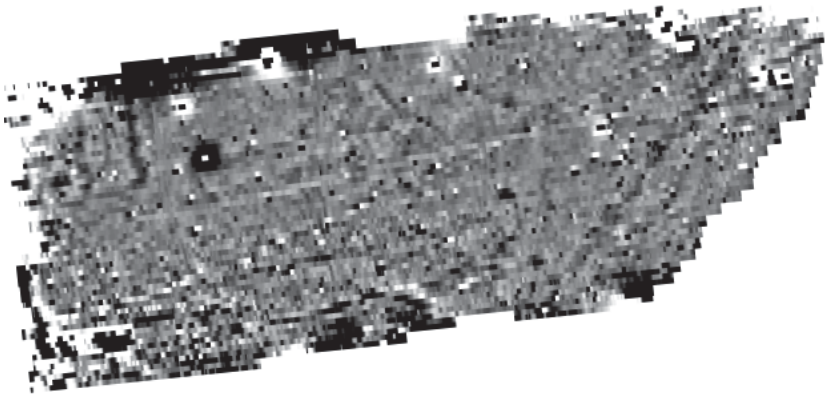
Northamptonshire Archaeology

Archaeological geophysical survey of land at Priory Lane, Marcham, Oxfordshire October 2012



Northamptonshire Archaeology
2 Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton NN4 8BE
t. 01604 700493 f. 01604 702822
e. sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk
w. www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk

Northamptonshire County Council

John Walford and
Charlotte Walker

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STAFF

Project Manager: Charlotte Walker BSc AIfA

Fieldwork: John Walford MSc
Olly Dindol BA

Text and Illustrations: John Walford and Charlotte Walker

QUALITY CONTROL

	Print name	Signed	Date
Checked by	Pat Chapman	*PC*	
Verified by	Mark Holmes	*MH*	
Approved by	Andy Chapman	*AC*	

OASIS REPORT FORM **OASIS No: 136295**

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	Archaeological geophysical survey of land at Priory Lane, Marcham, Oxfordshire	
Short description	Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned to carry out a detailed magnetometer survey of a proposed development site at Priory Lane, Marcham, Oxfordshire. The survey resulted in the detection of features probably associated with post-medieval tenements visible on the 1818 Inclosure Map of the village.	
Project type	Geophysical survey	
Site status	None	
Previous work	None	
Current Land use	Pasture	
Future work	Trial trenching	
Monument type/ period	Post-medieval tenement	
Significant finds		
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Oxfordshire	
Site address	Priory Lane, Marcham, Oxfordshire	
Study area	*c* 0.85ha	
OS grid reference	SU 4563 9655	
Height OD	*c* 57m aOD	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA)	
Project brief originator	Oxfordshire County Council	
Project Design originator	NA	
Director/Supervisor	John Walford	
Project Manager	Charlotte Walker	
Sponsor or funding body	Manor Oak Homes	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	October 2012	
End date	October 2012	
ARCHIVES	Location	Content
Physical	N/A	
Paper	NA	Site survey records
Digital	NA	Geophysical survey & GIS data
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Journal/monograph, published or forthcoming, or unpublished client report	
Title	Archaeological geophysical survey of land at Priory Lane, Marcham, Oxfordshire	
Serial title & volume	Northamptonshire Archaeology Reports 12/174	
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ARCHAEOLOGICAL GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY OF LAND AT PRIORY LANE MARCHAM, OXFORDSHIRE OCTOBER 2012

ABSTRACT

Northamptonshire Archaeology was commissioned to carry out a detailed magnetometer survey of a proposed development site at Priory Lane, Marcham, Oxfordshire. The survey resulted in the detection of features probably associated with post-medieval tenements visible on the 1818 Inclosure Map of the village.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA) was commissioned by Manor Oak Homes to conduct an archaeological geophysical survey in advance of proposed development at Priory Lane, Marcham, Oxfordshire (NGR SU 4563 9655; Fig 1). The purpose of the survey was to provide information on the likely archaeological impact of the development. Its methodology was set out in a written scheme of investigation (NA 2012) and was approved by Oxfordshire County Council's Planning Archaeologist

Fieldwork was undertaken on the 2nd October 2012, and comprised the detailed magnetometer survey of *c* 0.85ha of land. The data from this survey is presented and discussed in this report.

