



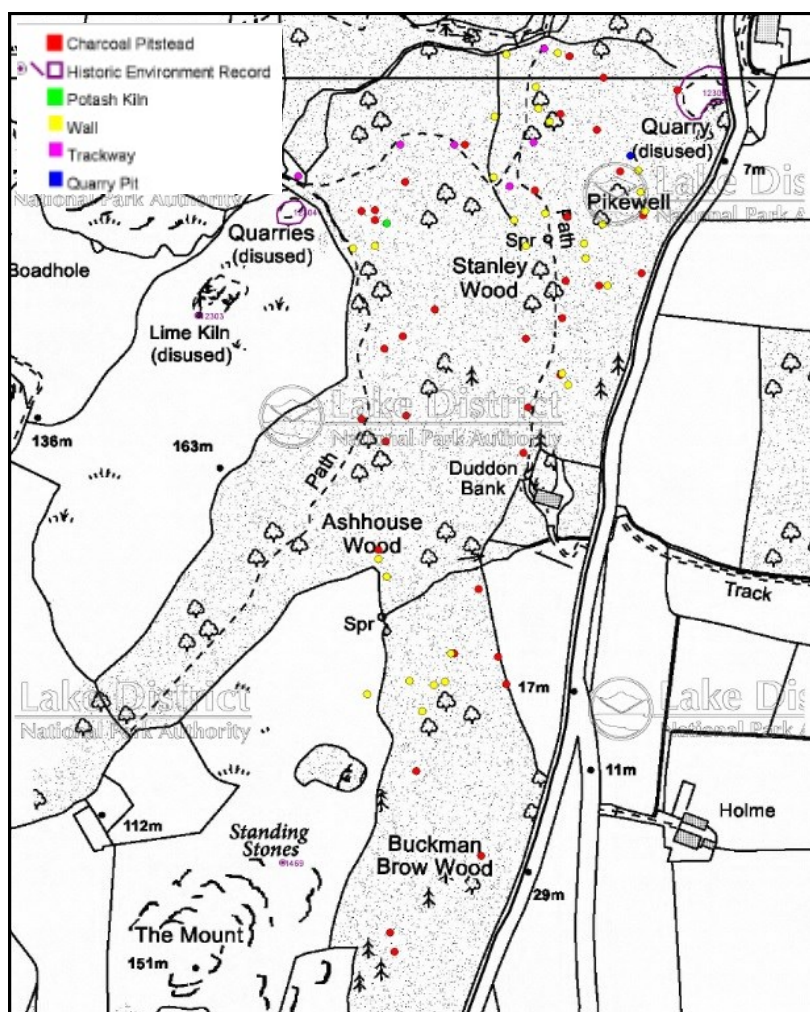
## BULLETIN NO. 3 - March 2014

### Level 1 walkover surveys

Our archaeology supervisors have done a sterling job in leading level 1 survey with volunteers across the Lake District for the past 3 months. The supervisors have led surveys across open fell and within woodland environments and have covered nearly 1500 ha of previously unsurveyed land. In total 200 new features have been recorded and entered into the Historic Environment Record.

Last year, a team of six Duddon Valley History Group members surveyed Stanley Wood in the Duddon Valley. They used a Global Positioning System (GPS) to record the location of each site, a measuring tape to measure the length, width and height/ depth of each site and completed the Archaeology Survey Field Recording Form to record the results.

The sites surveyed included a group of 38 charcoal burning platforms. All the platform features were sub-ovoid, sub-circular or circular in plan. Charcoal was found in 11 of the features, and some were supported by a revetment wall. Many were located adjacent to or close to trackways or cut into banks and slopes. Other features included a substantial, stone-lined, circular potash kiln with a large flue opening on the low (east) side and numerous boundary walls.



Map showing the location and type of archaeological features surveyed

This survey had been arranged at the request of a forestry contractor who knew that the woodland contained archaeological sites and did not want to damage them during forestry operations.

