

## Stear Point 77221 Waterlogged Wood

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### Methods

Fifteen pieces of waterlogged wood were recovered from three contexts and submitted for identification. A fine slice was taken from each fragment along three planes (transverse section (TS), radial longitudinal section (RL) and tangential longitudinal section (TL)) using a razor blade. The pieces were mounted in water on a glass microscope slide, and examined under bi-focal transmitted light microscopy at magnifications of x50, x100 and x400 using a Kyowa ME-LUX2 microscope. Identification was undertaken according to the anatomical characteristics described by Gale and Cutler (2000), Schweingruber (1990) and Butterfield and Meylan (1980). Identification was to the highest taxonomic level possible, usually that of genus and nomenclature is according to Stace (1997). The results are shown in **Table 1** below.

### Results

**Table 1 Waterlogged Wood Identifications 77221 Steart Point**

Context	Sample no.	ID	Comments
Area 503 21141	303	<i>Quercus</i> sp. x3	Three large twisted mature wood pieces. Possible very superficial charring to all.
21272	312	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> x1	1 large mature piece
20579	201	40-60mm d <i>Quercus</i> sp. rwd x5	Rod like pieces, poss. coppice
		60mm large rwd <i>Betula</i> sp. x1	Oblique cut end
		Rwd of <i>Alnus/ Corylus</i> sp. x5	Full ID not possible as all pieces twisted and compressed

The three large wood pieces recovered from Area 503 context 21140 were of mature oak (*Quercus* sp.). Possible superficial charring was noted on all three pieces indicating a potential relationship with human activity. The single large piece of mature wood from Post-Medieval ditch, context 21272, proved to be of ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*).

Of the eleven pieces of wood recovered from the medieval moat (20566), context 20579, five were oak, one was silver of downy birch (*Betula pendula/ pubescens*) and five compared favourably with alder or hazel (*Alnus glutinosa/ Corylus avellana*) but the latter could not be fully identified due to twisting and compression of the pieces. All pieces were 40-60mm diameter roundwood, cut at 20-30 years. The large birch piece displayed an obliquely cut end. It is apparent that these pieces were introduced by anthropogenic activity, either as waste or as part of a structure related to the moat e.g. stakes/ hurdling.

### Potential

The recovered assemblage has been identified as far as possible and therefore has no further potential.

### Recommendations

No further work is required on the wood reported here. However, should further pieces of waterlogged wood be recovered from these or other contexts as excavation progresses, these should be recovered, identified and the results combined with these at analysis to further clarify the availability and use of woody resources at the Site.

## **Bibliography**

Butterfield, B.G. and Meylan, B.A. (1980) *Three-Dimensional Structure of Wood. An Ultrastructural Approach*. London and New York: Chapman and Hall

Gale, R. and Cutler, D. 2000. *Plants in Archaeology*, Westbury and Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew

Schweingruber, F.H. (1990) *Microscopic Wood Anatomy*. Third Edition. Birmensdorf: Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research

Stace, C. (1997) *New Flora of the British Isles*. Second Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press