



2017: Made it!

A Year-End note from the president's hand

Dear shell friends,

A few months ago I wrote a letter to my shell friends wherein I alluded to the fact that we were just past the halfway mark in the year. Well, I can safely say that **we have made it** to the conclusion of 2017! And what a fast-paced year it was! Workwise it has been one of the busiest ever for me – if not the busiest – and it has also been an interesting and event-filled time for us as a Shell Society. Most of the highlights can be found in my letter following the Annual General Meeting, but in a nutshell:

- We had a very successful and fun-filled AGM, which included an interesting talk on dredged shells by Alan Seccombe, and a major shell auction with shells sponsored by Alan and Roy Aiken;
- We voted into play a revised Constitution;
- We launched the new Shell Collectors SA website;
- We launched the revised Shell Collectors SA Facebook Page;
- We standardised on a new logo and a set of document templates for all our written correspondence;
- We established a set of guidelines for the awarding of Lifetime Achievement Awards (LTAs);
- At the same time we issued two LTAs, one to Ms Barbara Fouche, the other to Mr Roy Aiken;
- We took ownership of a major shell collection once owned by Ms M.L. du Preez, and the Committee has been working tirelessly over many weekends to sort and catalogue the collection;
- We published two Strandloper magazines and one Sea Bones news letter.

I need to stress that none of our successes would have been achievable without the guidance, input, hard work and commitment from the current Committee Members, who have been working tirelessly alongside me all this time.

Our members have also been busy and we have had some successes in International Publications, as well as through attendance and trade at International Shell Shows.

Finally, the Pretoria Group has certainly remained very active and, under guidance and chairmanship of Mr Maurice Evans, continued with monthly Club meetings, hosting a total of 11 for 2017. Meetings were generally well-attended, were always entertaining and informative, and the after-session snacks were not half bad either! A major drive this year at the Pretoria Group meetings was to create more opportunity for **shell trade**. This has seen an increase in members bringing shells to

meetings for sale, swap or other forms of trade, and has created more opportunities for Club members to obtain lovely specimens for their collections, and at very good “Society rates”. Cudos to all who have taken the initiative to participate in this drive and add to its success.

Next year will undoubtedly bring further opportunities to see growth and improvement in the Society. As a Committee, we have a number of ideas up our collective sleeves and we hope to see most of them come to fruition in 2018. Without spilling too many of the beans, I can hint at an upcoming visit to the KZN South Coast, various opportunities to obtain lovely shells from the Du Preez Collection, and the establishment of our Society Reference Collection, amongst others. We will, as per usual, host the 2018 AGM, and the Pretoria Group will continue with regular meetings. Here is hoping that 2018 will see the reinstatement of at least one other regional Shell Club to help continue the heritage of the Society.

On a final note, in my 2017 New Year’s letter I posted an inspirational “challenge” motivating all to try and “spice up” our collecting styles, preferences or focus, or to simply change the way we present our shells. It will be interesting to hear from our members to see if any of you managed to reimagine your collections, or make changes leading to new collecting directions – or anything that has led to the passion for shells being rekindled. My email inbox is patient...!

In any event, and without belabouring the point, here is hoping that 2018 will be a year of *new directions* – not only for us as collectors, but also for us as Conchologists, increasing our knowledge of the oceans and the treasures within. Let us also not forget that none of us have been blessed with all knowledge: we can all learn from each other and we need to have some resilience in this area. I, for one, admit that I still know far too little of Conchology, and here’s hoping that 2018 will provide the necessary opportunities to help expand my knowledge on this fascinating hobby and pastime. I can only hope that similar opportunities will be presented to all our members.

Of course, an increase in knowledge means nothing if it is not accompanied with an increase in relationship with those imparting the knowledge. Here is hoping that 2018 will also see an increase in new friendships and new bonds being made within, and outside of, the Society.

I wish all of you a wonderful, peaceful and blessed Christmastime, and a most prosperous, safe and adventure-filled 2018!

Sincerely,



Andre Meredith
President, SCSA

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