

# The Strandloper

BULLETIN OF THE CONCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA



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## SNORKEL-DIVING: NATAL SOUTH COAST

by

MIKE CORTIE

In July 1975, I spent two weeks on the Natal South Coast with two friends, Kenneth and Peter, who are also University students. The weather was initially fine and we dived at several places up and down the coast. Of all the beaches, I think we enjoyed diving off Shelly Beach the most – why Shelly Beach? Well, here are the notes I made at the time:—

“The sea was fairly calm and clear today and we were all eager to dive. After pulling on wet suits and getting organised we swam out from the lee of the tidal swimming pool and swung north-east to avoid the breakers. The water was foamy but we pulled steadily out to sea. At one stage a towering breaker bore down on us and all three ducked simultaneously. Holding my goggles on with my hands in the turbulence, I swam downwards. All was just a gloomy rush of bubbles which tickled the skin and flashed past the ears. Then, as if a curtain had lifted, the foam cleared and we found ourselves beyond the breakers.

“Now kicking on our backs, we viewed the breakers from behind with satisfaction. The bottom was about five metres down and consisted of huge rocks with sandy cracks in between. The rocks were washed by a fierce blast of water as every breaker marched overhead.

“Eyeing the tidal pool and shoreline to fix our position, we slowly pulled southwards. We were hanging on the shimmering interface of two worlds. Below, far below, lay an eerie blasted world of forested rock canyons and mountains. Between the far boulders, lay pale gutters of sand. Fish, large and small, fled through the sea, we were intruders here. Visibility was probably six to seven metres through the sunlit blue of our watery world. I saw Kenneth’s black figure kicking past the red signal of Peter’s snorkel.

“Below, on the floor of the ever shifting sea-bed lay a sculptured shape, indistinct by virtue of depth. I dived and kicked vigorously downwards and struggled at about 6 metres to free an empty *Charonia pustulata* shell. With my lungs nearly bursting I soared upward to inspect my find. I was about to exclaim excitedly to Ken about my find when I saw that he, too, had a *Charonia* shell. Then Peter, swimming some 10 metres further out than us announced that he had seen some shells. Ken and I swam out to inspect his catch. Some 7 metres down, in a half-metre deep rift,

lay a whole nest of empty *Charonia* shells. I dived down and freed one from the crack. Ken was soon also spreadeagled on the seabed freeing a shell, while Peter, hanging above on the streaming surface, watched.

“We spread out, enjoying the entire new sensation of flying above a wonderland of rock, weed and sand. I spiralled down to the distant bottom and hung weightless above a *Charonia* filled gutter. In a nearby crack I saw wedged the biggest *Charonia* shell I had ever seen. Up again for air, and after some positioning, I pulled the knife out of its sheath and then, a deep breath, and kicking frantically, knife in hand, I swam down to the rocks. Holding myself firm against the push of the sea with one gloved hand, I freed the shell with the other. Lungs bursting, I grabbed the shell and kicked upwards. I burst out and up in a patch of foam. And then – I saw that the shell had a hole in it. Down it fell to finally reach the bottom and roll erratically in the force of the sea-winds.

“I left to find Pete and Ken and we all decided that it was perhaps time to return. As we swam steadily shorewards, I noticed how much shallower it rapidly became. Still innocent, I was about to mention this fact, when something huge, and dark descended furiously on the three of us. The grey turbulence pushed us down to the rocks. Up, through perhaps one and a half metres of dark foam, for a breath, and then ducking again to avoid the next breaker tearing down at us. We pulled out of the white reef water as quickly as possible, arriving somewhat shaken up on the lee side of the tidal pool. From there we steadily slogged shoreward against an energy-sapping backwash. The bottom became successively weedy, rocky, sandy, and shallow, and then, – we were in.”

In retrospect, I certainly think I enjoyed that particular dive more than the others. Perhaps it was the fact of finding so many large, but dead *Charonia* shells which has entrenched the experience of that dive in my imagination. Certainly, nowhere else where we dived had we seen even one dead *Charonia* shell beyond the breakers – although I have heard that large dead *Charonia* shells are especially common in the white water at Oslo Beach, some three kilometres north of Shelly Beach.

