

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land at Cherry Orchard, Mongewell,
Wallingford, Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Luis Esteves and Steven Crabb

Site Code: COM17/143

(SU 6136 8801)

Land at Cherry Orchard, Mongewell, Wallingford, Oxfordshire

An Archaeological Evaluation

for Mr and Mrs Shute

by Steven Crabb

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code COM 17/143

December 2017

Summary

Site name: Land at Cherry Orchard, Mongewell, Wallingford, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 6136 8801

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 5th-6th December 2017

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: Luis Esteves

Site code: COM 17/143

Area of site: c. 0.9ha

Summary of results: No archaeological features or finds were observed during this evaluation.

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 in due course.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 12.12.17 Steve Preston ✓ 12.12.17

Land at Cherry Orchard, Mongewell, Wallingford, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Luis Esteves and Steven Crabb

Report 17/143

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land to the west of Carmel College, Mongewell, Wallingford, Oxfordshire (SU 6136 8801) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Shute.

Planning permission (P16/S3801/FUL) has been granted by South Oxfordshire District Council to construct a new house on the site along with a greenhouse, storage, workshops, access, parking and landscaping including planting of a cherry orchard. Consent is given with a condition (3) relating to archaeology, requiring a programme of archaeological investigation on the site. It was determined that this should take the form, initially, of field evaluation by trial trenching, based on the results of which further work might be required.

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 Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Council, the archaeological adviser to the District. The fieldwork was undertaken by Luis Esteves with Daniel Haddad on 5th–6th December 2017 and the site code is COM 17/143. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire County Museum Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The hamlet of Mongewell lies to the south-east of Wallingford on the opposite bank of the River Thames in the parish of Crowmarsh (Fig. 1). The hamlet includes the now disused Carmel College, the ruinous church of St John the Baptist, and a small number of houses to the west. The site is located to the south of the A4130 on the northern edge of Mongewell park. The underlying geology is Lower Chalk (BGS 1980) and this was observed in the trenches as chalk marl ranging from a light grey to a brownish yellow in colour. The site lies at a height of *c.* 48m above Ordnance Datum with the side of the valley rising steeply to the east of the site. The Thames is located around 330m to the west. The site partly surrounds a lake, a former millpond, fed from the river.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site area has been highlighted in a brief for the project prepared by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Oram 2017). The site lies within the archaeologically rich Thames Valley with a wealth of remains from all periods recorded in this stretch of the valley (Benson and Miles 1974; Cromarty *et al.* 2006). Previously recorded sites and monuments abound around Wallingford, and the town itself is of exceptional historical and archaeological importance (Preston 2012; Christie *et al.* 2013). To the south, extensive flint scatters have been revealed around North Stoke representing Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age settlement, and further Iron Age and Roman settlement have been located on hilltops to the south-east (Ford 1987; Ford and Hazell 1989). The major Iron Age boundary work of Grim's Ditch lies just to the north and during excavation in advance of the Wallingford Bypass Late Bronze Age occupation and a medieval stone structure were revealed as well as the Iron Age monument. On the west bank of the Thames a rich late Bronze Age site was recorded with Saxon and Neolithic occupation also present approximately 400m west of the site (Cromarty *et al.* 2006).

To the south-west of the site, on the location of Carmel College, is the site of the deserted late Saxon/Medieval village of Mongewell. This is recorded in Domesday Book (Williams and Martin 2002, 444) as a moderately large manor assessed at 10 hides with arable land for 10 plough teams. The population was one knight along with 5 slaves, 6 villans and 11 bordars, there were two mills and 5 acres of meadow and woodland. It was valued at £14. The village is thought to have been abandoned between AD1350-1450. During the civil wars of the 12th century the east bank of the Thames was the location for castles built for besieging Wallingford. Remains of one of these have been discovered to the north of the site (Laban 2013).

The hamlet has a historic core around the site of Carmel College where an original Georgian mansion was replaced with the current building in 1890. The parish church of St John the Baptist has origins in the 12th century but was extensively remodelled in the late 18th century. It is now ruinous but listed (Grade II).

