

# **Lade Street, Largs, North Ayrshire: Archaeological Monitoring**

Data Structure Report



by Douglas Gordon

issued 12<sup>th</sup> April 2013

**RATHMELL**   
ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

## Quality Assurance

This report covers works which have been undertaken in keeping with the issued brief as modified by the agreed programme of works. The report has been prepared in keeping with the guidance of Rathmell Archaeology Limited on the preparation of reports. All works reported on within this document have been undertaken in keeping with the Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct.

Signed .....

Date .....

In keeping with the procedure of Rathmell Archaeology Limited this document and its findings have been reviewed and agreed by an appropriate colleague:

Checked .....

Date .....

Copyright Rathmell Archaeology Limited. All rights reserved.

No part of this report may be copied or reproduced by any means without prior written permission from Rathmell Archaeology Limited. If you have received this report in error, please destroy all copies in your possession or control and notify Rathmell Archaeology Limited.

This report has been prepared for the exclusive use of the commissioning party and unless otherwise agreed in writing by Rathmell Archaeology Limited, no other party may use, make use of or rely on the contents of the report. No liability is accepted by Rathmell Archaeology Limited for any use of this report, other than the purposes for which it was originally prepared and provided.

Opinions and information provided in the report are on the basis of Rathmell Archaeology Limited using due skill, care and diligence in preparation of the same and no explicit warranty is provided as to their accuracy. It should be noted and it is expressly stated that no independent verification of any of the documents or information supplied to Rathmell Archaeology Limited has been made.

## Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Historical and Archaeological Background.....</b>	<b>3</b>
Previous work .....	3
<b>Project Works.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Findings.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Discussion .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Recommendations .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>References .....</b>	<b>10</b>
Documentary .....	10
Cartographic.....	10
<b>Appendix 1: Registers.....</b>	<b>11</b>
Context Register .....	11
Photographic Register .....	12
<b>Appendix 2: Discovery &amp; Excavation in Scotland .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Contact Details .....</b>	<b>15</b>

## Introduction

1. This Data Structure Report has been prepared for M & J Timber Ltd in support of the construction of a new shed and forming of car parking at 12 Lade Street, Largs, North Ayrshire (12/00404/PP). These archaeological works are designed to mitigate any adverse impact on the archaeological remains within the development area.
2. North Ayrshire Council required a programme of archaeological works to be undertaken as a requirement of the issued planning consent (12/00404/PP). The West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS) who advise North Ayrshire Council on archaeological matters provided guidance on the structure of archaeological works required on site during extraction works.
3. Rathmell Archaeology Limited was appointed by M & J Timber Ltd to undertake the development and implementation of archaeological mitigation works prior to the development of the site. The project works were outlined in the Method Statement (Klemen 2013), which was agreed with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service.

## Historical and Archaeological Background

4. To the west of Lade Street and to the south of the site lies the monument known as Skelmorlie Aisle and Largs Old Churchyard (WOSAS pin 43015, NMRS NS25NW13.1). This comprises a burial ground containing the remains of the medieval parish church of Largs, in particular the aisle added to the N side of the church in 1636. The burial ground also contains another small burial aisle dated 1634 and a probable burial cist of unknown date and unlikely to be in its original location.
5. Further to the west of Lade Street and beyond the boundary of the now demolished Stevenson Institute a tumulus is recorded on 1<sup>st</sup> edition (1855) and 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (1910) Ordnance Survey maps (Figures 1a and 1b). The mound measured some 75ft by 27ft and is 15ft high. The mound was partly excavated in 1873 by Dr J S Phene who recorded the presence of human bone, some of which was partly and some wholly calcined, burnt clay, oak charcoal and bright green flakes, supposed to be of copper or bronze, probably 'remnants of armour'. Human teeth were also found. Dr Phene concluded that this was the burial place of the Norsemen killed during the Battle of Largs in 1263 (Bremner 1912). Its situation, near the parish church, is consistent with the account given in the Norse saga that the dead were interred at the church. The local tradition is that the mound, which is called the Gallowhill, was used for executions, and it is more than likely that it was so used in later centuries.
6. To the north of Lade Street on Nelson Street there is evidence for prehistoric activity recorded in the urban centre of Largs. During excavations by Robert Munro (1911) a large circular stone-lined cist measuring 1.35m by 0.75m and 0.6m deep containing seven cinerary (cremation) urns, with cremated human remains were discovered. The stone-lined cist and seven cinerary urns formed the primary focus with another five 'satellite' urns and a stone mace-head all placed in the vicinity. Four of the 'satellite' urns were also associated with cremated human remains (Turner 2007).

