

PALLIDULA

VOL.34 • NO.2 • • OCTOBER 2004

**THE MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH SHELL
COLLECTORS' CLUB**



COVER PAGE

A beautiful set of *Harpa costata* (L. 1758). The largest is a huge 100mm specimen originating from the Geoff Cox collection, collected in Reunion Island 45 years ago. These large sizes have not been collected for many years. The other three were purchased in July 2004 from a dealer in Mauritius and were collected in Blue Bay, Mahebourg. Only one or two specimens of *H. costata* are now collected in the course of a year and they are becoming extremely rare. All specimens pictured are in the collection of the Editor.

The Beaches of South Africa

by Gavin Malcolm



Table Mountain



Cape Town

As a collector of Cones and Olives and an absolute novice on any other species, then a vacation in South Africa was always going to be a challenge as we worked our way up the coast from Cape Town to Durban. So, armed with the book on beach Marine Shells of South Africa by Douw Steyn and Marcus Lussi, we headed out.

South Africa has some fabulous tourist sites to visit; the unsurpassable view from Table Mountain, the Cape Peninsula, the Drakensberg mountains and most of all, the spectacular beaches.

Our first couple of days in Cape Town were a great starting point, no clouds in the sky, and we quickly learned to do things the local way. If you are going to rent a car then all the big companies are there but check the insurance terms carefully for high-jacking and theft cover. Most South Africans are obsessed with security; every hotel has a guarded car park and every parking lot has approved local entrepreneurs to look after your parked car. Once you learn to pay the small fee and avoid any "unguarded" beaches then you can begin.

So off we went to Hout Bay and Kommetjie down the west side of the Cape via Chapmans Peak to the Atlantic beaches. Armed with a fishing licence from the Post Office, you can collect on most beaches. We stopped at the shell shop in Hout Bay to be greeted by the Scots-born owner from the same village as ourselves. The shop was wall to wall Philippine specimens. One of the great disappointments of this trip was that few shell shops had any South African shells. Scuba diving is not my thing and I avoid taking live shells so Kommetjie tide pool rocks were a good introduction for my collecting.

My first two finds were probably the best: a fine specimen of *Janthina janthina* (Linnaeus, 1758) followed by a large 39mm specimen of *Janthina prolongata* (Blainville, 1822), both vivid purple. *Diloma impervia* (Menke, 1834), *Diloma variegata* (Anton, 1839) and *Gibbula beckeri* Sowerby, 1901 were to become regular finds. Large specimens of black *Diloma tigrina* (Anton, 1839) were everywhere and we quickly learnt that limpets are outside in South Africa with *Patella granatina* Linnaeus, 1758 weighing in at 70mm.

As the sun set, we headed back to Hout Bay to visit with club member and dealer Alan Seccombe. A visit to the shell wing of his house produced some fine cones for my collection but most of all, we were given kind hospitality and good advice on where to go collecting and equally important a map to



Sorry... No collecting here

the best vineyards in Stellenbosch for tasting. Alan is a good judge of wines.

Next day it was down the False Bay coast to Boulders to see the penguins. The beach and rocks at the restaurant by the car park proved very fruitful for shell collecting although the penguins make it clear that shell collecting is not allowed in their Nature Reserve. Good finds on the nearby beach, included *Conus algoensis* f. *simplex* Sowerby, 1858, *C. mozambicus* Hwass in Brugière, 1789 and *Marginella lineolata* Sowerby, 1866.

In the Cape National park, we had a great visit to the Cape of Good Hope and then headed for the beach at Buffels Bay. Alan had given us some advice "watch out for the baboons on the beach" and after witnessing two cases of assault on the backpacks of unsuspecting walkers, we realised sandwiches and apples are better left behind. The baboon "watching" park rangers were happy that we collected some dead shells and there were some good specimens including *Marginella rosea* Lamarck, 1822, *Coralliophila squamosissima* (E A Smith, 1876), a bit south of its normal habitat, and *Conus mozambicus* Hwass in Brugière, 1789.

On the Atlantic side of the Cape, the sand beach stretched for miles; the beach was covered in large *Patella compressa* Linneaus, 1758 and *Patella granatina* Linneaus, 1758. There were many *P. compressa* specimens in the 100mm range and *P. granatina* up to 70mm.



Patella compressa* and *Patella granatina



Look after your car..Sir!

Our next probe took us for a day trip round False Bay to Cape Hangklip and Hermanus, an upmarket seaside town. Gordon's Bay shell shop was just awake and provided some of the more interesting South African specimens from an old collection. *Marginella ornata* Redfield, 1870, *Gyroscala lamellosa* (Lamarck, 1822), *Gyroscala coronata* (Lamarck, 1816) etc.

