

Benlister, Lamlash, Arran: Archaeological Evaluation

Data Structure Report

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Rathmell
Archaeology Ltd

Quality Assurance

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Signed

Date

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Checked

Date

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Overview

1. A programme of archaeological works was required by John Thomson Construction Ltd in respect to the building of a residential development (11/00630/PPM) at Benlister, Lamlash, North Ayrshire (NGR ²02158 ⁶30841). The archaeological works were designed to determine the nature, form and extent of any archaeology present within the development area and hence inform the appropriate mitigation to facilitate the development.
2. John Thomson Construction Ltd required a programme of archaeological works to be undertaken under advisement by the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (who advise the planning authority on archaeological matters) prior to development works. The West of Scotland Archaeology Service, through the planning authority, required an initial evaluation at 8% sample level with the potential for further stages of archaeological work.
3. Rathmell Archaeology Limited was appointed by John Thomson Construction Ltd to undertake the development and implementation of archaeological mitigation works prior to the development of the site. The project works have been defined by a Written Scheme of Investigation (Gordon 2012) that was agreed with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service.

Archaeological and Historical Background

4. The proposed development area at Benlister to the south of Park Terrace, Lamlash is currently an agricultural field which does not, according to the West of Scotland Archaeology Service and Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Scotland, contain any known archaeological sites.
5. To the immediate east stood the Lamlash Community Hall which, prior to recent demolition, was a Category C(S) Listed Building. The hall was originally built in 1914 by the Admiralty as accommodation for the fleet arriving at Lamlash on agricultural land (see Figure 1 for the original agricultural landscape). In 1917 the hall was converted into a convalescent hospital for soldiers.
6. To the south of where the hall stood is the football pitch of the Arran High School. This overlies the site of a Bronze Age cemetery identified and excavated during the construction of the school. Antiquarian records from the 19th century recorded the exposure of cists (stone lined graves) and the recovery of cinerary urns (pottery vessels holding cremated bone) from the fields to the west of the Whitehouse.
7. Intrusive evaluation works prior to the construction of the new Arran High School identified the cemetery, comprising burials in both cists and urns, underneath the old school's playing fields. These important archaeological remains were fully excavated prior to the construction of the new school. There was the potential that associated prehistoric burial activity may have extended into the ground upon which the hall stands. However, the Arran High School excavations did not locate any features extending from that site towards the hall.

Project Works

8. An archaeological evaluation was undertaken between the 20th and the 21st February 2012. This consisted of the excavation of a series of intrusive trenches for the purposes of exposing an 8% sample of the development area (roughly 1.5 ha) to be archaeologically examined. Where possible the trenches were placed in accordance with the terms of the Written Scheme of Investigation (Gordon 2012). In total 1286m² linear metres were excavated, which slightly exceeded the 1200m² linear metres required for the purposes of this investigation. The position of the trenches is depicted in the site plan below (Figure 2).

