

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING ON
THE ROUTE OF THE SWW GALLOWS GATE
TO BARTON (TORQUAY) WATER MAIN**

by

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report describes the results of archaeological recording undertaken along the route of the SWW Gallows Gate Reservoir to Barton water pipeline.

A preliminary archaeological assessment of the route was carried out by Exeter Museums Archaeological Field Unit (EMAFU Report No. 90.13), which identified potential areas of interest. In accordance with the recommendations set out in that report, a watching brief was undertaken during the construction work.

1.2 **The pipeline route** (Fig. 1)

The route follows a north-easterly course from the Gallows Gate Reservoir towards Edginswell. Beyond here it turns sharply to the east for a short distance before crossing and terminating at the Newton Abbot to Paignton railway line. For much of its course the route follows the bottom of a dry valley which drops from a height of 150m at Gallows Gate to 50m near Barton over a distance of some 1.2km.

Two soil types occur along the pipeline route, the majority of the route being covered by a relatively stoneless reddish-brown clay loam. In the southern section, between the reservoir and the road to Moles Cross, the soil consists of dark brown loam with a high concentration of flint and chert.

1.2 **Fieldwork methods**

Fieldwalking was carried out along the length of the pipeline after the stripping of the topsoil. This allowed for the retrieval of surface finds and the identification of any features in plan. The excavation of the pipe-trench was observed wherever possible to identify archaeological features exposed in the section. Fieldwork commenced some time after construction had begun and it was not possible to observe the pipe-trench in all locations of potential archaeological interest which had been identified in the preliminary assessment.

2. SITES OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

2.1 **Kingsland, north of Gallows Gate** (Fig. 2, No. 1)

Background

A socketed bronze spearhead of c. 1200-1000 BC was found by chance in the garden of Kingsland (SX8792 6519), adjoining the Gallows Gate Reservoir. A small scatter of prehistoric flint or chert implements had also previously been discovered in a ploughed field at Moles Cross.

Fieldwork

Fieldwalking between the reservoir and the road leading to Moles Cross recovered five lithic finds, one scraper and four waste flakes. No associated archaeological features were observed.

2.2 Medieval parish boundary, Kingskerswell/St Marychurch (SX 8787 6528; Fig. 2, No. 2)

Background

The parish boundary between Kingskerswell and St Marychurch, which probably pre-dates the 12th century, was cut by the pipeline near Gallows Gate where several parishes converge.

Fieldwork

The pipeline crossed the parish boundary just north of the reservoir. It is represented by a low hedge *c.* 1m high. Unfortunately, it was not possible to observe pipelaying in this area, nor to observe the bank in section.

2.3 Medieval field systems (SX8865; Fig. 2, No. 3)

Background

The configuration of the parish boundary in the valley between Moles Cross and Edginswell suggests that a well-developed system of fields was already in existence by the late 12th century. The fields probably belonged to the nearby Domesday settlement of Edginswell. Although many of the original field boundaries in this area had been removed, it was possible that palaeoenvironmental evidence would be preserved beneath existing hedgebanks.

Fieldwork

Although special attention was paid to the route of the pipeline along the valley floor, no evidence for earlier boundaries was uncovered. These features are likely to have been ploughed out over the centuries.

2.4 Stone Chester (SX8856 6596; Fig. 2, No. 4)

Background

Place-name evidence suggests that this may have been the site of earthworks or ‘fortifications’ dating from the Roman period or earlier. Despite there being no obvious surface indications of this being the case, the archaeological potential of this field necessitated detailed observation.

Fieldwork

The field itself is slightly undulating, however no man-made features were observed either in plan or section. The location of any archaeological deposits may therefore lie to the west of the field in the area not crossed by the pipeline.

Stone Chester adjoins a small track which was cut by the pipeline corridor just to the south-west of Edginswell. Trenching revealed that this metalled trackway was terraced slightly into the natural subsoil. No associated finds or features were located. The trackway probably formed an access road to the field system described above and may therefore have medieval origins.

2.5 Domesday settlement, Edginswell (SX887661; Fig. 2, No. 5)

Background

The present village lies on the site of the demesne farm or centre of the Domesday manor of *Wille*. It was possible that other sites of medieval occupation could have been encountered along Edginswell Lane.

Fieldwork

No other features associated with the settlement were revealed within the pipeline corridor. This suggests that the medieval settlement at Edginswell did not extend beyond its present limits to the south-east.

2.6 Fieldwalking

Five lithic finds were recovered were recovered from the area around Gallows Gate and Kingsland Farm (see 2.1). Two other waste flakes were located just north of the road leading to Moles Cross.

Four sherds of pottery were recovered from SX88956620 near Edginswell, although only one of these was of medieval date. The remainder were of 19th-century date. One 19th-century sherd was found in Stone Chester field.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The retrieval of seven prehistoric lithic finds from the south of the pipeline route, in addition to past discoveries of flints and a socketed bronze spearhead in the region of Kingsland and Moles Cross, confirms this as an area of prehistoric activity. The soil here is naturally rich in flint providing a ready supply of tool-making material. This region continues to be of archaeological interest, particularly in fields undisturbed by construction or intensive agriculture.

The other potential prehistoric or Roman site produced no archaeological material. This may have been due to the position of the pipeline corridor. However the field itself lies on the valley floor and would be a poor site for fortifications or earthworks. The site-name may indicate later building activity in another part of the field not crossed by the pipeline.

No material was recovered from the medieval parish boundary or the field systems to the north. Only one medieval sherd was found near Edginswell but no evidence was recorded for medieval settlement beyond the present limits of the hamlet.

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