

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Bannings, Bray Street,
Avebury Trusloe, Wiltshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

**by
Tim Dawson and James McNicoll-Norbury**

Site Code: BAT09/37

(SU 09525 69935)

**Bannings, Bray Street,
Avebury Trusloe, Wiltshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr M Daley

by Tim Dawson and
James McNicoll-Norbury
Thames Valley Archaeological Services
Ltd

Site Code BAT 09/37

July 2010

Summary

Site name: Bannings, Bray Street, Avebury Trusloe, Wiltshire

Grid reference: SU 09525 69935

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 9th July 2009, 30th June–2nd July 2010

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisors: James McNicoll-Norbury and Tim Dawson

Site code: BAT 09/37

Area of site: 110 sq m

Summary of results: No archaeological deposits were identified

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

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Report 09/37

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Bannings, Bray Street, Avebury Trusloe, Wiltshire (SU 09525 69935) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Michael Fowler of Michael Fowler Architects, 19 High Street, Pewsey, Wiltshire, SN9 5AF on behalf of Mr M. Daley, Bannings, Bray Street, Avebury, Marlborough, SN8 1RA.

Planning consent (K/50237/F) has been granted by Kennet District (now Wiltshire) Council to construct a new extension to the rear of the site. The consent is subject to a condition (4) relating to archaeology which requires a watching brief to be carried out during groundworks. This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Ms Vanessa Clarke, former Assistant County Archaeologist for Wiltshire Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Dawson and James McNicoll-Norbury on 9th July 2009 and between 30th June and 2nd July 2010. The site code is BAT 09/37.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Devizes or Avebury Museum in due course.

Location, topography and geology

Avebury Trusloe is a hamlet next to the village of Avebury, which nestles at the foot of the Marlborough Downs by the bank of the river Kennet (Fig. 1). The site is located on the north side of Bray Street opposite Trusloe Manor (Fig. 2). It is bordered to the south by Bray Street, to the east by a neighbouring property, to the west by a paddock and to the north by fields. The site lies 500m west of Avebury village and the henge monument, in the valley bottom at 155m above Ordnance Datum. Topographically, the ground within the site rises up steeply from the road to the south and then slopes gently down to the field boundary to the north. It is unlikely that this is the original ground level, as the field to the north and the neighbouring garden to the east are both at a significantly higher level than the site. A 0.95m-wide paved path has been laid on terraced ground 1.10m north of the existing

house. The site is currently occupied by an early 18th-century farmhouse, which is a Listed Building, gardens and outbuildings, The underlying geology is mapped as lower chalk (BGS 1974) which was observed on the site.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its position within a World Heritage Site (WHS). The environs of Avebury are rich in the remains of prehistoric ceremonial and burial monuments (Fig. 1), six of which in particular form the core of the WHS: Avebury henge and stone circles; Silbury Hill; Windmill Hill; West Kennet long barrow; West Kennet avenue; and The Sanctuary. The WHS however, includes many more sites and features of significance, and is best considered as a landscape rather than a collection of isolated sites. The site is also within Avebury Trusloe close to Manor Farm and Trusloe Manor, which presumably has medieval origins. This hamlet lies 500m west of Avebury itself, whose church is recorded as royal property in Domesday Book (Williams and Martin 2002, 164) and is a medieval village, possibly a late Saxon *burh* and is renowned for its large henge monument. Bannings itself dates from the early 18th century.

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 ground reduction and the digging of foundation trenches for the new extensions, and any service runs.

Archaeological deposits threatened by the groundworks were to be excavated and recorded and all archaeological finds and artefacts were to be retained.

Results

Test Pit

A 2.0m long, 0.60m wide and 1.0m deep test pit was dug prior to the main construction work using a mini-digger under constant archaeological supervision (Fig. 3) the stratigraphy consisted of 0.31m topsoil overlying natural chalk (Fig. 4), in the southern half of the exposed section the topsoil had previously been removed during the construction of a garden path. No archaeological deposits were identified.

