

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Recreation Ground, Peronne Road,
Hilsea, Portsmouth**

Archaeological Evaluation

by James McNicoll-Norbury

Site Code: PRH11/02

(SU 6565 0410)

Recreation Ground, Peronne Road, Hilsea, Portsmouth

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Taylor Wimpey**

by James McNicoll-Norbury
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code PRH 11/02

March 2011

Summary

Site name: Recreation Ground, Peronne Road, Hilsea, Portsmouth

Grid reference: SU 6565 0410

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 18th February – 2nd March 2011

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: James McNicoll-Norbury and Sean Wallis

Site code: PRH 11/02

Summary of results: A small number of middle to late bronze age features and a medieval pit were identified.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 17.03.11 Steve Preston✓ 17.03.11

Recreation Ground, Peronne Road, Hilsea, Portsmouth An Archaeological Evaluation

by James McNicoll-Norbury

Report 11/02

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at the recreation ground off Peronne Road, Hilsea, Portsmouth (SU 6565 0410) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Kathryn Jehan, for Taylor Wimpey Southern Counties, Templars House, Lulworth Close, Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh, Hampshire, SO53 3TJ.

Outline (A*39181/AB) and reserved matters planning consents (10/00839/REM) have been granted by Portsmouth City Council to construct new housing on part of the former recreation ground. The outline consent gained is subject to a condition (12) relating to archaeology which requires field evaluation.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's Planning Policy Statement, *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5 2010), and the City Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Dr Andy Russel. The fieldwork was undertaken by Sean Wallis, James McNicoll-Norbury, Felicity Howell and Marta Buczek between 18th February and 2nd March 2011 and the site code is PRH11/02. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Portsmouth Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on a large irregular shaped parcel of land off Peronne Road in Hilsea, Portsmouth (Fig. 1). The majority of the site is mainly flat and is covered with the former recreation ground consisting of a grassed area and trees. The north eastern corner of the site is covered with Tarmac and was the site of an old air raid shelter, Territorial Army centre and associated car parking (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is described as Raised Marine Deposits: a mixture of silty sand and gravel (BGS 1998) which was observed in the trenches, and the site lies at c. 3.0m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has several components. Partly, this stems from its location in a low-lying, coastal setting where there is cartographic evidence for salt production in post-medieval times and which may have much earlier origins. Coastal zones similar to the environs of the site are often rich in prehistoric and later activity as evidenced by survey work in the nearby Langstone Harbour (Allen and Gardiner 2000). The association of archaeology with natural deposits resulting from alluviation or peat formation in low-lying settings can also allow the recovery of organic evidence to permit the reconstruction of the contemporary environment. The site appears to lie on a parcel of slightly higher land adjacent to the former channel between Portsea and the mainland and which may have been preferentially settled to exploit both zones.

The site also lies adjacent to a 'Local Area of Archaeological Importance' (14) which defines the possible extent of medieval Hilsea and that of post-medieval Hilsea as indicated on the Edwards map of 1776. A second area of archaeological importance lies to the north, concerned with 18th-century and possibly earlier defences along Port Creek. The site also lies close to the main access road onto Portsea Island from a bridging point to the north.

The site does not appear to have been extensively developed previously and it is possible that archaeological deposits exist on the site which may be affected by the new groundworks.

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. The specific research aims of this project are:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if archaeological deposits relating to exploitation of nearby coastal resources are present;
- to determine if archaeological deposits representing medieval or early post-medieval Hilsea are present;
- to determine if archaeological deposits relating to the historic access onto Portsea Island and any adjacent roadside settlement are present.

Thirteen trenches were proposed to be dug, each 20m long and 1.6m wide and targeted at the areas of proposed new buildings and access roads. Topsoil and other overburden were to be removed by a JCB-type machine under constant archaeological supervision using a ditching bucket to expose archaeologically sensitive levels. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas would be cleaned using appropriate

hand tools. and sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed will be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief, without compromising the integrity of any features that might warrant preservation *in-situ* or might better be investigated under the conditions pertaining to full excavation.

Results

All 13 trenches were dug as intended (Fig. 3). They ranged in length from 20.0–21.8m and in depth from 0.33–1.30m. Trenches 1–5 were 1.6m wide and Trenches 6-13 were 1.8m wide. The locations of trenches 10–13 were adjusted slightly due to the large number of services located in the north-eastern part of the site. All spoilheaps were monitored for finds.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1 while a list of all excavated features forms Appendix 2.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was aligned NW-SE and was 20.5m long and 0.68m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.18m of topsoil, over 0.25m mid grey/brown clayey silt (buried soil) above 0.23m light orange brown silty clay (subsoil) overlaying natural geology, consisting of light yellow orange sandy clay with chalk and flint inclusions. No archaeological features were identified.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was aligned W-E and was 20.2m long and 0.75m deep. The stratigraphy comprised of 0.46m topsoil and 0.29m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological features were identified.

