

Conus marmoreus Linne

THE MALACOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALASIA Inc. VICTORIAN BRANCH BULLETIN

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VIC. BR. BULL. NO. 263

APRIL/MAY 2012

NOTICE OF MEETING

The next meeting of the Branch will be held on the 16th April at the Melbourne Camera Club Building, cnr. Dorcas & Ferrars Sts South Melbourne at 8pm.

Our speaker for the evening will be Leon Altoff from the Marine Research Group of the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria. Leon will speak on Victoria's Chitons.

The talk will centre around a beautifully self produced booklet which includes colour images, diagnostic features, occurrence, distribution and synonyms . The book was originally prepared by Clarrie Handreck but has been updated and extended by Leon Altoff and Audrey Falconer with Robert Burn and the assistance of the staff at Museum Victoria. The computer generated booklet has been printed by Leon and Audrey.

The May meeting will be on the 21st and will be a member's night unless otherwise advised.

Supper and Raffles as usual.

Secretary / Treasurer Michael Lyons Tel. No. 9894 1526

Printed courtesy of Steve Herberts Office, Parliamentary Member for Eltham

Hope Black honoured

Rebecca Garland of Museum Victoria attended the ceremony at Parliament House and her notes and images taken from the internet are here presented.

On the 6th of March, twenty extraordinary women were inducted into the Victorian Women's Honour Roll at a ceremony in Parliament House. I was lucky enough to be invited to witness Curator Emeritus Hope Black join this group.

Each year, the Honour Roll recognises and celebrates inspirational women across Victoria who, through their vision, leadership, commitment and hard work, have made an exceptional contribution to their communities or areas of expertise.

Minister for Women's Affairs the Hon Mary Wooldridge opened the events with this quote: "If your dreams do not scare you they are not big enough." These women, without exception, had big dreams.



Hope Black receiving her award at the Victorian Women's Honour Roll Ceremony. Image R.Garland

Hope Black nee Macpherson, Curator of Molluscs (1919 -) Source: Museum Victoria

Jessie Hope Black (nee Macpherson), Curator of Molluscs, achieved many 'firsts' during her long career, and has made a lasting contribution in the fields of Malacology, Marine Biology and their application to environmental management. She has been a mentor for many women following in these fields and an inspiration to both men and women.

In 1946 Jessie Hope Black (nee Macpherson) became the first woman to be appointed a Curator at the National Museum of Victoria in its then almost 90 year history. Hope had begun her scientific career as a museum assistant in 1937. Having applied for a job in Taxidermy the director at the time John Mahoney counselled her on the 'inappropriateness' of a woman in such a role and suggested they would find her something else. She spent her early days at the Museum under the financial support of the Carnegie Corporation developing and preparing new display cases and the ground breaking McCoy Hall dioramas.

Promoted to Curator of Molluscs in 1946 after completing a Science Degree part time at Melbourne University, she continued in this role until 1965, when she was required to resign from the Victorian public service as a result of the prohibition on the employment of married women known as the Marriage bar. After leaving the Museum Hope retrained as a science teacher, spending 13 rewarding years teaching in Victorian country high schools, her career providing an example to girls of the opportunities for them in science.

In 1947 Hope was part of the Museum team which used pack horses to survey the Snowy River Gorge, prior to dam construction and water diversion of the Snowy Mountain Hydroelectric Scheme. Hope also led the Museum's participation in ground-breaking marine biological surveys of Port Phillip Bay from 1957-1963. The baseline data provided by the Port Phillip Bay Survey is still in use today by environmental scientists, managers and planners, providing a benchmark against which to monitor environmental changes.

In conjunction with the Country Roads Board, CSIRO and Australian Paper Manufacturers she investigated the impact of the shipworm *Teredo*, (a marine bivalve mollusc which bores into wooden structures including bridges), in eastern Victoria and South Australia. She also undertook a survey of the edible molluscs in Victoria to determine the quantities of various species and the feasibility of the establishment of commercial fisheries.

Hope was a member of the first group of four women to travel to Antarctica as part of an Australian National Antarctic Research Expedition (ANARE) to Macquarie Island in 1959.

She co-authored, with C. J. Gabriel, *Marine Molluscs of Victoria* published in 1962, still widely used as the reference work on this topic. She was a consulting malacologist to the National Science Foundation of the Philadelphia Academy of Natural Sciences, USA.

