

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

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

**Land west of Cupernham Lane,  
Romsey, Hampshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Will Attard**

**Site Code: CLR16/132**

**(SU3621 2256)**

# **Land west of Cupernham Lane, Romsey, Hampshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for Hampshire Homes**

by Will Attard

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code CLR 16/132

**August 2021**

## Summary

**Site name:** Land west of Cupernham Lane, Romsey, Hampshire

**Grid reference:** SU3621 2256

**Site activity:** Evaluation Trenching

**Date and duration of project:** 16th - 17th August 2021

**Project coordinator:** Tim Dawson, Danielle Milbank

**Site supervisor:** Will Attard

**Site code:** CLR 16/132

**Area of site:** c.1.44ha

**Summary of results:** The evaluation trenching revealed no deposits of archaeological interest but noted the presence of numerous field drains and modern drainage ditches. A few undiagnostic prehistoric struck flints were recovered from the site. On the basis of these results the site is considered to have no archaeological potential

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Hampshire Cultural Trust in due course.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 27.08.21 Steve Preston ✓ 27.08.21
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# Land west of Cupernham Lane, Romsey, Hampshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Will Attard

**Report 16/132b**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out on land west of Cupernham Lane, Romsey, Hampshire (SU3621 2256) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Ms Grace Palmer for Hampshire Homes Group, 8 Chatmohr Estate, Crawley Hill, Hampshire, SO51 6AP. Planning permission (16/01857/FULLS) has been granted on appeal (APP/C1760/W/17/3179932) by Test Valley Borough Council for the development of the site for residential use. The permission is subject to a condition (16) relating to archaeology, requiring the implementation of a programme of evaluation trenching to assess the need for and scope of any further archaeological mitigation that may be necessary.

This was in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2012: since superseded), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr David Hopkins, County Archaeologist for Hampshire County Council, the archaeological adviser to the Borough. The fieldwork was undertaken by Will Attard and Richard Dewhurst on 16th and 17th August 2021, and the site code is CPR16/132. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Hampshire Cultural Trust in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The site lies at northern outskirts of Romsey on the western side of Cupernham Lane and comprises a sub-rectangular parcel of land covering an area of approximately 1.44ha centred on NGR SU 3624 2257 (Fig. 1). The site is bounded by houses to the north and south, Cupernham Lane to the east, on either side of which is a tree belt, and by a track to the west, with Fishlake Meadows and the Fishlake Stream beyond the track. The site was previously paddocks. The underlying bedrock geology has been mapped as Wittering Formation (sand, silt and clay) capped by 4th terrace river gravels (BGS 1987). The geology encountered in the trenches varied but was mostly a sandy clay. The site lies at a height of approximately 30m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) in the east sloping down to around 22m aOD in the west.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a desk-based assessment (Baljikas 2016), which noted the discovery of Roman pottery to the south-west, and flint scatters to the north-east. While the town itself has had relatively intensive archaeological attention, for most periods little archaeology is recorded in its outskirts, the marked exception being numerous records for Palaeolithic tools. There has been little archaeological work in the immediate vicinity but an archaeological evaluation followed by excavation at Oxlease Farm recovered an assemblage of Mesolithic or Upper Palaeolithic struck flints (Whelan and Ellis 2016) and late Roman pottery derived from a later (?medieval) field system. The assemblage was recovered from a relatively small area located to the north-east of the current site.

## **Objectives and methodology**

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

The specific aims of this project are:

- to determine if archaeologically relevant levels have survived on the site;
- to determine if archaeological deposits have survived on the site; and
- to gather data sufficient to inform a strategy for further archaeological mitigation if required.

It was proposed to excavate twelve trenches across the portion of the site to be developed. Each trench was to measure 25m in length and between 1.6m and 2m wide. Excavation was undertaken using a 360<sup>0</sup>-type excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. All machining was conducted under constant archaeological supervision. Potential archaeological deposits were cleaned and investigated by hand. A metal detector was used to enhance finds recovery.

## **Results**

The site had been subject to ecological mitigation prior to the commencement of the archaeological evaluation, part of which included the removal of vegetation and the stripping of topsoil and the creation of large wind-rows across the mitigation area. In the south-western corner there was an ingress of what appeared to be clear groundwater, possibly a small spring or the emergence of an underground watercourse, and the western edge of site was partially submerged. A foul drain also crossed the site on a roughly north-south alignment.

Consequently, trenches had to be relocated or re-aligned from their original intended locations, and only 11 trenches could be excavated (Fig. 2).

