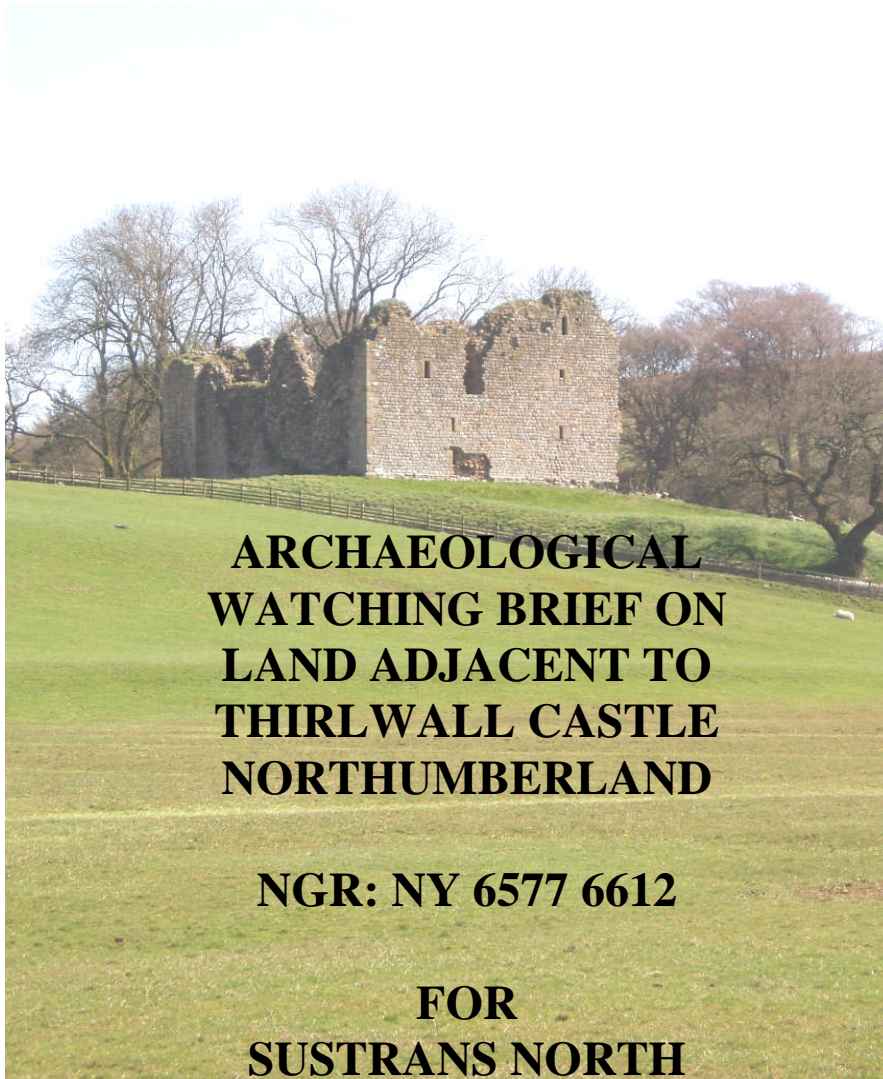


NORTH PENNINES ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Client Reports No.296/06



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In April 2006 North Pennines Archaeology Ltd undertook a watching brief on land that crosses Hadrian's Wall, the Vallum and the Military Way in Northumberland (NY 6755 6612), on behalf of Sustrans North, as part of the ongoing works for the construction of the Hadrian's Wall Cycle Way. The area is within the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site and is adjacent to the remains of the medieval castle of Thirlwall. Three areas in total were observed, which covered the presumed line of Hadrian's Wall, the Vallum and the associated Military Way.

The work entailed the construction of a cycleway and associated fence line, which involved the excavation of a corridor measuring approximately 5m wide; the cycle path being approximately 2.50m wide with 1m wide verges on both sides. The maximum excavated depth was 150mm inside the Hadrian's Wall scheduled area and 300mm outside this area. A base of Terram was laid to protect any archaeology and this was subsequently filled with a loose hardcore, made up of medium sized stones, onto which the path was directly laid. For the fencing non-intrusive gabion was to be used across the line of the Wall, Vallum and the Military Way, however, due to the lack of any visible archaeology during the soil strip, a number of trial pits were excavated with the agreement of Mike Collins, English Heritage Hadrian's Wall Archaeologist (EHHWA) to ascertain if any part of the major features remained, so as to aid the placing of the fence directly into the ground without the need for the gabion fencing. In total five test pits were mechanically excavated across the line of the Wall, to a maximum depth of 0.40m by 0.30m wide. All five pits were devoid of any archaeological remains.

