

**T H A M E S      V A L L E Y**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL**

**S E R V I C E S**

**Land at Cox's Lane,  
Enstone, Oxfordshire**

**Archaeological Evaluation**

**by Jamie Lewis and James McNicoll-Norbury**

**Site Code: CLE10/109**

**(SP 3780 2395)**

# **Land at Cox's Lane, Enstone, Oxfordshire**

**An Archaeological Evaluation  
for Satnam Investments Limited**

by James Lewis and James McNicoll-  
Norbury  
Thames Valley Archaeological Services  
Ltd

Site Code CLE 10/109

**November 2010**

## Summary

**Site name:** Land at Cox's Lane, Enstone, Oxfordshire

**Grid reference:** SP3780 2395

**Site activity:** Evaluation

**Date and duration of project:** 14th October 2010

**Project manager:** Steve Ford

**Site supervisor:** James Lewis

**Site code:** CLE 10/109

**Area of site:** c. 2.2 ha

**Summary of results:** An undated ditch, and a possible pit and possible gully were recorded on the western side of the site. The site is not considered to have high archaeological potential

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

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Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford ✓ 01.11.10
	Steve Preston ✓ 01.11.10

# Cox's Lane, Enstone, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Evaluation

by James Lewis and James McNicoll-Norbury

**Report 10/109**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out on land at Cox's Lane, Enstone, Oxfordshire (SP3780 2395) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Colin Griffiths, of Satnam Investments Limited, Satnam Group, 17 Imperial Square, Cheltenham, GL50 1QZ. Planning permission is to be sought from West Oxfordshire District to develop the site for residential use. The results of a field evaluation have been requested to accompany the application so as to assess the archaeological potential of the site and inform the planning process. The evaluation would also produce information to form the basis of proposals to mitigate the impact of the proposed development if appropriate.

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 District Council's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Hugh Coddington, Deputy County Archaeological Officer with Oxford County Council and based on a brief prepared by him (Coddington 2010). The fieldwork was undertaken by James Lewis and Susan Colley on 14th October 2010 and the site code is CLE 10/109. The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited at Oxfordshire County Museums Service in due course.

## **Location, topography and geology**

Enstone straddles the steep valley of the river Glyme to the east of Chipping Norton in West Oxfordshire. The site is located on the south slope of the valley, east of Cox's Lane and west of Oxford Road in Enstone adjacent to the village sports field (Fig. 2). The site is currently used as pasture and the underlying geology is described as Great Oolitic Limestone (BGS 1958) which was observed in the exposed trenches. The south edge of the site lies at 160m above Ordnance Datum, and the ground falls away to the north to 151m aOD.

## **Archaeological background**

The site lies just to the north of the Hoar Stone, a megalithic burial monument dating to the Early Neolithic which survives as three upright orthostats but was originally surrounded by a ring cairn. This is a Scheduled Monument (SM 21800). There is a possibility of additional contemporary occupation or burial deposits in adjacent areas. Roman pottery and coins have also been found in and around the site of the monument suggesting that either there is a Roman settlement in the vicinity, or that the site was being used as a ceremonial/ritual monument such as a shrine. Approximately 2.5km to the north-west are the remains of the deserted medieval village of Nether Chalford and within 2km to the south-east are the remains of another medieval village, Asterleigh. Enstone itself has Saxon origins, and at the time of Domesday Book (AD1086) was a large manor held by the Abbey of Winchcombe (Williams and Martin 2002, 430). Recent work at St Kenelm's Church in Church Enstone to the north uncovered what may be a 13th-century wall of the church, and sherds of both Roman and medieval pottery were recovered (McNicoll-Norbury and Lewis 2010).

## **Objectives and methodology**

The purpose of the evaluation was to determine the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits within the area of proposed development. The specific research aims of this project are:

- to determine if any burial or settlement deposits broadly contemporary with the Neolithic monument are present;
- to determine if any settlement deposits relating to Roman activity are present on the site; and
- to determine if archaeological deposits of any period are present.

It was proposed to dig six trenches 20m long and 1.6m wide, located to target the footprint of the proposed hall, the access from Cox's Road, and the footprints of proposed building plots 1-8 and 24-25. Topsoil and any other overburden was to be removed by a JCB- type machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under constant archaeological supervision. Metal detectors were to be used to enhance the recovery of metal finds.

