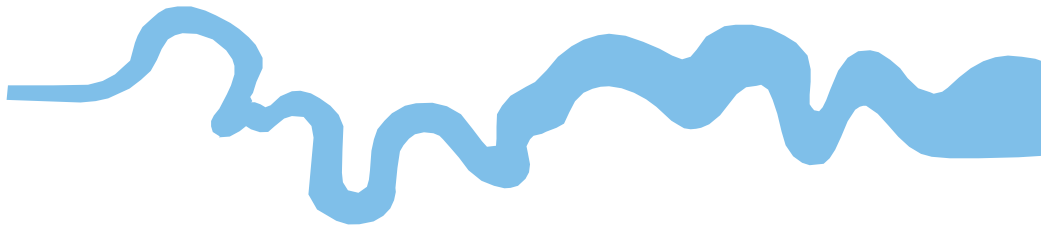


T V A S



SOUTH

**Middle Bronze Age pits on land adjacent to Dapper's Lane,
Angmering, West Sussex**

Archaeological Excavation

by Odile Rouard and Sean Wallis

Site Code: DLA20/168

(TQ 0713 0520)

Middle Bronze Age pits on land adjacent to Dapper's Lane, Angmering, West Sussex

**An Archaeological Excavation
for Persimmon Homes Thames Valley**

Planning Reference: A/76/20/PL

by Odile Rouard and Sean Wallis

TVAS South

Site Code DLA 20/168

Summary

Site name: Land adjacent to Dapper's Lane, Angmering, West Sussex

Grid reference: TQ 0713 0520

Planning reference: A/76/20/PL

Site activity: Excavation

Dates of fieldwork: 16th–17th August 2021

Project manager: Sean Wallis

Site supervisor: Odile Rouard

Site code: DLA 20/168

Area of site: c. 900 sq m

Summary of results: The archaeological excavation further investigated an area of the site, where two Bronze Age pits had been revealed during evaluation. Just one additional pit was identified during this fieldwork. The three pits produced an assemblage of pottery of Middle Bronze Age date supported by two radiocarbon dates of 1421-1271 and 1284-1122 Cal BC (UBA-46772-3) Soil sieving recovered a little charcoal, burnt flint and a struck flint. The pits are thought to represent a small, probably short - lived occupation site which is considered to be fairly typical of much settlement of this period. The location of the site on London Clay geology is noteworthy as this outcrop is not considered to have been extensively settled at this time.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 12.12.22 Steve Preston ✓ 12.12.22

Land adjacent to Dapper's Lane, Angmering, West Sussex An Archaeological Excavation

by Odile Rouard and Sean Wallis
with contributions by Steve Ford, Rosalind McKenna and Barbara McNee

Report 20/168b

Introduction

An archaeological excavation was carried out by Thames Valley Archaeological Services on land adjacent to Dapper's Lane, Angmering, West Sussex (TQ 0713 0520). The work was commissioned by Mr David Dawson of Persimmon Homes Thames Valley, Persimmon House, Knoll Road, Camberley, Surrey, GU15 3TQ.

Planning permission (A/76/20/PL) had been granted by Arun District Council to develop an area of farmland for residential purposes. The consent was subject to standard conditions relating to archaeology and the historic environment, which required the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in advance of groundworks. This was in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* as revised in 2019 (NPPF 2019), and the District Council's policies on archaeology.

The site was subject to a trial trench evaluation in July 2021 where two Bronze Age pits were identified (Wallis 2021). As a result, further archaeological work was requested in the area of the site where the two pits were recorded. The subsequent field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr James Kenny, the Chichester District Council Archaeological Officer, who advises Arun District Council. The fieldwork was undertaken on 16th and 17th August 2021, and the site code is DLA 20/168. The archive is presently held at TVAS South, Brighton and will be deposited with a suitable depository in due course. The preferred depository for the site and finds archive is Littlehampton Museum.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the west of Dapper's Lane, about 800m north of the historic core of Angmering, West Sussex, and is centred on NGR TQ 0713 0520. The site consists of an irregular shaped field which is bounded to the east by Dapper's Lane, to the south by residential dwellings, to the west by a footpath and playing field, and to the north by woodland and Herons Farm. The site generally slopes down towards the south and, as a result, the height above Ordnance Datum varies from about 26m in the north-west corner to about 20m in the south-west corner. According to the British Geological Survey, the underlying geology for much of the site consists of London Clay, with possible Head Deposits being present in the south-west corner (BGS 1996). Although London Clay was recorded across most

