

SYDNEY SHELLER

Newsletter of the Shell Club of Sydney
NSW Branch, The Malacological Society of Australasia Limited ACN 067 894 848

Shell Club of Sydney Mission Statement:

To appreciate, understand and preserve shells and their environment and to share this with others.

This Weekend!
First second & third prizes
available all categories!
Club annual shell show
Ryde Eastwood
Leagues Club
2pm 28th October 2000

November Meeting:

Shell Quiz,
Organised by Stephanie and Peter.
(Conducted in teams so lack of
knowledge is not a problem)
25th November 2000

Club Field Trip:

Callala Bay, Nowra
Meet at the northern end of
Callala Bay, at the car park near the
jetty/boat-launching ramp at 12 noon.
Focus will be the rock platform, sand
areas and diving areas also available.
12th November 2000

Office - Bearers:

President: Patty Jansen
Vice Pres: Maureen Anderson
Secretary: Chris & Karen Barnes
Treasurer: Peter Pienaar
Sheller Editor: Steve Dean
Raffles: Maureen Anderson
(The executive plans the field trips)



*One of the shells collected while Steve, Ron and Adrian
were on Doug Thorn's shell collecting trip
in the Swains Reefs (Great Barrier Reef)
during August/September 2000*

Some of the topics inside:

- News and Classifieds
- Shelling in Broome
- President's Annual Report
- Shell List
- Collecting in the Swains Reefs
- Sydney Shell Club - Shell Show

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Peter Pienaar
pienaar@mania.com.au
9/13-15 Chisholm Cres
Bradbury NSW 2560

Or to the Sheller Editor, Steve Dean

Note: The Sydney Shell Club is a branch of
the Malacological Society of Australasia
(MSA) It is preferred that you are also a
member of the MSA. MSA membership
can be organised through Des Beechey
Des@phm.gov.au
26 Malga Ave
Roseville Chase NSW 2069

**Members News, &
Buy, Swap & Sell:**

Wanted contributions to this classified
section of the Sheller. Please get
electronic contributions to Steve Dean,
or if typing is required to Karen Barnes
(See front cover for contact details)

Wanted gossip for this section of the
Sheller. Tell Steve Dean your news.

The upcoming club functions are
detailed on the front cover of this issue –
Annual Shell show, Callala Bay field trip,
and the Shell Quiz Club meeting.

Hi everybody

I am now back "on deck", my operation
appears to have been successful
and after I regained some weight and
learned how to feed myself thru my
new oesophagus I m sure I'll be as good
as new.

Many thanks for the good wishes, its
nice to know others are thinking of
you when you have a problem.

Best wishes, Kev Lamprell

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Shelling in Broome

By Michael Keats

Jenny (my wife) and I were sitting back after dinner on a cold June night this year. There were fires blazing at each end of the room and we were still not warm. Where would we go for a break? Somewhere to get away from the 'tail' of Winter; the GST changeover and before the Sydney Olympics hit. We needed a break. And there were all those expiring frequent flyer points.....

Out came the atlas. I had always hankered to spend some time in Darwin or Katherine and visit Kakadu. As usual we 'went to' wish list places. And there was the inevitable revisiting of all the 'old favourites.' Port Douglas; the unfinished bit of New Zealand; etc

We wanted something new! Why not try Broome? Why not?

Frontier stuff! The untamed North West! The Kimberley! Visions of huge cattle drives, The world's greatest pearling capital, a tough life in a harsh and unforgiving environment. These were my preconceptions of Broome, WA.....

The next available lunch break I was interviewing a WA Tourism salesman who was extolling the virtues of the Kimberley like there was no other Valhalla! Loaded with brochures and colour pictures of impossible hues we did our homework.....

On 6th August we woke up in our unit at the Blue Seas Resort, a stone's throw from Cable Beach. The first thing we noticed was that it was warm! It was delightful! If this was winter I could take a lot of it!

Our arrival late last night did not provide any opportunity to 'feel' the geography of the place. We knew from various maps that Broome was on a peninsula and that was about it. Now it was time to go and have a good look.

First things first. We needed a vehicle. I hankered for 4 Wheel Drive. All the roads that went anywhere interesting at all were marked '4WD only' As it turned out it was difficult to get anything else! Our Hyundai Terios served us admirably.



Barred Creek, Kimberley WA

'Old' Broome is on the Roebuck Bay (southern side) of the peninsula. Here is history and so much to see, to do and to experience. Cable Beach is on the northern side and faces squarely into the Indian Ocean. The spectacular cliffs of Gantheaume Point separate the two very different natural and cultural environments.

