



Croydon Report

Between October and December 2011 Archaeology RheeSearch Group carried out magnetometry and resistivity surveys on this site.

Members participating: Pat Davies, Brian Bridgland, Liz Livingstone, Bruce Milner, Ian Sanderson, Gill Shapland, Maureen Storey and Tony Storey.

Site liaison: Ian Malthouse & Mr Brown.

Site conditions: Harrowed plough.

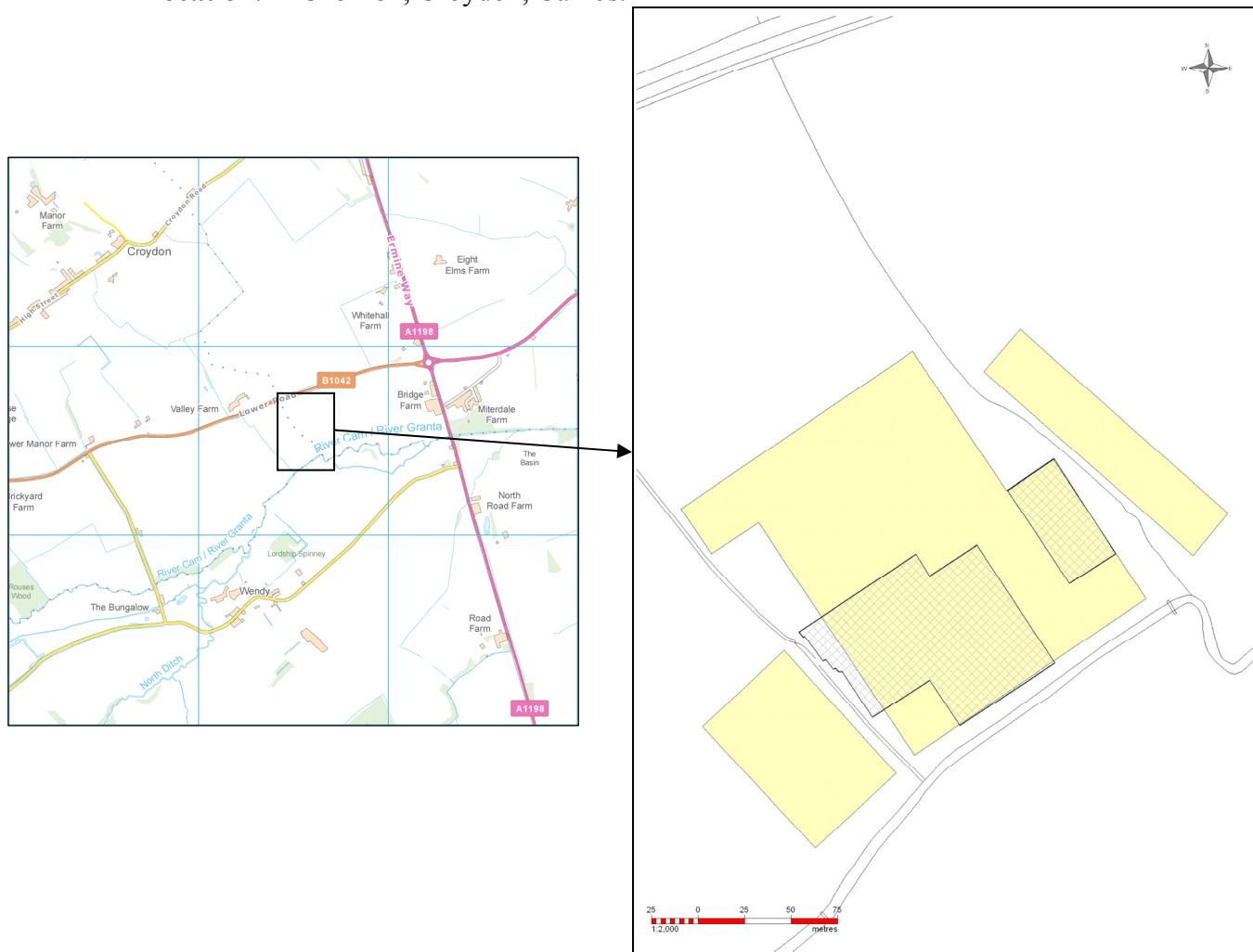
Equipment: Bartington 601 gradiometer; TRCIA 50 cm twin probe.

Magnetometry readings: 8/m, 1 m separation.

Resistivity readings: 1 m interval, 1 m separation.

Raw data are available as separate appendices.

Location: TL325 484, Croydon, Cambs.



