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**Land at Roundponds Farm
Broughton Gifford
Wiltshire**

Geophysical Survey

Report no. DRAFT

February 2014

Client: Cotswold Archaeology



Land at Roundponds Farm Broughton Gifford Wiltshire

Geophysical Survey

Summary

A geophysical (magnetometer) survey covering approximately 26 hectares was carried out on agricultural land at Roundponds Farm, Broughton Gifford, to inform the determination of an outline planning application for a proposed solar park. No anomalies of archaeological potential have been identified, and none have been identified at the sites of two possible ring ditches which are recorded within the Wiltshire HER. The survey has mainly detected anomalies which are consistent with the 19th century agricultural landscape as depicted on historical mapping sources, although evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation may suggest an earlier medieval agricultural land use. Therefore, on the basis of the magnetic survey the archaeological potential of the site is considered to be low, confirming the conclusions of a desk-based assessment of the site.



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Report Information

Client: Cotswold Archaeology
Address: Unit 4, Cromwell Business Centre, Howard Way, Newport Pagnell, MK16 9QS
Report Type: Geophysical Survey
Location: Broughton Gifford
County: Wiltshire
Grid Reference: ST 8882 6415
Period(s) of activity: medieval/post-medieval?
Report Number: DRAFT
Project Number: 4202
Site Code: MKS14
OASIS ID: archaeol11-
Planning Application No.: n/a
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Date of fieldwork: February 2014
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1 Introduction

Archaeological Services WYAS (ASWYAS) were commissioned by Cotswold Archaeology (the Client), on behalf of Pegasus Planning Group, to undertake a geophysical (magnetometer) survey of land at Roundponds Farm, Broughton Gifford, Wiltshire (see Fig. 1), to support a planning application for a proposed solar park development. The work was undertaken in accordance with a Project Design (Harrison 2014) supplied to and approved by the Client, with guidance contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) and in line with current best practice (David *et al.* 2008). The survey was carried out between February 12th and February 21st 2014 in order to provide additional information on the archaeological potential of the site.

Site location, topography and land-use

The Proposed Development Area (PDA) covers approximately 30 hectares and is situated between the town of Melksham and the village of Broughton Gifford, Wiltshire, centred at ST 8882 6415. The PDA comprises eight interconnecting arable fields (Fields 1 – 8; see plates) and a central area of woodland. Areas set aside for wild bird cover, and the woodland were unsuitable for survey (see Fig. 2 and Plate 2 and Plate 8) reducing the total area available for survey to 26 hectares.

The site is located in a gently undulating landscape at approximately 40m above Ordnance datum (aOD). The land slopes gently downwards from the centre of the site to the east and north-east.

Soils and geology

The underlying bedrock comprises Oxford Clay Formation - mudstone. This is overlain by superficial deposits of Head – clay and silt, and River Terrace Deposits 1 – sand and gravel (British Geological Survey 2014). The soils in this area are classified in the Badsey 2 association, characterised as well-drained calcareous fine loams over limestone gravel (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

2 Archaeological Background (see Figure 2)

A Heritage Desk-Based Assessment (Cotswold Archaeology 2013) has indicated that sub-surface prehistoric remains may exist within the east of the PDA. Two possible ring ditches are recorded within the Wiltshire HER (Ref. MWI1893 and MWI1897; CA17 and CA18) although the evidence for these features is unclear and no cropmarks are identifiable on aerial photographs. The Desk-Based Assessment concludes that there is limited evidence for prehistoric and Roman settlement and whilst Medieval settlement was located at nearby villages, there is little potential for settlement of that period within the site. However,

medieval ridge and furrow is thought likely to survive sub-surface throughout the PDA. Two ditches are recorded on aerial photographs within the west of the PDA, one of which visibly truncates the ridge and furrow cultivation. These are thought to be post-medieval boundary ditches or trackways and are not considered to be heritage assets. Elsewhere, a 19th century farmhouse is recorded within the west of the PDA and an animal pen, also from the 19th century is recorded within the north.

Prior to survey, therefore, the site was assumed to have a low potential for the presence of unrecorded archaeological remains.

3 Aims, Methodology and Presentation

The main aim of the geophysical survey was to provide sufficient information to enable an assessment to be made of the impact of the proposed development on potential sub-surface archaeological remains and for further evaluation or mitigation proposals, if appropriate, to be recommended. To achieve this aim a magnetometer survey covering all available parts of the PDA was carried out, an area of 26 hectares.

The general objectives of the geophysical survey were:

- to provide information about the nature and possible interpretation of any magnetic anomalies identified;
- to therefore determine the presence/absence and extent of any buried archaeological features; and
- to prepare a report summarising the results of the survey.

Magnetometer survey

The site grid was laid out using a Trimble VRS differential Global Positioning System (Trimble 5800 model). Bartington Grad601 magnetic gradiometers were used during the survey, taking readings at 0.25m intervals on zig-zag traverses 1m apart within 30m by 30m grids, so that 3600 readings were recorded in each grid. These readings were stored in the memory of the instrument and later downloaded to computer for processing and interpretation. Geoplot 3 (Geoscan Research) software was used to process and present the data. Further details are given in Appendix 1.

Reporting

A general site location plan, incorporating the 1:50000 Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping, is shown in Figure 1. Figure 2 is a large scale (1:3000) location plan displaying the processed greyscale magnetometer data, recorded heritage assets and historic environment data. Figure 3 is an overall data interpretation plot at the same scale. Detailed data plots ('raw' and

processed) and full interpretative figures are presented at a scale of 1:1000 in Figures 4 to 18 inclusive.

Further technical information on the equipment used, data processing and survey methodologies is given in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2. Appendix 3 describes the composition and location of the site archive.

The survey methodology, report and any recommendations comply with the Project Design (Harrison 2014) and guidelines outlined by English Heritage (David *et al.* 2008) and by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA 2013). All figures reproduced from Ordnance Survey mapping are with the permission of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (© Crown copyright).

The figures in this report have been produced following analysis of the data in 'raw' and processed formats and over a range of different display levels. All figures are presented to most suitably display and interpret the data from this site based on the experience and knowledge of Archaeological Services staff.

4 Results and Discussion (see Figs 4 to 18 inclusive)

Generally, a low to moderate level of background variation has been recorded across the PDA with localised variations in background magnetic response being caused by variations within the superficial deposits. Numerous anomalies have been identified by the survey which fall into a number of different types and categories according to their origin and these are discussed below and cross-referenced to specific examples and locations within the site, where appropriate.

Ferrous Anomalies

Ferrous responses, either as individual 'spike' anomalies or more extensive areas of magnetic disturbance, are typically caused by modern ferrous (magnetic) debris, either on the ground surface or in the plough-soil, or are due to the proximity of magnetic material in field boundaries, buildings or other above ground features. Little importance is normally given to such anomalies, unless there is any supporting evidence for an archaeological interpretation, as ferrous debris or material is common on rural sites, often being present as a consequence of manuring or tipping/infilling. Throughout the PDA individual iron 'spike' anomalies are common but there is no obvious pattern or clustering to their distribution to suggest anything other than a random background scatter of ferrous debris in the soil.

A high-magnitude dipolar linear anomaly, **A**, can be seen passing through Field 2 and Field 5 on an approximate north-south orientation. This anomaly is caused by a sub-surface service pipe.

Generally, areas of disturbance around the periphery of the PDA are due to ferrous material forming part of, or incorporated into, the adjacent field boundaries, although there are occasional exceptions. Within the north-west of Field 1 broad areas of magnetic disturbance, **B**, have been identified which are constrained to the south by a former boundary feature, **I** (see below). This disturbance corresponds to the site of a 19th century farmhouse which is depicted on the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map (1886), and is due to the presence of buried demolition material and possibly *in situ* building remains. These anomalies are not thought to be archaeologically significant. Within the north of Field 3, high magnitude anomalies, **C**, correspond to a pond which is also depicted on the first edition OS map. The anomalies are caused by the magnetically enhanced material used to backfill the former pond.

High magnitude ‘spike’ anomalies, **D** and **E**, within Field 4 and Field 5 respectively, are due to water troughs in these locations, whilst ‘spikes’ **F** and **G** in the north of Field 1 locate telegraph poles. Magnetic disturbance, **H**, within the north of Field 6 is caused by a farm track.

Agricultural Anomalies

Analysis of historical mapping indicates that the division and layout of fields within the PDA has undergone moderate change since the publication of the first edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map in 1886 with several field boundaries having been removed to create larger open fields. Some of these former field boundaries have been detected by the geophysical survey as fragmented linear anomalies, **L** and **M**, whereas others have not been detected at all. It is not clear whether the absence of these former boundaries is as a result of intensive agriculture in the intervening years or whether there is insufficient contrast between the soil-filled boundary ditches and the prevailing soils to result in an identifiable magnetic anomaly. Perhaps the most obvious former boundary can be seen within the north-west of Field 1, visible as a high-magnitude rectilinear anomaly, **I**. This boundary corresponds to the south-eastern perimeter boundary of a 19th century farm which is depicted on the first edition OS map. Two sinuous linear anomalies, **J** and **K**, extending to the east and north-east of this area, correspond to ditch earthworks, identified through aerial photography, which are recorded within the Heritage Desk-Based Assessment (CA30 and CA31; see Fig. 2). These are thought to indicate post-medieval boundary features or trackways and are not thought to be of any archaeological significance. Series of parallel, slightly sinuous, linear anomalies can be seen within Field 1 and Field 5. These anomalies are interpreted as being due to the medieval and post-medieval agricultural practice of ridge and furrow cultivation. The characteristic striped appearance to the data is a result of the magnetic contrast between the now soil-filled furrows and the former ridges. Faint parallel trends within the east of the PDA are more closely spaced and are typical of modern ploughing.

A ‘speckled’ linear trend aligned north-west/south-east within the west of Field 5 locates a probable field drain.

