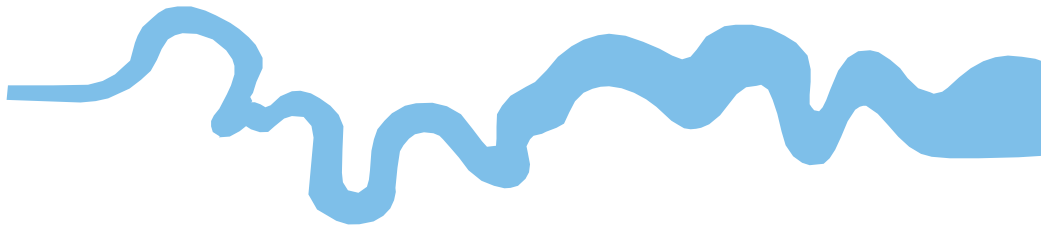


**T V A S**



**SOUTH**

**The Shelleys Hotel, High Street,  
Lewes, East Sussex**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**by Sean Wallis and Jim Webster**

**Site Code: SHL15/230**

**(TQ 4112 1000)**

# **The Shelleys Hotel, High Street, Lewes, East Sussex**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief**

**For The Shelleys Hotel**

by Sean Wallis and Jim Webster

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code SHL15/230

**May 2017**

## Summary

**Site name:** The Shelleys Hotel, High Street, Lewes. East Sussex

**Grid reference:** TQ 4112 1000

**Planning reference:** SDNP/14/05918/FUL

**Site activity:** Watching Brief

**Date and duration of project:** 28th – 31st March 2017

**Project manager:** Sean Wallis

**Site supervisor:** Jim Webster

**Site code:** SHL15/230

**Area of site:** c. 115 sq m

**Summary of results:** The watching brief at the Shelleys Hotel successfully investigated those parts of the site which were to be most affected by the construction of the new boundary walls. The bottom courses of an earlier boundary wall were recorded, along with a pit, and part of a possible brick surface. All these features are likely to date from the late post-medieval period. The wall and brick surface were largely left *in situ*, with the new wall being built over them.

**Location and reference of archive:** The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading and will be deposited with an approved local museum in due course.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 15.05.17 Steve Preston ✓ 11.05.17
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# **The Shelleys Hotel, High Street, Lewes, East Sussex An Archaeological Watching Brief**

by Sean Wallis and Jim Webster

**Report 17/230**

## **Introduction**

This report documents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out at The Shelleys Hotel, High Street, Lewes, East Sussex (TQ 4112 1000) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by the hotel's manager, Mr Maximilian Hamilton.

Planning permission (SDNP/14/05918/FUL) and Listed Building Consent (SDNP/14/05988/LIS) had been gained from South Downs National Park Authority to construct new boundary walls along the frontage with the High Street. The permission was subject to a standard planning condition (6) relating to archaeology and the historic environment. This is in accordance with the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF, 2012) and the Authority's policies on archaeology and the historic environment. As a consequence of the possibility of archaeological deposits on site which may be damaged or destroyed by the building work, it was proposed to carry out a watching brief. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation approved by the East Sussex County Council Archaeological Officer (Mr Greg Chuter), who advises the Authority on archaeological matters.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Jim Webster between 28th and 31st March 2017, and the site code is SHL 15/230. The preferred depository for the site archive is Lewes Museum, but unfortunately the museum is not accepting new material at the present time. The archive will be held by Thames Valley Archaeological Services until a suitable repository is available.

## **Location, topography and geology**

The hotel is situated on the north side of Lewes High Street, just to the west of the historic core of the town (Figs 1 and 2). The new boundary walls were to be built along the street frontage, within the hotel's car park, which is located immediately to the east of the main building. The area is relatively flat, although there is a slight slope down towards the east, and lies at a height of approximately 34m above Ordnance Datum. According to the British Geological Survey the underlying geology consists of Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation (BGS 2006), and this was confirmed in those footing trenches which were dug to a sufficient depth.

## **Archaeological background**

The archaeological potential of the site stems from its location close to the historic core of Lewes, which was an important town in the medieval period, with Saxon origins. A search of the East Sussex Historic Environment Record was carried out in September 2015 to provide archaeological background information on the site. In summary, the site lies within an Archaeological Notification Area associated with the medieval and post-medieval settlement of Lewes. It is located at the western end of the High Street. The present hotel building contains elements dating from the 16th century, although there have been numerous later additions. Documentary evidence indicates that there was an inn, called the Vine, on the site in the early 16th century, although it is not clear if the present hotel relates to this building in any way. It was purchased by the Shelley family in 1663. Recent archaeological work in the area recorded post-medieval finds and garden features in the grounds of the hotel, whilst a post-medieval drain was observed during a watching brief in Paddock Lane to the north of the present site.

