In the afternoon we will visit a range of aquatic sites on the River Wear. On the Sunday we will investigate various river valley woodlands, some on limewoods, in the vicinity of Barnard Castle. Bring waterproof clothing, wellingtons and water sampling equipment.

Members intending to come on this meeting should contact the leader well in advance of the meeting for further details and also for advice on where to seek accommodation.

FIELD - Saturday 16 June Ranmore Common, Surrey Leader: Simon Terry (0208 453 1302)(home)
A search for Mollusca particularly active at this time of year. For meeting sites please contact Simon. Bring wellingtons, waterproofs and a packed lunch.

FIELD – Saturday 25 June and Sunday 26 June Thanet area, Kent Leader: Celia Pain (01634 266147)(home)
Two marine sites will be visited. The Margate chalk ledges are the largest in Europe. There is an interesting marine mollusc fauna. We will be particularly looking for live Epitonium nitoi near Long Ashton, calcareous gravel on Clifton Downs, slug search, cliffs and Tickenham Hill (calcaneous woodland and downland). Bring suitable clothing for the weather, stout footwear and water sampling equipment. Lunch at pub or bring packed lunch. Meet in short term car park at Temple Meads Railway Station at 10.30h to meet trains (Paddington, depart 08:30h, Gloucester 09:41h and Exeter St Davids 09:35h). Return to Temple Meads 17:00h or 18:30h according to requirements.

YCS - Saturday 3 September Pocklington canal, 1 km recording along the canal. Meet at 10:30h at Hagg Bridge on B1228, grid ref. SE 717651.

NHM – Saturday 10 September 14:30h in the Demonstration Room.

We welcome as Guest Speaker Georges Dissart from Canterbury on the subject of 'Effects of environmental water chemistry on shells of freshwater gastropods'.

FIELD – Saturday 1 October Bridon Hill, Worcestershire. Leader: Harry Green (01386 710377) (home)

YCS – Saturday 1 October Dalby Forest.

Meet at 10:30h at Low Dalby car park, grid ref. SE 858785.

NHM – Saturday 15 October 14:30h in the Demonstration Room.

We welcome as Guest Speaker Martin Wilting from Malburh on the subject of Molluscs and favourable conservation status: what does this mean?

FIELD – Saturday 22 October and Sunday 23 October Angling Spring Wood, Buckinghamshire Leader: Liz Biles (01747 860146) (home)

A meeting to look for Limax cinereoniger and Molluscan tetelus. Angling Spring Wood is predominantly an old beach wood with some mixed planting, managed, until recently, by Chiltern District Council and now by local wildlife groups. The soil is predominantly clay with flints overlaying chalk and there are steep slopes within the wood. However, the wood is not large and after lunch the meeting may move on to a second site. There is no parking in the immediate vicinity of the wood but members, Tony and Val Marshall, have kindly offered for those arriving by car to park in their drive and overflow into the road where there is usually space. (Grid ref. SP 8785 0028 to arrive by 09:30h). There is a walk of just under a kilometre to a car park in the point from the wood. Those arriving by train should travel to Great Missenden, the nearest toilet facilities to the wood, and walk half a kilometre to the meeting point which is in the central ride of the wood (Grid ref. SP 8861 0099 to arrive by 10:00h). Bring lunch.

It has been provisionally agreed that the Bucks Fungus Group will hold a foray on Sunday 23 October at another site nearby (to be decided at their AGM in May) and if so, members of the Society are invited to study alongside them. Details to follow. Stout footwear and warm/waterproof clothing recommended depending on the weather. This site is suitable for children although supervision is particularly required on the steep slopes. Please inform the leader if you plan to attend either of these meetings – site maps and more information on the species, and also B&B details, if required, will be provided in advance of the meetings to those who contact the leader.

WKSHP – Saturday 26 November

The annual workshop held in Woking offers members the opportunity to receive tuition on identifying difficult groups. Bookings to Judith Nelson (01483 761210) (home)

YCS – Saturday 10 December 14:30h in the Demonstration Room.

We welcome as Guest Speaker Trevor James from Minsk Wood on the subject of ‘The NBN network and wildlife recording’.

