By WES THORSSON

Cypraea gaskoini Reeve always has been one of my favorite cowries — probably because I found so few during my first years of diving in Hawaii. In my opinion, it is our most attractive endemic Cypraea, and that includes our more famous C. tessellata Swainson, the jewel-like C. mauienensis Burgess, and diminutive C. semiplota Mighels.

When Mrs. Beatrice Burch gave a short presentation at a recent Hawaiian Malacological Society meeting on John Samuel Gaskoin, for whom the lovely little Hawaiian shell was named, she asked me to bring some typical C. gaskoini for display. In making a selection, I came upon one of my older lists of the distribution of C. gaskoini sizes which is reproduced here in graphic form. This, in turn, led me to summarize what I know about the species and its habitat.

First, a word on range. In his Living Cowries (1970), Burgess didn’t come flat out and say C. gaskoini is limited to the Hawaiian Chain, only that it is found rarely outside Hawaii. He noted a specimen from Fiji, which was given the name C. fisheri by Vayssiere, as possibly being conspecific. But E. A. Kay’s Hawaiian Marine Shells (1979) says unequivocally that the species is endemic to the Hawaiian Islands. I believe I am safe in saying that most experts today consider C. gaskoini to be exclusively Hawaiian.

The favored habitat on Oahu (Honolulu) seems to be niches in cliffs 40 to 70 feet deep, although they are also found in deeper and shallower water. Corals often grow on these little ledges or dead coral falls there. When you find red alga on top the coral your chances of getting live gaskoini are enhanced. The shells are found under the coral — whether live or dead — in a white, spaghetti-like algal mass, usually back in a corner of the niche. Normally you won’t find red sponge under the coral. The cowry animal is brilliant red, standing out sharply against the background.

As with many other Cypraea, two gaskoini are frequently found together. Sometimes (although I have noted no specific season) the larger of the two is laying or brooding eggs. This has led me inevitably to the conclusion that the larger is female. As my graph demonstrates, gaskoini I have found range in length from 8 to 24mm. From memory, I felt that specimens fell into two size groups, one large and the other small. The graph’s double-humped curve tends to confirm this. The smaller shells are much more common. The two groups overlap at 16-18mm.

Thinking about it, I also was pretty sure that the larger shells had more spots on the sides than the smaller ones did. To prove this, I plotted the number of spots vs. size. Now, spots do not come in neatly arranged rows, so I was forced to decide somewhat arbitrarily on a number for each shell. When I plotted the results, I found no correlation at all between the number of spots and size of the shell. Another bit of intuition shot down!

You will notice, however, that the plot of rows vs. size falls in a double-humped distribution curve that closely follows the form of the curve for distribution vs. size.

Being a lumper, I do not think that size differences alone merit species or subspecies designation. From the data, however, you could believe that some genetic factor is at work, putting a shell into either the ‘large’ or the ‘small’. In your collection, you could fairly positively call a gaskoini “large” if it is over 18mm and “small” if it is under 18mm.

(Cont’d on Page 6)

WHO’S THIS MAN

By BEATRICE BURCH

The early conchologist John Samuel Gaskoin (1790-1858) is relatively little known among today’s malacologists, whether professional or amateur. In Hawaii, he is recognized primarily as the man for whom a particularly attractive cowry is named, but I’m sure none of us would know John Gaskoin if we met him out on the reef!

I am writing this article with a certain self-assurance because I recently read an interesting study of his life in The Archives of Natural History, a delightfully informative periodical of which I previously was ignorant.

The journal is published by the Society for the Bibliography of Natural History, *which was set up in 1936 by the British Museum. Its writers deal not only with zoologists, but with botanists as well. Articles include photos and even the signatures of their subjects.*

Gaskoin was born in Bagshot, Surrey, England about 29 Sept. 1790. He went to a private school until he was 16, when he became a medical student in several London hospitals, including St. Bartholomew’s. While not medically “qualified,” he was able to establish a medical practice in London before 1815, after studying for two more years in Paris. In 1823 Gaskoin was appointed surgeon-in-ordinary to King George IV, and he was reappointed in 1830 to King William IV. Concurrently, he was retained as surgeon for several institutions.

During this period, Gaskoin became a member of several medical societies. He was elected as a fellow of the Royal Society of Medicine.

His biography is silent on how John Gaskoin became interested in conchology. His interest in...
REEFCOMBING

The Hawaiian Malacological Society this month is sending out membership renewal notices to its approximately 1,500 members throughout the world. It may seem early, considering that the membership year runs through December, but there is logic to the timing. HSN takes two months or more to reach some members, whose responses may be as slow in reaching Honolulu as they barely have time to reply before the January issue goes into the mail.

More important, probably, is the Society’s need for an early response. Our one-girl part-time office staff — even when backed by volunteer assistants — cannot cope with 1,000 renewal checks arriving in the final weeks of the year. Something like that happened a few years back, and it took the office until about April to straighten the mess! Literally hundreds of letters were stacked in corners waiting to be processed. We don’t want that to happen again.

