

ELECTRICITY NORTH WEST

LAND EAST OF SOUTHWAITE GREEN COTTAGES, EAMONT BRIDGE, CUMBRIA

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

June 2017



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ELECTRICITY NORTH WEST

Land east of Southwaite Green Cottages, Eamont Bridge, Cumbria

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION
GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY
TOPOGRAPHIC AND LANDSCAPE SURVEY
HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

DESK BASED ASSESSMENTS



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SUMMARY

Wardell Armstrong were commissioned by Electricity North West to undertake a rapid desk-based assessment and archaeological watching brief during excavations for the installation of an underground cable to provide a supply of electricity to a new BT Kiosk opposite 4 Southwaite Green Cottages at Eamont Bridge. As the scheme was due to have an effect on an area of archaeological potential, relating to its close proximity to Mayburgh Henge scheduled monument, Jeremy Parsons, Historic Environment Officer at Cumbria County Council, issued a brief for an archaeological watching brief to be undertaken during the groundworks (between NY 51777 28395 and NY 51800 28430).

The research has found that there was the potential for archaeological deposits, particularly of the Neolithic period, to be encountered during the excavation works, based on the nearby presence of Mayburgh Henge and the discovery of worked chert artefacts during archaeological work nearby. The riverside was utilised during the post medieval period by mills, one of which owned the land on which the groundworks occurred, in 1838, and there was a chance that surviving archaeological remains from this period would be encountered. Except for sporadic housing, including Nos. 1-4 Southwaite Green Cottages and Ash Bank and Ash Lea, and the construction of the M6, the area has remained unaffected by modern developments.

The archaeological watching brief, undertaken on Tuesday 6^{th} and Wednesday 7^{th} June 2017, monitored the excavation of a trench for the new electricity cable, which ran for a distance of c. 40m at a width of 0.3m and to a maximum depth of 0.9m. A mid orange-brown sandy silt was observed, overlain by 0.25m of mid brown silty topsoil.

Despite the high potential for archaeological deposits of the Neolithic period surviving within the immediate vicinity of the archaeological monitoring site, no archaeological finds or features were encountered during the groundworks.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Wardell Armstrong Archaeology (WAA) thanks Claire Purdham of Electricity North West for commissioning the project, and for all their assistance throughout the work. Also, WAA thank groundwork staff of Electricity North West, for all assistance.

The rapid desk-based assessment research and archaeological watching brief monitoring was undertaken by Cat Peters, who also wrote the report. The figures were produced by Adrian Bailey. The project was managed by Frank Giecco and the report edited by Dave Jackson.



1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Circumstances

- 1.1.1 In June 2017, Wardell Armstrong (WA) undertook an archaeological watching brief during excavations for a new electricity cable trench, excavated to the east of Southwaite Green Cottages, Eamont Bridge (between NY 51777 28395 and NY 51800 28430; Figure 1). The work was commissioned by Claire Purdham, Estates and Wayleaves Officer for Electricity North West.
- 1.1.2 Archaeological work was required at the bequest of Jeremy Parsons of Cumbria County Council's Historic Environment Team, due to the presence of known archaeological features in the vicinity (Parsons 2016). The groundworks occured close to the earthwork remains of Mayburgh Henge scheduled monument (NHL 1007902), within a wider area populated by other significant prehistoric sites including King Arthur's Round Table Henge Monument (NHL 1007903) and Little Round Table Henge (NHL 1008237).

1.2 **Project Documentation**

- 1.2.1 The project conforms to a 'Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief' prepared by Jeremy Parsons of Cumbria County Council (Parsons 2016).
- 1.2.2 This report outlines the initial desk-based research and the archaeological monitoring undertaken on site, together forming the results of this scheme of archaeological works.



2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Standards and Guidance

- 2.1.1 The archaeological watching brief was undertaken following the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching briefs* (2014a), and in accordance with the project brief (Parsons 2016).
- 2.1.2 The fieldwork programme was followed by an assessment of the data as set out in the Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching briefs (CIfA 2014a) and the Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (CIfA 2014b).

2.2 **Documentary Research**

2.2.1 A rapid desk-based assessment was undertaken as part of this programme of works and the results are included within this report. The aims of the rapid desk-based assessment were to set out the archaeological and historical background of the site to inform on the potential archaeological finds and features which may have been encountered during the cable trench excavations.

