

Palaeoecology Research Services

**Evaluation of biological remains from excavations at  
Green Acre caravan park, Lighthouse Road,  
Flamborough , East Riding of Yorkshire  
(site code: GAF02)**

by

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**Summary**

*Eight sediment samples recovered from excavations at Green Acre caravan park, Lighthouse Road, Flamborough, East Riding of Yorkshire, were submitted to PRS for an evaluation of their bioarchaeological potential. Artefacts recovered from the sampled deposits included worked flint (?Neolithic) and ?Iron Age pottery.*

*Plant remains were limited to very small amounts of charred material in three samples, with a somewhat larger amount of charcoal in one. No animal remains were recovered from the samples. A few fragments of flint were recovered and returned to the excavator.*

*No further work is thought necessary for the material in hand and prospects for recovery of useful assemblages of plant and animal remains seem poor, though future excavations may encounter deposits with quantities of charred material and this should be borne in mind in any further work at the site.*

*The remaining unprocessed sediment from the current samples may be discarded unless they are to be processed for material other than biological remains. The fossils recovered from the processed subsamples, should be retained for the present.*

**KEYWORDS:** GREEN ACRE CARAVAN PARK; LIGHTHOUSE ROAD; FLAMBOROUGH; EAST RIDING OF YORKSHIRE; EVALUATION; ?NEOLITHIC; ?IRON AGE; CHARRED PLANT REMAINS

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## Evaluation of biological remains from excavations at Green Acre caravan park, Lighthouse Road, Flamborough, East Riding of Yorkshire (site code: GAF02)

### Introduction

An archaeological evaluation excavation was carried out by Northern Archaeological Associates at Green Acre caravan park, Lighthouse Road, Flamborough, East Riding of Yorkshire (centred on NGR TA 2398 7081), during February 2002.

The site lies within an important archaeological landscape which has given evidence of occupation from the Neolithic period through to the present day. Flint scatters have been found in the vicinity. One or more Bronze Age barrows are known to have existed to the south of the site and other finds (and fragmentary crop marks) have indicated prehistoric to Romano-British activity in the area.

Eight sediment samples ('GBA'/'BS' *sensu* Dobney *et al.* 1992) were submitted to PRS for an evaluation of their bioarchaeological potential. Artefacts recovered from the sampled deposits included worked flint (?Neolithic) and ?Iron Age pottery.

### Methods

All of the submitted sediment samples were inspected in the laboratory and their lithologies were recorded, using a standard *pro forma*. Four were selected for processing, following the procedures of Kenward *et al.* (1980; 1986), for recovery of plant and invertebrate macrofossils.

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

A further four samples were wet sieved to 1 mm for the recovery of artefacts to be returned to the excavator.

Two of the samples (from Contexts 523 and 528) were also examined using the 'squash' technique of Dainton (1992). This technique was originally developed for the rapid assessment of deposits for their content of eggs of intestinal parasitic nematodes, but has proved useful to provide a qualitative assessment of other microfossils such as pollen, diatoms, and phytoliths.

### Results

The results are presented in context number order by trench. 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 number. Sample numbers were derived from the context numbers for PRS internal recording keeping purposes. No animal remains were recovered from the samples.

#### Trench 3

**Context 304** [upper fill of pit 303 which gave a small flint assemblage]

Sample 30401/T (NAA sample designation: AA. 16 litres sieved to 1 mm for artefacts; no unprocessed sediment remains)

Moist, light yellow-brown to mid grey-brown (somewhat jumbled), stiff to crumbly (working plastic), slightly sandy slightly silty clay, with some small stones (2 to 6 mm) and modern rootlets.

The small residue (dry weight 0.94 kg) was of coarse sand and stones (to 40 mm), including a fragment of ?worked flint.

**Context 307** [gully/small ditch fill (feature 306)]

Sample 30701/T (NAA sample designation: AA. 18 litres sieved to 1 mm for artefacts; no unprocessed sediment remains)

Just moist, light to mid grey-brown to light to mid orange-brown, stiff (working plastic), ?slightly silty clay. Stones (2 to 6 mm and 20 to 60+ mm) and modern rootlets were present.

The modest residue (dry weight 2.4 kg) was of coarse sand and stones (to 110 mm), including a large fragment of flint and three smaller flakes. Some of the stone had a burnt appearance and there was also a little coal.

*Trench 4***Context 402** [layer in-filling a hollow in the surface of the boulder clay]

Sample 40201/BS (NAA sample designation: AA. 15 kg litres to 1 mm for artefacts; no unprocessed sediment remains)

Moist, light to mid grey-brown (with some orange patches), stiff and slightly sticky (working plastic), ?slightly silty clay, with some stones (20 to 60 mm) and modern rootlets present.

The very small residue (dry weight 0.28 kg) was of coarse sand and small stones (to 25 mm).

