

**Experiment 5**

Fish ingested 5 sardines, total lengths 170-180 mm.

- Day 1 2 crushed vertebral centra, 1 complete vertebral centrum, 3 vertebral fragments, 3 scale fragments, 2 unidentified fragments
- Day 2 4 crushed vertebral centra, 2 complete vertebral centra, 4 eye lenses, 16 vertebral fragments, 1 torn hyomandibular, 10 scale frags, about 50 unidentified fragments
- Day 3 1 crushed, etched and stained vertebra, 5 vertebral frags, 2 eye lenses, 7 unidentified fragments
- Day 4 No remains.
- Day 5 No remains.

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[Editors' note: we apologise to the author for the delay in publication of this contribution, which was only in part beyond their control!]

## Notes, enquiries and correspondence

To the editors of *Circaea*:

Congratulations to James Greig on his well-researched etymological discussion on what to call organic pit-fills (*Circaea* 8, 70-3). Unfortunately we are often stuck with terms that have no basis and I would plump for *cesspit*. I still cannot bring myself to speak or write his other term *s-t*, which is not surprising when one considers that my parents were brought up in Edwardian times and my grandparents in the Victorian period.

But I have found that etymological aspects can throw important light on archaeological and historical studies, and Allan Hall's aside (*ibid.*, 73) is an example. I looked up *shive* (refuse from hemp or flax) in my *Dictionary of Textile Terms* and found it listed as *shives*: 'woollen trade term for all vegetable matter found entangled in wool'—an interesting example of the way in which a meaning can change with the context. This 524-page dictionary published by the now defunct *Textile Mercury* has no date and no pretension to be other than

a glossary, but it cannot have been published later than about 1950 and is fast becoming for me an encyclopaedia of textile history.

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## Book notices

Hurry, J. B. (1973). *The woad plant and its dye*. Clifton, New Jersey, U.S.A: Augustus M. Kelley (reprint of the 1930 edition published in London for Oxford University Press by Humphrey Milford). 328 pp., 17 pls., 11 figs. £25.00.

This book is a remarkable monograph dealing with all aspects of *Isatis tinctoria*—including the botany, cultivation, and multifarious uses of the plant, the extraction of the famous blue dye, and the economic importance of woad in Europe in the Middle Ages. The first edition (of 1930) has now been faithfully reprinted in the U.S., giving it a new lease of life, the only (small) failure in reproduction being to lose the colour originally used in Plates I and XVI.

The original title page bore the attribution 'by the Late Jamieson B. Hurry'; the author, sadly, died before seeing the completion of his work. He was a evidently a remarkable man for, as the memoir by a friend, Warren R. Dawson, records, Hurry was by profession a general practitioner, having trained as an obstetric physician and then as a ship's surgeon. His interests were wide—something almost *de rigueur* in a professional man born in the middle of the last century—and one aspect of this can be illustrated by reference to a series of monographs he wrote on *Vicious Circles—Vicious Circles in Disease, ...of Neurasthenia*, and *...in Sociology*, then *Poverty and its Vicious Circles*, not to mention his *Nursing on a Provident Basis*. Another series of publications relates to Reading Abbey and show his interest in history, and he combined history and medicine in works such as *Imhotep, the Vizier and Physician of King Zoser and afterwards the Egyptian God of Medicine*. At his home in Reading he established an 'educational garden', bringing together economic plants from all over the world, making this and a museum of plant products freely available to visitors. And it was his interest in economic botany which 'found its last expression in the admirable monograph of the history and use of Woad'.

Perhaps the greatest value of this book—not surprising, given the eclectic interest of its author—is the breadth of its scope. On pages 252–5, for example, we find that woad was used for the treatment of a great range of diseases and conditions (according to authorities from Pliny and Galen to L'Obel and Parkinson), including erysipelas, angina, catarrh and haemorrhage, whilst on page 268 measures taken in Germany in the 17th century to prevent the use of imported indigo from Asia in preference to home-grown woad are detailed, all this with footnote references and additional notes where appropriate.

For British readers, however, perhaps the most intriguing part is the discussion of the growing of woad, mainly in the Fens of S. Lincolnshire, in the latter part of the last century and the first two decades of the present one. Particularly fascinating are the monochrome photographs of structures and activities associated with woad-growing and manufacture. There is one, for example, of a woad mill at Parson Drove near Wisbech (pl. IV), with sketches of the interior (with wooden rollers for crushing the leaves) and walls (made of turf blocks—these were often short-lived structures made by the woad-men or waddies who moved from area to area as the woad crop exhausted the soil in one place).

Plate XIV was especially poignant for me, as it shows a German woad mill at the village of Pferdingsleben, near Gotha, and a woad hall of the 16th century in Gotha itself. Both of these structures have survived—I was fortunate to be able to visit them both during the International Woad Conference held in Erfurt in June 1992. The caption to the photograph of the mill remarks that it 'was pulled down a few years ago', but it has been reconstructed and consists of the upright and horizontal stones and new wooden posts linking them.

Of interest to those of us engaged in the debate as to whether it was woad with which the Ancient Britons painted themselves blue, is Hurry's discussion of 'primitive methods of extracting indican' [the blue pigment]. He cites Plowright, writing at the beginning of the 20th century, who offers several suggestions as to how such skin colouring might have proceeded. It must be said, though, that woad varies enormously and rather unpredictably in its content of indican (or indigotin as it is more commonly called today); even with the suite of chemicals available to us, with which

to effect the necessary reduction of indigotin to a soluble form (which can then be oxidised into the familiar blue pigment), dyeing with woad seems to be very much an art rather than a science!

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## Editorial

Despite our best intentions, we have not managed to make up the whole of the backlog of issues of *Circaea*. However, we have made some progress, and we have enough material for the second part for 1992 and a good proportion of what we need for the first part of volume 11 to hand as we publish this issue.

We still need material, though! We remind potential contributors of the existence of the *Notes, enquiries and correspondence* section for very short pieces of copy.

*Circaea* is more and more taking on the character of a 'proper' journal, so that the somewhat informal *Editorials* we have indulged in until now are perhaps no longer appropriate. This will probably be the last.

In keeping with the more formal nature of *Circaea*, we intend to produce title pages and lists of contents for binding into volumes in future. If any readers have views on the format of this—e.g. do we include contents arranged by author and subject?—they should let us know. It would be impracticable for us to produce a full index with current resources.