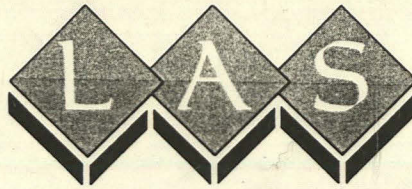


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ELI 333  
ELI 647  
41865  
43416

**MAREHAM ROAD, HORNCastle**  
**Archaeological Evaluation**

Application No: S 86/1823/92

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**LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES**  
FRANCIS HOUSE SILVER BIRCH PARK GREAT NORTHERN TERRACE LINCOLN LN5 8LG

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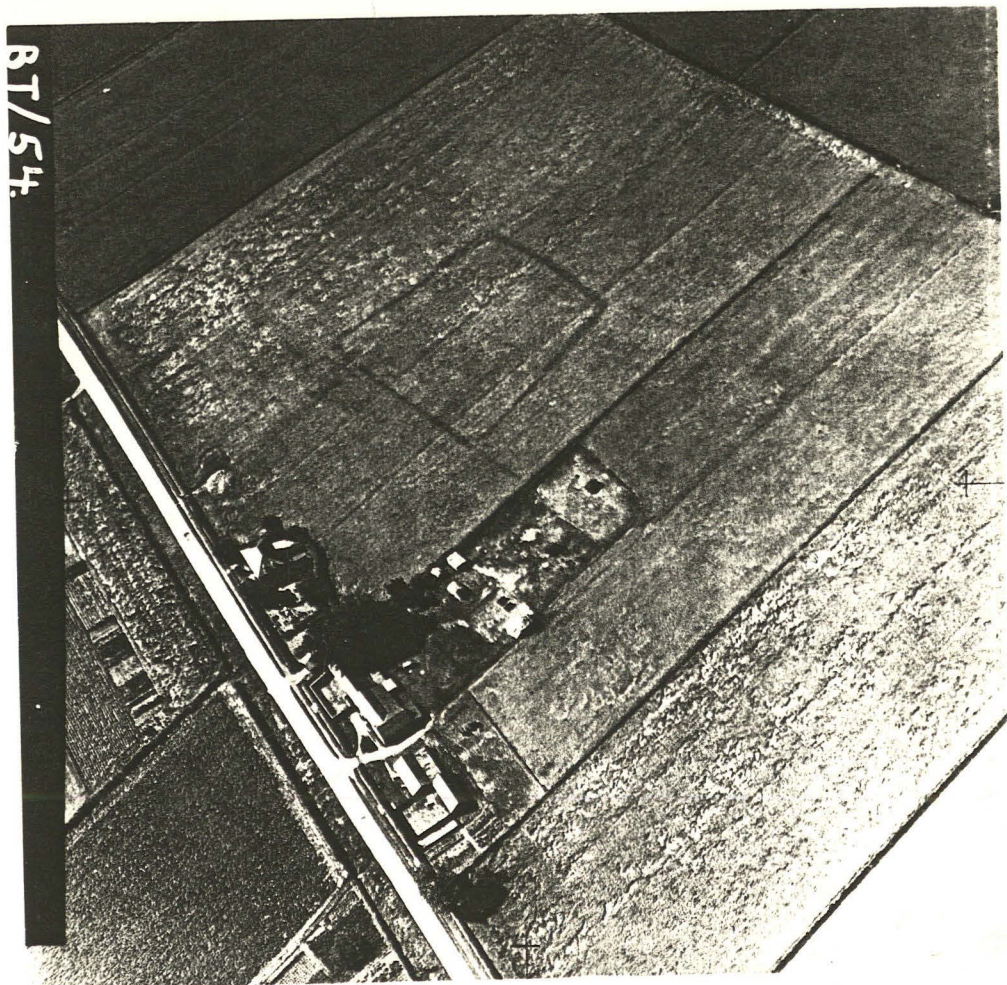
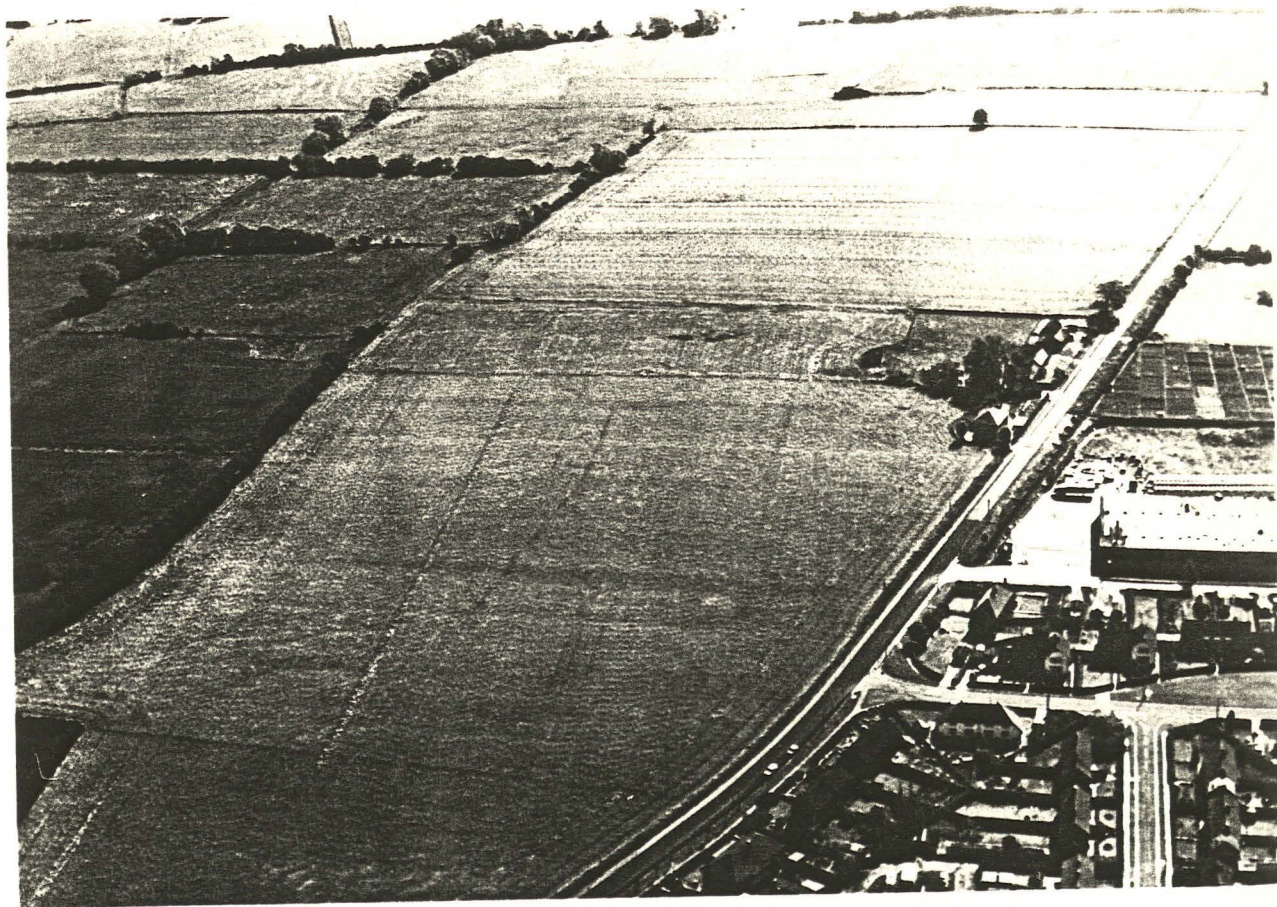


Fig.1. Mareham Rd, Horncastle. Air photographs showing enclosure. Top 23.7.1948 (Cambridge University Collection) Bottom 30.7.1977 (P.Everson).





