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X THE CONCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA X  
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CIRCULAR NO. 27

NOVEMBER, 1961

PAGE 1.

MEETING:

The next meeting will be held in the Lecture Room of the S.A. Museum on Tuesday, 21st. November at 8.15 p.m. This will be a "swop" evening, and members are asked to bring along shells in good condition to exchange. Mr. M.J. Penrith of the S.A. Museum will give a talk on the Museum's Tunny survey, illustrated with coloured slides.

This will be the last meeting of the year, as there will be no meeting in December. As there will be no Circular either, we take this opportunity of wishing all members a Very Happy Christmas. Remember to do those scrap books in the holidays!

XX

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. 24. 10. 1961

This was well attended. Apologies were received from Dr. and Mrs. F. Talbot and Mrs. H. Boswell.

The minutes of the previous A.G.M. were read and confirmed.

The following new members were elected:-

Mrs. B. Bloom, 17 La Corniche, Victoria Rd., Clifton.  
Master J. Lighton, 21 Berkeley Square, Main Rd., Rondebosch.  
Mrs. C. Martin, 16 Heath Court, Bergvliet Rd., Heathfield.  
Miss A. Pieser, Montpellier, Monastery Rd., Sea Point.  
Miss P. Smith, " " "

Mr. John L. Staid-Staadt was proposed for membership by Mr. Kennelly and seconded by Mrs. Kerr.

The Hon. Secretary, Mrs. Kerr, read her report for the year, which indicated a great increase in the activity of the Society, notably regarding the monthly circulars.

SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDING 24th OCTOBER, 1961.

In this third report we record with gratification the steady growth of our Society. At the end of June, 1960, the membership stood at 126. To date, 41 new members have joined the Society, 14 have resigned, mostly students, and regrettably, 3 have died, making the total now 150.

Eleven evening meetings have been held and 5 Field Days. The Student members have had 3 Field Days and a Competition. During this period the Circulars have been published regularly each month from No.12 to No.26, containing 70 pages. The Eastern Province and Natal Supplement, under the able editorship of Mr. D.H. Kennelly and Dr. Van Bruggen, was added to the Circulars from December 1960 to July 1961, containing 26 pages, making a total of 96 pages published. It is pleasing to note that more members are submitting articles for publication.

In December, 1960, Membership Cards were issued to members. In February, 1961, the Zoological Society held a very successful conversazione

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at the University of Cape Town, at which we exhibited some Western Province shells.

Our thanks go to the Director of the S.A. Museum for kindly allowing us to use the Lecture room for our meetings, also to Mr. Thorne for obtaining the excellent films shown.

I would like also to thank Dr. Barnard for his valuable help to members in identifying shells, Mr. John Grindley for his help in editing the articles, Mrs. Jean Ward for typing the envelopes, and Sydney Kannemeyer for his hard work in duplicating the Circulars.

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The Hon. Treasurer, Mr. J. Ackermann, read his Financial Statement, which showed a satisfactory credit balance.

BALANCE SHEET FOR TERM 1st JULY 1960 to 30th JUNE 1961.

RECEIPTS:

Balance on hand 1.7.60	N.B.S.	R170.86
" " "	CASH	24.06
Entrance Fees		22.93
Subscriptions 1959-1960		26.00
" 1960-1961		79.73
" 1961-1962		22.00
" in advance of 1962		2.00
Sale of Circulars		8.12
Exchange and Interest		10.26
Life Membership Fees		15.00
		<u>R380.96</u>

PAYMENTS:

Postages Secretary	R 30.60
General Expenses	59.29
Expenses for Circulars	17.92
" " Meetings	0.50
" " Library	30.31
Exchange	0.29
Membership Fees other Societies	10.00
Balance on hand N.B.S. 30.6.61	230.98
" " " CASH	1.07
	<u>R380.96</u>

There is a satisfactory improvement in the Society's finances for the year under review in spite of heavy commitments, such as Secretary's postages, General expenses for stationery, stencils, membership cards, Dr. van Bruggen's publications, and circulars which have vastly improved in their contents, entailing additional costs, plus the establishing of the Library for which books were purchased.

J. Ackermann  
Treasurer,  
23/10/61.

LIBRARIAN'S/....

LIBRARIAN'S REPORT, 24th. OCTOBER, 1961

Thanks to Dr. Cohen's gift, our Library books now total 33. Country members have been slow in taking advantage of the facilities offered and the postage has only been 13½ cents.

