

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

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

**Upwood Park, Tubney,  
Marcham, Oxfordshire**

**Phases 1 and 2**

**An archaeological recording action**

**By Jamie Lewis**

**UTO07/106  
(SU 4550 9999)**

# **Phases 1 and 2, Upwood Park, Tubney, Marcham, Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Recording Action**

**For Hills Quarry Products Ltd**

by James Lewis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Ltd

Site Code UTO 07/106

**November 2011**

## Summary

**Site name:** Upwood Park, Tubney, Marcham, Oxfordshire Phases 1 and 2

**Grid reference:** SU 4550 9999

**Site activity:** Recording Action

**Date and duration of project:** 23rd May–2nd November 2011

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** James Lewis

**Site code:** UTO 07/106

**Area of site:** 3.61ha

**Summary of results:** Three gullies, two ditches and one cremation burial were uncovered during the recording action. The linear features appear to be late post-medieval in date and correspond to features shown on 19th- and 20th-century maps. The cremation may be an isolated prehistoric feature; it contained the remains of an infant and an adult, possibly the mother.

**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✓ 17.11.11
	Steve Preston✓ 17.11.11

# **Phases 1 and 2, Upwood Park, Tubney, Marcham, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Recording Action**

by James Lewis

**Report 07/106b**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological recording action carried out at Upwood Park, Tubney, Marcham, Oxfordshire (SU 4550 9999) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Andrew Liddle of Hills Quarries Products Ltd, Ailesbury Court, High Street, Malborough, Wiltshire, SN8 1AA.

Planning permission (app MAR/5529/1-CM) has been gained from Oxfordshire County Council to extract sand and limestone from land at Upwood Park, Tubney, Marcham, Oxfordshire, extending an previous quarry. The archaeological potential of the site was highlighted in a desk-based assessment (Hopkins 2008) and earlier field evaluation (Lamdin-Whymark 2003). These noted that the extraction areas were in an area of high archaeological potential with prehistoric finds found on the site itself and medieval finds discovered nearby. Due to the potential destruction of archaeological deposits a condition (24) was attached to the consent in line with Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990) and Policy PE9 of the Oxfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification based on a brief prepared by Oxfordshire Archaeological Services (Coddington 2010) and approved by Mr Hugh Coddington, Deputy County Archaeological Officer. The fieldwork was undertaken by Aiji Castle, James Lewis, Andrew MUNDIN and David Platt from 23rd May to 3rd November 2011 and the site code is UTO 07/106.

The current report relates to work in advance of extraction in areas referred to in the application as 'Fields 3 and 4' (extraction phases 1–2) and access roads. Further work in subsequent areas/extraction phases will be reported on in due course. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course. Human remains were removed under the terms of licence 11-0168 from HM Ministry of Justice.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located on the top of the Corallian ridge which separates the River Thames to the north and the River Ock to the south. The site is surrounded by mixed woodland of pine and broadleaf trees. To the west of the site is

the A338 and to the north-west A420 and beyond this lies the village of Appleton. The current land use is arable farming. The site is located on limestone, silt and sand (BGS 1971; 1982) and is at height of 90m above Ordnance Datum in the west, sloping down south-eastwards to 80m AOD.

## **Archaeological background**

A modest range of sites and finds have been recorded on the Corallian ridge (Briggs *et al.* 1986) though more recent work has examined and located a number of larger sites (Weaver and Ford 2005). The geological outcrop is noteworthy for its concentration of Mesolithic sites (Briggs and Hey 1993) and more recent evaluation fieldwork (OA 2003) has revealed further Mesolithic material along with Bronze Age arrowheads. A scatter of flint and both Neolithic and Post-medieval pottery was found in evaluation trenching within the site (OA 1998). Late Neolithic and Bronze Age activity was recorded to the east, south and west of the site with pottery. A field evaluation in 2003 (OA 2003) at Tubney Manor Farm to the north-west located a Roman ditch and a probable Roman ditch. Roman pottery was recorded during the evaluation of the north-eastern part of the overall application area (but not within the areas of work reported here). The site lies south of the deserted medieval village of Tubney (Brooks 1984).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the watching brief was to:

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

The specific objectives were:

- When was the site first occupied?
- When was the site first abandoned?
- What activities were taking place on the site?
- What was the nature and date of any scatters of lithic artefacts on the site? Are such scatters coincident with subsoil deposits?
- What is the nature and date of any landscape features encountered (eg. Fields, Boundary features, Large enclosures) and what is their spatial organisation?
- What is the palaeo-environmental setting of the area?

The removal of topsoil was carried out using a 360<sup>0</sup>-type digger fitted with a toothless bucket under constant archaeological supervision. This was continued until either the natural geology or archaeological deposits were encountered. If archaeological features were found these were to be hand cleaned and recorded to an agreed sampling level.

