

Girvan Mains, South Ayrshire: Archaeological Mitigation

Data Structure Report



by Claire Williamson
issued 8th February 2016
on behalf of Mr Andrew Young

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 Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct.

Signed Claire Williamson Date ...8th February 2016...

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

Checked Thomas Rees Date ...8th February 2016...

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Introduction

1. This Data Structure Report has been prepared for Mr Andrew Young for the evaluation of ground near to the Girvan Waste Water Treatment Works on Girvan Mains Farm, South Ayrshire (NGR NS 19045 00091). These archaeological works were designed to evaluate the potential for archaeological remains in the area through a programme of intrusive trenching at an 8% sample level of the available ground.
2. Rathmell Archaeology Limited has been appointed by Mr Andrew Young to undertake the development and implementation of the archaeological investigation works. The project works have been defined by a Method Statement (McKinstry 2016).

Historical and Archaeological Background

3. There are no known sites within or close to the area protected for their archaeological or historical merit under the terms of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 or buildings protected under the Town and Country Planning Act 1997 (Historic Scotland 2011).
4. The site lies approximately 750m to the NNW of Girvan Mains Farm which is on the outskirts of the town of Girvan, South Ayrshire. The site is situated on the present day coastline with a palaeo-shoreline, which includes a high point called Gallows Hill, lying to the immediate east of the site. This palaeo-shoreline seems to have been made up of soft sedimentary rock, such as sandstone, and most likely suffered from coastal erosion in early prehistory which would leave the area in which the site was located as a wave cut platform covered in eroded material from the shoreline above.
5. A number of early prehistoric sites have been identified close to the area such as Littlehill Bridge (WoSAS Pin. 15862), Gallow Hill (WoSAS Pin. 5164) and to the north of Girvan Mains Farm (WoSAS Pin. 11406 and 20230). All of these sites produced Mesolithic period artefacts but were all located to the east of the site along the palaeo-shoreline.
6. Archaeological work carried out in 1994 in advance of the construction of a sewage treatment plant to the south of the area (Cullen 1994), produced no archaeology with an early prehistoric date, suggesting that the area site was submerged during that period. An evaluation carried out by Rathmell Archaeology in the land to the immediate south of the area prior to the erection of an Anaerobic Digestion Plant, also did not reveal any significant archaeological features (McKinstry 2015).
7. There is the possibility of later prehistoric and medieval activity within the area. Aerial photography and field walking have also identified other sites surrounding the area such as a ring ditch (WoSAS Pin. 62053) and a large D-shaped enclosure (WoSAS Pin. 11413) located approximately 250m and 300m, respectively, to the south of the area. It is unclear as to the date of these sites but prehistoric and medieval dates cannot be ruled out. Excavations at Ladywell Farm to the northeast of the area revealed evidence for burnt mounds and their associated features. Prehistoric and medieval dates were recovered from this site.
8. Cartographic evidence for the area suggests that the site was always open farmland during the post-medieval and early modern period. Roy's map of the Lowlands shows Girvan Mains Farm and its associated farmland (Figure 1) and both the 1st and 2nd edition Ordnance Surveys also show the farm and its associated fields. The boundaries of the field in which the site is located appear to be relatively unchanged from the mid-19th century onwards (Figure 2).



Figure 1: Roy's Military Survey (1752-55)



Figure 2: 1st Ordnance Survey (1859)

