



**REPLACEMENT GAS MAIN, CHARMOUTH TO  
MORCOMBELAKE, WEST DORSET  
Archaeological Watching Brief**



**Report No. 53314/3/1**

**March 2011**

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**Archaeological Watching Brief,  
February–November 2010**

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## Archaeological Watching Brief, Feb–Nov 2010

### CONTENTS

Summary .....	1
Introduction .....	1
Archaeological and Historical background .....	1
Aims and Objectives .....	2
Methods.....	2
Results .....	2
<i>Ship Knapp (Trenches 2-5)</i> .....	2
<i>Greenland Farm to St Gabriel's Gate (Trenches 1, 6-14)</i> .....	2
<i>Stonebarrow Hill (Trenches 15-32)</i> .....	3
<i>South of Stonebarrow Lane (Trenches 33-37)</i> .....	3
<i>North of Stonebarrow Lane to Bellair Farm (Trenches 50-53)</i> .....	3
<i>Finds</i> .....	3
Discussion .....	3
Project Archive .....	4
References .....	4
Figures	
1 Location map .....	5
2 Location of Trenches 1-6 (Ship Knapp and Greenlands Farm).....	6
3 Location of Trenches 7-21 (Greenlands Farm to St Gabriel's Gate and Stonebarrow Hill).....	7
4 Location of trenches 22-53 (Stonebarrow Hill, South of Stonebarrow Lane and North of Stonebarrow Lane to Bellair Farm).....	8
Plates	
1 View NE down Ship Knap during excavation of Trench 5.....	9
2 Trench 3 cut into edge of hedgebank, looking WNW.....	9
3 View WSW along track up Chardown Hill looking towards St Gabriel's Gate with Trench 9 in foreground.....	9
4 Trench 13 looking SW showing natural deposits beneath the track gravels.....	10
5 View east along Stonebarrow Hill with Trench 25 in foreground and Trench 24 in background.....	10
6 Trench 21 viewed from SW showing topsoil over natural deposits .....	10
7 Drilling operations in Stonebarrow Hill car park looking east towards Trench 32.....	11
8 Trench 30 looking NE showing car park deposits .....	11
9 General view of fields and boundaries south of Stonebarrow Lane, looking ESE towards Trench 36 from Trench 35 .....	11
10 Colluvial deposits in Trench 35 .....	12
11 General view of area north of Stonebarrow Lane, looking NE towards Trenches 51 and 52 from Trench 50 .....	12
12 Trench 52 during insertion of gas pipe .....	12
Appendix	
1 Pit Data .....	13

# **Replacement Gas Main, Charmouth to Morcombelake, West Dorset**

## **Archaeological Watching Brief, February-November 2010**

### **SUMMARY**

*An archaeological watching brief was carried out by Terrain Archaeology between February and November 2010 during the replacement of the gas main between Charmouth and Morecombelake in West Dorset. The new gas main was inserted by underground drilling and a total of 41 drilling pits or short lengths of open cut trench were observed. No archaeology was recorded.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Terrain Archaeology was commissioned by SGN Ltd to undertake archaeological observations and recording during the renewal of the gas main from Charmouth to Morcombelake, West Dorset.

The route of the new main was from Ship Knapp, Morcombelake (SY40379380) west-south-west along the top of Stonebarrow Hill, then part way down Stonebarrow Lane to SY37809326 and then north to Bellair Farm (SY37959378) (Figure 1). The new gas main was drilled between inspection pits excavated by machine.

An archaeological watching brief has been defined in the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* as “a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons, within a specified area or site [...] 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.”

The geology is Jurassic Lias clays capped by layers of Gault Upper Greensand sand and chert beds of the Cretaceous period. The highest land at Stonebarrow is capped with beds of Upper Greensand and Gault and on the lower ground, the Upper, Middle, and Lower Lias beds are exposed. The bedrock is unstable and prone to slumping.

The fieldwork was undertaken between 10<sup>th</sup> February and 26<sup>th</sup> November 2010 by Peter Bellamy and Mike Trevarthen. The drawings were by Mike Trevarthen and Peter Bellamy.

Terrain Archaeology would like to acknowledge the following people for their help and cooperation during this project: Colin Osborne (SGN); Dave Shipton and crew (NuCo Utilities); Tez and crew (Olsen International Drilling Ltd); Martin Papworth (The National Trust).

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

The archaeological and historical background of Stonebarrow Hill Estate is set out in the National Trust's Golden Cap Estate Historic Landscape Survey (Papworth 2000). In 2005, Terrain Archaeology carried out a watching brief during the laying of a new water supply to the National Trust's Golden Cap Estate (Tatler and Bellamy 2006), which ran from Morcombelake across Chardown Hill and Stonebarrow Hill, down to Stanton St Gabriel and to the various farms within the National Trust estate.

