

Land at Frome Road Norton St Philip Somerset

MAGNETOMETER SURVEY REPORT

for

Cotswold Archaeology

Kerry Donaldson & David Sabin August 2021

Ref. no. J875

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEYS LTD

Land at Frome Road Norton St Philip Somerset

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Cotswold Archaeology

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

> Survey date – 13th August 2021 Ordnance Survey Grid Reference – **ST 77905 55320**

Somerset HER event no: 45225



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SUMMARY

Detailed magnetometry was carried out over 2ha on the south eastern edge of Norton St Philip in Somerset by Archaeological Surveys Ltd. The results indicate the presence of numerous pit-like responses that are likely to relate to naturally formed soil-filled features within the underlying Cornbrash geology. A small number have a more magnetically enhanced response, but it is not possible to determine if they relate to pits with an anthropogenic origin or if they are also likely to be natural.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Survey background

- 1.1.1 Archaeological Surveys Ltd was commissioned by Cotswold Archaeology to undertake a magnetometer survey of an area of land on the south eastern edge of Norton St Philip in Somerset. The site has been outlined for a proposed residential development 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 (2021) and approved by Steve Membery, Senior Historic Environment Officer, South West Heritage Trust, prior to commencing the survey. The fieldwork has been issued with the Somerset HER event no: 45225.

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 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.*

- 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.
- It is recommended that the full report should always be considered when 1.3.3 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 north of Frome Road and south of Tellisford Lane on the south eastern edge of Norton St Philip in Somerset. It is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (OS NGR) ST 77905 55320, see Figs 01 and 02.
- The geophysical survey covers approximately 2ha within the south western 1.4.2 corner of a larger 6.35ha triangular shaped grassland field. The south western boundary is a hedgerow separating the field from the B3110 Frome Road, with post and wire fencing bounding the north western side of the area and a residential dwelling and garden located adjacent to the western corner. The land is generally level or sloping down slightly towards the south east
- 1.4.3 The ground conditions across the site were generally considered to be favourable for the collection of magnetometry data. Weather conditions during the survey were mainly fine.



1.5 Site history and archaeological potential

- 1.5.1 A Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment has been prepared for the site by Cotswold Archaeology (2021). It outlines that there are no designated or undesignated heritage assets within the site but that it lies 330m south east of the Norton St Philip Conservation Area which was designated to conserve the special interest and character of the historic village. The historic core has also been identified as an Area of High Archaeological Potential which includes the site of a monastic grange. It appears that the site was within the agricultural hinterland of the village during the medieval and post medieval period and remains of ridge and furrow cultivation have been identified.
- 1.5.2 In the wider vicinity, prehistoric settlement has been identified 920m east of the site and another 700m to the south east. A Roman road between Bath and Oldford is located 60m east of the site and a roadside settlement has been identified c450m south east of the site with the remains of a villa also recorded close to Peart Woods.
- 1.5.3 Although there are no recorded sites or findspots within the site, there is always potential for the survey to locate geophysical anomalies relating to previously unrecorded archaeological features should they be present within the site.

1.6 Geology and soils

- 1.6.1 The underlying solid geology across the site is limestone from the Cornbrash Formation (BGS, 2017).
- 1.6.2 The overlying soil across the survey area is from the Elmton 1 association 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).
- Magnetometry carried out over similar geology and soil has produced good 1.6.3 results, although anomalies can be associated with naturally formed, soil-filled features within joints, cracks and pits that at times can be difficult to distinguish from those with an anthropogenic origin. 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 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.
- The localised variations in magnetism are measured as sub-units of the Tesla, 2.1.4 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 measurement range of ±8000nT, although the recorded range is ±3000nT, and resolution is around 0.1nT. 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 around 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 2.3.1 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. 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.
- 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 2ha within the south western corner of a larger, 6.35ha field.
- 3.1.2 Magnetic anomalies located can be generally classified as positive anomalies of an uncertain origin, anomalies with a natural origin, linear anomalies of an agricultural origin, areas of magnetic disturbance, strong discrete dipolar anomalies relating to ferrous objects and strong multiple dipolar linear anomalies relating to buried services or pipelines. Anomalies located within each 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. There are no significant defects within the dataset.
- 3.2.2 A narrow zone of magnetic disturbance was located along the south western edge of the survey area, and it is possible that this relates to an underground service. The high magnitude response has the potential to obscure weak anomalies should they exist within this part of the site.
- 3.2.3 The soils and underlying geology have produced strong magnetic contrast and clear anomalies. However, many discrete anomalies of natural origin have been located, and it would not be possible to confidently determine these from discrete areas of burning or pits of anthropogenic origin. Numerous parallel linear anomalies are clearly associated with agricultural activity.

