



Tirril to Yanwath Pipeline, Cumbria

Archaeological Watching Brief



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SUMMARY

Following a request by McAlpine Utility Services, Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) undertook an archaeological watching brief, in September 2004, of a proposed pipeline installation route between Tirril and Yanwath, Cumbria (NY 512 277 to NY 504 268). This report sets out the results of the watching brief on three test pits along the pipeline route. The test pits were all excavated on the northern grass verge of the B5320, between the railway bridge on the western side of Yanwath and the turning to Sockbridge north-east of Tirril.

The test pits were excavated in order to locate an existing water-main, and were excavated down to the natural till. No deposits of any archaeological significance were present. It was not recommended that any further archaeological excavation be conducted at the site, and it was stipulated by CCCAS that an archaeological watching brief on the development would no longer be required.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology North would like to thank McAlpine Utility Services for commissioning and funding the work.

Matt town carried out the archaeological watching and also compiled the report. The drawings produced by Mark Tidmarsh. Alison Plummer managed the project and edited the report, together with Alan Lupton.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF PROJECT

- 1.1.1 Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) undertook a programme of archaeological assessment specified by the Cumbria County Council Archaeological Service (CCCAS) for McAlpine Utility Services, in advance of the refurbishment of an existing water pipeline (Fig 1). The proposed route runs between Tirril and Yanwath for a distance of approximately 1km (NY 512 277 to NY 504 268). The route runs through an area of archaeological potential, and as a result it was recommended that a programme of archaeological investigation be carried out prior to any ground work taking place. This involving a watching brief on three trial pits along the pipeline easement, excavated in order to locate an existing water-main.
- 1.1.2 A verbal project brief was provided by CCCAS, and OA North was immediately commissioned to carry out the work on the 28th of September 2004. This report details the results of the watching brief, together with a concluding chapter outlining recommendations for any further work.

1.2 SITE LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

- 1.2.1 The development area is situated along the B5320, between the villages of Tirril and Yanwath in Cumbria (Fig 1). The villages are located approximately 3km south-west of Penrith on low ground in the Eden Valley, between the Lake District to the south-west and the Pennines to the north-east. The River Eamont runs to the north. The soils consist of coarse sandy soils of the Newport 1 Association series, with the possibility of Wick 1 loamy brown earths (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983, 249).
- 1.2.2 The solid geology is mainly Permo-Triassic sandstone, generally concealed by glacial deposits (Countryside Commission 1998, 40). The drift geology is mainly boulder clay with some sand and gravel (*ibid*). The rich agricultural land resulting from the physical aspects of the Eden Valley is reflected in the number of corn mills in and around the study area during the nineteenth century (Ordnance Survey 1861). The land is relatively low-lying and flat, at a height of around 120m–140m above mean sea level (Ordnance Survey 1989).

1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 1.3.1 **Introduction:** the historical and archaeological background is principally compiled through secondary sources and is intended to put the results of the assessment into a wider context.
- 1.3.2 **Prehistoric:** in the Shap area to the south of Penrith, sites apparently dating to the late Mesolithic have been found at heights of around 275 – 300m above mean sea level (Cherry and Cherry 2002, 4). There appears to be a degree of continuity between the end of the Mesolithic and the start of the Neolithic; flint artefacts typically belonging to the early Neolithic are essentially

indistinguishable from the late Mesolithic (*ibid*). The Neolithic is, however, a time of significant social changes with the introduction of ceramics, large funerary and ritual monuments, more intensive agricultural practices and the large-scale production of polished stone axes in the Central Lake District. These are found throughout Cumbria, and were traded across Britain and into Europe (Rollinson 1967). The association of henges, stone circles, and long mounds with the movement of axes appears established, and the location of these monuments appears to suggest a shift in emphasis of activity from the coastal plain to the edge of the Lake District hills and the Eden Valley (Hodgkinson *et al* 2000, 37).

