

Millom Castle and Holy Trinity Church Geophysical Survey

A Millom and District Local History Society Publication
June 2023



View of Old School, Millom Castle and Holy Trinity Church, from The Knott



Area to be Surveyed © Google Earth

Permission

Pauline and Michael Park, the current owners of the land, farm and Castle, gave permission to conduct the surveys in the fields surrounding the Castle and Holy Trinity Church; we give them special thanks.

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June 2023

Cover Photo Jonathan Brind

The Project

Millom Castle and Holy Trinity Church Geophysical Survey is a pilot survey of the fields surrounding Millom Castle and Holy Trinity Church. The purpose is to discover whether any archaeological features exist which support the existence of habitation since Prehistoric times, and to identify the potential for further surveys and/or archaeological digs.

Millom and District Local History Society were awarded £5,500 from the Government's Shared Prosperity (Levelling Up) fund via the former, Copeland Borough Council.

Greenlane Archaeology managed the project which had to be completed by the end of June 2023. Volunteers from the local community came forward to assist with the project, attending a half day information session and taking part in two days of field survey work.

As part of the project the findings were to be published and shared at an event on Saturday, 24th June 2023 at Holy Trinity Church.

Context

The **Millom Heritage Triangle** – Millom Castle, Holy Trinity Church and the Old School complex are the key buildings of interest within the geophysical survey area. Millom and District Local History Society have been developing plans to acquire, renovate and develop the Old School complex as a heritage and education centre to celebrate the incredible history of this area. The Society is working alongside directors of the dormant South Copeland Tourism Community Interest Company to rename it South Copeland Cultural Heritage CIC with new objectives and directors.ⁱ

Since 2021, the Society has completed several archaeological projects to acquire knowledge and historical evidence of this amazing area of Millom and this Project is the next logical step to build on the evidence already gathered.

Holy Trinity Stones Project

In 2022 a group of volunteers worked with Greenlane Archaeology Ltd of Ulverston, to conduct a comprehensive survey of the exterior stonework of the church revealing more of the building's past. A description and report are available on the website and the findings have been submitted to the Barrow Archives.ⁱⁱ

Millom and District: Prehistoric Past

This project required a significant amount of research to bring together all known Prehistoric evidence for Millom peninsula and publish a book to both inform the public of the evidence and encourage further research. The book was released in February 2023; over 100 copies have been sold with proceeds going towards future surveys.ⁱⁱⁱ



Millom Castle, Pauline Park



Holy Trinity Church



Old School Complex

Millom Castle and Holy Trinity Church

Geophysical Survey: Background Evidence

The first phase of the project gathered background evidence to establish the rationale for conducting the geophysical surveys and identifying the exact locations for the surveys. It was important to build a picture of the kind of archaeological sites and/or evidence of previous structures or inhabitation that could be in the area. To establish this, literary evidence, maps, local history and historical finds/physical evidence discovered were examined.

The site of the existing buildings dates to the 11th and 12th centuries. There is however evidence of something earlier, possibly a small monastic building or early church with some sort of outer enclosure boundary.^{iv}



Part of a 10th Century Cross embedded in Church Wall

Significant evidence has also been found to suggest the area has been inhabited since Prehistoric times.

Prehistory (Before 43 AD)

There is a cropmark in a field close to the Castle which is likely Neolithic. A previous geophysical survey found evidence of an ancient road, a kiln and a possible pit which requires further investigation.



Cropmark Field next to Archer's Field © Google Earth

Sharon Arrowsmith found many flints in a field close by the castle as part of her archaeological degree which were donated to Millom Heritage and Arts Centre^v. These are documented in *Millom and District: Prehistoric Past*.



Scrapers Collected by Sharon Arrowsmith

In 1842 a Bronze Age urn (identified as Roman on early OS maps) was discovered in a field below Beck Farm, it contained ancient bones; the current whereabouts is unknown:



Beck Farm Bronze Age Funerary Urn, Transactions^{vi}

At the end of January/early February 2023, local metal detectorist Josh Carr discovered six Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age bronze socketed axe heads, inside one was two pieces of a broken sword:



Late iron Age/Early Bronze Age socketed axe heads and bits of sword, Josh Carr

Josh had previously found an Iron Age terret ring (used to put reins through to steer horses on a chariot):



Iron Age terret ring, Josh Carr

Both the terret ring and bronze axe heads are important finds for the Millom peninsula as few Bronze or Iron Age objects have been found here. This suggests the area was important in Prehistoric times and it could be there was a Bronze/Iron Age settlement, hillfort or burial ground in the area close to the Castle. The finds highlight the need for further archaeological investigation.

