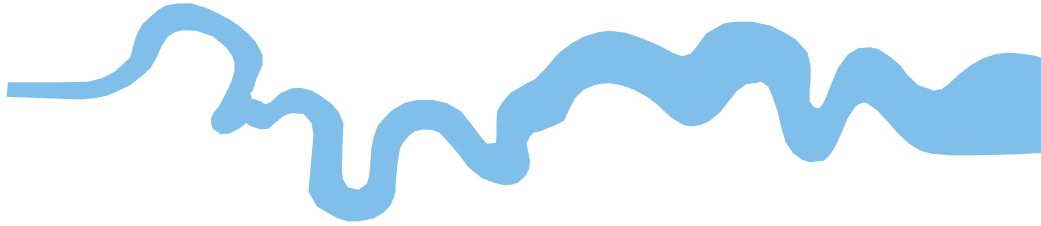


T V A S



NORTH MIDLANDS

**Land north of Stebbing Primary School,
Stebbing, Essex**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Garreth Davey

Site Code: TDS17/173

(TL 6607 2459)

**Land north of Stebbing Primary School,
Stebbing, Essex**

An Archaeological Evaluation

For CgMs Heritage

by Garreth Davey

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd.

TDS 17/173

October 2017

Summary

Site name: Land north of Stebbing Primary School, Stebbing, Essex

Grid reference: TL 6607 2459

Site activity: Archaeological Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 2nd – 5th October 2017

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Garreth Davey

Site code: TDS 17/173 **Essex site code:** STGF17

Summary of results: The evaluation consisted of eleven trenches but nothing of archaeological interest was exposed nor artefacts recovered. The site is considered to have low archaeological potential

Location of archive: The archive is presently held at TVAS Stoke-on-Trent and will be deposited at an approved local Museum willing to accept the archive in due course.

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

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 23.10.17
Steve Preston ✓ 23.10.17

Land north of Stebbing Primary School, Stebbing, Essex An Archaeological Evaluation

By Garreth Davey

Report 17/173

Introduction

This report details the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out at land north of Stebbing Primary School, Stebbing, Essex (TL 6607 2459) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Chris Clarke of CgMs Heritage, 140 London Wall, London, EC2Y 5DN,

Planning permission has been granted by Uttlesford District Council for the construction of a residential development comprising up to 30 dwellings and associated infrastructure (UTT/14/1069/OUT). The consent is subject to conditions which require a phased programme of archaeological investigation, 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 Havis, Historic Environment Advisor for Essex County Council, the adviser to the Uttlesford District on matters relating to archaeology.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Garreth Davey from the 2nd to 5th October 2017 and the site code is TDS 17/173. The archive is presently held at TVAS Stoke-on-Trent and will be deposited at an approved local Museum willing to accept the archive in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located north of Stebbing Primary School, on the northern edge of the village of Stebbing, approximately 9km north-west of Braintree, Essex (Fig 1). The site is bounded to the west by residential holdings off Garden Fields, Park Side and The Downs, to the north and east by open farmland and to the south by Stebbing Primary School. The site lies on a west facing slope from approximately 83m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) sloping down to 79m aOD at the western extent. The underlying geology is recorded as London Clay with superficial deposits of the Lowestoft Formation in the north and the Kesgrave Catchment Subgroup in the south (BGS 2017).

Archaeological Background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a brief for the project (Havis 2017) and summarized in a written scheme of investigation prepared by CgMs Limited (Clarke 2017). In summary the site lies on the northern margins of the historic (late Saxon/Medieval) village of Stebbing which is recorded in Domesday book as a large settlement with 104 households, 16 plough teams, woodland for 200 pigs, 24 acres of meadow and two mills. 250m west of the site is the scheduled monument of Stebbing Motte and Bailey castle, comprising a 70m diameter and 13m high earthen mound with a 15m wide water filled moat and 600m south of the site is the Grade 1 listed 14th century church of St. Mary the Virgin. Roman pottery and medieval features have been recorded nearby.

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 proposed development.

Specific aims of the project were:

- to determine the presence of any Prehistoric activity;
- to determine the presence of any Roman activity. Is there any evidence for Roman occupation activity?
- to determine the presence of any Anglo-Saxon activity;
- to determine the presence of any Late Medieval activity. Is this evidence indicative of occupation activity associated with the historic settlement or Motte and Bailey Castle at Stebbing?
- to establish the likely impact of past land use and development; and
- to provide sufficient information to, if appropriate, construct an archaeological mitigation strategy.

