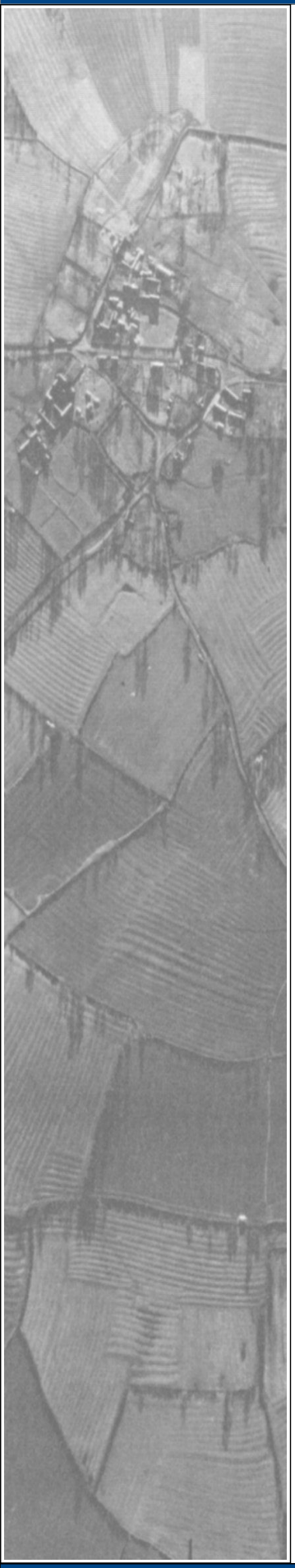

Rollright Quarry
Rollright
Oxfordshire

MAGNETOMETER SURVEY REPORT

for

Landgage Heritage

Kerry Donaldson & David Sabin

April 2023

Ref. no. J961

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEYS LTD

Rollright Quarry
Rollright
Oxfordshire

MAGNETOMETER SURVEY REPORT

for

Landgage Heritage

Fieldwork by David Sabin BSc (Hons) MCIfA
Report by Kerry Donaldson BSc (Hons) MCIfA
Report checked by David Sabin
Primary archive location - Archaeological Surveys Ltd, Yatesbury, Wiltshire

Survey date – 13th April 2023
Ordnance Survey Grid Reference – **SP 28000 30535**

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SUMMARY

Detailed magnetometry was carried out by Archaeological Surveys Ltd ahead of a proposed extension to Rollright Quarry in Oxfordshire. The survey located anomalies associated with naturally formed features and agricultural activity.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Survey background

1.1.1 Archaeological Surveys Ltd was commissioned by Landgage Heritage to undertake a magnetometer survey of an area of land at Rollright Quarry. The site has been outlined for a proposed extension to the quarry located to the north of the survey area and the survey forms part of an archaeological assessment.

1.1.2 The geophysical survey was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by Archaeological Surveys (2023) and approved by Richard Oram, Lead Archaeologist for Oxfordshire County Council, prior to commencing the fieldwork.

1.2 Survey objectives and techniques

1.2.1 The objective of the survey was to use magnetometry to locate geophysical anomalies that may be archaeological in origin so that they may be assessed prior to development of the site. The methodology is considered an efficient and effective approach to archaeological prospection.

1.2.2 Geophysical survey can provide useful information on the archaeological potential of a site; however, the outcome of any survey relies on a number of factors and as a consequence results can vary. The success in meeting the aims and objectives of a survey is, therefore, often impossible to predetermine.

1.3 Standards, guidance and recommendations for the use of this report

1.3.1 Archaeological Surveys Ltd is a Registered Organisation with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) and both company directors are Members of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (MCIfA) and have therefore been assessed for their technical competence and ethical suitability and abide by the CIfA Codes of Conduct. The survey and report follow the recommendations set out by: European Archaeological Council (2015) Guidelines for the Use of Geophysics in Archaeology; Institute for Archaeologists (2002) The use of Geophysical Techniques in Archaeological Evaluations. The work has been carried out to the Chartered Institute for

Archaeologists (2014, updated 2020) Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Geophysical Survey.

