Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological Geophysical Survey of land between Banbury Road and Kineton Road Southam, Warwickshire

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Report 11/186

September 2011

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QUALITY CONTROL

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Verified by	*Adrian Butler*	*AB*	13/09/11
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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project title	Archaeological geophysical survey of land between Banbury Road and Kineton Road, Southam, Warwickshire	
Short description	Northamptonshire Archaeology) was commissioned by Bloor Homes Ltd to conduct a magnetometer survey of land to the south of Southam, Warwickshire. A cluster of archaeological anomalies was detected on the eastern side of the site, close to Banbury Road. It is likely that these represent a roundhouse and a ditch of either Iron Age or Romano-British date. A few other small anomalies were found which may represent kilns or concentrations of ceramic material. Elsewhere the data was dominated by parallel linear trends representing traces of ridge and furrow cultivation	
Project type	Geophysical survey	
Site Status	None	
Previous work	None known	
Current land use	Meadows and recreational land	
Future work	Unknown	
Monument type and period	Iron Age or Romano-British roundhouse and ditch, possible undated kilns.	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Warwickshire	
Site address	Banbury Road, Southam	
Post code		
OS co-ordinates	SP 4135 6075	
Area	22 ha	
Height aOD	82-87m	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Warwickshire County Council	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	Ian Fisher	
Project Manager	Adrian Butler	
Sponsor or funding body	Bloor Homes Ltd	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	9 August 2011	
End date	14 September 2011	
ARCHIVES	**Location (Accession no.)**	**Contents**
Physical	NA store	Site records
Paper		Client report PDF
Digital		Survey data
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report (NA report)	
Title	Archaeological geophysical survey of land between Banbury Road and Kineton Road, Southam, Warwickshire	
Serial title & volume	Northamptonshire Archaeology Reports 11/186	
Author(s)	John Walford	
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY OF LAND BETWEEN BANBURY ROAD AND KINETON ROAD, SOUTHAM, WARWICKSHIRE AUGUST 2011

Abstract

Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by Bloor Homes Ltd to conduct a magnetometer survey of land to the south of Southam, Warwickshire. A cluster of archaeological anomalies was detected on the eastern side of the site, close to Banbury Road. It is likely that these represent a roundhouse and a ditch of either Iron Age or Romano-British date. A few other small anomalies were found which may represent kilns or concentrations of ceramic material. Elsewhere the data was dominated by parallel linear trends representing traces of ridge and furrow cultivation.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned by Bloor Homes Ltd, to conduct a magnetometer survey of approximately 22ha of land located between Banbury Road and Kineton Road, to the south of Southam, Warwickshire (NGR: SP 4135 6075, Fig 1). The survey was intended to determine the presence and nature of any archaeological remains which may be damaged during the proposed development of the site.

2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The survey was to cover approximately 22ha of land, located on the south side of Southam and bounded to the west by Kineton Road, to the east by Banbury Road and to the north by the Leamington Road. The south-western part of this area is currently occupied by sports pitches, whilst the remainder is divided into five meadows. Some small parts of the site proved to be unsurveyable, mostly due to dense vegetation or other obstructions.

The survey area is topograpically subdued, sloping down gently from 87m AOD in the west to 81m AOD in the east. It is underlain by the Blue Lias (BGS 1984), which supports clayey soils of the Denchworth and Evesham associations (SSEW 1983).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

There are no known archaeological findspots or sites within the survey area itself, but a number of Iron Age and Roman coins have been found immediately to the north-west, near to the Kineton Road Industrial Estate (Warwickshire SMR Nos. 763 & 765). This indicates that there is some potential for further remains of this date to occur in the vicinity.

During the middle ages, the survey area is likely to have been in agricultural use, as indicated by the surviving remnants of ridge and furrow (*pers obs*). The first edition Ordnance Survey shows that the land remained largely undeveloped in the late nineteenth century although, some time prior to 1887, a group of farm buildings had been constructed towards the north-east of the survey area, at SP 4142 6100 (Figs 2

and 3). These buildings are named on a subsequent edition of the map as 'New Buildings Farm'.

4 METHODOLOGY

The magnetometer survey was conducted with *Bartington Grad 601-2*, twin sensor array, vertical component fluxgate gradiometers (Bartington and Chapman 2003). These are standard instruments for archaeological survey and can resolve magnetic variations as slight as 0.1 nanoTesla (nT).

An independent set of 30m survey grids was established within each field, from base lines oriented along suitable field boundaries. These grids were set out by means of a tape measure and optical square and were tied in to the Ordnance Survey national grid with a Leica System 1200 dGPS. The gradiometers were carried at a brisk but steady pace through each grid square, collecting data along 1m spaced traverse lines. Measurements were automatically triggered every 0.25m along the traverses, giving a total of 3600 measurements per square.

