

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**19 East Street, Fritwell,
Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andrew Muddin

Site Code: ESF11/29

(SP 5281 2926)

**19 East Street, Fritwell,
Oxfordshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Ms Debbie Hudson

by Andrew Munding
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code ESF 11/29

April 2011

Summary

Site name: 19 East Street, Fritwell, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SP 5281 2926

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 28th–29th March 2011

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: James McNicoll-Norbury, Andrew Muddin

Site code: ESF 11/29

Area of site: c.110 sq m

Summary of results: Foundation trenches for a single plot were observed south of the existing house at 19 East Street. A ditch was recorded containing pottery of 13th to 14th century date.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 05.04.11 Steve Preston ✓ 05.04.11

19 East Street, Fritwell, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andrew Munding

Report 11/29

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 19 East Street, Fritwell, Oxfordshire, OX27 7PX (SP 5281 2926) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Debbie Hudson of the same address.

Planning permission (07/00102/F) was granted in 2007 and renewed in 2010 (10/00283/F) by Cherwell District Council for the construction of a two-storey dwelling on the land immediately to the south of 19 East Street. This consent was subject to a condition (12), requiring the implementation of an archaeological watching brief during ground works, due to the site's location in the historic core of the village.

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 District's Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services, and based on a brief prepared by him (Oram 2010). The fieldwork was undertaken by James McNicoll-Norbury and Andrew Munding on 28th and 29th March 2011 and the site code is ESF 11/29.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire County Museum Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

Fritwell lies roughly halfway between Bicester and Banbury in the north of Oxfordshire (Fig. 1). The site is located on the eastern side of the main street (East Street) through Fritwell village (Fig. 2). The ground is open garden belonging to 19 East Street, which had been levelled with turf of the garden removed to exposed general site overburden. The underlying geology is Great Oolite Limestone (BGS 1968), which provides the building material for the villages in this area (Tiller and Darke 2010, 8). The site is at 127.8m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The brief provided by the Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service has highlighted the immediate archaeological potential for the development area (Oram 2010). In summary, it is thought that the site, located as it is within the centre of the village on the main road (East Street), could be within the historic core of the settlement, just to the east of the main north-south street, and close to the junction with the Fewcott Road to the north. Davis's map of 1797 shows the settlement, and it is also mentioned in Domesday Book (1086) as *Fertwelle* (Williams and Martin 2002) meaning 'a spring used for divination' or 'wishing well' (Mills 1998, 145). Medieval pottery and associated features were identified during the Fritwell Sewerage Pipeline scheme, 200m west of the current site (Oram 2010).

At the time of the Norman Conquest, the land in Fritwell was owned by William FitzOsbern, Earl of Hereford, which came into the De Lisle family in the late 13th century (VCH 1959). Later, two manors held land in Fritwell: De Lisle manor on the north-western side of the village, off North Street (Fig. 1) and Ormond's to the south, which is thought to be located on the site of Lodge Farm (VCH 1959). It is thought that De Lisle manor house was built in 1619 by George Yorke. The Ormond's Manor may be older, but does not appear on survey maps of 1677 (VCH 1959). Many houses in the village are known to be 17th century or have elements surviving in their fabrics. The three-storey 'Rag-house', c. 50m from the current site, on the opposite side of East Street, was a key building during the 18th and 19th century when this area of North Oxfordshire became known for its textile and lacemaking industry (Tiller and Darke 2010).

An Iron Age tribal boundary or dyke is noted to exist c. 1km east of Fritwell, which is aligned on a NNE-SSW axis. This feature is linked south of Fritwell with the natural boundary created by the north-south flow of the River Cherwell. It is thought that the 'Aves Ditch', also known as Ashbank and Wattlebank, divided the lands of the Iron Age peoples known as the *Catuvellani* to the east and the *Dobunni* to the west (Henig and Booth 2000, 28; Sauer 1999). As yet, no pre-Medieval remains have been identified in or near the village; an archaeological watching brief at the school to the north of the current site, failed to identify any finds or features of archaeological interest (Ford 2004).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This involved the examination of the footing trenching, after turf and a little of the site overburden (less than 0.15m) had been removed to create a level machining base for the works to be carried out by a small

tracked excavator. This machine was fitted with a 0.8m wide toothed-ditching bucket, due to the limestone geology at the base of trenching.

