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**Westfield Farm
Scarborough Road
Sherburn**

Geophysical Survey

Report no. 2451

February 2013

Client: Walk Farm Eggs Ltd



**Westfield Farm
Scarborough Road
Sherburn
North Yorkshire**

Geophysical Survey

Summary

A geophysical (magnetometer) covering approximately 0.5 hectares was carried out at Westfield Farm in advance of the installation of seven rows of solar panels. Although the site lies within an archaeological landscape of high significance no anomalies indicative of likely archaeological origin have been identified. On the basis of the geophysical survey the site is considered to have a low archaeological potential.



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Report Information

Client: Walk Farm Eggs Ltd.
Address: Cat Babbleton Farm, Ganton Wold, Malton, North Yorkshire,
YO12 4PQ
Report Type: Geophysical survey
Location: Sherburn
County: North Yorkshire
Grid Reference: SE 9455 7670
Period(s) of activity:
represented
Report Number: 2451
Project Number: 4022
Site Code: WFS12
OASIS ID: archaeol11-????
Planning Application No.: 12/01143/FUL
Museum Accession No.: n/a
Date of fieldwork: January 31st 2013
Date of report: February 2013
Project Management: Alistair Webb BA MifA
Fieldwork: David Harrison BA MSc MifA

Report: Alistair Webb BA MifA
Illustrations: David Harrison

Authorisation for
distribution: -----



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1 Introduction

Archaeological Services WYAS was commissioned by Ian Pick on behalf of his client Walk Farm Eggs Limited to carry out a geophysical (magnetometer) survey on a small block of land at Westfield Farm, near Sherburn (see Fig. 1) in advance of the proposed installation of an array of 672 solar panels which will create a renewable energy system. The work was undertaken in accordance with guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), paragraph 128 and in line with current best practice. The survey was carried out on January 31st 2013 and the results will be used to assess the archaeological impact of the development proposals.

Site location, topography and land-use

Westfield Farm is located approximately 1km west of Sherburn to the south of Scarborough Road. The proposed development area (PDA) is located immediately to the north of the farm and outbuildings, centred at SE 947 767, immediately south of the road (see Fig. 2) which bounds the site to the north. A hedge screens the PDA from the road with a small copse of trees forming the eastern boundary. The survey covered approximately 0.5 hectares comprising of permanent pasture (see plates). The site was flat at about 39m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

Geology and soils

The underlying bedrock geology comprises mudstones of the Speeton Clay Formation overlain by superficial deposits of sands and gravels of uncertain origin (British Geological Survey 2013). The soils are classified in the Newport 1 association which are described as deep, well-drained sandy and coarse (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

2 Archaeological background

The proposed development lies within a landscape of high archaeological significance. Although there are no known remains within the application area itself there are a huge density of cropmarks, identified from analysis of aerial photographs, indicative of probable multi-period activity just to the north, west and east of the site. Some of these cropmarks are aligned such that they may be considered to continue into the application area. Therefore the Historic Environment Team at North Yorkshire County Council advised that a geophysical survey be undertaken of the PDA in order to assess the possible archaeological implications of the proposed development.

3 Aims, Methodology and Presentation

The general objective of the geophysical survey was to provide information about the presence/absence, character, and extent of any archaeological remains within the PDA that will be impacted by the proposed development and therefore to help inform further strategies should they be required.

In order to achieve these aims detailed (recorded) magnetometer survey was carried out over the whole of the PDA that was suitable for survey, an area of approximately 0.5 hectares.

Magnetometer survey

Bartington Grad601 magnetic gradiometers were used during the survey taking readings at 0.25m intervals on zig-zag traverses 1m apart within 30m by 30m grids so that 3600 readings were recorded in each grid. These readings were stored in the memory of the instrument and later downloaded to computer for processing and interpretation. Geoplot 3 (Geoscan Research) software was used to process and present the data. Further details are given in Appendix 1.

Reporting

A general site location plan, incorporating the 1:50000 Ordnance Survey map is shown in Figure 1. A more detailed site location plan is presented in Figure 2. The data are presented in greyscale, XY trace plot and interpretation formats in Figures 3, 4 and 5 at a scale of 1:500.

Further technical information on the equipment used, data processing and survey methodologies are given in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. Appendix 3 describes the composition and location of the site archive.

The geophysical survey methodology, report and any recommendations comply with guidelines outlined by English Heritage (David *et al.* 2008) and by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2010). All figures reproduced from Ordnance Survey mapping are with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (© Crown copyright).

