

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

S O U T H

**Southfields Recreation Ground,
Littlehampton, West Sussex**

Archaeological Recording Action

by Felicity Howell

Site Code: SLS11/91

(TQ 0390 0260)

Southfields Recreation Ground, Littlehampton, West Sussex

An Archaeological Recording Action

For Arun District Council

by FelicityHowell
ThamesValleyArchaeologicalServices
Ltd

SiteCodeSLS11/91

September 2011

Summary

Site name: Southfields Recreation Ground, Littlehampton, West Sussex

Grid reference: TQ 0390 0260

Site activity: Recording action

Date and duration of project: 6th–14th September 2011

Project manager: Sean Wallis

Site supervisor: Felicity Howell

Site code: SLS 11/91

Area of site: 1.62 ha

Summary of results: No archaeological features were identified but some prehistoric and Roman pottery was recovered from topsoil and subsoil.

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

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Southfields Recreation Ground, Littlehampton, West Sussex An Archaeological Recording Action

by Felicity Howell

Report 11/91

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological recording action carried out at Southfields Recreation Ground, Littlehampton, West Sussex (TQ 0390 0260) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Richard Martin of Arun District Council, Bognor Regis Town Hall, Clarence Road, Bognor Regis, West Sussex PO21 1LD.

A large part of the existing recreation ground is to be landscaped to create three new sports pitches. As a permitted development, it was not subject to the planning process as outlined in *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5, 2010). However, on the advice of, Mr John Mills, Senior Archaeologist with West Sussex County, who acts as archaeological adviser to the District Council, it was agreed that a programme of archaeological investigation and recording should take place during groundworks as a result of the possibility of damage or destruction of archaeological deposits. This was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by Mr. Mills, which followed the West Sussex County Council requirements for archaeological fieldwork (WSCC 2007). The fieldwork was undertaken by Felicity Howell, Andy Taylor and Sean Wallis between 6th and 14th September 2011, and the site code is SLS 11/91.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located within a residential area, about 900m north-east of the historic core of Littlehampton. The River Arun runs to the west of the town, approximately 1.5km west of the present site. Southfields Recreation Ground is bounded by residential housing on all sides except the south, where it is bounded by Southfields Road. Much of the area consists of grassed playing fields, with a car park, children's playground, and sports pavilion in the southern part of the site (Fig. 2). According to the British Geological Survey, the underlying geology consists of brickearth (BGS 1996), and this was confirmed during the investigation. The site is relatively flat, and lies at a height of approximately 7m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site, in part, stems from its location on the coastal plain of West Sussex which is considered as archaeologically rich (Rudling 2003). The capacity for development to threaten archaeological deposits is particularly pertinent due to the site's close vicinity to late Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman features uncovered by previous building work. Wall foundations of a Roman building and evidence for a Roman cremation cemetery were uncovered during the construction of housing in the mid 20th century just to the north and north-west of the playing fields. The Roman building was found along Gosden Road and Bell Davies Road and has been interpreted as being a farmstead or a villa. It is possible that associated features may lie within the present site, particularly in the northern area.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the recording action was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This was to involve examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks, in particular ground reduction. The initial topsoil strip for the new pitch was to be monitored to determine whether archaeological horizons were present at this level. The use of a bulldozer during topsoil stripping, however, made the observation of any possible archaeological features impossible. After discussions with John Mills and the client, it was agreed that a 10m wide strip would be archaeologically monitored along the northern edge of the development area, in that part of the site closest to the Roman villa previously identified. The findings from this initial strip would determine what further work, if any, was required. Topsoil was stripped using a 360°-type mechanical excavator under archaeological supervision, and subsoil was then stripped in those areas where its removal was necessary to reach the formation level (Pls 1 and 2). All spoil heaps were monitored for finds.

