Stella Bedggod Memorial Lecture
Mr Peter Kinchington "Why go North"

Peter is a Marine Biologist and keen marine photographer. He was at the Marine Study Centre for some time and is now a consultant with the Board of Works.

First he showed a Hibiscus flower, zoomed on to the stamens and then to the pollen showing the little hooks used to carry the pollen from plant to plant. A close up of moss with its interesting spore cases was also shown.

Peter's favorite subject, however, is Aquatic animals. The first shown was DAPHNIA with its two types of eggs waiting to be fertilised, and others fertilised. Next, a CYCLOP or COPEPOD. These are micro crustaceans and feed on plants and plankton, their eyes see only light and dark and they provide food for a number of water fowl, this group are found in fresh water ponds, along with wrigglers, damsel fly lavae which have mouth parts that capture tadpoles for food, and a host of other aquatic creatures.

Then onto the marine life of our sea shores and seas, with "old wives" or "angel fish", and NUDIBRANK, called such because of its gills. They get their colour from the sponges they eat and using the sponge toxins for their own protection. Another one eats the sea creatures, that in turn eat plankton while others eat sea anenomes, hydroids and corals and storing up the stinging cells for their own protection. All are brightly coloured. One known as a sap sucker eats seaweeds. They store up energy from the seaweed which in turn gets it from the sun "solar powered!" Several of these were creatures from Northern Australia on the coral reefs. One was a beautiful blue gilled worm, others were yellow. Over here in the South is the feather duster worm which feeds on minute particles floating by. At Point Cook Marine Reserve are white crusted rocks, which is actually a tube worm, some times called coral or Sydney coral, a planktonic worm about 2½ mm long. One worm has long tentacles that bring back food to the mouth.

Sponges are animals that capture food through their holes. They cause a current that brings food and oxygen. There are three sponges, one calcium carbonate called spicules with a variety of

shapes, others with spicules like golf balls budding off, and all with a variety of shapes and colours.

The action of the water over some sponges causes a filtration system that leaves the sponge nothing to do!

One of the most beautiful around Beaumauris is a relative of the sea anemone or corals, called a hydroid, another relative is the speckled sea anemone. These are sticky to touch mainly through the mini harpoons. One anemone is green, another is sometimes dangerous to people with allergic reactions.

The colonial COELENTERATES are joined by a membrane. There are coral hermophrodites and some are like a group of sea anemones or the stone-coral. Soft corals have stinging spicules to capture prey.

Young crabs are also part of the plankton circle- a crab with sea grass for camouflage- another with cunjevoi - and a bright red Sea Tulip.

Abalone with its swim holes and scalloped eyes, starfish, tube fish- were other of the slides shown. Starfish eat mussels by completely covering the mussel turning their stomach inside out sucking out the juices. One is called a sea biscuit. The relatives of starfish, the sea urchins were shown. These have spines and tube feet. Next a fish about 4cm long, with bright colours of blue and yellow, and a sea horse about 5cm long. The male sea horses give "birth" by having the female deposit the eggs in the male pouch.

We saw squid and mud oysters. Mud oysters have planktonic young and now are farmed. Then the Tasmanian Blennie, a very small fish; the unique Hermit crab in an abandoned shell that is discarded as the crab grows. The tulip shell fish that drill holes in other shellfish to eat the meat; Blue ringed octopus which is actually a mollusc - their poison is TETRA-DOXIN, and is used to capture crabs. Other octopuses also fond of crabs are harmless, although they have a beak that can bite like a parrot.

There were also some larger fish and sea mammals, dolphins up to three metres long, and the bizarre and colourful ornate cowfish.

All these are found around our Victorian beaches, so why go North? (At least its warmer! Editor)

Peter was thanked for a unique and interesting evening by Ken McDonnell.

L.F.