

Palaeoecology Research Services

**Evaluation of biological remains from excavations at
Hob Moor Junior School, York
(site code: OSA02EV13)**

by

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PRS 2003/15

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Summary

A single sediment sample recovered from excavations of deposits of medieval to modern date at Hob Moor Junior School, York, North Yorkshire, was submitted to PRS for an evaluation of its bioarchaeological potential.

The ancient biological remains recovered from the sample were restricted to a small quantity of charcoal and single fragments of charred hazel nutshell and cereal grain.

These results do not add substantively to the evidence for the nature of this feature, other than that charcoal and charred nutshell might be expected where some domestic or other waste had been deposited (as evidenced by the CBM and pottery).

No further work is thought worthwhile for this sample, and the prospects for recovery of environmental evidence from this area can be considered poor. The remaining sediment from this sample may be discarded unless it is to be processed for the recovery of non-biological remains.

KEYWORDS: HOB MOOR JUNIOR SCHOOL; YORK; NORTH YORKSHIRE; EVALUATION; MEDIEVAL TO EARLY MODERN; CHARRED PLANT REMAINS

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Introduction

An archaeological evaluation excavation was carried out by On-Site Archaeology, at Hob Moor Junior School, York, North Yorkshire (NGR SE 5800 5060), between the 16th of December 2002 and the 14th of January 2003.

Hob Moor, immediately to the east and south of the school, preserves a large number of visible archaeological earthworks and features which are likely to be indicative of the potential archaeology present on the site of the school itself. These include two areas of preserved medieval ridge and furrow, "Napoleonic" ridge and furrow across most of Hob Moor, three managed water courses linked with the site of a mill recorded in various late medieval documents, a series of backfilled clay-pits, and the remains of a late 19th/early 20th century golf course. The playing field area of Hob Moor Junior School itself contains some very well preserved medieval ridge and furrow earthworks.

A single sediment sample ('GBA'/'BS' *sensu* Dobney *et al.* 1992) recovered from Trench 3 (of 10 excavated) was submitted to PRS for an evaluation of its bioarchaeological potential.

Methods

The submitted sediment sample was inspected in the laboratory and its lithology 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 washover resulting from processing was examined for plant and invertebrate macrofossils. The residue was examined for

larger plant macrofossils and other biological and artefactual remains.

Results

Archaeological information, provided by the excavator, is given in square brackets. 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 3011 [fill of feature 3012 in Trench 3, described in the field as a firm brown silty clay, slightly darker towards the base, with occasional fragments of CBM and medieval pottery]

Sample 1/T (2 kg sieved to 300 microns with washover; approximately 7 litres of unprocessed sediment remain)

Moist, light to mid grey-brown (more brown and more grey in places), crumbly and slightly sticky to stiff (working soft and sticky), silty clay (to clay silt), with some small stones (2 to 6 mm), traces of charred material (including ?charcoal), and some modern rootlets.

The very small washover (of only a few cm³) was mostly of modern roots, with traces of charcoal and coal, a single fragment of charred hazel (*Corylus avellana* L.) nutshell and one fragment of charred cereal grain, perhaps wheat (*Triticum*). None of the charred fragments, nor the coal, was larger than 5 mm. No invertebrate remains were recovered.

The tiny residue (dry weight 50 g) was of small stones (to 8 mm) and a very little sand.

Discussion and statement of potential

These results do not add substantively to the evidence for the nature of this feature, other than that charcoal and charred nutshell might be expected where some domestic or other waste had been deposited (as evidenced by the CBM and pottery).

Recommendations

No further work is thought worthwhile for this sample, and the prospects for recovery of environmental evidence from this area can be considered poor, though every effort should be made to sample and assess suitable deposits if further excavations take place.

Retention and disposal

The remaining sediment from this sample may be discarded unless it is to be processed for the recovery of non-biological remains.

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.

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References

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