

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Matthewsgreen Farm,
Wokingham, Berkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Taylor

Site Code: MGF22/180

(SU 8041 6985)

Matthewsgreen Farm, Wokingham, Berkshire

**An Archaeological Evaluation
for Vistry Thames Valley**

by Andy Taylor

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MGF 22/180

December 2022

Summary

Site name: Matthewsgreen Farm, Wokingham, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 8041 6985

Site activity: Evaluation

Date and duration of project: 5th-6th December 2022

Project coordinator: David Sanchez

Site supervisor: Andy Taylor

Site code: MGF 22/180

Area of site: c.1.5 ha

Summary of results: No deposits or finds of any archaeological interest were observed during the evaluation. In particular, no artefacts were found of early post-medieval date which might have been expected from the presence of the farm on 18th century maps. Much modern made ground directly overlay the natural geology and some areas of deep truncation of the latter were observed. The site is considered to have very 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 Archaeology Data Service in due course.

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

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Matthewsgreen Farm, Wokingham, Berkshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by Andy Taylor

Report 22/180

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Matthewsgreen Farm, Wokingham, Berkshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr James Hammond, for Vistry Thames Valley, 500 Oracle Parkway, Thames Valley Park, Reading, Berkshire, RG6 1PT.

Planning permission has been granted by Wokingham Council (app 191949) for the erection of new housing on the site following demolition of existing structures. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on the site, a field evaluation has been requested by Wokingham Council as advised by Berkshire Archaeology and as detailed in *the National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2019) and Wokingham Council policies on archaeology.

The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Dr Edward Peveler, Archaeological Officer with Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the council on matters relating to archaeology.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Andy Taylor and Luciano Cicu between 5th and 6th December 2022 and the site code is MGF 22/180. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with The Archaeology Data Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on the northern margins of Wokingham, on an irregular plot land on the north side of Matthewsgreen Road (Fig. 1). It was formerly occupied by a bungalow and farm buildings, most of which had been demolished, as well as areas of hard standing (Fig. 2). It was surrounded by an active building site, which had previously been evaluated and excavated in earlier phases of work. The underlying geology is mapped as London Clay, with remnant 5th terrace gravel deposits on parts of the site (BGS 2000). This was reflected in the geology observed in the trenches, which more or less followed this pattern, but with occasional patches of gravel, sand and clayey silt present, along with patches of London Clay. The site lies at a height of *c.*54m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The site is located well beyond the historic core of Wokingham and lies within the claylands of East Berkshire which are considered to have a lower settlement density than other geological outcrops in the region (Ford 1987). The environs of the area been subject to fieldwalking survey which recovered a modest number of struck flints and a few Roman pottery sherds (Ford 1987), none of which was of a density to clearly indicate the presence of occupation deposits on the site. However a hoard of Roman coins was found just to the north of the farm complex.

Geophysical survey (Fry and Roseveare 2014) of a much larger area immediately to the north and around the current site, in advance of a previous development, revealed few anomalies most of which relate to post-medieval field boundaries shown on Ordnance Survey maps and the local geology is clearly unresponsive to the identification of archaeological anomalies. However subsequent evaluation (Ford 2015) and follow-up excavation (Ford 2017) revealed both an early Roman enclosed settlement, and a separate Middle Iron Age settlement involved with small scale iron production. The evaluation also revealed a number of charcoal-rich pits in the environs of the farm, one of which was certainly of Medieval date and may be a product of charcoal production. A metal detector survey north of the farm revealed a modest catalogue of objects mostly of late post-medieval date. Matthews Green Farm itself is of Post-medieval date and was present on historic maps in 1760 (Rocque) and may have late medieval origins.

To the west evaluation recorded Roman deposits and more iron production, possibly of Iron Age date. (CA2018) and to the east another early Roman settlement is recorded (Massey and Whelan 2020).

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.

Specific research 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 there are any Iron Age or Roman sites on the site; and
- To provide information in order to draw up a mitigation strategy if necessary.

It was proposed to dig 14 trenches measuring between 1.8m and 2m wide and each 25m long. These were dug using a 360° type machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket under constant archaeological supervision.

