

T V A S



SOUTH

**Land at Knoxbridge Farm, Cranbrook Road,
Staplehurst, Kent**

Archaeological Recording Action

by Sean Wallis

Site Code: KFS19/31

(TQ 7942 4122)

**Land at Knoxbridge Farm, Cranbrook Road,
Staplehurst, Kent**

**An Archaeological Recording Action
for Magnificent Energy Ltd**

by Sean Wallis

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code KFS 19/31

March 2019

Summary

Site name: Land at Knoxbridge Farm, Cranbrook Road, Staplehurst, Kent

Grid reference: TQ 7942 4122

Site activity: Recording Action

Date and duration of project: 6th March 2019

Project manager: Sean Wallis

Site supervisor: Jim Webster

Site code: KFS 19/31

Summary of results: The archaeological recording action at Knoxbridge Farm consisted of the monitoring of several geotechnical test pits in the north-east part of the site. No archaeological finds or features were recorded. It is clear that the area has been significantly disturbed in the past as made ground deposits were recorded immediately above the natural clay geology. This disturbance could have resulted from the groundworks associated with the creation, and subsequent removal of, a large soil bund in this area. It is not clear to what extent the underlying natural geology has been truncated, but this would obviously have had an effect on any archaeological deposits which may have been present.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Brighton and will be deposited with Maidstone Museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 20.03.19
	Steve Preston ✓ 20.03.19

Land at Knoxbridge Farm, Cranbrook Road, Staplehurst, Kent An Archaeological Recording Action

by Sean Wallis

Report 19/31

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological recording action carried out at Knoxbridge Farm, Cranbrook Road, Staplehurst, Kent (TQ 7942 4122) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Peter McCann-Downes of Magnificent Energy Ltd, Whiteladies Business Centre, 12 Whiteladies Road, Bristol, BS8 1PD.

Planning permissions (TW/15/504981 and TW/15/508499) have been granted by Kent County Council to construct a new anaerobic digester on the site, along with associated groundworks and landscaping. Planning permission TW/15/504981 is subject to a standard condition (9) relating to archaeology and the historic environment, which requires the implementation of the programme of archaeological work. This was in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2018), and the County Council's policies on archaeology.

It was determined that the investigation would take the form of the excavation of a number of geotechnical test pits to be monitored by an archaeologist. This was to ensure that any archaeological features revealed in the test pits could be recorded as appropriate, and also to give some idea of how the area had been affected by previous groundworks in this part of the site.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Jim Webster on 6th March 2019, and the site code is KFS 19/31. The archive is presently held at TVAS South, Brighton, and will be deposited with Maidstone Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located within farmland to east of Cranbrook Road, south of the historic core of Staplehurst (Fig. 1). The test pits were dug in the north-east part of the site, to the north, north-east and east of a large existing building (Fig. 2). The area is relatively flat, and lies at a height of approximately 25m above Ordnance Datum, although the ground does rise on the far side of a stream to the north of the site (Pls 1 and 2). According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology consists of Weald Clay (BGS 1976), and this was confirmed during the project with a light brown sandy clay being recorded in most of the test pits.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been gleaned from a draft written scheme of investigation prepared by Magnificent Energy (ME 2018). In summary, there have been stray finds of prehistoric material in the surrounding area, including over fifty worked flints of Neolithic or Bronze Age date, which were found to the east of the present site at Ilborden. The site is located in the Weald, which was a focus for iron production in the Iron Age, Roman, Saxon, medieval and early post-medieval periods. A possible Iron Age smelting site has been identified within the Knoxbridge Farm landholding. A number of Roman roads were built within the heavily wooded Weald to support the iron industry during that period. One of these roads is located to the west of the site, and partially follows the modern main road (A229). It is likely that this road would have been used to transport iron to the Roman town of Rochester.

Castle Bank, to the south-west of the site, is a circular earthwork of unknown origin. It has been suggested that it may have been the site of a Saxon meeting place, or 'moot'.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the recording action was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of proposed development.

Specific aims of the project were;

To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site.

To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

It was proposed to monitor the excavation of eleven small test pits across the site. The test pits were to be dug using a 360° type machine fitted with a toothless bucket under archaeological supervision. Once the archaeologically relevant horizon or natural geology (whichever was higher) was encountered and recorded, further excavation would take place without archaeological supervision. All spoilheaps were to be monitored for finds.

