

*Britannia* 50 (2019): Sweet Chestnut (*Castanea sativa* Mill.) in Britain: Re-assessment of its Status as a Roman Archaeophyte

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ONLINE TABLE 1. REVIEW AND EVALUATION OF PUBLISHED RECORDS OF SWEET CHESTNUT (*CASTANEA SATIVA*)  
WOOD/CHARCOAL/NUTS/POLLEN IN BRITAIN, UP TO A.D. 650

Status: '✓' = verified as *C. sativa*, with defined chronology; '?' = unverifiable identification and/or chronology; '×' = rejected (rationale given in the table)

AML = Ancient Monuments Laboratory; NRHE = National Record of the Historic Environment; HE = Historic England; ABCD = Archaeobotanical Database; ADS = Archaeology Data Service; aDNA = ancient DNA

Period	Material type	Status as defined by original reporter	Status as determined by this study	Site name (names in bold are those cited by Godwin 1975)	References	Original description & new evaluation
Palaeolithic	Wood	✓	× Insecure context: conflicting reports	<b>Crayford brickearth pit</b> [= Stoneham Pit], Kent	Ridley 1885, cited in Kennard 1944 and Godwin 1975	See ONLINE TABLE 3.
Pre-Roman	Charcoal	?	× Insecure context	<b>Bedham Hill</b> , West Sussex	Keef 1940, cited in Godwin 1975	See ONLINE TABLE 3.

	Charcoal	?	? Insecure context	Down Farm, Pewsey, Wilts.	Western 1960, cited in Smith 2002	Primary source checked: Western (in Vatcher 1960) identified <i>Castanea</i> charcoal from a Bronze Age barrow site ('Site C, Goddard's 8'). The charcoal report states 'Filling from hole [i.e. in surface of chalk] ... Humified material containing much charcoal, some good lumps, <i>Quercus</i> and <i>Castanea</i> . <i>Castanea</i> is not known in this country before Roman times, so there is a possibility that this specimen is intrusive; perhaps it was part of a modern fence post' (Western 1960, 350). It is evident from the report (Vatcher 1960, 346) that the find site hole was markedly different from other Site C pits containing charcoal assemblages and so was presumed to be recent.
	Charcoal	?	? Not verified	Harden Cairn/Moor, Bingley, West Yorks.	Henderson 1984, cited by ADS	Henderson (1984) describes an excavation of an Early Bronze Age ring cairn: charcoal recovered from a cremation pit was identified as ' <i>Quercus</i> or <i>Castanea</i> sp.' by P. Franklin (Dept. Forestry, Univ. Oxford) and radiocarbon dated (Ambers <i>et al.</i> 1991, 56). The specimen has not been sought.
	Wood	?	? Not verified: suspected misidentification	Heathrow (Terminal 5), Middlesex	Allen 2010	Primary source checked: Allen reported 'Early/Middle Bronze Age (PSH02 feature SG 547007): Waterhole revetted with two crude stakes (one <i>Acer campestre</i> , one <i>Betula pendula</i> L.) cut from branch wood. One <i>Quercus</i> spp. heartwood chipping, one section of unidentifiable roundwood (? <i>Castanea</i> [sic] <i>sativa</i> L.[sic])' (Allen 2010, 3). Allen concluded 'One oddity which should be mentioned is the presence of a small section of sweet chestnut roundwood apparently from an early/middle bronze age context. Sweet chestnut is believed to be a Roman introduction (Nayling 1991) and it is thus surprising to find it in such an early context. The possibility of accidental contamination by a later feature should be considered' (Allen 2010, 25). The specimen has not been sought.

