

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

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**147 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham,
Reading, Berkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

by Anne-Michelle Huvig

Site Code: 147UWR25/115

(SU 6972 7599)

**147 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham,
Reading, Berkshire**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief
for Mr and Mrs Bhupinder and Mr Tajinder Pureval**

by Anne-Michelle Huvig
Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code 147 UWR 25/115

June 2025

Summary

Site name: 147 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire

Grid reference: SU 6972 7599

Site activity: Watching Brief

Date and duration of project: 25th - 26th June 2025

Project coordinator: David Sanchez

Site supervisor: Camila Carvalho and Emily Gibson

Site code: 147UWR 25/115

Summary of results: The footings for a new extension were monitored. No archaeological features were observed with only made ground seen. No finds of archaeological interest were noted.

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

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www.tvas.co.uk/reports/reports.asp.*

Report edited/checked by:	Steve Ford✓ 30.06.25 Steve Preston✓ 30.06.25
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147 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading, Berkshire An Archaeological Watching Brief

by Anne-Michelle Huvig

Report 25/115

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at 147 Upper Woodcote Road, Caversham, Reading, RG4 7JR (NGR: SU 6972 7599) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Tajinder Purewal on behalf of himself and Mr and Mrs Bhupinder.

Planning permission (PL/23/0726) was granted by Reading Borough Council for extensions to the existing house. The consent is subject to an archaeological condition (4), which requires a watching brief to take place during groundworks because they could affect below ground archaeological assets.

This is in accordance with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF 2024) and the District's policies on archaeology (Policies EN1 and EN2 of the Reading Local Plan 2019). The field investigation was carried out to a specification approved by Dr Edwin Wood of Berkshire Archaeology, the archaeological advisers to the Borough. The fieldwork was undertaken by Camila Carvalho and Emily Gibson, on 25th and 26th June 2025 and the site code is 147UWR25/115.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with the Archaeology Data Service in due course.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located along the western side of Upper Woodcote Road, c.2km west of Caversham, in the Borough of Reading, Berkshire and c.3km north-west of the centre of Reading (Fig. 1). The site is a roughly rectangular plot of land of about c.1200 sq m, occupied by a private property, on the western edge of a residential area backing onto open land. The site is located on Seaford Chalk Formation and Newhaven Chalk Formation overlain by Boyn Hill gravel (5th terrace), at or close to its junction with the Black Park gravel (6th terrace) (BGS 2000). It is basically flat and lies at a height of approximately 75m above Ordnance Datum, the natural topography sloping down gently from north-west to south-east. The geology observed on site was a light brownish yellow silty sand and gravels, which could match either terrace.

Archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location within the archaeologically rich Thames Valley (Booth *et al.* 2007; Lambrick *et al.* 2009) with a wide range of sites and finds recorded in the Berkshire Historic Environment Record. In particular a Roman building with coins, pottery, and building materials was found in the garden of ‘Hillingdon’ on Upper Woodcote Road close to Blagrave Farm (Seaby 1934). Evaluation and follow-up excavation 30m to the north revealed additional Roman deposits relating to this site (Attard 2019; Manisse 2022). The wider environs of the site have yielded various findspots of Neolithic and Bronze Age flintwork, Iron Age, Roman and Medieval pottery and undated human burials. Bronze Age occupation was recorded on St Peter’s Hill to the south-east (Ford and Raymond 2013). Medieval and extensive prehistoric occupation has also been recorded on the Mapledurham and Caversham Golf Courses to the north (Ford 1991; Hull 1998). A Roman enclosure is also reported to the north on Mapledurham playing fields (BA 2020). The environs of the site are also noteworthy for the presence of Palaeolithic finds of flint handaxes and other tools (Wymer 1968), while Blagrave Farm just to the north may have medieval origins. Recent work in the wider vicinity routinely recovers evidence from a range of periods (Attard *et al.* 2025).

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the watching brief was to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the new development. This involved permanent monitoring of all areas of intrusive groundworks and included observation of surface stripping, ground reduction to the top of the relevant horizon and the excavating of foundation trenches, service trenches, landscaping works and all other invasive work as necessary. The work was to comply with the relevant *Standard and Guidance* of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2020).

Results (Figs. 2 and 3; Pls 1–4)

The main length of the footings was dug by a 360° tracked excavator equipped with ditching or digging buckets. Some of the trench footings were not dug as it was decided to use the existing ones from the previous house as a base. The new footings concern mainly the north-east corner, the north-west, west and south sides (see Fig. 2). Modern truncation (a manhole, various cables and pipes) disturbed the general area, in particular to the north-east. The trenches were 0.70m wide and about 1.10m deep at their maximum.

