

# LAND ON DOVERHAY DOWN

LUCCOMBE

EXMOOR

SOMERSET

Results of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording



South West Archaeology Ltd. report no. 221028



[www.swarch.net](http://www.swarch.net)

Tel. 01769 573555  
Tel. 01872 223164

# Land on Doverhay Down, Luccombe, Exmoor, Somerset

## Results of Archaeological Monitoring and Recording

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By P. Webb  
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Work undertaken by SWARCH on behalf of the National Trust (The Client)

### SUMMARY

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*This report presents the results of archaeological monitoring and recording carried out by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) on Doverhay Down at Woodcocks Ley Farm, Luccombe, Exmoor, Somerset.*

*The archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out along a c.750m water pipeline route from Woodcocks Ley Farm and across Doverhay Down. Much of the route was alongside existing roads and tracks, the probable made-ground in the stratigraphy reflecting the construction of these roads. Despite the route running across a landscape littered with prehistoric and later features including bowl barrows (running in very close proximity to some of these monuments), no archaeological features or finds were recovered during the excavations.*

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December 2022

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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THE NATIONAL TRUST (THE CLIENT)  
EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY (ENPA)

## PROJECT CREDITS

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PROJECT DIRECTOR: DR. SAMUEL WALLS, MCIFA  
PROJECT MANAGER: PETER WEBB  
FIELDWORK: PETER WEBB  
REPORT: PETER WEBB  
GRAPHICS: PETER WEBB  
EDITING: DR. SAMUEL WALLS, MCIFA

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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<b>LOCATION:</b>	LAND ON DOVERHAY DOWN
<b>PARISH:</b>	LUCCOMBE
<b>COUNTY:</b>	SOMERSET (EXMOOR NATIONAL PARK)
<b>CENTROID NGR:</b>	SS 88511 45111
<b>PLANNING REF:</b>	N/A
<b>SWARCH REF:</b>	LLWL22
<b>OASIS REF:</b>	SOUTHWES1-510162

### 1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) was commissioned by the National Trust (The Client) to undertake archaeological monitoring during groundworks associated with the laying of a new water pipe from Woodcocks Ley Farm to Doverhay Down, Luccombe, Exmoor, Somerset (Figure 1).

This work was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Boyd 2022) drawn up in consultation with the Local Planning Authority and in line with best practice and ClfA guidelines (2014).

### 1.2 TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site is located at Woodcocks Ley Farm on Doverhay Down, c.3km west of Luccombe. The pipeline route runs north and east for c.800m, largely following existing pipelines and trackways, but also crossing an area of moorland. The route crosses gently and steeply largely north facing slopes on the northern side of Ley Hill between heights of c.270-300m AOD. The soils of this area are the feely draining very acidic and slightly acidic sandy and loamy soils of Soilscape Groups 14 and 6 (CSAI 2022). These overlie the sedimentary sandstone of Hangmans Formation; the river/stream valleys with superficial Head deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel (BGS 2022).

### 1.3 HISTORICAL & ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site is located on Ley Hill, running from the historic farmstead of Woodcocks Ley Farm onto the moorland of Doverhay Down. The pipeline route runs across lands of the Holnicote Estate, through an area that contains evidence of significant prehistoric activity. The Exmoor National Park Historic Environment Record (HER) has identified a number of possible Bronze Age bowl barrows, including several within c.50m of the proposed route (List 1006191, MSO 7317; MSO 7425; MSO 7426); a possible prehistoric hillslope or medieval square enclosure (MSO7321); and medieval to post-medieval field boundaries (MMO 1850).

The site falls within land designated on the Historic Landscape Characterisation as *Anciently Enclosed Land, pre 17<sup>th</sup> century* (west) and *Unenclosed Pasture* (east).

Only a limited number of archaeological investigations are recorded as having taken place in this area, including archaeological excavation (EEM 13992), geophysical survey (EEM 14967) and walkover survey (EEM 14979) on Ley Hill; desk-based assessment at Wilmersham Farm (EEM 14981); and building survey of individual buildings including at Buckethole (EEM 14459) and Woodcocks Ley (EEM 14462) Farms.

## 1.4 METHODOLOGY

The archaeological monitoring & recording was conducted in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Boyd 2022) drawn up in consultation with the Local Planning Authority and in line with ClfA guidelines (2014) and best practice. A single sinuous pipe trench, running broadly north-east to south-west for a length of c.7500m and measuring c.0.50m wide was opened by tracked mechanical excavator to a depth of c.0.30m, this being the required depth of excavation, using a toothless grading bucket under archaeological supervision. Exposed archaeological deposits were excavated by hand and in accordance with the WSI and ClfA guidelines.

## 2.0 RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING & RECORDING

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### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The pipeline trench was located running east and north-east from fields to the immediate south of Woodcocks Ley Farm, along the edges of access tracks and tarmacked roads for a length of c.425m (not monitored) before turning to run to the north-east (for a further c.220m) along the edge of a stoned track and east (c.120m) across moorland (monitored). The trench measured 0.50m wide and was excavated to a depth of c.0.30m (c.0.80m when crossing roads/tracks).

### 2.2 RESULTS

The stratigraphy was largely consistent across the site. A loose black to dark grey-brown friable sand-silt c.0.06-0.15m thick overlay a dark grey-brown friable sand-silt subsoil (across the moorland) and a compacted mid-light grey soft clay-silt-sand with abundant sub-angular stone layer of probable made-ground (along the edges of the track).