2.3 The Watching Brief

- 2.3.1 The watching brief comprised the monitoring of all excavations occurring as part of the installation of the new cable in the area to the east of Southwaite Green Cottages, Eamont Bridge (Figure 2). This consisted of the excavation of a trench using a mini digger, to a maximum depth of 0.9m, and measuring 0.3m wide and *c*. 40m long. The general aims of the monitoring were:
 - to establish the presence/absence, nature, extent and state of preservation of archaeological remains and to record these where they were observed;
 - to establish the character of those features in terms of cuts, soil matrices and interfaces;
 - to recover artefactual material, especially that useful for dating purposes;
 - to recover palaeoenvironmental material where it survives in order to understand site and landscape formation processes.
- 2.3.2 No finds were encountered during the excavations, and no environmental samples were taken during the project.



- 2.3.3 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the project specification, and the Archaeological Archives Forum recommendations (Brown 2011). The archive will be deposited within Tullie House Museum, with copies of the report sent to the Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) in Kendal, Cumbria, available upon request. The archive can be accessed under the unique project identifier WAA 17, SOU-A, CL11942.
- 2.3.4 Wardell Armstrong Archaeology supports the Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS (OASIS) project. This project aims to provide an on-line index and access to the extensive and expanding body of grey literature, created as a result of developer-funded archaeological work. As a result, details of the results of this project will be made available by WAA as a part of this national project. The OASIS reference for the project is: wardella2-286931.



3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Location and Geological Context

- 3.1.1 Eamont Bridge is located approximately 1.5km south of Penrith and sits either side of the main A6 trunk road (Figure 1). The area affected by the groundworks is located approximately 550m to the south-west of the centre of the village of Eamont Bridge, east of Southwaite Green Cottages and west of Mayburgh Henge (between NY 51777 28395 and NY 51800 28430; Figure 2).
- 3.1.2 The underlying solid geology within the area of investigation is mapped as mudstone, siltstone and sandstone deposited during the Stainmore Formation approximately 313 to 326 million years ago. This is overlain by superficial deposits of sand and gravel, of Devenian Glaciofluvial Deposits, deposited up to 2 million years ago during the Quaternary Period (BGS 2017).

3.2 Historic Landscape Character

- 3.2.1 The Historic Landscape Characterisation (accessed 2017) positions Eamont Bridge within 'Area 17: Eden Valley', an area of "rolling hills and enclosed low fells around river valleys" (CHLCP 2009, 60).
- 3.2.2 The legacy of this character area is "a mixed pattern of modern and older settlements and field enclosure with strong legibility of landscape elements of medieval origin including extensive earthwork remains" (CHLCP 2009, 60).

3.3 Historical and Archaeological Background

- 3.3.1 A rapid desk-based research exercise was carried out to provide a background to the works, and to outline the archaeological potential of the area based on a study area of up to 0.5km from the site. This was undertaken using online access to Cumbria County Council's Historic Environment Record (CCC HER 2017), PastScape (Pastscape 2017), and the National Heritage List (NHL 2017) as well as other readily available sources, referenced as relevant within the text. The results are outlined below:
- 3.3.2 **Prehistoric**: Mayburgh Henge standing stone and henge (CCC HER 2867; NHL 1007902) lies just to the east of the area affected by the groundworks. It is located on a low knoll of glacial drift a short distance from the confluence of the rivers Eamont and Lowther, and comprises a stone bank enclosing a flat circular area within which there is a large standing stone. The stone bank is constructed from water-worn stones and varies in size from 33.7m wide and 3.8m high externally on the northern side to 45m wide and



7.3m high externally on the southern side. The henge is almost circular in plan, with an entrance on the eastern side. During the mid 17th century, eight stones similar to that surviving, were recorded within the henge, four close to the centre and four close to the entrance, although Stukely visiting in the early 18th century noted that there may have been two stone circles at the centre of Mayburgh and he saw hollows within the banks where stone had been removed for mending roads, and noted that ploughing had occurred within the henge (cited in Dymond 1891, 187-219). Such ploughing apparently revealed an axe-head of brass or bronze in the late 18th century, and, about one hundred years later, a broken polished stone axe of the Langdale type which was found beneath the turf in the entrance (scheduled monument information NHL 1007902).