- 1.3.3 A landscape survey was undertaken in 1988 on Askham Fell, approximately 6km south of the development area (Quartermaine and Leech forthcoming). It demonstrated intermittent but non-intensive use of the moorland until the present day, with the earliest monument within the survey area being the Cockpit stone circle, possibly dating to the Neolithic period, and associated with a stone avenue (*ibid*). During the Bronze Age a line of funerary monuments was constructed adjacent to the cross ridge between the Lowther and Ullswater valleys (*ibid*), and probably indicated a prehistoric route way, which utilised the natural communication route between the two valleys (*ibid*).
- 1.3.4 The well-known Neolithic stone circle, Long Meg and her daughters, lies to the north-east of the development area (Burl 1979, 90). The Long Meg stone has one face covered by rock art and inside the stone circle are a number of burial cairns, believed to be later in date (Beckensall 2002, 118). Ditched enclosures, thought to be of an earlier date, are known to lie in the immediate vicinity to the Long Meg site (*ibid*). Close by is Little Meg, a burial cairn also showing rock art (*ibid*, 119).
- 1.3.5 Human activity close to the site is known to date back to the late Neolithic period, with three important henges approximately 2km north-east of the development area. The closest one to the site is Mayburgh Henge, which survives as a circular bank with an entrance in the east. It is also believed to date to the end of the Neolithic or the early Bronze Age (Burl 1979, 231), with the discovery of a bronze axe implying the use of the henge during the Bronze Age. Stukeley described Mayburgh Henge in 1776, saying that previously there had been two circles of stones around Mayburgh, four stones of the inner circle surviving until a year or two before he wrote his account, when they had been blown to pieces by gunpowder (Atkinson 1883, 454-5). The presence of other prehistoric monuments south-east of the henge is also suspected; the land between the monument and the road was referred to as 'High Round Table' and Stukeley remarked upon a 'very fine *tumulus* of a large size, and set about with a circle of stones' located on the northern bank of the Eamont, opposite the henge (Dymond 1890, 188).
- 1.3.6 King Arthur's Round Table, which lies immediately east of Mayburgh, has been dated to the late Neolithic, around 3000 – 2400 BC (Burl 1979, 64). It survives as a circular bank with an inner concentric ditch, cut by roads on the northern and eastern sides, and has an entrance in the south. It is a striking

monument within the landscape, and as such has attracted attention for many centuries.

- 1.3.7 Excavations at King Arthur's Round Table during the twentieth century investigated a monument which had been interfered with at least as early as the eighteenth century. During the later eighteenth century a man by the name of Bushby deepened the ditch and threw earth upon the banks (Heelis 1912, 146). Shortly afterwards the road leading west to Yanwath was built, and the main road which passes through Eamont Bridge was widened and straightened (*ibid*). The Yanwath road destroyed the northern part of the monument, while the change in the road through Eamont Bridge destroyed the eastern edge. The excavation also revealed a small mound had previously existed in the centre, which covered a trench containing a burnt body (Clare 1981, 12).
- 1.3.8 The third henge is Little Round Table lying to the south; it was described in 1776 as being 300 feet in diameter with a small vallum and the ditch outermost, with 1000 feet separating it from King Arthur's Round Table to the north (Bersu 1940, 202); the henge was visible until 1878, when it was said to have been destroyed during the widening of the Lowther Lodge gates (LUAU 1993).
- 1.3.9 **Roman:** the Roman road running south from Carlisle, to the east of the Roman fort of Old Penrith, passed through Brougham Roman fort (Shotter 1997, 35), approximately 3km north-east of the development site. The fort's rectangular earthwork is plainly visible, and whilst there is little dating evidence for the site, it is hardly conceivable that this important road-junction fort does not go back at least to Agricola's period of office (*ibid*, 24). A second Roman road also passes through Brougham fort and runs east through Kirkby Thore and Brough (*ibid*, 44). The function of the fort was to guard the nearby crossing of the River Eamont and the junction of the Roman road from Manchester to Carlisle, mentioned above, with the road from York to Stainmore Pass (Allan 1994, 6). The road is thought to have continued west from Brougham, crossing the River Lowther (*ibid*). It is then believed to have run due west towards Yanwath (*ibid*), and thence over High Street to Ambleside, passing adjacent to the southern end of the development area, although its exact location is not known. An early Roman settlement site, comprising a series of possibly walled enclosures, was excavated by Higham (1983) at Yanwath Wood, 1km south-east of the development area. Two late Roman coin hoards have been found near Brougham, with more found further south (Shotter 1997, 62).
- 1.3.10 **Early Medieval:** a reference is made in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles to *Eamotum*, where a meeting is said to have taken place between Athelstan and a number of northern lords in AD 927; this suggests the area was of significance in the tenth century, but could refer to the general area rather than the village of Eamont Bridge (LUAU 1993).
- 1.3.11 Three significant post-Roman settlement sites have been excavated in the area. The first is at Dacre, approximately 6km south-west of the development area, where activity seems to have commenced in the fifth or sixth century.

