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X THE CONCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA X
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CIRCULAR NO. 32

MAY, 1962

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(Re-printed January, 1976)

Edited by Leila Kerr.

MEETING:

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 22nd May, at 8.15 p.m. in the Lecture Room of the S.A. Museum. Mrs. Kerr will give a talk on "The Romance of Shells". As this is specially for beginners, we hope that they will attend. There will be a film too. To help you, members may bring along not more than twelve S.A. shells for identification.

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ABOUT MEMBERS:

MEETING AT THE S.A. MUSEUM. 24.4.1962.

Apologies were received from Miss P. Kempthorne, Prof. J.H. Day, Mr J. Grindley and Mr D. Ackermann. The minutes were taken as read. The following were elected as members of the Society:-

Mr A. Bannah, Box 10, P.O. Cannon Hill, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.
Mrs E. Burnes, Martins Avenue, Laurieton, New S. Wales, Australia.
Mrs M. van Wyk, 3 Villa Marina, Beach Road, Mouille Point, Cape Town.

The following was proposed as a new member:-

Mr M. Cantor proposed by Mrs H. Boswell, seconded by L. Kerr.

The scrap books were very well done and much admired. It was interesting to follow the history of the Society and the activities of members. Your Secretary appeals to members to forward any press cuttings relevant to shells or collections from their centres so that they may be preserved in our book. Three interesting films were shown.

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS.

Mrs J. Weakley, 4 Brooke Court, Brooke Street, Claremont, Cape.
Master J. Lighton, Paradise Hotel, Talana Road, Newlands, Cape.

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GENERAL NOTES:

ARTICLE NO. 7

CLEANING SHELLS

by J. & C. Walker

When you have collected live shells they have to be cleaned before they can be placed in your cabinet.

The first thing you need to make when you have the opportunity are some hooks, varying in size, for removing the insides of the shells after they have been boiled. The hooks can be made from pieces of fairly strong wire bent in the form of a fish hook.

A useful item to have is a jet which you can put into the shell to squirt out any remaining flesh sticking inside the shell. Taking an ordinary garden hose-tap fitting and reducing the size of the nozzle by means of copper piping produces a very fine jet. The local garage man would do it for you. This fine jet penetrates the back of the shell removing all the dirt and dead material.

Most shells that are taken alive are covered with weed, limey deposits and the outer horny skin known as the periostracum. There are several methods which can be adopted to remove these deposits. The first, and perhaps the most primitive method, is the use of a penknife and patience to

scrape the shell clean.

Secondly, acid, spirit of salts, may be used. (Young beginners should be supervised by their parents). The shell is placed under water and then with an old tooth brush the acid is applied, rubbed only for a second and then put back into running water. This must be done several times to ensure complete cleaning. If too much acid is applied the shell gets burnt and white patches appear destroying the appearance of the shell. Beginners should be careful and take the advice and guidance of older members.

Another method of cleaning shells is with Caustic Soda. A strong solution of the soda is made and the shells dropped into it and left from 12 - 24 hours before removing using a spoon, and washed under running water. Then a wire brush or coarse scrubbing brush will finish the work and give pleasing results. Remember to handle the shells with a spoon when removing them from the Caustic Soda and to wash them well before scrubbing, otherwise you may end up with burnt fingers.

Never use any cleaning liquid that is inclined to bleach shells.

Having cleaned the inside of the shell we will follow by identifying, cataloguing and storing.

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CASSIS SABURON Adanson.

by D.H. Kennelly

The abovementioned species will be found mentioned by most writers as occurring in the Mediterranean, but the writer has two specimens taken at Durban.

This week while sorting over a quantity of trawled material stored at the East London Museum, another specimen was found measuring 2½ inches, proof that the range is much greater than hitherto known.

The example referred to is a fresh dead shell, and was trawled from 60 fathoms in St. Francis Bay, off the Elands River.

Should any of our members have any further records of C. saburon, it will be of interest if they send the information for inclusion in a Circular.

It is interesting that more species hitherto known from the Mediterranean Sea are being found on our coast. Readers will remember that in 1958 live specimens of Gyrina gigantea (Lamarck) were trawled at a point 10-20 miles off the Zululand coast, from a depth of 90 fathoms. A report of this discovery will be found in the Journal of Conchology (S.P. Dance, Vol. 24 No.10, p.351, Dec.1959)

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NATAL NOTES. by E. Dee.

Since my son and I took up Skin-diving some three years ago we have learned much about the sea and the currents on the Natal Coast.

The Mozambique Current drifts southwards some 6 to 10 miles off shore and does not come any closer along the Natal Coast. There is an inshore current running northwards which at times is very strong and is made use of by all shipping coming up the coast from the Cape.

This northerly current comes right inshore and is the cause of the shifting sand along the Natal Coast. Durban has made use of this and by establishing groynes running out to sea from the beach front the sand has been trapped on the south side of the groyne and thus conserved the sandy beaches to some extent. On some days more than others this northerly current is very strong and I have been carried by it some hundreds of yards while shindiving without being aware of the fact.

At a place called Island Rock in Zululand this same current reaches a velocity of 4 to 5 knots depending on the wind and state of the tide.

Shells we find, collect in holes and gullies and are only washed ashore when there has been a heavy ground swell running. We divers swim through the breakers on to the reefs that lie beyond.

As to how tropical shells find their way along our coast I am at a loss to know as they cannot be carried along by the Mozambique current, as it is too far off shore.

I think that shell eggs and other forms of marine life got attached to ship's hulls, and are transported that way from harbour to harbour.

