

Land at Castle Street Aldbourne Wiltshire

MAGNETOMETER SURVEY REPORT

for

Foundations Archaeology

Kerry Donaldson & David Sabin

June 2020

Ref. no. J822

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEYS LTD

Land at Castle Street Aldbourne Wiltshire

MAGNETOMETER SURVEY REPORT

for

Foundations Archaeology

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Primary archive location - Archaeological Surveys Ltd, Yatesbury, Wiltshire

Survey date – 12th June 2020 Ordnance Survey Grid Reference – **SU 25995 75475**



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CONTENTS

,	SUMMARY	1
1	INTRODUCTION	1
	1.1 Survey background	1
	1.2 Survey objectives and techniques	1
	1.3 Standards, guidance and recommendations for the use of this report	1
	1.4 Site location, description and survey conditions	2
	1.5 Site history and archaeological potential	3
	1.6 Geology and soils	3
2	METHODOLOGY	4
	2.1 Technical synopsis	4
	2.2 Equipment configuration, data collection and survey detail	4
	2.3 Data processing and presentation	5
3	RESULTS	7
	3.1 General assessment of survey results	7
	3.2 Statement of data quality and factors influencing the interpretation of anomalies.	7
	3.3 Data interpretation	7
	3.4 List of anomalies	8
4	CONCLUSION	9
5	REFERENCES	.10
1	Appendix A – basic principles of magnetic survey	11
,	Appendix B – data processing notes	11
,	Appendix C – survey and data information	.12
,	Appendix D – digital archive	12

Archaeolo	gical Surveys Ltd	Land at Castle Street, Aldbourne, Wiltshire	Magnetometer Survey Report		
Append	dix E – CAD layers	for abstraction and interpretation plots	s13		
Append	dix F – copyright an	d intellectual property	13		
LIST OF	FIGURES				
Fig 01	Map of survey ar	ea (1:25 000)			
Fig 02	Fig 02 Referencing information (1:1000)				
Fig 03	Fig 03 Greyscale plot of minimally processed magnetometer data (1:1000)				
Fig 04 Greyscale plot of high pass filtered magnetometer data (1:1000)					
Fig 05	Abstraction and i	nterpretation of magnetic anomalies (1:1000)		
LIST OF	PLATES				
Plate 1:	Site at Aldbourne lo	ooking north	3		
LIST OF	TABLES				
Table 1:	List and description	n of interpretation categories	8		
Table 2:	Archive metadata		12		
Table 3:	CAD layering		13		

SUMMARY

A geophysical survey, comprising detailed magnetometry, was carried out by Archaeological Surveys Ltd on land at Castle Street, Aldbourne. The results indicate the presence of a number of positive and negative anomalies, but they are weak and poorly defined. Two broad linear anomalies appear to relate to former lynchets extending along the south facing slope. A zone of weakly magnetic debris could relate to former burning or dumping, but it may also be associated with industrial waste or magnetically thermormenant material such as tile or brick.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Survey background

- 1.1.1 Archaeological Surveys Ltd was commissioned by Foundations Archaeology to undertake a magnetometer survey of an area of land to the south of Castle Street, Aldbourne, Wiltshire. The site has been outlined for a proposed residential development (Wiltshire Council planning application no. 20/03638/OUT) 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 (2020) and approved by Neil Adam, Assistant County Archaeologist for Wiltshire 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 The survey and report generally 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) Standard and
Guidance for Archaeological Geophysical Survey. Note: currently Historic

England (2018) no longer support the guidelines set out in English Heritage (2008) Geophysical survey in archaeological field evaluation and there are currently no plans to update the document. As a consequence other sources of written guidance referring to this document may be out of date and/or contain unsupported information (e.g. Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014).

- 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 Castle Street and west of Westfield Chase on the western edge of Aldbourne, Wiltshire. It is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (OS NGR) SU 25995 75475 see Figs 01 and 02.
- 1.4.2 The geophysical survey covers approximately 1.66ha within the c2ha outlined plot (see Fig 02). The area has been recently divided off from an arable field by a hedgerow and band of new tree planting where survey could not be carried out. The site had been left fallow and contained widespread poppies, tall grass and other wild plants, see Plate 1.
- The northern half of the survey area is located on elevated land above the village, the southern part of the area drops steeply as it is located on the northern side of a dry valley that is orientated south west to north east. The base of the valley lies approximately 80m further south than the southern edge of the site. Gardens associated with residential dwellings are located immediately to the east with established hedgerow boundaries to the north, east and south. A small playing field is located immediately to the south.