3.3.3 All other standing stones had gone by 1769, when Pennant undertook his tour, though their locations are included in his plan (Plate 1). Earlier tourists and antiquarians assumed it to be a Roman fort (Horn and Wooler 2008, 21) but by the late 18th century it was considered more likely to have been "a Roman theatre where men were exposed to combat with wild beasts" (Hutchinson 1794, 310-311). This Roman origin for the site was not widely agreed upon, as the henge is labelled on Jeffery's map of Westmorland of 1770 as 'Druid's Temple' (Figure 3). Dymond, in 1891, notes that stone walls had been added to the banks at Mayburgh (Dymond 1891, 187-219), though this is difficult to ascertain from his surveyed plan as no heights are given, but the shape and width of the banks look similar to Pennants' 1769 plan (compare Plates 1 and 2). In 1936, when the Royal Commission published 'Historical Monuments in Westmorland', they associated Mayburgh Henge with King Arthur's Round Table, concluding that "the one possibly designed for secular assembly, the other for religious ritual" (RCHM 1936, 31).

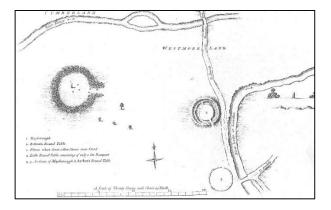


Plate 1: Plan of the Monuments at Eamont Bridge from Pennant's First Tour of
Scotland, 1769 (after Dymond 1891)



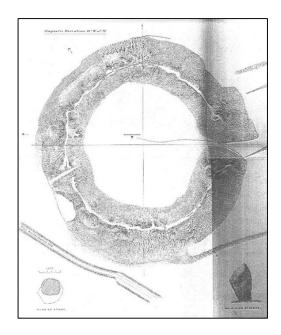


Plate 2: Dymond's 1889 Surveyed Plan of Mayburgh (Dymond 1891)

- 3.3.4 Mayburgh Henge lies within an area populated by other significant prehistoric sites including King Arthur's Round Table Henge Monument (NHL 1007903) and Little Round Table Henge (NHL 1008237). King Arthur's Round Table Henge Monument lies c. 525m to the east, and Little Round Table Henge c. 752m to the south-east, of the area monitored during the watching brief. All three date to the Late Neolithic period. As there are only about 80 known examples of henges, it is significant that three are located in such close proximity. Further unknown unclassified cropmarks c. 400m to the south-east (CCC HER 13582) may relate to additional prehistoric activity.
- 3.3.5 *Romano-British:* there is no evidence for Roman activity within the 500m study area, although there was a Roman fort at Brougham, *c*. 2km to the north-east, with associated road.
- 3.3.6 *Medieval*: the bridge at Eamont Bridge has medieval origins (NHL 1007193), and although the oldest buildings surviving in the village date to the 16th and 17th centuries, it is likely that the area was inhabited, either side of the main road between Penrith and Shap, long before this.
- 3.3.7 **Post-Medieval**: Southwaite Green Mill, a corn mill, watermill and mill race (CCC HER 15418), is shown on the Tithe Award Plan of 1843 (Figure 4), and is located c. 210m west-south-west of the area monitored by the watching brief. There is a reference in 1799 to a "John Rittson of Southwaite Green, parish of Barton (Westmorland), bleacher, customary of tenantright house, stable, ½ acre close behind, adjoining William Bushby's croft on south" (CACC DCC/2/12).



- 3.3.8 A second mill is marked on the Tithe Award Plan of 1843 (Figure 4), labelled 'Walk Mill', located *c.* 200m to the north of the area monitored during the watching brief. There is a will of 'Thomas Mason, bleacher, of Walk Mill, Barton, Westmorland' dating to 1817 (CACC PROB/1817/W208), showing it was in existence as a bleach mill by at least 1817. A 'John Mason', probably a relative, is listed as a bleacher at Walk Mill in February 1838 (CACC DX 2163/33). There is a notice to quit and application for tenancy for Bleach Green, Barton/Eamont Bridge dating to 1863-1867 (CACC DLONS/L/BOX/881).
- 3.3.9 The accompanying award for the Tithe map cites plots '50', '56', '56a', '57', '58' and '59' as owned by the Earl of Lonsdale and occupied by John Mason (CACK WDRC/8/28). Plots '56' and '59', in the vicinity of the area monitored by the watching brief are known as 'May Brough Croft' and 'Smelt Thorns', respectively. These plots of land are likely to be associated with Walk Mill, as plot '57' is known as 'homestead' (CACK WDRC/8/28). This connection, as well as the presence of a 'Foot Path' through Plot '59' suggests this was all part of the mill's holdings, and features of smelting, or former paths may survive in the vicinity.
- 3.3.10 Both mills are still shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1859 (Figure 5), Southwaitegreen Mill being a corn mill at this time, with an associated mill race running to the south-west. Walk Mill is not labelled, but appears to have mill races heading north-east and west-south-west. A flour mill is shown on the opposite side of the river. The pattern of strip fields associated with Eamont Bridge shown on the Tithe Award map of 1843 (Figure 4) is still shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1859 (Figure 5). These have gone by the publication of the Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1900 (Figure 6), though the mills and footpath are still shown. Walk Mill is known as Bleach Green by this date.
- 3.3.11 *Modern*: the Third Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1915 (Figure 7) shows the same layout for the vicinity of the area monitored by the archaeological watching brief as the Second Edition map (Figure 6). At some point between 1915 (Figure 7) and 1967 (Figure 8) two pairs of semi-detached cottages had been constructed to the east of the footpath, Southwaite Green Cottages 1-4. A further pair of semi-detached dwellings, closer to Mayburgh Henge, to the south-east, Ash Bank and Ash Lea, also date to this period (Figure 8). After 1967, the M6 had been constructed to the southwest. Also the Southwaite Green Mill area had been redeveloped as a static caravan site (Figure 2).



