

## Assessment of non-ceramic finds from Sewerby Cottage Farm, East Yorkshire (OSA02 EX09)

### Alan Vince

The finds from the archaeological excavation at Sewerby Cottage Farm, East Yorkshire, excavated by On Site Archaeology were submitted to the author for identification and assessment (Sitecode OSA02 EX09). The worked flints and pottery were not included.

The finds included objects of bone, copper alloy, fired clay, glass, iron and stone (Table 1). With the exception of eight fragments from unphased deposits all the finds come from prehistoric features ranging in date from the Neolithic period (Phase 1) to the late Iron Age or early Roman period (Phase 3).

phase	period	BONE	COPP	FCLAY	GLASS	IRON	STONE	Grand Total
							8	8
1	Neo			1			7	8
2	LIA						3 38	41
3	LIA/RB		1	8		27	10	46
3?	LIA/RB?	2		5	6	7	1	21
Grand Total		2	1	14	6	37	64	124

### Retention and Storage

A number of objects were identified as unworked stone of types known to occur locally in boulder clay. These were listed and discarded. A few objects were probably also unworked stone but have been retained for a second opinion by future researchers.

### Conservation Assessment

The copper alloy object, the glass and all those iron objects which were not obviously nails were submitted to Lincoln Conservation Laboratory for assessment, stabilisation (if required) and packaging for permanent storage.

The finds are packed into two airtight plastic containers, containing the copper alloy and iron finds respectively. The remaining finds were deemed to require no special storage conditions.

### Description

#### Bone

Three fragments of bone pins with roughly spherical heads were recovered from context 3258, the cremation deposit in pit 3259. All three had been burnt and are presumably remains of pins worn by the deceased.

The pins should be drawn and fully described for publication.

### **Copper Alloy**

A fragment of a copper alloy brooch was recovered from context 4040, the fill of a post hole associated with a probable rectangular building of late Iron Age or early Roman date. The fragment includes the trumpet-shaped terminal of the brooch with remains of the connecting pin on the back. Remains of textile have been preserved on the back of the brooch only, suggesting that it had been buried attached to the item of clothing which it was used to secure or decorate. This suggests that the brooch might originally have accompanied an inhumation and was subsequently redeposited in the post hole.

The brooch requires investigative cleaning so that it can be drawn and before that the textile remains need to be fully studied. The brooch then requires a full report and description by a specialist in Iron Age metalwork and an illustration.

### **Fired Clay**

Fragments of fired clay were recovered from eleven contexts. All shared a similar fabric, consisting of a clay containing abundant subangular quartzose sand with moderate rounded and angular rock fragments. These fragments include sandstones, siltstones and shales, probably mainly of Jurassic origin, and fragments of igneous rock, mostly black fine-grained basic rocks but including some coarser-grained acid igneous examples.

Three of these collections consisted of samples of clay structures: the abandonment and backfill of crop drier 2 (context 3611) and the flue lining of crop drier 3 (contexts 3811 and 3856). None of the three groups were heavily burnt and in two cases faces remained on some of the fragments. Those from context 3611 had curved faces suggesting the rounded corners of a clay structure. No wattle impressions were noted and in some cases the 'back' of the fragments were less heavily burnt than the surfaces, suggesting the clay lining of a cut feature rather than a clay domed superstructure.

Most of the remaining samples also came from the crop driers and were of similar character to the large samples.

Fired clay was also recovered from two soil samples from cremation pits. From one, context 3258, the fragments appear to be accidentally burnt crumbs of soil, presumably scraped up from the funeral pyre. From the other, context 3797, came a single fragment which has the appearance of being from a wattle and daub structure. The actual piece represented is typical of the pieces which were squeezed through between two wattles on a structure which has wattle on one side only. This fragment is the only one to have organic inclusions, presumably deliberately added.

The three final collections consist of rounded gravel-sized pieces of fired clay. Two come from late Iron Age or early Roman pits, 3869 and 4179, and the remaining collection comes from a soil sample

taken from a Neolithic pit, 3805. The latter fragments look somewhat different and may in fact be naturally cemented fragments of soil, not subjected to heat at all.