The figures in this report have been produced following analysis of the data in 'raw' and processed formats and over a range of different display levels. All figures are presented to most suitably display and interpret the data from this site based on the experience and knowledge of Archaeological Services staff.

4 Results and Discussion (see Figs 3, 4 and 5)

Ferrous anomalies

Ferrous anomalies, either as individual 'spikes' or more extensive areas of magnetic disturbance, are typically caused by ferrous (magnetic) debris, either on the ground surface or mixed in with the plough-soil. Little importance is normally given to such anomalies, unless there is any supporting evidence for an archaeological interpretation, as ferrous debris is common on rural sites, often being present as a consequence of manuring or tipping/infilling. On this site there are very few iron 'spikes' but there are large areas of magnetic disturbance particularly in the southern half of the survey area and around the site boundary. This disturbance is likely to be caused by a combination of modern disturbance (see Plate 1), ferrous material in the boundaries themselves and the accumulation of general farm rubbish (see Plate 2).

Agricultural anomalies

Several vague, parallel linear trend anomalies have been identified running north/south at right angles to the road in the northern half of the survey area. These anomalies reflect the direction of recent cultivation/ploughing.

Geological anomalies

Throughout the site broader areas of enhanced magnetic response have been identified. These anomalies are either interpreted as geological in origin, being due to variation in the composition of the soils and superficial deposits.

5 Conclusions

Despite the site being situated in a landscape of high archaeological potential the survey has not identified any anomalies interpreted as being of likely archaeological origin. Whilst it is possible that the very strong magnetic anomalies in the southern part of the survey area could mask the likely much weaker responses that might be expected from an archaeological feature, if present, on the basis of the survey the site is considered to have a low archaeological potential.

Disclaimer

The results and subsequent interpretation of data from geophysical surveys should not be treated as an absolute representation of the underlying archaeological and non-archaeological remains. Confirmation of the presence or absence of archaeological remains can only be achieved by direct investigation of sub-surface deposits.

