



# SYDNEY SHELLER

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

## Next Meetings:

23<sup>rd</sup> May 2009  
10 Favourite Shells  
(1.30pm for 2pm – 4pm)

27<sup>th</sup> June 2009  
Favourite Rostrate,  
Melanistics and Freaks  
(1.30pm for 2pm – 4pm)

(normally 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday)

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

View old shell newsletters on line  
[www.sydneyshellclub.net](http://www.sydneyshellclub.net)

## Submit articles or ads:

Steve Dean  
PO Box 316, Mona Vale, NSW 1660  
Text by disk or email only. Photos, and  
disks by mail, or preferably by email to  
[steve@dean.as](mailto:steve@dean.as)

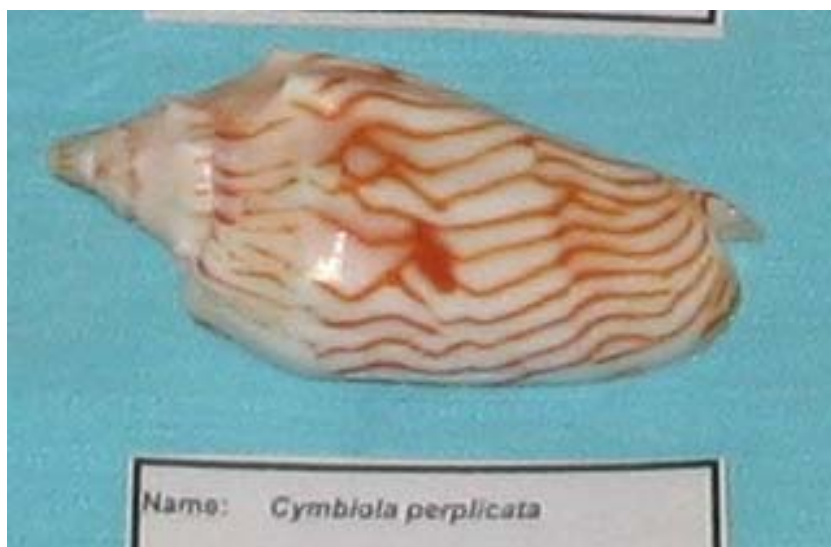
## Club Executive:

### Office bearers:

President: Steve Dean  
Vice Pres: Maureen Anderson  
Treasurer: Peter Pienaar  
Secretary: Kim Bishop  
Raffles: Kim Bishop  
Sheller 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.



2009 NZ Shell Show – “Australian Shell of The Show” - Winner Peter Pienaar

The rest of Peter's competitive volute display - Below



## Some of the topics inside:

- NZ Shell Show Pictures (Also cover photos)
- *Umbilia armeniaca*
- Meeting Minutes February
- Meeting Minutes April
- School 1957 vs 2007



VISITING – PERTH, WESTERN AUSTRALIA

*Don't forget to call in on..*

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Peter Pienaar  
PO Box 901  
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Australia 2560

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  
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## This Spot Available

**This small size (5.4x6.2) A\$40/year**

**Mid size (7.9x6.2) A\$60/year**

**Large Size (11.7x6.2) A\$80/year**



## *Umbilia armeniaca*

### Kim Bishop's COA winning educational exhibit, October Shell Show - Text

(See Oct/Nov 08 Sheller, pages 4 and 5 for pictures)

#### INTRODUCTION

*Umbilia armeniaca* are an endemic Australian cowry species that evolved in the temperate waters of the Southern Ocean. This cowry was discovered by Sir Joseph Verco, a natural scientist and medical practitioner of Adelaide when he was a guest on the fisheries vessel "Endeavour" during a trawling survey in the Great Australian Bight in March 1912.

Living specimens have been taken in both shallow and deep water from Rottnest Island off the coast of Perth, Western Australia to Investigator Strait off the north coast of Kangaroo Island, South Australia.

A number of populations have been discovered by divers in relative shallow water off Esperance WA and Port Lincoln SA and others have been discovered by fishing and research vessels trawling the outer part of the continental shelf. It is likely that populations exist but are yet to be discovered in other inner-mid shelf areas off Western Australia and South Australia.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE SPECIES

This shell is easily identified as a member of the family Cypraeidae typically with a very smooth, thick glossy nacre and striking patterning and coloration. The shell is usually swollen and sometimes globose, the base of the body whorl is rounded without marginal ridges except for short anterior flanges. The anterior rostrum is short with weakly developed lateral flanges and the posterior canal very short and twisted to the left. The colour and pattern are quite variable; typically the whole shell is apricot or golden and slightly darker around the ends and basal periphery with an indistinct network pattern and freckles on the dorsum, usually with darker spots around the side. As can be seen in the display, some specimens have distinct mantle lines.