## MAREHAM ROAD, HORNCASTLE Archaeological Evaluation

TF 267690

### Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services undertook an archaeological evaluation of a proposed housing development site in Mareham Rd, Horncastle, on behalf of Hugh Bourn Developments (Wragby) Ltd. A rectangular enclosure complex had been identified from aerial photographs which covers part of the eastern half of the proposed development area. The enclosure complex is located on a prominent gravel ridge in the field.

### Aims of the Assessment

The aim of the assessment was to locate the enclosure complex accurately on the ground and to determine its full extent by means of geophysical survey. In order to minimise the area surveyed the air photographic evidence was plotted onto an Ordnance Survey map.

### Background

It has long been known that Horncastle was a major Roman settlement whose origins lie in the Iron Age. Throughout the whole Roman period there was a settlement on the banks of the Rivers Bain and Waring. In the 3-4th centuries AD an area adjacent to the settlement, at the confluence of the two rivers, was fortified. The total area of the Roman settlement extended over 54 ha and reached along the Boston Road, as far as Tennyson Gardens and along the Mareham Road as far as the Residential College. Just south-east of the Residential College is the proposed development site where the rectangular enclosure was first recorded as a mark in ripening crops in 1948 (Figs.1 and 2).

### THE SURVEY

#### 1. Aerial Photography

The proposed development will affect an enclosure which was first identified from aerial photography in 1948 (REF. BT54). It was photographed again in 1977 (RCHM ref. 2988/8A). (Fig.1) A full search was made of the national photographic libraries at Cambridge University and the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments (National Air Photographic Library, Swindon) but no further record of the site was found.

Careful examination of the photographs during plotting have revealed that there are at least three subdivisions in the enclosure with the possibility of further features. The 1977 photograph was very poor but indicated that the enclosure extended further west. The poor photographic evidence made it essential to carry out a geophysical survey of the area in order to identify the full extent of archaeological remains.

The photographic evidence was plotted, to scale, onto an Ordnance Survey map at a scale of 1:2500 using the two available photographs (Fig.2). It proved to be an extremely



difficult task because many of the field boundaries present on the 1948 photograph were not present on the later photograph or the OS map. However, the resulting plot was used as the basis for positioning the grids for a geophysical survey of the area.

## 2. Geophysical Survey (Figs. 3, 4, 5)

A total of 16,200m<sup>2</sup> was surveyed using a Geoscan FM36 fluxgate gradiometer. The results were processed using Geoplot software. The main enclosure identified on the aerial photographs shows quite clearly, despite the site being located on a gravel subsoil which has a relatively high magnetic background. The field was in a state of rough plough at the time of the survey.

It should be noted that no magnetometer survey can identify all archaeological features present on a site. However, the survey did identify features which were not visible on the aerial photographs. Magnetometer surveys are unable to date the features it records and the interpretation in Fig. 5 is based on modern map and photographic evidence. It would appear that the enclosure complex is just one component on a much larger system of field boundaries which extend in all directions beyond the limit of the survey area. There is every possibility that the features recorded which are thought to be ancient in date may represent several phases of activity on the site.

There were problems in accurately locating the enclosure in the large field because the boundaries present when the site was photographed in 1948 have since been removed. Only part of the southern ditch appears in the geophysical survey but the other three sides show reasonably well. A number of parallel field boundaries cross the enclosure on the 1948 photograph, three of which were recorded on the survey (Fig.5, marked pink). It is also possible that the boundaries defining a back garden or yard which is visible on the 1948 photograph are also on the survey but they are not very distinct. The large ferrous anomaly is probably connected with one of these boundaries.

The eastern extension of the main enclosure was also found but is not a very strong magnetic anomaly. Both it and the main enclosure may well have internal features which are marked on Fig. 5. The main enclosure appears to be sub-divided by a ditch running north-south, which continues beyond the northern limit of the enclosure.

Definition is poor but a continuation of the northern ditch of the main enclosure westwards (with a possible break of 12-15m) is possible.

To the west of the main enclosure there are further indistinct anomalies which may represent archaeological features but definition is poor.

