

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Hatch Gate Farm, Lines Road,
Hurst, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Kyle Beaverstock

Site Code: HGF15/235

(SU 7926 7242)

Hatch Gate Farm, Lines Road, Hurst, Berkshire

An Archaeological Evaluation for Belcher Farms

by Kyle Beaverstock
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code HGF15/235

May 2016

Summary

Site name: Hatch Gate Farm, Lines Road, Hurst, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7927 7227

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 18th May 2016

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Kyle Beaverstock

Site code: HGF15/220

Area of site: c. 0.87ha

Summary of results: The evaluation has revealed a small number of archaeological deposits of medieval date. A prehistoric struck flint was also found. The majority of the trenches dug found nothing of archaeological interest and parts of the site had been truncated and backfilled with made ground. It is considered that only a small part of the site has some archaeological potential.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at an appropriate designated museum or repository (to be decided by the local planning authority).

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 26.05.16 Steve Preston✓ 26.05.16
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Hatch Gate Farm, Lines Road, Hurst, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Kyle Beaverstock

Report 15/220

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Hatch Gate Farm, Lines Road, Hurst, Berkshire (SU 7927 7227) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Robin Bradbeer on behalf of Belcher Farms, Hatch Gate Farm, Lines Road, Hurst, Reading, Berkshire, RG10 0SP. Planning consent (F20154/1235) has been gained from Wokingham Borough Council for the construction of new cattle sheds and farm workshops. The consent is subject to a condition (7) relating to archaeology.

A single component of work is proposed at this stage, a field evaluation by means of machine trenching. Further fieldwork may be required if archaeological deposits are encountered which cannot be preserved *in situ* by amendments to the development layout or foundation design in consultation Berkshire Archaeology.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Ellie Leary of Berkshire Archaeology, the adviser to the Borough Council on archaeological matters. The fieldwork was undertaken by Kyle Beaverstock and Benedikt Tebbit on the 18th of May 2016 and the site code is HGF15/235. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at an appropriate designated museum or repository (to be decided by the local planning authority) in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located approximately 1km south of the village of Hurst and to the east of the river Loddon (Fig. 1). This relatively flat irregularly shaped parcel of land approximately 40m above Ordinance Datum was being partly used as a standing area for machinery to the north and partly as scrub land to the south (Fig. 2). The underlying geology is mapped as London Clay (BGS 2000). However, many of the trenches revealed a light reddish yellow sandy gravel natural geology.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a briefing document prepared by Ms Ellie Leary of Berkshire Archaeology. In summary this potential stems from its location within the lower Loddon Valley. Various survey projects, such as fieldwalking (Ford 1987; Ford 1991-3) and aerial photography (Gates 1975) have revealed a wide range of sites and finds in surrounding areas. Most notable are excavations in advance of mineral extraction to the north west which revealed a small volume of Late Bronze Age occupation, followed by Iron Age and Roman enclosures (Manning and Moore 2011). A Roman road from Silchester to St Albans is also considered to traverse the area in the environs of the site, though its precise line here is not known.

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. Specific research aims of this project are:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present;
- to determine if any dense Mesolithic activity is present on the site; and
- to provide sufficient information to construct an archaeological mitigation strategy.

It was proposed to excavate 11 trenches, each 25m long and 1.6m wide. The trenches were to be dug using a 360°-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket and under constant archaeological supervision. Any archaeological deposits encountered were to be cleaned, excavated and recorded using the appropriate tools to an agreed sampling fraction, but without jeopardising the integrity of any feature that might warrant preservation *in situ* or might be better investigated under the conditions pertaining to full excavation.

Results

Most of the trenches were dug as intended (Fig. 3), however Trenches 1 and 8 were reoriented due to rubble piles and Trenches 9, 10 and 11 were abandoned after a test pit dug in Trench 9 established that the area where they were to lie had been truncated and filled with made ground. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. The excavated features are summarized in Appendix 2

Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

Trench 1 was aligned SW- NE and was 26.5m long and 0.56m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.28m of topsoil and 0.26m of greyish brown clayey sand subsoil overlying light greyish yellow silty clay natural geology.

