

PALLIDULA



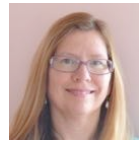
The Magazine of the British Shell Collectors' Club

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Editorial



This issue brings to you the culmination of our club's 40th anniversary with the Pallidula article which was displayed at Theydon and won the COA trophy for Tom Walker. We have our memories of 2012 meetings in the photo galleries of the Chatsworth Show in September and the Shell Show in October. I hope these will inspire you to come and meet with us all at one or more of our meetings in 2013. I certainly delighted in our birthday cake decorated with shells; see photo on p9.

After enjoying the cone theme of the last issue, I have scintillated the creative juices on a mainly bivalve issue. It is an amalgamation of exhibits from the past, as well as stories from our current membership, showing that you can exhibit specimens for their pure beauty or to share educational information with the club. Some of these articles bring club members and their shells together, e.g. Peter Dance has written a shell poem on the Angel Wing shell found on the Sanibel shores after storms. The photograph illustrating the poem was taken by Gavin Malcolm. It is actually my specimen, which originally belonged to the late Geoff Cox. I wonder if you could share a tale of a mollusc which involves other club members?

I have also received marvellous photos of living molluscs which I think show the progress of shell collecting with digital photography; perhaps we are moving to an age of mollusc spotting! I welcome any images of living molluscs, particularly if they are left in the wild. We are uploading living British shell images onto the website to encourage more people to find the club. Recently added were many by Colin Goss, including his winning photograph of *Littorina obtusata*. So get out and start snapping images of specimens and beaches.

Please contact me at editor@britishshellclub.org Come and chat, at my social on April 28th, all club members are most welcome.




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Front Cover: From Peter Dance, Ed Tory's *Pholadomya candida*, inside view; see article P4.

Back Cover: A new talent being displayed, with an etching of *Tellina tenuis* da Costa, 1778 by Theo Tamblin.



Pholadomya candida, the story of a rarity

By S. Peter Dance

The first part of my book *Rare Shells*, published in 1969, surveyed the historical aspect of a subject that is of perennial interest to shell collectors. In the second part I discussed and illustrated 50 species I considered significant in that context, well aware that even then some of them were rare no longer. Among those that incontestably were rare was *Pholadomya candida* G. B. Sowerby 1st, 1823.

Sometimes known as the Caribbean Piddock-clam, this bivalve has a fragile, translucent and milky-white shell that may attain a maximum length of about 100 millimetres (4 inches) when fully grown. Belonging to a family that flourished from early Carboniferous to Cretaceous times, it may be the only surviving member of its genus and, as such, is regarded as a 'living fossil'. In 1969 I had sketchy information of about half a dozen examples, all dating from the nineteenth century. There may have been scarcely a dozen of them in museum collections throughout the world. The one illustrated in my book once formed part of the celebrated Hugh Cuming collection and is now in the Natural History Museum in London. For these reasons the discovery of several shells of *P. candida*, collected at one locality at the end of the twentieth century, deserves to be recorded. By a strange stroke of fate it was because I had included this species in my *Rare Shells* that they were brought to my attention.

In March 2009 I was attending the prestigious Sanibel Shell Fair, in the company of my friend Harlan Wittkopf. During a book-signing session a copy of *Rare Shells* was lying on the table in front of me. A shell dealer I had never met before - and who shall be nameless - glanced at it and said he had some



Ed Tory's *Pholadomya candida*, dorsal view –
the hands are the author's!

examples of one of the rarities featured in it. 'Which one?', I asked him. 'This one', he replied, opening the book to reveal the photograph of Hugh Cuming's *P. candida*. Understandably, I was sceptical and intimidated as much to him and to Harlan, but the dealer was insistent. 'Would you like to see them?', he asked. Harlan said 'Perhaps we should'. The idea appealed to him because, five years earlier, he had paid handsomely for a fine example of the species, found in Venezuelan waters, during a visit we made to Al Deynzer's shell emporium, 'Showcase Shells', on Sanibel. Accordingly, we arranged to meet the dealer a day or two later.

Apprehensively, we drove east towards Lake Okechobee. We had agreed to meet someone we knew nothing about, somewhere on the road to La Belle. For all we knew he would direct us into a dark, dismal swamp and waylay us for the sake of the substantial number of US dollars each of us was carrying. He would be driving towards us and would be armed, as we were, with a cell-phone – and very possibly with something more sinister. He shouted 'Have you got your lights on?' Harlan turned on the lights, even though it was broad daylight, and shouted back, 'We're following a silver Cadillac'. The dealer barked, 'There's a turning by a fast-food place. Take it and I'll be waiting for you in the lay-by'. Nervously we turned into the lay-by where, sure enough, he was waiting for us, by a car that may have seen better days. He seemed to be as nervous as we were. He opened the car boot and out jumped a little dog. Then he pulled out two or three battered cardboard boxes. As he opened the first one my heart missed a beat, for nestling on a pad of grubby cotton wool was a perfect *P. candida*! He opened the others and eight more examples of this unmistakeable and ultra rare bivalve met our astonished gaze! Having assured Harlan that they were, indeed, the genuine article, we started haggling. We soon agreed a price, completed the exchange and sped away, taking with us the seven best examples, leaving two inferior ones.

Back in Sanibel, we divided the spoils between us. I took five shells, Harlan two. A label on one of the boxes showed that they had all been collected at Bahia San Francisco, Venezuela, by a scuba diver working at a depth of 35 feet, after nightfall, on 8 December 1999. Similar information, as stated in my 2005 publication *Out of my Shell* (p. 194), had accompanied the shell purchased from 'Showcase Shells' by Harlan in 2004. Between us we now had eight examples of *P. candida*, a number not even approached anywhere else in world collections. That was remark-

A year or two after the publication of *Rare Shells* in 1969 I was surprised to learn that a few collectors had begun assembling as many of the 50 species illustrated in the book as they could obtain. In the 1970s it would have been very difficult and certainly very expensive to acquire examples of most of them. To obtain all of them would have been impossible, for *P. candida* was not the only species that was virtually unobtainable then. Early in the new millennium, however, someone did manage to obtain all of them. With his purchase of a damaged *P. candida* Harry Lee of Jacksonville became the first collector to complete a collection of 'the rare 50'. His shell, it seems, had also been part of the Bahia de San Francisco haul. That scuba diver must have been very busy on the 8th day of December in the final year of the old millennium!

pose of four of them to those who may have had that desire. I am pleased to report that one of my shells was acquired by Jean-Paul van Weert, who thereby became only the second collector in the United Kingdom to possess all of my 50 rarities. I had intended to keep the finest one, as a souvenir of a memorable collecting experience. That intention, as I shall now reveal, I never fulfilled.

