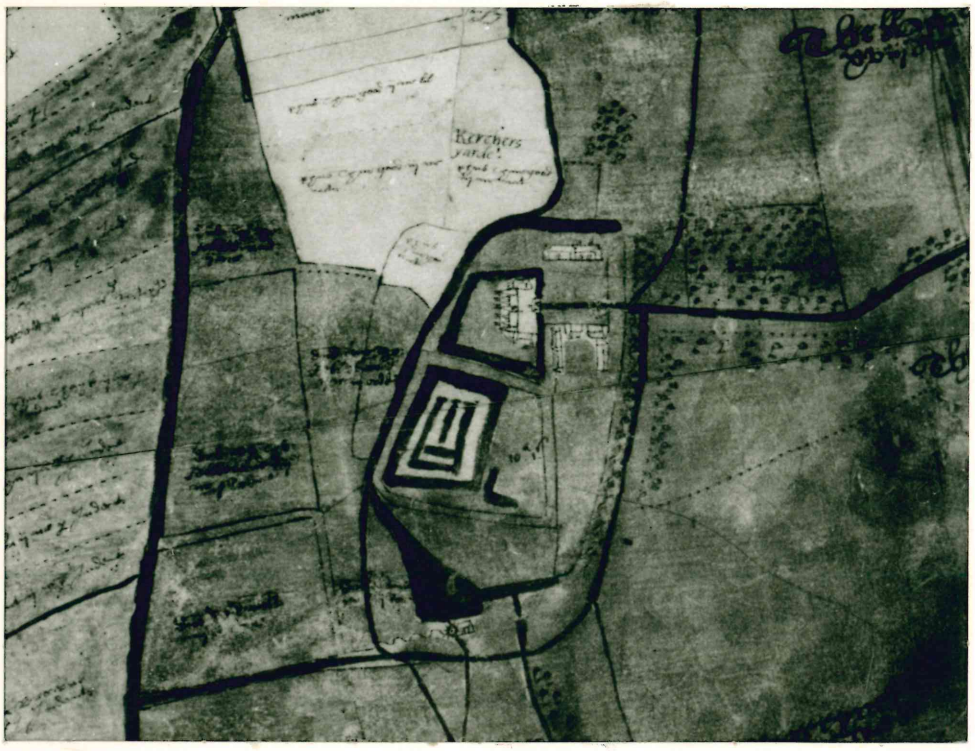
AFU REPORT NO.51

ARCHAEOLOGY OF LITTLE LINTON FARM PIPELINE



Cambridgeshire County Council

Extract from the Parys map of 1600, showing Little Linton manorial complex.
(Pembroke College Pemb.Coll.Mun. Barham T.i.0)

Archaeology of Little Linton Farm Pipeline

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Report no. 51

Summary

Archaeological work on a 1km pipeline to the west of the Cambridgeshire village of Linton identified a number of new sites and added to our knowledge of previously recognised sites. A substantial Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age flint scatter was recorded. Possible Middle Iron Age occupation was identified. Further evidence for the presence of Roman buildings on the western outskirts of Linton was uncovered. A cobbled street surface was found to be an integral part of the earthworks representing the site of the deserted medieval village of Little Linton. Dating evidence recovered from the latter indicated that it had reached its present surviving form at some point during the 9th-11th centuries.

Introduction

The village of Linton lies approximately nine miles south-east of Cambridge, at a crossing point on the river Granta. During October and November 1991 the Archaeology Section of Cambridgeshire County Council, at the request of Anglian Water Services, carried out a programme of archaeological work, occasioned by the laying of a new sewage pipe from the pumping station on the western outskirts of Linton to the sewage works next to Cow Gallery Wood (Figure 1).

The course of the pipeline ran roughly parallel to the river at a height of around 40 mOD. It was approximately 1km in length, and at its mid-point passed close to Little Linton Farm.

Throughout its length the pipeline lay on glacial gravels.

