



Thriplow Trackway Report

In 2008 and 2009 Archaeology RheeSearch Group carried out magnetometry and resistivity surveys on this site to extend previous work* to the E of the church in Thriplow. Aerial photographs from Bing.com showed cropmarks which gave primary targets.

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

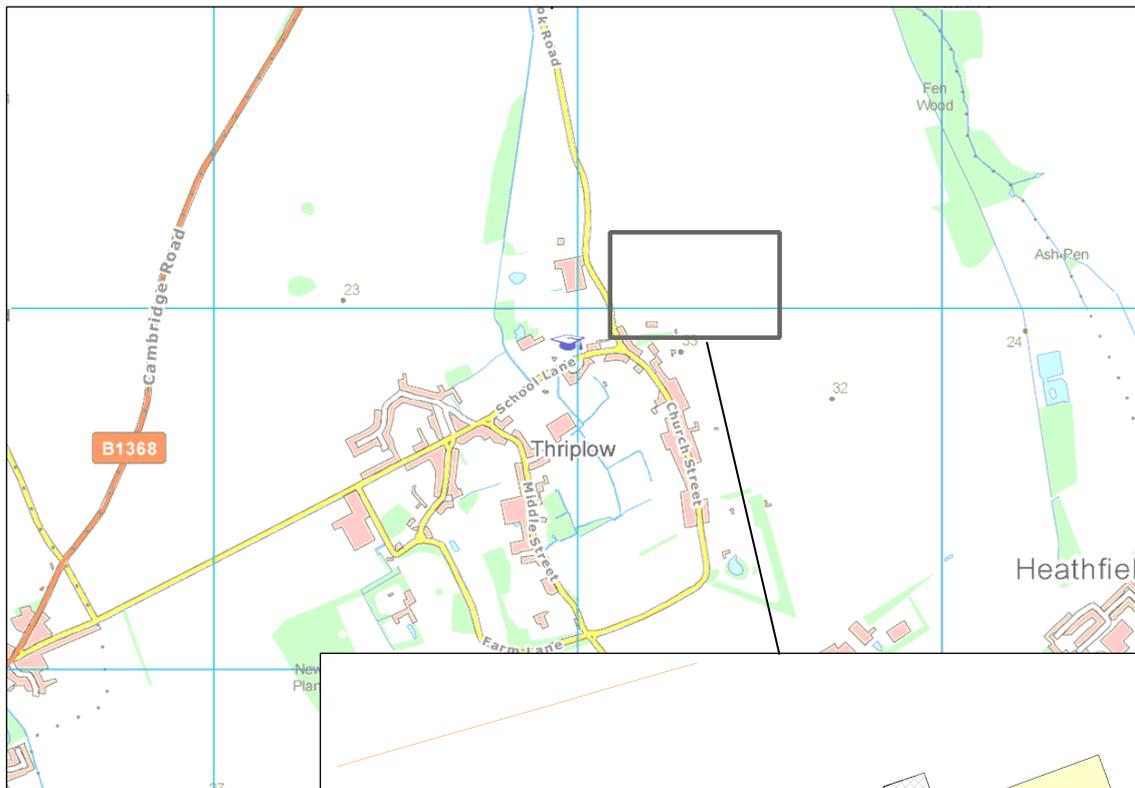
Site permission: Oliver Walston.

Site conditions: Stubble or ploughed and rolled.

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

Area covered:	Magnetometry eastern area	17,100 m ²
	western area	16,200 m ²
Resistivity	eastern area	3,600 m ²
	central area	1,200 m ²
	southern area	600 m ²

