THAMES VALLEY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

SERVICES

Coley Farm, Stoney Lane, Newbury, West Berkshire

Archaeological Evaluation

by Maisie Foster

Site Code: CFN15/284

(SU 4874 6850)

Coley Farm, Stoney Lane, Newbury, West Berkshire

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Cala Homes

by Maisie Foster

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CFN15/284

October 2022

Summary

Site name: Coley Farm, Stoney Lane, Newbury, West Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 4874 6850

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 27th-28th September 2022

Project coordinator: David Sanchez

Site supervisor: Maisie Foster

Site code: CFN 15/284

Area of site: *c.* 3ha

Summary of results: The fieldwork including a metal detector survey was carried out as intended but no features of archaeological interest were observed in the trenches and no pre-modern metalwork found by detecting. The only items of note were thirteen sherds of medieval pottery (from the same vessel) and a single piece of struck flint recovered from the subsoil during excavation of the trenches, The site is therefore considered to have low potential both for archaeological deposits and those related to the Civil War battle.

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

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 10.10.22
	Steve Preston✓ 10.10.22

Coley Farm, Stoney Lane, Newbury, West Berkshire
An Archaeological Evaluation

by Maisie Foster

Report 15/284c

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Coley Farm, Stoney Lane, Newbury, West Berkshire (SU 4874 6849) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Paul Carter of Cala Homes (Chiltern), Gemini House, Mercury Park, Wooburn Green, Buckinghamshire, HP10 0HH.

Planning permission (app 20/00604/FULEXT) has been granted by West Berkshire Council for the development of a parcel of land for housing. Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeology the consent is subject to a condition (22) relating to archaeology requiring an archaeological evaluation, based on the results of which a further stage of work might be required. This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2018) and the Council's policies on archaeology.

The fieldwork was carried out according to a specification approved by Ms. Sarah Orr, Senior Archaeologist for West Berkshire Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Maisie Foster, Aidan Colyer and Emily Norton between 27th-28th September 2022 and the site code is CFN 15/284.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with West Berkshire Museum and The Archaeology Data Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the north-east of Newbury, and just north-west of Thatcham, West Berkshire (Fig. 1). The roughly rectangular parcel of land is on moderate incline from a height of *c.* 120m above Ordnance Datum in the north-west to around 100m aOD in the south-east. The site is bounded by Stoney Lane to the west, a housing estate and open field to the south-east, open land to the north, a small stream and fields giving onto woodland to the east (Fig. 2). The land is currently open grassland (Pls 7 and 8) that was previously used for the grazing of horses. The underlying geology is mapped as Harwich Formation (sand, silt and clay) (BGS 2006). This geology was observed in all trenches opened.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a desk-based assessment (Bermingham 2016). In summary, the site's potential stems from its location on the flanks of the archaeologically rich Kennet Valley. There are no archaeological sites already recorded on the site but several prehistoric and Roman sites are recorded to the south and south-east (Pine 2010; Simmonds 2008) with an extensive Bronze Age/Iron Age site located on the valley margins at Hartshill Copse to the east (Collard *et al.* 2006; Preston 2019; Huvig and Manisse 2022). The tertiary geological outcrops on the valley side have been used for early Iron Age iron production as at Dunston Park (Fitzpatrick 2011). The site may have potential evidence relating to the Civil War (the Second Battle of Newbury), with the site of the Parliamentary camp thought to be nearby. A geophysical survey carried out across the site itself (Fig. 3) in 2021, however, revealed no magnetic anomalies of potential archaeological interest (Beaverstock 2021).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development. This work was to be carried out in a manner which would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which warrant preservation *in-situ*, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to a full excavation. The specific research aims of this project were:

to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site;

to determine if archaeological deposits of any periods are present;

to determine the nature of any geophysical anomalies;

to determine if any evidence survives relating to the Civil War and Second Battle of Newbury; and

to provide information with which to draw up a mitigation strategy if necessary.

Nineteen trenches were to be dug using a 360º machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Topsoil and any other overburden was to be removed to expose 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 and scanned with a metal detector. A metal detector survey of the site was also undertaken.