The trenches ranged in length from 12.4m to 26.5m and all were 2m wide. Depths varied from 0.2m in the south of the site to 0.60m in the north. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

#### Trench 1 (Figs 2 and 3; Pl. 1)

Trench 1 was aligned north–south and measured 25.60m in length with a depth of 0.46m. Stratigraphy observed consisted of 0.10m of topsoil (partially removed prior to commencement of archaeological work) overlying 0.20m of subsoil, in turn overlying a natural geology of mottled orange-blue/blue-grey sandy clay with frequent gravel flint inclusions. Four field drains were present within Trench 1, one with a gravel flint fill, one a brick culvert and two containing ceramic pipes. No features or deposits of archaeological significance were encountered in this trench.

#### Trench 2

Trench 2 was aligned close to north–south and measured 24.80m long by 0.34m deep. Topsoil had been completely removed from this trench prior to commencement. The remaining stratigraphy consisted of 0.12m of subsoil overlying a mottled blue-grey/orange brown sandy clay natural geology. Nothing of archaeological interest was present in this trench.

#### Trench 3

Trench 3 nearly north–south, was 26.50m long by 0.32m deep. Stratigraphy consisted of subsoil (0.12m) overlying the same natural geology as observed in trench 2. Three struck flints were found within the subsoil overlying this trench, with one being of likely Mesolithic date. Two tree throws and a ceramic field drain were present within Trench 3, but no features of archaeological significance were encountered.

#### Trench 4

Trench 4 measured 24.60m long by 0.30m deep and was aligned NNW–SSE. The topsoil and subsoil had been completely removed prior to archaeological excavation, so just 0.10m of natural sand was removed to clean the trench. No archaeological finds, features or deposits were encountered.

#### Trench 5 (Figs 2 and 3; Pl. 2)

Trench 5 was aligned NNW–SSE. It measured 25.50m in length and 0.60m in depth. The stratigraphy observed consisted of 0.30m of topsoil overlying 0.20m of subsoil, in turn overlying natural geology consisting of

compact orange-brown sandy clay with frequent patches of flint gravel. Two linear features were investigated, with both determined to be land drains. Three possible discrete features were also investigated and determined to be tree throws.

#### Trench 6

Trench 6 was aligned NNW–SSE and measured 20.60m in length and 0.40m in depth. No topsoil was present overlying this trench, and the observed stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of loose loam subsoil overlying a light brown-grey silty sand with very frequent flint gravel inclusions. A series of heavily rooted modern drainage ditches crossed the trench, of which two were already visible prior to excavation.

#### Trench 7 (Figs 2 and 3; Pl. 3)

This trench was aligned NNW–SSE and was 17.20m long and 0.37m deep. The length was constrained by a vegetation wind-row in the north-west and surveyed markers for the proposed access road in the south-east. Stratigraphy consisted of 0.20m of loose, dark loam overlying mixed sand, clay and gravel natural geology. Two tree throws were investigated but no archaeological material, horizons or features were present within the trench.

#### Trench 8

Trench 8 measured 22.50m in length by 0.46m in depth. It was aligned north-east–south-west. Much of Trench 8 was truncated by an array of land drains. All contained ceramic pipes of various sizes and several were still active, with immediate reburial required after locating the pipes to avoid massive ingress of water into the trench. No archaeological deposits survived within this trench.

#### Trench 9

This trench was aligned north-east–south-west and measured 24.30m long by 0.25m deep. Topsoil was completely removed and subsoil partially removed prior to commencement of archaeological work. Some 0.10m of subsoil remained, overlying natural geology consisting of pale grey gravel, silty sand and a compact orange-grey sandy clay. Two tree throws and a land drain were investigated. No archaeological deposits were present.

#### Trench 10 (Plate 4)

Trench 10 measured 13.9m long and was aligned ENE–WSW. It was constrained by the foul drain in the west and the edge of the accessible portion of the site in the east. Topsoil was completely, and subsoil partially, removed prior to commencement of archaeological work. The remaining stratigraphy consisted of 0.10m of subsoil overlying the same mixed natural deposits observed in Trench 9 to a maximum depth of 0.23m. One field drain and one modern truncation were investigated within this trench.