All spoilheaps were monitored for finds. Sufficient of any identified archaeological deposits would be investigated to address the objectives outlined above.

Results

All 14 trenches were dug, although some repositioning had to be carried out due to access issues, extant storage of building materials and spoil storage from the adjacent building site (Fig. 3). One trench (9) had to be sub-divided due to an area of standing water. The trenches measured between 19m and 31m long and between 0.05m and 1.38m deep. A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1.

Trench 1 (Pl. 1)

This trench was aligned approximately NW-SE and measured 22m long and 0.87m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.87m of made ground, comprising buried farm rubbish and brick rubble, directly overlying a sandy clay natural geology. A large area of modern truncation was noted between 10m and 17m.

Trench 2

This trench was aligned approximately NW-SE and measured 23m long and 0.88m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of made ground, comprising buried farm rubbish and brick rubble, directly overlying a sandy clay natural geology.

Trench 3 (Figs 3 and 4)

This trench was aligned approximately NW-SE and measured 22m long and 0.46m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.46m of soil and brick rubble made ground directly overlying a sandy clay natural geology.

Trench 4 (Pl. 2)

This trench was aligned approximately N-S and measured 19m long and 0.54m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.02m of Tarmac overlying 0.07m of hoggin overlying 0.19m of bitumen shingle. This overlay 0.07m of crushed stone and gravel overlying 0.13m of a black silty clay overlying 0.06m of crushed brick and stone overlying sandy clay and gravel natural geology.

Trench 5 (Pl. 3)

This trench was aligned approximately NE-SW and measured 21m long and 0.56m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.56m of brick rubble made ground directly overlying a sandy clay natural geology.

Trench 6

This trench was aligned approximately NE-SW and measured 20m long and 0.56m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.56m of brick rubble made ground overlying silty sand and clay natural geology.

Trench 7 (Pl. 4)

This trench was aligned approximately SE-NW and measured 21m long and 0.50m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.50m of brick rubble made ground above silty sand and clay natural geology.

Trench 8 (Figs 3 and 4)

This trench was aligned NW-SE and measured 31m long and 0.80m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.50m of clay and soil made ground that had been dumped from other parts of the site and which overlay 0.30m of topsoil overlying silty sand and clay with gravel patches natural geology.

Trench 9

This trench was aligned approximately NE-SW and had to be sub-divided into two halves due to an area of standing water. It measured 11m (9a) and 10m (9b) long and 0.10m (9a) and 0.17m (9b) deep. The stratigraphy in Trench 9a consisted of redeposited soils from other parts of the site, directly overlying clay and sandy clay and gravel natural geology.

Trench 10 (Pl. 5)

This trench was aligned approximately NW-SE and measured 19m long and 1.38m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.90m of clay and soil dumped from other parts of the site onto 0.42m of topsoil overlying clay natural geology.

Trench 11

This trench was aligned approximately N-S and measured 21m long and 0.05m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.05m redeposited soil overlying sand and gravel natural geology.

Trench 12 (Pl. 6)

This trench was aligned N-S and measured 26m long and 0.27m at the southern end and 0.80m deep at the northern end. The stratigraphy consisted of soil and rubble made ground overlying sand and gravel natural geology.

Trench 13

This trench was aligned N-S and measured 23m long and 0.80m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of soil and brick rubble made ground overlying silty clay and gravels natural geology.

Trench 14

This trench was aligned approximately NW-SE and measured 22m long and 0.60m deep. The stratigraphy consisted of soil and concrete rubble made ground overlying sandy clay natural geology.

Finds

No finds of any archaeological interest were recovered.

Conclusion

The evaluation was successfully carried out, although with some repositioning of trenches. Despite the site's potential for archaeology to present no deposits or finds of an archaeological nature were observed during the evaluation. In particular, no artefacts were found of early post-medieval date representing the presence of the farm on historic maps. The site is considered to have very low archaeological potential.

