

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Upper Farm, Hinton Parva,
Swindon, Wiltshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Aidan Colyer

Site Code: UHP 21/148

(SU 2238 8341)

Upper Farm, Hinton Parva, Swindon, Wiltshire

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Mr A Coates

by Aidan Colyer

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code UHP 21/148

January 2022

Summary

Site name: Upper Farm, Hinton Parva, Swindon, Wiltshire

Grid reference: SU 2238 8341

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 19th and 24th January 2022

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: Aidan Colyer

Site code: UHP 21/148

Area of site: c. 0.2ha

Summary of results: The evaluation was successfully carried out with an additional area stripped to expand trench 5. Isolated medieval features were identified towards the south-west of the site. However a substantial geophysical anomaly was identified as a part of modern landscaping. A single residual sherd of Roman pottery was also recovered.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Swindon Museum in due course.

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 31.01.22
	Steve Preston ✓ 31.01.22

Upper Farm, Hinton Parva, Swindon, Wiltshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Aidan Colyer

Report 21/148

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Upper Farm, Hinton Parva, Swindon, Wiltshire (SU 2238 8341) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr R Spurr, Sun Design, Consultancy Limited, 22 Ham Road, Wanborough, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN4 0DF on behalf of Mr A Coates, Upper Farm, Hinton Parva Lane, Hinton Parva, Swindon, SN4 0DH.

Planning permission (application S/21/0698) has been gained from Swindon Borough Council for the construction of a new dwelling with associated outbuilding, access and landscaping on the site. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by groundworks, the consent is subject to a condition (8) requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological investigation to record any such deposits. This is in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019) and the Council's policies on archaeology. Two components of archaeological work were proposed: a geophysical survey and field evaluation.

The geophysical survey (Beaverstock 2021) revealed a single L-shaped magnetic anomaly of potential archaeological interest. This report documents the results of the trenching component of the investigation. The fieldwork was carried out according to a specification approved by Ms Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger, County Archaeologist for Wiltshire Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Aidan Colyer and Emily Gibson on 19th and 24th January 2022 and the site code is UHP 21/148.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Swindon Museum and Art Gallery in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is a rectangular parcel of land located in Hinton Parva on the slopes of the eastern spur of a ridge (Fig. 1). To the south lie The Coombes, and the land rises to the North Wessex Downs; while to the north the land slopes away steeply. The village is 3km east from the edge of Swindon. The site lies on the north side of the main road for the village with buildings to the east and west with fields to the north (Fig. 2).

The geology of the site is recorded as Head deposits (BGS 1997) and the natural geology observed during the evaluation was a mid brown grey, silty clay with greensand inclusions. The site is *c.*131m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) and was mainly level for all trenches with only a slight drop in height to the northern end to *c.* 130m aOD.

Archaeological background

The area is noteworthy for the presence of a 'small Roman town', *Durocornovium*, now a Scheduled Monument, *c.*2km north of the modern village, at the junction of the Roman road from Marlborough (*Cunetio*) with Ermin Street (Cirencester to Silchester). Archaeological investigations *c.* 300m to the north of the site revealed a further Roman settlement (Pine and Taylor 2016). To the west the village of Wanborough has late Saxon origins and is mentioned in Domesday Book of 1086 (Williams and Martin 2002, 165) showing a potential for Saxon remains.

The geophysical survey on the site itself (Beaverstock 2021) revealed a single L-shaped positive magnetic anomaly which likely represents a buried archaeological feature such as a boundary ditch (Fig. 4). The southern half of the site was found to be subject to high levels of magnetic disturbance, likely caused by buried services and scattered magnetically-enhanced debris.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development.

Specific aims of the project were;

- To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site.
- To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.
- To determine if any deposits of Roman or Saxon date are present.
- To provide information in order to draw up an appropriate mitigation strategy if required.
- To report on the findings of the evaluation.

Six trenches, each between 5m and 10m long and 1.6m wide, were to be dug using a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Topsoil and any other overburden were to be removed to expose the archaeologically sensitive levels. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools and sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed would be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims outlined

above, without compromising the integrity of any feature that might warrant preservation *in situ* or be better investigated under the conditions pertaining to full excavation. Spoil heaps were to be monitored for finds.

Results

All six trenches were opened with only minor alterations due to the space available and the slope of the site. Trench 6 was longer than intended due to the slope and to confirm that we had opened an area over the feature identified in the geophysical survey. Trench 4 was moved 0.5m to the East due to a tree and initial identification of services. The trenches ranged from 3.6m to 9.3m in length and 0.48m to 0.8m in depth. A complete list of trenches giving length, breadth, depth and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Figs 2 and 3; Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned NW - SE and was 9.3m long and 0.7m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.29m of topsoil and 0.41m of subsoil overlying natural geology. Two archaeological features and one modern feature were observed in this trench.

Gully 1 was excavated at the NW end of the trench. This gully was 0.7m in width and 0.09m in depth, and contained a single deposit of dark grey brown silty clay (52). Animal bone three sherds of 12th-century pottery were recovered from the feature, along with a redeposited sherd of Roman pottery.

