

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**SSE Power Cable, Langel Common, Cogges,
Witney, Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Susan Colley

Site Code: LCW09/96

(SP 3596 0978 to SP 3622 0978 to SP 3620 0988)

SSE Power Cable, Langel Common, Cogges, Witney, Oxfordshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Scottish and Southern Electric Power Distribution

by Susan Colley

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Ltd

Site Code LCW 09/96

June 2010

Summary

Site name: SSE Power Cable, Langel Common, Cogges, Witney, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SP 3596 0978 to SP 3622 0978 to SP 3620 0988

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 6th–28th May 2010

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Susan Colley

Site code: LCW 09/96

Summary of results: Thirteen trenches for the new power cable and three exploratory trenches to confirm the location of a gas pipe were dug. No archaeological features were observed nor artefacts recovered.

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 01.06.10 Steve Preston ✓ 01.06.10
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SSE Power Cable, Langel Common, Cogges, Witney, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Susan Colley

Report 09/96

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Langel Common, at the west end of Church Lane, Cogges, Witney, Oxfordshire (centred at NGR SP 3610 0979) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Chris Gaskell on behalf of Scottish and Southern Electric Power Distribution, 1 Woodstock Road, Yarnton, Kidlington, Oxfordshire, OX5 1NY.

Scottish and Southern Electric proposed to replace the overhead power cable across Langel Common with underground cabling. This involved a new cable from the substation on Church Lane, to the substation on the west side of the River Windrush, with an offshoot to the north to join with an existing pylon, and a small section running south to the road. Part of the new cable would be within the area of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 29177) and the remaining part passes through an area considered to be of archaeological potential. Scheduled Monument Consent was accordingly granted by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in 2005, subject to a condition which requires the implementation of a programme of observation and investigation conducted during works on the site.

This is in accordance with the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act*, the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), Oxfordshire County Council's policies on archaeology and the Electricity Act 1989. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Hugh Coddington, Deputy County Archaeological Officer for Oxfordshire County Council and Mr Chris Welch, Inspector of Ancient Monuments for English Heritage, adviser to the DCMS and in accordance with a brief prepared by Oxford County Archaeological Service (Coddington 2005). The fieldwork was undertaken by Susan Colley between the 6th and 28th May 2010 and the site code is LCW 09/96.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with Oxfordshire Museum Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on Langel Common, north of Church Lane, Cogges, Witney, Oxfordshire. (Fig. 1). The site is currently rough pasture through which the river Windrush and its tributary the Madley Brook flow. It also forms

a park and through way for the general public (Fig. 2). The geology of the area is mapped as alluvium of the Windrush valley, with a thin band of Forest Marble clay to the east (BGS 1974) and in an area where pockets of cornbrash and first terrace gravel might also be expected: the natural geology encountered in Trenches 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 was alluvial clay; Trenches 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 came down onto limestone although Trench 9 did also include some alluvial deposits. The site is located at a height of approximately 80m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site was outlined in a brief for the project provided by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Coddington 2005). In summary the estate known as Cogges was recorded in Domesday Book of AD1086 (Williams and Martin 2002). The immediate area has produced a number of prehistoric and early historic artefacts and features, but its more immediate interest is the location of the cable route partially lies within a Scheduled Monument. The Scheduled area consists of several elements. To the west is a moated castle of probable 12th century origin. A priory was established as a daughter site to Fecamp Abbey in 1103. At the same time Manasses Arsic established a fortified residence nearby. It is possible that the existing manor was given to the Abbey. During the reign of Stephen the priory fell into disuse but was later re-established as a nonconventual cell. The priory was granted to Eton College in 1441 when it was dissolved, and in 1859 it became a vicarage. In the southern part of the Scheduled area a series of well-defined earthworks indicate the presence of a medieval village and open field system. This appears to have declined when a new planned settlement was established at Witney by the Bishops of Winchester in the early 13th century (Foster *et al.* 1975, 179). Excavations at the Manor House have demonstrated it to have 13th-century origins and also indicated an earlier phase with Anglo-Saxon artefacts and a sunken featured building. The church of St Mary, to the south, has late Saxon origins (Steane 1984)