Location plan: Survey areas

(resistivity survey areas hatched, magnetometry areas solid)

Purpose of survey: The purpose of this survey was to determine if any subsurface features could be detected to explain a concentration of Roman pottery found on the site. Rowland Parker (1974) excavated multiple test pits on the site largely, as far as can be estimated, in the area between the two resistivity surveys reported here.



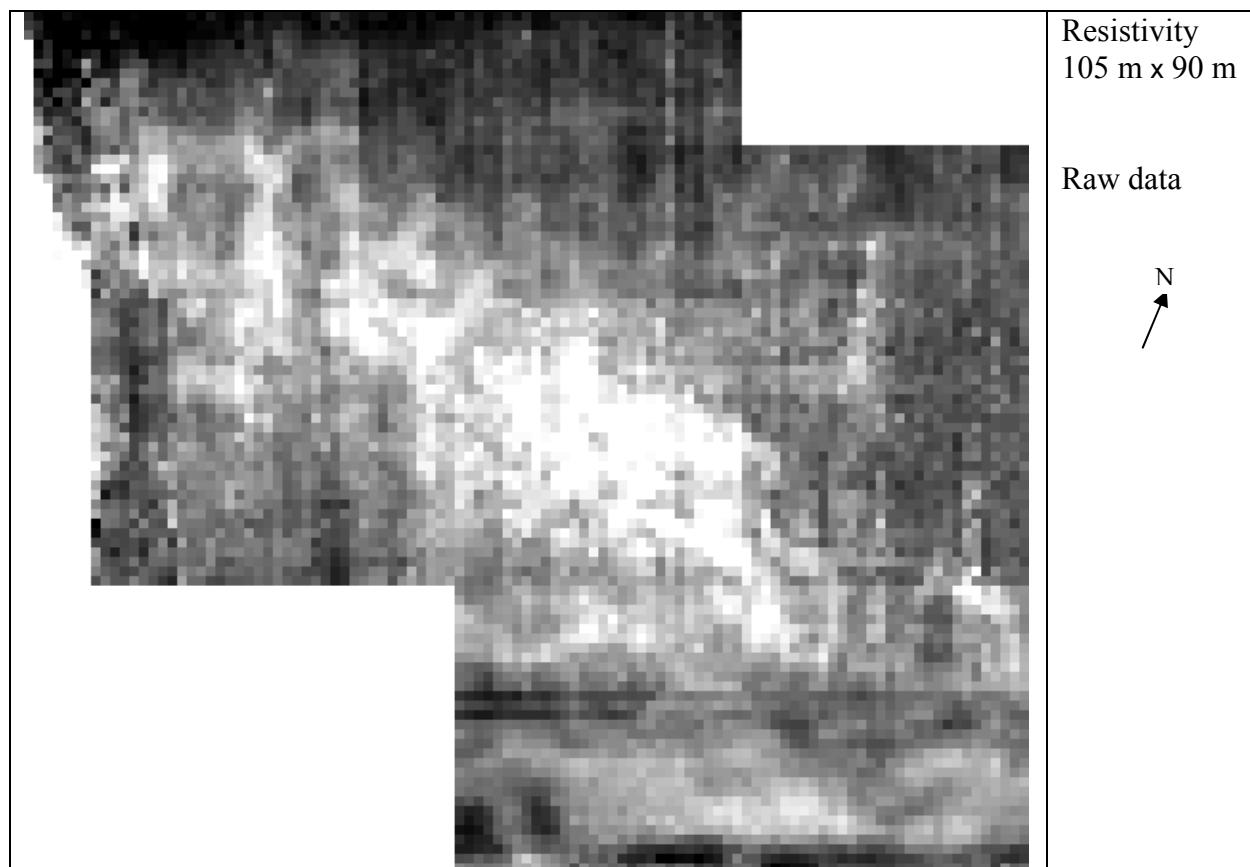
Site topography:

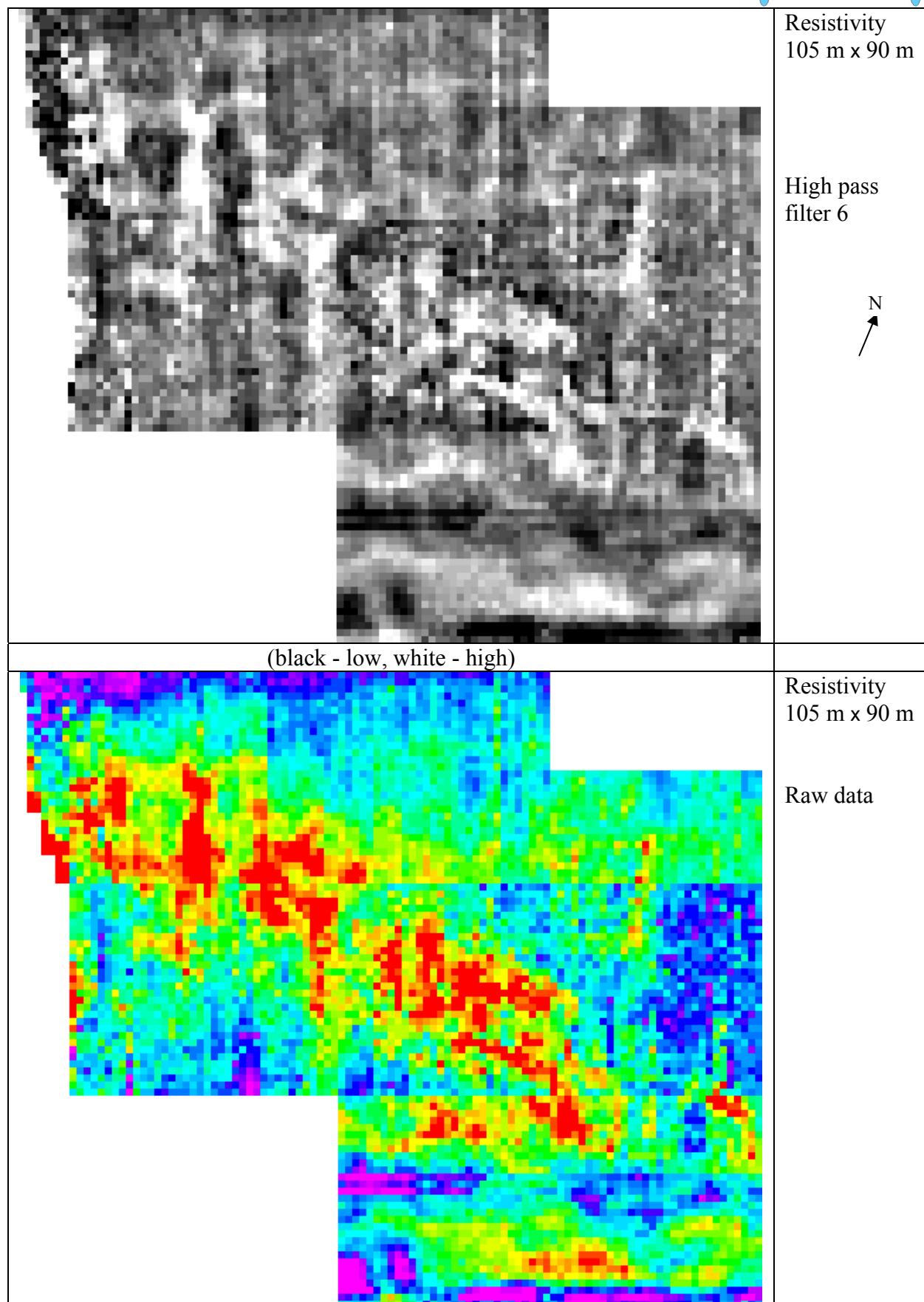
The site comprised three arable fields running from Lower Road Croydon (B1042) to the River Cam (or Granta or Rhee). The fields are level until they start to slope down to the river bank about 20 m away from the water.