The religious settlement, however, with well attested monastic activity, flourished from the eighth to eleventh centuries (Oliver *et al* 1996, 168-9).

- 1.3.12 The second site is that of Fremington, lying approximately 3km east of the development area (*ibid*). The third site is at Whinfell Forest, Brougham, and was excavated in 1996 (Heawood and Howard-Davis 2002, 159).
- 1.3.13 **Medieval:** around the end of the eleventh century, Brougham Castle was built, just one of a large number of castles built at the time to close up the open way southward to the east of the Shap Fells (Furness 1894, 56). Brougham Castle is situated to the east of the study area. The first written reference to Yanwath dates to the twelfth century, where the village is recorded as *Eunewit*, the Old English for 'even level wood' (Smith 1966, 204).
- 1.3.14 In the twelfth century, the first written reference to Eamont Bridge also occurs (Smith 1966, 205), and the bridge was presumably built as a new crossing point when the population and economic function moved away from Brougham to Penrith (LUAU 1993). The presence of a bridge at Eamont is first recorded in 1303, when the boundaries of Inglewood Forest were described '*... and so going down by the same way unto the bridge of Amote*' (Nicolson and Burn 1777, 523). It is indicated that this bridge was repaired or reconstructed in 1425, on the command of Thomas Langley, Bishop of Durham, who offered an indulgence of 40 days to anyone who should contribute to its building (*ibid*, 413). The settlement at Eamont Bridge is believed to date to the medieval period, but there is no mention of it in the Domesday Survey.
- 1.3.15 The village of Yanwath is recorded as being held by the Cliffords during Norman rule, before passing to the Threlkelds. The village subsequently passed in marriage to the Dudleys, who held it until 1654; it was subsequently sold to Sir John Lowther (Bulmer 1885). Yanwath Hall, the manorial seat located approximately 1km north of the development area, was built around the fifteenth century and is of tower-house construction, with later additions in the Elizabethan period (Bulmer 1885).
- 1.3.16 **Post-medieval:** Westmorland, like the rest of north-west England and indeed the whole country, is dominated by the events of the Industrial Revolution during the post-medieval period. The study area is, however, essentially rural and as such the effects of the Industrial Revolution are less obvious. One of the major changes was the construction of new transport links, in particular the Lancaster and Carlisle Railway running from Yanwath adjacent to the northern end of the development area (Ordnance Survey 1861). It later changed its name to the London and North Western Railway (LNWR) (Ordnance Survey 1915). The last battle on English soil was fought at Clifton, around 2.5km to the east of the development area, in 1745 (LUAU 1997, 4). It was in practice, however, more of a skirmish than a battle.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

2.1.1 OA North undertook the works in response to a request from McAlpine Utility Services Ltd for an archaeological watching brief of the development area, in accordance with a verbal brief issued by CCCAS. Due to the short time-frame involved between the commissioning and undertaking of the project, no project design was prepared, but the work undertaken complied with current legislation and accepted best practice, including the Code of Conduct and the relevant professional standards of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA).

2.2 FIELD WORK

2.2.1 **Watching Brief:** the excavation of three test pits was carried out using a three ton mechanical excavator fitted with a 0.3m wide toothed bucket. Permanent observation of the work was undertaken, as well as examination of any soil horizons exposed, and the accurate recording of all archaeological features, horizons and any artifacts found during the excavations.