Prehistoric and Romano-British finds have been limited to finds from coastal cliff falls or linked to excavations of sites threatened by coastal erosion. The road across Stonebarrow Hill has been suggested as part of the Roman road from Dorchester to Exeter. The watching brief confirmed the general lack of finds from all areas except close to the farms and Stanton St Gabriel, suggesting the area was marginal land from the prehistoric period onwards and was very sparsely settled except along the coastal strip.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

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

The archaeological works aimed to observe and record all the *in situ* archaeological deposits and features revealed during the groundworks to an appropriate professional standard.

## **METHODS**

The work was carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Code of Conduct and Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs* (2008). No written brief or Written Scheme of Investigation was produced.

The new gas main was drilled by an underground drilling rig drilling between drilling pits of variable distance apart depending on the local geological conditions. Small stretches on Stonebarrow Hill were laid in short lengths of open trench.

The observation of the pipe trenching operations along most of the route was partial, as defined by the Institute of Field Archaeologists, with a suitably qualified archaeologist present as and when seemed appropriate. In practice, observations often took place after the pits had been dug, but before drilling. A number of pits were not observed until after drilling and were largely filled with drilling mud, as were most of the 'blow holes'. Although, the full section of these pits could not be observed, the upper part of the section of nearly all these pits was observable and it was clear that there were no archaeological features cut into the natural.

All deposits and features exposed during the groundworks were recorded using elements of Terrain Archaeology's recording system of complementary written, drawn and photographic records.

## **RESULTS**

The gas main was drilled from east to west and will be described in the same direction. For ease of description, the route has been subdivided into a number of individual areas. The location of each trench is shown on Figures 2-4 and described in Appendix 1.

### **Ship Knapp (Trenches 2-5)**

Four drilling pits (Trenches 2-5) were excavated by machine along the northern verge of Ship Knapp (Figure 2; Plate 1). Two of the trenches were partially dug into the edge of the hedgebank forming the boundary to the road (Plate 2). No archaeology was revealed. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.3 m of topsoil over orangey-grey sand natural.

### **Greenland Farm to St Gabriel's Gate (Trenches 1, 6-14)**

Six drilling pits (Trenches 1, 6-10, 13) and three 'blow holes' (11-12, 14) were excavated by machine along the farm track from the turn off to Greenland Farm up the side of Chardown Hill to

St Gabriel's Gate (Figures 2-3; Plate 3). No archaeology was revealed. The stratigraphy consisted of the stone metalling of the current farm track between 0.15 – 0.25 m thick, over sand, gravel and clay track make-up between 0.05-0.6m thick (Plate 4). Natural deposits were revealed at a depth of between 0.3-0.9m below ground level.

### **Stonebarrow Hill (Trenches 15-32)**

Sixteen drilling pits and 'blow holes' (Trenches 15, 17-20, 22-32) and two short lengths of open-cut trench (16, 21) were excavated by machine along the edge of the track (or car park) from Gabriel's Gate in the east to the end of Stonebarrow Lane in the west (Figures 3-4; Plates 5-8). No archaeology was revealed. The stratigraphy consisted of the stone metalling of the track or car park between 0.20 – 0.50 m thick or topsoil about 0.25m thick. There was a 0.15- 0.3 m thick layer of stony clay makeup beneath the car park area at the west end of Stonebarrow (Trenches 30-31) (Plate 8). The natural deposits were revealed at a depth of between 0.1-0.5m below ground level.

### **South of Stonebarrow Lane (Pits 33-37)**

Five drilling pits (Trenches 33-37) were excavated by machine either in the south verge of Stonebarrow Lane or in the fields to the south (Figure 4; Plates 9-10). No archaeology was revealed. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil about 0.25m thick over a layer of greyish-brown colluvium 0.35-0.5m thick (Plate 10). The natural deposits were revealed at a depth of between 0.3-0.75m below ground level.

### **North of Stonebarrow Lane to Bellair Farm (Trenches 50-53)**

Four drilling pits (Trenches 50-53) were excavated by machine running down the slope to the north of Stonebarrow Lane towards Bellair Farm (Figure 4; Plates 11-12). Trench 53 was backfilled before recording. No archaeology was revealed. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil about 0.25m thick over a subsoil or colluvium between 0.2-0.65m thick. This sealed natural or Head deposits at a depth of between 0.15-0.8m below ground level.

### **Finds**

No finds were recovered from the observations.

## **DISCUSSION**

No archaeological features or finds were recorded during the watching brief. This may be partly a result of the drilling method used to insert the new pipe, which meant that only a number of small pits were excavated along the length of the pipeline. It may be that the small trenches managed to miss any archaeology in the area. However, on Stonebarrow Hill no finds or features were revealed in the two lengths of open-cut trench either (Trenches 16 and 21), suggesting that there was a genuine lack of archaeological evidence along the pipeline route. This confirms the conclusion reached in the 2005 watching brief during the renewal of the water supply to the National Trust's Golden Cap Estate (Tatler and Bellamy 2006). This revealed almost no archaeological finds or features and none on the high ground of Chardown Hill and Stonebarrow other than a relatively recent boundary.