Hope was a pioneer in her desire to involve the broader community in the life of the Museum, both through her education work with the Blind Institute, planning and supervising a biology course for blind children at the Museum, for which she was made a Life Governor of the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind. She further included the community with the establishment of a volunteer programme utilising groups such as the Marine Study Group of Victoria and the Underwater Explorers and Photographers Club. These programs engaged volunteers to assist in the labour-intensive activities of sorting, documenting and analysing specimens and data from the museum research collections. To this day volunteers continue to be extensively involved in museum activities.

Unrelated to her work in science Hope has been an active advocate for services for the disabled. Over many years she supported groups with her considerable administrative ability to lobby for suitable independent housing for the disabled.



Image: Portrait of Hope Macpherson, Museum Victoria Curator of Molluscs (1946 - 1965)

Dive Report Portsea 29/2/12 Geoff Macaulay

Points that will be in context later were that I was again using a 3 layer wetsuit system as with the warm water it is much freer and more comfortable and on getting into the water found that I had left my collecting bottle in the car and only had a plastic shopping bag for big specimens. I had also clicked my car key twice which deadlocks the car and then used my usual 10 clipseal bag storage system. We also made a relatively early entry so it wouldn't be too late a night.

I found a nice large *Lyria mitraeformis* on rubble near but not quite under a large overhang at 7-8m; not perfect, but good size and has cleaned up fairly well. In the same general area I also located a small rock with a small Triphorid about 6mm as yet unidentified which was sitting on the upper surface of the rock and on turning over the rock collected a small 7-8mm turrid which appears to be a rather pale specimen of *Paramontana rufozonata* - the first time I have seen this live. I put these in the bag but did not really expect to see them again. I also found in the same area some dead joined (*Chlamys aktinos* and around this time had a brief sensation of something like fabric at the back of my neck which I thought was some shift in the position of my BC and which disappeared a couple of minutes later. Towards the end of the dive I picked up a fresh dead *Callianaitis disjecta* in a sandy patch among seagrass in 3m. Michael also gave me a couple of sea urchin tests which I had mentioned that Catherine was looking for. So overall a pretty good haul for Portsea.

We both exited onto the pier and walked towards the car - at which time I suddenly realised that I had no car keys. In retrospect I had put the key bag between my thermal undersuit and the second suit which was my old trisuit that doesn't zip up and then a steamer on top of this and the keys were at chest height not at stomach level which I thought was safe. It appears that with movement the key bag had migrated around from the front of my chest somehow to the back of my neck where I felt the plastic as it worked its way out and exited.

If anyone is diving near the deep ledge in question please check the roof of the ledge as it was around here that everything happened and as the bag was positively bouyant I would not be surprised if it is still sitting there - and I could still do with a spare. I can say this because I went one way and Michael the other to see if the bag had washed up - but no luck. Thankfully. Michael had made the inspired decision to hide his key rather than lock it in my car as we have done previously.

So with no clothes I was at least able to sit on a towel in Michaels car, for which I am very grateful, and call the RACV, hoping to at least get in and get some dry gear if not try to persuade a jump start. (this was about 11.45 pm. An hour or so later an RACV man finally arrived and after fiddling for 5 mins decided that since I had double

clicked and deadlocked the system there was simply no way he could get in, but he did think it would be safe to leave the car there now that the holiday season was over. At this stage with no cash the only option was for Michael to drive me home. We arrived a bit after 2.30am and I am sure Michael didn't get home until about 3.30am, both of us having to work the next day. Pretty disastrous but I guess could have been a lot worse.

I was driven down next morning, concerned that the spare key having not been used for 5 years and the locking system on the Adventure sometimes won't open if the key is inactive, but it worked and I was able to drive back to Frankston Hospital (with my necessary medical bits and pieces) arriving about 20 minutes late for work.

Which also brings me to a report for 7.3.12

We again dived at Portsea with somewhat more pleasant conditions and a moderately strong flood tide entering the water about 2200. I reverted to the traditional 7mm suit and keys at belly button level. We entered to the West of the Pier and headed out to about 6m before heading back east. Some large fish were present on the reef areas in shallow but we spent most of the dive over the *Fulvia tenuicostatum* habitat.

