



## THE STRANDLOPER

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*Atrivoluta pringlei* Tomlin 1947  
SEA SHELLS AND THEIR MAKERS

by R.N. Kilburn.

### Part 9 - The Cleaning of Seashells.

This article will deal with the art of preparing specimens for a shell collection.

Empty shells need merely be washed in warm water to remove dirt and salt. However, the collector should strive to obtain living specimens as these are more likely to be perfect. The problem then arises of removing the animal.

Bivalves need simply be left in tap water until they gape, whereupon the animal can be scooped out. The process may be hastened by chilling or freezing.

Spirally-coiled gastropods present difficulties. The most widely used method is boiling. This produces quite satisfactory results, provided that sudden changes in temperature are avoided, as this will cause minute cracks to appear in the shell surface. After boiling for ten to fifteen minutes, a strong pin is inserted into the foot, and the animal carefully prised out. The trapdoor, termed the operculum, which in life is used to close off the aperture, should be saved. If part of the mollusc should break off inside the shell it can often be flushed out with a strong jet of water. As a last resort the shell may be filled with alcohol or diluted formalin, left for a few days, then drained.

The best and simplest cleaning method, however, is to drop the shells into meths (or 70% ethyl alcohol if available). They should be left in this preservative for a few days, or until required. The animal can then be easily hooked out. Smaller shells, after a few days preservation, need only be allowed to dry out. There will be no smell, and dried animal may later prove to be of great value to science.

There are a few other techniques in use, but all are unreliable or have serious disadvantages.

When the shell is ready, the operculum may be glued to a plug of cotton wool, and inserted into the aperture in its natural position. Or, it may be wrapped in tissue paper, and wedged inside the aperture. Sometimes the collector may first wish to remove the fibrous brown periostracum which covers many shells. This can be done by soaking for a short while in diluted caustic soda, followed by a gentle scrubbing. Any household bleach containing sodium

hypochlorite/ .....

hypochlorite will serve the same purpose, and will also remove green algae stains, without affecting the natural colours. But it should be realised that the periostracum is an intrinsic part of the shell, and should be retained in at least some examples of each species.

Finally there are the chitons which need special treatment to prevent their curling up. They must be bound, while still in an extended position, to a narrow strip of wood which is then submerged in meths. When they have set they may be dried, the animal being first removed if desired. A drop or two of glycerine rubbed into the girdle will prevent shrinking.

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This article was the ninth in a series of ten talks which were originally compiled for, and broadcast by, the English Service of the South African Broadcasting Corporation, who have given permission for distribution amongst members of the Conchological Society of Southern Africa.

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A NOTE ON THE FAMILY PYRAMIDELLIDAE IN SOUTH AFRICA.

by E.H. Ralph.

- Figure 1. Turbonilla (Pyrgolampros) angea Bartsch, 1915.  
Shell brownish-yellow with fine, microscopic, spiral striations. Locality:- Port Alfred.  
Ref. Bartsch 1915, page 77, plate 9, fig. 3.
- Figure 2. Turbonilla (Dunkeria) helena Bartsch, 1915.  
Shell golden-brown. Locality:- Port Alfred to Stil Bay.  
Ref. Bartsch 1915, page 77, plate 14, fig. 1 and Barnard's Contributions vol. XLVII, pt. 1, page 88.
- Figure 3. Turbonilla (Pyrgiscus) maia Bartsch, 1915.  
Shell milk-white. Locality:- Port Alfred.  
Ref. Bartsch 1915, pg. 80, pl. 14, fig. 3.
- Figure 4. Turbonilla (Pselliogyra) abada Bartsch, 1915.  
Shell white. Locality:- Port Alfred to East London.  
Ref. Bartsch 1915, pg. 75, pl. 15, fig. 5, and Barnard's Contributions Vol. XLVII, pt.1, pg.87, fig. 14g.
- Figure 5. Turbonilla (Ptycheulimilla) erna Bartsch, 1915.  
Shell bluish-white, translucent. Locality:- Port Alfred.  
Ref. Bartsch 1915, pg. 75, pl. 16, fig. 2.
- Figure 6. Turbonilla (Pyrgiscus) apsa Bartsch, 1915.  
Shell thin, semi-translucent, bluish-white. Locality:- Port Alfred.  
Ref. Bartsch 1915, pg. 81, pl. 16, fig. 4.
- Figure 7. Mormula cifara Bartsch, 1915.  
Shell bluish-white. Locality:- Port Alfred.  
Ref. Bartsch 1915, pg. 84, pl. 16, fig. 5.
- Figure 8. Turbonilla (Pyrgiscus) zenobia Bartsch, 1915.  
Shell bluish-white. Locality:- Port Alfred.  
Ref. Bartsch 1915, pg. 79, fig. 6.

