

AMMAN VALLEY SEWER SCHEME

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Report No. 2002/75

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MONTGOMERY WATSON HARZA.

CAMBRIA ARCHAEOLOGY

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AMMAN VALLEY SEWER SCHEME

By

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
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SUMMARY

The proposed improvement works on Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) at several locations in the Amman Valley required a programme of archaeological works. An initial desk-based assessment of the scheme identified three locations that potentially had archaeological implications (CSO 22, CSO 33 and CSO 38). It was decided that a watching brief should be maintained on these areas and Montgomery Watson Harza commissioned Cambria Archaeology to carry out the required works.

CSO 22 at SN70251352 was thought to possibly impact on a short length of the embankment for the disused Brynamman Railway constructed in 1842. In the event the tail of the railway embankment was clipped for a distance of a few metres and no significant archaeological deposits were noted.

CSO 38 at SN62602109 contained several boundaries of at least 18th century date, which were to be breached by the works. The boundaries were eroded earth banks topped with mature hedges and modern post and wire fences.

CSO 33 at SN64321282 was close to a post-medieval mill race that fed the now derelict Pontamman flour mill, and an overflow channel that ran from the mill race to the Afon Amman. The works avoided the mill race, but did encounter several deposits of building rubble and a 'bitumen-like' substance that appeared to have been dumped on the site during the demolition and clearance of the former 19th century Amman Bridge Chemical Works, which stood close to the site.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT COMMISSION

A programme of archaeological works was required as part of the renewal and upgrading of the Amman Valley Sewer scheme. The archaeological works were programmed into the overall construction timetable and Montgomery Watson Harza commissioned Cambria Archaeology to carry out the required works.

1.2 SCOPE OF PROJECT

Three areas were subject to archaeological evaluation or monitoring, CSO 22, CSO 33 and CSO 38. The monitoring works at CSO 22 and CSO 38 revealed no archaeological features, so the following report concentrates on the results of the evaluation and monitoring of CSO 33.

1.3 REPORT OUTLINE

This report describes the physical environment of the three sites (Section 2) before summarising the watching brief results (Section 3) and the conclusions (Section 4) based on the results of Sections 2 and 3. Supporting data, including the field records generated through the site visits and the primary and published sources used, are given in a series of appendices.

1.4 ABBREVIATIONS

Sites recorded on the county Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) will be identified by their Primary Record Number (PRN) and located by their National Grid Reference (NGR).

Archaeological features and contexts will be referred to using the continuous open-ended numbering system (e.g. *001*; *010*; *100*; *1000*) employed by Cambria Archaeology Field Section.

2. THE SITES

2.1 LOCATION

The three areas of the scheme subject to archaeological works were CSO 22 at SN70251352; CSO 33 at SN64321282; and CSO 38 at SN62602109 (Fig. 1). These areas were highlighted because the proposed works potentially had archaeological implications.

2.1.1 CSO 22

This section was thought to possibly impact on a short length of the embankment for disused Brynamman Railway constructed in 1842. In the event the tail of the railway embankment was clipped for a distance of a few metres and no significant archaeological deposits were noted.

2.1.1 CSO 33

This site contained a post-medieval mill race that fed the now derelict Pontamman flour mill, and an overflow channel that ran from the mill race to the Afon Amman. The site was too overgrown to assess during the initial desk-based assessment of the scheme (Ramsey 1999), so it was agreed to monitor the site clearance works and to excavate a small evaluation trench on the line of the new sewer main, in case the works impacted upon the mill race or any associated features. See below for discussion of the results of the evaluation.

2.1.2 CSO 38

A number of 18th century field boundaries were noted in the original desk-based assessment within this section (Ramsey 1999, 6). The boundaries were mostly eroded earth banks topped with mature hedges, which had been breached in several places and augmented by post and wire fences.

