

## **Archaeological test-pitting at Land at Yeo Valley, Cannington, Sedgemoor, Somerset**

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### **Introduction**

Six archaeological test pits were opened by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) at the request of a private client to assess the stratigraphy on land at Yeo Valley, Cannington, Sedgemoor, Somerset. The test pits were hand dug by S. Stevens on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2023. This work was undertaken in accordance with a WSI in line with best practice.

### **Background**

The site is on the south-west side of Cannington, c.1km south-west of the centre of Cannington. It is across two roughly rectangular fields on a relatively flat and level plateau beside the Cannington Brook, at a height of c.20m AOD. The fields are between the brook and the A39 and divided by a lane that leads to the Yeo Valley (Cannington) offices and building.

The site is at the approximate boundary of two soils: the well-drained fine loamy reddish soils over rock of the Milford Association, and the slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged reddish fine loamy over clayey soils of the Brockhurst 1 Association (SSEW 1983); which overlie mudstone and halite-stone of the Mercia Mudstone Group (BGS 2021).

### **Site Description**

The site was located adjacent to the east of Yeo Valley creamery. The area of interest was on the south side of a slightly sloping field that had recently been harvested of crop and the topsoil was relatively soft but had been disturbed heavily by the crop and contained relatively common amounts of rounded stones. The 6 test pits were spread across the field (Figure 6) and in accordance with the geophysical survey results and were positioned to avoid any potential archaeological features.

### **Methodology**

Six small test-pits, up to c.0.50m x c.0.50m in size, were hand excavated to an average depth of c.0.40m below ground level (BGL), this being the top of the undisturbed natural substrate. Test pit 6 (TP6) was located over a feature and so was excavated to a depth of c.0.60m, through fill (103) and deep enough to demonstrate the stratigraphy. Six sections, each facing south, were drawn and photographed, and the test pits were backfilled at the end of excavation for safety; as a public right of way and footbridge was located on the north side of the field, without a fence barrier.

### **Stratigraphy**

The stratigraphy was consistent across all six test pits. It consisted of topsoil layer (100) a mid brown soft-friable silt-clay up to 0.25m thick; overlying subsoil (101), a mid yellow-brown soft silt-clay up to 0.20m thick; overlying natural (102), a light-mid grey-yellow-brown gritty silt-clay, with frequent small sub-angular stone. TP6 was excavated to feature fill (103), a light-mid brown soft-firm silt-clay >0.20m thick.

### **Discussion**

The test pits were opened to assess the stratigraphy and to investigate the depth of the level of natural, before ground works associated with the installation of a solar farm on the site. The fieldwork would indicate that there are soil depths of between 0.4-0.45m on average across the site and that any anchoring system for the panels which was within these levels would have little to no impact upon any archaeology deposits which may exist on the site.

## References

British Geological Survey 2022: *Geology of Britain Viewer*.

[http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer\\_google/googleviewer.html](http://maps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyviewer_google/googleviewer.html)

Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983: *Legend for the 1:250,000 Soil Map of England and Wales (a brief explanation of the constituent soil associations)*.



FIGURE 1: VIEW ACROSS THE FIELD; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH-EAST (NO SCALE).



FIGURE 2: TEST-PIT 1 (TP1) SOUTH-FACING SECTION; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH (1M SCALE).



FIGURE 3: TEST-PIT 1 (TP1) POST-EXCAVATION PLAN; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH (1M SCALE).



FIGURE 4: TP6 SOUTH-FACING SECTION; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH (1M SCALE).



FIGURE 5: TP6 POST-EXCAVATION PLAN; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH (1M SCALE).

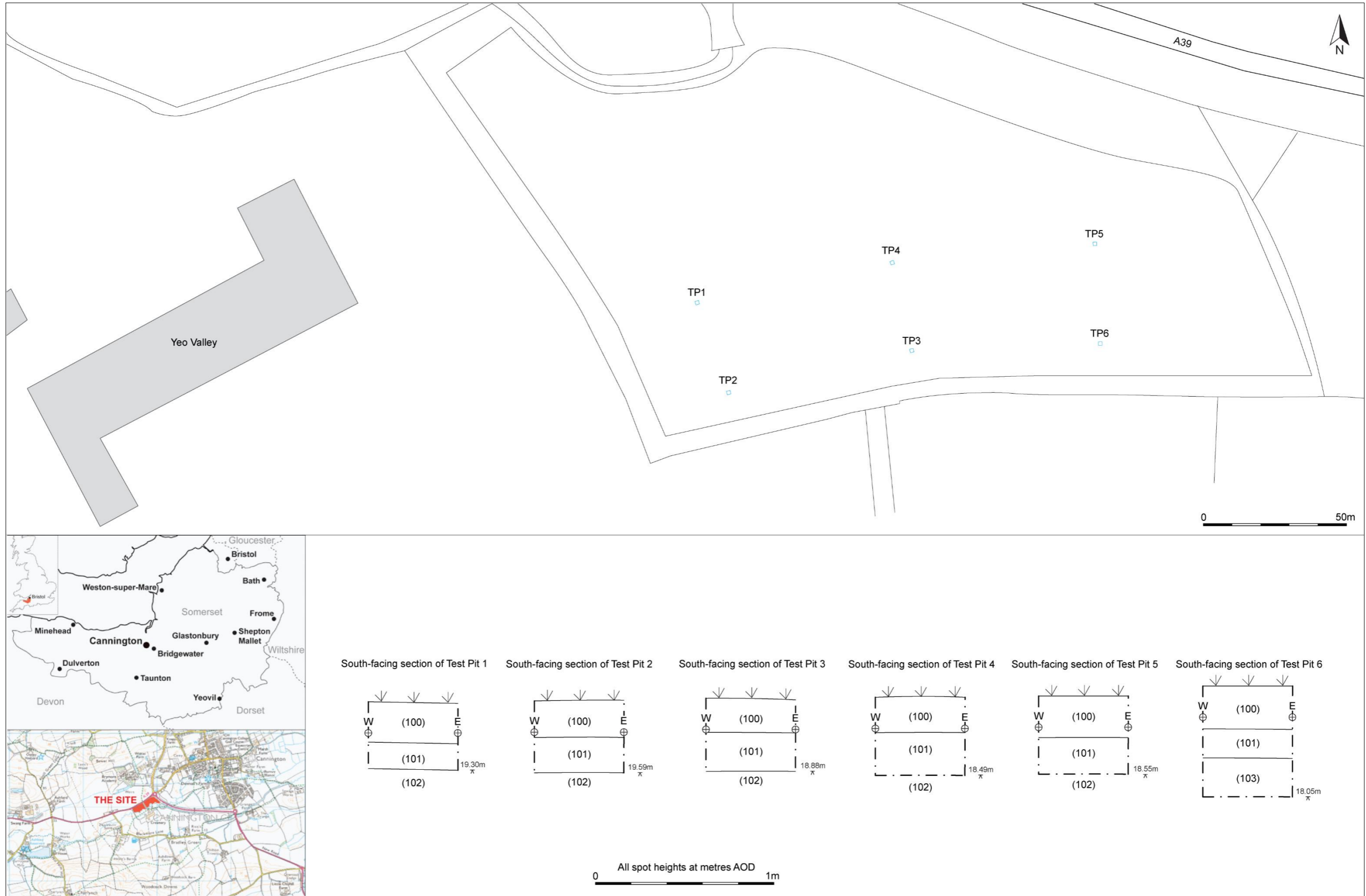


FIGURE 3: SITE PLANS AND SECTIONS