A possible pit (2) was recorded at 6m. The pit was 0.34m in width with an overall length of 0.74m. It was shallow at 0.07m, and the deposit within the pit (53) was a firm mid blue-grey silty clay with significant greensand inclusions. The colour and shape suggest that this may have been a tree hole or other root action. A single sherd of pottery has a broad date of 13th - early 16th century but could easily be intrusive or redeposited in this natural feature.

A ditch at the SE end of the trench produced several large sherds of modern pottery which were retained on site.

Trench 2 (Fig. 2)

Trench 2 was aligned W - E and was 6.7m long and 0.55m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.27m of topsoil and 0.23m of subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological features or finds were observed.

Trench 3 (Fig. 2; Pl. 2)

Trench 3 was aligned close to S - N and was 6.1m long and 0.48m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.30m of topsoil and 0.11m of subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological features or finds were observed.

Trench 4 (Fig. 2)

Trench 4 was aligned NW - SE and was 3.6m long and 0.55m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of topsoil and 0.30m of subsoil overlying natural geology. This trench was shortened due to the roots of a tree that was to be retained and also a mains electrical service which ran down the entire length of the trench as well as site access. No archaeological features or finds were observed.

Trench 5 (Figs 2, 3 and 5; Pls 3 to 6)

Trench 5 was aligned NW - SE and was 9m long and 0.6m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.28m of topsoil and 0.32m of subsoil overlying natural geology. Two archaeological features and an area of modern disturbance were observed. A pit (3) was observed at 3m and a ditch (4) at 5m.

Pit 3 had a diameter of 0.7m and a depth of 0.18m. Significant root disturbance was noted within the feature especially to the northern side. The fill of the pit was a mid brownish grey sandy clay (54) with frequent greensand inclusions. Discolouration due to the root action was noted. The pit contained a single sherd of pottery dated to the 13th - early 16th century.

Ditch 4 had a width of 1m and a depth of 0.2m with medium to shallow sides. Significant root disturbance was noted throughout leading to some localised discolouration of the deposit within the ditch. The deposit (55) was a mid to pale mid brownish grey with frequent medium to large greensand inclusions. Pottery, glass and animal bone were recovered from the feature. The single piece of glass can only be dated as pre-19th century. The pottery is of mixed dates with the earliest (3 sherds) being from the 11th to 12th centuries and one sherd from the late 12th to the 14th centuries: however, at the base of the feature a sherd of post-medieval pottery was recovered. A tentative date of 16th to 18th century is suggested

The modern disturbance had an unclear extent but ran from 6.5m to 9m with a potential connection to ditch 4. The nature and extent of this deposit was uncovered during the extension and widening of trench 5.

Trench 5 extension (Fig3 and 5)

Due to the presence of medieval pottery in trenches 1 and 5, alongside the modern disturbance, trench 5 was extended towards trenches 1 and 4 to create a roughly rectangular area of 75 sq m. The stratigraphy was the same as recorded above. No further archaeological features were uncovered. However, the nature of the modern deposit and its relationship to the ditch became clear. The ditch bounded an area that contained Victorian and modern pottery (retained on site) as well as building debris. Ditch 4 can be seen to be associated with this rubble so that the medieval pottery within the ditch was residual. A 19th century orchard that had been in place on the

site was confirmed to be the cause of other disturbances (root action). The rubble layer probably represents an outbuilding related to the orchard in use from the Victorian period into the modern era.

Trench 6 (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 1 and 5)

Trench 6 was aligned close to S - N and was 10m long and 0.60m - 0.80m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.23m of topsoil, over 0.22m of modern made ground, over 0.11m of buried topsoil, over 0.24m of subsoil, all of which was overlying natural geology. The geophysical anomaly targeted by this trench was part of modern landscaping and likely represents a ditch at the original edge of the break of slope that was buried during the landscaping. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered.

Finds

Pottery by Sue Anderson

Eleven sherds of pottery weighing 186g were collected from four contexts during the evaluation. Table 1 shows the quantification by fabric and a summary catalogue is included as Appendix 3. Quantification was carried out using sherd count, weight, estimated vessel equivalent (eve) and minimum number of vessels (MNV). Cross-matching between contexts was noted when distinctive sherds were present, but otherwise the MNV is based on context groups. Methods follow MPRG recommendations (MPRG 2001) and form terminology follows MPRG (1998). An Access database forms the archive catalogue. Local fabrics were identified with the aid of Vince (1997), Musty (1973), and the Gloucester type series (<http://glospot.potsherd.net/>).

Table 1. Pottery quantification by fabric in approximate date order.

<i>Description</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Date range</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt/g</i>	<i>EVE</i>	<i>MNV</i>
Roman colour-coated ware	RBCC	1st-4th century.	1	2		1
Kennet Valley flint-tempered ware	KVA	11th-12th century	2	21		2
Kennet Valley limestone and flint ware	KVB	Late 12th-14th century	3	89		3
Minety-type ware	MIN	12th-Early 16th century	4	42		4
Glazed red earthenware	GRE	16th-18th century	1	32	0.16	1
<i>Totals</i>			<i>11</i>	<i>186</i>	<i>0.16</i>	<i>11</i>

The pottery was generally in good condition with only mild or moderate abrasion. Calcareous fabrics had commonly lost some or all inclusions due to leaching in the ground or burning out during firing.

