

Community Landscape Archaeology Survey Project

# A magnetometer survey of the abandoned village of Thrupp, Norton, Northants

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# Abstract

CLASP undertook an exploratory magnetometer survey of an area of 9.4 ha. covering the deserted medieval village of Thrupp in the parish of Norton, Northamptonshire. The geophysical survey area is bisected by the B4036 and archaeological remains of the site are also known to lie below the present road surface.<sup>1</sup> The survey results revealed many integrated anomalies both to the north and south of the road, centred on the cross roads of the B4036 and Station Rd. Welton. The majority of the features observed are consistent with the archaeological vestiges of some of the destroyed late 15<sup>th</sup> century medieval tenements and an abandoned chapel, the results of enclosure in 1489. The overall layout and extent of the medieval village was discerned and the distribution of tofts/tenements, enclosures and trackways revealed. Several other anomalies associated with early Iron Age and Romano-British settlement activity are also present although their collective meaning is difficult to interpret.

# Introduction.

- 1.1 The geophysical survey was conducted by the Community Landscape and Archaeology Survey Project (CLASP), a community based archaeological charity, between January 2014 and October 2017. The investigative fieldwork was carried out across five fields to the west and south-west of Thrupp Grounds Farm.
- 1.2 This fieldwork formed part of a wider landscape characterization survey of Norton parish linked to the large-scale investigation of the area surrounding the scheduled Ancient Monument of the Roman Posting Station at Bannaventa immediately to the south-east of the deserted medieval village.<sup>2</sup>
- 1.4 The survey covered a total area of 9.4 ha. spread over 5 fields. At the time of investigation four of the fields were under pasture (B, C, D & E) whilst the other one contained rape stubble (A). The Magnetometer survey was employed as it offered the most effective and appropriate methodological approach for obtaining reasonable quality data from the existing circumstances and conditions.
- 1.5 The survey methodology described in this report was based upon guidelines set out in the English Heritage document Geophysical Survey in Archaeological Field Evaluation (David et al 2008).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Young S. and Kay F. Archaeological Excavation and Evaluation of a Cable Trench on the B4036 near Thrupp Grounds Farm, Northamptonshire OASIS clasp1-224802

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Young S. & Kay F. et al

1.6 Various magnetic anomalies were revealed over an area of 8 ha. The potential sites of several individual 'tofts' or medieval tenements were identified as was the internal infrastructure of trackways associated with the deserted medieval village.



#### 2.0 Site Location and Description

#### Fig. 1 Site Location

2.1 The site is centred on SP459299265110. It is 1.3 km north of the village of Norton, Northamptonshire and is situated on a level plateau. At the time of the geophysical survey the area to the north of the B4036 was mostly pasture, as was area D to the south, while Area A was covered by rape stubble.



#### Fig. 1b Site location, detail

2.2 The survey area is situated in the watershed of the River Nene on substantially level ground of a promontory at an average of 120m OD (fig.2). North of the area the land slopes down to a tributary of the Nene called Western Water and the Grand Union Canal, to the south it slopes down to an un-named stream also feeding the Nene. The A5 is 0.7 km east and the Iron Age fort of Borough Hill 2 km west. The geology of the site consists of glacial sands and gravel deposits. (British Geological Survey sheet 185, published in 1980).



Fig. 2 Area of Geophysical Survey

# 3.0 Archaeological and historical background

Thrupp is a deserted medieval village site in the parish of Norton, Northamptonshire. It was, very likely, founded by Danish farmers from across the Watling Street, [the Danelaw boundary], in the northern part of Norton parish with the agreement of the Norton people. In the Domesday Book there are four small estates which make up the landholdings in the village with a population of 5 villagers and 3 small-holders.<sup>3</sup> The documentary history of the village can be gleaned from the various transactions made by the holders of these small estates and especially from the "Cartulary of Daventry Priory" which has details of land deals by means of purchase and exchange. The Priory was able to consolidate some of their holdings and in the 1280s commenced to build a grange and to surround it with a wall. This meant that the Priory land, within the wall, would not be a party to the agricultural regime followed by the rest of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Domesday book

inhabitants and farmers of Thrupp and that the Priory would enjoy freedom of action.

