

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

**S E R V I C E S**

**Witta's Ham Cottage, High Street,  
Long Wittenham, Oxfordshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by David Platt**

**Site Code: WHC12/10**

**(SU 5475 9389)**

**Witta's Ham Cottage, High Street,  
Long Wittenham, Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Mr Martin Mellor**

by David Platt

ThamesValleyArchaeologicalServices

Ltd

WHC12/10

**March 2012**

## Summary

**Site name:** Witta's Ham Cottage, High Street, Long Wittenham, Oxfordshire

**Grid reference:** SU 5475 9389

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 20th–21st March 2012

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** David Platt

**Site code:** WHC 12/10

**Summary of results:** Three pits were observed in the foundation trenches all three were certainly or probably of all late post-medieval in 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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[www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp](http://www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp).*

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 22.03.12 Steve Preston✓ 22.03.12
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# **Witta's Ham Cottage, High Street, Long Wittenham, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief**

by David Platt

**Report 12/10**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Witta's Ham Cottage, High Street, Long Wittenham, Oxfordshire, OX14 4QH (SU 5475 9389) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Martin Mellor of this address.

Planning permission (P11/W1787)n has been granted from South Oxfordshire District Council for a two-storey rear extension. This permission is granted subject to a condition relating to archaeology which requires the implementation of a watching brief during the period of ground works. 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 policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Council and based on a design brief supplied by him (Oram 2012). The fieldwork was undertaken by David Platt on the 20th and 21st of March 2012 and the site code is WHC 12/10.

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

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located on the north side of Long Wittenham, a small village *c.*2.5km north-east of Didcot and 5km south-east of Abingdon. The river Thames flows north-eastwards *c.*200m north-west of the site, with a branch approaching much closer to the village (Fig. 1). The site is currently residential and located between the school to the north-east and village hall to the south-west. Large houses with associated gardens border the site on the north and west and the site is bordered to the south by High Street and to the east by an access road to the properties behind (Fig. 2). The site is relatively flat at *c.*50m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology observed on site is described as First (Flood Plain) Terrace Deposits of Younger River Gravels (BGS 1980).

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the area has been highlighted in a brief prepared by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Oram 2012). In summary, the site lies within the historic (medieval) core of Long

Wittenham which has late Saxon origins and is mentioned in Domesday Book (Williams and Martin 2002, 135, 147). A variety of early post-medieval listed buildings are present in the vicinity of the site. A Saxon cemetery was discovered in the 19th century, 300m to the south-east of the site on the west side of Didcot Road and an extensive cropmark complex visible from the air lies to the south of the site (Fig. 3). Linear features can be seen to run towards the site and consist of a possible trackway with a series of what appear to be small field enclosures on either side. These are part of a much larger complex of cropmarks which include a possible Saxon timber hall, a possible Iron Age pit alignment, pits, enclosures and a series of trackways and possible field systems (Fig. 3). Iron Age deposits have also been recorded 160m to the north-east of the site within the village. A watching brief carried out c.200m to the south-west of the site identified four linear features, one of which could be tentatively dated as medieval (Dawson 2011); however, another watching brief c.400m south-west of the site recorded no deposits of archaeological interest (Croxxson 2001).

## **Objectives and Methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the works. This was to involve examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks, in particular excavations for foundations and service trenches, area strips for access roads, soakaways or landscaping.

## **Results**

Four foundation trenches were observed (Fig. 4), three aligned SE-NW and one aligned NE-SW (Pls 1 and 2). These were all 0.60m wide and varied in depth between 2.00m and 1.10m. Three of these trenches were 4.0m in length and one was 6.90m in length. The area surrounded by the trenches was lowered by 0.45m but no natural geology was observed at this depth.

The 2m closest to the house was covered by 0.15m of paving. In the westernmost trench (Fig. 5, upper) this overlay 0.35m of dark grey sandy silt made ground (52), this in turn overlay 0.50m of pale brownish grey sandy silt made ground (53), above 0.60m of dark grey sandy silt made ground (54). This lowest made ground (54) contained a piece of 19th – 20th century transfer printed pottery. This made ground overlay the natural geology and sealed two probable pits.

Pit 1 contained a piece of red earthen ware of broadly 16th- to 19th-century date. Pit 2 contained a piece of mass produced white ware of 19th – 20th century date.

