

PALLIDULA

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THE MAGAZINE OF THE BRITISH SHELL

COLLECTORS' CLUB



EDITORIAL

I have now had the pleasure of editing our club magazine since October 1999 and I have decided that it is time to pass this duty on to someone else who can hopefully improve it further with fresh new ideas. It has been a great and enjoyable experience for me and I have learnt much, especially in the use of a computer which was not something that I had ever shown a great deal of interest in before but certainly has been of great benefit to me in recent years.

I am pleased to announce that Selina Wilkins has agreed to take on the roll of the editor as from the next issue of *Pallidula* and I would like to wish her the very best in her new role. Please send all further articles, adverts and any other relevant material to Selina at: selina-wilkins@msn.com or to her home address: 41 Priest Avenue, Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 2LT; Telephone No: 01189 786380.

I must express my thanks to everyone who has supported me throughout my time as editor with so many interesting articles and various other input.

A decision has been made at the Committee meeting in January that it would be a good idea to have an editorial board to give support to the editor through helping to obtain material and proof reading articles etc. I will be remaining on the editorial board along with Julian Joseph and Jonathan Welsh but we would like to hear from any other members who would like to join us in helping out the new editor.

I will continue holding the get-together in August under the name of the Yateley Summer Get-together and as usual all club members are welcome to attend. Please note that John and Jenny Whicher have now moved to Somerset and their Get-together will be held at their new address which is listed on Page 2.

The Editor

SECRETARY'S NOTES

It's time for our AGM yet again, and the relevant papers are included with this issue of *Pallidula*. There are three spaces on the Committee to be filled as Selina Wilkins is leaving the Committee to take up the Editorship of *Pallidula* (the Editor is an ex-officio member), Sharon Crichton has resigned owing to family pressures and the change of the Constitution to allow five ordinary members has generated another vacancy. Please think about joining the Committee, the nomination papers are included with the papers for the AGM.

John Batt has produced flyers advertising the Club and it would be helpful if anyone attending a suitable venue could take some and distribute them. They can be obtained from Daphne Howlett.

As you know from the October 2010 issue of *Pallidula* there were a number of changes on the Committee with effect from the 1st of November 2010. On behalf of all our membership I would like to thank those members leaving various roles for their hard work and dedication to the Club, in particular John Batt, Tom Walker and Simon Taylor have done a great deal of work on our behalf.

The webmaster has changed internet provider for a reduced cost and obtained more space. So please note that the new address is www.britishshellclub.org, i.e. no "UK" at the end.

We have an excellent diary of informal events which I would strongly encourage you to attend. The Whichers' Shell Weekend will continue despite their move from Yorkshire to Somerset so please note the change of venue. Please think about attending the Chatsworth Shell Fayre in September; this is in a beautiful location at a lovely time of year. Please support it by coming and by taking tables for display or for sale items.

Dates for your Diary

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

- Saturday 30th April 2011** - Shell Convention at Theydon Bois Community Centre
- Weekend 11/12th June 2011** - The Whichers' Get-together at Henstridge, Somerset: BA8 0TQ
- Saturday 9th July 2011** - The Howletts' Get-together, Norwich: NR14 7HP
- Saturday 20th August 2011** - The Yateley Summer Get-together: GU46 4HB
- Saturday 17th September 2011** - Chatsworth House, Derbyshire
- Saturday 29th October 2011** - Shell Show at Theydon Bois Community Centre

SHELL SHOW 2010

Last October's Show saw a very high standard of exhibits yet again and was one of the busiest yet in terms of attendance and the number of dealer tables. Innovations included full use of the small hall by dealers which, now that everybody is accustomed to the established Club "home venue" of Theydon Bois Village Hall, receives its fair share of attention, and the new Dealer Shell of the Day competition, judged by member ballot, which attracted a hugely varied and interesting selection of entries, each of which received some support.

The Show results were:

Single species	1 st	Koen Fraussen : <i>Neobuccinum eatoni</i> (also won Peter Oliver Cup)
	2 nd	Kevin Brown: <i>Trachycardium isocardia</i>
One Genus / Family	1 st	Mick Davies: British Buccinidae (also won the Scotia Shield)
British	1 st	Graham Saunders: "Nomad Gene Pool"
	2 nd	Dave Rolfe: "Variation in the Common Limpet"
Foreign	2 nd	Graham Saunders: "Signature Species"
Self-Made Shell Art	1 st	Selina Wilkins: Shell Flowers (also won the COA award)
	2 nd	Lucy Pitts / Loretta Spridgeon: Shell Montages
Shell Photography (member ballot)	1 st	Paul Wilkins
	2 nd	Sara Cannizzaro
Shellomania	1 st	Dave Rolfe: "A Mystery"
	2 nd	Carl & Craig Ruscoe: "Back to Front Shells"
	3 rd	Angela Marsland: Self-collected Florida Fossils
Junior age 12 – 16	1 st	Theo Tambllyn: Unionid mussels (also won John Fisher Trophy)
Junior age 11 & under	1 st	Christopher Wilkins

Dealer Shell of the Day (member ballot): Fernand de Donder & Rika Goethaels: *Nodipeecten magnificus*

Shell of the Show (Walter Karo Trophy): Carl & Craig Ruscoe: sinistral *Trichia hispida*

Notably, there were entries in every single Show category and, although the regular themes were very well represented as usual, there can be no doubt that the most attention was attracted by the entries in Self-Made Shell Art: Selina Wilkins's amazing shell flowers, which scooped her the COA Award, and a selection of very attractive montages by new members Lucy Pitts and Loretta Spridgeon. I think it is safe to say that the high standard ensured shell art will feature as a category quite regularly in future Shows. One other particular item of note from the Show was that a British shell won the **Walter Karo Trophy** as shell of the show. Is this a first?

This Show was my last in the capacity of Show Secretary for the Club. It seems mind boggling that I have overseen 14 shows/conventions, the time has truly flown by. I would like to thank everybody who has helped in any capacity; it is impossible to name everybody, but particularly the exhibitors and dealers who support our events, and Selina and her crew who work so hard to provide the excellent catering. I hope that you will all continue to support my successor, John Llewellyn-Jones, to whom I wish every success.