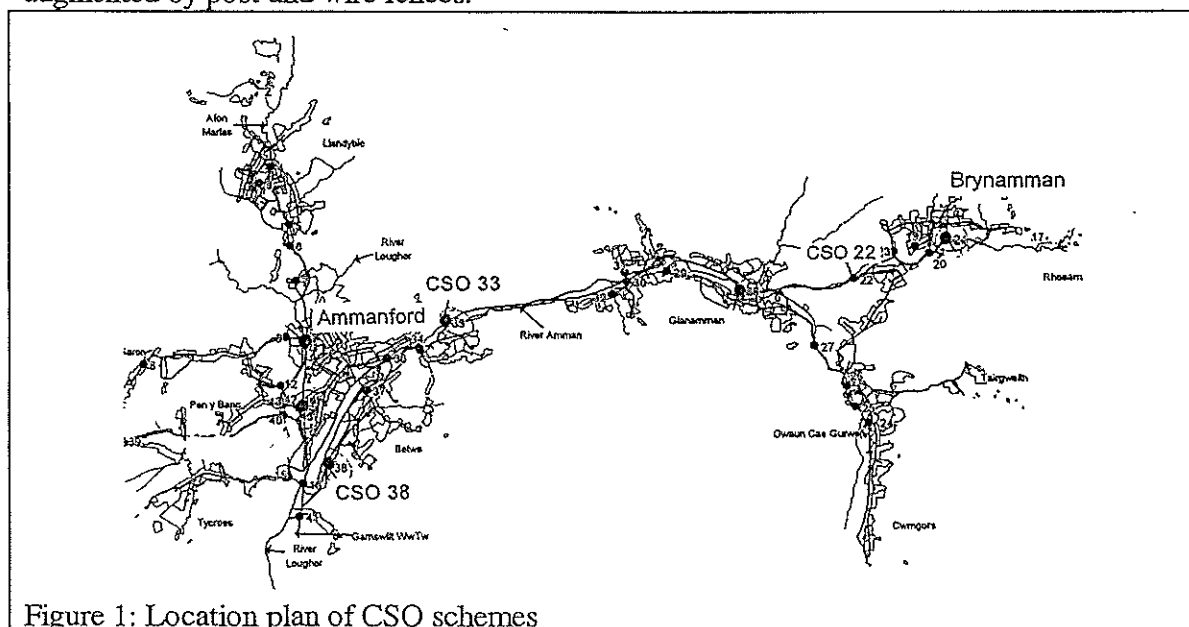


Figure 1: Location plan of CSO schemes

3. SUMMARY OF WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

3.1 CSO 22 and CSO 38

Small-scale watching briefs were undertaken at these sites to monitor the removal of parts of two historic boundaries (CSO 38) and part of the tail of a mid-19th century railway embankment (CSO 22). Neither site revealed any significant archaeological deposits.

3.2 CSO 33

Works here included the monitoring of clearance operations on the site of four new pipes and a control kiosk and the excavation of an evaluation trench along the line of a new pipe that will link into the existing sewer (Fig. 2). The clearance operations revealed nothing of archaeological interest, but the evaluation trench encountered deposits associated with former industrial activity.

3.2.1 location

CSO 33 covered a wooded area on the southern bank of the Afon Amman. The site was bounded on its north side by the river and on its south side by the disused Brynamman Railway line. A small watercourse, an overflow from the mill race that fed the disused and derelict Pontamman flour mill, crossed the site from southeast to northwest. The proposals for this scheme consisted of the construction of a new control kiosk and associated pipe work, which was to link with the existing sewer main at a manhole located to the south of the small watercourse.

It is not known when the Pontamman flour mill, formerly known as the 'Tyn-y-coed Mill' (Locksmith 1999, 195) was established, but it probably dates from at least the 18th century. The mill, the mill race and the overflow channel that crosses the construction site are shown on the Betws parish Tithe Map (1846). Also shown on the tithe map is the Amman Bridge Chemical Works, which was established c.1827 on a site 300m to the west of the CSO 33 site (now occupied by Tout's Garage).

By the time the 1st edition Ordnance Survey maps were produced for the area in the 1870s the flour mill was still operational and the chemical works had expanded with buildings shown to the north of the railway line. Water for these new buildings was taken from the flour mill race via a sluice and small channel. The expansion of the works continued during the late 19th century and by 1906 a complex of up to seven buildings and circular structures had been established between the river and the railway line (Fig 2).

The works produced paint and at its height employed around one hundred staff working twelve hour shifts (Locksmith 1999, 196)

Study of the Betws parish tithe map and the early Ordnance Survey editions has shown that the chemical works buildings lay to the west of the proposed CSO 33 site and that the sewer works were unlikely to impact on any surviving structures. The only feature to be affected was the overflow channel from the Pontamman flour mill race.

