

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**New Manege, Nursery Farm, Gatehampton Road,
Goring-on-Thames, Oxfordshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andrew Muddin

Site Code: NFG10/114

(SU 6070 7980)

**New Manege, Nursery Farm, Gatehampton Road,
Goring-on-Thames, Oxfordshire**

An Archaeological Watching Brief

For Mr and Mrs Edmunds

by Andrew Munding

Thames Valley Archaeological Services

Ltd

Site Code NFG 10/114

November 2010

Summary

Site name: New Manege, Nursery Farm, Gatehampton Road, Goring-on-Thames, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SU 6070 7980

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 25th -26th October 2010

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Andrew Munding

Site code: NFG 10/114

Area of site: 1075 sq m of topsoil and turf stripping

Summary of results: No archaeological features were discovered, but two sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from the subsoil.

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

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 02.11.10 Steve Preston ✓ 01.11.10

New Manege, Nursery Farm, Gatehampton Road, Goring-on-Thames, Oxfordshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Andrew Munding

Report 10/114

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out during construction of a manege at Nursery Farm, which is part of Gatehampton Farm, Gatehampton Road, Goring-on-Thames (SU 6070 7980) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Roger and Sarah Edmunds, 2 Hope Cottage, Reading Road, Woodcote, Reading, RE8 0QY.

Planning permission (P10/W1050) was granted by South Oxfordshire District Council to construct a manege on existing grazing land for private use. Due to the potential of the site, located close to a complex of Roman archaeology, the consent was subject to a condition requiring a watching brief during groundworks for the manege.

The watching brief 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's policies on archaeology. The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Mr Richard Oram, Planning Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service and based on a brief supplied by him (Oram 2010). The fieldwork was undertaken by Andrew Munding on the 25th and 26th October 2010 and the site code is NFG 10/114.

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

Location, topography and geology

The site is located to the south of Goring-on-Thames, north of the River Thames and on the western side of Gatehampton Farm and Manor (Figs 1 and 2). Currently used as grazing land, the site lies at c.45m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). It slopes down gently to the south and west, with the underlying geology being valley gravel over upper chalk (BGS 1946). Geologically, the Goring Gap marks the point within the chalk ridge where the Chiltern Hills and the Berkshire Downs meet, which has been broken through by the course of the River Thames and its valley.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential for this site has been highlighted by a project brief prepared by Oxfordshire County Archaeological Service (Oram 2010). In summary, a Roman villa complex lies 100m to the north east of the development area, which is currently a part of a research excavation carried out by the South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group (SOAG). Their findings suggest a structure of some status, built of stone, with evidence of tessellated flooring, hypocaust; cobbles, chalk and *opus signinum* surfacing (Williams 2008). Recently, a corn drier has been identified with further investigation outside the buildings structure, along with Iron Age boundary ditches (Williams 2010).

This building seems to be set within a complex of archaeological deposits of several periods on both sides of the River Thames (Gates 1975). These have mostly been identified as cropmarks visible from the air with a ring ditch cemetery present (levelled Bronze Age round barrows) and various enclosure complexes presumably of Iron Age and Roman date (Fig. 3). A small excavation in advance of a water processing plant identified an area of Upper Palaeolithic and Neolithic occupation (Allen 1995). Saxon occupation is recorded to the south of the River.

Gatehampton (*Gadintone*) formed two small manors of no great account at the time of Domesday Book (AD 1086), held by William de Warenne and Miles Crispin (Williams and Martin 2002, 432; 437)

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits which would be possibly damaged or destroyed by the groundworks. This was to involve examination of the stripping of topsoil/turf and any subsoil which was carried out by a small 360° machine fitted with a ditching bucket. The spoilheaps and exposed surfaces were to be searched for finds and scanned using a metal detector.

Results (Fig. 4)

A rectangular area of ground 40.9m by 26.3m was initially stripped of turf which was to be stored on the southern edge of the site. This was to be used to fill the remaining ground to a raised level at 43.1m aOD. Due to the gentle fall of slope from north to south and east to west across the site, the deepest point of excavation was at its northern edge. This was investigated with a further machined trench, dug to the deepest level of truncation, which cut into the subsoil (51). Towards the north-west two stray Roman pottery sherds were recovered (Fig. 4).

