

T H A M E S V A L L E Y

ARCHAEOLOGICAL

S E R V I C E S

**Land south of Burford Road,
Minster Lovell, Oxfordshire**

Geophysical Survey (Magnetic)

by Kyle Beaverstock

Site Code: MLO16/162

(SP 3085 1066)

**Land south of Burford Road, Minster Lovell,
Oxfordshire**

Geophysical Survey (Magnetic) Report

For Mr & Mrs Martin Kinch

by Kyle Beaverstock

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code MLO 16/162

September 2016

Summary

Site name: Land south of Burford Road, Minster Lovell, Oxfordshire

Grid reference: SP 3085 1066

Site activity: Magnetometer survey

Date and duration of project: 12th - 14th of September, 2016

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Kyle Beaverstock

Site code: MLO16/162

Area of site: 8ha

Summary of results: Several positive linear anomalies and two circular linear anomalies were detected within the surveyed area which may represent cut features of archaeological interest.

Location of archive: The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading in accordance with TVAS digital archiving policies.

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Report edited/checked by: Steve Ford ✓ 22.09.16

Land south of Burford Road, Minster Lovell, Oxfordshire A Geophysical Survey (Magnetic)

by Kyle Beaverstock

Report 16/162

Introduction

This report documents the results of a geophysical survey (magnetic) carried out at Burford Road (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Simon Joyce of Strutt and Parker LLP, 269 Banbury Road, Oxford, OX2 7LL on behalf of Mr & Mrs Kinch.

Planning permission is being sought from West Oxfordshire Council for the development of an 8ha parcel of land for a housing development and landscaped 'green' area. The predetermination investigation will determine whether conditions will need to be attached. This is in accordance with the Department for Communities and Local Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012) and the District's policies on archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Kyle Beaverstock, Rebecca Constable, Jesse Coxy and Peter Banks between the 12th and 14th of September 2016 and the site code is MLO16/162.

The archive is presently held at Thames Valley Archaeological Services, Reading in accordance with TVAS digital archiving policies.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located within the administrative district of West Oxfordshire District Council on the western edge of the village of Minster Lovell (Fig. 1), approximately 400m to the south of the river Windrush. The site is a relatively flat parcel of land c.123m above Ordinance Datum (aOD) which is bounded by Burford Road to the north, private properties to the east and open farmland to the south and west. The land is currently being utilised for crop farming and the underlying geology is stated as mostly Forest Marbles with some White Limestone (BGS 1982) to the south-west.

Site history and archaeological background

The archaeological potential of the site has been highlighted in a desk-based assessment (OA 2016). In summary, the archaeological potential for the site is mainly derived from features associated with possible Iron Age enclosures to the south of the site identified by crop marks from aerial photography.

Methodology

Sample interval

Data collection required a temporary grid to be established across the survey area using wooden pegs at 20m intervals with further subdivision where necessary. Readings were taken at 0.25m intervals along traverses 1m apart. This provides 1600 sampling points across a full 20m × 20m grid (English Heritage 2008), providing an appropriate methodology balancing cost and time with resolution. The site contained no significant obstructions although other than some interference from the gate and fence as well as a modern pipeline along the northern edge of the site which may have masked the presence of some features.

The Grad 601-2 has a typical depth of penetration of 0.5m to 1.0m. This would be increased if strongly magnetic objects have been buried in the site. Under normal operating conditions it can be expected to identify buried features >0.5m in diameter. Features which can be detected include disturbed soil, such as the fill of a ditch, structures that have been heated to high temperatures (magnetic thermoremnance) and objects made from ferro-magnetic materials. The strength of the magnetic field is measured in nano Tesla (nT), equivalent to 10^{-9} Tesla, the SI unit of magnetic flux density.

Equipment

The purpose of the survey was to identify geophysical anomalies that may be archaeological in origin in order to inform a targeted archaeological investigation of the site prior to development. The survey and report generally follow the recommendations and standards set out by both English Heritage (2008) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2002, 2011, 2014).

Magnetometry was chosen as a survey method as it offers the most rapid ground coverage and responds to a wide range of anomalies caused by past human activity. These properties make it ideal for the fast yet detailed surveying of an area.

