

**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 Recording Action**

**by Steve Ford**

**Site Code: AKW16/64**

**(SU 0463 9331)**

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

**An Archaeological Recording Action**

**for Mr John Hartshorn**

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Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code AKW16/64

**October 2018**

## Summary

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

**Grid reference:** SU 0463 9331

**Site activity:** Archaeological Recording Action

**Date and duration of project:** 12th June 2017 - 4th September 2018

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** Steve Ford

**Site code:** AKW 16/64

**Area of site:** 3ha.

**Summary of results:** The fieldwork confirmed the findings of the evaluation revealing no cut features pre-dating post-medieval times and recovering just a few stray pottery finds of Post-medieval date. The finding of two flint flakes on the stripped surface points to a low level of use in Mesolithic or Neolithic times, with the pieces likely to represent casual loss or discard within the wider landscape setting. There is no hint of activity in later prehistoric, Roman or Saxon times, not even a few stray sherds of pottery to suggest manuring of farmland, though this does not mean the land was not used at all.

A number of linear features were recorded which were of post-medieval date from the pottery and other items they contained. A single sherd of pottery may be of late medieval date, but was recovered from a post-medieval ditch. Some of the boundaries are depicted on the Ordnance Survey maps of 1875 and 1900 and from the few stratigraphic relationships present, a reorganization took place in the early 20th century.

**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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Report edited/checked by: Steve Preston ✓ 15.10.18
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# **Proposed new fishing lake, Ashton Road, Three Bridges, Ashton Keynes, Wiltshire An Archaeological Recording Action**

by Steve Ford

**Report 16/64b**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological recording action 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 Mr John Hartshorne.

Planning permission (15/12547/WCM) has been gained 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. Initial evaluation of the site was undertaken in April 2016 (Sanchez and Taylor 2016) which revealed little of archaeological interest.

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 south-west 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.84m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is light brown limestone gravel with patches of mid greyish brown clay (BGS 1974).

## **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). Evaluation trenching on the site itself, however, revealed only features considered to be natural, and no finds (Sanchez and Taylor 2016).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the fieldwork was to record and excavate any deposits of archaeological interest within the area of development. Overburden was stripped using a 360° type machine fitted with toothless grading bucket under archaeological supervision. Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools. Following creation of an initial haul road (Pl. 1), the site was stripped in phases with the spoil being stored, initially, in wide windrows between the cells (Pl. 2). Stripping of areas beneath the windrows took place at a later phase (Fig. 2).

## **Results**

Overburden was removed under archaeological supervision to reveal the surface of the natural geology. The latter was typically 0.4m below the surface (but slightly deeper to the west) and comprised gravel with numerous clay patches accounting for perhaps 10% of the site area. The clay patches were 1-2m across, with irregular outlines, and up to 0.3m deep. A small number were investigated during the previous evaluation and some more during this recording action, in all cases revealing neither artefacts nor charcoal, and they are quite clearly a component of the natural geology. Despite the proximity of the Swell Brook, alluvium was only recorded at the north-eastern end of the site where the gravel dipped down to *c.* 1m below ground level.

The site was worked in phases (cells) with each cell being partially stripped to create a windrow, which was subsequently moved to expose the natural geology beneath (Fig. 2; Pls 2–5).

The fieldwork revealed sixteen linear features, some of which corresponded with earthworks. No pits nor postholes were observed and the only other item of interest was the presence of an area of hard standing comprising brick rubble that may have indicated the position of a gateway and junction between fields (Fig. 2).

A number of the features were investigated by hand but several were clearly very shallow as their clayey fill was often ‘plucked’ out by the machine bucket. Some had a very wide (1m+) but shallow profile (0.05-0.1m deep) such that they would have appeared to be furrows were it not that only single examples were noted.

Several of these linear features contained datable finds of pottery, brick/tile glass and some metalwork, all of post-medieval date. Others were dated by association.

There would appear to be several phases of field system present, some of which predate the First Edition Ordnance Survey map layouts of the later 19th century.

