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**Evaluation of biological remains from 90 Piccadilly, York
(sitecode: 1998.706)**

by

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Summary

One sediment sample from the deepest revealed deposit, beneath several metres of man-made build-up, was submitted for an evaluation of its bioarchaeological potential.

The sample contained low concentrations of plant and invertebrate remains of limited interpretative value. Nevertheless, a sequence of deposits of this kind, if properly dated and with preservation of remains of the quality seen here, would provide an insight into the environment obtaining in the lower reaches of the Foss beyond the main area of urban settlement in York.

No further work is currently recommended on the sample, but it may be of value in a future synthetic study.

KEYWORDS: 90 PICCADILLY; RIVER FOSS; YORK; NORTH YORKSHIRE; EVALUATION; PLANT REMAINS; CHARRED PLANT REMAINS; INVERTEBRATE REMAINS

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Introduction

An archaeological excavation was carried out by On-Site Archaeology at 90 Piccadilly, York, in October 1998. One sediment sample ('GBA' *sensu* Dobney *et al.* 1992) was recovered from the deepest revealed deposits, beneath several metres of man-made build-up associated with the canalisation of the River Foss. This sample was submitted to the EAU for evaluation of its bioarchaeological potential.

Methods

The sediment sample was inspected in the laboratory and a description of its lithology was recorded using a standard *pro forma*. A 2 kg subsample was processed, following the procedures of Kenward *et al.* (1980; 1986), to recover plant and invertebrate macrofossils.

The sample was also examined for microfossils using the 'squash' technique of Dainton (1992).

Results

Context 2002

Sample 1 (2 kg paraffin flotation)

Moist, mid to dark grey-brown, crumbly and slightly sticky (working soft), clay silt with some patches of mid grey silty clay.

The sample contained a rather low concentration of well-preserved plant and aquatic or aquatic marginal invertebrate taxa. The plant remains were mostly small fragments of unidentifiable woody and herbaceous detritus, including small twigs, with

some bud-scales of willow (*Salix*), and a moderately large range of fruits and seeds. The propagules were mostly of terrestrial plants, principally plants of waste places and cultivated ground, though with no component of cornfield weeds. Aquatic and waterside taxa were rather sparse. Amongst these plant debris were a few gravel clasts (to 25 mm) and a little angular brick/tile (to 15 mm). Charcoal (to 5 mm) was very rare and there were traces of coal (to 15 mm). No interpretable microfossils were seen in the 'squash'.

The deposit appears, on the basis of the plant and invertebrate remains, to have formed in quiet or still water, with areas of somewhat disturbed natural or semi-natural aquatic marginal vegetation in the vicinity, but with no significant input from dumping of waste or any other human activity.

Discussion and statement of potential

A sequence of deposits of this kind, if properly dated and with preservation of remains of the quality seen here, would provide an insight into the environment obtaining in the lower reaches of the Foss beyond the main area of urban settlement in York. If reasonably closely dated, such material would, together with samples from a range of other sites already excavated, be of considerable value in building up a picture of land use around, and aquatic conditions within, the lower Foss basin.

Recommendations

No further work is recommended on the present material.

Retention and disposal

Any remaining sediment samples should be retained for the present.

Archive

All 'environmental' 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

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References

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