There is another factor, too. It’s called cash flow. About 75 per cent of the Society’s income is from membership dues, characteristically peaking in November-December-January. At that time the Treasurer has to match our cash needs for the coming year with our current income. If he guesses correctly, we have enough cash (as opposed to our reserve funds) to carry us through. If he doesn’t — or if our needs change during the year, as happened in 1982 — there may be a crunch.

“A speedy response on renewals will save the Society considerable money that we otherwise will have to pay in penalties to withdraw cash from our time deposits,” Treasurer Wes Thorsson told the HMS Board of Directors. “It is money we can ill afford to lose.”

So please send in your renewals as quickly as possible.

* * *

Speaking of memberships, you will note that the basic dues went up $1 for 1983. In addition, the postage charges were adjusted to reflect the substantial increase imposed last year by the U.S. Postal Service. Overseas members who receive Hawaiian Shell News by air mail are hit hardest — doubly so to the extent of their subscriptions rate.

With these adjustments we expect that HSN publishing costs can again be brought into line with our income.

This year’s bargain, by the way, is HSN’s Per- sentation of Booklets. As it has been from the beginning.

bigger one, asked HSN.

The answer, in a word, is yes. The New Cale- donia shell periodical Rossmittana reports a L. lam- bis collected in the lagoon near Nourmea measuring 239mm.

Any more entries in this contest?

* * *

Correspondents of E. S. Nyman, of Groningen, Holland, might make a note of his new address. It is Holmsteerd 5, 9737 LS Groningen.

Fred E. B. Johnson

A note from his wife, Beatrice Johnson, tells of the death in June of Fred E. B. Johnson of Hunstanton, Norfolk, England. He had been a member of the Society since 1979 and, as Mrs. Johnson noted, “always read Hawaiian Shell News with great en- joyment. His shell collection meant a great deal to him.”

The HMS has expressed its sympathy and con- dolenes to the Johnson family.

Off-Color Publication

Some members of HMS may deserve an apology for the appearances of their copies of HSN last month. Color reproduction — particularly on page one — was erratic and disappointing. The printer attributes the problem to a new ink which the pressmen had trouble controlling.

Everyone is sorry about the results which didn’t become apparent until the issue was in the mail.

The Index Is Coming!

The interim last word on the HSN Five Year Index is that it will be ready for distribution about 15 November. Index Editor Ray McKinsey says it will run about 30 pages with something over 6,000 entries and cover the years 1976 through 1981.

“Thanks to the response from our advertisers, the Index can be distributed for $2 plus postage,” said McKinsey. “Museums, universities and scientific libraries will get copies without charge.”

There will be details of the publication, and an order form, in the November HSN.

* * *

Malacological Review

A shift in editorial responsibilities for the Malacological Review — long published at the Museum of Zoology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, with John B. Burch as editor — has been announced. Dr. Shi-Kuei Wu of the University of Colorado Museum in Boulder, has taken over as managing editor, with John B. Burch and J. White-Rudolph as editors. P. H. Rudolph is listed as associate editor.

Editorial offices have been transferred to Boulder and the business operations to Niwot, Colorado.

WELCOME TO HAWAII!!

HMS members visiting Hawaii are invited to con- tact the Society while in Honolulu. Please keep in mind, however, that the Society office is open irregularly, and that it does not have a telephone. Society officers are listed individually in the telephone book. In doubt, ask the Waikiki Aquarium or the Bishop Museum for names. Better still, write to the Society in advance. The Museum’s Karl Greene Shell Room has a good display of both Hawaiian and Indo-Pacific species.
Do Scientists Care About Shell Names?

By ELMER G. LEEHMAN

It probably is no secret that I am greatly disturbed at the chaos in molluscan names, particularly in the Conidae.

My correspondence convinces me that I am supported by a significant portion of the advanced collectors around the world. At the same time, however, I have been rather disappointed at the apparent complacency of the professional scientists. In the face of a trend that seems to undermine their work, few have spoken out except to suggest that time will cure all ills.

Basically, two issues are involved here. The first is the inability to develop a simple test of species status. To an appalling degree, this remains a problem. Superimposed on that is the laissez-faire attitude of many scientists on the publication of new species names and descriptions. Literally, anyone can do this, regardless of scientific qualifications or the responsibility of the periodical involved.

Only a handful of periodicals are in a position to refuse papers seriously. In many instances the roles of scientific writer, reviewer and editor are played by a single person!

Now for the good news. Lately I have heard of several occasions on which there has been serious, responsible talk among scientists about the need for stricter rules on publication of new species proposals. The most recent was at the annual meeting of the Association of Systematic Collections in Honolulu.

The second attack on the problem came from an unexpected quarter and it was delivered almost two years ago. The Seventh International Malacological Congress, held in Perpignan, France in 1980, looked at the description-publication situation and passed two resolutions calling for reform.

A worldwide body of malacologists, the Congress comes under the umbrella of Uniras Malacologica. Its opinions carry weight.

The resolutions were published in a recent issue of Malacologia.

I can do no better than offer the text of the two pertinent resolutions.

The first notes that ‘‘Whereas: The Seventh International Malacological Congress, held in Perpignan, France in 1980, looked at the description-publication situation and passed two resolutions calling for reform. A worldwide body of malacologists, the Congress comes under the umbrella of Uniras Malacologica. Its opinions carry weight. The resolutions were published in a recent issue of Malacologia.