- 3.3.12 *Previous Archaeological Works:* an archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Ash Lea at Southwaite Green, and although no archaeological features were encountered, four worked chert artefacts were recovered from the topsoil (NPA 2004). In addition, an archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Southwaite Green Mill which excavated 14 trenches and revealed a ditch of probable post medieval agricultural origin (NPA 2005). In 2008, a rapid desk based assessment and watching brief was undertaken at Ash Bank (the research from which has been utilised for the compilation of this report), though this encountered no archaeological finds or features (Horn and Wooler 2008).
- 3.3.13 *Summary*: there is the potential for archaeological deposits, particularly of the Neolithic period, to be encountered during the excavation works, based on the nearby presence of Mayburgh Henge and the discovery of worked chert artefacts during archaeological work nearby. The riverside was utilised during the post medieval period by mills, one of which owned the land on which the present groundworks will occur, in 1838 and there is a chance that surviving archaeological remains from this period will be encountered. Except for sporadic housing, including Nos. 1-4 Southwaite Green Cottages and Ash Bank and Ash Lea, and the construction of the M6, the area has remained unaffected by modern developments.



4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The watching brief occurred on Tuesday 6th and Wednesday 7th June 2017 and monitored all open cut excavations occurring in relation to the provision of a new electricity cable. This was due to run from an existing telegraph pole at the northwestern extent of the trench and a new BT box on the south side of the road to the south of Southwaite Green Cottages and Mayburgh Henge. The southernmost section, that beneath the hedge forming the southern boundary of the field to the east of No. 4 Southwaite Green Cottages and across the road to the south, was excavated using a mechanical mole excavator. As this resulted in no open cut excavation, these works were not monitored during the archaeological watching brief.

4.2 Results

4.2.1 The cable trench was excavated to a width of 0.3m and a depth of between 0.6m and 0.9m, the maximum depth being reached towards the southern extent of the trench. It began at an existing telegraph pole (Plate 3), at its north-western extent and ran for a distance of 3.1m on a southerly trajectory, before running south-westwards (Plate 4), roughly parallel to the field boundary to the west, following this orientation until it reached the southern boundary of the field (Figure 2; Plate 5). The total length of the cable trench measured *c*. 40m.



Plate 3: North-western extent of cable trench, facing north-west





Plate 4: Cable trench, showing change in orientation, facing south-west



Plate 5: Cable trench once completed, facing south-west

4.2.2 The excavations revealed a mid orange brown sandy silt (**101**), overlain by a midbrown silty topsoil (**100**) of up to 0.25m depth (Plate 6). The only other deposit encountered during the cable trench excavations was a gravel deposit (**102**), at the southern extent of the trench, in lieu of grass, lain directly on the topsoil (**100**), and this was a recent deposit, lain to allow vehicular access to a trailer stored within a fenced-off area at the southern boundary of the field (Plate 7).





Plate 6: Showing topsoil (100) and subsoil (101) deposits revealed in cable trench



Plate 7: Showing gravel deposit (102) at southern extent of cable trench, facing south-west



5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 **Summary**

- 5.1.1 Despite the potential for archaeological features or finds, particularly of the prehistoric period, to be encountered during the excavations, no evidence for past human activity was encountered within the cable trench.
- 5.1.2 All groundworks occurring in the area specified by Jeremy Parsons of Cumbria County Council's Historic Environment Team, were excavated under archaeological supervision.



