

XX
X
X THE CONCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN AFRICA X
X
XX

CIRCULAR NO. 91.

NOVEMBER, 1967.

PAGE 1.

Edited by Leila Kerr.

MEETING:

The next meeting of the Society will be held in the Lecture Hall of the S.A. Museum on Tuesday, 28th November at 8.15 p.m. We have been fortunate in obtaining as speaker, Dr. R. Hewlett of the Department of Anatomy, Medical School, who will tell us about "Some Poisons of interest to Conchologists". This promises to be a very interesting subject, so do turn up. The shells for display will be not more than 10 of your most interesting or beautiful ones - foreign or South African.

N.B. The Librarian would like all books returned by the end of November, please, so as to take stock. Members not attending the meeting, please post. (registered).

XX

DECEMBER MEETING:

(Please make a note of this, as there will be no Circular out in time). This meeting will be held in the Lecture Hall of the S.A. Museum on Tuesday, 12th December at 8.15 p.m. There will be fun for all, including a Lucky Dip, Competition, Shell Auction and a Film. All proceeds to swell the Society's funds. Donations of good shells for the Auction could be brought to the November meeting. Please be generous. Oh yes, would the lady members please bring a plate of cakes etc.? Thank you. There will be no shells for display, otherwise you might find them being auctioned!

XX

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD AT THE S.A. MUSEUM 31.10.1967.

Mr. Freeman in the Chair welcomed members and friends. Apologies were received from Miss Leers, Mrs. Kinloch, Mrs. Hofmeyr, Mr. Carlsson and Mr. Dichmont. The minutes of the September meeting were taken as read and confirmed.

The following were elected as members of the Society:

- Mr. R. Lucas, Hotel Florence, Kei Mouth, J.P.
- S Master B.L. Clarke, 54 Abeliard, Kloof, Natal.
- Mr. M.J. Taylor, 1105 City Heights, Broad Street, Durban.
- Mr. B.J. Young, 12 Woodlawn Cres., Umgeni Heights, Durban.
- Mrs. E.W. Holmberg, P.O. Box 74, Elandsfontein, Transvaal.
- C Mr. W.R. Low Choy, Badu Island, C-D, D.A.I.A., Thursday Island, N. Queensland, Australia, 4875.

The following were proposed as new members:

- Mr. J. Cummins, proposed by L. Kerr, seconded by E. Giles.
- Mr. J. Polak, proposed by A.B. Jenner, seconded by E. Giles.

Mr. Freeman drew the attention of members to the new Lists on the table, and spoke about three new books (see Review elsewhere in this issue). Mrs. Carlsson had brought greetings from Hazel Jefferies, and said Hazel's Museum was well worth a visit. Mr. Freeman announced that the Garden State Shell Club had had to disband, so we would receive no more Jersey Sheller for our Library.

The cones/....

The cones on display (Plate 11) were described by Mrs. Kerr and Mr. Elston, who mentioned, inter alia, that Conus viridis and C. sulphuratus were not valid species and were only illustrated for the information of collectors.

Mrs. Miller, our speaker for the evening, had provided cakes for our tea and a most unusual item - Sea Food - which was minced, savoury Turbo sarmaticus on rice, served hot. Very delicious; recipe supplied on request!

After tea, Mrs. Miller gave us a delightful and interesting talk on Arniston, (near Cape Agulhas) its shells, wrecks, history etc. illustrated by many specimens and coloured slides. The amount of shells found there was an eye-opener to most of us. These included some fossil ones and land snails. Mrs. Miller brought greetings from Mrs. Joubert of Arniston who had lent her some trawled shells. She also wished to thank Mrs. Connolly for her help in identifying the exhibits.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

PUBLICATIONS:

1. The Additional List of S.A. Marine Shells found on the Natal/Zululand Coast by the late B.L. Cock is now available at 30 cents per copy from the Secretary.
2. Marine Mollusca Taken Alive on the "Wild Coast" by D.H. Kennelly Supp. List No. 1. Price 20 cents from the East London Museum.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

ADDITIONS TO LIBRARY:

1. "Marine Shells of the Pacific" by Walter O. Cernohorsky. Presented by Pacific Publications (Pty) Ltd.
2. "How to Clean Sea Shells" by Eugene Gergeron (Director, Marine Biol. Balboa). Presented by Mrs. E.K. Giles.