The remaining deposits contained very occasional abraded tile fragments, modern metal finds, wire cabling and plastic finds. The lowest depth of excavation was seen on this northern edge which removed 0.37m of topsoil, to a depth of 0.52m of subsoil/ploughsoil. The top of the natural gravel geology (the archaeologically relevant horizon) was not uncovered although pockets of disturbed gravel were encountered within the subsoil. No deposits of archaeological significance were uncovered. The remainder of the area to the south was built up.

Finds

Pottery

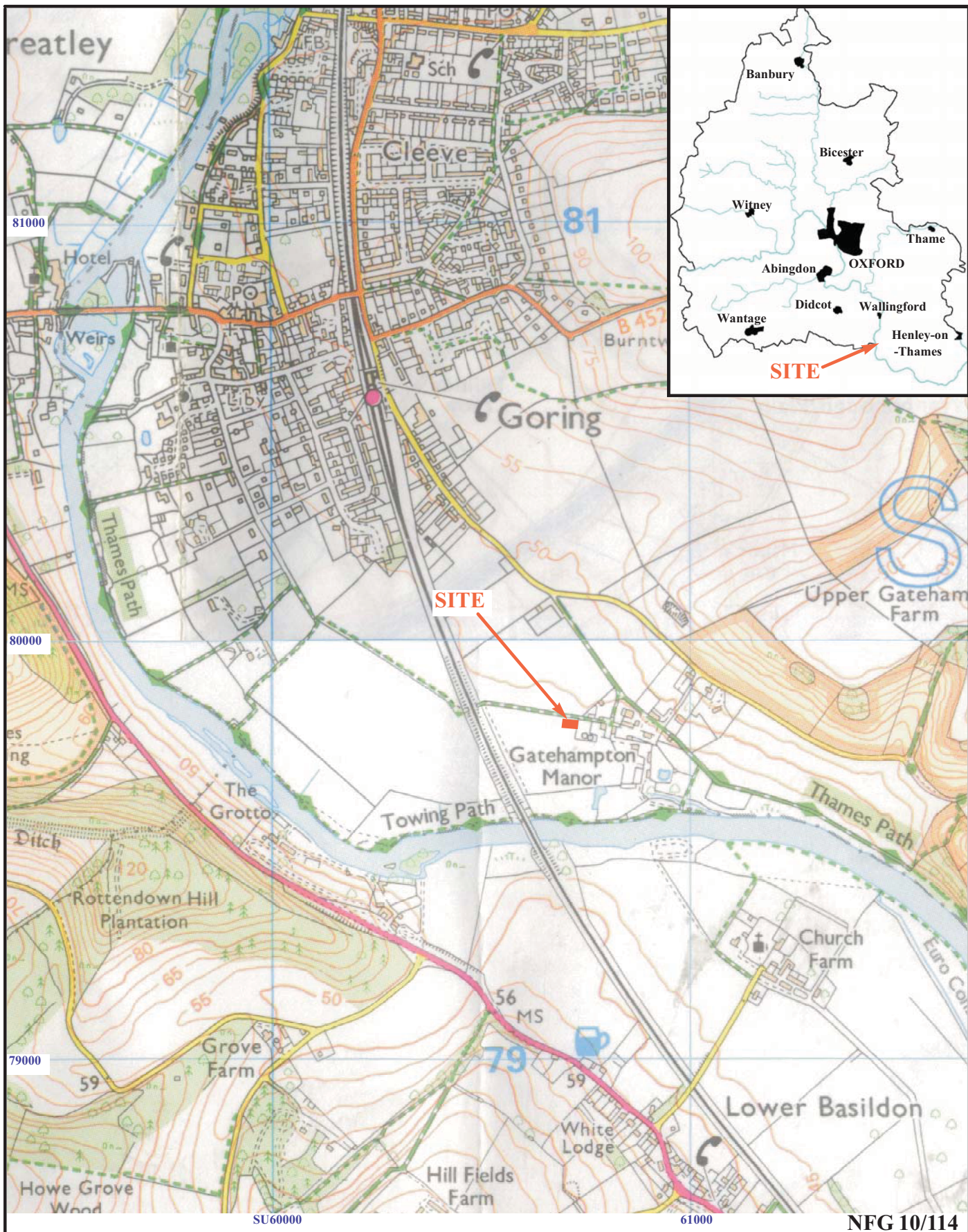
Two sherds of pottery were recovered from the subsoil (51). One is a hard-fired dark brown fabric with grog tempering, of late 1st century BC to late 1st century AD date, and the other is greyware of a type common throughout the Roman period. Both are non-distinctive body sherds weighing 3g each.

