

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Chapel Meadow, Copse Grove,
Ogbourne St George, Wiltshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Daniel Bray

**Site Code: OSG12/07
(SU 2044 7435)**

**New Grain Store, Chapel Meadow, Copse Grove,
Ogbourne St George, Wiltshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr R Iliffe

by Daniel Bray

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Ltd

SiteCodeOSG12/07

November 2012

Summary

Site name: New Grain Store, Chapel Meadow, Copse Grove, Ogbourne St George, Wiltshire

Grid reference: SU 2044 7435

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 8th September – 12th September 2012

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Daniel Bray

Site code: OSG 12/07

Area of site: c.0.5 ha

Summary of results: A single ring gully was found measuring approximately 9m in diameter. It revealed an incomplete skeleton of a baby but contained no dateable finds. From its form, it is likely that the structure is a house of Iron Age date but is possibly a small levelled round barrow of Bronze Age date.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 21.11.12

New Grain Store, Chapel Meadow, Copse Drove, Ogbourne St George, Wiltshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Daniel Bray

Report 12/07

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Chapel Meadow, Copse Drove, Ogbourne St. George, Wiltshire (SU 2044 7435) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Irene Dymond of Fowler Architects and Planning Limited, 19 High Street, Pewsey, Wiltshire, SN9 5AF on behalf of Mr R Iliffe, of The Pooles Yard, High Street, Ogbourne St. George, Marlborough, Wiltshire, SN8 1SL.

Planning consent (E/2011/1683/FUL) has been granted by Wiltshire Council to construct a new multi-purpose farm building at Copse Drove, Ogbourne St George, Wiltshire. The consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology which requires 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Environment* (PPS5 2010), and the Council's policies on archaeology although it is acknowledged that PPS5 has been superseded by the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012).

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr David Vaughan former Assistant Archaeologist for Wiltshire. The fieldwork was undertaken by Daniel Bray, along with Marta Buczek, James Earley, Jo Pine and David Platt between the 8th and 12th September 2012 and the site code is OSG 12/07.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located directly to the east of the village of Ogbourne St. George and the A346, in the bottom of a valley. Marlborough is c. 5km north and the River Og runs through the centre of the village, to the west of the site. Copse Drove forms the northern boundary of the site and Copse Drove Dairy Farm marks the eastern side (Fig. 2). The excavation area lies in the north west corner of Chapel Meadow and slopes gently from south to north. The underlying geology is recorded as valley gravel (BGS 1974) although a clay and flint colluvial deposit was observed above a chalky marl natural geology. The site lies at a height of 155m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location close to the projected line of the Roman road from *Cunetio* (Mildenhall, near Marlborough) to *Durocornovium* (Wanborough near Swindon). It is possible that such a location could have been used for Roman roadside settlement or burial. The site lies some distance from the historic centre of the village which has late Saxon origins and is mentioned in Domesday Book of 1086 (Williams and Martin 2002). A number of Bronze Age round barrows and prehistoric or Roman field systems have also been recorded for the area.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief 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 overburden removal, ground reduction and the digging of foundation trenches for the new building, and any service runs.

Results

Topsoil, 0.20m thick, was removed from the whole site area of 90m by 46.5m to expose a flinty, clayey colluvial deposit. The ground reduction was undertaken by a 360° excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Inspection of this area revealed no archaeological deposits or artefacts (Pl. 1).

The underlying colluvial deposit was also stripped for the footprint of the proposed building to expose the natural geology which was chalk marl (head?). This revealed a single incomplete ring gully [10] measuring approximately 9m in diameter (Pl. 2). It was investigated by a series of seven slots (Fig 3, 1–7) which were a nominal 2 m length each. This revealed that the gully ranged in depth from 0.08m-0.20m with a single fill (Fig. 4) The whole circuit of the gully was excavated. The excavation of terminal ends, [2] and [3], suggest a west-south-west facing entrance although slot [1] is also a terminal end possibly indicating that the structure was segmented rather than continuous. The fills (52) – (58) were firmly compacted, dark greyish brown with a clay silt matrix with occasional flint inclusions. The incomplete skeleton of a baby was revealed in slot [7] fill (58) on the eastern side. No dateable pottery or artefacts were found associated with the burial nor elsewhere in the gully.

