AM1 Report 3849

1487

Althorne Grove. BATTERSEA

The Animal Bones.

The animal bone recovered from this site belonged to four periods; Saxon, Medieval, Post Medieval and Recent, the latter includes Victorian features.

The total number of bones recovered was 989, this was too few for any calculation of age groupings, and as much of the bone was fragmentary no measurements were taken. A chart was made for each of the four periods showing which species were represented.

Saxon

The following species were identified; cattle (Bos sp.), sheep (Ovis sp.), pig (Sus sp.), cat (Felis sp.), domestic fowl (Gallus sp.), whale and fish.

	cattle	sheep	pig	cat	domestic fowl
skull	4	-	-	3	-
horncore	-	-	-	-	-
mandible	5	2	-	2	-
vertebrae	11	-	-	7	-
os coxae	5	1	-	1	-
humerus	3	1	-	3	2
radius	1	-	-	1	-
ulna	1	-	-	1	1
scapula	-	2	1	-	1 coracoid
metacarpal	1	-	-	-	-
femur	3	-	-	-	1
fibula	-	-	-	-	-
tibia	3	3	-	2	2
metatarsal	2	3	-	-	-
calcaneum	2	-	-	-	-
1st phalanx	1	2	-	-	-
2nd phalanx	1	-	-	-	-
3rd phalanx	-	1	-	-	-
astragalus	2	1	-	-	-
					1

rib	3	-	-	4	-
teeth	15	4	2	-	-
total	63	20	3	24	7

cattle sized fragments 11.

unidentified bone fragments 164.

whale; 1 vertebral body.

fish; 1 bone.

total 294.

The number of unidentifiable pieces of bone is approximately equal to the number that were identified, the degree of fragmentation is, therefore, quite high. Cattle is the most numerous species, all the bones showed full epiphyseal fusion and full permanent dentition, except the mandible of a calf which retained some deciduous teeth. The unfused proximal end of a radius and the distal epiphysis of a femur were also present. A number of bones showed signs of butchery especially on vertebrae and some long bones, all were chop marks.

The sheep were all adult specimens having achieved full epiphyseal fusion and dentition. Only a few pig bones were present. The cat was an immature individual, the tibiae were unfused at both ends, the proximal end of the humerus was also unfused. The presence of a single individual distorts the proportion of species shown on the chart.

The whale vertebra, although it could not be positively identified, is very similar to that of a pilot whale (Globicephala melaena.) This was identified by M.C. Sheldrick, British Museum Natural History.

Medieval

The following species were present; cattle (Bos sp.), sheep (Ovis sp.), pig (Sus sp), horse (Equus sp.), red deer (Cervus elaphus.), rabbit (Cryctolagus cuniculus.), and peafowl (Pavo sp.), 1 humerus, which was identified by D Bramwell.

	cattle	sheep	pig	horse	red deer	rabbit
skull	7	1	-	-	-	-
horncore	1	-	-	-	-	-
mandible	11	2	3	-	-	-
vertebrae	10	1	-	-	-	-
os coxae	-	2	-	-	-	-
humerus	2	1	-	-	-	-
radius	3	3	-	2	-	-
ulna	1	1	-	-	-	-
scapula	5	-	1	-	-	-
metacarpal	2	-	-	-	-	4
femur	1	4	-	2	-	-
fibula	-	-	-	-	-	-
tibia	2	-	-	2	-	-
metatarsal	3	2	-	-	-	-
calcaneum	1	-	-	-	-	1
1st phalanx	4	3	-	1	-	-
2nd phalanx	1	-	1	-	-	-
3rd phalanx	1	-	-	-	-	-
astragalus	2	1	-	-	-	-
rib	-	-	-	-	-	-
teeth	20	12	2	2	2	-
talus	3	-	-	-	-	-
total	80	33	7	9	2	5

cattle sized fragments 1.

unidentifiable fragments 57.

peafowl 1 humerus

total 175

The bone from this period was better preserved than that from the Saxon period, the relative proportion of unidentifiable bone was also smaller.

Again cattle is the numerous species, no selectivity was observed and all the bone showed full epiphyseal fusion and full dentition except one unfused proximal

end of a tibia. Butchery was noted on a few bones including a metacarpal and metatatarsal both chopped axially.