Results

All trenches were dug as intended (Fig. 2) aside from Trench 19 which had to be shortened due to a concentration of potentially live services. The trenches ranged from 10.6m to 26.8m in length and 0.37m to 0.69m deep and 1.8m wide. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadth, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was aligned SW - NE and was 24.8m long and 0.39m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.19m of topsoil and 0.09m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered or observed.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was aligned NW - SE and was 19.0m long and 0.43m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.17m of topsoil and 0.12m subsoil overlying natural geology. No features of archaeological interest were observed nor finds recovered.

Trench 3 (Fig. 4 and Pl. 1)

Trench 3 was aligned S - N and was 24m long and 0.32m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.14m of topsoil and 0.11m subsoil overlying natural geology. Thirteen small sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from the subsoil but no associated or other feature of archaeological interest was observed.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was aligned E - W and was 26.5m long and 0.36m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.13m of topsoil and 0.14m subsoil overlying natural geology. A flint flake was recovered from the spoilheap, but no features of archaeological interest were observed.

Trench 5 (Pl. 2)

Trench 5 was aligned E - W and was 25m long and 0.46m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.19m of topsoil and 0.15m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered or observed.

Trench 6

Trench 6 was aligned ENE - WSW and was 25.7m long and 0.37m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.12m of topsoil and 0.11m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological finds or features were encountered.

Trench 7

Trench 7 was aligned NW - SE and was 24.6m long and 0.69m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.26m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered or observed.

Trench 8 (Fig. 4; Pl. 3)

Trench 8 was aligned NW - SE and was 24m long and 0.43m deep at the NW end and 0.62m deep at the SE end for a test pit. The stratigraphy consisted in NW end of 0.16m of topsoil and 0.11m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds of archaeological interest were recovered nor features observed.

Trench 9

Trench 9 was aligned E - W and was 26.8m long and 0.39m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.19m of topsoil and 0.13m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered or observed.

Trench 10

Trench 10 was aligned SE - NW and was 25.7m long and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.13m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered or observed.

Trench 11 (Pl. 4)

Trench 11 was aligned W - E and was 24m long and 0.44m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.23m of topsoil and 0.12m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered or observed.

Trench 12

Trench 12 was aligned S - N and was 25.5m long and 0.41m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.21m of topsoil and 0.10m subsoil overlying natural geology. There were no finds or features of archaeological interest in this trench.

Trench 13 (Pl. 5)

Trench 13 was aligned S - N and was 24.8m long and 0.52m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.17m of topsoil and 0.13m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered or observed.

Trench 14 (Fig. 4)

Trench 14 was aligned W- E and was 26.5m long and 0.4m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.16m of topsoil and 0.11m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered or observed.

Trench 15

Trench 15 was aligned SE - NW and was 25.1m long and 0.38m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.18m of topsoil and 0.12m subsoil overlying natural geology. There were no archaeological features nor finds of interest in this trench.

Trench 16 (Pl. 6)

Trench 16 was aligned NE - SW and was 25m long and 0.37m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.17m of topsoil and 0.08m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered or observed.

Trench 17

Trench 17 was aligned NE - SW and was 25.6m long and 0.38m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.09m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were observed.

Trench 18

Trench 18 was aligned SE - NW and was 25.4m long and 0.37m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.19m of topsoil and 0.11m subsoil overlying natural geology. No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered or observed.

Trench 19

Trench 19 was aligned N - S and was 10.6m long and 0.37m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.14m of topsoil overlying 0.23m+ of made ground containing services. Natural geology was not reached No finds or features of archaeological interest were recovered or observed.

Metal Detector Survey by Aidan Colyer

The metal detector survey was completed across the majority of the area of the site. Sections of the western portion of the site were unable to be surveyed, due to the presence of demolition rubble, buildings, services, and existing fences and trees.

The available part of the site was divided divided into four sections on a north-south axis, then into transects 2.5m wide, starting from a point in the south-western corner of the main field and modified to take into account topography and trees. Where signals were identified the immediate area was checked for a radius of 1m from the central signal.

