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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

**S E R V I C E S**

**Land at Bignell Park Barns,  
Chesterton, Oxfordshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Andy Taylor**

**Site Code: BPB20/204**

**(SP 5515 2235)**

# **Land at Bignell Park Barns, Chesterton, Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation**

**for Mr C J Lane Fox**

by Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code BPB 20/204

**April 2022**

## Summary

**Site name:** Land at Bignell Park Barns, Chesterton, Oxfordshire

**Grid reference:** SP 5515 2235

**Site activity:** Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 6th April 2022

**Project coordinator:** Tim Dawson

**Site supervisor:** Andy Taylor

**Site code:** BPB 20/204

**Area of site:** c. 3750 sq m

**Summary of results:** No archaeological deposits nor artefacts of archaeological interest were identified. On the basis of these results the site is considered to have low archaeological potential.

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

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[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 11.04.22 Steve Preston ✓ 08.04.22
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# Land at Bignell Park Barns, Chesterton, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Taylor

Report 20/204b

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land at Bignell Park Barns, Chesterton, Bicester, Oxfordshire (SP 5515 2235) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Joel Day, of Anderson Orr Architects, Jamesons House, 6 Compton Way, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX28 3AB on behalf of Mr C J Lane Fox, Bignell Park Farm, Chesterton, Oxfordshire, OX26 1UH.

Planning permission (21/0231/FUL) has been granted by Cherwell District Council for the construction of new offices and car parking following demolition or re-use of former farm buildings. The consent is subject to conditions (11 and 12) relating to archaeology. This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2021), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. A field evaluation was requested in order to provide information on the archaeological potential of the site and allow a mitigation strategy to be designed as appropriate. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Victoria Green, Planning Archaeologist with Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services, advisers to the District on matters relating to archaeology.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor on 6th April 2022 and the site code is BPB20/204. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service and Archaeology Data Service in due course.

## Location, topography and geology

The site is located in Bignell Park, north-west of Chesterton which itself lies *c.*4km west of Bicester (Fig. 1). It is surrounded by open fields with the M40 running N-S to the west. The area of the former barns is west of Bignell House (Fig. 2). It is currently comprises a flat area of rubble with areas of hard standing after the former barns on the site had been demolished. The underlying geology is mapped as Cornbrash Limestone (BGS 2002), which along with a clayey silt was observed in the trenches and the site lies at a height of *c.*83.60m above Ordnance Datum.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a detailed briefing document for the project prepared by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Green 2021) drawing on the results of a desk-based assessment (Baljkas 2021). In summary, there are no known deposits of archaeological interest for the site itself but in general, the site lies to the south-west of Bicester in which a number of sites of various periods (prehistoric, Roman, Saxon) have recently been recorded during the expansion of the town, as at Merton Grounds Farm (Taylor 2006), Langford Park, (Pine and Mundin 2019), Whitelands Farm (Martin 2011) and Bicester Park (Westgarth and Caryle 2008). The area also lies within the hinterland of the Roman town of Alchester (Booth *et al.* 2002) to the south-east, and from which Chesterton takes its name. Alchester lies at a crossroads of two Roman roads. A deserted Medieval village lies at Bignell Park to the east of the proposal site.

## **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 research aims of this project were:

- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present; and
- to provide information to allow the preparation of a mitigation strategy if necessary.

It was proposed to dig three trenches, each measuring 30m long and 1.80m wide. These were opened by a 360° type machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Sufficient of any identified archaeological deposits were to be investigated to achieve the objectives outlined above. All spoilheaps were monitored for finds.

## **Results**

Three trenches were opened as close as possible to their intended locations, although some slight repositioning of Trench 3 was required due to the presence of a water main. They measured between 29.40m and 30.40m long and between 0.24m and 0.56m deep.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

#### Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 1)

This trench was aligned approximately NE-SW and measured 30m long and 0.24m deep at its SW end and 0.50m at its NE end. The stratigraphy, at the SW end consisted of 0.12m of scalpins overlying 0.10m of subsoil overlying limestone natural geology. The NE end consisted of 0.12m of scalpins overlying 0.36m of brick and limestone rubble made ground overlying limestone natural geology.

#### Trench 2 (Fig. 3; Pl. 2)

This trench was aligned approximately N-S and measured 29.40m long and 0.46m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.18m of limestone crush overlying 0.24m of subsoil overlying clayey silt and limestone natural geology.