1.3.2 Archaeological Surveys Ltd provide a detailed geophysical survey report and it is recommended that where possible the contents should be considered in full. The Summary provides a brief overview of the results with more detail available in the Discussion and/or Conclusion. The *List of anomalies* within the Results provides a detailed assessment of the anomalies within separate categories which can be useful in inferring a level of confidence to the interpretation. Quality and factors influencing the interpretation of anomalies is also set out within the results.

1.3.3 It is recommended that the full report should always be considered when using data and interpretation plots; where this is not possible, in the field for example, the abstraction and interpretation plots should retain their colour coding and be used with a corresponding legend.

1.3.4 Where targeting of anomalies by excavation is to be carried out, care should be taken to place trenches over solid lines or features visible on the abstraction and interpretation plots. Archaeological Surveys abstraction and interpretation avoids the use of dashed or dotted line formats, and broken or fragmented lines used in interpretive plots may well correspond closely with truncation of archaeological features.

1.4 Site location, description and survey conditions

1.4.1 The site is located to the south of the existing Rollright Quarry on the north western edge of Oxfordshire. It is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (OS NGR) SP 28000 30535, see Figs 01 and 02.

1.4.2 The geophysical survey covers approximately 1.6ha within a grassland field immediately to the south of an existing quarry. The site lies on an elevated broad hilltop at approximately 245m AODN, and it is within a small triangular area of Oxfordshire that juts into Warwickshire with the boundary located along the southern field boundary and also to the north of the adjacent working quarry. There is a gentle downward slope towards the north west which becomes much steeper further to the west beyond the site boundary. Field boundaries are mainly hedgerows with post and wire fencing along the northern side. The south western limit of the survey is define by a large soil mound associated with former quarrying.

1.4.3 The ground conditions across the site were generally considered to be favourable for the collection of magnetometry data, although waterlogged ground was encountered in the northern part of the site and heavily rutted ground along the western side. Weather conditions during the survey were fine.

Plate 1: Survey area looking N towards existing quarry workings

1.5 Site history and archaeological potential

1.5.1 The site does not contain any designated or undesignated heritage assets although a Neolithic or Beaker pot was located around 1943 ahead of quarrying 225m to the north east. Previous watching briefs carried out ahead of quarrying immediately to the north only revealed evidence for post medieval agricultural activity (Oxford Archaeology, 2005 and 2008). In the surrounding vicinity there are findspots of two undated ironstone pounders, 200m to the north west and 320m to the south east. A prehistoric to possible Roman settlement has been identified from aerial photographs 450m to the north.

1.5.2 The site lies within 1.3km-1.9km west south west of the Rollright Complex, which includes a number of scheduled monuments both within Oxfordshire and Warwickshire, including the Rollright Stones or King's Men Stone Circle, The King Stone orthostat and the Whispering Knights portal dolmen. Numerous other features including round barrows, cairns, a passage grave, Iron Age settlement and trackway and an Anglo Saxon cemetery are all recorded within the complex of archaeological features that lie either side of the border between the two counties.

1.6 Geology and soils

1.6.1 The underlying solid geology across the majority of the site is argillaceous rocks with subordinate sandstone and limestone from Sharp's Hill Formation with ooidal limestone from the Chipping Norton Limestone Formation along the western edge (BGS, 2022).

1.6.2 The overlying soil across the survey area is from the Elmton 1 association (343a) and is a brown rendzina. It consists of a shallow, well drained, brashy, calcareous, fine, loamy soil over limestone (Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983).

1.6.3 Magnetometry carried out over similar geology and soil has produced good results. The site is, therefore, considered suitable for magnetic survey.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Technical synopsis

2.1.1 Magnetometry survey records localised magnetic fields that can be associated with features formed by human activity. Magnetic susceptibility and magnetic thermoremnance (also known as thermoremanence) are factors associated with the formation of localised magnetic fields.

2.1.2 Iron minerals within the soil may become altered by burning and the break down of biological material; effectively the magnetic susceptibility of the soil is increased, and the iron minerals become magnetic in the presence of the Earth's magnetic field. Accumulations of magnetically enhanced soils within features, such as pits and ditches, may produce positive magnetic anomalies that can be mapped by magnetic prospection. In addition, where soil is displaced by material of comparatively low magnetic susceptibility, such as many types of sedimentary rock, anomalies of negative value may occur which could be indicative of structural remains.