In 2001 an archaeological watching brief maintained during the excavation for a new gas pipeline at the south-west end of Church Lane (JMHS 2001) uncovered a ditch that appears to have formed part of a leat system for a fishpond at the west end of Church Lane. The fishpond itself explored in 1984-5 (Chambers 1985) and in a watching brief in 1998 (Pollinger 1998), and well documented from the 13th century. Evaluation trenching at the Manor Farm Museum, however, revealed nothing of archaeological interest (Pine 1998).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the groundworks. This involved examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks, in particular any ground

reduction and the digging of the cable duct trench and any other significant invasive works, such as access easement.

Results

Thirteen trenches were excavated for the purpose of laying the new power cable (Fig. 2). The cable laying itself was not observed, as this was done via a drill at a depth of 1.20m below ground level. The drill was first employed between Trenches 1 and 2 below the river, later drilling took the cable, still at a depth of 1.20m to Trench 4 from Trench 1 and from Trench 4 to Trench 3.

Trench 1 was immediately to the east of the river Windrush and Trench 2 was to the west of the river. Trench 3 was at the northern extreme of the cable, close to the existing pylon, and Trench 4 close to the substation on Church Lane. These trenches were all of a similar size *c.* 0.80m wide, 4m long and 1.20m deep. Trenches 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 were dug into river alluvium and so there was a possibility of archaeology throughout. The stratigraphy for Trenches 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 50, 51 and 52 consisted of topsoil to a depth of 0.40m, and then a layer of subsoil 0.20m deep giving an overall depth of 0.60m from the surface to the alluvium (Fig. 3)

The stratigraphy for Trenches 3, and 7–12 was slightly different in that they contained topsoil to a depth of 0.40m and then naturally layered gravels (Pl. 1). Trench 13 was similar but with the addition of a 0.10m deep Tarmac surface and 0.06m sand layer above the layered gravels.

Trenches 4 and 6 came down onto an old water pipe and so the stratigraphy here was disturbed.

Trench 5 was dug to confirm the location of the gas pipe but also as a point for the drilling of another cable and connection to the existing power cables. This trench was longer than the others 1.5m in length, 1m wide and dug to a depth of 1.5m. Trench 5 was backfilled on confirming the location of the gas pipe.

Trench 6 was dug along the front of the existing sub station to a depth of 1m. It was 1m wide and 4m long. A modern drain was observed running (roughly NE-SW) through the centre.

Trench 7 was dug in the car park just outside the field for the purpose of drilling towards Trench 6. It was 1m wide and 0.50m deep.

Trench 8 was located in the field next to the car park and close to the roadway it was 1.5m long, 0.70m wide and 0.80m deep.

Trench 9 was dug as a result of the drill becoming stuck in hard ground. This trench linked Trench 6 to Trench 5 and was 0.80m wide and 1.20m deep.

Trench 10 was dug between trenches 7 and 8 and had similar stratigraphy, it was 0.70m wide and 0.50m deep.

Trench 11 was dug from Trench 3 in a SW direction for approximately 52m at a depth of 1m and width of 0.70m. This trench was immediately backfilled as the pipe was laid.

Trench 12 was short and was dug from the north-east corner of Trench 3 to a telegraph pole, a length of 5m at a depth of 1m.

Trench 13 was dug from the south-east corner of Trench 8 across the road for a length of 10m and at a depth of 0.70m.

Three further small slots were excavated (Trenches 50, 51 and 52) in order to confirm the location of the gas pipe laid in 2001. These slots were 0.80m wide, 4m long and 1m deep (Pl. 2) and the stratigraphy here was considerably disturbed due to the previous laying of the gas pipe and the trenches were immediately backfilled on confirmation of the gas pipe's location.

