

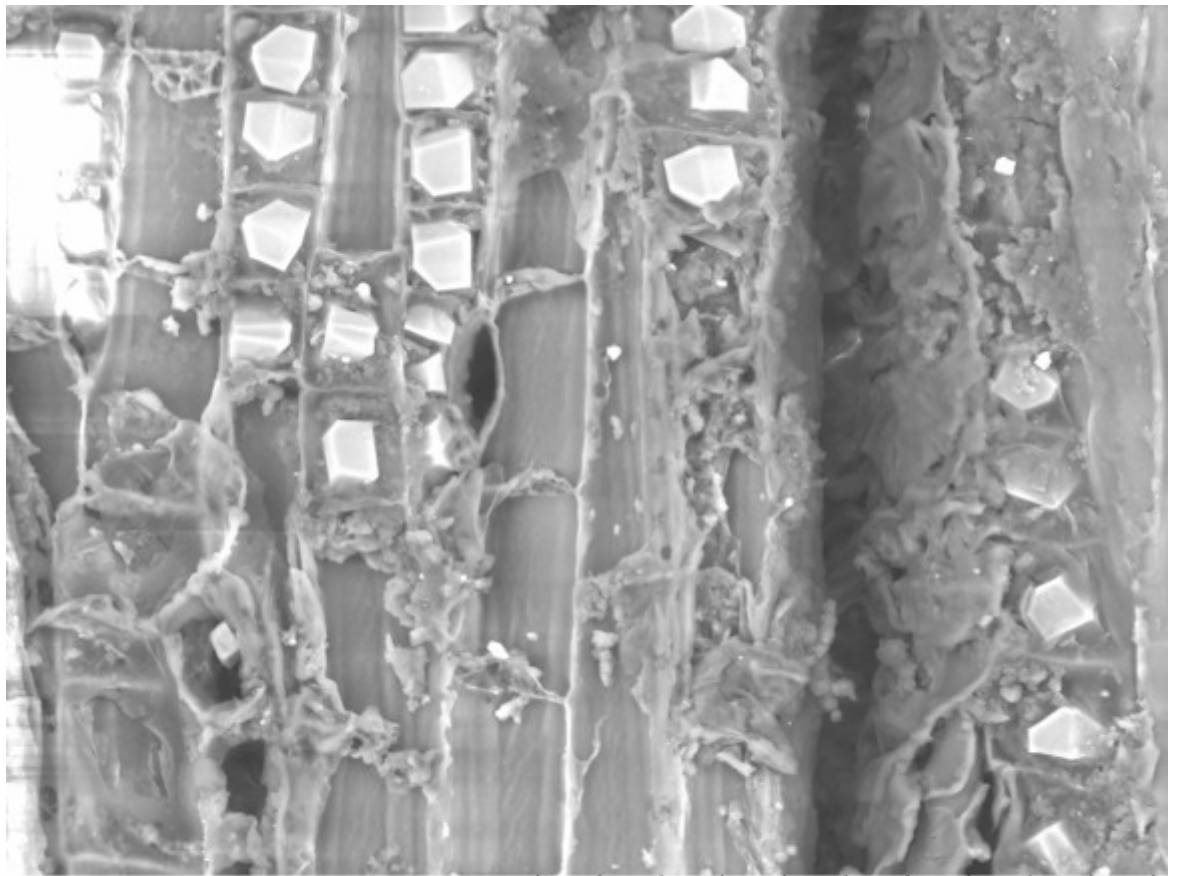
LOOKING AT PHYTOLYTHS IN EXPERIMENTAL PLANT FIBRES – BUILDING A REFERENCE LIBRARY AT CSI

July 12, 2014 Dana Goodburn-Brown Community Archaeology, Conservation, Day of Archaeology 2014, Education, Experimental Archaeology, Science

At the end of the day I am reviewing some of the SEM (Scanning Electron Microscope) images I took of some experimental vegetable fibres – looking at plant structures and phytoliths (silica crystals that are taken up by plants and often survive in archaeological soils after the organic material has long decayed). We are interested in these at the CSI lab because we are wondering if we might find these preserved in corrosion products, alongside or in addition to the mineralised organic remains we often find.

We are trying to build up reference images that we can refer to as we investigatively clean the Anglo-Saxon artefacts from the Meads cemetery in Sittingbourne. On a day that we spent largely focused on how to find funding for our project, it is nice to end with some thoughts on what types of evidence we might find at our microscopes and how we are going about teaching ourselves, the volunteers, and general public about archaeological science. We are very lucky to have a SEM at our shopping mall lab, and we are building up a reference library of structures and characteristics that might help us identify materials we find during our conservation work.