<b>Roman A.D. 43– 410</b>	Pollen	✓	✗ Not verified: undateable context	Pins Knoll, Litton Cheney, Dorset	Sidaway 1964, cited in Watson 1983	Primary source checked: Sidaway recorded <i>Castanea</i> pollen (as the dominant arboreal type, with sparse <i>Pinus</i> , <i>Quercus</i> , <i>Salix</i> , <i>Tilia</i> ) in a predominantly grass/herb dominated pollen flora from a shallow peat deposit (6 inches [15 cm] depth of peat below 18 inches [46 cm] depth of overburden). Sidaway (1964, 82) dated the peat deposit as ‘post-Roman ... as [ <i>Castanea</i> ] was not introduced until Roman times (Godwin (1956)’. Watson re-examined the record and the site in 1979 and concluded that the identifications and site date were ‘reasonable’ (Watson 1983, 18). Sidaway (pers. comm. 2016) provided his original notebook and pollen analyses (refereed at the time by G.W. Dimbleby) and they do support the correct species identification (although original pollen specimens/slides are unavailable). The context for the pollen was a shallow peat bed that had formed in a hollow in a landslip counterscarp on the south slope of Pins Knoll hill. Nearby was a spring that served an Iron Age/Romano-British occupied site, previously archaeologically excavated producing abundant pottery and human burial remains (Bailey 1967). The Romano-British context for the <i>Castanea</i> pollen is plausible. However, the peat deposit no longer exists, so the context cannot be dated and the pollen record cannot be verified.
	Charcoal	✓	✗ Misidentification	<b>Rotherley</b> , Wilts.	Helbaek 1953 [ <i>sic</i> ], cited in Godwin 1975, 74	See ONLINE TABLE 3. Incorrectly referenced by Godwin – it should be Pitt Rivers (1888). If the Helbaek reference had been relevant, it should have been cited as Helbaek (1952).
	Charcoal	✓	✗ Misidentification	<b>Woodcutts Common</b> , Dorset	Pitt Rivers 1884 [ <i>sic</i> ], cited in Godwin 1975, 79	See ONLINE TABLE 3. Incorrectly referenced by Godwin – it should be Pitt Rivers (1887).

	Charcoal	?	? Not verified	Silchester, Hants.	Straker 2000, cited in Smith 2002	Primary source checked: Straker (in Fulford and Timby 2000, 512–24) identified charcoals of ‘cf. sweet chestnut’ and ‘oak/sweet chestnut’, but of small pieces that could not be described definitively as <i>Castanea</i> . All were from Periods 2 to 6 (c. 15 B.C. to A.D. 150). Refer also to the ‘Wood’ entry for this site <i>infra</i> .
	Charcoal	?	? Not verified: specimens not found	Chesters villa, Woolaston, Glos.	Figueiral 1992, cited in Smith 2002	Primary source checked: Figueiral states ‘cf. <i>Castanea</i> ’ for six small branchwood specimens of charcoal excavated in 1988 from Phase 3, Furnace 24, Context 12 (late third to mid-fourth century A.D.). Figueiral explains: ‘The identification of Chestnut ... is based on anatomical features which characterize th[is] ... gen[us] only. However, the low number of fragments identified ( <i>Castanea</i> – 6...) is not conclusive. That is why we prefer to use the qualification ‘cf.’. If our identification of Chestnut is correct, as we think it is, it is quite significant as this species was introduced in Britain in Roman times [Rackham 1990]’ (Figueiral 1992, 190). Figueiral (pers. comm. 2014) has confirmed that she could not definitively describe these specimens as <i>Castanea</i> owing to the low number of samples, but that they were similar enough to <i>Castanea</i> to be cited as ‘cf’. A search of the Chesters archive at the Reading University Archaeology Dept. by Prof. Fulford with R.J. in 2015 failed to find the sweet chestnut charcoal specimens. Other charcoal specimens from the excavation were found, but not the <i>Castanea</i> packet reported by Figueiral. It appeared that the charcoal specimens for the excavation had been repackaged, as Figueiral did not recognise the present packets and labels (Figueiral pers. comm. 2015).