Conclusion

No archaeologically relevant deposits were uncovered or disturbed by the groundworks with the underlying natural geology was not exposed during the groundworks. The two sherds of Roman pottery may have been introduced to the site such as during the manuring of farmland.

References

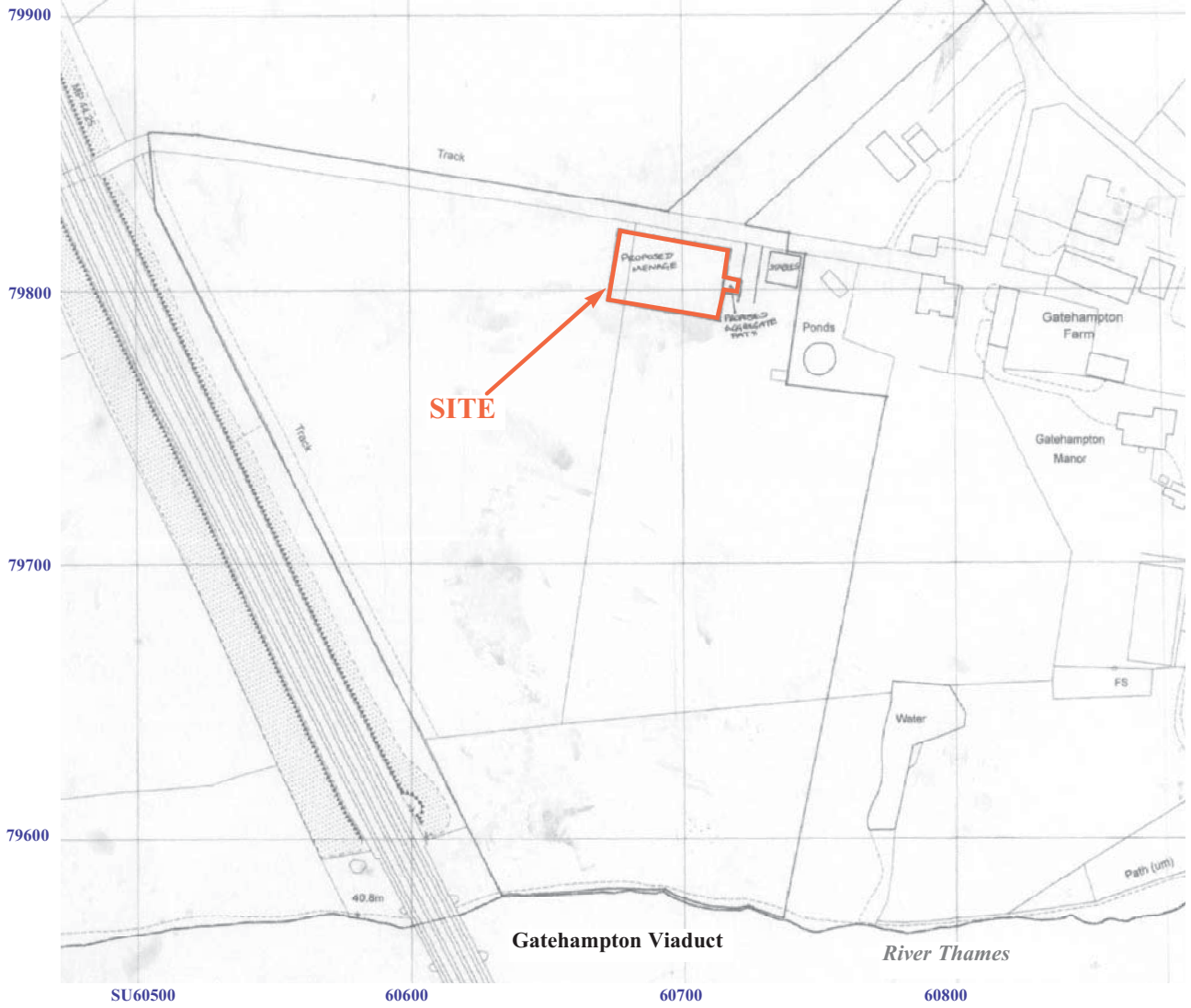
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**New Manege, Nursery Farm, Gatehampton Road,
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Figure 1. Location of site in relation to Gatehampton, Goring on Thames and within Oxfordshire.