### *Group A*

#### Ditches 3B=7; 3A=12, 2, 14

These features lie parallel to each other just a couple of metres apart and are clearly related in time and space. Ditches 3A and 3B were observed as an extant earthwork before stripping, with a single bank between (Pls 5 and 6).

### *Group B*

#### Ditches 6, 13, 15, 16, 5 and 9

These features are later in date than Group A but without any evidence of a stratigraphic link. Ditch 13 represents the earlier layout and corresponds well with a boundary depicted on the Ordnance Survey maps of 1875 and 1900. The site at this time consisted of just two fields.

This layout was replaced by ditches 15, 16, 6 and possibly 5 to form perhaps five fields. Ditch 15 cross cut ditch 13. This reorganization must have taken place early in the 20th century.

Ditch 9 was a substantial feature at its northern end, but shallowing to the south-east and is possibly a channel rather than a ditch.

### *Other linear features*

#### Gulles 1, 4, 8 10,11

These boundaries were represented only by short lengths of surviving gully and are not obviously related to any other features, and their significance unclear: some may be wheel ruts.

## **Finds**

### *Pottery by Jane Timby*

The archaeological work resulted in the recovery of nine sherds of pottery weighing 136g accompanied by a single fragment of ceramic building material (16g). The assemblage was scanned to assess its likely date and catalogued (Table 1). The material was recovered from five defined contexts four of which are ditches.

The complete assemblage with one possible exception dates to the post-medieval / modern periods. The sherds comprise either glazed red earthenware or industrial refined glazed white earthenware (china). One grey sandy ware sherd from ditch 1, accompanied by two post-medieval sherds, may be later medieval or early post-medieval but appears too compact to be Roman.

**Table 1: Pottery catalogue**

<i>Context</i>	<i>Fabric</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Form</i>	<i>Wt</i>	<i>No</i>
Cell 1 NE end	PMCH	china	plate	7	1
Cell 1 NE end	GRE	glazed red earthenware	bowl	32	2
Cell 5 Ditch 3A	GRE	glazed red earthenware	bowl	36	1
Ditch 1	GRE	glazed red earthenware		32	1
Ditch 1	GRE	glazed red earthenware		6	1
Ditch 1	GY	grey sandy		10	1
Ditch 13	CBM	ceramic building material		16	1
Ditch 33	PMCH	china	bowl	1	1
Ditch 33	GRE	glazed red earthenware		12	1
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>152</b>	<b>10</b>

### *Struck flint* by Steve Ford

Just two struck flints were recovered from the stripped surface of the quarry (Fig. 2).

Cell 1 NE end. Large flake, iron stained

Cell 4. Broken blade, slightly cherty

### *Glass* by Steve Ford

Ditch 13 contained a fragment of thick black glass bottle.

## **Conclusion**

The fieldwork confirmed the findings of the evaluation revealing no cut features pre-dating post-medieval times and recovering just a few stray pottery finds of Post-medieval date. The finding of two flint flakes points to a low level of use in Mesolithic or Neolithic times, with the pieces likely to represent casual loss or discard within the wider landscape setting. There is no hint of activity in later prehistoric, Roman or Saxon times, not even a few stray sherds of pottery to suggest manuring of farmland, though this does not mean the land was not used.

