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ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Western Green Farm,
Thornborough, Buckinghamshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Tim Dawson

Site Code: GFT10/78

(SP 7352 3355)

Western Green Farm, Thornborough, Buckinghamshire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr D Richmond-Watson

byTimDawson

ThamesValleyArchaeologicalServices

Ltd

SiteCodeGFT10/78

August 2010

Summary

Site name: Western Green Farm, Thornborough, Buckinghamshire

Grid reference: SP 73525 33555

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 29th July 2010

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Tim Dawson

Site code: GFT 10/78

Area of site: c. 470 sq m of reduced levels within 1000 sq m overall area

Summary of results: One very shallow, modern drain was noted.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 04.08.10 Steve Preston ✓ 04.08.10

Western Green Farm, Thornborough, Buckinghamshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Tim Dawson

Report 10/78

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at Western Green Farm, Thornborough, Buckinghamshire, MK18 2AA (SP 73525 33555) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr D Richmond-Watson, The Estate Office, Wakefield Lodge Estate, Potterspury, Northamptonshire, NN12 7QX.

Planning consent (09/01349/APP) has been granted by Aylesbury Vale District Council for the construction of a new manege and associated barn. The planning permission is subject to a condition (3) which requires the implementation of an archaeological watching brief.

This is in accordance with the Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance, *Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16 1990), and the District's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification prepared in accordance with a Buckinghamshire County Archaeological Service brief (BCAS 2010) and approved by Ms Ruth Beckley, (former) Archaeological Planning and Conservation Officer at Buckinghamshire County Council. The fieldwork was undertaken by Tim Dawson on 29th July 2010 and the site code is GFT 10/78.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located on Western Green Farm, c.1km west of the present village of Thornborough and c.3.5km east of Buckingham. The area excavated is positioned directly to the south of the farm buildings which are set on the southern edge of earthworks of a shrunken medieval village (Fig. 2). It lies on the upper slopes of a hill overlooking Padbury Brook, which flows northwards 650m to the west. The land is currently in use as farmland and is of an uneven nature. The underlying geology is described as Till (stony clay, generally with flint and chalk pebbles) (BGS 2002) and this was observed on site along with some smaller patches of clay with no inclusions. The site covers 28m by 39m, at a height of 97.50m above Ordnance Datum.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location adjacent to the shrunken medieval village of Thornborough. The modern village and parish church lie to the east. The parish church may be as early as 12th-century in part. To the north of the site (west of the modern village) are extensive earthworks representing the former location of either a much larger village, or an earlier site of the village before subsequent migration eastwards. Thornborough is mentioned as Torneberge in Domesday Book and therefore has late Saxon origins (Williams and Martin 2002, 418). In AD 1086 it was a modest manor although with extensive arable land and a mill. Thornborough Bridge, carrying the road to Buckingham across the Padbury Brook to the south-west, is 14th-century, but is on the site of a Roman river crossing. It has been suggested that a Roman roadside settlement may also exist, as there is a road junction, a temple (Green 1965) and a cremation cemetery (Farley, 2010, 80–2; 101; Johnson 1975). Several round barrows are recorded to the south-west indicating that there is the possibility of prehistoric occupation in the area: although these mounds, excavated in the 19th century, housed Roman burials (Liversidge 1954) it is not impossible they were prehistoric barrows re-used.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits which would be damaged or destroyed by the new groundworks. This involved examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks, in particular ground reduction for construction of the new manege. The proposed new barn was no longer to be built.

Due to the nature of the terrain the manege was constructed using a cut and fill method, so that slightly less than half of the overall size of the manege was actually excavated from the higher ground. The manege area, measuring approximately 12m by 39m, was excavated using a mini-digger. A toothless ditching bucket was used to remove the topsoil, exposing the underlying geology. Spoil was monitored as it was removed from the ground and all potential features were hand-cleaned and excavated. After archaeological recording, a toothed bucket was then used to dig deeper, through only natural till deposits.

Results

The area of the manege was stripped of c.0.20m of topsoil to expose the natural stony clay with flint and chalk pebble inclusions (Fig. 3; Plate 1). A variety of finds were identified from the topsoil as it was loosened. These included animal bone, tile, fired clay and a segment of clay pipe stem, all of which were obviously of recent

origin and retained on site. No archaeological features were uncovered although a very shallow hollow(1) was faintly visible in the field (Fig. 3). This was never more than 0.10m deep, in places no more than 0.04m, and c.1.10m wide. The hollow contained very little fill (51) and it was difficult to see the edges or observe a clean section but a profile was drawn of the most obvious part of it (Fig. 4). Where present, fill (51) was observed to be c.0.04m deep and very similar in compaction and composition to the topsoil though it was a slightly darker shade of brown. Two metal finds, including a machine-made chain link, and one fragment of modern ceramic drain pipe were recovered from the area of the possible ditch. As with the topsoil finds, these modern finds were not retained.

