

Appendix 3.6: Environmental Assessment

Thorpe in Balne (Tib08)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A single sample flot was examined for the presence of carbonised plant macrofossils including charcoal. One bag of charred material sorted from the retent was also scanned for identifiable remains.

2. Methodology

- 2.1 The bulk environmental samples was processed by Archaeological Services WYAS using an Ankara-style water flotation system (French 1971). Flots were collected in a 300 μ m sieve and the heavy fraction (the retent) was collected in a 1mm mesh. The retents were sorted by eye for artefacts and ecofacts and were also scanned using a magnet. The flot, once dry, was scanned using a low powered binocular microscope. Identified carbonised plant material and charcoal was removed and bagged separately by type.
- 2.2 All charcoal suitable for identification was examined using a high powered Vickers M10 metallurgical microscope. The reference photographs of Schweingruber (1990) were consulted for charcoal identification. Plant nomenclature utilised in the text follows Stace (1997) for all vascular plants.

3. Results

- 3.1 Carbonised material is fairly scarce with only 5ml recovered from the flot and a further 5ml from the retent. Modern roots and seeds are present in small amounts up to 5ml, which represents a low level of contamination.
- 3.2 All results are presented in Table 1 and discussed below.

Table 1. Carbonised plant, charcoal and other remains

Context/sample	11/1
Total Carbonised volume	10ml
Modern	5ml
Charcoal	
<i>Corylus</i>	1 (0.02g)
Wild Resources	
Burnt peat	3 (1.26g)
Other Remains	
Modern (non-carbonised) seeds	3

4. Discussion

- 4.1 The single sample produced a small amount of carbonised plant material, consisting mostly of tea leaf sized charred detritus and other indeterminate fragments. No carbonised cereal grain or weed seeds were recovered from the sample, but occasional pieces of identifiable charcoal and burnt peat are present. A single identifiable charcoal fragment, *Corylus* (hazel), is noted. The fragment is quite well preserved although small in size. The presence of hazel charcoal indicates the use of open lighter areas of woodland, with small trees or shrubs most likely being used as a source of fuel. The retent portion of the sample produced three fragments of burnt peat, which provided a tentative indication of the cutting of peat or heath as an alternative source of fuel to woodland resources.

Bibliography

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Jane Richardson PhD

Report

Diane Alldritt PhD