

February 2001

# 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.

## Next Meeting:

**24<sup>th</sup> March 2001**  
(normally 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday)

**Ryde Eastwood  
Leagues Club**  
117 Ryedale Rd  
West Ryde, Sydney

**1.30 for 2.00pm**

**Seminar: Jack Hannan  
(NSW Dept. Fisheries)**

## Contributions:

Please send contributions to:  
**Steve Dean**

**166 Narrabeen Park Parade,  
Mona Vale NSW 2103**

Text in electronic form only. Photos, and discs by mail, or preferably by email to [steve@dean.as](mailto:steve@dean.as)

If you cannot get your text onto disc, then **Karen Barnes** may be prepared to type it for you - send material to:  
**1/7-9 Severn St  
Maroubra NSW 2035**

## 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)



*Cypraea vitellus* live at Kurnell, Sydney  
Courtesy Patty Jansen

## Some of the topics inside:

- News and Classifieds
- January Minutes
- Northern Beaches Conservation
- Snorkelling in Jervis Bay
- Favourite spots in Sydney (cover photo)

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 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@pnm.gov.au](mailto:Des@pnm.gov.au)  
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**Members News, &  
 Buy, Swap & Sell:**

Wanted: classifieds and gossip for this  
 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)

**Saving Abalone**

From a Newspaper article:

Due to dwindling populations of Abalone  
 in NSW, 150,000 juvenile farm grown  
 abalone have been released at Eden,  
 and 86,000 at Broughton Island near  
 Port Stephens during November and  
 December 2000.

A number of juvenile Abalone are placed  
 in plastic shelters that are then jammed  
 between rock boulders below the  
 surface.

The shelters protect the Abalone from  
 predators during the day. At night the  
 Abalone leave the shelters.

The article does not say what convinces  
 the Abalone to return to the shelters  
 each morning.

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## Meeting Minutes

27/01/2001.

Meeting opened by P. Jansen at 2:00pm.

**Apologies** :- M. Keats, away revisiting Norfolk Island with Jenny.

R. Moylan, announced the sad passing of Lady Io Myers earlier this week. Io had been ill for some time, though still attended meetings when able and of course her huge effort with the Second National Shell Show Sydney, will not be forgotten. Io will be greatly missed. Our deepest sympathies are extended to Sir Rupert Myers and his family for their loss.

**Field Trip Reports** C. Barnes reported visiting Little Bay with S. Clark and M. Keats on the 10/01/2001. A couple of blue ringed octopus and a number of Nudibranchs were sighted during the day. It is believed Michael and or Stephanie will have more to report next meeting. P. Jansen reported on a trip to Norah Head on the central coast on the 07/01/2001. Patty noted that even after inspecting the rock platform and the boulder field near the lighthouse, that there was little shell material to be found.

S. Dean reported on a trip to Sydney's Northern Beaches where he was able to observe a number of Cypraeidae species including a very dark example of *Cypraea vitellus* Linnaeus, 1758 and a live *Cypraea caurica* Linnaeus, 1758 located in one metre of water beyond the low tide mark.

**New Acquisitions** Ron Moylan advised that he had more *Cypraea cribraria* Linnaeus, 1758 "exmouthensis" form available if anyone was interested.

**Book Reviews:** P. Jansen had the latest available copy of *La Conchiglia* to show the group. An article containing photos by Rudie Kuitert of Ovulidae from Sydney harbour was of interest. The *Haliotidae* can now be purchased in the *Iconography* series, this family was written by internationally recognised author Dan Gieger.

**General Business:** C. Barnes tabled a letter from Chris M<sup>c</sup>Carthy (General Manager RELC) re: use of the rooms and catering. After a short discussion the meeting decided Secretary, C. Barnes, would contact Functions Coordinator, Cheryl Sutton and make

arrangements to have our Treasurer P. Pienaar make payment a year in advance (\$33 per meeting) at the next meeting, assuring Tea/Coffee and Biscuits.