In addition the following specific research questions were posed, based on the revised Eastern Region Archaeological Framework (Medlycott 2011):

Roman

How far can the size and shape of fields be related to the agricultural regimes identified, and what is the relationship between rural and urban sites?

Late Medieval

How far can the size and shape of fields be related to agricultural regimes? What is the relationship between rural and urban sites?

It was proposed to dig 11 trenches, each 25m long and 1.6m wide. Topsoil and other overburden were removed using a JCB-machine fitted with toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, or where the archaeological potential is

uncertain, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools, and sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief, without compromising the integrity of any features that might warrant preservation *in situ* or that might be better excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation. All spoil heaps were to be monitored for finds.

Results

The 11 trenches were located as intended (Figs 2 and 3). The trenches were 1.6m wide, and measured between 20m and 29m long and were between 0.36m and 0.70m deep. A complete list of trenches detailing lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

The stratigraphy was consistent across the site and each of the trenches contained a soft, mid-brown loam topsoil directly onto the natural geology, an orange sand with a high content of gravel and flint inclusions.

Trenches 1-4 (Fig 2, 4; Pl. 1)

Trenches 1-4 were 20-29m long, 1.6m wide and between 0.36m – 0.50m deep. The stratigraphy of each trench was the same and consisted of soft mid-brown loam topsoil onto an orangey sand natural geology with regular gravel and large flint inclusions.

Trenches 5-9 (Figs 3, 4; Pls 2-4)

Trenches 5-8 were 26.2-28m long, 1.6m wide and between 0.40m – 0.65m deep. The stratigraphy of each trench was the same and consisted of soft mid-brown loam topsoil onto an orangey sand natural with regular gravel and large flint inclusions.

Trenches 10-11 (Figs 3, 4; Pl. 5)

Trenches 10-11 were 25m and 24m long, 1.6m wide and between 0.47m – 0.70m deep. The stratigraphy the trenches was the same, however due to the slope of the site, the topsoil was deeper in these trenches than previously. The trenches consisted of soft mid-brown loam topsoil onto an orangey sand natural geology with regular gravel and large flint inclusions as well as several large soft sand pockets.

Finds

No finds of archaeological interest were encountered.

Conclusion

The 11 trenches were successfully excavated as intended however despite the site's location within an area of elevated potential for medieval archaeology, in this case neither features nor finds of archaeological interest were present. As a result, the objectives of the project were unable to be met due to the sterile nature of the site, however it is clear that the site falls outside of the area of elevated potential. The site is considered to have low archaeological potential as a result.

