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FAUNAL REMAINS PROJECT  
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY  
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ANIMAL BONES FROM EXCAVATIONS AT WIMBORNE, DORSET,  
1978 - 1981

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The Wimborne sites from which bones were collected were as follows:

<u>place</u>	<u>code</u>	<u>year</u>
<u>AREA 1</u>		
Wimborne Corn Market	CMT	1978
Wimborne Minster	WMR	1979
<u>AREA 2</u>		
Wimborne Crown Hotel	WCL	1979
Wimborne Lloyds Bank	WLB	1980
<u>AREA 4</u>		
Wimborne East Street	WET	1979

Most of the bone from these urban excavations was of medieval or post-medieval date. A swift appraisal was made of all material to enable the excavator (P.Woodward, Trust for Wessex Archaeology) to assemble the archive and to discard a quantity of animal bone which was of modern or mixed origin or was undateable.

All dateable medieval and post-medieval groups were computer-coded using the Ancient Monuments Laboratory's coding scheme. Detailed archive is available at the Faunal Remains Project, University of Southampton. All bones computer-coded have been kept.

#### AREA 1

##### Wimborne Corn Market

Layers with mixed medieval and nineteenth century finds were discarded as the bones confirmed the residual nature of some of this material.

Apart from a few fragments dated to the early medieval period, the only bones recorded were from two medieval (13-14th Century AD) pits, Pits 67 and 71. These are summarised together in Table 1 as they cover the same range of species and are not unlike in many other criteria. The main differences are that Pit 71 contains bones mostly from heads and feet (45 of the 66 bones compared with 21 of the 80 fragments from Pit 67). Pit 71 also has a high level of charred and burnt fragments (21%).

Of note are a collection of cattle metacarpals in Pit 71 which have a somewhat twisted shaft. These represent at least four

TABLE 1

Bones from Pits 67 and 71, Wimborne Corn Market

	<u>cattle</u>	<u>sheep</u>	<u>pig</u>	<u>bird</u>	<u>total</u>
horn core		4			4
skull			3		3
maxilla	2	2	1		5
jaw	1	8	1		10
rib	8	4	1		13
vertebra	2	3	2		7
scapula	1	1	1		3
humerus	2		3	5	10
radius/ulna	2	2	2	2	8
pelvis	2	2	1		5
femur	1			1	2
tibia	4	2			6
carpal/tarsal	1	1			2
metapodial	9	2	11	2	24
phalanx	1	1			2
loose teeth		4	4		8
long bone frag.	6			1	7
other	1	<div style="text-align: center;">⏟ 24</div>		1	26
<hr/>					
totals	43	36	<div style="text-align: center;">⏟ 24</div> 30	12	145

individuals related by genetic anomaly or similarity of function - it is conceivable that they might have pulled ploughs or carts. The dimensions of one suggest that it was a bull. There was also a cattle first phalanx with bony outgrowths (exostoses).

Of the bird bones, both pits contained remains of domestic fowl, goose, and duck. Pit 67 also contained a fragment of horn core which may have been from a goat and Pit 71 a horse femur fragment.

### Wimborne Minster

Bone from most layers was undateable and butchery sometimes modern in character. The only bones recorded and kept were 12 from a pit containing middle medieval pottery - Pit 27. These were both meat-bearing and peripheral bones of cattle, including two horn cores, and three fragments of sheep.

### AREA 2

#### Wimborne Crown Hotel

Table 2 summarizes the material kept from Pit Complex 183. Other material from these excavations that could not be dated was not kept. It contained a large amount of material which was modern or 19th Century. The pits in complex 183 were cut into the soil of what was probably an orchard in late medieval and post-medieval times. This assemblage contained some measurable bones, especially metapodials. Apart from one possible goat bone and a few fragments of horse, cat, domestic fowl and duck, and a partial skeleton of dog, the bones were overwhelmingly those of cattle and sheep. The former included bones both of calf and a newborn.

Separate but probably contemporary with these was the burial of a pig<sup>(in Layer 41)</sup> with the fourth deciduous molar in wear, suggesting an age of 2 - 4 months.

In Layer 93 - possibly the medieval boundary ditch-there was a horse burial dated to 12/13th Century AD. An early medieval pit (Pit 86) contained sheep jaws and two cattle long

TABLE 2      Animal Bones from Soil/Pit Complex 183

	<u>horse</u>	<u>cattle</u>	<u>sheep</u>	<u>pig</u>	<u>dog</u>	<u>cat</u>	<u>bird</u>	<u>total</u>
horn core		1	1					2
skull	1	2	2	3				8
maxilla		1	1	3				5
mandible		9	7	6				22
rib		32	14		2			48
vertebra		13	7		2			22
scapula		13	5	1				19
humerus		3	5	3	2	1	2	16
radius/ulna	1	4	13	4	3		1	26
pelvis		14	2		2			18
femur		7	8		1			16
tibia	1	5	16	4	3	1	1	31
carpal/tarsal		6	3	3				12
metapodial	1	22	51	3				77
phalanx		18	22	3				43
loose teeth	1	9	3	3	1			17
long bone frag		40	44					84
other		46	16		1			63
totals	5	245	160	36	17	2	4	529

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bone fragments. The fragments from both these contexts were not well preserved.

#### Wimborne Lloyds Bank

Bones from this excavation were discarded being modern or mixed.

#### AREA 3

##### Wimborne East Street

Layers 3 and 6 produced a few cattle horn cores associated with 17th Century pottery and these were measured and kept. Undated cattle horn cores were also found near the bridge. All the cores lacked knife marks but may have been left over from tanning, or from horn-working where the rotting of the tissue holding horn to core enabled the horn to be pulled off.

#### Conclusion

It is important for urban material of this type that even small amounts of data are accumulated to add to data from other small Wessex urban collections and from the large collections from Winchester and Southampton. But material of mixed origin or which is always likely to be undateable is not recorded. It is, however, better in some cases to discard this, not during excavation, but at the post-excavation stage when its stratigraphic and ceramic associations are clarified.

To some extent such mixed collections, even if eventually discarded, can be used to confirm the mixed and/ or modern nature of a context - mostly by the size of the bones and the nature of the butchery.

Although these excavations produced fewer than a thousand bones that were worth recording, a number of the bones, especially cattle horn cores and cattle and sheep metapodials, provided important measurements, and sheep jaws provided tooth wear data, which will add to that already accumulated in studies of the medieval and post-medieval urban assemblages for Wessex.