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THE MAGAZINE OF THE CONCHOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND
Editorial

Editorials are very difficult things to write. I started off in Mollusc World 1 leaving this much space so that I could introduce the magazine, invite members to write articles and so on. However, now that this much space is set aside (enough for c. 250 words), there is the problem of filling it. This is particularly problematic when one feels that one doesn’t have a great deal to say. I could write all the usual stuff like thanking all of you who have sent contributions for MW7 and grumbling about being so short of copy that we have had to produce another thin issue with less colour. However, that would be all very predictable. I could produce a few sentences of philosophical ramblings on various esoteric aspects of conchology, but that sounds like hard work, besides which I only have a few minutes to get this off to the designer. This is the last piece to go in as I have already proof-read the rest of the magazine. I could say isn’t it great that spring is now here and that there is no excuse for not going out and doing something molluscan and taking pictures and then writing about it and sending it to me. Oops... I seem to have written an editorial. Have fun!!

Jan Killeen

Mollusc World

Mollusc World is published 3 times a year by the Conchological Society of Great Britain & Ireland at the end of March, July and November, and is issued free of charge to members.

We invite all members to contribute to Mollusc World. In addition to the traditional articles, field meeting reports, diary of events and so on, we will be including features, profiles, news from recorders, and identification keys. Do not feel that you have to write long or full page articles. We would particularly welcome short pieces, snippets, pictures, observations, new records, book reviews, mollusc recipes, cartoons, requests for information - anything on molluscs!

Mollusc World will become an important means of staying in touch with the membership and communicating information to the conservation agencies and promoting molluscs to the wider biological community. So, please contribute!

Copy is acceptable in any format - electronic, typed or legible hand-written. When sending copy by email, please ensure that you include Mollusc World in the email title and also include a few lines of text in your message as well as an attachment. Unidentified attachments may not be opened! Please do not include diagrams or pictures embedded in the text - send them as separate attachments. To enable the best reproduction of diagrams or pictures embedded in the text - send them as separate attachments. To enable the best reproduction diagrams or pictures embedded in the text - send them as separate attachments.

Society Notes

Founded in 1876 the Conchological Society of Great Britain & Ireland is one of the oldest existing societies devoted to the study of molluscs. The Society promotes the study of molluscs and their conservation through meetings, publications and distribution recording schemes. The Society publishes Journal of Conchology (twice a year) and Mollusc World (three times per year).

The Conchological Society of Great Britain & Ireland is Registered Charity No. 208205

The Society’s Web Site is at: http://www.conchsoc.org

Subscriptions

These cover 1 January to 31 December and are due on 1 January each year:

Ordinary Membership £23.00
Family/joint membership (open to two people living at the same address) £25.00
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Institutional Membership (Overseas address) £35.00
Student (in full-time education) £10.00
Entrance Fee for new members £1.00
Early payment discount (Ordinary, Family and Student Members) for paying the correct amount before 31 March £1.00

Please pay by one of:
Sterling cheque drawn on a UK bank and made out to “The Conchological Society” to Honorary Membership Secretary: Mike Weideli, 35 Bartlemoys Road, Newbury, Berks, RG14 6LD. Tel: 01635 42190, email: membership@conchsoc.org
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Hunting molluscs on Les Ecrehou

Jan Light

“They are fragments of France which fell into the sea to be gathered up by England.” Victor Hugo 1802-1885.

Lying in the crook of the west Cotentin and north Brittany coasts, the principal Channel Islands consist of Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney, Sark and Herm with their satellite isles of Brechou, Lihou, Burhou, and Jethou. There are also four island clusters: Les Minguiques, Les Casquets, Les Ecrehou and Iles Chaussey, of which only the latter cluster belongs to France.

A week of sailing with friends in late summer, plying between the Channel Isles and the north coast of France, gave me the opportunity to visit one of these island clusters. Les Ecrehou is a mini archipelago of islets, under the Bailiwick of Jersey, which form a plateau of reefs midway between Jersey, and Carteret on the west coast of the Cotentin peninsula. The central islet, Marmotière, harbours a cluster of stone cottages once used by fishermen and now leased by a band of local yachtsmen as summer retreats. At high tide this frill-looking settlement is an isolated huddle of small vulnerable buildings as the rock platform becomes submerged.

We sailed from Carteret to Les Ecrehou in balmy, calm conditions with a sea surface which was so smooth the water appeared oily. However, in any conditions, the final approach needs extreme care in negotiating a route through channels of deeper water amongst seabed rock outcrop and the shallow gravelly sands. On the final approach to Marmotière a sheltered sound opened up and revealed a handful of yachts moored within an idyllic vista. Anchoring in 3m of water the vessel was in no time stranded on a sand bank, as the tide ebbed away before our eyes. The rise and fall extend over a range of 9.5m at mean springs.