Results

All but a small portion of footing trench was available to view during the two site visits made during ground works (Fig. 3, Pl. 1). A uniform stratigraphy was noted over most of the footing trenches. This consisted of topsoil above a brown silty clay subsoil (50) with occasional sub-rounded small (<5mm) limestone pieces. This overlaid natural limestone geology for all of the footing trenches which was observed at a depth of 0.45m over most the site. All bases of the new footings exposed the natural geology. Two sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from layer 50, along with one sherd of modern pottery.

In the northern edge of the foundation trenches, a feature was noted. This was interpreted as the southern edge of a ditch (1), and thought to project outside the trenching across the northern part of the development area, on a WNW-ESE axis. It had a single fill (51), which was brownish-light grey silty clay, which contained small (<3mm) sub-rounded pieces of limestone. Fifty-one sherds of pottery, most dated between the mid 13th and 14th century, were also recovered from the fill of this feature. One small piece of animal bone was also recovered. This feature was noted to be 0.32m deep with the base 0.84 below modern ground level. Only 0.9m of the width was visible in the northwestern section (Fig. 4, Pl. 2).

Finds

Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn

The pottery assemblage comprised 54 sherds with a total weight of 832g. It was recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1984; 1994), as follows:

OXBF: North-East Wiltshire Ware, AD1050–1400. 3 sherds, 26g.
OX234: Banbury ware, late 11th – late 14th century. 6 sherds, 146g.
OXBK: Medieval Shelly Coarseware, AD1100–1350. 2 sherds, 42g.
OXAM: Brill/Boarstall ware, AD1200–1600. 40 sherds, 532g.
OX68: Potterspury ware, mid 13th–17th century. 2 sherds, 34g.
WHEW: Mass-produced white earthenwares, 19th–20th century. 1 sherd, 32g.

The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 1.

The range of fabric types is typical of sites in the north Oxfordshire/south Northamptonshire region, comprising largely local wares with a small number of regional imports. The assemblage from the ditch (fill 51), consists of fairly large, fresh sherds, mainly of highly decorated Brill/Boarstall baluster jugs which were the standard 13th- to 14th-century products of the tradition. The rest of the assemblage comprises bodysherds from

unglazed jars in a range of non-Brill fabrics, and also two bowls rims, one in OX234 and the other in OX68. A near-complete OXAM jug base was also present. Overall, it appears to be a well-stratified domestic assemblage typical of the mid 13th – 14th century.

Animal bone

One piece of long bone shaft from a large animal (horse or cow) was recovered from Ditch 1. It weighs 12g and is in poor condition. Many lateral cuts marks are present on posterior surfaces and there are signs of shaft splitting on interior surfaces.

