

# GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY REPORT

# sumo

Survey

**GEOPHYSICS FOR  
ARCHAEOLOGY &  
ENGINEERING**

**Coalpit Heath,  
South Gloucestershire**

Client  
**Edward Ware Homes**

Survey Report  
**10822**

Date  
**February 2017**

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## GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY REPORT

Project name: **Coalpit Heath, South Gloucestershire** SUMO Job reference: **10822**

Client:  
**Edward Ware Homes**

Survey date:  
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## DIGITAL CONTENT (Archive Data)

- Minimally Processed Greyscale Images and XY Trace Plots in DWG format
- DWG Viewer
- Digital Copies of Report Text and Figures (both PDF and native formats)

## 1 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

A detailed gradiometry survey was conducted over approximately 53ha of arable land. A rectilinear enclosure has been identified, along with several possible archaeological responses. Further anomalies of uncertain origin have been detected, being possibly archaeological, natural or agricultural.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Background synopsis

**SUMO Surveys** were commissioned to undertake a geophysical survey of an area outlined for residential development. This survey forms part of an archaeological investigation being undertaken by **Edward Ware Homes**.

### 2.2 Site details

<b>NGR / Postcode</b>	ST 684 807 / BS36 2QT
<b>Location</b>	The site is located to the east of Coalpit Heath, Gloucestershire, on land surrounding Froglane Farm.
<b>Unitary Authority</b>	South Gloucestershire
<b>Parish</b>	Westerleigh CP
<b>Topography</b>	The east of the site occupies relatively level ground, however the west of the site comprises more steeply undulating ground, with two areas rising to a level of c.70m AOD.
<b>Current Land Use</b>	Arable
<b>Weather Conditions</b>	Sunny, occasional showers
<b>Geology</b>	Solid: Farrington Member and Barren Red Member (undifferentiated) – mudstone across majority of the site with several bands of sandstone (Farrington Member and Barren Red Member) across the site. Superficial: None recorded (British Geological Survey website).
<b>Soils</b>	Dale Association (712a) – slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged, clayey and fine loamy soils (SSEW 1983)
<b>Archaeology</b>	Historic England's PastScape (HE 2017) records a number of medieval, post-medieval and industrial remains within a 1km radius, along with a cropmark of uncertain origin (1591065). A former coal mine is recorded at Frog Lane (ST68SE15), which was operational between 1850 and 1949.
<b>Survey Methods</b>	Magnetometer survey (fluxgate gradiometer)
<b>Study Area</b>	c.53 ha

### 2.3 Aims and Objectives

To locate and characterise any anomalies of possible archaeological interest within the study area.

### 3 METHODS, PROCESSING & PRESENTATION

#### 3.1 Standards & Guidance

This report and all fieldwork have been conducted in accordance with the latest guidance documents issued by Historic England (EH 2008) (then English Heritage) and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2002 & ClfA 2014).

#### 3.2 Survey methods

Detailed magnetic survey was chosen as an efficient and effective method of locating archaeological anomalies.

Technique	Instrument	Traverse Interval	Sample Interval
Magnetometer	Bartington Grad 601-2	1.0m	0.25m

More information regarding this technique is included in Appendix A

#### 3.3 Data Processing

The following basic processing steps have been carried out on the data used in this report:

*De-stripe*  
*De-stagger*  
*Interpolate*

#### 3.4 Presentation of results and interpretation

The presentation of the results for each site involves a grey-scale and colour-scale plot of processed data. Magnetic anomalies are identified, interpreted and plotted onto the 'Interpretation' drawings. The minimally processed data are provided as a greyscale image in the Archive Data Folder with an XY trace plot in CAD format. A CAD viewer is also provided.

When interpreting the results, several factors are taken into consideration, including the nature of archaeological features being investigated and the local conditions at the site (geology, pedology, topography etc.). Anomalies are categorised by their potential origin. Where responses can be related to other existing evidence, the anomalies will be given specific categories, such as: *Abbey Wall* or *Roman Road*. Where the interpretation is based largely on the geophysical data, levels of confidence are implied, for example: *Probable*, or *Possible Archaeology*. The former is used for a confident interpretation, based on anomaly definition and/or other corroborative data such as cropmarks. Poor anomaly definition, a lack of clear patterns to the responses and an absence of other supporting data reduces confidence, hence the classification *Possible*.

