

# Marchmont House, Greenlaw: Archaeological Watching Brief Data Structure Report

AOC 22302

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# Marchmont House, Greenlaw: Archaeological Watching Brief

## Data Structure Report

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**On Behalf of:** Richard Amos Ltd  
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**National Grid Reference (NGR):** NT 7479 4857

**AOC Project No:** 22302

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**Date of Fieldwork:** 28<sup>th</sup> January to 7<sup>th</sup> March 2013

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This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

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**Date:** 19<sup>th</sup> March 2013

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## Abstract

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AOC Archaeology group was commissioned by Richard Amos Ltd on behalf of their clients to undertake a watching brief at Marchmont House, Greenlaw, the Scottish Borders. The watching brief was to monitor works associated with the installation of a biomass boiler and accumulator tank at Marchmont House.

Several features relating to post-medieval activity were recorded during the excavations including five midden and waster pits, as well as former services and foundations relating to ranges associated with Redbraes Castle. The upstranding gable end of the southwestern range of the castle was identified incorporated into a former estate cottage which is itself now ruined.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by Richard Amos Ltd on behalf of their client to undertake a Watching Brief at Marchmont House, Greenlaw, the Scottish Borders. The work required was in response to advice by the Scottish Borders Council Archaeology Officer, Dr. Christopher Bowles, who has recommended a Watching Brief on the installation of a biomass boiler and accumulator tank at Marchmont House. A programme of archaeological works had been specified by the Scottish Borders Council in keeping with the policies outlined in *Scottish Planning Policy* (2010) and *PAN 2/2011 Planning And Archaeology* (2011) in order to record the extent and significance of any archaeological remains which may be present within the development area.

### 1.2 Site Location

1.2.1 The proposed development site is centred at NGR 7479 4857 and lies within the designed landscape of Marchmont House (NMRS: NT74NW 20). The grounds are situated at the end of Marchmont Road, approximately 4 miles north east from the village of Greenlaw (Figure 1).

### 1.3 Archaeological background

- 1.3.1 The designed landscaped estate around Marchmont House was formerly the location of Redbraes Castle (NMRS: NT74NW6), the seat of the Home's of Polwarth from at least the sixteenth century until the construction of the current Marchmont House. The castle was believed to be a tower house surrounded by a moat with two detached wings either side (Hardy 1882). The current stable yard, located immediately south of the site of the castle (NMRS NT74NW20.01) incorporates earlier 17<sup>th</sup> century structures which originally serviced the castle (Cluttons 1998).
- 1.3.2 Marchmont House was built on a new site, to the west of the old castle between 1750 and 1754, and was associated with an extensive designed landscape, dominated by a long formal avenue (Figure 2). The identity of the architect who designed Marchmont House has been the subject of some debate. The 2nd Earl of Marchmont commissioned William Adam to draw up plans for a new house, but these were never carried out. It was the 3rd Earl who built Marchmont House, after Adam's death, and Thomas Gibson was recorded as the architect employed by him; little is known about Gibson, and it has been suggested that he may have been a draughtsman who simply executed the Earl's ideas. No other sites of archaeological significance were identified within the proposed development.

## 2 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The objectives of the archaeological watching brief were:
- i) to safeguard the archaeological resource that may be disturbed by the proposed development works;
  - ii) to liaise with Dr. Christopher Bowles and the client in the event of significant archaeological features and /or small finds being unearthed as to the most appropriate response in safeguarding these features either by preservation *in situ*, if at all feasible, or by archaeological recording.

### 3 METHOD

- 3.1 All groundbreaking works were conducted using a 7 tonne tracked excavator utilising a bladed ditching bucket or a narrow toothed bucket, monitored at all times by an experienced archaeologist. Machine excavation was conducted in shallow units/spits through topsoil/overburden to the depth required by the development. All recording was undertaken according to AOC Archaeology Group's standard operating procedures as detailed with the *Written Scheme of Investigation* (AOC 2012).