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 uncertain origin	The category applies to a range of anomalies where <u>there is not enough evidence to confidently</u> <u>suggest an origin</u> . Anomalies in this category <u>may well be related to archaeologically significant</u> <u>features</u> , but equally relatively modern features, geological/pedological features and agricultural

	<u>features should be considered</u> . Morphology may be unclear or uncharacteristic and there may be a lack of additional supporting information. Positive anomalies are indicative of magnetically enhanced soils that may form the fill of 'cut' features or may be produced by accumulation within layers or 'earthwork' features; soils subject to burning may also produce positive anomalies. Negative anomalies are produced by material of comparatively low magnetic susceptibility such
	as stone and subsoil.
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 <u>does not include</u> 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 <u>almost impossible to</u> <u>distinguish from pit-like anomalies with an anthropogenic origin</u> . 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 List of anomalies

Area centred on OS NGR 377905 155320, see Figs 03 & 04.

Anomalies with an uncertain origin

(1) – The survey area contains a small number of discrete positive anomalies with comparatively high magnitude responses. The two outlined in the south have a response of 20-30nT, while the two in the north have a response of 40-60nT. The magnitude of the anomalies suggests an association with burnt/magnetically thermoremnant material, but it is not possible to determine if they have an anthropogenic origin or are just more magnetically enhanced examples of anomalies (3).

(2) – The survey area has a very small number of weakly positive linear anomalies. They are generally short and poorly defined and they cannot be confidently interpreted as cut features.

Anomalies with a natural origin

(3) – The entire survey area contains widespread and numerous weakly positive discrete anomalies. They tend to have a response of 4-12nT, with some peaking at 20nT. The widespread distribution and lack of coherent morphology or layout indicates that they are likely to relate to soil-filled naturally formed pit-like features within the underlying Cornbrash geology.

Anomalies with an agricultural origin

(4) – The survey area contains two series of linear anomalies relating to agricultural activity.

Anomalies associated with magnetic debris

(5) – The survey area contains a small number of strong, discrete, dipolar anomalies that relate to ferrous objects within the topsoil.

Anomalies with a modern origin

(6) – A strong, positive linear anomaly extends towards a strong dipolar response within the western part of the survey area. This type of anomaly would suggest a buried service/pipe or cable.

(7) – Magnetic disturbance is a response to ferrous material used within adjacent field boundary.

4 CONCLUSION

4.1.1 The detailed magnetometry survey located a large number of discrete positive responses throughout the survey area. The widespread distribution and general lack of coherent morphology indicates that they are likely to relate to natural pit-like features. A small number of these have a much stronger response, which may indicate an association with burnt/magnetically thermoremnant material within the fill.

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.

