

**LAND AT STRAITGATE FARM**

**EXETER ROAD**

**OTTERY ST MARY**

**DEVON**

Results of a Geophysical Survey



South West Archaeology Ltd. report no. 190424



[www.swarch.net](http://www.swarch.net)

Tel. 01769 573555

Tel. 01872 223164

## LAND AT STRAITGATE FARM, EXETER ROAD, OTTERY ST MARY, DEVON Results of a Geophysical Survey

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By J. Bampton  
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Work undertaken by SWARCH for a Private Client

### SUMMARY

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*This report presents the results of a geophysical survey and archaeological assessment carried out by South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) on land at Straitgate Farm, Exeter Road, Ottery St Mary, Devon. The site is located across a rectangular field c.3km west of Ottery St Mary, to the South of Straitgate Farm and Exeter Road (B3174).*

*Historic mapping shows the site as at the edge of open moorland in 1801 and divided into three fields with a structure in its north-west corner by 1842. By 1888 the site is depicted as a single field with no structure in its north-west corner. The Devon HER lists flint findspots and modern activity in the surrounding area as well as the presence of a Roman Road to the north of the site. Previous geophysical survey and excavation to the north and north-west of Straitgate Farm has revealed historic and undated boundaries as well as Neolithic to Romano-British settlement activity. No standing archaeological features were identified on site during a site inspection on the day of the survey.*

*The geophysical survey identified seven anomaly groups, totalling 13 anomalies: a historic boundary; a possible enclosure in the north-west corner of the site; a possible undated field system or drainage ditches at the south end of the site; a possible drain or ditch; a possible pit or treethrow; sinuous/amorphous anomalies possibly associated with an enclosure and possible historic structure in the north-west corner of the site; and probable geological anomalies. Ploughing across the site was clearly evident in the survey data and may have truncated any buried archaeological resource.*

*The buried archaeological potential for the site is ostensibly low to moderate; with the remnants of possible historic/19<sup>th</sup> century features present on the site and potentially little else across most of the site; although the potential presence of small discrete anomalies can not be discounted.*

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April 2019

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### THE CLIENT

THE STAFF OF THE DEVON COUNTY HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT TEAM (DCHET)

THE STAFF OF THE DEVON HERITAGE CENTRE (DHC)

## PROJECT CREDITS

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DIRECTOR: DR. SAMUEL WALLS

DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT: JOE BAMPTON

FIELDWORK: JOE BAMPTON

REPORT: JOE BAMPTON

EDITING: NATALIE BOYD

GRAPHICS: JOE BAMPTON

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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<b>LOCATION:</b>	LAND AT STRAITGATE FARM, OFF EXETER ROAD (B3174)
<b>PARISH:</b>	OTTERY ST MARY
<b>DISTRICT:</b>	EAST DEVON
<b>COUNTY:</b>	DEVON
<b>NGR:</b>	SY 06890 95282
<b>PLANNING NO.</b>	16/1190/FUL
<b>OASIS NO.</b>	SOUTHWES1-349151
<b>SWARCH REF.</b>	OSG19

### 1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) was commissioned by Stags (the Agent) on behalf of the Client to undertake a geophysical survey off Exeter Road Road, Straitgate Farm, Ottery St Mary, Devon, as part of the planning conditions for the construction of a proposed agricultural outbuilding. This work was undertaken in accordance with best practise and to inform a WSI (Boyd 2019) that sets out the further mitigation required to discharge the planning condition.

### 1.2 TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The site is a rectangular field located on the south side of Exeter Road (B3174), c.250m south of Straitgait Farm and c.3km west of the heart of Ottery St Mary. The site is on a gentle south-south-east facing slope with a small tributary to the River Otter to its south. The site was at a height of c.129m AOD at its north end (Figure 1).

The soils on the site are the well-drained reddish coarse and fine loamy soils over gravel of the Newnham Association (SSEW 1983), which overlie the sandstone of the Helsby Sandstone Formation (BGS 2019).

### 1.3 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Ottery St Mary is a town, with a designated Conservation Area about its core, and parish in the hundred of Ottery St Mary and deanery of Aylesbeare (Lysons 1822), c.15.5km east of Exeter and c.7.5km south-west of Honiton. Ottery was a large Domesday Manor (*Otrei*) of 101 households (Morris 1992); although the nearest Domesday manor to the site was Strete Raleigh to the west, which had 11 households and was held by Aelmer before the conquest and by Turstin from Ralph of Pomeroy in 1086 (Morris 1992). The manor of Ottery St Mary was given to the Church of Sainte-Marie in Rouen in the 11<sup>th</sup> century from whom it was obtained by the diocese of Exeter in 1334 (Lysons 1822). Ottery St Mary was granted a market in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and various fairs (Lysons 1822). The name of Ottery St Mary is derived from a saints name and the name of the river running through the settlement; *Otery Santé Marie* in 1242 meaning 'St Mary's Ottery/River Otter estate' (Watts 2004). Lysons (1822) asserts that the parish had an established serges (fabric) and extant spinning wool industry. The town was occupied during the civil war through 1645; first by Royalist forces and then Parliamentarian, under Sir Thomas Fairfax (Lysons 1822). The name of Straitgate Farm may refer to a gap in a ridge cut by the Roman road to the north of the site (MDV17099).

Historic mapping shows the site as at the edge of open moorland in 1801 on the Surveyor's Draft Map for the Ottery St Mary area. The 1842 tithe map and apportionment depicts the site as across three fields (plots 3043, 3044 and 3067) with two structures in the north-west corner of

the site. These portions were part of the *Thorn Mow Tithing* and belonged to Sir John Kennaway, Baronet and were occupied by an Abraham Ackland. These plots and those in the surrounding landscape had prosaic names; plots 3043 and 3044 as *House and Home Close* and *Garden*, with 3067 as *field* under arable cultivation. By the time of the Ordnance Survey(OS) 1<sup>st</sup> edition map, published 1889 the site was shown much as it is today; a single large rectangular field with no structures depicted on the site and the southern boundary having been ostensibly rectified/straightened.

The Devon Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) categorises the site as within a landscape of *post-medieval enclosure*, laid out in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century alongside occasional modern enclosures and later medieval and post-medieval *barton fields*.

The Devon Historic Environment Record (HER) lists the route of the Roman Road to Exeter to the north of the site (MDV118710); the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Belbury Castle, a prehistoric hillfort to the south-south-east of the site (MDV10433). Within 1km of the site the HER includes two Grade II Listed buildings; the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century Straitgate Farm to the north (MDV86866, MDV17099 and MDV24080), and the 19<sup>th</sup> century Church of St Michael at West Hill to the south (MDV106943). To the south-east it lists assets relating to modern gravel pits, quarries and mill activity. The HER also lists an undated earthwork, enclosed field system and a 19<sup>th</sup> century telegraph station (MDV108226, MDV122144, MDV48024, MDV18745) to the south-west; a flint scatter, ROC observation post, part of the Whimple-Ottery boundary, modern field system, medieval road and historic track (MDV63441, MDV72249, MDV17205, MDV55752, MDV44030, MDV48030) to the west; flint scappers and scatters (MDV55756, MDV55755, MDV61005, MDV61006) and more parts of the Saxon era parish/manor boundary (MDV44028, MDV53326) to the north-west and north

Geophysical survey and archaeological excavation between 2014 and 2016 by Substrata, Wessex Archaeology and AC Archaeology (MDV109745, MDV118607, MDV118630, MDV118626, EDV6105, EDV6560, EDV6689) and earlier excavations by Exeter Archaeology (MDV66739, MDV62740) identified historic boundaries and undated linear and curvilinear anomalies and possible pits as well as Neolithic to Romano-British settlement activity. This included pottery, flint tools and features at Straitgate Farm to the north and north-west of the site, near to the A30.

#### 1.4 METHODOLOGY

This work was undertaken in accordance with best practice and CIfA guidance. Any desk-based assessment aspect of this report follows the guidance as outlined in: *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment* (CIfA 2014a) and *Understanding Place: historic area assessments in a planning and development context* (English Heritage 2012). The geophysical (gradiometer) survey follows the general guidance as outlined in: *Geophysical Survey in Archaeological Field Evaluation* (English Heritage 2008) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Geophysical Survey* (CIfA 2014b).

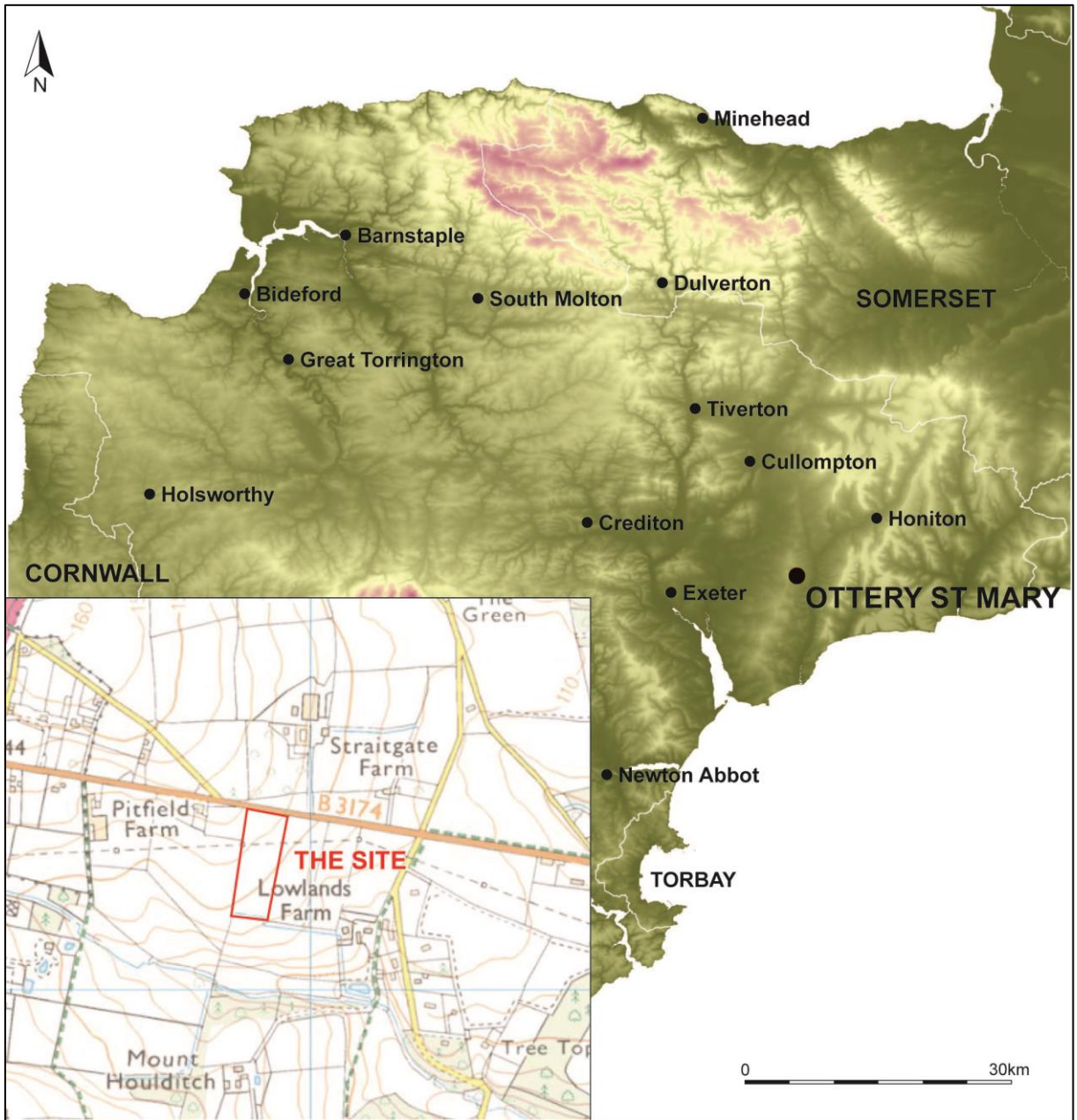


FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION (THE SITE IS INDICATED).



## 2.0 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY AND WALKOVER SURVEY

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### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

An area of c.1.7ha was the subject of a magnetometry (gradiometer) survey. The purpose of this geophysical survey was to identify and record magnetic anomalies within the proposed site. While identified anomalies may relate to archaeological deposits and structures the dimensions of recorded anomalies may not correspond directly with any associated features. The following discussion attempts to clarify and characterise the identified anomalies. The survey was undertaken on the 21<sup>st</sup> of March 2019 by J. Bampton; the survey data was processed by J. Bampton.

### 2.2 SITE INSPECTION

The site was located across a large rectangular field, under pasture (sheep), with short grass. The field sloped down gently from the north-north-west to the south-south-east. The north, east and west boundaries were lined with stone-lined earth banks and hedges with occasional oak trees along these lines. There were access points into the site from the north-east corner, the middle of the north boundary (although overgrown), the middle of the western boundary by a pylon, the south end of the western boundary and the south end of the eastern boundary. In the western boundary there appeared to be a blocked entrance or disturbed part of the boundary that included animal troughs. The southern boundary was defined by a water course/drain and an earth and hedge bank with occasional oak trees, it had been eroded in places and some brick and concrete was noted along its western end. All of the boundaries were lined with barbed wire fencing. A relatively frequent amount of rounded stone (medium pebbles) was noted within the topsoil, particularly at the northern end of the site, near to its northern corners. Supporting photographs can be seen in Appendix 3.



FIGURE 2: SITE SHOT FROM THE NORTH-EAST CORNER OF THE SITE; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-EAST (NO SCALE).



## 2.3 METHODOLOGY

The gradiometer survey follows the general guidance as outlined in: *Geophysical Survey in Archaeological Field Evaluation* (English Heritage 2008) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Geophysical Survey* (ClfA 2014b).

The survey was carried out using a twin-sensor fluxgate gradiometer (Bartington Grad601). These machines are sensitive to depths of up to 1.50m. The survey parameters were: sample intervals of 0.25m, traverse intervals of 1m, a zigzag traverse pattern, traverse orientation was circumstantial, grid squares of 30x30m. The gradiometer was adjusted ('zeroed') every 0.5-1ha. The survey grid was tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid. The data was downloaded onto *Grad601 Version 3.16* and processed using *TerraSurveyor Version 3.0.25.0*. The primary data plots and analytical tools used in this analysis were *Shade* and *Metadata*. The details of the data processing are as follows:

Processes: Clip +/- 3SD; DeStripe all traverses, median; DeStagger all traverses out- and inbound by -3 intervals.

Details: 1.658ha surveyed; Max. 97.58nT, Min. -100.89nT; Standard Deviation 2.96nT, mean 0.12nT, median 0.00nT.

## 2.4 RESULTS

Table 1 with the accompanying Figures 3 and 4 show the analyses and interpretation of the geophysical survey data. Additional graphic images of the survey data and numbered grid locations can be found in Appendix 1.

TABLE 1: INTERPRETATION OF GRADIOMETER SURVEY DATA.

Anomaly Group	Class and Certainty	Form	Archaeological Characterisation	Comments
1	Weak-moderate positive and negative, probable	Linear	Historic Boundary	Indicative of a boundary defined by a bank and flanked by ditches on either side. Aligned approximately east-west. This boundary is represented on mapping from 1842, but not 1801 or 1888. Responses of +3nT to +12nT and c.-5nT.
2	Weak-moderate positive, probable	Linear	Ditch	Indicative of an in-filled cut feature such as a ditch. Aligned parallel and perpendicular to the site boundary. Possibly associated with a structure or enclosure to a structure depicted on mapping from 1842, but not 1801 or 1888. Responses of between +3nT and +8nT.
3	Weak positive and negative, possible	Sinuuous /Ovoid	Disturbed ground	Indicative of discrete in-filled cut feature such as a drain and a possible dump of stone or bank material, possibly within a pit. It is in the location of a possible structure depicted on 19 <sup>th</sup> century mapping. Responses of <+/-4nT.
4	Weak positive, probable	Linear	Ditch	Indicative of an in-filled cut feature such as a ditch. Aligned west-north-west by east-south-east and north-north-east by south-south-west. Possibly associated with drainage or an earlier, undated, field system with a possible entrance between the two limbs of this anomaly group. Responses of <+3nT.
5	Moderate-strong positive, possible	Ovoid	Pit or Treethrow	Indicative of an in-filled cut discrete feature such as a pit or treethrow. Response of c.+22nT.
6	Very weak positive, possible	Amorphous /Sinuous	Geological	Diffuse amorphous/curvi-linear sinuous responses indicative of geological variation. Within the response range of natural background variation. Possibly representative of alluvial or colluvial spreads or paleochannels. Response of between <+2nT.
7	Weak positive, possible	Linear	Drain	Intermittent response indicative of an in-filled cut feature such as a ditch or drain. Weak response and intermittent nature possibly indicative of poor survival. Response of <+3nT.

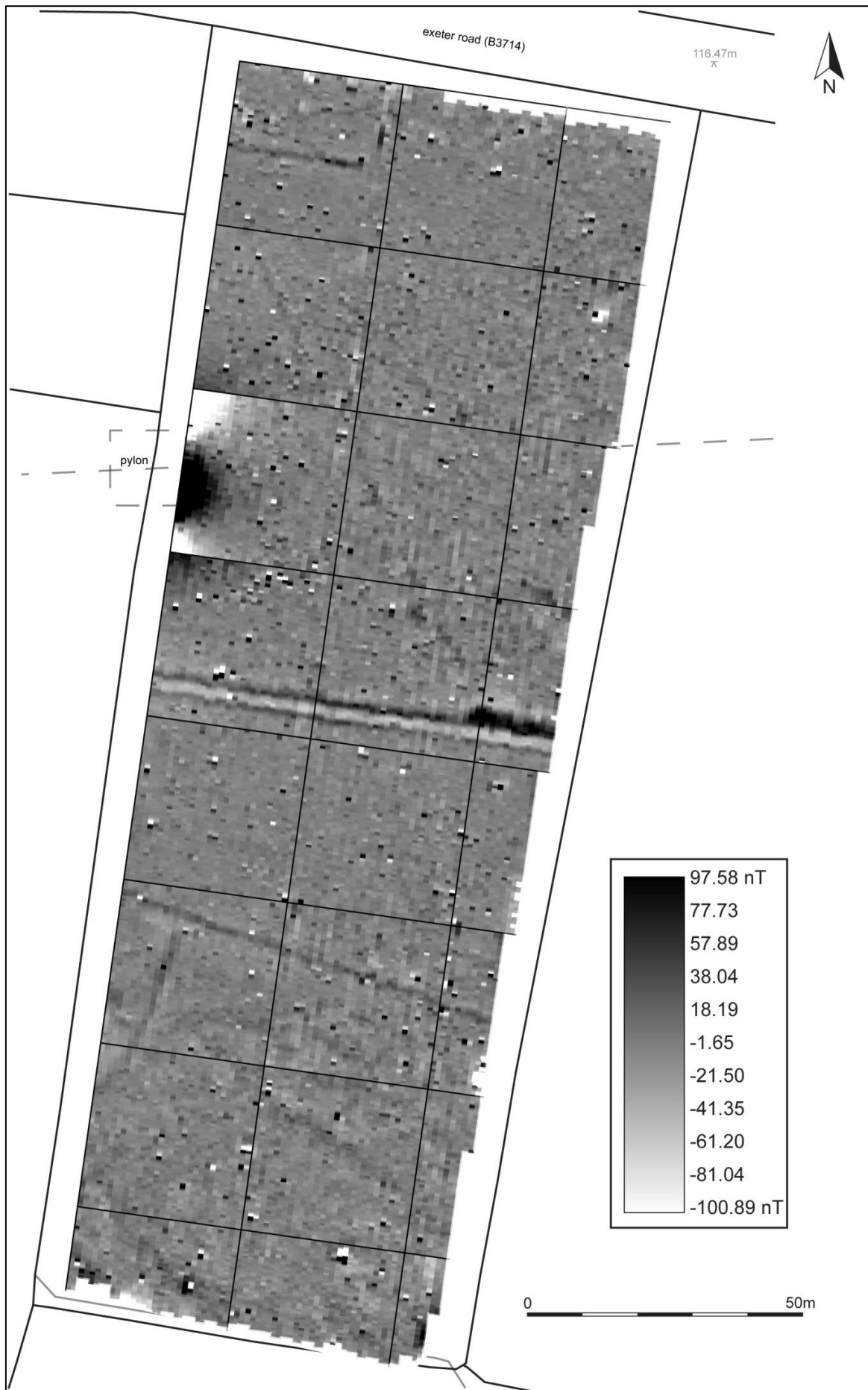


FIGURE 3: SHADE PLOT OF GRADIOMETER SURVEY DATA; MINIMAL PROCESSING.

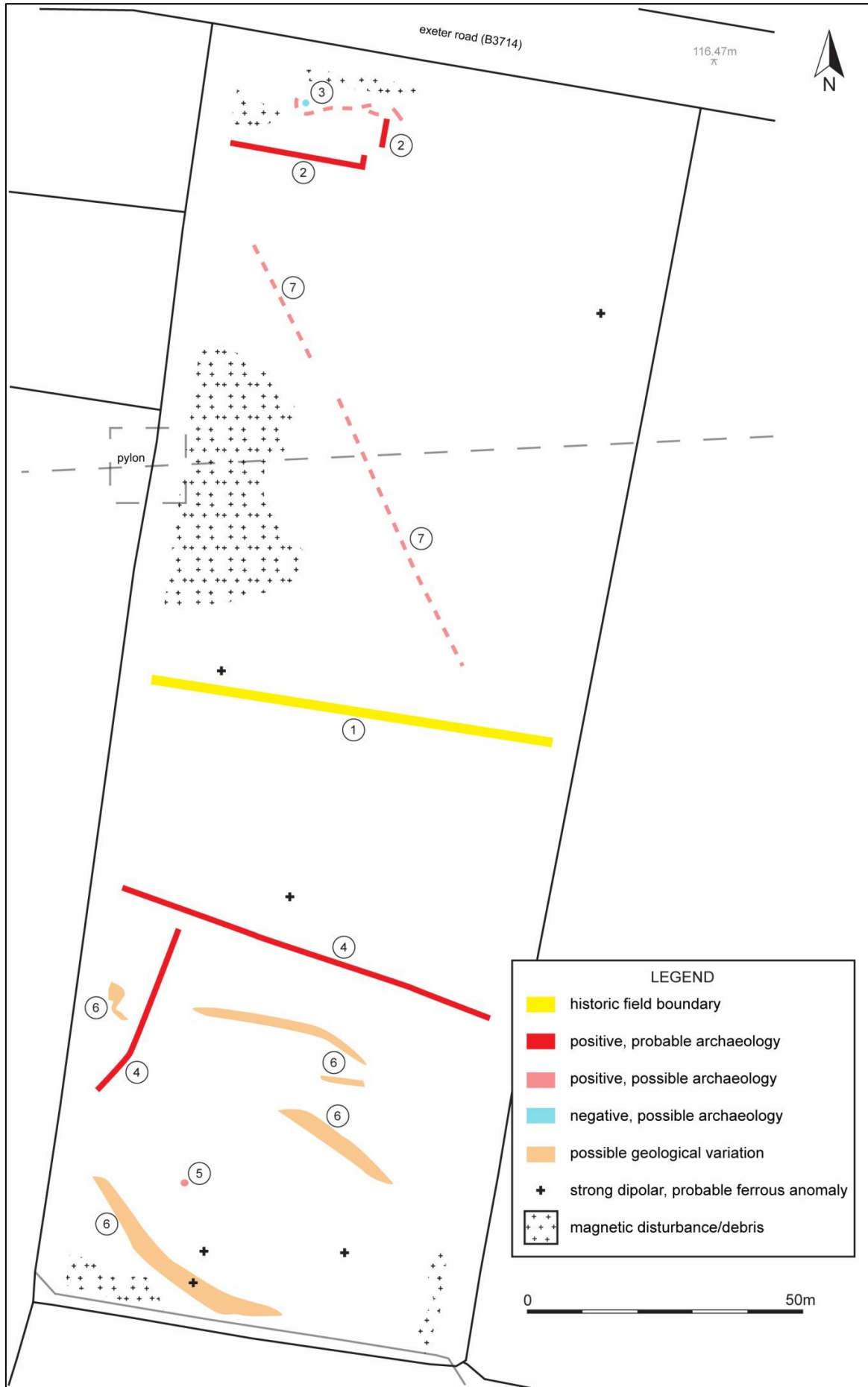


FIGURE 4: INTERPRETATION OF GRADIOMETER GURVEY DATA.

## 2.5 DISCUSSION

The survey identified seven groups of anomalies and areas of ground/magnetic disturbance and debris. The anomaly groups included 13 defined anomalies representing: an historic field boundary; a possible enclosure and disturbed ground area associated with a probable 19<sup>th</sup> century structure; a possible drain; a possible undated field system; a possible pit or treethrow; and geological anomalies. Ploughing had evidently occurred across the site, predominantly along the long axis of the site (approximately north-south) and the weak and sometimes intermittent responses of anomalies may reflect truncation by this ploughing. The absence in the survey data of an approximately north-south aligned historic field boundary may also be the result of plough truncation. The natural variation of response across the site was predominantly +/-1nT in the north half of the site and up to +/-2nT at the southern end of the site. Cartographic and additional sources that support the following discussion and earlier interpretation can be seen in Appendix 2.

Anomaly Group 1 consists of a weak-moderate (+3 to +12nT and c.-5nT) positive and negative linear response aligned approximately east-west. It probably represents a banked boundary with flanking ditches. It corresponds to a boundary depicted on the 1842 tithe map for Ottery St Mary. As the site is depicted as in open moorland on the 1801 Surveyor's draft map and this boundary is absent from the 1888 Ordnance Survey (OS) 1<sup>st</sup> edition map; this boundary presumably had a short life in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Anomaly Group 2 consists of two weak-moderate (+4nT to +8nT) positive linear responses indicative of ditches. It has two limbs aligned parallel and perpendicular to the site boundary in the north-west corner of the field. This anomaly may define an enclosure in the corner of the field in which a structure was depicted on the 1842 tithe map. No structure is shown on any other available mapping and, similarly to Group 1, it presumably had a short life in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Anomaly Group 3 consists of a weak (<+4nT) positive sinuous response with an associated weak (<-4nT) negative ovoid response within an area of possible disturbed ground and the possible enclosure defined by Group 2. It may be associated with both cut features and material dumps relating to the structure depicted in the approximate area in 1842 or use of the possible enclosure as defined by Group 2.

Anomaly Group 4 consists of two weak (<+3nT) positive linear responses indicative of ditches, Aligned west-north-west by east-south-east and north-north-east by south-south-west, these features are aligned slightly off of the existing field-scape and may represent earlier phases of the initial enclosure of the land, drainage of the land or an earlier, undated, field system that pre-dates the 1801 mapping. A slight gap in the responses may indicate an entrance between the two limbs of this group.

Anomaly Group 5 consists of a single moderate-strong (c.+22nT) positive ovoid response indicative of a pit or treethrow at the southern end of the site.

Anomaly Group 6 consists of five amorphous/sinuous very weak (<+2nT) positive responses indicative of natural in-filled features. These may be representative of a geological deposit such as alluvium or colluvium or of paleochannels. The presence of these anomalies at the southern end of the site may be indicative of natural topographic variation across the site, such as the extent of wetter and drier ground through history or different use or intensification of ploughing when the site was divided into smaller enclosures. The presence of these features and the slight difference in general background variation in the southern end of the site may indicate a better survival of the buried potential archaeological resource at this end of the site compared to the north end; although, ploughing is evident across the entire site.

Anomaly Group 7 consists of a weak (<+3nT) positive, intermittent, response aligned north-west by south-east and indicative of a ditch or drain. Its intermittent and weak response may indicate a poor level of survival, probably due to plough truncation. Its alignment is parallel to the slope of the land and it would have possibly drained water away from a presumed enclosure or structure in the north-west corner of the site, associated with Groups 2 and 3. A slightly wider gap in the response/anomaly may allude to surface disturbance from machines crossing the site from the north-east entrance to the field towards the pylon and gate in the west boundary of the site; or the presence of a possibly contemporary historic boundary (as shown on the 1842 tithe map), now removed and absent from the geophysical record.

### 3.0 CONCLUSION

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The site is located across a rectangular field c.3km west of Ottery St Mary, to the South of Straitgate Farm and Exeter Road (B3174).

Historic mapping shows the site as at the edge of open moorland in 1801 and divided into three fields with a structure in its north-west corner by 1842. By 1888 the site is depicted much as was on the day of the survey; as a single field with no remains of a structure in its north-west corner. The Devon HER lists flint findspots and modern activity in the surrounding area as well as the presence of a Roman Road to the north of the site. Previous geophysical survey and excavation to the north and north-west of Straitgate Farm has revealed historic and undated boundaries as well as Neolithic to Romano-British settlement activity.

The geophysical survey identified six linear anomalies, a discrete ovoid anomaly and six diffuse sinuous and amorphous anomalies. One of the linear anomalies defined an historic boundary; two defined a possible enclosure in the north-west corner of the site; two defined a possible undated field system or drainage ditches at the south end of the site; and one defined a possible drain or ditch. The discrete ovoid anomaly may represent a pit or treethrow. One of the sinuous/amorphous anomalies may be associated with the possible enclosure and possible historic structure in the north-west corner of the site; while the other five represent probable geological anomalies. Ploughing across the site was clearly evident in the survey data and may have truncated any buried archaeological resource.

The buried archaeological potential for the site is ostensibly low to moderate; with the remnants of possible historic/19<sup>th</sup> century features present on the site and potentially little else across most of the site.



## 4.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY & REFERENCES

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**Devon County Council Historic Environment Record (HER) and HLC** 2019: *Devon Environment Viewer Map*

<http://map.devon.gov.uk/dccviewer> and <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk>

### *Devon Heritage Centre (DHC)*

Ottery St Mary Tithe Apportionment, 1842

Ottery St Mary Tithe Map, 1842

Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> edition, 25 inch map, Sheet: Devon LXIX.16, surveyed 1881, published 1881

### *British Library (BL)*

Surveyor's Draft Map of the Ottery St Mary area, 1801

APPENDIX 1: ADDITIONAL GRAPHICAL IMAGES OF THE GRADIOMETER SURVEY



FIGURE 5: GEOPHYSICAL GRID LOCATION AND NUMBERING.

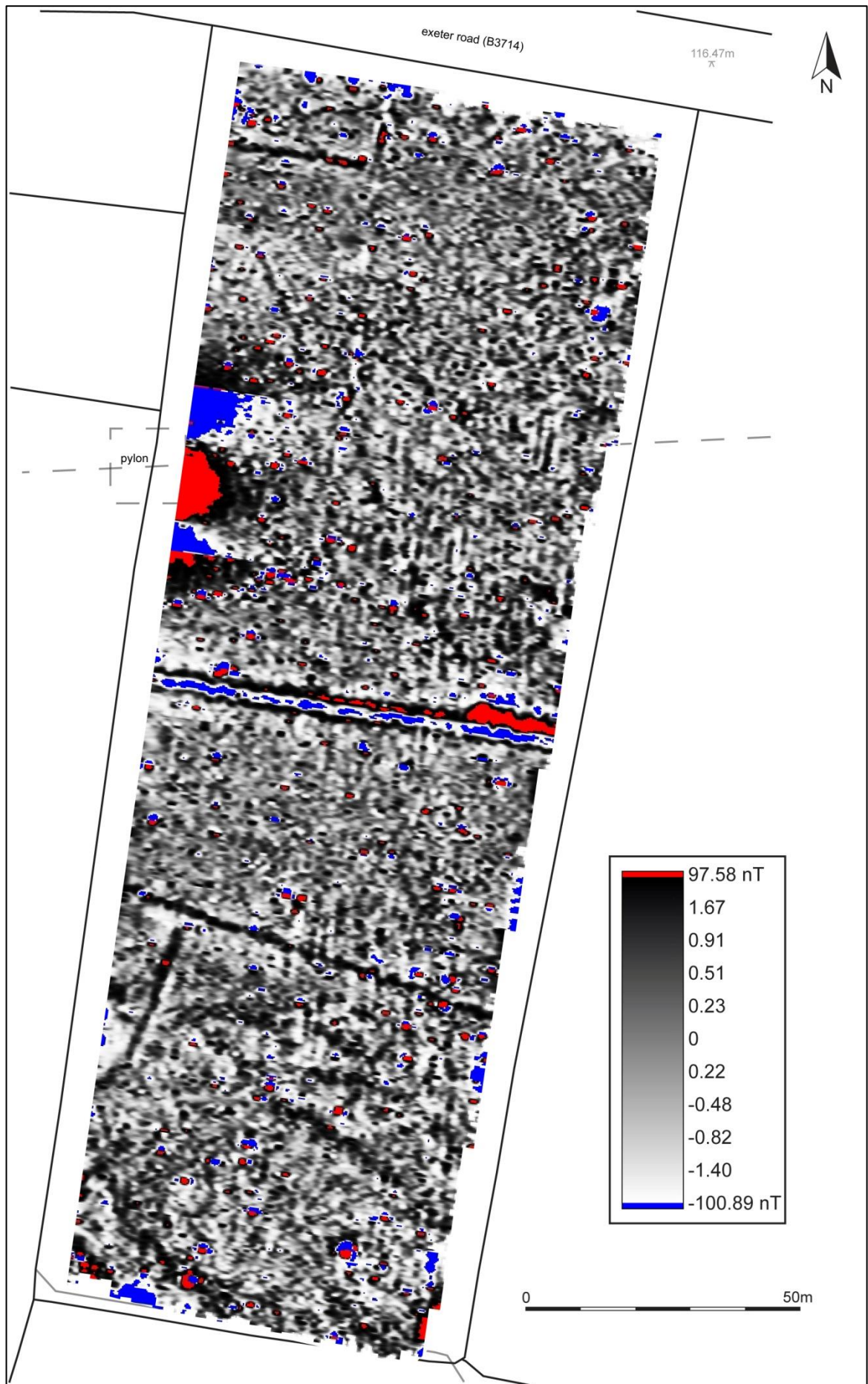


FIGURE 6: RED-GREY-BLUE SHADE PLOT OF GRADIOMETER SURVEY DATA; BAND WEIGHT EQUALISED; GRADIATED SHADING.



APPENDIX 2: SUPPORTING CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES



FIGURE 7: EXTRACT FROM THE 1801 SURVEYOR'S DRAFT MAP FOR THE OTTERY ST MARY AREA; THE APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF THE SITE IS INDICATED (BL).



FIGURE 8: EXTRACT FROM THE 1842 OTTERY ST MARY TITHE MAP; THE APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF THE SITE IS OUTLINED IN RED (DHC).

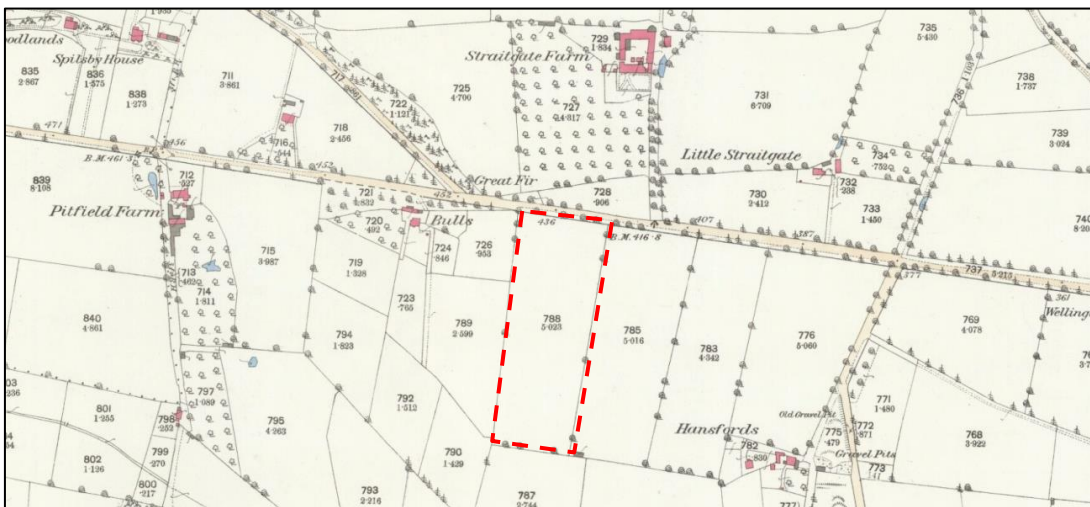


FIGURE 9: EXTRACT FROM THE ORDNANCE SURVEY 1ST EDITION, 25 INCH SERIES, SHEET LXIX.16, SURVEYED 1881, PUBLISHED 1888; THE SITE IS OUTLINED IN RED (DHC).



APPENDIX 3: SUPPORTING PHOTOGRAPHS



1. ENTRANCE TO THE SITE IN THE NORTH-EAST CORNER OF THE SITE; VIEWED FROM THE EAST (NO SCALE).



2. EASTERN BOUNDARY AND EDGE OF THE SITE; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH (NO SCALE).





3. DETAIL OF THE BOUNDARY ALONG THE NORTHERN BOUNDARY OF THE SITE; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH (NO SCALE).



4. VIEW OF THE EASTERN BOUNDARY OF THE SITE; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH (NO SCALE).





5. VIEW OF THE WESTERN BOUNDARY AND WESTERN EDGE OF THE SITE; VIEWED FROM THE SOUTH (NO SCALE).



6. VIEW OF THE SOUTHERN BOUNDARY AND SOUTHERN END OF THE SITE; VIEWED FROM THE WEST (NO SCALE).





7. DETAIL OF THE SOUTH-WEST CORNER OF THE SITE; VIEWED FROM THE EAST-NORTH-EAST (NO SCALE).



8. DETAIL AT THE WEST END OF THE SOUTHERN BOUNDARY OF THE SITE; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-EAST (NO SCALE).



THE OLD DAIRY  
HACCHE LANE BUSINESS PARK  
PATHFIELDS BUSINESS PARK  
SOUTH MOLTON  
DEVON  
EX36 3LH

DEVON: 01769 573555  
Cornwall: 01872 223164  
EMAIL: [MAIL@SWARCH.NET](mailto:MAIL@SWARCH.NET)