Geological Anomalies

Throughout the survey area numerous discrete anomalies, characterised as localised areas of enhanced magnetic response, have been identified. These anomalies are interpreted as geological in origin, being caused by variation in the composition of the soils and superficial deposits (particularly sands and gravels) from which they derive. Broader, amorphous anomalies, particularly within Field 1 and the west of Field 5 are more typical of areas of silting – the result of episodes of seasonal waterlogging. Towards the centre of Field 5, two concentrations of discrete anomalies, **N** and **O**, are visible. These anomalies are thought to be caused by poorly-sorted concentrations of clay, silt, sand and gravel within the superficial deposits of Head (hill-wash).

5 Conclusions

The geophysical survey has identified anomalies which are, in the main, indicative of a 19th century agricultural landscape. Anomalies have been identified which locate a former farm in the north-west of the PDA, whilst a former pond and former field boundaries have also been recorded. Evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation within the west of the PDA may be due to earlier medieval land use. Some of these anomalies may be of local historical interest, but are not thought to be of any archaeological significance. No anomalies have been identified which correspond to the possible ring ditches which are recorded within the Wiltshire HER. If present, it is possible that there is insufficient contrast between the soil-fill of the cut features (ditches) and the surrounding soils for the ring ditches to be detected by the magnetometer. However, on balance, and considering the lack of any other obvious archaeological anomalies, it is likely that the geophysical survey results reflect the absence of archaeological activity.

Therefore, on the basis of the geophysical survey, the PDA is assessed as having a low archaeological potential, corroborating the conclusions of the Heritage Desk-Based Assessment.

The results and subsequent interpretation of data from geophysical surveys should not be treated as an absolute representation of the underlying archaeological and non-archaeological remains. Confirmation of the presence or absence of archaeological remains can only be achieved by direct investigation of sub-surface deposits.

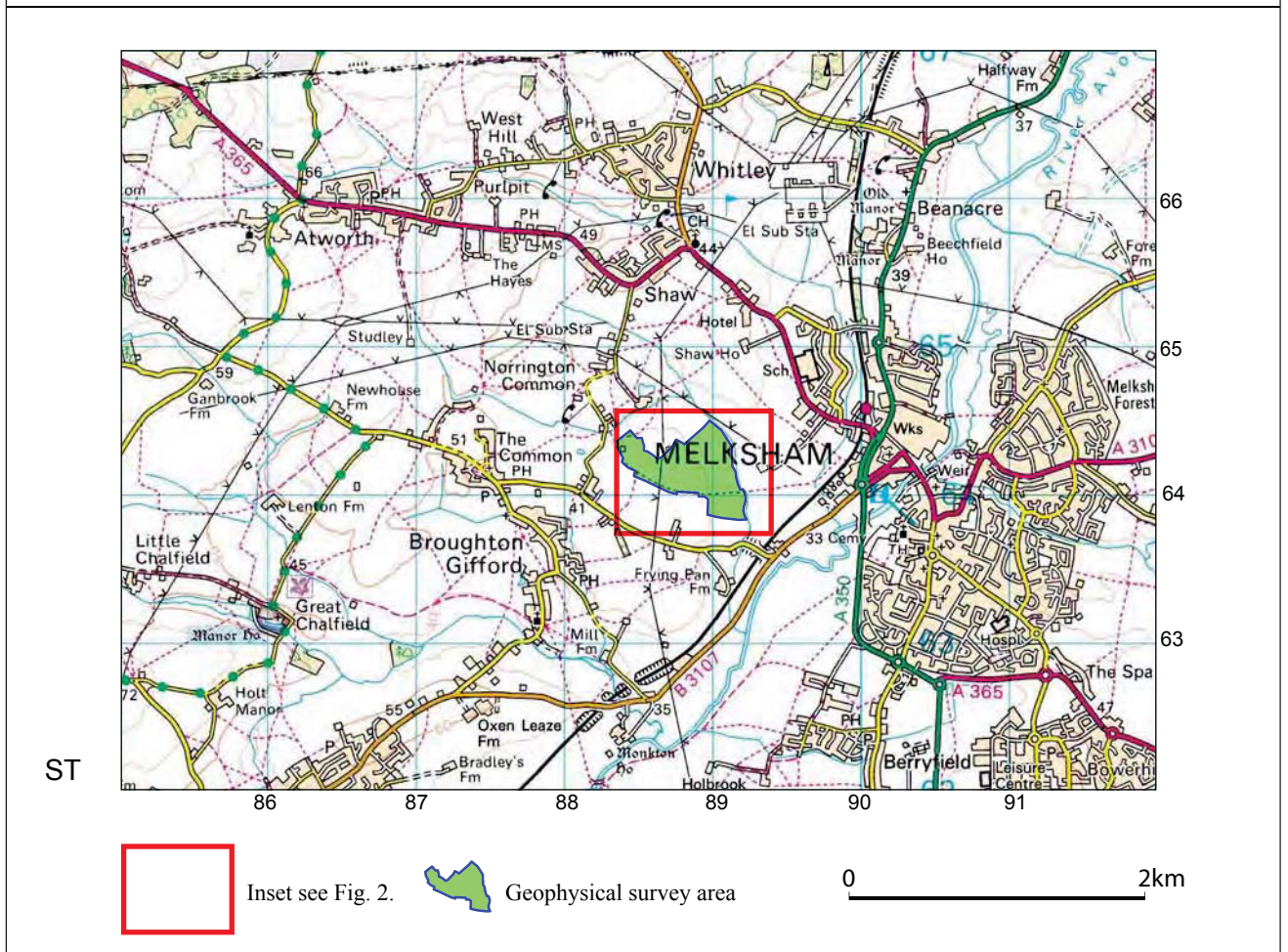
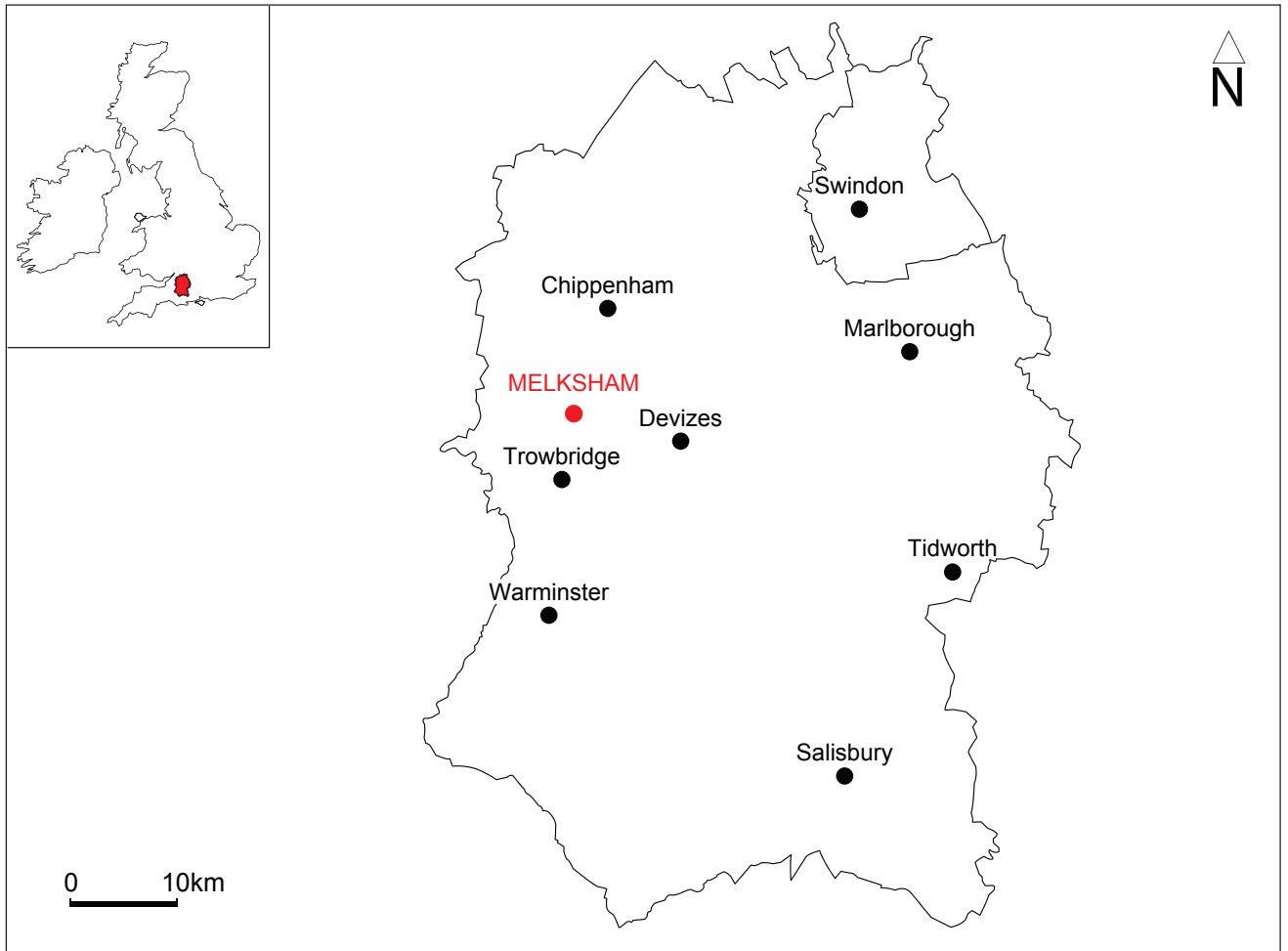


Fig. 1. Site location



Fig. 2. Site location showing greyscale magnetometer data (1:3000 @ A3)