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The first notes that ‘‘Whereas: The Seventh International Malacological Congress, recognizing a proliferation of inadequately described new taxa whose descriptions do not meet acceptable scientific standards; 2. recognizing that numerous taxa are being described in nonscientific journals, pamphlets and newsletters, and in miscellaneous works whose extremely restricted distribution renders them inaccessible to a worldwide community of scientists; 3. recognizing that various amateur and commercial interests encourage a proliferation of new names for purposes outside those of objective biological science; and 4. believing that solutions to these problems can be achieved only by action of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature on recommendations from established international bodies of zoologists.’’

‘‘Resolves: 1. That the Council of Uniras Malacologica be requested to form a standing committee of malacologists representing various countries and taxonomic groups: i) to consider ways in which effective regulation of taxonomic publications could be achieved; ii) to contact taxonomists in other animal groups to explore the possibilities of concerted action; iii) to prepare recommendations for nonronal to the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature; and iv) to submit proposals to Uniras Malacologica for discussion and approval at the Eighth International Congress in Budapest in 1983. . . .”

The second resolution is rather more to the point. It states that ‘‘Whereas: The Seventh International Malacological Congress, recognizing that the efficient practice of taxonomy is severely impeded by the publication of new taxa: i) with inadequate descriptions; ii) in works which are not regulated by critical editorial policies; and iii) with primary types not deposited in readily accessible collections.’’

‘‘Resolves: 1. That the Council of Uniras Malacologica be requested to prepare a notice setting out a Code of Practice strongly urging: i) that malacologists describing new taxa follow the Rules and Recommendations of the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature, and in particular those concerning descriptions of new taxa and institutional deposition of type material; ii) that publications containing new taxa be submitted to adequate scrutiny by editorial committees and referees; iii) . . .; iv) . . . (not pertinent); v) that all primary types of new taxa be deposited in recognized institutional collections; and vi) . . .’’

The record shows that he had been proposed for membership in the latter by a number of naturalists of that period.

Most of his papers were published in the journal of the Zoological Society. Gaskoin described several new species of gastropods in the Columbellidae, the Cypraeidae, the Marginellidae and the Eratoidae. (Unfortunately, however, many of the names he proposed were subsequently synonymized by later authors.)

In his later life, Gaskoin moved his interest to terrestrial gastropods, many of which he kept alive to study their habits. He also published papers on mice, deer and the insects that activate jumping beans!

John Gaskoin had many friends such as Carpenter, Reeve and Woodward among the conchologists. We are told that they greatly appreciated his comments and his work.

Aside from the terrestrial gastropods, his personal collection was derived primarily from dealers and people who had participated in conditions such as that of H.M.S. Samarang and H.M.S. Beagle. On Gaskoin’s death, the collection went to the eldest of his three sons who subsequently sold it to Thomas Combe Taylor. Gaskoin had exchanged and disposed of much of his collection during his life and had donated some to the British Museum. Taylor dispersed the rest to India, the British Museum and to museums in Liverpool and Wales.

John Gaskoin died in London on 5 Oct. 1858. Here in Hawaii, the principal monument to his memory is Cypraea gaskoini Reeve, 1846. The shell is found in shallow water (10 to 15 meters) in coral reefs, and it also has been referred to as a Pleistocene fossil. According to Kay’s Hawaiian Marine Shells (1979), C. gaskoini is endemic to the Hawaiian islands.
News of New Species:

A MURICID, A VOLUTE AND A GIANT CLAM

By WALTER E. SAGE

Among new species proposed by malacologists in recent months is a small muricid from Hansa Bay, Papua New Guinea, described by HMS member Roland Houart of Belgium in The Nautilus, Vol. 95(4) dated 29 October 1981.

*Chicoreus* (*Chicomurex*) *turschi* honors another HMS member, Prof. Ben Tursch of Brussels, who had collected several specimens of the stranger before it came to Houart’s attention.

The holotype has been deposited in the Belgian Royal Institute of Natural Sciences in Brussels, with paratypes in the British Museum (Natural History), the American Museum of Natural History in New York, and the U.S. National Museum in Washington, D.C.

*C. turschi* ranges from 28 to 40mm. It is compared with *Chicomurex venustulus* Rehder & Wilson, 1975, from which it is distinguished by shell color (“Generally cream with 3 brown bands on varices”), size, and in protoconch and columellar lip.

Other new species proposed in the same issue of The Nautilus are:

-Volutocorbits *rosavittoriae* Rehder; Volutidae; 50mm, from southern Somalia. It is distinguished by a strong thick shell with strong axial and spiral sculpture. Rehder compares it with *V. semirugata* Rehder & Weaver, 1974.

-Acanthochitonina *imperatrix* Watters and *A. andersoni* Watters, both members of the Cryptoplacidae. *A. imperatrix*, 9mm, is found in Southern California and the Galapagos; *A. andersoni*, 12mm, is from southeastern Florida and the Caribbean.

