

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Shinfield Glebe, Church Lane, Shinfield,
Reading, Berkshire**

An archaeological Recording Action (Cremation Burial Area)

By Danielle Milbank

(SU 72525 68290)

**Shinfield Glebe, Church Lane, Shinfield, Reading,
Berkshire (Cremation Burial Area)**

**An Archaeological Recording Action
for the Diocese of Oxford**

by Danielle Milbank
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

SiteCodeSGS09/22

August 2010

Summary

Site name: Shinfield Glebe, Church Lane, Shinfield, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 72525 68290

Site activity: Recording action

Date and duration of project: 10th–11th August 2010

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Danielle Milbank

Site code: SGS 09/22

Area of site: 400 sq m

Summary of results: No archaeological deposits or features were encountered. The previously recorded undated cremation burial was shown to be isolated.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 17.08.10 Steve Preston✓ 17.08.10

Shinfield Glebe, Shinfield, Reading, Berkshire
An Archaeological Recording Action (cremation burial area)

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Report 09/22c

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological recording action carried out at Shinfield Glebe, Shinfield, Reading, Berkshire (SU 72525 68290) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned Ms Jo Emmett of Hives Planning, 46 Queen's Road, Reading, RG1 4AU, on behalf of the Oxford Diocesan Board of Finance, Diocesan Church House, North Hinksey Lane, Oxford, OX2 0NB. as a part of their proposals to develop the site for housing. Initially an archaeological desk-based assessment carried out to inform the proposal (Hopkins 2009) had indicated that there was a possibility of significant archaeological deposits on the site. A subsequent field evaluation (Milbank 2009) was carried out to assess the potential of the site from field observation and provide information to enable mitigation of the effects of development on any archaeological deposits present. Archaeological deposits were encountered in two parts of the site. This report relates to a recording action carried out on one of the areas of archaeological interest, that of the location of an undated cremation burial, in order to resolve its archaeological significance.

This is in accordance with *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPGS 2010), and Wokingham Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification agreed with Ms Mary O'Donoghue, Archaeological Officer with Berkshire Archaeology, who advise Wokingham Borough Council on matters relating to archaeology.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Danielle Milbank and Natasha Bennett on 10th–11th August 2010, and the site code is SGS 09/22. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Reading Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located immediately to the west of the historic core of Shinfield, 3km south of Reading town centre (Fig. 1). The site lies with a field used for the pasturing of horses and cattle. The proposal site overall is bordered to the north-west and north-east by lanes, to the east by Church Lane Farm and to the south-east by a modern housing development. The 20m by 20m area to which this report relates is centred on SU 72525 68290 (Fig. 3). The site is located on London Clay (BGS 1946). It is at a height of approximately 50m above Ordnance Datum

and slopes gently down to the north-west. Topographically the site lies on the eastern valley side of the Foudry Brook, which drains into the Kennet to the north.

Archaeological background

The archaeological background for the site in general has been considered in the desk-based assessment (Hopkins 2009) and enhanced by the results of the field evaluation (Milbank 2009) to which the reader is referred for more detail. In summary the site lies adjacent to the historic core of Shinfield within a wider area where a modest range of archaeological finds and sites are known. The field evaluation on the proposal site located two areas of archaeological significance. One of these, an area of *c.* 0.46ha lay on the eastern boundary of the site and mostly contained deposits of medieval date, probably reflecting a component of medieval Shinfield. The other area represented a point location of a single findspot of a human cremation burial. Additional trenching during the evaluation failed to reveal any further deposits surrounding this. It was suggested that a zone of 20m square was an appropriate area of potential around this location (Milbank 2009).

Objectives and methodology

The general aims of the project were to:

- excavate and record all archaeological deposits and features within the area of the smaller area of potential centred on the cremation burial findspot;
- produce relative and absolute dating and phasing for deposits and features recorded on the site;
- establish the character of these deposits in attempt to define functional areas on the site such as industrial, domestic, etc; and to
- produce information on the economy and local environment and compare and contrast this with the results of other excavations in the region.

