

PALLIDULA

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



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Photo below - Cley Beach, Norfolk



Editorial

It is my great pleasure to warmly (It is 32°C whilst I write this) greet you all, in my first issue of Pallidula. I am sure you will all delight in noticing and debating the changes that I implement! I have moved the magazine into Microsoft Publisher so that it takes less time to format and move articles, photographs and puzzles around, though understandably this first issue has been a challenge. You will also notice that Pallidula is now in 2 column format, which means it is more comfortable to read, in line with newspapers and other journals. As to the other changes I will leave you to spot them.

I would like to say a big thank you, on behalf of the committee and the club to John Batt for being editor of Pallidula. He edited the magazine since the October 1999 issue; a period of 12 years, a total of 24 issues. In that period, he moved Pallidula to being printed in colour, and oversaw lots of new ideas being introduced, in particular photographs of shows and shells. I hope to maintain these with the help of my editorial board; John Batt, Julian Joseph and Jonathan Welsh. I would also like to take the opportunity to thank an unsung hero, Tom Walker, who did a lot of the final proofing and fixing before Pallidula went to the printers. He also printed Pallidula for several issues before the committee were able to find new cost efficient professional printers.

I note that in the last editorial John thanked everyone who had sent him interesting articles and various other input. Pallidula is very much the magazine of the club and is written by you, the members, for the you, the members. So I urge you all to think what you could contribute.

Have you visited somewhere interesting that links to shells, like Lise Landmark did in April, see Page 8? Have you read any interesting, new or old shell books? Did you go somewhere on holiday and found a paradise of shells? Was this paradise due to tide, current or good luck? Or did you travel in high expectation and find nothing? Have you spotted shells in unusual places, as in architecture, paintings or images? Have you a collection of shells that could be shared in an article? Please don't hesitate to call or email me. My role as editor is to help facilitate and encourage any would be writers. Please come and chat about ideas whilst I am in the kitchen area.

Lastly I would like to warmly invite you to come and visit me at home for my first Editor's get-together, Saturday 17th March 2011.

The Editor



Front Cover:

Volutea bednalli, Brazier, 1878

Collected from Arafuri Sea, North Australia.

Weight 146.3 g

Back Cover:

Strombus erythrinus, Dillwyn, 1817

Collected from Olango Island, Cebu, Philippine Islands.

Shell Collecting on a whitefish trawler

By David W McKay

During January 2011 I had the opportunity to do some shell collecting on the whitefish trawler 'Deeside'. The trip was to last ten days and the fishing grounds were to be to the west of the Orkney Islands. The 'Deeside' is a 90 foot long bottom trawler which targets white fish species with an emphasis on the high value species such as megrim and monkfish. It concentrates on fishing deep water and uses two trawls, one with lighter ground gear for use on soft bottoms and the other with heavier 'rockhopper' gear for use on harder bottom. Both nets had 120mm codends so I expected to collect mostly larger shells but hoped that I might get a few smaller shells that came aboard on the ground gear.

We sailed from Buckie and after a short stop in Scrabster to collect ice headed for the deep waters North West of Noup Head in Orkney. The first haul which lasted five hours yielded very little fish especially the high value ones the skipper had hoped for and one *Buccinum undatum* plus a single *Astropecten irregularis* from which I obtained one *Policines montagui* and two *Timoclea ovata*. With the weather deteriorating we moved further west to try the grounds north by west of the Butt of Lewis. We had two hauls in 115-140 metres of water which produced reasonable hauls of cod and haddock but very few of the high value species that we were after, and no shelled molluscs at all. While I was helping with the gutting of the fish I noticed that the haddocks, in particular, had been feeding on molluscs and I began to collect the intestines for later examination.

Once all the fish had been gutted and packed in ice I cut open the intestines and put the contents into a sieve and washed the residue to remove as much extraneous matter as possible and examined what was left for molluscs. The molluscs I collected could be divided into two categories:-

- those that had been eaten alive (better condition molluscs)
- those that had been eaten because they contained hermit crabs

After two hauls we moved to the Sula Sgeir Bight about 20 miles northwest of the rocky island of Sula Sgeir. This is a bight of deeper water at the edge of the continental shelf with the water depths varying from 150-190 metres. We had nine hauls in this general area and with the exception of the second haul I got no shelled molluscs from the codend so I collected shells from haddock intestines. From the second haul, however, I collected some pieces of discarded plastic from which I collected some *Heteranomia*

squamula and a single whale vertebra which yielded a number of *Adipicola simpsoni*. (See below.)



When I first saw the whale vertebra on the conveyor which carried the fish from the hopper, into which the fish had been emptied from the codend, I thought that it was a discarded mug that had been encrusted with marine organisms. I was about to place it on the conveyor so that it would be dumped overboard when I noticed that the area where the one remaining vertebral process was attached was full of a woolly material. I, therefore, put it into the bucket where I was collecting the haddock intestines for later examination. You can imagine my exhilaration when I saw a small mussel embedded in the woolly stuff I had noticed earlier. Once I had carefully disentangled it I immediately recognised it as a specimen of *Adipicola simpsoni*. I teased out all the woolly material which turned out to be a mass of byssus threads and recovered a total of 35 specimens ranging in length from 3mm to 15mm. When one of the deckhands asked if I had found any shells of interest my response was yes I have just collected my first specimen of *Adipicola simpsoni* and as far as I'm concerned it made the whole trip worthwhile for me.

At the end of five days with the weather forecast deteriorating the skipper decided we should head for port to land our catch. So we set course for Scrabster where we stayed for three days until the weather improved. By the end of this part of the trip I had collected five species from the codend and a further twenty one species from haddock intestines. A full list from each of the grounds fished is given in Table 1. The prize specimen from the haddock intestines was undoubtedly a *Danilia octaviana*, only the second one I had collected from the continental shelf around the UK.

Similipecten similis,
85 miles WxS of Foula



For the second half of the trip, the 'Deeside' headed for fishing grounds 85 miles west by south of Foula (Shetland Islands). The water depth in this area varied from 118 to 162m. As with most of the first part of the trip we caught no shelled molluscs and the only molluscs I collected came from haddock intestines. The fishing was rather poor and after five hauls with a deteriorating weather forecast we moved grounds back to the deep water 20 miles west by north of Noup Head, Orkney where the skipper had heard that the fishing had improved and which were closer to sheltered waters should the forecast storm arrive. We had two hauls in deep water but the fishing was still rather poor. I, however, had more success and from the two hauls recovered some two dozen large *Buccinum undatum*, one *Neptunea antiqua* plus one dead but articulated *Glossus humanus*. (See below.)



With the weather deteriorating and the long range forecast showing no improvement in the short term the skipper moved into shallower water where we completed the trip fishing for haddock and whiting. The move to shallower water substantially reduced the amount of molluscs I collected from haddock intestines as they appeared to have a diet that was more composed of small fish than molluscs and crustaceans.



