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# Kirkby Thore Play Area, Kirkby Thore, Cumbria

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Kirkby Thore Parish Council



DECEMBER 2020

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Archaeological Watching Brief  
Report EH032/02

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# Kirkby Thore Play Area, Kirkby Thore, Cumbria

## Archaeological Watching Brief Report For Kirkby Thore Parish Council

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## CONTENTS

1	Introduction.....	5
1.1	Project Circumstances.....	5
2	Methodology.....	6
2.1	Scope of the Work.....	6
2.2	Archaeological Watching Brief.....	6
2.3	Archive.....	7
3	Background.....	8
3.1	Location and Geological Context.....	8
3.2	Research Context.....	8
3.3	Previous Archaeological Work.....	10
4	Archaeological Watching Brief.....	11
4.1	Introduction.....	11
4.2	Results.....	11
4.3	Discussion.....	15
5	Finds.....	16
5.1	Introduction.....	16
5.2	Medieval Pottery.....	17
5.3	Post-medieval Pottery.....	17
5.4	Clay Pipe.....	18
5.5	Ceramic Building Material (CBM).....	18
5.6	Glass.....	19
5.7	Metal Objects.....	19
5.8	Discussion.....	19
6	Conclusions.....	20
6.1	Interpretation.....	20
6.2	Research Potential.....	20
1	Bibliography.....	21
	APPENDIX 1: FIGURES.....	23

## FIGURES

Figure 1: Site location

Figure 2: Detailed site location

Figure 3: Layout of the play area (Areas A-F)

## PLATES

Front Cover: Photograph showing the location of the play area

Plate 1: Excavation underway in Area A on the northwest side of the site, looking east

Plate 2: Excavated pits in Area B on the southeast side of the site, looking southeast

Plate 3: Excavation in Area A on the northwest side of the site, looking east

Plate 4: Deepest excavation area in Area C on the north side of the site, looking southwest

Plate 5: Excavations for the zip wire on the south side of the site, looking northeast

Plate 5: Southwest-facing section through the zip wire trench, looking northeast



## SUMMARY

In 2020 Eden Heritage Ltd was commissioned by Kirkby Thore Parish Council, to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Kirkby Thore, Cumbria (NGR NY 63493 25679). The archaeological work was undertaken during the replacement and renewal of existing recreational play equipment within the Kirkby Thore Play Area. The work was required as the site was located within the scheduled area of Kirkby Thore Roman Fort and Associated Vicus (Scheduled Monument No 13450). The work was conducted in accordance with scheduled monument consent granted by Historic England (SMC Reference S00230372).

The archaeological watching brief was undertaken over three days in August and November 2020. The watching brief monitored the excavation of 25 small-scale individual excavations in total, which were required to house the concrete bases for the new play equipment. No archaeological remains were noted in any of the excavated areas. The deposits encountered related to the previous agricultural use of the site and levelling activity associated with the creation of the play area.

Sherds of medieval and post-medieval ceramics were recovered during the watching brief along with fragments of ceramic building material, clay pipe, glass and metal. Several metal-detector finds were also recovered from the spoil heaps were likely to be accidental losses associated with the use of the site as a recreation ground.

As this archaeological watching brief was conducted as part of a recommendation to observe groundworks in association with the development of the new play area, no further work is deemed necessary. However, given the high archaeological potential of the area, it is recommended that any future work be subject to a similar programme of archaeological investigation.

## AKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Eden Heritage Ltd thank Lindsay Nicholson, Parish Clerk at Kirkby Thore Parish Council, for commissioning the project, and for all assistance throughout the work. Eden Heritage Ltd also thank Neil Walne, Installation Contractor for Wicksteeds, and Malcolm Ridley, Kirkby Thore Parish Council, for their help during this project. The archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Martin Railton who also produced the project report.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Project Circumstances

- 1.1.1 The following document outlines the results of an archaeological watching brief at Kirkby Thore, Cumbria (centred on Ordnance Survey grid reference NY 63493 25679). The archaeological work was undertaken in August and November 2020 for the Kirkby Thore Parish Council (the client) during the replacement and renewal of existing recreational play equipment within the Kirkby Thore Play Area.
- 1.1.2 Kirkby Thore Play Area lies within agricultural land to the northwest of Main Street in Kirkby Thore, located c.250m to the north of the A66 Trunk Road (Figure 1). The play area is located within the scheduled area of Kirkby Thore Roman Fort and Associated Vicus (Scheduled Monument No 13450) with the monument boundary running to the west along Piper Lane. The play area development included small scale individual excavations for each piece of play equipment within the scheduled area (Figure 2).
- 1.1.3 As a result, Historic England advised that a programme of archaeological work was required at the site, which was to be undertaken accordance with the Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC Reference S00230372). This required that an archaeological watching brief was maintained during the excavation work within the scheduled area in accordance with the SMC condition which stated:
- 'No ground works shall take place until the applicant has confirmed in writing the commissioning of a programme of archaeological work during the development in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved by the Secretary of State advised by Historic England.'*
- 1.1.4 This is in line with government advice as set out in the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (as amended); Section 2 control of works*.
- 1.1.5 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was subsequently produced by Eden Heritage Ltd for the required archaeological watching brief at the site (Eden Heritage Ltd 2020). The Written Scheme of Investigation was submitted to Andrew Davison, Principal Inspector of Ancient Monuments at Historic England for approval, prior to the commencement of the project.

## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 Scope of the Work

2.1.1 The project comprised an archaeological watching brief, which was maintained over three days during the excavation work associated with the installation of recreational play equipment at Kirkby Thore Play Area (Figure 3). Six pieces of play equipment were installed (Areas A-F) plus a zip wire.

2.1.2 The general aim of the watching brief was to record any archaeological evidence revealed within the immediate vicinity of the excavations, in order to attempt to re-construct the history and past-use of the site. This comprised close monitoring of the excavation work undertaken by the groundworks contractor, followed by the archaeological investigation and recording of any archaeological features or deposits identified. This also included the recording any archaeological finds or other archaeological deposits identified within the excavated soils.

### 2.2 Archaeological Watching Brief

2.2.1 An archaeological watching brief consists of a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons, in this case during the excavation work for the installation of play equipment. All fieldwork was carried out in accordance with codes and practices outlined by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists regarding archaeological watching briefs (CIfA 2014a).

2.2.2 In summary, the main objectives of the watching brief were:

- to establish the presence/absence, nature, and extent of archaeological remains revealed by the works and to record these where they are observed;
- to investigate and record any evidence for archaeological features or finds present;
- to establish the character of those features in terms of cuts, soil matrices and interfaces;
- to recover artefactual material, especially that useful for dating purposes;
- to recover palaeoenvironmental material (where it survives) in order to understand site and landscape formation processes;

2.2.3 Individual excavations were undertaken by a JCB 16 C-1 mini digger with a back-hoe under close archaeological supervision. The excavations were dug to specified depths to house the concrete foundations for the pieces of play equipment. Some smaller excavations were undertaken by hand.

- 2.2.4 The excavated areas consisted of six excavations measuring 0.7m by 0.7m for a new Two-bay Viking Swing (Area A), these being 0.8m deep, and ten excavations measuring 0.4m by 0.4m for a Crixus Fitness and Agility Module (Area B) these being excavated to a depth of 0.6m. A new Pedestal Slide (Area C) required the excavation of two foundations measuring 0.5m by 0.5m to a depth of 1.0m, one excavation measuring 0.5m by 0.5m to a depth of 0.6m and one measuring 0.7m by 0.8m being 0.4m deep. A dual-axis Whizzy Roundabout (Area D) required the excavation of a single area measuring 0.5m by 0.5m to a depth of 0.75m. A Single-bay Viking Swing (Area E) required the excavation of two areas measuring 0.6m by 0.7m to a depth of 0.45m. A Simple Simon Multi-Play Unit (Area F) was also provided with two excavations to a depth of 0.3m which were within topsoil deposits. The zip wire required the excavation of twelve areas in total, comprising two excavations measuring 1.8m by 0.8m to a depth of 0.9m, four excavations measuring 0.8m by 0.8m to a depth of 0.8m and six excavations for the access ramp measuring 0.35m by 0.35m by 0.1m deep (Figure 3).
- 2.2.5 All potential archaeological features encountered were investigated and recorded according to standard recording procedure as set out in the Museum of London Archaeological Service Archaeological Site Manual (Museum of London 1994).
- 2.2.6 All written records utilised the Eden Heritage *pro-forma* record sheets. A full photographic record in digital format was maintained. Electronic survey work was undertaken using a Trimble M3 Total Station and transferred into a CAD environment.
- 2.2.7 All non-modern finds were collected and are reported upon in Section 5. A metal detector was utilised to maximise the collection of metal artefacts from the excavated soils.

## 2.3 Archive

- 2.3.1 The project archive has been prepared in accordance with the recommendations in *Archaeological Archives: A Guide to Best Practice in Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Curation* (Brown 2011) and will be maintained by Eden Heritage Ltd. The archive can be accessed under the unique project identifier EH032, KTP/A.
- 2.3.2 Copies of the final report (in PDF/A format) will be provided to Historic England and Cumbria County Council (CCC) Historic Environment Record, where viewing will be available on request.
- 2.3.3 Eden Heritage Ltd supports the **Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS)** project. This project aims to provide an online index and access to the extensive and expanding body of grey literature created as a result of developer-funded archaeological fieldwork. As a result, details of the results of this study will be made available by Eden Heritage as a part of this national project, and a copy of the report will be uploaded to OASIS. The OASIS reference is: edenheri1-409513.