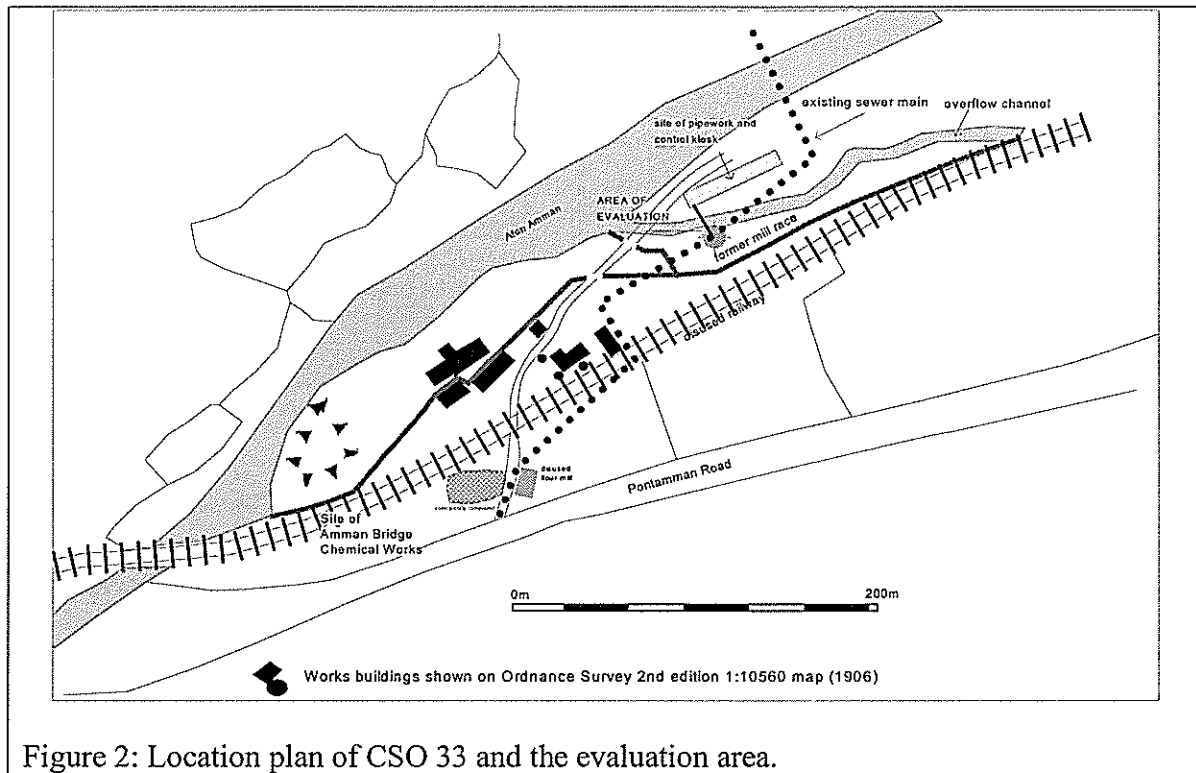


Figure 2: Location plan of CSO 33 and the evaluation area.

3.2.2 the evaluation

Description

A single trench, 10m x 1.5m, was excavated along the proposed line of the new pipeline that will link into the existing sewer main (Fig. 3). The trench was located towards the southern end of the route at the point the new pipe was to join the existing main.

A terrace or platform, c.0.75m high, made up of yellow/brown silty clay occupied the southern end of the trench. The northern edge of the terrace was steep-sided and it extended east and west into woodland, which was too overgrown to trace the platform's full extent. A manhole for the existing sewer main had been inserted into this platform/terrace in the past.