## **Results**

The two fields (3 and 4) explored in this phase of works revealed very modest archaeological deposits, the majority of these were probably post-medieval in date, However, one human cremation burial was found in field 4. A small amount of pottery was recovered from the topsoil, dating from the Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods.

### *Field 3*

Field 3 covered 1.69 ha and contained three features;

Gully 1 was aligned approximately north-south and measured 50m long and 0.9m wide and 0.1m deep. It contained a single fill (52) of brown sandy silt with three tiny sherds of 19th- or 20th- century pottery.

Gully 2 was located immediately to the west of gully 1 and was aligned north-south and measured 20m long, 0.8m wide and 0.06m deep. It contained a single fill (53) of brown sandy silt with two tiny sherds of 19th- or 20th- century pottery. Gullies 1 and 2 correspond closely with a hedge line of a marked on the 1899 Ordnance Survey map (Hopkins 2008, fig. 4) but not on the maps of 1871 or 1913 and are presumably the remains of a short-lived boundary.

Gully 3 extended from the north-east side of the field. It was a shallow gully which measured 10 long, 0.2m wide and 0.04m deep. It contained a single fill (54) of brown sandy silt with no finds.

### *Field 4*

Field 4 covered 1.92ha and again three features were recorded in it.

#### Ditch 100

Ditch 100 (excavated as slots 5, 6 and 8) was aligned northwest-southeast and measured approximately 225m long and between 0.65-1.9m wide and 0.18-0.3m deep. As the ditch continued NW it became shallower and extended beyond the NW and SE excavation boundary. The ditch contained a single fill of moderately compact brown orange sandy silt, with occasional limestone inclusions and contained no finds. Given that it so closely

mirrors the present field boundary, and its fill has not markedly leached, the ditch is not likely to be of any great antiquity.

#### Ditch 101

Ditch 101 (slots 4 and 7) was aligned NE-SW and measured 13.7m long and was 1.1m wide and 0.1m deep. It appeared to extend from ditch 100 from which it displayed an unclear relationship but was probably contemporary. Its line is close to a boundary marked on 19th and 20th-century maps. The ditch contained a single fill of loose dark brown sandy silt, with frequent limestone inclusions and again, contained no finds.

#### Cremation burial 9

Cremation burial 9 was located in the NE corner of the site. It was oval in plan and measured 0.45 long, 0.38m wide and 0.09m deep. It contained a single fill (60) which was dark brown to black silty sand with significant burnt bone and charcoal inclusions. The deposit was whole-earth sampled in four 0.02m spits but apart from the bone, no artefacts were found in this feature.

## **Finds**

### *Pottery by Paul Blinkhorn*

The pottery assemblage comprised 21 sherds with a total weight of 121g. It comprised a mixture of Roman, medieval and post-medieval wares. Post-Roman wares were recorded utilizing the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor and Oakley 1984; Mellor 1994), as follows:

**OXAC:** Cotswold-type ware, AD975–1350. 1 sherd, 4g.

**OXBF:** North-East Wiltshire Ware, AD1050–1400. 4 sherds, 31g.

**OXY:** Medieval Oxford ware, AD1075–350. 1 sherd, 11g.

**OXDR:** Red Earthenwares, AD1550 onwards. 1 sherd, 3g.

**WHEW:** Mass-produced white earthenwares, 19th - 20th century 5 sherds, 5g.

In addition, 9 sherds (67g) of Roman pottery were also noted, mainly grey wares, along with a single sherd of samian, thus all likely to date to the 1st – 2nd centuries. The pottery occurrence by number and weight of sherds per context by fabric type is shown in Appendix 2. All the pottery occurred in topsoil (50) or in post-medieval features, and thus the entire Roman and medieval assemblage is residual. The range of medieval wares indicates that there was activity at the site (which may amount to no more than dispersal of manure onto fields) in the 11th

and 12th centuries, but it then appears to have been abandoned, as Brill/Boarstall Ware (Oxford fabric OXAM), a common pottery type of the 13th century onwards in the region, is entirely absent.

### *Cremated Bone* by Ceri Falys

A single deposit of burnt human remains was recovered from the excavated area. The unurned remains were whole-earth recovered in a series of four 0.02m spits. During the post-excavation processing, these samples were floated and wet-sieved to a 1mm mesh size, with all burnt bone and other associated residues separated for further analysis. The burnt bone from each context was sorted using a sieve stack of 10mm, 5mm, and 2mm mesh sizes. For ease of sorting, the remains were considered in terms of those over the size of 10mm and 5mm, and those under 5mm for the purposes of weighing. The relative weights of the size fractions were recorded (Appendix 3). The degree of bone fragmentation can be inferred by the weight of bone in each category when compared to the fragment size.

