THAMES VALLEY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

SERVICES

100 – 102 High Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire

Archaeological Evaluation

by Kyle Beaverstock

Site Code: HSM19/145

(SU 8871 8120)

100 – 102 High Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire

An Archaeological Evaluation

for HEL Distribution Limited

by Kyle Beaverstock

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code HSM19/145

February 2020

Summary

Site name: 100 – 102 High Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 8871 8120

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 22nd – 23rd January 2020

Project coordinator: Tim Dawson

Site supervisor: Kyle Beaverstock

Site code: HSM19/145

Summary of results: Other than a residual sherd of medieval pottery no deposits nor finds of archaeological interest was recovered from the evaluation. Deep late-post-medieval or modern made ground was revealed overlying the natural geology suggesting some, if not extensive truncation of the archaeological relevant levels. The site is considered to have low archaeological potential.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the appropriate museum or repository in due course.

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 31.01.20
	Steve Preston✓ 31.01.20

100 – 102 High Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire
An Archaeological Evaluation

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Report 19/145

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at 100 – 102 High Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire (SU 8871 8120) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr. Ash Gaffar of HEL Distribution Ltd., 100 – 102 High Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 1PT.

Planning permission (16/01667) has been gained from the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead for the construction of new housing and a retail unit on the site following demolition of the existing structure. The consent is subject to a condition (7) relating to archaeology. This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Matt Saywood, Archaeology Officer for Berkshire Archaeology.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Kyle Beaverstock and Jon Tierney between 22nd and 23rd January 2020 and the site code is HSM19/145. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the appropriate museum or repository in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in the centre of Maidenhead on the northern side of High Street (Fig. 1) approximately 0.4km west of the River Thames. This rectangular parcel of land is formally a retail unit and sits at a height of 28m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is stated as either Taplow Gravel or Shepperton Gravel above Chalk (BGS 2005), although what was seen in the trenches is most likely Langley Silt (brickearth) overlying the gravel.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the archaeologically rich Thames Valley with a wealth of prehistoric and later archaeological finds recorded for the area (Ford 1987; Gates 1975; Dils 2013). Recent discoveries of early Saxon structures at Braywick Leisure Centre to the south (Taylor 2018) with

additional Bronze Age ring ditches discovered during follow-up fieldwork indicated the potential of the environs of the proposal site.

More specific potential comes from the location of the site within the town centre. Maidenhead has late Saxon origins but developed further once a new crossing of the Thames was made (Astill 1978) The pre-modern topography of Maidenhead is complex as it lies on the lower terrace of the Thames and comprised elements of a braided river, system, now alluviated with several channels having areas of higher ground (islands) in between. These islands of higher, drier land were favoured for initial settlement with some land reclamation of the lower, wetter, land. The latter riparian locations can, if deposits become waterlogged, have good preservation of organic remains.

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. This work will be carried out in a manner which will not compromise the integrity of archaeological features or deposits which warrant preservation *in situ*, or might better be excavated under conditions pertaining to full excavation. The specific research aims of this project are;

To determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on this site.
To determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.
To determine if there are any deposits of prehistoric or medieval date on the site.
To determine, if possible, the palaeotopography of the site with regards to areas of higher, drier land (gravel islands) more suitable for occupation.
To determine if alluvium or peat deposits are present on the site and if so the relationship of archaeological deposits to them.
To determine the palaeoenvironmental potential of the site.
The potential and significance of any such deposits located will be assessed according to the research priorities such as set out in *Historic England Research Agenda* (HE 2017) or any more local or thematic research priorities such as the *Solent Thames Research Agenda* (Hey and Hind 2014) as necessary.

It was proposed to dig two trenches between 5 to 7m long and between 1.6 and 2m wide within the impact area of the groundworks. The trenches were to be dug by a 360-type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket and under constant archaeological supervision. Any archaeological features were to be cleaned and excavated using the appropriate hand tools and fully recorded.