Only two features of archaeological interest were located throughout the whole of the soil-strip and both of these **(103)** and **(104)**, proved to be post-medieval stone lined field drains, re-using stone from Hadrian's Wall. The whole area of excavation revealed no clear evidence of Roman archaeology despite the proximity of the Wall to the works, this is probably due in part to the area being heavily disturbed by the building of Thirlwall Castle and the Newcastle to Carlisle Railway. It is likely that the majority of archaeological features in this immediate area have either been severely truncated or are located at a depth where they remain undisturbed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

North Pennines Archaeology Ltd would like to offer thanks to Stephen Psallidas of Sustrans North for commissioning the project, and for his assistance throughout the fieldwork. Dave Patterson is thanked for his on-site assistance, Paul Henderson for excellent machining and to the various villagers from Longbyre for their historic knowledge of the area. Sincere thanks must also go to David Shotter, for his help in identifying the coin find. North Pennines Archaeology Ltd would also like to extend thanks to Mike Collins, Hadrian's Wall Archaeologist. The report was compiled by and the watching brief conducted by Martin Sowerby.

The project was managed by Gareth Davies, NPA Project Manager and the report was edited by Juliet Reeves

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by North Pennines Archaeology Ltd on land at Longbyre, Northumberland (NY 6577 6612), on behalf of Stephen Psallidas of Sustrans North. The aim of the watching brief was to record any significant archaeological deposits uncovered during the construction of the Hadrian's Wall Cycle Way. The work was required in a brief provided by Mike Collins, Hadrian's Wall Archaeologist for English Heritage (EHHWA).
- 1.1.2 It was a requirement of these works that the remains of Hadrian's Wall will be left in situ, as well as every effort made to preserve any other archaeological features encountered. If the remains of Hadrian's Wall were encountered, it was accepted by all parties that the archaeologist on site would advise the contractors as to whether the level of the cycle way will have to be raised over the Wall remains to allow their preservation.
- 1.1.3 A Site Visit was carried out on the proposed development, in order to assess the condition of any archaeological features present.
- 1.1.4 This report sets out the results of the work in the form of a short document outlining the findings, followed by a statement of the archaeological potential of the area, an assessment of the impact of the proposed development, and recommendations for further work. This report also contains the results of the rapid identification survey carried out in conjunction with the desk-based assessment.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

- 2.1.1 A project design was submitted by North Pennines Archaeology Ltd in response to a request by Steve Psallidas of Sustrans North for an archaeological watching brief in accordance with a brief prepared by Mike Collins, Hadrian's Wall Archaeologist. Following acceptance of the project design, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by the client to undertake the work. The project design was adhered to in full, and the work was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), and generally accepted best practice.
- 2.1.2 Work was undertaken in strict accordance with the specification document issued by Mike Collins, Hadrian's Wall Archaeologist for English Heritage (*Land adjacent to Thirlwall Castle Northumberland, brief for an archaeological watching brief*, English Heritage, 2005), and under the terms set down in a Project Design prepared by North Pennines Archaeology Ltd.

2.2 SITE VISIT

- 2.2.1 The site was visited in order to assess the survival, nature, extent and potential significance of any upstanding archaeological remains on the site, to determine any constraints to archaeological site survival, and to provide a detailed assessment of areas of archaeological potential.

2.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

- 2.3.1 A programme of field observation was intended to:
- observe and record archaeological remains should they occur within the defined watching brief area;
 - establish the presence/absence, nature, extent and state of preservation of archaeological remains as far as possible within the remit of the archaeological watching brief condition;
 - recover artefactual material, especially where useful for dating purposes;
 - recover palaeoenvironmental material where it survives.

