



**Archaeological evaluation on land at
Willow Bank Road, Alderton, Gloucestershire
July 2014**

Report No. 14/147

Authors: Christopher Jones and Adam Yates

Illustrator: Liz Muldowney and Amir Bassir



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Authors: Christopher Jones and Adam Yates

Illustrators: Liz Muldowney and Amir Bassir

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MOLA
Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton
NN4 8BN
01604 700 493
www.mola.org.uk
sparry@mola.org.uk

STAFF

Project Manager: Adam Yates BA MIfA

Text: Christopher Jones and Adam Yates

Fieldwork: Christopher Jones and David Haynes

Illustrations: Liz Muldowney MA and Amir Bassir
BSc

OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		Oasis No. – molanort1 - 185554	
Project title	Archaeological evaluation on land at Willow Bank Road, Alderton		
Short description	Four trenches were excavated to investigate a series of geophysical anomalies and to examine 'blank' areas. No archaeological features were present, the anomalies related to geological variations and the remnants of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation.		
Project type	Trial trench evaluation		
Site Status			
Previous work	Geophysical survey (Davey and Walford 2014)		
Current land use	Pasture		
Future work	Unknown		
Monument type and period			
Significant finds			
PROJECT LOCATION			
County	Northamptonshire		
Site address	Land at Willow Bank Road, Alderton, Gloucestershire		
Post code	N/A		
OS co-ordinates	NGR SO 999 329		
Area (sq m/ha)	1.5 hectares		
Height aOD	45-50m aOD		
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation	MOLA Northampton		
Project brief originator			
Project Design originator	MOLA Northampton		
Director/Supervisor	Chris Jones (MOLA)		
Project Managers	Adam Yates (MOLA), Mike Dawson (CgMs)		
Sponsor or funding body	CgMs Consulting Ltd		
PROJECT DATE			
Start date	8 July 2014		
End date	10 July 2014		
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Contents	
Physical	Cirencester Museum	Pottery; animal bone	
Paper		Site records	
Digital		Survey data, report, photographs	
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (MOLA report)		
Title	Archaeological Evaluation on land at Willow Bank Road, Alderton, Gloucestershire July 2014		
Serial title & volume	14/147		
Author(s)	Christopher Jones and Adam Yates		
Page numbers	12		
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Contents

- 1 INTRODUCTION
- 2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY
- 3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES
- 4 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND
- 5 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY
- 6 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE
- 7 CONCLUSION

BIBLIOGRAPHY

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Figures

Front cover: General view of site

Fig 1: Site location

Fig 2: Trench plan

Fig 3: Trench 1, looking north

Fig 4: Trench 2, looking north-west

Fig 5: Trench 3, looking south-east

Fig 6: Trench 4, looking south-east

Archaeological evaluation on land off Willow Bank Road, Alderton Gloucestershire July 2014

Abstract

Four trenches were excavated to investigate a series of geophysical anomalies and to examine 'blank' areas. No archaeological features were present, the anomalies related to geological variations and the remnants of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation.

1 INTRODUCTION

CgMs Consulting Ltd commissioned MOLA to carry out archaeological trial trenching on land at Willow Bank Road, Alderton (NGR SO 999 329, Fig 1).

