Report 2264

TARRABY

"Roman grass cuttings"

The bulk of this material was preserved fragments of monocotyledonous stems (eg grasses, sedges etc.) and did indeed look like cut or mown vegetation.

5Kg of the material was washed down and subjected to paraffin flotations. This concentrated the fruits and seeds etc. present while the stem fragments remained in the residue. The following taxa were identified:

Carex echinata Murr. (Star Sedge)	30 fruits
Carex panicea L. (Carnation - Grass)	1 nutlet
C. rostrata Stokes/ vesicaria L.(Bottle Sedge/Bladder Sedge)	20 fruits
Carex sp. (Sedge)	5 nutlets
Gramineae (Grasses)	670 florets
Lychnis flos-cuculi L. (Ragged Robin)	30 seeds
Potentilla anserina L. (Silverweed)	1 achene
P. erecta (L.) Räusch (Common Tormentil)	13 achenes
P. palustris (L.) Scop.(Marsh Cinquefoil)	1 achene
Ranunculus sect. Ranunculus (Buttercup)	8 achenes
R. sceleratus L. (Celery-leaved Crowfoot)	3 achenes
Rumex, crispus Type (Dock)	1 nutlet
Stellaria media (L.) Vill. (Chickweed)	2 seeds
Urtica dioica L. (Nettle)	1 achene
Pteridium aquilinum L. (Bracken)	1 piece of frond

Unfortunately specific identification of thr grass florets was impossible as the lemna was always damaged and the caryopsis immature. From the overall size and venation of the lemna however it was apparant that at least two species were present.

The list is dominated by plants of wet meadow and fen with a few species which would have grown near or in open water. In addition there are a few plants of waste ground or rough pasture such as nettles, chickweed, silverweed, tormentil and bracken.

It is likely that the deposit is vegetation cut from a low-lying meadow or similar, with areas of fen and open water and some drier places. As it comes from a ditch however it is possible that the open- water component and the drier, waste- land component may have come from the ditch and banks respectively.

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? Late- Glacial deposits from Field 7, Trench A.

Paraffined samples from the Ancient Monuments Lab. were examined and the macroscopic remains are shown on the attached sheet.

Sedge nutlets are the commonest remains. Although several species are involved, they all grow in wet places. Other plants grow in damp places, marshes and fens with some water flow.

The birch fruit indicated the presence of birch trees within a few miles of the fen.(Being winged, birch fruit can travel relatively far.) Although most of the birch pollen from the Cumbrian Late-Glacial falls within the range of the dwarf birch Betula nana L. macroscopic remains of tree birches have been found in zone II (Allerød) and even zone I deposits, and of course in the Post- Glacial.

An interesting record is that of Selaginella selaginoides which does not grow in the Carlisle area today, being mainly a plant of mountainous areas. It is an arctic- montane plant and is characteristic of late-glacial times, when it had a much wider range.

There are therfore indications that these deposits represent a Late-Glacial or early Post Glacial fen but only pollen analysis, giving a more regional view, especially of tree cover, could verify this.

TARRABY ? Late- Glacial deposits from Field 7, Trench A.

		110-120 cm	100-110 cm	90-100 cm
Betula pendula Roth./pubescens Ehrh. (Tree birch)	achenes	1		
Carex acuta L./nigra (L.) Reichard (Tufted/Common Sedge)	fruits	2	55	11
Carex cf aquatilis Wahlenb.	nutlets		10	
Carex rostrata Stokes/vesicaria L./pendula Huds. (Bottle/ Bladder/Pendulous Sedge)	nutlets	23	392	90
Carex sp.	nutlets	6	9	10
Lychnis flos-cuculi L. (Ragged Robin)	seeds	4	28	5
Menyanthes trifoliata L.(Bog Bean)	seeds	4	8	29
Potentilla palustris (L.) Scop. (Marsh Cinquefoil)	achenes	-	8	8
Ranunculus sceleratus L. (Celery-leaved Crowfoot)	achenes	-	22	10
Ranunculus sect. Ranunculus (Buttercups)	achenes	-	-	1
Rumex acetosella L. (Sheep's Sorrel)	fruits	-	1	-
Salix sp. (Willow)	buds	+	-	-
Selaginella selaginoides (L.) Link (Lesser Clubmoss)	megaspores	~1	1	12

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Fighting Ditch. Date of fill unknown.

A paraffined sample contained the following:

Alisma plantago- aquatica L.(Water Plantain)	achenes	404
Carex acuta L./nigra (L.) Reichard (Tufted/Common Sedge)	nutlets	2
Carex rostrata Stokes/vesicaria L./pendula Huds (Bottle/Bladder/Pendulous Sedge)	nutlets	7
Chenopodium album L.(Fat Hen)	seeds	1
Cirsium vulgare(Savi) Ten. (Spear Thistle)	achenes	1
Isolepis setacea (L.) R.Br. (Bristle Scirpus)	nutlets	9
Menyanthes trifoliata L. (Bog Bean)	seeds	100
Montia fontana L. (Blinks)		
ssp. chondrosperma (Fenzl.) S.M.Walters	seeds	1
ssp. intermedia (Beeby) S.M.Walters	seeds	2
ssp. variabilis S.M.Walters	seeds	30
Potamogeton natans L. (Broad-leaved Pondweed)	fruits	33
Ranunculus subgenus Batrachium (DC) A.Gray (Water Crowfoot)	achenes	8
Ranunculus flammula L.(Lesser Spearwort)	achenes	4
Ranunculus sceleratus (Celery- leaved Crowfoot)	achenes	2
Stellaria alsine Grimm. (Bog Stichwort)	seeds	6
Viola cf. riviniana Rchb. (Common Violet)	seeds	1

The pondweed is a true aquatic, with submerged and floating leaves, while the waterplantain, bog bean and crowfoots could have been growing in the water or on the muddy margins.

Most other species are of wet or damp places. The Montias indicate some acid soils nearby. Subspecies variabilis and intermedia grow in water trickles or very wet places on acid soil or rock while ssp. chondrosperma grows on light acid soil with a high water table.

There is also a small component of weeds of wasteland or waysides while the violet grows on woods, pasture or heathe but not on very wet soils.

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Ditch 766 (AML 762084) Fill Roman.

The sample was subjected to paraffin flotations and contained the following:

Carex sp. (Sedge)	nutlets	2
Chenopodium rubrum L./botryoides Sm./glaucum L.	seeds	30
Juncus effusus L./conglomeratus L. (Soft Rush)	seeds	2
Juncus articulatus L./acutiflorus Ehrh. ex. Hoffm. (Jointed/Sharp- flowered Rush)	seeds	1
Lemna trisulca L. (Ivy Duckweed)	seeds	18
Menyanthes trifoliata L.(Bog Bean)	seeds	5
Potamogeton friesii Rupr. (Flat-stalked Pondweed)	fruits	5
Urtica dioica L. (Nettle)	achenes	142
Gramineae (Grasses)	caryopses	5
Chara	oosporangia (uncalcified)	16

Open, still water is indicated by the duckweed and a muddy substrate by the pondweed. Chara, the large alga, also usually grews in still water and can often tolerate fairly anaerobic and polluted conditions. Other species would have grown on the margins of the ditch.

A large proportion of the seeds are of nettles and goosefoot and indicate nutrient- rich waste ground nearby.

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