Available from Ormond McGill, 581 Forest Ave., Palo Alto, California 94301. U.S.A. (\$1.50 = R1.10)

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

Master Kevin Lowry-Bell, Rosedale House, Lower Nursery Road, Rosebank, Cape Town.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

EXCHANGE WANTED:

Mr. C.F. Claydon, 34 Pettycur Road, Kinghorn, Fife, Scotland, U.K.
Members of the Malacological Society of Australia, c/o Hon. Secretary, Brisbane Branch, 14 Shepherd St., Brighton, Queensland, Australia.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

BORDER NOTES:

by Maimie Rix

Our meeting for October was held in the Museum Lecture Room on Sunday 29th at 3 p.m.

Apologies were received from Miss Courtney-Latimer and Mr. Cook. Miss Anne Lawford attended as a visitor and was very welcome.

A talk was given by Mr. Kennelly on the BULLIA. This was very much enjoyed and appreciated. The variety mentioned and discussed was an eye-opener to most of us. Connie Hulley and Rita Scott brought some very nice specimens for display and information on localities.

Because/.....

Because of a misunderstanding with regard to keys, we were not able to make our usual "cup that cheers" and Connie Hulley insisted that we adjourn to her home again, and have tea - which we did and all was well! Good old Connie!

Miss Benson made a suggestion that we each bring a parcel of shells to the next meeting and auction these - unseen - to raise funds for the Society. This suggestion was warmly received and between now and the next meeting we will all be making up "surprise packets".

Our next meeting will be held at the Museum on SUNDAY, 10TH DECEMBER.

NATAL NOTES:

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

by A. Lambert.

A successful meeting was held at the Durban Undersea Club on Saturday, 28th October at 2.30 p.m. Mr. Dee, Chairman, welcomed members and guests. The minutes of the previous meeting were confirmed. "The Standard Catalogue of Shells" by van Nostrand - 2nd Edition was on show. This contains a few extra families such as Marginella, Harpa, etc. It can be obtained direct from Hano-Book Dept., 1598 Third Ave., between 89th and 90th Streets, New York, 10028. U.S.A. \$ 6.10.

Plastic boxes in a range of suitable sizes can be bought from Richard E. Petit, P.O. Box 133, Ocean Dr., Beach, S. Carolina, U.S.A.

Mr. Dee suggested that when members advise the Secretary of recent shell finds, a full description should be included as well as the finder's classification. This should obviate incorrect records being kept.

Meetings:

Mr. Dee gave a talk on S.A. Cypraea. As this talk could not be concluded in time, Mr. Dee suggested that members meet at his house, 312 Florida Road, Durban on Saturday, 11th November at 6 o'clock for a spaghetti supper and further discussion. Please bring your Cypraea helvola.

Next House Meeting: Home of Mr. Richard Gerber, 68 Brand Road, Durban, on Saturday 9th December at 6 p.m. This will be a braaivleis. Please bring your own meat, snacks, drinks and colour slides of either 2 1/4 or 35 m.m. Any subject!

New Year Party: Home of Mr. & Mrs. Clapham, 3 Ridge Road, Botha's Hill, Durban, on Friday, 5th January, 1968 at 6.30 p.m. Bring braaivleis meat, snacks and drinks.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Mrs. Connolly's new phone no. is 77-3770.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

GENERAL NOTES:Review of New Books:

by "Capensis"

MARINE SHELLS OF THE PACIFIC by Walter O. Cernohorsky
Published by Pacific Publications (Pty) Ltd., P.O. Box 3408, G.P.O. Sydney,
N.S.W. Australia.

What appears at first glance to be just another shell book, turns out to be rather better than average. The excellent black and white photographs that illustrate some 440 species of gastropoda are proof that the author is well qualified to include the chapter on the photography of shells in the first part of the book.

