



Northamptonshire
County Council

Northamptonshire Archaeology

Coldharbour Farm,
Crowmarsh Gifford, Oxfordshire
Archaeological Geophysical Survey
March 2008



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April 2008

Report 08/61

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Coldharbour Farm, Crowmarsh Gifford, Oxfordshire: Archaeological Geophysical Survey	
Short description (250 words maximum)	Northamptonshire Archaeology were commissioned by Hallam Land Management to conduct a geophysical survey as part of the archaeological evaluation of a proposed development site at Coldharbour Farm, Crowmarsh Gifford. Two fields, with a combined area of 23.44ha, were investigated by detailed magnetometer survey. This work revealed a ring ditch, possibly part of a Bronze Age round barrow, and an adjacent oval feature which could also be of prehistoric date. Several linear ditches, a large palaeochannel and a modern pipeline and cable were also detected.	
Project type (eg DBA, evaluation etc)	Geophysical Survey	
Site status (none, NT, SAM etc)	None	
Previous work (SMR numbers etc)	Desk-based assessment (Soden 2008)	
Current Land use	Arable	
Future work (yes, no, unknown)	Unknown	
Monument type/ period	Bronze age ring ditch; Undated ditches	
Significant finds (artefact type and period)		
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Oxfordshire	
Site address	Coldharbour Farm, Crowmarsh Gifford, Oxfordshire	
Study area (sq.m or ha)	23.44ha	
OS Easting & Northing	SU 619896	
Height OD	c 45m AOD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Hallam Land Management	
Project Design originator		
Director/Supervisor	Ian Fisher	
Project Manager	Adrian Butler, Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Sponsor or funding body	Hallam Land Management	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	March 2008	
End date	April 2008	
ARCHIVES		
	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Physical		
Paper		
Digital	Northamptonshire Archaeology	Geophysical data, GIS mapping
BIBLIOGRAPHY		
	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)	
Title	Coldharbour Farm, Crowmarsh Gifford, Oxfordshire: Archaeological Geophysical Survey	
Serial title & volume	NA Reports 08/61	
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Cover Photograph Cropmark in Field 2: Ian Fisher, March 2008

COLDHARBOUR FARM, CROWMARSH GIFFORD, OXFORDSHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGICAL GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY
MARCH 2008

ABSTRACT

Northamptonshire Archaeology were commissioned by Hallam Land management to conduct geophysical prospection as part of the archaeological evaluation of a proposed development site at Coldharbour Farm, Crowmarsh Gifford. Two fields, with a combined area of 23.44ha, were investigated by detailed magnetometer survey. This work revealed a ring ditch, possibly part of a Bronze Age round barrow, and an adjacent oval feature which could also be of prehistoric date. Several linear ditches, a large palaeochannel and a modern pipeline and cable were also detected.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by Hallam Land Management to conduct a geophysical survey on a proposed development site at Coldharbour Farm, Crowmarsh Gifford, Oxfordshire (Fig 1, SU 619896). The site comprised a roughly triangular block of land lying immediately north of the village, and was divided into two arable fields with a small area of trees and scrub at its northern tip. Only the arable land, with a total area of 23.44ha, was suitable for survey.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The known archaeology of the proposed development area has been the subject of a desk-based assessment by Soden (2008). He notes that the northern of the two fields contains one clear cropmark of a ring ditch and an indistinct mark suggestive of a second such feature. Nothing else is known from the site itself, but a complex of Roman features was discovered immediately to the west during development work at Howberry Park and a small Roman cemetery was excavated to the east, closer to Coldharbour Farm itself. There are also a number of findspots of prehistoric and Roman pottery from the wider vicinity.

3 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The site lies just over half a kilometre to the east of the River Thames, and is somewhat elevated above the level of the floodplain. It is topographically subdued, although not entirely flat. The geology of the site is Upper Greensand, with Pleistocene terrace gravels overlying in places.

4 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 are capable of resolving magnetic variations down to 0.1 nanotesla (nT).

Each field was divided into 30m grid squares which were set out manually by tape measure and optical square. The instruments were carried at a brisk but steady pace through each grid, collecting data along 1m spaced traverse lines. Measurements were automatically triggered every 0.25m along the traverses, giving a total of 3600 measurements per grid.

All fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the guidelines issued by English Heritage and by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (EH 1995 & Gaffney, Gater and Ovendon 2002).