It is believed that the lack of definition of some of the archaeological features is mostly a reflection of the



prevailing ground conditions and geological background and not because the archaeology has been destroyed. This must be further tested by excavation.

### **3. Fieldwalking**

The field had recently been ploughed so the opportunity was taken to do a rapid search for artefacts in the ploughsoil. When the field was walked over by the Boston Archaeology Group in about 1970 nothing was found but 23 years of further ploughing had brought considerable quantities of worked flint to the surface of the field. Only a sample area of the site could be investigated within the timescale available. An area 90m x 30m (three of the geophysical grid squares) was investigated (Fig. 3, marked blue). 15 abraded Roman pottery sherds were recovered together with 31 worked flints which were late Neolithic /early Bronze Age in date (c.2,000 B.C. in date).

### **DISCUSSION**

Similar simple rectangular enclosures have been recorded from the air at numerous locations in the county. Until recently little has been known about their date or function. Walking over these sites after ploughing sometimes produces pottery sherds and the crude rule of thumb has been to assign those producing Roman pottery to the Roman period and those producing nothing to the Iron Age. Limited excavation on similar sites at Hackthorn, Cold Hanworth and Burgh on Bain has produced late Iron Age pottery of the 1st century BC. An enclosure complex at Kirmond le Mire, constructed on a much larger scale, has proved to be late Bronze Age in date (perhaps 700-800 B.C.).

The results of the fieldwalking at Mareham Rd raise difficulties in interpretation of the site. The small amount of associated Roman pottery may mean that it is Roman, or possibly Iron Age in date. (The close proximity of the site to the main Roman settlement at Horncastle makes the presence a small quantity of Roman pottery unremarkable.) It is possible that the worked flints are associated with the enclosure and date it to the late Neolithic/ early Bronze Age. Alternatively the flints may belong to an entirely different phase of activity, perhaps connected with the more ephemeral features in the geophysical survey. As mentioned above there could be several phases of human activity represented in the magnetometer plot of features.

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion the importance of the site on Mareham Road lies in the possibility that the enclosure might be Neolithic in its origins. Very few enclosures can be securely assigned to this period and if it is truly this early is of considerable archaeological importance. Alternatively, the late Neolithic flints may be associated with surviving structures lying beneath a later, Iron Age or Roman, enclosure complex.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The enclosure complex is at least 150m long and 60m wide with associated ditches extending the the north west and east. It is difficult to see how it can be preserved within the proposed development. In addition, the potential importance of the site lies in its possible Neolithic/Bronze Age origins and it is therefore recommended that excavations should be carried out on the site to establish its date.

A strategy for future work should be agreed with the County Archaeological Officer.

### **Acknowledgements**

Mick Clark plotted the air photographs. Scott Birch carried out the geophysical survey and his report on the findings is incorporated above. I am grateful to Daryl Garton of Trent and Peak Archaeological Trust (Nottingham) who kindly looked at the worked flints at short notice.