Results

Two trenches were dug, trench 1 measured 2.9m long and 2.06m deep and trench 2 measured 2m long and 2.3m deep. Due to the presence of services, basements and reinforced concrete foundation pads the trenches were shortened. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Figs 3 and 4; Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned north- south and was 2.9m long and 2.06m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.2m of wooden floorboards, 0.27 of brick foundation, 0.18m of concrete foundation, 1.19m of a brownish grey silty clay made ground (53) and 0.22m of a mid greyish yellow made ground (54) overlying natural geology. A few sherds of blue transfer printed 'china', clay pipe, green glass bottle, iron nails, a knife blade and animal bone were recorded from context 53.

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

Trench 2 was aligned north- south and was 2m long and 2.3m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.26m of concrete, 0.22 of brick foundation, 0.14m of compacted made ground, 1.1m of a brownish grey silty clay made ground (53) and 0.58m of a mid greyish yellow made ground (54) overlying natural geology. A few sherds of blue transfer printed 'china', brown glazed post-medieval red ware pottery, green glass bottle, iron nails, oyster shell and animal bone were recorded for context 53. A single sherd of green glazed pottery medieval pottery was recovered from context 54.

Finds

Pottery by Luke Barber

Spot Dates

The archaeological work recovered 28 sherds of pottery, weighing 634g, from two individually numbered contexts but both 'made ground'. The material has been fully listed by common and/or descriptive name in Table 1 e. Overall the pottery consists of medium to large sized sherds with no or limited signs of abrasion. As such, despite there being chronological mixing the material does not appear to have been subjected to any significant reworking.

The earliest sherd consists of the fairly large and fresh Late Medieval Coarse Border Ware jug fragment from layer [54] which is probably of later 14th- to 15th- century date. Despite clearly being residual in this deposit the sherd is quite fresh. The other two sherds from this layer are also fresh, but belong to a later 17th to mid 18th- century date range. The assemblage from layer [53] is much larger but still dominated by fresh sherds. Local redwares in different grades of coarseness dominate the group but they are joined by definite sherds from the Surrey-Hampshire Border Ware industry. All can be placed within a later 17th- to mid 18th- century date range though some of the redwares are certainly of the first half of the 18th century. The German Frechen bottle, although a 17th- century vessel, may well have been in contemporary use in the first half of the 18th century. The more industrialised finewares give a good indication of dates: the white salt-glazed wares generally being dated c. 1720-1780 and the creamware c. 1740-1820. However, the creamware all appears to be quite early probably suggesting a pre 1770 date, a suggestion strengthened by the absence of any pearlware sherds. There is nothing to suggest anything other than a domestic assemblage.

Conclusion

The evaluation revealed the presence of a substantial depth of 19th century made ground directly above the natural geology. This post-medieval context was most likely deposited during construction of the building and the adjacent basements. No features of archaeological interest were revealed and only only a single sherd of medieval pottery was of archaeological interest. The made ground directly overly the natural geology with no indication of buried topsoil or subsoil suggesting some truncation as does a small difference in height in the recorded depth of the natural geology. Whilst probable, it is not entirely clear if wholesale truncation of the archaeological horizon has taken place such as during the adjacent basement construction with these deposits reflect backfilling of the completed structure construction trench. On the basis of these results, the site is considered to have low archaeological potential.

References

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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

Trench	*Length (m)*	*Breadth (m)*	*Depth (m)*	*Comment*
1	2.9	1.4	2.06	0 – 0.2m wooden floor; 0.2 – 0.47m of brick foundation; 0.47 – 0.65m of concrete foundation; 0.65 – 1.84m of a dark brownish grey silty clay made ground; 1.84 – 2.06 of a mid greyish yellow silty clay made ground; 2.06m+ of a pale brownish yellow sandy clay natural geology. **[Pl. 1]**
2	2	1.6	2.3	0 – 0.26m concrete; 0.26 – 0.48m of brick floor; 0.48 – 0.62m of compacted made ground; 0.62 – 1.72m of a dark brownish grey silty clay made ground; 1.72 – 2.3 of a mid greyish yellow silty clay made ground; 2.3m+ of a pale brownish yellow sandy clay natural geology. **[Pl. 2]**