Simon Taylor, Chairman, ex Show Secretary

OCTOBER 2010 SHELL SHOW GALLERY



Selina Wilkins - winner of the COA Award for her amazing display of self made flower arrangements made of shells



Craig Ruscoe –winner of the Walter Karo Trophy with his sinistral specimen of *Trichia hispida*



Koen Fraussen – winner of the Peter Oliver Cup with his specimen of *Neobuccinum eatoni*



Mick Davies- winner of the Scotia Shield with his superb collection of British Buccinidae



Theo Tamblin – winner of the John Fisher Trophy with his display of Unionid mussels





Remembering

(Phillip) Terry Wimbleton 1938 - 2010



Known as Terry to all the many BSCC members, he sadly died on 18th October 2010. Terry enjoyed being Club President from 2004 to 2007 and in his role was a great encouragement to young collectors. He was a very knowledgeable collector of British species marine, land and freshwater, and his interests and collection ranged across the world of shells, all genera and species.

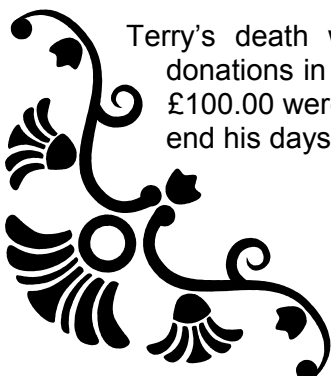
During his time as a Club member he was very active in promoting the club and following his retirement he was involved in putting on displays of shells from his collection at local museums and libraries.

Terry was born in Southsea and went to school in Drayton, Portsmouth. At 16 he went to St James hospital to start his nursing training. He then completed 2 years at St Mary's hospital in general nursing and returned to St James as an S.R.N. as he wanted to specialise in psychiatric care. He worked his way through the ranks and became a director of nursing. He set up psychiatric community services, which was ground breaking at the time. He became a district manger based at Havant day hospital where he was also responsible for the day to day running of it, retiring at 52 to spend time with his family and pursue his hobbies.

Terry became a Fellow of the Linnean Society in 1998, something he was very proud of. Sadly Terry died in October 2010 eight months after being diagnosed with cancer.



Terry's death was announced at the October Shell show and members gave donations in his memory. These donations with money from the club to make £100.00 were sent in his memory to Rowan House Hospice where he hoped to end his days.



Daphne Howlett



THE 2011 BSCC CONVENTION

This year's Shell Club Convention will take place on Saturday 30th April. As usual it will be at Theydon Bois Village Hall starting at 7.30 am for dealers and 9 am for everybody else. The Show finishes at 5 pm when the doors close and dealers can start packing up.

The usual wide array of dealers will be present and we are hoping to hold a short illustrated talk for anyone interested around midday and before the auction.

This year's auction, arranged and organised by our excellent auctioneer and manager John Fisher, has had so many items that the club is having to hold another one at the Shell Show in October. If you still have any lots or items for future auctions then please get in touch with John and let him know.

If you have an informal exhibit and would like to display it at the Convention please let me know in plenty of time, as space is limited, and we will make sure that you get a space in a strategic position.

Donations of shells are always welcome for the 'Bring and Buy' table supervised by Judith Nelson. As usual Daphne Howlett will have plastic boxes etc., you can bring your membership subscriptions up to date and new members will be most welcome.

Looking forward to seeing you all there.

THE BSCC SHELL SHOW 2011

The Shell Show this year will be held on Saturday 29th October. As usual it will be at Theydon Bois Village Hall again starting at 7.30 am for dealers and 9 am for everybody else, going on to 5 pm.

The Classes for the 2011 Show will be:

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 that does not fit into any other class
9. Junior - 11 and under
10. Junior - 16 and under.

All members entering an exhibit must be paid up members of the BSCC but can join on the day.

The fossil category makes a reappearance and we hope that members with an interest in fossils will make an effort and enter this class, not necessarily on a competitive basis but to show other people what there was in the past.

Dealer 'Shell of the Day' is being held again. Judging, as before, will be by members ballot. We would like to thank dealers for making this such a successful class. It is a way of drawing people to the tables as well.

As is customary the entry form will be included with the next issue of Pallidula. Can exhibitors please let the show secretary have full details of their entries (Name, title and class clearly written, preferably in capital letters) in advance of the show as we probably can't organise spaces on the day.

We all look forward to seeing you at the Show October 2011.

John Llewellyn-Jones (John L-J), Show Secretary.

IS THE POND SNAIL *Planorbis planorbis* MOVING NORTH?

by Nigel Trewin

On 29 September 2010, Peter Dance and I conducted a search for land snails in my garden at Altries Cottage, near Aberdeen, with no results; hence the poem below! However, we did discover *Planorbis planorbis* living in a small pond in the garden. The 'pond' is only a plastic water tank 75 cm in diameter, sunk into the ground, and containing lilies, duckweed, *Lymnaea peregra* (or *Radix balthica*, which is the currently accepted name), frogs, and a variety of arthropods. This pond has been in place for 15 years, and has not had introductions from garden centres. Peter has checked the records and tells me that this is a first record of *P. planorbis* for Kincardineshire, and the most northerly in Scotland. I have no idea how the snails reached the pond, but they have been present for more than a year. Numerous individuals of 4-6 mm are present with a few 11mm in diameter, strongly suggesting that they are breeding in the pond. They clearly survived the very cold winter of 2009-10 when the pond was frozen for weeks and air temperatures were frequently lower than -10° C. There is no sign of *Planorbis* in the other two larger ponds in the garden both of which contain goldfish. Goldfish eat snails!



The small garden pond with a population of *Planorbis planorbis*

Further searches are required to see if there are other localities nearby where *Planorbis* is surviving in the wild.

No snails for Peter.

'They must be here' came the plaintive wails
But Peter Dance could find no snails.
He searched the ground on hands and knees,
And scrutinised the bark of trees.
He ripped apart moss on the edges of bogs,
Destroyed stone walls, and turned over logs.
There were worms and beetles,
 woodlice and spiders,
But shelled molluscs at Altries
 were clearly outsiders.
Where did they hide?
Had they all died?
Maybe the cold at the end of September
Makes our northern molluscs remember
It's warm underground
Till spring comes around.

