

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**New antennae site, Harwell Science Park,
Harwell, Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andy Taylor

Site Code: NAH13/222

(SU 4825 8675)

New antennae site, Harwell Science Park, Harwell, Oxfordshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Kemp and Kemp LLP

by Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code NAH 13/222

November 2013

Summary

Site name: New antennae site, Harwell Science Park, Harwell, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 4825 8675

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 25th November- 9th December 2013

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: NAH 13/222

Summary of results: The fieldwork examined small areas stripped of overburden for the new antennae structures along with a number of test pits on the route of a cable trench. However, no deposits or finds of an archaeological nature were observed.

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

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

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New antennae site, Harwell Science Park, Harwell, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

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Report 13/222

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out for the construction of a new antennae at Harwell Science Park, Harwell, Oxfordshire (SU 4825 8675) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mrs Nicky Brock on behalf of Kemp & Kemp LLP, The Studio, Grove St, Summertown, Oxford, OX2 7JT. Planning permission (P13/1641/FUL) has been gained for the construction of a new antennae base with placement of storage units and an associated cable trench. The consent was subject to a condition relating to archaeology.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) and the County's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist with Oxfordshire County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor between 25th November and 9th December 2013. The site code is NAH 13/222.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the east side of the Harwell Science Park, Harwell, Oxfordshire, which lies to the west of Didcot (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is mapped as Lower Chalk (BGS 1971), although where observed this also had a gravelly clay capping. The site lies at a height of *c.* 119m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from a number of sites and finds recorded in the Oxfordshire historic environment record within the environs of the Harwell complex. Well to the south an Iron Age occupation site and Roman villa have recently been excavated (Pine and Preston, 2014) with an additional Iron Age and Roman site recorded to the south west within the footprint of the Diamond Building. Close to the site to the west, recent evaluation has revealed the presence of a prehistoric ditch and post-medieval ditch.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits prior to any impact by the groundworks. This would involve examination of areas of ground reduction and excavation of service trenches.

The areas observed were to be those containing the aerial platform, generator and communications as well as a cable trench. These would be stripped using a small 360° type machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket. The test pits for the cable were to be hand dug.

Results

The antennae area

The whole area to contain the aerial platform, generator and communications structures was initially stripped of 0.20m of topsoil (Fig. 2). This action did not reveal the archaeologically relevant levels and no artefacts of archaeological interest were revealed.

The three areas for the structures were reduced further under archaeological supervision down to the top of the natural geology. The antennae base area measured 6m x 5m, the generator area 2 x 2m and the communications area 6m x 4m (Fig. 2; Pl. 1). The stratigraphy observed for these areas consisted of up to 0.05m of remnant topsoil above 0.14m of light grey brown silty clay subsoil overlying a gravelly clay with patches of decayed chalk. These areas would be further reduced into the natural geology at a later date. No archaeological deposits were revealed.

The cable trench

A cable trench of c. 300m length was to be dug along the line of the nearby access road. Initially five small test pits were dug along its length in order to ascertain the stratigraphy on the route and/ or adjacent areas.

Pit 1

This measured 1.60m in length, 0.30m wide and 0.20m deep. It consisted of 0.20m of turf/topsoil overlying concrete.

Pit 2 (Pl. 2)

This measured 2.00m in length, 0.40m wide and 0.22m deep. It consisted of 0.22m of turf/topsoil overlying concrete.

Pit 3

This measured 1.90m in length, 0.30m wide and 0.60m deep. It consisted of 0.10m of turf/topsoil overlying 0.23m of Tarmac and soil made ground. This overlay 0.17m of light grey brown silty clay overlying 0.10m of silty chalk natural geology.

Pit 4

This measured 1.00m in length, 0.30m wide and 0.50m deep. It consisted of 0.13m of turf/topsoil overlying 0.21m of redeposited chalk overlying 0.16m of subsoil.

Pit 5

This measured 5.00m in length, 0.30m wide and 0.40m deep. It consisted of 0.10m of turf/topsoil overlying 0.20m subsoil and chalk mix overlying Tarmac.

None of the test pits revealed any deposits or artefacts of archaeological interest but all showed the presence of modern made ground. As the proposed new cable was to be laid in a shallow trench no deeper than this made ground, it's digging was not further observed.

