

2nd International Cone Meeting

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From the 28th to the 30th September a group of about 50 Cone lovers – including collectors, researchers and dealers – got together in the Natural History Museum at La Rochelle, France, for the 2nd International Cone Meeting.

La Rochelle is a very pleasant and welcoming city, founded during the 10th century; because of its western location in the Bay of Biscay, it became an important harbour in the 12th century. The city is historically rich and very well maintained, hence the centre of an important tourism industry: suffice it to say that it harbours the largest marina for pleasure boats in Europe. La Rochelle is home of a very big aquarium, a 7,000 students university and several interesting museums; the Natural History Museum extends into a botanical garden.

The weather during the weekend was wonderful, which added to the enjoyment of all those who attended our meeting. Prof. Georges Richard and Michaël Rabiller, from the Natural History Museum, spared no effort to ensure that everything went according to plan and to the satisfaction of participants. From sessions to meals, from coffee breaks to workshops, from exhibitions of shells and books to the Cone bourse, everything ran smoothly and all those present could benefit from the whole organization and enjoy a great weekend.

Participants in the meeting came from many different – and sometimes far away – countries, like Portugal, Spain, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Austria, United Kingdom, Norway, United States of America, Australia and South Africa. In the Cone bourse there were more than ten well known dealers, with a vast range of specimens on offer, including many rarities.

Everybody started arriving during Friday. Along the afternoon, the sessions' room in the basement and the bourse – set inside an independent building in the garden – were given the final touches. At 6:00 p.m. the entire group went to the City Hall for a reception by



the local authorities. A delegate of the Mayor welcomed the participants in a short address; afterwards, in the name of the Organizing Committee and all those presents I expressed our thanks and Georges Richard also made a short introductory speech. The meeting was also mentioned in a local Saturday newspaper and part of the exhibitions was filmed for TV, while Prof. Richard was minutely interviewed.

Saturday was packed with the scheduled sessions, after a few welcoming words from the museum's Director. Between talks, workshops and coffee breaks, everybody was kept fully busy until the evening. The talks were vastly interesting and our speakers deserve our warmest thanks for their invaluable contribution to the high level of the event (we were of course sorry that André Poremski and Gabriella Raybaudi Massilia were unable to participate after all). The workshops on the identification of juvenile Cones (coordinated by Arnold Zandbergen) and on radula extraction and study (coordinated by Manuel Jimenez Tenorio) were also quite successful.

During the opening ceremony, Prof. Georges Richard was presented as our Guest of Honour. I had the

honour of saying a few words, as follows:

It is a difficult task to present someone who is well known internationally to an audience who perforce knows him well and is familiar with his almost 150 publications in the field of Malacology, with a special emphasis on Cones.

Professor Georges Richard's fascination with the sea and its many creatures began early and has never stopped throughout his life, and he developed his fruitful career as a collector, a teacher and a researcher. This triplet of interests meant that he has been able to remain accessible to the vast public of shell collectors, even authoring general books on Polynesian molluscs, a fauna he knows particularly well, and at the same time completing deeper research work encompassing different areas, from Ethology or Statistical Biometrics to Systematics and Biochemistry. He has also been active as member of several malacological associations and has contributed to the reunion and revision of collections in different public museums, like the Muséum d'Histoire Naturelle de La Rochelle, where we so gladly find ourselves today.





I could go on, detailing Georges's curriculum, his many activities and publications, or praising his extensive collections. But I am sure that everybody will rather hear what he himself has to tell us about his life, work and interests.

I will conclude by telling Professor Georges Richard that I am honoured to be able to count him among my friends; that it is a true privilege to be here today, thanks to his kind invitation and initiative, for the 2nd International Cone Meeting, in this wonderful setting provided by the Museum and city of La Rochelle; that it was a pleasure for us all that he accepted our invitation to be the Guest of Honour in this meeting. And to mark the occasion the Organizing Committee hereby presents him this modest gift, a commemorative plaque whose inscription I beg permission to read: "To Prof. Georges Richard, on the occasion of the 2nd International Cone Meeting, acknowledging his outstanding role and his unfailing interest in the study of Cones, which inspired generations of researchers and collectors".

This is how we sincerely feel and I am certain that all those present in this room today and many others that

were unable to come but would undoubtedly like to be here with us share the very same feelings.

Ladies and gentlemen, a round of applause for our Guest of Honour, Professor Georges Richard!

In the evening, we had the official dinner, consisting of a choice of local products, such as oysters, delicatessen, mussels, local vegetables, cheese and dessert, accompanied by famous local aperitif wines like pineau and cognac. It took place in the library room and was served as a buffet, which once again enabled all those attending to mingle and talk.

Sunday morning we had the final talks and the closure of the whole event at about 1:00 p.m. It was time to pack, dismount the bourse and head to each own destinations. A group that was staying in La Rochelle until Monday took advantage of the sunny afternoon to walk through the city and pay a detailed visit to its famous Aquarium; besides all varieties of fishes, corals, crustaceans, etc. several living molluscs could be seen, including oysters, mussels, abalones, tiger cowries and nautilus!





**2nd International
CONE MEETING**
28 - 30 sept. 2012 - LA ROCHELLE



In all, the 2nd International Cone Meeting was a huge success – and inevitably contacts and conversations are already under way to prepare the third meeting, to be announced!

On behalf of the Organizing Committee, I extend my warmest thanks to all those attending this brilliant event. Special thanks are due to the members of the

Committee themselves, for their unfailing enthusiasm, skills and thoroughness in the preparation of everything. And it is only fair to underline the important activity of Manuel Jimenez Tenorio, who organized the definitive program, to Prof. Georges Richard for his initial invitation to La Rochelle and to Michaël Rabiller, who went well beyond the call of duty to make sure that absolutely no detail was left unattended.