

ABINGDON ARCHAEOLOGICAL GEOPHYSICS

4 Sutton Close, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 1ER

tel. 01235 529720 website www.archaeologicalgeophysics.co.uk

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Short Report form no. 2014-14

Survey Details

Name of site: Thorney, Binsey lane. Oxford. **Parish:** Binsey

County: Oxfordshire. **HER:** Oxford City

NGR grid reference Centred on SP485079

Nearest postcode. OX2 ONG **Altitude** 60 metres OD

Start date: 18 June 2008. **End date:** 18 February 2009 **Report date:** 10 November 2014

Geology at site

We understand from the Geology of Britain Viewer that the solid geology is Oxford clay which is overlain by the Northmoor gravel member and alluvium.

Known archaeological sites / monuments covered by the survey

This area has been studied by John Blair see :-

J. Blair, 'Saint Frideswide Reconsidered', *Oxoniensia* 52 (1988), pp. 71-127.

It has also been mentioned in Lydia Carr, Russell Dewhurst and Martin Henig (eds) *Binsey : Oxford's Holy Place*. Archaeopress 2014.

The 2014 book was also the basis for an article in *Current Archaeology* in December 2014.

Archaeological sites / monument types detected by the survey

Ridge and furrow. Bank and ditches.

Surveyor Abingdon Archaeological Geophysics, Roger Ainslie, Sally Ainslie, Chris Oatley.

Name of client:

John Blair suggested the survey and Mike Gooding of FAI Farms Ltd. Gave consent to it taking place.

Purpose of survey:

To establish whether magnetometry could give any further information on the curved bank and ditch in this field.

Location of:

a) Primary archive, i.e. raw data, electronic archive etc

Abingdon Archaeological Geophysics.

b) Full report:

This is it - as it is part of researches by others.

Technical Details

Type of survey

A Magnetometer

Area surveyed, if applicable :	2.98 hectares
Traverse separation, if regular:	0.5 metres
Reading / sample interval:	8 per metre
Type, make and model of instrumentation:	Bartington Grad 601/2

Comments

Zig zag data collection. Start NW corner of each grid going east.

Land use at the time of survey

Fairly short tussocky grass.

Additional remarks

30 metre grids

SW corner grid 1 448552.7E 207936.26N

SE corner grid 2 448590.9E 207982.0N

SW corner grid 6 448579.2E 207874.8N

SE corner grid 14 448660.01E 207924.29N

Results (refer to plans below)

Magnetometry

- 1 An area of extremely high magnetic response. The readings here are some 100 to 3000nT where the magnetometer stops reading at 3000nT. This indicates a lot of burning of soil which is magnetically responsive.
- 2 Traces of approx N-S ditches. These are in an area covered with alluvium.
- 3 An area of high readings in a ditch-like anomaly in the alluvial area.
- 4 Traces of the ditch and bank which is more apparent as an earthwork feature. There are however some small parallel linear anomalies which

may relate to the bank which are mainly visible in grid 3. Often later ground disturbances, such as ridge and furrow are more apparent where they are over areas of magnetically enhanced material, which could have been enhanced by unrelated settlement activity centuries earlier. The same may be happening here in that the enhanced magnetic qualities of the soil here may be making it possible to see features relating to the bank which are not magnetically visible elsewhere.

- 5 Patches of ridge and furrow, although the interior area does contain other anomalies it is difficult to make any understandable pattern from them.

Conclusions

As only a small section of the present earthwork bank and ditch shows a very strong magnetic response, it may be that these earthwork features are cutting an earlier area of burning at their northern end and have brought burnt material to the surface. If so, this indicates that there may be other features of importance which are in the alluvial area and are beneath the level at which they can be detected with magnetometry.

The nature of this high magnetic response is probably from clays containing the right kind of iron having been burnt to high temperatures. This could be fairly recent but burning to that intensity is difficult to achieve.

The valley fort at Burroway and hill fort at Bladon are local examples where clay in the ramparts has been heavily fired. This may be deliberate rather than the surface burning which one would associate with an attack. Scottish vitrified forts show a similar strong deep burning.