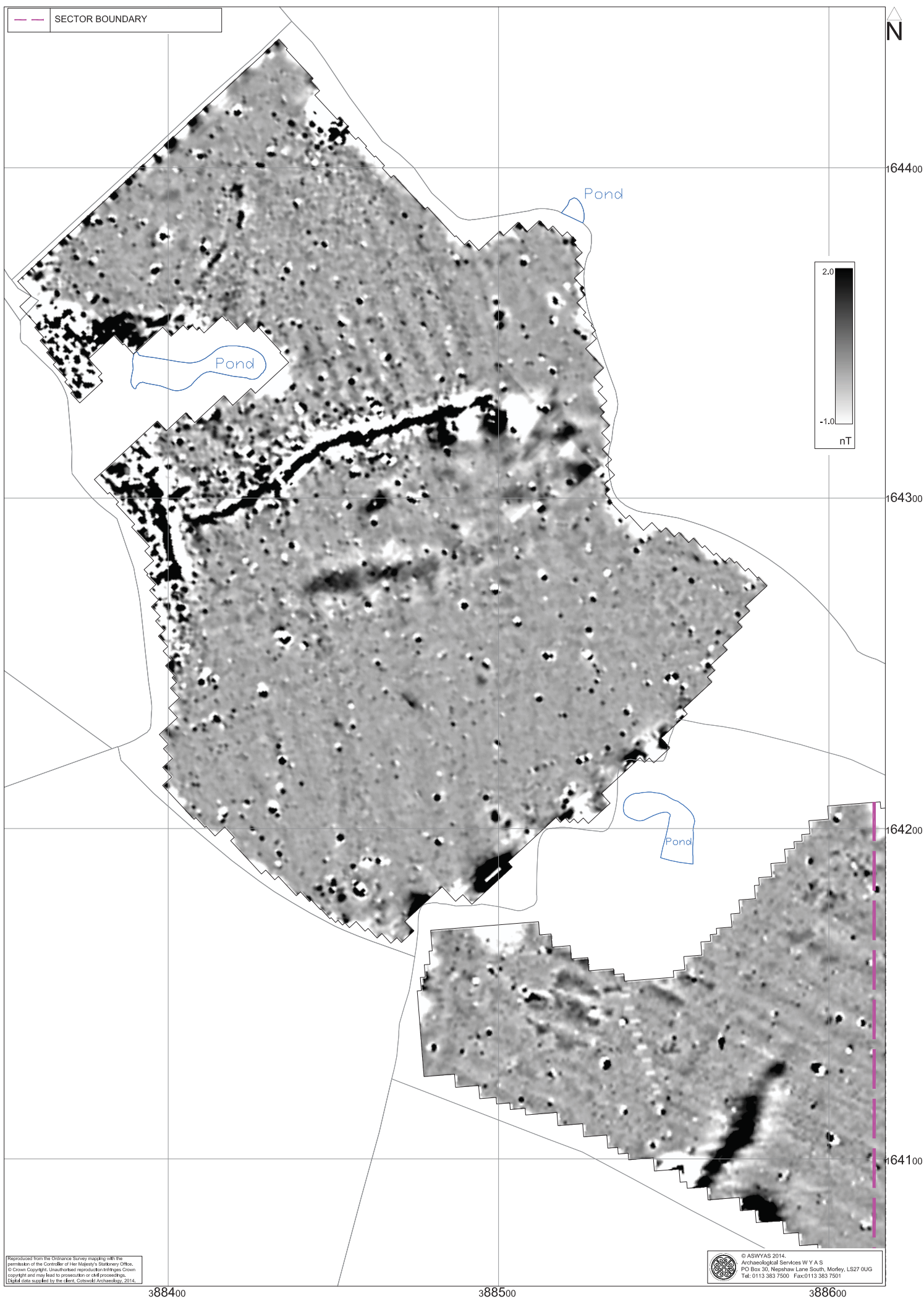


Fig. 4. Processed greyscale magnetometer data; Sector 1 (1:1000 @ A3)

0 40m

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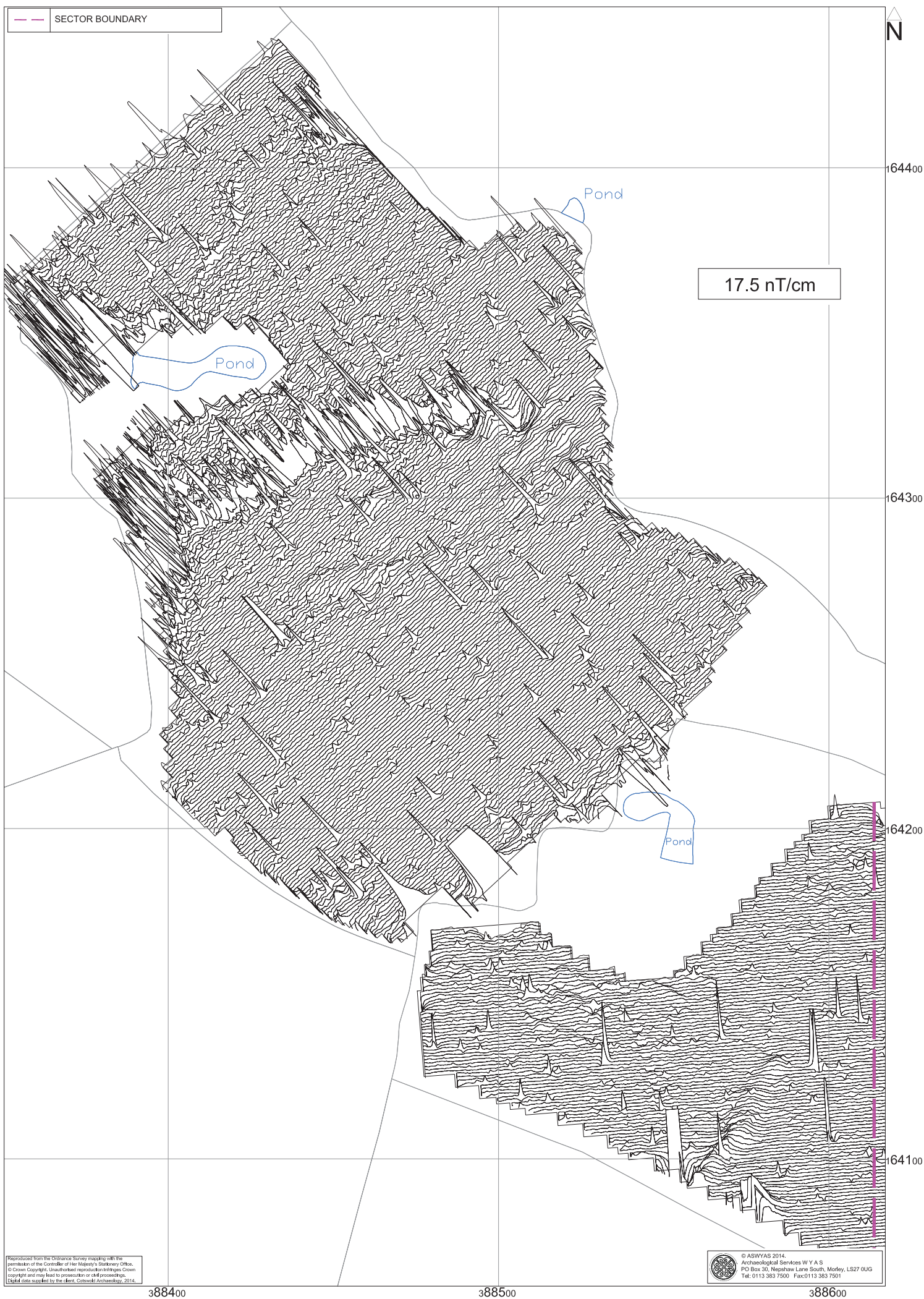


Fig. 5. XY trace plot of minimally processed magnetometer data; Sector 1 (1:1000 @ A3)

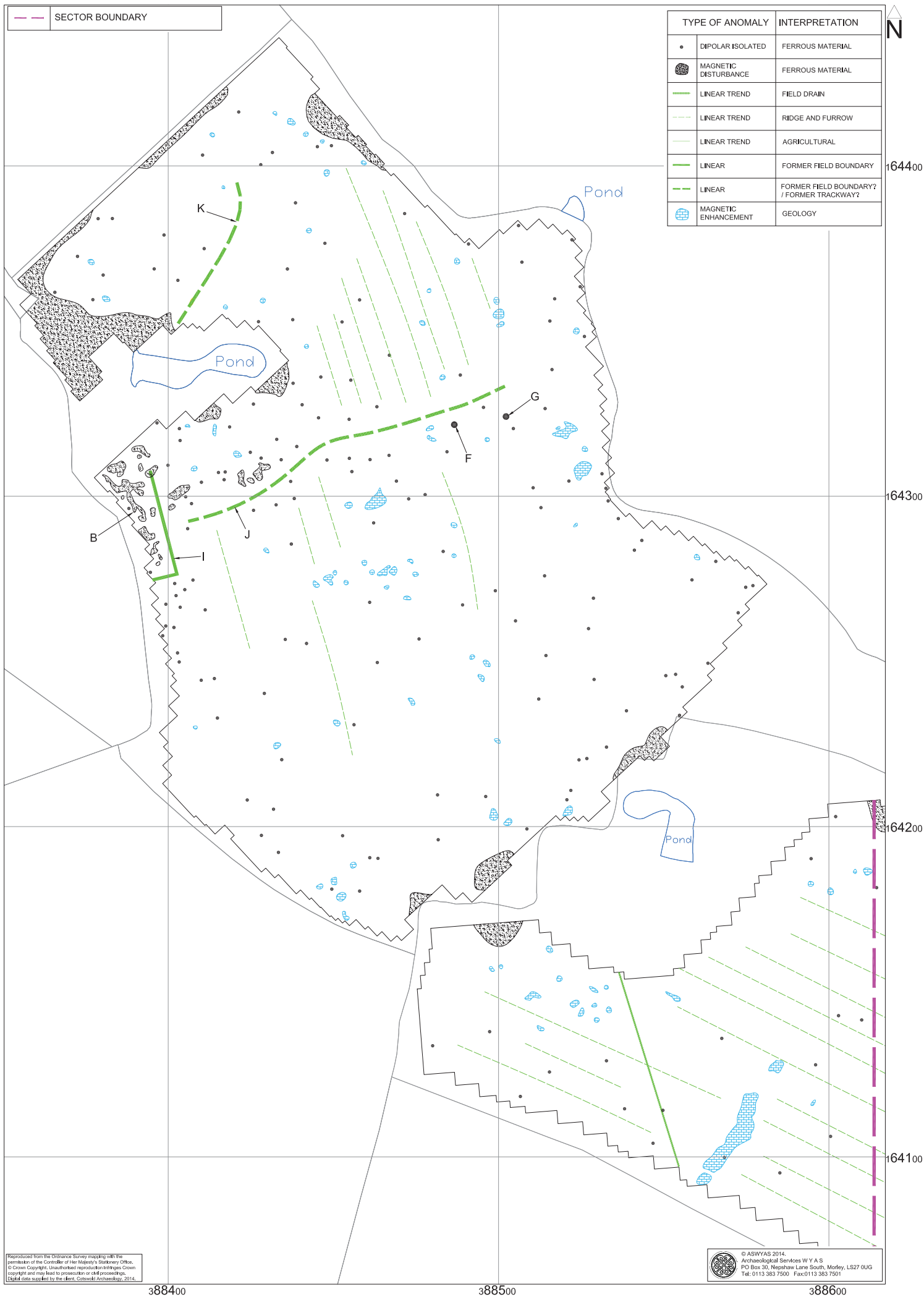


Fig. 6. Interpretation of magnetometer data; Sector 1 (1:1000 @ A3)