The detailed magnetometry survey was carried out using a dual sensor Bartington Instruments Grad 601-2 fluxgate gradiometer. The instrument consists of two fluxgates mounted 1m vertically apart with a second set positioned at 1m horizontal distance. This enables readings to be taken of both the general background magnetic field and any localised anomalies with the difference being plotted as either positive or negative buried features. All sensors are calibrated to cancel out the local magnetic field and react only to anomalies above or below this base line. On this basis, strong magnetic anomalies such as burnt features (kilns and hearths) will give a high response as will buried ferrous objects. More subtle anomalies such as pits and ditches, can be seen from their

infilling soils containing higher proportions of humic material, rich in ferrous oxides, compared to the undisturbed subsoil. This will stand out in relation to the background magnetic readings and appear in plan following the course of a linear feature or within a discrete area.

A Trimble Geo7x handheld GPS system with sub-decimetre real-time accuracy was used to tie the site grid into the Ordnance Survey national grid. This unit offers both real-time correction and post-survey processing; enabling a high level of accuracy to be obtained both in the field and in the final post-processed data.

Data gathered in the field was processed using the TerraSurveyor software package. This allows the survey data to be collated and manipulated to enhance the visibility of anomalies, particularly those likely to be of archaeological origin. The table below lists the processes applied to this survey, full survey and data information is recorded in Appendix 1.

Process	Effect
e.g. Clip from -3.00 to 3.00 nT	Enhance the contrast of the image to improve the appearance of possible archaeological anomalies.
Interpolate: y doubled	Increases the resolution of the readings in the y axis, enhancing the shape of anomalies.
De-stripe: median, all sensors	Removes the striping effect caused by differences in sensor calibration, enhancing the visibility of potential archaeological anomalies.
De-spike: threshold 1, window size 3×3	Compresses outlying magnetic points caused by interference of metal objects within the survey area.
Search & Replace: from: ±30 nT to: ±1000 nT with: dummy	Removes extreme values resulting from magnetic interference caused by near-by ferromagnetic objects.
Range match (area: top 90, left 0, bottom 149, right 359) to top edge	Equalises the range of values between areas surveyed by different operatives, correcting for differences in setup.
De-stagger: all grids, both by -1 intervals	Cancels out effects of site's topography on irregularities in the traverse speed.

Once processed, the results are presented as a greyscale plot shown in relation to the site (Fig. 3), followed by a second plan to present the abstraction and interpretation of the magnetic anomalies (Fig. 4). Anomalies are shown as colour-coded lines, points and polygons. The grid layout and georeferencing information (Fig. 2) is prepared in EasyCAD v.7.58.00, producing a .FC7 file format, and printed as a .PDF for inclusion in the final report.

The greyscale plot of the processed data is exported from TerraSurveyor in a georeferenced portable network graphics (.PNG) format, a raster image format chosen for its lossless data compression and support for transparent pixels, enabling it to easily be overlaid onto an existing site plan. The data plot is combined with grid and site plans in QGIS 2.6.1 Brighton and exported again in .PNG format in order to present them in figure

templates in Adobe InDesign CS5.5, creating .INDD file formats. Once the figures are finalised they are exported in .PDF format for inclusion within the finished report.

Results

A range of magnetic anomalies were recorded across the survey area (Fig. 4). The magnetic anomalies of possible archaeological origin are recognisable as positive variations in the site's general background magnetic field. The positive anomalies usually represent buried cut features such as ditches or pits whereas negative anomalies are indicative of earthen banks, or thickened or disturbed subsoil.

The following anomalies [Fig. 5: 1 - 9] represent the most likely features of archaeological significance. Along the northern boundary running south-west to north-east for approximately 94m is a strong positive linear anomaly [1], due to its proximity and alignment with the current field boundary this may represent an earlier phase of the field boundary. To the immediate south of anomaly [1] is a strong circular linear [2] approx. 12.5m in diameter and may represent a circular feature such as a ring gully. To the south-west of these on the western boundary, are parallel linear anomalies [3] and [4] both of which are aligned from the south-west to the north-east and may represent earlier field boundaries or a driveway.