The first 120m of the site, from the western end, produced one signal from a modern pin for an electric fence. The eastern portion of the site, for the remaining 105m, produced more signals, clustered in the south-eastern section of the site.

All of the signals were investigated and revealed a selection of modern artefacts. These ranged from a section of harrow to a modern galvanised nail and a broken paint brush ferrule. All of the artefacts were unambiguously modern in nature and were retained on site.

Despite the potential for artefacts the site did not reveal any metalwork of any historical provenance.

Finds

Pottery by Sue Anderson

Thirteen sherds (87g) were recovered from context 52 (subsoil) in Trench 3. The sherds were all part of a single vessel in a hard orange fabric containing abundant fine to medium and moderate red clay pellets. This is comparable with Newbury C group (Vince *et al.* 1997) and the sandy wares produced at kiln sites such as have been identified at Ashampstead and along the Newbury bypass (Mepham 1999). The sherds are unsooted and there is no trace of glaze, suggesting that they were part of an undecorated jug of 13th/14th century date.

Struck flint by Steve Ford

A single struck flint was recovered from the spoilheap of Trench 4. It is probably of Neolithic or Bronze Age date.

Conclusion

The evaluation has successfully investigated the site. Aside from a small number of unstratified medieval pottery sherds and a single piece of struck flint found in the spoil, no further finds nor features of archaeological interest were observed in the trenches, despite the area's potential for archaeological remains. The metal detector survey produced only unambiguously modern material. From the combination of results from the geophysical survey, evaluation and metal detecting survey, the area is considered to have low archaeological potential.

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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S or SW. end

Trench	*Length (m)*	*Breadth (m)*	*Depth (m)*	*Comment*
1	24.8	1.8	0.39	0-0.19m Topsoil; 0.19-0.28m mid orange brown clayey silt subsoil; 0.28m+ mid brown orange clay with gravel inclusions (natural geology)
2	19	1.8	0.43	0-0.17m topsoil; 0.17-0.29m subsoil; 0.29m+ mid yellow brown clayey silt with gravel inclusions (natural geology)
3	24	1.8	0.32	0-0.14m topsoil; 0.14-0.25m subsoil; 0.25m+ mid brown orange clay (natural geology) **[Pl. 1]**
4	26.5	1.8	0.36	0-0.13m topsoil; 0.13-0.27m subsoil; 0.27m+ mid brown orange silty clay (natural geology)
5	25	1.8	0.46	0-0.19m topsoil; 0.19-0.34m subsoil; 0.34m+ mid brown orange clay with gravel patches (natural geology) **[Pl. 2]**
6	25.7	1.8	0.37	0-0.12m topsoil; 0.12-0.23m subsoil; 0.23m+ mid brown orange clayey silt with gravel (natural geology)
7	24.6	1.8	0.69	0-0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.46m subsoil; 0.46m+ mid brown orange clayey silt (natural geology)
8	24	1.8	0.43	0-0.16m topsoil; 0.16-0.27m subsoil; 0.27m+ mid yellow orange silt (natural geology) Test pit dug to 0.62m at NE end. **[Pl. 3]**
9	26.8	1.8	0.39	0-0.19m topsoil; 0.19-0.32m subsoil; 0.32m+ mid brown orange clay (natural geology)
10	25.7	1.8	0.4	0-0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.33m subsoil; 0.33m+ mid brown orange clay (natural geology)
11	24	1.8	0.44	0-0.23m topsoil; 0.23-0.35m subsoil; 0.35m+ mid brown orange clay (natural geology) **[Pl. 4]**
12	25.5	1.8	0.41	0-0.21m topsoil; 0.21-0.31m subsoil; 0.31m+ mid brown orange clay (natural geology)
13	25	1.8	0.52	0-0.17m topsoil; 0.17-0.3m subsoil; 0.3m+ mid brown orange clayey silt (natural geology) **[Pl. 5]**
14	25.1	1.8	0.40	0-0.16m topsoil; 0.16-0.27m subsoil; 0.27m+ mid brown orange clayey silt with gravel (natural geology)
15	26.5	1.8	0.38	0-0.18m topsoil; 0.18-0.3m subsoil; 0.3m+ mid brown orange, clayey silt (natural geology)
16	24.8	1.8	0.37	0-0.17m topsoil; 0.17-0.25m subsoil; 0.25m+ mid orange brown clay (natural geology) **[Pl. 6]**
17	25.6	1.8	0.38	0-0.2m topsoil; 0.2-0.29m subsoil; 0.29m+ mid orange brown clay (natural geology)
18	25.4	1.8	0.37	0-0.19m topsoil; 0.19-0.3m subsoil; 0.3m+ mid orange brown clay (natural geology)
19	10.6	1.8	0.37+	0-0.14m topsoil; 0.14-0.24m+ mid grey brown clayey silt made ground with services. Natural geology not reached.

