

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

S O U T H

**Tawney Nurseries, Bell Lane, Birdham,
Chichester, West Sussex**

Archaeological Evaluation

by James McNicoll-Norbury

Site Code: TNB15/287

(SZ 8191 9926)

**Tawney Nurseries, Bell Lane,
Birdham, Chichester, West Sussex**

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Cala Homes Limited**

by James McNicoll-Norbury

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code TNB 15/287

January 2016

Summary

Site name: Tawney Nurseries, Bell Lane, Birdham, Chichester, West Sussex

Grid reference: SZ 8191 9926

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 18th January 2016

Project manager: Sean Wallis

Site supervisor: James McNicoll-Norbury

Planning reference: 12/04147/OUT; APP/L3815/A/13/2199668

Site code: TNB 15/287

Area of site: c. 1.1ha

Summary of results: The trial trenching revealed that whilst the natural geology had only being moderately disturbed by the presence of land drains and services no archaeological deposits were identified. The site is considered to have no archaeological potential

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

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

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 20.01.16
	Steve Preston✓ 20.01.16

Tawney Nurseries, Bell Lane, Birdham, Chichester, West Sussex

An Archaeological Evaluation

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Report 15/287

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Tawney Nurseries, Bell Lane, Birdham, Chichester, West Sussex (SZ 8191 9926) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Stuart Forrester of Cala Homes Limited, Tilford House, Farnham Business Park, Weyden Lane, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 8QT.

Planning consent (12/04147/OUT) has been gained from Chichester District Council on appeal (APP/L3815/A/13/2199668) to construct new housing at the former Tawney Nurseries. The consent is subject to a condition (17) relating to archaeology. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by proposed re-development of the site, it was proposed to carry out a field evaluation on the site, to determine the site's archaeological potential.

This is 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 James Kenny, Archaeology Officer with Chichester District Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by James McNicoll-Norbury and Thomas Stewart on 18th January 2016 and the site code is TNB 15/287. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Chichester Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the eastern side of Bell Lane (B2198) in the hamlet of Somerley which lies to the south of Birdham and to the south west of Chichester (Fig. 1). The site was formerly in use as a caravan park and comprises flat open areas of grassland with access tracks with shrubs and small trees (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is described as Aeolian Deposits (Brickearth - silts with gravels) (BGS 1996) which was observed in the trenches as a light red-brown sandy clay, and the site lies at between 5–6m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential for the site has been highlighted in a desk-based assessment (Briscoe 2012). In summary this potential stems from its location on the archaeologically rich Sussex coastal plain and within the wider hinterland of the Iron Age *oppidum* and Roman town of Chichester (Manley 2008). The site lies just to the east of a possible Roman road. A small number of Bronze Age and Roman finds are recorded for the area along with many buildings of post-medieval date.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of development. This work was to be carried out in a manner which would not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which might warrant preservation in situ, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation. The work was to be carried out to comply with the East Sussex requirements for archaeological fieldwork (ESCC 2014).

The specific research aims of this project are:

to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site; and

to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

Seven trenches, each 20m long and 1.6m wide, were to be dug targeting areas to be affected by the development, using a 360° type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket down to archaeologically sensitive levels under the direction of a qualified archaeologist. If archaeological deposits were identified these were to be cleaned and sampled to an agreed sample fraction satisfy the aims of the project.

Results

The trenches were dug as intended (Fig. 3) and ranged from 17.30m to 20.50m in length and between 0.40m to 0.73m in depth. All were 1.8m wide. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned NW - SE and was 19.60m long and 0.54m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil and 0.39m subsoil overlying natural geology comprising sandy clay. No archaeological features were identified.

Trench 2 (Pl. 3)

Trench 2 was aligned SE - NW and was 19.50m long and 0.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of topsoil and 0.40m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological features were identified, but two modern services were present.