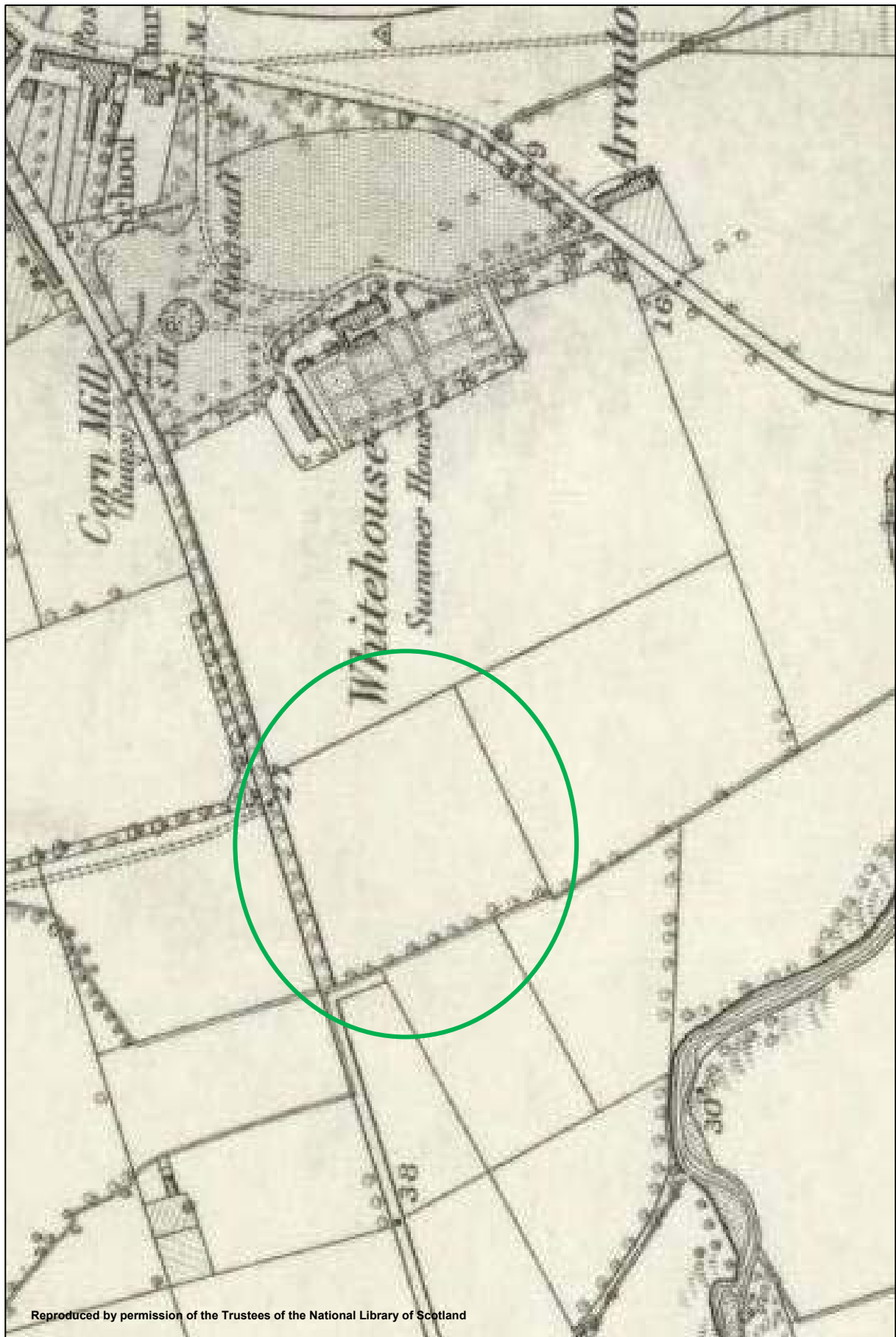


Figure 1: 1st edition Ordnance Survey (1868)