No further work is recommended for the fired clay.

## **Glass**

A collection of melted glass beads was recovered from context 3258, the cremation deposit in pit 3259. The beads appear to have been of two colours, blue and light green/colourless.

These beads should be examined by a specialist in prehistoric glass beads and a full description prepared for publication. The beads also require illustration.

## **Iron**

Twenty one collections of iron were recovered. Of these, one was a knife, nine were nails, three were thin strips and the remainder were unidentifiable lumps, most of which were x-rayed but could still not be identified.

The knife is complete and is a whittle-tanged example with a deep short pointed blade. The knife was found in context 3403, the fill of late Iron Age/early Roman ditch 3404. No sign of minerally-preserved organics were noted on the tang. This indicates that the organic handle had either decayed or removed before the object started to decay.

The iron strips include two with parallel sides. Such strips were used to decorate and bind together wooden objects made from multiple pieces of wood. The third piece is irregularly-shaped. None of the three pieces showed any signs of rivets or rivet holes.

The nails include four examples in which the head is an elongated rectangle, an unusual shape for Roman nails which are usually either dome-headed or have flat square heads. It is possible, therefore, that the nails had a specialised function. With this in mind, it may be significant that six of the nails were recovered from context 3795, the cremation deposit in pit 3796, suggesting either than a nailed object was burnt on the funeral pyre or that debris from this object was used as fuel.

The unidentifiable objects were mainly heavily corroded, such that the original iron object had been completely or partly removed leaving a void surrounded by concentric layers of corrosion products.

## **Stone**

Twenty nine collections of stone were recovered from the excavation. However, 24 of these were unworked pebbles or cobbles, all of which were discarded. The remaining five objects consist of two putative hone stones, a spindle whorl, a quern fragment and two flakes of a metamorphic rock which might be waste, but are probably not, given that they come from a hearth pit.

The hone stones consist of a light green-coloured oval-sectioned pebble with no signs of use, from context 3716, the backfill of the cut for corn drier 3, and a trapezoidal slab of mudstone with scratches on its two flat surfaces, from context 3256, the fill of beamslot 3257.

The spindle whorl is carved by hand from a lump of chalk. It comes from context 4040, the fill of late Iron Age/early Roman posthole 4058.

The quern is the bottom stone of a millstone grit rotary quern. The bottom and sides have been pecked and the upper surface has concentric grooves caused by wear.

The hones, the spindle whorl and the quern all require illustration and a full description for publication.

## Assessment

The only possibly humanly-worked objects from Phase 1 (Neolithic) consist of fragments of putative fired clay. No further work is possible.

Phase 2 (Late Iron Age) produced two iron objects, neither identifiable, from the packing fill for the screen in the square mortuary enclosure.

The remaining finds, where phased, come from Phase 3 (Late Iron Age or Early Roman). Only a small number are worthy of further work: the bone pins, the copper alloy brooch, the glass beads, the iron knife and strips and the putative hones, spindle whorl and quern.

