

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

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

**23 Beech Hill Road, Spencers Wood,  
Reading, Berkshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Daniel Bray and Susan Porter**

**Site Code: BHR11/126**

**(SU 7132 6610)**

**23 Beech Hill Road, Spencers Wood,  
Reading, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Mr N Redman**

by DanielBray andSusanPorter  
ThamesValleyArchaeologicalServices  
Ltd

SiteCodeBHR11/126

**April 2012**

## Summary

**Site name:** 23 Beech Hill Road, Spencers Wood, Reading, Berkshire

**Grid reference:** SU 7132 6610

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 11-12<sup>th</sup> April 2012

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Daniel Bray and Susan Porter

**Site code:** BHR 11/126

**Summary of results:** No deposits nor artefacts of archaeological interest were observed

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited in an appropriate designated museum or repository in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 13.04.12
	Steve Preston ✓ 13.04.12

# 23 Beech Hill Road, Spencers Wood, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Daniel Bray and Susan Porter

Report 11/126

## Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 23 Beech Hill Road, Spencers Wood, Berkshire, NGR SU 7132 6610 (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Mark Groom of Groom Design, 5 Autumn Close, Emmer Green, Reading, Berkshire, RG4 8UL, on behalf of Mr Nick Redman of 23 Beech Hill Road, Spencers Wood, Reading Berkshire, RG7 1HL.

Planning permission (app no F/2011/1917) has been granted by Wokingham Borough Council to construct a new single-storey extension to the existing garage to house a swimming pool. The consent is subject to a condition (4) relating to archaeology which requires a programme of archaeological work, in this instance a watching brief to be carried out during groundworks.

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 Borough's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Borough on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Daniel Bray and Susan Porter on the 11th and 12th April 2012 and the site code is BHR 11/126.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at an appropriate designated museum or repository in due course.

## Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the south of Reading, on the east side of Beech Hill Road, towards the southern end of the village of Spencers Wood, in the parish of Shinfield (Fig 1). The site currently forms the rear garden to the existing house and the pool building will be constructed to the rear of the existing garage on the north-east side of the garden (Fig. 2). The site is at an elevation of 60m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology is mapped as London clay (BGS 1946) and this was observed on site. The river Loddon flows around 1km to the south-east of the site.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location close to an area where archaeological deposits have been discovered prior to development. Occupation deposits of Middle Iron Age through to post-medieval dates were revealed by trial trenching and were subsequently excavated (ASE 2004a; 2004b). The wider environs of the site contain a modest range of finds from other periods. A possible settlement complex is represented by cropmarks visible from the air in an area to the south-east of the site (Gates 1975) and from field survey (Ford 1997). These include enclosures, ring ditches, trackways and linear features though none have been excavated. Sites of Iron Age and Roman date have been found nearby such as at Grazeley Road and Mere oak Lane to the north (Ford *et al.* 2011; Milbank 2010). It is thought that the route of the Henley to Silchester Roman road passes to the south-west of the site (Margary 1973), however a watching brief and evaluation carried out to the south-east of the site on the west side of Basingstoke Road only revealed a modern ditch (Colley 2009; Porter 2012).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This was expected to involve monitoring of foundation trench digging for the new structures and any other intrusive groundworks such as service trenches were to be examined if they were of sufficient depth to impinge on archaeologically relevant levels. Foundations were dug to the east of the existing garage using plant equipped with a ditching bucket, and spoil heaps were monitored for finds.

## **Results**

### *Foundation trenches*

Topsoil was partially removed from a along the line of the foundation prior to digging for a width of 1m (Fig. 3). The northern and southern foundations were 6.50m long and excavated to a depth of 0.65 to 0.80m deep. The eastern foundation was 5.0m long. All footing trenches measured 0.70m wide. The stratigraphy comprised 0.20m light brown grey clayey sand topsoil over 0.40m mid yellow brown sandy clay subsoil overlying mid orange brown sandy clay natural geology (Pl. 1). No deposits of archaeological interest were observed. Two parallel modern drain pipes were observed: one in the northern foundation which was shingle covered and another in the eastern foundation which was set in concrete and was 2m from the northern fence line. This was also seen through the area reduced for the swimming pool.

