

SYDNEY SHELLER

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

Next Meetings:

26th Feb 2011 Ron Moylan
Coral Sea

26th March Ron Moylan
Paris and other shows

30th April(5th Sat)
Ron Moylan
Cymbiola Rutila

28th May Ashley Miskelly
Antarctic Research

(1.30pm for 2pm – 4pm)
(normally 4th Saturday, except for clashes with long weekends, and shell events – call to check)

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

View old shell newsletters on line
www.sydneyshellclub.net

Submit articles or ads:

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Text by disk or email only. Photos, and disks by mail, or preferably by email to steve@dean.as

Club Executive:

Office bearers:

President: Steve Dean
Vice Pres: Maureen Anderson
Treasurer: Peter Pienaar
Secretary: Kim Bishop
Raffles: Maureen Anderson
Shell Editor: Steve Dean
Librarian: Steve Dean
Annual Shell Show Mgr: Steve Dean
Special Projects Mgr: Vacant
MSA Delegate: Chris Barnes

Shell Club of Sydney Mission Statement:

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



Some of the topics inside:

➤ Annual Shell Show (cover photo)

➤ Shells of Darwin and NT

➤ Minutes

➤

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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

desbee@optushome.com.au

26 Malga Ave, Roseville Chase NSW 2069



A nice *Spondylus linguaphiles* from Maureen's Collection



Seashells from the Darwin Area

John Oakman

Introduction

This article has been written to give members of the Sydney Shell Club an indication of some of the gastropods that can be found in the Darwin region, especially species from the more popular families. I have catalogued over 1500 species of molluscs from the Northern Territory however this article mentions about 50 species hence it is only meant as a sampler of the myriad of shells from the Top End. I am also working on a project to publish a book on the shells of the Darwin region (2010) with a follow up edition of shells in the NT (2012) and as such would be very interested in hearing from anyone who may have collected in the NT, especially in areas outside of Darwin.

The Darwin region (Gunn Point to Charles Point) contains a wide variety of habitats including: coral reefs; mangrove forests; mud and sand flats; rocky reefs and platforms; grassy seabeds; creek and river outlets. "The Wet" heralds the start of the cyclone season which often means turbulent seas and many shells, live and dead, being washed up onto the littoral zone. In "The Dry", although not providing as many shells, great finds can still be made especially amongst the micro species. Tides which can exceed 8 metres also assist in making the Darwin environs so rich in molluscs. There are also many isolated beaches in the NT which means that having a beach "all to oneself" is still quite a common occurrence.

To avoid any confusion with the scientific names used in this article I have used Barry Wilson's 'Australian Marine Shells Vol 1 & 2' (Odyssey, 1993) for the identification of most of the species I have mentioned. One particularly interesting record in Barry Wilson's text is *Conus grangeri* Pl. 46, fig. 11. This is very similar to a number of juvenile and granulose specimens of what I have identified as *Conus monachus*. It would be interesting to make a comparison between these and the specimen of *C. grangeri* in the Australian Museum collection.

Shells of Interest

Volutoconus bednalli and *Pterynotus bednalli* are probably the most well-known shells from this area and they are certainly keenly sort. *Volutoconus bednalli* can occasionally be obtained from trawlers and beached specimens are uncommonly found after storms. Specimens from this area appear to be very consistent in their pattern and shape (slightly nodulose). In contrast, *Pterynotus bednalli* is quite commonly found once its habitat has been discovered in the littoral and sub-littoral zone. It is variable in colour – white, white/brown, orange, orange/brown, pink and chocolate brown arguably being the rarest in this area. There are also dwarf populations in the region. Unfortunately some of the best localities for this species have been recently destroyed, such as a once extensive coral reef at East Arm now completely devastated by the Darwin Port development.