2.1.3 Magnetic thermoremnance can occur when ferrous minerals have been heated to high temperatures such as in a kiln, hearth, oven etc. On cooling, a permanent magnetisation may be acquired due to the presence of the Earth's magnetic field. Certain natural processes associated with the formation of some igneous and metamorphic rock may also result in magnetic thermoremnance.

2.1.4 The localised variations in magnetism are measured as sub-units of the Tesla, which is a SI unit of magnetic flux density. These sub-units are nano Teslas (nT), which are equivalent to 10^{-9} Tesla (T). Additional details are set out in 2.2 below and within Appendix A.

2.2 Equipment configuration, data collection and survey detail

2.2.1 The detailed magnetic survey was carried out using a SENSYS MAGNETO®MXPDA 5 channel cart-based system. The instrument has 5 fluxgate gradiometers (FGM650) spaced 0.5m apart with readings recorded at 20Hz. The cart is pushed at walking speed and not towed. Each sensor is not zeroed in the field as the vertical axis alignment is precisely fixed leaving sensor offsets that are removed during data processing. The fixing of the vertical alignment ensures the

sensors are not unduly influenced by localised magnetic fields and that the vertical component of a magnetic anomaly is measured. The gradiometers have a recorded range of ±3000nT, and resolution is approximately 0.1nT. They are linked to a Leica GS10 RTK GNSS with data recorded by SENSYS MonMX software on a rugged notebook computer system.

2.2.2 Due to the fixed offsets within the fluxgate sensors, as a result of the manufacturing and tensioning process, the survey data do not provide a visually useful dataset until a zero median traverse algorithm is applied. It is recognised that this has the potential to affect some anomalies detrimentally by removing linear features orientated parallel to survey transects. However, this has not been noted as a particular problem with the system due to the high resolution data collection, generally long length of traverses and variability within the magnetic characteristics of a linear anomaly.

2.2.3 Data are collected along a series of parallel survey transects to achieve 100% coverage of the surveyable land. The length of each transect is variable and relates to the size of the survey area and other factors including ground conditions. A visual display allows accurate placing of transects and helps maintain the correct separation between adjacent traverses. Data are not collected within fixed grids and data points are considered to be random even though the data are collected in a systematic manner covering all accessible areas (Aspinall, Gaffney and Schmidt, 2009).

2.2.4 Fluxgate sensors are highly sensitive to temperature change and this manifests as drift during the course of a survey. This can be particularly noticeable during the morning as temperatures rise and the equipment warms or cools. Sensor drift within the course of a traverse will appear as a line trending from negative to positive after processing with a zero median traverse algorithm. To remove the potential for temperature drift, data were collected after a 20 minute stabilisation period and traverses were limited to a time of generally <60s.

2.3 Data processing and presentation

2.3.1 Magnetic data collected by the MAGNETO®MXPDA cart-based system are initially prepared using SENSYS MAGNETO®DLMGPS software. The software effectively allocates a geographic position for each data point and can compensate for fixed offsets present within the FGM650 sensors. The offsets are positive or negative values present on all fluxgate gradiometer sensors. Some systems use manual or electronic balancing to effectively zero the sensors; however, this is a short term measure that is prone to drift through temperature changes and vibration and can easily be incorrectly set due to localised magnetic fields. The FGM650 sensors are very accurately aligned to the vertical magnetic gradient and are highly stable showing negligible drift on long traverses. The offset values are removed using TerraSurveyor software.

2.3.2 Survey tracks are analysed and georeferenced raw data (UTM Z30N) are then

exported in ASCII format for further analysis and display within TerraSurveyor. The removal of the offset values (compensation) of the sensors is also carried out in TerraSurveyor using a zero median traverse function. Data are then considered to be minimally processed. Note: without the zero median traverse function it is not possible to create a meaningful data plot as all sensors have a different offset value. Although a zero median traverse algorithm can remove anomalies aligned with the survey tracks, in practice this rarely occurs due to the use of long traverses, high resolution measurement and variability within the magnetic susceptibility of long linear features.