-Pyrene *Conella* *ledaluciae* Rios & Tostes, a 25+mm member of the Columbellidae, was found off Brazil. It is separated by locality and shell characters from *P. (C.) ovalata* (Lamarck) and *P. (C.) ovuloides* (C. B. Adams), the other Western Atlantic members of the subgenus.

A new genus, *Laminoplax*, in the family Afrosochitonidae, is proposed by Ferreira for the species *dalli* Kaas from the northwestern Atlantic. The presence of slitless insertion plates in all valves of *dalli* is said to separate this genus from all others in the family.

HMS member Dr. Joseph Rosewater of the U.S. Natural History Museum in Washington, writing in the January 1982 issue of The Nautilus Vol. 96(1), proposed *Hippopus porcellanus* as a new species in the Tridacnidae. A native of the central and southern Philippines, and measuring 216mm, *H. porcellanus* is distinguished from its congener *H. hippopus* (Linne) by its consistently thinner, smoother and less colorful shell. *H. hippopus* is more common and wider-ranging than the new species.

-Sassia *Sassia* *lewisi* Petuch & Harasewych, in the Cymatiidae, was proposed in The Nautilus Vol. 94(3) July 1980. The holotype measures 28mm. It was dredged off Contoy, Yucatan peninsula, Mexico; other specimens are from off Barbados. The new species is distinguished from *S. semitorta* (Kuroda & Habe) by its smaller size and finer sculpture.

Meet Endodontia kalaeloana

HMS Director Carl Christensen, in charge of malacology at the Bernice P. Bishop Museum in Honolulu, has described a new species of land snail from Oahu (Honolulu). Recognized previously but never described and named, *Endodontia kalaeloana* Christensen apparently is extinct today.


The Santa Barbara Show

The Santa Barbara Malacological Society will host the 1982 West Coast Shell Show at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History (behind the Old Mission) on 2 and 3 October. Doors will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free.

For further information, contact John Gilbody, 3618 San Gabriel Lane, Santa Barbara, CA 93105.
WHAT'S HIDING IN THAT SAND?

By PETER van PEL

SHARK BAY, W.A. — Halfway around the world from our home in Holland, my wife and I have rented a camper-van at Perth and driven it northward nearly 1,000 kilometers to Shark Bay, at the most westerly point on the Australian continent.

What are we doing in Western Australia?

Years ago I began planning that as soon as I retired from the Dutch Navy my wife and I would come here on a shelling tour. That moment came at the beginning of January 1982, and here we are.

There were several reasons for choosing Western Australia. First, a relative has lived for many years in Perth. Second, it has always been difficult for me to get shells from here. From the literature I knew that there are numerous out-of-the-way places where shelling is most exciting.

I tried to read as many reports of the area as possible. The most useful was an article by Lorna Marrow in Of Sea & Shore (Fall, 1974). I have read it so many times I nearly know it by heart.

We didn’t come here with the idea of finding rarities, however. When you put that aside, shelling can be quite satisfactory.

A collector is very lucky when his wife is also interested in shelling. I must say that Jan is much more eager than I am. As soon as we arrive at a nice spot, she is far ahead of me in heading for the beach.

After several stops at beautiful camp sites along the road northward, we got to Shark Bay and found a nice spot at Denham. Of course, I couldn’t wait to get to the beach. The tides were magnificent — some of the lowest of the year, which was very nice.

Once out on the beach, I was eager to spot the volutes for which this part of Western Australia is famous. While looking over the dry sand around me, littered with many kinds of bivalves, I suddenly became aware of some unusual “cracks” in the sand. I dug into one and there it was — a beautiful Cymbiola nivosa (Lamarck), a real gem with beautifully colored soft parts.

I couldn’t stop taking photos of it. When, finally, I put it back on the sand again, it immediately started digging in.

Once I learned how to find the volutes, I looked at these sandcracks carefully, but soon discovered that many sea urchins and bivalves were hiding in the same way.

Another volute species (my wife discovered this one) was Melo miltonis (Griffith & Pidgeon). It also was completely exposed, although we later found them well buried, also. M. miltonis looks very much like M. amphora, but the spines are curved more inward.

This all happened during our first day here. Not bad for a start!

I intend to tell more about this most interesting region in a following article.
HMS AUGUST MEETING

HMS members at their August meeting in Honolulu heard a great deal about the chambered nautilus from a young man who is rapidly becoming a world-class expert in the subject. Bruce Carlson, curator of exhibits at the Waikiki Aquarium, had returned less than a month before from a five-week face-to-face encounter with Nautilus pompilius Linne in its home waters — Palau.

The project included trapping specimens at depths up to 500 meters, then rigging them with tiny radio transmitters before turning them loose again. Newly developed equipment made it possible to track them from a small boat on the surface. The plan also called for extensive underwater film coverage, with eventual television release expected.

"Certain technical problems" were encountered, Carlson told the Society. On the first tryout, the tiny radios were shorted out by water pressure and shortly afterward the expensive underwater movie camera was flooded. The weather was ideal until the critical moment, then turned foul.