Naomi Field  
February 26th 1993



HORNCASTLE CP

5622  
1.543ha  
3.81

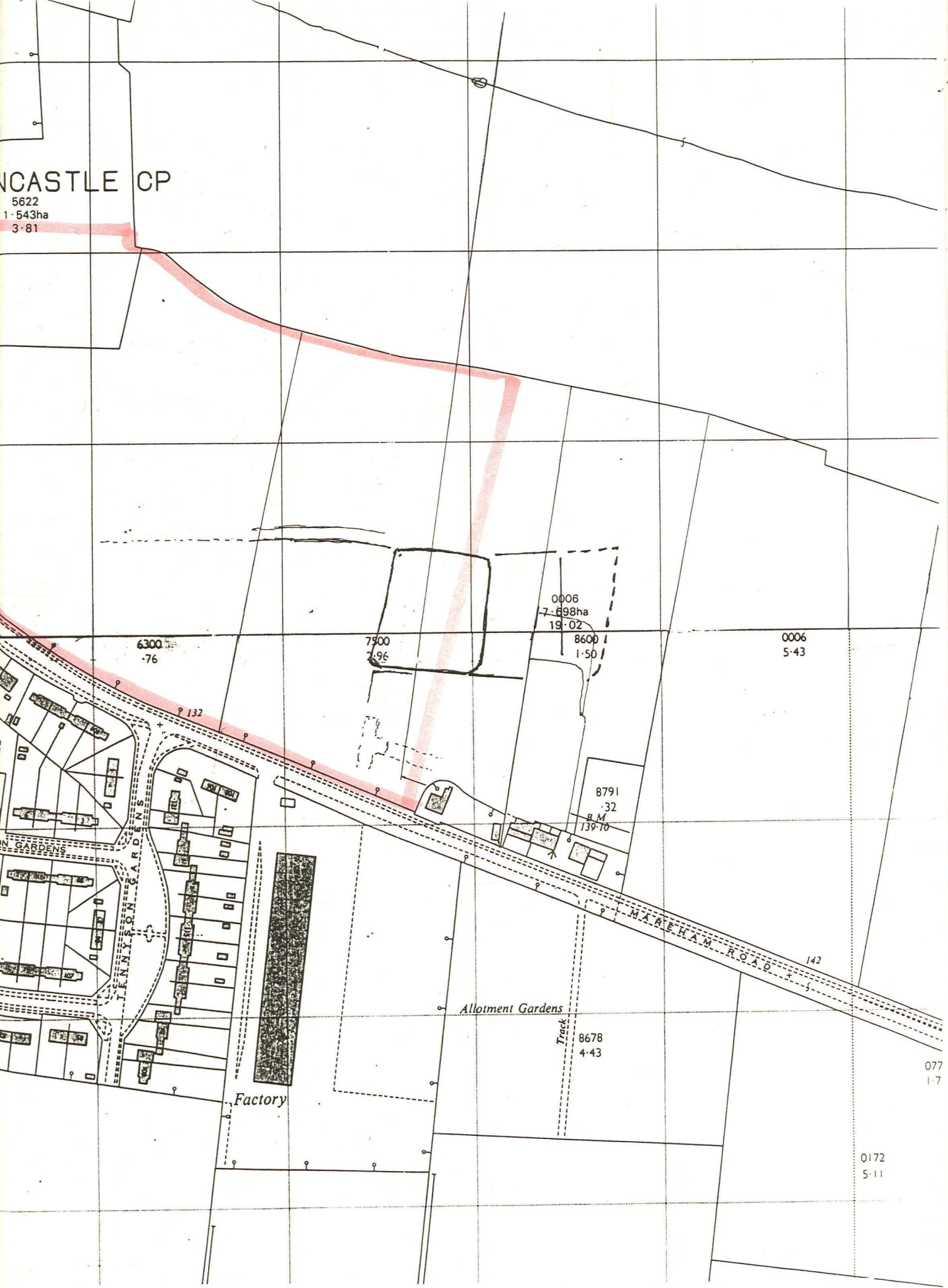


Fig. 2 Mareham Rd, Horncastle. Location of housing development site (pink) and cropmark enclosure. Scale 1:2500. MVC