A total of 1231g of bone was present for analysis. The vast majority of bone was 5mm in size or smaller, making element identification impossible in many instances. This greatly decreased the amount of retrievable demographic and pathological data from the remains.

All bone was subjected to osteological analysis following the procedures suggested by Brickley and McKinley (2004) and Buikstra and Ubelaker (1994). The condition of bone was generally poor, with a worn and chalky appearance. The surfaces of all pieces were heavily etched, likely from root activity. The majority of the bone was completely oxidized (i.e. buff-white or white in colour), indicating an efficient cremation process. This demonstrates the skeleton was subjected to adequate time, temperature and oxygen supply for the organic components of the bone to be oxidized. The maximum fragment size was 73mm in length.

The analysis divided fragments into five main areas of the body: cranial, axial, upper limb, lower limb and long bone (unidentifiable to specific limb). A more detailed identification of fragments to specific skeletal element and side was also attempted, where possible. The most frequently preserved and identifiable fragments were portions of the cranial vault, tooth roots, pieces of mandible, and phalanges of the fingers. Non-descript fragments of long bone shafts were also exceptionally common. Both the preservation of the remains and the degree of fragmentation were detrimental to the reliable application of skeletal demographic techniques (i.e. age-at-death estimation and sex determination methods). No observable pattern of skeletal element deposition was present between spits.



Skeletal age at death was assessed based on a very limited number of observations present, and resulted in very general age classification. Young individuals are commonly identified based on the degree of dental development (van Beek 2002) and the degree of epiphyseal fusion (Scheuer and Black 2004). Adult individuals can be identified through the presence of third molars (wisdom teeth), fully fused skeletal elements, and the presence of degenerative changes to selected limited-movement joints (i.e. pubic symphysis, auricular surface, sternal rib ends etc).

Based on differences in skeletal development, this deposit of burnt human bone was found to contain a minimum of two individuals, one adult and one infant. The infant was identified by the presence of a proximal humerus and a manual distal phalanx, both demonstrating characteristic small size and development of infant remains. The second individual's skeletal elements had all completed maturation (i.e. epiphyses had fully fused), although could not be given a more precise age other than adult, due to the lack of observable degenerative criteria.

The sex of adult individuals is commonly determined through the observation of sexually dimorphic aspects of the skull and pelvis. Only non-diagnostic fragments of pelvis were present, however portions of the frontal and occipital bones suggested the sex of the adult individual to be possibly female. Evidence of pathological alterations and non-metric traits were investigated on all bone fragments, although none were able to be identified. As was found with determination of demographic information, the degree of preservation and fragmentation greatly hindered this examination.

In conclusion, this human cremation burial contained the remains of two individuals, one adult possible female and one infant.

## *Environmental Samples By Rosalind McKenna*

### Introduction

A programme of soil sampling was implemented during the excavation, which included the collection of soil samples from sealed contexts. The aim of the sampling was:

- To assess the type of preservation and the potential of the biological remains
- To record any human activities undertaken on the site – both domestic and industrial
- To provide information on the past environment of the area.

### Methods

Following selection, subsamples of raw sediment from the selected samples were processed. The samples were examined in the laboratory, where they were described using a pro forma. The subsamples were processed by

staff at TVAS and were floated and wet sieved using a 0.25mm mesh. The flot was air dried. The heavy residue (the material which does not float) was not examined, and therefore the results presented here are based entirely on the material from the flot. The flot was examined under a low-power binocular microscope at magnifications between x12 and x40.

A four point semi quantitative scale was used, from '1' – one or a few specimens (less than an estimated six per kg of raw sediment) to '4' – abundant remains (many specimens per kg or a major component of the matrix). The flot was then sieved into convenient fractions (4, 2, 1 and 0.3mm) for sorting and identification of charcoal fragments. Identifiable material was only present within the 4 and 2mm fractions. The number of charcoal fragments to be identified is dependent on the diversity of the flora. A study by Keepax (1988, 120-124) has indicated that depending on the location of the archaeology site, 100-400 fragments of charcoal would need to be identified in order to obtain a full range of species. A random selection of ideally 100 fragments of charcoal of varying sizes was made, which were then identified. Where samples did not contain 100 identifiable fragments, all fragments were studied and recorded. This information is recorded with the results of the assessment in Appendix 4 below. Identification was made using the wood identification guides of Schweingruber (1978) and Hather (2000). Taxa identified only to genus cannot be identified more closely due to a lack of defining characteristics in charcoal material.

## Results

Four sub-samples, from spits 1 – 4 of the cremation urn are the basis of this investigation. Appendix 4 below shows the components recorded from each of the samples.

