

THE CONCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

CIRCULAR NO. 109

JULY, 1969

PAGE 1.

(Re-printed July, 1977)

Edited by Richard Carlsson

MEETING:

The next meeting of the Society will be held on Tuesday, 29th July, 1969 in the Lecture Hall of the S.A. Museum at 8.15 p.m. The shells for display will be the remaining 25 species featured in 'Rare Shells' by S. Peter Dance. They are:- Vexillum stainforthii, Epitonium scalare, Harpa costata, Festilyria festiva, Scaphella junonia, Lyria lyraeformis, Lyria beui, Aurinia kieneri, Volutoconus bednalli, Aulica aulica, Aulica chrysostoma, Provocator pulcher, Afrivoluta pringlei, Conus thomae, Conus cervus, Conus crocatus, Conus gloriamaris, Conus milneedwardsi, Conus excelsus, Conus adamsonii, Conus dusavelli, Thatcheria mirabilis, Fimbria soverbii, Pholadomya candida, Spondylus regius.

As with the time when we displayed the first twenty five of these Rare Shells members can bring along anything else they might have that is rare.

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Minutes of the Meeting held in the Zoology Department, Universtiy of Cape Town. 24.6.1969:

The thirty nine members and friends present were welcomed by Mr. Freeman who also expressed the Society's gratitude to the University and Professor Day for organising the evening's entertainment.

Apologies had been received from Mr Kapp, Mrs Wynne, Miss Gould, Mrs Carlsson, Mrs Prior, and Mr and Mrs Mills.

The minutes of the last meeting were taken as read subject to the addition of the following item which had been omitted.

"Mr Dichmont raised the question of whether the recent cases of dishonesty reported by members in the matter of exchange of shells should be referred to in the Circular. After discussion it was decided that this matter be left to the Council, and that the Council would issue a statement later".

Election of Members:

Mr W. Kirsten, Poste Restante, Doonside, South Coast, Natal.  
Mrs W. Kirsten, Poste Restante, Doonside, South Coast, Natal.  
Miss M. Eva, Y.W.C.A., 49 St. George's Road, East London.  
Miss D. Smalles, P.O. Kentani, Transkei

Proposal of New Members:

Mr S. Angeletti, proposed by E.K. Giles, seconded by M.C. Giles.  
Mrs D. Cruickshank, " " J. Scheepers, " " E. Dee.  
Mr D. Wright, " " L. Kerr, " " E.K. Giles.  
Mrs D. Wright, " " L. Kerr, " " E.K. Giles.

Prof. Mallory introduced a guest, Miss June Pattullo, who is a Professor of Oceanography from America. Mr Freeman expressed the meeting's pleasure of having her with us on this occasion.

Mr Freeman, who had just returned from a short visit to Durban, brought greetings from the Natal Group. He spoke of the hospitality which members of the Natal Group had extended to him, to Mr and Mrs Giles on their recent visit, and earlier to Mrs Kerr, all of whom concurred in expression of appreciation. The Group had arranged meetings and outings and had showed great enthusiasm, and we hope to reciprocate their kindness when any of them visit Cape Town.

Members were reminded of the proposed visit to Robben Island and those interested were requested to hand their names to the Secretary.

Members/.....

Members were also reminded that the A.G.M. was to be held on 26th August, and that subscriptions are due on 1st July, 1969.

Mr Freeman then handed over to Professor Day who spoke of the surveys made in recent years of estuaries in the area between Port Nolloth and Inhambane, P. E. A. with special reference to plant and animal ecology. He then described a trip to Inhambane, illustrating his talk with slides of shells found on the rocks, in sandy beaches and mangrove swamps. His audience showed their appreciation by warm applause. Professor Day then invited questions and discussion. One question brought a most informative reply from Mrs Day, who described the method by which certain species bore holes in the shells of their prey.

In thanking Professor Day, Mr Freeman said that he was sure we had all learnt a lot from the evening. The meeting then adjourned to another room, where, over tea, the members were able to study the shells depicted on the slides and many others collected from Inhambane, all preserved in bottles of spirits.

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THE BORDER GROUP.

by Mrs M. Rix

Our May meeting was held on 25th with a good attendance. Connie Hulley brought Mrs Barfield as an interested visitor and we are hoping she will join the Society once her family arrangements have been organised.

Mr Armstrong reported that much damage was being done to local beaches by people bull-dozing for, and carting away, shale. The beach near Glengariff was in a shocking state. Mr Kennelly agreed to try to find out who, or what department, should be approached on the matter.