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Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1900 (25" to 1 mile scale)

Third Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1915 (25" to 1 mile scale)

Ordnance Survey Map, 1967 (1:2,500 scale)

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APPENDIX 1: FIGURES

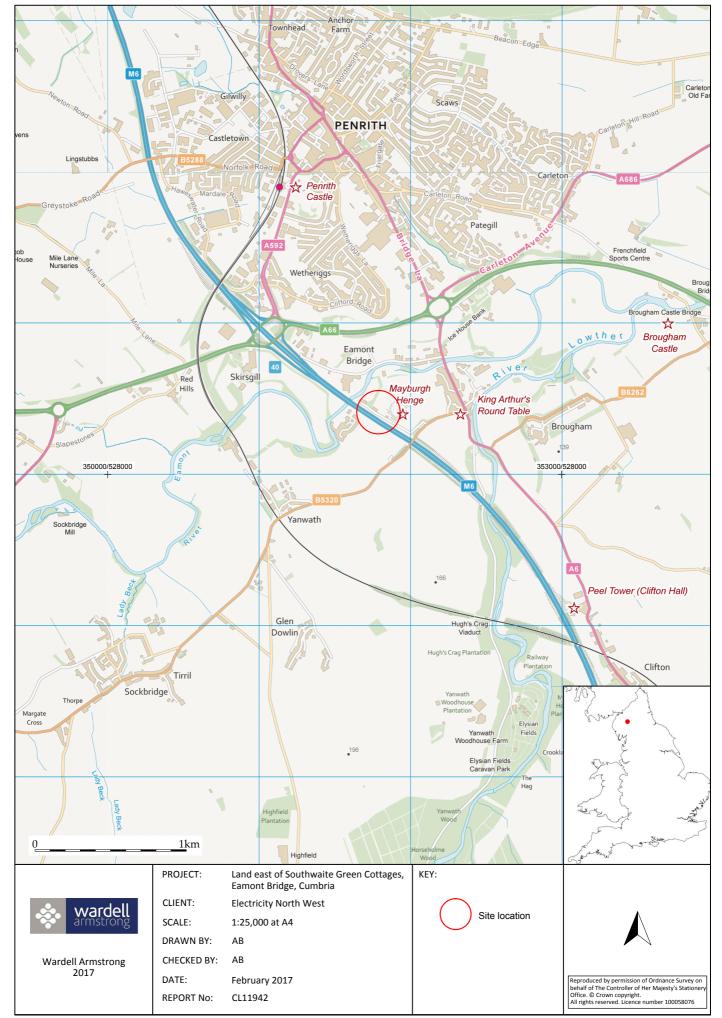


Figure 1: Site location.