Conclusion

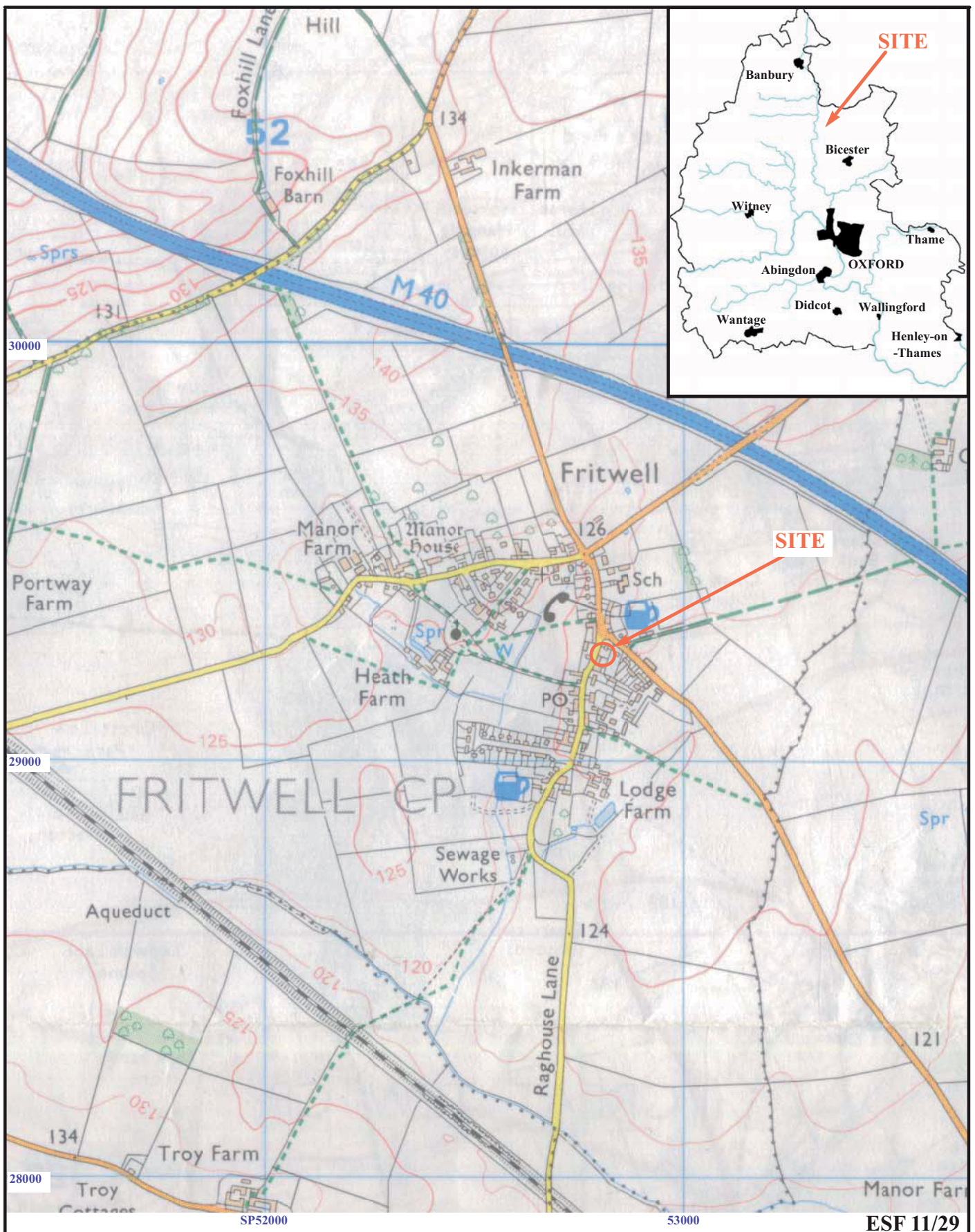
The watching brief has successfully recorded one feature of archaeological interest. Though most of the site displays undisturbed natural geology across the base of foundations, ditch 1 confirms that well preserved Medieval remains are present on the northern part of the development. Due to the density of pottery recovered from the relatively small part of the feature's exposed fill, it is thought that there is potential for significant domestic remains of 13th-14th century occupation to exist nearby on this side of East Street.

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APPENDIX 1: Pottery catalogue

<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>OXBf</i>		<i>OX234</i>		<i>OXBK</i>		<i>OXAM</i>		<i>OX68</i>		<i>WHEW</i>	
		<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt</i>
	50	-	-	-	-	1	5	1	3	-	-	1	32
1	51	3	26	6	146	1	37	39	529	2	34	-	-
	Total	3	26	6	146	2	42	40	532	2	34	1	32

