

GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY REPORT

sumo

Survey

GEOPHYSICS FOR
ARCHAEOLOGY &
ENGINEERING

**Staggs Farm, Great Dunmow,
Essex**

Client
CgMs Heritage (part of RPS)

Survey Report
13286

Date
October 2018

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GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY REPORT

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Staggs Farm, Great Dunmow, Essex

SUMO Job reference:
13286

Client:
CgMs Heritage (part of RPS)

Survey date:
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Report date:
11 October 2018

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1 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

A detailed magnetometer survey was conducted at Staggs Farm, Great Dunmow. An area of possible later-prehistoric or Romano-British settlement activity is visible in the form of small, adjoining enclosures while further linear anomalies could have archaeological origins. Plough effects are visible in the east, and two old field boundaries, visible on historic mapping, have been identified. The remaining responses include magnetic disturbance from nearby ferrous metal objects and areas of natural magnetic variation.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background synopsis

SUMO Geophysics Ltd were commissioned to undertake a geophysical survey of an area outlined for residential development. This survey forms part of an archaeological investigation being undertaken by **CgMs Heritage (part of RPS)**.

2.2 Site details

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| NGR / Postcode | TL 619 218 / CM6 1DX |
| Location | The site is located to the south-west of Great Dunmow, Essex. The B1256 forms the northern boundary of the site, with Staggs Farm to the west and the wooded area of Oak Spring to the south. |
| HER/SMR | Essex |
| District | Uttlesford |
| Parish | Great Dunmow CP |
| Topography | Largely level, sloping slightly to the east |
| Current Land Use | Pasture |
| Geology | Solid: Longon Clay Formation - clay, silt and sand. Superficial: Head - clay, silt, sand and gravel across the north and east; Kesgrave Catchment Group - sand and gravel across central parts; Lowestoft Formation - diamiction across the west (BGS 2018). |
| Soils | Ludford Association (571x) - deep well drained fine loamy, coarse loamy and sandy soils (SSEW 1983). |
| Archaeology | A search of Essex HER (ECC 2018) within a 1km radius of the site identifies a number of later prehistoric and Roman remains. Immediately west of the site linear cropmarks (SMR. 18298) of uncertain date are recorded, while directly to the south and extending into the site a number of medieval and post-medieval boundaries (SMR. 1328; 1329) are recorded. Prehistoric and other undated features (SMR. 1330) including a possible post-hole, ditch and lynchet have been discovered immediately to the south, along with Bronze Age pottery sherds (SMR. 1327) and a scatter of flints (SMR. 1326). To the north of the B1256, a middle Iron Age - Roman settlement is recorded (SMR. 9991). |
| Survey Methods | Magnetometer survey (fluxgate gradiometer) |
| Study Area | c. 5.1 ha |

2.3 Aims and Objectives

To locate and characterise any anomalies of possible archaeological interest within the study area.

3 METHODS, PROCESSING & PRESENTATION

3.1 Standards & Guidance

This report and all fieldwork have been conducted in accordance with the latest guidance documents issued by Historic England (EH 2008) (then English Heritage), the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014) and the European Archaeological Council (EAC 2016).

3.2 Survey methods

Detailed magnetic survey was chosen as an efficient and effective method of locating archaeological anomalies.

| Technique | Instrument | Traverse Interval | Sample Interval |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Magnetometer | Bartington Grad 601-2 | 1.0m | 0.25m |

More information regarding this technique is included in Appendices A and B.

3.3 Data Processing

The following basic processing steps have been carried out on the data used in this report:

De-stripe; de-stagger; interpolate

3.4 Presentation of results and interpretation

The presentation of the results includes a 'minimally processed data' and a 'processed data' greyscale plot. Magnetic anomalies are identified, interpreted and plotted onto the 'Interpretation' drawings.

When interpreting the results, several factors are taken into consideration, including the nature of archaeological features being investigated and the local conditions at the site (geology, pedology, topography etc.). Anomalies are categorised by their potential origin. Where responses can be related to other existing evidence, the anomalies will be given specific categories, such as: *Abbey Wall* or *Roman Road*. Where the interpretation is based largely on the geophysical data, levels of confidence are implied, for example: *Probable*, or *Possible Archaeology*. The former is used for a confident interpretation, based on anomaly definition and/or other corroborative data such as cropmarks. Poor anomaly definition, a lack of clear patterns to the responses and an absence of other supporting data reduces confidence, hence the classification *Possible*.

4 RESULTS

The survey has been divided into seven survey areas (Areas 1-7) and specific anomalies have been given numerical labels [1] [2] which appear in the text below, as well as on the Interpretation Figure.