Roman

A small body sherd of Roman colour-coated ware was a residual find in gully 1, fill 52. It was in a fine very pale grey fabric, with a burnished black slip on the external surface only, giving it the appearance of *Terra nigra*.

Medieval (11th–14th century)

The majority of sherds in this assemblage were of medieval date. Five fragments were in Kennet Valley fabrics, all body and base sherds. These came from gully 1, fill 52 and ditch 4, fill 55. Small body sherds of Minety-type ware also came from ditch fill 55, one of which was decorated with stabbing and spots of yellow glaze externally. Larger fragments of this ware were found in pit fills (53 and 54), the former with internal green glaze and the latter a base fragment with external green glaze.

Late/post-medieval pottery (15th–17th century)

A rim fragment of a bowl-shaped skillet or pipkin came from ditch 4, fill 55. It was in a fine orange sandy earthenware with sparse ferrous oxide inclusions. The rim was plain and slightly thickened with a rounded top, and the vessel had two incised lines externally and brown glaze internally. It was heavily sooted.

Discussion

One sherd of Roman fineware was recovered, but was residual in a medieval context. Nevertheless, it showed little sign of abrasion and may indicate a Roman presence in the vicinity. Most of the other pottery comprised Kennet Valley and Minety wares. Vince (1984) suggested that the former were largely replaced by the latter in northern Wiltshire in the 13th century. Both types were present together in only one context, but were likely residual in that ditch fill as a post-medieval redware vessel fragment was also present.

Glass by Danielle Milbank

A single glass fragment of green glass weighing 6g was recovered from ditch 4. It represents the base of a vessel, probably a small bottle. The circular pontil mark suggests it is pre-19th century in date but it cannot be more closely dated.

Animal Bone by Ceri Falys

A small assemblage of non-human bone was recovered from two features: gully 1 (52) and ditch 4 (55). Weighing 127g, a total of 22 pieces of bone were present for analysis (Appendix 4). The remains were generally well preserved, with little damage or erosion to the cortical bone surfaces observed. However, a moderate degree of fragmentation was present, which rendered many pieces non-descript in appearance. It was not possible to identify most of the bone to specific skeletal element, animal size category or species of origin. However, a

minimum of one “large” animal (i.e. horse or cow), could be identified based on seven fragments. The majority of these were non-descript midshaft portions of rib(s), from both gully 1 and ditch 4.

An unidentified long bone shaft fragment from ditch 4 (55) bore a minimum of three, transverse cut/chop marks were located at either end of the shaft fragment, which possibly contributed to the severing of the portion of bone from the larger skeletal element.

Conclusion

The evaluation revealed a small group of isolated features towards the south-western portion of the area, closest to the road and also to the entrance of the site which has been in use for a significant length of time. Despite being isolated and difficult to interpret, the medieval features are nonetheless of interest, as little of the period has been recorded in close proximity and, small as it is, the assemblage of pottery is of consistent types and contributes to the study of medieval pottery distribution within the area.

The area of Victorian to modern disturbance associated with ditch 4 is also of interest. The residual medieval pottery and spread of pottery dates from the ditch and their association with the disturbance suggests a relatively continuous occupation. It is possible that medieval features occupied the space that has been truncated by the later disturbance which would explain the residual pottery within the ditch.

The single sherd of Roman pottery from a medieval feature in an area close to a major Roman road does not allow for any meaningful conclusion.

References

- Beaverstock, K, 2021, ‘Upper Farm, Hinton Parva, Swindon, Wiltshire. A Geophysical Survey (Magnetic).’ TVAS report **21/148**, Reading
- BGS, 1997, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet **252**, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- NPPF, 2019, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, London
- Pine, J and Taylor, A 2016, ‘Roman Occupation at Stanley Close, Wanborough, Swindon, Wiltshire’, in J McNicoll- Norbury, J Pine, and A Taylor, 2016, *Two Roman Occupation Sites near Swindon: Wanborough and Purton*, TVAS Occasional Paper **14**, Reading
- Williams, A and Martin, G H, 2002, *Domesday Book, a complete translation*, London

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	9.3	1.8	0.7	0–0.29m topsoil; 0.29-0.7m (dark brown grey silty clay) subsoil; 0.7m+ mid brown-grey silty clay with greensand inclusions (natural geology). [PI. 1]
2	6.7	1.8	0.55	0-0.27m topsoil; 0.27-0.50m subsoil; 0.50-0.55m+ (natural geology).
3	6.1	1.8	0.48	0-0.30m topsoil; 0.30-0.48m subsoil; 0.48m+ (natural geology). [PI. 2]
4	3.6	1.8	0.55	0-0.25m topsoil; 0.25-0.55m subsoil; 0.55m+ (natural geology).
5	9	1.8	0.6	0-0.28 topsoil; 0.28-0.60m subsoil; 0.60m+ (natural geology). [PI3 3–6]
6	10	1.8	0.8	0-0.23m topsoil; 0.23-0.45m mid blue grey clay with modern rubble inclusions made ground; 0.45-0.56m buried topsoil; 0.56-0.80m subsoil; 0.5m+ (natural geology).