One 1st phalanx showed lipping on the proximal surface suggesting arthritis.

A human astragalus was recovered from the boundary ditch.

Post Medieval

The following species were present; cattle (Bos sp.), sheep (Ovis sp.), pig (Sus sp.) horse (Equus sp.), red deer (Cervus elaphus), fallow deer (Dama dama), dog (Canis sp.), cat (Felis sp.), rabbit (Oryctolagus cuniculus.), oyster (Ostrea edulis.).

	cattle	sheep	pig	horse	red deer	fallow deer	dog	cat	rabbit
skull	9 & 1 skull	3	1	-	-	-	11	-	-
horncore	3	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
mandible	6	3	1	-	1	-	1	-	-
vertebrae	11	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
os coxae	6	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
humerus	4	3	-	-	-	-	2	3	-
radius	3	3	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
ulna	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	1
scapula	3	3	-	-	-	1	-	1	-
metacarpal	5	3	-	-	-	1	-	-	-
femur	3	4	1	-	-	-	2	-	1
fibula	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
tibia	4	5	-	-	-	1	2	1	1
metatarsal	5	3	-	-	-	-	16	-	-
calcaneum	5	1	-	-	-	-	11	1	-
1st phalanx	3	4	-	-	-	-	12	-	-
2nd phalanx	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3rd phalanx	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
astragalus	4	3	-	-	-	-	2	-	-

rib	6	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
teeth	14	13	2	3	1	-	-	-	-
talus	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
total	101	60	5	3	2	3	65 (inc. 1 skeleton)	6	8

cattle sized fragments 19.

unidentifiable fragments 67.

oyster; 2 valves.

1 piece of burnt bone

76 bird bones.

total 418

This period produced the largest amount of bone, although this is distorted by the large number of bird bones.

Cattle were predominant, and butchery was practised on a number of bones. Bone working was evident on the midshaft of a metatarsal which had been sawn at both ends and shaved down the sides, possibly for use as a handle.

The astragalus of a horse recovered from the garden soil (F53) showed butchery marks.

A variety of birds were identified, including 9 bones of domestic fowl (Gallus sp.), one of goose (Anser sp.), and from F478 a group of 59 bones of red grouse (Lagopus lagopus), representing at least six individuals. In the same deposit were 8 bones of partridge (Perdix perdix), all of these were humeri.

A human mandible was found in F459, a rubble pit, this showed antemortem loss of the first and second molars on the left side.

Recent.

The following species were present; cattle (Bos sp.), sheep (Ovis sp.), pig (Sus sp.), horse (Equus sp.), dog (Canis sp.), hare (Lepus sp.), domestic fowl (Gallus sp.), goose (Anser sp.), and fish.

	cattle	sheep	pig	horse	dog	hare
skull	-	-	-	-	2	-
horncore	-	-	-	-	-	-
mandible	3	2	-	-	2	-
vertebrae	2	2	-	-	-	-
os coxae	3	-	-	-	-	-
humerus	4	1	-	-	-	-
radius	-	1	1	-	1	-
ulna	-	-	-	-	-	-
scapula	2	-	-	-	-	-
metacarpal	8	-	-	-	-	-
femur	1	2	2	-	-	-
fibula	-	-	-	-	-	-
tibia	2	-	1	-	-	1
metatarsal	-	1	2	-	-	-
calcaneum	-	-	-	-	-	-
1st phalanx	2	3	-	1	2	-
2nd phalanx	-	-	1	-	-	-
3rd phalanx	-	-	-	-	-	-
astragalus	-	-	-	-	-	-
rib	2	4	-	-	1	-
teeth	5	4	-	-	-	-
total	34	20	7	1	8	1

cattle sized fragments 8

unidentifiable fragments 18

burnt fragments 2

domestic fowl 1 ulna

goose 1 coracoid

fish 1 bone

Only a small amount of bone was recovered from recent deposits, part of a dog burial was found, however this was very eroded and incomplete.

Victorian rubbish pits (F305 307 308) produced 6 cattle metacarpals, 5 of which had holes drilled in their proximal surface down through the shaft. All the holes are in the same position and made with the same instrument.

Conclusions.

The number of bones recovered from this site is too few for any economic interpretation and probably represents local food consumption. However there seems to be little variation between the species present in each of the four periods. A full list of identifications is available on request.

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