Photographs on display (courtesy Peter Clarkson) show that the living animal is quite beautiful, the body being orange-red with irregular splotches of cream, black or dark brown across the mantle. The mantle is opaque with relatively long papillae with variable colour usually matching the part of the mantle from which they extend. The foot is orange-red and the tentacles very long and similar colour to the rest of the foot.

The smallest adult shell I am aware of is 62.8mm in a collection in USA and the largest 124.5mm in a collection in South Australia. There is significant variation in average size within populations. Shells from the relative shallow waters (approx 35m) off Esperance are generally smaller than shallow water specimens from Port Lincoln which usually exceed 110mm. Trawled specimens from deeper water (145-160m) in the eastern part of the Great Australian Bight are generally smaller than those taken by divers. Shells trawled from the western part of the Great Australia Bight at similar depths tend to be larger and can commonly be in the 100-110mm range. Study of the Port Lincoln population has shown that males on average are larger, more inflated, and have a more developed anterior rostrum than the females. The Port Lincoln specimen in this exhibit is female.

#### HABITAT

This shell is known to exist on relative level seabeds at depths from 25m to at least 200m. Little is known about the deep water habitat in the Great Australian Bight but since divers discovered populations in moderately shallow water off Port Lincoln and Esperance, information about their habitat became available.

South of Port Lincoln a large colony of *Umbilia armeniaca* occurred at a depth between 25m and 35m on a sandy, flat limestone terrain. It is estimated that around 300 specimens have been taken from this colony since the first shallow-water shell was discovered in the mid 1980's by abalone diver John Kroezen, at an undisclosed location in Thorny Passage. It was not until 1992 that the existence of a colony of large dark shells in Thorny Passage was confirmed by divers, Tony Kingdon, Peter Clarkson and Steve Beckwith. This colony was found when the divers were exploring on sandy, low profile limestone reef.

Scallop trawlers working out of Esperance have occasionally collected dark-shelled specimens at a depth of 35-55m for some years but it wasn't until 1993 that a colony of this form was discovered by Peter Clarkson and Andrew Edinger while diving on flat, rubble and sand substrates for *Austroharpa punctata* and *Austroharpa loisae*. Only approximately 20 specimens are known to have been collected by divers off Esperance.

Divers have observed that breeding takes place in the Port Lincoln population during summer and autumn, the females usually depositing egg masses beneath raised portions of the pink sponge *Phoriospongia* which provides some protection. The young cowries do not disperse from this refuge until just prior to adulthood and the male shell usually remains within a few metres of the female even outside the breeding season. For this reason *Umbilia armeniaca* shells from the Port Lincoln area have often been found in pairs.



## VARIATIONS

Following the discovery of the Port Lincoln and Esperance colonies and the availability of large numbers of specimens trawled from the outer part of the continental shelf it is well established that *Umbilia armeniaca* live in fairly well defined colonies, each with their own morphological characteristics.

Minor variations occur in shell shape, with trawled specimens from the Great Australian Bight being the most globose while shells from Thorny Passage, Port Lincoln tend to have a less inflated body whorl. Shells taken by divers off Esperance are generally more slender without a prominent dorsal hump which is quite noticeable in the two dark specimens on show.

There is also variability in shell colour and pattern from one population to another and within populations. Commonly the shell is wholly apricot or golden, slightly darker around the base and ends with indistinct pattern and many freckles on the dorsum with large spots around the sides. Many specimens have a large dorsal blotch and some having a distinct mantle line. Very dark shells have been found at Port Lincoln and Esperance. Shells from the Port Lincoln population are often referred to as the "*brunnea*" form by collectors. Peter Clarkson has recently confirmed that the Esperance shells are the subject of a manuscript to be published shortly by Marty Beals in Los Angeles to name the Esperance form as a subspecies.

Almost colourless "albino" colour morphs of *Umbilia armeniaca* similar in some respect to the "*howell*" form of *Umbilia hesitata* have been collected by trawlers from several locations in the Great Australian Bight but very few specimens of this colour are known. I was fortunate enough to photograph of one of these specimens recently.

*Umbilia armeniaca* are an interesting gastropod to collect due to the many variations.

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## Shell book with errors

### Max Coates

Perhaps you can forward this to the appropriate sheller ...

I've a new (2007) copy of Pocket Guide to Shells, by Kenneth Wye

It has 20 pages headed 'Cowies' (no 'r') but the paragraphs talk about 'Cowries' .

Do all copies of this book have this typing error?

Cheers, Max Coates

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## Shell Club Minutes – 28th February 2009

The President, Steve Dean, opened the meeting at 2.19 pm.

**Attendance** Steve Dean, Maureen Anderson, Peter Pienaar, Sandra Montague, Ron Moylan, Chris Barnes, Steve Jones and Kim Bishop.