Results

An area of 10m by 125m was monitored over the course of the recording action (Fig. 2). Topsoil was removed from the entire area and the finds recovered were retained, except those which were obviously modern in date. Further ground reduction took place in specific areas so that the depth of the excavated area varied across the strip between 0.20–0.66m deep. The stratigraphy largely consisted of light grey brown sandy clay topsoil which lay directly above a light orange brown sandy clay subsoil (Fig. 3). All subsoil finds uncovered were also retained. No archaeological features were observed. A clearly modern pit and ditch were not recorded in detail.

Following the initial strip, it was decided after a discussion with John Mills that no further work was necessary on the site. This decision was based on the fact that no archaeological features had been uncovered in

the area closest to the Roman villa, and that monitoring of the subsequent drainage would be unlikely to reveal any features successfully.

Finds

Pottery by Malcolm Lyne

The recording action yielded 15 sherds (59g) of pottery. These sherds can be divided into two groups. The first of these consists of eight very abraded fragments from field marling, ranging in date from the Early/Middle Iron Age to Late Roman period from perhaps as early as 600BC to *c.* AD300.

The second group of seven sherds is made up of much fresher Post-Medieval material ranging in date from the 16th to the 19th century. It is too fresh to be from field-marling and suggests rubbish-dumping from occupation somewhere in the vicinity.

Fabrics

Iron Age

- IA1. Carbon soaked black with profuse <1.00mm calcined-flint and grog filler
- IA2. Similar but with profuse <1.00mm protruding calcined-flint only
- IA3. Carbon-soaked black fired rough buff with profuse <0.50mm quartz-sand filler

Roman

- R1. BB1
- R2. Arun Valley Greyware

Post-Medieval

- PM1. Pink earthenware with internal cream glaze with brown patches
- PM2. Very-fine-sanded whiteware with internal matt brown glaze.
- PM3. Flowerpot
- PM4. Willow pattern
- PM5. Very-fine-sanded greyware fired smooth dark pink externally with internal green glaze.

Other Finds by Sean Wallis

Several fragments of post-medieval tile were found during the recording action, along with pieces of burnt flint and a small number of oyster shells. This material was all unstratified, from the topsoil and subsoil layers, and will not be retained.

