

PALLIDULA

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THE MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH SHELL

COLLECTORS' CLUB



EDITORIAL

I have decided to keep this Editorial very brief and thank all the members who have contributed to this edition for their efforts in producing some very interesting reading. I have very much enjoyed the article by S.P. Dance on a "Necklace cone for Charles Kingsley" as I have in my own collection of cowry shells some specimens with very clear numbers appearing within the pattern. In the next issue I will take some photographs of these cowries to share with our members.

Articles are always welcome for *Pallidula*; now that we have a full colour magazine, please do include photographs or other pictures with your articles – this makes for much more interesting reading.

Please read carefully the Secretary's Notes on the following page which includes some very important information about the upcoming events and changes within the Committee roles.

Please keep up the good work with your articles and look forward to seeing you all at Theydon Bois for the October Shell Show.

The Editor

Dates for your Diary

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

- Saturday 30th October 2010** - Shell Show at Theydon Bois Community Centre
- Saturday 30th April 2011** - Shell Convention at Theydon Bois Community Centre
- Saturday 17th September 2011** - Chatsworth House, Derbyshire
- Saturday 29th October 2011** - Shell Convention at Theydon Bois Community Centre

Other event dates for 2011 will be announced in the April edition of *Pallidula*

**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**

Conchological Society

Indoor meetings are held in the Dorothea Bate Room (Palaeontology Demonstration Room) in the Natural History Museum, South Kensington, London, and consist of talks on a wide variety of conchological subjects. The talks start at 2.00pm, but the October and January meetings start at 11.00 when there will be exhibits and demonstrations. You do not need to be a member to attend.

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|------------------|---|
| 2 October 2010 | Robert Cameron: Thoughts on an extraordinary snail: <i>Helixena</i> in the Azores and other molluscan oddities. |
| 11 December 2010 | John Llewellyn-Jones: Molluscs in China. |
| 29 January 2011 | David Reid: Worldwide periwinkles: the evolution, diversity and changing classification of the Littorinidae. |

For further information see: www.conchsoc.org.

SECRETARY'S NOTES

There are several important items to discuss. First, the Committee has decided that it is time for some of the Officers' posts to change. Many of the present Officers have held the same role for the last seven years, and feel that a change will allow new ideas to develop. With effect from 1st November 2010 the Committee will consist of:

Chairman	Simon Taylor
Vice-chairman	Selina Wilkins
Club Secretary	John Whicher
Show Secretary	John Llewellyn-Jones
Treasurer	Daphne Howlett
Editor	John Batt (ex-officio)
Webmaster	Julian Joseph (ex-officio)
Other Committee members	Sharon Crichton, Celia Paine, Tom Walker, Jonathan Welsh

Please note that our new Club Secretary, John Whicher, is in the process of moving house – see the next page for details.

The informal gatherings during 2010 (York - Jenny and John Whicher; Norwich - Daphne and Derek Howlett; Yateley - Goga and John Batt) have been successful, as usual, with between 25 and 30 members attending each meeting, and thanks are given to our hosts for their hospitality. However, the Scottish Shell Show, held in Edinburgh in June, failed to attract more than a handful of people, despite the hard work of organisers Brian Hammond and Gavin Thompson; this is regrettable, as it was hoped that members from the north of England and Scotland would support a meeting outside the south-east of England. There have now been three meetings in Edinburgh, the first two of which, held in the winter months, attracted only a moderate attendance and it was thought that by holding this year's meeting in the summer more people would be encouraged to attend. However, the poor attendance indicates that there is little support for a meeting in the north, and this event will no longer take place.

BUT... we do have another venue to try, and we very much hope that it will be better supported. A Shell Show will be held at **Chatsworth House in Derbyshire on September 17th, 2011**. I am sure that everyone has heard of this magnificent House, the home of the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire. The meeting will be held in Cavendish Hall, an excellent location at the entrance to Chatsworth Park. In order to make it a success it is very important that many members take tables (at a cost of only £10 each) and offer their wares for sale; it is also hoped that members will make exhibits for display (non-competitive). Local advertising should attract good support from the population of the surrounding area. However, it will only succeed if there is also very strong support from BSCC members, both by taking tables and by attending to enjoy a great day's shelling. **So please put the date in your diary now, and think about how YOU can make this event a big success.** This will be an event for EVERYONE, so why not come along; consider making a weekend of it and enjoy some of the sights and wonders of this part of the country. Further details about the meeting, Chatsworth House and the surrounding area will be given in the Spring edition of *Pallidula*, but remember, YOUR SUPPORT IS ESSENTIAL. Incidentally, Chatsworth is holding an "Attic Sale" on 5-7 October 2010, organised by Sotheby's, which contains a shell collection accumulated by Georgiana, 5th Duchess (1757-1806) and extended by her son the 6th Duke and subsequent members of the Cavendish family in the 19th century; the sale catalogue will be viewable online in September (www.sothebys.com – lot 350); should any member wish to view this lot pre-sale at Chatsworth without the need to purchase the full catalogue normally required for entry please contact me about how to obtain free entry.

Most members will have heard of the Conchological Society, and many are members of both the Conch Soc. and the B.S.C.C. Traditionally there has been little direct communication between the two organisations, but many now feel that there should be stronger links and as a start each will list the other club's meetings in their respective magazines. The Conch Soc. newsletter, *Mollusc World*, will list our meetings, and *Pallidula* will list the Conch Soc. meetings. Please see page 3 for their forthcoming events – you do not need to be a member to attend.

Finally, I would like to thank all those people – members and non-members – who have made my seven years as Club Secretary very enjoyable. The Club has grown considerably over this period, from 173 members in October 2003 to 219 at the time of writing, an increase in membership of over 25%; this has occurred largely through the hard work of a core of people, considerably aided by the Club website. With everyone's help the Club can continue to grow.

Tom Walker, Club Secretary

SHELL SHOW 2010

As you should already know, this year's Show is on Saturday 30th October at Theydon Bois Village Hall. This is quite possibly the last Show to be administered by your current Show Secretary and it would be great to go out with a flourish so, exhibitors, you are urged to pull out all the stops to put on an extra special display this year.

The sheet detailing exhibit categories and how to enter is enclosed with this magazine. Nowadays it seems a bit old-fashioned to insist that exhibitors send a slip of paper by post so entries are also welcomed by email to abmanuk@hotmail.com. However, please do not attempt to submit entries by telephone as missed messages and the like have the potential for confusion. All entries received will be acknowledged but please allow a few days for acknowledgement. In order to allow the Show to be well planned in advance, please provide correct details of the size of exhibits and at least a working title. As usual, it is intended to accommodate the exhibits in the centre of the main hall.