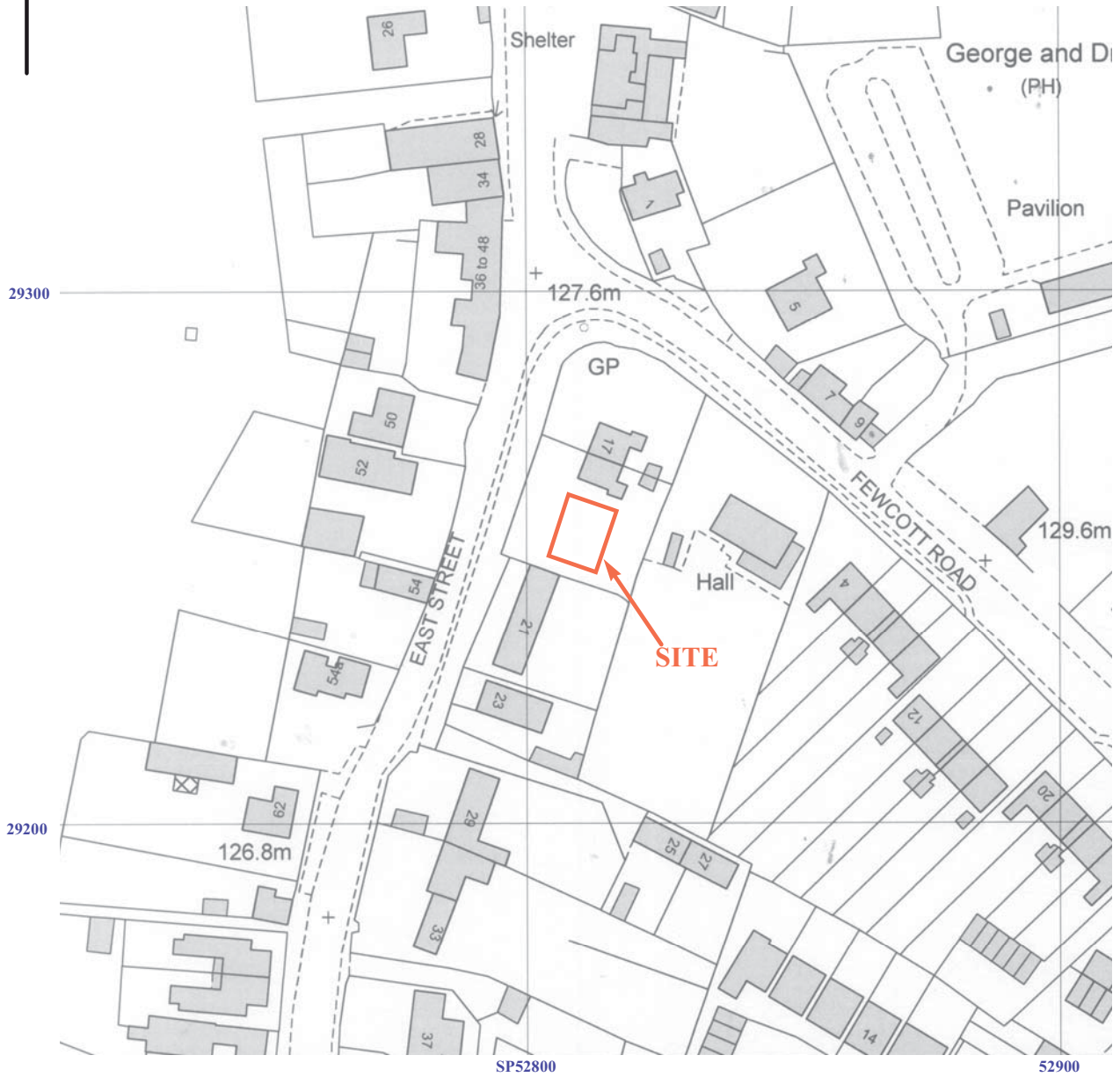


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Archaeological watching brief**

Figure 1. Location of site within Fritwell and Oxfordshire.

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Archaeological watching brief**

Figure 2. Detailed location of site off East Street.

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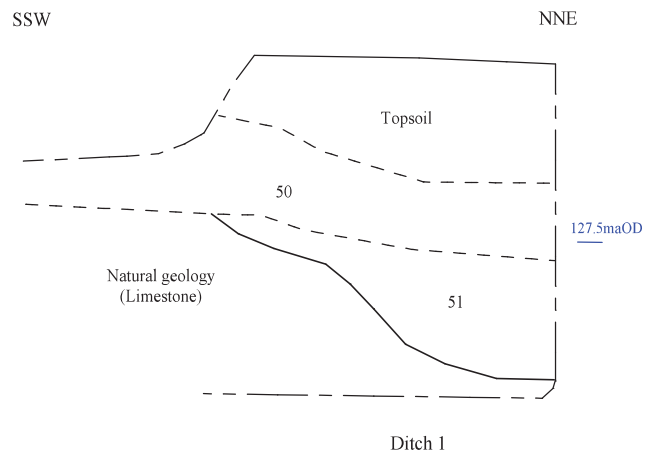


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Archaeological watching brief**

Figure 3. Location of area observed during watching brief.



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Archaeological watching brief**

Figure 4. Section.





Plate 1. General shot looking north east over footing trenches.



