



# Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological geophysical survey on land at Wood End  
Marston Moretaine, Bedfordshire  
August - November 2013



## Northamptonshire Archaeology

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Northamptonshire  
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**QUALITY CONTROL**

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**OASIS REPORT FORM**

<b>PROJECT DETAILS</b>		<b>Oasis No. 158998</b>	
Project title	Archaeological geophysical survey on land at Wood End, Marston Moretaine, Bedfordshire, August - November 2013		
Short description	Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by the Marston Vale Trust to carry out a detailed magnetometer survey in advance of a proposed programme of woodland planting at Wood End, Marston Moretaine, Bedfordshire. The survey covered c 7.8ha of land, including the site of a moat-like earthwork. The moat was detected successfully, as was a series of ditches that perhaps represent medieval or early post-medieval plot boundaries lying alongside a track. One large pit and some medieval or later furrows of a former field system were also identified.		
Project type	Geophysical survey		
Previous work	Unknown		
Current land use	Pasture		
Future work	Unknown		
Monument type and period	Shrunken medieval village and moat		
Significant finds	Undated ditches		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>			
County	Bedfordshire		
Site address	Wood End, Marston Moretaine		
Easting Northing	SP 978 416		
Area (sq m/ha)	7.8ha		
Height aOD	50-55m AOD		
<b>PROJECT CREATORS</b>			
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)		
Project brief originator	Central Bedfordshire Council		
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology		
Director/Supervisor	Paul Clements (NA)		
Project Manager	Mark Holmes (NA)		
Sponsor or funding body	The Marston Vale Trust		
<b>PROJECT DATE</b>			
Start date	27/08/2013		
End date	22/12/2013		
<b>ARCHIVES</b>	<b>Location (Accession no.)</b>	<b>Contents</b>	
Physical	BEDFM 2013-45	None	
Paper		Site records (1 archive box)	
Digital		Client report PDF. Survey data,	
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>			
Title	Archaeological geophysical survey on land at Wood End, Marston Moretaine, Bedfordshire, August – November 2013		
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY ON LAND AT  
WOOD END, MARSTON MORETAINE, BEDFORDSHIRE  
AUGUST 2013**

**Abstract**

*Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by the Marston Vale Trust to carry out a detailed magnetometer survey in advance of a proposed programme of woodland planting at Wood End, Marston Moretaine, Bedfordshire. The survey covered c 7.8ha of land, including the site of a moat-like earthwork. The moat was detected successfully, as was a series of ditches that perhaps represent medieval or early post-medieval plot boundaries lying alongside a track. One large pit and some medieval or later furrows of a former field system were also identified.*

**1 INTRODUCTION**

Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by the Marston Vale Trust to conduct a geophysical survey in advance of a programme of woodland planting at Wood End, Marston Moretaine, Bedfordshire (NGR SP 978 416; Fig 1). The aim of the survey was to investigate an earthwork feature, believed to be a moat, and to detect any other archaeological remains that were present nearby. The fieldwork was conducted on 27th to 28th August and 21st to 22nd November 2013 and comprised the detailed magnetometer survey of c 7.8ha of land.

**2 BACKGROUND**

**2.1 Location and geology**

The survey area extends across parts of four pasture fields on the northern side of the hamlet of Wood End. These fields are bounded to the south and south-west by housing and a panel beaters yard, and to the north-west by the ancient woodland known as Marston Thrift. They lie at an elevation of c 50-55m aOD and slope gently down to the south-east. In Field 3 a bank and ditch earthwork forms two sides of a moat with a raised central platform. The remaining two edges appear to be aligned under the modern track way to the south-west and modern hedge boundary to the south-east. A small area of Field 1 was not surveyed due to long grass and newly planted saplings.

The site is underlain by mudstones of the Peterborough Formation of the Oxford Clay (BGS 2013). The soils are identified as slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid, but base-rich loamy and clayey soils (Landis 2013).

**2.2 Historical and archaeological background**

Cropmarks of circular features, perhaps of prehistoric date, have been recorded to the south of Wood End (Beds HER 14726) and remains of Iron Age to Roman date have been excavated to the south-east of the hamlet, on the line of the A421 dual carriageway. A geophysical survey by Northamptonshire Archaeology slightly further south-east, at Moreteyne Farm, identified a separate group of features also relating to Iron Age or Roman settlement (Walford and Clements 2011).