HORNCASTLE CP

5622  
1.543ha  
3.81

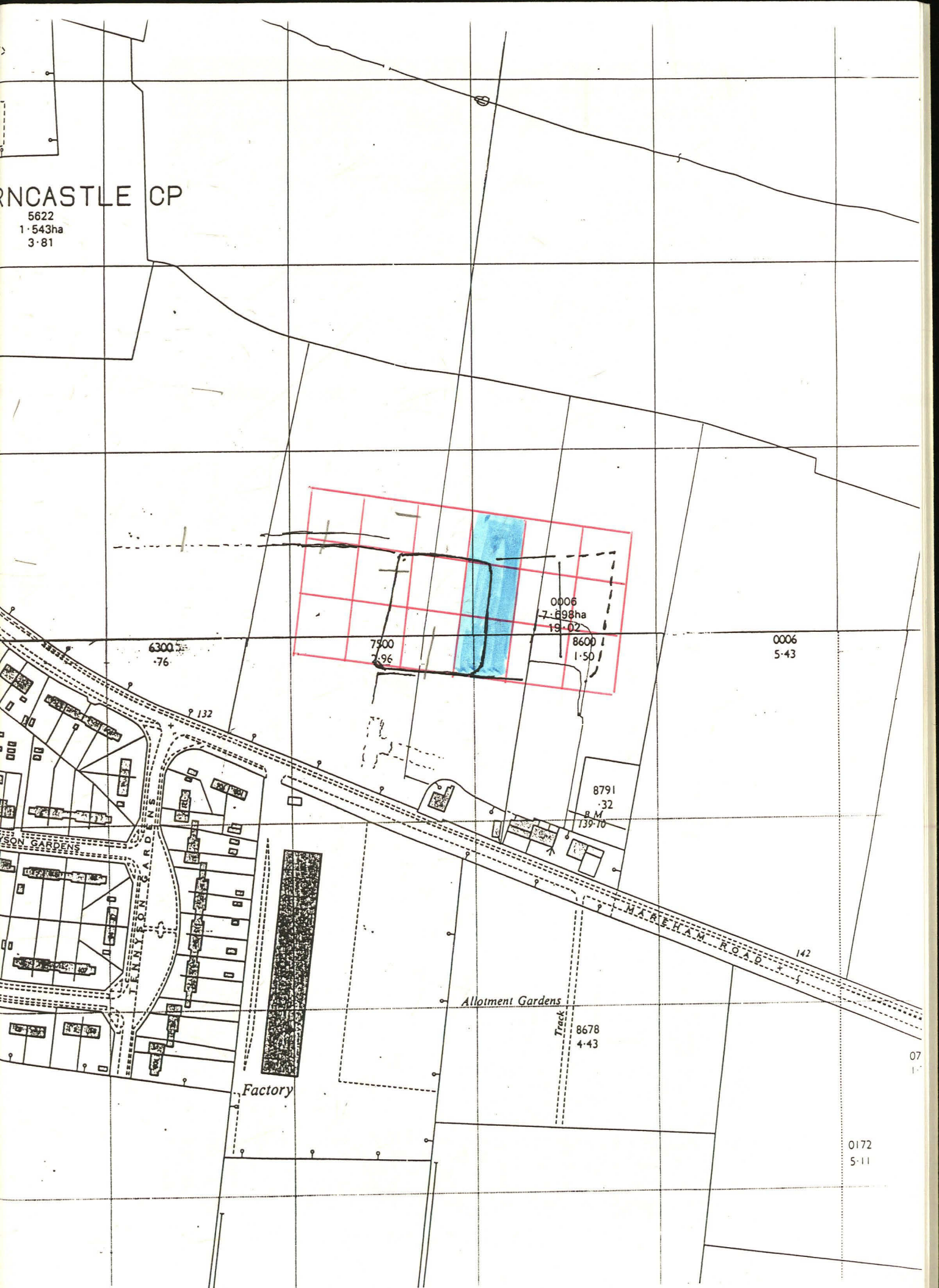


Fig. 3 Mareham Rd, Horncastle. Location of geophysical survey grid (red) and area fieldwalked (blue).



