

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**New Pond, Glebe House, Southill Park,
Southill, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andrew Muddin

Site Code: GHS 10/55

(TL 1481 4238)

**New Pond, Glebe House, Southill Park, Southill,
Biggleswade, Bedfordshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Southill Estate

by AndrewMundin

ThamesValleyArchaeologicalServices

Ltd

SiteCodeGHS10/55

June 2010

Summary

Site name: Glebe House, Southill Park, Southill, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire

Grid reference: TL 1481 4238

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 21st–22nd June 2010

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Jamie Lewis

Site code: GHS 10/55

Area of site: 634m²

Summary of results: No archaeological features or finds were uncovered during the groundworks.

Location and reference of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Bedford Museum in due course, with the accession code BEDFM.2010.34.

This report may be copied for bona fide research or planning purposes without the explicit permission of the copyright holder

Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 25.06.10 Steve Preston ✓ 24.06.10

New Pond, Glebe House, Southill Park, Southill, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andrew Muddin

Report 10/55

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Glebe House, Southill Park, Southill, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Mark Egar of Southill Estate, Southill Park, Biggleswade, Bedfordshire, SG18 9LJ.

Planning permission (CB/10/01019/FULL) has been granted by Central Bedfordshire Council for the creation of a new pond at Glebe House. This consent is subject to a condition (2) which requires a programme of archaeological works to excavate and record archaeological deposits which could be destroyed or damaged during the shaping of the pond.

This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's Planning Policy Statement, *Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS5 2010), and the Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Martin Oake, Archaeologist for Central Bedfordshire Conservation and Design Team, based on a brief (Oake 2010) supplied by him, and was monitored by him. The fieldwork was undertaken by James Lewis on 21st–22nd June 2010. The site code is GHS 10/55.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Bedford Museum in due course, with the accession code BEDFM.2010.34.

Location, topography and geology

Southill Park is situated just to the west of the village of Southill, which is roughly 5km west of Biggleswade (Fig 1). Glebe House and its grounds are located within the eastern part of Southill Park, which covers c.200ha overall. The site of the new pond is 110m directly east of Glebe House (Figs 2 and 3). This is within an area of landscaped gardens and woodland. The surrounding area, situated on the Greensand Ridge, rises to the south-west, by the site of the pond itself lies on a flatter area of ground. The underlying geology is Lowestoft Formation glacial till, which is a chalky, sandy stony clay (BGS 2001). Undifferentiated glaciofluvial chalky sands and gravels lies just to the north. On site the natural geology comprised a grey clay with brown streaks. The pond is located at a height of approximately 41m above Ordnance Datum (OD).

Archaeological background

The known archaeology of the vicinity was summarized in the design brief for the project (Oake 2010). Ridge and furrow earthworks are visible on aerial photographs in the vicinity and are recorded within this field, just north of the new pond (HER 5507). Southill (HER 17134) to the south-east is mentioned in Domesday Book (AD1086) and has late Saxon (or earlier) origins. All Saint's parish church (HER 1123) to the south-west, was built in the 14th-15th century but with considerable alterations in the 19th century. The design brief considered that the field within which the new pond was to be constructed might contain evidence of settlement at Southill pre-dating the medieval field system (ridge and furrow).

Glebe House itself is a Grade II listed building, dating from the late 18th century, which was also altered during the 19th century. It has been in the Whitbread family's ownership since 1795 when Samuel Whitbread bought the estate created by Admiral Byng (1st Viscount Torrington) in Southill in the earlier part of that century.

Southill Park is a Grade II* Registered Park. Several other listed buildings exist in the park, including Southill Park House (Grade I), The Sandstone Lodge, Garden Bridge, Fishing Temple and an obelisk to William Whitbread (all Grade II). Lancelot Brown (1716-83) created the majority of the current landscaping and park in the 1770s, which included changes to clearings within the woodlands and redirecting of paths, and establishing other pond locations, such as the Round Basin.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the removal of the topsoil and/or subsoil. This involved continuous supervision of machining which was undertaken using a bladed 360° mechanical excavator. If any archaeologically significant deposits, primarily of Medieval and/or Post-Medieval date, but potentially of any date, were present, hand definition, sampling and excavation would take place to identify date, character, and function, within a potentially larger landscape use.

