

PALLIDULA

**VOL. 40 • NO. 1 •
APRIL 2010**

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



EDITORIAL

This winter has for certain been a rather long drawn out season and I know that for many there have been good shelling possibilities missed, but with springtime approaching I for one am looking forward to getting back into the swing of things and this year looks to be the busiest yet for BSCC members.

Firstly please make sure to look carefully at the "Dates for your Diary" below, as there have been some changes to the norm and an additional event added.

The Shell convention will be held as usual on the last Saturday of April, the Whichers' Get Together in York is next at the end of May followed by the Scottish Shell Show in late June. This has been moved from early in the year as it was felt that people would prefer travelling to Scotland in the summer and avoid possible bad weather in the winter. Both Daphne and Derek Howlett have announced that they will be holding their Summer Get Together in early July at their home in Norfolk which I know will be popular with the many members that enjoyed previous weekends there. The date for the Editor's Get Together remains in early August and the Shell Show as usual on the last Saturday in October.

For some time now we have been trying to arrange events on a monthly basis throughout the Spring and Summer and now we have a really good calendar for this year and hopefully so long as they are well attended carry on for years to come.

As you can see this is a bumper packed edition of Pallidula for which I am greatly appreciative to all who have contributed so please keep these articles rolling in so that I can continue to fill our publication to its capacity.

The Editor

Dates for your Diary

Plans are already in hand for future Club Meetings. Members may like to note the following dates:-

- | | |
|--|---|
| Saturday 24th April 2010 | - Shell Convention and Auction at Theydon Bois Community Centre |
| Saturday 29th May 2010 | - The Whichers' Shell Day at Deighton, York |
| Saturday 26th June 2010 | - Scottish Shell Show in Edinburgh |
| Saturday 10th July 2010 | - Howletts' Shell Get-together in Norfolk |
| Saturday 7th August 2010 | - Editor's Get-together at Yateley, Hampshire |
| Saturday 30th October 2010 | - Shell Show at Theydon Bois Community Centre |

SECRETARY'S NOTES

It's time for our AGM again, and the relevant papers are enclosed with this issue of *Pallidula*. Most of the Committee have served their 3-year term, and elections will be held. I know my plea gets repetitive, but do please consider putting your self forwards. It is also time to elect a new President, so get your nominations in by 31 March. If you have any matters which you would like to raise at the AGM please let me know by 18 April.

I will reinforce the Editor's comments about our meetings; the Club has increased the number of gathering at which you can meet others with similar interests, but they will only be successful if members support them; they really are most enjoyable, so if you haven't been to these before, do give them a try.

Please don't forget to log onto THE BRITISH SHELL COLLECTORS CLUB website and check out our regular updates and articles: www.britishshellclub.org.uk

THE 2009 BSCC SHELL SHOW

Last year's Show, held on 31st October, was enjoyed by a good number of members and visitors alike despite some challenging weather conditions experienced by many on the way to Theydon Bois.

Those who braved the elements were met with the usual exciting variety of dealers' tables and an impressive display of exhibits from members old and new. They were also able to enjoy a rare autumn auction which is always fun and enables members to avail themselves of some attractive lots while generating income for the Club.

Interestingly, the Show entries tended to cluster into a few preferred categories with, yet again, the Foreign category being uncontested (somebody is going to get wise to that one soon I'm sure), while One Species proved increasingly popular with no fewer than 7 entries, which I think may be an all-time high for any single category in the Show. Judging, a tricky task requiring some considerable deliberation, were Judith Nelson, Mick Davies and Dave Rolfe, to whom the Club offers its deep gratitude. The results were:

One Species	1 st	John Llewellyn-Jones: <i>Nucella lapillus</i>
	2 nd	Ken Wye: <i>Vittina waigiensis</i>
	3 rd	Kevin Brown: <i>Chicoreus strigatus</i>
	4 th	Graham Saunders: <i>Flexopecten hyalinus</i>
	5 th	Selina Wilkins: <i>Melo broderipii</i>
	Highly Commended:	Andy McNaughton: Super Sexy Stolina
	Highly Commended:	Ken Wye: <i>Smaragdia rangiana</i>
One Genus/Family	3 rd	Peter Siggers: <i>Spondylus</i>
Shell Photography	1 st	Andy Wakefield: <i>Cepaea</i> "Oi! What are you looking at?"
	2 nd	Paul Wilkins: <i>Ensis americanus</i>
	3 rd	Sara Cannizzaro: Shellfish
	4 th	Andy Wakefield: <i>Murex regius</i>
Spots & Dots	2 nd	Kevin Brown: <i>Conus leopardus</i>
Shellomania	1 st	Ken Wye: White Shells Chequerboard
	2 nd	James Fray: Limmerickidae
	3 rd	David McKay: What is a species
Junior: 12 to 16	1 st	Theo Tamblyn: Molluscs of the Red Crag
	2 nd	Sophie Ward: Pretty Purple Patterned Shells
Junior: 11 & under	1 st	Christopher Wilkins: Pink Murex
	2 nd	Adam Ward: Murex Mania

COA Award (Best overall exhibit): Ken Wye: White Shells Chequerboard

Peter Oliver Cup (Most educational exhibit): John Llewellyn-Jones: *Nucella lapillus*

John Fisher Trophy (Best junior exhibit): Theo Tamblyn: Molluscs of the Red Crag

Scotia Shield (Promoting interest in British Shells): John Llewellyn-Jones: *Nucella lapillus*

Walter Karo Trophy (Shell of the Show): Sophie Ward: *Neotrionia bednalli*

One critical comment from the judges comments was that they expect more than just a display of drawers pulled from a collection but, on the plus side they were hugely impressed by the attention to detail and imagination shown by many of the exhibits. It was very encouraging to see multiple exhibits in both the junior categories it is evident that the John Fisher Trophy is becoming a popular prize, although Theo Tamblyn appears to have a rather established hold on it at the moment. It may also be encouraging to all to see a non-scientific exhibit winning the COA award, with stunning design and specimens really impressing the judges (as you may recall it did the previous year with Koen Fraussen's *Palliolum* exhibit, which would not have looked out of place in the Tate Gallery.

Lastly, thanks should be expressed to all those who contribute their time and effort to make the day the successful event that it is. It is impossible to name them all but particular gratitude it extended to Selina and her catering gang, Judith Nelson for overseeing the Bring and Buy, John Fisher for the auction, and Daphne and Derek Howlett for principally manning the Club Table, greeting people and making them feel very welcome, which indeed they are.

Simon Taylor, Show Secretary.

THE BSCC 2010 CONVENTION

Normal service resumes this year with the Club Convention returning to the last Saturday in April, the 24th. Dealers are requested to get all table requests to the show secretary as early as possible to avoid disappointment. The table charge remains unchanged so continues to be excellent value.

The main event of the day, aside from the usual social and dealing sides, will be the auction arranged by John Fisher. There will also be a very short AGM held at some point. As usual the Club table will be offering a wide array of plastic boxes and bags, etc. plus Club badges, and the 'Bring and Buy' box will be supervised as usual by Judith Nelson (donations of unwanted specimens for the box are always welcome).

If anybody would like to bring any exhibits they would like to display these are very welcome indeed. You are asked to let the show secretary know in advance please, just so that accommodation within the Hall can be planned in advance as much as possible.

Doors are open from 7:30am for dealers and helpers with general admittance, free of charge as usual, from 9:00am. I look forward to seeing you there.

Simon Taylor, Show Secretary.

CORRECTION TO BOOK REVIEW ON "THE LIVING OVULIDAE" FROM THE OCTOBER 2009 ISSUE

by Julian Joseph

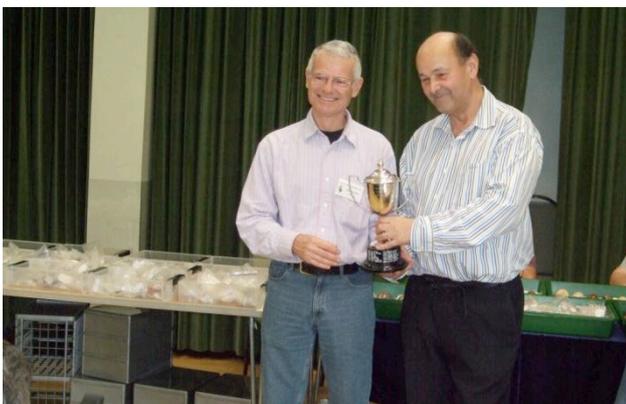
Missing last paragraph

In my opinion, this is one of the best shell books published in recent years. I have seen some which seem to me to be little more than photograph albums. Not so this one. This book provides a large amount of very valuable information, and will be an important resource not only to collectors but also to professional malacologists. I am sure it will inspire many collectors, especially, perhaps, cowry collectors, to take an interest in these intriguing gastropods. I unhesitatingly recommend it.