I started shelling on Cable Beach. For most of its 22kms the beach is flawless white sand, but for a small section below the Intercontinental Hotel there are rocks and beach drift. In this drift is a huge variety of material that you would expect in the tropics. Dominated by bivalves (venerids, arcs, mactrids, cardiums, pectens and carditids) everything is somewhat beach worn. Not surprising when you think about the huge tides and the even bigger cyclones.

The gastropods were dominated by Olives. There were lots of cypraea, naticids and trochids. Ficus and murex were to be found with difficulty. The best find was an epitonium. I am yet to try and put a species name on it!

Town Beach as it is called (more correctly for sheller's it is the Mangrove Point part of the beach) is a great place to shell. So good that all my materials are in the deep freeze awaiting time for processing! The fauna of this small rocky, coral encrusted point is home to 100's if not 1,000's of *Conus victoriae*. Every rock had at least one live specimen underneath! Surrounding each rock were live Vexillids and on top of some rocks were tremendous specimens of *Chicoreus stainforthi*.

On the part of Town Beach which the locals use for swimming are millions of

live marginellids, and nassarids. On the falling tide stranded jellyfish are set upon by the nassarids in a feeding frenzy. Plenty of bivalves and opisthobranchs make for an exciting fauna and a great place to shell.

Out of town to the North the most incredible shelling is at a place called Barred Creek. Without a 4WD and a strong sense of adventure, (including the feeling that you might never return!) most people would never get there. Only some 40 kms from Broome on the Cape Leveque Peninsula, it can take 3 hours of concentrated driving and determination.

Barred Creek is so good for shells it is even advertised as such in tourist brochures! Believe you me the shells are as safe as if they were in a vault! Driving the 4WD to the shells is the go! When you get out to collect it is like being in a shell shop without price tags. You can pick up almost anything tropical. Volutes, Syrinx (yes the largest living gastropod known), Cypraea, Olives, Murex, Naticids, Bivalves of all kinds. Magnificent pairs of rayed mactrids, Perfect pairs of dosinids. The list goes on.

Perhaps the greatest excitement for me was picking up a fresh beached specimen of *Cypraea tigris*! I just could not believe that this was possible! It is not a perfect specimen but I found it all by my self.

Barred Creek would have been absolutely magnificent if we could have been there 2 months earlier. Cyclone activity was / is responsible for the incredible shell array. Because the weather is so extreme shells fade quickly. The 'hook' of the Peninsula

which protects Barred Creek also acts as the 'trap' for dead and dying shells.

The most unusual shelling on the trip was done on the main road into Geike Gorge, some hundreds of km's to the east of Broome. On a guided tour we were invited to inspect a 'bower' bird bower which is active and right on the sealed road to the gorge.

Whilst the bower is beautiful and decorated with lots of green glass, it is also decorated with the local *Camaenid* species. The birds are going to have to replace a shell! It is now in the collection.

Broome and its surrounding areas are a real challenge for the shell collector. We had no encounters with crocodiles but saw lots. The mud is sticky and the things that bite and itch are active. I have made no mention of pearl shells or the Pearling Industry. Everywhere in Roebuck Bay where there is a substrate there is a young *Pinctada maxima*. The story of pearling is both romantic and tragic. It is also the history of Broome. I will encourage others to write that history which is still being written

If you have the chance to go to Broome particularly when the weather is good, take it and go. The more adventurous you are the more fun and enjoyment you will have.

1999 - 2000 President's report

Patty Jansen

This has been my first year as president of the NSW Branch of the Malacological Society of Australasia, and it has been a year that has passed all too quickly. There have been no major upheavals or dramas within the club and many members continue to be good friends and continue to bring good shells and information to the club meetings.

A brief summary of our club meetings is outlined below:

In July Des Beechey gave an interesting talk about the *Volute* genus *Fulgoraria*. Des used the latest in technology with his colour overheads. His maps were also very useful.

In August Michael Keats gave a report on his continuing research of the molluscan fauna, dead or alive, of Shark Island. His recent surveys have become especially interesting since the oil spill in Sydney Harbour.

In September Ashley Miskelly showed some of his new slides of finds in Sydney Harbour. Ashley and Ernie Uhle continue to find the most amazing shells at Bottle & Glass rocks. There were also some slides of his visit to the GBR.

In October we held our annual shell show hosted by Ron and Marina Moylan.

There were some really good entries. The November meeting was cancelled in favour of branch members attending the Christmas party of the Malacology Section of the Australian Museum at Winston Ponder's house. A great time was had by all, although it was a pity we did not get Winston to show us how he absails down his back yard to get rid of the weeds.

In December we held our own Christmas function at Kurnell Beach. A small but eager (and some very young) band of shellers attended on this beautiful day.

