

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land north of Beetle Cottage, Moulsoford,
Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Susan Porter

Site Code: BCM14/254

(SU 5923 8373)

**Land north of Beetle Cottage,
Moulsford, Oxfordshire**

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Mr & Mrs Varian

by Susan Porter

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code BCM 14/254

February 2015

Summary

Site name: Land north of Beetle Cottage, Moulsoford, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 5923 8373

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 6th February 2015

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Susan Porter

Site code: BCM 14/254

Area of site: c.580 sq m

Summary of results: The evaluation recorded the presence of a single undated pit with no artefacts of archaeological interest recovered from any of the trenches. On the basis of these results, the site is considered to have a low archaeological potential.

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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Land north of Beetle Cottage, Moulsoford, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Susan Porter

Report 14/254b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at land north of Beetle Cottage, Moulsoford, Oxfordshire SU 5923 8373 (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Resh Kuypers of Carroll & partners, 2 St Mary's Court, Wallingford, Oxon, OX10 0EB on behalf of Mr and Mrs Varian, Beetle Cottage, The Street, Moulsoford, Oxfordshire.

Planning permission is to be sought for the construction of a new house and detached garage on a plot of land of c. 580 sq m to the north of Beetle Cottage. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by groundworks a field evaluation has been requested by the County Archaeological Officer.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the County Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Richard Oram, of Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, advisors to the District, and following a brief provided by him. The fieldwork was undertaken by Susan Porter and Benedikt Tebbit on 6th February 2015 and the site code is BCM 14/254. 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 in the village of Moulsoford, Oxfordshire on the west bank of the River Thames, 6km southwest of Wallingford, 3.5km north of Goring and Streatley (Fig 1). The area of investigation comprises level ground currently used as a private garden bounded on three sides by hedges including developed conifer trees, and by the River Thames to the east (Fig 2). To the south west a planting bed of shrubs and bushes (crossed by Trench 1) separated the area of investigation from the rest of the private garden. The site lies at a height of 59m above Ordnance Datum and the underlying geology is recorded as Quaternary Northmoor Member Riverine sand and gravel (BGS 1980).

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in the brief. In summary the site lies in an area of high archaeological potential, with a number of sites and finds recorded within the Oxfordshire historic Environmental Record. Moulsoford is not mentioned in Domesday Book (Williams and Martin 2002) and the earliest records of the settlement date to c.1110 AD. To the west of the site cropmarks visible from the air indicate the presence of a trackway and field system, perhaps of Iron Age or Roman date. A Roman cemetery was also located in the area where the cropmarks lie. In the wider area between Goring and Moulsoford presumed field systems survive as earthworks (Fenner and Dyer 1994, 21). Fieldwork in advance of a pipeline located an Iron Age and Roman settlement on Halfpenny lane to the west with another Late Iron Age settlement to the south (Ford 1990). An inhumation burial, Roman pits and rare possible Saxon pottery were found during excavations c.550m north west of the site at Cranford School (Platt 2012a and b) and within 600m to the south further possible enclosures and a possible Roman villa have been recorded. Elsewhere a torc (bracelet) was uncovered during ploughing in 1960 (Wymer 1961) and a plain neck ring was discovered by a metal detectors in 2001 (PAS 2015) in the same field c.850m north west of the site. Roman coins and two Neolithic axes have also been recovered in the vicinity (Platt 2012a 2). The projected line of the Roman road from Dorchester to Silchester lies somewhere in the vicinity of the site and may follow the main road through the village.

A geophysical survey carried out on the proposal site (Dawson and Dawson 2015) recorded a variety of magnetic anomalies which were considered to be possibly of archaeological origin.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development. This work was to be carried out in a manner that would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which warrant preservation in situ, or might be better excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

The specific research aims of this project were:

- To determine if archaeological deposits of any period were present.
- To determine if any prehistoric occupation or landscape features were present on the site.
- To determine if there were later prehistoric, Roman Saxon or medieval deposits present on the site.
- To determine the nature and date of any geophysical anomalies.