## Appendix One

context	REFNO	class	cname	subfabric	Form	Nosh	Weight	NoV	Action	Description
3112	345	STONE	STONE	SSTMG	QUERN	1	0	1	PH;DR	BOTTOM STONE OF ROTARY QUERN;UPPER FACE HAS CONCENTRIC GROOVES FROM USE;BOTTOM AND SIDES ARE PECKED
3256	125	STONE	STONE	LIGHT GREEN MUDSTONE	HONE?	3	275	1		TRAPEZOIDAL SLAB;SCRATCHES ON BOTH FLAT SURFACES
3258	19	GLASS	GLASS	LTGR	BEAD	3	0	3		
3258	19	GLASS	GLASS	BLUE	BEAD	3	0	3		
3258	19	FCLAY	FCLAY		SAMPLE	1	46	1		BURNT SOIL
3258	333	BONE	BONE		PIN	2	1	1		CYLINDRICAL SHAFT;SQUASHED SPHERICAL HEAD
3258	334	BONE	BONE		PIN	1	1	1		POLYGONAL SHAFT;OVOID HEAD
3258	19	IRON	IRON		WASTE	1	26	1		
3336	352	STONE	STONE	BASIC	PEBBLE	1	537	1	DISCARDED	UNWORKED PEBBLE
3340	62	FCLAY	STONE		GEOL	1	0	1		DISCARDED
3341	351	STONE	STONE	BASIC	PEBBLE	1	272	1	DISCARDED	UNWORKED PEBBLE WITH STRANGE RE-ENTRANT ANGLE
3403	337	IRON	IRON		KNIFE	1	35	1	XRAY	WHITTLE TANG;SHORT, DEEP BLADE
3409	340	STONE	STONE	JET	PEBBLE	1	3	1		UNWORKED LUMP
3502	343	STONE	STONE	BASIC	PEBBLE	1	188	1		UNWORKED PEBBLE
3607	137	IRON	STONE		GEOL	1	0	1	XRAY	DISCARDED;VERY FAINT XRAY

context	REFNO	class	cname	subfabric	Form	Nosh	Weight	NoV	Action	Description
										THEREFORE LITTLE IRON PRESENT
3611	141	IRON	IRON		NAIL	1	11	1	XRAY	ELONGATED OVAL DOME HEAD;SQUARE SHANK
3611	140	IRON	IRON		OBJECT	1	3	1	XRAY	ALMOST SQUARE LUMP
3611	55	FCLAY	FCLAY		OVEN	1	1388	1		SOME CURVED FACES;NO WATTLE IMPRESSIONS
3656	63	FCLAY	STONE			2	0	2	DISCARDED	SCRAPS
3656	63	STONE	STONE		GEOL	1	1	1		FOSSIL ?SPONGE?
3676	48	FCLAY	FCLAY		DAUB	46	34	1		SOME SLIGHTLY CURVED FACES;OXID SURF AND BLACK CORE
3677	123	STONE	STONE		PEBBLE	36	120	36		UNWORKED PEBBLES
3678	139	IRON	IRON			2	3	1	XRAY	XRAY PL 3
3711	315	IRON	IRON		OBJECT	1	6	1		POSSIBLY NATURAL CONCRETION
3713	358	STONE	STONE	VEIN QUARTZ	PEBBLE	1	0	1	DISCARDED	UNWORKED PEBBLE
3716	350	STONE	STONE	FINE-GRAINED LIGHT GREEN SST ?CM	HONE?	1	130	1		ROUNDED PEBBLE POSSIBLY USED AS HONE
3781	66	FCLAY	STONE		GEOL	1	0	1		SCRAPS
3795	346	IRON	IRON		NAIL	1	42	1		
3795	346	IRON	IRON		NAIL	1	7	1		RECT HEAD
3795	346	IRON	IRON		NAIL	1	6	1		
3795	346	IRON	IRON		NAIL	1	7	1		RECT HEAD
3795	346	IRON	IRON		NAIL	1	12	1		
3795	346	IRON	IRON		NAIL	1	7	1		