For most of the late medieval period Thrupp belonged to Daventry Priory. The priory maintained a chapel there and the village is recorded by name in the *Nomina Villarum* 1316, although thereafter its taxation records were included with those of Norton. In 1489 the priory enclosed all the land of the village, abandoning the chapel, destroying eighteen houses and expelling one hundred people. By 1518 the chapel was described as fallen '*in desolacionem*', and in a survey of about 1530 relating to the former possessions of Daventry Priory Thrupp is described as being 'formerly a town but converted into pasture, with a ruined chapel'. By 1564 only one farm existed and this remained so until the early eighteenth century the single farm probably being the site of Thrupp Lodge (RCHME, 1981, 153).

The surface remains of the village have been eroded and destroyed by more recent cultivation, but large quantities of pottery, mainly dating from the twelfth to fourteenth century, are recorded from fields to the east and north-east of Thrupp Lodge (RCHME, 1981, 154; SMR 626). Thrupp is recorded as having had two fields, known as East and West, in early fourteenth century *terriers* of Daventry Priory, and these fields still existed in 1450. They are said to have been enclosed in 1489, and there are records from the sixteenth century of sheep being kept on the pasture and meadows of Thrupp. (Hall, 1995, 323).

By the early eighteenth century, according to Bridges, Thrupp 'hath only one house upon it' (ibid, 80) and the 1847 Tithe Map suggests that a substantial area of 'old enclosure', presumably made soon after 1583 (Waterfield, 1999, 5), refers to land along the B4036 as being part of the open fields system at that time. Jeffery and Eyre's map indicates that buildings existed at Thrupp Lodge, Thrupp Grounds and Lower Thrupp Grounds in 1779, and the line of the Daventry to Long Buckby road appears to have lain somewhat north of the modern line of the B4036 at Thrupp Grounds. Apart from the building at Lower Thrupp Grounds, the site appears to have been entirely in agricultural use, and the field name 'grounds', suggesting outlying grazing, attests to its medieval depopulation and reuse as sheep pasture (Steane, 1974, 175).

#### 4.0 Field Methodology

4.1 The aim of the geophysical survey was two-fold: to establish accurately the extent and presence of archaeological remains and the character of any geophysical anomalies within the survey area.

#### 4.2

The gradiometer is a non-intrusive scientific surveying instrument used to determine the presence or absence of some types of subsurface archaeological features (e.g. ditches, trackways, field systems, enclosures and building foundations). By scanning the soil surface geophysics can identify areas of varying magnetic susceptibility, the data from which can be displayed in a variety of graphical formats from which archaeological features can be identified. In this case magnetic survey was employed because it offered the best chance of locating the wider extent and structural detail of the surviving archaeology (Clark 1990).

#### 4.3

The area survey was conducted using a Bartington gradiometer type 601, dual flux gate gradiometer, with the 601 data logger set to make four readings per metre (sample interval of 0.25m). The zigzag traverse method of survey was used with 1m wide traverses on an approximate North South line across the fields based on 30x30m grid squares. The sensitivity of the machine was set to detect and record variation in the order of 0.1 nanoTesla. Metal contamination along some field boundaries and landscape trees with metal cattle protection slightly restricted the survey area

#### 4.4

The data was processed using Snuffler Version 1.3 and filtered to reduce geomagnetic striping (ZMT) and operator error due to ground irregularities etc. The gradiometer data is displayed as a series of greyscale maps and an interpretation of the possible archaeological anomalies is shown in a series of interpretational figures on a field by field basis.