The potential and significance of any such deposits located was to be assessed according to the research priorities such as set out by English Heritage Research Agenda (English Heritage 2005) or any more local or thematic research priorities as necessary such as the Solent Thames Research Agenda (Hey and Hind 2014).

It was proposed to dig three trenches, 10m long and 1.6m wide targeted at the footprint of the proposed new buildings and geophysical anomalies. A contingency of 10m of trench was included should it be required to clarify initial findings. Topsoil and other overburden was removed by a JCB type machine equipped with a toothless ditching bucket to expose the archaeological horizon under constant archaeological supervision. Where archaeological features were encountered they were hand cleaned and excavated, with environmental samples taken from the deposits.

Results

The three trenches were excavated as intended, trench three, was, however, slightly realigned to avoid a service cable. The trenches ranged in length from 9.40m to 11m and in depth from 0.46-0.65m. Spoil heaps were checked for finds.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Figs 2 and 4; Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned East - West and was 11m long and 0.65m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.42m of topsoil and 0.13m dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil overlying light yellow brown sandy gravel natural geology. No deposits of archaeological interest were encountered and no finds were recovered. A treebole was noted c.0.30m along the northern edge of the trench.

Trench 2 (Figs 2 and 4; Pl. 2)

Trench 2 was aligned East - West and was 9.40m long and 0.48m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of topsoil and 0.11m of subsoil overlying light gravel natural geology.

Trench 3 (Figs 2, and 3; Pls 3 and 4)

Trench 3 was aligned South West - North East and was 10.50m long and 0.46m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.19m of topsoil and 0.19m of subsoil overlying gravel natural geology. A possible pit (1) was recorded which was 1.02m in diameter and 0.13m deep and filled with a single deposit (52) comprising loose dark yellow

brown sandy silt with 10-15% 5-50mm angular stone inclusions. No finds were recovered despite the sieving of a 20L soil sample from this feature.

Conclusion

The results of the evaluation recorded the presence of a single pit of indeterminate date with no artefacts of archaeological interest recovered from any of the trenches. On the basis of these results, the site is considered to have a low archaeological potential.