Hangklip beach produced many black *Diloma tigrina* Anton, 1839 and *Diloma sinensis* Gmelin, 1791, black with a bright red flash, which became the most common species for much of the trip. Large shining black specimens of *Patella oculus* Born, 1778 were easily gathered. Other notable finds were large *Nucella dubia* Krauss, 1848 of various shapes and sizes.

Vroeklip beach, Hermanus was one of the stars of the trip. It was my first experience of the elongate *Bullia digitalis* (Dillwyn, 1817) and oval shaped *Bullia laevissima* (Gmelin, 1791) which were coming ashore in their hundreds, dead or alive, following the bluebottle seaweed ashore. *Donax serra* Dillwyn, 1817 and some uncommon *Tivela compressa* (Sowerby, 1851) were washed up on the beach.



Bullia digitalis



Bullia laevissima

Still bathed in sunshine, it was time to head for Arniston Bay and Cape Agulhas, the most southerly point in Africa. Our hotel in Arniston Bay was displaying a large collection of a nautilus type shell *Argonauta argo* Linnaeus, 1758, shoals of which had come ashore in the winter. Our trip to nearby Cape Agulhas took in collecting at the fine beach of Struisbaai and at Stinkibaii, a seaweed infested cove. We took in a couple of shell shops which had only a few South African species but this included lots of different local colour forms of *Conus tinianus* Hwass in Brugière, 1792 and *C. mozambicus*; and so my cone collection grows.

The common local shell was *Turbo cidaris* Gmelin, 1791 in many hues of brown together with *Turritella carinifera* Lamarck, 1822. Other finds were *Marginella lineolata* Sowerby, 1886 and a vivid orange *Gibbula multicolor* f. *hera* Turton, 1932. For the micro collector, there were bright red *Tricolia capensis* (Dunker, 1846), and *Pyrene obtusa* (Sowerby, 1832). *Turbo sarmaticus* Linnaeus, 1758 began to become common, the nodular juveniles and the smoother larger adults. *Patella cochlear* Born, 1778, well named for its shape in a wonderful ink blue colour, and *Argobuccinum postulosum* f. *proditor* (Frauenfeld, 1865) were to be found in many sizes. Large *Patellas*, surprisingly dazzling in colours of red and cream were to be found in the seaweed on the beach. These included *Patella tabularis* Krauss, 1848, *Patella miniata* Born, 1779 up to 75mm and the long fingers of *Patella longicosta* Lamarck, 1819.



***Conus tinianus* from Struisbaai**

To end the day here, I would recommend to anyone and everyone, a long dinner of seafood and chilled wine overlooking the beaches at Arniston Bay.

Next day, we headed for the Garden Route and took in Mossel Bay on the way. Mossel Bay is a pretty, classic seaside town but with one problem; all South African offshore oil comes ashore to a mega refinery behind the town. However in the old part of town is the Bartholomew Dias museum with replicas of the ships which the Portuguese Diaz used to come ashore in 1488 and a most magnificent shell museum showing South African and worldwide collections. Well worth a visit.

The next week saw us doing the tourist Garden Route from our bases in Wilderness and Knysna. Having jousted at the hotel buffet with the Stormers rugby squad full of healthy eating giants, we followed some advice and went to the smaller places not on the tourist bus routes, Sedgefield and Still Bay, and were rewarded with fantastic beaches.

Swartvlei (Black Fly) beach at Sedgefield was approached with some trepidation. The surf swept beach was covered in *Bullia rhodostoma* Reeve, 1847, alive with beautiful transparent animals chasing bluebottle seaweed in the surf. Here large *Turritella carinifera* Lamarck, 1822 were to be found and a domed large specimen of *Patella barbara* Linnaeus, 1758. *Haliotis spadicea* Donovan, 1808 and colourful *Chlamys tincta* (Reeve, 1853) were in the tideline.



Garden Route



Turritella carinifera*; *Patella barbara



Patella from Struisbaai



Argonauta argo from Arniston Bay

Next the highlight of the trip: Jefferys Bay... but there I was on the beach with a strong south easterly blowing and not a shell in sight on any of the town beaches. The local beachcomber seemed to think that if you are after 5.00am then all the shells are taken ... an hour that I do not know too well. How to rescue the day? A trip to the local shell shops revealed the one and only box of J. Bay beach shells; some bags of *Conus*, *Marginella*, *Phalium*, etc., and when I realised it was 20 rand (£2) for each bag of 15 specimens, life improved. Across the road, the shell museum was quiet and giving us space and time to enjoy the fine display of S. A. shells.