No archaeological features were identified and no finds were recovered during the excavations.

## 3.0 CONCLUSION

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The archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out along a c.750m water pipeline route from Woodcocks Ley Farm and across Doverhay Down. Much of the route was alongside existing roads and tracks, the probable made-ground in the stratigraphy reflecting the construction of these roads. Despite the route running across a landscape littered with prehistoric and later features including bowl barrows (running in close proximity to some), no archaeological features or finds were recovered during the excavations.

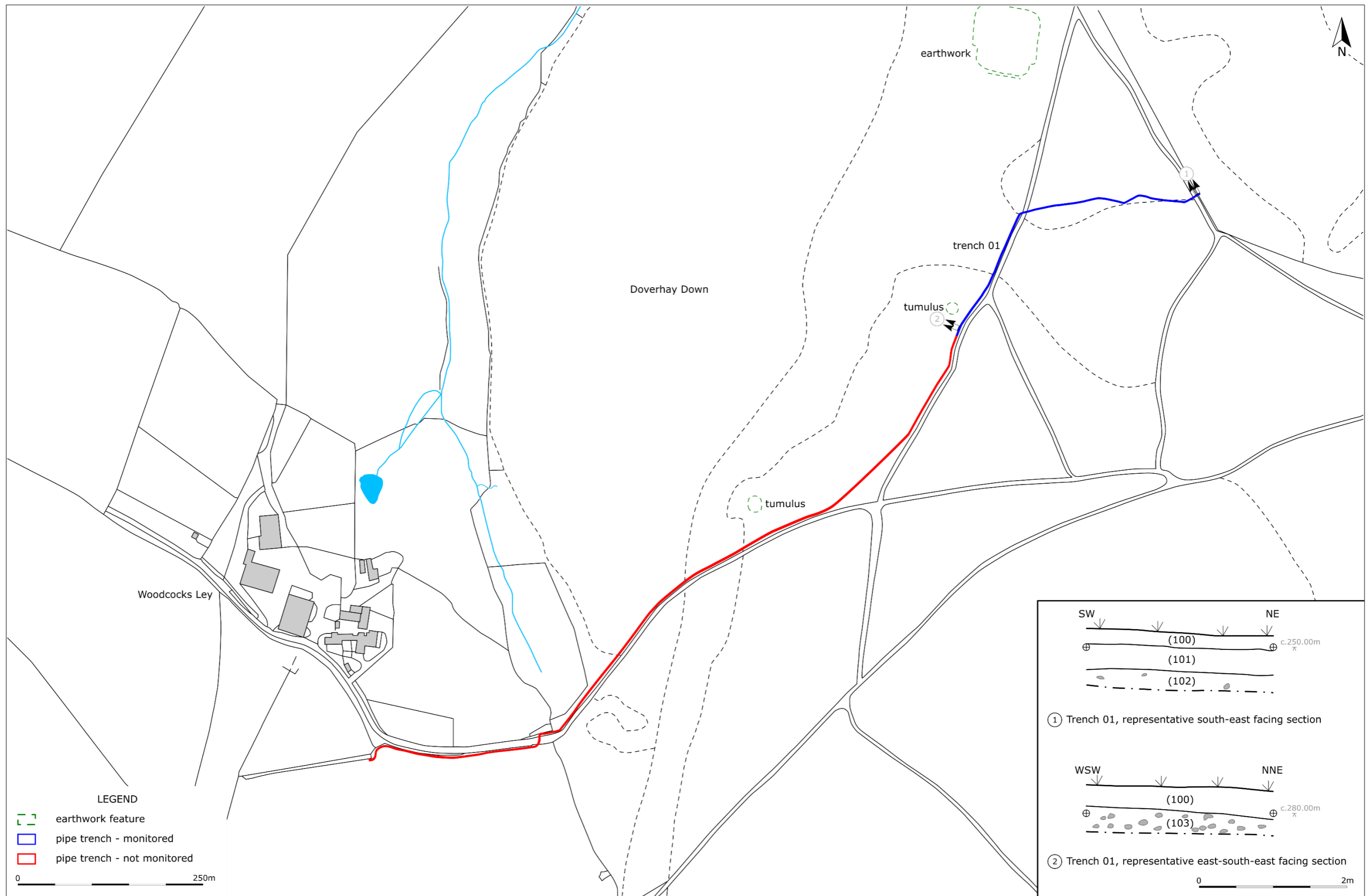


FIGURE 1: PIPELINE ROUTE PLAN, SHOWING LOCATION OF MONITORED AREAS.





FIGURE 2: TRENCH 01, POST-EXCAVATION AS IT RUNS TO THE EAST OF THE SCHEDULED BARROW; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-WEST (NO SCALE).



FIGURE 3: TRENCH 01, REPRESENTATIVE EAST-SOUTH-EAST FACING SECTION ALONG TRACKSIDE; VIEWED FROM THE EAST-SOUTH-EAST (1M SCALE).





FIGURE 4: TRENCH 01, REPRESENTATIVE SOUTH-EAST FACING SECTION ACROSS MOORLAND; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-EAST (1M SCALE).

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TEL: 01769 573555

Tel. 01872 223164

EMAIL: [MAIL@SWARCH.NET](mailto:MAIL@SWARCH.NET)