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## HOLIDAY ON RODRIQUEZ ISLAND

by

M. POLACK

In October 1975, Douglas Alexander, author of several travel books, wrote an article in a local Johannesburg newspaper in which he stated that Rodriguez Island, a dependency of Mauritius, now had a regular air service. "Ah!, thought the Polacks, here is an Indian Ocean Island, no doubt with lovely coral beaches, lots of sea food, coconuts and shells". So Jack approached the travel agency and we were booked to fly to Mauritius on 11th March 1976, and on to Rodriguez the following day.

When we told officials and attendants in Mauritius that we were going to holiday on Rodriguez for 23 days they looked astounded. We did say 23 not three days? Did we know the place? Again on arrival at Plain Corale Airport on Rodriguez the officials checking our documents asked the same questions. Everybody looked us up and down and stood with mouths wide open!

The flight to Rodriguez from Mauritius is made in a 17-seater Twin-Otter plane but she only carried eight or nine passengers as the rest of the space is taken up with cargo. Passengers, suitcases and even hand baggage is weighed right to the last kilo and you are then seated so as to balance the plane. The flight took a little over two hours. Until recently the island was far off the beaten track, the only link with the outside world being a coaster every six weeks. Now, with the building of the airport, it is connected to Mauritius three times a week by plane.

Early Arab traders knew of Rodriguez which they called Dina More, the dark island, Portuguese pilot Diego Rodriguez sighted the island while homeward bound from India in 1528, the Dutch settled there in 1638 after which the French then the British were in occupation.

Although Rodriguez is only 17 kilometres long by 8 kilometres wide we travelled for 21 kilometres from the airport to the hotel, along a road that wended its way up one hill after another and zig-zagged down the other side. It was a spectacular drive with marvelous sea, mountain and valley vistas. There are about 110 kilometres of roads on the island, mostly potholed, rutted, rocky tracks more like dry river beds. We duly arrived at the hotel, the Relais Pointe Venus, situated high up on a hill on the outskirts of the principal town, Port Mathurin. The jeep stopped at the base of the hill and we climbed to our bungalow in four stages. The hotel is big and airy and can accommodate 24 guests. We were now given the bad news — Rodriguez last had rain nearly two years ago, there was no running water and very little food and we were the only tourists at the hotel. When a hotel is planned it is estimated that each guest requires 30 gallons of water per day. I'd say we had about three pints and we had to buy water even to brush our teeth (45 cents a 26 fluid ounce bottle).

We ate a hasty meal, changed into beach clothing and dashed down the hill to the shore, only to find that there was no white stretch of beach and crystal clear water. Instead we found red mud which meant that any molluscs

and other sea life of interest to us would have been smothered long ago. A walk into the water simply stirred up the sludge and made the water dirtier. Further out to sea we found a terrific area of coral of every shape and colour. During the next four or five days we went for long walks to the edge of the island, where the lava suddenly stopped and the sea really began, but we found nothing.

Since we could not pursue our hobby, the next best thing was to make the most of our stay and see what the island itself had to offer. Diminutive Rodriguez remains the most isolated and easterly island coming under the African sphere of influence. Rocky, reef-grit, steep and small, it lies amid the vast wastes of the Indian Ocean 600 kilometres north east of Mauritius. The Island is tropical but lacks the green lushness of its nearest neighbours, Mauritius and Reunion. Its wild and flinty landscape is patterned by terraced stonehedge fields reminiscent of the hill country in Wales and Scotland. In summer when the rains fall the sea lagoon is often stained red by mud. The island's dry watercourses become raging torrents in cyclone time. Rodriguez has been a dependency of Mauritius for 200 years, and a very neglected dependency it is. Very overpopulated and underdeveloped. There are 30 000 Rodriguans and the population doubles every twenty years. There is electricity in Port Mathurin and only three other small villages. The Island was inhabited by many kinds of birds, the largest being the Solitaire, much like the Dodo, and long extinct. It is estimated that 200 000 were slaughtered and 200 deer a day slaughtered in the early part of its occupation just for the fun of it by visiting officials. Schemes to improve the arable farming and animal husbandry and to check soil erosion, to develop harbour and fishing facilities were proposed and pigeon-holed. We met many Government officials at the hotel, all making notes, but will today's investigations come to anything or simply be pigeon-holed again? All the Rodriguans, except for a few hundred Chinese and four or five whites are Creole.