Need some help with collecting?

Now we were off to Marina Martinique at the Aston Bay end and collecting was better.

My first cowrie, a nice fresh specimen of *Cypraea edentula* Gray, 1825 followed by my first Olividae-Ancilla which at first glance was beach worn but turned out to be a white specimen of the form *Ancilla marmorata* f. *pura* (Sowerby, 1892) and then a large *Argobuccinum pustulosum* Lightfoot, 1786 rolled up the beach. *Semicassis labiata zeylanicum* (Lamarck, 1822) and its smoother form *S. labiata* f. *iredalei* (Bayer, 1935) were present with many "leather skinned" *Cabestana cutacea* (Linnaeus, 1768) and some *Bullia annulata* (Lamarck, 1816). Smaller

species included *Psittacodrilla bairstowi* (Sowerby, 1886), *Anachis lightfooti* (E A Smith, 1901), *Clionella rosaria* (Reeve, 1846) and lots of bright dark red *Tricolia capensis* (Dunker, 1846).

I followed up an invitation to visit local collector Arie Jooste and his son Philip who is the diver supplying many of the main shell dealers. Arie is a *Conus* collector like myself and to see his collection was a thrill. Tempt me! ... he did ... and my S. A. cone collection has several new species. The family are setting up their own distribution business as Aston Bay shells.

And so to roost in Port Elizabeth and a quick evening search on the beach opposite the hotel; only to be greeted by press cameras. Had news of my speeding camera skirmish spread? The South African cricket team were having a photo team swim before dinner. The West Indians, who had made their lowest ever score the previous night in Cape Town, were "resting" in the hotel lounge.

Our next leg took us to East London with shell stops at Port Alfred, Kenton on Sea and Kidds Beach. Kidds Beach provided the best shelling. A nice specimen of the unusually shaped *Melapium lineatum* (Lamarck, 1822) was found with colourful red *Patella concolor* Krauss, 1848 in the tideline. with lots of smaller species, *Vaughtia scrobiculata* (Dunker in Philippi, 1846), *Mitrella elegans* (H Adams, 1860), *Mitra latruncularia* f. *albozonata* Turton, 1932, *Nassarius conoidalis* Deshayes in Belanger, 1832, *Nassarius speciosus* (A Adams, 1852 and *Hastula diversa* (E A Smith, 1901).



Melapium lineatum Lamarck 1822

Beautiful burgundy coloured *Fissurella mutabilis* Sowerby, 1834 and *Helcion pectunculus* (Gmelin, 1791) were found for the first time.

From East London to Durban is a mere 600 km through the Transkei tribal homelands of the Xhosa. General advice seemed to be that this was bandit country, especially Umtata, the main town and don't break down! Our refuelling schedule prepared, we headed out and hit Umtata at mid morning in the rain. No stopping at traffic lights, every window/door locked but no bandits... just a busy African market town with pedestrians all over the road. Maybe the 9 police patrol cars were having some impact or was it the rain?

After many hours of delay for roadworks we reached Durban and our hotel on the beach and it rained for three days. The South African and West Indies cricket teams were both resting in the lounge awaiting the sunshine.

One of the traditions in Durban is a morning swim at the North Beach Club and by 6.00am the beach is crowded with swimmers and surfers. My seashell searches on the beach produced little and did not seem to disturb the locals frolicking in the waves.

When in doubt, head out; and by the time we got 70kms down the Hibiscus coast to a town called Shelly Beach, the sun was shining and we decided to seek local advice but the shell museum was permanently closed and the pickings on the beach were sparse.

Time to revert to the Alan Seccombe guidebook and head for Park Rynie beach further up the coast and its near neighbour Umkomaas. One of the more successful days



Conus coronatus Gmelin, 1791 followed by *Cypraea staphylea* Linnaeus, 1758, *Marginella pachista* Tomlin, 1913 and then a large *Purpura panama* (Röding, 1798), a nice *Cymatium vespaceum* (Lamarck, 1822), *Heliacus areola* (Gmelin, 1791), *Trochus nigropunctatus* Reeve, 1861, *Oliva caroliniana* Duclos, 1835, *Turbo coronatus* Gmelin, 1791 and a fine bubble shell *Hydatina physis* (Linnaeus, 1758); and for the micro enthusiast *Clionella rosaria* (Reeve, 1846), *Morula granulata* (Duclos, 1832), *Morula uva* (Röding, 1798), *Cerithium alveolus* (Hombron & Jacquinot, 1854), *Peristernia forskalii leucothea* Melvill, 1891. The common shells seemed to be *Thais bufo* (Lamarck, 1822) together with *Nerita albicilla* Linnaeus, 1758 and *Nerita polita* Linnaeus, 1758. *Fissurella natalensis* Krauss, 1848 and *Siphonaria oculus* Kraus, 1848 were colonising the area.

