ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT:

GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY BY MAGNETOMETRY ON LAND OFF SYSONBY ROAD,

MELTON MOWBRAY, LEICESTERSHIRE

Planning Reference: Pre-planning
NGR: SK 7442 2120
AAL Site Code: MESY 13
Museum Accession Code: X.A184.2013
OASIS Reference Number: allenarc1-176804

Report prepared for Leicestershire County Council

By
Allen Archaeology Limited
Report Number AAL2014037

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Allenarchaeology

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Cover image: Field 6 looking East with Field 5 in the distance

Executive Summary

- A geophysical survey by magnetometry was undertaken by Allen Archaeology Limited for Leicestershire County Council on a c.40ha area off Sysonby Road in Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire to support a planning application for a residential development.

- The site is located 2.1km north-northwest of the centre of Melton Mowbray and is centred on NGR SK 7442 2120.

- The geophysical survey has revealed complex of anomalies suggestive of a multi-phase settlement complex focussed on a probable trackway running northwest away from an existing spring. Ridge and furrow anomalies are also evident across the study area. The three fields at the east end of the site produced poor survey results that seems in part due to modern debris identified on the surface of a field.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 A geophysical survey using magnetometry was undertaken by Allen Archaeology Limited for Leicestershire County Council on land off Sysonby Road in Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire to support a planning application for a residential development.

1.2 The site works and reporting conform to current national guidelines, as set out in '*Geophysical Survey in Archaeological Field Evaluation*' (English Heritage 2008), '*The Use of Geophysical Techniques in Archaeological Evaluations*' (IFA Paper 6), the Institute for Archaeologists '*Standard and guidance for archaeological geophysical survey'* (IfA 2010), and a specification prepared by this company (AAL 2013).

1.3 The documentary archive will be submitted to Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service within six months of the completion of the fieldwork, where it will be stored under the museum accession code X.A184.2013.

2.0 Site Location and Description

2.1 The site is located within the parish of Melton Mowbray, in the administrative district of Melton Borough Council, approximately 21km northeast of central Leicester and 28km southeast of Nottingham (Figure 1). Sysonby Farm is located 2.1km north-northwest of the centre of Melton Mowbray and is centred on NGR SK 7442 2120. The site comprises an irregular shaped area of agricultural land and farm buildings which covers a total area of 40.04 hectares (Figure 2).

2.2 The bedrock geology is variable and comprises Charmouth Mudstone Formation is the southern half of the site and Dyrham Formation Siltstone and Mudstone in the northern half. Overlying superficial deposits of Oadby Member Diamicton are recorded across the site with localised areas of Head indicated within two shallow glacial valleys (http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html), which run across the site from north-northeast to south-southwest. At its highest the site is c.130m above Ordnance Datum and at its lowest it is c. 110m OD.

3.0 Planning Background

3.1 The proposed development entails a residential development of the site, although the number of dwellings or layout has not yet been finalised, as it is intended to submit an outline application in due course. As a first stage of archaeological investigation, a desk-based assessment was prepared for the scheme (AAL 2013). This identified a significant archaeological potential, due to the possibility of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery extending into the site, with evidence for prehistoric Roman and medieval activity nearby. Following consultation with the Principal Planning Archaeologist (HNET), a programme of non-intrusive survey was requested, comprising the current geophysical survey, and fieldwalking, for which a separate report has been prepared (AAL 2014).

3.2 The relevant planning policy which applies to the effect of development with regard to cultural heritage is Chapter 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment, of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Department for Communities and Local Government 2012). The current strategy is in line with the recommendations of this document.

4.0 Archaeological Background

4.1 The preceding desk-based assessment contained a detailed discussion of the sites archaeological setting, and this is summarised below.

4.2 Prehistoric and Roman activity in the area is restricted to a small number of findspots, including a Neolithic flint arrowhead, a Roman coin, a scatter of Roman pottery and painted plaster, and a number of cropmarks of later prehistoric or Roman date.

4.3 There is a 19th century reference to the discovery of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery during gravel digging. The precise location of this find is unclear, but the activity may extend into the northwest corner of the site.

4.4 Evidence for medieval activity is limited, and the site was probably within the agricultural hinterland of Melton Mowbray. The scheduled earthworks of the medieval Sysonby Grange are 250m to the west of the site.

4.5 The Grade II Listed 19th century hunting lodge at Sysonby Lodge is adjacent to the southern edge of the site, and the northern part of the site was used as a an airfield in World War One.

5.0 Methodology

5.0.1 The geophysical survey consisted of a detailed gradiometer survey of the entire development site, totalling approximately 35 hectares. The survey was undertaken in a series of 30m grids across the site.

5.0.2 The fieldwork was carried out over a period of fifteen working days, Monday 6th to Friday 10th and Monday 13th to Friday 17th January 2014, Tuesday 1st to Friday 4th and Monday 7th April by two teams of experienced geophysicists. The site was divided into 30m by 30m grids, established on site with reference to local fixed boundaries and accurately tied into the National Grid with Ordnance Survey base mapping using a survey grade Leica GS08 Netrover receiving RTK corrections.

5.0.3 The survey was undertaken using Bartington Grad601-2 Dual Fluxgate Gradiometers with onboard automatic DL601 data logger. This instrument is a highly stable magnetometer which utilises two vertically aligned fluxgates, one positioned 1m above the other. This arrangement is then duplicated and separated by a 1m cross bar. The 1m vertical spacing of the fluxgates provides for deeper anomaly detection capabilities than 0.5m spaced fluxgates. The dual arrangement allows for rapid assessment of the archaeological potential of the site. Data storage from the two fluxgate pairs is automatically combined into one file and stored using the onboard data logger.

5.0.4 Data collection was undertaken in a zigzag traverse pattern, using a sample interval of 0.25m and a traverse interval of 1m.

5.0.5 The fieldwork and reporting were carried out in accordance with the procedures in 'Geophysical Survey in Archaeological Field Evaluations' (English Heritage 2008) and 'The Use of Geophysical Techniques in Archaeological Evaluations: IfA Paper 6' (Gaffney et al. 2002).