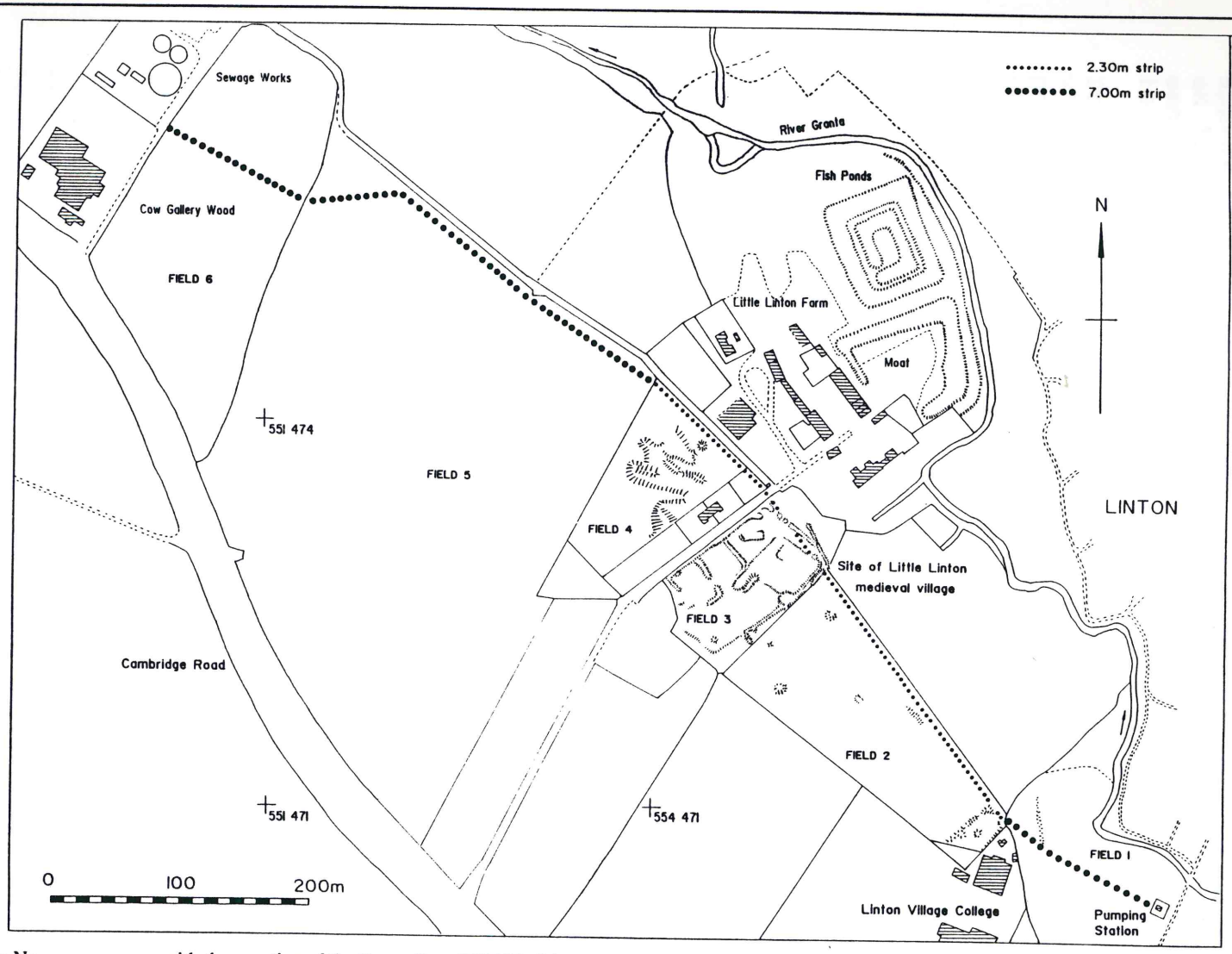
Historical Background

The present-day parish of Linton represents an amalgamation of three formerly distinct territories: Great Linton, Little Linton and Barham. The two Lintons are recorded as early as 1008 when King Ethelred sold land in the area to Ely Abbey. Both names appear in the Domesday Book of 1086, with Little Linton apparently half as populous as Great Linton. This difference was more marked by 1279 when there were about eighty tenants in Great Linton but only twenty in Little Linton.

The site of Little Linton manor-house was a trapezoidal moated enclosure, surviving between Little Linton Farm and the river. A representation of this building appears on the Parys estate map of 1600 (see frontispiece). The Parys family lived there from the late fifteenth to the early seventeenth century, holding both the manors of Little Linton and Great Linton. A mill, fishponds and barns were also part of this manorial complex.