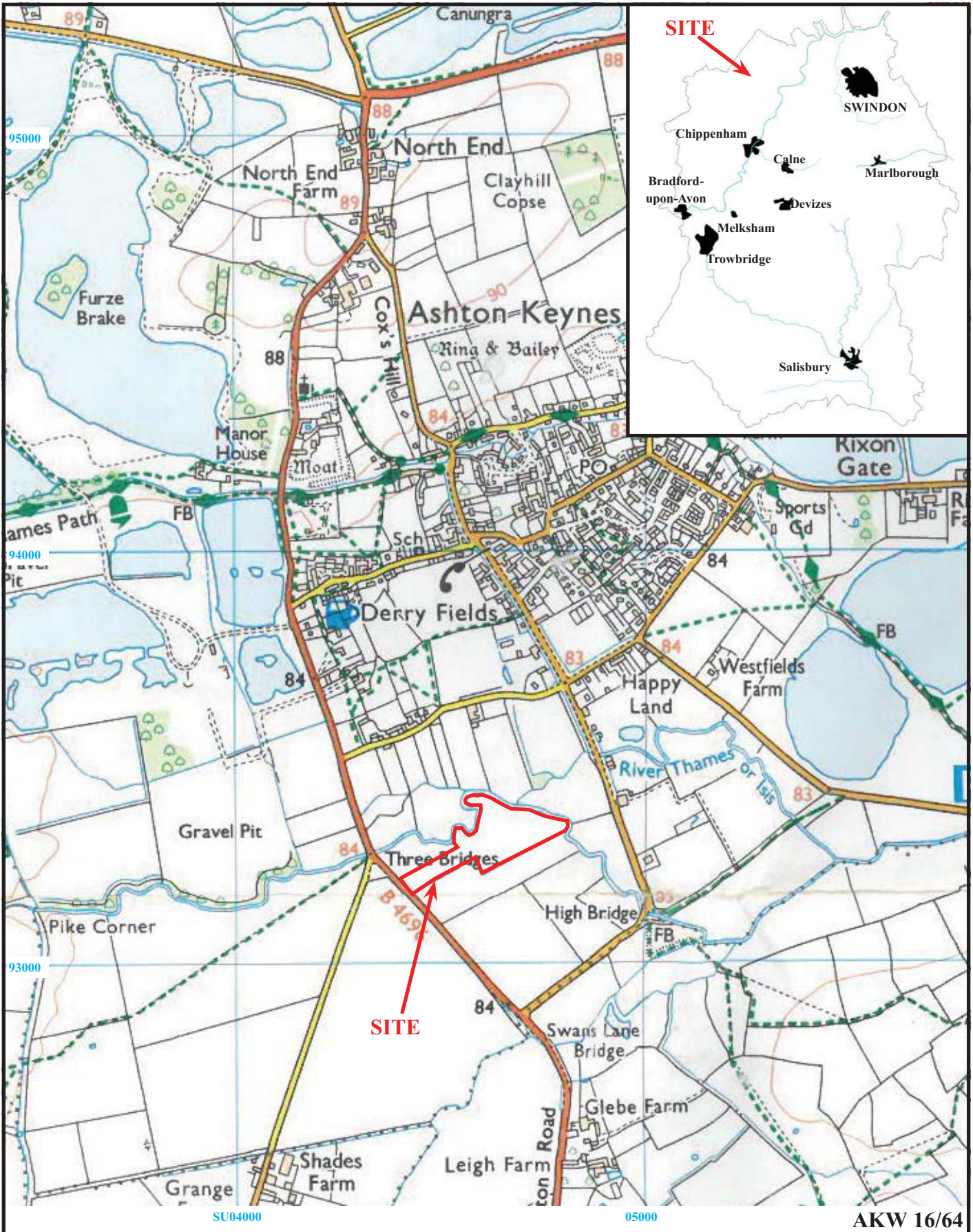
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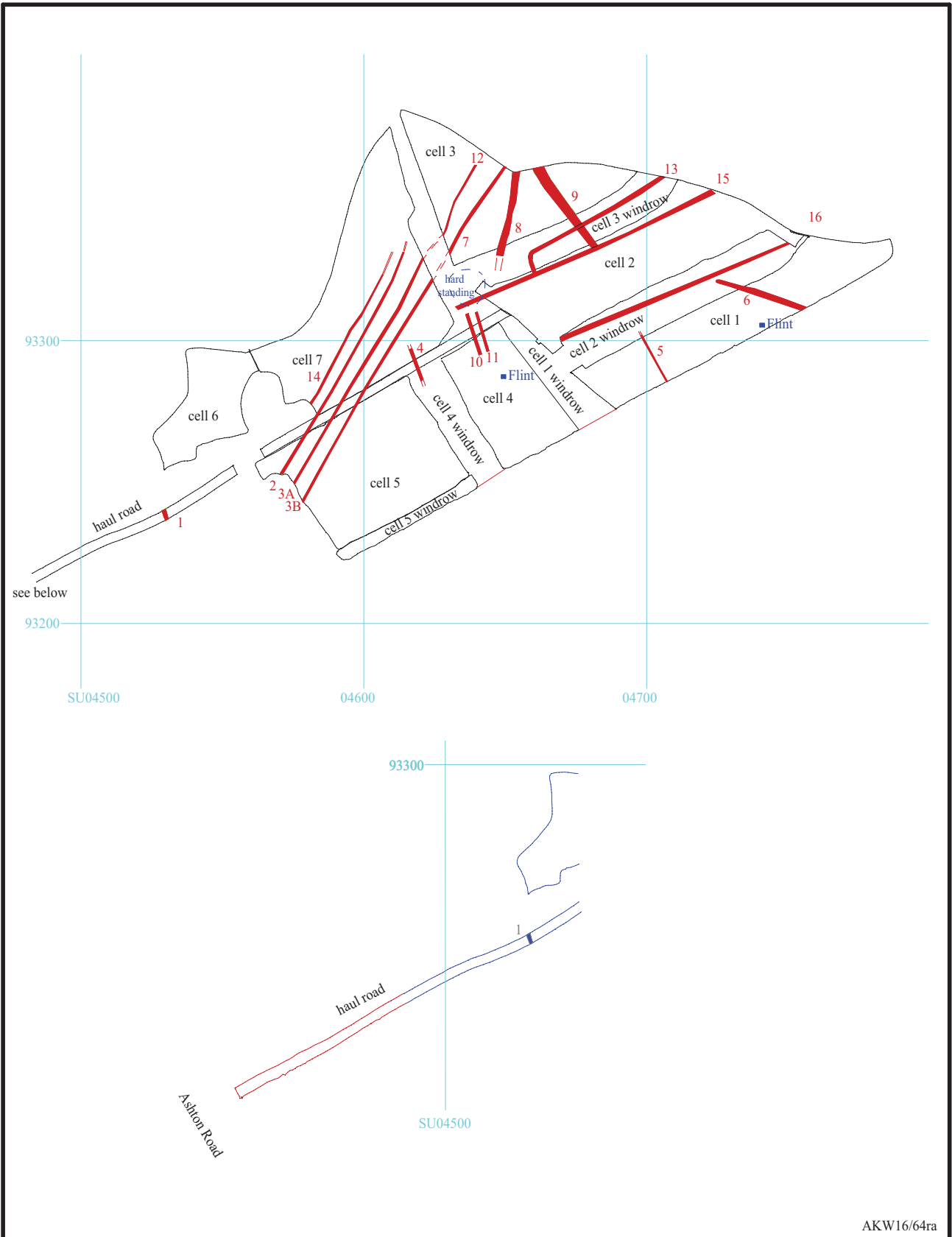
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Figure 1. Location of site in relation to Ashton Keynes and within Wiltshire.

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Figure 2. Location of areas investigated.



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Plate 1. Haul Road, SW end looking South West, Scale: 1m.



Plate 2. Cell 1 looking East,



Plate 3. Cell 2, looking North East



Plate 4. Cell 3, looking North East



Plate 5. Cells 5 and 7, looking North East



Plate 6. Cell 7, Ditch 2 looking North, Scale 2m

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Plates 1 - 6**

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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





**Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd,  
47-49 De Beauvoir Road,  
Reading RG1 5NR**

**Tel: 0118 9260552  
Email: [tvas@tvas.co.uk](mailto:tvas@tvas.co.uk)  
Web: [www.tvas.co.uk](http://www.tvas.co.uk)**

*Offices in:  
Brighton, Taunton, Stoke-on-Trent and Ennis (Ireland)*