


REPORT
ON THE
MOLLUSCS
OF THE
WEST SUSSEX
CHALK DOWNS
1993

Dr. M. Willing

SUSSEX DOWNS

CONSERVATION BOARD

 **west
sussex
county
council**

17. **Steyping Round Hill (TQ 168103)**

ASPECT - slopes facing in all directions. The important areas that were surveyed were easterly and southerly facing.

MANAGEMENT - the coombe to the east of the quarry appeared to have been lightly horse grazed. The area in and around the quarry has been recently partly scrub cleared, although there appears to be no managed grazing regime.

MOLLUSCS - the short turf and scree slopes of the quarry produced many obligate short turf species including abundant *Abida secale* and *Pupilla muscorum*. The presence of the local (to Sussex) species, *Lauria cylindracea* is of note. Although the coombe has numbers of shortgrassland species, the widespread areas of rank vegetation and encroaching scrub support a number of shade demanding taxa such as *Pomatias elegans*. The number of *Cochlicella acuta* contrast with the abundance of this species on Steyping Down to the south. The northern slopes of Steyping Round Hill are covered in rank grass and a short visit produced no short turf indicator molluscs.

RECOMMENDATIONS - the areas of grassland around the quarry needs to be grazed or mown regularly. The areas of scree should be disturbed as little as possible. In the coombe more intense grazing, particularly with cattle, might reduce and control the spread of rank vegetation.

18. **Steyping Rifle Range (TQ 165113)**

ASPECT - a coombe with northern and southern facing slopes.

MANAGEMENT - light cattle and sheep grazing.

MOLLUSCS - this is a very important site because, (in addition to the usual, moderately widespread suite of old short turf indicator species) there is an abundance of *Monacha cartusiana* and *Helicella itala*. Both of these rare and vulnerable species occur at few sites in West Sussex, and they are only known living together at one other survey site, that of Amberley Mount. Both *M. cartusiana* and *H. itala* are restricted to the southerly facing slopes of the coombe.

RECOMMENDATIONS - there is a rather worrying amount of hawthorn scrub on the southerly facing slopes, which needs to be controlled or cleared.

**SUMMARY OF
SITE
IMPORTANCE**

6.1 In order to simplify appreciation of the relative importance of study sites, they have been classified into four categories. These include sites of :

- (1) National Importance.
- (2) Regional Importance (the "region" being approximately South-East England).
- (3) Local Importance - sites which have at least one short grassland indicator species present; and
- (4) Little Importance at present.

The sites are outlined in table 1, followed by a brief further discussion on sites of National, Regional and Local importance.

TABLE 1

A summary of the relative importance of Study Sites

MOLLUSCAN IMPORTANCE	SITES (AS NUMBERED IN SECTION 4)
NATIONAL IMPORTANCE	13, 18, 35, 36, 37.
REGIONAL IMPORTANCE	2, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17, 19, 30, 32, 38, 40, 48.
LOCAL IMPORTANCE	1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 14, 15, 20, 24, 26, 28, 29, 31, 33, 34, 39, 41, 42, 44, 46, 47B, 49, 50, 51, 53, 55, 56, 59, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 68.
OF LITTLE OR NO IMPORTANCE	5, 7, 21, 23, 25, 27, 43, 45, 47A, 52, 54, 57, 58, 60, 67.

6.2 SITES OF NATIONAL IMPORTANCE

6.2.1 13 (Coombe south of old Erringham Farm)

As well as a wide range of old chalk grassland species, this site is very important due to the abundance over several hectares, of the Red Data Book species *Monacha cartusiana*.

6.2.2 18 (Steining Rifle Range)

This relatively small site has an abundance of all the more common short turf indicator species as well as the regionally endangered *Helicella itala* and the Red Data Book species *Monacha cartusiana*.

6.2.3 35, 36, 37 (The Amberley Mount complex)

These sites are of National Importance because they support "a regionally complete" range of characteristic short turf indicator species (e.g. *Pupilla muscorum*, *Abida secale*, *Vertigo pygmaea*), as well as an abundance of *Helicella itala* and the Red Data Book, *Monacha cartusiana*. Additionally there are populations of the local maritime species *Cochlicella acuta*.

6.3 SITES OF REGIONAL IMPORTANCE

6.3.1 2 Newtimber Hill

Site 2 is of regional importance as it has a good range of the characteristic short turf species over a comparatively large area, as well as local populations of the maritime *Cochlicella acuta*.

6.3.2 10, 11. (Room Bottom and adjacent old Quarry workings)

These sites have a good range of characteristic short turf species as well as small, but vulnerable populations of the regionally threatened *Helicella itala*.

6.3.3 12 (Anchor Bottom)

Anchor Bottom is regionally important as it has a characteristic range of short turf indicator species and a moderate, but probably stable, population of *Helicella itala*.

6.3.4 16 (Steining Bowl)

As well as a characteristic population of short turf species over a relatively large area it has a very large population of the local maritime species, *Cochlicella acuta*.

6.3.5 **17 (Steyping Round Hill)**

Is regionally important for it is similar to site 16 but also supports an abundance of *Abida secale* and the regionally local *Lauria cylindracea*.

6.3.6 **19 (South-West of Wiston House)**

This site is notable on account of the abundance of *Helicella itala* over a fairly extensive area.

6.3.7 **30 (Highdown Hill) and 38 (Grassland by the entrance to Arundel Park)**

Although these sites both support populations of the Red Data Book *Monacha cartusiana*, these only occur in a very limited and vulnerable area.

6.3.8 **32 (Chantry Hill), 48 (Heyshott Grassland)**

These sites are important as they support good populations of the characteristic short turf indicator species over fairly large areas of the north facing scarp slope of the Downs. Generally the north-facing slopes are much poorer than the south-facing areas for these species.

6.3.9 **40 (Grassland to the immediate north of Swanbourne Lake)**

This grassland supports a good range of characteristic short-turf indicator species as well as low numbers of *Helicella itala*.

6.4 **SITES OF LOCAL IMPORTANCE**

All of these sites (listed in table 1) support at least one short turf indicator species and are thus of at least local importance in representing unimproved chalk turf.

6.5 **THE IMPORTANCE OF SOUTH-FACING SITUATIONS**

With the exception of sites 32 and 48, all the remaining sites of either national or regional importance have a southerly facing aspect. (Or the important sections of the sites were southerly facing).