He says, "this handbook of Pacific molluscs is confined to those genera which have been only superficially treated in other current publications; or have been erroneously named in previous illustrations".

Illustrations/.....

Illustrations of the very common species have been dispensed with. Relatively few families (nine) are represented but these are treated "in depth". For example, no fewer than 150 species of the often neglected family Mitridae are shown.

Most of the Cowries illustrated are uncommon or rare. There are surprises in store for anyone who has been using such well established works as Joyce Allan's cowrie book for classifying and naming their specimens.

The pictures and their descriptions have been printed as close as space has allowed. The printers have paid careful attention to layout and have used several different typefaces, for example, italics are used for all scientific names.

The bibliography has been arranged so that each chapter ends with a list of works relating to the family just dealt with. This is better than having to plough through a long list at the back of the book.

Were it not for our national "credit squeeze," the photograph on the dust jacket would impel at least half our members to leave for Fiji immediately.

If ordered direct from the publishers, the book will cost (in Australian currency) \$6.50 plus 25c postage. This is cheaper than an airline ticket.

THE FRINGE OF THE SEA by Isobel Bennett, with photography by F.G. Myers and Keith Gilett.
Published by Angus & Robertson - London and Rigby Ltd., - Adelaide, Australia.

Describes marine invertebrate animals found in inter-tidal waters of Australia. The incredibly beautiful illustrations by two master photographers combine with a very readable text to put this book into the same class as Rachel Carson's "The Edge of the Sea". There is, of course, a chapter on mollusca, and gimlet eyed conchologists will be amused to notice that a couple of the photographs have been printed back to front, producing sinistral specimens of certain shells.

The retail price in South Africa is about R7-00.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

CYPRAEA AMPHITHALES (MELVILLE)

by R.O. Carlsson.

In recent circulars there have been a number of references to this so called rare shell and this started me on a course of investigation about this species. For easy reference I have collated all that has been written about C. amphithales in the circulars of the Conchological Society.

Circular No. 12. In an article entitled "Notes on the Cypraea and Trivia Families as Found at Port Alfred" John S. Hutt reported "..... it is possible that C. amphithales is a rare resident as I have found three specimens"

Circular No. 27. It was reported that Mrs. Helen Boswell found a specimen while collecting at a locality ten miles north of East London.

Circular No. 28. In an article titled "How rare is Cypraea amphithales" A.C. van Bruggen wrote "My dear friend Helen Boswell seems to have all the luck in the world! Such was my reaction when I read in Circular No. 27 of November, 1961, that she had found a specimen of C. amphithales (Melville) 1888, north of East London. I only fully realised how lucky indeed she was, when I started checking up on this species in literature. The cowry specialists F.A. and M. Schilder state in a paper on Dautzenberg's famous collection (Mem. Inst. R. Sci. Nat. Belg. (2) 45, 1952) that they only have records of five specimens of

C.amphithales/.....

C. amphithales in collections, viz., three in the British Museum (Natural History) in London (this includes the type specimen), one in the collection of Tomlin and one in their own collection. Tomlin's specimen is the one figured in Sowerby's book on South African shells, after his death the collection was presented to the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff.

"If C. amphithales is really as rare as the Schilders found it to be (and they know their cowries and the world's great collections quite well), then Helen Boswell's specimen must be the sixth reported so far. Are there any more specimens among our members or South African Museums?

Circular No. 29. C. amphithales by R.N. Kilburn "Dr. van Bruggen has called for more information on C. amphithales. It is certainly a rare species and, apart from the five that he mentions, I only know of the following. I personally have two, both worn, from Port Alfred, Turton collected one while the late J. Hutt had a very good specimen which he sent to an American collector. As reported in an earlier circular Mr. D.H. Kennelly has a fresh shell from Jeffery's Bay, and lastly, I was informed by Mrs. Boswell herself that she did in fact once have another, but sent it to an overseas collector.

Circular No. 31. South Africa's Rarest Cowry - Cypraea amphithales by D.H. Kennelly. "In working over a large collection of shells from the Transkeian and Pondoland coasts the writer found two more specimens of this rare species - one of which is in excellent condition - from Mbontyi, Pondoland.