2.4 SITE SPECIFIC AIMS

- 2.4.1 Site-specific aims of the watching brief were defined as follows:

- to survey the line of the proposed route using a metal detector prior to excavation of the cycleway corridor in order to recover metal artefacts, such as coins, nails or Roman military metalwork, that might provide an indication of the location, date and likely extent of buried archaeological remains;
- to monitor, as per specifications and project design, all groundworks within the cycleway corridor;
- to advise groundworks team of maximum permitted excavation depths specified in the brief and ensure that these depths are kept to;
- to detect, if possible, any surviving evidence of Roman activity along the cycleway corridor;
- to define the location, character, extent and state of preservation of Hadrian's Wall, Military Way and the Vallum, or any other significant archaeological remains, should these be encountered in the development area, and protect them from impact by the development works;
- to prepare a report for our client detailing the results of the watching brief, and providing recommendations for any future archaeological work that may be deemed necessary.

2.5 WATCHING BRIEF METHODOLOGY

- 2.5.1 Excavation was undertaken by the client's contractor, using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket. The entire area of the cycleway corridor was closely monitored, and all archaeological features discovered were investigated and recorded according to the NPA standard procedure as set out in the company Excavation Manual (Giecco, 2003).
- 2.5.2 A Photographic record of all aspects of the archaeological watching brief was made using Pentax K1000 and Pentax P30 Single Lens Reflex (SLR) manual cameras. A photographic record of all contexts was taken in colour transparency and black and white print and included a graduated metric scale. Digital photographs were also taken where applicable.
- 2.5.3 All work was undertaken in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (IFA 1994).
- 2.5.4 All references to cardinal directions refer to site grid north, aligned approximately with Ordnance Survey (OS) grid north.
- 2.5.5 Metal detector survey and Archaeological Watching brief was undertaken by Martin Sowerby and Alan James.

2.6 ARCHIVE

- 2.6.1 The full archive has been produced to a professional standard in accordance with the current English Heritage guidelines set out in the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 2nd Ed. 1991). The archive will be deposited within an appropriate repository and a copy of the report given to the County Sites and Monuments Record, where viewing will be available on request. The archive can be accessed under the unique project identifier NPA 06, THR-A.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 3.1.1 The hamlet of Thirlwall, Northumberland lies on the border between Cumbria and Northumberland and is located between the villages of Greenhead to the east and Gilsland to the west. The site of the works is within the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site and lies some 750m to the south of the medieval ruins of Thirlwall Castle. The cycle path runs parallel to Pow Charney Burn and the Newcastle to Carlisle railway line.
- 3.1.2 The parish is a mix of upland grasses, heather and marshes, the only low lying area of relatively flat ground is located along the Tipalt Burn where the site is situated. The development site is a field under permanent pasture and the topography of the site is typical of a glacial landscape being located in a gently sloping, low river valley, at an altitude of c49m OD (Countryside Commission 1998).
- 3.1.3 The solid geology consists of sedimentary rocks of the Carboniferous age, a repetitive succession of limestones, sandstones and shales belonging to the Middle or Upper Limestone groups (*ibid*). The drift geology consists of melt out debris and fluvio-glacial deposits dating from the Devensian period, which are predominately clay or boulder till (Countryside Commission 1998).

3.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.2.1 **Prehistoric:** there are no known prehistoric sites in the parish of Thirlwall, however, traces of an oval-shaped enclosure have been seen on an aerial photographs taken to the north-east of Thirlwall Castle. The present farm buildings and castle cover part of the enclosure, but the projected course appears to possibly enclose the castle site. What the function of this enclosure was is uncertain; it could possibly represent part of a Romano-British field system or a later medieval barmkin.
- 3.2.2 **The Roman Period:** the extravagant expansion of the Empire, which was undertaken by the Emperor Trajan (98-117), forced Hadrian (117-138) to realise that Rome could no longer afford to continue this policy of expansion to envelop the whole known world as foreseen by Augustus (Frere 1978). During Hadrian's many protracted visits of inspection and reform throughout the Empire he determined to define its limits and consolidate the defences. During the course of these visits, in AD 121 to 122, Hadrian visited Germany to reassess the linear German-Raetian frontier, which most likely represented the first fixed frontier the Roman Empire had seen. In 122 Hadrian came to Britain to establish the northern limit of the Empire. The time of the visit could have followed a period of insurrection by northern tribes culminating the construction of the wall (Taylor 2000).