Finds

Human Bone by Ceri Falys

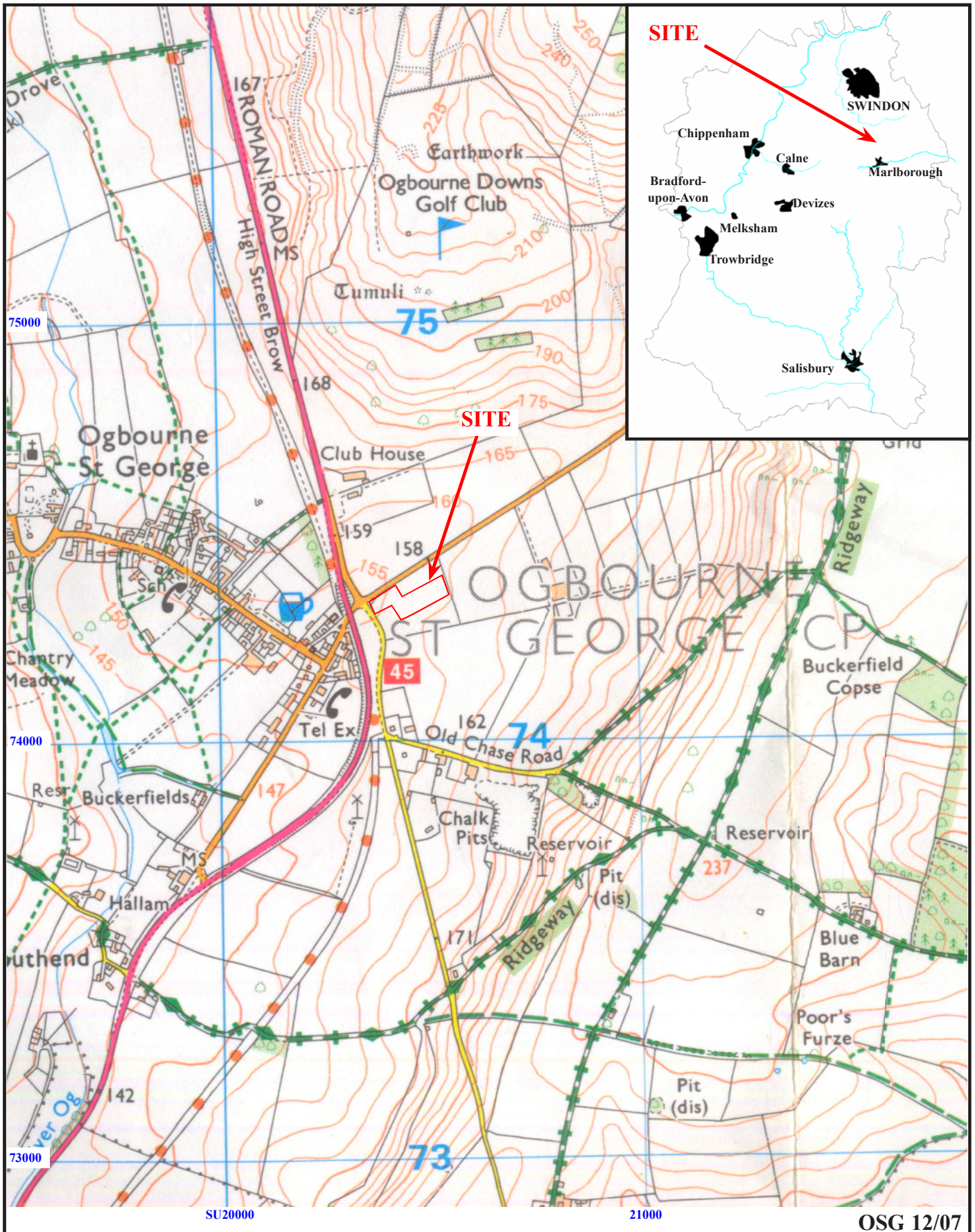
Human skeletal remains were recovered from a portion of the excavated ring gully (58). Although fragmentary and incomplete, the skeleton of a baby was identified. The skeleton was approximately 25% complete, with fragments of the frontal bone, maxilla, pars basilaris, ribs, mid-clavicle shaft (unside), humeri, ulnae, radii, right femur, and left tibia present for analysis. The preservation of the remains was fair, as the cortical bone surfaces were commonly etched from root activity, and all pieces were fragmented to some degree. The left humerus and tibia were sufficiently complete to allow measurement in order to provide an estimate of age-at-death. The length of the humerus (62.1mm) and tibia (63.2mm) fell into the range of standard maximum lengths of long bones of a perinatal (around the time of birth) baby aged 10 lunar months (Scheuer and Black 2004, 275). The sex of the individual could not be determined, and pathological alterations were not observed. Although the reason or cause of death can never be known, neonatal mortality can be the result of genetic and maternal influences, such as congenital anomalies, prematurity, low birth weight and birth trauma (Lewis 2007). No further information could be retrieved from the remains of this perinate.

