

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land to the rear of 2-4 Old Bath Road,
Charvil, Berkshire**

An Archaeological Recording Action

by Andrew Weale and Andrew Munda

Site Code: OBC08/118

(SU 7720 7559)

**Land to the rear of 2–4 Old Bath Road,
Charvil, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Recording Action
for Hicks Developments Ltd**

by Andrew Weale and Andrew Munday
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code OBC08/118

November 2009

Summary

Site name: Land to the rear of 2–4 Old Bath Road, Charvil, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 7720 7559

Site activity: Archaeological Recording Action

Date and duration of project: 15th January to 11th November 2009

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andrew Weale

Site code: OBC 08/118

Area of site: c.400 sq m

Summary of results: Continuations of three features identified in the earlier evaluation were investigated. All were found to extend beyond the limits of the previous trenching. A fourth ditch was also identified within the extended strip. One gully was identified as being of modern date. The other features remain undated.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford✓ 24.11.09. Steve Preston✓ 24.11.09
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Land to the rear of 2–4 Old Bath Road, Charvil, Berkshire An Archaeological Recording Action

by Andrew Weale and Andrew Munding

Report 08/118b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological recording action carried out on land to the rear of 2–4 Old Bath Road, Charvil, Berkshire (SU 7720 7559) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Ian Walton of Hicks Development Limited, 15 Headley Road, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire, RG5 4JB.

Planning consent (O/2007/0474 and RM/2008/1385) has been gained from Wokingham Borough Council for the construction of four new houses, a detached garage access and parking, following demolition of garages on the site. The consent is subject to a condition (15) requiring the implementation of a phased programme of archaeological works prior to development. A field evaluation identified three undated linear features, and it was thought there was potential that these could be associated with nearby prehistoric and Roman features (Munding and Weale 2008). As a result, further recording was required during groundworks.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Borough Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Mary O'Donoghue, Archaeology Officer for Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Borough Council on matters relating to archaeology. This second phase of fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Weale in January 2009 and Jamie Lewis, Tim Dawson and Sue Colley between March and November 2009. The site code is OBC 08/118.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Reading Museum, with the accession code REDMG.2009.53.

Location, topography and geology

The site is situated on the western edge of Charvil, on an inverted T-shaped plot of land to the rear of Nos 2 and 4 Old Bath Road (A4). This is situated close to the junction of Old Bath Road with the A4 which is to the north (Fig. 2). The land slopes down from the south to the north with a drop of c. 5m within the site. The southern boundary of the site is at c.48m above Ordnance Datum. The underlying geology is pebble gravel (BGS 1946), which was observed through all areas.

Archaeological background

Generally, the archaeological potential for the site derives from its position within the Thames Valley, an archaeologically rich area. A wealth of finds and sites have been recorded in the area (Ford 1987). North-west of Charvil is a Neolithic ceremonial complex comprising a *cursus* monument, mortuary enclosure and levelled burial mounds of round and oval plan, along with other undated cropmarks, all visible from the air (Slade 1964, Gates 1975). Part of this area has been designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 180). Fieldwalking to the north of Charvil revealed dense clusters of struck flint indicative of prehistoric occupation (Ford 1997). A recent watching brief in the north of Charvil, on footings for a new extension at Pebble Cottage on Milestone Avenue, however, uncovered no archaeological deposits (Taylor 2003).

Three linear features of unknown date were recorded from the earlier trenching at this site (Mundin and Weale 2008). It is possible, given the prehistoric activity and Roman activity to the south of Charvil, at East Park Farm (Lovell and Mephram 2003), that these features could be related, but they could equally be of any date. A wide range of dates were identified during the work at East Park Farm, which in subsequent evaluation and excavation revealed finds and deposits of Palaeolithic flintwork, Neolithic pottery, a Middle Bronze Age ditch and Late Bronze Age occupation, and a Roman gully.

Objectives and methodology

The aim of the recording action was to excavate and record any extension of features identified in the evaluation and any other archaeological or palaeoenvironmental deposits within the area of development. The recording action was to take place prior to ground reduction and piling, while a watching brief would be maintained during other intrusive groundworks.

This would involve monitoring of area strips/ground reduction for plots 1 and 4 where possible archaeological deposits were recovered during the evaluation phase, and other intrusive works across the rest of the site.