OCTOBER 2009 SHELL SHOW GALLERY



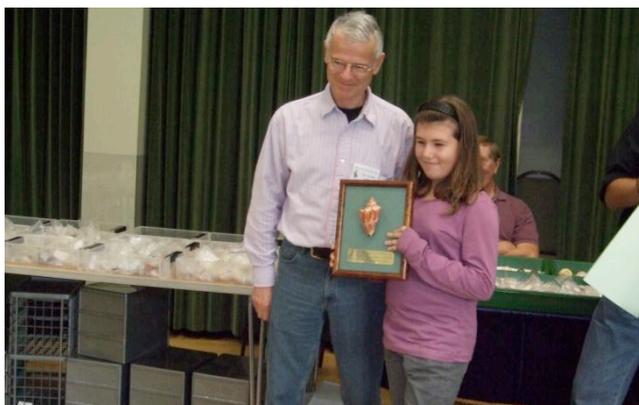
Ken Wye receiving The COA Award for his exhibit of white shell chequer board



John Llewellyn-Jones winner of The Peter Oliver Cup and The Scotia Shield for his exhibit of Nucella Lapillus



Theo Tamblin winner of the John Fisher Trophy for his exhibit of Mollusc of the Red Crag



Sophie Ward winner of The Walter Karo Award for her specimen of *Neotrignia bednalli*



SHELL SHOW 2010

This year's Show is at Theydon Bois Village Hall on 30th October. The categories are as follows:

- 
1. **One Species.**
 2. **One Genus or Family.**
 3. **British – includes marine, land or freshwater.**
 4. **Foreign – includes marine, land or freshwater.**
 5. **Self-made Shell Art**
 6. **Shell Photography**
 7. **Shellomania – any entry that does not fit into any of the above classes.**
 8. **Junior: 16 & under**
 9. **Junior: 11 & under**

Exhibits under the 'Foreign' category have continued to be few and far between so members thinking of breaking their virginity as exhibitors might perhaps consider this option as an easy target. Hopefully all you creatives out there will have noticed that 'Self-made Shell Art' makes a return again as a specific category so do get working and let us see the fruits of your labour (and do please note the stress is on the 'self-made' part of the title).

Incidentally, the word 'members' was used in the previous paragraph so it is perhaps worth stressing again that in order to exhibit in the Show you should be a paid-up member of the Club. Mind you, our subs remain very reasonable and you can even join on the day of the Show if necessary.

Dealer Shell of the Day:

This is an innovation aimed at getting the dealers a bit more involved on the day. Each dealer is invited to set aside a single shell on their table(s) as an entry for this competition. It should be labelled but not actually offered for sale until after the award is made. Each dealer's specimen will be uniquely numbered and then the award can be decided by members' ballot. It's just a bit of fun but it's hoped all the dealers will make an effort to enter. All shells can of course be sold after the award has been made, presumably with the winner fetching something of a premium (and, no doubt, gaining the dealer plenty of free mentions on the website and within these pages).

The remainder of the Show remains unchanged, with the judging being carried out using the now familiar scoring system and with the photographic competition continuing to be judged by members' ballot (yes, I know, that means two ballots – I'm sure we will all cope). For now the paper sheet will continue to be distributed with the next edition of Pallidula but entries can also be made by email (abmanuk@hotmail.com). Please do be sure to inform the show secretary in advance if you wish to enter, otherwise it may not be possible, and to give as much detail as possible. Members are also asked to remember the strict length limit of 4 feet per exhibit.

Two-day Events?:

No, not a new 2012 Olympic sport for lazy horse riders, but you may recall from the last issue of Pallidula the suggestion that the Club try to extend either its spring Convention or autumn Show over a whole weekend and a request for feedback from the membership. Thanks to those who voiced opinions though the general response was a stonewall silence. As a result the committee have decided to maintain the current arrangements for now, but with a 'never-say-never' rider. We are all keen to develop and improve the Club and its activities so all should feel free to make suggestions and voice thoughts and ideas.

Simon Taylor, Show Secretary

SHELL COLLECTING FROM A COMMERCIAL SCALLOP DREDGER

by David W McKay

During the late spring of 2008 and 2009 I had the opportunity to carry out some shell collecting from the 'Kestrel', a commercial scallop dredger fishing out of Buckie, Moray, Scotland.

The purpose of the exercise was twofold, firstly to fill in the gaps in my collection of molluscs from the Moray Firth and secondly to ascertain whether or not the single specimen of *Calliostoma papillosum* (da Costa 1778) I had found in 1994 was an isolated occurrence.

The 'Kestrel' is a converted beam trawler, which tows a total of twenty eight dredges in two arrays of fourteen. Each dredge is 90cm wide and has a bag consisting of steel rings 10cm in diameter. Tows last for two hours and the vessel fishes around the clock. I restricted my sampling to the hours of daylight approx 5am to 10pm. On hauling the contents of the dredges are emptied onto conveyor belts, one on each side of the vessel and the crew pick out the commercial sized scallops before the trash is dumped over the side (figures below). The sorting of the catch once it is on board takes between 30 and 40 minutes.



Most of my previous experience of scallop dredging had been as a fishery scientist operating on a relatively small research vessel. We towed two rigs of three dredges, each tow lasting half an hour. Unlike commercial fishing boats the research vessels, which were carrying out surveys of the distribution and abundance of scallops, moved fishing grounds after each haul. The number of hauls made varied between six and ten. On these surveys I kept a sample of the trash and examined it at my leisure at the end of the normal working day. Such an approach was not possible on the 'Kestrel'. I soon worked out a plan of action which involved positioning myself where the main conveyor discharged onto the shorter sorting one and simply picking out everything I saw of interest. No time was available during the picking out process to examine the collected molluscs as to condition.

At first I had a tendency to spend too much time on the large whelks which have always been a special interest of mine. However I soon weaned myself off this and tried to concentrate on collecting as wide a range of species as possible from each haul. I found that if I wanted to get specimens of the smaller species of scallops it was essential to collect lots of dead shells, especially articulated specimens of *Arctica islandica*, *Pecten maximus* and *Glycymeris glycymeris*. From past experience I knew that I could increase the numbers of small bivalves and gastropods that I obtained by examining the gut contents of starfish, particularly *Astropecten irregularis*. Some of the large bivalves, particularly *Arctica islandica*, *Acanthocardia echinata* and *Laevicardium crassum* are much more fragile than they look and I soon found that the only way to obtain whole specimens of these was to take the opportunity to examine as much of the catch as possible while the crew carried out the regular maintenance on the dredges.

I collected my first specimen of *Calliostoma papillosum* on the second haul of the 2008 trip and collected some twenty five specimens during the whole trip, averaging between one and two per haul.

On the 2009 trip I was even more successful collecting almost twice as many specimens. Although reasonably large this species looked very fragile to me and I was concerned that even if I found it the majority of specimens most would be broken. In reality nothing could be further from the truth and on both trips combined saw less than ten shells which were so badly damaged as to be useless as specimens. The second objective of my trips on the 'Kestrel' had been achieved; I had found that *Calliostoma papillosum* is widespread over the scallop grounds to the east of Smith Bank in the Moray Firth. So far I have been unable to ascertain the situation elsewhere in the Moray Firth. Over time I hope to arrange trips on other vessels working on different grounds in the Moray Firth. I have not seen any specimens of *Calliostoma papillosum* in the dredge hauls I have carried out from my own small boat off the southern coast of the Moray Firth. However the single dredge I am using from my boat is only fifty cm wide and I only tow for ten minutes per haul. I try to go dredging once a week for between three and four hours, but bad weather and other commitments mean I only average one dredging trip a fortnight. During this time I only average six hauls as I like to change grounds between each haul. Also I have to be about five miles off the harbour before I get to suitable dredging ground as the inshore grounds are extremely stony. The net result is that in the two years I have been dredging in this area I have only sampled a tiny fraction of the area that the 'Kestrel' covers in one haul.

When it comes to deciding whether the first objective has been achieved I am delighted every time I add a specimen from a new area to my collection. It has been some time since I added a new species to my collection from Scottish waters, but I live in hope and will continue to sail on the 'Kestrel' and other fishing vessels as long as I am fit and the skipper and crew are prepared to take me. Others will get a more complete impression of the success of shell collecting from commercial scallopers by examining the table on the following page.

I thoroughly enjoyed the experience and still remember the thrill of recovering an intact *Erato voluta* from amongst the tons of stones and debris of a dredge haul.