Plate 1: Site at Aldbourne looking north

1.5 Site history and archaeological potential

- 1.5.1 An archaeological desk-based assessment has been prepared by Foundations Heritage (2020) which outlines that there are no known sites or findspots within the site; however, it has not been subject to previous archaeological investigation. Neolithic worked flint, Bronze Age pottery and four barrows and an Iron Age pit have all been located within 400m of the site. There is widespread evidence for Roman activity in the wider vicinity including coins and pottery finds. An Anglo Saxon cemetery with 26 inhumations was discovered 200m to the south east of the site, with the medieval core of the village 200m to the east.
- 1.5.2 It appears that the site was within the agricultural hinterland of the medieval village, although there is no evidence for ridge and furrow. Google Earth images indicate a series of linear crop marks or soil marks running along the contours of the steeply sided dry valley to the west and south e.g. Lat 51.477019° Lon -1.627516°, March 9th 2017. It is likely that these relate to former lynchets associated with medieval ploughing that extends into the survey area.

1.6 Geology and soils

- 1.6.1 The underlying solid geology across the site is from the New Pit Chalk Formation (BGS, 2017).
- 1.6.2 The overlying soil across the survey area is from the Andover 1 association

- and is a brown rendzina. Itconsists of a shallow, well drained, calcareous, silty soil over chalk (Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983).
- Magnetometry survey carried out across similar soils has produced variable results as there can be low magnetic contrast between the fill of cut features and the material into which they are cut. Long term occupation and industrial activity can result in better magnetic contrast and the underlying geology and soils are, therefore, considered acceptable for magnetic survey.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Technical synopsis

- 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 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 magnetic anomalies that can be mapped by magnetic prospection.
- 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

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 range of

- recording data between ±0.1nT and ±8000nT. They are linked to a Leica GS10 RTK GNSS with data recorded by SENSYS MAGNETO®MXPDA software on a rugged PDA 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 <100s.

2.3 Data processing and presentation

- 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.

- The minimally processed data are collected between limits of ±8000nT and clipped for display at ±3nT. Data are interpolated to a resolution of effectively 0.5m between tracks and 0.15m along each survey track.
- 2.3.4 Additional data processing has been carried out in the form of high pass filtering. This effectively removes low frequency variation along a traverse that has been caused by large magnetic bodies, cultivation or rapid temperature change. Data treated to additional processing have been compared to unprocessed data to ensure that no significant anomalies have been removed.
- 2.3.5 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.
- 2.3.6 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. With regard to the Sensys MXPDA, 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.
- The raster images are combined with base mapping using ProgeCAD Professional 2016, creating DWG (2010) 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.
- 2.3.8 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.
- 2.3.9 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. Where further interpretation is possible, or where a number of possible origins should be considered, more subjective discussion is set out in Section 4.

2.3.10 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 a total of 1.66ha within a single land parcel.
- 3.1.2 Magnetic anomalies located can be generally classified as positive and negative linear anomalies of an uncertain origin, linear anomalies of an agricultural origin, areas of magnetic debris and disturbance and strong discrete dipolar anomalies relating to ferrous objects. Anomalies located within the survey area have been numbered and are described in 3.4 below.

3.2 Statement of data quality and factors influencing the interpretation of anomalies

- 3.2.1 Data are considered representative of the magnetic anomalies present within the site.
- 3.2.2 A narrow zone of magnetic disturbance occurs along the eastern boundary and this is likely to have been caused by steel fencing material and other steel objects within residential gardens. It is unlikely that it has obscured anomalies of archaeological potential.
- 3.2.3 Close to the southern end of the survey are a very small zone of thick and matted grass was very difficult to survey and caused excessive movement of the sensors resulting in some additional noise within the data. Again, it is very unlikely that this has obscured any significant anomalies.
- 3.2.4 The location of two clear linear anomalies likely to be associated with former lynchets indicates sufficient magnetic contrast within the soil for the location of former cut features.

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.

origin

origin

Table 1: List and description of interpretation categories

3.4 List of anomalies

Area centred on OS NGR425995 175475, see Figs 03 – 05.

Anomalies with an uncertain origin

- (1) The survey area contains a number of weakly positive linear and possible curvilinear anomalies and some negative linear anomalies. They lack a coherent morphology preventing confident interpretation as cut features and their origin is, therefore, uncertain.
- (2) A weakly positive linear anomaly on a similar north east to south west trend as the lynchets (3) could be associated.