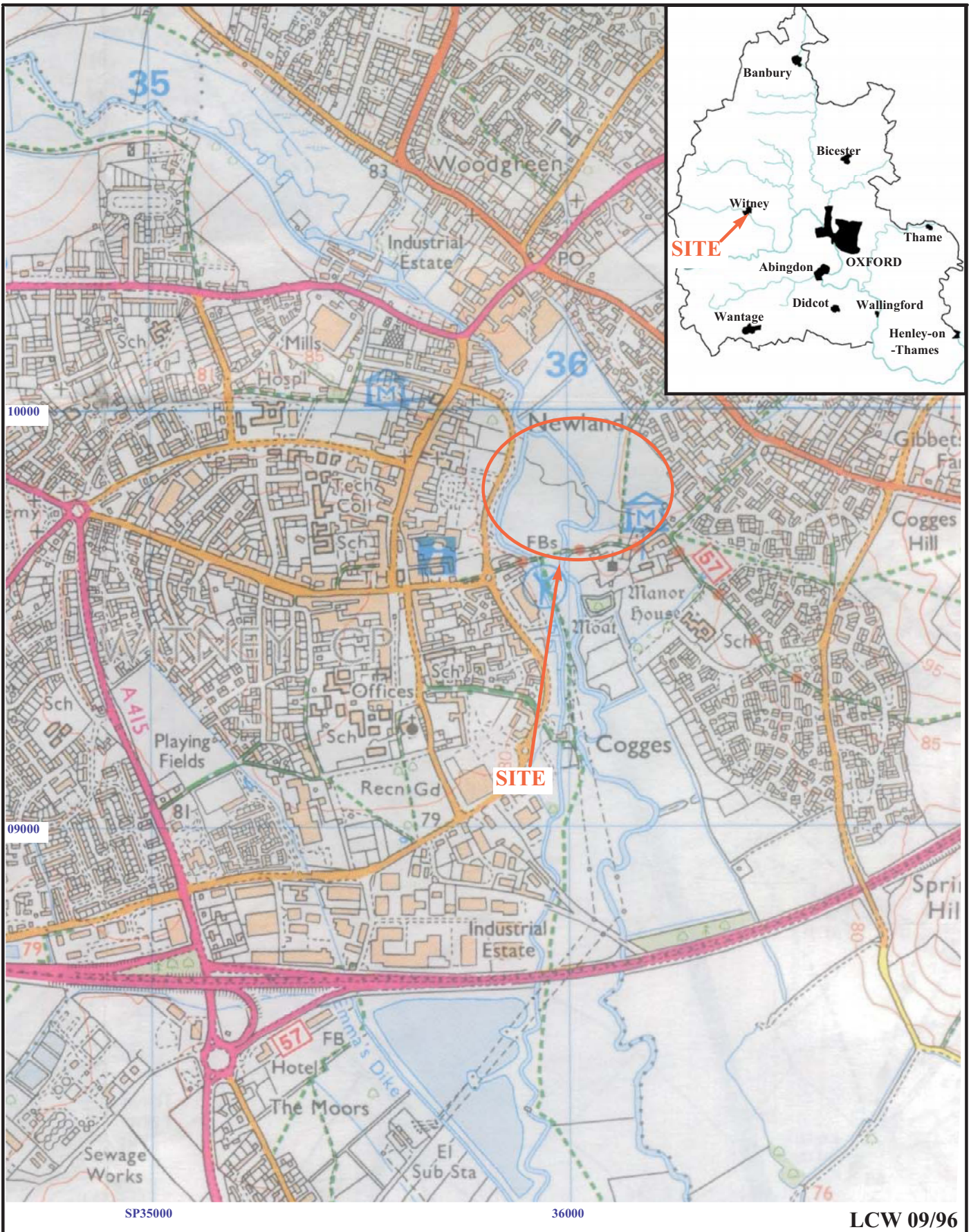
No archaeology was observed in any of the trenches.

Conclusion

Whilst there was considerable archaeological potential for this site with the proximity of the Scheduled Monument and the possibility of good preservation of material by waterlogging in the alluvial layers present, no archaeological features or finds were observed during the excavations.