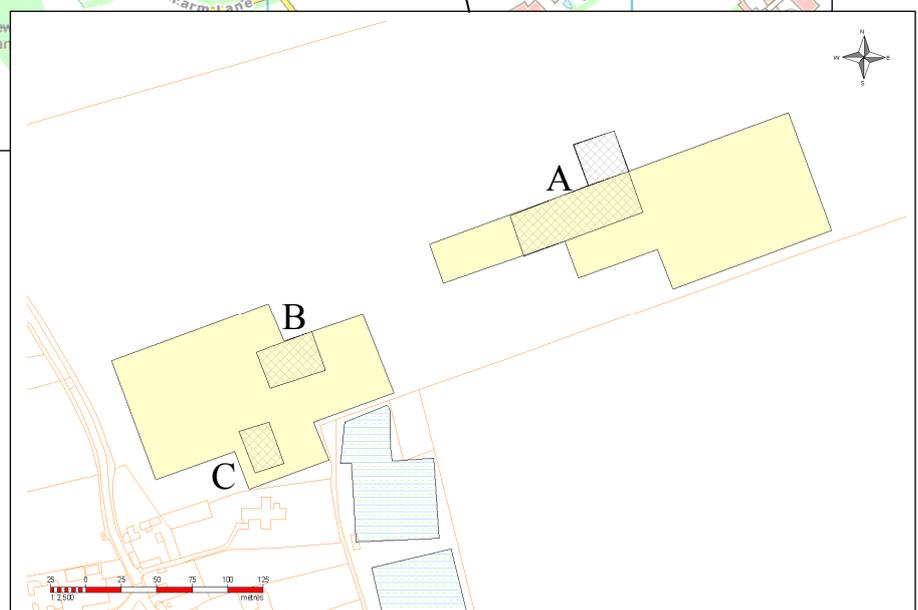
Location: TL 443 471, North of Thriplow Church, Thriplow Cambridgeshire.



Location plan: Survey areas in Thriplow

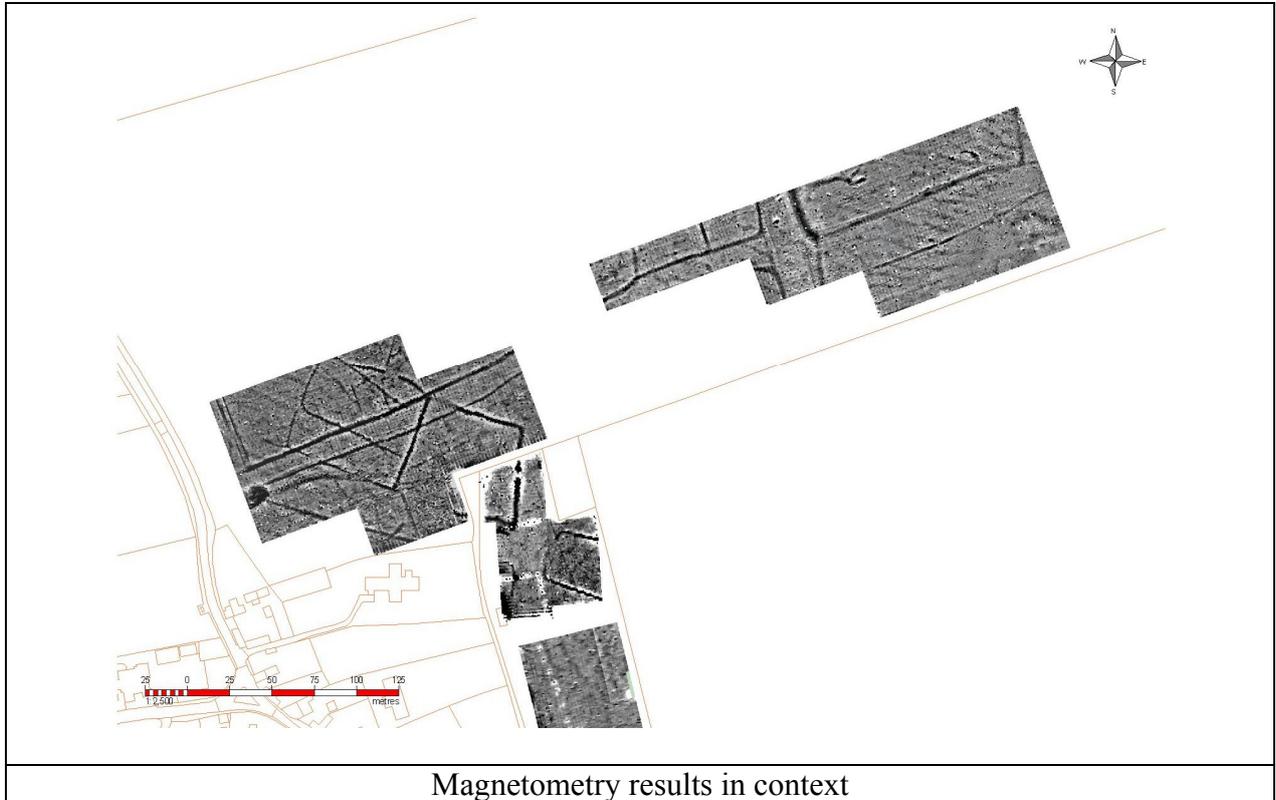
(Resistivity survey area is black crosshatched, magnetometry area is yellow solid. Previously reported data blue horizontal hatching.)