No visible remains of the manor-house survive. The oldest parts of the existing farmhouse (to the south-west of the moat) appear to date to the mid-seventeenth century; it is possible that the moated site was abandoned at this time.

The history of the actual village of Little Linton is also uncertain; it has been suggested that it never existed as a discrete settlement, separated from the present-day Linton. However, the Royal Commission for Historical Monuments (England) (RCHME) has surveyed a number of earthworks immediately to the south-west of the medieval moated site. (Figure 1, Field 3, reproduced by kind permission of C. C. Taylor). These consist of a series of scarps, banks and ditches, forming rectilinear enclosures, typical of deserted medieval village remains. The earthworks cover a relatively small area (120m x 75m) but nonetheless probably represent at least part of the deserted medieval village of Little Linton.



Based upon Ordnance Survey Map No. with the sanction of the Controller of HMSO (Licence No LA 07649 X)

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Figure 1: Location map showing pipeline route, Little Linton Farm, and site of deserted Medieval village of Little Linton.
Earthwork survey by CC Taylor reproduced by the kind permission of RCHME

Scale 1: 5000

Initials	Date
DS	19/3/92

The boundaries of the field containing these earthworks are clearly visible on the 1600 Parys map. The land appears to be given over to wooodland or orchard and is bounded to the north-west and south-east by rabbit warrens. (The top of the map points approximately south-east). There does appear to be a field name on the map but this is unfortunately illegible. On a late eighteenth century survey of Little Linton Farm (Figure 2) the field is simply shown as part of the warren.

It might be inferred from this documentary evidence that the village of Little Linton was in existence by the Late Saxon period, and had been deserted by at least the beginning of the seventeenth century.

Research Methodology

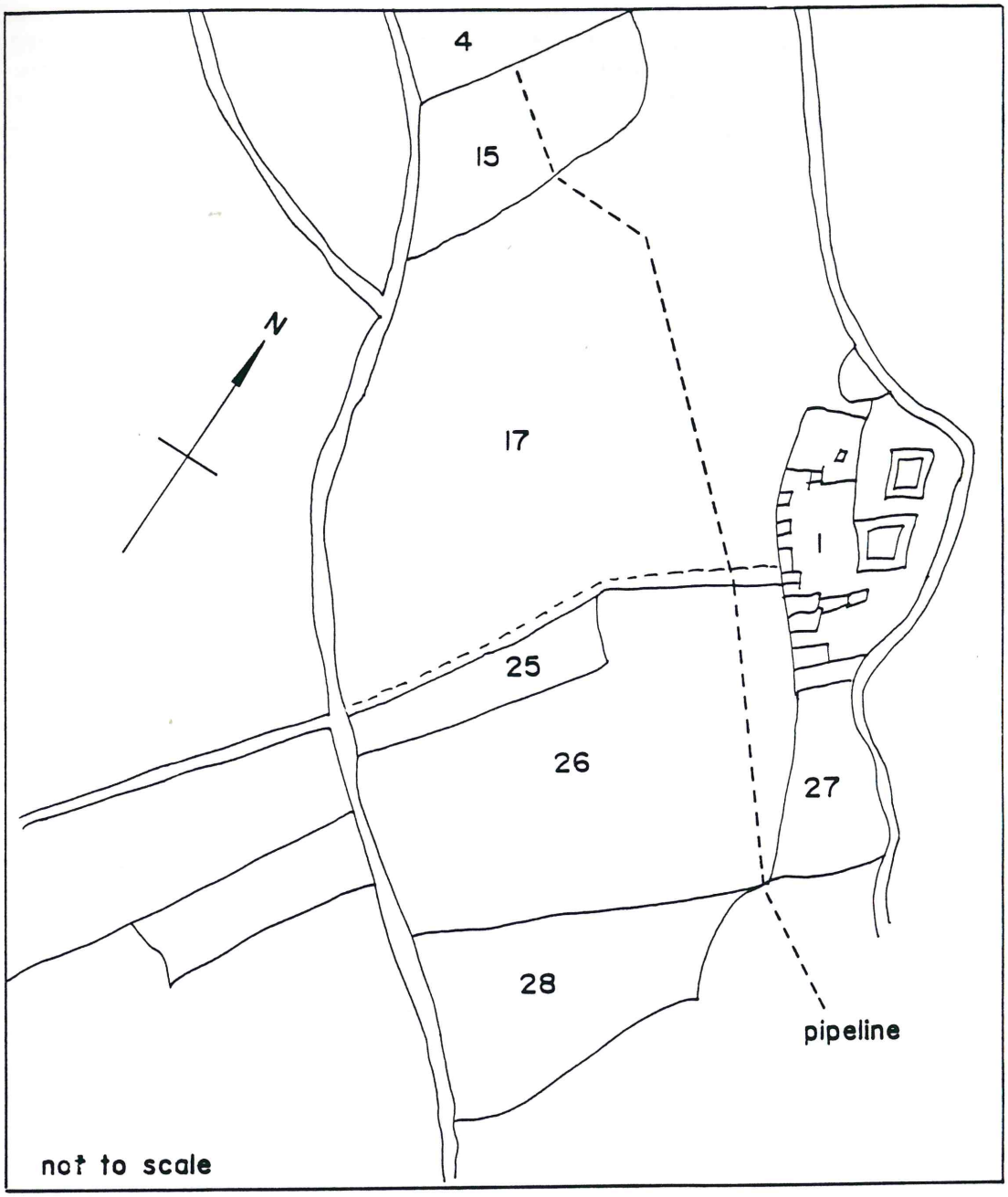
The route of the pipeline passed close to two sites recorded on the county Sites and Monuments Record (SMR): the deserted medieval village of Little Linton (SMR number 10110) and a collection of 2nd century AD Roman pottery, recovered during building work at Linton Village College in the 1940's (SMR number 06100).

