

# Water Main Replacement, Stowell, Sherborne, Somerset:

Results of an Archaeological Watching Brief

HER No:43146

NGR: 368590 122123 to 368855 122539

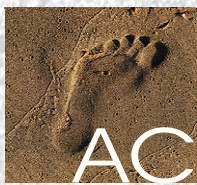
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Prepared by:  
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On behalf of:  
Wessex Water

Document No: ACW1369/2/0

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AC archaeology

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# **WATER MAIN REPLACEMENT, STOWELL, SHERBORNE, SOMERSET: Results of an Archaeological Watching Brief**

**Wessex Water Project No: B18054**

**HER Number: 43146**

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1** This document has been prepared by AC Archaeology Ltd on behalf of Wessex Water. It sets out the results of an archaeological watching brief during groundworks relating to the construction of a replacement water main at Stowell, Sherborne, Somerset (see Fig. 1 for site location details). Stowell is located in the parish off Charlton Horethorne and approximately 2km to the west of Templecombe.
- 1.2** A consultation between Wessex Water and the South West Heritage Trust Historic Environment Officer (HEO) confirmed that groundworks associated with the replacement water main would require archaeological monitoring.
- 1.3** Although most of the replacement water main was within the highway or using methods requiring minimal excavation (pipe burst and slip line), there was a c.100m length of open cut pipeline in a field to the north of the church next to Stowell Farm. The compound area, located to the north of Glebe Farm, was not stripped of topsoil.
- 1.4** The bedrock geology comprises Frome Clay Formation – Mudstone a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 166 to 168 million years ago in the Jurassic Period. There are superficial deposits of Head comprising clays, silts, sands and gravels formed 3 million years ago in the Quaternary Period. The overall area of the replacement water main lies at between 113m and 125m OD.

## **2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The overall area is well documented in the Somerset Historic Environment Record (HER) with records relating to the church and associated settlement. The village area of Stowell appears as a dispersed settlement with earthworks of a deserted medieval village located in the south and a church and manor approximately 400m further to the north east.
- 2.2** The Church of St Mary Magdelene is a Grade II listed building which dates back at least to the 14th century (HER 53656). It was substantially rebuilt in 1912-13. The graveyard is believed to have been in use since the medieval period. To the south of the church is Manor Farm with fishponds (HER53676). The house is a Grade II listed building with 15th century origins. There are also historic records dating to 1286 that refer to Stowell manor court, suggesting that an earlier building may have stood on this site.

**2.3** Approximately 400m south of the church and manor, there are earthworks relating to a deserted medieval village (HER53674). These cover an area of 1.5ha and are located immediately to the south of Clare Farm. There are six small enclosures defined by scarps and banks up to 0.3m high. Holloways are also visible, but there is no evidence for house platforms.

### **3. AIMS OF THE WATCHING BRIEF**

**3.1** The principal aims of the archaeological watching brief were:

- To monitor, under constant archaeological supervision, all groundworks associated with the open cut trenching;
- To record and excavate any archaeological features exposed that would be adversely affected by the groundworks;
- To contribute to archaeological research framework questions, and in particular with regard to those outlined in the South West Archaeological Research Framework (SWARF Somerset County Council 2012);
- To provide an interpretive report (and an archive, if appropriate) on the results of the monitoring.

### **4. FIELD METHODOLOGY**

**4.1** The site monitoring was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by the HEO (Clark, 2021). The machine excavation of the pipe trench was undertaken by the main contractor and the work monitored by the site archaeologist. Attendance by the archaeologist was comprehensive.

**4.2** Site observations were recorded using the standard AC archaeology *pro-forma* recording system, comprising written and graphic records in accordance with AC archaeology's General Site Recording Manual, Version 2. A photographic record was made; and a representative selection is included in this report (see Plates 1 to 3).

### **5. RESULTS**

**5.1** The archaeological watching brief was undertaken in August 2021 and involved monitoring the length of an open-cut pipe trench measuring between 0.30m and 0.40m in width (see Plates 1-3). It was machined to a depth of up to 1.0m. The general stratigraphy consisted of a topsoil / plough-soil c. 0.20 in depth comprising a mid grey-brown clayey loam. This sealed a light grey-brown silty clay subsoil c.0.10 deep (see Plate 2). Below this was a very stiff yellow-brown clay natural.

**5.2** No archaeological features, deposits or finds were recovered during the monitoring and the area closest to the main gate to the field was heavily disturbed by livestock and agricultural equipment. The DMV earthworks were visible in land to the south-west near Clare Farm.

**5.3** As nothing of archaeological significance was found, it is proposed not to deposit an archive for this project.

### **6. REFERENCES & GUIDELINES**

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists 2014, *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief*. CIFA: Reading

Clark, R, 2021, *Water Main Replacement, Stowell, Somerset: Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological watching brief*, AC archaeology ACW 1369/1/0