Prehistoric evidence from other parts of Millom include ancient footprints on the Duddon Estuary, a stone head found at St George's church, a roughout stone axe found in a potato field near Hodbarrow and, from the same field, a Roman strigil.^{vii}

Roman Period (43 -410 AD)

There have been several Roman artefacts found in Millom and a number of Roman coins within the Heritage Triangle area, here are just three items, two found by Josh Carr and the third (one of several Roman weights) found by local historian Duane Farren:



Silver Marcus Aurelius denarii, 161-180 AD, Josh Carr



Roman Trumpet brooch, Josh Carr



Roman weight, Duane Farren

In the 18th century, Rev William Stukely, a keen antiquarian, wrote in his diary:

Millom Castle. 18th April 1759. Sir Hedworth Williamson, of Monkweremouth, told me at Millom Castle, Cumberland, which was a Roman castrum, they dug up two great urns full of silver Roman coins, which they sent up to London, and sold by pound weight.^{viii}

Whilst Millom Castle may well have been built on a Roman castrum, in the 18th century antiquarians had a habit of identifying anything that was old as Roman. However, finding two urns full of silver Roman coins does indicate something significant.

Before the 20th Century, it was accepted that the Romans at the very least came through Millom on their way up to Ravenglass.^{ix}

A Roman road could be somewhere in the vicinity of the Castle and Archer's Field – something the geophysical survey may reveal.

Medieval Period (410-1485)

There have been several lead Viking gaming pieces dating from the Medieval period found not far from the site including this little ship, found by David Hartley near Aggie's Lonning:



Viking gaming piece, 8th – 11th Centuries, David Hartley

David also found this Medieval lead ampulae which would have been filled with holy water and hung round the owners neck:



Ampulae for Holy Water, 12th-14th centuries, David Hartley

Spindle whorls, used to weight spindles when hand-spinning yarn, were used from Pre-historic times through to the Medieval period and it is difficult to date them. It is suggested, however, that those with a smaller hole belong to the Roman period. Here are several whorls and a Medieval ring brooch found in the area by Duane Farren:



Spindle Whorls, Duane Farren



Medieval Ring Brooch, Duane Farren

Coins can often be dated. Josh Carr has found literally hundreds of coins in all four fields within the search area but the Children's Field (number 1) has been the most fruitful. In this field alone, he has found hundreds of copper coins, around forty silver coins and about 35 hammered coins. Here are some of the better quality ones:



King John 1199-1216, Josh Carr



King Henry 5th 1413-1422, Josh Carr



King Henry 7th 1485-1509, Josh Carr



King Henry 8th 1509-1547, Josh Carr



Queen Elizabeth 1st 1558-1603, Josh Carr

Market Charter (1251)

In 1251 John de Hudelston was granted a charter by King Henry III to hold a **weekly Wednesday market** and an **annual three-day fair** over the feast of Holy Trinity, at his **Manor of Millom**. It is possible the coins found in the vicinity of the Castle were lost at either the market or fair.

The exact spot where the market and fair were held is unknown but it is likely they were held on the higher ground outside the Castle, possibly on the site of the Old School or across the road in the field behind Castle cottages. However, given the amount of coins found in the field behind the Old School (Children's Field) it seems this is the more likely of the two. It was important to include these two areas in the survey.

Deserted Medieval Village

Old maps suggest there was a deserted Medieval village; this may have been either in the field behind Castle Cottages (field 2) or in the field south of the Church (field 4). There are earth works in the field south east of the Church (field 3) as well as traces of buildings,^x hence this field also being included in the survey.

Most of the fields surrounding the Castle and Church were, at times, water logged and the higher ground where the Castle and Church stand was probably once an island surrounded at times by tidal water brought in at high tide by the various becks before the embankment down by the railway was built.

The same old maps also show stepping stones from Low House Farm across the field to the Castle which may have been used as a thoroughfare.