#### Trench 3 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 3)

This trench was aligned NW-SE and measured 30.40m long and 0.56m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.38m of brick and limestone rubble made ground overlying 0.15m of subsoil overlying clayey silt and limestone natural geology.

### **Finds**

No finds of any archaeological interest were recovered.

### **Conclusion**

Despite the potential for archaeology to be present on the site no deposits or finds of any archaeological significance were observed during the evaluation. No traces of any Roman archaeology or any deposits associated with the deserted medieval village at Bignell Park were recorded. On the basis of these results, the site is considered to have low archaeological potential.

### **References**

- Baljkas, G, 2021, 'Land at Bignell Park Barns, Chesterton, Oxfordshire archaeological desk-based assessment', TVAS unpubl rep 20/204, Reading
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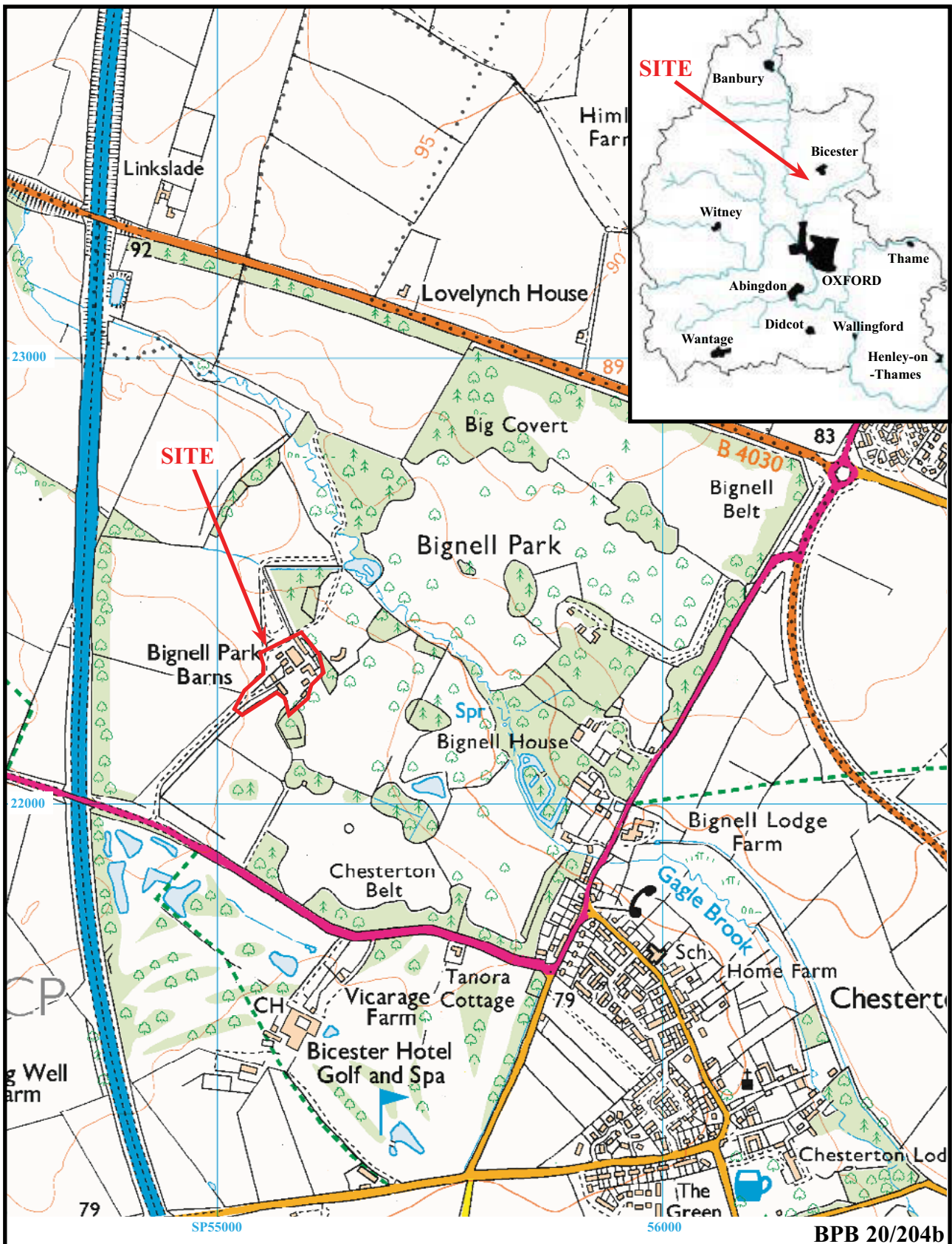
- Green, V, 2021, 'Bignell Park Barns, Kirtlington Road, Chesterton, Oxfordshire, Design Brief for Evaluation and Staged Mitigation', Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services, Oxford
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- Westgarth A and Caryle, S 2008, 'A Roman settlement at Bicester Park, Bicester, Oxfordshire', *Oxoniensia*, **73**, 121-46