## 3 Background

### 3.1 Location and Geological Context

- 3.1.1 The site of Kirkby Thore Roman Fort (*Bravoniacvm*) is located within the village of Kirkby Thore in the Eden Valley, Cumbria, being located close to the meeting point of the Roman road over Stainmoor to Carlisle (A66), and the Maiden Way Roman Road (Figure 1). The land around the village is gently undulating and comprises a rich agricultural area with the Pennine Hills rising steeply to the east.
- 3.1.2 The scheduled monument of Kirkby Thore Roman Fort and Associated Vicus includes the Roman fort identified as *Bravoniacum* and its associated civilian settlement or *vicus*. The fort is located in fields immediately north and east of the Town End of Kirkby Thore and is bisected by the modern Main Street. The fort is some 2.2 hectares in extent and is believed to have accommodated a cavalry unit. Numismatic evidence and limited excavations suggest that occupation commenced in the Flavian period with the construction of a turf and timber fort. This was destroyed c. AD 125 and replaced by a masonry-built fort. Occupation appears to have continued into the late 4th century AD (Historic England 2020).
- 3.1.3 Little remains to be seen of the fort above ground as it has been subject to stone robbing and ploughing and now lies under pasture with approximately one third of the area under the road and housing to the southeast. The outer defences of the fort are visible as banks under the present-day field boundaries to the northeast and southwest, and to the northwest as a low bank bisecting the field. This structure has also been detected by previous geophysical surveys undertaken within the field (Railton 2014). The vicus extends to the west, south and east of the fort, the densest concentration of remains being noted to lay in the area between Main Street and the Trout Beck. The Kirkby Thore Play Area lies within a field of pasture located c.200m to the west of the northwestern fort defences.
- 3.1.4 The solid geology of the area comprises Penrith Sandstone Formation, a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 256 to 290 million years ago in the Permian Period (BGS 2020). The overlying soils comprise seasonally waterlogged loamy soils known as Clifton (SSEW 1983).

### 3.2 Research Context

- 3.2.1 The name of Kirkby Thore Roman Fort is recorded within the Antonine Itinerary as *Brovonacis*, where it is said to be located 14 Roman miles from *Voreda*, the Roman fort at Old Penrith, and 13 miles from *Verteris* at Brough Castle. The 4th-5th century Notitia Dignitatum and the Ravenna Cosmology give the name as *Braboniacum* (Birley 1934).
- 3.2.2 Based on 13 Roman inscriptions (seven of which were altar stones and three tombstones) at Kirkby

Thore it is thought that the fort housed the auxiliary cavalry or *Ala Quingeriaria*, a 500 strong unit. An additional inscription dedicated by Aurelius Marcus also described a cavalry garrison, thus confirming the presence of a cavalry garrison at Kirkby Thore (Birley 1934, Jarrett 1960).

- 3.2.3 A lack of modern excavations at Kirkby Thore has placed a greater emphasis on antiquarian reports for a basic understanding of the nature and extent of Roman activity in the area. In the late 17th century Machell noted that remains of the Roman fort could be seen between the Trout Beck to the southeast, to the southwest by Waterman Croft, Keld or Kelk-bottom to the northwest, and the Church of Kirkby Thore to the northeast. He also noted that within these areas (but not outside of these areas) foundations of walls, channels of stone and lead pipes, urns, altars and tiles had all been noted. The First Edition Ordnance Survey map shows the presently named Street House as Kelk House and it is probable that Machell was referring to the area around this dwelling. There is also a reference to 'Kelkes' and to 'the land of Keldes' in the grants of land made to Holm Cultram in the late 12th century (Gibbons 1989).
- 3.2.4 In 1777 Nicholson and Burn recorded the only other description of the extent of the site stating that the main area of the fort was located within a place known as Burwens, on high ground, at the bank of the Trout Beck. They stated that the area known as High Burwens was the location of the Roman fort that contained 'eight score yards in diameter, now ploughed and cultivated' and the outer buildings mantle and gardens ran down along the Trout Beck as far as the fulling mill, and possibly further, beyond the Roman road. The remains they recorded as underground vaults, flags, tiles and slates with iron nails, and the foundations of walls constructed of both brick and stone as well as coins, altars, and urns (Nicholson and Burn 1777, Gibbons 1989). This suggests that the main focus of the vicus lay in the area between Main Street and the Trout Beck.
- 3.2.5 In 1936 the Royal Commission of Historic Monuments drew attention to an area of earthworks to the north west of the village suggesting that the site was originally that of a larger 'labor camp' (RCHME 1936). These defences were suggested to run parallel and close to the present line of the A66 before turning northwest along the line of Piper Lane finally turning to align with the northeast rampart of the fort. The extent of the vicus indicated by these various finds demonstrates that while the origins of the settlement probably began as a cluster of buildings immediately outside the fort grouped around an access road, it must have expanded considerably to occupy a much greater area (Historic England 2020).
- 3.2.6 *Bravoniacum* is located on one of the main roads (the present A66) leading to the Hadrianic frontier to the north and must have been closely involved in maintenance of this major frontier line. The Roman fort at Kirkby Thore was one of a line of Roman forts over Stainmore, but as a cavalry base is of particular note as such units are considerably rarer than other types (Historic England 2020).
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### 3.3 Previous Archaeological Work

