

**LAND AT YEO VALLEY
CANNINGTON
SEDGEMOOR
SOMERSET**

Results of a Geophysical Survey



South West Archaeology Ltd. report no. 211104



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LAND AT YEO VALLEY, CANNINGTON,
SOMERSET
RESULTS OF A GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

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Work undertaken by SWARCH for a Private Client

SUMMARY

The site is located to the south-west of the village of Cannington; the survey area comprises a single field situated between Cannington Brook and the A39. Previous archaeological works alongside parts of the A39 and for the Cannington Bypass have uncovered a Bronze Age enclosure, Late Iron Age settlement activity, Romano-British buildings, graves and 'ladder' settlement, medieval field ditches and modern agricultural and drainage activity. Historical mapping shows general continuity of the layout of the site, but potentially parts of a relict post-medieval field system. The two fields to the east of the site have already been surveyed; the results of this survey would suggest fairly low archaeological potential.

This survey identified ten groups of anomalies, most of which can be attributed to modern disturbance or utilities. The anomaly groups with the highest archaeological potential are diffuse curving linears located towards the north boundary of the site. The high responses from the modern utility and di-polar anomalies across the site may mask features of archaeological potential.



November 2021

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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STAFF AT YEO VALLEY (CANNINGTON)

PROJECT CREDITS

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

LOCATION:	LAND AT YEO VALLEY, CANNINGTON
PARISH:	CANNINGTON
COUNTY:	SOMERSET
NGR:	ST 24833 39021
OASIS REF:	SOUTHWES1-420216
SWARCH REF.	CRFS21B

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

South West Archaeology Ltd. (SWARCH) was commissioned by a private client to undertake a geophysical survey on land at Yeo Valley, Cannington, Somerset. This work was undertaken in accordance with best practice, Chartered Institute for Archaeology (CIfA), and South West Heritage Trust (SWHT) guidance. The work has been carried out as part of the planning submission for a PV site. This survey extends and complements an earlier survey carried out in April 2021 (Bampton 2021; Figures 4-5).

1.2 TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Cannington is a village c.3km north-west of Bridgewater, off of the A39. The site is on the south-west side of Cannington, c.1km south-west of the centre of the village. It comprises of a single field immediately to the north of the Cannington Brook, at a height of between 24m and 21m AOD. The field is located between the brook and the A39 and is bordered by lanes to the east and west; the one to the east leading to the Yeo Valley (Cannington) complex; the one to the west to Blackmore Farm to the south.

The site is at the approximate boundary of two soils: the well drained fine loamy reddish soils over rock of the Milford Association, and the slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged reddish fine loamy over clayey soils of the Brockhurst 1 Association (SSEW 1983). These overlie the mudstones and halite-stones of the Mercia Mudstone Group (BGS 2021). The lowlying areas along Cannington Brook are described as alluvial (Baggs & Siraut 1992).

1.3 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The parish and village of Cannington is in the Hundred of Cannington (Baggs & Siraut 1992). The place-name of Cannington is derived from the Old English *tūn* and the name of the Quantock Hills, meaning 'estate/settlement by the Quantock Hills' (Watts 2004). It was rendered as *Cantuctune* in the 9th century (Watts 2004). The estate was mentioned alongside the estates of Williton and Carhampton in the Will of Alfred the Great in 899 (Baggs & Siraut 1992). A Benedictine nunnery was located at Cannington from the 12th century until the Dissolution (Baggs & Siraut 1992). Cannington is on the banks of the River Parrett, and Cannington Brook, which runs alongside the site, is a tributary of that river.

The site lies between several relatively small Domesday manors: Blackmore, Chilton [Trivett], Withiel and Dodisham. The Yeo Valley site/creamery factory, on the other side of the Cannington Brook, is on the site of Cook's Farm/Mill (HER no.10319); this was recorded in 1494 as part of Chilton Trivett Manor. It may have been the site of a mill recorded in 1086. It was used as a fulling mill in 1599 and used to crush spar during the First World War (Baggs & Siraut 1992). An advertisement in 1869 described it as a water grist mill. It has an intact mill pond and leat that fed an overshot watermill and then a hydroelectric power turbine (HER no.10319). Blackmore would have been the nearest ancient manor to the site; however, the c.1839 tithe apportionment for the site lists the site (plots 1061 and 1068) as part of Brymore and Withiel. Cannington Brook probably formed a

natural boundary between estates. The Domesday manor of Withiel was listed as having a mill. In 1739 the road that lined the north-west boundary of the site (now the A39) was Turnpiked (HER no.24588).

Historical mapping from c.1800 shows the site as part of a long narrow field north-east of the road leading to Blackmoor Farm. The 1839 Cannington tithe map shows the site as the southern half of field no.1068. This plot was listed in the tithe apportionment as being part of *Brymore and Withiel*, owned and occupied by the Hon. Bouverie Philip Pleydell and listed as *meadow or pasture*. The Ordnance Survey (OS) 1st and 2nd edition maps, from c.1886 and 1903, showed continuity with the earlier tithe map regarding the layout of the site. The adjacent Cook's Mill was described as a *corn mill* on the 1st edition map and then as *disused* on the 2nd edition map. By 1962 OS mapping Cook's Mill is named *Brooklands Farm*, labelled as a creamery on the 1970 OS map. OS mapping between 1974 and 1980 shows the new access road to the creamery that defines the north-east extent of the field. LiDAR imagery of the site indicates the site slopes gently down to the Cannington Brook, divided into two parcels by a very slight ridge. This ridge could be a relict field boundary or a known service trench crossing the field. Supporting cartographic sources and LiDAR imagery for this section can be seen in Appendix 2.

To the north and further afield, Mesolithic material has been found at Brymore and Cannington Hill, which itself is the site of an Iron Age hillfort (Baggs & Siraut 1992). Near the hillfort was a cemetery that was in use from the 4th to 8th centuries (Baggs & Siraut 1992). Archaeological works near to the site associated with the Cannington bypass and other potential developments include geophysical survey, evaluation and watching briefs. To the north of the site a 49-trench evaluation identified a Middle Bronze Age enclosure with internal features at the north end of the bypass route; a small Romano-British villa; and a medieval Holloway that runs parallel and to the north of the A39 (Graham & Biggs 2010; Hart 2016; Saunders 2011; HER no.30403, 32203). To the east of the site a geophysical survey identified what it described as a Romano-British 'ladder settlement' (Richardson 2013; Sheldon 2013; HER no. 11892, 32408, 32703, 32738). A watching brief carried out in 1993/4 across the southern length of the Cannington bypass did not record any significant features (Broomhead 1994; HER no.28850), and the bulk of the Romano-British activity east of the site appears to be to south of Cannington Brook. Cropmarks of rectilinear enclosures to the west of the site have been identified from aerial photography (HER no.12505). Somerset's Historic Environment Record (HER) also includes the 15th century Grade I Listed Blackmore Farmhouse (List Entry no.1175359), to the south-west of the site; and 15th century Brymore Academy schoolhouse (List Entry no.1059065) with associated park and WWII use (HER no.10203, 22810).

1.4 METHODOLOGY

This work was undertaken in accordance with current best practice and ClfA guidance. Any desk-based assessment aspect of this report follows the guidance as outlined in: *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment* (ClfA 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: *EAC Guidelines for the use of geophysics in Archaeology: Questions to Ask and Points to Consider* (Europae Archaeologiae Consilium/European Archaeological Council 2016) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Geophysical Survey* (ClfA 2014b) and the Somerset Archaeological Handbook (2017 SWHT).

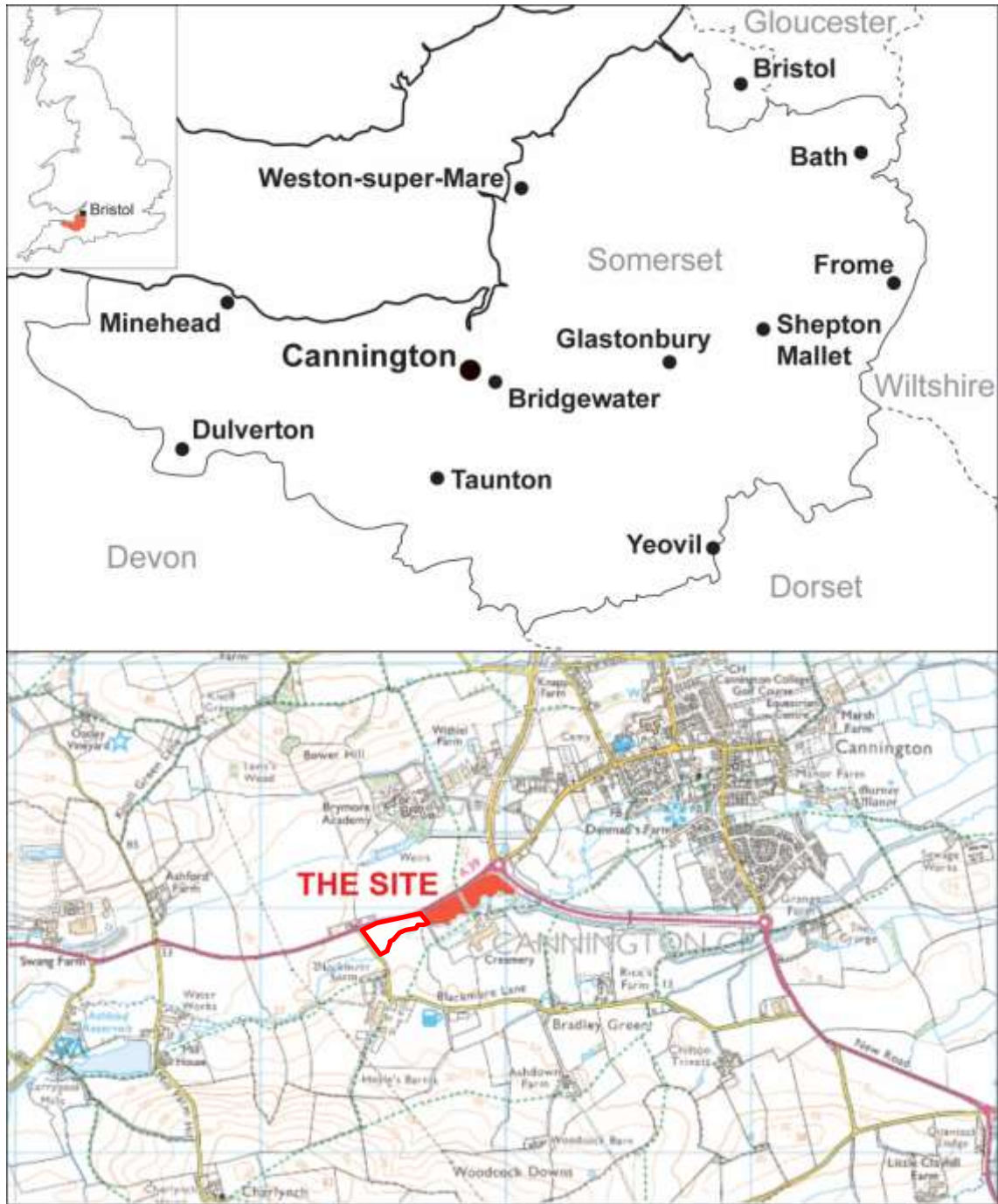


FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION (THE SITE IS OUTLINED IN RED, FOR THE AREA FILLED IN RED – SEE BAMPTON 2021).

2.0 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

An area of c.1.7ha was the subject of a magnetometry (gradiometer) survey. The purpose of this 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 12th of October 2021 by P. Bonvoisin; the survey data was processed by P. Bonvoisin.

2.2 SITE INSPECTION

The site was located within a single field, immediately to the south-west of the survey undertaken earlier this year. The site was rough pasture at the time of survey, with some overgrown and weedy patches. The field is situated between the A39 and the Cannington Brook, with Blackmore Farm to the south and the Yeo Valley creamery to the east. The site is bounded by hedgebanks to the north and west, with an agricultural fence to the east; access to the survey area was via a metal gate along the eastern boundary. Cannington Brook makes up the southern boundary of the site, though this was overgrown, with dense shrub and tree cover. Overhead cables ran across the site on a roughly north-east to south-west axis. Supporting photographs for the site inspection can be seen in Appendix 3.

2.3 METHODOLOGY

The gradiometer survey follows the general guidance as outlined in: *EAC Guidelines for the use of geophysics in Archaeology: Questions to Ask and Points to Consider* (Europae Archaeologiae Consilium/European Archaeological Council 2016) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Geophysical Survey* (CIfA 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- and set out using a Leica CS15 GNSS Rover GPS. The data was downloaded onto *Grad601 Version 3.16* and processed using *TerraSurveyor Version 3.0.36.0*. 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:

DeStripe all traverses, median; used to equalise underlying differences between grids (potentially caused by instrument drift or orientation, directional effects inherent in magnetic instrument, or differences in instrument set up during survey e.g. using two gradiometers).

DeStagger all traverses out and in-bound by 25cm (Grids a12, a13), by 50cm (Grids a19, a20, b2, b17), by 75cm (all other grids); reduces staggering effects within data derived from zig-zag collection method.

Clip +/- 1SD; removes extreme data point values.

Details:

1.5516ha surveyed.

Stats unadjusted/prior to data clipping; Max. 115.31nT, Min. -101.46nT; Standard Deviation 10.67nT, mean -0.50nT, median 0.00nT.

2.4 RESULTS

Table 1 with the accompanying Figures 2 and 3 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 positive, probable	Curvilinear	Ditch or cut feature	Indicative of a ditch or cut feature, shows a similar form to anomaly groups 2 and 3, and likely related or representing similar features. Anomaly groups 1, 2 and 3 are situated close to or over the feature that can be seen on the LiDAR for this site. Response of <+1.9nT.
2	Weak positive, possible	Curvilinear	Ditch or cut feature	Indicative of a ditch or cut feature, similar to anomaly groups 1 and 3, and likely related or representing similar features. Anomaly groups 1, 2 and 3 are situated close to or over the feature that can be seen on the LiDAR for this site. Response of <+2.1nT.
3	Weak positive, possible	Curvilinear	Ditch or cut feature	Indicative of a ditch or cut feature, similar to anomaly groups 1 and 2, and likely related or representing similar features. Anomaly group 2 appears to follow a similar orientation to anomaly group 4 and may be related. Anomaly groups 1, 2 and 3 are situated close to or over the feature that can be seen on the LiDAR for this site. Response of <+1.9nT.
4	Weak positive, possible	Linears	Plough scars	Indicative of previous agricultural activity, the orientation of these linears follow a similar orientation to the crop/plough lines from the recent agricultural activity. Responses vary between c.+0.5nT to c.+2.1nT.
5	Weak negative, possible	Linears	Agricultural activity	Indicative of previous agricultural activity, follows the same orientation as anomaly group 4 and likely represents the same features. Responses vary from c.-3.4nT to c.-1.0nT.
6	Weak to moderate mixed response, possible	Amorphous area	Disturbance	Indicative of disturbed ground, the irregular form and occasional high response or di-polar readings suggest that this may be more recent disturbance. Responses of c.-4.3nT to c.+10.2nT.
7	Very strong mixed response, probable	Linear	Modern utility	Indicative of a modern utility, likely associated with the overhead cables or power lines. Responses of c.-100nT to +100nT.
8	Very strong mixed response, probable	Amorphous ovoid	Overhead cables/modern utility	Indicative of a modern utility, likely associated with anomaly group 7, and centres on position for one of the overhead cables. Responses of c.-100nT to +100nT.
9	Moderate mixed response, probable	Amorphous ovoid	Modern utility	Indicative of magnetic disturbance around the base of the pylons for the overhead cables, represents the same overhead cables as anomaly groups 8 and 10. Responses of c.-8.5nT to c.+3.5nT.
10	Moderate mixed response, probable	Amorphous ovoid	Modern utility	Indicative of magnetic disturbance around the base of the pylons for the overhead cables, represents the same overhead cables as anomaly groups 8 and 9. Responses of c.-24.1nT to c.+13.3nT.
-	Moderate-strong dipolar, probable	Point/ovoid	Ferrous objects/debris	There is a mostly irregular spread of dipolar anomalies across the site, with a slight concentration towards the northern boundary of the site and the A39. The strongest examples are indicative of ferrous objects that are typically presumed to be modern, such as farm machinery fragments. Similar and weaker responses can be indicative of geological features/anomalies. In the case of this site, most of these are presumably associated with either ferrous fragments with some weaker examples indicative of differential geology/weathering of relict river deposits. These are highly probable to be non-archaeological in nature. Responses of between approximately +/-5nT and +/-60nT.
-	Magnetic disturbance, probable	Spreads assoc. with site boundaries and disturbed or made ground	Magnetic disturbance	Near the edges of the site magnetic disturbance from fence lines, modern structures/services and made-ground/hard-core near field accesses/gates is visible. Responses of <+/-100nT.



FIGURE 2: SHADE PLOT OF GRADIOMETER SURVEY DATA; MINIMAL PROCESSING.

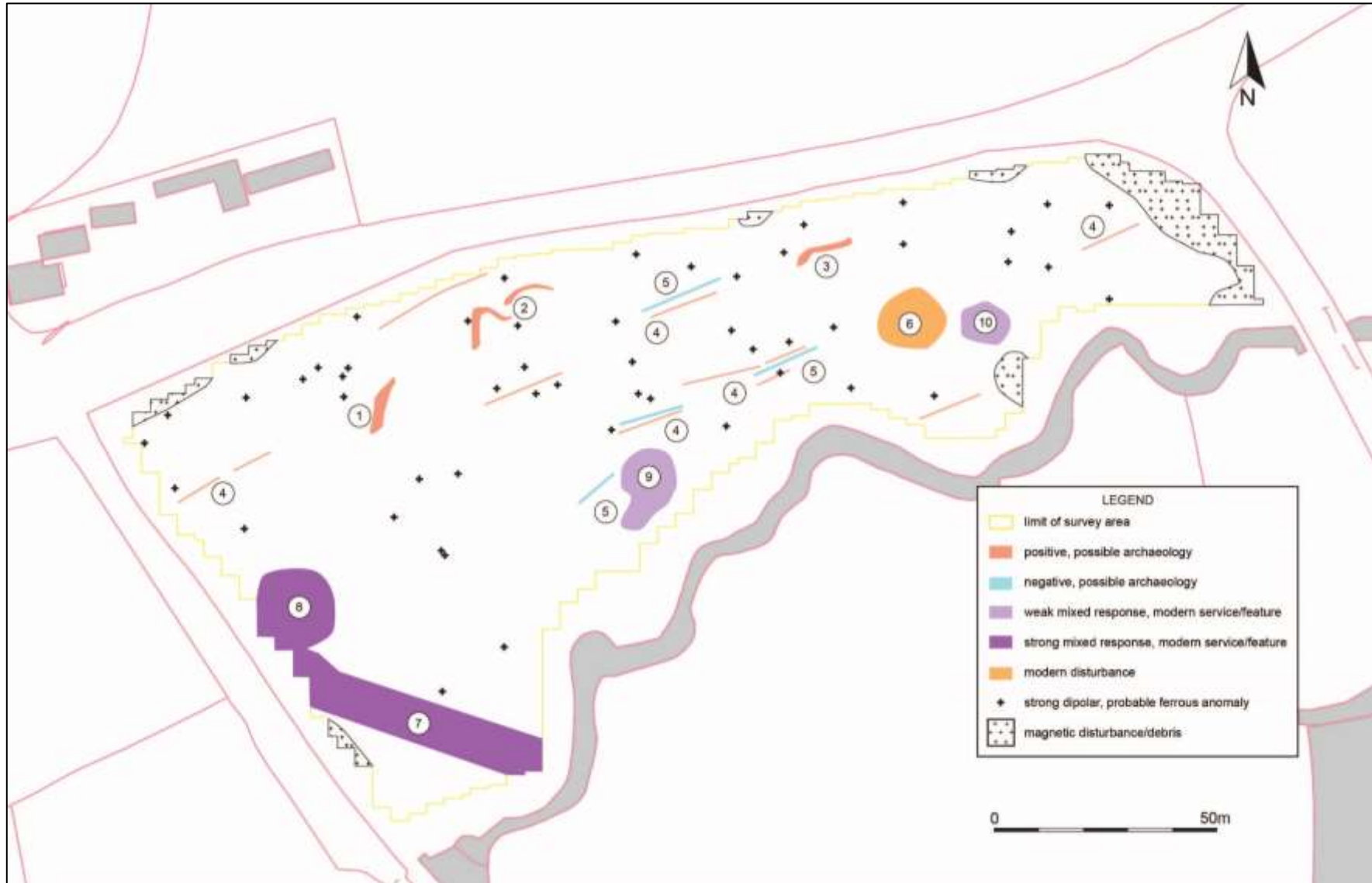


FIGURE 3: INTERPRETATION OF GRADIOMETER SURVEY DATA.

2.5 DISCUSSION

The geophysical survey identified ten groups of anomalies. These include: potential archaeological features (groups 1, 2 and 3); probable agricultural markings (group 4), modern disturbance (group 6) and utilities (groups 7-10). The results of the survey carried out in the fields immediately to the north-east showed some much clearer features, but displayed the same low response background (Bampton 2021).

As stated, the background response of the site was quite low, with a smoother response closer to the brook. This probably corresponds to the geological makeup and ordered sediments within that zone. The background response closer to the road contains more interference. The site had been cropped within the year, and the plough marks were still visible below the vegetation running across the site. No finds were found during the walkover of the site but a single flint tool was found in the fields to the north-east.

Groups 1 and 2 have a similar form and may be related to the same phase of activity, with anomaly group 2 being the clearer feature, possibly a truncated or damaged curving linear. Its orientation and form do not relate to the current fieldscape, potentially indicating an earlier date. Anomaly group 3 has a similar response range but its orientation may suggest a relation to the agricultural scarring features.

Groups 4 and 5 likely represent agricultural marking or plough scars running across the site and match the orientation of the ruts visible on the surface.

Group 6 is a diffuse set of readings and is more likely to represent magnetic disturbance or a slight concentration of di-polar anomalies.

Groups 7 to 10 represent modern utilities and the overhead cables that run north-east to south-west across the site.

Magnetic disturbance and di-polar anomalies also appear across the site, with the areas of magnetic disturbance attributed to modern debris or the metallic gate and fencing around the site boundary. Di-polar anomalies also appear across the site in high numbers, a slight concentration appears along the boundary next to the road, likely corresponding to metallic waste. Amorphous spreads of di-polar anomalies are usual on agricultural sites though this frequency is higher than usual.

2.5.1 CONTEXT

The results from this phase of geophysical survey are similar to those seen in the fields to the east (see Figures 4-5). The survey to the east identified nine groups of anomalies, which included: undated ditches associated with a former field boundary or water management associated with the former mill south of the site; a ditch and possible land drains associated with either a relict post-medieval field system and boundaries and/or the extant field and road system; a series of linear anomalies associated with probable land drains; a spread probably associated with a modern feature; eleven possible pits or tree-throws; and an area of mixed responses including possible concentric ring-ditches and material deposits indicative of either prehistoric or later monuments, or post-medieval to modern ground disturbance.

While it is likely most of the probable archaeological anomalies on both sites will prove to be medieval or later in date, they cannot be dated from this survey and there is the potential for Prehistoric, Late Iron Age and Romano-British activity on the site.

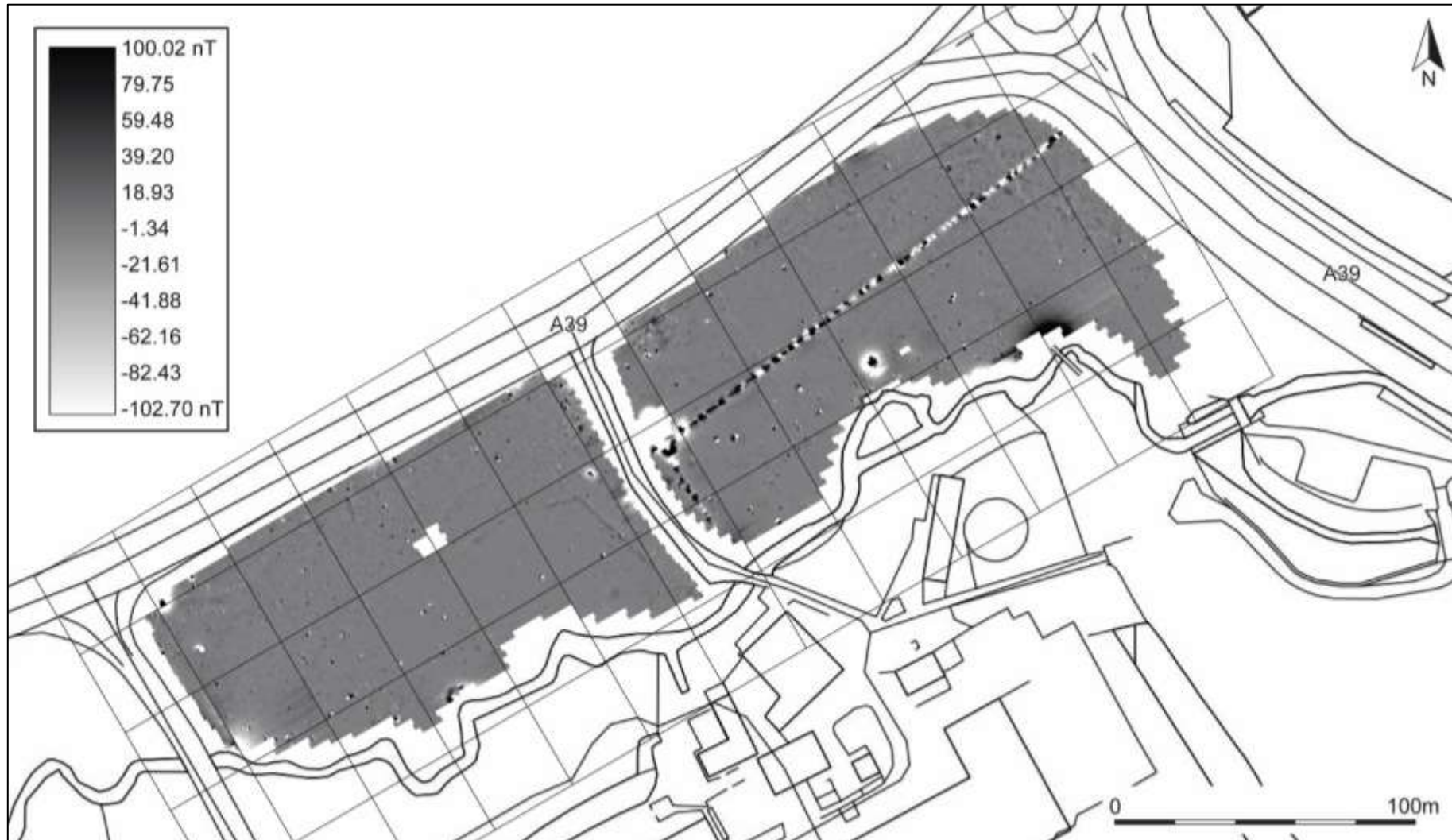


FIGURE 4: FIELDS TO THE EAST OF THE SITE - SHADE PLOT OF GRADIOMETER SURVEY DATA; MINIMAL PROCESSING (FROM: BAMPTON 2021).

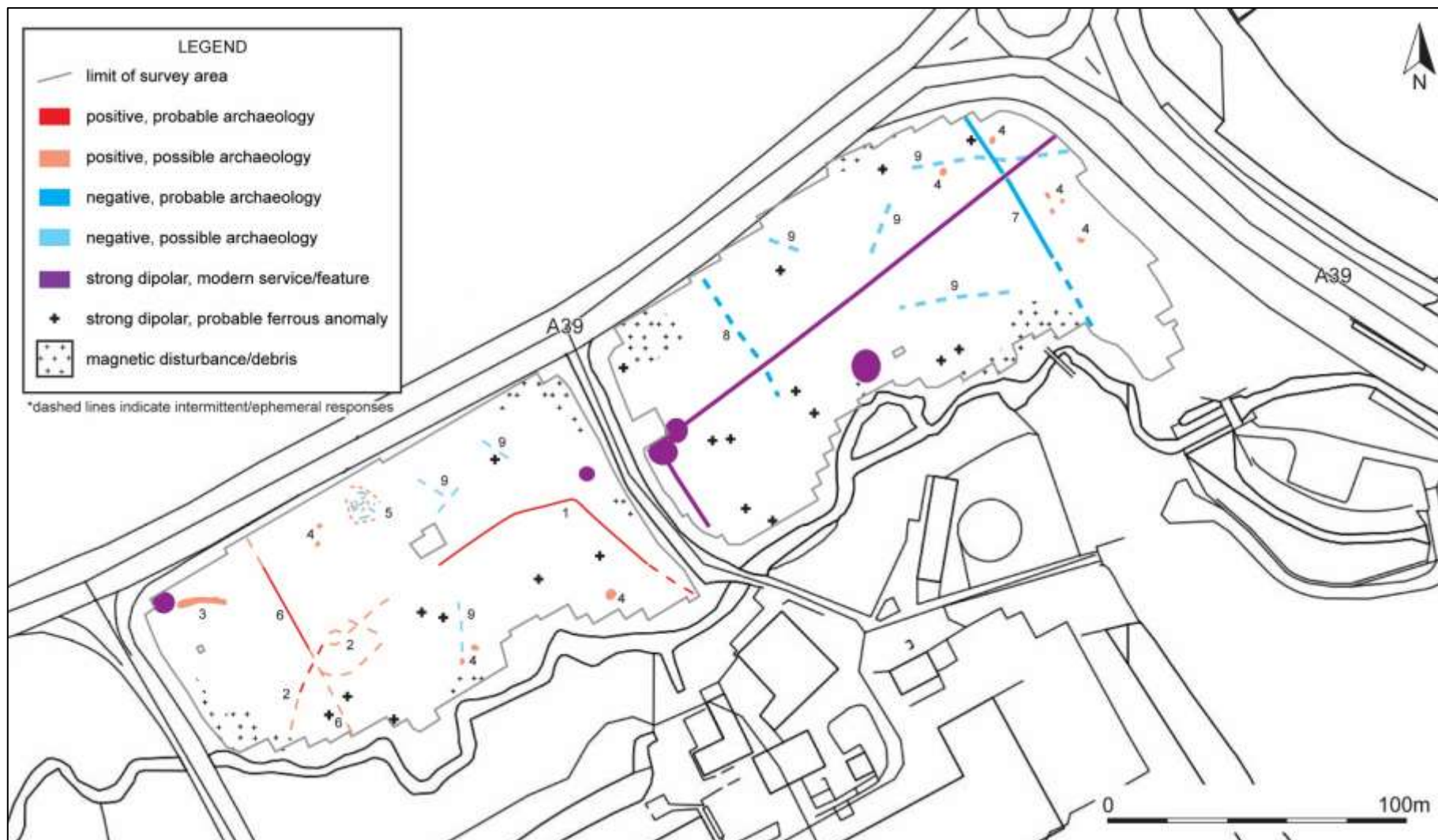


FIGURE 5: FIELDS TO THE EAST OF THE SITE - INTERPRETATION OF GRADIOMETER SURVEY DATA (FROM BAMPTON 2021).

3.0 CONCLUSION

The site is located south-west of the village of Cannington, the survey area comprising a single field situated between Cannington Brook and the A39. Archaeological fieldwork in the area has identified Bronze Age and Romano-British activity, the closest being a possible 'ladder settlement' c.0.5km to the south-east. The gradiometer survey identified ten groups of anomalies, most of which can be attributed to modern disturbance or utilities. The anomaly groups with the highest archaeological potential are diffuse curving linears towards the northern boundary of the site. The high response from the modern utility and the high numbers of di-polar anomalies may mask other, smaller archaeological features.

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<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>
- South West Heritage Trust** 2021: *Somerset Historic Environment Record (HER)*
<https://www.somersetheritage.org.uk/>
- Environment Agency** 2021: *LiDAR, Digital Surface Model data*
<https://environment.data.gov.uk/DefraDataDownload/?Mode=survey>

British Library (BL)

Surveyors draft map for the Bridgewater area, c.1802

Somerset Heritage Centre (SHC)

Cannington Tithe Apportionment, c.1839

Cannington Tithe Map, c.1839

Ordnance Survey 1st edition, 25 inch map, Sheet: Somerset L.5 & XLIX.8, surveyed 1886 & 1885, published 1889 & 1888 respectively

Ordnance Survey 2nd edition, 25 inch map, Sheet: Somerset L.5 & XLIX.8, revised 1903 & 1902, published 1904 & 1903 respectively

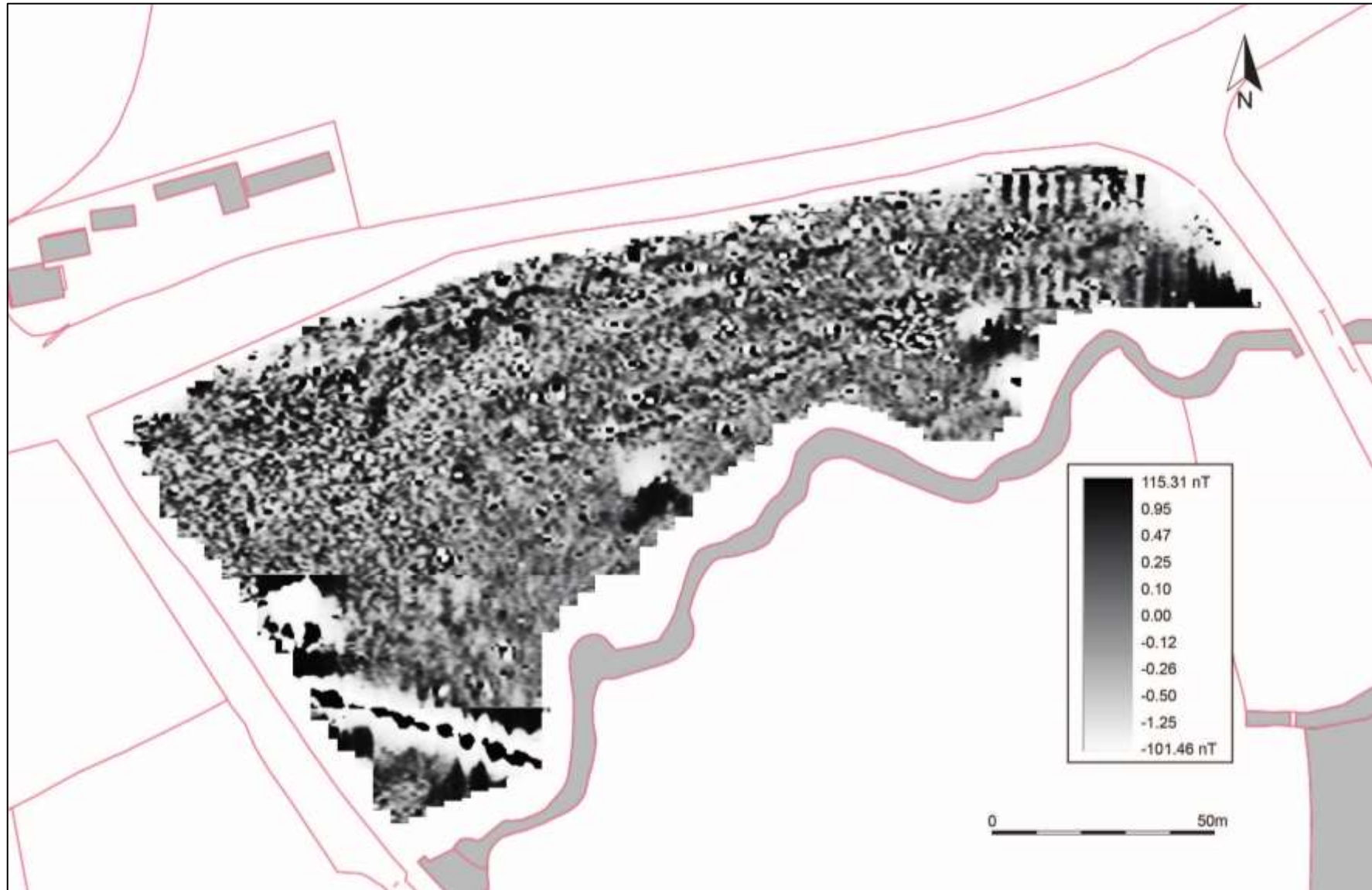


FIGURE 7: GREYSCALE SHADE PLOT OF GRADIOMETER SURVEY DATA; BAND WEIGHT EQUALISED; GRADIATED SHADING.

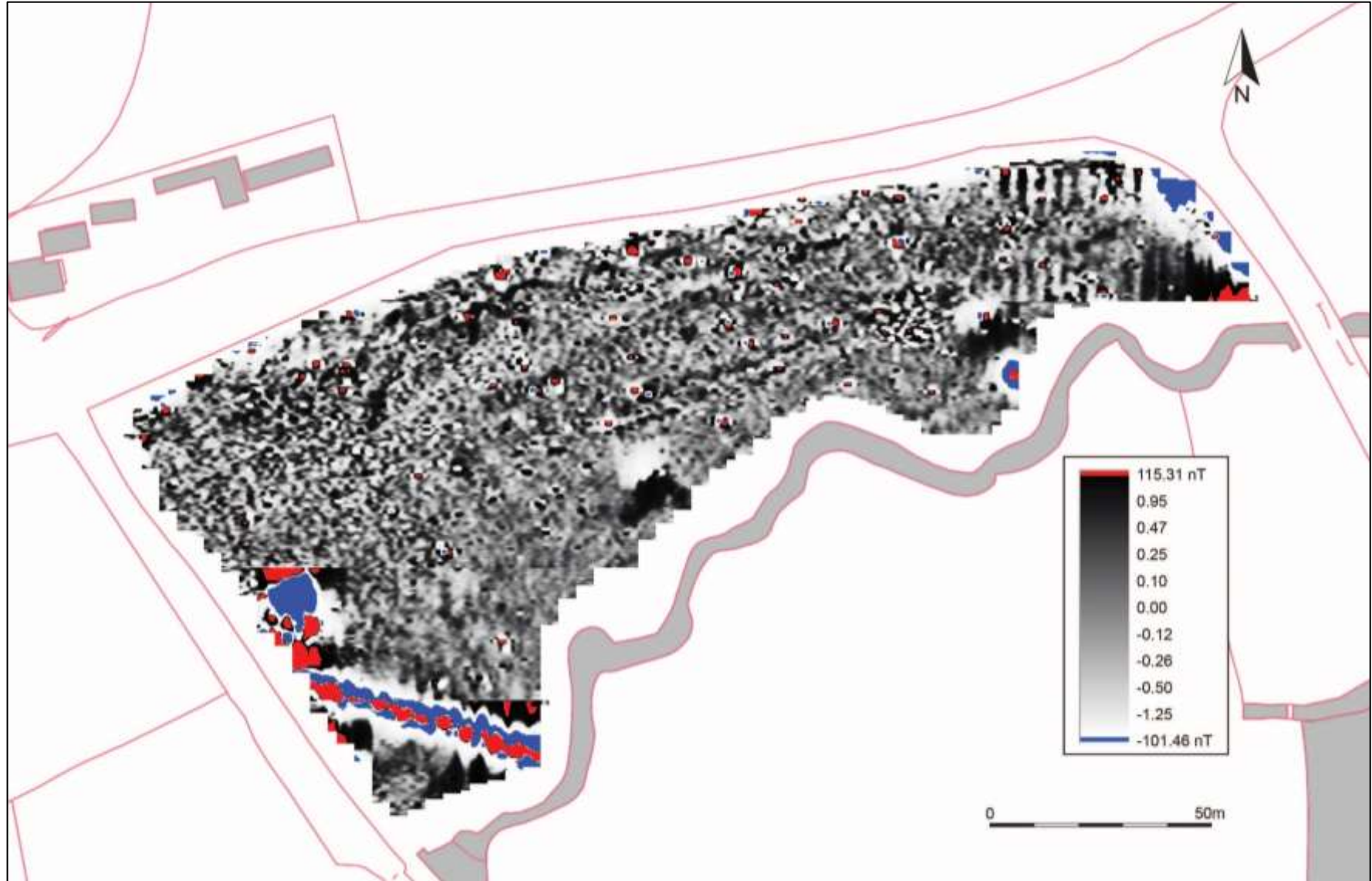


FIGURE 8: RED-GREY-BLUE SHADE PLOT OF GRADIOMETER SURVEY DATA; BAND WEIGHT EQUALISED; GRADIATED SHADING.

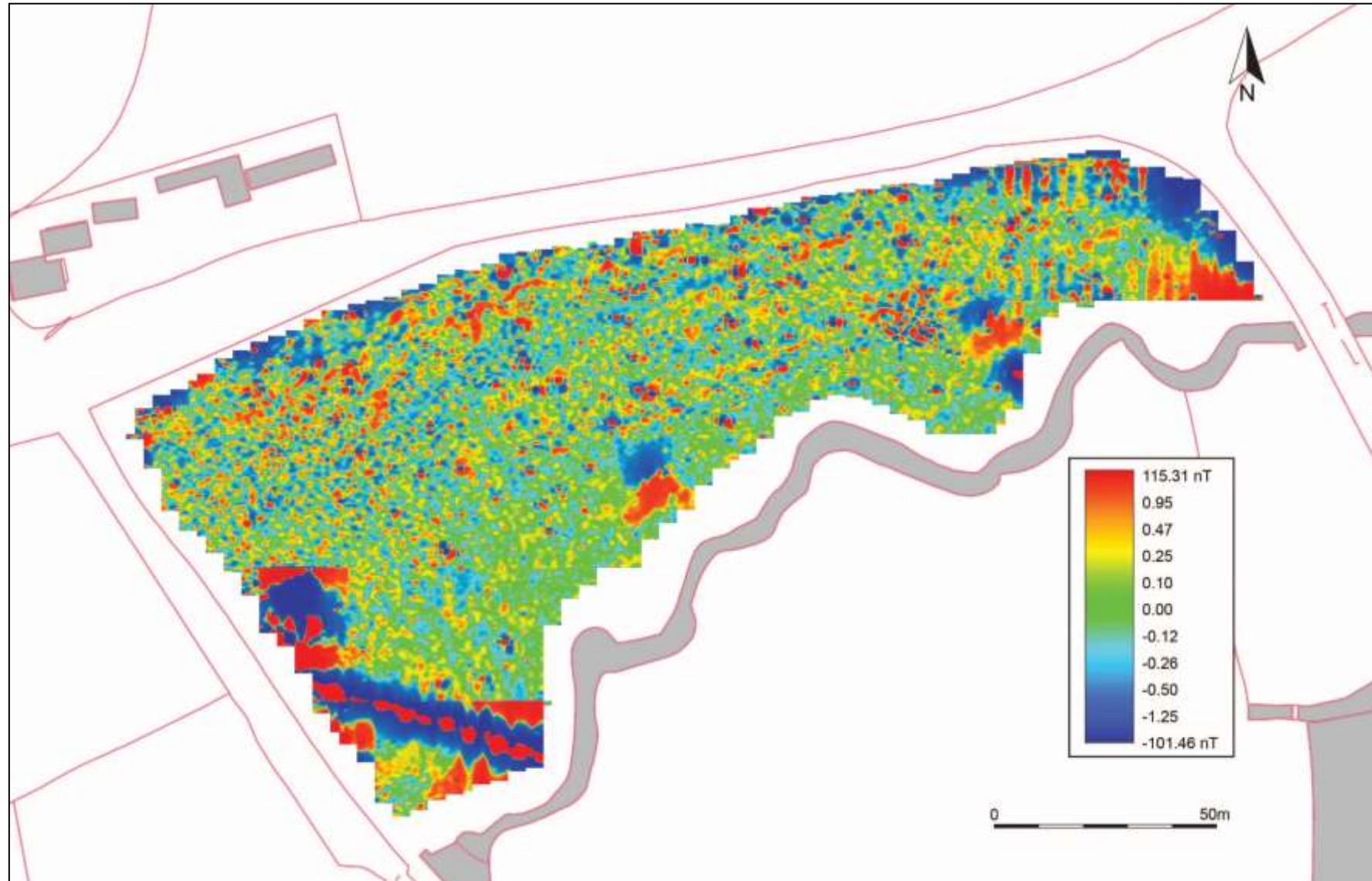


FIGURE 9: RED-BLUE-GREEN SHADE PLOT OF GRADIOMETER SURVEY DATA; BAND WEIGHT EQUALISED; GRADIATED SHADING.

APPENDIX 2: SUPPORTING SOURCES



FIGURE 10: EXTRACT FROM THE SURVEYOR'S DRAFT MAP, c.1802; THE APPROXIMATE LOCATION OF THE SITE IS INDICATED (BL).



FIGURE 11: EXTRACT FROM THE CANNINGTON TITHE MAP, 1839; THE SITE IS INDICATED (TNA).

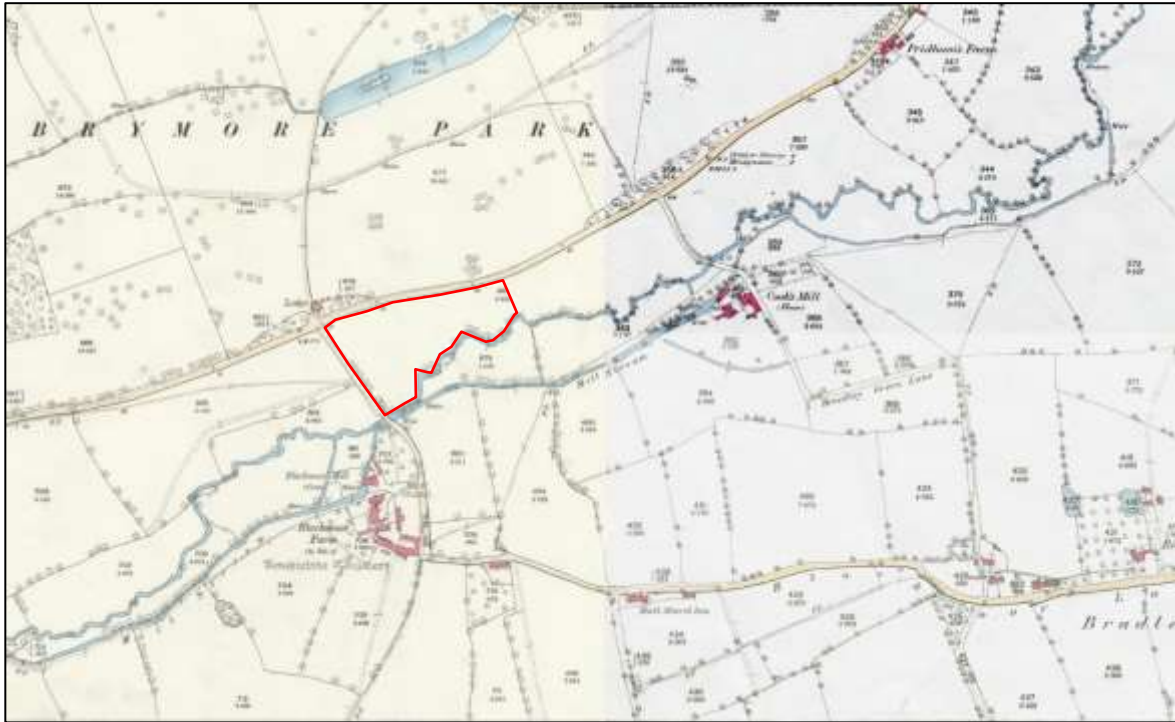


FIGURE 12: EXTRACT FROM THE ORDNANCE SURVEY 1ST EDITION, 25 INCH SERIES, PUBLISHED 1888 AND 1889 (NLS). SOMERSET SHEETS XLIX.8 & L.5.

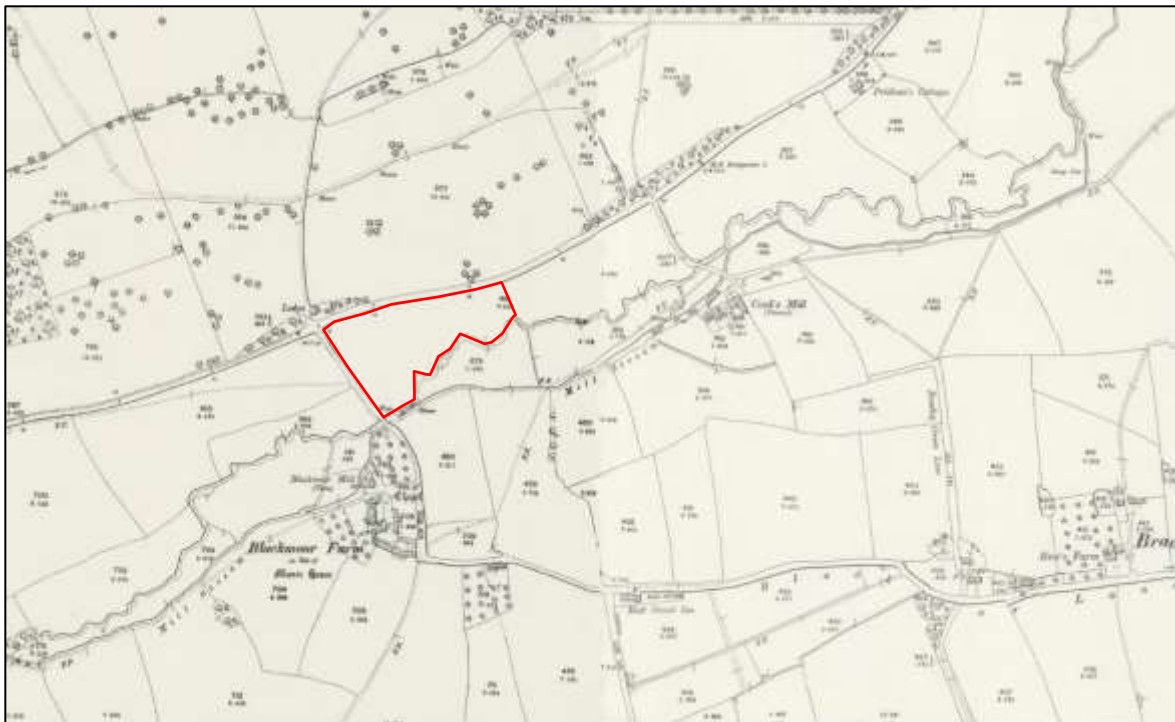


FIGURE 13: EXTRACT FROM THE ORDNANCE SURVEY 2ND EDITION, 25 INCH SERIES, PUBLISHED 1903 AND 1904 (NLS). SOMERSET SHEETS XLIX.8 & L.5.

APPENDIX 3: SUPPORTING PHOTOGRAPHS



1. NORTHERN BOUNDARY OF THE SITE, VIEWED FROM THE EAST AND THE ENTRANCE.



2. THE SOUTHERN EDGE OF THE SITE, SHOWING THE OVERHEAD CABLES; VIEWED FROM THE EAST-NORTH-EAST.



3. THE EASTERN BOUNDARY OF THE SITE; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH.



4. BLACKMORE FARM, AS VISIBLE FROM THE WESTERN EDGE OF THE SITE; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH.



5. THE WESTERN BOUNDARY OF THE SITE; VIEWED FROM THE NORTH-WEST (NO SCALE).



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