Previous work in the immediate vicinity of the site revealed features of post-medieval or modern dates and two ditches, one of which was undated and the other tentatively dated as medieval. Residual and stray finds of Roman, medieval and post-medieval pottery were recovered (Taylor 2012; Platt 2014).

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. Specifically the aims of the evaluation were to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present and to provide information to allow the preparation of a mitigation strategy if necessary.

It was proposed to excavate seven trenches, each 20m long and between 1.6–2m wide with a further contingency of 25m of trenching should it be necessary to clarify the initial results. The trenches were to be opened using a JCB type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket to expose archaeologically sensitive areas, under constant archaeological supervision. Certain or probable archaeological features would be cleaned by hand and sufficient of these would be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief. All spoil heaps were to be monitored for finds.

Results

Seven trenches were excavated (Fig. 2), with some slight modification of locations necessitated by avoidance of trees. Trenches 2, 3, 5 and 6 were located as intended. They ranged in length from 17m to 23m and in depth from 0.34m to 0.7m. Trench 1 was relocated 10m to the north and on the same alignment as intended. Trench 7 was rotated around its northern end to an alignment parallel with the adjacent property boundary. Trench 4 was dug as a test pit (see below).

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. All trenches were 1.8m wide.

Trench 1 (Figs 2 and 3; Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned W-E and measured 17m long and 0.4m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.1m of topsoil overlying 0.15m of subsoil which overlay the natural chalk geology. This trench was moved slightly to run between standing trees. No archaeological features were observed.

Trench 2 (Fig. 2; Pl. 2)

Trench 2 was aligned just off south–north and measured 21m long and 0.34m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.1m of topsoil overlying 0.1m of subsoil which overlay the natural chalk geology with the southern end of the trench having moderate to frequent gravel natural. No archaeological features were observed.

Trench 3 (Figs 2 and 3)

Trench 3 was aligned WSW-ENE and measured 20m long and 0.5m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.11m of topsoil overlying 0.19m of subsoil which overlay the natural mid brownish grey silt natural. No archaeological features were observed.

Trench 4 (Figs 2 and 3, Pl. 3)

Trench 4 was dug to a depth of 1.5m with no evidence for natural geology at this depth. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.3m of topsoil overlying modern made ground 0.9m thick consisting of grey clayey silt mottled with light orange sand containing modern debris, which further overlay a deposit of flood alluvium at least 0.4m thick consisting of dark grey clayey silt. This trench was excavated as a test pit only. No archaeology was observed. The stratigraphy in this trench was presumably related to the excavation of the lake.

Trench 5 (Fig. 2)

Trench 5 was aligned SW-NE and measured 17m long and 0.42m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of topsoil overlying 0.12m of subsoil which overlay the natural chalk geology. No archaeological features were observed.

Trench 6 (Fig. 2)

Trench 6 was aligned SW-NE and measured 23m long and 0.65m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.05m of topsoil overlying 0.47m of subsoil which overlay the natural chalk geology. No archaeological features were observed.

Trench 7 (Fig. 2, Pl. 4)

Trench 7 was aligned SE-NW and measured 18m long and 0.7m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.1m of topsoil overlying 0.1m of made ground (light yellowish grey clayey silt) overlying 0.45m of subsoil which overlay the mottled chalk natural geology. No archaeological features were observed.

Finds

No finds were observed on this site.

Conclusion

The evaluation of land at Cherry Orchard, Mongewell, revealed no evidence of archaeological features or artefacts on this site. Trench 4 was excavated as a test pit only as it was located within a significant made ground and an alluvial deposit likely to relate to the lake, a former millpond, to the south of the site. On the basis of these results the site can be considered to have negligible archaeological potential.

