



Gas Main, Winfrith Technology Centre, Wool, Dorset

Observations and Recording



Report No. 53373/3/1

May 2012

Gas Main, Winfrith Technology Centre, Wool, Dorset

Archaeological Observations and Recording, March 2012

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Project Report Summary Page

Project Details			
OASIS Reference	terrains1-122937		
Project Title	Gas Main Replacement, Winfrith Technology Centre, Dorset		
Short Description of Project	In March 2012, Terrain Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief during machine trenching by Southern Gas Networks for installation of a new replacement gas main between the A352 and the Winfrith Technology Centre, near Wool, Dorset (centred on OS NGR SY82128642). No archaeological features or finds were identified within the trench, but a small group of flint flakes was retrieved from ploughsoil adjacent to the trench, primarily from the southern end of its route.		
Project Dates	Start: 24-03-2012	End: 24-03-2012	
Previous/Future Work	No/No		
Project Code	53373		
Monument Type and Period	None		
Significant Finds	Flake (Late Prehistoric)		
Project Location			
County/District/Parish	Dorset/ Purbeck/Wool		
Site Address	Winfrith Technology Centre, Dorchester Dorset, DT2 8FD		
Site Coordinates	SY 8212 8642		
Site Area	116 m ²		
Height OD			
Project Creators			
Organisation	Terrain Archaeology		
Project Brief Originator	None		
Project Design Originator	None		
Project Supervisor	Mike Trevarthen		
Project Manager	Peter Bellamy		
Sponsor or Funding Body	SGN		
Project Archive			
Archive Type	Physical	Digital	Paper
Location/Accession No		Terrain Archaeology offices, pending deposition with Dorset County Museum.	Terrain Archaeology offices, pending deposition with Dorset County Museum.
Contents	None	Digital photography	context sheets, photographs, plans, report

Gas Main, Winfrith Technology Centre, Wool, Dorset

Archaeological Observations and Recording, March 2012

1. Introduction

1.1 Project Introduction

Terrain Archaeology was commissioned by SGN Ltd to carry out archaeological observations and recording during trenching for the installation of a new gas main between the A354 west of Burton Cross and Winfrith Technology Centre (Figure 1, centred on OS NGR SY 8212 8642). The observations were requested because of the proximity of the works to an extant Bronze Age round barrow (Scheduled Monument number 29044), about 280m to the west.

'Archaeological observations and recording', also more colloquially known as an archaeological watching brief, is defined by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) as *"a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive"* (IfA 2008). Its purposes are: *"to allow, within the resources available, the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established (or established with sufficient accuracy) in advance of development or other potentially disruptive works "* and *"to provide an opportunity, if needed, for the watching archaeologist to signal to all interested parties, before the destruction of the material in question, that an archaeological find has been made for which the resources allocated to the watching brief itself are not sufficient to support treatment to a satisfactory and proper standard."*

Fieldwork was carried out on 24th March 2012 by Mike Trevarthen (AlfA). The project was managed for Terrain Archaeology by Peter Bellamy.

Terrain Archaeology gratefully acknowledges the assistance of Colin Osborne (Projects Manager, SGN) and the site contractors NuCo Utilities Ltd. The archaeological programme was monitored on behalf of the local planning authority by Steve Wallis (DCC Senior Archaeologist, Advice and Management).

1.2 Brief

No written brief was issued, but the scope of the works was discussed between SGN and Steve Wallis, Senior Archaeologist (Advice and Management), Dorset County Council.

1.3 Site Location and Topography

The site (centred on OS NGR SY82128642) comprised the line of the replacement gas main which traversed two arable fields, separated by a hedge and ditch, and referred to here as the north and south fields (Figures 1-2; Plates 1-2). The north field was flat and level. In the southern field the traverse rose gently up to a slightly elevated localised flat plateau occupying the southern half of the field.

1.4 Geology

The underlying geology is mapped as sand of the West Park Farm Member of the London Clay Formation. Superficial deposits in the northern part are recorded as Quaternary sands and gravels of River Terrace Deposits 3 (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

1.5 Archaeological and Historical Background

The site is located on gently undulating arable farmland, improved from former heathland. No archaeological sites or finds have previously been recorded from the close vicinity of the site but a Bronze Age round barrow survives as a low earthwork mound some 280 m to the west (RCHME 1970, 473). Mesolithic occupation traces have been found about 2 km to the northeast (Palmer and Dimbleby 1979). Further round barrows lie to the west at Tadnoll and Blacknoll (RCHME 1970). Iron Age and Roman occupation traces have been recorded to the south east of the site, on the opposite side of the A352 south of Burton Cross (Fowler 1962), and a deserted medieval settlement lies somewhat to the south west at West Burton (Field and Taylor 1966).