Across the centre of the field along a south-west to north-east alignment for approx. 219m is a strong positive anomaly [5] with an associated negative anomaly. These most likely represent a ditch and embankment of possible archaeological interest. Along the western boundary are two linears [6 and 7] which may be related and form the corner of a field boundary. Anomaly [6] runs SSW - NNE for approx. 83m and linear [7] runs south-east to the north-west for approx. 37.5m. Extending from anomaly [6] along a WSW - ENE alignment for approx. 191.5m is a weak positive linear [8] which may be associated with the possible field system represented by anomalies [6 and 7]. In the south-west corner is a circular linear [9], approx. 16.5m in diameter and may signify the presence of a feature such as a ring gully.

Across the site were several points with a high response, these are most likely natural in origin however some may represent cut features such as pits or post holes. Anomaly [10] is a line of these anomalous points which could possibly be a fence or pit line. Also detected were faint linear anomalies [11] running south-west to north-east, these are most likely agricultural in origin caused by ploughing. Also present were anomalies caused by changes in the natural geology [12], these weak background variations have no specific structure and are usually caused by variations in the underlying geology.

Along the northern edge of the field was a positive linear anomaly [13] with an associated negative response, this is very likely to be a modern pipeline. to the south of this surrounding the site entrance from Burford Road is an area of magnetic debris [14] consisting of numerous dipolar responses which are likely to have been caused by modern disturbance.

Conclusion

Across the site there are several anomalies that may represent features of archaeological interest. These positive anomalies are most likely cut linear features such as ditches [1 and 3 - 8] and signify the presence of an earlier agricultural system. Of particular interest however are the presence of possible ring gullies [2 and 9] which may represent the presence of occupation deposits of possible Iron Age date.

References

- BGS, 1982, *British Geological Survey*, 1:50,000, Sheet 236, Solid and Drift Edition, Keyworth
- English Heritage, 2008, *Geophysical Survey in Archaeological Field Evaluation*, English Heritage, Portsmouth (2nd edn)
- CI/A, 2002, *The Use of Geophysical Techniques in Archaeological Evaluation*, IFA Paper No. 6, Reading
- CI/A, 2011, *Standard and Guidance: for archaeological geophysical survey*, Reading
- CI/A, 2014, *Standard and Guidance: for archaeological geophysical survey*, Reading
- NPPF, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, Dept Communities and Local Government, London
- Oxford Archaeology, 2016, Proposed Development, Land off Burford Road, Minster Lovell: Desk Based Assessment, Oxford

Appendix 1. Survey and data information

Programme:

Name: TerraSurveyor
Version: 3.0.25.0

Raw data

Survey corner coordinates (X/Y):
Northwest corner: 430637.11, 210890.51 m
Southeast corner: 430957.11, 210490.51 m
Direction of 1st Traverse: 88.05012 deg
Collection Method: ZigZag
Sensors: 2 @ 1.00 m spacing.
Dummy Value: 2047.5

Dimensions

Composite Size (readings): 1360 x 440
Survey Size (meters): 340 m x 440 m
Grid Size: 20 m x 20 m
X Interval: 0.25 m
Y Interval: 1 m

Stats

Max: 97.10
Min: -100.00
Std Dev: 13.67
Mean: 0.78
Median: 2.13
Composite Area: 14.96 ha
Surveyed Area: 8.093 ha