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

Filename: Description: Instrument Type: Units:	J875-mag-proc.xcp Imported as Composite from: J875-mag.asc Sensys DLMGPS
UTM Zone:	30U
Survey corner coord	nates (X/Y):OSGB36
Northwest corner:	377809.24, 155414.51 m
Southeast corner:	377999.44, 155218.46 m
Collection Method:	Randomised
Sensors:	5
Dummy Value:	32702
Dimensions	
Survey Size (meters)): 190 m x 196 m
X&Y Interval:	0.15 m
Source GPS Points:	Active: 594500, Recorded: 594500

Stats	
Max:	5.53
Min:	-5.50
Std Dev:	1.77
Mean:	0.09
Median:	0.02
Composite Area:	3.7289 ha
Surveyed Area:	2.1772 ha
PROGRAM	
Name:	TerraSurveyorPre
Version:	3.0.36.24
GPS based Proce	94
1 Base Layer.	
2 Unit Convers	ion Layer (Lat/Long to UTM).
3 DeStripe Mee	dian Traverse:
4 Clip from -5.0	00 to 5.00

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 PDF copy will be supplied to the Somerset Historic Environment Record with greyscale images and abstraction layers made available on request. 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	J875-mag- [area number/name] .asc J875-mag- [area number/name] .xcp J875-mag- [area number/name] -proc.xcp	Raw data as ASCII CSV TerraSurveyor raw data TerraSurveyor minimally processed data
Graphics	J875-mag-[area number/name]-proc.tif	Image in TIF format
Drawing	J875-[version number].dwg	CAD file in 2018 dwg format
Report	J875 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	Colou	ur with RGB index	Layer content		
Anomalies with an uncertain origin	Anomalies with an uncertain origin				
AS-ABST MAG POS LINEAR UNCERTAIN		255,127,0	Line, polyline or polygon (solid)		
AS-ABST MAG POS DISCRETE UNCERTAIN		255,127,0	Solid donut, point or polygon (solid)		
Anomalies with an agricultural origin	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)		

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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
Anomalies with a natural origin			
AS-ABST MAG NATURAL FEATURES		Yellow 255,255,0	Polygon (cross hatched ANSI37)



