

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

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

**226 Greys Road, Henley-on-Thames,  
Oxfordshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Andy Taylor**

**Site Code: GRH14/70**

**(SU 7445 8164)**

**226 Greys Road, Henley-on-Thames,  
Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For Ms Hayley White**

by Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code GRH 14/70

**May 2014**

## Summary

**Site name:** 226 Greys Road, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire

**Grid reference:** SU 7445 8164

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 22nd April - 1st May 2014

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Andrew Muddin, Andy Taylor

**Site code:** GRH 14/70

**Area of site:** c. 80 sq m

**Summary of results:** Although natural gravels and sand deposits were uncovered in the base of the trenches for the new extensions, no deposits of archaeological finds of interest were uncovered.

**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 ✓ 09.05.14 Steve Preston ✓ 09.05.14
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# 226 Greys Road, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andy Taylor

**Report 14/70**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 226 Greys Road, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, RG9 1QY (SU 7445 8164) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Hayley White, of the same address.

Planning permission (P12/S1542/HH) was sought from South Oxfordshire District Council for the construction of new extensions at the property. Due to the potential disturbance of below ground archaeological features and finds an archaeological watching brief was required to be carried out during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the District's policies relating to planning in archaeology. The fieldwork was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services, advisers to the District on matters pertaining to archaeology within the planning process. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Mundin and Andy Taylor between 22nd April and 1st May 2014 and the site code is GRH 14/70.

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

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located on the northern side of Greys Road, on the western edge of Henley-on-Thames (Fig. 1). It is located within a rectangular plot of land with other residences on both sides, of which the western property (228), has recently been redeveloped. The underlying geology consisted of 5th Terrace gravel deposits (BGS 1980) which were observed at the base of all new foundation trenches. The site lies at a height 77m above Ordnance Datum.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location, on an outcrop of gravel known as the Black Park gravel, which comprises deposits from a former channel of the Thames. Some half a million years ago the River Thames flowed north-east past St Albans to Clacton before joining the River Rhine somewhere beneath the

present North Sea. From the effects of glaciation, river downcutting and land uplift in subsequent times the course of the Thames has been deflected southwards to its present course, leaving relict terraces in its wake. Examination of 19th- and early 20th-century gravel workings in the area uncovered numerous flint tools of Lower Palaeolithic date representing some of the earliest ancestral human (hominin) presence in the British Isles, with Highlands Farm to the south-west being especially prolific (Wymer 1968, Morigi *et al.* 2011). A handaxe has also been found at the local school to the south-east of the current site, which may have been towards the edge of the channel. However, no finds were recovered from detailed sampling and excavation prior to the construction of the new house at the neighbouring site at No.228, (Taylor 2013), nor during evaluation off Elizabeth Road to the north (Dawson 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 include examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks and include observation of service trenches, landscaping works, which would be carried out after demolition of modern west and east extensions.

## **Results**

Wall footing trenches were observed on the western side of the existing house and the north-eastern side of the house (Fig. 3).

The observed section in the western footing was recorded (Pl. 1). This consisted 0.45m of turf and subsoil overlying rounded gravel deposits, with minimal sand included. The base of the footing trench reached a depth of 1m. A manhole for a existing drain was located to the north of the new footing in front of the previous addition to the western wall. This pipe trench ran southwards through the new footing, at a depth of 0.8m. The existing house footing reached a depth of 0.7m. No archaeological finds were uncovered from this footing.