Word had got around that I may have a shell or two of *P. candida* in my possession and, one day in May 2011, I received a message, by email, from one Leslie Tory of Newport, New York. Her husband, Ed Tory, had his 60th birthday coming up and she wanted to give him a present he would really treasure. She told me that Ed, a former aerospace engineer with the NASA launch team, was an enthusiastic shell collector who had been trying for years to make a complete collection of my 50 rarities. The one that always eluded him, of course, was *Pholadomya candida*. Could I possibly help? I could and did.

At the COA convention, held at Philadelphia in June 2012, Ed Tory proudly exhibited and introduced the 'magic 50'. I was privileged to follow his presentation with one of my own, courtesy of Skype. I described how I came to write *Rare Shells* and explained how it had been the catalyst for collectors like him to try to bring together in one collection all of the 50 rarities featured in the book. As far as I know there are currently two collectors in the UK and three in the USA who have successfully done so, two of them with my help. It is my earnest wish that another of those precious shells I owned for so short a time may, even now, be helping to complete someone else's collection of my 50 rarities.

So now with a nod to Ed Tory.
I come to the end of my story.



Ed Tory's *Pholadomya candida*, side view.

I had made it extremely difficult, albeit unwittingly, for collectors to assemble a complete collection of 'the rare 50'. Now, with five examples of this delicate bivalve in my possession I was in a position to do something to help them achieve their goal. With no desire to achieve that goal myself I was happy to dis-

Editor's note: If you've ever wanted to see specimens of Peter's Book *Rare Shells*, B.S.C.C. member Dave Charlton has the full set which he sometimes displays at club shows. This year he displayed them at Chatsworth. We have a question for you all—is this *Pterynotus elongatus* yellow colour fake or not? Dave acquired it this colour. Peter thinks it could be authentic and I pointed out it was the same as a scallop for sale on Naomi Dubnickyj's stall next door.





Pallidula

By Tom Walker

The British Shell Collectors' Club was founded in 1972 and for the first 12 years its magazine was just called the Newsletter. In 1984 Robert Morrell published an article in the Newsletter about the family of shells called the Xenophoridae and mentioned that they were the "original shell collectors" because of their tendency to attach molluscs and other material to their own shells. The committee clearly thought it was time to have a more exciting name for the Club magazine and chose *Pallidula*, after probably the best known of this genus, *Xenophora pallidula*. Why they chose this particular species is not recorded.

'armour plating' to make attack more difficult. All species have their aperture on the base of their pyramid-shaped shells; this base is concave in shape and some researchers have suggested that the attachments, which generally extend below the shell base, are to increase stability of the shell by increasing its diameter or to lift the aperture off the substrate to make feeding easier.

Xenophora pallidula was first described by Lovell Augustus Reeve (1814-1865) (Figure 1, 2). In June 1842 he published illustrations of several new species of the genus *Phorus* in his *Conchologia Systematica* and *Phorus pallidulus* was one of these new species (Figure 3).

The illustration was by G. B. Sowerby J^r and no description of the shell was given. That had to wait until 22 November 1842 when Reeve read a paper to the Zoological Society of London which was published in February 1843 (Figure 4). The shell was moved in 1854 by H. and A. Adams into the newly named genus *Xenophora*; Reeve had originally placed the shell in the family Turbinacea.

1



2



The genus *Xenophora* currently includes 15 extant species and two subspecies. To a greater or lesser extent they all attach shells, stones, coral and a variety of other objects to themselves. Why they do so is unknown, although several theories have been proposed. Disguise to avoid detection by predators would seem obvious, but does not explain why species that live at great depths in the ocean below light penetration, as most *Xenophora* do, should need visual camouflage. Other theories include olfactory disguise to avoid predators smelling their presence or

PHORUS PALLIDULUS. *Phor. testá solidá, albá, acutissimè pyramidalí, volutis angulatis conchyliorum frustis sparsis agglutinatis; inferna facie leviter concavá, pallidulá, subtilissimè striatá.*
Reeve, *Conch. Syst.*, vol. ii. pl. 214. f. 4; *Conch. Icon. Phorus*, pl. 1. f. 4.

Hub. Coast of Japan: Siebold.

This shell is most nearly allied to the *Phorus onustus*; it is very solid, sharply pyramidal, and of a singular live pallid appearance. There are two or three specimens of it in the collection of H. Cuming, Esq.; and the fragments of shells which are agglutinated indiscriminately to the area of the whorls are very much broken in all, though the shells to which they are agglutinated are in every respect live and perfect.

Translation of the Latin description

"THE PALE PHORUS. *Phorus* with a solid, pale shell, very sharply pyramidal; whorls angular with scattered fragments of shells agglutinated to them; under surface slightly concave, pale, very finely striated."

Fig 4. The original description of *Xenophora pallidula*. Reeve, L. A. 1843. On the genus *Phorus*, a group of agglutinating Mollusks of the family Turbinacea. *Proceedings of the Zoological Society* **10**, 160-163. The reference to his *Conch. Icon. Phorus* was not published until later in 1843 and used the same illustration as in his *Conchologia Systematica*.

The shells Reeve described came from the collection of Hugh Cuming. The syntype is in the Natural History Museum (BMNH 1950.8.28.17) (Figure 5). No holotype has been designated as more than one specimen was available to Reeve.

Today *Xenophora pallidula* is common in collections, and is known with a large variety of attachments. Although shells (complete or fragments) seem to be the favoured attachments many other objects are often found (Figures 6,7), such as stone (Figure 8) and coral (Figure 9), but human artefacts are not ignored (Figure 10).

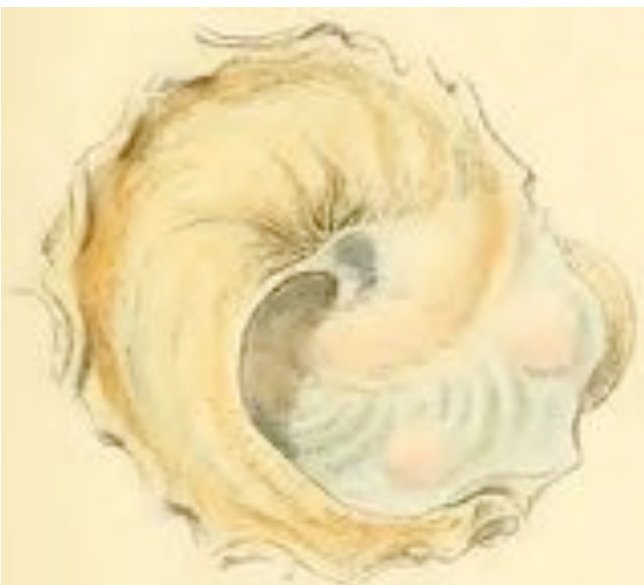


Fig 3. The original 1842 illustration of *Xenophora pallidula* in *Conchologia Systematica*, vol. 2; p. 161; plate 214, fig. 4.