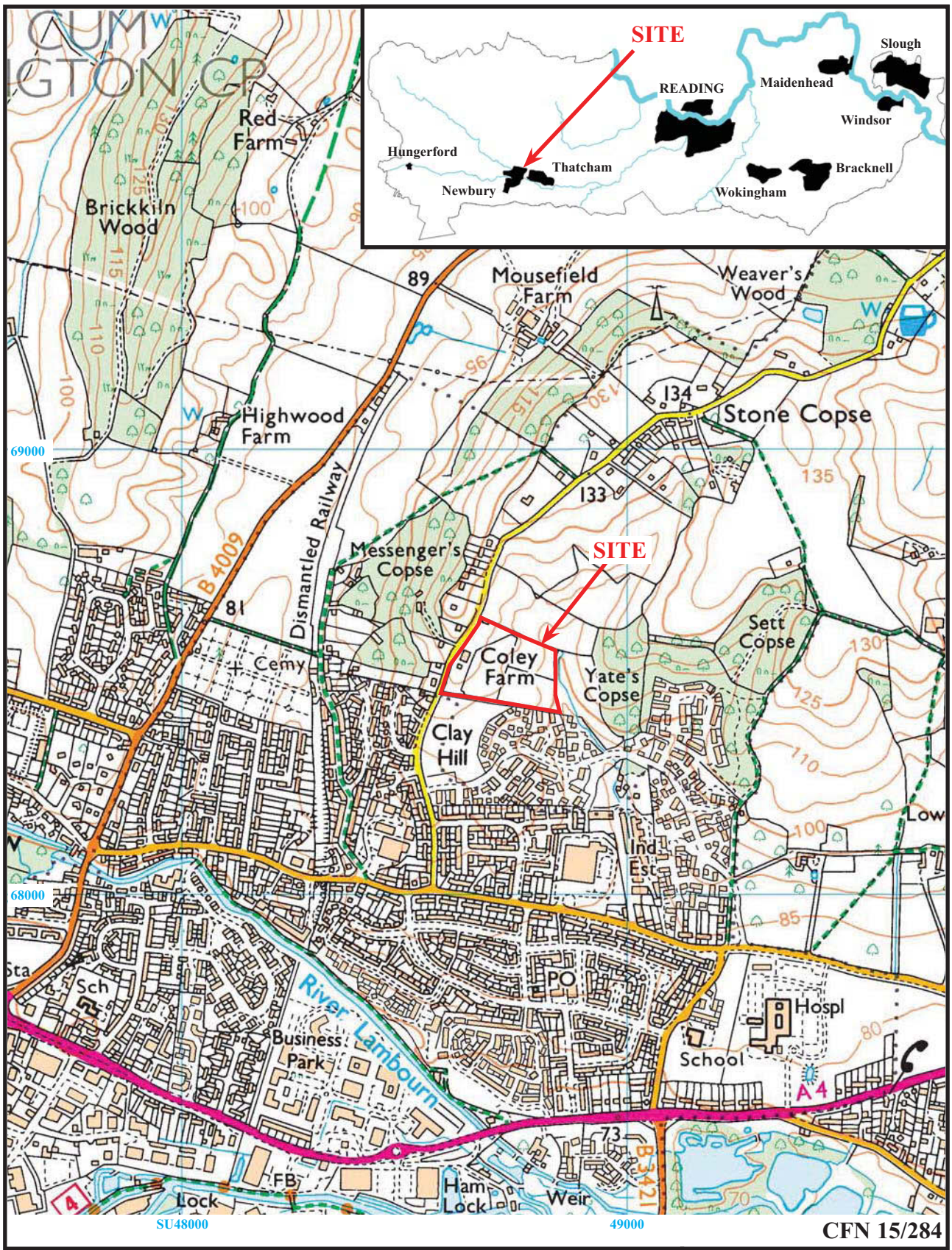

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Figure 1. Location of site within Newbury and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Location of trenches.