The bank, which is visible as an earthwork structure, may have parallel features as part of its construction but this is far from certain as tractor wheel ruts can also produce narrow parallel negative anomalies.

Some lines of high readings, probably ditches, are going approx N-S in the area outside the bank.

Inside the bank mainly ridge and furrow was detected and other anomalies there were difficult to analyse and could warrant further investigation..

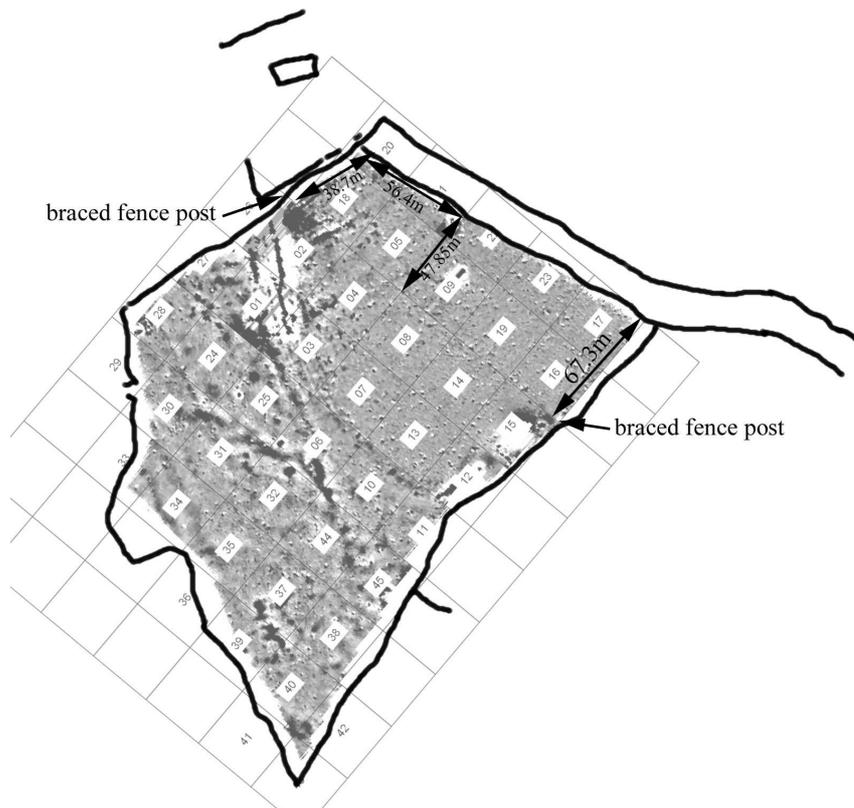
REMINDER

Many features cannot be located by using magnetometry or resistivity. Features, including flint scatters and burials, may well exist which are not detectable by these survey methods. The failure of these methods to locate remains does not mean that they are not there.