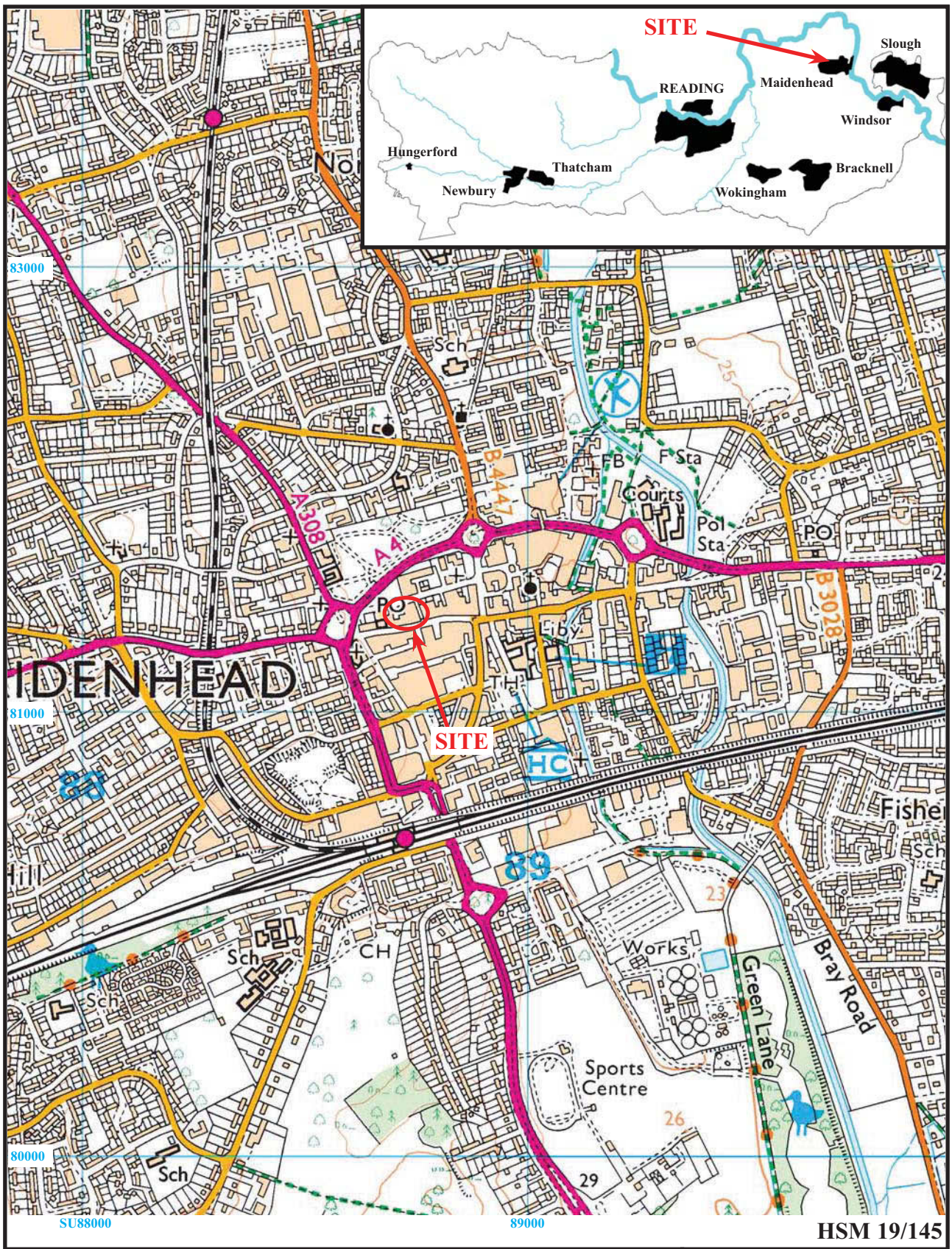
APPENDIX 2: Feature and deposits details