Trench 3 (Figs 4 and 6, Pl. 1)

Trench 3 was aligned WNW-ESE and was 21.8m long and 0.65m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.20m topsoil, above 0.23m buried soil over 0.22m subsoil overlying natural geology. A gully (1), a pit (2) and a ditch (3) were identified. Gully 1 was 0.53m wide and 0.2m deep with a U-shaped profile. The single fill (54) of a light grey/brown silty clay with gravel pieces contained refitting sherds of Bronze Age pottery, a flint flake and fragments of burnt flint. Pit 2 was 0.62m across and 0.09m deep with a U-shaped profile. The single fill (55) of a light grey/brown silty clay with gravel pieces contained burnt flint only. Ditch 3 was 0.7m wide and at least 0.128m deep but was not further investigated due to rapid ingress of groundwater. The upper fill (56) was a grey silty clay which contained burnt flint.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was aligned SW-NE and was 20.0m long and 0.82m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.17m topsoil, over 0.31m buried soil and 0.34m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological features were identified.

Trench 5 (Figs 4 and 6, Pl. 3)

Trench 5 was aligned W-E and was 21.0m long and 0.90m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.30m topsoil and 0.60m subsoil overlying natural geology. A pit (4) and gully (5) (Pl. 3) were recorded. Pit 4 was 0.6m across and 0.38m deep with a bowl-shaped profile. The single fill (57) of a brown silty clay contained a single sherd of medieval pottery, fragments of burnt flint and a flint flake, the latter presumably residual. Gully 5 was cut by pit 4. Gully 5 was 0.3m wide and 0.07m deep with a bowl-shaped profile. The single fill (58) of a brown silty clay contained fragments of burnt flint.

Trench 6 (Figs 4 and 6)

Trench 6 was aligned NW-SE and was 20.1m long and 1.12m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.37m disturbed ground, 0.46m mixed chalk and clay with modern inclusions and 0.17m dark grey sandy clay overlying natural geology. A modern truncation was observed at the NW end of the trench. Gully 8 was 0.5m wide and 0.18m deep with a bowl-shaped profile. The single fill (61) of a grey sandy clay contained fragments of animal bone and a few crumbs of pottery (which disintegrated on discovery). A second linear feature (9) was recorded in plan but not investigated due to the depth of the trench and ingress of water.

Trench 7

Trench 7 was aligned SW-NE and was 20.1m long and 0.84m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.18m topsoil, 0.25m buried soils and 0.33m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological features were identified. The natural geology was heavily truncated 15.3m from the SW end.

Trench 8 (Figs 5 and 6; Pls 2 and 4)

Trench 8 was aligned SW-NE and was 20.25m long and 0.68m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.20m topsoil and 0.38m subsoil overlying natural geology. Two slots (6 and 7)(Pl. 4) were dug into a gully that ran along the length of the trench. The gully was 0.5-0.8m wide and 0.15-0.35m deep with a bowl-shaped profile. The single fill (59,60) was a brown silty clay and slot 7 (60) contained fragments of burnt flint and animal bone. A single piece of Bronze Age pottery was recovered the subsoil immediately above the gully.

Trench 9

Trench 9 was aligned SW-NE and was 20.8m long and 0.85m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.20m topsoil, 0.18m of buried soil and 0.37m of subsoil overlaying natural geology. No archaeological features were identified.

Trench 10

Trench 10 was aligned NW-SE and was 20.6m long and up to 1.22m deep. The stratigraphy comprised of 0.07m tarmac, 0.20m hoggin materials, 0.13m dark grey clay, 0.70m mixed chalk and clay with brick and concrete rubble inclusions overlaying natural geology. A cast iron pipe was observed running along the base of the trench from 0-16m. No archaeological features were identified.

Trench 11

Trench 11 was aligned WNW-ESE and was 21.3m long and up to 1.30m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.07m Tarmac, 0.20m hoggin materials, 0.13m dark grey clay, 0.78m mixed chalk and clay with brick and concrete rubble inclusions overlaying natural geology. No archaeological features were identified.

Trench 12

Trench 12 was aligned WNW-ESE and was 20.8m long and 1.12m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.30m of disturbed ground and 0.68m mixed chalk and clay with brick and concrete rubble inclusions overlaying natural geology. No archaeological features were identified.

Trench 13

Trench 13 was aligned SW-NE and was 20.3m long and 0.33m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.07m of Tarmac and 0.24m hoggin material overlaying natural chalk. No archaeological features were identified.

Finds

The Prehistoric Pottery by Frances Raymond

Sixteen sherds of pottery (weighing 30g) came from gully 1 and the subsoil in Trench 8. The group from the gully (15 sherds, weighing 22g) are all fragments from a single wall sherd in fresh condition that has shattered on lifting. This is from a thick-walled vessel (15mm thick) with partly smoothed dark brown surfaces. The fabric is tempered with common medium-grade flint (0.2 to 4mm) and is both friable and soft. A middle Bronze Age date is most probable, but the continued use of such wares into the late Bronze Age means that a later origin is possible.

The single sherd from the subsoil (weighing 8g) is in moderately abraded condition, having lost its external surface. It is from a thin-walled vessel (5mm thick) and is in a contrasting hard fabric incorporating common rounded grains of quartz sand (0.125–0.5mm) and sparse flint (up to 1mm). This is more typical of the kinds of wares produced in the latter part of the late Bronze Age and during the Iron Age. As with the pottery from the gully, a more precise date is not possible without stylistic evidence.

