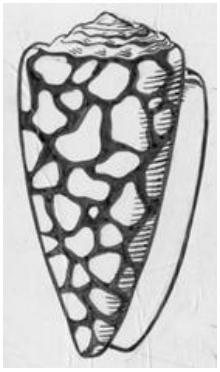

Conus marmoreus Linne

THE MALACOLOGICAL SOCIETY
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VICTORIAN BRANCH BULLETIN

(Mailed to financial members of the Society within Victoria)

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VIC. BR. BULL. NO. 295 OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2018

NOTICE OF MEETING

The next meeting of the Branch will be held on the 19th of November at the Melbourne Camera Club Building, cnr. Dorcas & Ferrars Sts South Melbourne at 8pm.

This will be our annual meeting and the election of office bearers.

Angus Hawke is guest speaker and will give us a talk on fossils.

Christmas meeting "Mega" buy/swap/sell

Each meeting will also be an opportunity to trade or sell any shells or books – so come along, you never know what you might find and the more people who attend the better!

Currently Branch Bulletin issues from VBB169- 288 can be accessed via the Society's website which includes an index 1-279. . http://www.malsocaus.org/?page_id=91

Bulletins mentioned in this issue prior to 169 can be obtained from the editors in PDF form on request.

Secretary / Treasurer Michael Lyons Tel. No. 9894 1526

Hunting for *Sunetta vaginalis* (Menke, 1843)

Sunetta vaginalis

With its solid construction, glossy exterior and stunning array of pattern variations, the Venerid, *Sunetta vaginalis* is one of southern Australia's more spectacular bivalves. Single valves are frequently cast ashore on Victoria's open ocean beaches; however, in my experience, finding a specimen with conjoined valves is a rare event. One locality where paired valves can occasionally be found is the small beach on the eastern flank of Shelly Beach, San Remo. After finding some intact shells in 2012, I resolved that, one day, I would attempt to find living examples by scuba diving offshore from shelly beach.

It was not until a boat dive expedition off San Remo with Simon Wilson in December 2014, that I found my opportunity. Whilst motoring ~300 metres off Shelly Beach, the boat's depth sounder appeared to indicate a reef bottom in water approximately 11 metres deep. We decided to investigate, deployed the anchor, geared up, jumped in and followed the anchor line to the bottom. Unfortunately, it was not reef we had anchored on but 'barren sand'.

The visibility was quite good as I watched as Simon picked up a dead example of the bivalve, *Gomphina undulosa*. Seeing this, I immediately began scooping up sand with my hands and uncovered a live example. This species proved to be abundant and nearly every scoop would produce a specimen. I collected a selection ranging from plain white to well patterned. They reminded me of pipis, as they were quite quick to rebury themselves when uncovered.

The bottom ranged from fine, compacted sand to areas of reasonably coarse grained, loosely packed sand. The latter areas appeared to be better for bivalves. The area was moderately impacted by passing swells, with occasional surges resulting in 'dust storm' conditions closely followed by the rapid settling of the suspended sediment. After a period, I found a nice live *Sunetta vaginalis*, which was laying on top of the sand, and showed it to Simon giving an excited "thumbs up". He soon came back to me with a brilliantly purple specimen.Before long, it was time to head to the surface. Discussing the dive once topside, and the fact that *Sunnettas* were on my 'to get' list, we resolved to return to the area at a later date better equipped to collect from the sand, i.e. with sieves.

Gomphina undulosa

On February 7th, 2015 Simon and I were back on the water (armed with sieves) and headed back to the 12-metre mark off Shelly Beach. We geared up and were soon in the water at the bow of the boat, preparing to descend the anchor line. Once we confirmed we were good to go I ducked under the water and was greeted by green tinged water with visibility of around 5 metres. I clipped my guide line to the anchor rope before following it to the sandy sea floor below.