With few other yachts at anchor in the sound, all of which were under French ownership, and no sight of others within the vista of islets
making up this tiny archipelago, the place was very peaceful and perhaps the more so because it is predictably ephemeral. You can count on an hour and a half either side of low water springs before streamlets of water start to trickle back between the reefs. These channels widen and spill over to link small pools with larger pools and the larger pools become sounds. While some of the crew went ashore to explore the larger islets and the old settlement, we stuck off across the platform with a basic shoreworking kit. A rucksack, some polyethylene bags of varying sizes, a few collecting tubes, a trowel, a knife, cameras. Lacking any space to truly call your own on a yacht, where you live cheek by jowl, I didn’t think I would be popular if I collected any samples of weed or sediments for later processing. However I had a quest. Having argued to convince my companions that “there be abalone on those there isles”, I was hopeful of finding Halosid tuberculata living at low water mark. Crossing the current-ripped sand and gravel banks which had dried out, I noted abundant dead shells, including the suite of bivalves associated with shell gravels: Glycymeris glycymeris Clausinella fasciata, Arcopagia crusae, Gari tellinella. Circophasia casina, Tapes rhomboideus and other showy species such as Gari depressa and Luecardium crussum. There were cockle-raking activities being carried out by some of the French visitors (I trowelled some air holes and was good indicator of molluscan diversity. I found these species in plenty is often a good indicator of molluscan diversity. I also saw a number of bristly chiton, Acanthochiton fasciculatus, a species which reaches considerably larger sizes on the French side of the Channel than on the English coast. Persistence was eventually rewarded with the finding of two adult Halostis tuberculata. Ormer harvesting is subject to regulation in the Channel Islands although there is no bag limit in Jersey or Guernsey. Harvesting can take place between 1 October and 30th April on Jersey and in that season ormers can be collected on the first day of each new or full moon and the three following days. Frozen ormers may be possessed at any time in Jersey (it is illegal to freeze ormers in Guernsey.)

Two ormers is barely a mouthful for a boat’s crew and in any event it was the closed season. However it is worth noting here that to cook ormers most sources suggest tenderising - 30 seconds boiling with a mallet! (Davidson 2003) - before light frying. I have eaten them in France and was surprised to find that they don’t taste remotely shellfishy! However we were able to return to the boat with a contribution to the evening’s fare in the shape of some extremely unshapely oysters. Wild Crassostrea gigas were ubiquitous on the rocks in the intertidal and were being collected by a couple of Frenchmen. They assured me the oysters were good to eat and so they were. When we opened our oysters they formed a motley collection of misshapen valves, some still attached to pebbles, small cobbles and old shell. However a bed of seaweed gave the platter an authentic air and, flushed with lemon juice, a fresh juicy oyster takes some beating. It truly is a taste of the sea. In fact I have a friend who says she cannot eat oysters because she feels she is drowning! As the rising tide lapped at the side of the boat, soon to refloat her, we suppressed our oysters with a ‘un coup de blanc’ and enjoyed a taste of the best that the sea has to offer. In the hour and a half we had been allotted to stay ashore we put together a very respectable species list of molluscs (400). I have no doubt the weeds and undersides of rocks would yield a diverse list of microspecies. It would be a great place to spend a few days’ shore recording not just for the pleasure of working there but also because it has potential as an ‘island’ of mussel distributional data in the drive to get ever better coverage in mapping the molluscs of the English Channel. But does anyone fancy being abandoned to the elements and isolation?!

Reference

Field meeting for British whorl snail
Truncatellina calllicratis

Brancombe area, south-east
Devon, 22 May 2004

Keith Alexander

A rather small but select party gathered in the car park at Branscombe Mouth for what proved to be an enjoyable and interesting day investigating the local habitat for the British whorl small Truncatellina calllicratis. I have seen this tiny shell snail has a mainly Mediterranean and southern Alpine range but has a few relict populations further north, most notably along the limestone sea-cliffs from south-east Devon to the Isle of Wright. Most British specimens differ considerably from typical T. calllicratis from southern Europe in their much weaker apertural dentition - this distinction probably reflecting their long genetic isolation. It has been found in just 11 hectads since 1965 (Kerney, 1999, Atlas of the Land and Freshwater Molluscs of Britain and Ireland, Harley Books) and has been given British Red Data Book (Rable) status (M.P. Kerney, 1999, in: J.H. Bratton, ed., British Red Data Books: 3. Invertebrates other than insects, INCC). Its British populations are regarded, however, as being relatively secure.