### *Previous work*

7. Opposite to the present development area on Lade Street, archaeological monitoring was carried out by Rathmell Archaeology in March 2012 on behalf of North Ayrshire Council in respect to the removal of foundations during the demolition of the Stevenson Institute (NGR 20281 59484).

During both phases of monitoring no significant archaeological deposits or features were recorded. The only feature of note was a well that was uncovered in the course of the works when the sandstone slab covering it was uncovered. Given its construction and presence of a lead pipe it would appear to be from the nineteenth century and most likely



Figure 1a: 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey. The green circle denotes the development area (Surveyed 1855)

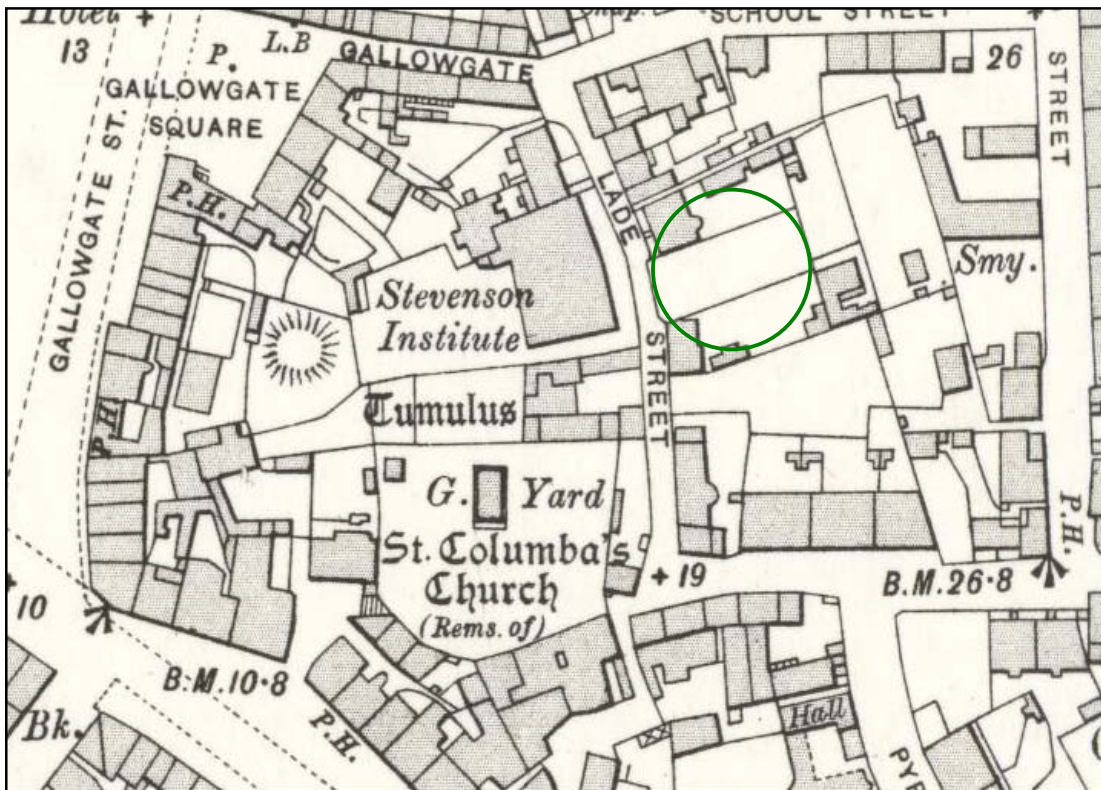


Figure 1b: 1909 revised Ordnance Survey. The green circle denotes the development area (Published 1910)

constructed at that time. The fact that it was capped with a sandstone slab probably explains why the well was not recorded on any mapping as it would have been hidden from view during the surveyor's visits. The only other anthropic material recorded was related to modern use in the form of modern brown glazed ceramic service pipes, lead pipes, white glazed ceramics and modern debris in the form metal, glass and plastic piping.

