

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**The Wall House, Mongewell,
Oxfordshire, Phase 2 (Plot 3)**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by David Platt

Site Code: WHM12/79

(SU 6120 8797)

The Wall House, Mongewell, Oxfordshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief Phase 2 (Plot 3)

For Mr Peter McMahon

by David Platt

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code WHM 12/79b

March 2014

Summary

Site name: The Wall House, Mongewell, Oxfordshire, Phase 2 (Plot 3)

Grid reference: SU 6120 8797

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 31st October 2013 – 1st November 2013

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: David Platt

Site code: WHM 12/79b

Area of site: c.0.2ha

Summary of results: No finds or features of archaeological interest were discovered during this phase of the ground works.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course, with accession code OXCMS:2013.6

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 10.03.14 Steve Preston✓ 21.02.14

The Wall House, Mongewell, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief - Plot 3

by David Platt

Report 12/79b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at The Wall House, Mongewell, Oxfordshire, OX10 8DA (SU 6120 8797) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Peter McMahon, 7 Arne Close, Reading Road, Winnersh, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG41 5GN.

Planning permission (P12/S3038/DIS) has been gained from South Oxfordshire District Council to build new houses at The Wall House. The consent is subject to two conditions (10 and 11), requiring the implementation of an archaeological watching brief to be maintained during the period of ground works.

This is in accordance with *Planning and the Historic Environment* (PPS5 2010) and the District Council's policies on archaeology. It is acknowledged that PPS5 has since been superseded by the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012). The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services and based on a brief prepared by him (Oram 2012). The fieldwork for this parcel of land was undertaken by David Platt between the 31st October 2013 and 1st November 2013. The site code is WHM 12/79b.

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

This reports deals only with the construction of plot 3 on the site (Phase 2). Previous works carried out on land to the east (Phase 1, Plots 1 and 2) have been reported separately (Taylor 2012).

Location, topography and geology

Mongewell lies to the south-east of Wallingford on the opposite bank of the River Thames in the parish of Crowmarsh (Fig. 1). The village is a small hamlet that includes Carmel College (now disused), the ruinous church of St John the Baptist, and a small collection of houses to the west. The site is located on the site of the demolished Wall House, so named as it is located on Mongewell Park's northern brick boundary wall (Fig. 2). The site was previously occupied by a swimming pool and The Wall House. The underlying geology is Lower Chalk (BGS 1980) and this was observed in the trenches as a brownish yellow chalk marl. The site lies at a

height of *c.*50m above Ordnance Datum, the valley rising steeply to its east; the Thames is located about 300m to the west.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site area has been highlighted in a brief for the project prepared by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Oram 2012). In summary, the site lies within an area of considerable archaeological interest on the floor of the Thames Valley. To the south, fieldwork around North Stoke has revealed extensive lithic scatters representing Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age settlement with extensive Iron Age and Roman settlement located on hilltops to the south-east (Ford 1987; Ford and Hazell 1989). Just to the north-east lies the major Iron Age boundary work (Grim's Ditch). Excavation through a section of it in advance of construction of the Wallingford Bypass revealed Late Bronze Age occupation and a medieval stone structure as well as the Iron Age monument. A rich late Bronze Age riverside site was recorded on the west bank of the Thames (Cromarty *et al.* 2006) and both Saxon and Neolithic occupation recorded 250m west of the site.

Just to the south west, where Carmel College now stands, is the site of the deserted late Saxon/medieval village of Mongewell which was mentioned in Domesday Book (Williams and Martin 2002). It was assessed at 10 hides with 9 ploughs. The population was one knight along with 5 slaves, 6 villans and 11 bordars. Also of note are two mills, 5 acres of meadow and woodland. It was worth £14. It is thought that the village was deserted between AD1350–1450. During the 12th century civil wars between Stephen and Matilda, the east bank of the Thames was the site of castles built for besieging Wallingford, substantial remains of one of which have recently been discovered not far to the north of the site (Laban 2013).

The historic core of the hamlet is located on the site of Carmel College when an original Georgian mansion was replaced with the current building in 1890. The parish church of St John the Baptist has 12th-century origins but was remodelled extensively during the late 18th century. It is now ruinous but is listed (Grade II).

The previous phase of works (Phase 1) (Fig. 3) on the site revealed several features mostly of post-medieval or modern date. Two ditches were observed, one of which was undated and the other tentatively dated to the medieval period. Residual and stray finds of Roman, medieval and post-medieval pottery were recovered (Taylor 2012).

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 and include observation of surface stripping, geo-technical investigations, the excavation of foundations and service trenches, landscaping works and all other invasive work. Archaeological deposits that were exposed by the groundworks were to be recorded but not further excavated unless under immediate threat of destruction.