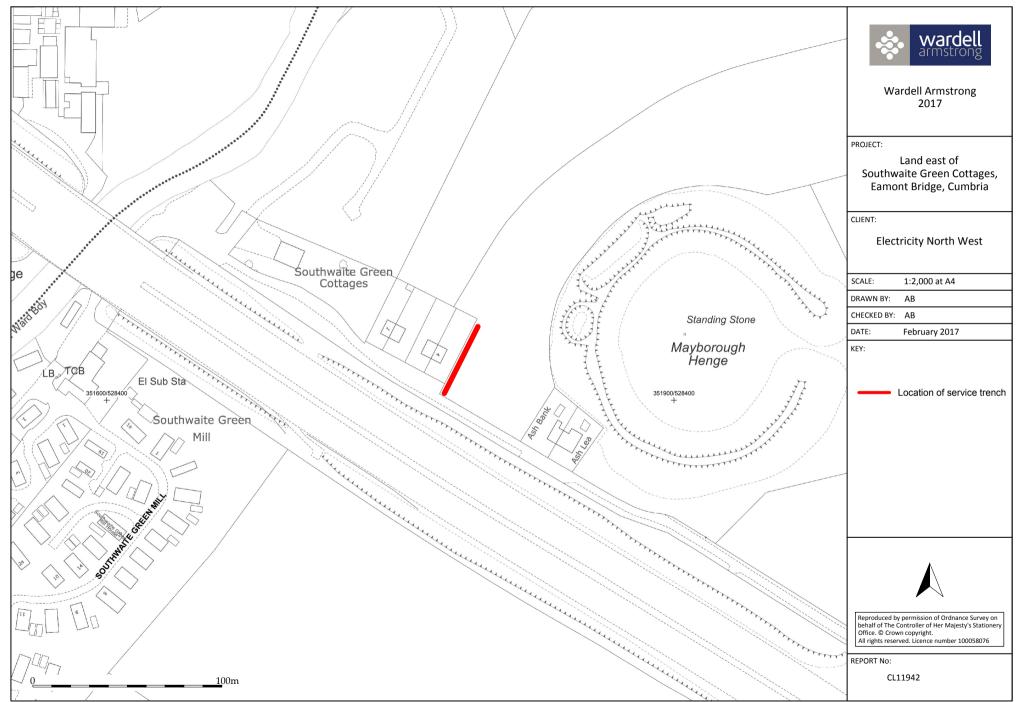


Figure 2: Detailed site location.



Figure 3: Jefferys' Plan of Westmorland, 1770.

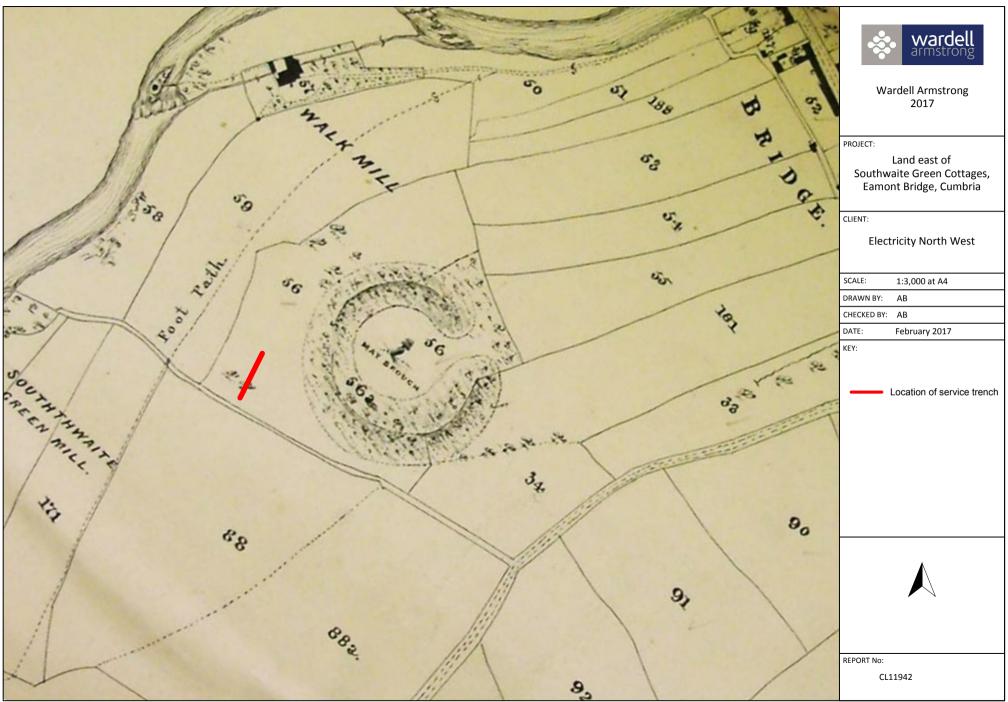


Figure 4: Tithe Award Plan for Eamont Bridge, 1843.