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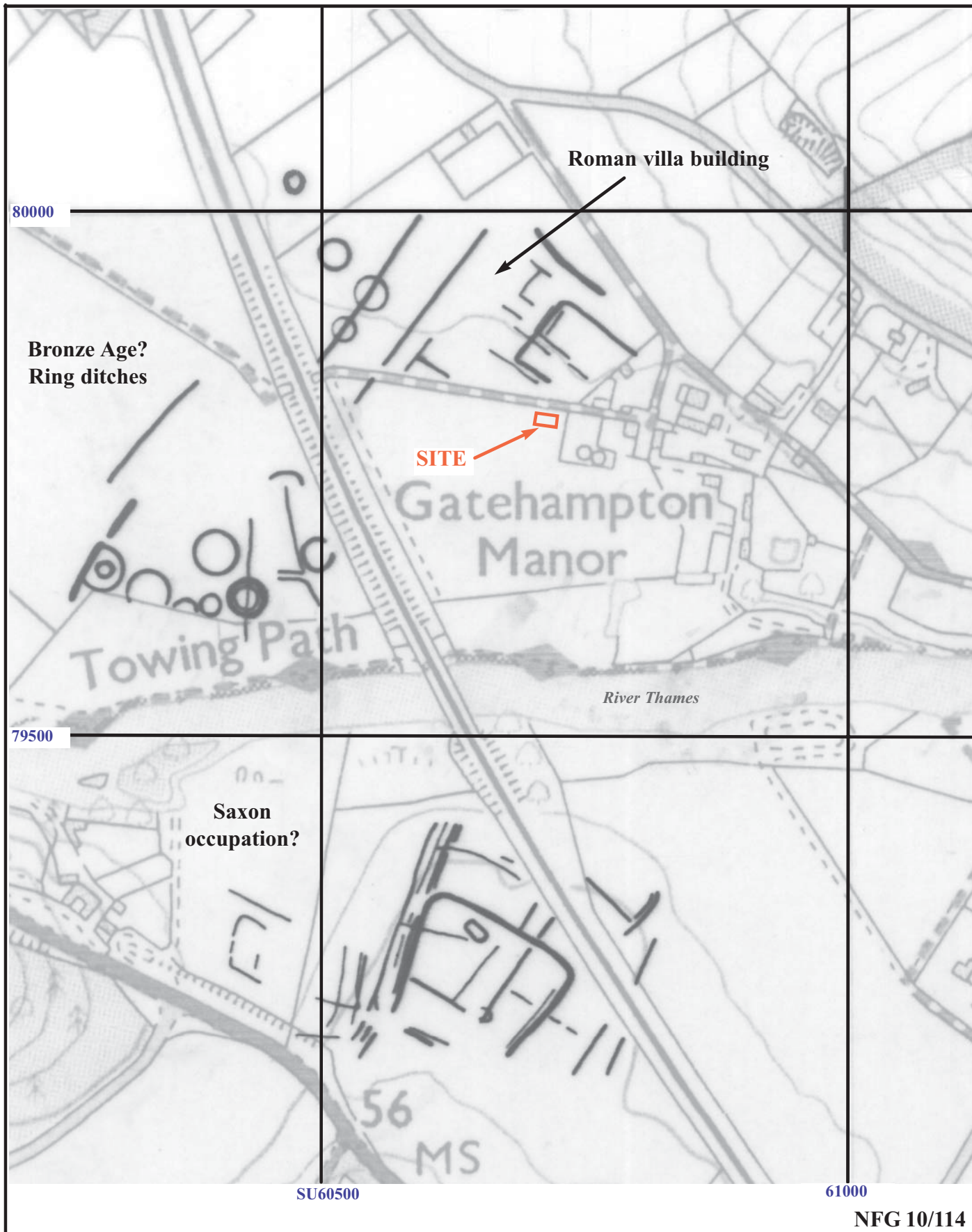