Specific research objectives for the project were informed by the regional frameworks (Glazebrook 1997; Brown and Glazebrook 2000, Medlycott and Brown 2008; Oake *et al*, 2007). The project aimed to answer the following questions about the site:

- What is the nature and date of any landscape features (eg fields, boundary features, large enclosures) and what is their spatial organization?
- How did these landscape features relate to occupied areas?
- Are there occupied areas within the proposal site? If so when were the sites first occupied and when were they abandoned?
- What is the palaeoenvironmental setting of the area?

Results

The excavation of the pond was located to the east of Glebe House, in a parcel of land bounded by School Lane to the east and woodland to the south (Fig. 3). The pond was roughly oval in plan, c.25m on the NW–SE axis and some 30m on the SW-NE axis, with a slight ramp extending 6m further to the north-east. Turf and topsoil were removed over the area first, to a depth of 0.2m. Subsoil was then removed (Plates 1 and 2). The central part of the pond which dug into the natural geology was at a depth of 0.6m (deepest point 41.0m aOD).

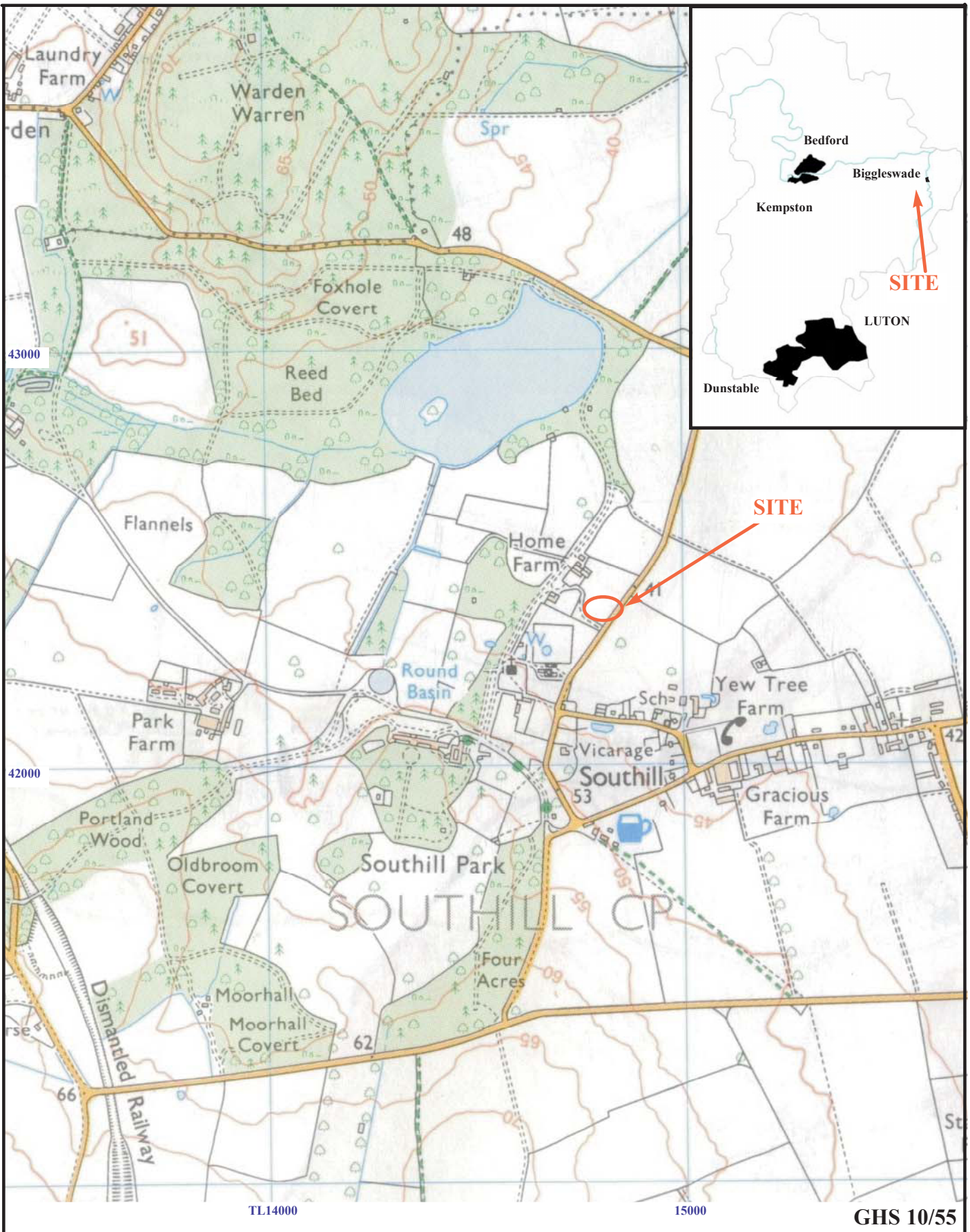
No archaeological deposits were revealed during the topsoil stripping and artefacts of archaeological interest were not recovered from either topsoil or subsoil.