Finds

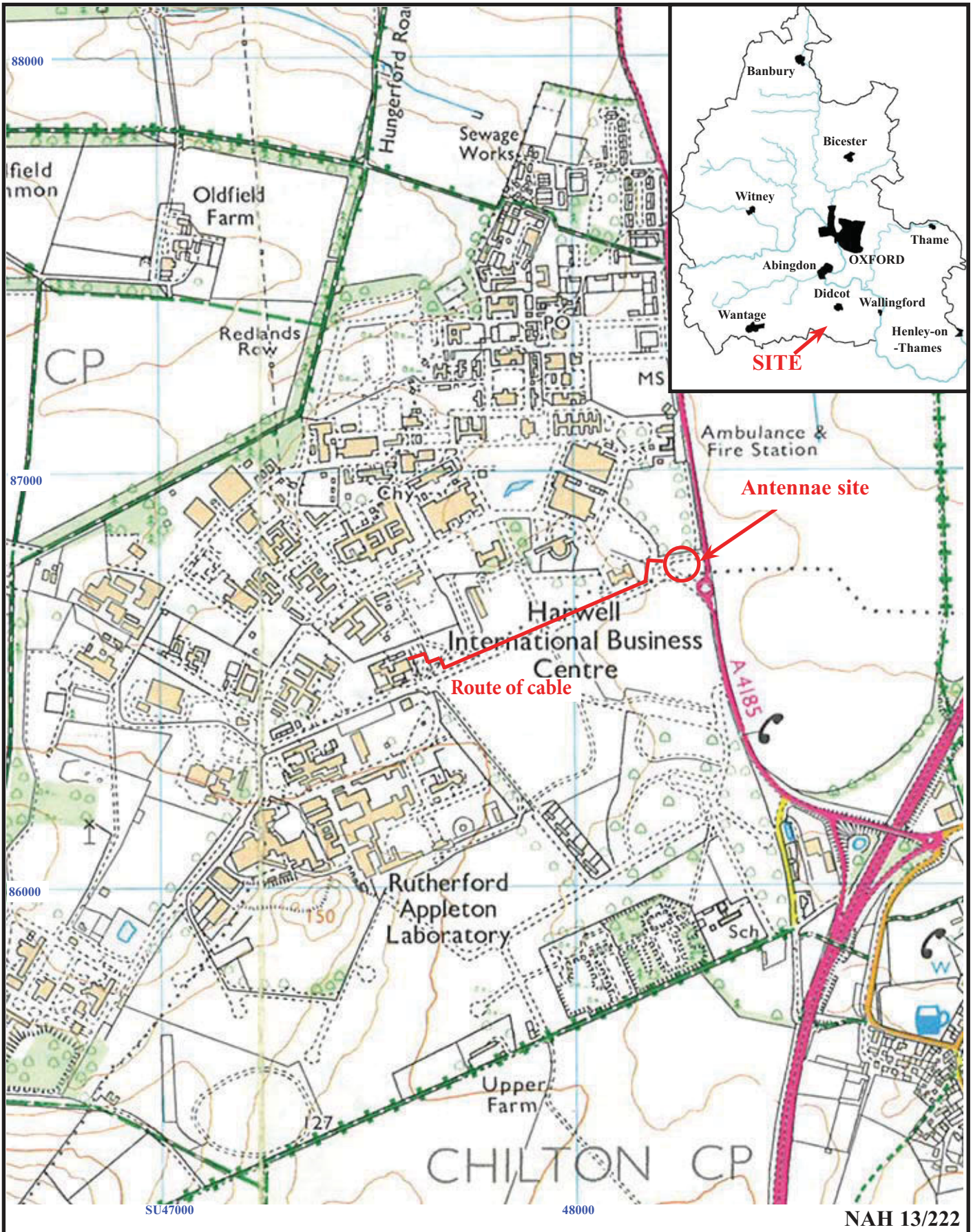
No finds of an archaeological nature were recovered during the course of the watching brief.

Conclusion

Despite the potential for the survival of archaeology to survive on the site no deposits or finds of an archaeological nature were recorded.