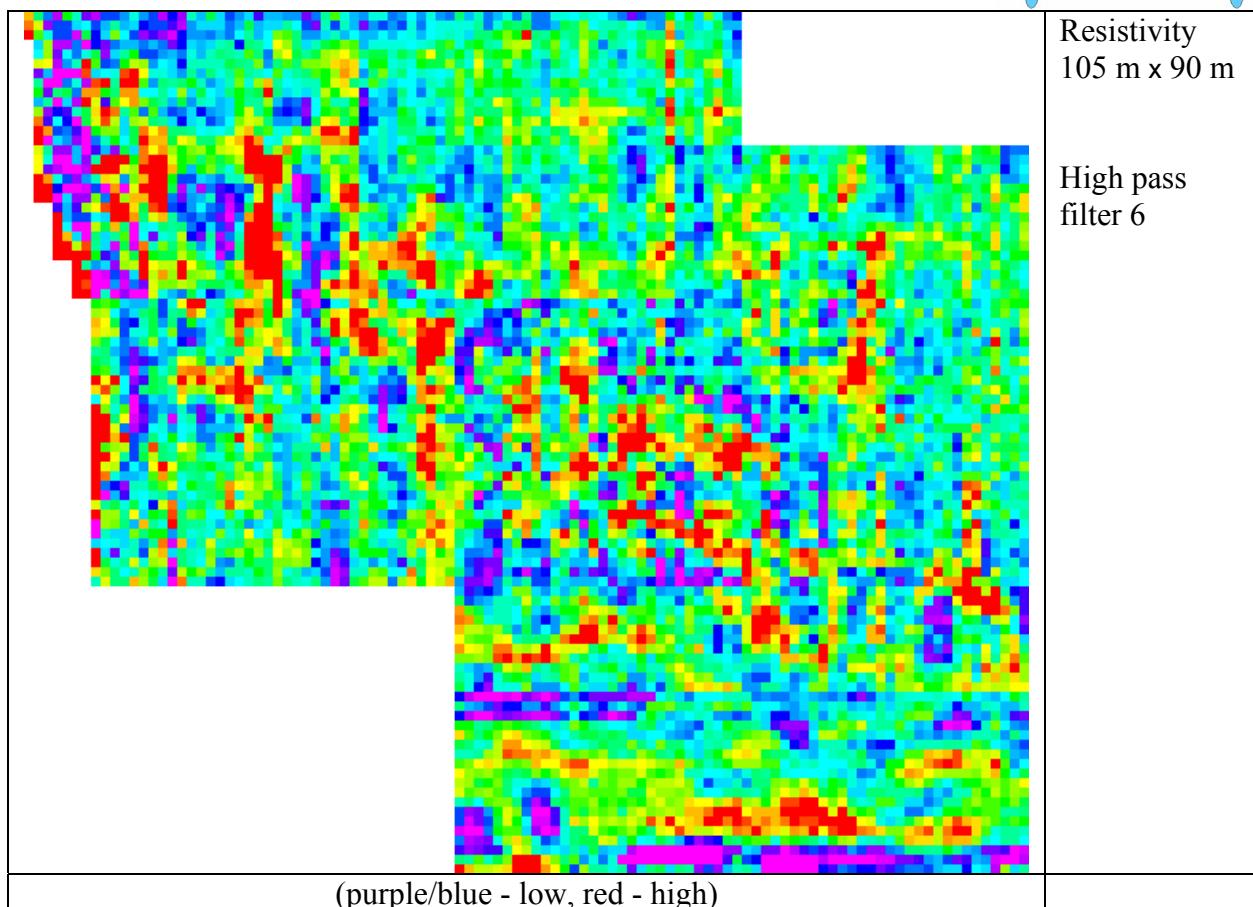
Results:

The images in this section are orientated for presentation. The images are not to a common scale.