of the site during the earlier trial trench evaluation, a light yellow brown sandy clay interspersed with natural flint patches was encountered in the south-west corner of the site where the excavation took place.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site largely stems from its location on the Sussex Coastal Plain, which is thought to be archaeologically rich from the Neolithic period onwards. Recent large scale excavations have revealed numerous features which support the theory that the coastal plain was the focus of intensive settlement during the Bronze Age, Iron Age and early to Middle Roman periods. Complex multi-period sites have been excavated to the west of Angmering at Courtwick Lane (Bray *et al.* 2019) and Toddington Lane (Wallis 2019a), and to the east at West Durrington (Wallis 2019b). Evidence of prehistoric and Roman activity has also been recorded within Angmering itself. A modest number of archaeological features dating from the Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman periods were revealed during an excavation at Roundstone Lane (Wallis 2017), whilst a recent project to the south of Water Lane uncovered evidence of a settlement of Roman but with a significant Bronze age component (Rouard forthcoming).

The archaeological potential of the site had been established from the results of recent fieldwork. A total of 33 trenches were excavated across the site (Wallis 2021) (Fig. 2) but archaeological features were only recorded in two trenches in the south-west corner (14 and 33). Each of these trenches contained a pit dating from the middle or middle-late Bronze Age, which suggested a limited amount of activity during that period.

Objectives and methodology

The aim of the project was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits and features within the site where features had been discovered during the evaluation. The exact extent of the area to be stripped was agreed in advance with the archaeological advisor to Arun District Council.

The general objectives of the project were to:

- Excavate and record all archaeological deposits and features within the excavation area.
- Produce relative and absolute dating and phasing for deposits and features recorded on the site.
- Establish the character of the deposits in an attempt to define functional areas on the site such as industrial, domestic, etc.
- Produce information on the economy and local environment and compare and contrast this with the results of other excavations in the region

The project would also address the following research questions:

- What is the nature and extent of Bronze Age activity on the site?

- What use was made of floral and faunal resources and can these be identified and assessed from a programme of environmental sampling?

The Excavation

The excavation area was stripped down to the top of the underlying natural geology, which necessitated the removal of up to 0.50m of topsoil (50) and subsoil deposits (51). The area was stripped by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. The excavation area covered an area of approximately 900 sq m (Fig. 3). Appendix 1 provides a summary of all of the excavated features, with dating evidence, including the features from the evaluation.

Middle Bronze Age

Just one additional archaeological feature was uncovered during the excavation phase, bringing the total number recorded on the site up to three, all of which were small sub-circular pits (1, 2 and 3) (Figs 4 and 5).

Pit 1 measured about 0.42m in diameter and was up to 0.15m deep (Pl. 1). It had a single fill of dark brownish grey silty clay which was packed with over 100 fragments of burnt flint, weighing nearly 2 kg (52). Over 30 sherds of pottery, dating from the Middle to Late Bronze Age, were found in the pit. A moderate amount of charcoal of Rose family, oak and some willow/poplar was recovered from a sieved soil sample, but no charred seed remains. A radiocarbon date of 1421–1271 cal BC (UBA-46772; Appendix 5) was obtained from the charcoal indicating a Middle Bronze Age date.

Pit 2 was oval in plan, measuring 0.80m by 0.72m, and was up to 0.10m deep (Pl. 2). It had a single fill of dark brownish grey silty clay (53) which yielded 4 small sherds of Middle to Late Bronze Age pottery, along with 9 fragments of burnt flint, weighing 153g. A moderate amount of charcoal, all of oak, was again recovered from a sieved soil sample but no charred seed remains. A radiocarbon date of 1284–1122 cal BC (UBA-46773: Appendix 5) was obtained from the charcoal indicating a Middle – Late Bronze Age date. This could overlap with the date from pit 1 at the early end of the range but is more probably about a century later.

Pit 3 measured 0.80m by 0.50m, and was up to 0.08m deep (Pl. 3). Four worn sherds of Middle to Late Bronze Age pottery were recovered from its fill of dark brownish silty clay (54), along with a single struck flint and 3 fragments of burnt flint. There was very little charcoal from this pit (oak and willow/poplar) which suggested that any radiocarbon date would be less securely provenanced than from the other two pits.

All three pits were fully excavated following their initial half-sectioning and recording.

Finds

The Prehistoric Pottery by Barbara McNee

A total of 42 prehistoric pottery sherds weighing 236g, and with a mean sherd weight of 5.6g were recovered from three pits. The pottery was recorded using the methodology set out by the Prehistoric Ceramics Research Group (PCRG 1997).

Sherds deriving from pit 1 (52) probably belong to the same pot. Six of the examples are thick walled, coarse flint tempered base sherds, and the remainder are plain body sherds. No rim sherds survive, however the vessel probably represents a middle or middle-late Bronze Age bucket type jar form. The flint tempered pottery fabric is typically used during the middle and late Bronze Age. Parallels can be seen on other Sussex sites, for example Varley Halls (Hamilton 1997) and Roundstone Lane, Angmering (Seager Thomas 2002).