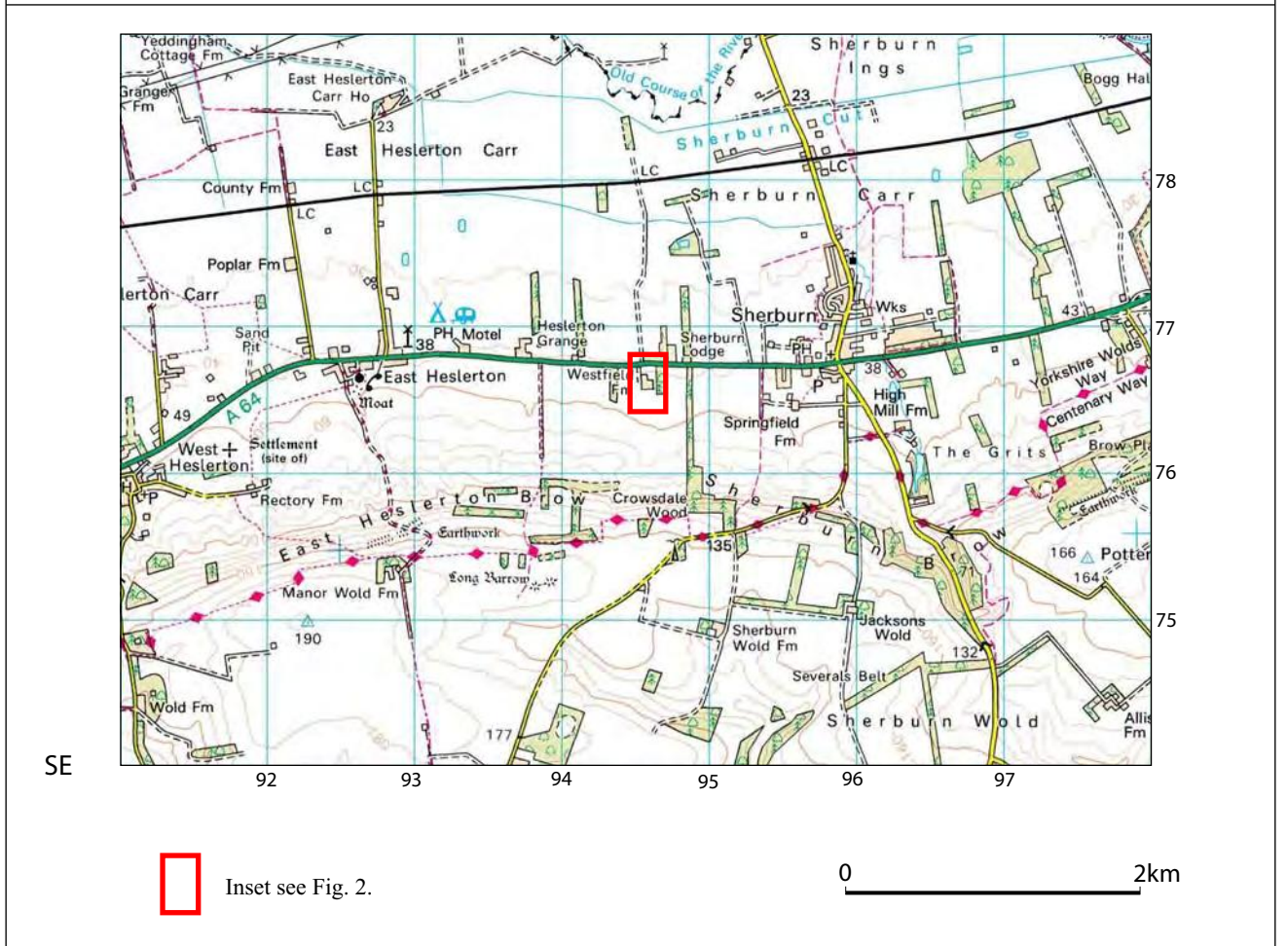
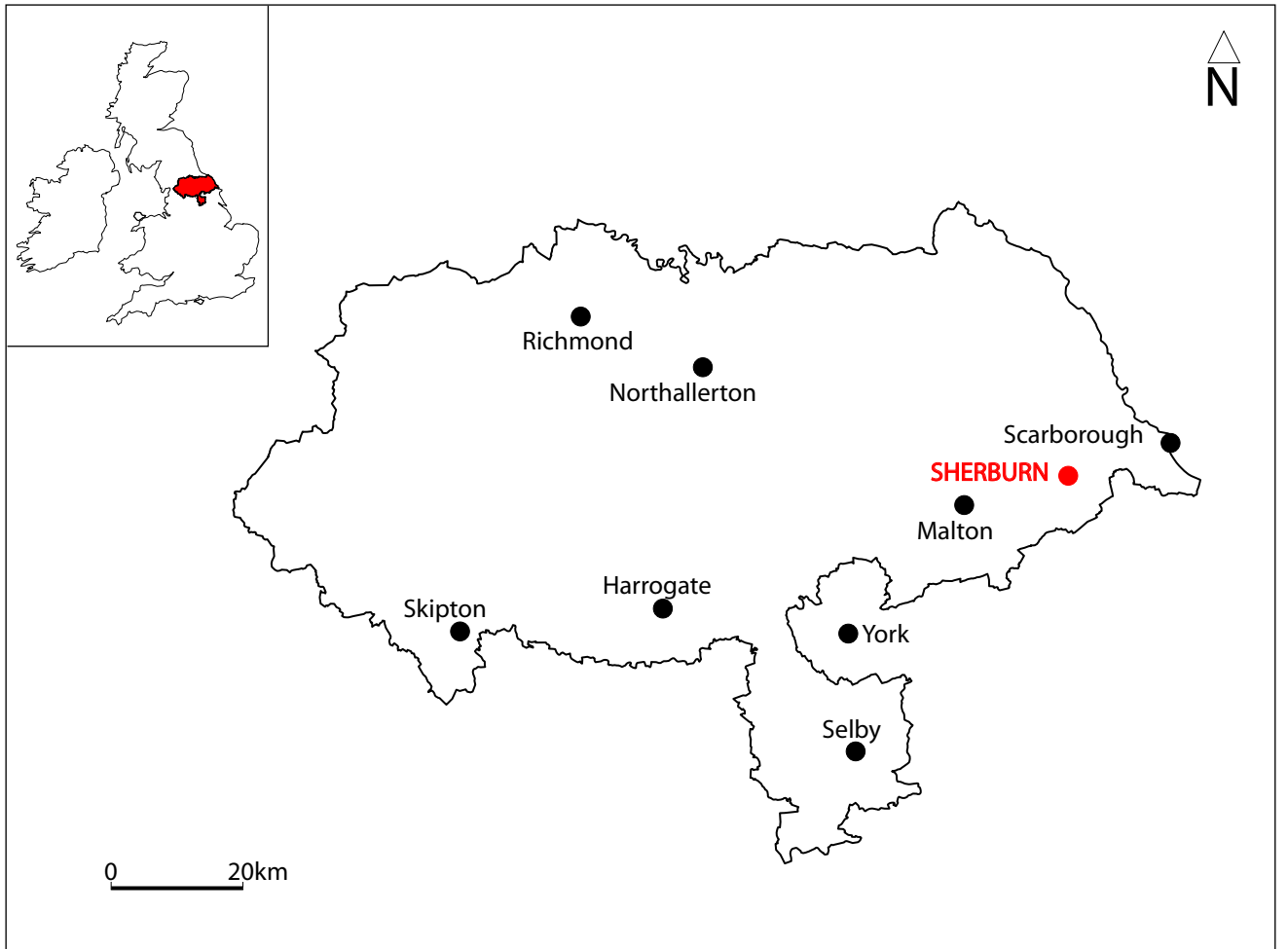