NFG 10/114

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.**

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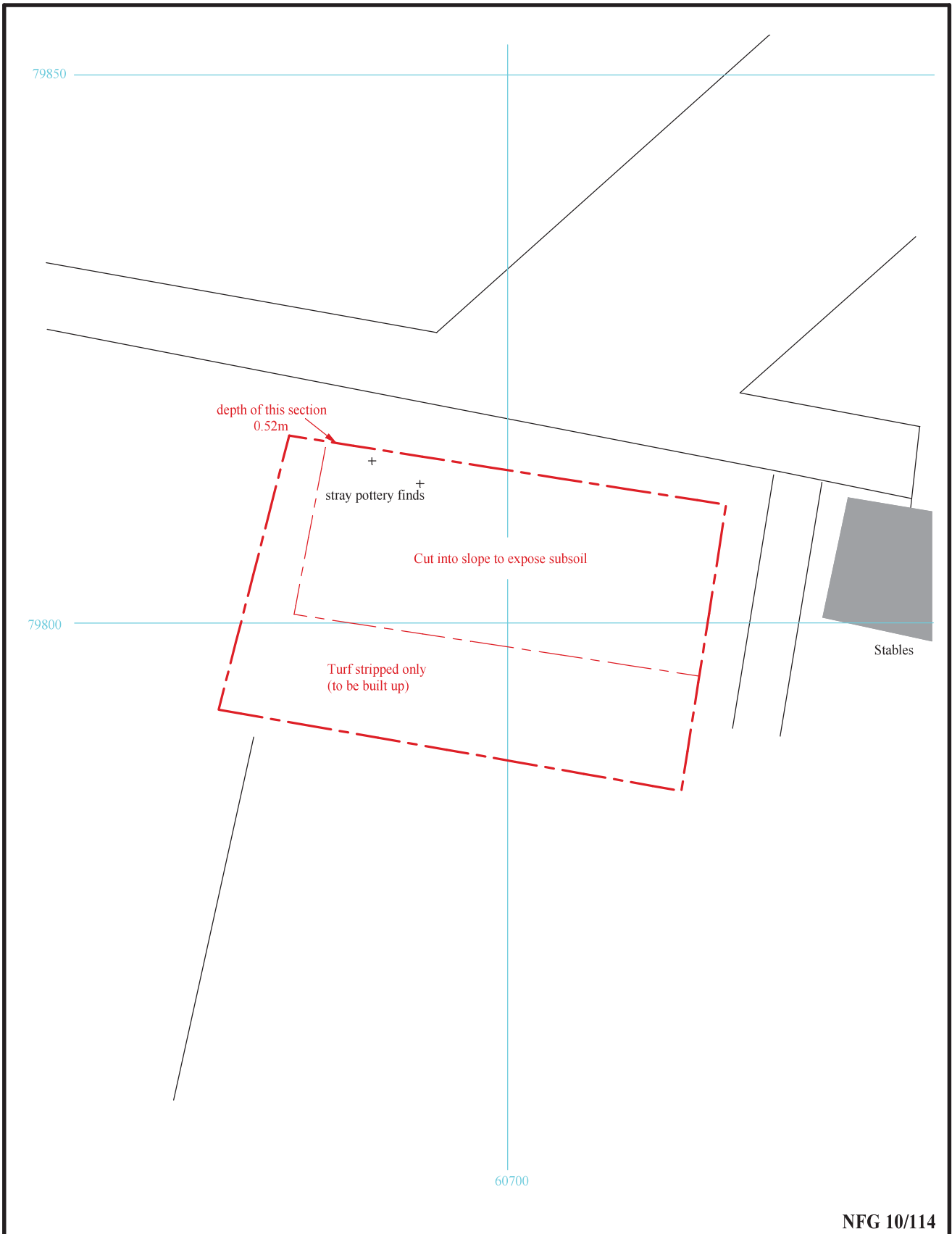


NFG 10/114

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Archaeological watching brief**

Figure 3. Cropmark plot out at Gatehampton.

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Figure 4. Location of observed area.



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Plate 1. Machine trench into ploughsoil/subsoil, looking toward turf strip (south westwards).