1.6 Aims and Objectives

The aim of the archaeological programme was to establish and make available information about the archaeological resource existing on the site.

Its objectives were:

- To observe and record the all the *in situ* archaeological deposits and features revealed during the groundworks to an appropriate archaeological standard.
- To present the results in a report to the appropriate standard.

1.7 Fieldwork

The fieldwork comprised the mechanical excavation of a continuous trench about 290 m long, 0.4 m wide and 1.1 m deep, which was observed archaeologically. In addition, as the entire length of the trench lay within, or adjacent to, weathered ploughed land, a transect about 10 m wide was informally walked along, or adjacent to, the pipe-route to recover of surface artefacts. The aim of this recovery was to augment any material retrieved from the excavated soils and, in the absence of any previous site information, to provide a control sample against which the importance (or otherwise) of any trench-finds could be assessed.

1.8 Methods

All archaeological works were carried out in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists *Code of Conduct and Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (IfA 2008).

All exposed deposits and features, regardless of their perceived date and significance, were recorded using components of Terrain Archaeology's system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records. . These have been compiled in a stable, cross-referenced and fully indexed archive in accordance with current AAF guidelines (2007), IfA guidelines (2009) and the requirements of the receiving museum.

A digital photographic record of the watching brief was maintained, incorporating specific aspects of its technical detail as well as its conduct and wider townscape setting.

1.9 Archive and Dissemination

The project archive, comprising written, graphic and photographic records, and appropriate background documentation, is currently stored by Terrain Archaeology under the project code 53373. In due course, and subject to the legal agreement of the landowner to full Transfer of Title, it is anticipated that those components of the archive not re-interred on site, or selected for discard in accordance with appropriate policies will be accessioned for long-term curation and storage by the Dorset County Museum, Dorchester, which has agreed, in principal, to accept it, subject to fulfilment of the Museum's requirements of the preparation of archaeological archives. Deposition of the archive will place it in the public domain.

A paper copy of this report will be lodged with Dorset County Council's Historic Environment Record (HER). The HER is a publicly funded and accessible resource, and deposition of the report will place it, and the project results, in the public domain.

A digital summary of the archive will be placed with the OASIS project (www.oasis.ac.uk) under the reference code *terrains1-122937*. A digital copy of this report will be uploaded for inclusion in the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) online 'grey literature' library.

A brief summary of the fieldwork results will be published by Terrain Archaeology in the next edition of the *Proceedings of the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society*. No further publication is proposed.

2. Results

2.1 Archaeological Deposits

No archaeological features or finds were identified within the pipe trench or the excavated soils.

2.2 Soil Profiles

Soil profiles were recorded in four key locations along the pipe route, representative of the different topographic zones encountered.

At the north end of the trench the soil profile comprised 0.2 m depth of mid-dark grey brown loamy silt ploughsoil (100) containing moderate brecciated flint gravel, over about 0.2 m of darker grey-brown sandy loam (101) with variable quantities of flint gravel. This lower soil sealed the upper exposure of natural deposits (102), comprising variably composed pale yellow and buff sand with gravelly drifts, sometimes becoming more clayey with depth. There was some humic staining and mineral/silt enrichment of the upper natural soils.

The profile at the north end of the south field comprised about 0.3m of ploughsoil directly over natural orange and pale grey/off-white sand with some gravel and white silty pipeclay seams.

Rising ground to the south saw ploughsoil to a depth of about 0.4 m above dark orange-brown loamy colluvium (103).

In the elevated southern part of the south field, about 0.3m of ploughsoil directly overlay natural pale yellow and grey loamy and clayey sand inter-bedded with white pipeclay seams.

3. Finds

3.1 Finds Assemblage

No finds were recovered from the excavation of the new gas main trench itself. However, a small assemblage of struck flint flakes was collected during the informal surface collection along the pipe-route.

3.2 Flint

A total of twenty artificially struck flint flakes (480.3g) was retrieved. One flake (6.3g) was recovered from the lower-lying north field, with nineteen flakes (474g) from the southern field – mostly from the elevated southern area.

All the flint artefacts were primary or secondary flakes, bearing worn nodule cortex and consistent with exploitation of local secondary nodular- and gravel flint. Where it was possible to determine method of manufacture, hard hammer percussion had been employed – usually on flaked striking platforms. The stone varied in quality and character, from translucent dark grey and brown to opaque, mottled pale grey. One flake bore a thin ochre-brown band immediately below its cortex. The group was in moderately sharp condition with some post-depositional edge damage, and was entirely unpatinated.