The northernmost trench (Fig. 5, lower) consisted of 0.35m of dark grey sandy silt topsoil overlying 0.25m of light brown clayey sand (57), this overlay 0.40m of dark grey sandy silt made ground (58) which overlay the natural and a probable pit (3). Pit 3 contained a single piece of brick, most likely post-medieval in date.

## **Finds**

### *Pottery*

Three sherds of pottery were recovered. A single sherd from pit 1, was of red earthenware or “country ware” which can only be dated from the 16th to the 19th century. Pit 2 contained a sherd of mass produced white ware of 19th to 20th century date. Within the made ground a piece of 19th to 20th century transfer printed ware was recovered. These finds were not retained.

### *Ceramic building material* by Danielle Milbank

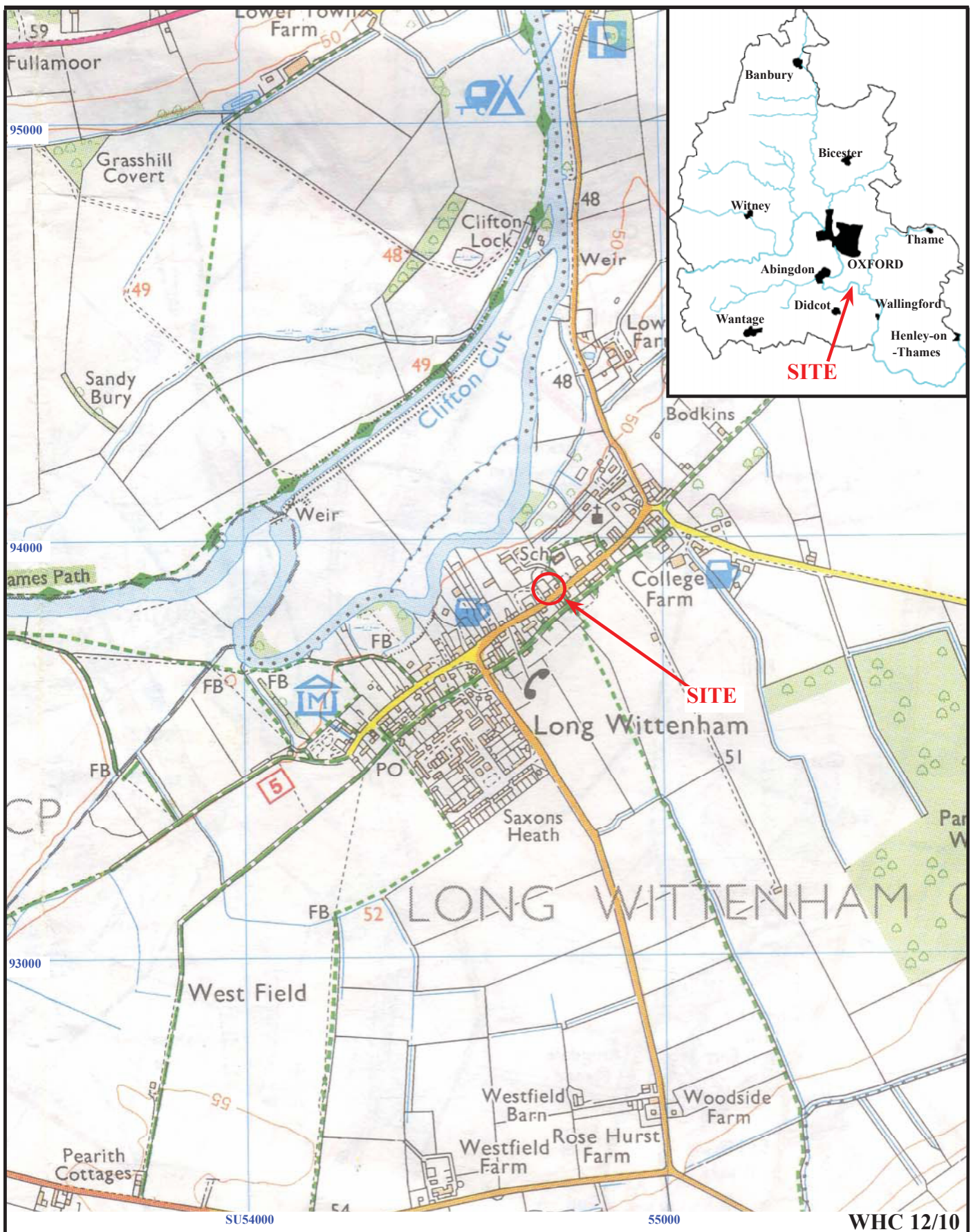
One fragment of brick (35g) was recovered from pit 3. It is a hard, evenly fired sandy fabric with sparse small inclusions, and is a uniformly dark red colour. It is likely to be broadly post-medieval. These finds were not retained.