In January Stephanie and Patty held another shell quiz with some very interesting questions.

The February meeting was well attended when Chris Barnes spoke about the Cowries of Little Bay. Chris and Karen continue to find many unusual species, which shows that yes, the shells are still there, it just requires patience and time (and no children) to find them.

The March meeting was cancelled because more than half of the members that

usually attend branch meetings went to the National Shell Show in Adelaide. Members did quite well at the show. Chris and Karen won a second in the cowries - a hotly contested category, and whenever I looked at Ron Moylan's table, he was selling shells!

We had a quiet April meeting, with members talking about their experiences in Adelaide and other field trips.

At the May meeting, we had Peter Middelfart from the Australian Museum give

a talk about egg capsules in Muricids. Peter showed up how you can tell the difference between species and groups of species by their egg capsules.

There were no official club shelling trips, but a number of members went on interesting excursions.

Ron Moylan and Ashley Miskelly took a trip on Doug Thorn's boat to the GBR. They found many great shells, some of which they have brought to club

meetings.

Chris and Karen went to Lord Howe Island. Of course you are not allowed to collect there, but they had a good look around nevertheless.

Steve went to the SA shores in the week prior to the Adelaide shell show.

He will hopefully report on this and bring in some shells later on.

Unfortunately, a planned club shelling trip to the Solomon Islands had to be abandoned due to the current political circumstances over there.

In the club, our committee has again worked to keep things running. We must all realise that without volunteers to take positions, there will be no club. So we must thank Chris and Karen Barnes for their role as secretaries and Karen's great cakes, Steve Dean for continuing to produce an excellent newsletter, Peter Pienaar for his good job as our treasurer and Maureen Anderson the Raffle Lady. Our present team has agreed to stay on for another year. Thanks must also go to those who simply turn up at meetings, who bring their shells, and other things to share. Let the next year also be a good one.

An Email List

Roman V. Egorov

3rd Vladimirskaaya Str. 16-24
111401 Moscow Russia

Dear Friends, we have the pleasure to send you our new price-list #33. Our specialisation in trade of deep-sea, uncommon tropical and arctic-boreal shells, also Eurasian land and freshwater shells and literature on these subjects. If you are interested in the last two categories, ask for free-list (by common mail or e-mail). Marine list has changes every month. If you have a special order, send your want-list us. All shells come with complete field data, often with coordinates. When ordering, please be specific: name of shell, size, condition, price, AND YOUR POSTAL ADDRESS!!!

Unsuitable shells should be returned within 2 weeks of receipt for a refund or exchange. Please note: deep-sea material is very limited! With best wishes, Sincerely, Roma.

A few shells from each family are extracted from Roma's list as shown:

SCISSURELLIDAE

- **Scissurella costata* Mediterranean, d-200 m, 1.5 mm+, F \$5.00
 **S. crispata* Mediterranean, d-200 m, 2 mm+, F+ \$9.00

FISSURELLIDAE SECTION

- **E. punctulum* Piani, 1980, Italy, 2-3 mm, F \$5.00
 (1)*Fissurella angusta* (Gmelin, 1791) Cuba, 12 mm, F++ \$1.00

TROCHACEA SECTION

- (1)*Antimargarites* sp. Chatham rise, d- 720 m, 7 mm, nice white polished shell G \$15.00
 **Bankivia fasciata* S. Australia, Sidney, 15 mm+, F \$2.00
Diloma nigerrima Chile, 20-22 mm, w/o, F+/F++ \$1.00
Gaza sericata Wakayama pref., Japan, 13 mm+, w/o, F++ \$6.00
Solariella varicosa Couthouy, Bering Sea, d-100 m, 7-9 mm, w/o, F+, \$5.00
Solariella varicosa Couthouy, White Sea, d-30 m, 5-6 mm, w/o, F+, \$8.00
 (1)*S. obscura* Okhotsk Sea, Simushir, D-320 m, 8 mm, F+, w/o, \$8.00