Results

This involved examination of areas of intrusive groundworks including foundation trenches and service trenches. All deposits were uncovered by a 360° mechanical excavator under constant archaeological supervision. The foundation trenches were 0.8m wide and 1.2m deep. The stratigraphy of the site consisted of 0.40m of topsoil overlying 0.30m of dark brown grey clayey silt made ground which in turn overlay 0.20m of reddish brown clayey silt which appeared to be a buried subsoil. Underlying this was a yellowish brown chalk marl natural geology. Some foundation trenches observed on the western edge of the site filled with modern brick and these were most likely to have been from the demolition of The Wall House.

No deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

Finds

No finds of any archaeological interest were recovered during the watching brief.

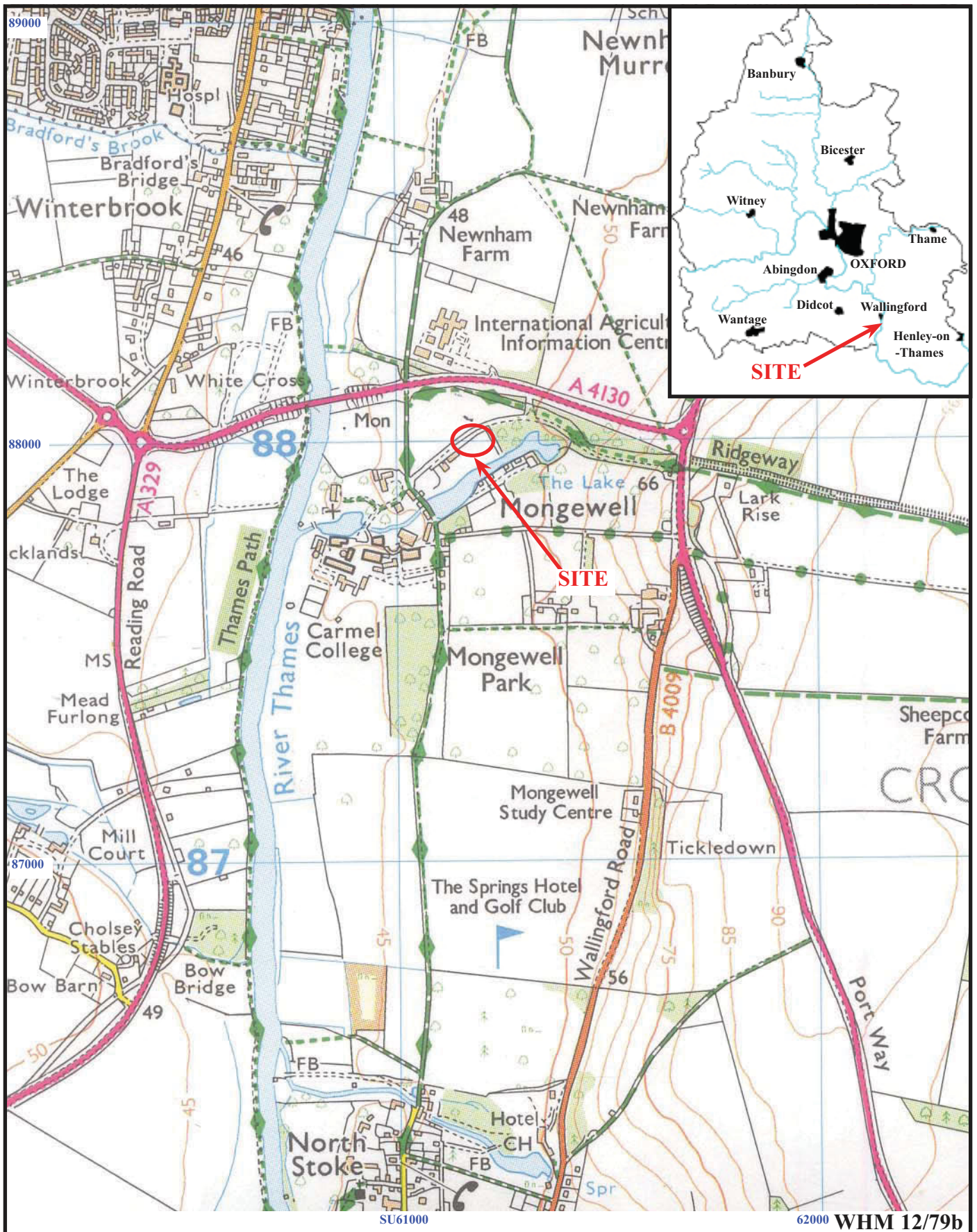
Conclusion

Despite the potential for archaeological deposits being present on the site no further features or finds were observed during this phase of the watching brief.

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**The Wall House, Mongewell, Oxfordshire, 2013
Archaeological watching brief - Plot 3**

Figure 1. Location of site within Mongewell and Oxfordshire.

