

RIDGE CROSS, STOCKLAND, EAST DEVON (AA165)

Charcoal Report

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for:-

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A single sample from undated subcircular pit 2 was presented for flotation, assessment and selection of suitable material for radiocarbon dating. The pit was reported to be artefact-free and the sides showed signs of extensive burning, and the 'impression' is that there was burning inside the pit which was then cleaned out and backfilled with burnt material' (Clarke pers. comm. 20/6/13). A sample from context 4, described as very dark grey to black sandy silty clay with a high proportion of charcoal, mainly as ash', was presented as 50 litre bulk sample.

Following bulk washover flotation, the >4mm charcoal was removed by sieving and was examined, identified and reported.

The charcoal >4mm comprises several hundred fragments of charcoal. A selection of 100 was selected for identification (Table 1).

The sample was sorted using a low power MEIJI stereo light microscope the cell structure of all the non-oak identification samples was examined in three planes under a high power microscope and identifications were carried out using reference texts (Hather 2000) and reference slides housed at the Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service.

Species	Pit 2
	Context 4
<i>Quercus</i> (Oak)	79 + 3 rw
<i>Salicaceae</i>	7 + 3 rw
Unid	8
	100

Table 1. Charcoal identifications (rw = roundwood)

The majority of the wood charcoal is heartwood *Quercus* (oak) which will burn at high temperatures and is suitable for furnaces, pyres and kilns as well as domestic fires. Most of the assemblage is large wood fragments, i.e. large branches and trunks rather than smaller roundwood elements. This suggests selected large oak wood for high-temperature fires, kilns or ovens.

Very little other identifiable wood was present, some *Salicaceae* was present. *Salicaceae*: willow family including *Salix* (willow) and *Populus* (poplar). Two elements were more suitable for radiocarbon dating, and one of which was submitted.

Reference

Hather, J, 2000. *The identification of the North European Woods: a guide for archaeologists and conservator*. Archetype: London

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