Site Levelling

Due to the sloping nature of the ground, the entire area of the extension was levelled using a 1.20m ditching bucket. At its deepest, next to the northern wall of the house, the levelling cut through 0.31m of topsoil and into chalk natural geology to a depth of 0.40m below ground level. Towards the centre of the area stripped, the levelling met the existing ground surface as it fell away to the north. No archaeological finds or features were seen in the area of levelling closest to the existing house where the natural chalk was exposed. The remainder, consisting of exposed topsoil only, yielded many late post-medieval and modern finds including transfer printed pottery, clay tobacco pipe, roof tiles and animal bone, which were noted on site but not retained.

Footing Trenches

A series of footing trenches, totalling 22.80m in length, were excavated in the levelled area. These were dug using a 0.60m-wide toothed bucket to a depth of 0.46m below the levelled ground (a maximum of 0.86m below original ground level). The stratigraphy observed consisted of, at the northern end of the footprint, 0.31m of topsoil overlying the chalk natural geology, and, at the southern end, 0.46m of chalk.

No archaeological finds or features were identified although it was noted that in some places, particularly the westernmost trenches, the surface of the chalk was uneven. These undulations/hollows had been in filled with topsoil which contained modern brick and tile (not retained). It may be that this levelling of the unevenness in the underlying chalk was associated with either the construction of the adjacent garage or the landscaping of the lawn. One area had suffered extensive root damage presumably from a removed tree.

Finds

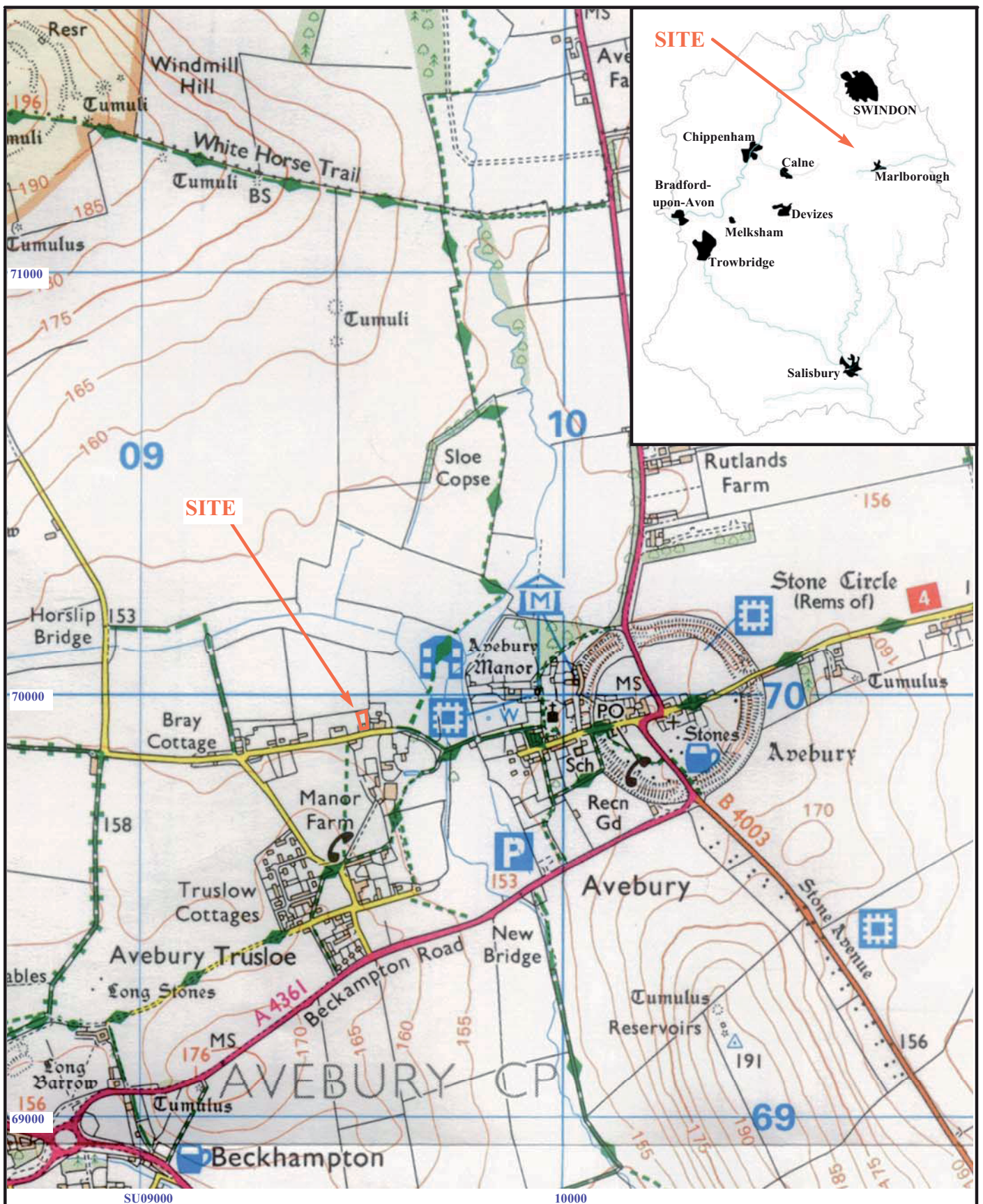
No finds were recovered.