The snail is said to live amongst short dry calcareous grassland in exposed places and amongst rocks and stones on the cliff slopes of the south-facing scree and the Creteceous Chalk and Jurassic Limestone. The Branscombe area has some of the most westerly exposures of chalk within Britain. We were lucky to have Barry Colville with us and he was able to point out areas where he had previously found the species and where he had been told other members had found it in the past. One locality on the east side of Branscombe Mouth where he had found several in 1970 had subsequently ceased to be productive for the species - whether or not it still survives there is not known.

The field party started searching high on the brow of Branscombe West Cliff (SY2088). The snail varied from dense matted grasslands through finer herb-rich typical chalk grassland, into sparsely-vegetated therophyte vegetation along the cliff edges. A blower-vac machine with two-stroke engine was used to draw up loose debris from the cliff-top grasslands into a collecting bag. The debris was then passed through 2.5 and 0.5mm sieves to remove both coarse material and fine dust, and then examined in a white plastic tray. Little was found in the denser swales but the shorter, more open areas were found to contain large numbers of Pupilla muscorum together with Candidula intersecta, Carnellia virgata and Herigo pygmea. Abide mele was also locally frequent on steeper slopes with open friable areas. This is a very characteristic assemblage for long-established, fine and sparsely-vegetated, calcareous grasslands in southern Britain. At the time it was thought that no T. calllicratis had been found but we each took away plastic packets with samples of the debris for microscopic examination. Both my own and Barry’s samples from this area were, however, later found to contain one full grown and one juvenile shell each – unrecognised success at our first spot! Barry’s also held a live Pupillo of sinistral form – there are very few references to this form in the literature.

We moved on to Berry Cliff (SY1988) and later to Lower Dunscombe Cliff (SY160881), continuing searching using the blower-vac machine as well as searching by hand. We did manage to spot a few old T. calllicratis shells in the debris from the last site and so managed to have a successful exploration at the time. This last area is a site known to Martin Willing to hold the
Four Holes Swamp is located 35 miles west of Charleston, South Carolina, USA. It is nearly 60 miles long, encompasses over 40,000 acres, and is a major tributary of the Edisto River. Part of this area near Harleysville, known locally as the Wildder Forest, is managed as a wildlife sanctuary by the National Audubon Society, the aim of which is to protect the largest virgin stand of cypress-tupelo backwater swamp in the world. A 1.5mile long boardwalk takes visitors into the heart of the swamp, past 1000 year old cypress trees. I was lucky to have visited the visitor area on my way to catch a flight home following a business trip. The Director of the visitor centre, Norman Brunswig, kindly allowed me to carry out a brief survey of the edge of the swamp area for molluscs. The area consisted of boggy coastal plain species found from Virginia to Florida and west to Oklahoma and Texas.

Individuals were found under damp leaf litter. Triopsis hopletonensis Shutttleworth (Holotype Forest Snail) c.1.5mm. This is a coastal plain species found from Virginia to Florida. Under dead wood on drier parts of the boardwalk trail.

Triopsis sp. Damaged shell - unidentified but possibly different from T. hopletonensis.

Anguispira alternata Say (Striped Forest Snail) Endodonts in the US are characterised by having depressed brownish shells with a strong surface sculpture of axial ribs and ribs. The animals are frequently found in large colonies. The animal of *A. alternata* is distinctive because it is rather brightly coloured and the animals produces an orange slime trail. Under leaf litter and debris in the drier part of the trail.

Haplotrema concavum Say (Disc Cannibal Snail)c.18mm. This species has a huge umbilicus and a pale yellow flat shell. The animal is a predator, feeding on other molluscs and worms. The animal is long and slender and can aggressively enter the shell of its prey and can consume its victim to its entirety into the topmost whorl. It is also possible that Haplotrema feeds as a cannibal on juveniles of its own species. Found under decaying wood under the boardwalk.

Also found: small snail (c.5mm diameter) with sharp keel, small umbilicus and no teeth in aperture (could be a juvenille). Freshwater: I found two specimens of possibly Pridium dubium or small *Sphaerium* by sampling from a platform next to a hollow cypress tree, but identification has yet to be confirmed. I was also briefly shown a freshwater gastropod collected earlier by the wardens. I recommended that it should be checked that this was not the introduced *Bithynia tentaculata* which it seemed to resemble. *B. tentaculata* has been implicated as having a negative effect on native populations of Pleurocerid snails, which can quickly suffer from the strong competition, contributing to local extinction.