From the second half of the trip I collected four species of shelled molluscs from the codend and twenty eight species from haddock intestines. The prize recovery from the haddock intestines was a specimen of *Calliostoma formosa*

which was obtained from the grounds west by south of Foula. Full details are given in Table 1.

Apart from the shelled molluscs I collected, we caught *Loligo forbesii* in every haul made on the trip, a number of *Eledone cirrhosa* and four small specimens of *Sepia officinalis* which were the most interesting. This is a species most associated with the southern waters of the British Isles. Occasional large specimens are caught in the waters of northern Scotland but I know of no other records of small specimens being collected in the winter months.

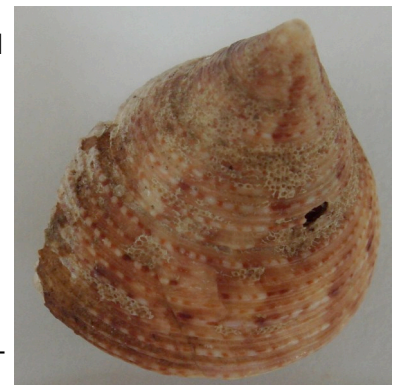


(Above photo of *Erato volute*, from NW of Sula Sgeir)

Although I collected rather fewer species and specimens than I have done on all my trips on scallop dredgers and I caught very few specimens of the large buccinids I was hoping for, this was a most interesting trip as I got to areas of the British continental shelf that are difficult to access for the amateur collector and collected specimens of three species that would be on every collector of British molluscs rare list.

I also obtained specimens, albeit dead and crabbed, of *Calliostoma granulatum* (See right) which extend

its recorded range in Scottish waters much further to the north and west. In the past three years I have collected specimens of this species previously not thought to occur in Scottish waters, along the west of Scotland almost to 60 degrees north and into the North Sea as far south as off Johnshaven on the East Coast.



I must, at this point, thank Norman Wilson, skipper of the 'Deeside' for allowing me to accompany them on this trip and his crew Michael, Ross and Nick for all their help and patience.

(photos by the author)



Palliolum tigerinum, eaten alive,
from 20-30 miles N of Butt of Lewis



David, in action on scallop dredger

Table 1 Species collected from haddock intestines on the various grounds

85 miles WxS of Foula	20-30 miles N of Butt of Lewis	20 miles NW of Sula Sgeir	20-25 miles WxN of Noup Head
eaten alive	Eaten alive	Eaten alive	eaten alive
<i>Erato voluta</i>	<i>Palliolum tigerinum</i>	<i>Erato voluta</i>	<i>Scaphander lignarius</i>
<i>Acteon tornatilis</i>	<i>Acteon tornatilis</i>	<i>Acteon tornatilis</i>	Crabbed
<i>Policines poliana</i>	Crabbed	<i>Policines poliana</i>	<i>Jujubinus miliaris</i>
<i>Roxania utriculus</i>	<i>Danilea otaviana</i>	<i>Cylichna cylindracea</i>	<i>Policines fuscus</i>
<i>Palliolum tigerinum</i>	<i>Jujubinus miliaris</i>	<i>Nucula nitidosa</i>	<i>Policines montagui</i>
<i>Similipecten similis</i>	<i>Capulus ungaricus</i>	Crabbed	<i>Colus gracilis</i>
<i>Limaria loscombi</i>	<i>Aporrhais pespelecani</i>	<i>Jujubinus miliaris</i>	
<i>Spisula elliptica</i>	<i>Policines montagui</i>	<i>Turritella communis</i>	
<i>Moerella pygmaea</i>	<i>Policines poliana</i>	<i>Aporrhais paespelecani</i>	
<i>Gari costulata</i>	<i>Boreotrophon truncatus</i>	<i>Policines montagui</i>	
<i>Timoclea ovata</i>	<i>Buccinum humphreysianum</i>	<i>Epitonium trevelyanum</i>	
Crabbed	<i>Liomesus ovum</i>	<i>Colus gracilis</i>	
<i>Jujubinus miliaris</i>	<i>Colus gracilis</i>	<i>Colus jeffreysianus</i>	
<i>Jujubinus montagui</i>	<i>Colus jeffreysianus</i>	<i>Raphitoma purpurea</i>	
<i>Calliostoma formosum</i>	<i>Scaphander lignarius</i>	<i>Teretia anceps</i>	
<i>Calliostoma granulatum</i>		<i>Scaphander lignarius</i>	
<i>Calliostoma zizyphinum</i>		<i>Dentalium entalis</i>	
<i>Turritella communis</i>			
<i>Policines fuscus</i>			
<i>Policines montagui</i>			
<i>Policines poliana</i>			
<i>Liomesus ovum</i>			
<i>Colus gracilis</i>			
<i>Colus jeffreysianus</i>			
<i>Buccinum humphreysianum</i>			
<i>Buccinum undatum</i>			
<i>Hinia incrassata</i>			
<i>Raphitoma boothii</i>			
<i>Dentalium entalis</i>			



Raphitoma purpurea, crabbed,
from NW of Sula Sgeir

The Whichers' Get-together

By Chris Bristow

On the weekend of 11/12th June 2011 John and Jenny Whicher held their summer get-together at their new residence at Henstridge in Somerset. Higher Marsh farm, their new home is an old farm house with an amazing collection of converted out buildings, delightful garden and tennis court. I arrived on a rainy Friday afternoon with tent and camping gear; other club members who were already there had booked in for bed and breakfast. In the evening we went to the local pub in Henstridge for a



meal and a drink, and were later joined by Dave Charlton and Craig Ruscoe (after field trip). We returned back to the farmhouse and several of us bedded down in the dairy (not in use as a dairy now) for the night as it was a bit wet to pitch tents; bats and ghosts ('Edge' Craig Ruscoe) were briefly spotted.

The Saturday get-together was a mixture of sun and showers, with six dealers exhibiting their wares in the dairy. Alistair Moncur without directions parking his car closest to the dairy; 'his nose obviously smelling shells' quoted Jenny. More people arrived throughout the morning including John and Jenny's neighbours, two of whom are fellow fossil hunters.



John then took us on a tour of his fossil and shell gallery, an amazing collection and huge array of Ammonites superbly exhibited in glass cases and numerous drawers, a room to be envied by all collectors. Other guests went to

peruse the garden and look for Newts by the pond, instead a Grass Snake was spotted. The afternoon BBQ of burgers, sausages and chicken legs was followed by fruit salad and Jenny's annual brownies (made for BSCC only!).



That evening the hosts and the guests staying the night walked along the narrow country lane to the curry house at Henstridge for a very enjoyable meal in the busy restaurant. We then made our way back to the farmhouse in the dark aided by torch light. Back in the dairy as the rain beat down and the lager flowed a group of us talked well into the early hours of the morning about various topics and one especially about how to entice children into the joys of shell collecting.