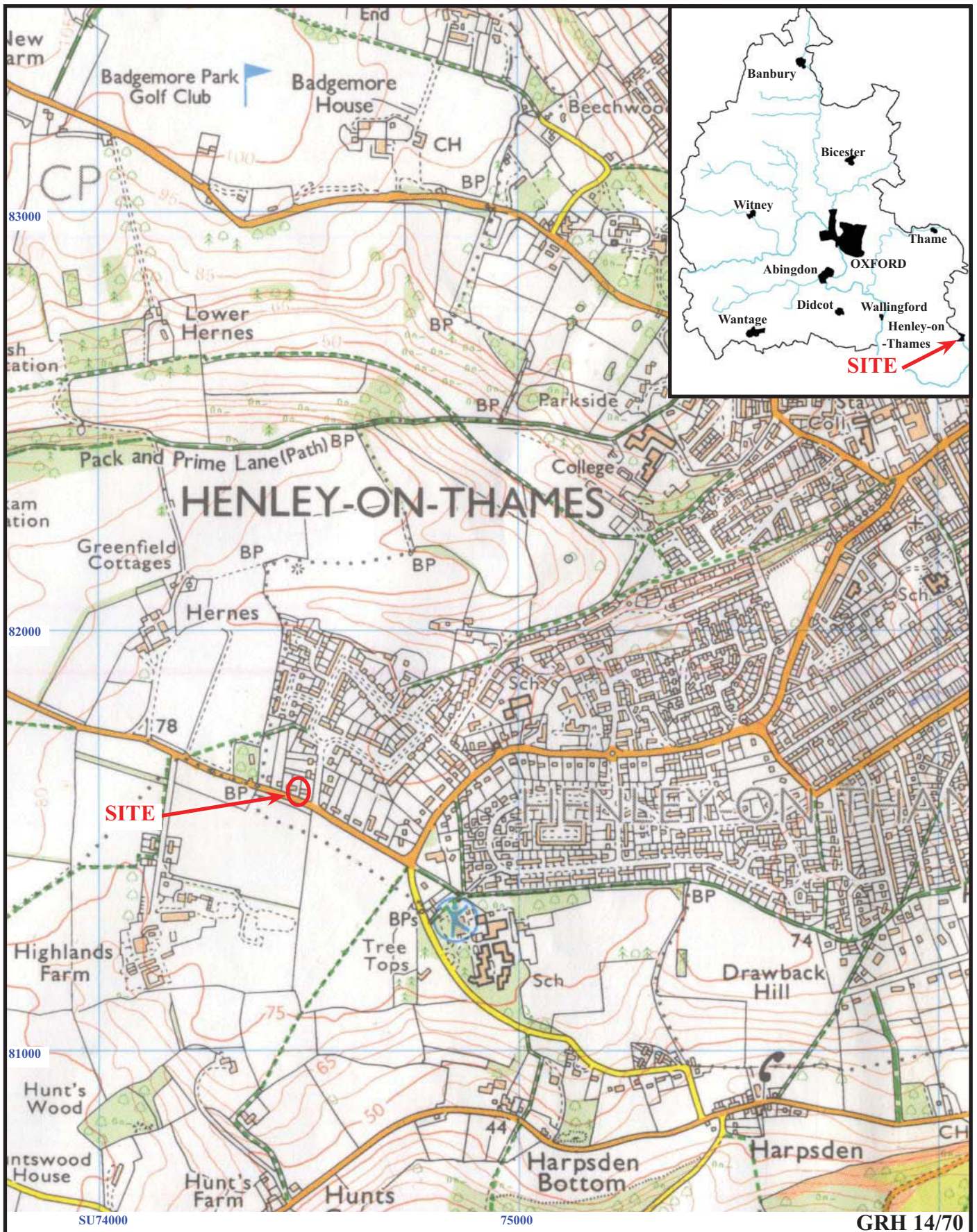
The footings for the new extension behind the garage to the east of the house were observed (Pl. 2). This trench was 1.05m deep and 0.6m wide (Fig. 4). It revealed the same stratigraphy as previously seen; 0.45m of subsoil overlying natural gravel. Sand was uncovered within the base of this footing, however, no archaeological finds were recovered from these works.

## Conclusion

No finds nor deposits of archaeological interest were uncovered during the groundworks at this site. Despite the potential of Palaeolithic activity on the site, no worked flints were observed within the sand on the eastern side of the site or anywhere else.