If possible, some of the books will be brought in to the meetings to enable members to borrow them. Members are reminded of the fine of 10 cents per week for overdue books.

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Amendments to the Constitution were proposed and passed after much discussion. The Constitution with amendments is enclosed with this Circular.

Mr. D.H. Kennelly had been proposed as an Honorary Member by the Council. This was approved unanimously by the meeting.

It was suggested that when members submitted articles for the Circulars, they should, as far as possible, include photographs or drawings of the specimens they described. These illustrations could then be filed in the Society's Library, and might be useful for publication in the future.

ELECTION OF COUNCIL MEMBERS.

The retiring Council Members were thanked for their services to the Society.

Nominations were called for, and after voting, the following were elected to the Council:

- President - Prof. J.H. Day .(subject to acceptance)
- Vice-President- Dr. F. Talbot.
- Secretary - Mrs. L. Kerr.
- Treasurer - Miss P. Kempthorne.
- Council Members - Mrs. C. Connolly
- Mr. J. Grindley
- Mr. J. Walker.

According to Item 12 in the amended Constitution, three additional Council members from the country are needed. Acting in the spirit of the A.G.M. the Council ask for suggestions for three representatives for the vacant offices to be co-opted by the Council. These should be forwarded as soon as possible.

After tea, Mr. Jock Dichmont showed us some interesting slides of his trip to Bazaruto Island and other places on the Mozambique Coast. He also showed us the really magnificent film he had taken under water of the fish and shells on the coral reefs.

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ABOUT MEMBERS.

We welcome back from Overseas Mrs. Joan Weakley and Mrs. Iris Cohen. It will be good to have them once more at our meetings.

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Congratulations/..

Congratulations to Mr. D.H. Kennelly who has been appointed Curator of the Department of Mollusca at the East London Museum. We wish him every success and happiness in his new post. After January 1st, 1962, his address will be C/o. East London Museum, East London.

XX

GENERAL NOTES.

ARTICLE NO.3. COLLECTING ROCK SHELLS by J. and C. Walker.

Collectors may be divided into two distinct groups, the Malacologists who collect live specimens and study the animal as a whole and the Conchologists, who devote their attention to the shell. Shells may be collected for the sake of their beauty and shape alone.

Conchologists may collect live and beach washed specimens. The latter, unless perfect and very newly dead, do not resemble the live specimen very much, so it is advisable to replace such specimens with ones taken alive at the earliest opportunity.

Having learnt a little about the beginning and construction of shells, we might now ask where we can find them. Before setting out on a shelling expedition, let us assemble our implements.

Firstly, a pair of good shoes, preferably hockey boots, or rope-soled fishing boots, which protect the ankle if your foot slips into a crack. Secondly, a basket or bucket in which you can put your shelling tools which are, a mason's trowel with the end rounded, a knife, a small crow-bar and several jars with wide mouths into which your smaller specimens may be placed. A needle is always handy to remove the spines of sea urchins, and elastoplast or a bandage may be useful.

Having assembled everything, let us proceed with our shell hunting. If there is a beach near the rocks, walk along the high water mark. Look at the beach washed shells to see what you are likely to find amongst the rocks, for then you get a general idea of the shells of that locality.

Shells do not appear to like bright light and do most of their crawling around at night, hiding under rocks in the daytime, so under rocks we must look.

Commence turning loose rocks over one by one, remembering that it is not always the large rocks that hide the best shells. If you find crabs under the rocks, go closer to the sea, for where the crabs are common, there are no worth-while shells.

When you find your first shell, fix a line, for it is on this tide line that you will find the majority of your shells. If you go further out, you may find something less common, but usually there is nothing.

Having done your day's collecting, go back to the beach and compare the shells you have collected with those on the beach. Then only will you see the big difference between those taken alive and beach washed specimens.

Finally, please, always turn rocks back again after you have finished, for otherwise you will be destroying the lives of shells and minute animals which cannot move out of the hot sun.

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EASTERN PROVINCE NOTES. by D.H. Kennelly.

All Eastern Province members received a real boost to their collecting morale during the first week of October.

This/....

This was due to the annual visit of our "one-and-only" Helen Boswell, and the term "Dud" could well be applied to any collector who fails to respond to Helen's infectious enthusiasm.