Conclusion

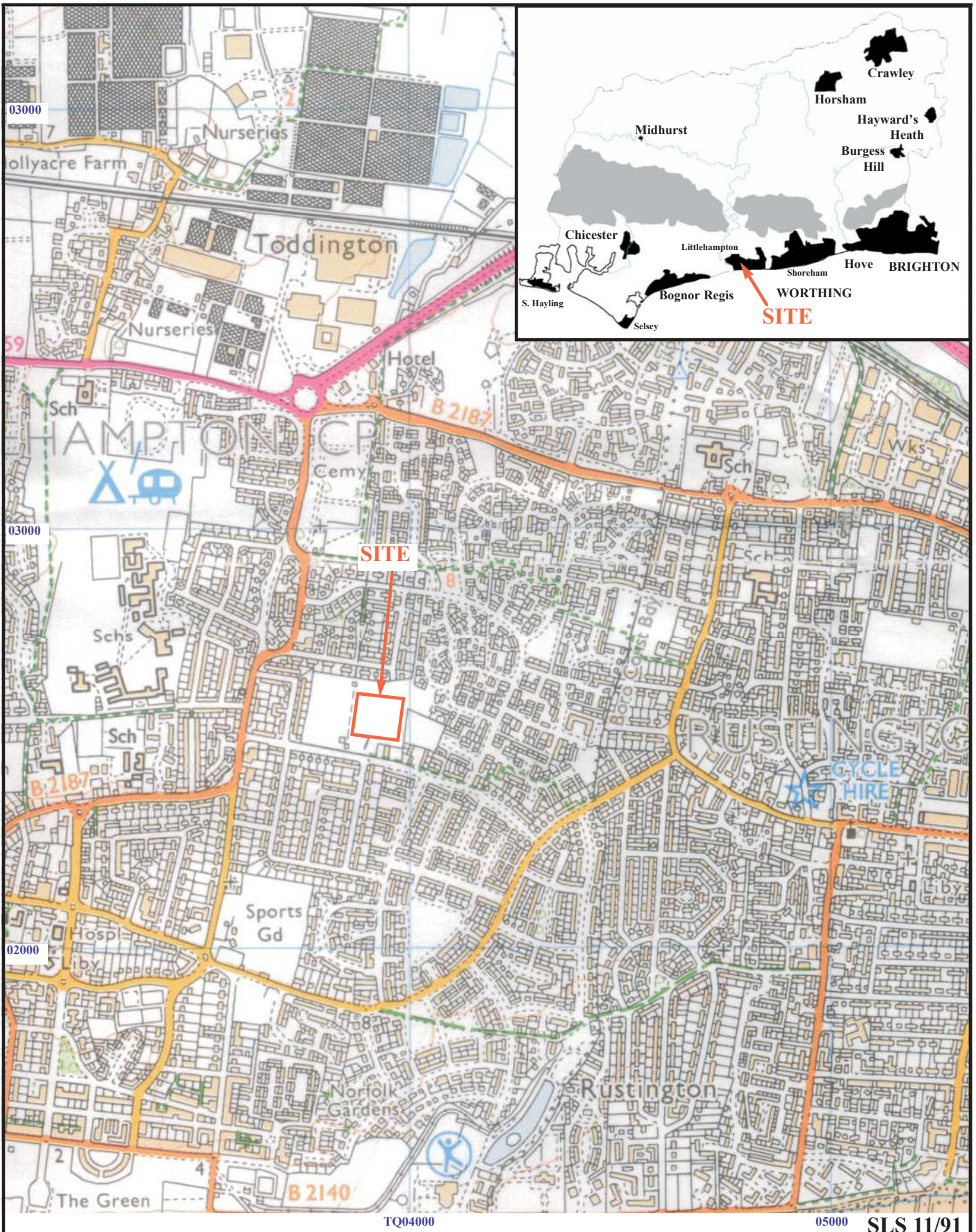
The recording action at Southfields Recreation Ground successfully demonstrated that it is highly unlikely that any archaeological features or deposits, particularly any associated with the Roman villa to the north, will be damaged or destroyed by the creation of the new sports pitches. However, the modest collection of unstratified finds collected during the project suggests activity in the vicinity from the prehistoric period onwards.

References

- BGS, 1996, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 317/332, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
- Rudling, D (ed), 2003, *The archaeology of Sussex to AD2000*, Brighton
- WSSC, 2007, 'Standards for archaeological fieldwork, recording and post-excavation work (development control)', West Sussex County Council, Chichester