Conclusion

A ring gully was revealed and excavated during a watching brief in advanced of the erection of a new barn. Excavation of the gully revealed the incomplete skeleton of a baby but no dateable artefacts were found associated with the burial. The structure is of a size and form, with a possible entrance to the south west suggestive that it is a ring gully house of Iron Age date. However, it is also possible, but much less likely that it is the remnants of a small burial mound of Bronze Age date. Unfortunately despite full excavation, the lack of any artefacts precludes an easy reconciliation of this dating issue.

References

- BGS, 1974, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 266, Drift Edition, Keyworth
Lewis, M E, 2007, *The Bioarchaeology of Children*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Department of Communities and Local Government, London (TSO)
PPS5, 2010, *Planning for the Historic Environment*, The Stationery Office, Norwich
Scheuer, L and Black, S, 2004, *The Juvenile Skeleton*, London
Williams, A, and Martins, G H, 2002, *Domesday Book, a complete translation*, London



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Archaeological watching brief

Figure 1. Location of site within Ogbourne St. George and Wiltshire.

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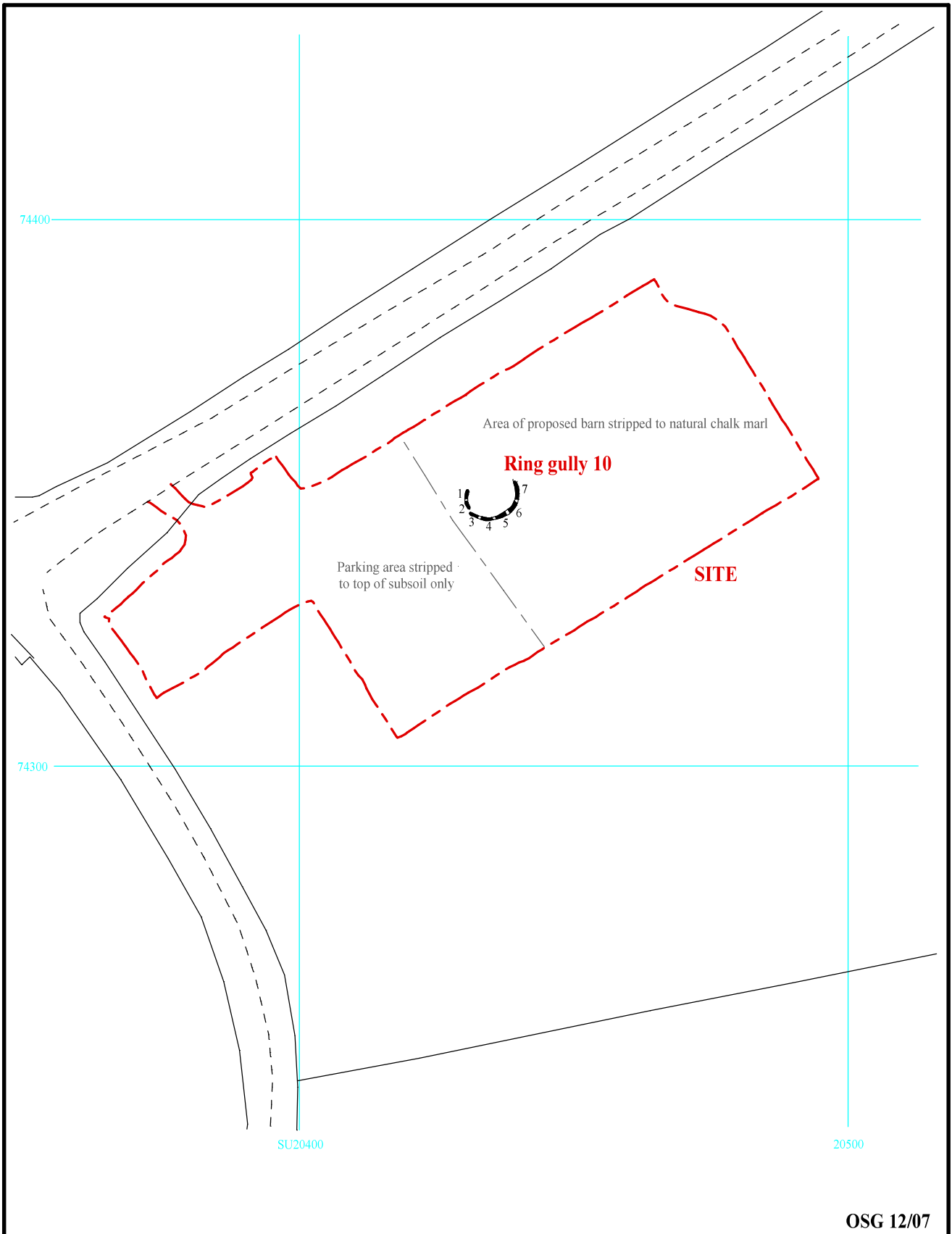