**Visitors** Nil.

**Apologies** Jack Hannan.

### Correspondence

An email from Lisa Kradenian, Functions Co-ordinator, Ryde-Eastwood Leagues Club Ltd dated 4 February 2009 regarding our room booking requirements for 2009 was tabled by Kim Bishop. The Turner Room has been made available for our regular monthly meetings and the Willandra Room has been made available for our Annual Show on 24 October 2009. No charge has been made for our February meeting. An Application for Discounted Room Hire form has been provided and is to be submitted to the Club by Kim Bishop.

### Finance

Bank account balance currently \$3,400 reported by Treasurer, Peter Pienaar.

### Library

The following publications have been received:

Directory of Conchologists & Malacologists 6<sup>th</sup> Edition.

Of Sea and Shore Magazine (CD).

A Catalog of Dealers' Prices for Shells: Marine, Land & Freshwater 23<sup>rd</sup> (2007) Edition.

### Coming Events

Auckland Shell Show 28-29 March 2009.





After a discussion it was agreed that our regular monthly meeting 28 March 2009 would be cancelled, Kim Bishop to notify the Functions Co-ordinator Ryde-Eastwood Leagues Club.

**Other Reports** Nil.

## Field Trip

Steve Dean reported on a club trip to Kurnell on 11 January 2009. A number of live specimens of *Cypraea vitellus* were found under rocks at low tide.

## Acquisitions

Steve Dean reported on the purchase of a number of cowries, cones and other shells from Didier Briche, a New Caledonia collector holidaying in Sydney in January.

## General Business

It was agreed that consideration be given to bringing forward or putting back meetings that clash with long weekends. Steve Dean to insert a notice on our website alerting potential visitors to email [steve@sydneyshellclub.net](mailto:steve@sydneyshellclub.net) to confirm details of next meeting.

Steve Dean has been advised by Merv Cooper, Western Australian Shell Club that accommodation for the 8<sup>th</sup> National Shell Show 19-21 February 2010 can be arranged by visiting Fremantle Visitor Centre at [www.fremantlewa.com.au](http://www.fremantlewa.com.au). About 150 display boxes will be made available from Brisbane Shell Club.

Steve Dean provided an excellent example of how a standard display box can be modified to lay flat for easy transporting and reassembled.

Cake Roster: April purchase downstairs, May Maureen Anderson, June Ron Moylan, July Peter Pienaar, August Chris Barnes, September Steve Dean, October Show everyone, November Kim Bishop.

## Next Meeting:

Because most members would be away or at the NZ show, it was decided not to hold the March meeting

## The meeting closed at 3.28pm

A discussion followed and the following program was agreed:

April 2009: Mini Shell Show, categories Cypraeidae (world wide) and Conidae (world wide).

May 2009: Everyone to show a selection of any 10 shells. Ron Moylan to report on Cook Island dive and Auckland Shell Show,

June 2009: Bring along your rostrate, melanistic and freak shells.

July 2009 : to be confirmed.

August 2009: Mini Shell Show – Category subject to change - TBA.

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## Shell Club Minutes - 25 April 2009.

The President, Steve Dean, opened the meeting at 2.34pm.

**Attendance** Steve Dean, Maureen Anderson, Sandra Montague, Ron Moylan, Peter Pienaar, Chris Barnes, Steve Jones and Kim Bishop.

**Apologies** were received from Jack Hannan and Michael Keats.

## Correspondence

A letter was tabled by Kim Bishop from Ryde Eastwood Leagues Club dated 26 March 2009 in response to our Application For Discounted Room Hire at the Heritage Function Centre advising that they will be charging us for room hire and advising us to request a donation to offset the room hire. This has the effect of creating a paper trail regarding the donation that allows the Club to obtain a tax benefit. The request should be made on a periodic basis (no less than per quarter in arrears) and should be directed to the Board of Directors. There is no guarantee that the donation will be paid as that is a board decision but any group with a long association with the Club such as ours is unlikely to have their application rejected. We have been offered use of the Rutledge Room which accommodates up to 20 people from 1pm-6pm once a month at a cost of \$75, tea and coffee to be provided at \$1.50 per person (Minimum fee \$22.50). Kim Bishop to reply to the Club thanking them for their kind offer and requesting initial donation of \$75.00 to cover April 2009 fee.

P Keefe is a new member joining from the Philippines.

**Finance** Bank account balance currently \$3,400 reported by Treasurer, Peter Pienaar.

**Sydney Sheller** Next issue due out shortly.

## Library

Various magazines received.

Volume 2 of the Philippine Marine Mollusks book by Guido Poppe to be purchased shortly.



## Coming Events

10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> July 2009 Kepple Bay Shell Show, Yeppoon; enquiries Kepple Bay Shell Club, PO Box 5166, Central Queensland Mail Centre 4702., Phone 07 49250085.