## **Conclusion**

Three pits were recorded. All three most likely dated to the later post-medieval period and are probably rubbish pits relating to the use of earlier cottages that were located on the road frontage, which were demolished when Witta's Ham Cottage was built in the 1960s.

## **References**

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- Dawson, T, 2011, 'Fieldside, Long Wittenham, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, An archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Services unpubl rep 11/82, Reading
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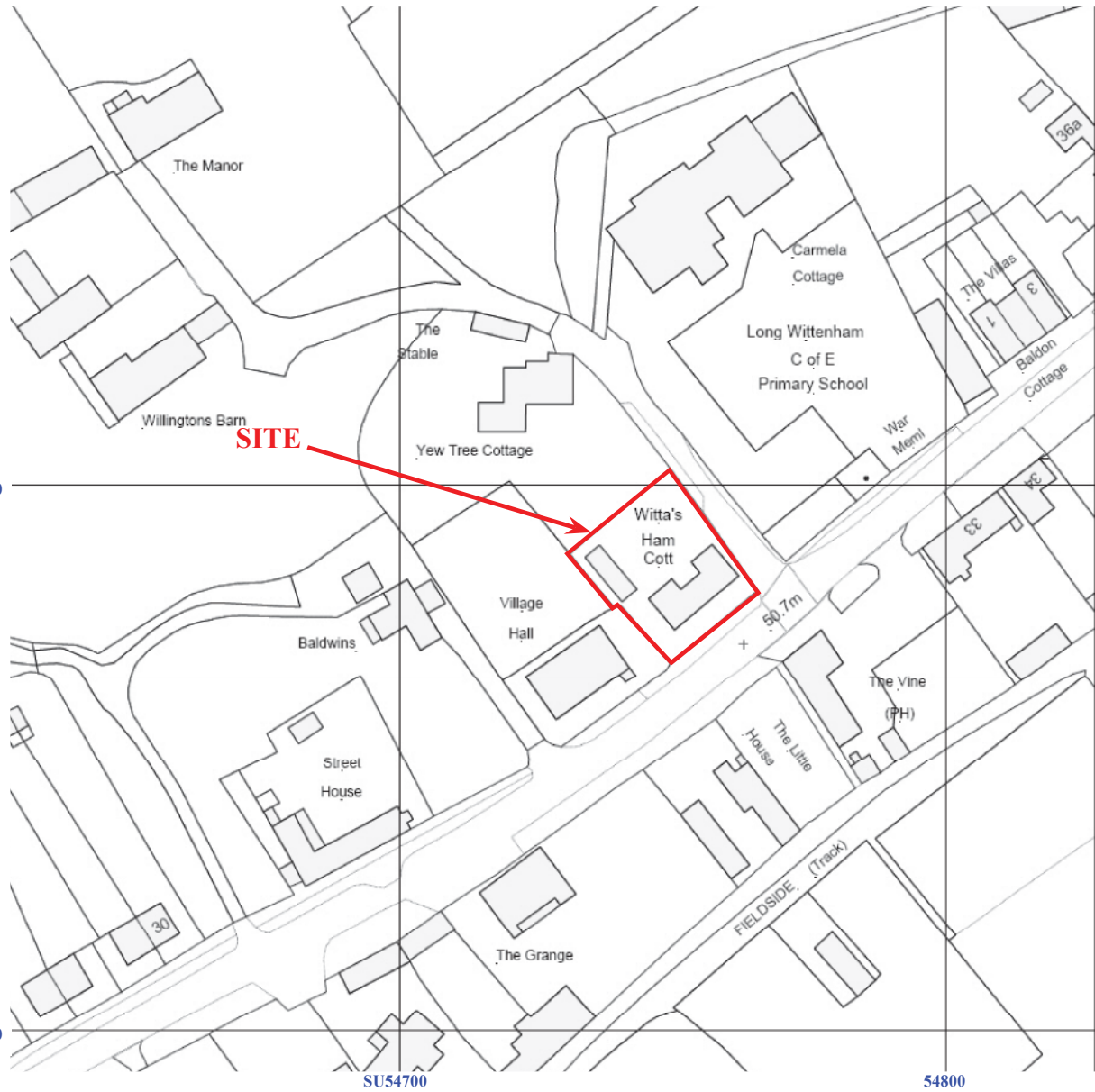
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Figure 1. Location of site within Long Wittenham and Oxfordshire.