Plot 1 was stripped for c.14m x 12.5m, over two previously identified linear features. Plot 4's strip was c. 9m x 7.5m in the area where the earlier trenching had identified a gully (4). Topsoil and other overburden were removed mechanically under constant archaeological supervision. A ditching bucket was used to expose archaeologically sensitive levels. Where features were uncovered, the stripped areas were cleaned using appropriate hand tools. All spoil heaps were searched for finds.

Results

Two areas which had previously uncovered features were reopened and extended (Fig. 3). A list of the features examined forms Appendix 1.

Plot 1

Both of the linear features from previous Trench 2 were re-examined. Two additional slots (100 and 101) were excavated on the N-S aligned linear feature (previously numbered 2). Both slots contained a reddish brown silty sand with occasional rounded flint inclusions. Both were 0.38m wide and 0.05m deep (Fig. 4). Neither contained finds, so unfortunately, this feature remains undated. This gully continued beyond the limits of the area examined towards the south, but was not traced beyond an area of root disturbance to the north.

The slightly curvilinear ditch identified as 3 in the evaluation was reinvestigated and extended as 102 in this phase of work. This feature contained light reddish brown silty sand, with occasional rounded flint inclusions (152). This feature was 0.15m deep (Fig. 4). This also contained no finds and remains undated. This feature also seems to have continued both to the west and south-east out of the area examined.

Plot 4

Two roughly parallel linear features were identified. Gully 103 was a continuation of that previously identified as 4. This feature did not terminate within the confines of the stripped area. The fill comprised of dark brown silty sand, loosely bound with rounded inclusions, 0.36m deep (Fig. 4). One piece of modern ceramic pipe was found in its fill. It is thought that this feature is a recent (20th-century) drainage pipe cut.

Ditch 104 was not uncovered by the previous trenching. This feature was 1.02m wide and 0.15m deep, aligned W-E (Fig. 4). This feature contained brownish red sandy silt (154) with no finds. Again, this feature remains undated.

Access Road

The access road was stripped using a toothless ditching bucket from Old Bath Road to a location between the house plots. The stratigraphy consisted of made ground (0.2m of gravel and sand), 0.05m of grey silty clay (residual topsoil?), 0.15m clayey gravel (subsoil or natural geology) which in turn overlay solid natural gravel. No archaeological features were identified in this area and no finds were recovered.

Service Trenches

A service trench c. 75m in length with side branches, 0.50m wide and 0.96m deep was dug from Old Bath Road into the site along the western edge of the access road. The stratigraphy consisted of 0.23m concrete rubble overlying 0.13m made ground which in turn overlay natural gravel at the north end. At the south end, the stratigraphy comprised 0.19m of made ground overlying natural gravel. No archaeological features were identified in this area and no finds were recovered.

Finds

No finds of archaeological relevance were uncovered. One piece of ceramic, possibly from a drainage pipe was recovered from feature 103 (<8g) but was not retained.

