

ANCIENT MONUMENTS LABORATORY

REPORT

1767

SERIES/No	Consultant - BOTANY
AUTHOR	J R B Arthur
TITLE	CHELMSFORD, Seeds

CHELMSFORD F.18 747361.

Carbonised grain and straw from what is thought to be a stokepit of a malt oven.

The deposit comprises in the main of barley, with minor components of wheat, rye and brome.

Hordeum vulgare L. Hulled and naked six-row barley.

Triticum aestivum L. or T. turgidum L. Wheat.

Secale cereale L. Rye.

Bromus secalinus L. Bromegrass

Comment: Fortunately up to 2 centimetres of straw and pieces of the axis of the inflorescence of the barley ear, namely the rachis, were examined and assisted in an accurate identification.

The deposit was charred in an extremely tight mass but as many barley grains appeared in situ in an unbroken state, it would indicate the threshing had been of a light nature.

The majority of the barley grains were of the naked species with smaller amounts of the hulled species. It is not always possible to decide if one is dealing with a deposit that represents one crop, or the crop remains in a drying oven representing a number of crops. If this deposit represented one crop the other cereal components could very well have been the result of a field which had been continuously cropped over many years, from experience it is easy to find how quickly this kind of adulteration can occur either by mechanical or natural means.

J.R.B.Arthur.