

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**25 Bridge End, Dorchester-on-Thames,
Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andrew Muddin

Site Code: BDO 14/247

(SU 5786 9375)

**25 Bridge End, Dorchester-on-Thames,
Oxfordshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

for Mr T Fisher

by Andrew Muddin

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code BDO 14/247b

September 2015

Summary

Site name: 25 Bridge End, Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 5786 9375

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 26th August 2015

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andrew Muddin

Site code: BDO 14/247

Summary of results: A disturbed possible grave had been uncovered in the previous evaluation at the location of the new dwelling. However, no further remains nor deposits of archaeological interest were revealed in the footing trenches.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museum Service with the accession code OXCMS:2015.38.

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

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 21.09.15 Steve Preston ✓ 22.09.15

25 Bridge End, Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andrew Muddin

Report 14/247b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out on land next to 25 Bridge End, Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire (SU 5786 9375) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Richard Anderson of Anderson Orr Architects, The Studio, 70 Church Road, Wheatley, Oxford, OX33 1LZ on behalf of Mr Tim Fisher, 11 Wittenham Lane, Dorchester-on-Thames, Oxfordshire, OX10 7JR.

Planning permission (app no P14/S1635/FUL) has been gained from South Oxfordshire District Council for the demolition of the existing stables and erection of a new dwelling, and extension of an existing cottage on the site. The consent includes conditions (4 and 5) relating to archaeology requiring the implementation of a phased programme of archaeological works. An initial field evaluation comprised of archaeologically supervised machine trenching in the area of the new development and a recording action on the extension to the existing property (Taylor 2015). The latter uncovered one feature; a possible grave in Trench 2 (Fig. 3) which contained heavily disturbed remains of a human burial. Due to this deposit and the possibility that the groundworks might encounter further graves, that are known in the immediate vicinity, a second phase of work was required to observe the new footings where the stables had once stood.

This was in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist with Oxfordshire County Council, advisers to the District on matters relating to archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Muddin on 26th August 2015 and the site code is BDO 14/247. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course, with accession code OXCMS:2015.38.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the east side of Wittenham Lane, which itself lies on the southern edge of Dorchester-on-Thames (Fig. 1). Recent development at 25 Bridge End has created a separate land parcel where a stables once

stood. It is a flat parcel of land that steps down to the rear of to the adjoining property (Fig. 2). The underlying geology consisted of 1st (Flood Plain) Terrace Deposits (gravels), which were observed across the site and it lies at a height of *c.*48m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The site stems is located within an area of high archaeological potential (Munby and Rodwell 1975), *c.*170m south of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Dorchester Roman Town (SAM OX116) and *c.*160m north-east of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of the Dyke Hills Iron Age *oppidum* or fortified settlement site (SAM OX17). The route of the Roman road from *Calleva Atrebatum* (Silchester) is projected to pass to the west, as might any outer earthwork of the town (Burnham and Wachter 1990). The area to the south of the Roman town is known to contain extra mural settlement as evidenced from sites recorded in the immediate vicinity of this development. Several episodes of fieldwork to the north have revealed settlement and cemetery deposits of Roman date (JMHS 2013; Mundin 2008; Williams 2013; Platt in prep.) and another burial is recorded in the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record *c.*10m beyond the site's southern boundary. During the evaluation of the site itself, a heavily truncated deposit was uncovered which contained a human femur and contained a single sherd of Early Saxon pottery (Taylor 2015).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any further archaeological deposits within the area of development. This involved the examination of footing trenching, with existing drainage linking into No.25. The mechanical excavator was fitted with a bladed ditching bucket, 0.7m wide.

Results

Observation was carried out during digging of the new footing trenching (Fig. 3). The footprint of the trenches formed a 'T-shaped plan and were *c.* 12.2m at east to west with their longest extent 14.9m north to south. The full depth of all footing trenching was 1m.