**Where are all the virgin conchologists?**

Not quite sure of the location, I arrived, so I thought, bright and early. I’d just opened my flask for a welcome cup of coffee when up rolled the veteran ‘snailers’. It was a very picturesque spot, Piccokington Canal, and well-maintained with useful display boards giving a brief history of the area. Not wanting any time, we made a start. Well, I say “we”; I stood uselessly on the bank whilst these very experienced guys trawled the canal with their high-tech equipment i.e. a sieve on a stick. They then reeled off a long list of Latin names, in quick fire succession, whilst the rain began.

We then moved to another couple of sites, still along the canal. The wind and rain began with a vengeance. I was really beginning to wonder what I was doing there. Apparently oblivious to this atrocious weather, my companions bravely carried on with vast enthusiasm, despite being nearly blown into the water!  

Despite the constant lashing rain and howling gale (it was like something out of an old black and white horror movie), I learnt quite a bit about both snailing and snailers. So much so, I even turned up to the next field meeting in the North Yorkshire Moors to learn from these great...
The arctic-alpine pea mussel *Pisidium conventus* is one of the rarest bivalves in Ireland. It has been recorded only from three localities: Brandon Mountain in County Kerry, Lough Barra in Donegal, and Lough Aigue, County Fermangh. The Donegal record dates from 1967 (by Mary Pugh) but the others are by A.W. Stelfox between 1909 and the 1920s. Stelfox visited Brandon Mountain and collected *Pisidium* on three occasions between 1910 and 1914, the first time in the company of Robert Welch. They collected specimens that they could not assign to any species known to them although B.B. Woodward named them as *P. puzilum (= nitidum)*. Subsequently Chas Oldham collected the same species in Snowdonia. It was not until the late 1920s that these were recognised as *P. conventus* although Stelfox originally held the view that *P. conventus* was but a degenerate race of *P. puzilum* and the evidence produced by Drs Jules Favre has forced me – at least temporarily – to abandon this view (Stelfox 1929). Thus his earlier works on the molluscs of Ireland (Stelfox 1911) and the molluscs of Dingle (Stelfox 1915) do not include this species. The full history of the recognition of *P. conventus* is given by Oldham (1932).

There are no recent records in the Irish National database for Brandon Mountain, so last August Ian Killean and I decided to see whether it was still there. At least ten “Pater noster” lakes are present in the glaciated valley running south-east from the summit of Brandon Mountain (alt. 891m) - the lowest, Loch Cruite lies at an altitude of 194m. Stelfox (1929) notes that *P. conventus* was confined to the highest tarns at an altitude of 2080 to 2300 feet (c.710m). There is no easy access up the valley from Loch Cruite, therefore one has to walk several kilometres along the path from west of Cloghane and along the eastern slopes of the valley below the summit of Dan Cum Tine. The route from the nearest tarn lying at an altitude of c. 660m (but not the two highest ones referred to by Stelfox – which are not so easy to get to). Sure our chosen tarn would be OK, after all, there is a stream flowing out of the higher tarns into the one we are proposing to sample – wouldn’t the P. conventus flow downhill? Having reached the tarn, by now obliterated by cloud we quickly sampled the muddily ledges vegetated by Littorella. A quick look revealed that there were *Pisidium* in the sample so what next could be done? Needless-to-say, by the time the footpath was reached and we had descended back towards Cloghane, the sun came out. Should one go back and try to sample the higher lakes, or keep ponding up and given rise to swamp habitat. Indeed some southern species have very much dried out to the extent whereby they support fen vegetation with *Veronica mouliniana*. The habitat at the sites comprised swampy pools, densely vegetated with *Glyceria maxima*, *Carex riparia*, *Equisetum vulgare*, *Typha angustifolia*, *Alisma plantago-aquatica*, *Menhira aquatica*, *Myriophyllum spicatum* and *Potamogeton plantarius*. The associated mollusc fauna at the two sites was low diversity with *Valvata cristata*, *Physa fontinalis*, *Lymnaea stagnalis*, *Stagnicola fuscus*, *Planorbis planorbis*, *Planorbarius corneus*, *Planorbis planorbus*, *Hygicus complanatus*, *Pisidium niloum* and *P. obtusum*.