## **Objectives and methodology**

The aims of the watching brief were to excavate and record any archaeological deposits affected by the proposed groundworks. This was to involve the examination of all areas of intrusive groundworks, including any significant ground reduction and the digging of foundation trenches for the new boundary walls. Where archaeological deposits are found, and which could not be preserved *in situ*, the features were to be excavated by hand and fully recorded, to ensure their 'preservation by record'. Where appropriate and relevant, the recommendations in *Sussex Archaeological Standards* (ESCC 2015) were to be followed.

## **Results**

The footing trenches for the new walls were dug in three sections, with the gaps in between allowing for vehicular access (Figs 3 and 4). Due to the presence of several protected trees, and other logistical issues, the trenches were largely dug by hand, and were generally 0.5m wide, and between 0.16m and 0.5m deep (Fig 5). The area had been heavily disturbed by services and tree roots. The excavated/observed features are summarized in Appendix 1.

The buried remains of a wall (2), which previously ran along the street frontage, were recorded in all three footing trenches. At the far western end of the site, this wall was seen to support the existing car park wall (1) (Pl. 1). Along most of its length, wall 2 appeared to be faced with flint to the north, and brick to the south, with a

core consisting of sandy mortar and brick and flint fragments (Pl. 2). Wall 2 was largely encountered beneath 0.16m - 0.20m of Tarmac and made ground. Following discussions with the engineer, it was decided that the new wall could be built directly over wall 2, as this would provide a firm foundation. As a result, just a small section of wall 2, at its western end, was removed during the watching brief, and this revealed its probable construction cut (3). The backfill of the construction cut (53) had been disturbed by services and roots, but a number of clay pipe fragments were recovered from the deposit. A brick fragment from wall 2 appears to date from the mid 18th to mid 19th century. This date is supported by the fact that a wall is shown in this position on the First Edition Ordnance Survey from 1874.

The corner of a probable pit (4) was recorded in the eastern return of the central footing trench, beneath approximately 0.26m of Tarmac and made ground (52) (Pl. 3). Although only a small section of the feature was visible in the trench, it appeared to be rectangular in plan, and was at least 1.10m long and 0.60m wide. Although it could not be bottomed due to the narrowness of the footing trench, the pit was excavated by hand to a depth of 0.96m, and was seen to be filled with a deposit of loose dark greyish brown sandy silt (54). This deposit contained fragments of pottery, brick, clay pipe, glass, oyster shell and animal bone, along with a small piece of stone roofing slab, and a possible stone marble. The material recovered from the feature suggests a late 17th- to mid 18th-century date.

A small area of brickwork (5), possibly a buried floor surface or old path, was recorded at the end of the western return of the central footing trench (Pl. 4). As with wall 2, it was decided to leave this feature *in situ*, and build the new wall directly on top of it.

## **Finds**

### *Pottery* by Luke Barber

A single sherd of pottery was found within the fill of probable pit 4 (54). This consists of a pale/late bodysherd (6g) from a Frechen stoneware bottle of 17th-century date.

### *Clay Tobacco Pipe* by Luke Barber

The archaeological work recovered 15 pieces of clay pipe from the site (Appendix 2). The clay pipe assemblage consists of a relatively wide range of fragments from the second half of the 17th century onwards, though there is little that post-dates the middle of the 18th century. The two bowl fragments are both of AO25 form (Atkinson and Oswald 1969) but only one has a legible maker's mark – possibly of Thomas Holness of Hastings, working

in the first half of the 18th century (Oswald 1975). The clay pipe assemblage is small and is dominated by stem fragments from slightly mixed deposits.

### *Glass by Luke Barber*

Pit 4 (54) produced a 2g fragment of 1.7mm thick window glass. The piece is slightly corroded and would be very much in keeping with the later 17th to mid 18th century date suggested by the associated clay pipes.

### *Ceramic Building Material by Luke Barber*

A small assemblage of brick was recovered. Wall 2 produced a sample (1/1974g) from a very neatly formed, well-fired brick tempered with sparse fine quartz and moderate/common iron oxides to 5mm (dimensions: ? x 107 x 62mm). The header had been neatly clear glazed and the brick had been set in a buff sandy mortar. An 18th to 19th century date is certain, and a mid 18th to mid 19th century date is suspected.