- 3.2.3 ***The Stanegate System:*** the Tyne-Solway isthmus was the first possible strategic frontier line south of Scotland. A road between the Tyne and the Solway was already in existence by the Trajanic period, having seemingly been built under Quintus Petillius Cerialis, governor of Britain from AD 71 to 74, or one of his successors (Shotter 1997). The road, later named the Stanegate or `stoney street` in medieval times, possibly linked the two forts at Corbridge in the east to Carlisle in the west, both of which guarded major river crossings. It is likely that the road was extended to the east of Corbridge, possibly heading for the fort at Washing Well and subsequently to South Shields. Along the Stanegate a number of military sites have been discovered suggesting that they may be part of the Trajanic frontier. On pottery evidence forts at Corbridge, Vindolanda, Nether Denton and Carlisle had been in existence since the Flavian period (AD 75 -120). Carvoran fort 2km east of Thirlwall has been generally assumed to be of similar date, though what evidence there is from the pottery assemblage, indicates that the fort was occupied during the Trajanic period. The fort at Brampton Old Church is thought to have had a short occupation of about the time of Trajan. Newbrough has yielded pottery of the 4th century, however an earlier fort on this site is generally postulated as it fits a regular spacing of forts along the Stangate. Finally Haltwhistle Burn and Throp, (located 3km to the west of Thirlwall), have shown from pottery assemblages recovered to possibly be of a Trajanic date (Breeze and Dobson 2000).
- 3.2.4 The Stangate system was not efficient enough to police the local tribes of the Brigantes, Selgovae and Novantae effectively. It is suggested that there may have also been interaction between the Brigantes (within Roman Provincial territory) and the Selgovae (in Lowland Scotland). British threats to the Empire had become a pressing concern at the beginning of Hadrian's reign; this is indicated by his biographer who mentions that `The Britain's could no longer be kept under control` (Taylor 2000).
- 3.2.5 ***Hadrian's Wall:*** the Wall was a composite military barrier, which in its final form, comprised several separate elements; a stone wall fronted by a V-shaped ditch, and a number of purpose-built stone garrison fortifications such as forts, milecastles and turrets. A large earthwork and ditch, built parallel with and to the south of the Wall, known as the Vallum and a metalled road linking the garrison forts, which is known as the 'Roman Military Way'. The Wall begins in the east at Wallsend in Tyneside and continues to the west terminating at Bowness-on-Solway in Cumbria, a distance of 80 Roman miles (73.5 English miles or 117 kilometres). The Wall conceived by Hadrian was to be ten feet wide and about fifteen feet high. The front face of the wall most likely sported a crenulated parapet, behind which the soldiers patrolled along a paved rampart-walk (Bedoyere 1998). The foundations of Hadrian's ten-foot wide Wall were laid from Newcastle-upon-Tyne eastward for 23 Roman miles to Chesters in Northumberland, but thereafter, apart from a few short lengths further west, the wall is reduced to eight or sometimes, six feet in width. We can assume that at some time during the early construction of the Wall, a decision was made to reduce its width, probably in order to speed-up the work during times of threat from the tribes of southern Scotland. The wall to the west of the River Irthing was originally built out of turf and about sixteen feet wide, topped by a wooden palisade and walkway and punctuated by timber-framed turrets and milecastles. This 'turf-wall' did not endure