But not so fast
Mollusc at last
Slimy grey beast
Having a feast
And living it seems
On best garden beans

Cold fingers evict the slug.
Time for a dram in the snug!



Peter Dance searches for snails in Altries Cottage garden.

THE ALLIED COWRIES - PART 1

by Julian Joseph

Introduction

The superfamily Cypraeoidea comprises four families. Of these, the Cypraeidae, the “true cowries”, are undoubtedly the single most popular family of shells among collectors. But what about the remaining families, the so-called “allied cowries”? They are considerably less well known, even though, like the Cypraeidae, their shells are very diverse and often colourful.

Systematics of the Allied Cowries

The allied cowries comprise the following families:

- Eocypraeidae
- Pediculariidae
- Ovulidae

Schilder & Schilder (1971), in their Catalogue of Living and Fossil Cowries, treated most members of all three groups as belonging to the single family Ovulidae. However the most recent classification, in Lorenz and Fehse's *The Living Ovulidae* (2009), treats them as separate families. This article follows the systematics used in that book.

Note that the Triviidae and Eratoidea, although looking superficially as if they belong in this group, they are now in a separate superfamily, the Lamellarioidea. Despite the similarities between the shells of the two groups, there are significant anatomical and developmental differences.

Eocypraeidae

This family contains very “cowry-like” species, many of which possess teeth along both margins of the aperture. There are numerous fossil taxa, but only one living species, the spectacular and very rare *Sphaerocypraea incomparabilis* (Briano, 1993), of which a few specimens have been dredged off East Africa. Nothing is known about the animal and its biology.

Pediculariidae

This small family consists of two very distinct groups:

- The Pediculariinae, with cup-like, often very irregularly shaped shells. The species *Pedicypraea atlantica* Lorenz, 2009 was recently discovered at a depth of over 1 km. in the Atlantic Ocean, and closely resembles the Eocene fossil genus *Protocypraeda*.
- The Cypraediinae, with rather cowry-like shells. This subfamily includes the well-known species *Jenneria pustulata* (Lightfoot, 1786) and *Pseudocypraea adamsonii* (Sowerby I, 1832).

Ovulidae

These are the “egg” or “spindle” shells, comprising four subfamilies:

- Prionovolvininae – small, mostly quite “cowry-like” shells.
- Simniinae – mostly less cowry-like, with some very thin-shelled species, but also contains heavily calloused species such as the common *Cyphoma gibbosa* (Linnaeus, 1758).
- Ovulinae – includes the familiar large, white *Ovula ovum* (Linnaeus, 1758) and several genera of very elongate, spindle-shaped shells.
- Aclyvolvininae – a small group of very elongate shells.

The recognition of these four subfamilies is supported by radular features and DNA studies. This article will concentrate on the Ovulidae.

Distribution

The Ovulidae have a worldwide distribution. The majority of species inhabit the warm waters of the Indopacific region. Many species have a wide range, spanning the Indian and Pacific oceans with rather little variation compared with the Cypraeidae. One subfamily, the Simniinae, is dominant in the

Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean and Mediterranean. One species, *Simnia patula* (Pennant, 1777), occurs in the cold waters of the UK and as far north as Norway.

Biology

Most Ovulidae live on various types of soft corals, on which they feed. Some are very specific to particular hosts. The animals often mimic their hosts closely, and the various tufts and papillae on their mantles closely resemble the individual polyps that they are almost impossible to see. They are often very colourful. Most species are parasites, and only a few large species, such as *Volva volva* (Linnaeus, 1758), move between hosts like a predator.

The sexes are separate, and in some species, such as *Archivolva clava* (Habe, 1991) and *Kuroshiovolva shingoi* Azuma & Cate, 1971, the males are much smaller than the females. The females lay eggs on the host. Veliger larvae hatch from the eggs and are dispersed by ocean currents. Eventually, the veligers settle on a host and develop into adults. The veliger stage of *Simnia patula* is known to last several weeks. A long planktonic phase allows a species to be dispersed over large distances, and indeed few species are endemic to a small area, as is the case in some groups of cowries.

Shell structure

The structure of an ovulid shell is shown below:



The shell is similar to that of a cowry, but there are some significant differences: Ovulids never have columellar teeth.

Many ovulids have a callous structure called a funiculum below the posterior extremity, on the columellar side. The presence or absence, and shape, of the funiculum is of great importance for distinguishing between genera and, sometimes, species.

The Genera of Ovulids

The following photographs show an example species for each genus. They illustrate some of the enormous variety of shapes and colours to be found among these shells. This part covers the largest subfamily, the Prionovolvinæ, only. The rest are dealt with in part 2.

Family Ovulidae Fleming, 1828

Subfamily Prionovolvinæ Fehse, 2007

The taxa in this subfamily were until recently included in the Ovulinae. However molecular studies by Schiapparelli *et al.* revealed that this and the Aclyvolvinæ constitute distinct groups at the subfamily level.



Calpurnus verrucosus (Linnaeus, 1758)
 Left: 30 mm, South China Sea, shallow water
 Centre & right: 25 & 28 mm, off Masbate,
 Philippines, January, 2008



Procalpurnus lacteus (Lamarck, 1810)
 Left: 15 mm, Between Rusukan Besar and R. Kecil, Brunei
 November, 1987. In 1-1.5 m on soft coral
 Right: 14 mm, Naçala Bay, Mozambique, March 2002.
 Dived in 5-10 m



Globovula cavanaghi (Iredale, 1931)
 Left: 8 mm, Short Point, Queensland, 2002
 On soft coral at low tide
 Right: 11 mm, Keppel Bay, Queensland, 2002
 On soft coral at low tide.



