

An Archaeological Watching Brief at Nursery Gardens, Haltwhistle



Looking south across the site at Nursery Gardens

ARS Ltd Report 2011/119
November 2011

OASIS ref: archaeol5- 115314

Compiled By:

Kate Mapplethorpe and Philippa Cockburn
Archaeological Research Services Ltd
Baltic Business Centre
Saltmeadows Road
Gateshead
Tyne and Wear
NE8 3DA

Checked By:

Jim Brightman
Tel: 01629 814540
Fax: 01629 814657
admin@archaeologicalresearchservices.com
www.archaeologicalresearchservices.com

An Archaeological Watching Brief at Nursery Gardens, Haltwhistle

ARS Ltd Report 2011/119

November 2011

Archaeological Research Services Ltd

Contents

Executive summary.....	4
1. Introduction.....	5
1.1. Location and scope of work.....	5
1.2. Geology and soils.....	6
2. Methodology.....	6
3. Historical background.....	6
4. Results.....	7
5. Conclusion.....	7
6. Publicity, confidentiality and copyright.....	7
7. Statement of indemnity.....	8
8. Acknowledgements.....	8
9. References.....	9

© ARS Ltd 2011

List of Figures

1. Location of site.....	5
2. Photograph showing the stratigraphy of the site.....	7
3. Site plan.....	10

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In March 2011 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by Galliford Try to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Nursery Gardens, Haltwhistle in Northumberland. The watching brief involved the monitoring of groundworks associated with the construction of 14 dwellings.

In 2005, eight archaeological evaluation trenches were dug across the site. A stone lined pit, thought to have been associated with allotments that once occupied the site, was the only archaeological feature that was discovered.

During the 2011 watching brief there were no archaeological finds, features or buried land surfaces discovered on the site.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Location and Scope of Work

1.1.1 In September 2011 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by Galliford Try to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Nursery Gardens, Wapping in Haltwhistle, Northumberland.

1.1.2 The watching brief involved the monitoring of groundworks during the development of 14 dwellings on land south of Nursery Road in Haltwhistle. The site was subject to archaeological evaluation in 2005 when eight trial trenches were opened to reveal contexts that were believed to be consistent with the use of the site as an allotment, nursery and orchard. Only one archaeological feature was discovered. This was a stone lined pit of uncertain date that was perhaps associated with the allotment.

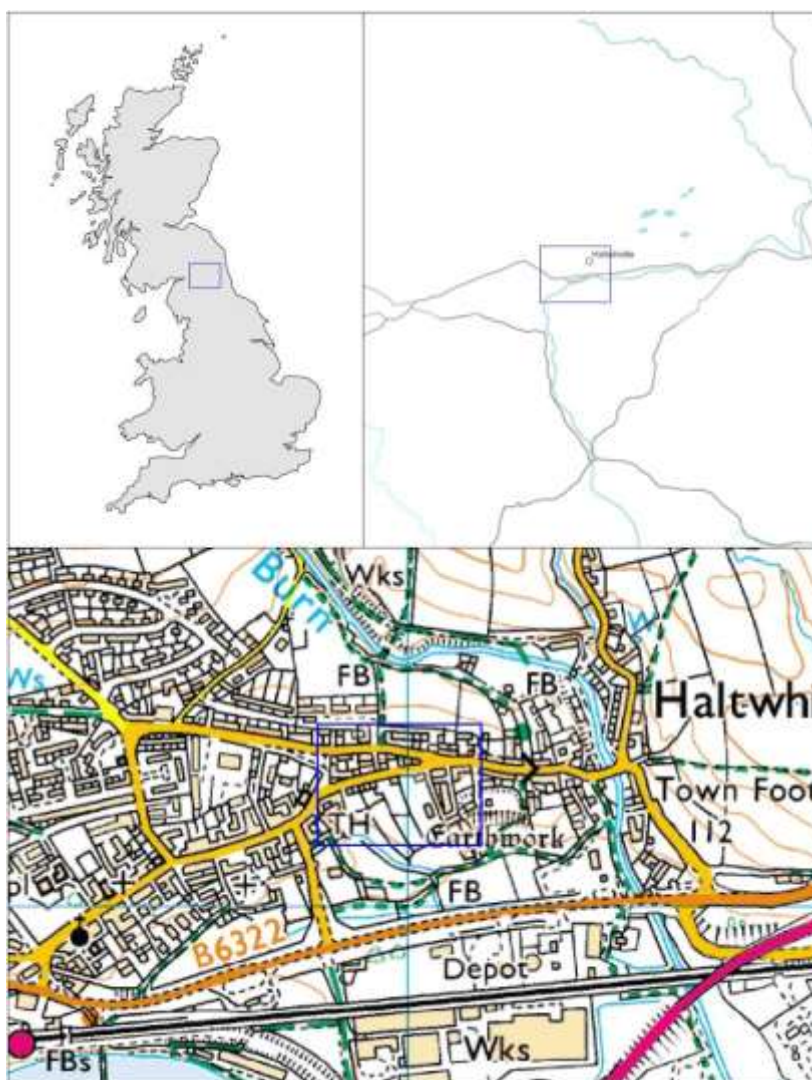


Fig. 1 Location of site.