Appendix F – copyright and intellectual property

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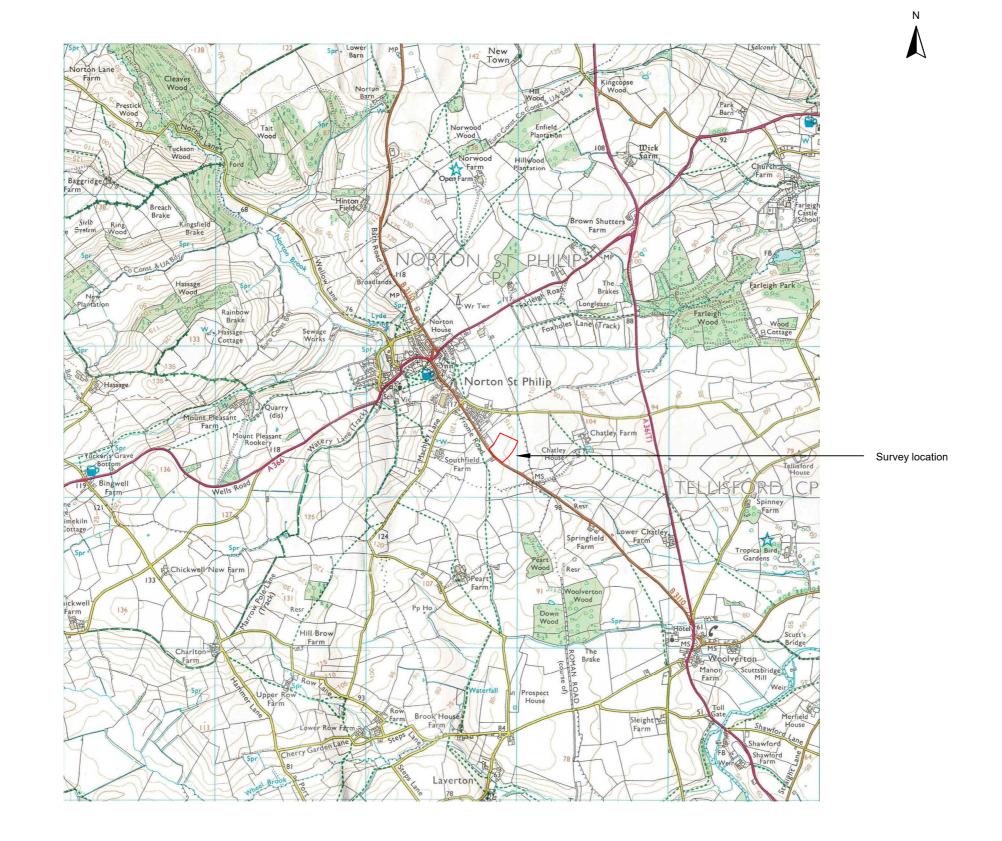