	Charcoal	✓	? Not verified: insecure context	Witcombe villa, Glos.	Clifford 1954, cited in Smith 2002 as ‘Anonymous 1955’	Primary source checked: Maby compiled the Soil & Charcoal report and stated ‘Trench C Room 1 ... Chestnut, sweet ( <i>Castanea vesca</i> ), one large fragment of good wood, <i>not</i> oak wood’ (Clifford 1954, 66). Maby’s species list for the charcoals in this context also included ash, wild cherry ( <i>Prunus</i> ) and hazel. Other contexts also yielded hawthorn, hornbeam, maple?, oak, alder, dogwood and Horse Chestnut <i>Aesculus</i> (‘early formed wood, rarely found – 2 pieces’). The horse chestnut was identified in a second ‘lot’ from Room 1: when excavated in 1938 the floor of this room had the remains of post-holes from a fence put in some time after the 1818 excavations (Clifford 1954, 15). The identification of horse chestnut here in a Roman context is confusing (it was allegedly not introduced into N Europe / Britain until the seventeenth century); perhaps the nineteenth-century post-holes introduced modern material. Maby had also identified horse chestnut – and sweet chestnut – at Cissbury Camp (Maby 1931) see <i>infra</i> . The Witcombe villa excavations reported in 1954 had been undertaken in 1938–9, so the intervening period might have introduced some confusion. An unsuccessful search for the charcoal was made at Gloucester City Museum.
	Charcoal	?	✗ Not verified: no information Insecure original identification	Herriotts Bridge, Somerset	Metcalfe and Levy 1977, cited in Smith 2002	Primary source checked: appendix 9, table XXIV lists ‘ <i>Castanea sativa</i> charcoal twigs’ and remarks ‘Roman specimen, possibly Ash’ (Metcalfe and Levy 1977, 366). No information to verify the record was found.
	Charcoal	✓	? Not verified: insecure context	<b>Red Hill</b> , Goldhanger, Essex	Reader 1907–9 [ <i>sic</i> ], cited in Godwin 1975, 74	See ONLINE TABLE 3. Incorrectly referenced by Godwin – it should be Reader 1909.

	Charcoal	✓	✗ Not verified	<b>Cissbury Camp</b> , West Sussex	Maby 1931, cited in Godwin 1975 and the ABCD (Tomlinson and Hall 1996)	See ONLINE TABLE 3.
	Charcoal	?	✗ Not verified: specimen not found Insecure original identification	Denton villa, Lincs.	Levy 1971, cited in the ABCD (Tomlinson and Hall 1996)	Primary source checked: Levy recorded charcoal from the furnace stoke-hole of the bath-house for the Roman villa as ‘Oak or possibly Chestnut’ (Levy 1971, 41). The bath-house was dated to A.D. 360–70 and was presumed in use for some 20 years. The site was excavated from 1959–61. The finds from the site were noted as deposited at City & County Museum Lincoln. The charcoal specimen was sought at Lincolnshire Archives. In addition to the samples described in the Denton villa ‘Wood’ entry ( <i>infra</i> ), a box labelled ‘LE MORE BOTANICAL SAMPLES 15–23’ was stored within the Denton villa archive material. It contained eight packets containing charcoal, labelled “WP ‘53/4/5’” numbered ‘15’ to ‘23’. This material cannot be ascribed to the Denton villa site and so is dismissed.
	Charcoal	?	? Not verified	Brede High Wood, Kent	Challinor 2014	Primary source checked: Challinor identified a single piece of small roundwood charcoal as ‘cf. <i>Castanea</i> ’ from an excavation of a Romano-British iron-working furnace site. Conclusive differentiation from <i>Quercus</i> was not possible (Challinor pers. comm. 2014).