Occasionally living organisms attach themselves and grow on the shell, basket sponges being well known examples (Figure 11). The species is widely distributed throughout the Indian Ocean, in the western Pacific and Japan and in south east Australia. It generally lives at depths of around 50-1010m, mostly on the continental shelf.

Fig 5. The syntype of *Xenophora pallidula* in the Natural History Museum. The base view is clearly the same shell as in Reeve's original illustration.



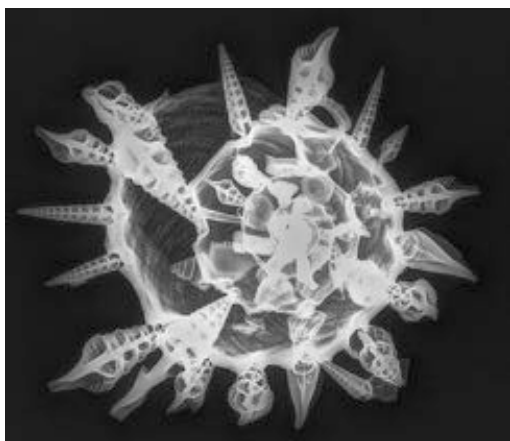
Fig 6. A specimen from the Philippines showing a great variety of shells.



Fig 8. Majority of attachments are stones on this shell from South Africa.



Fig 10. A bottle glass fragment is on this Philippine specimen.



Editor's note: Well done to Tom on his super display which was exhibited at the October Show. It won the COA award and a revised version is published here for you all to enjoy.

Fig 7. X-ray of the shell shown in Figure 6, demonstrating the beauty of shell design.



Fig 9. *Xenophora* with attached coral and other material. This photograph shows how the attachments lift the base of the shell up from the surrounding substrate.



Fig 11. Glass sponges grow on this shell from the Philippines.



Endangered Cone Species

By Gavin Malcolm

Participants in the 2nd International Cone Meeting at La Rochelle had the opportunity to hear a talk by Howard Peters entitled "Cone snails: Laying the groundwork for survival of the scarcest". This focused on the work of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) concerning Cone species.

The IUCN was founded in 1948 and is today the largest professional global conservation network, grouping more than 1,200 member organisations and almost 11,000 voluntary scientists and experts, grouped in 6 commissions in some 160 countries. The Union's headquarters are located in Switzerland and it has Official Observer Status at the United Nations General Assembly.

During the last week of October 2011 the Biodiversity Synthesis Center at the Field Museum, Chicago hosted a workshop for IUCN. The purpose of the meeting, under the leadership of Howard Peters and Professor Callum Roberts of the University of York, was to assess threats to over 640 species of cone snails and at the end of the meeting, a preliminary risk assessment for each species was completed, each individual species – as long as sufficient data were available – being placed into one of the following categories: "Least Concern", "Near Threatened", "Vulnerable", "Endangered", "Critically Endangered", "Extinct in the Wild", or "Extinct". These categories are clearly defined, on the IUCN website.

A unique approach was adopted by Howard by including in the study all the available sources of expertise including scientists, museum experts, expert collectors and major shell dealers who were familiar with one of the geographic areas in the assessment.

As I heard the talk, my expectation was that the species considered rare by collectors would be the most at risk. This is not the case, as most rare species are found in deep water and spread over the ocean floor at considerable depths. The key factor in the case of cones is the range of the species and whether the population is endemic and isolated on one short stretch of coast which faces a threat to the typically shallow water cones. There was no evidence that collecting for science or leisure had any significant impact. It is the combination of the constrained geographical distribution, with chemical pollution from major cities or the development of major infrastructure such as harbours, pristine beaches and breakwaters to support the development of tourism.

Such factors are found in two key hot spots. In parts of the Cape Verde Islands, there are bays where there is a single population of one of the many endemic Cape Verde species and where major tourist development is under way. The distribution range for a species can be less than 10km.

Three cone species, from the Cape Verde Islands were identified as Critically Endangered, see below.



C. lugubris



C. salreiensis



C. mordeirae

- C. lugubris* Reeve, 1849
- C. mordeirae* Rolán & Trovão, 1990
- C. salreiensis* Rolán, 1980

Because further major developments are planned for the islands, some other species are considered Endangered in the medium term.

- C. ateralbus* Kiener, 1845
- C. cuneolus* Reeve, 1843
- C. crotchii* Reeve, 1849
- C. fernandesii* Tenorio, Afonso & Rolán, 2008

This list may surprise some of you as some of these species would be considered common today.

In Senegal, the sprawling city of Dakar faces all the pollution challenges found in a developing nation. Around the bay are populations of endemic cones with a distribution of 10km to 80km, which are considered Endangered in the medium term. Of these *Conus belairensis* is perhaps the most critical.

- C. belairensis* Pin & Leung Tack, 1989
- C. echinophilus* Petuch, 1975
- C. bruguieresi* Kiener, 1845
- C. unifasciatus* Kiener, 1845
- C. cloveri* Walls, 1978
- C. mercator* Linnaeus, 1758
- C. hybridus* Kiener, 1845

Most of you will be surprised by the inclusion of *C. mercator* and *C. hybridus* which would be considered abundant today.

It is widely recognised that it is not the action of collectors and/or researchers that endanger any given population, provided a little common sense is used to prevent over-collecting. Collectors and/or researchers usually take only limited samples that are more or less meaningless in the total individual count of a normal population.

So what should collectors do to respond to the situation? A number of proposals were aired at the Cone Collectors' meeting including:

- A full voluntary ban on the scientific and leisure collection and the trade of specimens of the 3 Critically Endangered species. In my view and the majority of the conference feedback, this is sensible and I would hope that it would be respected by everyone. The number of specimens of the Critically Endangered species is getting so low that sample collecting may make the difference.
- A further voluntary code of conduct was also suggested. This proposed that no further specimens either from recent collecting or from old collections of the Critically Endangered and Endangered species should be offered for sale or ex-

change in any manner through any bourse, website, catalogue or any other means. This is difficult to enforce especially as several of the 11 potentially Endangered species are common and abundant in collections. My view is that it would be better at this stage, if each member of the Cone community should note the status of the 3 critically endangered species and 11 Endangered species and decide how they wish to respond if they are offered specimens.

Cone collectors, researchers and other interested parties are acutely aware of the conservation issues in modern times and are actually in the front row when it comes to defending nature. In fact, without their knowledge, the problems would not have been identified. The challenge is how to tackle the oncoming problem of the 11 other species considered as potentially Endangered. There is no strong evidence that the populations are in such decline that continued scientific or leisure collecting today will make a measurable difference, but the bigger problem needs to be tackled.

