

## Fish bones from the Old White Hart, Newark

A group of 24 fish bones, collected by hand from trowelled deposits excavated within the Old White Hart, Newark, were submitted for identification and comment. The bones were recovered from deposits ranging in date from the 12th-18/19th centuries. The standing building, one of the finest of its kind in England, is thought to have been constructed in the 14th & 15th centuries. The excavations revealed a number of earlier features including garderobe pits and evidence for early structures on the site.

The majority of the identified fish bones were of marine fish well known for their food value and eating qualities. Bones of cod, Gadus morhua L. and flatfish, (probably plaice, Pleuronectes platessa L.) were the most common. In addition, two kinds of freshwater fish were represented: pike, Esox lucius L., and a member of the salmon family (probably salmon, Salmo salar L.). The size of the bones indicates that the round fish were all 80-100 cm in length while the flatfish were approximately 30 - 40 cm long. It is likely that a number of other fish, particularly small-boned species like eel, Anguilla anguilla (L.), and herring, Clupea harengus L., were present in the excavated deposits but have been missed because sieving was not employed.

The assemblage of fish is typical of hand-collected material from urban sites in central England. The presence of bones from both the head and axial skeleton of cod suggests that at least some of the marine fish were brought to the site as fresh fish. (Most techniques for preserving large fish involve decapitating the animal prior to cleaning and processing.) In conclusion, bones of marine species were the most common fish remains, while freshwater fish were present in small numbers.

Approximately half the bones could not be identified to species but have been recorded by element, for example ribs, fin-rays and branchiostegal rays. A full list of the identified bones has been deposited with the Fish Section, British Museum (Natural History), the Environmental Archaeology Unit, University of York, the National Monuments Record and with Mr J. Samuels.

Andrew K. G. Jones, November, 1982.

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Layer code	Number and kind of bone with measurements	Identification
Cutting 2		
L 3	1 pterygiophore	Flatfish, Pleuronectidae, probably plaice <u>Pleuronectes platessa</u> L.
	1 branchiostegal ray	Indeterminable
F 5	1 vertebral centrum, 12 mm	Salmon family, Salmonidae, probably salmon <u>Salmo salar</u> L.
	2 ribs	Salmonidae
	1 maxilla	Cod, <u>Gadus morhua</u> L.
	1 pterygiophore	Pleuronectidae
F 5/9	1 vertebral centrum, 4.8 mm	Pleuronectidae
F 7	1 dentary	Pike, <u>Esox lucius</u> L. total length c. 80 cm
L 11	1 vertebral centrum, 11.5 mm	Salmonidae
	1 pterygiophore	Pleuronectidae TL c. 20 cm
L 13	1 supracleithrum	Cod TL c. 90 cm
	1 branchiostegal ray	Gadidae, cod family
L 28/29	1 rib	Gadidae
F 31	7 fin rays	Gadidae
L 36	1 caudal vertebral centrum 15 mm	Cod
Cutting 3		
L 13	1 caudal vertebral centrum 15.8 mm	Cod
F 43	1 caudal vertebral centrum 12 mm	Cod