### 4 RESULTS

- 4.1 The various data gathered from the evaluation is presented as a series of appendices:
- i) Appendix 1 contains the context register
  - ii) Appendix 2 contains the finds register
  - iii) Appendix 3 contains the photographic register
  - iv) Appendix 4 reproduces the '*Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*' entry
- 4.2 Work was undertaken between the 28<sup>th</sup> of January and the 7<sup>th</sup> of March 2013, in overcast and wet conditions. Across the site the natural subsoil was found to consist of red clays with frequent inclusions of stone pebbles.
- 4.3 Several features were recorded in the vicinity of the walled gardens during topsoil stripping for the crane access road (Figure 3). Ditch [001] was located to the north of the walled garden and was aligned N-S measuring 1.1m wide and 0.36m deep. The ditch fill [002] consists of demolition material such as fragmented stone, mortar, brick, slate and tile.
- 4.4 To the north east of the walled garden five pits [003], [006], [008], [010] and [012] were located that were aligned NW-SE, and spaced approximately four metres apart (Plate 1; Figure 3). The pits were between 1.4m and 1.67m in diameter and contained deposits of light grey ash mixed with a mid reddish brown sandy silt. Pits [003] and [010] included large amounts of post-medieval flower pot fragments, with pit [010] also containing a large amount of slate tiles.



Plate 1 – Pits [003]-[012]

- 4.5 Within a paddock to the north west of the stable block overlying the former site of the projecting southwest wing of Redbraes Castle, a stone lined well [014] was revealed during excavations of the pipe service track (Plate 2; Figure 3). The well was circular and of dry stone construction with a sandstone slab capping the structure prior to excavations. The internal diameter of the well was 0.9m and was at least 1.8m deep. Two sandstone lintels were placed within the well at approximately 1.8 from the top of the well which may have been for supporting the weight of a pulley mechanism or a bucket rest. The well lies southwest of site of the castle's southwest range and presumably relates to the use of either the castle or the subsequent stable yard.



Plate 2 - Well [014]

- 4.6 Further north east within the paddock and also within the pipe service track a series of sandstone wall footings [015], [016], [018], [019] were revealed aligned N-S and E-W as well as a sandstone culvert [017] aligned NW-SE and a rubble drain aligned E-W (Figure 3). All wall footings were constructed of sandstone rubble and some angular slabs, with evidence of sand and lime bonding in places. Walls [016] and [018] are aligned with the walls of the upstanding ruin that lies to the north east of the paddock.

## 5 DISCUSSION

- 5.1 The pit features revealed to the north east of the walled garden are most likely associated with local industrial and estate management from the post medieval period. Given the amount of broken flower pot fragments within the dumps of material it is most likely that the pits date from when the walled garden was erected as this feature would have been the catalyst for large amounts of gardening activity to be taking place nearby.
- 5.2 Probably dating from before the current Marchmont House was erected and the designed landscape formed around it, the fill of ditch [001] contained demolition material suggesting that it may have been backfilled during the laying out of the designed landscape during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.
- 5.3 The wall features and well revealed within the paddock area are most likely related to phases of activity contemporary with the use of Redbraes Castle (NMRS: NT74NW6). Walls [015] and [016] align perfectly with the upstanding western gable of the castles projecting southwest wing which



survives incorporated into a now ruined cottage (see Figure 3). The other features located within the paddock, such as culverts [017] and [019] or wall [018] all clearly relate to either components of this wing or activity immediately to the southwest where ancillary structures and yards may have once stood. The two sandstone culverts [017] and [019] may have been drains related to cottages and the well and wall [018] situated close to the earliest part of the stable block may have been related to activity surrounding this.



Plate 3 – The surviving gable end of the southwest projecting range of Redbraes Castle

## 6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The watching brief on the works at Marchmont House has revealed a number of episodes of activity associated with the pre-1750 estate. Excavation in the area to the NW of the current stable blocks and estate buildings has shown that significant wall footings and ancillary structures such as drains and a well survive in-situ after the demolition of sixteenth century structures associated with Redbraes Castle. Walls were fully recorded in situ, before being removed as appropriate for the development.
- 6.2 No further archaeological works are considered necessary. The recommendation will require confirmation by Dr. Christopher Bowles, Borders Council.