Land traversed by the pipeline was being used in a number of different ways, necessitating the adoption of a variety of archaeological techniques. (For ease of reference the route has been divided into fields, numbered 1-6 in the order in which the pipe-laying was carried out, see Figure 1).

Field 1 formed part of Linton recreation ground, and was grassland. The western edge of the field was scarped and the whole of the area appeared to have been landscaped, possibly following gravel extraction. Fields 2,3 and 4 were under pasture and had not been ploughed in living memory. Field 5 was under arable but had not been deeply cultivated. Field 6, Cow Gallery Wood, contained oak woodland, recently replanted.

Before pipe-laying commenced, the earthworks in Fields 1, 2 and 4 were surveyed to complement the work carried out by the RCHME in Field 3. A metal detector survey was carried out along the entire route, with the exception of Cow Gallery Wood. Field 5 contained recently sprouted winter wheat, so that it was possible to fieldwalk the route of the pipeline. The affected area was divided into 10m x 10m squares and all flint, pottery and tile were collected from the surface.

Under normal circumstances a 7m width of topsoil is removed from the pipeline easement so that a solid running track can be established alongside the pipe trench. However, it was agreed that on undisturbed pasture the strip would be reduced to 2.30m to minimise the destruction of earthworks lying on the route of the pipeline.



1: Homestall
4: New Park
15: Cow Gallery
17. Warren
25: Sheep's Pen
26: The Warren
27: The Low Grounds
28: College Close

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Figure 2: Extract from a rough survey of Little Linton Farm, circa 1794, Showing field names and superimposed pipeline route

Scale

Initials	Date
DS	19/3/92

A notional 300mm of topsoil was removed along the length of the pipeline. Very poor archaeological visibility necessitated the removal, under archaeological supervision, of a further spit so that features cut into the subsoil could be identified. These were then excavated, generally by half-sectioning, to recover dating and morphological evidence. With the sub-contractor's co-operation it proved possible to keep ahead of the pipe-laying. A watching brief was maintained while trenching took place in previously cleared areas.

Summary of Results

The Linton pipeline was only 1km long and efforts were made to limit its impact on any archaeological remains by reducing the stripped area from 7.00m to 2.30m over much of its length. Nevertheless, it was always likely that such a linear sample through a small, well-drained river valley would produce evidence from a variety of periods. The results of the fieldwork are reported in broad chronological order: prehistoric, Roman, medieval, post-medieval and modern.