Sunday morning was chilly and wet; after croissants and bacon for breakfast we bid our hosts farewell and thanked them for a very hospitable weekend. I found it to be a superb weekend socially, in glorious surroundings (pity about the weather), and I fully recommend that you should try to get to one of the clubs get-togethers that take place several times during the summer.



(photographs by the author)





A Visit To The Shell House in Hatfield Forest

by Lise Landmark

As a new member of the British Shell Collectors' Club, I was invited by the Chairman, Simon Taylor and his wife, Shirley, for a trip to "The Shell House" within the Hatfield Forest in Essex. I had been reading about the house and suddenly had the opportunity to see this extraordinarily beautiful little building, which you will never find in Nor-



way, where I come from. We were shown around by Mr. Ray Addley and Shirley who both work voluntarily for the National Trust and look after the house.

I learnt about the history of the house and its wonderful shell decorations.

History of The Shell House

The Shell House was built in the 1750s by the Houblon Family who owned the forest area, from 1729 to 1923. Its initial purpose was to provide a picnic room by the lake for



the family and friends to "drink tea". It was attached to an existing cottage where the housekeepers lived. Shells and shell motifs had been employed by the ancient Romans as a celebration of nature, and in the eighteenth century the idea took hold with English landowners who saw and admired Renaissance grottoes in France and Italy.

The designer of the house is unknown, but its style shows Italian influence.

The decorating of the



building interior is attributed to the landowner's daughter Laetitia, who was born in 1742 and was 17 years old when The Shell House was ready for use. It is believed that the exotic and colourful shells came from the West Indies mixed with the sand, which was used as ballast for the slave ships.

People who are interested in shells will easily recognize all the different species, which have not changed at all! The room is beautifully decorated with shells in the ceiling; around the fireplace; on mirrors and on different pictures. Even the exterior of the house's front and side-walls are decorated with more shells, corals, stones, split flint and blue glass slag showing patterns of birds, sunburst and other details you have to find yourselves. All of this work is believed to be in its original form.

In 1924 The Forest and the house were donated to the

Today

It is now a popular place for people visiting and picnicking in the forest. Admission is free, cameras permitted. There is a cafe, toilets and a shop in the old warden house and a fisherman's rest which was built nearby in 1928. There is a visitor book to be signed by all visitors. This started in 1892 and the old books which include many prominent signatories. The children who visit The Shell House can use their artistic talent to make a shell picture using real shells on sand and have it photographed. It is a peaceful place where you can perceive the history of the Houblon family, hidden in the walls.

I can definitely recommend a trip to The Shell House, especially for shell collectors. I will, as the only Norwegian member of the club, use the opportunity to thank the chairman, the officials and other members in The British Shell collectors Club for a warm welcome in the club. I really look forward to many future Shell Shows and other gatherings.

(Photographs by the author, Lise Landmark)



Shell Houses and Grottoes by Hazelle Jackson

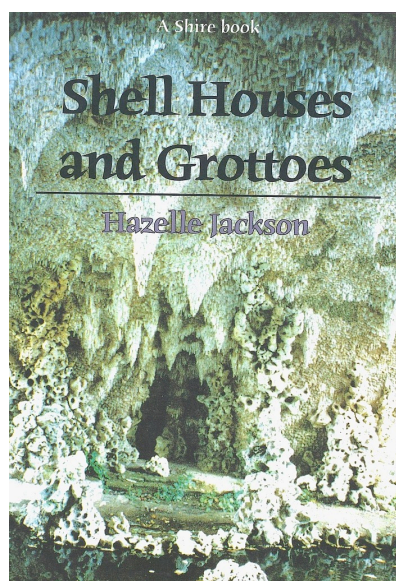
A Book Review by Selina Wilkins

This is a beautiful little book full of the treasures of where to view houses decorated in shells, here in Britain. It starts with the early history of grottoes which were shrines in ancient Greece. These were built into natural caves at the sites of springs, in honour of water spirits and describes the development of grottoes in England, through the sixteenth and seventeenth century, emulating and copying designs from Europe. One of the earliest indoor grottoes exists at Chatsworth House, beneath the grand stairs, hides a fountain and a bas relief of the goddess Diana bathing. Did you spot it when the club visited in September?

The next section covers grottoes of the eighteenth century; the nymphaeum, shell grotto and house and the simulated limestone cave. The book incorporates a wealth of illustrations, such as, black and white plans for the different grottoes, like on Page 9 for the poet, Alexander Pope and a painting of his home by the River Thames. There are tantalising glimpses, making you want to visit and see them yourself. Not only are there colour photographs of the outside of shell buildings, but also the inside which show off the symmetrical designs used in shell grottoes. The photograph of the shell grotto at Margate, Kent is very eye catching, and as are also the beautiful contrast of colours and shell shapes used in the shell house at Goodwood House, Sussex.

The book then moves into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries when work became less symmetrical and more pictorial, such as the subterranean grotto at Leeds Castle, Kent. There is then an interesting section on how all these grottoes, and caves were constructed and with what materials, local rocks, stones and pebbles or expensive minerals and marble from abroad. Did they use locally collected shells or imported shells from abroad? From some the photographs it can be noted the size and depth of the owner's purse!

The last section lists all the places to visit in England, Wales and Scotland, with details of ownership, such as, National Trust and English Heritage and telephone details. So let's get reading and visiting these places in Britain!



Shell Houses and Grottoes by Hazelle Jackson, A Shire Book. Published in 2001, by Shire Publications Ltd, ISBN 0 778 0522 9, and is readily available on the internet.





The Allied Cowries - Part II

By Julian Joseph

This part will cover the remaining subfamilies of the Ovulidae, The Simniinae, Ovulinae and Aclyvolvinae. It also shows representative genera in the Pediculariidae and Eocypraeidae.

Family Ovulidae

Subfamily Simniinae

Most Atlantic and Mediterranean species belong to this subfamily, which includes the British species, *Simnia patula* (Pennant, 1777). A few genera, (*Contrasimnia*, *Quasisimnia*, *Naviculavolva* and *Dissona*, occur in the Indo-Pacific region.