## 7 REFERENCES

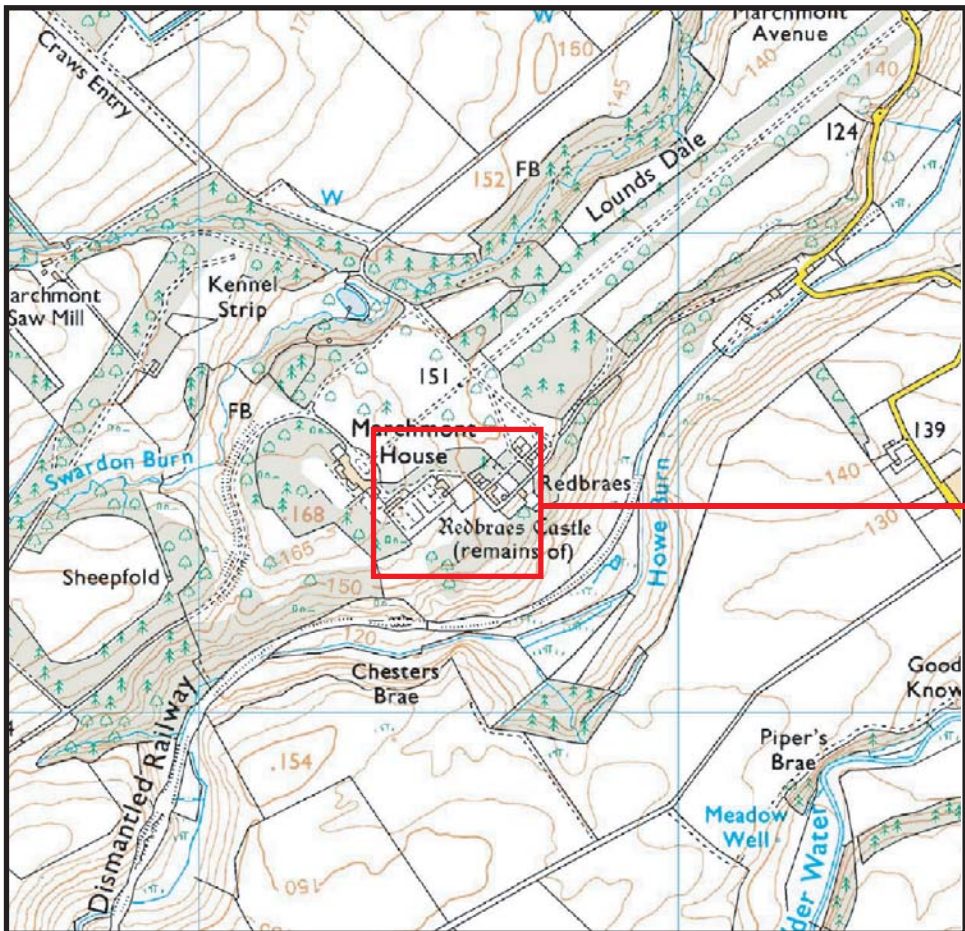
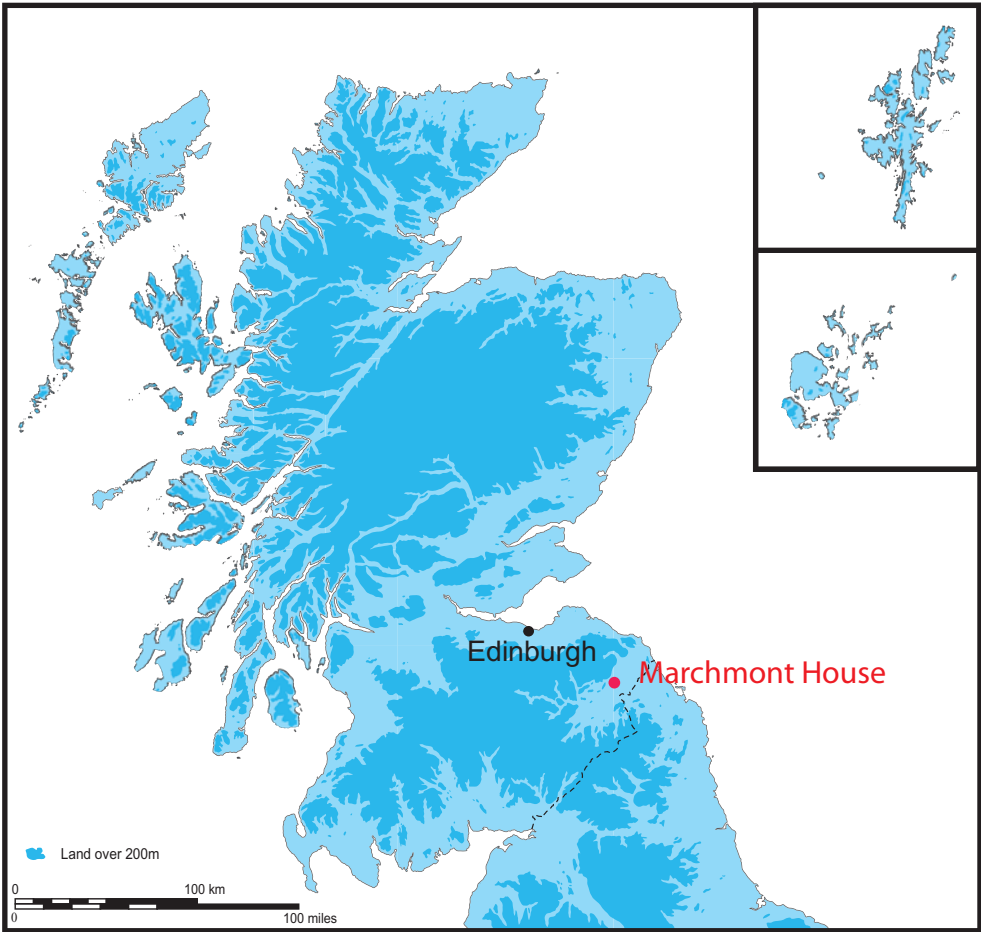
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Hardy, J 1882d *Report of meetings of the Berwickshire Naturalists Club for the year 1879*, Historical Berwickshire Natur. Club, vol.9, Page(s) 42