Conclusion

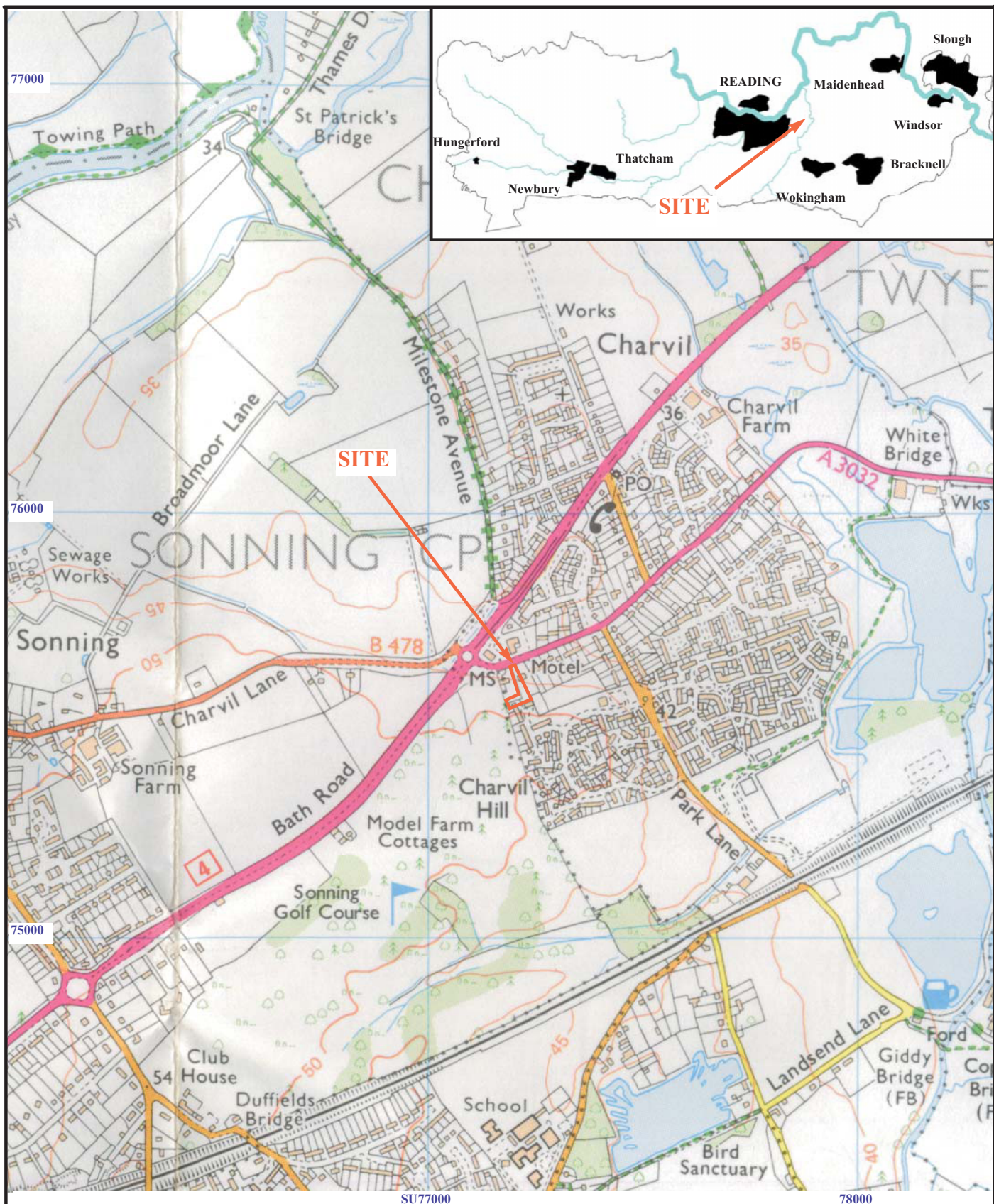
The continuations of the three features identified in the evaluation were further investigated in areas where overburden stripping was archaeologically supervised. All were found to extend beyond the limits of the previous trenching. One gully was identified as being of modern date. The other features remain undated. A fourth ditch was identified within the stripped area, but this too, was undated. A watching brief carried out on an access road and drain digging revealed no deposits or finds of interest.

References

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APPENDIX 1: Feature details

<i>Area</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
Plot 1	100	150	Gully	Undated	
Plot 1	101	151	Gully	Undated	-
Plot 1	102	152	Ditch	Undated	-
Plot4	103	153	Gully	Modern	Ceramic building material
Plot 4	104	154	Ditch	Undated	-