English Civil War (1642-1651)

The Huddleston family owned Millom Castle for 500 years and fought on the side of the King during the English Civil War with several members being killed in battles. Sir William Hudlestone was a leading Royalist colonel in Cumberland and Lancashire. The Huddlestons (spelt differently across time) previously fought on the side of the Yorkists during the Wars of the Roses with a suggestion the castle sustained damage. There is little evidence to confirm this.

In 1644 there was a skirmish between the Royalists and Roundheads at Millom Castle, and both the Castle and Holy Trinity Church were badly damaged. The old vicarage was pulled down to avoid it being used by the Roundheads to gain an advantage point against the Castle. It is possible there was another skirmish here in 1648 however information about both attacks is sparse.

The site of the vicarage is not known and it was hoped the survey would identify it.

There is evidence that a Rev. Nathaniel Ward, vicar of Staindrop near Durham, was slain at Millom Castle in 1644 fighting for the King and that **"He was a very learned and estimable person."**^{xi} Josh Carr found the following small statuette in field 1 (the Children's Field):



Part of a Processional Cross, Civil War or Elizabethan fork handle? Josh Carr

Claire Bradshaw, Archaeologist and Heritage Officer for the Morecambe Bay Partnership has assisted the Society on several occasions including identifying and grouping flints for *Millom and District: Prehistoric Past*, she suggests the statuette is likely to have been part of a processional cross. Alternatively, it might be the handle of an Elizabethan knife or fork as suggested by what appears to be a ruff around the neck.

The Lamport Crucifix in Peterborough Cathedral, shows how the statuette may have appeared in a processional cross:



Lamport Crucifix, photograph Patrick Comerford, 2019

Is it possible Rev. Ward was in the field blessing the King's cavaliers when he fell and the resting place of the statuette is where he died in battle? Further research is needed to clarify the object.

There are no references to burials related to the skirmish in the Millom registers so the location of any bodies is unknown.^{xii}

Duane Farren has found numerous musket and cannon balls in the vicinity of the Castle.



Artefacts from the English Civil War 1644? Duane Farren

Up to Victorian Times

The main evidence for this period is coinage found in the Children's Field by Josh Carr.



King Charles II 1660-1685, Josh Carr



King William 3rd 1689-1702, Josh Carr



French Jeton (?) Josh Carr



King George 3rd 1760-1820, Josh Carr



King George 4th 1820-1830, Josh Carr



Victorian Florin 1837-1901, Josh Carr

Most of the above artefacts are portable, i.e. they were likely dropped, in particular by people visiting the market and fair. It is doubtful the surveys will find any evidence of the market as the stalls would have been wooden and portable. However, there may be evidence of the vicarage and possibly other structures.