In conclusion, the results of this watching brief suggest that this area was marginal land and was not densely settled or used in the past. The character of the topography and the nature of the geology means that for most of the prehistoric and historic periods the area was agricultural land, perhaps largely pasture land.

## PROJECT ARCHIVE

The archive and finds (Terrain Archaeology Project No. 53314) will be deposited with the National Trust, Wessex Regional Office.

## REFERENCES

- |                                |      |   |
|--------------------------------|------|---|
| IFA                            | 2008 | <i>Code of Conduct and Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs</i> . Institute of Field Archaeologists.  |
| Papworth, M.                   | 2000 | <i>The National Trust Archaeological and Historic Landscape Survey, Golden Cap Estate, Dorset</i> . Unpublished National Trust report, September 2000.              |
| Tatler, S. and Bellamy, P. S., | 2006 | <i>Golden Cap Water Supply Renewal, West Dorset: Archaeological Watching Brief, September–December 2005</i> . Terrain Archaeology Report No. 53199/3/1, March 2006. |



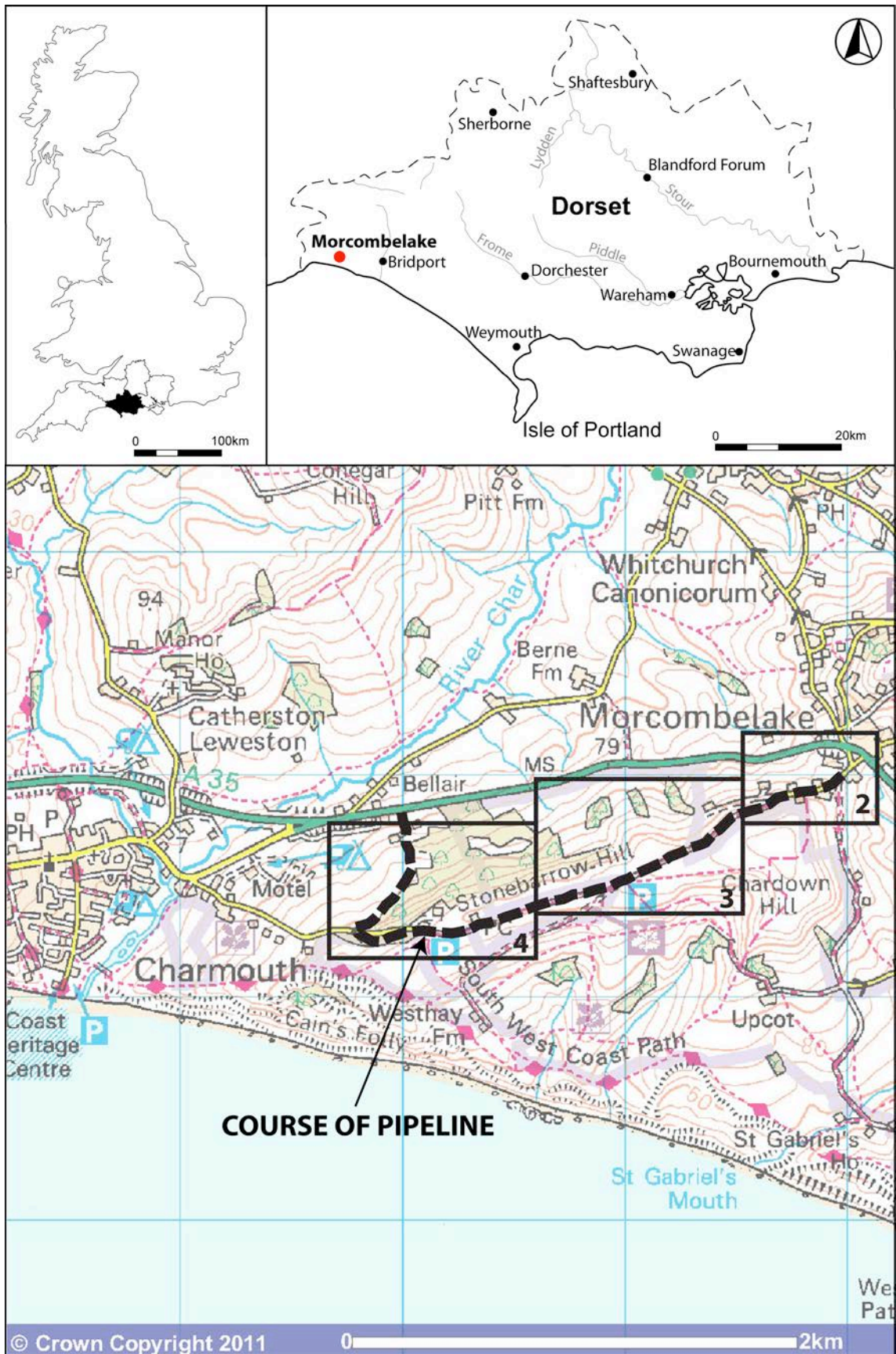


Figure 1: Location map



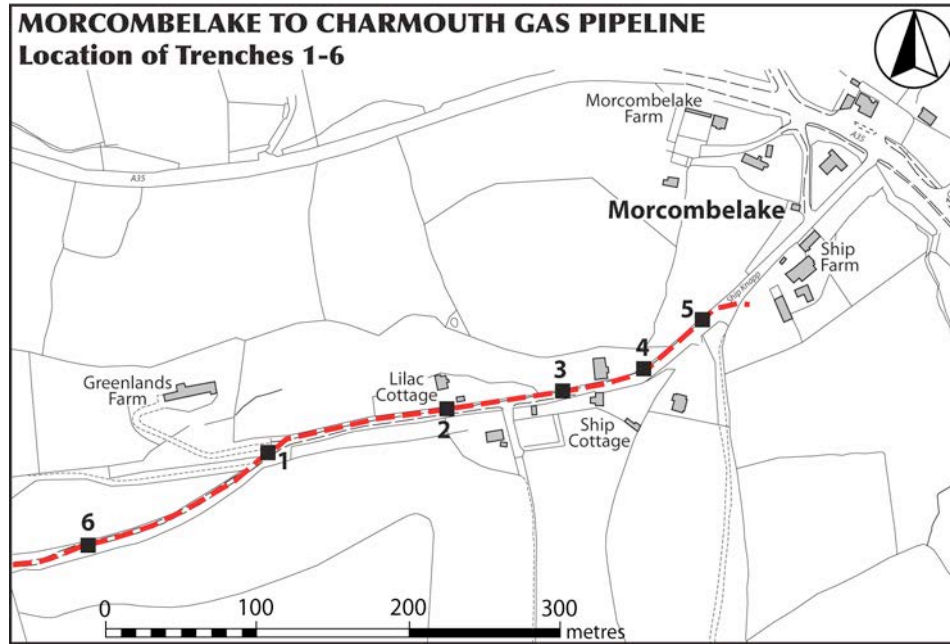


Figure 2: Location of Trenches 1-6 (Ship Knapp and Greenlands Farm)