No tools, cores or burnt flint were found. Notwithstanding the small sample recovered, this may suggest that the material represents opportunistic testing and working of surface nodules, possibly over a considerable span of time, rather than evidence for occupation or settlement. The flake-based assemblage and absence of prepared blades or blade flakes would seem consistent with a broadly Late Neolithic – to Bronze Age date.

The surface-collected finds are considered to be of low significance and negligible archival value, and have been discarded. A full quantification of the finds is retained in the site archive

4. Discussion and Conclusions

4.1 Conclusions

No archaeological features or finds were identified during monitoring of the trenching works. A small amount of prehistoric flaked flint was retrieved from ploughed land immediately adjacent to the trench, mostly from the elevated southern part of the south field, near the A352. Deeper colluvium was noted on the rising ground in the northern part of the south field, reflecting the readily mobile nature of soils in the area, even on comparatively gentle slopes. The absence of tools, cores or burnt flint from the surface artefacts collection, and the character of the assemblage, may suggest opportunistic field-knapping of surface nodules, perhaps in the Later Neolithic and/or Bronze Age, rather than evidence for settlement or occupation.

5. References

- | | | |
|------------------------------|------|---|
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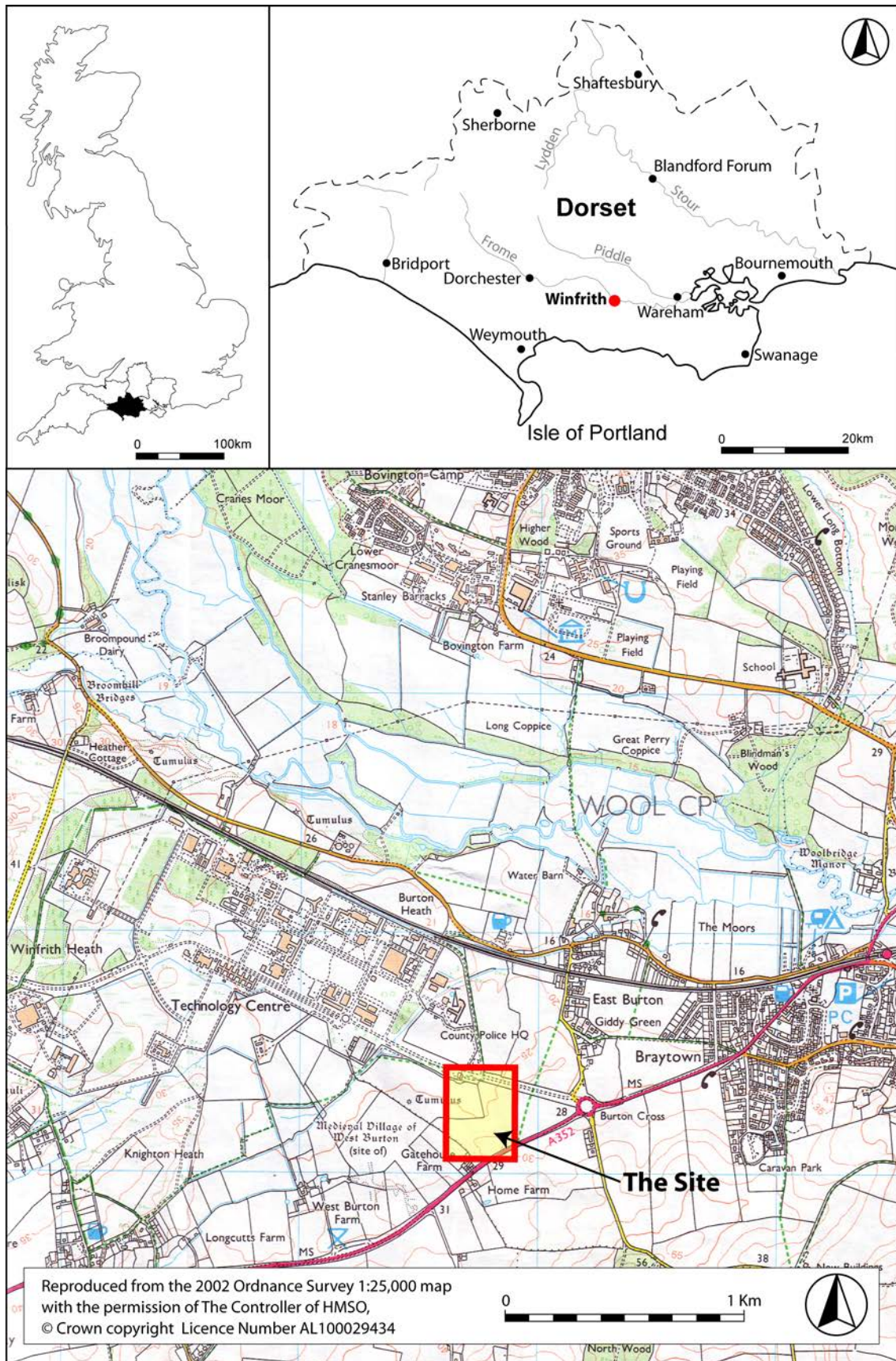


Figure 1: Location map.

