

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**AT**

**CROPREDY MARINA,**

**CLAYDON ROAD,**

**CROPREDY, OXFORDSHIRE**

**NGR SP 4694 4716**

*On behalf of*

*Cropredy Marina Ltd*

**FEBRUARY 2013**

**REPORT FOR** Cropredy Marina Ltd.  
c/o Crick Marina  
Crick  
Northamptonshire  
NN6 7SQ

**PREPARED BY** Stephen Yeates  
with contributions from Dave Gilbert

**ILLUSTRATION BY** Andrej Čelovský

**FIELD WORK** 19<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> September, 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> October 2012

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**ENQUIRES TO** John Moore Heritage Services  
Hill View  
Woodperry Road  
Beckley  
Oxfordshire OX3 9UZ  
  
Tel/Fax 01865 358300  
Email: [info@jmheritageservices.co.uk](mailto:info@jmheritageservices.co.uk)

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## **Summary**

*John Moore Heritage Services conducted a watching brief during the ground stripping prior to the construction of a new marina to the north of the ancient village of Croprey (NGR SP 4694 4716). The only indication of any activity was the remains of ephemeral features in Field 1, which were probably all of an agricultural origin and had become severely truncated by modern ploughing. A handful of pottery sherds were recovered again probably the result of agricultural activity.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)**

The development site is located on the Claydon Road to the north of the village of Croprey (NGR SP 4694 4716). The site lies between 95-105m OD. The underlying geology is Lower Lias of the Jurassic period with in the eastern part of the field alluvial deposits suspected overlying the clays (BGS 1982, sheet. 201).

### **1.2 Planning Background**

Cherwell District Council granted planning permission for the construction of a marina along the line of the Oxford Canal to the north of the medieval village of Croprey (ref. 11/01255/F). Due to the archaeological and historical importance of Croprey that lies immediately to the south a condition was attached to the permission requiring a watching brief to be maintained during the course of soil stripping on the site by Oxfordshire Archaeological Services (OCAS). This was in line with PPS 5 (the planning policy current at the time of the application) and Local Planning policies.

### **1.3 Archaeological Background**

The place-name Croprey survives in its earliest form in the Domesday Book of 1086 as *Cropelie*, and has later variations of *Cropperi(a)* of 1109 and Croprithi of c. 1275 (Gelling 1954, 419-20). The etymology given for the name is *Croppa* or *cropp rīdig*, a small stream either named after a person *Croppa* or an Old English plant name *cropp*. The latter suggestion is more likely and the name refers to the Highfurlong Brook, though elsewhere it has been interpreted as the *Brademere* (Blair 1994, 75-76).

In 1086 the manor of Croprey was held by the bishop of Lincoln (Morris 1978, 6.5), which contained 50 hides and 55 villagers and 22 smallholders, 2 mills and 120 acres of pasture. There is a second account of the village (Morris 1978, 6.13) covering a manor or a group of manors covering 30 hides with 28 villagers and 27 smallholders, 4 Frenchmen and 10 slaves, with 3 mills. These latter groups of holdings probably represent manors in the latter parish.

The first indication of a documented church is in 1109 (VCH 1972, 157-75). In the 13<sup>th</sup> century the village and church were associated with the 9<sup>th</sup> century Saint Freomund, and a shrine of the saint is known to have been located at the church of Croprey. Early spellings of the village associated with saint are *Ridic*, which is now