0 40m

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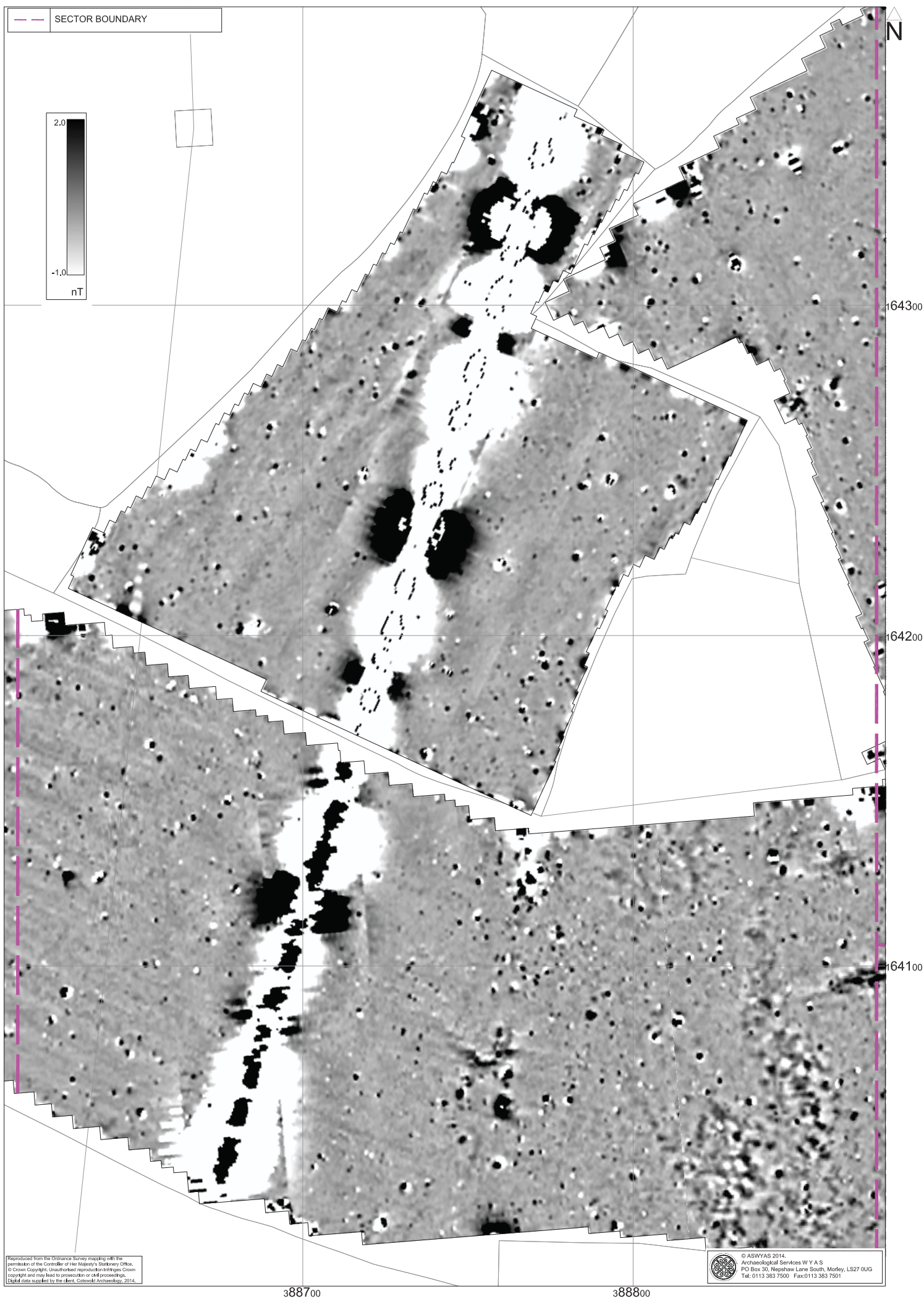


Fig. 7. Processed greyscale magnetometer data; Sector 2 (1:1000 @ A3)

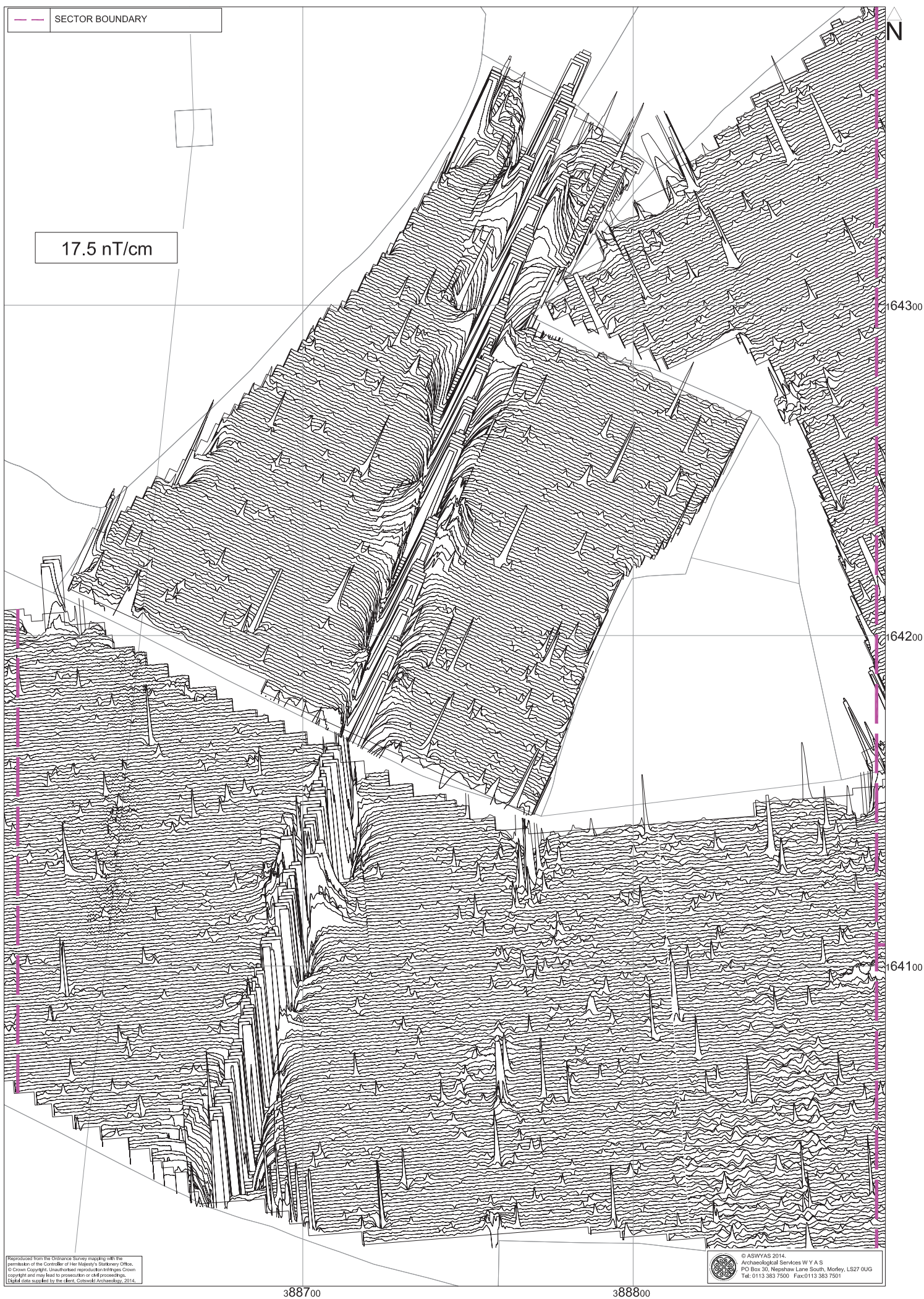


Fig. 8. XY trace plot of minimally processed magnetometer data; Sector 2 (1:1000 @ A3)