I am left to speculate as to what has caused the appearance of *Calliostoma papillosum* in the Moray Firth. All the authorities I have looked at indicate that this species is entirely absent from the North Sea and where it does occur on the west coast of Scotland it is extremely rare. In my over forty years of shell collecting in the Moray Firth I never saw this species before 1994. Indeed in all my collecting around Scotland I never saw this species before 1993. This is a large spectacular shell and I cannot believe that I would have missed it if it was there. According to Fretter and Graham (1977) nothing is known about the breeding and growth of this species. They however infer from the data available on other species of *Calliostoma* that this species has no free living larval phase. Without a free living larval phase I find it hard to explain the rapid expansion in the distribution of this species. Other genera of British molluscs notably *Littorina* show considerable variation in breeding strategy between species living in very close geographic and biological habitats and far be it for me to question the conclusions of Fretter and Graham (1977): the inference they make is unsubstantiated by any known data and until data is available to the contrary I will continue to believe that *Calliostoma papillosum* must have a free living larval phase.

Acknowledgements

These trips were only possible because the Skipper Mr Derek Wood was kind enough to take me. I also thank the members of the crew, Sherriff, Alan, Philip and Leo, for their patience when I got in their way and Jake the cook for all the times I took over his galley cooker to boil up my precious specimens.

Reference

Fretter V. and Graham A. 1977. The Prosobranch Molluscs of Britain and Denmark. Part 2: Trochacea.. *The Journal of Molluscan Studies*, Supplement 3

Mollusc species collected from the Moray Firth on Kestrel in 2008 and 2009			
Species marked with * were collected only as dead shells			
2008		2009	
CHITONS	BIVALVES	CHITONS	BIVALVES
<i>Lepidopleurus asellus</i>	<i>Glycymeris glycymeris</i>	<i>Lepidopleurus asellus</i>	<i>Nucula nitidosa</i>
	<i>Modiolus modiolus</i>		<i>Nucula nucleus</i>
GASTROPODS	<i>Modiolarca tumida</i>	GASTROPODS	<i>Nucula sulcata</i>
<i>Emarginula fissura</i>	* <i>Pinna fragilis</i>	<i>Emarginula fissura</i>	<i>Arca tetragona</i>
<i>Gibbula tumida</i>	<i>Pecten maximus</i>	<i>Gibbula tumida</i>	<i>Glycymeris glycymeris</i>
<i>Calliostoma papillosum</i>	<i>Chlamys opercularis</i>	<i>Calliostoma papillosum</i>	<i>Modiolus modiolus</i>
<i>Calliostoma zizyphinum</i>	<i>Palliolium striatum</i>	<i>Calliostoma zizyphinum</i>	<i>Modiolarca tumida</i>
<i>Cantharidus montagui</i>	<i>Palliolium tigrinum</i>	<i>Cantharidus montagui</i>	* <i>Pinna fragilis</i>
<i>Turritella communis</i>	<i>Similipecten similis</i>	<i>Turritella communis</i>	<i>Pecten maximus</i>
<i>Aporrhais pespelecani</i>	<i>Monia patelliformis</i>	<i>Aporrhais pespelecani</i>	<i>Chlamys opercularis</i>
<i>Capulus ungaricus</i>	<i>Heteranomia squamula</i>	<i>Capulus ungaricus</i>	* <i>Chlamys distorta</i>
<i>Balcis alba</i>	<i>Astarte montagui</i>	<i>Lamellaria perspicua</i>	<i>Palliolium striatum</i>
<i>Velutina plicitalis</i>	* <i>Astarte sulcata</i>	<i>Velutina velutina</i>	<i>Palliolium tigrinum</i>
<i>Amauropsis islandicus</i>	<i>Montacuta substriata</i>	<i>Erato voluta</i>	<i>Similipecten similis</i>
<i>Natica alderi</i>	* <i>Lucinoma borelais</i>	<i>Trivia arctica</i>	<i>Monia patelliformis</i>
<i>Natica catena</i>	<i>Acanthocardia echinata</i>	* <i>Amauropsis islandicus</i>	<i>Heteranomia squamula</i>
<i>Natica montagui</i>	<i>Parvicardium ovale</i>	<i>Natica alderi</i>	<i>Astarte montagui</i>
<i>Buccinum undatum</i>	<i>Laevicardium crassum</i>	* <i>Natica catena</i>	<i>Astarte sulcata</i>
<i>Neptunea antiqua</i>	<i>Spisula elliptica</i>	<i>Natica montagui</i>	<i>Kellia suborbicularis</i>
<i>Colus gracilis</i>	* <i>Lutraria angustior</i>	<i>Buccinum undatum</i>	<i>Lucinoma borealis</i>
<i>Lora turricula</i>	* <i>Ensis arcuatus</i>	<i>Neptunea antiqua</i>	<i>Myrtea spinifera</i>
	<i>Arcopagia crassa</i>	<i>Colus gracilis</i>	<i>Acanthocardia echinata</i>
	* <i>Abra prismatica</i>	<i>Colus jeffreysianus</i>	<i>Parvicardium ovale</i>
SCAPHOPODS	* <i>Gari fervensis</i>	<i>Lora turricula</i>	<i>Laevicardium crassum</i>
<i>Dentalium entalis</i>	* <i>Solecurtus scopula</i>	<i>Philbertia gracilis</i>	<i>Spisula elliptica</i>
	<i>Arctica islandica</i>	<i>Mangelia nebula</i>	* <i>Lutraria angustior</i>
	<i>Dosinia exoleta</i>	<i>Doto fragilis</i>	* <i>Ensis arcuatus</i>
CEPHALOPODS	<i>Dosinia lupinus</i>		* <i>Ensis siliqua</i>
<i>Eledone cirrhosa</i>	<i>Venus fasciata</i>		* <i>Arcopagia crassa</i>
	<i>Venus casina</i>	SCAPHOPODS	* <i>Tellina fabula</i>
	<i>Venus ovata</i>	<i>Dentalium entalis</i>	<i>Abra prismatica</i>
	<i>Venus striatula</i>		* <i>Gari fervensis</i>
	<i>Gafrarium minimum</i>		* <i>Gari tellinella</i>
	<i>Venerupis rhomboides</i>	CEPHALOPODS	* <i>Solecurtus scopula</i>
	<i>Hiatella arctica</i>	<i>Eledone cirrhosa</i>	* <i>Dosinia exoleta</i>
	<i>Xylophaga dorsalis</i>	<i>Loligo forbesii</i>	* <i>Dosinia lupinus</i>
	* <i>Cochlodesma praetenuae</i>	<i>Todaropsis ebelanae</i>	<i>Arctica islandica</i>
	* <i>Thracia villiosiuscula</i>		<i>Venus casina</i>
			<i>Venus fasciata</i>
			<i>Venus ovata</i>
			<i>Venus striatula</i>
			<i>Gafrarium minimum</i>
			<i>Venerupis rhomboides</i>
			* <i>Mya truncata</i>
			<i>Hiatella arctica</i>
			<i>Lyonsia norwegica</i>
			* <i>Cochlodesma praetenuae</i>

AN INTERVIEW WITH KEN WYE

by Selina Wilkins

After my last interview with Koen Fraussen, there was interest from club members to do another interview. After much thought, I have interviewed our new club president, Ken Wye, who will be well known for his stall in the corner at shell shows and conventions -but how well do you know him and his passion for shells? Here are Ken's answers to my questions.

I first found the name, Ken Wye, on a shell book. How many books have you written and did the publishers come to you or did you go to them?

I have written three books - Mitchell Beazely Pocket Guide to Shells (1989), The Encyclopedia of Shells (various reprints 1991-96) and the latest beginners guide The Shell Handbook (2003), later reprinted in a smaller version (2005/6). These are now sadly out of print. Publishers in all cases approached me to write their books.

When did you join the BSCC? And tell me about your many exhibits.

I joined the club, I believe, in about 1975, and was honoured in 1977 to have received one of the first awards for the Exhibit of the Show - called then The DuPont Trophy. It still hangs proudly on my office wall. I exhibited at the Autumn shows for many years. My displays were usually of a more artistic rather than a scientific nature and I was always trying to think of new and varied ways to display my shells. Amongst my favourite displays featured were pure, white shells on a black background with an emphasis on the shape (which won the DuPont Trophy); shells portraying all colours of the rainbow/spectrum, laid on pastel coloured tissue – 1978; and in 1981 I exhibited all orange shells on black geometrically cut card in a 'Visual Beauty' (colour) class and won first for this.