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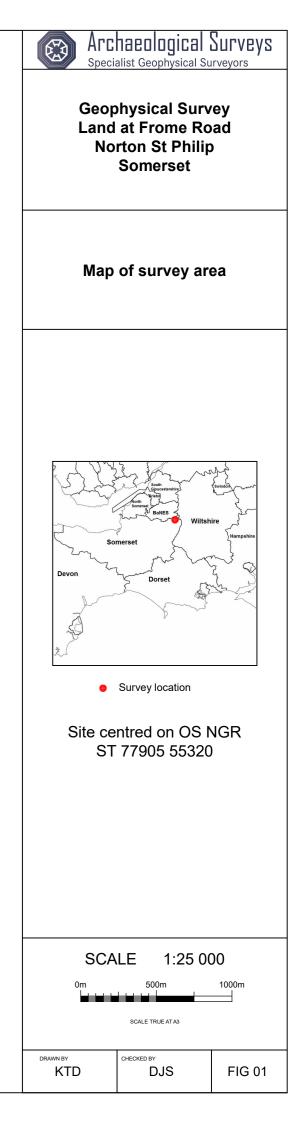
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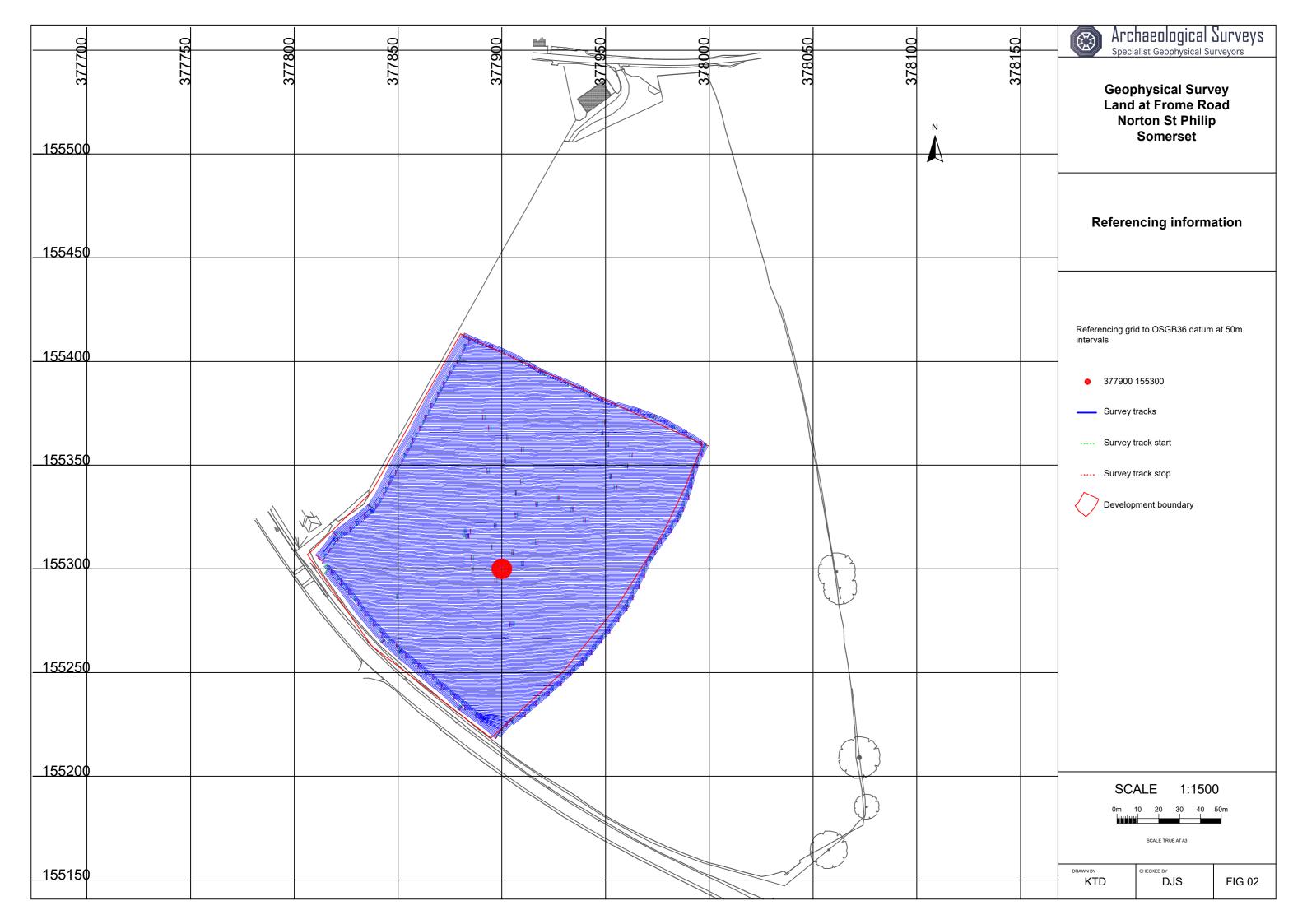