Results

Due to various restrictions, including buried services, only eight test pits were monitored during the project (Fig. 2). The test pits each measured about 1.20m by 0.60m wide, and were generally excavated to a depth of around 4m. However, archaeological monitoring ceased when the natural geology was exposed, apart from Test Pit 8 where excavation stopped when a concrete slab was encountered. A complete list of the test pits giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Test Pit 1 (Fig. 3)

The natural Wealden Clay geology was encountered beneath 1.25m of made ground in this test pit.

Test Pit 2

The natural Wealden Clay geology was encountered beneath 0.74m of made ground in this test pit.

Test Pit 3 (Pl. 3)

The natural Wealden Clay geology was encountered beneath 0.90m of made ground in this test pit.

Test Pit 4 (Pl. 4)

The natural Wealden Clay geology was encountered beneath 1.34m of made ground in this test pit.

Test Pit 5 (Fig. 3)

The natural Wealden Clay geology was encountered beneath 0.98m of made ground in this test pit.

Test Pit 6

The natural Wealden Clay geology was encountered beneath 1.50m of made ground in this test pit.

Test Pit 7 (Pl. 5)

The natural Wealden Clay geology was encountered beneath 0.90m of made ground in this test pit.

Test Pit 8 (Pl. 6)

The natural Wealden Clay geology was not encountered beneath in this test pit as a concrete slab was revealed beneath 0.80m of made ground and the excavation was not taken deeper.

No archaeological finds or features were recorded in any of the test pits. It is clear from the stratigraphy recorded in the various test pits that the area has been disturbed in the past as no original soil horizons were recorded above the natural geology. Part of the site had previously been covered with a soil bund, which had been removed shortly before the recording action took place.

Finds

No archaeological finds were recovered during the recording action.

Conclusion

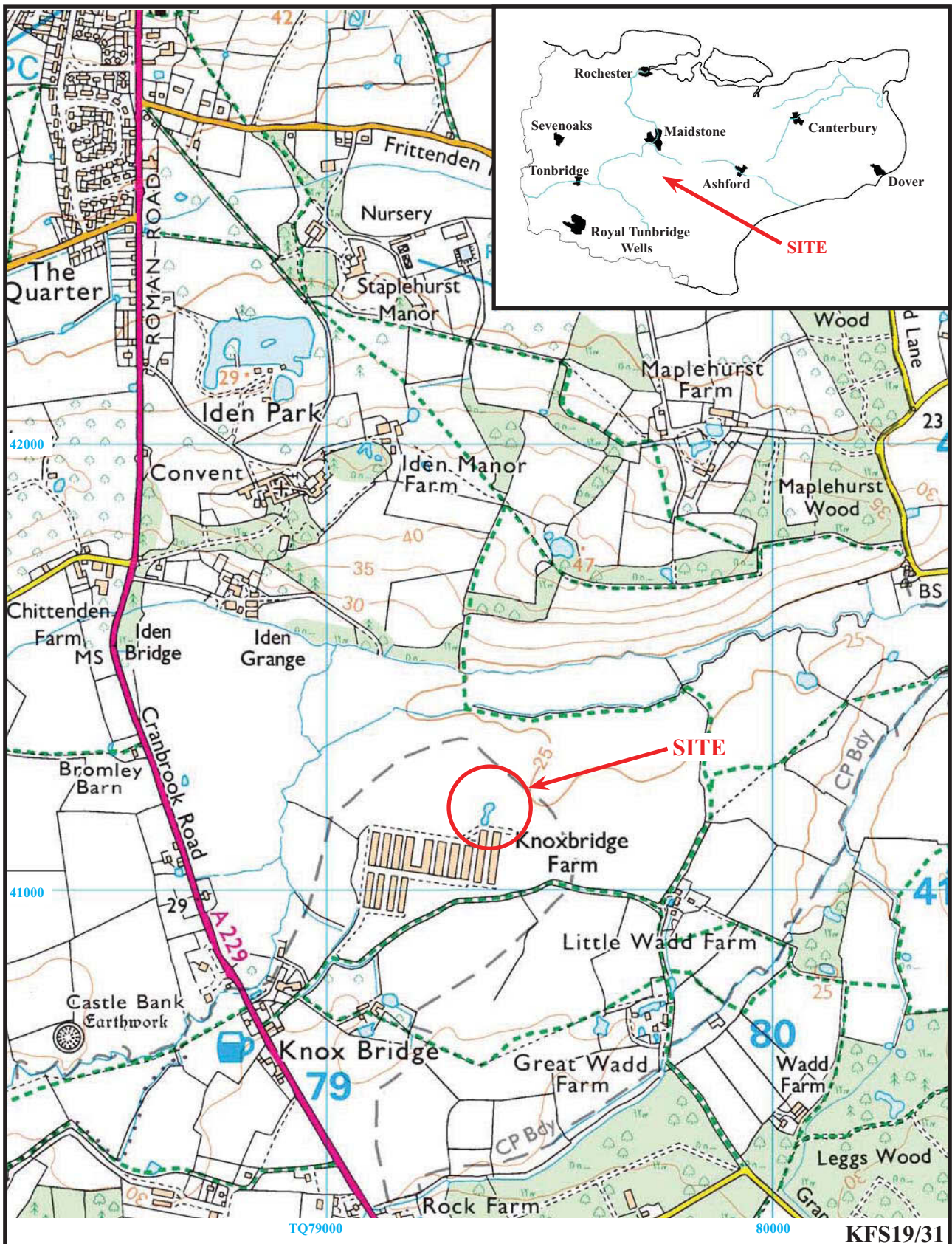
The archaeological recording action at Knoxbridge Farm consisted of the monitoring of several geotechnical test pits in the north-east part of the site. No archaeological finds or features were recorded. It is clear that the area has been disturbed in the past as made ground deposits were recorded immediately above the natural clay geology. This disturbance could have resulted from the groundworks associated with the creation, and subsequent removal, of a large soil bund in this area though it is not clear to what extent the underlying natural geology has been disturbed.