Trench	*Fill (s)*	*Type*	*Date*	*Dating evidence*
2	50	Concrete	Modern	
2	51	Brick Floor	Modern	
2	52	Compacted Made Ground	Modern	
1 + 2	53	Made Ground	Late Post-Medieval	Pottery
1 + 2	54	Made Ground	Late Post-Medieval	Pottery
1	55	Wooden Floor	Modern	
1	56	Brick Foundation	Modern	
1	57	Concrete Foundation	Modern	

APPENDIX 3: Pottery collection

Context	Fabric	Period	No	Weight (g)	**Comments** (including estimated number of different vessels represented by form. ? = undiagnostic of form)
53	Glazed red earthenware (abundant fine quartz)	EPM	4	84	Dish x1 (clear glaze internally, thickened rim); ?jug x1 (clear glaze all over); ?x2 (x1 clear glaze internal patches, x1 internal lime scaling)
53	Glazed red earthenware (sparse/moderate fine quartz)	EPM/LPM	4	142	Jar x1 (clear glaze internally, club rim); dish x1 (trailed white slip and clear glaze internally); ? X2 (clear glaze internally)
53	Glazed red earthenware (no/rare fine quartz)	EPM/LPM	1	14	?x1 (clear glaze internally)
53	Black-glazed redware	EPM/LPM	1	26	?x1 (black glaze all over)
53	White Surrey-Hampshire Border Ware	EPM	1	12	?x1 (green glaze internally)
53	Red Surrey-Hampshire Border ware	EPM	1	10	Bowl x1 (green glaze internally, lid-seated rim)
53	Tin-glazed earthenware	EPM	2	18	?Plate/dish x1 (hand-painted blue foliage); ?mug x1 (hand-painted blue Chinese design)
53	Frechen stoneware	EPM	1	64	Bottle x1 (iron mottles, salt glaze)
53	White salt-glazed stoneware	EPM	2	26	?Mug x1 (cylindrical); lid x1
53	Creamware (early)	LPM	8	100	Plates x4 (x1 plain dished rim, x1 plain scallop rim, x1 Queen's pattern rim, x1 moulded feathered rim); teabowl x1 (simple rim, moulded horizontal row of beading below rim and green and yellow glazed external strips)
54	Red Surrey-Hampshire Border ware	EPM	2	104	Dish x1 (trailed zig-zag white slip line around rim and concentric trailed white slip circles on base, all under clear glaze)
54	Coarse Border ware	LM	1	34	Jug x1 (green glaze patches externally, thumbed base)

LM – Late Medieval c. 1350/75-1525/50; EPM – Early Post-Medieval c. 1525/50-1750; LPM - Late Post-Medieval c. 1750-1900+.



HSM 19/145

100-102 High Street, Maidenhead,
Berkshire, 2020
Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 1. Location of site within Maidenhead and Berkshire.

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HSM 19/145

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100-102 High Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire, 2020
Archaeological Evaluation
Figure 2. Detailed location of site off High Street.

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Figure 3. Location of trenches.