Figure 9/ .....

PYRAMIDELLIDAE

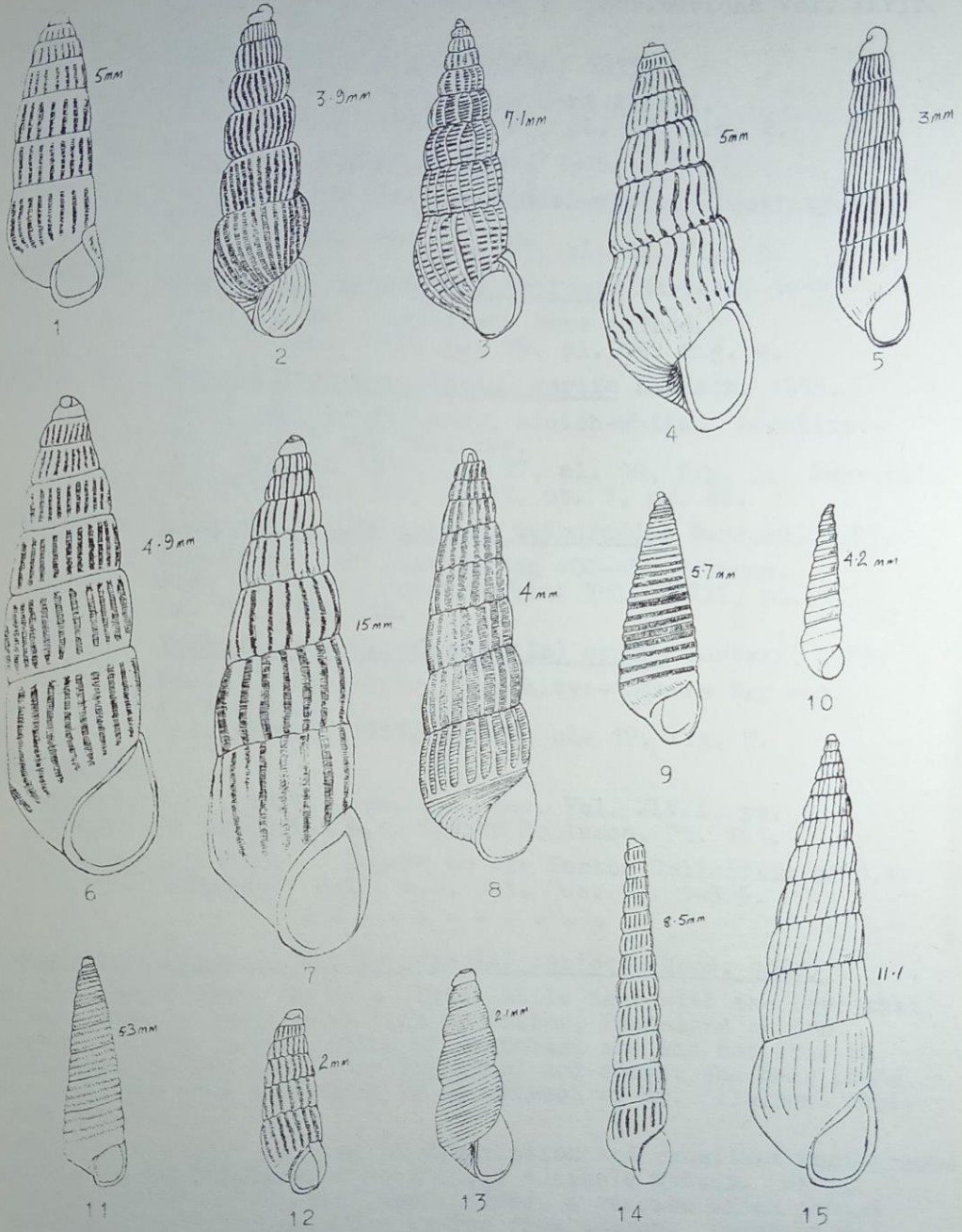


Fig. 14 after Barnard  
Other figs. from Bartsch's photographs

- Figure 9. Cingulina trachaelis Gould, 1861.  
 Shell yellowish-white. Locality:- Saldanha Bay to Natal.  
 Ref. Gould 1861, pg. 407, Bartsch 1915, pg. 82, pl. 17, fig. 1. Barnard's Contributions Vol. XLVII, pt. 1, pg. 84.
- Figure 10. Cingulina callista Bartsch, 1915.  
 Shell white. Locality:- Port Alfred.  
 Ref. Bartsch 1915, pg. 83, pl. 17, fig. 2.
- Figure 11. Cingulina aglaia Bartsch, 1915.  
 Shell sub-diaphanous, bluish-white. Locality:- Port Alfred.  
 Ref. Bartsch 1915, pg. 83, pl. 17, fig. 3.
- Figure 12. Turbonilla (Pyrgiscus) tritonia Bartsch, 1915.  
 Shell white. Locality:- Port Alfred.  
 Ref. Bartsch 1915, pg. 79, pl. 19, fig. 4.
- Figure 13. Turbonilla (Careliopsis) carifa Bartsch, 1915.  
 Shell semi-translucent, bluish-white. Locality:- Port Alfred and Stil Bay.  
 Ref. Bartsch 1915, pg. 87, pl. 18, fig. 5. Barnard's Contributions Vol. XLVII, pt. 1, pg. 88.
- Figure 14. Turbonilla (Chemnitzia) deprofundis Barnard, 1963.  
 Locality:- Off East London 400-450 fathoms.  
 Ref. Barnard's Contributions Vol. XLVII, pt. 1, pg. 89, fig. 14b.
- Figure 15. Turbonilla (Strioturbonilla) segura Bartsch, 1915.  
 Shell bluish-white. Locality:- Simons Bay and Port Alfred.  
 Ref. Bartsch 1915, pg. 76, pl. 17, fig. 7.

References:-

- Barnard, K.H., 1963. Ann. S.A. Mus. Vol. XLVII, pt. 1, Contr. to Knowledge S.A. Marine Mollusca, Pt. 111.
- Bartsch, P., 1915. Report on the Turton Collection of S.A. Marine Molluscs. Bull. U.S. Nat. Mus. 91: 1-305.

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Extension of Range:- Morula (Cronia) cariosa (Wood, 1828)

Mrs C.M. Skead wrote to us a little while back with the news that she had found a shell near Port Grosvenor, Pondoland on 5th November, 1971. After months of searching she was not able to identify it so she had it photographed and sought the help of Mr. R.N. Kilburn. The following is an extract of Mr. Kilburn's reply to Mrs Skead.

"Your very clear and careful description and excellent photographs make the identification of your shell a simple matter. It is Morula (Cronia) cariosa (Wood, 1828), a species which occurs occasionally in Natal, but is far from common. Yours is a new record for Pondoland".

