ANCIENT MONUMENTS LABORATORY

REPORT

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SERIES/No	CONTRACTOR
AUTHOR	Alison M Donaldson Feb 1977
TITLE	Botanical report on material from BERWICK-UPON-TWEED, 1976

Botanical Report on material from Berwick-upon-Tweed, 1976.

Alison M Donaldson.

Archaeological introduction supplied by the excavator, Mr J R Hunter, Undergraduate School of Studies in Archaeological Sciences, University of Bradford.

Botanical report on material from destruction levels, C13th- C16th

Charcoal.

DD. all Quercus sp. (Oak)
CF. " " " "
CJ. " " " "

Seeds.

DD.

Avena sp. (Oats)	c. 1,000 grains
(all those with remains of flower bases were A.sativa L., the cultivated oat)	
Hordeum sp. (Barley)	19 grains (hull
Triticum aestivum s.l. (Wheat)	3 grains
Corylus avellana L. (Hazel)	4 nuts (broken
Pisum sativum L. (Pea)	6 seeds
Spergula arvensis L. (Corn Spurrey)	11 seeds
Rumex acetosella L. (Sheep's Sorrel)	2 nutlets
Rumex, crispus T. (Docks)	1 nutlet
Urtica urens L. (Small Nettle)	1 achene
Stellaria media (L.) Vill. (Chickweed)	1 seed
Cirsium or Carduus sp. (Thistles)	1 acene (broke

The bulk of this material was carbonised grain , legumes and nuts and seems to indicate deliberate storage or perhaps drying of food.

The other seeds present are common weeds of cultivation and likely contaminants in a seed crop. Spergula arvensis, the corn spurrey, indicates sandy, acid soils in the region. Seeds of this species are themselves edible.

CG.

As this sample consisted of several thousand carbonised seeds, it was agreed that a species list should be drawn up with only an estimate of the relative abundance of the different taxa.

Avena sp. (Oats) incl. A. sativa	grains	++++
Hordeum sp. (Barley) (hulled)	grains	++
Stellaria media (L.) Vill. (Chickweed)	seeds	+++
Chenopodium album L. (Fat Hen)	seeds	++
Brassica rapa L./ nigra (L.) Koch (Turnip/Black Mustard)	seeds	++
Atriplex hastata L./patula L. (Orache)	seeds	+
Polygonum aviculare L. (Knotgrass)	fruits	+
Rumex,crispus T. (Docks)	nutlets	+
Sinapsis arvensis L. (Charlock)	seeds	+
Tripleurospermum maritimum (L.) Koch ssp. inodorum (L.)Hyl. ex Vaarama (Scentless Mayweed)	achenes	+
Gramineae (Grasses)	caryopses	+
Calluna vulgaris (L.) Hull	shoots	+

Oats are again the commonest grain and the sample probably represents grain storage or drying. Weeds of cultivation are again represented. The seeds of Chenopodium album are themselves edible

The Brassica seeds fall somewhere between modern reference material of B.rapa and that of B.nigra and they could be an early cultivated variety or a wild variety of either. They could therefore represent either weeds of cultivation,contaminants in a cereal crop or the drying of seeds prior to the preparation of mustard or oil, or simply storage.

The heather is unlikely to have been growing near the crops and was probably flooring orconstructional material which got incorporated into the sample.

CF.? Thatch or matting.

Dicotyledonous stems	v. abundant
Gramineae stems (grass or cereal)	few
Triticum aestivum s.l. (Wheat)	3 grains
Chenopodium album (Fat Hen)	3 seeds
Polygonum aviculare (Knotgrass)	1 fruit

Although ther were a few pieces of grass or cereal stem, the bulk of the material was crushed stems with some secondary (woody) thickening. This rules out the grasses, sedges, rushes, reeds and all other monocotyledons. The width of the medullary rays rules out the other common thatching and flooring material, heather (Calluna vulgaris) The stems of the 2 dicotyledenous weed species present are unlikely to get as thick and woody as this material

This material could have been used asthatch, flooring etc.although it doesnot contain most of the usual species.

Alison M Donaldson,
Biological Laboratory,
Department of Archaeology,
University of Durham.