Colours of the spectrum



Du Pont trophy winner

At one particular time I was a little bored with over-scientific displays, so I decided to create something for the show which would hopefully have the judges guessing! I gathered together tiny pieces of grit, sand, small protoconchs and broken tips from tiny shells, etc and placed each piece in a tiny magnifying box and invented both generic and specific names and authors and called the exhibit 'The Microshells of Tristan de Cunha' - supposedly collected by a retired priest, Father Egan!! Well - it DID have them guessing and they spent ages pouring over the boxes and studying the names. I think it may have been Peter Dance (bright spark) who found a discrepancy in a name or author's date, or whatever, and the game was up. Regrettably the judging team didn't have the nerve to award me a prize, but several members with a sense of humour congratulated me on my effort!

Another, hopefully, ground-breaking exhibit was a joint effort with my good friend Dick Plester, when we created an 'Edible Mollusc' stall where not only could you see the edible species, but actually EAT the fish as well. Can't recall how that effort fared!

After many dormant years, I exhibited my 'fake' Wentletrap in 2007.

When did you start collecting? What do you collect?

I started collecting/buying shells back in 1965 when I chanced upon the original Eatons Shell Shop off Charing Cross Road in central London. I purchased shells for art reasons (drawing and painting) which eventually led to an interest in shells as beautiful natural objects and I became a collector! I shared this new interest with a good friend (whom I still know) and we learnt the Latin names, etc together. The very first book I bought, the Golden Nature Guide by Tucker Abbott, was always an inspiration - I still have it in my library!

Due to frequent home moves of late, most of my reference collection (perhaps for future books?!) is kept in cartons with few on display. My pride was a beautiful shell room/study in my former Victorian house in Leytonstone, where I know that many of club members have visited. Many shells were displayed in home made glass fronted wall cabinets.

I like Gastropods and Bivalves equally, although my most favourite shells are Gastropods! I rarely collected specific families, although at one time or another I majored on Conidae, Pectinidae, Turridae and Cancellaridae.

How big is your reference collection?

Obviously several thousand but I have never counted them. I have many species with numerous variations, etc, which of course would give a false reading, but I'm fascinated by colour and pattern variation in shells!

What are your favourite 10 shells?



Chicoreus palmarosae



Neritina communis

It would be most difficult to name 10 of my favourite species, but amongst them would certainly be:- *Thatcheria mirabilis*, *Epitonium scalare* and *rugosum*, *Chicoreus palma-rosae*, *Astraea heliotropum*, *Neritina communis*, *Stellaria solaris*, *Biplex perca*, *Fimbria soverbii*, *Meiocardia moltkiana*, *Columbarium aapta* and *Fusinus crassiplicatus*
Oops – sorry, that’s 12



Kenneth Wye: A Profile in Paint

Young Kenneth Wye walked into a tiny shop early in 1965 in search of inspiration. An amateur artist with "a pretty foundation class job in a government office," Wye quickly became fascinated by what he found. The fascination grew into a hobby and, before long, into a career.

The shop was Eaton's Shell Shop, established a few years earlier by Frederick Meyer, a World War II airplane frame designer. Despite its rather obscure location, Eaton's had acquired a reputation for reliability and the reputation of a world-class classic.

"I found Eaton and discovered that shells were indeed excellent subjects for art work," Wye recalls now. "In addition, as a collector at heart, I quickly developed an interest in the shells themselves, acquired a small collection, learned their names, and began displaying them at home. A few months later Frederick Meyer offered me a job as a sales assistant."

"In the years that followed, the shop grew, offering worldwide shells, seashells, fossils and other collectibles. I remained on the staff even after Meyer's death in 1980. His widow very generously gave me her share of the business. After several difficult years I was able to negotiate the purchase of the remaining shares from the two Meyer daughters then living in New York. So today I am the proud owner of Eaton's Shell Shop."

There is an interesting story in the shop name. Meyer was nothing if not a determined businessman. His 1950s Right From Vietnam had meant the loss of his progressive leader goods business. On his arrival in London, he quickly set up what became the Eaton's Shell Company, specializing in raffia and cane products.

The name was intended to be "Eaton," after the British school, but one mistake saw how the "t" caught on, but a dot had been retained there more than half a century.

"The idea of selling shells came in the 1950s," according to Kenneth Wye. "Meyer never expected to make a business of it. He recognized it as a niche, however, as shells had declined since the Victorian era of conchological enthusiasm. But the shop obviously met a need, and in time Meyer became London's first and full-time shell dealer since well before World War II."

He also was an early member of the Hawaiian Malacological Society, continuing until the year of his death.

Meyer never separated his shell business from the company which Wye now also owns, rather to his own surprise.

"After more than 40 years at the West End address, Eaton's moved (28th October 1989/20) but under 'the name of problems with landlords, rents, etc.'" as Wye expresses it. Today it is doing business at a new location near Covent Garden.

"I always have been an artist of sorts, having been pretty good at painting and drawing from an early age," Wye goes on. "I had received some nice advice – that I channel my artistic capabilities into a hobby, rather than into a full-time career. My interest has stayed with me although my activity has been sporadic. Largely at the urging of my wife and two daughters, I have been finding an oil painting alone every five years."

"Last year (1989), however, I was motivated to do a watercolor of a couple of shells in my collection. I was pleased enough with the outcome to send out a stamp of £2 for display in the Fall show of the British Shell Collectors Club. I not only received five prizes in the shell art category, but got three commissions from collectors friends."

"At the 1990 Spring Commission I sold that painting and took orders for three larger studies, two of which will go to Belgium."

"I've often asked how I find time to paint. Actually, if I am sufficiently enthused, and if I have orders, I make the time – usually at home in the evening. It helps me succeed from making the shells. Some shell families paint very well. Others, such as the Cypraea, require great concentration to achieve that smooth, glossy look."

In a separate column, Kenneth Wye recently

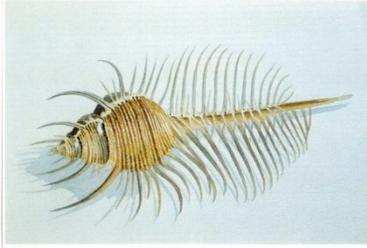
Drawing of Epitonium scalare by Ken Wye

Drawing of Nematopoma aapta by Ken Wye

©CNSF on Page 8

I always enjoy our chats at the shows, and know that your passion of shells, includes your hobby of painting shells. Have you shown them to club members?

I was featured in Hawaiian Shell News in November 1990 when they were up and running! Sadly, it is no longer. I also exhibited at the Napier Hall, some years ago, a series of my shell paintings and would have won exhibit of the show had not the judges thought it wasn't 'shell-like' enough!!! Through this exhibit I gained several commissions. Amongst our members who own my work are Peter Sheasby, Derek Worth, Tom and Celia Pain, Janet Sawyer and a few of our European friends too!



Our newer members won't know of Eaton's Shell Shop in London. Tell me more about your days at Eaton's Shell Shop?

In March 1966, (42 years ago!!) I was employed by the owner of the shop and thus, in time, I became not only a collector but a dealer too. So - I would now consider myself as both.

The shop was a mecca in those days for world-wide collectors. Eaton's, in the post war years, were Britain's pioneers in the shell trade and I still know people who recall 'the old shop'. It was a tragic day when it eventually had to close in 1989. By the early 1960's, Frederick Mayer, the founder owner had already developed and nurtured world-wide contacts and was importing shells from the USA, East Africa, Taiwan and Australia.

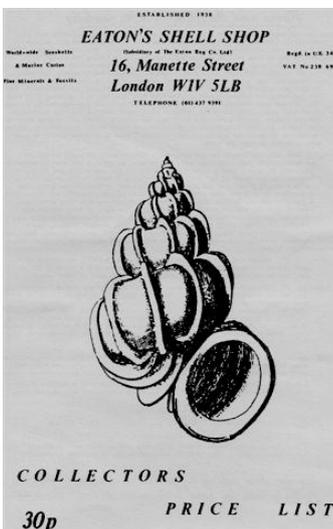
Many and various were our customers - serious collectors, shell crafters, artists, interior designers, people in the theatre and film industry - the list goes on. I suppose I could write a book on the tales from the old shop. The staff always enjoyed working amongst such lovely things - and meeting so many wonderful and interesting people. Unbeknown to most, I kept a scrap book of caricatures I drew of some of our customers whilst they perused our shells - I have temporarily mislaid it, but some of those sketches might



appear in future Pallidulas for your intrigue! Two well-known collectors that come to mind were Roy Ward Dixon - a Canadian TV presenter and inventor of the first TV quiz shows (which included Mr & Mrs). Also, Christopher Lee (Horror film star) who was adorned in Navaho Indian jewellery when he called to buy shells!