Pit 4 (54) produced a fragment weighing 1192g, with dimensions of ? x 110 x 52mm. This consisted of a well formed, medium fired probable floor brick tempered with sparse fine quartz, common iron oxides to 5mm and some marl mottling. The brick shows signs of having been re-used, or at least repaired *in situ* as there was a blob of sandy mortar on the broken edge. A later 17th to 18th century date is probable for the brick.

### *Geological Material by Luke Barber*

Pit 4 (54) produced a 376g fragment from a light grey Horsham stone roofing slab measuring 17mm thick. The fragment has slight staining from bedding mortar but no surviving peg hole. This roofing type was most common in Lewes between the 15th and 17th centuries.

### *Animal Bone by Lizzi Lewins*

Twenty-four fragments of animal bone weighing 337g were recovered from pit 4 (54). The remains were in good condition with only minimal surface abrasion noted. Two rib fragments and two long bone shaft fragments were from a medium sized mammal (sheep/goat, pig, or deer). One of the rib fragments bore a diagonal cut across the body and one of the long bone fragments had been sliced along the length of the shaft. A partial vertebra from a medium sized mammal had been chopped. A right proximal radius that had been sliced across the shaft and a

right calcaneus were classified more certainly as sheep/goat. Two re-fitted tooth fragments and a fragment of maxilla with two molars *in situ* were classified as pig.

A single fragment of longbone shaft came from a large mammal (cattle or horse). Two large rib fragments and two fragments of metatarsal (proximal and distal, some shaft missing) were classified more closely as cattle. The larger of the two ribs bore four deep cutmarks and the distal metatarsal bears two possible chop marks.

Three of the main domesticates are present and there is a small amount of evidence for butchery.

### *Shell* by Lizzi Lewins

Sixteen fragments of oyster shell (*Ostrea edulis*), weighing a total of 1303g, were recovered from pit 4 (54). The fragments ranged in size from 63mm long and 68mm wide, to 102mm long and 110mm wide. Some of the fragments show evidence of pitting in the outer shell.

### *Miscellaneous Material* by Luke Barber

A brown spherical object with a diameter varying between 21.7–23.5mm and some circumferential rings/grooving, was recovered from pit 4 (54). Although the surface has thin areas of iron corrosion these relate to corrosions from adjacent items – the sphere itself is not of iron and shows no magnetic properties. Without breaking the object it is not easy to ascertain if it is of baked clay or stone, though the density and colour suggest a Wealden ferruginous siltstone. The piece is interpreted as a stone marble.

## **Conclusion**

The watching brief at the Shelleys Hotel successfully investigated those parts of the site which were to be most affected by the construction of the new boundary walls. The bottom courses of an earlier boundary wall were recorded, along with a pit, and part of a possible brick surface. All these features are likely to date from the late post-medieval period. The wall and brick surface were largely left *in situ*, with the new wall being built over them.