The stratigraphy consisted usually of topsoil, a mid brownish grey silty sand with occasional roots and frequent gravels/pebbles, or a made ground (up to 0.65m thick). The topsoil varies in depth. It was around 0.25m

in the north-east side and 0.30m to 0.40m on the south-west side (Pl. 1). The made ground was a dark grey brown silty sand with gravels and brick/tile. The natural horizon was a light brownish yellow silty sand and gravels. No subsoil was seen, suggesting the site had been levelled, presumably when the existing house was built. No archaeological features or deposits were observed.

Findings

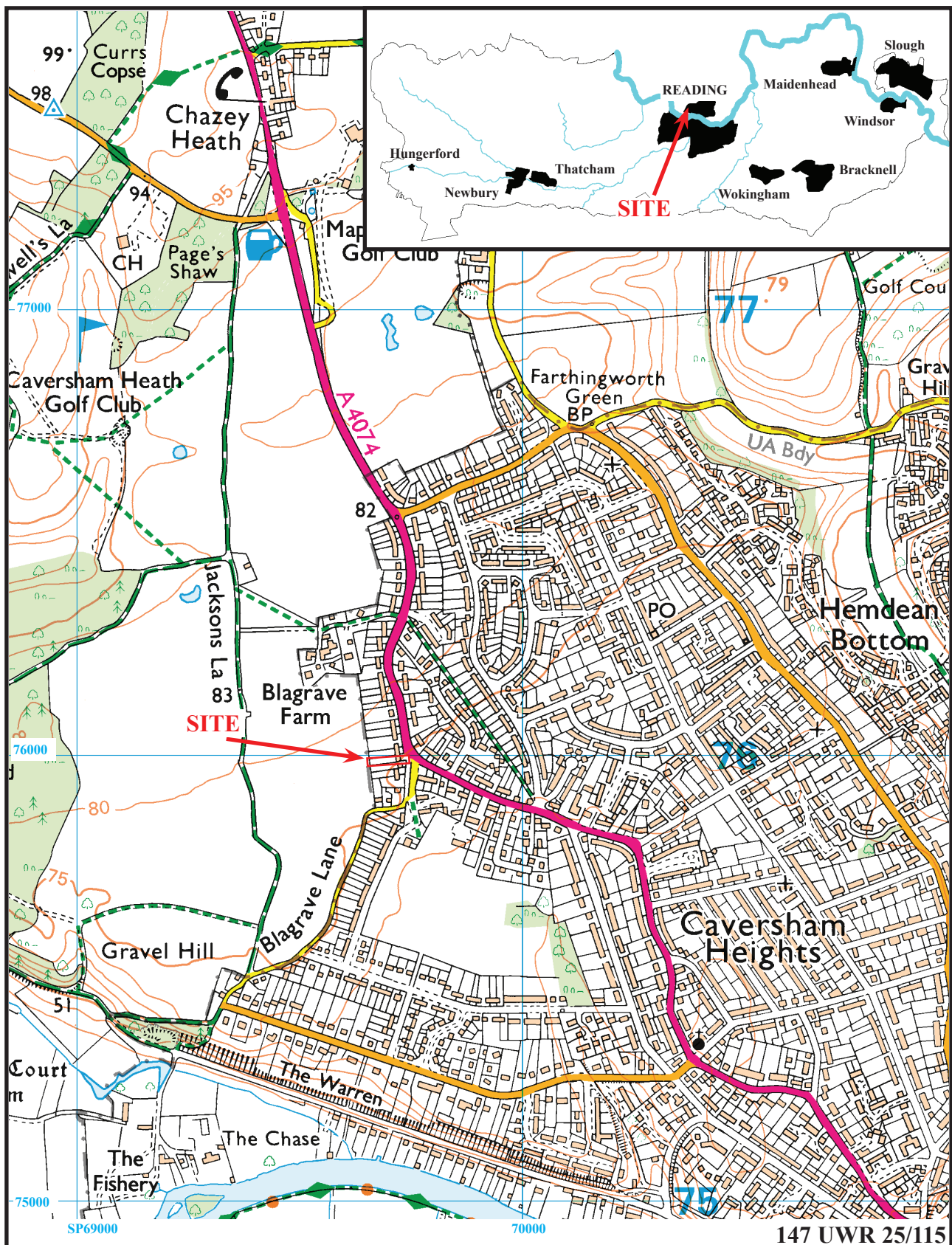
No artefacts of archaeological interest were recovered.