Cyphoma gibbosa (Linnaeus, 1758)
Left: 27 mm, right: 32 mm
Almond Smugglers Cove, St. Lucia, 2 July, 2009. On gorgonians at 1-2m



Simnia patula (Pennant, 1777) 10 mm
Plymouth, Devon. On alcyonian at 20 m



Neosimnia spelta (Linnaeus, 1758)
Left: 11 mm, centre: 13 mm, right: 11 mm
Algeria Bay, April, 2010. Fishing nets at 40-60 m



Contrasimnia xanthochila (Kuroda, 1928) 24.5 mm
East China Sea. Trawled in 180 m



Quasisimnia robertsoni (Cate, 1973a) 18 mm
North Taiwan, August, 2008. Deep water



Simnialena ilhabelaensis Fehse, 2001 11 mm
Salvador Bahia, Brazil, 2006



Cymbovula acicularis (Lamarck, 1810) 14 mm
Aruba
Photo reproduced by kind permission of Felix Lorenz



Naviculavolva massierorum (Fehse, 1999) 14 mm
Naçala Bay, Mozambique



Dissona tosaensis (Azuma & Cate, 1971)
Left: 8 mm, right: 9 mm
off Shirahama, Wakayama Prefecture, Japan,
December, 2003. Gill nets in 60-70 m

Subfamily Ovulinae

This is an Indo-Pacific group. The species of the genus *Ovula* a cowry-like in general shell shape; those of *Volva* are similar but with both canals greatly elongated, giving them a spindle-like shape. The other genera are all spindle-shaped and much smaller than most *Volva*. Many of these genera were formerly included in *Phenacovolva*, which is the largest of these genera, and with many very colourful species.



Ovula ishibashii (Kuroda, 1928) 21 mm
Philippines. By compressor diver



Volva volva (Linnaeus, 1758) 149 mm
Punta Engano, Mactan I., Philippines, February, 2010



Pellasimnia improcera (Azuma & Cate, 1971)
Upper: 25 mm, Panglao I., Philippines. Tangle net at 100 m
Lower: 31 mm, Calituban I., Philippines. Dived in 2-5 m



Calcarovula longirostrata (G. B. Sowerby I, 1828)
Upper: 32 mm; lower: 28 mm
Mindanao, Philippines. Trawled in 150 m



Kurodovolva wakayamaensis (Cate & Azuma in Cate, 1973)
34 mm
Off Inami, Wakayama Prefecture, Japan, 17 April, 2010. Gill
nets at 80 m



Takasagovolva gigantea Azuma, 1974 61 mm (young spec-
imen with lip not yet fully developed)
Balicasag I., Philippines, at 150 m



Phenacovolva barbieri Fehse, 2009 38 mm
Punta Engano, Mactan I., Philippines, December, 2009

Subfamily Aclyvolvinaeinae

These shells were formerly included with *Phenacovolva*. However, they are very different genetically.



Aclyvolva lanceolata (G. B. Sowerby II, 1848)
Upper: 22 mm, lower: 17 mm
Panglao I., Philippines. Tangle net at 80-100 m



Hiatavolva rugosa Cate & Azuma in Cate, 1973
13 mm. Panglao I., Philippines. Tangle net at 8 m



Kuroshiovolve shingoi Azuma & Cate, 1971
27 mm.
Aliquay I., Philippines. Trawled at 100-150 m

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Family Eocypraeidae

Two fossil genera are shown to represent this largely extinct family.



Eocypraea inflata (Lamarck, 1802) 20 mm
Fontenay-en-Vexen, France
Mid-Lutetian, Fossil



Oxycypraea delphinoides (Cosman, 1886) 25 mm
Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine
Late Eocene, Fossil

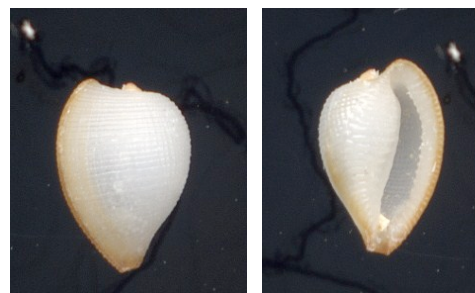
Family Pediculariidae

Subfamily Pediculariinae

Below are shown examples of all living genera except *Pedicypraea*, which is represented by one species, known only from the holotype.



Pedicularia californica (Newcomb, 1864)
Left: 7.2 mm San Clemente Island, California
Right: 12.6 mm California



Lunovula superstes (Dolin, 1991) 4.4 mm
Aliguay Island, Philippines
Dredged in 80-100 m on soft coral/coral rubble

Subfamily Cypraediinae



Pseudocypraea exquisita Petuch, 1979 9 mm
Aliguay I., Philippines
Trawled in 120-160 m



Jenneria pustulata (Lightfoot, 1786)
Left: 19.5 mm, La Paz, Baja California
Right: 20 mm, Pedro Gonzalez I., Panama Bay, under rock at low tide

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my thanks to Dr. Felix Lorenz, for permission to use photographs of *Cymbovula acicularis* and *Habuprionovolva basilia*.



An Interview with Derek Howlett

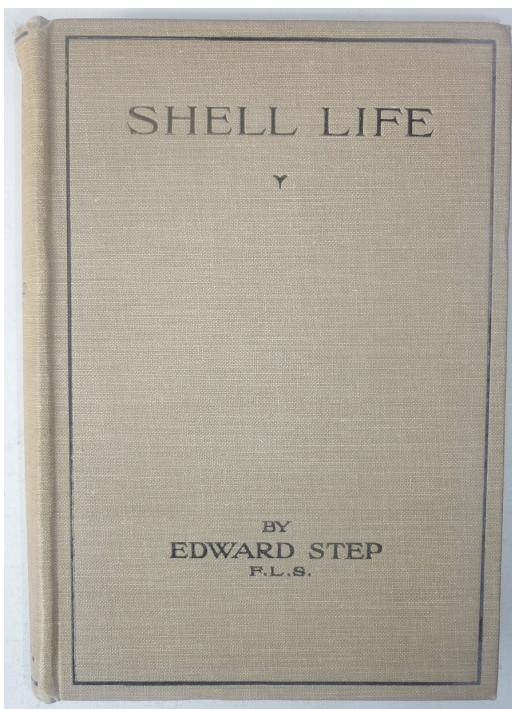
By Selina Wilkins

When and where did you first start collecting shells? What did you first collect?

I collected my first shell when I was 5 – 6 years old. This event took place whilst on a day out with mum and dad visiting the seaside town of Sheringham in North Norfolk. We all sat on the beach, parents chattering with friends, and restless me grubbing around in the shingle up underneath the cliffs. I suddenly discovered this beautiful little pink thing which was covered in ribs and had a slot along one side. I treasured this object for a long time and I now know that it was *Trivia arctica*. (Editor's Note—This shell is seen top left, from the illustration plate 18, figure 1 taken from Derek's first reference book.)

Unfortunately this shell did eventually disappear, probably into the Hoover during one of mum's clean-ups. Why this event has stayed with me for all this time I do not know but it is as clear in my mind now as it was then.

My first experience of real collecting took place when I was 12 years old. I discovered that the silts on the flow side of fresh-water sluices were full of beautiful little shells of a large number of species. I spent hours seeking out these areas on all the local marshes, collecting vast numbers of shells. At this time I had no idea what they were and could not rest until I had saved enough money from my paper-round to purchase my first shell book, "Shell Life" by Edward Step. My learning started here. I soon discovered that the shells I had collected were both freshwater and land species. A collection was born. Sadly this early collection was lost during the busy period of early adulthood. But, after a few more years the hobby was reborn and continues to this day.