Very little else of interest except for large number of good sized *Cabestana spengleri*, singly, mating and on eggs and with very obvious wide flat sand trails. None I saw were good enough to take and likewise a pair of paler *Amoria undulata* and a few *Pleuroploca australasiae*. I did see one *spengleri* that appeared to be chasing a small *Fulvia* along and out of the sand. I did find a black *Gena impertusa* and later 2 specimens of *Chioneryx cardidoides* popping out of and leaving a trail in the sand which I have not seen before. *Pterynotus triformis* were present in good numbers and I collected a single nice dark specimen. A few nice *Conus anemone* too. Again some very large conspicuous *Haliotis laevigata* in shallow water. A dead *Terebra tristis* (bicolor): fish life was diverse and I swam through a school of good sized Sole/Flounder among others. A seadragon frightened the daylights out of me when it suddenly appeared 1 cm away from my mask - presumably admiring its own reflection. I am fairly sure that I saw a specimen of *Octopus warringa* sitting securely in the neck of an old beer bottle.

After about 90 mins I was getting a bit cold and indicated to Michael that I would exit. I was very surprised when just about to get out on to the rocks immediately west of the pier, in about 1m I came across the biggest *Octopus maorum* that I have ever seen out in the open. The body was football sized about 30cm across and tentacles at least 1.2m (bigger than my fins) and suckers bigger than 20 cent coin size. It was quite happy to play and got a bit of a tickling. It was not obviously perturbed even when I grabbed some of its tentacles and grabbed my fins at the same time presumably to stabilise in case I didn't let it go. This was the highlight of the dive.

Carnivorous snails.

In *Australian Shell News* No. 109, March 2001, I wrote an article on a specimen of *Victaphanta compacta* eating an earthworm. The collected specimen was observed latching on to the worm about one third of the way along and in about half an hour had eaten through, discarding the small piece and commencing to ingest the larger section, appearing to swallow it whole. After about 4 hours and consuming about 3 cm's of the worm, it finally released the remainder.

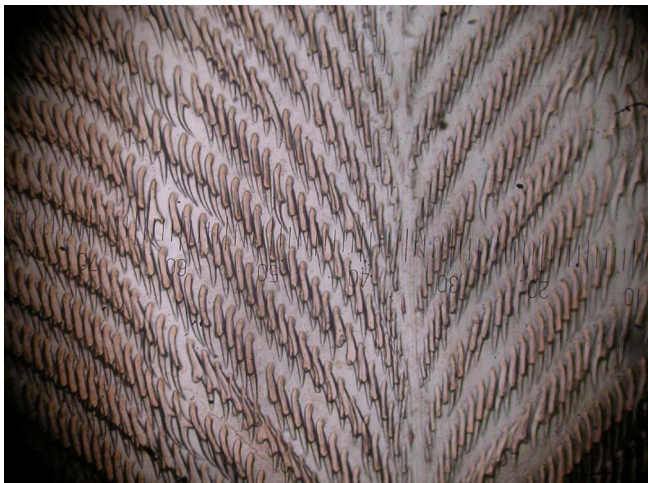
Two species of these black carnivorous snails of the family Rytididae occur in Victoria: *Victaphanta atramentaria* (Shuttleworth, 1853), which is confined to the temperate rainforest areas of the Dandenong ranges and the eastern central part of the Great Dividing Range and *Victaphanta compacta* (Cox & Hedley, 1912) confined to the temperate rain forest areas of the Otway ranges in the south-western part of Victoria. The species can be differentiated by the animal colour and shell shape: *V. atramentaria* has a grey-black animal with a distinct orange frill around the foot, whereas the animal of *V. Compacta* is similar but lacks the orange frill. The shells of both are black, but *V. compacta* has a more globular shell than *V. atramentaria*.

In 1970 Dr Brian Smith described the anatomy of these two species and designated a neotype for *V. atramentaria*, as the type specimen could not be located and was presumed lost. He briefly described the radula of *V. compacta* as "Radula teeth unicuspid, tooth base plate without posterior notch", but did not illustrate it. The animal of this species has no jaw and has a radula with curved dagger like teeth, arranged in oblique rows (in a V shaped pattern). Photomicrograph radular images of both species from slides in my collection are here illustrated and no apparent differences between the species has been noted.