Where archaeological features were certainly or probably present, the stripped areas were to be cleaned using appropriate hand tools. Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits exposed were to be excavated or sampled by hand to satisfy the aims of the brief, this work was to take place so as not to compromise the integrity of any features that might warrant preservation *in situ* or might be better investigated under the

conditions pertaining to full excavation. A programme of environmental sampling was to take place should suitable deposits be located.

## **Results**

Six trenches were excavated using a JCB-type digger fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, continuously monitored by an experienced archaeologist. The trenches all measured 1.6m wide, and were between 20.14m and 23.17m in length and were 0.28m to 0.80m deep (Fig. 3). All spoil heaps were monitored.

A complete list of trenches giving lengths, breadths, depths and a description of sections and geology is given in Appendix 1. A summary of excavated features forms Appendix 2.

### Trench 1

Trench 1 was aligned SE–NW and was 22.34m long and 0.30m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.10m topsoil and 0.11m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological features were identified.

### Trench 2

Trench 2 was aligned W–E and was 21.52m long and 0.35m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.10m topsoil and 0.15m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological features were identified.

### Trench 3

Trench 3 was aligned SW–NE and was 20.15m long and 0.60m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.18m topsoil and 0.42m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological features were identified.

### Trench 4 (Fig. 4; Pls 1 and 3)

Trench 4 was aligned SW–NE and was 21.0m long and 0.80m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.13m topsoil and 0.47m subsoil which overlay 0.20m of yellow grey silty clay which in turn overlay the natural geology. Two possible archaeological features were investigated in this trench. At 3.5m from the south-west end was an oval pit (2), 0.80m long, 0.50m wide and just 0.06m deep with a flat base. It contained two fills: a very dark brown silty clay with charcoal flecks, heavily root-disturbed (51) and a reddish brown silty clay (52), also root-disturbed. Neither fill produced any finds and it is possible that this is no more than a roothole. At 19m from the south-west end of the trench was ditch 1, which was aligned perpendicular to the trench (almost north-south) and was 1.30m wide. A 0.8m long slot was excavated, showing it to have a shallow U-shaped profile, 0.30m deep

(Pl. 3) with a single fill of dark red-brown silty clay (50) with angular limestone inclusions, but no finds were recovered. It is possible that this is a fairly modern field boundary.

#### Trench 5 (Fig. 4 and Pls 2 and 4)

Trench 5 was aligned SE–NW and was 23.17 long and 0.50m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.20m topsoil and 0.30m subsoil overlying the natural geology. At 18m from the south end, possible gully (3) was aligned west-east across the trench. It was 0.45m wide (widening to 0.6m towards the east) but only 0.09m deep (Pl. 4), and contained a red-brown silty clay fill (53) but no finds were recovered. It is possible that this feature is of natural origin.

#### Trench 6

Trench 6 was aligned SW–NE and was 20.14m long and 0.28m deep. The stratigraphy comprised 0.08m topsoil and 0.12m subsoil overlying natural geology. No archaeological features were identified.

### **Finds**

No finds were recovered from the site, neither from the spoilheaps nor investigated features.

### **Conclusion**

The evaluation revealed few deposits that could be considered as being of archaeological interest. Two investigated features are of very doubtful archaeological relevance and a better considered as being of natural origin. A third feature, is likely to be a ditch, but did not produce any dating evidence. As it seems to be on the same alignment as Cox's Lane, it is tentatively considered to be a relatively modern (post-medieval) field boundary. No artefacts of archaeological interest were recovered and this, together with the paucity of cut deposits, suggests that the site has no archaeological potential.

