

EVALUATION OF SLAG AND OTHER DEBRIS FROM LAND NORTH OF BOSTON ROAD, SLEAFORD (SITE CODE: EPBR 08)

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Introduction and methodology

A small assemblage weighing just under 490g, recovered by hand on site, was examined by eye and categorised on the basis of morphology alone. Each slag or other material type in each context was weighed; quantification data are given in the table below in which weight (wt.) is shown in grams.

Quantification table and explanation of terms

| EPBR 08 | Land North of Boston Road, Sleaford |
|-----------------------------|---|
| ctx identification | wt. comment |
| 200 undiagnostic | 95 possibly smithing slag; coal as fuel |
| 200 undiagnostic | 44 partly iron rich |
| 902 natural concretion | 99 with ferrous element |
| 1306 undiagnostic | 8 |
| 1308 undiagnostic | 29 broken fragment |
| 1310 ferruginous concretion | 97 formed around vanished root or iron object |
| 1310 natural concretion | 59 |
| 1404 undiagnostic | 51 |
| 1600 burnt coal | 5 |

total wt = 487g

Most of the slag in the assemblage was undiagnostic, i.e. could not be assigned to either smelting or smithing because of its morphology or because it had been broken up during deposition, re-deposition or excavation. Other types of debris in the assemblage were natural concretions or soil with some ferruginous or other element binding the lump together.

Discussion of the assemblage

Although the quantity is small the slag indicates some activity, possibly smithing, somewhere in the vicinity.

Recommendations for further work

If any further excavation is envisaged, strategies should be established for sampling pits, ditches and other cut features with slag. Any internal surfaces with hearths, slag or ash, or which show signs of burning should be tested with a magnet (initially) for micro-slags such as hammerscale (which is very magnetic). Should the latter be present in quantities it may be necessary to carry out a magnetic susceptibility survey or to grid the surface for sampling. This will allow spatial analysis of the activity to be examined later.