

ASSESSMENT OF MOLLUSCS FROM AREA 330 ZONE 4

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1.1 Introduction

- 1.1 Mollusc shells were recovered during excavation works at Tollgate ARC TGS 97 and ARC TLG 98 and from the watching brief excavations ARC 330 98.
- 1.2 Mollusc shells were recovered by wet-sieving and flotation of bulk samples taken in the field. The material was processed using a modified Siraf tank fitted with 1.0 mm and 0.25 mm flexible nylon meshes to retain the residue and flot fractions respectively. The residues and flots were then air-dried, bagged and labelled as sample groups. Each group was then visually sorted for mollusc shells.
- 1.3 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; and Hayward, Nelson-Smith & Shields, 1996. Allocations of habitat preference followed Kerney 1999.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 In each case, the soil was processed using a modified Siraf-type tank fitted with 1.0mm and 0.25mm flexible nylon meshes to retain the residue and flot fractions respectively. The flot and residue fractions were air-dried in a warm drying cabinet and then visually sorted for mollusc shell.
- 2.2 Each sample was roughly quantified and then scanned under a binocular microscope to determine the species-composition of the assemblage. Taxonomic identifications were made using the MoLSS reference collection in conjunction with Cameron & Redfern 1976; and Kerney & Cameron 1979. Allocation of identified taxa to habitat groups, as specified by the CTRL post-excavation assessment report template, followed these sources together with Kerney 1999.
- 2.3 All mollusc groups were examined; no sub-sampling was required.

3. Quantification

- 3.1 A total of 26 small groups of mollusc shells, an approximate total of 129 shells, were assessed. This material derived almost entirely from terrestrial species with a few very fragmented shells of marine species. There were no open-country or freshwater species. The identified taxa recovered were *Cecilioides acicula*, *Vallonia sp.*, *Cepaea nemoralis*, *Helix aspersa*, Clausilidae, *Pomatias elegans*, *Retinella sp.*, *Helicigona lapicida*, *Hygromia sp.*, *Oxychilus sp.*, common/flat oyster *Ostrea edulis*, common cockle *Cerastoderma edule*, and common mussel *Mytilus edulis*.
- 3.2 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 material is in good condition and presents no difficulty in terms of species identification.
- 4.2 Mollusc shells were recovered from ARC TGS 97 ([102], a Late Iron Age/Romano-British pit), ARC TLG 98 (four undated samples {1}-{4}), and ARC 330 98. The material from ARC 330 98 derived from an early Iron Age pit fill [741] (Pit [740] Figure 6), a Late Iron Age/Romano-British pit fill [1193] (Pit 1172, Figure 6), a Romano-British pit fill[160] (Pit [160], Figure 11), a medieval hearth fill [418] (Hearth 419, Figure 11), ditch fill [1136] (Ditch 1135), and pit fill [773] (Pit [1148], Figure 8) together with a small group of undated pit, ditch, external, ?furnace and unknown contexts.

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. There 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 retain the very limited material from ARC TGS 97 and ARC TLG 98; the larger and more diverse group from ARC 330 98 should be retained for further identification and quantification.

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 view of the CTRL zonal molluscan groups.

7. Potential for further work

- 7.1 The assemblage has generally little potential for further study in terms of quantification of species, or of ecological interpretation, indeed the material from ARC TLG 98 all derived solely from the burrowing species *C.acicula*.
- 7.2 Further identification of species present will allow some comment on the general nature of the local environment. This is mainly applicable to the catholic and shade-loving species recovered from ARC TGS 97 and, particularly, ARC 330 98. Identification of the species in the catholic and shade-loving assemblages may allow some interpretation of the local habitat, in terms of vegetation and drainage, in view of the known current distribution of these species in SE

England (Kerney 1999). There is no potential for further study of the marine species or of the entirely *C.acicula* group from ARC TLG 98.

8. Bibliography

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

Hayward, P, Nelson-Smith, A, & Shields, C, 1996, *Sea shore of Britain and Europe* London

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

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

Table 24: Assessment of molluscs from ARC TLG 97 and ARC TLG 98

Event code	ARC TGS 97	ARC TLG 98	ARC TLG 98	ARC TLG 98	ARC TLG 98
Column/Sectn					
Sample	6	1	2	3	4
Context	102				
Date/interpretation	?Late Iron Age/Romano-British/pit	unknown	Unknown	unknown	unknown
Catholic species					
Open country species					
Shade-loving species	++				
Burrowing species		+	+	+	+++
Aquatic species					
Marine species					
Approx totals	6	3	5	5	11

Table 25: Assessment of molluscs from Area 330 Zone 4

Event code	ARC 330 98	ARC 330 98	ARC 330 98	ARC 330 98	ARC 330 98	ARC 330 98
Column/Sectn						
Sample	29	45	102	146	204	165
Context	161	198	418	426	575	617
Date/ interpretation	Romano-British/pit	unknown/ditch	medieval/ hearth	unknown/mech fixture	unknown/destr debris	unknown/ditch
Catholic species		+	+	+	+	+
Open country species						
Shade-loving species			+		+	
Burrowing species		+				
Aquatic species						
Marine species	+					
Approx totals	2	5	2	1	5	5

Event code	ARC 330 98	ARC 330 98	ARC 330 98	ARC 330 98	ARC 330 98	ARC 330 98	ARC 330 98	ARC 330 98
Column/Sectn								
Sample	181	178	183	188	203	211	224	238
Context	638	656	684	688	710	741	773	805
Date/ interpretation	unknown	unknown /furnace	unknown /ditch	unknown/ ditch	unknown/ furnace	Early Iron Age/pit	medieval/ pit	unknown/ external
Catholic species				+		+	+	
Open country species								
Shade-loving species		+++	+				+	+
Burrowing species						+		
Aquatic species								
Marine species	+							
Approx totals	1	35	1	2	1	2	5	5

Event code	ARC 330 98	ARC 330 98	ARC 330 98	ARC 330 98	ARC 330 98	ARC 330 98	ARC 330 98
Column/Sectn							
Sample	240	241	244	282	340	315	345
Context	814	818	825	890	1193	1136	1215
Date/ interpretation	unknown/ pit		pit		Late Iron Age/early Romano- British/pit	medieval/ditch	
Catholic species	+	+				+	+
Open country species							
Shade-loving species				+	+		+
Burrowing species							
Aquatic species							
Marine species			+				
Approx totals	5	5	1	1	1	2	10