By this time, we had many species and a large bagful of specimens. And so we left the beaches behind to spend a few days in the magnificence of the Drakensberg mountains and a trip through the land of the Zulus to Rorkes Drift to check out the movie scene.

And lastly to Johannesburg airport, keeping to the bandit free highway through the city... only to be trapped in the airport elevator... that's South Africa.

A CORNISH FIELD TRIP WITH DEREK HOWLETT AND JOHN FISHER

by Selina Wilkins

In November 2003, I had the most delightful opportunity to visit Cornwall with the family and spend some time with Derek Howlett and John Fisher shelling on various Cornish beaches. We stayed at Steve and Sheila Harper's Newquay Guesthouse, where the welcome is genuinely warm, the facilities for shellers amazing (a complete workshop) and delicious home cooked food.

Paul and Christopher visited many local sites each day whilst we did our shelling, as many of the beaches are not entirely child friendly (not for the under 7s). They went to the Gweek seal sanctuary, Newquay aquarium and Newquay zoo.

There are lots of traditions and rituals to be undertaken on an outing with Derek and John which add to the experience. Derek does not rush. He meanders, gently not appearing to be looking, pipe in mouth or hand. He pauses and hunches over rocks, cleans the rock with a paint brush into a little tub, searching for micros. Later Derek will empty his pockets saying in a very understated voice "you might like these", "didn't know if you might find these interesting", and they are the species you have been frantically looking for all morning. Derek makes it seem easy, effortless, like Fred Astaire dancing.

John, on the other hand, is always first on the beach. We all get out of the car at the same time, chat together by the boot as to what we might find, and as a group, change from shoes to boots, put on extra layers of clothing, and yet John is always first onto the sand. He has a hat like the earlier air pilots wore, with the ear covers, which he leaves flapping. And as you complete your own boot rituals, you see him far in the distance the hat ears flapping. If Derek makes you stand in awe, John inspires one to get moving, get looking. John works systematically and fast, discarding his unwanted shells in prominent positions for you to find. He works an area, to and fro, his eyes picking out gems of shells. His enthusiasm to be in the right place at the right time has him leaping like a gazelle from rock to rock, not to be thwarted by the tide. This had me charging, slipping and jumping trying to keep up.

In the evenings, before and after dinner would be spent sorting, cleaning and identifying shells.



Derek and John would peer down their microscopes hoping to find different or new micros – lamenting, "only more *Rissoa parva*". I would be frantically sorting and cleaning whilst I had the opportunity, and getting help on identification from Derek and John – much faster than checking books. The funniest day was when they tried to teach me how to clean some shells. Gastropods were just a question of the right toothpick, and amount of pull and twist. But the piddocks were hilarious.

1. Hold gently.
2. Detach from hooks.
3. Hold this end, pull here – gently.
4. Don't remove the plates.
5. Stuff this area with cotton wool.
6. Tie with cotton.

It won't smell once dry (it still does).

Each day we went to a different location, to find different species and for me to learn about habitat. Most days, even when the tide went out, there was still lots of water sloshing about – so wellies are a must.

Day 1 – Daymer Bay

A sandy beach with rocks to the right covered in limpets and various gastropods. The limpets I found fascinating, because it was the first time I have seen all three British species of *Patella* in one place. John likes this beach because it is home to some of his banded *Nucella lapillus*. I also found in the grass by the path leading down to the beach some little snails juvenile *Theba pisana*. They were prolific moving around in the morning dew and sunshine, which I forgot to say, for a November day, was a mere 20°C.

