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Evaluation of biological remains from excavations north-east of Castle Hill Farm, Swine (site code: TSEP458)

by

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Summary

A single sediment sample from deposits revealed by excavations north-east of Castle Hill Farm, Swine, was submitted for an evaluation of its bioarchaeological potential.

The very few biological remains recovered were probably of modern origin and of no interpretative value or use for radiocarbon dating.

KEYWORDS: CASTLE HILL FARM, SWINE; EVALUATION; ?NEOLITHIC TO BRONZE AGE; CHARRED PLANT REMAINS; PLANT REMAINS (MODERN); INVERTEBRATE REMAINS (?MODERN)

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Introduction

An archaeological evaluation excavation (of a single 50 metre long trench) was carried out by Humber Field Archaeology north-east of Castle Hill Farm, Swine (NGR: XX), between 6 September 1999 and 7 September 1999.

A single sediment sample ('GBA' *sensu* Dobney *et al*. 1992) was recovered from the deposits. Preliminary assessment of worked flints recovered from the site suggested a Bronze Age date (though one flint may have been of Neolithic date).

The sample was submitted to the EAU for an evaluation of its bioarchaeological potential.

Methods

Visual inspection of the sample indicated that it was unlikely to yield much in the way of biological remains. The decision to process a subsample was made on the grounds that this was the only sample from the site and on the slight possibility of recovering material dateable by radiocarbon techniques. The sediment sample was inspected in the laboratory and its lithology 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 and residue were examined for plant remains. The washover was also examined for invertebrate remains, and the residue was examined for other biological and artefactual remains.

Results

Archaeological information, provided by the excavator, is presented in square brackets.

Context 1004 [ditch fill; a single possibly Neolithic flint was recovered]
Sample 1/BS (5 kg sieved to 300 microns with washover)

Just moist, light slightly greyish orange-brown, stiff to crumbly (working plastic and sticky when wet), slightly sandy silty clay with some black staining (from ?manganese or humic matter).

This sample yielded a very small residue of about 175 cm^3 of clean quartz sand and a little gravel with one angular fragment of brick/tile, perhaps recent. The small washover consisted of modern root fragments with a little fine charcoal and modern seeds and grass leaf fragments, along with a few unidentifiable fragments of insect cuticle (perhaps also of modern origin).

Discussion and statement of potential

The very few biological remains recovered were probably of modern origin and of no interpretative value or use for radiocarbon dating.

Recommendations

No further work on biological remains is recommended for the current material.

Retention and disposal

Any remaining sediment may be discarded unless it is to be sieved for possible 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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