## References

- BGS, 1980, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50 000, Sheet 254, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Dawson, T, 2012, 'Land to the north of Windyridge, Elizabeth Road, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire: an archaeological evaluation', Thames Valley Archaeological Services unpubl rep **12/110**, Reading
- Morigi, A, Schreve, D and White, M, 2011, 'Introduction and pre-Anglian geological, palaeoenvironmental and archaeological records', in Morigi, D Schreve, M White, G Hey, M Robinson, A Barclay, and P Bradley, *The Thames Through Time: The Archaeology of the Gravel Terraces of the Upper and Middle Thames: Early Prehistory to 1500BC*, Oxford Archaeol Thames Valley Landscapes Monogr **32**, Oxford, 1–40
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
- Taylor, A, 2013, 'Longacre, 228 Greys Road, Henley-on-Thames, Oxfordshire; an archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Service unpubl rep **12/185**, Reading
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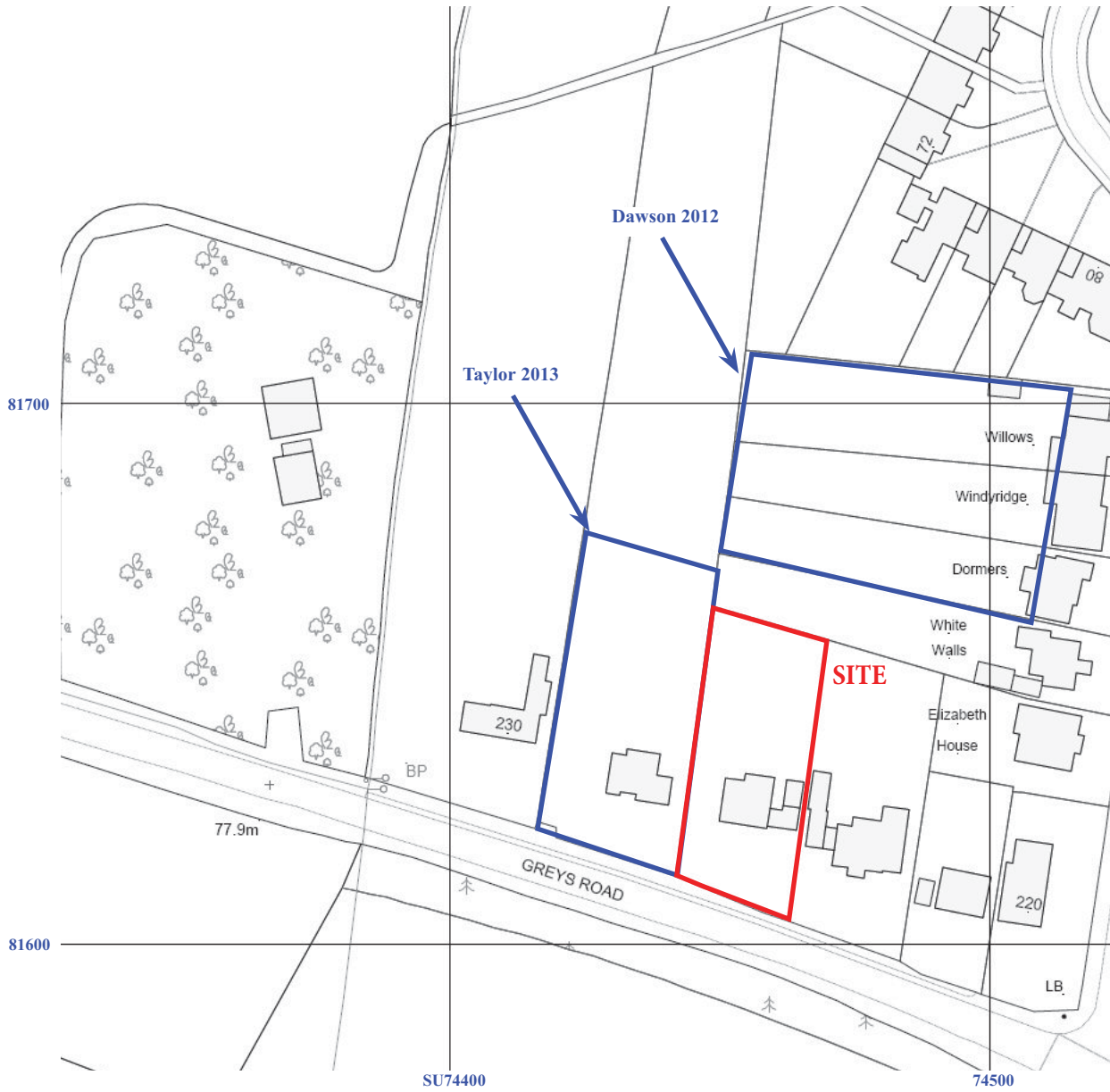
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Figure 1. Location of site within Henley and Oxfordshire.

