



President's Report – AGM 2022

August 2022

Dear Members,

Herewith a very concise report on some of the matters dealt with in the past year.

AGMs and Meetings

The 2021 AGM was held on 27 November 2021 at the Netcare Unitas Hospital. It was less well attended than former AGMs, but was the first one since the 2019 AGM, and was still conducted under limited COVID lockdown restrictions, so not surprising. Since it was a voting year, a new Committee was up for election, but due to no new nominations being forwarded, the 2021 Committee Members were re-elected by default. Gillian Petzer was elected as an Additional Member to assist the Society with matters pertaining to our hobby and the Youth.

The 2022 AGM was held on 13 August 2022 at the Sinoville Wesleyan Church hall, the current venue for Pretoria Group meetings. It was a very well-attended event, an indication that pre-COVID activities were on the return. The AGM voted on a new title for the Society, which has now been changed to the *Conchological Society of South Africa* (CSSA). A total of 197 lots of shells and books were auctioned off and the attendees enjoyed the interaction and banter.

Details regarding the AGM will be the subject matter for a separate letter.

The Committee convened two meetings in the past year, slowly getting back to normal pre-COVID cadence. At least two more are planned for the remainder of 2022.



Groups and Memberships

The following Regional Groups (Clubs) were functional during the past tenure:

- Pretoria Group: one of the most active Groups, adding two new Members in the last year. Meetings are held monthly every second Saturday afternoon at the Sinoville Wesleyan Church hall. Meetings take on the form of workshops, inviting members to participate and bring shells for identification. The current Chairperson is Gordon Webster.
- Jeffreys Bay Group: another large and active Group, meeting monthly in the Jeffreys Bay Museum. Meetings are well-attended. The current Chairperson is Tana Kruger.
- South Coast Group: meets on a quarterly basis in a venue of choice in the Shelly Beach area. Meetings are informal, and usually include a talk and shell identification. This Group added two new members in the last year. The current Chairperson is Roy Aiken.
- Cape Town Group: the smallest Group, but currently growing steadily, adding two new Members in the last month. The current Chairperson is John Hobbs.

Overall Society Membership stood at 50 at the time of writing of this report.

Youth Interaction

Following the 2021 AGM a lot of effort was put into resurrecting the plans to reach the youth and create interest with our hobby. Gillian and Anton presented a talk and mini workshop to Grade 4 and 5 kids from the "Voortrekkers" (Scouts) on 23 May 2022. The kids have an activity wherein they need

to learn about collecting items, including how to collect, how to manage a collection, store items, etc. They need to also view a collection. Anton presented his collection and provided interesting facts to help the kids meet their objectives towards obtaining a badge called “Versamel Kuns” (the Art of Collecting).



More activities have been planned by Gillian for high school kids on 24 August 2022.

Bursaries

Alwyn Marais has started engaging with academic institutions who offer post-graduate degrees or diplomas in the fields of conchology, malacology or related molluscan studies. The Committee agreed that it would be beneficial to invest financially by offering small bursaries (in the range of R2000 to R5000) to post-graduate students specialising in the above, to help further these academic fields.

We have already received a positive response from one institution and the Committee is awaiting responses from all the institutions approached before selecting recipients.

Upcoming Pretoria Group Shelling Trip

Alwyn Marais has taken it upon himself to arrange a week-long shelling trip to Xora in October 2022.



The trip is for members of the Pretoria Group. I will report on the outcome of the trip once complete, and an article will also appear in a copy of Strandloper. It promises to be a lovely break for all attending!