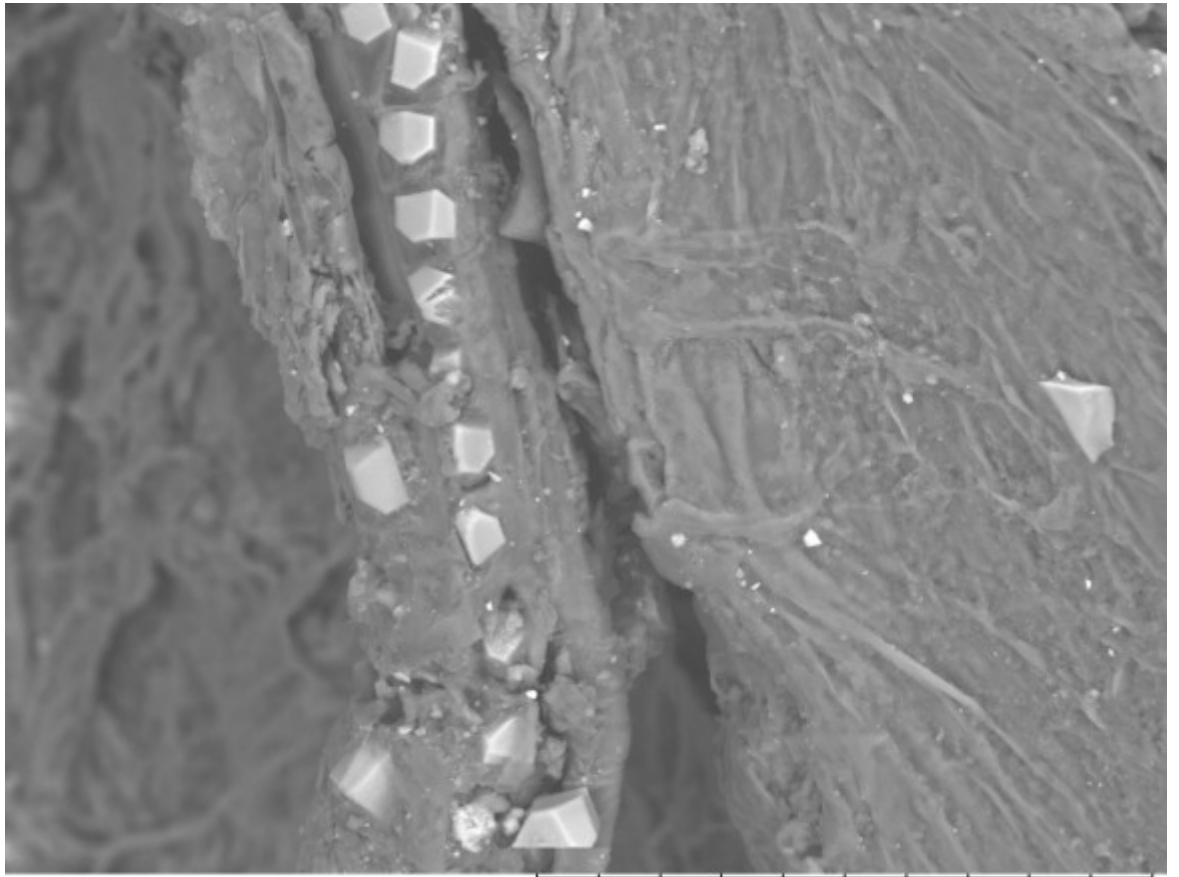
Willow0003

experimental fibres

HL

x1.0k

100 um



Chestnut0001

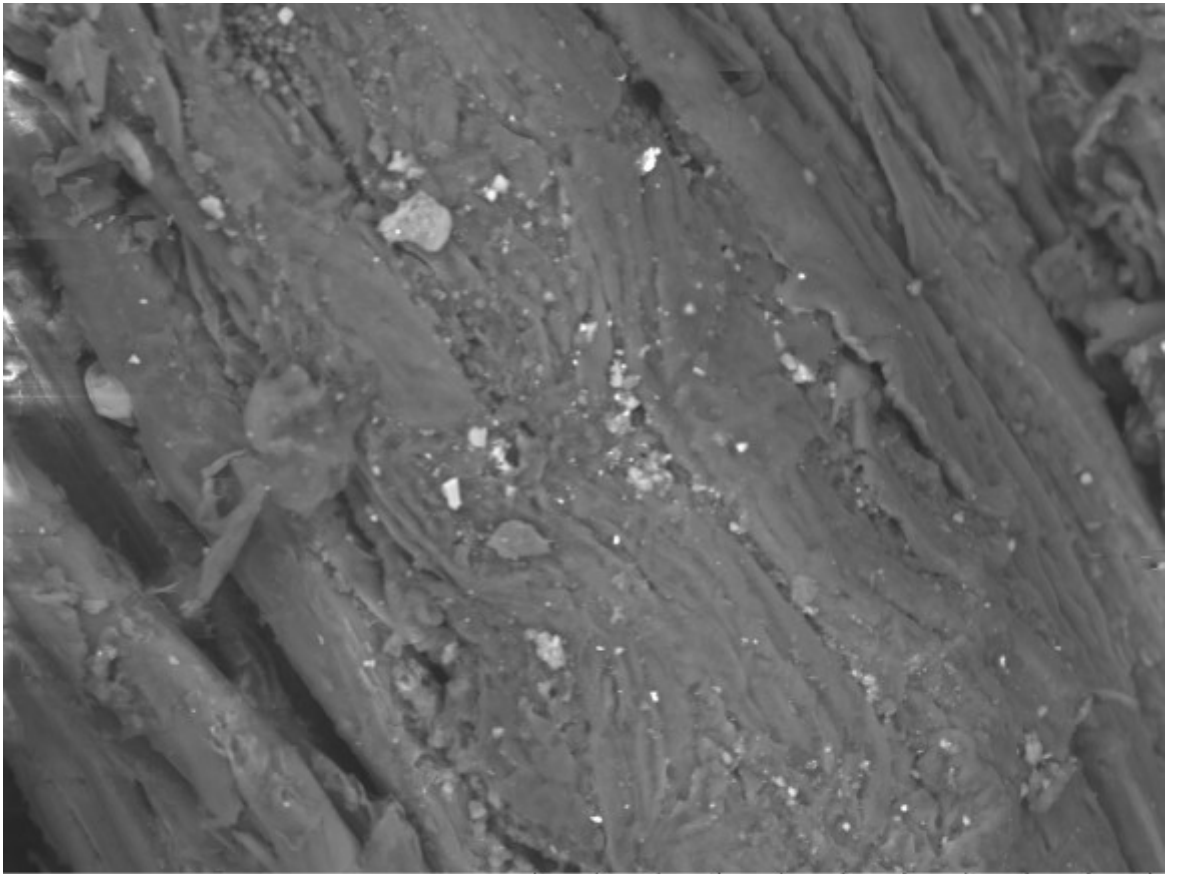
HL

x1.0k

100 um

experimental fibres

experimental fibre made from chestnut bast



