

## **APPENDIX 8: ASSESSMENT OF MOLLUSCS**

Alan Pipe

### **1. Introduction**

1.1 Mollusc shells were recovered during excavation works at the sites ARC SSR 99 and ARC STP 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 Aims:-

- *to establish changes in the local environment through the recovery of suitable palaeo-environmental samples from the fill of cut features*
- *to determine the spatial organisation of the landscape, and changes through time*

### **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 genus and species were made using a binocular microscope and following Cameron & Kerney 1976; allocations of habitat preference followed Kerney 1999.

### **3. Quantifications**

3.1 A total of seven small groups of mollusc shells, an approximate total of 87 shells, were assessed. This material derived entirely from terrestrial species; there were no marine or freshwater forms. The identified taxa recovered were:

- *Cecilioides acicula, Vallonia sp., Retinella sp. and Helicella sp.*

3.2 The table below groups this material in terms of habitat preference and relative abundances specified by the CTRL assessment template.

3.3 The assemblage included open country (*Helicella sp., Vallonia sp.*), shade-loving (*Retinella sp.*) and burrowing forms (*Cecilioides acicula*). Although the bulk of the shells derived from *C.acicula*, ARC SSR 99 also produced shade-loving species, and ARC STP 99 produced a few open-country snails.

#### **4. Provenance**

- 4.1 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.

#### **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 There is no reason to discard any of the mollusc assemblage.

#### **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, and will be of little value for either of the selected Fieldwork Event Aims. Identification of all species will allow some comment on the general nature of the local environments at ARC SSR 99 and ARC STP 99. It will not be possible to specify spatial and temporal variation resulting from changes in landuse or to accurately define the characteristics of the habitat at each site.

#### **8. Bibliography**

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

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

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

Table 26: Assessment of molluscs from Zone 2

Event code	ARC SSR 99	ARC SSR 99	ARC SSR 99	ARC STP 99	ARC STP 99	ARC STP 99	ARC STP 99
Column/Sectn							
Sample	2	7	11	15	16	17	23
Context	13	35	43	63	65	67	88
Date /interpretation	/ditchfill	/demolition oven feature	Modern/pitfill	fill stakehole	fill stakehole	fill stakehole	modern/pitfill
Depth							
Catholic species							
Open country species				+			+
Shade-loving species	+		+				
Burrowing species	+	+		+++	+++	+	+++
Aquatic species							
<b>Approx totals</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>5</b>	