Trench 3 (PL. 4)

Trench 3 was aligned SE - NW and was 20.00m long and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of topsoil and 0.27m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological features were identified.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was aligned SW - NE and was 20.00m long and 0.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.27m of made ground and 0.23m light green grey silty clay overlying natural geology. This trench was taken down an extra 0.30m at one end to confirm the interpretation of the light red-brown sandy clay natural geology. No archaeological features were identified.

Trench 5

Trench 5 was aligned SE - NW and was 20.00m long and 0.73m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.23m of made ground (scalpins), 0.23m light brown clay with modern inclusions (made ground) and 0.27m light green silty clay overlying natural geology. No archaeological features were identified.

Trench 6

Trench 6 was aligned SE - NW and was 20.50m long and 0.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.15m of topsoil and 0.30m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological features were identified.

Trench 7 (Pl. 2)

Trench 7 was aligned SW - NE and was 20.00m long and 0.55m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.35m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological features were identified.

Finds

No finds of archaeological interest were recovered.

Conclusion

Despite the site lying in a rich archaeological area the trial trenching did not reveal any archaeological deposits nor were any finds recovered. The evaluation did reveal that the natural geology was relatively undisturbed however and was still sealed by a moderate amount of subsoil suggesting that it had not be subject to high levels of ploughing in recent times. The site is considered to have no archaeological potential.

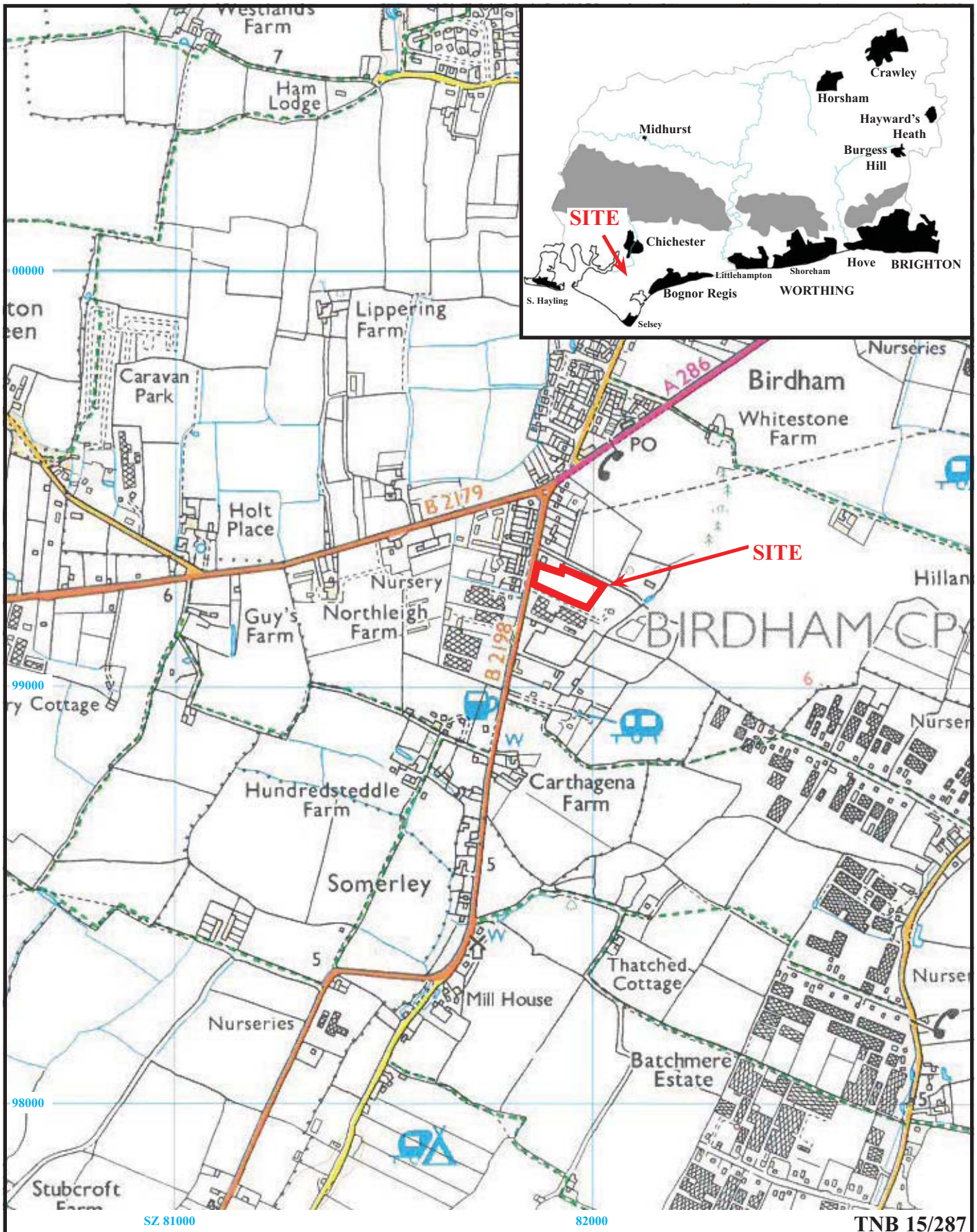
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- Briscoe, J, 2012, 'Tawney Nurseries, Bell Lane, Birdham, Chichester, West Sussex, an archaeological desk-based assessment', Archaeology South East project **201217**, Portislade
- ESCC, 2014, *Sussex Archaeological Standards*, East Sussex County Council, Lewes
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- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at W, SE or SW end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	19.60	1.8	0.54	0–0.15m dark brown silt with turf (topsoil), 0.15–0.54m light grey brown silty clay (subsoil), 0.54m+ yellow brown sandy clay (natural geology). No archaeology [Pl. 1]
2	17.3	1.8	0.50	0–0.10m topsoil, 0.10–0.40m subsoil, 0.40m+ natural geology. No archaeology
3	19	1.8	0.40	0–0.10m topsoil, 0.10–0.37m subsoil, 0.37m+ natural geology. No archaeology
4	20.00	1.8	0.60 Test pit 0.8m	0–0.27m made ground, 0.27–0.50m light green silty clay, 0.50m+ natural geology. No archaeology
5	20.00	1.8	0.73	0–0.23m made ground, 0.23–0.46m light brown silty clay, 0.46–0.73m light green silty clay, 0.73m+ natural geology. No archaeology
6	20.50	1.8	0.50	0–0.15m topsoil, 0.15–0.45m subsoil, 0.45m+ natural geology. No archaeology
7	18	1.8	0.55	0–0.20m topsoil, 0.20–0.55m subsoil, 0.55m+ natural geology. No archaeology [Pl. 2]



