

David Mitchell

SWAVESEY TO OVER PIPELINE 1992

INTRODUCTION

During the uprating of the main between Swavesey Cow Fen pumping station (TL 365/719) and Over sewage works (TL 386/719) in the spring and summer of 1992 Cambridgeshire Archaeology were engaged to conduct an archaeological watching and recording brief by Anglian Water Engineering and Business Systems Ltd. This work was in accordance with the Cambridgeshire County Council's archaeology policy and was carried out by Ben Robinson. The county sites and monuments record (SMR) identified two "cropmark" sites through which the four kilometre pipeline passed. In addition to this three Roman finds sites were close enough to the route to suggest the possibility of further discoveries.

PIPELINE ROUTE

The pipeline runs south from the Over sewage works to the St.Ives-Cambridge mineral railway. At this point it turns to follow the railway west for about 750 metres before turning south-west, running to the Cow Fen road which it follows to the pumping station. The geology of the area is based on upper jurassic Ampthill clay with pockets of gravel on the northern part of the route, Boulder clay near the Longstanton road, and finally Alluvium for much of the route south of the mineral railway.

METHODOLOGY

The original intention was to field-walk the route before construction work in an attempt to establish the location of any areas of archaeological interest other than those on the SMR. The route was then to be walked again after stripping of the topsoil to form an easement to watch for any stray finds or features on or in the soil surface. Archaeological features were to be excavated and recorded.

The pipeline work was to be in two main phases :

1. The stripping of an easement 12 metres wide
2. The digging of a pipe trench 0.6 metres wide and 1.5 to 3 metres deep. butt welding of the pipe in 80 metre lengths, its laying and the refilling of this trench.

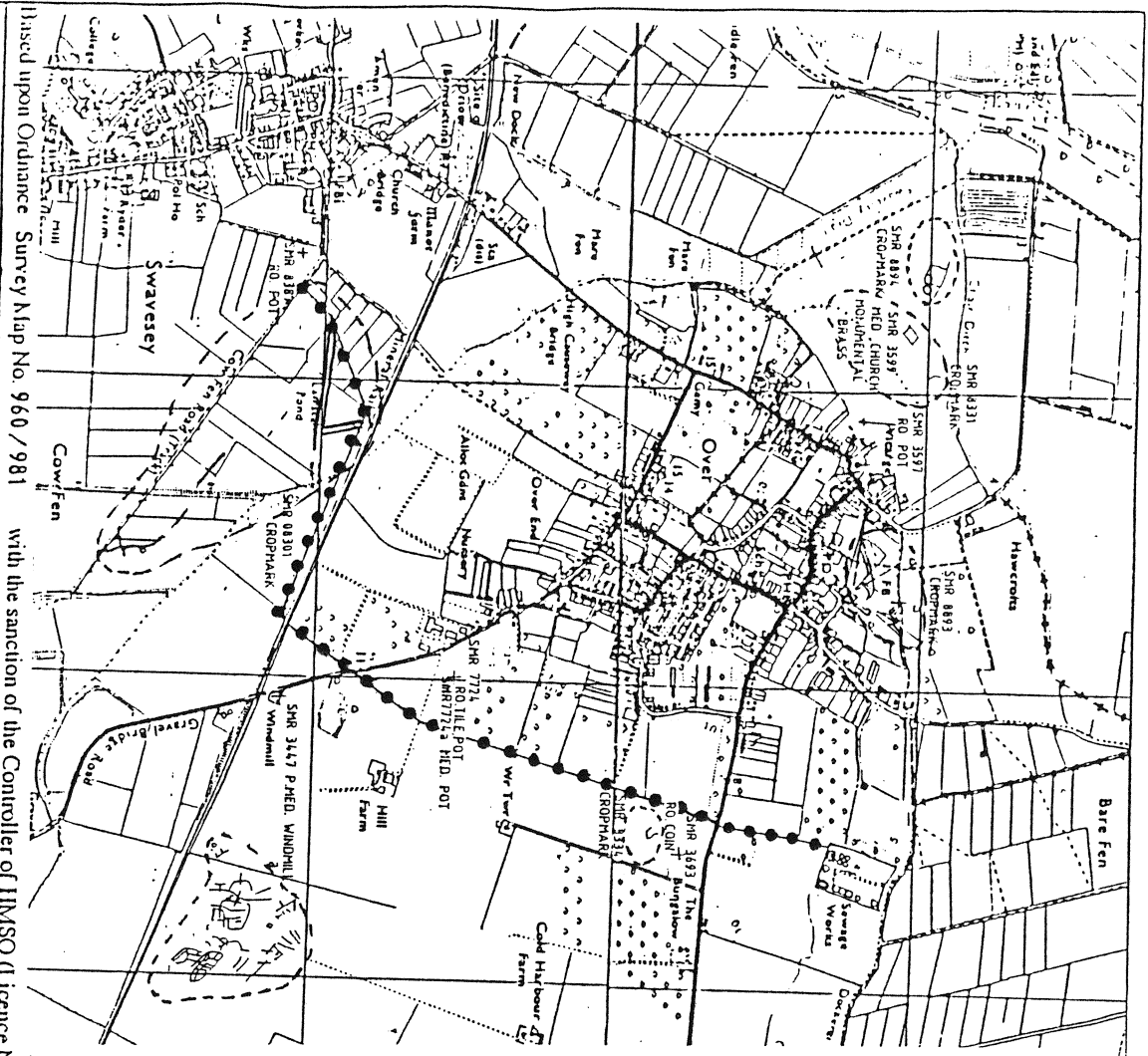
RESULTS

The fieldwalking potential of the site was assessed on 30th. April 1992 in the morning. Unfortunately tall crops of rape and cereals on all but 100 metres of the route meant that any fieldwalking would be pointless. Two fields of low ridge and furrow earthworks were noted in the fields either side of the mineral railway. Their straightness may indicate nineteenth century traction ploughing, rather than a medieval field system