2.2.2 **Recording:** all spoil was scanned for finds during the excavations. A complete record of all features and horizons exposed was made, comprising of a full description and preliminary classification of features or structures revealed, on OA North *pro-forma* sheets, and their accurate location in plan. A plan of the site was produced, showing the position of the excavations. A photographic record in colour slide and monochrome formats was also compiled. The location of the trenches were accurately recorded.

2.3 ARCHIVE

2.3.1 A full archive has been produced to a professional standard in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). The paper and digital archive will be deposited in the Cumbria County Record Office (Carlisle) and to English Heritage on completion of the project. A copy of the report will be deposited with the Cumbria SMR in Kendal.

3. RESULTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 Three test pits were excavated by the client along the pipeline route, to locate an existing water-main prior to the development taking place (Fig 2). The test pits were all excavated on the northern grass verge of the B5320, between the railway bridge on the western side of Yanwath and the turning to Sockbridge to the north-east of Tirril. The results of the archaeological watching brief maintained on these excavations are presented below.

3.2 TEST PIT 1

3.2.1 The test pit was excavated on the western side of the railway bridge. It measured 0.6m by 1m, and was excavated to a depth of 0.9m (Plate 1).

3.2.2 The soil horizon comprised 0.1m of thin turf overlying a very thin skin of pink concrete, to a depth of 0.05m. The remaining 0.75m consisted of loose sub-angular gravel in a gritty-sandy matrix. The gravel is of a form frequently deposited along railway tracks and a quick visual inspection of the bridge shows that the ground on both sides of the bridge has been ramped up with make-up deposits to take the road over the railway line, presumably in the twentieth century. The water-main was not located. The natural is at least 3-4m below present ground level at this point; therefore no archaeologically significant deposits were observed in the test pit.

3.3 TEST PIT 2

3.3.1 The test pit was excavated opposite Tirril Moor farmhouse and a turning down an unnamed road, and west of a gate into the field to the north. It measured 0.55m by 1m, and was excavated to a depth of 1.1m (Plate 2).

3.3.2 The soil horizon comprised 0.2m of mid brown slightly sandy-clayey-silt topsoil, overlying 0.6m of light pinkish brown sandy-silt subsoil. The remaining 0.3m consisted of a plastic pinkish orange boulder clay, the natural glacial till. The water-main was visible on the south side of the test pit near to the road edge. No archaeologically significant deposits were observed in the test pit.

3.4 TEST PIT 3

3.4.1 The test pit was excavated opposite Tirril Lodge and east of the turning to Sockbridge. It measured 0.7m by 1.3m, and was excavated to a depth of 1m (Plate 3).

3.4.2 The soil horizon comprised 0.4m of dark to mid grey humic sandy-silt topsoil, containing frequent gravel. This overlay 0.4m of sticky orange silty-clay at the western end of the test pit, containing mortar flecks; the eastern end of the

test pit comprised the remains of a large collapsed sandstone culvert running north/south, with walls comprising rounded stones up to 300mm in width, and capped by large sandstone flags. The culvert is probably of post-medieval date, possibly constructed to act as a drain for the road. The remaining 0.2m consisted of a pink silty boulder clay, the natural glacial till. The water-main was visible on the south side of the test pit near to the road edge. No archaeologically significant deposits were observed in the test pit.

4. IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 IMPACT

- 4.1.1 The watching brief carried out on Test Pits 2 and 3 identified varying natural tills below 0.80m of soil horizon. No deposits of archaeological significance were observed during the watching brief.

4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.2.1 It is not recommended that any further archaeological work be carried out on this section of the development. An archaeological watching brief will not be maintained on any excavations for the development following an agreement with CCCAS that this watching brief represents sufficient monitoring at present.