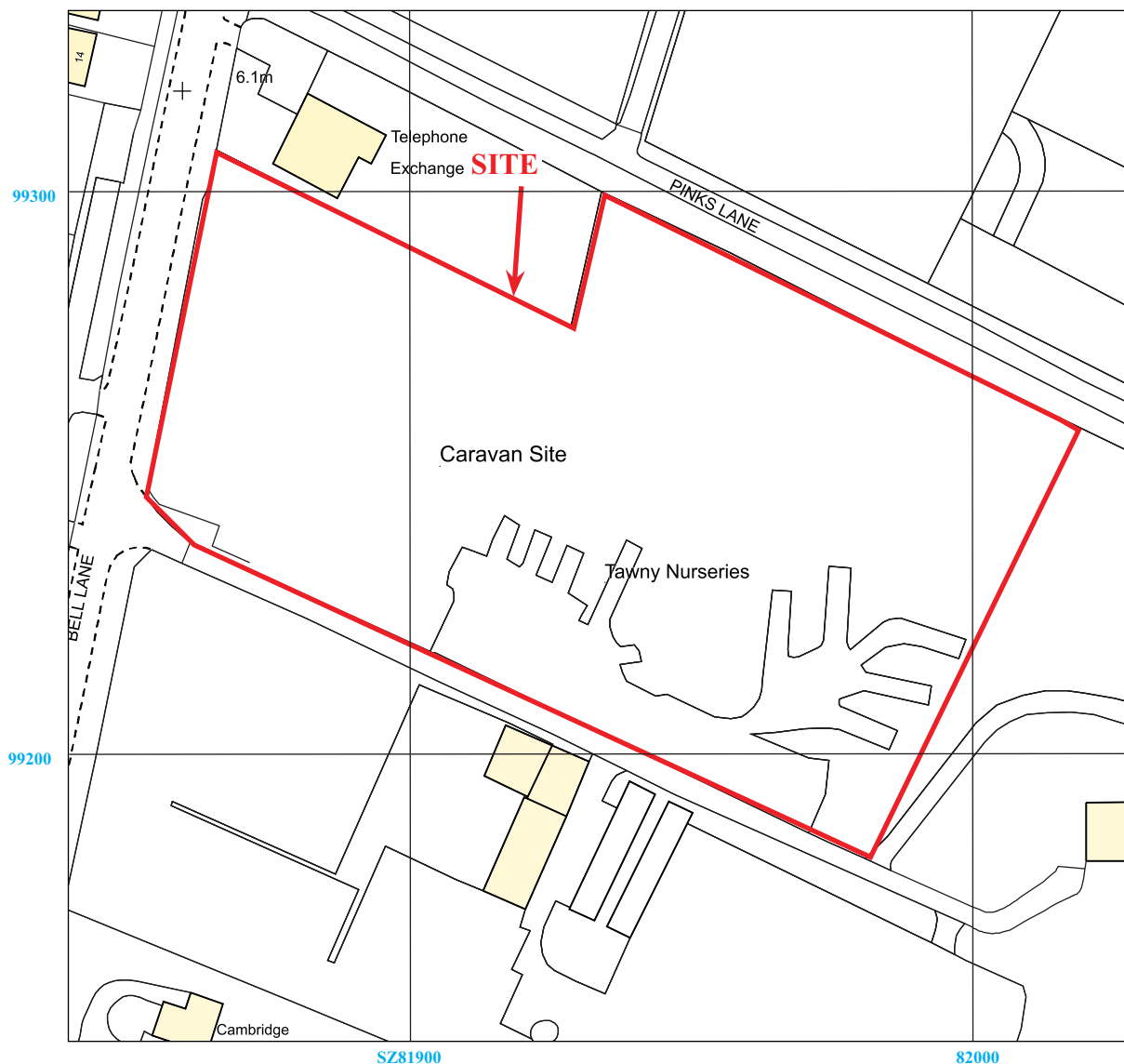
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Figure 1. Location of site within Birdham and West Sussex