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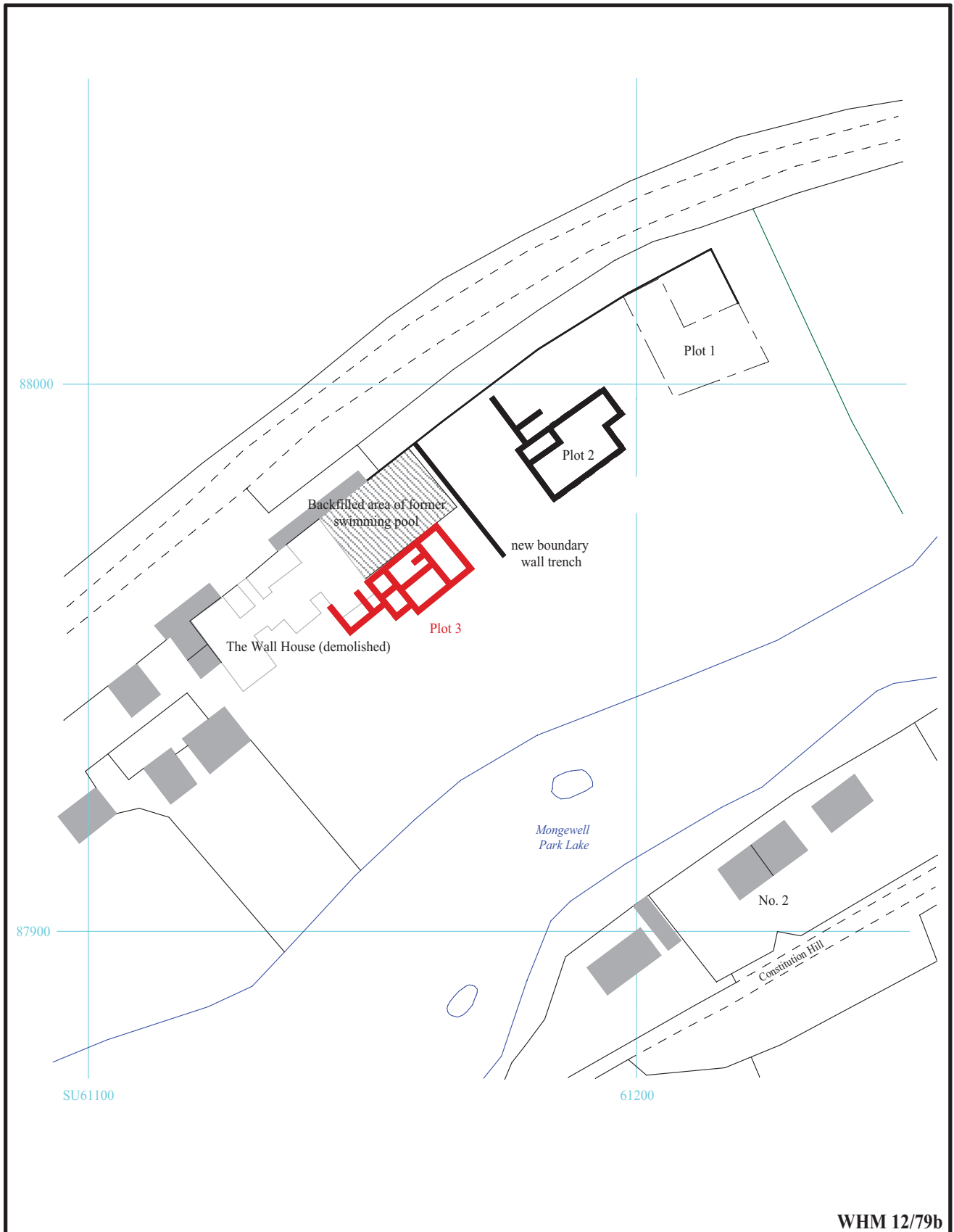


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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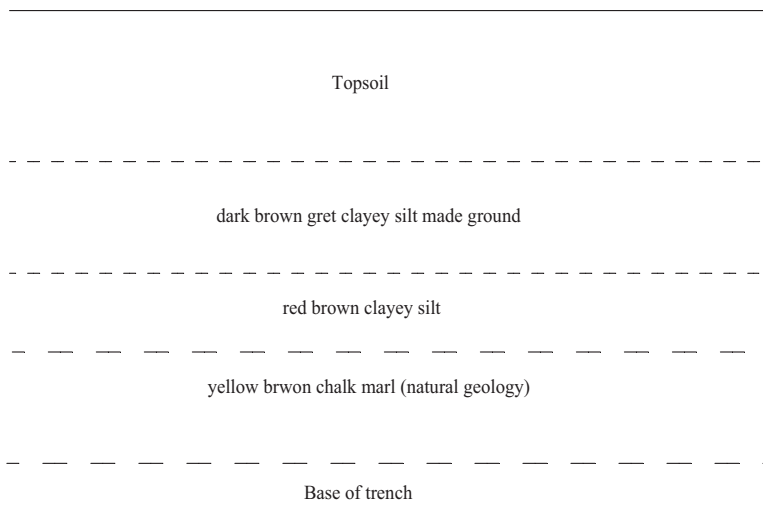
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Figure 3. Location of Plot 3



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Figure 4. Representative section.