On the Saturday morning we were up by 5-30 a.m. and saw a cargo boat lying at anchor in the bay right in front of our bungalow. This vessel, the inter-island steamer Mauritius, is always a great occasion, causing a stir for miles around and drawing inquisitive bystanders. The anchorage swarms with small canoes, rowing boats and barges, Mountainmen stream down with cattle, pigs, goats, poultry, onions, lemons and garlic destined for the markets of Mauritius and the streets become noisy and dusty with the milling people and animals. About 100 Zebu cattle are shipped per voyage and they provide impromptu rodeo shows as they resist trussing by legs for flinging aboard barge and coaster by hook. Crates of poultry, pigs, cattle and articles are packed on the open deck. plus deck passengers, till there was standing room only.

The capital of Rodriguez, Port Mathurin, must be the

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smallest capital in the Indian Ocean, consisting of a dozen narrow, dusty streets of tumbledown houses and shops mercifully cloaked by tropical foliage. Stores are well stocked (each sells anything from a pin to clothing, tinned foods, mostly from South Africa, scooters, liquor and soft drinks). One week in the month the Magistrate comes from Mauritius to try cases and crowds gather at the courthouse out of curiosity, also to size up the newest strangers in town (like the Polacks). The shimmering street throngs with straw-hatted pedestrians, stray dogs and fowls – all adept at dodging buzzbikes, lorries and busses.

A few days after our arrival on the island we decided to pay our respects to the Resident Commissioner. We found the Residency, half hidden in a wooded walled garden, opposite the courthouse. We walked through the gates of the Residency, saw a dark skinned woman dressed in a faded sleeveless dress and barefoot and asked where we might find the Commissioner. She directed us to his office where we found Nigel Heseltine, an Irishman. He was most friendly, a wee bit haughty, but never the less invited us to lunch at his beach cottage the following Sunday. We travelled there by Jeep over the most shocking roads but before leaving we got into our Sunday best. We duly arrived to find the Commissioner dressed in a sarong, barefoot and wriggling his toes. Madame Heseltine came out of the house and who do you think she was? – the dark skinned woman we had met the Monday before in the garden, but better dressed this time. The rest of the guests were all Creoles – bank manager, hotel manager, chief of prisons and chief of police.

We were never lonely as thereafter the chief of police took us all over the island in his official jeep, when he went inspecting police stations. The caves in the south eastern part of the island are amongst the most remarkable geographical features to be seen. One cave, Patate is 240 metres long and 13 metres wide, and another, Grand Cavame has not been penetrated beyond 130 metres. In parts both are 60 metres high and ornamented with beautiful stalactites and stalagmites. They are great caverns in the ground, situated nowhere near hills, and consist of solid coral.

The problem of washing and laundry worried us. In the corner of the bathroom stood a big drum of water and at the hand basin was a pint jug and a big notice "use water sparingly" so you tried to wash in a little water as possible. This and the fact that there were no shells to be found decided us not to stay for the 23 days and we flew to Mauritius after 16 days. We had, however, seen all there was to see of the island so decided to spend a week in luxury at a super hotel in Mauritius.

For its small reference library the Eastern Cape Group wants to buy a copy of Turton's "The Marine Shells of Port Alfred".

