

**Approach Wood, Mountcastle Quarry, Fife:  
Phase 1 Archaeological Evaluation**

Data Structure Report

by Alan Matthews

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**Rathmell**

Archaeology Ltd

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## Introduction

1. This Data Structure Report has been prepared for Hanson Aggregates, under the oversight of Andrew Josephs Ltd, in respect to the archaeological evaluation of the Phase 1 area at Mountcastle Quarry, in support of mineral extraction. The archaeological works are designed to mitigate the impact on the archaeological remains within the extraction area.
2. Fife Council has required a programme of archaeological works to be undertaken as a requirement of the extraction proposal. Fife Council Archaeology Unit, who advise Fife Council on archaeological matters, has provided guidance on the structure of the archaeological works required on this site during extraction works; this structure has been outlined in a Method Statement (Rees 2009a).
3. Rathmell Archaeology Limited has been appointed by Hanson Aggregates to undertake the implementation of archaeological mitigation works during the extraction at Mountcastle Quarry.

### *Archaeological and Historical Background*

4. A detailed assessment of the cultural heritage resource present within the proposed extraction area has been detailed in the existing assessment report (Rees 2005). Cognisance of the contents of this document is presumed within this Data Structure Report. However, the proposed extractive area may have a direct physical impact upon four general historic monuments or areas:
  - a. the Approach Wood, an element of the Inventory Designed Landscape associated with the late seventeenth century Melville House;
  - b. the Beech Avenue; an element of the Inventory Designed Landscape associated with the late seventeenth century Melville House;
  - c. Melville House Dovecot; a Category B listed monument that stands within the Inventory Designed Landscape associated with the late seventeenth century Melville House;
  - d. pre-designed landscape features.
5. These historic areas have different issues of significance and substance. The current phase of evaluation only has the potential to assess impacts upon potential features from category (a) and (d) should significant features from these categories be present.
6. After the granting of planning consent for extraction, Hanson Aggregates and Andrew Josephs Ltd became aware of the potential for military remains associated with the use of Melville House as the headquarters of the Auxiliary Units in Scotland during World War II. These units were trained in subversive resistance fighting in case of invasion, which, following the fall of France, appeared imminent.
7. Mr David Blair (*pers comm.*) recounts that training exercises and demonstrations took place in Approach Wood (see fuller account in Rees 2009b). Of the known military activity the most likely to lie within the Phase 1 area was a recounted exercise where shell scrapes were formed adjacent to the road running through the woods and ambush training on a convoy was undertaken.

