

## ABIDA SECALE (DRAPARNAUD) IN WALES

*Abida secale* has only been reported recently in Wales from a single hectad: SO21<sup>1</sup>. It was first reported 'near Crickhowell' by J.G. Jeffreys before 1830<sup>2</sup>, and was rediscovered in the area at Darren Cilau (NGR SO200158) in 1973 by D.C. Long and A. Pierce, the specimens being confirmed by M.P. Kerney. Darren Cilau is a steep north-facing rocky hillside on the lower slopes of Mynydd Pen-cyrn, the outcrop being of Carboniferous Limestone. The site is actually within Llangattock Community rather than Crickhowell, being on the opposite side of the River Usk.

It is interesting therefore to report the discovery of two further Welsh localities, albeit within the same 10km square and the same geological formation, but on the opposite side of this large ridge of hill land in Cwm Clydach.

The first new site lies on the steep south-facing craggy hillside of Darren Ddu at 290m a.s.l. (SO217127), above Cheltenham in Cwm Clydach, Llanelly Community (currently within the present Monmouthshire unitary authority but within Brecknock, Vice-county 42). Carboniferous Limestone crags form the backdrop to slopes of loose scree and close-cropped calcareous grassland. JFH had found a few specimens in this area while surveying for myriapods and woodlice on 20.x.2001 and again on 4.v.2003. KNAA found live snails commonly beneath virtually every loose rock lifted from the grasslands during general invertebrate surveying along the course of the A465 west of Abergavenny on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2006. Following this find and oblivious of the JFH record, KNAA contacted Henry Arnold at BRC for details of the original locality and in subsequence correspondence with David Long had been told that JFH had also found the species in this general area on 11.xi.2006 and found 20 specimens from under 50 stones. On this latter occasion a search further up the limestone incline as far as SO224132 at 330m a.s.l. Produced no more specimens.

The third site had also been discovered by JFH on the opposite side of the Clydach Gorge at the edge of yet another limestone quarry, above Clydach village at SO233129, 270m a.s.l. where he found a few specimens of *Abida* on 17.ii.2002. However, considering the numerous occasions on which quarries, cliffs, screes and old railway cuttings have been searched in this area by JFH, *Abida* does seem remarkably localised.

The absence of recent records from Limestone elsewhere in Wales appears inexplicable, given its presence right across the Limestone and chalk formations of southern England and its widespread occurrence in the Craven district of northern England. The Conchological Society database otherwise only has two old records by T.W. Proger at Porthkerry (ST06)\* on the coast by Cardiff Airport. There is also a fossil record from Leckwith (ST17) between here and Cardiff.

KNAA would like to thank Henry Arnold for access to the details behind the published records and David Long for providing the reference to the 1973 report.

1 Kerney MP 1999 *Atlas of the Land and Freshwater Molluscs of Britain and Ireland*.

2 Kerney MP 1974 *J. Conch.* **28**(4): 257-259.

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\* This record has since been confirmed by colleagues at National Museum of Wales who visited this site 19th July 2000.

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