For some thoughts on the Show, exhibiting and recent trends please see the article page 7 in this issue.

Dealers are requested to contact the Show Secretary as well in advance as possible in order to book table-top space (the cost is still just £15 per 6 foot table). Doors open for dealers and exhibitors at 7:30 am with general entry from 9:00 am onwards. Please don't forget to bring any spare material you may be able to donate to the Bring & Buy box, which others may find interesting and helps to supplement Club funds.

Dealers & Exhibitors please note: too often these days it seems that our events are all but over by the middle of the afternoon. While it is appreciated that many have longish journeys ahead, the events are all-day affairs for the benefit of all Club members including those who may not be able to get to Theydon Bois early on. As such, you are requested to refrain from packing away wares and exhibits until 4:30pm at the earliest please.

Dealer Shell of the Day: previous innovations (the scored judging system, the photographic competition displayed on vertical boards and judged by members' ballot) are being retained and this year's novelty is the Dealer Shell of the Day category. All dealers are invited (and will be nagged) to set aside on their stall a single specimen shell, labelled but with no price displayed, as their entry into this competition. These will be given unique references and then all present will be invited to vote for their favourite via a ballot (no cheating please dealers - I will be watching). Once the competition result is announced, the shells may be offered for sale.

I look forward to seeing you all at the Show.

Simon Taylor, Show Secretary.

NOTICE BOARD

We would like to express our thanks to all members who have donated shells for our Bring and Buy box which continues to contribute to Club funds and support our annual events.

Found at the April 2010 Shell Convention - black fabric purse left on Eatons Seashells stall.
Please contact Ken Wye (01279-410284) for further details.

THE MYTHS OF EXHIBITING

by Selina Wilkins (with input from Simon Taylor)

Did you know that some of the duties of the club committee also include the organising of shell meetings, shows, auctions and events? Simon Taylor is currently our Show secretary, whose role not only includes booking the hall and shell dealers but also organising of the annual show and exhibits. As a committee we listen to views, ideas and suggestions from members of the club, thrash them around (you'd be surprised at how differently dealers and collectors sometimes view things) and bring about changes. One such change, implemented in 2005, was the introduction of a scoring system for the judges to use when judging the exhibits.

At each committee meeting, Simon asks for feedback on the previous show and thoughts for the next. This means we debate the categories of the exhibits and what the themes will be. These can bring heated discussion, as we are always trying to encourage members to "have a go"; so we try to think of themes which will motivate new exhibitors, not frighten them away. In our discussions, someone might say 'well there weren't that many entries this year' and another might dispute it, as our recollections and perceptions can vary. So to aid our memory banks, I put together a table which highlighted some interesting facts.

As the British Shell Collectors' Club, we have had at least one entry for the British category for the last 6 years. We can be proud that we do indeed collect British shells and we strive to share information about them with the rest of the club and beyond. In years gone by there were times when there were no entries, but perhaps the lure of the Scotia Shield has helped promote exhibiting British shells.

Curiously, there have been no entries in the Foreign category for the last 5 years. Is it because exhibits with foreign shells are in other categories? Are people unsure what the Foreign category means?

The introduction of the photography section in the themed category in 2008 proved so popular it has been made a new regular category in itself. It is hoped it will perhaps help people to consider their shells, and collecting, in a new light. I have used photographs of my shells in exhibits in the past, and was always amazed at how much more detail I could observe after photographing them. The future may also see entrants exhibiting images taken underwater, particularly amongst those who perhaps prefer to collect photographs rather than specimens.

The most bizarre oddity in the table, for me certainly, concerns the themed and variable categories. As mentioned before, we debate what theme or variable might encourage someone to exhibit for the first time. Every few years, we usually chose a geographical area, but no-one exhibited for the Caribbean theme in 2009. We have tried to chose some very open to interpretation themes for which a member could chose shells from nearly any family or any part of the world. These have included; 5 favourite shells, 5 ugliest shells and "spots and dots". Somewhat surprisingly, each of these only had one exhibit.

So here are some questions for you. Please write to, email or phone me or Simon with your thoughts.

- Why do you exhibit or not exhibit? Time? Unsure of how to resource the actual display?
- Concerned about quality of the shells you have available? Worried about your level of expertise?
- Do you think there are too many categories? Or not enough?
- Do you like the variable and themed categories? Would you like more input into their selection?
- Or perhaps all of this information will spur you onto putting on your own little exhibit.

Year	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
One Species	2	2	2	2	5	7
One Genus / family	2	2	4	3	3	1
British	2	3	1	2	3	1
Foreign	1	0	0	0	0	0
Variable	1	0	3	1	1	0
Themed	1	0	1	2	5	1
Shellomania	2	1	2	2	1	3
Junior 12-16	0	2	0	0	0	2
Junior 11 and under	3	1	0	1	3	2
Photography						4
No. of exhibits	14	11	13	13	21	21
Total junior exhibits	3	3	0	1	3	4
Exhibits per category	1.56	1.22	1.44	1.44	2.33	2.10
No. of exhibitors	12	10	9	11	15	19
Exhibits per exhibitor	1.17	1.10	1.44	1.18	1.40	1.11
Variable		Fossils	Self made art	My 5 ugliest shells	Fossils	Caribbean
Themed		Gmelin	5 favourite shells	Bivalves	Photography	Spots & Dots
Total length of exhibits (ft)	42	32	34	39	40.5	
Average length per exhibit (ft)	3.00	2.91	2.62	3.00	1.93	
Uncontested categories	Junior 12+	Foreign Fossils Themed: Gmelin	Foreign Junior 12+ Junior 11-	Foreign Junior 12+	Foreign Junior 12+	Foreign variable

A NECKLACE CONE FOR CHARLES KINGSLEY

by S. Peter Dance

My friend Harlan Wittkopf is besotted with the Alphabet Cone, *Conus spurius* Gmelin. To collect it is the main purpose of his regular visits to the island of Sanibel, off the south-west coast of Florida. The markings on its shell have a particular fascination for him, so much so that he has issued thousands of brochures for distribution to schools in the USA. *Alphabet Cones, Living, Learning Tools*, is a nicely illustrated brochure aimed at younger readers. It shows that, using a little imagination, markings resembling every number, including '0', and every letter of the alphabet may be found on different examples of this cone, giving it a unique distinction among shells and making it a subject of potential interest to the young and the not-so young.

