FISH REMAINS FROM SCARBOROUGH FUTURIST THEATRE (FTS18)

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INTRODUCTION AND METHOD

Fish bones were recovered from bulk environmental samples taken from six contexts during archaeological investigations at the Futurist Theatre, Scarborough. Four contexts sampled during a watching brief, and two contexts sampled during the evaluation contained the remains of marine fish.

Fish remains were identified to element, side and as low a taxonomic level as possible using NAA's reference collection, published identification guides (Yee Cannon XXX) and the Archaeological Fish Resource (University of Nottingham 2018). Taxonomy follows FishBase (Froese and Pauly 2018). An assessment of any taphonomic evidence including cut- and chop-marks, animal activity and burning was undertaken and recorded on a presence/absence basis to allow potential for reconstruction of processing and cooking methods.

RESULTS

In total, 36 fish bones were recovered from the Futurist Theatre site during archaeological works; 21 during the watching brief, and 15 during the evaluation (Table 1). All identifiable fish remains represented marine taxa of two families; gadidae (cod) family and clupeidae (herring) family. Cod family fishes including *Gadus morhua* (Atlantic cod), *Melanogrammus aeglefinus* (haddock) and potentially other gadid species were represented by both cranial and post-cranial elements, whereas herring family fish were represented by post-cranial elements only. Thre remains of large and small gadid specimens were present. No evidence for butchery in the form of cut- or chop-marks was visible, and none of the remains presented burnt.

Context	Gadidae	Cod	Haddock	Clupeidae	Ribs and spines	Unidentified fish	Total
201							1
203	8				6		14
501	4		2	1	2		9
519		2		5			7
521			1				1
522			2			2	4
Total	12	2	5	6	8	2	36

Table 1 Fragment count for fish remains recovered from sampled contexts at the Futurist Theatre, Scarborough by context and taxa.

Fish remains from the watching brief

501

Context 501 contained the remains of at least three fish, three caudal vertebrae and a cranial element from medium or large sized fish of the cod family, two haddock caudal vertebrae, a single caudal vertebra from a herring family fish, as well as two rib fragments from a large but unidentified fish.

519

Five vertebrae from clupeid family fish and two precaudal vertebrae from a large specimen of Atlantic cod were recovered from context 519.

521

A single vertebra from a medium sized haddock was recovered from context 521.

522

A right-side premaxilla and a precaudal vertebra from a medium sized haddock as well as two fragments of fish bone that could not be identified were recovered from context 522.

Fish remains from the evaluation

201

A single vertebra was recovered from this context, it is from a small to medium sized fish, but is poorly preserved such that identification is not possible.

203

Context 203 contained the remains of at least three fish. Three small caudal vertebrae likely represent one cod family fish, a basioccipital and caudal vertebrae representing an additional, medium sized cod family fish, and three fragments of cranial elements, one being an epihyal, all consistent with a large sized cod family fish.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The small assemblage of fish remains recovered during archaeological investigations at the Futurist Theatre, Scarborough, contains the remains of marine fish species that can and could be procured locally to the site. The proximity of the site to the sea means that understanding the means of deposition is not straight forward. The remains may have resulted from human activity and represent food waste, but could equally have been deposited by marine animals or through other natural processes.

The small size of the assemblage and the inability to establish how the remains came to be deposited at the site prevents any further discussion or interpretation.

The assemblage may be discarded when reporting is complete.

REFERENCES

Froese, R. and Pauly, D. (Eds) (2018) FishBase [Online] Available at: www.fishbase.org (version - 06/2018) (accessed on 01/08/2018)

Yee Cannon, D. (1987) *Marine Fish Osteology. A Manual for Archaeologists.* Burnaby: Department of Archaeology, Simon Fraser University.

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REFERENCES

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