Archaeology South-East

ASE

Archaeological Watching Brief Report
Cable Trench at Scotney Castle, Lamberhurst, Kent.

NGR 568650 135430 to 568100 135050

ASE Project No. 6047

ASE Report No. 2013104

By Simon Stevens

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Archaeology South-East (ASE) was commissioned by the National Trust to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the mechanical and manual excavation of a cable trench and associated joining chambers from Scotney Castle to Ruffets Cottage, Lamberhurst, Kent (Fig. 1, NGR 568650 135430 to 568100 135050).

1.2 The works were being undertaken under the powers of permitted development and are not subject to a formal planning application. The watching brief was initiated at the request of Nathalie Cohen, The National Trust Archaeologist with responsibility for sites in London and the South-East.

1.3 A written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by ASE (2013) and submitted to Nathalie Cohen for approval in advance of the commencement of works.

1.4 According to current data from the British Geological Survey, the underlying bedrock is the Wadhurst Clay Formation of mudstone. There is no recorded superficial geology (BGS 2013).

1.5 The work was carried out between 16th and 25th April 2013 by Simon Stevens (Senior Archaeologist).

2.0 Research Aims

2.1 The aim of the watching brief was to record, interpret and report on any archaeological and palaeoenvironmental remains exposed during the groundworks (including artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest) to appropriate archaeological standards.

2.2 The watching brief would also assess the past impacts on the site and pay particular attention to the character, height/depth below ground level, condition, date and significance of the deposits. Particular attention would be paid to any evidence associated with linear earthworks and other boundaries known to cross the new alignment of the cable trench.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 The works involved the excavation of a trench 700m long, 0.30m wide and 0.45m deep as well as three jointing chambers, each measuring 750mm by 1.3m by 0.45m deep, placed 200m apart (Fig. 2).

3.2 All intrusive ground works were carried out using a Kubota KX018-4 mini-excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket, and monitored by an archaeologist. The spoil from the excavations was inspected by archaeologists to recover artefacts or ecofacts of archaeological interest and routinely scanned with a metal detector.

3.3 Features and deposits were described on standard pro-forma recording sheets used by ASE. A photographic record was maintained throughout.

3.4 All work was undertaken in accordance with the WSI (ASE 2013) and the Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2008).

4.0 Results

4.1 The trench originated immediately to the south of the main car park at Scotney Castle and ran in a south-west direction across a steeply sloping field (Fig. 2). The stratigraphic sequence consisted of the natural orangey yellow Wadhurst Clay [003] overlain by an orangey brown silty clay subsoil [002], covered with a surface layer of mid-brown silty clay topsoil [001]. The subsoil and natural were only exposed intermittently, the former to a maximum thickness of 0.21m, but the vast majority of the material removed from the trench was topsoil. The trench crossed earthworks running across the slope, which appeared to be substantial lynchets, but given the width and depth of the trench it was impossible to gain any further information, such as date or morphology.

4.2 The trench then turned westwards through an existing gate (where the topsoil contained a concentration of imported brick rubble). The encountered deposits were similar to those seen in the previously monitored area, and only changed noticeably when the trench proceeded through the western gate of the field into a short stretch of footpath/trackway. In this location the 0.36m thick topsoil was darker in colour, more humic and contained a high concentration of brick rubble, terram sheeting and other modern debris [004]. The underlying subsoil was similar in character to that seen previously but the natural was not exposed in this part of the site.

4.3 Further to the west, the trench crossed the aces track to Ruffets Cottage, where the surfacing layer [005] was a 0.39m thick deposit of brick rubble and tarmac pieces, which directly overlay the natural [003]. The trench was also excavated through the verge adjacent to the track where the 0.45m thick topsoil was a mid-greyish brown silty clay and contained a limited quantity of brick rubble. It directly overlay the natural [003].

4.4 No significant archaeological deposits or features were encountered during the watching brief and the finds were limited to the recovery of a 20mm calibre spent heavy machine gun round found close to the mid-point of the excavated trench (Fig. 2).

5.0 The Find by Justin Russell

5.1 The only find recovered during the works was a single 20mm brass Hispano heavy machine gun cartridge, fired. This is detailed below.

Headstamp reads: *"K2 1943 20mm"*

K2 refers to the manufacturers Kynoch (part of ICI), and their factory in Standish, Greater Manchester. The year 1943 is the production date and 20mm the calibre.

