

Bennetts Orchard, Pibsbury, Huish Episcopi, Somerset:

Results of an Archaeological Watching Brief

Museum Accession Code: TTNCM 62/2020

NGR: 343864, 126316 to 345883,126072

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On behalf of:
Wessex Water

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AC archaeology

BENNETTS ORCHARD, PIBSBURY, HUISH EPISCOPI, SOMERSET: RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

NGR 343864, 126316 to 345883, 126072

Museum Accession Number: TTNCM62/2020

HER Number: 42562

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** This document sets out the results of archaeological monitoring along the route of a replacement rising main at Bennetts Orchard, Pibsbury, Huish Episcopi, Somerset (NGR 343864, 126316 to 345883, 126072). The archaeological works were undertaken on behalf of Wessex Water during September and October 2020.
- 1.2** The site is located to the east of Pibsbury, approximately 1km to the east of Huish Episcopi. The works included the monitoring of seven launch/receptor pits, each 5 x 5m in size. In addition, two open cut trench areas located at the west end of the pipeline to the south of Pibsbury and to the west of where Batt's Lane joins Gainsmarsh Lane where also monitored (see Fig.1)
- 1.3** The underlying bedrock comprises Langport Member, Blue Lias Formation and Charmouth Mudstone Formation (Undifferentiated) formed approximately 183 to 210 million years ago during the Jurassic and Triassic period and are typical of a local environment previously dominated by shallow lime-mud seas (BGS online). The route of the pipeline lies between 9m and 13m OD.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1** Although there is little recorded in the Somerset Historic Environment Record (HER) for the area of the pipeline route, it is considered an area of some archaeological potential. The area of Pibsbury, which forms the western extent of the pipeline lies on a tongue of land that extends out into the Muchelney Levels, which are located to the south of the pipeline. Such areas were often used for settlement during the prehistoric period.
- 2.2** At the western extent of the pipe route, at Pibsbury, there are records of a post-medieval farmhouse, now demolished (HER 39495), and a Grade II listed building known as Moorfield and building immediately to its rear (HER 51815). The pipeline route is located to the south of these buildings.
- 2.3** In the central part of the pipeline route, just to the north west of where Batts Lane joins Gainsmarsh Lane is evidence for possible medieval or post-medieval settlement with associated ridge and furrow (HER 54933).

2.4 To the north west of the eastern extent of the pipeline (north of Batts Farm) geophysical survey revealed faint anomalies of linear features and a possible lime kiln (HERs 39427 and 39482).

3. RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

3.1 Two launch/receptor pits, in preparation for directional drilling, were excavated in fields to the south of Upton Bridge Farm, west and east of an active north - south aligned drainage channel. Further test pits were excavated to locate the existing sewer pipeline. Five launch/receptor pits were excavated in preparation for directional drilling in fields to the south of Pibsbury, west of Gainesmarsh Lane and south of A372.

3.2 The details of the soil sequence revealed during excavations of the launch/receptor pits and stripped areas are presented in Table 1 below. The observation notes and context numbers are in the order that excavations were progressed and recorded. No archaeological cut features or deposits were noted in any of the excavations.