Plate 2. Final level of strip looking north east, scale, 1m.

NFG 10/114

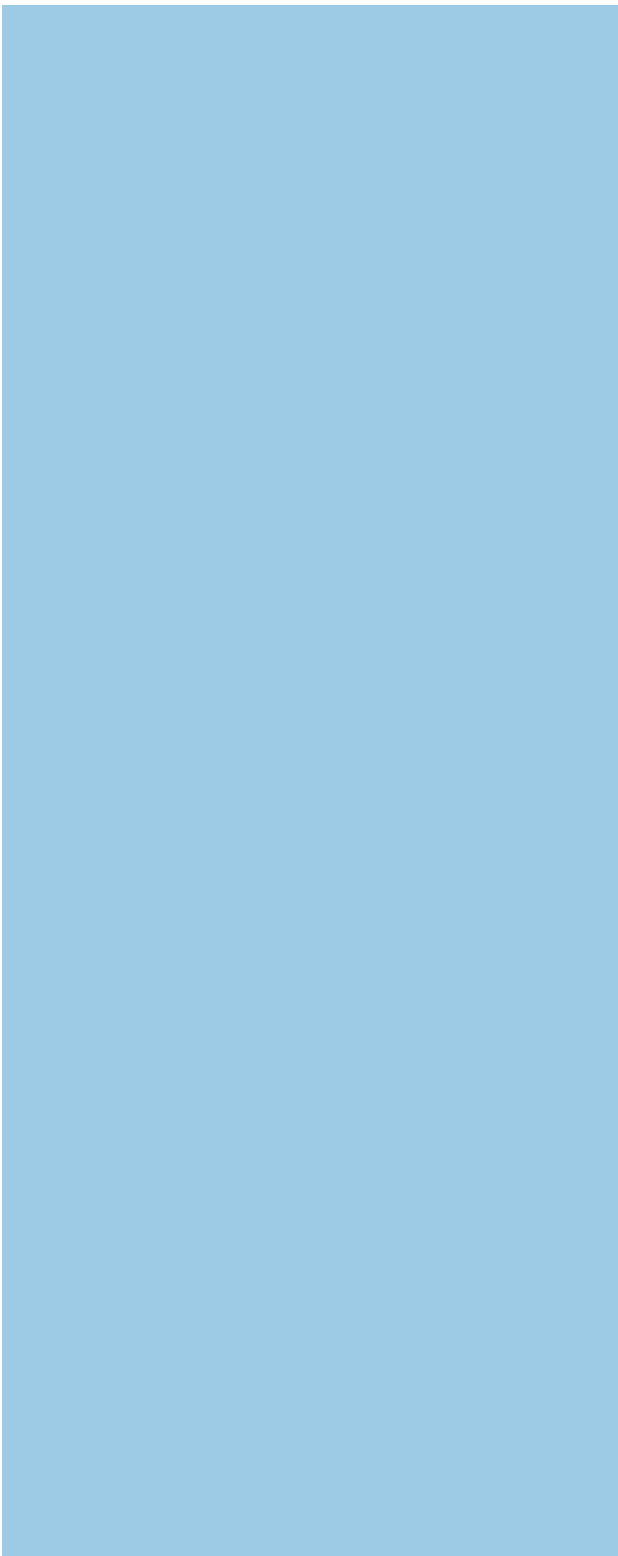
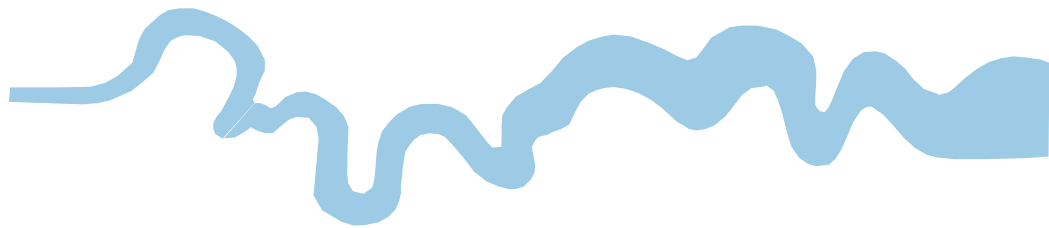
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Plates 1 and 2**

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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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