Hispano machine guns of 20mm calibre were used in a limited capacity as ground based anti-aircraft weapons but the likelihood is that this example was ejected from a British aircraft, having been fired in combat at some point in time from 1943 to the end of hostilities with Germany in 1945.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 With the exception of the 20mm cartridge, no artefacts were recovered, perhaps not surprisingly given the narrowness of the trench. It was unfortunate that no details of the origins of the earthworks could be ascertained given the limited depth of the trench, but consequently little damage was done to them and they remain an obvious feature of the landscape. Ross Wingfield (Senior National Trust Ranger at Scotney Castle) has requested that the cartridge is returned to Scotney for possible display.

Bibliography

ASE 2013 Scotney Castle, Lamberhurst, Kent, Cable Trench: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief, ASE Project No. 6047

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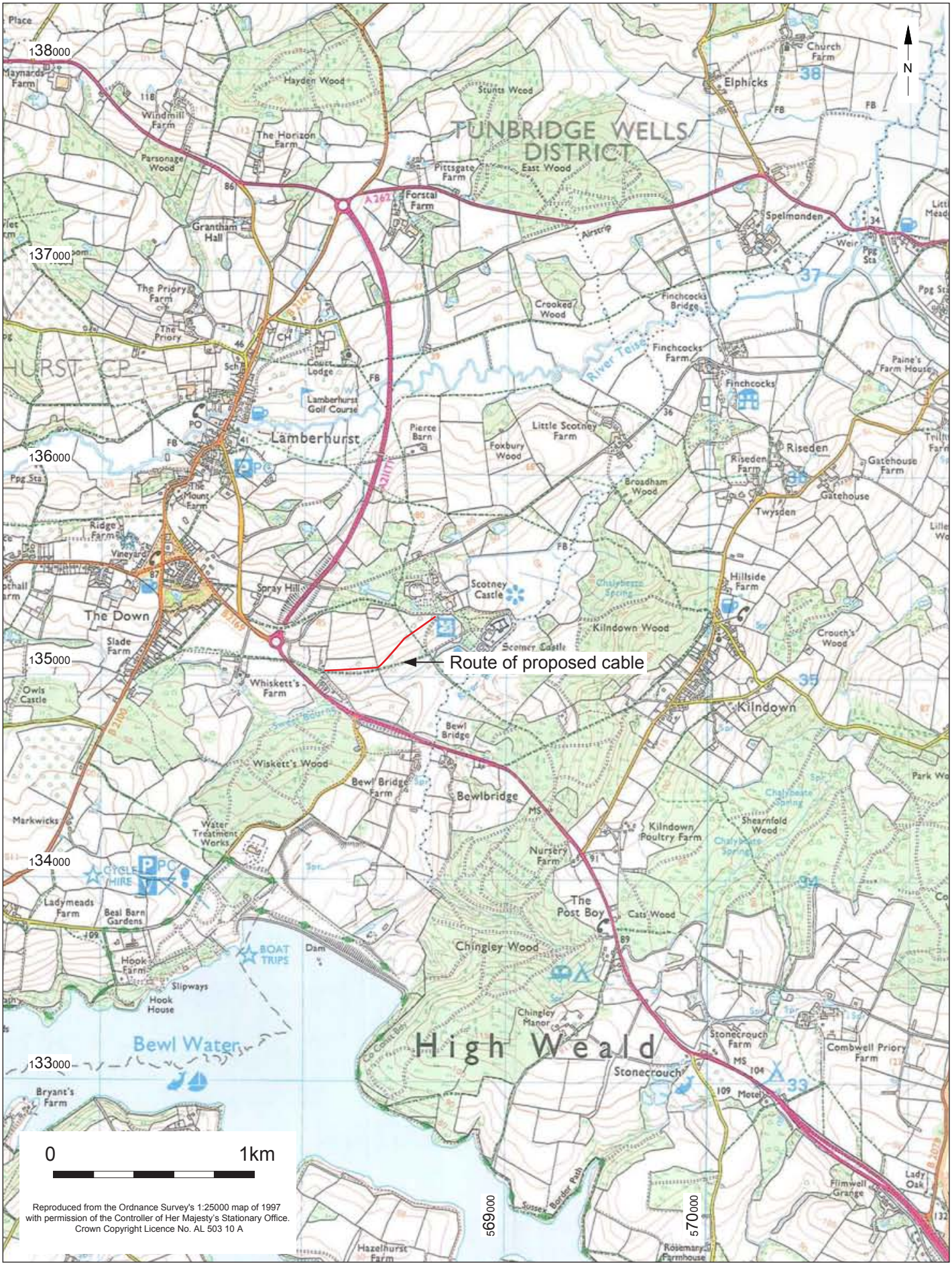
Accessed 28th March 2013