Our afternoon was mostly spent browsing through a selection of books which Dick Kilburn had brought from the Museum and some of Mr Kennelly's private books. Mr Kennelly gave an explanatory talk on the importance of having, or having access to, books on shells, particularly for reference when making up overseas parcels. As a comprehensive book on South African Shells has never been published reference has to be made to a variety of smaller books.

After the usual enjoyable tea, the meeting closed with a vote of thanks to Mr Kennelly.

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There was a fair attendance at our meeting of 29th June, although it being school holiday time, some members were unable to come. Dick Kilburn is away on leave and we missed him, but all sincerely wish him a happy and restful holiday.

Mr Kennelly welcomed all those present and said that he had hoped that Pauline Ogilvie, from the Transvaal Group, would be with us, but that she had been unable to make it.

Nominations for Chairman of the Group were called for, and Mr. Kennelly was unanimously elected by the members.

Both Mr. Kennelly and Pauline Ogilvie had written to the Regional Officer of the Forestry Department at Kingwilliamstown about the damage being done by firms digging for shale, and we are very hopeful that an investigation into the matter will be made soon and a stop put to the desecration of our coast. A post card had been received from Steve Fenwick, from the Middle East. He was shortly returning to England and hoped to come back to South Africa in the near future. We all wish him luck and hope that he will be able to discard sufficient clothing to enable him to pack all his shells into his suitcase!

Ken's subject for the meeting was on the family Marginellidae, and both he and Connie Hulley brought a variety of specimens. Brought in for identification were Astraea andersoni Smith, the best specimens we've yet seen of Cypraea amphitales Melvill, and Tonna perdix Linnè, all from Bulugha/.....

Bulugha, and Fusus africanus Sowerby from Bonza Bay.

The shelling on our beaches is definitely improving and we are all planning outings in the near future. The meeting closed on a happy note and a vote of thanks to Mr. Kennelly.

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THE TRANSVAAL GROUP.

by A. Jenner.

There was an excellent attendance at our meeting held on the 13th June, no fewer than 34 people being present. Apologies were received from 5 members unable to attend.

This was the evening chosen for sorting out our so called "puzzle" or problem shells and a very successful occasion it turned out to be. With so many knowledgeable people at hand and with the aid of numerous reference books and records most of us were very happy with the identification of a large number of our unnamed and doubtful specimens.

Eddie Rapph gave us a short talk on his painstaking work of compiling a reference record of our S.A. mollusca with accompanying photographs which will be of considerable value as a local source of reference. The availability of these records on this occasion proved their usefulness and it goes without saying that we will give him all the encouragement and assistance we can to further his worthy objective.

The promised film entitled "The Sea" loaned by courtesy of Messrs. African Explosives and Chemical Industries Ltd. was shown and very much enjoyed. The underwater photography in this film is superb.

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

Master K. Lowrey-Bell, 24 Berkely Crescent, Durban North, Durban, Natal.  
Mr M. Cantor, 209 Summer Hill, Sally's Alley, Kentview, Athol, Oaklands, Transvaal.

Mr A. Kennelly, c/o W.A. Norton, 195 Mirca Ave., Sinoville, Pretoria.

Mr C. Appleton, C.S.I.R. Bilharzia Research Unit, P.O. Box 634, Nelspruit, Transvaal.

Mr E.H. Rapph, P.O. Rivonia, Sandton, Transvaal.

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OBITUARY:

Dr H. Ackert of Somerset West passed away suddenly on 12th June. We extend to Mrs Ackert and family the Society's deepest sympathy.

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EXCHANGE WANTED:

Mrs V. Meyer, 21 Stirling Crescent, Durban North, Natal, wants perfect specimens of Cape shells mainly cowries, Cones, Volutes and Murex and can offer perfect specimens of Natal species, many live taken.

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GENERAL NOTES.

Conus milne-edwardsii Jousseaume, 1894.

(Syn:- C. clytospira, Melvil & Standen, 1899).

by D.H. Kennelly.

According to available literature, this shell is now rated as one of the rarest species of the genus Conus. It has received the popular name "Glory-of -India" Cone, and has supplanted the once famous Conus gloriamaris Chemnitz 1777, in rating as a rare species.

Not/.....

Not very many species have been recorded. In 1961 only nine shells were known, and range as then known was the Gulf of Oman, Bombay, Japan, Aden and Mauritius. An extension of range become known in 1965 when five more specimens were obtained by trawlers operating off the coast of Mocambique in the Porto Amelia area, and the total recorded number of shells rose to fourteen. As far as may be ascertained all five shells were purchased by collectors or dealers, and are now in the U.S.A.