Finds

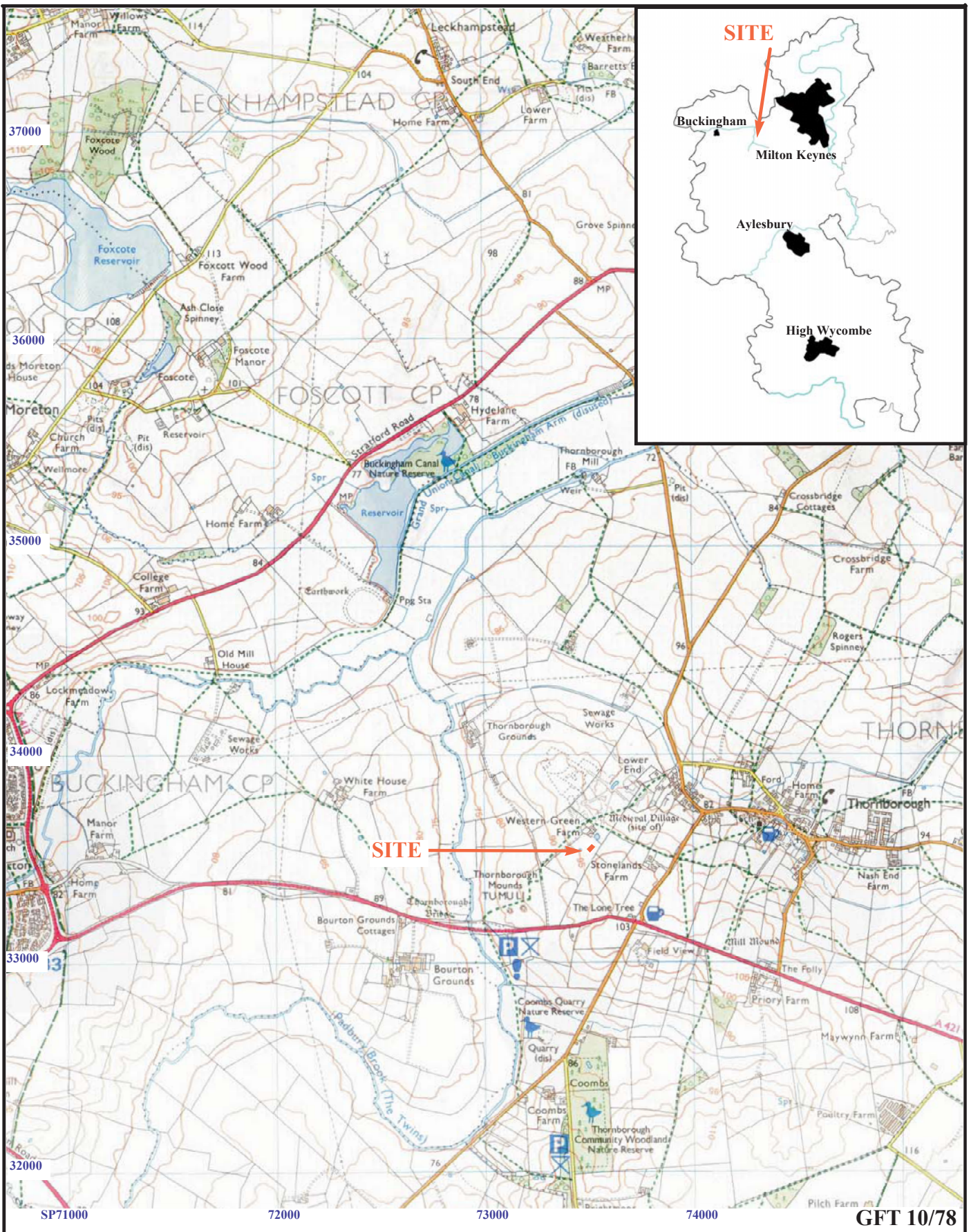
No finds of archaeological interest were recovered.

Conclusion

Despite being located adjacent to the shrunken medieval village of Thornborough, the area excavated for the manege at Western Green Farm uncovered no finds or features of archaeological significance. One shallow hollow infilled with modern material was observed running approximately north-south with a dog-leg turn half way along its length.