The stratigraphy of the plot was noted to contain disturbed and undisturbed natural deposits (Fig. 4, Pls 1 and 2). Towards the east, especially in the north-east corner, the section showed a homogenous overburden overlying natural geology to a depth of 0.88m. Further to the west the natural gravel was much shallower and at its highest was only 0.36m deep. There some modern (Tarmac-filled) disturbance of the gravel was noted. No further deposits of archaeological interest were uncovered in the trenching, and no finds of archaeological

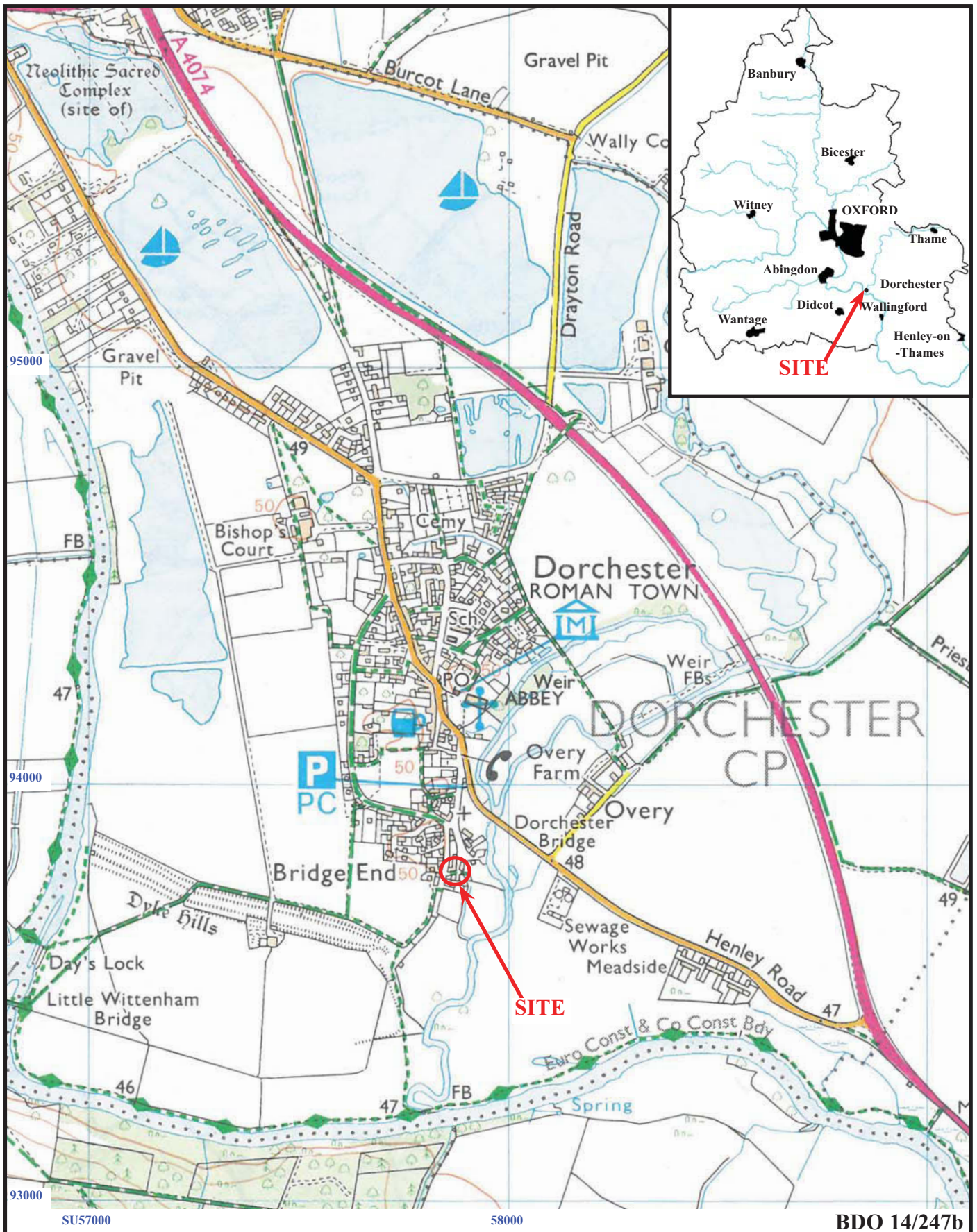
interest were encountered. Sherds of transfer-printed 'willow-pattern' china and brick and tile (retained on site), suggested that the overburden was relatively recent in deposition.

Conclusion

Despite the potential for archaeological deposits to be present on the site no further archaeological material was recorded and no further human bone was recovered. Modern overburden was observed to overlie the natural geology and there was a marked change in the height of the natural geology encountered suggesting the possibility of some previous truncation of archaeologically relevant levels.