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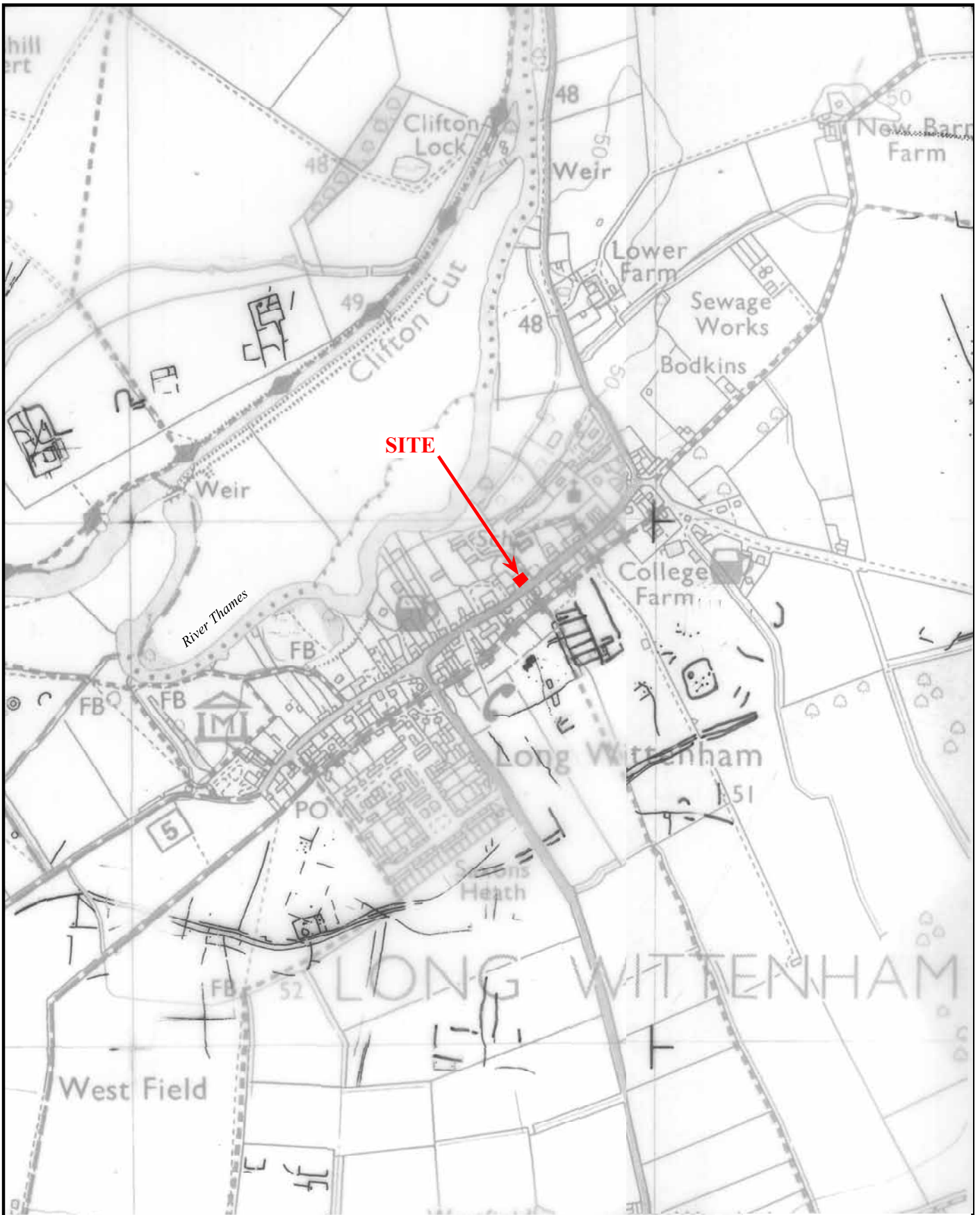
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