Day 2 – St Anthony Beach

Derek and John have extensive knowledge of many beaches in Cornwall, and so, after hearing of my liking for *Calliostoma zizyphinum*, they took me to this beach. There were great promises of other treats “when the tide goes out”. So we arrived just as the tide was turning, with the idea of following it out; unfortunately it didn’t happen. I know you will say – the moon – of course it goes out – well the tide didn’t – not properly. Why? Because of the strong winds from the South blowing the water, (literally) back into the bay. So we were able to meander along the edge of the shore, and then were reduced to hopping (John), hobbling (me) over rocks and large boulders, still slippery from the tide water. However, I was shown by John some *Calliostoma zizyphinum* sitting on a ledge. When the tide was out its furthest, their ledge, sheltered and facing the harbour, was just revealed. So now I know when I have been hunting for them before, (in Jersey, Cornwall, France...) I just haven’t walked far enough into the tidal zone. I was thrilled to see my first *Venerupis rhomboides*, even if it was only one valve, and an old *Laevicardium crassa* was also a first for me. Derek and Steve were full of chat regarding an algae reported in Cornwall’s southern bays and how it has now affected shell life. We found beached *Calyptrea chinensis*, but no live ones (to show me their habitat) so I am still none the wiser. Steve showed me how to find *Helcion pellucida laevis* inside seaweed. He also found different crabs to show me and a sucker fish. John and Derek wanted to find a particular micro *Leucophytia bidentata* and so had us all (even Paul and Christopher) turning over rocks and carefully putting them back. Derek had never found one before and said, “John always finds them”, and then Derek found one! Hurrah! Then John turned over a rock and found 15+. All said it had been a very funny outing.

Day 3 – Penzance Harbour

John and Derek had been showing Steve and Sheila the B.S.C.C website and came across some of my favourite shells in the picture gallery, in particular, angel wings and piddocks. So off we went to Penzance Harbour looking for piddocks. The harbour is full of rocks which are layered slate, and there are colonies of hole-boring molluscs. McMillan page 98 describes them as “Piddocks bore mechanically into peat, hard clay or rock between tidemarks or in shallow water”. Let us be quite clear, you MUST have wellies and you must be MAD, because between the tidemarks means the area is not fully exposed when the tide goes out, and shallow water means – you wade in it, because they live successfully under the water.

Derek and John love a bit of a joke and tease, so they said “just look for holes the size of your thumb – out there” (as they pointed in a general direction out to sea). I was game for a laugh, and after sloshing around looking at various anemones, crabs, seaweed and common shells, looking for these holes Derek says “I never find them, John does”. So I took my cue, and left Derek and paintbrush, and went sloshing after John. Suddenly we found them – it is silly – you don’t see any holes, and then they are everywhere. But just because you find a hole doesn’t mean to say there is anything in it! It might just be a natural crevice. So you look for the siphon, you watch out for the water it jets out at you, should you try and disturb it, and then you might find something exciting. It was the funniest, most exhilarating day. John said at the end “I never realised or thought you’d muck in Selina, but you do” which I take as a great compliment. Another first were the *Littorina neritoides*, the smallest *Littorina* I have ever seen, that Derek found in the harbour wall cracks.

Day 4 – Hannifore Beach

This was the last day, and we had a day of sunshine and showers. The beach is a rocky area going out to a point, with channels of sand amongst the rocks. Both John and Derek were excited saying this would be the best day yet, and on arrival we waited for the tide to slowly make its way out, and we followed it tracing our way through the channels. Now I would be able to put all I had learned into

practice. Sloshing, wading and hobbling over rocks to “work” the beach. What surprised the team was that the rocks were covered in huge swathes of seaweed. I became quite adept at swinging up over the rock to peer at ledges and sides looking for treasure. However, mostly I found crabs as they had yet to disappear with the water. Then once the tide had moved, suddenly I was able to find *Calliostoma zizyphinum*, *Ocenebra erinacea*, *Trivia monacha* as well as the usual *Monodonta lineata*. The gastropods were out in their masses. Beached at the top of the shore were many yellow and multi-coloured *Littorina obtusata* and other micro shells. Strangely though, there were very few bivalves to be found. Derek and John said often they would be left in the sandy channels, but this time they were strangely empty. It was a great end to a great trip, and I learned a huge amount from Derek and John as well as had a huge number of laughs. Any morals? Well don't try to be first on the beach, John is already there. And never presume the same shells will be in the same place, because the molluscs keep moving around – and that's the fun isn't it, finding out what is there.

PETER COKE'S SHELL TREASURES

by Tom Walker



Anyone who visited the galleries of the Fine Art Society during May was in for a treat. Peter Coke's second exhibition at this gallery was held from 6th to 27th May, and was a spectacular display of shell art.

Mr Coke is now in his 92nd year, but no-one would guess this when looking at his work. Well over 100 pieces were shown, including mirrors, obelisks, boxes and caskets, sailors' valentines, flowers and many more. All consist of numerous shells, some large, some small, but totally covering the foundation object. Most are easily found shells, but a few less common items have been used for special effect, e.g. *Conus gloriamaris* and *Cypraea aurantium*. Some pieces consist of thousands of minute shells individually glued on the base object, while others have larger or fewer shells mixed with corals or other sea treasures. Numerous opercula feature in many items.