Testudovola nebula (Azuma & Cate, 1971)
 Left: 10.3 mm; right: 11 mm
 Nucnucan I., Philippines, early 2010



Habuprionovola basilia (Cate, 1978)
 10.2 mm
 Somalia

Photo reproduced by kind permission of Felix Lorenz



Prionovola brevis (G. B. Sowerby I, 1828)
 Left: 21 mm; right: 20 mm
 Olango I., Philippines, early 2010



Pseudosimnia carnea (Poiret, 1789)
 Left: 12 mm; right: 12.5 mm
 Algeria Bay, May, 2009. Fishing nets at 20-30 m



Margovula pyriformis (G. B. Sowerby I, 1828)
 Left: 23 mm; right: 22 mm
 Nucnucan I., Philippines, early 2010



Diminovula culmen (Cate, 1973)
11 mm
Nucnucan I., Philippines, early 2010



Sandalia triticea (Lamarck, 1810)
8.5 mm
Off Zhejiang Province, East China Sea
Trawled in 100m



Archivolva clava (Habe, 1991)
8 mm
Kaw-oy I., Philippines, October, 2009



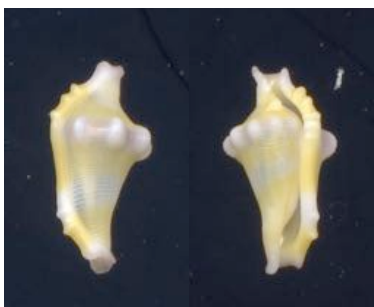
Carpiscula procera Fehse, 2009
11 mm
Off Zhejiang Province, East China Sea.
Trawled in 100 m



Prosimnia semperi (Weinkauff, 1881)
Left: 13 mm, Nucnucan I., Philippines, early 2010
Centre, right: 12 mm, Philippines



Serratovolva dondani (Cate, 1964)
12 mm
Punta Engano, Mactan I., Philippines, March, 2009



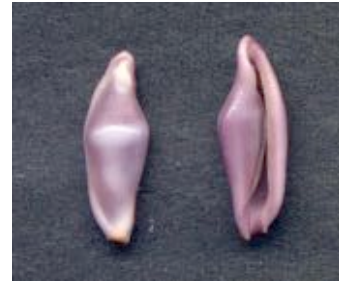
Rotaovula hirohitoi Cate & Azuma in Cate, 1973
5 mm
Japan
Gill net. On whip coral at 80 m



Crenavolva aureola (Fehse, 2002)
Left: 11 mm, right: 12 mm
Nucnucan I., Philippines, early 2010



Primovula rosewateri (Cate, 1973)
8 mm
Philippines



Cuspidovula formosa (G. B. Sowerby II in
A. Adams & Reeve, 1948)
Left: 14 mm, right: 14.5 mm
Philippines



Dentiovula horai (Cardin, 1994)
18 mm
Nucnucan I., Philippines, early 2010

OVULIDAE WORDSEARCH
by Selina Wilkins

c a s e i p a d f a h p t h a a y i a o c a
 a e d i a r y m l l p e s o i d e s p j y n
 l t a a s i n u i o v o a d f c s r o e p a
 p l v l e n v n n p c f o u n e i t r n h y
 u n a o y o e e a b p h t a r n r m s n o b
 r o o o g v a n l h r r d p o s u r i a m r
 n u v r y o l s i a t a e v i t a h m i a e
 u e a u t l a s l s v d o a a r t a l a g w
 s m a u l v y u l l a l s n a i a r c p i o
 v b n r o a v n o v v l g e m o r m i u b s
 e t s m o o c v l a l i u s r e t t r s b a
 r n b a m f o o f a s o a v n s s y i t o v
 r a t i i c v r s a n i u n o v o c c u s l
 u r r t a a u o m t n v a s a n r b b l u o
 c p a n t t b o d m e m o t h o i a s a m v
 o v e a i h h e i s c l i h g t g m e t i m
 s p i c o p a s s o g i l a a p n a i a y o
 u h u b y s b i a v l o v a v l o v s d a s
 s m o c o u v e t o l p b s t r l h v n a i
 c s d e s o i m f a y l e s u a l y h h i a
 r p a v e m i i r e a t h o i l n u t a p s
 t o u b u l o i a n v u n i h r n a r l o n

Words Used
(presented in lower case to match the puzzle)

- calpurnus verrucosus
- prinovolva fruticum
- hiatavolva depressa
- diminovula sinensis
- penacovolva dancei
- jennaia pustulata
- ovula costellata
- cyphoma gibbosum
- cyphoma signatum
- volva sowerbya
- primovula rhodia
- subsimnia smithi
- longirostrata
- volva volva
- prinovolva
- margovula

BEACHCOMBING IN BENIDORM by Carl Ruscoe

In May 2009 my brother, Craig, spent a week in Benidorm on the Costa Blanca in Spain. He went with the intention of collecting as many different species of shells as he could, particularly micro shells. However, things did not go quite to plan and his collecting time was severely restricted due to his friends' desire to party. They spent the first 3 days in 3 different hotels. By the 4th day Craig had managed to start drying out the shell grit he had collected but this was difficult as the temperature had dropped to around 15° C. by this time. However, he still managed to bring back some good samples of shell grit which yielded more than 100 species of micro shells, including some rare and interesting species.

We decided to use Craig's trip as a reconnaissance mission and both of us planned to go for a week in October 2009 and do a more thorough search for shells in the area. I booked a car and had several trips planned for the holiday. We arrived at the airport in Alicante at 10 am on a Sunday morning. We spent 4 hours trying to pick up our hire car but to no avail because they would not accept my credit card. The staff at the airport operate at a snail's pace and I would strongly recommend that you pick up your hire car in the resort. On reaching Benidorm by bus we had to walk about 1.5 miles with luggage, and then up a steep hill to the hotel Torres. It felt like climbing Everest. We then went down to Levante beach.

At first it did not look as good as it was when Craig went in May but we soon found some good drift material and grit behind a sort of rocky reef about one third of the way along the beach. There did not seem to be many species in it. However we did find some lovely *Nassarius incrassatus*, live specimens of *Gibberula milliaria* with lovely bands, and many *Cerithium rupestre*. Craig and I decided in the evening to go out to look for land snails. We climbed up in to the hills and collected about 200 dead shells of land snails, consisting of about 8 to 10 species. They could be found at the base of small limestone cliffs by the roadside; we had to rely on street lamps for our only source of light. We found a fantastic species which looks like a mint imperial, a pure white Helicid called *Alabastrina subvancinquaie albina*. At first these shells look like dead, faded shells but they are pure white and glossy when cleaned up. We also collected a beautiful species called *Pseudotachea splendida*, a flattened Helicid with lovely bands of brown on a creamy/yellowish shell.



