

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Stable block conversion, Manor House, Ferry Road,
South Stoke, Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Anne Huvig and Will Attard

Site Code: MSS20/183

(SU 5989 8369)

**Stable block conversion, Manor House, Ferry Road,
South Stoke, Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
for Mr and Mrs Millar**

by Anne Huvig and Will Attard
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MMS 20/183

March 2022

Summary

Site name: Stable block conversion, Manor House, Ferry Road, South Stoke, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 5989 8369

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 11th to 25th February 2022

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: Anne Huvig

Site code: MSS 20/183

Summary of results: No archaeological deposits were encountered nor finds recovered but foundation components of the building were recorded.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading, will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service in due course, and the digital archive submitted to the Archaeology Data Service (ADS).

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 07.03.22
	Steve Preston ✓ 07.03.22

Stable block conversion, Manor House Ferry Road, South Stoke, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

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Report 20/183

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Manor House, Ferry Road, South Stoke, Oxfordshire, RG8 0JL (SU 5989 8369) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr and Ms Millar, of the above address.

Planning permission (P20/S2032/FUL) has been gained from South Oxfordshire District Council for the conversion to residential use of the old stable block, on the northeast side of the property. The consent is subject to two conditions (4 and 5) relating to archaeology. Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeological features, an archaeological watching brief is required during groundworks on the site.

This is in accordance with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019) and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification, based on a brief prepared by Ms Clare King, former Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (King 2020) who also subsequently approved the specification. The fieldwork was undertaken by Anne Huvig & Will Attard between the 11th & 25th February 2022, and the site code is MSS 20/183.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire Museum Service in due course, and the digital archive submitted to the Archaeology Data Service.

Location, topography and geology

South Stoke is located adjacent to the River Thames, on the east bank, c.2.5km from Goring-on-Thames (Fig. 1). Manor House is a residential property comprising a complex of buildings (Fig. 2), of which the former stables are the subject of the present investigation. The property is enclosed, south of Ferry Road at its junction with The Street. The site is located towards the eastern limit of terrace gravels belonging to the Northmoor Sand & Gravels (BGS 1980) and lies at a height of c.44m above Ordnance Datum (OD), at the point where the valley sides begin to rise to the east. The River Thames lies around 450m to the west.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a brief prepared for the project by Ms Clare King of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (King 2020). In summary, the site lies within a complex of protected buildings, once thought to be the manor of South Stoke. Generally, the site is located within the archaeologically rich Upper Thames Valley with numerous sites (i.e. Booth *et al* 2007; Lambrick *et al* 2009; Benson and Miles 1974). The stretch of river valley north of the village is rich in evidence of Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age settlement, with a number of Roman and Saxon sites also recorded and finds on the valley floor (Case 1982; Ford 1987; Ford and Hazell 1989).

The manor house lies central to a village once dated in the Domesday Book, as *Stoch*, the ‘south’ manor in Dorchester Hundred (Williams and Martin 2002, 425). Buildings of the Manor property (Fig.2), with a Dovecote (Grade II*’ SAM1017325), date from the late 17th century. The Manor House, Barn and its property boundaries also date from the 17th century in some form, though with greater overall alternation or additions. The stables are modern, rebuilt after a fire just before 1905 (Soden and Prentice 2020). It is recognised that land immediately east of the stables was once also part of the manor property before being sold. In the late 18th century, the whole site was referred to as a Parsonage, a property of the neighbouring church.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. This involved continual monitoring of all areas of intrusive groundworks and included observation of surface stripping, ground reduction to the top of the relevant horizon and the excavating of foundation trenches, service trenches, landscaping works and all other invasive work as necessary.

Results

The works occurred in, and adjacent to, a stable block situated in the north-east corner of the property (Fig. 2).

Ground reduction

Within the structure, the concrete floor had been removed in all three rooms prior to TVAS’ arrival on site, but was discernible in section and would have measured approximately 0.10m in thickness. In addition, a handful of minor service trenches for cables had also been dug near the entrance of the property, west of the barn. These were shallow and impacted only modern deposits.