References

BGS, 1971, *British Geological Survey*, 1:63360, Sheet 253, Solid and drift Edition, Keyworth
NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
Pine, J and Preston, S, 2014, An Iron Age house and Roman villa at Chilton Fields, Avon Road, Chilton, Oxfordshire, Post-excavation assessment, Thames Valley Archaeological Services project 05/111, Reading

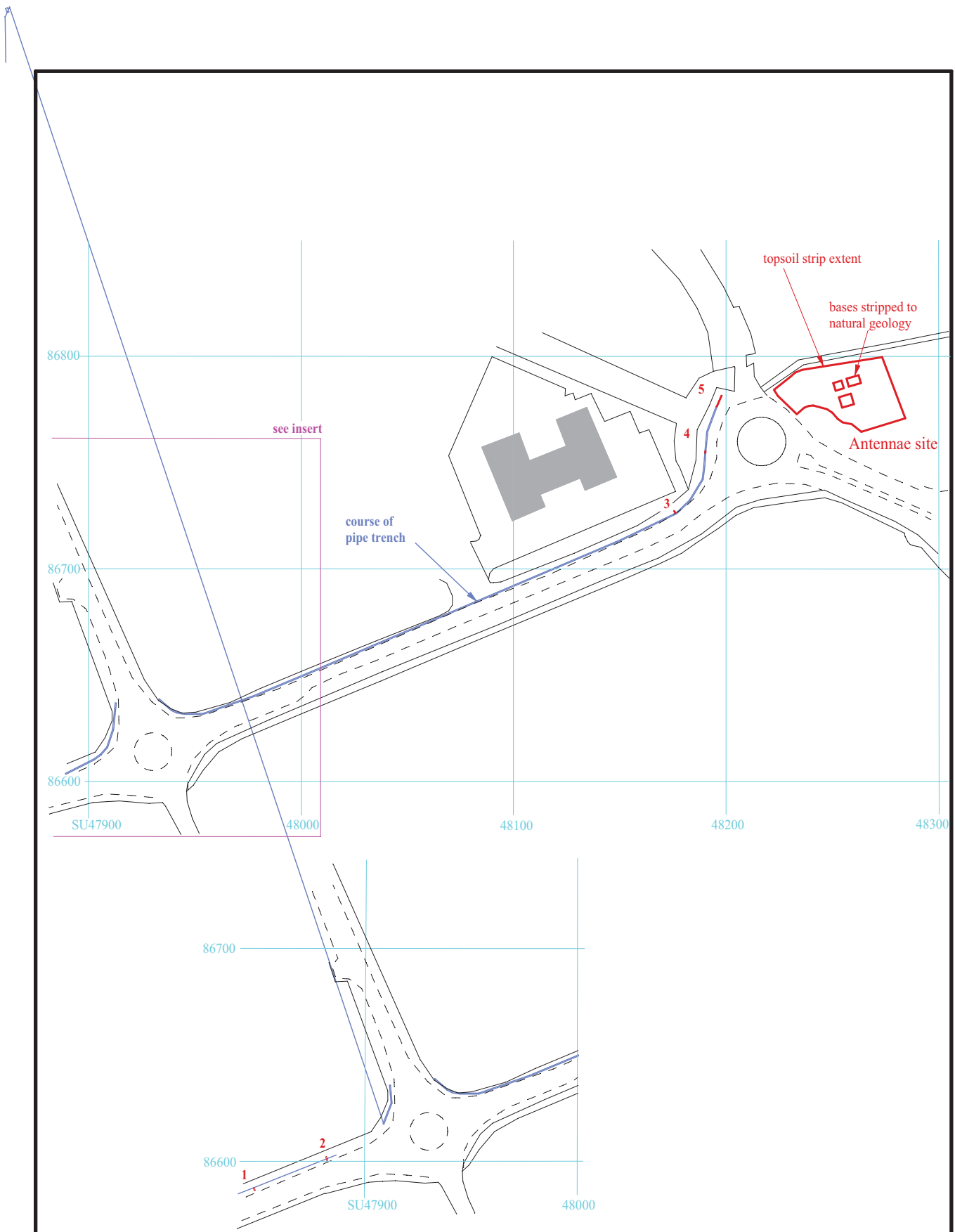


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Oxfordshire, 2013**

Archaeological watching brief

Figure 1. Location of site within the Harwell Science Park and Oxfordshire.