The sea floor consisted of a familiar bed of fine sand punctuated by low ripples of coarser sand. I "got down to business" and proceeded to sieve the sand with my newly acquired, fine meshed, "kitchen tidy". After my first drag I vigorously shook the sand through the mesh, which retained everything bigger than a couple of millimetres. The bulk of the material consisted of fragments of dead shells and one large *Gomphina undulosa*, I emptied it out of the sieve and continued on. Every drag captured at least one, often many more, of these bivalves. Persistence paid off however, as every now and then the more desirable *Sunetta vaginalis*, would materialise as the sand filtered through the mesh. *Gomphina* - they were abundant. However, I looked at Simon and immediately could tell he was quite enjoying himself, finning along the bottom, sieve in each hand scraping through the sand, with piles of *Gomphina* indicating the ground he had worked.

I continued sieving and in one drag collected a small, juvenile *Cancellaria undulata*, in another a small dead *Epitonid*. Some drags would result in the capture of up to a dozen small heart urchins, as well as the occasional *Austroginella johnstoni*.After a while I swam over to Simon and signalled I was going to reel in my guide line back to the anchor. He motioned he understood and followed me, all the while digging into the sand with his sieves.

Back at the anchor I found a nice large *Sunetta* so continued swimming beyond it, in the opposite direction to our original path. Simon followed, pointing out a banjo shark partially buried in the sand. My very next drag revealed a nice *Hemidonax chapmani* (another species on my want list) and subsequent drags resulted in more examples. I collected a live *Modiolus areolatus* that had obviously been washed off a reef as it had the remnants of a kelp holdfast attached.

Hemidonax chapmani

No other marine life was seen apart from the odd purple sea star, *Meridiastra gunnii*. Before long, having been down for over an hour, we ascended, performing a 3-minute safety decompression stop at five metres.
Back on the boat we compared notes. We both agreed that it had been a successful session. In addition to the species previously mentioned, Simon had also collected a dead *Dosinia crocea* and a small live *Tawera lagopus*.

Michael Lyons

Scallops of Victorian and Bass Strait waters.

In a magnificent work of over 200 pages, Dutch malacologist Henk Dijkstra and New Zealand paleontologist Alan Beu have collaborated to produce a review of the living scallops of Australia and adjacent waters (Dijkstra & Beu, 2018). The paper is beautifully illustrated with both SEMs of the smaller species and coloured images of the larger. A total of 105 species (30 Propeamussiidae, 2 Cyclochlamydidae, 73 Pectinidae) are revised; this includes 7 new species. 29 new records of named species, and 5 new synonyms. The tropic and warm temperate waters of northern Australia have by far the greater number of species; only 17 species are listed as being found in the temperate waters of south-eastern Australia.

Those listed as occurring within Victorian waters and the Bass Strait area are:

Parramussin maorium Dell, 1956
thetidis (Hedley, 1902)
Cyclopecten kapalae Dijkstra, 1990
Cyclochlamys nepeanensis (Pritchard & Gatliff, 1904)
Chlamydella favus (Hedley, 1902)
Delectopecten forsterianus (Powell, 1933)
Pseudamussium challengeri (E.A. Smith, 1891)
Mimachlamys asperrima (Lamarck, 1819)
Pecten fumatus Reeve, 1852
Equichlamys bifrons (Lamarck, 1819)
Notochlamys hexactes (Lamarck, 1819)
Scaeochlamys livida (Lamarck, 1819)
Semipallium aktinos (Petterd, 1886)
Talochlamys pulleineana (Tate, 1887)
Veprichlamys perillustris (Iredale, 1925)
Zygochlmays delicatula (Hutton, 1873)
Mesopeplum fenestratum Hedley , 1901)

Reference
Dijkstra, H.H. & Beau, A.G., 2018. Living Scallops of Australia and Adjacent Waters (Mollusca: Bivalvia: Pectinoidea: Propeamussiidae, Cyclochlamydidae and Pectinidae).
Records of the Australian Museum 70 (2): 113-330.

Robert Burn

A collection of Tasmanian shells.

According to the "Proceedings of the Conchological Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 343rd Meeting, June 21st 1905, "among "Exhibits" displayed that night was that "By Mr. R. Standen: A portion of the fine collection of Tasmanian shells recently presented, through the good offices of Miss M. Lodder, to the Manchester Museum, by the Victoria Museum, Launceston."