Raffles M. Anderson thanked P. Jansen for her raffle prize donations over the past year.

Meeting closed at 2:38pm.

C. & K. Barnes, Secretary

## Sydney's Northern Beaches Marine Conservation

### Steve Dean

At our meetings we hear a lot about all the shells that can be collected at Sydney's Southern Beaches. Specifically from two locations that are not marine reserves, yet have sheltered rock platforms, protected from the main onslaught of Pacific Ocean waves during the North Easterly and Southerly Winds.

Little Bay has a narrow opening and the Rock platform faces West. Kurnell (see article this issue) is within Botany Bay giving it protection from direct exposure to the Pacific Ocean.

On Sydney's Northern Beaches a very large number of Headlands and rock platforms are marine reserves, leaving limited sites available for collection of shells or any other marine creatures.

All of the rock platforms North of Sydney Harbour, which include West-facing sections, are protected. (Shelly Beach Manly, Long Reef, and the rear of Barrenjoey Headland).

Additionally rock platforms that are partly sheltered are also protected. (Collaroy, North Narrabeen, Mona Vale beach rock pool and Newport). Most of the headlands directly exposed to the Pacific are also protected.

The result is that for the half of Sydney's population that use the Northern Beaches, there are severe limitations as to where they can legitimately collect specimens or harvest food.

Parts of our local population have a culture of harvesting from the sea. (Primarily some Asians and Polynesians) People can be observed almost every day gathering bucket loads of Urchins and Turbinidae. Unfortunately without some easily accessible headlands that are not protected, they tend to choose the most sensitive of the protected headlands due to ease of access and lack of exposure.

I was wondering if it would make any sense to remove protection from some headlands, to provide 'sacrificial' areas on the least sensitive headlands, while policing the sensitive ones even more.

Two weeks ago there were good low tides all week, so I decided to have a look at various headlands to see how much variety of marine life was at the low tide level. I looked at Newport, Avalon and North Narrabeen. For reference I looked at Long Reef and also Little Bay on the Southern Beaches.

One look after rough weather does not constitute any sort of definitive result, however my comments on each location, based on this one visit, follow:

**Avalon.** Directly exposed to the North East, limiting the amount of life under rocks. The marine life, especially the plant material, was quite different to other headlands, thus justifying the protection. Shells were primarily those you would expect on exposed rocky Sydney shores – *Thais orbita*, *Turbo imperialis*, *Turbo Torquatus*, *Cabestana spengleri*, many *Ranella australasia* and a plague of juvenile *Morula marginalba*. I saw one very dead but large *Cypraea erosa*

**Newport.** There is a low-water rock bridge extending 200m from the rock platform to an offshore rocky outcrop/island. The headland points East, but is partly protected by the island.

On the day I was there kelp ripped up by rough weather covered much the area I had intended to look at.

There was much less life under the rocks at low water than I was expecting. At other times I have been there the tides were not as low and there is a good variety of life further up on the platform.

The southern part of the platform has a more dense population of urchins and *Turbo imperialis* than Long Reef does. (This probably means fewer poachers venture this far North, or they have just

not discovered the area). The off shore Island may allow species not common at other headlands so continued protection is essential.

**North Narrabeen.** My family swims at the rock pool (rock pools are concrete 50 m swimming pools constructed on the platform that are partly filled and emptied by waves, partly by pumps), and when I wander the rock platform I have wondered what is under the flat rocks South of the rock pool that are normally still under water and waves at low tide.

I had last looked under these rocks as a child 35 years ago, and there was plenty of life then. I therefore chose Narrabeen on one of the lowest tides.

To my disappointment there was nothing at all under the rocks other than washed in sand and beach wash shell grit. There were a few urchins and a small number of chitons under some rocks.

The local council regularly re-opens the entrance to Narrabeen lagoon and the tidal rush of water in and out of the entrance runs along this side of the rock platform and seems to have taken its toll.