Charred plant macrofossils present in one of the sub-samples. Where charred remains were present they were very poorly preserved, and were lacking in most identifying morphological characteristics. The results of this analysis can be seen in Appendix 4 below. The nut shell fragments lacked identifying morphological characteristics and this unfortunately precluded identification.

Plant macrofossils that were modern contaminants were also present in 3 of the sub-samples, and were represented by the species of goosefoot/orache and cinquefoils.

Charcoal fragments were present in all 4 of the samples, scoring a '2' on the semi quantitative scale. The preservation of the charcoal fragments was relatively variable even within the samples. Some of the charcoal was firm and crisp and allowed for clean breaks to the material permitting clean surfaces where identifiable characteristics were visible. However, most of the fragments were very brittle, and the material tended to crumble or break in uneven patterns making the identifying characteristics harder to distinguish and interpret.

The majority of the charcoal present in the samples was too poor to enable identification, and so only a limited amount of environmental data can be gained from the samples. Three of the samples produced remains with identifiable material. Table 1 below shows the results of the charcoal assessment.

The total range of taxa comprises willow/poplar (*Salix/Populus*), and oak (*Quercus*). These taxa belong to the groups of species represented in the native British flora. As seen in Table 1, oak is the most numerous of the identified charcoal fragments present in three of the samples, with willow/poplar being identified in two samples. It is possible that these were the preferred fuel woods obtained from a local environment containing a broader choice of species.

As most of the samples contained only a few charcoal fragments, nothing of interpretable value can be gained from them apart being able to identify the charcoal present – oak dominated the majority of samples, with willow/poplar also being present.

Bark was also present on some of the charcoal fragments, and this indicates that the material is more likely to have been firewood, or the result of a natural fire.

Generally, there are various, largely unquantifiable, factors that effect the representation of species in charcoal samples including bias in contemporary collection, inclusive of social and economic factors, and various factors of taphonomy and conservation (Thery-Parisot 2002). On account of these considerations, the identified taxa are not considered to be proportionately representative of the availability of wood resources in the environment in a definitive sense, and are possibly reflective of particular choice of fire making fuel from these resources.

Root / rootlet fragments were also present within all four of the sub-samples. This indicates disturbance of the archaeological features, and this may be due to the nature of some features being relatively close to the surface, as well as deep root action from vegetation that covered the site. The presence of earthworm egg capsules in two sub-samples further confirms this, as does the presence of modern contaminants of plant macrofossils in three of the sub-samples.

### Conclusion

The samples produced little environmental material of interpretable value, with the exception of the charcoal remains from three of the samples, and the plant macrofossils from a single sample. The compositions of the samples are all very similar. The deposits, from which the samples derive, probably represent the debris associated with the cremation – possible indicating the use of oak as the desired fuel for use in cremating bodies combined with the use of willow/poplar probably as kindling material.

These charcoal remains showed the exploitation of several species native to Britain, including oak and salix/poplar being selected and used as fire wood. Oak has good burning properties and would have made a fire suitable for most purposes (Edlin 1949). Oak is a particularly useful fire fuel as well as being a commonly used structural/artefactual wood that may have had subsequent use as a fire fuel (Rossen and Olsen 1985). Willow/Poplar are species that are ideal to use for kindling. They are anatomically less dense than for example, oak and ash and burn quickly at relatively high temperatures (Cutler and Gale 2000, 34, 236, Grogan *et al.* 2007, 29-31). This property makes them good to use as kindling, as the high temperatures produced would encourage the oak to ignite and start to burn.

As asserted by Scholtz (1986) cited in Prins and Shackleton (1992, 632), the “Principle of Least Effort” suggests that communities of the past collected firewood from the closest possible available wooded area, and in particular the collection of economically less important kindling fuel wood (which was most likely obtained from the area close to the site), the charcoal assemblage does suggest that the local vegetation would have consisted of an oak woodland close to the site.

The archaeobotanical evidence found in a single sample provides little evidence of interpretable value due to there being only several fragments of unidentifiable nut shell.

## Conclusion

The recording action at Upwood Park found a modest amount of archaeological deposits. All the ditches and gullies were probably no older than the post-medieval period. The cremation burial is probably prehistoric but appears to be an isolated feature within the wider landscape. Further excavation to the south and or east of this feature may reveal whether it is isolated or part of a larger cemetery. As large scale area excavations have often demonstrated, isolated cremation burials of various dates are not uncommon in the archaeological record (e.g. at Trench 44 in Jennett’s Park in Bracknell; Simmonds *et al.* 2009).