LITTORINIDAE SECTION

- **Littorina aspera* (Philippi, 1846) Equador, 13 mm, F++ \$1.00
 (1)*Littorina araucana* (D'Orbigny, 1840) Chile, 7-12 mm, w/o, F \$1.00
Littorina lineolata (D'Orbigny, 1840) Florida, +8 mm, F \$0.50
Littorina littorea (L., 1758) White sea, 20-27 mm, w/o, F+ \$0.50
Littorina mandjurica Japan Sea, 10 mm+, w/o, F++, \$2.00
Littorina modesta (Philippi, 1846) Mexico, 12-14 mm, F++ \$1.50
 **Littorina obtusata* White Sea, 6-11 mm, w/o, F+ \$0.50
 (1)*Littorina penicillata* (Carpenter, 1864) Mexico, 10 mm, F+ \$1.50
Littorina peruviana (Lamarck, 1822) Chile, 15-18 mm, F/F+ \$1.00
Littorina punctata (Gmelin, 1791) Spain, +10 mm, \$0.50
Littorina squalida Japan Sea, 10 mm+, w/o, F+ \$3.00
Littorina zebra (Donovan, 1825) Colombia, 28-33 mm, F++/G \$2.00
Littorina ziczac (Gmelin, 1791) Florida, USA, +15 mm, w/o, F++ \$0.50

RISSOACEA SECTION

- Alvania geryonia* Italy, 3-5 mm, F \$1.00
 **A. beani* Italy, 2-3 mm, F \$1.50
 **A. carinata* Sardegna Is., 2 mm, F \$1.00

STROMBIDAE SECTION

- (1)*Aporrhais occidentalis* Newfoundland bank, d-200 m, fresh dead, 57 mm, heavy shell, F \$10.00
Strombus aurisdianae diff. loc., diff. forms, 47-71 mm, F++-G \$3.00
 (
S. vittatus Vietnam, 63 mm, G \$2.00
 (1)*Struthiolaria papulosa* New Zeland, 76.5 mm, excellent size and quality, F++ \$10.00
 (1)*Lambis c. crocatus* Mauritius, d-15 m, 138 mm, yellow body, dark orange aperture, w/o, F++ \$10.00
 (1)*Terebellum t. terebellum* Australia, 58 mm, G \$3.00
 (1)*Terebellum terebellum lineatum* Philippines, 43 mm, G \$2.00

CYPRAEACEA SECTION

- Cypraea annulus* Australia, 27+mm, G \$2.00
C. annulus Maldives, 11 mm, G \$5.00
C. asellus Madagaskar, 18 mm, F++/G \$1.50

- C. atomaria* (ssp. *punctata*), New Guinea, 11.8 mm, F++/G, \$5.00
C. atriceps (ssp. *isabella*) Hawaii, 21 mm, \$5.00
C. bistrionotata Vietnam, 15-20 mm, F++/G, \$3.00
C. boivini Philippines, 23 mm, G, \$1.00
C. zonaria W. Africa, 25.4 mm, G \$6.00
Erato evoluta Italy, 5-7 mm, G \$5.00
Pseudosimnia carnea Morocco, 14-16 mm, G \$6.00
 (1)*P. adriatica* Italy, 19 mm, G \$5.00
 (1)*T. multilirata* 37°N-12°E, 10 mm+, \$10.00
 (1)*T. pedicula* Cuba Is., 10 mm G \$3.00
T. sanguinea W.Mexico, 7-8 mm, G \$3.00
Janneria pustulata Panama, 16 mm, F++ \$2.00

FOSSIL SAMPLES OF CYPRAEIDAE, PLIOCENE, FLORIDA

- (1) *S. (A.) floridana* (Mansfield, 1931) -- APAC Pit, Sarasota, Florida, some with nat. colour, excellent, 67 \$40.00

BUCCINACEA SECTION

- **Nassarius macrodon* W.Africa, Senegal, 12-19 mm, F++ \$3.00
 **N. denticulatus* W.Africa, Senegal, 14-19 mm, F \$2.00
 **N.cf. pygmaeus* W.Africa, Senegal, 10-12 mm, F++ \$3.00
 (1)*Nassarius dujardini* FOSSIL, Kerch', Crimea, middle Eocene, 12 mm, F++ \$5.00

MURICOIDEA SECTION

- **Trophonopsis muricatus* Italy, 7-8 mm, F+ \$6.00
 **Murex aradasii* Italy, Genova, 9-11 mm, F/F+ \$8.00

CONOIDEA SECTION

- Bela laevigata* Sardegna Is., 6-8 mm, F+ \$2.00
 **B. brachystoma* Italy, d-50 m, 5-6 mm, F \$2.00
Raphitoma linearis Italy, Genova, 9 mm, F+ \$3.00

