

T H A M E S V A L L E Y
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
S E R V I C E S

**Baylis Court School, Gloucester Avenue,
Slough, Berkshire**

Archaeological Recording Action

by Danielle Milbank

Site Code: BSS09/95

(SU 9660 8160)

**Baylis Court School, Gloucester Avenue,
Slough, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Recording Action
for Baylis Court School**

by Danielle Milbank
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

SiteCodeBSS09/95

February 2010

Summary

Site name: Baylis Court School, Gloucester Avenue, Slough, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 9660 8160

Site activity: Archaeological Recording Action

Date and duration of project: 10th–16th February 2010

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Danielle Milbank

Site code: BSS 09/95

Area of site: 0.625ha

Summary of results: A gully identified during the previous evaluation was re-examined and shown to be of later post-medieval date. A single sherd of possible prehistoric pottery was recovered as a residual find from the gully. The gully is thought to be a landscape feature such as a field boundary.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Reading Museum, with the accession code REDMG: 2009.622.

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 25.02.10
	Steve Preston ✓ 25.02.10

Baylis Court School, Gloucester Avenue, Slough, Berkshire An Archaeological Recording Action

by Danielle Milbank

Report 09/95b

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological recording action carried out at Baylis Court School, Gloucester Avenue, Slough, Berkshire, SL1 3AH (SU 9660 8160) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Steve Owen, of Integrated Design Consultants, The Corner House, 18-20 West End Road, Mortimer Common, Berkshire, RG7 3TF on behalf of Baylis Court School, Gloucester Avenue, Slough, Berkshire, SL1 3AH. Planning consent has been gained (app no P/06960/015) from Slough Borough Council to construct a new Arts Building along with associated car parking areas on the site. The consent is subject to a condition (9) relating to archaeology requiring a programme of archaeological fieldwork to be carried out. This initially comprised a field evaluation (McNicoll-Norbury 2009a), the results of which required further investigation during these current groundworks. This required that the work be monitored as part of a recording action, with intrusive ground disturbance being monitored under archaeological supervision.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990). The recording action was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Mary O'Donoghue, Archaeology Officer for Berkshire Archaeology, advisers to the Borough Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Danielle Milbank and Paulina Pankiewicz between the 10th–16th February 2010 and the site code is BSS 09/95. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Reading Museum with accession code REDMG: 2009.622.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on Gloucester Avenue, in the northern margins of Slough. The site comprises a rectangular parcel of land at Baylis Court School adjacent to the current school (Fig. 2.). The underlying geology is mapped as Langley Silt, a mixture of sandy clay and silt (brickearth) over Upnor and Reading formations of the Lambeth group clay (silty clay with sandy beds, gravel at base) (BGS 2004). The geology observed in the evaluation trenches and in the excavation area was patchy brown sandy clay and gravel. The site lies at a height of 31m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location on a terrace of the Thames Valley which is usually regarded as archaeologically rich, with a range of sites and finds of many periods recorded from field survey, aerial photography and trial trenching (Ford 1987; Gates 1975; Foreman *et al.* 2002; Ford 2008). The deeply buried underlying gravel deposits in the vicinity are also noteworthy for the presence of Palaeolithic finds. However, for later, post-glacial periods, relatively few finds or sites are recorded, with a Roman coin and a Bronze Age round barrow to the north. Recent evaluation just to the north located an undated gully, though no additional deposits were revealed in the subsequent watching brief (McNicoll-Norbury 2009b and c). Field evaluation on the site revealed two undated gullies which were located within the footprint of the proposed building (McNicoll-Norbury 2009a).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the recording action was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks, which comprised the removal of overburden in the area of the proposed building footprint. The specific aims of the project were to determine the nature and date of the gully(s) already recorded for the site, and to determine if any additional, contemporary deposits are present. The overburden was removed under archaeological supervision by 360⁰-type machine fitted with a toothless bucket, in order to expose the natural geology, and the gully was excavated by hand and recorded.

Results

Overburden comprising topsoil *c.*0.18m thick and subsoil which was *c.*0.30m thick, was removed to expose the natural geology which was observed to be largely brown sandy silty gravel, with frequent patches of brown clay silt. This lay at 30.65m above Ordnance Datum. The gully which was recorded as 1 (52) in evaluation trench was identified, and five slots were excavated through it (Fig. 3). The gully (100) was aligned NW–SE, and extended beyond the limit of excavation at both the east and west, with a total of 44m exposed in the excavation area (Plate 1). It was 0.87 to 1.12m wide, 0.30m to 0.48m deep, with gently sloping sides and a rounded, slightly v-shaped base (Fig. 4). It was filled with a single fill (recorded as deposits 54, 55, 56, 57 and 58), which comprised firm to slightly soft, slightly orange-brown clayey sand with moderate gravel inclusions. Deposit 57 contained a copper alloy pin, a badly corroded large iron object (possibly a scythe blade), two small ceramic building material fragments, an animal bone fragment and a fragment of clay pipe stem. Samples of deposits 54, 55 and

56 (each 20 litres) were processed, to aid retrieval of any further small finds. Although the gully contained a small residual piece of possibly prehistoric pottery, the presence of a clay pipe fragment indicates that it is of post-medieval date.

