

**Channel Tunnel Rail Link
London and Continental Railways
Oxford Wessex Archaeology Joint Venture**

**The land snails from North of Saltwood Tunnel,
Saltwood, Kent
by Michael J Allen**

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1 THE LAND SNAILS

The predominantly sandy soils at Saltwood Tunnel are typical argillic brown earth soils (Malling or Fyfield 2 Association) and sandy humo-ferric podzols developed on the sandy Folkestone Beds. These are acidic with values of pH 6.3 and are not conducive to the preservation of land snails. However the provision of some information about the prehistoric local landscape was seen as important in view of the ground breaking palynological work c. 1.7 km to the east-north-east at Frogholt (Godwin 1962). No samples were taken specifically for land snails, as preservation was too meagre. Nevertheless where shells were recorded in the flots of bulk samples from key deposits, notably ditch C4744, middle Bronze Age pit C6153 and late Bronze Age/early Age feature C2805, the residues were also sorted for snails. Analysis of these attempted to provide some general information.

Samples were processed by bulk flotation and flots retained on 0.5mm residue (cf. Evans 1972), but residues were only retained and sorted to 1mm residues. Although this might result in the loss of small apical fragments and less robust species, the poor preservation recorded suggests it is unlikely that significant numbers of fragments less than 0.5mm survived. In fact no apical shell fragments were recovered from the residues. This might suggest that the a proportion of the flot assemblage might be intrusive, obviously modern shells are record (Table 1).

Table 1: Archive table of land snails from Saltwood Tunnel

Site code	SLT99		SLT98										SFB99			
Phase	preh	BA	MBA	LBA/EIA												
Feature type	feature	barrow ditch	Pits													
Feature	C3720	C4744	C6153	C2805									W 208	C5146		
Context	3719	3930	6152	2802	2802	2802	2803	2804	2804	2813	2813	2814	5030	5153		
Sample	802	825	1046	210	248	255	211	212	249	213	250	251	311	330		
litres	10	10	50	20	20	10	10	20	10	20	10	20	10	10		
MOLLUSCA																
<i>Cochlicopa lubrica</i> (Müller)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
<i>Vertigo pygmaea</i> (Draparnaud)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-		
<i>Vallonia costata</i> (Müller)	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
<i>Vallonia excentrica</i> Sterki	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-		
<i>Punctum pygmaeum</i> (Draparnaud)	1	[4]	[1]	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		
<i>Cecilioides acicula</i> (Müller)	-	-	1	7	20	31	6	12	3	7	1	1	-	-		
<i>Helicella itala</i> (Linnaeus)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-		
<i>Trichia hispida</i> (Linnaeus)	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-		
<i>Cepaea</i> spp.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	[1]		
TOTAL	0	0	3	1	0	0	2	2	1	1	1	0	1	0		

Snails in [] are those with periostrium and therefore modern and are excluded from the sum

The most abundant species is *Cecilioides acicula* which is a burrowing species and therefore probably recent. In addition *Punctum pygmaeum* was recorded in three samples, in

which two of these were clearly entirely modern specimens, and in the third sample the antiquity of the specimen (context 3719) is questionable. There, are unfortunately too few shells to make any significant comment, except that all of those which are possibly contemporary with the archaeological deposits, are open country species (*Vertigo pygmaea*, *Vallonia costata*, *V. excentrica*), typical of open pasture, trampled grassland and arable habitats. If these are contemporary with the deposits it suggest that woodland had been long cleared and that open an established open landscape existed by the Bronze Age

2 REFERENCES

Evans, J G, 1972 *Land Snails in Archaeology*, London Seminar press

Godwin, H, 1962 Vegetational history of the Kentish Chalk Downs as seen at Wingham and Frogholt, *Veröffertlichungen des geobotanischen* **37**, 83-9 (Zurich)