MISCELLANEOUS

- Lepetella laterocompressa* Italy, Livorno, d-300 m, 2-3 mm, F \$5.00
 **Scurria parasitica coffea* Chile, 15-16 mm, F+ \$1.50
 (1)*Turricaspia triton* Caspian Sea, d-40 m, alive taken, w/o, 5 mm, F \$8.00
 **Nerita morio* Chile, 12-16 mm, F+ \$2.00
 (1)*Cerithium cattleyae* FOSSIL, Kerch', Crimea, middle Eocene, 26 mm, F \$5.00
 (1)"*Cerithium*" sp. (nov?). FOSSIL, Ukraine, Podol'e, N2/1, 33 mm, F++ \$7.00
 **Cerithium vulgatum* Black sea, Crimea, subfossil, well colored, 30-32 mm, F++ \$7.00
Gibberula miliaria Sardegna Isl., 5-7 mm, F/F++ \$2.00
G. philippi Sardegna Is., 2 mm+, F++ \$2.00
Granulina clandestina Sardegna Is., 2 mm, F/F+ \$2.00
 **Enaeta cumingi* Mexico, 28 mm, F+ \$3.00
 **Lyria mitraeformis* Australia, 53 mm+, w/o, F \$3.00
 (1)*Volutocorbis gilchristi* South Africa, Algoa Bay, d-320 mm, very thick fresh dead shell, 29 mm, F++ \$30.00
 (1)*Heliculus fallaciosus* W.Africa, Senegal, diam.-11 mm, F++ \$8.00
 **Cylichna alba* White Sea, 6-9 mm, F+ \$5.00

BIVALVIA

- **Vesicomya sergeevi* Filatova, 1971 Kurile-Kamchatka trench, label with coordinates, d-8060-8135 m, Sigsbi trawl, 3-5 mm, mostly deep-sea shells offered for sale, all alive, F++ \$30.00
 **Parvamussium alaskensis* Dall Kurile Is., d-900 m, 15-22 mm, F \$10.00
 **Aequipecten opercularis* (Linne) Norwegian Sea, d-110 m, 55-65 mm, alive taken, covered a few nice *Balanus*, F \$5.00
Mactra stultorum Portugal, 32 mm+, F \$2.00
Donax trunculus Portugal, 32-37 mm, F+ \$1.00



Collecting in the Swains Reefs

By Steve Dean

I was lucky enough to go on 'Rat Pack 2000', this year's shell collecting trip organised by Doug Thorn. It was for 10 days in the Swains Reef part of the Great Barrier Reef, and was on a vessel Doug owns that is normally chartered for corporate fishing trips (The 'Australiana' shown above).

For this trip we had 15 shell collectors, plus one dive master (Chris) one deck hand (Danny) and one skipper (Malcolm Cox). From Sydney there was Adrian Browne, Ron Moylan and myself Steve Dean. From southern NSW there was Bob Kershaw specialising in *Haliotis*, along with his friend Barry Mead who had never been to the reef before and came along to see the reef and to snorkel. There was Mike Hart from NZ, Merv Cooper from WA, Rob Ekert and Charley Taylor from northern QLD, Doug Thorn and Malcolm Ford from Gladstone, Ray Oakey from Brisbane,

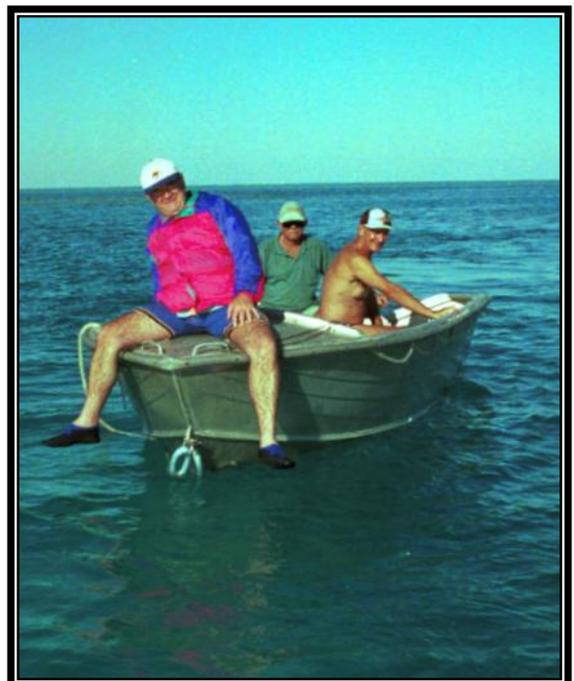
Fred Schroeder from Guam, and Alain Robin and Pat Bail from France.

Pat, Doug and Malcolm are exclusively interested in *Volutidae*. Pat co-authored the recent book on the *pulchra* series. Fred's main interest is *Mitridae* and *Murex*. The rest of the collectors have an interest in a broader range of families. As a result there was a heavy emphasis on dredging and diving the sandy lagoons inside the reefs (10m to 20m depth). There were few reef walking and snorkelling excursions. This suited me fine, as all my previous collecting in the Swains had been all reef walking and snorkelling. It rounded out my collection primarily with Barrier Reef sublittoral sand shells.