The waters round Durban and along the coast during the late summer months are usually dirty and there is always the danger of sharks, and we have had 3 or more attacks on the bathers this summer, so we skindivers have not been able to do a lot of shelling. Nevertheless, I have been able to make some really good finds. I have been able definitely to establish that the following Cowries (Cypraea) are living on the Natal Coast:

Palmadusta ziozac-ziozac Linné 1758 (Ref. J. Allan p.55) Cowry Shells

Palmadusta clandestina clandestina Linné 1767. (Ref. J. Allan p.53)

The colour of the animal is dark grey to black and the teeth are stronger than those of the more common species P.clandestina passerina Melville 1888 found in and around Durban. Also the animal in P.clandestina passerina is dark navy blue.

C.talostolida teres teres Gmelin has been recorded from Natal before and is fairly common, but I have now found some four specimens of Talostolida teres subfasciata Link 1807 (see Joyce Allan page 47)

C.Ovatipsa caurica caurica Linné 1758 has also been recorded before as an inhabitant of our coast, but I have now found Ovatipsa caurica elongata Perry 1811 living on Vetchi Pier of Durban. (J. Allan page 47).

The following shells have been found in the last 3 months and have all been checked by P. Elston:

<u>Conus tessellatus</u> Born	50 mm.	<u>Conus millepunctatus</u> Link	100 mm.
<u>Conus penniculus</u> Lam	65 mm.	<u>Conus figulinus</u> Linne	79 mm.
<u>Conus striatus</u> Linne	75 mm.	<u>Conus pennaceus</u> Born	60 mm.
<u>Bursa bufonia</u> Gmelin	45 mm.	<u>Cymatium chlorostoma</u> Lam.	78 mm.
<u>Peristernia nassatula</u> Lam	35 mm.	<u>Solidula solidula</u> Lam.	27 mm.
<u>Latirus craticulatus</u> Linne	33 mm.	<u>Nassa olivaceus</u> Brug.	38 mm.
<u>Northia northiae</u> Gray	46 mm.	<u>Cymatium gemmatum</u> Reeve	45 mm.
<u>Nassa velatus</u> Gould	20 mm.	<u>Cardiidae Fragum fragum</u>	
<u>Chlamys nipponensis</u> Kuroda	43 mm.	Linné	35 mm

And last, but by no means least, a fine specimen of the rare Murex palma-rosea Lam

Ref: J. Allan, Kira, Webb and Timken.

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BORDER NOTES. by D. H. Kennelly.

Recent study of the shells collected from various localities on the Ciskei, Transkei and Pondoland Coasts, has revealed the potential richness of this area for collectors.

Further investigations made with the aid of Skin divers, would undoubtedly increase our present knowledge, and moreover most of the specimens recovered would be "live".

The reader has only to refer to the activities of our member - Mr E. Dee of Durban - and his colleagues of the Durban Undersea Club during the last two years. These enthusiasts have not only secured proof that certain species are actually living on the Natal/Zululand coast, but some of their finds are astonishing in that the shells have been recovered of species hitherto unknown as existing on the South African Coast.

The following notes on two species of shells are for the benefit of members who are more or less unacquainted with these particular examples.

Latirus abnormis Sowerby, 1894

The type locality was given by Sowerby as 'Natal' and the species has been

taken alive in 13 fathoms off the Zululand coast (Barnard). Beach specimens have been found - probably ex pisco - on the Natal and Pondoland coasts. The writer has a juvenile specimen found on the beach at Mazeppa Bay, which is in excellent condition, of an orange brown colour and measures 25 mm. Dr. Barnard states that the adult shell measures up to 75 mm. in length.

Ref: Ann.S.A.Mus., Vol XLV, Pt.1, June 1959. S.A.Gastropoda
Dr K.H. Barnard.

Vasum (Xancus) truncatum Sowerby, 1892.

This is a solid robust shell, which measures up to 75 mm. when adult, judging by the two specimens seen by the writer. These were taken on the Pondoland coast and are beach worn, but the locality is of interest. Sowerby records Port Elizabeth as the type locality. Turton recorded small specimens from Port Alfred, and Barnard mentions further localities and describes and figures a juvenile. V.truncatum is not reported from Inhaca Island (Mavnae & Kalk), but as dead specimens have turned up on the Pondoland coast, there appears to be a possibility that more may be found in Natal.

Ref: Marine Shells of South Africa, G.B. Sowerby, 1892
Ann.S.A.Mus., 45(1) : 36, Barnard, 1959

Members who are able to collect at or near the localities mentioned are urged to look for these two species and report results in the Circulars. So little is known about the molluscan inhabitants of our coast, that every small piece of information will be welcomed for record.

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CAPE NOTES. by L. Kerr.

During the last spring-tide, Mrs Connolly, Mrs Weakley and the writer spent a rewarding morning below Slangkop Lighthouse. The weather was ideal no wind and partly cloudy. Joan Weakley who was after Patella, found some very fine ones, but the largest P.miniata yet seen in these waters was collected by Mrs Connolly. On turning over a rock, the writer found eight beautiful white egg-cases, laid by a cone. Searching further, the cones were located, a yellow one and the commoner brown. Both these were Conus elongatus Chemn. When the yellow periostracum was removed later, the cone was found to be white. The egg cases were left and the locality noted, so that a watch may be kept on their growth. The "bag" that day included many Marginella :- M.rosea, neglecta, capensis and biannulata. Mrs Connolly was especially pleased to find a live Cythara alfredi Smith, as she had only found one specimen on a previous occasion.

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Dirk Ackermann has added a fine Cassis cornuta Linn. to his extensive collection. This is the Pacific Ocean variety and is a deeper colour than the Indian Ocean shell. The lip is orange and the whole shell very clean and without blemish.

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