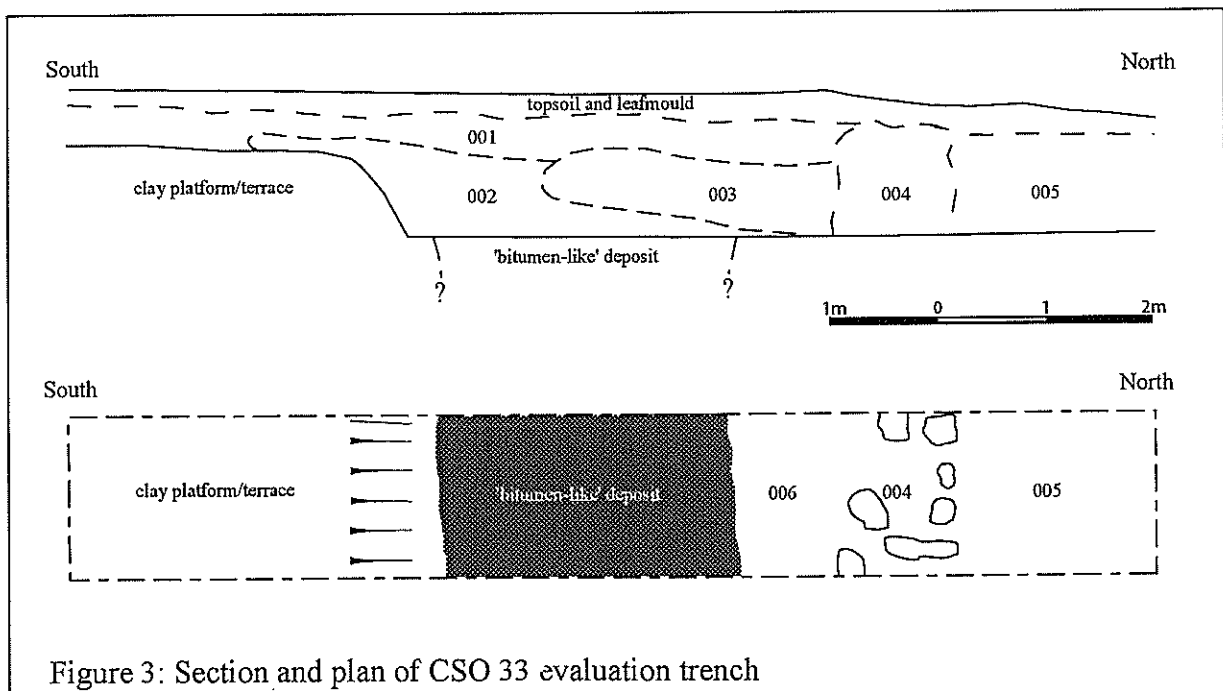
At the base of the slope was a large solidified 'bitumen-like' deposit, which was sitting in a hollow that continued east and west beyond the edges of the trench. This deposit became mixed in its upper levels with a layer of loose black gritty soil, yellow clay and large stones (002). To the north of the 'bitumen-like' deposit was a layer of loose black gritty soil, which also contained some of the bitumen-like material (006) and which may in fact be part of layer 002. Layer 002 extended south onto the clay platform/terrace. The northern end of 002 was covered by a spread of loose large stones (003) and gritty grey soil.

Towards the northern end of the trench was a discontinuous band of stone and brick rubble with gritty grey soil with a high mortar content (004), which ran east-west across the trench. The band was very loose and had no obvious structure, although its linearity suggested it might have been part of a wall. Between 004 and the north end of the trench was a spread of mixed gritty grey soil, mortar and brick rubble (005).

Interpretation

The small-scale of the evaluation meant that most of the deposits extended beyond the edges of the trench, which limits the observations that can be made about their nature. They appear to represent the remains of some kind of industrial process, although whether they are *in situ*, or dumped from elsewhere is not certain. The linear deposit of stone and brick rubble (004) is suggestive of a wall, but there was no definitive evidence to support this. The spread of brick rubble and mortar (005) to the north of 004 appears to be dumped from elsewhere, rather than collapsed walling.

The 'bitumen-like' deposit may be a by-product of the paint production process, which was carried out during the 19th century at the Amman Bridge Chemical Works that formerly occupied a position to the west of the evaluation site and operated from the 1820s until the early years of the 20th century (Locksmith 1999, 195-203). The most likely explanation is that the deposits encountered during the evaluation represented waste and debris from the demolition and clearing of the chemical works site.



APPENDIX ONE: CATALOGUE OF WATCHING BRIEF ARCHIVE

The project archive has been indexed and catalogued according to National Monument Record (NMR) categories and contains the following:

- A.** Copy of final report.
- B.** Site records, including context record sheets and site notebook.
- C.** Drawing catalogue and site drawings.
- D.** Site photographs - catalogue, colour slide and B/W contact sheets.
- E.** Finds catalogue, individual finds record and finds report.
- G.** List of references, including primary and secondary sources.
- I.** Archive report and draft copies of final report.
- J.** Publication drawings.
- M.** Miscellaneous correspondence.

There is no material in categories **F**, **H**, **K**, **L** and **N**.

The archive is currently held by Cambria Archaeology Field Operations, Llandeilo, Carmarthenshire as project number 46407.

SOURCES

CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

PUBLISHED SOURCES

Locksmith W 1999 *Ammanford: origin of street names and notable historical records*. Carmarthen. Carmarthenshire County Council.

UNPUBLISHED SOURCES

Ramsey R 1999 'Amman Valley Sewer Scheme: an archaeological assessment'. Unpublished Cambria Archaeology report for Montgomery Watson Ltd. Project Record No. **39134**.

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Signature Date 8/11/02

This report has been checked and approved by Ken Murphy on behalf of Cambria Archaeology,
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