We went to six different reefs in the Northern and North Eastern Swains. Three of these were chosen as new ground where few if any shell expeditions had been, and certainly no one on board had been to before. Each reef consisted

of a fringing reef sheltering a lagoon area. Some reefs were half moon shaped and over 10km long, others completely encircled their lagoons with only a small entrance and others had

Dredging – Adrian lookout, Alain shell sorting & Charlie skipper





many fingers of reef extending into the lagoon area. None had islands, and only for the first five days were there any exposed reefs at low tide.

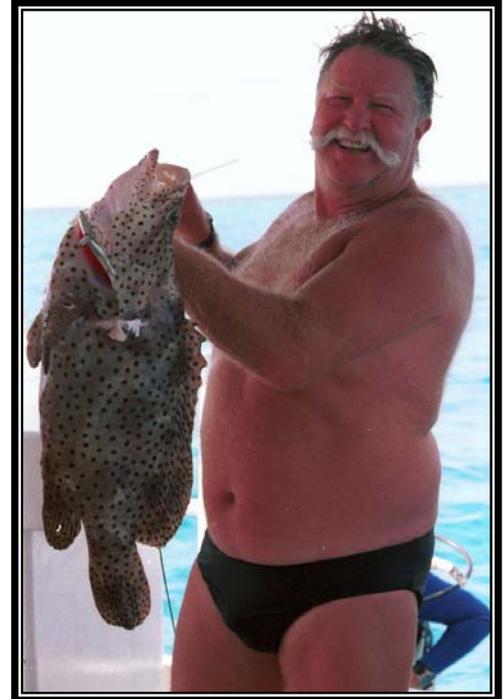
The trip started from Gladstone Port on a Saturday late August. Everything was loaded onto the boat including the four dredges and a fourth run-about dinghy. As it was Doug's vessel, his normal shore staff cleaned the boat, and stocked it with all the food drinks and supplies. There was only a limited amount we could do to help. Doug was well organised, ably assisted by Malcolm Ford.

We left port late Saturday afternoon and travelled 19 hours to arrive at the first reef the middle of the next day. We had travelled in a straight line NE into a brisk NE wind, resulting in more than half of the collectors becoming sea-sick during the first evening. I had the honour of being first. (Seconds of dinner had not been a good idea, and so much for the seasickness tablets – next year I will bring stronger tablets). Other than for the first 24hrs the ocean was very calm. The "Australiana" picture was taken 180km off the Australian coast and is calm because it is inside one of the lagoons, but even in the open waters on the return trip to Gladstone the water was just as calm. Some days were windy creating a chop noticeable only in the dinghies.

Those of us with new items in our scuba gear dived the first afternoon to check them out before the night dives, while the others dredged. The first two reefs and the fifth reef did not yield a lot of uncommon material, so we stayed less than 24hrs at each. The third and fourth reefs warranted a day and a half each. The final reef was a good all round reef so we stayed three days, since quick looks in nearby reefs did not show anything promising.

Chris the dive master had four special skills, reciting poetry, telling jokes, ensuring all dives were safe and spearing fish. He was great at three of these – we had only one fish dinner during the trip. All meals were spectacularly large and very well cooked by the crew.

At the start of the trip eleven people on board were scuba divers by the end there was thirteen. Each move to a new reef was only a few hours sailing, and the weather was good so both the skipper and the deck hand, took the opportunity to learn to dive and then get certified - our dive master was always available to help. Calm crystal clear waters in sandy lagoons is a perfect place to learn to dive, and there is the coral and fish to look at, but it will mean all other locations they dive will not be as good as their first dives.



Dredging settled into a pattern, with the four drivers retaining their "captaincy" every day, and retaining most of their same crew. I mainly crewed in one dinghy, but experienced the different dredging styles in two other dinghies. The Dredges worked extremely well (a Malcolm Ford design) and were impressive to watch diving or snorkelling near them.

The three main types of volute we were collecting were *Amoria canaliculata*, *Cymbiola pulchra* forma *peristicta* and *Amoria maculata*. Their colour and size varied dramatically from reef to reef.

There was a theory amongst the *Volutidae* fanatics that if *Ethalia guamensis* shells were coming up in the dredges we would find *Volutidae*. They postulated the *guamensis* were the food for the *Volutidae*. This seems unlikely as the *guamensis* seems to have the ability to hurl itself up from the sand about 75cm when threatened and then 'swim' away up to 1.4m by extending its body out from the shell and by twirling it thus moving itself in a rapid corkscrew motion.