- 3.3.1 Numerous previous archaeological investigations taken place in the vicinity of Kirkby Thore Roman Fort, but only those of particular relevance to the current project are repeated here.
- 3.3.2 In 1961 excavations were undertaken at two sites in the area of the Roman fort, including on the south side of the main street, near the junction of Main Street with Chapel Lane. All that was found of the defences was a ditch section with two pieces of late 2nd century pottery. Excavations suggested that this was not the first fort on this site as a turf rampart and ditch were revealed within the area of the stone fort. Pottery found on the site from earlier levels were dated within the period of 80-120 AD. Pottery from the overlying areas suggests that the early fort ended around c.120-125 AD, although Charlesworth stated that this was tentative (Charlesworth 1964). On the south side of Piper Lane, a single trench revealed the foundation of a substantial wall that was thought by Charlesworth to have surrounded the civilian settlement. The hypothesis that a defensive wall surrounded the civil settlement at Kirkby Thore was questioned by Gibbons who thought that it was possibly the rear boundary wall of a medieval toft (Gibbons 1989). In 1965 further excavations by Charlesworth on the south side of Piper Lane, near the junction of the A66 revealed no traces of disturbance in Roman or later periods. The absence of finds suggested that the vicus did not extend this far north and west (Charlesworth 1965).
- 3.3.3 In 2003 a geophysical survey was undertaken at Kirkby Thore Roman Fort. The earth resistance survey revealed evidence for the northwest defensive wall containing a twin towered gateway. Internal roadways between buildings were revealed including the *intervallum* street and the road leading from the north-western gateway to the site of a possible headquarters building (*principia*). Evidence for buildings within the fort was poor due to plough damage and stone robbing. The presence of a town to the northwest of the fort was investigated but not substantiated (Railton 2003).
- 3.3.4 In 2013 additional geophysical survey was undertaken on behalf of the North Pennines AONB Partnership, both within and adjacent to Kirkby Thore Roman Fort. Geomagnetic survey detected the fort's northwest defensive ditch and wall along with the foundations of buildings within the fort, and internal roads. To the northwest of the fort an external road was detected with evidence of civilian settlement (*vicus*) strip buildings located either side, defined by ditches. Survey of a narrow field to the northwest of the fort revealed only ridge and furrow cultivation running along its length (Railton 2014).
- 3.3.5 In 2015 an archaeological watching brief was maintained during groundworks associated with the refurbishment of high voltage overhead apparatus on land at within the scheduled monument. This included monitoring the groundworks associated with the replacement of three electricity poles, however no archaeological finds or features were identified (Wardell Armstrong Archaeology 2014).

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## 4 Archaeological Watching Brief

### 4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The archaeological watching brief was undertaken over two days on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> August 2020. This work comprised the monitoring of the excavation of 25 small-scale individual excavations in total, which were required to house the concrete bases for the new play equipment (Plate 1 & Plate 2).
- 4.1.2 The new play equipment was located at the northwest corner of a large rectangular playing field, in an area that had previously housed play equipment, all but the existing swings having been removed (Figure 2). This area was slightly elevated compared to the remainder of the playing field, indicating the ground level may have been raised in the past. Ground in the vicinity of the existing swings had evidently been levelled, resulting in a low mound of earth immediately to the south.
- 4.1.3 The play equipment comprised six individual items (Figure 3, Areas A-F) with associated excavations ranging in size between 0.4m by 0.4m and 0.7m by 0.8m, being between 0.3m and 1.0m deep. Details of the dimensions of excavations for each individual piece of equipment are provided in Section 2.2.
- 4.1.4 Following the initial watching brief, a further watching brief was undertaken over one day on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020 during the excavation of foundations for a zip wire. This was located immediately to the south of the play area with excavations ranging in size between 0.35m by 0.35m and 1.8m by 0.8m, being between 0.1m and 0.9m deep (see Section 2.2 above for exact dimensions).

### 4.2 Results

- 4.2.1 The topsoil **(100)** comprised a friable brown loam, which was present across the play area on the northeast side of the site to a depth of 0.2m. Beneath the topsoil, was a layer of sandy loam subsoil **(101)** which was between 0.2m and 0.3m deep (Plate 3). This overlay the natural drift geology **(102)** which comprised glacial deposits of pink/orange sand with frequent rounded pebbles and cobbles.
- 4.2.2 To the south in the area of the zip wire, a 0.1m-deep layer of topsoil and turf **(100)** overlay 0.3m of sandy loam subsoil **(101)**, below which was the natural drift geology **(102)** with some large boulders.
- 4.2.3 The deepest excavations (at 1.0m) were located on the northeast side of the area for a new pedestal slide (Plate 4). Two excavations in Area C reached this depth revealing compacted boulder clay beneath the natural sand **(102)**.
- 4.2.4 The longest two trenches were located either end of the zip wire on the south side of the site measuring 1.8m by 0.8m (Plate 5 and Plate 6). These also penetrated the natural sand **(102)**.