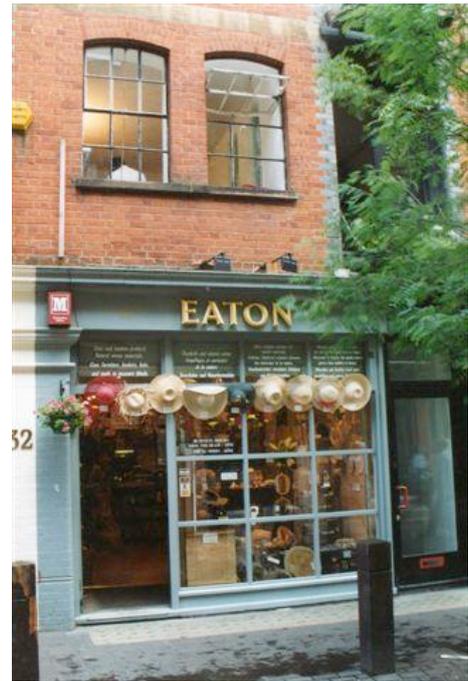
Apart from its exclusive goods, Eaton's was a favourite stop for folk coming from the well known bookshop, Foyles, and thousands of people over the years have been drawn and amazed at the display in our shop windows. Of course, shells were only a part of the business - a potted history can be found on my website, eatonsseashells.co.uk

I recall 2 occasions when serious collectors fell very ill whilst at the shop! Once a wealthy Italian collector, who came periodically, had eaten at Wheelers Fish Restaurant locally and whilst sitting at our counter looking at *Cypraea*, suddenly looked very pale, sweated profusely and then fainted

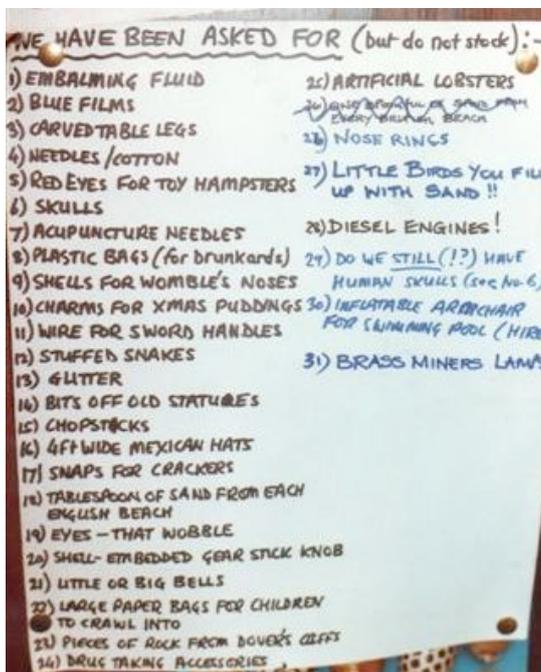


onto the floor! I think it turned out to be bad food poisoning! We also had a regular visit from an elderly Cambridge 'Don' who was such a dear old man - he bought just about everything and couldn't resist shells full stop. His nephew sometimes accompanied him and he often came in with the old boy saying that he'd suffered another (!) stroke. He must have weathered many, but still managed to get to the shop by taxi when in London! One day - low and behold - he had a heart attack right in front of us and his beloved shells. I tried desperately to force one of those 'heart pills' under his tongue to no avail! The ambulance duly arrived and by now he had 'recovered' and was most embarrassed and apologetic and felt himself to be a real nuisance. However, he was taken to the Middlesex Hospital where he charmed the nurses and wanted his recent acquisitions displayed at the bottom of his bed!!

Our busiest time of year was Christmas - the shop was a place where the most exclusive gifts could be bought for the 'person with everything'! The tiny interior of the shop was often packed tight and the front door had to be locked on occasions! We opened a 'new' larger shop in Covent Garden which survived for 10 years until its closure in December 1996.



With Eaton's closed, I know you are still a dealer, with a regular pitch at our shows and conventions. Please explain to me your work, as a dealer, without disclosing trade secrets?



Because both my old shop, and the 'newer' one in Covent Garden had to close - due primarily to excessive overheads - I decided to carry on trading from home without the encumbrance of staff and all the numerous responsibilities of running a prominently sited business. I have owned a website for about 7 or 8 years and of course it helps, but I still get former clients of up to 40 years standing, still contacting me for various things. Some still want to know where the old shops were!

I rely on old established suppliers worldwide - and with the Internet explosion, virtually no shell is now unobtainable - for a price! I find many of my customers prefer to deal with me rather than 'take a chance' on the Internet, although many reliable dealers are in existence there now.

I keep relatively little stock - apart from long established favourites and best sellers - but anyone remotely interested in shells can order most things from me which I endeavour to source within a short timescale. However -

the majority of collectors over the years have constantly asked me for and about the two most famous shells, *Cypraea aurantium* and *Conus gloriamaris* - nothing ever changes!

My thanks to Ken Wye, in helping writing this article, for sharing his love of shells, and also for his patience whilst answering my questions over the web. In the next issue, I hope to have interviewed a collector from the club. If you would like to be interviewed, or can make a suggestion as to whose shell passion should be shared with club members, please let me know.

JOTTINGS FROM SAVOY AND SOUTH BURGUNDY, FRANCE: SNAILS AND ARCHITECTURE

by Peter Topley



Looking for snails at Laives in Burgundy; photo by Alan Thornton

Last year, during a two week holiday in France with my wife and two friends, I was, as usual, looking out for signs of molluscs! I found these in several forms; the animals themselves, their shells, their representation in art and architecture and also in food (snails are popular in Burgundian cooking). Although, perhaps, there was not very much out of the ordinary, it's always worthwhile looking out for shells in all their forms and I thought it worth including some notes here.

For the first week we stayed in the alpine village of Les Allues, near the ski resort of Meribel. Much of the geology here is limestone and following a period of rain, amongst boulders by a local road there were many of the yellow form of the banded snail *Cepaea nemoralis*. The vast majority (I recorded almost 200 within 50m) were of the somewhat unusual band configuration of 00345 with all the bands at or below the periphery. The only sign of the related alpine *Cepaea sylvatica* was the empty shell of a juvenile. Also present in reasonable numbers of juveniles and adults were Roman Snails *Helix pomatia* and large and handsome individuals of the spotted Great Grey Slug *Limax maximus* and orange *Arion ater* agg. (possibly *A. rufus*) slugs. On a steep mossy bank under hazel were found a familiar fauna of snails including the Plaited Door Snail *Cochlodina laminata* and the Ribbed Glass Snail *Vallonia costata*. It was also interesting to see here for comparison both the Bulin snails found in the UK (*Ena montana*, and *Merdigera obscura*), the former much more frequently encountered in continental Europe than here.

The second week was spent in southern Burgundy, in an old cottage on a farm in the village of Laives, between Macon and Chalon-sur-Saone. Here, too, the underlying geology was calcareous and I was pleased to find a rich molluscan fauna in the wall of the small garden attached to the cottage; species here included the Tree Snail *Balea perversa* and the Rock Snail *Pyramidula rupestris*.

The village boasted a fine Romanesque church, St Martins, perched on a hill, a stiff climb through the trees to the south, which was largely abandoned in the nineteenth century for a more convenient new church built in the centre. Around this deserted church were piles of limestone masonry covered in ivy. The weather at this time was very hot with temperatures up to 39°C, but I managed to persuade my friends to join me in a snail hunt (figure above) and we found ten species, including two land operculate snails, the familiar Round-Mouthed Snail *Pomatias elegans* as well as the commonest European cyclophorid *Cochlostoma septemspirale* (figure on right).



Cochlostoma septemspirale – Laives, Burgundy; photo by P. Topley



The Cabinet of Curiosities in Château de Cormatin; photo by P. Topley

Other species included the Chrysalis Snail *Abida secale* and the small clausiliid *Clausilia rugosa parvula*. Examining

boulders around a small chapel in the village also yielded the Lapidary Snail *Helicigona lapicida*, characteristic of limestone areas but

declining in many parts of the UK outside its strongholds of the Peak District and some western counties.

Finally two other shell encounters, one an ancient collection and the second in architecture. Château de Cormatin, between Tournus and Cluny, is a recently restored early 17th century moated château with a rich and colourful interior, including the St. Cecilia study with its decorative panels edged in gold, reflecting the fashion in France, and particularly Paris, during the reign of Louis XIII. Objects of Conchological interest included a “cabinet of curiosities” (pictured above), including *Strombus*, *Haliotis* and other shells, together with the remains of turtles, fish, a human skull and an armadillo. The cabinet dated from origins in the 17th century when such things were fashionable among early collectors and was also perhaps added to later when the house was owned by the 19th century opera impresario Raoul Gunsbourg.



