

A WATCHING BRIEF ON THE INSTALLATION OF NEW PATH FURNITURE ON
**OFFA'S DYKE PATH AT BRYNDRINOG,
NEWCASTLE ON CLUN, SHROPSHIRE, 2019**

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

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 In February 2019 improvements were made to footpath furniture on a section of the Offa's Dyke Path National Trail at Bryndrinog, Newcastle on Clun. The location of these works (see Fig. 1) lay within 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: Offa's Dyke: section 175m east of Cefn Bronydd, National Ref.: 1020899, SO 2565 8246

1.2 In accordance with the Scheduled Monument consents for this work, an archaeological watching brief was maintained by the Archaeology Service, Shropshire Council, on the excavation of post-holes for the new gate at Bryndrinog. 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 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 several locations along the Dyke.

2 THE WATCHING BRIEF

2.1 Bryndrinog is a farmstead lying at the southern foot of Graig Hill where it runs down to the River Clun, about 400m to the east of the village of Newcastle in southwest Shropshire. The Dark Age earthwork monument Offa's Dyke runs across the western slopes of Graig Hill before dropping down to cross the River Clun on the southern side of the hill at Bryndrinog (Fig. 1). 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 175m east of Cefn Bronydd National List Entry No. 1020899).

2.2 The 2019 footpath work at Bryndrinog involved the removal of the old stile on the line of the Dyke at the southern edge of the farmstead and its replacement with a new kissing gate.

2.3 The old stile lay in a fence-line on the line of the dyke. No earthwork remains of the Dyke survived in the location of the stile, although immediately to the north the outer (western) edge of the ditch survived as a slight gully running down the hillside. The bank portion of the dyke here is buried beneath an earthwork platform extending the southern edge of the farmyard and carrying a 20th century dutch barn. The new gate was placed in the location of the old stile. Five postholes for the new

gate were excavated by hand; the post-holes rapidly filled with water below 0.5m depth. Two postholes, one 1m deep and one 0.7m deep and both 0.4m x 0.3m in plan were excavated for corner and strainer posts on the fence-line and three postholes between 0.7m and 0.55m deep by up to 0.3m in diameter were dug for the remaining gate posts.

2.4 Two postholes were located in ground previously disturbed by postholes for the old stile. The topsoil (1) here was about 0.65m deep (Fig. 2; 1) and was seen to overlie a deposit of dark grey-brown sandy loam over 0.3m thick with many small stone fragments (2), which represented a buried soil contaminated with backfill from the earlier postholes.

2.5 The southern gatepost was on the line of the ditch, and the remaining two postholes lay just beyond the line of the western edge of the ditch. In all these holes, the topsoil comprised a dark grey-brown humic loam 0.4m deep (Fig. 2; 4) which overlay a deposit of dark grey-brown silty loam (5) over 0.3m thick. This had the appearance of being a natural deposit rather than ditch-fill.

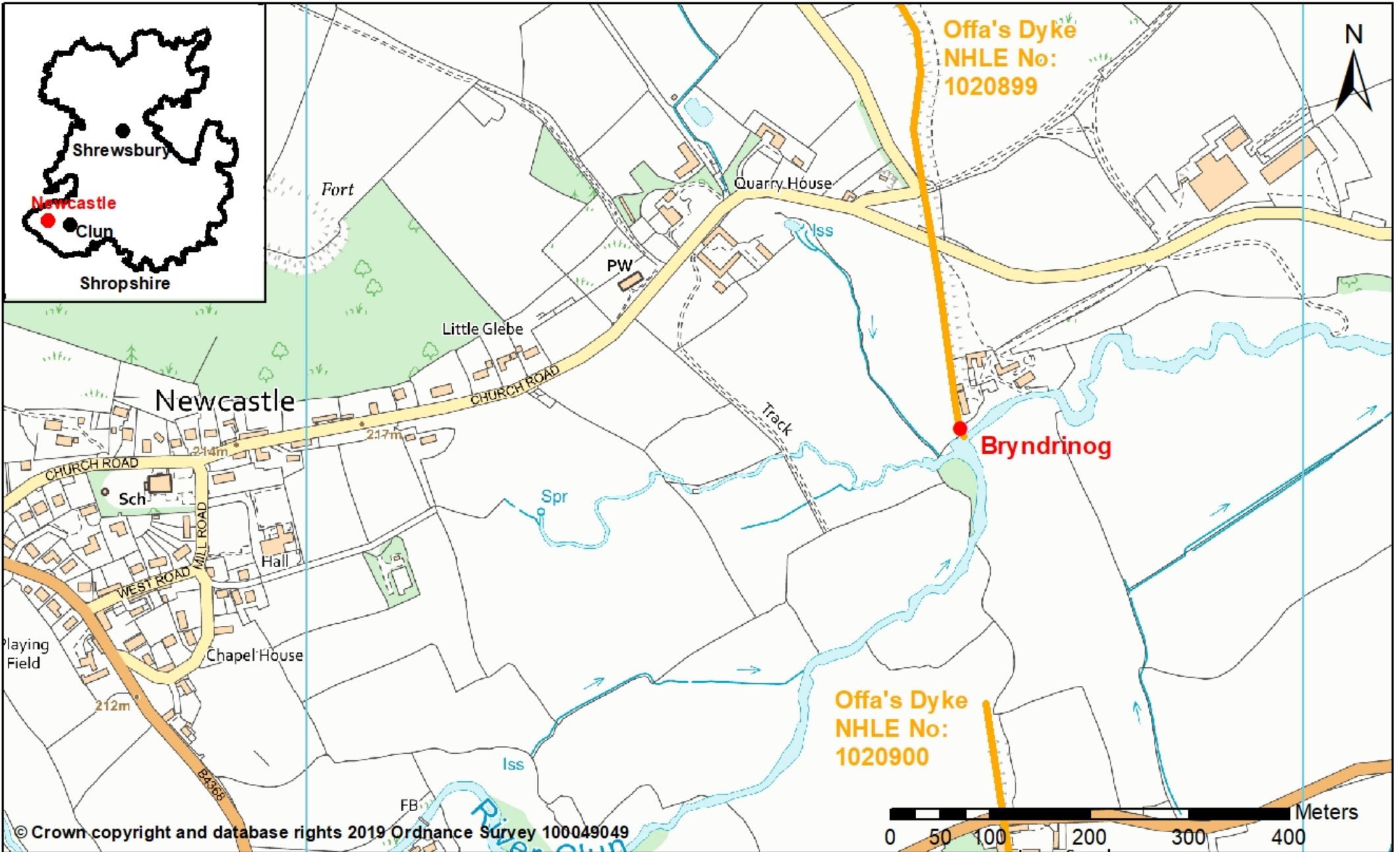
2.6 No other significant archaeological features or deposits were encountered.