Resistivity central survey

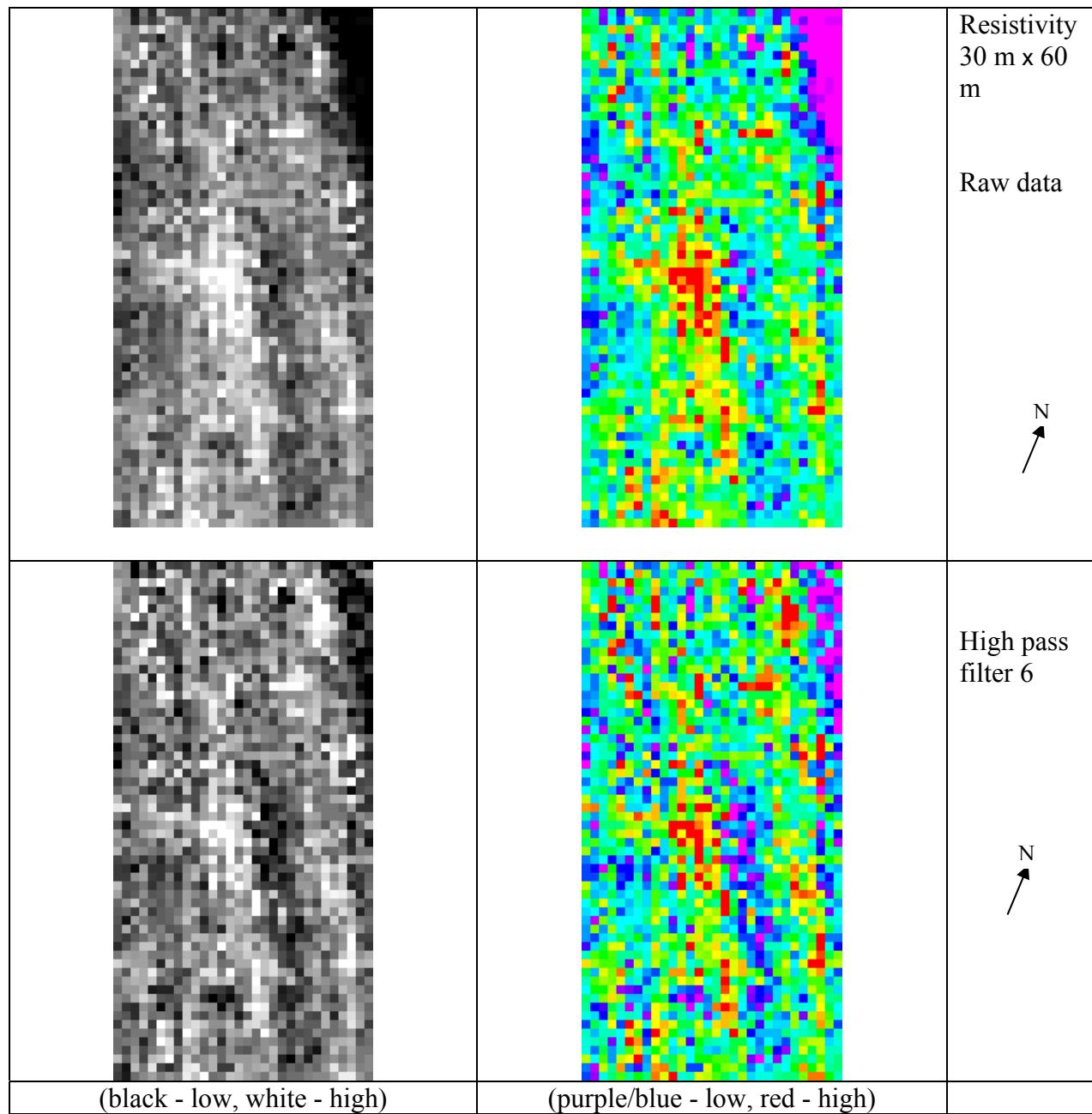






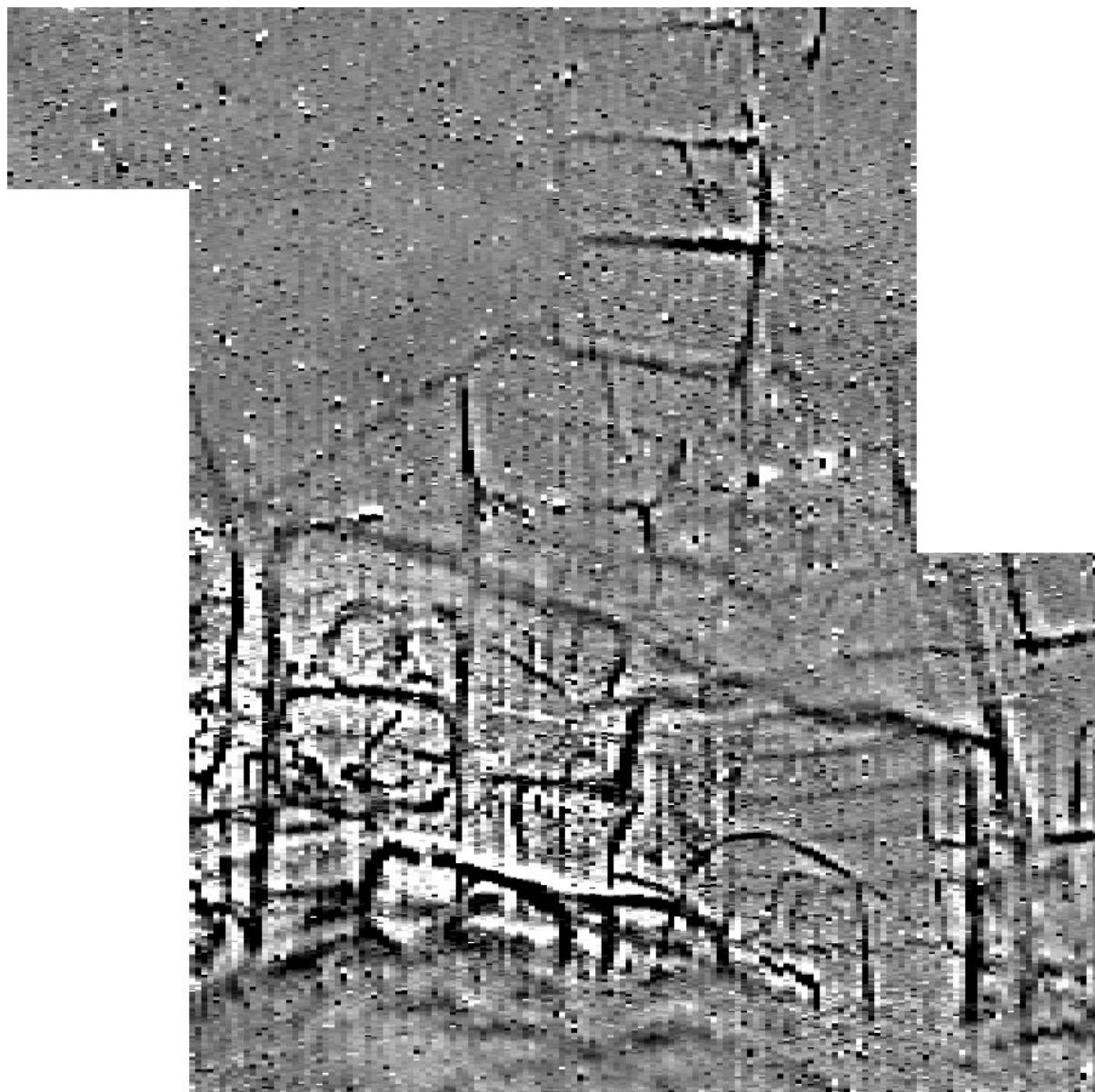


Resistivity eastern survey



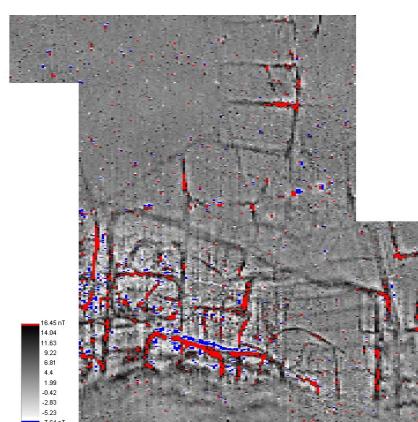
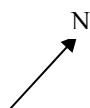


Magnetometry central area



Magnetometry 180 m x 180 m range +3 to -3 nT

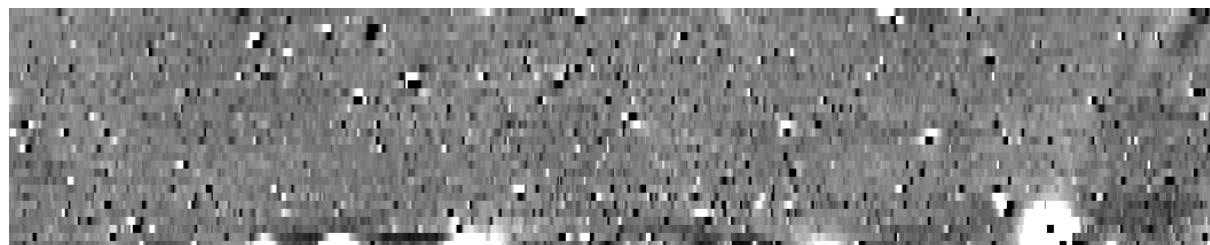
Magnetometry range
+16 to -8 nT with extreme
values in red (high) and blue
(low)