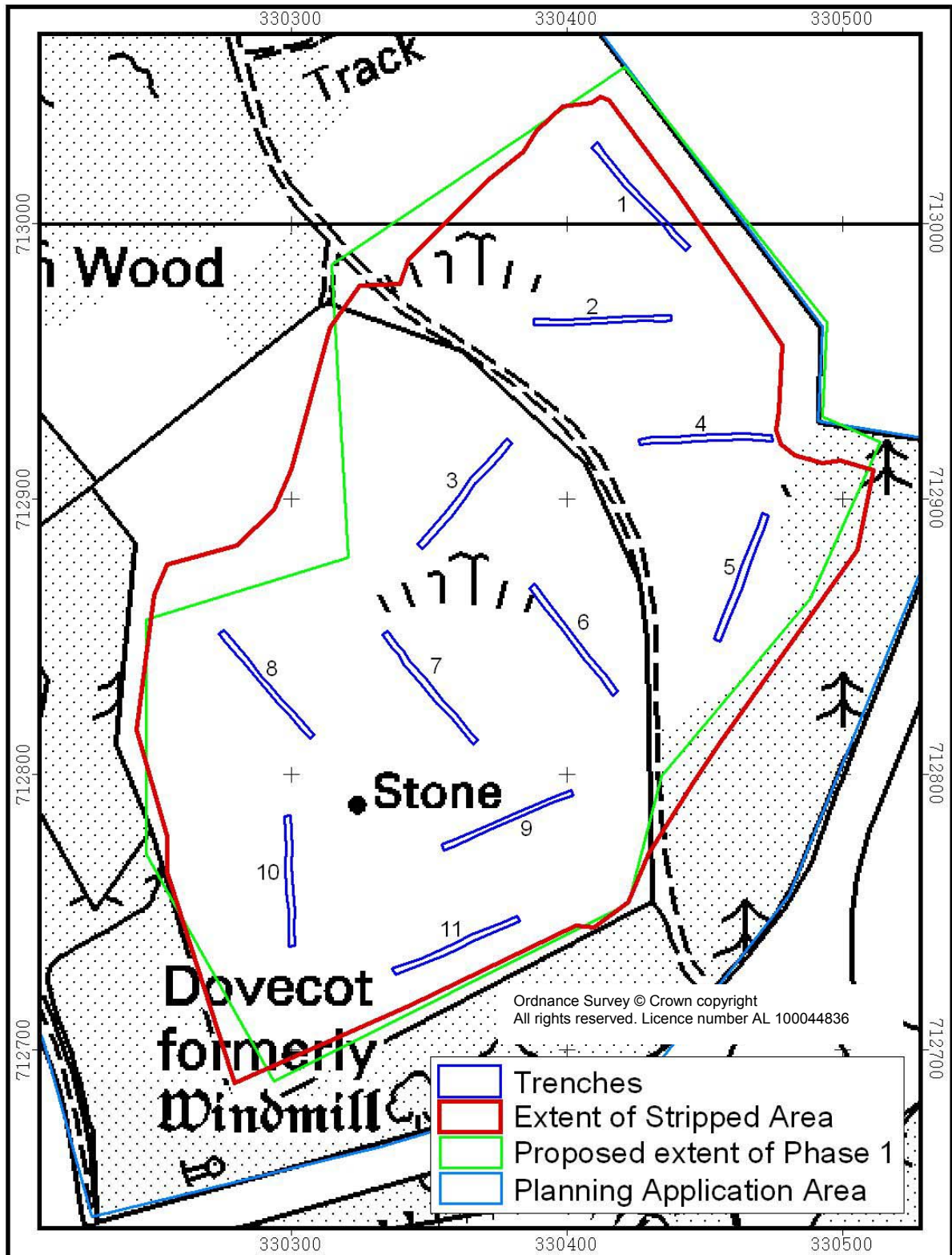


Figure 1: Trench Layout



Figure 2a: North part of Investigated Area



Figure 2b: Trench 4 looking east

## Project Works

8. The programme of works commenced with an archaeological evaluation through machine cut trenches which were initially to include 2% of the Phase 1 evaluation area, which measures some 5.5ha in extent. An initial target of 1100m<sup>2</sup> of trenching (approximately 550 linear meters using a 2m bucket) was specified in the Written Scheme of Investigation. In total 557m of linear trenching was excavated, slightly exceeding 2% of the study area.
9. Placement of the evaluation trenches was broadly in keeping with the trench plan submitted with the Method Statement (Rees 2009a). Alterations were made to the trench layout due to the presence of a few upstanding trees on-site; however the alterations were never more than a few metres away from an obstruction.
10. Any exposed features were investigated and evaluated to determine their archaeological significance, with the on-site works taking place from the 18th - 19th May 2009. All works were conducted in accordance with the Fife Council Archaeology Unit Standard Conditions, the Institute of Field Archaeology's Standards and Policy Statements and Code of Conduct and Historic Scotland Policy Statements.

## Findings

11. Eleven evaluation trenches were opened across the development area. Full descriptions of each are contained in the appendices at the end of this report. Included below is a synthesis of the findings and interpretation from these. A further element of this project was the potential risk from the unrecorded placement or disposal of munitions within the grounds of Melville House, resulting from the activities of Auxiliary Units during the Second World War. Although no munitions were located in the course of the Phase 1 works, this will continue to be a potential hazard during the later stages of the project.
12. The topsoil across the site (001) ranged between 200mm to 400mm in depth, though typically it was no deeper than 300mm. The area had been an area of plantation woodland, which was cleared prior to work commencing. Evidence of disturbance resulting from the growth of trees was evident over the entire investigation area and the ground surface was covered in a layer of wood chip resulting from the clearing of the woodland. The natural subsoil was predominantly compact orange/brown sand and gravel (002). Although there were bands of variation in the subsoil; light brown sand (003) and orange sand and gravel (004), it was all sand and gravel.

### *Significant Archaeological features*

13. No significant archaeological features were observed during the course of the evaluation works. All potential archaeological features were investigated but for the most part the subsoil was disturbed only by occasional tree roots. Disturbance resulting from the growth of tree roots was actually far less than might have been expected in a heavily wooded area with shallow subsoil (see Crow 2004 for discussion of likely impacts). In fact the average root depth of trees was shallow, barely penetrating the subsoil, and most tree bases encountered during the evaluation works were easily removed by the digger. Tree bowls were encountered at regular intervals throughout the investigation area. These were always irregularly shaped and filled with a mixture of topsoil and roots.