## **References**

- Atkinson, D, and Oswald, A, 1969, 'London clay tobacco pipes', *J British Archaeol Assoc* **32**, 171–227  
BGS, 2006, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet **318/333**, Bedrock and Superficial Deposits Edition, Keyworth  
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NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept of Communities and Local Government, London.  
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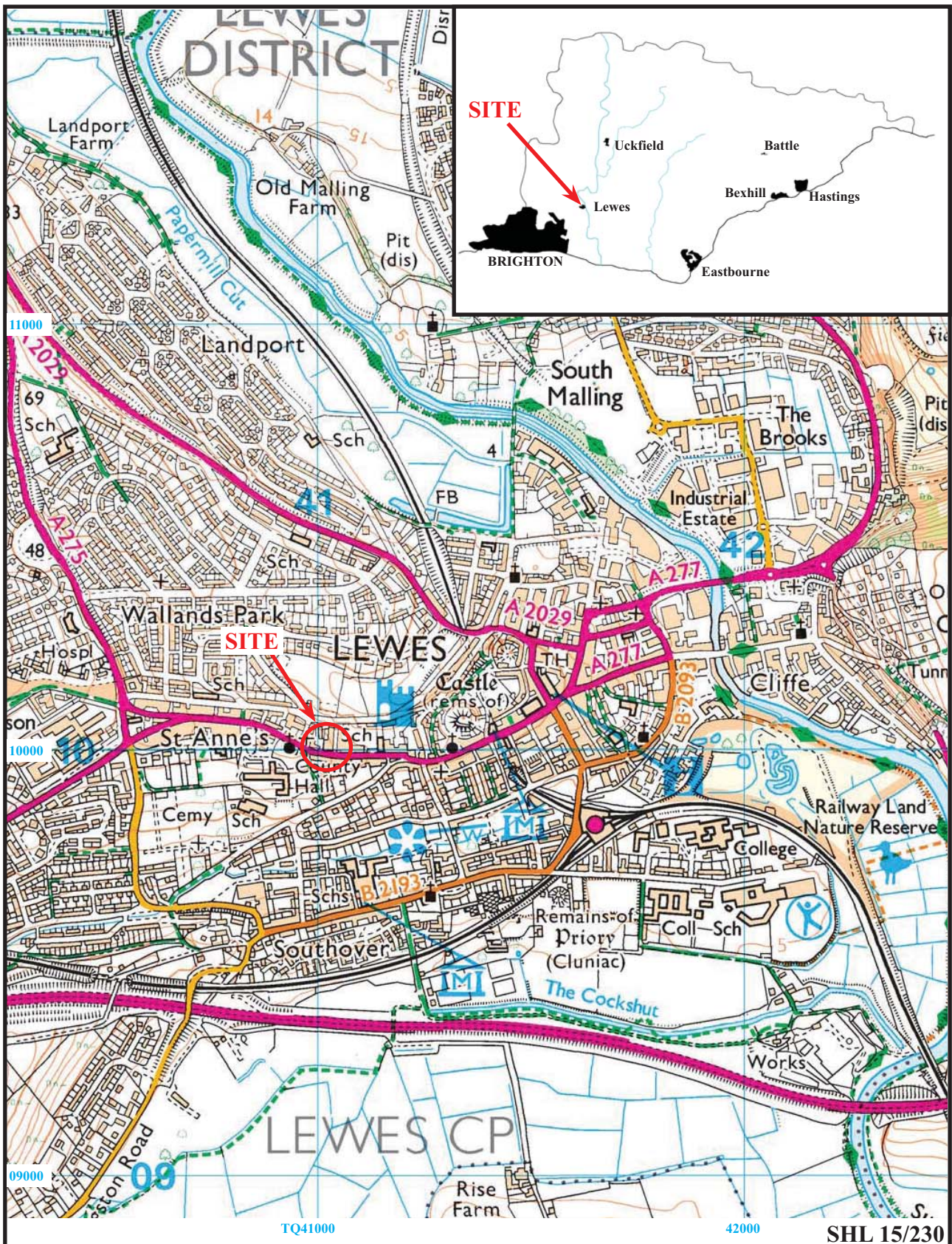


**APPENDIX 1: Feature details**

<i>Context</i>	<i>Fill (s)</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Dating evidence</i>
1	n/a	Wall	Modern	Existing car park wall.
2	n/a	Wall	Post-medieval	Brick.
3	1	Construction Cut	Post-medieval	Clay pipe.
4	54	Pit	Post-medieval	Pottery, brick, clay pipe.
5	n/a	Surface ?	Post-medieval	Brick.

**APPENDIX 2: Catalogue of Clay Tobacco Pipe**

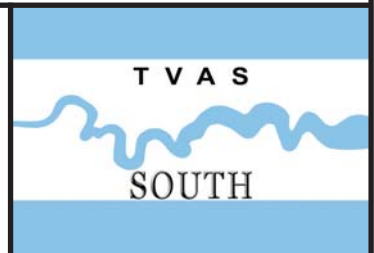
<i>Context</i>	<i>Element</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Wt (g)</i>	<i>Bore diameter (mm)</i>	<i>Combined stem length 9mm</i>	<i>Comments</i>
53	Stem	1750-1900	3	4	1.6-1.9	70	Slight wear
53	Stem	1700-1750	1	2	2.2	35	Slight wear
54	Stem	1650-1700	5	28	2.4-2.7	242	Slight wear
54	Stem	1700-1750	4	18	2.1-2.3	161	Quite fresh
54	Bowl frag	1700-1770	1	8	2.1	27	T/H initials
54	Bowl frag	1700-1770	1	6	2.0	25	Illegible maker's initials