In the medieval period Wood End comprised mainly a linear settlement along a minor road. A moated site associated with the medieval village is located to the north of

Wood End within the development area and is still visible as an earthwork. Evidence of settlement shrinkage is indicated by former earthworks to the south-west of Wood End.

The present buildings of Wood End all date from the post-medieval to modern period. Lower Wood End Farm, at the north-eastern edge of the hamlet, is a Grade II listed 17th to 18th-century farmhouse. Upper Wood End Farm and its associated buildings are all of post medieval date. Former cottages were shown in the area, now covered by a panel-beaters yard, on an 1837 map of Wood End.

### **3 METHODOLOGY**

The survey was conducted with Bartington Grad 601-2, twin sensor array, vertical component fluxgate gradiometers (Bartington and Chapman 2003). These are standard instruments for archaeological survey and can resolve magnetic variations as slight as 0.1 nanoTesla (nT).

A 30m grid was laid out in each field to be surveyed and the area expanded where archaeology was identified. The grid was established with a tape measure and optical square and tied in to the Ordnance Survey National Grid by recording points on grid baselines using a Leica System 1200 survey-level. The gradiometers were carried at a brisk but steady pace through each grid square, collecting data along 1m spaced traverse lines. Measurements were automatically triggered every 0.25m along the traverses, giving a total of 3600 measurements per square.

All fieldwork methods complied with the guidelines issued by English Heritage and by the Institute for Archaeologists (EH 2008; IfA 2011) and with the Written Scheme of Investigation for the project (NA 2013).

The survey data was processed using Geoplot 3.00v software. Striping was removed using the 'Zero Mean Traverse' function, and destaggering of the data was performed as necessary.

The processed data is presented in this report in the form of grey-tone plots at a scale of +/- 4nT black/white. These have been scaled, rotated and re-sampled (georectified) for display against the Ordnance Survey base mapping (Fig 2). An interpretative overlay is presented in Figure 3.

### **4 SURVEY RESULTS**

The survey has detected a magnetic response from the moat earthwork, and identified further archaeological remains extending north-eastwards from it across Fields 2 and 3.

The response from the moat is fairly ill-defined, despite the moat surviving as a distinct earthwork. However, the survey has identified two features of interest within the circuit of the moat. One is a linear feature which appears to represent a ditch bisecting the interior of the moat from north-west to south-east. The other is a moderately intense 'thermo-remnant' anomaly, with a peak intensity of c 54nT, which may represent a small area of brickwork or burnt debris.

Extending north-eastwards from the moat, on a similar alignment to it, is a ditch which parallels the modern boundary between Fields 2 and 3. This may represent a boundary feature, or one of the side ditches of a former trackway. To its south, a series of other ditches define small enclosures. These cannot be interpreted with certainty, but seem

most likely to represent house or garden plots of medieval or early post-medieval date. A strong, positive sub-circular anomaly to the east of these may be an infilled pit or small pond. Two of the ditches appear to respect the pit indicating the contemporaneous nature of these features.

Furrows of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation are evident in Fields 1, 3 and 4 on a north-west to south-east alignment. In the western part of Field 3, modern plough scars are evident on a north to south alignment. In Field 5, land drains were detected aligned north-east to south-west. Scattered isolated magnetic anomalies across the survey area indicate ferrous objects, of likely modern origin, within the topsoil.