Launch/receptor Pit	Thickness (range in mm)	Contexts	Description
L/R1, located in field south of Little Upton Bridge. NGR: ST 45803/26114 Excavated 15/09/20	300 200-300 >1300	100 - Ploughsoil 101 - Subsoil 102 - Natural	Ploughsoil composed of grey-brown silty loam. Subsoil composed of yellow brown silty clay. The natural substratum composed of mottled yellow and grey slightly sandy silt, becoming very gravelly at c.1.3m.
L/R2, located in field south of Upton Bridge Farm. NGR: ST 45892/26088 Excavated 15/09/20	300 300 >900	200 - Ploughsoil 201 - Subsoil 202 - Natural	Ploughsoil composed of grey-brown silty loam. Subsoil composed of yellow brown silty clay. The natural substratum composed of yellow clay overlying weathered bedrock at c.0.9m.
L/R3, located in field immediately north of farm buildings, off Gainesmarsh Lane. NGR: ST 44697/26248 Recorded 21/09/20	200 not determined	300 - Topsoil 301 - Subsoil 302 - Natural	Topsoil composed of light grey-yellow-brown silty loam. Subsoil composed of yellow brown silty clay. The natural substratum composed of mottled yellow and grey silt/clay (weathered bedrock). Pit filled with water unable to measure soil depth(s).
L/R4, located in field north-west of farm buildings, off Gainesmarsh Lane. NGR: ST 44555/26252 Recorded 21/09/20	150 300 Not determined	400 - Topsoil 401 - Subsoil 402 - Natural	Topsoil composed of grey-yellow-brown silty loam. Subsoil composed of yellow brown silty clay. The natural substratum composed of mottled yellow and grey silt/clay with cobble and boulder size, angular and tabular limestone/mudstone fragments.
L/R5, located in field south of Woodstock Farm, Pibsbury. NGR: ST 44420/26254 Excavated 22/09/20	200 300 >1000	500 - Ploughsoil 501 - Subsoil 502 - Natural	Ploughsoil composed of yellowish grey-brown silty loam. Subsoil composed of yellow grey-brown silty clay with sporadic subangular, tabular cobble-size fragments of lias/mudstone. The natural substratum composed of mottled yellow and grey friable and laminated clay (weathered bedrock). Becoming solid bedrock >1.0 mbgl.
L/R6, located in field south of Whitehorn Annexe, Pibsbury. NGR: ST 44264/26270 Excavated 28/09/20	250 250 >500	600 - Topsoil 601 - Subsoil 602 - Natural	Topsoil composed of yellowish grey-brown silty clay loam. Subsoil composed of yellow brown silty clay. The natural substratum comprised solid bedrock.
L/R7, located in field, east of access to pumping station on Long Sutton Main Drain. NGR: ST 44101/26269 Recorded 13/10/20	Not known	700 - Topsoil	Topsoil comprised disturbed reddish-brown loam and turf. Area has been backfilled. Not monitored.

Table 1: Summary of soil sequence encountered.