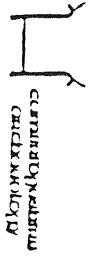
On the 7th. May stripping of the easement began from the sewage works. In the first week this progressed as far as the track to Hill farm. No outlying feature was found, though field drains, post-medieval pottery and modern ironwork were found. When work began from Swavesey it was thought that the easement would just touch the end of a trackway feature marked on the SMR as 8301 which had showed up very well from the air. In fact the easement seemed to miss the westernmost end of this track by about two metres. However it is possible that the clay subsoil might have been masking this feature. The pipe-trench itself yielded no information, as the manner in which it was dug for maximum efficiency and speed meant that it was only open for a limited time, and was shored, obscuring the section. No other sections of the easement and pipe-trench exhibited archaeological features despite the proximity of known sites according to SMR records.

RESULTS

Due to problems caused by conditions in the field and working methods (above), and the lack of any easily recognisable archaeological features, no new information was obtained from this pipe-line and it seems that no sites were disturbed.



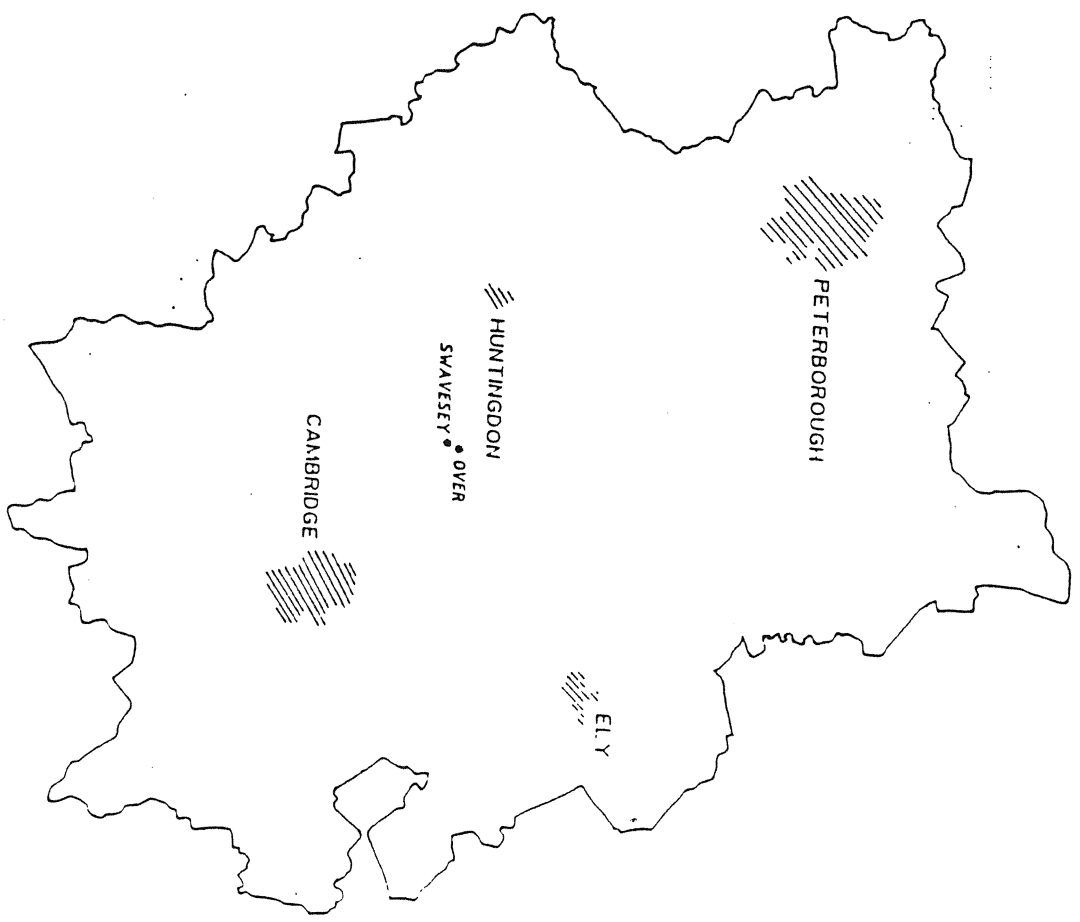
Based upon Ordnance Survey Map No. 960/981 with the sanction of the Controller of HMSO (Licence No LA 07649 X)



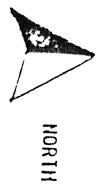
CAMBRIDGE
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Archaeology Section
Cambridgeshire County
Council

SWAVESEY/OVER PIPELINE
FIG.1 SITE LOCATION PLAN
(SHOWING ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES)



KEY
PIPELINE



NORTH

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Initials	Date
B.R./J.M.	10/92