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

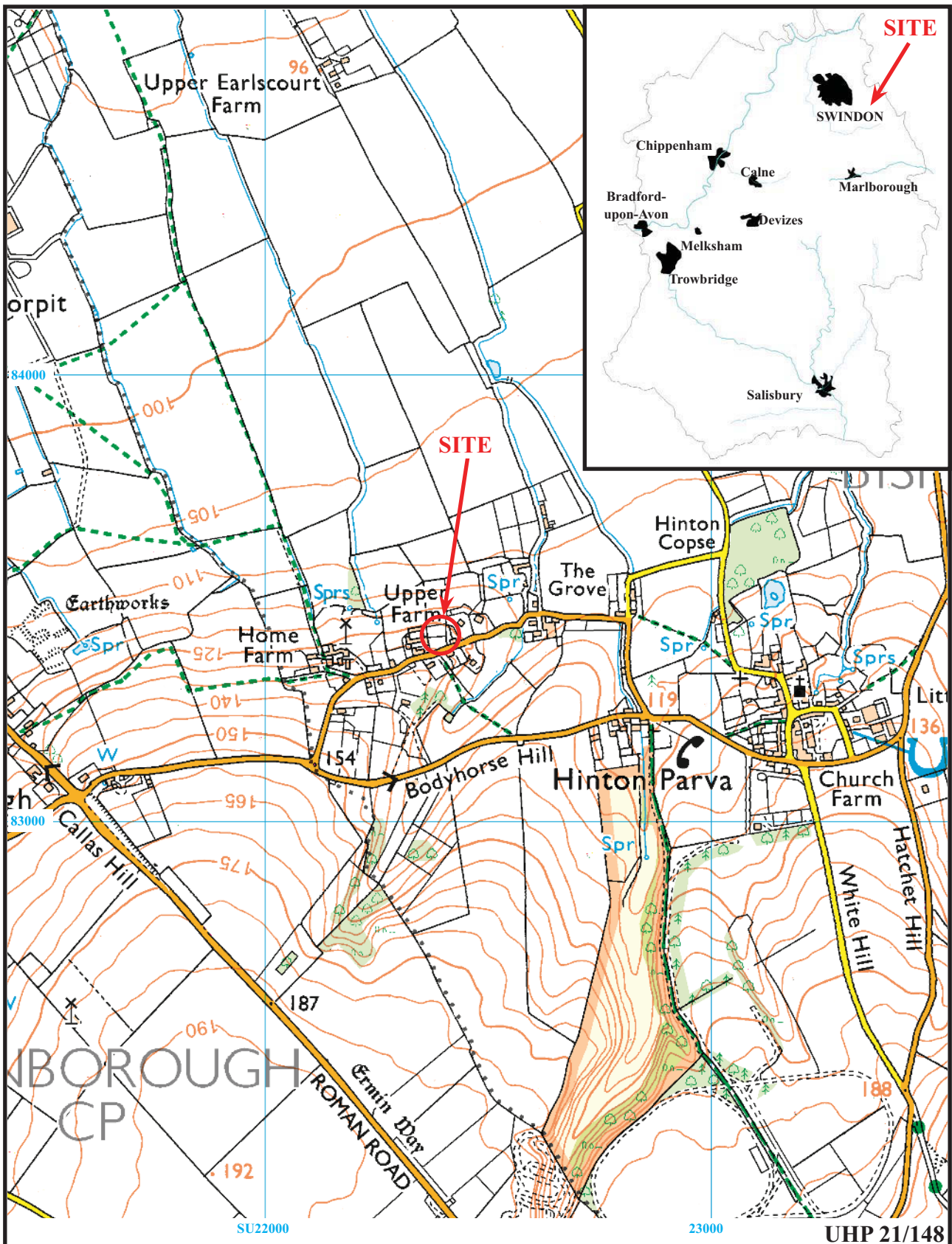
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1	1	52	Gully	Late 12th century	Pottery
1	2	53	Pit?	13th to Early 16th centuries	Pottery
5	3	54	Pit	13th to Early 16th centuries	Pottery
5	4	55	Ditch	16th–18th century	Pottery

APPENDIX 3: Catalogue of pottery by context

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>RBCC</i>	<i>KVA</i>	<i>KVB</i>	<i>MIN</i>	<i>GRE</i>	<i>Spotdate (AD)</i>
1	1	52	gully	1	1	2	-	-	Late 12th century
1	2	53	pit	-	-	-	1	-	13th-early 16th century
5	3	54	pit	-	-	-	1	-	13th-early 16th century
5	4	55	ditch	-	1	1	2	1	16th century?

APPENDIX 4: Inventory of animal bone.

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>No frags</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Large</i>	<i>Unidentified</i>	<i>Elements identified</i>
1	1	52			4	4	rib shaft fragments
5	4	55	14	76	3	11	Rib shaft. Transverse cut/chop marks (3) across both ends of an unidentified shaft fragment