The higher levels of the platform have none of the urchins or Turbinidae prevalent on the other platforms. Higher up the intertidal area supports a lot of plant material and large Octopi as well as *Thais orbita* and *Cabestana spengleri*.

Either the exposed location, facing East, or its exposure to regular holidaymakers from the adjoining caravan park takes its toll and there is little obviously worth protecting. Any species that would flourish on this headland would also be on some equivalent part of Long Reef headland.

This headland more than any other cries out to be NOT protected. The hundreds of children that forage for dead shells and other souvenirs in the pools of the flat rock area between the rock pool and the beach, risk heavy fines. (The sign says \$5000) The beach-wash style material they collect serves to kindle their interest and understanding of marine life, and should be encouraged.

As a side note in one area of the main rock pool there are a large number of *Ostrea sp.* And in the large sandy warm watered children's pool, 50 or so large *Pinctada sp* some attached some loose in the sand.

**Long Reef (Northern End)** I took my son's cub scout group on an outing there on the last of the low tides, and Phil Coleman acted as our guide.

The children and leaders were amazed at the variety of creatures. We thought they would last less than one hour – they lasted two. To ensure lack of boredom they invented a new sport – sea urchin races. Phil explained that after an urchin race each urchin needed to be returned close to where it had been found, as habitats can be quite specific.

They also played with a large octopus until it spurted ink completely covering one kids arm. We also found a blue ringed octopus for them to look at.

The variety and quantity of creatures at Long Reef clearly justifies its protection.

The good news is that from 14<sup>th</sup> Jan 2001 NSW Fisheries have empowered the 12 Warringa Council Rangers with powers similar to their own staff. (The local police are also very protective of the platform and will act quickly if called)

The only negative is that the sign advising Long Reef platform is protected does not stand out and seems to be genuinely missed by many that are heading out onto the reef for a look around. (The sign at North Narrabeen, while smaller, is well positioned and is seen by everyone going there)

**Little Bay** (South of Sydney Harbour) The mid-intertidal area exhibits similar large quantities and varieties of marine life as Long Reef. (Of course over a very small area compared to Long Reef) On the western sheltered side I therefore expected the extreme low tide to show the variety of feather stars *Cypraea* and other creatures as at Long Reef. However at little bay these deeper rocks become rounded boulders that are not closely packed and so have little growth where the water surges through.

It was a pleasure to be able to collect shells after four days of just looking.

Also there were more shells to be seen at little bay than at any of the Northern beaches locations, they are in a small area, most rocks are easy to turn, and the water is sheltered from the waves. In all, a very pleasurable spot to collect shells.

At little Bay my father Keith was also collecting, and Chris Barnes arrived and showed us his favourite and best spots for finding various species.

Conclusions re Northern Beaches:

- Removing the protection from one or two easily accessible headland rock platforms could well better protect the others, thus improving overall protection for Sydney's Northern Beaches marine environment.
- The best headlands to 'unprotect' are not necessarily the ones that would be expected.
- A thorough analysis of what creatures are living only on limited headlands, and what factors are denuding certain headlands, would need to be factored in before deciding which headlands should and should not be protected.
- Based on my observations the headlands that should have protection removed are unlikely to be ones that would add more variety of shells to the ones that can currently be found on existing unprotected headlands. We Northern Sydney shell collectors will most likely remain limited in available species, collect dead beach shells or travel to the Southern parts of Sydney, where without protection species are flourishing.

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All those who believe in telekinesis, raise my hand.

I almost had a psychic girlfriend but she left me before we met.

OK, so what's the speed of dark?

Depression is merely anger without enthusiasm.

When everything is coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.

Everyone has a photographic memory. Some just don't have film.

Many people quit looking for work when they find a job.

24 hours in a day ... 24 beers in a case.....coincidence?

When I'm not in my right mind, my left mind gets pretty crowded.

What happens if you get scared half to death twice?