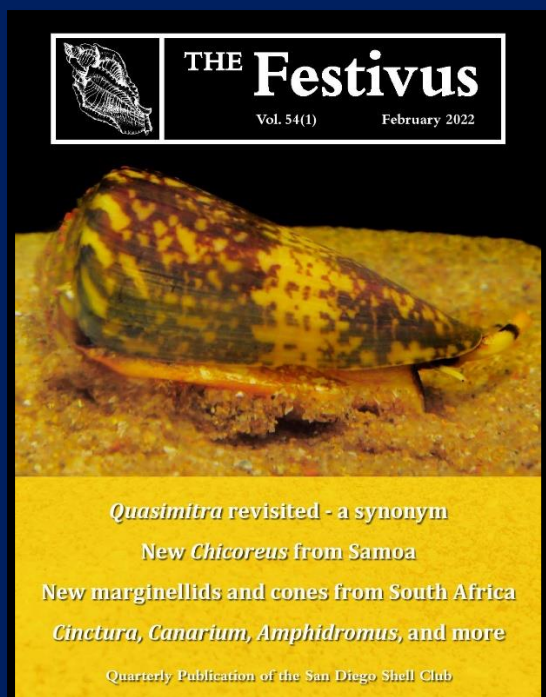
International Reach

Due to COVID lockdowns and regulations, all international Shell Shows were still on hold for the majority of 2021. This precluded our Society stalwarts, Alan and Roy, from attending and representing the South African conchological scene on international front.

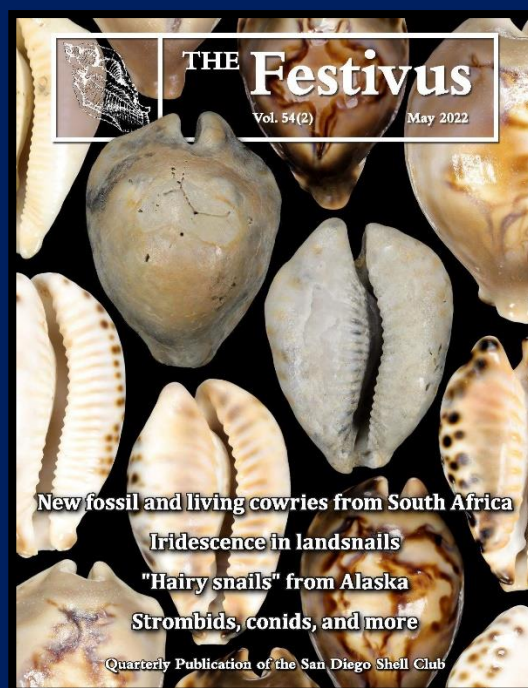
However, the two gents noted above spent their time wisely by doing some good conchological research and publishing their findings in two editions of peer-reviewed journal, *The Festivus*:

- Roy Aiken & Alan Seccombe: The description of two new SA Cone subspecies (*Floraconus baeri desuntnotae* and *Nataliconus immelmani alanfraseri*). Published in the journal *The Festivus* no 54(1), February 2022.
- Roy Aiken & Alan Seccombe: The description of a new Bistolida subspecies (*Bistolida clavicola jangamoensis*), as well as the description of an interesting fossil (*Barycypraea iungo*) from Richards Bay harbour, linking SA *Barycypraea* and fossils of the same Genus from Java. Published in the journal *The Festivus* no 54(2), May 2022.

The research even made the front covers of both above mentioned journals.



The Festivus, February 2022



The Festivus, May 2022

Conclusion

The Society has had its fair share of ups and downs over the course of the past three years, starting in 2020 with the onset of COVID and the lockdowns ensuing – leading to major challenges. These included cancellation of Club meetings, AGMs and other outings and related activities. It has taken time to rebuild and rekindle what was lost, but the tremendous spirit and enthusiasm seen at our recent AGM is testament to the resilience of the Society, and the will to revitalise our hobby.

I wish to thank everyone who has assisted me over the course of the last tenure, and those who have helped shoulder the load. I am excited about – and looking forward to – the next tenure to see where our hobby takes us. I hope to see the Society growing from strength to strength and seeing our members enjoying the friendships in the Clubs and the shells that bring us together.

Until next time, happy shelling!

President, CSSA
18 August 2022