**Plate 1:** Excavation underway in Area A on the northwest side of the site, looking east



**Plate 2:** Excavated pits in Area B on the southeast side of the site, looking southeast





**Plate 3:** Excavation in Area A on the northwest side of the site, looking east (1m scale)



**Plate 4:** Deepest excavation area in Area C on the north side of the site, looking southwest (1m scale)



**Plate 5:** Excavations for the zip wire on the south side of the site, looking northeast (1m scale)



**Plate 5:** Southwest-facing section through the zip wire trench, looking northeast (1m scale)

4.2.5 All of the excavations reached the level of the natural drift geology, apart from two excavations in Area F, and six excavations for the ramp at the north end of the zip wire, which at 0.1m to 0.3m deep did not penetrate beneath the topsoil/subsoil layer (Figure 3).



## 4.3 Discussion

- 4.3.1 The presence of 0.4m-deep topsoil/subsoil deposits in all of the excavated areas, indicating the buildup of a substantial plough soil across the site **(101)**. The presence of a deeper topsoil layer **(100)** in the northeast corner of the play area also supported the topographic evidence that this area had been raised/levelled, probably during the creation of the original play area.
- 4.3.2 No archaeological features were noted in any of the excavated areas and no environmental samples were taken. A small number of finds were recovered from the excavated soils (see Section 5 below).

## 5 Finds

### 5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 All non-modern finds were returned to the Eden Heritage offices where they were assessed under the direction of Martin Railton, Managing Director. All finds were dealt with according to the recommendations made by Watkinson & Neal (1998) and to the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard & Guidance for finds work* (CIfA 2014b). All finds were assessed according to material type and conforming to the deposition guidelines recommended by Brown (2011).

5.1.2 The material spanned the post-medieval and modern periods, with a small assemblage of medieval ceramic material also being recovered. Most of the material was recovered from excavated topsoil (**100**) and subsoil (**101**) deposits by hand. A small number of metal objects were also recovered from the spoil heap using a metal detector and were classified as unstratified (U/S).

5.1.3 The total numbers of artefacts recovered during the watching brief are summarised in Table 1 below:

Context	Material	Quantity	Weight (g)	Period	Notes
100	Ceramic	17	77	Post-medieval	Coarse earthenware x 7, undecorated pearlware x 3, transfer printed earthenware x 5, brown stoneware x 1
100	Glass	10	58	Modern	Blue, brown and clear bottle glass, including one bottle base fragment stamped 'returnable'. Window glass fragments x 2
100	Clay Pipe	4	12	Post-medieval	Undecorated stem fragments x 4
100	CMB	1	10	Post-medieval	One brick fragment and one fragment of glazed tile
101	Ceramic	7	25	Post-medieval	Coarse earthenware x 3, undecorated creamware x 2, transfer printed earthenware x 2
101	CBM	3	162	Post-medieval(?)	One brick fragment and two tile fragments
U/S	Ceramic	3	10	Medieval	Two sherds of orange-buff gritty ware and one Late Medieval Reduced ware fragment
U/S	Metal	9	39	Post-medieval/ Modern	One corroded iron object, one lead object, steel washer, tin button and four modern coins



## 5.2 Medieval Pottery

5.2.1 Three sherds of medieval pottery, weighing 10g, were recovered during the investigation (Table 1). The medieval ceramic material was recovered from the excavated soils and spoil heaps on site and therefore classified as unstratified (U/S).

5.2.2 For the purposes of this assessment, fabrics have been identified using to the following groups, based on the Carlisle Medieval Fabric Type Series:

- Gritty ware - dominant in the North from the 12th century, continuing into the mid-13th century.
- Lightly gritted/coarse Sandy wares – 13th-early 14th century
- Partially Reduced ware – 13th-14th century
- Late Medieval Reduced Grey ware, part of a widespread Northern Reduced Greenware tradition seen across both the North West and the North East - 14th-16th century
- A number of fabrics do not closely match Cumbrian fabrics but are broadly 'medieval' date.

5.2.3 The sherds within the assemblage all appeared to be body fragments. It was noteworthy that two of the sherds were not particularly abraded, and it is reasonable to assume that the fragments have not moved far from the original point of deposition.

5.2.4 Two orange-buff gritty ware fragments were recovered which may have its origin in the 13th-early 14th century. One sherd was very worn and one appears to be part of the neck of a bowl or jar.

5.2.5 One of the sherds comprised Late Medieval Reduced ware with a splashed or dipped yellow to green glaze. It was a hard, smooth, fine sandy grey fabric, with a pale grey margin below the glaze. The sherd was decorated with two ridges incised with parallel lines located either side of a central groove. The sherd could be ascribed a date range of c.14th-16th century.