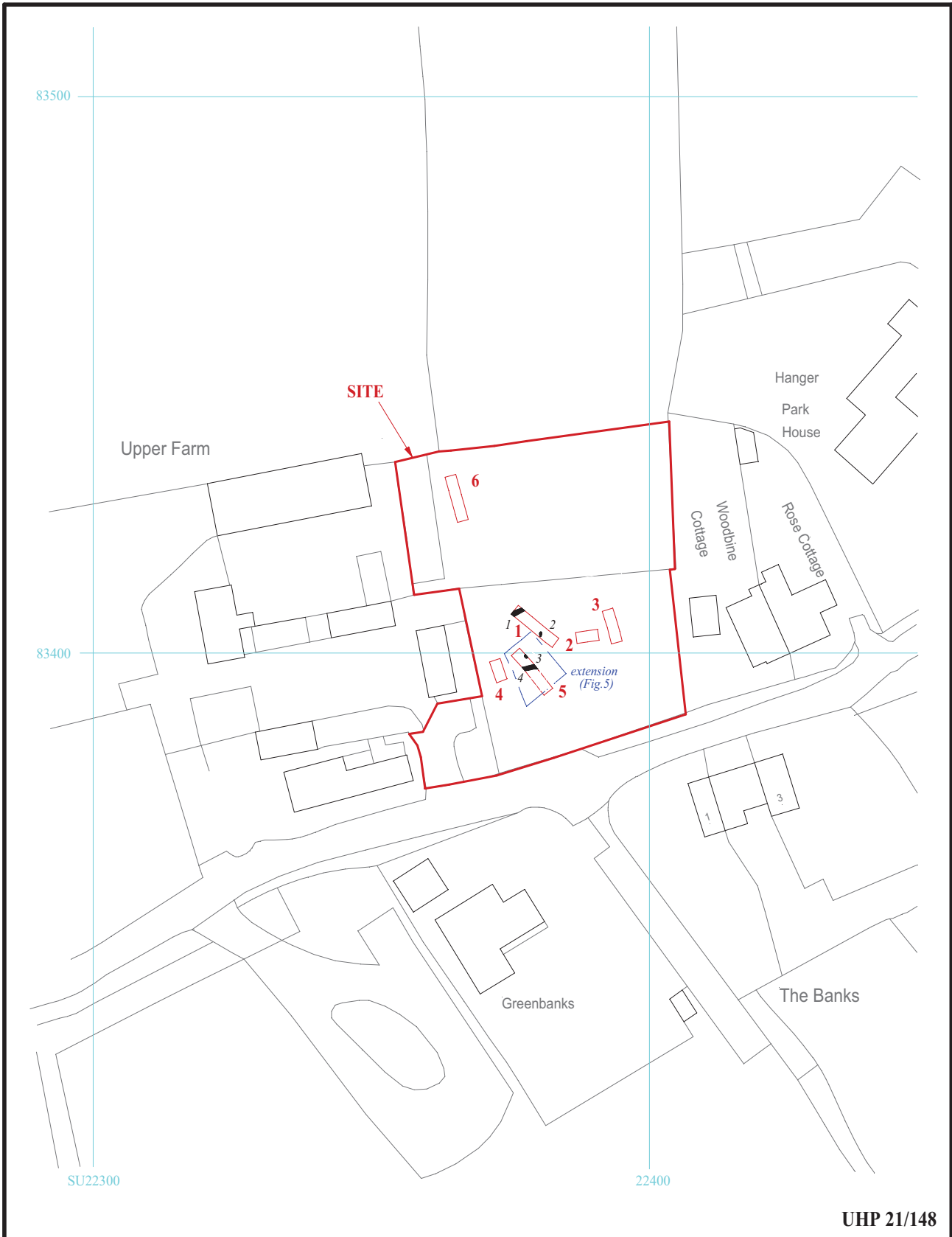


**Land at Upper Farm, Hinton Parva,
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Figure 1. Location of site within Hinton Parva and Wiltshire.