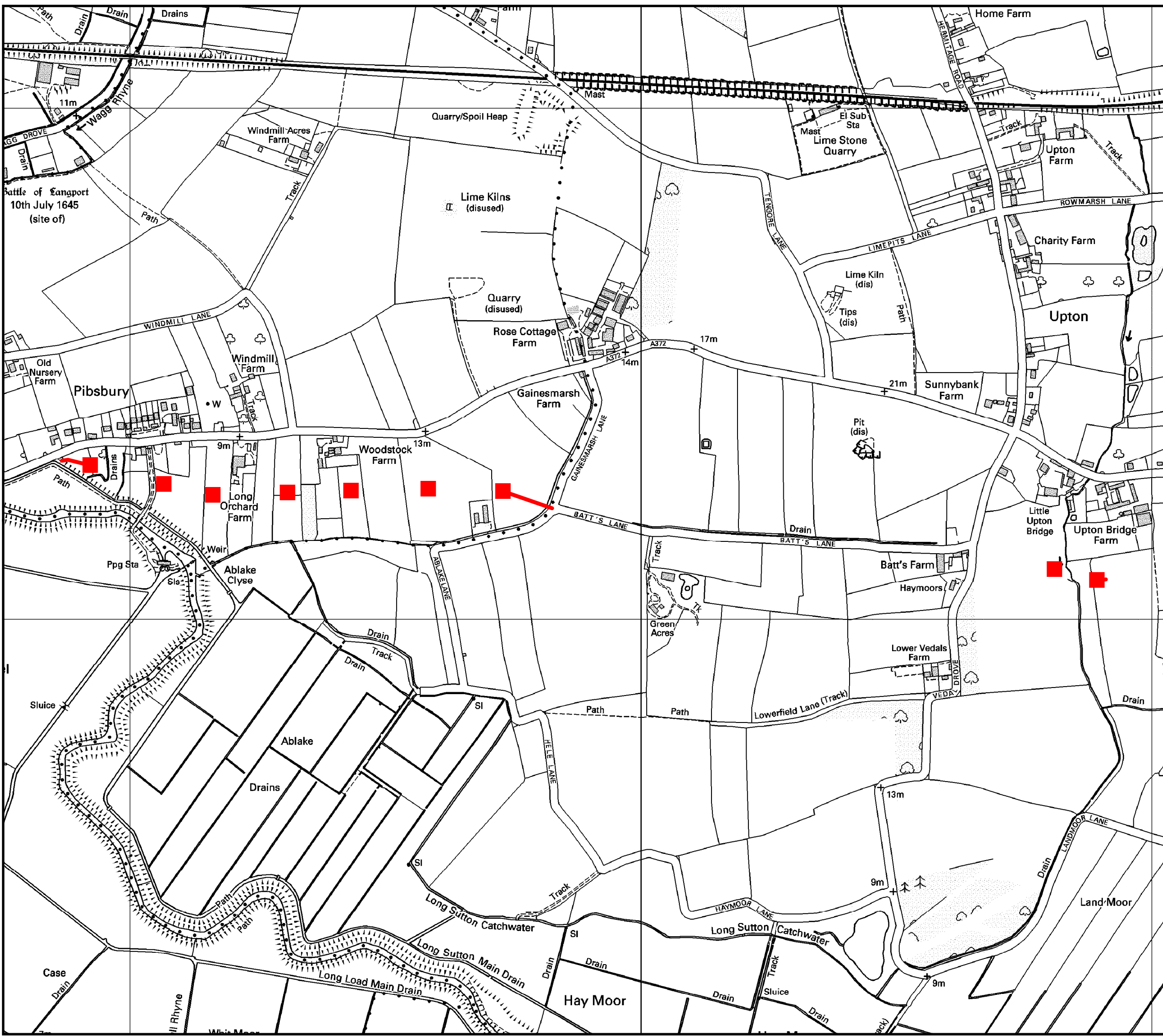
3.4 A short section of open-cut trench was excavated for c.60m to connect to the existing pumping station located south of the A372 in Pibsbury (approximately ST 43912/26295 to 43878/26315). The trench measured c.0.9m wide x c.0.9m depth x c.60m length. The soil stratigraphy exposed consisted made/disturbed ground comprising mixed grey-brown and grey silt and clay, yellow gravelly medium to coarse sand with abundant brick, lumps of concrete and old kerbs, crushed rock aggregate also containing metal, plastic, wood and other detritus. No archaeological cut features or deposits were encountered during observation of the excavation process.

4. COMMENT

4.1 No archaeological cut features or deposits were encountered during the archaeological monitoring and no pre-modern artefacts were recovered.

5. REFERENCES

Clark, R., 2020. *Bennetts Orchard, Pibsbury, Huish Episcopi, Somerset: Project Design for an archaeological watching brief*. Unpublished report by AC archaeology Ltd No. ACW1297/2/0, September 2020.



Legend

- Drill Pit Monitoring
- Open Cut Monitoring

**Bennetts Orchard
Rising Main Replacement
Site Location Plan (A3)**

Grid Reference: 343864, 126316	Date: 04/09/2020
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Drawing Number: CN0185/ENV/300/REV A	1:7,000	
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This map may be used for Wessex Water Projects only.

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Environment and Planning Services

SELECTED PLATES



**Plate 1. South facing section L/R1
No scale**



**Plate 2. North facing section L/R2 Scale:
2m**



**Plate 3. L/R5 area strip in progress
Scale: 2x1m**



**Plate 4. Area stripped around L/R6
Scale: 2x1m**



Plate 5. Open-cut trench Scale: 1m

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