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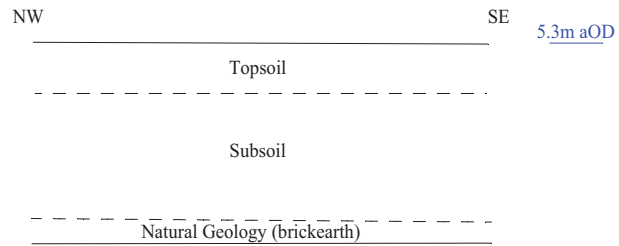
Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Bell Lane.

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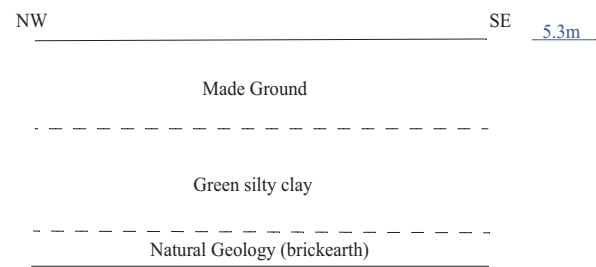
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Trench 1



Trench 4



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Figure 4. Representative sections



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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking SE, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 2. Trench 7, looking NE, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

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Plates 1 and 2.

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Plate 3. Trench 2, looking S, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 4. Trench 3, looking NW, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

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Plates 3 and 3.

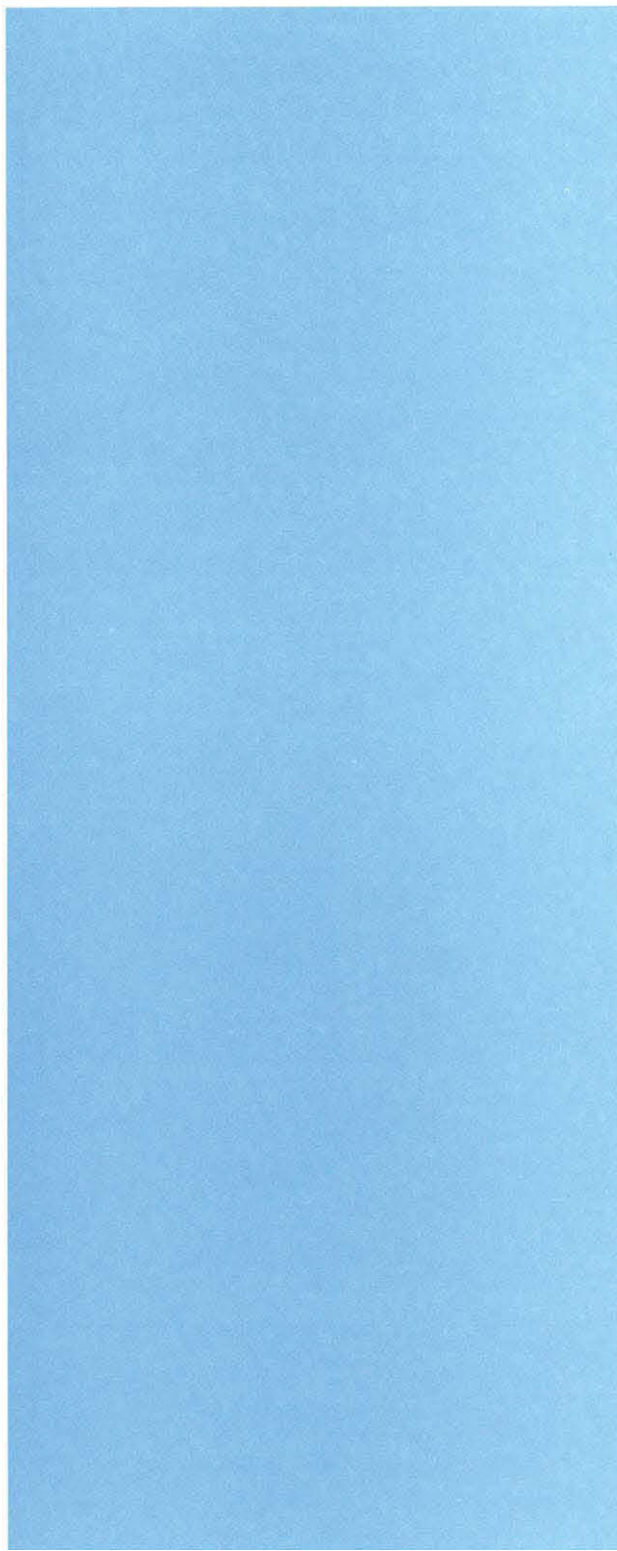
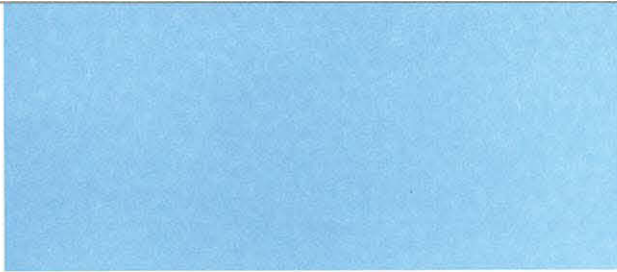
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TIME CHART

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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