The specific research aim relating to this area was to establish if there were any additional cremation burial deposits to accompany the burial already recorded, and if so, what their chronology and demographics were.

Results

An area of 20m x 20m was stripped of topsoil and subsoil using a JCB-type machine using a toothless ditching bucket, under continuous archaeological supervision (Fig. 3; Pl. 1). The spoil was checked for finds. The upper surface of the natural geology (orange/grey plastic clay) was exposed, and cleaned by hand where necessary. The

topsoil was typically 0.18m thick (varying from 0.17m to 0.23m thick), and overlay grey/brown clay silt subsoil which was 0.16m thick on average (Pl. 2), thinner at the south, and slightly thicker towards the north. The excavation area was stripped to a total depth of 0.35m overall, with the area of evaluation Trench 65 stripped slightly deeper (0.45m to 0.50m). Trenches 73, 74 and 75 were shallower, but slightly truncated the natural clay and were still visible. Any remaining backfill was removed from these, down to the surface of the natural clay.

The natural geology of orange/grey clay was mottled, with some patches that were clearly root disturbance at the south of the area. These were fewer towards the north, but throughout the area, the colour was patchy and in some places a slightly darker grey. This was a natural (geological) characteristic of the surface of the clay. Several of these patches were investigated by hand to confirm that they were not archaeological in nature. Occasional (small, angular flint) gravel patches and inclusions were also noted.

No cremation burials or associated features, and no archaeologically significant deposits or finds of any sort, were encountered.

Conclusion

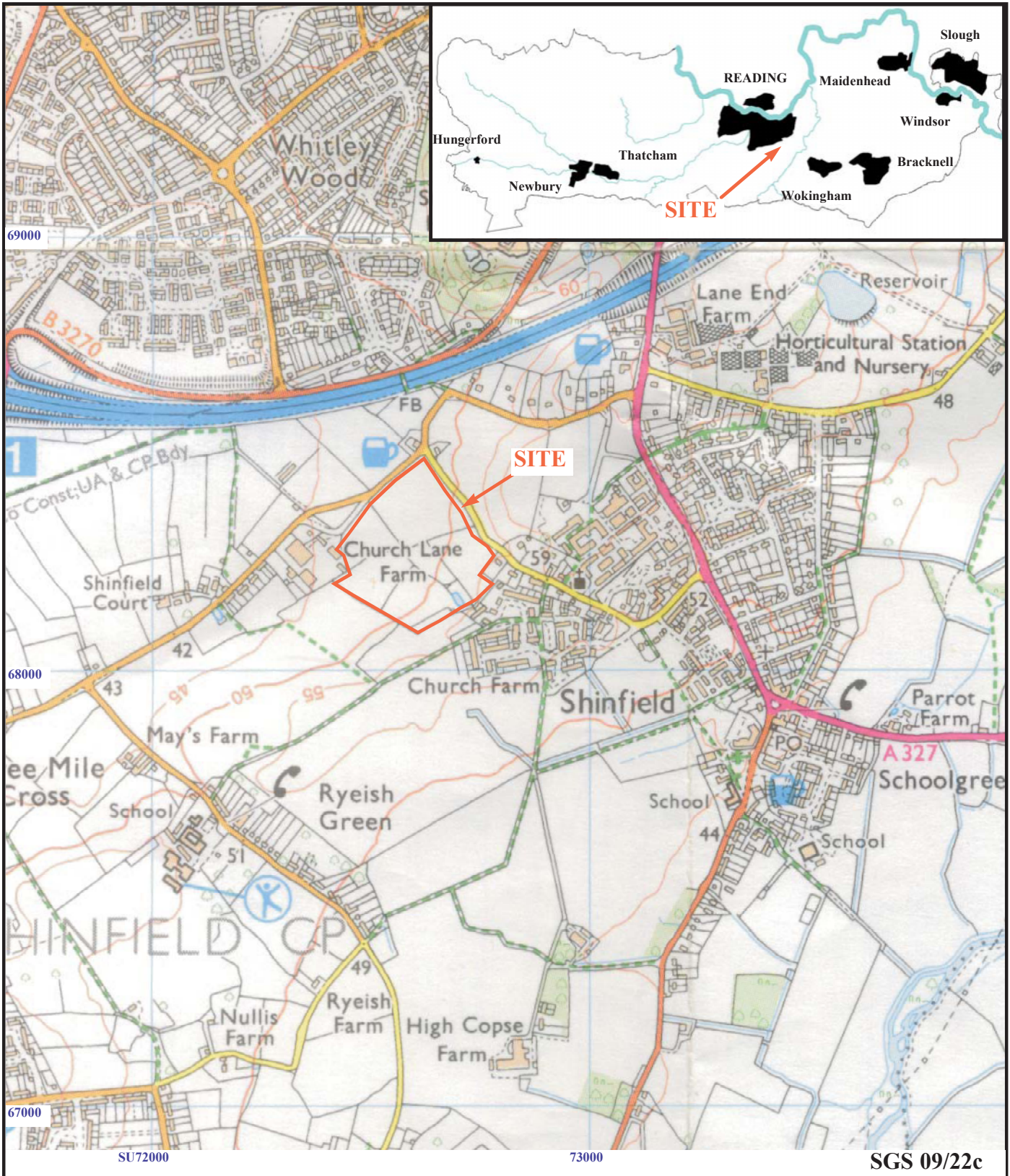
Despite the potential for additional deposits to have survived on this portion of the site, none was encountered in this excavation area. The evaluation trench in which the cremation burial was found was excavated slightly into the surface of the natural clay geology, and the excavation area was excavated to the upper surface of the clay, to ensure that no thin deposits or shallow features were truncated or removed. However, after thorough examination of the exposed clay, and investigation of the patches of colour variation, it was confirmed that there were no features within the 400 sq m area around the cremation burial.