Gibberula milliaria



Alabastrina subvancinquaie albina



Pseudotachea splendida

We got back to the room at 6 am and after a bite to eat we went straight to Poniente beach. Poniente is about a 2 mile walk along the coast, southwards. This is the old part of Benidorm. The sea front there consists of mostly businesses and office buildings, and a few bars, restaurants and gift shops. Unlike Craig's previous visit in May, on this occasion Poniente was very disappointing. There was a mass of weed washed in at the near corner of the beach but no shells could be found in the weed, just flotsam. We walked along the sea front and came to a lot of flower beds with many dead snails in the soil. No live snails could be found. The soil and plants appeared to have been transported there from somewhere else and so the dead shells could have come from anywhere, so for this reason they would not be good for a reference collection and we did not collect many. Exhausted and disappointed we traipsed back to the hotel.

Demoralised and devastated we went straight out again to Levante beach where we collected more drift and grit and it seemed to be a bit better this time. There were a lot of land snails in the drift and a

lot of *Physa*. Also a lot of *Gregariella subclavata*. Pleased with our haul we went back to the hotel. On Tuesday we got up a bit later and went back to Levante beach. We spent about 6 hours sieving in the sea. Because the water is warm it is possible to spend all day in the sea without any problems. We collected much the same species as the day before with a few additions. I collected one lovely fresh specimen of *Cypraea lurida* and a fantastic orange and white Turrid which I think is a form of *Raphitoma purpurea*. Also in the grit were several adult specimens of *Opalia crenata*, a very distinctive species of Wentletrap. The method we used for sieving in the sea was to look for where there was a lot of shell material accumulated and scraped the sieve through the material. The sieve was then washed in the sea, by moving the sieve up and down and around in a figure of eight pattern until most of the fine sand was gone. If there was a lot of weed fragments in the sieve then we removed the weed by moving away from where the weed was floating and moved the sieve with the same action under the water and the weed fragments floated away. The contents of the sieve were then thrown into a large, strong waterproof sack. It was important briefly to inspect the contents of the sieve before bagging it up. There was no point carrying 20 kg. of grit and rubble back with few shells in it.



Gregariella subclavata



Raphitoma purpurea



Otala punctata

The sack of shell grit/rubble was then drained off to get rid of excess water. This was done by placing the sack on a gently sloping bank. The gradient of the bank must not be too steep or you will lose many of the smaller micro shells in the grit. The beaches at Benidorm have been landscaped by man so that nothing from the sea washes on to the beach. I think this is actually beneficial to the collector as all the shell material accumulates in shallow water close to the shore and can easily be scraped up, rather than being scattered all over the beach. I think this is the same for many tourist beaches in Europe. We found exactly the same scenario at the beaches on the South coast of Tenerife in 2008.

On Wednesday we went by bus to a small town north of Benidorm called Altea. There was a small beach there but it was all shingle and no shells could be found on the beach. Behind the market at Altea there was some waste ground and many land snails could be found there including a few species which were not found in Benidorm, including *Otala punctata* and *Pomatias sulcatus*. When we got back to Benidorm we sorted through more of the finds we had collected locally.

On Thursday we went to Poniente Beach again and this time there was a good amount of shell grit to be found in the sea and more slightly larger shells were also being washed in fresh, including many specimens of *Cancellaria cancellata* in quite reasonable condition. This is truly a wonderful species to be found in the Mediterranean, with lovely chocolate bands on a cream background. I also found one large specimen of *Epitonium algerianum* with excellent deep sutures. This is undoubtedly a difficult species to find in the Mediterranean.



Pomatias sulcatus



Cancellaria cancellata



Epitonium algerianum

After several hours at Poniente we retired back to the hotel and spent several hours sorting through the larger fragments of the shell material from Levante. Because of the limit of a pathetic 20 kg. in luggage allowance it is important to take back as little shell material as possible. To do this the shell material is placed in trays and left to dry in the sun. When it is dry it is then passed through a series of sieves. The larger material which stays in the first sieve is then checked thoroughly and any good shells are taken out, the rest of this larger size material is discarded. The remaining shell material is then passed through a finer sieve and the sand is discarded. The shell grit that remains in the second sieve is then bagged up to be taken back home. For the first stage of the sieving process I recommend a sink strainer, over a large tray, followed by a standard sieve used for rice, for example, for the second stage. Even the fine sand will contain some extremely small micro species and it is therefore advisable to take some small samples of this fine material back home in order to do a thorough check of the species living in the area.

During the last 3 days of our visit to Benidorm it rained constantly and the temperature dropped to about 10° C. This made it very difficult to dry the shell material collected at Poniente and this was undoubtedly the best material collected. We had to improvise. We sieved the shell material in water and sorted through the larger fragments in a tray with just the bottom of the tray covered with water, only sorting through a handful of material at a time to ensure every fragment was checked. This greatly reduced the material to be dried out.

On Friday we collected more material from Poniente beach and this was probably our best day's collecting. We collected hundreds of good shells that we picked out from the shell material whilst on the beach and several thousand more micro shells. Craig collected a perfect fresh specimen of *Typhinellus sowerbyii*, the best we have seen. It was amazing that such a delicately ornamented species should be washed up here intact. I collected a fantastic large specimen of *Epitonium clathrus* at 36 mm. with super pattern. I also collected a dwarf specimen of *Cypraea (Luria) lurida* at 16 mm., a perfectly intact shell but with little gloss. Craig had previously collected a similar specimen at 17 mm. in May. The world size record mini for this species is 14 mm., so these are very small adult specimens and most impressive. There must be a dwarf population living in the area. Friday night was absolutely manic, we worked for about 9 hours solid sorting through the shell material collected in the last two days and had just a few hours sleep before the taxi came to take us to the airport.



Typhinellus sowerbyii



Epitonium clathrus



Cypraea lurida

In summary, it was very disappointing not to be able to drive around the area and we were restricted to just two beaches, separated only by a large rocky outcrop. However, we still collected some fantastic shells and obtained about 25 kg. of very good shell grit containing many wonderful micro shells. In all we collected probably more than 200 species. Many shells have yet to be identified but we have compiled a list of some of the more interesting species identified so far.