If this is the case the *Volutida* would be hard pressed to catch them. Ron and myself witnessed this rapid swimming as a dredge slowly passed while we were diving. At first it looked like they were being flung upward as they hit the dredge similar to a lawn mower throwing rocks. Then we noticed their body doing its swimming action, and then we realised the dredge was in soft sand with nothing hard to fire the *guamensis* against. We did not however do any serious investigation.

We reef walked at three reefs and snorkelled at others. There were not many rocks to be turned on the reef walks so we did not get many *Cypraeidae*

Ron had a new underwater video camera, which looked like a Martian, but the shell collecting was so good he did not get time to try it out until the second last day. (Picture below)



All shells collected by any means - dredge, walk, snorkel or dive were placed on the fish-cleaning table. The uncommon specimens including most of the *Volutidae*, some *Conidae* some *Mitridae* and most of the *Murex* were placed together for dividing up at the end of the trip. All other shells were available for any one who wanted them. Any that no one wanted, along with any shells that were immature, were thrown back before they died. We each had a large bucket with lid for storing our booty in diluted methylated spirits prior to cleaning.

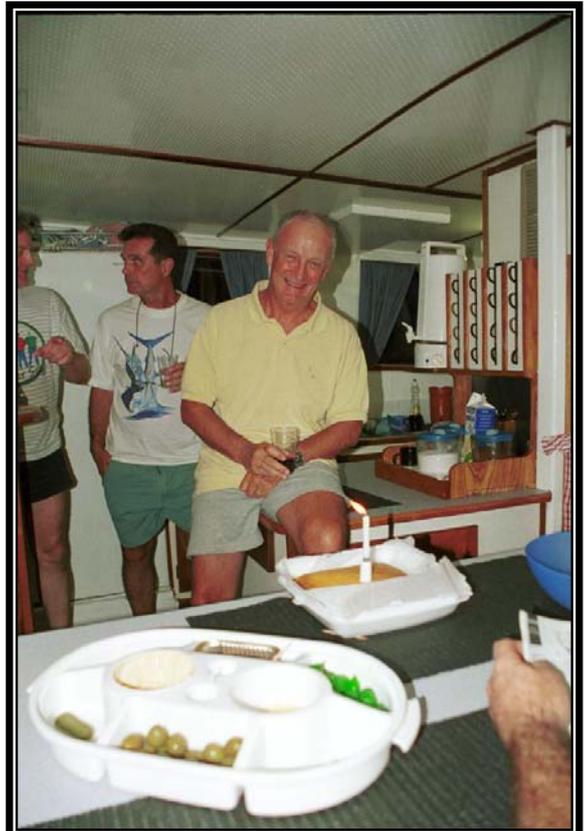


Ray brought hookah gear with him and Adrian became a hookah junkie, doing many dives in the lagoons from the main boat. Each hookah line was 100m long and the lagoons shallower than 20m, so a large area could be covered. Adrian even got to experience how to do an unplanned free ascent when the hookah compressor stopped.



One evening, at the last reef, Chris was fishing off the side of the boat and hooked a shark. As it thrashed about on the surface, one of the two giant Gropo that we had been swimming with and admiring for two days in the lagoon under our boat, surfaced and ate the shark with one bite, also biting off the line.

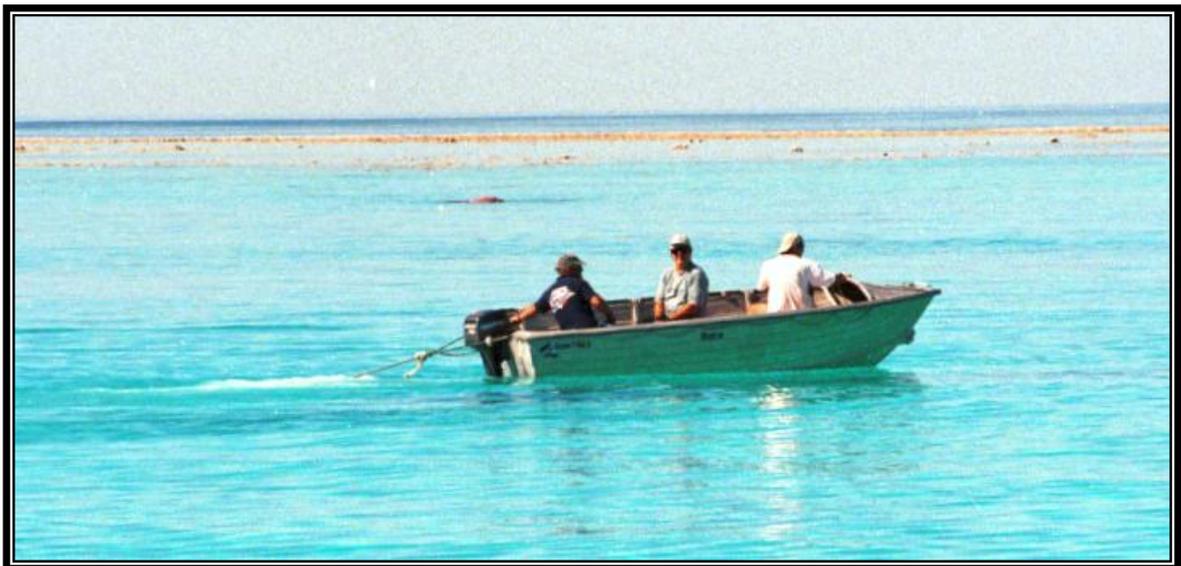
Alain officially commenced his retirement while on the trip and our skipper surprised us with a freshly made cake to celebrate, even though there were allegedly no suitable cake ingredients on board. (Picture right)



