

## APPENDIX 1 – ASSESSMENT OF MARINE SHELL

### 1.1 Marine shell

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#### *Introduction*

- 1.1.1 Shells of the common flat oyster *Ostrea edulis* L. together with mussel (?*Mytilus* sp.), whelk (*Buccinum undatum* L.) and common cockle (*Cerastoderma edule* L.) were recovered from excavations at White Horse Stone (ARC WHS 98), Pilgrims Way (ARC PIL 98) and West of Boarley Farm (ARC BFW 98).
- 1.1.2 Shells were recovered by hand retrieval and sieving of bulk samples.
- 1.1.3 It was hoped that the study of marine molluscs would assist in the understanding of the manipulation and consumption by humans of natural resources (1.4.c) and the way in which population increase and concentration might have affected natural resource exploitation and accelerate environmental change (2.4.b)
- 1.1.4 The recovery and study of this assemblage was undertaken in accordance to the original Fieldwork Event Aims (see Section 2.2), in particular those concerning the diet of prehistoric communities (aims 6, 11 and 13).

#### *Methodology*

- 1.1.5 The shells from each context were identified, where possible, and counted. Oyster valves were separated into left and right valves, and further divided into shells suitable or unsuitable for measuring and detailed recording of features. A sub-sample of contexts containing at least thirty measurable left or right valves would be selected as suitable for use in statistical comparisons of size or comparisons of evidence for epibiont infestation (Winder 1993).

#### *Quantifications*

- 1.1.6 Table 13.1.1 gives a breakdown of the assemblages by context.
- 1.1.7 From White Horse Stone (ARC WHS 98) only two complete valves and 28 small fragments of oyster were recovered from twenty contexts together with fragments of at least 6 mussel valves, a single cockle valve and a body whorl fragment from a common whelk. From the Pilgrims Way excavation (ARC PIL 98) 6 oyster valves and 4 fragments were recovered from two contexts. From the West of Boarley Farm excavation 29 oyster valves and 113 fragments were recovered from seven contexts together with 20 mussel fragments. The number of shells and shell fragments in each context is very small.

Table 13.1.1: A breakdown of the assemblages by context

Event code	Context number	Sample number	Left valve(LV) oyster	Unmeasurable LV oyster	Right valve(RV) oyster	Unmeasurable RV oyster	Total valves oyster (P = present)	Other species
ARC WHS98	2013					1F	P	
	2106	3					P	
		10-4mm						
	2136		1				1	
	2261						P	
	2264	29					P	?mussel
		10-4mm						
	4051	49					P	?mussel
		10mm						
	4138	93					P	
		10-4mm						
	4181	96					P	
		10-4mm						
	4342	124					P	
		10mm						
	4512	150						1 valve Cerastoderma edule
		10mm						
	4831	533						
		10-4mm						
	4930	635						
	10-4mm							
4947								
4997	294						3 fragments of ?Mytilus sp.	
	10mm							
5316	742						1 minute fragment ? mussel	
	10-4mm							
6085	616					P		
	10mm							
6097	419						1 minute fragment ?mussel	
	10-2mm							
8014	705						1 body whorl fragment Buccinum undatum	
	10mm							
8024	714						1 fragment ?mussel	
	10-4mm							
9012			1				1	
ARC PIL 98	343		1			1	2	
	368		3			1	4	

### *Provenance*

- 1.1.8 The provenance of the marine mollusc material cannot be determined. The state of preservation of the shells is almost without exception extremely poor. The quality of the shell material totally denies it any potential for further investigation.

### *Conservation*

- 1.1.9 Long term storage would not be affected by any further analysis, were this feasible. Long term storage, should it be deemed necessary or desirable would require the shells to be kept dry, in sealed polythene bags, with minimisation of mechanical damage. Regarding retention/discard policy, it is suggested that there is little merit in retaining this assemblage of material.

### *Comparative material*

- 1.1.10 This assemblage of material is not suitable for comparison with material from elsewhere, whether within or from outside the CTRL project.

### *Potential for further work*

- 1.1.11 There is no potential for the data assemblage derivable from this assemblage of marine molluscan material to address the original Landscape Zone Aims and the Fieldwork event Aims.

### *Bibliography*

Winder, J M, 1993 *A study of the variation in oyster shells from archaeological sites and a discussion of oyster exploitation*. PhD Thesis, University of Southampton, Department of Archaeology