## 5.0 Field data analysis and interpretation of results

### 5.1 Area A (Figs. 3 & 4)

The field lies to the south of the B4036 between Thrupp Grounds Farm and the Station Road, Welton crossroads. A concentrated focus of geophysical anomalies across the northern part of the field indicate an extensive, possibly multi-period, grouping of largely rectangular enclosures aligned along a west/east axis. These enclosures lie across and intersect each other implying phasal change of the features through time but perhaps not reflecting any deviation in the underlying agricultural use. Area A is difficult to interpret clearly in a chronological sense and probably should be seen as also reflecting underlying elements of a pre medieval landscape like the Late Iron Age to early Roman activity detected through excavation in the next field to the east. In addition, evidence of a curved trackway alignment adjacent to the modern field boundary which cuts across some enclosure boundaries can be observed and at the southern extremity of the survey area ridge and furrow is evident.

## 5.2 Area B (Figs. 5 & 6)

This field lies immediately to the north of Area A and occupies the ground between Thrupp Grounds Farm and the Station Road, Welton crossroads. The geophysical anomalies are less concentrated in this area but they are more easily understand and open to interpretation. The distribution and alignment of the boundaries suggests a distinct pattern of medieval toft enclosures that compose the north eastern extremity of the deserted medieval village that appear to be serviced by an associated trackway.

## 5.3 Area C (Figs. 6 & 8)

In the field immediately to the west of the Station Road, Welton crossroads the geophysical survey revealed a series of anomalies lying alongside a trackway that bisected the area. This could well be interpreted as the main street of the deserted medieval village with the boundaries of individual 'tofts' emanating backwards from the trackway. Like the anomalies located in Area A the distribution and density of features is indicative of more than one period of activity although the appearance of extensive hardcore deposits in the northeast of the field hindered an overall interpretation.

## 5.4 Area D (Figs. 9 & 10)

This field lies to the south east of the Station Road, Welton crossroads and south of the B4036 parallel to the field containing Area C to the north with the geophysical anomalies showing a very clear southern boundary ditch containing the anomalies which are best defined as a series of enclosures which could be interpreted possibly as 'tofts'. The area also has extensive evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation.

## 5.5 Area E (Figs. 11 & 12)

The field is located to the north west of the geophysical survey area and lies immediately alongside the boundary fence of Area C to the south. A range of geophysical anomalies suggest features that not only define the expected medieval landscape but also elements of earlier occupation possibly of the Late Iron Age and Roman periods. The northern extent of the deserted medieval settlement is evident in the west/east alignment of the perimeter ditch which defines the limit of the 'tofts' in this area. Ridge and furrow are also evident to the north of the boundary ditch.

#### 6.0 Conclusions

The geophysical survey of the deserted medieval village of Thrupp has enabled us to determine for the first time the overall size, general layout and extent of the settlement. The geophysical survey demonstrates that the deserted medieval village of Thrupp lies between Thrupp Ground Farm and the 19<sup>th</sup> century landscape garden and orchard associated with Thrupp Lodge located in the field beyond Station Road near the Welton crossroads. The domestic focus of the settlement appears to lie immediately to the north and south of the B4036. The nature of that domestic focus has been subsequently attested through excavation of several medieval tenements<sup>4</sup>. Both the north and southern boundaries of the settlement can be observed running through to the fields either side of the B3036. This fieldwork also hints at an earlier series of landscape features underlying the medieval remains probably of Iron Age & Roman date. The latter are difficult to interpret, at present, but illustrate the possible longevity of activity on the site. An important diagnostic feature connected to the deserted medieval village is the reasonably organised layout of the 'tofts' and their relationship towards the trackways that serviced them. The boundaries to the settlement are particularly clear in the north and south west zone.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Young & Kay forcoming

