



## SURVEY RESULTS - 97/50

### 1. Survey Areas (Figure 1)

- 1.1 Two detailed survey blocks, Areas 1 and 2, were investigated by resistivity and by limited scanning with a fluxgate gradiometer.
- 1.2 The survey was tied in by RCHME who retained the location information.

### 2. Display

- 2.1 Figures 2 and 3: Grey-scale images of the data from Areas 1 and 2 at a scale of 1:500.

### 3. Results

*Letters in parentheses refer to anomalies highlighted on the grey-scales (Figures 2 and 3)*

#### 3.1 Area 1

- 3.1.1 The primary aim of the survey in this area was to see if there was any geophysical evidence for a putative moat that is thought to have surrounded the medieval site. A secondary aim was to try to locate any buildings in the farmyard that were possibly associated with the manor house.
- 3.1.2 There were two main complications for the geophysical work. First, the small areas available for survey, and second, the fact that over the years numerous farm buildings are recorded as having been erected in the farmyard. Both these factors made interpretation of the results difficult as it was hard to assess the background (geological) levels. Two additional probe separations were, therefore, employed in an attempt to penetrate to greater depths than is normally possible with the conventional 0.5m spacing.
- 3.1.3 A band of low readings (A) was recorded to the south of the track (Figure 2), though its interpretation was uncertain. The results could have indicated the waterlogged fill of a moat ditch or an area of increased runoff adjacent to the track and an earthen bank. A trial excavation revealed thick clay deposits which were not evident in the trench to the north of the track, however, there were no suggestions of a ditch feature. The extent of waterlogged clay accounted for the observed readings.
- 3.1.4 At the south east corner of the barn there was an area of high readings (B) most clearly visible in the 0.5m and 1.0m probe configurations. The results suggest a concentration of building rubble, or similar, perhaps associated with a collapsed building, but not having any substantial foundations. The high readings have all but disappeared in the 1.5m survey.
- 3.1.5 As a contrast to the above, high readings at (C) and (D) become more prominent in the deeper probe settings. In the case of (C) the results could be associated with a dipping brick surface that was excavated in a trench dug between the survey grid edge and the barn. It is not known why there should be high readings at (D) though given the apparent lack of shape or form to the anomaly a geological explanation would seem likely.

## 3.2 Area 2

- 3.2.1 The main farmhouse incorporates elements of a building interpreted as being a gatehouse to the medieval manor. However, there is no evidence for a road leading to the site; it was hoped that a resistance survey would identify such a feature.
- 3.2.2 Once again the small area available for survey has hindered the survey, but some positive results were obtained.
- 3.2.3 The clearest anomaly is a high resistance linear (E) which runs directly to the front door of the farmhouse. However, scanning with a gradiometer indicated that the line coincided with a service main leading to the building and this fact was confirmed by the owners of the property who identified it as an electricity cable. The relatively shallow nature of the feature is confirmed by the absence of any anomalies in the wider probe configurations.
- 3.2.4 To the south of this anomaly is a peculiar curving band of high resistance readings (F) that appears road-like in the shallow setting but more geological in the deeper probe configuration. It is possible that the results could indicate a road surface sitting on a geological ridge but clearly such an interpretation is tentative. Unfortunately the results were not tested by excavation.

## 4. Conclusions

- 4.1 Unfortunately the nature of the ground conditions at Aston Eyre resulted in the geophysics contributing little to the archaeological interpretation of the medieval complex. The survey failed to find any clear evidence for a moat ditch. However, it was decided during the course of the *Time Team* investigations that the site probably never had a moat. Similarly, although the geophysical evidence for a road leading to the gatehouse was only tentative, the results were never seriously tested.
- 4.2 Despite the archaeological limitations, the general results are interesting in that they have identified a few anomalies that are only visible in the data sets from different probe separations. Some of the features are clearly near surface, like the presumed building rubble and the electricity cable, while others are relatively deep such as the dipping brick surface. The work demonstrates the benefits of taking multiple readings from small survey areas where there is a potential complex of buried features.

### **Project Assistants**

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