

**Report on soil samples and bones from excavations
at Kirmington Runway, 1991 (site code KRU 91)**

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Summary

Samples of residues and washovers from wet-sieving some pit fills of probable late Bronze Age/early Iron Age were examined for plant remains and other inclusions. They were barren apart from a few uncharred 'seeds', perhaps all or mostly of recent origin. A very small sample of sediment adhering to potsherds in one of the pits was also devoid of any preserved macroscopic biological material. The few poorly preserved bones from these prehistoric pits submitted for identification were all unidentifiable, but a little large domestic mammal bone was present in the fills of two slots (perhaps resulting from medieval agriculture).

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(i) Soil samples:

^{Nine}
Eight samples of residue (sieved to 1 mm) and washover (sieved to 500 μ m; this was formerly, but misleadingly termed 'float', cf. Kenward *et al.* 1980) from wet-sieving of pit fill deposits from excavations at Humberside International Airport, Kirmington, S. Humberside were submitted for examination. In the three for which the original sample size was recorded, this varied between 2.75 and 5 kg. The results obtained were as follows:

Sample 1, upper part of fill 33 in pit 34: single specimens of seeds of both fat-hen (*Chenopodium album* L.) and orache (*Atriplex* sp.) were recorded from the washover which, together with the residue, comprised small flint, chalk and charcoal fragments.

Sample 2, lower part of fill 33 in pit 34, within a possible post-hole in base of cut: there was a single fragmented *Atriplex* seed in the washover; the residue of flint, chalk and very small charcoal fragments yielded a single fruit of fool's parsley (*Aethusa cynapium* L.)

Sample 3, fill 26 in pit 25: some ?modern rootlets and several *Atriplex* sp(p). seeds were present in the washover; there was no evidence of the 'white snail shells' recorded by the technician who processed the samples for Humberside Archaeological Unit, but it is likely that these would have been *Ceciloides acicula* Müller (see below). The residue comprised flint, chalk and charcoal.

Sample 4, fill 22 in pit 21: the washover consisted of flint and charcoal, with rather more of the latter than in other samples, but the largest fragments were only 10 mm in maximum dimension and these were not identifiable.

Sample 5, fill 3 in pit 2, from around fragments of bone: in the washover there was a little fine charcoal and some ?modern roots, together with a single ?modern fumitory (*Fumaria* sp.) seed; the residue comprised small clasts of chalk, flint and charcoal.

Sample 7, fill 37 in pit 36: the washover comprised charcoal (up to 8 mm in size), with several shells of the burrowing snail *Ceciloides acicula*, almost certainly modern, together with several uncharred and probably modern seeds of *Fumaria* and *Atriplex*. Some probable modern roots were also present. In the residue of charcoal (to 10 mm), flint (to 60 mm) and chalk (to 15 mm), there were a few very abraded fragments of hazel (*Corylus avellana* L.) nutshell to 8 mm.

Sample 8, fill 3 in pit 2: in the washover were some crushed shells probably of *Ceciloides acicula* (see above), ?modern roots and a ?modern *Fumaria* seed, whilst the residue comprised coarse flint and chalk with some charcoal (to 8 mm).

Sample 9, fill 20 in pit 19: the washover from this sample gave the largest assemblage of 'seeds', though all could be modern, as also probably were the root fragments. The list of taxa identified is as follows: uncharred remains of *Atriplex* sp., *Bilderdykia convolvulus* L. (black bindweed), *Chenopodium album*, and *Fumaria* sp. and a charred seed of *Veronica*

hederifolia L. All might be growing in cultivated land. 'White snail shells' were recorded during processing, but these (almost certainly *Cecilioides*) were not observed in the material examined by the authors. The washover also contained a modest amount of charcoal (to 12 mm), and this was present, too, in the residue, along with coarse chalk and flint and some undisaggregated sediment.

Sample 10, fill 20 in pit 19: this was a sample of 122 g of undisaggregated sediment taken from around a pot in pit 19. It was washed to 500 μm in the EAU and the residue examined wet. It consisted of a few grammes of sand, with a little charcoal (to 8 mm) and two *Chenopodium album* seeds.

(ii) Bones:

The material submitted was identified as follows:

Context 3, fill of pit 2 - unidentifiable fragments of large (*Bos*-sized) mammal.

Context 8, fill of slot 7 - metacarpus (distal fragment, fused) of sheep/goat (*Ovis/Capra*); 3 unidentifiable fragments.

Context 12, fill of slot 11 - left humerus fragment (shaft and deltoid tuberosity) of cow (*Bos*) and about 20 fragments of unidentifiable large (*Bos*-sized) mammal bone.

Context 20 - 17 unidentifiable fragments.

Context 26 - 1 unidentifiable fragment.

This small assemblage calls for no further comment.

Reference

Kenward H. K., Hall A. R. and Jones A. K. G. (1980). A tested set of techniques for the extraction of plant and animal macrofossils from waterlogged archaeological deposits. *Science and Archaeology* 22, 3-15.