*Trench 5***Context 505** [fill of curvilinear gully 504 which produced worked flint and (provisionally) Iron Age pottery]

Sample 50501/T (NAA sample designation: AA. 3 kg sieved to 300 microns with washover; approximately 12 litres of unprocessed sediment remain)

Moist, light to mid grey-brown to light to mid orange-brown, stiff to crumbly (working plastic), ?slightly sandy slightly silty clay, with some stones (20 to 60 mm) and charcoal.

There was a very small washover of a few cm<sup>3</sup> of modern (uncharred) remains: roots, live grass seedlings, earthworm egg capsules and fumitory (*Fumaria*) seeds/fragments, together with some coal (to 5 mm), and a single fragment of (presumably ancient) ?conifer charcoal (to 5 mm).

The small residue (dry weight 0.43 kg) was of sand and stones (to 60 mm).

**Context 516** [fill within large circular pit 514]

Sample 51601/BS (NAA sample designation: AA. 14 litres sieved to 1 mm for artefacts; no unprocessed sediment remains)

Moist, light to mid grey-brown to light to mid orange-brown, stiff to crumbly (working plastic), ?slightly sandy slightly silty clay, with some stones (20 to 60 mm) and charcoal.

The modest residue (dry weight 1.25 kg) was of coarse sand and stones (to 60 mm). Some of the stones appeared burnt.

**Context 517** [lens of charcoal fragments lying on the base of large circular pit 514]

Sample 51701/T (NAA sample designation: AA. 2.2 kg sieved to 300 microns with washover; no unprocessed sediment remains)

Just moist, mid slightly orange-brown, crumbly (working more or less plastic), ?slightly silty clay, with some charcoal.

The small washover of about 25 cm<sup>3</sup> consisted wholly of charcoal, apparently mostly oak (*Quercus*), though with some diffuse-porous material also present, in fragments to 10 mm. The material was brittle and sometimes 'silted' and internal structure was not usually easy to discern. There was a single uncharred modern fumitory (*Fumaria*) seed.

The small residue (dry weight 0.27 kg) was of sand and small stones (to 15 mm), with a little coal.

**Context 523** [lens of ?peaty material within the infill sequence of a small pond-like feature which was completely infilled before a probably Iron Age gully cut into it]

Sample 52301/T (NAA sample designation: AA. 0.4 kg sieved to 300 microns with washover and 'squash' for pollen survival; no unprocessed sediment remains)

Moist, mid grey-brown to mid orange-brown, stiff and slightly sticky (working plastic), clay, with a little fine charcoal and/or other charred material.

The washover comprised a very small amount of dark grey, fine-grained sediment in clasts (to 2 mm), apparently amorphous organic material with some silt, to judge from a 'squash' (*sensu* Dainton 1992); no microfossils were noted, so if this was truly organic sediment it had almost completely decayed. Also recorded were single charred fragments of ?heather

(*Calluna vulgaris* (L.) Hull) root/basal twig, ?herbaceous detritus (probably plant stem) and charcoal (all no larger than 2 mm). There is clearly not enough material for dating from this subsample (which represents all the material collected).

The tiny residue (dry weight 0.02 kg) was of sand and small stones (to 12 mm).

**Context 528** [as Context 523 but a lower in the infill sequence of the feature]

Sample 52801/T (NAA sample designation: AA. 0.6 kg sieved to 300 microns with washover and 'squash' for pollen survival; no unprocessed sediment remains)

Just moist, mid grey-brown to mid orange-brown, stiff to slightly sticky (working plastic), clay. There were no obvious inclusions.

The washover comprised barely 1-2 cm<sup>3</sup> of undisaggregated silty sediment, mostly pale grey (i.e. paler than that in 523AA) or light orange-brown or occasionally darker grey (a 'squash' of the darker material gave what appeared to be amorphous organics, but—again—no recognizable microfossils). There were two tiny (<2 mm) fragments of charred plant material which may have been from a small rhizome or perhaps woody root. Again, there is insufficient material to support a date.

The tiny residue (dry weight 0.03 kg) was of sand and very small stones (to 5 mm).

## Discussion and statement of potential

Plant remains were limited to very small amounts of charred material in three samples, with a somewhat larger amount of charcoal in one. The two samples from ?pond/pit 514 do not seem likely to be able to address the interpretation of this feature; at best they seem to represent some extremely decayed organic sediment, perhaps from a former soil *in situ* or inwashed. The minute amounts of charred plant remains indicate that some ash was incorporated into the deposit either from occupation or from a natural fire; it is too difficult, on the evidence available here, to suggest which.

## Recommendations

No further work is thought necessary for the material in hand and prospects for recovery of useful assemblages of plant and animal remains seem poor, though future excavations may encounter deposits with quantities of charred material and this should be borne in mind in any further work at the site.

## Retention and disposal

The remaining unprocessed sediment from the current samples may be discarded unless they are to be processed for material other than biological remains. The fossils recovered from the processed subsamples, 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.

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