## APPENDIX 1: Trench details

### 0m at S or W end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	30.00	2.10	0.24 (SW) 0.50 (NE)	SW: 0-0.12m scalpins; 0.12m-0.22m subsoil; 0.22m-0.24m+ limestone natural geology. NE: 0-0.12m scalpins; 0.12m-0.48m brick and limestone rubble made ground; 0.48m-0.50m+ limestone natural geology. <b>[Pl. 1]</b>
2	29.40	2.10	0.46	0-0.18m limestone crush; 0.18m-0.42m subsoil; 0.42m-0.46m+ clayey silt and limestone natural geology. <b>[Pl. 2]</b>
3	30.40	2.10	0.56	0-0.38m brick and limestone rubble made ground; 0.38m-0.53m subsoil; 0.53m-0.56m+ clayey silt and limestone natural geology. <b>[Pl. 3]</b>





**Bignell Park Barns, Kirtlington Road, Chesterton,  
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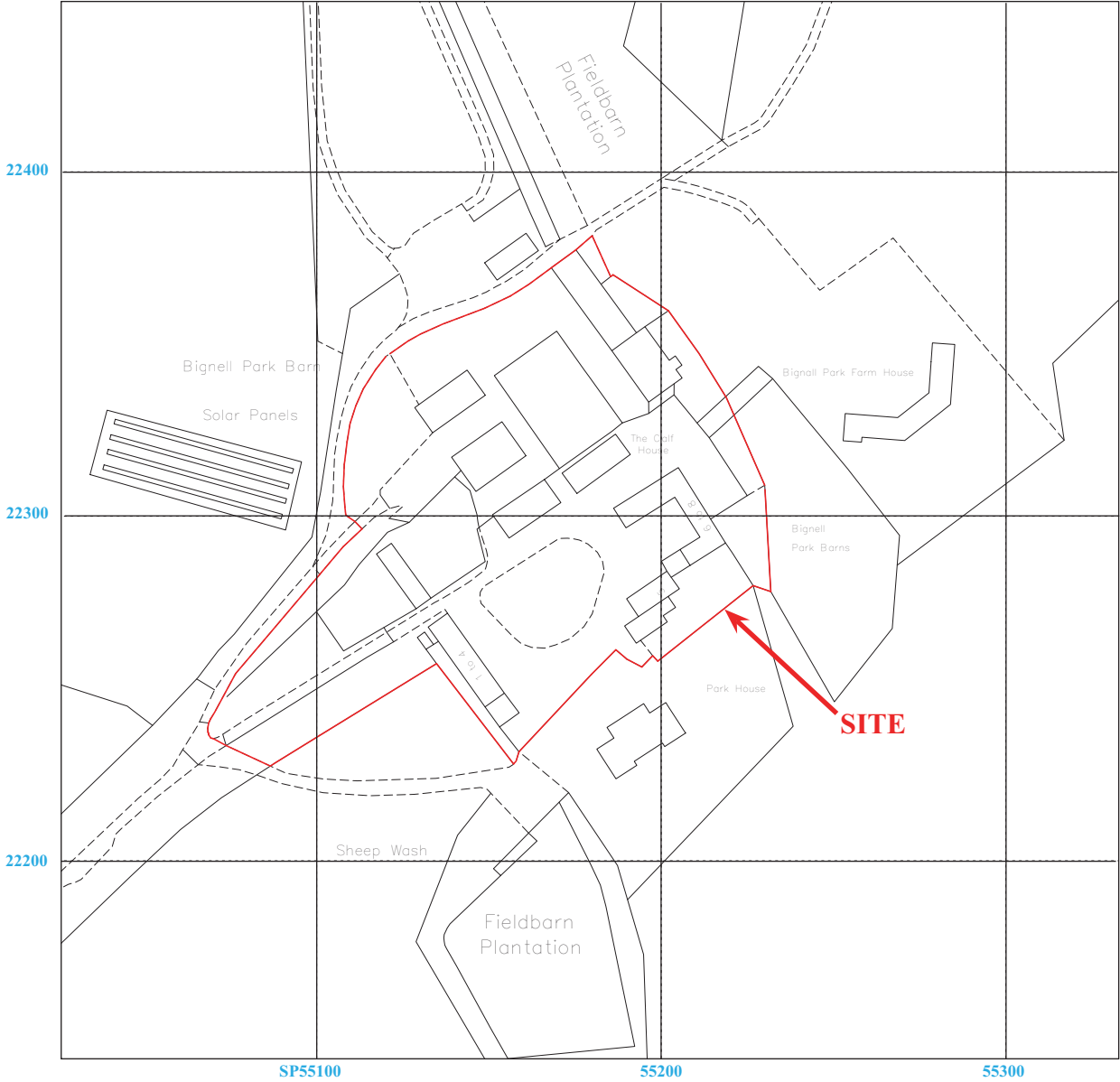
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Figure 1. Location of site within Bignell Park, Chesterton and Oxfordshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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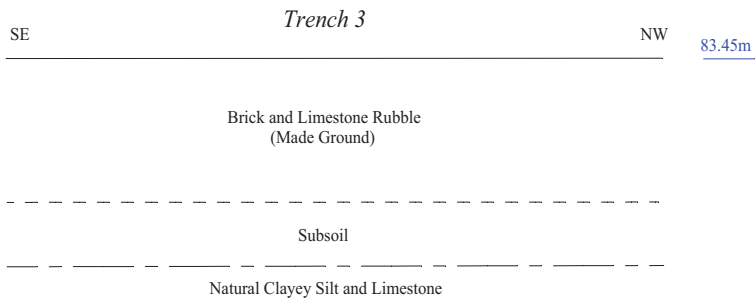
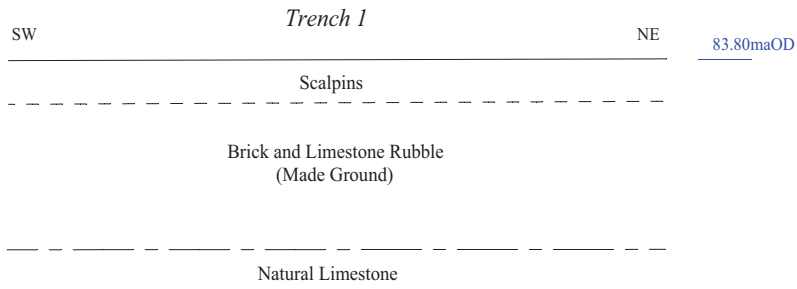
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Figure 3. Location of trenches, imposed against recently demolished(black) and proposed (blue) buildings.