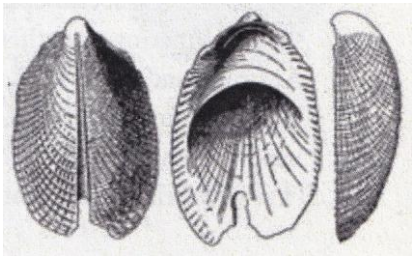
Hope Black's 'Encyclopedia of Malacologists' reveals that Mary Lodder (1851-1911), though she published relatively little, was very active in the natural history world of Tasmania and south-eastern Australia with a special interest in shells. Not only did she facilite the donation of a shell collection to Manchester in 1905

but many years before (1892) had presented a collection of north-coast Tasmanian nudibranchs was sent to Rudolph Berg in Copenhagen, Denmark, from which 4 or 5 new species were described.

Mary Lodder spent much time in an honorary capacity working on the shell collection of the Queen Victoria Museum & Art Gallery, Launceston. For specimens on display, she created some rather impressive artistic labels, which these days are probably more of interest than the specimens they identified.

Mary Lodder is commemorated by the rather uncommon fissurellid *Zeidora lodderae* (Tate & May, 1900), the eulimids *Eulima lodderae* (Hedley, 1903) and *Scalenostoma lodderae* (Petterd, 1884), the marginellid *Dentimargo lodderae* (May, 1911), the liotiine genus *Lodderena* Iredale, 1924, and the vitrinellid genus *Lodderia* Tate, 1899 and its type species *lodderae* (Petterd, (1884).

Robert Burn



Zeidora lodderae Tate & May (figure by Hedley, 1900)

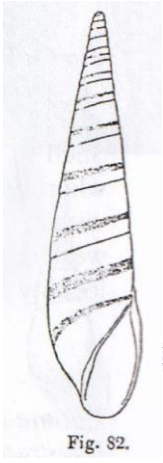
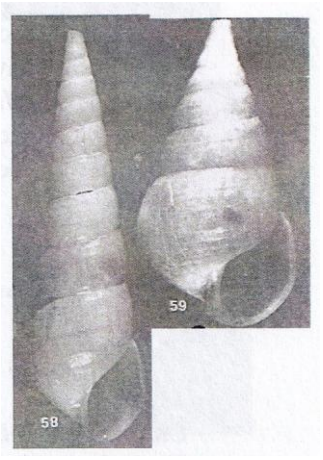


Fig. Hedley, 1903

Fig. 82.

Eulima lodderae (Hedley, 1903)



Scalenostoma lodderae (Petterd, 1884)
Stilifer lodderae Petterd, Journ. of Conch. 4, 1884: 140

Photos of *S. lodderae* from Waren, 1980

Fig. from May, 1911

Dentimargo lodderae (May, 1911)

All images taken from Alan Monger's privately compiled "Gorgeous Gastropods".

The theme for the June meeting was to bring in 10 shells from your favourite family.

Platon Vafiadis – HALIOTIDAE
Haliotis scalaris form *emmae*
Haliotis roei – collected at Portland, Victoria
Haliotis rubra form *conicopora* – collected at Kingston, South Australia
Haliotis elegans – collected from Western Australia
Haliotis melculus form *ethologus* – species found in northern NSW/southern QLD
Haliotis rubiginosa – collected at Lord Howe Island
Haliotis virginia form *crispata* – from New Zealand
Haliotis jacnensis – from Philippines
Haliotis spadicea – from South Africa
Haliotis queketti – from South Africa

Don Cram – CYPRAEIDAE
Cypraea labroliniata -from Long Reef in 1968 (An area now closed to collecting)
Cypraea caputserpentis - from Long Reef in 1968 (An area now closed to collecting)
Cypraea solida - from Great Keppel Island in 1971
C. cribraria form *melwardi* – from North West Island QLD in 1978 (the type locality of Iredale's *melwardi*)
Cypraea talpa - from Vanuatu in 1996
Cypraea cribraria - from Vanuatu
Cypraea isabella - from Fiji in1984
Cypraea helvola – from Taveuni, Fiji (1km east of the international date line)
Cypraea staphylea – melanistic specimen collected at Nusa Dua, Bali in 1997
Cypraea coxeni - from Ghizo Island , Solomon Islands in 1989

