

Bronze Age charcoal samples from Pingewood, Berkshire.

Charcoal from a series of Late Bronze Age cremation burials was submitted for identification. The material had been sieved through 5.6 and 2.0 mm sieves.

Identification was hampered by the small size of many of the fragments, which were usually less than 5mm², and by the poor condition of some of the charcoal. Fifty fragments were identified from each sample with the exception of the small sample 791136, and 791135 (which was a single fragment). Features were checked at high magnifications and on longitudinal sections when necessary. As far as could be determined from the small fragments available, most of the charcoal was from branches or more mature wood (no curvature was visible on the growth rings).

The identifications for each sample are given below. The taxa are listed in approximate order of frequency of occurrence.

791132 PE2-79/BA2

Ash (Fraxinus excelsior L.)
Oak (Quercus sp.)
Hawthorn-type (Rosaceae, subfamily Pomoideae)?
C.f. Blackthorn (Prunus sp.)

791133 PE2-79/BA7

Oak
Holly (Ilex aquifolium L.) including some twig
Willow (or possibly Poplar) (Salix/Populus sp.)
Hawthorn-type?

791134 PE2-79/BA 10

Oak
C.f. Blackthorn
Ash
Willow or Poplar
Buckthorn (Rhamnus catharticus L.)
Small unidentified twig fragment

791135 PE2-79/BA 15

Willow.

791136 PE2-79/BA 19

Oak

Ash

Hazel (*Corylus avellana* L.)?

Hawthorn-type?

A "thorn" fragment, could be from Blackthorn or Buckthorn

791137 PE2-79/BA 311

Oak

Ash

Small unidentified twig fragment

Ash, Oak, Hawthorn-type, Willow, Hazel and Blackthorn are common on sites of all periods throughout lowland England. Holly and Buckthorn occur less frequently. Buckthorn would be expected in association with calcareous soils.

Wood from a Roman context at Pingewood

The wood was from a large pit or small pond of Roman date. The identifications were as follows:-

793447 PE 1-78/F84 a-d

"From carved beam?" (a)	Oak (<i>Quercus</i> sp.)
"From plank" (b)	Oak
"From worked timber" (c)	Hawthorn-type (<i>Rosaceae</i> , subfamily <i>Pomoideae</i>)
"Dowel from joint" (d)	Ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> L.) worked from a large timber

793447 PE 1-78/F253

"Sample of split post"

Oak

Wood from a well at Pingewood

The wood was from a well of Medieval date, with some (possibly residual) Roman pottery associated. The identifications were as follows:-

794743 PE 79/207 (2 samples)

"Wood from upright timbers lining well"

Alder (Alnus glutinosa (L.) Gaertn.)

794744 PE79/207A

"Wood possibly part of a superstructure or step"

Oak (Quercus sp.)

Carole A. Keepax
18/11/80