Conclusion

The groundworks partially re-used existing footings which limited exposure of the natural geology but additional trenchers ones were dug for the remodelling of the property. This occurred under constant archaeological supervision. However, it did not reveal any archaeologically relevant deposits or artefacts on this occasion.

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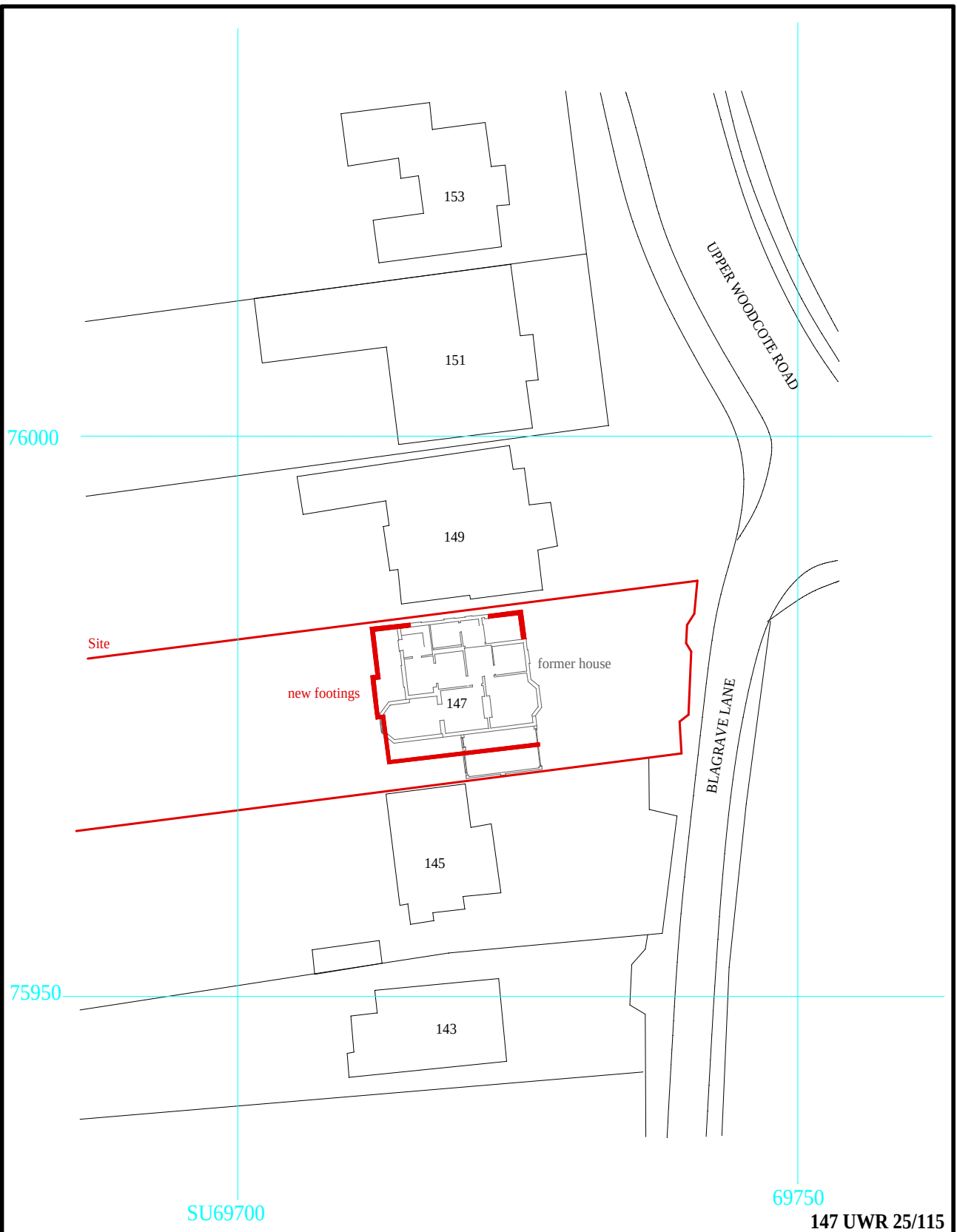
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Figure 1. Location of site within Reading and Berkshire.

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Figure 2. Location of monitored footings



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S N [76.5m aOD](#)

Topsoil

Natural geology

----- base of trench

E W [76.8m aOD](#)

Made ground

----- Natural geology base of trench

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Figure 3. Representative sections of footings.

