

THE CONCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

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PAGE 1

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Edited by Leila Kerr.

MEETING:

There will be no meeting this month, as so many of us are away, but please keep in mind the 21st August, when there will be a treat in store! More about this in the next circular.

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ABOUT MEMBERS.

MEETING AT THE S.A. MUSEUM - 19.6.62.

Apologies were received from Mr Swaneveld, and Mr and Mrs Jack Ackermann.

The following were elected as members of the Society:

Miss A. Baker, 7 Elm Court Flats, Kloof Nek Road, Cape Town.
Miss K. Wilson, 60 Arthurs Road, Sea Point, C.P.

The following was proposed as a new member:-

Mrs N. Prior, proposed by L. Kerr, seconded by M. Kempthorne.

Miss Wapenaar gave a very interesting talk on the Bivalves of the Southern Cape, illustrated by many specimens. Several members displayed their S.A. bivalves and were pleased to have the opportunity of obtaining the correct names of some of their shells.

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THE LIBRARY.

Once again we have to thank our generous member, Dr Morris Cohen of Durban for a further gift to our Library. These valuable books are listed below:-

- No. 38 Lessons on Shells. (1846)
- " 39 The Conchologists Companion - Mary Roberts. (1834)
- " 40 The Ocean - Sir John Murray.
- " 41 Wodarch's Introduction to the Study of Conchology - J. Mawe (1832)
- " 42 The Land & Fresh-Water Shells of the British Islands - W. Turton (1840)
- " 43 Catalogue of Recent Mollusca - W.F. Webb
- " 44 Land & Fresh Water Conchology - Cpat. T. Brown (1845)
- " 45 Catalogue of Mollusca, No.25, Wards Natural Science Establishment.
- " 46 A Child's Book of Sea Shells - W. Hutchinson
- " 47 National Geographic Magazine, July, 1949

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A NEW BOOK ON SHELLS.

This new publication is a handy pocket guide of 6 inches by 4 inches, with 160 pages, and 790 illustrations in colour.

The title is "Sea Shells of the world" by R. Tucker Abbott, price 90 cents including postage, and is well worth the money.

Obtainable from Shuter & Shooter (Pty) Ltd., Box 109 Pietermaritzburg.

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GENERAL NOTES.

NOTES ON CYPRAEA CITRINA, GRAY. by D.H. Kennelly

The type locality of the above is quoted as Natal by Joyce Allan, who further states the range to be Indian Province, Cape of Good Hope, and African regions.

Assisted by the large number of specimens in the East London Museum collection, from numerous localities, an investigation was made to ascertain the actual range of C. citrina as far as possible.

The Museum records revealed that C. citrina occurs at Jeffreys Bay, Port Alfred, East London and vicinity, the Transkei coast (several localities), Pondoland and Durban (Port Natal).

The species does not occur at Mosel Bay, and Port Elizabeth has been omitted as there is no record at the East London Museum. It probably does occur in the Cape ^Aceife/Algoa Bay area.

Among a number of shells collected at Bazaruto Is., P.E. Africa, held by the East London Museum, a surprising discovery was made of two specimens of C. citrina from this locality.

It is noteworthy that the species is not recorded from Inhaca Island by MacNae & Kalk, and there is a big gap between Port Natal and Bazaruto Island.

Further material should be looked for to confirm that these two specimens did not reach Bazaruto Island fortuitously.

The writer is indebted to Mrs A.G. Richards, Mossel Bay, and Messrs. P. Elston, E. Dee and E.T. Haywood of Natal, for information forwarded which materially assisted to complete these notes.

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SHELLING EXPERIENCES OVERSEAS.

by Joan Weakley

This is not going to be of much scientific interest, and my suggestion has been that it be used only when more important articles are not forthcoming. Shelling Experiences Overseas is what Leila Kerr suggested, but Shelling Frustrations would be more accurate.

I had once, for instance, had visions of lovely spring days on the little Channel Island of Herm, with the sun sparkling, the seascape with its radiance and a mild salty sea-breeze gently blowing - the sort of day when it is good to be alive and a shell collector. This was when Gladys Dunningham and I were to spend eight days on the island of Guernsey. Herm, famed for shells, lies a mere two miles off the coast from Guernsey. But the strength of the wind made a landing at the, then, primitive little jetty impossible. Along with the Guernsey "extras" for the filming of "Appointment with Venus", we did manage a landing on the Isle of Sark, where David Niven and Glynis Jones were awaiting these "extras", and that was only after the wind-lashed waves had mercilessly pitched and rolled us across the intervening eight miles.