Despite everything, the project finally paid off, he reported. Data must still be considered incomplete, it appears that the nautilus actually moves up range. It also has a considerable longitudinal depth. Both groups occur throughout the 40-to-70 foot range. I have dredged large dead specimens from as deep as 180 feet, and I also have found small ones at that depth.

Hawaiian Shell News has published a significant amount of discussion about the Cribraria group of cowries. I know from personal observation that it is difficult to separate one small gaskoini from a series containing C. cumingii, C. cumingii cleopatra, and C. fischeri, except by minute examination.

Cypraea fischeri has been reported from Fiji, the Loyalty Islands, and Vanuatu (New Hebrides). Dr. C. M. "Pat" Burgess (HSN Dec. 1977) called fischeri a synonym of C. gaskoini.

Bob Purtymun (HSN Feb. 1977) confirmed my own observation that C. fischeri (or whatever you call the Samoan shell) has a more orange animal than the Hawaiian gaskoini.


NOTES ON SHELL IDENTIFICATIONS

Maculotriton serriale (Deshayes in Laborde & Linant, 1834). Family Muricidae, Subfamily Thaidinae. An extremely variable species with numerous synonyms such as digitale Reeve, 1844; lativicorosus Reeve, 1844; bracteatus Hinds, 1844; and longus Pilsbry & Vanatta, 1904, it lives in shallow water under rock and coral rubble, and often is confused with Maculotriton sculpile.

Scabricola (Swainsonia) ocellata (Swainson, 1831). Family Mitridae, Subfamily Imitrariae. Usually in sand, the shell is circled with finely incised grooves and flecked and flocked with white on a light tan background, but occasional specimens are steel gray or white.

Maculotriton sculpile (Reeve, 1844). Family Muricidae, Subfamily Thaidinae. An uncommon species with the same range as Maculotriton serriale. Sometimes listed in the Murex genus Phryglomurex. Rarely collected in good condition, it is characterized by a strange wide, deep groove on the body whorl and deep pits at the suture.

Scabricola (Swainsonia) ocellata (Swainson, 1831). Family Mitridae, Subfamily Imitrariae. An extremely variable species with numerous synonyms such as digitale Reeve, 1844; lativicorosus Reeve, 1844; bracteatus Hinds, 1844; and longus Pilsbry & Vanatta, 1904, it lives in shallow water under rock and coral rubble, and often is confused with Maculotriton sculpile.

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To use these illustrations, cut carefully along the dashed lines. Perhaps a bit of extra trimming may be necessary. Then carefully mount the illustration on a standard 3 x 5 inch file card. Additional data about shells of this species in your collection, sizes, etc., may be entered on the back of the file card.

See Page 6 for notes on identifications.
Do You Ever Have Days Like That?

"But I don't want to go among mad people", Alice remarked.

"Oh, you can't help that", said the Cat. "We're all mad here, I'm mad, you're mad!"

"How do you know I'm mad?", said Alice.

"You must be", said the Cat, "or you wouldn't be here".

By OLIVE PEEL

DURBAN, S. AFRICA — The weatherman predicted 'warm and cloudy with rain later'. But he did not say how much or how soon "later"

Reunion Rocks has been inaccessible for so long owing to security measures because of the oil tanks, that we shellers have not been able to get there. At long last, after much research, I discovered how to get into a locked gate near the security gate. So along comes spring tide and equinox at that, and six of us prepare for a morning's shellhunting at this delightful spot.

The day dawned dull and cool as predicted, so off we went into the bush with sandy roads that almost caressed our underclothes. Never did we come to the end rather abruptly and discovered to our horror that a long way ahead through the mist and only just distinguishable was Reunion Rocks.

By the time we arrived, the thunder and lightning had started, and a few raindrops. Kathy and Peta went to investigate where we could get around the rocks, and past the canal. After slithering all over the place they managed to get across. Val and I had started, and a few raindrops. Kathy and Peta were the carryings on down below were all safely in their homes.

I was not and my rather flimsy dress kept climbing up around my waist. The notice of change included an invitation to other clubs to keep the LCS informed of their club activities, including new ideas for club meetings, such as slide shows, members' talks or guest speakers.

The Other Shell Clubs:

Saudia Group Pushes Conservation

JEDDAH — The Malacological Club of Yanbu is very new — since 24 April 1982. As far as we know, it is the only shell club in Saudi Arabia today. We have 32 paid-up members, all amateurs and all very keen.

My husband, who is involved in public works construction for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, started the club when he realized how fast the community was growing and how the beaches, which are popular with weekenders, were being ruined by careless shellhunting habits.

The sea life of the Red Sea is very prolific. When we came four years ago it did not seem possible that such damage could be done in such a short while. We hope to slow the process somewhat by educating the community.

Morag Marinoni
Club Secretary

Show Time in Noumea

The New Caledonia Conchology Society has scheduled its 1982 Shell Show for October 21 to 28 at the Noumea City Hall. Many molluscan families found in New Caledonia will be on display, says a note in Rossinianna, the club periodical, and a number of worldwide specimens are to be added.

The club has extended a particular welcome to overseas shell collectors. Any interested in exhibiting are urged to contact Pierre Allaud, B.P. 146, Noumea.