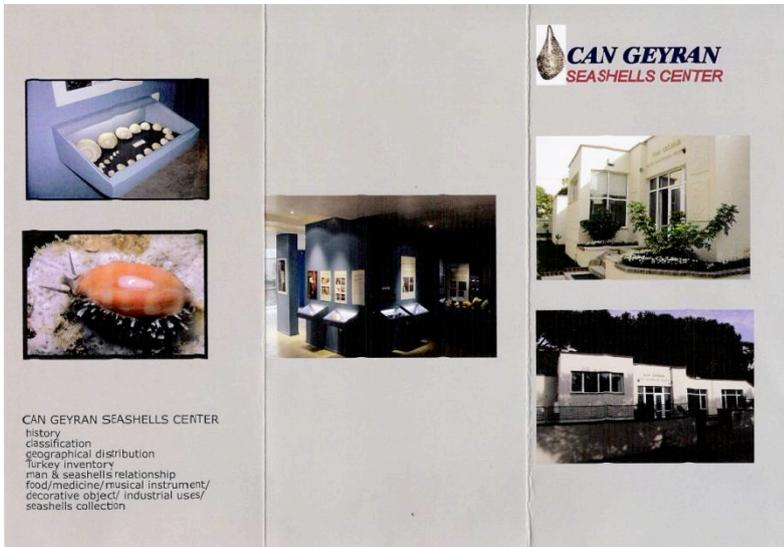
The Hotel de Ville in Paray de Monial; photo by P. Topley

Paray le Monial is an ancient town dominated by its clunaic basilica and a site of Catholic pilgrimage because of the visions of the Sacred Heart given to Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque in the 19th century. In the town, the 16th century Hotel de Ville (Town Hall) is a striking Renaissance style building (1515) which boasts a superbly carved facade, including shell motifs (picture on right).

THE CAN GEYRAN SEASHELL CENTRE

by Gavin Thompson

“If ever you are in Istanbul”



Whilst planning our holiday in Istanbul last September I surfed the Internet for any establishment of “sea shell” interest in that historic City. Up popped “The Can Geyran” Shell Centre and I quickly made contact with Kemal Geyran the Curator and Founder of the only Sea Shell Museum in Turkey. This center is dedicated to his son CAN GEYRAN, who passed away during a paintball game in October 2007, while he was studying at the Virginia University in America.

On Saturday 19th September I finally broke free of the family, Mosques, Markets and Bazaar tours and set off

on my wonderful journey into Asia! You make a delightful journey by tram, ferry and train to the Cevizli Coastline of Istanbul.

The Centre is located in a beautiful, arborial setting at Papatya Sokat No.12 and is open from 11am to 5pm on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Sundays. **Admission is FREE.**

The Can Geyran Centre houses a diverse collection of World Shells and covers a wide range of conchological interests. These include a history of conchology, classification, geographical distribution, man and shell relationships and, of course, The Collection of over 1000 species. The Museum houses an excellent Library of reference books, periodicals and papers from a plethora of professional and amateur authors. These are supported by a computerised reference system linking relevant University and Museum data bases around in Turkey and many other Countries.

There is a developing Website which already provides an interesting, ethical and tasteful introduction to the Centre, its goals and contents. The address being: www.cangshells.com

Kemal Geyran is to be heartily, congratulated on a thoroughly professional establishment that provides a cosmopolitan and extensive service to Conchology that is a joy to visit. – What a ‘Grand Afternoon’ I spent with him there! It is a MUST for any Shell Collector visiting Istanbul.

It is a non profit center founded to display, promote, and protect seashells living in the coasts & seas of the world, especially Turkey.

The Center, besides introducing seashells, establishes an inventory and data base for the researchers.

It sets an example for the mollusca department of a natural history museum which may be founded in Turkey. It aims also to bring together the collectors and related foundations, interacting with various institutions to enrich the collections.

The library within the center is open to the usage of all researches and collectors. The Center will get in touch with the related university departments on the subject.

This center will use the data base system of the “Comparative Zoology Department of Harvard University” and the nomenclature of Paris Natural History Museum (CLEMAM).

Kemal Geyran
cellphone: 0532 3673220
Papatya sok. No 12 Orhanlıtepe (Dragos) Cevizli Istanbul
0216 383 16 62
kgeyran@gmail.com
www.cangshells.com

THE *ENGINA* ENIGMA

by Jonathan Welsh

As some of you may know, in 2007 I decided to start collecting these small colourful Buccinids. I have got to the point where the *Cypraea*, *Strombus* and (to a lesser extent) *Terebra* that I would like to buy are too expensive so I decided to find another family to specialise in as well. I chose something that wouldn't take up a lot of space as my new house is smaller than the old one, were nice to look at and also fitted into my display boxes easily.

On reflection, despite all these positive reasons for recommending them, this was not such a wise idea!

At the present time, there *appear* to be about 50 - 60 species of *Engina* that have been described. However, the number of species keeps being altered and many are being renamed. Fortunately, though, they are still left within the *Buccinidae*, at least for the moment...

Sometimes, even in the most recent books, *Engina* and *Enginopsis* are lumped together under a generic '*Engina*' heading and at other times, in other books, they are separated. To further complicate things, some '*Engina*' are now classified as being in the families *Hesperisternia*, *Clivipolia* (which is a subgenus of *Cantharus*) or even *Enginella* (which is also a subgenus, according to some sources). I think the taxonomic splitters and lumpers have obviously been hard at work!

There is also a lot of confusion over the species themselves – not helped by names such as *Engina pulcher* and *Engina pulchra* (which is now sometimes classified as an *Enginopsis* or *Cantharus* (*Clivipollia*)). Another example is *Engina carinae* that should not be confused with *Engina karinae* (now apparently called *Hesperisternia karinae*) or *E. corinnae*!

It is not just the names that can be confusing - while viewing various websites for information, some species shown could easily be illustrated twice under the same name. For example, *Engina mactanensis* can look very similar to *E. obliquicostata* – both species are from the Philippines to confuse matters further. There also appears to be some sub-speciation that needs to be investigated – *E. turbinella* from the West Indies occurs in a much rarer brown coloured form as well as the normal black and white one. Also from the same region, *Engina pyrostoma* appears to be easily confused with *E. tobagoensis* which also appears to be amazingly variable – some species have a wide lip with bright orange colouration and distinct black nodules on the varices whereas others have smaller thinner lips and look more like *Engina alveolata fusiformis* (although, to be fair, these come from different regions so confusion is not likely!). This particular species is now apparently classified within the family *Anachis*.

There are also problems with the species that are still definitely classified within the *Engina* – looking at my copy of Poppe *et al.*'s Philippine Marine Mollusks, volume 2, plate 321 nos. 7 & 9 illustrate *E. histrio* and *E. fusiformis* respectively and they do look really similar.

I suppose the only real solution is to get the molecular geneticists in to work on this and help sort out this mess using DNA profiling!

I suppose in their favour, at least *Engina* (or whatever) species are not generally expensive and do at least fit nicely into my display boxes!

BOOK REVIEW by Jonathan Welsh**Philippine Marine Mollusks, volume 2**
G.T. Poppe (ed.)

In a previous issue of Pallidula (April 2009, page 10), I wrote a book review of volume 1 of Poppe et al.'s Philippine Marine Mollusks and stated that I was looking forward to the next volume. At the time of that review being written, the next volume was just about published but I didn't get a copy until several months after that, hence the delay in writing a review for volume 2.

Anyway, as with volume 1, this book is published by Conchbooks and it has 394 plates and arranged on 848 pages making it another very substantial tome! Unlike volume 1, there is no need for a long introduction and so this is not included, leaving more room for more amazing plates of photographs. However, as before, there are numerous pictures of unusual and rare shells, many of which are not normally illustrated, and there appears to be special emphasis on the smaller species. This volume continues from where volume 1 left off, starting with the *Buccinidae* and working taxonomically up to *Cancellariidae* and including a large section on *Olividae*, *Conidae* and (especially useful for me) *Terebridae*.

As previously, the plates themselves are arranged in a very orderly manner making them very easy to read and navigate. Conchbooks have stuck to the pattern that they did with volume 1, i.e. facing pages with plates and the text on the left of these. They have also used the same dark background, which makes the shells (especially the spiny *Murex* and *Latiaxis*) stand out very nicely. There are also scattered throughout the book (usually on the side with the text) pictures of the living molluscs, which is very interesting from an aesthetic point of view as well.

Lastly, following the plates and the index, there is also a very small erratum section for volume 1 that, considering the amount of information that was in that book, is a real achievement.

It goes without saying that this is a remarkably useful book, and, as with volume 1, my microshells have been so much easier to identify (see my updated article for further detail on them) and over all, it will be a great help to collectors all over the world.

So, once again, full marks to Poppe *et al.* for a fantastic effort - volume 3 is being published soon and it's getting close to Christmas...!

AN ODD PLACE TO FIND COCKLES**by David W McKay, BSc**

On a recent visit to the Shetland Isles I was engaged in my usual holiday activity of collecting shells.