19<sup>th</sup>-23<sup>rd</sup> July 2009 2009 Conchologists of America, Inc Annual Convention, Clearwater, [www.conchologistsofamerica.org](http://www.conchologistsofamerica.org) for details.

Florida, refer

19<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> February 2010 Eighth National Shell Show, Fremantle. Information: Email [merv@perthshells.com](mailto:merv@perthshells.com) or write to WA Shell Club Secretary, PO Box 175,

Rockingham WA 6168.

**Other Reports** Peter Pienaar reported on his successful visit to the New Zealand Shell Show, Auckland 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> March 2009. His prize winning exhibits were:

Australian Shell of the Show 1<sup>st</sup> Place ***Cymbiola perplicata*** (Perpetual Trophy) (Picture on front cover)  
Volutidae of Australia 3<sup>rd</sup> Place (Picture on front cover)

Shells with Matching Stamps 2<sup>nd</sup> Place



Single Specimen >250mm 3<sup>rd</sup> Place





# The Sydney Sheller



**Field Trips** Ron Moylan reported on his recent visit to Cook Islands with Mike Hart. He was successful in obtaining *Conus adamsonii* and *Cypraeidae goodallii goodallii*.

Kim Bishop reported on his recent trip to South Australia and showed a number of South Australian shells he had purchased during his visit to Adelaide, Yorke Peninsula and Port Lincoln.

## General Business

Sandra Montague announced that she will be unable to attend further meetings. Steve Dean responded by thanking Sandra for her long association with the club and her valuable contributions over many years.

## Raffle

First Prize: Kim Bishop    Second Prize: Maureen Anderson

**The meeting closed at 3.30pm.**

A discussion and exercise in displaying and judging shells followed the meeting. Displays were kindly provided by Chris Barnes and Steve Dean.

## Peter's displays of shells with stamps at a Sydney Stamp Show







## More Pictures from the New Zealand Shell Show:



Shells from various other categories





# The Sydney Sheller





## SCHOOL -- 1957 vs. 2007

**Scenario: Jack goes rabbit shooting before school, pulls into school parking lot with rifle in gun rack.**

**1957** - Vice Principal comes over, looks at Jack's rifle, goes to his car and gets his rifle & chats with Jack about guns.

**2007** - School goes into lock down, Star Force called, Jack hauled off to jail and never sees his ute or gun again.. Counsellors called in for traumatized students and teachers.

**Scenario: Johnny and Mark get into a fistfight after school.**

**1957** - Crowd gathers. Mark wins. Johnny and Mark shake hands and end up buddies.

**2007** - Police called, arrests Johnny and Mark. Charge them with assault, both expelled even though Johnny started it. Both children go to anger management programs for 3 months. School board hold meeting to implement bullying prevention programs

**Scenario: Robbie won't be still in class, disrupts other students.**

**1957** - Robbie sent to office and given 6 of the best by the Principal. Returns to class, sits still and does not disrupt class again.

**2007** - Robbie given huge doses of Ritalin. Becomes a zombie. Tested for ADD. Robbie's parents get fortnightly disability payments and School gets extra funding from state because Robbie has a disability.

**Scenario: Billy breaks a window in his neighbour's car and his Dad gives him a whipping with his belt.**

**1957** - Billy is more careful next time, grows up normal, goes to college, and becomes a successful businessman.

**2007** - Billy's dad is arrested for child abuse. Billy removed to foster care and joins a gang. State psychologist tells Billy's sister that she remembers being abused herself and their dad goes to prison.

**Scenario: Mark gets a headache and takes some aspirin to school.**

**1957** - Mark gets glass of water from Principal to take aspirin with.

**2007** - Police called, Mark expelled from school for drug violations. Car searched for drugs and weapons.

**Scenario: Pedro fails high school English.**

**1957** - Pedro goes to summer school, passes English and goes to college.

**2007** - Pedro's cause is taken up by state. Newspaper articles appear nationally explaining that teaching English as a requirement for graduation is racist. AFRE files class action lawsuit against state school system and Pedro's English teacher. English banned from core curriculum. Pedro given diploma anyway but ends up mowing lawns for a living because he cannot speak English.

**Scenario: Johnny takes apart leftover firecrackers from 4th of July, puts them in a model airplane paint bottle, and blows up a bull ant nest.**

**1957** - Ants die.

**2007**- Star Force, Federal Police & Anti-terrorism Squad called. Johnny charged with domestic terrorism, Feds investigate parents, siblings removed from home, computers confiscated. Johnny's Dad goes on a terror watch list and is never allowed to fly again.

**Scenario: Johnny falls while running during recess and scrapes his knee. He is found crying by his teacher, Mary. Mary hugs him to comfort him.**

**1957** - In a short time, Johnny feels better and goes on playing.

**2007** - Mary is accused of being a sexual predator and loses her job. She faces 3 years in Prison Johnny undergoes 5 years of therapy.