4.1 **Probable / Possible Archaeology**

4.1.1 A series of small, adjoining rectilinear anomalies [1] is visible in Area 5. These appear to be indicative of small enclosures or a potential ladder settlement, though it is small in size making further interpretation difficult. Given the close proximity of prehistoric and Roman activity, they have been classified as having possible archaeological origins.

4.2 **Uncertain**

4.2.1 To the east of the series of enclosures [1], a curving trend may form a potential 'D-shaped' enclosure [2]. It is possible that the response is of archaeological origin but the eastern side of the 'enclosure' could equally be associated with a former field boundary which can be seen on Google Earth imagery. As such, the responses are assigned an uncertain origin.

4.2.2 A small cluster of strong discrete positive anomalies and an associated area of enhanced magnetic response [3] have been detected at the western edge of Area 5. These could be indicative of activities associated with later prehistoric or Roman settlement, such as industrial workings or small, shallow pits. However, their location at the terminus of the corroborated former field boundary [5] suggests that they could simply be disturbance associated with the removal of the boundary.

4.2.3 A small cluster of discrete and linear anomalies [4] in Area 1 could be archaeological, though such an interpretation would be tentative at best. The responses are more likely to be of modern, agricultural or natural origin.

4.3 **Former Field Boundary**

4.3.1 Two positive linear anomalies [5-6] are visible in Area 5 and are a result of former field boundaries. Both features are visible on OS maps from 1875 to 1960.

4.4 **Agricultural – Ploughing**

4.4.1 Straight, parallel linear anomalies are visible across Area 5 and are a result of agricultural activity, such as ploughing.

4.5 **Natural / Geological / Pedological / Topographic**

4.5.1 Amorphous areas of enhanced magnetic response are visible in Area 4 and are likely to be a result of localised variations in the underlying bedrock or superficial geology.

4.6 **Ferrous / Magnetic Disturbance**

4.6.1 Ferrous responses close to boundaries are due to adjacent buildings, fences and gates. Smaller scale ferrous anomalies ("iron spikes") are present throughout the data and are characteristic of small pieces of ferrous debris (or brick / tile) in the topsoil; they are commonly assigned a modern origin. Only the most prominent of these are highlighted on the interpretation diagram.