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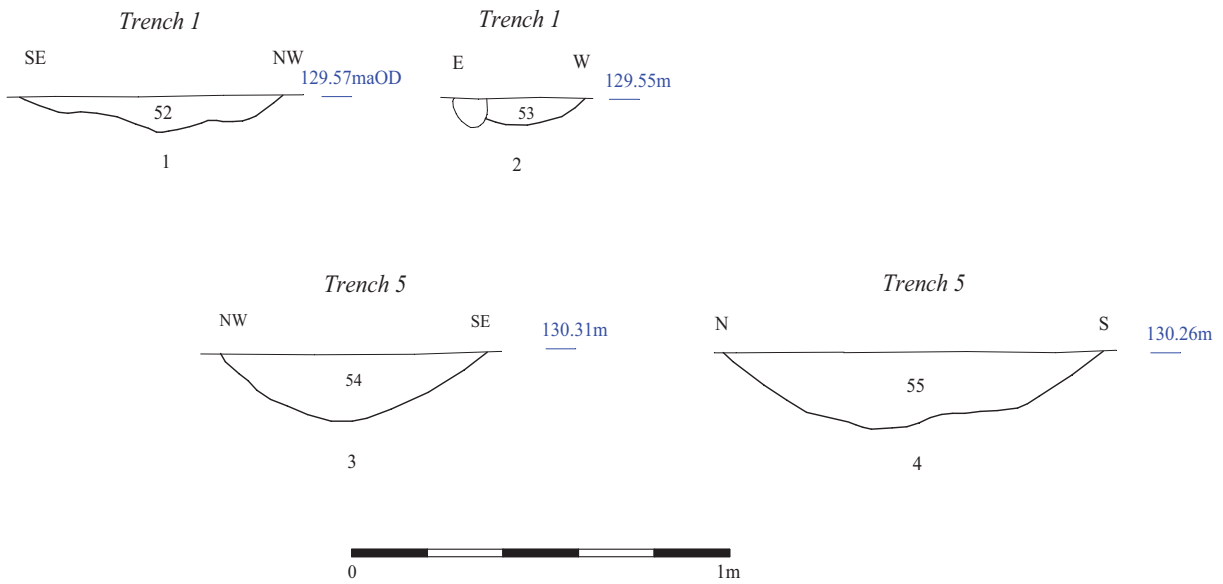
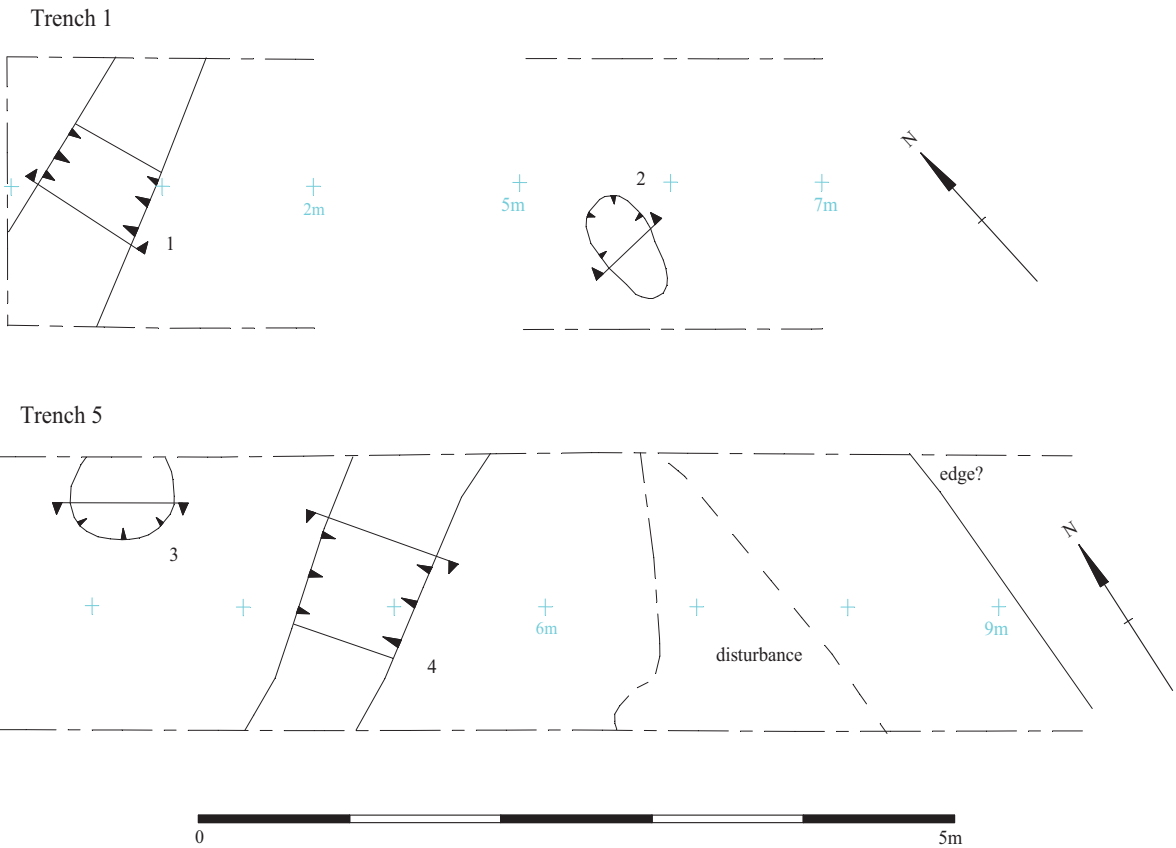
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Figure 2. Location of trenches and features.



