

T V A S



SOUTH WEST

**Old Ship Inn, Castle Street,
Mere, Wiltshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Agata Socha-Paszkiwicz

Site Code: OSM18/142

(ST 8122 3243)

Old Ship Inn, Castle Street, Mere, Wiltshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Armour Heritage

by Agata Socha-Paszkiwicz

TVAS South West

Site Code OSM 18/142

February 2019

Summary

Site name: Old Ship Inn, Castle Street, Mere, Wiltshire

Grid reference: ST 8122 3243

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 7th January 2019

Project manager: Agata Socha-Paszkwicz

Site supervisor: Agata Socha-Paszkwicz

Site code: OSM 18/142

Area of site: 5.6 m x 7.9m

Summary of results: The watching brief monitored the excavation of footings of a new build cottage to the rear of the existing Grade II* building and revealed only modern made ground and service trench. No deposits nor finds of archaeological interest were recorded.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at TVAS South West, Taunton and will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service in due course.

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

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 10.03.19

Old Ship Inn, Castle Street, Mere, Wiltshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Agata Socha-Paszkiwicz

Report 18/142

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Old Ship Inn, Castle Street, Mere, Wiltshire, BA12 6HJE (NGR ST 8122 3243) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Sue Farr of Armour Heritage, Greystone Cottage, Trudoxhill, Frome, BA11 5DP, on behalf of the client.

Planning consent (16/09919/FUL) has been granted by Wiltshire Council for the conversion and renovation of the existing Grade II* Listed Old Ship Inn into 7 apartments and 2 x 3 bed cottages. The proposal includes the demolition of outbuildings and construction of a new build 2 bed cottage to the rear, on condition (Condition 9) which required the implementation of an archaeological watching brief during all intrusive groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012) and the Wiltshire Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Martin Brown, Assistant Archaeologist for Wiltshire Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Agata Socha-Paszkiwicz on the 7th January 2019 and the site code is OSM 18/142.

The archive is presently held at TVAS South West, Taunton and will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located within the centre of Mere a small town and civil parish in County Wiltshire which lies at the extreme south-western tip of Salisbury Plain and close to the borders of Somerset and Dorset. It is bounded by Castle Street to the south, Lloyds Bank to the south-east, Manor Road to the east and residential properties to the north and west (Fig. 2). The site measures c.0.14ha and is broadly rectangular in plan. The Old Ship Hotel faces Castle Street and occupies the south side of the parcel. The building forms an approximate L-shape in plan with garages, an external staircase and car parking at the back. The car parking area is generally flat and lies at around 106m above Ordinance Datum. Underlying geology is mapped as West Melbury Marly Chalk Formation: Chalk, sedimentary bedrock formed in Cretaceous Period. No superficial geological deposits are recorded (BGS 2017)

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site was highlighted in a heritage assessment (WA 2016). In summary the evidence of prehistoric activity recorded within a 1 km study area is sparse. The earliest data refers to flint cores and quantities of worked flints found during construction of Mere bypass some 900m northwest of site. A small handful of chance finds of Neolithic date is recorded from within the area alongside a Bronze Age palstave found within medieval Mere Castle grounds. The most significant locally are four Bronze Age barrows situated on Long Hill, some 440m northwest of site. Later periods are represented by small amount of Roman pottery and *opus signinum* found to the west of site at the extent of Dead Maid Quarry and a hoard of 20 Roman coins is recorded some 265m to the south of site.

The settlement at Mere is first mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086) where it is recorded under the ownership of Wulfric, AEllic having held it pre-Conquest. During the medieval period Mere formed part of Royal Estate and in 1253, a licence was granted to build a castle at Mere, which was completed using the natural ridge of Long Hill with a large ditch, known today as the Bull Ring. The Old Ship Inn is a Grade II* listed building constructed in 1711 by Henry Andrews of Woodlands replacing earlier 17th century house. The site is located within the Mere Conservation Area the extent of which reflects post-medieval growth of the town and comprise mostly post-medieval or 19th century buildings; however its historic core respects what appears to be an older street layout set around the medieval church and the castle.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was the monitoring of all groundworks associated with the construction of the replacement dwelling on site, and included building foundations, service trenches and, where appropriate, all new roadways and pathways.

Specific aims of the project are:

- to determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains;
- to ensure their preservation by record to the highest possible standard;
- to confirm the approximate date or date range of the remains
- to determine or confirm the approximate extent of any remains;
- to determine the condition and state of preservation of the remains and;
- to determine the degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present.