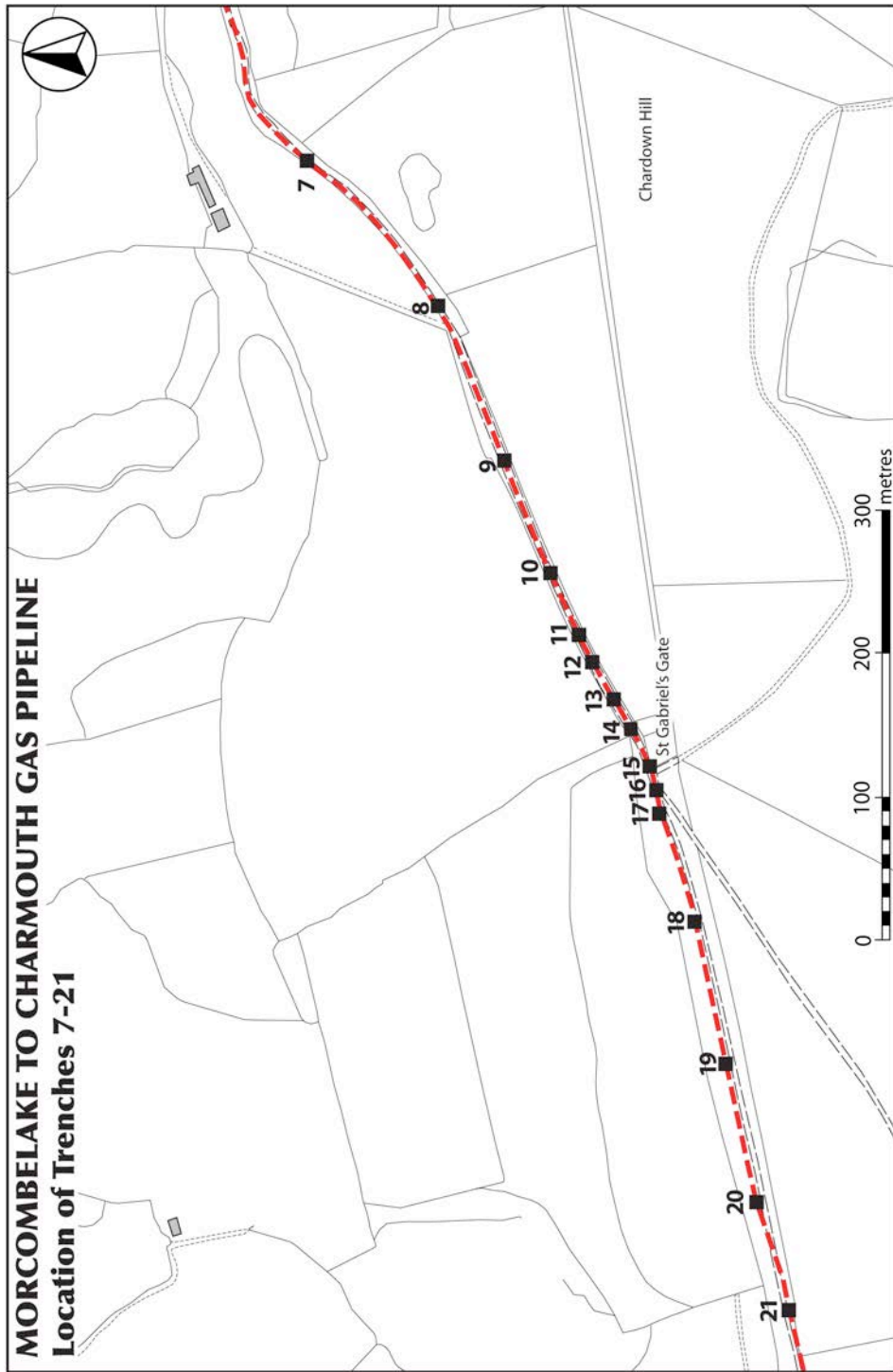


Figure 3: Location of Trenches 7-21 (Greenlands Farm to St Gabriel's Gate and Stonebarrow Hill)

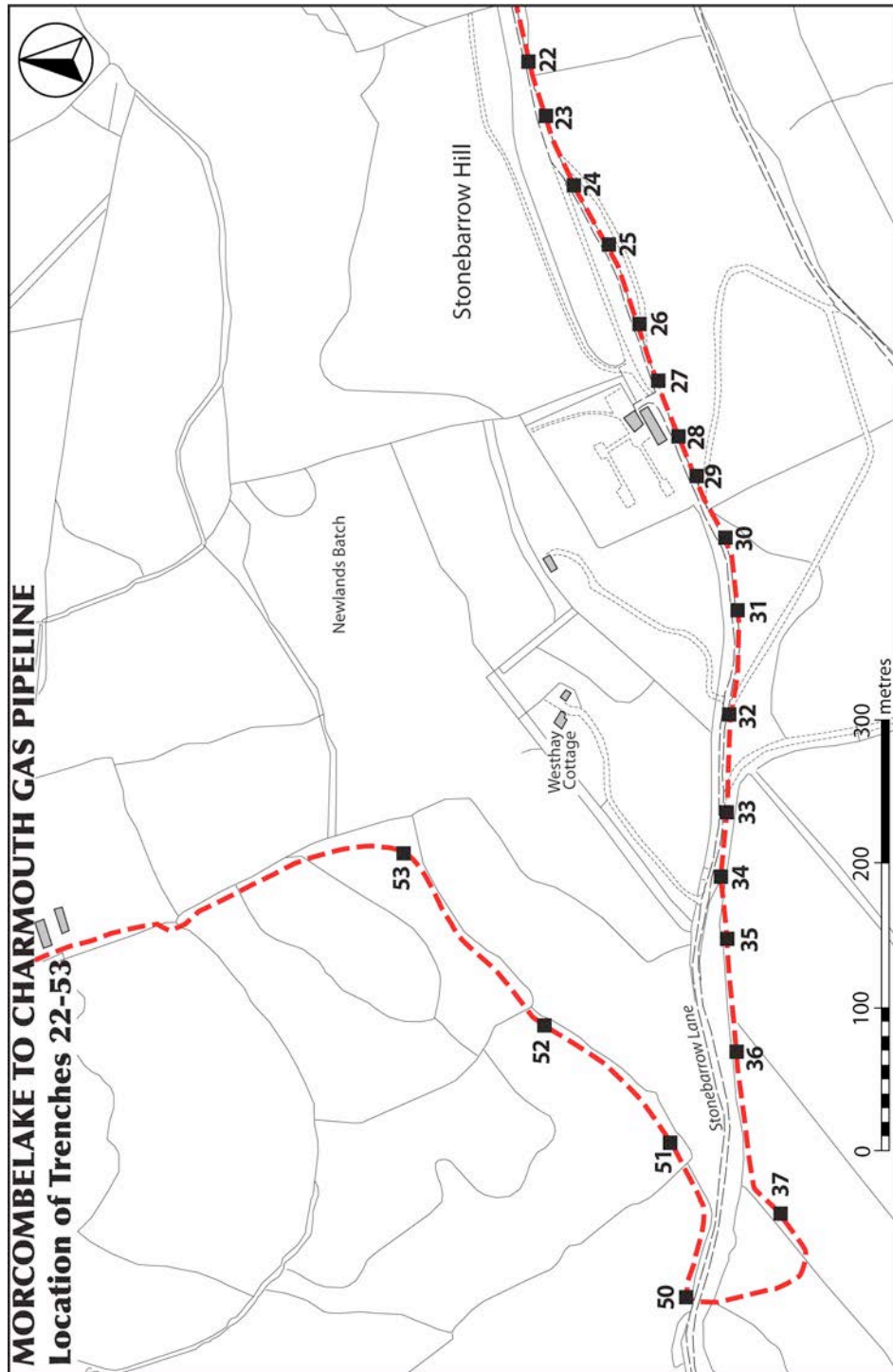


Figure 4: Location of trenches 22-53 (Stonebarrow Hill, South of Stonebarrow Lane and North of Stonebarrow Lane to Bellair Farm)





Plate 1: View NE down Ship Knap during excavation of Trench 5.