Thank you for reading my article. If anyone is planning on visiting Costa Blanca we would love to hear from you. For correspondence please write to Carl or Craig Ruscoe, 10 Acer Grove, Preston, Lancs, UK., PR2 6EZ.

Benidorm shells

FAMILY	SPECIES	FAMILY	SPECIES
Scissurellidae	<i>Scissurella costata</i>	Epitoniidae	<i>Epitonium algerianum</i>
Fissurellidae	<i>Emarginula huzardi</i>	Epitoniidae	<i>Epitonium cantrainii</i>
Cocculinidae	<i>Cocculina corrugata</i>	Epitoniidae	<i>Epitonium clathratulum</i>
Trochidae	<i>Gibbula guttadauroi</i>	Epitoniidae	<i>Epitonium pulchellum</i>
Trochidae	<i>Gibbula umbilicarus</i>	Epitoniidae	<i>Epitonium tiberi</i>
Trochidae	<i>Jujubinus gravinae</i>	Epitoniidae	<i>Opalia crenata</i>
Vitrinellidae	<i>Circulus striatus</i>	Epitoniidae	<i>Opalia helenica</i>
Omalogyridae	<i>Omalogyra atomus</i>	Eulimidae	<i>Vitreolina philippi</i>
Caecidae	<i>Parastrophia asturiana</i>	Cylindrobullidae	<i>Cylindrobulla fragilis</i>
Rissoidae	<i>Alvania cingulata</i>	Retusidae	<i>Rhizorus acuminatus</i>
Rissoidae	<i>Alvania discors</i>	Ringiculidae	<i>Ringicula conformis</i>
Rissoidae	<i>Alvania geryonia</i>	Haminoeidae	<i>Weinkauffia turgidula</i>
Rissoidae	<i>Alvania tenera</i>	Scaphandridae	<i>Roxania utriculus</i>
Rissoidae	<i>Manzonina crassa f. exigua</i>	Pyramidellidae	<i>Chrysallida dolliolum</i>
Rissoidae	<i>Pusillina philippi</i>	Pyramidellidae	<i>Chrysallida excavata</i>
Rissoidae	<i>Rissoa violacea</i>	Pyramidellidae	<i>Chrysallida jeffreysiana</i>
Iravadidae	<i>Hyala vitrea</i>	Pyramidellidae	<i>Noemiamea dollioliformis</i>
Fosaridae	<i>Fosarus ambiguus</i>	Pyramidellidae	<i>Odostomia connoidea</i>
Naticidae	<i>Tectonatica filosa</i>	Pyramidellidae	<i>Ondina scandens</i>
Triviidae	<i>Trivia candidula</i>	Pyramidellidae	<i>Turbonilla jeffreysi</i>
Muricidae	<i>Typhinellus soverbii</i>	Pleurobranchidae	<i>Berthella plumula</i>
Buccinidae	<i>Cantharus dorbignyi</i>	Ellobiidae	<i>Pedipes afer</i>
Nassariidae	<i>Cyclope donovania</i>	Nuculanidae	<i>Nuculana pella</i>
Nassariidae	<i>Nassarius pygmaeus</i>	Arcidae	<i>Striarca lactea</i>
Marginellidae	<i>Volvarina mitrella</i>	Mytilidae	<i>Gregariella subclavata</i>
Costellariidae	<i>Vexillum tricolor</i>	Mytilidae	<i>Musculus costulatus</i>
Turridae	<i>Bela nebula</i>	Montacutidae	<i>Mysella bidentata</i>
Turridae	<i>Comarmondia gracilis</i>	Cardiidae	<i>Parvicardium papillosum</i>
Turridae	<i>Mangelia multilineata</i>	Cardiidae	<i>Parvicardium scriptum</i>
Turridae	<i>Raphitoma concinna</i>	Cardiidae	<i>Parvicardium vroomi</i>
Turridae	<i>Raphitoma linearis</i>	Pomatiasidae	<i>Pomatias elegans elongated form</i>
Turridae	<i>Raphitoma purpurea</i>	Vertiginidae	<i>Vertigo pygmaea</i>
Turridae	<i>Taranis moerchi</i>	Chondrinidae	<i>Chondrina avenacea</i>
Triphoridae	<i>Metaxia metaxae</i>	Helicidae	<i>Alabastrina subvamcinquei albina</i>
Cerithiopsidae	<i>Cerithiopsis minima</i>	Helicidae	<i>Pseudotachea splendida</i>
Cerithiopsidae	<i>Dizonopsis coppolae</i>	Vitrinidae	<i>Hawaiiia miniscula</i>
Epitoniidae	<i>Cirostrema pumicea</i>	Ferussaciidae	<i>Celcilioides jani</i>

IN SUPPORT OF SQUARE BASHING

by David W McKay

For those of you not familiar with square bashing in relation to shell collecting let me immediately reassure you that it has absolutely nothing to do with marching. It is the practice of choosing collecting sites on the basis of some arbitrary grid system to maximise the coverage in a scheme for recording the distribution of animals or plants.

I have been interested in the distribution of marine molluscs for as long as I have been collecting and for many years was a determined square basher, especially when I was collecting data for the *Marine Mollusca of East Scotland* which was published in 1979. While I was self employed and doing very little shell collecting I gave up the practice of square bashing and limited my activities to gathering shells where ever I was on holiday. In the last few years as I began winding down to full retirement I began the extensive collecting of shells again. I focussed simply on collecting shells as I had begun to sell my surplus specimens. However, I soon fell back into my old habits of choosing collecting sites to ensure maximum recording coverage. My return to the practices developed when I was actively recording and was well rewarded in October last year. I went out dredging on my small boat and instead of automatically choosing to head for one of the areas I had been successful in the past I decided to sample a small corner that represented the only accessible part of a previously un-dredged square. The three dredge hauls that I made looked as unexciting as I expected but when I got home and analysed what I had caught I had taken two single valves of *Saxicavella jeffreysi* (Winckworth, 1930). I had only collected specimens of this species once before from a sample of shell sand taken in Loch Thurnaig way back in 1969. When choosing dredging sites this year I'll be looking for more un-sampled squares.