Animal Bone by Ceri Falys

A small assemblage of animal bone was recovered from three separate contexts within the evaluated area. All contexts were gully features. A total of 39 fragments of bone were present for analysis, weighing 200g (Appendix 3). The overall preservation of the remains was poor, with all pieces highly fragmented. The cortical bone was also poorly preserved on many element fragments, while others were etched by root activity. The poor preservation hindered much identification.

Initial analyses roughly sorted elements into categories based on size, not by species, into one of three categories: “large”, “medium”, and “small”. Horse and cow are represented by the large size category, sheep/goat and pigs are represented in the medium size category, and any smaller animal (e.g. dog, cat etc.) were designated to the “small” category. Wherever possible, a more specific identification to species and side of origin was made. The minimum number of individuals both within and between the species was determined.

The minimum number of animals present in this assemblage was one, a large animal. Context 7 (60) contained the fragments of a cow mandible with one in situ tooth, while only non-descript fragments of a large animal long bone shaft were present in context 8 (61). No further information could be derived from these poorly preserved remains.

Struck Flint by Steve Ford

A small collection comprising 2 struck flints were recovered from the site, both flakes. One flake came from gully 8 (61) and the other from medieval pit 4 (57). None of the pieces are chronologically distinctive and only a broad Neolithic or Bronze Age date can be suggested.

Burnt Flint by James McNicoll-Norbury

A small amount of burnt flint totalling 33 fragments and weighing a total of 546g were found in five separate features on the site including the Bronze Age gully (1), nearby pit (2) and ditch (3) in trench 3, medieval pit (4) in trench 5 along with a single fragment in gully slot 7 in trench 8.

Shell by James McNicoll-Norbury

A small amount of oyster shell totalling 4 fragments and weighing 26g were recovered from pit 4 in trench 5.

Conclusion

The evaluation has confirmed the archaeological potential of the site. The trenching has revealed that the archaeological relevant levels have survived on a part of the site with a number of archaeological deposits being identified in trenches 3, 5, 6 and 8 in the form of linear features and small pits. Few of the features were well dated but both the later Bronze Age and medieval periods were represented. No archaeological deposits were identified in the north eastern corner of the site which was the location of a demolished building and car parking, and it is possible that truncation of the archaeologically relevant levels had taken place in that zone.

References

- Allen, M J and Gardiner, J, 2000, *Our changing coast: a survey of the intertidal archaeology of Langstone Harbour, Hampshire*, CBA Res Rep **124**
BGS, 1998, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 316, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
PPS5, 2010, *Planning for the Historic Environment*, The Stationery Office, Norwich