Source Grids: 237

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Processed data

Stats

Max: 2.20

Min: -1.80

Std Dev: 0.92

Mean: 0.06

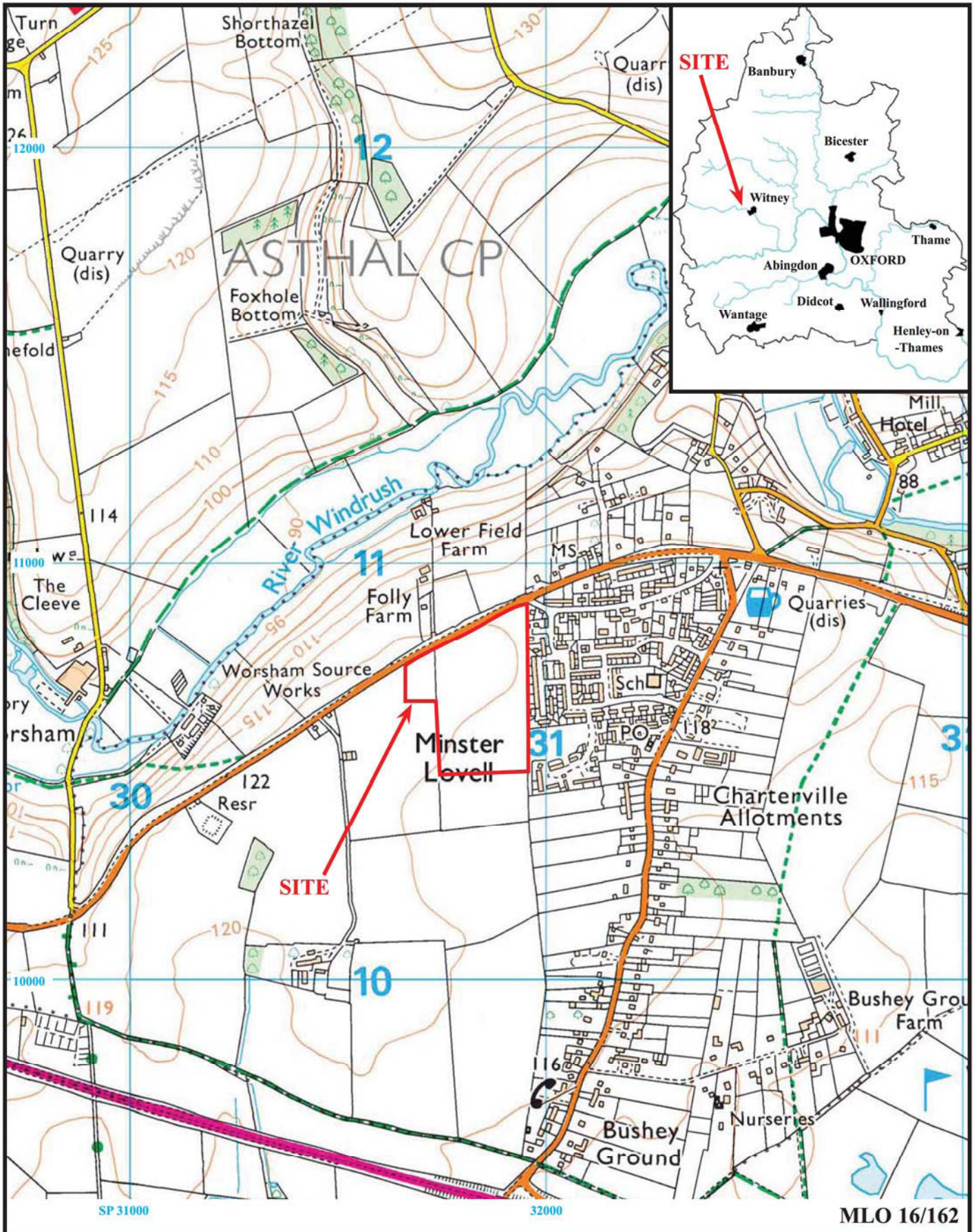
Median: 0.01

Composite Area: 12.8 ha

Surveyed Area: 8.093 ha

Processes: 6

- 1 Base Layer
- 2 Move (Area: Top 100, Left 0, Bottom 219, Right 319) to X 80, Y 0
- 3 DeStripe Median Sensors: All
- 4 Despike Threshold: 1 Window size: 3x3
- 5 Interpolate: Y Doubled.
- 6 Clip from -1.80 to 2.20 nT