The main shell of Sark seems to be the Ormer (the local Haliotis). These decorate the walls and gate posts of many of the cottages. At very low spring tides, which are called Ormering Tides, almost the entire population of Sark goes "ormering". Stewed or pickled ormers are a favourite local dish. In the little Chapel of Le Vauxbelets, on Guernsey, shells are mixed with bits of coloured china to give the effect of mosaic.

I did collect some shells in the teeth of a blustering wind in the harbour of St. Sampson, but these were exactly the same as the shells my husband and I had collected at Falmouth in Cornwall on our honeymoon. In case anyone plans to go to Herm, I must add that a well-known British conchologist, who had spent years dredging around the coasts of Britian, told me later that we had not missed much.

There was a day when my husband and I and our two daughters had passed through Haarlech, in Wales, and were travelling south towards Barmouth, our ultimate destination for that day being Oxford. He was singing lustily "The March of the Men of Haarlech", when suddenly, confronting us, was a huge sign-board that I must one day see again: TO THE SHELL ISLAND. we pulled up short and made inquiries. A boat had just left. The next would leave in an hour's time, and here we were, still 200 miles from Oxford. Sadly we drove on.

There is a phrase, read somewhere, that for years has haunted me. This is it: "The beach here (at John o' Groats) is strewn with cowries, called locally, "Groatie Buckies". "Strewn" was the unforgettable word. The nearest I have ever got to John o' Groats is Inverness, near enough, however, to be tantalising.

This obsession with shells once landed me in a very real predicament in Copenhagen. My husband had agreed to this trip on condition we travelled lightly. He had had enough of luggage. So I thought I would show him what a woman could do. I went to Denmark in the dress I was wearing, light in weight and light in colour, a raincoat and winter coat clutched in one hand, a small attaché-case in the other. Along the shores of the Baltic I slithered down an embankment to search for shells among the sea-weed. All I got for my trouble were some miserable little mussels and a soiled frock. We never saw a cloud during our ten days in Copenhagen. In fact, there was a drought on, but I had to wear one or other of my coats.

Finally their was last year in Spain. Towards sunset one evening we arrived at San Carlso de la Rapita, between Barcelona and Valencia. Little boats were coming in laden with an assortment of sea creatures: squids, shark-like fish, octopi, crabs, eels, clams, barnacles, crayfish and prawns. Those prawns! They were the famous "langostinds" - the six-inch long prawns. There were Murex brandaris. I bought a number of them, and in the kitchen of the homely little place where we spent the night, I boiled them myself.

Out in the harbour were several "vivarias". These are mussel farms - large floating stages, moored, with lines hanging down in the water, and tackle for hoisting up the traps. Each floating platform has its little deck house.

Later on, fishermen from the little village where we rented our house, brought me beautiful Murex trunculus. I myself must have collected literally thousands of "pelicans' feet" on our beach, near Malaga. These get caught up in the "copo", the fine fish net that is stretched from between two boats and then slowly drawn up on to the beach. I had visions of doling them out by the handful to friends at home, and having milk covers made to last me for life. There were also fair-sized Tritons, that must obviously have been the kind that in some parts of Spain are used for piping bridal couples to bed.

When the day came for packing up, it seemed to me, a shell collector, that there was really no longer anything unpleasant about the odour still clinging to some of those shells. I sealed them securely - as I thought, but by the time we reached Majorca, they were a real threat to the further success and happiness of our prolonged European tour. So Valldemosa is to me less the place where George Sand and Chopin spent several months together, than the place where I threw away all my precious shells! All, that is, excepting that first boiling of my own supervision at San Carlso, that had remained securely packed all the months of our stay in Spain.

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FROM MARY KUTTEL, 300 miles South of the Cape Verde Islands.