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at W, SW or NW end

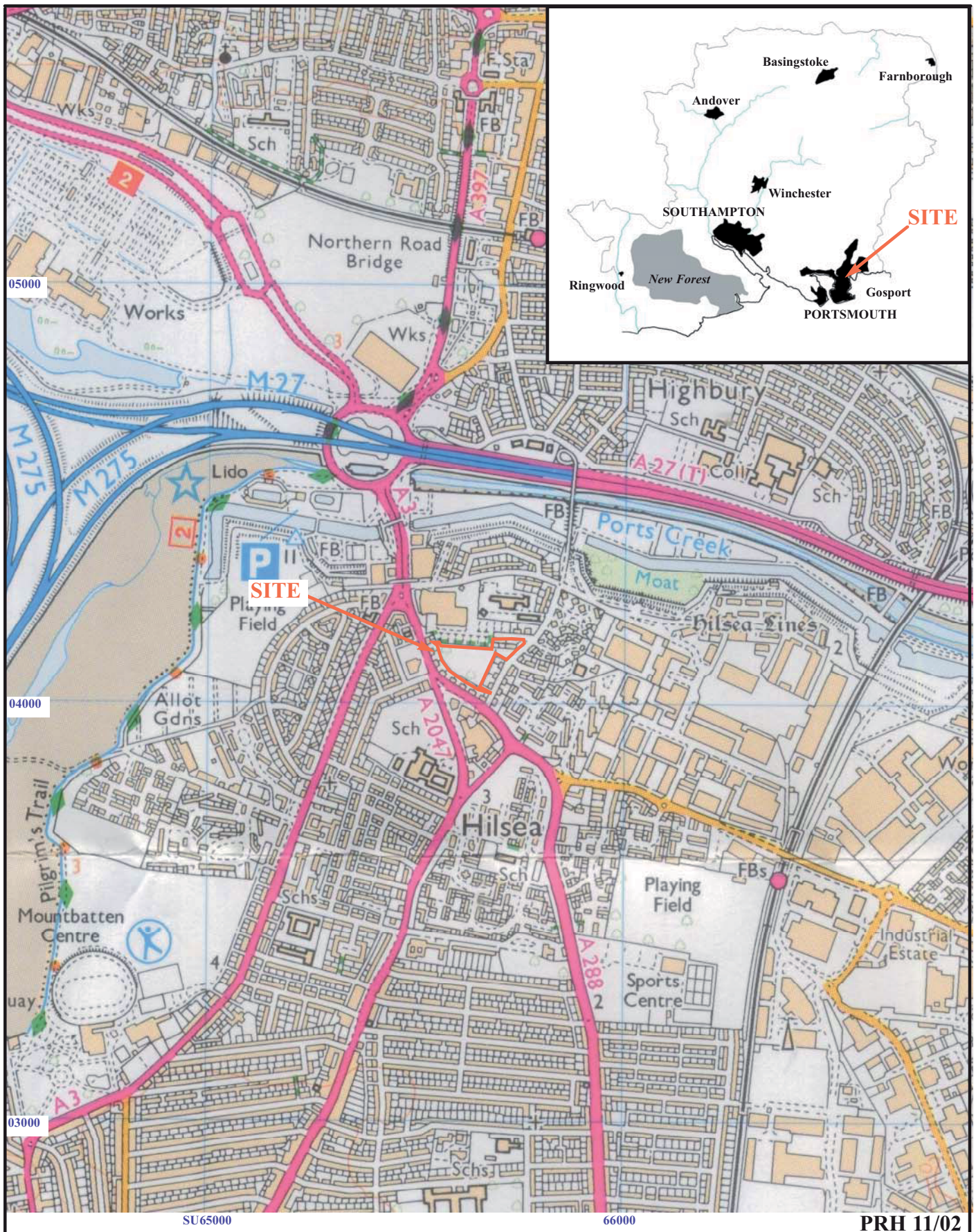
<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	20.5	1.6	0.68	0-0.18m topsoil, 0.18-0.43m mid grey brown clayey silt (buried soil), 0.43-0.66m light orange brown silty clay subsoil, 0.66m+ yellow orange silty clay with chalk/flint inclusions (natural geology)
2	20.2	1.6	0.75	0-0.46m topsoil, 0.46-0.75m subsoil, 0.75m+ natural geology.
3	21.8	1.6	0.65	0-0.20m topsoil, 0.20-0.43m buried soil, 0.43-0.65m subsoil, 0.65m+ natural geology. Gully 1, Pit 2, Ditch 3 [Plate 1]
4	20.0	1.6	0.82	0-0.17m topsoil, 0.17-0.48m buried soil, 0.48-0.82m subsoil, 0.82m+ natural geology.
5	21.0	1.6	0.90	0-0.30m topsoil, 0.30-0.90m subsoil, 0.90m+ natural geology. Pit 4, Gully 5 [Plate 3]
6	20.1	1.8	1.12	0-0.37m disturbed ground, 0.37-0.83m light brown clay with chalk and rubble inclusions, 0.83-1.00m mid grey brown silty clay, 1.00m+ natural geology. Gully 8
7	20.1	1.8	0.84	0-0.18m topsoil, 0.18-0.43m buried soil, 0.43-0.75m subsoil, 0.75m+ natural geology.
8	20.25	1.8	0.68	0-0.20m topsoil, 0.20-0.58m subsoil, 0.58m+ natural geology. Gullies 6 and 7 [Plate 2 and 4]
9	20.8	1.8	0.85	0-0.20m topsoil, 0.20-0.38m buried soil, 0.38-0.75m subsoil, 0.75m+ natural geology.
10	20.6	1.8	1.22	0-0.07m Tarmac, 0.07-0.27m gravels (hoggin), 0.27-0.40m dark grey clay with modern rubble, 0.40-1.10m mixed chalk and clays with brick and concrete rubble, 1.10m+ natural geology.
11	21.3	1.8	1.30	0-0.07m Tarmac, 0.07-0.27m gravels (hoggin), 0.27-0.40m dark grey clay with modern rubble, 0.40-1.18m mixed chalk and clays with brick and concrete rubble, 1.18m+ natural geology.
12	20.8	1.8	1.12	0-0.07m Tarmac, 0.07-0.31m hoggin, 0.31m+ chalk.
13	20.3	1.8	0.33	0-0.30m disturbed ground, 0.30-0.98m mixed chalk and clays with brick and concrete rubble, 0.98m+ 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>
3	1	54	Gully	Middle to Late Bronze Age	Pottery
3	2	55	Pit		None
3	3	56	Ditch		None
5	4	57	Pit	Medieval	Pottery
5	5	58	Gully		None
8	6	59	Gully		None
8	7	60	Gully		None
6	8	61	Gully		None

Appendix 3: Inventory of animal bone

Context		Number of Fragments	Weight (g)	Identified – by size category			Unidentified
Cut	Deposit			Large	Medium	Small	
1	54	16	32	-	-	-	16
7	60	18	92	18	-	-	-
8	61	5	76	5	-	-	-
Total		39	200	23	0	0	16