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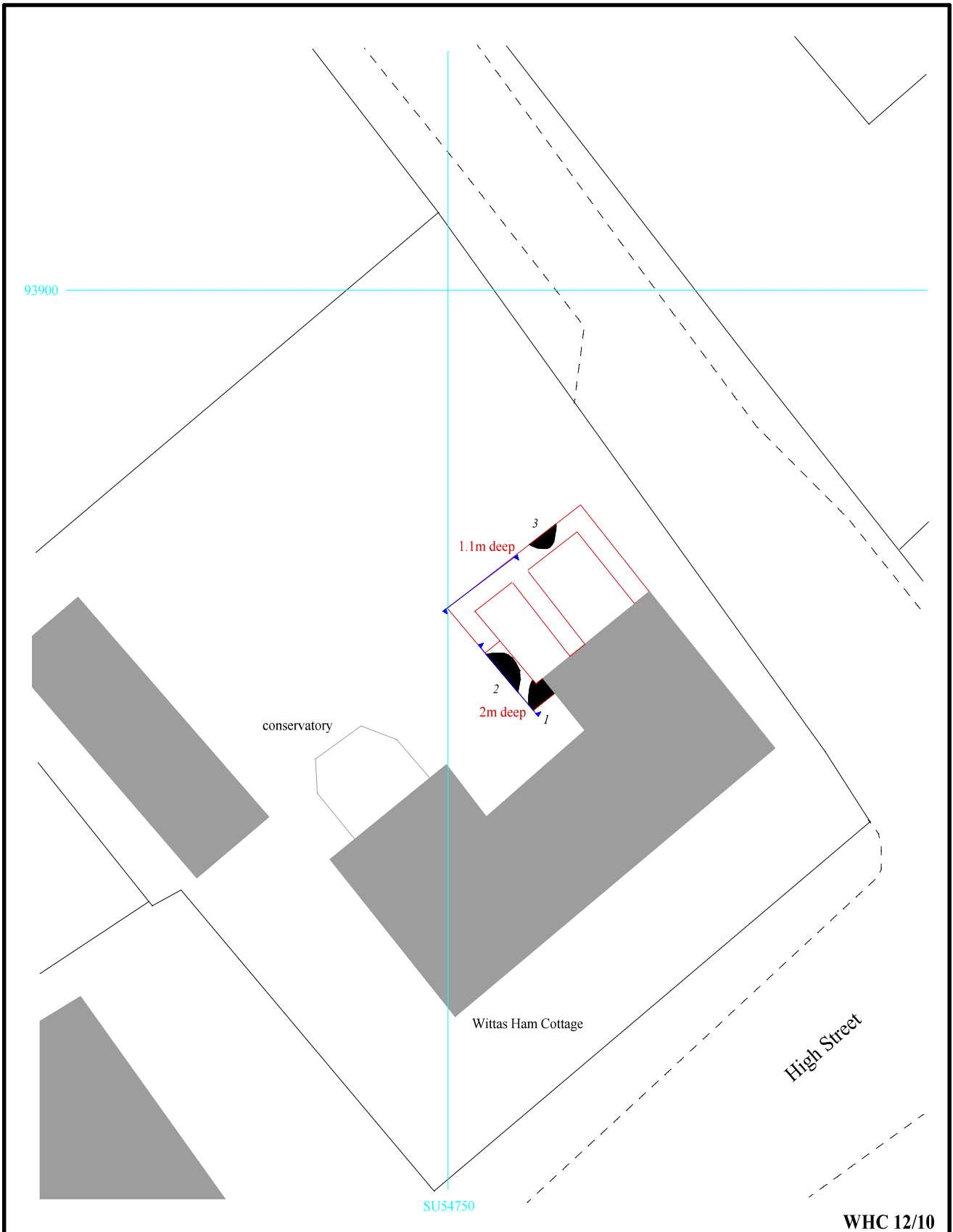
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Figure 3. Cropmark plot of Long Wittenham.