*Spisarius nuanum* may be separated from *S. corsenius* on the basis of its smaller, very tumid shell with the area of greatest tumidity between the centre of the shell and the ventral margin, the sloping anterior-dorsal margin and the dense pores on the shell surface (see descriptions and illustrations in Killeen, Aldridge & Oliver 2004). In England it has so far been reported from richly-vegetated ditches on grazing marsh systems in south-east England and East Anglia (Killeen et al. 2004).

Proposed Subscription Increase from 2006

The Society’s Council considers that it is necessary for the annual subscription to be increased with effect from 1st January 2006 and a Rule change to this effect will be put to the Annual General Meeting which is to be held on 16th April 2005 at the Natural History Museum. The reasons behind the decision to propose an increase are as follows:

The Marine Biological Association has been advised by the Charity Commission that the level of benefits received by its members is significantly higher than is appropriate for the fees they pay, and that this compromises the status of the M.B.A. as a Charity. The Charity Commission also considers that the fundamental principle of charitable giving has been brought to our notice, we are sure members will agree that we cannot ignore it.

It is over 10 years since the last increase and the Marine Biological Association has been given rise to swamp habitat. Indeed some southern species have very much dried out to the extent whereby they support fen vegetation with *Veronica mouliniana*. The habitat at the sites comprised swampy pools, densely vegetated with *Glyceria maxima*, *Carex riparia*, *Equisetum vulgare*, *Typha angustifolia*, *Alisma plantago-aquatica*, *Menhira aquatica*, *Myriophyllum spicatum* and *Potamogeton plantarius*. The associated mollusc fauna at the two sites was low diversity with *Valvata cristata*, *Physa fontinalis*, *Lymnaea stagnalis*, *Stagnicola fuscus*, *Planorbis planorbis*, *Planorbarius corneus*, *Planorbis planorbus*, *Hygicus complanatus*, *Pisidium niloum* and *P. obtusum*.

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If the Charity Commission were to criticise us later and insist on our fees and donations covering all the cost, the increase at that later time would not be as large as it would have to be if we were to do it all now. Alternatively, we would have to consider giving up our charitable status which Council does not recommend.

Council therefore recommends that with effect from 1st January 2006:

1. The early payment discount should be abolished; presently this is £1.
2. The entrance fee for new members should be abolished; presently £1.
3. Subscriptions should be increased to:
   (a) Ordinary membership: £33 (presently £30)
   (b) Family/joint membership: £35 (presently £25)
   (c) Institutional Membership (receive both *Journal and Molluscan World*) to addresses in UK – £47 (presently £32) to addresses overseas – £50 (£37)
   (d) Student (in full-time education): £15 (presently £10)

Council trusts that the information given above is sufficient to enable a considered decision to be made regarding the proposed changes and that members will support us by voting in favour of the resolution at the AG.M.

Pryce Buckle (Honorary Treasurer)
The Countryside Council for Wales is putting up sculptures at the entrance to all of its NNR’s. At Whiteford Burrows they have decided to commemorate *Vertigo angustior* - albeit in a somewhat abstract manner (Thanks to Adrian Fowles for this).

These images relate to specific articles within the magazine.

1. Royal Canal habitat for *Sphaerium nucleus*. Page 8
2. The lakes on Brandon Mountain. Page 8
4. Sampling with the vacuum. Page 5
5. Wild oyster *in situ*. Page 2
6. Two specimens of *Chiamys varia* attached to rock underside. Page 2
7. *Solaropsis paravicinitii* Ancey, 1897
10. *Haplotrema concavum* Say. Page 6
11. *Haplotrema concavum* Say. Page 6
In follow up to the article I wrote for the November 2003 issue concerning some of the letters held in Tomlin archive of correspondence (held at the National Museum and Galleries of Wales), I would like to tell you a little about some of the other letters from the collection. This time I wish to focus on those of Yoichiro Hirase and his son Shintaro Hirase.

Yoichiro Hirase was undoubtedly a great contributor to conchology. He devoted his life to study of shells and shell collecting, exchanging with collectors worldwide, accumulating nearly 3,500 shells, hundreds of which were new to science. His wide ranging expeditions and investigations resulted in the increase in scientific knowledge of the fauna of Japan and many areas of the Far East including Korea, China and groups of islands such as Taiwan, which contained vast displays of molluscs, exhibits on mollusc cultivation, shell button factories, mollusc habitats, collection, and the use of shells by native tribes.