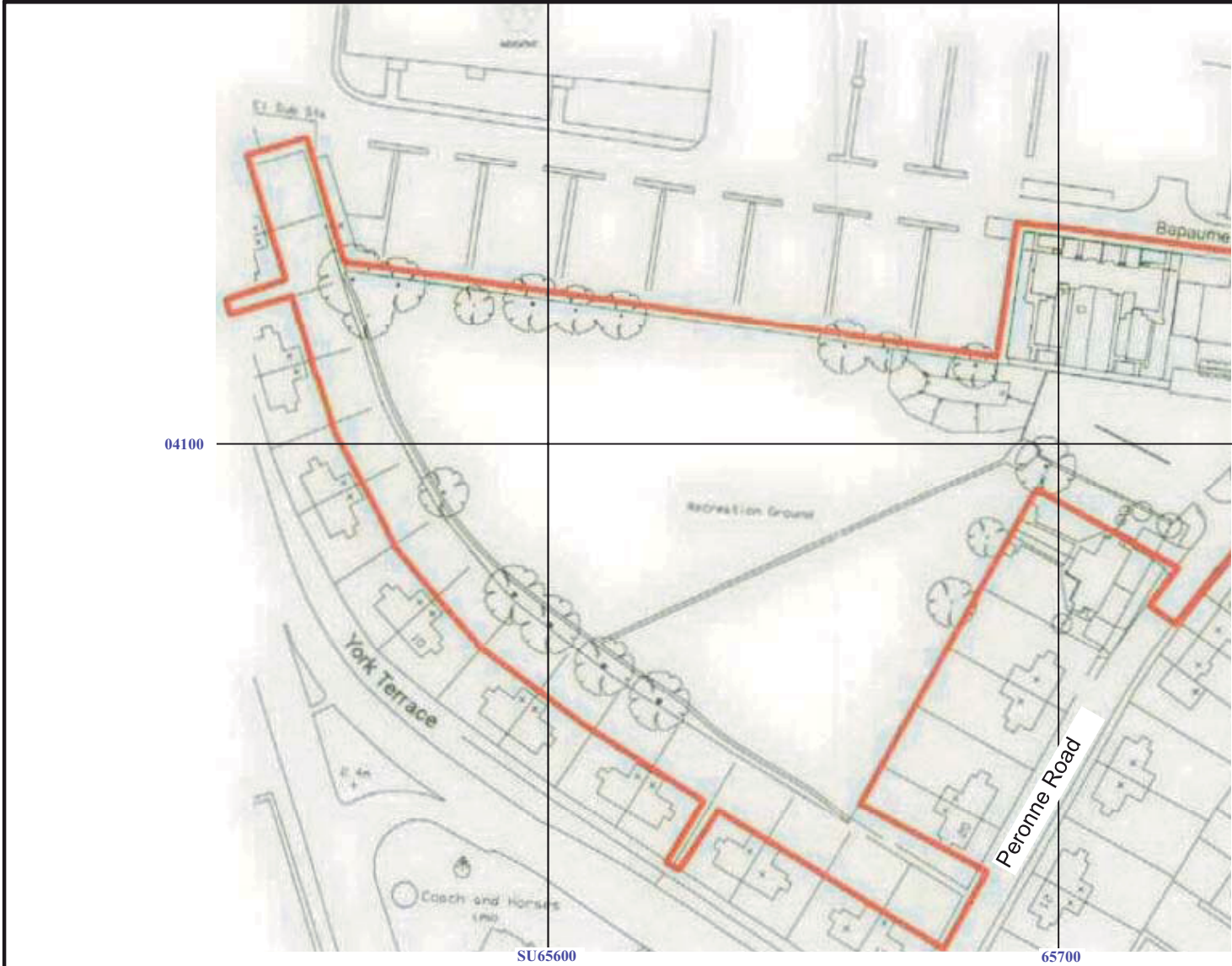


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Figure 1. Location of site within Hilsea and Portsmouth.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Peronne Road.