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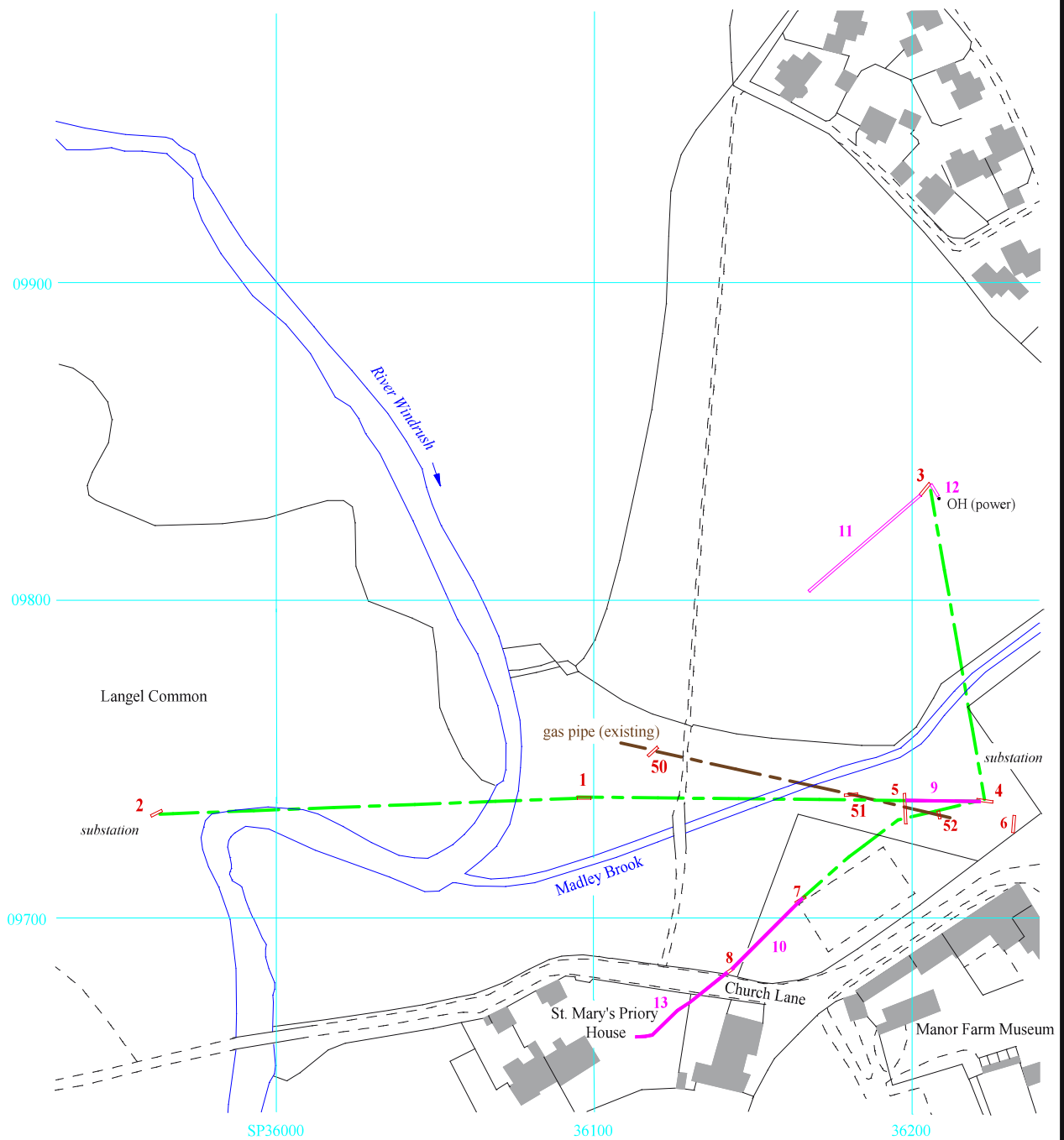
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Archaeological watching brief

Figure 1. Location of site within Witney and Oxfordshire.