Four plain coarse flint tempered body sherds were recovered from pit 2 (53). In terms of fabric they would appear to be contemporary with the pottery from pit 1. The vessel walls are slightly thinner, which may be suggestive of a transitional middle-late Bronze Age or very early late Bronze Age date. It is possible that two vessels are represented.

Four worn prehistoric sherds were recovered from pit 3 (54) representing two vessels. Two sherds belong to a coarse grog and flint tempered flat bottomed base fragment, and the remaining two are coarse flint tempered body sherds. An early late Bronze Age date is suggested.

This small pottery assemblage is important as an indicator of settlement or use within the Angmering area during the middle-late Bronze Age (1500-900 BC) but with the two radiocarbon dates indicating a chronology in the towards the earlier, Middle Bronze Age part of this range centred on c. 1280 BC. The pottery sherds show high levels of abrasion on all surfaces, and this could suggest possible derivation from a rubbish collection.

Struck Flint by Steve Ford

A single broken flint flake was recovered from pit 3 (54). It is lightly patinated and is very broad in shape and is not obviously a piece suitable for use such as cutting or scraping. It is not intrinsically closely datable but would be in keeping with the later Bronze Age context it was recovered from.

Burnt Flint by Sean Wallis

All of the features recorded during the archaeological work contained fragments of burnt flint (Appendix 3), with the vast majority coming from pit 1 (52). None of the fragments had been worked and the material is not obviously the remnants of a burnt mound.

Charcoal by Rosalind McKenna

Bulk soil samples were taken from all three pits and processed using standard water flotation techniques. Details of methodology are in the archive. Charred plant macrofossils were not recorded in any of the samples. Charcoal fragments were present in all three of the samples (Appendix 4). The preservation of the charcoal fragments ranged from poor to average. The majority of the fragments were too small to enable successful fracturing that reveals identifying morphological characteristics. Where fragments were large enough, the fragments were very brittle, and the material crumbled or broke in uneven patterns making the identifying characteristics difficult to distinguish and interpret, and so only a limited amount of environmental data can be gained from the sample.

The total range of taxa comprises oak (*Quercus*), willow / poplar (*Salix / Populus*) and the rose family (ROSACEAE), with oak the most frequently recorded remain within the samples, dominating two of them. ROSACEAE also dominated a sample, along with a similar amount of willow / poplar and a smaller amount of oak. It is possible that these were the preferred fuel woods obtained from a local environment containing a broader choice of species. The identified taxa are not considered to be proportionately representative of the availability of wood resources in the environment in a definitive sense, and are possibly reflective of particular choice of fire making fuel from these resources.

Oak is a particularly useful fire fuel as well as being a commonly used structural/artefactual wood that may have had subsequent use as a fire fuel. Willow/Poplar are species that are ideal to use for kindling. The Rosaceae family includes deciduous herbs, shrubs and trees. Several economically important products come from the family including many edible fruits such as apples, pears, plums, cherries, and are also trees and shrubs such as rowans and hawthorns.

Radiocarbon Dating

Two samples of oak charcoal from pits 1 and 2 were submitted to the Chrono Lab at Queen's University, Belfast, for AMS radiocarbon dating. Details of methodology are in the archive; in summary the lab considered the results reliable (Appendix 5). The laboratory calibrated the results with CALIB rev 8.2, used in conjunction with Stuiver and Reimer (1993), with data from IntCal20 (Reimer *et al.* 2020). The plot of the calibrated results (Chart 1) used OxCal v4.4.4 (Bronk Ramsey 2022): the two calibrations give results which differ by only a single year at the extremes.

Conclusion

The archaeological excavation at land adjacent to Dapper's Lane, Angmering successfully investigated the part of the site where two Bronze Age pits had been revealed during the evaluation. One further pit was identified during the excavation phase, and this also produced some pottery and is similarly dated to the Bronze Age period. Whilst it cannot be guaranteed that other low-density clusters of pits do not also exist within the development site area, given the necessary limitations on trench sample sizes, this cluster, at least, appears to be discrete with no other components. The pottery fabrics and some distinctive sherds belong to the broad Middle-Late Bronze Age tradition. This chronology has been refined by the two radiocarbon determinations which returned overlapping dates of Middle and Middle/Late Bronze Age date. Although it is possible that the pits could be even two centuries apart in date, and indicate sporadic re-use of a favoured location at different times, the small number of pits and their proximity suggests that they are best considered as one, perhaps short-lived site. If the radiocarbon dates are correctly representing a single use site, then this use took place where the two dates overlap, ie at around 1280–1270 cal BC.