As large scale area excavations have often demonstrated, isolated cremation burials of various dates are not an uncommon event. In this instance as there were no others within an area of 400 square metres, it can be said with certainty that it is not part of a cremation cemetery and should be classed as an isolated deposit.

It is now clear that this location on the site has no remaining archaeological potential.

References

- BGS, 1946, *British Geological Survey*, 1:63360, Sheet 268, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Hopkins, H, 2009, 'Land at Shinfield Glebe, Church Lane, Shinfield, Wokingham, Berkshire, an archaeological desk-based assessment', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 09/22, Reading
- Milbank, 2009, 'Land at Shinfield Glebe, Church Lane, Shinfield, Wokingham, Berkshire, an archaeological evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 09/22b, Reading
- PPS5, 2010, *Planning for the Historic Environment*, Planning Policy Statement 5, The Stationery Office, Norwich

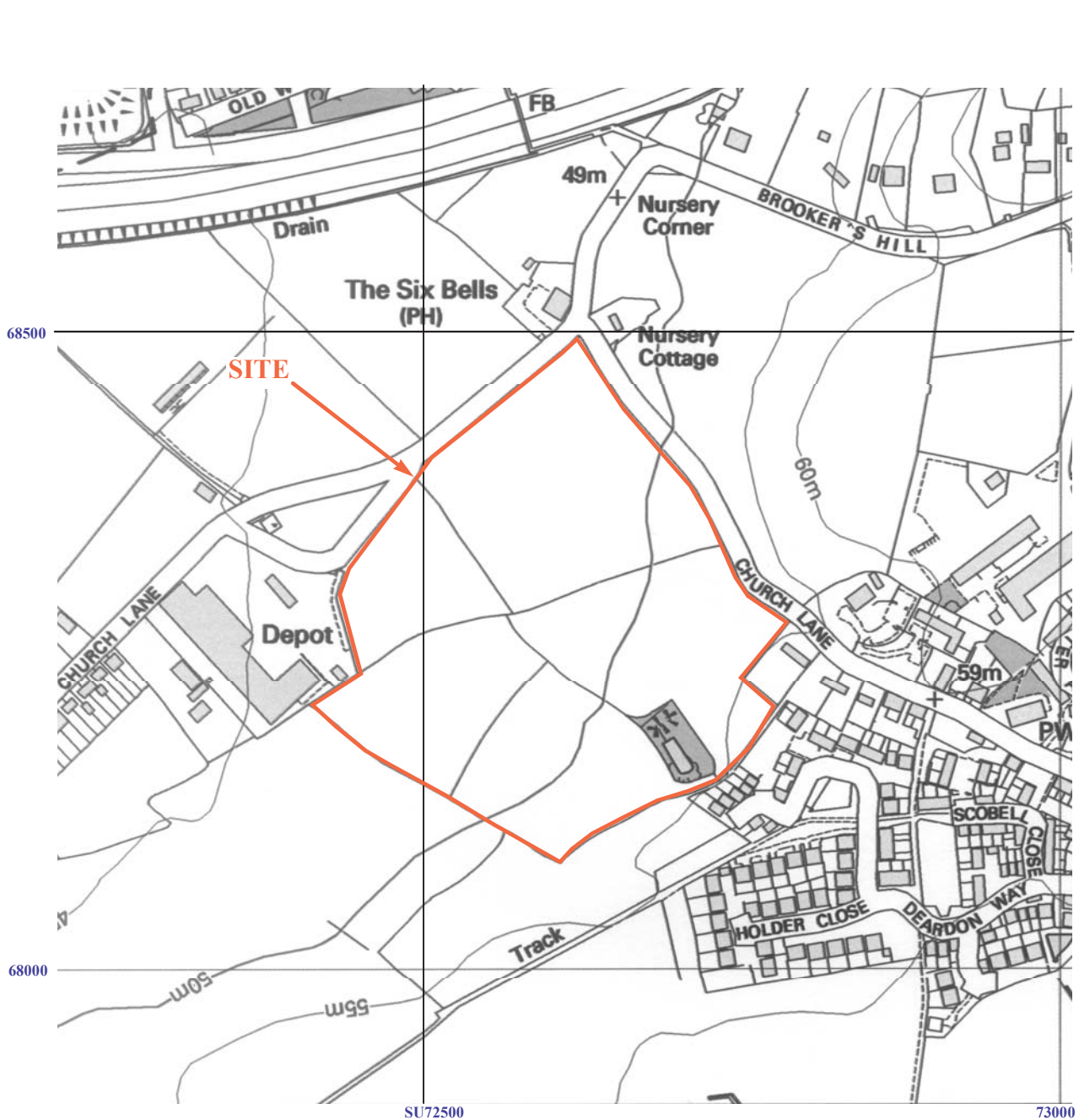


**Shinfield Glebe, Church Lane, Shinfield,
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Figure 1. Location of site in relation to Shinfield and Berkshire.

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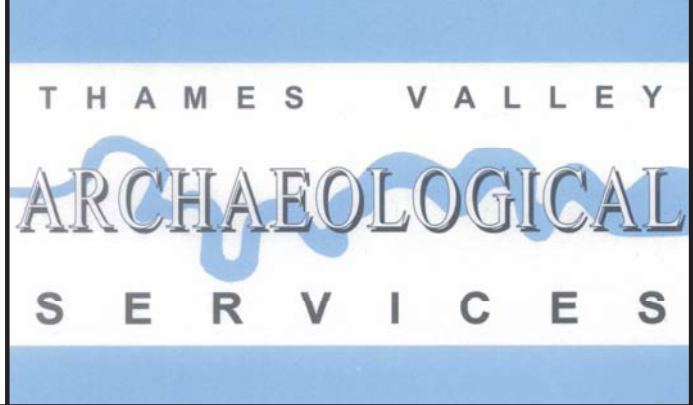


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Figure 2. Location of site off Church Lane.