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Figure 4. Representative sections.



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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking West, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.1m.



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

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**Bignell Park Barns,  
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Plates 1 and 2.**

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Plate 3. Trench 3, looking North West, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

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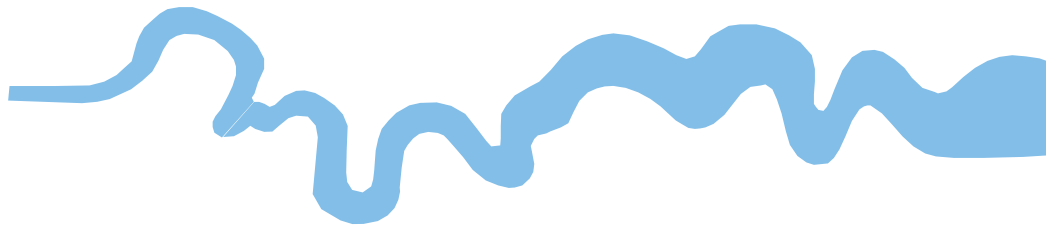
**Bignell Park Barns,  
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Plate 3.**

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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





**Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd,  
47-49 De Beauvoir Road,  
Reading RG1 5NR**

**Tel: 0118 9260552  
Email: [tvas@tvas.co.uk](mailto:tvas@tvas.co.uk)  
Web: [www.tvas.co.uk](http://www.tvas.co.uk)**

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