Unfortunately this unique institution had to close six years later due to the continued poor health of Yoichiro combined with strained financial circumstances.

It is to this closure that the first letter addresses, written to Tomlin in June 1919. Hirase appears to have suffered greatly from a reoccurring illness that left him bed ridden for long periods. Here he describes the symptoms:

“I often feel a severe pain in the abdomen, and have an attack of fever. A complete rest is of the greatest importance to...”. The doctor advised me that if I were not patient enough to take the greatest care of myself in a slow and leisurely manner, I should not be able to recover from my illness.”

He goes on to say:

“The serious disease that attacked me some years ago, caused me to keep to my bed all the spring of last year, when I had the good fortune to regain my health. I was then, determined to work hard and make up for the loss I had sustained during my illness, and last August I started for Tokyo to consult with some of my friends there as to how to maintain my conchological museum”.

It is thus with regret that he states he must close the museum. The collections were donated to the Tokyo Imperial Museum and to the U.S. National Museum at Washington. He finishes by stating that it is also his profound regret not to make his son, Shintaro, his successor.

Shintaro Hirase followed in his father’s footsteps, devoting most of his life in the same line on work. He possessed his father’s passion for the education of the public, spending much of his time in teaching the younger generation, giving courses in natural sciences at the Meiji, Hosei and Senshu Universities. He was present at the opening of his father’s museum and made a brief address to those present, following in a line of distinguished speakers. In 1934 he published “A collection of Japanese Shells”. The book includes more than 1360 species and is accompanied by many colour plates. It is to this work that he refers to in a letter to Tomlin, dated September 24th, 1932:

“I am going to publish a book of Japanese shells, the work of which was bequeathed to me by my father who wished to devote his life to it. Now I have at last gained the helping hand of a publisher here, and the work is to appear in Japanese. The shells are to be printed in original colour along with their authentic names.”

All images taken from NMGW archive.
Wales: National Science Week 2004

John Llewellyn-Jones and Celia Pain

National Science Week was organised to promote hands-on science, especially for children. The National Museum and Gallery, Cardiff took part, putting on open days, Friday 12 - Sunday 14 March, with special exhibits in the Grand Hall. Most of the displays were provided by the Biological Sciences Group, Malacological Section with the assistance of the Conchological Society. This was a conscious-raising exercise for molluscs. The three hectic days were voted a success by everyone.

John Llewellyn-Jones, Christine Street and Celia Pain travelled to Cardiff to participate. Friday the 12th March was Schools Day, but when we woke there was a thick layer of snow. Most schools were closed, and the Museum visits were cancelled but we were kept busy because lots of parents bought their youngsters anyway. The displays and activities were busy all day on Saturday and Sunday, an estimated 1900 visitors attended Science Week. We were available to tell visitors about the shells and help with activities. They include:

• A display of large interesting and colourful shells and identification books, which could be picked up and examined by visitors. This was very popular; nearly everyone wanted to know why they could hear the sea when they put the shells to their ear! They were provided by the Malacological Section
• Christine Street joined us on the Saturday and did a wonderful job enthusing youngsters and their parents who were able to use a digital microscope and screen to look at minute marine shells. Many small visitors came back several times during the day
• Feelies: an opaque box filled with sand and a dozen shells, which youngsters had to identify by feel from examples on the wall behind. A great success with the younger children, especially as they were given a small bag of shells as a prize. The idea was suggested by Adrian Rundle.
• A quiz, devised by Harriet Wood, which could be answered in the Museum’s Mollusc Gallery. ‘Goody Bags’ were given as prizes; 50 of these attractive bags were produced. They contained marine and non-marine shells and a booklet to aid identification, and information about the Museum and Society. The aim of the bags was to encourage children to identify the shells and then find out more about them.
• Activity table: with Wordsearch, crayons and colouring sheets to make stand-up snails, octopus and snails which could be made to roll along with a marble in them. It became the focus for families as parents helped younger children to cut and colour
• A large tray of foreign sea shells that the visitors were allowed to choose one to take away. A very difficult choice for many! All the shells had gone by the end of the weekend
• A number of short videos on molluscs were available
• Display of Society history, literature and publications

The Museum’s activities:
• Get to know a mollusc, in which visitors were able to handle large living Achatina – Ugh!! But they loved it!
• Made beautiful coloured models in Fimo with Ben Rowson’s expert help
• A garden snail survey which people of any age could join
• Using a microscope to draw tiny shells and insects
• Display illustrating the Museum’s historical collections
• Printing badges with snails and other beasts
• Matching shells with shaped holes

Before we even got to Wales there was a great deal to organise. We would like to thank Barry Colville, Adrian Sumner, Jane Reynolds and Pryce Buckle for sending us land and freshwater shells for inclusion in the ‘goody bags’. The design and production of the bags were done by Celia and John. A very big thank you must go to Harriet Wood and Jennifer Gallichan, who put in many hours before and during the Science Week. It would not have been the great success it was without their unstinting help. Also: Ciara Charnley, Ben Rowson and Chris Meecham; Terry Wimbleton who organised the Society display boards.

