



Dear fellow member

End of Year Wishes

It is extraordinary to find another year sliding towards its end. In the time since our last communication, a fair bit of water has passed under the bridge.

We have worked hard in getting our website presence very focused and professional, and my thanks goes to Andre for his hard work and input. Just type in “Conchological Society of South Africa” into any search engine or www.scsa.co.za. We are presently working on including every single Strandloper from day one to be available on this site for download, and Henk Smit is assisting us ably in this task.

Hand in hand with this, and in the process of being linked to the website, is our new Facebook presence. Please support it and comment – Christelle Deysel has set this up and its great to know that we are out there making our presence felt.

Strandloper 304 is about to be distributed – you may already have received it at the time of this message. The style and professionalism of Alwyn Marais always shows through in the fine and professional way he puts the publication together, but as always, we rely on support for articles to make the Strandloper a success. For those of you who are cowrie aficionados, you will certainly have fun but be challenged – enjoy!

Maurice Evans, Kobie du Preez and myself were fortunate to spend time on a private reserve in the Barberton area recently doing some fieldwork on landshells – have a look at the blog <https://www.mountainlands.co.za/landshells-in-an-ancient-land/>. We also spent time at Verlorenkloof on the Drakensberg escarpment and Hildi and Alwyn Marais joined us. Good rains brought the wildlife out, including a number of live *Achatina* and *Gulella* shells.

We are planning a Society get-away next year – if you are keen to participate and have any ideas, please speak to Alwyn or me and we can plan a destination that will meet all our expectations. Our last trip to Xhora was indeed special as it combined both fine beach and land shelling, in a setting that was peaceful and beautiful.

Our local club in Pretoria has thrived under Gordon's committed leadership, and it has not just been about learning and growing, but also about finding new friendships. Roy has ably nurtured the South Coast Club with his considerable knowledge and skills, whilst the Jeffreys Bay Club is also going from strength to strength. It has asked us for assistance with the identification of shells in its Museum, and anyone willing to be involved is welcome to contact me. Cape Town and Durban are on backburner right now.

We have recently heard that Rina Mathee and her husband Jurie are both battling terminal cancer, and our thoughts are with them at this very traumatic time.

May I take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you a very special Christmas and year end: it

is a time for endings but also for new beginnings. *Carpe diem!*

Please do not hesitate to contact me or any committee member – we are all part of this team and journey together.

With very best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ken Brown', enclosed within a large, horizontal oval flourish.

Ken Brown
President
12 December 2023