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**APPENDIX 1: Feature details**

<i>Group</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
	1	52	Gully	19th century	Pottery
	2	53	Gully	19th century	Pottery
	3	54	Gully	Unknown	None
101	4	55	Gully	Unknown	None
100	5	56	Gully	Unknown	None
100	6	57	Gully	Unknown	None
101	7	58	Gully terminus	Unknown	None
100	8	59	Ditch	Unknown	None
	9	60	Cremation	Unknown	None

**APPENDIX 2:** Pottery occurrence by number and weight (in g) of sherds per context by fabric type

Cut	Deposit	RB		OXAC		OXBF		OXY		OXDR		WHEW	
		No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt	No	Wt
	50	9	67	1	4	4	31	1	11	1	3		
1	52											3	3
2	53											2	2
	Total	9	67	1	4	4	31	1	11	1	3	5	5

**APPENDIX 3: Summary of burnt human bone fragmentation**

All from cut 9, fill 60

<i>Spit</i>	<i>10mm</i>		<i>5mm</i>		<i>&lt;5mm</i>		<b>Total wt (g)</b>
	<i>(g)</i>	<i>(%)</i>	<i>(g)</i>	<i>(%)</i>	<i>(g)</i>	<i>(%)</i>	
1	233	47.6	125	25.6	131	26.8	<b>489</b>
2	199	55.9	77	21.6	80	22.5	<b>356</b>
3	131	52.0	49	19.4	72	28.6	<b>252</b>
4	54	40.3	27	20.1	53	39.6	<b>134</b>
	<b>617</b>	<b>50.1</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>22.6</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>27.3</b>	<b>1231</b>



#### APPENDIX 4: Environmental Samples

##### A) Charcoal

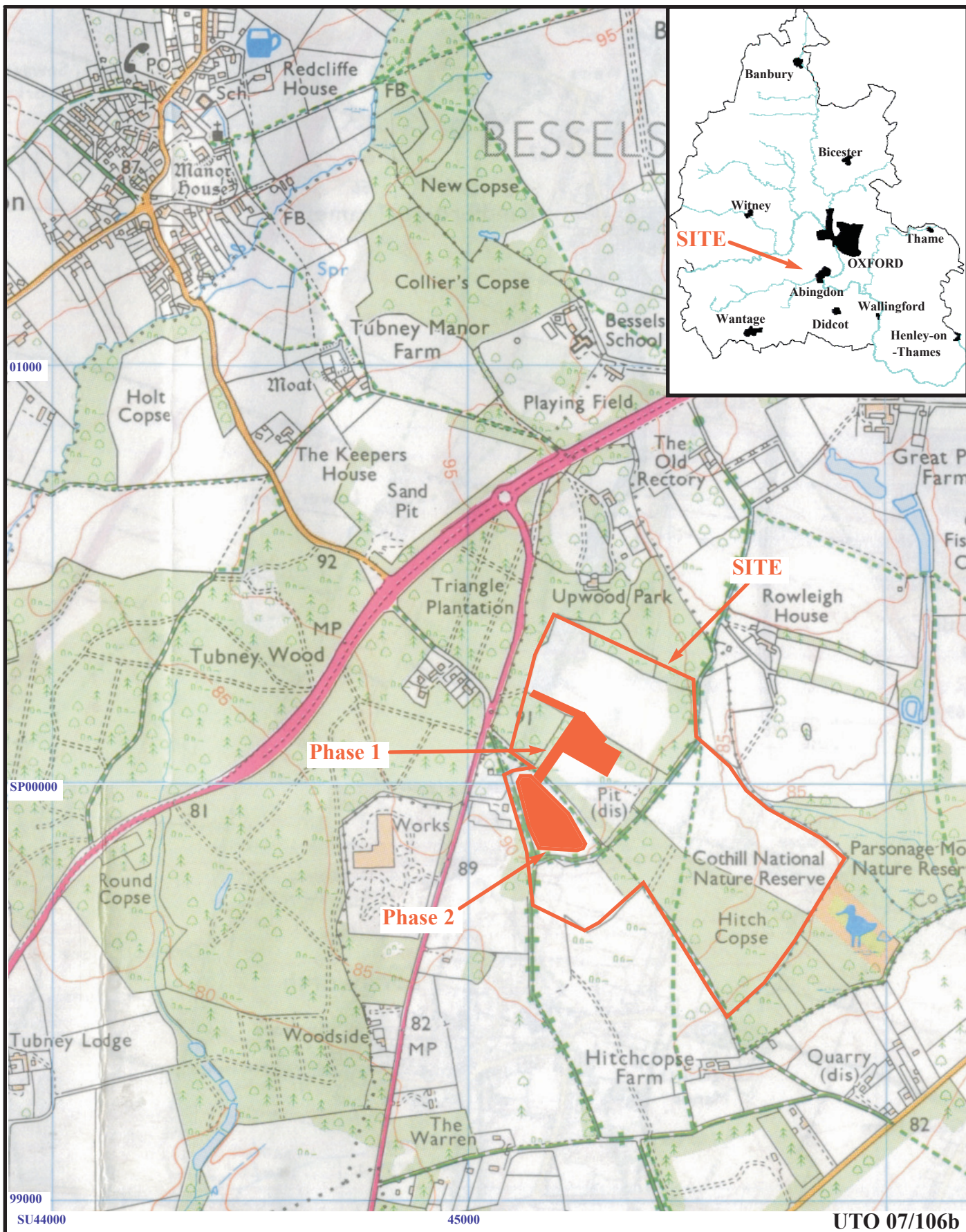
Sample		1	1	1	1
Cut		9	9	9	9
Deposit		60	60	60	60
Spit Number		1	2	3	4
Feature type		Cremation	Cremation	Cremation	Cremation
No fragments		17	11	18	12
Max size (mm)		5	9	8	10
<b>Name</b>	<b>Vernacular</b>				
<i>Salix / Populus</i>	Willow / Poplar		1		1
<i>Quercus</i>	Oak	2	2		
	Indeterminate	15	8	18	11