Did anyone collect with you or inspire you?

No I did not get inspiration from anybody. I just had this in-built Victorian obsession for collecting. Sometimes I would have friends with me and occasionally one would show some interest in what we were doing, but the next day their interest was gone whilst mine was stronger than ever.



What do you like about collecting shells – the shell, the mollusc, the habitat or the identification?

First of all I think the shell has to be top of the list. I find good collections of shells absolutely amazing. Of course all shells were at one time part of the living animal and living in a particular habitat. This is an area of intense interest to me, particularly when dealing with British shells. Identifying shells is a pleasant way to spend a few hours, but I think with many of the foreign shells it can get very frustrating if you haven't got a huge library of books or access to the internet.

Another interesting part of shell collecting is when one finds a new species either locally or nationally. So far I have discovered two new species which have been added to the British list, *Ensis directus* Conrad and *Corbicula fluminea* (Muller). I was the first person to find the razor shell *Ensis directus* Conrad, living in this country whilst collecting at Holme-Next-The-Sea in North Norfolk. The *Corbicula fluminea* (Muller) I uncovered in the River Chet in Norfolk during one of the surveys I was undertaking. These events give a certain sense of achievement to the hobby. Locally I have added one new species to the Norfolk list, the small land snail *Acricula fusca* (Mont), and also many more sites for known rarities. So it is not all about just collecting.

Which do you prefer and why? Bivalves or gastropods?

Do you have any particular favourite families which you have collected or like to collect?

My main preference has always been bivalves. I love the diversity of shape, form and colour. I do not collect all families these days because space was becoming a problem. I have four particular families which I like to collect and these are *Glycymeridae*, *Spondylidae*, *Cardiidae* and *Veneridae*. I do keep a few more families but rarely purchase shells to add to them.

Which do you prefer to find freshwater or seashells?

This is a difficult question to answer as I thoroughly enjoy collecting in all environments. I am involved in many environmental surveys for land and freshwater species throughout Norfolk most of the year, and I find this immensely enjoyable. Equally, when the opportunity arises for a day on the beach it can be very enjoyable too. What gives me the most pleasure and satisfaction is when a species new to this country turns up. (See the previous page on collecting question.)



What are your 10 favourite shells?

I find to name my 10 favourite shells almost impossible as I love them all, however two species that I consider to be marginally more appealing than the rest are:-

Ringicardium hians (Brocchi, 1814)



Cardium costatum Linne, 1758



Both are deep water West African cockles of the family *Cardiidae*.

How do you store your collection?

The "Caravan Shell House" is 38ft long, 10ft wide. I have a work area with microscope, etc and a wet area with sink for cleaning and preparing the shells for the collection. The collection used to have around 9,500 species but I have no idea of the number of specimens as I used to have from 2 to 10 specimens per species. My guess is that it was around 30,000 plus. This was getting silly as at the shows I had no idea what to buy – apart from everything having such a wide collection. Then there came the problem of where to store them, I was fast running out of space. Last year I decided to rationalise the collection and sell off all the families that I never really looked at and this was a lot of shells!



My ultimate dream is to have a collection of around 20 families from all environments, land, freshwater and marine. The collection is organised by family into whatever drawer cabinets I could get hold of at the right price. Wherever possible each specimen is kept in a clear plastic box with a label. These days I do not keep lots of unidentified shells, mainly due to lack of space. Occasionally I will put a specimen into the collection labelled "sp." With a view to identifying it later, but of course this rarely ever happens. Every specimen has a number and data card for it. A simple form of this is also on my computer data base but I prefer the long hand!

When collecting with you in Cornwall you spent some time collecting micro-shells. What is the attraction of small molluscs? How do you magnify and identify them.

Sorting out micro-shells is amazing. Collecting is easy, just shovel up the little drifts on the beach into bags, take the material home and dry it out. When dry, use a teaspoonful at a time in a Petri dish under a microscope and a whole new world opens up before you. For this country identification is fairly easy, you just need a copy of Alastair Graham's "Prosobranch and Pyramidellid Gastropods". This book covers just about every species you will normally come across. The only downside of micro-shells is that when boxed and in the collection you do need to use magnification to see them clearly and this is not always convenient.



When did you first join the club? What are your earliest memories of the Club?

I first joined the BSCC sometime in the mid 1970's, after finding out about the Club's existence from Eaton's Shell Shop in London. (We had taken the children to London for the day which included a visit to Hamley's Toy shop and then "found" Eatons.) Those early days at Napier Hall were great fun, there were several little dealers; most of them Club members and the shells were comparatively cheap by today's standards. The main function of the Show was to show shells. Even on the day of the competition there was always a non-competitive section where shells were just laid out, but not made into a proper display. This gave the opportunity to identify, talk, meet people of a like mind and interest and in those days; coming from Norfolk, we knew no one else who collected shells. From this many friendships were forged. The commercial side of these early shows was much the same as today except that everything was obviously very much cheaper. I rarely saw shells that I liked that I could not afford, unlike today when I am constantly saying to myself "I'm not paying that!" (Dealers please note, as I am not alone in this.)

How long did you run a dealer table for and what did you sell on it? Why did you stop?

In those early days I soon realised that there was quite a lot of interest in British shells, but nobody ever had any to sell. I had a vast stock of duplicate material from collecting all round Britain whilst on holiday and at weekends in the quest to build and improve my collection. I decided to fill the British gap and at my first attempt sold or exchanged almost everything I had taken to the Show. I was very successful up to the point when everybody had acquired from me all the species that I had readily available. It also meant that from the proceeds I could buy other shells. However, I was not prepared to spend time going to different locations in this country just to collect shells to sell, so this was a good point to stop at.

I still run one table at the shows but that's because I'm reducing my collection somewhat. Hopefully this year should see the end of this and then I can settle into enjoying the shows much more than you can when stuck behind a table.

If you had to name 3 reference books for a beginner what would you recommend?

There are of course many books which are specialist and related to just one genera or area. However these books that I have used over the years (and still do) are unfortunately mostly now out of print but I think it is still worth recommending them.

1. British Bivalve Seashells – Norman Tebble
2. Molluscs: Prosobranch and Pyramidellid Gastropods – Alistair Graham
3. Compendium of Seashells – R Tucker Abbott & S Peter Dance
4. Compendium of Landsnails – R Tucker Abbott

Why do you think it is important for the Club to run by a committee and not just a few dealers?

Any organisation of any size should be run by a committee of persons with mixed views, who are enthusiastic and knowledgeable and want the organisation to progress. I think we should have a Dealer serving on the Club committee as they are an important part of our Shows and should have the opportunity to air their views too.

(Editor's note - my thanks to Daphne for typing Derek's answers to my many, many questions.)