References

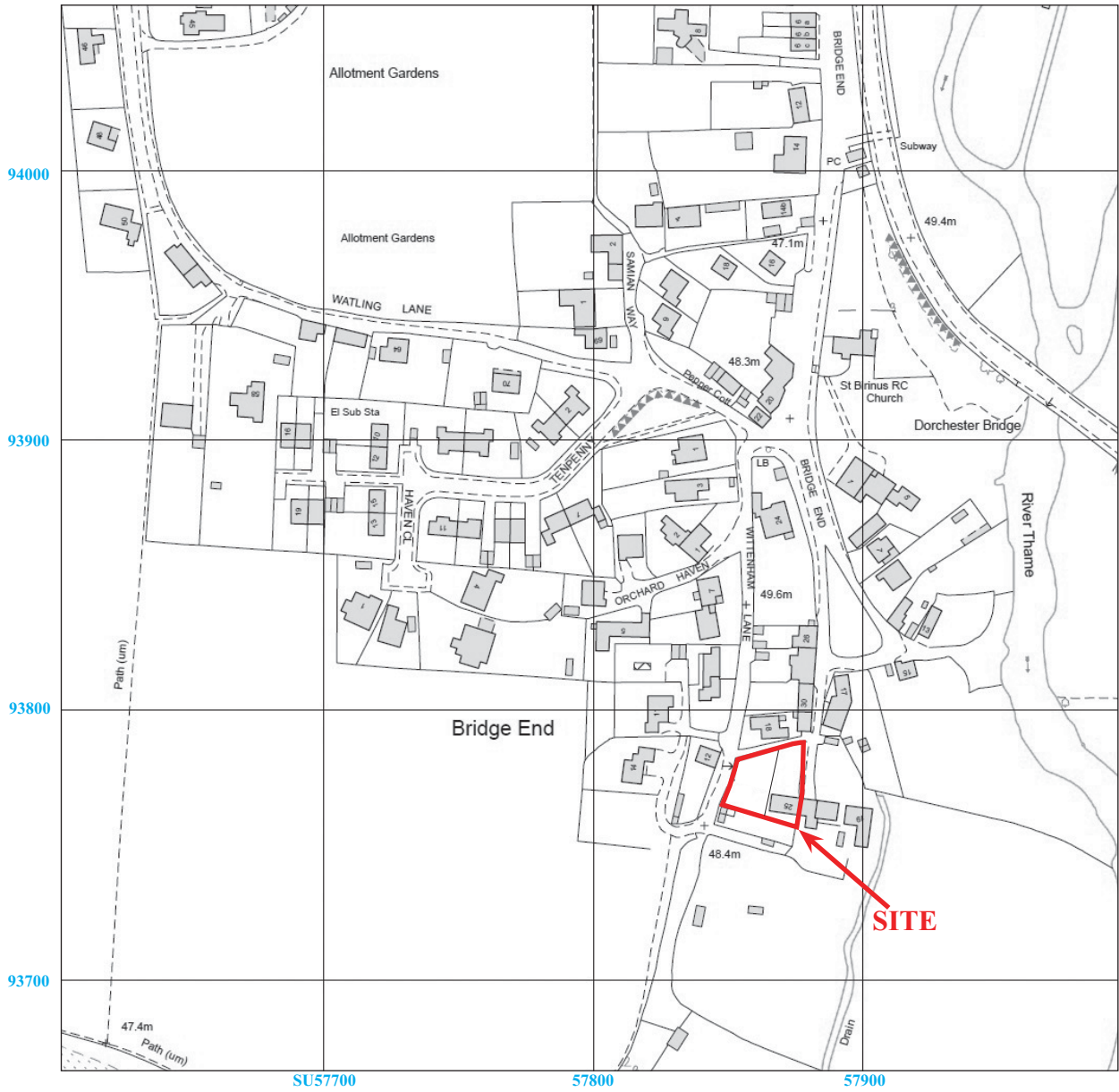
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 Figure 1. Location of site within Dorchester-on-Thames and
 Oxfordshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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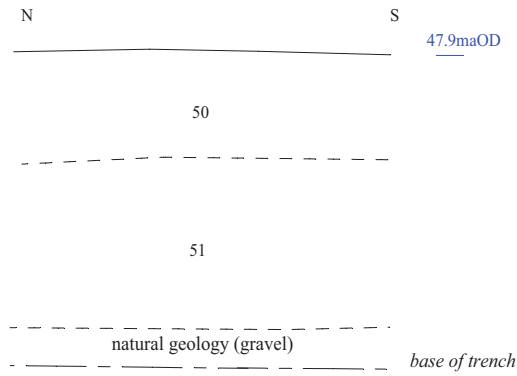
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Figure 3. Detail of area observed.