Fig. 1. Site location

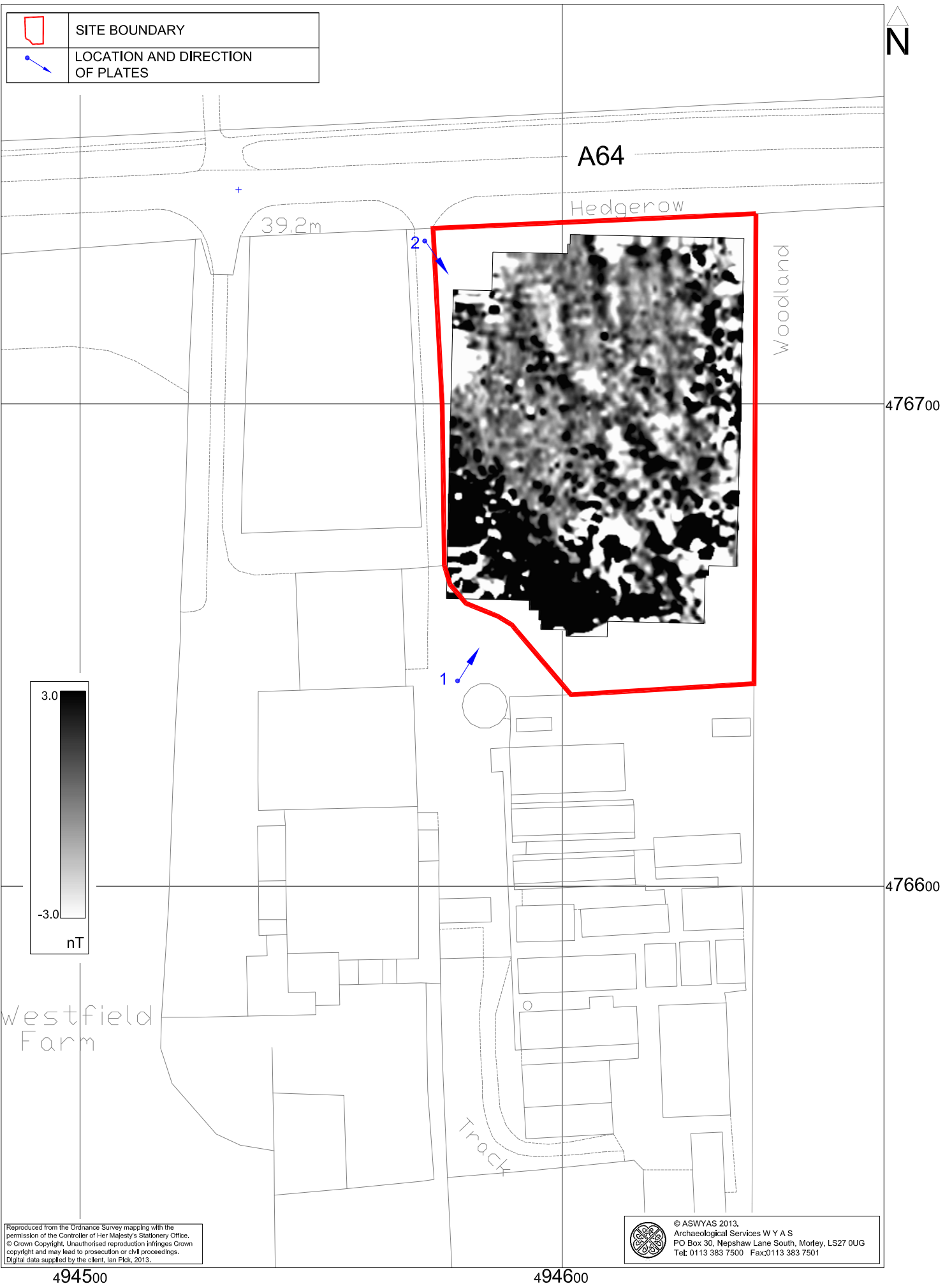


Fig. 2. Site location showing greyscale magnetometer data (1:1000 @ A4)

