

## 7.1 Assessment of Pollen

Michael J. Allen and Rob Scaife

### *Introduction*

- 7.1.1 Several monoliths were taken of undisturbed soil sequences to facilitate both more detailed pedological description, and also sub-sampling for pollen.

### *Methodology*

- 7.1.2 Undisturbed samples were taken from sealed contexts during excavation either in kubiena tins (foil containers) or soil monoliths. Where samples were taken in long soil monoliths (in excess of 0.2m) then undisturbed sample can be cut from these after suitable pedological/ sedimentological description has been made and any subsampling for pollen or other analyses.

### *Provenance*

- 7.1.3 Samples include Bronze Age to Saxon contexts (**Table 42**). Of particular note are potential denuded Bronze Age barrow mounds, through which the Saxon graves were cut; deposits recording beneath potential trackway metalling (e.g. samples 83, 84, Q, X1 – X4); and occupation debris (e.g. pit sample E1).

**Table 42: Provenance details of Pollen samples**

Sample/ ref no	Phase	Contexts	Description
W83	EBA		Old land surface under mound
W84	EBA		Old land surface under mound
W103	EBA	W1661	Ditch fills W33
E1	Iron Age	C1499	Basal layer of storage pit
A1 – A3, A1a – A5a	Iron Age	C624, C625, C626, C679, C678, C628	Deep irregular pit complex in west of site
X1 – X4	R-B	C143, C916	Above and below road metalling 155
Y1 – Y4	R-B	C838	Above road metalling 839
Z1 – Z6	R-B	C121, C122	Above road metalling
B1- B5	Saxon	C1360 +	Cemetery
C1 – C3	Saxon		Ditch fills in cemetery
F1 – F6		C1483, C1500- 1507	Ditch fills
G1, G2	Saxon	W632, W631	Sunken-featured building ‘floor’
M1 – M11	Saxon	C1178, C1083, C1079, C1171, C1174, C1175, C1176, C1177	Fills of grave C7
Q	Saxon		Former old land surface through which graves were cut

### *Conservation*

- 7.1.4 Undisturbed soil samples are not suitable for long term storage. Samples should be stored in dry cool to cold/ refrigerated, but not freezing, dark conditions before sampling. Once the monolith samples have been fully described following pedological/ sedimentological notation and subsampled for pollen, it is proposed the monoliths are discarded unless being used for soil micromorphology.

### *Comparative material*

- 7.1.5 The most significant comparative data from this area is that published within long landscape sequences at Holywell Coombe (Kerney *et al.* 1980), and the nearby site of Frogholt (Godwin 1962).

### *Potential for further work*

- 7.1.6 None of sampled contexts provide long sequences for which a wider landscape picture would be gained. Those from individual pits are unlikely to greatly increase our interpretation of activity and function over and above the charred remains (cf. Dimbleby 1985; Scaife pers. comm.). Only contexts for which soil micromorphology (see below) might be undertaken are worth pursuing for pollen. These would include buried soils beneath barrows, and occupation deposits in pits (see list above).
- 7.1.7 Thus the assessment to date is largely assessment of contextual value, rather than pollen preservation. The analytical value of samples is heightened by the following samples considered for contemporary soil micromorphological analysis. Those of significant contextual potential include buried soils (samples 83, 84 and Q), turf in graves (one of M1-11), below trackway metalling (one of sample X1-X4) and the basal layer in the storage pit (sample E1).

### *Bibliography*

Dimbleby, G W, 1985, *Palynology on Archaeological Sites* (London)

Godwin, H, 1962, 'Vegetational history of the Kentish Chalk Downs as seen at Wingham and Frogholt', *Veröffentlclungen des geobotanischen* **37**, 83-99 (Zurich)

Kerney, M P, Preece, R C and Turner, C, 1980, 'Molluscan and plant biostratigraphy of some late Devensian and Flandrian deposits in Kent', *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* **B291**, 1-43 (London)