I was the most general collector, showing interest in all species. Few others were interested in the less glamorous bivalves, no one else was interested in echinoderms, and there was little interest in small shells – *Nassariinae* and *Columbellidae* etc. As a result I probably ended up with the most shells in total, albeit common species. (Of course more specimens means more work cleaning. Nearly all my specimens have now been cleaned and bagged). There were enough shells found that anyone interested in a species or family could get an adequate number of specimens for themselves. As the days progressed the list of shells that everyone had more than enough of kept increasing and they were banned from being brought back to the boat so they did not have to be thrown back.



Last year a percentage of the uncommon shells was not divided amongst the collectors, but was retained by Doug and sold to cover the incidental additional boat related costs, dive masters fee etc. For shell dealers who relate shells to a dollar value this is not a problem, but to shell collectors it presents as a loss of collected booty. As a result this year it was decided we would put in an additional \$50 each to cover the extra boat costs. That way there was no need for a boat share and all uncommon shells were divided equally.





Back at Doug's house everyone pitched in to clean the group shells. Each species was then divided into 15 equal portions, and given lot numbers. Each of us drew a lot number for one species, and then new lot numbers were drawn for the next species. This was repeated for all uncommon species collected. For species with less than 15 specimens several species were grouped as lots.

Everybody including Doug got exactly the same quantity and value of shells. Fortunately there was adequate numbers of specimens such that nobody had to miss out on varieties they wanted, and very little swapping needed to be done at the end.

Some of the rarer species did not have exact multiples of 15, so volunteers came forward to take other things as

alternatives - Fred got first look in at the *Mitridae* and three other people got the three unusual *Harpidae* they had found, to even the numbers in the other rare lots.

I have three brothers, and as a youngster at meal time all food was divided into exactly equal portions, or there was big trouble. I have never seen a divide up of anything done more fairly or more equally than the divide up of the uncommon shells from this trip.

Doug put in a mammoth effort before, during and after the trip to ensure it went smoothly, and to keep us focussed on successful collecting. We are all very appreciative and are looking forward to next year's trip.

Most people stayed a few days on board in port after the trip to clean their shells before heading off to various parts of the world. At this time we watched another boat being prepared for the Brisbane Shell Club's collecting trip, due to depart the following weekend. Our trip was so good it made us wish we could go again the following week rather than waiting another year, and we hoped that their shelling trip would be as successful as ours.

In the next Sheller I hope to provide some idea of the variety of species found by listing many of them.



NEW SOUTH WALES BRANCH ANNUAL SHELL SHOW

Saturday 28th October 2000

Entry Fee: \$3.00 per entry, exhibitors may enter up to 3 entries per category.

Non Entry Penalty: \$5.00 per person.

CATEGORIES

Display of 'White Coloured' Shells:

10 pieces minimum – any size – colour "white" to dominate external portion of shell.

Display of Cones:

15 Favourite pieces – size above 60mm.

Display of Cowries:

15 Favourites pieces – size above 60mm.

Display of Cowries:

Minimum 15 pieces - size 30 to 50mm.

Display of Cowries:

Minimum 20 pieces – size under 28mm.

Display of Volutes:

Endemic to Australia – size above 60mm – minimum 12 pieces.

Display of Volutes:

Worldwide – minimum 12 pieces – no size restrictions.

Display of Murex:

12 Favourite pieces – any size.

Display of Mitres:

20 pieces minimum.

Display of Harps:

15 pieces minimum.

Display of Marginella:

20 pieces minimum.

JUDGING:

Judges will consider, where applicable:-

*Quality and perfection of specimens

*Correct identification and number in display.

*Quality of display, aesthetic appeal.

*Where specific sizes are nominated specimens must be mature.