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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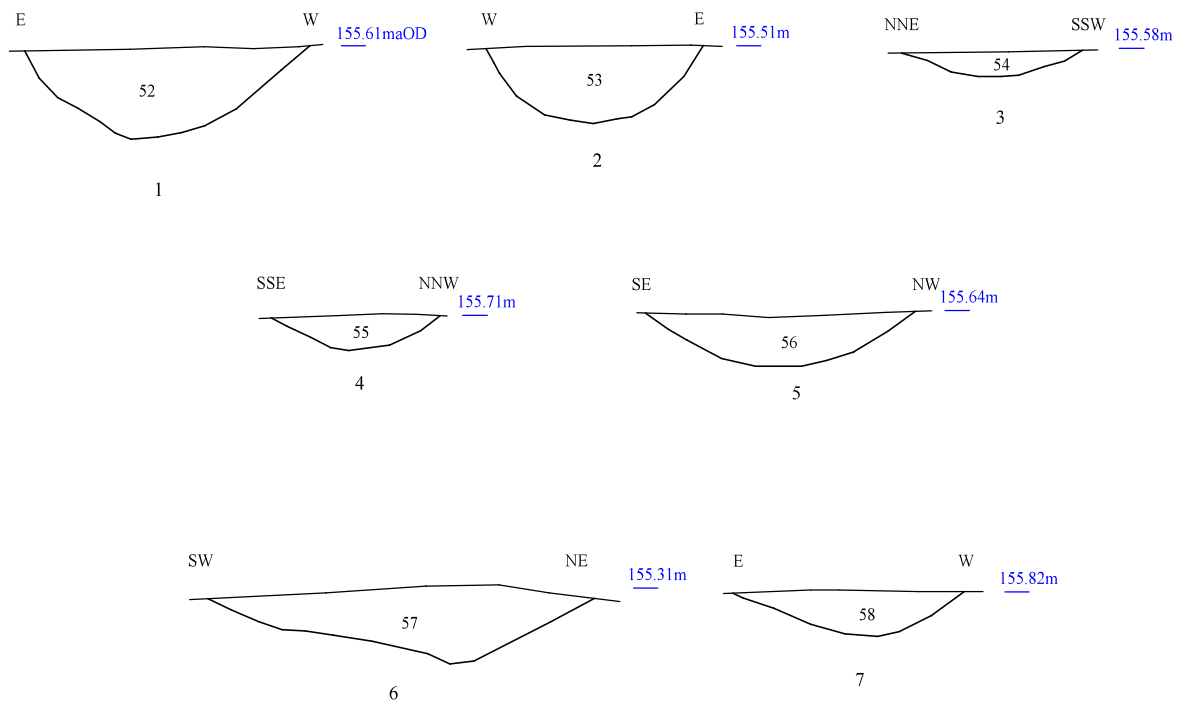
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Figure 3. Plan of observed area.



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Figure 4. Sections.





Plate 1. Setting of site strip, looking east, Scales: 2m vertical.