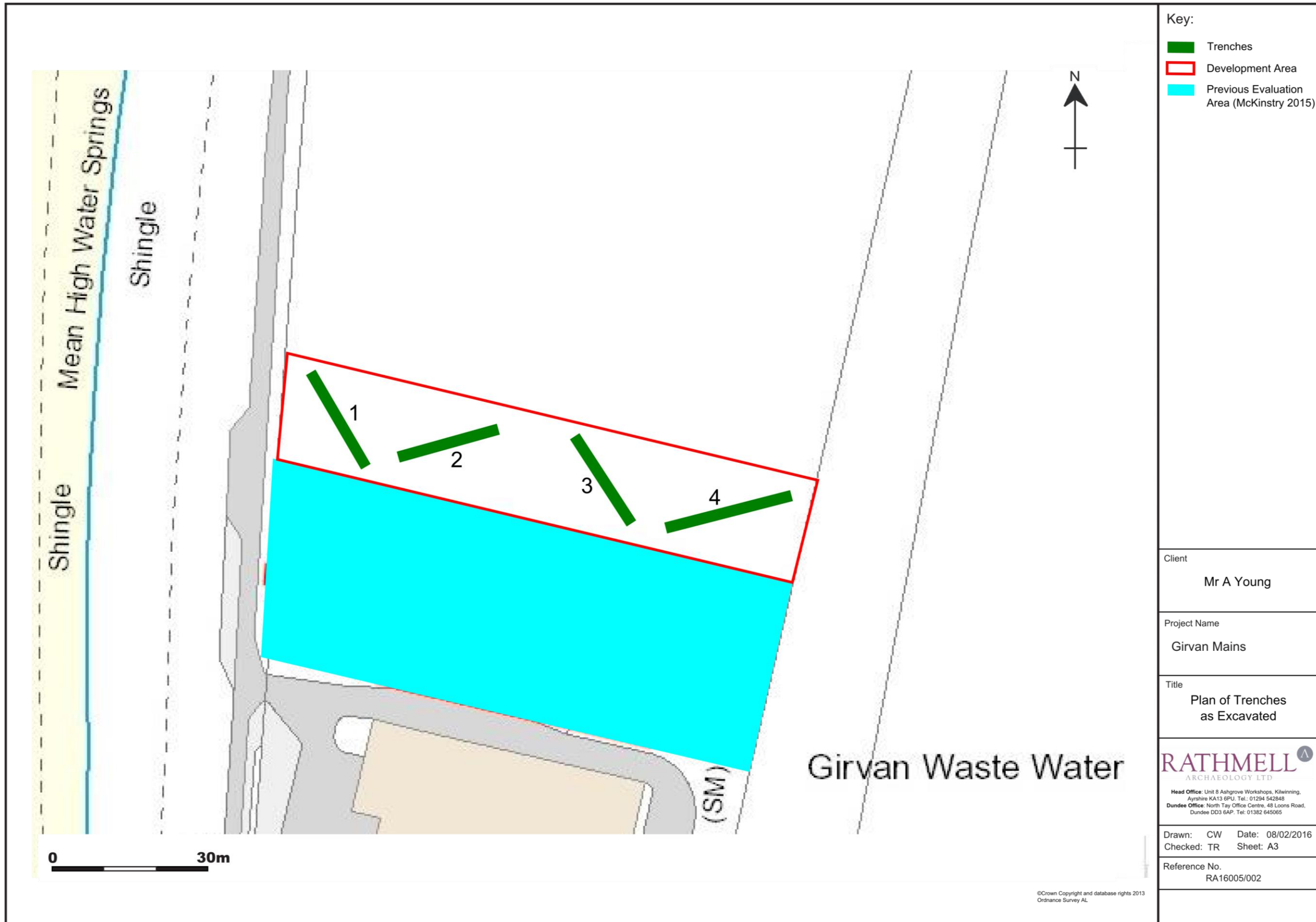


Figure 3: Plan of trenches as excavated

Project Works

9. An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on the 26th January 2016. This consisted of the excavation of a series of intrusive trenches for the purposes of exposing an 8% sample of the area (roughly 2124m²) to be archaeologically examined.
10. The proposed area was located within agricultural land that had been previously ploughed and used for a potato crop. The ground had a gentle slope downwards from east to west (Figure 4).
11. The trenches were placed in accordance with the terms of the Method Statement (McKinstry 2016).
12. In total 86.7 linear metres were excavated with a 2m wide bucket equalling an area of 173.4m². This slightly exceeded the 169.9m² required for the purposes of this investigation. The position of the trenches is depicted in the site plan above (Figure 3).
13. All works were conducted in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct and Historic Scotland Policy Statements.

