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An evaluation of biological remains from excavations at a proposed site for a garage on the Leven-Brandesburton by-pass, North Humberside (site code: LV94)

by

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Summary

Four samples of sediment from excavations at a proposed site for a garage on the Leven-Brandesburton by-pass, North Humberside were submitted for evaluation of their potential for bioarchaeological analysis. They were almost barren of bioarchaeological remains.

Keywords: Leven; Brandesburton; Humberside; biological analyses

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Introduction and methods

Four samples of sediment ('GBAs' *sensu* Dobney *et al.* 1992) were submitted for an evaluation of their potential for bioarchaeological analysis. All of 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 each of the samples for extraction of macrofossil remains, following procedures of Kenward *et al.* (1980; 1986). A 3 kg voucher from each sample was retained and the remaining sediment sieved to 500µm primarily to recover small bones and finds (the latter to be returned to the excavator). The residues from sieving of this excess material were dried prior to examination and are recorded as BSXS residues in the text below.

Plant macrofossils were examined from both the residues and the washovers resulting from processing. The washovers were also examined for invertebrate remains.

None of the samples were suitable to be examined for the eggs of parasitic nematodes.

Results

The results of the investigations are presented in context number order, with information provided by the excavator in square brackets.

GBA washovers

Context 1002 [Early medieval]

Sample 3

Moist, mid grey-brown, crumbly working slightly plastic, moderately stony silty clay sand. Very small stones (2 to 6 mm) were common and small stones (6 to 20 mm) were present in the sample.

The very small washover was mostly modern rootlets with some rounded sand grains, a few fragments of charcoal, a single fragment of unidentified fly puparium and nine fragments of unidentified insect cuticle.

Context 1003 [?Roman/early medieval]

Sample 1

Moist, dark grey-brown, crumbly working plastic, slightly stony sandy clay silt. Very small and small stones (2 to 20 mm) were present in the sample.

The very small washover was mostly modern rootlets and rounded sand grains with two mite fragments, three unidentified beetle fragments and a single ?modern *Atriplex* sp. seed.

Sample 2

Moist, mid to dark grey-brown, crumbly working slightly plastic, moderately stony silty clay sand. Very small stones (2 to 6 mm) were common and small and medium-sized stones (6 to 60 mm) were present in the sample.

The very small washover was mostly modern rootlets with some rounded sand grains, a single fragment of unidentified fly puparium and one modern contaminant beetle (*Bembidion* sp.) which was complete apart from the head.

Context 3002 [Iron age]

Sample 4

Moist, mid brown, slightly crumbly to unconsolidated, slightly stony slightly clay silty sand. Very small and small stones (2 to 20 mm) were common and medium-sized stones (20 to 60 mm) were present in the sample.

The small washover was mostly modern rootlets and rounded sand grains with many earthworm egg capsules and fragments of charcoal and some fragments of coal. A single modern beetle larva, four modern soil nematodes, seven fragments of unidentified insect, a more complete modern unidentified beetle and a few seeds (*Atriplex* sp., *Fumaria* sp. and *Polygonum littorale*) were also noted.

GBA residues

All of the GBA residues were small and composed mostly of stone (to 35 mm), gravel and sand in varying proportions. The stones were flint and rounded pebbles of several types. Concreted lumps of sediment (to 3 mm) were present in samples 3 and 4 (contexts 1002 and 3002 respectively) and single fragments of coal were present in samples 2 (context 1003) and 4 (context 3002).

BSXS residues

All of the residues from sieving of excess sediment were again small and composed mostly of stone (to 70 mm), gravel, sand and concreted lumps of sediment (to 10 mm) in varying proportions with some modern rootlets. The stones were flint and rounded pebbles of several types.

Discussion

None of the deposits examined gave sufficient numbers of ancient plant or insect remains to be of interpretative value. No bone or shell was observed in the residues.

Statement of potential

These deposits offer no potential for bioarchaeological analysis.

Recommendations

No further work is recommended on the material in hand.

Retention and disposal

The samples recovered during this exercise are not thought worthy of retention.

Archive

All extracted biological remains 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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