2.3.3 The minimally processed data are collected between limits of ±3000nT and clipped for display at ±5nT. Data are interpolated to a resolution of effectively 0.5m between tracks and 0.15m along each survey track.

2.3.4 Appendix C contains metadata concerning the survey and data attributes and is derived directly from TerraSurveyor. Reference should be made to Appendix B for further information on processing.

2.3.5 A TIF file is produced by TerraSurveyor software along with an associated world file (.TFW) that allows automatic georeferencing (OSGB36 datum) when using GIS or CAD software. The main form of data display used in the report is the minimally processed greyscale plot. Minimally processed data are considered by the manufacturer to be data that are compensated by SENSYS MAGNETO DLMGPS software, see 2.3.1 and 2.3.2. Note: traceplots are not considered to be appropriate as they do not provide an accurate or useful assessment of the magnetic anomalies due to the very high density of data collection. In addition, traceplots cannot be meaningfully plotted against base mapping and in areas of complexity traces may be lost or highly confused. Traceplots may be used to demonstrate characteristic magnetic profiles across discrete features where it is considered beneficial.

2.3.6 The raster images are combined with base mapping using ProgeCAD Professional 2021, creating DWG (2018) file formats. All images are externally referenced to the CAD drawing in order to maintain good graphical quality. The CAD plots are effectively georeferenced facilitating relocation of features using GNSS, resection method, etc.

2.3.7 An abstraction and interpretation is drawn and plotted for all geophysical anomalies located by the survey. Anomalies are abstracted using colour coded points, lines and polygons. All plots are scaled to landscape A3 for paper printing. Appendix E sets out CAD layer names with colour and graphic content for each interpretation category, see 3.3.

2.3.8 A brief summary of each anomaly, with an appropriate reference number, is set out in list form within the results (Section 3) to allow a rapid and objective assessment of features within the survey area.

2.3.9 A digital archive is produced with this report, see Appendix D below. The main archive is held at the offices of Archaeological Surveys Ltd.

3 RESULTS

3.1 General assessment of survey results

3.1.1 The detailed magnetic survey was carried out over approximately 1.6ha.

3.1.2 Magnetic anomalies located can be generally classified as linear anomalies of an agricultural origin, anomalies with a natural origin, anomalies associated with magnetic disturbance and strong discrete dipolar anomalies relating to ferrous objects.

3.2 Data quality and factors affecting the interpretation or formation of anomalies

3.2.1 Data are considered representative of the magnetic anomalies present within the site. There are no significant defects within the dataset.

3.2.2 Soil magnetic susceptibility is typically high across the Cotswolds and as a consequence strong magnetic anomalies may form within infilled anthropogenic features such as pits and ditches. The soils also frequently produce anomalies associated with naturally and agriculturally formed features; both are apparent within the survey area.

3.3 Data interpretation

3.3.1 The list of sub-headings below attempts to define a number of separate categories that reflect the range and type of features located during the survey. A general explanation of the characteristics of the magnetic anomalies is set out for each category in order to justify interpretation, see Table 1.

Interpretation category	Description and origin of anomalies
Anomalies with an agricultural origin	The anomalies are often linear and form a series of parallel responses or are parallel to extant land boundaries. Where the response is broad, former ridge and furrow is likely; narrow response is often related to modern ploughing. This category does not include agricultural features of early date or considered to be of archaeological potential (e.g. animal stockades, enclosures, farmsteads, etc).
Anomalies associated with magnetic debris	Strong discrete dipolar anomalies are responses to ferrous objects within the topsoil.
Anomalies with a modern origin	The magnetic response is often strong and dipolar indicative of ferrous material and may be associated with extant above surface features such as wire fencing, cables, pylons etc. Often a significant area around these features has a strong magnetic flux which may create magnetic disturbance; such disturbance can effectively obscure low magnitude anomalies if they are present. Fluxgate sensors may respond erratically adjacent to strong magnetic sources. Buried services may produce characteristic multiple dipolar anomalies dependant upon their construction.
Anomalies with a natural origin	Naturally formed magnetic anomalies are caused by localised variability in the magnetic susceptibility of soils, subsoils and other drift or solid geologies. Anomalies may be amorphous, linear or curvilinear and may appear 'fluvial' or discrete; the latter are almost impossible to distinguish from pit-like anomalies with an anthropogenic origin. Fluvial, glacial and periglacial processes may be responsible for their formation within drift material and subsoil. Igneous and metamorphic activity can lead to anomalies within more solid geology.