0 10m

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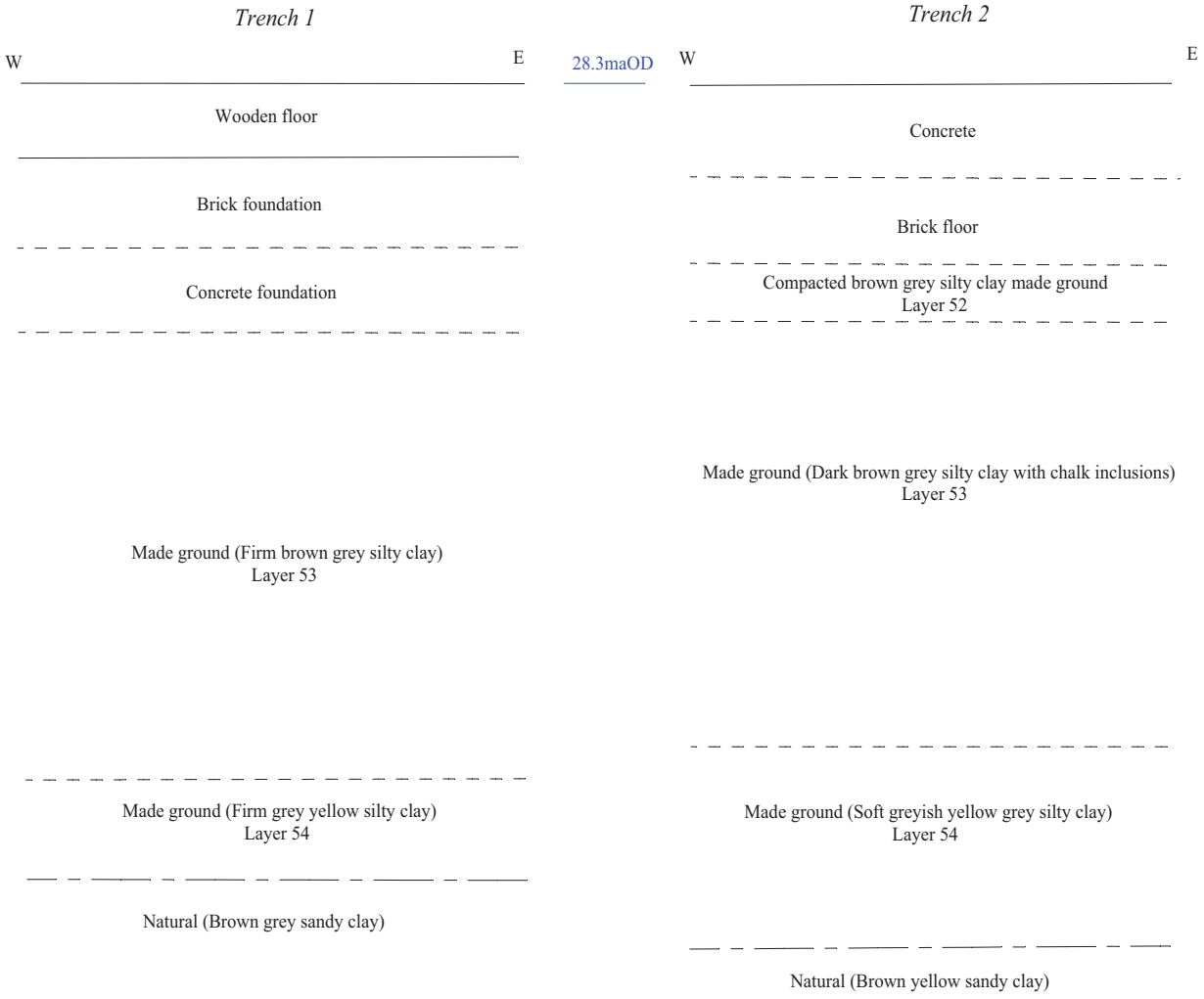

HSM 19/145

100-102 High Street, Maidenhead, Berkshire, 2020 Archaeological Evaluation

Figure 4. Representative sections.

0 1m

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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking NNW, Scales: 2m and 1m.

Plate 2. Trench 2, looking W, Scale: 2m.

HSM 19/145

100-102 High Street, Maidenhead,
Berkshire, 2020
Archaeological Evaluation
Plates 1 and 2.

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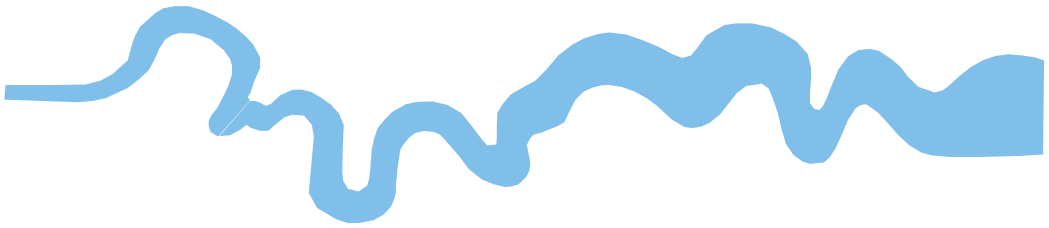
TIME CHART

	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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