It would be difficult for the governments of Senegal and Cape Verde to stop the progress of developments. So the cone community will propose that a scientific study should evaluate the status in more detail and make proposals as to how the developments could be adjusted to improve the chances of survival, by controlling the worst of the pollution and by defining ways that the rocky habitat can be protected as tourist areas are built. Hopefully, the action plans following the formal publication of the findings of the IUCN investigation will result in studies and proposals to allow economic progress and the endangered cones to find a common harmonious path for the future.



The Anniversary Cake shared by Club members and visitors to the Shell Show in October 2012.



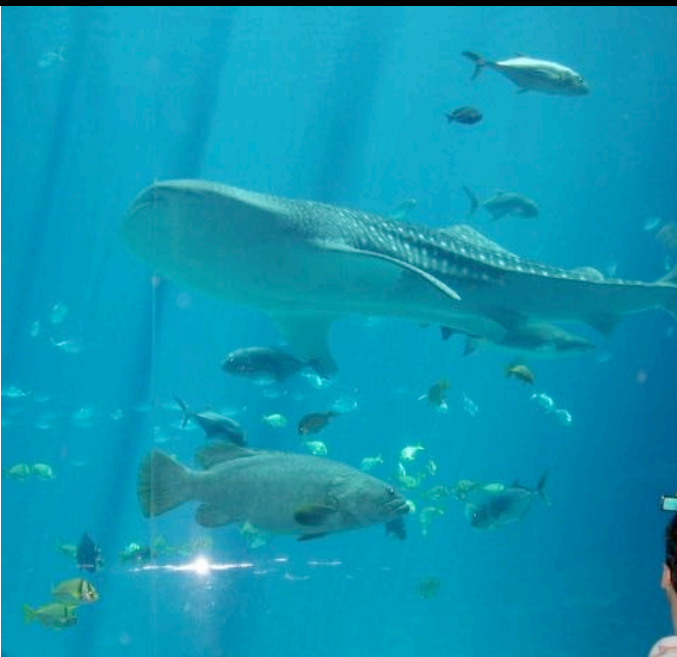


Highway 16 to Savannah

written and enjoyed by Bob Allen

In June 2012 we went to the USA. The trip started in Memphis for 4 days with the intention of driving 670 miles to Savannah Beach after visiting Graceland, the home of Elvis Presley. I planned that the ideal stopover would be Atlanta, Georgia. This happened to be the home of the world's largest aquarium. Opened in November 2005, it features more creatures than any other major aquarium, in over 10 million gallons of water.

One of the four whale sharks in the main tank of the Georgia Aquarium



The aquarium doesn't focus at all on invertebrates except for one or two tanks which contain Japanese spider crabs, a crowd pulling octopus and a touch pool. Nevertheless it is a very worthwhile place to visit especially if you are at all interested in marine life. It is split into various zones which entertain and teach at the same time.

The highlight for me was the Tropical Diver exhibit



Graceful manta rays in the large tank

where a glass screen as big as any cinema screen holds a beautiful, colourful and highly successful coral reef, full of corals and thousands of fish. This all comes together with simulated waves crashing overhead.



A live *Melongena* on the glass of the touchpool

The most spectacular exhibit is The Ocean Voyager, which not only contains thousands of smaller fish, but also manta rays, sharks and groupers as big as a vespa scooter. But the most stunning inhabitants were the 4 gigantic but gentle whale sharks. The tank is so big that you rarely see all four sharks at the same time. They were truly magnificent, a real eye opener.

A spiny urchin and starfish prey on a cowrie in the touchpool



There are penguins, beluga whales, freshwater fish, brackish water fish, otters and two touch pools. The U-shaped pool is the only place for invertebrates with starfish, urchins, coral and 2 species of cowrie of which the attendant could not differentiate one from the other.

From there we drove 300 miles to Savannah and visited Tybee Island on two separate days. Unfortunately the shelling was pretty dismal, there was

almost nil to be found except when the water receded. On the plus side we did see brown pelicans regularly and a pod of dolphins fishing making the fish leap out of the water to try and avoid being eaten.



A live measled cowrie

As I walked around the sandy bed as it dried out, I saw lots of olives (*miniacea*). It was fun to pick them up, wash them off and watch them tunnel back into the mud like a boring machine.

There were lots of small hermit crabs in various shells running around wrestling each other; everything from ceriths to winkles were utilised.

I found the best way to find shells without killing anything was to dig down on the high tide mark. I went down about 300mm, where I found olives, a fair sized Lightning Whelk, 2 Shark Eyes, cockles, ceriths and lots of small bivalves. Tybee Island is

really expensive to park, hire an umbrella and sunbeds and to eat, so if you are after shells only, it's not financially viable.

In Savannah itself we found a really great gift shop, which was upstairs over a bar. It was run by a lovely young lady who said that I had made her day. She kept the shop open late and I spent \$67 and came out loaded with shells. The shop is deceptively tardis-like and is crammed with shells, bought single, in packs, bags, baskets or made into artefacts. The shells are mainly for the tourist trade but all you have to do is sort them out to find the gems. I picked up a Triton for around \$12. In all I filled a sports bag for £40. Sadly the holiday was over far too soon and the next day we headed for the airport and home.

The shop's details are: The Gift Shack 505 River Street, Savannah. GA 3401 Tel (912) 238 5250.



A range of seashells purchased from the Gift Shack



ANGEL WING

If you go to Sanibel when shellers are gathering and ospreys are clamouring you may have a tale to tell.

Seashells strewn along the shore where sea and sandbars meet flash bright colours at your feet hectic reds and pinks galore.

But the virginal whiteness of the fragile Angel Wing makes you realize nothing may rival its loveliness.

S. Peter Dance
Carlisle, 7 November 2012



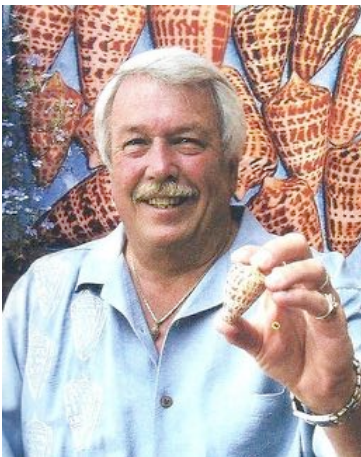


"ALPHiE Finds The Seashell Alphabet"