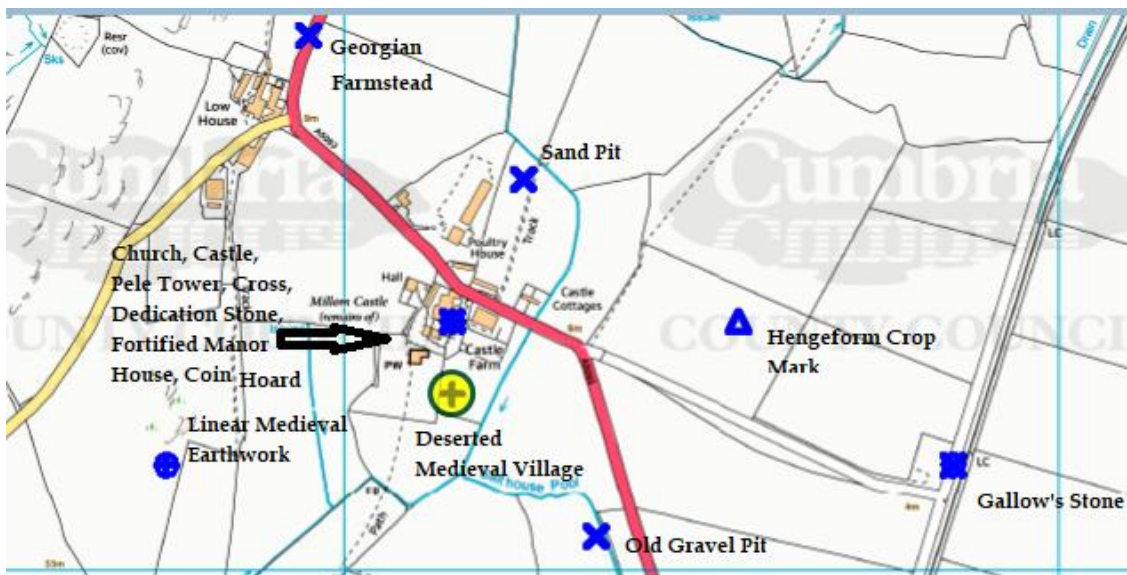
LiDAR

LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) provides detailed aerial overviews of sites and can be used to identify evidence of previous structures/habitation and archaeological features which might otherwise remain hidden. Here is a LiDAR image of our site which clearly suggests earthworks in field 3. The image also implies the raised nature of our area.



LiDAR Image © LiDARFinder

Historic Environment Record



© Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Record^{xiii}

The above image shows the results of a search on the Historic Environment Records for Cumbria. From this you can see how near the cropmark is and also that the deserted medieval village is identified to the south of the Castle, which is a different position to that shown on old maps where it is placed near the Castle Cottages.

Project Delivery

Publicity

The Millom and District History Society has a comprehensive website and Facebook group of more than 1,000 members where the Project was publicised. In addition, the local news media and other related Facebook pages promoted the project. Border and Granada TV News also covered Josh Carr's finds of the six socketed bronze axe heads and included our successful funding bid to conduct this project.

Volunteers

Thirteen local people volunteered to be part of the project with a reserve list of several more. In the event, twelve volunteers took part.

An initial 'Getting To Know You' event was held at Holy Trinity Church on 1st April 2023 where volunteers registered and gave permission for photographs to be used in the publicity. An overview of the project was provided. Volunteers and history society members introduced themselves and shared why they wanted to be involved and the wealth of skills and knowledge they were contributing. The volunteers were from a range of backgrounds and many originally from Millom and the surrounding area.

Duane Farren and Josh Carr, finders of many of the artefacts and a descendant of the Huddleston family were also involved. Here are some of the volunteers from the session:



Volunteer Session, 1st April 2023, Jan Bridget

Local Involvement

The importance of involving local people with knowledge of the area was key and added useful anecdotal evidence to the process; Andrew O'Brien, who grew up near the Castle and worked on the farm, shared historical knowledge which would otherwise be lost. He recounted one story about part of a Roman helmet being found whilst digging foundations at the Castle farm for a cowshed in the mid 1970's; sadly the whereabouts of it is unknown.

Andrew and his brother were also very helpful in explaining the area around the Castle and Church, advising on the order the surveys should be conducted and supporting the archaeologists and volunteers at all of the surveys.

The Surveys

Greenlane Archaeology commissioned Phase Site Investigations Ltd,^{xiv} to conduct the non-intrusive surveys with the Geophysical Survey equipment. They completed the field behind the Old School (field 1) and the one behind Castle Cottages (field 2) on 24th and 25th April 2023. The field to the south of the Church (field 4) was completed with volunteers on 26th and 27th May 2023. Field 3 was not surveyed at this stage due to the presence of cows, however the archaeologists felt there was sufficient evidence of earthworks to merit a trench being sunk here in the next phases.

26.5.23: Volunteer Survey

Seven volunteers were trained to use the equipment and completed a survey of Field 4 alongside the archaeologist. The following photos show some of the volunteers chatting to Daniel Elsworth, archaeologist of Greenlane Archaeology Ltd., who managed the archaeological element of the project followed by some volunteer action photos which include Jelmer Wubs, the archaeologist from Phase Site Investigations Ltd:



Day One, Jonathan Brind



Day One, Jonathan Brind



Day One, Jonathan Brind

“Awesome day.”

“Really good day. Well organised as usual.”

27.5.23 Volunteer Survey

Five volunteers took part on the second day:

“What a brilliant day I have had today doing something very different from metal detecting.”

“What a great morning ...I loved it, thank you...always trying to be ready for next volunteering stuff.”