Findings

14. In all, 4 evaluation trenches were excavated using a 13 tonne 360° tracked excavator with a smooth 2m 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.
15. The trenches were excavated through ploughsoil (001) which comprised a loose to moderately compacted mid-brown silty clay with frequent small stone inclusions. Natural subsoil was encountered at depths of between 300 to 500mm below the top of the current ground surface.
16. The natural subsoil across the area was a mixture of clays, sands and gravels; the diversity being a reflection of the ground's origins as a build-up of marine deposits.
17. The subsoil across the eastern half of the site consisted mainly of (002) with a small area of (003) in the northeast corner. (002) comprised a moderately compacted mottled light to mid-orange sandy clay and gravel (Figure 5); while (003) comprised a firmly compacted mid-orange brown sandy clay with frequent small stone inclusions.
18. Across the west, the subsoil was mainly characterised by (004) with some patches of (005). (004) comprised a firmly compacted dark red orange sand with occasional small stone inclusions (Figure 6), and (005), a loosely compacted dark red brown rounded beach gravel.
19. The only archaeological feature present in the area was field drain (006), which sat in Trench 1 at the western end of the site (Figure 7). This consisted of a linear shaped feature running east to west measuring 0.35m wide and 130mm deep. The cut had gradual sloping sides and a flat base and was filled by (001). It contained a circular yellow corrugated plastic pipe that was also perforated, and which measured 0.1m in diameter.
20. No other archaeological features were present and the only artefacts present were the occasional 20th century find throughout the ploughsoil (001), which related to the modern use of the area for agriculture.



Figure 4: General shot of site from the west, showing the ground sloping up to the east



Figure 5: Trench 3 from the north-northwest showing subsoil (002)



Figure 6: Trench 1 from the south-southeast showing subsoil (004)



Figure 7: Field drain (006) in Trench 1 from the west

Discussion

21. No significant archaeological features were uncovered during the course of the archaeological works. The only feature present was field drain (006) at the western end of the site. The very modern nature of the drain itself indicates that it was inserted at some point during the late 20th century, or even in the early 21st century, likely during the ground's use for potato crops. The natural slope of the ground places the western end of the site at the lowest-lying point, explaining why water would have been more prone to gather at this location. That the drain did not continue into the next trench along, Trench 2, also indicates that this would have been a localised area of flooding, occurring badly enough in this location to warrant the need to take action.
22. The lack of archaeological features in this area matches well with similar findings from the previous archaeological works carried out in the adjacent areas (Cullen 1994 and McKinstry 2015). Combined, the findings from these archaeological works indicate an area which has in the past been submerged underwater, with the original shoreline represented by the higher ground to the east. The mixed marine deposits which form the natural subsoils across the area, and the lack of archaeological activity, support this indication.

Recommendations

23. No significant archaeological remains were located within the area and the only anthropic material observed suggested modern agricultural 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 change in land management regime is appropriate. This reflects the absence of a significant archaeological resource that could need safeguarding or management.

Conclusion

25. A programme of archaeological works was required by Mr Young for the evaluation of ground near to the Girvan Waste Water Treatment Works on Girvan Mains Farm, South Ayrshire (NGR NS 19045 00091). These archaeological works were designed to evaluate the potential for archaeological remains in the area. No significant archaeological remains were uncovered. The only remains identified was a field drain which relates to the continued use of the area for agriculture.

Acknowledgements

26. I am grateful to our client Mr Young for giving us the opportunity to carry out these works. I would also like to thank Thomas Rees for his editing of this report.

References

Documentary

Cullen, I. 1994 'Girvan Mains Farm (Girvan parish): Archaeological Fieldwalking', *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland 1994*, p.71

HM Government 1979 *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act*, HMSO

HM Government 1997 *Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) (Scotland) Act*, HMSO

Historic Scotland 2011 *Scottish Historic Environment Policy*

McKinstry, L. 2015 *Girvan Mains AD Plant, South Ayrshire: Archaeological Evaluation, Data Structure Report*, unpublished commercial document by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd

McKinstry, L. 2016 *Girvan Mains AD Plant, South Ayrshire: Archaeological Mitigation, Method Statement*, unpublished commercial document by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd

Cartographic

Roy, W.	1752-55	Military Survey of Scotland, Lowlands
Ordnance Survey	1859	6-inch 1 st edition Ordnance Survey, Ayrshire, Sheet XLIX
Ordnance Survey	1897	6-inch 2 nd edition Ordnance Survey, Ayrshire, Sheet XLIX.SE

Appendix 1: Trench Details

Within this appendix a standardised set of data pertaining to the evaluation trenches is presented.

All measurement distances quoted along the trench measure based on the quoted orientation of the trench.