0 40m

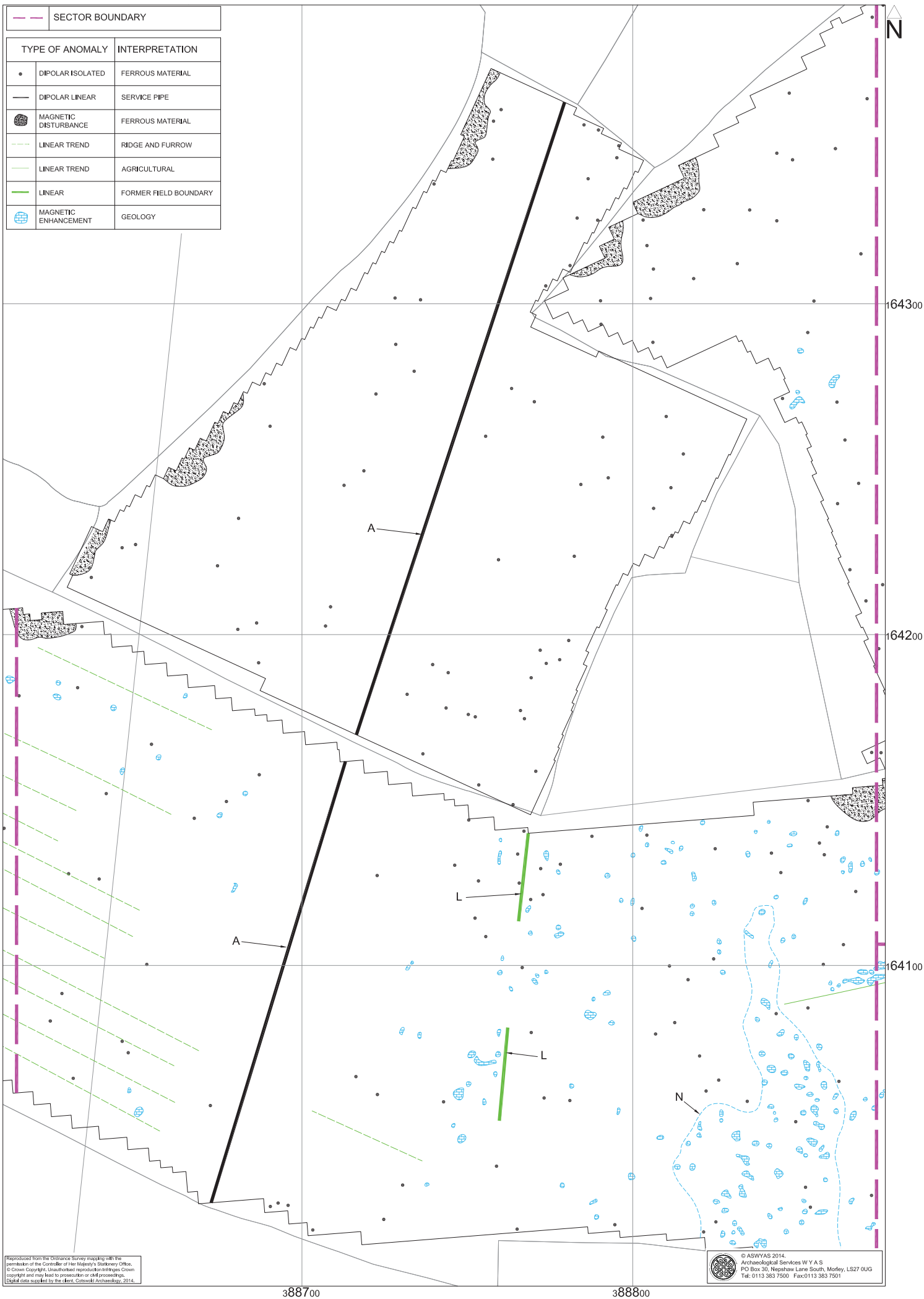


Fig. 9. Interpretation of magnetometer data; Sector 2 (1:1000 @ A3)

0 40m

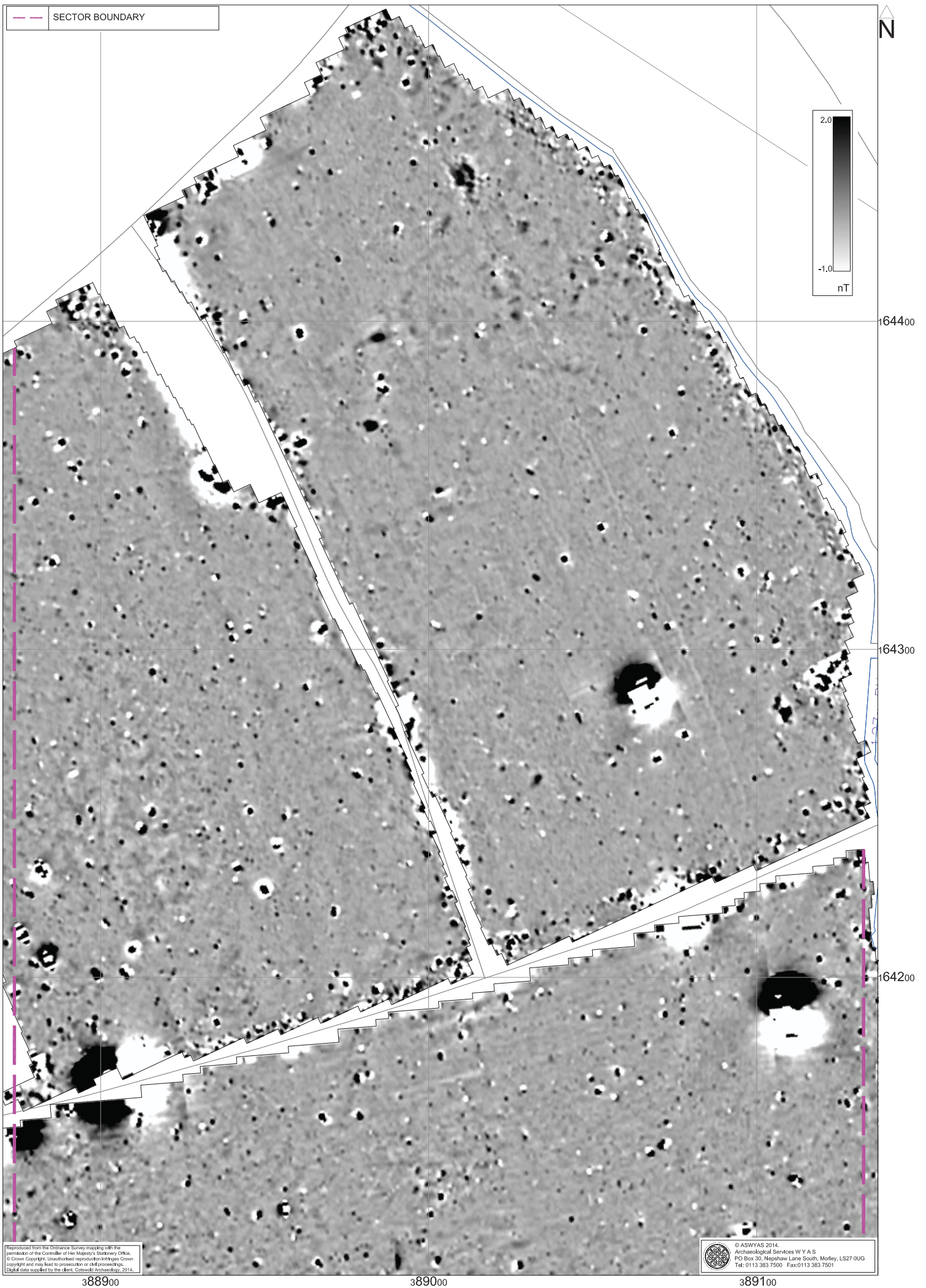


Fig. 10. Processed greyscale magnetometer data; Sector 3 (1:1000 @ A3)

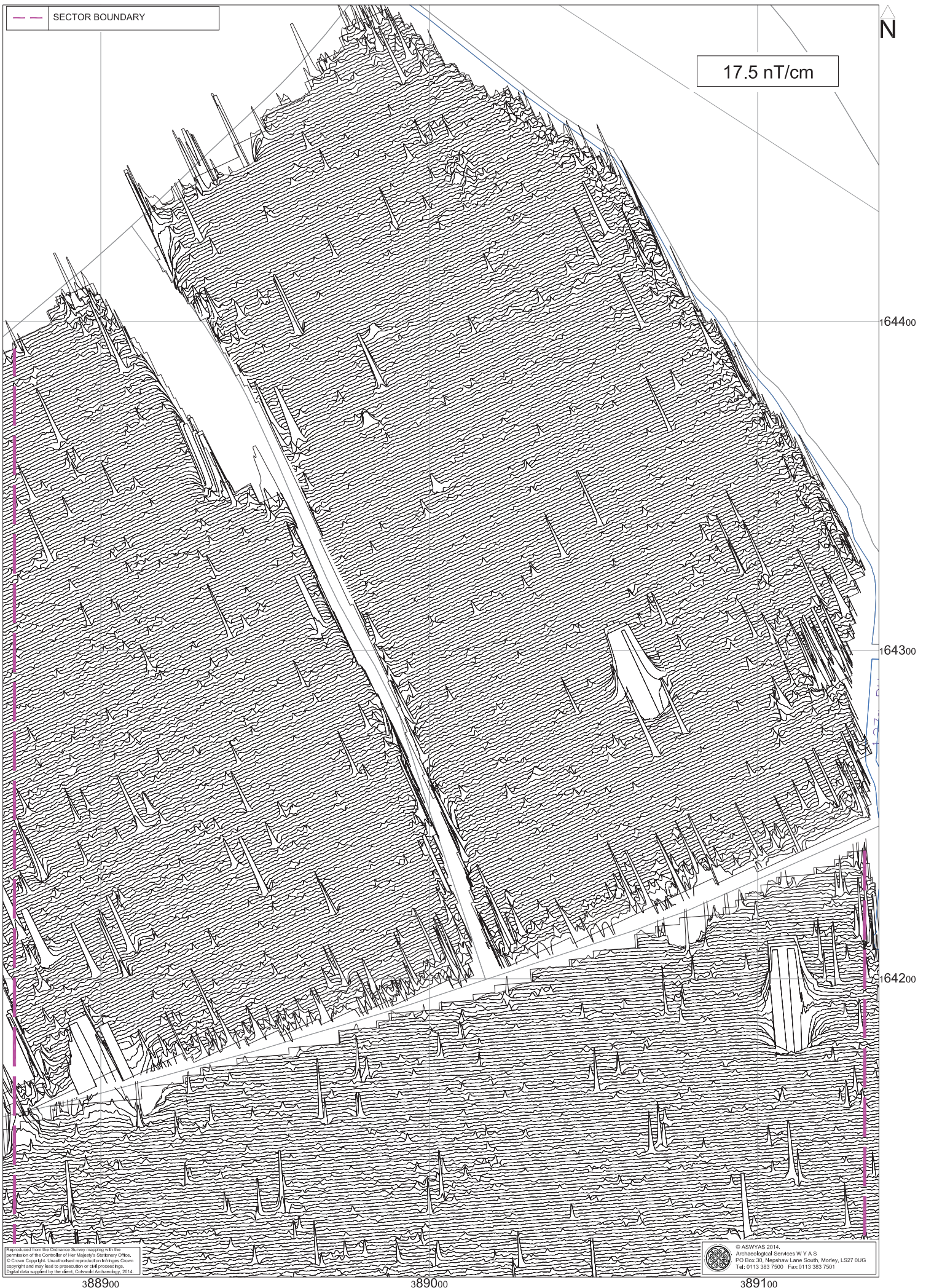


Fig. 11. XY trace plot of minimally processed magnetometer data; Sector 3 (1:1000 @ A3)

