

Field Meeting to north Nottinghamshire - Chris du Feu

North Nottinghamshire is a rather poorly recorded area for molluscs. This field visit had been arranged to cover two habitats - ancient woodland and limestone grassland. Fortunately, the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust has two reserves in the area with these habitats: Treswell Wood in SK77 and Clarbrough Tunnel, a little to the north in SK78. Only a few people attended, but these included both veterans, novices and non-members from NWT.

The morning was spent in Treswell Wood. This ancient woodland is mainly of coppiced ash with hazel understorey. It is situated on heavy clay and parts remain damp throughout the year - an island in a sea of dry arable farmland. The coppice rotation gives a variety of habitats in a relatively small area although this may affect the internal distribution of some other species (such as birds or butterflies) more than it does molluscs. There are some ponds and shaded, wet patches and a stream (which sadly no longer flows throughout the year). The slugs in the wood have been observed over a number of years and it would have been surprising to find any new species. We were not surprised. The shelled molluscs have hardly been recorded, so almost any species would be new. By the end of the morning we had added 19 species to the woodland list and these included nine new 10-km records.

Clarbrough Tunnel reserve is limestone grassland over the top of a railway tunnel. Scrub has been encroaching over the years. The NWT has recently begun clearing this, although some parts still have maturing woodland. The approach to the reserve proper is through the old orchard belonging to the former crossing-keeper's cottage. This is now a meadow with a few remaining fruit trees. Again, a variety of habitats within a small site. No mollusc recording had been done previously on the reserve. Not a difficult task, therefore, to add to the species total of zero for the reserve - we recorded 21 - and these included five new 10-km records.

With one exception, the new 10-km records seem to be species which are under-recorded in the area. Thus we have helped to darken the North Nottinghamshire white hole in the national distribution map. The exception is *Zenobiella subrufescens*. There are only two records in or near the county, both of these being pre-1965. It is a species of old, broad-leaved woodland and typical of undisturbed habitats.

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It is always a rewarding experience to be with others on a field visit. In spite of the team being composed of mollusc enthusiasts, various non-molluscan species in the wood were identified. Such species included the cardinal beetle, *Pyrochroa serraticornis*. Even when asking about one plant, I was not in the least offended to be told 'Mind-your-own-business.' This extra-subject knowledge separates the serious student of the natural world from the mere spotter. The true student needs to understand the species and how it relates to its ecosystem. This then engenders curiosity about all the other species which impact upon the species under study. A particular case of the value of this understanding the ecosystem was in the chase for the Blind Snail, *Cecilioides acicula*. On the limestone grassland there were old anthills and various other mammal excavations. Old hands made a bee line for these in the confident hope of finding the small, subterranean species whose shells may have been brought to the surface in these natural excavations. Sure enough, they were there. You cannot learn about all those sorts of things from the field guide.

We did discuss names of some species. It can sometimes be difficult to communicate with non-specialists as the scientific names are not always memorable, or even pronounceable and common names are not always helpful. It seems that different people often refer to species by their own personal, descriptive names. This is very helpful in communicating to non-specialists (provided it is made clear that the 'name' is really more of a description of a key identification feature rather than a name with any official standing). I leave it to you to work out which slugs were described as the Yellow Stainer, the Chocolate Slug and the Milk of Magnesia Slug.

It has been said that we do not judge great works of art, rather we judge by our reaction to them. Being a Philistine, I cannot comment on this. However, I do know that we are judged by our reaction to the natural world. As far as this group of mollusc hunters is concerned, I think the natural world will have given them a good report for the day's work.

We are grateful to the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust for permission to use the two reserves, and we have submitted full species lists to them.

Helena Mapp and David Porter, Rosemary Hill, Ron Boyce, Robert Atkinson, Christine du Feu, Chris du Feu

(The species list appears on the following page)

	Treswell Wood			Clarborough			Treswell Wood			Clarborough	
Species		new to wood	new to SK77		new to SK78	Species		new to wood	new to SK77		new to SK78
<i>Lymnaea peregra</i> L	T	T				<i>Aegopinella nitidula</i> L	T	T		C	
<i>Anisus vortex</i> L	T	T				<i>Oxychilus cellarius</i> L	T	T		C	
<i>Cochlicopa lubrica</i> L	T	T		C		<i>Oxychilus alliarius</i> L	T	T		C	
<i>Cochlicopa lubricella</i> L				C		<i>Limax maximus</i> L	T			C	
<i>Columella edentula</i> L	T	T	T	C	C	<i>Lehmannia marginata</i> L	T				
<i>Vertigo pygmaea</i> L				C	C	<i>Deroceras laeve</i> L	T				
<i>Acanthinula aculeata</i>	T	T	T			<i>Deroceras reticulatum</i> L	T			C	
<i>Punctum pygmaeum</i> L	T	T	T			<i>Euconulus fulvus</i> seg L	T	T	T	C	C
<i>Discus rotundatus</i> L	T			C		<i>Ceciloides acicula</i> S (fresh)				C	
<i>Arion ater</i> agg L	T			C		<i>Clausilia bidentata</i> L	T				
<i>Arion circumscriptus</i> L agg				C		<i>Zenobiella subrufescens</i> L	T	T	T		
<i>Arion distinctus</i> L	T			C		<i>Trichia striolata</i> L	T	T	T	C	
<i>Vitrina pellucida</i> S	T	T		C		<i>Trichia plebeia</i> L	T	T			
<i>Vitrea crystallina</i> L	T	T	T			<i>Trichia hispida</i> L	T	T		C	
<i>Vitrea contracta</i> L				C	C	<i>Cepaea nemoralis</i> L	T			C	
<i>Nesovitrea hammonis</i> L	T	T				<i>Cepaea hortensis</i> L	T			C	C
<i>Aegopinella pura</i> L	T	T	T			<i>Sphaerium corneum</i> L	T	T	T		