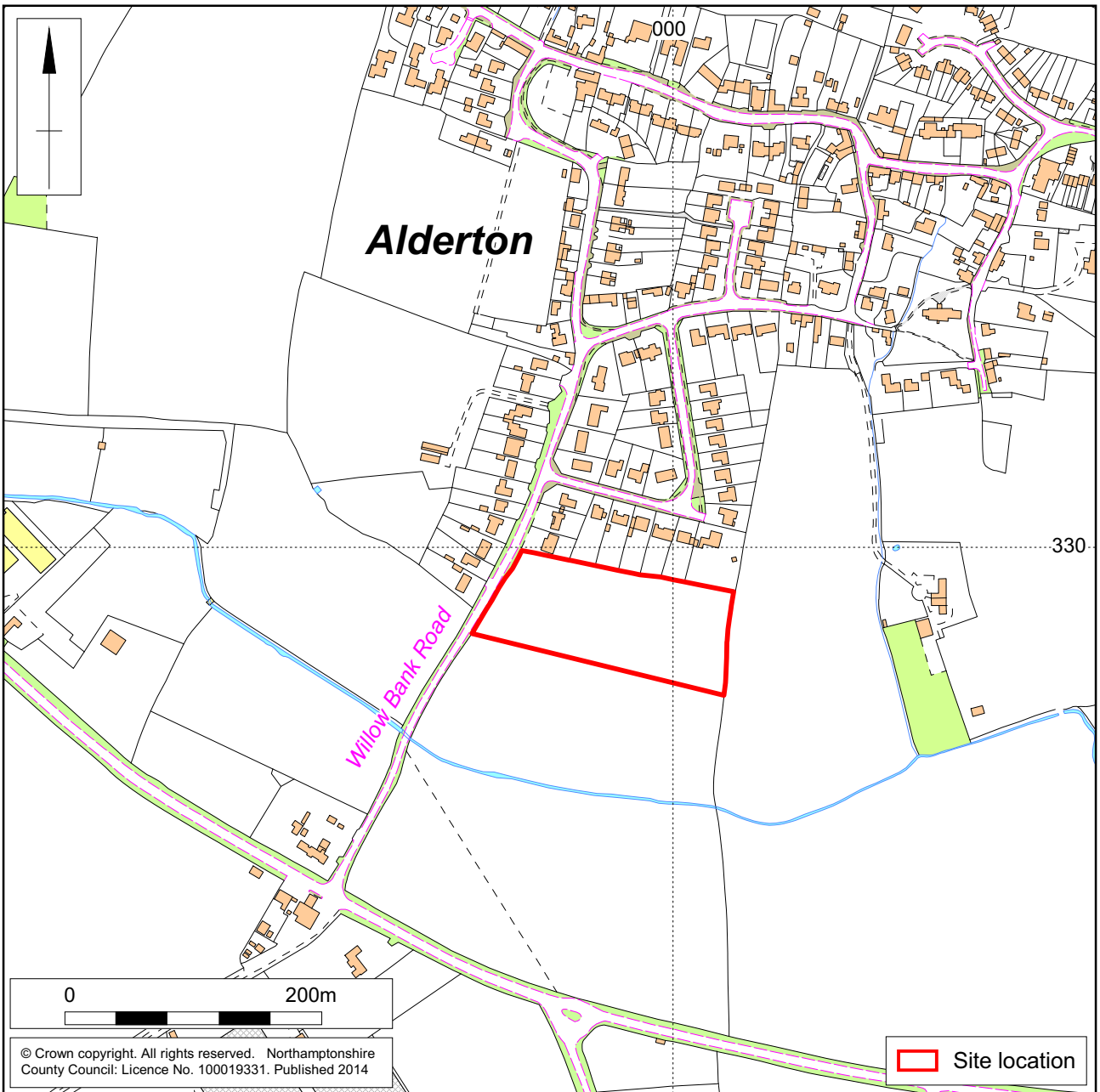
The works were undertaken in accordance with Section 12, paragraph 128 and Appendix 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (DCLG 2012) and in accordance with a WSI prepared by MOLA (2014a).

MOLA is an Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) registered organisation. This project was undertaken in accordance with the current best archaeological practice as defined in the Institute for Archaeologists' Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation (IfA 2008) and the procedural document Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) (EH 2009).

2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The site comprises a single pasture field of 1.5ha, located on the southern edge of Alderton, to the east of Willow Bank Road. To the north the site is bounded by residential properties and to the east and south is bounded by further pasture fields. Willow Bank Road forms the western boundary.

The site lies between the 45m and 50m above Ordnance Datum and slopes to the south-west. Its underlying geology consists of Charmouth mudstone with no superficial deposits recorded (BGS 2014).



Scale 1:5000

Site location Fig 1

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of the archaeological evaluation were to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development.

Specific research objectives are contained within national and regional research frameworks documents (English Heritage 1991, Webster (ed) 2008, Grove and Croft (eds) 2012).

4 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

There are a number of sites and finds recorded on the Historic Environment Record (HER) close to the site. Within the site only medieval/post-medieval remains of ridge and furrow have been recorded.

There was, until recently, relatively sparse evidence for prehistoric settlement in the vicinity of the site. However, evaluation of land less than 100m to the east found several Mesolithic and Neolithic flint tools as residual items in later features. There were also middle Iron Age features in the western part of the evaluation area including part of a sub-square ditched enclosure and associated field boundary ditches, pits and a roundhouse ditch (Ellis 2013; HER 45174). Finds included pottery, worked bone and briquetage. Evaluation on land to the north-west of the site found a pit containing Neolithic pottery as well as a number of other undated features (Bradley 2013; HER 44524).