All groundworks were carried out with a mini excavator fitted with a toothless bucket 0.90m wide. Within the building, ground reduction continued to a depth of 0.40m below the base of the previously removed concrete floor. The only deposit encountered was a compact mid grey-brown silt with frequent inclusions of chalk, brick/tile fragments and degraded ferrous fragments. Natural geology was not encountered during ground reduction within. The current modern brickwork of the above-ground elements of the barn appears to have been constructed following in part the footprint of an earlier building (see Plate 9).

Soakaway

A small (2m x 1m) pit was opened just to the south of the barn and was to serve as a soakaway. The observed stratigraphy consisted of turf (0-0.10m) overlying dark silty made ground (0.10-0.60m - as observed underlying the concrete floor within the barn) with the same range of chalk, iron and brick/tile inclusions. Underlying this deposit was a layer of redeposited chalk (0.60-0.85m) containing no anthropogenic material. This in turn overlay a yellow-brown clayey sand containing only small brick/tile fragments (0.85-1.10m).

Finds

No finds of archaeological interest were encountered.

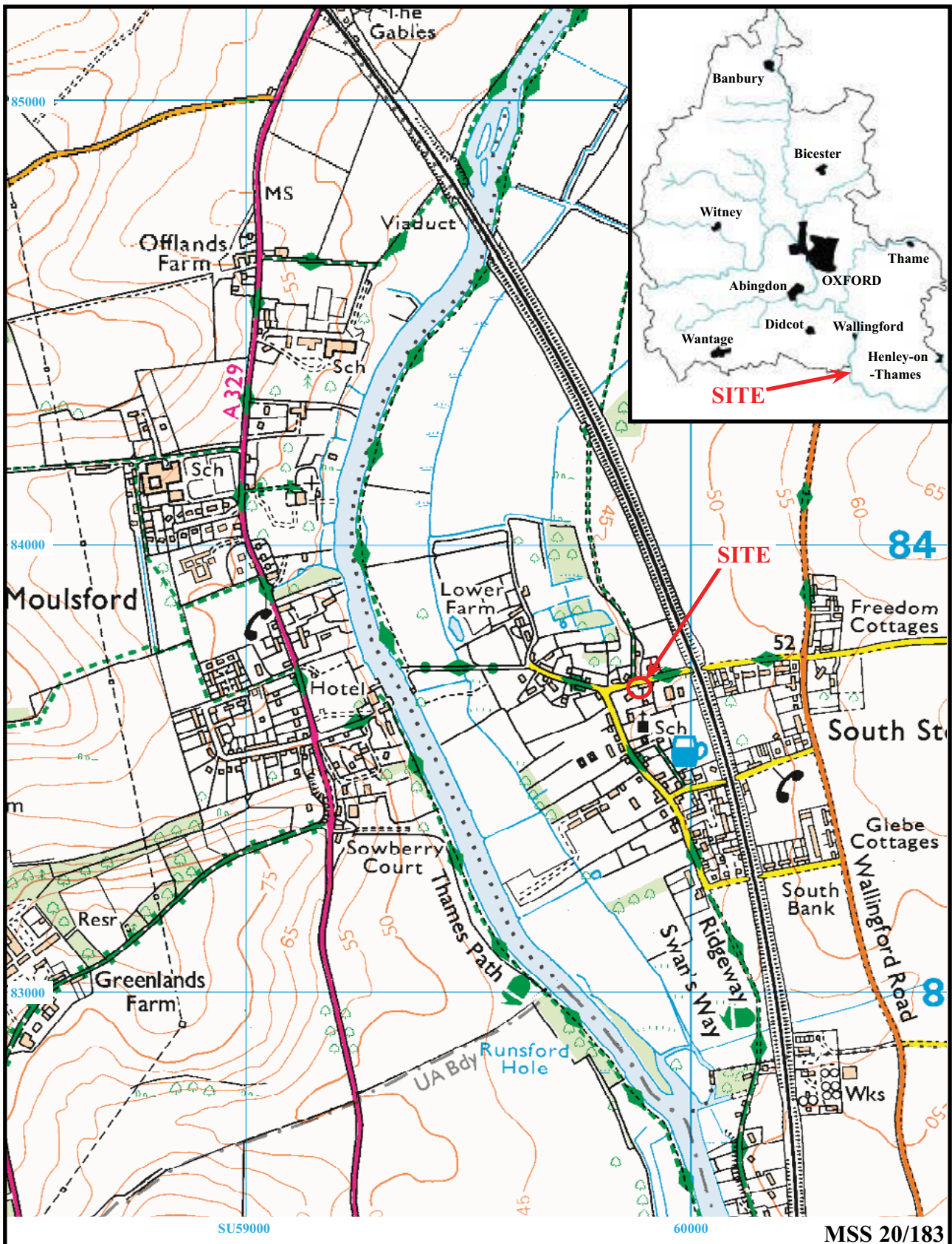
Conclusion

Archaeological monitoring of groundworks associated with the stable block conversion at Manor Farm, South Stoke was undertaken as intended. Structural elements observed within the standing barn indicate the expected range of rebuilding and re-use of earlier foundations. This is consistent with the known age range of extant buildings on the property as a whole. Deposits encountered consist of a range of made ground and make-up layers likely encompassing the same 17thC to present date range as the majority of the rest of the property. No archaeological finds were encountered during this watching brief.

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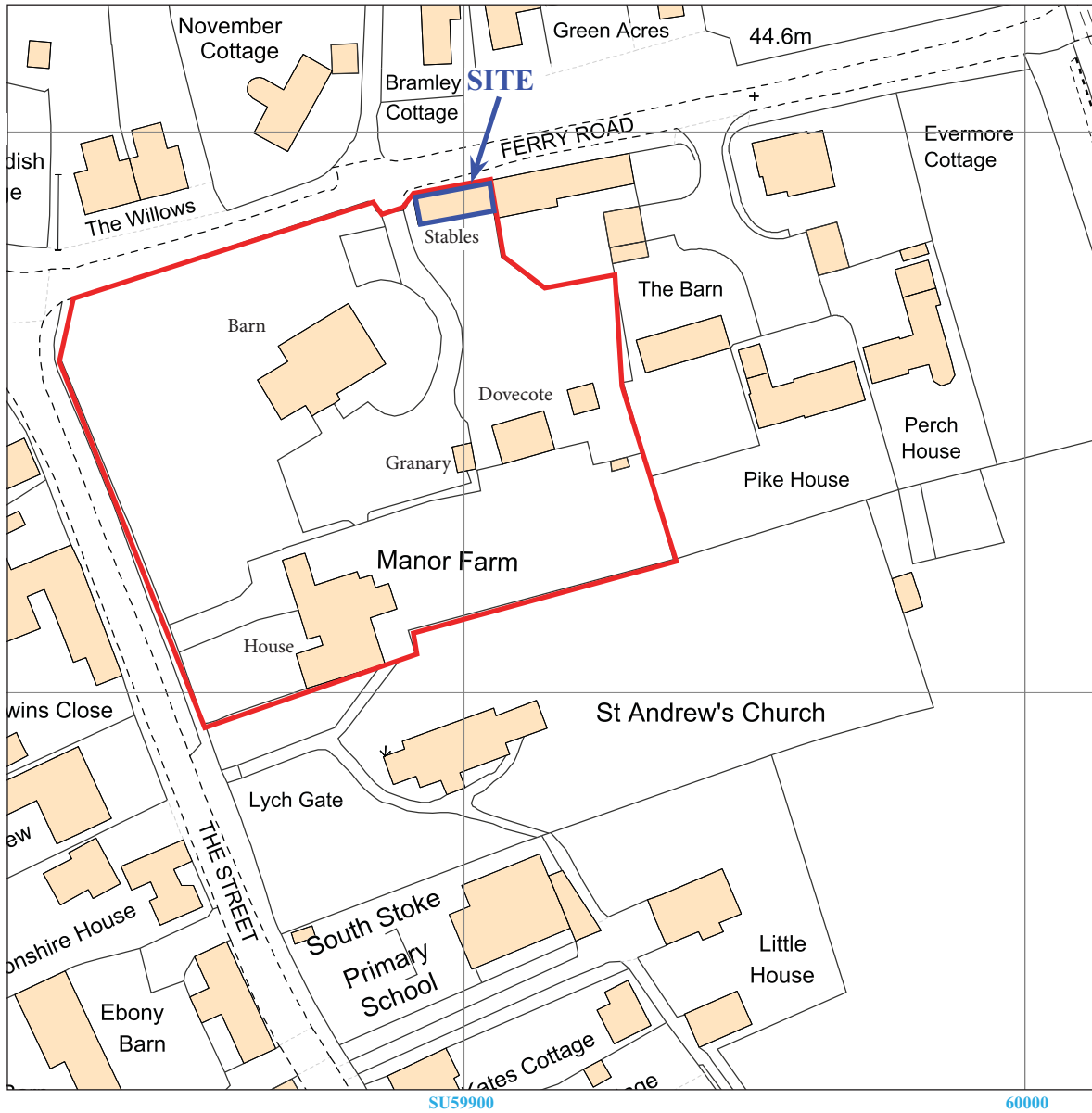


