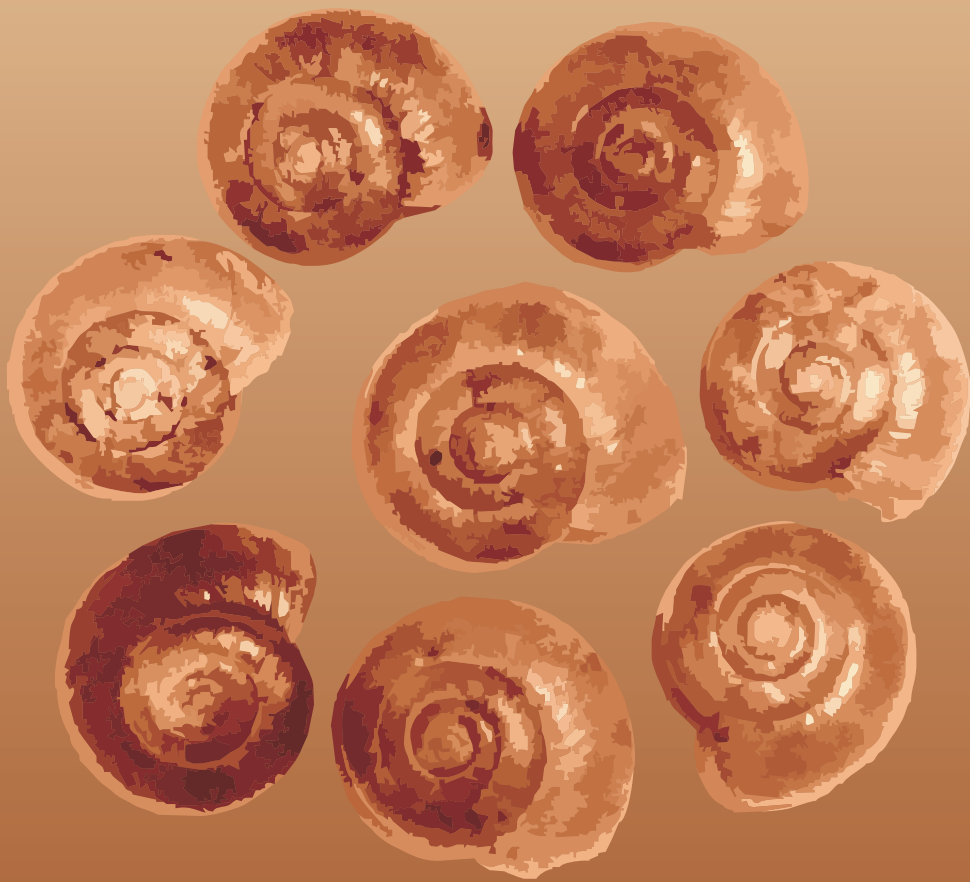


# A Romano-British rural site at Eaton Socon, Cambridgeshire

## Specialist Report

### Snails



*by Michael J. Allen*

# THE LAND SNAILS

by Michael J. Allen

Molluscs from a single sample of Phase 1 ditch 285 (segment 754) were examined in detail. The majority of the shells were of open country and catholic species (cf. Evans 1984). A significant proportion of the taxa (Table 1) were those which enjoy wet or more mesic habitats. These included the freshwater, or amphibious (Robinson 1988) species *Anisus leucostoma* and both *Oxyloma* sp. and *Vallonia pulchella*. The assemblage represents one of long sward grassland, with high groundwater table and areas of temporary, probably seasonal, wetness and puddles.

**Table 1:** The snail assemblage from ditch 285

<b>Cut</b>	<b>754</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>755</b>
<b>Sample no.</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Weight (g)</b>	<b>2000</b>
<b>Mollusca</b>	
<i>Oxyloma</i> cf. <i>pfeifferi</i> (Rossmässler)	2
<i>Cochlicopa</i> spp.	3
<i>Vallonia costata</i> (Müller)	9
<i>Vallonia pulchella</i> (Müller)	6
<i>Vallonia pulchella/excentrica</i>	5
<i>Nesovitrea hammonis</i> (Ström)	2
<i>Oxychilus cellarius</i> (Müller)	1
Limacidae	3
<i>Trichia striolata</i> (C/ Preiffer)	1
<i>Trichia hispida</i> (Linnaeus)	18
<i>Cepaea</i> spp.	10
<b>Freshwater</b>	
<i>Anisus lecaustome</i> (Millet)	8
<b>Taxa</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>68</b>

Rapid assessment of the flots showed that fresh and brackish water species were common in a number of the bulk samples. These included a high proportion (67%) of samples with snails from pits, all samples from ring ditch 60, over 40% of samples containing snails from ditches, as well as in possible grave fills, gullies and tree throw hollows. This reinforces the presence of episodic flooding suggested above, but in some cases may reflect the exploitation of riverine resources such as reeds (for thatching, bedding and lining), alluvial mud (for walling, flooring and lining) and water.

## References

Evans, J.G., 1984, Stonehenge – the environment in the late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age and a Beaker Age burial, *Wilts. Archaeol. Natur. Hist. Mag.* **78**, 7-30

Robinson, M., 1988, Molluscan evidence for pasture and meadowland on the floodplain of the Upper Thames basin, in P. Murphy and C. French (eds), *The Exploitation of the Wetlands*, Oxford, BAR **186**, 101–12



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