Trench 2 (Fig. 3)

Trench 2 was aligned SE - NW and was 28m long and 0.49m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.35m of topsoil and 0.14m of subsoil overlying light greyish yellow silty clay natural geology.

Trench 3 (Fig. 3)

Trench 3 was aligned SW -NE and was 26.5m long and 0.41m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.25m of topsoil and 0.13m of subsoil overlying greyish brown sandy gravel natural geology.

Trench 4 (Fig. 3)

Trench 4 was aligned SW – NE and was 24.6m long and 0.54m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of topsoil and 0.21m of subsoil overlying greyish brown sandy gravel natural geology.

Trench 5 (Fig. 3)

Trench 5 was aligned SE NW and was 27.1m long and 0.46m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.31m of topsoil and 0.07m of subsoil overlying yellowish brown sandy gravel natural geology.

Trench 6 (Fig. 3)

Trench 6 was aligned SW- NE and was 27.2m long and 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.28m of topsoil and 0.16m of subsoil overlying yellowish brown sandy gravel natural geology.

Trench 7 (Fig. 3; Pl. 1)

Trench 7 was aligned SW NE and was 30m long and 0.51m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.27m of topsoil and 0.21m of subsoil overlying yellowish brown sandy gravel. natural geology.

Trench 8 (Figs 3 and 4; Pls2-4)

Trench 8 was aligned SW- NE and was 24.5m long and 0.48m deep. The trench was extended sideways at the SW end to fully expose feature 1. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.26m of topsoil and 0.16m of subsoil overlying yellowish brown sandy gravel natural geology. Two features were recorded. Pit 1 (Pl. 3) was up to 0.78m across and 0.28m deep. It was filled with a grey brown sandy silt with gravel (52). It contained a single sherd of medieval pottery. Posthole 2 (Pl. 4) was up to 0.43m across but only 0.08m deep. It was filled with a similar grey brown sandy silt with gravel (53). It also contained a single sherd of medieval pottery along with a prehistoric struck flint.

Trench 9 (Fig. 3)

Trench 9 was 2m long and 0.72m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.26m of topsoil overlying made ground.

This area of the site had been truncated and filled.

Finds

Pottery by Jane Timby

The archaeological work resulted in the recovery of just three sherds of medieval pottery weighing 37g. The sherds are all in a hard, grey sandy ware and feature two rimsherds and one bodysherds from jars/ cooking pots.

One vessel has a lightly thumb-depressed rim top. Date: later 12th to 14th century.

1. Bodysherd and thumbed rimsherd from a grey sandy ware jar / cooking pot. Wt. 18g. Posthole 1 (52).
2. Rimsherd from a jar/cooking pot with an everted neck and rolled rim. Hard, grey sandy ware. Wt. 19g. Posthole 2 (53).

Struck Flint by Steve Ford

A single struck flint was recovered from posthole 2 (53). The piece was a spall (a piece less than 20x20mm). It is not closely datable but is likely to be of Neolithic or Bronze Age date. It is clearly residual alongside the medieval pottery sherd.

Conclusion

The evaluation has revealed just two archaeological deposits (post holes) of medieval date located within a single trench at the eastern end of the proposal site. A prehistoric struck flint was also found. The majority of the trenches dug found nothing of archaeological interest and the western parts of the site had been truncated and backfilled with made ground. It is considered that only the north-eastern part of the site has some archaeological potential.

References

- BGS, 2000, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 268, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Ford, S, 1987, *East Berkshire Archaeological Survey*, Berkshire County Council Dept Highways and Planning Occas Pap 1, Reading
- Ford, S, 1997, 'Loddon Valley (Berkshire) fieldwalking survey', *Berkshire Archaeol J* 75, (for 1994-7), 11-33
- Gates, T, 1975, *The Thames Valley, An archaeological Survey of the River Gravels*, Berkshire Archaeol Comm Pubn 1, Reading
- Manning, A and Moore, C, 2011, 'Excavations at Lea Farm, Hurst, 1998', *Berkshire Archaeol J* 80, 31-71
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London

APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at southern and western ends