Modified from RCHME SU58SW and SU58 SE  
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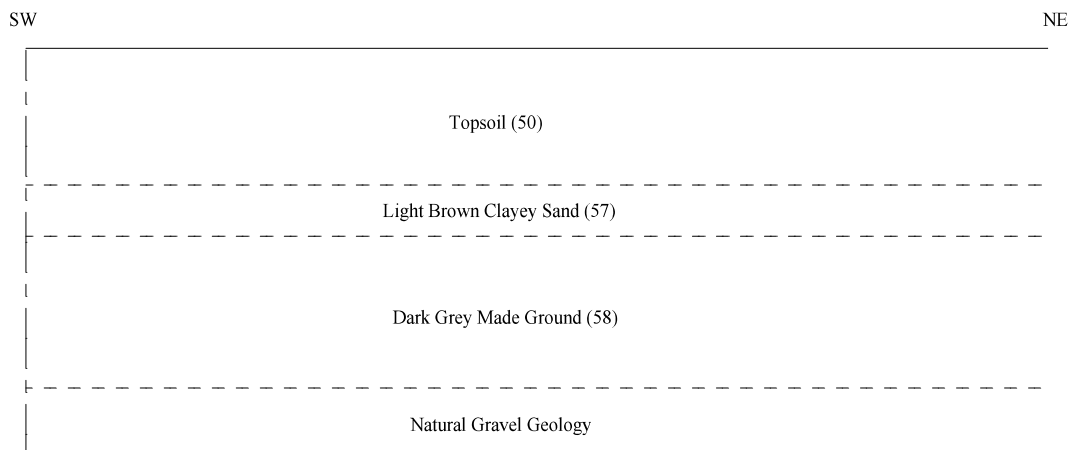
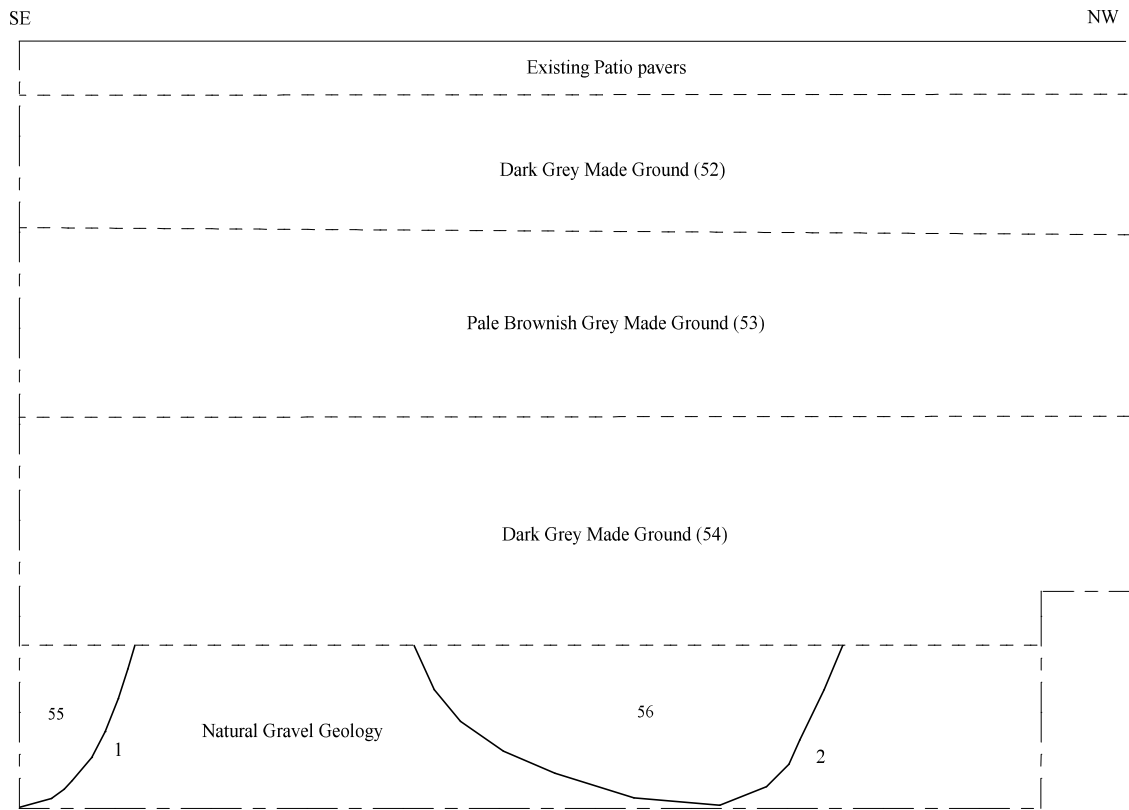