Well here I am pulling the flying fish out of my hair and the pink Portuguese Men-of-war off my arms! At any rate, there they are just over the side, as well as a dear little pair of stormy petrels which have followed us all the way from the Cape. I am looking forward soon to really doing some shelling at Porto Praya, St. Jago, as shelling at St. Helena and Ascension could have been better. But I got quite a number of Patella caerulea, blue limpets at St. Helena, and a fisherman gave me a cowry and a conch. A woman at Ascension too, gave me some pretty shells from the beach, cassis and strombus I take them to be. I also collected quite a variety of shells myself. There are no live shells to be had there. You are fined if you enter the sea on account of the undertow and the sharks, to say nothing of the huge shoals of blackfish with their sharp teeth - one nipped one of the young men on board and he bounded out of the water faster than he went in over the yacht's side. We caught some nice fish at night when the blackfish sleep, and after sailing through jumping Bonito for 3 days, north of the equator we caught a lovely tunny which fed us for 3 days. The yacht's rolling a bit, hence the writing. One morning at ascension they went off at 7 a.m. to gather frigate bird eggs at Bosun Bird Island and I was put ashore. -"Hang on to the ropes, ma'am, and jump for the steps at the top of the swell!" Ma'am finally did and tripped for miles along the gritty beaches and over volcanic hillocks till I came to the oddest tracks and holes. The tracks seemed newly made by the green turtle but I couldn't find any eggs when I felt in the holes with a stick. Between

two beaches I found about 3 kinds of cowries, small lion's paw Pectens, some Harpa with pink colouring and various other kinds of shells. There are only 3 kinds on the rocks, Neritas, a small periwinkle and a keyhole limpet. The sea with enormous breakers was too dangerous to enter. This is the most fantastic island with 40 reddish volcanic cones on rough low ground around green mountains up which the Wireless Manager, Mr Bruce, very kindly drove us, swathed in cloud, the S.E. wind always blows and cools things down. There is a very hush-hush American Missile tracking station on the island which is brightly lighted at night with red, green and white flashing lights. The people at St. Helena are very kind too. The governor and French Consul entertained us and I spent a lot of time at the Archives in the Castle.

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NATAL NOTES by A.C. van Bruggen.

Although my main research work is in the field of land molluscs, I do not neglect the marine species (as far as possible). One of the main jobs at the moment is the organisation of a proper malacological department out of the magnificent collections of the Natal Museum. Our collections comprise those of Burnup and Falcon and material collected by staff members (especially Dr. R.F. Lawrence: small land snails) and are rich in type material and other important specimens. We have fine series of South African Volutes, among which are many taken from fish stomachs, e.g. by Bell-Marley. I have discovered a very fine specimen of the rare cowry Cypraea fultoni; furthermore we have no less than at least six specimens of the supposedly rare Cypraea listeri (now recognised as a synonymy of C. marginalis), all from Natal.

I have made full use of our fine opportunities for field work. In the beginning of April we made a short collecting trip to the Drakensburg Mts., Cathedral Peak Area, where we collected one (if not two!) possibly new species of Achatinidae and numerous species of various families. During April and May we did the Mollusca Survey of the Kruger National Park under the auspices of the National Parks Board of Trustees and with the help of the Scientific Research Division of the game reserve. It was a most exciting trip and we made a fine collection, which together with the material already collected by the Biologist and his staff, will give a fair impression of the land snail fauna of this great nature reserve. Of course, the working out will take a lot of time.

There are still collections of my expedition to Rhodesia and Portuguese East Africa (1959) and of Bechuanaland and Southwest Africa (Transvaal Museum) to be studied and reported on, so that you can imagine that there is no lack of work to be done.

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THE MOLLUSCS OF THE NATAL COAST by P. Elston

I have long been interested that many species occurring in Natal are widely ranged from Japan through the Indo-Pacific region. The appended list of species collected may be of interest to fellow members, who may possibly be able to add to the number. All these shells are in my collection and with few exceptions have been taken alive. The three marked x are in Mr Dee's collection.

I have been shown many others which are claimed as having been taken alive, but were submitted to me for identification after they were cleaned, and are not listed.

In my opinion the Society has now reached a stage where members should take steps to ensure that shells - claimed to have been collected alive, should be submitted for identification with the animal left intact within and suitably preserved.

It is by this method that positive records may be made, and errors eliminated as far as possible.

I would appreciate comments from members on the foregoing remarks.

LIST:Cypraea

arabica - Linne.	Annulus - Linne.	chinensis - Gmelin
caurica - Linne.	caputserpentis - L.	erosa - Linne.
helvola - Linne.	isabella - Linne.	mauritiana - Linne.
moneta - Linne.	staphylea - Linne.	talpa - Linne.
tigris - Linne.	teres - Gmelin.	x testudiharia ingens-S&S
vitellus - Linne.	zic-zac - Linne.	