# Some Snorkelling Observations At Boat Harbour Jervis Bay

By John Franklin

After months of planning our vacation and in particular some snorkelling at Jervis Bay, finally the day for the adventure arrived.

On the morning of the 24<sup>th</sup> January 2001 we arose early and made our way to the Huskisson wharf, located directly opposite Myola and the ocean entrance to the Currumbene Creek.

Standing on the wharf waiting for the boat to take us to Boat Harbour, we could not help noticing the surroundings, which revealed a pervading sense of beauty. We had been promised a very hot day and after stepping on board, the morning temperature was already increasing at a rapid rate as the boat departed Huskisson for its destination across Jervis Bay. Whilst travelling at high speed the trip at times was rather bumpy. Finally, however, the speed of the engine decreased as we passed Longnose Point and glided into Boat Harbour, which is located west of Point Perpendicular and almost directly opposite Bowen Island. Boat Harbour is a small horseshoe shaped bay being lined on both sides by stratified beds of sandstones, conglomerate and siltstone. At the end of the bay is a very coarse sandy beach consisting of washed up stone pebbles in the main.

The boat came to anchor in deep water and as we slipped fully equipped into the water, anticipation gave way to realisation as the cold water consumed our bodies. Unfortunately the deep water provided little visibility and therefore we were compelled to limit our observations to depths between one and two metres of water.

Following an initial overview we eventually decided to limit our snorkelling activities to the eastern side of the bay, with the tide running out. In their natural habitat we observed the following live gastropods:-

## Generally:

Patellidae	<i>Patella peronii</i> Blainville 1825
Patellidae	<i>Cellana tramoserica</i> Holten 1802
Patellidae	<i>Patella chapmani</i> Tenison-Woods 1872
Siphonariidae	<i>Siphonaria denticulata</i> Quoy & Gaimard 1853
Siphonariidae	<i>Siphonia funiculata</i> Reeve 1856
Neritidae	<i>Nerita altramantosa</i> Reeve 1855
Trochidae	<i>Austrocochlea constricta</i> Lamarck 1822
Trochidae	<i>Austrocochlea concamerata</i> Wood 1828
Ranellidae	<i>Cabestana spengleri</i> Perry 1811
Ranellidae	<i>Charonia lampas rubecunda</i> Perry 1811
Ranellidae	<i>Cymatium(monoplex) parthenopeum parthenopeum</i> Von Salis 1793
Turbinidae	<i>Subninelia undulata</i> Lightfoot 1786

## Some Specific Comments:

### Turbinidae *Astraliium tentoriiforme* Jonas 1845

This specimen was observed on both rock ledges and on the floor of the substratum.

### Turbinidae *Ninella torquata* Gmelin 1791

In this instance the preceding comments apply, however it was interesting to note that this rather large shell was grouped in clusters in some instances. Furthermore the shell was noted to be in abundance.

### Muricidae *Morula marginalba* Blainville 1832

At about a metre under the surface of the water thos shell was prominent.

### Muricidae *Dicathais orbita* Gmelin 1791

Only one specimen was observed located in a deep gutter about one metre below the surface of the water.

## Conclusions:

- The sunlight passing through the shallow water projected towards the sandy/rock bottom leaves both a feeling of reward and satisfaction.
- Most of the abovementioned specimens were in abundance.
- Whilst all our observations were conducted over a three-hour period up until lunchtime, it can be said that, given the rather isolated and remote area one would expect to have located many more live specimens.
- Jervis Bay has been said to lie in an overlap between two climactic zones. Animals and plants occurring to the north and south also occur in Jervis Bay. However, from our observations we formed the view that not one gastropod located could be said to exclusively come from the north or the south.
- A marine area of Jervis Bay located between Captains Point (HMAS Creswell) to the northern tip of Bowen Island forms part of the Booderee National Park. Marine rock platforms are protected. In a recent brochure issued by the Booderee National Park it states that there are more than 206 species of birds, 27 species of land mammals, 15 frog species, 23 species of reptiles and 650 species of land plants in the Park. One can only speculate on the content of the marine life in the area.