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- Key**
- underground bore (no subsurface disturbance)
 - - - investigative trench
 - pipe trench (subsurface disturbed)

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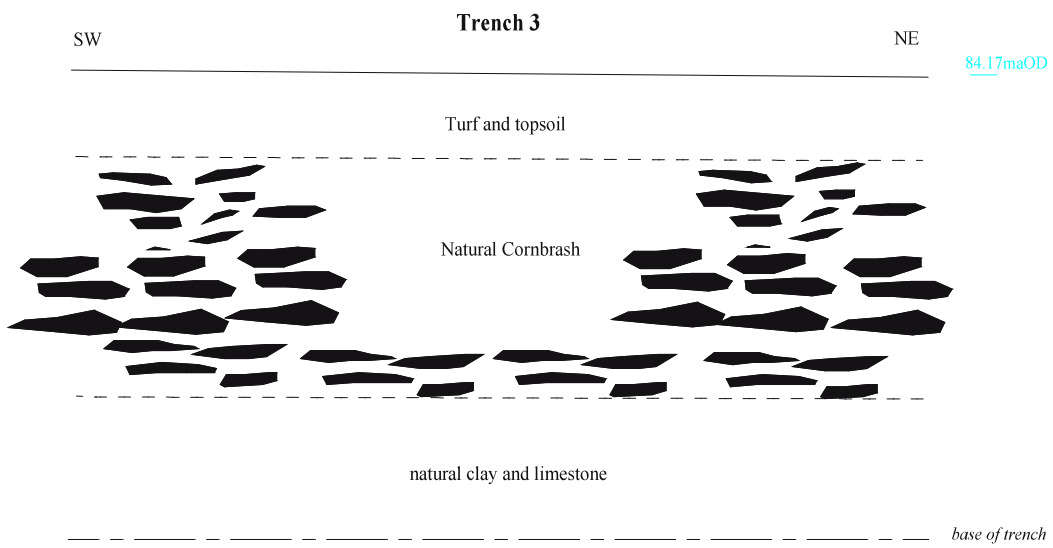
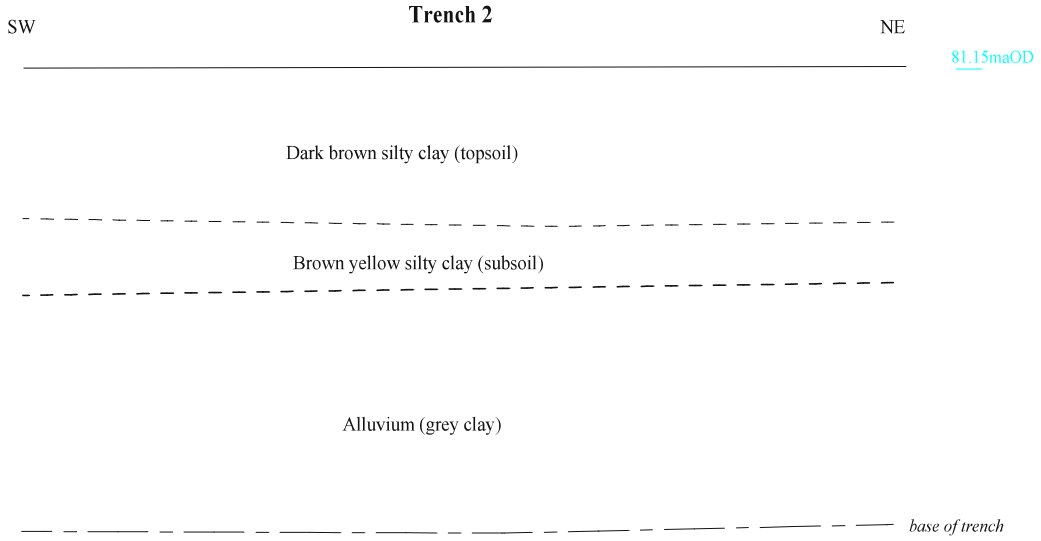


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Figure 2. Location of areas observed during watching brief.



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Figure 3. Representative section.





Plate 1. Trench 3, looking north , vertical scale 2m, horizontal scale 1m.



Plate 2. Trench 50, looking north west, vertical scale 2m, horizontal scale 1m.