Allied species

Amphiperas ovum - Linne.	x Calpurnus verrucosus - Linne.
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Conus

capitaneus - Linne	coronatus - Gmelin	chaldeus - Rod.
hebraeus - Linne.	figulinus - Linne.	x geographus - Linne.
lividus - Brug.	miles - Linne.	rattus - Brug.
tessellatus - Born	vexillum - Gmelin.	

Miscellaneous Univalves

Architectonica maximum - Philippi.	Architectonica perspectiva - Linne.
Bursa bufonia - Gmelin.	Bursa rana - Linne.
Columbraria maculosa - Gmelin	Cymatium aquatile - Reeve.
Cymatium pilearis - Linne.	Cymatium lotorium - Linne.
Drupa aspera - Lamarck.	Drupa granulata - Duclos
Drupa ricina - Linne.	Hapra amouretta - Roding.
Murex ramosus - Linne.	Nerita ambicilla - Linne.
Nerita polita - Linne.	Nerita plicata - Linne.
Natica maculosa - Lamarck.	Nassa grancolinus - Brug.
Polinicea mamilla - Linne.	Rapa rapiformis $\frac{3}{4}$ Born.
Torina (Helicacus) varigata - Gmelin.	Thais (Purpura) rudolphi - Lamarck
Thais (Purpura) persica - Linne.	
Dolabella auricularia - Solander.	Umbraculum umbraculum - Humphrey.

Note: x Collection E. Dee.

Ref: Hirase - Illustrated Handbook of Shells. Kira - Japanese Shells 1959.
J. Allen - Australian Shells. J. Allen - Cowry Shells of World Seas.
Dr K.H. Barnard - Contributions Nos. II & IV.

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BORDER NOTES.

by D.H. Kennelly.

The writer spent the last two public holidays at Bonza Bay, six miles from East London. Collecting was good and Bonza Bay appears to be living up to its reputation for shells.

The outstanding find was a specimen of Cypraea caurica, Linn. which is the first recorded for this part of the world. Another good find is a specimen of Voluta africana, Reeve, in very good condition.

It is hoped to pay further visits to this locality in the near future, as it warrants further investigation.

During the winter holidays, we had the pleasure of receiving visits from some of our members, who passed through East London.

Mrs A.G. Richards of Mossel Bay, was on a collecting trip to the Transkei Pondoland and Natal coasts. This enthusiastic lady advises having taken over 200 live cowries on the South Coast Natal. We hope "Bobby" has left a few for the benefit of other collectors.

Mrs C.M. Connolly of Fish Hoek - noted for her field work - was in East London for a week. Unfortunately no details about collecting are available, and it is hoped an account will be contributed to a Circular later on.

Our "live-wire" member - R.N. Kilburn of the Natal University - spent a day in East London with the writer, to our mutual advantage. "Dick" recently had a wonderful trip collecting at Umzamba, Pondoland, with excellent results.

He has promised an article thereon for the next Circular.

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EASTERN CAPE NOTES

by D.H. Kennelly.

Our lucky member - Mr E.C. Wicks - recently put in time collecting at Jeffreys Bay, and returned with very interesting finds. The outstanding specimens are detailed below:-

Sylvanocochlis ancilla Hanley

Clavatula Sp. ? (Deep water)

Drupa granulatam Ducloz

Thais bufo Lamarck

Of the foregoing, Drupa granulatam and Thais bufo are - as far as the writer is aware - the first examples found at Jeffreys Bay. He is fortunate in having a Natal friend collecting for him. Judging by the variety and quality of specimens submitted to the writer for identification, this members collection is increasing rapidly.

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CAPE NOTES by L. Kerr

During these cold, wet holidays, the writer has walked along Muizenberg beach nearly every morning. "Lie-a-beds" don't know what they are missing! There is always something new to find. At a recent low tide, I found 11 Cassis achatina, 10 Fusus verruculatus, 7 Tellina madagascariensis, 16 Mactra glabrata, 10 Bullia laevissima, 2 Lima rotundata in red-bait, and any amount of live Schizodesma spengleri which I left. All of the foregoing were alive. In addition, there were 24 Argobuccinum argus, large, and in good condition, and various other dead shells.

Dirk Ackermann is proud to announce that he has added the very rare Voluta bednalli Brazier, from Australia, to his extensive collection

While in East London, Clarice Connolly paid a visit to the Aquarium and spent an interesting time watching Eugyrina gemmifera depositing egg-cases. Some of these were taken and given to the S.A. Museum. Do members know what this animal feeds on? Please send any information at once to the Secretary.

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