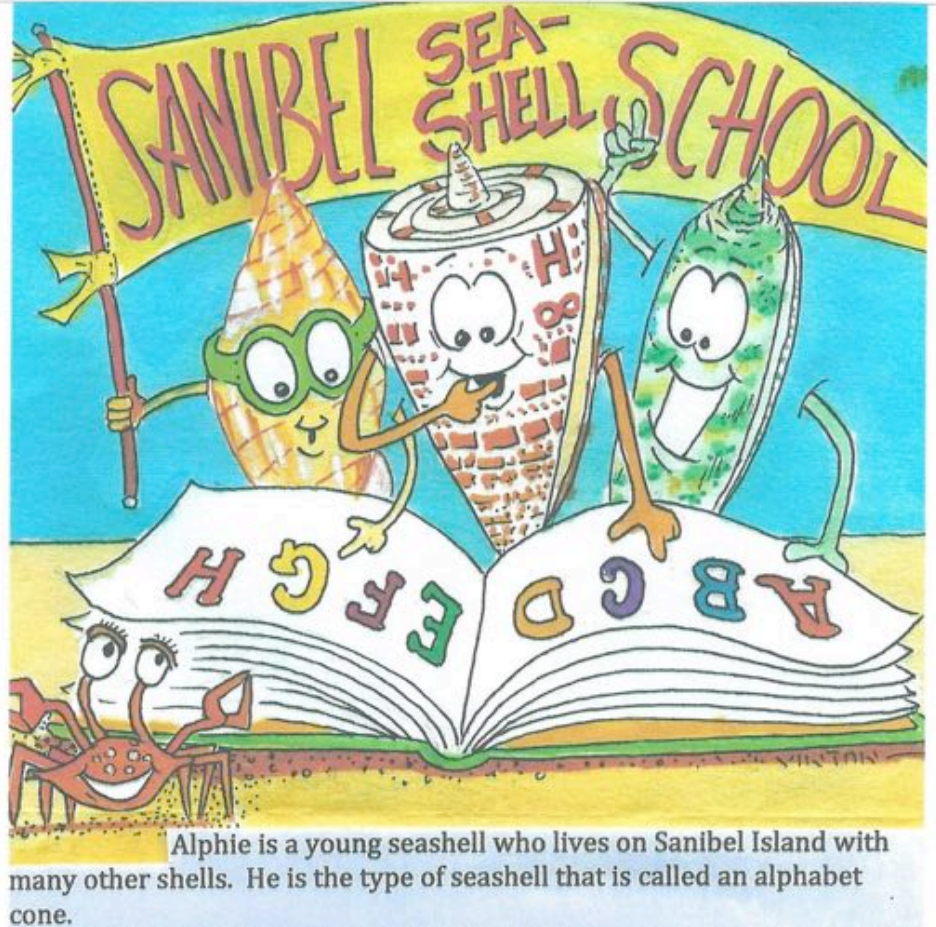
A book review by Selina Wilkins

In the last issue, we shared a tale of Harlan Wittkopf, who loves to find interesting distinguished markings on the alphabet cone. Did you know that not only has he found a cone showing each letter of the alphabet, Harlan has photographed them and produced a pamphlet which was then distributed to schools throughout the States? Now Harlan has gone further still by writing a new shell book with photographs and cartoons especially to captivate younger readers. This new publication, "ALPHiE finds the Seashell Alphabet" was designed by Harlan to share his passion for the shells of Sanibel Island with a new generation of potential shellers. The foreword is written by his good friend, Peter Dance.

It is a story book, with each page detailing a segment of Alfie's exploration of Sanibel Island. He is on a quest assigned by his school teacher to find the alphabet in shell names and on shells themselves. Small children will be engaged not only by the adventure but also with the charming full page cartoon illustrations of Alfie and friends, by artist Ken Vinton. Young readers will be challenged to read it themselves, a few pages each night. The cartoons have the letters cunningly disguised within the backgrounds, willing readers to look more closely to learn the letter shape and forming confident shape recognition which is the first step in reading. Each shell is also accompanied by stunning photographs of specimens in situ, on sand or in water, showing clearly their patterns and distinguishing features.



This is a book to be enjoyed again and again. It will help children become familiar with the species commonly found on the Sanibel shoreline, as well as reinforcing their school learning of our English alphabet. It will help any child to learn about shell specimens, how and where to find them, including tips on habitat specific to Sanibel. The unusual shell names help to fuel children's imaginations and cement the connec-



Alfie is a young seashell who lives on Sanibel Island with many other shells. He is the type of seashell that is called an alphabet cone.

tion between letter shape and sound. The story includes not only the shell names, but also many children's names for the various friends of Alfie, such as Asher, Beckham, Hayden and Noah. (These names are inspired by Harlan's own grandchildren.)

As you read the book, there is a temptation to rush ahead, to guess what shell Harlan will have chosen for Alfie to find, to represent a particular letter. Would 'T' be for Tellin or Tulip? And what will he have selected for those tricky 'X' and 'Y' letters.

This book is highly recommended to any parents, or grandparents who wish to share the common names for American native species of Florida with their young relations. It should be in any family's luggage whilst travelling along the southwest coastline of Florida, especially if journeying to Sanibel Island itself.

Our thanks to Harlan who has generously donated a number of ALPHiE Finds The Seashell Alphabet books to be sold at club meetings, at a cost of £5 per book.

ALPHiE Finds The Seashell Alphabet by Harlan E. Wittkopf. Published by Library of Congress Cataloging-In-Publication Data Pending ISBN 978-1-62407-290-1





Sưu tầm ốc tại Việt Nam

Shelling in Vietnam by Simon Aiken

Vietnam doesn't have a long tradition of shell collecting in the way that the Philippines or Thailand do. Inevitably its malacological fauna overlaps with China and the Philippines, and it cannot match the Philippines for variety. There are many species and forms that are endemic to Vietnam, and these are the shells that attract collectors to the country.

I found Vietnam delightful to visit. Costs are low by Asian standards, but hotels are clean, the cuisine is superb, public transport is efficient, and the people are most polite – although few speak any English. Currently there are no collecting restrictions and no regulations concerning the export of cleaned shells (apart from CITES). Vietnam is a destination to consider seriously for diving and snorkelling.

The photos on the next two pages show endemic species and subspecies, and other species that are 'associated' closely with Vietnam. Several of these occur over a wider area of Southeast Asia, and yet are regularly obtained only from Vietnam. *Ancistrolepis vietnamensis* is an exception – this beautiful Buccinid is very rare in Vietnam (its type locality), but is somewhat easier to find in Chinese waters. The

once-rare *Lyria kurodai* is still the most famous of Vietnam's endemic shells – prized for its elegant shape and markings.



A fishing boat leaves the port of Nha Trang. Most of the desirable Vietnamese seashells are collected by these boats, in deep water. The trawling method brings up some of the world's largest marine species but few micro-shells. Traditional fishing here may be threatened as Nha Trang develops into a tourist town.



Vietnamese girls clean *Cymbiola nobilis* (Lightfoot, 1786) by the sack-load. Most shells prepared in this way will be made into ornaments or sold to tourists.



Polishing *Trochus niloticus* Linnaeus, 1767 for the tourist trade. The nacre is used in jewellery and decorative artefacts.