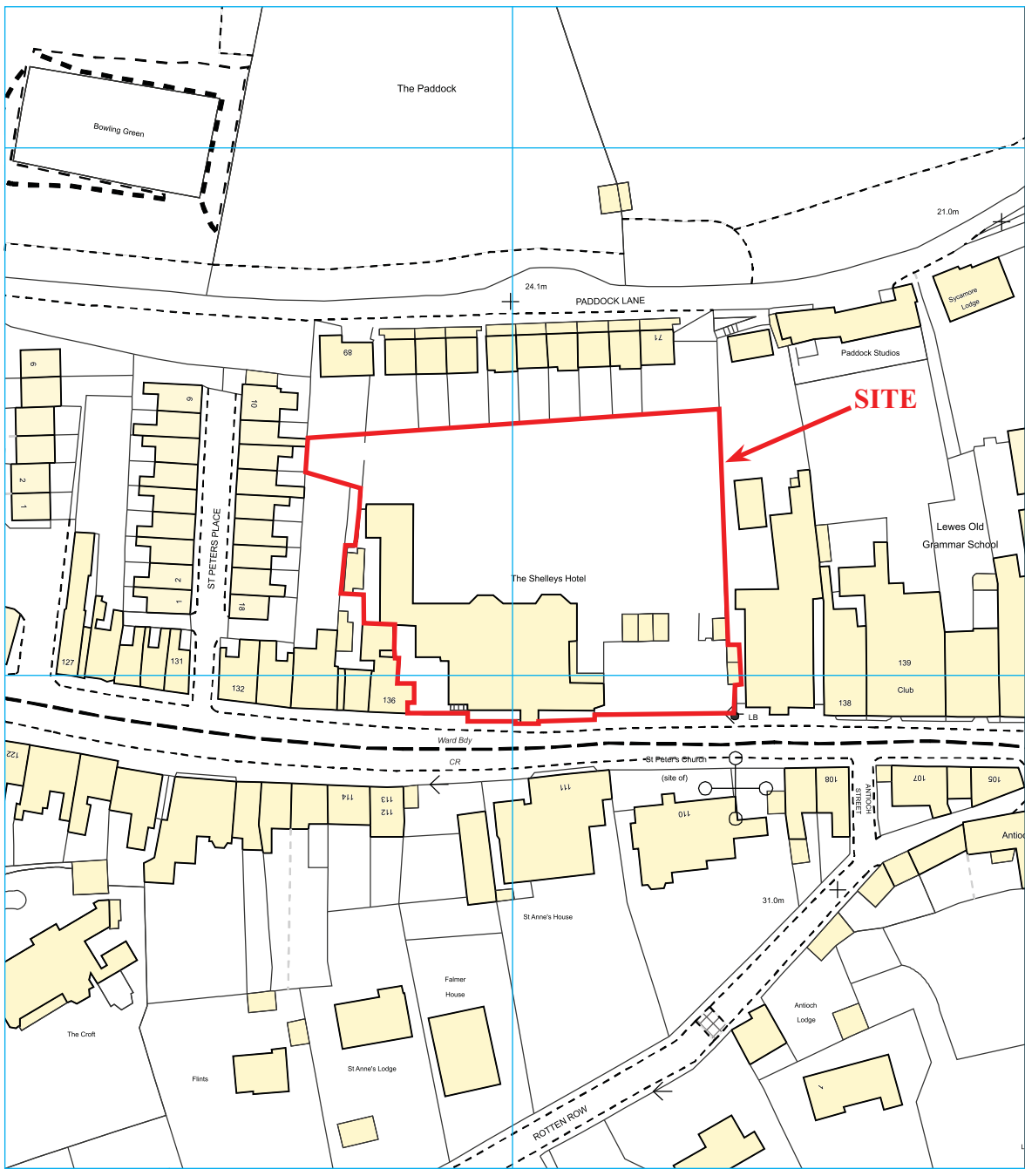


**The Shelleys Hotel, High Street  
Lewes, East Sussex, 2017  
Archaeological watching brief**

Figure 1. Location of site within Lewes and East Sussex.