- long, and it was all replaced in stone within a few years, section by section. It is thought that the reason the western part of the Wall was built of turf was due to the fact that there were no ready supplies of stone or lime close to hand at the time of construction, and it was left to a later date to replace this with a regular stone wall. The interior structures in each milecastle seem to have varied, but all contain at least one recognizable barrack-block. They housed a varying number of men with a conjectured maximum of approximately 64 soldiers, and were effectively large gate-houses, whose garrison were originally stationed to control egress through the Wall, and perhaps to levy a tax on goods carried through.
- 3.2.6 Between each milecastle were two smaller turrets, equidistant from each other and the milecastles to either side. They were of a uniform pattern, about 20 feet square, recessed into the Wall and built-up above the height of the Wall rampart walk. In the original plan the Wall was to be garrisoned and patrolled from the milecastles, and there was no requirement for any large forts to be built on the Wall itself. The wall was to be reinforced when needed, from the forts already in existence along the Stanegate, which runs parallel, to the rear of the wall. This format was to prove inadequate, however, and the wall was soon modified by the inclusion of several auxiliary forts along its length. These garrison forts were of a standard 'playing-card' profile, but varied in size between 3 and 5 acres, depending on the type of unit it was built to house. In the infantry forts, the Wall itself generally formed the northern defences of the camp, which projected wholly to the south, as is the case with the milecastles and turrets. In the cavalry forts, or those of part-mounted units, the forts were generally built across the line of the Wall with three of its major gates opening out onto its northern side, part of the wall having to be demolished in order to accommodate the fort. In some cases forts were sited on top of milecastles, which had to be demolished, as at Bowness on Solway.
- 3.2.7 The original concept of the Wall fulfilled what Hadrian's biographer wrote, that he 'drew a wall along the length of eighty miles to separate barbarians and Romans' (Birley 1976). This concept reflected the form of the German Raetian *limes* in that the Wall relied on the forts of the Stanegate for reinforcements in case of need. Its main purpose was to control movement in and out of the Province, as well as forming a base for military activity on or north of the frontier, and was never intended to be a defensive feature (*ibid*).
- 3.2.8 **The Vallum:** shortly after work on the Wall had been completed a large earthwork was constructed a short distance to the south, which followed along almost the full length of the Wall. This earthwork, known as the vallum, consisted of a continuous steep-sided trench, with a flat-bottom. Unlike the ditch fronting the Wall to the north, which had a normal Roman military V-shaped profile this flat-bottomed ditch, twenty Roman feet (5.9m) wide and 20 feet deep, was flanked by 10 feet (3m) high and 20 feet wide mounds, positioned 30 feet (8.9m) away on either side. These features combined created a 120-foot (35m) wide system of earthworks. The vallum usually diverts around forts therefore, it is probably safe to assume that it was created after work on the Wall had commenced. The vallum may have formed part of the original plan but was perhaps not scheduled to be constructed until Hadrian's Wall was substantially

completed. The Vallum followed the route of the Wall closely for almost its entire length, being conspicuously absent in the stretch from Wallsend to Newcastle, but running uninterrupted from the bridge over the River Tyne to the large auxiliary fort at Bowness on the Solway Firth. The vallum runs almost parallel to the Wall all the way to the fort at Stanwix in Carlisle deviating from this route for only a short stretch at Castlesteads. Beyond the large cavalry fort at Stanwix, the vallum proceeds westwards to the Bowness terminus with only three or four relatively minor re-alignments, and mostly ignores, the meandering course of the Wall in this part of the Solway region. It is thought that the vallum was intended to mark-out a kind of rearward boundary or "exclusion zone" behind the Wall, another school of thought is that its main purpose was as a communication route. An idea recently expounded, is that the vallum served no other purpose than to punctuate the northern frontier of Rome, and was deliberately built on a monumental scale on the orders of emperor Hadrian.

- 3.2.9 ***The Military Way:*** at first, the Wall garrisons were supplied along roads, which issued from the gates at the rear of each fort and were possibly connected to the Stanegate, which ran parallel with the Wall. These supply-roads were provided to each of the main forts on the Wall, and also to a few of the milecastles. Around the time that the vallum went out of use c AD 140, the Wall was provided with its own purpose-built, metalled supply road, which ran between the Wall and the vallum. This new road connected each of the garrisons on the Wall, and ran through the rear portion of each fort. In addition to providing a shorter and more secure route between each fort, there were branch-roads serving the milecastles, and pathways to all of the turrets probably branched-off from it (Bedoyere 1998). The modern name for this road is the Roman Military Way.
- 3.2.10 A number of Roman sites connected with the Wall are located within the environs of the parish of Thirlwall. Milecastle 46a is located next to the Thirlwall Castle Farm, however the exact site of this turret is not yet known. It is possible to postulate its position by measuring from other points along Hadrian's Wall as the turrets and milecastles were usually constructed at regular intervals (Birley 1961). To the west of Longbyre is another milecastle 46b, which like 46a, is no longer visible on the ground. To the south of Longbyre a small Roman camp at Glenwhelt Leazes was constructed most likely as a temporary work camp, overlooking a gap in the Whin Sill escarpment. It can be seen today as a series of earthworks enclosing a rectangular piece of ground. The camp has four entrances through the ramparts, one on each side. Unusually, each entrance is protected by a bank and ditch on the inside and outside. The inside of the fort has been ploughed and drained (Welfare and Swan 1995). Another similar sized Roman camp is located Chapel Rigg to the west of Thirlwall. It stands 500m to the south of the Wall. It survives well as a series of upstanding earthworks. The camp stands on the top of an east-west ridge and has excellent views of the surrounding areas. It is rectangular in shape and surrounded by a rampart and a ditch (*ibid*).
- 3.2.11 Several stone inscriptions have also been uncovered in and around Thirlwall. A block of Roman building stone was noticed in the 1980s built into the garden wall at Thirlwall View. The stone is carved with the following text, **COH VI 7 LO VSI SVAV IS** (Hassall and Tomlin 1981). At Holmhead Farm two inscribed Roman stones