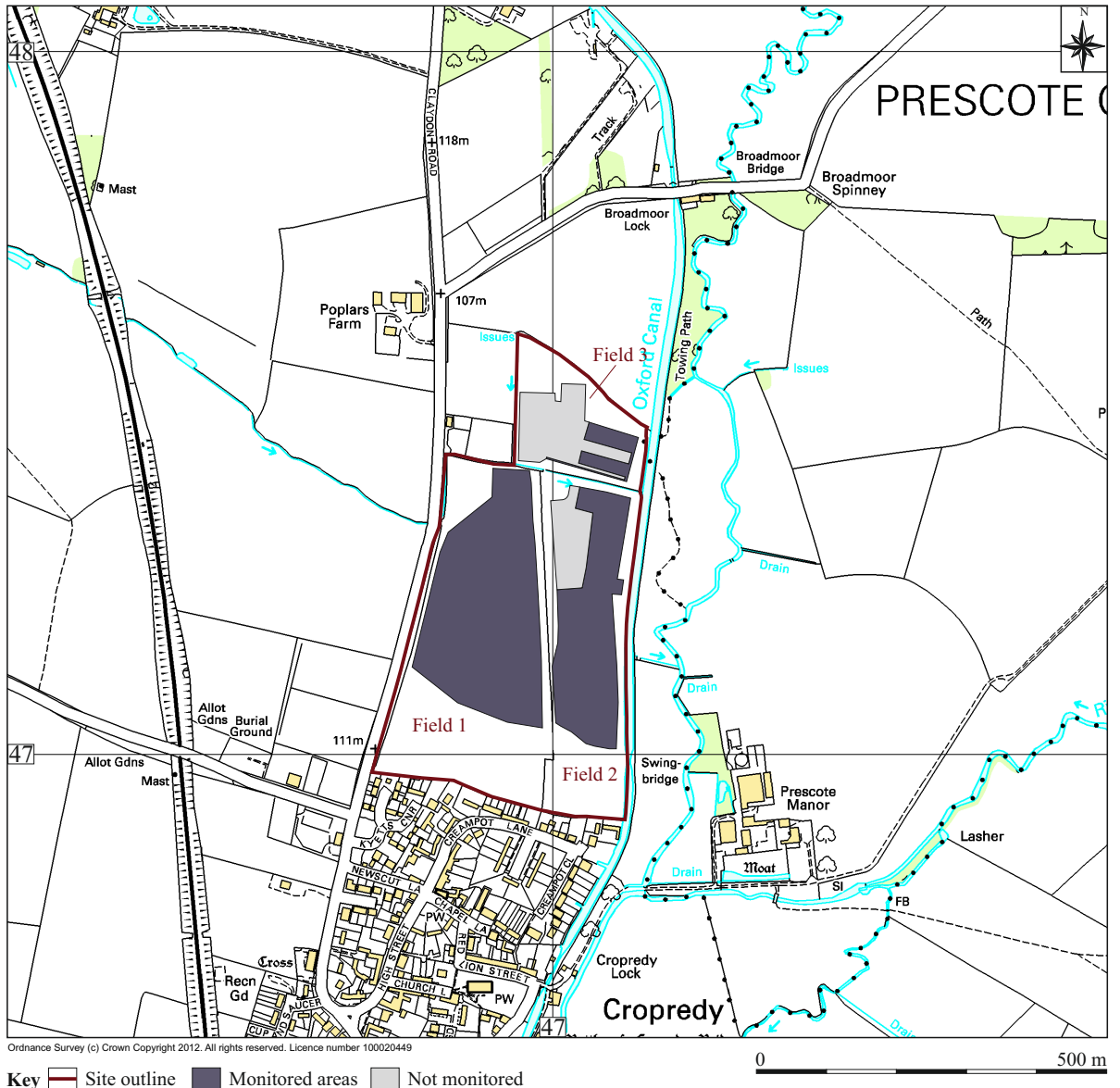