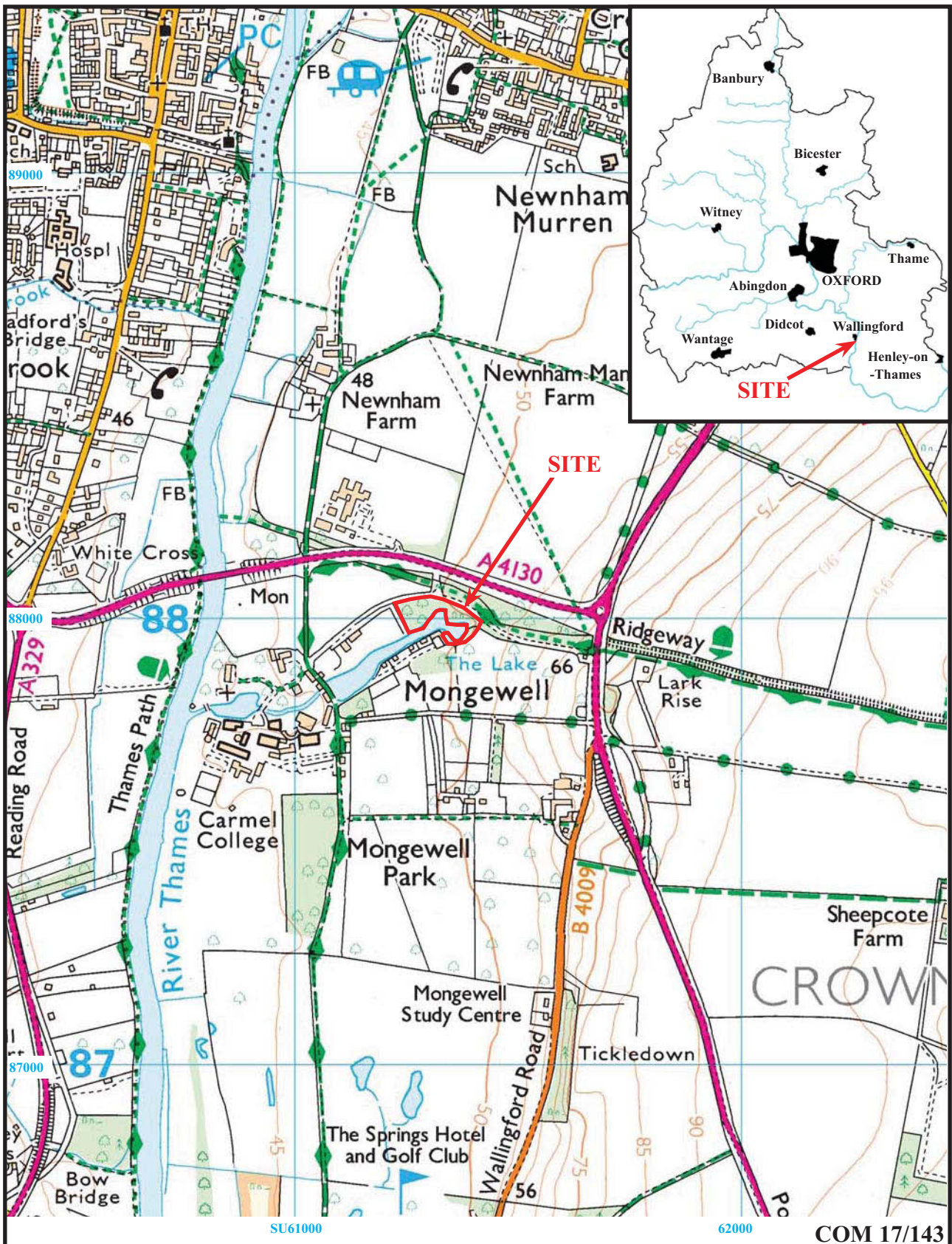
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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S or W end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	17	1.8	0.4	0–0.1m topsoil, 0.1-0.25m subsoil. 0.25-0.4m light grey chalk marl natural geology. [Pl. 1]
2	21	1.8	0.34	0.0-0.1m topsoil, 0.1-0.20m subsoil, 0.2m-0.34m light grey chalk marl natural geology with chalk lumps at south end. [Pl. 2]
3	20	1.8	0.5	0.0-0.11m topsoil, 0.11-0.30m subsoil, 0.30m-0.50m, light grey chalk marl natural geology.
4	2.8	1.8	1.5	0.0-0.3m topsoil, 0.3-1.2m made ground. 1.2-1.5m dark grey clay flood alluvium. [Pl. 3]
5	17	1.8	0.42	0.0-0.2m topsoil, 0.2-0.32m subsoil, 0.32m-0.42m light grey and yellowish brown chalk marl natural geology
6	23	1.8	0.65	0.0-0.05m topsoil, 0.05-0.52m subsoil, 0.52m-0.65m light grey and yellowish brown chalk marl natural geology
7	18	1.8	0.7	0.0-0.1m topsoil, 0.1-0.2m light yellowish grey clayey silt made ground, 0.2-0.65m subsoil, 0.65-0.7m mottled light grey and yellowish brown chalk marl natural geology [Pl. 4]