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	26.5	1.8	0.56	0-0.28m of topsoil; 0.28-0.54m of mid greyish brown clayey sand subsoil; 0.54m+ of light greyish yellow silty clay
2	28	1.8	0.49	0-0.35m of topsoil; 0.35-0.49m of mid greyish brown clayey silt subsoil; 0.49m+ of light greyish yellow silty clay
3	26.5	1.8	0.41	0-0.25m of topsoil; 0.25-0.38m of mid greyish brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.38m+ of mid greyish brown sandy gravel
4	24.6	1.8	0.54	0-0.30m of topsoil; 0.30-0.51m of mid greyish brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.51m+ mid greyish brown sandy gravel
5	27.1	1.8	0.46	0-0.31m of topsoil; 0.31-0.40m of mid greyish brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.40m+ of mid yellowish brown sandy gravel
6	27.2	1.8	0.50	0-0.28m of topsoil; 0.28-0.44m of mid greyish brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.44m+ of mid yellowish brown sandy gravel
7	30	1.8	0.51	0-0.27m of topsoil; 0.27-0.48m of mid greyish brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.48m+ of mid yellowish brown sandy gravel. [Pl. 1]
8	24.5	1.8	0.48	0-0.26m of topsoil; 0.26-0.42m of mid greyish brown sandy silt subsoil; 0.42m+ of mid yellowish brown sandy gravel. Feature 1 and 2. [Pls 2-4]
9	c.2	1.8	0.72	0-0.72m+ of made ground

APPENDIX 2: Feature details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
8	1	52	Post hole	Medieval	Pottery
8	2	53	Post hole	Medieval	Pottery