	Charcoal	✓	? Not verified: specimen not found	Blackbird Leys, Oxford, Oxon.	Challinor (in Booth and Edgeley-Long 2003, 254–7), cited in Allen <i>et al.</i> 2016	Primary source checked: Challinor recorded 15 pieces of <i>Castanea</i> charcoal (Sample no. 2 from Context 385, Feature 377, a stokehole) but commented that the charcoal specimens were too small to allow interpretation of coppicing or not. Challinor (pers. comm. 2015) confirmed that the identification as <i>Castanea</i> was corroborated by J. Hather (University College London) in 1999: the pieces were clearly fragmented along the growth rings rather than down the rays (a characteristic of oak) and only uniseriate rays were observed. The context was dated from pottery finds to A.D. 180–240 (Booth and Edgeley-Long 2003, 236). Oxfordshire County Museum Service (David Moon) has advised that the sample does not appear to have been kept. The relatively recent expert identification and dating allows the find to be accepted, although it has not been verified.
	Nut	✓	✓ Specimens re- examined: identification and date confirmed	Great Holts Farm, Boreham, Essex	Murphy <i>et al.</i> 2000; Germany 2003; Jarman <i>et al.</i> 2018	Primary sources checked: the well serving this Roman farmstead was excavated in 1995. The well's (feature 567) construction was dated to after A.D. 188 (Germany 2003, 20). The base of the 6 m deep well contained abundant food plant remains, including sweet chestnut pericarps (from 'c. 5' nuts; a photograph of a chestnut shell is reproduced in the reports), walnuts, hazelnuts, olive stones, grape pips, stone pine nuts, cherry stones and apple pips. The chestnut pericarp specimens were recovered from Norwich Museum Archives by Peter Murphy and Alan West (July 2015) and were analysed for potential aDNA by Prof. Robin Allaby and Oliver Smith at Warwick University, but this proved inconclusive (Jarman <i>et al.</i> 2018). Three of the nut pericarps were submitted for radiocarbon dating and confirmed as third or fourth century cal A.D. (ibid.).

	Nut	✓	✗ Specimen re-examined: incorrect date (modern origin)	Castle Street, Carlisle, Cumbria	Van der Veen 1983, cited in Hall and Huntley 2007; Jarman <i>et al.</i> 2018	<p>Primary source checked: Van der Veen identified a find from the 1981–2 Castle Street, Carlisle excavations as ‘<i>Castanea sativa</i>, sweet chestnut, fragment’ (Van der Veen 1983, 2). Hall and Huntley (2007) presumed that a nut fragment was being referred to and that it was Roman but were unclear. Van der Veen confirmed (pers. comm. 2015) that <i>C. sativa</i> was definitely identified and that the fragment was from a nut pericarp, undated. The find is not mentioned in the relevant site reports of the Castle Street excavations (McCarthy 1991a; McCarthy 1991b). The original excavation field notes might be in the Tullie House Museum (Carlisle) archive, but they have not been available to search.</p> <p>The nut fragment was analysed for aDNA by Robin Allaby at Warwick University, but this proved inconclusive (Jarman <i>et al.</i> 2018). A sample of the nut pericarp was radiocarbon dated and found to be of modern origin, possibly contemporary with the excavation (ibid.).</p>
	Nut	✓	✗ Misreported	Caerwent, Monmouths.	Howkins 2003, cited in Stace and Crawley 2015	<p>Stace and Crawley (2015, 35–7) state that sweet chestnut is a Roman archaeophyte and cite Howkins (2003) as a source of evidence. Howkins (2003, 60) stated ‘caches of chestnuts found by archaeologists at Roman sites remind us how useful were nuts, whether chestnuts or walnuts, for shipping around the Empire’; and referred to a single example of a chestnut cache find, ‘at Caerwent’, but with no references. A literature search has produced no evidence for these statements. Mark Lewis (pers. comm. 2016 — Senior Curator at Caerleon Roman Museum) has confirmed that there is no record of sweet chestnut at Caerwent or Caerleon (‘there was a find of hazelnuts in a well deposit at Caerwent by Brewer in 1983’).</p>



