

Note on the accessioned finds from Trench 14, the fifth batch of material from C257 Crossrail Central - Broadgate Ticket Hall Excavation (XSM10)

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1.1 Introduction and summary of previous work

This note addresses the accessioned finds from trench 14. The material has been processed and recorded in accordance with standard MOLA practice and is summarised below (Table 1). This is the fifth batch of material from the Crossrail Central – Broadgate site. The earlier work has been reported on separately. To summarise, there is a small Roman element, not represented in the current batch, but the finds are primarily of Post Medieval date, mostly dating to around the 17th and 18th century.

The most dominant element is waste from bone and ivory working with other industrial evidence from the area relating to broadly contemporary copper-alloy and glass working. The stratigraphic and chronological evidence has yet to be collated but it is possible that this material represents dumping from nearby workshops after the burial ground had gone out of use and much of this material is associated with 18th century pottery. Other Post Medieval finds are largely domestic in character including a few fittings and personal objects but some funerary material associated with the cemetery was also recovered.

Material	Accessions	Fragments
Bone	5	5
Ivory	5	6
Total	10	11

Table 1 Summary of Post Medieval material from XSM10 Batch 4

1.2 Discussion of the present assemblage

The present batch of finds consists exclusively of bone and ivory working waste, all of which was recovered from two contexts [919] and [925]. There are no significant differences in the material between the two contexts and so they are considered together below.

There are five fragments of bone waste. <317>, [919] is a short length of cattle metatarsal sawn at either end and reduced to give it a faceted roughly circular section using a draw knife or similar. This may have been a preliminary worked blank intended for lathe working. <319>, [919] is a transverse section of a cattle metapodial shaft, sawn on one end and lathe cut on the other with file marks on the edges. Fragments similar to these two pieces of varying lengths have been found in all the phases of work on the site (type 2 waste.) These appear to represent trimming or abandoned pieces from lathe working. These pieces are undiagnostic but identified lathe turned products from the site include needle cases and larger cylindrical cases/boxes as well as ring/ferrules.

Three other fragments are type 3 waste, blocks produced by sawing cattle long bones into sections then splitting them longitudinally into smaller sections of wall which could then act as blanks for further working. <323>, [925] is from the distal end of a femur while <320>, [919] and <318>, [919] are from metatarsals.

There are five fragments of ivory waste. One is certainly a sawn offcut <314>, [925] and represents part of the curved outer surface of the tusk removed while creating a squared off block. It is from the solid section of the tusk and large enough that it could have been further worked to make smaller objects if that had been desired. Two <316>, [919] and <322>, [925] are sub rectangular offcuts or blanks. <327>, [919] is a finer strip. All three could have been intended to produce the kind of well finished rectangular ivory strips/blocks found in an earlier phase of work on the site which may have been intended for use as inlay.

<315>, [919] is a very different object a sub circular sectioned peg. Bone or ivory waste of this sort (type 1) has been found in most phases of work on the site. These appear to represent part finished objects. The intended products are uncertain but tuning pegs and dowels are amongst the most likely.

1.3 Potential and significance

The present assemblage further expands our understanding of the bone and ivory working industry at the Broadgate site. The significance of this material is best seen within the context of the total assemblage which is by far the largest recorded on the Museum of London Archaeology or Museum of London databases and by fragment count larger than all other Post-Medieval assemblages from London put together.

It seems likely that this represents one of the largest and most important collections of bone and ivory working waste from Britain although further comparative research must await analysis. The present group in itself is of less intrinsic significance though it does contain ivory waste morphologies which have not previously been recorded such as <314>, [925] which seems to represent primary reduction of the solid part of the tusk onsite and several pieces which could be blanks for inlays.

1.4 Catalogue

Bone

Bone waste (possible type 2 blank)

<317>, [919]

Complete; L 24mm, Diam 25. Length of cow metatarsal sawn at both ends with ?draw knife marks on surface which have made it roughly cylindrical but have not erased the natural groove.

Bone waste (type 2)

<319>, [919]

Incomplete; L 3mm, diam 26. Fragment of a thin slice of cow metatarsal, sawn on one end lathe cut on the other with rasp/file marks on edge

Bone waste (type 3)

<318>, [919]

Complete; L 28mm. Section of cow metatarsal wall, sawn top and bottom and split longitudinally.

Bone waste (type 3)

<320>, [919]

Complete but broken; L 34mm. Quarter to third of a section of cow metatarsal wall. Sawn top and bottom and split longitudinally

Bone waste (type 3)

<323>, [925]

Complete; L 36mm. Half section of cow femur wall from near the distal end. Sawn at top and bottom then split longitudinally

Ivory

Ivory waste

<314>, [925]

Complete; L 46mm. Fragment of ivory waste. Retains curved outer face but split top and bottom and across interior to give a plano-convex section.

Ivory waste (as bone type 1)

<315>, [919]

Complete; L 70mm. max diam 12mm. Peg waste, in danger of splitting. Tapering section. Knife facet surface, sawn at either end

Ivory waste

<316>, [919]

Complete; L 60mm. Ivory ?offcut, sub rectangular.

Ivory waste

<321>, [919]

Incomplete; L 57mm, W 12mm. Ivory strip, possible inlay blank

Ivory waste

<322>, [925]

Complete but broken; L 60mm, W 12mm. Split sub rectangular block, probable shaving off an elephant tusk tapers to one end perhaps from near the base. Possible inlay blank.