Ordnance Survey data copyright OS, reproduced by permission, Licence no. 100045420

1.2. Geology and soils

1.2.1. The site is centred at NGR NY 70978 64195. The solid geology of the area is Yordale Group limestone, sandstone, siltstone and mudstone. The superficial deposits of this area are unknown, however the surrounding deposits consist of till (British Geological Survey 2011).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks for the development of 14 dwellings. The ground was cleared of vegetation using a 360° machine equipped with a back-acting toothed bucket. The main road corridor and the foundation trenches for the new development were then dug across the site using a toothless ditching bucket or a toothed bucket where appropriate.

3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.2.1. The earliest evidence for human occupation in and around Haltwhistle is the Mare and Foal stone circle which was probably associated with ritual during the Bronze Age period. There are also some burials that may date from the Bronze Age period (www.keystothepast.info).

3.2.2. Hadrian's Wall crosses the parish which means that there are many Roman sites around Haltwhistle. The Wall runs along the top of Cawfields Crags and stands to a height of 12 courses high. There are also a number of milecastles and turrets in the area. Some of these have been excavated while other features include a watermill, milestones, a cemetery and a small fortlet. More than ten temporary camps have been discovered in Haltwhistle so far, all of which have upstanding earthworks. The largest of these, covering almost 17 hectares, is Markham Cottage camp (www.keystothepast.info).

3.2.3. During the Medieval period there existed a settlement at Haltwhistle from the 12th century. This is known from a mention in the Melrose Chronicle. The settlement consisted of a mill, a church, a castle, a market place and a hospital. The border region of England and Scotland was a dangerous place to live during the Medieval and post-Medieval periods. There were frequent battles and raids on both sides. By the 15th century a tower had been built at Haltwhistle, with another following in the late 16th/early 17th century. As feuds continued between rival border families it became necessary to build defended farmsteads, of which Haltwhistle seems to have had quite a few (www.keystothepast.info).

3.2.4. During the 18th and 19th centuries industries began to flourish, especially along the Haltwhistle Burn. There was a gas works, a saw pit, a brewery, a woollen mill, a colliery, a tile works, a brick works, an ironworks and a number of quarries. When the Newcastle to Carlisle railway was built during the 1830s Haltwhistle prospered when it became the junction for the Alston branch line in 1851 (www.keystothepast.info).

4. RESULTS

4.1 Topsoil

The topsoil (001) covered the entirety of the width of the site to an average depth of approximately 0.4m. It was very organic with minimal inclusions of stones, and almost no modern finds.

4.2 Natural Substratum

Directly below the topsoil (001) was the natural substratum (002). This consisted of a fine orange brown clay with lenses of grey clay and occasional inclusions of mixed aggregates. The depth was unknown as the deposit was not excavated to its lowest extent. No finds were recovered from the deposit.



Figure 2: Photograph showing the stratigraphy of the site

5. CONCLUSION

No finds, features or buried land surfaces were recovered from the area of excavation. The site has previously been used as an orchard for many years and so any mixed subsoil is minimal. There were almost no finds of modern pottery, glass, animal bone etc in the topsoil, indicating that modern disturbance is minimal. There appear to be no archaeological remains present relating to Hadrian's Wall or the Medieval settlement.

6. PUBLICITY, CONFIDENTIALITY AND COPYRIGHT

6.1. Any publicity will be handled by the client.

6.2. Archaeological Research Services Ltd will retain the copyright of all documentary and photographic material under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act (1988).

7. STATEMENT OF INDEMNITY

7.1 All statements and opinions contained within this report arising from the works undertaken are offered in good faith and compiled according to professional standards. No responsibility can be accepted by the author/s of the report for any errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by any third party, or for loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in any such report(s), howsoever such facts and opinions may have been derived.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

8.1. Archaeological Research Services Ltd would like to thank all those involved in this project, in particular Mick Fewster of BT Openreach and Tyne and Wear archaeological officer Jennifer Morrison.

9. REFERENCES

Bidwell, P. T. and Holbrook, N. 1989. *Hadrian's Wall Bridges*. English Heritage Archaeological Reports 9. London: English Heritage.

Websites

British Geological Survey
Keys to the Past

<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/index.htm>
<http://www.keystothepast.info/>

N



Archaeological Research Services Ltd
Angel House
Portland Square
Bakewell
Derbyshire
DE45 1HB

Site Code: HALT '11
Date: 7/12/2011
Drawn: KM
Scale: 1:1000 at A4

Figure 3

Key:
— Site Boundary

Notes:

Copyright/Licensing:
This drawing
© A.R.S. Ltd

Ordnance Survey data if applicable
© Crown Copyright, all rights reserved
reproduced with permission. Licence
No. 100045420