0 20m

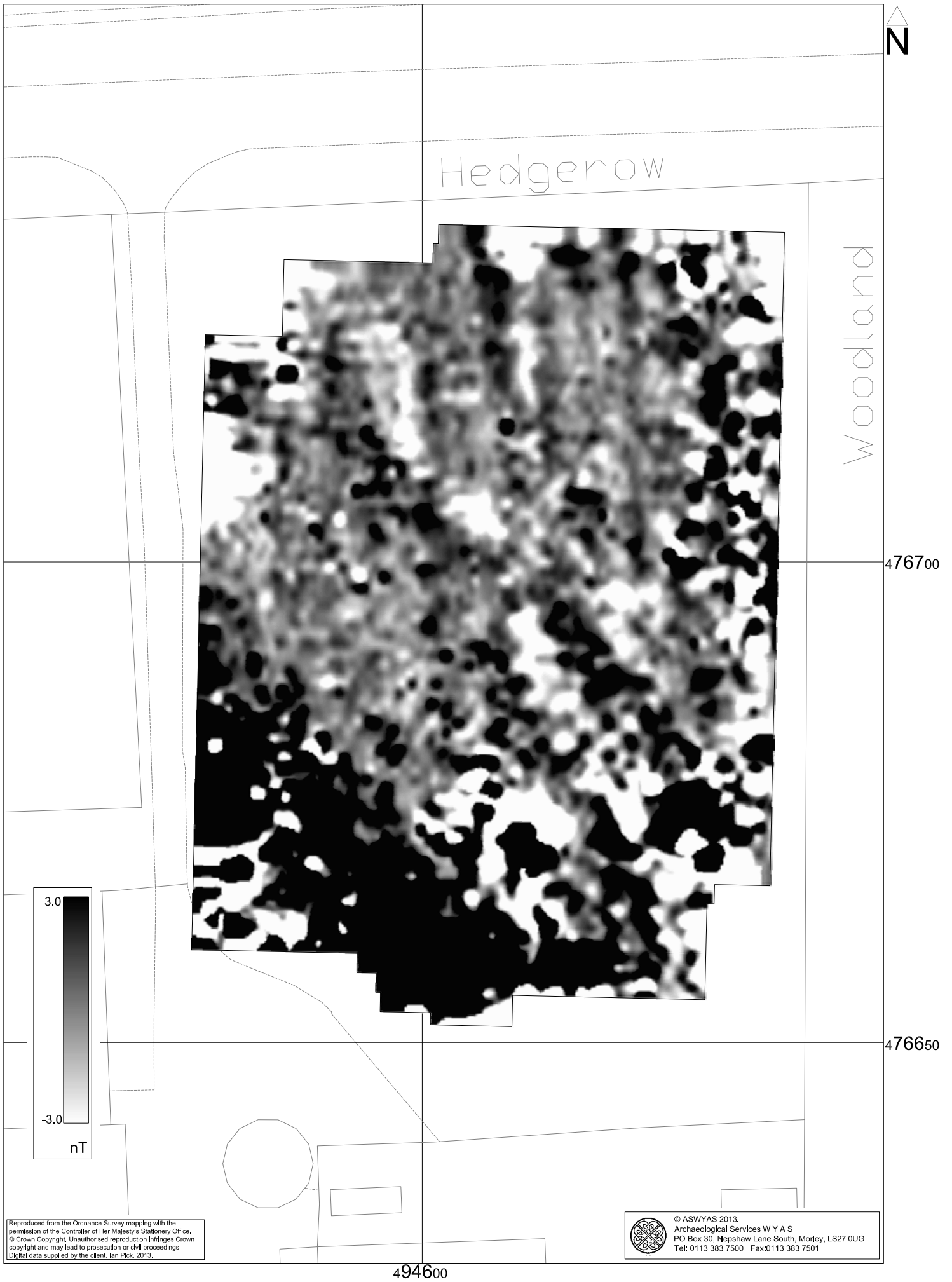


Fig. 3. Processed greyscale magnetometer data (1:500 @ A4)

0 10m



Fig. 4. XY trace plot of minimally processed magnetometer data (1:500 @ A4)