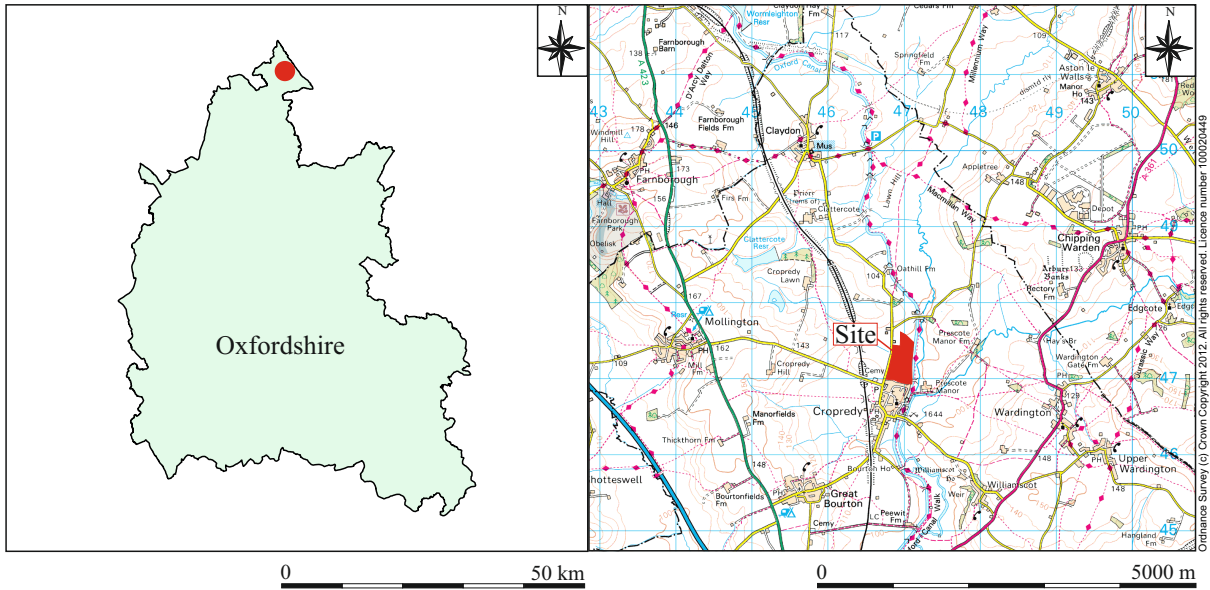


