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**Evaluation of biological remains from excavations at Burythorpe Quarry,  
North Yorkshire (site code: BQ94)**

by

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**Summary**

*The potential for further analysis of biological remains from six sediment samples from deposits excavated at Burythorpe Quarry, North Yorkshire, is considered.*

*Further examination of charcoal recovered from the deposit may yield a little additional information if there are relevant archaeological questions to be addressed. Other biological remains were very few in number and of no interpretative value.*

**Keywords:** BURYTHORPE QUARRY; NORTH YORKSHIRE; PLANT REMAINS; INSECT REMAINS

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## Evaluation of biological remains from excavations at Burythorpe Quarry, North Yorkshire (site code: BQ94)

### Introduction and methods

Six 'general biological analysis' samples (GBAs *sensu* Dobney *et al.* 1992) of sediment from excavations by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. at Burythorpe Quarry, North Yorkshire, were submitted for an evaluation of their potential for bioarchaeological analysis.

The samples were inspected in the laboratory and a description of their lithology recorded using a standard *pro forma*. Subsamples of 1 kg were taken from four of the samples for extraction of macrofossil remains following procedures of Kenward *et al.* (1980; 1986).

Plant and invertebrate macrofossils were examined from both the washovers and the wet residues resulting from processing.

The samples were not deemed suitable for examination for the eggs of parasitic nematodes.

### Results

The results of the examinations are presented in context number order with archaeological information provided by the excavator in brackets.

**Context 1004** [Fill of East-West aligned ?enclosure ditch.]  
Sample 100401

Just moist, light to mid orange-brown, unconsolidated and soft, fine sand with a few very small stones (2 to 6 mm).

No further analysis was undertaken on this sample.

**Context 1006** [Fill of pit which sealed a charcoal layer and contained pottery and a fragment of loom weight.]  
Sample 100601

Just moist, light to mid greyish-brown, unconsolidated and soft, fine sand with patches of dark brown amorphous material. Small stones (6 to 20 mm, rotted sandstone), fragments of pot and twigs were present in the sample.

Mostly ?modern woody and herbaceous root fragments with a little charcoal (to 10 mm) and a charred seed (*Galium aparine* L.—goosegrass) and grain (?*Avena* sp.—oat). A single staphylinid beetle fragment was also present.

The very small residue consisted of sand and stones with a little charcoal and a few modern rootlets.

**Context 1008** [Fill of ?post hole. The hole contained twenty-six stones showing the effects of heat and several pot shards.]  
Sample 100801

Just moist, light to mid orange-brown, unconsolidated and soft, fine sand with some small stones (6 to 20 mm, rotted sandstone and flint) and traces of modern rootlets present.

The small washover was mostly modern rootlets, sand and charcoal (to 5 mm). A single seed (*Chenopodium* sp.) and an abdominal apex of a larva of *Actenicerus sjaelandicus* (Müller) were also noted.

The very small residue was sand and stones with a few modern rootlets.

**Context 1010** [Fill of pit 1007 containing very large shards of cooking vessels.]  
Sample 101001

Just moist, mid gingery-brown, unconsolidated and soft, fine sand. Small fragments of very rotted sandstone (6 to 20 mm) were common and medium-sized flints (20 to 60 mm) and patches of

dark brown amorphous material (to 5 mm) were present in the sample.

The small washover was mostly charcoal (to 7 mm) and modern rootlets with some sand and a single fragment of *Coprophilus striatulus* (Fabricius), a beetle suspected of being capable of colonising buried archaeological deposits.

The very small residue was mostly sand and stones with a little charcoal and modern rootlets.

**Context 1013** [No information provided.]  
Sample 101301

Just moist, light yellowish grey-brown, unconsolidated and soft, fine sand with small clasts of rotted sandstone (6 to 20 mm) and modern rootlets present.

The small washover was mostly modern rootlets and sand with a little charcoal (to 5 mm), a *Chenopodium* sp. seed and a modern beetle (*Amaraulica* Panzer).

The very small residue was sand and stones with a few modern rootlets.

**Context 1014** [No information provided.]  
Sample 101401

Just moist, light to mid yellowish-brown, unconsolidated and soft, fine sand with traces of modern rootlets.

No further analysis was undertaken on this sample.

## Discussion

Most of the recorded biological remains were, or were suspected of being, modern. The few ancient insect and plant remains present are of no interpretative value, and no bone or shell was observed in the residues.

## Statement of potential

These deposits offer no potential for

further bioarchaeological analysis other than through examination of the charcoal, which may yield a small amount of information if there are relevant archaeological questions, although the fragments were generally very small and identification would be difficult.

## Recommendations

No further work on this material is recommended. If deposits with organic preservation by anoxic waterlogging or higher concentrations of charred plant material are exposed during development, however, every effort should be made to sample and investigate them.

## Retention and disposal

There is no justification for retaining this material.

## Archive

All extracted fossils from the test subsamples, and the residues and washovers, are currently stored in the Environmental Archaeology Unit, University of York, along with paper and electronic records pertaining to the work described here.

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