At a time when for some areas of the country and county, the Middle Bronze Age is represented by enclosures, earth-fast structures, numerous pits and often very extensive areas of field systems (e.g., Taylor *et al* 2014; Colyer *et al.* 2022), such records are neither ubiquitous nor even widespread. Much more extensive evidence for settlement is likely to be represented below ground by small clusters of Bronze Age pits with occasional postholes or even just artefact-rich single pits. Such sites are recorded in Sussex as at Courtwick Lane, Littlehampton (Bray *et al.* 2019). The site here appears to represent another of these ephemeral records of Middle Bronze Age settlement.

Acknowledgements

The evaluation and excavation were funded by Persimmon Homes Thames Valley, with the fieldwork being monitored by James Kenny, the archaeological advisor to Arun District Council. The excavation team consisted of Virginia Fuentes-Mateos, Duncan Graham, Odile Rouard and Sean Wallis. Illustrations were produced by Virginia Fuentes-Mateos and the authors.

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APPENDIX 1: Feature details

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1	52	Pit	Late Bronze Age	Pottery.
2	53	Pit	Late Bronze Age	Pottery.
3	54	Pit	Late Bronze Age	Pottery.

APPENDIX 2: Catalogue of pottery

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Fabric(s)</i>	<i>No sherds</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Date</i>
1	52	Pit	F1	34	183	Middle or Late Bronze Age
2	53	Pit	F2	4	21	Middle or Late Bronze Age
3	54	Pit	FG1, F2	4	32	Late Bronze Age

APPENDIX 3: Catalogue of burnt flint

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>No. frags</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>
1	52	Pit	100	1978
2	53	Pit	9	153
3	54	Pit	3	56

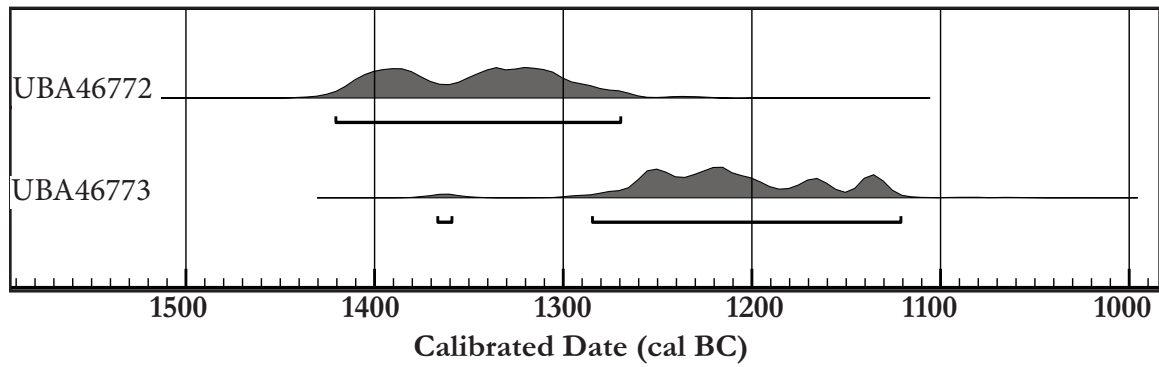
APPENDIX 4: Charcoal

Taxonomy and nomenclature follow Schweingruber (1978)

	<i>Sample</i>	1	2	3
	<i>Feature</i>	1	2	3
	<i>Context</i>	52	53	54
	<i>Feature Type</i>	Pit	Pit	Pit
	<i>No. frags</i>	100+	53	20
	<i>Max. size (mm)</i>	10	17	19
<i>Salix / Populus</i>	Willow / Poplar	12	-	1
ROSACEAE	Rose family	16	-	-
<i>Quercus</i>	Oak	8	35	10
	Indeterminate	64	18	9

APPENDIX 5: Radiocarbon dating

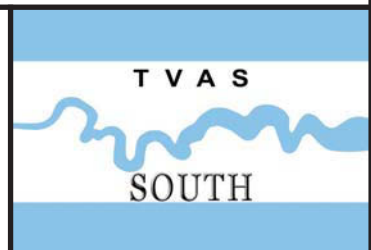
<i>Lab ID</i>	<i>Material</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Feature</i>	<i>Radiocarbon Age</i>	<i>F14C</i>	<i>Calibrated age (cal BC)</i>	<i>Probability (%)</i>
UBA-46772	charcoal	1	52	Pit	3086 ± 28	0.6810 ± 0.0024	1421–1271	100.0
UBA-46773	charcoal	2	53	Pit	2985 ± 23	0.6896 ± 0.0019	1367–1359	1.0
							1284–1122	99.0