So not only did the survey help to locate important archaeological features that were previously unknown, it was also used to ensure that the archaeological sites were protected during the creation of a trackway which was being constructed in advance of forestry extraction.

These Level 1 surveys are a great opportunity for people to get out and about in the National Park, to learn how to identify archaeological sites and how to record them. If you don't believe us, read the reports from our archaeological supervisors!

## **Jeremy Rowan Robinson and Alan Strachan, Archaeology Volunteer Supervisors in the southern Lake District.**

“Over here”, shouted a voice. The line of volunteers sweeping through the woodland broke up and everyone gathered round for a communal scratching of heads to see if we could determine what, if any, archaeological feature had been discovered. We were doing a Level 1 survey, basically a sweep search of an area, in this case some of the woodlands of High Furness, to find and record any archaeology.

The theory is that the volunteers taking part spread out in a line about 10 meters apart and sweep majestically through the wood with one eye open for archaeology and the other eye focused on keeping the line straight. Unfortunately, the woodlands seemed to favour steep and craggy hillsides, so the line kept breaking up to negotiate the numerous small cliffs and keeping in contact at all was a challenge. To maintain any sort of line, the volunteers at both ends had to follow a bearing.

Theory also requires the volunteer at one end of the line to plant a line of flags to mark the edge of the sweep. When the line reaches the end of the sweep it then swings round 180 degrees and starts back again on a parallel course with the volunteer who planted the flags collecting them and the volunteer at the other end of the line planting a new line of flags. Unfortunately, there was a severe shortage of flags, no doubt due to government cut backs, so we planted one at the beginning and one at the end of a sweep. Finding them again in broken terrain was also a challenge.

There were, however, ample rewards. The woodlands provided a rich source of charcoal for the blast furnaces which drove the Furness iron industry. Charcoal was also a principal constituent of gunpowder and supplied the local gunpowder works. It was the remnants of this woodland industry for which we were looking and we were not disappointed. In four days we logged some 70 pitsteads, man-made platforms on which the coppiced wood was stacked and burned to make charcoal.

We also came across remnants of two other woodland industries: bark and potash. Bark from oak trees is high in tannin and was used to tan animal hides until well into the 18th Century. During the surveys we encountered the remains of a number of bark peelers' huts, round or rectangular structures built on low turf or stone walls with a conical roof and a squat stone chimney.

Potash was used in making soap for washing of wool until the 19th Century. Potash production grew with the expansion of the woollen industry and was made by burning bracken in a small round kiln built into the slope of the woodland. They can be stone-lined but the ones we encountered during the surveys were just earth pits.



Volunteers recording a bark peelers hut in Holywell Wood. Photograph taken by Alison Ewin.

## **Mervyn Cooper and Peter Matthiessen, Archaeology Volunteer Supervisors in the south west Lake District.**

Although much of the land in the National Park has been subjected over the years to Level 1 surveys for archaeological sites, some gaps still remain. One of these areas in the southwest is on Woodland Fell, which stretches from High Kep to the Three Pit Stone and includes Strands Beck and Hodge Wife Gill. Few archaeological monuments have yet been reported from this area, although there is a large bloomy site northeast of Green Moor and an amazing stone-lined leat which used to carry water from Strands Beck to a small pond of unknown use.

Perhaps the reason this area had not previously been systematically surveyed is the huge amount of bracken which cloaks most stone structures. Or maybe John Hodgson was just feeling a bit mischievous when he asked us to take the area on. Either way, we have spent the last four Tuesdays with a small team of ArchVol enthusiasts, trying to walk in straight lines over the fell, and recording the position and essential features of all artificial structures which appear out of the bracken jungle.

Each time we go out, we play down the expectations of our volunteers, and each time we have surprised everyone (ourselves included) by finding over a dozen previously unrecorded sites. The total to date is around 60. These have ranged in estimated date from prehistoric clearance cairns, burial cairns, hut circles and burnt mounds, through a variety of medieval walls and post-medieval shepherd's shelters and water channels, to reminders of the First World War. One of our volunteers who lives nearby led us to a remote rock on which there's a poignant, neatly engraved inscription from 1916 which records the names of certain individuals who were conscientious objectors. This is a true work of discovery, and is one of the most exciting ways of spending a day in the hills. Look out on the ArchVol web-page for further opportunities to sign up for Level 1 surveys, and come and join us!