Although as a result of its inherent form a pipeline trench may reveal a large number of archaeological sites, interpretation of those sites is made difficult by the absence of extensive excavated areas. Only small parts of features may be available for excavation, and the finds assemblage from any one site is generally relatively small. If much of the latter is non-diagnostic, then further difficulties ensue. The small ceramic assemblage from the Little Linton pipeline has been examined and spot-dated by Chris Going and Morag Woodhuysen.

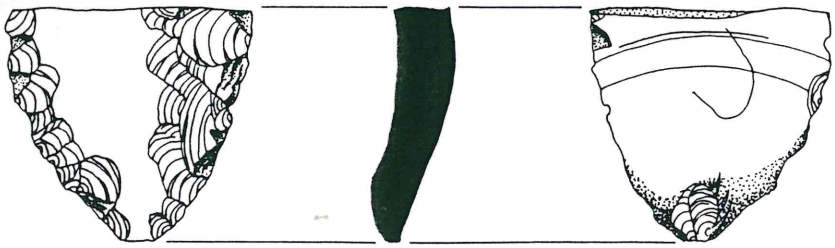
Despite their shortcomings, pipelines do produce valuable evidence for site distribution, which can be complemented by more extensive research away from the route itself.

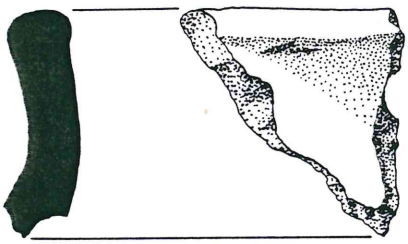
Early Prehistoric.

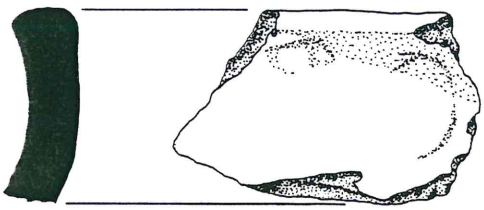
The most significant results for the prehistoric period came from the surface collection from Field 5. Over 100 pieces of worked flint were collected. For the most part the assemblage consisted of fire-cracked flint (63 pieces). 28 flakes, 13 tools (mostly blade fragments) and one core were also collected. A broken flint arrowhead was recovered from the side of the footpath which runs along the northern edge of Field 5 (at TL 5525 4756) (see Figure 3). Two Roman ditches at the south-eastern end of Field 2 also produced five further, residual pieces. The site archive contains a full, illustrated catalogue of this assemblage (compiled by S.Kemp).

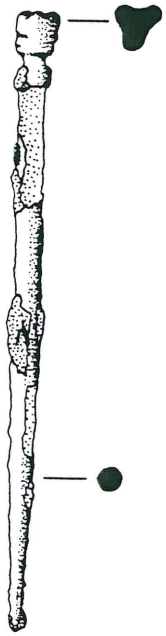
Gravel flint in a variety of colours was available in the area but the black and grey appear to have been preferred for working. Most of the tools were made from the better quality black flint. With the exception of the arrowhead and a single end scraper,

Broken Flint Arrowhead
From TL 5525 / 4756









Saxo-Norman Rim Sherds
Context 21

Iron Pin
Context 13

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Figure: Selected finds

Scale 1:1

Initials	Date
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there are few formal tool types in the assemblage. However, the large number of smaller flakes with edge damage may suggest proximity to activity concentrations. The flintwork can probably be assigned to the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age period, although the absence of diagnostic tool types makes dating very uncertain.

It was hoped that the stripping of the topsoil from Field 5 would reveal archaeological features cut into the subsoil, which could have represented the source of the surface flint. However, Field 5 was almost devoid of sub-surface features. The flint may, therefore, be derived from a disturbed prehistoric surface deposit, or may have moved in the ploughsoil from a site higher up the slope to the south.

Late Prehistoric

A small number of features, in the north-western half of Field 2, can be assigned to the Middle Iron Age on the basis of pottery dating. A shallow gully (11) and posthole (10) may represent part of a structure. A substantial pit (13), 1.40m in diameter and 0.60m deep, produced an iron pin in addition to pottery (see Figure 3).

Roman

Only a limited number of excavated features can be securely identified as Roman in date. In the south-eastern corner of Field 2 two features, a large field ditch (7) and a 0.80m deep rubbish pit (3), contained pottery assemblages dated to the 1st-2nd centuries. The pit also produced frequent fragments (up to 40mm in diameter) of painted wall plaster, presumably derived from a nearby structure.

