

CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

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**Recreation & Wildlife Area,
Burgh by Sands, Cumbria:**

**Pond Excavation.
Archaeological Watching Brief
Data Structure Report No. 1560**

CONTENTS

0.	Non-Technical Summary	3
1.	Introduction	4
2.	Methodology	5
3.	Archaeological Results	6
4.	Conclusions	8
5.	References	8

Appendices

1.	Context Register	9
2.	Photograph Register	9
3.	Drawings Register	10
4.	Finds Quantification	10

Illustrations (bound at rear)

Fig. 1 Burgh-by-Sands Wildlife and Recreation Area showing the location of the pond

Fig. 2 Image showing excavation of the pond area

0. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- 0.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) in October 2008 during the excavation of a pond on land to the rear of the Greyhound Inn, Burgh by Sands, Cumbria (Fig. 1). This work forms part of a programme of work aiming to improve the recreation and wildlife of the village.
- 0.2 The pond was excavated some 10m to the south of the assumed alignment through Burgh by Sands of Hadrians Wall Vallum (Fig. 1) but was not within the Scheduled Area covering the Vallum itself.
- 0.3 Section 1 below summarises the background to the work. The detailed methodology is described in Section 2, while the results are described in Section 3. Conclusions form Section 4 with the site records being reproduced in the appendices.
- 0.4 In summary, the pond was excavated in a low-lying and often waterlogged area. The work revealed that under modern topsoil, a spread of 19th century made ground overlay wet peaty silt, with natural gravelly sand below. No Roman finds or features were recorded.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

- 1.1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken in October 2008 by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA). It took place during the ground breaking works relating to the excavation of a pond which is part of a programme of recreational and environmental improvements within what is currently wet pasture grassland to the south of the Greyhound Inn, Burgh by Sands, Cumbria (NGR NY 3235 5890, Figs. 1-2). The project was commissioned by the Burgh by Sands Sports & Recreation Association.

1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced by CFA which was based on a Brief prepared by Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (CCCHES). This WSI was approved prior to the work by Jeremy Parsons of CCCHES.

1.3 Aims and Objectives

- 1.3.1 In specific terms, the aims of the archaeological work were:
- To monitor the ground-breaking works associated with the excavation of the pond;
 - To produce a report on the findings of the fieldwork, setting out the potential for any further work and dissemination of the results, as appropriate.
- 1.3.2 The wider research aims were to inform wider regional, national and period based research frameworks, particularly the *North West Archaeological Research Framework* (NWARF), initiated by English Heritage and the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers. Although a small piece of fieldwork, the location is close to the suggested alignment of Hadrian's Wall Vallum (Scheduled Ancient Monument No. 28484) through Burgh-by-Sands and the exact location of the Vallum is unknown.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 General

- 2.1.1 Work was conducted with regard to the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Code of Conduct and Standards. Recording of all elements was carried out following established CFA methods.
- 2.1.2 All on-site recording was carried out by drawing, photography and by completing standard CFA record forms. The stratification of all excavated areas was fully recorded whether or not significant archaeological deposits were identified.

2.2 Pond excavation

- 2.2.1 The location of the pond was marked on the ground at a low point in the field using wooden posts.
- 2.2.2 All excavation work was conducted using a tracked mini-digger equipped with a flat-bladed bucket. Constant supervision of this work was maintained.
- 2.2.3 Due to the presence of standing water, the topsoil was initially bunded around the pond area to prevent water ingress. Subsequent topsoil was bunded around the edge of the field to the north and west of the pond to prevent flood water affecting houses to the east of Station Road.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 The text below presents the results of the watching brief. Context numbers are presented in bold and a full description is provided in Appendix 1. Other site records are reproduced as Appendices 2-4.
- 3.1.2 The pond was deliberately positioned at a low point in a wet area of an uncultivated field. The surface vegetation consisted of long grass with patches of reeds around which were puddles of surface water. An open ditch containing a small stream lay 10m to the south, with the track-bed of the former railway beyond. To the north, the ground rose gently to the back gardens of houses fronting the main road through the village.

