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A Preliminary Report on the Landsnails from Little Somborne.

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The samples examined so far are from context 701, all from the fill of the ditch. Four samples have been extracted and the land snails identified. A further series of samples from this site have been extracted but the detailed study of the snail shells remains to be undertaken. It is hoped that this will be accomplished in the near future.

The results obtained so far are listed in the appended table (page 3). The details of the samples are as follows:

Sample 10. 95-100 cm from the surface of the ditch. Tightly packed chalk rubble and primary 'silt'. Material contains numerous roots with diameters up to 5 mm.

Sample 9. Depth 60-65 cm. From layer above the very coarse primary silt; very stony.

Sample 7. Depth 35-40 cm. Fairly fine material, more 'earthy'.

Sample 3. Depth 10-15 cm. Surface layer of the fine material represented in samples 3 to 7, inclusive. Overlain by bare, stony ploughed soil.

The land snails were extracted by wet sieving and all identifiable fragments larger than 0.5 mm were recovered. The comments made below on the assemblages are provisional.

Sample 10

This assemblage is a rather mixed one with open country and shade-preferring species represented. This is not at all unusual in ditch, and other such, contexts were one part of the assemblage represents animals which were living in the sheltered microhabitat of the ditch while the others have probably either fallen into the ditch from the surrounding land surface, or have been deposited in the ditch with

eroded turves. Discus and Vitrea in this sample probably represent snails living in the sheltered ditch but Pupilla, Vallonia and Helicella probably indicate open-country conditions around the ditch. The fauna is rather impoverished in terms of total numbers and numbers of species.

Sample 9

This sample contains the largest numbers of individuals and highest species diversity of all the samples examined. This may indicate a slowdown in the rate of infill of the ditch. Shade-loving species are very abundant, reflecting the sheltered ditch habitat. The open country component in the assemblage is dominated by Vallonia costata which may indicate grassland adjacent to the ditch but the extent of this is uncertain.

Sample 7

A rather impoverished assemblage with few obligate shade-loving species. The assemblage probably indicates a rather rapid infill of fine material, ploughing being the most likely mechanism.

Sample 3

This assemblage is dominated by open country species and probably reflects the ploughing phase suggested from sample 7. While Vallonia costata is still the most abundant species, V. excentrica and Pupilla muscorum are also quite numerous. These latter species reflect a more disturbed and drier soil, such as would be produced by the plough.

LITTLE SOMBORNE. Context 701.

Landsnails from selected samples.

	Sample 3 10-15 cm.	Sample 7 35-40 cm.	Sample 9 60-65 cm.	Sample 10 95-100 cm.
Pomatias elegans (Müller)	1	1	1	-
Carychium tridentatum (Risso)	1	1	7	-
Cochlicopa sp.	-	2	7	1
Vertigo pygmaea (Draparnaud)	2	-	2	-
Pupilla muscorum (Linnaeus)	41	2	9	3
Vallonia costata (Müller)	117	22	121	19
V. excentrica Sterki	52	5	4	1
V. pulchella (Müller)	-	-	3	-
Vallonia spp.	-	4	7	-
Ena obscura (Müller)	-	1	-	-
Punctum pygmaeum (Draparnaud)	-	-	1	3
Discus rotundatus (Müller)	+	7	103	14
Vitrina pellucida (Müller)	-	3	13	-
Vitrea crystallina (Müller)	-	-	-	7
V. contracta (Westerlund)	2	-	25	4
Aegopinella pura (Alder)	-	-	3	-
A. nitidula (Draparnaud)	3	5	33	1
Oxychilus cellarius (Müller)	1	-	13	-
Oxychilus sp.	-	1	-	-
Limacidae	1	-	-	-
Cecilioides acicula (Müller)	42	7	15	3
Clausilia bidentata (Ström)	1	1	8	-
Helicella itala (Linnaeus)	9	4	5	1
Trichia hispida (Linnaeus)	16	18	63	13
Arianta arbustorum (Linnaeus)	-	-	+	+
Cepaea nemoralis (Linnaeus)	-	-	+	-
C. hortensis (Müller)	-	-	+	-
Arianta/Cepaea spp.	+	1	3	1
Totals* :	247	78	431	68

* Excluding C. acicula.