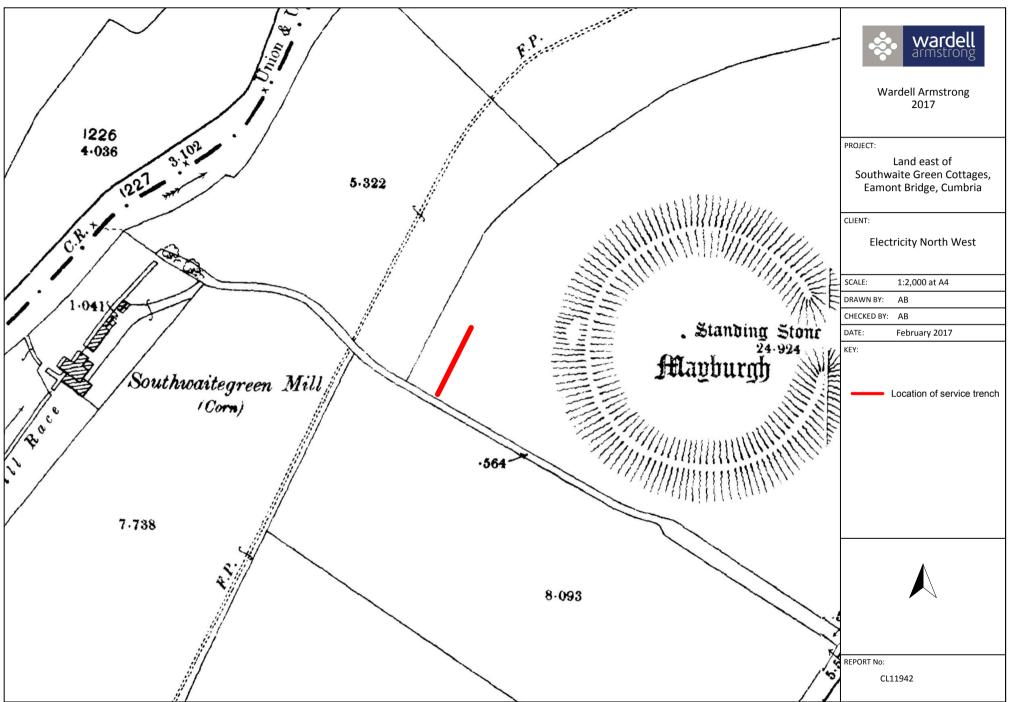


Figure 5: First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1859 (25 inches to 1 mile).

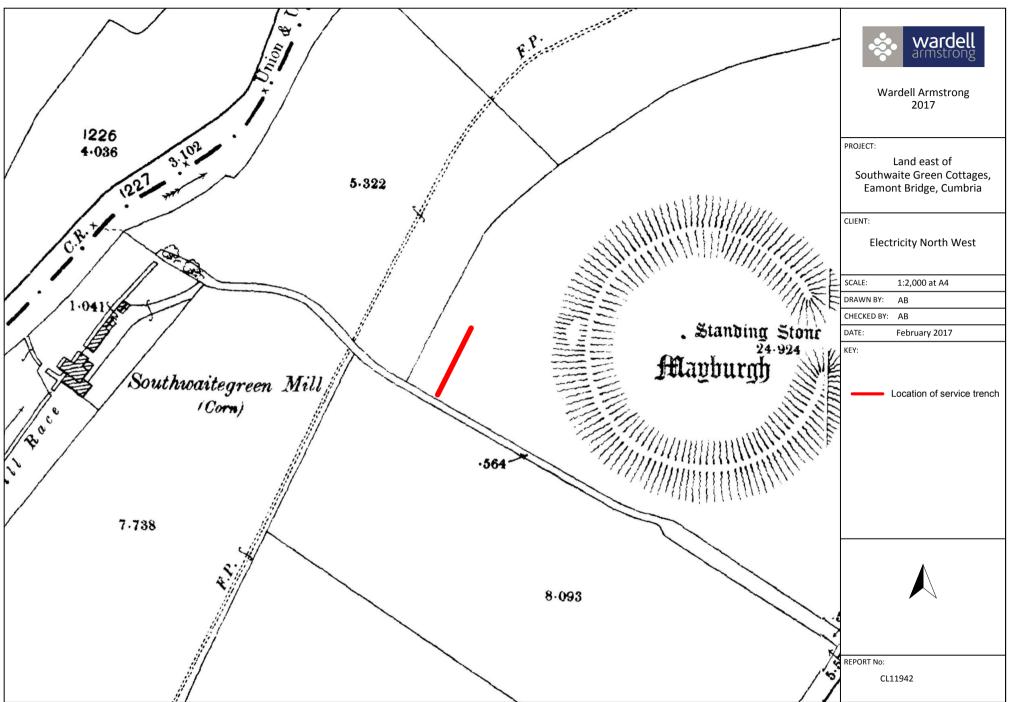


Figure 6: Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1900 (25 inches to 1 mile).