	Wood	✓	? Not verified	<b>Pevensey Roman fort</b> ( <i>Anderitum</i> ), East Sussex	Salzmann 1908, cited in Godwin 1975	See ONLINE TABLE 3. Incorrectly referenced by Godwin – it should be Salzmann 1909.
	Wood	?	✗ Misreported	‘London Port’, London	Straker 1985, cited in Smith 2002	Primary source checked: a find of barrel staves in Roman contexts is reported in Milne 1985 (107), but the list of species identified therein by V. Straker does not include <i>Castanea</i> . Smith (2002, 74) classified this record in a summary table as ‘ <i>Quercus/Castanea</i> ’, despite having referred to it as ‘oak’ in the main text (Smith 2002, 31). Milne (pers. comm. 2017) confirmed that the record was as described by Straker i.e. <i>Castanea</i> was not found. Smith’s citation is considered erroneous.
	Wood	✓	✗ Not verified: insecure context	<b>Christ’s Hospital,</b> London	Lyell 1912, cited in Godwin 1975	See ONLINE TABLE 3. Incorrectly referenced by Godwin – it should be Norman and Reader 1912

	Wood	✓	? ?worked wood Not verified: specimen not found	London Wall (LOW88), London	Nayling 1991, cited in Smith 2002; Woodger and Lees n.d.	Primary source checked and supplemented with information from the original archaeological excavation report for LOW88 (Woodger and Lees, report undated but annotated on the cover ‘presumed post-October 1989’) and associated site files in the MOLA LAARC archive. Two wood specimens (5034 and 5036) were initially described in the site notes as ‘ <i>Castanea</i> /sweet chestnut’, but 5034 had been revised to <i>Fraxinus</i> sp. The wood specimen 5036 (structure context 1159) was confirmed in the final report as <i>Castanea</i> . The piece was described as 0.12 m diameter and 0.60 m length: it was thought to form part of a timber-lined drain/roadside structure at 60 London Wall, which was dated to before A.D. 120 (Duncan Lees pers. comm. in Nayling 1991). Nayling took a small section 123 mm x 120 mm from 5036 for dendrochronological analysis and measured 20 growth rings (including 9 sap + bark) with an average ring width of 4.0 mm; the piece was described as of 20 years growth, felled after formation of late-wood i.e. winter-felled, with an off-centre pith suggesting branch-wood and presumed to derive from a mature tree (Nayling 1991). Identification as sweet chestnut was confirmed at the time by David Cutler and Tim Lawrence at Jodrell Laboratory, Kew (Nayling 1991). The sweet chestnut timber specimen 5036 has been sought from MOLA, Jodrell Laboratory Kew and N. Nayling for re-assessment (in 2016–2017) but has not been found. As ‘unworked’ wood, it is now presumed not to have been preserved/archived. The relatively recent expert identification and context definition allows this find to be accepted as definite, but not verifiable.
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	Wood	✓	? ?worked wood Not verified	London Bridge Approach and Lower Thames Street, London	Norman and Reader 1906, 235–6, citing Kelsey and Santle 1840; and RCHME 1928, 129–30, citing Knight 1834, 600–1	Primary sources checked: Norman and Reader refer to a report by Kelsey and Santle (1840, 90) of a discovery in 1834 during sewer construction at the west end of Lower Thames Street: ‘In building this sewer nearly the whole line was found full of oak and chestnut piles, but much closer and larger at the end of Botolph’s Wharf gateway and warehouse ...’. The RCHME report quotes from a report by Knight, submitted to the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1832, describing discoveries during 1824–31 around the construction of the new London Bridge, including ‘a timber embankment ... about ten feet below the surface of the ground ... traced to the depth of more than twenty feet ... formed of large solid trees of oak and chestnut, about two feet square, roughly hewn ... perfectly sound’ (Knight 1834, 601). It is unclear whether these two reports are of the same piles – the find dates (1824–31; and 1834) differ, the contexts (London Bridge abutment; and sewer construction) differ and the descriptions are not equivalent. The RCHME report cites Kelsey (1840) for other finds during sewer works, but not this Lower Thames Street find. In neither report is it stated who identified the timbers, nor whether ‘chestnut’ meant sweet chestnut or horse chestnut. The context in both cases was given as Roman. The NRHE record (958738) describes the finds of oak piles, but does not mention the chestnut, although it cites the RCHME report as the primary source, which does refer to chestnut timbers. These finds have not been verified.
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	Wood	✓	? Artefact Not verified	Corbridge, Northumbd.	Watson 1987, cited in Hall and Huntley 2007	Primary source checked: Watson recorded 'fragment of wax writing tablet with remains of inscription, <i>Castanea</i> sp.' (Watson 1987, 3) from the Corbridge Hoard in 1964, Ref. no. 868135. Writing-tablets (of exotic woods) were presumed to be imported pre-manufactured (Allason-Jones and Bishop 1988, 106). The specimen has not been sought.
	Wood	✓	? Artefact fragments Not verified	Housesteads fort, Northumbd	Whittaker 1986; Whittaker 1988, cited in Hall and Huntley 2007	Primary sources checked: Whittaker 1988 reports that samples of waterlogged wood from the excavation of the north curtain wall at Housesteads were submitted to the AML for assessment and two pieces of <i>Castanea sativa</i> were identified (Whittaker 1986). These were found in an assemblage of waterlogged wood (branch/twig/waste trimmings) from a range of tree/shrub species that were all considered in the excavation report as 'locally-growing', with the exception of a few taxa including yew and the <i>Castanea</i> pieces. The AML report and the excavation report state that whilst the majority of the assemblage is branch/twig waste, this is not true of all the assemblage, suggesting two sources for the material, i.e. a separate source for the yew and the sweet chestnut fragments. The fragments of sweet chestnut come from the same context as the sweet chestnut 'bung' (see <i>infra</i> ) so might be associated with this artefact. Species identifications were checked by Jacqui Watson. The specimens have not been sought.
	Wood	✓	? Artefact Not verified	Housesteads fort, Northumbd	Clapham 1988, cited in Hall and Huntley 2007, 234	Primary source checked: Clapham recorded a bung made from <i>Castanea sativa</i> wood in a domestic rubbish layer dated to the second century A.D. or later (under a layer where a half-bung made from silver fir <i>Abies alba</i> was found). Both specimens were presumed by Clapham to have been imported to Britain. These artefacts were identified prior to freeze drying; they have not been sought.