References

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- Liversidge, J, 1954, 'The Thornborough Barrows', *Recs Buckinghamshire* **16**, 29–32
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- Williams, A and Martin, G H, 2002, *Domesday Book, a complete translation*, London



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Figure 1. Location of site within Thornborough and Buckinghamshire.

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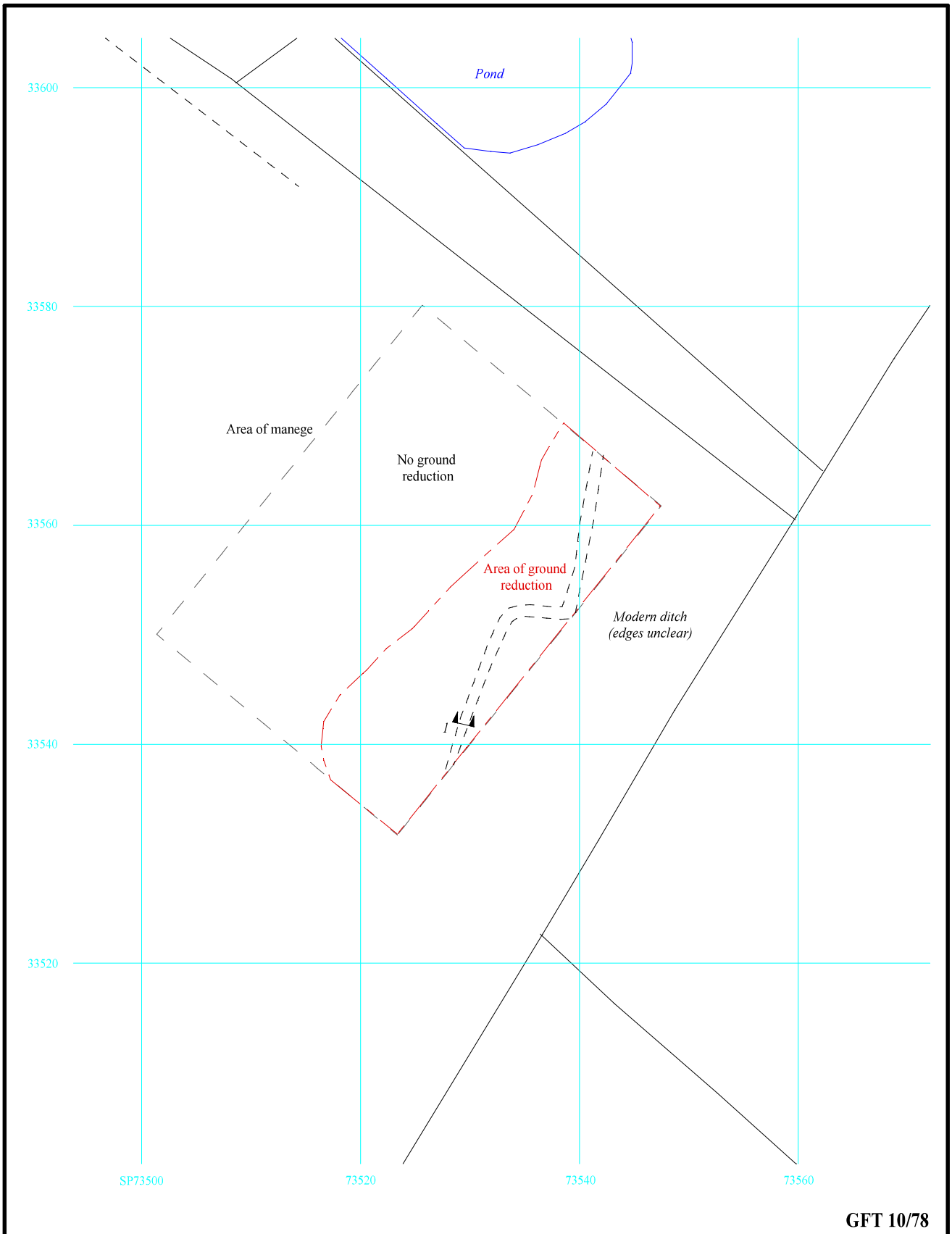
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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

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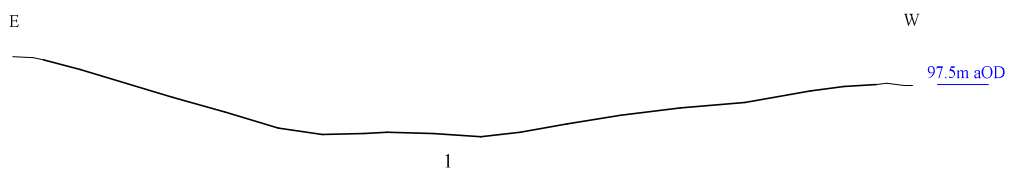
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Figure 3. Plan of the excavations.





