The Charcoal assemblage

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Although all reasonable sized fragments of charcoal were collected and listed from all three zones of the site (see Charcoal Spreadsheet), limited funding did not allow for any species identification or other analysis. The charcoal was listed simply by weight and number of fragments by the Heritage Lottery volunteers. Only larger pieces of charcoal were kept for recording, so this does not take into account any charcoal which was smaller and more dispersed in charcoal-rich or charcoal-flecked layers – of which there were many.

The largest number of charcoal fragments were recorded from the MF zone trenches (461gms), as shown in Figure1 below. The MF zone trenches with the largest charcoal assemblage were Trenches 2, 14 and 18, which perhaps links to the fact that these trenches also produced large amounts of iron slag. Though it might seem puzzling that Trench MF34 (with its two Roman smithing hearths and very large quantities of iron slag) has practically no recorded charcoal, there is probably a reason for that. The site context sheets for the hearths in this trench records charcoal-rich layers fanning out from these features and charcoal rich layers within them, but this charcoal was very broken down and formed ashy charcoal-rich layers rather than lumps of discrete charcoal that could be separated out. However, not all the charcoal found on site was necessarily associated with smithing hearths, many fragments would have derived from domestic cooking hearths or fires as well as various ritual practices involving fire.

MF ZONE CHARCOAL		
Trench No.	**Total Weight**	**Total Frag. Number**
1	9	19
2	83	238
3	7	22
5	2	5
8B	27	50
12	4	11
14	126	138
15	30	69
18	39	143
21	13	25
22	3	11
24	17	5
34	4	3
35	18	17
39	23	44
40	56	48
TOTAL MF ZONE	**461gms**	**848x**

Figure 1 Incidence of charcoal in MF Zone trenches

The MFP Zone (see Figure 2 below) has only 276gms of charcoal recorded but as pointed out above, this does not reflect all the layers and fills which had much more broken down and

dispersed flecks of charcoal in them. Finally, the MFNA zone retained and recorded only very small quantities of charcoal, *c.* 50gms (see Figure 3 below).

MFP ZONE CHARCOAL		
Trench No.	**Total Weight**	**Total Frag. Number**
2	34	35
3	195	224
4	21	31
5	1	5
6	25	44
TOTALS MFP ZONE	**276gms**	**339x**

Figure 2 Incidence of charcoal in MFP Zone trenches

MFNA ZONE CHARCOAL		
Trench No.	**Total Weight**	**Total Frag. Number**
1	15	35
2	3	7
6	1	1
7	25	32
8	6	4
TOTALS MFNA ZONE	**50gms**	**79x**

Figure 3 Incidence of charcoal in MFNA Zone trenches