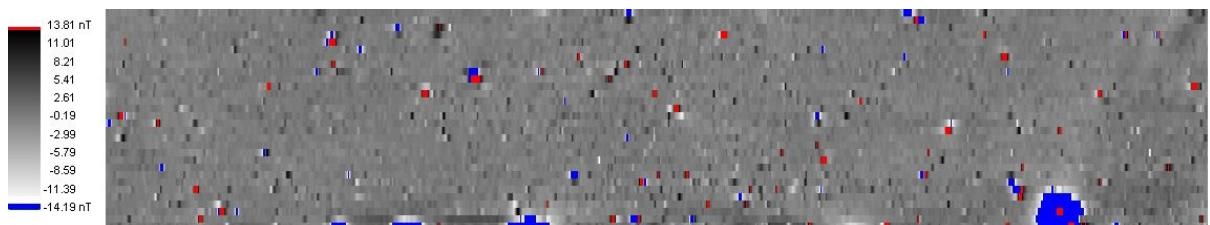


Magnetometry eastern area

N
↗



Magnetometry 30 m x 150 m range +3 to -3 nT



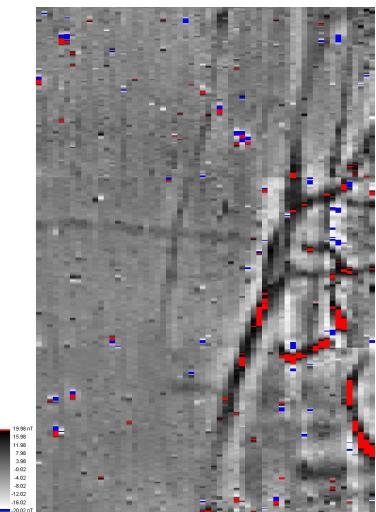
Magnetometry range +14 to -14 nT with extreme values in red (high) and blue (low)

Magnetometry western area

N
↗



a

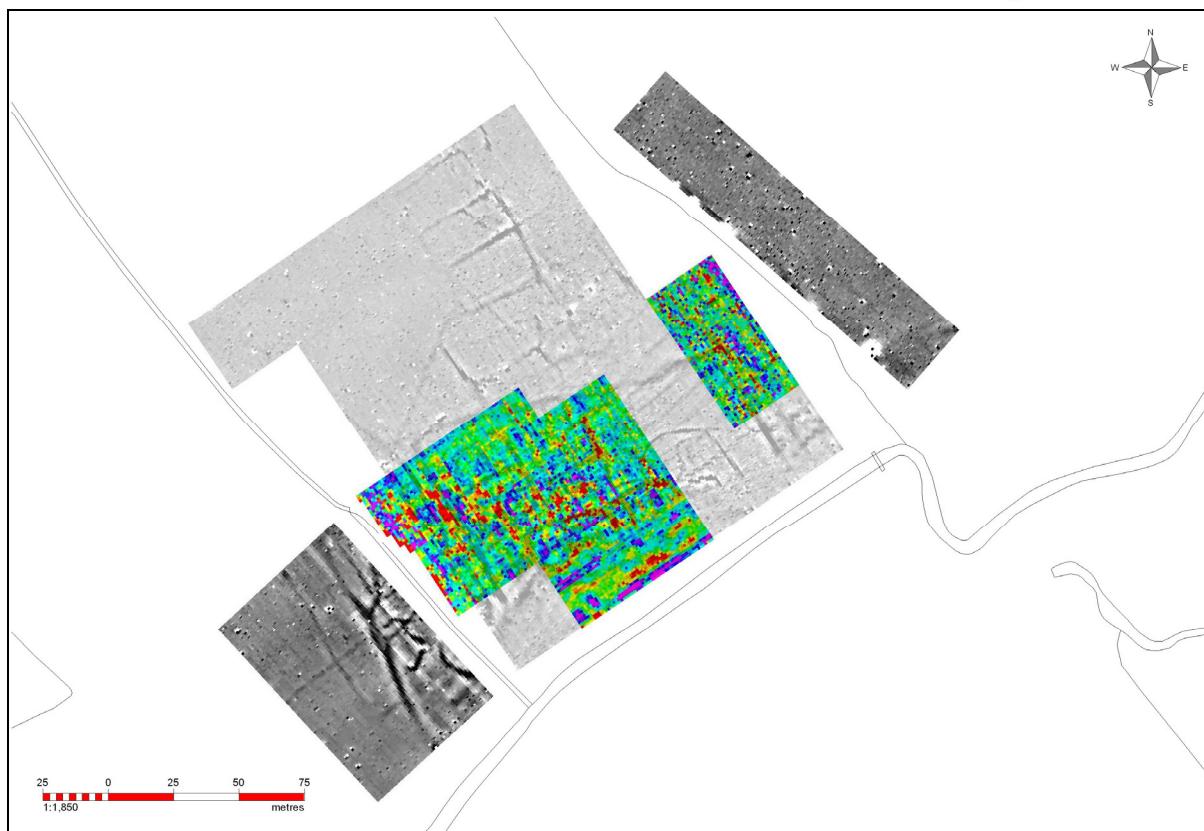


b

Magnetometry 60 m x 90 m

a +6 to -6 nT

b extreme values ± 20 nT in red (high) and blue (low)