context	REFNO	class	cname	subfabric	Form	Nosh	Weight	NoV	Action	Description
3797	69	STONE	STONE	IRON ORE	PEBBLE	1	0	1		ACCIDENTALLY BURNT LIMONITE CEMENT > HAEMATITE
3797	69	FCLAY	FCLAY	ORGANIC INCLUSIONS;A SA Q;S ANG SILTSTONE	DAUB?	4	8	4		SQUEEZED BETWEEN WATTLES?
3797	69	POTTERY	FCLAY?		FUEL ASH	1	1	1		BLACK HIGHLY VESICULAR
3805	74	STONE	STONE	LIMONITE	PEBBLE	1	0	1		
3805	74	FCLAY	FCLAY			12	7	1		LOOKS LIKE CEMENTED SOIL RATHER THAN DAUB
3811	79	FCLAY	FCLAY		SAMPLE	1	781	1		ONLY SLIGHT EVIDENCE OF FIRING;WORM/ROOT HOLES;NO SIGN OF SURFACES
3841	81	FCLAY	STONE		GEOL	1	1	1	DISCARDED	
3856	96	FCLAY	FCLAY	M AS Q;NO ORGANICS VISIBLE;S ANG ROCK FRAGS	DAUB?	78	756	1		SOME FACES
3856	96	FCLAY	FCLAY		SAMPLE	13	7	1		ROUNDED GRAVEL
3861	338	IRON	IRON		OBJECT	1	47	1		FLAT STRIP TWO PARALLEL SIDES AND TWO TAPERING
3869	97	FCLAY	FCLAY		SAMPLE	26	13	1		ROUNDED GRAVEL
3871	357	STONE	STONE	JET	PEBBLE	1	4	1		UNWORKED LUMP
3877	83	FCLAY	STONE		GEOL	2	0	2	DISCARDED	SCRAPS
3879	85	STONE	STONE	FERRUGINOUS SST		1	0	1		
3879	341	STONE	STONE	BASIC	PEBBLE	7	302	1		UNWORKED PEBBLES
3879	342	STONE	STONE	BASIC	PEBBLE	1	137	1		UNWORKED PEBBLE

context	REFNO	class	cname	subfabric	Form	Nosh	Weight	NoV	Action	Description
3881	354	IRON	IRON		NAIL	1	6	1		
3881	353	IRON	IRON		OBJECT	1	19	1		STRIP
3887	84	FCLAY	STONE			1	0	1	DISCARED	SCRAPS
3887	84	STONE	STONE	IRON ORE		1	0	1	DISCARDED	SCRAP
4005	105	FCLAY	FCLAY		DAUB	1	37	1		SCRAPS
4040	349	STONE	STONE	CHALK	SPWH	1	38	1		
4040	332	COPP	COPP		BROOCH	1	0	1		TRUMPET TERMINAL WITH ATTACHMENT ON BACK;MINERALLY PRESERVED ORGANICS ON BACK? CLOTH
4105	344	STONE	STONE	BASIC WITH ABUNDANT EUHEDRAL VOIDS	PEBBLE	1	726	1		UNWORKED PEBBLE
4148	114	FCLAY	STONE		GEOL	1	0	1	DISCARDED	SCRAPS
4148	114	POTTERY	STONE		WASTE	1	1	1		FLAKES OF A COARSE-GRAINED METAMORPHIC ROCK
4160	116	FCLAY	STONE		GEOL	1	0	1		DISCARDED
4179	118	FCLAY	FCLAY		SAMPLE	18	9	1		ROUNDED GRAVEL
4179	118	IRON	IRON		WASTE	13	819	13		
4196	336	IRON	IRON		STRIP	8	3	1		IRREGULAR SHAPED COMING TO A POINT
4196	336	IRON	IRON		OBJECT	1	6	1		OVAL SHAPED LUMP
4196	336	IRON	IRON		OBJECT	1	10	1		IRREGULAR LUMP
4196	336	IRON	IRON		OBJECT	1	5	1		IRREGULAR LUMP



context	REFNO	class	cname	subfabric	Form	Nosh	Weight	NoV	Action	Description
4196	336	IRON	IRON		WASTE	1	7	1		VESICULAR SLAG
4196	336	IRON	IRON		NAIL	1	6	1		RECT SHANK COMING TO A POINT
4196	336	POTTERY	IRON		OBJECT	16	7	1		SHATTERED OBJECT
4198	335	IRON	IRON		STRIP?	4	18	1		RECTANGULAR
4198	355	IRON	IRON		OBJECT	1	3	1		
4198	335	POTTERY	IRON		NAIL?	1	14	1	XRAY	XRAY PL1
4198	335	POTTERY	IRON		STRIP?	1	65	1	XRAY	XRAY PL1
4198	335	POTTERY	IRON			1	2	1	XRAY	XRAY PL1
4198	335	POTTERY	IRON		HOBNAIL?	1	2	1	XRAY	XRAY PL1