## *Swimming Pool*

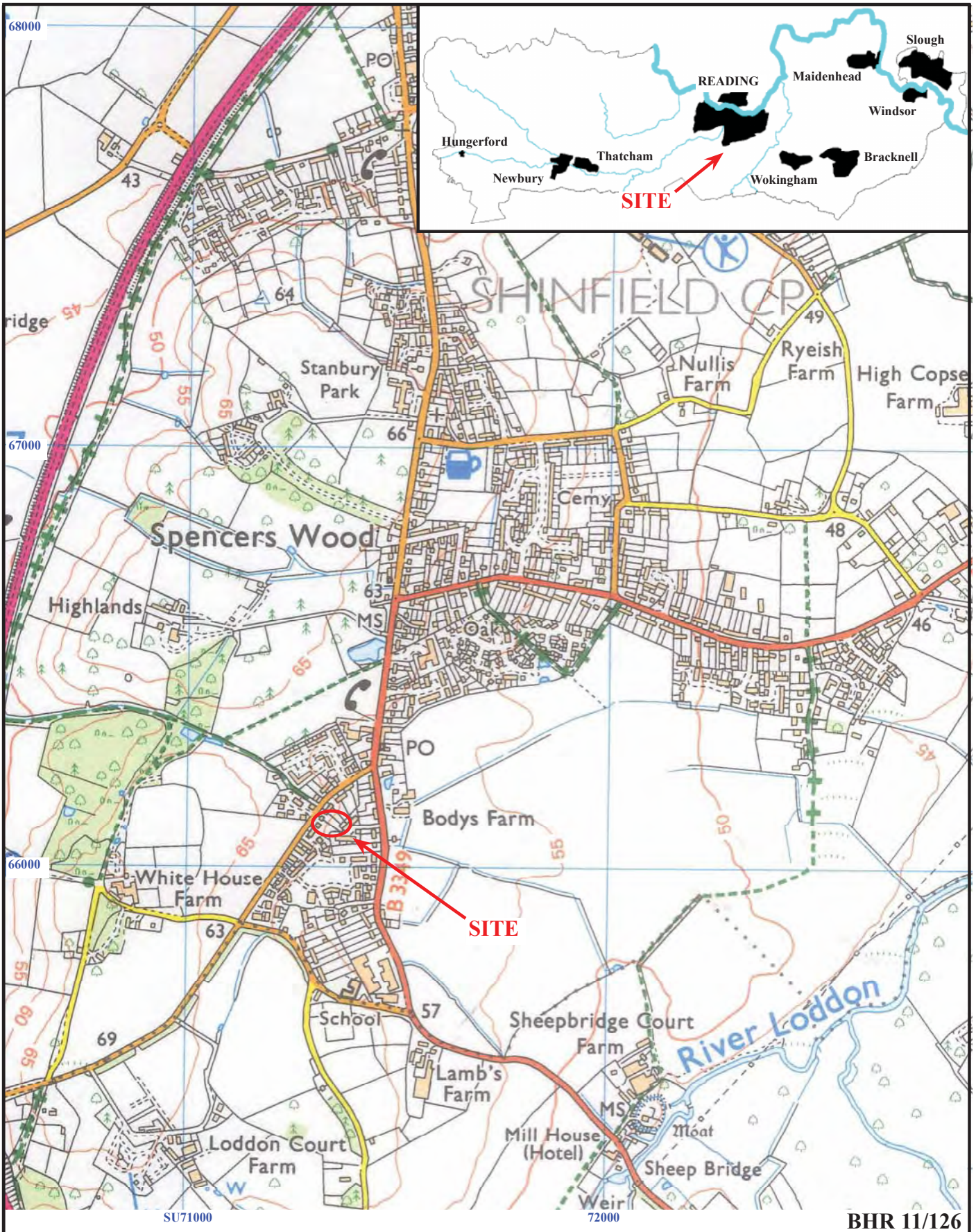
The area between the footings was reduced to the level of the natural clay in advance of the digging of the swimming pool (Pl. 2). The stratigraphy observed was the same as the foundations excavated and the drain pipe set in concrete continued through and under the existing garage. No archaeological features were identified but close to the garage was a modern truncation, probably a soakaway, which contained breeze blocks and other modern building materials.