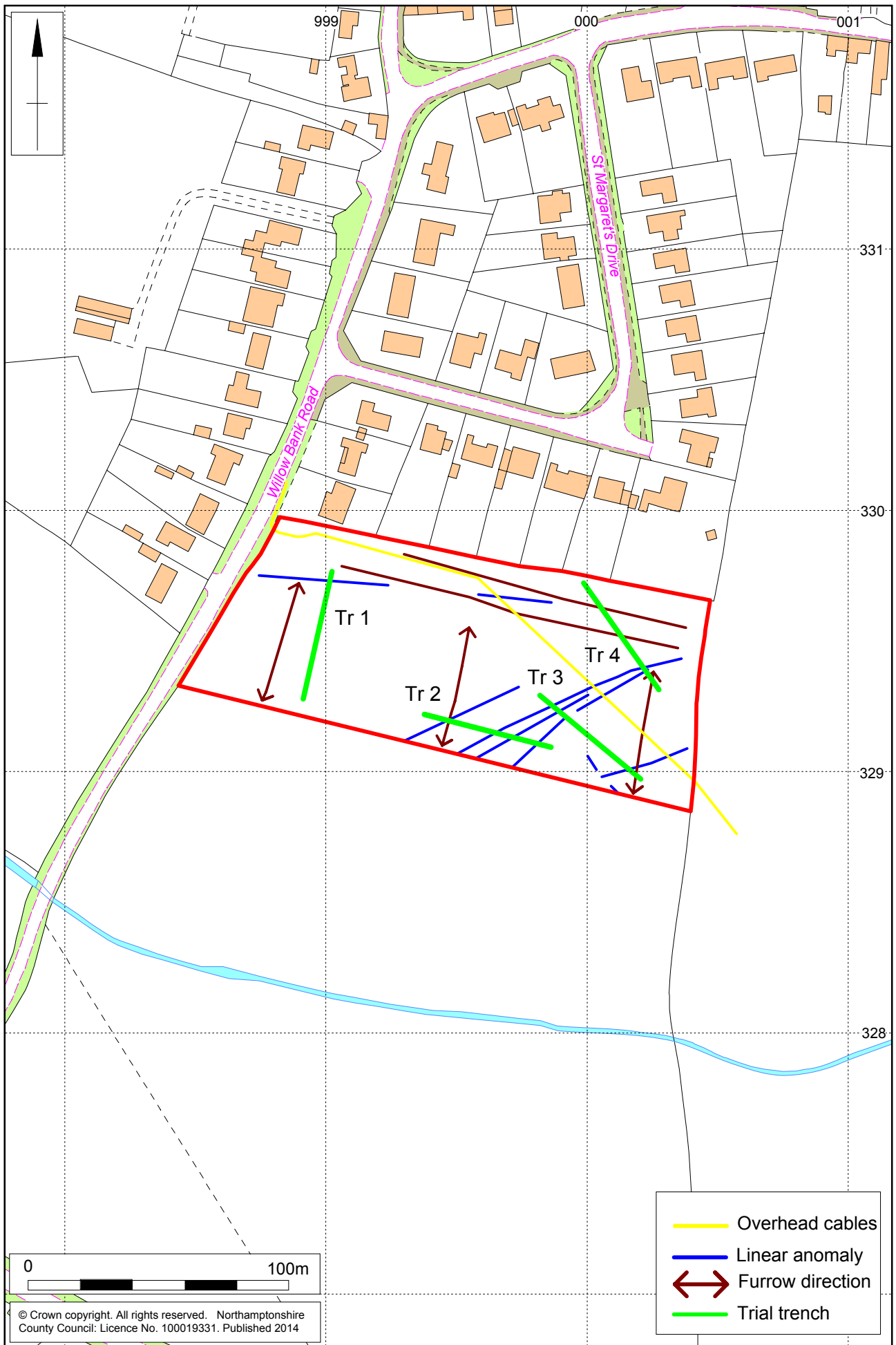
Geophysical survey (Davey and Walford 2014) identified some probable archaeological features that were interpreted as parts of enclosures or small fields associated with the Iron Age site that lies to the immediate north-east. However, the association was not conclusive, as there was no clear continuity or common alignment between the features in the present survey area and those previously investigated. Medieval or early post-medieval ridge and furrow was also been identified, as were two ambiguous features which could either represent plough furrows or the side ditches of a trackway.