## Project Works

8. The programme of mitigation consisted of the archaeological monitoring of ground breaking works for the preparation of the site and the excavation of attenuation chamber. Works undertaken by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd were consistent with the terms described in the Method Statement (Klemen 2012). Monitoring, recording and excavation were carried out in conjunction with the terms of this document.
9. Archaeological monitoring works was undertaken from the 26<sup>th</sup> February to the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013. Excavations were carried out by 360° mechanical excavator. Any potentially significant archaeological features, structures or deposits encountered were recorded by the archaeologist on site, using Rathmell Archaeology Ltd standard method. All contexts, small finds and environmental samples were given unique numbers with bulk finds collected by context.
10. All works complied with West of Scotland Archaeology Service Standard Conditions, the Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct and Historic Scotland Policy Statement.

## Findings

11. The main strata exposed was a black brown silt (002 & 005) with very frequent inclusions of red and yellow brick, plastic, slate, red sandstone fragments, tiles, metal pipes and broken drainage pipes. This context carried across the whole site and was up to 270mm in depth. Where this was removed sufficiently to expose the underlying strata a red brown silt clay (006) with very frequent rounded and sub rounded medium sized stones was evident.
12. Within the south eastern corner of the site a well was uncovered (004) which had been capped with concrete slabs (003) (Figure 3a). The well was circular in plan with an external diameter of 1m, a internal diameter of 800mm. The top 700mm of the interior of the well was visible, below which was filled with a brown grey silt clay with frequent inclusions of small and medium sized stones. The fabric of the well-wall was sub rounded stones, with red sandstone and red bricks evident as well. The visible mortar appears to have been cement or concrete-based, in addition there was a partial concrete screed over the inside of the well. The well was filled in with type 1 hardcore then covered with type one prior to being concreted over.
13. In the northern portion of the site a wall (008) and a linear feature [009] were uncovered (Figure 4a). The top of wall (008), which was aligned ENE-WSW, was initially revealed with a mortar surface (012) either side of the wall for 80-100mm. The ground to the north of the wall was excavated to a depth of approximately 1m through context (005), in addition brown ceramic drainage pipes were uncovered leading to the area from the west. This excavation revealed the wall which was one course thick was 900mm deep, 940mm wide at its base and 600mm wide at the top.

The base of the wall (008) consisted of un-worked square stones with un-mortared large sub rounded stones above, in total some eight courses high. The stones had been roughly laid with voids evident between the stones. Within these voids modern pottery and glass was evident. No other walls were evident, however in the base of the trench was a linear feature [009] extending north from (008). The feature was 2.45m long, up to 1.3m wide and 230mm deep, it was aligned N-S with vertical stone-lined sides and a flat base. Within [009] were two fills; the upper fill (010) was a grey brown silt clay 150mm in depth with modern white glaze pottery and modern glass present, while the