## Acknowledgements

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# Appendix 1 OASIS form

REPORT FORM PROJECT	DETAILS	OASIS No: CL	ASP1-353952
Project name		Geophysics su village of Thrug	rvey centred on the medieval op, Norton, Northants
Short description (250 words maximum)		A magnetomet the now vanish parish of Norto other features probably the La the late mediev	er survey of 9.4ha of the area of ned village of Thrupp in the n, Northamptonshire. Numerous were revealed dating from ate Iron Age/Roman period to val
Project type		research	
(eg DBA, evaluation etc)			
Site status		none	
(none, NT, SAM etc)		Watching brief	
(SMR numbers etc)		watching brief	Clasp1-0A515 224602
Current Land use		Mixed agricultu	Iro
Future work		Yes trial excav	vations
(ves, no, unknown)			
Monument type/ period		Medieval 900-1	550
County HER ref.		ENN109411	
Significant finds (artefact type and period) PROJECT LOCATION		n/a	
		1	
County		Northamptonsh	nire
Site address (including postcod	de)	Thrupp Ground	s Farm, Norton NN11 2LY
Study area (sq.m or ha)		9.4ha	
US Easting & Northing		Centred on SP4	+59299 265110
Hoight OD		C OD m 125	
Theight OD		C. OD III 125	
Drift Geology		Glacial gravels	
Solid Geology		Upper Lias	
PROJECT CREATORS			
Organisation		CLASP	
Project brief originator		CLASP	
Project Design originator		CLASP	
Director/Supervisor		Stephen Young	
Project Manager		Fred Kay	
Sponsor or funding body		CLASP	
PROJECT DATE			
Start date/End date 1/	1/2015	10/8/2017	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no	) )	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)

Physical	CLASP Archive	:	None
Paper	CLASP Archive	:	Site file
Digital	CLASP Archive	:	Mapinfo plan files, Word report (PDF)
BIBLIOGRAPHY			
Title		Geophysical Su	Irvey of Thrupp
Serial title & volume		CLASP report	NRTN02_Th
Author(s)		S. Young, F. Ka	ау
Page numbers			
URL www.claspweb.gov.uk			

# **Appendix 2 HER records**



ENN records within 500m



MNN records within 500m

record no.	Title	period	0.S. SP
FNN100825	Finds at Thrupp, 2000	R	and the second se
ENN100877	Finds. 2000	R	604 643
ENN101725	Finds, 2000	Я	605 652
ENN101740	Finds, 2001		
ENN101759	Finds, 2001		
ENN101846	Thrupp Grounds, 2001 (Finds)	Σ	604 655
ENN101855	Thrupp	ж	599 652
ENN101858	Finds, 2001		
ENN101859	Norton, 2001 (Finds)	R	600 650
ENN101918	Finds, 2001	R	605 649
ENN108214	Cable trench watching brief		
ENN4568	Thrupp	Μ	599 651
ENN4573	Thrupp, c1950 (Trial pit)	Σ	599 651
ENN4690	Aerial survey, undated		604 655

MNN18809  S	ite of probable medieval moat	ω	597 650
MNN26505	nstratified med. pottery and possible building foundations	Σ	598 650
MNN26506	ossible Roman Enclosures & Ditches	δ	598 650
MNN134118 Pc	ossible Post Medieval Activity	Post M	598 653
MNN406	ledieval settlement at Thrupp	Σ	599 651
MNN407 R	oman Settlement at Thrupp Lodge	R	599 651
MNN135658	ben Field System. Thrupp	Σ	60 64
MNN18810 Pc	ossible medieval stone surface	Σ	600 650
MNN18812 Pc	ossible medieval chapel at Thrupp	Σ	600 650

ENN & MNN within 500m

# **Appendix 3 Figures**



Fig. 3 Area A. Greyscale plot of geophysics



Fig. 4 Area A interpretation



Fig. 5 Area B. Greyscale plot of geophysics



Fig. 6 Area B interpretation



Fig. 7 Area C Greyscale plot of geophysics



Fig. 8 Area C. Interpretation



Fig. 9 Area D. Greyscale plot of geophysics



Fig. 10 Area D interpretation



Fig 11 Area E Greyscale plot of geophysics



Fig. 12 Area E Interpretation



Fig. 13 Total geophysics survey