THE QUEST CONTINUES

I told the tale some years ago about a little shell,
 And how no one could name the thing as far as I could tell.
 It got me quite frustrated as it had beaten me
 And I decided just to take the thing and throw it in the sea.
 However I had second thoughts and hid the shell away
 And hoped the situation changed on some far distant day.
 I put it in a little box and hid the thing from view
 I had no other ideas left, so what else could I do?
 Well time has passed and things have changed, and now the moment's nigh,
 To remove it from its hiding place and have another try.
 I had some trouble finding it, as I'd hid the thing too well
 And this time I swore, it wouldn't be the rocky road to hell.
 I told myself I'll get a name if it's the last thing that I do
 But how to go about the quest I didn't have a clue.
 Last time the internet and books had both turned out to be
 As good as a "chocolate teapot" and not much use to me.
 The experts who I had approached, turned out to be the same
 As not a single one of them could give the shell a name.
 I thought I'll be scientific and find myself a key
 That would I hoped, if nothing else, give it a family.
 I knew it was a gastropod that much was very clear
 It's a small step on the ladder but a long way up from here.
 I searched inside my many books and found keys by the score
 Then I used the Google search engine and found a hundred more.
 I sat and tried to key it out in every single one
 A task that took me many hours but finally was done.
 "This animal has a foot that's red and this other one has not."
 Not very useful if the shell's the only thing you've got.
 "This one has a longer spire." I am sure that this is true
 But if you only have the one it's not much use to you.
 I analyzed what I had found but alas it didn't help
 To name this little mollusc I'd extracted from the kelp.
 Perhaps my little snails extinct, a fossil it might be
 Which may be why it doesn't fit in any family tree?
 I took it off to see a friend, a paleontologist,
 In the hope that he could throw some light on something that I'd missed.
 He examined it for many hours and finally he said
 "I don't think it's a fossil, I think that it's just dead".
 Did this mean that I could never reach my chosen Holy Grail
 And so no name would thus be stowed upon this lowly snail?
 But I had this funny feeling that this might not to be true.
 If the quest was to fail a second time I'm not sure what I'd do.
 I thought perhaps I've been misled and the sea is not its home
 Perhaps it is a land snail that on the earth did roam.
 So I checked out this train of thought, but it was not to be
 As many hours later it was still a mystery.
 I will not throw the thing away or smash it on the rocks,
 I'll print a little label and put it in its box;
 Like the snail in "The Magic Roundabout", the program on TV
 My quest has now come to an end as I've named it after me.

Brian Hammond

(Part I was printed in Pallidula, April 2005)

Report on the Shell Convention Saturday 30th April 2011

The morning for the Convention arrived. Simon Taylor had given me all the help that I needed so that everything should go smoothly. Thanks Simon. I had already visited the Hall the week before and had been kindly shown round by the caretaker, Roy Coombs. He showed me where the tables and chairs were stored; where the kitchen and toilets were; the emergency numbers list and everything else that I needed to know, so nothing could go wrong!



encouraging where needed. A full report on this auction and the auction at the Shell Show in October will follow in the April 2012 Pallidula. This additional auction to the Shell Show has arisen because we had so many donations to the auction in April that we couldn't include them in the Convention. Thanks John for all the organisation and work that the auction entails.

I arrived to find a number of dealers already waiting at the doors. I opened up and the dealers got to work only to find that half the tables were missing? On ringing the caretaker we found out that the tables had been used in the village for a street party for the well televised wedding celebrations (Prince William and Kate Middleton) the day before and that the tables would be returned by 9 o'clock the time we opened for members and the public. By careful juggling we managed to keep most of the dealers fairly happy and asked those not dealing to be patient. They were and the tables arrived at last and we managed to get everyone settled in.



My personal thanks are extended to the dealers that helped put up the tables early in the morning and to those dealers that offered to go into the side room. Space was at a premium with the large number of people asking for space. We couldn't manage without these offers. As far as I could tell the rest of the day seemed to go well?

The day followed its normal path with people wandering round searching, buying and chatting in the morning followed after lunch with the AGM. There were several changes in the committee, all accepted. John Whicher, then stepped down from the chair and Simon Taylor took over. There was no other business so Simon closed the meeting. The auction followed.

The club's auction plays a central role in the Convention and again John Fisher assembled a full and varied set of lots and acting as auctioneer oversaw some very successful bidding



As usual a huge and special thanks needs to be given to Selina Wilkins and her very hard working crew, Paul, Christopher and Matthew for the food, which starts with early morning bacon butties, followed by mid-day sandwiches and then cream teas all washed down with coffee, tea and soft drinks all day long.



Also I would like to thank personally, Daphne Howlett who works quietly and tirelessly in the background both in the foyee and at the auction. So, to finish this report, I feel that there was a good attendance of dealers, members and visitors; that everyone tried hard to make the day a friendly one and I hope that everyone had an enjoyable, interesting and sociable day.

By John Llewellyn-Jones, Show Secretary

SHELL DUKO

Fill the Shell Duko grid below so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the nine different shells. The answer is in this issue, on Page 23.

A Shelling trip in Dorset (the Far East and the Americas)

by Colin Goss

On a gloriously hot, sunny day at the start of July this year, I took a trip to the Studland Bay area in Dorset. This peninsular of dunes and heath land is located just across the entrance of Poole Harbour from the exclusive neighbourhood of Sandbanks, and can be reached via a short trip on a floating bridge ferry from Sandbanks, or alternatively by road from Swanage. My aim for this trip was to explore two shorelines offering two differing habitats: first that of the promisingly named Shell Bay, a tract of sandy beach, backed by dunes found just outside Poole Harbour and which faces North East towards Bournemouth; second to explore the area around Bramble Bush Bay, laying just inside Poole Harbour and providing a more sheltered habitat.

On travelling through Sandbanks you could have been mistaken for thinking you were in the South of France or Beverley Hills. On such a sunny day and in this setting it was difficult to believe you were still in England, and this sense of being on distant shores was to become a recurring theme during my trip.

I used the opportunity of the ferry ride to top up on sun cream – it was the height of the day and the sky being cloud free meant a fierce sun. On alighting the ferry I made my way to the beach at Shell Bay and walked the strand line. Disappointingly there was not too much to be found there, however I wasn't too surprised considering the time of year. In the main it was the common Cockle, *Cerastoderma edule* and the slipper limpet, *Crepidula fornicata*. There were also some valves of the saddle oyster *Anomia ephippium*. On the spit of beach separating Shell Bay from Studland Bay I did find a complete example of *Ensis arcuatus*, perhaps 6 inches long, in good condition with most of the periostracum remaining. Shell finds though were generally sparse, but I suspect like most beaches, this would be a worthwhile location to visit between October and January, after the autumnal storms have done their worst.