The large (68mm) and sinistral land snail *Bertia cambodjiensis* (Reeve, 1860) (family Dyakiidae) looks conspicuous, but is very rare. The land snails of Vietnam and neighbouring Cambodia are relatively unstudied.



Street vendors offer up fresh *Phalium glaucum* (Linnaeus, 1758), *Perna viridis* (Linnaeus, 1758), and *Trisidos semitorta* Lamarck, 1819, which can be cooked on-the-spot.



SHELLS FROM VIETNAM: 1 *Kanekotrochus vietnamensis* Dekker, 2006 (17mm, 16mm); 2 *Crepidula walshi* Reeve, 1859 (35mm); 3 *Melanel-la kuronamako* (Habe, 1952) (31mm); 4 *Niso matsumotoi* Kuroda & Habe, 1961 (18mm); 5 *Siphonalia marybethi* Parth, 1996 (45mm); 6 *Semicassis thachi* Kreipl & Alf, 2007 (36mm); 7 *Angaria nhatrangensis* Dekker, 2006 (59mm); 8 *Scalptia verreauxii* (Kiener, 1841) (19mm); 9 *Cheungbeia mindanensis* (E.A. Smith, 1877) (34mm); 10 *Ptychobela kawamurai* Habe & Kosuge, 1976 (48mm, 45mm); 11 *Amal-da hinomotoensis urashima* Kira, 1959 (35mm, 36mm); 12 *Nassarius thachi* Dekker, 2004 (36mm).



SHELLS FROM VIETNAM: 13 *Pugilina zhangyii* Kosuge, 2008 (73mm); 14 *Lyria kurodai* (Kawamura, 1964) (91mm, 89mm); 15 *Columbarium suzukii* Habe & Kosuge, 1972 (101mm); 16 *Pugilina kawamurai* Habe, 1965 (165mm); 17 *Babylonia feicheni* Shikama, 1973 (42mm); 18 *Ancistrolepis vietnamensis* Sirenko & Goryachev, 1990 (75mm); 19 *Fulgoraria rupestris thachi* Bail & Chino, 2010 (74mm); 20 *Conus pergrandis fletcheri* Petuch & Mendenhall, 1972 (96mm). All photos are courtesy of Simon's Specimen Shells Ltd (www.simons-specimen-shells.com).

Chatsworth 2012



Chatsworth was a time of socialising with shared meals Friday and Saturday night, and breakfast Sunday morning. There were artifacts for sale from a glass cabinet; new members creating and selling; a coincidence to be noted: *Zidona dufresni* replicating the Chesterfield spire.



Exhibits included the shell cards shown with the real shells, even duplicated pasta shells and chocolate shells. Angie brought her sailors' valentines and John Llewellyn-Jones displayed shells which can be blown. Sunday had members sharing a walk perusing molluscs!



Searching for British *Palliolum* Species

By David W McKay

My search for the three British species of *Palliolum* began in February 1969, when as a junior scientist on the research vessel 'Mara' I was involved on a survey of herring eggs on Ballantrae Bank in the Firth of Clyde. The survey involved the vessel carrying out transects across the gravel bank, taking samples with a small spring loaded grab. As well as samples of gravel, often with fish eggs attached, the grab picked up lots of molluscs including some small purple and brown mottled scallops. Consulting my copy of Tebble, I determined that the scallops, which so fascinated me, were *Chlamys tigrina* (Figure 1). I further discovered that there were two other species in the same subgenus, *Chlamys (Palliolum) striata* and *Chlamys (Palliolum) furtiva*. From then on, on all my research vessel trips I assiduously examined all the material for these species with a conspicuous lack of success.

In July 1973, however, I was given by one of my col-

leagues in the lab' a sample of bottom sediment which had been inadvertently caught in a small meshed mid-water trawl that had collided with the bottom. In this sample was a single specimen of a small scallop (approx. 15mm in diameter) that was similar in shape but rather differently coloured to the *Chlamys tigrina* that I had found. Close inspection indicated that it had spines on the upper valve and the key in Tebble rapidly convinced me that it was a specimen of *Chlamys (Palliolum) striata* (Figure 2). I now had specimens of two species: a smooth one with various arrangements of ribs, *Chlamys tigrinum* and a spiny one that was *Chlamys striata*. Over the years, particularly after I transferred to the shellfish section of the laboratory, I collected many specimens that I identified as *Palliolum tigrinum* or *striatum* largely on the presence or absence of spines. I continued my search for *furtivum* with no success, largely I now suspect because I could not see from the

description given in Tebble, how this species differed from the smooth variety of *tigrinum*. That was the situation when I retired from the laboratory in 1995 and put my shell collecting on the back burner except for when I was on holiday (generally abroad), until I retired from my second career and moved to Portknockie in 2008. I then returned to shell collecting in earnest again, first on my own small boat and then by begging trips on commercial fishing boats. My early trips on commercial fishing boats produced very few *Palliolum* specimens because the mesh sizes on commercial trawlers and scallop dredgers are so large (approximately 100mm). In March 2010 while waiting in harbour in Oban while repairs were being carried out on the 'MFV Rois Mhari', the scallop boat I had begged a trip on, I made a small meshed net that could be piggy backed on a commercial scallop dredge. Once the repairs were completed I asked the skipper if, as an experiment, the net I had made could be attached to one of the dredges. The net was more successful than I could have imagined. We spent three days scallop dredging in the Tیره Passage and off the north coast of Mull and using the small meshed net I caught more *Pallio-*

lum specimens than I had ever seen before. In one haul I recovered in excess of 100 specimens. By this time I had seen enough *tigrinum* and *striatum* specimens to be confident that I could separate them into species on the basis of shell shape and the much more fragile looking lower valve on *striatum*, that I felt I no longer needed to examine specimens for the presence of spines. However, the possession of so many specimens sent me back to Tebble (1966) again to re-examine what he had to say about the three species. He certainly did not indicate that *furtivum* was particularly rare or had a distribution that was markedly different from the other two so I came to the conclusion that I was missing something.

At the April show I discussed the matter with Graham Saunders and he indicated that continental collectors considered *furtivum* to be a synonym for *incomparabile*. On the way home from the Show I stopped off at Brian Hammond's to deliver some specimens and



Fig. 1 The first *Palliolums* I ever collected



Fig. 2 The first spiny *Palliolum* I ever collected

leagues in the lab' a sample of bottom sediment which had been inadvertently caught in a small meshed mid-water trawl that had collided with the bottom. In this sample was a single specimen of a small scallop (approx. 15mm in diameter) that was similar in shape but rather differently coloured to the *Chlamys tigrina* that I had found. Close inspection indicated that it had spines on the upper valve and the key in Tebble rapidly convinced me that it was a specimen of *Chlamys (Palliolum) striata* (Figure 2). I now had specimens of two species: a smooth one with various arrangements of ribs, *Chlamys tigrinum* and a spiny one that was *Chlamys striata*. Over the years, particularly after I transferred to the shellfish section of the laboratory, I collected many specimens that I identified as *Palliolum tigrinum* or *striatum* largely on the presence or absence of spines. I continued my search for *furtivum* with no success, largely I now suspect because I could not see from the

we talked about *Palliolium furtivum*. He suggested that I should consult his copy of the Pectinid Iconography (Raines et al, 2006). On doing this I discovered that it listed *furtivum* as a synonym of *striatum*. Distilling all the information that I had available I came to the conclusion that what I needed to do to obtain *furtivum* was to find a spineless *striatum*. On arriving home I re-examined all the specimens from my recent trip that I had labelled as *striatum* and amongst them I found a number of specimens that were indeed spineless. Oh joy of joys! I had found the missing *furtivum*.