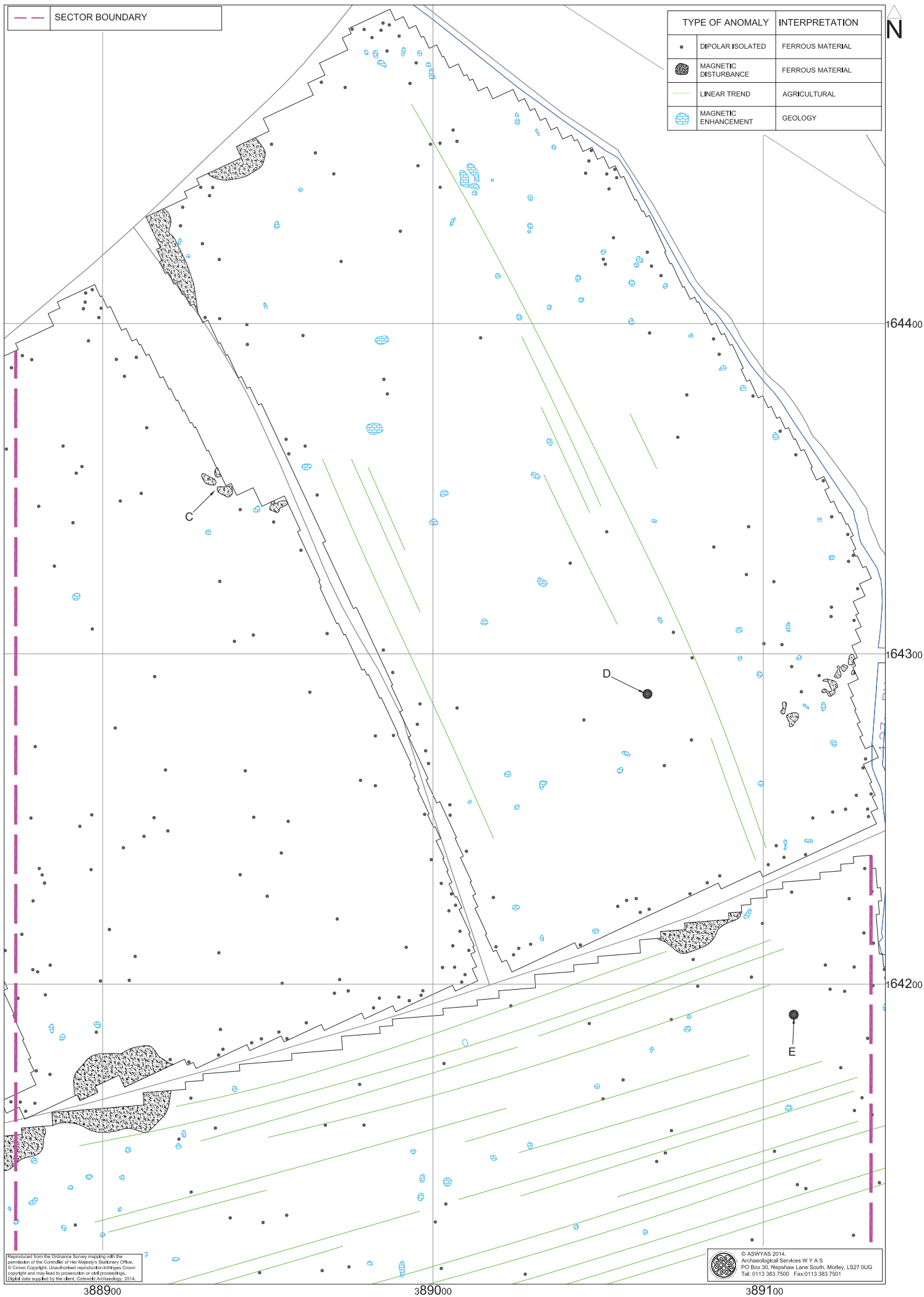


Fig. 12. Interpretation of magnetometer data; Sector 3 (1:1000 @ A3)

0 40m

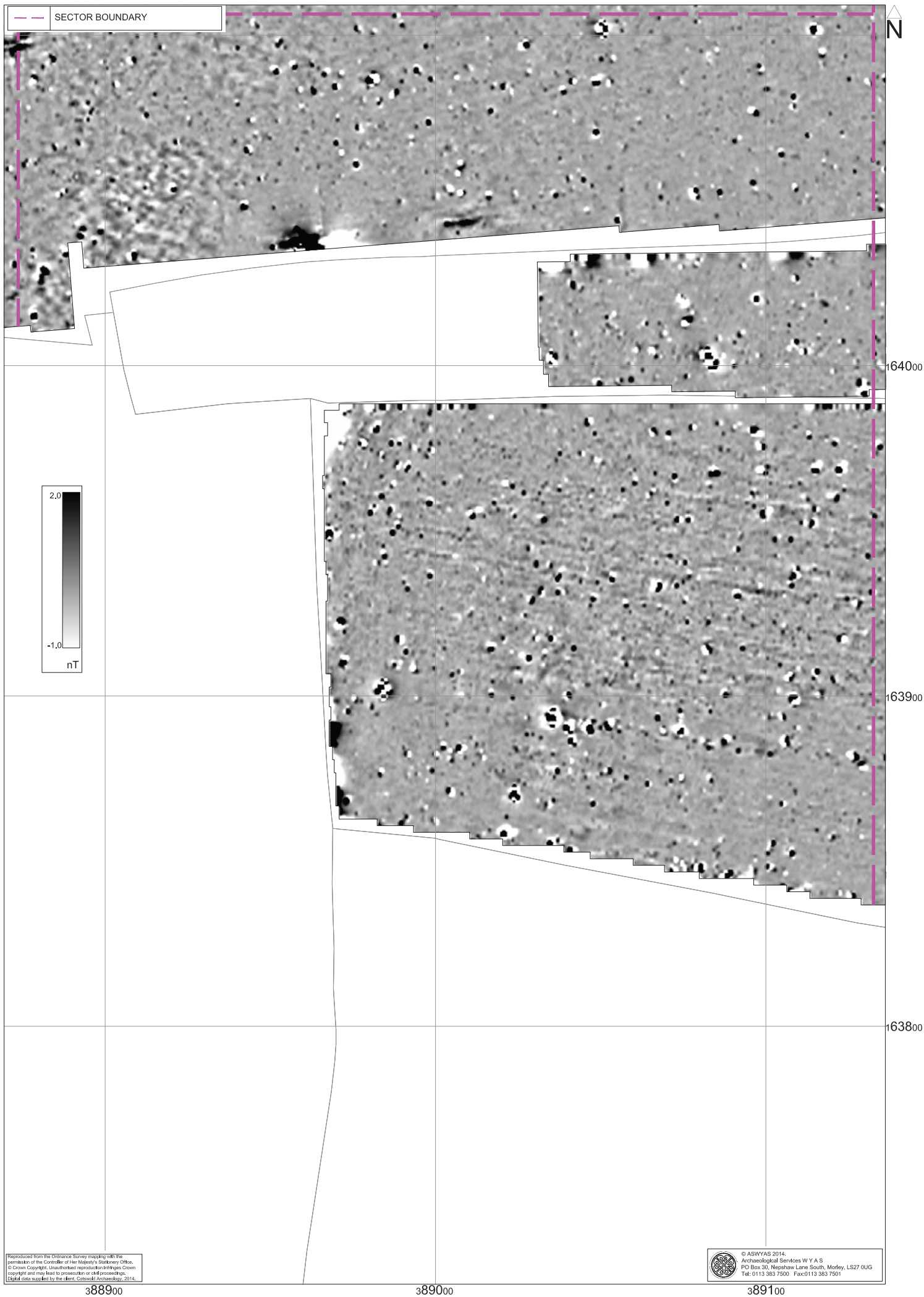


Fig. 13. Processed greyscale magnetometer data; Sector 4 (1:1000 @ A3)