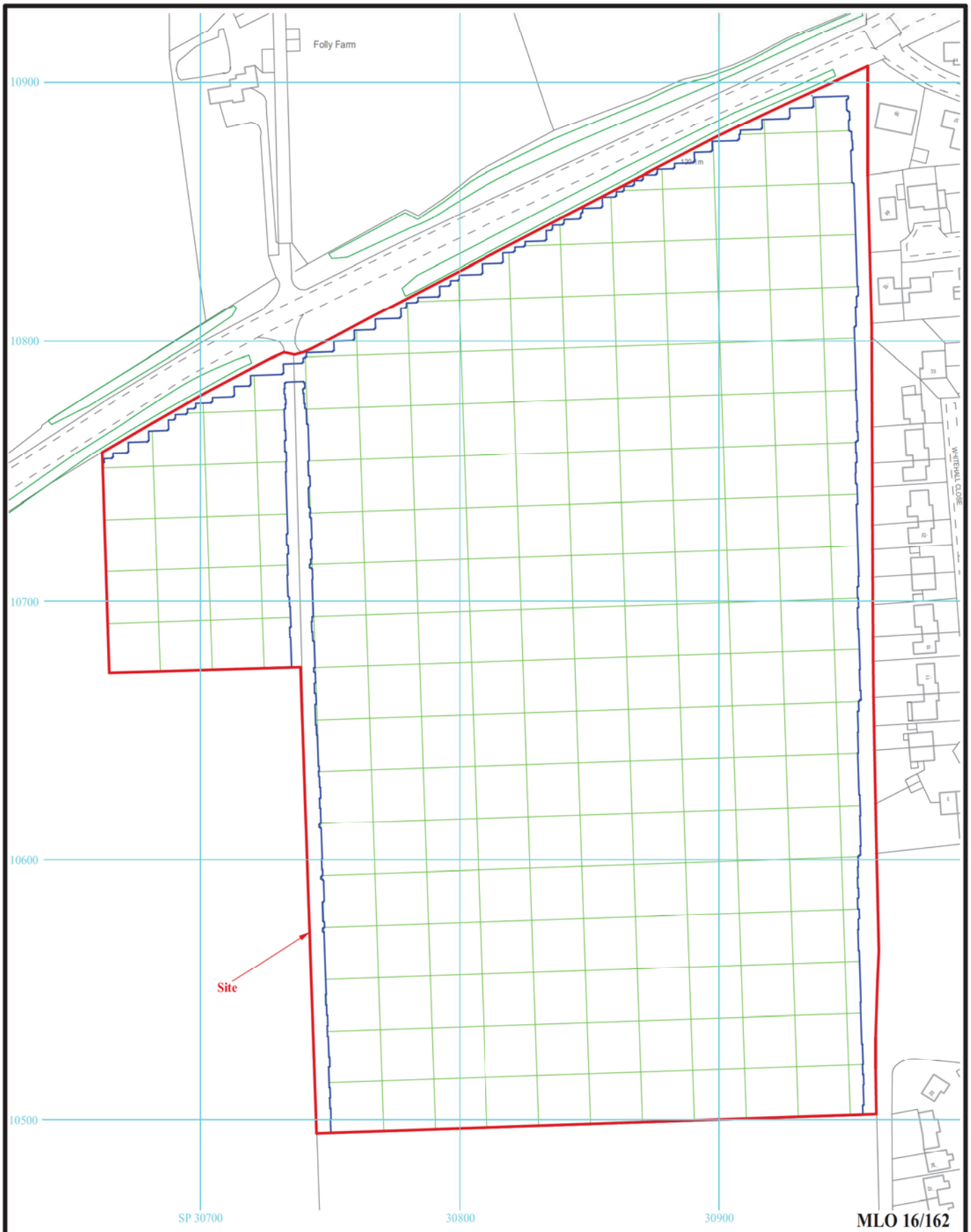


**Land south of Burford Road,
Minster Lovell, Oxfordshire, 2016
Geophysical Survey (Magnetic)**

Figure 1. Location of site within Minster Lovell and Oxfordshire

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Minster Lovell, Oxfordshire, 2016
Geophysical Survey (Magnetic)**

Figure 2. Survey grid layout.