An outing to Jeffreys Bay was organized, which proved to be only partly successful, due to hurried planning and the Equinox wind.

Later the usual "unofficial" meetings were held, at which the exchange of notes and news of shells and shelling, gave much pleasure to members able to attend.

Earlier in the year, Mrs. Boswell enjoyed a very pleasant trip to Europe, which - judging by the shells exhibited - was a very successful collecting venture.

One of the highlights of this trip, was attending a meeting in London of the Conchological Society of Great Britain.

At this gathering, Helen received a warm and friendly welcome from the Society's office bearers, who expressed their pleasure at having present an overseas member, who also belonged to our C.S.S.A.

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Our old friend - E.C. Wicks - intends allocating his forthcoming leave, between a trip along the Transkei coast to Natal, and Jeffreys Bay.

"Ginger's" luck as a collector is now becoming proverbial, for his latest find at Jeffreys Bay is an excellent specimen of Cypraea marginalis Dillwyn, rare at this locality.

It is hoped that the usual luck will attend this member when he visits the Transkei and Natal, and we look forward to some interesting news of molluscan finds.

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While in the Eastern Province during September, Mrs. Helen Boswell did some collecting at a locality ten miles north of East London, and was fortunate in finding a specimen of the very rare Cypraea ampithales Melvill. It appears there are very few examples of this shell known, and we congratulate Helen on her good fortune.

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NATAL NOTES by D.H. Kennelly.

Mention was made in Circular No. 24, of the taking of a specimen of Cymatium tuberosum Lam., at Natal, by our member, Mr. E. Dee.

Since the foregoing appeared, the writer has had time to make a study of available literature mentioning the species under discussion, and further information is now given for the benefit of interested members.

In their Monograph of Cymatidae, (Johnsonia, Vol.3, No.36), Clench & Turner, 1937, state the correct name for this species to be Cymatium (Gutturium) muricinum Roding, and the specific name tuberosum is now a synonym.

These authors give the range as, West Atlantic and Indo-Pacific, Ceylon, Mauritius, Zanzibar, Kilifi (Kenya), Portuguese East Africa, Bazaruto Is. and Mozambique. Shells from the localities listed show no appreciable differences. Adult shells vary in size, and exhibit a varying number, and development, of the nodulose varices and ridges.

Further this species will be found listed in "The Sea Shells of Dar-es-Salaam", by J.F. Spry, and therefore it is not very surprising that it has been taken at Port Natal (Durban).

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A NEW BOOK ON AUSTRALIAN SHELLS.

In Circular No. 23, July 1961, mention was made of a forthcoming publication, and definite information is now at hand.

The title is:- "Queensland and Great Barrier Reef Shells", by Dr. D.F. McMichael and Mr. C.H. Rippingale. The work is illustrated in colour, and the price is £A7:1, and £A12:12/- for the De Luxe edition.

Orders may be placed with the Publishers, the Jacaranda Press (Pty)Ltd, 75, Elizabeth Street, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.

This is an up-to-date work on the shells of the region covered, and will be of value to all members interested in Australian shells.

D.H.K.

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MORE NATAL FINDS by E. Dee.

On reading Mr. Liversidge's article on the Cowry shells, I can add that I have found the following cowries in the bulla stage in and around Durban and they have part of the adult markings from quite an early stage.

Cypraea (Palmudusta) ziczac Lin. Cinnamon scarlet with cream markings.

Ziczac markings not quite as complete as in the adult, but the brown dots around the spire are there from a very early stage.

Cypraea (Erronea) caurica Lin. Faint khaki marking on the back. No side spots present in the bulla stage.

Cypraea (Cribraria) teres Gmel. In the bulla stage, the back markings are quite distinct and conform to the adult. No side spots present.

During the past six weeks, the following live specimens of interest have been taken or submitted to me:-

- Tridacna gigas 20 lbs. weight, shell alone.
- Amphiperas ovum 3 ins. long
- Lambis chiragra 6 ins.
- Lambis lambis 8 ins.
- Cassis madagascariensis 4 ins.
- Semicassis glauca 3 to 4 ins.
- " aralea 3 ins.
- Conus figulinus
- Conus virgo
- Conus miles
- Tonna galea 5 ins.
- Drupa hystrix 1 in.
- Meta coniformis 1 in.
- Mitra ? 6 ins.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF LABELS by A.C. van Bruggen.