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Eastern footing



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Figure 4. Representative section



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Plate 1. Footing at close to location of Trench 2 , looking north north east, Scales: 1m.



Plate 2. Representative section, looking west north west, Scales: 1m and 0.5m.

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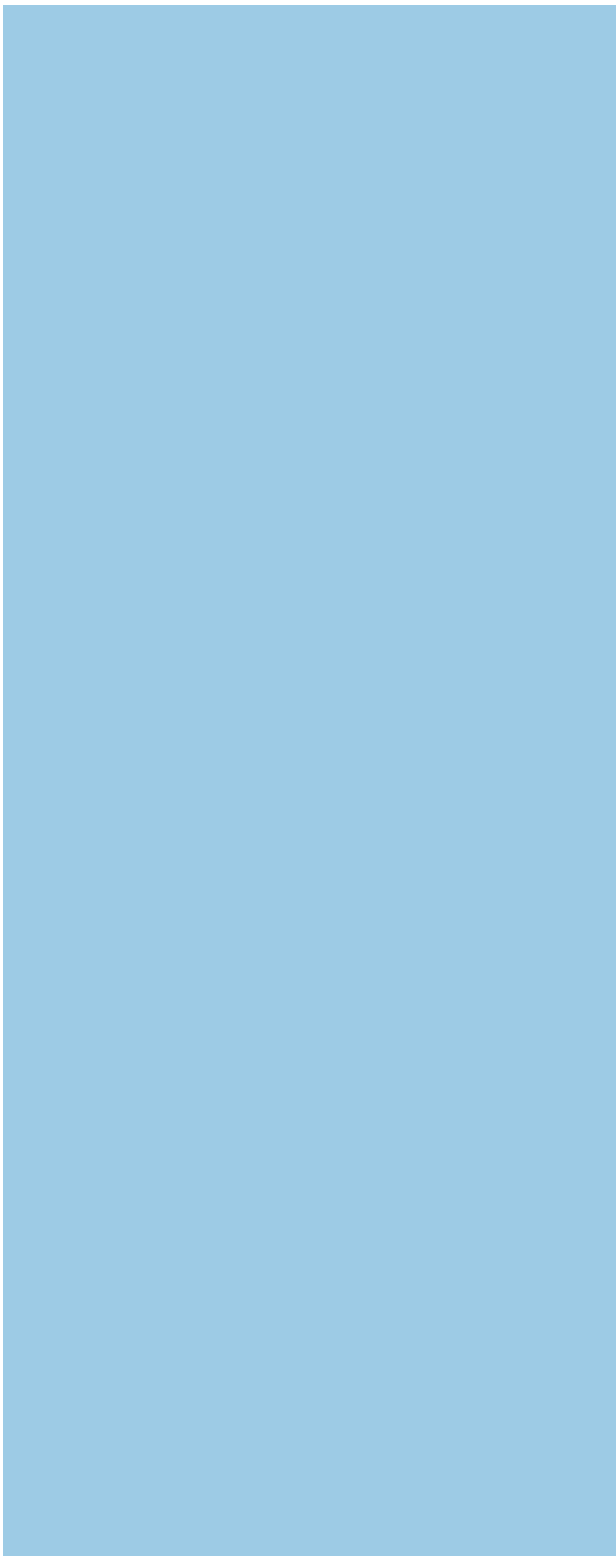
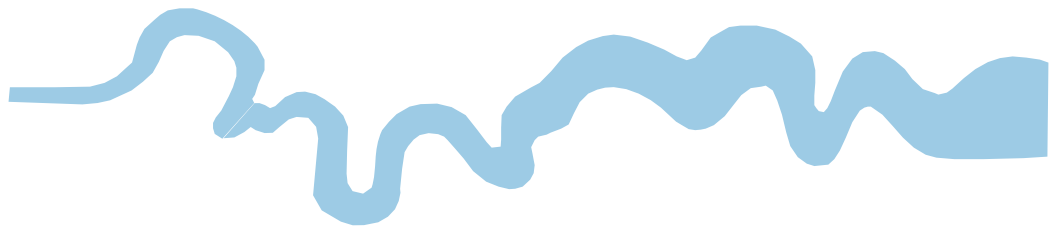
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Plates 1 - 2.

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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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