

CAMBRIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECTS LTD.

Marshfield to Uskmouth Pipeline

Archaeological Watching Brief Interim Report



By
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Marshfield to Uskmouth Pipeline Watching Brief

Interim progress report

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Cambrian Archaeological Projects Ltd.

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Uskmouth Pipeline Watching Brief.

Interim progress report.

1. Background and Summary.

The Marshfield to Uskmouth Pipeline runs approximately 6km on a roughly east-west course through the Wentlooge and Caldicot Levels, Gwent.

These works are being carried out by LMR Drilling UK Ltd (LMR) and Murphy Pipelines Ltd (MPL) on behalf of the client, Severn Gas Transportation Ltd. Mitigation of the projects' archaeological impact is managed by RSK Environment Ltd (RSK), archaeological consultants to the client, with Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust (GGAT) undertaking a curatorial role.

In accordance with the written scheme of investigation stipulated by RSK (RSK 2008), Cambrian Archaeological Projects (CAP) is undertaking a watching brief of the construction of two Horizontal Direction Drilling sites (hereafter HDD3 and 4), south west of Newport, between the villages of Duffryn and St Brides. The sites are located at NGR ST30997 83371 and ST29950 83419 respectively.

Construction entailed the topsoil stripping of several thousand square metres at each site, and, in HDD3, the excavation of a water reservoir, several shallow lagoons and a two metre deep drill entry point.

All soil stripping and associated excavations were conducted by MPL and LMR, under the archaeological supervision of CAP Ltd staff, using a 360° 20 tonne slew with a flat-edged ditching bucket. To date, no archaeological materials or features have been observed.

2. HDD3. ST3099783371.

This site comprised a rectangular area of roughly 3625²m aligned N-S, at an elevation between 0.0 and 1.0m OD; in addition to the drill site, a 240m long, by four metre wide roadway was stripped to provide access between HDD3 and the existing New House Farm trackway.

2.1 Conditions

Weather conditions were predominantly wet with heavy rain and frequent showers during much of the works.

Ground conditions in this area were wet, with standing surface water affecting most areas of stripping; however, it was possible to make satisfactory observations prior to water infiltration.

2.2 Methodology

HDD3 and its access road were machine-stripped to the surface of subsoil over the entire area of development; no activity requiring hand excavation was encountered. Written soil descriptions were recorded, and sample photographic records were made at intervals throughout the excavations, these will form part of the final archive.

2.3 Results

Excavation revealed a thin to moderate (0.15-0.25m), topsoil deposit overlying a yellow-brown clay subsoil. These strata were consistent in both the road and HDD area.

With the exception of a modern land-drain and a spread of modern hardcore, no activity was observed along the length of the road.

HDD3 itself proved archaeologically sterile, the only recorded features being land-drains, traces of modern plough marks and a shallow, vertically sided trench base, interpreted as a recent evaluation trench.

Further excavation of several 'Lagoons', a drill entry point and an extraneous topsoil strip were also observed in HDD3, no archaeological activity was evident, and no further excavation is anticipated at this site.

3. HDD4. ST2995083419

The drill site comprised an asymmetric pentagonal area of approximately 5500²m at an elevation of c5.0m OD; it also entailed the construction of a four metre wide roadway, giving access to the B4239, immediately North East of the drilling site.

3.1 Conditions

Weather conditions were predominantly dry and sunny for much of the works. Soil conditions at HDD4 were wet but unaffected by the standing water issues noted in HDD3.

3.2 Methodology

As at HDD3, both roadway and drill site were entirely machine-stripped to the surface of subsoil (except where noted below), no activity requiring hand excavation was encountered. Written soil descriptions and sample photographic records were taken during excavation, and will form part of the final archive.

3.3 Results

Excavation revealed a moderate (0.20-0.30m) topsoil deposit overlying a banded yellow to dark grey clay subsoil. Topsoil contained a notable quantity of 19th and 20th century materials, chiefly glass and ceramics, throughout. Possibly suggesting intentional manuring of this field in the recent past.

No features were observed within the cut of the roadway, the area of the drill site too was archaeologically sterile, the only feature observed being an irregular linear depression aligned towards an extant gate on the fields' South West side. This feature contained a significant assemblage of late 20th century material, including a plastic cattle tag.

Two sondages showed an inconsistent depth, and an irregular base to this feature, it is interpreted as livestock erosion.

Additional works are anticipated at HDD4, these will be monitored through to completion.