	Wood	✓	? Artefact Not verified	Housesteads fort, Northumbd	Watson 1985, cited in Hall and Huntley 2007, 234	Primary source checked: Watson recorded a large chisel with mineral preserved wood in socket, identified as <i>Castanea</i> sp. (chestnut); and commented that two similar chisels had been found at Newstead and Old Penrith (unpub.), the one from Old Penrith also hafted with chestnut (Watson 1985, 1). This find has not been sought.
	Wood	✓	? ?worked wood Not verified: specimen not found	Denton villa, Lincs.	Conolly (in Greenfield 1971), cited in the ABCD (Tomlinson and Hall 1996); Allen <i>et al.</i> 2016	Primary source checked: Conolly identified as <i>Castanea</i> a short length of split stake with a clean-cut end, recovered from the basal infilling (Context No. 610114) of the well that served the Roman villa and bath-house, excavated in 1961. The well infill was dated by pottery to mid-late fourth century A.D. (Greenfield 1971). The wood specimen has been sought (unsuccessfully) in the Denton villa collection at Lincolnshire Archives. Five specimen packets were found, four labelled with Context numbers 610062, 610065, 610065A, 610066, 610073, none of which are reported in Greenfield 1971. These packets contained various wood specimens, severely dried and reducing to dust. None matched Conolly's description of the alleged find 610114 of a length of split stake of <i>Castanea</i> . The Roman Rural Settlement of Britain database (Allen <i>et al.</i> 2016) reports this site (ref 24196) as 'Fruits, herbs and nuts included sweet chestnut, coriander, poppy, opium poppy, raspberry or blackberry. Flax also present. All in small numbers.' This description implies a sweet chestnut find of 'nuts', but there is no record for a sweet chestnut nut in the excavation reports; it also infers that the finds of sweet chestnut charcoal and wood relate to nut production, but this cannot be substantiated.