2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The site lies within Marcham, about 4km west of Abingdon, and comprises a single pasture field (Fig 1). It is bounded to the north and west by housing and to the south by The Priory, a late 16th-century building and associated gardens. It is bounded to the east by a track.

The proposed development area is largely flat and stands at a height of about 57m aOD. The geology consists of Coral Rag limestone, overlain by brown rendzina soils (SSEW 1983).

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Although there are no monuments on the Historic Environment Record for the site itself, there is evidence of archaeological activity close by.

A Bronze Age barrow cemetery and Iron Age settlement have been found on playing fields *c* 150m to the north-east (Wessex Archaeology 2012b and c). The activity extended beyond the site boundaries The early/middle Iron Age settlement comprised roundhouses and storage pits with some evidence of structured deposition of artefacts. The settlement may have been occupied through into the late Romano-British period. To the north-east of the village considerable quantities of Iron Age pottery and Romano-British pottery and tiles have been found in conjunction with an area of cropmarks of possible Iron Age date. About 200m to the south of the proposed development site are a series of undated linear cropmarks, which may also indicate extensive ditches and enclosures. The site lies on the edge of the historic core of Marcham, which originated in the Anglo-Saxon period.

On the 1818 Inclosure Map the north-western part of the site was a cottage and garden belonging to Esther Stone (Fig 6). The remainder of the site was a field known as Malthouse Close. By the late 19th century the buildings on Esther Stone's former plot appear to have been replaced by an extension to Malthouse Farm, which mostly lay north of the current site.

A watching brief was carried out on land immediately to the north of the proposed development site during excavation of the footings for a number of houses (Gill 2006), but no archaeological features were observed.

4 METHODOLOGY

The 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).

A system of 30m grids was established. The grids were established with a tape measure and optical square and were tied in to the Ordnance Survey National Grid by measurement to the surrounding field boundaries. 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 guidelines issued by English Heritage and by the Institute for Archaeologists (EH 2008; IfA 2011).

The survey data were processed using Geoplot 3.00v software. Striping, caused by slight mismatches in sensor balance, was removed using the 'Zero Mean Traverse' function and destaggering of the data was performed as necessary.

The processed data is presented in this report in the form of a grey-tone plot, at a scale of +/- 6nT black/white. This has been scaled, rotated and resampled (georectified) for display against the Ordnance Survey base mapping (Fig 2). An interpretation diagramy has been produced and is shown in Figure 3. Plots of the minimally processed survey data are presented in Figure 4 (greyscale) and Figure 5 (X-Y trace).

5 SURVEY RESULTS

The survey has detected a cluster of archaeological anomalies in the north-western corner of the site. These represent two parallel, north-south aligned sections of ditch which abut against another ditch aligned from east to west. A smaller curvilinear feature, perhaps represent a gully, is also present. The location and alignment of these features is comparable, though not identical, to building plots shown on the 1818 Inclosure Map. They may, therefore, indicate settlement remains of post-medieval (or, potentially, medieval) date.

Towards the south-west of the site there is a group of magnetic anomalies which cannot be confidently interpreted. A positive linear anomaly lying alongside the field boundary most probably indicates a ditch (and is shown as such on the interpretation plot), but could alternatively represent a ceramic pipe or a halo from the adjacent fence. The localised magnetic anomalies to its south are not particularly diagnostic, but their notable intensity (*c* 50-100nT) might be consistent with areas of burnt soil, or with pits containing slag, brick rubble, or other magnetic debris.

Four other positive linear anomalies occur in the data. One of these passes through the eastern end of the site, almost parallel with the field boundary, and appears to represent the course of a footpath present on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map. The three other anomalies are likely to represent ditches, but are too short and disjointed to interpret further.

Two very weakly negative linear anomalies run across the site. One follows the line of the modern footpath. Initially thought to just represent the line of the footpath, service information indicates that a gas pipeline is also located along this route. The other is most likely to represent a service trench containing a cable or a non-ferrous pipe.

Various discreet dipolar anomalies occur at random across the site. Most of them will relate to insignificant pieces of ferrous debris, but one, to the south-west of Priory Lodge, was observed to coincide with a manhole cover. Some larger ferrous halos are also present around the margins of the field, reflecting the presence of adjacent fences and buildings.