Anomalies with an agricultural origin

(3) - Two broad linear anomalies, positive to the south and negative to the north, are likely to relate to former strip lynchets extending along the south facing slope.

(4) - A series of parallel linear anomalies are oriented north north west to south south east and relate to former agricultural activity, possibly ridge and furrow.

Anomalies associated with magnetic debris

(5) – A zone of weakly magnetic debris within the central part of the site. Although this may be associated with relatively modern burning or dumping of weakly magnetic material, this type of response can sometimes relate to early industrial activity. It may also indicate magnetically thermoremnant material (e.g. tile, brick fragments) spread during manuring that has accumulated due to slope processes and/or associated with a former lynchet.

Anomalies with a modern origin

(6 & 7) - Magnetic debris (6) and magnetic disturbance (7) can be seen along the eastern and southern edge of the survey area. It relates to dumped magnetically thermoremnant material (6) within the field margin and a response to strongly magnetic material (7) within the field boundary.

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1.1 A number of positive linear and possible curvilinear anomalies have been located, along with a small number of negative linear anomalies. They are generally widespread, weak and lack a coherent morphology.
- 4.1.2 Two broad positive and negative bands are likely to relate to former lynchets that can be seen as crop marks or soil marks across the arable land to the west of the site. An area of weakly magnetic debris within the central part of the site may indicate former burning or dumping, but it could also be associated with an accumulation of industrial waste or magnetically thermoremnant material such as tile or brick.

5 REFERENCES

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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.

Despike

Removal of data points that exceed the mean/median/threshold by selecting a window size of data points and replace by mean/median/threshold. Magnetic spikes can be caused iron objects on the surface or within the topsoil. Despike can improve the appearance of data and remove extreme readings that may affect further processing.

High Pass Filter

Removes low frequency anomalies within the data that are not considered to be archaeologically significant and may be natural in origin. A window passes over the data, the mean of all the data within the window is subtracted from the centre value. The size of the window is adjusted as is the weighting which may be uniform or Gaussian. The process is used to improve the visibility of anomalies of interest.

Low Pass Filter

Removes high frequency anomalies or 'noise' within datasets and provides a smoother output. A window passes over the data, the mean of all the data within the window is used to replace the centre value. The size of the window is adjusted as is the weighting. The process is used to improve the visibility of anomalies of interest.

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 Mean: 0.03 Median: 0.02 3.0648 ha Composite Area: Filename: J822-mag-proc.xcp Description Surveyed Area: 1.662 ha Imported as Composite from: J822-mag.asc Sensys DLMGPS GPS based Proce4 Instrument Type: Units nΤ Base Layer. 30U Unit Conversion Layer (Lat/Long to OSGB36). Survey corner coordinates (X/Y):OSGB36 DeStripe Median Traverse 425913.95, 175571.99 m 426063.20, 175366.64m Clip from -3.00 to 3.00 nT Northwest corner: Southeast corner: Collection Method: Randomised Filtered data Sensors: Dummy Value: Source GPS Points: 32702 Filename: J822-mag-proc-hpf.xcp 659000 Stats Dimensions
Composite Size (readings): 995 x 1369 Max: -2.20 Survey Size (meters): 149 m x 20 Grid Size: 149 m x 205 m 149 m x 205 m Std Dev 0.72 0.02 Mean: X Interval: 0.15 m Median: 0.00 Y Interval: GPS based Proce5 0.15 m Base Layer.
 Unit Conversion Layer (Lat/Long to OSGB36). Stats Max: 3.32 3 DeStripe Median Traverse:
4 High pass Uniform (median -3.30 High pass Uniform (median) filter: Window dia: 225 Std Dev: 0.94 5 Clip from -2.00 to 2.00 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 onsite and off-site.