The writer is not quite sure of the actual number of specimens known, but probably these two shells bring the total up to ten of which the East London Museum possesses three".

Circular No. 35. Extract from Border Notes by D.H. Kennelly "While collecting recently at Bonza Bay, near East London, the writer had the good fortune to obtain another specimen of the rare C. amphithales."

"The type locality is given by Joyce Allan as South Africa, and the range as Port Elizabeth to Port Alfred".

"According to the records of the East London Museum, this species occurs at Jeffrey's Bay, Port Alfred, East London District and Mbontyi Pondoland, so it is obvious that the range is more extensive than recorded by Joyce Allan".

Circular No. 38. Further Notes on Cypraea amphithales by D.H. Kennelly "At the present time collectors in general are becoming keen on obtaining a specimen of this shell, and these notes are compiled for the benefit of all interested.

It is now seventy four years since the discovery of this species, and as far as the writer can ascertain from all available sources, the total number of specimens known is sixteen. This figure includes Dirk Ackerman's shell found at Bonza Bay in October.

Therefore C. amphithales may still be rated as a rare species.

At the present time the known range of the shell is from Jeffrey's Bay to Pondoland, and it seems possible that few specimens have been found owing to the similarity of Amphithales to the very common C. edentula, and there are probably many more which collectors have overlooked.

In discussing this matter with Percy Elston recently, he agreed with this point of view and considered that amphithales may eventually be proved to be not as rare as hitherto considered".

Circular No. 64. Reported that Max Ackerman had found two C. amphithales at Haga-Haga.

Circular No. 65. Reported that Bobbie Richards was the proud possessor of the first live collected specimen of C. amphithales Mellville. This shell was secured by a diver at Cape Infanta, at low tide from a depth of five feet. The specimen is a lovely one and agrees in every detail with the description by Joyce Allan.

Circular No. 80. In an article titled "General Notes" D.H. Kennelly reports that a good specimen was submitted to him for identification by Mr. L. Kapp of Cape Town. The shell was collected at Jeffrey's Bay in April, 1966.

In an article titled "Some further notes on C. amphithales" D.H. Kennelly writes "In circular No. 38 page 4, a note appears estimating the number of known specimens of this species at sixteen. Since that date (January 1963) many more specimens have been found by collectors, and it is not now possible to estimate the number held in collections or museums.

As this shell has been greatly sought for by collectors in recent years it appears desirable to give a short review of the history of the species as far as possible in accordance with available literature.

Following the description of the type shell by Melville in 1888, Sowerby 1892 listed the species and stated it to be rare at Port Elizabeth, the type locality. Turton 1932 reported collecting amphithales at Port Alfred, and stated it was rare.

During this period, 1888 - 1932, and for the next twenty years, collectors in South Africa were at a loss to determine any specimens as being amphithales, as there was no publication available in this country giving a description and figure for reference. In 1956 Joyce Allan gave a description and figure of this species, enabling collectors to recognise the shell, thereby increasing interest and intensifying the search, and more and more specimens were found and the known range considerably extended.

The range of amphithales as now known (1966) appears to be as follows:- Jeffrey's Bay (rare), Port Elizabeth (rare), Port Alfred (very scarce) Bonza Bay E.L. (scarce). Specimens have also been collected at Gonubie, Haga Haga, Double Mouth (Morgan Bay), at which localities the species may be rated as scarce. The writer has no definite information relative to collecting localities on the Transkei Coast, but it seems probable that amphithales does occur there.

Circular No. 82. Suggested by F.A. Schilder in his article "The Endemic Cowries of South Africa" that C. amphithales looks like a hybrid between C. edentula and C. capensis".

Following from the above it appears that there are now twenty two recorded specimens as follows:-

Circular 12	J.S. Hutt	3	Circular 29	H. Boswell	1
Circular 27	H. Boswell	1	Circular 31	D.H. Kennelly	2
Circular 28	British Museum	3	Circular 31	East London	
Circular 28	Tomlin	1		Museum	3
Circular 28	Schilders	1	Circular 35	D.H. Kennelly	1
Circular 29	R. Kilburn	2	Circular 64	Max Ackerman	2
Circular 29	Turton	1	Circular 65	Bobbie Richards	1 live.