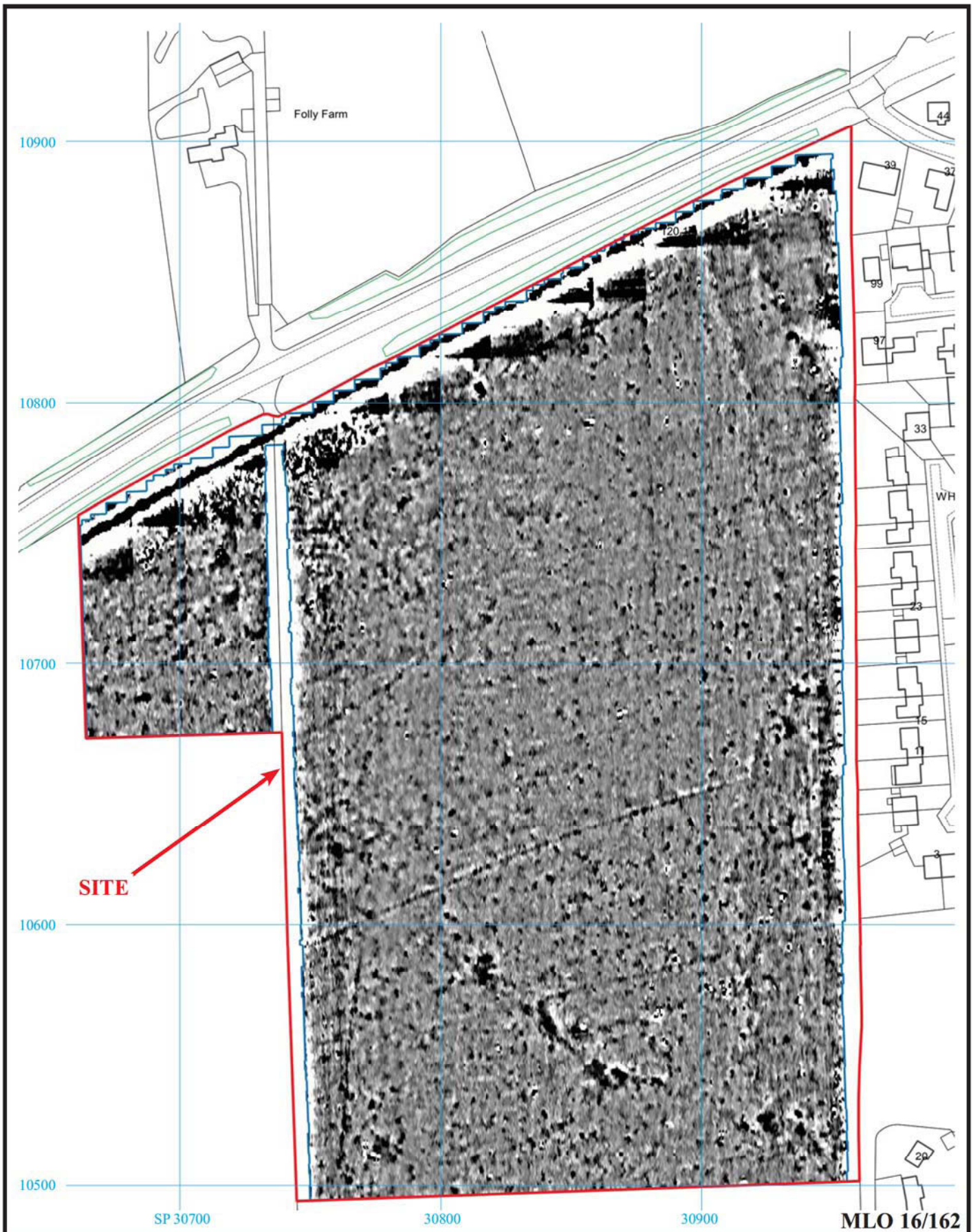
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Land south of Burford Road,
 Minster Lovell, Oxfordshire, 2016
 Geophysical Survey (Magnetic)
 Figure 3. Plot of raw gradiometer data.