B) Semi quantitative score of the components of the samples is based on a four point scale, from '1' – one or a few remains (less than an estimated six per kg of raw sediment) to '4' – abundant remains (many per kg or a major component of the matrix).

<b>Sample</b>	1	1	1	1
<b>Cut</b>	9	9	9	9
<b>Deposit</b>	60	60	60	60
<b>Feature type</b>	Cremation	Cremation	Cremation	Cremation
<b>Spit Number</b>	1	2	3	4
Bone fgts.	2	1	5	2
Charcoal fgts.	2	2	2	2
Earthworm egg capsules		1		1
Plant macros. (ch.)				1
Plant macros. (m/c)	2	1	1	
Root/rootlet fgts.	3	3	4	4
Sand	4	4	3	3
Snails	1	2	2	2

##### C) Other

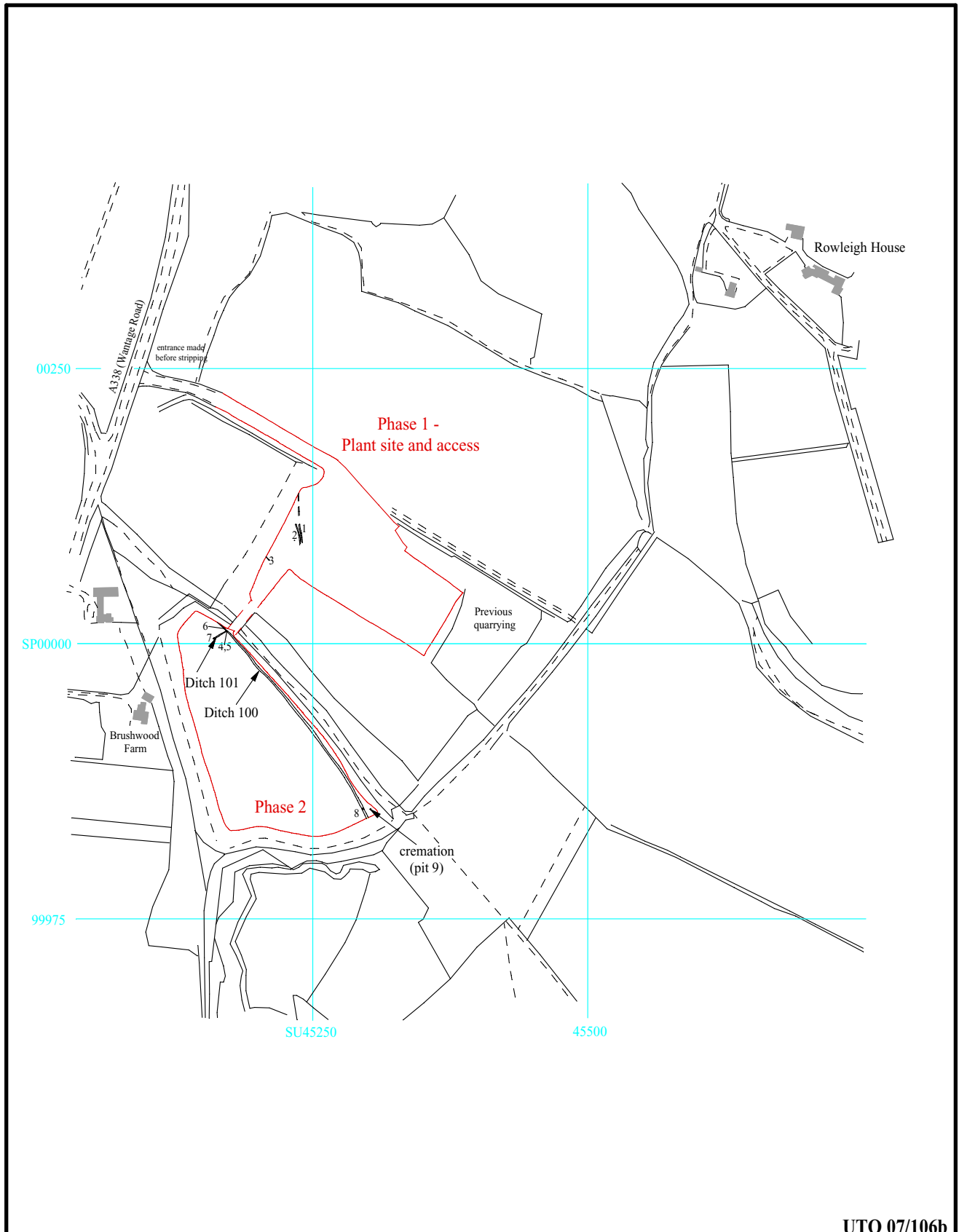
<b>Sample</b>	<b>1</b>	
<b>Cut</b>	<b>9</b>	
<b>Deposit</b>	<b>60</b>	
<b>Feature type</b>	<b>Cremation</b>	
<b>Spit Number</b>	<b>4</b>	
<b>LATIN BINOMAL</b>		<b>COMMON NAME</b>
Indeterminate nutshell fgts.	4	Indeterminate nutshell fgts.