Inspired by Harlan's brochure, I offer these curious, if less dramatic observations about markings on another kind of cone shell, for the Alphabet Cone is not the only member of its family to display numbers and letters on the surface of its shell. For instance, another one that does so, as its name suggests, is the Lettered Cone, *Conus litteratus* Linnaeus.

As far as I know, such markings do not normally appear on shells of the Necklace Cone, *Conus monile* Bruguière. They do appear, however, on a specimen I acquired recently. Collected near Phuket, Thailand, it displays two broad, spiral bands of transverse markings resembling numbers and letters. Using a little imagination, the upper band may be seen to contain the following line up of numbers, arranged from left to right: **7 0 1 8 1 1 5**. Also present on one or other of the bands are the following letters: **A E F G L X**.



Conus monile, collected from outside Reef 15, Kantang, south of Phuket, Thailand. S. Peter Dance collection. Seen from left to right in the upper spiral band are what appear to be the following numbers: 7018115.

Conus monile, plate 20, figure 2, from John Mawe's *Linnaean System of Conchology* (1823). From a copy of the book owned by S. Peter Dance. Clearly visible in the upper spiral band are the letters Y E C K C.



Conus monile, plate 20, figure 2, from another copy of Mawe's book, also owned by S. Peter Dance. In this copy the letter E in the upper spiral band is not fully formed.

For many years shell books, old and new, have been a passion of mine, rivalling, if not exceeding, my love of shells. *The Linnaean Conchology*, by John Mawe, was an early favourite. Published in 1823, it has many excellent lithographs by Edmund A. Crouch and in most copies they are exquisitely hand coloured. Plate 20 portrays the shells of eight different cones. One of them is the Necklace Cone, the name referring to an encircling pattern of dots and dashes, typically present on perhaps a majority of examples. The pattern displayed on Mawe's shell, however, is not typical. It shows 'necklaces' of dots and dashes, yes, but also two broad spiral bands of transverse markings. In one of two copies of the book before me the upper band shows the letters **Y E C K C**, arranged from left to right. The arrangement of these letters is repeated in the second copy, except that the **E** is not fully formed. The **E** is not fully formed in the Tomlin copy in the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, and is scarcely formed at all in a copy owned by John Robinson.

This brings me, finally, to a remarkable shell owned by Brian Hammond, an avid collector of cone shells. One day he produced from his collection a Necklace Cone with the letters **C** and **K** clearly displayed near its base. They affected me strangely. At first I saw them as the bold signature of an unknown artist. Then they became the initials of Charles Kingsley, author of a book that helped inspire me to take up the study of molluscs and their shells: *Glaucus; or the Wonders of the Shore* (1855). Fanciful ideas, perhaps, but they lead, if indirectly, to a pertinent question. Do numbers and letters occur on the shell of the Necklace Cone with any degree of regularity? I suspect they do not, but others more qualified than me should be able to discover if they do. Of one thing, however, I am certain. Charles Kingsley would have been delighted to see his initials on a Necklace Cone, for both he and his wife, Fanny, had an early attachment to conchology. As for me, I shall continue to let my imagination run riot over any curiously marked shell that catches my eye.



Conus monile, locality unknown. Brian Hammond collection. The letters **C** and **K** are boldly displayed in the lower spiral band.

For sending me photos of the Necklace Cone, *Conus monile*, illustrated in copies of Mawe's *Linnaean Conchology*, I am indebted to Chris Meechan of the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff, and to John Robinson of Darlington. For bringing his uniquely marked specimen of this cone to my attention I am grateful to Brian Hammond.

SHELL BOOKS & ARTICLES FOR SALE

For Sale: Books and articles about molluscs, from the collection of the late Bill Pettitt.

These include:-

- Jeffreys *British Conchology* (1862-69), pls in vol. 5 all hand coloured;
- Lovell *Edible Mollusks of Great Britain & Ireland* (1867);
- Wood *Index Testaceologicus* (1828), plain pls;
- Knudsen *The Deep-sea Bivalvia* (1967);
- Thiele *Handbuch der Systematischen Weichtierkunde* (1931, the Asher reprint of 1963);
- Chenu *Manuel de Conchyliologie* (1859-62);
- Adams & Adams *The Genera of Recent Mollusca* (1858);
- Hirase *A Collection of Japanese Shells ... in Natural Colors* (1938);
- Houbrick *Genus Clypeomorus* (1985).

For a priced list of these and other titles please write to:
S. P. Dance, 83 Warwick Road, Carlisle CA1 1EB
or email: spdance@live.com.

SHELL COLLECTING IN THE AZORES

by Jonathan Welsh

For my holiday in July 2007, I headed off to the Azores. These are a group of 9 islands, divided into 3 sub-groups, and situated approximately 1000 miles from the Portuguese coast. They are volcanic in origin as they are situated on the mid-oceanic ridge that runs down the centre of the Atlantic Ocean. The population of around 130,000 people includes a grand total of 10 English people, including the couple that ran the hotel! Because of the volcanoes, the coastlines are rugged and there are few sandy beaches. It also makes for some treacherous climbing to get to the shoreline.



Anyway, I arrived very late on a Saturday evening (after a long drive, a short (4 hour) flight and a 20 minute taxi drive) at a small hotel in the fishing village of Caloura on the southern coast of the biggest island, San Miguel. Prior to departure, I had emailed Dr. Sergio Avila at the University of the Azores as he has written several papers on the molluscs found there. He replied saying that where I was actually staying was a good place to collect. Spurred on by this, on the Sunday I went for a stroll down to the nearest area of beach – called Baixa d'areia (which means in Portuguese sand at the bottom – I assume this is a reference to the fact that when the tide is out, the lower half of the beach is sandy and nothing to do with sitting on the beach!) I employed my usual method of collecting – namely looking at the strand line, which was very clear as the tide was falling (interestingly, the tidal range in the Azores is typically 3 feet – i.e. not very much in comparison with other places that have coastlines on the Atlantic). Almost immediately, I spotted a *Haliotis coccinea* Reeve, 1846 glinting in the sunshine. After only a very few minutes I found several *Columbella rustica* (Linné, 1758), more *H. coccinea* and also *Natica (Euspira) guillemini* (Payradreau, 1826), several Pectens - possibly *Chlamys varia* (Linné, 1758), *Calliostoma (Calliostoma) laugierii* (Payradreau, 1826), *Patella (Patella) ulyssiponensis aspersa* Röding, 1798, *Patella (Patella) caerulea* Linné, 1758, *Thais (Thais) haemastoma* Linné, 1758, *Littorina (Echinolittorina) striata* King & Broderip, 1832, *Nassarius (Hinia) incrassatus* (Strøm, 1768) and *Jujubinus striatus* (Linné, 1758). Quite a good haul for an hour on the beach. I returned to this beach on several other occasions during the week and found more of the same as well as two, rather eroded, *Coralliophila meyendorffi* (Calcara, 1845), some single valves of *Lima hians* Gmelin, 1791 and *Glycymeris glycymeris* Linné, 1758 and various other *Patella*.

