

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

**S E R V I C E S**

**177 Upper Woodcote Road,  
Caversham, Berkshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Will Attard**

**Site Code: UWR19/82**

**(SU6968 7623)**

**177 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham,  
Reading, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation**

**for Mr Amarjot Singh**

by Will Attard

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code UWR19/82

**July 2019**

## Summary

**Site name:** 177 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham, Berkshire

**Grid reference:** SU6968 7623

**Site activity:** Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 1/7/19

**Project coordinator:** Danielle Milbank

**Site supervisor:** Will Attard

**Site code:** UWR 19/82

**Area of site:** c.750 sq m

**Summary of results:** Two trenches were opened as intended, targeting the footprint of the proposed new build. Several archaeological features were revealed, two of which produced Roman pottery. The site is considered to have archaeological potential and appears to add to the distribution of Roman deposits already recorded for this locality. A prehistoric flint flake was also recorded.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited in an appropriate designated museum or repository to be decided by the local planning authority in due course.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 05.08.19 Steve Preston ✓ 05.08.19
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# **177 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation**

by Will Attard

**Report 19/82**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at 177 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire (SU6968 7623)(Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Amarjot Singh. Planning consent (190316) has been gain from Reading Borough Council to construct a single new house on land at 177 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire (SU6960 7620). The whole site area is c. 750 sq m. The consent is subject to a condition (9) relating to archaeology. In accordance with this, an archaeological evaluation has been carried out. The fieldwork was carried out to a specification approved by Roland Smith, Archaeological Officer for Berkshire Archaeology, Berkshire Record Office, 9 Coley Avenue, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 6AF. The fieldwork was undertaken by Will Attard and Cosmo Bacon on the 1st July 2019 and the site code is UWR 19/82. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with an appropriate designated museum or repository to be decided by the local authority in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site is located along the western side of Upper Woodcote Road, 2.2km west of Caversham in the Borough of Reading, and 3.14km north-west of Reading train station. Topographically, the site is situated just below the crest of a ridge that runs roughly east-west, constituting the northern edge of the Pleistocene river system. The site lies on fluvial terrace gravel recorded as Black park gravel member, overlying chalk bedrock of the Seaford chalk formation (BGS 2000).

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site is highlighted in a briefing document by Ms Ellie Leary (formerly) of Berkshire Archaeology. In summary, this potential stems from the site's location within the archaeologically rich Thames Valley (Booth et al 2007; Lambrick et al 2009) with a wide range of sites and finds recorded in the Berkshire Historic Environment Record. Of particular relevant is the presence of a Roman building found in the

garden of 'Hillingdon' on Upper Woodcote Road, close to Blagrove Farm (Seaby 1934). Coins, pottery, building materials etc. were recovered from this site

The wider environs of the site note various findspots of Neolithic and Bronze Age flintwork, Iron Age, Roman and Medieval pottery and undated human burials. Bronze Age occupation was recorded on St Peter's Hill to the southeast (Ford and Raymond 2013). Evidence for extensive prehistoric and medieval occupation has also been recorded on the Mapledurham Golf Courses to the north (Ford 1991; Hull 1998). The environs of the site are also noteworthy for the presence of Palaeolithic finds of flint handaxes and other tools (Wymer 1968), and the Black Park gravels on which the site lies are known to contain lower Palaeolithic artefacts. Nearby Blagrove farm may have medieval origins.

## **Objectives and methodology**

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

Specifically, the aims of this project were;

- To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site.
- To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.
- To determine if Roman or medieval deposits have survived on the site.
- To collect information with which to prepare a mitigation strategy if necessary.

Two trenches measuring 16m by 1.5m were to be opened, targeting the footprint of the proposed new dwelling. Top and subsoil were removed by machine and under constant archaeological supervision. A JCB backhoe-type machine fitted with a 1.5m toothless ditching bucket was used for this portion of the work. After exposing the natural geology and archaeological levels, all possible cut features were cleaned using appropriate hand tools, and the trenches photographed and recorded. Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief, but without compromising the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which warrant preservation in-situ, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation.