have been used as building material. The first originally came from Hadrian's Wall near Thirlwall Castle and was used in a house at Greenhead before being taken out and reused in an outbuilding at Holmhead. This stone is inscribed – ciuitas Dumnoni. The second stone was only discovered at Holmhead in 1976 and is built into a ruined outbuilding. This stone is inscribed, **IVL . IANAL**, which means '*the century of Iulius Ianalis (built this)*' (Hassall and Tomlin 1977). It is possible that this inscription could relate to the cohort who constructed milecastle 46a.

3.2.12 **Thirlwall Castle:** Thirl-Wall is an Old English place name meaning 'Gap In the Wall' (Mills 2003). It probably refers to a break in Hadrian's Wall where Tipalt Burn cuts the ridge on which the Wall is located. The Thirlwall family adopted the name when they acquired the landholdings of the 'Township' of Thirlwall (Long 1967). In the 1330s, John Thirlwall built a stronghold that provided protection for his family and descendants for the next 300 years. The site chosen by John Thirlwall was a sheltered, wooded bank of the Tipalt Burn, it was not a naturally defensive position, but it was surrounded by hilltop positions that could warn of impending raids from Scotland. All the materials that were needed lay close by, especially dressed sandstone blocks, which had been quarried by the Romans to build Hadrian's Wall. These strongholds became an essential element in the defence of the English Border against Scottish raids (*ibid*). Several generations of Thirlwalls survived the border raids and prospered. When Lionel Thirlwall died in 1586, he left a comfortable endowment to his wife and each of his eight children. His will lists many domestic items as well as farm livestock and crops. After the Union of the Scottish and English Crowns in 1603, more peaceful conditions developed and border strongholds became redundant. By the 1660s, the Thirlwalls had moved to Hexham where the land was more fertile and the climate a little gentler. The Thirlwall Castle Estate was sold to the Earl of Carlisle in 1748 for £4,000. The Earl was interested only in the land and allowed the Castle to fall into gradual decay (Long 1967).

3.2.13 Thirlwall Castle is rectangular in form and measures 14.2 metres by 5.8 metres. The castle was built largely from re-used Roman stones and is aligned north-east to south-west. Square turrets project from the northern angles and a large rectangular tower occupies the south-east corner. The main structure of Thirlwall Castle seems to have been built to four storeys throughout with the turrets and tower carried higher. The floors were all wooden, as shown by internal set-backs in the wall faces. There seems to be an exception with probable stone vaulting in the north-west turret and basement of the tower. Unusually Thirlwall Castle seems to be mostly unaltered by later additions or modifications. Also notable is the absence of associated medieval structures and features, either domestic or defensive. Excavations within and just outside Thirlwall Castle have located buried floors of cobbles and stone flagging, while an excavation on the east side of the castle revealed the lower courses of a wall of two phases in the restricted space between the castle and the edge of the drop to the burn (Pevsner 1957).

3.2.14 **Tyne Valley Railway:** the railway was built by the Newcastle-on-Tyne and Carlisle Railroad Company, gaining Royal Assent on the 22 May 1829 (Brown 1969). The line was built in sections from 1834 onwards; the entire route between Carlisle London

Road station and Redheugh in Gateshead was formally opened to passengers on the 18th June 1838. From 1864, trains ran to Carlisle Citadel station, and the old London Road station was closed. A 17-mile branch line from Haltwhistle to Nenthead was proposed by the railway company, which first connected the east and west coasts of Britain when it opened its main line from the Tyne at Redheugh to Carlisle canal basin on 18th June 1838 (*ibid*). To the south, subsidiaries of the Stockton and Darlington Railway Company were steadily progressing up the valley of the River Wear, and the Wear Valley Extension Railway was projected to construct a 38 mile line from Frosterley to Milton (the present Brampton station) on the Carlisle line, passing through Nenthead and Alston. This would have been a truly great monument to the early railway engineers, with massive earth works up the Wear Valley culminating in a summit level of 1,525 feet, followed by a 2.25 mile tunnel under Killhope to reach the valley of the River Nent. However due to the economic climate at the time the construction of the railway was postponed (Brown 1968).