Plate 1. Section of stratigraphy looking South West. Scales: 2m and 1m



Plate 2. Plot 3 foundations looking South West. Scale 2m.

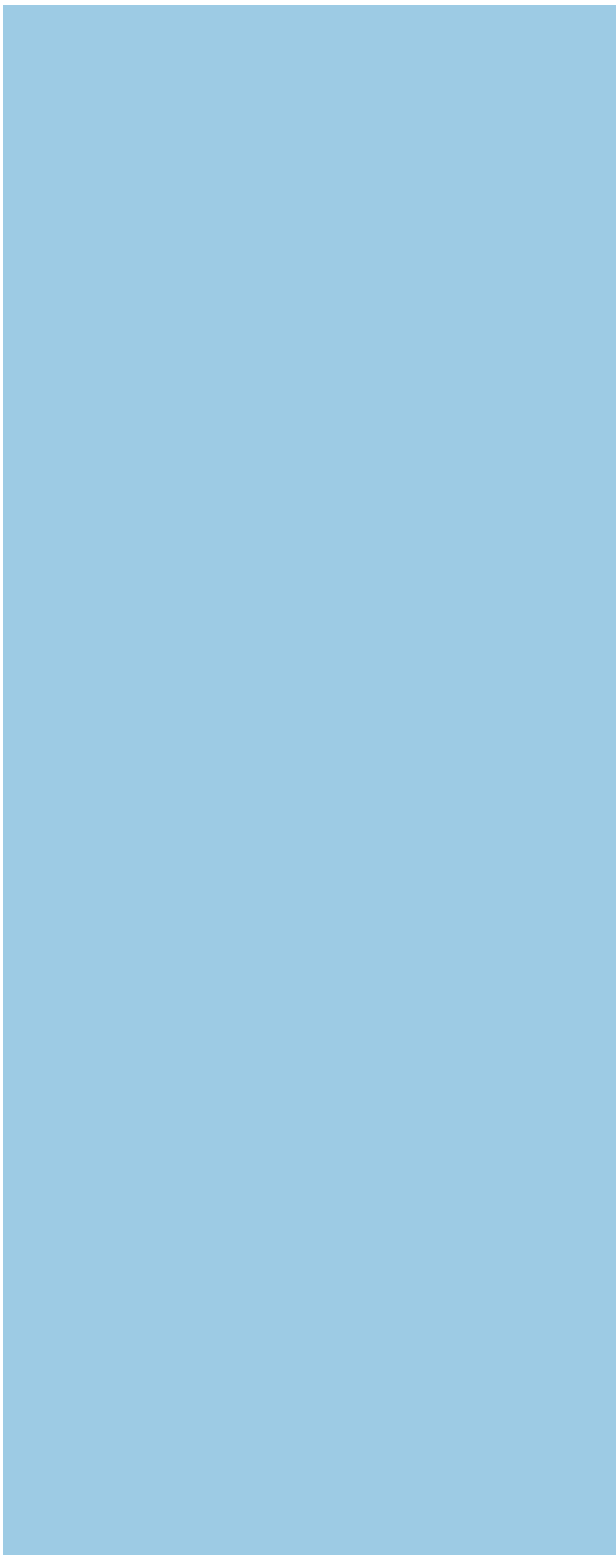
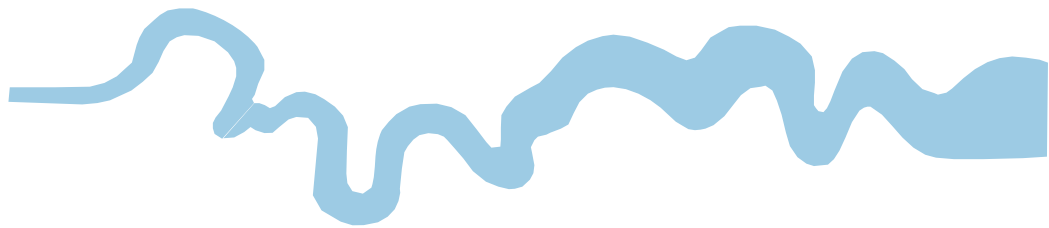
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**The Wall House, Mongewell,
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Plates 1 - 2.

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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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