The data was displayed and processed using Geoplot 3.00s software. The 'Zero Mean Traverse' function was applied as standard in order to balance the data to a consistent zero and remove striping. Other functions were applied only where necessary to correct specific data flaws.

The processed data is presented in this report in the form of greyscale plots (scale +3nT to -3nT black ~ white). These have been scaled, rotated and resampled (georectified) for display against the Ordnance Survey base mapping (Figs 3 and 5). Interpretation plots have been overlaid onto the greyscales (Figs 4 and 6). Stacked trace plots have not been included as it was considered that they would be illegible at printing scales and uninformative to the non-specialist reader.

5 SURVEY RESULTS

Field 1 (Figs 3 and 4)

Only one archaeological feature is apparent in this field, a sinuous linear ditch aligned approximately east-west. This does not appear to relate to any of the post-medieval enclosure boundaries (Soden 2008, fig 4) and is thus probably of earlier date. The other main features relate to a cable along the former line of Brooms Lane and an 18 inch gas pipe along the western edge of the field. Several large discreet ferrous anomalies also occur: one at the north-eastern corner of the field is due to an adjacent gate. The broad and irregular patterning across the western half of the field is apparently of geological origin.

Field 2 (Figs 5 and 6)

The most obvious archaeological feature in this field is a ring ditch. This coincides with a known cropmark (see cover photograph) and probably represents the remains of a ploughed-out round barrow of Bronze Age date. To the east lies a much fainter oval-shaped anomaly. Whilst this cannot be interpreted with complete certainty, its form and its association with a round barrow invite comparison with the Neolithic oval barrow excavated further upstream at Barrow Hills, near Abingdon (Bradley 1992). A faint linear anomaly, suggestive of a ditch, lies slightly to the south, and there is also one possible pit lying to the north-west of the ring ditch. Elsewhere there is a parallel pair of ditches, which may represent the side ditches of a road or trackway.

Two areas of geological noise are apparent in the data, along with a broad north-west to south-east aligned linear anomaly which is probably a palaeochannel. The latter seems unlikely to be a part of the Thames itself and is more likely to be a spring fed channel draining towards the area known as The Marsh. Although it is not an archaeological feature it could contain archaeologically significant palaeoenvironmental deposits or, possibly, ephemeral remains of earlier prehistoric date.

The gas pipeline previously noted in field 1 continues into this field and a smaller pipe or cable is also apparent, as well as several discrete ferrous anomalies.

6 CONCLUSION

This survey has revealed several features of archaeological interest, particularly towards the northern end of the development site. These comprise a possible Neolithic oval barrow, a probable Bronze Age round barrow, a ditched road or trackway and two other ditches. An infilled palaeochannel has also been detected, and may prove to contain archaeological deposits.

The survey has provided no evidence for the extension of the Howberry Park site into the proposed development area. This does not, however, amount to conclusive proof of absence. It must be remembered that small features such as postholes, are usually invisible to geophysical survey and even larger features can remain hidden if they lack a magnetic contrast with the underlying subsoil or geology.