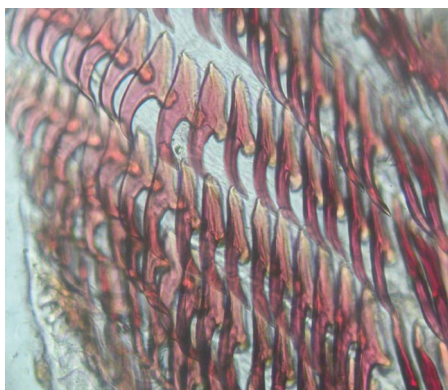


Victaphanta compacta Mait's Rest walking track, Otway National Park, 13/11/10, crawling on moss on rainforest floor during rain. Photo Platon Vafiadis

Victaphanta atramentaria Mount Erica, crawling in rain near car park: photo Paul George Field Naturalists Club of Victoria.



Radula of *V. compacta* showing tooth arrangement and a close up of individual teeth. Radula 18 mm long 4.5mm wide.



V. atramentaria radula teeth close up. Radular images from slides in my collection.

Above *V. compacta* eating through worm. Right Ingesting worm, note discarded piece, top left.

Reference

Smith, B.J. (1970). Notes on the anatomy of *Victaphanta atramentaria* (Shuttleworth) and *Victaphanta compacta* (Cox & Hedley, and the designation of a noetype for *V. atramentaria*. *Journal of the Malacological Society of Australia* 2:13-21

Don Cram

Cornu

Cornu Born, 1778 is used a lot these days as the name of the genus of our common garden snail that we all know as *Helix aspersa*. The type species of *Cornu* is *copiae* Born, 1778, the shell of which is a scalariform specimen of *Helix aspersa* Müller, 1774. Various authors have argued against uses of *Cornu*, because the rules of nomenclature exclude names given to teratological (aberrant or monstrous) specimens. Others have urged use of *Cornu*, arguing that Born did not know his specimen was abnormal in any way.

Now a well-drafted application is before the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, asking for a ruling on the availability of the genus name *Cornu*. Should the application be successful, the species will henceforth be correctly listed as *Cornu aspersum* (Müller, 1774).

Reference

Cowie, R.H., 2011. Case 3518. *Cornu* Born, 1778 (Mollusca, Gastropoda, Pulmonata, Helicidae): request for a ruling on the availability of the generic name.
Bulletin of Zoological Nomenclature 68 (2): 97-104

Robert Burn**Ditaxis**

Gastropods crawl along on a foot. Most of us at sometime have watched the muscular waves ripple from tail to head on the sole of the common garden snail as it moves over a pane of glass. Two chance observations last year (nudibranchs were sparse these two days) led me to look out references to other forms of locomotion by gastropods, in particular trochids.

Both *Cantharidella tiberiana* and *Minopa legrandi* have very active animals, with head and epipodial tentacles constantly on the move. Of great interest however is the action of the foot, especially the tail. In both species, the tail appears almost divided along the centre line, because one side stays anchored to the substrate while the other moves forward, anchors itself while the first side moves forward, hence repeating the process over and over again. The action in *C. tiberiana* is more strident than in *M. legrandi*, but can be easily observed with a low-power hand-lens. This type of sole movement is known as ditaxis. The extent to which it occurs among species of Trochidae is not known, but future field-work will undoubtedly provide more live specimens to observe.

Robert Burn**M.S.A Victorian Branch Financial Statement 31/01/2012**

| | | |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| <u>Balance as at 30/01/10</u> | | \$1626.36 |
| <i>Receipts</i> | | |
| Raffles 2 | \$94.80 | |
| Subscriptions received | \$360.00 | |
| Craft shell sales | \$100.00 | |
| Council Rebate | \$425.00 | |
| Book Sales | \$20.00 | |
| Bank Interest | \$56.71 | |
| | <u>\$1056.51</u> | <u>\$1056.51</u> |
| | | \$2682.87 |
| <i>Expenses</i> | | |
| Postage | \$144.60 | |
| Subscriptions out | \$360.00 | |
| Room Rental | \$270.00 | |
| Book Purchases | \$39.00 | |
| Refreshments | \$50.00 | |
| Subscriptions to other clubs | \$61.58 | |
| | <u>\$925.18</u> | |
| | | <u>\$925.18</u> |
| Balance as at 31/01/2012 | | <u>\$1757.69</u> |
| <u>Michael Lyons (Hon.Sec/Treasurer)</u> | | |