## 4 RESULTS

*The survey has been divided into 9 survey areas (Areas 1-9); where considered appropriate, specific anomalies have been given numerical labels [1], [2] and these appear in the text below, as well as on the Interpretation Figure(s).*

### 4.1 **Probable Archaeology**

- 4.1.1 Positive linear anomalies [1], forming a rectilinear enclosure, have been detected in Area 1. Given the location on an area of higher ground, they responses are clearly of archaeological interest, and it is possible that they may have later prehistoric or Roman origin.

### 4.2 **Possible Archaeology**

- 4.2.1 A number of positive linear, curvilinear and discrete responses [2] are dispersed within the above enclosure [1] and throughout the irregular shaped enclosure of uncertain origin [see Section 4.6.1] An archaeological origin seems likely, however, the responses are located on an area of high ground, which comprises a different geology to its lower surroundings. It is therefore possible that the anomalies may be geological/pedological in origin. Distinguishing between possible archaeological and natural responses is extremely difficult, hence all of the responses being categorised as 'possible archaeology'.

- 4.2.2 Positive linear anomalies [3] are visible in Areas 5 and 6 and are indicative of former cut features, such as ditches. The anomalies in Area 6 appear to form a small rectilinear enclosure, however its origin cannot be determined with confidence. Given that several positive discrete responses, indicative of backfilled pits, have been detected adjacent to the linears, it is possible that the anomalies relate to an area of former settlement activity. This interpretation, however, is tentative at best.

- 4.2.3 Positive linear and discrete responses in the west of Area 1 may be archaeological in origin, given their proximity to the probable archaeology of [1]. The responses may also be natural in origin, or may be related to the former coal mining activity recorded around the site.

### 4.3 **Former Field Boundary**

- 4.3.1 Several positive linear anomalies and areas of enhanced magnetic response have been detected across the site (Areas 1,2,3,5,7,8,9). These have all been corroborated, and are all visible on mapping dating back to 1772.

### 4.4 **Agricultural – Ploughing, Land drains**

- 4.4.1 Closely spaced, magnetically weak, parallel linear anomalies are visible in Areas 1, 2, 3, 5, 8 7 9. These are a result of modern agricultural activity, such as ploughing.

#### 4.5 ***Natural / Geological / Pedological / Topographic***

- 4.5.1 Sinuous bands of enhanced magnetic response are visible in several locations across the site. These are typical or natural responses detected across mudstone and sandstone geologies.

#### 4.6 ***Uncertain***

- 4.6.1 A series of positive discrete and linear responses [4] form an irregular-shaped enclosure in Area 1. The anomalies follow the contours of an area of high ground in this location and also encircle an area of sandstone. It is possible that the responses are archaeological in origin, however it is equally likely that they are of natural origin, perhaps related to the effects of ploughing or erosion at the border of two geological zones.
- 4.6.2 A positive linear anomaly with associated negative response [5] runs down the north-western edge of the site, and its exact origin is unknown. The anomaly may relate to a former trackway, or possibly to a former drainage channel associated with the coal mining of the area.
- 4.6.3 Positive linear anomalies [6] in Area 5 are similar in response to those of [3], albeit less clearly defined. The anomaly oriented approximately north-south may relate to an extension of the field boundary immediately to the north, though the exact origin remains unclear.
- 4.6.4 A series of weak, positive linear anomalies across Area 3 may relate to former field boundaries, not present on available historic mapping, though the weak nature of the response makes their exact origin difficult to determine.
- 4.6.5 Further weak linear and discrete responses have been detected across the site, and they may be natural in origin, a result of coal mining activity or of later agricultural origin. The discrete anomalies in the east [7] are thought more likely to be of natural origin, as they correspond with bands of sandstone.

#### 4.7 ***Ferrous / Magnetic Disturbance***

- 4.7.1 Strong linear anomalies and areas of magnetic disturbance [8] in Field 8 are related to a former railway, associated with the former coal mine to the north.
- 4.7.2 An area of increased magnetic response [9] in Area 8 corresponds with the location of a former field boundary, visible on available historic mapping, and as such is likely associated with this.
- 4.7.3 Discrete areas of strong magnetic debris [10] in Areas 7 and 9 are related to backfilled ponds, which are visible on available historic mapping.
- 4.7.4 Strong bipolar linear anomalies [11] and a weaker bipolar linear anomaly [12] are related to underground services, such as pipes or cables.

- 4.7.5 Ferrous responses close to boundaries are due to adjacent fences and gates. Smaller scale ferrous anomalies ("iron spikes") are present throughout the data and their form is best illustrated in the XY trace plots or the colour-scale plots. These responses are characteristic of small pieces of ferrous debris (or brick / tile / igneous rocks) in the topsoil and are commonly assigned a modern origin. Only the most prominent of these are highlighted on the interpretation diagram.