Results

The excavation of footings 0.90m deep and 0.78m wide dug along the edge of new cottage area was observed. It comprised the area of a demolished timber shed and a thin strip of Tarmacadamed car park. Beneath the Tarmac, aligned SW-NE and cutting across northern sections of excavated footings was service trench (2) which contained plastic gas pipes and power cable. The service trench was 0.80m deep and comprised made ground deposit of dark grey silty sand. The deposit extended throughout the new footings and was abutted to the hotel footings (1) and (3) and contained modern ceramic building materials, fragments of plastic and rubber pipes and scrap metal. All finds were observed but not retained. Underneath the made ground was a yellowish white marl and chalk – natural geology. No deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

Conclusion

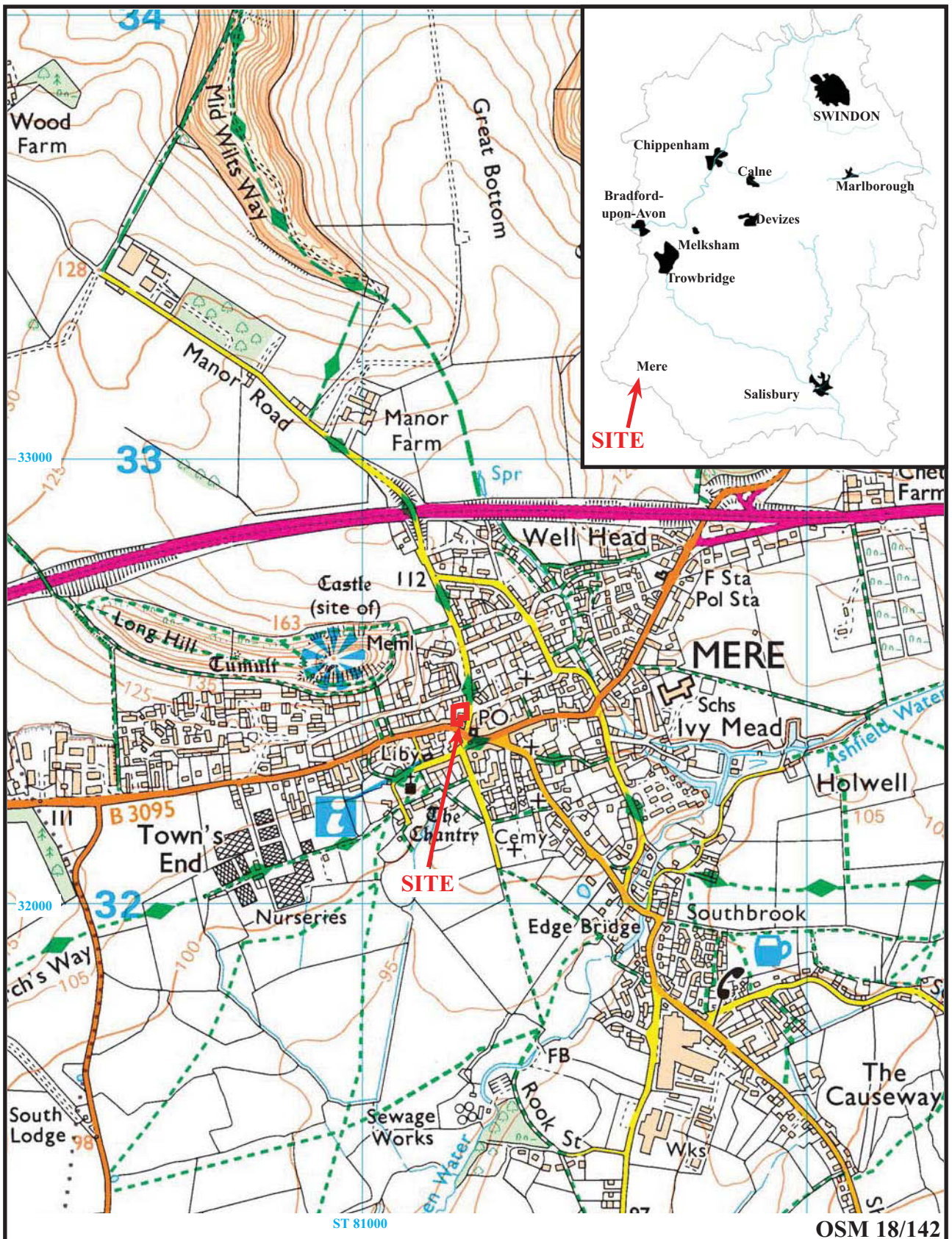
Despite the archaeological potential of the site the watching brief revealed only modern made ground, a very likely levelling layer for the car park. No archaeological features were observed during the works, nor finds or deposits of archaeological interest.