0 10m

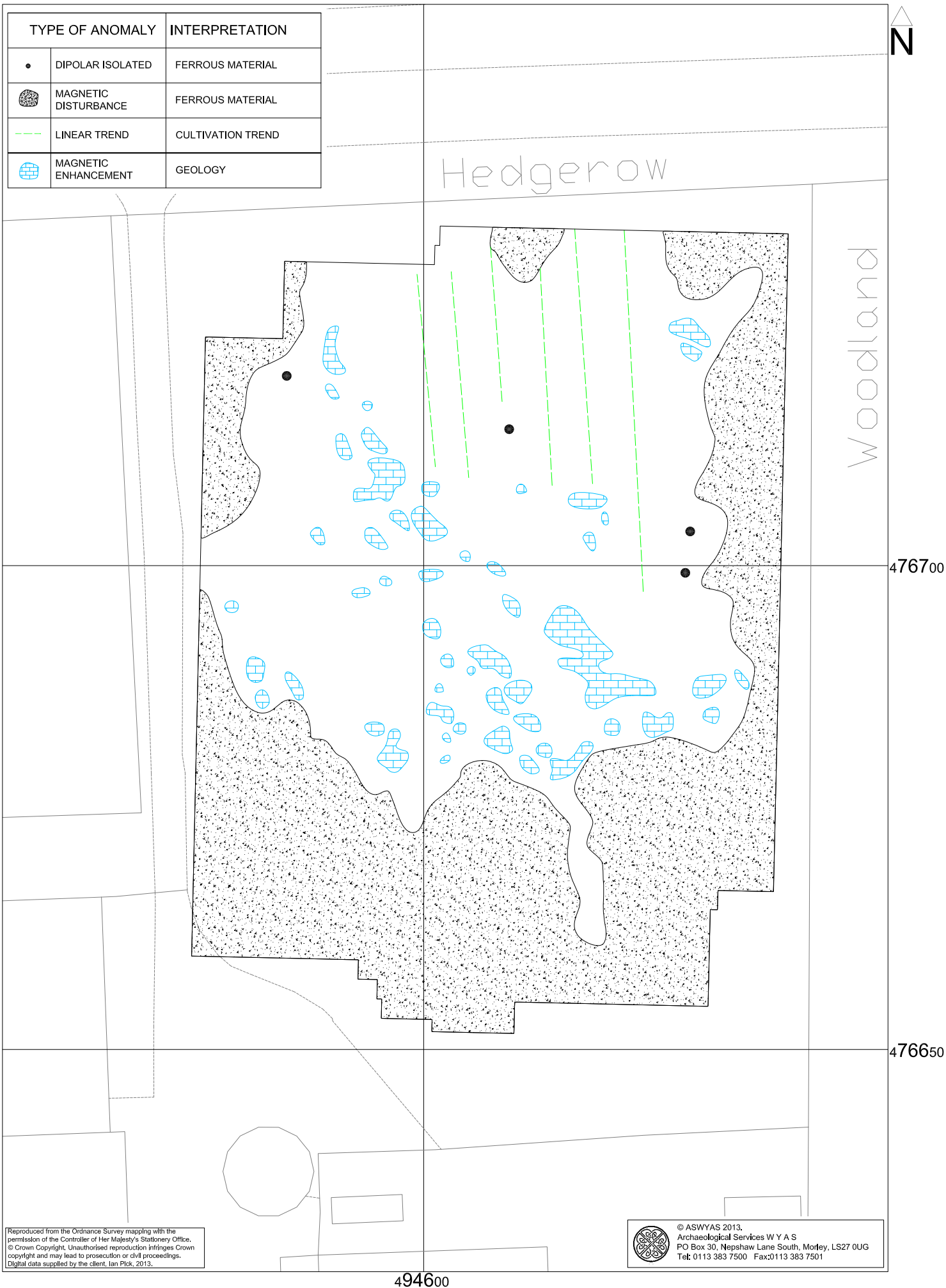


Fig. 5. Interpretation of greyscale magnetometer data (1:500 @ A4)

0 10m



Plate 1. General view of survey area, looking north-east



Plate 2. General view of survey area, looking south-east

Appendix 1: Magnetic survey - technical information

Magnetic Susceptibility and Soil Magnetism

Iron makes up about 6% of the Earth's crust and is mostly present in soils and rocks as minerals such as maghaemite and haemetite. These minerals have a weak, measurable magnetic property termed magnetic susceptibility. Human activities can redistribute these minerals and change (enhance) others into more magnetic forms so that by measuring the magnetic susceptibility of the topsoil, areas where human occupation or settlement has occurred can be identified by virtue of the attendant increase (enhancement) in magnetic susceptibility. If the enhanced material subsequently comes to fill features, such as ditches or pits, localised isolated and linear magnetic anomalies can result whose presence can be detected by a magnetometer (fluxgate gradiometer).