3.2 Pond Excavation

- 3.2.1 The pond area (Figs. 1-2) was kidney shaped and measured 40m at most in length by an average of 16m wide. It was orientated ENE to WSW.
- 3.2.2 Wet sterile topsoil (**001**) with a depth of 0.2m was removed from the entire area of the pond. This exposed a deposit of orange-brown sand and gravel (**002**), which was cut by modern drains (**003**, **005**).
- 3.2.3 A large boulder was dislodged and removed from the northern part of the excavation area and this exposed a deposit of grey peaty silt (**007**) underlying **002**. As this may have been the fill of an archaeological feature, it was decided to excavate a series of 3 hand-dug test-pits on a north to south alignment (ie at 90° to the likely alignment of any Roman feature) across the pond area to investigate these underlying deposits.
- 3.2.4 The test-pits revealed that **002** had a depth of between 0.1m-0.2m and that it overlay a deposit of grey peaty silt (**007**) with a depth of between 0.25m-0.35m. In Test-Pits 1-2, this overlay a deposit of brown silty peat (**008**) with a depth of 0.1m containing poorly preserved plant and wood remains. In all the test-pits, natural creamy-white sand with occasional pebbles (**009**) was encountered at a depth of between 0.5m-0.65m. The regularity at which the natural subsoil appeared indicated that deposits **007** and **008** were in all probability not archaeological in nature and the excavation of the pond was allowed to progress.
- 3.2.5 The stepped interior of the pond was then marked out. The outer step measured 19.5m by 7.5m and was 0.2m deep. This removed **002**, thereby exposing the peaty silt **007** and the cut for a field drain (**011**), previously sealed by **002**. Drain **011** contained a moulded arch-tile clay pipe (**010**). The inner step measured 7m by 4m and was excavated to natural subsoil, an additional depth of 0.3m-0.4m. This revealed the same sequence of deposits as in the test-pits. No further archaeological features were revealed.

3.3 Finds, by Sue Anderson

- 3.3.1 Finds were collected from contexts **002** and **010**. A full quantification by context and find type is included in Appendix 4.
- 3.3.2 One base fragment of a red earthenware pot, possibly a plant pot or storage jar, was collected from **002** and is likely to be of 19th/20th-century date. This context also contained a fragment of handmade, organic-tempered red brick (102 x 70mm), a fragment of modern window glass, two fragments of grey slate roofing tile, and a natural flint nodule. The latter is not part of the local geology and must have been brought in. The closest sources of flint may be beach pebbles washed up from undersea deposits derived from coastal sources in Antrim, Northern Ireland (Wickham-Jones and Collins 1977), although it is possible that the stone was brought into the area as railway or shipping ballast, or as a souvenir.
- 3.3.3 A complete horseshoe drain tile was collected from context **010**. It measured 330mm long, 130mm wide at the open side, and 112mm tall. It is in a fine sandy fabric with small ferrous and calcareous inclusions. Field drains of this type were in use during the 18th-19th centuries, although the manufacture of cylindrical drainpipes began in Kent in 1843 (Douglas and Oglethorpe 1993, 16) and the earlier type was probably gradually superseded during the later 19th century in most areas.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The watching brief during the excavation of the pond at Burgh-by-Sands revealed no significant archaeological remains.
- 4.2 Information from local residents suggests that the deposit of sand and gravel **002** derives from the excavation of the cutting containing the trackway of the Port Carlisle Railway which was opened in 1854 and closed in 1964 (English Heritage 2007). This suggestion is supported by the findings of the watching brief which found that deposit **002** sealed a field drain pre-dating 1850.
- 4.3 No further work is recommended.
- 4.4 The online OASIS form at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis> will be completed.
- 4.5 An archive will be prepared in accordance with the recommendations of *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition 1991, and arrangements made for its deposition with an appropriate repository. A copy will be offered to the National Monuments Record.