Please contact the Secretary, Mr. F. Graeve,  
P.O. Box 2054, Port Elizabeth 6000

## MARINE MOLLUSCS AND THEIR ENVIRONMENT

Summary of a short talk delivered to the Natal Group of the Conchological Society in Durban on 14.12.1963

by A.C. VAN BRUGGEN

The sea offers a variety of environments, such as brackish estuaries, tidal zone, continental shelf, deepsea and so on. Various factors combine to make up this variety of environments: temperature, depth, salinity, currents, dissolved chemicals, availability of food, etc. Every combination of circumstances has its molluscan inhabitants, of course dependent on these circumstances which all can be limiting factors. For example, it is quite clear that there can be no inhabitants in an environment which is ideal in all requirements, but which lacks an adequate food supply.

The various environments call for adaptations which enable the species to survive and flourish; species not adapted to their environment have either to adapt themselves or disappear.

The littoral environment of the tidal zone calls for special adaptations. Disadvantages are turbulent, sometimes murky, water and the tides (exposure to drought and heat as opposed to periods of submersion); an obvious advantage is that the water contains plenty of dissolved oxygen because of the wave action. Adaptions are thick and strong shells, few adornments, presence of an operculum, tolerance of drought and rapid changes of temperature, strong foot to counteract wave action, byssus and so on. Typical examples are *Littorina* and patelliform molluscs (i.e. univalves with limpet-like shells); the limpet shape is a typical adaptation which is also found in fresh water where there is a strong current such as in mountain streams. It is obvious that in this case an operculum would be superfluous. Many limpet-like shells strongly resemble each other, although the soft anatomy shows them to belong to widely separated groups. This phenomenon, resulting in superficial similarity, occurs throughout the animal and plant kingdoms, and is called 'convergence'. The classical examples are of course fish and whales; they look alike, but belong to entirely different groups of vertebrates.

The coral reef is an utterly different environment. Although corals occur throughout the world's seas (even in arctic and antarctic surroundings), reef-building corals have their own special requirements, which consist of a high temperature (about 75°F.), shallow water (not over 120 ft. = 20 fathoms deep), clear and quiet water (no river mouths in the neighbourhood) and a high salinity (do.). Coral reefs consist of the skeletons of both animal (reef-building corals) and plant species (calcareous algae). This combination of requirements makes that suitable sites for coral reefs are only found on the east coast of the world's great continents, for example the Great Barrier Reef (east coast of Australia), African reefs (East Africa as far as Inhaca Island and northern Zululand), American reefs (Bermuda's West Indian Islands, Brazil). The western coasts of the continents are usually exposed to cold currents (Benguella current!) and turbulent waters.

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On the coral reef all conditions of life for molluscs are optimal, particularly because of the availability of liberal quantities of calcium. All this has resulted in a wealth of species, usually with massive shells, growing to large sizes and full of adornments and striking colour patterns. The number of species directly dependent on the coral is, however, limited; they mostly consist of coral feeders. One of the interesting features of the molluscan fauna of the coral reef is the occurrence of luxury structures, i.e. structures that are not of direct importance to survival in the struggle for life: spines, ridges, cords, colour patterns. These luxury structures only occur in environments like coral reefs and tropical rain forests, where there is an abundance of food, shelter and other relevant factors.

The deepsea environment is in many respect diametrically opposed to that of the coral reef. The water is cold and stagnant, temperatures are very low, there is perpetual darkness and little food is available. Apart from that, there is a terrific water pressure, which was thought to preclude the existence of life in the depths. It appears, however, that the tissues of abyssal animals contain water under the same pressure as that outside the body, so that life can go on unhampered by this factor. The deepsea environment is reckoned to being at a depth of 1200 ft. = 200 fathoms; perpetual darkness makes plant life impossible here. Consequently there is no scope for plant feeders. The only source of food is the rain of corpses from above; apart from the animals that prey upon the others all have to subsist on this source of food. This inter alia explains the large number of filter feeding organisms. A combination of factors makes it difficult to extract the calcium (lime) from the seawater which has resulted in thin shells for many deepsea species. There are few colours in this dark world, most shells are whitish. If one meets with colour here it is usually black and red as for instance in many cephalopods. The existence of giant forms in the deepsea is thought to be caused by low temperatures delaying maturity so that growth continues for a much longer period; on the coral reef large size can of course be explained by the abundance of favourable factors.