References

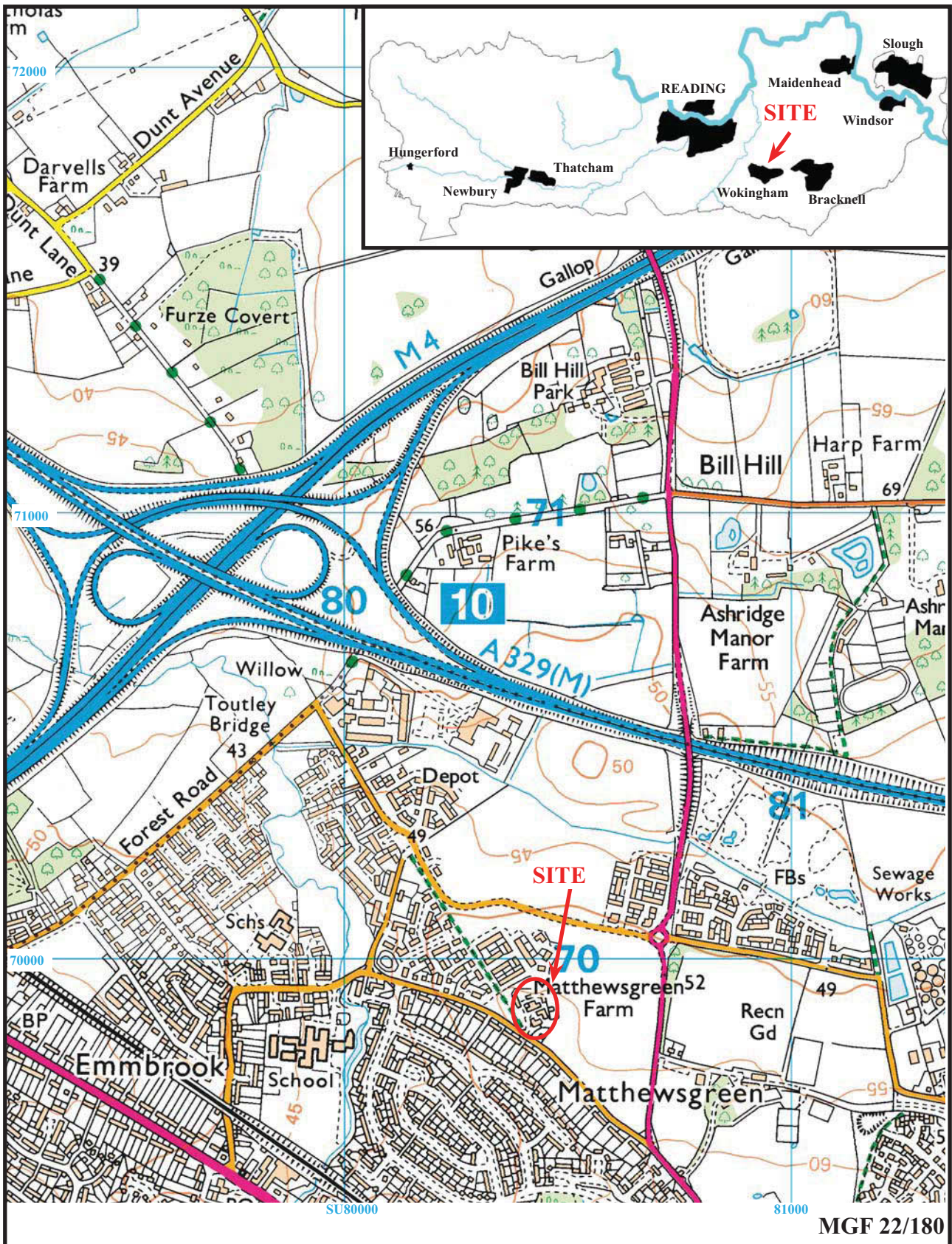
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APPENDIX 1: Trench details