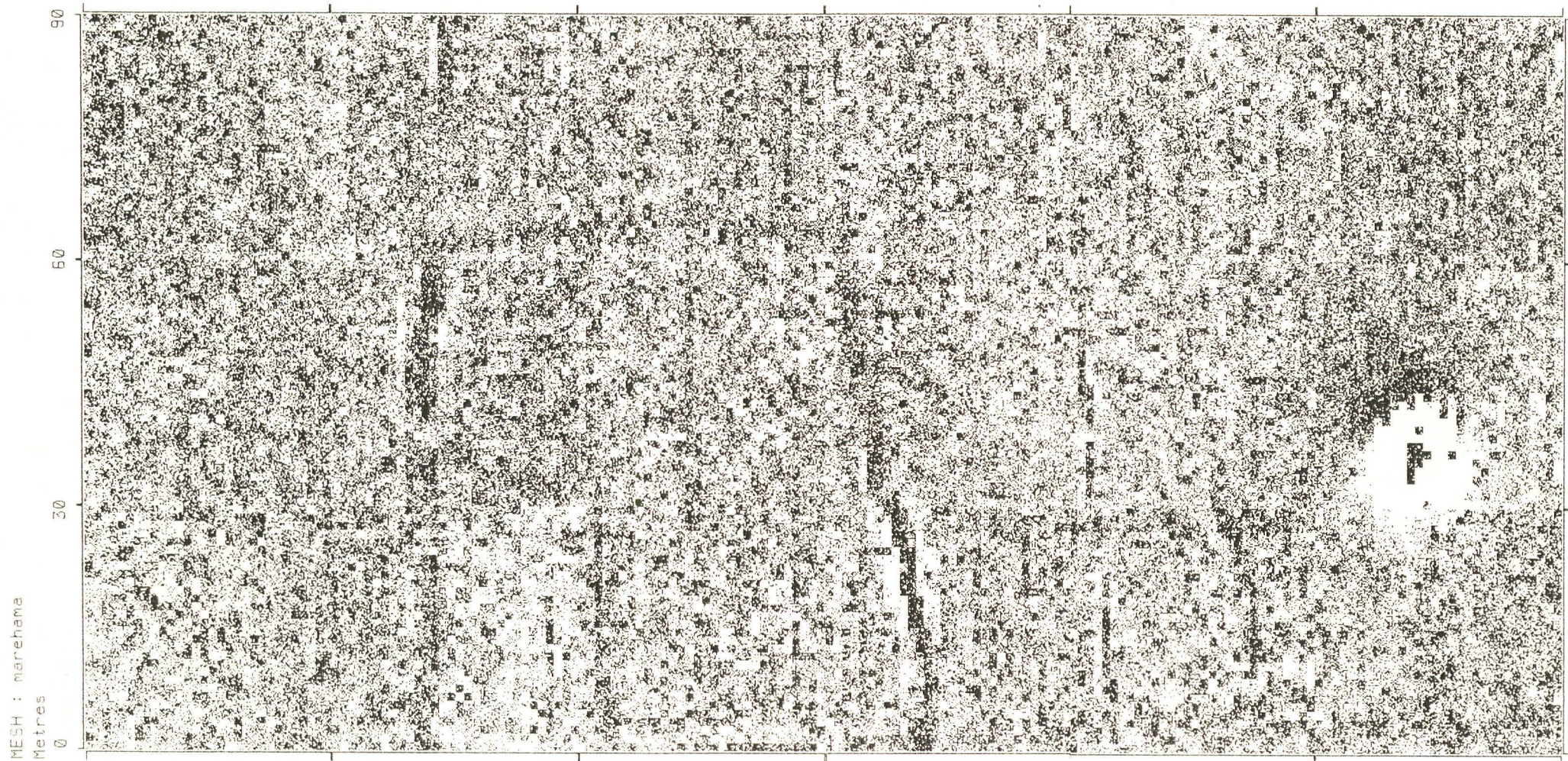


Fig. 4 a) Mareham Rd, Horncastle. Magnetometer results

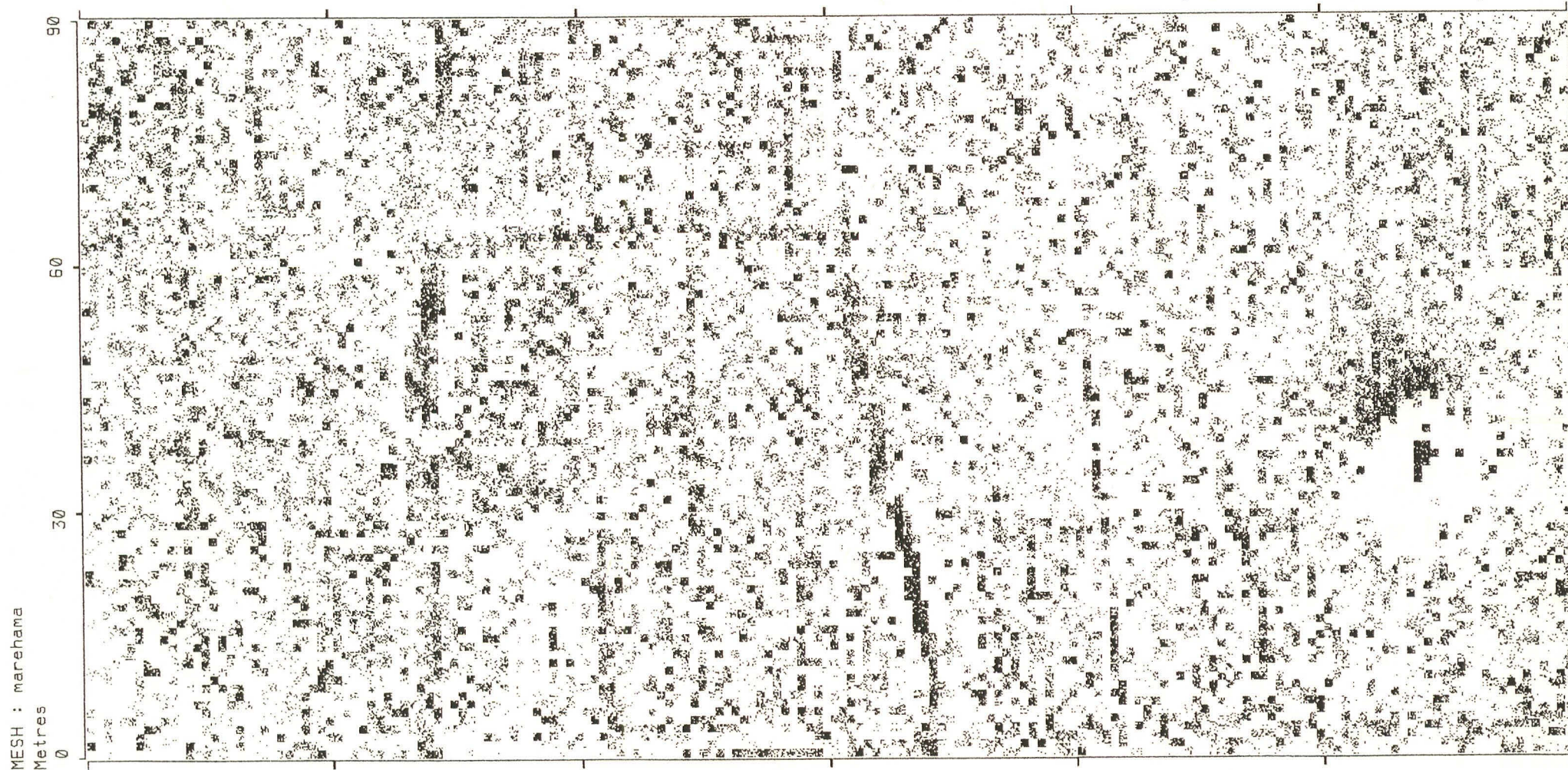


SITE : mareham

Plotting parameters

Minimum	-1.00	-175.76 %	-0.68 SD
Maximum	6.00	354.55 %	1.38 SD
Contrast	2.0	Intensity Multiplier	2.0

North



MESH : marehama

Metres

0

30

60

90

Fig. 4  
b) Magnetometer results using narrower plotting parameters.



SITE : mareham

Plotting parameters

Minimum	-1.00	-175.76 %	-0.68 SD
Maximum	6.00	354.55 %	1.38 SD
Contrast	2.0	Intensity Multiplier	2.0

North



Field division on 1948 on photograph



Fig. 5 Mareham Rd, Horncastle. Magnetometer results with interpretation of features. Modern field boundaries and other modern features  Archaeological remains 