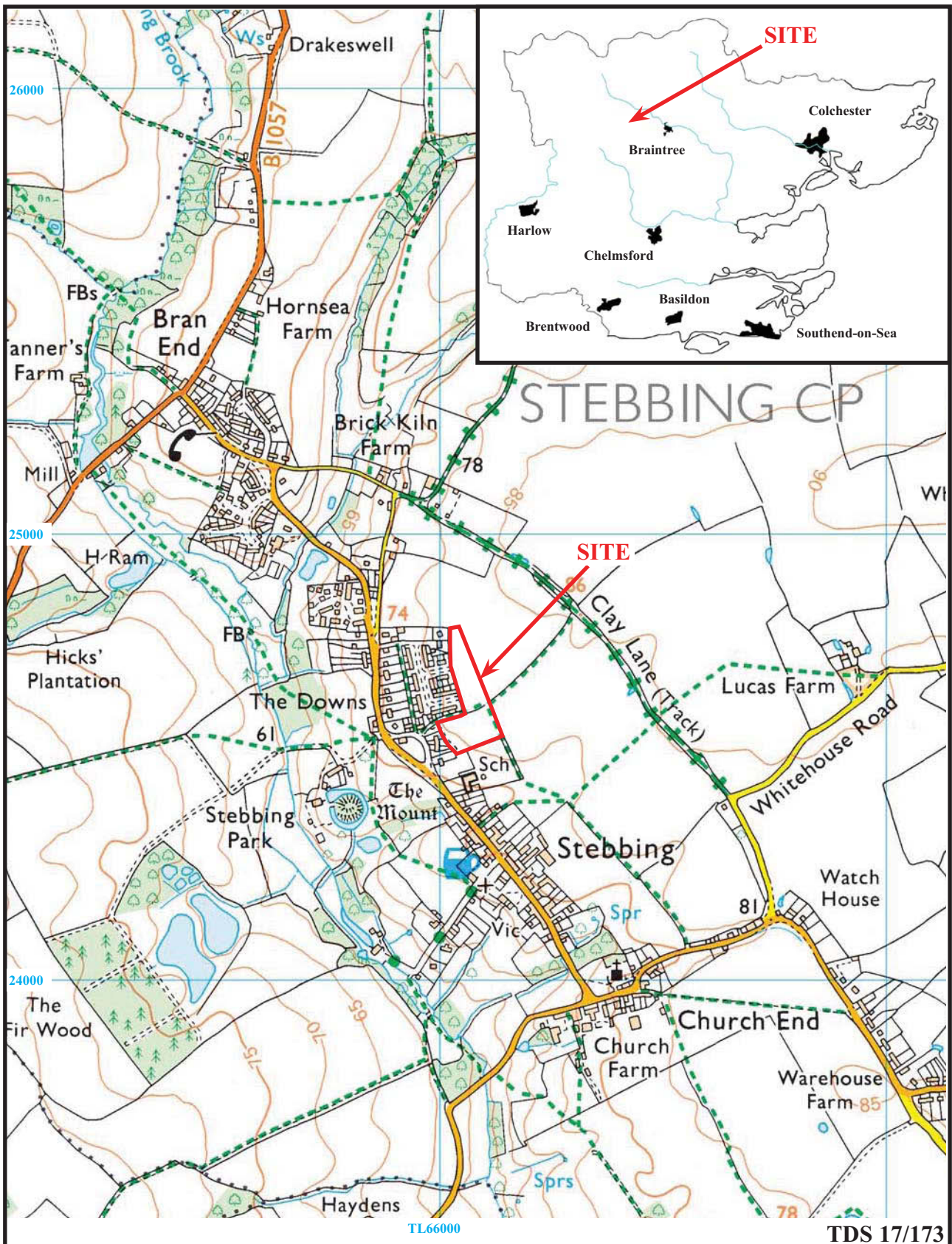
The stratigraphy of the site was uniform throughout and consisted of loam topsoil onto a sandy natural with no evidence for subsoil deposits recorded.

References

- Clarke, C, 2017, 'Land north of Stebbing Primary School, Stebbing, Essex, written scheme of investigation for an archaeological evaluation', CgMs Ltd, London
- BGS 2017, *British Geological Survey*, <http://www.bgs.ac.uk>
- Havis, R, 2017, 'Brief for trial trenching and excavation at Land To The North Of Stebbing Primary School and Rear Of Garden Fields and Parkside, Stebbing, Dunmow', Essex County Council, Chelmsford
- Medlycott, M (ed), 2011, *Research and Archaeology Revisited; A Framework for the Eastern Counties, 2 Research Agenda and Strategy*, E Anglian Archaeol Occas Pap **24**, Chelmsford
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Government, London

APPENDIX 1: Trench Details

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comments</i>
1	23.9	1.8	0.36-0.40	0-0.40m soft mid-brown loam topsoil, 0.40+ orange sand with regular gravel and flint inclusions. (PI 1)
2	20.0	1.8	0.42-0.45	0-0.45m soft mid-brown loam topsoil, 0.45+ orange sand with regular gravel and flint inclusions.
3	28.1	1.8	0.39-0.48	0-0.48m soft mid-brown loam topsoil, 0.48+ orange sand with regular gravel and flint inclusions.
4	29.0	1.8	0.38-0.50	0-0.40m soft mid-brown loam topsoil, 0.40+ orange sand with regular gravel and flint inclusions.
5	26.2	1.8	0.49-0.65	0-0.65m soft mid-brown loam topsoil, 0.65+ orange sand with regular gravel and flint inclusions. (PI 2)
6	26.6	1.8	0.40-0.60	0-0.60m soft mid-brown loam topsoil, 0.60+ orange sand with regular gravel and flint inclusions.
7	26.7	1.8	0.40-0.55	0-0.55m soft mid-brown loam topsoil, 0.55+ orange sand with regular gravel and flint inclusions. (PI 3)
8	28.0	1.8	0.42-0.58	0-0.58m soft mid-brown loam topsoil, 0.58+ orange sand with regular gravel and flint inclusions.
9	26.8	1.8	0.50-0.60	0-0.60m soft mid-brown loam topsoil, 0.60+ orange sand with regular gravel and flint inclusions. (PI 4)
10	25.0	1.8	0.50-0.65	0-0.65m soft mid-brown loam topsoil, 0.65+ orange sand with regular gravel and flint inclusions. (PI 5)
11	24.9	1.8	0.47-0.70	0-0.70m soft mid-brown loam topsoil, 0.70+ orange sand with regular gravel and flint inclusions.