Inscriptions in rock outcrop by conscientious objectors during WWI (1916).

## Tricia Brown, Archaeology Volunteer Supervisor in the northern Lake District

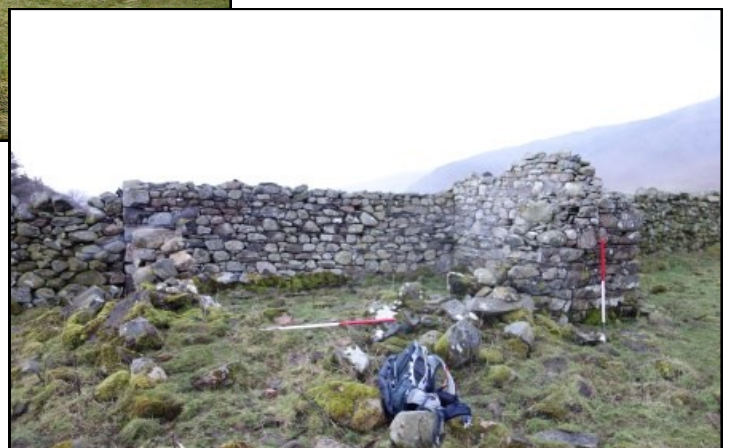
The northern volunteers bravely faced the January elements to continue surveying Caldbeck common. Wellies have been the order of the day and have enabled us to survey a large area in conditions that have been extremely wet underfoot. This and the horizontal hail and snow have certainly made for interesting days out! Having obtained permission from three of the farmers who have fields adjacent to the common, we were rewarded by finding half of a possible Romano-British enclosure (the second half being on the other side of the wall on the common land). This, together with a second unrecorded enclosure made one of the days particularly rewarding and worth spending in the cold. We needed two days to complete the level 1 survey of another very large field on the side of the common and we recorded 13 features.

As the supervisor, mine was the final decision - after much discussion in many cases - as to whether a structure was worth recording or not. As a rank amateur my thoughts were with the professional team back at Murley Moss. I could imagine them looking at the photos and asking themselves, 'what is that supposed to be?!' This particular field was absolutely covered with boulders, almost certainly dumped by the last glacier to visit the area. We found one or two possible stone circles and then realised that without looking too hard it was easy to spot circles all over the place. You can join up any ring of stones if you have a mind to!

Eleanor (welcome back from maternity leave) came out with us recently and very tactfully put us right on a couple of 'cairns' which were, in fact, glacial dump. This was extremely helpful as her trained eye was able to spot things which were clues to what a feature probably was and we were able to pick up a few tips. The Caldbeck Common team of volunteers has been so willing and enthusiastic that it has been a joy to be out with them - in spite of the weather, and I look forward to the next few months when, hopefully, the weather will be kinder.



Tricia, second in in the far left, leading volunteers.



Building of unknown date at Linewath, Caldbeck, previously unrecorded.

Tricia will be leading 4 more survey days on Thursday 10, 17 April and 8,15 May. If you are interested in attending ones of these survey days please contact Tricia directly at [triciabrown@talktalk.net](mailto:triciabrown@talktalk.net).

## The Roman Frontiers need you!

This spring and summer opportunities to investigate the Roman heritage along the west coast of Cumbria continues. Excavations to explore the extent of Maryport's civilian settlement, the largest currently known

If you are interested in participating with the excavation as a volunteer, please contact Stephen Rowland. ([stephen.rowland@oxfordarch.co.uk](mailto:stephen.rowland@oxfordarch.co.uk)) for further information.



Volunteers excavating at Maryport and an aerial shot of the strip building taken by Jim Hunt.