### Trench 11

Trench 11 was aligned close to west–east and measured 12.40m long and 0.22m deep. It was constrained by the foul drain in the west and the limit of excavation in the east. Topsoil was completely removed and subsoil partially removed prior to commencement of archaeological work. Only 0.06m of subsoil remained overlying extensive modern truncation containing slate, brick, concrete, metal and glass. Where natural geology remained, it consisted of compact orange-brown sandy clay with frequent flint inclusions. No deposits or finds of archaeological significance were present within this trench.

### **Finds**

#### *Struck flint* by Will Attard

A small assemblage of 10 struck flints was recovered (Appendix 2). Five unretouched flakes were recovered from the subsoil overlying Trench 3. One shows parallel dorsal ridges indicative of being struck from a prepared core or a blade core. Three further struck pieces were recovered from the surface of the site, and consist of a blade, a bifacially flaked fragment and a small end scraper. A fourth, unretouched flake was recovered from the subsoil surrounding the possible spring. All pieces recovered are heavily iron-stained, but otherwise in fresh condition. No clusters or tight groupings were observed, and it is not clear how far these lithics might have travelled down-slope from their original point of loss or deposition.

### **Conclusion**

The evaluation trenching on land west of Cupernham Lane revealed no archaeological features but did recover a small assemblage of struck flint. The site was extensively truncated by field drains and modern drainage ditches, and it is likely that even if archaeological remains had been present that they would have been significantly damaged or destroyed. The struck flint recovered was largely non-diagnostic and can only broadly be assigned a date of Mesolithic to Bronze Age. The site is further south than the posited origin point of Mesolithic/Upper Palaeolithic flints recovered during previous archaeological work to the west, and if such an origin exists it is likely on the plot of land to the north of this site.

### **References**

- Baljkas, G, 2016, Land to the west of Cupernham Lane, Romsey, Hampshire, an archaeological desk-based assessment, Thames Valley Archaeological Services report 16/132, Reading
- BGS, 1987, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 315, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework (revised)*, Department of Communities and Local Government, London
- Whelan, J and Ellis, C, 2016 'Land at Oxlease Farm, Cupernham Lane, Romsey, Hampshire: Archaeological Excavation', Cotswold Archaeology report 16339, Andover



