

**Channel Tunnel Rail Link
London and Continental Railways
Oxford Wessex Archaeology Joint Venture**

**The charred plant remains from Cobham Golf
Course, Cobham, Kent (ARC CGC98)**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION 3

2 METHODS..... 3

3 RESULTS..... 4

4 DISCUSSION..... 4

5 BIBLIOGRAPHY..... 5

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: The charred plant remains from Cobham Golf Course 3

1 INTRODUCTION

Twenty-six environmental samples were taken from the Cobham Golf Course sites (ARC CGC 98 and ARC 330 98). Preservation of plant remains was found at assessment to be generally very poor, but occasional charred cereal remains and weed seeds were noted in four samples, and these have been identified and quantified. Three of these samples are believed to be late Bronze-Age in origin, and come from the fills of pit [137], ditch [133], and post-hole(?) [177]. The fourth, middle Bronze Age, sample is from a fill of ditch [195].

2 METHODS

The samples were processed by flotation, using meshes of 0.25mm and 1.0mm to catch the flot and residue respectively. Both fractions were dried and the residue sorted by eye, while a low-powered binocular microscope was used for sorting the flot. Plant macrofossils were then identified, quantified, and recorded on the MoLAS ORACLE database. The plant taxa identified from each sample are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: The charred plant remains from Cobham Golf Course

	period:		LBA	LBA	LBA	?
	feature:		D 133	P 137	SP 177	D 195
	group:		41512	41505	41505	41506
	subgroup:		3	26	46	40
	context no:		194	136	176	133
	sample no:		10	4	9	15
Latin name	common name	plant part				
cereals						
<i>Triticum cf. dicoccum</i>	emmer wheat	-				2
<i>Triticum dicoccum/spelta</i>	emmer/spelt wheat	-				2
<i>Triticum dicoccum/spelta</i>	emmer/spelt wheat	GB	1	1		
<i>Triticum spelta</i> L.	spelt wheat	GB		1		
<i>Triticum</i> sp.	wheat	-		1		
cf. <i>Triticum</i> sp.	wheat	-		1		1
<i>Hordeum sativum</i>	barley	-		2		
cf. <i>Hordeum sativum</i>	barley	-			1	
cf. <i>Avena</i> sp.	oats	-	1			
Cerealialia	indet cereal	-		2		
other plants						
<i>Montia fontana</i> ssp. <i>chondrosperma</i> L	blinks	-	1			
<i>Chenopodium</i> sp.	goosefoot etc.	-	1			
cf. <i>Trifolium</i> sp.	clover	-		2		
cf. <i>Vicia faba</i>	horsebean	-		1		
cf. <i>Vicia/Lathyrus</i> sp.	vetch/tare/vetchling	-		1		
<i>Fallopia convolvulus</i> (L.) A. Love	black bindweed	-	1			
<i>Rumex acetosella</i> agg.	sheep's sorrel	-	1			
<i>Rumex</i> sp.	dock	-	1	1		

	period:		LBA	LBA	LBA	?
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	context no:		194	136	176	133
	sample no:		10	4	9	15
Latin name	common name	plant part				
<i>Galium</i> sp.	bedstraw	-		3		
<i>Eleocharis palustris/uniglumis</i>	spike-rush	-		1		
Poaceae indet.	grasses	-		1		
<i>Bromus</i> sp.	brome grass	-		1		
indeterminate	-	-	2	1		
indeterminate	-	ST	+			

Key

-: seed/fruit/grain; GB: glume base; ST: stem

3 RESULTS

The charred plant assemblages all consisted of fewer than twenty items (excluding charcoal), mostly in very poor condition. They included several charred wheat (*Triticum* sp.) grains, most of which could not be identified further, although two, from ditch fill [132], were small and elongated, with flat ventral surfaces and highest immediately behind the embryo, resembling emmer wheat (*T. cf. dicoccum*). Three wheat glume bases were recovered, of which one was from spelt (*T. spelta*), while the remaining two were badly broken and could be from either emmer or spelt. Three grains of hulled barley (*Hordeum vulgare*), two of them twisted, indicate the presence of the six-row variety of this cereal. A single fragmentary grain of probable oats (cf. *Avena* sp.) was also found. A probable horse bean (cf. *Vicia faba*), identified from its shape and size as the hilum was not preserved, was recovered from pit fill [136]. Small assemblages of arable weed seeds were found in ditch-fill [194] and pit fill [136], including black bindweed (*Fallopia convolvulus*), bedstraw (*Galium* sp.), dock (*Rumex* sp.), and clover (*Trifolium* sp.).

4 DISCUSSION

Little can be said about the economy of the site from these small assemblages, simply that a variety of cereals were in use here during the late Bronze Age, probably including both emmer and spelt wheats, as well as six-row hulled barley. All three cereals have been recorded from other Bronze Age sites within the CTRL project, although with similarly low levels of survival. Evidence from other areas of southern Britain suggest that barley and emmer wheat were the principal cereals in use during the Bronze Age, with spelt wheat introduced by the middle of the period (Greig 1991). It is likely that horsebeans were also

eaten and perhaps cultivated at Cobham, and would have provided a useful source of protein when meat and dairy products were in short supply.

These remains probably represent scattered detritus from accidental burning during food preparation or other crop-related activities, but it is not possible to suggest, from such small assemblages, specific activities that may have been taking place on the site.

5 BIBLIOGRAPHY

Greig, J, 1991 The British Isles, in *Progress in Old World Palaeoethnobotany* (eds W. Van Zeist *et al*), Rotterdam