Table 1: List and description of interpretation categories

3.4 Summary of anomalies

Area centred on OS NGR, see Figs 03 & 04

3.4.1 The site contains a number of discrete positive anomalies, several with a north west to south east trend that relate to soil-filled natural features within the underlying limestone geology. Numerous anomalies associated with agricultural activity have also been located. Magnetic disturbance within the north western part of the site has been caused by quarry plant immediately north of the survey area.

4 CONCLUSION

4.1.1 The detailed magnetometry survey located a number of discrete positive anomalies that relate to natural features within the underlying limestone geology and linear anomalies relating to agricultural activity.

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Appendix A – basic principles of magnetic survey

Iron minerals are always present to some degree within the topsoil and enhancement associated with human activity is related to increases in the level of magnetic susceptibility and thermoremnant material. Magnetic susceptibility is an induced magnetism within a material when it is in the presence of a magnetic field. This can be thought of as effectively permanent due to the presence of the Earth's magnetic field. Thermoremnant magnetism occurs when ferrous material is heated beyond a specific temperature known as the Curie Point. Demagnetisation occurs at this temperature with re-magnetisation by the Earth's magnetic field upon cooling.

Enhancement of magnetic susceptibility can occur in areas subject to burning and complex fermentation processes on biological material; these are frequently associated with human settlement. Thermoremnant features include ovens, hearths, and kilns. In addition thermoremnant material such as tile and brick may also be associated with human activity and settlement.

Silting and deliberate infilling of ditches and pits with magnetically enhanced soil can create an area of enhancement compared with surrounding soils and subsoils into which the feature is cut. Mapping enhanced areas will produce linear and discrete anomalies allowing an assessment and characterisation of hidden subsurface features.

It should be noted that areas of negative enhancement can be produced from material having lower magnetic properties compared to the topsoil. This is common for many sedimentary bedrocks and subsoils which were often used in the construction of banks and walls etc. Mapping these 'negative' anomalies may also reveal archaeological features.

Magnetic survey or magnetometry can be carried out using a fluxgate gradiometer and may be referred to as gradiometry. The SENSYS gradiometer is a passive instrument consisting of two fluxgate sensors mounted vertically 65cm apart. The instrument is carried about 10-20cm above the ground surface and the upper sensor measures the Earth's magnetic field as does the lower sensor but this is influenced to a greater degree by any localised buried magnetic field. The difference between the two sensors will relate to the strength of the magnetic field created by the buried feature.

There are a number of factors that may affect the magnetic survey and these include soil type, local geology and previous human activity. Situations arise where magnetic disturbance associated with modern services, metal fencing, dumped waste material etc., obscures low magnitude fields associated with archaeological features.

Appendix B – data processing notes

Clipping

Minimum and maximum values are set and replace data outside of the range with those values. Extreme values are removed improving colour or greyscale contrast associated with data values that may be archaeologically significant. Different ranges are applied to data in order to determine the most suitable for anomaly abstraction and display.

Zero Median/Mean Traverse

The median (or mean) of data from each traverse is calculated ignoring data outside a threshold value, the median (or mean) is then subtracted from the traverse. The process is used to equalise differences between the offset values of the gradiometer sensors. The process can remove archaeological features that run along a traverse but with the high resolution datasets created by the Sensys FGM650 sensors and the method of data collection this has not been a notable problem. In fact, the removal of offsets using software avoids carrying out a balancing procedure on site, which inevitably can never be done in magnetically clean conditions and results in improperly aligned fluxgate sensors and/or electronic adjustment values.