Scottish Government 2010 *Scottish Planning Policy*.

Scottish Government 2011 *PAN 2/2011 2/2011 Planning and Archaeology*.)



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Figure 1: Site Location

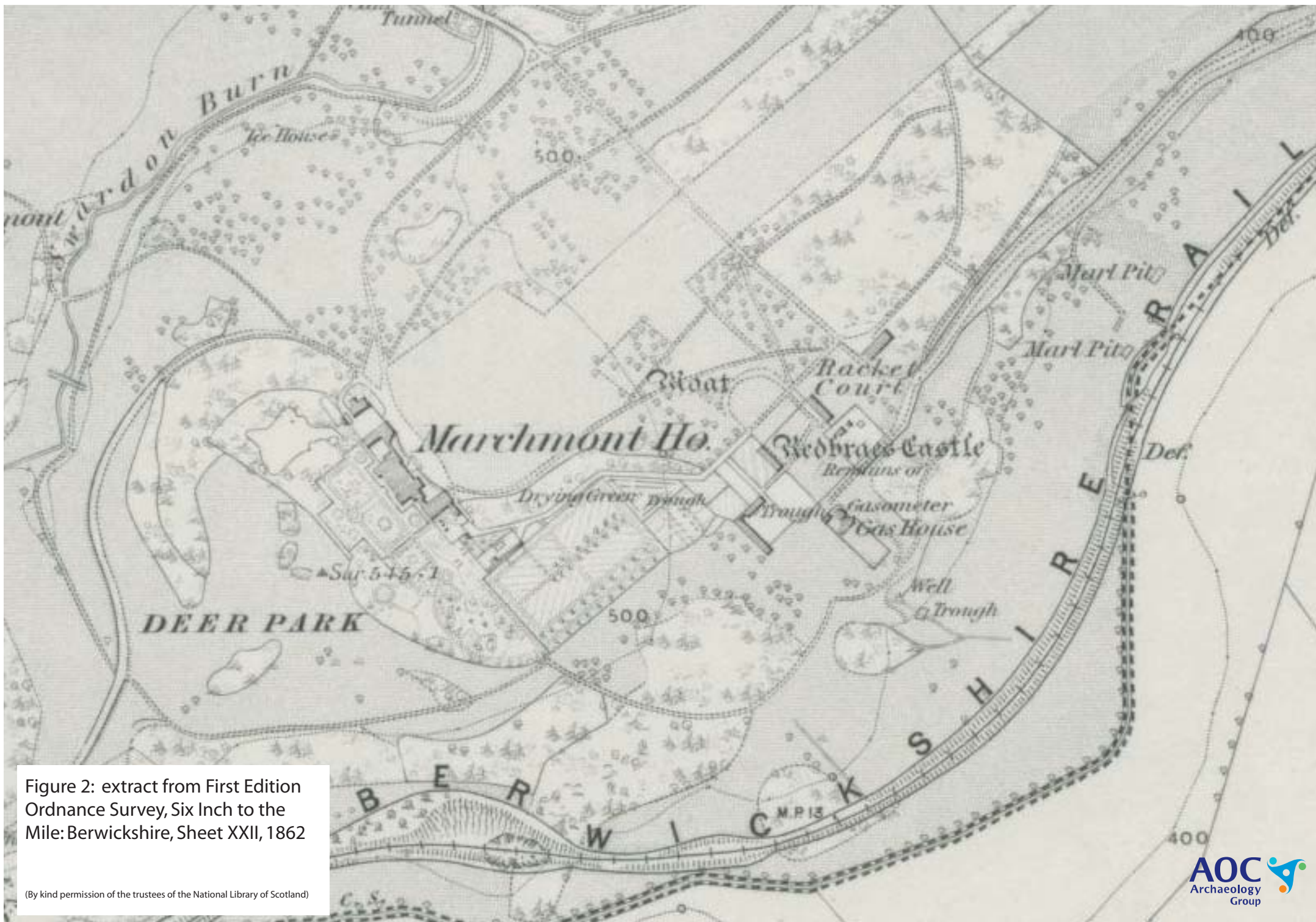
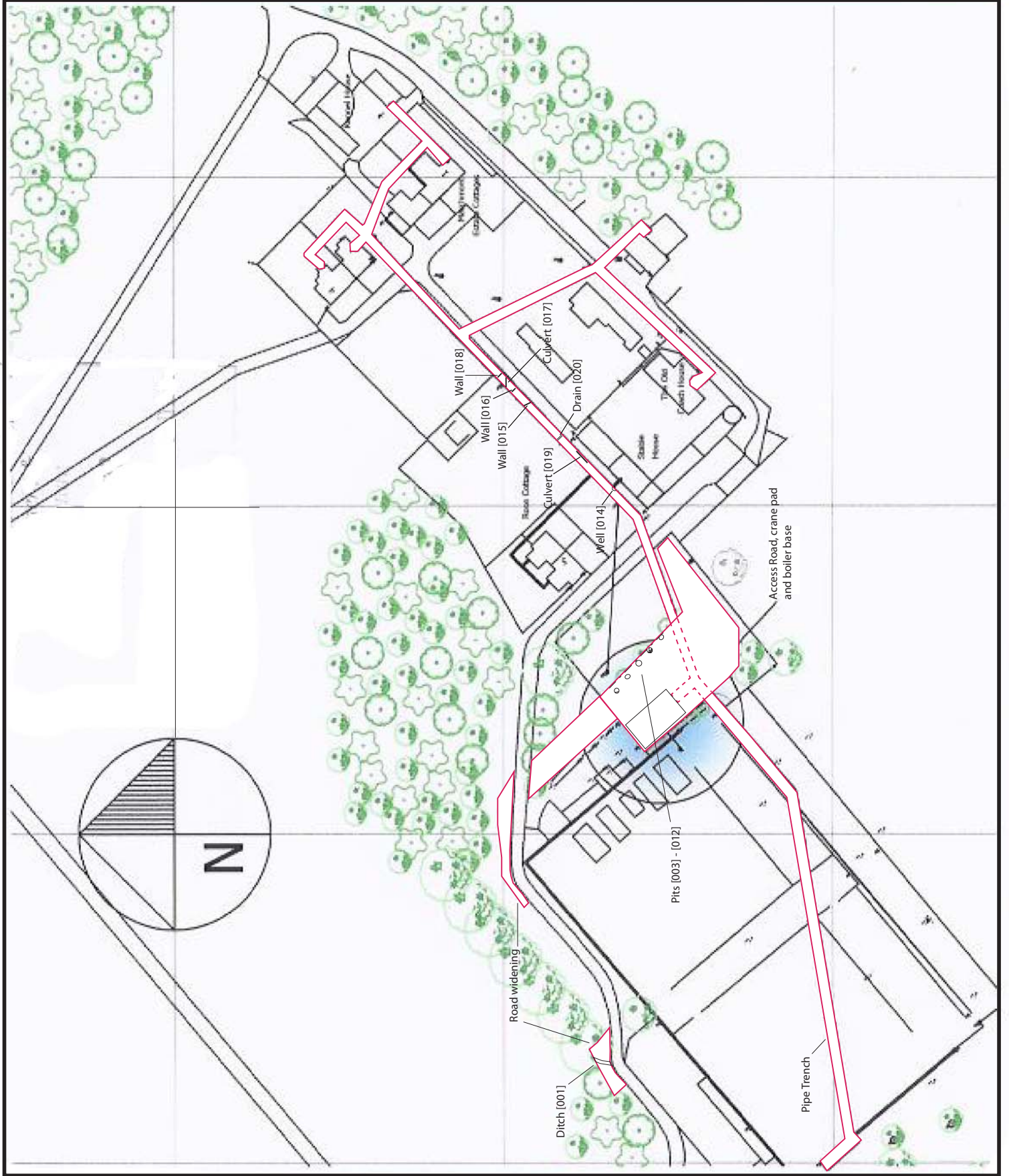


