

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Proposed new fishing lake, Ashton Road, Three Bridges,
Ashton Keynes, Wiltshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by David Sanchez and Andy Taylor

Site Code: AKW16/64

(SU 0463 9331)

Proposed new fishing lake, Ashton Road, Three Bridges, Ashton Keynes, Wiltshire

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Me. John Hartshorn

by David Sanchez and Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code AKW16/64

April 2016

Summary

Site name: Proposed new fishing lake, Ashton Road, Three Bridges, Ashton Keynes, Wiltshire

Grid reference: SU 0463 9331

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 21st-25th April 2016

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: David Sanchez

Site code: AKW 16/64

Area of site: 3ha.

Summary of results: The evaluation revealed a large number of deposits at the top of the natural geology and most of these were investigated. However, these deposits were frequently shallow, with some having shapes typical of tree-throw holes. They contained no artefacts despite a programme of wet sieving. The latter also produce no charred plant remains. No artefacts of archaeological interest were recovered from the spoilheaps. It is considered that these features are of natural (geological or biological) origin and that the site has no archaeological potential.

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

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

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 29.04.16

Danielle Milbank ✓ 29.04.16

Proposed new fishing lake, Ashton Road, Three Bridges, Ashton Keynes, Wiltshire An Archaeological Evaluation

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Report 16/64

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at a parcel of land at Three Bridges, Ashton Keynes, Wiltshire (SU 0463 9331) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr. Nick Dunn, of Land & Mineral Management, Roundhouse Cottages, Bridge Street, Frome, Somerset, BA11 1BE on behalf of John Hartshorne.

Planning permission (15/12547/WCM) has been sought from Wiltshire Council to construct a new fishing lake. The consent is subject to a condition relating to archaeology. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site which may be damaged or destroyed by groundworks, fieldwork has been requested as detailed in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms. Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger of Wiltshire Council Archaeology Service.

The fieldwork was undertaken by David Sanchez and Peter Banks, between the 21st and 25th April 2016 and the site code is AKW 16/64. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Swindon Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in a parcel of land of 3ha. to the southwest of Ashton Keynes and lies to the east of Ashton Road and west and south of Swill Brook (Fig. 1). The parcel of land is flat and surrounded by trees running through the site boundary and the site lies at a height of *c.*94m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is mapped as Oxford Clay (BGS 1974) but the geology observed on site consisted of light brown gravel with patches of mid greyish brown clay.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the archaeologically rich Upper Thames Valley. Numerous sites of many periods have been discovered and recorded during the extensive mineral

extraction that has taken place in the area (Booth et al. 2007; Lambrick and Robinson 2009). In the general vicinity, Iron Age and Roman deposits have been excavated at Cleveland Farm (Coe et al. 1991).

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.

The specific research aims of this project were:

- a) To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site.
- b) To determine if archaeological deposits or any period are present.
- c) To provide information in order to draw up an appropriate mitigation strategy if required.
- d) To report on the findings of the evaluation.

Four trenches between 1.6 and 2m wide and 50m long were to be dug in the area affected by the groundworks. These were subdivided after consultation with the Archaeological Adviser in order to manage water ingress. This resulted in eight trenches 25m long. The trenches were to be dug using a 360° type machine fitted with toothless grading bucket under constant archaeological supervision. All spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds.

Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools. In trenches 2B, 4A and 4B the depth of the trenches was lower than the water-table and it was not possible to dig any potentially archaeological deposits but these were planned at a scale of 1:20 and described on pro-forma context recording sheets. In the rest of the trenches sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were excavated or sampled by hand and recorded to satisfy the aims of this scheme of work brief and several potential features were fully excavated following the half-section recording in order to recover dating evidences for the site. This was according to the requirement of the Archaeological Adviser.

Results

The proposed trenches were subdivided after consultation with the Archaeological Adviser so as to manage water ingress. This resulted in eight trenches which measured between 24.30m to 26.80m long and between 0.40m to 0.49m deep. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1A (Figs 2,3 and 5)

Trench 1A was aligned SW-NE and measured 24.80m long and 0.45m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.21m of topsoil overlying 0.19m of subsoil overlying gravel natural. One posthole-sized feature (1) was observed at 9m from the SW end of the trench with circular shape and a diameter of 0.30m, and was excavated in half-section showing to be 0.10m deep. The fill (52) consisted of mid greyish brown sandy clay with small size gravel inclusions but did not produce any dating evidence.