Other Volutidae include: *Cymbiola sophia*, *Amoria damoni keatsiana*, *Amoria turneri*, *Cymbiola flavicans*, *Melo amphora* and *Melo umbilicatus*



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Other Muricidae include: *Murex coppingeri*, *Murex brevispina macgillivrayi*, *Pterynotus acanthopterus*, *Chicoreus cornucervi*, *Chicoreus cervicornus*, *Chicoreus capucinus*, *Haustellum multiplicatus* and *Homalocantha secunda*



Live specimens of *Cymbiola flavicans* have only started to reappear in the Darwin region in the last couple of years. Certainly in the preceding 20 years only dead shells were encountered. Unfortunately the disappearance of this species appears not to have been a natural phenomenon. I met a collector in 1984 who showed me literally thousands of *Cymbiola flavicans* that he had collected live in the Gunn Point area. In addition to this he also showed me tray after tray of orange *Pterynotus bednalli* – needless to say such extensive populations do not exist today. Hopefully such environmental pillaging no longer occurs?, although given the number of specimens of certain species such as WA *Zoila* offered by some dealers and collected by some divers I suspect that this is not the case.

I have found *Oliva lignaria* in many different locations throughout the NT and the Indo-Pacific and it is very common and extremely variable. Interestingly in Darwin harbour it is uncommon and very consistent in colour and pattern, with the exception of a rare, small, orange variety (Plate 3). Other Olividae include: *Oliva caldania*, *Oliva panniculata*, *Ancillista muscae*, *Ancillista cingulata* and *Ancillista ngompitchae*.





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According to some “old timer” collectors, in the 1960’s and early 70’s there were live populations of **Conus coronatus** in the Darwin area, however today it cannot be found (I have only one very poor specimen from Casuarina Beach). It appears that Cyclone Tracy may have been the culprit in this instance. There are only three species of Conidae which are commonly found in the Darwin area – **Conus monachus/achatinus**, **Conus austroviola** and **Conus trigonis** – other cones are only rarely encountered (e.g. **Conus textile**, **Conus tessellatus**, **Conus suturatus**) which are common elsewhere in the NT suggesting that there are no breeding populations of these species in the area. **Conus cf adami** is also occasionally collected. A specimen of **Conus marmoreus** was collected shortly after Cyclone Tracy and to my knowledge it is the only report of this species from the region.



Scabricola barrywilsoni is another local shell that is very popular with collectors. Beached specimens are reasonably common and the occasional beached gem specimen can be found. Live specimens are very rare. Other Mitridae include: **Mitra rosacea**, **Mitra variabilis**, **Mitra fraga**, **Cancilla aegra**, **Neocancilla circula**, **Vexillum rugosum**, **Vexillum vulpeculum**, **Vexillum cf plicarium** plus many smaller species.





I almost completed this article without mentioning Cypraeidae, which are certainly well represented. Species include: *Cypraea caurica*, *miliaris*, *cylindrica*, *errones*, *erosa*, *gracilis*, *pyriformis*, *quadrimaculata*, *subviridis*, *brevidentata*, *saualae*, *cribraria*, *helvola* and *Cypraea eglantina* (common throughout the NT but rare in Darwin harbour)



Bivalves are often less popular with collectors however there is such a wealth of material in this region that I didn't want to completely ignore them in this text. On a number of occasions I have visited the remains of recently used Aboriginal shell middens to discover many wonderful bivalves with a great variety of colours and patterns. It is certainly an easy way to collect many shells and the removal of the animal has already been done for you.

One of the great things about shell collecting is that just when you think you have collected all the species from a particular area a new find comes along. Only in the past couple of weeks I collected my first Darwin harbour specimen of *Xenophora solarioides*.

I am always delighted to receive and read copies of 'The Sydney Sheller' and I thought it was about time that I shared some of the knowledge I have gained from collecting in the NT since 1984 (having lived in Sydney until then and starting my interest in conchology as a junior member of the Sydney Shell Club in the late 60's and 70's). If you are ever up this way please do not hesitate to contact me – I am always eager to have a reason to go collecting, share my knowledge or show my collection.

Report on October Sydney Annual Show – October 2010

Steve Dean
Show Convenor

Our thirtieth show had more exhibits and more attendees than we have had for many years. All of the exhibits were amazing in their quality of shells!! We had a great show.

We were in the largest meeting room at Ryde Eastwood, which has the advantage of natural light. With a staggering 37 exhibits, in 16 different categories, and many attendees, visitors, and members we have not seen for a long time. (Over 25) we needed this large room. This show had 40% more categories than we normally have.

Ron, Steve and Angus had shells to sell and swap.



Des gave a very interesting talk about the history of scientific naming of animals and plants and Linnaeus' home, although as Des said it was actually a talk about his daughter's wedding. I will leave you guessing – so you will have to ask someone who was there for an explanation of how the two topics came together.