5.2.6 This sherd appeared to be similar to examples recovered from Appleby-in-Westmorland and it may have similar origins. The medieval pottery recovered in Appleby does not exactly correspond to other assemblages in Cumbria but does have close parallels, and has more in common with, the medieval ceramic traditions seen in the North West than those of the North East (McCarthy and Brooks 1988). The location on a main cross-Pennine route (the current A66) means that it is reasonable to expect material from both the east and the west to be present (Brooks, McCarthy and Railton 2013).

5.2.7 Since the fragments were unstratified, their research potential is very limited.

## 5.3 Post-medieval Pottery

5.3.1 In total 24 sherds of post-medieval and early modern ceramics, weighing 102g, were recovered

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during the investigation from topsoil **(100)** and subsoil **(101)** deposits. The sherds were generally small and in poor to moderate condition with a range of fabrics present (Table 1).

5.3.2 The fabrics included coarse earthenware bowls and cream slipware vessels of 18th or 19th century date. Finer wares included transfer printed earthenware of possible 18th or 19th century date and small fragments of undecorated pearlware and creamware of likely 19th century date. A white glazed stoneware fragment from a 19th or 20th century plate was also recovered.

5.3.3 The pottery is typical of domestic household wares comprising cooking vessels/storage jars and finer table wares. No further work is recommended.

## 5.4 Clay Pipe

5.4.1 A total of four fragments of clay pipe, weighing 12g, were recovered from the topsoil **(100)**. All pieces were undecorated stem fragments, which are much more difficult to date than bowls (Table 1).

5.4.2 The fragments were between 25mm and 40mm in length. One had a diameter of 6mm, the others being 9mm in diameter, although one of the stems was somewhat flattened in profile. The draft holes on two stems measured 2mm in diameter and two measured 3mm in diameter.

5.4.3 The clay pipe is of low archaeological potential and no further work is considered necessary.

## 5.5 Ceramic Building Material (CBM)

5.5.1 A total of five fragments of CBM, weighing 196g, were recovered. All the pieces were brick or tile fragments which are difficult to date, plus one tile fragment of likely post-medieval date (Table 1).

5.5.2 The brick fragments comprised one small chunk of buff sandy fabric and the end of one partial hand-made brick. The latter measures 55mm wide, 35mm deep and measures 45mm long from the end of the brick to the break. The brick was irregular in size and shape with rounded edges and is a red oxidized fabric with grit inclusions. A post-medieval date was considered likely for this material.

5.5.3 Two unglazed tile fragments were recovered which were very worn and were undated. One earthenware glazed tile fragment was recovered from the topsoil **(100)**. This had traces of brown/orange glaze on the upper surface the majority having worn away and is likely post-medieval.

5.5.4 The unglazed brick and tile fragments are difficult to date and could potentially date from the Roman, medieval or post-medieval periods. The CBM recovered could be dated more accurately by a specialist. However, the ceramic building material from the site is considered to be of low archaeological potential and no further work is considered necessary.

## 5.6 Glass

- 5.6.1 In total ten glass items, weighing 58g, were recovered during the investigation. The glass comprised fragments of blue, brown and clear bottle glass. Two window glass fragments were also recovered.
- 5.6.2 The glass is modern and of no archaeological potential.

## 5.7 Metal Objects

- 5.7.1 In total nine metal objects weighing 39g were recovered during metal detecting (Table 1). These included iron, lead, tin and steel objects and four coins of post-medieval or modern date. A modern steel washer was also recovered.
- 5.7.2 The corroded iron object was a rod with a triangular profile measuring 6mm in diameter and 140mm in length, which is likely to be post-medieval or modern in date. A small piece of rolled lead was also recovered. This was 35mm long and 4mm in diameter. The purpose of the lead object is unknown.
- 5.7.3 The back of a corroded button of likely post-medieval date was recovered. This appears to be tin plate stamped with lettering with a wire loop fitting. The front of the button has been lost.
- 5.7.4 Three corroded bronze coins were recovered from the play area, comprising one 1949 sixpence of King George VI, and one penny and one very corroded half-penny of Queen Elizabeth II. A silver 1937 King George VI shilling was also recovered with a 'Scottish' reverse (Spinks Ref. 4083). The coins are almost certainly accidental losses and relate to the use of the site as a recreation ground.
- 5.7.5 The metal objects have no archaeological potential.

## 5.8 Discussion

- 5.8.1 The medieval pottery recovered is of limited research potential due to the lack of stratified context. Further analysis of this material could result in tighter date ranges and fabric groups and it is somewhat similar to material from Appleby. It will therefore be maintained with the project archive.
- 5.8.2 The post-medieval ceramics, clay pipe, ceramic building material, glass and metal objects are considered to have no research potential and it is suggested that these are discarded following completion of the reporting. The coins recovered from site will be returned to the client.

