

The Plant Remains from Hemlington Larchfield, Cleveland.

(first interim report).

(grid ref. NZ 500 135)

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Introduction

A small-scale trial excavation was carried out at this site to test the potential for further work in advance of housing developments. A small number of subsoil features were recovered, the finds of which suggested a Romano/British date. Two bulk samples were collected from two of the features to test for the presence of plant remains.

The samples were air-dried and then subjected to manual water flotation using a 0.5 mm mesh sieve. The flots were analysed microscopically. The context, volume and content of the samples is given in Table 1.

Results

As can be seen from the Table, the plant remains are extremely sparse. In total only six fragments were found. There were three fragments of cereal grains, all too poorly preserved to allow further identification. One chaff fragment of a brittle rachis wheat was found, in addition to a common arable weed (small Leguminosae) and a root fragment of a not further identifiable grass.

Interpretation

Though the number of plant remains in these two samples is small, it is not unlike some of the samples from Thorpe Thewles, Cleveland. Their presence, furthermore, points to the presence of human activity in the close vicinity, suggesting that the features recovered represent some of the outlying features of a settlement. Future excavation in the core of the settlement is highly desirable, as the plant remains from this Romano-British settlement would form a very interesting comparison with those of the late Iron-Age settlement at Thorpe Thewles. Their analysis would greatly improve our understanding of the development and role of crop production in the region.

Durham, 18 October 1984

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Table 1      Hemlington Larchfield 1984

context: Trench II ditch      Trench VI pit  
volume :      18 litres              16 litres

content

Cerealia indet	2	1
rachis internode Triticum sp(brittle rachis)	.	1
Leguminosae indet (small)	.	1
rhizome fragm, grass	.	1
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Total	2	4