All fieldwork methods complied with the written scheme of investigation (NA 2011), and guidelines issued by English Heritage and by the Institute for Archaeologists (EH 2008; I*f*A forthcoming).

Survey data was processed using Geoplot 3.00v software. Striping, caused by slight mismatches in sensor balance, was removed using the 'Zero Mean Traverse' function and the data was destaggered as necessary.

Both the raw and processed data are presented in this report in the form of greyscale plots (scale +4nT to -4nT black ~ white) which have been scaled, rotated and resampled (georectified) for display against the Ordnance Survey base mapping (Fig 2). An interpretative plot has been produced and overlaid on the data in Figure 3. Figure 4 displays the raw survey data (+/-10nT black/white).

5 SURVEY RESULTS (Figs 2 & 3)

The survey data contains one set of archaeological anomalies, lying close to the eastern edge of Field 6. These consist of a penannular anomaly, measuring approximately 11m in diameter, and a tangential linear anomaly aligned approximately north-west to south-east. It is likely that the pennanular anomaly represents a ring gully around the site of an Iron Age or Romano-British roundhouse and the linear anomaly represents an associated length of ditch.

Approximately 35m south-west of these anomalies is a small dipolar anomaly with a peak intensity of *c* 80nT. Although this cannot be interpreted with particular confidence, it is weaker than would be expected for a typical ferrous anomaly, and is perhaps more likely to represent a 'thermoremnant' feature, such as a small kiln or a concentration of ceramic material. Another possible thermoremnant anomaly occurs in Field 1, and there is a cluster of similar, but weaker, anomalies in the centre of Field 7. The interpretation of the latter as thermoremnant is especially tentative, and they may prove instead to relate modern ground disturbance associated with the construction and levelling of the overlying football pitch.

Elsewhere across the site, the data is dominated by parallel linear anomalies, generally trending from north-west to south-east. The spacing and gently curving

courses of these anomalies are highly characteristic of the ridge and furrow earthworks produced by medieval to early post-medieval cultivation. No such anomalies are present in Fields 2 and 7 or the northern part of Field 6, which suggests that these areas were not ploughed as part of the former open field system.

In the northern corner of Field 3 there is an area of magnetic noise, consisting of many small and intermingled dipolar anomalies. This occurs immediately east of the site of New Buildings Farm, and probably represents a spread of modern debris, including brick rubble and ferrous scrap. Unfortunately it was not possible to survey across the site of the farm itself, as this corner of the field was badly overgrown.

Intense dipolar anomalies of undoubtedly ferrous origin occur at various locations within the survey area. The most prominent of these are located within Field 6, and represent, *inter alia*, goal-posts and an electricity cable suspended on poles. Another group of such anomalies, clustered at the southern end of Field 2, could represent the footings of a former structure or else a concentration of ferrous scrap within a backfilled pit or pond. The remaining dipolar anomalies are probably of less significance, just representing small and scattered pieces of debris.

At various points around the perimeter of the site there are large ferrous halos, caused by the magnetic fields of adjacent buildings and fences. These are not of any significance.

6 CONCLUSION

The magnetometer survey has identified one group of archaeological anomalies, lying close to the eastern edge of the survey area at SP 4158 2607. These seem to represent a round-house and a length of ditch of probable Iron Age or Romano-British date. It is possible that this site is more extensive than the survey data suggests, perhaps extending eastwards under the unsurveyed area of hardstanding.

There several other anomalies in the data which could represent small kilns or concentrations of ceramic material but, as none is diagnostic enough to be interpreted with confidence, their archaeological significance remains unclear.

Due to the badly overgrown ground conditions, it was not possible to conduct any survey over the former site of New Buildings Farm. However, the identification of a spread of magnetic noise to the immediate east suggests that ground disturbance associated with the farm may extend beyond the immediate footprint of the buildings.

The remaining parts of the survey data contain little of interest, apart from parallel linear anomalies indicative of medieval or later ridge and furrow cultivation. This suggests that no substantial archaeological remains exist across the majority of the survey area, although it does not entirely preclude the presence of inhumations, post-built structures or other relatively small or ephemeral features.