On a further trip on the 'Rois Mhari' in May 2010, this time to Aberdeen Bank, I found specimens that I thought I could separate into *Palliolium striatum* and *Palliolium furtivum* and I took these and some of the original material from the April trip, to the Scottish Shell Show in July. On a particularly slow day when exhibitors outnumbered visitors I had plenty of time to discuss the problem with other exhibitors and spent quite some time examining my material with Rika de Donder who noticed that some of the specimens I had labelled as *striatum* only had spines along the edges of the shell. She further noted that the microsculpture on these seemed to be different from that of *striatum*. My nice simple method of differentiating the species was inadequate and the situation was more complex than I had suspected.

I spent several weeks re-examining all my specimens that were in the *striatum/furtivum* group and divided them into three categories:

- 1) those shells that had spines all over the upper valve and occasionally on the lower valve and had a microstructure that consisted of a whole series of sausage shapes (Figures 3 & 4)
- 2) those specimens that had no gross structure on the upper valve and a microstructure that consisted of a lattice of intersecting concentric and radial lines (Figures 5 & 6)
- 3) a group of specimens that had the same microstructure as 2 but possessed spines (flutes) along the outer edges of the shell (Figure 7).



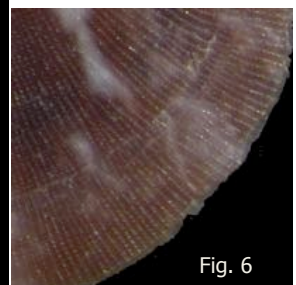
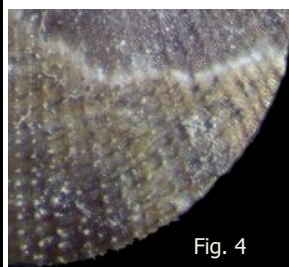
I was happy that
1) was *striatum*
2) was *furtivum*;
but what was 3)?

Was it a previously undescribed species or were the descriptions of *striatum* and *furtivum* inadequate? Incidentally the specimen that I had so confidently identified as *striatum* in 1973 turned out to belong to group 3. I consulted Graham Oliver in Cardiff, who incidentally took all the photomicrographs of *striatum* and *furtivum* (Figures 3 to 7) used in this article, and he suggested that I contact Henk Dijkstra. This I did and from the specimens of the three groups I sent him he confirmed that category 1 were indeed *striatum* and that categories 2 and 3 were *furtivum*, which he believed to be a synonym for *incomparabile*. It would therefore appear the description of *furtivum* (= *incomparabile*) given in Tebble (1966) is inadequate as it fails to acknowledge that *furtivum* can on occasions have a gross sculpture. This seems entirely sensible to me as the specimens with and without the gross sculpture appear together in samples.

My quest to find the three British species of *Palliolium* is now complete and I now have to collect them from as many localities as possible.

References

Raines, B. K. & Poppe, G. T. (2006): *The Family Pectinidae*. In: Poppe, G. T. & Groh, K.: *A Conchological Iconography*. 402 pp., ConchBooks, Hackenheim, ISBN 3-925919-78-3.
Tebble, N. (1966): *British Bivalve Seashells*. 212pp., The Trustees of the British Museum (Natural History), London, ISBN 0 11 491401X



Palliolum tigerinum

By Koen Fraussen



Strawberry juice with icecream



A rising sun with some clouds



By Hubble Space Telescope



Ice cap I



Rippling water on a golden sandflat



Ice cap II



Two handprints on a big fat stomach



Un-named



Motorway



Mountains in the distance



Ice



A rising sun



Un-named



Sunset



Words are insufficient

These shells were awarded the COA award in 2008. In this mainly bivalve issue they are redisplayed here to remind us that an exhibit can be very simple but still breathtaking.

LIMERICKIDAE part II

By Jim Fray



The notes of Gillespie and James
 Would be drowned by the screaming dames
 But the triton apart
 Sounds like a huge fart
 To accompany islanders' games.



The sunrise mien is compelling
 And the visitor thought he was well in.
 With infinite skill
 And a powerful drill
 Who had the meal – would be tellin(g).



The tang of the shark's eye flavour
 Is something for gourmets to savour.
 But behold I'm a moon
 An hermaphrodite goon,
 Which makes for some spicy behaviour.



The augers get thinner and thinner
 And a moon thought he was on to a winner.
 With two slices of bread
 He might be well fed
 But returned with a very small dinner.



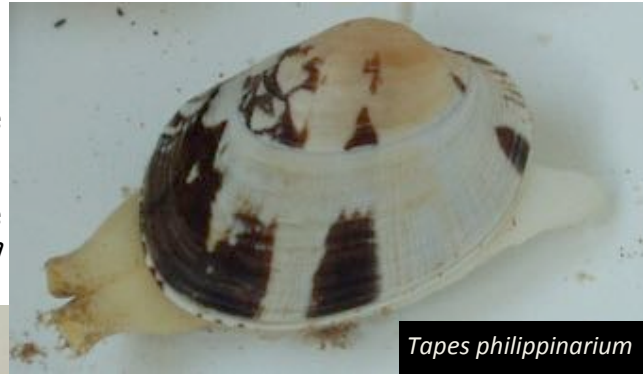
The campaign to cull the sea otter
 Sees the fishermen's collars get hotter.
Abalones are the target
 While those at the bar get
 To try jellied eels or pig's trotter.



Living bivalves from Exmouth

By John E. Llewellyn-Jones

This set of photographs was put together by John who shares the belief that we can digitally record molluscs to share information negating the need to harvest them. This editor wishes to encourage club members to take more digital shots which can then be put onto the club website to help engage and share information with the next generation of shell lovers. These photographs will join those already on the website by Colin Goss, whose photo of *Littorina obtusata* was voted best photo at the October show.