Trench 1B (Figs 2,3 and 5), Pl. 1)

Trench 1B was aligned SW-NE measured 25.60m long and 0.48m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.21m of topsoil overlying 0.22m of subsoil overlying gravel natural. Two possible linear features were observed at 1m and 13m from the SW end of the trench. The first feature (2) which was 0.65m wide, was under the water-table level and it was only planned. A slot was dug in the second showing to be two features (5 and 6). these measured 0.60m and 0.19m wide and 0.16m and 0.13m deep respectively. Both fills (56) and (57) consisted of dark yellowish brown sandy clay but neither produced any finds. An elongated feature (7) was observed and excavated at 22m from the SW end. It was 0.32m wide and only 0.07m deep with concave shape profile. Its fill (58) consisted of dark yellowish brown sandy clay but no finds were recovered. Two pit-like features were observed at 20.50m and 23.50m from the SW end of the trench. The first (10) was nearly square with a flat base and shallow sides measuring 0.27m wide and 0.08m deep. Its fill (61) consisted of mid yellowish brown sandy clay but did not contain any finds. A second possible pit (8) was nearly circular with a diameter of 0.55m and it was not excavated due to the trench flooding.

Trench 2A ((Figs 2,3 and 5)

Trench 2A was aligned SW-NE and measured 24.40m long and 0.47m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.16m of topsoil overlying 0.27m of subsoil overlying gravel natural. A possible pit (31) was investigated but proved to be of natural origin. This was also the case with a possible small pit (29) and possible posthole (30). A modern truncation was noted at the NE end of the trench.

Trench 2B (Figs 2,3 and 5)

Trench 2B was aligned SW-NE and measured 24.30m long and 0.46m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.13m of topsoil overlying 0.28m of subsoil overlying gravel natural. This trench rapidly flooded but possible features were observed along its length. A possible gully (38) and pit (39) were noted at the eastern end of the trench. A

possible pit (40) was noted at 8m and a ditch (41) was noted between 10.20m and 13m. Two possible pits (42 and 43) were also noted at 20m and 21m respectively. These are thought to be of natural in origin.

Trench 3A (Figs 2.4 and 5; Pls 2 and 3)

This trench was aligned E-W and measured 26.30m long and 0.44m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.13m of topsoil overlying 0.31m of subsoil overlying gravel natural. A possible gully (11) and pit (12) were noted at the western end but after investigation these are likely to be of natural origin. A possible posthole was noted at 3.30m measuring 0.32m wide and 0.11m deep. Its light blue grey fill (64) did not produce any finds. Two terminal ends of gullies (14 and 16) at 11m and 14m respectively were both investigated but are again likely to be natural. Feature 14 was markedly crescentic in plan. A possible gully (15) was noted at 12.50m measuring 0.62m wide and 0.14m deep. Its light blue grey clayey silt fill (66) did not contain any finds. A group of possible postholes (17-19) were noted at 16m, which after investigation are all likely to be natural silt patches in the gravel. This is also the case with a possible pit and gully (20 and 21) at 17.50m, two possible pits (22 and 23) at 20m and 21.50m and a possible gully at 23m.

Trench 3B (Figs 2.4 and 5; Pl. 4)

This trench was aligned SW-NE and measured 26.80m long and 0.40m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.21m of topsoil overlying 0.17m of subsoil overlying natural gravel. A possible posthole (25) was noted at 6.80m measuring 0.30m wide and 0.10m deep. Its mid grey brown sandy clay fill (76) did not contain any finds. A possible pit (26) was observed at 15m measuring 0.97m wide and 0.19m deep. Its dark grey brown sandy clay fill (77) did not contain any finds.

Trench 4A (Figs 2 and 4 ; Pl. 5)

This trench was aligned E-W and measured 25m long and 0.49m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.12m of topsoil overlying 0.35m of subsoil overlying gravel natural. This trench rapidly flooded and as such none of the potential features were investigated. A possible gully terminus (32) was noted at 4.50m with four possible gullies (33-36) between 10.70m and 14.50m and a possible pit (37) at 20.50m. These are thought to be natural in origin.

Trench 4B (Figs 2 and 4; Pl. 6)

This trench was aligned SE- NW and measured 26.40m long and 0.46m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.13m of topsoil overlying 0.30m of subsoil overlying gravel natural. Two possible pits (27 and 28) were noted at 20.50m and 24m respectively. Neither of these were investigated but are thought to be of natural in origin.

Finds

No finds of an archaeological nature were recovered during the evaluation.