Before heading back to Poole Harbour I took a detour over the dunes and the heath beyond, hoping to catch a glimpse of a lizard or an adder. Unfortunately I found neither of these – the only animals I did see were a rabbit which I startled from a patch of gorse, and in the distance some naked Homo sapiens (Studland Bay has a section for naturists)! One of the things I did see however were scatterings of slipper limpet shells among clearings in the heather. How they had got there I don't know exactly, but I suspect they may have been carried there live by seabirds to feed on.

The dunes and the heath made an interesting walk. The arid sand dotted with gorse, heather and stunted pine trees had more of a feel of the Mediterranean, especially given the strong sun and blue sky. As mentioned earlier - the feeling of being somewhere other than the UK was to continue in Poole Harbour. On reaching the Studland Road I made my way to the shore of Bramble Bush Bay over more dunes. The tide had begun retreating by this time (low tide was expected at around 16:45), so I donned my wellies and began exploring.



(Photo by C. Goss of *Ruditapes philippinarum*)

It wasn't long before I found examples of the Manila carpet shell - *Ruditapes philippinarum*. This species is now very familiar and widespread in Poole Harbour after being introduced from the Far East twenty or so years ago in order to establish a fishery; and like most introductions this species is slowly spreading. It closely resembles the native Cross-cut Carpet Shell, *Tapes decussatus*, but there are some differences: The general outline of *R. philippinarum* is more rounded compared to the oblong *T. decussatus*; radial sculpture dominates on *R. philippinarum*; and the pallial sinus on *philippinarum* is shallower than that of *T. decussatus*. I found some good examples for my collection, but I have mixed feelings about a species which is introduced.



(Photo by C. Goss of *Mya arenaria*)

Is it for instance outcompeting the native species and threatening their future? I would be interested to hear from other members who have views on this.

As I ventured further around Bramble Bush Bay the intertidal sediment became increasingly muddy and very sticky in places, due in part to the presence of clay in the sediment. Wading across the muddy sediment was proving to be treacherous going, and it paid not to stray too far from the shore or remain in one place for too long - curling my toes downwards on lifting a foot from the mud proved the only sure way of retaining my wellie boot! I explored one of the more solid areas, a small spit of beach fortified by stones, and pockmarked by the greyish mounds of previous bait digs. It was here I found a couple of live chains of the omnipresent Slipper Limpet - *Crepidula fornicata* - this perhaps the most well known of introduced marine molluscs, native to North America, but which is now the most familiar shell on practically all south coast beaches.



(Photo by C. Goss of Studland Bay)

Other species encountered were the native Common cockle, *Cerastoderma edule*, both live and shell, as well as *Hydrobia ulvae*, often occurring live on shell valves. I did not make a check for other cardiid species chiefly due to a lack of time. Another frequent find was the previously mentioned Cross-cut Carpet Shell, *Tapes decussatus*. On returning across Bramble Bush Bay in the direction of ferry, the sticky mud gave way to firmer silty sand, and it was here I saw many complete examples of the Razor shell *Solen marginatus*. I also found solitary examples of *Macoma balthica* and *Angulus tenuis*.

Shell Bay, and particularly Bramble Bush Bay were both interesting locations I'd not previously visited, and two I intend to revisit possibly in late autumn, or early next spring. In Molluscan terms, Poole Harbour tells a story of introduction and invasion, therefore it's ironic to think that surrounded by this cosmopolitan mix of émigré species, in the middle of the harbour lies Brownsea Island, one of the last bastions of the Red Squirrel!

(AWAITING FURTHER PHOTOS FROM AUTHOR)



(Photo by C. Goss of *Mercenaria mercenaria*)

Empty shells of another long established introduction, the Hard Shell Clam *Mercenaria mercenaria* occurred in large numbers. This impressive clam also introduced from North America to Poole Harbour, as well as to Southampton Water, can grow up to 120mm or more in width, and often displays a vivid purple flush on its interior. I found very few in-tact examples, most having at least one valve broken. I did collect one whole live specimen with some damage to the ventral margin as well as one juvenile dead specimen displaying sharp ridged ornament - although I'm not convinced the juvenile is *Mercenaria*. I found one example of another venerid - *Petricolia pholadiformis* (again introduced) - it looks superficially like the piddock, *Barnea candida*, but its heterodont hinge teeth betray its venerid identity.

The other dominant species of the area was the Sand Gaper, *Mya arenaria*, or as it's known in America the soft shelled clam. There were many damaged and broken valves scattered along the shore but I did find some pairs in good condition. This species is native but also circumboreal occurring on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts of North America where it is used in Clam Chowder.



Photo Gallery of Howletts Get-together



Left - Carl Ruscoe shows Jane some large volutes and tritons



Right - Julian Joseph shows Tony a tray of ovulids

Below - From left to right: Jean-Paul, Claire, Derek and Daphne, Yoshiko, Goga, John and Alice



Editor's note: Due to timescales of PALLIDULA print run, it was not possible to include photos of the Yateley get together, nor of our first meeting at Chatsworth. Please see next issue.

Simnia patula (Pennant 1777)

By David W McKay

While I was on a shell collecting trip to Aberdeen Bank I collected two specimens of *Simnia patula* (Pennant 1777). Both specimens were alive in a small meshed net attached to a commercial scallop dredge. They were approximately 20mm long.

These are the first specimens of this species I have seen from the North Sea. The Conchological Society on line Atlas indicates records as far north as the Orkney Islands but none from the North Sea.

This continues a trend of species that were at one time considered to be entirely southern in their distribution appearing in collection from the North Sea. It began with *Erato voluta* continued with *Calliostoma granulatum* and now includes *Simnia patula*. Whether this reflects poor recording in the past or a real change in distribution is open to speculation. However a number of fish species that were formerly considered to very occasional

migrants are now common enough to appear in the catches on the fist market.

(PHOTO TO BE ADDED)

Shell Show 2011

The Shell Show is again being held at Theydon Bois Village Hall on Saturday 29th October starting at 7.30 a.m. for dealers and 9 a.m. for everybody else, going on to 5 p.m. Again can I ask both dealers and exhibitors to start packing away after 4.30 pm. at the earliest so that everyone can get a chance to look at everything properly? Especially as this year we will be holding the second part of the Auction held in April, because we had so many items to auction off that we couldn't get rid of them all in one go. The auction will be held after the exhibits have been judged and the prizes will be given out after the auction has finished.

The classes, may I remind members, for this year's show are:

1. One species
2. One Genus or family
3. British – includes marine, freshwater and land
4. Foreign – includes marine, freshwater and land
5. Shell photography – judged by ballot
6. Fossils
7. Self-made shell art
8. Shellomania – Any entry, not suiting other classes
9. Junior – 11 and under
10. Junior – 16 and under

Rules to consider if exhibiting

Exhibits All should only be a maximum of 4 feet wide or less. All should only be a maximum of 4 feet wide or less (depth being limited by the size of the tables, approximately two feet six inches).

