

Redmires abandonment: brief notes on biological remains from one sample

One sample of sediment from a deposit associated with a stone cut ditch at Redmires abandonment (nr Sheffield) was examined. Brief notes on the biological remains recovered from this sample are presented below.

Results

Context 1015 [waterlogged ditch fill]

Sample 101501/T (2 kg sieved to 300 μ m with washover also to 300 μ m)

Moist to wet, mid to dark grey to mid to dark grey brown, soft, silty sand with very small to medium-sized stones (2 to 60 mm) present.

The very small washover consisted of a few cm³ each of modern root fragments and some charred plant debris, the latter comprising tentatively identified heather (*Calluna vulgaris* (L.) Hull) root/twig fragments (to 5mm) and some charcoal (to 15mm). There were traces of charred heather flowers and shoot fragments, suggesting the identification of the basal material to have been sound. Moderate numbers of poorly preserved uncharred rush (*Juncus*) seeds were also present; these may be modern but if they are not they offer only limited interpretative information since they are species likely to have grown in a wide variety of wet habitats including moorland and poorly drained pasture. A few, very decayed insect remains were noted including those of the highly migratory water beetles *Agabus bipustulatus* (Linnaeus) and *Helophorus* sp., a dung beetle (*Aphodius* sp.), and *Xantholinus* sp.

The large residue (dry weight 1 kg) consisted of sand and stones (sandstone to 50 mm).

Discussion and statement of potential

Plant remains are very thinly dispersed in the sample examined and do not themselves warrant further study. If the sediment investigated bioarchaeologically is typical of the archaeological deposits at this site it is probable that further study will not be productive of interpretatively useful fossil plant assemblages, though every effort should be made to recognise, sample and analyse any primary contexts where charred plant material is known or suspected to be present in high concentrations. The insect remains were too few and too badly decayed to be of interpretative value even if a much larger sample were to be processed.

Retention and disposal

Any remaining sediment from this sample may be discarded.

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