Plate 2. Ditch 1 looking west, Scale: 1m.

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Archaeological watching brief

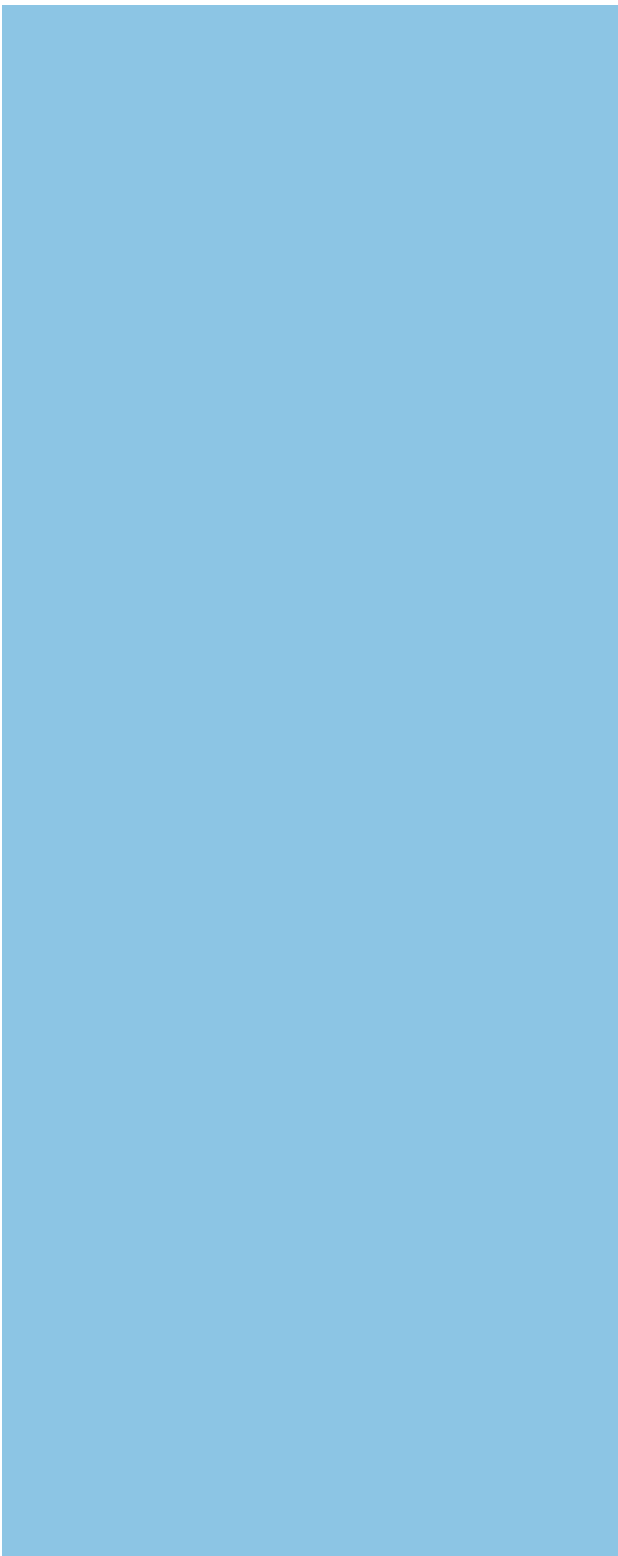
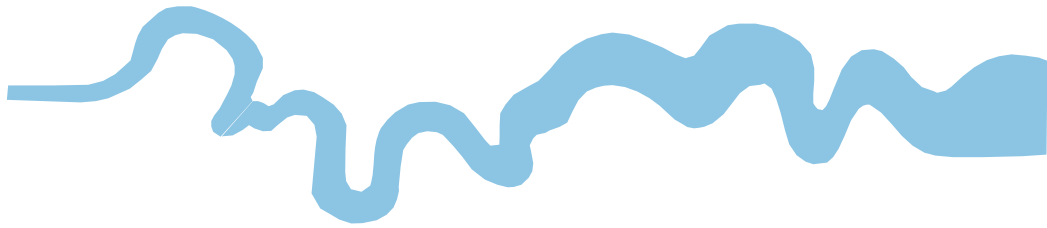
Plates 1 and 2.

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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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