### **References**

- BGS, 1958, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50000, Sheet 218, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- Coddington, H, 2010, 'Land off Cox's Lane, Enstone: design brief for archaeological field evaluation', Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service, Oxford
- PPS5, 2010, *Planning for the Historic Environment*, Planning Policy Statement 5, The Stationery Office, Norwich
- McNicoll-Norbury, J and Lewis, J, 2010, 'St Kenelm's Church, Church Enstone, Oxfordshire: an archaeological watching brief', Thames Valley Archaeological Services unpubl rep 10/41, Reading
- Williams, A and Martin, G H, 2002, *Domesday Book, a complete translation*, London

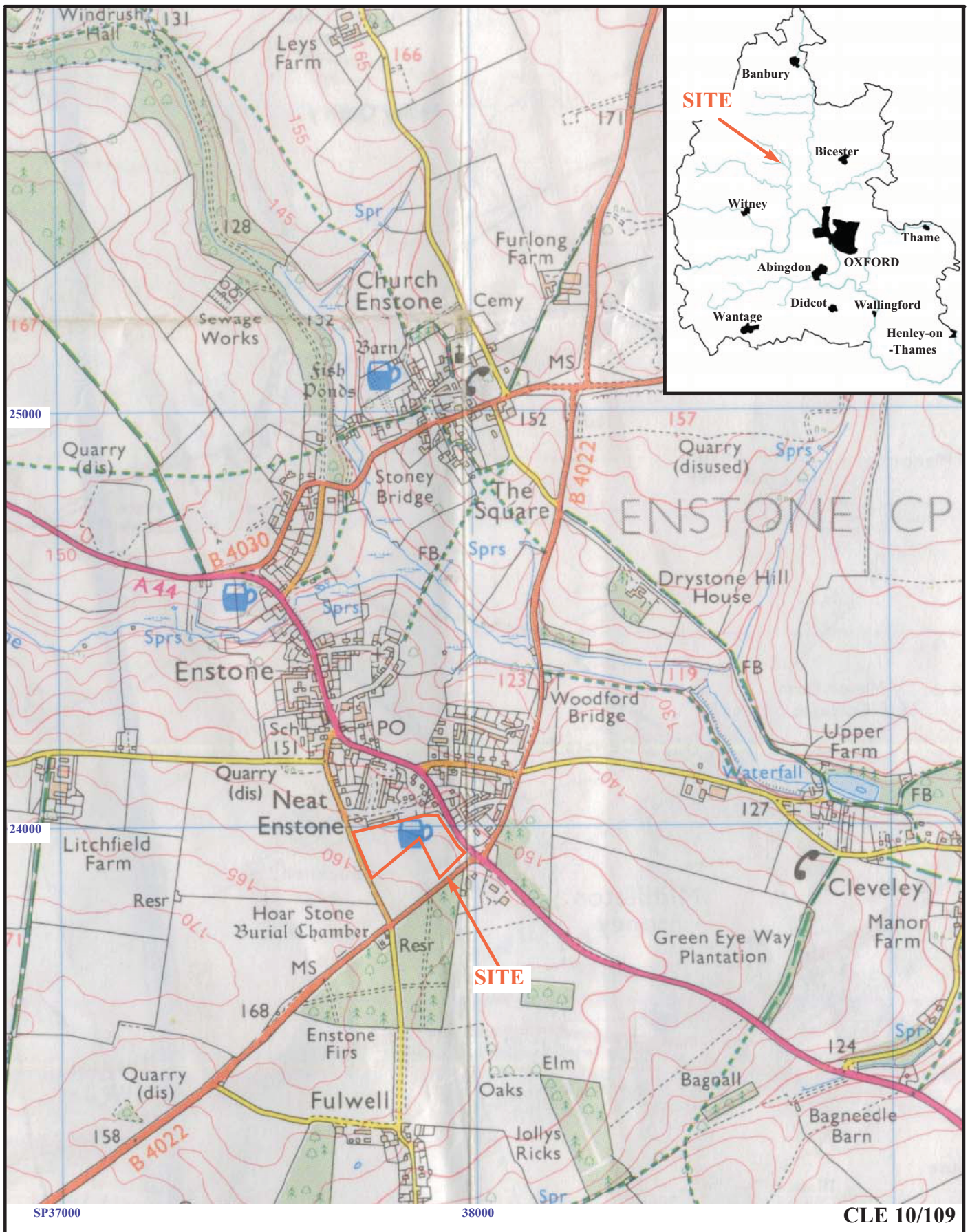
**APPENDIX 1: Trench details**  
 0m at W, SW or SE end