bramble0006

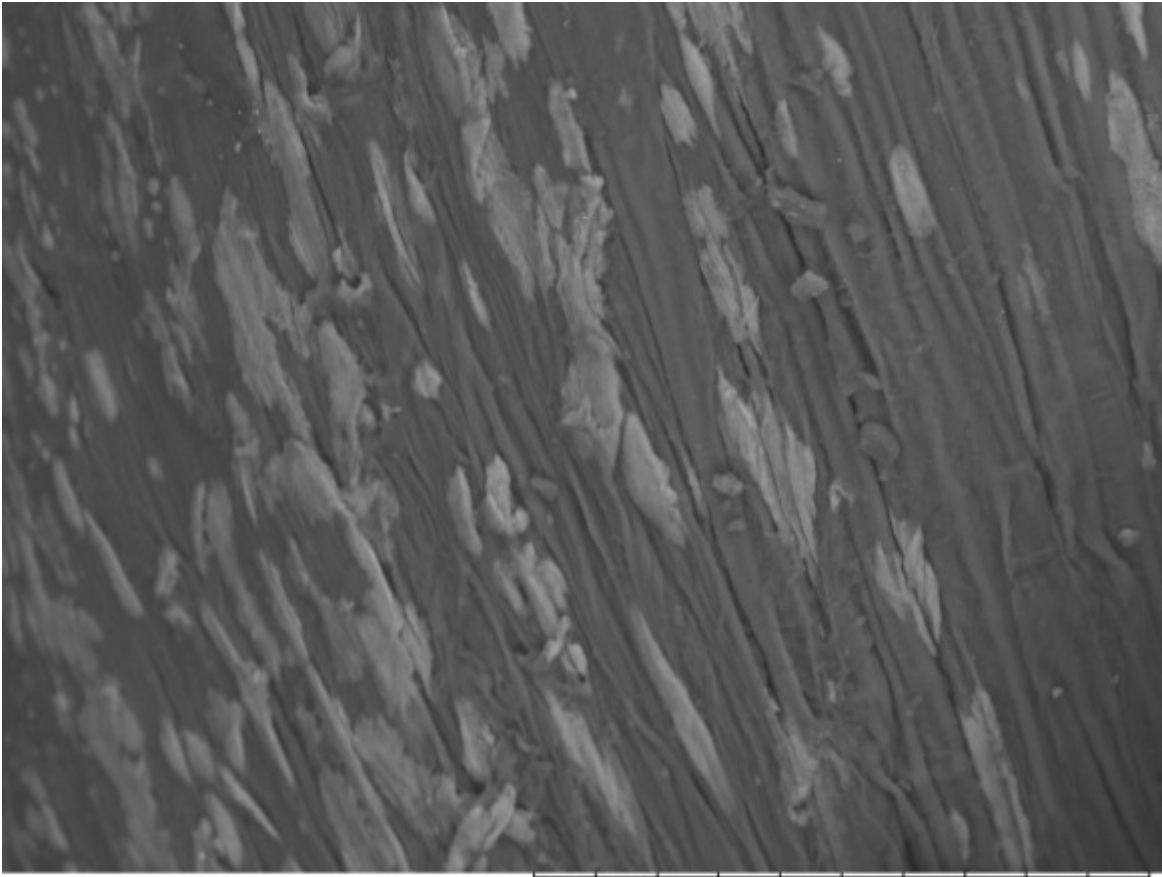
HL

x1.0k

100 um

Experimental fibres

phytoliths on experimental bramble fibre



nettle0002

HL

x1.0k

100 um

Experimental fibres

phytoliths on experimental nettle fibre