## **Conclusion**

Although previous excavation nearby had revealed deposits of Middle Iron Age to post-medieval date no deposits of archaeological interest were observed within the area of the extension and no pre-modern artefacts were recovered from the site.

## **References**

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**Archaeological watching brief**

Figure 1. Location of site within Spencers Wood and Berkshire.

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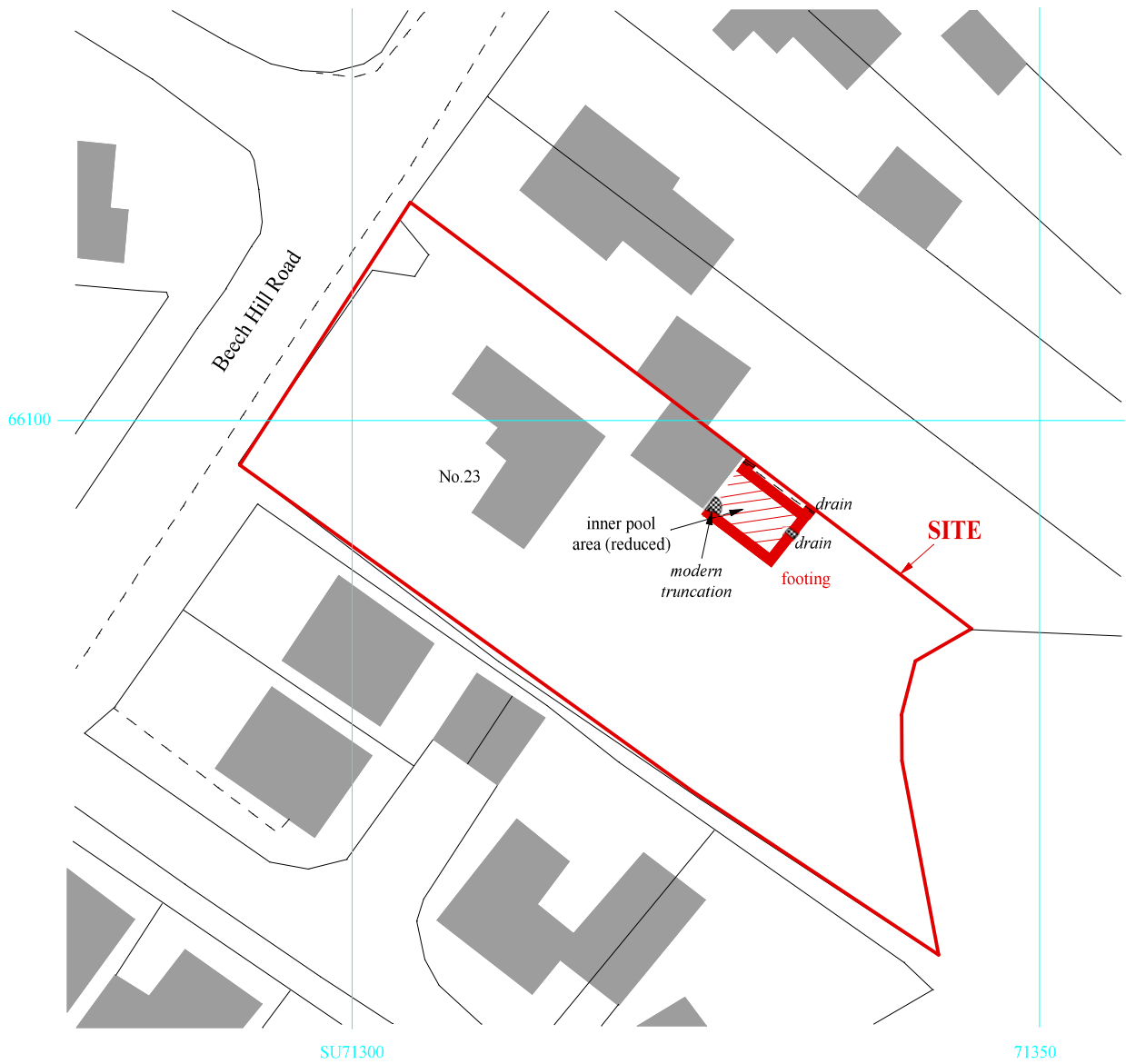
**Archaeological desk-based assessment**

Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Beech Hill Road.