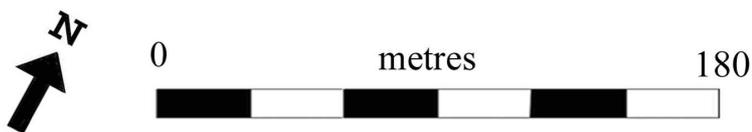
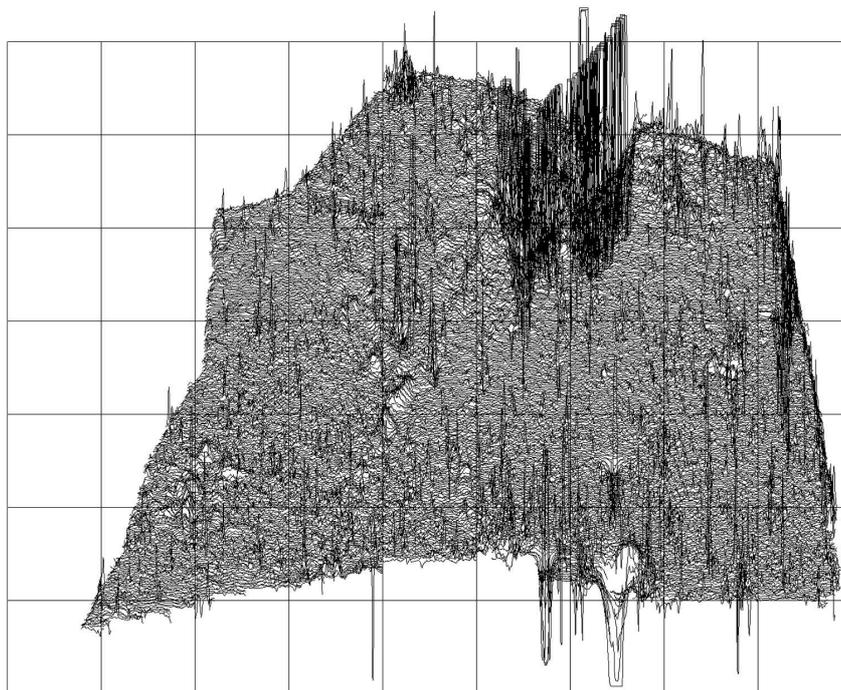
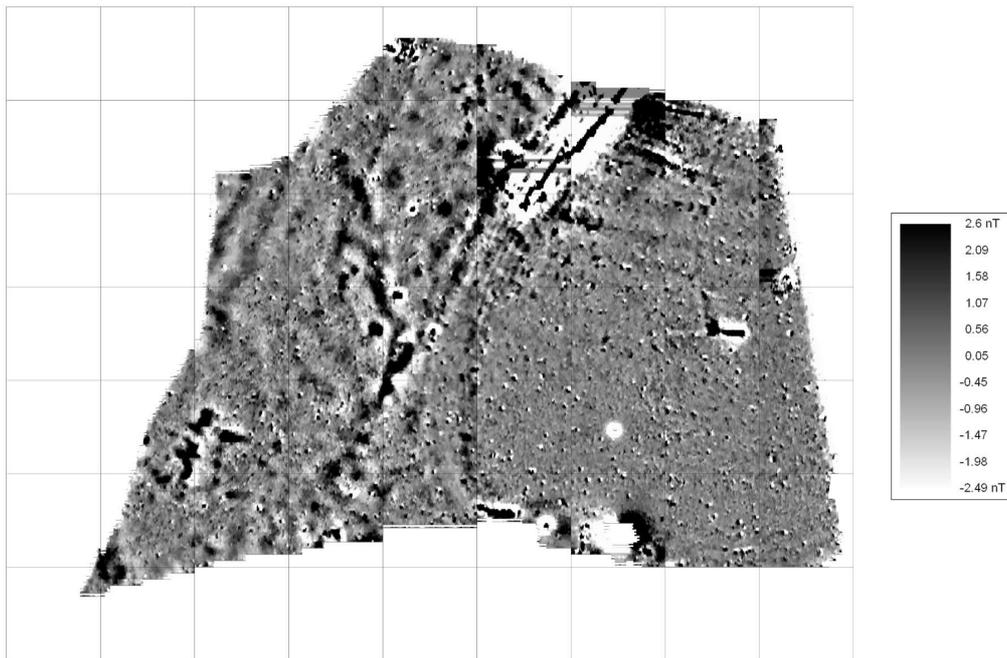
R. Ainslie
10 Nov 2014