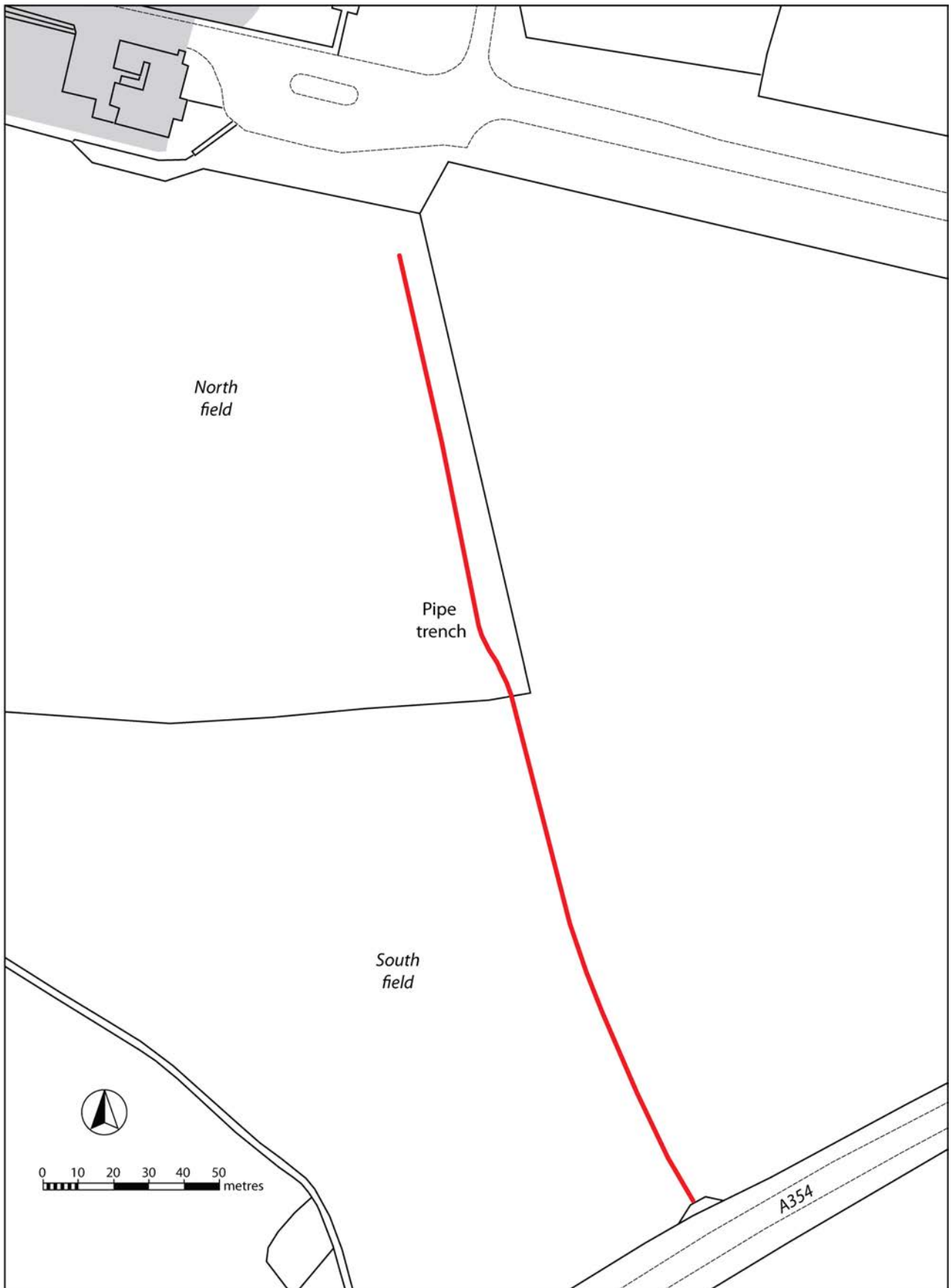


Figure 2: Plan of the route of the new gas main



Plate 1: Trenching in the north field, viewed from the north.



Plate 2: Trenching on rising ground in the south field, viewed from the north.