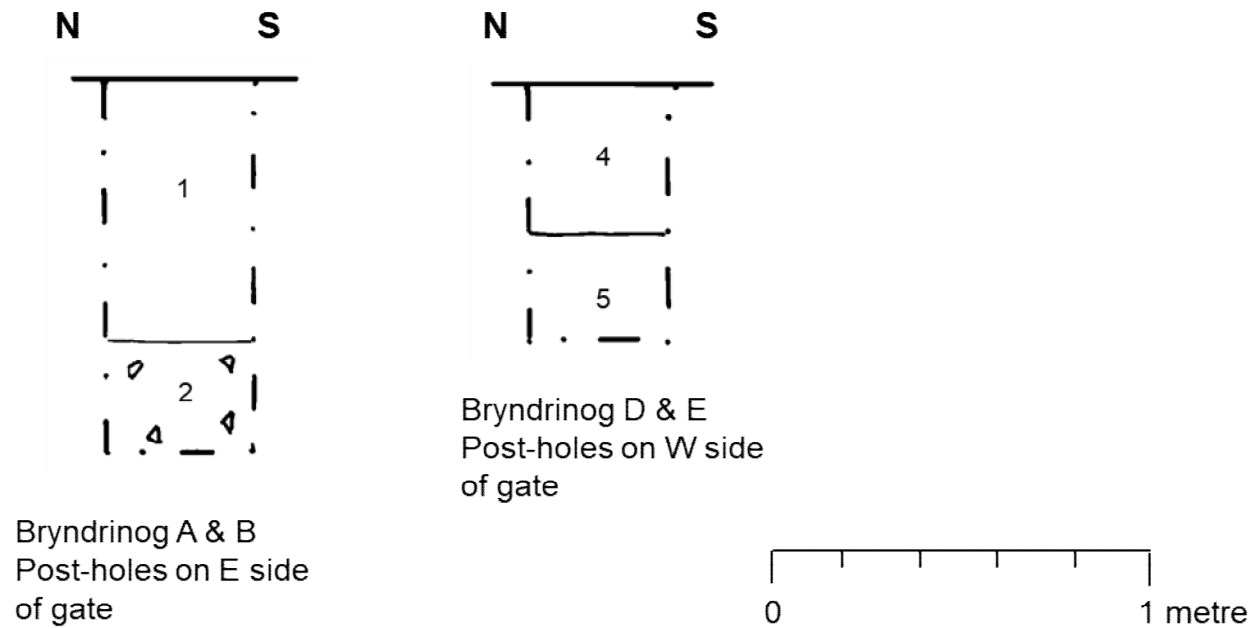
3 REFERENCES

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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





OFFA'S DYKE, BRYNDRINOG, NEWCASTLE ON CLUN, 2019

Figure 2: Sections through post-holes on the site at Bryndrinog

A Watching Brief on the Installation of New Path Furniture on Offa's Dyke Path at Bryndrinog, Newcastle on Clun, Shropshire, 2019



Photo 1: The old stile at Bryndrinog, looking NW



Photo 2: The NE post-hole for the new gate at Bryndrinog, looking E; scale bar 1m



Photo 3: The completed gate at Bryndrinog, looking W