Peter has had many different careers during his long life, including playwright, actor both on radio (Paul Temple in the Durbridge thriller for 15 years) and in many West End plays, and antique dealer; he first became interested in shell art when he was repairing sailors' valentines for those fortunate enough to own them. After some years he tried making them himself, and a new career was born. He now lives in Norfolk, and has a large workshop and gallery attached to his house.



If you missed the exhibition in London, and are visiting Norfolk, make a point of going to meet Peter and seeing his work – you won't regret it. He lives at Sharrington Hall, between Fakenham and Holt in north Norfolk, and says he welcomes visits from those with an interest in shells (tel: 01263-861411).



The Howletts' Shell Weekend 2004

by Peter Topley

The weekend of 19th to 20th June this year saw Derek and Daphne Howlett open their house in the small village of Rockland St Mary once more for a "Shellers' Get-together". For those of us who attended many thanks are due to Derek and Daphne for their generous supply of food and drink, and arrangement of local accommodation for those travelling from a distance, which helped the weekend go smoothly. Shells that had been brought for sale or exchange were laid out in a large gazebo and in a summer house in the garden. The day was also an opportunity for both new and longstanding members to meet together away from the more serious bustle of the Club Convention or Shell Show. Personally I valued the time to meet with other members and share something of our thoughts and interests in the world of shells, where however much a beginner or an expert you may be in a particular field, there is always something new to be discovered. We were also able to view Derek's collection, which spans the whole world of shells but in particular demonstrates his interest in land and freshwater mollusca.



On the Saturday afternoon those of us who had expressed an interest were taken by Derek to the local Ted Ellis Nature reserve at Wheatfen Broad. Former home of the well known East Anglian naturalist Ted Ellis until his death in 1986, the Ted Ellis trust was founded to preserve one of the few remaining areas of the once extensive Yare Valley swamp. This is a strange primitive area recognised as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and is one of the last tidal marshes of the Yare Valley. The reserve consists of open fen, reed beds, sallow carr and the small broads Wheatfen and Deep Waters. On arrival the party was split. The first group were given a guided walk around the reserve by warden David Nobbs, partly in the hope of viewing the Swallowtail butterflies which can be seen if the conditions are right. Unfortunately this was not the case on the day which was overcast with some heavy showers; but David made the walk enjoyable and interesting for those who attended.

A second smaller group accompanied Derek along a flooded path which decided to amply demonstrate to us the tidal nature of the fen! After donning life jackets we boarded a small flat-bottomed boat amongst the reeds, together with our collecting nets, dredge and containers. Many of the stems of the plants above water level held one or more actively crawling Amber Snails (Succinidae), brought out by the high tide and damp weather. Along the edge of the channels near Wheatfen broad we took samples of water plants, washing through on trays to look for freshwater gastropods. Samples of bottom mud were also taken and sieved. Unfortunately amongst the shells found was a juvenile of the invasive alien Japanese freshwater clam *Corbicula fluminea* (Müller, 1774) This was the first record within the reserve of this species, which is able completely to cover the surface of the mud to the exclusion of native freshwater mussel species and is rapidly spreading through much of the Broads system in Norfolk. We continued out into Rockland Broad, accompanied by the song of a nearby Cetti's Warbler. Here we were able to carry out dredging along the sides of this quite shallow waterway and samples of the larger freshwater mussels were taken including *Unio pictorum* (L., 1758), *Anodonta cygnea* (L., 1758), *A. anatina* (L., 1758) and the local and rarer Compressed River Mussel *Pseudanodonta complanata* (Rossmassler, 1835) together with more (adult) *C. fluminea*. Fine sieving of mud samples also revealed the presence of the small Pea Mussel *Pisidium henslowanum* (Sheppard, 1823), only identifiable later by the use of a microscope and Derek's expert eye!

The remainder of the weekend consisted of specimen sorting, cleaning and identifying, as well as more time to discuss such subjects as the intricacies of variation in cowries, that next shell show in Florida or recommendations of economical storage systems for shells. Many thanks again to Derek and Daphne for making this event such an enjoyable one for all involved.

