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**Assessment of biological remains from excavations at Barrow Road,
Barton-upon-Humber, North Lincolnshire (site code: BOH99)**

by

John Carrott, Allan Hall and Deborah Jaques

Summary

Six sediment samples from deposits revealed by excavations at Barrow Road, Barton-upon-Humber, North Lincolnshire were submitted for an assessment of their bioarchaeological potential.

The deposits from which the samples were taken show little evidence for occupation other than a few fragments of pottery, brick/tile and bone. Ancient plant remains were essentially limited to a very few poorly preserved charred cereal grains and small charred legume cotyledons (probably from weed species), of no particular interpretative value.

No further work is recommended on the current material. Further bioarchaeological analysis of the deposits at this site is only likely to be warranted if sediments with a richer content of better-preserved remains are encountered.

KEYWORDS: BARROW ROAD; BARTON-UPON-HUMBER; NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE; ASSESSMENT;
CHARRED PLANT REMAINS; VERTEBRATE REMAINS

Authors' address:

Palaeoecology Research Services
Environmental Archaeology Unit
Department of Biology
University of York
P. O. Box 373
York YO10 5YW

Prepared for:

Humber Field Archaeology
The Old School
Northumberland Avenue
Hull
HU2 0LN

Telephone: (01904) 433846/434475/434487
Fax: (01904) 433850

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Assessment of biological remains from excavations at Barrow Road, Barton-upon-Humber, North Lincolnshire (site code: BOH99)

Introduction

An archaeological intervention was undertaken by Humber Field Archaeology at Barrow Road, Barton-upon-Humber, North Lincolnshire during October and November 1999. Although dating evidence was rather scarce, the two excavated trenches revealed deposits of possible 8th to 12th century date. Pits, ditches, post-holes and other features associated with buildings were identified during the excavations.

Six sediment samples ('GBA' and 'BS' *sensu* Dobney *et al.* 1992) recovered from the deposits were submitted to the EAU for assessment of their bioarchaeological potential.

Methods

Sediment samples

All of the sediment samples were inspected in the laboratory. Descriptions of their lithologies were recorded using a standard *pro forma*. All six samples were processed following the procedures of Kenward *et al.* (1980; 1986).

Table 1 lists the samples delivered for assessment and gives notes on their treatment.

Results

The results are presented in context number order by trench. Archaeological information (provided by the excavator) is given in square brackets.

Trench 1

Context 1006 [upper fill of rectangular feature 1008 - 10th and 11th century pottery]

Sample 4 (3 kg sieved to 300 µm and washover to 300 µm)

Moist, mid to dark grey-brown, with a slight orange and purple cast in places, brittle to crumbly (working soft and sticky when wet), clay silt to silty clay. Very small and small (2-20mm) stones, rotted lime and charcoal were present. Modern rootlets were also noted.

The small washover of a few cm³ was of modern woody roots and a few poorly preserved charred bread/club wheat (*Triticum aestivo-compactum*), barley (*Hordeum*) and ?oat (cf. *Avena*) grains, a little charcoal to 5mm and a single unidentified mite.

The small to moderate-sized residue of about 200cm³ consisted of clean sand and gravel, the latter up to 30mm in maximum dimension, with traces of brick/tile to 20mm, and chalk (to 15mm). Twenty-five small (to 40mm) bone fragments, including two mouse/vole bones, were recovered from this sample.

Context 1009 [no information]

Sample 1 (3 kg sieved to 300 µm and washover to 300 µm)

Moist, predominantly mid to dark grey-brown to light grey-brown with an orange cast in places, crumbly (working soft), clay silt. Very small, small and medium-sized (2-60mm) stones, traces of rotted charcoal, modern rootlets and springtails (*Collembola*) were present.

The small washover of a few cm³ consisted of modern woody roots and a little charcoal (to 10mm) with a few poorly preserved charred barley, bread/club wheat and ?oat grains and small (<2mm) charred legume cotyledons, and a modern uncharred weed seed. No invertebrate remains were seen, with the exception of a modern contaminant.

The small to moderate-sized residue of about 200cm³ was of clean sand and gravel (to 35 mm), with a few small bone fragments, four of which were burnt.