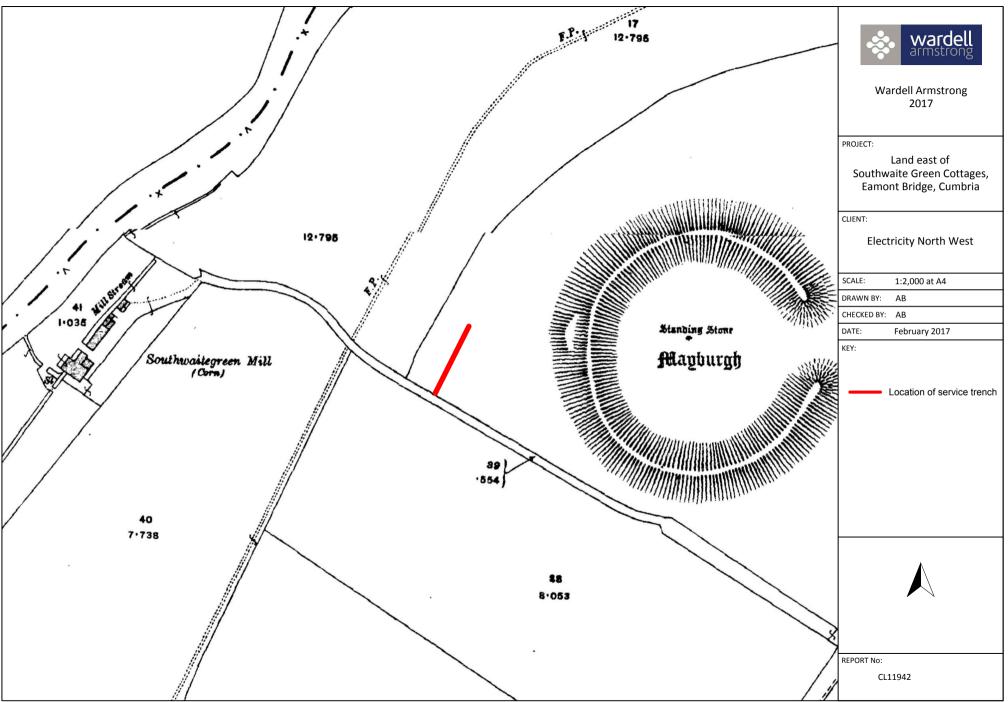


Figure 7: Third Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1915 (25 inches to 1 mile).

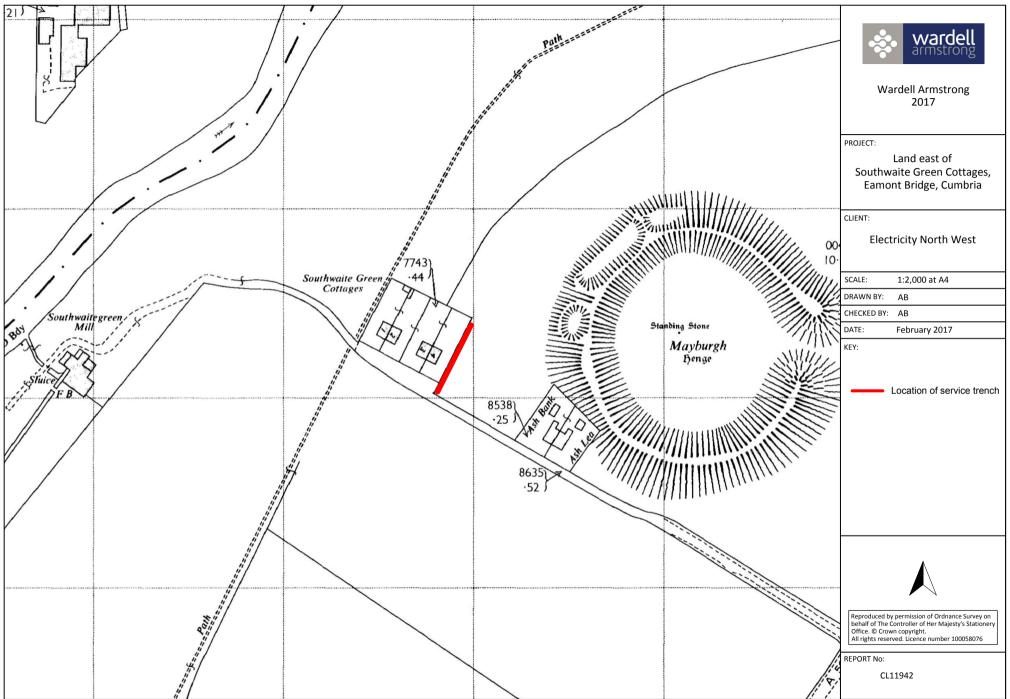


Figure 8: Ordnance Survey Map, 1968 (25 inches to 1 mile).

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