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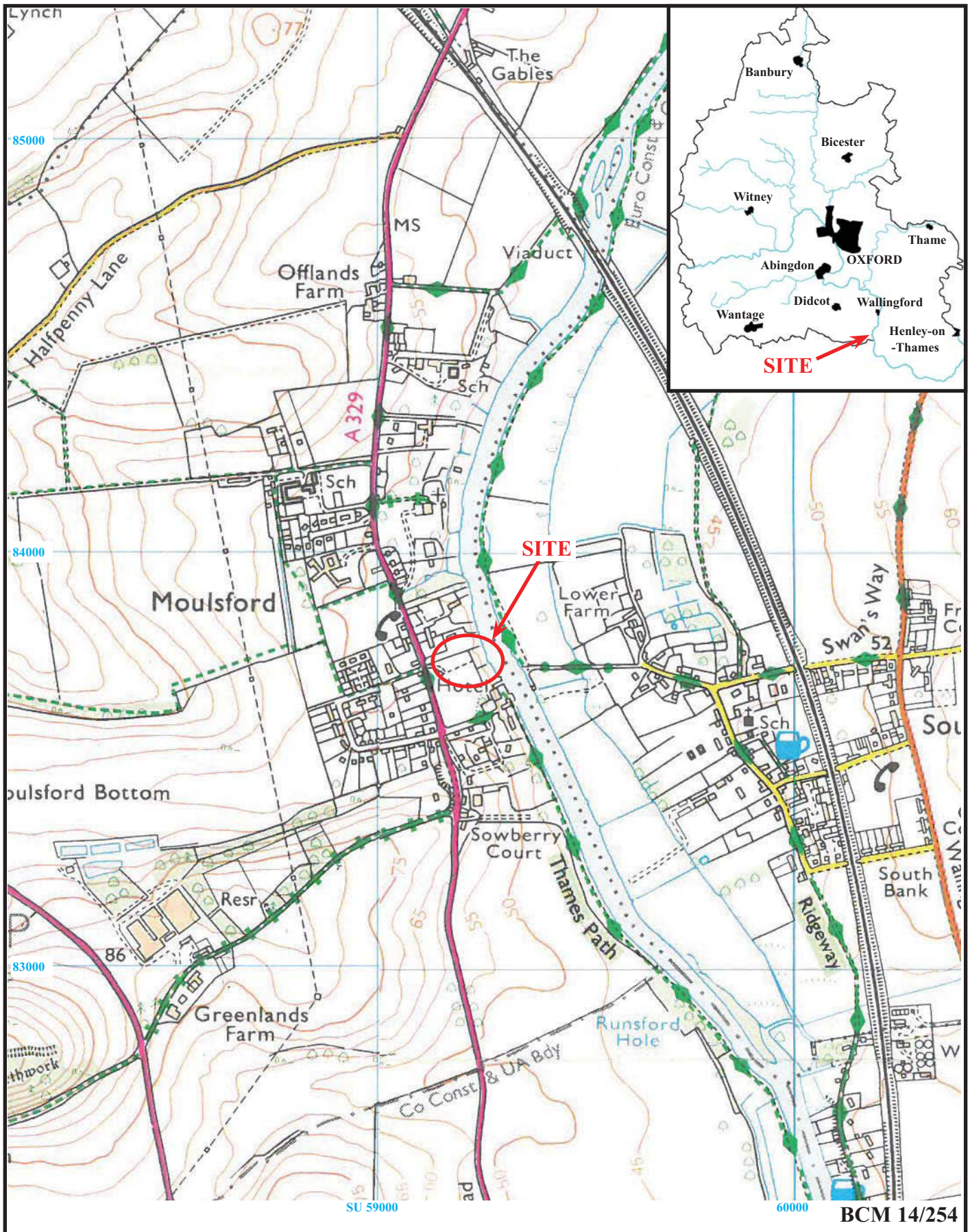
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at western end

Trench	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1	11	1.60	0.65	0-0.42m topsoil, 0.42-0.56m Dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil, 0.56+m light yellow brown sandy gravel natural geology. No features of archaeological interest were observed and no finds were recovered.
2	9.40	1.60	0.48	0-0.25m topsoil, 0.25-0.36m Dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil, 0.36+m light yellow brown sandy gravel natural geology. No features of archaeological interest were observed and no finds were recovered.
3	10.50	1.60	0.46	0-0.19m topsoil, 0.19-0.38m Dark grey brown sandy silt subsoil, 0.38+m light yellow brown sandy gravel natural geology. Pit (1) excavated but undated.