In general, it is the contrast between the magnetic susceptibility of deposits filling cut features, such as ditches or pits, and the magnetic susceptibility of topsoils, subsoils and rocks into which these features have been cut, which causes the most recognisable responses. This is primarily because there is a tendency for magnetic ferrous compounds to become concentrated in the topsoil, thereby making it more magnetic than the subsoil or the bedrock. Linear features cut into the subsoil or geology, such as ditches, that have been silted up or have been backfilled with topsoil will therefore usually produce a positive magnetic response relative to the background soil levels. Discrete feature, such as pits, can also be detected. The magnetic susceptibility of a soil can also be enhanced by the application of heat and the fermentation and bacterial effects associated with rubbish decomposition. The area of enhancement is usually quite large, mainly due to the tendency of discard areas to extend beyond the limit of the occupation site itself, and spreading by the plough. An advantage of magnetic susceptibility over magnetometry is that a certain amount of occupational activity will cause the same proportional change in susceptibility, however weakly magnetic is the soil, and so does not depend on the magnetic contrast between the topsoil and deeper layers. Susceptibility survey is therefore able to detect areas of occupation even in the absence of cut features. On the other hand susceptibility survey is more vulnerable to the masking effects of layers of colluvium and alluvium as the technique, using the Bartington system, can generally only measure variation in the first 0.15m of ploughsoil.

Types of Magnetic Anomaly

In the majority of instances anomalies are termed 'positive'. This means that they have a positive magnetic value relative to the magnetic background on any given site. However some features can manifest themselves as 'negative' anomalies that, conversely, means that the response is negative relative to the mean magnetic background.

Where it is not possible to give a probable cause of an observed anomaly a '?' is appended.

It should be noted that anomalies interpreted as modern in origin might be caused by features that are present in the topsoil or upper layers of the subsoil. Removal of soil to an archaeological or natural layer can therefore remove the feature causing the anomaly.

The types of response mentioned above can be divided into five main categories that are used in the graphical interpretation of the magnetic data:

Isolated dipolar anomalies (iron spikes)

These responses are typically caused by ferrous material either on the surface or in the topsoil. They cause a rapid variation in the magnetic response giving a characteristic 'spiky' trace. Although ferrous archaeological artefacts could produce this type of response, unless there is supporting evidence for an archaeological interpretation, little emphasis is normally given to such anomalies, as modern ferrous objects are common on rural sites, often being present as a consequence of manuring.

Areas of magnetic disturbance

These responses can have several causes often being associated with burnt material, such as slag waste or brick rubble or other strongly magnetised/fired material. Ferrous structures such as pylons, mesh or barbed wire fencing and buried pipes can also cause the same disturbed response. A modern origin is usually assumed unless there is other supporting information.

Linear trend

This is usually a weak or broad linear anomaly of unknown cause or date. These anomalies are often caused by agricultural activity, either ploughing or land drains being a common cause.

Areas of magnetic enhancement/positive isolated anomalies

Areas of enhanced response are characterised by a general increase in the magnetic background over a localised area whilst discrete anomalies are manifest by an increased response (sometimes only visible on an XY trace plot) on two or three successive traverses. In neither instance is there the intense dipolar response characteristic exhibited by an area of magnetic disturbance or of an 'iron spike' anomaly (see above). These anomalies can be caused by infilled discrete archaeological features such as pits or post-holes or by kilns. They can also be caused by pedological variations or by natural infilled features on certain geologies. Ferrous material in the subsoil can also give a similar response. It can often therefore be very difficult to establish an anthropogenic origin without intrusive investigation or other supporting information.

Linear and curvilinear anomalies

Such anomalies have a variety of origins. They may be caused by agricultural practice (recent ploughing trends, earlier ridge and furrow regimes or land drains), natural geomorphological features such as palaeochannels or by infilled archaeological ditches.