A simple, rectilinear enclosure (see Figure 1) was surveyed immediately adjacent to these features but it was impossible to establish whether or not any association existed.

The above dates are in accord with that of the material recovered during building work at Linton Village College (see above) and it seems likely that significant early Roman remains may still survive on the western outskirts of present-day Linton.

Medieval

The most significant evidence from the medieval period came from the excavation work carried out in Field 3.

The Royal Commission survey had mapped a substantial bank on the south-eastern edge of the earthworks in Field 3. This was cut by the pipe trench and was recorded in section as context 20. The bank comprised redeposited subsoil and sealed a shallow cut

feature (21) of uncertain function, containing a soapy, shell-tempered pottery, tentatively dated to the 9th-11th centuries (see Figure 3).

On its south-eastern side the bank was bounded by a cobbled surface (16), made from sub-angular flint nodules, 20-150mm in diameter, lying directly over the subsoil. This surface was matched by similar cobbling (19) to the north-west, which was again bounded by an earthen bank. This surface overlay a dumped deposit (23), containing pottery which can again be broadly ascribed to the Saxo-Norman period. Both areas of cobbling were sealed by dumps (15, 17, 22) containing pottery dated to the 15th-17th centuries, with earlier residual material dating to the 13th-14th centuries.

These two surfaces are interpreted as parts of a cobbled street, 3.50-4.50m wide, running around the north-eastern corner of the surveyed earthworks (see Figure 4). The earthen banks and street clearly form part of an integrated village earthwork layout. It is clearly not entirely satisfactory to date the earthworks on the basis of a small, uncertainly identified pottery assemblage from one corner of the complex. However, the available evidence suggests that the village may have been in its surviving form at some point during the 9th-11th centuries. This tallies with the mention of Little Linton in the Liber Eliensis for 1008 but does not actually rule out an earlier foundation.

The presence of 13th-14th century pottery argues for the survival of the village into the later medieval period. Excavation produced no evidence for the date of its abandonment but neither did it contradict the evidence of the Parys map (see above) that the village was no longer extant by 1600.

Post-medieval and modern

A series of scarps and banks were surveyed in Field 4 (see Figures 1 and 3). From their form these were clearly not associated with the village earthworks to the south-east. They may represent old quarry workings. However, local knowledge also identifies this field as the possible site of pre-First World War field manoeuvres, which may account for the earthworks. The metal detector survey of the route did locate a number of .303 cartridge cases.

Nearly all the finds from the metal detector survey could be identified as 19th century in date or later. This may be accounted for by the fact that for much of its length the pipeline route ran along a buried, gravelled carriageway laid in the Victorian period. Known locally as the "causeway" this thoroughfare marked the course of a much earlier trackway between Little Linton manor-house and the village of Linton.