Day Two, Josh Carr



Day Two, Jake Huddleston



Day Two, Josh Carr

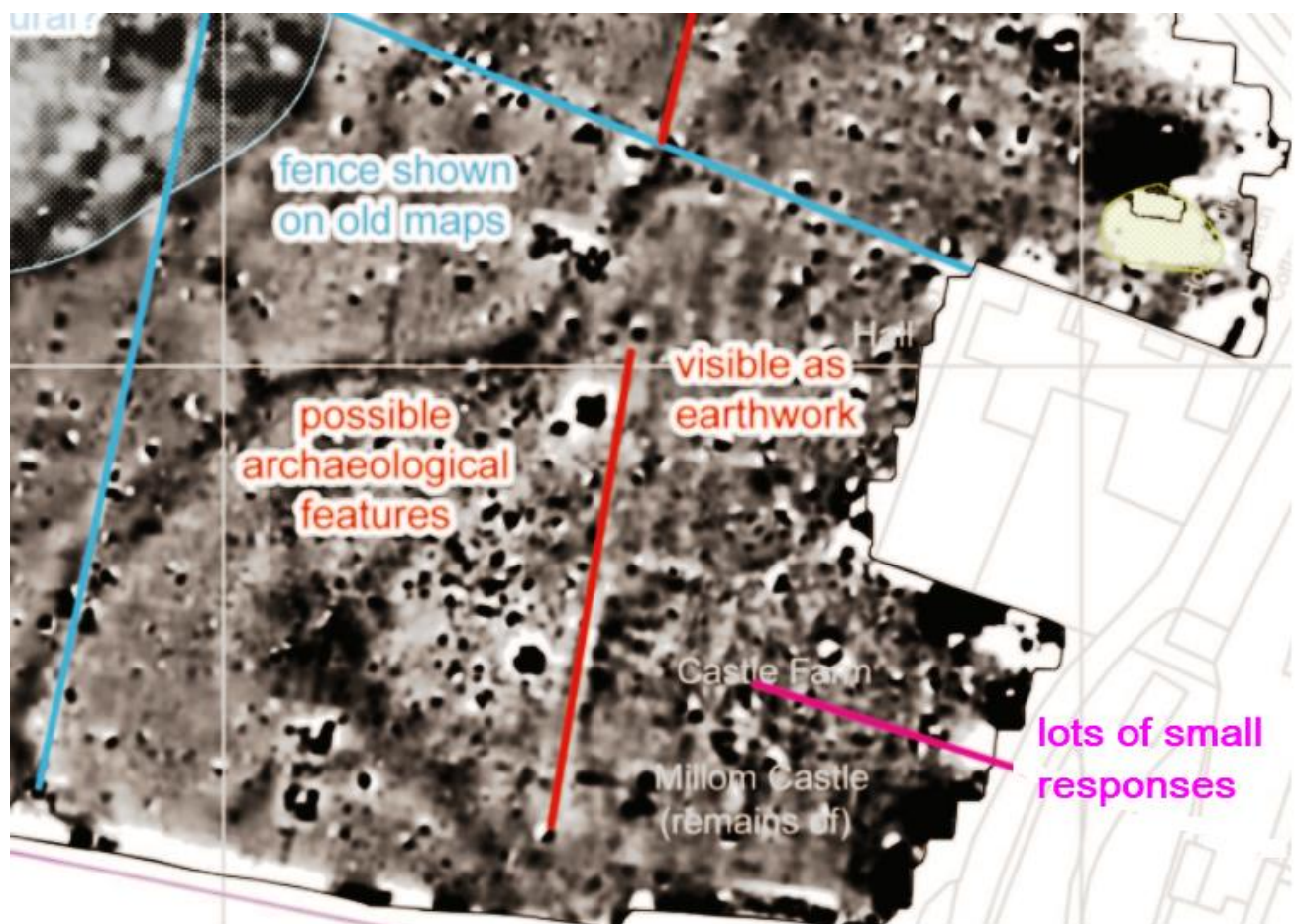
Findings

The surveys produced images of anomalies in the ground beneath the surface that may identify any previous earthworks or activity such as buildings, roads or other archaeological features; this can then be cross referenced with the other evidence.