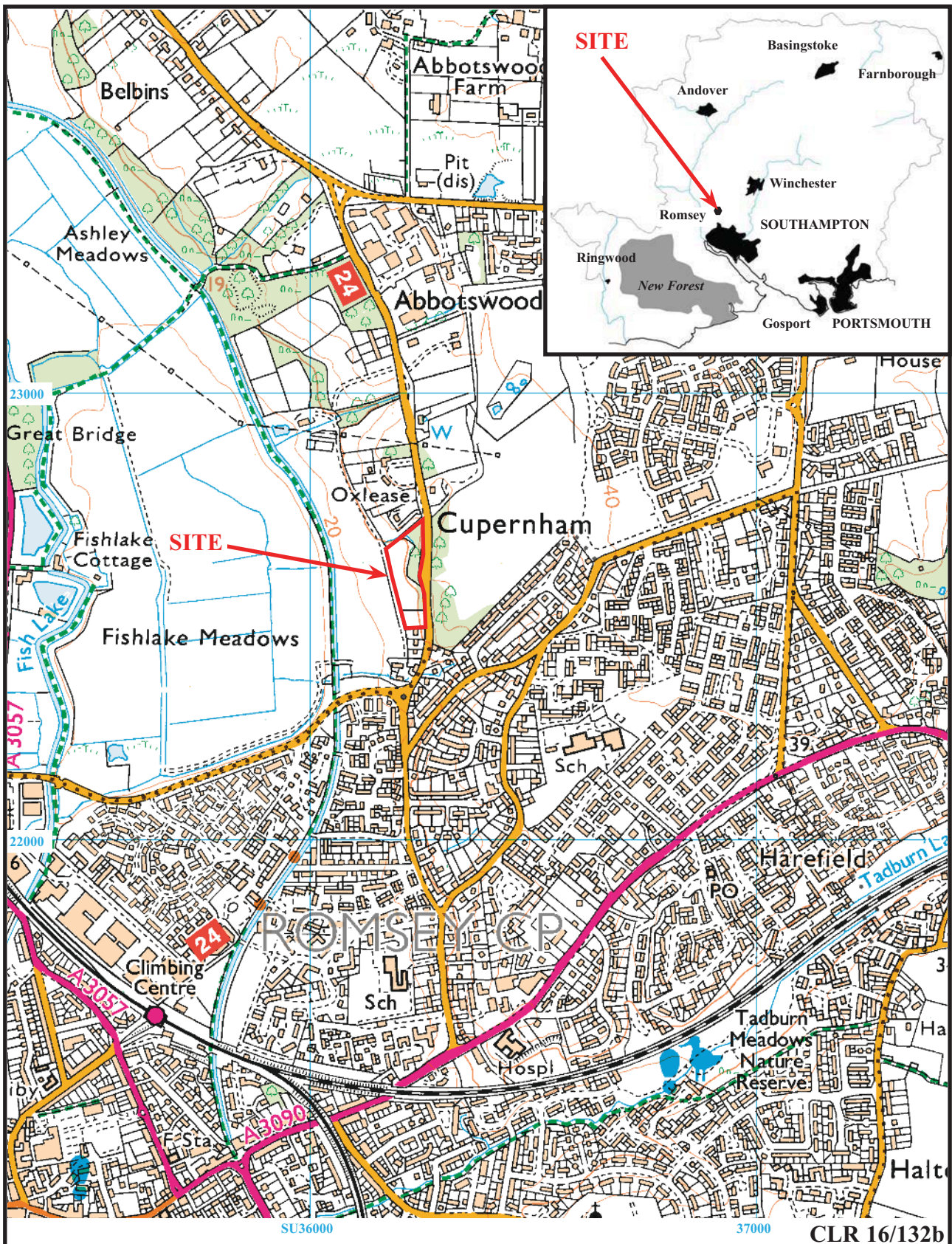
**APPENDIX 1: Trench details**

0m at SW, S or W end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	25.6	2	0.46	0-0.10m topsoil (partially stripped prior to arrival on site); 0.10m-0.30m subsoil; 0.30m+ mottled orange/blue-grey sandy clay natural geology with flint inclusions. Four field drains were present in this trench. <b>[Pl. 1]</b>
2	24.8	2	0.34	(Topsoil stripped prior to arrival on site); 0-0.12m subsoil; 0.12m+ mottled grey-blue/orange-brown sandy clay natural geology.
3	26.5	2	0.32	(Topsoil stripped prior to arrival on site); 0-0.12m subsoil; 0.12m+ compact sandy clay natural geology. 1 tree throw and 1 land drain present in this trench.
4	24.6	2	0.30	(Topsoil stripped prior to arrival on site); 0-0.10m subsoil (partially stripped); 0.10m+ mottled orange-brown/blue-grey sandy clay. No features present.
5	25.5	2	0.60	0-0.30m topsoil (partially stripped); 0.30-0.50 sandy silt subsoil; 0.50m+ mottled orange-brown sandy clay with frequent flint gravel inclusions natural geology. Two tree throws and two field drains were present within this trench. <b>[Pl. 2]</b>
6	20.6	2	0.40	(Topsoil stripped prior to arrival on site); 0-0.20m subsoil (partially stripped); 0.20m+ mid yellow-grey silty sand with frequent flint gravel inclusions natural geology. Three field drains and a tree throw encountered.
7	17.2	2	0.37	0-0.20 heavily root-disturbed topsoil; 0.20-0.37m subsoil; 0.37m+ mixed sandy gravel/pale sandy clay natural geology. Two large modern tree throws present along eastern edge of trench. <b>[Pl. 3]</b>
8	22.5	2	0.46	0-0.15m topsoil; 0.15-0.35m subsoil; 0.35m+ blue-orange/white-grey sandy clay natural geology. Surface of natural truncated by a mixture of land drains and tree throws.
9	24.3	2	0.25	(Topsoil stripped prior to arrival on site); 0-0.10m subsoil; 0.10m+ mixed light grey gravel/orange-blue sandy clay natural geology.
10	13.9	2	0.23	(Topsoil stripped prior to arrival on site); 0-0.10m subsoil; 0.10m+ mixed light grey gravel/orange-blue sandy clay natural geology. Heavily truncated by modern drainage trenches & cuts for ceramic field drains. <b>[Pl. 4]</b>
11	12.4	2	0.22	(Topsoil stripped prior to arrival on site); 0-0.10m subsoil; 0.10m+ compact, mid-orange-brown sandy clay natural geology with occasional gravel flint inclusions. Heavily truncated by modern cuts filled with demolition rubble including CBM, concrete, slate, blue & white printed china, modern printed design dishes.
12	-			Trench not dug due to spatial constraints on site.