Context 1023 [fill of pit 1026 - probable mid 11th - 12th century date]

Sample 11 (3 kg sieved to 300 µm and washover to 300 µm)

Just moist, mid grey-brown with some patches of light grey-brown and light to mid orange-brown (possible oxidation), brittle (working soft and slightly plastic), clay silt. Very small and small (2-20mm) stones (including flint), rotted ?lime and ?charcoal and, both modern and ancient rootlets were present.

The small washover of a few cm³ included modern woody roots, tree leaf fragments and two beetle fragments, with a little charcoal (to 5mm) and traces of poorly preserved charred legume cotyledons (to 4mm) and a single ?oat grain. The uncharred elder (*Sambucus nigra*) seed may have been modern, too. A few earthworm egg capsules were also noted.

The small to moderate-sized residue of about 200cm³ comprised clean sand and gravel (to 45mm).

Context 1025 [primary fill of rectangular feature 1008]

Sample 6 (3 kg sieved to 300 µm and washover to 300 µm)

Dry, light to mid orange-ish grey-brown, crumbly to brittle (working soft and slightly sticky), silty clay, with traces of rotted charcoal and modern roots.

The small washover of a few cm³ consisted of modern woody roots and a little charcoal (to 5mm) and coal (to 10mm) with a charred legume cotyledon and a modern germinating seedling. A few fragments of ?earthworm egg capsules were also identified.

There was a small to moderate-sized residue of about 250cm³ of clean sand and gravel (to 40mm), with eight mammal fragments, including a caprovid deciduous incisor.

Trench 2

Context 2004 [fill of ditch 2003]

Sample 2 (3 kg sieved to 300 µm and washover to 300 µm)

Moist, mid grey-brown, crumbly (working soft and slightly plastic), clay silt to silty clay. Small (6-20mm) stones and roots (?ancient) were present.

The small washover consisted of a few cm³ of modern woody roots and a little coal and charcoal (both to 5mm).

The small to moderate-sized residue of about 200cm³ was of clean sand and gravel (to 35mm, including angular chalk) with a trace of pottery (to 10mm) and unidentified mammal bone (to 20mm).

Context 2020 [fill of ditch 2019 - probable mid 11th -12th century date]

Sample 9 (3 kg sieved to 300 µm and washover to 300 µm)

Just moist to dry, mid grey-brown to orange-ish brown (?oxidation), brittle to crumbly (working soft and slightly sticky when wet), clay silt, with very small, small and medium-sized (2-60mm) stones and modern roots.

The small washover of a few cm³ comprised modern woody roots and a single poorly preserved charred barley grain, a little charcoal to 5mm and several earthworm egg capsule fragments.

There was a small to moderate-sized residue of about 250cm³ of clean sand and gravel (to 20mm) and three fragments of mammal bone (to 20mm).

Discussion and statement of potential

These deposits were remarkably free of any evidence for occupation other than a very little pottery, brick/tile and bone. Plant remains were essentially limited to a very few poorly preserved charred cereal grains and small charred legume cotyledons (probably from weed species), of no particular interpretative value. There is nothing to be gained from further analysis of these samples and further bioarchaeological analysis of the deposits at this site is only likely to be warranted if sediments with a richer content of better-preserved remains are encountered.

Recommendations

No further investigation of the biological remains from these deposits is warranted.

Retention and disposal

All of the remaining sediment samples may be discarded unless they are to be sieved specifically for artefact recovery.

Archive

All material is 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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References

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Table 1. List of the sediment samples evaluated from Barrow Road, Barton-upon-Humber, North Lincolnshire (with notes on their treatment).

Context	Sample	Context description	Notes
1006	4	upper fill of rectangular feature 1008	3 kg sieved to 300 µm and washover to 300 µm
1009	1	no information	3 kg sieved to 300 µm and washover to 300 µm
1023	11	fill of pit 1026	3 kg sieved to 300 µm and washover to 300 µm
1025	6	primary fill of rectangular feature 1008	3 kg sieved to 300 µm and washover to 300 µm
2004	2	fill of ditch 2003	3 kg sieved to 300 µm and washover to 300 µm
2020	9	fill of ditch 2019	3 kg sieved to 300 µm and washover to 300 µm