Plate 2: Trench 3 cut into edge of hedgebank, looking WNW.



Plate 3: View WSW along track up Chardown Hill looking towards St Gabriel's Gate with Trench 9 in foreground. 1m scale.





*Plate 4: Trench 13 looking SW showing natural deposits beneath the track gravels. 1m scale.*



*Plate 5: View east along Stonebarrow Hill with Trench 25 in foreground and Trench 24 in background.*



*Plate 6: Trench 21 viewed from SW showing topsoil over natural deposits.*





*Plate 7: Drilling operations in Stonebarrow Hill car park looking east towards Trench 32.*



*Plate 8: Trench 30 looking NE showing car park deposits. 1m scale.*



*Plate 9: General view of fields and boundaries south of Stonebarrow Lane, looking ESE towards Trench 36 from Trench 35.*





*Plate 10: Colluvial deposits in Trench 35. Viewed from SW. 1m scale.*



*Plate 11: General view of area north of Stonebarrow Lane, looking NE towards Trenches 51 and 52 from Trench 50.*



*Plate 12: Trench 52 during insertion of gas pipe.*

## Appendix 1: Pit Data

### Ship Farm

Pit No.	OS Grid Ref.	Dimensions	Stratigraphy	Archaeology
<b>Ship Knapp</b>				
2	SY 39774 93911	3.5 x 1.0 x 1.0m	200 <b>Topsoil</b> Dark yellowish brown sandy loam, 0.3m thick 201 <b>Natural</b> Greyish orange sand with moderate stone and gravel 0.5m thick 202 <b>Natural</b> Orange Grey Sand at 0.8m BGL.	None
3	SY 39854 93925	3.0 x 1.0 x 1.3m	300 <b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish-brown clay loam, 0.30m thick. 301 <b>Hedgebank:</b> Dark yellowish-grey silt and clay, 0.3m thick. 302 <b>Natural:</b> Yellowish-brown and brownish-grey clay with some stone at 0.6m BGL	None
4	SY 39906 93941	2.0 x 1.0 x 1.3m	400 <b>Topsoil:</b> Dark yellowish-brown clay loam, 0.3m thick. 401 <b>Natural:</b> Yellowish-brown silty clay with occasional stone at 0.3m BGL	None
5	SY 39947 93970	3.0 x 1.0 x 1.4m	500 <b>Topsoil:</b> Dark yellowish-brown clay loam, 0.3m thick. 501 <b>Natural:</b> Yellowish brown silty clay with occasional stone, at 0.3m BGL.	None
<b>Greenland Farm to St Gabriel's Gate</b>				
1	SY 39651 93880	3.0 x 1.0 x 1.2m	100 <b>Farm Track deposits:</b> Mixed orange and grey sand and gravel, 0.28m thick. 101 <b>Earlier track surface:</b> 0.05m thick grey clayey sand 102 <b>Natural</b> Orange Sand at 0.33m BGL	None
6	SY 39540 93818	3.0 x 1.0 x 1.2m	600 <b>Farm Track:</b> Compact gravel metalling, 0.2m thick. 601 <b>Track Make Up:</b> Mid orange brown sandy gravel up to 0.4m thick. 602 <b>Natural:</b> Light yellowish-brown sandy clay loam at 0.6m BGL.	None
7	SY 39431 93765	3.0 x 1.0 x 1.4m	700 <b>Topsoil:</b> Dark humic silty loam, 0.15m thick. 701 <b>Track Make Up:</b> Angular gravel in mid brown silty clay matrix 0.1m thick. 702 <b>Natural:</b> Light orangey-brown sandy clay loam with stone at 0.25m BGL, grading into 703 pale yellowish-brown sandy silt with common chalk and greensand at 1.0m BGL.	None
8	SY 39329 93670	3.0 x 1.0 x 1.2m	800 <b>Farm Track:</b> Compact gravel metalling, 0.15m thick. 801 <b>Track Make Up:</b> Light grey crushed stone, 0.15m thick. 802 <b>Track Make Up:</b> Angular chert and greensand rubble in light grey silty sand matrix, 0.6m thick. 803 <b>Natural:</b> Orange-brown sand with stone at 0.9m BGL.	None
9	SY 39217 93630	1.7 x 0.8 x 0.8m	901 <b>Farm Track:</b> Compact gravel metalling, 0.20m thick. 902 <b>Track Make Up:</b> Flint gravel in dark brown clay matrix, 0.25m thick. 903 <b>Natural:</b> Yellowish-grey clay with moderate to frequent flint at 0.45m BGL.	None
10	SY 39124 93590	2.4 x 1.2 x 1.2m	1001 <b>Farm Track:</b> Compact stone in dark greyish-brown clay matrix, 0.35m thick. 1002 <b>Natural:</b> Yellowish-grey clay with flint at 0.35m BGL.	None
11	SY 39110 93584	1.5 x 0.6 x >0.25m	1101 <b>Farm Track:</b> Compact stone in dark greyish-brown clay matrix, 0.25m thick. 1102 <b>Natural:</b> Yellowish-grey clay with flint at 0.25m BGL.	None
12	SY 39086 93584	1.5 x 0.6 x >0.25m	1201 <b>Farm Track:</b> Compact stone in dark greyish-brown clay matrix, 0.25m thick. 1202 <b>Natural:</b> Yellowish-grey clay with flint at 0.25m BGL.	None
13	SY 39040 93546	3.8 x 1.1 x 2.2m	1301 <b>Farm Track:</b> Compact stone in dark greyish-brown clay matrix, 0.25m thick. 1302 <b>Natural:</b> Yellowish-brown clay with flint over compact pale grey clay with frequent stone, at 0.25m BGL.	None
14	SY 39026 93538	2.6 x 2.0 x 1.5m	1401 <b>Farm Track:</b> Compact stone in dark greyish-brown clay matrix, 0.25m thick. 1402 <b>Natural:</b> Yellowish-grey clay with flint at 0.25m BGL.	None