Figure 1. Site location

taken as an early spelling of the latter suffix of the name Cropredy. This has led to the suggestion that Cropredy is the location of a minster (Blair 1994, 66-7).

Through the high medieval period the manor and parish of Cropredy consisted of the lordship of Prescote, the hamlets of Great and Little Bourton and the chapelries of Wardington, Claydon and Mollington (VCH 1972, 157).

## **2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION**

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- To record any archaeological remains that will be impacted on by the development.

In particular:

- To record any features relating to the early medieval and medieval settlement.
- To record any feature of prehistoric date that maybe related to cropmarks in the area.

## **3 STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the work to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS) the archaeological advisors to Cherwell District Council. Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate and possible.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute for Archaeologists (1994).

### **3.2 Methodology**

An archaeologist was present to observe any groundwork that could potentially uncover archaeological remains.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and section drawings compiled where appropriate. A photographic record was also produced where appropriate.

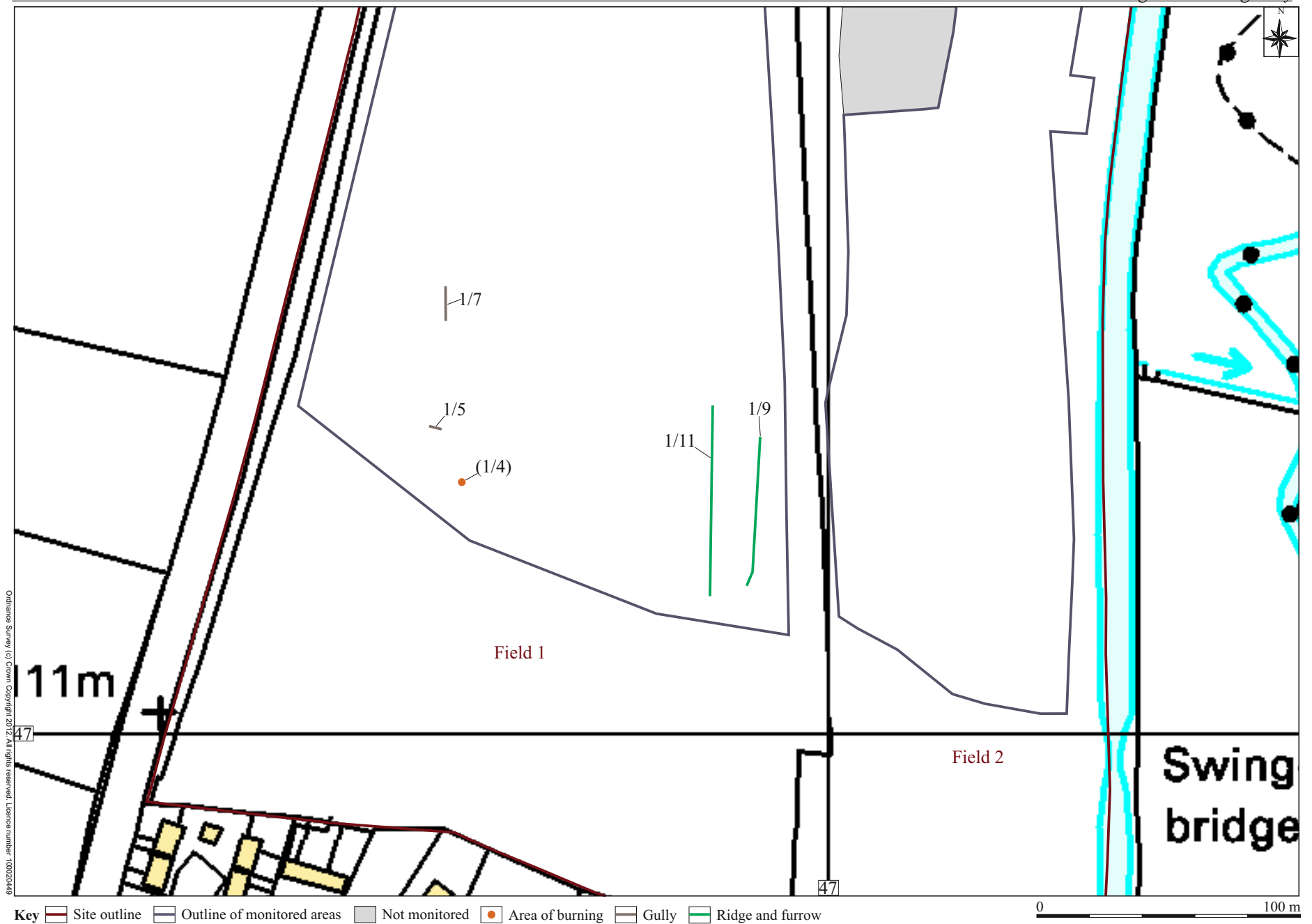


Figure 2. Plan of field 1

## 4 RESULTS

Topsoil and subsoil were stripped in three fields: numbered Field 1, Field 2 and Field 3 (Fig. 1). It was only in the first of these that any features were recorded and these were of such an ephemeral nature and produced no dating evidence. A handful of pottery sherds were recovered from the various field soils.