* * *

The Louisville Conchological Society has changed its mailing address to 1123 Hathaway Avenue, Louisville, KY 40215. This is the home address of the editor of The Littorina, Walter Sage.

The notice of change included an invitation to other clubs to keep the LCS informed of their club activities, including new ideas for club meetings, such as slide shows, members' talks or guest speakers.

Are You a Conchilofiliist?

Is it a club? Is it a shell dealer? Or is it something new and difficult to define?

A recent announcement by Gemme del Mare in Rome leaves the reader in some doubt as to its professional status, but makes clear the enthusiasm for fine shells that motivates the organizers. Although nowhere in the initial catalog is there any mention of the promoters by name, everything indicates that Gemme del Mare is backed strongly by HMS member Luigi Raybaudi Massilia, one of the most active of Cypraea collectors and the author of frequent published papers on the family.

Gems of the Sea was founded by two keen malacologists and now has seven partners, all enthusiastic "conchilofiliists," according to the announcement.

"It is an organization created by collectors for collectors. Beyond commercial purposes, it has the ambitious aim of contributing realistically to the development of 'conchilofily' in Italy as well as in other countries, by means of a complex and engaging program which will gradually be put into action."

In its first list of offerings, limited almost entirely to the Cypraeidae, Gemme del Mare uses its own shell grading system, not easily translatable into the HEMS International Shell Grading Standards. It offers an interesting innovation, however — a "Dr. Raybaudi certificate," presumably a guarantee of data or species identity.

S.L.
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THERE’S A NEW CLAM IN TOWN

Waikiki Aquarium in Hawaii is displaying a new 173-pound Tridacna gigas Linne, a former resident of Kwajalein Atoll in the mid-Pacific. Grouped around it in its display tank and in adjacent tanks are representatives of four more species of giant clams. Just possibly, Honolulu has the most nearly complete collection of these legendary beasts of any aquarium in the world.

The newcomer replaced a 295-pound T. gigas that was established in the Waikiki Aquarium three years ago. The giant clams — shallow water dwellers in the wild — need a great deal of direct sunlight to fuel the photosynthesis that helps to keep them fed. An equator-girdling stratospheric cloud of volcanic ash from Mexico (or was Indonesia the villain?) sharply reduced the sun’s strength last December and January. A prolonged spell of overcast weather did the rest.

HMS member Bruce Carlson, the Aquarium’s curator of exhibits, returned to Kwajalein in June to choose a successor. It wasn’t easy.

“Tridacna gigas is becoming quite rare in its native Micronesian waters, and it would be a good candidate for the threatened species list,” he explained on his return to Honolulu. “Three years ago we flagged 15 or 20 big clams at Eniwetok. Most of them are gone now.

“The giant clam is particularly vulnerable to human predation because it is easy to catch, the meat is edible, and the shell has considerable commercial value.”

Before taking the present specimen, Carlson got the permission of the Marshall Islands people living on the atoll. Members of the Kwajalein Scuba Club and particularly David Johnson, assisted in finding and lifting the new giant, and Air Micronesia went out of its way to make special arrangements for carrying the live animal to Honolulu.

The new display tank gets direct sunlight through an open panel in the Aquarium roof. As back-up, Carlson has installed artificial lighting and automatic water temperature control.

Parallel with the capture and display of the new T. gigas, Carlson and his co-workers have installed other members of the giant clam family.

“In addition to about 25 ‘babies’ each of T. gigas and T. squamosa, we have adult T. crocea, T. derasa and T. maxima,” said Carlson. “Our previous Hippopus hippopus Linne died and has not yet been replaced, but even without it we have specimens of five of the six giant clams.”

The baby T. gigas and T. squamosa brought back by Carlson were chosen from among the ‘crop’ that was spawned and raised by HMS member Jerry Heslinga at the Micronesian Marine Biology Lab on Palau. Heslinga’s pioneering work in the field of artificial propagation of these bivalves has raised the prospect that Pacific reefs can be restocked with giant clams.

His studies have been supported by grants from the HMS Scholarship Fund.

S.L.
The Other Side of the Coin

By CHARLES T. JOHNSON

KUWAIT — Everyone who reads Hawaiian Shell News knows about Coin Shellcrafts of Bombay as mail-order dealers in specimen shells. On a recent visit to India, I discovered that this represents only one side of the coin, so to speak.

Any shell collector who passes through India should stop in Bombay to acquaint himself with the other face of the coin — the direct purchase.

With its office and showrooms in Bandra, a suburb of Bombay, Coin House is within a five-minute walk of the commuter-train station — most convenient for those willing to take those trains which link all the suburbs with central Bombay.

On my arrival in Bandra, unannounced, I was greeted most cordially by the two Sukhadwala brothers, Phiroz and Pervez, the owners. A large private residence with offices on the ground floor, Coin House turned out to be a pleasant surprise with its calm and gracious atmosphere — very different than the noisy crowded streets outside.

Another surprise was the realization that the Sukhadwala brothers really were taking great personal interest in me and my taste in shells. Meticulous gentlemen and gracious hosts, they made it clear that they consider specimen-shell collectors to be very special people.