## 5 CONCLUSION

The enclosures and pit identified by the survey demonstrate that archaeological remains extend to the east of the moat. It is not certain what date these remains are, but the fact that they are on the same alignment as the moat indicates that they may be contemporary with it. Thus it may be plausibly suggested that they represent a series of medieval or early post-medieval house and garden plots laid out along one side of a trackway or boundary ditch.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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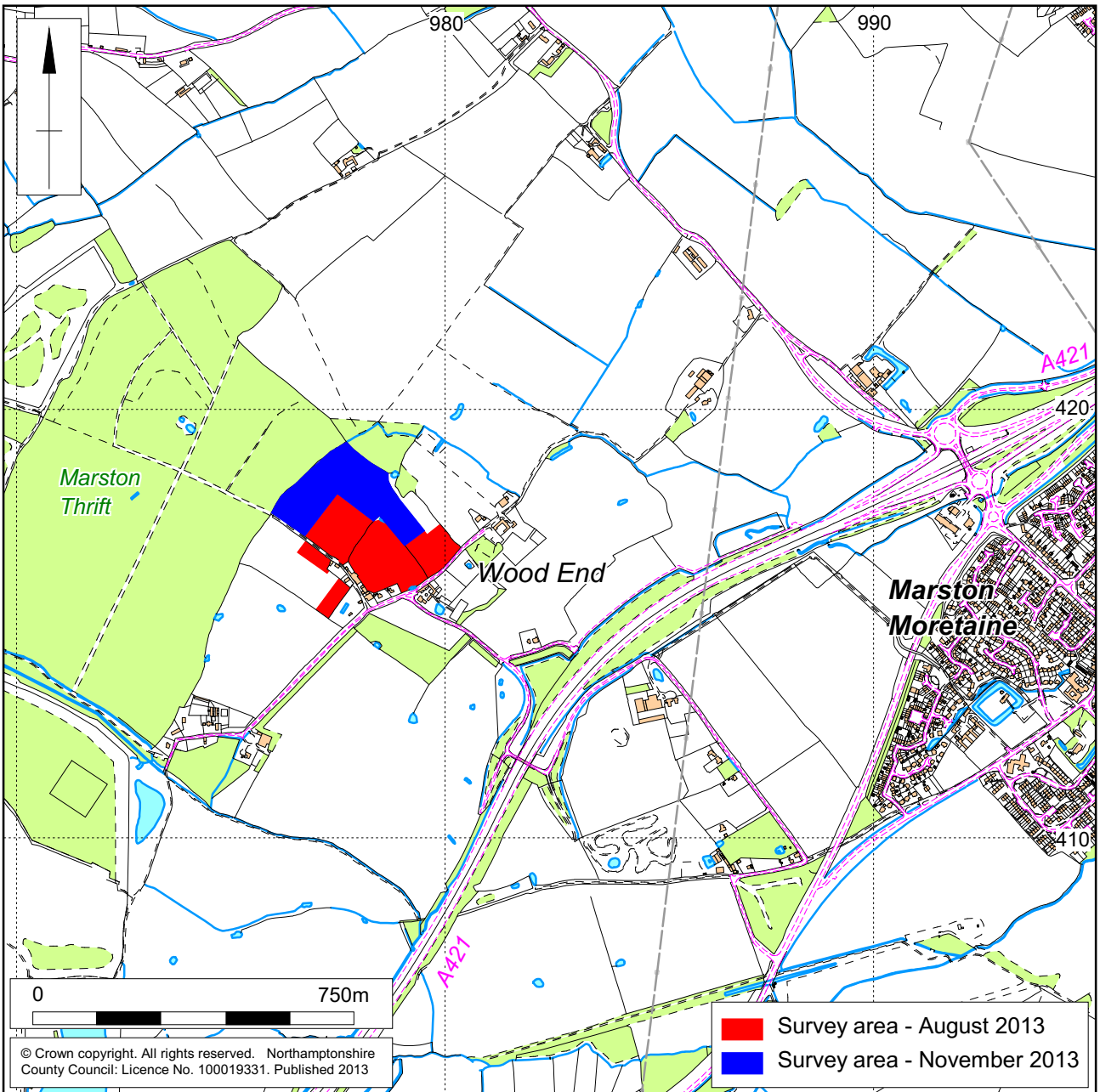
Walford, J, and Clements, P, 2011 *Archaeological geophysical survey of land at Moreteyne Farm, Marston Moretaine, Bedfordshire*, Northamptonshire Archaeology report, **11/49**

### Websites

BGS 2013 <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/home.html> British Geological Survey website

Landis 2013 <https://www.landis.org.uk/soilscapes/> Cranfield University National Soil Resources Institute





Scale 1:15,000

Site Location Fig 1



Scale 1:2500 (A3)

Magnetometer survey results Fig 2



Scale 1:2500 (A3)

Magnetometer survey interpretation Fig 3



Northamptonshire County Council

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