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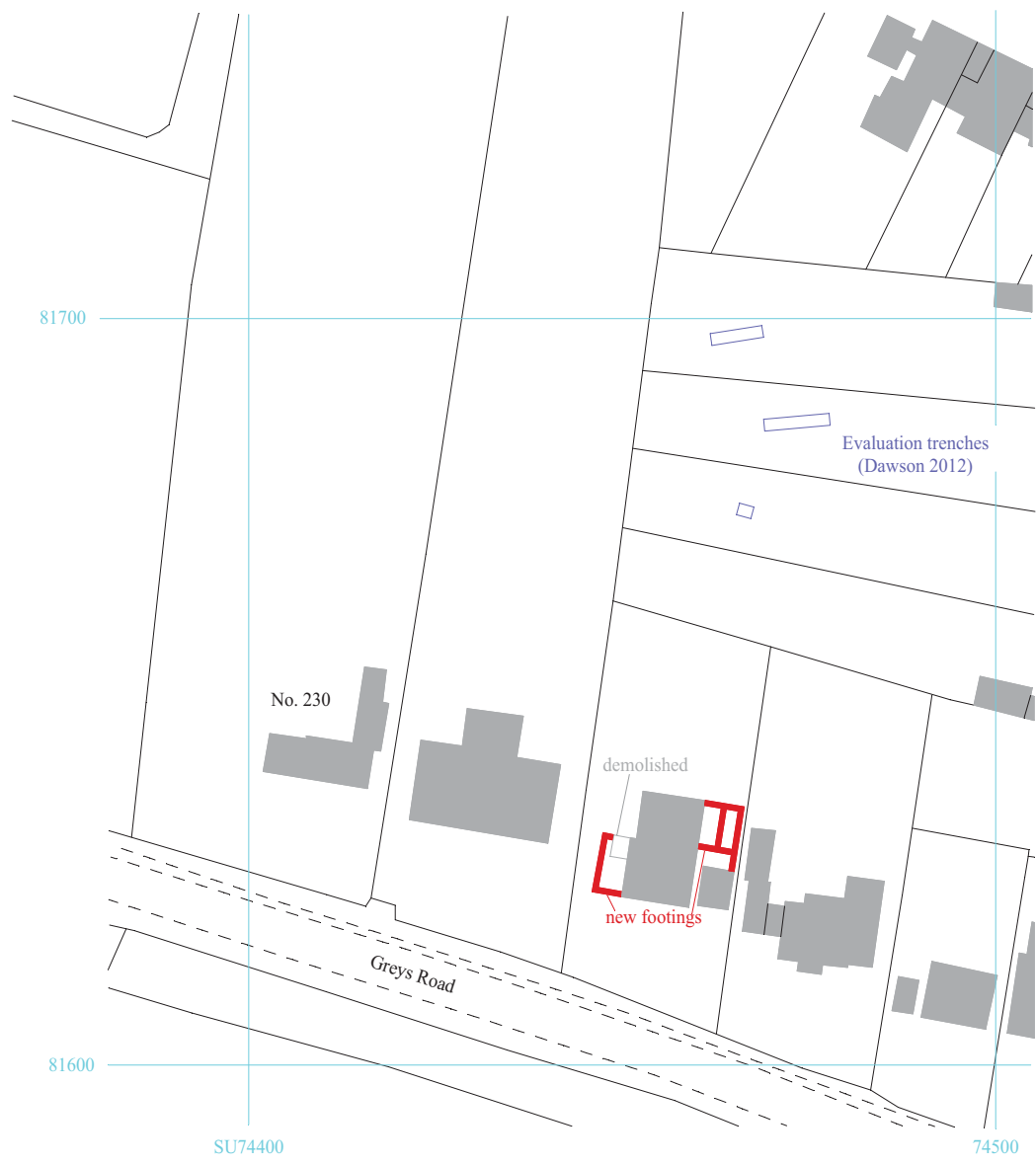
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site, prior to 2012/3 modification.

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Figure 3. Location of observed areas.



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Subsoil (grey/browngravelly sandy silt)



Natural geology (gravel)



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Figure 4. Representative section (north-east footing).