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Shinfield Glebe, Church Lane, Shinfield, Berkshire, 2010

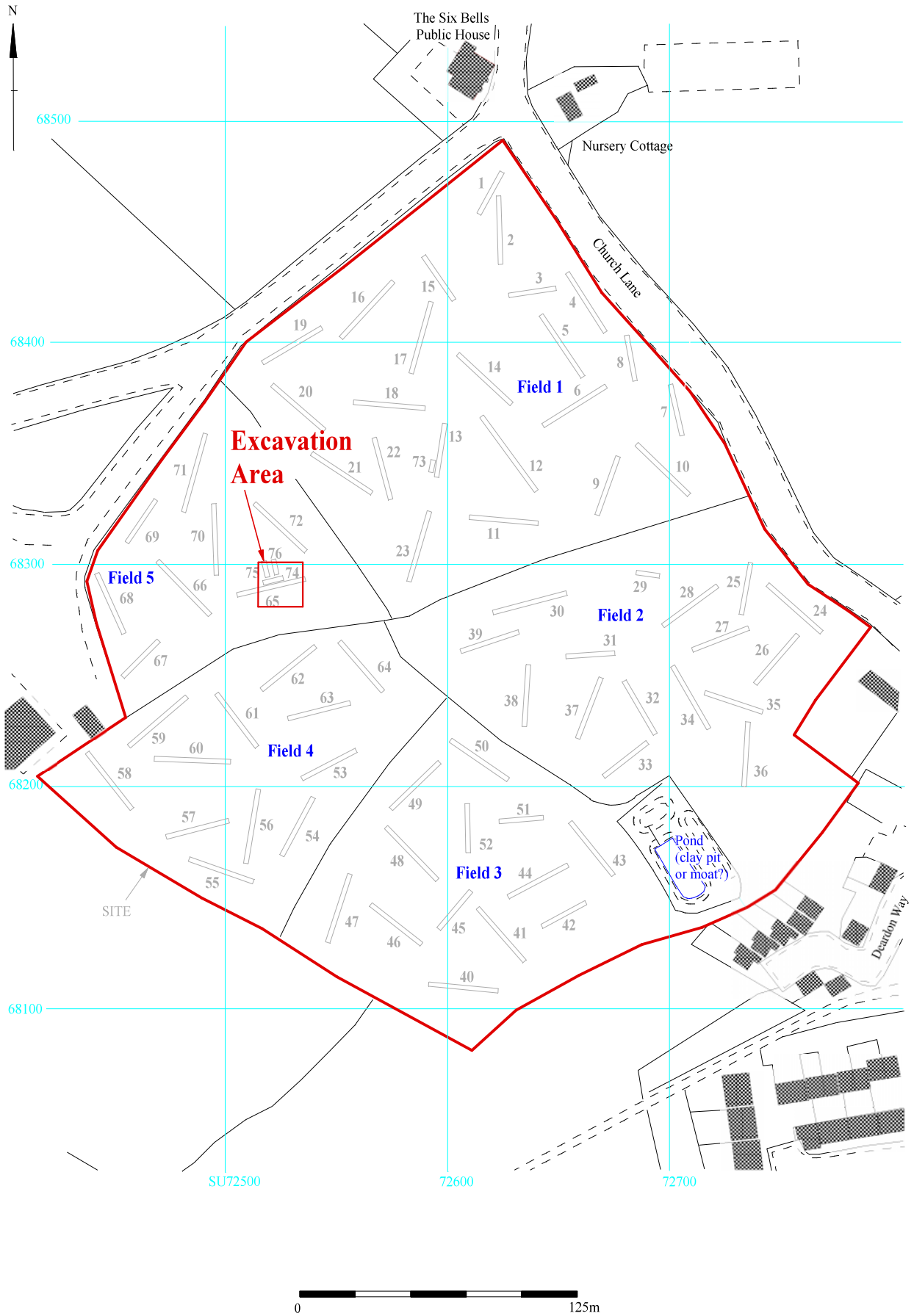


Figure 3. Location of excavation area around site of cremation burial.