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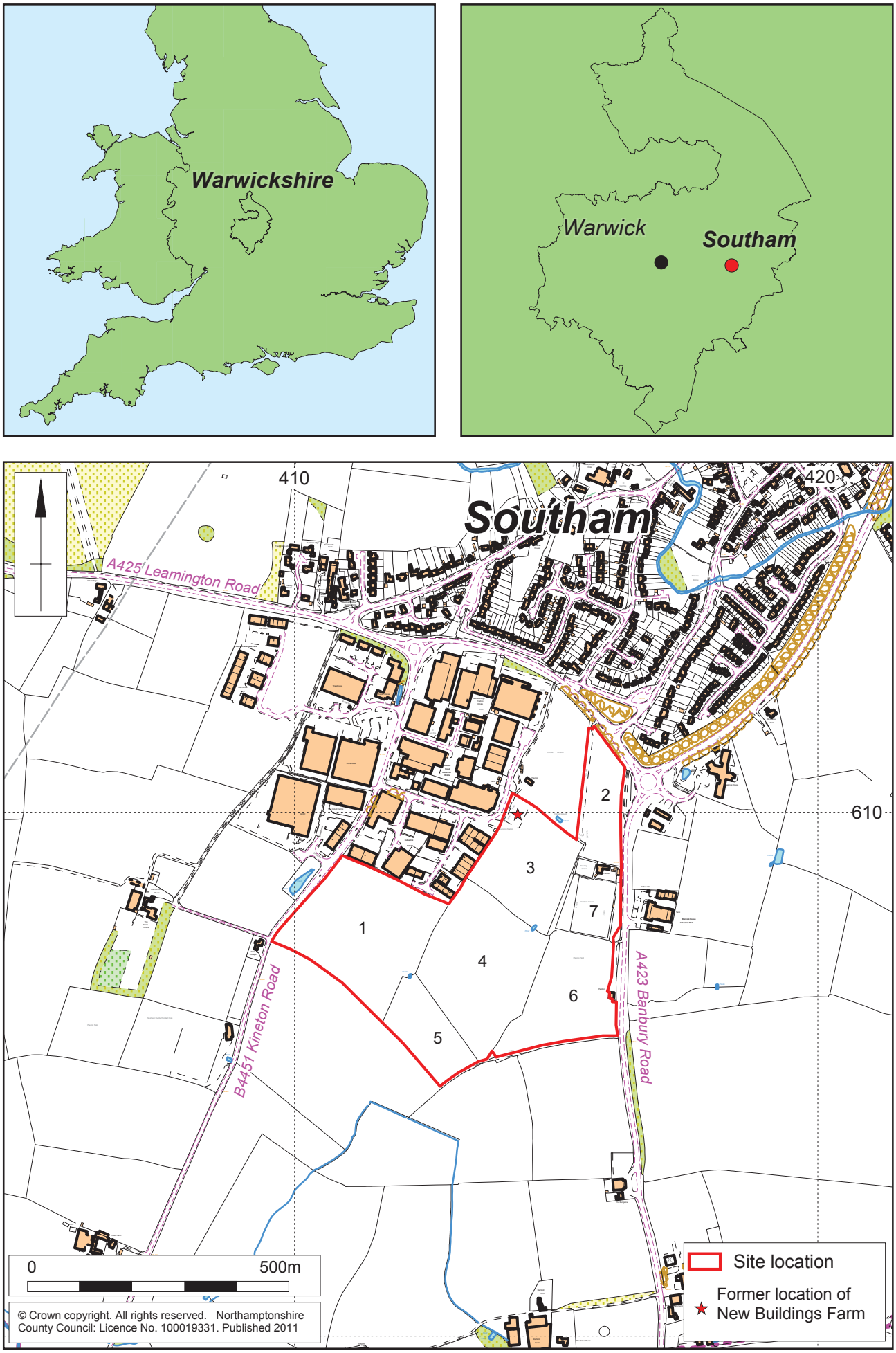
BGS 1984 *Map sheet 184 (Warwick)*, 1:50,000 series, British Geological Survey

EH 2008 *Geophysical Survey in Archaeological Field Evaluation,* English Heritage

IfA forthcoming *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Geophysical Survey,* Institute for Archaeologists Technical Paper

NA 2011 *Archaeological geophysical evaluation; Land at Banbury Road, Southam, Warwickshire; Written Scheme of Investigation,* Northamptonshire Archaeology

SSEW 1983 *Soils of England and Wales, Map sheet 3 (Midland and Western England)*, Soil Survey of England and Wales 1:250,000 series