In addition to this my wife and I found one specimen at Haga Haga in 1965 and another four specimens at the same locality in 1966 together with one specimen at Double Mouth (Morgan Bay) in the same year.

I am therefore inclined to agree with the statement in Circular No. 38 that "amphithales may eventually be proved to be not as rare as hitherto considered". How many of us have specimens in our collections? Specimens which have not been reported. I myself am one of the guilty parties when it comes to not reporting finds. As stated above I have six, and there may well be others which have not been recorded.

It appears that the range of C. amphithales is now as follows:- Cape Infanta (live), Jeffrey's Bay, Port Elizabeth, Port Alfred, East London District, Haga Haga, Double Mouth (Morgan Bay) and Mbontyi (Pondoland).

Admittedly/.....

Admittedly there are not numerous specimens to be found at each spot but surely this is natural when one considers the possibility suggested by F.A. Schilder that amphithales may be a hybrid between edentula and capensis both of which are numerous and that the amphithales might well be overlooked because of the similarity, especially with edentula.

It would be interesting to know whether any one else has any theories as regards South Africa's so called rarest cowry.

The description given to this shell by Joyce Allan in her book "Cowry Shells of World Seas" is:-

Cypraeovula amphithales Melville 1888. A very rare shell differing from C. capensis in having a smooth dorsum and spotted margins, also the fine ribs that cross the inner lip of the base as far as the inner margin of the shallow, declivitous fossula, and of the columella are less numerous; the fossular denticles are more thickened than in C. capensis and the aperture is more dilated. Specimen marked as type in the British Museum is creamy bluish in colour with a tan central blotching and a few elongated coloured streaks. The margin of the outer lip is much higher than the umbilicus. Type locality, South Africa, distribution Port Elizabeth to Port Alfred.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

TONNA CHINENSIS, DESHAYES.

D.H. Kennelly.

In September Mrs. M.A. Rix brought in a specimen of Tonna collected at Bonza Bay, which has proved to be an example of T. chinensis and as far as may be ascertained is the first specimen reported from the South African coast.

The Bonza Bay shell is in good condition, only the outer lip being slightly damaged. There are about 19 ridges round the body whorl, set close together, and the colouration of the shell agrees with the illustration in Reeve's Monograph. Size of the Bonza Bay shell 40 m.m.

Dr. D. McMichael of the Australian Museum gives the range of T. chinensis as Indo/Pacific, and New South Wales to Queensland, and further mentions that Parvitonna perselecta/Iredale, is a synonym of chinensis.

The Family Tonnidae, according to available literature, contains a large number of species, and the latter are to be found throughout the Indo/Pacific, East and West Atlantic, and the Med. Sea.

Several species have been recorded as occurring in South African waters.

There appears to be a certain amount of confusion over the nomenclature, which can only be cleared up by publication of an up-to-date Monograph on the Family. It seems very probable that a number of species recorded in current literature, will be found to be synonyms.

References:- Barnard, Dr. K.H. 1963. Ann. S. Af. Museum Vol. XLVII part 3, Cont S. African Shells.

Kira, T. Date ?. Illustrated Japanese Shells, Plate 22, Fig.1.

Reeve, L. 1849. Monograph, Conch. Icon. Dolium. Plate VI.

Fig. 10.

Rippingale & McMichael. 1961. Queensland & Great Barrier Reef Shells.

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

SECRETARY.

Mrs. M.C. Giles,
2, Flora Park,
Flower Street,
Gardens,
Cape Town.

Phone: 45-3070

TREASURER:

Mr. M.C. Giles,
2, Flora Park,
Flower Street,
Gardens,
Cape Town.

Phone: 45-3070

LIBRARIAN.

Mr. S. Kruger,
26, Kloof Nek Road,
Tamboerskloof,
Cape Town.

Phone: 2-0436.