Conclusion

No deposits nor artefacts of archaeological interest were recorded during the watching brief.

References

- Brown, N and Glazebrook, J, 2000, *Research and Archaeology: A Framework for the Eastern Counties 2: Research agenda and strategy*, E Anglian Archaeol Occas Pap **8**, Norwich
- BGS, 2001, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50 000, Sheet 204, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Glazebrook, J (ed), 1997, *Research and Archaeology: a framework for Eastern counties: 1 – Resource assessment*, E Anglian Archaeol Occas Pap **3**, Norwich
- Medlycott, M and Brown, N, 2008, 'Revision of the Regional Archaeological Framework for the Eastern Region', ALGAO East of England
- Oake, M, 2010, 'Brief for a Programme of Archaeological Observation, Investigation, Recording, Analysis and Publication at Glebe House, Southill, Bedfordshire', Central Bedfordshire Conservation and Design Team, Bedford
- Oake, M, Luke, M, Dawson, M, Edgeworth, M and Murphy, P, 2007, *Bedfordshire Archaeology – Research and archaeology: resource assessment, research agenda and strategy*, Bedfordshire Archaeol Monogr **9**, Bedford
- PPS5, 2010, *Planning for the Historic Environment*, The Stationery Office, Norwich



**New Pond, Glebe House, Southill Park, Southill,
Biggleswade, Bedfordshire 2010**
Archaeological watching brief
Figure 1. Location of site within Southill and Bedfordshire

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Explorer 208 at 1:12500
Ordnance Survey Licence 100025880