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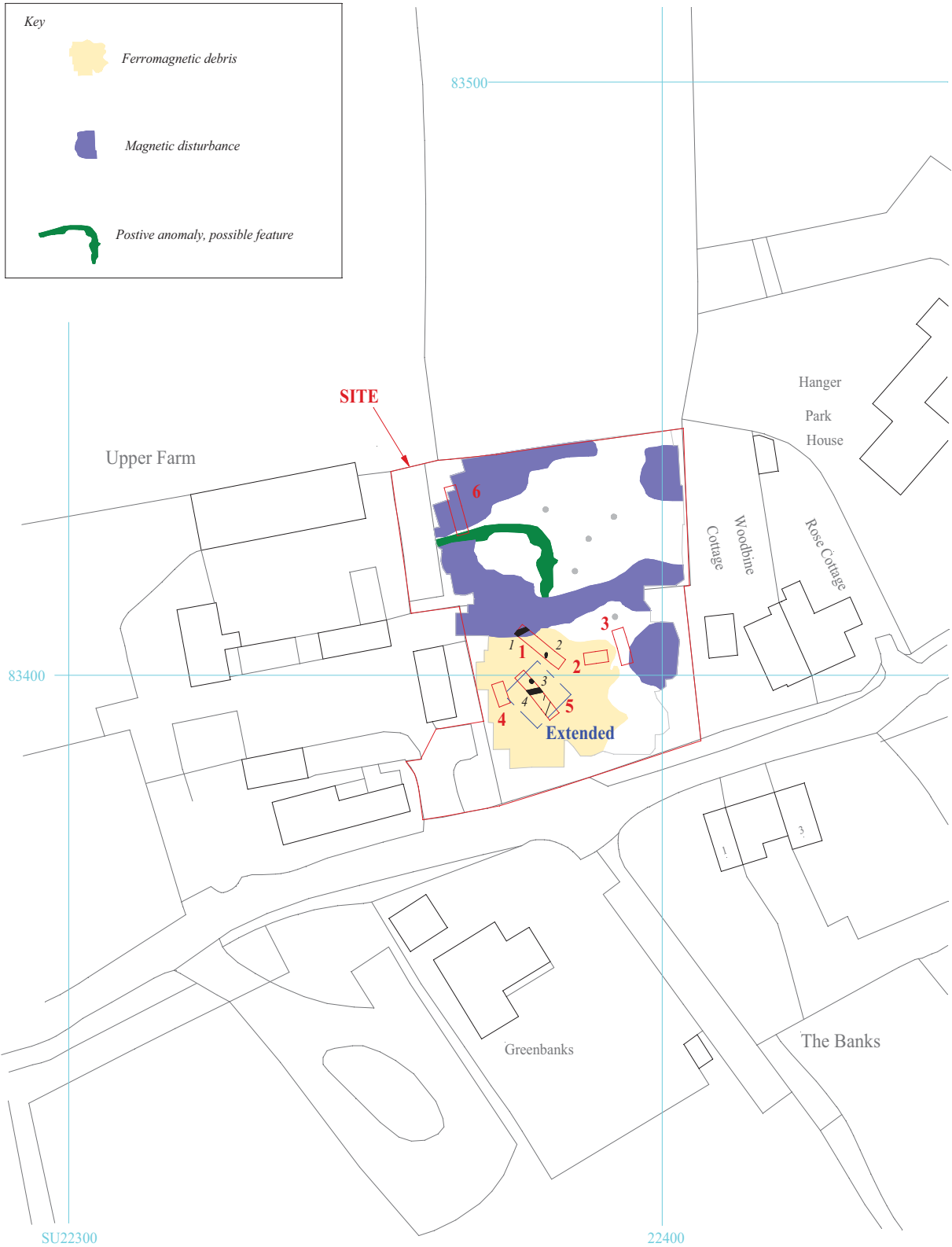
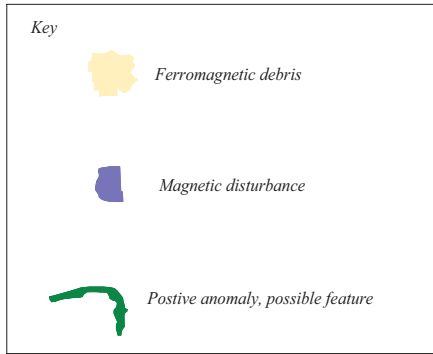


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Figure 3. Detail of features.



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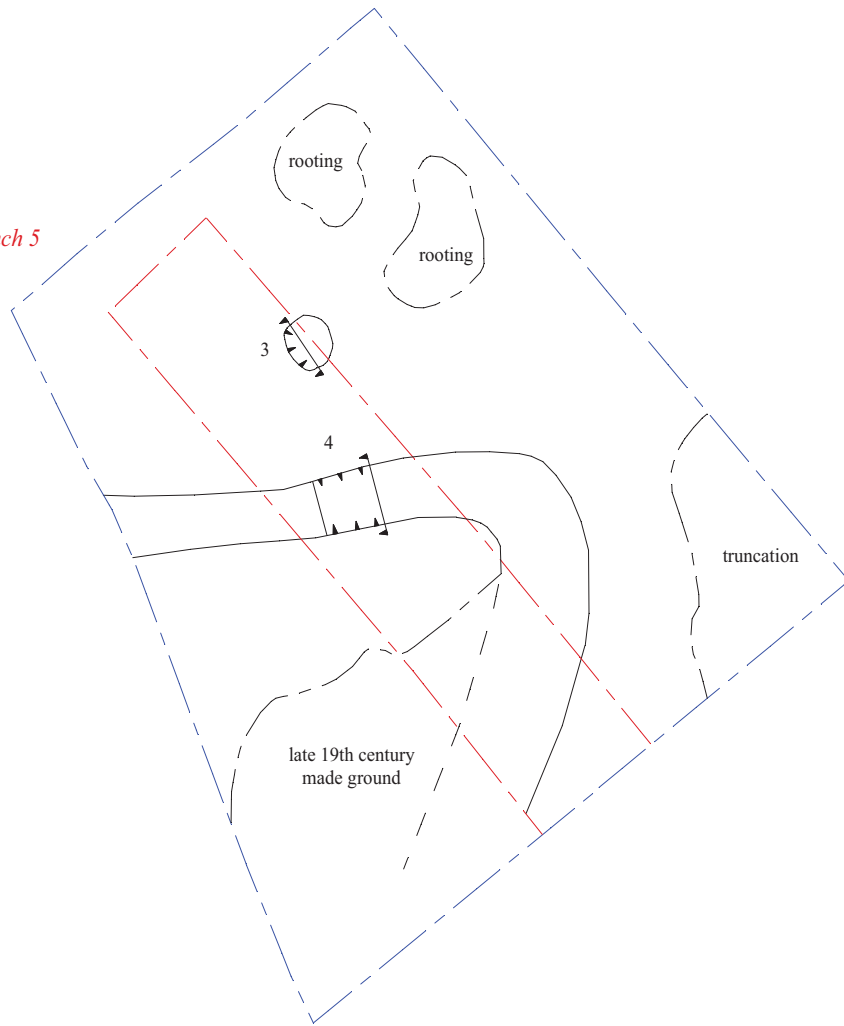
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Figure 4. Features compared to magnetic geophysics anomalies.