5. REFERENCES

Douglas, G and Oglethorpe, M 1993 '*Brick, Tile and Fireclay Industries in Scotland*', RCAHMS, Edinburgh

English Heritage 2007, <http://pastscape.english-heritage.org.uk/>

Wickham-Jones, C R and Collins, G H 2002 'The sources of flint and chert in northern Britain', *Proc Soc Antiq Scot* 109 (1977-8), 7-21

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT REGISTER

Context Number	Description
001	Topsoil. Grey silt under grass and rushes
002	Made ground. Orange-brown sand and gravel with a grey silty matrix. Seals 011.
003	Linear cut for drain apparently leading from the main road through Burgh-by-Sands into the stream to the south of the pond.
004	Fill of 003. Mixed silt, sand and gravel over a glazed ceramic pipe
005	Linear cuts for field drains
006	Fill of 005. Mixed silt, sand and gravel over a modern plastic pipe
007	Brownish-grey silt with occasional cobbles
008	Dark brown silt with plant and woody fragments
009	Natural subsoil. Creamy-grey sand and gravel.
010	Fill of 011. Mixed silt over arched-profile clay pipe. No basal tile
011	Linear cut for field drain. Sealed by 002.

APPENDIX 2: DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPH REGISTER

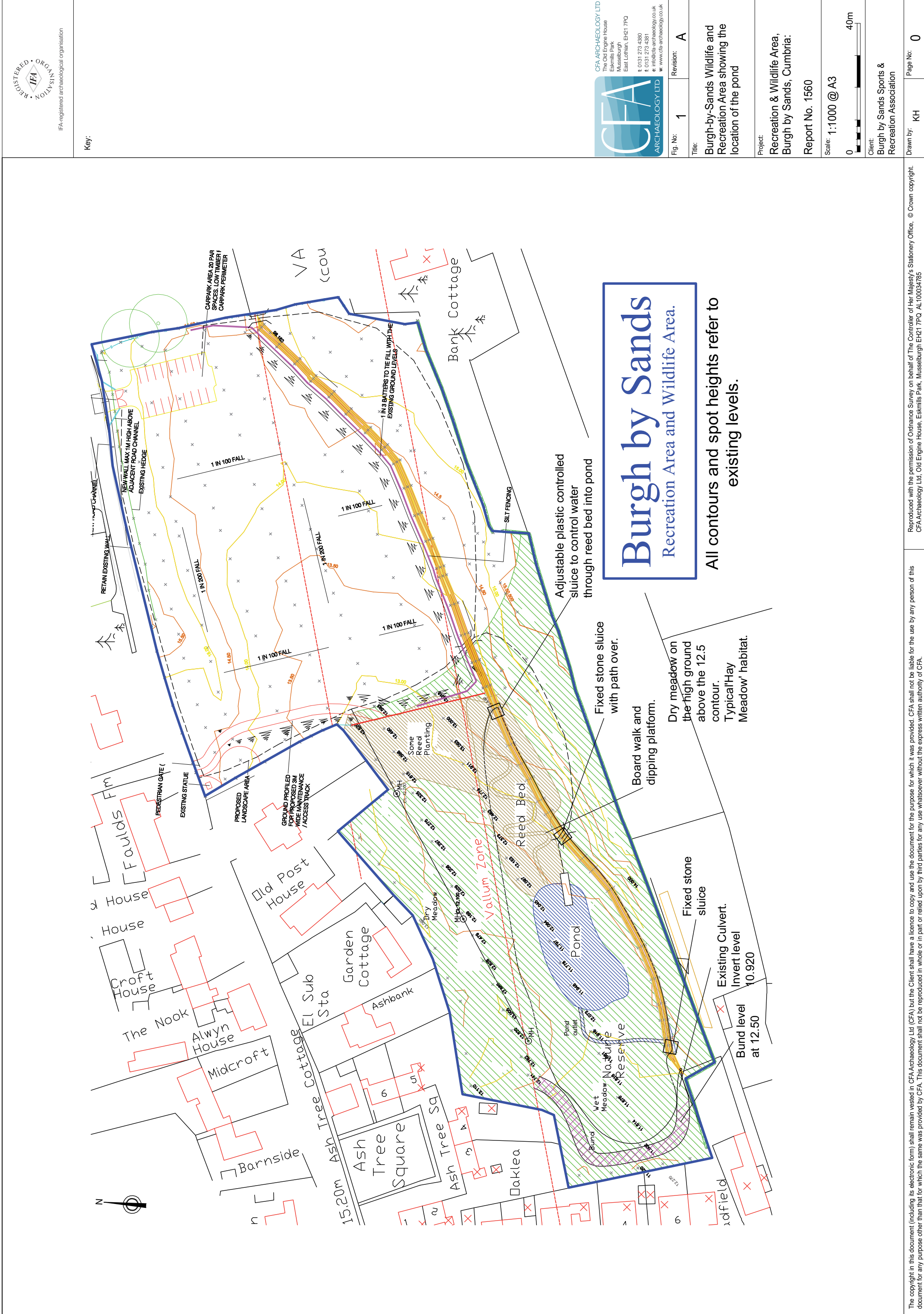
Photo No.	Description	Conditions	From
1-2	Pond area pre-excavation	Overcast	East
3-5	Pond area pre-excavation	Overcast	South
6-7	Test-Pit 1. North facing section	Overcast	North
8-9	Test-Pit 2. South facing section	Sun/Shade & Flash	South
10-11	Test-Pit 3. West facing section	Sun/Shade & Flash	West
12-14	Pond area. Topsoil 001 removed, general views	Sunny	ESE & SE
15-16	Working shots. Start of level reduction in centre of pond area	Sunny	North & SSE
17	Pond area. Centre of pond excavated to natural sand and gravel 009	Sun/Shade	East