0m at S or W end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	22.00	1.80	0.87	0-0.87m farm rubbish and brick rubble made ground; 0.87m+ sandy clay natural geology. Pl. 1
2	23.00	1.80	0.88	0-0.88m farm rubbish and brick rubble made ground; 0.88m+
3	22.00	1.80	0.46	0-0.46m soil and brick rubble made ground; 0.46m+ sandy clay natural geology.
4	19.00	1.80	0.54	0-0.02m tarmac; 0.02m-0.09m hoggin; 0.09m-0.28m bitumen/shingle; 0.28m-0.35m crushed brick; 0.35m-0.48m black silty clay; 0.48m-0.54m crushed brick; 0.54m+ sandy clay natural geology. Pl. 2
5	21.00	1.80	0.56	0-0.56m soil and brick rubble made ground; 0.56m+ sandy clay natural geology. Pl. 3
6	20.00	1.80	0.56	0-0.56m soil and demolition rubble mix; 0.56m+ silty sand and clay natural geology.
7	21.00	1.80	0.50	E. End: 0-0.50m topsoil; 0.50m+ silty sand and clay natural geology. W. End: 0-0.50m soil and demolition rubble mix; 0.56m+ silty sand and clay natural geology. Pl. 4
8	31.00	1.80	0.80	0-0.50m clay and soil made ground; 0.50m-0.80m topsoil; 0.80m+ silty clay natural geology.
9	A: 11.00 B: 10.00	1.80	A: 0.10 B: 0.17	A: 0-0.10m soil, clay, rubble mix made ground; 0.10m+ clay natural geology. B: 0-0.17m soil, clay, rubble mix made ground; 0.10m+ clay natural geology.
10	19.00	1.80	1.38	0-0.90m soil, clay, rubble mix made ground; 0.90m-1.38m topsoil; 1.38m+ clay natural geology. Pl. 5
11	21.00	1.80	0.05	0-0.05 soil and clay mix; 0.05m+ sand and gravel natural geology.
12	26.00	1.80	0.27 (S) 0.80 (N)	S: 0-0.27m soil and rubble mix made ground; 0.27m+ sand and gravel natural geology. N: 0-0.80m soil and rubble mix made ground; 0.80m + sand and gravel natural geology. Pl. 6
13	23.00	1.80	0.80	0-0.80m soil and rubble mix made ground; 0.80m+ silty clay natural geology.
14	22.00	1.80	0.60	0-0.60m soil and rubble mix made ground; 0.60m+ sandy clay natural geology.