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

Trench	Cut	Fill (s)	Type	Date	Dating evidence
3	1	52	Pit	Undated	None

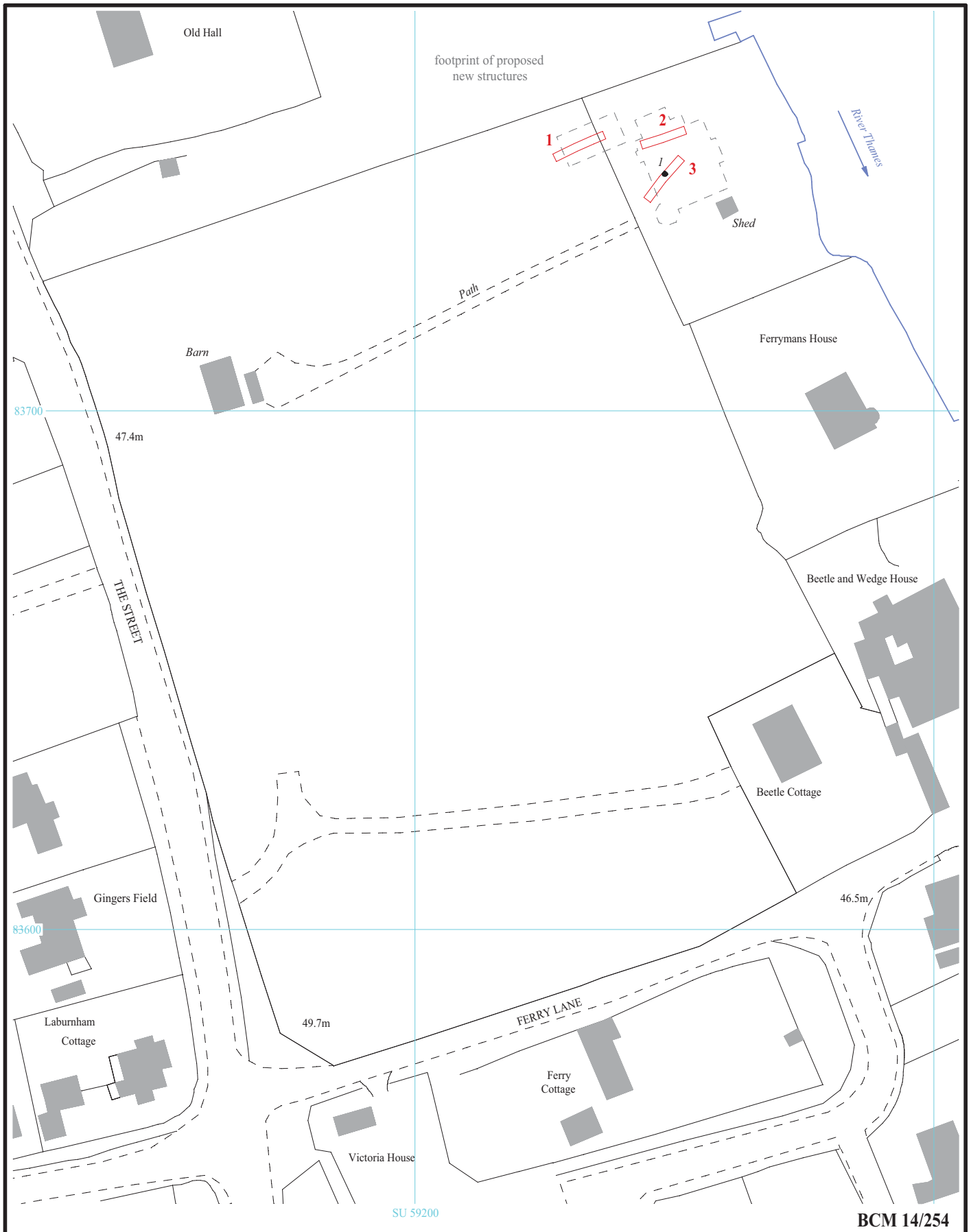


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Figure 1. Location of site within Moulsoford and Oxfordshire