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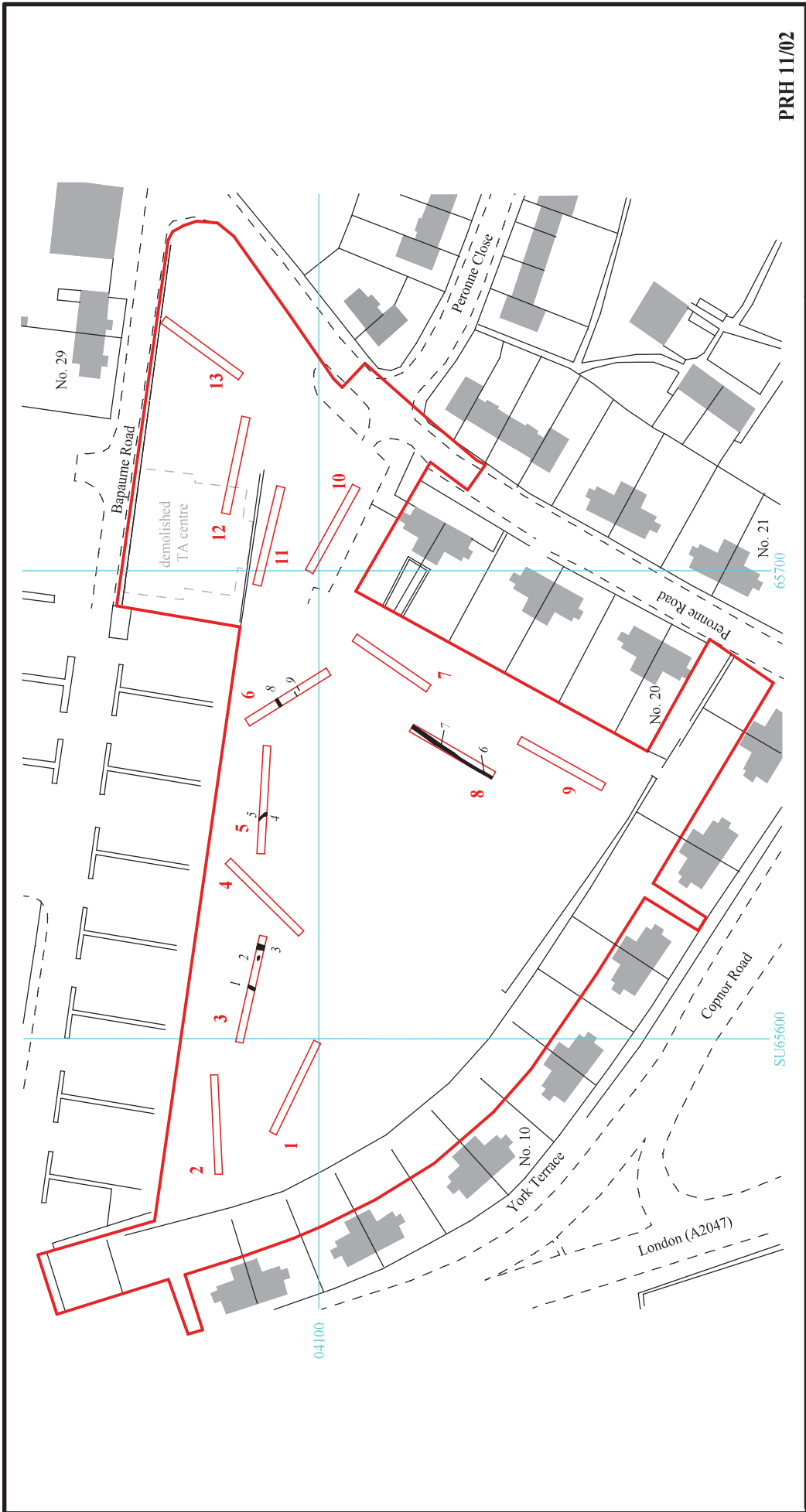
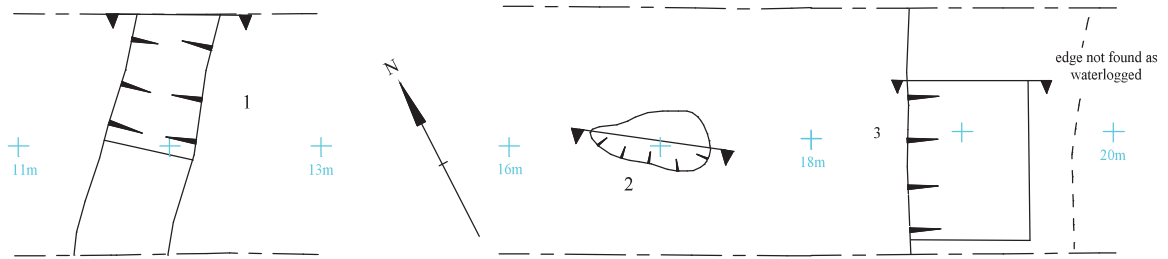
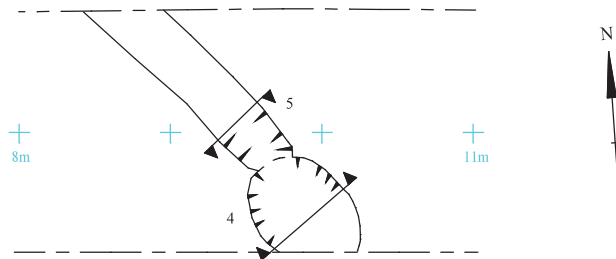


Figure 3. Location of trenches.