On the ground location points are retained in the field notes.

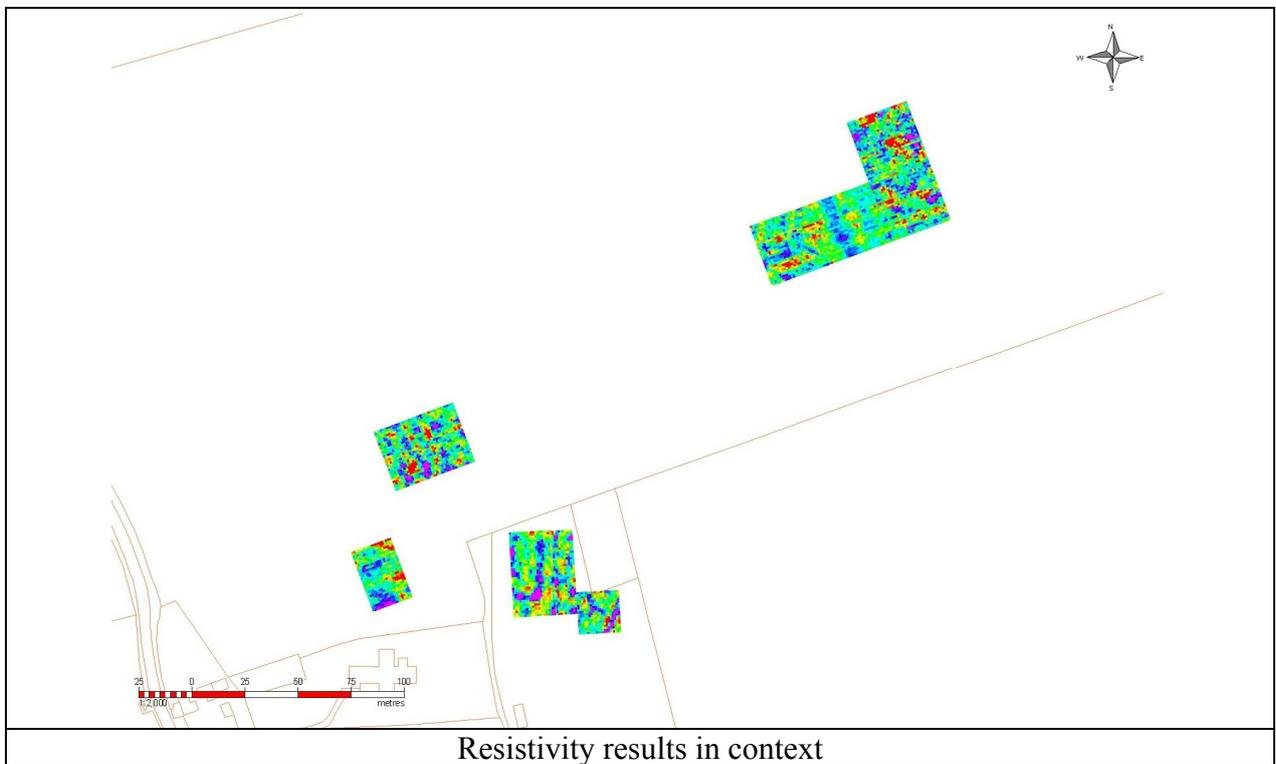


Purpose of survey: To determine if any subsurface structures were detectable relating to crop marks seen on aerial photographs.

