

Site: Orsett
County: Essex
Code: TQ 68/36
Type of site: Causewayed enclosure
Period: Neolithic
Type of material: Impressions on pottery
Director: D. Buckley

Orsett Causewayed Enclosure: Impressions of plant material on pottery

Sherds showing possible impressions of plant material, selected by the excavator, were examined. Identifications were made from silicone rubber casts.

The majority of the impressions seen were of indeterminate scraps of grass culm and spikelets. A sherd from BF 21 (3) shows some particularly clear spikelets. This might indicate use of hay, or possibly animal dung as a temper for the pottery. Two sherds from CF 121 IV 3 and CF 121 II 3 show impressions of longitudinally ribbed 'stems', very tentatively identified as petioles of Pteridium aquilinum (bracken). Only two clear impressions of cereal grains were seen: an impression of the ventral side of a barley grain (Hordeum sp) on a sherd from CF 4 IV 9, and an oblique lateral impression of a small elongate wheat grain, possibly of emmer (Triticum dicoccum) from 1731/CF 4 (11) 9. The barley grain is 6.5mm long and 2.9mm wide. It is unclear whether it is of hulled or naked barley. The wheat grain is 4.6mm long.