

APPENDIX 10: ASSESSMENT OF MOLLUSCS

Alan Pipe

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Mollusc shells were recovered during excavation works at the watching brief sites (ARC 330 98) and Whitehill Road Barrow (ARC WHR 99).
- 1.2 Mollusc shells were recovered by wet-sieving/flotation of bulk samples taken in the field. These were washed using a modified Siraf tank fitted with 1.0mm and 0.25mm flexible nylon meshes to retain the residue and flot fractions respectively. These fractions were air-dried and visually sorted for mollusc remains, which were bagged and labelled as individual sample groups.
- 1.3 The material was assessed to determine any possible value to the Fieldwork Event Aim:
 - to establish a record of the changing palaeo-environment for all time periods present and the interaction with past economies.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 All samples containing mollusc remains were recorded onto a table template in terms of habitat preference and approximate quantification as specified in the CTRL project requirements. No sub-sampling of sample groups was carried out. Preliminary identifications of taxa were made using a binocular microscope and following Cameron & Kerney 1976; allocations of habitat preference followed Kerney 1999.

3. Quantifications

- 3.1 The material is in good condition and presents no difficulty in terms of species identification. The value of the assemblage will not be affected by factors of preservation.
- 3.2 A total of four small groups of mollusc shells, an approximate total of 65 shells, were assessed. This material derived entirely from terrestrial species; there were no marine or freshwater forms. The identified taxa recovered were *Cecilioides acicula*, *Retinella sp.*, *Vallonia pulchella*, *Cepaea nemoralis*, *Hygromia sp.*, *Pomatias elegans*, and *Discus rotundatus*.
- 3.3 The table below groups this material in terms of habitat preference and relative abundance as specified by the CTRL assessment template.

4. Provenance

- 4.1 The snail shells come from the complex of ditches at Fawkham Junction, dated c AD50 to AD100 and from the outer ditch fill of the Whitehill Road Barrow, dated c 2000 – 1600 BC.

5. Conservation

- 5.1 Further analysis of this material would involve more detailed examination under a binocular microscope in order to ensure precise identification of all species present. There is no reason why such work would damage the shells or impose any restriction on long-term storage procedures.
- 5.2 The shells are mainly small and fragile and therefore liable to accidental damage by crushing. They should therefore all be stored by context/sample group in glass tubes or clear plastic boxes, each contained within labelled plastic bags. The complete assemblage should then be stored in an archive quality 'shoe-box'.
- 5.3 The mollusc assemblage should be retained for comparison with other sites of similar dates in Area 330.

6. Comparative material

- 6.1 Although the very small size of this assemblage does not justify detailed inter-site comparison with any other particular site, for completeness it should be included in any overall review of the CTRL Zonal molluscan groups.

7. Potential for further work

- 7.1 The assemblage has very little potential for further study in terms of quantification of species, or of ecological interpretation. Identification of all species present will allow some comment on the general nature of the local environment at ARC WHR 99 only. It will not be possible to specify spatial and temporal variation resulting from changes in landuse.
- 7.2 All species would be identified and counted in order to maximise data retrieval from this very small group.

8. Bibliography

Cameron, R A D, & Redfern, M, 1976 British land snails *Linnean Society synopses of the British fauna no.6* London

Kerney, M, 1999 *Atlas of the land and freshwater molluscs of Britain and Ireland*, Colchester

Table 20: Assessment of molluscs from Zone 1

| Event code | ARC 330 98 | ARC 330 98 | ARC 330 98 | ARC WHR 99 |
|-------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Column/Sectn | | | | |
| Sample | 62 | 63 | 104 | 17 |
| Context | 316 | 318 | 403 | 69 |
| Date/ interpretation | /fill | /fill | /fill | /ditch |
| Depth | | | | |
| Catholic species | | | | |
| Open country species | | | | |
| Shade-loving species | +++ | +++ | + | |
| Burrowing species | | | | + |
| Aquatic species | | | | |
| Approx totals | 35 | 25 | 2 | 5 |

+ present (0-5 items), ++ some (6-10 items), +++ many (11+).