A modern brick wall with a concrete foundation and two concrete piles truncated the gully, and in the south of the excavation area some bluish staining of the natural geology was observed. The feature recorded in evaluation Trench 4 as a possible gully was re-examined. Although elongated in plan, it is of no great length and produced neither artefacts nor other cultural indicators such as charcoal. It is now considered as being of doubtful archaeological origin and is more likely to be a natural clay patch.

Finds

Clay pipe by Danielle Milbank

A single fragment of clay pipe stem (7g) was recovered from deposit 57. Although it is not closely dateable, the bore diameter might indicate an 18th- or 19th-century date.

Ceramic building material by Danielle Milbank

Deposit 57 contained one fragment of brick or tile, weighing 28g. The fabric was of a light orange-red colour, but could not be closely dated other than broadly to the medieval or later periods.

Metalwork by Danielle Milbank

A small copper alloy pin was recovered from deposit 57. It was 32mm long with a small rounded globular head measuring 1.5mm in diameter. The small size and delicate form of this pin indicates a post-medieval date.

Pottery by Danielle Milbank

A small fragment of pottery weighing 4g was recovered from sample 3 (deposit 57). It was abraded and the outer surface was present only on a small part of the fragment. The fabric is a slightly soft orange-red and black clay with sparse angular flint inclusions. It is likely to be prehistoric in date but is clearly a residual find within a post-medieval context.

Animal bone by Danielle Milbank

A single piece of animal bone (19g) was recovered from deposit 57, which was fairly weathered and striated. It was a fragment of a medium-sized animal, probably a sheep/goat, left distal humerus. It did not have any butchery marks or other notable characteristics.

Conclusion

The results of the recording action have shown that the relevant archaeological levels encountered in the evaluation on the site were largely undisturbed. The modern wall and concrete piles had truncated the geology but this truncation was limited to a small part of the excavation area. Overall, the site provided good conditions for identifying and excavating any archaeological features. Although two linear features were recorded in the evaluation, one of these is now seen to be of doubtful archaeological origin. Dating evidence retrieved from the broader gully showed that it is post-medieval in date, and was isolated, with no associated or contemporary features identified nearby. No features of earlier periods were identified but a single sherd of possible prehistoric pottery was recovered.