Trench 3



Trench 5



Trench 6



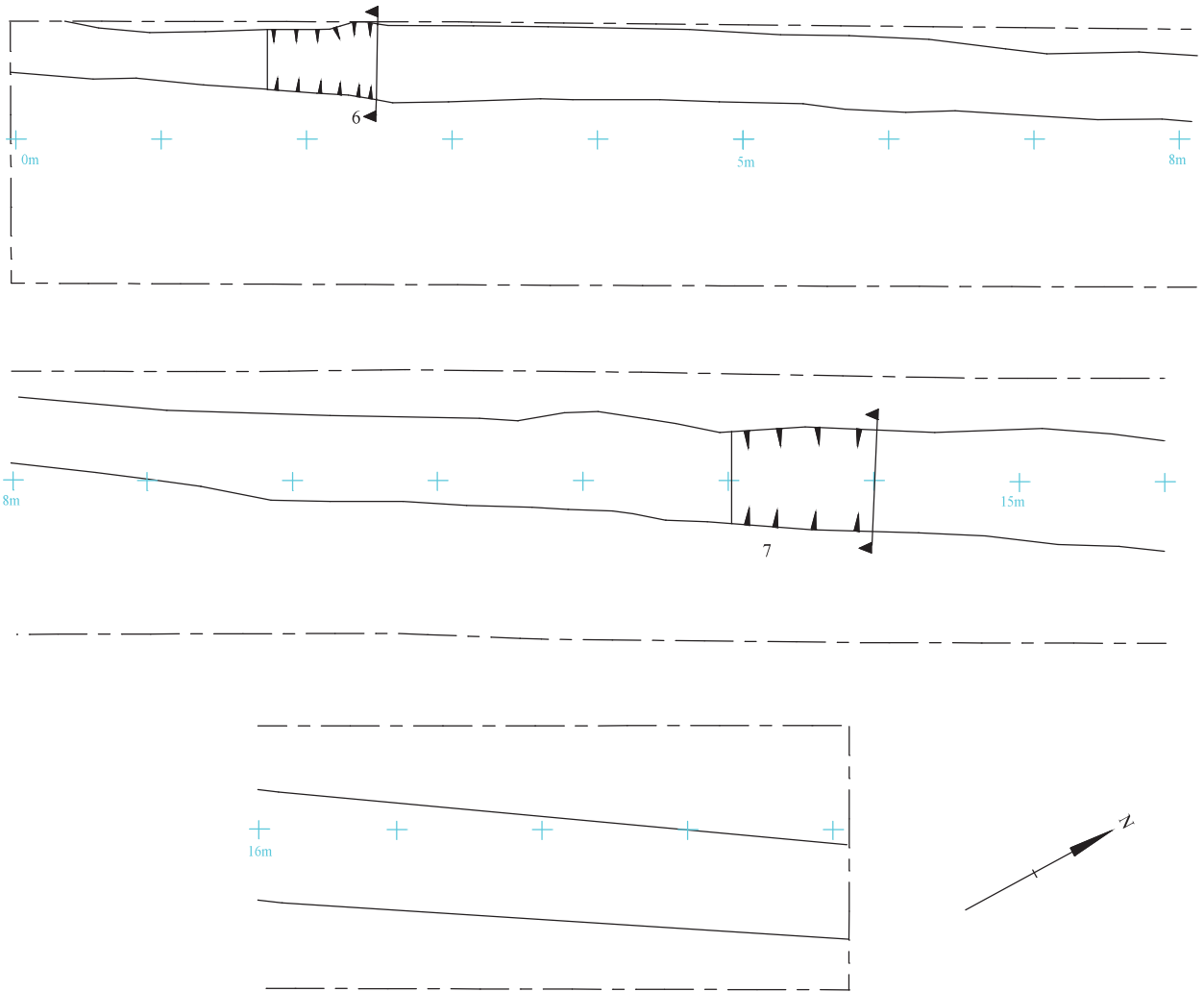
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Figure 4. Detail of trenches.



Trench 8

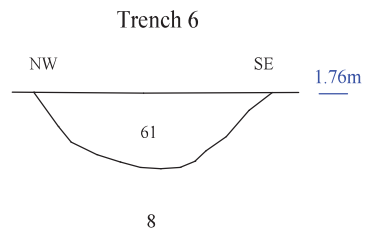
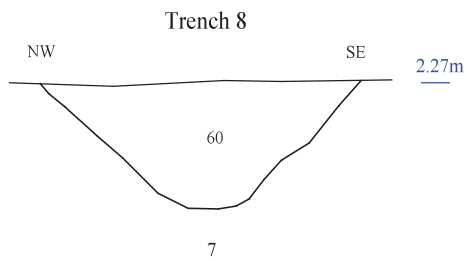
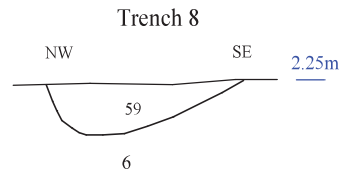
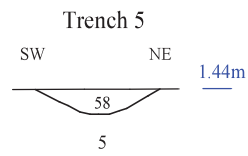
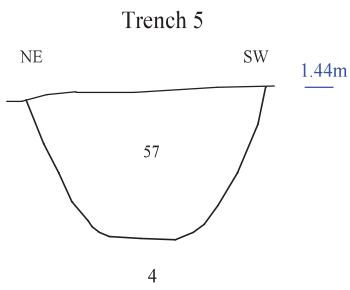
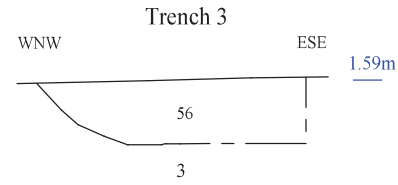
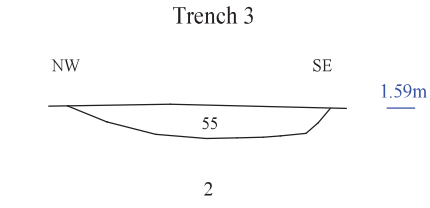
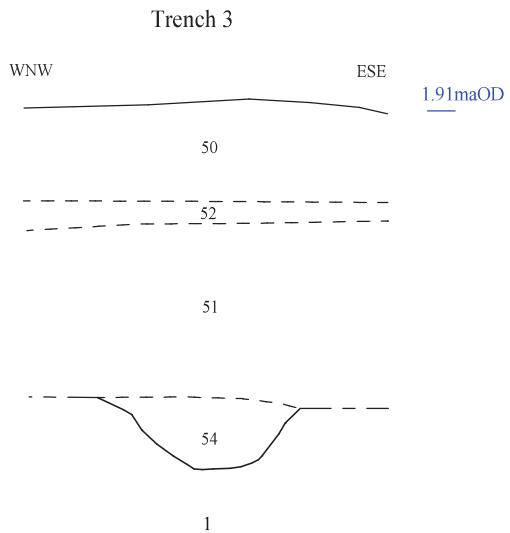


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Figure 5. Detail of trenches.