References

- BGS, 2017, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 297, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Farr, S, 2018, 'The Old Ship Inn, Castle St, Mere, Wiltshire, BA12 6JE: Written Scheme of Investigation: Archaeological Watching Brief', Armour Heritage Ltd WSI AH712, Frome
- NPPF 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Govt, London
- WA, 2016, 'Old Ship Hotel, Castle Street, Mere, Wiltshire Heritage Assessment', Wessex Archaeology, Salisbury

APPENDIX 1: Feature details

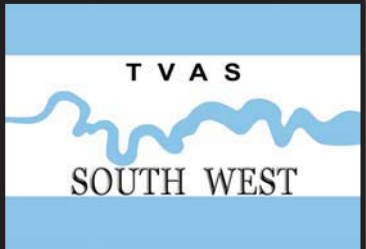
<i>Cut</i>	<i>Deposit (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
	50	Tarmac	Modern	Stratigraphy
	51	Made ground	Modern	CBM, plastic
1	52, 53	Hotel footings	Post Medieval	Cartographic
2	54	Utilities trench	Modern	Service pipes
3	55	Hotel footings	Post Medieval	Cartographic

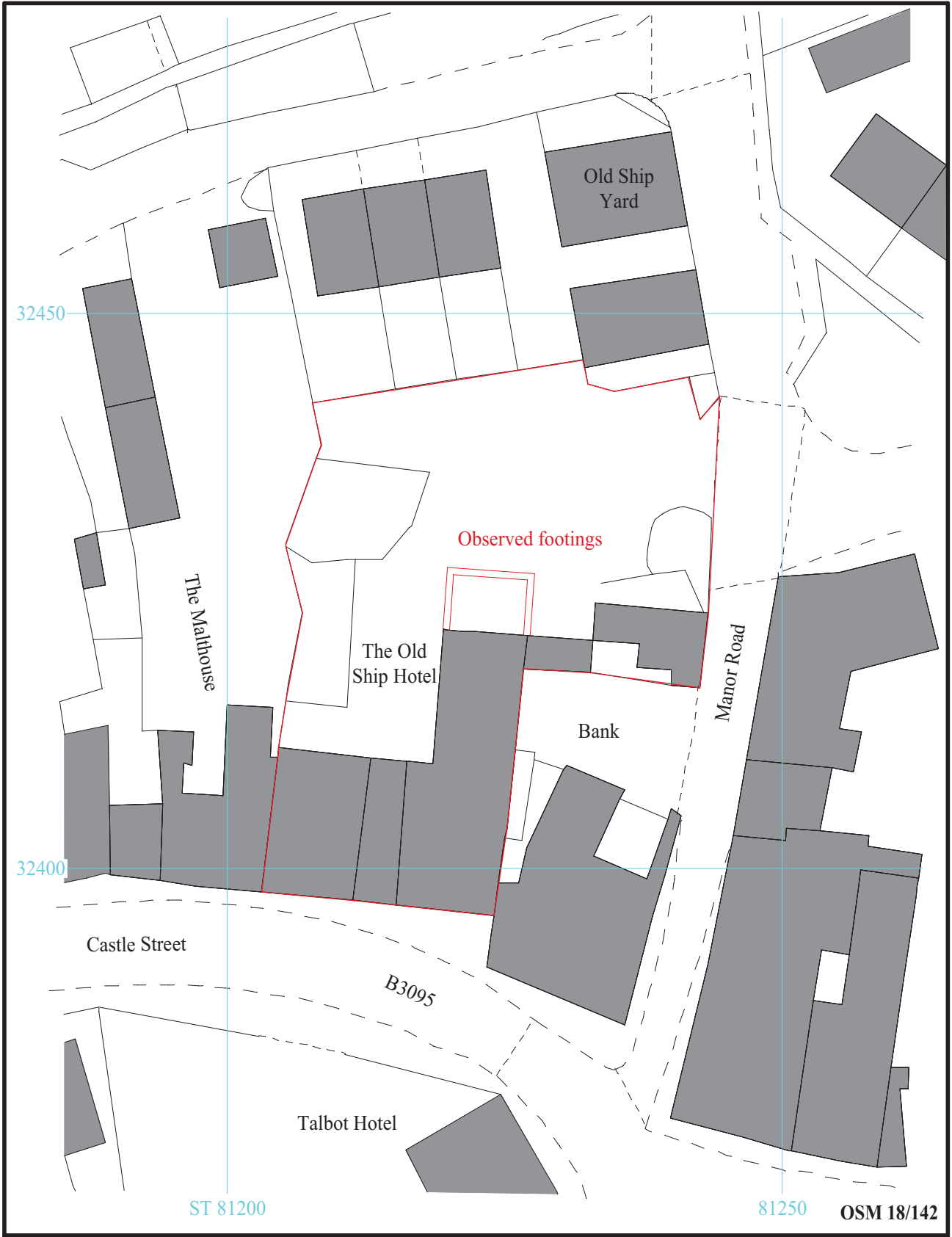