Conclusion

Despite being located in an area of high archaeological activity and significance, the site yielded no finds or features of archaeological interest. It is possible, as suggested by the modern finds in the topsoil, the absence of subsoil, and the higher ground level in the neighbouring plots and the terraced garden path, that the lawn has been landscaped by reducing the ground level in its recent history. This may have been carried out in association with the construction of the 20th-century garage building, which is located to the west of the extension.

References

BGS, 1974, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 266, Drift Edition, Keyworth
PPG 16, 1990, *Archaeology and Planning*, Dept of the Environment Planning Policy Guidance 16, HMSO
Williams, A and Martin, G H, 2002, *Domesday Book, a complete translation*, London



BAT 09/37

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Avebury Trusloe, Wiltshire, 2010
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 1. Location of site within Avebury Trusloe and Wiltshire.

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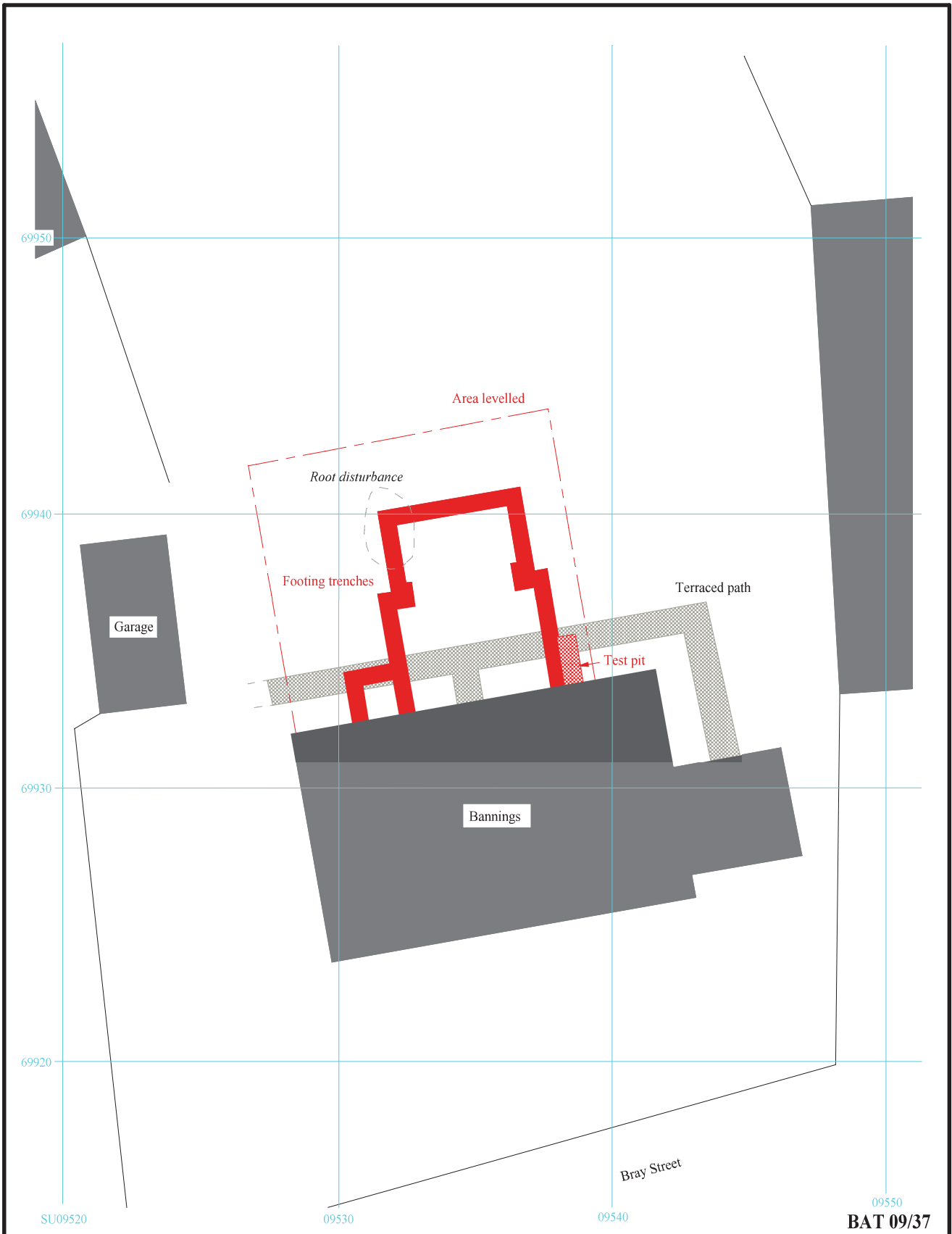
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Bray Road.

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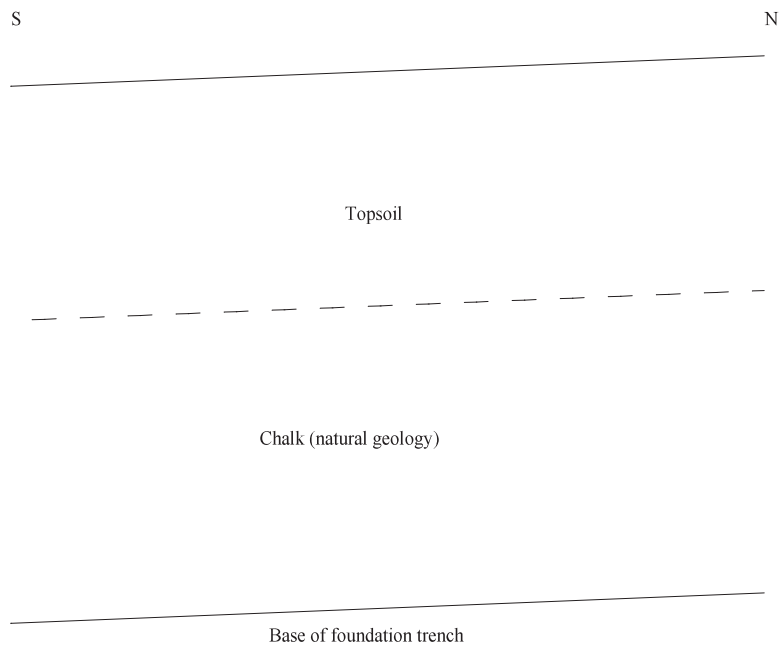


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Wiltshire, 2010
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 3. Plan of areas observed.



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Wiltshire, 2010
Archaeological Watching Brief**

Figure 4. Representative section.