**Land off The Downs, Stebbing,
Essex, 2017
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 1. Location of site within Stebbing and Essex.

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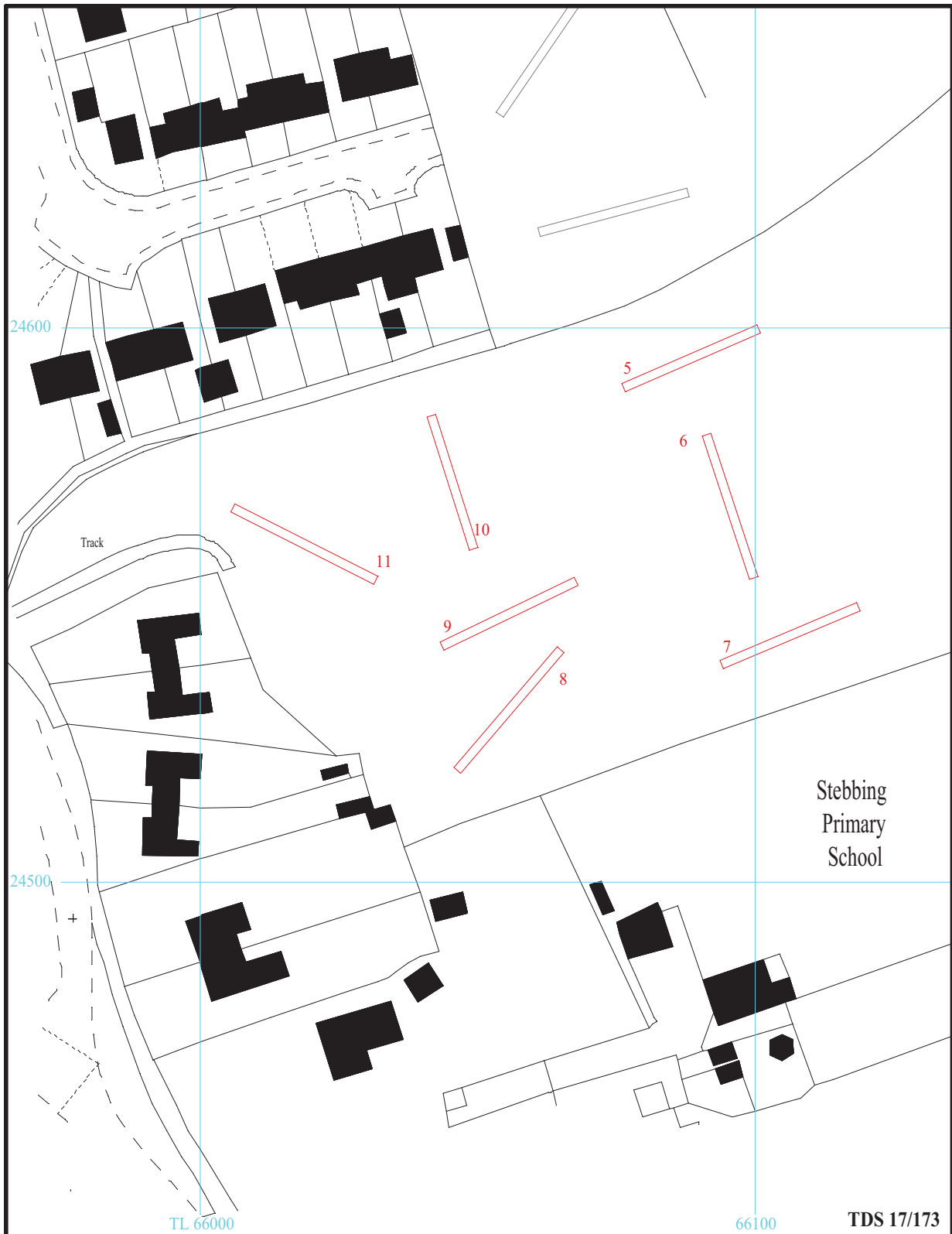
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**Land north of Stebbing Primary School,
Stebbing, Essex, 2017
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 2. Trench locations (North)