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Length (m)</i>	<i>Breadth (m)</i>	<i>Depth (m)</i>	<i>Comment</i>
1	22.34	1.6	0.30	0–0.10m topsoil; 0.10–0.21m subsoil; 0.21m+ limestone natural geology.
2	21.52	1.6	0.35	0–0.10m topsoil; 0.10–0.25m subsoil; 0.25m natural geology.
3	20.15	1.6	0.60	0–0.18m topsoil; 0.18–0.60m subsoil; 0.60m+ natural geology.
4	21.00	1.6	0.80	0–0.13m topsoil; 0.13–0.60m subsoil; 0.60–0.80m yellow grey layer; 0.80m+ natural geology. Ditch 1, Pit/ roothole 2; <b>[Pls 1 and 3]</b>
5	23.17	1.6	0.50	0–0.20m topsoil; 0.20–0.50m subsoil; 0.50m+ natural geology. Possible gully 3, <b>[Pls 2 and 4]</b>
6	20.14	1.6	0.28	0–0.08m topsoil; 0.08–0.20m subsoil; 0.20m+ natural geology.



**APPENDIX 2: Feature details**

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Cut</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
4	1	50	Ditch	Unphased	None
4	2	51, 52	Pit or roothole ?	Unphased	None
5	3	53	Gully or geological stripe	Unphased	None

