

**Evaluation of biological remains from excavations at
12-13 The Avenue, Clifton, York (site code: YORYM 2000.4287)**

by

Deborah Jaques, Allan Hall and John Carrott

Summary

A single sediment sample and a small assemblage of vertebrate remains, from deposits revealed by excavations at 12-13 The Avenue, Clifton, York, were submitted for an evaluation of their bioarchaeological potential.

The sediment sample showed no potential for the recovery of useful biological remains.

Most of the bone fragments were poorly preserved and few bones could be identified to species.

No further work on the current material is warranted and it may be discarded.

KEYWORDS: 12-13 THE AVENUE, CLIFTON; YORK; EVALUATION; ROMAN TO MODERN; VERTEBRATE REMAINS

Authors' address:

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

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

Prepared for:

York Archaeological Trust
Cromwell House
11 Ogleforth
York YO1 2JG

25 January 2001

Evaluation of biological remains from excavations at 12-13 The Avenue, Clifton, York (site code: YORYM 2000.4287)

Introduction

An archaeological evaluation excavation was carried out by York Archaeological Trust at 12-13 The Avenue, Clifton, York (NGR SE 5934 5277) between 11 and 15 December 2000.

A single sediment sample ('GBA'/'BS' *sensu* Dobney *et al.* 1992) and a small assemblage of hand-collected bone, were recovered from the deposits. Artefacts recovered from the deposits ranged in date from Roman (pot sherds) through to modern.

All of the material was submitted to the EAU for an evaluation of its bioarchaeological potential.

Methods

Sediment sample

The sediment sample was inspected in the laboratory and its lithology recorded.

Hand-collected vertebrate remains

All of the bone was recorded in detail; subjective records were made of preservation, angularity (i.e. the nature of the broken surfaces) and colour. Where possible, fragments were identified to species or species group, using the reference collection at the EAU. Fragments not identifiable to species were grouped into a single 'unidentified' category.

Results

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

Sediment sample

Context 3006 [Lowest deposit in Trench 3 of ?alluvial origin and containing a sherd of Roman pottery]
Sample 1

Moist, yellowish brown, well-sorted, slightly clay silty sand with some small concretions (to 3 mm) of ?iron pan. As thought by the excavator, this appears to be an alluvial deposit probably the result flooding of the nearby Bur Dyke stream.

The deposit showed no potential for the recovery of biological remains and no further investigation was undertaken.

Hand-collected vertebrate remains

The hand-collected vertebrate remains were recovered from four contexts, two from Trench 1 (1001 and 1002), one from Trench 2 (2001) and one from Trench 3 (3006). Dating of the deposits was rather uncertain but three of the four were either top soil or plough soil and hence the recovered material is likely to be of a modern or mixed origin. Pottery fragments from Contexts 1001 and 1002 ranging in date from the Roman period to present day support this. Context 3006, an ?alluvial deposit, produced a single sherd of Roman pottery. In total, twenty-two fragments of bone were recovered, of which five were identifiable to species (See Appendix).

Preservation of the bones was poor, with most fragments being rather eroded. Some fragments were quite fragile and their surfaces were broken off, giving a layered appearance. Much fresh breakage was noted throughout the assemblage. The only identifiable remains were of cattle.

Discussion and statement of potential

The sediment sample showed no potential for the recovery of useful biological remains.

Overall, the hand-collected bone assemblage was very fragmented, with few identifiable bones, none of which could provide

biometrical or age-at-death data. The deposits from this site show little potential for the preservation of vertebrate remains.

Recommendations

No further work is recommended on the current material.

Retention and disposal

All of the current material may be discarded.

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.

Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to Mark Johnson of York Archaeological Trust for providing the material and the archaeological information, and to English Heritage for allowing AH to contribute to this report.

References

Dobney, K., Hall, A. R., Kenward, H. K. and Milles, A. (1992). A working classification of sample types for environmental archaeology. *Circaea, the Journal of the Association for Environmental Archaeology* **9** (for 1991), 24-6.

Appendix

Notes on the hand-collected vertebrate remains recovered from 12-13 The Avenue, Clifton, York.

Trench 1

Context 1001 [topsoil]

Twelve rather battered looking bone fragments were recovered from this deposit, with almost every fragment showing evidence of some fresh breakage damage. Four fragments joined to form part of a cattle horncore which had been chopped or sawn across. A number of other cattle fragments were also identified which included a fragment of pelvis, a first phalanx and a tooth (P3). Five unidentified fragments were also noted, mostly representing large-sized mammals.

Weight = Cow - 34.5g; unid = 15g.

Context 1002 [plough soil]

Two fragments, a tooth enamel fragment and a shaft fragment, were recovered from this deposit. The bones were poorly preserved and rather fragile.

Weight = 5g.

Trench 2

Context 2001 [top soil]

Four fragments of poorly preserved tooth enamel were noted from this deposit.

Weight = 3g

Trench 3

Context 3006 [?alluvial deposit]

Four poorly preserved enamel fragments, representing a single cow tooth were identified from this deposit.

Weight = 10 g