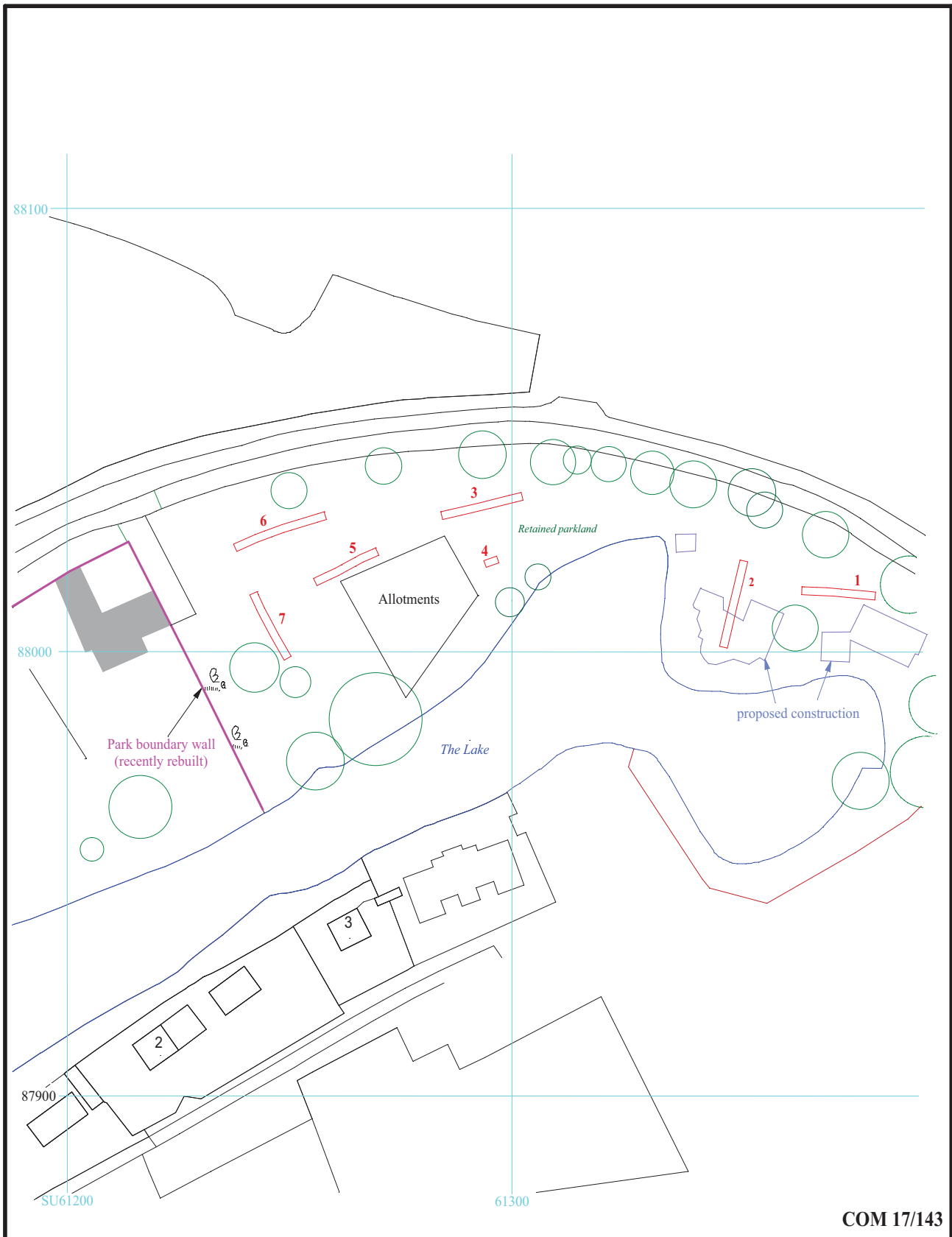
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Figure 1. Location of site within Mongewell and Oxfordshire.