**Upwood Quarry, Tubney Wood, Oxfordshire, 2011  
Archaeological recording action - Phase 1 and 2**

Figure 1. Location of site within Tubney Wood and Oxfordshire.

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Explorer 170 and 180 at 1:12500  
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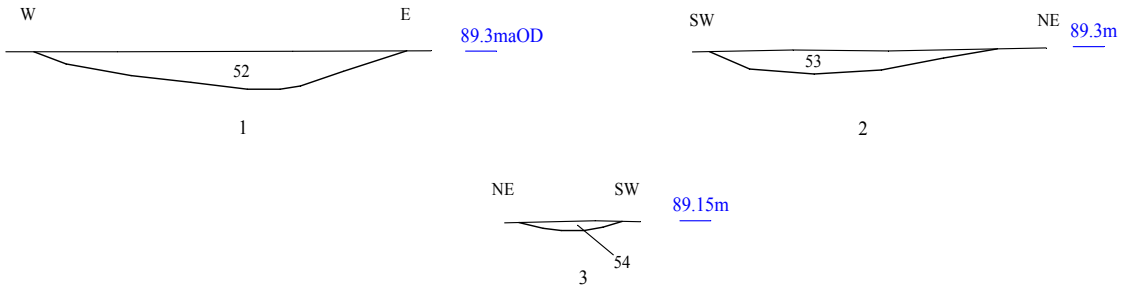
**Upwood Quarry, Tubney Wood,  
Oxfordshire, 2011  
Archaeological recording action - Phase 1 and 2**

Figure 2. Location of site works.