Trench	Orientation	Size	Topsoil Depth	Subsoil Character	Modern/ Agricultural Features	Significant Features	Artefacts
1	South-southeast to North-northwest	2m by 21m 42m ²	300 to 400mm	Firmly compacted dark red orange sand (004).	Field drain (006) at +8.2m orientated E-W.	None	None
2	West-southwest to East-northeast	2m by 20.2m 40.4m ²	300 to 400mm	Firmly compacted dark red orange sand (004) present until +7m, before changing to a loosely compacted dark red brown rounded beach gravel (005). This was present until +12.1m before changing back to (004), until +17.6m, when it changed back to (005) for the rest of the trench.	None	None	None
3	South-southeast to north-northwest	2m by 20.3m 40.6m ²	350 to 400mm	Moderately compacted mottled light to mid-orange sandy clay and gravel (002).	None	None	None
4	West-southwest to East-northeast	2m by 25.2m 50.4m ²	400 to 500mm	Moderately compacted mottled light to mid-orange sandy clay and gravel (002) until +13.7m, before changing to firmly compacted mid-orange brown sandy clay (003) which was present for the rest of the trench.	None	None	None

Appendix 2: Registers

Within this appendix are all registers pertaining to works on-site during the evaluation.

Context Register

Context No.	Area/ Trench	Type	Description	Interpretation
001	All	Deposit	Loose to moderately compacted mid-brown silty clay with frequent small stone inclusions. Covers entire area, measuring 300 to 500mm deep.	Ploughsoil
002	3, 4	Deposit	Moderately compacted mottled light to mid-orange sandy clay and gravel.	Natural subsoil
003	4	Deposit	Firmly compacted mid-orange brown sandy clay with frequent small stone inclusions.	Natural subsoil
004	1, 2	Deposit	Firmly compacted dark red orange sand with occasional small stone inclusions.	Natural subsoil
005	2	Deposit	Loosely compacted dark red brown rounded beach gravel (mainly pea-sized, but up to 15cm x 10cm in size).	Natural subsoil
006	1	Feature	Linear shaped cut running E-W. Measured 0.35m wide and 130mm deep. Gradual sloping sides and a flat base. Filled by (001). Contains yellow corrugated plastic pipe, which is also perforated. Pipe measures 0.1m in diameter.	Late 20 th century field drain (possibly even 21 st century)

Photographic Register

Image No.	Digital	Description	From	Date
1	1813	General shot – trenches open	WSW	26/01/16
2	1814	General shot – trenches open	WSW	26/01/16
3	1815	Trench 1	SSE	26/01/16
4	1816	Trench 1	SSE	26/01/16

Image No.	Digital	Description	From	Date
5	1817	Trench 2	WSW	26/01/16
6	1818	Trench 3	NNW	26/01/16
7	1819	Trench 3	NNW	26/01/16
8	1820	Trench 4	WSW	26/01/16
9	1821	Trench 4	WSW	26/01/16
10	1822	General shot – trenches open	E	26/01/16
11	1823	General shot	NNE	26/01/16
12	1824	Drain (006) in Trench 1	W	26/01/16

Drawing Register

Drawing No.	Sheet No.	Area/ Trench	Drawing Type	Scale	Description	Drawer	Date
001	1	4	Plan	1:100	Plan of Trench 4	CW	26/01/16
002	1	3	Plan	1:100	Plan of Trench 3	CW	26/01/16
003	1	2	Plan	1:100	Plan of Trench 2	CW	26/01/16
004	1	1	Plan	1:100	Plan of Trench 1	CW	26/01/16

Appendix 3: Discovery & Excavation in Scotland

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	South Ayrshire
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Girvan Mains
PROJECT CODE:	RA16005
PARISH:	Girvan
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Claire Williamson
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)	NS 19045 00091 (centred on)
START DATE (this season)	26 th January 2016
END DATE (this season)	26 th January 2016
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. <i>DES</i> ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (may include information from other fields)	A programme of archaeological works was required by Mr Young in support for the evaluation of ground near to the Girvan Waste Water Treatment Works on Girvan Mains Farm, South Ayrshire (NGR NS 19045 00091). These archaeological works were designed to evaluate the potential for archaeological remains in the area. No significant archaeological remains were uncovered. The only remains identified was a field drain which relates to the continued use of the area for agriculture.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Mr Andrew Young
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 HES Collections.

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