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Plate 3: Test pit 3, facing-east

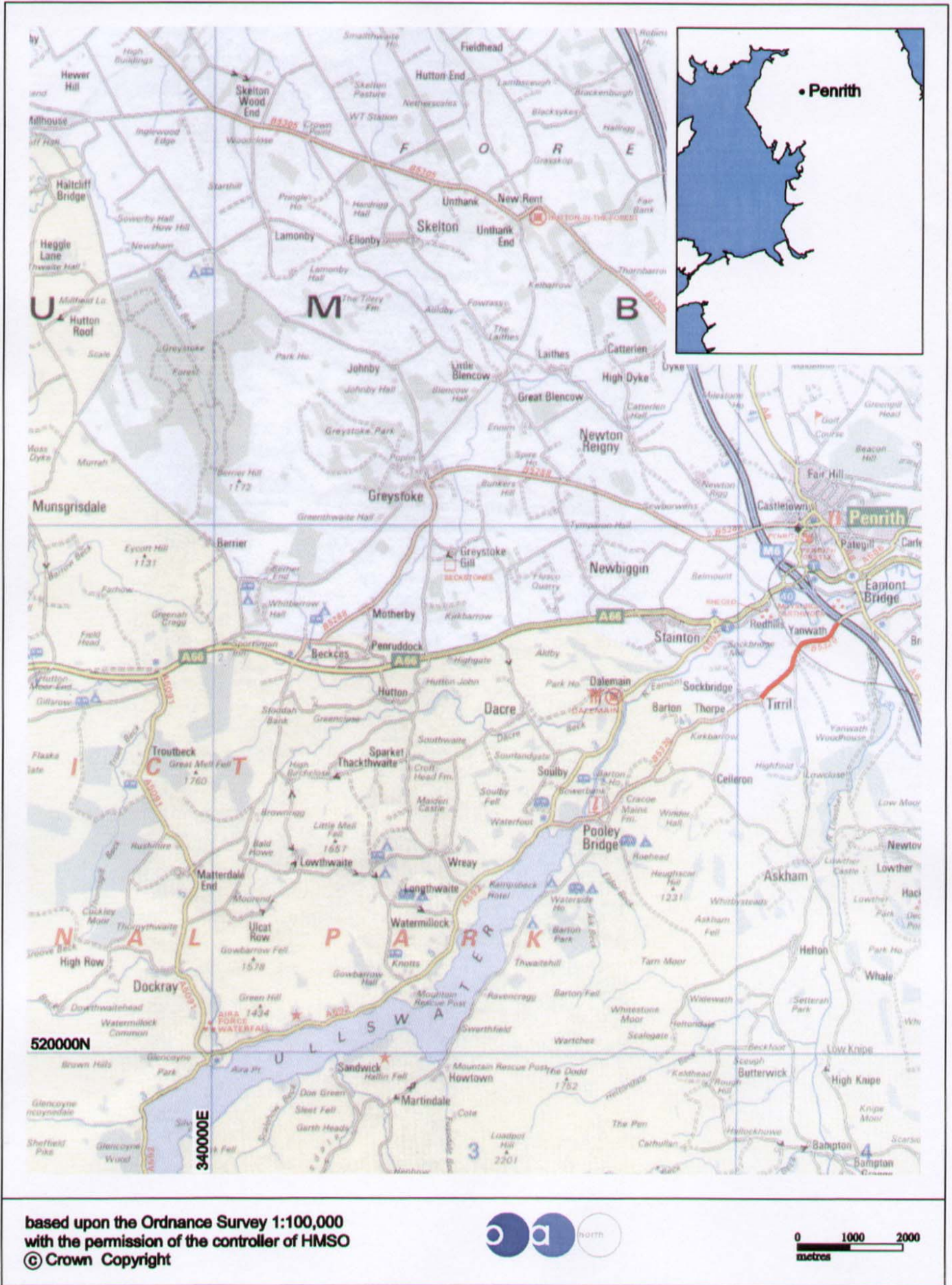
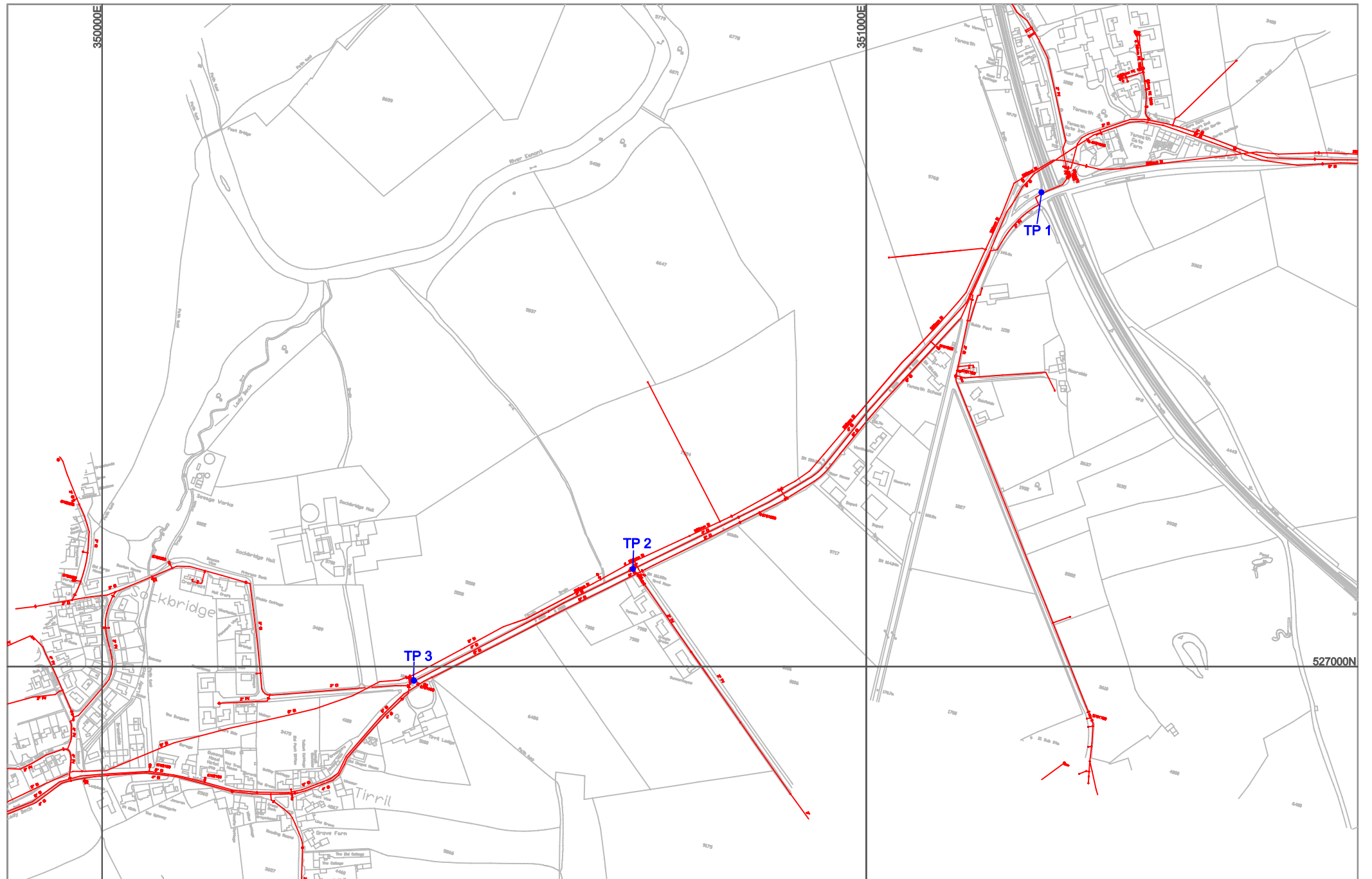


Figure 1: Location Map



based upon the Ordnance Survey 1:10000
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== Water Main
TP 3 = Test Pits

0 250
metres
Scale 1:5000 at A3



Figure 2: Test Pit locations



Plate 1: Test pit 1, facing-west



Plate 2: Test pit 2, facing-west



Plate 3: Test pit 3, facing-east.