4. Additional Observations

In addition to HDD 3 and 4 and their associated works, a roadway was also constructed between the contractors plant depot at Fair Orchard Farm.

The road cut North-West through approx 120 metres of undisturbed low-lying pasture before turning West through approx 200 metres of modern hardcore.

Only the topsoil stripping of the undisturbed ground was observed. This showed shallow (0.15-0.20 m) topsoil overlying a blue/white clay natural, no archaeological strata were observed.

5. Further Work.

Excavations are scheduled to continue on this project during 2008, with tie-in trenches to be excavated later this year, and lagoons similar to those excavated at HDD3 to be created at HDD4. Evaluation trenches will be carried out at two of the tie-in sites prior to works going ahead.

All works will continue to be monitored, with a full report and archive to be submitted upon completion of the project.

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6. Marshfield to Uskmouth Pipeline: Area and Site Locations.

Fig 1. Area of site location map outlined in red.

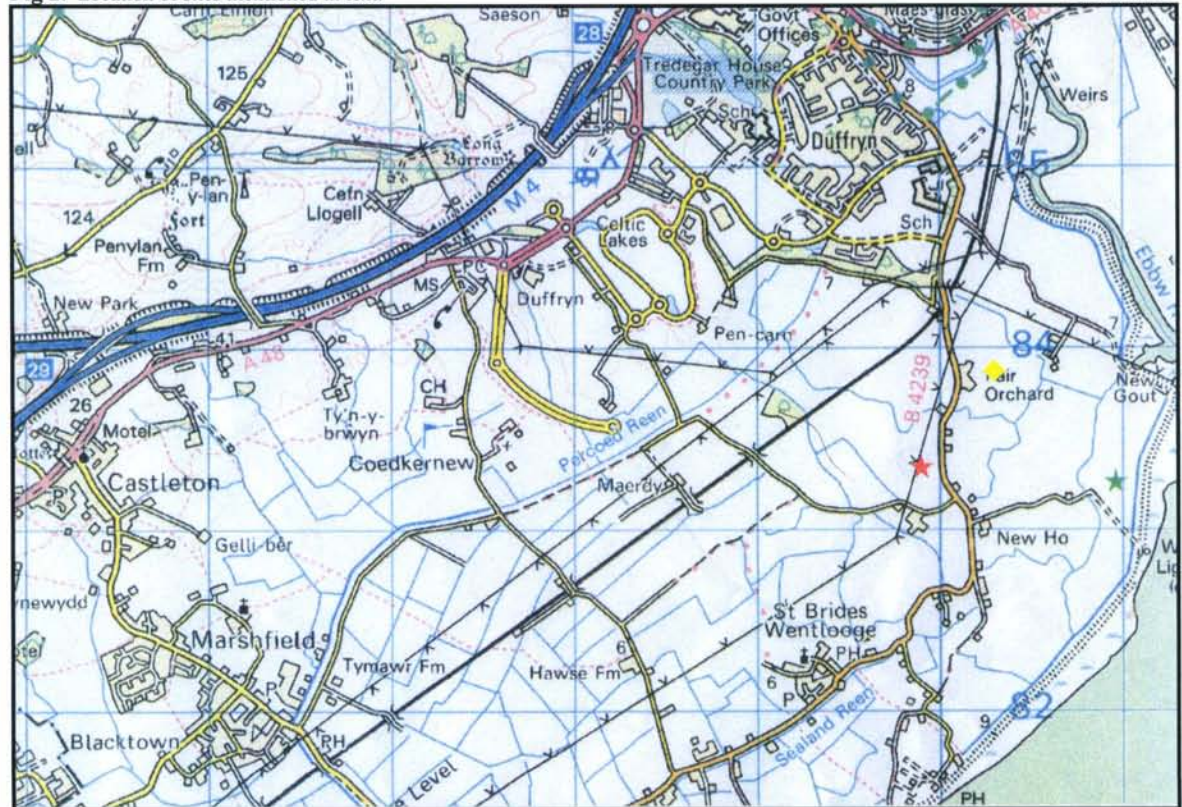
Not to scale



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Fig 2. Location of sites mentioned in text.

Not to scale



★ = HDD3

★ = HDD4

★ = Fair Orchard Farm Depot

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7. References.

RSK 2008. *Marshfield to Uskmouth Pipeline: Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological works*. Client report for Murphy Pipelines Ltd.



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