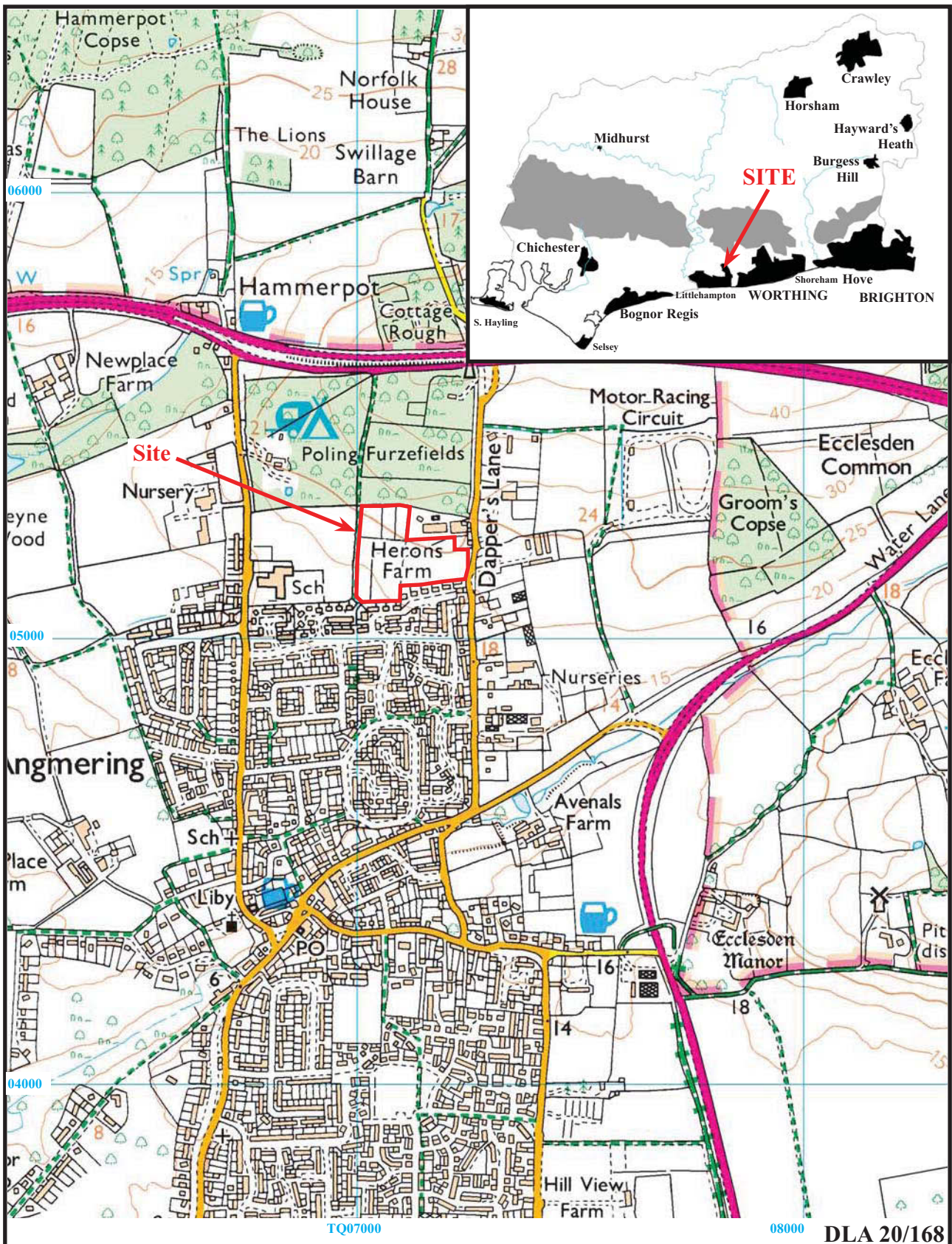


DLA 20/168

Land adjacent to Dapper's Lane, Angmering,
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Chart 1. Plot of radiocarbon calibrations using OxCal 4.4.4 (Bronk Ramsey 2022) (data from Appendix 5).

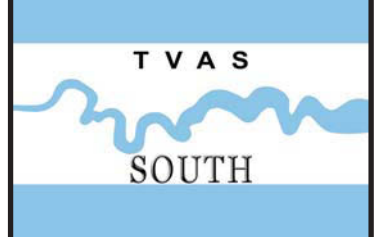




**Land adjacent to Dapper's Lane, Angmering,
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Figure 1. Location of site within Angmering and West Sussex.