The deepsea is thus a poor environment which is reflected in the following statistics (after Jaekel):

- Gastropoda, total of 170 families, in deepsea 6 (about 3%);
- Bivalvia, total of 73 families, in deepsea 4 (5½%);
- Cephalopoda, total of 40 families, in deepsea 14 (45%).

This clearly shows that proportionally the cephalopods are the most successful group of molluscs in the deepsea. The number of species is also revealing:

- Loricata, 32 (3% of all known species);
- Scaphopoda, 150 (42% of all known species);
- Bivalvia, 5-600;
- Gastropoda, 1200 (biggest but relatively smallest group);
- Cephalopoda, 150.

This makes for a total of 2032 species or about 1½% of all known species if one accepts the estimate of 128 000 recent species.

(Editor's Note - This article was originally published in Circular No. 49 of January, 1964.)

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Although we searched fairly diligently we could not find any live Charonias either large or small. Perhaps they live deeper out, certainly, the region where we found the dead shells, being somewhat sandy, did not impress me as being a stable place for large Charonias to dwell. Another curious feature is that I have never found any sizeable Charonia shells or shell fragments on the beach at Shelly Beach despite there being so many beyond the breakers. Perhaps I have been unlucky, or perhaps there are structural factors which prevent the shells reaching the beach in any quantity. In any event, several of the shells we subsequently brought in from beyond the breakers were fairly fine specimens, being freshly coloured and not noticeably knocked around. The best specimen I brought back was about 200 mm long, but there were other much larger, though less perfect shells as well.

#### CHANGES TO JANUARY 1977, MEMBERSHIP LIST

##### NEW MEMBERS:

- S Mr R. Piaseki, M6 Chateau Lynn, 38 Farmers Folly, Lynnwood, Pretoria 0081.
- Mr G.D. Wilson, 283 Silver St., Muckleneuk, Pretoria 0002.
- Mr L. Znatowicz, 1234 Meara Rd., Queenswood, Pretoria 0186
- Mrs R.E. Botes, Farthings, Uitsig Crescent, Durbanville 7550

##### CHANGES OF ADDRESS:

- 1976 Mrs E.E.F. Sadler, 23 Normandy Court, Rochelle Rd., Adcockvale, Port Elizabeth 6001.
- 1971 Mr A.T. Young, 152 Oriel Rd., Grosvenor, Bluff, Durban 4052.
- 1971 Miss M.E. Booth, P.O. Box 17634, Hillbrow, Johannesburg 2038.

##### CHANGE OF NAME AND ADDRESS:

- Miss G. Bolza of the Western Cape has recently got married (congratulations) and her entry on the Membership list is now:-
- 1967 Mrs G. Whitehead, 44 Monte Vino, Rosemead Avenue, Kenilworth 7700.

#### EXCHANGES WANTED

- Mr R. Powell (age 17), of 15 Ensign Ave., Airfield, Benoni, Transvaal, South Africa 1500, would like to correspond with members of his own age, preferably from the Pacific Ocean Islands, with a view to friendship and exchanging letters and specimens.
- Dr Flavio Cavalli, Rua dos Andradas, n. 1755, conj. 43, 90000 - Porto Alegre (RS), Brasil. Would like to contact South African collectors with a view to exchanging.
- Mr N. Andronicos, Grevenon Street 108, Nikea, Piraeus, Greece. Would like to exchange shells.
- Mr F. Frydman, 148 Avenue Parmentier, 75011 Paris, France. Is a collector of cone shells and would like to exchange to obtain some of the more uncommon cones from South and East Africa.
- Mrs D. Murphy, Box 288, Smithton 7330 Tasmania, Australia. Wishes to contact members with a view to exchanging perfect shells.

#### PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

The Society has copies of the following publications for sale at the prices stated:

- A Preliminary list of S.A. Marine Shells found on the Natal/Zululand Coast by B.L. Cock **R0.50**
  - Additional list of S.A. Marine Shells found on the Natal/Zululand Coast by B.L. Cock **R0.50**
- Write to the Secretary, P.O. Box 98, Howard Place 7450.

We would welcome any article of interest to Shell Collectors for future publication.



## AROUND THE GROUPS

**CAPE TOWN:** Our November meeting, being the last of the year, once again took the form of a social evening. Members brought a display of six shells of any choice and gave short talks on their displays. This proved to be very popular. There after an enjoyable tea and cake party was held. The new year started off with a field outing at Kommetjie on Saturday 22nd January, The weather was perfect and it was a very low tide with a dead calm sea. The nineteen members and families present had a fair amount of success although they had to work hard for what they found. Our meeting on the following Tuesday was similar to the November meeting and was once again informal.

**PORT ELIZABETH:** At our November meeting our Chairman, Dr McLachlan, told us about his experiences during a recent under-water dive at Hout Bay, near Cape Town, and, after the tea break, we discussed the family Cymatiidae. Mr Graeve mentioned at our December meeting that it might be worthwhile having a look at the sand being dredged from the harbour channel. He brought along some of the shells he had found at the end of the pipeline, including *Ancilla albozonata* Smith, *Nassarius speciosa* Adams, *Bullia laevissima*, *B. tenuis* and *B. annulata* (all with animals). Dr McLachlan mentioned that the University of Port Elizabeth was doing a study on four species of *Bullia*, viz. *B. rhodostoma*, *B. digitalis*, *B. pura* and *B. diluta*. If any member found the eggs of these species the University would be keen to receive them. Thereafter the family Olividae was discussed.

**EAST LONDON:** We discussed the family Cassidae at our November meeting. Notes on the family and species were read and some very interesting facts came to light. The family was well represented in the many fine specimens brought along by members. Mrs Hulley displayed a box of shells representing a few different families, while Michael Els brought shells found on a recent trip to Zululand. It was recorded that a live *Argonauta argus* had been found at Kidds Beach and was now in the East London Aquarium. Our December meeting took the form of a year end party as well as a farewell party to Mrs Armstrong who is moving to Pretoria. Gift-wrapped shells were put into a box and each member drew a gift.

**DURBAN:** During a recent visit of Mrs Muller we took the chance to do a few hours shelling. Reunion was agreeably surprising, the area is recovering after the hammering it took during the laying of the pipeline. It was good to see so much life returning to the rocks.

**PIETERMARITZBURG:** At our November meeting Mr Kilburn gave a very interesting talk on the *Ancilla* and, as usual handed round numerous specimens for examination.

**JOHANNESBURG:** Much stimulus was added to the Society by the Pretoria Group's Shell Show held on 5th and 6th November, and was the focus of attention both before and after. Congratulations on the splendid performance. At our final meeting of the year a lively discussion was held, chaired jointly by Dr van Hoepen and Mr M. Cortie, on "unusual methods and new localities for shell collecting". It encompassed the dredging of river mouths, lagoons and

other estuarine waters, coastal lakes and mangroves, various bays and little heard of parts of our coast and that of South West Africa. It was, by this discussion, very adequately proved that there is little need for the average conchologist ever to step outside his home country - South Africa - to find fine specimens. This was the entire emphasis upon which the Group dwelt, and enthusiasm was high. It was also pointed out that more inter-Group activities should occur, and mention was made of veld excursions and Group visits to areas. Mrs van der Spuy generously donated fine specimens of shells to the Group, which will, in all probability, be auctioned or awarded to members.

**PRETORIA:** By ons vergadering op November 3 was die finale reëlins vir die Skulpskou bespreek en die trofee ingedeel. 'n Kort onderwater film is na die teepouse vertoon. At our January meeting Mr Smith gave an interesting talk on his recent visit to the Cape where he met up with various Cape Town members. He also displayed the shells he had collected - more than sixty species. The Chairman thanked all those concerned for the hard work done at the Shell Show. Laurie then gave an excellent talk on the Allied Cowries.