Morula (Cronia) cariosa (Wood, 1828)

Syn:- Drupa cancellata (Quoy & Gaimard, 1833).  
Drupa fenestrata (Blainville, 1832)

Shell ivory, interstices light brown. Size 33 mm.

Animal greyish-green with iridescent green spots.

Range:- Pondoland northwards.

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A Word for Conservation by C.M. Connolly.

With conditions becoming intolerable for sea life all around the world I would like to endorse all that has been said for "look, but do not touch". With thousands of shells to study it is not necessary to take live specimens.

More work on lists of shells from special beaches and more specialised collections of series, of sizes and of localities would be more advantageous than all to the "boiling pot".

My last trip to Millers Point, False Bay to see how the marine life is adapting to the present conditions of being a popular picnic spot was very depressing. There have been big changes at this collecting locality in the last ten years. For one thing there seem to be too many starfish and sea urchins with very little shell life.

Are starfish good for compost?

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EXCHANGES WANTED:-

Mr M.L. Loper, Box 23 AFRSF, FPO New York, NY. 09551, U.S.A. Has been collecting for about a year and has a large collection of Carribean shells for exchange.

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NEW MEMBERS:-

Mrs B.E. Wood, 5 Tiddy Crescent, Baysville Ext., East London.

Mr F.J. Farrell, P.O. Box 210, George, Cape.

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AROUND THE GROUPS:-

Transvaal Group, Johannesburg. At our meeting of 16th February the Chairman, Mr Hyatt, announced that the Annual General Meeting of the Group would take place on Wednesday 25th April, 1973 and called for nominations for the committee. He stated that he would not be available for nomination as he was retiring and moving to the Lowveld. It was with regret that we had to record the death of Mrs du Preez of Pretoria and Mrs Wilson was asked to extend the sympathy of the members to her daughter, Miss du Preez.