## **Results**

Both trenches were opened in the intended locations as per the approved written scheme of investigation. They ranged in length from 15.05m to 16.20m and in depth from 0.60m to 0.61m. Top and subsoil was stored in separate spoil heaps, which were monitored for archaeological material during the course of the evaluation.

### Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 1 and 3)

Trench 1 was aligned east-west and measured 16.20m long, 1.60m wide and 0.61m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.41m of subsoil overlying natural geology.

Here, ditch 1 ran north-west/south-east and crossed Trench 1 at 9.20m to 10.40m from the east end of the trench. It measured 0.95m in width, was 0.25m deep. Burnt flint, burnt coarse-grained stone and 3 sherds of Early Roman pottery were recovered from this feature. Pit 2 was situated at 10.70m from the eastern end of the trench, and was partially truncated by Ditch 1. Pit 2 was 0.65m in diameter and 0.07m deep. No finds were recovered from this feature. Both Ditch 1 and Pit 2 were investigated in a single relationship slot 0.60m in length.

### Trench 2 (Figs 3 and 4; Pls 2 and 4)

Trench 2 was aligned west north-west/east south-east and was 15.05m long, 1.60m wide and 0.60m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of topsoil and 0.40m of subsoil overlying the natural geology.

Several archaeological features were revealed in this trench. A probable continuation of Ditch 1 (Trench 1) ran north-west/south-east at the eastern end of the trench. Located 3m from the east end of the trench, Pit 3 measured 0.62m in diameter and 0.18m in depth. No finds were recovered from this feature. Pit 4 was located roughly in the centre of Trench 2, and extended beyond both the northern and southern edges of the trench. It had a maximum exposed width of 3.60m, and a maximum excavated depth of 0.47m. Pit 5 was located 8.60m from the eastern end of the trench, and was 0.52m in diameter and 0.10m deep. Two sherds of later Roman pottery were recovered from this feature.

## **Finds**

### *Pottery by Jane Timby*

The archaeological work produced a small assemblage of six sherds of pottery weighing 66 g from two features. The group includes material of early and later Roman date. Feature [1] (52) produced four sherds; three grog-tempered wares including a beaded rim jar and one sherd of Alice Holt grey sandy ware all of which suggest an

early Roman date. Feature [5] (56) produced just two small sherds weighing 1 g each, one of which is a piece of Oxfordshire red-slipped ware dating to after AD 240. This was accompanied by a further sherd of Alice Holt grey ware not closely datable other than Roman.

### *Catalogue*

#### Feature [1] (52)

1. Two bodysherds and one rim from a beaded rim jar. Wt. 58 g. Date: 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.
2. One bodysherd Alice Holt grey sandy ware. Wt. 6 g.

#### Feature [5] (56)

3. One bodysherd of Oxfordshire red-slip ware. Wt. 1 g. Date: AD 240-400+
4. One bodysherd Alice Holt grey sandy ware. Wt. 1 g.

### *Stone by Will Attard*

A single fragment of quern stone was recovered from Ditch 1. It is made of greensand, with a probable identification of Lodsworth stone based on overall colour, inclusions and occasional swirls of darker material. Although querns of Lodsworth stone are known from the Neolithic period onwards, their main period of use was the late Iron Age through to the Roman period (Shaffrey and Roe 2011), the latter consistent with other material recovered during this evaluation. Although only a fragment of quern is present, part of the grinding surface is preserved, with a series of dark red-brown striations visible over the surface, though not aligned with the 'grain'. The origin of these striations is unclear, but likely to be post-depositional.

### *Flint by Will Attard*

A single struck flake was recovered from Ditch 1. It is a pale to medium grey and features a single oval area of coarse grained material. Edges and ridges are moderately abraded. Given the presence of Roman pottery and CBM within the fill of Ditch 1, it is very likely this flake is a residual prehistoric artefact. The form of the flake is not diagnostic in terms of either function or age.