The COA winner was an educational exhibit titled, "Why collect Strombidae? / Why collect land snails?"

Its purpose was to try to encourage family specific collectors to broaden their focus.

The concept of moving exhibits where there was only one competitor to the general category for judging worked well. In the past members who prepared exhibits only to find they were the only competitor did not get their exhibits judged. This process ensured all exhibits were judged and graded against others, justifying all the work put in by members.

Our two new photo categories only had two exhibitors, but all the photos were spectacular. We now have a year to fine tune the photo categories and encourage people not currently associated with our club to exhibit in 2011

Thanks to all those who contributed exhibits or helped on the day to make this show the great success that it was.

Show results were as follows:

Thirtieth NSW Annual Shell Show, October 2010 Results:

No.	Category	First	Second	Third
1.	Shell of Show	Maureen Anderson	A Hawke/K Bishop (tied second)	
2.	Strombidae under 250mm	Steve Dean	-	-
3.	Muricidae and related families	Ron Moylan	-	-
4.	Conidae under 60mm	Ron Moylan	Peter Pienaar	Peter Pienaar
5.	Cypridae over 100 & under 50mm	Ron Moylan	Chris Barnes	-
6.	Harps and Morum	Kim Bishop	-	-
7.	Shells from one area (50km radius)	Ron Moylan	Chris Barnes	Talia Pienaar
8.	Shells one area (50km radius) Junior	Talia Pienaar	-	-
9.	Volutidae over 100mm	Ron Moylan	Trevor Appleton	Trevor Appleton
10.	Variation of one Species or one family	Kim Bishop	-	-
11.	Land snails	Maureen Anderson	Steve Dean	-
12.	Favourite Shells	Kim Bishop	Jack Hannan	-
13.	General	Ron Moylan	Kim Bishop	Trevor Appleton
14.	Photo of live shells with animal	Jack Hannan	Chris Barnes	-
15.	Interesting photos of marine creatures	Jack Hannan	Jack Hannan	Chris Barnes
16.	Conchologists of America Award	Steve Dean	-	-





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Shells of the Show



Sections of the winning COA educational exhibit, by Steve Dean:
"Why collect Strombidae? / Why collect land snails?"



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Parts of the new photography category





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Some of the exhibits – also see front cover



Meeting Minutes – 28th August 2010

The President, Steve Dean, opened the meeting at 2.30pm.

Attendance Steve Dean, Maureen Anderson, Kim Bishop and Keith Dean.

Apologies were received from Bob Snedic, Jack Hannan, Peter Pienaar and Ron Moylan.

Correspondence Kim Bishop tabled a letter dated 24 June 2010 from Ryde-Eastwood Leagues Club enclosing a cheque for \$75 covering room hire refund for 22 May 2010 meeting. Steve Dean reported on an email received from a shell collector from Chatswood, Steve to reply to his enquiry.

Finance Bank account balance currently unchanged from last month.

Field Trips Kim Bishop reported on a recent visit to the home of Maureen and Noel Anderson at Mossie Point to view Maureen's fabulous shell collection.

General Business Following on from last month's meeting further discussion took place on the categories to apply for our Annual Shell Show in October 2010. The list to be finalised at our next monthly meeting.

Cake Roster September - Ron Moylan, October (Shell Show) everybody and November- Jack Hannan.

Raffle First Prize: Kim Bishop.

The meeting closed at 3.35pm.

Presentation Steve Dean provided a very informative talk on Limpets supported by a large number of specimens, many of which were self-collected in UK, South Africa and Chile.

Kim Bishop, Secretary

Meeting Minutes – 25th September 2010

The President, Steve Dean, opened the meeting at 2.13pm.

Attendance Steve Dean, Maureen Anderson, Peter Pienaar, Ron Moylan, Chris Barnes, Ashley Miskelly, Steve Jones and Kim Bishop.

Visitors Glenis Hill.

Apologies were received from Jack Hannan and Bob Snedic.

Correspondence Steve Dean tabled copies of letters dated 16 September 2010 to Mr Adrian Toovey, Manager Aquatic Protected Areas, Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water being The Sydney Shell Club's submission on Draft Zoning Plan Solitary Islands Marine Park and Jervis Bay Marine Park.

An email was received from Associazione Malacologica Internazionale, Rome, Italy dated 31 July, 2010 wanting to establish an exchange of publications. After discussion it was agreed not to respond.