In Circular No. 103, page 1, under the heading "Natal Notes", there is an announce,ent of "the finding of four specimens of Conus milne-edwardsii from Zululand. Also Mr. Kidwell obtained a very fine specimen by skin diving".

This bare statement mentions one of the most important finds in collecting off our coastline, and surely merits more than a passing mention. Museums and other Institutions, and all collectors will be most interested in this statement.

What is now needed is more detailed information of these shells, such as the dimensions of the specimens, deptn at which taken, and if the shells were live taken, or dead. Further the present destination of the specimens should be noted. Is any one example retained ina South African collection, or have they gone to the U. S. A. in the wake of so many of our molluscan treasures in recent years?

The "Natal Notes" referred to above, appears a little misleading. It is not clear if Mr. Kidwell's specimen is one of the four found off the Zululand coast, or if it is an additional find.

Readers will look forward to further information, when it will be possible to state that the number of known C. milne-edwardsii is now eighteen, and the record of an extension of range.

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#### COLOUR IN CONCHOLOGY.

by B.J. Young.

This is not an attempt to analyse the biological aspects of the occurrence of colour in marine molluscs but an argument in favour of the standardisation of description appertaining thereto. It might well be that marked departure from the normal range of colouring in a species or sub-species may be because of ecological factors or numerous others such as salinity, exposure to light, chemical influences associated with the water in which the young develop etc. Modern catalogues are becoming more and more wedded to the idea of colour plates and this indeed is nothing more than meeting a demand. Almost all books dealing with the subject of conchology whether elementary or advanced, recent or out-of-print go to some length as far a colour description is concerned. A few have a brief word colour description and others coloured illustrations with out description. Of the last named there appears to be a tendency (possibly associated with reproduction procedures) to illustrate in colours brighter than those of 'fresh live' specimens.

One method of overcoming difficulties relating to the foregoing is the production of a colour-card of the type very well known in the Philatelic world. It is appreciated, of course, that colour is of paramount importance in philately, colour in the 'rare' categories accounting in numerous instances to thousands per cent increase in value by comparison with common shades. Such a tendency already is evident in conchological catalogues, in fact, one which I have in front of me at the moment in one instance states, inter alia, 'Quote..... rare colour shades'. Such quotation is accompanied by a valuation considerably above those of the commoner shades.

An advantage of the colour-card system which surely must override almost any objection is the ability of persons widely seperated geographi-ally to be in perfect agreement in dealings in which colour is a necessary factor PROVIDED, OF COURSE, that each is referring to the same colour system. It is here that some difficulty may arise as a necessary adjunct to a colour card is that it should have widespread distribution -

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at the very least national but preferably international.

The writer is aware of what may be involved in the production of colour cards but they appear to be quite cheaply produced for varying purposes - the paint industry being one. Two excellently produced and very practical instances are those (both philatelic publications) of Messrs. Stanley Gibbons the world famous London stamp dealers, which displays 100 colour shades and the very well-known Lipsia Philatelic Colour Guide produced by Transpress Veb Verlag Für Verkehrswesen of Berlin, published for Philart Productions Ltd., also of London, 160 shades.

It must surely 'go without saying', that the production of such an index system, specifically designed for conchologists would add immeasurably to the enjoyment of collectors in addition to being of value to dealers, museums etc.

In conclusion and as an example of the confusion which could arise in relation to a discussion of a common and widespread cowrie, i.e. Cypraea felina, I reproduce the description as set down by three separate authorities:

- (i) ... finely mottled greenish blue with perhaps small patches of orange. Edges and base cream-orange and lower sides have dark purple-brown spots;
- (ii) ... greenish blue shell flecked all over with olive shade; sides and base are yellowish with the former decorated with large black spots;
- (iii) ... blue-grey or greenish blue with obscure yellow bands and small brown spots. Sides with blackish-purple spots.

I feel sure that, if the foregoing should receive sufficient support a small sub-committee could soon obtain relevant data.

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Breeding of Cypraea - Ornamentaria annulus Linne. by Allen Jenner.

Mr and Mrs Jack Polak report that on a visit to Inhaca Island, Mocambique, during the period 26th May - 1st June, 1969, they came upon large numbers of Ornamentaria annulus brooding on eggs in the cymodocea weed in shallow water at low tide between Inhaca and Portuguese Islands.

The mantles were draped around the clutches and the lemon coloured eggs had been laid on living pinna protruding above the sand, dead bivalves, other dead broken shells, and sundry rubble, in fact any solid material, which included a discarded tin container, that afforded a suitable site.

It was observed that many of the specimens appeared to be abnormal in that whitish spots were dispersed over the shell surface.

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