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Plate 1. Western extension trench section, looking north, Scales: horizontal 0.5m, vertical 1m.



Plate 2. Eastern extension trenching, looking north, Scales: horizontal 2m, vertical 1m.

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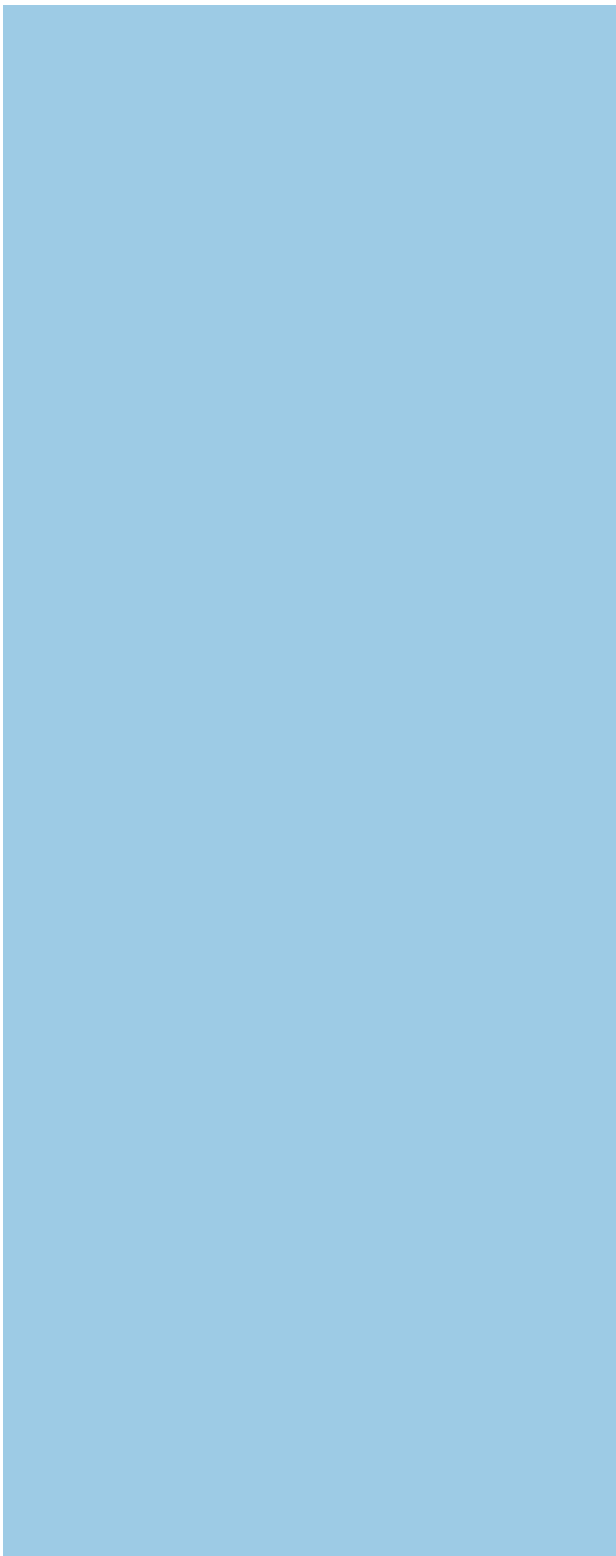
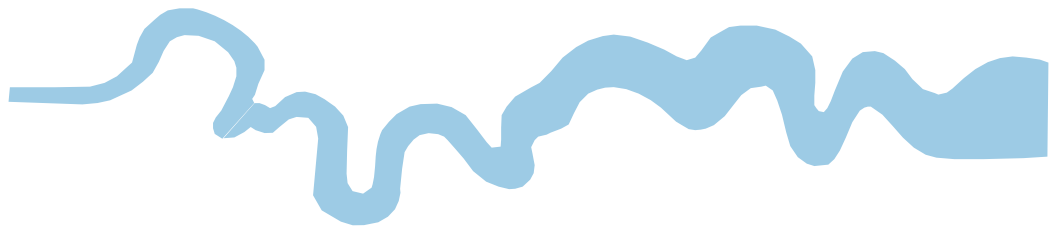
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Plates 1 - 2.

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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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