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Figure 4. Areas observed during watching brief.



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Figure 5. Sections.





Plate 1. New footings, looking north east Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Pits 1 and 2, looking south west, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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Plates 1 and 2.

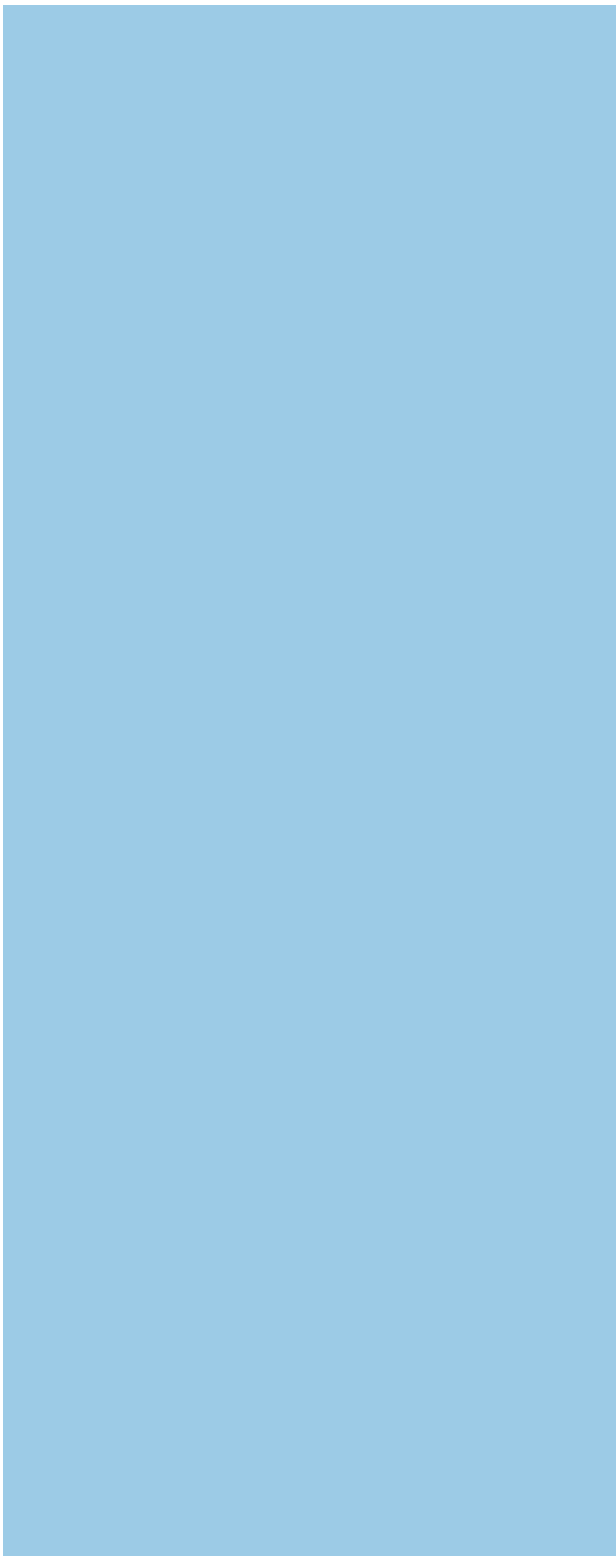
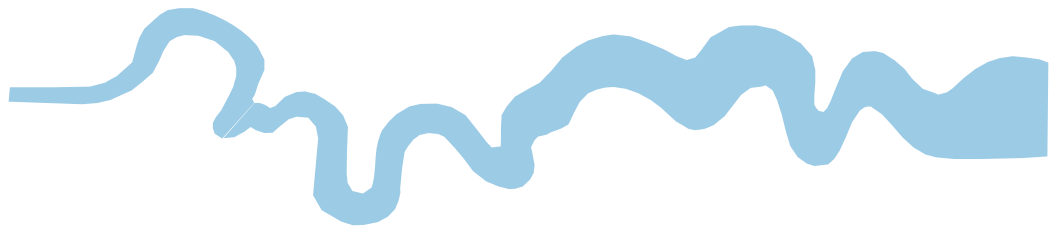
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## TIME CHART

	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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