I had decided to have a relaxing holiday and so did not do much travelling around the island (hence my mostly collecting at Baixa d'areia) but I did also visit another beach within walking distance called Galera. This is apparently a famous place for collecting limpets, which the locals eat in a dish called Lapas, consisting mostly of garlic, tomatoes and oil in addition to the molluscs themselves. However, there was very little evidence for this amongst the rocks – I only found a few very small examples and some fragments as well as half a *Janthina janthina* Linné, 1758 and a small, unidentified bivalve – probably *Cardita senegalensis* Reeve, 1843. Slightly dejected I headed back up the beach and on my way I saw a huge *Patella* near the top of the beach, well above the strand line. After 10 minutes searching in this location, I found about another dozen examples that turned out to be from two species – *Patella (Patella) ulyssiponensis aspersa* Röding, 1798 and *Patella (Patella) caerulea* Linné, 1758. Later in the week I decided to get some more examples of Lapas by the simple technique of ordering it in a restaurant and asking to keep the shells. Let me just say that it is probably an acquired taste and I shall not be making the effort again – the shells are nice though! Interestingly, the meal turned out to consist of both of these species so Lapas is obviously just a generic name for limpets eaten in the Azores.

That was really it for shelling but (via an interpreter) I spoke to the local fishermen and they said that they never caught anything in their nets as they tended to go for pelagic fish species and so they would have no contact with the sea floor. I also spoke to the housekeeper at the hotel and she said that her sister had some shells that were collected at Caloura and so I suggested she bring them along for me to identify. She did so and then said that I could keep them! They were two examples of *Charonia lampas* Linné, 1758 (both heavily encrusted and slightly damaged – I have made a concerted effort to clean them up since the holiday) and a *Ranella olearia* (Linné, 1758). I was also

told by a couple who I met in the hotel that they had seen a live *Charonia lampas* Linné, 1758 at about 12 metres deep while on a dive at Baixa d'areia – obviously, they very rarely get washed ashore hence my not finding any on the beach.

Overall, the Azores is a good place to collect – probably better if you can dive rather than looking on the beach. Being a (very) novice diver, I was only able to have a quick look at what was underwater and unfortunately, most of the animal life seemed to consist of Echinoids! However, I did find numerous examples of all the species mentioned above and many, despite being on the beach, were in excellent fresh dead condition and so, to all intents and purposes, are gem. The *Natica* were particularly good as they still had their opercula attached to the animal within the shell, as did one of the *Thais*.

MOLLUSCS AND MISERICORDS

by John Robinson

We all know what the former are, but perhaps not everyone has come across the latter. A misericord, from the Latin word *misericordia*, meaning act of mercy or compassion, is a modification to the stalls used by monks in the part of the church known as the choir or quire. Normally the monks would have been expected to stand when observing the many holy offices held throughout the day, but as a concession to elderly or infirm monks who found standing for long periods difficult, the stalls were modified to include a small hinged shelf on which they could lean. First appearing in the eleventh century, they continued to be made into the sixteenth century, and originally were simple and without decoration. As we shall see, later ones were elaborately carved on the underside depicting all manner of fables and animal imagery, some rather crude, but others beautifully carved and polished.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Misericords depicting molluscs are not as rare as one might expect. They are usually styled depictions making identification difficult, with the exception perhaps being the scallop. Fig. 1 shows a 15th century example of this in St Peter's church in Hackness, North Yorkshire, a beautiful old church with Saxon origins. As well as the shelf, the supports are also carved with scallop shells. It is thought that these choirs originally came from Whitby Abbey. Another example of the scallop, illustrated in Fig. 2, can be found in St Margaret's church in Kings Lynn. Dating to the late 14th century, they show the coat of arms of Robert de Scales, a prominent Norfolk family of that time.

A child issuing from a shell was said to symbolise innocence or virtue confronting evil. Beverly Minster in Yorkshire has 68 misericords, the largest number in the country, dating from 1520. One of them, Fig. 3, shows just such a child emerging from a shell to confront two wyverns, while the shelf support has a man attacking a snail with a stick.

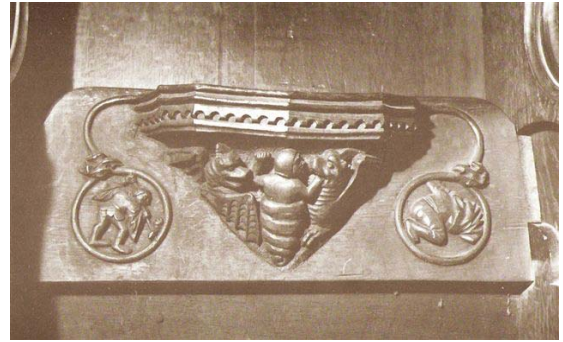


Fig. 3



Fig. 4

The misericords in Manchester Cathedral are considered to be among the finest in Europe. Fig. 4 illustrates a 16th century carving showing a child rising from a shell wielding a short sword to confront a dragon. Norwich Cathedral has a similar 16th century example with a carving of a pilgrim emerging from a shell also holding a short sword or dagger, which is illustrated in Fig. 5. (Incidentally, misericord is also the word for a small mediaeval dagger used to give the death stroke to a wounded foe).

In mediaeval times, some people believed that the soul of a newly born child could be placed in a coconut shell for safekeeping. In Durham Cathedral there is a misericord where the nut splits into two cornucopia shells overflowing with fruit and foliage, between which the child's well-fed body ends in swirling leaf formations.

There are many churches with misericords, and some have ones depicting shells. Next time you are out and about, and you come across a mediaeval church, pause a moment and see if it contains some of these rather beautiful carvings, perhaps you too will be lucky enough to come across a shell.



Fig. 5

I would like to express my thanks to the following people who were very helpful with the composition of this article:

Joanne Hooper and Canon Denby, Manchester Cathedral
 Jane Myers, Beverly Minster
 Ken Harvey (photo credit), Norwich Cathedral
 Shiela Coulson, St Peter's Church, Hackness
 Liz James, St Margaret's Church, Kings Lynn

SHELL COLLECTING IN THE NORTHERN SPORADES, GREECE, (SKIATHOS AND SURROUNDING ISLANDS) AND THE MAINLAND

by Jonathan Welsh

For our holiday in October 2009, my girlfriend Heather and I decided upon Greece, specifically the small island called Skiathos in the island group known as the Sporades. They are called this because a local legend states that two giants had a competition of strength as to which one could throw boulders furthest out to sea. This led to the creation of the islands and gave accounts for their sporadic distribution. The legend does not record which giant won the competition!