Results:

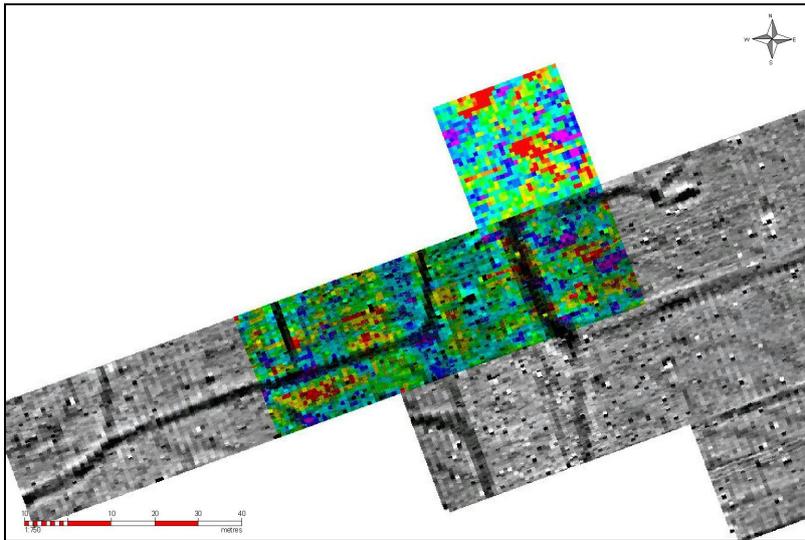


Magnetometry results in context

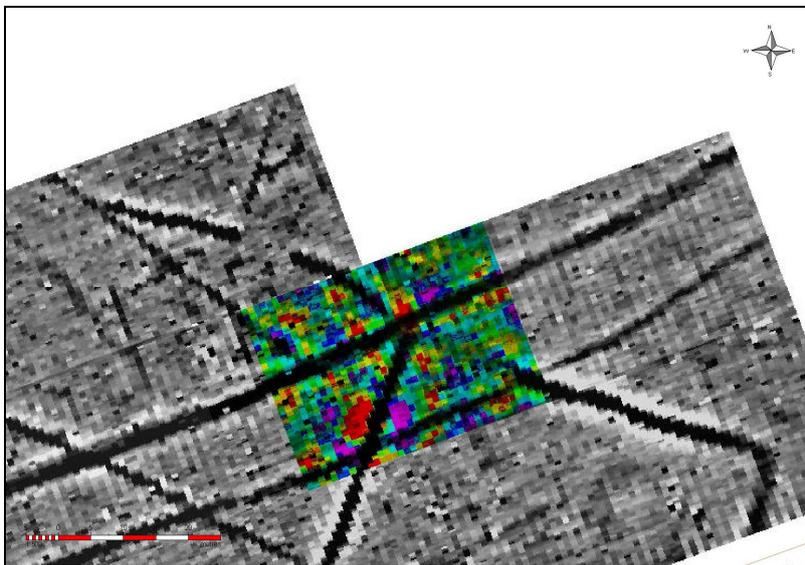


Resistivity results in context

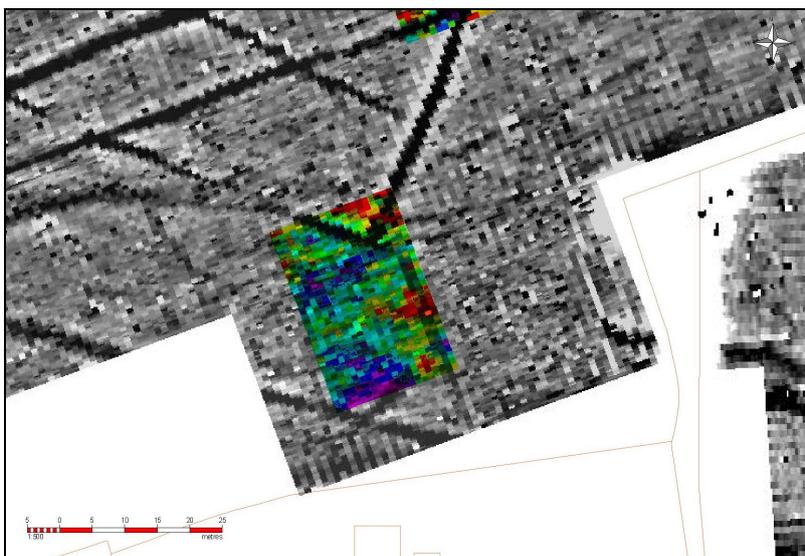
Correlated resistivity and magnetometry results in context