Our meeting of 23rd March was attended by twenty one members and visitors. After reminding members of the A.G.M., Mr Hyatt said that he would probably not be present on that date. The Vice-Chairman, Mr. Ruben, thanked Mr Hyatt on behalf of the members for his unstinting efforts to sustain the interest and enthusiasm of the Group. In reply Mr Hyatt said that during his year of office many ideas had been put forward and he hoped that some of these would be put into practice. He thanked Mr Ruben and the members for their good wishes and said that he and Mrs Hyatt would attend meetings in Johannesburg whenever possible.

Three short films, "Coral Kingdom", "Unknown Ocean" and "Miniatures Magnificent", kindly lent by the Australian Trade Commissioner, were shown. After viewing the films Mr Hyatt said that there was much to be studied in the sea around us and a great deal of work to be done, especially as regards conservation and pollution. Shells from the family Cymatiidae were on display, and the meeting closed at 10.15 p.m.

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Natal Midlands Group, Pietermaritzburg. Our meeting of 3rd March was very well attended and Mr Kilburn discussed the family Neritidae. We were able to see and examine several specimens - both sea and fresh water.

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Natal Coast Group, Durban. A new attendance record was established for the Group at our meeting of 10th March when 17 members and 8 visitors were present. There were apologies from a further eight members.

Arising from the minutes of the previous meeting, which were approved, Mrs Muller reported that she and her husband had personally interviewed authorities in Mocambique as regards shelling in that area. No shell permits are required but a total ban on shelling exists in war zones and in Marine Nature Reserves. Visitors to Mocambique are advised to communicate with the police in the areas they visit to receive permission to collect there. A vote of thanks to Justice and Mrs Muller was passed for this excellent work.

Mr B. Young referred to the report of the Cyp.arabica var histrio Gmelin in Mr A. Young's tank. What was reported as being a bivalve and two barnacles has turned out to be a cluster of barnacles.

Mr R.N. Kilburn of the Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg, delivered an extremely detailed and informative talk on the S.A. Conidae. During this talk members were able to discuss their problems with this family. The Chairman expressed the thanks of the members and it was felt that all present had derived great benefit and interest from the talk.

After a tea break general discussion amongst members took place. Various points were raised including a shelling trip to Kosi Bay over the long weekend of 31st May. Justice Muller offered to arrange for permits to visit this area and Mr Hanneman volunteered to get details from the Natal Parks Board Ranger in Kosi Bay. Members were advised to complete application forms for shell permits for 1973. The Secretary would forward these to the Parks Board.

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Border Group, East London. Ten members and two visitors attended our meeting of 5th March. Our Chairwoman, Mrs Latigan, reported that due to the absence of the Secretary the minute book and other correspondence had not been brought to the meeting. As regards the display in the French Bank window various suggestions were made for advertising this display which would be on from 26th March to 9th April. It was agreed that Mrs Gilmer should approach the Castlemarine display artist for help. He would possibly be willing to make a poster. Mrs Latigan had prepared leaflets, which could be duplicated and distributed as widely as possible. Mrs Palmer suggested contacting schools and this idea was received with enthusiasm, and it was agreed that a letter should be sent to all headmasters of primary and high schools offering to give talks on shell collecting. Mrs Latigan was also to contact the editor of "What's On" and the feature editor of the Daily Dispatch for write-ups and possibly photographs. It was agreed that a special meeting should be called when all material would be assembled and prepared for display.

During tea-time there was the usual chatter and comparing of specimens. Mr. Wannenburg had some very fine specimens of C.amphithales - one had the appearance of Luponia alfredensis and was an excellent specimen.

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Eastern Cape Group, Port Elizabeth. Our meeting of 3rd March was attended by 9 members and three visitors. Apologies were received from a further five members. At the start of the meeting Mrs Watters informed those present of the death of Mr Vaesen and of Mrs Farrell's husband and asked the members to stand in tribute.

Arising from the minutes of the previous meeting it was noted that the response of the mid-month informal meetings had been poor and that no more would be held for the time being. The junior members were quite happy about their progress and Mrs Watters offered assistance to any members provided they telephoned in advance. It was suggested that members use Families and Genera ... by J.H. Day to organise their collections. Mrs Watters also undertook to approach the Port Elizabeth Museum about the incorrect labels in their shell display cases.