Plate 1. Excavation Area, looking south. Scales : 1m



Plate 2. Section. Scales: 0.3m, and 0.1m

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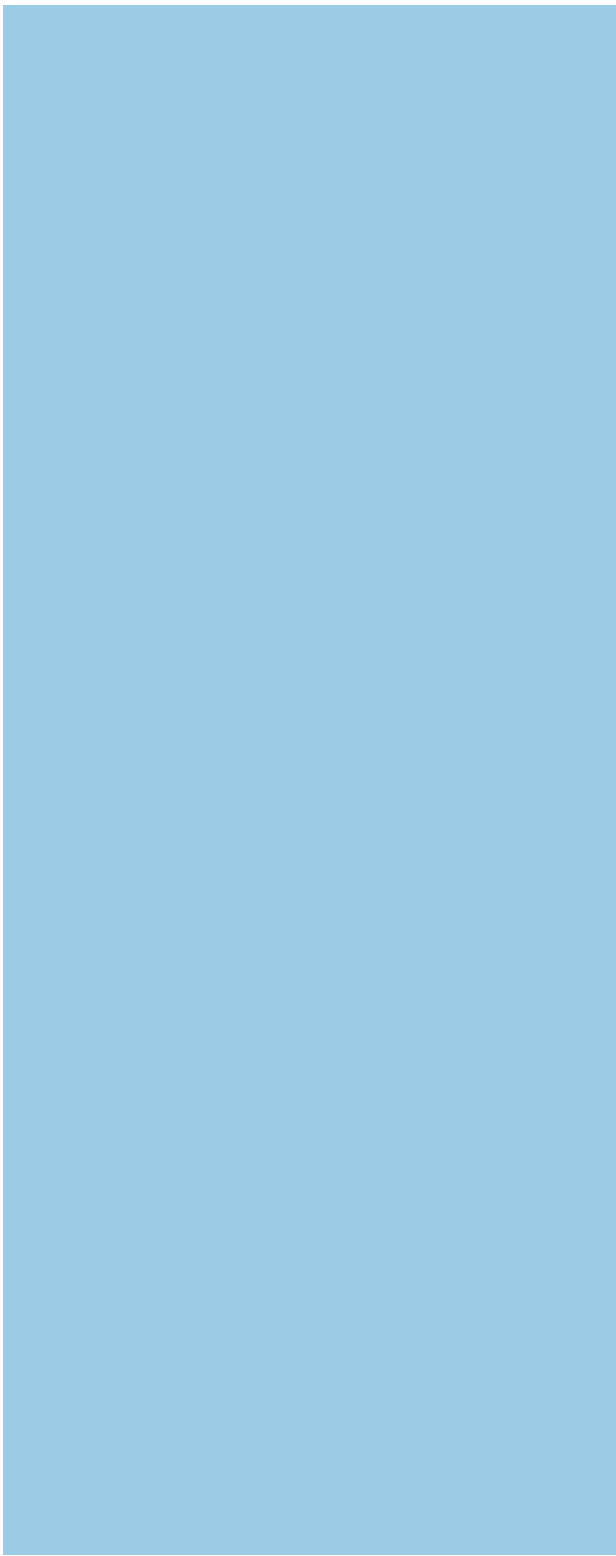
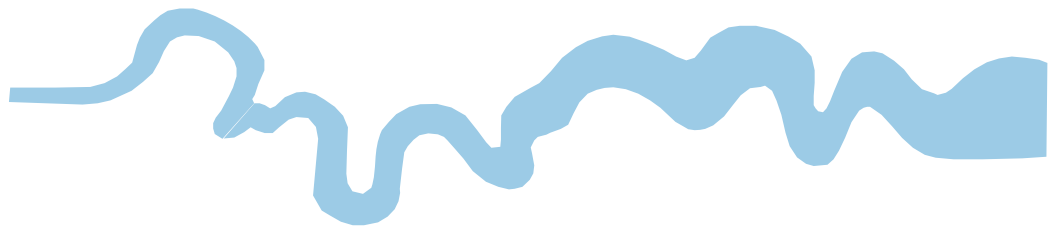
Plates 1 and 2

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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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