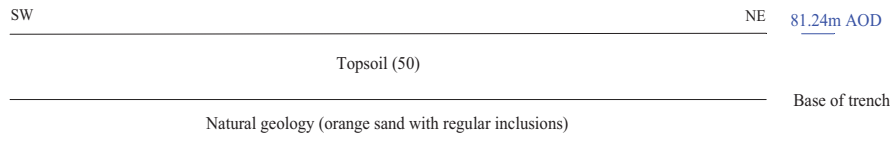
0 50m



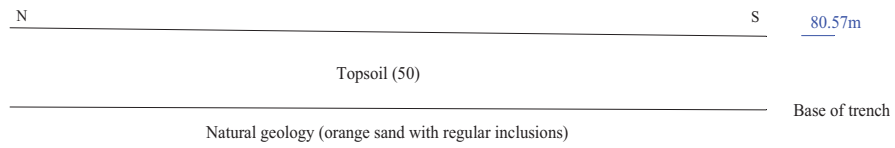


	<p align="center">Land north of Stebbing Primary School, Stebbing, Essex, 2017 Archaeological Evaluation</p> <p align="center">Figure 3. Trench locations (South)</p> <p align="center">0 50m</p>	
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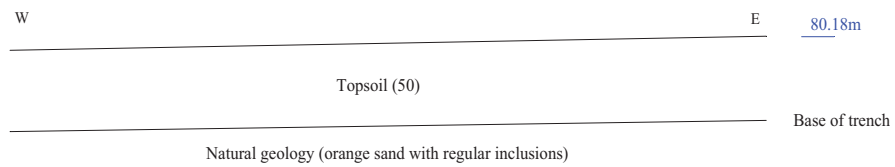
Trench 3



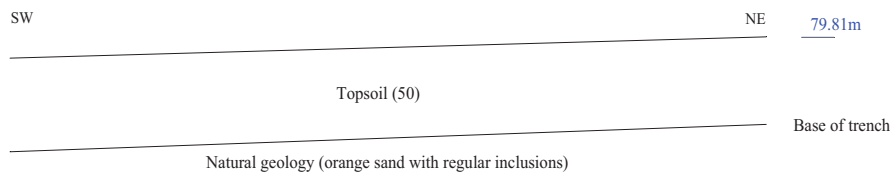
Trench 6



Trench 9



Trench 11



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**Land north of Stebbing Primary School,
Stebbing, Essex, 2017
Archaeological Evaluation**

Figure 4. Representative Sections.





Plate 1. Trench 1, looking southwest, Scale: 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 5, looking east, Scales 1m.

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**Land north of Stebbing Primary School,
Stebbing, Essex, 2017
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 1 and 2.**





Plate 3. Trench 7, looking west, Scale: 1m.



Plate 4. Trench 9, looking east, Scale: 1m.

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**Land north of Stebbing Primary School,
Stebbing, Essex, 2017
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 3 and 4.**

T V A S

NORTH MIDLANDS



Plate 5. Trench 10, looking north, Scale: 1m.



Plate 6. Site shot showing reinstatement, looking east.

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**Land north of Stebbing Primary School,
Stebbing, Essex, 2017
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 5 and 6.**

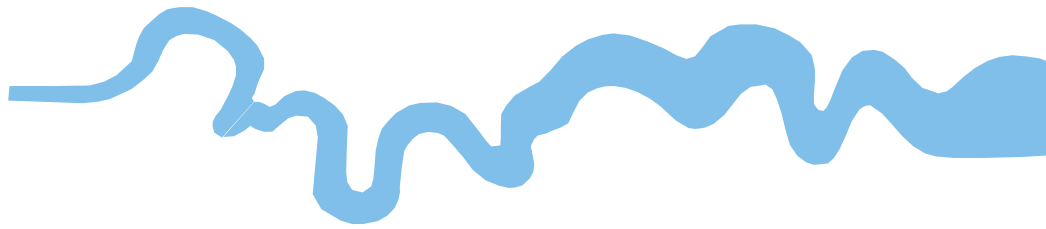
T V A S

NORTH MIDLANDS

TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43 AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	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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