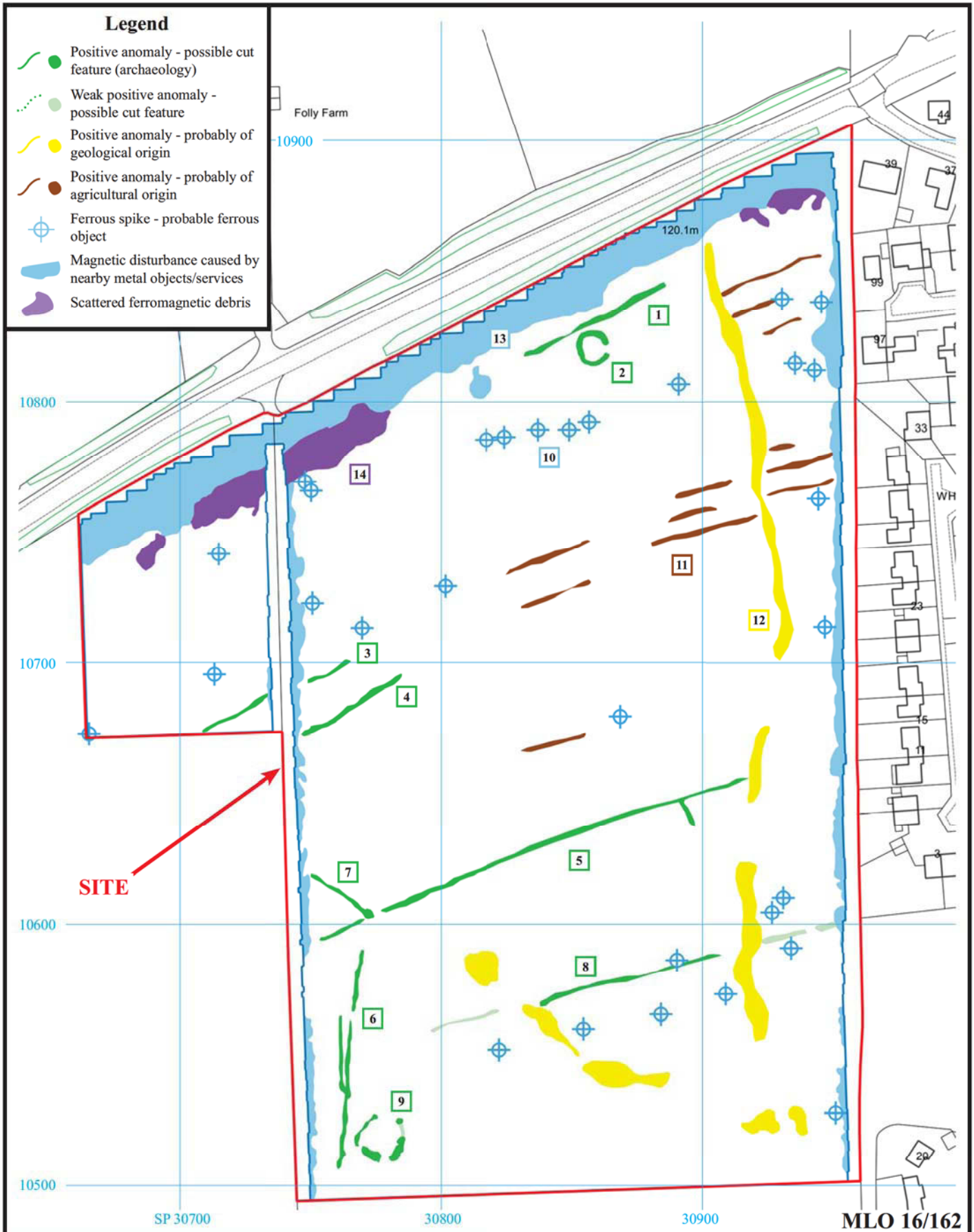




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Figure 4. Plot of minimally processed gradiometer data.