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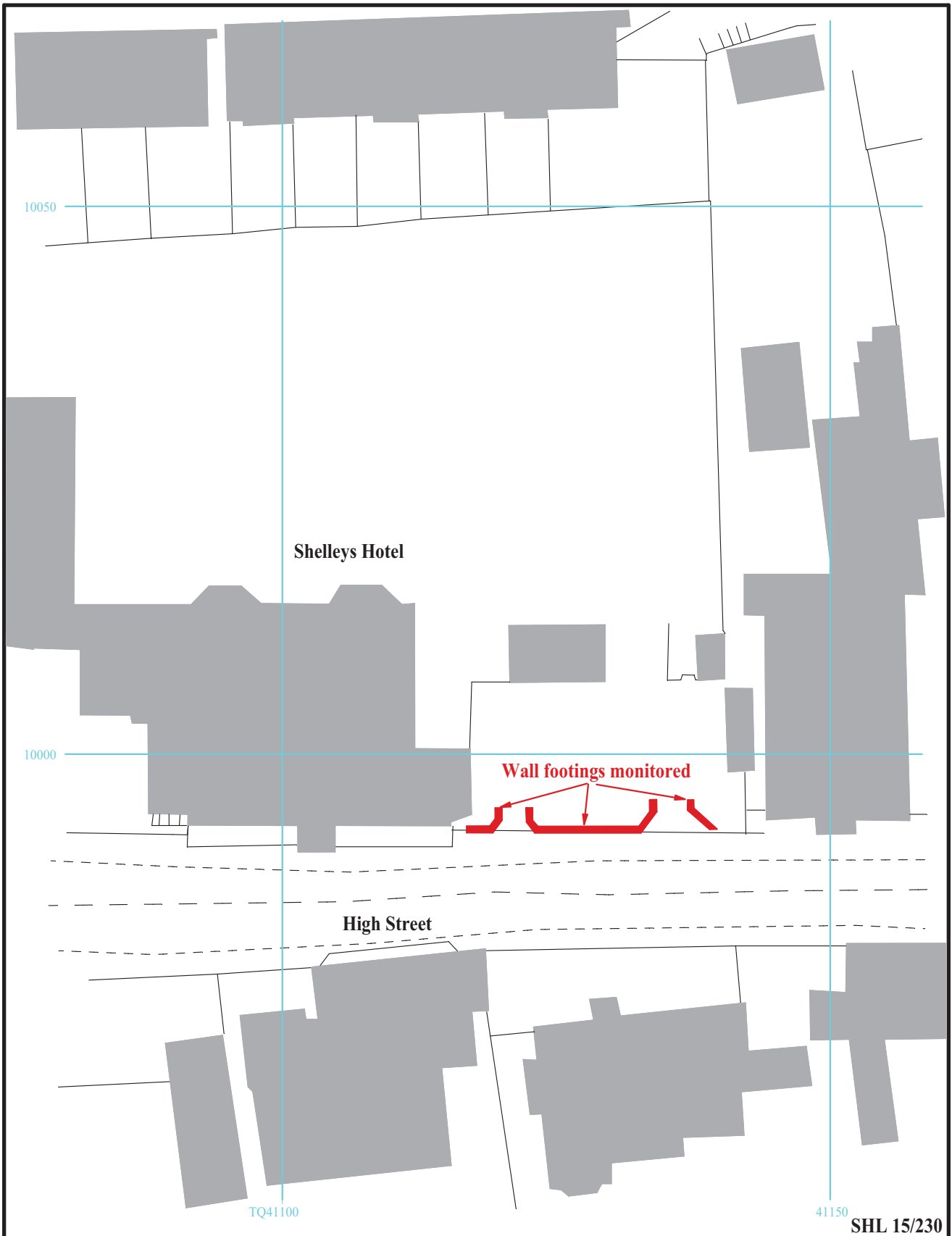
SHL 15/230



**The Shelleys Hotel, High Street  
Lewes, East Sussex, 2017  
Archaeological Watching Brief**  
Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