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Figure 1. Location of site within Mere and Wiltshire.

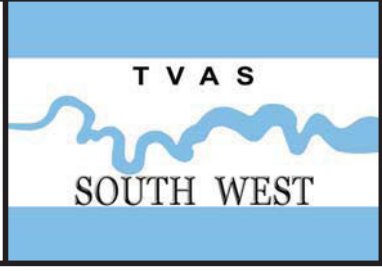
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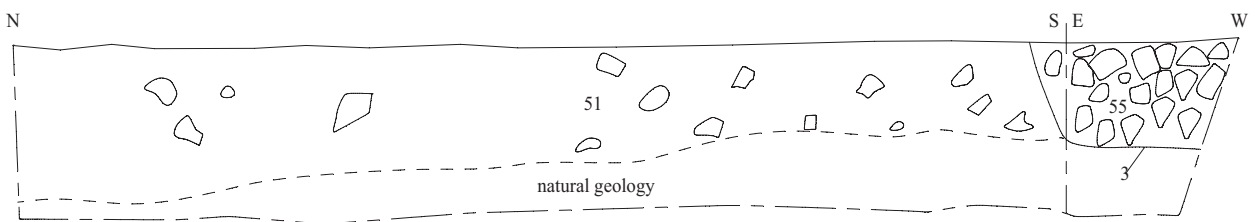
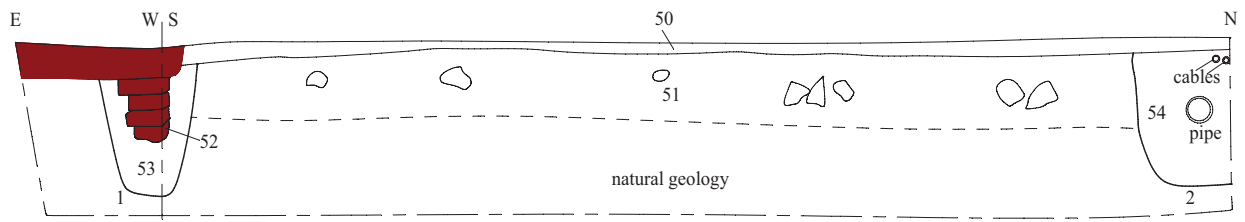




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Figure 2. Site plan.





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Figure 3. Representative sections of excavated footings





Plate 1. Area footings, looking SE



Plate 2. Existing and excavated footings, looking SE, Scales: 1m and 2m.

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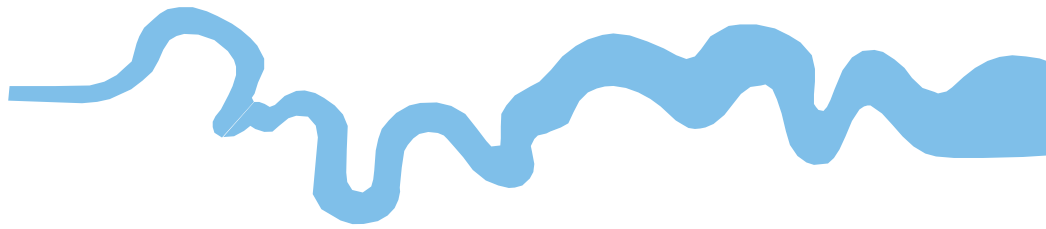
**Old Ship Inn, Castle Street
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Plates 1 and 2.**



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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