Perhaps my biggest surprise, however, was in the quality of the shells themselves. Every specimen was a perfectly cleaned gem. That often-ignored item, the operculum, was impeccably mounted — even in the cones!

Equally impressive were the numbers of specimens of each species. I spent hours going through them, selecting just exactly the color patterns and structural forms I wanted.

To top my experience, Phiroz Sukhadwala offered me a personal tour of Coin House’s new shellcraft factory at Bassein, some 50 kilometers north of Bombay. It is here that the specimen shells are extracted from the incoming material, sorted and prepared for shipping.

I discovered that I was the first dedicated amateur shell collector to visit the Bassein factory, and I was given the royal treatment.

Needless to say, I wound up buying a lot more showpiece shells than I had planned!

In the end, I did resist the purchase of a Conus milneedwardsi Jousseaume. It was not easy. The price was good and I had my pick of more than a dozen gem specimens — each with its carefully mounted operculum.

I am back at work on the shores of the Persian Gulf as I write this. My “loot” from Bombay is not far from my desk. There is great satisfaction in looking over those magnificent shells; but I keep asking myself, why didn’t I get that milneedwardsi when I had the chance?

(Charles Johnson’s rhapsody on his visit to Bombay and the Sukhadwala brothers came to HSN without the knowledge of Coin Shellcrafts. Ed.)

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RECENT FINDS
By LYMAN HIGA

Mt. Hawthorn, W.A.

Dear Lyman:
I have recently returned from the islands off Onslow, near the westernmost point in Western Australia. I had eight advanced American collectors with me — Mr. and Mrs. Frank King, Mr. and Mrs. Don Pisor of San Diego and their brother Richard, Mrs. Barbara Hudson of Houston, Marjorie Wing and Constance Boone of Houston. All of us enjoyed good collecting.

My biggest surprise, however, was when I had returned home and started cleaning my treasures. I found I had a sinistral Voluta dampieria Weaver (see photo).

It was collected on a sand and weed bottom at night on a minus tide.

Merv Cooper

Cymatium, treating Sepia, Ranularia and Lotoria as subgenera. The subdivisions of Sepia become synonyms.

Orders for the Card Catalogue should be directed to Sally D. Kaicher, 1826A 54th Place South, St. Petersburg, FL 33712.

DO A FRIEND A FAVOR!

HMS Members: Nonmembers will receive a complimentary copy of Hawaiian Shell News (with a membership application) if you send the Corresponding Secretary their full name and address.

Publication Notices

Dr. R. Tucker Abbott and S. Peter Dance, two outstanding names in modern malacology, have announced publication of their long-awaited Compendium of Seashells, described as "a pictorial summary of the world's most conspicuous marine species."

Each of some 4,000 marine shells is illustrated in color, with important data beneath it. These data include the vernacular name, the scientific name with author and date, the size in both metric and U.S. units, the geographic range, habitat and rarity. Synonyms are frequently added.

The bad news is that the publisher's price is US $50, with no discounts for club or bulk orders.

Pictorial coverage includes 181 species of cowries, 334 cones, 132 volutes, 140 scallops, 73 Cancellariidae "and all the Strombiidae, Cassidiae, Pleurotomariidae, Neritidae, etc." Among all these are said to be 500 species not illustrated in any other popular shell book.

As a distinct plus for the serious collector or malacologist, the Compendium lists the leading source books and indices. Hundreds of monographs are listed under their appropriate genera and families, and a long list of faunal books, useful to local collectors, is arranged by countries.

Advance purchasers are promised copies with a handsome bookplate, personally autographed by both authors.

S.L.

S. Africa Nudibranchs

HMS member Gordon Verhoeven in Cape Town has announced publication of Nudibranchs of Southern Africa, with text and photos by Terence Gosliner. The volume is listed as A South African Museum Publication. The price is 25 Rand, £15 or US $25 per copy. Postage and handling for overseas orders are an additional $2.50 or £1.50.

Dr. Gosliner is a relatively young American expert in the classification and evolution of the opisthobranchs. He did graduate work in Hawaii in the 1970s and for the past two years has been curator of molluscs at the South African Museum in Cape Town. He has published more than 30 papers on his speciality.

Relatively little research had been done on the nudibranchs of southern Africa, an area with a wide variety of marine habitats. Of the almost 200 species discussed in Gosliner's book, about two thirds had not previously been recorded from that region and 70 had not yet been described and named.

Judging from the promotional material, the book has some exceptionally fine photos.

Orders can be sent directly to: Nudibranchs of Southern Africa, Box 892, Cape Town 8000, South Africa.

Publication of The Freshwater Molluscs of Canada has been announced by the National Museums of Canada in Ottawa. Arthur H. Clarke, former curator of molluscs and head of the Invertebrate Zoology Division of the Canadian National Museum of Natural Sciences and a recent president of the A.M.U., is the author.

The new volume is the first comprehensive handbook for the identification of Canada's freshwater molluscs. It is described as both a field guide and a laboratory manual for collectors and scientists. Some 179 species are pictured in black and white or color.

In addition to providing keys and descriptions for identification, the book gives information on the ecology of each species and its relationship to humans.