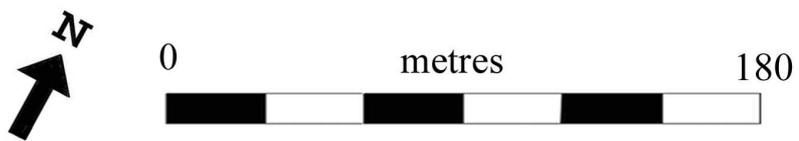
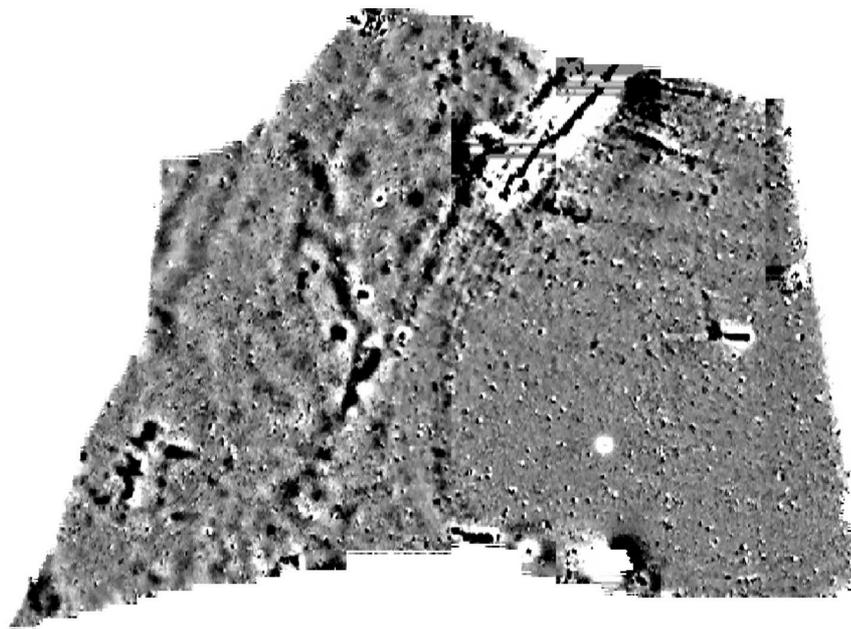
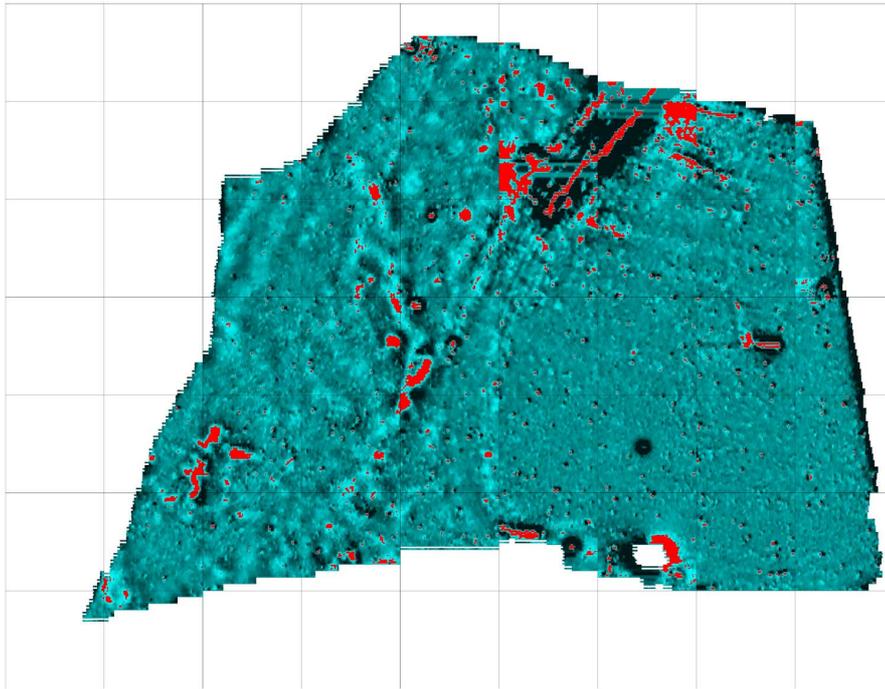
LOCATION . Magnetometry on Google Earth base.