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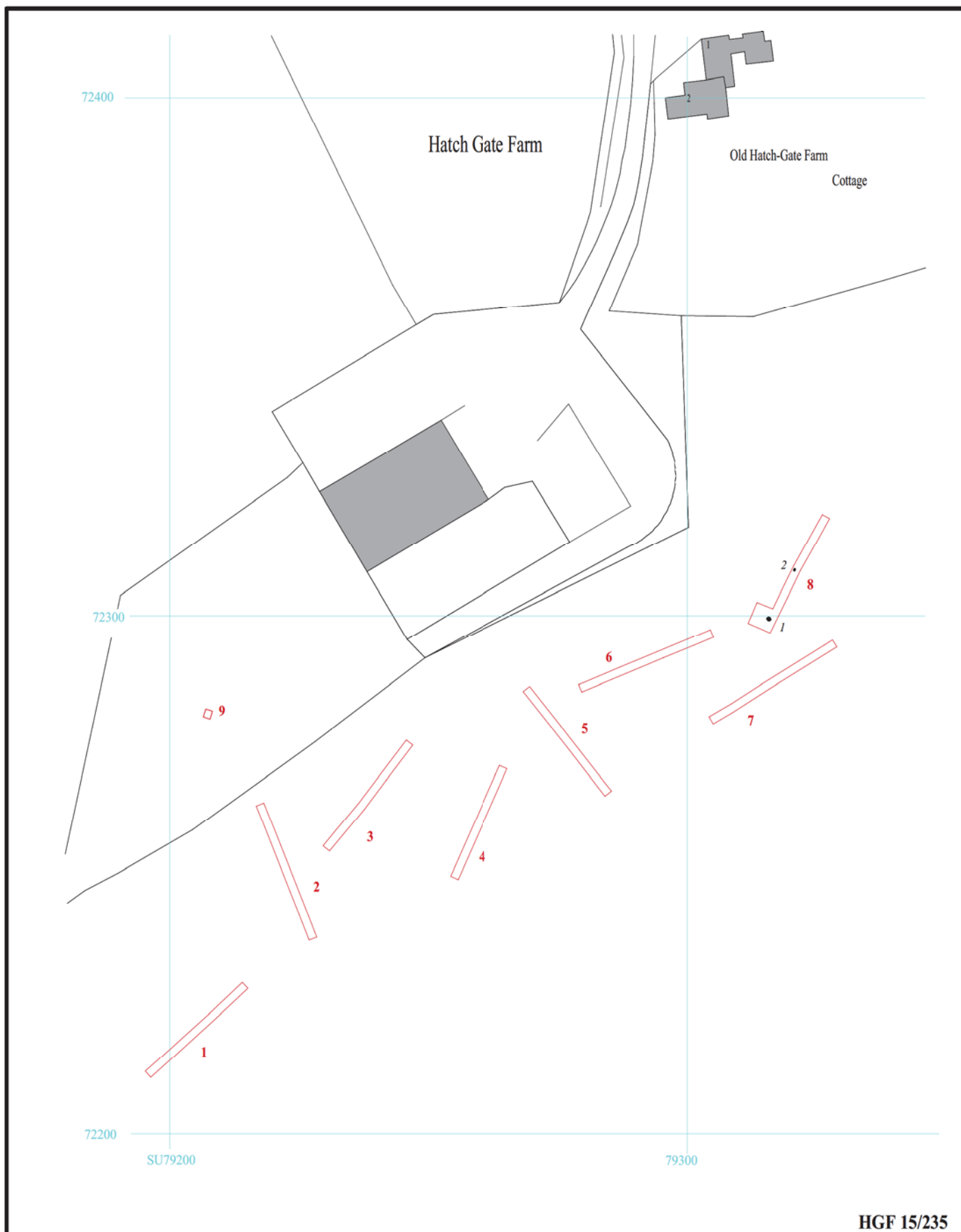
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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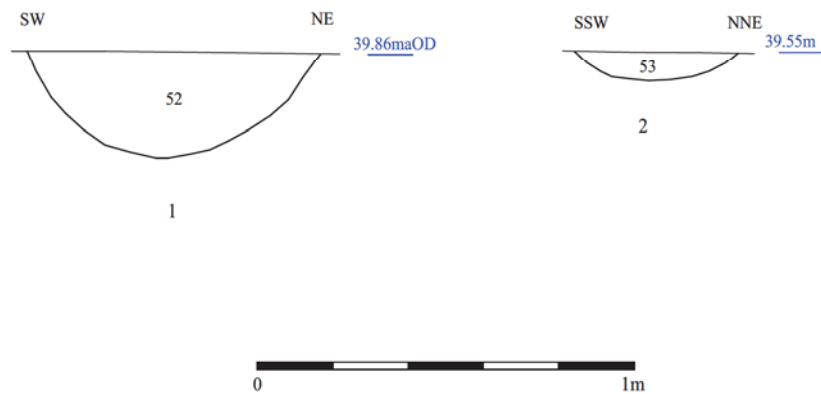
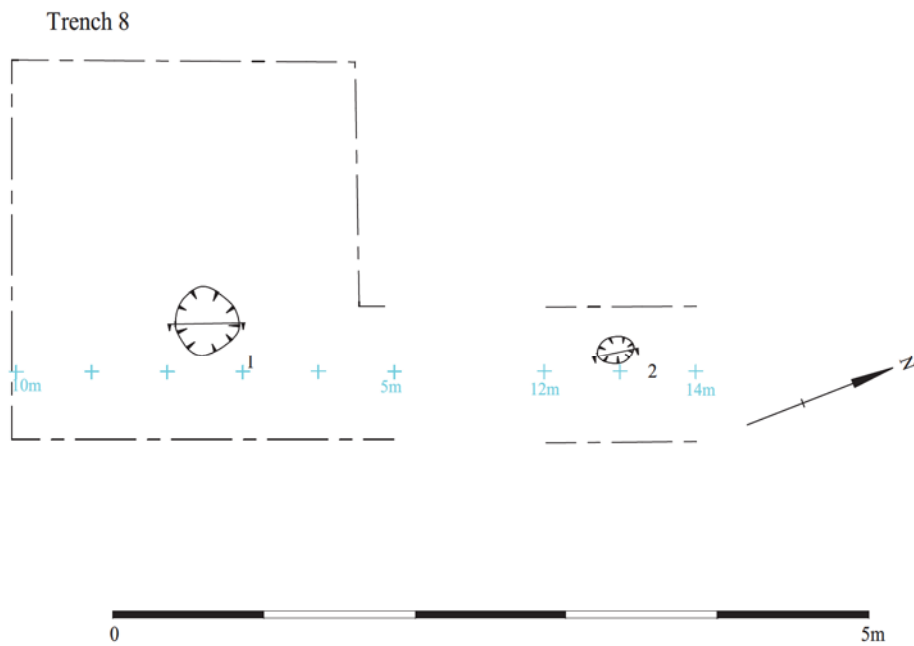
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Figure 3. Location of observed areas.