APPENDIX 1: Catalogue of pottery

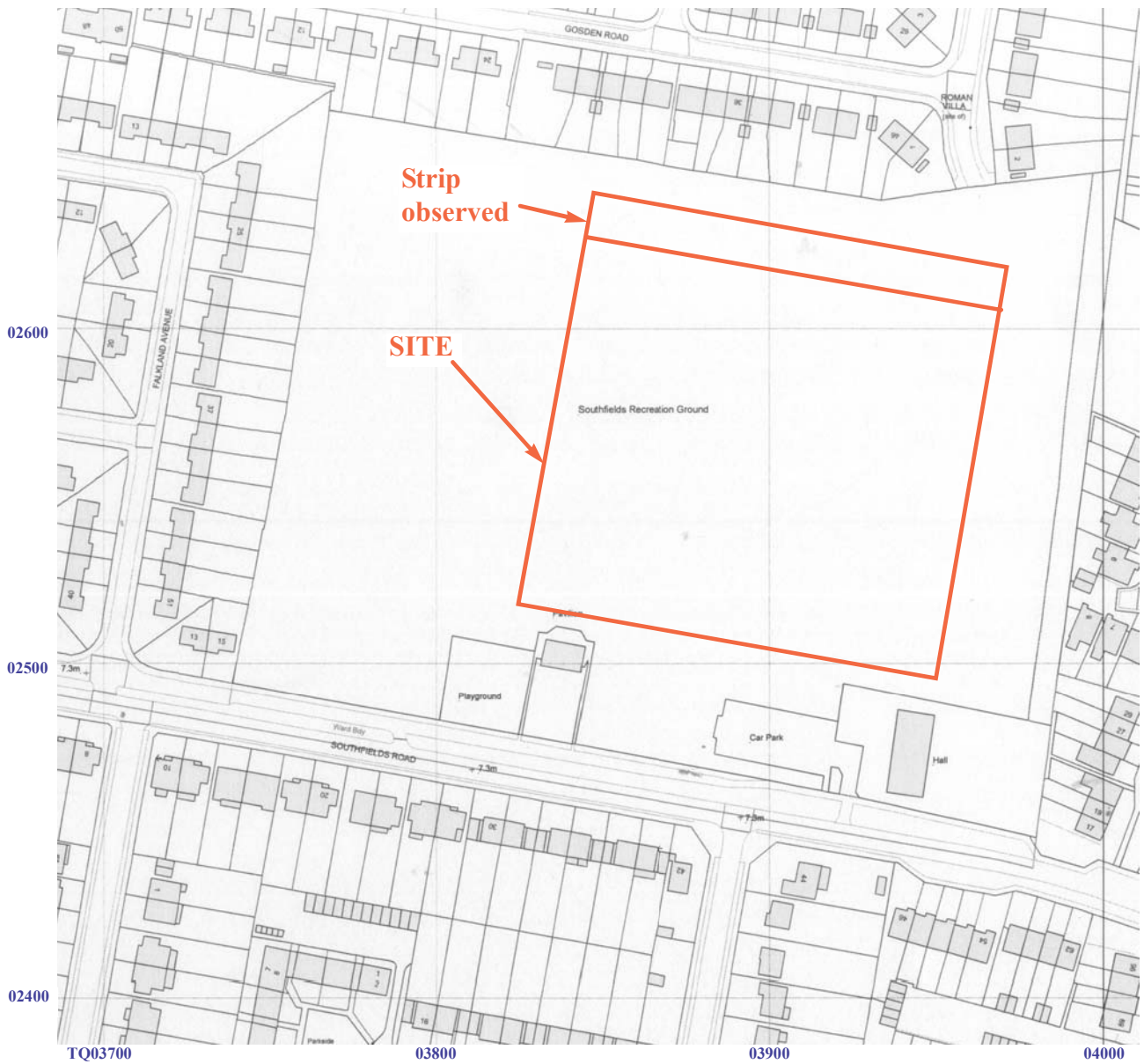
<i>Context</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Date-range</i>	<i>No of sherds</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Topsoil	IA3		50BC–AD50	1	1	V abraded
	R1	Ev rim cooking pot	AD200–300	2	3	
	R2	Reeded-rim bowl	AD100–200	1	11	V abraded
	PM1	Plate	AD1700–1750	2	13	Poss. Niederrheinisch.fr
	PM2	Open form		2	3	Fresh
	PM3	Flower pot	AD1800–1950	1	8	fresh
	PM4	Plate	AD1800–1900	1	3	fresh
Subsoil	IA1	?Saucepan pot	500–100BC	1	1	V abraded
	IA2		600–1BC	1	1	V abraded
	IA3		50BC–AD50	2	5	V abraded
	PM5	Open form	AD1500–1700	1	10	Fresh



**Southfields Recreation Ground, Southfields Road,
Littlehampton, West Sussex, 2011
Archaeological recording action**

Figure 1. Location of site within Littlehampton and
West Sussex.