On the afternoon of 5 August 2009 I was collecting in the voe on the west side of Mavis Grind. I was wading in as deep as I could wearing my chest waders and pulling up the *Laminaria saccharina* plants which abound there to see what was living on the stones they were attached to. I was supremely unsuccessful in finding anything unusual on the stones but on a casual inspection of the fronds I found a total 14 small cockles ranging in length from 5-10mm. I have now identified these as *Parvicardium exiguum* (Gmelin 1791).

I have checked a number of books and find no mention of this behaviour in what is normally thought to be a family of burrowing bivalves.

I would be interested to know if this is a one off or have other members come across this apparently odd behaviour in this or other cockles.

THE MAGIC OF IMM 2009

by S. Peter Dance

Last year I received an offer I could not refuse. Sonia Fuschi, the presiding genius of Shelline Group, based at Monterosi, near Rome, invited me to take part in an event cryptically entitled 'IMM 2009'. I told her I should be honoured to take part in her International Malacological Meeting 2009, an ambitious, non-academic project, aimed at revealing the beauty and wonder of the shell world to the general public. Eventually IMM 2009 became a 5-day convention lasting from Wednesday 7 to Sunday 11 October. The venue was the elegant Grand Hotel Villa Tuscolana, perched high up on a hillside at Frascati, overlooking the Eternal City, 20 kilometres distant. Providing there is no pollution, it is possible to see over Rome, as far as St Peter's Basilica. It would be difficult to find a more perfect setting for such a convention.

Sonia and her business manager Gaetano greeted me on the Wednesday at Ciampino airport and hurried me away to the hotel for a cocktail welcome at lunchtime, after which I took part in a small sightseeing tour of Frascati and its environs, including a visit to the celebrated Villa Belvedere Aldobrandini. In the evening, a small party of us repaired to the Cantina Comandini, to sample the produce of Frascati. Sitting opposite me at table was Claudio Buccarella, violinist with I Musici, the renowned Italian chamber orchestra. After signing for him a couple of my books - and having partaken freely of the excellent local wine - I linked arms with this enthusiastic shell collector and attempted a joint performance of 'O sole mio'. Painful though it must have been for the rest of the party, our performance may have helped establish the convivial atmosphere that pervaded the entire convention subsequently.

By Thursday I had been joined by fellow BSCC members Janet Sawyer and Ingrid Thomas. Koen Fraussen had also arrived from Belgium. The four of us became inseparable. In the morning I enjoyed a sightseeing tour of Rome, accompanied by the Greek shell dealer, Maria Demertzis, and her husband Niko. We explored the Vatican, St Peter's Basilica and the Colosseum - where I lost sight of the tour guide and was rescued by Maria and Niko. After this invigorating but tiring experience we arrived back at the hotel in time for refreshing cups of coffee on the hotel patio, before tucking into the evening meal, a 'Candlelight Roman Dinner'. I slept well.

On the Friday a large Shell Exhibition was set up in specially provided cabinets, while preparations for the Dealers' Bourse were also set in motion, both events scheduled to open the next day. Meanwhile, Janet had discovered a small church in the hotel grounds (she describes the museum incorporated within it in her accompanying article) and we visited it together. I could not resist the temptation to look for snails in the vicinity, but found only a single shell of *Cornu aspersum* Müller. It proved to be the largest shell of this cosmopolitan species I have ever found (with a diameter of 39mm it is large enough to justify the label var. *major* Pascal). That evening the participants made their way to Castell Gandolfo to partake of a gala dinner at the Antico Ristorante Pagnanelli. We dined sumptuously on Rigatoni all'Amatriciana, Rugbetta con Cacio e Pere and other unpronounceable but tasty dishes. Slightly inebriated and spell-bound by the spectacular views over Lake Albano, so prettily dotted with lights, we ended the evening seeing each other in a very rosy light, in no hurry to reclaim our lonely, if comfortable, beds at the Villa Tuscolana!

Saturday was the business end of the convention. The Mayor of Frascati cut a ceremonial ribbon to declare the Shell Exhibition open, the doyenne of Italian malacology, Kety Nicolay, on one side of him, myself on the other. The eagerly awaited Dealers' Bourse swung into action at about the same time. Then, shortly after 11 a.m. I had the honour to present the first of a short series of illustrated talks. Entitled 'But where are the children in malacology?', I tried to show how young children may be introduced to the shell world by playing simple games, utilising different kinds of shells. Koen Fraussen followed this with a talk entitled 'Colourful shells from the Arctic - a fairy tale about beauty and cold' - but actually about whelks! Neither of us could have predicted that our talks would be translated into Italian, almost verbatim, as we spoke! The translator, Clive Riche, originally from Leeds but now domiciled in Italy, performed this difficult task effortlessly. It would have helped non-Italian speakers in the audience if he had performed the same service, in reverse, when Drusiano

Cipriano, gave the third talk, 'Seafood and wine: a special marriage in the Italian cuisine', in his native language!

Throughout Saturday visitors enjoyed shell-related displays and events. Maurizia Braga showed her wonderfully decorative shell jewellery; Carlo Castellani impressed with his art work for scientific publications, featuring molluscs and other sea life; photos of shells by Carlo Maccá were so beautiful and imaginative that Ingrid could not stop looking at them; impressive in a different way was the demonstration of cameo carving by students from the cameo carving school in Torre del Greco, Naples. The Dealers' Bourse was very popular and trade, for some dealers at least, was brisk. It was to be expected that Bruno Briano, among Italy's top shell dealers, should be offering shells for sale here, but that Vincent Crayssac and his lovely wife Elodie should have travelled across the world from New Caledonia to do so was a surprise.

The final act for most of the participants was the farewell party in the hotel. Another scrumptious meal, another occasion for friendly banter and jollity, it was also an opportunity to exchange addresses, to sign menu cards, to make future plans and to stand up and say pleasant things about everyone and everything. Kety Nicolay said little, but she must have been delighted to have witnessed the success of an event celebrating the joys of the shell world, that world to which she had devoted so many years of her life. Luciano Barberini, of Shelline Group, rounded off the proceedings with a rousing valedictory speech, thanking all of us for taking part and supporting the venture. I spoke for everyone when I praised Sonia and the members of her hard-working team and promised to help her continue the good work she and they had started. The next day, well nourished physically and mentally, we all went our separate ways, happy to have taken part in IMM 2009.



SPD suggesting playful ways to introduce the shell world to young children.

A be-hatted Clive Riche translates for the benefit of a predominantly Italian audience. Photo courtesy of Koen Fraussen.



Ingrid Thomas lingers over the stunning photos of shells by Carlo Maccá. Photo courtesy of Carlo Maccá

SHELLS REVEALED IN UNUSUAL PLACES

by Janet T Sawyer

A conchological event at Frascati, Italy? It was an invitation from Sonia Fuschi which I simply could not refuse. An expedition to the district of crisp white wines, elegant palazzi surrounded by beautiful gardens with tall cypress trees, and the added excitement of a treasure hunt among the dealers' wares, but I intend to leave others to tell you about the fulfilment of that vision, about the Villa Tuscolana, the historic conference hotel which was our home for half a week, with its cool corridors, antique furniture and excellent restaurant, historic because of its connections with the great Roman orator Cicero, with the Sforzas, the Renaissance princes of Milan, those rich and famous patrons of Bramante and Leonardo da Vinci, and with the conqueror of Italy, Napoleon Bonaparte, and his younger brother Lucien. I shall leave others to tell you about the detailed and smoothly successful arrangements made by Sonia and her team of helpers, about our convivial suppers at wonderful restaurants in Frascati and at elegant Castel Gandolfo with its beautiful views over the moonlit lake below.



Villa Tuscolana

Yes, I shall also leave it to others to tell you about the show-cases of shells, each a first-class specimen, that were on exhibition to the Public and which invited them into the world of Conchology, with special emphasis on gaining the interest of young children. The Mayor of Frascati attended, so did a minister responsible for conservation and the environment, as well as the president of the college of wine-tasters, though unfortunately he did not bring any samples! The exhibition also included such unexpected delights as a demonstration of cameo carving, of beautiful shell jewellery and ornaments, as well as more humble items such as a DVD on the physical process of collecting sea shells which ought to tempt any young child on to the beach. Our own Peter Dance, as Guest of Honour, continued this theme in his address, starting with several shell games suitable for young children, and Koen Fraussen gave a talk about his famous whelks. I leave it to both of them to give you their impressions of this fabulous event.

Instead I intend to tell you about my walk down the lane from our high point on the Albani Hills above Frascati, overlooking the Tiber valley and the Italian capital with St. Peter's Basilica centre stage. Downhill, the first building in sight is a much more humble establishment, a modest Classical Renaissance-style church attached to a monastery of the Cappucin monks of St. Francis. Outside the church is a notice stating that it also included a museum of ETHIOPIA, open to the public on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, which day it was. I had already visited the church on the previous day and the mention of Ethiopia had intrigued me.