Appendix C – survey and data information

Minimally processed data
Filename: J961-mag-proc.xcp
Instrument Type: Sensys DLMGPS
Units: nT
UTM Zone: 30U
Survey corner coordinates (X/Y):OSGB36
Northwest corner: 427907.54, 230587.98 m
Southeast corner: 428109.74 230433.03 m
Collection Method: Randomised
Sensors: 5
Dummy Value: 32702

Dimensions
Survey Size (meters): 202 m x 155 m
X&Y Interval: 0.15 m
Source GPS Points: Active: 434206, Recorded: 434211
Stats
Max: 5.53
Min: -5.50
Std Dev: 1.48
Mean: 0.04
Median: 0.01
Composite Area: 3.1331 ha

Surveyed Area: 1.5328 ha
PROGRAM
Name: TerraSurveyor
Version: 3.0.37.0
GPS based Proce4
1 Base Layer.
2 Unit Conversion Layer (UTM to OSGB36).
3 DeStripe Median Traverse:
4 Clip from -5.00 to 5.00 nT

Appendix D – digital archive

Archaeological Surveys Ltd hold the primary digital archive at their offices in Wiltshire. Data are backed-up onto an on-site data storage drive and at the earliest opportunity data are copied to CD ROM for storage on-site and off-site.

A draft copy will be supplied to the Oxfordshire county archaeological officer for comment and the agreed final copy supplied in PDF format to the Oxfordshire Historic Environment Record. The report will also be uploaded to the Online AccesS to the Index of archaeological investigationS (OASIS).

Archive contents:

File type	Naming scheme	Description
Data	J961-mag.csv J961-mag.xcp J961-mag-proc.xcp	Raw data as ASCII CSV TerraSurveyor raw data TerraSurveyor minimally processed data
Graphics	J961-mag-proc.tif	Image in TIF format
Drawing	J961-**[version number]**.dwg	CAD file in 2018 dwg format
Report	J961 report.odt	Report text in LibreOffice odt format

Table 2: Archive metadata

Appendix E – CAD layers for abstraction and interpretation plots

The table below sets out Archaeological Surveys Ltd CAD layer names with associated colours and graphical content. Where CAD files are available layers may be extracted for further CAD/GIS use. Note: hatched polygon boundaries are contained within layers with the RGB colour code 254, 255, 255 (near white) in order to prevent their visibility.

Report sub-heading and associated CAD layer names	Colour with RGB index	Layer content
Anomalies with an agricultural origin		
AS-ABST MAG AGRICULTURAL	Green 0,255,0	Line or polyline
Anomalies associated with magnetic debris		
AS-ABST MAG STRONG DIPOLAR	132, 132, 132	Solid donut, point or polygon (solid)
Anomalies with a modern origin		
AS-ABST MAG DISTURBANCE	132, 132, 132	Polygon (hatched ANSI31)
Anomalies with a natural origin		
AS-ABST MAG NATURAL FEATURES	204,178,102	Polygon (cross hatched ANSI37)