Anyway, we stayed on the southern coast of the island, which is the more inhabited part – the northern part of the island is almost devoid of people and has no roads. On the southern section, there is a long line (insofar as is possible on an island only 8 miles long!) of small resorts running eastwards all the way along from the capital (Skiathos Town) to the far end of the island at Koukounaries from where you can view spectacular sunsets over the distant Greek mainland. After the usual settling in period after the flight, we decided to head to the nearest local beach, called Agia Paraskevi. This is a lovely sandy beach and, at that time of year, many of the tourists have gone so it was very quiet. Toward one end of the beach, there is also a rocky protuberance between this area and the next beach along the coast. I wandered along the strandline as usual and found very little. However, when I got to the rocky bit, after a very few minutes I observed numerous *Patella* and *Gibbula* species and, later in the week when we returned I found numerous *Rissoa* and one *Murex* (*Hexaplex*) *trunculus* (Linné, 1858) with a resident hermit crab.

After a couple more days, we decided to head to a beach near Koukounaries to see what we could find. There is a large freshwater lake nearby so, initially; we had a walk around it as it is a pleasant spot. Unfortunately, at that time of year, following the rains there are lots of the dreaded mosquitoes about and despite repellent we were bitten quite a few times. Oddly, the outer fringes of the lake were surrounded by shells – mostly *Tapes philippinarum* that I did not see elsewhere, it is possible these were subfossils of some description as they looked as if they had been exposed to the sun for some time. The beach itself was quiet and curves nicely around the bay up to the headland beyond which is the infamous nudist beach called Big Banana and Little Banana (don't ask why it's called that, no one seemed willing to divulge that information.)

Anyway, Koukounaries is a lovely sandy beach with a large rocky outcrop at one end which gives way to large cliffs with various small inlets so Heather sat near that while I clambered over the rocks. Almost immediately, I spotted some *Monodonta turbinata* (Linné, 1758) and further investigations discovered *Patella* and *Gibbula* species, *Rissoa* and assorted stuff. A little later as the tide receded, I was able to make my way a little further around the headland and I found a lovely little cove with a small cave. There was little in the way of shells in it but it was a lovely spot for paddling in the warm water. When I returned to see Heather, she pointed at my leg and said, "Haven't you just trodden on one of those *Haliotis*?" and I had. Under my foot was a rather nice, good-sized *H. tuberculata* Linné, 1758 that, despite being beached (and stood on), was in excellent condition.

Another day, we headed to a beach adjacent to Agia Paraskevi, a place called Kanapista. There was not a great deal there aside from the usual species but I did find some small *Monodonta turbinata*, *Payraudeautia intricata* (a nice little Naticid) and *Chamelia fasciata*.

The other good thing about the island is that it is close to various other islands and it is easy to get a boat trip to these if you wish to. We went on one of these trips, which visited two nearby islands – Skopelos and Alonnisos. On the way there, we stopped on an uninhabited island called Argos, which is a site for foolhardy lunatics to sand surf down the mountain and out into the sea. This is because the sand reaches high up towards the central elevated part of the island and leads down to the beach. The beach at first glance looked rather unexciting but while I wandered off to find stuff Heather lay in the sun and relaxed and somehow or other managed to find better shells than I did without even moving! One of these had a bright purple mouth and eventually, after much searching in numerous books, I was able to identify as *Muricopsis cristata inermis* Philippi, 1836, a species

I hadn't already got in the collection. Other finds were a very pretty *Gibbula divaricata*, lots of *Pyrene rustica* (which seemed to be ubiquitous in all locations on the island), some very beached *Conus ventricosus*, a very dark *Gibbula ardens* (quite unlike the ones I found in the Balearics nearly 30 years ago), some beached *Cerithium rupestre*, a very strange little *Ocenebra* which might be *O. leukos*, *Nassarius incrassatus* (all much more colourful than those from British waters), *Patella candei*, *Patella tenuis crenata*, *Monodonta turbinata* and lastly five small *Gibbula* or *Monodonta* which require some serious detective work to identify. Just as we were about to leave, we observed a local fisherman playing with a small octopus in the shallows.

Another expedition by boat which was originally scheduled to see the most beautiful bay on the island was somewhat diverted by extremely strong currents so we took an interesting cruise around the top of the island and back around, before heading off to the mainland for lunch. A famous Hollywood couple apparently frequents the village of Platania, as it is a lovely unspoilt fishing village. The shells here were poor, more of the usual type of thing but I did find another *Murex (Hexaplex) trunculus* (Linné, 1858), without hermit crab, and another much smaller, much more lamellate, *Haliotis tuberculata*.

On our last complete day, we once again walked to Agia Paraskevi and spent almost the whole day there. Now knowing what to look for and being armed with a snorkel, shells were much easier to find. Crawling along the sea floor there was another *Murex (Hexaplex) trunculus* (Linné 1858) with a resident hermit crab and underwater at the point where the *Zostera* sea grass ended and the offshore large boulders began, there was an open bivalve, which I decided would be nice to have. I am not a strong swimmer but Heather is and so I asked her if she could try to collect it for me by diving. She duly obliged and collected a very nice, fresh dead *Chamelia varigata* Linné, 1758 for me from about seven feet deep. Many of the shells here were the same as elsewhere but other different material collected included *Cyclope donovania*, *Arca noae*, *Patella caerulea* Linné, 1758, *Clanculus bertheloti*, *Modiolus barbatus* (a small one, represented by single valve collected under a rock) *Donacilla cornea*, *Venus verrucosa* and *Arca tetragona*. As the sun began to go down and the dreaded mosquitoes began to emerge, we walked back along the strandline and while doing this; I spotted an unusual top shell of some sort. Once identified, it turned out to be *Gibbula franulum* in reasonable condition aside from a broken lip. Despite this, it was my best find of the holiday.