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Figure 4. Profile.



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Plate 1. Stripped Area, looking south-west, scales 2m and 1m.

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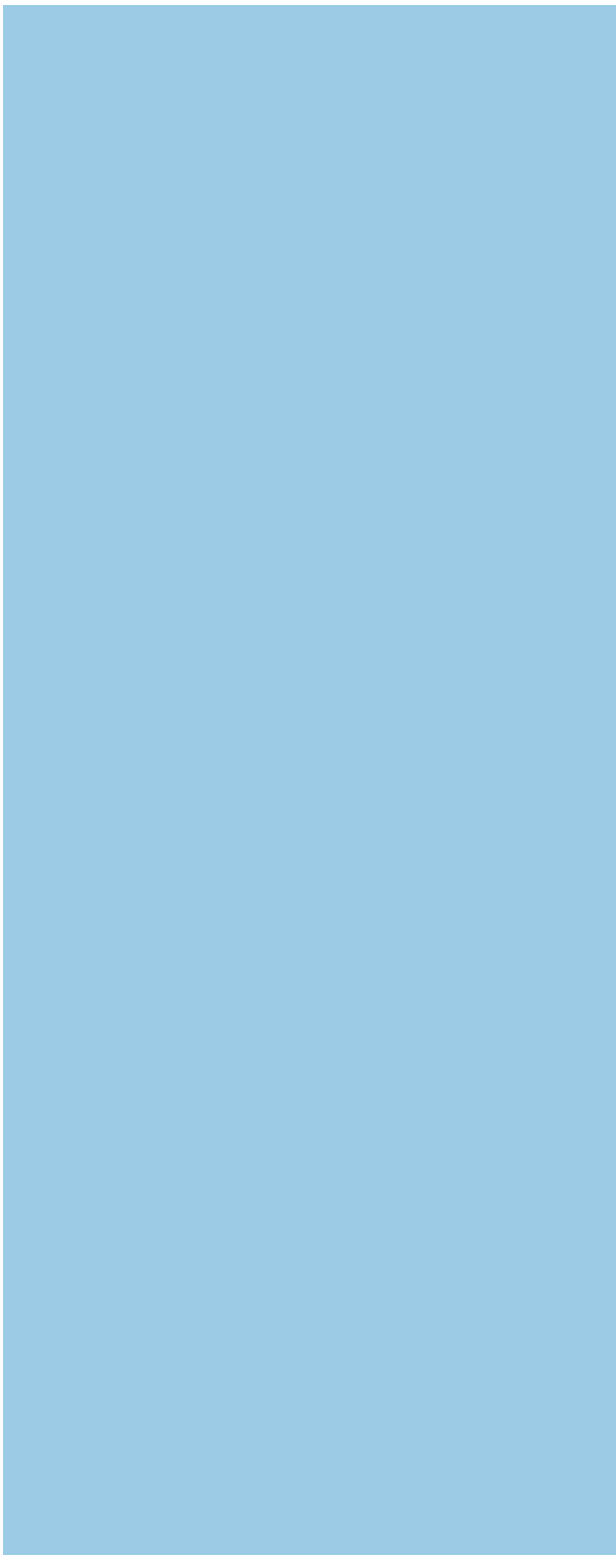
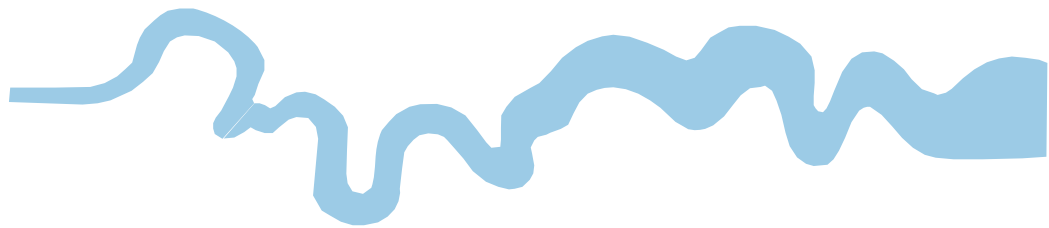
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Plate 1

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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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