SUTB 144 AML Rpt 2802

QUAKER'S BURIAL GROUND - STAINES

Plant remains report

Pond. Y.14 Levels S1 - S8

Remains from the two extreme levels of S1 and S8 represent an environment of fresh water and with the establishment of such plants as Hydrochaeris morus-ranae L.; Apium nodiflorum (L) Lag. and Ranunculus subgenus Batrachium, particularly as there is evidence of flowering and formation of mature fruits, the habitat suggests running water. The marginal plants which include Lycopus; Bidens and Alisma are such as are typically associated with a good rich loamy soil with good water retention. The seed count on Sambucus nigra L., although present through the levels, does not seem high enough to indicate the presence of a tree (shrub) growing in the immediate vicinity, and may be simply a down-wash from a stream or the result of bird activity.

S2 reveals an area still damp enough to support Lycopus, a marginal-type plant more normally associated with river banks, pond margins or marshy ground rather than ditches. It is probably indicative of less muddy area by the apparent disappearence of such species as Eleochaeris and Carex, both of which prefer a wet muddy soil to flourish, allowance must of course be made for the fact the samples may not have yielded or even represented a true picture of the site levels.

S3 appears to be drier as can be judged by the introduction of Malva, a species associated with the idea of following man, for it's preference for soil which has been disturbed such as along tracks and pathways, but not cultivated ground. It is interesting to note the absence of Plantago, another well known follower of man and quick to colonise just such an area.

The finding of the odd few seeds in the remaining apparently barren levels could have resulted from either earthworm or root activity, although if this was the result of earthworms it would surely indicate a richer organic soil and one would have hoped to find more seeds, and these levels just do not seem to have supported plant life - not even an Urtica, a plant well represented on other levels and not well known as a plant which dies out quickly! Even the worst C.20th. dumps support plants, many becoming a sanctuary from man's herbicidal activities. Do these levels represent flooding?

These samples probably come from a margin of the pond and the non-aquatics and non-marginals are drift debris from river banks etc. This whole area requires an overall assessment, it would for example, be interesting to compare a report on the smails, particularly where the water snails disappeared.

Phase XII Sample Ref. Y.97 levels.

Most of the material here was collected from the second sample. The list again represents plants of a rich soil, damp to wet as is indicated by Callitriche; Eleochaeris and Conium and certainly indicative is the higher proportion of achenes of Urtica dioica L. to the more open and drier growing U.annua L. and as U.dioica is a perennial it suggests a period of sufficient establishment to flower and produce mature achenes without the interference of man's activities such as control of growth. Sambucus is evident, though again lacking the number one tends to anticipate once their presence has been found in a sample. The Compositae achenes are relatively so few as to suggest blowing in from the neighbourhood rather than growing close by. The plants listed here cannot exactly be considered as common inhabitants of cultivated fields, which at first glance could be

construed by the cereals.

Once more, the plant list can only, hopefully, be supportive to other environmental reports.

Phase XVI Sample Ref. Y.156 levels.

This is the most complex of the samples. The middle section was recovered from the soil sample and even after repeated attempts to loosen and float the disseminules the majority were actually recovered from the residue.

The list of plants can be said to show quite distinct eco-systems, the only common factor is a preference for an open unshady position. Briefly listing some of the more obvious members of the habitats, the following groups can be found.

a) Aquatics, either marginals, marshes, water-ditches (albeit winterbournes) or true water growing plants: Potamogeton; Ranunculus hederaceus; R.subgenus Batrachium; Apium nodiflorum; Alisma; Callitriche, Lychnis etc.

b) Plants associated mainly with disturbed ground such as cultivation: Stellaria media; Thlaspi arvense; Aethusa cynapium, Papaver etc.

c) Hedgerow or scrubland: Bryonia; Dipsacus; Ballota; Prunus, Rubus etc.

These are just three groups taken out from a list which represents over 50 species of plants which do not seem to fall into any one pattern and must surely be from different sites originally.

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