Photographs Remember that each photographic exhibit are limited to a total area of 15" X 12" including all frames, captions etc...

Dealer shell of the Day This category judged by ballot was considered a great success with Fernand de Donder and Rita Goethaals winning with *Nodipecten magnificus* last year. May I remind dealers to set aside a single specimen shell, labelled but with **no price displayed**, as their entry into this competition. These will be given a unique reference and all present will be invited to go round the hall and vote for their favourite shell via a secret ballot. Once the competition is announced the shells may be offered for sale.

Shell of the Show Exhibitors don't forget there is also Shell of the Show. So look out a large, beautiful or rare or beautiful and rare specimen for your exhibit? But it doesn't actually have to be either large, beautiful or a rare species as Carl and Craig Ruscoe showed us last October, by winning with their sinistral specimen of *Trichia hispida*, a common garden species in this country.

Entry details For those wishing to enter an exhibit, a loose sheet detailing these exhibit categories and how to enter is enclosed with this edition of Pallidula, so you don't need to deface your copy of Pallidula. Please send in entries either on the form enclosed or e-mail me via Celia Pain's e-mail tp006f6896@blueyonder.co.uk Entries must be received by Saturday 15th October 2011.

Come and join us at Theydon Bois on the 29th October and have a good day out with beautiful exhibits, lovely shells to buy and delicious food all day.

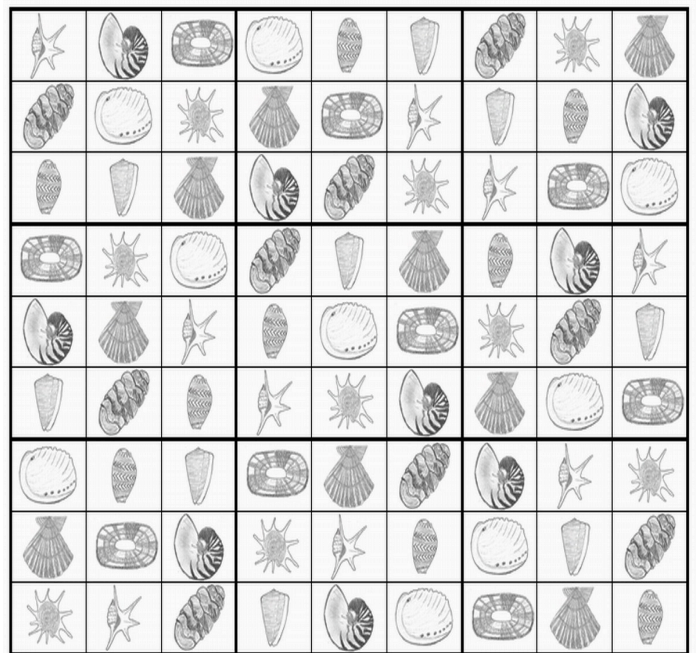
John Llewellyn-Jones, Show secretary



Secretary's Notes

I am delighted to report that our request at the AGM for members interested in standing for the Committee received a good response. The Committee has thus co-opted David Feld, Alistair Moncur and David Rolfe onto the Committee until the next AGM when those wishing to continue will stand for election.

The Club receives notification of several collections for sale each year. Most of these turn out to be beach-collected common material but occasionally we hear of interesting specimens for sale. We are considering whether members could be informed of these by e-mail and mail. As most members may not be interested it is probably not justified to do a full Club mailing each time this occurs. However I would be grateful if members who would like to be informed would let me know, if possible by e-mail but by mail if necessary. This also raises the question of whether the Club should have an active e-mail list and what we could use it for. Comments from members on this would be welcome.



Shell Duko Answer

Obituaries

We are sad to inform club members John Hesketh, died earlier this year. He had been a member of the club for many years, and came to the shows at Theydon Bois. John lived in Cornwall and was particularly interested in British molluscs. Although he did not exhibit, John's collection included all molluscs; fossils and non marine shells too. He will be sadly missed.



Barbara (also known as Babs) Shepherd died on the 6th of June, 2011 after a short illness. I first met Barbara because she wrote to me, while I was still living with my parents in Northwich in Cheshire. She also had recently moved to the area and was keen to meet up with other shell collectors. She had also contacted Paul Rosa as he lived (and still lives) there and so in about 1996, the three of us had our first shell meeting round at her house. We bought a long a few things of interest and also perused her amazing collection, much of it self-collected while her and her husband was stationed in Brunei and latterly Cyprus.

She was a fantastically enthusiastic collector (and generally enthusiastic person as well) and had amassed a vast quantity of material. She was also fanatical about details on collecting labels, often citing such things as "found on wet leaves of a plant at 3pm in the garden of the hotel, just to the left of the fountain". The three of us continued to meet monthly and a couple of years later were joined by Brian Hammond who worked at the same place as I did at the time.



Our meetings continued for several years, carrying on with the original 3 members once Brian had returned to Scotland. In the year 2000, I also moved away but whenever I visited my family, we 3 would meet up again and have a shell related chat! The last time we all met up was in March of 2011 at Barbara's house. Barbara was just as jolly as ever and had finally got over some problems with her eyes, she even said that she would like to come to the next show which would have been for the first time in several years. Sadly this was not to be the case.

We extend our deepest sympathies to her family and to her numerous other friends.

By Jonathan Welsh

Donations can be made at <http://www.justgiving.com/chesterway>



Dates for your Diary

12th October 2011

Conch Soc. Regional meeting in Bath at Bath Royal Literary & Scientific Institution, 16-18 Queen Square, Bath. 10.00 am onwards. Contact: Ron Boyce (0118-9351413)

27th October 2011

Shell Show at Theydon Bois Community Centre: CM16 7ER
For directions please see back issues of Pallidula, or look on the club website www.britishshellclub.org

10th December 2011

Conch Soc. Angela Marmont Centre, Darwin Building, Natural History Museum, London. 2.00 pm. Jan Light: *Blogging a way along the Normandy Coast.*

28th January 2012

Conch Soc. Angela Marmont Centre, Darwin Building, Natural History Museum, London. 2.00 pm. Suzanne Williams: *Trochidae.*

17th March 2012

Editor's Social at Selina's home: RG40 2LT. Tel: 0118 9786380

28th April 2012

Shell Convention at Theydon Bois Community Centre.
For directions please see back issues of Pallidula, or look on the club website www.britishshellclub.org



In the next issue ...

There will be an article on the history of our shell club by founder member, Mike Dixon.

Editor's note: I am looking for photographs of beaches and coastlines of the UK, taken by members of the shell club. These will be used as an encouragement to go out collecting, as well as a useful space filler! Please email your photographs direct to me, with your name and the location of the photograph. The photographs don't have to be as blue as Studland Bay by Colin Goss, on Page 21, just inspirational to go and visit somewhere new. Below, Titchwell Beach, Norfolk, *Zirafaea crispata* can be found after storms.