Table 3: CAD layering

Appendix F – copyright and intellectual property

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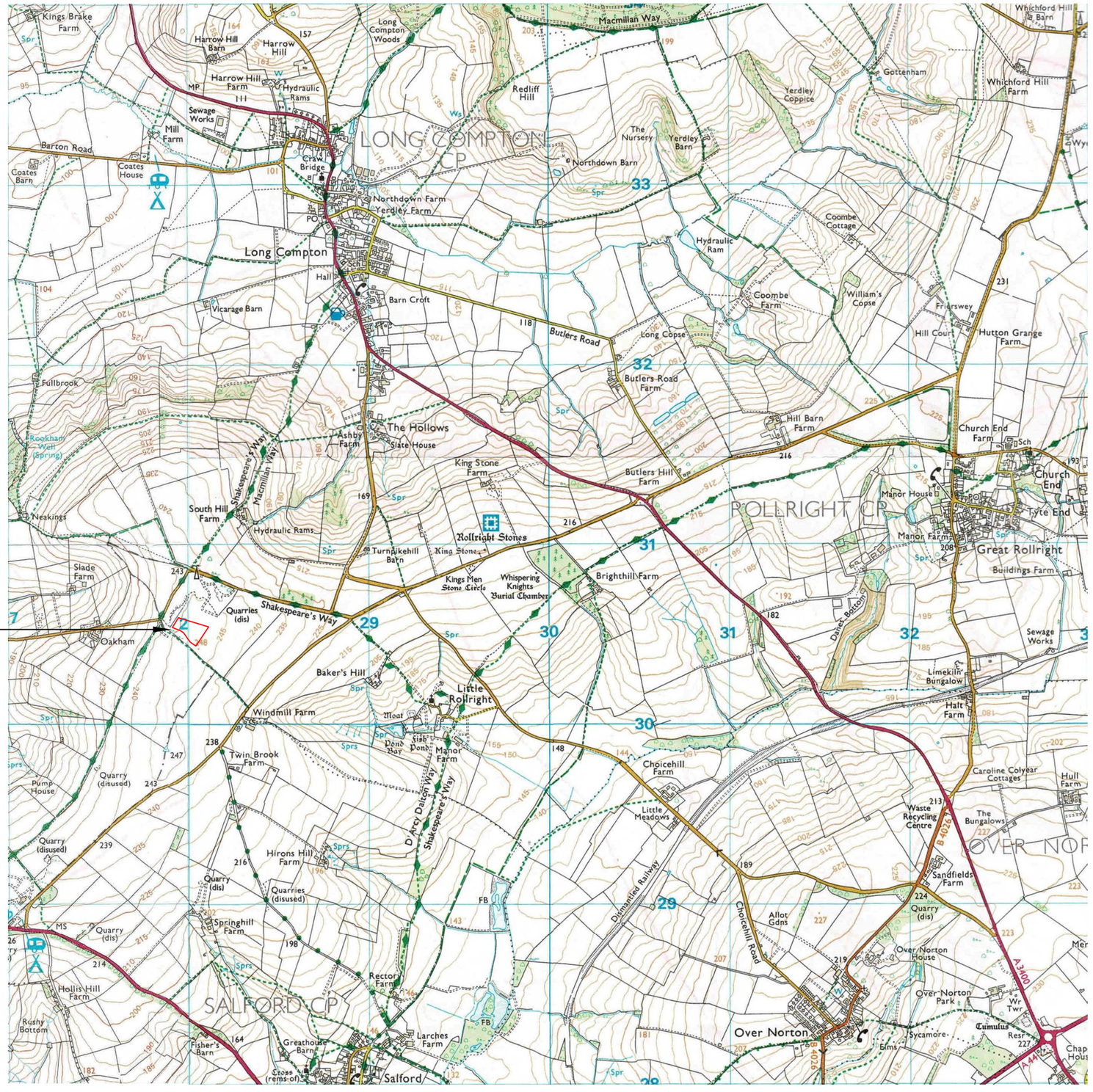
www.archaeological-surveys.co.uk
info@archaeological-surveys.co.uk
Tel: 01249 814 231