Species List

Bithynia tentaculata (Linnaeus, 1758)
Bithynia leachii (Sheppard, 1823)
Potamopyrgus antipodarum (Gray, 1840)
Viviparus viviparus (Linnaeus, 1758)
Lymnaea stagnalis (Linnaeus, 1758)
Lymnaea auricularia (Linnaeus, 1758)
Lymnaea peregra (Müller, 1774)
Planorbis planorbis (Linnaeus, 1758)
Anisus vortex (Linnaeus, 1758)
Gyraulis albus (Müller, 1774)

Acroloxus lacustris (Linnaeus, 1758)
Anodonta anatina (Linnaeus, 1758)
Anodonta cygnea (Linnaeus, 1758)
Pseudanodonta complanata (Rossmassler, 1835)
Unio pictorum (Linnaeus, 1758)
Corbicula fluminea (Müller, 1774)
Sphaerium corneum (Linnaeus, 1758)
Musculum corneum (Linnaeus, 1758)
Pisidium henslowanum (Sheppard, 1823)

BOOK REVIEW

by Kevin Brown

Catalog of Dealers' Prices for Shells, Marine, Land & Freshwater

edited by Tom Rice, 21st Edition 2004. U.S. \$ 25.00. Ringbound

Familiarly known as "Rice's Prices" this annual publication has long been an invaluable aid to the shell collector. I have regularly recommended it both as a standard source of values, and as a quick and handy reference for authors and dates of description which are so often omitted from popular identification guides.

As with previous editions this book gives the values of thousands of species based on dozens of U.S. Dealers' lists issued in the previous year.

In the introduction to this latest edition the Editor writes "This new edition of our catalogue is arriving nearly a year later than originally planned. We decided that in order to issue both a printed and a CD version we would have to change the format and re-enter all the data.....". Given that these changes considerably alter this familiar work, I felt that a full review might be useful to readers even though this is a new edition rather than a totally new publication. The following comments all refer to the printed edition rather than the CD – which I have not seen; indeed I have not yet seen the CD offered for sale.

The bulk of the text is now divided into five columns: Genus, alphabetically listed; Species, alphabetically listed within Genus; Author; Date of description and Value (in U.S. \$). Unlike previous editions there is no space between the various Genera, marking this more like reading a telephone directory. Space within each column is limited so that longer names are sometimes cut short, for example Benthoclione (sic) instead of Benthoclionella; this is more common at the start of the book, later the problem is overcome by simply using a smaller type face, although reducing an already small print may in itself cause problems for some readers. In the entry for *Strombus depauperatus*, the Author Dautzenberg & Bouge are printed in a space of thirteen mm by less than 1mm high

There is another noticeable change in format part way through the text. At the start each Genus follows on without any preliminary entry. From *Gafrarium* to *Galegna* each Genus entry commences in the format "*Gafrarium* (Veneridae) Roding 1798" – indicating the Family together with Author Date for the Genus. From *Gemma* onwards the Family is again omitted although Author and Date of the Genus are given. To change format part way through the book suggests that the contents were not thought through sufficiently before starting. I regret the omission of the Family from the Genus entries which can be helpful where Generic names are similar. *Nassa*, *Nassaria*, *Nassarina* and *Nassarius* can easily confuse – particularly for less experienced collectors but *Nassa* (Muricidae), *Nassaria* (Buccinidae), *Nassarina* (Columbellidae) and *Nassarius* (Nassariidae) immediately sorts out any problems. Hopefully Author and Dates of the Genera can be consistently given throughout in the next edition.

It is understandable that errors should creep in especially given the large amount of data which has been re-entered for the new format. However there are far too many errors in this edition. To give a few examples; *Ovula ovum* is valued at \$33.00 - \$5.00 obviously \$3.00 - \$5.00 but less easy to spot if the entry had just read \$33.00. *Strombina monfilsii* Emerson 19993 (sic) – again obviously 1993, but finding five entries like this in three pages does not give confidence. Simple spelling mistakes abound but how did *Mitra eomgema* (sic!) ever pass proof reading? – in case you wonder this should read *Mitra melongena*, though I had to check the alphabetical listings in a previous edition to work this out. I was also puzzled as to why the Genus *Paraphanta* (sic) appeared after *Partulina* before I twigged that the spelling should be *Paryphanta* and that all 25 entries for the Genus are incorrectly given.

In previous editions many Genera had cross references to related Genera – thus *Ancilla* referred you to *Alcospira*, *Amalda* and *Baryspira*. Very useful where dealers may place a species in several

different Genera depending on which reference books they use. This has been lost with the change of format.

Similarly in previous editions a number of Genera were used in the broadest sense, thus all the Ovulidae were listed under Ovula, cross referenced under the various Genera – “Phenacovolva see Ovula”. In the Species entries under Ovula, “dancei (PH)” indicated the Species Phenacovolva dancei with a key to the Generic abbreviations at the beginning of the section. This was ideal as half the dealers will use Ovula for all of Ovulidae and half will use the individual Genera more strictly. These keyed lists for Mitra, Epitonium, Ovula etc. are all now gone in the new edition. The Generic cross references are still given, but all the additional information has gone leaving a long list of Species but no indication of which belong to which Genus within the Ovulidae. All because the new entries had to ‘conform’ with the new format, what a loss.