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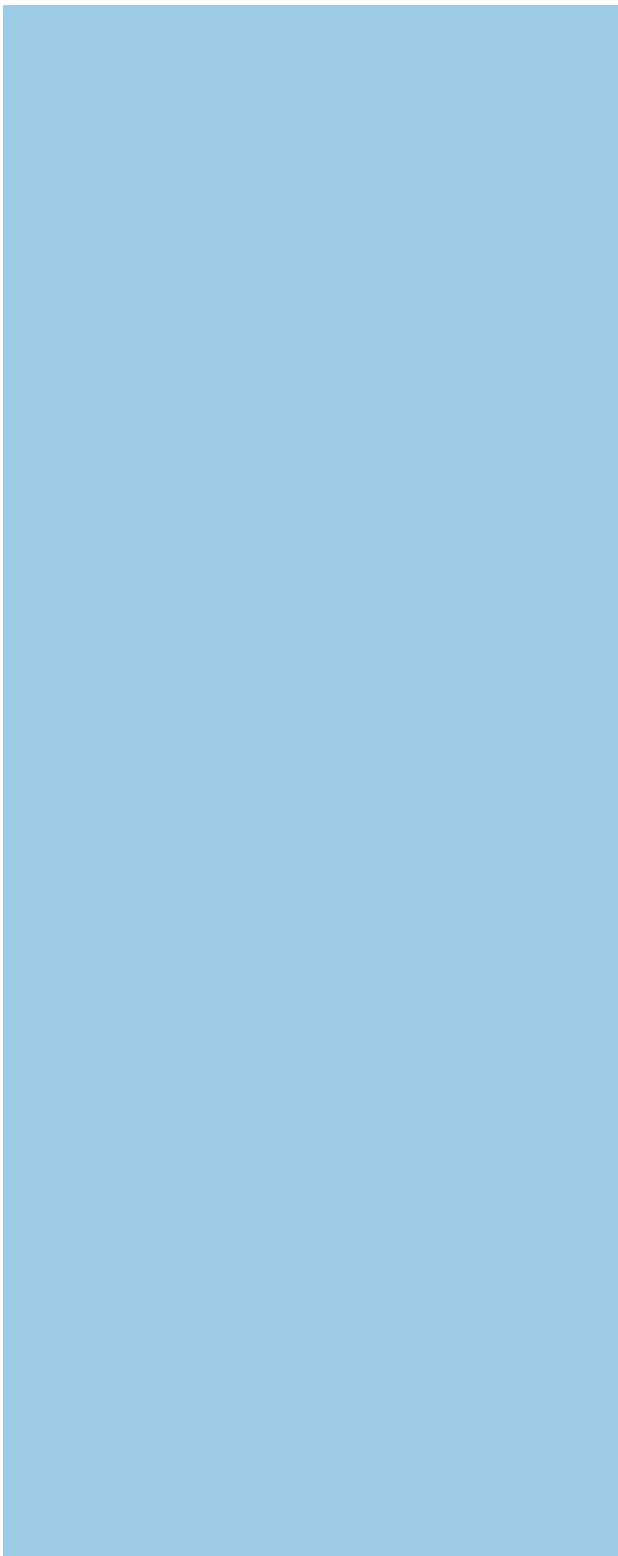
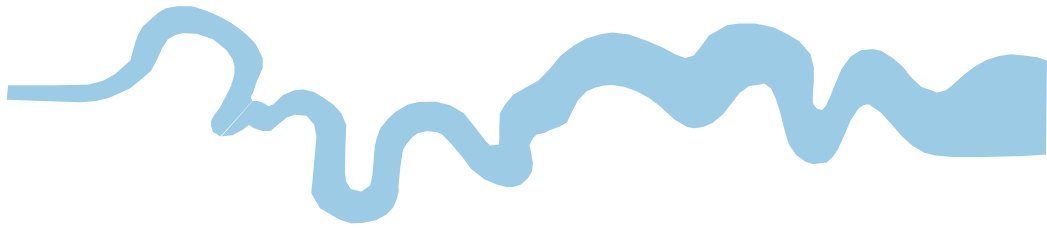
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Plates 1 and 2

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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
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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