English Heritage, 1991, *The Management of Archaeological Projects. Second Edition* (MAP2)  
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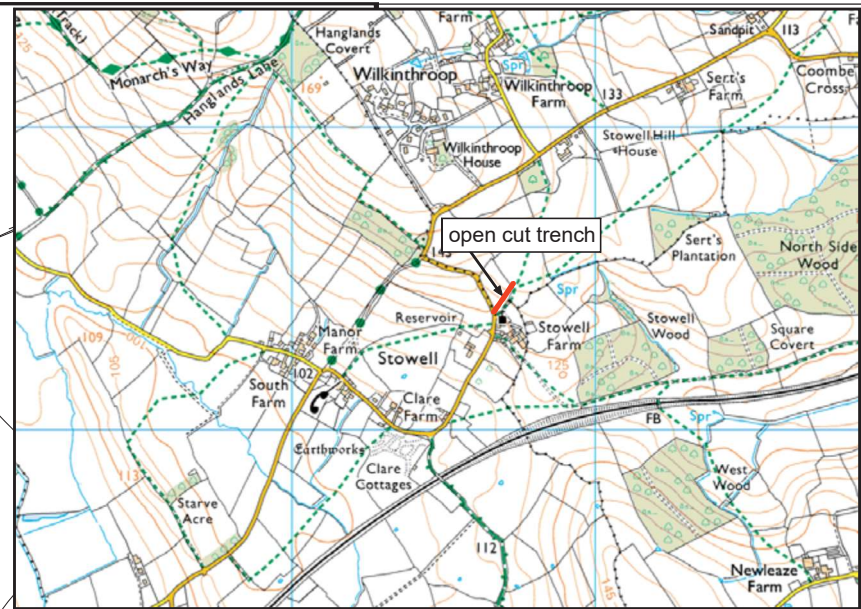
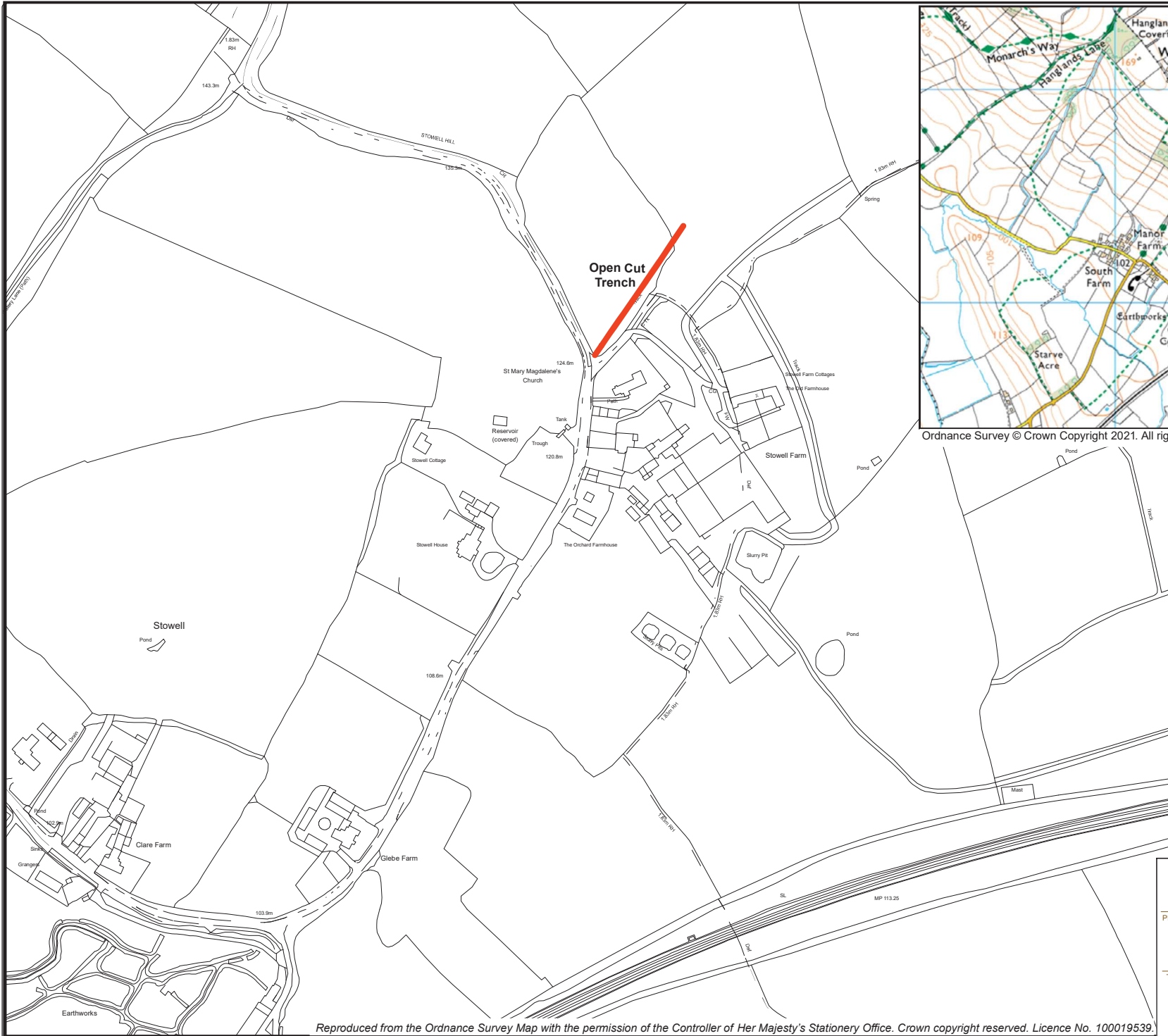
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Somerset County Council, 2012. *The Archaeology of South West England: South West Archaeological Framework: Research Strategy 2012-2017*. Somerset County Council.

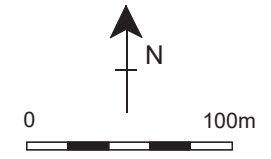
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***Fig. 1: Site location***



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**Legend:**  
 Open cut trench that was archaeologically monitored



PROJECT  AC archaeology

Stowell, Sherborne

TITLE

Fig. 1: Site location and area of archaeological monitoring

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***PLATES:***



Plate 1: General view of groundworks



Plate 2: Soil profile along the route



Plate 3: Disturbed ground in gateway



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