We feel that we can honestly say that although the weekend was extremely tiring, it was a great success. The adults and children who visited during the three days had a great time and learned much more about molluscs that they could have imagined.
Notes on a French Conchologist
By Harriet Wood (NMGW, Cardiff)

The Mollusca Section of the National Museum and Galleries of Wales has a reputation for its production of new Names lists. The first was the New Names of James Cosmo Melville, produced by Alison Trevor in 1987. This was followed by three more over the following decade: those of Tomlin, Smith and the Adams brothers. All have since become standard reference texts for curators and enthusiasts worldwide. To continue this tradition Jennifer Gallichan and myself started work a year ago on researching the French conchologist César-Marie-Felix Ancey. Although his entire collection does not reside at Cardiff a good proportion does and so trawling the Melvill-Tomlin collection for his material seemed a good place to start. Through reading his obituaries and other references we have also been able to find out a lot about Ancey as a collector and the great contribution to science he provided in his short life.

Ancey was born in Marseille, France on 15th November 1860. He showed a keen interest in natural history and by the time he was 23 he was appointed conservator of the Oberthur entomological collections at Rennes. Shortly afterwards he returned to Marseille to study the diverse mix of law, literature and science and successfully obtained his degree in 1885. Two years on he entered the government in Algeria and after 13 years hard work he was promoted to acting administrator at Mascara in Western Algeria.

Even before Ancey started his studies he was writing and publishing conchological papers and began to amass his own collection. From 1881 to the year he died he published some 140 papers and introduced over 500 new taxa names. Many of his papers can be found in the prominent French journals such as the Journaux de Conchylie, Bulletins de la Société Zoologique de France and La Naturophile. His interest was very much focused on the smaller land snails and through exchange and purchase he collected from worldwide localities. The Pacific and Asia are particularly strong in his collection but it also covers Europe, N & S America. Ancey's great desire to have made a scientific journey to the Cape Verde Islands or South America but sadly this dream was never realised as Ancey died of a fever at the young age of 46.

After Ancey's death Fischer (1908) published a list of his many small publications on Mollusca and Geret (1909) published a list of Ancey's new species names. Although his entire collection does not reside at Cardiff a good proportion does and so trawling the Melvill-Tomlin collection for his material seemed a good place to start. Through reading his obituaries and other references we have also been able to find out a lot about Ancey as a collector and the great contribution to science he provided in his short life.

Researching these to ascertain how many of them are present. As we are aware that a lot of Ancey's material is also in Brussels we wish to go there to continue our research and as much of his type material as possible. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Conchological Society of Great Britain and Ireland for awarding us a grant which will allow us to make this trip in the coming months. We hope that our final publication will be taken to a higher level than the previous lists with the inclusion of high quality images of the types and by researching the material from the other collections. We also hope it will reflect the true extent of Ancey's contribution to conchology and help to make his collection more accessible to the scientific community worldwide.

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Alcaries, shellfish bars are limited in this rural area. Bring your own food and drink. Some parts of Treswell Wood are muddy – bring walking boots or wellingtons.

Meet at 1000h at the car park show near Taylors Earth, grid ref of TQ 698691. Low tide is at 10:50h.

FIELD - Saturday 25 May
Treswell Wood Tunnel nature reserves, Nottinghamsribe. Leader: Chris du Feu (01472 484000) (home).
A one day meeting to record molluscs in two very different habitats. Both are SSSIs managed by Nature's Wildlife Trust and although relatively close are in different 10km squares in this relatively hydrologically recorded part of the country. Trelawny Wood is a roundwood woodland, managed since 1973 by NWT and is coppiced with holly, mainly with ash stands. Molluscs recording in the wood has been limited to Sussex. Cliftonforth Wood is an area of limeteared woodland with some scrub woodland. No mollusc recording has been carried out here.

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