Moving the four, more detailed, special sections on Conus, Cypraea, Murex (s.l.) and Voluta (s.l.) to the back of the book is a definite improvement. It has made it much easier to find other Genera without getting bogged down in 30 pages of Cones.

The new edition runs to 139 pages plus the unnumbered special sections. The 1998 edition which I have been using (I update every 4-5 years) ran to 162 pages plus the special sections. The reduction in number of pages is undoubtedly due to the unbroken columns of text. This edition would be much easier to use with a line space between each Genus, and preferably with the Land/Freshwater section starting on a new page rather than running from Zonulispira to Abbottella without a break.

This continues to be an excellent reference work with an enormous amount of information and is very good value for money. However it is far less ‘user friendly’ when compared with previous editions and some information has regrettably and in my view unnecessarily been lost through the changes in format. I will continue to use the work heavily and to recommend it, but wish they had not changed the format.

THE FOLLOWING EXTRACT WAS SENT IN BY TERRY
WIMBLETON
IT IS FROM THE MAGAZINE FOR PAIN CONCERN (SPRING/SUMMER
2004 P. 11)

CAN CONE SNAILS NAIL PAIN?

The shell of the cone snail is the kind of beautiful memento one might keep after a holiday walk on a tropical beach. Its occupant, a small and poisonous sea snail, has been keeping scientists interested for a couple of decades. The reason is that these tiny animals are believed to contain more substances of potential benefit to man than any other creature. Trials are about to start of prialt, a synthetic pain killer for sufferers of chronic intractable pain that is based on cone snail venom or conotoxin. It is reportedly 1000 times more powerful than morphine and yet does not have problems of tolerance or addiction. The reason cone snails have so many active substances in their bodies is that they have developed a poisonous harpoon which kills their pray. In order to prevent the pray becoming immune to the poison, they produce 1000's of different chemicals, which they then mix into a lethal cocktail. This means each species of cone snail (about 500 are known) has up to 100 different conotoxins. Many of these conotoxins are potentially useful in medicine. In particular anti-epileptics may be discovered, but drugs specifically targeting chronic pain are the most advanced in development.

A NEW FORM OF *LEPORICYPRAEA MAPPA VIRIDIS*

by John Batt

If you recall in the previous issue of Pallidula I remarked within my article on shelling in New Caledonia upon an unusual population of *Leporicypraea mappa viridis* from deeper water on the main reef 9 miles off Noumea. This form of *viridis* has been known for some time but as far as I know has not been collected in recent years and has never had a name attributed to it.

I stated that I wish to propose the forma name *L. mappa viridis* "*kanakinus*" (relating to the New Caledonian native kanak people) as an ideal forma name for these very different map cowries. I mentioned that the three specimens I acquired on the trip differed from typical *L. mappa viridis* as well as *L. mappa viridis* "*montrouzieri*" having far more callus around the margins and a somewhat rhomboidal shape, extending further at the canals and most importantly lacking the prominent dark basal blotch as always seen in the other map cowries from this area. There are no significant differences in the fossula but the teeth of "*kanakinus*" seem to be a brighter more solid orange than its relatives in the area. It seems to me to be a great shame that such an unusual population of this subspecies should be ignored and I firmly believe that due to its consistent differences certainly deserves a name at least for the time being at forma level. It may well represent a link between the nominate *L. mappa mappa* and *L. mappa viridis*. Pictured below are the three specimens in question showing dorsal and basal views and below them on the right a typical *L. mappa viridis* from Guam, and on the left a typical specimen of *L. mappa viridis* "*montrouzieri*" for comparison.

These three specimens were all collected by divers under coral heads at 24 – 25 metres in the late 1980's off Noumea, New Caledonia.



Holotype: *L. m. "kanakinus"*
85.7mm - Collection J. Batt



Paratype 1: *L. m. "kanakinus"*
80.5mm – Collection J. Batt



Paratype 2: *L. m. "kanakinus"*
79mm - Collection J. Joseph



***L. m. viridis* "*montrouzieri*"** Dautzenberg, 1903
New Caledonia, Goro Bay,
Collected under dead coral at 8 metres
66.4mm – Collection J. Batt.



L. m. viridis (Kenyon, 1902)
Guam, collected under dead coral at 12 metres.
49.9mm –Collection J. Batt.

The new *L. mappa viridis* "*kanakinus*" differs from the nominate *L. mappa mappa* by its far more callus margins and extended broad flanging canals, as well as having much brighter teeth and larger more crowded marginal spotting.