
NEW INVESTIGATIONS OF FIRE RELATED INTERGLACIAL SEDIMENTS (MIS11) AT BEECHES PIT

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Résumé

We present details of a new project investigating burnt sediments at Beeches Pit in conjunction with new palaeoenvironmental and geoarchaeological analyses of related depositional environments, using a range of geological and geophysical proxies. Along with four other blocks, all of which appear to contain evidence of burning, a one ton mega-sample was extracted from the site in 1994 and transported back to the University of Liverpool, contextualising the largest combustion feature. Pilot work has so far been conducted on this largest block using sedimentary facies analysis and a suite of geomagnetic parameters and interparametric ratios including magnetic susceptibility and anhysteretic remanent magnetisation. The sequence shows an evolution from a small water body depositing clays to sandy sediments indicating a connection to more widespread river drainages. The fire-affected sediments are related to a hiatus within the sandy unit. The magnetic susceptibility results along with the ratios of χ_{ARM}/χ_{FD} and χ_{ARM}/χ_{LF} can be used to show unequivocal evidence of fire at Beeches Pit and accord with previous interpretations at this site of multiple hearths. The magnetic results are further supported by the identification of micro-charcoal within the < 125 μm fraction from one of the burned samples. Work will continue on all the hearths and surrounding sediments to provide a fuller picture of the burned areas and their depositional settings at Beeches Pit.

Mots-Clés: fire, palaeolithic, environmental magnetism, Beeches Pit

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