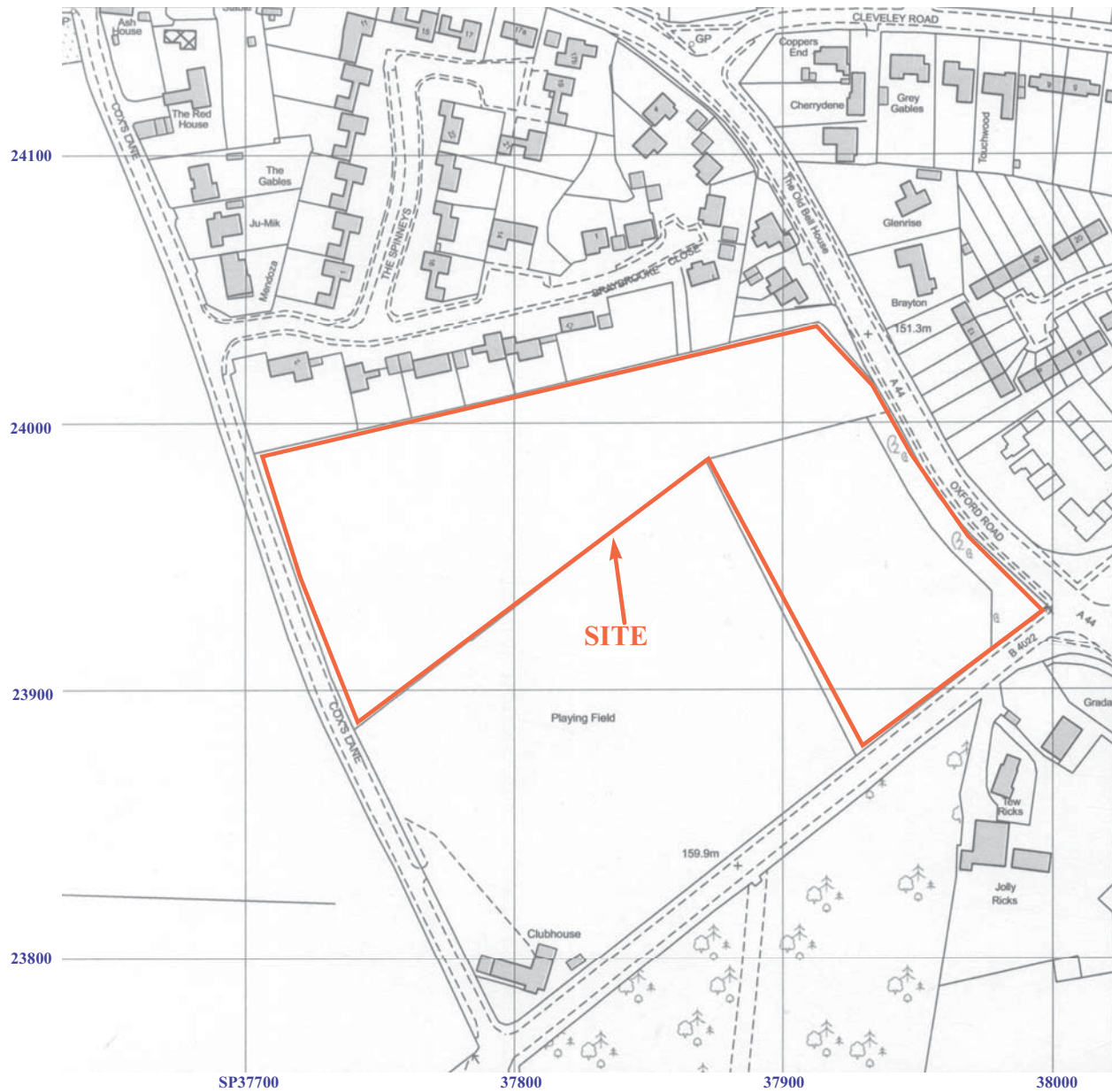


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Figure 1. Location of site within Enstone and Oxfordshire.

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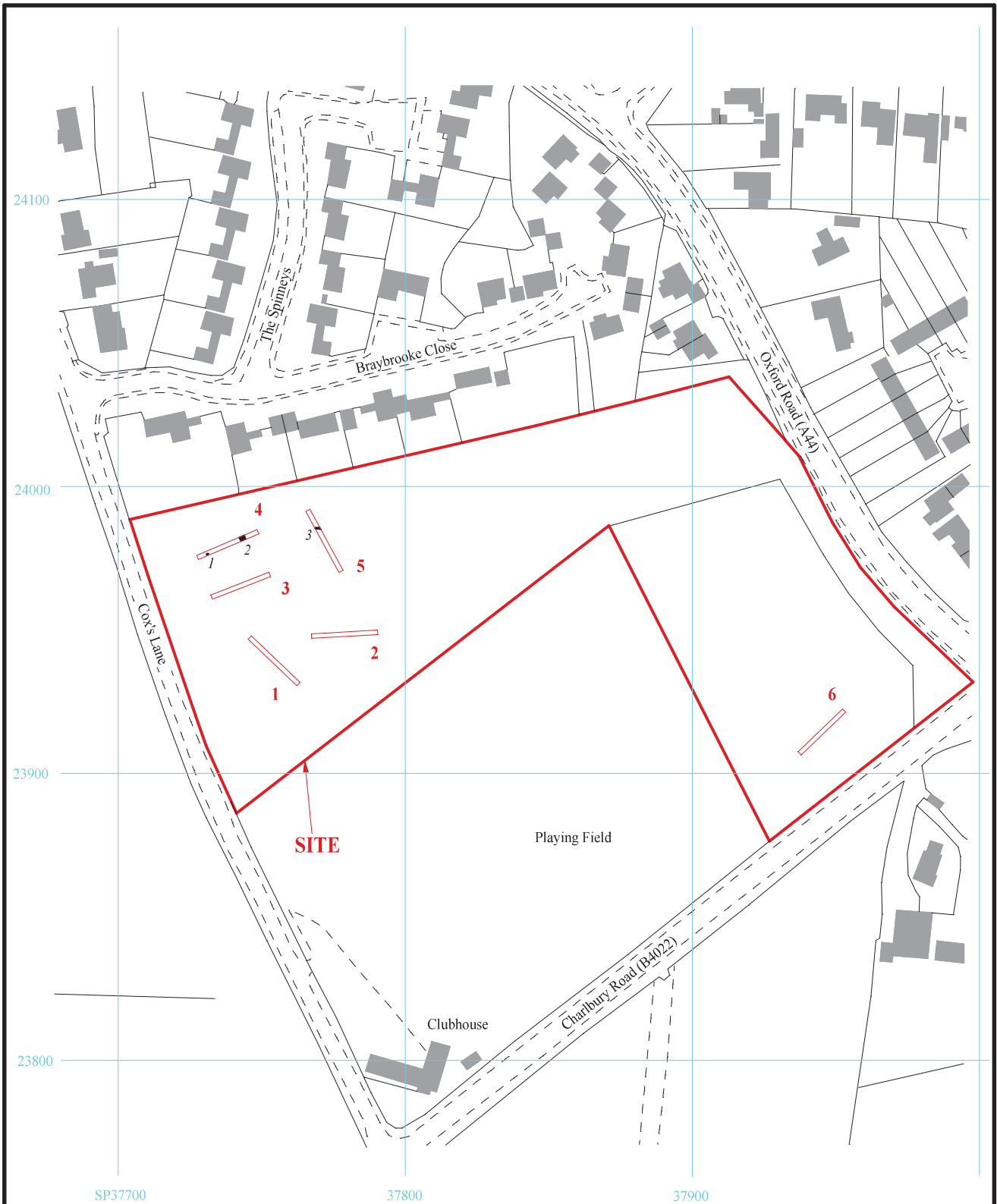