## Conclusion

The two trenches were dug as intended and revealed a range of archaeological features (ditches and pits) cutting the natural geology. Two of the features produced dating evidence comprising Roman pottery, with the expectation that the other features were of similar date. Thus the trenching has confirmed the archaeological potential of the site as anticipated from previous finds made in this area.

## References

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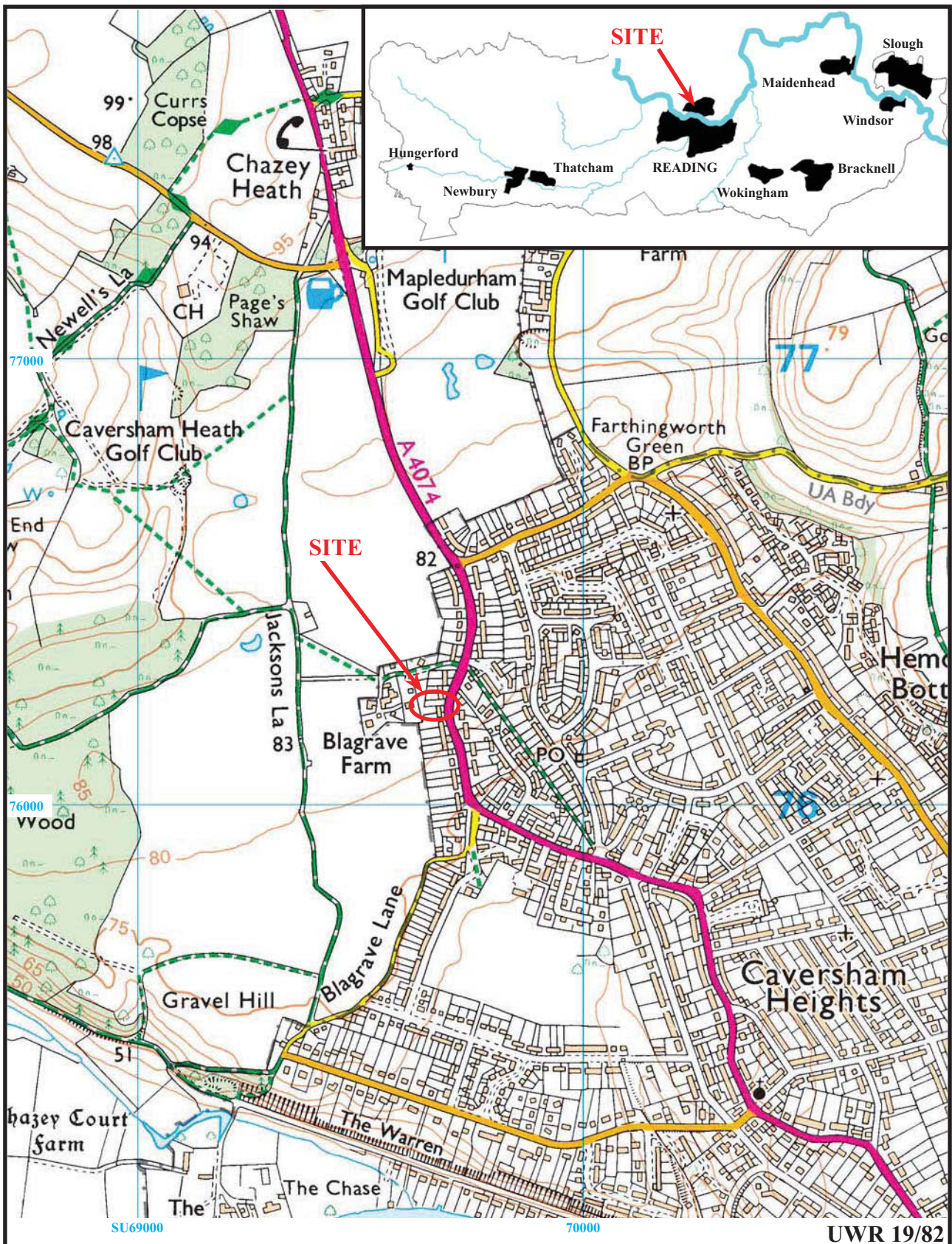
## APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S or West end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	16.20	1.60	0.61	0-0.20m topsoil; 0.20-0.61m subsoil; 0.61m+ gravel natural geology. Ditch 1; Pit 2 <b>[Pls 1 and 3]</b>
2	15.05m	1.60	0.60	0-0.20m topsoil; 0.20-0.60m subsoil; 0.60m+ gravel natural geology. Pits 3, 4 and 5, unexcavated ditch 6, (same as ditch 1?) <b>[Pls 2 and 4]</b>