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

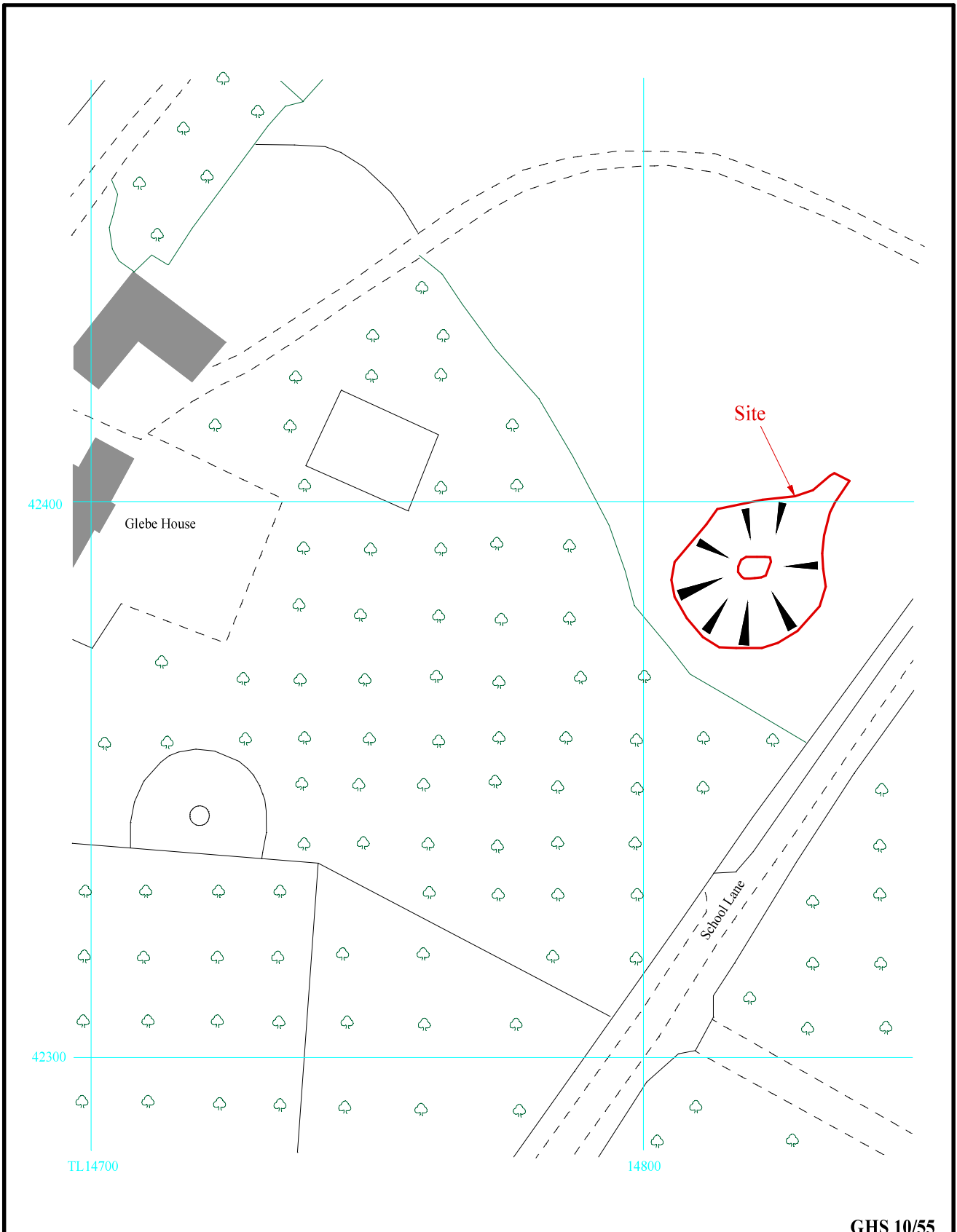


GHS 10/55

**New Pond, Glebe House, Southill Park, Southill,
Biggleswade, Bedfordshire, 2010
Archaeological watching brief
Figure 2. Detailed location of site.**

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey digital mapping under licence.
Crown copyright reserved. Scale: 1:2500





GHS 10/55

**New Pond, Glebe House, Southill Park, Southill,
Biggleswade, Bedfordshire, 2010
Archaeological watching brief**

Figure 3. Location of pond.





Plate 1. looking north east, Scales 2m and 1m.



Plate 2. Looking south west, Scales 2m and 1m.