Methodology: Magnetic Susceptibility Survey

There are two methods of measuring the magnetic susceptibility of a soil sample. The first involves the measurement of a given volume of soil, which will include any air and moisture that lies within the sample, and is termed volume specific susceptibility. This method results in a bulk value that is not necessarily fully representative of the constituent components of the sample. For field surveys a Bartington MS2 meter with MS2D field loop is used due to its speed and simplicity. The second technique overcomes this potential problem by taking into account both the volume and mass of a sample and is termed mass specific susceptibility. However, mass specific readings cannot be taken in the field where the bulk properties of a soil are usually unknown and so volume specific readings must be taken. Whilst these values are not fully representative they do allow general comparisons across a site and give a broad indication of susceptibility changes. This is usually enough to assess the susceptibility of a site and evaluate whether enhancement has occurred.

Methodology: Gradiometer Survey

There are two main methods of using the fluxgate gradiometer for commercial evaluations. The first of these is referred to as *magnetic scanning* and requires the operator to visually identify anomalous responses on the instrument display panel whilst covering the site in widely spaced traverses, typically 10m apart. The instrument logger is not used and there is therefore no data collection. Once anomalous responses are identified they are marked in the field with bamboo canes and approximately located on a base plan. This method is usually employed as a means of selecting areas for detailed survey when only a percentage sample of the whole site is to be subject to detailed survey.

The disadvantages of magnetic scanning are that features that produce weak anomalies (less than 2nT) are unlikely to stand out from the magnetic background and so will be difficult to detect. The coarse sampling interval means that discrete features or linear features that are parallel or broadly oblique to the direction of traverse may not be detected. If linear features are suspected in a site then the traverse direction should be perpendicular (or as close as is possible within the physical constraints of the site) to the orientation of the suspected features. The possible drawbacks mentioned above mean that a 'negative' scanning result should be validated by sample detailed magnetic survey (see below).

The second method is referred to as *detailed survey* and employs the use of a sample trigger to automatically take readings at predetermined points, typically at 0.25m intervals, on zig-zag traverses 1m apart. These readings are stored in the memory of the instrument and are later dumped to computer for processing and interpretation. Detailed survey allows the visualisation of weaker anomalies that may not have been detected by magnetic scanning.

During this survey a Bartington Grad601 magnetic gradiometer was used taking readings on the 0.1nT range, at 0.25m intervals on zig-zag traverses 1m apart within 30m by 30m square

grids. The instrument was checked for electronic and mechanical drift at a common point and calibrated as necessary. The drift from zero was not logged.

Data Processing and Presentation

The detailed gradiometer data has been presented in this report in XY trace and greyscale formats. In the former format the data shown is 'raw' with no processing other than grid biasing having been done. The data in the greyscale images has been interpolated and selectively filtered to remove the effects of drift in instrument calibration and other artificial data constructs and to maximise the clarity and interpretability of the archaeological anomalies.

An XY plot presents the data logged on each traverse as a single line with each successive traverse incremented on the Y-axis to produce a 'stacked' plot. A hidden line algorithm has been employed to block out lines behind major 'spikes' and the data has been clipped. The main advantage of this display option is that the full range of data can be viewed, dependent on the clip, so that the 'shape' of individual anomalies can be discerned and potentially archaeological anomalies differentiated from 'iron spikes'. Geoplot 3 software was used to create the XY trace plots.

Geoplot 3 software was used to interpolate the data so that 3600 readings were obtained for each 30m by 30m grid. The same program was used to produce the greyscale images. All greyscale plots are displayed using a linear incremental scale.

Appendix 2: Survey location information

The site grid was laid out using a Trimble VRS differential Global Positioning System (Trimble 5800 model). The accuracy of this equipment is better than 0.01m. The survey grids were then super-imposed onto a base map provided by the client to produce the displayed block locations. However, it should be noted that Ordnance Survey positional accuracy for digital map data has an error of 0.5m for urban and floodplain areas, 1.0m for rural areas and 2.5m for mountain and moorland areas. This potential error must be considered if co-ordinates are measured off hard copies of the mapping rather than using the digital co-ordinates.

Archaeological Services WYAS cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party or for the removal of any of the survey reference points.

Appendix 3: Geophysical archive

The geophysical archive comprises:-

- an archive disk containing compressed (WinZip 8) files of the raw data, report text (Microsoft Word 2000), and graphics files (Adobe Illustrator CS2 and AutoCAD 2008) files; and
- a full copy of the report.

At present the archive is held by Archaeological Services WYAS although it is anticipated that it may eventually be lodged with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). Brief details may also be forwarded for inclusion on the English Heritage Geophysical Survey Database after the contents of the report are deemed to be in the public domain (i.e. available for consultation in the North Yorkshire Historic Environment Record).

Bibliography

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