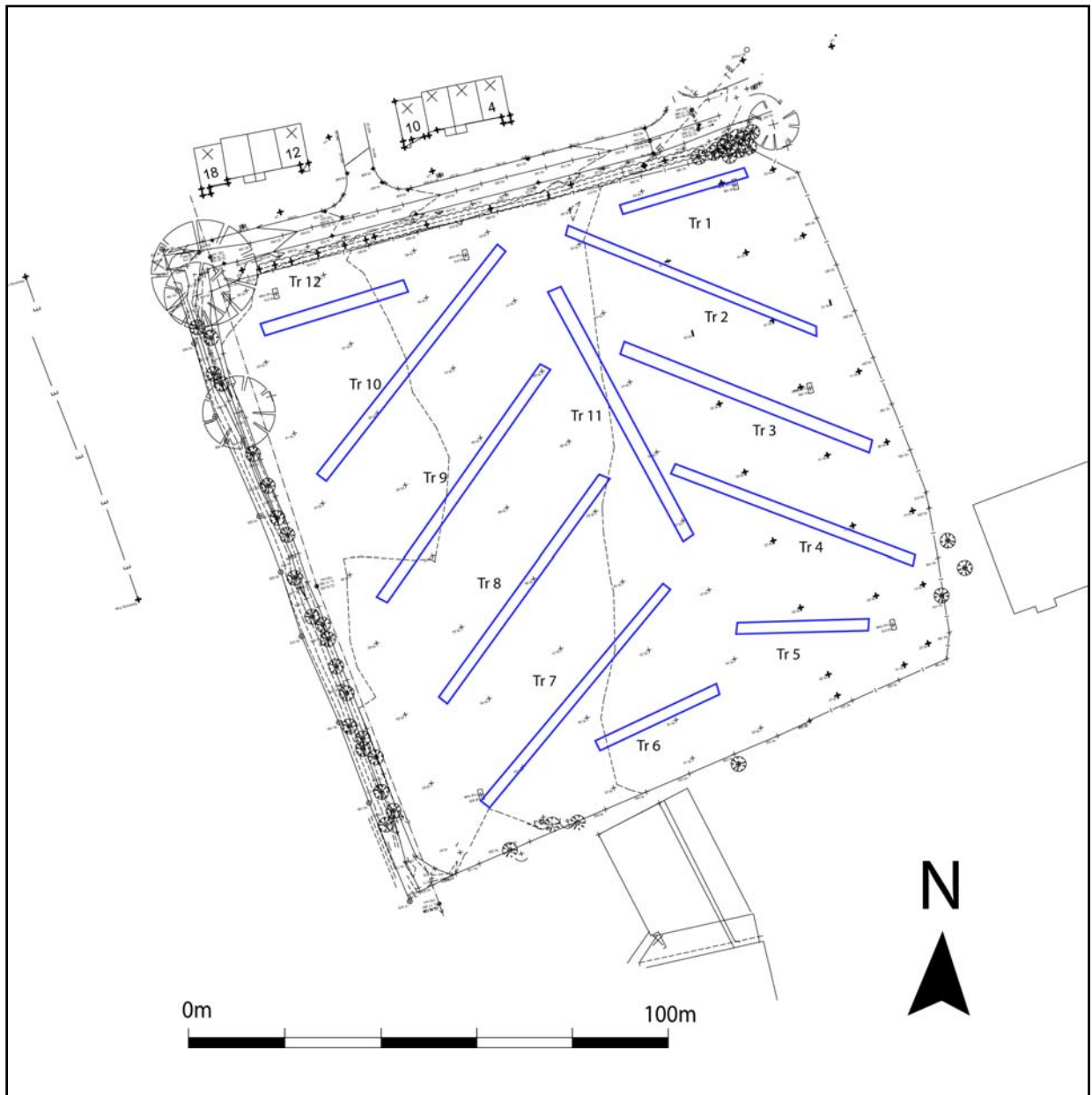


Figure 2: Layout of trenches as machined

9. All works were conducted in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct and Historic Scotland Policy Statements.

Findings - Evaluation

10. In all 12 evaluation trenches were excavated using a 23 tonne 360° tracked excavator with a smooth 2.1m ditching bucket; details of the trenches may be found in Appendix 1 of this document. Included below is a synthesis of the findings and interpretation from these trenches.
11. The ground within the development area was waterlogged and had areas of standing water. However, excavation revealed a predominantly sand and gravel subsoil which when exposed drained quickly was reasonably dry. The trenches were excavated through turf and topsoil (001) which was a mid to dark brown grey, sand and soil mix with frequent rootlet inclusions.
12. Natural subsoil was encountered at depths of between 280mm-440mm below the top of the current ground surface and consisted predominantly of a moderately compacted, dark yellow orange, sand and gravel (003). The colours of the exposed subsoil were very similar in nature, and varied only slightly. Trenches 4 and 5 contained narrow areas of loosely compacted gravel bands with rounded stones ranging in size from 10-50mm (006). The stone inclusions found within the subsoil and the predominantly sand composition of the subsoil ((002) (003) (010)) are probably a result of marine deposition.
13. Excavation of the trenches revealed that nine out of the twelve (75%) had evidence of disturbance, primarily modern. Installation of modern drainage pipes, plough scars, bore-holes and a possible test pit demonstrated modern anthropic activity. On excavation of Trench 4 at its SE end, a brick wall was exposed aligned NE-SW some 2.1m in length and 300mm wide. Abutting to the SE of the wall was a concrete base measuring 2.5m on its north side, 2.1m on its west side and 1m on the south side. These features are possibly related to the recently demolished Lamlash Community Hall.
14. Within Trenches 1, 2, 10 and 12 modern tile field drainage pipes were recorded with 20th century pipes recorded in Trenches 2 and 3. Plough scars in Trenches 5, 7, and 8 are evidence that the development area has been previously ploughed.
15. Excavation of Trenches 7 and 8 revealed three linear features all aligned approximately N-S; one in Trench 7 and two in Trench 8. Their shape and fill were initially considered to be possible ditch termini. All three features were hand excavated by half sectioning with the aim to discover their possible function.
16. Within Trench 8 one of the linear features once sectioned and cleaned was concluded to have been the result of bioturbation, most likely caused by animal activity. The second linear feature after being sectioned and cleaned was still inconclusive and as a result it was felt that it was necessary to draw the section at 1:10. Both the cut and fill were given the same context number [(009)]. Aligned N-S, its dimensions are 93mm wide and 130mm in depth with a moderately compacted light grey brown, silty sand small to medium angular and rounded stones (see Figure 4a).
17. In Trench 7 the cut and fill [(011)] were again given the same context number. Aligned N-S, 700mm wide and 90mm in depth with a moderately compacted light grey brown, silty sand with occasional small to medium angular and rounded stones (see Figure 4b). A bulk sample of 10 litres was extracted from (009) as charcoal was visible within the fill. No artefacts were recovered from either (009) or (011).