**APPENDIX 2: Catalogue of Struck Flint**

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Deposit</i>	<i>Intact Flake</i>	<i>Broken Flake</i>	<i>Intact Blade</i>	<i>Scraper</i>	<i>Other</i>
-	51			1	1	1
3	51	4	1			
-	51	1				



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Figure 1. Location of site within Romsey and Hampshire.

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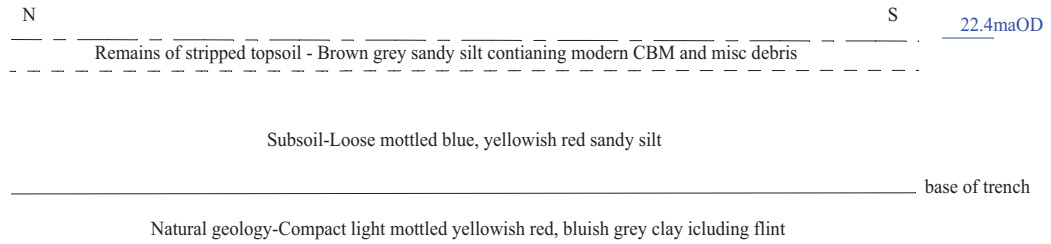
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Hampshire, 2021  
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Figure 2. Location of trenches.

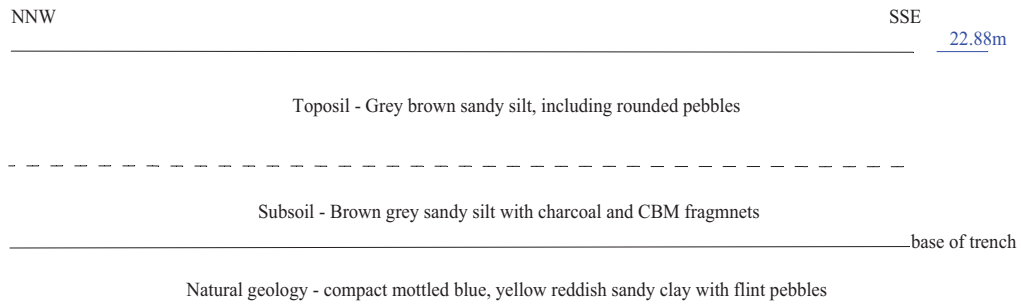


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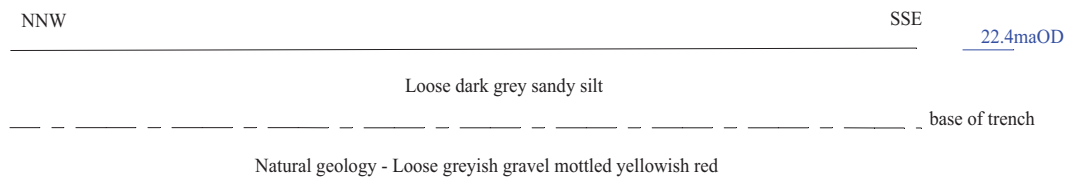
*Trench 1*



*Trench 5*



*Trench 7*



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Figure 3. Representative sections.



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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking North,  
Scales: horizontal 1m x2, vertical 0.3m.



Plate 2. Trench 5, looking North West,  
Scales: horizontal 1m x2, vertical 0.3m.

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**Land west of Cupernham Lane, Romsey,  
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Plates 1 and 2.**

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Plate 3. Trench 7, looking North West,  
Scales: horizontal 1m x2, vertical 0.3m.



Plate 4. Trench 10, looking North East,  
Scales: horizontal 1m x2, vertical 0.3m.

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**Land west of Cupernham Lane, Romsey,  
Hampshire, 2021  
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Plates 3 and 4.**

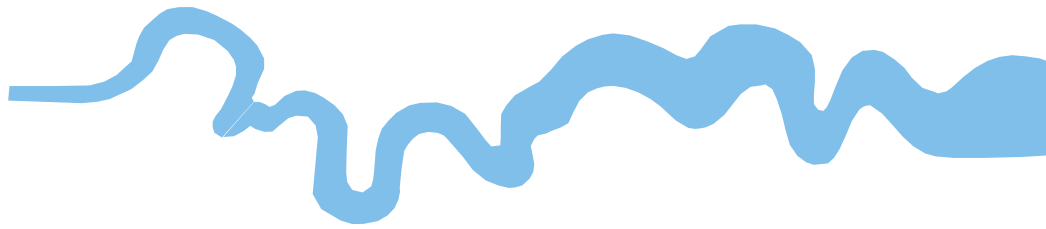
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## TIME CHART

	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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