Survey location



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Archaeological Surveys

Specialist Geophysical Surveyors

Geophysical Survey
Rollright Quarry
Rollright
Oxfordshire

Map of survey area

● Survey location

Site centred on OS NGR
SP 28000 30535

SCALE 1:25 000

0m 500m 1000m

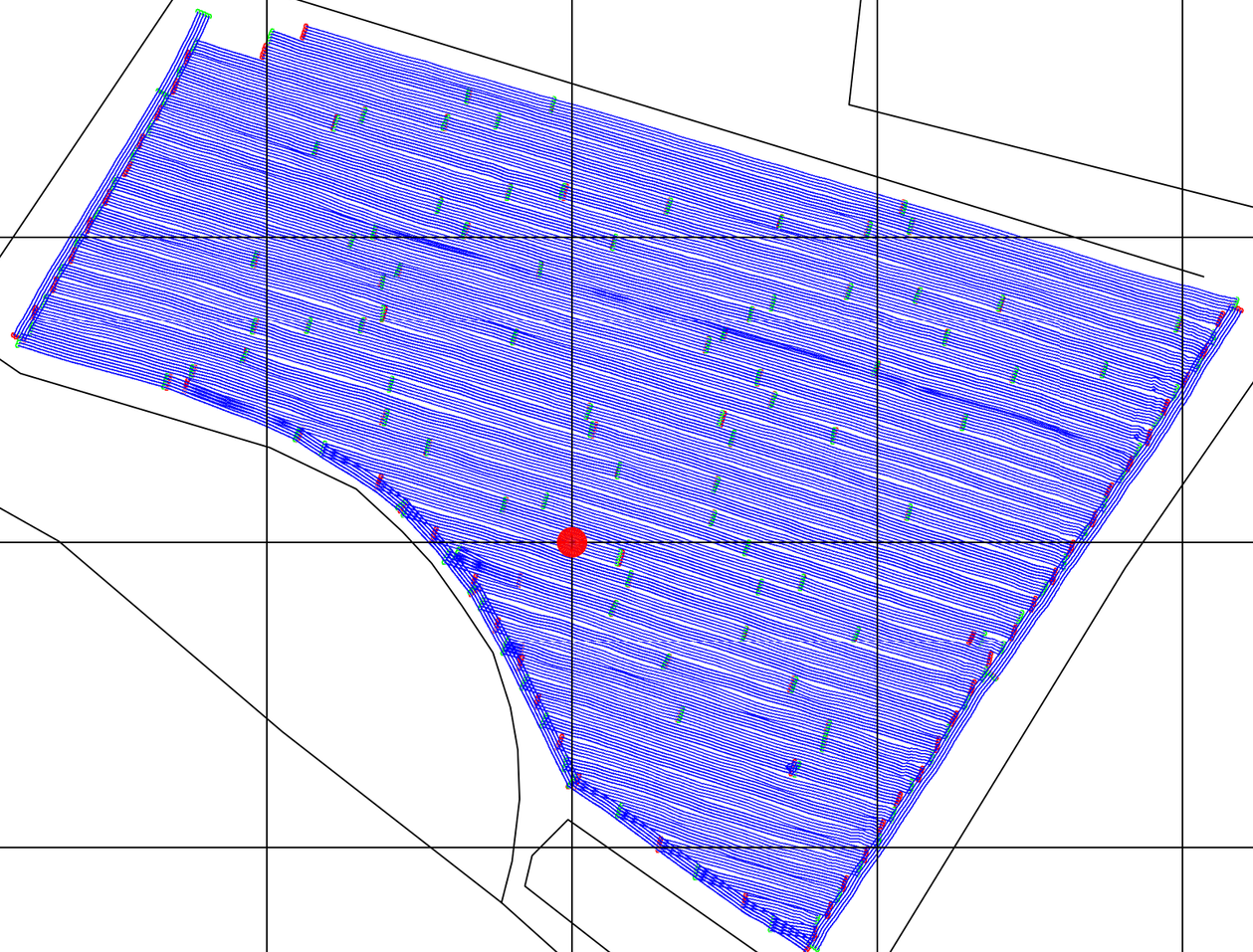
SCALE TRUE AT A3

DRAWN BY	CHECKED BY	
KTD	DJS	FIG 01

427850
427900
427950
428000
428050
428100
428150

230600
230550
230500
230450
230400

N



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Geophysical Survey
Rollright Quarry
Rollright
Oxfordshire

Referencing information

Referencing grid to OSGB36 datum at 50m intervals

428000 230500

Survey tracks

Survey track start

Survey track stop

SCALE 1:1000

0m 10 20 30 40 50m

SCALE TRUE AT A3

DRAWN BY	CHECKED BY	
KTD	DJS	FIG 02

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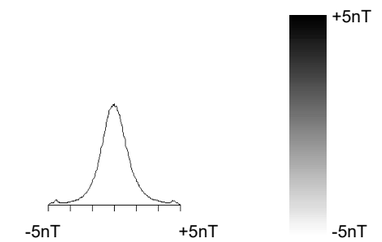
Geophysical Survey
Rollright Quarry
Rollright
Oxfordshire

Greyscale plot of minimally processed magnetometer data

N



SCALE 1:1000

0m 10 20 30 40 50m

SCALE TRUE AT A3

DRAWN BY	CHECKED BY	
KTD	DJS	FIG 03

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Oxfordshire

Abstraction and interpretation of magnetic anomalies

N

- Linear anomaly - of agricultural origin
- Linear anomaly - of natural origin
- Discrete positive response - of natural origin
- Magnetic disturbance from ferrous material
- Strong dipolar anomaly - ferrous object

SCALE 1:1000

0m 10 20 30 40 50m

SCALE TRUE AT A3

DRAWN BY	CHECKED BY	
KTD	DJS	FIG 04