## Another favourite shelling spot in Sydney

**Patty Jansen**

If you have a family, your requirements for shelling spots can change quite considerably. Spots you used to visit often can suddenly become too far away, too dangerous or too boring for non-shelling family members. That is why we are always on the look for spots that offer both rocks and shell banks for collecting and sand for making sandcastles (and rolling in until the only way to clean them is with a high-pressure hose). Ideally, there must also be some shade, preferably from which the beach can be overlooked.

As far as I know, there is only one beach in Sydney that meets all these requirements hands down. But please tell me if you know any others, because it is a long drive from my house to Kurnell.

The sleepy suburb of Kurnell is the only part of Sydney I know of that has remained virtually unchanged since we left Sydney in 1991. I suppose the long travelling time to almost anywhere, the proximity of the oil refinery and incessant aircraft noise have contributed to this.

Kurnell is a beach collector's heaven. There are always plenty of shells on the beach, usually many in good condition, and the variety of species is incredible. I am not going to list what you can find there, because the list would be too long. It would be easier to list which local shells you can't find, and that list would be really short.

Up until recently I had never seen any of the underwater environment at Kurnell. Although we used to SCUBA dive in the early 90's, we never got around to diving at Kurnell. So during these past school holidays we had a few snorkelling trips there and I got to look at the underwater environment for the first time. The rock plateau continues under water, to end in a sandy bed. There are many rock ledges, gullies and other hiding places. There are plenty of different species of fish and also shells if you look for them.

On one of those occasions, I found a live *Cypraea vitellus* (front cover picture), which I took to a shallow pool to photograph. On this particular day, there were also many sea hares (*Aplysia* spp.) around. I tried to pick up a really big one. These things are soft and very gooey, and you can feel their small internal shell. The foot of this animal has very strong adhering powers, so in the end I had to pull the seaweed it was crawling on off the rock. After I got it to a shallow pool, the animal refused to pose for the camera, and my hands were feeling funny and had a strange musky smell. I can only presume this is a defence mechanism against being eaten.

The rock platform revealed two mating squid, an octopus eating a turbo and a large *Charonia lampas*. It was also a most interesting place to watch a variety of fish. As I am not a fish specialist, I didn't know what they were, only that there were many different species.

Snorkelling with a wetsuit without weights doesn't allow you to dive down to look at things close-up, so I stayed in the shallow areas, where more than enough was to be seen to keep me occupied. I did, though, find a dive weight. Now for the belt and the other six weights...

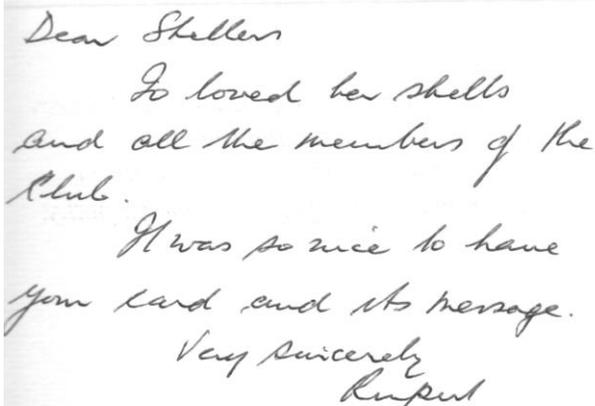
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## The sad passing of Lady Io Meyers

Lady Io Meyers passed away last month after battling cancer for two years.

Ron Moylan sent a card on behalf of the club. The 'With Sincere Thanks' card from Sir Rupert Meyers is copied below:

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Dear Shellers  
 I loved her shells  
 and all the members of the  
 Club.  
 It was so nice to have  
 your card and its message.  
 Very sincerely  
 Rupert

Rupert, Philippa, Gillian, Michele and Stuart,  
 and their families,  
 wish to express their appreciation for your  
 kind thoughts and expressions of sympathy.

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