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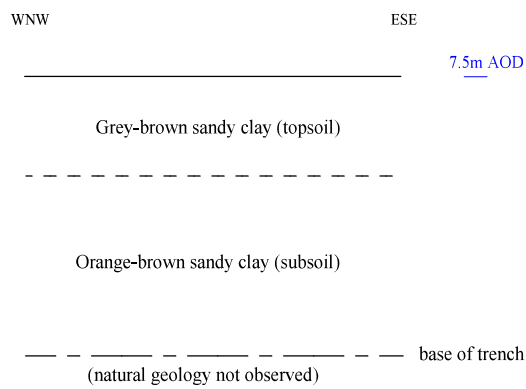


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**Southfields Recreation Ground, Southfields Road,
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Southfields Road,
showiing area observed.

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Figure 3. Representative section





Plate 1. Supervised strip area, looking north-west. Scales: 2m and 1m



Plate 2. Supervised strip area, looking west. Scales: 2m and 1m

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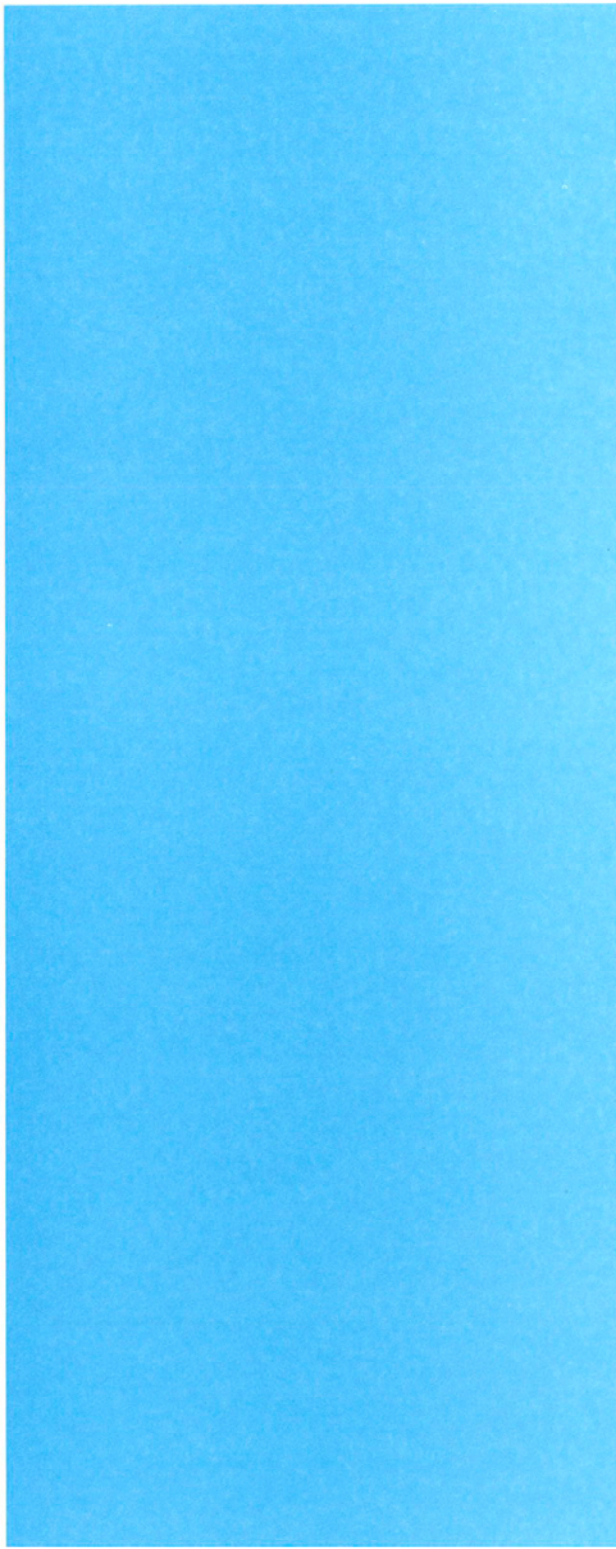
Plates 1 and 2.

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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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