6 CONCLUSION

The survey has located a number of archaeological features. In the north-western corner of the site a cluster of anomalies probably represent features associated with medieval or post-medieval tenements. Elsewhere, there are various anomalies which seem to represent pits and ditches of unknown date.

The survey results are thought likely to provide a reasonable overview of the main archaeological features within the proposed development area, although it should not be assumed that all significant remains have been detected.

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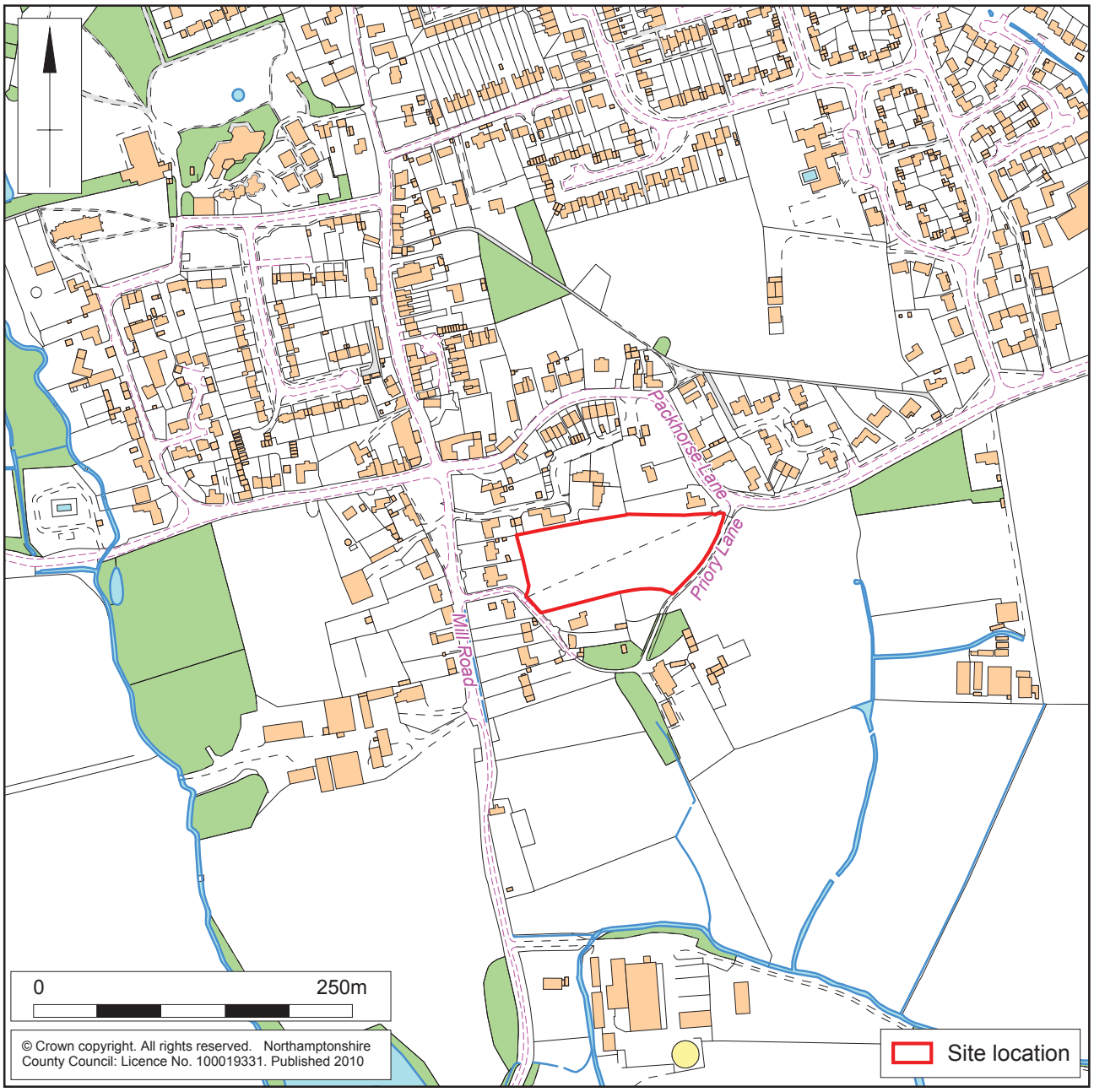
a Service of Northamptonshire County Council 26 October 2012