Eastern survey area A



Central survey area B



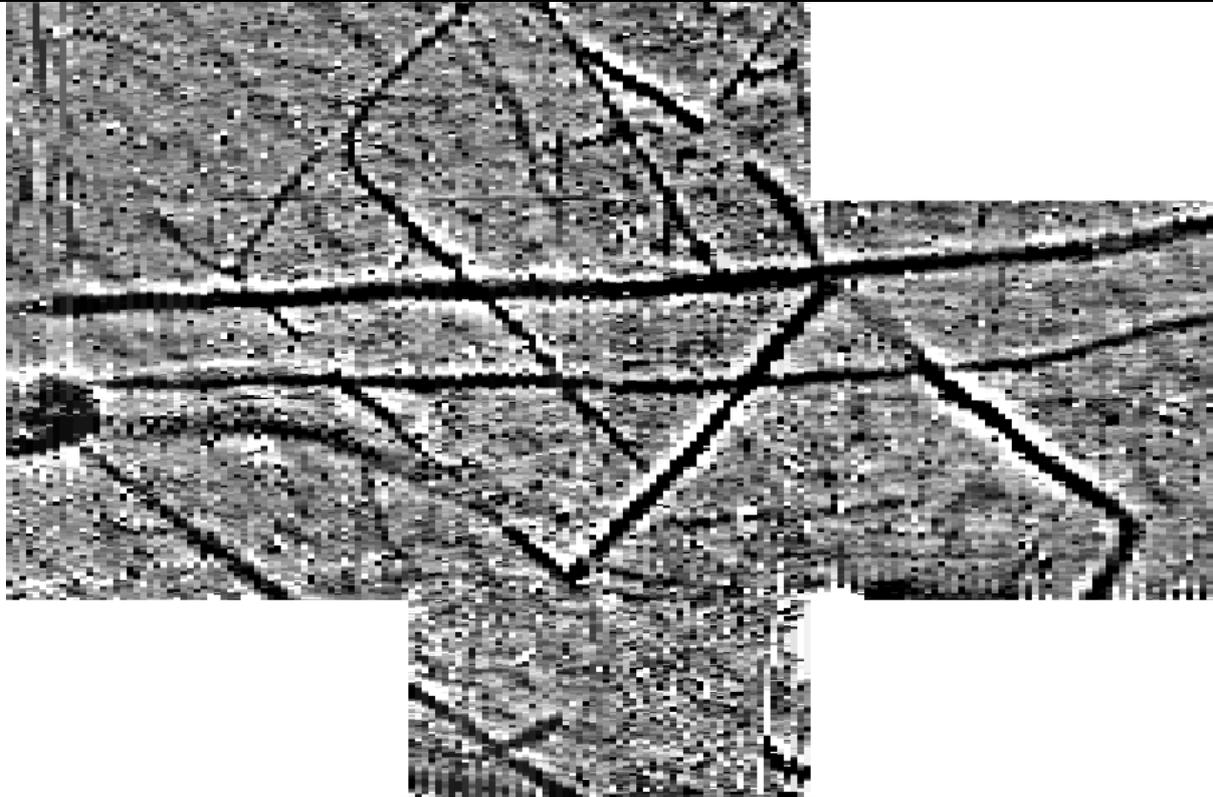
Southern survey area C

Individual survey area results

(The following images have been rotated for presentation, the orientation may be derived from the context images above. They are not to a common scale.)

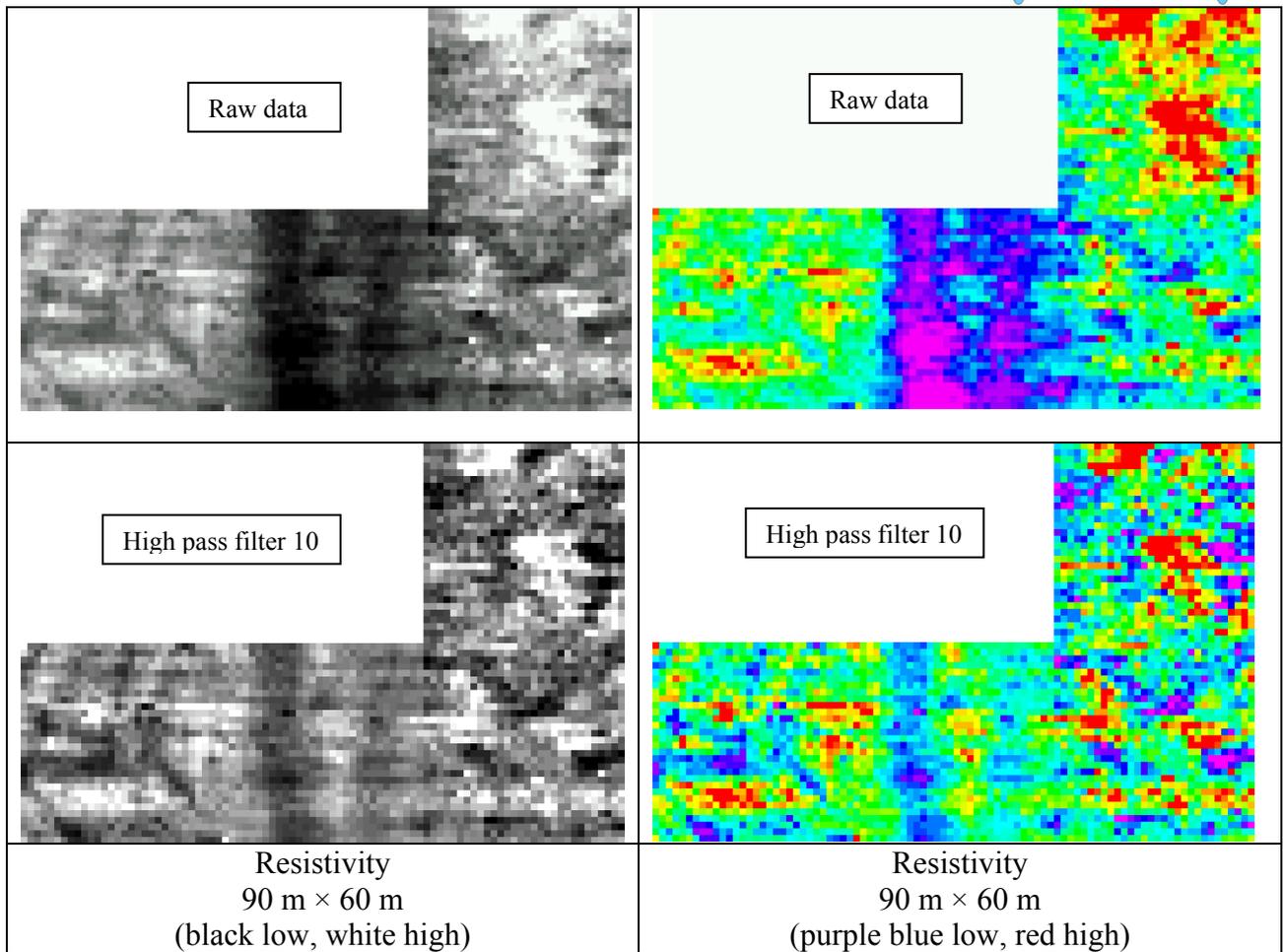


Magnetometry eastern site
 (± 1 nT, black high, white low)
 270 m x 90 m