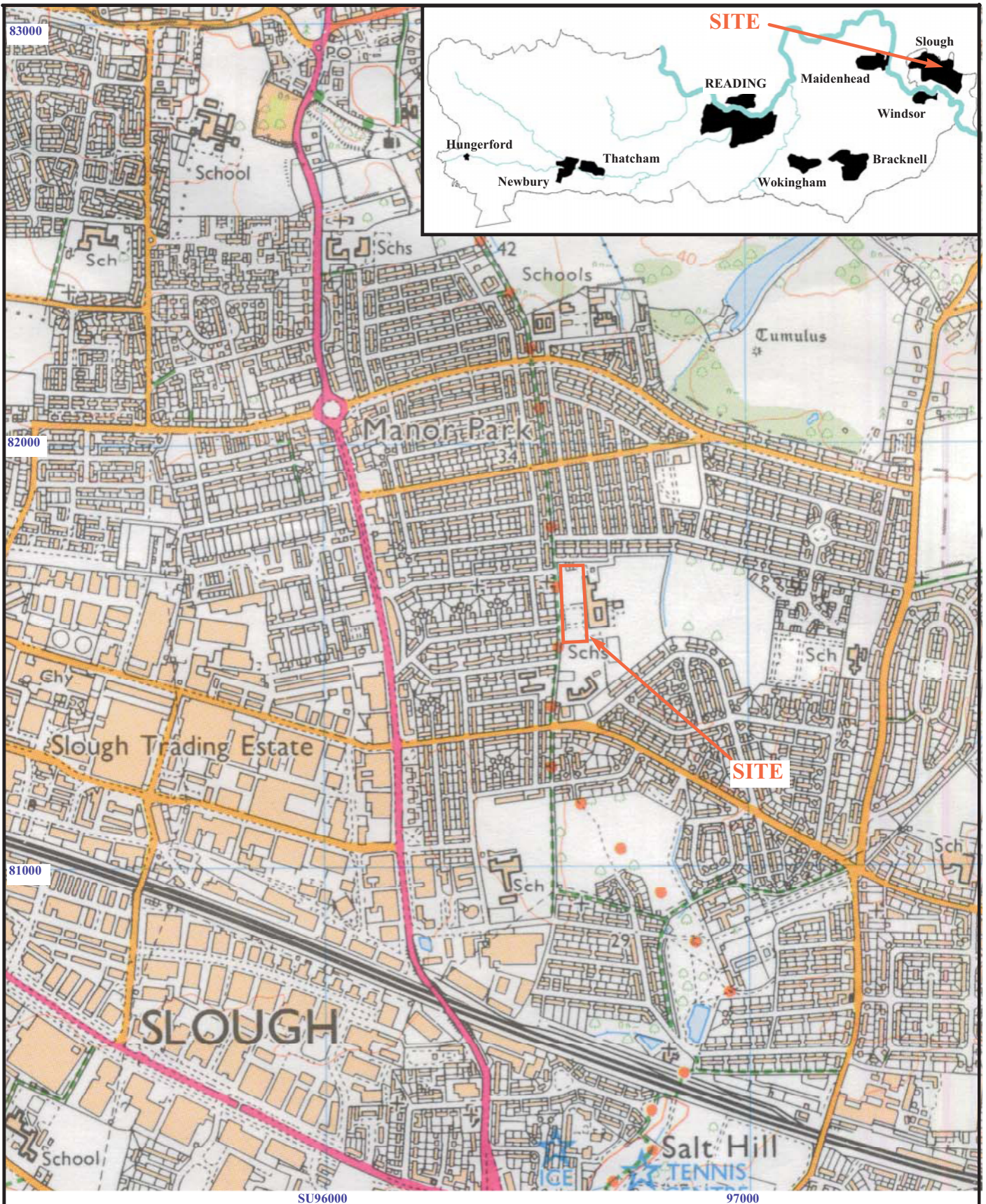
The poverty of finds recovered suggest that the gully is likely to be agricultural and to represent a field boundary. However, it is not represented on early historic maps such as the 18th- and early 19th-century maps of Rocque, Bryant or Jefferys, nor the late 19th- and early 20th-century Ordnance Survey maps and as such may reflect an unrecorded component of landscape development.

References

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APPENDIX 1: Feature details

<i>Group</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
100	3	54	Gully	Post-medieval	Stratigraphy
100	4	55	Gully	Post-medieval	Stratigraphy
100	5	56	Gully	Post-medieval	Stratigraphy
100	6	57	Gully	Post-medieval	Stratigraphy
100	7	58	Gully	Post-medieval	Clay pipe



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 Figure 1. Location of site within Slough and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Location of site off Gloucester Avenue.

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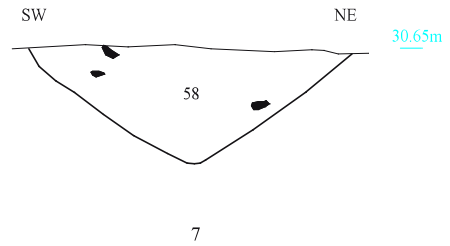
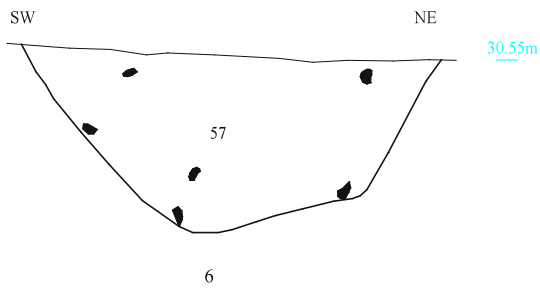
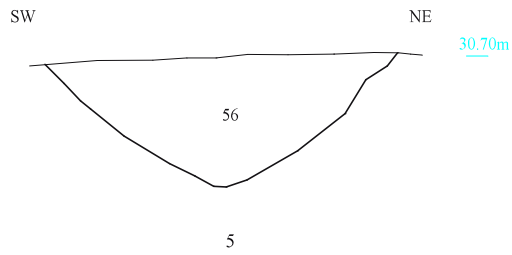
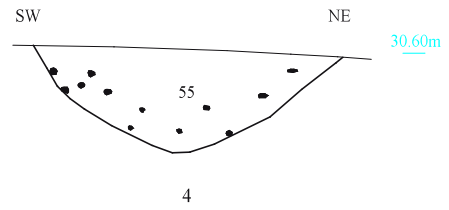
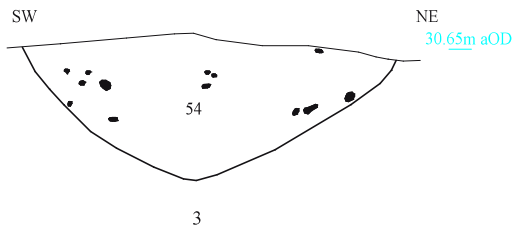
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Figure 3. Location of area observed, with previous evaluation trenches.