In early May 2010, Heather and I returned to Greece once more. This time, we elected to stay on the mainland at a tiny resort called Parga. This is in the most depopulated area of the country and it is almost untouched by tourism (at the moment). On the first day, after a delayed flight, we headed down to the nearest beach – a little stony area to the left of the main harbour called Piso Krioneri. After well over an hour of diligent searching (and the re-occurrence of the famous “Sheller’s Stoop”), we’d only found two microshells and one very beached *Murex (Hexaplex) trunculus*. Over the next few days of searching the other beaches around the area, I concluded there was nothing but it wasn't until I visited a little shop high up on the side of the headland leading up to the castle which overlooks the village that I found out the reason. The owner informed me that the authorities clean the beaches before the tourist season; I assume this is done with some sort of vacuum device that recycles the sand back onto the beach, removing the rubbish. Obviously, the shells are light in weight and so will be removed and disposed of as well. However, he did have a few shells recovered from this exercise – all *Tonna galea* (Linné, 1758) and all were beached. One of them was the largest I have ever seen, it must have been around 350 mm. from apex to siphonal canal but the lip was so severely damaged that I left it and bought a much smaller example that was in much better condition. After that, I gave up collecting at Parga.

However, we booked a boat trip to two of the smaller islands offshore – Paxos and Antipaxos (which is famous for its Blue caves). Paxos is larger and has a very pretty Venetian capital called Gaios, which has many fishing boats and a rather impressive natural harbour. If you walk out of town clockwise and uphill, you come across a small, sandy beach which the authorities have seen fit to leave uncleaned and so after half an hour of fairly lazy collecting, we had a large amount of material – mostly *Pyrene rustica* (Linné, 1758), *Monodonta (Osilinus) mutabilis* Philippi, 1846, *Bittium reticulatum* (da Costa, 1778), *Bittium scabrum* (Olivi, 1792), *Gibbula (Steromphala) divaricata* (Linné, 1758), some *Vexillum (Pusia) ebenus* (Lamarck, 1811), one *Pseudochama corbieri* (Jonas, 1846),

one *Nassarius incrassatus* (Ström, 1768) and two very nice *Pisania striata* (Gmelin, 1791) with very purple apertures one of which was fresh dead and contained the operculum. In total there were about 10 species, many the same as at Skiathos but oddly, there were very few bivalves. After a picnic lunch, we left that little beach and progressed around the headland to the next one where, once again, there were numerous shells, although less than our initial stopping place. They were mostly the same species as before but with two additional species, a single *Mitrella scripta* (Linné, 1758) and a slightly worn *Pisania* of some species which I need to investigate further. Lastly, as we were running short of time, we decided to clamber down a cliff to another little cove we'd spotted earlier. Once again, material was the same sort of species but in far lower numbers. The shells were also generally larger and I found a large fragment of a *Murex (Hexaplex) trunculus* which, had it been intact would have been around 90 mm. tall. There was also a very odd Buccinid that looks like a *Euthria cornea* (Linné, 1758) but with an unusually short siphonal canal (and no, it's not broken). Upon our return to the jetty to get the boat back, we had a look in the shallows and there were hundreds of *Gibbula (Steromphala) divaricata* alive on the rocks in less than six inches of water. Soon after we returned to the boat and then back to the mainland and its lack of shells.

I also had a quick look around for landsnails while in Greece, many were damaged appearing to have been predated by beetles but I did find one very nice and large *Pomatias elegans* (Müller, 1778) in the grounds of the castle overlooking Parga. The other material will require further investigation.

Overall, I would say if you intend to go to Greece for collecting purposes, don't bother with the mainland, the islands are much better!

EULOGY FOR A SNAIL

by S. Peter Dance

*I freely admit
That I take inspiration
From the Common Garden Snail
And its peregrination.*



*Forever at home
Although it goes out to dine
Its house is never empty
Which is seldom true of mine.*

*It may fix its eyes
Pointedly on this or that
Sublimely imperious
A haughty aristocrat.*

*Gliding serenely
It leaves a glistening trail
The signature and hallmark
Of the Common Garden Snail.*

*This noble creature
Is as you may plainly see
Not so common after all
But shows signs of pedigree.*



THE LIVING PLEUROTOMARIIDAE – PART 2

by John Batt

In *Pallidula* Volume 36, No.2, October 2006, I wrote a short article including a checklist of all species of living Pleurotomariidae. Since then there has been another addition to the species list by the name of *Bayerotrochus philpoppei* Anseeuw, Poppe & Goto, 2006, but my reason for submitting a second part or follow up to that article is that I was disappointed not to have included photographs and a little more in the way of information regarding differences between closely related species, sizes, variations within certain species and some general information on depth and distribution.

Some four years have passed since I wrote the first part of this article and throughout that period of time I have been actively obtaining specimens for my collection and would like to share the following images with our club members. I have kept all closely related species next to each other where necessary and as you can see separated them into their correct genera as they stand at the time of writing.

I am still missing some eleven species that I have not yet obtained due to their scarcity and/or expense and have been able to photograph but you can see these species in Visaya supplement 1. Pleurotomariidae: An Iconographic visit, 2005 by Patrick Anseeuw & Guido T. Poppe. These are:-

Bayerotrochus charlstonensis Askew, 1987 an extremely rare species dredged by a research vessel off South Carolina 80-90 miles east of Charleston from 750-850 ft. in depth and currently known from a few specimens only.

Bayerotrochus boucheti (Anseeuw & Poppe, 2001). It is difficult to obtain this species which is closely related to *B. teramachii* but from southern New Caledonia. Many specimens were originally dredged by a French research vessel of which most specimens ended up in museum collections but Vincent Craysaac has dredged a small number on his boat the Tui 2 Sarl which have fortunately found their way into private collections. I was very pleased to be able to view a specimen at the Antwerp Shell Show that Patrick Anseeuw had kindly bought along for me to see and I have to agree that it is something very different from *B. teramachii*, being a superb brightly coloured orange with striking white flecked markings, somewhat squatter in general shape with a flatter less inflated base.

Bayerotrochus diluculum (Okutani 1979) is only known from Japanese waters; this is another very rare species closely related to *B. teramachii* but with a lower more domed spire profile, white in colour with a smoother surface texture and more rounded aperture.

Bayerotrochus indicus (Anseeuw, 1999). Trawled in the Bay of Bengal this extremely rare species is known from just a couple of specimens. It has a very domed spire appearance and the whorls are quite tall but heavily stepped compared with other species within this genus. The general shape seems similar to *B. midas* from Caribbean waters but the apex in *B. midas* is very sunken.

Bayerotrochus poppei (Anseeuw, 2003). Quite recently described and so far only known from two specimens from Tonga, N.W of Tongatapu trawled alive by the French research vessel N.O Alis at 501 m. It is a small species, the holotype measuring 53.57 mm. and the paratype 62.53 mm. It has a large inflated body whirl with the rest of the whorls much less stepped. A full description was published in *Novaplex* 4 (1): 11-16, 10 March 2003.