Pit No.	OS Grid Ref.	Dimensions	Stratigraphy	Archaeology
<b>Stonebarrow Hill</b>				
15	SY 38998 93524	2.3 x 1.6 x 1.2m	1501 <b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish-brown sandy loam, 0.1m thick. 1502 <b>Natural:</b> Greyish-brown clay with frequent large stone at 0.1m BGL 1503 <b>Natural:</b> Yellowish-brown clay with frequent large stone at 0.35m BGL.	None
16	SY 38988 93522	c. 19 x 0.75 x 1.2m open cut trench dug between 15 and 17	1601 <b>Track:</b> Compact stone in dark greyish-brown clay matrix, 0.2m thick. 1602 <b>Natural:</b> Hard packed greyish-brown clay and flint at 0.2m BGL. 1603 <b>Natural:</b> Dark reddish-brown friable clay at 0.6m BGL.	None
17	SY 38969 93517	3.0 x 1.8 x 1.2m	1701 <b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish-brown sandy loam, 0.1m thick. 1702 <b>Natural:</b> Pale yellowish-grey sand with frequent stone at 0.1m BGL.	None
18	SY 38902 93498		Not Observed.	
19	SY 38800 93477	3.0 x 1.8 x 1.2m	1901 <b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish-brown sandy loam, 0.3m thick. 1902 <b>Natural:</b> Pale yellowish-brown sand with frequent stone at 0.3m BGL.	None
20	SY 38731 93473	2.5 x 1.6 x 1.2m	2001 <b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish-brown sandy clay, 0.15m thick. 2002 <b>Natural:</b> Hard pale yellowish-grey sand with frequent stone at 0.15m BGL. 2003 <b>Natural:</b> Yellowish-brown sand and stone at 0.4m BGL.	None
21	SY 38628 93429	c. 45 x 1.0 x 1.2m open cut trench incorporating a drilling pit 2.8 x 1.8 x 1.2m	2101 <b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish-brown sandy clay, 0.15m thick. 2102 <b>Natural:</b> Pale yellowish-grey sand and frequent stone at 0.15m BGL. 2103 <b>Natural:</b> Dark yellowish-brown sand and frequent stone at 0.55m BGL.	None
22	SY 38588 93425	2.3 x 1.5 x 1.2m	2201 <b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish-brown sandy clay, 0.3m thick. 2202 <b>Natural:</b> Pale yellowish-grey sand with frequent stone at 0.3m BGL.	None
23	SY 38554 93411	2.3 x 1.7 x 1.2m	2301 <b>Topsoil/Track:</b> Dark greyish brown sandy clay grading into compact stone and gravel metalling to north, 0.3m thick. 2302 <b>Natural:</b> Greyish-brown sand with moderate stone at 0.3m BGL. 2303 <b>Natural:</b> Yellowish-brown clay with moderate small stone at 0.6m BGL.	None
24	SY 38525 93402	2.2 x 1.0 x 1.2m	2401 <b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish brown sandy clay, 0.2m thick. 2402 <b>Natural:</b> Yellowish-brown clay with moderate small stone at 0.2m BGL.	None
25	SY 38465 93369	2.05 x 0.75 x 1.2m	2501 <b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish-brown clay, 0.25m thick. 2502 <b>Natural:</b> Orangey-brown clay with moderate stone at 0.25m BGL.	None
26	SY 38412 93348	2.8 x 1.2 x 1.2m	2601 <b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish-brown clay, 0.25m thick. 2602 <b>Natural:</b> Orangey-brown clay with moderate stone at 0.25m BGL.	None
27	SY 38336 93333	1.8 x 0.7 x 1.2m	2701 <b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish-brown clay, 0.25m thick. 2702 <b>Natural:</b> Orangey-brown clay with moderate stone at 0.25m BGL.	None
28	SY 38334 93320	1.8 x 1.1 x >0.7m	2801 <b>Topsoil/Track:</b> Dark greyish brown sandy clay grading into compact stone and gravel metalling to north, 0.3m thick. 2702 <b>Natural:</b> Yellowish-brown clay with moderate small stone at 0.3m BGL.	None
29	SY 38306 93309	2.2 x 1.3 x 1.45m	2901 <b>Topsoil/Track:</b> Dark greyish-brown clay with frequent small stone gravel up to 80mm across, 0.5m thick. 2902 <b>Natural:</b> Yellowish-brown clay with moderate small stone and occasional medium stone, at 0.5m BGL.	None
30	SY38254 93280	2.4 x 1.1 x 1.5m	3001 <b>Car Park Surface:</b> Compact grey crushed stone, 0.25m thick. 3002 <b>Car Park Make Up:</b> Dark brown clay with frequent small stone, 0.15m thick. 3003 <b>Natural:</b> Yellowish-brown clay and stone at 0.4m BGL.	None
31	SY 38208 93274	2.1 x 1.1 x 1.4m	3101 <b>Car Park Surface:</b> Compact grey crushed stone, 0.2m thick.	None