**APPENDIX 2: Feature details**

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1	1	52	Ditch	Roman	Pottery
1	2	53	Pit	-	-
2	3	54	Pit	-	-
2	4	55	Pit	-	-
2	5	56	Pit	Roman	Pottery
2	-	57	Linear (unexc)	-	-

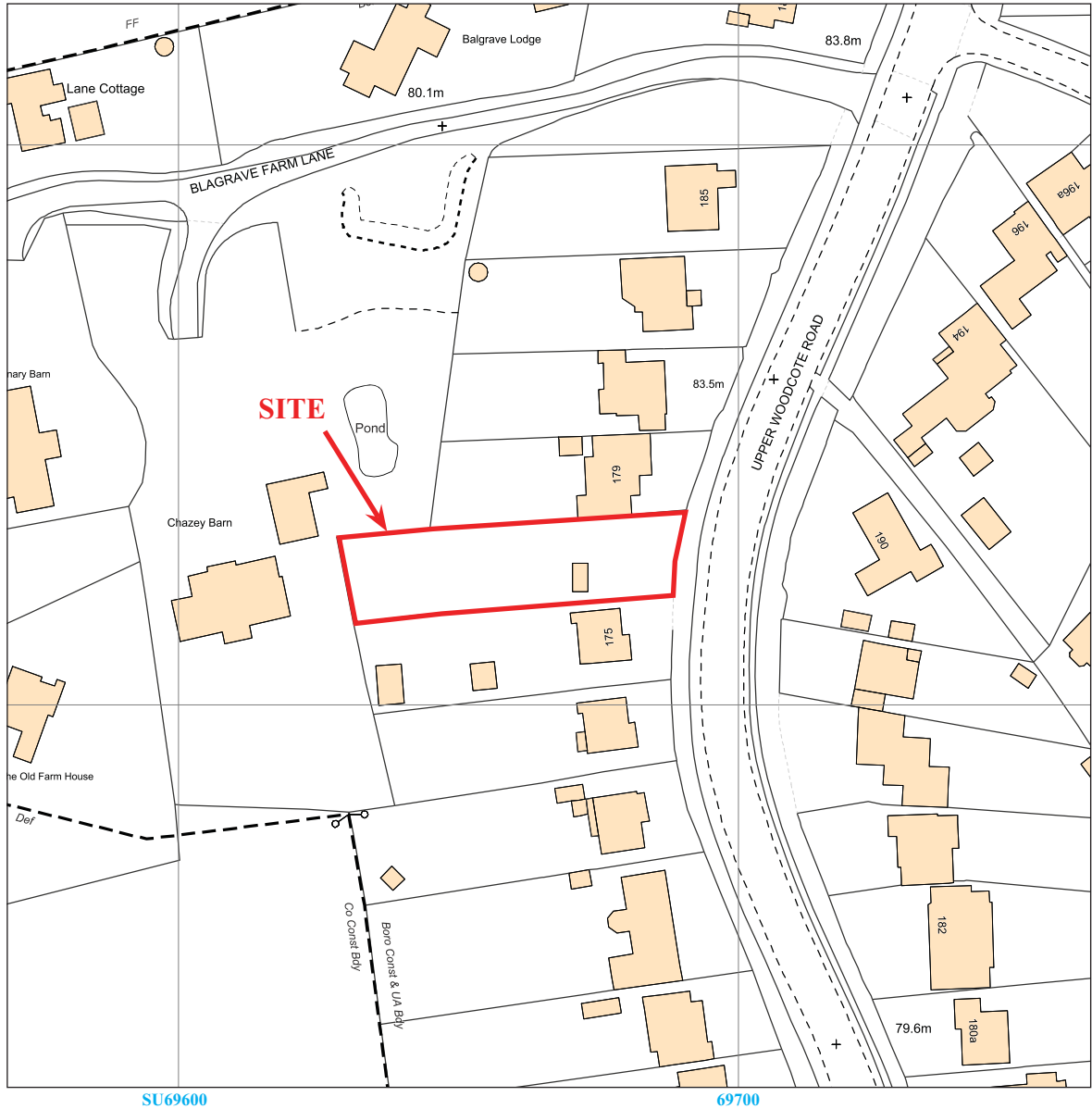


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Figure 1. Location of site within Caversham and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Upper Woodcote Road.

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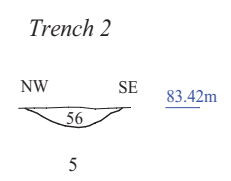
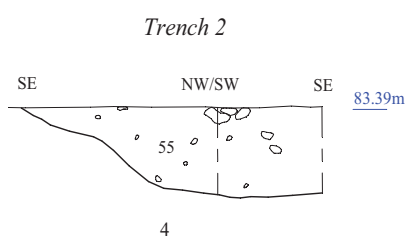
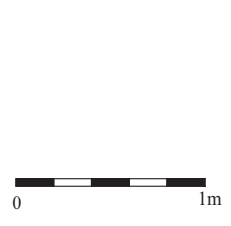
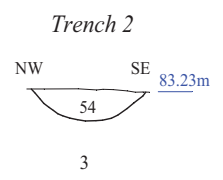
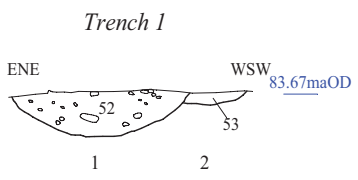
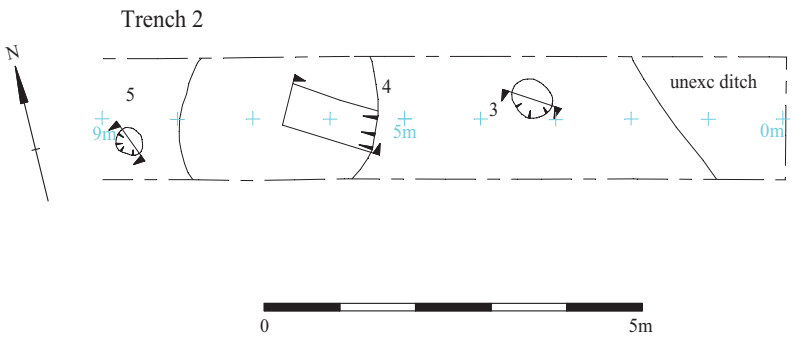
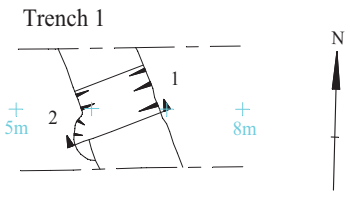
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Figure 3. Detail of trenches.



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Figure 4. Detail of trenches.





Plate 1. Trench 1, looking east, Scales: horizontal 0.5m and 0.3m, vertical 0.5m.



Plate 2. Trench 2, looking south east, Scales: horizontal 0.5m and 0.3m, vertical 0.5m.

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Plates 1 and 2.**

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Plate 3. Trench 1, ditch 1 cutting pit 2, looking north west,  
Scales: 0.5m and 0.1m.



Plate 4. Trench 2, pit 4, looking east, Scales: horizontal 0.5m, vertical 0.5m.

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Plates 3 and 4.