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(Founded 1958)

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All enquiries should be addressed to the Secretary:  
The Conchological Society of Southern Africa,  
P.O. Box 98, Howard Place 7450, Cape, South Africa.

Entrance Fee is R1,00, with a yearly subscription of R4,00.  
The Financial year runs from 1st July to 30th June, and members joining after December need only pay one half of the annual subscription to ensure membership to the 30th June of that financial year.

Members who are full-time students at an Educational Institution in South Africa may join as Student Members on payment of an annual subscription of R2,00. No Entrance Fee is payable in respect of Student Membership.

The Society's Bulletin, *The Strandloper*, is issued free to members.

The Society has active groups in the following areas:—

<b>Cape Town</b>	Secretary: Mrs R.O. Carlsson, P.O. Box 98, Howard Place 7450. Telephone: 53-1536
<b>Port Elizabeth:</b>	Secretary: Mr F. Graeve, P.O. Box 2054, Port Elizabeth 6056. Telephone 4-5744.
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Display adverts from dealers — R5,00 per column inch.

Smalls from members — R1,00 per column inch.

The Society accepts no responsibility for any transaction arising from advertisements published in good faith.

### BACK COPIES OF CIRCULARS FOR SALE

Copies of back numbers of the Society's circulars are available at 10 cents each or in sets, complete with index, at the following prices:—

Nos.	1 to 40 . . . . .	R4,00
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	141 to 160 . . . . .	R2,00
	161 to 170 . . . . .	10 cents each.
		no index.

Write to the Secretary, P.O. Box 98, Howard Place 7450.

## INTERTIDAL TALK

To err is only human and we are human and we do make mistakes. A bad error crept into the last *Strandloper* — Mr R.N. Kilburn's article 'Checklist of the Ficidae of the World' had already been published a couple of months earlier and was unwittingly re-set and published again — and we must apologise for this oversight. It, together with the fact that an article from an earlier Circular (No. 27) was republished, does stress the fact that we are short of articles. Many members have requested that *The Strandloper* be published monthly. This we are willing to do provided you, the Members, provide us with the articles. As we have stated many times in the past the job of your editor is to edit articles submitted NOT to write them himself. This issue leave our file empty and as the next issue is to be prepared for printing in about six weeks time, let us hope that suitable articles will be forthcoming.

Early in January a new membership list was sent to all members. To date we have had no complaints of having left off any members' names, but we have had notification of a couple of changes of address. These are published elsewhere in this issue, together with the names and addresses of new members since the list was compiled. Any further changes will be published in each issue of *The Strandloper*.

Mrs Betty Giles has compiled a schedule comparing the known literature on South African Chitons using 'Key to S.A. Chitons' by Prof Day (a C.S.S.A. publication now out of print) and K.H. Barnards Contributions to the knowledge of S.A. Marine Mollusca (*Annals of the S.A. Museum*). This schedule is available from the Society at 15 cents per copy (cost price) postage free. As stated above 'Key to S.A. Chitons' is out of print but we are hoping to be able to re-print and once again have copies available very shortly.

The National Capital Shell Club, with whom we exchange circulars have asked us to insert the following message:— 'Receive complimentary issue of the Newsletter of the National Capital Shell Club of Washington, D.C. Has wide interest for growing worldwide membership. Write: NCSC Editor, C/o Division of Mollusks, Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., U.S.A. 20560.'

Just before New Year our Secretary was approached by the producers of the South African Broadcasting programme "Women's World" to give a talk about the Society. The interview was recorded and broadcast on Monday, 10th January. We are grateful to our member, Victor Millard, for arranging the interview and to the S.A.B.C. for broadcasting. This bit of publicity has already brought in a few membership enquiries.

Following upon the resignation from the Council a couple of months back of Mr and Mrs Watt, the Council have co-opted Miss L. Everitt and Mr V. Millard to serve in their place. We are grateful to these two members for giving up their time for the benefit of the Society.