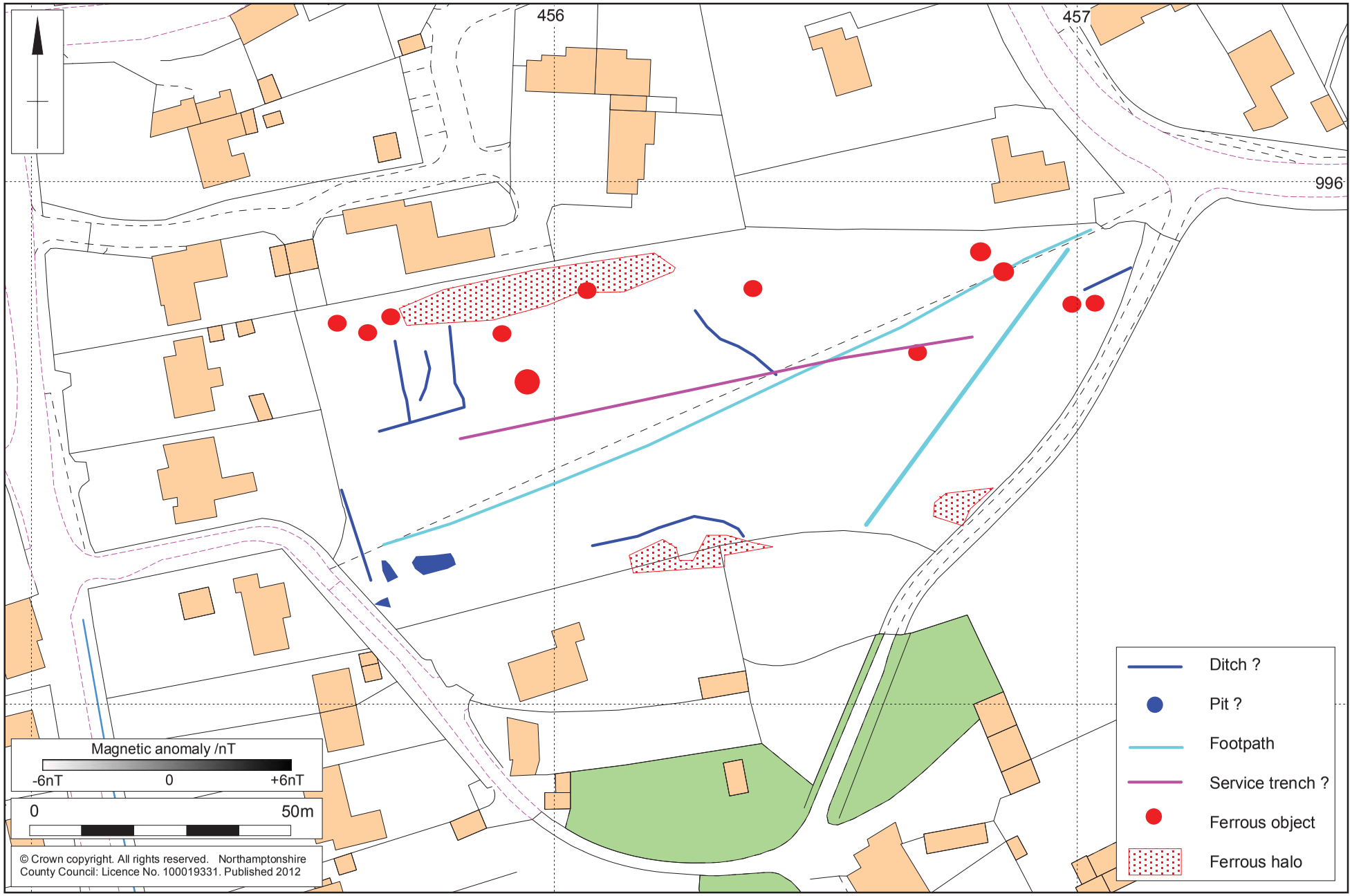


Scale 1:5000

Site Location Fig 1

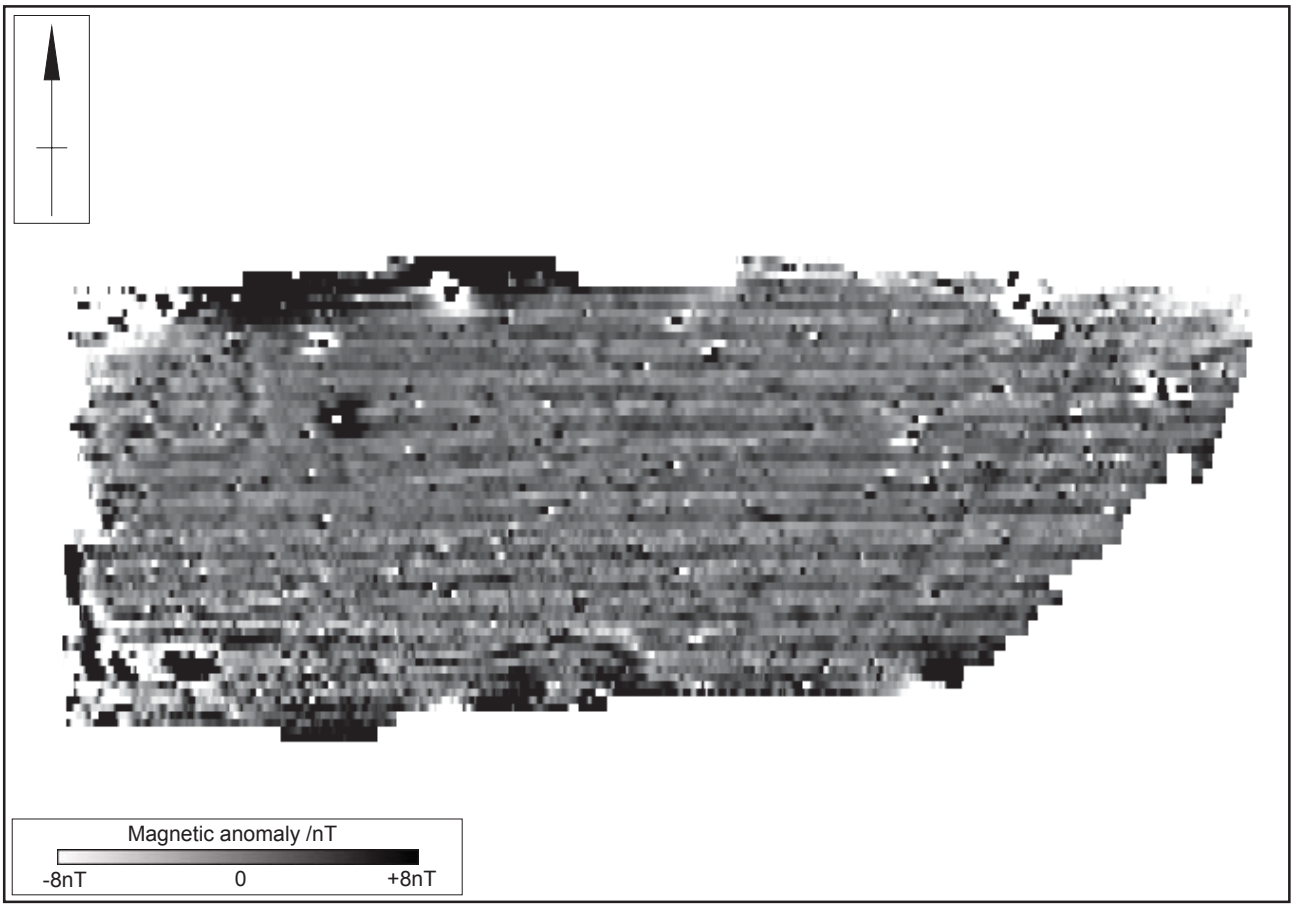
Scale 1:1000

Magnetometer survey results Fig 2

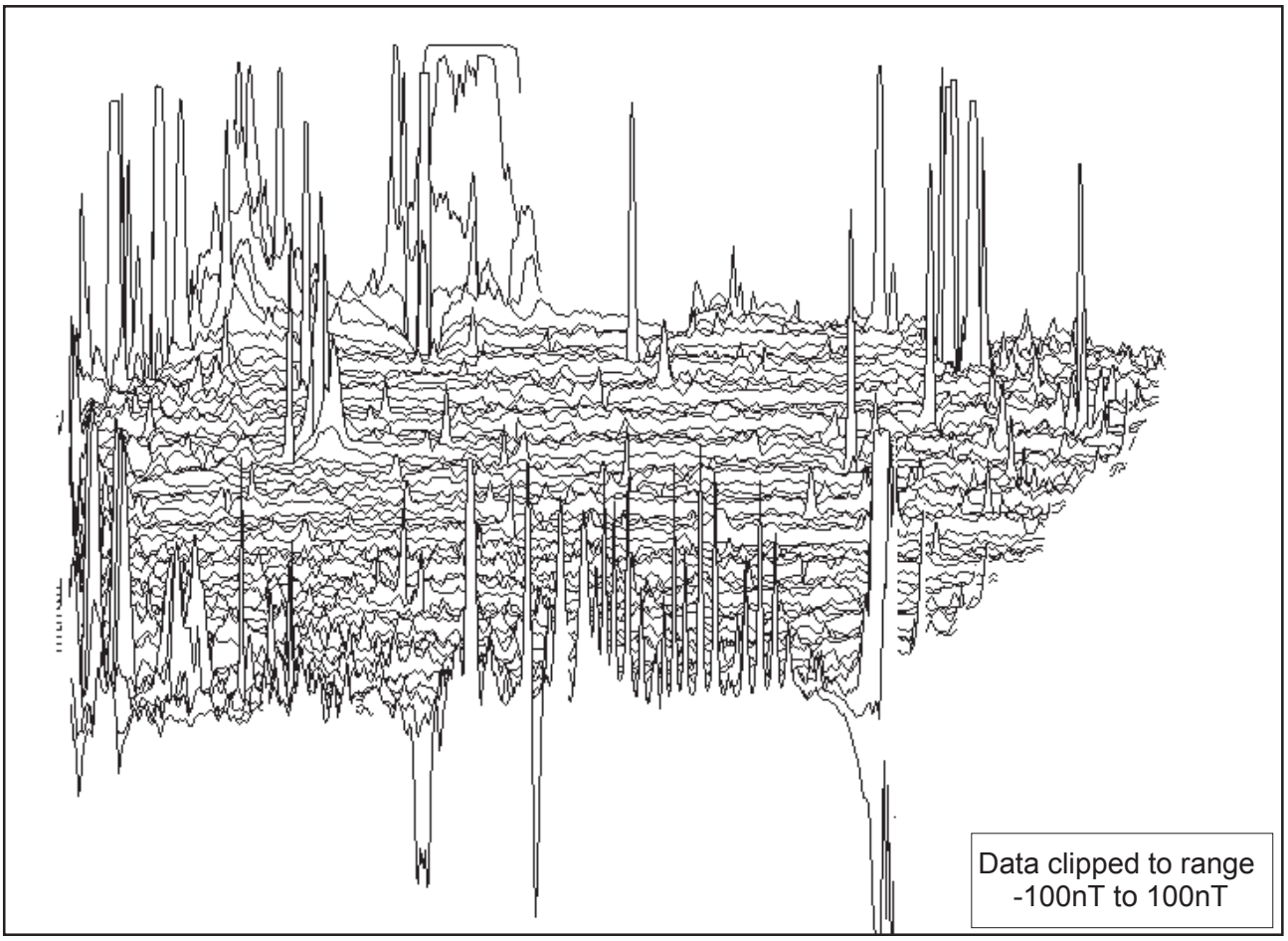


Scale 1:1000

Magnetometer survey interpretation Fig 3



1:1,000 Greyscale plot of raw data Fig 4



1:1,000 (Approximate) X-Y plot of raw data Fig 5

Marcham Inclosure Map, 1818 Fig 6

Northamptonshire County Council

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Northamptonshire Archaeology
2 Bolton House
Wootton Hall Park
Northampton NN4 8BE
t. 01604 700493 f. 01604 702822
e. sparry@northamptonshire.gov.uk
w. www.northantsarchaeology.co.uk