References

- BGS, 1976, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 288, Solid and Drift Deposits Edition, Keyworth.
- ME, 2018, 'Draft Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological evaluation at Knoxbridge Farm, Cranbrook, Staplehurst, Kent, TN17 2BT', Magnificent Energy unpublished document, Bristol.
- NPPF, 2018, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, London.

APPENDIX 1: Test pit details

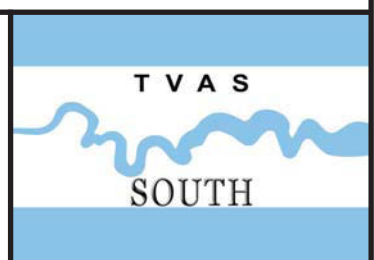
<i>Test pit</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	1.20	0.60	>1.30	0-1.25m made ground; 1.25-1.30m+ natural geology (light yellow brown sandy clay).
2	1.20	0.60	>0.80	0-0.74m made ground; 0.74-0.80m+ natural geology (light yellow brown sandy clay).
3	1.20	0.60	>1.00	0-0.90m made ground; 0.90-1.00m+ natural geology (light yellow brown sandy clay). [PI. 3]
4	1.20	0.60	>1.40	0-1.34m made ground; 1.34-1.40m+ natural geology (light yellow brown sandy clay). [PI. 4]
5	1.20	0.60	>1.10	0-0.98m made ground; 0.98-1.10m+ natural geology (light yellow brown sandy clay).
6	1.20	0.60	>1.70	0-1.50m made ground; 1.50-1.70m+ natural geology (light yellow brown sandy clay).
7	1.20	0.60	>1.00	0-0.90m made ground; 0.90-1.00m+ natural geology (light yellow brown sandy clay). [PI. 5]
8	1.20	0.60	0.80	0-0.80m made ground; concrete slab (excavation ceased). [PI. 6]