OBC 08/118b

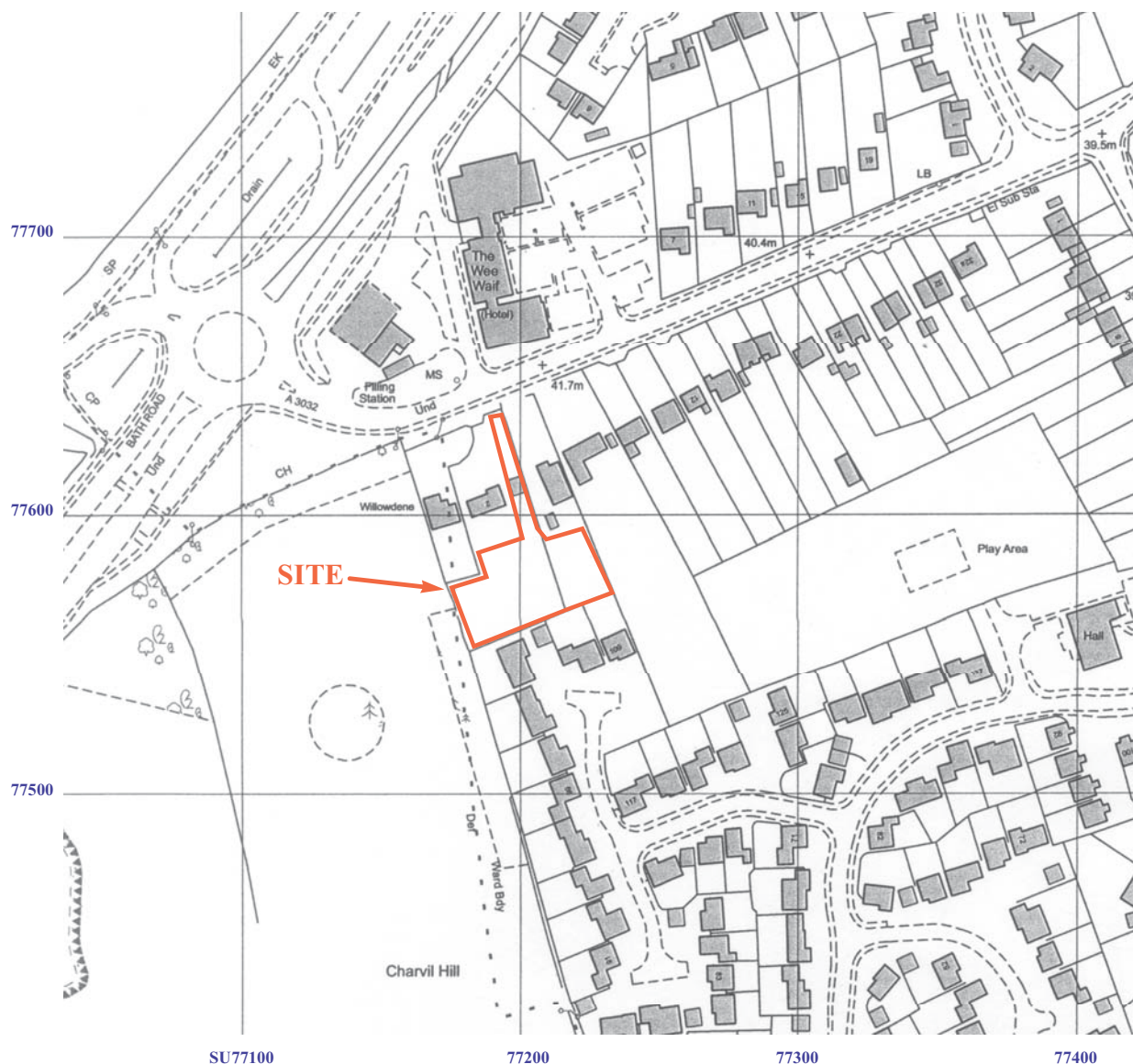
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Berkshire, 2009**

Archaeological Recording Action

Figure 1. Location of site within Charvil and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Location of site off Old Bath Road.

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75650

Old Bath Road

SITE

No. 4

No. 2

Access Road

75600

Service Trench

Root disturbance

Plot 2

Plot 4

Plot 1

Plot 3

previous evaluation

SU 77200

OBC 0/8/118b

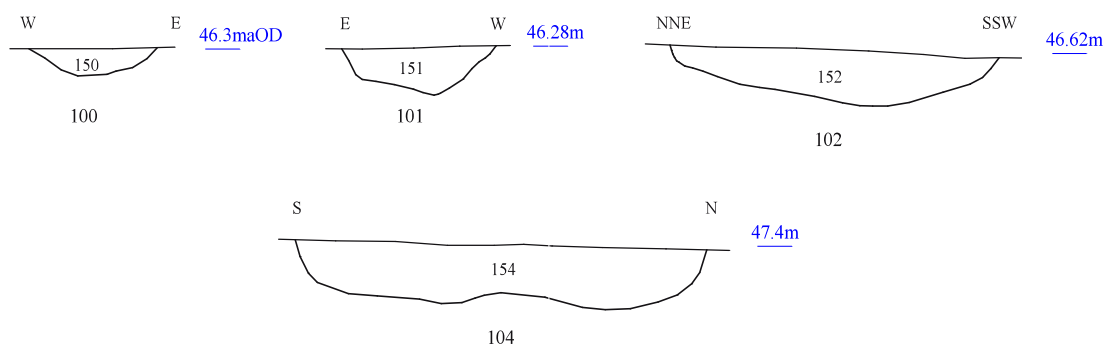


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Figure 3. Plan of areas, show extensions of trenches within Plots 1 and 4
and watching brief areas