View over Frascati and Rome from the balcony of Villa Tuscolana

It seemed such an odd combination in such an out-of-the-way place, but I had noted in the church a large marble statue and monument to a Bishop Guglielmo Massaja who had spent 35 years in the late 19th century ministering to the desert tribes of untutored Ethiopia.

I rang the doorbell, which was presently answered by a handsome young friar who gave me a personal tour of the Museum with a commentary in rapid Italian. Fortunately I had become sufficiently conditioned to the language by this time to be able to follow him. As well as artifacts and objects of daily use in Ethiopia and those used for Christian worship, there were passages written in the Coptic script of the Galla and similar tribes, which the Bishop was the first to set down - hitherto these languages had been purely oral. There were charming locally-made drawings of the Bishop advising a somewhat puzzled and apprehensive King Menelik II of Ethiopia, and sadly realistic ones of the brutal wars which raged among the tribes. After such carnage had ended, the Bishop would walk over the battlefield in search of any boy child left alive - the girls and women seem to have been killed or carried away, before such orphans could be killed and eaten by hyenas and vultures - there were photos too, all quite explicit. The rescued children were taken to a monastery and were later sent to a school which the Bishop had founded. As the adviser to kings, this Bishop is also credited with the foundation of Addis Ababa, which shortly became the country's capital.

During his ministry the Bishop made many journeys on foot along the shores of the Red Sea and as far as Aden (now S. Yemen but then a British colony), often suffering exile and imprisonment on the way. Among the items which he had brought back I was amused to note a collection of shells from the Red Sea. In pride of place stood a full-size specimen of *Strombus (Tricornis) oldi* - Emerson, 1965, and beside it by way of contrast was a strip of leather onto which had been sewn a few *Cypraea moneta*, the very epitome of Franciscan poverty. The robes which the Bishop had worn in the desert, his broken sandals and his wooden staff, all were there in the Museum.

On his return to Italy in 1884, Pope Leo XIII created Bishop Massaja a Cardinal and asked him to write down his experiences for the benefit of others, which he did in 12 volumes. He is buried at the monastery here, where the monks are devoted to his memory and have just celebrated the bicentenary of his birth. Apparently the Museum receives many visitors from Africa. Indeed the work which Massaja carried out in Ethiopia was of such quality that the local people called him Abi (Abbe) Messiah! Yet his beatification is still awaited.



I was so impressed and absorbed by all I had learnt that I completely forgot to photograph the church. On joining some fellow conchologists at coffee beneath the hotel portico, Peter Dance offered to return with me. On the damp causeway beneath the apron of the church, which the monks must have used for centuries when walking downhill to Frascati, Peter found a large and colourful specimen of *Cornu aspersum* - Muller, 1774, with which he was highly satisfied - but I shall leave him to tell you all about it. We conchologists are surely a curious bunch of 'Odd Bods'!

Peter Dance in front of Cappuccin Monastery – note monk fresco on the inside wall

SOME FURTHER SMALL THOUGHTS ON MICROSHELLS

by Jonathan Welsh

As some of you may remember, I wrote an article about microshells about 2 and a half years ago. As last year I had a spell of not working, I decided to press on with trying to identify some of them. I continued with the box from Punta Engano, Cebu that I had already made a good start on. Aided by Poppe's excellent new book on Philippine Marine Mollusks (volumes 1 & 2), and Eddie Hardy's Gastropods.com website, I was able to identify quite a number of species I had not been able to before. As I mentioned previously, I have them arranged in a plastic plate with 96 small wells in it so below is the schematic for the plate so far.

As before, if anyone can suggest any other useful books or websites to assist me with these little things, I would be most grateful!

Species so far identified from Punta Engano, Cebu

Microshells Box 1					
No.	Species Name	No.	Species Name	No.	Species Name
1	<i>Calliostoma ticaonica</i>	33	<i>Gyrineum bituberculare</i>	65	<i>Frenulina sanguinolenta*</i>
2	<i>Clavus furvus</i>	34	<i>Afrocardium richardi</i>	66	<i>Pyrene flava</i>
3	<i>Clavus laetus</i>	35	<i>Cantharus pulcher</i>	67	<i>Mitrella bella</i>
4	<i>Cymatium comptum</i>	36	<i>Engina mactanensis</i>	68	<i>Engina lanceolata</i>
5	<i>Distorsio pusilla</i>	37	<i>Mitrella venulata</i>	69	<i>Clavus (Tylotia) pica</i>
6	<i>Engina concinna</i>	38	<i>Jujubinus gilberti</i>	70	<i>Plagiostropha quintuplex</i>
7	<i>Conus (juvenile)</i>	39	<i>Plagiostropha quintuplex</i>	71	<i>Tylorella humilis</i>
8	<i>Eratoena nana</i>	40	<i>Etrema gainesii</i>	72	<i>Nassarius (Hima) crenulicostatus</i>
9	<i>Pascula paucimaculata</i>	41	<i>Lienardia philberti</i>	73	<i>Lienardia tricolor</i>
10	<i>Gyrineum (Gyrineum) gyrinum</i>	42	<i>Engina alveolata</i>	74	<i>Mitrolumna philippinensis</i>
11	<i>Gyrineum pusillum</i>	43	<i>Favartia maculata</i>	75	<i>Lienardia mighelsi</i>
12	<i>Gyrineum roseum</i>	44	<i>Conus (juvenile)</i>	76	<i>Vexillum hilare</i>
13	<i>Lienardia roseotincta</i>	45	<i>Rissoina tornatilis</i>	77	<i>Mitrella moleculina</i>
14	<i>Lienardia rubida</i>	46	<i>Lienardia malleti</i>	78	<i>Nassarius pauperus</i>
15	<i>Mitra (Nebularia) cucumerina</i>	47	<i>Conus (juvenile)</i>	79	<i>Vanikoro plicata</i>
16	<i>Mitromorpha atramentosa</i>	48	<i>Conus musicus</i>	80	<i>Vexillum (Pusia) diutenera</i>
17	<i>Nassarius cinctellus</i>	49	<i>Vexillum (Pusia) rubrum</i>	81	<i>Natica species</i>
18	<i>Pascula darrosensis</i>	50	<i>Vexillum crocatum</i>	82	<i>Pyrene ocellata</i>
19	<i>Pterygia elongata</i>	51	<i>Vexillum (Costellaria) caelatum</i>	83	<i>Vexillum (Pusia) aureolatum</i>
20	<i>Tricolia (Hiloa) megastoma</i>	52	<i>Vexillum (Pusia) paligerum</i>	84	<i>Cerithium punctatum</i>
21	<i>Venustoma lacunosa</i>	53	<i>Cerithium buzzurroi</i>	85	<i>Engina siderea</i>
22	<i>Pyrene testudinaria</i>	54	<i>Mastonia clavata</i>	86	<i>Gyrineum roseum (tall)</i>
23	<i>Favartia rosamiae</i>	55	<i>Conus (juvenile)</i>	87	<i>Astralium calcar</i>
24	<i>Favartia munda</i>	56	<i>Favartia (Favartia) salmonea</i>	88	<i>Morula spinosa</i>
25	<i>Cerithium balteatum (var 1)</i>	57	<i>Polinices flemingianus</i>	89	<i>Chlamys irregularis</i>
26	<i>Cerithium balteatum (var 2)</i>	58	<i>Orania walkeri</i>	90	<i>Excellichlamys spectabilis</i>
27	<i>Cerithium balteatum (var 3)</i>	59	<i>Vexillum crocatum</i>	91	<i>Lienardia kaymai</i>
28	<i>Rhinoclavis sordidula</i>	60	<i>Bolma microconcha</i>	92	<i>Favartia dorotheae</i>
29	<i>Dolicholatirus lancea</i>	61	<i>Cerithium koperbergi</i>	93	<i>Turridrupa astricta consorbrina</i>
30	<i>Mastonia rubra</i>	62	<i>Volvarina janneefsi</i>	94	<i>Vexillum amanda</i>
31	<i>Mitra (Nebularia) doliolum</i>	63	<i>Vexillum (Pusia) bilineatum</i>	95	<i>Anarithma fischeri</i>
32	<i>Cytharomorula vexillum</i>	64	<i>Frenulina sanguinolenta*</i>	96	<i>Mitromorpha (Mitrolumna) philippinensis</i>

I've also continued with the other huge box that I have from Cebu as well – some species are duplicated but there are many more in there that are different. As I said in my previous article, this is going to take a long time, even with the aid of a binocular microscope!