Figure 3a: Trench 1 from W with modern tile field drain (004) running W-E through the centre



Figure 3b: Trench 7 from NE showing the predominant subsoil (003) recorded across the site



Figure 4a: Section through [009] from south



Figure 4b: Section through [011] from south

Discussion

18. No significant archaeological remains were uncovered in the course of the archaeological works. The features that were revealed and investigated are the result of modern activities; the modern tile field pipes used for drainage (004) are possible the result of late 19th century to earlier 20th century activity to prevent standing large bodies of standing water, as were noticed on arrival.
19. The presence of plough scars in the subsoil of Trenches 5, 7, and 8 represent that the development area has been ploughed. The 1st edition ordnance survey map shows the area as an enclosed agricultural field, however, when this ploughing occurred is unknown. The remaining features were revealed to be the products of bioturbation activities (animal burrows).
20. The pipe (005) would certainly point to 20th century use and may possibly have been associated with the now demolished Lamlash Community Hall. Likewise, the close proximity of (007) and (008) in the adjacent field to the previous location of community hall, would also suggest that both features are associated with this once standing structure.
21. The two linear features [009] and [011] were both ephemeral though clearly of anthropic origin. Their common alignment and character of fills suggest that they are infilled ditches rather than structural slots. There were no artefacts associated with these ditches (either modern or ancient) and no other associated features. Their linear form would suggest they should have appeared in other trenches, but they were not observed at these points. It is reasonable to suggest that these were once longer feature, truncated by agricultural ploughing. Indeed on balance, we would propose these to be the fragmentary remains of a rig and furrow field system – being the truncated remnant of two furrows.
22. The soil profile observed within the evaluation trenches indicates a generally undisturbed area of ground which supports the evidence of the cartographic sources referred to above. The trenches revealed a natural soil profile, the product of natural geological processes influenced by agriculture but not subject to radical change through human interference. The topsoil is typical of what would be expected from an area that has been improved and left fallow for a long time.

Recommendations

23. No significant archaeological remains were located within the development area and the only anthropic material observed suggested modern (19th and 20th century) use of the site.
24. On balance, given the lack of significant archaeological material recovered in the course of the evaluation works, Rathmell Archaeology Ltd recommends that no further archaeological work be carried out within this development area.
25. The appropriateness and acceptability of our recommendations rest with John Thomson Construction Ltd and their advisors, West of Scotland Archaeology Service.

Conclusion

26. A programme of archaeological works was required by John Thomson Construction Ltd in respect to the building of a residential development (11/00630/PPM) at Benlister, Lamlash, North Ayrshire (NGR 202158 630841). The archaeological works were designed to mitigate the impact on the archaeological remains within the development area.
27. No significant archaeological remains were located within the development area and no anthropic material was recovered other than would suggest activities due to modern activity.

References

Documentary

Gordon, D 2012 *Benlister, Lamlash, Arran: Archaeological Mitigation, Written Scheme of Investigation*, unpublished commercial report by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd

Cartographic

Ordnance Survey 1868 1st Edition

Appendix 1: Trench Details

Trench Summary

Trench	Orientation	Size	Topsoil Depth	Subsoil Character	Modern/ Agricultural Features	Significant Features	Artefacts
1	W-E	2.1m by 30m 63m ²	440mm to 410mm	Moderately compacted, brown grey, sand and soil gravel mix mottled with yellow sand (002). From 10.5m there is a change for 3m to a moderately compacted, dark yellow orange, sand and gravel (003). The rest of the trench comprises of (002).	Modern tile field drains	None	None
2	NE-SW	2.1m by 58.40m 122.64m ²	320mm to 490mm	The first 8.5m comprises of (003) with the rest of the trench (002).	Modern tile field drains and pipe	None	None
3	SW-NE	2.1m by 58.40m 122.64m ²	500mm to 340mm	The whole 58.4m is characterised by (003).	Pipe	None	None
4	NE-SW	2.1m by 59m 123.90m ²	300mm to 100mm	The first 10.5m is comprised of (003). For 3m after this point it changes to a loosely compacted, gravel band with rounded stones ranging in size from 10-50mm. From 13.5m it changes back to (003) for 4m, where the gravel band of (006) is present for 5m. From this point it changes back to (003) for the remaining 37m.	Brick wall and concrete base with drain	None	None
5	SW-NE	2.1m by 28.50m 59.85m ²	370mm to 300mm	(003) forms the first 17.2m, where the gravel band of (006) is present for the next 2.1m with the remaining 2.2m reverting back to (003).	Plough scars	None	None
6	E-W	2.1m by 30m	160mm to 350mm	The whole length is characterised by dark yellow orange, sand and gravel (003).	None	None	None

Trench	Orientation	Size	Topsoil Depth	Subsoil Character	Modern/ Agricultural Features	Significant Features	Artefacts
		63m ²					
7	SW-NE	2.1m by 60m 112.60m ²	280mm to 290mm	The whole length is characterised by dark yellow orange, sand and gravel (003). The possible ditch terminus has a fill composed of a light grey brown, slity sand with occasional small to medium angular and rounded stones.	Plough scars	Possible terminus of a ditch. Aligned approximately N-S, 700mm wide and 90mm in depth	None
8	NE-SW	2.1m by 60.20m 126.42m ²	360mm to 270mm	The whole length is characterised by dark yellow orange, sand and gravel (003).	Plough scars	Possible terminus of a ditch	None
9	SW-NE	2.1m by 60.90m 127.89m ²	380mm to 300mm	The whole length is characterised by dark yellow orange, sand and gravel (003).	None	None	None
10	NE-SW	2.1m by 63.40m 133.14m ²	240mm to 320mm	The first 39.5m is comprised of (003), where it changes for 10.2m to a moderately compacted, orange yellow, sandy clay. The remaining length of the trench reverts back to (003).	Modern tile field drains	None	None
11	E-W	2.1m by 33.50m 70.35m ²	300mm to 340mm	The whole length is characterised by dark yellow orange, sand and gravel (003).	None	None	None
12	S-N	2.1m by 62.30m 130.83m ²	300mm to 390mm	The whole length is characterised by dark yellow orange, sand and gravel (003).	Modern tile field drains	None	None

Appendix 2: Registers

Context Register

Context No.	Area/ Trench	Type	Description	Interpretation
001	All	Deposit	Moderately compacted, mid brown grey, sandy soil mix with grass roots/rootlets	Turf/topsoil
002	Tr 1, 2	Deposit	Moderately compacted, brown grey, sand gravel and soil mix mottled with yellow sand	Natural subsoil
003	All	Deposit	Moderately compacted, dark yellow orange sand and gravel	Natural subsoil
004	Tr 1, 2, 10, 12	Field drain	Dark orange tile field drain	Modern tile field drain (19 th -20 th century)
005	Tr 2, 3	Pipe	Black pipe	Modern asbestos pipe (20 th century)
006	Tr 4, 5	Deposit	Loosely compacted, gravel band, rounded stones ranging in size 10-50mm	Natural subsoil
007	Tr 4	Wall	Orange red brick wall, aligned approximately ne-sw, 2.6m in length and 300mm in width	Wall possible associated with the Lamblash community hall, prior to its recent demolition
008	Tr 4	Concrete Base	Concrete base with a small drain on the eastern side. Dimensions: 2.5m north top side, 2.1m western side, 1m south bottom edge	Concrete base with drain are possibly associated with the Lamblash community hall, prior to its recent demolition
009	Tr 7	Cut & fill	Aligned N-S, 700mm wide and 90mm in depth with a moderately compacted light grey brown, silty sand with occasional small to medium angular and rounded stones	Possible ditch terminus
010	Tr 10	Deposit	Moderately compacted, orange yellow, sandy clay	Natural subsoil
011	Tr 8	Cut & fill	Aligned N-S, 930mm wide and 130mm in depth with a moderately compacted light grey brown, silty sand	Possible ditch terminus