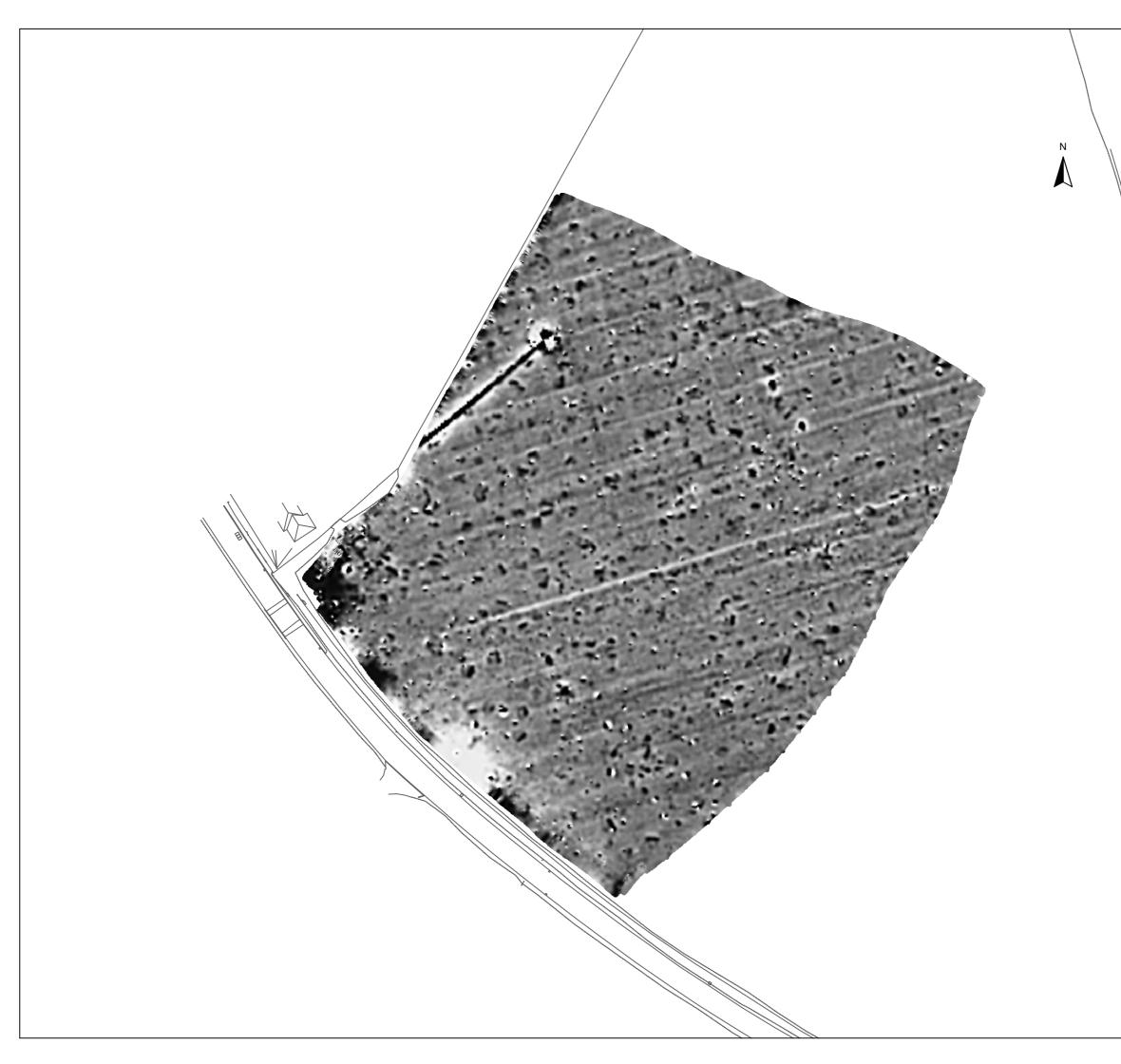
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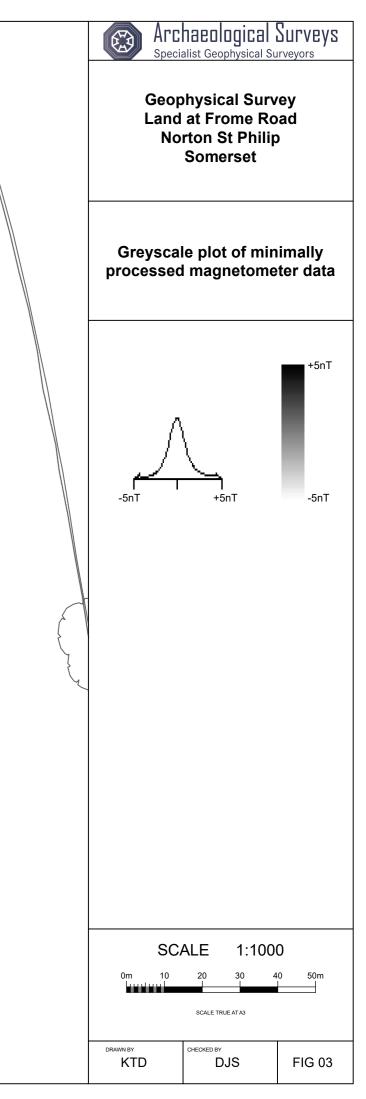