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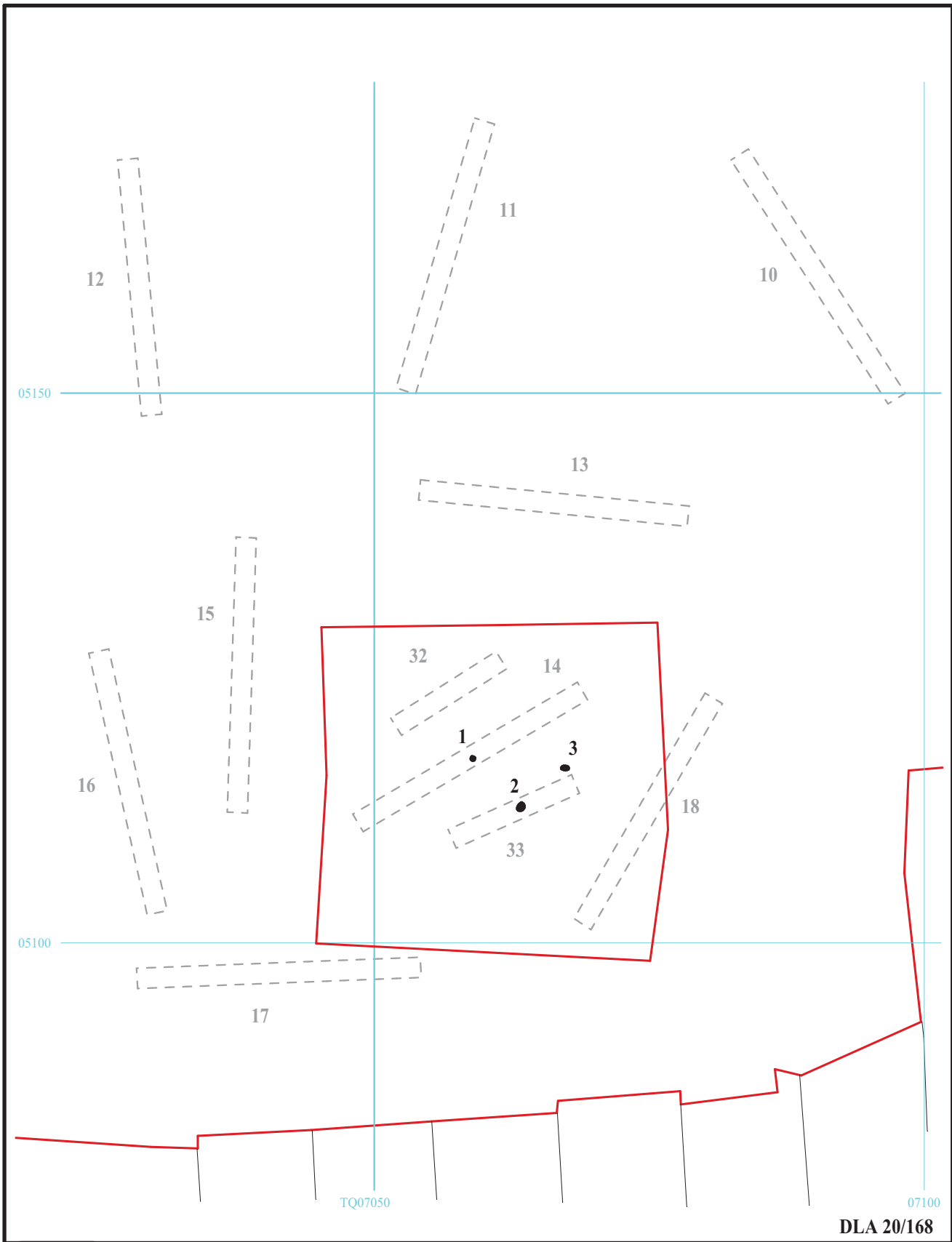
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site showing excavation area and evaluation trenches.