### *Artefacts*

14. No artefacts were recovered during the evaluation though modern detritus (late nineteenth and twentieth century material) was observed within the topsoil in most trenches.



Figure 3a: Trench 10 looking south



Figure 3b: Feature [007] south facing section



### *Modern Disturbance*

15. Two features were investigated by hand in the course of the archaeological evaluation works as being of potential archaeological significance. Neither was found to contain any anthropic material and there was no indication that either was associated with a structure or with previous human occupation of the site. Feature [008] was a linear feature running almost the entire length of Trench 8. It comprised a shallow cut (the fill width could not be determined as it continued beyond the trench edge) about 150mm deep, with steep sides and a flat base. The fill of this feature appeared to be topsoil (001).
16. Trench 11 contained feature [007]. This feature was a shallow linear feature which followed approximately the same alignment as feature [008]. Feature [007] was a shallow, about 150mm deep and 800mm wide, ditch with gently sloping sides. It was similar to feature [008] in that no anthropic material was recovered from the fill, which appeared to be composed of topsoil (001). There was some doubt as to whether or not [007] was a feature at all, as it seemed to exaggerate a natural dip in the subsoil and may simply have been the backfill of a natural landscape feature.

## Discussion

### *Significant Archaeological Features*

17. No significant archaeological features were uncovered in the course of the evaluation works and no anthropic material was recovered which would indicate use of the site prior to the twentieth century. The extent of disturbance due to trees was limited to isolated areas and this proved easy to discount as potential features. No features, structures or munitions were recovered relating to the use of the area as training ground for Auxiliary Units.

### *Modern Disturbance*

18. The only features which were cut into the subsoil can be putatively interpreted as modern, though without artefacts there can be no definitive conclusion about the origin of these features, [007] and [008].
19. Feature [007] appeared to exaggerate a natural dip in the subsoil and may simply represent the backfilling and levelling of a natural feature. This supposition is supported by the fact that it was filled with topsoil (001). However, feature [008] was also filled with topsoil and appeared to be a shallow cut feature.
20. It is possible that features [007] and [008] are linear ditches resulting from the use of the land as plantation woodland. It is unclear if the area ever experienced forestry ploughing and this, if it took place, may provide an explanation for the presence of linear ditches running north-west to southeast across the site.

### *Shell Scrapes*

21. The historical account of the use of the southern portion of Approach Wood for ambush training suggests the potential for the survival of shallow excavations in the form of craters (used to provide cover).
22. The evaluation undertaken in the Phase 1 area did not observe any topographic hollows of this character in the felled area nor was any suggestion of craters located in any of the evaluation trenches.
23. It was postulated on the site inspection (Rees 2009b) that the most likely location for ambush training may have been where the winding drive meets the cross road from the sawmill; this lies outwith the Phase 1 evaluation area.



Figure 4a: Feature [008] north facing section



Figure 4b: Trench 8 looking south

## Conclusion

24. This Data Structure Report has outlined the work carried out during archaeological evaluation of the Phase 1 area at Approach Wood, Mountcastle Quarry, in support of mineral extraction. The archaeological works were designed to mitigate the impact on the archaeological remains within the extraction area.
25. The archaeological evaluation works uncovered no significant archaeological deposits and no anthropic material other than that which related to twentieth century use of the site. The only features discovered on the site were investigated and found to be most likely the result of modern forestry work although no definitive diagnostic information was found.

Draft

## References

### Documentary

- |             |       |   |
|-------------|-------|---|
| Crow, P     | 2004  | <i>Trees and Forestry on Archaeological sites in the UK: A review document</i> , web-mounted Forestry Research Report.  |
| Lampe, D    | 1968  | <i>The Last Ditch, Britain's Secret Resistance and the Nazi Invasion Plan</i> , Greenhill Books.  |
| Matthews, A | 2009  | <i>Approach Wood, Mountcastle Quarry - Phase 1 Evaluation: Data Structure Report</i> , unpublished commercial report by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd for Hanson Aggregates.                   |
| Rees, T     | 2005  | <i>Mountcastle Quarry, Fife – Archaeological Assessment</i> , unpublished commercial report by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd for Hanson Aggregates.  |
| Rees, T     | 2009a | <i>Approach Wood, Mountcastle Quarry: Written Scheme of Investigation</i> , unpublished commercial report by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd for Hanson Aggregates.                              |
| Rees, T     | 2009b | <i>Approach Wood, Mountcastle Quarry – Site Inspection for Military Remains: Data Structure Report</i> , unpublished commercial report by Rathmell Archaeology Ltd for Hanson Aggregates. |
| Scot Gov    | 2008  | SPP23 Planning and the Historic Environment.  |
| SOEnv       | 1994  | Planning Advice Note 42, Archaeology, Scottish Office Environmental Department.   |