5.1 Summary of Survey Parameters

5.1.1 Fluxgate Magnetometers

Instrument 1:	Bartington Grad601-2 Dual Fluxgate Gradiometer
Sample interval:	0.25m
Traverse interval:	1.00m
Traverse separation:	1.00m
Traverse method:	Zigzag
Resolution:	0.1 nT
Processing software:	Terrasurveyor 3.0.24.1
Surface conditions:	Pasture
Area surveyed:	23 ha
Date surveyed:	Monday 6th – Friday 17th January 2014, Tuesday 1st – Monday 7th April 2014
Surveyor:	Robert Evershed
Survey assistants:	Matt Gault and Iain Pringle
Data interpretation:	Robert Evershed

Instrument 2:	Bartington Grad601-2 Dual Fluxgate Gradiometer
Sample interval:	0.25m
Traverse interval:	1.00m
Traverse separation:	1.00m
Traverse method:	Zigzag
Resolution:	0.1 nT
Processing software:	Terrasurveyor 3.0.24.1
Surface conditions:	Pasture
Area surveyed:	12 ha
Date surveyed:	Monday 6th to Friday 17th January 2014
Surveyor:	Iain Pringle
Survey assistants:	Jedlee Chapman and Bill Baker
Data interpretation:	Robert Evershed

5.2 Data Collection and Processing

5.2.1 The grids were marked out using pre-programmed coordinates on the Leica GS08 Netrover. The collection of magnetic data using a north – south traverse pattern is preferable for a magnetic survey, as enhancements to the magnetic field caused by buried features is mapped increasingly stronger the closer the traverse direction can get to a magnetic north – south direction (Breiner 1999). On this occasion magnetic data was collected on a north – south alignment due to the orientation of the pre-programmed survey grids. Data was collected by making successive parallel traverses across each grid in a zigzag pattern. Several key points of the survey grids were accurately tied into the National Grid with Ordnance Survey base mapping using a Leica GS08 Netrover receiving RTK corrections.

5.2.2 The data collected from the survey has been analysed using the current version of Terrasurveyor 3.0.24.1. The resulting data set plots are presented with positive nT/m values and high resistance as black and negative nT/m values and low resistance as white.

The data sets have been subjected to processing using the following filters:

- De-stripe
- Clipping
- De-staggering

5.2.3 The de-stripe process is used to equalise underlying differences between grids or traverses. Differences are most often caused by directional effects inherent to magnetic surveying instruments, instrument drift, instrument orientation (for example off-axis surveying or heading errors) and delays between surveying adjacent grids. The de-stripe process is used with care however as it can sometimes have an adverse effect on linear features that run parallel to the orientation of the process.

5.2.4 The clipping process is used to remove extreme data point values which can mask fine detail in the data set. Excluding these values allows the details to show through.

5.2.5 The de-staggering process compensates for data correction errors caused by the operator commencing the recording of each traverse too soon or too late. It shifts each traverse forward or backwards by a specified number of intervals.

5.2.6 Plots of the data are presented in processed linear greyscale (smoothed) with any corrections to the measured values or filtering processes noted, and as separate simplified graphical interpretations of the main anomalies detected.

6.0 Results

6.1 For the purposes of interpreting the anomalies, the survey data has been processed to the values of -3 to 3 nT/m (Figure 4). This enhances faint anomalies that may otherwise not be noted in the data. The survey results revealed a number of anomalies across the data set, and these are discussed in turn and noted as one digit numbers in square brackets.

Field 1

6.2 At the western end of the field there are very noticeable positive linear anomalies [1] that start orientated west-northwest to east-southeast at the northern edge of the field but are more orientated north-northwest to south-southeast by the southern edge. These produced magnetic readings of 4-8nT/m and almost certainly relate to former ridge and furrow agricultural cultivation. Within this area there were three more distinct cultivation trends identified; a north to south trend (4nT/m), a northeast to southwest trend (2-4nT/m) and an east-northeast to west-southwest trend (1-2nT/m). These trends may relate to more modern agricultural cultivation.

6.3 The positive linear anomalies [1] continue to the east until they appear to end abruptly, respecting a pair (possibly more) of parallel linear positive anomalies [2] running north to south. These produce magnetic readings of 2-5nT/m that may be indicative of a migrating field boundary or trackway.

6.4 To the east of [2] there are a number of mostly parallel positive linear anomalies [3], producing readings of 2-3nT/m, which may represent ditches separating individual plots of land- potential crofts.

6.5 Orientated roughly north to south, slightly to the east of [3], are more parallel positive linear anomalies, [4] with readings of 2-5nT/m, which are likely represent more ridge and furrow cultivation. Further to the east there are a number of positive linear anomalies [4a] following

the same orientation that have slightly stronger magnetic readings, 4-8nT/m. These are also likely to relate to ridge and furrow, albeit with a higher magnetic signature than [4].

6.6 Running north northwest to south southeast through the centre of the field is a negative linear anomaly [5], -1 to -2nT/m, which relates to a ditch/drainage channel. This cuts through [4a].

6.7 There are a further set of parallel positive linear anomalies [6], this time orientated north-northwest to south-southeast, producing readings of 1-3nT/m. These likely relate to more ridge and furrow cultivation at the northeast corner of the site.

6.8 Running roughly east to west across part of the eastern end of the field are a series of positive linear anomalies [7], 1-3nT/m. These correspond with a former field boundary seen on the 1845 Tithe Map (AAL 2013, Figure 4).

6.9 In the south-eastern corner of the field there is a north – south linear dipolar feature, producing readings of -50 to +50nT/m, with some spikes greater than -100 to +100nT/m, that appears to join up with a linear area of magnetic noise that continues north slightly before turning to the east and running to the edge of the field. This produced readings of -5 to +10nT/m, with occasional larger spikes. These features [8] likely relate to former field boundaries seen on aerial photographs, with the particularly high and low readings suggestive of a service pipe for example.

6.10 There is a curvilinear positive anomaly [9] in the southwestern corner of the field, 4-8nT/m, that reflects a former field boundary seen on the Tithe Map (AAL 2013, Figure 4).

6.11 Of some interest is anomaly [10]. This circular positive anomaly with magnetic readings of 2-4nT/m morphologically resembles a prehistoric roundhouse drip gully or the remains of a funerary round barrow.

Field 2

6.12 Field 2 is characterised by a complex of linears, curvilinears and amorphous anomalies, [11], that are characteristic of a multiphase occupation area comprising a series of enclosures and possible pits. The anomalies include a double-linear anomaly that is likely to represent a trackway running southeast to northwest, possibly linking with Anomaly [2] in Field 1. In the centre of the site these parallel features produce readings of mostly 10 to 15nT/m but up to 40nT/m. Slightly away from the focus of the complex to the northwest the readings are much lower, namely 1-3nT/m.

6.13 There are some amorphous positive anomalies throughout the settlement area with magnetic signatures generally of 8-10nT/m but occasionally as high as 20nT/m that may represent former storage/rubbish pits, soil-filled hollows or former ponds. A cluster of these is highlighted as anomaly [11a].

6.14 Anomaly [12] is a large area of magnetic noise associated with a few very large dipolar spikes. These appear to correspond to a large hollow that was visible during the survey and identified in the desk-based assessment (AAL 2013, plate 4). There are also a large number of strong and weak dipolar responses scattered randomly throughout the entire site. The characteristic dipole response of pairs of positive and negative ‘spikes’ suggest near surface ferrous metal or other highly fired material.

6.15 There is some evidence of probable ridge and furrow running on a northwest to southeast alignment throughout the field. It is not clear if this activity pre- or post-dates the complex evidence of human activity across Field 2.

Field 3

6.16 The field was characterised by abundant parallel positive linear anomalies with magnetic signatures of 4nT/m running roughly east to west. These are further evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation activity in the landscape.

6.17 A linear positive anomaly, 2-3nT/m, was noted in the northwest corner of the field that appears to be respected by [14]. This may be part of the complex of activity highlighted in Field 2 and may form part of a former boundary feature.

6.18 There are a few short linear positive anomalies [15], 2-3nT/m up to 8nT/m, orientated north to south within the field. These may relate to former ditches, possibly related to the complex in Field 2, although their orientations suggest they may not be contemporary.

Field 4

6.19 Again, Field 4 is dominated by parallel linear positive anomalies that are evidence of ridge and furrow, [16]. On this occasion the orientation is broadly east-southeast to west-northwest.

6.20 A positive linear anomaly measuring 2-4nT/m is noted in the east half of the field running northwest to southeast, [17]. This follows the alignment of the complex in Field 2 and is probably related to these remains.

Field 5

6.21 Ridge and furrow is also evident in Field 5 although it is more ephemeral in the data exhibiting readings of 2-4nT/m and running east – west, [18].

6.22 Two closely spaced parallel negative anomalies, [19], with magnetic readings of -2 to -4nT/are not of archaeological interest as they reflect modern tractor tracks.

6.23 There is a linear dipolar anomaly [20], +/-20nT/m, running east – west across field 5 that may represent a land drain or more likely a small modern service pipe.

Field 6

6.24 Field 6 is dominated by further evidence of ridge and furrow activity on several alignments, [21] and [22]. Anomaly group [21] includes both positive and negative anomalies running mostly east – west and likely to reflect both ridges and furrows, with readings of 1-2nT/m and -3 to -6nT/m. Group [22] was orientated northeast to southwest and seems to respect or is cut by [21]. It produced magnetic readings of 2nT/m.

6.25 A particularly large dipolar spike [23] in the northwest corner of Field 6 with values greater than +/-100nT/m is likely to represent a modern ferrous object.

6.26 There is a long linear dipolar anomaly [24], +/-100nT/m, running roughly north to south along the western edge of the field. This likely relates to a modern service, possibly a water pipe.

Field 7

6.27 The geophysical survey results in Field 7 were curious and anomalous to Fields 1 – 6. The whole field exhibited magnetic noise covering the entire field, [25]. This is not completely uniform in character, and there are areas producing greater and lesser readings. The majority of the field produces readings of +/-20nT/m, with some areas as high as +/-50nT/m or greater. There may be a slight linear trend to the noise, running roughly northwest to southeast suggesting ploughing in this direction up and down the slope may have contributed and had an effect on the magnetic noise.

6.28 The dipolar spikes [26] relate to telegraph poles carrying electrical cables, and produced readings of +/-100nT/m.

Field 8

6.29 Field 8 is also covered in an area of magnetic noise [27], similar to Fields 7 and 9. However there are lower readings in this field, +/-10nT/m, except for a small area at the northeast corner of the field where the readings are +/-50nT/m or higher.

6.30 Despite the presence of the magnetic noise, it appears that there may be potential positive linears orientated roughly east – west running across the field [28]. These have produced readings of roughly 2-4nT/m and are suggestive of further former ridge and furrow activity.

6.31 The eastern edge of the survey within Field 8 has produced a large linear positive anomaly [29], producing readings of 100nT/m. This relates to a large metal fence separating the field from a school playground.

Field 9

6.32 Anomaly [30] relates to magnetic noise covering this field, very similar to Fields 7 and 8, and producing readings similar to Field 7.

6.33 A series of telegraph poles with associated electricity cables were noted in the field and these are shown as dipolar spikes [31]. The dipolar spikes and associated linears produced readings of +/-100nT/m.

7.0 Discussion and Conclusions

7.1 Immediately apparent within the survey is a complex of anomalies of archaeological interest focussed in Field 2, but potentially extending into Fields 3 and 4. This complex seems to comprise a series of circular and rectilinear enclosures focussed on a probable trackway orientated northwest to southeast. It is perhaps not coincidental that the probable trackway seems to begin or end at its southeast end adjacent to a spring line that is evident today but is probably therefore of some antiquity. The series of linear anomalies associated with this group follow several alignments suggestive of activity over a period of time that saw the realignment of boundaries.

7.2 The geophysical survey has also identified widespread evidence of former ridge and furrow cultivation across the proposed development area, especially in Fields 1 and 3-6, but also in Fields 2 and 8.

7.3 Fields 7-9 were characterised by extensive magnetic noise, and, in Field 9, it was clear during the survey that this was likely at least in part due to quantities of modern building debris spread across the entire of the field. For Fields 7 and 8 it was less certain that this was the reason for the disturbance in the survey due to a lack of surface litter being present. It should however also be noted that Fields 7 – 9 were not accessible at the time of the initial investigations in January 2014 due to waterlogging, so were surveyed in April 2014 when conditions improved.

8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

8.1 The non-intrusive evaluation methodology employed was appropriate to the scale and nature of the site surveyed. Magnetometry surveying was the prospection technique best suited to the identification of archaeological remains on the site. Other techniques would have required justification and may have proved too time consuming or cost-prohibitive.

9.0 Acknowledgements

9.1 Allen Archaeology Limited would like to thank Leicestershire County Council for this commission.

10.0 References

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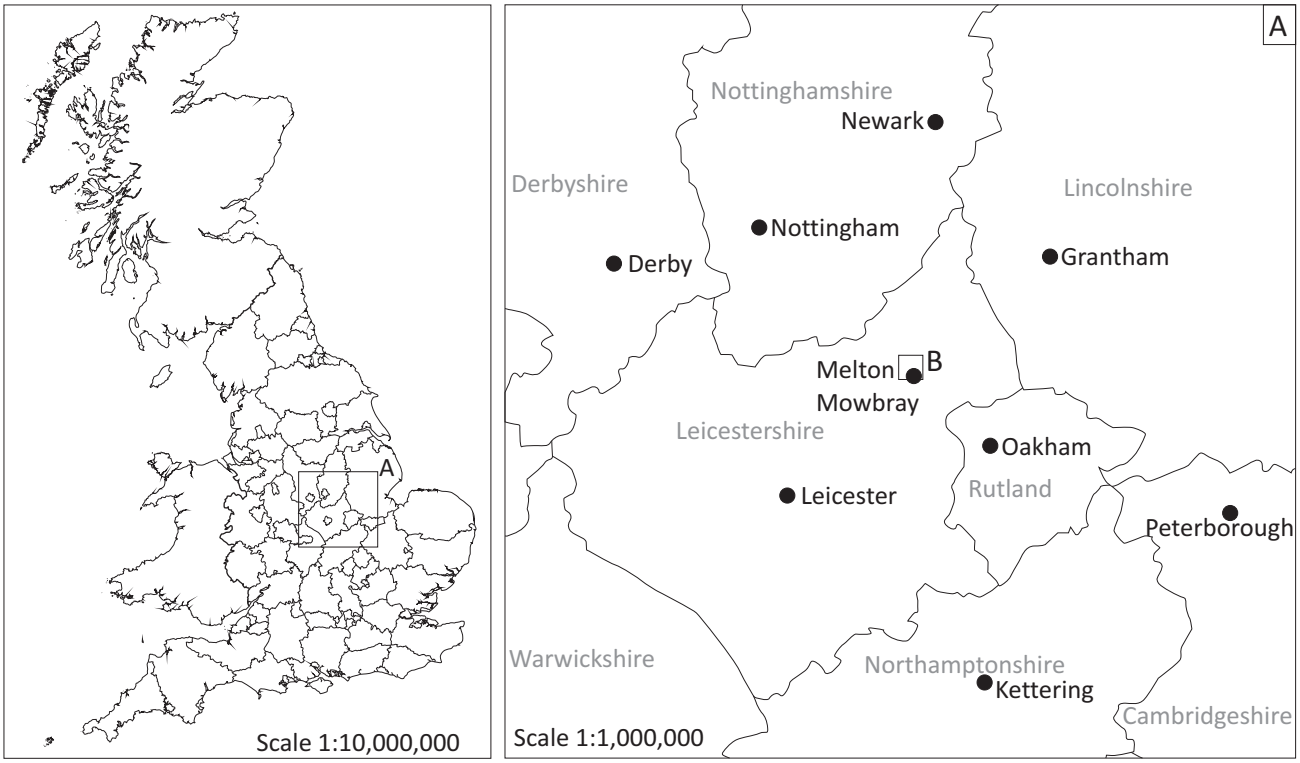

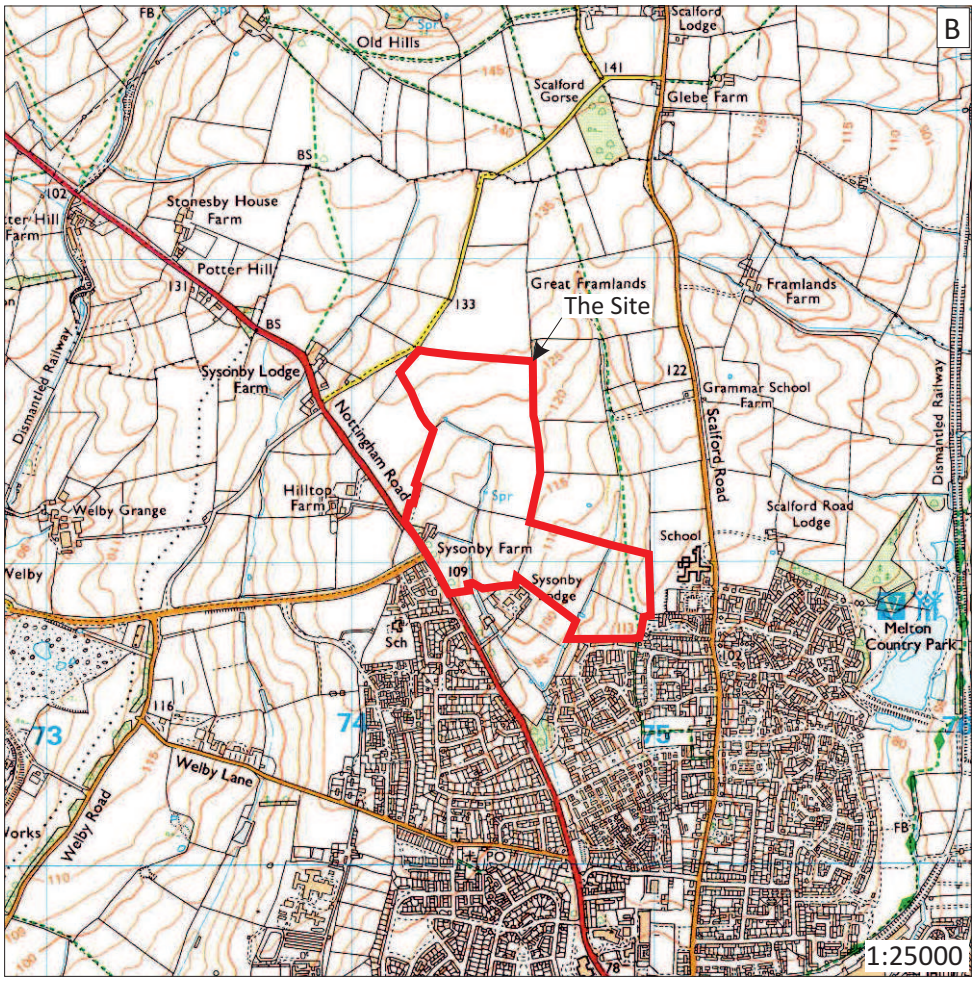

Figure 1: Site location outlined in red

Site Code	MESY 13
Scales	1:10,000,000 1:1,000,000 1:25,000 @ A4
Drawn by	R Eversheed
Date	09/04/2014

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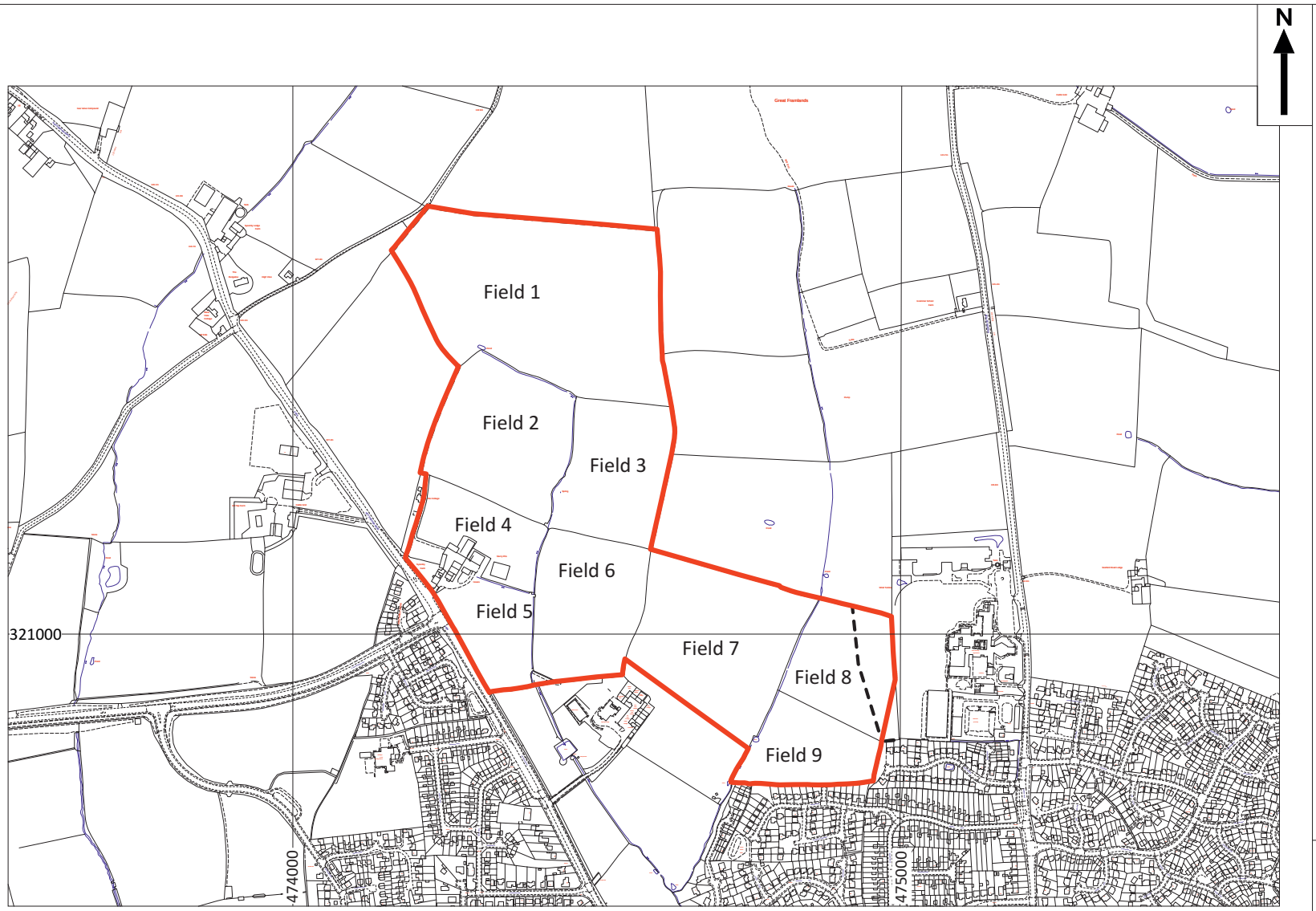

Site Code	MESY 13
Scale	1:10,000 @ A4
Drawn by	Robert Evershed
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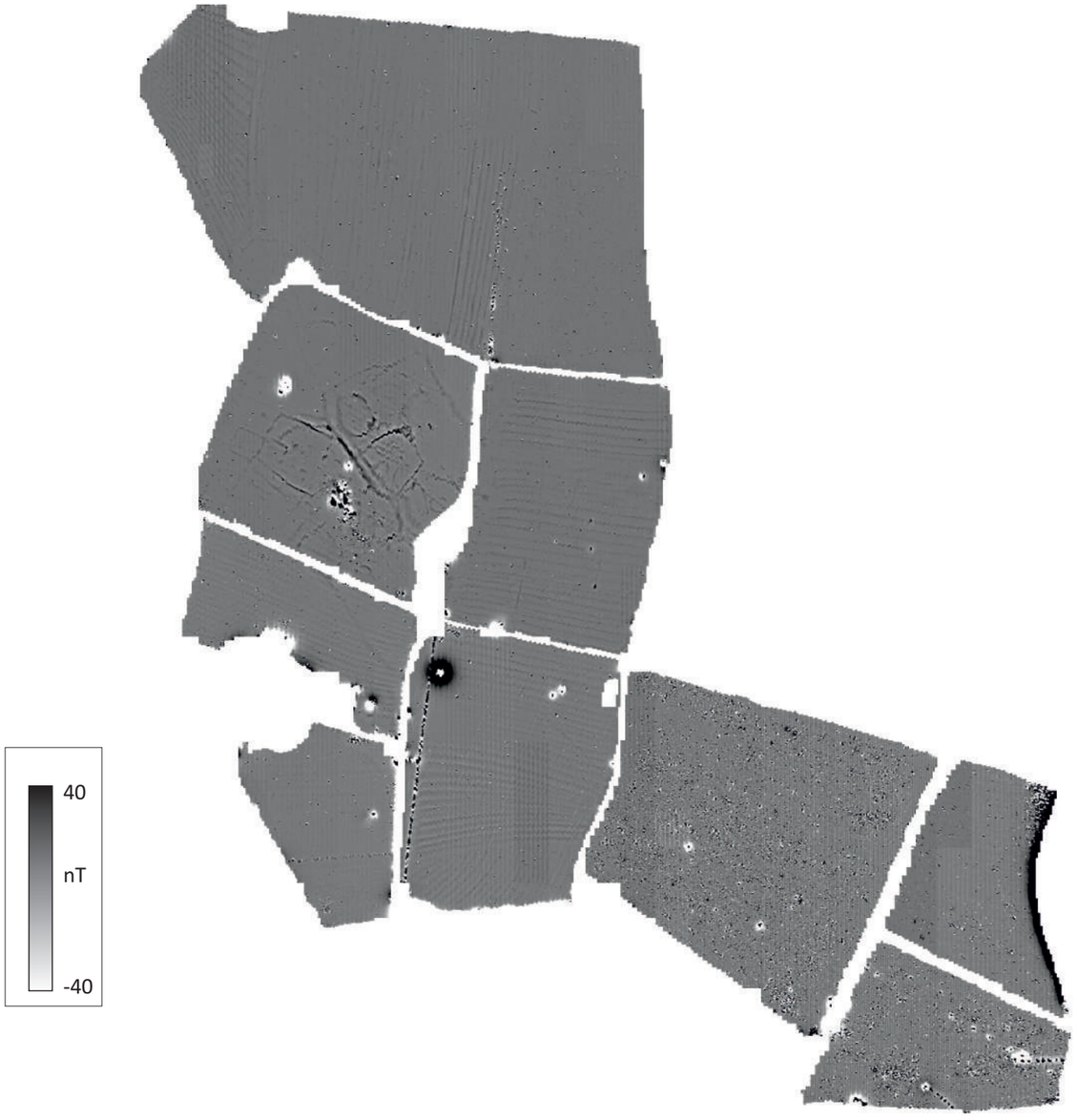
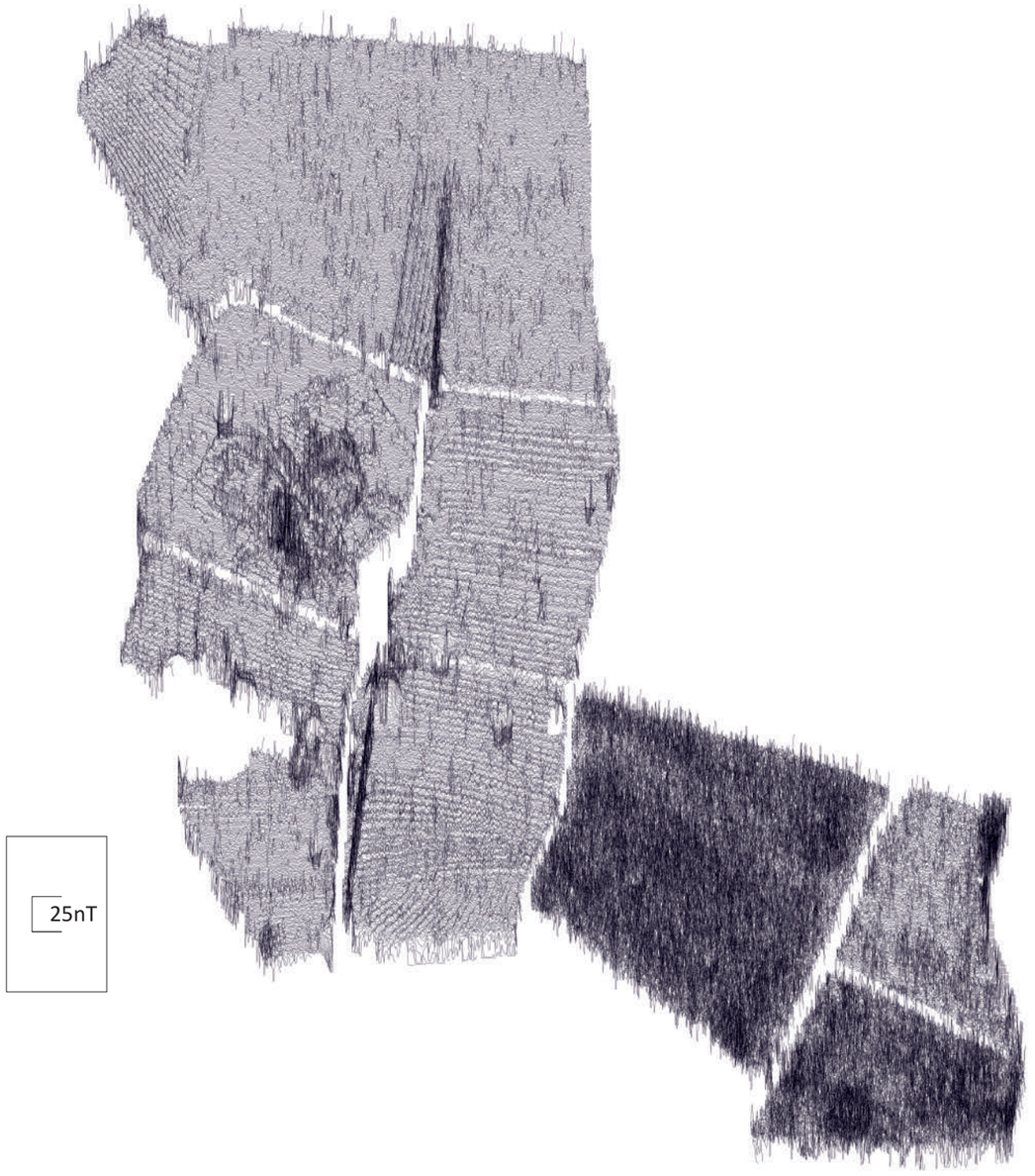
Figure 2: Map showing the location of the site and field numbering system

Raw data (clipped to +/- 40 nT)



Trace Plot (ZMT and clipped to +/- 25nT)



N

Site Code	MESY 13
Scale	1:5,000 @ A3
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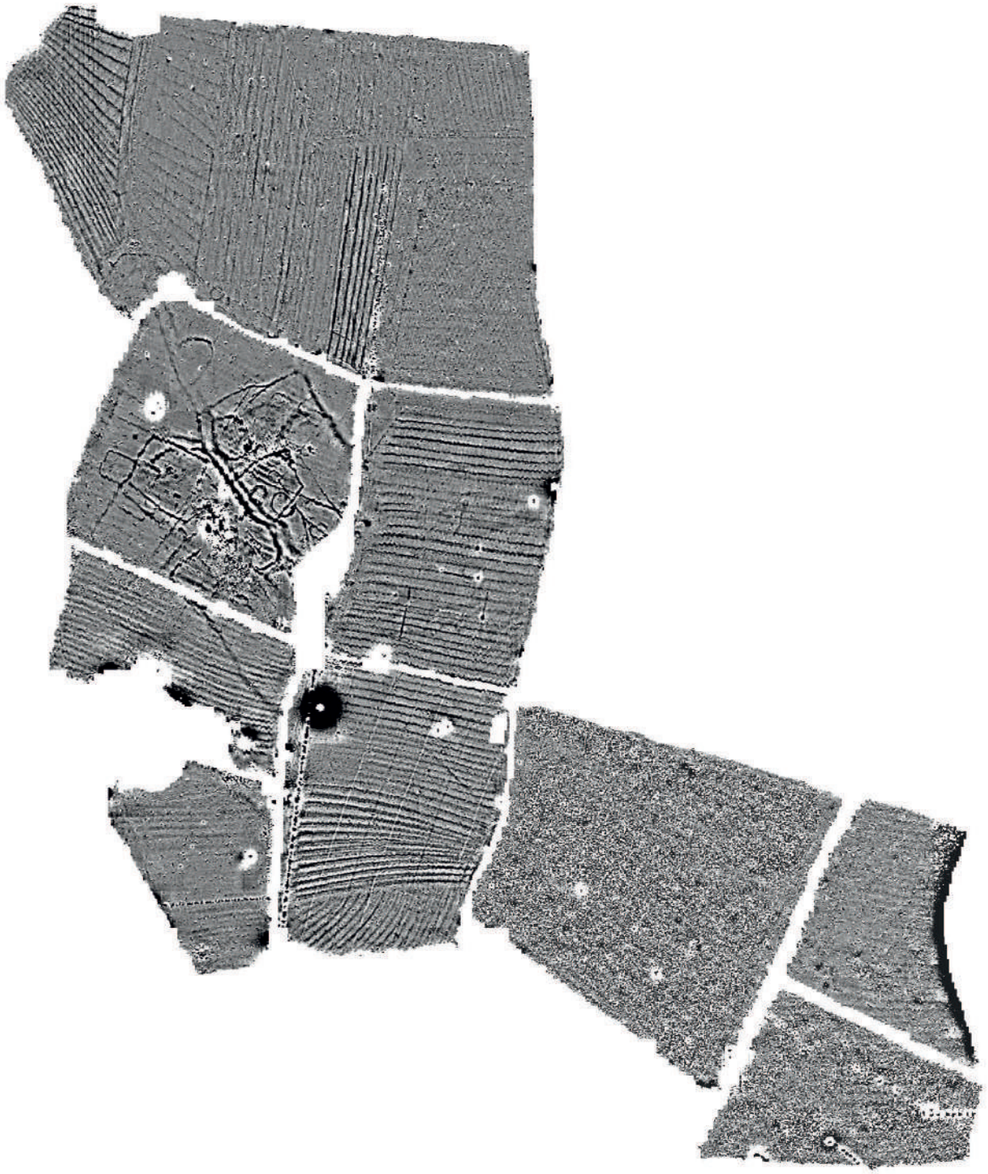
Figure 3: Greyscale raw data and processed trace plot

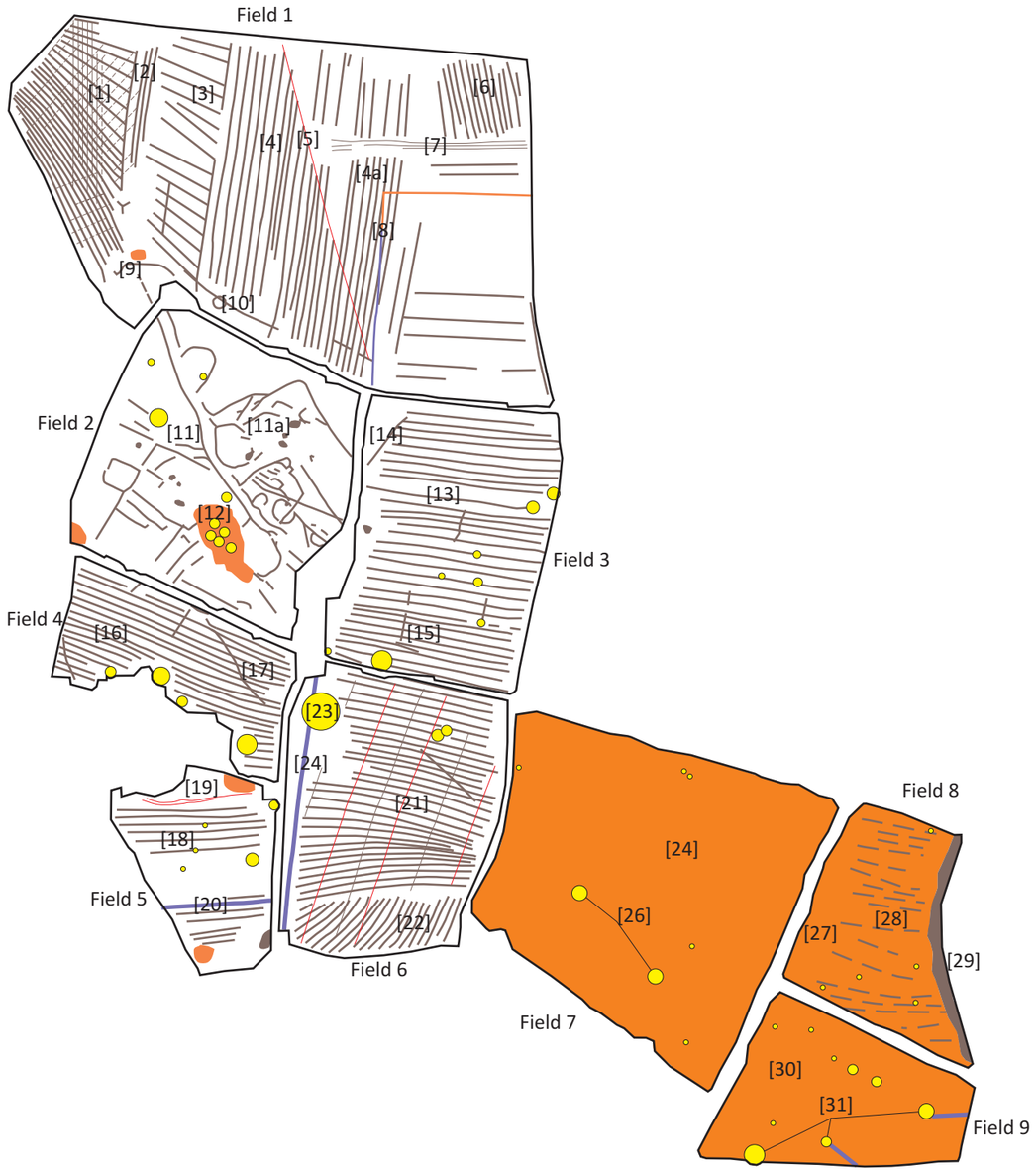
Processed (ZMT and clipped to +/- 3 nT)



0 500m

Scale 1:5,000

Interpretation of Survey Results



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Scale	1:5,000 @ A3
Drawn by	Robert Eversheed
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Figure 4: Processed greyscale plot of survey area with interpretation outlined in black

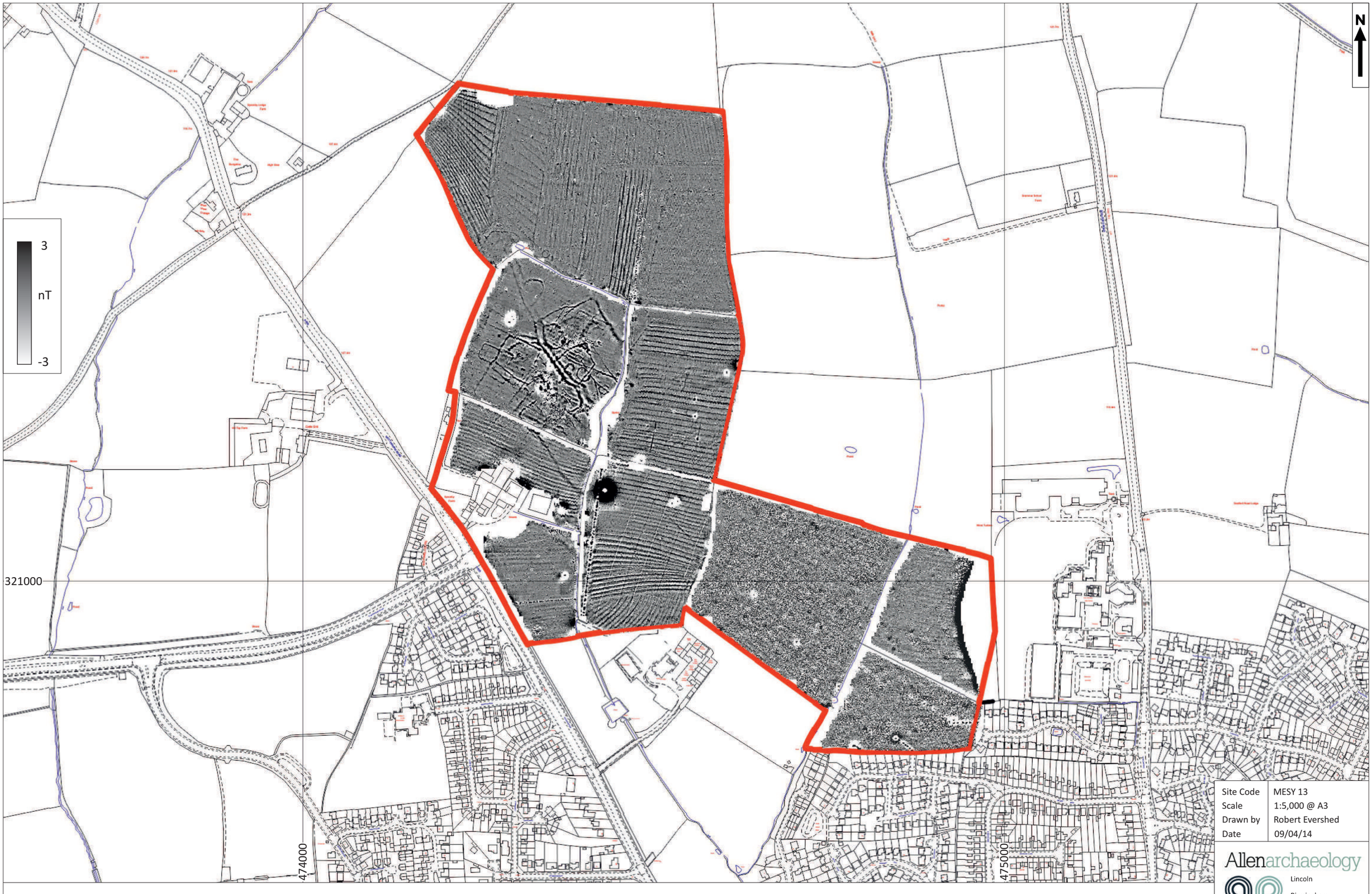
Dipolar linear anomaly

Positive magnetic anomaly

Negative magnetic anomaly

Area of magnetic noise

Examples* of individual dipolar responses
Indicative of ferrous or highly fired material
*smaller responses omitted for clarity



Site Code	MESY 13
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Figure 5: Processed greyscale located in real space

N

321000

474000

475000

Figure 6: Interpretation located in real space

Dipolar linear anomaly

Negative magnetic anomaly

Area of magnetic noise

Positive magnetic anomaly

Examples* of individual dipolar responses
Indicative of ferrous or highly fired material
*smaller responses omitted for clarity

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