

Palaeoecology Research Services

**Short note: Biological remains from excavations at  
South Becksde, Beverley, East Riding of Yorkshire  
(site code: BSB00)**

by

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*PRS* 2002/10

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**Summary**

*A single sediment sample from excavations at South Becksid, Beverley, East Riding of Yorkshire, was submitted but no other site, context or dating information was available.*

*The processed subsample yielded a large residue of about 400 cm<sup>3</sup>, mainly herbaceous detritus with a little woody material including a few wood chips to about 10 mm in maximum dimension). The bulk of the residue comprised 'grassy' and 'strawy' plant fragments with rather a large proportion of peat fragments (probably from fen peat). The seeds and fruits present were mostly rather well preserved and included taxa consistent with components from hay, straw, and peatland (presumably in peat itself) - a combination (with the wood chips and other litter such as bracken frond fragments) perhaps most likely to represent stable manure. The flot was fairly small and consisted primarily of plant debris. There were modest numbers of fairly well preserved invertebrates, among which fly puparia and beetles were the most numerous. The beetles were a group rather typical of sites with intensive occupation. Although insufficient remains were present for a clear reconstruction, it seems likely that the insects represent the fauna of somewhat foul litter, such as stable manure (as also indicated by the plant remains).*

*The material clearly deserves a more detailed analysis if its context type and dating can be established, to contribute to the picture of living conditions and human activity in this area of the town. Also, this deposit indicates good survival of organic remains at the site which should be borne in mind in the event of further excavation in the vicinity.*

**KEYWORDS:** SOUTH BECKSIDE; BEVERLEY; EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE; PLANT REMAINS; CHARRED PLANT REMAINS; INVERTEBRATE REMAINS

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17 April 2002

## Short note: biological remains from excavations at South Becksde, Beverley, East Riding of Yorkshire (site code: BSB00)

### Introduction

A single sediment sample from excavations at South Becksde, Beverley, East Riding of Yorkshire, was submitted but no other site, context or dating information was available.

### Methods

The lithology of the sample was recorded, using a standard *pro forma*, prior to processing, following the procedures of Kenward *et al.* (1980; 1986), for recovery of plant and invertebrate macrofossils.

The flot and residue resulting from processing were examined for plant and invertebrate macrofossils. The residues were examined for larger plant macrofossils and other biological and artefactual remains.

### Results

A brief summary of the processing method and an estimate of the remaining volume of unprocessed sediment follows (in round brackets) after the sample numbers.

#### Context 7

Sample 7/T (1 kg sieved to 300 microns with paraffin flotation; 7 litres of sediment remains)

Moist, mid to dark brown, brittle and fibrous and compressed to crumbly (working soft), slightly sandy silt and fine and coarse herbaceous material. Twigs and traces of vivianite were present and 'straw' was common in the sample.

The sample of 1 kg yielded a large residue of about 400 cm<sup>3</sup>, mainly herbaceous detritus with a little woody material including a few wood chips to about 10 mm in maximum dimension). There was a very little sand and grit. The bulk of the residue comprised 'grassy' and 'strawy' plant fragments with rather a large proportion of peat fragments (probably from fen peat). The seeds and fruits present were mostly rather well preserved

and included taxa consistent with components from hay, straw, and peatland (presumably in peat itself) - a combination (with the wood chips and other litter such as bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum* (L.) Kuhn) frond fragments) perhaps most likely to represent stable manure. There were traces of a few plants likely to have been used in some way - perhaps in this case in the textile industry: weld (*Reseda luteola* L.), teasel (*Dipsacus*, though not identifiable to species), and flax/linseed (*Linum usitatissimum* L.: seeds and capsule fragments). There were also a few charred fragments of saw-sedge (*Cladium mariscus* (L.) Pohl), remains typically found at many sites in this southern and south-eastern part of Beverley.

The flot was fairly small and consisted primarily of plant debris. There were modest numbers of fairly well preserved invertebrates, among which fly puparia (probably mostly Sphaeroceridae) and beetles were the most numerous. The beetles were a group rather typical of sites with intensive occupation. Although insufficient remains were present for a clear reconstruction, it seems likely that the insects represent the fauna of somewhat foul litter, such as stable manure. A subsample of 3-5 kg would probably produce enough remains to give a more complete reconstruction and to recover more complete examples of the ?*Damalinea* (animal louse) and ?*Melophagus ovinus* (Linnaeus) (sheep ked), which at other sites are usually regarded as part of an indicator package for wool processing.

### Discussion and statement of potential

The material clearly deserves a more detailed analysis if its context type and dating can be established, to contribute to the picture of living conditions and human activity in this area of the town.

### Recommendations

This deposit indicates good survival of organic remains at the site which should be borne in mind in the event of further excavation in the vicinity.

### Retention and disposal

All of the current material should be retained for the present.

## Archive

All material is currently stored by Palaeoecology Research Services (Unit 8, Dabble Duck Industrial Estate, Shildon, County Durham), along with paper and electronic records pertaining to the work described here.

## Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to Trevor Brigham of Humber Field Archaeology for providing the material.

## References

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