Mr McLachlan informed the meeting that the Port Elizabeth University had a reference collection of 800 classified species which could be referred to by the members. The University would welcome any live taken specimens that members could give them. Mr McLachlan agreed to make arrangements for the holding of the next meeting at the University.

Mrs Carstens asked to be relieved of the secretarial duties of the Group. This was accepted by the meeting and Mr Greave was elected secretary.

The family Naticidae was then discussed and a most successful meeting came to a close at 4.45 p.m.

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Minutes of a meeting of the Society held on 27th March, 1973.

Mr Freeman, in the Chair, welcomed those present. Apologies were received from five members.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed. Arising from these minutes the Secretary reported that she had not yet sent a circular to the Somerset West Members. With regard to the extra meetings to be held in Cape Town, the Director of the Museum had been away and it had not been possible to find out if the Museum Lecture Hall could be used for this meeting.

Members were reminded of the Field Day to be held at Cape Hangklip on Friday 6th April, low tide at 11.12 a.m.

The Secretary mentioned that she had received a letter from Mr and Mrs Giles who were caravanning up the east coast. They sent their regards. Mrs Giles had asked that the members attention be drawn to the range of "Golden Products". These bio-degrading products had been produced in an effort to help lessen pollution.

A letter from Mrs Wilson was read out. This letter is dealt with more fully below.

Mr Freeman drew the attention of members to the new book "Sea Shells of Southern Africa" by B. Kensley which was now available. Errors have been found in this book where numbers and diagrams have been switched. This had been brought to the attention of the publishers who have agreed to issue an errata. Another new book is "Shells and Shell Collecting" by S. Peter Dance, published by Hamlyn. This book has numerous colour plates and covers a wide range of subjects from shells in art to identification and the shell collection.

Mr Taylor had on display a specimen of Haliotis parvum Linn., which he had collected while diving off Llandudno. The size 64 x 42 mm. Members who had brought Cymatiidae then spoke about their shells.

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National Zoological Gardens of South Africa, Pretoria.

The Council has received a letter from the National Zoological Gardens in which they ask if members would be willing to donate shells to form part of the educational exhibits at the new aquarium which is in the process of being built.

The aquarium is to be planned on a scientific basis and will serve to emphasize the importance of conservation of marine life.

Any members who may be able to assist are asked to send their donations of shells, with their full names and addresses to Mrs A. Wilson, 283 Silver Street, Muckleneuk, Pretoria. All parcels will be officially acknowledged by the Zoological Gardens. The following is a list of the shells which would be appreciated:-

- a) Any trawled, dredged or deep water shells - S.A. as well as world localities.
- b) Cymatiidae except Charonia lampas pustulata.
- c) Beach material only if shells are not usually found live, e.g. Cyp.capensis, etc.
- d) S.A. volutes.
- e) Couple of live taken Patella compressa, Schizodesma spengleri, Cyp.argus, Cyp.zic zac, any S.A. Dentalium, Stomatellidae and Calyptraeidae.

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MEETINGS:-

The next meeting of the SOCIETY will be held on Tuesday, 24th April in the Lecture Hall of the S.A. Museum, Queen Victoria St., Cape Town at 8.15 p.m. The shells for display and discussion will be South African Haliotidae as illustrated on pages 26 & 27 of "Sea Shells of Southern Africa". Dr. D. Hey of the Department of Nature Conservation has agreed to address the meeting and members are asked to bring any friends who may be interested.

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The next meeting of the EASTERN CAPE GROUP will be held on Saturday, 5th May at the Port Elizabeth Museum at 2.30 p.m.

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The next meeting of the BORDER GROUP will be held on Monday 7th May in the Lecture Room of the East London Museum at 7.30 p.m.

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The next meeting of the DURBAN AND NATAL COAST GROUP will be held on Saturday 12th May at 2.30 p.m.

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The next meeting of the NATAL MIDLANDS GROUP will be held on Saturday 5th May at the Natal Museum, Pietermaritzburg at 2.30 p.m. The shells for display and discussion will be the families Turritellidae and Siliquariidae.

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The next meeting of the TRANSVAAL GROUP will be held on Wednesday 25th April in the Auditorium of Shell House at 8 p.m. This will be the Annual General Meeting of the Group.

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Library List. A new revised and up-to-date list of books in the library has recently been sent to all members. Members are asked to make use of this facility.

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H E L P ! Once again we have no articles on hand for future publication. Please assist and send in your contributions. No articles no circular next month.

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