0 100m

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N

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Figure 3. Location of trenches, with magnetic geophysical anomalies (Beaverstock 2021).

0 50m

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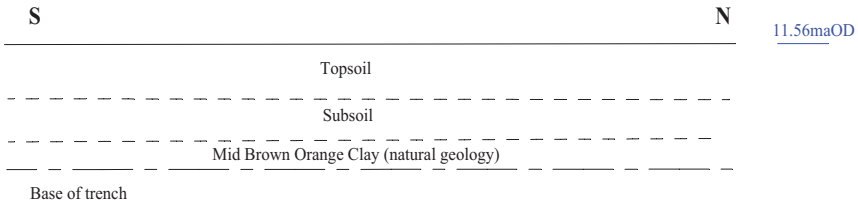
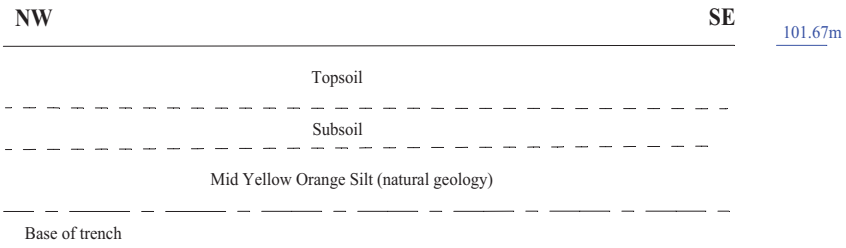
Trench 3



Trench 8



Trench 14

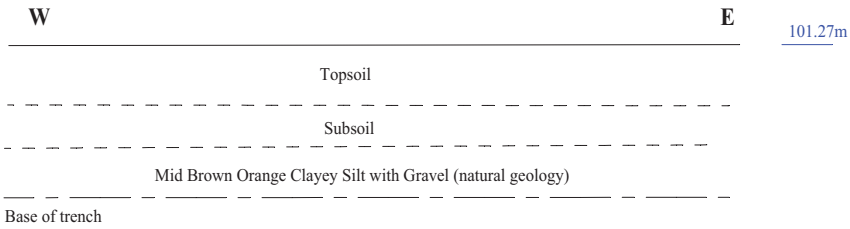


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Figure 4. Representative sections.

0 1m

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

Plate 2. Trench 5, looking North East,
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

Plate 3. Trench 8, looking South East,
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

Plate 4. Trench 11, looking North West,
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

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Plates 1 to 4.

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Plate 5. Trench 13, looking North,
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

Plate 6. Trench 16, looking North East,
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

Plate 7. Site, looking North West.

Plate 8. Site, looking South East.

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Coley Farm, Stoney Lane,
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Plates 5 to 8.

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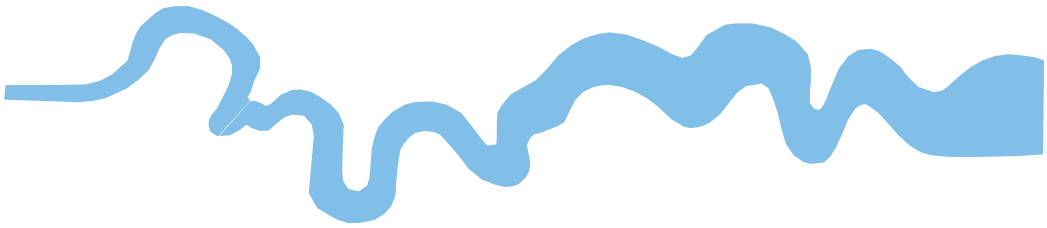
TIME CHART

	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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