18-19	As 17	Sun/Shade	WSW & West
20-21	Working shots during excavation of outer pond level	Overcast	East
22	Test-Pit 2. Natural overnight water ingress, 0.35m	Overcast	South
23	Test-Pit 1. Natural overnight water ingress, 0.35m	Overcast	South
24-25	Pond area fully excavated	Bright	East
26-27	North facing portion of stepped pond profile. General and close-up views of 007-009	Overcast	North
28-30	South facing section of stepped pond profile. General view with drain 010-011 on left and close-up of profile	Overcast	North
31-32	Pond area. Post-excavation views	Overcast	West
33-34	Pond area. Post-excavation views	Overcast	South

APPENDIX 3: DRAWINGS REGISTER

Drawing Number	Scale	Description
1	1:100	Pond area. Plan after topsoil (001) removal showing drains
2	1:10	Test-Pit 1. North facing section
3	1:10	Test-Pit 2. West facing section
4	1:10	Test-Pit 3. West facing section
5	1:20	Pond area. North to south profile post-excavation
6	1:100	Pond area. Post-excavation plan (overlay of Drawing No. 1)

APPENDIX 4: FINDS QUANTIFICATION

Context	Find type	No	Wt (g)	Notes
002	Pottery	1	112	red earthenware base fragment, 19th-20th c.
002	CBM	1	642	handmade red brick, ?organic tempered, reduced core, 102 x 70mm
002	Glass	1	4	modern window glass
002	Stone	2	514	fragments of pale grey roofing slates, 19th c.+
002	Stone	1	902	natural flint nodule
010	CBM	1	2949	complete horseshoe drain tile, 18th-19th c. 330 x 130 x 112mm.






Key:

Scale: NTS

Fig. No:	2	Revision:	A	Client:	Burgh by Sands Sports & Recreation Association
Title:					
Image showing excavation of the pond area					
Project:					
Recreation & Wildlife Area, Burgh by Sands, Cumbria					
Report No. 1560					



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Page No: