

SURVEY RESULTS**2003 / 47 Great Easton, Leicestershire****1. Survey Area**

- 1.1 Three areas were surveyed at Great Easton. The largest area (1) was in a field in the central part of the village and to the south of High Street. The two smaller surveys lie to the north of High Street, one in a field adjacent to Rectory Farm (Area 2) and the other in the grounds of Manor Farm House (Area 3).
- 1.2 The survey grid was set out by **GSB Prospection** and tied in by Dr Henry Chapman using a Trimble GPS instrument.

2. Display

- 2.1 The results are displayed as grey scale images and XY traces. These display formats and the interpretation categories used are discussed in the *Technical Information* section at the end of the text.
- 2.2 Figures 2 and 3 show summary greyscale images and interpretations of the resistance data superimposed on the OS map at a scale of 1:1000. Figure 4 shows a summary greyscale image and interpretation of the gradiometer data at 1:1000.
- 2.3 Figures 5, 6, 7 and 8 display the results of survey in each of the individual areas. Gradiometer and resistance survey results in Area 1 are produced at scale of 1:500 in Figures 5 and 6. Figures 6 and 7 show the results of resistance survey alone in Areas 2 and 3 at scales of 1:625 and 1:500 respectively. Figure 8 displays the resistance survey results from Area 3 at 1:500.
- 2.4 Letters in parentheses in the text refer to specific anomalies of interest noted on the relevant interpretation diagram.

3. General Considerations - Complicating factors

- 3.1 Conditions for survey were good as few obstacles lie within each survey area. However, most of the survey areas were small and the confidence in the interpretation is reduced as a result.

4. Results of Detailed Survey**Area 1 – Village Field**

- 4.1 This small survey is part of a field in the centre of the village. Low earthworks are present that suggest that both property divisions stretching back from High Street as well as evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation are present. Both magnetic and resistance survey were undertaken in this field.

Magnetic Survey

- 4.2 The magnetic data are dominated by strong responses from a buried ferrous pipe as well as other elements of modern activity. The western part of the data set in particular is full of noise from the pipe and other debris; it is likely that anomalies of archaeological interest, if present, would be dwarfed by the response from the pipe and therefore would not be identified.
- 4.3 In the central part of the survey the background magnetic noise is considerably reduced and there are a number of anomalies of archaeological interest. The most prominent response is the narrow linear that is approximately at a right angle to High Street. This anomaly (A) is interpreted as a ditch and there are several pit type responses near to it. In particular there is a cluster of possible pits (B) to the west of (A).
- 4.4 There is a curious series of anomalies (C) that approximately parallel (A) and is situated about 20m to the east of it. The anomalies are unusual in that they change character along the length of the 'linear'. During the survey it was noted that a narrow parchmark could be seen at (C) and its northern extremity was at the end of a modern brick wall. Although the parchmark suggested that the wall, or at least the footings, were in situ the magnetic evidence suggests a difference in the material along its length; this variation is supported by resistance survey, paragraph 4.7.
- 4.5 A few pit type anomalies were noted to the east of (C), however the proximity of the modern fenceline and the adjacent properties suggested that many of these anomalies may have a recent origin.

Resistance Survey

- 4.6 The main high resistance anomaly (D) correlates with a pronounced earthwork platform. Although analysis suggests that walls maybe present, it is likely that the linear anomalies in Figure 6 are a product of the filter used. Although (D) appears to be of some archaeological significance the magnetic anomaly (A), which is a metal pipe, cuts through it.
- 4.7 Of the remaining resistance anomalies they are nearly all oriented at a right angle to High Street; mostly they are broad and reflect the ridge and furrow that is present. One anomaly of note is the c. 12m long, high resistance linear (E) that covers part of the magnetic anomaly (C). This variation in response suggests a change in the composition of the wall along its length.

Area 2 – Manor Farm House

- 4.8 This resistance survey was undertaken in the grounds of a large modern house known as Manor Farm House. Based on the name of the building it was thought that an earlier manorial building might lie within the boundary of the property.
- 4.9 Two small areas of garden were surveyed using the Twin-probe resistance technique. Neither area has produced any significant anomalies.
- 4.10 The variation in resistance in the larger of the two areas can be interpreted as the result of gardening and landscaping. While there are a few linear, low resistance anomalies they probably result from drainage or former garden divisions. The sporadic high resistance 'blobs' are likely to reflect landscaping activity.

- 4.11 The results from the smaller garden are very difficult to interpret, as the area involved is very small. While the anomalies with the highest resistance values can be seen at the southeastern end of the garden, it is likely that they are relatively recent in origin. Perhaps the most interesting responses are in the region next to the house. The shape of these mid range responses has not been delimited due to the small survey size. However, it is possible that they may relate to a former structure, although the fact that they are on the same orientation may mean that they relate to former garden features.

Area 3 - Rectory Farm

- 4.12 A small area was available in a paddock leading to Rectory Farm. The land is of high archaeological potential due to archaeological finds to the north and east.
- 4.13 Preliminary survey with a gradiometer revealed that the area had a significant magnetic background that is the result of a buried pipe, metal fencing and general modern debris. As a result the area was only completely surveyed using the resistance technique. The latter revealed a broad trend along the length of the survey that probably reflects variation in the depth of the topsoil or a change in the subsoil. Apart from the broad variation there are only a few other minor trends in the data and these may be a result of ploughing or other agricultural practice. The majority of the small high resistance zones that can be seen in the northern part of the area are likely to be modern. Six anomalous areas have been highlighted, but it is difficult to suggest an archaeological interpretation for them - the origin of these responses could be natural and the fact that they group around a present day trackway through the paddock may indicate that they relate to land improvement.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 Of the three surveys covered in this report only the village field can be said to have located anomalies of archaeological interest with any certainty. In that case, on excavation, the archaeology was found to include a ditch, a cobbled surface, ridge and furrow and a recent field wall.
- 5.2 The resistance survey around the Manor House Farm revealed very few anomalies of archaeological interest and none that indicate the remains of a former building is present. However, while evidence for a building has not been found, it is not possible to conclusively state there is no manor house within the boundary of the property; it is possible that an earlier building exists beneath the present house.
- 5.3 The final survey area revealed little of interest apart from a few high resistance anomalies of unknown origin.

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References:

- SSEW 1983. *Soils of England and Wales. Sheet4, Eastern England.* Soil Survey of England and Wales.

SITE SUMMARY SHEET

2003 / 47 Great Easton, Leicestershire

NGR: SP 849928

Location, topography and geology

Great Easton is a village near Harborough in southeast Leicestershire. It lies within the Welland valley. Three areas were surveyed as part of this work and they were all reasonably level land covered by short grass. The soils at the site are probably of the Wickham 2 (711f) soil association, which are clayey soils over drift and clay/mudstone (SSEW 1983).

Archaeology

The village has produced a plethora of finds from many periods, stretching from a polished Neolithic axe through to the present day. It is mentioned in the Domesday survey and many buildings of historical and architectural interest still survive.

Aims of Survey

The surveys reported here are part of a larger investigation into the village of Great Easton. This project was undertaken on behalf of Channel Four's 'Time Team Big Dig'. In the main survey area the aim of the work was to direct the location of 1m test pits, while the other two surveys were undertaken to establish the presence or otherwise of detectable archaeology.

Summary of Results *

The largest survey area, which was within a grass field in the centre Great Easton, produced the most informative data set collected during this project. Both magnetic and resistance measurements were made and the interpretation of the results suggested that a low concentration of potential archaeological anomalies were present. On excavation the anomalies were found to relate to a ditch, a cobbled surface and a recent wall. There was also evidence for the possible presence of pits and ridge and furrow.

The resistance survey in the gardens of Manor Farm House was undertaken to establish the presence, or otherwise, of an earlier building. However, the survey revealed few anomalies of archaeological interest. The majority of these have been attributed to landscaping or agricultural / gardening activities. While there is no evidence for any buried structures within the data, it is not possible to rule out an earlier building beneath the present house.

The final survey area, near to Rectory Farm, revealed a group of high resistance anomalies of unknown origin.

*** It is essential that this summary is read in conjunction with the detailed results of the survey.**

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