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**Figure 1. Location of site within South Stoke and
Oxfordshire.**

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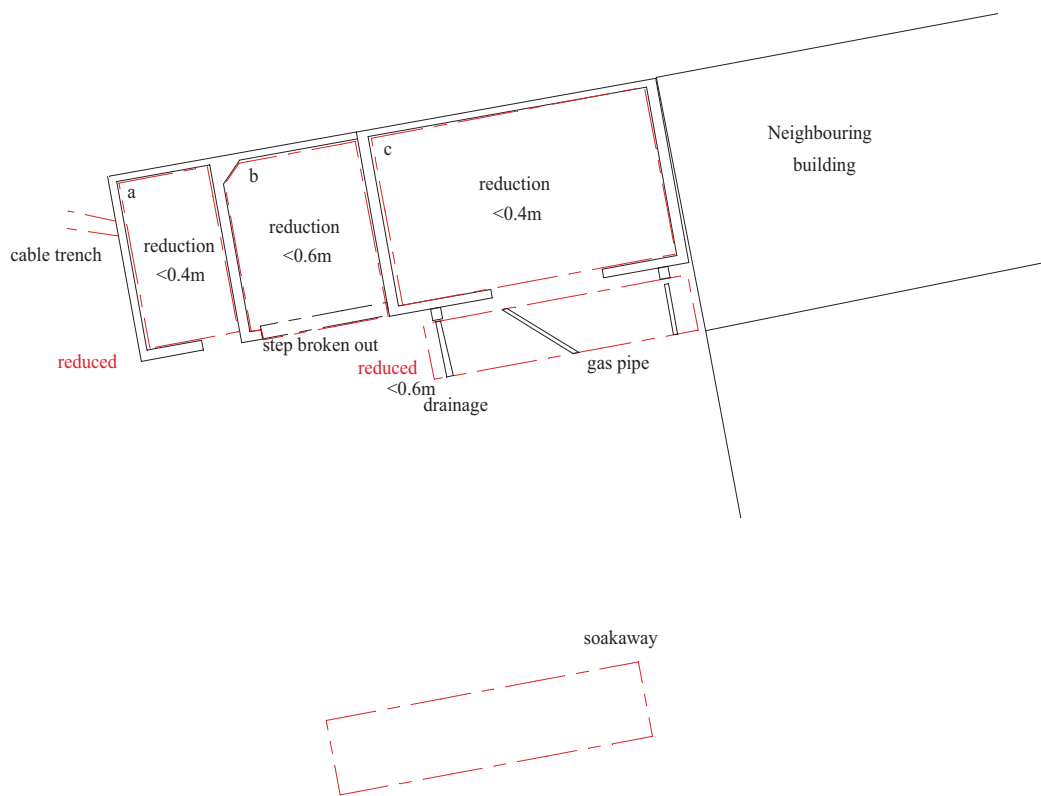
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.**