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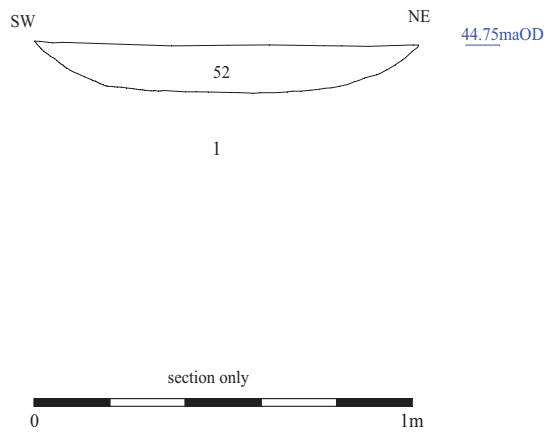
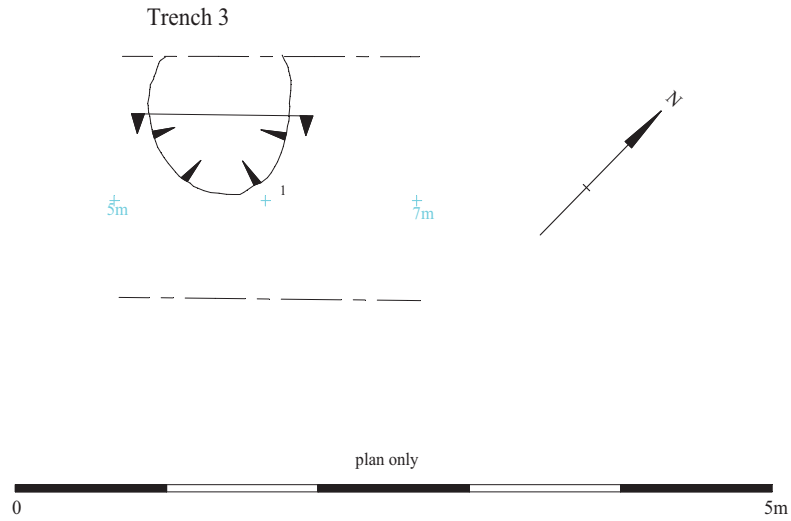
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Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 2. Location of trenches.





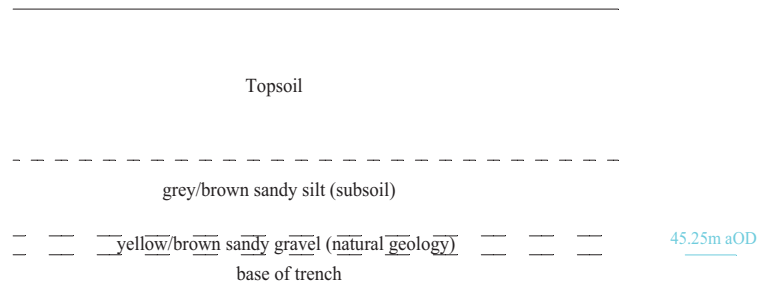
BCM 14/254

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Oxfordshire, 2015
Archaeological Evaluation

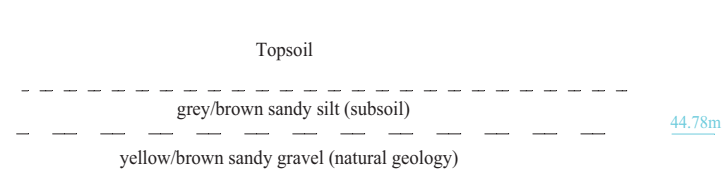
Figure 3: Plan and section of feature 1 in Trench 3.

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Trench 1



Trench 2



BCM 14/254

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Oxfordshire, 2015
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 4: Representative sections





Plate 1. Trench 1, looking east,
Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.



Plate 2. Trench 2, looking east,
Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.



Plate 3. Trench 3, looking north east,
Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.



Plate 4. Trench 3, pit 1, looking north west,
Scales: 0.5m and 0.1m.

BCM 14/254

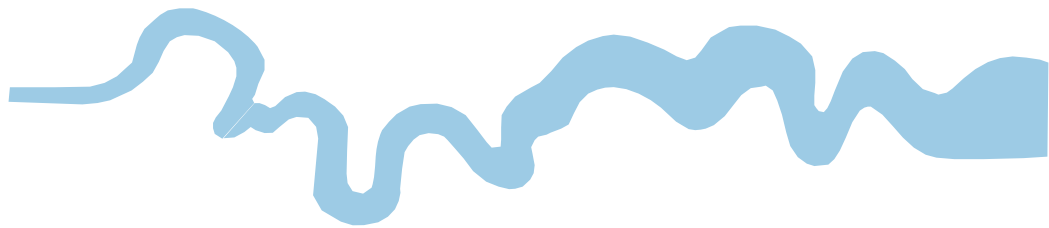
Land north of Beetle Cottage, Moulsoford,
Oxfordshire, 2015
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 1 - 4.

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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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