Conclusion

The evaluation identified a number of features of potential archaeological interest and the majority of these were investigated. However, the majority of these proved to be natural in origin, such treeboles or silt patches. No dating evidence nor artefacts of any kind was recovered from any these features and nine environmental samples were also taken which did not produce any charred plant remains nor charcoal, supporting the notion that these are most likely of natural (biological or geological) origin. It is considered that the site has no archaeological potential.

References

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- Booth, P, Dodd, A, Robinson, M and Smith, A, 2007, *Thames through time: the archaeology of the gravel terraces of the upper and middle Thames: the early historic period: AD1–1000*, OA Thames Valley Landscapes Monogr **27**, Oxford
- Coe, D, Jenkins V and Richards J, 1991, 'Cleveland Farm, Ashton Keynes: second interim report, investigations May-August 1989', *Wiltshire Archaeol Natur Hist Mag* **84**, 40–50
- Lambrick, G and Robinson, M, 2009, *The Thames through time: The archaeology of the gravel terraces of the upper and middle Thames – The Thames Valley in Late Prehistory; 1500 BC – AD 50*, OA Thames Valley Landscapes Monogr **29**, Oxford
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London

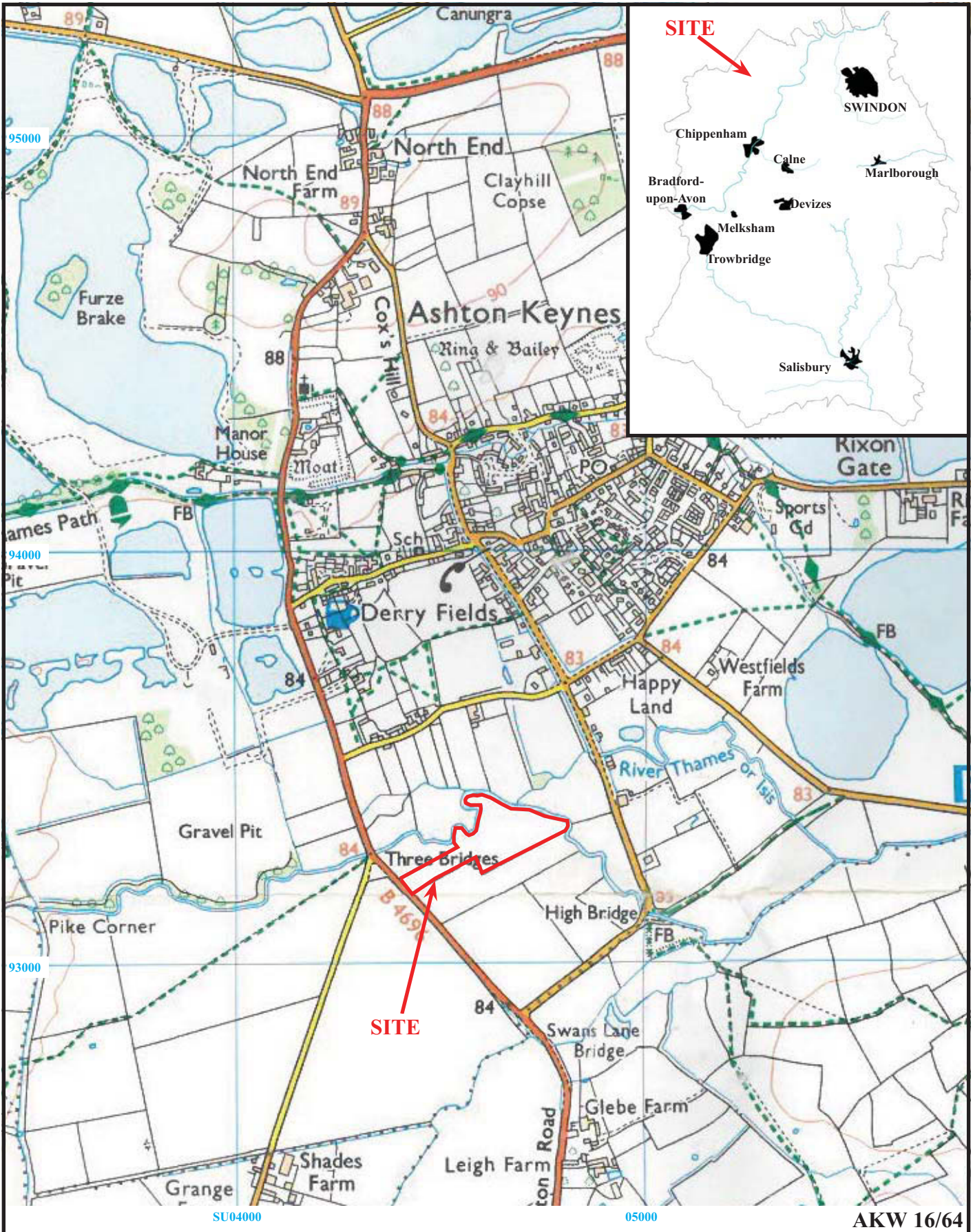
APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S or W end