Scale 1:10,000

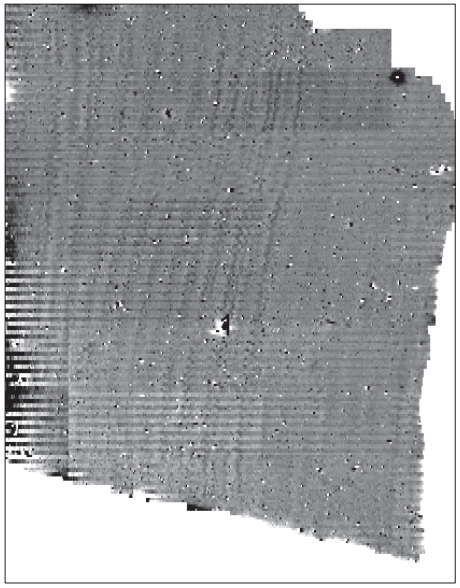
Site location Fig 1

Scale 1:2500

Magnetometer survey results Fig 2

Scale 1:2500

Magnetometer survey interpretation Fig 3



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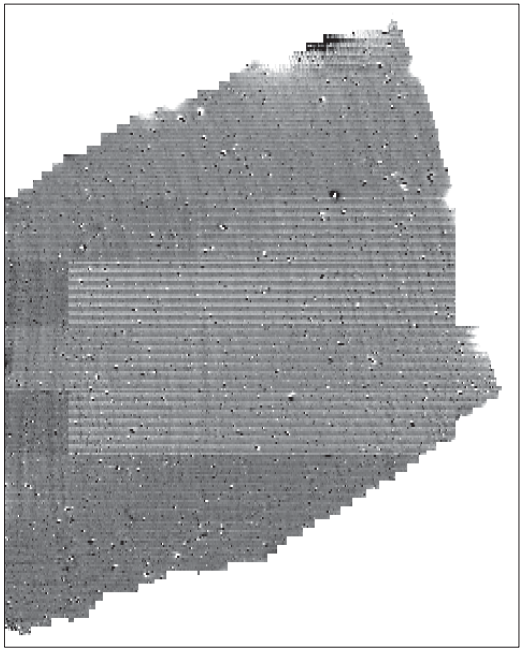

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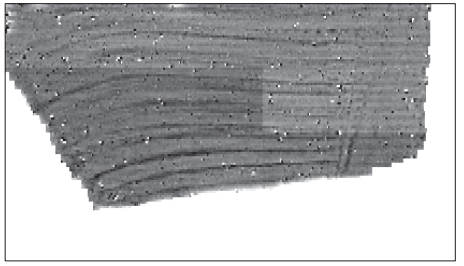

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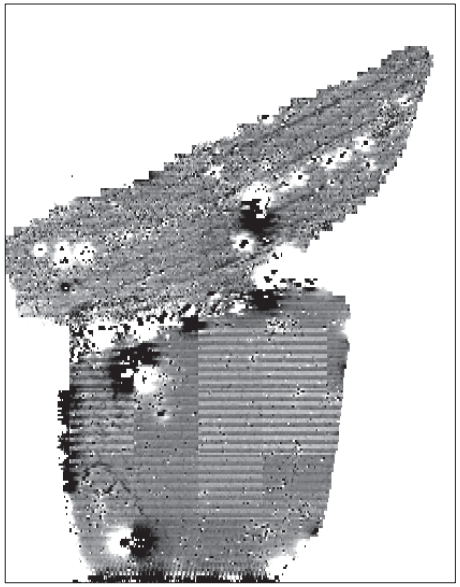

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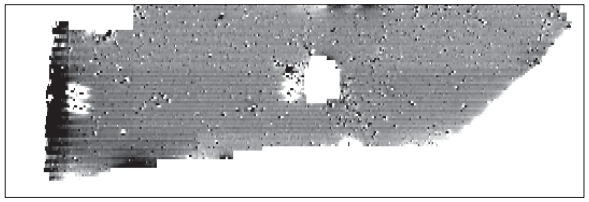

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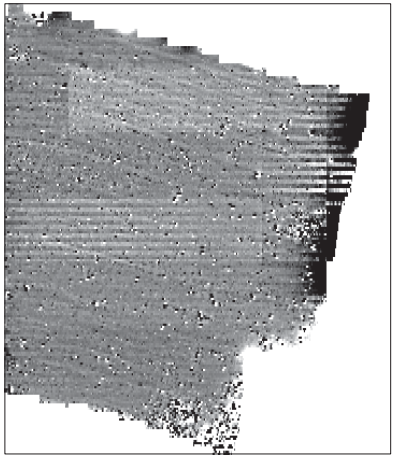

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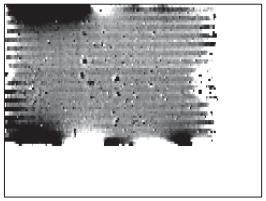

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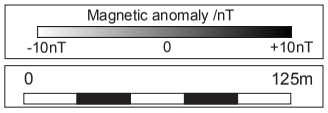

Scale 1:2500

Raw data plots Fig 4

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