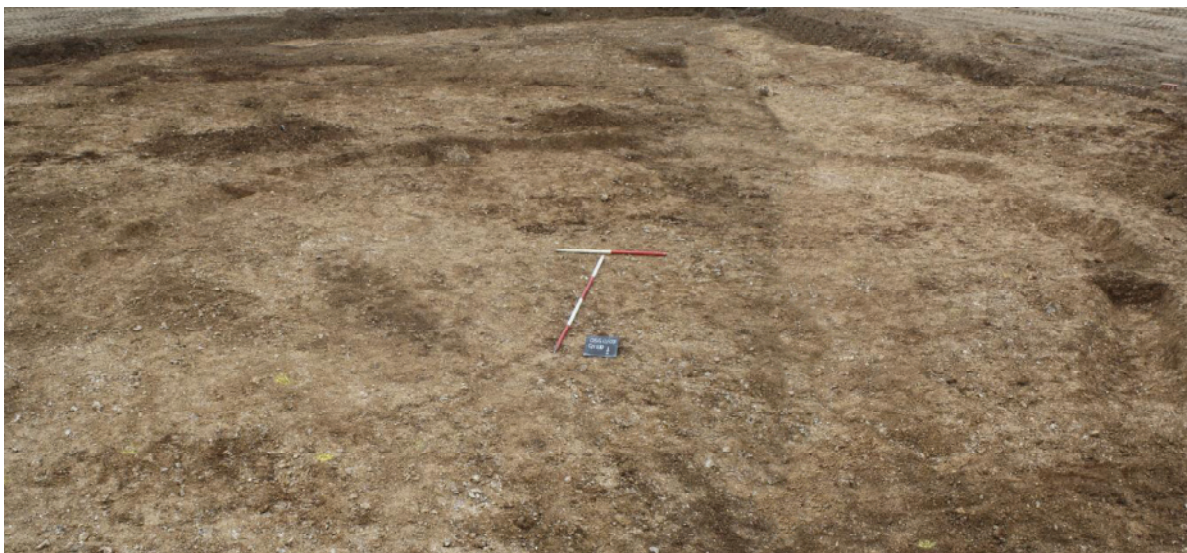


Plate 2. Ring gully 10, looking south, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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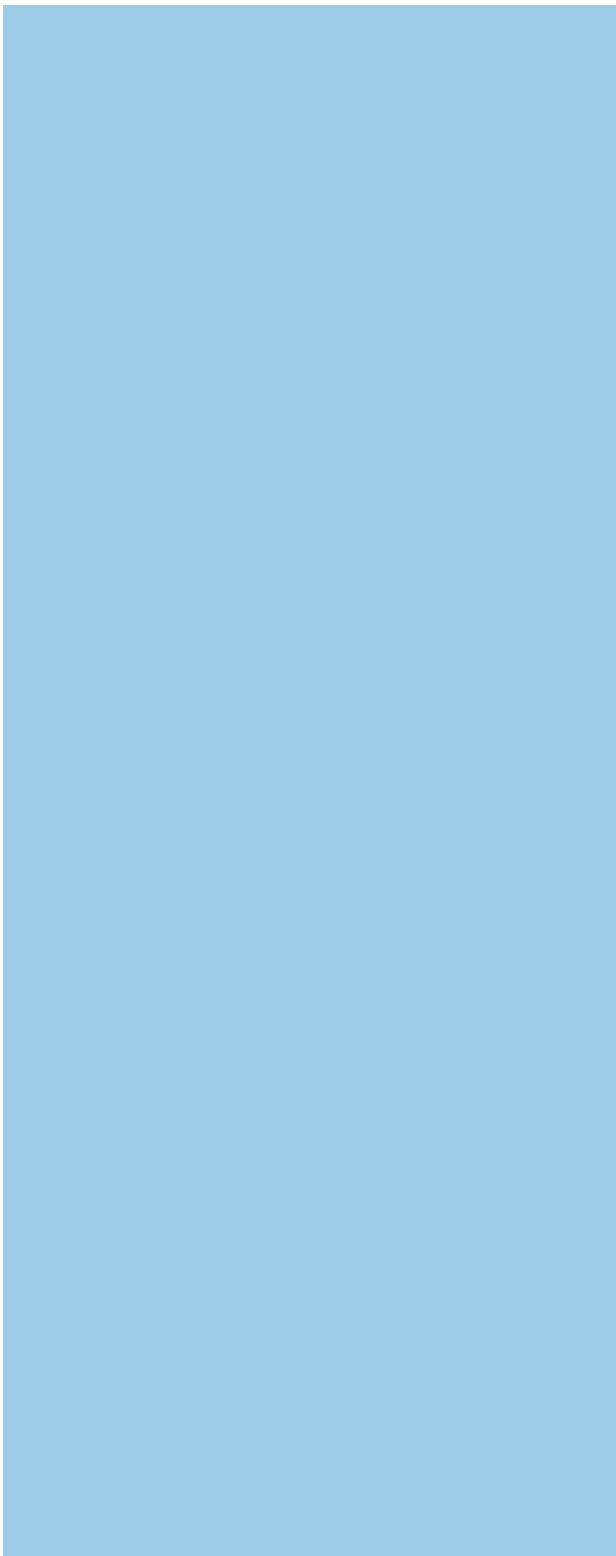
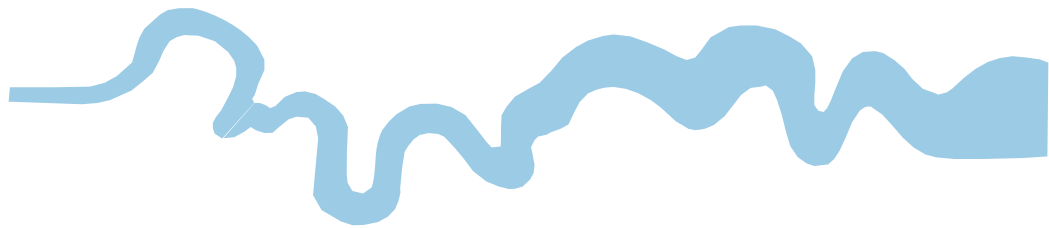
Plates 1 and 2.

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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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