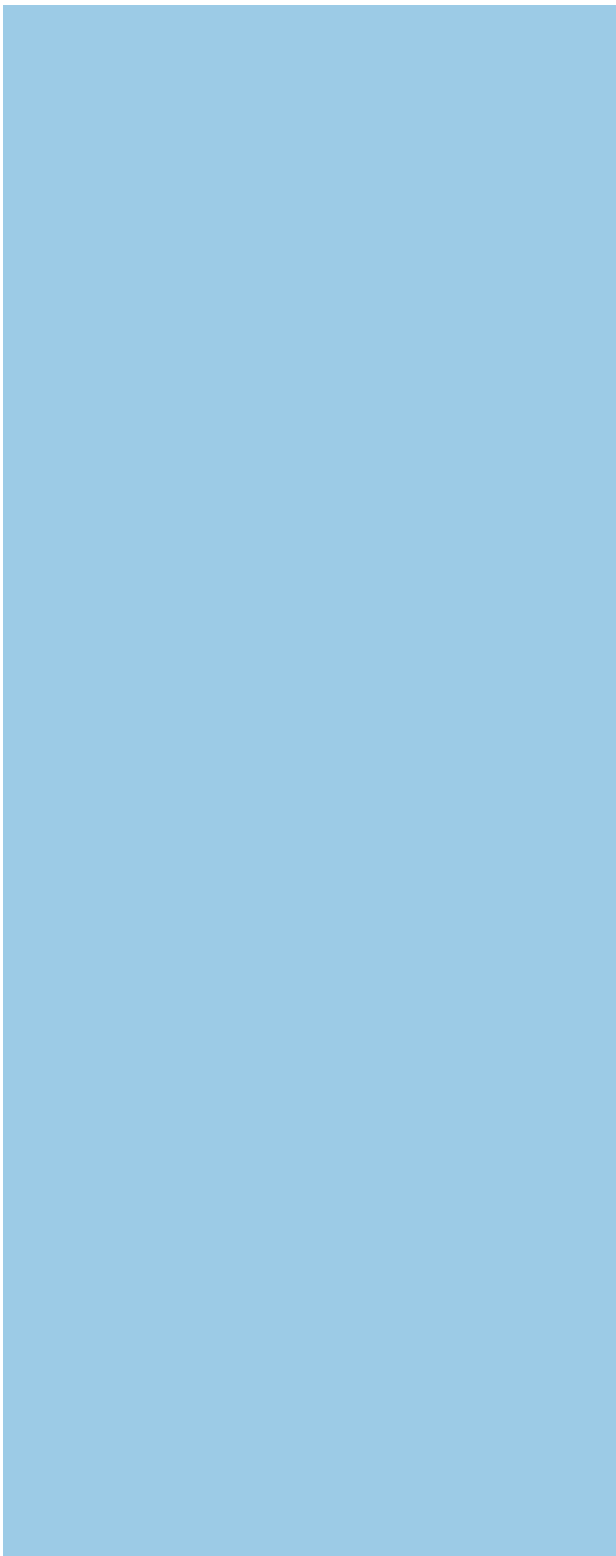
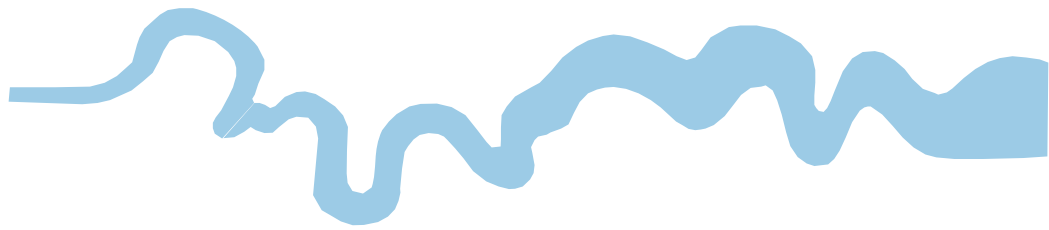
GHS10/55

**New pond Glebe House, Southill Park, Southill,
Biggleswade, Bedfordshire 2010
Archaeological Watching Brief
Plates 1 and 2**

THAMES VALLEY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES

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
↓	↓



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

**Tel: 0118 9260552
Fax: 0118 9260553
Email: tvas@tvas.co.uk
Web: www.tvas.co.uk**