A PDF copy will be supplied to the Wiltshire 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	J822-mag-[area number/name].asc J822-mag-[area number/name].xcp J822-mag-[area number/name]-proc.xcp	Raw data as ASCII CSV TerraSurveyor raw data TerraSurveyor minimally processed data
Graphics	J822-mag-[area number/name]-proc.tif	Image in TIF format
Drawing	J822-[version number].dwg	CAD file in 2010 dwg format
Report	J822 report.odt	Report text in Open Office 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 uncertain origin						
AS-ABST MAG POS LINEAR UNCERTAIN		255,127,0	Line, polyline or polygon (solid)			
AS-ABST MAG NEG LINEAR UNCERTAIN		Blue 0,0,255	Line, polyline or polygon (solid)			
Anomalies with an agricultural origin						
AS-ABST MAG AGRICULTURAL		Green 0,255,0	Line or polyline			
AS-ABST MAG LYNCHET		0,127,63	Polygon (cross hatched ANSI37)			
Anomalies associated with magnetic debris						
AS-ABST MAG DEBRIS		132, 132, 132	Polygon (cross hatched ANSI37)			
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)			
AS-ABST MAG SERVICE		132, 132, 132	Line or polyline			

Table 3: CAD layering

Appendix F – copyright and intellectual property

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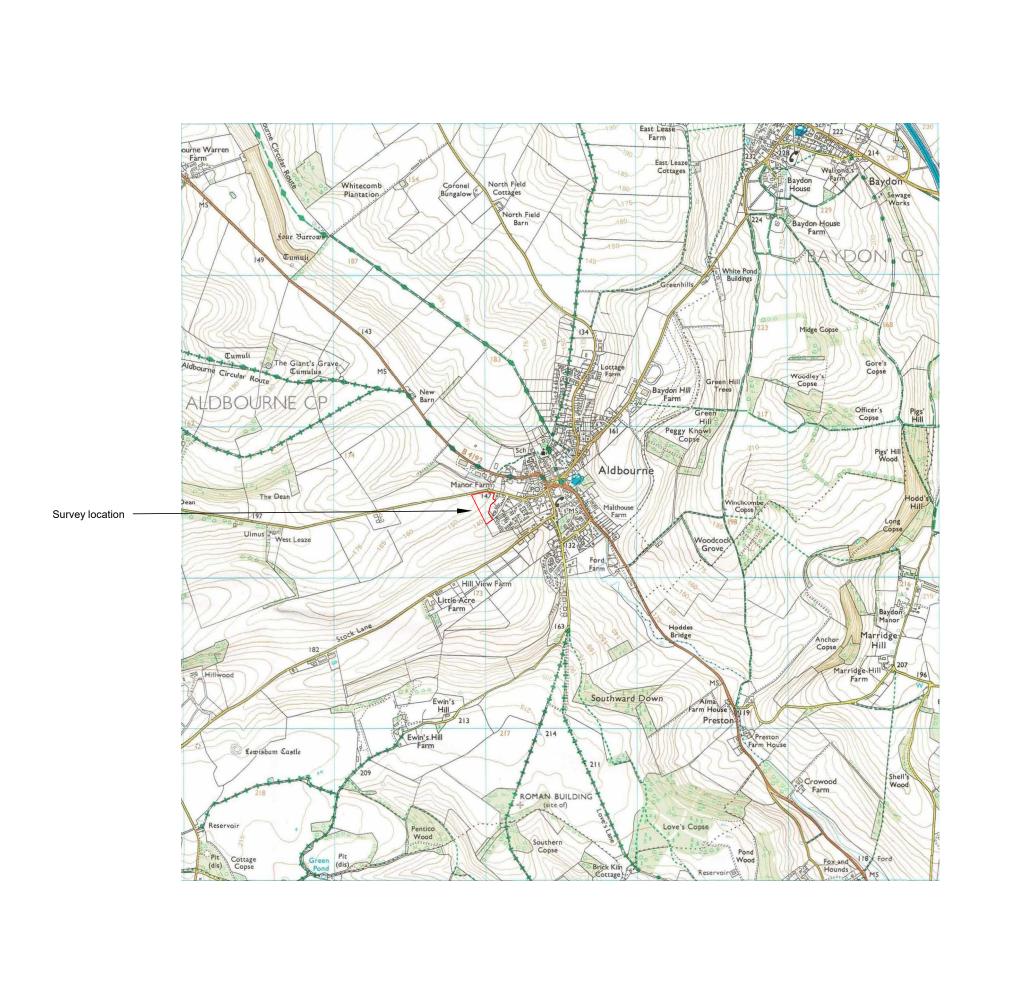
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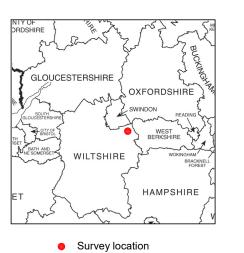






Geophysical Survey Land at Castle Street Aldbourne Wiltshire

Map of survey area



Site centred on OS NGR SU 25995 75475