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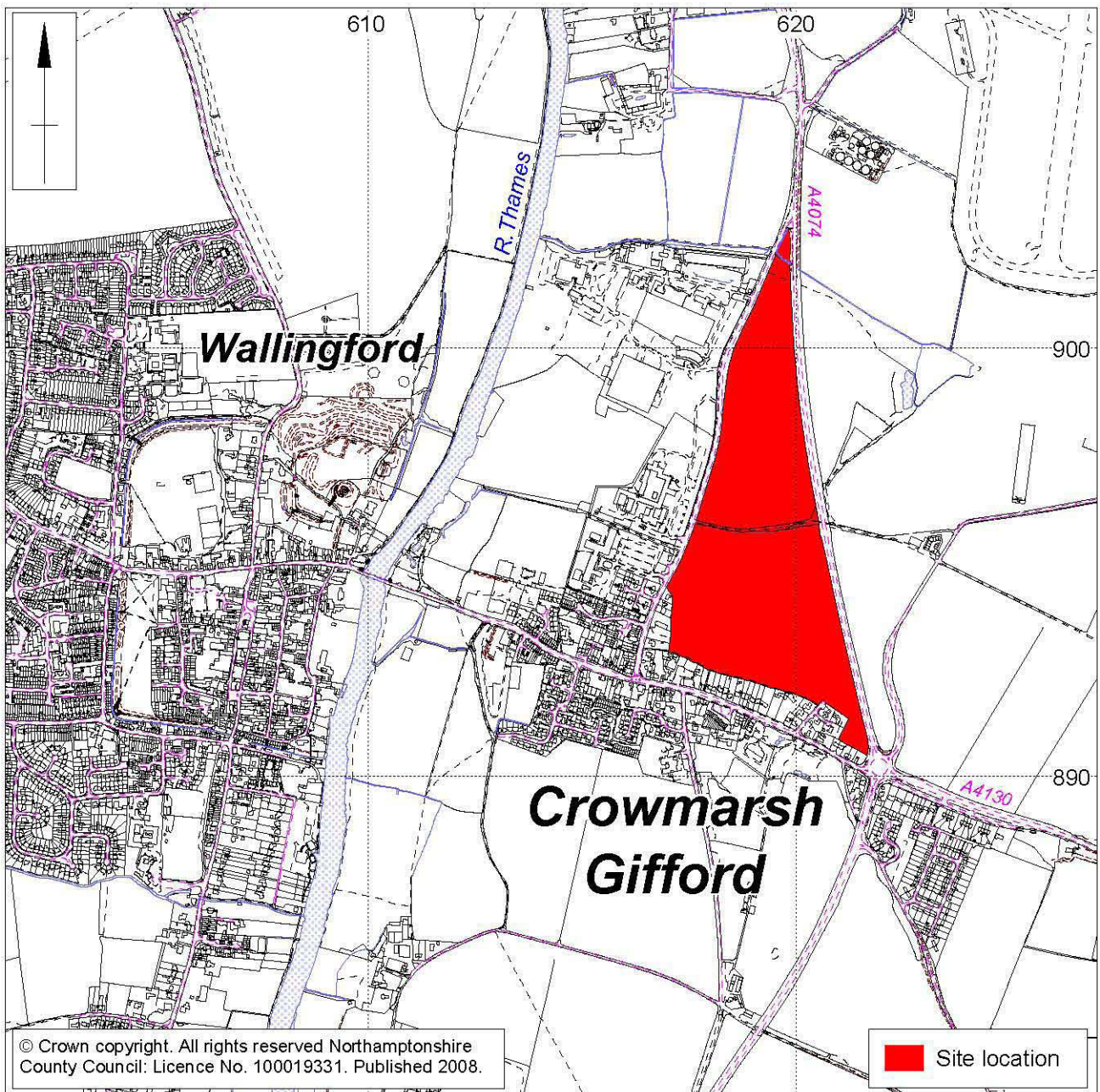
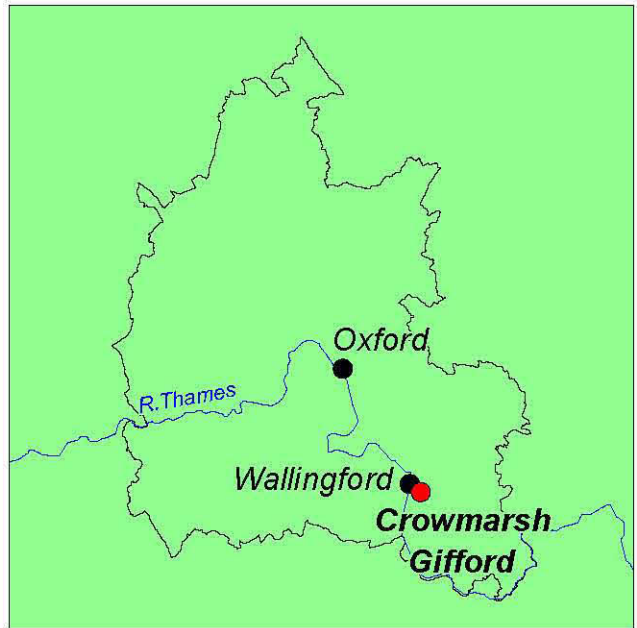
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Scale 1:15,000

Site location Fig 1



Scale 1:5000

Detailed Gradiometer Survey Results Fig 2



Scale 1:2500

Detailed Gradiometer Survey Results Field 1 Fig 3



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Scale 1:2500

Detailed Gradiometer Survey Interpretation Field 1 Fig 4



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Scale 1:2500

Detailed Gradiometer Survey Results Field 2 Fig 5



Scale 1:2500

Detailed Gradiometer Survey Interpretation Field 2 Fig 6