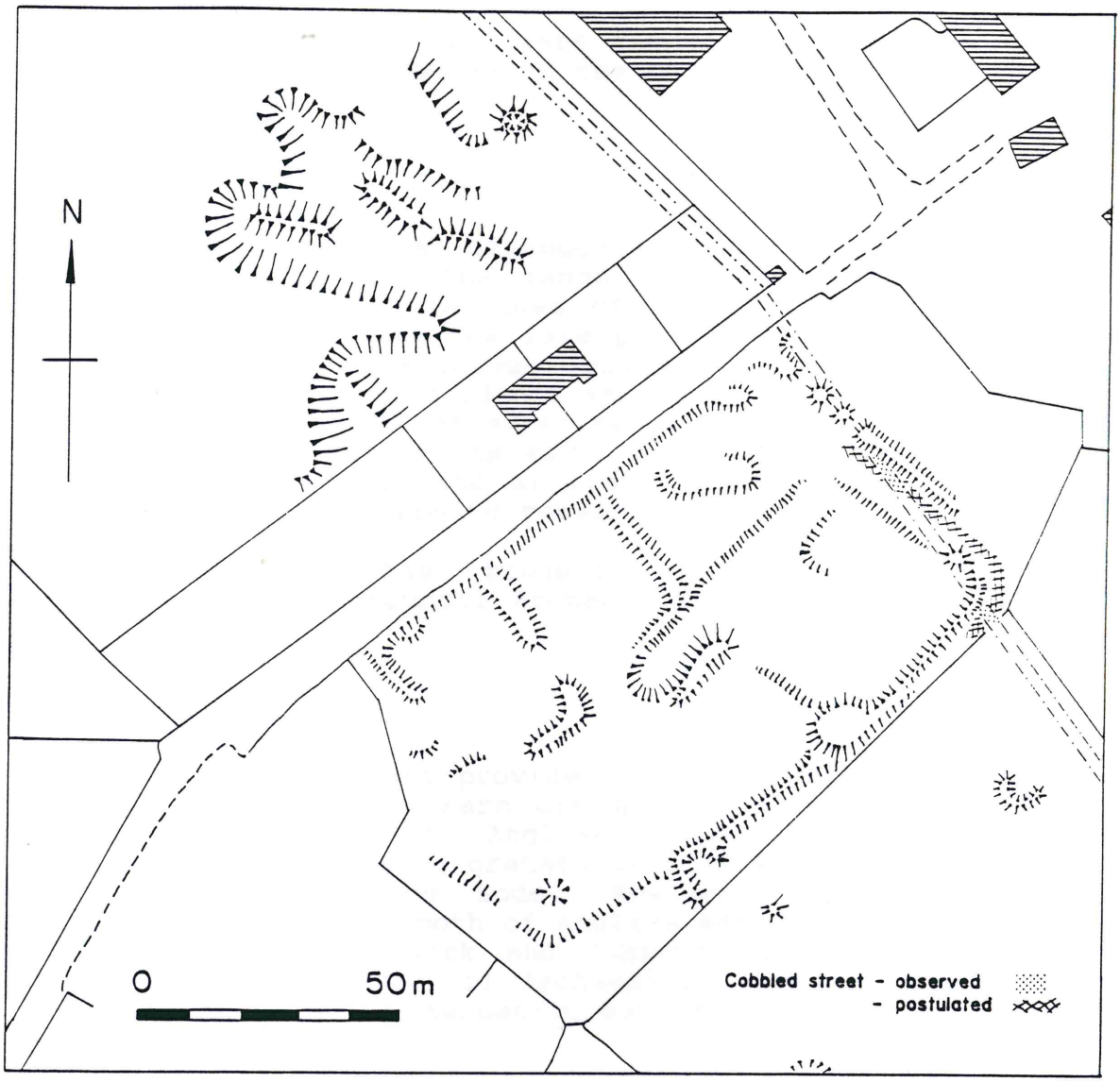

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Figure 4: Interpretive plan of Little Linton village earthworks, showing cobbled street revealed in pipe trench.

Scale	
Initials: DS	Date: 19/3/92

Undat able archaeological features

A further eight ditches were excavated in Field 2 but did not produce any diagnostic dating evidence. Also in Field 2 a cluster of relatively large, deep cut features (centring on grid reference TL 5556 4723) were recorded in section during the laying of the pipe itself. These appeared to represent a mixture of major land boundaries and quarries. They were not identified during excavation work on the pipe trench as their fills were similar to the underlying, undisturbed glacial gravels.

Similar, probable quarry pits were recorded in the same fashion beneath the village earthworks in the north-western half of Field 3.

Conclusion

The Little Linton pipeline, although only 1km in length, provided a valuable insight into the range of archaeological deposits surviving on the gravel terraces of the river Granta. A great variety of evidence, from the late prehistoric to the Victorian period, was recovered. Although, given the nature of pipelines themselves, some of this evidence may be difficult to interpret, it nevertheless helps to characterise the archaeological resource in this part of the county. As such, it can help to inform future decisions on land use in the area and can be used as the basis for further, more wide ranging research.

All records from this project are archived with the Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeological Service, under site code LINLLF'91.

Acknowledgements

The assistance and support provided by Messrs Taylor, senior and junior, of Little Linton Farm are gratefully acknowledged. The financial commitment of Anglian Water Services to the archaeological work is also gratefully acknowledged. On-site work was facilitated by Gordon Sodey (Resident Engineer) and Bill Knight (Clerk of Works), both of Anglian Water. I am particularly grateful for the hard work and support of all the staff of Cambridgeshire County Council Archaeology Section. The interest shown in our work by G W Seaman-Turner of Linton was also warmly appreciated.