0 1m

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Plate 1. South-western section, corner footing, looking West, Scales: 1m and 0.5m



Plate 2. Southern east-west trench footing, looking South, Scales: 2m and 1m



Plate 3. Northern east-west trench footing, looking East, Scales: 2m and 1m



Plate 4. Site view, looking West, Scales: 2m and 1m.

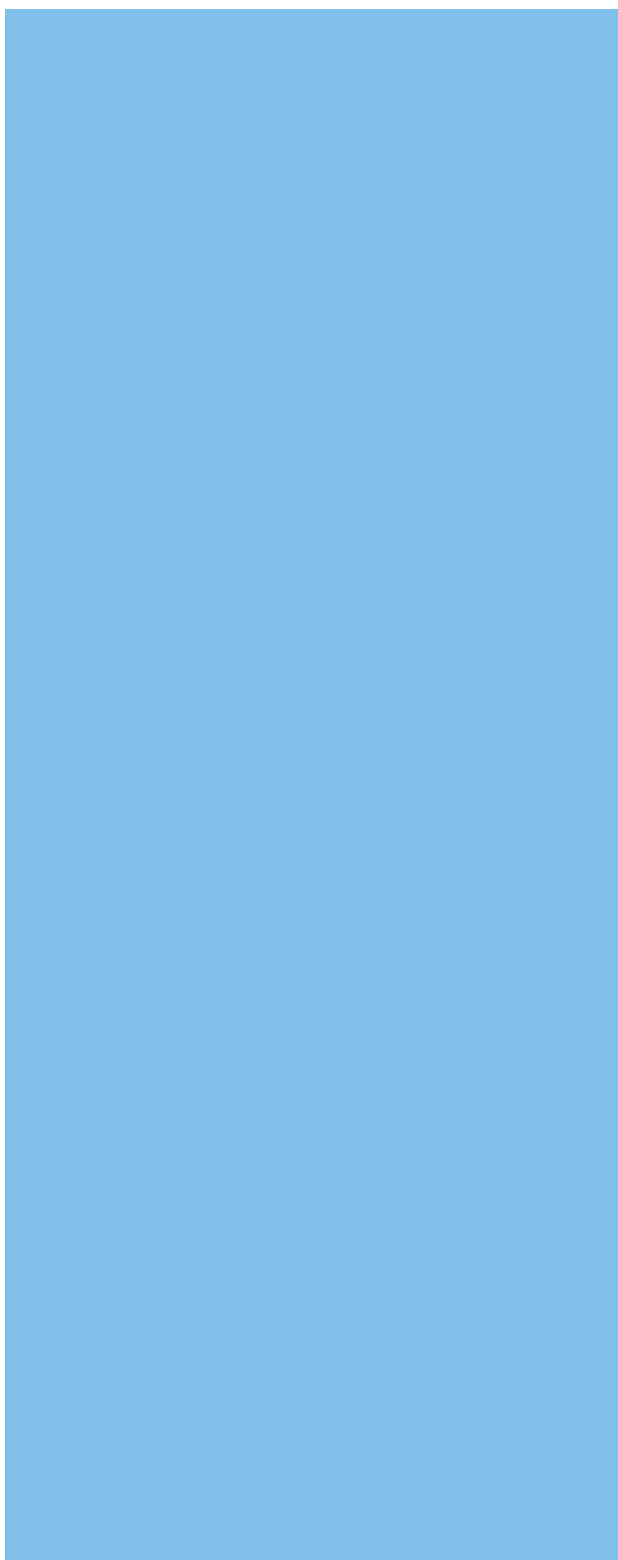
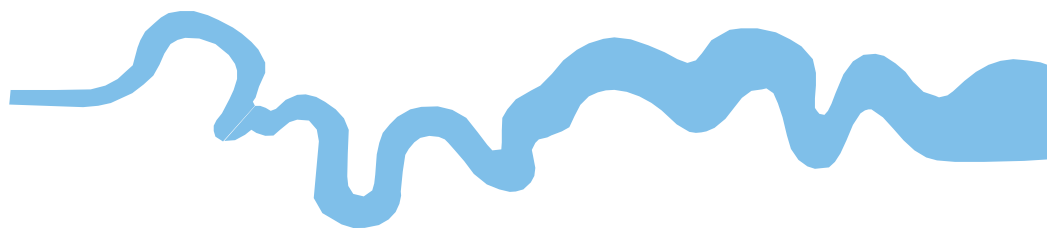
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Plates 1 to 4

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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
	AD 0 BC
Iron Age _____	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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