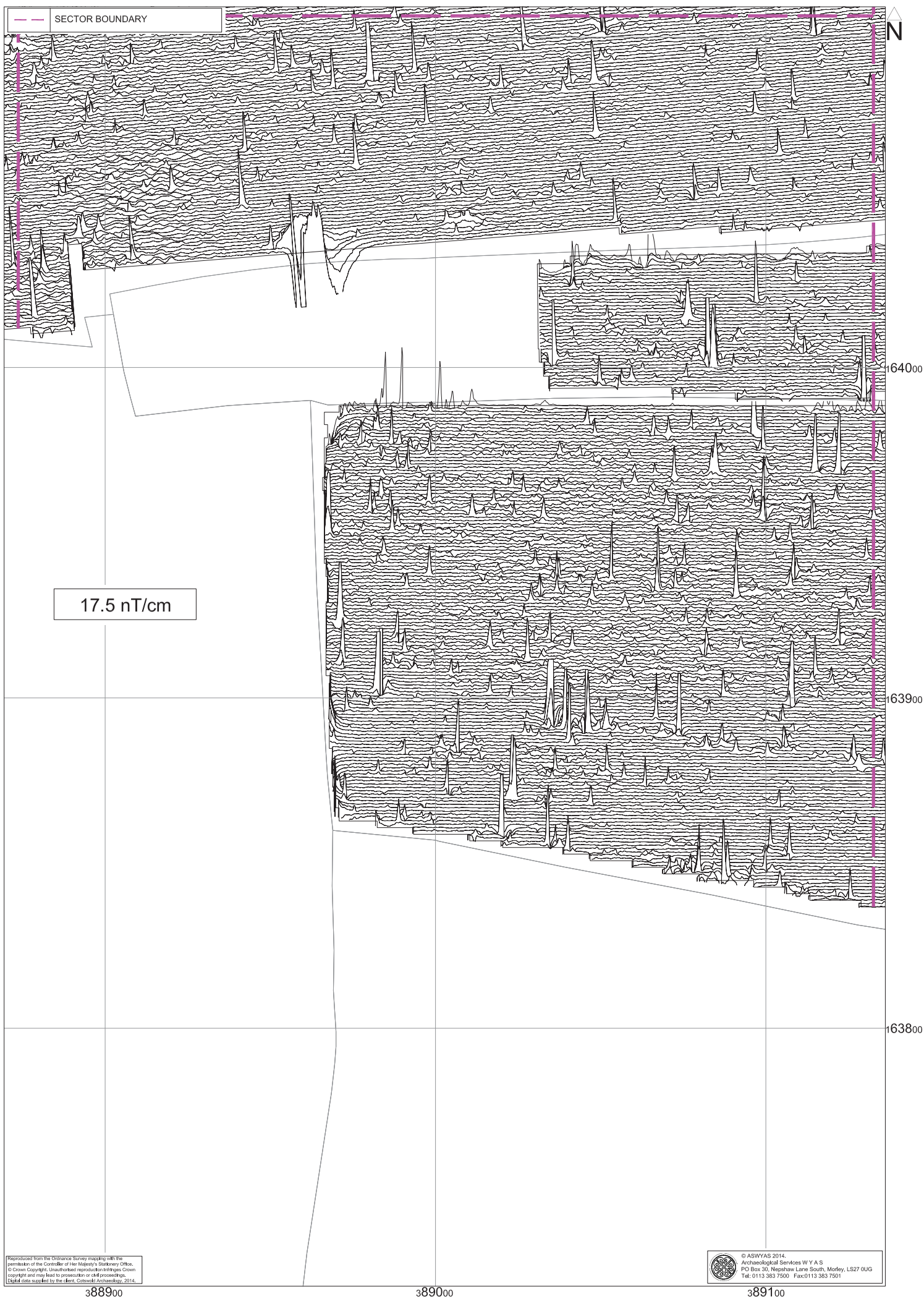


Fig. 14. XY trace plot of minimally processed magnetometer data; Sector 4 (1:1000 @ A3)

0 40m



SECTOR BOUNDARY



TYPE OF ANOMALY	INTERPRETATION
•	DIPOLAR ISOLATED FERROUS MATERIAL
⊗	MAGNETIC DISTURBANCE FERROUS MATERIAL
—	LINEAR TREND AGRICULTURAL
—	LINEAR FORMER FIELD BOUNDARY
⊕	MAGNETIC ENHANCEMENT GEOLOGY

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Fig. 15. Interpretation of magnetometer data; Sector 4 (1:1000 @ A3)

0 40m



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Fig. 16. Processed greyscale magnetometer data; Sector 5 (1:1000 @ A3)

0 40m

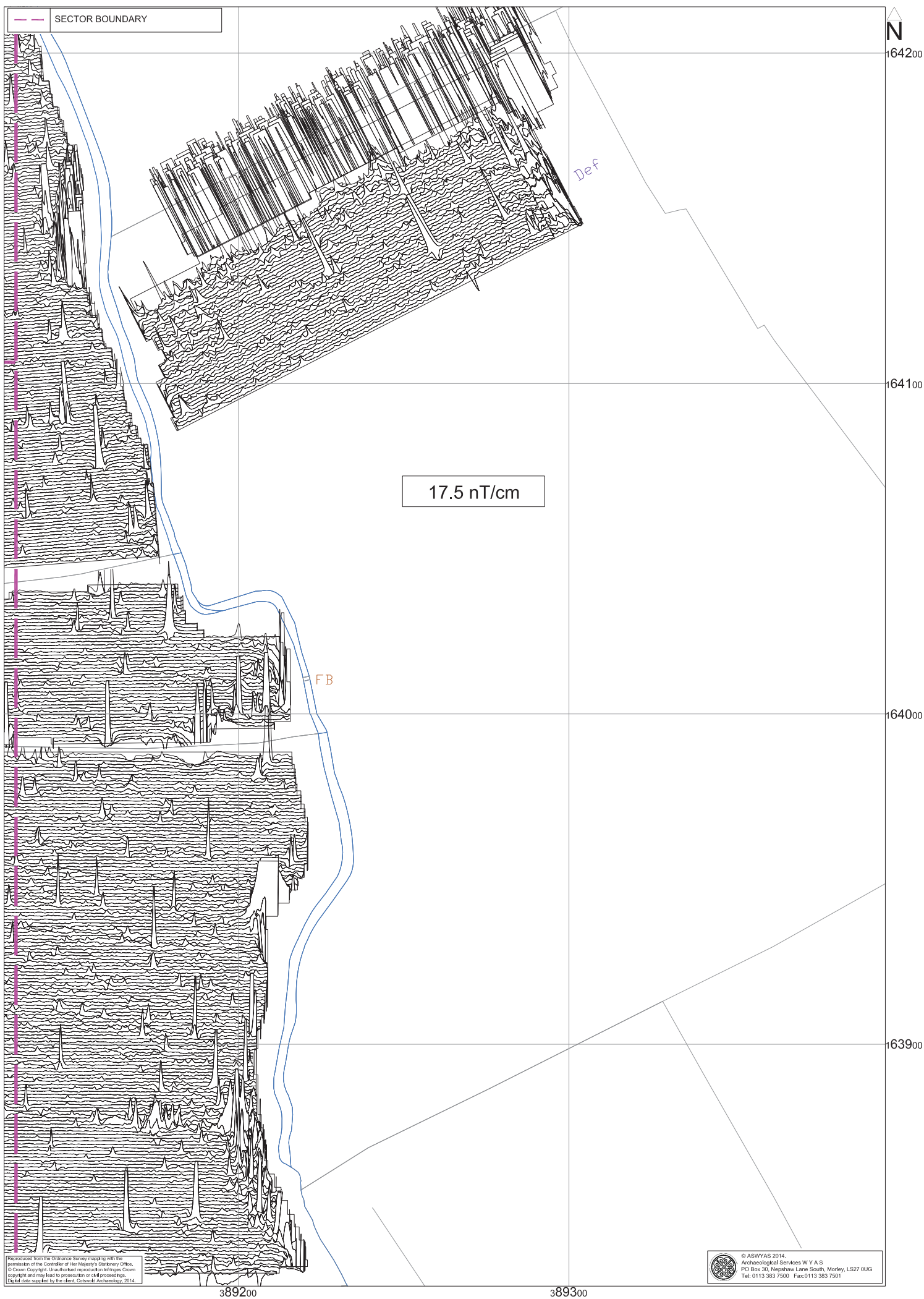


Fig. 17. XY trace plot of minimally processed magnetometer data; Sector 5 (1:1000 @ A3)

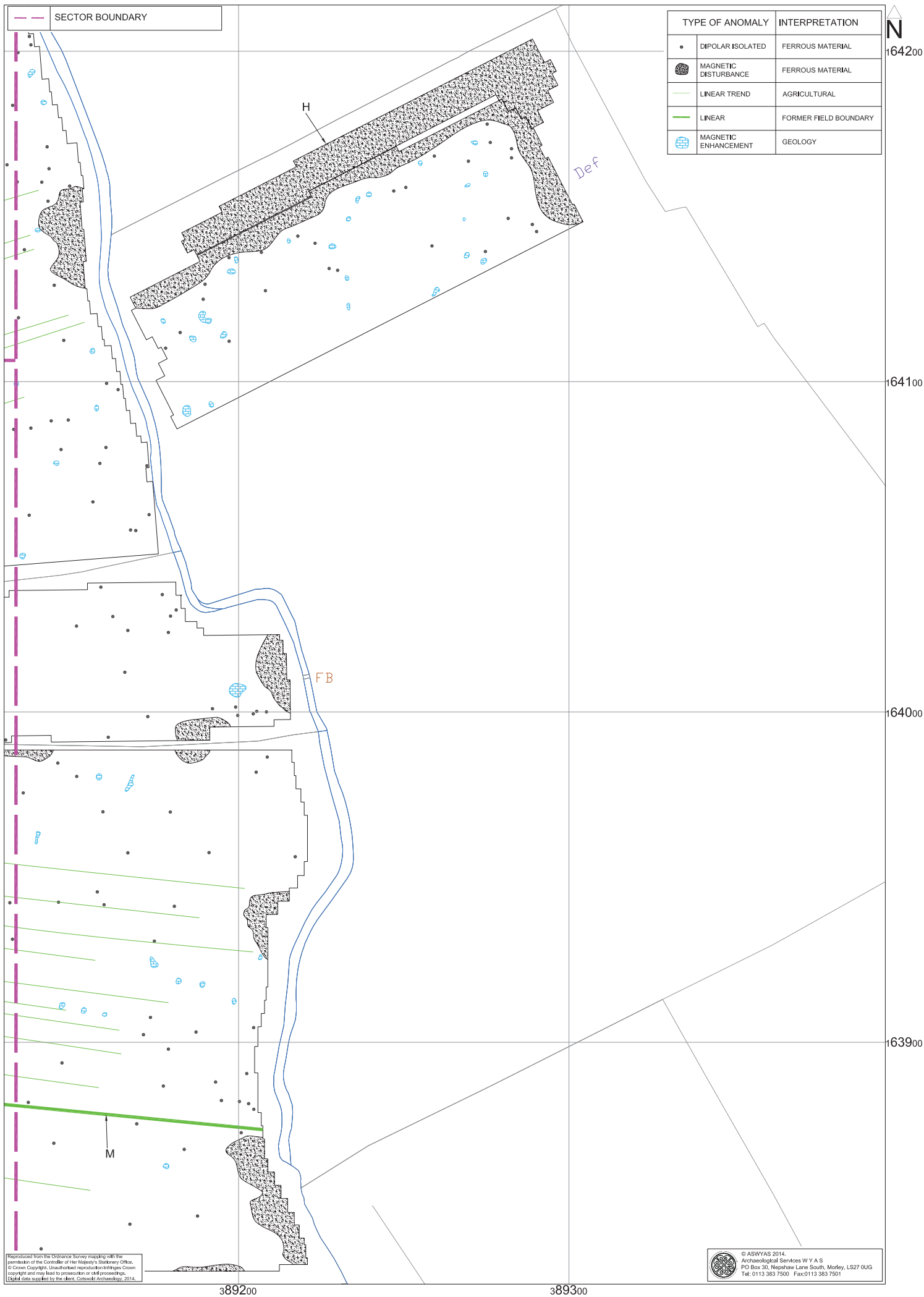


Fig. 18. Interpretation of magnetometer data; Sector 5 (1:1000 @ A3)