Steve also advised that he had received a few email enquiries from people wanting to swap shells.

Finance

Bank account balance was reported by Treasurer, Peter Pienaar.

Library Steve Dean is preparing a current list of library books and has identified a number of duplicate books and magazines. Duplicate books were sold at today's meeting and duplicate magazines made available to anyone wanting them.

Coming Events The thirtieth NSW Shell Show to be held 23rd October 2010.

General Business Ashley Miskelly spoke about his display of *Acrosterigma reeveanum* taken in shallow water at Shoal Bay NSW and unusual mussel shells taken from Richmond River NSW.

Steve Dean raised the issue regarding MSA membership and its requirements. This matter to be further investigated.



A brief discussion on categories for next month's Shell Show was discussed. Steve Dean to send an email to members seeking their response to proposed categories. Kim Bishop to contact Ryde-Eastwood Leagues Club regarding provision of a suitable room for next month's Shell Show.

Raffle First Prize: Chris Barnes Second Prize: Ashley Miskelly

The meeting closed at 3.34pm.

Presentation Ron Moylan gave a very interesting account of his recent trip to New Caledonia, Coral Sea and Solomon Islands and displayed a very nice collection of rare and unusual shells.

Kim Bishop, Secretary

Meeting Minutes - 27 November 2010

The President, Steve Dean, opened the meeting at 2.23pm.

Attendance Steve Dean, Maureen Anderson, Peter Pienaar, Ron Moylan, Jack Hannan, Debra Hannan, Bob Snedic, Steve Jones and Kim Bishop.

Visitors Teddy Aqung.

Apologies were received from Keith Dean.

Correspondence Kim Bishop tabled a letter dated 5 November 2010 from Ryde-Eastwood Leagues Club enclosing a cheque for \$550 being their donation to offset room hire for June to October 2010. Steve Dean tabled a membership renewal notice from Conchologists of America, Inc which has been handed to Peter Pienaar for payment.

Finance Bank account balance was reported by Treasurer, Peter Pienaar. (This including cheque for \$550 from Ryde-Eastwood Leagues Club)

Library Steve Dean advised that a new Iconography titled Volume XVI: The Family Volutidae covering the endemic Far East Asia Fulgorariinae family is now available. It was decided that this would not be purchased for the Library.

Field Trips Ron Moylan spoke about his recent trip to the Coral Sea.

Acquisitions Ron Moylan had on display a number of shells he had found on his recent trip. Steve Dean showed a number of Volutidae *Provocator mirabilis* trawled from deep water off New Zealand recently and a number of large *Janthina janthina* self-collected from the northern beaches of Sydney last month.

General Business Kim Bishop advised that due to work commitments he would not be able to attend meetings until May 2011. Volunteers are being sought to complete the minutes of the meetings until he returns. Steve Dean advised that the Marine Parks shell collecting permit had expired. After a discussion it was agreed that Jack Hannan would assist with the submission of a return and renewal of the permit would not be required at this stage. A discussion on the October Shell Show categories indicated that the categories worked well and would likely continue unchanged next year. Discussion followed on the prospects of a future National Shell Show being held in Sydney and it was indicated that despite the costs the Ryde-Eastwood Leagues Club would be the most appropriate venue in view of its facilities, central location and access to accommodation. A show of hands indicated strong support for another National Shell Show in Sydney. Further discussion to be held.

After a discussion it was agreed that the following field trips would take place to take advantage of extreme low tides:

23 January 2011 Callala Bay. (Combined monthly meeting and field trip.)

20 February 2011 Little Bay and Long Bay.

19 March 2011 Long Reef.

A number of members are interested in collecting Land Snails and Steve will investigate details for a trip in winter 2011.

As no meeting will take place at Ryde Eastwood in December 2011 and the January 2011 monthly meeting and field trip will take place at the Callala Bay field trip, Kim to contact the Ryde-Eastwood Leagues Club to cancel the December 2010 and January 2011 room bookings.

Ron Moylan has agreed to provide a talk on his trips to the Coral Sea at the meeting in February, 2011.

Raffle First Prize: Bob Snedic, Second Prize: Peter Pienaar and Third Prize: Bob Snedic.

The meeting closed at 4.15pm.

Kim Bishop, Secretary