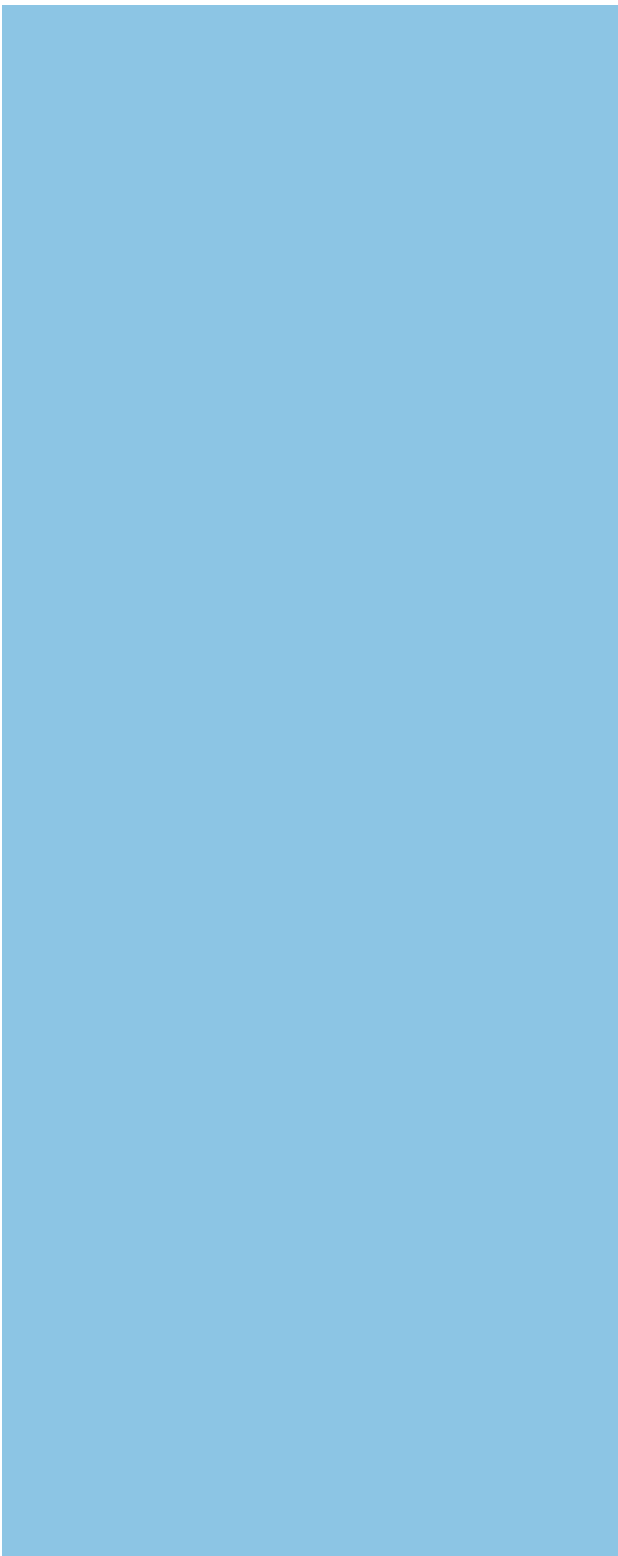
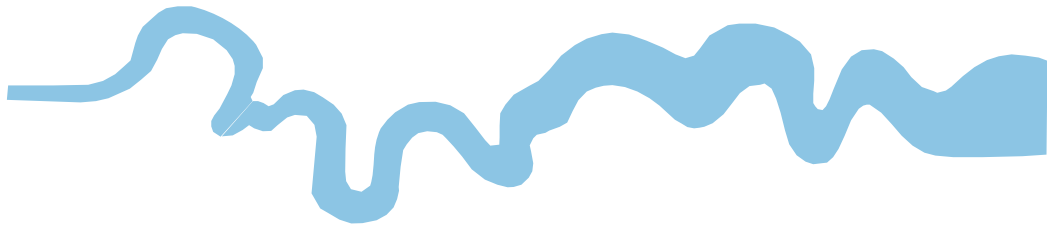


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TIME CHART

	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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