Plate 1. General view of Field 1, looking north-west



Plate 2. General view of Field 5, looking north-east



Plate 3. General view of Field 2, looking north-east



Plate 4. General view of Field 5 looking west



Plate 5. General view of Field 3, looking north-east



Plate 6. General view of Field 4, looking north-west



Plate 7. General view of Field 5, looking west



Plate 8. General view of Field 7, looking west



Plate 9. General view of Field 8, looking west

Appendix 1: Magnetic survey - technical information

Magnetic Susceptibility and Soil Magnetism

Iron makes up about 6% of the Earth's crust and is mostly present in soils and rocks as minerals such as maghaemite and haemetite. These minerals have a weak, measurable magnetic property termed magnetic susceptibility. Human activities can redistribute these minerals and change (enhance) others into more magnetic forms so that by measuring the magnetic susceptibility of the topsoil, areas where human occupation or settlement has occurred can be identified by virtue of the attendant increase (enhancement) in magnetic susceptibility. If the enhanced material subsequently comes to fill features, such as ditches or pits, localised isolated and linear magnetic anomalies can result whose presence can be detected by a magnetometer (fluxgate gradiometer).

In general, it is the contrast between the magnetic susceptibility of deposits filling cut features, such as ditches or pits, and the magnetic susceptibility of topsoils, subsoils and rocks into which these features have been cut, which causes the most recognisable responses. This is primarily because there is a tendency for magnetic ferrous compounds to become concentrated in the topsoil, thereby making it more magnetic than the subsoil or the bedrock. Linear features cut into the subsoil or geology, such as ditches, that have been silted up or have been backfilled with topsoil will therefore usually produce a positive magnetic response relative to the background soil levels. Discrete feature, such as pits, can also be detected. The magnetic susceptibility of a soil can also be enhanced by the application of heat and the fermentation and bacterial effects associated with rubbish decomposition. The area of enhancement is usually quite large, mainly due to the tendency of discard areas to extend beyond the limit of the occupation site itself, and spreading by the plough. An advantage of magnetic susceptibility over magnetometry is that a certain amount of occupational activity will cause the same proportional change in susceptibility, however weakly magnetic is the soil, and so does not depend on the magnetic contrast between the topsoil and deeper layers. Susceptibility survey is therefore able to detect areas of occupation even in the absence of cut features. On the other hand susceptibility survey is more vulnerable to the masking effects of layers of colluvium and alluvium as the technique, using the Bartington system, can generally only measure variation in the first 0.15m of ploughsoil.

Types of Magnetic Anomaly

In the majority of instances anomalies are termed 'positive'. This means that they have a positive magnetic value relative to the magnetic background on any given site. However some features can manifest themselves as 'negative' anomalies that, conversely, means that the response is negative relative to the mean magnetic background.

Where it is not possible to give a probable cause of an observed anomaly a '?' is appended.

It should be noted that anomalies interpreted as modern in origin might be caused by features that are present in the topsoil or upper layers of the subsoil. Removal of soil to an archaeological or natural layer can therefore remove the feature causing the anomaly.

The types of response mentioned above can be divided into five main categories that are used in the graphical interpretation of the magnetic data:

Isolated dipolar anomalies (iron spikes)

These responses are typically caused by ferrous material either on the surface or in the topsoil. They cause a rapid variation in the magnetic response giving a characteristic 'spiky' trace. Although ferrous archaeological artefacts could produce this type of response, unless there is supporting evidence for an archaeological interpretation, little emphasis is normally given to such anomalies, as modern ferrous objects are common on rural sites, often being present as a consequence of manuring.

Areas of magnetic disturbance

These responses can have several causes often being associated with burnt material, such as slag waste or brick rubble or other strongly magnetised/fired material. Ferrous structures such as pylons, mesh or barbed wire fencing and buried pipes can also cause the same disturbed response. A modern origin is usually assumed unless there is other supporting information.

Linear trend

This is usually a weak or broad linear anomaly of unknown cause or date. These anomalies are often caused by agricultural activity, either ploughing or land drains being a common cause.

Areas of magnetic enhancement/positive isolated anomalies

Areas of enhanced response are characterised by a general increase in the magnetic background over a localised area whilst discrete anomalies are manifest by an increased response (sometimes only visible on an XY trace plot) on two or three successive traverses. In neither instance is there the intense dipolar response characteristic exhibited by an area of magnetic disturbance or of an 'iron spike' anomaly (see above). These anomalies can be caused by infilled discrete archaeological features such as pits or post-holes or by kilns. They can also be caused by pedological variations or by natural infilled features on certain geologies. Ferrous material in the subsoil can also give a similar response. It can often therefore be very difficult to establish an anthropogenic origin without intrusive investigation or other supporting information.

Linear and curvilinear anomalies

Such anomalies have a variety of origins. They may be caused by agricultural practice (recent ploughing trends, earlier ridge and furrow regimes or land drains), natural geomorphological features such as palaeochannels or by infilled archaeological ditches.

Methodology: Magnetic Susceptibility Survey

There are two methods of measuring the magnetic susceptibility of a soil sample. The first involves the measurement of a given volume of soil, which will include any air and moisture that lies within the sample, and is termed volume specific susceptibility. This method results in a bulk value that is not necessarily fully representative of the constituent components of the sample. For field surveys a Bartington MS2 meter with MS2D field loop is used due to its speed and simplicity. The second technique overcomes this potential problem by taking into account both the volume and mass of a sample and is termed mass specific susceptibility. However, mass specific readings cannot be taken in the field where the bulk properties of a soil are usually unknown and so volume specific readings must be taken. Whilst these values are not fully representative they do allow general comparisons across a site and give a broad indication of susceptibility changes. This is usually enough to assess the susceptibility of a site and evaluate whether enhancement has occurred.

Methodology: Gradiometer Survey

There are two main methods of using the fluxgate gradiometer for commercial evaluations. The first of these is referred to as *magnetic scanning* and requires the operator to visually identify anomalous responses on the instrument display panel whilst covering the site in widely spaced traverses, typically 10m apart. The instrument logger is not used and there is therefore no data collection. Once anomalous responses are identified they are marked in the field with bamboo canes and approximately located on a base plan. This method is usually employed as a means of selecting areas for detailed survey when only a percentage sample of the whole site is to be subject to detailed survey.

The disadvantages of magnetic scanning are that features that produce weak anomalies (less than 2nT) are unlikely to stand out from the magnetic background and so will be difficult to detect. The coarse sampling interval means that discrete features or linear features that are parallel or broadly oblique to the direction of traverse may not be detected. If linear features are suspected in a site then the traverse direction should be perpendicular (or as close as is possible within the physical constraints of the site) to the orientation of the suspected features. The possible drawbacks mentioned above mean that a 'negative' scanning result should be validated by sample detailed magnetic survey (see below).

The second method is referred to as *detailed survey* and employs the use of a sample trigger to automatically take readings at predetermined points, typically at 0.25m intervals, on zig-zag traverses 1m apart. These readings are stored in the memory of the instrument and are later dumped to computer for processing and interpretation. Detailed survey allows the visualisation of weaker anomalies that may not have been detected by magnetic scanning.

During this survey a Bartington Grad601 magnetic gradiometer was used taking readings on the 0.1nT range, at 0.25m intervals on zig-zag traverses 1m apart within 30m by 30m square

grids. The instrument was checked for electronic and mechanical drift at a common point and calibrated as necessary. The drift from zero was not logged.

Data Processing and Presentation

The detailed gradiometer data has been presented in this report in XY trace and greyscale formats. In the former format the data shown is 'raw' with no processing other than grid biasing having been done. The data in the greyscale images has been interpolated and selectively filtered to remove the effects of drift in instrument calibration and other artificial data constructs and to maximise the clarity and interpretability of the archaeological anomalies.

An XY plot presents the data logged on each traverse as a single line with each successive traverse incremented on the Y-axis to produce a 'stacked' plot. A hidden line algorithm has been employed to block out lines behind major 'spikes' and the data has been clipped. The main advantage of this display option is that the full range of data can be viewed, dependent on the clip, so that the 'shape' of individual anomalies can be discerned and potentially archaeological anomalies differentiated from 'iron spikes'. Geoplot 3 software was used to create the XY trace plots.

Geoplot 3 software was used to interpolate the data so that 3600 readings were obtained for each 30m by 30m grid. The same program was used to produce the greyscale images. All greyscale plots are displayed using a linear incremental scale.

Appendix 2: Survey location information

The site grid was laid out using a Trimble VRS differential Global Positioning System (Trimble 5800 model). The accuracy of this equipment is better than 0.01m. The survey grids were then super-imposed onto a base map provided by the client to produce the displayed block locations. However, it should be noted that Ordnance Survey positional accuracy for digital map data has an error of 0.5m for urban and floodplain areas, 1.0m for rural areas and 2.5m for mountain and moorland areas. This potential error must be considered if co-ordinates are measured off hard copies of the mapping rather than using the digital co-ordinates.

Archaeological Services WYAS cannot accept responsibility for errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by a third party.

Appendix 3: Geophysical archive

The geophysical archive comprises:-

- an archive disk containing compressed (WinZip 8) files of the raw data, report text (Microsoft Word 2000), and graphics files (Adobe Illustrator CS2 and AutoCAD 2008) files; and
- a full copy of the report.

At present the archive is held by Archaeological Services WYAS although it is anticipated that it may eventually be lodged with the Archaeology Data Service (ADS). Brief details may also be forwarded for inclusion on the English Heritage Geophysical Survey Database after the contents of the report are deemed to be in the public domain (i.e. available for consultation in the Wiltshire Historic Environment Record).

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