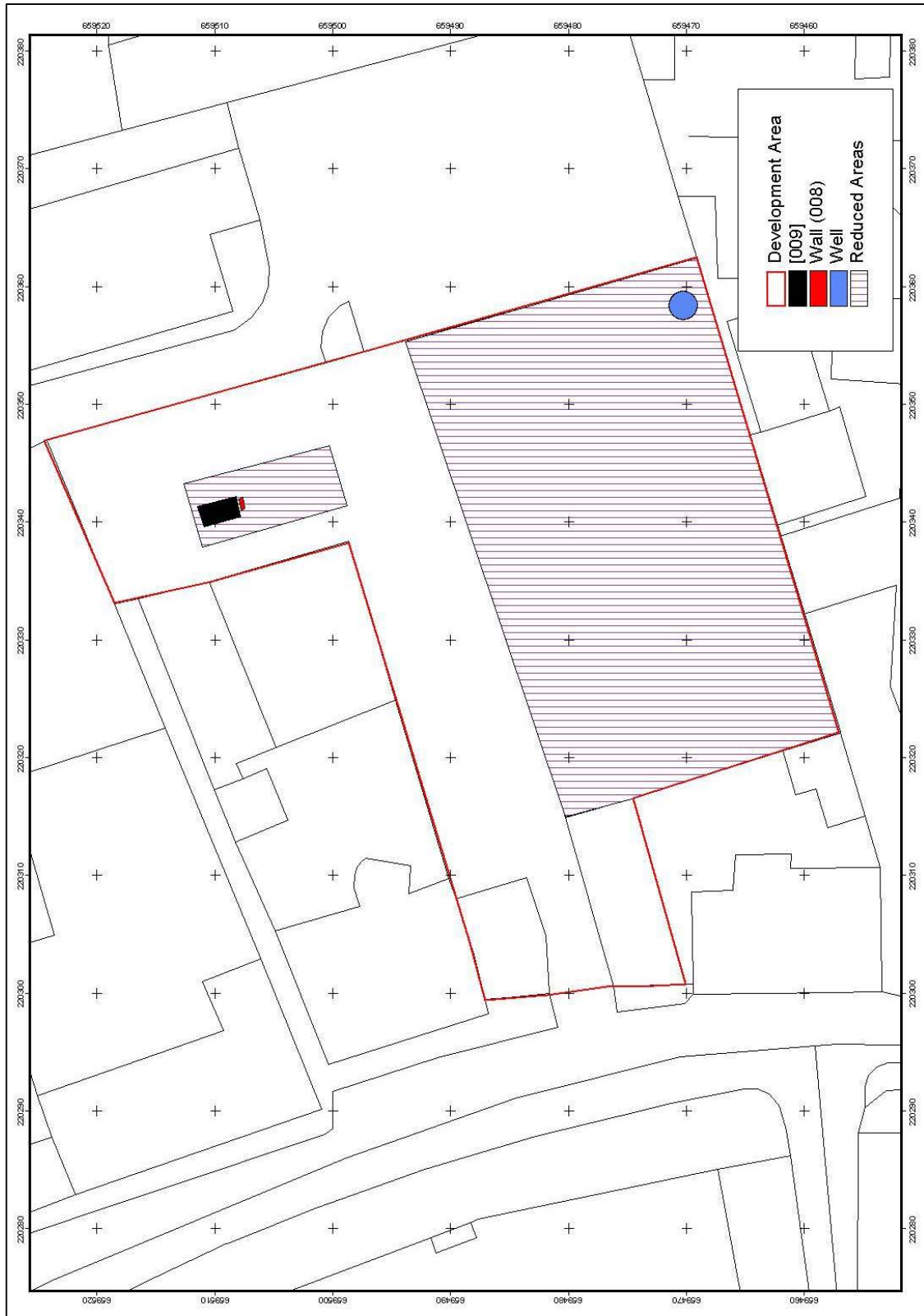


Figure 2: Site Layout



Figure 3a: Well (004) taken from the NE



Figure 3b: General Shot of Reduced Area





Figure 4a: Wall (008) and Linear [009] from the North



Figure 4b: North facing section of [009] showing (010) and (011)

lower fill (011) was a dark grey moist silt 80mm in depth which had a fragment of polyester like material in its base (Figure 4b). The removal of the soil to the south of wall (008) revealed the (008) was one course thick and that there were no other walls and the linear [009] did not extend to the south beyond (008).

