

ENVIRONMENTAL REMAINS
FROM PARK VIEW HOTEL,
RIVERSIDE, EVESHAM,
WORCESTERSHIRE

A.J. CLAPHAM
(with A. MANN – mollusc identification)

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Environmental remains from Park View Hotel, Riverside, Evesham, Worcestershire (WSM 38555)

A. J. Clapham & A. Mann (molluscs)

1. Summary

Analysis of environmental samples from an excavation at Park View Hotel, Riverside, Evesham, Worcestershire was undertaken on behalf of 110 Archaeology prior to redevelopment. A single sample from a single deposit of early-late Medieval (?15-17th Century AD) date were selected for analysis. The deposit from the possible secondary fill of ditch 104 was found to contain abundant waterlogged plant remains, few charred remains and abundant molluscs. The environmental evidence indicates a well vegetated ditch which had a tendency to dry out in summer. The results are displayed in tables 1 and 2.

2. Introduction and archaeological background

An analysis of environmental remains from an evaluation project at Park View Hotel, Riverside, Evesham, Worcestershire (NGR 04074356; WSM 38555) was undertaken on behalf 101 Archaeology. Geology and soils, site summary, and previous excavations can be found in the Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological evaluation for Park View Hotel Riverside, Evesham (Cook 2008).

A single sample from the secondary fill of ditch 104 (context 107) was processed for environmental remains.

2.1 Project parameters

The environmental project conforms to relevant sections of the *Environmental Archaeology: a guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation* (English Heritage 2002), *Environmental archaeology and archaeological evaluations* (AEA 1995).

2.2 Aims

The aims of the assessment were to determine the state of preservation, type, and quantity of environmental remains recovered, from the samples and information provided. This information will be used to assess the importance of the environmental remains.

3. Methods

3.1 Fieldwork and sampling policy

Samples were taken by the excavator from deposits considered to be of high potential for the recovery of environmental remains. A single sample was taken from the site from the following context:

- Sample 1. Context 107 of ditch 104. This sample was from the secondary fill of a 3 metre wide ditch. Pottery recovered from the upper fill (103) produced two sherds of early-late post Medieval pottery (?15-17th Century AD). Context 107 produced a single early-late post Medieval pottery sherd. The sample was of wet stick blue lias clay.

3.2 **Processing and analysis**

A sub-sample of 1 litre was retained just in case it was required for waterlogged plant material which would be processed using the wash-over technique.

A total of 14 litres were processed by flotation using a Siraf tank. The flot was collected on a 300µm sieve and the residue retained on a 1mm mesh. This allows for the recovery of items such as small animal bones, molluscs and seeds.

The residue was fully sorted by eye and the abundance of each category of environmental remains estimated. A magnet was also used to test for the presence of hammerscale. The flot were scanned using a low power MEIJI stereo light microscope and plant remains identified using modern reference collections maintained by the Service, and a seed identification manual (Capper *et al* 2006). Nomenclature for the plant remains follows the *New Flora of the British Isles*, 2nd edition (Stace 1997).

4. **Results**

4.1 **The environmental remains**

The results are presented in Tables 1, 2, and an environmental sample summary is provided in Table 3. After processing it was realised that the majority of the plant remains were preserved by waterlogging, although some remains were preserved by charring. It was also noted that molluscs were also abundant in the sample. The waterlogged plant remains were dominated by seeds of elder (*Sambucus nigra*), with similar numbers of marsh woundwort (*Stachys palustris*) being identified, other species identified included common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), greater celandine (*Chelidonium majus*), fool's parsley (*Aethusa cynapium*), and dead-nettle (*Lamium* sp.). The majority of these species are usually found on disturbed/cultivated ground although some can be found in woodlands, hedgerows and scrub. These species would have been ideally suited to the environment around a ditch and the waterlogged plant remains probably reflect the local vegetation growing around the ditch.

Charred plant remains were few and far between and consisted of a single find of a free-threshing wheat grain (*Triticum* sp.) which was most likely to have been of bread wheat (*Triticum aestivum*). Two grains of hulled barley (*Hordeum vulgare*) were also identified. As there were few charred cereal remains recovered it is most likely that the remains in this sample represent background flora.

It was noted that molluscs were prominent in this sample. These were identified by A. Mann. The dominant snail was the Button ram's-horn snail (*Anisus leucostoma*) which is usually found in most aquatic environments including ditches, it has a preference for damp places which tend to dry out in the summer. All the other species prefer moist, sheltered well vegetated habitats which fits well with the evidence provided by the plant remains. The presence of the garden (common) snail (*Helix aspersa*) indicates that the deposits are of a later date than the early Romano-British as this is when this species was thought to have been introduced to the British Isles (Kerney 1999).

5. **Significance**

This sample has little significance in aiding the understanding of this site with regards to the rural economy. The waterlogged plant remains reflect the local environment around the ditch and the small quantity of charred plant remains most likely represent a background flora component of the assemblage. The mollusc assemblage indicates that the ditch was well vegetated and had a tendency to dry out in the summer.

6. **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made with regard to further work on the samples considered as part of this report

- No further work is required on this sample.

7. **The archive**

The archive consists of:

One bag of flot, one bag of sorted residue and one sub-sample (1 litre) retained for further processing and analysis if required. 1 flot record sheet (AS21) and 1 sample record sheet (AS17)

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