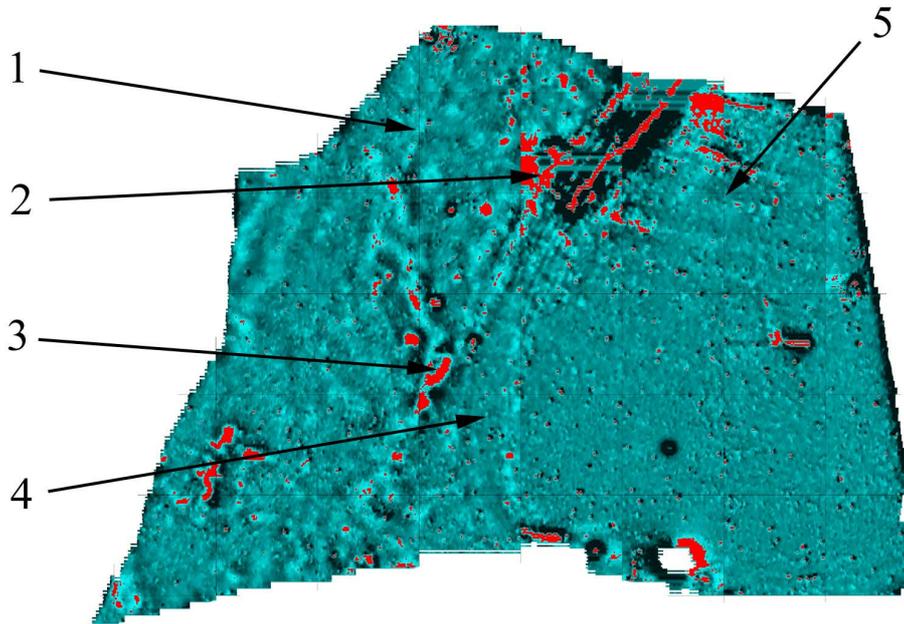
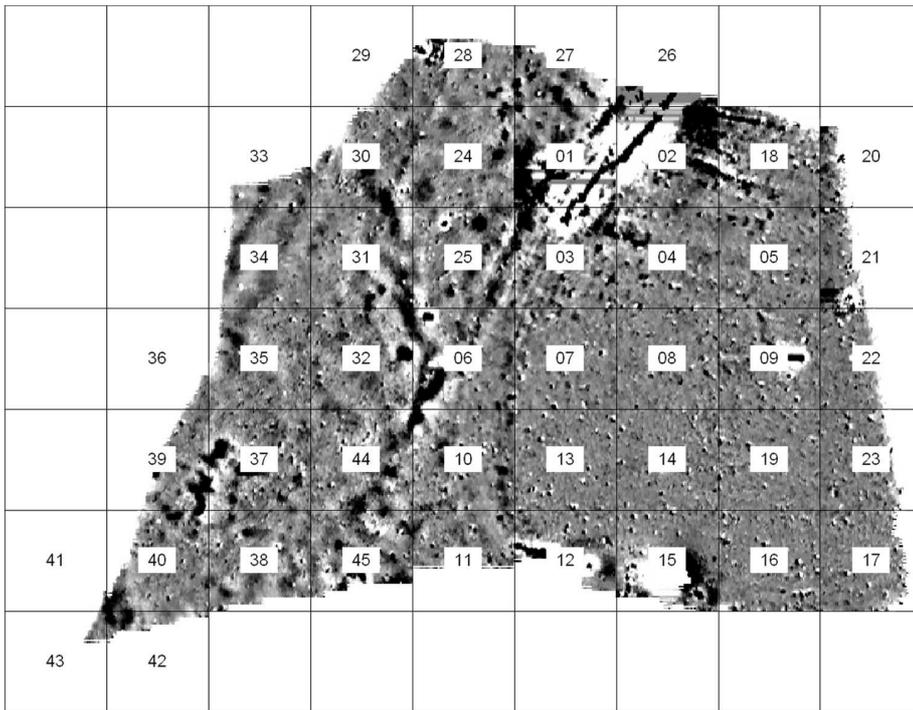
Grid Location sketch



Magnetometry Greyscale and trace plot clipped to +/-100nT



Magnetometry colour and greyscale without grid plots



Magnetometry Grid order and interpretation plots