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Figure 2. Detail of location for new antennae, and cable route.





Plate 1. Antennae base area after topsoil strip, looking west, Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Cable route test pit 1, looking south, Scales: 0.5m and 0.3m.

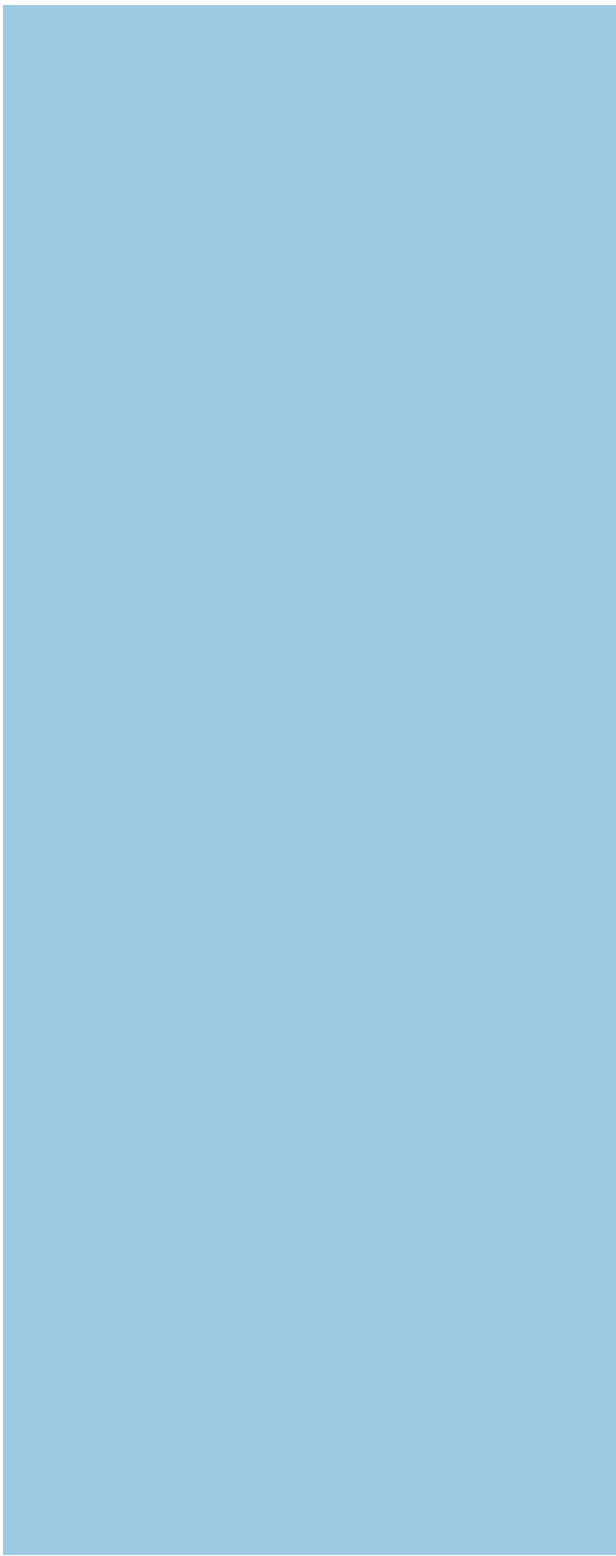
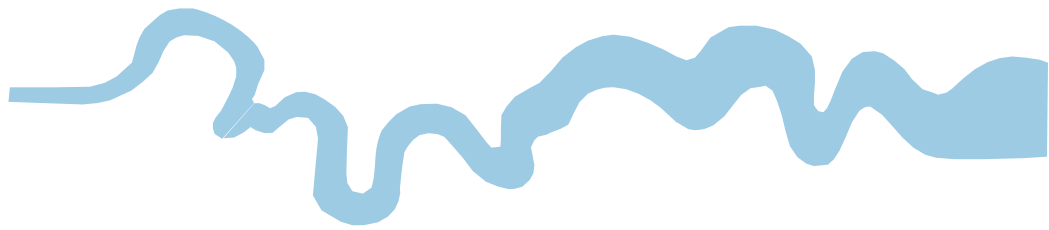
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Plates 1 - 2.

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

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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