0 50m

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Figure 4. Detail of plan and sections from Trench 8.

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Plate 1. Trench 7, looking north east, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.5m.



Plate 2. Trench 8 extension, looking north west, Scales: 2m and 1m.

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Plates 1 - 2.**

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Plate 3. Trench 8, pit 1 looking north west, Scales: 0.5m and 0.3m.



Plate 4. Trench 8, pit 2, looking north west, Scale: 0.3m.

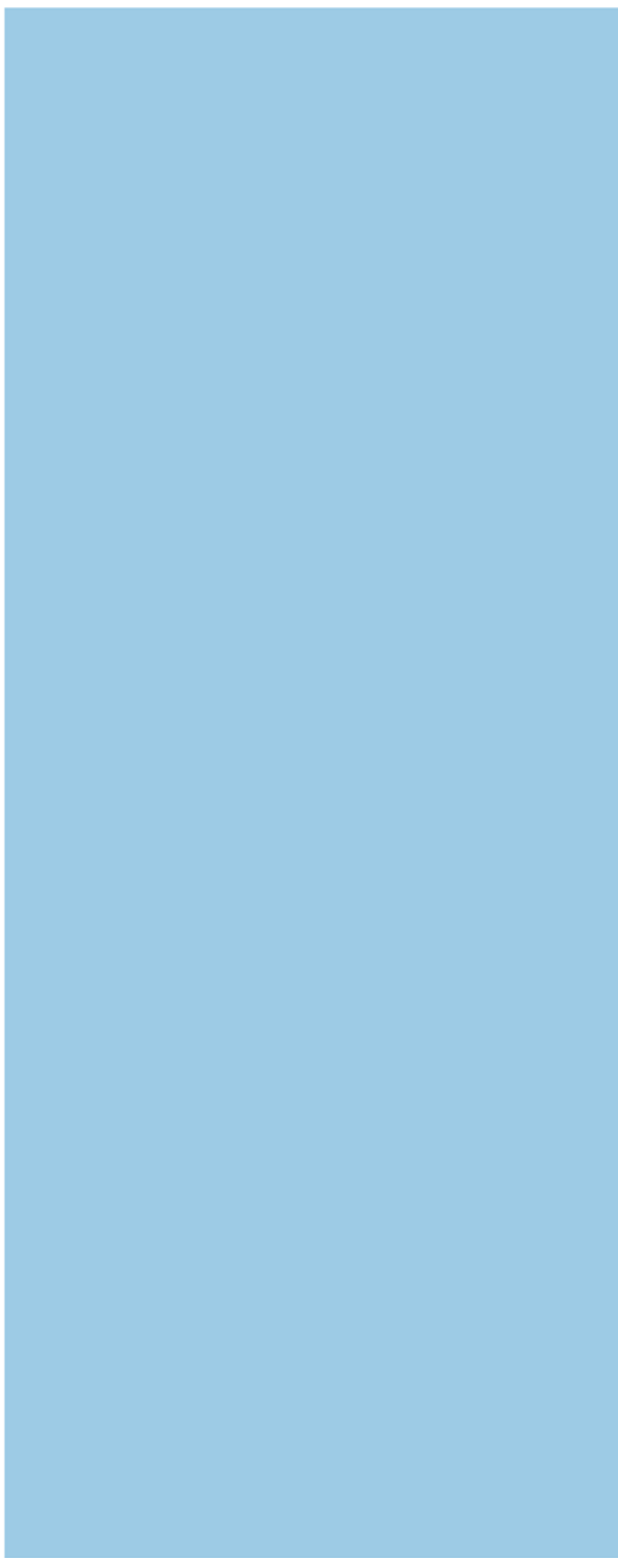
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Plates 3 - 4.

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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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