Institute for Archaeologists 2008. *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching*



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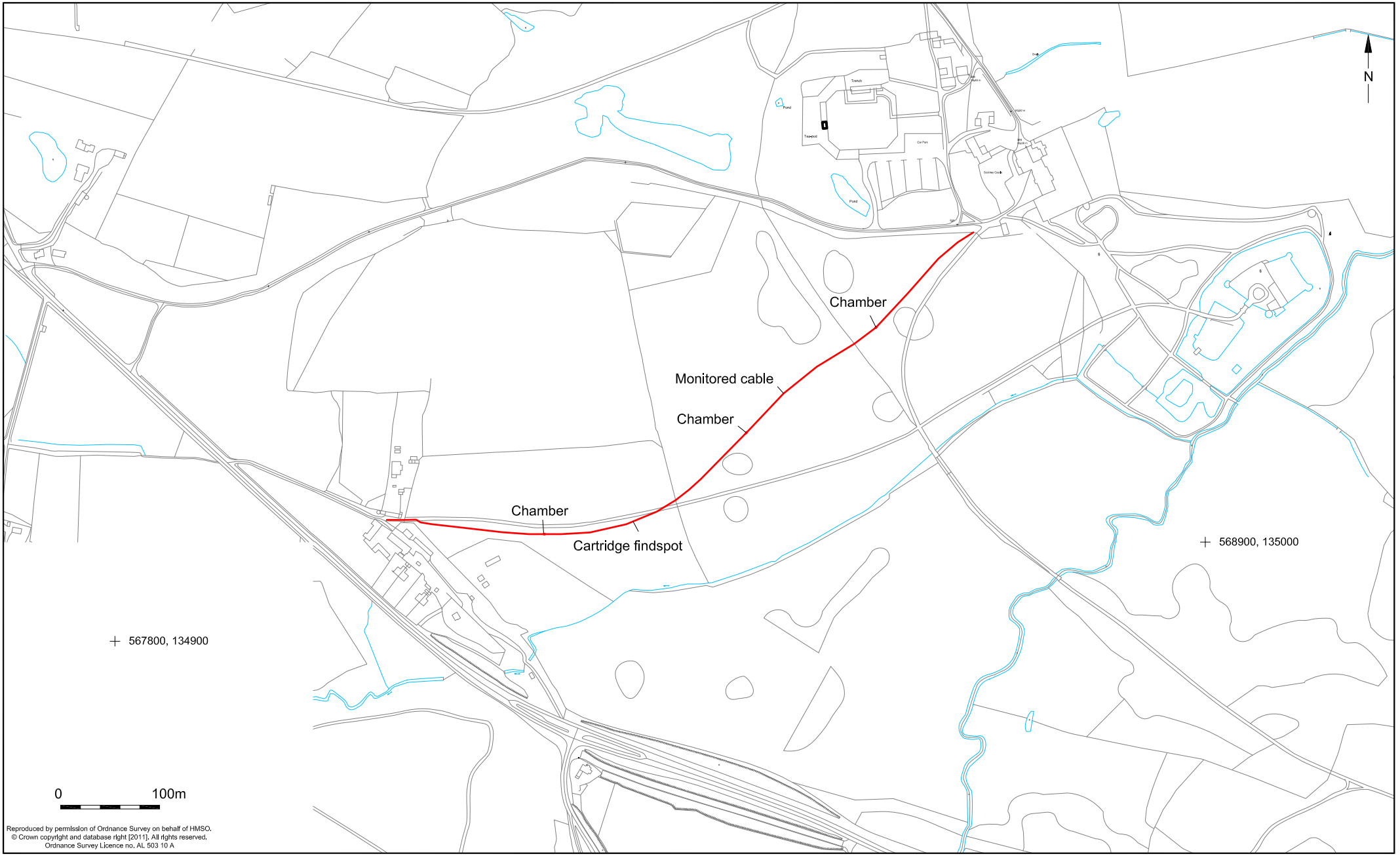
© **Archaeology South-East**		Scotney Castle, Lamberhurst	Fig. 1
Project Ref: 6047	March 2013	Site Location Plan	
Report Ref: WSI	Drawn by: HLF		



© Archaeology South-East		Scotney Castle, Lamberhurst	Fig. 2
Project Ref: 6047	May 2013	Plan of monitored cable	
Report Ref: 2013105	Drawn by: JLR		

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