### 4.1 Undated Features

#### Field 1

In the larger field to the southwest of the site, the remains of some very shallow ephemeral features were identified (Fig. 2). The natural (1/3) was a highly compact to tenacious yellow grey clay. This was covered in most of the field by context (1/2) a moderately compact orange brown (in some areas yellow) clay with occasional pebble inclusions and measuring in places up to 0.1m deep. In some areas this deposit was nonexistent especially along the sloping bank on the west side of Field 1, where two ephemeral gullies were located. These two gullies appeared to be cut into the natural. The first gully 1/5 was a short linear feature 0.6m wide and 0.05m deep with gentle sides and a rounded. The fill (1/6) was a moderately compact grey silt clay which contained crop roots. The second cut 1/7 was also a short linear feature 0.4m wide and 0.05m deep with gentle sides and a rounded base. The fill (1/8) was a moderately compact grey silt clay. Cut into the top of the subsoil (1/2) where some further linear features and a spread of burnt material. Cut 1/9 was a linear feature approximately 3m wide and 0.1m deep with gentle sloping sides and a rounded base. The fill (1/10) was a moderately compact grey silt. The second cut 1/11 was a linear feature also approximately 3m wide and 0.1m deep with gentle sides and a rounded base. The fill was a moderately compact grey silt clay. Both of these features were considered to be the ephemeral (almost ploughed out remains of medieval ridge and furrow). They like the gullies were so shallow that they were churned up by the earthmoving machinery. The last feature was deposit (1/4) a moderately compact grey black silt clay some 3m in diameter and 0.02m deep. The deposit is the residue of burning, probably stubble in the field. These features were all sealed by topsoil layer (1/1) a moderately compact grey brown silt clay with minimal inclusions of brick, slate, marl and pottery.

#### Field 2

The lowest layer (2/3) in Field 2 (southeast field) was a blue grey clay that was interpreted as an alluvial deposit. This was sealed by layer (2/2) a compact light red brown sand clay some 0.2 with some gravel deposits. Sealing this was layer (2/1) a compact mid grey silt 0.3m deep. These three deposits were also catalogued as (5/1), (5/2) and (5/3), with the latter numbers corresponding to their duplicated context.

#### Field 3

In Field 3 (north field) the lowest layer (3/4) was a compact light yellow brown to grey sand and gravel. This was sealed by layer (3/3) a highly compact blue grey clay 0.25m deep. This was in turn covered by layer (3/2) a compact light brown sand clay 0.2m deep. The top layer (3/1) was a compact dark grey silt 0.3m deep. These deposits were also replicated as (4/1), (4/2) and (4/4) where the descriptions of each being duplicated with the last number. In the case of context (4/3) the description is slightly different in that light brown orange and one should consider that this is just variation in the layer.



## 5 FINDS

### 5.1 Pottery (*By David Gilbert*)

#### **Roman Pottery**

A single sherd of Roman coarse ware was recovered, from context (1/2), with a sand-tempered reduced fabric that probably originated from the Oxford potteries. It is an un-diagnostic body-herd and very abraded. The sherd was not retained.

#### **Medieval and Post-medieval Pottery**

A small assemblage of six sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery was recovered from the topsoil. The pottery was recorded utilising the coding system and chronology of the Oxfordshire County type-series (Mellor 1989, 1994) and not retained. Fabrics included:

OXAM: *Brill/Boarstall Ware*. AD 1200-1600 (1 sherd)

OXDR: *Red Earthenwares*. AD 1550+ (4 sherds)

OXBEW: *Staffordshire manganese wares*. c. AD 1700-1800 (1 sherd)

## 6 DISCUSSION

The watching brief at the new marina site along the Claydon Road failed to identify any features of major archaeological significance. What survived on the site was located in Field 1 but this was of a very ephemeral nature, being extremely shallow. Two of the linear features possibly represent gullies of a former truncated field system, while the other two linear features probably represent the remains of furrow bases of a medieval or early post-medieval ridge and furrow system to the north of the village. The area of burning may simply be stubble burning. Fields 2 and 3 had no recognisable or surviving features in them.

## 7 ARCHIVE

### **Archive Contents**

The archive consists of the following:

#### Paper record

The project brief

Written scheme of investigation

The project report

The primary site record

#### Physical record

Finds

The archive currently is maintained by John Moore Heritage Services and will be transferred to the County Museums' Store under accession number OXCMS: 2012.113.

## 8 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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