0 100m



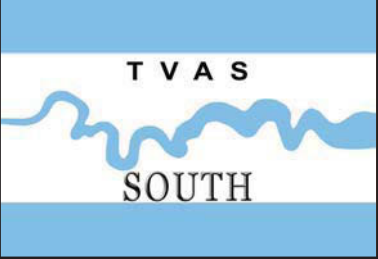


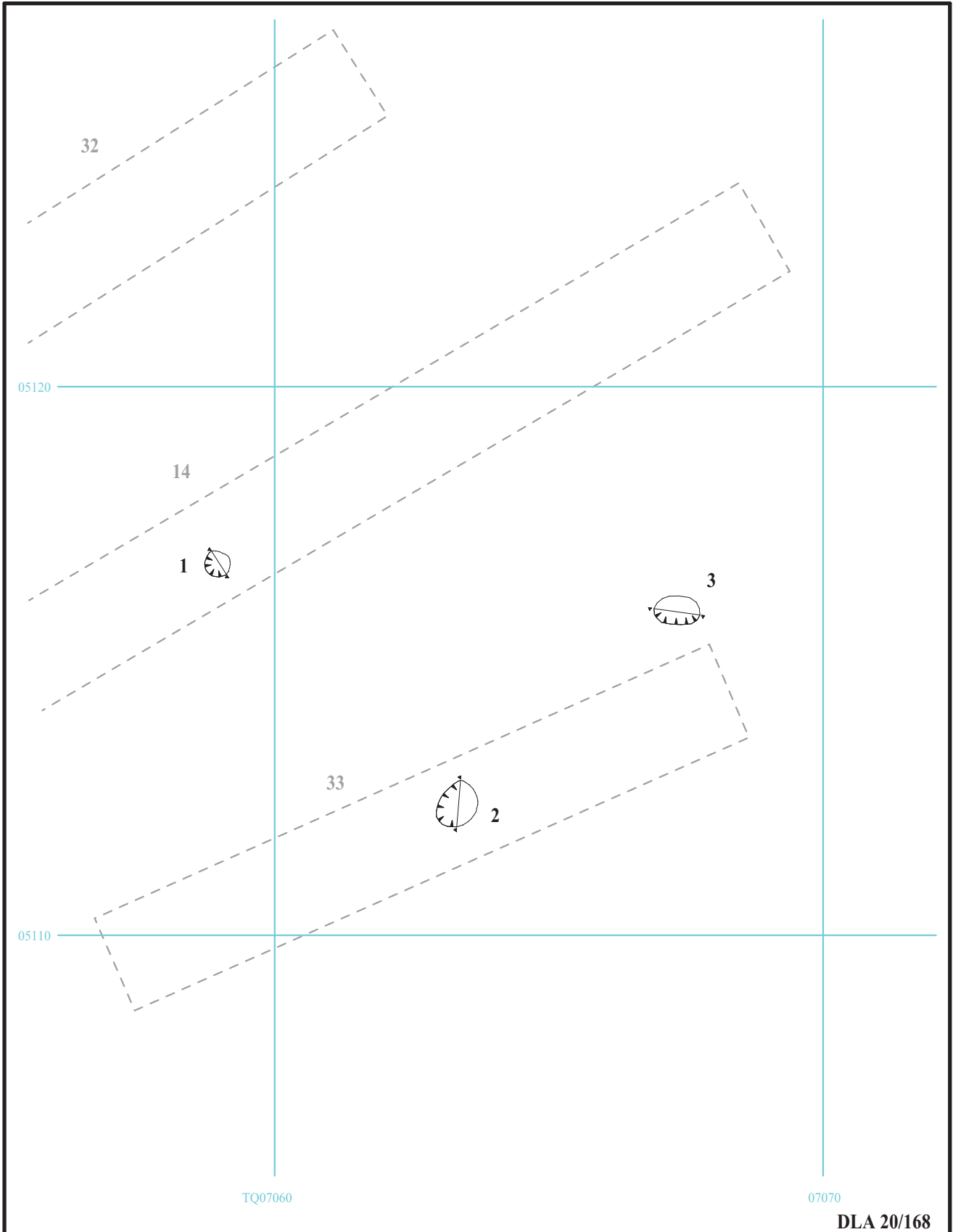
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Figure 3. South-west corner of site, showing excavation area, evaluation trenches, and archaeological features.





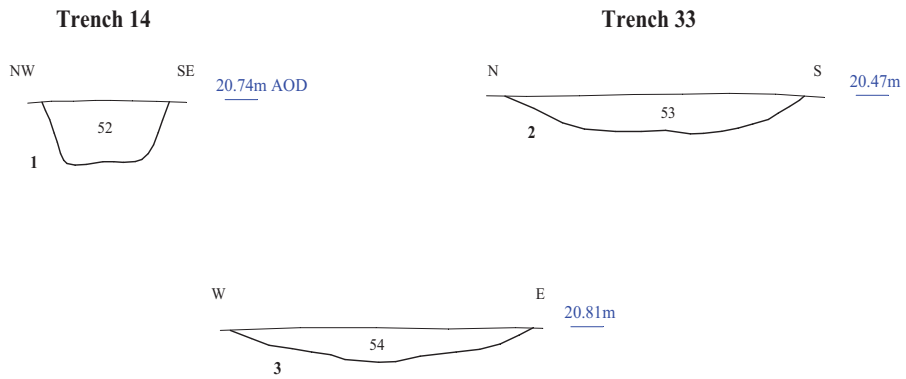
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**Land adjacent to Dapper's Lane, Angmering,
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Figure 4. Detail plan of Bronze Age pit cluster.





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**Land adjacent to Dapper's Lane, Angmering,
West Sussex, 2021
Archaeological Excavation**

Figure 5. Sections.