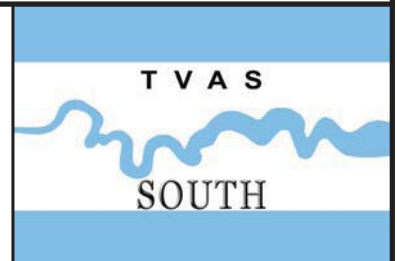
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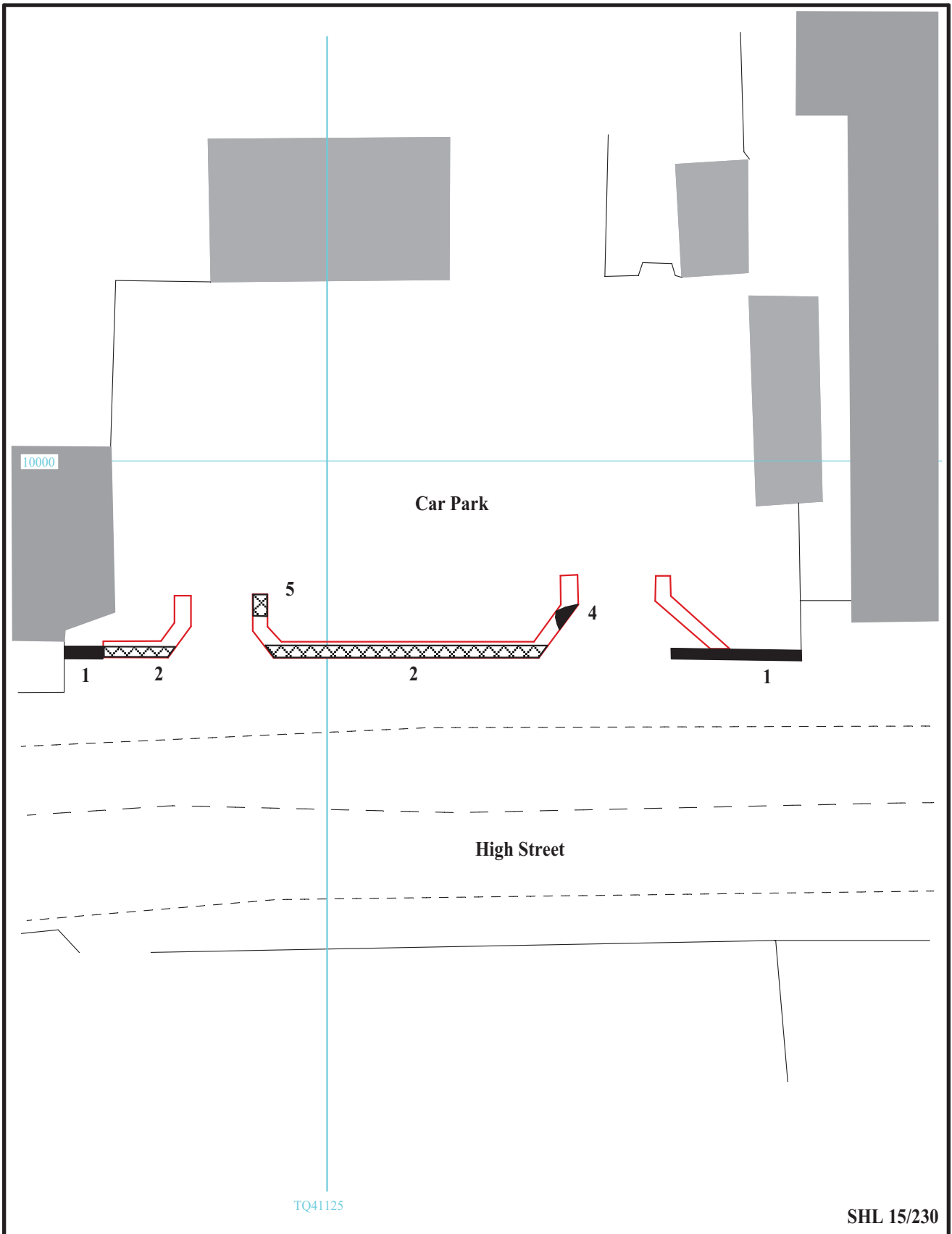




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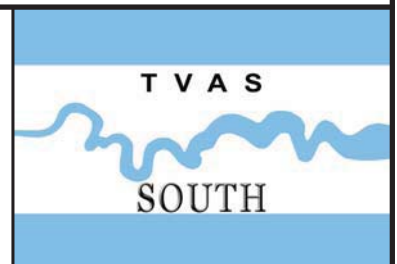
Figure 3. Site plan showing monitored areas.



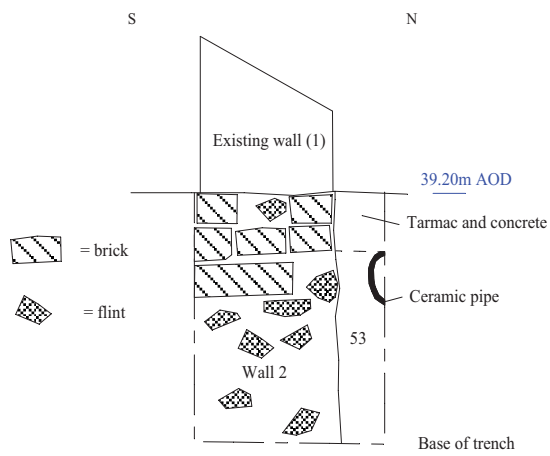


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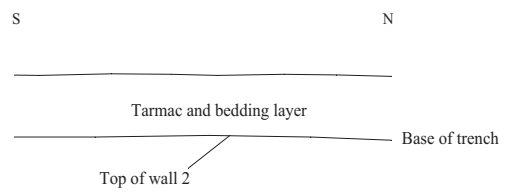
Figure 4. Site plan showing monitored areas.