Bayerotrochus philpoppei Anseeuw, Poppei and Goto, 2006 The most recently described species of Pleutomaria, endemic to Philippine waters, very closely related to *B. teramachii* but differing by its smaller adult size and very high spire profile.

Bayerotrochus tangaroana (Bouchet and Metivier, 1982). Endemic to the waters off New Zealand.

Perotrochus tosatoi Anseeuw, Goto & Abdi 2005. As far as I know this species is known only from one dead dredged beaten up specimen from French Guiana and resides in the collection of T. Tosato. The whorls seem to be less step-like than in its closest relative *P. atlanticus*, but I believe that this is the most dubious of all the named species of Pleurotomaria so far.

Perotrochus amabilis (Bayer, 1963) an incredibly beautiful species closely related to *P. maureri* but the two species are separated by the Florida Ridge. *P. maureri* is a smaller species, has a lower spire and the selenizone and base have a lesser number of spiral cords.

Perotrochus pyramus (Bayer, 1967). Quite a unique species whose area of distribution is much greater than originally expected, ranging from the Lesser Antilles through the Northern Antilles and most recently discovered off Roatan Island, Honduras, by Carl Stanley with the aid of his newer submersible Idabel.

Perotrochus metivieri (Anseeuw & Goto, 1995) is another very rare species believed to come from the Salha de Malha Bank in the Indian Ocean but there have been reports of this species from Vietnam and New Zealand. All of the very few known specimens were collected by Russian trawlers who seem not to have kept accurate locality information (unless of course this species does have a very wide distribution.) It can be easily separated from any other species by its uniquely wide slit. I personally think that *P. metivieri* should belong in the genus *Bayerotrochus* as it appears most closely related to *B. africanus* and *B. teramachii*

Entemnotrochus Fischer, 1885



E. rumphii (Schepman, 1879).

This is certainly a species not to be confused with any other and the largest living Pleurotomaria. This specimen measures 215 mm. across the base and was trawled off N.W.Taiwan at 200 fathoms. Juvenile specimens are very beautifully coloured in comparison to adults like this one and, as with many species of Pleurotomaria, there are high spired forms and more squat low spired forms.



E. adansonianus adansonianus (Crosse & Fischer, 1861).

I think this is one of the most spectacular species with its fantastic colouration and very thin and long delicate slit. This one is 114.5 mm. across the base and was collected off the Bahamas by submersible at 230 m. 1989.



E. adansonianus bermudensis (Okutani & Goto, 1983).

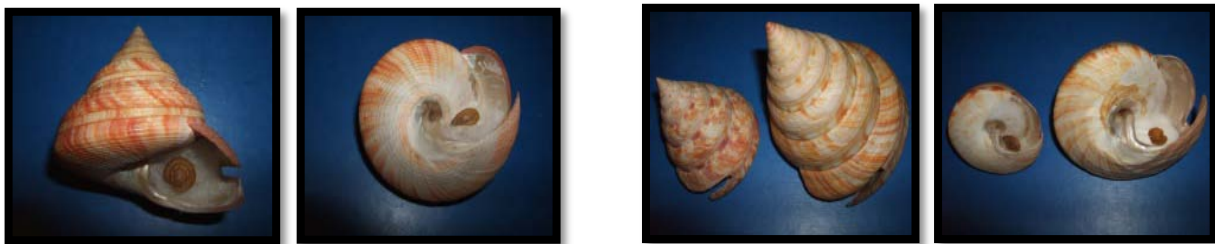
One of only two subspecies currently within the whole family this very rare shell is known mostly from dead collected specimens and is endemic to Bermuda. 40.9 mm. trawled on muddy sand off the south coast of St David's Island at 1200 ft.

Mikadotrochus Lindholm, 1927



M. hirasei (Pilsbry, 1903) *M. oishii* Shikama, 1973 Left shell: *M. hirasei*, right shell: *M. oishii*

Mikadotrochus hirasei is a very variable species in colour and albino specimens are not uncommon. *M. oishii* is very similar to *M. hirasei* and was once thought to represent a hybrid between *M. hirasei* and *B. teramachii*. It is now considered a valid species and many consistent differences have now been noted. The shape of *M. oishii* differs by having a more inflated base and the apical whorls have a more convex shape. The selenizone is always sunken in *M. oishii* where in *M. hirasei* is either flush or convex. The very fine shell sculpture with a less beaded surface texture differs greatly from that heavily granulous appearance of *hirasei*. *M. oishii* remains a very rare species known from just a hand full of specimens. The specimen pictured above was trawled by Taiwanese fishermen off N.W. Taiwan at around 200-300 m. It measures 90.7 mm. across the base, its longest dimension.



M. beyrichii (Hilgendorf, 1877).
This species has been found living in as little as 30 m. and is the shallowest living species of Pleurotomaria. It is endemic to Japanese waters, this specimen coming from the Uraga Strait, Chiba Prefecture, in gill nets at 60 m. 79.3 mm.

M. salmianus (Rolle, 1887).
The smallest of the two specimens above was trawled by Chinese fishermen in the E.China Sea at 300 m. The larger shells tend to come from Tosa Bay in Japan, this one being trawled at 350 m. The recorded world record size of *M. salmianus* is 135.8 mm. but this one I have yet to record at a huge 139.3 mm.



M. gotoi (Anseeuw, 1990).
A pair of size variations taken in tangle nets off Balut Island, Philippines at 200 m. 35.1-53.2 mm.

M. anseeuwi (Kanazawa & Goto, 1991).
A nice set of three showing a great difference in size and colour, from 29.8-94.5 mm. Philippines, Balut Island, tangle nets at 100-120 m.

Bayerotrochus Harasewych, 2002



B. teramachii (Kuroda, 1955).

This with *M. hirasei* is the most common species within the family but with uncommon varieties such as the pearly white specimen pictured above; I have never seen other varieties. The three largest specimens were trawled by Chinese fishermen in the E. China Sea between 350-420 m., the smallest from Balut Island, Philippines from 150 m.



B. africanus (Tomlin, 1948).

Here are two specimens of *B. africanus* a species very closely related to *teramachii*, both trawled off Durban, Natal, South Africa, on muddy sand at 70-90 m. The smallest measures 88.1 mm., the largest 116.9 mm.



B. westralis (Whitehead, 1987).

This set of three shows quite well the colour differences within this species ranging from pearly white in young shells with adults having orange markings some like the largest one being very golden in colour. The golden specimen was trawled off Port Hedland, N.W. Australia at 450-500 m. 1983 by a scampi trawler, the other two trawled off Broome at 450 m. 62.9-96.8 mm.