As in the past I submitted my records to a national data base believing that I was enhancing the sum of knowledge about mollusc biogeography. Like many collectors I had not fully thought through the potential implications this practice had for my favourite hobby. I was horrified when I read Tom Walker and John Whicher's report on Protected Species and the BSCC. Having worked in Government funded biological research for many years and being aware of how funding for base line research programmes had been squeezed over the years it surprised me that the various Environmental Protection Bodies had gathered enough evidence to support the listing of these species. This unease was heightened when I was talking to former colleagues at the Marine Laboratory about the development of new bivalve fisheries when they mentioned the use that Scottish Natural Heritage made of these national data bases when looking at environmental impacts.

Over the intervening months I have become more and more uncomfortable with submitting my site specific collection data to national data bases where the information is available to anyone. Other developments such as the introduction of Protected Areas under the EU Habitats Directive and the possible introduction of Marine Nature Reserves might use the data available from these data bases and has led me to believe that it is not in my best interest as a shell collector to submit my data to any data base where I do not have absolute control over who accesses the information. Therefore I no longer submit any data to national data bases.

This decision has not altered at all my commitment to square bashing – it has simply encouraged me to begin mapping all my personal collection data so that I have my own data base. The production of my own distribution maps on a species by species basis is progressing and is giving me immense pleasure and the presence of gaps in the coverage further encourages me to visit areas that I have not collected in before.

WHY ARE OFFSHORE SHELL SAND SAMPLES SO FRUSTRATINGLY POOR? by David W McKay

I must admit that I am a late convert to the dubious pleasures of examining shell sand for micro shells. Let me say in my defence that one of the reasons for this is that shell drift on most sandy shores on the East Coast of Scotland is a rare phenomenon so my early experience of examining shell gravel came from examining the residues from grab samples taken in Loch Ewe (courtesy of the Marine Laboratory, Aberdeen Benthos Section) and the occasional small amount of material that came from plankton samplers that collided with the sea bed (I was involved in a research project that attempted to estimate the size of herring stocks by the abundance of their planktonic larval stages). Although the samples did yield some nice finds neither seemed to reward one with enough good specimens to make the effort worthwhile.

I therefore continued to concentrate on collecting live material either onshore or by offshore dredging where I could arrange it.

When I joined the British Shell Collectors' Club and came to my first meeting I was surprised by the number of collectors who asked if I could collect offshore shell grits from Scotland. Doing that from my own dredgings was not difficult but before giving the material away I resolved to look at some of it to see what all the fuss was about and, like the true Scot I am, to make sure I was not parting with the 'crown jewels'. With a few exceptions my scepticism about shell sand as a source of shells was confirmed. I eventually developed a means of collecting samples of shell sand from scallop dredges but even though these came from further offshore and in deeper water they were as unrewarding. The general feedback I got from the samples I passed to others was 'There wasn't much in it'.

I keep collecting shell gravel samples in hope of one day collecting that bonanza sample that will make it all worthwhile. Then last week I was walking along the sandy beach at Fraserburgh seeing absolutely no shells when it suddenly came to me why offshore shell sand was apparently so much poorer than onshore collected samples. When we are collecting shell sand from the shore we see where the waves and tides have concentrated the shell grits in a small section of the beach and we take our samples from there. We don't bother with the rest of that beach or with beaches where there is no concentration of shell grits. When I take a sample with a dredge in 20+ metres of water I cannot see the bottom; I can by interpreting my echo sounder display to be fairly sure that I'm sampling sandy bottom but the exact make up of the sand has to wait until I haul the dredge up. When I'm collecting samples from a commercial scallop dredger I'm entirely at the mercy of the skipper's decision – I went three days one trip last year without collecting any shell sand at all. For two days I continually adjusted the rigging of my small net and only when we moved grounds did I catch anything.

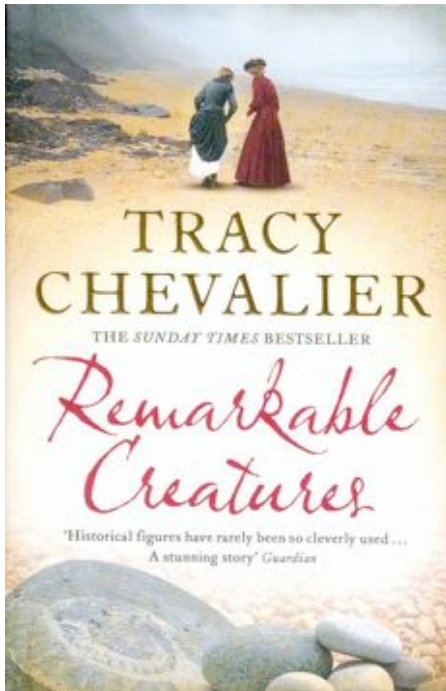
When collecting samples by dredge it is like going to the middle of a beach and digging up some sand hoping to get some shells. The success rate would be very small. Getting anything at all from an offshore collected shell sand sample should be considered as a bonus, to get something nice is something to be celebrated. I will now look at the shell sand samples I collect with a new sense of realism and be even more thankful when I collect something new or unexpected.

BOOK REVIEW by Selina Wilkins

Remarkable Creatures by Tracey Chevalier

HarperCollins, 2009, hardback ISBN 978 0 00 717837 7

Harper, 2009, paperback, ISBN: 978 0 00 717838 4



Instantly, the book cover attracted my attention by the picture of the sandy shore and a golden ammonite on the front and on spine. As I had enjoyed reading previous novels by the author, Tracy Chevalier, I delved into this one with great interest. It is a book set in Lyme Regis, c. 1804 and tells us of the first women fossil hunters, in particular Mary Anning and Elizabeth Philpot.