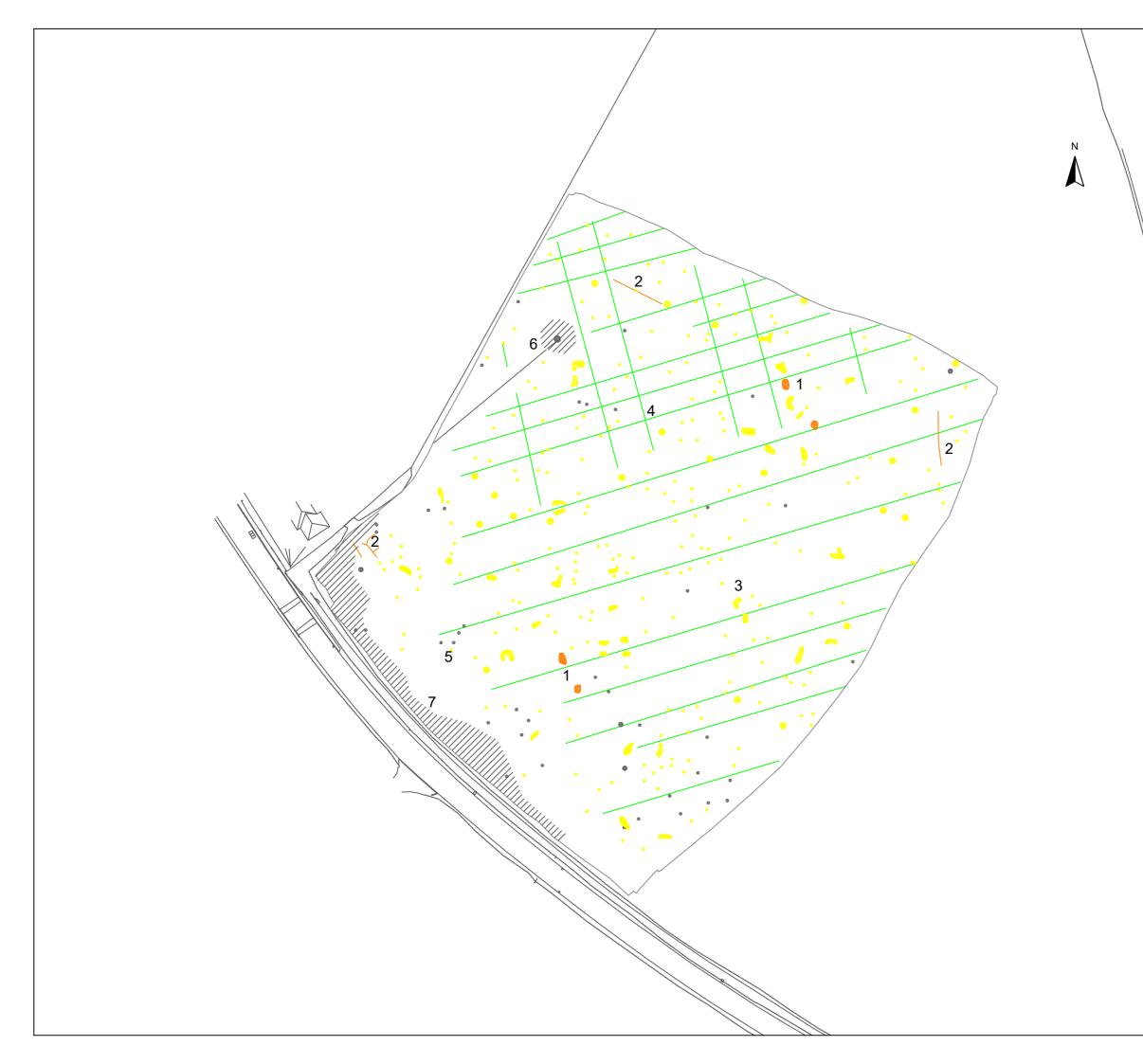
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Archaeological Surveys Specialist Geophysical Surveyors Geophysical Survey
Land at Frome Road Norton St Philip Somerset
Abstraction and interpretation of magnetic anomalies
 Positive linear anomaly - of uncertain origin Linear anomaly - of agricultural origin Discrete positive response - possible pit-like feature Discrete positive response - of natural origin Magnetic disturbance from ferrous material Strong multiple dipolar linear anomaly - cable / service Strong dipolar anomaly - ferrous object
SCALE 1:1000
DRAWN BY CHECKED BY DJS FIG 04