Plate 1. Pit 1 looking north-east, Scale: 0.3m



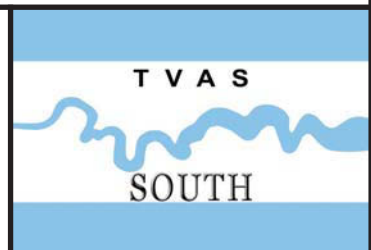
Plate 2. Pit 2, looking north-east, Scale: 0.3m



Plate 3. Pit 3, looking north, Scales: 0.3m, 0.1m

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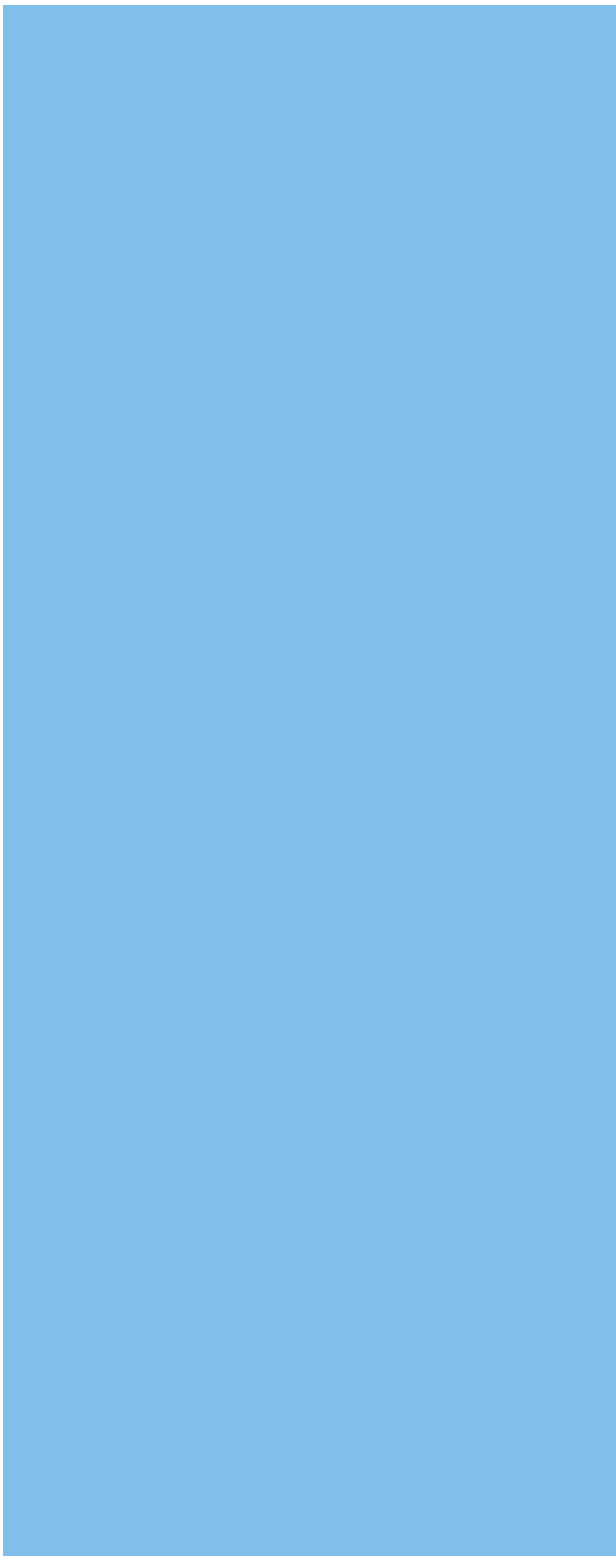
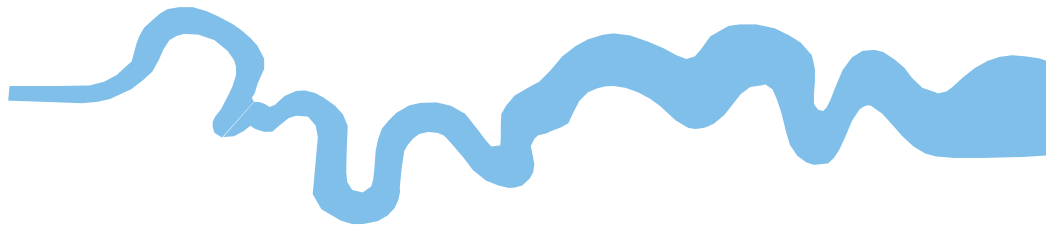
**Land adjacent to Dapper's Lane, Angmering,
West Sussex, 2021
Archaeological Excavation
Plates 1 - 3.**



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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