Superimposition of resistivity and magnetometry results

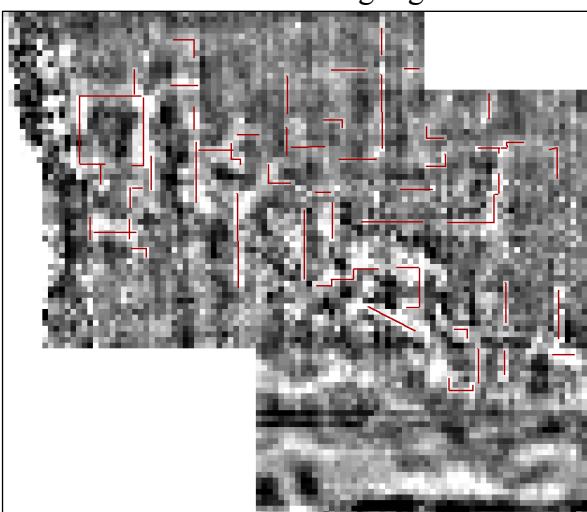
Discussion:

The results indicate that this was an extensively reconfigured Roman centre of activity. The resistivity results show a variety of linear and rectilinear high responses suggesting a complex series of building foundations. Some of the possible foundation lines are highlighted in red on the adjacent resistivity plot. The southern parts of both the magnetometry and resistivity surveys show the effects of flooding or silting from the river which almost certainly meandered before being straightened into its present course.

The lack of responses in the E magnetic survey indicates that either the site was constrained by the present ditch line, or that farming practises in this field have been sufficient to obliterate any archaeological residues.

The E resistivity survey has one area in the centre with a rectilinear form, one side of which is coincident with part of a line in the magnetometry results. The coincident part of the line shows as a section of extremely high values suggesting that at least one building utilising brick or tile stood there.

The W magnetic survey probably shows an earlier course of the present ditch line that marks the extent of the settlement.



Resistivity survey with some potential foundation lines highlighted



The surface finds noted on the site include high quality pot, Samian ware and fine glass. Previous finds by Parker (1974) included parts of a sandstone pillar, painted wall plaster, fine brown glass, parts of a flanged roof tile and oyster shells. He also found part of a mill-stone and tesserae and discovered a laid flint floor and post holes with bone in the base.

The position of the site (about 800 m west of Arrington Bridge on Ermine Street 15 miles south of Godmanchester) and the quality of the finds might suggest that this was both a riverside restocking depot and an informal rest and recreation centre, possibly a Taberna.

References: Parker R, 1974 English Heritage Excavation Archive Reference No. PAR02 (<http://www.englishheritagearchives.org.uk/SingleResult/Default.aspx?id=1298055&t=advanced&io=false&pe=R+Parker&l=all&page=3>)

Transcript of part of Rowland Parker's notes:

Conclusions

1) There was a villa in the immediate vicinity.

This is indicated by a) the sandstone pillar (or pillars) which could only have come from a villa or temple, and were unlikely to have been carried very far.

b) the many tesserae, brown, white and red, which are scattered all over the field, which denote a mosaic floor and which could not have been carried any distance except in compact lumps, which we did not find.

c) the fragments of brick and tile, remarkably few; these could have been carried from a distance, but there seems no reason why they should have been.

d) the tiny fragments of painted wall plaster - so few and so small that they must have been adhering to the flints.

e) several nails and one small piece of very fine glass - of no great significance.

f) the oyster-shells (about 200 in number) and pottery strewn over an area of about 25 sq yds; these, in particular the pottery which included 20 bits of samian, could not have been the result of habitation by the dwellers in the huts. They could not have been carried to where they were found; could only have been thrown.

2 The villa disappeared at an early date.

Apart from the above indications, and a few bits of mortar, we found no trace whatever of it, though we did find what could have been a courtyard.

My reasoning is that it was destroyed or abandoned - not by fire, that would have left more traces than the few bits of burnt wood which we found in the pond area - and that every bit of material was robbed, mainly by people who carried off all, or nearly all of the bricks, tiles and timber, leaving only piles of flints and the large stones which were its foundations.

3) The site was derelict for a considerable time after the villa was abandoned. Apart from the villa refuse, nothing earlier than a coin of Hadrian was found.

4) The site was reoccupied in the 2nd century by a group of peasant farmers, possibly one family, living in two huts.

They had no use for the stream which ran across the site from N to S, in fact they found it a nuisance. It was silted up and had formed a pool just to the east of their huts. They, for some reason, needed to cross the stream to go eastwards [To the shops situated on the Ermine Street?] and so constructed a causeway across the muddy bed of the stream, using the piles of flints and stones still left on the site of the villa.



*They used more flints to make floors for at least two stables.
At the same time, perhaps, they dug the mill-stream and constructed a
mill, again using flints as a foundation.*

5) The site was still occupied in the 4th century when one of the huts was rebuilt (probably not for the first time)

Report by Dr I Sanderson for Archaeology RheeSearch