## 5 DATA APPRAISAL & CONFIDENCE ASSESSMENT

English Heritage Guidelines (EH 2008) Table 4 states that the average magnetic response on both mudstone and sandstone can be variable. However, the detection of a rectilinear enclosure, along with numerous possible archaeological anomalies, suggests that this survey is likely to have been effective.

## 6 CONCLUSION

The survey at Coalpit Heath has identified a rectilinear enclosure, along with linear and discrete responses of possible archaeological interest. Several anomalies of uncertain origin have been detected, being possibly archaeological, natural or agricultural.

Former field boundaries, backfilled ponds and evidence of ploughing suggest the site has a more recent agricultural past.



## 7 REFERENCES

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## Appendix A - Technical Information: Magnetometer Survey Method

### Grid Positioning

For hand held gradiometers the location of the survey grids has been plotted together with the referencing information. Grids were set out using a Trimble R8 Real Time Kinematic (RTK) VRS Now GNSS GPS system.

An RTK GPS (Real-time Kinematic Global Positioning System) can locate a point on the ground to a far greater accuracy than a standard GPS unit. A standard GPS suffers from errors created by satellite orbit errors, clock errors and atmospheric interference, resulting in an accuracy of 5m-10m. An RTK system uses a single base station receiver and a number of mobile units. The base station re-broadcasts the phase of the carrier it measured, and the mobile units compare their own phase measurements with those they received from the base station. This results in an accuracy of around 0.01m.

Technique	Instrument	Traverse Interval	Sample Interval
Magnetometer	Bartington Grad 601-2	1m	0.25m

### Instrumentation: **Bartington Grad 601-2**

Bartington instruments operate in a gradiometer configuration which comprises fluxgate sensors mounted vertically, set 1.0m apart. The fluxgate gradiometer suppresses any diurnal or regional effects. The instruments are carried, or cart mounted, with the bottom sensor approximately 0.1-0.3m from the ground surface. At each survey station, the difference in the magnetic field between the two fluxgates is measured in nanoTesla (nT). The sensitivity of the instrument can be adjusted; for most archaeological surveys the most sensitive range (0.1nT) is used. Generally, features up to 1m deep may be detected by this method, though strongly magnetic objects may be visible at greater depths. The Bartington instrument can collect two lines of data per traverse with gradiometer units mounted laterally with a separation of 1.0m. The readings are logged consecutively into the data logger which in turn is daily down-loaded into a portable computer whilst on site. At the end of each site survey, data is transferred to the office for processing and presentation.

### Data Processing

Zero Mean Traverse	This process sets the background mean of each traverse within each grid to zero. The operation removes striping effects and edge discontinuities over the whole of the data set.
Step Correction (De-stagger)	When gradiometer data are collected in 'zig-zag' fashion, stepping errors can sometimes arise. These occur because of a slight difference in the speed of walking on the forward and reverse traverses. The result is a staggered effect in the data, which is particularly noticeable on linear anomalies. This process corrects these errors.

### Display

Greyscale/ Colourscale Plot	This format divides a given range of readings into a set number of classes. Each class is represented by a specific shade of grey, the intensity increasing with value. All values above the given range are allocated the same shade (maximum intensity); similarly, all values below the given range are represented by the minimum intensity shade. Similar plots can be produced in colour, either using a wide range of colours or by selecting two or three colours to represent positive and negative values. The assigned range (plotting levels) can be adjusted to emphasise different anomalies in the data-set.
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## Interpretation Categories

In certain circumstances (usually when there is corroborative evidence from desk-based or excavation data) very specific interpretations can be assigned to magnetic anomalies (for example, *Roman Road, Wall, etc.*) and where appropriate, such interpretations will be applied. The list below outlines the generic categories commonly used in the interpretation of the results.