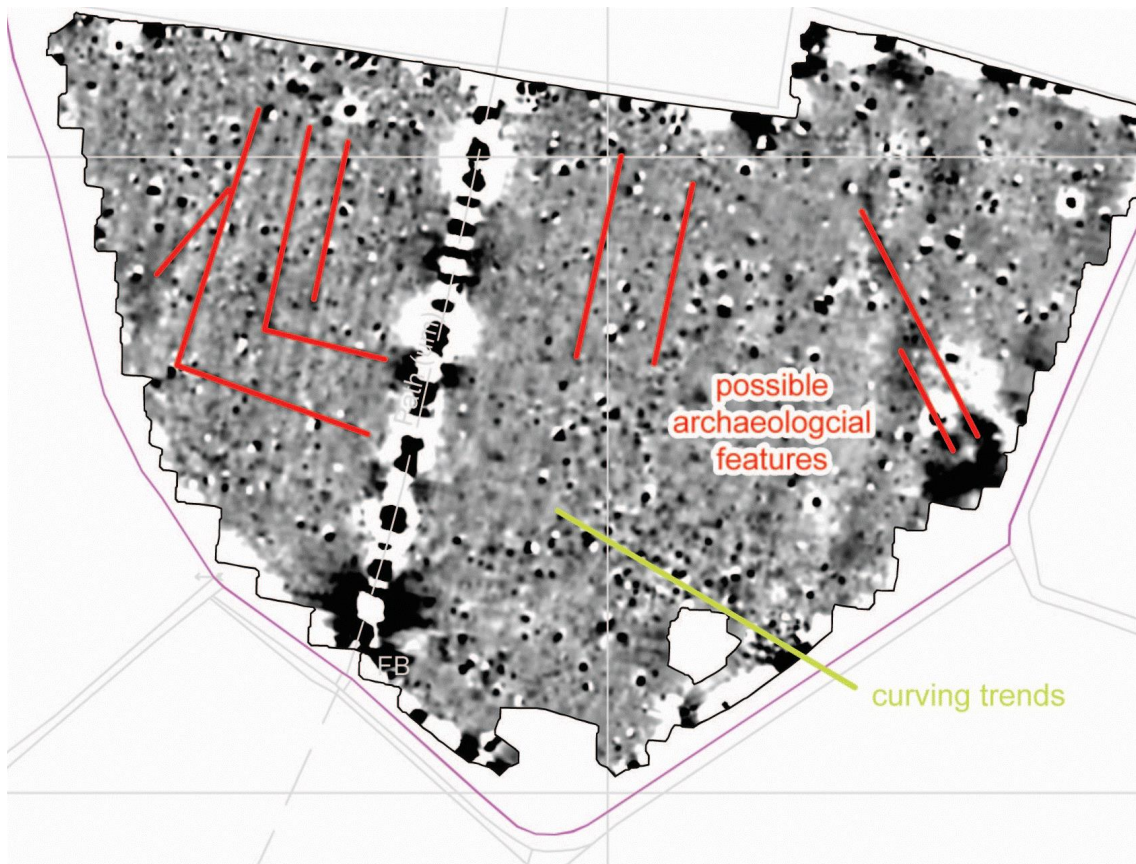
Across all the fields anomalies were identified by the surveys that could be the result of agricultural, or other modern features / activity or natural variations from glacial movements in the landscape. There are also several positive linear anomalies and trends which are suggestive of drainage features but the possibility that some could be related to infilled archaeological ditches cannot be completely discounted. A number of other anomalies of uncertain origin were also found and some of these could be related to archaeological features requiring further exploration and evidence.

Full details and explanations of the survey and the results can be found in *Land at Millom Castle and Holy Trinity Church, Millom, Archaeological Geophysical Survey Project No. ARC/3188/1331, June 2023*; a link to this document will be added to the website.

Field 1



In Field 1 signals suggested a lot of activity to the south of the old school, perhaps structures or something relating to the site of a market. The line of a feature visible on the ground as an earthwork that might be an



Field 4

Field 4 was first surveyed with data collected walking broadly west / east and then resurveyed in a broadly north / south direction. Changing directions would allow a comparison of the data to determine if the direction of survey has an effect on the data.

There are several interesting lines which could possibly be a double-ditched enclosure, of maybe Prehistoric or Romano-British date. The presence of old drainage needs to be established. The black and white line is the path. There are also some possible curving semi-circular features.

What next?