## Discussion

14. The well (004) exposed is not recorded on any Ordnance Survey map relating to the site and is similar to a well found across the street during monitoring works carried out after the demolition of the Stevenson Institute (Klemen 2012). Given presence of red brick and concrete mortar in the fabric of the well is most likely post medieval in date rather than of any greater antiquity.
15. Wall (008) appears to be the surviving southern wall of a chamber, most likely relating to drainage. The stone lined linear feature [009] extending northward out from the wall may have been the bottom of the chamber. The construction of the wall of un-mortared poorly sorted un-worked stone would initially suggest a possible medieval origin; however the presence of modern white glaze pottery and glass within the voids present in the wall would seem to contradict this. Taken together with the presence of similar pottery and glass in the upper fill of [009] and the drainage pipes that lead to this area it is more likely that (008) and [009] are the remains of a 19<sup>th</sup> century drainage system like a soak away that has been heavily disturbed during a later incarnation of the site.

## Recommendations

16. The archaeological mitigation works did not reveal any significant archaeological material from within the development area those features that were revealed are considered to be of recent origin.
17. As such it is the recommendation of Rathmell Archaeology Ltd that no further works are appropriate. The appropriateness and acceptability of our recommendations rest with North Ayrshire Council and their advisors, the West of Scotland Archaeology Service.

## Conclusion

18. A programme of archaeological monitoring was carried out from 26<sup>th</sup> February to the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013 on behalf of the M & J Timber Ltd in support of the construction of a new shed and forming of car parking at 12 Lade Street, Largs, North Ayrshire (12/00404/PP).
19. In the course of the archaeological monitoring no significant archaeology was uncovered, only features relating to the 19<sup>th</sup> century were uncovered including a well.

## References

### *Documentary*

Bremner, RL 1912, *'The ancient accounts of the battle of Largs'*, Trans Glasgow Archaeol Soc, Vol 6, Part 2,

Klemen, P 2012, *Lade Street, Largs, North Ayrshire: Archaeological Watching Brief, Method Statement* (unpublished commercial report by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd)

Klemen, P 2012, *Stevenson Institute, Largs, North Ayrshire: Archaeological Watching Brief, Data Structure Report* (unpublished commercial report by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd)

Turner, L 2007, *67-73 Nelson Street, Largs, North Ayrshire: Archaeological Mitigation, Data Structure Report* (unpublished commercial report by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd)

### *Cartographic*

1855	Ordnance Survey	25 Inch Ordnance Survey 1st Edition
1910	Ordnance Survey	25 Inch Ordnance Survey

## Appendix 1: Registers

### Context Register

Context No.	Area/ Trench	Type	Description	Interpretation
001		Deposit	Brown angular and sub angular gravel 100mm deep	Decorative surface
002		Deposit	Black brown silt with very frequent red brick CBM, Plastic and Slate, 270mm deep	Made ground with demolition material
003		Deposit	Grey very compact Concrete Slabs	Concrete surface covering (004)
004		Structure	Circular in plan with a 800mm diameter, fabric consists of Sub rounded stones, red sandstone and red brick with concrete mortar and screed	Probable 19 <sup>th</sup> Century Well
005		Deposit	Black Brown silt with very frequent red and yellow brick CBM, tile slate, plastic, metal pipes, red sandstone fragments and drainage pipes.	Made ground with demolition material (Probably same as (002) )
006		Deposit	Reddish Brown Silt Clay with very frequent rounded and sub rounded medium sized stones	Natural
007		Deposit	Brown Clay Silt with inclusions of seashells and modern white pottery	Re-deposited topsoil
008		Structure	Wall aligned ENE-WSW, measuring 900mm deep, 940mm wide at the base and 640mm wide at the top. With un-worked, un-mortared square stones at the base and poorly sorted un-mortared sub-rounded stones above.	Wall of a probable soakaway
009		Cut	Linear aligned N-S measuring 2.45m, up to 1.3m wide and 0.23m in depth. With vertical stone line sides and a flat base	Possible Drain
010		Fill	Dark grey brown silt clay with inclusions of white glazed pottery and modern glass	Upper fill of [009]
011		Fill	Dark grey moist silt with modern fabric present	Lower fill of [009]

Context No.	Area/ Trench	Type	Description	Interpretation
012		Deposit	Compact pink brown with frequent inclusions of seashell. Abutts either side of (008)	Possible floor