Unfortunately few people realise how important labels are for a good shell collection. Too many rely on their memories as far as locality is

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concerned, while putting great value on the names of the species on their labels. It has to be stressed, however, that we will always be able to check the name later on, but that it is utterly impossible for anyone but the finder or owner (and even they are liable to forget!) to check the locality. We may even go so far as to say that a specimen without a label has lost most, if not all, of its value to the serious collector.

The label tells us where the shell has been found and our knowledge of the distribution of a species is simply based on numerous labels belonging to numerous specimens. Consequently wrong labels give wrong information, such as species allegedly occurring outside their normal area, etc. Specimens without labels may give us unreliable information (from the often faulty memory of the collector) or no information at all.

A good label should contain the following data:

1. Locality; 2. Basic ecological information (if any); 3. Date; 4. Name of collector and/or donor, and 5. Name of species (this is not imperative and can be added any time). It is not practical to have more information on the actual label, because space tends to be restricted. The catalogue should contain all additional data, such as name and qualifications of the person who identified the shell, additional remarks on the habitat, exchange, purchase price (if any), etc.

The following are (fictitious) examples of labels for various shells:

Marginella spec.

East London, on rocks (tidal)  
23.X.1939, leg. J. Burns

Afrivoluta pringlei Tomlin

Off Cape Recife, trawled at 50 fathoms  
13.VII.1959, leg. A.K. Young  
don. Port Elizabeth Museum.

Achatina panthera

Natal, Dukuduku Forest,  
among dead leaves  
1.I.1949, leg. F. Smart

Cypraea lamarcki

Durban, Salisbury Island (beach)  
2.II.1952, leg. S. Hell  
don. D.C. Drakensberg

Gulella (?)

Alexandria Forest,  
on bark of trees  
3-10.VI.1960, leg. T. Thumb

Lymnaea natalensis Krs.

Great Kei R., near bridge at  
Volksdorp, stagnant pools  
3.III.1963, leg. Portuguese  
Expedition 1962-63,  
don. Lisbon Zool. Museum.

The above-mentioned examples are concise labels to be put in the box or tube with the relevant specimen(s). The abbreviation "leg." is short for the Latin term "legit", which means "has collected"; it has been dropped by many collectors, especially entomologists who must be more concise in their labels on account of their size. The abbreviation "don." stands for "donor" or "donation", although originally it also was a Latin term.

The date is of some importance for various reasons. Certain marine species come inshore to spawn at certain times of the year, others are fond of warm or cold water, etc.; the dates on the labels enable us to find out as much about the life cycle of the species as can be expected from a specimen in a collection. It also helps us to trace the whereabouts of the collector and his trips, especially in the case of old travellers. Finally, the source of donated or exchanged specimens should always be mentioned for the sake of the record; finding a specimen of a rare species in the collection of Mr. X. donated by the Port Elizabeth Museum, I can write to the Port Elizabeth Museum and ask them if they have seen more of this rare shell. Do never discard original labels that have come with your donated or exchanged specimens. They are also valuable records enabling us e.g. to trace handwritings, etc.; they should be kept in a box or tube with your own label. I know from experience in working in large museum collections overseas how important this is.

It is probably a well known fact that all labels should be written on good paper with indelible ink, preferably black waterproof drawing ink.

Ballpoint/...

Ballpoint and ordinary inks tend to fade over the years, more particularly when exposed to sunlight. Labels should be kept with the specimens and, in the case of closed boxes or glass tubes, kept inside these containers. Pasting on of labels is never really satisfactory, apart from the fact that no glue or paste holds indefinitely. There is no chance of losing your labels when they are inside; the larger the collection the more important this fact is. The same applies also to specimens in liquid preservatives.

One last point is of prime importance too. The specimen(s) and label should be kept together in the collection. This sounds in fact easier than it is. Especially in large collections where the specimens are being handled frequently, they are not always put back in their proper places. And sometimes the opening and closing of drawers makes shells jump out of their proper boxes. Therefore the catalogue number should appear both on the shell and the label; if this is the case, then the specimen can never be mislaid, notwithstanding the fact that it is taken out of its drawer and compared to a large number of similar shells or that it probably may jump out of its shallow box or tray.

Always remember: the better the label, the more valuable the shell.

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