## 6 Conclusions

### 6.1 Interpretation

- 6.1.1 The play area at Kirkby Thore lies within agricultural land to the northwest of the main street through the village, within the scheduled area of Kirkby Thore Roman Fort and Associated Vicus.
- 6.1.2 The play area development included 25 small-scale individual excavations to provide foundations for the play equipment within the scheduled area, all of which were monitored during the watching brief. The excavations revealed a 0.3m depth of subsoil overlying the natural geology at the site which is believed to relate to the previous use of the site for agriculture. This was overlain by 0.2m of topsoil in the northeast corner of the field in the vicinity of the play area, which showed evidence of being raised/levelled, probably during the creation of the original play area.
- 6.1.3 The majority of the finds recovered were associated with the presence of post-medieval domestic waste, which may have been deposited in the field as midden material or brought to site with the topsoil from elsewhere. Several of the metal-detector finds recovered from the spoil heaps were likely to be accidental losses associated with the use of the site as a recreation ground.
- 6.1.4 No archaeological features were revealed in any of the excavation areas. The results of the watching brief suggest that the play area was located outside of the area of Roman activity associated with the Roman fort and vicus. The site does not appear to have been intensively utilised in the past other than for agriculture.

### 6.2 Research Potential

- 6.2.1 Three sherds of medieval pottery were recovered during the watching brief, which are likely to have originated at Kirkby Thore, and may have been deposited as midden material.
- 6.2.2 Several chunks of brick and tile were also recovered some of which could potentially be Roman or medieval in date, but this was uncertain.
- 6.2.3 None of the finds were recovered from stratified deposits and they are considered to be of low or nil archaeological potential. No further work is recommended in relation to the watching brief.

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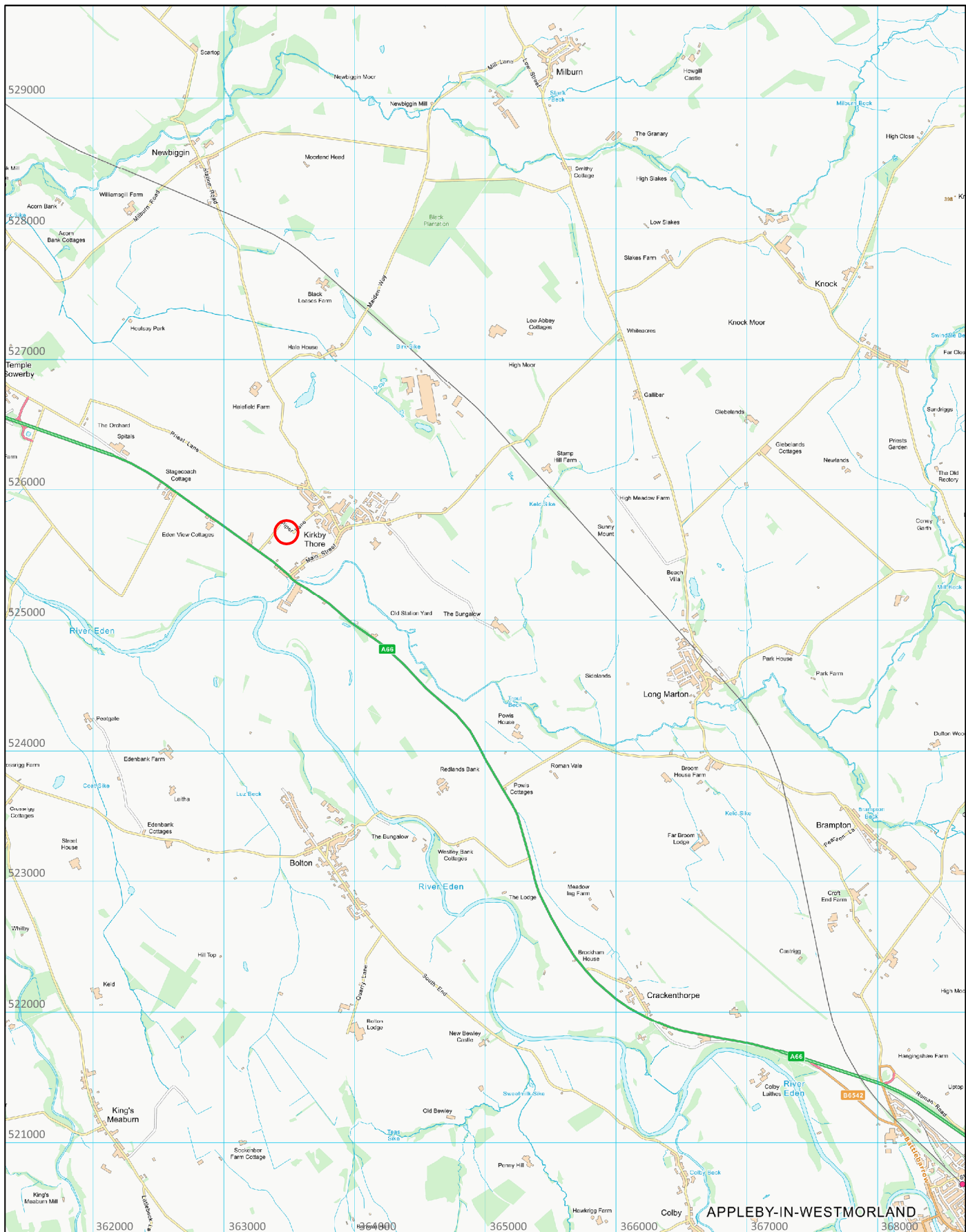
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## APPENDIX 1: FIGURES





Eden Heritage 2020

PROJECT: Kirkby Thore Play Area, Kirkby Thore, Cumbria  
 CLIENT: Kirkby Thore Parish Council  
 REPORT: EH032/02  
 SCALE: 1:40,000 at A4  
 DRAWN BY: MDR  
 DATE: December 2020

KEY:  
 site location



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Figure 1: Site Location.