*Photographic Register*

Image No.	Digital	Description	From	Date
01	1	Well (004)	ENE	26/02/13
02	2	Well (004)	W	26/02/13
03	3	Well (004)	NW	26/02/13
04	4	Well (004)	WSW	26/02/13
05	5	General shot of reduction in the along southern portion	ENE	26/02/13
06	6	General shot of reduction along eastern portion	SSE	26/02/13
07	7	General shot of reduction in the along southern portion	ENE	26/02/13
08	8	Well (004)	ENE	26/02/13
09	9	General shot of reduction	ENE	
10	10	General shot of reduction	E	
11	11	Drainage track along northern edge of concrete platform	ENE	
12	12	General shot of reduction	ENE	
13	13	General shot of reduction in SW corner	ENE	
14	14	Sewage connection at road	SW	
15	15	Drainage track along Southern edge of concrete platform	ENE	
16	16	Drainage track along Southern edge of concrete platform	ENE	

Image No.	Digital	Description	From	Date
17	17	Drainage track along Southern edge of concrete platform	NE	
18	18	Drainage track along Southern edge of concrete platform	NE	
19	19	Drainage track along Southern edge of concrete platform	NE	
20	20	General shot of reduction	N	
21	21	Drainage track along Northern edge of concrete platform	NE	
22	22	Reduction for the	SW	
23	23	Wall (008) and Linear [009]	N	
24	24	Wall (008) and Linear [009]	W	
25	25	Wall (008) and Linear [009] with slot excavated	N	
26	26	North facing section of [009] with (010) and (011)	N	
27	27	Drainage track along Western edge of concrete platform	SSE	
28	28	Meeting of the Northern and western drainage tracks	S	
29	29	Reduction of the southern portion of the Water retention	SW	
30	30	Reduction of the southern portion of the Water retention	NW	

## Appendix 2: Discovery &amp; Excavation in Scotland

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	North Ayrshire	
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	Lade Street, Largs	
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	RA12070	
<b>PARISH:</b>	Largs	
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Douglas Gordon	
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	Rathmell Archaeology Limited	
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Watching brief	
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	NA	
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	NA	
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	None	
<b>NGR (2 letters, 8 or 10 figures)</b>	NS 2033 5948	
<b>START DATE (this season)</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> February 2013	
<b>END DATE (this season)</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> March 2013	
<b>PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)</b>	None	
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (may include information from other fields)	<p>A programme of archaeological monitoring was carried out from 26<sup>th</sup> February to the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013 on behalf of the M &amp; J Timber Ltd in support of the construction of a new shed and forming of car parking at 12 Lade Street, Largs, North Ayrshire (12/00404/PP).</p> <p>In the course of the archaeological monitoring no significant archaeology was uncovered, only features relating to the 19<sup>th</sup> century were uncovered including a well.</p>	
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	None	
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>	None	
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	M & J Timber Ltd	
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Unit 8 Ashgrove Workshops, Kilwinning, Ayrshire KA13 6PU	
<b>E MAIL:</b>	contact@rathmell-arch.co.uk	
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)</b>	Report to West of Scotland Archaeology Service and archive to RCAHMS Collections	

## Contact Details

20. Rathmell Archaeology can be contacted at our Registered Office or through the web:

Rathmell Archaeology Ltd	<a href="http://www.rathmell-arch.co.uk">www.rathmell-arch.co.uk</a>
Unit 8 Ashgrove Workshops	
Kilwinning	t.: 01294 542848
Ayrshire	f.: 01294 542849
KA13 6PU	e.: <a href="mailto:contact@rathmell-arch.co.uk">contact@rathmell-arch.co.uk</a>

21. The West of Scotland Archaeology Service can be contacted at their office or through the web:

West of Scotland Archaeology Service	<a href="http://www.wosas.org.uk">www.wosas.org.uk</a>
Charing Cross Complex	
20 India Street	t.: 0141 287 8332/3
Glasgow	f.: 0141 287 9259
G2 4PF	e.: <a href="mailto:enquiries@wosas.glasgow.gov.uk">enquiries@wosas.glasgow.gov.uk</a>

End of Document