B. midas (Bayer, 1965).

Very much a unique species *B. midas* is usually collected by submersibles at depths of around 600 m. This one was according to the data slip collected at just 300 m. off Cat Island Bahamas. The range of distribution of this species is far greater throughout the Caribbean than originally thought with specimens now being collected off Roatan Island, Honduras.



Perotrochus Fischer, 1885



Left: *P. quoyanus quoyanus* (Fischer & Bernardi, 1856) Barbados, dredged at 200-220 metres, 46.2mm

Right: *P. quoyanus quoyanus* "gemma" Bayer, 1966, trawled between N. Guadeloupe & Antigua at 300 m., June, 2008, an unusual locality for this form; 33.5 mm. It may be possible through further anatomical and DNA studies that "gemma" could be a valid species.



P. quoyanus insularis Okutani & Goto, 1985

This is the second subspecies in the family and is also endemic to Bermuda. Note the shorter slit length in comparison to *P. quoyanus quoyanus*, the bulging whorls and the more rounded inflated base. This shell measures 51.3 mm. and was taken in baited trap one and a half miles off St. David's Island at 200 fathoms, 1989.





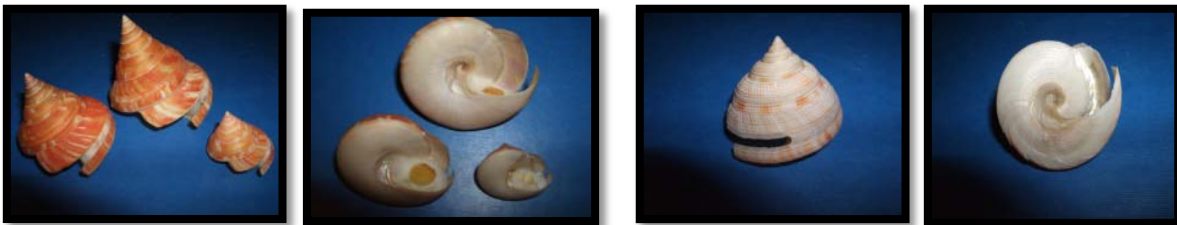
P. lucaya Bayer, 1965.
Two specimens collected by submersible off Grand Bahama Island at 400 m., 1989. High spired form on the left, depressed spired form on the right. 40 mm., 39.8 mm.



P. atlanticus Rios & Matthews, 1968.
Brazil, Cabo Frio, trawled by shrimp boat at 140 m. 69.4 mm.



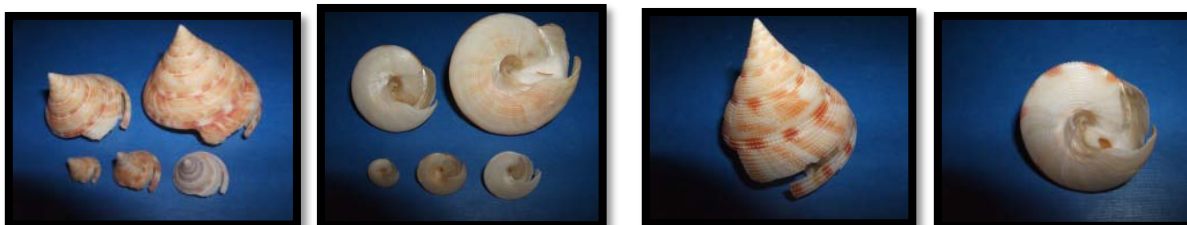
P. maureri Harasewych & Askew, 1993.
Another very scarce species closely related to *P. amabilis*. S. Carolina, U.S.A. Trawled 90 miles N.E. of Charleston at 195-210 m. 1993.



P. vicdani Kosuge, 1930.
Set of three specimens ranging from 32.1-65 mm. Philippines, Balut Island, taken in tangle nets at 100 m. Note the high turreted spire of the largest shell.



P. deforgesii (Metivier, 1990).
West of New Caledonia, Chesterfield Ridge, dredged at 520 m. This rare species seems closely related to the granulous form of *P. caledonicus*



P. caledonicus (Bouchet & Metivier, 1982).
Typical smooth form from the Norfolk Ridge, Banc Jumeau, dredged at 450 m. Sizes above range from 13.1-52.4 mm. Very pale almost white specimens occur.

P. caledonicus (Bouchet & Metivier, 1982).
This is the granulous form, possibly a separate species from the Belep Islands, New Caledonia; 40.2 mm.

PHOTO GALLERY OF THE 2010 INFORMAL GET-TOGETHERS



FAREWELL TO RUSH HOUSE

by Carl Ruscoe

On Saturday the 29th of May 2010, John & Jenny Whicher held their final summer get-together at their home at Deighton near York.

As always the event was a great success, although the weather could have been kinder. It rained all day on the Saturday and subsequently all the guests were confined to the house. However, Rush House is a magnificent house with plenty of room for everyone to wander and talk about shells with all of the interesting people that have attended the meetings there over the past few years. There were lots of interesting shells for sale on the day with no less than six dealers offering high quality specimens from all over the world, and in addition Peter Dance had brought a table full of shell books all at very reasonable prices. I purchased a lovely book printed in 1880 in pristine condition for just £6, what a bargain!

Some people visited for a few hours only, while others stayed from the Friday evening right through to Sunday morning. On both evenings everyone strolled down to the local pub for some good traditional Yorkshire fodder and a few drinks.

Due to the poor weather most of the guests that were staying for the weekend slept inside the house wherever they could find space, whereas on previous occasions many have slept in tents in the garden. Sleeping was a little difficult for some guests - try sleeping on the floor at the bottom of the stairs while three shell dealers held a lengthy conversation well into the early hours whilst consuming large amounts of lager.

On the whole I had a fantastic time at John and Jenny's and I am sure that all who attended thoroughly enjoyed their time there. Both have been the perfect hosts for several get-togethers during the last few summers and on behalf of all who have attended I would like to thank them for their hospitality and friendship. Also thanks must go to Tom Walker who has provided the catering at many of the get-togethers in the shape of a freshly murdered and slowly cooked lamb, although on this occasion pre-cooked barbecued chicken provided a great alternative in the inclement weather.

John and Jenny are leaving Rush House this summer and are moving down to the west country. They have kindly offered to continue to stage a summer B.S.C.C. gathering at their new home. I for one will certainly be attending and I hope I will be joined by many other shell enthusiasts for a really good time.

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