AML Report 4559

SITE 538

REPORT ON THE MOLLUSCS FROM MILTON LILBOURNE, WILTSHIRE SU 19995787

by Caroline Ellis, Geology Department, Imperial College

Eight samples were analysed for molluscan remains. The samples were dried and then weighed and then were placed in a bowl and water was added. The floating shells were decanted off, a procedure that was repeated 7 or 8 times. The remaining material was then washed through a 0.5 mm sized sieve (BS No. 30). These "floats" and "sinks" were then oven dried and then the shells and shell fragments were extracted, identified and counted. The results are given in Table 1.

One sample is outstanding as it is awaited from Dr. John Evans, Cardiff University.

BARROW 2, CONTEXT 79

This was a sample of occupation material. It was a chalky soil containing abundant flecks of charcoal.

In total 49 individuals were recovered. The dominant species was Vallonia costata, a snail that prefers dry grassy substrates. The overall fauna is in agreement with this type of environment but there is a small but significant element of shade-loving species, as for example Discus rotundatus, Aegopinella nitidula and Clausilia bidentata. These could either suggest the nearby presence of some scrub or light woodland or they could have been residing in the soil when it was heaped up into the body of barrow.

BARROW 2, CONTEXT 103

This sample was also occupation material from the "loam" core of the barrow. This material was richer in molluscs containing 129 individuals. The dominant species was again Vallonia costata. This species in association with Vallonia excentrica, and Helicella itala suggests dry, open-country conditions. The presence of Pomatias elegans suggests that there were patches of loose rubbly soil as it needs a broken, friable substrate in which to burrow. There was also a small number of shade-loving species as in the sample above.

BARROW 4, CONTEXT 95

From this context there was only 600g (dry weight) of sediment available for analysis. Despite this 122 individuals were recovered. The sample was from a burnt layer and contained very large amounts of charcoal. The dominant ecological group of molluscs was the open-country species, especially Vallonia costata and Vallonia excentrica. Shade-loving species were also present in lownumbers.

BARROW 4, CONTEXT 119

This sample was from the ashy material surrounding the coffin. 169 individuals were recovered and these were almost entirely open-country species. The dominant species was Vallonia costata totalling 99. Again the main faunal elements suggest dry open-country conditions. Also present were a small number of shade demanding species (Discus rotundatus, Aegopinella pura).

BARROW 4, CONTEXT 125

This sample was from the material surrounding and adhering to the "timber Baulk". The soil is thought to represent the old land surface that would have been preserved beneath the barrow. This sample was almost entirely made up of charcoal and contained very few molluscs. The ones that were preserved had been burnt, making identification very difficult. 45 individuals were recovered from this sample and were predominantly species with open-country ecolcgical requirements.

BARROW 4, CONTEXT 126

This sample was from around the beam but contained only a very small number of shells and shell fragments. Only 5 individuals were recovered making an environmental interpretation impossible.

BARROW 4, CONTEXT 94

This sample was also of the old land surface prior to barrow construction. This sample contained much less charcoal and many more snails. In total 217 individuals were extracted and identified. This was the richest sample and contained 217 species. The dominant ecological group was the open-country species, with the Vallonia being the

dominant species. Also present were eight species that require shade . These occurred in larger numbers that in the "loam" core material. This suggests that woodland was present on the site and had to be cleared prior to barrow construction.

BARROW 5, CONTEXT 31

Only 450g of this material was available for analysis and it contained only 9 molluscs. Hence environmental reconstruction was impossible.

CONCLUSIONS

Molluscs were present in all the samples and were predominantly open-country species. In the samples of the old land surface, preserved beneath the barrow, shade-demanding species were present in significant numbers.

BONE

This was present in all the samples except for Barrow 5, Context 31. This has been submitted to the ancient monument laboratory for identification.

SLUG REMAINS

Slug plates from Deroceras and Limax species were recovered from 6 samples and have been included in the totals of individuals, Arion granules which are the rudimentary internal shells in Arinoid species of slug were recovered from all the samples.

OSTRACODS

4 of these were recovered from Barrow 2, Context 79.

x = diagnostic shell fragment

TABLE 1 - MILTON LILBOURNE

DRY WEIGHT	1kg	1kg	600g	1kg	1kg	1kg	1kg	450g
SITE	B2	B2	B4	B4	B4	B4	B4	B4
CONTEXT NUMBER	79	103	95	119	125	126	94	31
Pomatias elegans	1	6	2	2	4	x	5	-
Carychium tridentatum	1	7	2	-	1	-	3	-
Cochlicopa spp	4	7	3	-	-	-	8	-
Vertigo pygmaea	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-
Vallonia costata	11	45	65	99	9	1	78	6
Vallonia excentrica	-	5	22	29	5	-	34	1
Acanthinula aculeata	1	4	2	-	1	-	2	-
Punctum pygmaeum	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-
Discus rotundatus	2	3	3	2	3	-	15	-
Vitrina pellucida	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vitrea contracta	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Vitrea crystallina	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-
Nesovitrea hammonis	-	-	4	-	3	-	5	-
Aegopinella pura	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-
Aegopinella nitidula	1	2	2	1	5	-	11	-
Oxychilus cellarius	1	1	2	-	-	-	2	-
Clausilia bidentata	1	3	1	1	-	-	2	-
Helicella itala	-	9	3	14	3	-	6	-
Trichia hispida	4	15	6	11	5	2	29	x
Trichia striolata	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
Arianta/Cepaea spp	x	2	x	-	3	x	3	-
Deroceras/Limax spp	18	16	3	2	2	-	13	-
Shell totals	48	129	122	169	45	5	217	9