

A WATCHING BRIEF ON THE INSTALLATION OF NEW PATH FURNITURE ON
**OFFA'S DYKE AT VRON FARM,
TREFONEN, SHROPSHIRE, 2017**

by
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A report for
Countryside Maintenance, Outdoor Partnerships,
Shropshire Council

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In August 2017 improvements were made to footpath furniture at Vron Farm, Trefonen, in northwest Shropshire. The location of these works (see Fig. 1) lay on a section of the linear monument, Offa's Dyke which has been scheduled as an Ancient Monument as defined by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979

NGR	Location	NHLE no.	Mon. name
SJ 2585 2722	Vron Farm, Trefonen	1004767	Offa's Dyke: section 380m west of Pottery Cottages.

1.2 In accordance with the Scheduled Monument consent for this work, an archaeological watching brief was maintained by the Archaeology Service, Shropshire Council, on the excavation of post-holes for a new kissing gate. The excavations were all carried out by the Shropshire Council Countryside Maintenance team. The excavations were carried out with minimal disturbance to the ground.

1.3 The aim of the archaeological watching brief was to allow for the preservation by record of any archaeological remains that were encountered during the excavations for the new path furniture.

1.4 A schedule of work was prepared for the work on the site and submitted to Historic England with the application for scheduled monument consent.

1.5 The Archaeology Service has previously carried out watching briefs on the installation of new path furniture at a number of locations along the Dyke.

2 THE WATCHING BRIEF

2.1 The site at Vron Farm, Trefonen, lies 250m north of the village of Trefonen in northwest Shropshire. The Dark Age earthwork monument Offa's Dyke runs through the village on a roughly north-south alignment. This section of the Dyke has been scheduled as an ancient monument as defined by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (Offa's Dyke: section 380m west of Pottery Cottages., National List Entry No. 1004767). The work area lay where a public right of way (Route code 0307/143) crossed the line of the Dyke at SJ 2585 2722.

2.2 In 2008 a watching brief was carried out on pits dug for water pipeline works, adjacent to Chapel Lane, Trefonen, 125m to the southeast of the current work; no remains associated with the dyke were seen to have been directly impacted by the work (HER Event Record ESA7629).

2.3 The location of the new kissing gate lay on a fenceline on the bottom (west side) of the bank of Offa's Dyke, immediately adjacent to a set of stone steps taking the footpath up the bank. Five postholes for the new gate were excavated by hand; two

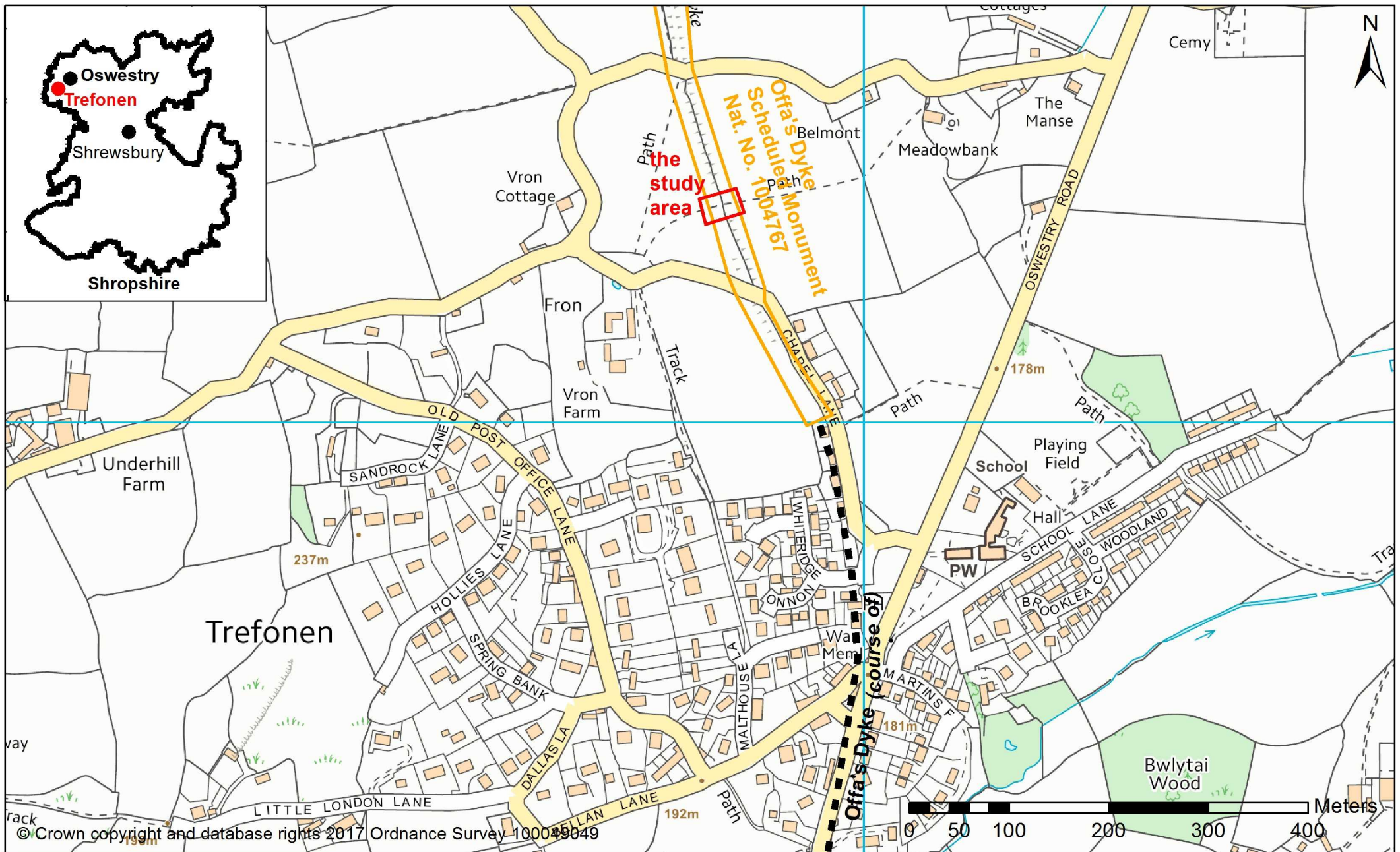
postholes, 0.4m x 0.3m in plan (one 0.85m deep and one 0.65m deep) were excavated for corner and strainer posts, and three postholes to 0.3m in diameter and between 0.5m and 0.9m deep were dug for the remaining gate posts.