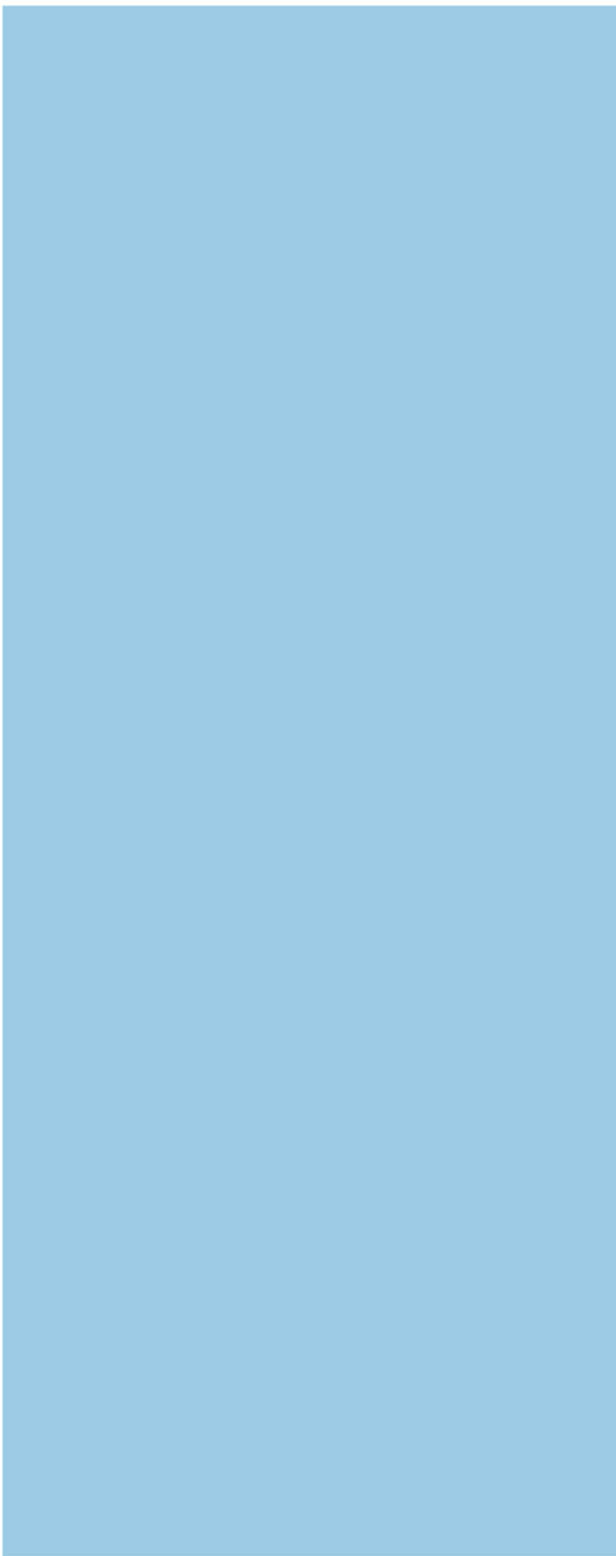
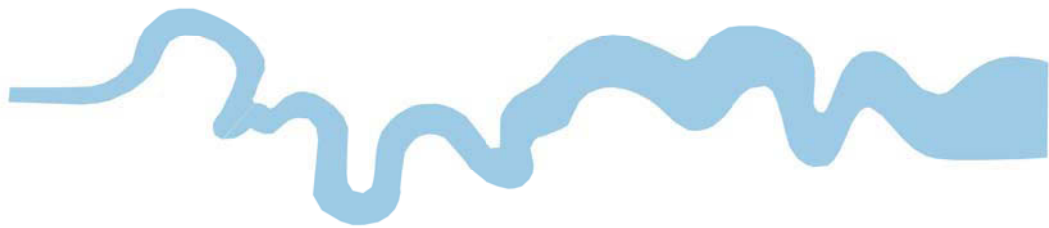
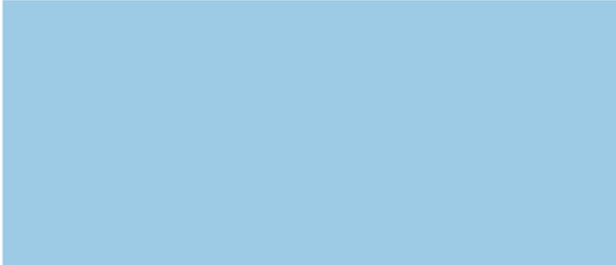


Land south of Burford Road,
Minster Lovell, Oxfordshire, 2016
Geophysical Survey (Magnetic)
Figure 5. Interpretation plot.

TIME CHART

	Calendar Years
Modern _____	AD 1901
Victorian _____	AD 1837
Post Medieval _____	AD 1500
Medieval _____	AD 1066
Saxon _____	AD 410
Roman _____	AD 43
Iron Age _____	BC/AD 750 BC
Bronze Age: Late -----	1300 BC
Bronze Age: Middle -----	1700 BC
Bronze Age: Early -----	2100 BC
Neolithic: Late	3300 BC
Neolithic: Early	4300 BC
Mesolithic: Late	6000 BC
Mesolithic: Early	10000 BC
Palaeolithic: Upper	30000 BC
Palaeolithic: Middle	70000 BC
Palaeolithic: Lower	2,000,000 BC





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