The retail price is US $39.95 or £24. There is an edition in French also.

* * *

S. L.
Hedley’s ‘Lost’ Turricula pilsbryi

By RICHARD SALISBURY

Charles Hedley described Turricula pilsbryi in 1899. His paper in the Memoirs of the Australian Museum was titled “The Mollusca of Funafuti. Part 1 — Gastropoda.” Funafuti — capital of the new nation of Tuvalu — lies in the South Pacific 600 miles north of Fiji and some 600 miles south of the Equator, at the eastern edge of Micronesia. The area was long known as the Ellice Islands.

Hedley’s original description and type figure (Fig. 1) depict a small shell prominently crowned with a two-whorl globose projecting protoconch. This bulb-like protoconch is unusual in members of the subgenus Pusia.

Turricula pilsbryi long was regarded as a “lost” species. As far as I am aware, no new specimens were reported in this century.

A half dozen broken shells with a very peculiar protoconch were taken at Guam 4,500 kilometers northwest of Funafuti, late in 1977 during dredging in 100 fathoms near the entrance to Apra harbor. The shells were too worn for proper identification.

Later, however, scuba divers working along the cliffs near Orote Point, Guam found a fresh, crabbed specimen of the same shell. It turned out to be Turricula pilsbryi Hedley.

It was uncanny how closely the newly discovered shell matched Hedley’s type figure, right down to the broken lip.

Figures 2 and 3 with this article are believed to be the first actual photos to be published of what is now known as Vexillum (Pusia) pilsbryi (Hedley).

Hedley’s lengthy description is extremely accurate. He states that the shell has 13 ribs on the early whorls, the ribs growing comparatively more prominent toward the base. The ribs on the earliest whorls are sharply constricted and angled at their upper third. Between the ribs appear delicate evenly spaced spiral grooves. Seven or eight broad, close, flat-top lirae are wound obliquely around the base.

The columella bears a tubercle at the posterior angle. The moderately straight pillar carries four conspicuous projecting plaits (columellar teeth). The shell is 6mm long and 2.5mm wide.

Hedley’s shells were taken in tangles in depths of 40 to 80 fathoms.

The only discrepancy between the Guam shell and Hedley’s holotype appears to lie in the color. Hedley said his specimens were uniformly orange buff, with a rosy apex. The Guam shells also are orange buff with a rosy apex, but they have a prominent white central band.

Muricid Bloom Under Suspicion As Reef Killer

Although many marine animals feed on coral polyps, it is quite unusual for such animals — and a seemingly innocuous muricid, at that — to pose a serious threat to an entire reef system. There is a strong suspicion, however, that that actually is happening in at least two places — at Miyake-jima, an island in the Izu chain south of Tokyo Bay, and at Mactan Island in the Central Philippines.

The crown-of-thorns starfish, Acanthaster planci, caused a stir several years ago when significant predation on coral was observed along the Great Barrier Reef. This was followed by alarms from several other parts of the Pacific, including Hawaii. The threat seems to have subsided; both the cause and the cure remain obscure.

Now, widespread coral destruction associated with population explosions of several species of the muricid genus Drupella has been reported by Jack Moyer, at the Tanaka Memorial Biological Station on Miyake-jima, HMS member William K. Emerson of the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, and Michael Ross of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources in Cebu. Their paper in The Nautilus (April 1982) is thought to be the first documentation of gastropod involvement in reef destruction on this scale.

“Swarming” of Drupella fragum was first noted in 1976 during reef-fish behavior studies at Miyake-jima. When, the following year, sizable areas of fresh white coral skeletons were found there was uncertainty whether the culprit was D. fragum, Acanthaster or siltation from nearby construction.

A similar explosion of D. rugosa was observed at Mactan Island in 1979.

Accurate measurement and study of the damage began at Miyake-jima during an Acanthaster monitoring and removal program in 1980. In spite of intensive searches, relatively few of the starfish were found. Instead, thousands of D. fragum which during the day had concealed themselves under coral branches were observed feeding on coral polyps two to four hours after sunset. They showed a distinct preference for the branching corals such as Montipora, Acropora and Pocillopora.

In one month they were observed to have destroyed 17 square meters of reef. Between 1979 and 1981 they appear to have been responsible for destroying about 35 per cent of the study-site reef.

All 12 specimens selected at random in the area of destruction for radular study proved to be females. No egg cases were found, however, suggesting that the snails were aggregating to feed. The feeding may have been indirectly related to reproduction, as a preparatory or restorative phase, for example.

The results of study at Mactan Island show similar patterns, but the effect on the reef differed. On the rich tropical reef at Mactan, the selective predation seems to perform a “weeding-out” function in the fast-growing foliate species, opening space for other corals and increasing diversity. At Miyake-jima, where coral growth is much less profuse due to the temperate climate, the predation is a threat to whole colonies.

The authors of the Nautilus article speculate that siltation and nutrient increase through terrestrial runoff may have contributed to the Drupella explosion. High phosphorus levels in shallow water can produce a lush phytoplankton bloom which might allow greater-than-usual survival of certain molluscan larvae — Drupella fragum in the present instance.

John Mapes