Trench	Length (m)	Breadth (m)	Depth (m)	Comment
1a	24.80	1.80	0.45	0-0.21m topsoil; 0.21m-0.40m subsoil; 0.40m-0.45m+ gravel natural geology.
1b	25.60	1.80	0.48	0-0.21m topsoil; 0.21m-0.43m subsoil; 0.43m-0.48m+ gravel natural geology. [Pl. 1]
2a	24.40	1.80	0.47	0-0.16m topsoil; 0.16m-0.43m subsoil; 0.43m-0.47m+ gravel natural geology.
2b	24.30	1.80	0.46	0-0.13m topsoil; 0.13m-0.41m; subsoil; 0.41m-0.46m+ gravel natural geology.
3a	26.30	1.80	0.44	0-0.13m topsoil; 0.13m-0.44m subsoil; 0.44m+ gravel natural geology. [Pls 2 and 3]
3b	26.80	1.80	0.40	0-0.21m topsoil; 0.21m-0.38m subsoil; 0.38m-0.40m+ gravel natural geology. [Pl. 4]
4a	25.00	1.80	0.49	0-0.12m topsoil; 0.12m-0.47m subsoil; 0.47m-0.49m+ gravel natural geology. [Pl. 5]
4b	26.40	1.80	0.46	0-0.13m topsoil; 0.13m-0.43m subsoil; 0.43m-0.46m+ gravel natural geology. [Pl. 6]

APPENDIX 2: Investigated feature details

Trench	Cut	Fill (s)	Type	Dating evidence
1A	1	52	Small circular	-
1B	2	53	Linear	-
1B	5	56	Linear	-
1B	6	57	Linear	-
1B	7	58	Oval	-
1B	8	59	Circular	-
2A	29	80	Circular	-
2A	30	81	Small circular	-
2A	31	82	Circular	-
2B	38	89	Linear	-
2B	39	90	Circular	-
2B	40	91	Circular	-
2B	41	92	Linear	-
2B	42	93	Circular	-
2B	43	94	Circular	-
3A	11	62	Linear	-
3A	12	63	Circular	-
3A	13	64	Circular	-
3A	14	65	Crescentic	-
3A	15	66	Linear	-
3A	16	67	Oval	-
3A	17	68	Small circular	-
3A	18	69	Small circular	-
3A	19	70	Small circular	-
3A	20	71	Circular	-
3A	21	72	Circular	-
3A	22	73	Circular	-
3A	23	74	Circular	-
3A	24	75	Linear	-
3B	25	76	Circular	-
3B	26	77	Circular	-
4A	32	83	Oval	-
4A	33	84	Linear	-
4A	34	85	Linear	-
4A	35	86	Linear	-
4A	36	87	Linear	-
4A	37	88	Circular	-
4B	27	78	Circular	-
4B	28	79	Circular	-

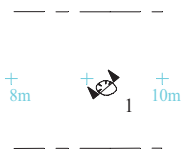


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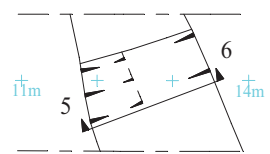
Figure 1. Location of site in relation to Ashton Keynes and within Wiltshire.

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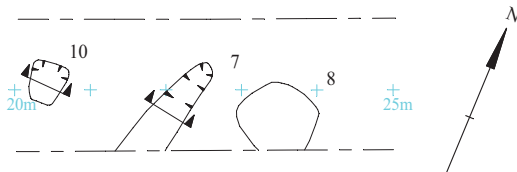
Trench 1a