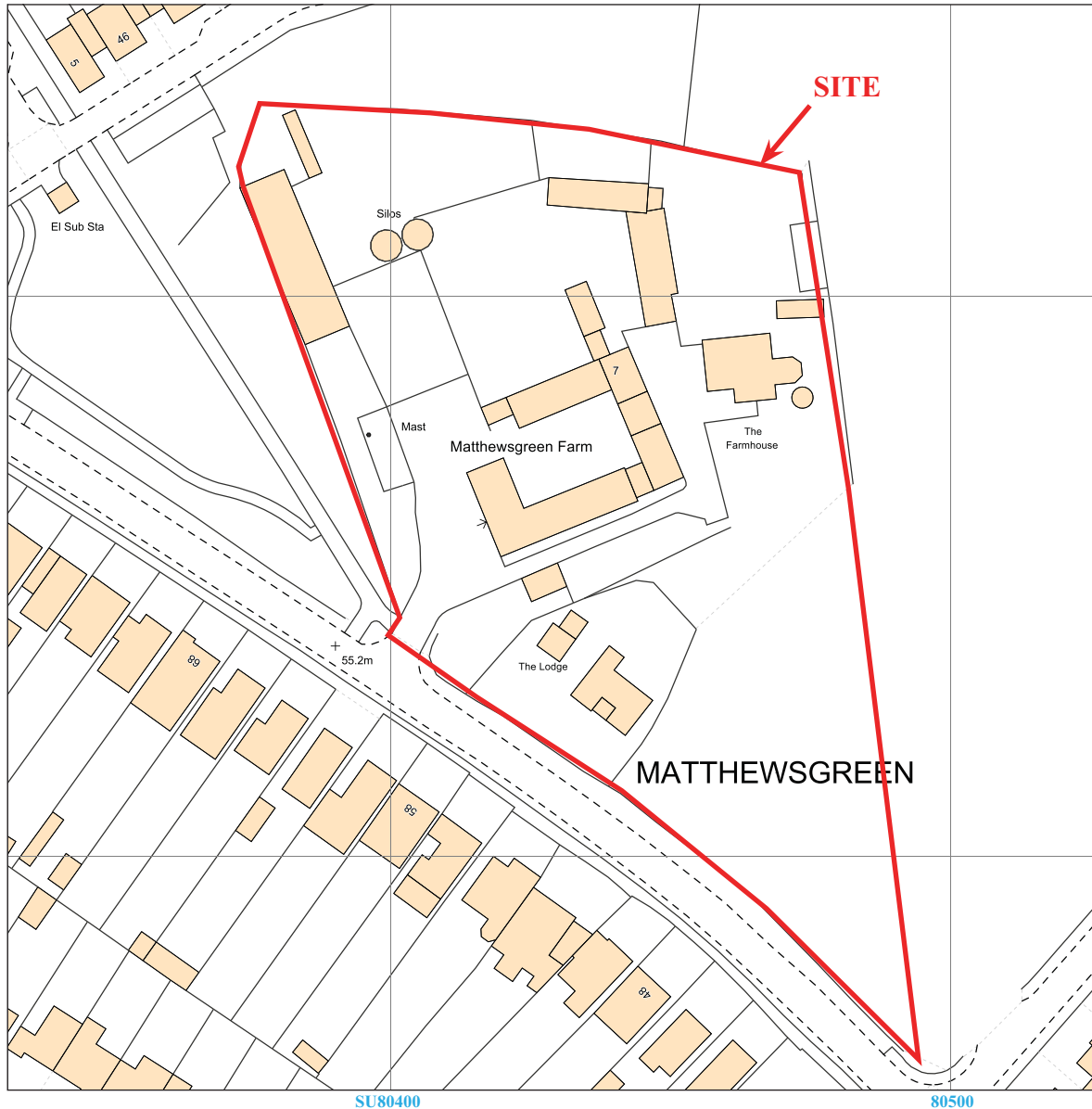
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Figure 1. Location of site within Wokingham and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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Figure 3. Location of trenches relative to former buildings on the site.



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S *Trench 3* N 54.35m aOD

Soil and Brick Rubble Made Ground

Natural geology - sandy clay

NW *Trench 8* SE 55.39m

Clay and soil made ground

Topsoil

Natural geology -silty clay

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Figure 4. Representative sections.



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Plate 1. Trench 1, looking North West, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 2. Trench 4, looking North, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

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Plates 1 and 2.**

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Plate 3. Trench 5, looking North East, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 4. Trench 6, looking West, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.

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Plates 3 and 4.**

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Plate 5. Trench 10, looking North West, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.5m.



Plate 6. Trench 12, looking North, Scales: 2m, 1m and 0.3m.

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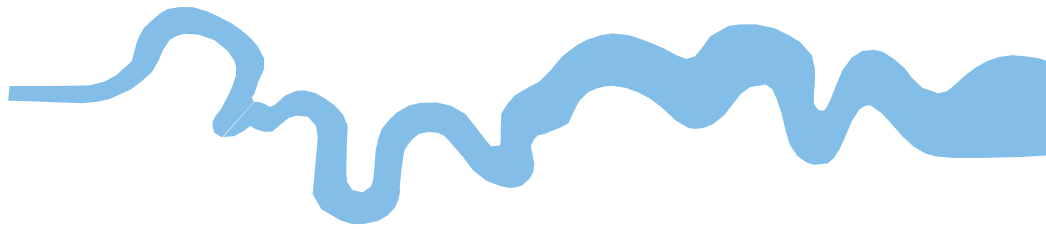
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Plates 5 and 6.**

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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





**Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd,
47-49 De Beauvoir Road,
Reading RG1 5NR**

**Tel: 0118 9260552
Email: tvas@tvas.co.uk
Web: www.tvas.co.uk**

***Offices in:
Brighton, Taunton, Stoke-on-Trent, Wellingborough
and Ennis (Ireland)***