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Figure 2. Detailed location of site off Cox's Lane.

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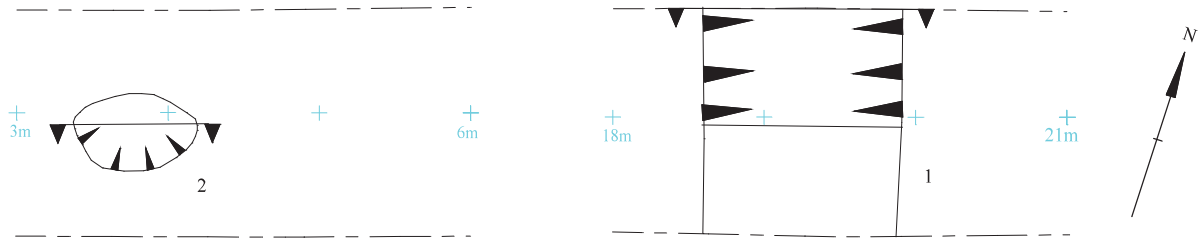
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Figure 3. Location of trenches.

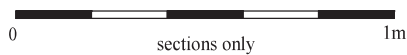
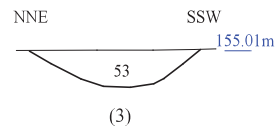
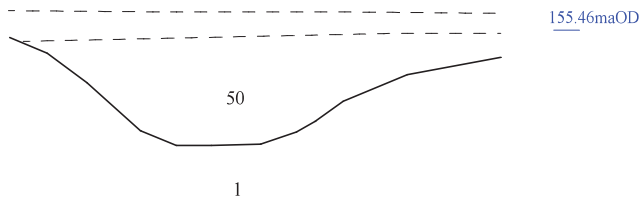
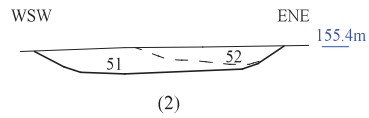
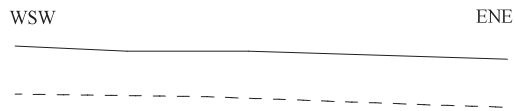
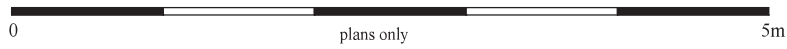
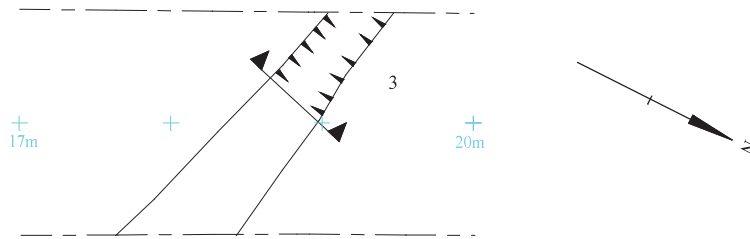


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Trench 4



Trench 5



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Figure 4. Detail of Trenches 4 and 5.



Plate 1. Trench 4, looking north east, scales 2m, 1m and 0.4m



Plate 2. Trench 5, looking north west scales 2m, 1m and 0.4m

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Plates 1 and 2

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Plate 3. Trench 4, ditch 1, looking north west, scales 1m and 0.4m.



Plate 4. Trench 5, possible gully 3, looking east, scales 0.4 and 0.1m

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Plates 3 and 4.