3.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

- 3.3.1 In 1977 a watching brief was undertaken by the Central Excavation Unit during the construction of a new cattle barn on the north side of the farm complex. No archaeological material was found which was associated either with the Castle or Hadrian's Wall. (CEU127 1977).
- 3.3.2 The Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU) now known as Oxford Archaeology North (OAN) monitored the excavation of a series of holes for three new stiles and a gate associated with the Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail Alignment Project at Wall End Farm, Thirlwall. No significant archaeological features were recorded immediately south of the Wall ditch (LUAU 1998).

4 WATCHING BRIEF AND METAL DETECTOR SURVEY RESULTS

4.1 WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

- 4.1.1 Summary results of the watching brief are presented below. The context list is reproduced in Appendix 1, with Figure 2 showing the locations of the watching brief and Figure 3 the location of the archaeological features.
- 4.1.2 The area of the field for the cycle path was mechanically stripped of turf using a toothless ditching bucket on a 360° mechanical excavator. The stripping commenced from the north-west side of the field in the area next to the sewerage processing plant. The depth of excavated turf and underlying, brown loamy topsoil, **(100)** varied from 0.10m to 0.20m. The subsoil was sealed by a layer **(102)**, which was interpreted as a dump of domestic waste. It comprised dark almost black silty sand, containing c 40-60% small- medium sub-oval stones mixed with ash, charcoal and clinker. No archaeological features were observed cutting into it. However, within the excavation area a large pottery assemblage, dating mainly to the 19th century, was recovered as well as animal bone and clay pipe stems, possibly indicating that this area could be the site of the village dump or debris from the construction of the railway, which runs parallel to the site. The character of the subsoil, **(101)** varied considerably across the excavated area. It appeared to have been deposited in broad undulating bands varying in colour between deep-red, mid greyish-brown and orangey-brown, generally comprising sterile gritty clayey sand with c20-30% small to medium sub-rounded to angular stones. In the south-east corner of the site, along the line of the presumed course of the Vallum, it had a much higher sand content and contained lenses of pea-grit rich sandy gravel. The natural subsoil in the middle of the site was relatively undisturbed. All of the archaeological features in the following narrative were cut into the natural deposits.
- 4.1.3 Approximately 4m to the north-west of the line of Hadrian's Wall, was a linear band, 0.20m wide, of loose stones of variable sizes, consisting of reused wall stones **[103]**. There did not appear to be any facing stones and they seemed relatively unsorted, although it was not possible to examine the entire length or the depth of the feature, due to the limit of excavation being only 150mm. After cleaning it was established that the feature was a post-medieval stone lined field drain or conduit. Also from this area two dressed Roman Ashlar Wall stones were recovered from the topsoil.
- 4.1.4 A stone lined feature **[104]** was located in the south-east corner of the field, approximately 10m from an existing path running from Longbyre to Thirlwall Castle. It was observed for a length of 1.50m and was approximately 0.20m wide. The stones in this were mostly sub-square to sub-rounded and of amorphous shapes and variable sizes, but were generally smaller than the stones comprising **[103]**. They were unsorted but formed a quite even deposit and almost certainly extended out of the watching brief area into the field. It is highly likely that the stones used in the feature are Wall stones, which have been broken into smaller more manageable pieces. Indeed, further examination of the bank side of Tipalt Burn showed that the feature runs into the

stream. It is highly likely therefore, that this feature is another post-medieval land drain or conduit.

- 4.1.5 A number of small trial pits were excavated over the line of Wall to assess the state of preservation. In total five machine dug pits were excavated to a maximum depth of 0.40m. No archaeology was noted in the test pits.