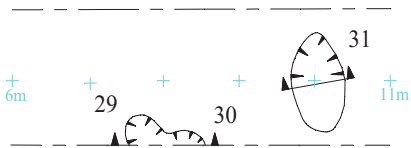
Trench 1b



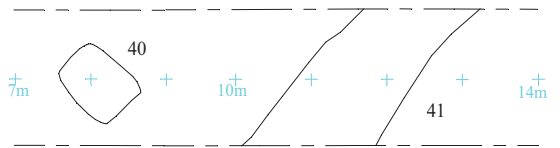
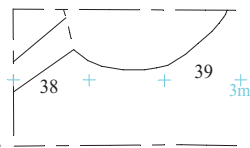
Trench 1b continued



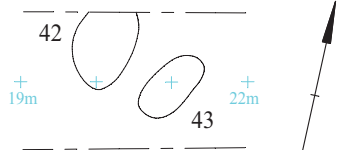
Trench 2a



Trench 2b



Trench 2b continued



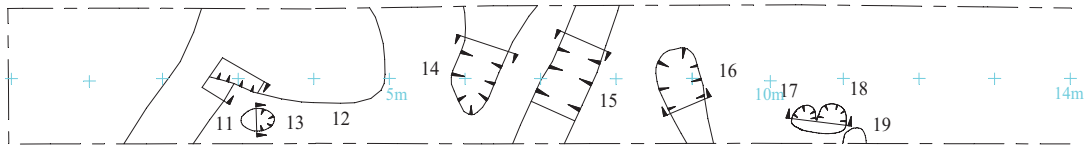
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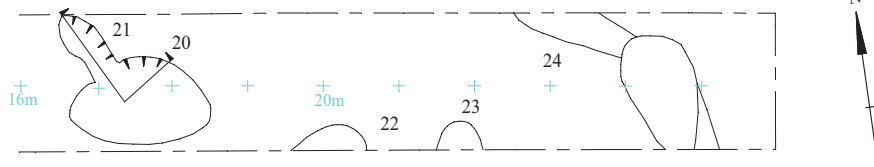
Figure 3. Detail of trenches.