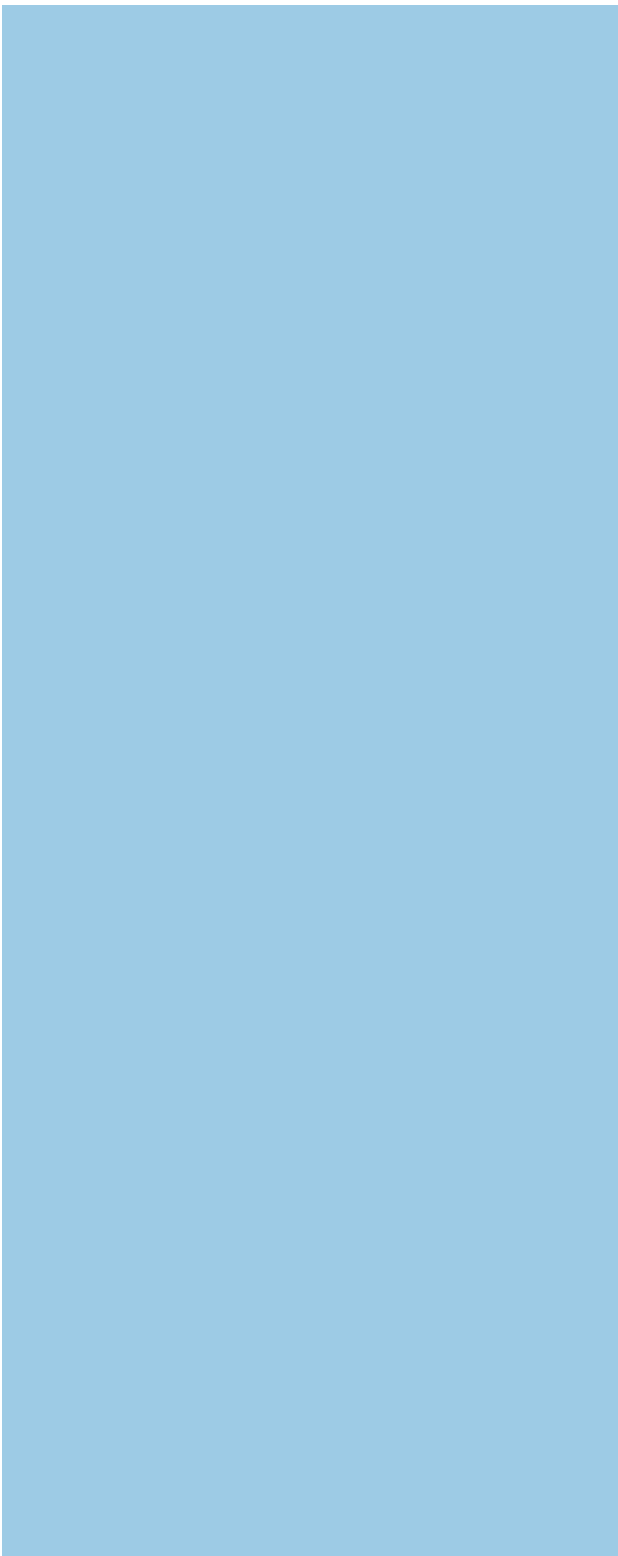
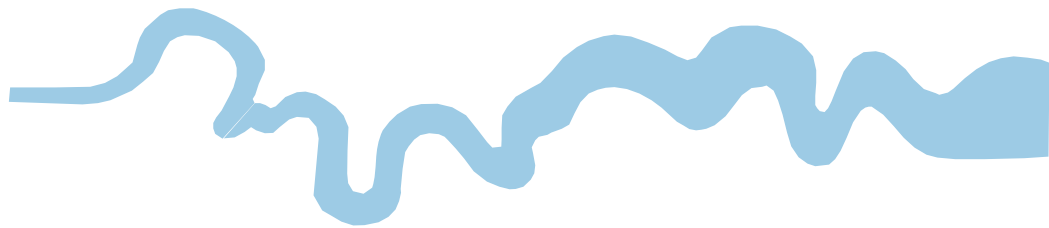
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## TIME CHART

	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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