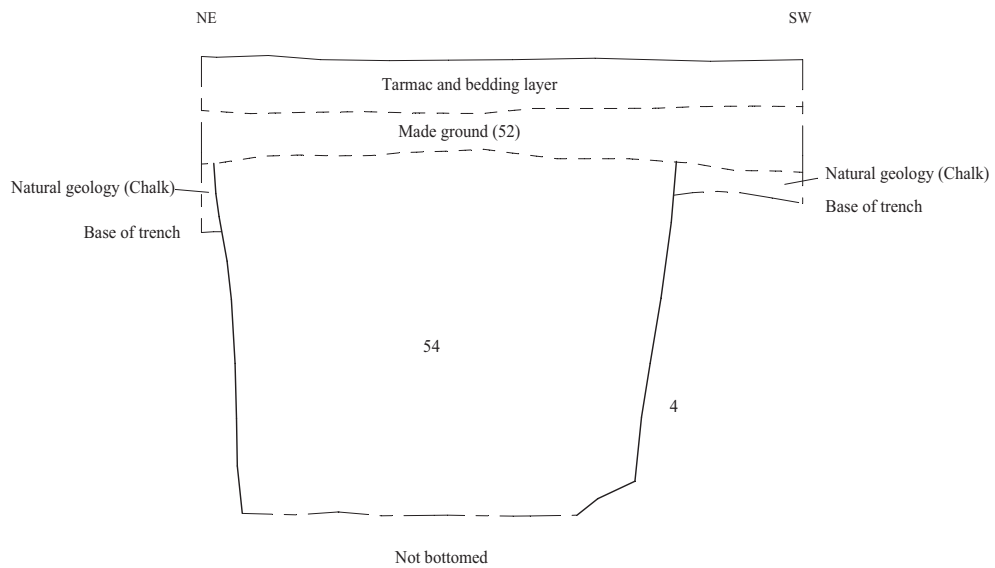
**Footing trench (Western end)**



**Footing trench (Central section)**



**Footing trench (Pit 4)**



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Lewes, East Sussex 2017  
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Figure 5. Sections.

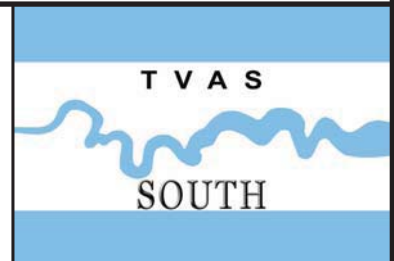




Plate 1. Existing wall 1 and buried wall 2, looking West.  
Scales: 1m, 0.50m and 0.30m



Plate 2. Wall 2, looking East.  
Scales: 0.50m and 0.30m.



Plate 3. Pit 4, looking South.  
Scales: 2m and 1m.



Plate 4. Possible brick surface, looking North.  
Scales: 0.50m and 0.30m.

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**The Shelleys Hotel, High Street,  
Lewes, East Sussex, 2017  
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Plates 1 - 4.**

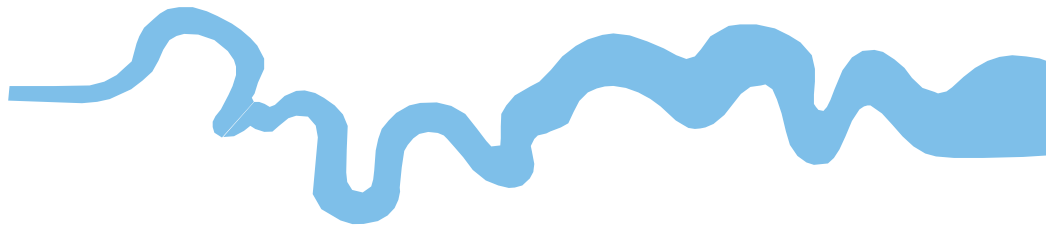




## TIME CHART

	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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