4.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL METAL DETECTOR SURVEY

- 4.2.1 Archaeological Metal Detector Survey was undertaken along several sections of the of the cycleway, with the express permission of Mike Collins, English Heritage Hadrian's Wall Archaeologist (EHHWA). The purpose of the survey was to provide an impression of the location, extent, and date of significant below ground archaeological remains in advance of excavation of the cycleway route, just as the distribution of artefacts recovered from the surface of a ploughed field allows the archaeologist to gain an impression of the location, date and extent of buried archaeological features, so likewise the distribution of metalwork objects recovered from disturbed horizons such as ploughsoil or topsoil allows particular areas of activity to be distinguished.
- 4.2.2 Metal detector survey at Longbyre, Thirlwall involved making multiple passes, or scans, of the area of cycleway strip to be excavated, and the recovery of metal artefacts from the topsoil only. Metal objects below the topsoil layer were not removed, due to the risk of impacting archaeological horizons. Survey was carried out in advance of excavation, and during removal of topsoil, as metal detector passes immediately following the initial bucket scrape removing the grass roots often revealed more signals than survey undertaken prior to any excavation .
- 4.2.3 A number of small finds were uncovered during the metal detector survey and the majority of these relate to post medieval domestic waste and agricultural machinery fragments which were subsequently discarded. A coin which was demonstrably Roman in date was discovered from the topsoil (**100**) at the south-west corner of the field, along the presumed line of the Vallum. The coin appears to be a radiate copy, possibly of Tetricus I (271-3). The coin is very worn and highly corroded, which would either suggest a considerable period of circulation or the negative impact of the environmental conditions from which it was found.

5 FINDS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

- 5.1.1 **Pottery:** a total 78 fragments of pottery were recovered from the topsoil (100) during the watching brief. The majority of the pottery sherds were of a late 19th early 20th century domestic wares. Layer (102) yielded fragments of salt-glazed stoneware, industrial slipware and dark-glazed earthenware. Most of the pottery sherds from (102) appeared to be burned lending to the credence that this layer was a deposit of industrial, or domestic waste. No fragments of Roman or medieval pottery were recovered. A number of complete ceramic vessels were recovered from the topsoil (100), which have been identified as Hartley's jam jars.
- 5.1.2 **Glass:** 15 sherds were recovered from the topsoil, again like the pottery assemblage, the glass fragments are late 19th to 20th century in date. Several complete beer bottles were also recovered during the watching brief.
- 5.1.3 **Iron Objects:** five fragments of iron were recovered from the watching brief. The quantity of iron fragments recovered was small due to the allowed depth of the metal detector survey and wet conditions on site. The iron objects were identified as modern nails, broken horse shoes and plough tips. These finds were discarded on site, however a record of what was found was kept for the report.
- 5.1.4 **Roman Coin:** a badly worn and heavily corroded coin was recovered from the topsoil (101) at the southwest corner of the field next to the footpath from Longbyre to Thirlwall Castle. The coin, which was identified by David Shotter appears to be a radiate copy, possibly of Tetricus I (271-3). C. Pius Esuvius Tetricus was the last emperor of the so-called `imperium Galliarum`. He had senatorial rank and occupied the post of *praeses provinciae Aquitaniae* at the time when Victorinus (AD 269-271) was murdered at Cologne in early 271 AD. Through the influence of Victoria, the mother of Victorinus, who bribed the troops in his favour, Tetricus, although absent from Rome, was proclaimed emperor near Burdigalia, Bordeaux in spring of the same year. Tetricus I was recognised as legitimate emperor in Gaul and Britain (Shotter 2000).

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 CONCLUSION

- 6.1.1 The watching brief revealed that there is evidence of two linear features within the construction area, however the dating of these features is difficult and can only be firmly established by excavation. The features identified in the watching brief strongly suggest that they relate to post-medieval landscape management, namely land drains. The area of land on which the cycle way lies, appears to have been marshy for a long period of time.
- 6.1.2 Even though the potential for subsurface Roman remains was high, no Roman features were observed during the soil-strip and although the watching brief was designed specifically to look for these archaeological elements within the remit and specified in the project brief. It may be concluded that the Wall, Military Way and Vallum were either partly destroyed by later activities or that they remain undisturbed deeper into the subsoil. However, the coin that was recovered during the metal detector survey strongly indicates that evidence for Roman interventions are present.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.2.1 From the evidence presented above there is little potential for the survival of archaeological remains above 150mm. In light of this, no further archaeological work will be required.

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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT LIST

Context Number	Category	Interpretation
100	Layer	Topsoil
101	Layer	Subsoil
102	Deposit	Natural
103	Structure	Field Drain
104	Structure	Field Drain

APPENDIX 2: FIGURE AND PLATES