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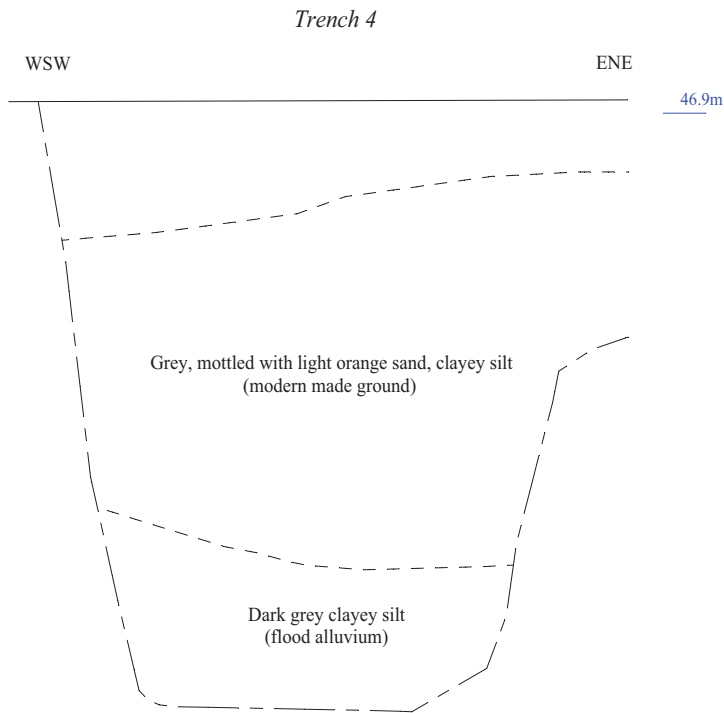
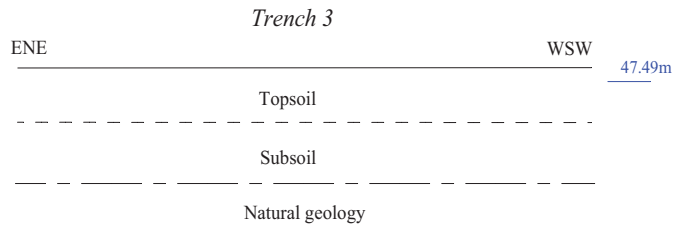
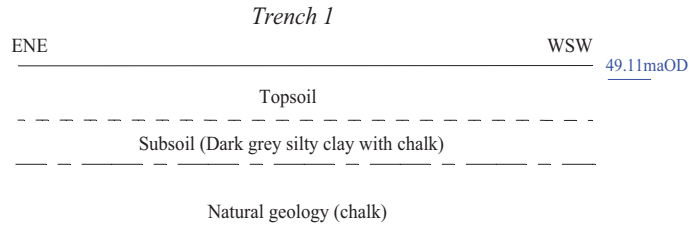
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Figure 2. Location of trenches.



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Figure 3. Representative sections.



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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking east, Scales: 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.



Plate 2. Trench 2, looking north, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.

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**Land at Cherry Orchard, Mongewell,
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Plates 1 and 2.**

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Plate 3. Trench 4 test pit, looking north west, Scales: 2m.



Plate 4. Trench 7, looking north west, Scales: horizontal 2m and 1m, vertical 0.3m.

