

ANCIENT MONUMENTS LABORATORY

REPORT

2006

SERIES/No

ENVIRONMENTAL

24/76

AUTHOR

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TITLE

WINKLEBURY

GENERAL

ANCIENT MONUMENTS LABORATORY

INTERIM REPORT

24/76

Carole A. Keppax . 24/3/76

A.M. No.

This report is sent to keep excavators informed of the progress of work on their material and is not to be considered as necessarily representing the final conclusions on the work reported. Thus the Chief Laboratory Officer should be informed of any intention to publish information given in an A.M.L. Interim Report so that he may advise as to its suitability for publication.

On completion of an investigation, a formal report, correlating the information notified in any Interim Report will be prepared by the Laboratory. This report may include a revision of conclusions previously notified.

SITE

WINKLEBURY

EXCAVATOR

Central Unit

760313 951-9900

Ashy loam layer sealed between clay layers of pit. ? Identity of white flecks .
Root remains?

The white flecks were found to be small tunnel-like structures about 0.5 to 1.0mm in diameter. This material effervesces very strongly with dilute hydrochloric acid, indicating that it is a carbonate, probably calcium carbonate (chalk). This might be compared with the calcium carbonate replaced fungal hyphae discovered in the position of a 'stake' on the previous excavation at Winklebury (A.M.Lab. report by Mr. L. Biek 6th Sept. 1960). However, when examined at high magnification, the material was found to be composed of a regular arrangement of granules resembling cellular structure. It therefore appears that the replaced structures in this case may have been plant roots.



760314 775-9901

'Vegetable matter? Greenish-spongy textured with fibrous appearance. Low down in pit'
This sample was not found to display a greenish colour when examined - it is 7.5YR 4/2 moist (brown) on the Munsell chart. There was no obvious 'fibrous' appearance, although the presence of modern roots may have given this impression. The sample is a loam containing a large amount of finely divided wood charcoal and a few snail shells. It seems that some ash may also be present. This could account for the unusual texture noted in the field.



760316 624-3901

' Carbonised grain - chalk backfill'

Sample wt. 6.8kg. (damp)

The sample was treated as described for the previous sample, except that it was not dry sieved first. The flotant was sorted and was found to contain the following material:-

- 1) A medium amount of modern roots.
- 2) Some insect remains (possibly modern).
- 3) A large quantity of snail shells.
- 4) A large amount of finely divided wood charcoal.*
- 5) One charred cereal grain, (separated for identification)

Because of the comparative lack of cereal grains, it was not thought worthwhile to sieve the non-floating residues for these.

*Many of the fragments were too small for identification, but the following species were identified:-

Ash (Fraxinus excelsior L.)

Oak (Quercus sp.)

Probably hawthorn-type (Crataegus/Pyrus/Malus/Sorbus sp.)

Possible hazel or alder (Alnus glutinosa (L.))



760317 903 - 3902

'Charcoal, seed, and burnt bone- chalk backfill'

Sample wt. -5.7kg. (damp)

The sample was treated as described for sample 760315. The flotant was found to contain:-

- 1) A large amount of modern root material.
- 2) Some insect remains. Most of these are possibly modern, but some of them seem to be replaced by calcium carbonate and could therefore be older. These are being studied further.
- 3) Some snail shells.
- 4) Some finely divided wood charcoal*
- 5) A few poorly charred cereal grains, (separated for identification).
- 6) Tiny fragments of spongy bone and a few small mammal vertebrae were present in the flotant. Larger fragments of burnt bone were present in the non-floating residue.

Because of the comparative lack of cereal grains, it was not thought worthwhile to sieve the non-floating residue.

* Many of the fragments were too small for identification, but the following species were found to be present:-

Ash
Oak
Hawthorn-type



760318 1268 - 2900

'Deposit on walls and base of pot-found at base of chalk back fill/top of primary silts of pit. Remains of contents of pot?'

This is a charred material with a spongy texture. No recognisable structure was seen.

The sample might be submitted for chemical analysis of food substance residues.

In similar cases of this kind, it is more valuable to have the residue submitted in position on the pot. It would also be of interest to have a soil sample of the deposit in which the pot was found.