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Figure 6. Sections.



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



Plate 2. Trench 8, looking north, Scales: 2, 1m and 0.3m

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Plates 1 and 2



Plate 3. Trench 5, pit 4 and gully terminal 5, looking south east, Scales: 0.5m and 0.3m



Plate 4. Trench 8, ditch slot 7, looking north east, Scales: 0.3 and 0.1m.

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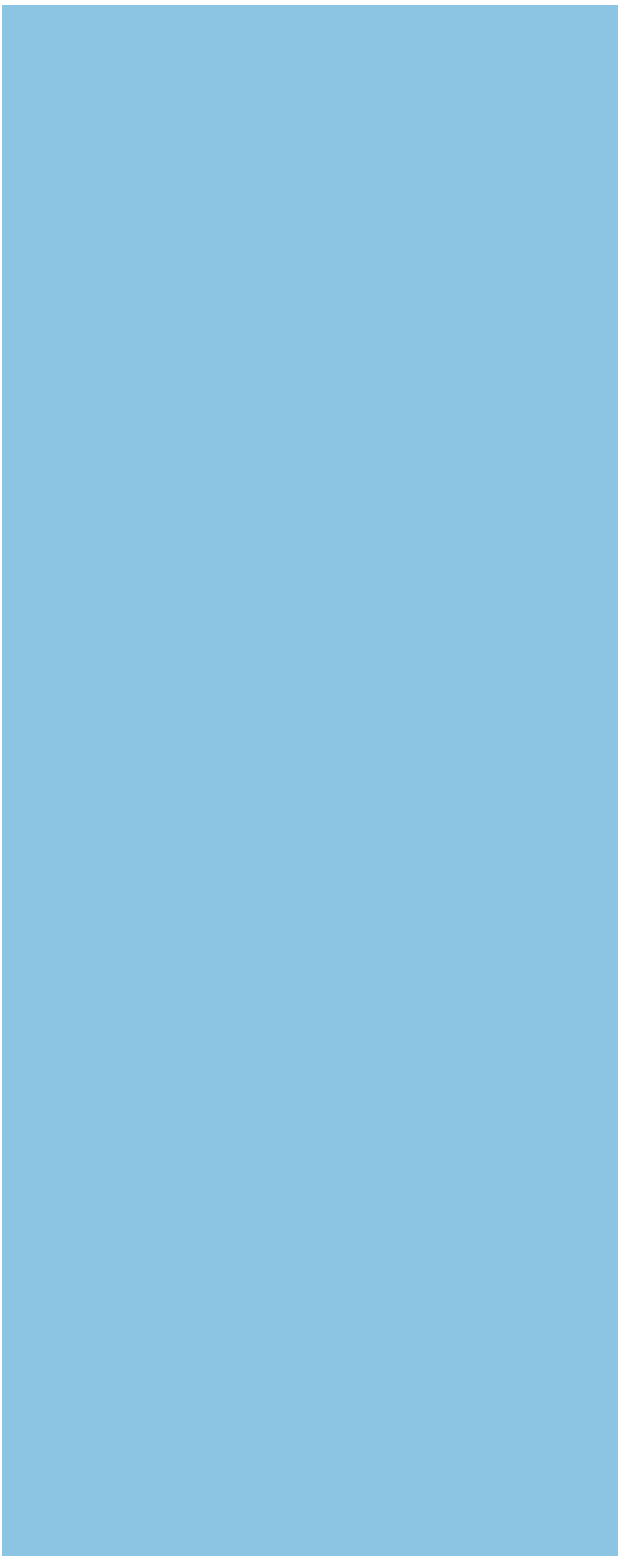
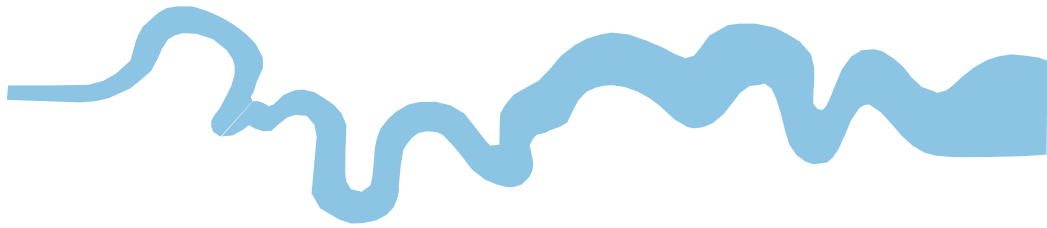
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Plates 3 and 4.

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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
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 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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