5 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

A programme of evaluation was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by MOLA (MOLA 2014a). This required the excavation of four trenches, planned to investigate the potential impact of the proposed development on any archaeological remains within the development area within the constraints of the overgrown site. The trenches were designed to target the geophysical survey anomalies and to examine 'blank' areas.

Trenches were set out using differential GPS (Leica Viva) operating to an accuracy of +/- 0.05m.

All trenches were excavated using a tracked excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, operated under constant archaeological supervision. The trenches varied in length and were excavated to a width of 1.6m.



The excavation and recording were carried out in accordance with MOLA guidelines and all records were created using MOLA pro-forma (MOLA 2014). Photographs were taken of all trenches and all relevant deposits on 35mm monochrome print film, high resolution digital images were also taken. Work was carried out in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (IfA 2008).

The trenches were excavated to the top of the natural geological horizon or the upper archaeological levels, whichever was the highest.

Levels in metres above Ordnance Datum were established for all trenches and excavated features using a dumpy level from temporary bench marks (TBMs) established using GPS.

All records and materials will be compiled in a structured archive in accordance with the guidelines of Appendix 3 in the English Heritage procedural document, *Management of Archaeological Projects 2* (EH 1991).

6 THE EXCAVATED EVIDENCE

No archaeological features were present. No finds were recovered.

The general stratigraphic sequence was consistent in all four trenches excavated. Firm mid yellow-grey natural clays contained small chalky fragments and was generally encountered at a depth of 0.4-0.5m. This varied becoming siltier or sandier in places, these variations corresponded well with the geophysical survey anomalies.

The natural was overlain by firm mid yellow grey silty clay subsoil between 0.08m and 0.2m thick. The topsoil was firm dark grey brown silty clay up to 0.3m thick.

Furrows deriving from medieval ridge and furrow cultivation were encountered in all four trenches on the alignment indicated by the geophysical survey..

A full index of contexts is included as Appendix 1.

7 CONCLUSION

The evaluation has established that the anomalies identified by geological survey relate to variations in the natural geology. Remnant furrows from medieval ridge and furrow cultivation was present.

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MOLA
July 2014

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT INVENTORY

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
1	50m x 1.6m, Approx. N-S	399891 232928 to 399902 232976	47.63m	0.45m 47.18m
Context	Context type	Description	Dimensions	Artefacts/ Samples
101	Topsoil	Mid-dark grey-brown silty clay	D 0.23-0.26m	
102	Subsoil	Firm mid yellow-grey silty clay	D:0.18-0.25m	-
103	Natural	Firm mid yellow-grey silty clay with orange sandier patches		-



Trench 1, looking north

Fig 3

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
2	50m x 1.6m, Approx. W-E	399938 232922 – 399986 232909	47.91	0.46m 47.45m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
201	Topsoil	Mid-dark grey-brown silty clay occasional small stones	D 0.26-0.30m	
202	Subsoil	Firm mid yellow-grey silty clay	D:0.10-0.26m	-
203	Natural	Firm mid yellow-grey silty clay with orange sandier patches, occasional small chalk fragments		-



Trench 2, looking north-west

Fig 4

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
3	50m x 1.6m, Approx. NW-SE	399982 232929 – 400021 232897	48.42m	0.37m 48.04m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
301	Topsoil	Mid-dark grey-brown silty clay occasional small stones	D 0.23-0.29m	
302	Subsoil	Firm mid yellow-grey silty clay	D:0.05-0.17m	-
303	Natural	Firm mid yellow-grey silty clay with orange sandier patches, occasional small chalk fragments		-



Trench 3, looking south-east

Fig 5

Trench No	Length, width & alignment	NGR	Surface height (aOD)	Depth & height of natural (aOD)
4	50m x 1.6m, Approx. NW-SE	399999 232972 – 400028 232931	49.25m	0.41m 48.84m
<i>Context</i>	<i>Context type</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>	<i>Artefacts/Samples</i>
301	Topsoil	Mid-dark grey-brown silty clay occasional small stones	D 0.23-0.29m	
302	Subsoil	Firm mid yellow-grey silty clay	D:0.12-0.19m	-
303	Natural	Firm mid yellow-grey silty clay with orange sandier patches, occasional small chalk fragments		-



Trench 4, looking south-east

Fig 6



MOLA
Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton
NN4 8BN
01604 700 493
www.mola.org.uk
sparry@mola.org.uk