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Figure 5. Extension of Trench 5.



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Plate 1. Trench 1, Possible pit 2, looking South, Scale: 0.3m.



Plate 2. Trench 3, looking North, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.

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Plates 1 and 2.**

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Plate 3. Trench 5, looking North East, Scales: 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 4. Trench 5, pit 3, looking North East, Scales: 0.3m and 0.1m.

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Plates 3 and 4.**

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Plate 5. Trench 5, ditch 4, looking North East, Scales: 0.3m and 0.1m.



Plate 6. Trench 5 extension, looking North West, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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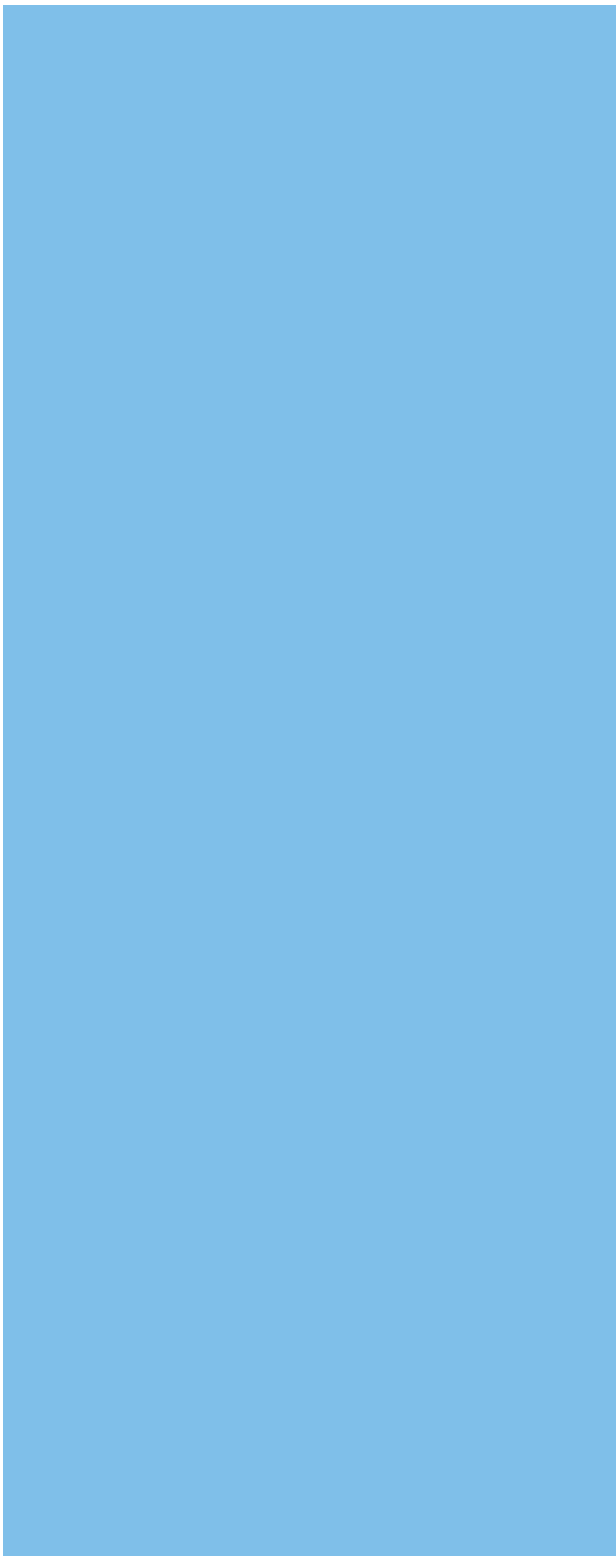
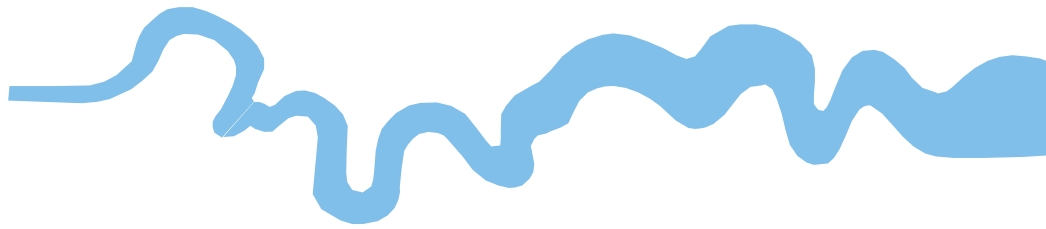
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Plates 5 and 6.

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TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	750 BC
Bronze Age: Late _____	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle _____	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early _____	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





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