Pit No.	OS Grid Ref.	Dimensions	Stratigraphy	Archaeology
			3102 <b>Car Park Make Up:</b> Dark brown clay with frequent small stone, 0.3m thick. 3003 <b>Natural:</b> Yellowish-brown clay and stone at 0.5m BGL.	
32	SY 38133 93280	2.3 x 1.3 x 1.4m	3201 <b>Car Park Surface:</b> Grey crushed stone, 0.4–0.5m thick. 3202 <b>Natural:</b> Reddish-brown clay with moderate-frequent flint at 0.4m BGL.	None
<b>South of Stonebarrow Lane</b>				
33	SY 38072 93286	1.8 x 1.3 x 1.2m	3301 <b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish-brown clay loam, 0.3m thick. 3302 <b>Natural:</b> Dark yellowish-brown clay with flints, at 0.3m BGL.	None
34	SY 38023 93291	2.3 x 1.7 x 1.3m	3401 <b>Topsoil:</b> Dark greyish-brown clay loam, 0.3m thick. 3402 <b>Natural:</b> Dark yellowish-brown clay with flints, at 0.3m BGL.	None
35	SY 37979 93288	5.0 x 0.75 x 1.1m	3501 <b>Topsoil:</b> Humic brown clay with occasional small stone, 0.25m thick. 3502 <b>Colluvium:</b> Brown clay with frequent small flint, 0.5m thick. 3503 <b>Natural:</b> Reddish-brown clay with frequent flint, at 0.75m BGL. 3504 <b>Natural:</b> Yellowish-grey clay with frequent flint, at 0.95m BGL.	None
36	SY 37903 93280	2.4 x 1.25 x 1.2m	3601 <b>Topsoil:</b> Humic brown clay with occasional small stone, 0.25m thick. 3602 <b>Colluvium:</b> Brown clay with frequent small flint, 0.45m thick. 3603 <b>Natural:</b> Reddish-brown clay with frequent flint, at 0.7m BGL. 3604 <b>Natural:</b> Yellowish-grey clay with frequent flint, at 1.2m BGL.	None
37	SY 37800 93261	2.1 x 1.3 x 1.2m	3701 <b>Topsoil:</b> Greyish-brown clay loam with moderate small stone, 0.25m thick. 3702 <b>Colluvium:</b> Greyish-brown clay with moderate to frequent small flint, 0.35m thick. 3703 <b>Natural:</b> Yellowish-brown clay and flint, at 0.6m BGL.	None
<b>North of Stonebarrow Lane to Bellair Farm</b>				
50	SY 37724 93318	3.0 x 1.0 x 1.4m	5000 <b>Topsoil:</b> Turf and mid greyish-brown clay loam with small stone, 0.15m thick. 5001 <b>Subsoil:</b> Mid orangey-brown clay loam with occasional small stones, 0.2m thick. 5002 <b>Head Deposit?:</b> Orange-brown clay loam with moderate small and medium stone at 0.35m BGL.	None
51	SY 37837 93323	3.0 x 1.0 x 1.4m	5100 <b>Topsoil:</b> Mid greyish-brown clay loam with small stone, 0.15m thick. 5101 <b>Subsoil:</b> Light/mid yellowish orange-brown clay loam with occasional small stones, 0.65m thick 5102 <b>Head Deposit:</b> Light Yellowish-brown clay loam with frequent greensand stones at 0.8m BGL.	None
52	SY 37919 93410	3.0 x 2.5 x 1.0m	5200 <b>Topsoil:</b> Mid greyish-brown clay loam, 0.15m thick. 5201 <b>Natural:</b> Mid orange clay grading to mid orangey-grey clay at 0.15m BGL.	
53	SY 38029 93519		Not Observed	