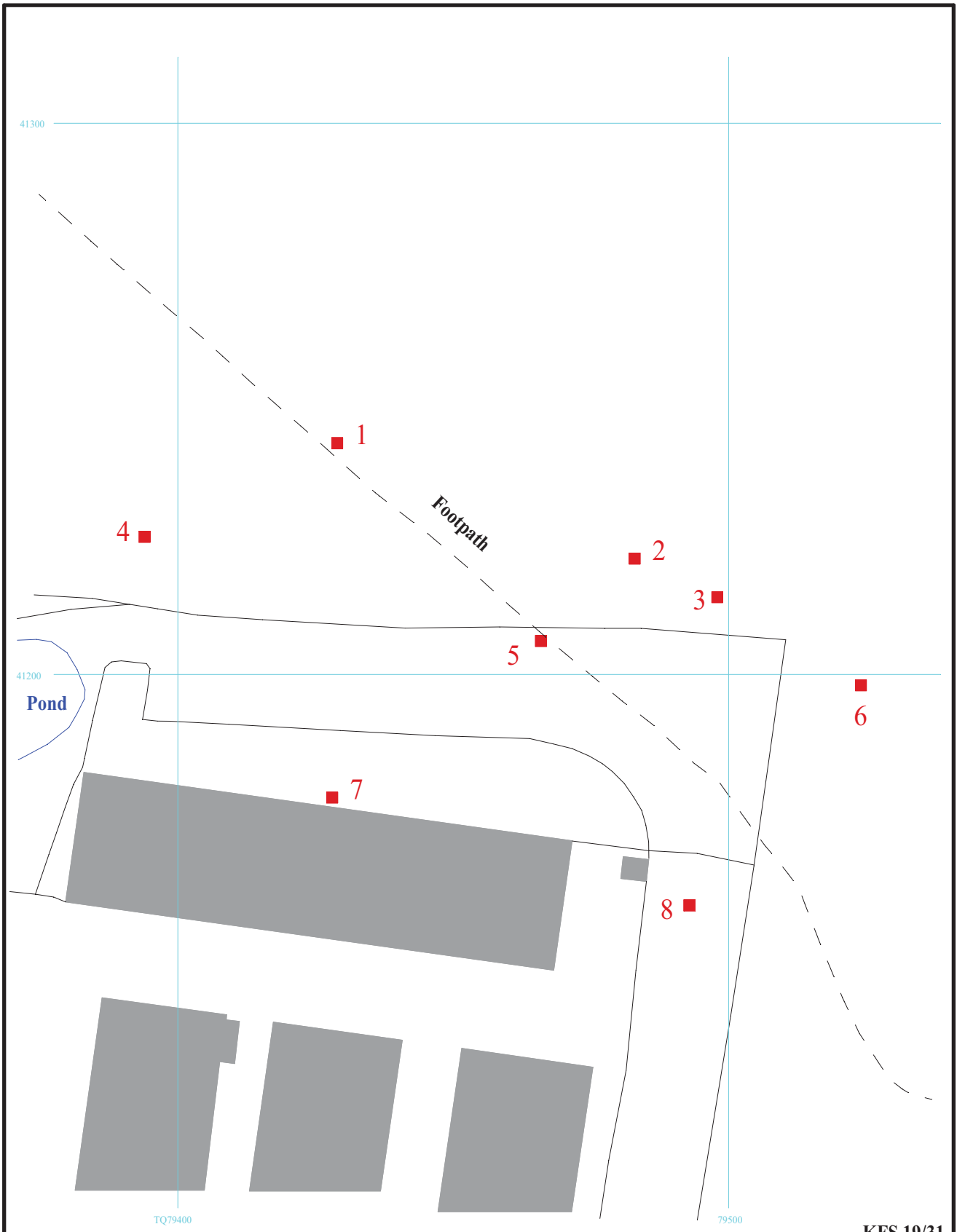


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Figure 1. Location of site within Staplehurst and Kent.

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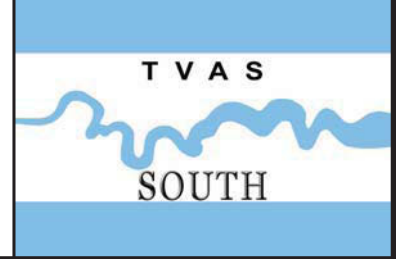


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site showing test pits monitored.



Test Pit 1

W

E

25.30m AOD

Made ground

Light yellow brown sandy clay (natural geology)

Test pit not monitored
beyond this point

Test Pit 5

W

E

25.67m

Made ground

Light yellow brown sandy clay (natural geology)

Test pit not monitored
beyond this point

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Figure 3. Representative sections.





Plate 1. General view of site, looking South-west.



Plate 2. General view of site, looking North-west.



Plate 3. Test pit 3, looking East.
Scale: 1m.



Plate 4. Test pit 4, looking South-east.
Scale: 1m.



Plate 5. Test pit 7, looking North-east.
Scale: 1m.



Plate 6. Test pit 8, looking East.
Scale: 1m.

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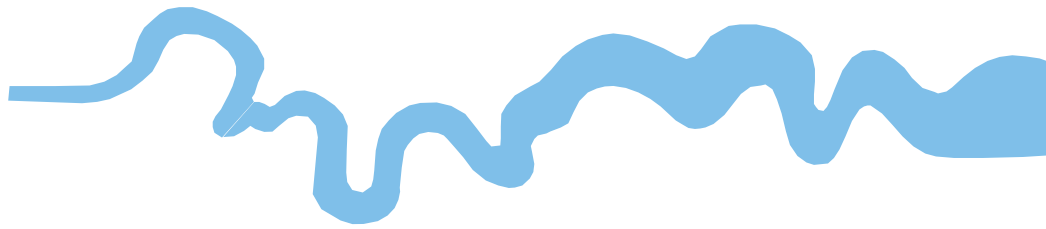
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Plates 1 to 6.**



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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