	Wood	✓	? ?worked wood Not verified	Langton villa, Malton, Yorks.	Blackburn 1932, cited in Hall and Huntley 2007	Primary source checked: Blackburn (1932) recorded the plant remains from a well-fill (dated from a Roman coin and three pottery jars to c. A.D. 335–7). He described shells of hazel and walnut and short lengths of twig and pieces of worked timber, including ‘two big pieces of sweet chestnut’, three pieces of oak, one walnut twig, one sycamore twig, with ash, alder, willow, cherry, elder and heather stems (see Corder and Kirk 1932, 55). The sweet chestnut pieces were not further described. Specimens have not been sought.
	Wood	?	? Not verified: specimen not found	Farmoor, Oxon.	Robinson 1979, cited in Smith 2002	Primary source checked: Robinson recorded ‘the piece of wood identified as <i>Castanea</i> or <i>Quercus</i> from 1060/2 [a Roman well] was probably <i>Quercus</i> , but no large rays were found so <i>Castanea</i> cannot be eliminated. It was part of a large coppice stool from which about ten poles had been cut’ (Robinson 1979, 81, 87 – table 8). Specimen was sought via M. Robinson but has not been located.
	Wood	?	? Not verified	Silchester, Hants.	Straker 2000	Primary source checked: Straker found waterlogged plant remains in various wells, including twigs of ‘oak/sweet chestnut’ from well Context 2099 in Phase 1.6 = Period 1 (c. 25–15 B.C.) (Fulford and Timby 2000, 524, table 112). See also section on ‘Charcoal’ <i>supra</i> .

Post-Roman A.D. 410–650	Wood	Y	✓ Worked wood Specimens re-examined: identification and date confirmed	Alverstone Marshes, Isle of Wight	Wroe-Brown <i>et al.</i> 2011	Primary source checked: it reports a timber structure on Alverstone Marshes, excavated in 2005. Of hundreds of timber pieces recovered, 22 were identified as sweet chestnut. They formed piles and stakes made of small roundwood of ~10 years growth. Five of the sweet chestnut specimens were recovered from Isle of Wight County Archaeology Service and their identifications confirmed by Z.H.: some had been previously dated by radiocarbon dating, the earliest from the sixth century A.D. (Wroe-Brown <i>et al.</i> 2011). Original excavation reports and analyses are not yet complete. These sweet chestnut piles and stakes comprise worked wood that can be attributed to the post-Roman period, but the trees/coppice from which the wood was derived could conceivably have been growing within the Roman period. The origins of the sweet chestnut wood, whether local or imported, are currently unknown.
	Pollen	?	? Tentative record	Uckington fire station, Glos,	Pearson <i>et al.</i> 2015	Primary source checked: S. Richer recorded a single grain of <i>Castanea</i> pollen from a wicker-lined structure, possibly a retting pit (Pearson <i>et al.</i> 2015, table 8). The structure was radiocarbon dated to ‘Cal A.D. 549–650 and 570–658 at 94.5% probability’ (Pearson <i>et al.</i> 2015, 4, table 5). All the pollen was well preserved. Identification of <i>Castanea</i> was confident, but the record is reported as ‘tentative’ (Pearson <i>et al.</i> 2015, 12). The pollen slides are stored (as at March 2018) with part of the excavation archive at Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service: they were not sought for assessment. GHER 37941.

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