Drawing Register

Drawing No.	Sheet No.	Area/ Trench	Drawing Type	Scale	Description	Drawer	Date
001	1	Trench 1	Plan	1:100	Post-excavation plan of Trench 1	DiG/PK	22/2/12
002	1	Trench 3	Plan	1:100	Post-excavation plan of Trench 3	DiG/PK	22/2/12
003	1	Trench 2	Plan	1:100	Post-excavation plan of Trench 2	DiG/PK	22/2/12
004	1	Trench 4	Plan	1:100	Post-excavation plan of Trench 4	DiG/PK	22/2/12
005	1	Trench 5	Plan	1:100	Post-excavation plan of Trench 5	DiG/PK	22/2/12
006	1	Trench 6	Plan	1:100	Post-excavation plan of Trench 6	DiG/PK	22/2/12
007	2	Trench 7	Plan	1:100	Post-excavation plan of Trench 7	DiG/PK	22/2/12
008	2	Trench 8	Plan	1:100	Post-excavation plan of Trench 8	DiG/PK	22/2/12
009	2	Trench 9	Plan	1:100	Post-excavation plan of Trench 9	DiG/PK	22/2/12
010	2	Trench 10	Plan	1:100	Post-excavation plan of Trench 10	DiG/PK	22/2/12
011	2	Trench 11	Plan	1:100	Post-excavation plan of Trench 11	DiG/PK	22/2/12
012	2	Trench 12	Plan	1:100	Post-excavation plan of Trench 12	DiG/PK	22/2/12
013	3	Trench 7	Section	1:10	Post-excavation plan of Trench 14	DiG/PK	22/2/12
014	3	Trench 8	Section	1:10	Post-excavation plan of Trench 9	DiG/PK	22/2/12

Sample Register

Sample No.	Trench	Context	Sample Type	Description / Quantity
001	7	009	Bulk	Light grey brown, silty sand with occasional small to medium stones, angular and rounded. Flecks of possible charcoal

Photographic Register

Image No.	Print		Slide		Digital	Description	From	Date
	Film No.	Neg. No.	Film No.	Neg. No.				
001					001	Trench 1 post-excavation shot. Modern drainage pipe running through centre	W	21/2/12
002					002	Trench 2 post-excavation shot	NW	21/2/12
003					003	Trench 3 post-excavation shot	NW	21/2/12
004					004	Trench 4 post-excavation shot	NW	21/2/12
005					005	Trench 5 post-excavation shot	W	21/2/12
006					006	Trench 6 post-excavation shot	E	21/2/12
007					007	Trench 7 post-excavation shot	NE	21/2/12
008					008	Trench 8 post-excavation shot	NE	21/2/12
009					009	Trench 9 post-excavation shot	NE	21/2/12
010					010	Trench 10 post-excavation shot	NE	21/2/12
011					011	Trench 11 post-excavation shot	E	21/2/12
012					012	Plant in operation along trench 12	S	21/2/12
013					013	Trench 12 post-excavation shot	N	21/2/12
014	1	9	1	25	014	Possible ditch terminus post-excavation shot. Trench 7	S	21/2/12
015	1	8	1	26	015	Possible ditch terminus post-excavation shot. Trench 8	S	21/2/12
016	1	7	1	27	016	Possible ditch terminus post-excavation shot. Trench 8	E	21/2/12

Appendix 3: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	North Ayrshire Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Benlister, Lamlash
PROJECT CODE:	RA12007
PARISH:	Kilbride
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Douglas Gordon & Peter Klemen
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	Rathmell Archaeology Limited
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Evaluation
NMRS NO(S):	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	None
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)	² 02158 ⁶ 30841
START DATE (this season)	20 th February 2012
END DATE (this season)	21 st February 2012
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (may include information from other fields)	<p>A programme of archaeological evaluation works was required by John Thomson Construction Ltd in respect to the building of a residential development (11/00630/PPM) at Benlister, Lamlash, North Ayrshire.</p> <p>This consisted of the excavation of a series of intrusive trenches for the purposes of exposing an 8% sample of the development area (roughly 1.5 ha) to be archaeologically examined.</p> <p>No significant archaeological remains were located within the development area and no anthropic material was recovered other than would suggest activities due to modern activity.</p>
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	John Thomson Construction Ltd
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	Unit 8 Ashgrove Workshops, Kilwinning, Ayrshire KA13 6PU
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ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Report to West of Scotland Archaeology Service and archive to RCAHMS Collections.

Contact Details

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