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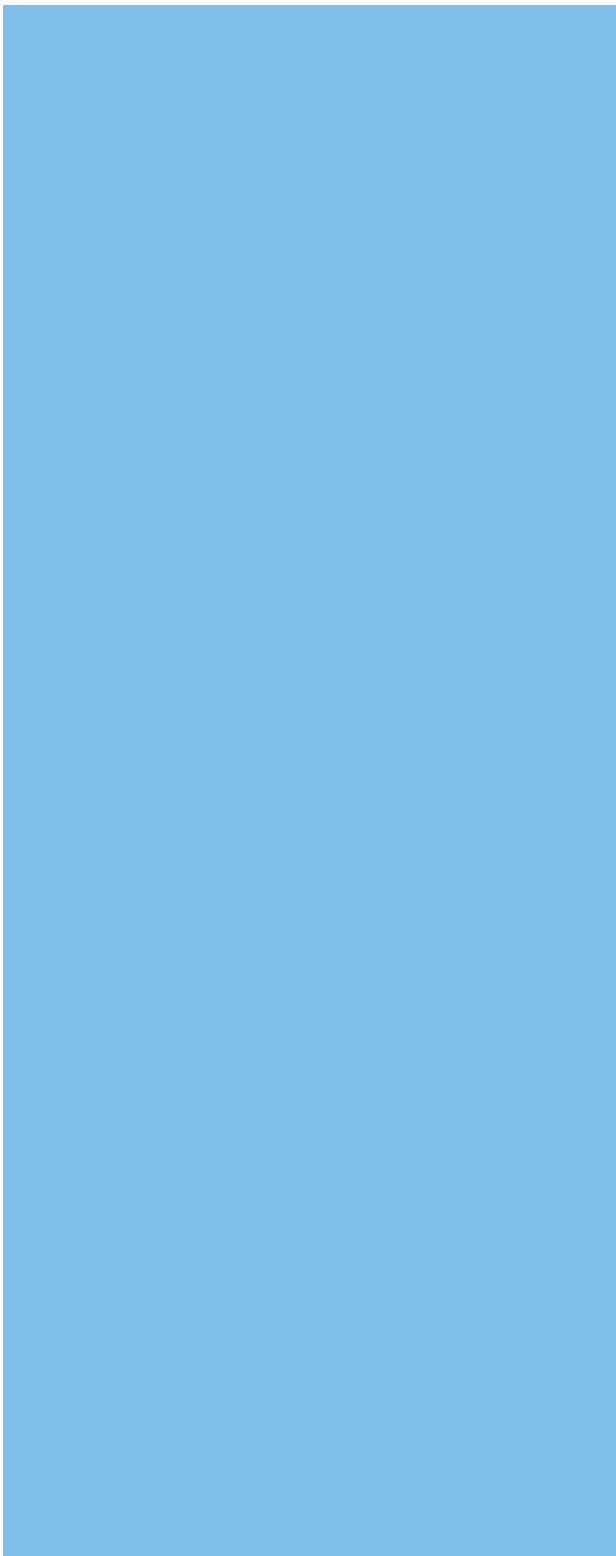
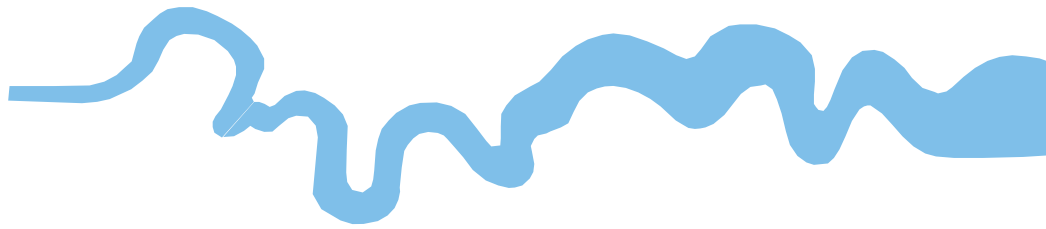
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Plates 3 and 4.**

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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 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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