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Figure 4. Sections.



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Plate 1. Gully 100, slot 7, looking west, scales 1m and 0.5m

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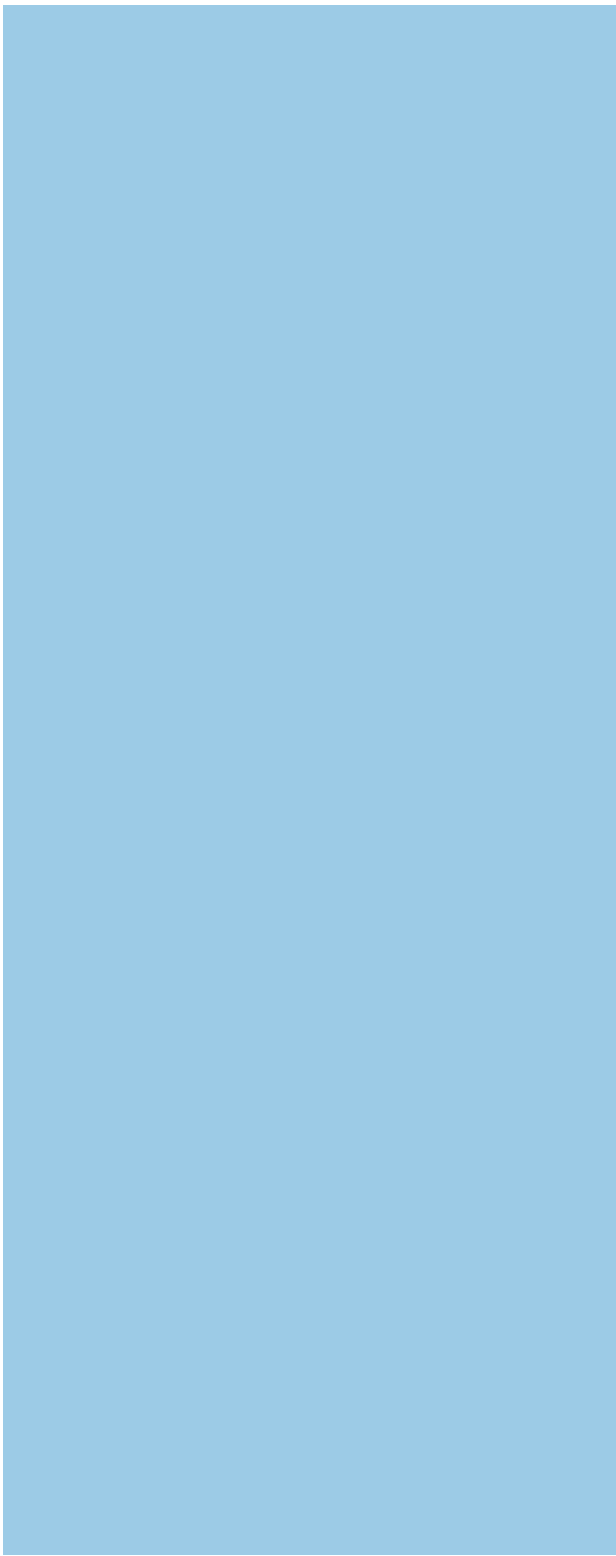
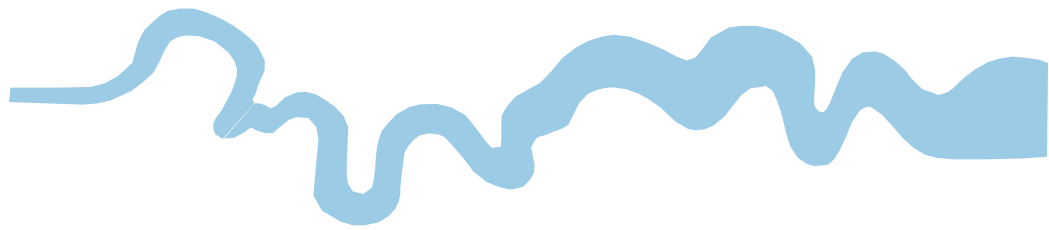
**Baylis Court School, Gloucester Avenue, Slough,
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Plate 1

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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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