5 DATA APPRAISAL & CONFIDENCE ASSESSMENT

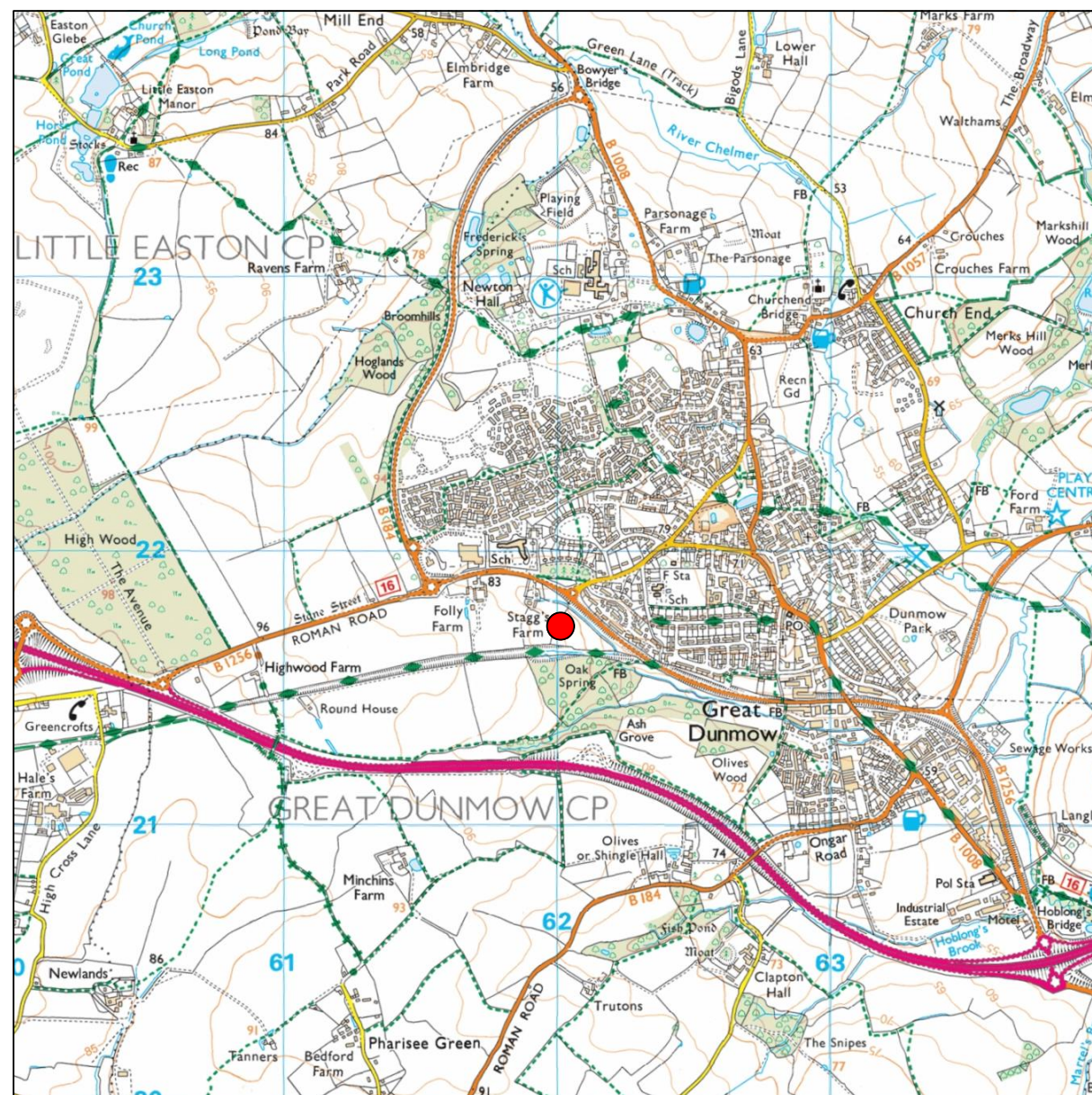
- 5.1 Historic England guidelines (EH 2008) Table 4 states that the average magnetic response on London Clay geologies is poor, while results over superficial sand, gravel, silt and clay deposits can vary. The results from this survey indicate the presence of a series of connected enclosures along with several linear and discrete anomalies of uncertain origin. As a consequence, it can be determined that the technique has been effective.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The survey at Staggs Farm has revealed a series of small, adjoining rectilinear enclosures which could be of Romano-British origin. In addition, a tentative 'D-shaped' enclosure and other linear trends of uncertain origin have been highlighted. Former field boundaries have been mapped, along with evidence of ploughing activity. Areas of natural magnetic variation are visible in the data, along with disturbance from nearby ferrous metal objects such as buildings and fences.

7 REFERENCES

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 Site Location

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Title:
Site Location Diagram

Client:
CgMs Heritage (part of RPS)

Project:
13289 - Staggs Farm, Great Dunmow, Essex

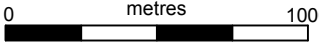

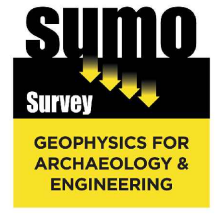
Scale:

1:25000 @ A3

Fig No:
01



 Survey Area - showing 30m grid



Title: Location of Survey Areas

Client: CgMs Heritage (part of RPS)

Project: 13289 - Staggs Farm, Great Dunmow, Essex

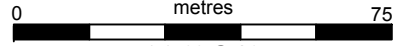
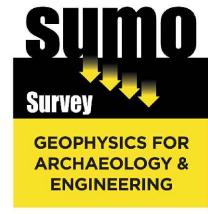
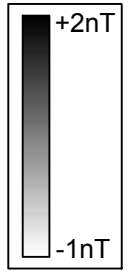
Scale:  1:1500 @ A3

Fig No: 02



Title: Magnetometer Survey - Greyscale Plots

Client: CgMs Heritage (part of RPS)

Project: 13289 - Staggs Farm, Great Dunmow, Essex

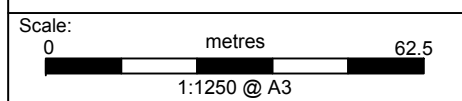
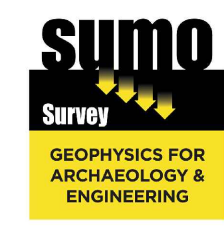


Fig No: 03

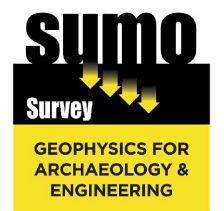
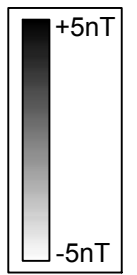