Michael Lyons – VENERIDAE
Bassina disjecta – from Portsea
Callista diemenesis – washed ashore at Kingston Beach, Tasmania
Callista disrupta – dead collected whilst scuba diving at Camp Cove, Sydney Harbour
Sunetta vaginalis – sieved from sand in 12 metres of water off Shelly Beach, San Remo
Tawera lagopus – From Second Valley, South Australia
Tapes sp. From Caloundra, QLD
Dosinia victoriae – collected off Portsea
Bassina pachyphylla – from Waratah Bay
Callista kingii – collected from intertidal sandbanks at Rosebud in 1984
Tawera gallinula – collected from intertidal sandbanks at Rosebud in 1984

The theme for the August meeting was 'variability within a species'.

Michael Lyons brought in three species of Pecten; *Notochlamys hexactes*, *Mimachlamys asperrima* and *Semipallium aktinos.*
Notochlamys hexactes comes in a fantastic range of colours, from uniform red, purple, crimson and white, to shells with varying degrees of patterning, including shells with contrasting coloured rays and shells with cream coloured maculations.
The right valve is always pale white/cream and uniformly sculptured whereas the left valve is variable in both colour and sculpture.
Mimachlamys asperrima is also extremely variable in colour with purple shells the most commonly seen. Other colours include bright yellow, orange and red.
Semipallium aktinos Like *N. hexactes*, the left valve of this species is extremely variable in colour, with no two shells the same. Examples shown included orange, rose, white and purple.

Platon Vafiadis brought in *Bankivia fasciata* collected from Waratah Bay. Whilst unvarying in form and sculpture, this species shows an amazing variability in colour and pattern.
Platon also showed shells he had collected from the beach at Waratah Bay including *Haliotis laevigata* (at the eastern end of its distribution range), *Callista kingii* and *Epidirona quoyi,* a species rarely found on the beach.
Don Cram updated us on his ongoing work on the *Notocypraea*.

Michael Lyons

No further information !

Many years ago, the then editor Barbara Nielson, published a letter received from an English correspondent in the " Dorothy Dix for Members" page of the Victorian Branch Bulletin (No.43:4,March 1974). The editor commented on the problem outlined in the letter and appended a plea for help.

"Dear Dorothy Dix,

For years now I have been collecting left-handed shells but all the box manufacturers I've been able to find only make right-handed ones. This means that the shells have to lie upside-down in my collection, so could you tell me the name of a good left-handed shell-box manufacturer please?"

This problem almost proved too sinister for your poor Editor then she had the thought why not look for a left-handed man who makes shell boxes. There is sure to be one somewhere in the world. If any members can help please contact the Editor.

The answer was immediately forthcoming (Bulletin No. 43 :4, March 1974), indicating the respondent to a Victorian member or someone known to the member.

"Dear Dorothy Dix,

In response to the plea for display boxes for your English correspondent, I am pleased to be able to supply both right and left hand boxes, either singly or in matching pairs at rather short notice. In this field, the usual practice is to take a pair of boxes and hinge them together at one side.

Of course, while this procedure satisfies the customer seeking left handed boxes, I have yet to devise the ultimate display boxes demanded by the most fastidious of collectors. Upside-down shells (technically hypostrophic gastropods) baffle me completely and will continue to do so until collectors of these curiosities chance upon the even curiouser sinistral hypostrophic specimens. The matching upside-down boxes with mirrors will probably supply the answer to display problems.

Yours etc.

(signed)

Competent Carpenter."

As far as I can ascertain after searching the Bulletin for the subsequent 10 years, no further correspondence on this subject was received and published during her editorship. Nor that of later editors. Whether the respondent " Competent Carpenter" ever received any orders for display boxes is unknown, but lack of an address in his response makes this very unlikely.

A search of Bulletin editorial archives, should they exist, might reveal this otherwise elusive character and more of his ideas for displaying upside-down shells. What would he have made for displaying bivalved gastropods is hard to imagine.

Robert Burn