Figure 2: extract from First Edition Ordnance Survey, Six Inch to the Mile: Berwickshire, Sheet XXII, 1862

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Figure 3 - Location of features within excavated areas



# **Marchmont House, Greenlaw: Archaeological Watching Brief Data Structure Report**

## **Section 2: Appendices**

## APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT REGISTERS

Context	Type	Description
[001]	Linear	Linear cut (with slight curve) aligned SW-NE with steep to moderate sides and a concave base cut into natural subsoil. Filled by (002). Measures 4.3 m x 1.1 m x 0.36 m Possible ditch forming a drain or boundary prior to 1700 designed landscape and walled garden. Rubble fill assumed to date to this period.
(002)	Deposit	Light yellowish brown sandy mortar with abundant inclusions of fragmented stone, occasional brick and rare tile and slate. Fill of [001] 4300x1100x360mm Deliberate deposit to fill in earlier ditch
[003]	Pit	Circular cut filled by (004) and capped with [005] NW of five similar pits. Measures 1520 in diameter Midden or waster pit
(004)		Re-deposited reddish brown sandy clay with ash and Scottish post medieval reduced ware fragments. 1520 in diameter Sealed by (005) Fill of midden or waster pit
[005]	[003]	Mid reddish brown sandy clay with flecked coal inclusions Seals (004) fill of [003] 1000x500x400mm Final fill of pit – possible topsoil
[006]	Pit	Circular cut 4000 SE of pit [003] Filled by (007) 1670mm diameter Midden or waster pit
(007)	[006]	Redeposited reddish brown sandy clay with ash and Scottish post medieval reduced ware fragments. 1670 in diameter Fill of midden or waster pit
[008]	Pit	Circular cut 4000 SE of pit [006] Filled by (009) 1400 in diameter Midden or waster pit
(009)	[008]	Redeposited reddish brown sandy clay with ash and Scottish post medieval reduced ware fragments. 1400 in diameter Fill of midden or waster pit
[010]	Pit	Circular cut 3600 SE of [008] Filled by (011) NE edge outwith LOE 1630 in diameter Midden or waster pit
(011)	[010]	Mid reddish brown sandy silt Frequent Ceramic and slate included in matrix Occasional flecks of coal
[012]	Pit	Circular cut 3800 SE of pit [010] 1600 diameter Southeastern most pit in alignment Filled by (013) Midden or waster pit
(013)	[012]	Redeposited reddish brown sandy clay with ash and Scottish post medieval reduced ware fragments. 1600 in diameter Fill of midden or waster pit

[014]	Well	Circular drystone well capped with sandstone slab Roughly hewn sandstone blocks roughly coursed with smaller fragments of sandstone packed into gaps Internal diameter = 900 Depth is at least 1800 from the top of capping Probably silted below this depth
[015]	Wall	East West aligned wall footings crossing trench 400 wide – block sizes between 380-200mm A more substantial rounded sandstone block 500x150 abuts the Northern side of the wall – possible perpendicular wall footing E/W wall footing
[016]	Wall	N/S wall footings in the west section of trench only Consists of substantial rounded sandstone cobbles
[017]	Culvert	NW/SE aligned culvert external diameter 800 Internal diameter 250 -200 deep into sand Angular sandstone blocks average size 300x200 Sealed by angular roughly hewn sandstone slabs 600 wide 180 high
[018]	Wall	Rounded sandstone wall footings aligned N/S in W section of trench 250x200x120mm Uncoursed and mixed with angular slabs
[019]	Wall	N/S aligned wall footings, possibly turns E/W crossing trench at the S end of the footings Either for a wall or a drain, surviving as 1-2 courses of substantial roughly hewn sandstone blocks average size 400x300x280
[020]	Wall	Rounded sandstone average size 150x160x70
[021]	Deposit	Friable dark brownish grey Sandy silty clay Sark soils characteristic of domestic occupation