KEY

| | |
|--|---|
| | Possible archaeology (discrete anomaly / trend / enhanced response) |
| | Uncertain Origin (discrete anomaly / trend / enhanced response) |
| | Former field boundary (corroborated) |
| | Agriculture (plough) |
| | Natural (e.g. geological / pedological) |
| | Magnetic disturbance |
| | Ferrous |



| | | |
|----------|--|------------|
| Title: | Magnetometer Survey - Interpretation | |
| Client: | CgMs Heritage (part of RPS) | |
| Project: | 13289 - Staggs Farm, Great Dunmow, Essex | |
| Scale: | 1:1250 @ A3 | Fig No: 04 |



Title: Minimally Processed Data - Greyscale Plots

Client: CgMs Heritage (part of RPS)

Project: 13289 - Staggs Farm, Great Dunmow, Essex

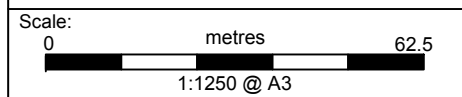


Fig No: 05

Appendix A - Technical Information: Magnetometer Survey Method

Grid Positioning

For hand held gradiometers the location of the survey grids has been plotted together with the referencing information. Grids were set out using a Trimble R8 Real Time Kinematic (RTK) VRS Now GNSS GPS system.

An RTK GPS (Real-time Kinematic Global Positioning System) can locate a point on the ground to a far greater accuracy than a standard GPS unit. A standard GPS suffers from errors created by satellite orbit errors, clock errors and atmospheric interference, resulting in an accuracy of 5m-10m. An RTK system uses a single base station receiver and a number of mobile units. The base station re-broadcasts the phase of the carrier it measured, and the mobile units compare their own phase measurements with those they received from the base station. This results in an accuracy of around 0.01m.

| Technique | Instrument | Traverse Interval | Sample Interval |
|--------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Magnetometer | Bartington Grad 601-2 | 1m | 0.25m |

Instrumentation: **Bartington Grad 601-2**

Bartington instruments operate in a gradiometer configuration which comprises fluxgate sensors mounted vertically, set 1.0m apart. The fluxgate gradiometer suppresses any diurnal or regional effects. The instruments are carried, or cart mounted, with the bottom sensor approximately 0.1-0.3m from the ground surface. At each survey station, the difference in the magnetic field between the two fluxgates is measured in nanoTesla (nT). The sensitivity of the instrument can be adjusted; for most archaeological surveys the most sensitive range (0.1nT) is used. Generally, features up to 1m deep may be detected by this method, though strongly magnetic objects may be visible at greater depths. The Bartington instrument can collect two lines of data per traverse with gradiometer units mounted laterally with a separation of 1.0m. The readings are logged consecutively into the data logger which in turn is daily down-loaded into a portable computer whilst on site. At the end of each site survey, data is transferred to the office for processing and presentation.

Data Processing

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Zero Mean Traverse | This process sets the background mean of each traverse within each grid to zero. The operation removes striping effects and edge discontinuities over the whole of the data set. |
| Step Correction (De-stagger) | When gradiometer data are collected in 'zig-zag' fashion, stepping errors can sometimes arise. These occur because of a slight difference in the speed of walking on the forward and reverse traverses. The result is a staggered effect in the data, which is particularly noticeable on linear anomalies. This process corrects these errors. |

Display

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Greyscale/ Colourscale Plot | This format divides a given range of readings into a set number of classes. Each class is represented by a specific shade of grey, the intensity increasing with value. All values above the given range are allocated the same shade (maximum intensity); similarly, all values below the given range are represented by the minimum intensity shade. Similar plots can be produced in colour, either using a wide range of colours or by selecting two or three colours to represent positive and negative values. The assigned range (plotting levels) can be adjusted to emphasise different anomalies in the data-set. |
|--------------------------------|---|

Interpretation Categories

In certain circumstances (usually when there is corroborative evidence from desk-based or excavation data) very specific interpretations can be assigned to magnetic anomalies (for example, *Roman Road, Wall, etc.*) and where appropriate, such interpretations will be applied. The list below outlines the generic categories commonly used in the interpretation of the results.