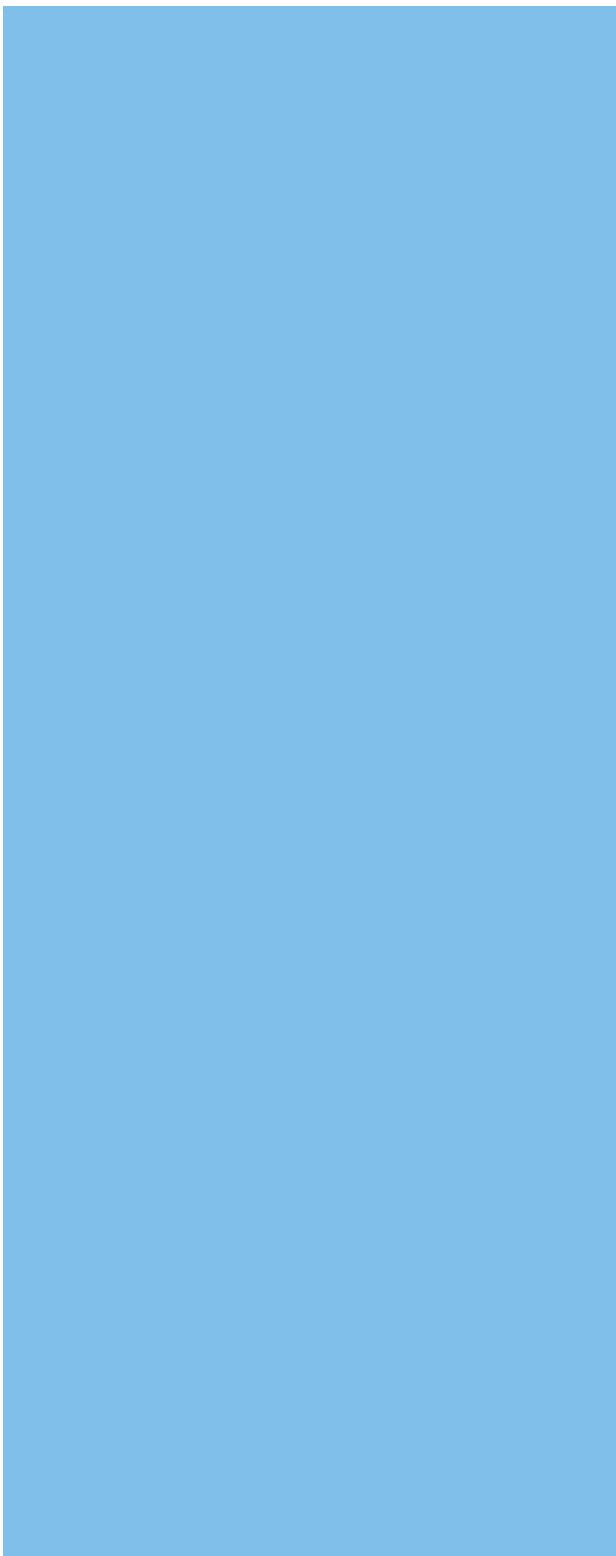
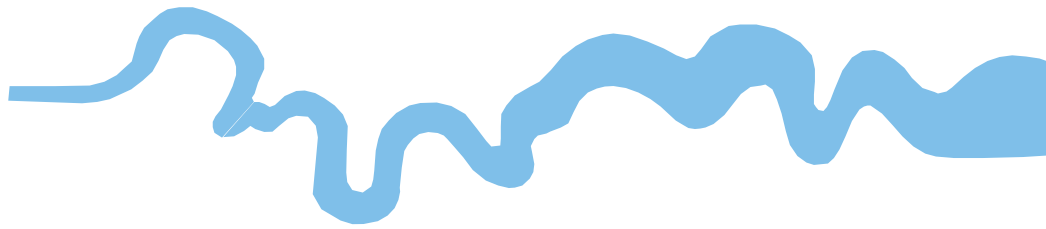
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## TIME CHART

	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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