Tapes philippinarium

Juvenile *Chlamys opercularis*



Natica catena

Smooth cockle



Donax vittatus



Mactra corallina



Dosinia exoleta



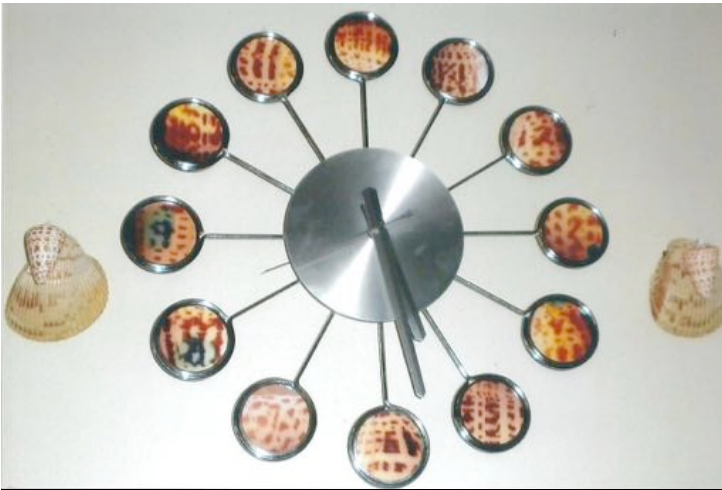
Exmouth beach from the air



How to make a shell clock

By Selina Wilkins

Many years ago, I decided to set out on the task of making a shell clock. I found cheap clock mechanisms and played about with different ideas, in particular how to hide the mechanism. I really wanted to drill through a *Pecten maximus* but the thickness and curvature its shell was prohibitive to the movement of the clock hands. I persevered and used a photo of a shell instead. Then I decided that alt-



Harlan Wittkopf's Alphabet Cone Clock

though I had already selected 12 foreign specimens of the same size and shape, I really wanted a British species clock. All these decisions took months of playing and deliberating. The actual making took a few days. It has now been on display in my kitchen for 8 years, only requiring battery replacement and one repair when a roman numeral became damaged.

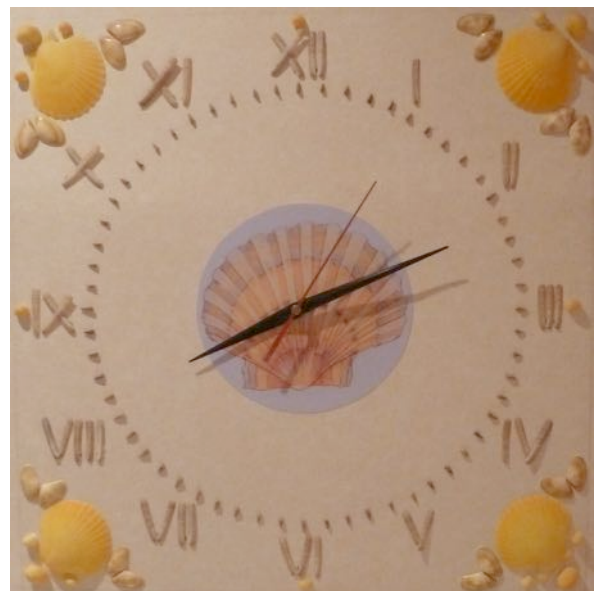
Last year, I heard that Harlan had made his own clock too, using Alphabet cones, *Conus spurius*. He had been on a mission to find all the numbers from 0-9, and then found 10, 11, 12 which spurred him to make his own clock. Harlan created his clock using photos of his numbered shells. I have summarised the steps that you need to take, as well as pitfalls to be avoided, should you wish to try your hand at making a shell clock.



Shell clock by Sarah Topley; photographed and owned by John Llewellyn-Jones

Alternatively, if all this craft work and DIY is too scary, you could just purchase a shell clock from Sarah Topley at the next Chatsworth meeting.

- Choose the clock mechanism, perhaps utilising a second hand clock and select the material on which is it to be mounted; glass, metal, wood, card. Mount the clock mechanism.
- Select how the hours are to displayed, same shell but different markings, e.g. Harlan's clock, same shell but different layout; Selina's clock, or even different shells. Mark out the hour position.
- Decide if further time demarcations are to be displayed, e.g. 60 minutes/seconds and with what mollusc or marking. Use a compass and protractor to get the correct time divisions e.g. 6 degrees for each second/minute. Trace the marking onto the design.
- Create any further design to fill additional spaces, e.g. corners or centre.
- Before finalising the design, consider how the clock will be hung and ease of changing batteries. If the clock is placed face down to change batteries, will any shells be damaged? How much pressure can be applied to shells if the clock is face down? Prepare clock for hanging with your chosen method, e.g. eyes and strings.
- Finalise overall design and find appropriate adhesive, dependent on indoor or outdoor use and weight of selected molluscs. Glue the molluscs into position. Insert battery and set time. Hang clock.





This year's show included a large number of exhibitors showing a wide variety of specimens. These photographs are just a reflection of some of the day's events. There is insufficient space to show all exhibits, and there are more photographs on our club website, but surely the most admired and photographed was Eileen Amabilino's Shell Shop and the shells arranged in domes. There were the most colourful molluscs arrayed by dealers, including rarities.



PURPLE DYE AND DOG WHELKS

The use of animal bladder waste for the production of dyes dates as far back as 2000 BC. The use of dog whelk shells for the production of purple dye is well documented in the Bible. The following text is taken from the Bible (Ezekiel 47:1-12).

PURPLE DYE IN BRITAIN

The purple dye used in the Bible was made from the shells of the dog whelk, *Urosalpinx*. The following text is taken from the Bible (Ezekiel 47:1-12).

Nautilus aglipsis in archaeological excavations

A new find of dog whelk dye shells in Cornwall





2012 Shell Show Results

1st One species: Tom Walker: "*Pallidula*" - winner of the COA Award

1st One genus or family: David Rolfe: "Fishbones (*Venus Murex*)"

1st British—marine, freshwater or land: Tom Walker: "Purple Dye from *Nucella lapillus*" - winner of the Peter Oliver Cup

2nd Carl and Craig Ruscoe: "British *Venerupis* (Carpet Shells)" - winner of the Scotia Shield

1st Foreign - marine, freshwater or land: Selina Wilkins: "*Tivela tripla*"

1st Shell Photography (judged by member ballot): Colin Goss: "*Littorina obtusata*"

1st Self-made shell art: Yves Terryn: "Large Dome"

2nd Eileen Amabilino: "Smaller domes"

1st Shellomania: Roberto Rodolico: "Shell Collecting and Photography"

1st Junior—age 12– 16 inclusive: Theo Tamblin: "Gigantism in the Swan Mussel" - winner of the John Fisher Trophy

1st Dealer Shell of the Show (member ballot): David Knight: *Cypraea mappa mappa* f. *panerythra*

1st Shell of the Show: Graham Saunders: Red *Chlamys nivea* (Macgillivray, 1825)

Non-competitive: Eileen Amabilino: "Shell Shop"