The dig, run by Oxford Archaeology North, is a research and community archaeology project funded by the philanthropist Christian Levett and sponsored by the Hadrian's Wall Trust. It represents the first scientific excavation within the heart of the settlement, which may have been occupied for over 200 years. It can be presumed that the inhabitants were a cosmopolitan mix of locals and incomers from across the Empire, including retired soldiers, serving soldiers' dependants, and people who made a living from servicing the fort. We know some of these people came from Austria, Hungary, Spain and North Africa to make new lives at Maryport.

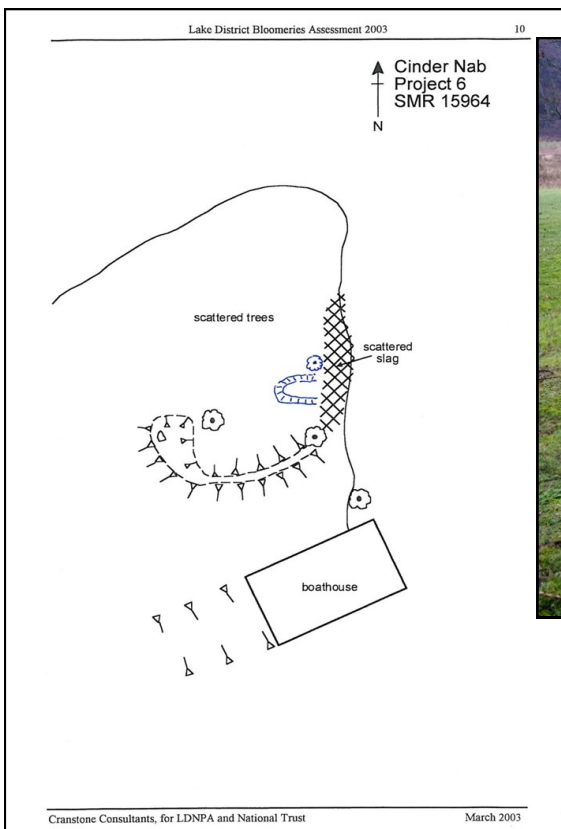
We hope to learn more about the everyday lives of these people, their culture, and their identity. This year we aim to more fully excavate a selection of the remains investigated in 2013. These comprised the well-preserved remains of three stone buildings, a portion of the settlement's cobbled main road, and various pits and ditches within the 'backland' to the rear of the buildings. The project provides an excellent opportunity for volunteers of all ages to experience, and learn, a wide variety of fieldwork and post-excavation techniques. The first fieldwork season, completed in 2013, revealed a great deal of important new information about life on Rome's northern frontier, and many more exciting discoveries will undoubtedly be made this year. The excavation is free to attend, and will run from 7 April to 30 May 2014. Site open days are planned for Easter Saturday, 19 April, the May Day bank holiday, 5 May, and Saturday 24 May. Guided tours of the excavations are available on weekday afternoons, beginning at the Senhouse Roman Museum.

Furthermore a project to investigate the Roman Altars at Maryport will take place between the 9 June to 18 July. For further information, please see: <http://www.senhousemuseum.co.uk/excavation>. Finally, the Romans in Ravenglass excavation will take place from the 3 September through to the 28 September 2014. If you haven't already booked, please sign up to the results evening on the 3 June at the Old Laundry Room at Muncaster Estate, to find out what happened during season 1.

## Forthcoming Network activities

Thought the Reflections on History survey was over? Well it isn't! We can confirm that a 4th phase of the project will take place between 30 April and the 23 May. This phase of the project will look at investigating iron smelting sites in the Windermere catchment. This will involve topographic and geophysical survey of four bloomery sites and a small scale excavation of Bleham Tarn, a water powered bloomery site. We will be holding an introductory day to find out about the project on Saturday 26 April at Wray Castle, Low Wray, Ambleside. Booking for this will be on a first come first served basis. Please email us at [archvol@lakedistrict.gov.uk](mailto:archvol@lakedistrict.gov.uk) to reserve your place - they are limited!