### Cartographic

- |           |                           |  |
|-----------|---------------------------|--|
| 1747-1755 | Roy                       | Military Survey of Scotland                                |
| 1775      | Ainslie, John             | Counties of Fife and Kinross with the Rivers Forth and Tay |
| 1827      | Thomson, John             | Fife with Kinross Shire.                                   |
| 1828      | Sharp, Greenwood & Fowler | Map of the counties of Fife and Kinross                    |
| 1855      | Ordnance Survey           | 1 <sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey, Fifeshire         |
| 1893      | Ordnance Survey           | 2 <sup>nd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey, Fifeshire         |
| 1919      | Ordnance Survey           | 3 <sup>rd</sup> edition Ordnance Survey, Fifeshire         |

## Appendix 1: Trench Details

26. Within this appendix a standardised set of data pertaining to the evaluation trenches is presented.
27. All measurement distances quoted along the trench measure based on the quoted orientation of the trench. See Figure 1 for trench locations.

Trench	Orientation	Size	Topsoil Depth	Subsoil Character	Modern Features	Significant Features	Artefacts
01	Southwest to Northeast	2m by 52.1m  104.2m <sup>2</sup>	250 to 300mm	Compact orange brown sand and gravel (002) until +21.2m where it becomes very compact orange sand with inclusions of gravel (004) with some tree disturbance (005) at +35.5m and +44m.	None	None	None
02	Northwest to Southeast	2m by 51m  102m <sup>2</sup>	250 to 300mm	Compact orange brown sand and gravel (002) with some tree disturbance (003) at +10.5m and +33m.	None	None	None
03	East-north-east to West-south-west	2m by 50m  100m <sup>2</sup>	250 to 400mm	Changes between compact orange brown sand and gravel (002) and very compact orange sand with inclusions of gravel (004) throughout trench.	None	None	None
04	East to West	2m by 50m  100m <sup>2</sup>	220 to 300mm	Changes between compact orange brown sand and gravel (002) and very compact orange sand with inclusions of gravel (004) throughout trench with some tree disturbance (006) at +4.4m.	None	None	None
05	East-north-east to West-south-west	2m by 50m  100m <sup>2</sup>	300 to 400mm	Changes between compact orange brown sand and gravel (002) and very compact orange sand with inclusions of gravel (004) throughout trench with some tree disturbance (005) at +29m.	None	None	None

Trench	Orientation	Size	Topsoil Depth	Subsoil Character	Modern Features	Significant Features	Artefacts
06	Southeast to Northwest	2m by 50m  100m <sup>2</sup>	300 to 350mm	Changes between compact orange brown sand and gravel (002) and very compact orange sand with inclusions of gravel (004) throughout trench with some tree disturbance (005) at +24m.	None	None	None
07	Southeast to Northwest	2m by 51m  102m <sup>2</sup>	320 to 350mm	Very compact orange sand with inclusions of gravel (004) until +12.2m before changing to compact orange brown sand and gravel (002).	None	None	None
08	Southeast to Northwest	2m by 51m  102m <sup>2</sup>	300 to 400mm	Very compact orange sand with inclusions of gravel (004).	Linear ditch [008] present at +8m until trench end orientated SE-NW.	None	None
09	West to East	2m by 51.5m  103m <sup>2</sup>	200 to 320mm	Changes between compact orange brown sand and gravel (002) and very compact orange sand with inclusions of gravel (004) throughout trench.	None	None	None
10	Northeast to Southwest	2m by 51m  102m <sup>2</sup>	250 to 300mm	Changes between compact orange brown sand and gravel (002) and very compact orange sand with inclusions of gravel (004) throughout trench.	None	None	None
11	West to East	2m by 49m  98m <sup>2</sup>	250 to 400mm	Changes between compact orange brown sand and gravel (002) and very compact orange sand with inclusions of gravel (004) throughout trench.	Linear ditch [007] present at +30.9m orientated N-S.	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	Topsoil	Very humid dark brown to black silty sand with frequent roots and plants.	Topsoil
002		Subsoil	Compact orange brown sand and gravel with small-medium sub-rounded stones and some roots.	Subsoil
003	2	Deposit	Area of loose light brown and orange sand with frequent roots.	Area of tree root disturbance
004		Subsoil	Very compact orange sand with inclusions of gravel (small-medium sub-rounded stones) and tree root disturbance.	Subsoil
005	1	Deposit	Loosely compacted mid-dark brown/black sandy gravel with frequent small-medium sized stones and frequent roots.	Area of tree root disturbance
006	4	Deposit	Loosely compacted mid-dark brown silty sandy gravel with frequent roots.	Area of tree root disturbance
007	11	Cut	Linear feature running approx. N-S. Shallow cut with gently sloping sides and rounded base. Measures approx. 100mm deep and approx. Unknown length. 1.2m wide. Filled by topsoil (001).	Possible shallow natural depression filled by tree disturbance.
008	8	Cut	Linear feature running NW-SE. Shallow cut with gradual-gentle sloping sides with flattish base. Measures min. 0.9m wide x 200mm deep. Unknown length. Filled by topsoil (001).	Probable artificial/drainage channel dug during the plantation of trees

### Photographic Register

Image No.	Print		Slide		Digital	Description	From	Date
	Film No.	Neg. No.	Film No.	Neg. No.				
1	1	33	1	33	1	Pre ex general site shots (area NE of access road)	W	18/05/09
2	1	32	1	32	2	Pre ex general site shots (area NE of access road)	S	18/05/09

Image No.	Print		Slide		Digital	Description	From	Date
	Film No.	Neg. No.	Film No.	Neg. No.				
3	1	31	1	31	3	Pre ex general site shots (area SW of access road)	NE	18/05/09
4	1	30	1	30	4	Pre ex general site shots (area SW of access road)	E	18/05/09
5	1	29	1	29	5	Pre ex general site shots (area around access road)	SE	18/05/09
6	1	28	1	28	6	Trench 2	W	18/05/09
7	1	27	-	-	7	Trench 1	SE	18/05/09
8	1	26	-	-	8	Trench 4	E	18/05/09
9	1	25	-	-	9	Trench 5	NE	18/05/09
10	1	24	1	27	10	Trench 6	SE	18/05/09
11	1	23	-	-	11	Trench 7	SE	18/05/09
12	1	22	-	-	12	Trench 8	SE	18/05/09
13	1	21	1	26	13	Trench 3	NE	19/05/09
14	1	20	-	-	14-15	Trench 10	N	19/05/09
15	1	19	-	-	16	Trench 11	SW	19/05/09
16	1	18	-	-	17	Trench 9	NE	19/05/09
17	1	17	1	25	18	S facing section of ditch [007]	S	19/05/09
18	1	16	1	24	19	SE facing section of ditch [008] (at +12m)	SE	19/05/09
19	1	15	1	23	20	NW facing section of ditch [008] (at +29m)	NW	19/05/09
20	-	-	-	-	21	NW facing section of ditch [008] (at +29m)	NW	19/05/09
21	1	14	1	22	22	Post ex general site shots	SW	19/05/09
22	-	-	1	21	23	Post ex general site shots	S	19/05/09
23	-	-	-	-	24	Post ex general site shots	E	19/05/09
24	-	-	-	-	25	General shots of access roads around Approach Wood	-	19/05/09
25	-	-	-	-	26	General shots of access roads around Approach Wood	-	19/05/09
26	-	-	-	-	27	General shots of access roads around Approach Wood	-	19/05/09



Image No.	Print		Slide		Digital	Description	From	Date
	Film No.	Neg. No.	Film No.	Neg. No.				
27	-	-	-	-	28	General shots of access roads around Approach Wood	-	19/05/09
28	-	-	-	-	29	Shots of possible revetment walling in Approach Wood	-	19/05/09
29	-	-	-	-	30	Shots of possible revetment walling in Approach Wood	-	19/05/09
30	-	-	-	-	31	Shots of possible revetment walling in Approach Wood	-	19/05/09
31	-	-	-	-	32	Shots of possible revetment walling in Approach Wood	-	19/05/09
32	-	-	-	-	33	General shots of access roads around Approach Wood	-	19/05/09
33	-	-	-	-	34	General shots of access roads around Approach Wood	-	19/05/09
34	-	-	-	-	35	General shots of stone rubble in Approach Wood	-	19/05/09
35	-	-	-	-	36	General shots of stone rubble in Approach Wood	-	19/05/09
36	-	-	-	-	37	General shots of straight tree-lined avenue to Melville House	-	19/05/09
37	-	-	-	-	38	General shots of straight tree-lined avenue to Melville House	-	19/05/09
38	-	-	-	-	39	Shot of stables/farm buildings near Melville House	-	19/05/09
39	-	-	-	-	40	General shots of straight tree-lined avenue to Melville House	-	19/05/09
40	-	-	-	-	41	General shots of straight tree-lined avenue to Melville House with High Pressure Gas Main sign in foreground	-	19/05/09
41	-	-	-	-	42	General shots of Melville House	-	19/05/09
42	-	-	-	-	43	General shots of Melville House	-	19/05/09
43	-	-	-	-	44	General shots of Melville House	-	19/05/09
44	-	-	-	-	45	General shots of Melville House	-	19/05/09
45	-	-	-	-	46	Shot of stables/farm buildings near Melville House	-	19/05/09
46	-	-	-	-	47	Shot of Melville House gatehouses	-	19/05/09

*Drawing Register*

<b>Drawing No.</b>	<b>Sheet No.</b>	<b>Area/ Trench</b>	<b>Drawing Type</b>	<b>Scale</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Drawer</b>	<b>Date</b>
001	1	2	Plan	1:100	Plan of trench 2	AM	18/05/09
002	1	1	Plan	1:100	Plan of trench 1	AM + CW	18/05/09
003	1	4	Plan	1:100	Plan of trench 4	CW	18/05/09
004	1	5	Plan	1:100	Plan of trench 5	AM	18/05/09
005	1	6	Plan	1:100	Plan of trench 6	AM + CW	18/05/09
006	1	7	Plan	1:100	Plan of trench 7	CW + AM	18/05/09
007	1	8	Plan	1:100	Plan of trench 8	CW	18/05/09
008	2	3	Plan	1:100	Plan of trench 3	AM	19/05/09
009	2	10	Plan	1:100	Plan of trench 10	AM	19/05/09
010	2	11	Plan	1:100	Plan of trench 11	AM	19/05/09
011	2	9	Plan	1:100	Plan of trench 9	AM + CW	19/05/09
012	2	11	Section	1:10	S facing section of ditch [007]	AM	19/05/09
013	2	8	Section	1:10	NW facing section of ditch [008] at +12m	CW	19/05/09
014	2	8	Section	1:10	NW facing section of ditch [008] at +29m	CW	19/05/09

## Appendix 3: Discovery &amp; Excavation in Scotland

<b>LOCAL AUTHORITY:</b>	Fife
<b>PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:</b>	Approach Wood, Mountcastle Quarry
<b>PROJECT CODE:</b>	09029
<b>PARISH:</b>	Collessie
<b>NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Alan Matthews
<b>NAME OF ORGANISATION:</b>	Rathmell Archaeology Limited
<b>TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:</b>	Evaluation
<b>NMRS NO(S):</b>	None
<b>SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):</b>	None
<b>SIGNIFICANT FINDS:</b>	None
<b>NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)</b>	NO 303 129
<b>START DATE (this season)</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> May 2009
<b>END DATE (this season)</b>	19 <sup>th</sup> May 2009
<b>PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)</b>	None
<b>MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION:</b> (may include information from other fields)	This work was the archaeological evaluation of the Phase 1 area at Mountcastle Quarry, in support of mineral extraction. The archaeological evaluation works uncovered no significant archaeological deposits and no anthropic material other than that which related to twentieth century use of the site. The only features discovered on the site were investigated and found to be most likely the result of modern forestry work although no definitive diagnostic information was found.
<b>PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:</b>	None
<b>CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:</b>	None
<b>SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:</b>	Hanson Aggregates
<b>ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:</b>	Unit 8 Ashgrove Workshops, Kilwinning, Ayrshire KA13 6PU
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<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)</b>	Report to Fife Council Archaeology Unit and archive to National Monuments Record of Scotland.

## Contact Details

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2 Wemyssfield f.: 01592 583638  
Kirkcaldy KY1 1XW e.: [douglas.speirs@fife.gov.uk](mailto:douglas.speirs@fife.gov.uk)

End of Document