0 25m

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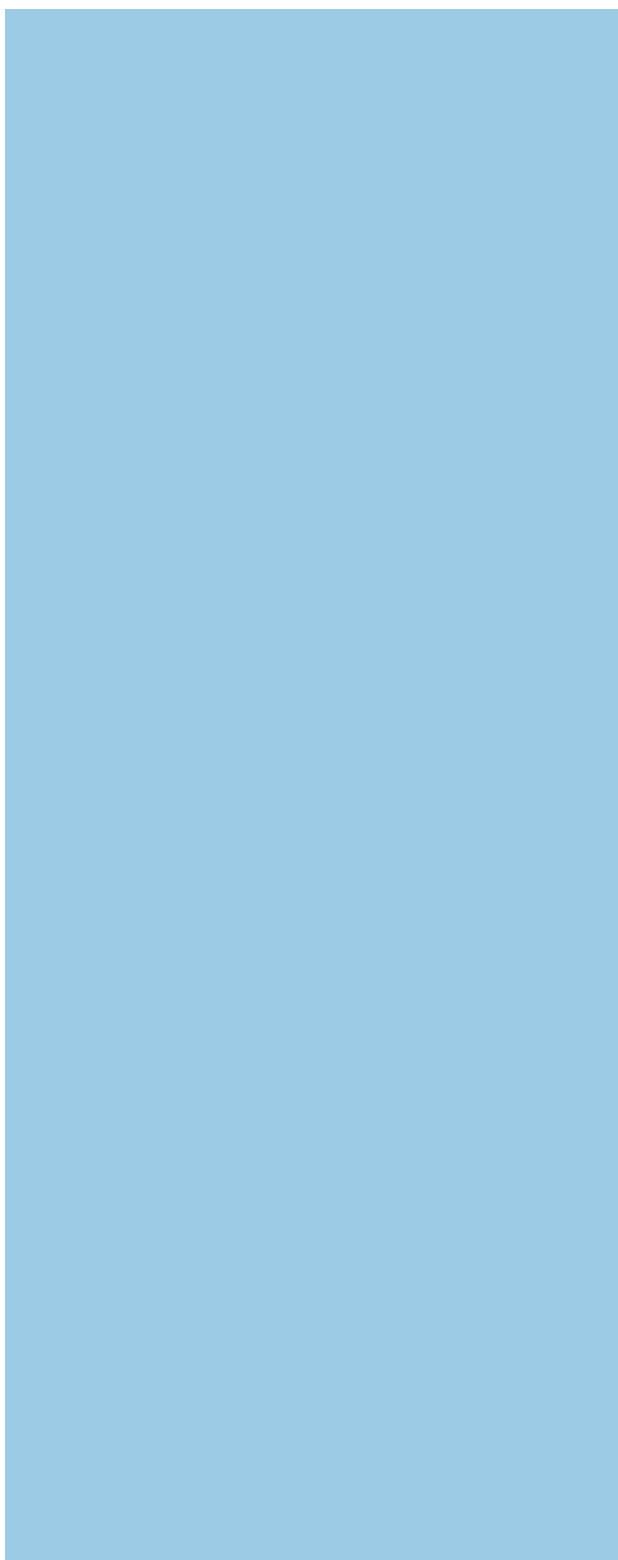
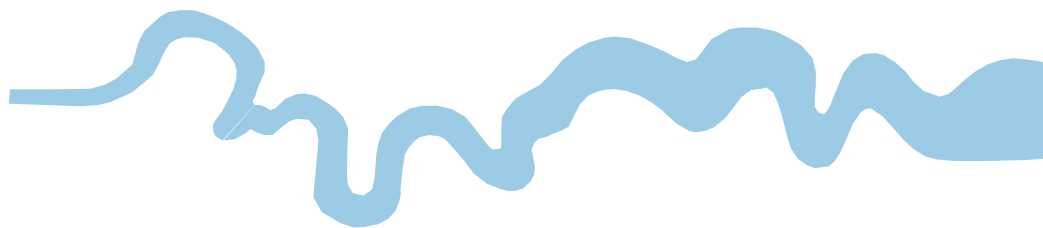
Figure 4. Sections



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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
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 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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