## APPENDIX 2: FINDS REGISTERS

Find No.	Context	Description
1	(004)	Ceramic fragments
2	(011)	Ceramic fragments



### APPENDIX 3: PHOTOGRAPHIC REGISTER

Digital

Frame	Feature	Description	From
1-4		Boiler area stripped	SE
5-8		Top of boiler field stripped	SE
9-10		Access track waterlogged	S
11-14		Drain excavated and waterlogging	Var
15-16		General shot of strip for road	SW
17-20		Rubble drain next to road strip	NE
21-22		Continuation of drain	NE
23-26		General shots of road strip	NE
27		General shot of road widening	SW
28		Modern manhole in strip	SW
29		Initial area stripped	NE
30		Second area stripped	SW
31	001	Ditch [001]	S
32-33	001	Ditch [001]	N
34	001	N-facing section of ditch [001]	N
35	001	S-facing section of ditch [001]	S
36		Second area strip of road widening finished	W
37		Line of pits in crane pad area	NW
38		Line of pits in crane pad area	SE
39	[003]	Pit [003]	NE
40	[006]	Pit [006]	NE
41	[008]	Pit [008]	S
42	[010]	Pit [010]	S
43	[012]	Pit [012]	W
44		Line of pits [003], [006], [008], [010], [012]	SE
45		Line of track through paddock	SW
46		Paddock with ruin in Northern corner	SW
47		Track through road	SW
48		Initial shot of well	W
49-50	[015]	Wall footing [015]	SE
51	[015]	Location shot of [015]	NE
52-53	[016]	Wall footing [016]	SE
54		Location shot of [016]	E
55		Location shot of [016] with ruin behind	SE
56-58	[017]	Culvert [017]	NW
59		Location of culvert	NW

60	[018]	Wall footing [018]	SE
61		Location shot of wall [018] with ruin behind	SE
62-63	[014]	Well [014]	NW
64-65		Location shot of well [014]	NW
66-70	[014]	Detail of well [014]	NW
71	[019]	Wall footings [019] in trench section	NE
72-76	[019]	Wall footings [019] in trench section	NW
77-79		Possible return of [019]	SE
80-81		General shot of trench	SW
82-95		General shots of upstanding ruin showing stone and doorway details	Var
96-97		View of stable and cottage from ruin	N
98-100		View of stable and cottage from walled garden	W

**APPENDIX 4: 'DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND' REPORT**

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	Borders Council
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	Marchmont House Watching Brief
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	AOC 22302
<b>PARISH:</b>	Polwarth
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Jake Streatfeild-James
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	AOC Archaeology Group
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Archaeological Watching Brief
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	None
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	NMRS NT74NW6 (Redbraes Castle)
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	None
<b>NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)</b>	NT 748 486
<b>START DATE (this season)</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> January 2013
<b>END DATE (this season)</b>	07 <sup>th</sup> March 2013
<b>PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)</b>	None
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (May include information from other fields)	<p>AOC Archaeology group was commissioned by Richard Amos Ltd on behalf of their clients to undertake a watching brief at Marchmont House, Greenlaw, the Scottish Borders. The watching brief was to monitor works associated with the installation of a biomass boiler and accumulator tank at Marchmont House.</p> <p>Several features relating to post-medieval activity were recorded during the excavations including five midden and waster pits, as well as former services and foundations relating to ranges associated with Redbraes Castle. The upstranding gable end of the southwestern range of the castle was identified incorporated into a former estate cottage which is itself now ruined.</p>
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	None
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>	n/a
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	Richard Amos Ltd
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	AOC Archaeology Group; Edgefield Road Industrial Estate; Loanhead, Midlothian, EH20 9SY
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<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION</b>	Archive to be deposited in NMRS



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