The next stage is to explore the anomalies further which requires permission from the owners to dig small trenches in all four fields plus the previously surveyed cropmark field with a possible kiln and ancient road. If permission is given, further funding can be applied for the next stage in the archaeological study.

Subject to permissions and funding, the trenches could commence in the Autumn of this year.

Evaluation

The Project and the volunteers' experiences were evaluated and it is clear from the comments and feedback that the volunteers gained much from their involvement and valued their experience.

"The survey day provided a comprehensive sweep across the techniques and processes that need to be carried out, including: erecting and dismantling the equipment; laying out the survey grid in the field; operating the scanner; maintaining and checking the grid accuracy achieved; reviewing preliminary results. Being a wholly practical event, this was a really good introduction to the process – with (obviously) much more to learn."

"I learned a lot about geo physics including what we needed to do, what kind of things the process will detect and not, how we need to follow up anomalies with other searches and what can compromise the process."

"I have benefited socially through meeting like-minded, history passionate people. I also enjoy learning from others knowledge and expertise, even in areas that I haven't expressed an interest in before. It feels good to be a part of living history in unearthing what lies beneath."

"The project has increased my knowledge of the potential of geophysical surveys and how the findings could guide the next stages of the project in terms of archaeological investigations. A worthwhile opportunity to meet and share information and ideas with a group of people who enjoy discovering more about the local history of Millom."

"It was good to meet up with others with a similar interest in local history. A thoroughly enjoyable day doing practical measurements that can be used to investigate local history. It has made me more aware of the potential we have in this area."

"Tremendous. Millom is looking for a new role half a century after the iron industry that dominated the town died. Clearly the place has stunning landscapes and a very pleasant climate, but it could do with a greater sense of its own place in history. That history is mostly unknown or disjointed (ie Swinside has a vast reputation but its place in local history is obscure)."

"I think the project has immense value for Millom and the local community - the project raises the stakes as an area of geological and historical interest, will attract more historians and experts to consider Millom's pre industrial history. In terms of tourism, the Castle and Church attracts its own family historians and medievalists, this project will capture footfall and attract footfall to the Castle and its grounds area."

"If the Millom community can tap into this footfall of visitors then an historical attraction would benefit the local tourism industry."

"The project provides a focal point for bringing members of the community together who share an interest in local history. The level of interest locally can be seen in the large numbers who attend meetings organised by M&DLHS . It allows an opportunity for people to share their local knowledge and discussions can highlight areas for further research. This project raises awareness of the wealth of local history in the area and the potential for discovering even more. It brings the importance of the H Trinity church and Millom Castle into focus as significant historical buildings over time."

"I've really enjoyed meeting others who know much more about the area including those who have lived on the site, detectorists and local historians."

"It's like bringing local history to life and connecting it to wider well known events."

Acknowledgements

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Jonathan Brind
Josh Carr
Kathryn Miller
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References

ⁱ See <https://www.millomhistory.org.uk/projects/triangle.html>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.millomhistory.org.uk/projects/stones.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.millomhistory.org.uk/projects/prehistory.html>

^{iv} See HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, MILLOM, CUMBRIA Stones Recording Project, Greenlane Archaeology Ltd November 2022.

^v The flints were donated to Millom Heritage and Arts Centre.

^{vi} Transactions 002, 1939, Vol 39

^{vii} Further information on our website

^{viii} Diary, vol xviii., 46.

^{ix} <https://www.millomhistory.org.uk/time/roman.html>

^x <http://www.matthewpemmott.co.uk/2007/04/millom-castle-cumbria.html?fbclid=IwAR2rdKtdgD-shRQVJ4Lr2814aq4QXmb1NgOtdYWdiQlg14EPW-UMqfXUli4>

^{xi} Nathaniel Ward, M.A., of King's College, Cambridge. Vicar of Staindrop. Slain, fighting for the King at Millum Castle, Cumberland, 1644. "He was a very learned and estimable person."—*Cooper*.—Born, 1605. Left School, 1620. Died, 1644

^{xii} Thanks to Bry Cooper. The register for 1648, when there was possibly another skirmish, is missing.

^{xiii} <https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/chr/herdetail.aspx?crit=&ctid=90&id=4719>

^{xiv} <http://www.phasesi.com/>

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