**PROJECT:**

Kirkby Thore Play Area,  
Kirkby Thore, Cumbria

**CLIENT:**

Kirkby Thore Parish Council

**REPORT:**

EH032/02

**SCALE:**

1:750 at A4

**DRAWN BY:**

MDR

**DATE:**

December 2020

**KEY:**

 site location



Figure 2: Detailed site location.

**PROJECT:**

Kirkby Thore Play Area,  
Kirkby Thore, Cumbria

**CLIENT:**

Kirkby Thore Parish Council

**REPORT:**

EH032/02

**SCALE:**

1:250 at A4



**DRAWN BY:**

MDR

**DATE:**

Desember 2020

**KEY:**

-  play equipment
-  existing swings

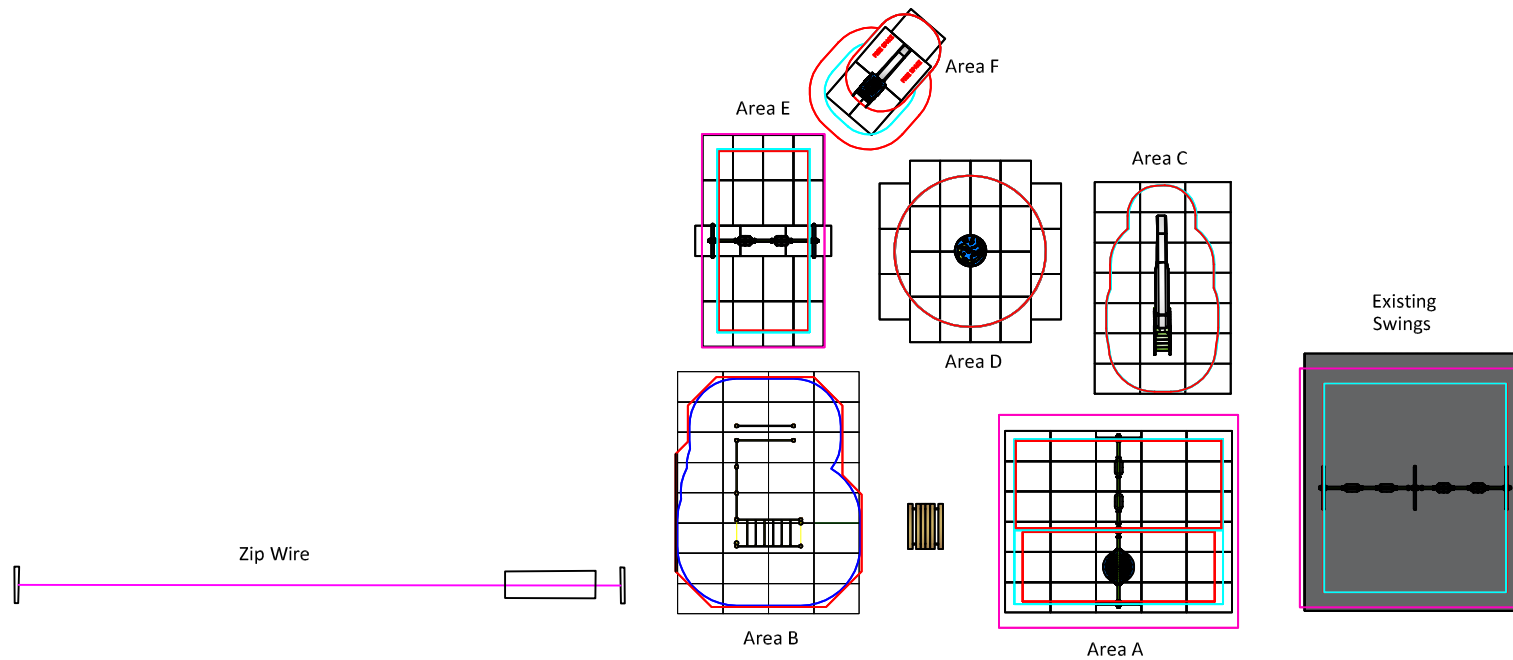


Figure 3: Layout of the Play Area (Areas A-F).

**Heritage Impact Assessment  
Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment  
Historic Landscape Survey  
Written Scheme of Investigation**

**Geophysical Survey  
Trial Trench Evaluation  
Archaeological Excavation  
Archaeological Watching Briefs**

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