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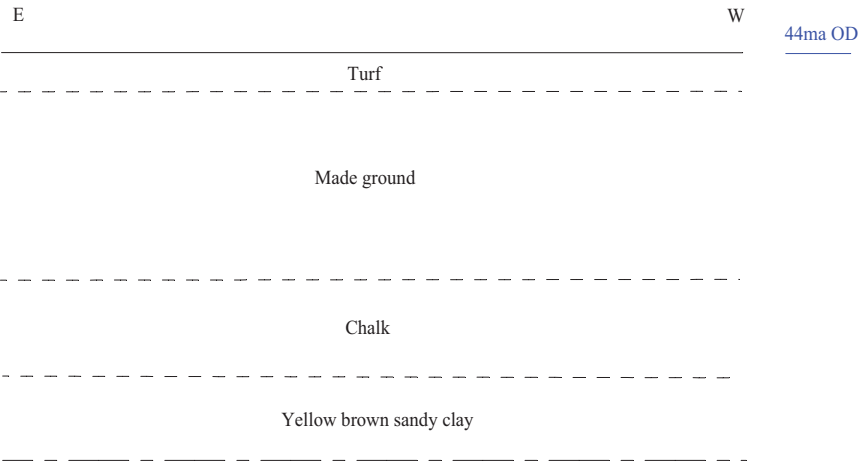
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Figure 3. Plan of building.



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Figure 4. Section of soakaway.





Plate 1. Stable building, looking North East.



Plate 2. Room A, reduction from exterior, looking North,
Scales: 1m x2.

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Plates 1 and 2.**

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Plate 3. View from interior reduction to dovecote, looking South.



Plate 4. Room B. Reduction, looking North,
Scales: 1m x2.

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Plates 3 and 4.**

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Plate 5. Room B, bricks previously removed in step, looking East, Scale: 1m.



Plate 6. Room B, Fireplace, looking East, Scales: horizontal 1m, vertical 1m.

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Plates 5 and 6.**

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Plate 7. Room C, reduction of north west side of floor in progress, looking North, Scale: 1m.



Plate 8. Room C, exposed footing under timber facing, looking South, Scales: horizontal 1m, vertical 1m.

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Plates 7 and 8.**

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Plate 9. Exterior ground reduction,
looking East, Scales: 1m x2.



Plate 10. Exterior, ground reduction section,
looking South, Scales: horizontal 1m, vertical 1m.

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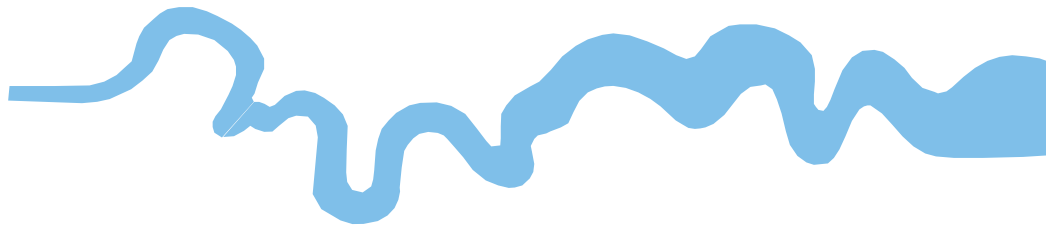
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Plates 9 and 10.**

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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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