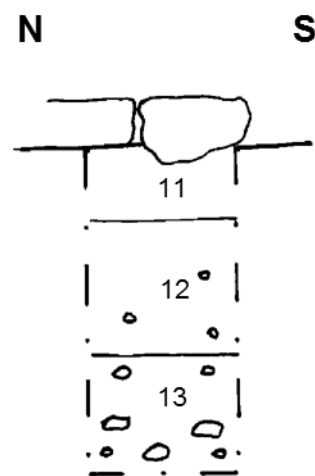
2.4 A topsoil up to 0.20m deep (Fig. 2; 11) was seen to overlie a deposit of loose brown sandy loam (12) up to 0.35m thick. This may have been re-deposited subsoil forming part of the bank itself. This in turn lay over a further soil deposit comprising a brown sandy clay loam with gravel and limestone fragments (13).

2.5 No other significant archaeological features or deposits were encountered.

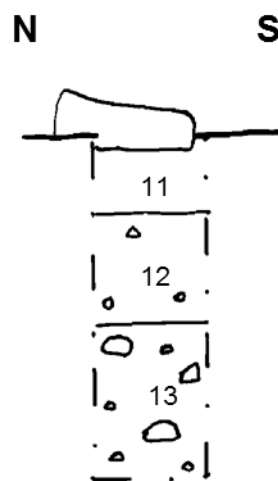
ABBREVIATIONS

CBA	Council for British Archaeology
HER	Historic Environment Record, Shropshire Council
NGR	National Grid Reference
OS	Ordnance Survey
SAM	Scheduled Ancient Monument
TSAHS	Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society

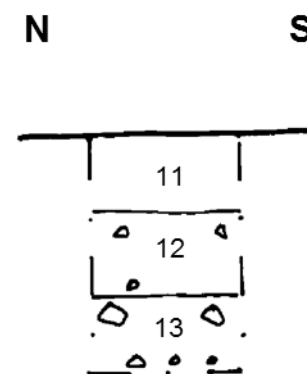




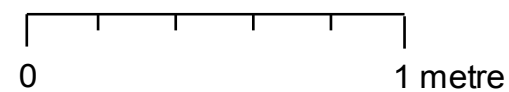
Post-hole on NE corner
of gate



Post-hole on E side
of gate



Post-hole on SE corner
of gate



OFFA'S DYKE, VRON FARM, TREFONEN 2017

Figure 2: Sections through post-holes on the site at Fron Farm, Trefonen

*A Watching Brief on the Installation of New Path Furniture on Offa's Dyke at
Vron Farm, Trefonen, Shropshire, 2017*



Photo 1: The old "stile" at Vron Farm before removal, looking NE



Photo 2: The gate post hole on the S corner of the gate, looking NE; scale bar 1m



Photo 3: The new gate installed, looking NE

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