Within the first four chapters, I was captivated by a different time, which I know from Jane Austen descriptions; a time of men, and not of women; a time when men were educated and women were expected to not know more than men; a time when travel was limited to carriage and coach in fine weather and travel to London, in winter, only made by sea; a time of long dresses; a time of gloves, hats, introductions, curtsying, and being chaperoned. I mention Jane Austen for not only in the book do the characters wonder if she visited their Assembly Rooms in the summer season, but there is historical evidence that Jane Austen did visit Lyme Regis herself. Why? Because the coast was considered healthy living for ladies but this area was also of particular interest to the fossil hunters and collectors.

The chapters alternate the telling of a remarkable story of friendship and history of two differently classed women, Miss Elizabeth Philpot, a sister of a London solicitor, with income of £150 a year and Mary Anning, daughter of a local carpenter, whose mother struggled to feed the family and keep poverty away by selling “curies” that is, fossils. There is an ammonite sketch which precursors the narrative of Mary Anning, and a fossil fish sketch is before Miss Elizabeth Philpot who collects fossil fish. Both are told in first person, and provide delightful insights into a world where one woman (Elizabeth) can converse with gentry and knows when they are ignorant of the subject they collect or can intellectually challenge them, but must always seem submissive about it! Mary Anning on the other hand uses her knowledge to make money to help support the family.

I loved the tone of the book, as it tried to explain to the reader the emotions of the hunt for a fossil. Here is a brief extract from page 115: “Hunters spend hour after hour, day after day out in all weather, our faces sunburned, our hair tangled by the wind, our eyes in a permanent squint, our nails ragged and our fingertips torn, our hands chapped. Our boots are trimmed with mud and stained by sea water. Our clothes are filthy by the end of the day. Often we find nothing, but we are patient and hard-working and not put off by coming back empty-handed.”

The author, Tracy Chevalier, has researched her characters well, as is this not how many of us feel after a day on the hunt for shells, live, dead or fossilized? She intertwines the story with the other scientific people of the day, Henry de la Beche, Lord Henley, William Bullock, Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas James Birch, William Conybeare, and William Buckland. There are mentions of many fossils throughout, from Belemnites, Bezoar stones, Pentacrinites, Brittle Star fish, to the very first Ichthyosaurus.

The book hides no punches about the awfulness of the British weather, particularly in the winter, nor that the best finds are to be found, after a winter sea storm has revealed fresh layers from the clay, or sliced off a face from the cliffs, even though it maybe very dangerous. Mary Anning’s little dog “Tray” in

real life died under a cliff slippage by her feet one day. Reading the descriptions of the scenery certainly cultivated in myself a desire to run to those cliffs after a winter storm! If you go to <http://www.soton.ac.uk/~imw/lymchar.htm> you will see maps from the time period, as well as geological explanations as to why such fantastic fossils have been found there.

I loved this book, as it caused me to do a little research of my own and I discovered through the wonderful access of the internet much of the framework of the story is true, but whether the friendship was true is uncertain. The fossil fish delineating Elizabeth Philpot's chapters comes from a sketch of a fish held in the British Museum, *Dapedius politus*, author De la Beche, Lyme Regis. The species which Elizabeth hunts and collects "Eugnathus, Pholidophous, Dapedius, and Hybodius – the last is an ancient shark" can all be seen on the internet, all specimens from Lyme Regis.

The title itself is most alluring, "Remarkable Creatures"; does it refer to the creatures which have been remarkably fossilized or to the women who remarkably found them? I suggest the later, as it is recorded on the abitabout.com site that geologist George William Featherstonhaugh called Anning a "very clever funny Creature".

For more information please see:

Full biographical information of Mary Anning	http://abitabout.com/Mary+Anning
explanation of belemnites and to see illustrations	http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Belemnite
Photos of the sites around Charmouth and Lyme Regis today, with guide to fossils and sites	http://www.ukfossils.co.uk/dorset.htm
Photographic guide to fossils listed in the book	http://www.fossilcollections.co.uk/notakiosk.html
Website of Ian West, hosted by Southampton university, explaining fossils of Lias, Lyme Regis etc.	http://www.soton.ac.uk/~imw/liafos.htm#Ammonites
Website showing fine examples of Pentacrinites found in the Lyme Regis area	http://www.fossilmuseum.net/fossils/Crinoids/Pentacrinus-fossilis/Pentacrinus.htm
Natural History Museum link showing <i>Pentacrinites fossilis</i>	http://www.nhm.ac.uk/nature-online/species-of-the-day/evolution/pentacrinites-fossilis/index.html

BOOK FOR SALE

I am looking to free up some library shelf space with the disposal of a very large heavy book, page size 10 x 13 inches and 3.5 inches thick with thick paper cover.

Part of a series on Indonesia, details are as follows;

Resultats scientifiques du Voyage aux Indes Orientales Neerlandaises. Published by and memoires of Musee Royal D'Histoire Naturelle De Belgium 1939, Volume II 2nd Part.

There are over 140 pages most still uncut, plus colour and black and white plates.

Authors are P. Dautzenberg, W. Adams and E. Leloup.

Pages are clean but rubbed at edges the same as the cover which has small tears. Probably of interest to the collector of more scientific historical type conch books ?

I am open to offers and can bring book to the April convention to view.

Please contact **Adrian Brokenshire on 01305 820814**

**NEW SHELL FAYRE FOR 2011
CHATSWORTH HOUSE, DERBYSHIRE**
by Brian Hammond



The Club is holding an extra special show this year, on **Saturday September 17th**. This will take place in the Cavendish Hall on the Duke of Devonshire's Chatsworth estate in beautiful Derbyshire. The hall is within easy walking distance of the main house.



This is a non-competitive event and we hope all members will make the effort to attend. Shows like this take a tremendous amount of planning and work, so please support this event if you possibly can and make all this work worthwhile.

Along with the normal displays and dealers tables it is hoped to have a special display of fossils from the wonderful collection of our past chairman John Whicher. We also hope to have an art display by another club member. If you are able to stay on after the show we are planning a dinner on the Saturday night. This was done at the Scottish show and was very successful. We are also hoping to get a group tour of the wonderful Chatsworth house at a reduced rate on the Sunday. Refreshments will be available in the Cavendish Hall throughout the day. For any further information or to book Display space &/or Dealer space please contact myself by email at brianandedna@btinternet.com or telephone 01461 701096

PLEASE ATTEND AND MAKE THIS EVENT A ROARING SUCCESS