| | |
|--|--|
| <i>Archaeology / Probable Archaeology</i> | This term is used when the form, nature and pattern of the responses are clearly or very probably archaeological and /or if corroborative evidence is available. These anomalies, whilst considered anthropogenic, could be of any age. |
| <i>Possible Archaeology</i> | These anomalies exhibit either weak signal strength and / or poor definition, or form incomplete archaeological patterns, thereby reducing the level of confidence in the interpretation. Although the archaeological interpretation is favoured, they may be the result of variable soil depth, plough damage or even aliasing as a result of data collection orientation. |
| <i>Industrial / Burnt-Fired</i> | Strong magnetic anomalies that, due to their shape and form or the context in which they are found, suggest the presence of kilns, ovens, corn dryers, metal-working areas or hearths. It should be noted that in many instances modern ferrous material can produce similar magnetic anomalies. |
| <i>Former Field Boundary (probable & possible)</i> | Anomalies that correspond to former boundaries indicated on historic mapping, or which are clearly a continuation of existing land divisions. Possible denotes less confidence where the anomaly may not be shown on historic mapping but nevertheless the anomaly displays all the characteristics of a field boundary. |
| <i>Ridge & Furrow</i> | Parallel linear anomalies whose broad spacing suggests ridge and furrow cultivation. In some cases, the response may be the result of more recent agricultural activity. |
| <i>Agriculture (ploughing)</i> | Parallel linear anomalies or trends with a narrower spacing, sometimes aligned with existing boundaries, indicating more recent cultivation regimes. |
| <i>Land Drain</i> | Weakly magnetic linear anomalies, quite often appearing in series forming parallel and herringbone patterns. Smaller drains may lead and empty into larger diameter pipes, which in turn usually lead to local streams and ponds. These are indicative of clay fired land drains. |
| <i>Natural</i> | These responses form clear patterns in geographical zones where natural variations are known to produce significant magnetic distortions. |
| <i>Magnetic Disturbance</i> | Broad zones of strong dipolar anomalies, commonly found in places where modern ferrous or fired materials (e.g. brick rubble) are present. They are presumed to be modern. |
| <i>Service</i> | Magnetically strong anomalies, usually forming linear features are indicative of ferrous pipes/cables. Sometimes other materials (e.g. pvc) or the fill of the trench can cause weaker magnetic responses which can be identified from their uniform linearity. |
| <i>Ferrous</i> | This type of response is associated with ferrous material and may result from small items in the topsoil, larger buried objects such as pipes, or above ground features such as fence lines or pylons. Ferrous responses are usually regarded as modern. Individual burnt stones, fired bricks or igneous rocks can produce responses similar to ferrous material. |
| <i>Uncertain Origin</i> | Anomalies which stand out from the background magnetic variation, yet whose form and lack of patterning gives little clue as to their origin. Often the characteristics and distribution of the responses straddle the categories of <i>Possible Archaeology / Natural</i> or (in the case of linear responses) <i>Possible Archaeology / Agriculture</i> ; occasionally they are simply of an unusual form. |

Where appropriate some anomalies will be further classified according to their form (positive or negative) and relative strength and coherence (trend: weak and poorly defined).

Appendix B - Technical Information: Magnetic Theory

Detailed magnetic survey can be used to effectively define areas of past human activity by mapping spatial variation and contrast in the magnetic properties of soil, subsoil and bedrock. Although the changes in the magnetic field resulting from differing features in the soil are usually weak, changes as small as 0.1 nanoTeslas (nT) in an overall field strength of 48,000 (nT), can be accurately detected.

Weakly magnetic iron minerals are always present within the soil and areas of enhancement relate to increases in *magnetic susceptibility* and permanently magnetised *thermoremanent* material.

Magnetic susceptibility relates to the induced magnetism of a material when in the presence of a magnetic field. This magnetism can be considered as effectively permanent as it exists within the Earth's magnetic field. Magnetic susceptibility can become enhanced due to burning and complex biological or fermentation processes.

Thermoremanence is a permanent magnetism acquired by iron minerals that, after heating to a specific temperature known as the Curie Point, are effectively demagnetised followed by re-magnetisation by the Earth's magnetic field on cooling. Thermoremanent archaeological features can include hearths and kilns; material such as brick and tile may be magnetised through the same process.

Silting and deliberate infilling of ditches and pits with magnetically enhanced soil creates a relative contrast against the much lower levels of magnetism within the subsoil into which the feature is cut. Systematic mapping of magnetic anomalies will produce linear and discrete areas of enhancement allowing assessment and characterisation of subsurface features. Material such as subsoil and non-magnetic bedrock used to create former earthworks and walls may be mapped as areas of lower enhancement compared to surrounding soils.

Magnetic survey is carried out using a fluxgate gradiometer which is a passive instrument consisting of two sensors mounted vertically 1m apart. The instrument is carried about 30cm above the ground surface and the top sensor measures the Earth's magnetic field whilst the lower sensor measures the same field but is also more affected by any localised buried feature. The difference between the two sensors will relate to the strength of a magnetic field created by this feature, if no field is present the difference will be close to zero as the magnetic field measured by both sensors will be the same.

Factors affecting the magnetic survey may include soil type, local geology, previous human activity and disturbance from modern services.



- Archaeological
- Geophysical
- Laser Scanning
- Measured Building
- Topographic
- Utility Mapping

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