You can also now reserve a place on the survey days. We will be working week days between 30 April and 23 May (including the bank holiday, Monday 5 May). Because we anticipate that this will be popular, everyone will initially be limited to booking three days on site, so email us with your dates as soon as you can!



View of Cinder Nab bloomery, Ridding Bay from the south. One of the sites selected to be recorded during the final phase of the project.

Sketch plan of Cinder Nab bloomery (HER 15964) from Cranstone 2003

## An Archaeological Tour of Torver High Common - still open for bookings.



Come and join us on an archaeological tour of Torver High Common on Tuesday 1 April. We will visit Bronze Age ring burial cairns, a possible medieval deer trap, quarries and the smallest stone circle in the Lake District! It's a fairly strenuous 8km walk, including a river crossing.

To book, email us at [archvol@lakedistrict.gov.uk](mailto:archvol@lakedistrict.gov.uk)

Torver High Common limekiln - one of the sites that you will see on the guided walk.

[www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/archaeologyvolunteers](http://www.lakedistrict.gov.uk/archaeologyvolunteers)

email: [archvol@lakedistrict.gov.uk](mailto:archvol@lakedistrict.gov.uk)

## Forthcoming Network activities continued...

### Boot Mill, Eskdale, Conservation day.

We are planning a conservation day on the 15 April at Boot Mill in Eskdale. We require 6 people to help out with this task. We would be grateful if you could email your availability for this activity now!

Date	Event
Tuesday 1 April	An Archaeological Tour of Torver High Common. <b>Still open for bookings.</b>
Tuesday 8 April	Rusland Tannery Conservation Day. Now fully booked.
Thursday 10 April	Level 1 survey days. N Area. <b>Please book through Tricia Brown:</b> triciabrown@talktalk.net
Tuesday 15 April	Boot Mill, Eskdale, Conservation Day. <b>Open for bookings.</b>
Thursday 17 April	Level 1 survey days. N Area. <b>Please book through Tricia Brown:</b> triciabrown@talktalk.net
Tuesday 22 April	Level 1 survey day. SW Area. <b>Please book through Mervyn Cooper:</b> coopermervyn@hotmail.com
Wednesday 23 April	Desk Based Assessment Workshop 1. Now Fully booked.
Saturday 26 April	Windermere Reflections 4th Phase Introductory day.
Wednesday 30 April – Friday 23 May	Reflections on History 4th Phase survey and excavation project.
Wednesday 30 April	Desk Based Assessment Workshop 2. Now Fully booked.
Thursday 8 May	Level 1 survey day. N Area. <b>Please book through Tricia Brown:</b> triciabrown@talktalk.net
Thursday 15 May	Level 1 survey day. N Area. <b>Please book through Tricia Brown:</b> triciabrown@talktalk.net
Saturday 3 June	Romans in Ravenglass season 1 results evening.
Tuesday 17 June	Science in the historic environment lecture.

### Stop Press - Report from LDNPA Volunteer Leadership Team (VLT)

Mervyn Cooper, one of our Archaeology Supervisors, represents the Archaeology Volunteers on the LDNPA VLT. If you have any questions, issues or comments about volunteering for the LDNPA, please contact Mervyn: email [coopermervyn@hotmail.com](mailto:coopermervyn@hotmail.com) or telephone 01229 582379. The next VLT meeting is scheduled for 6th May.

As you are aware, the issue of 'Minimum Commitments' has been the subject of intense debate in recent months. A sub-group of staff and volunteers has now been set up to consider various proposals and is to make a recommendation to the next meeting of the VLT in May. One suggestion is to focus on Volunteers meeting the commitment for their primary role - as Archvol volunteers we are being offered no end of opportunities and this should not be an issue...!

The other thorny topic of whether or not to retain the Voluntary Ranger title has now been put on the back-burner and will not be revisited until after April 2015. At the recent meeting the results of the Volunteer Satisfaction Survey for 2013 were communicated and are about to be published in the next issue of Volunteer News. As the Archvol team we recorded a 97% level of satisfaction with our volunteering experience, the highest of any team. We must be doing something right...!