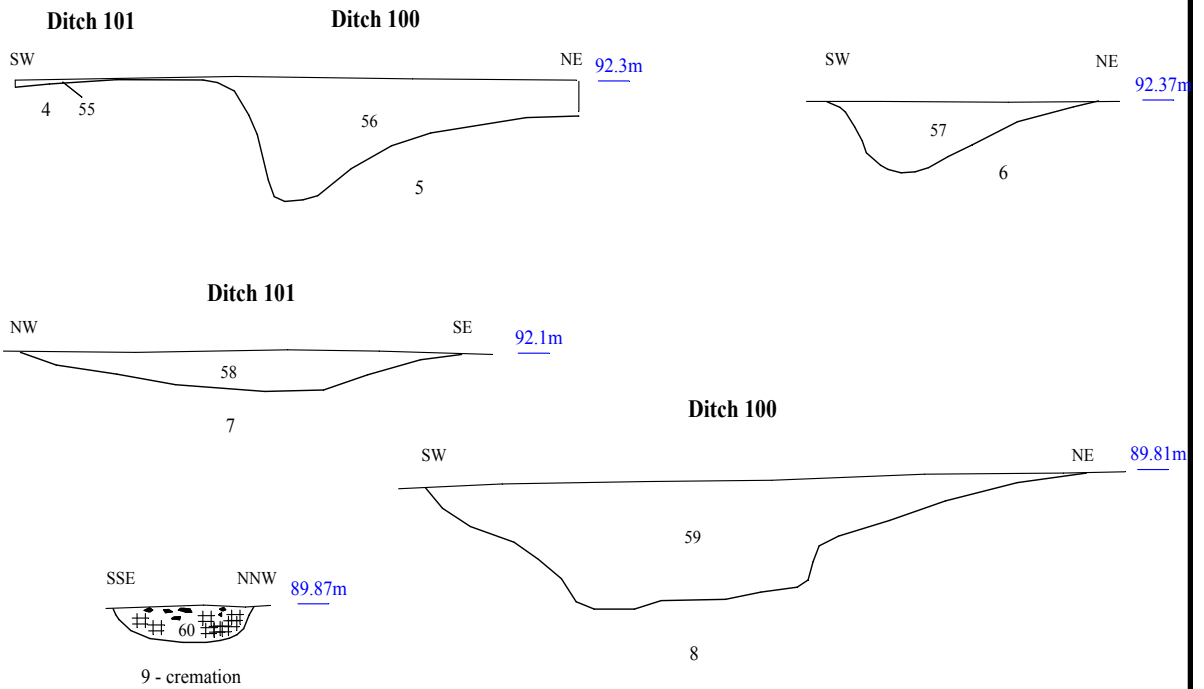


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**Phase 1**



**Phase 2**



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Figure 3. Sections.



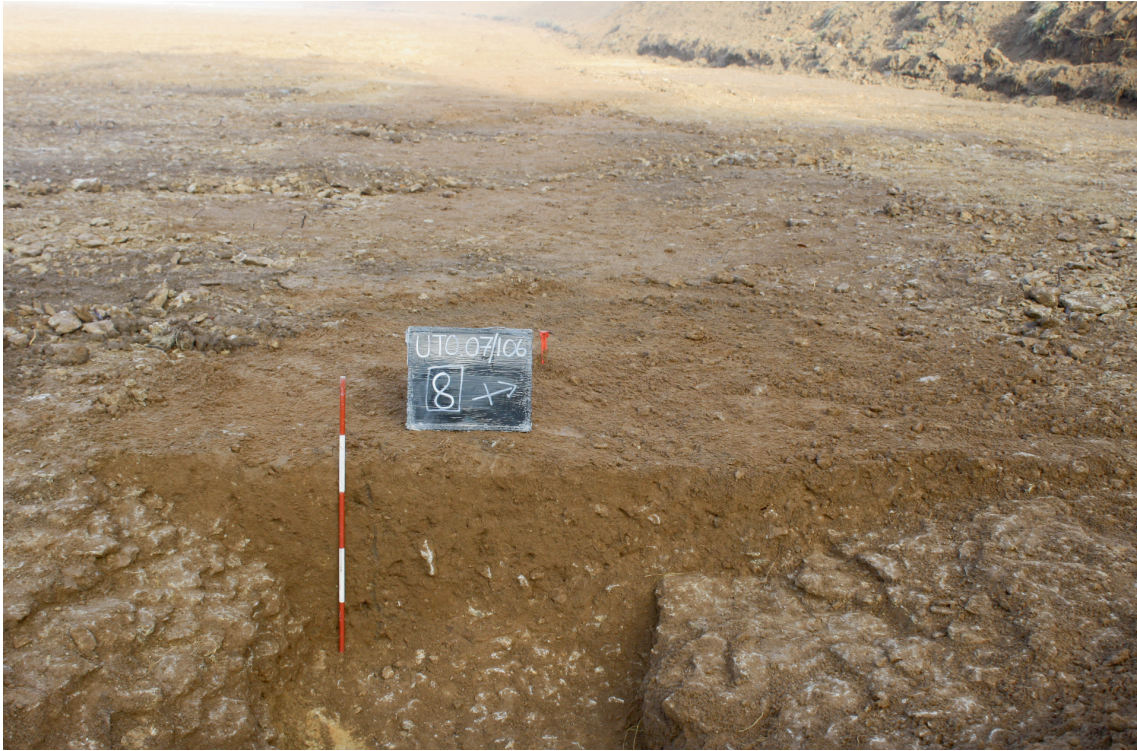


Plate 1. Phase 2, slot 8 in Ditch 100, looking north west, Scales: 0.5m.



Plate 2. Phase 2. cremation burial (9), looking north west, Scale: 0.5m

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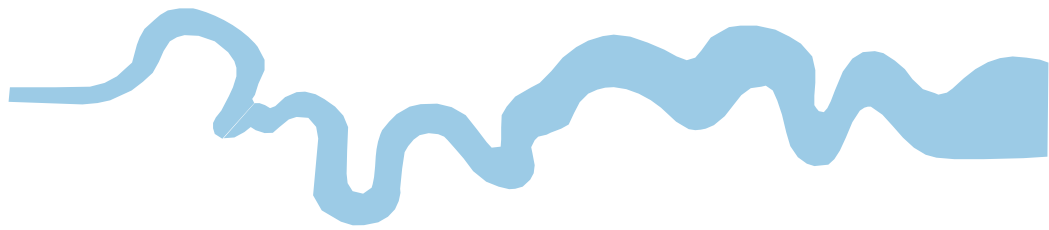
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Plates 1 and 2.

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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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