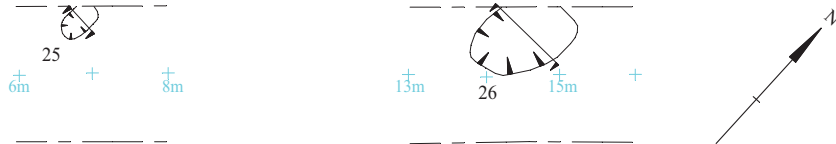
Trench 3a



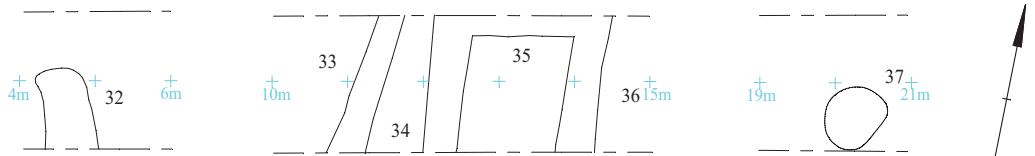
Trench 3a continued



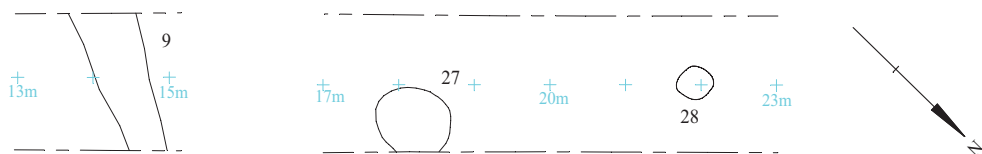
Trench 3b



Trench 4a



Trench 4b

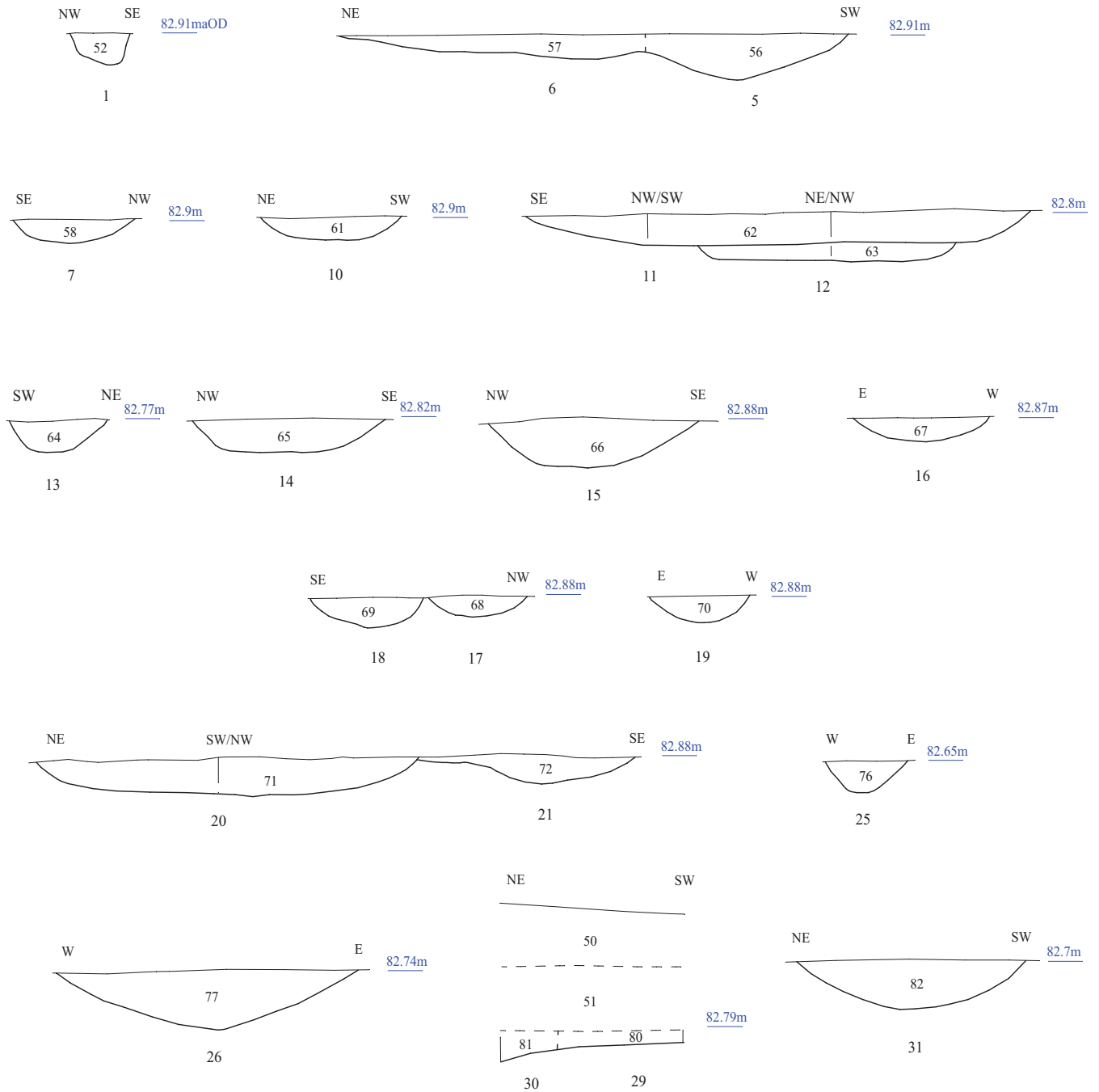


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Figure 4. Detail of trenches.





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Figure 5. Sections.





Plate 1. Trench 1b, possible gully 7, looking South,
Scale: 0.3m.



Plate 2. Trench 3a, looking East,
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 3. Trench 3a, pits 20 and 21, looking West,
Scales: 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 4. Trench 3b, looking South East,
Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.

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**Proposed new fishing lake, Three Bridges,
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Plates 1 - 4.**

THAMES VALLEY
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Plate 5. Trench 4a, looking North West, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.



Plate 6. Trench 4b, looking North, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.

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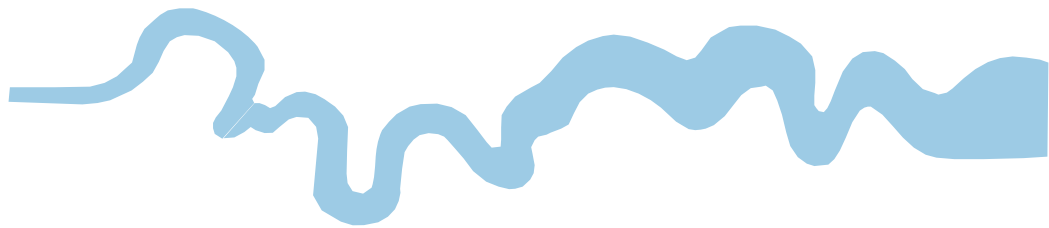
**Proposed new fishing lake, Three Bridges,
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Plates 5 - 6.**

THAMES VALLEY
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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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