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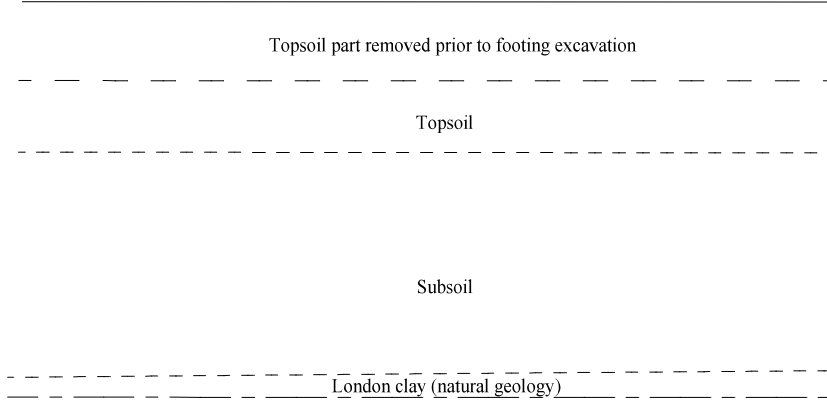
Figure 3. Location of area observed.



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Figure 4. Representative section.



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Plate 1. Reduced level for swimming pool to top of natural geology, looking south, Scales: 2m and 1m.

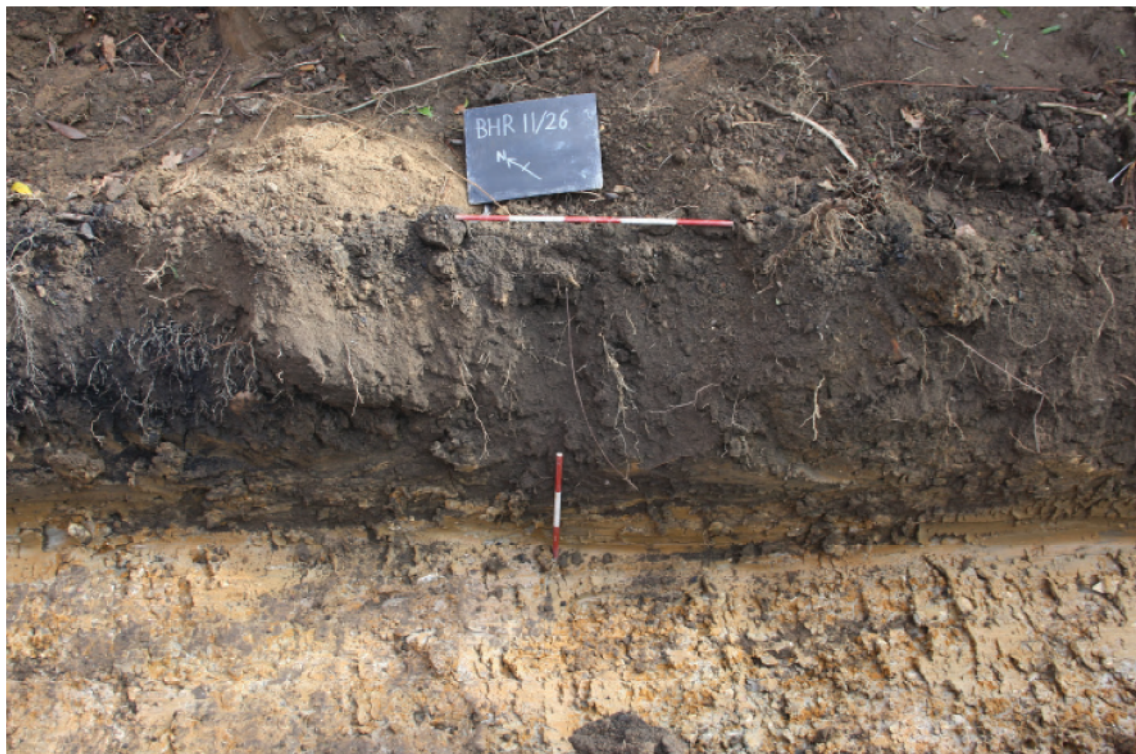


Plate 2. Representative section from footing trench, looking north east, Scales: 0.5m and 0.1m.

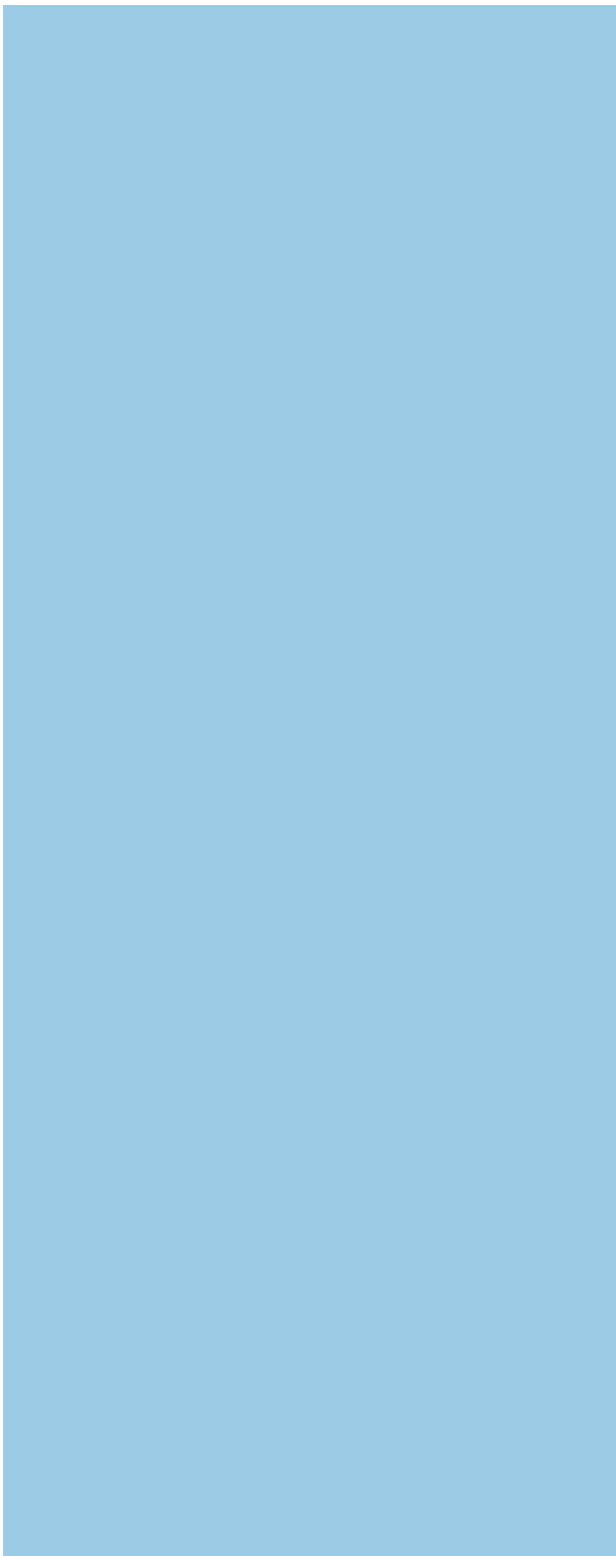
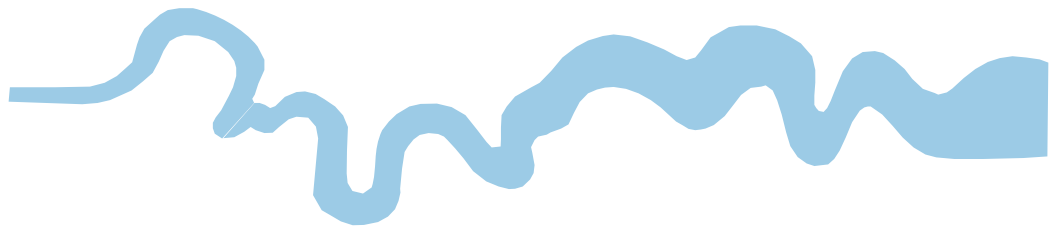
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Plates 1 and 2.

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## TIME CHART

	<b>Calendar Years</b>
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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