<i>Archaeology / Probable Archaeology</i>	This term is used when the form, nature and pattern of the responses are clearly or very probably archaeological and /or if corroborative evidence is available. These anomalies, whilst considered anthropogenic, could be of any age.
<i>Possible Archaeology</i>	These anomalies exhibit either weak signal strength and / or poor definition, or form incomplete archaeological patterns, thereby reducing the level of confidence in the interpretation. Although the archaeological interpretation is favoured, they may be the result of variable soil depth, plough damage or even aliasing as a result of data collection orientation.
<i>Industrial / Burnt-Fired</i>	Strong magnetic anomalies that, due to their shape and form or the context in which they are found, suggest the presence of kilns, ovens, corn dryers, metal-working areas or hearths. It should be noted that in many instances modern ferrous material can produce similar magnetic anomalies.
<i>Former Field Boundary (probable &amp; possible)</i>	Anomalies that correspond to former boundaries indicated on historic mapping, or which are clearly a continuation of existing land divisions. Possible denotes less confidence where the anomaly may not be shown on historic mapping but nevertheless the anomaly displays all the characteristics of a field boundary.
<i>Ridge &amp; Furrow</i>	Parallel linear anomalies whose broad spacing suggests ridge and furrow cultivation. In some cases, the response may be the result of more recent agricultural activity.
<i>Agriculture (ploughing)</i>	Parallel linear anomalies or trends with a narrower spacing, sometimes aligned with existing boundaries, indicating more recent cultivation regimes.
<i>Land Drain</i>	Weakly magnetic linear anomalies, quite often appearing in series forming parallel and herringbone patterns. Smaller drains may lead and empty into larger diameter pipes, which in turn usually lead to local streams and ponds. These are indicative of clay fired land drains.
<i>Natural</i>	These responses form clear patterns in geographical zones where natural variations are known to produce significant magnetic distortions.
<i>Magnetic Disturbance</i>	Broad zones of strong dipolar anomalies, commonly found in places where modern ferrous or fired materials (e.g. brick rubble) are present. They are presumed to be modern.
<i>Service</i>	Magnetically strong anomalies, usually forming linear features are indicative of ferrous pipes/cables. Sometimes other materials (e.g. pvc) or the fill of the trench can cause weaker magnetic responses which can be identified from their uniform linearity.
<i>Ferrous</i>	This type of response is associated with ferrous material and may result from small items in the topsoil, larger buried objects such as pipes, or above ground features such as fence lines or pylons. Ferrous responses are usually regarded as modern. Individual burnt stones, fired bricks or igneous rocks can produce responses similar to ferrous material.
<i>Uncertain Origin</i>	Anomalies which stand out from the background magnetic variation, yet whose form and lack of patterning gives little clue as to their origin. Often the characteristics and distribution of the responses straddle the categories of <i>Possible Archaeology / Natural</i> or (in the case of linear responses) <i>Possible Archaeology / Agriculture</i> ; occasionally they are simply of an unusual form.

Where appropriate some anomalies will be further classified according to their form (positive or negative) and relative strength and coherence (trend: weak and poorly defined).

## Appendix B - Technical Information: Magnetic Theory

Detailed magnetic survey can be used to effectively define areas of past human activity by mapping spatial variation and contrast in the magnetic properties of soil, subsoil and bedrock. Although the changes in the magnetic field resulting from differing features in the soil are usually weak, changes as small as 0.1 nanoTeslas (nT) in an overall field strength of 48,000 (nT), can be accurately detected.

Weakly magnetic iron minerals are always present within the soil and areas of enhancement relate to increases in *magnetic susceptibility* and permanently magnetised *thermoremanent* material.

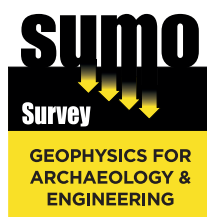
Magnetic susceptibility relates to the induced magnetism of a material when in the presence of a magnetic field. This magnetism can be considered as effectively permanent as it exists within the Earth's magnetic field. Magnetic susceptibility can become enhanced due to burning and complex biological or fermentation processes.

Thermoremanence is a permanent magnetism acquired by iron minerals that, after heating to a specific temperature known as the Curie Point, are effectively demagnetised followed by re-magnetisation by the Earth's magnetic field on cooling. Thermoremanent archaeological features can include hearths and kilns; material such as brick and tile may be magnetised through the same process.

Silting and deliberate infilling of ditches and pits with magnetically enhanced soil creates a relative contrast against the much lower levels of magnetism within the subsoil into which the feature is cut. Systematic mapping of magnetic anomalies will produce linear and discrete areas of enhancement allowing assessment and characterisation of subsurface features. Material such as subsoil and non-magnetic bedrock used to create former earthworks and walls may be mapped as areas of lower enhancement compared to surrounding soils.

Magnetic survey is carried out using a fluxgate gradiometer which is a passive instrument consisting of two sensors mounted vertically 1m apart. The instrument is carried about 30cm above the ground surface and the top sensor measures the Earth's magnetic field whilst the lower sensor measures the same field but is also more affected by any localised buried feature. The difference between the two sensors will relate to the strength of a magnetic field created by this feature, if no field is present the difference will be close to zero as the magnetic field measured by both sensors will be the same.

Factors affecting the magnetic survey may include soil type, local geology, previous human activity and disturbance from modern services.



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