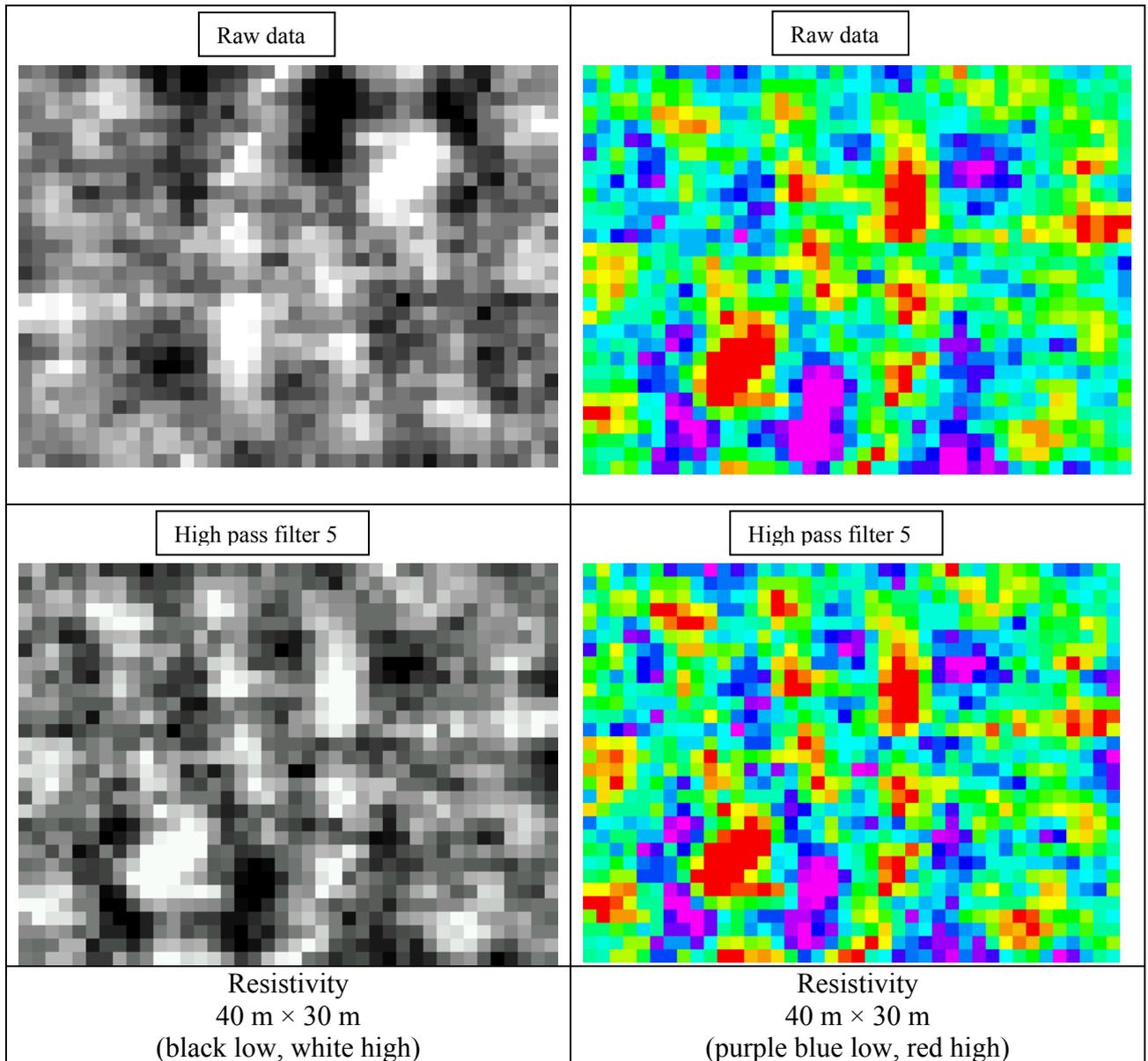
Magnetometry western site
 (± 3 nT, black high, white low)
 180 m x 120 m

Resistivity results; eastern area A

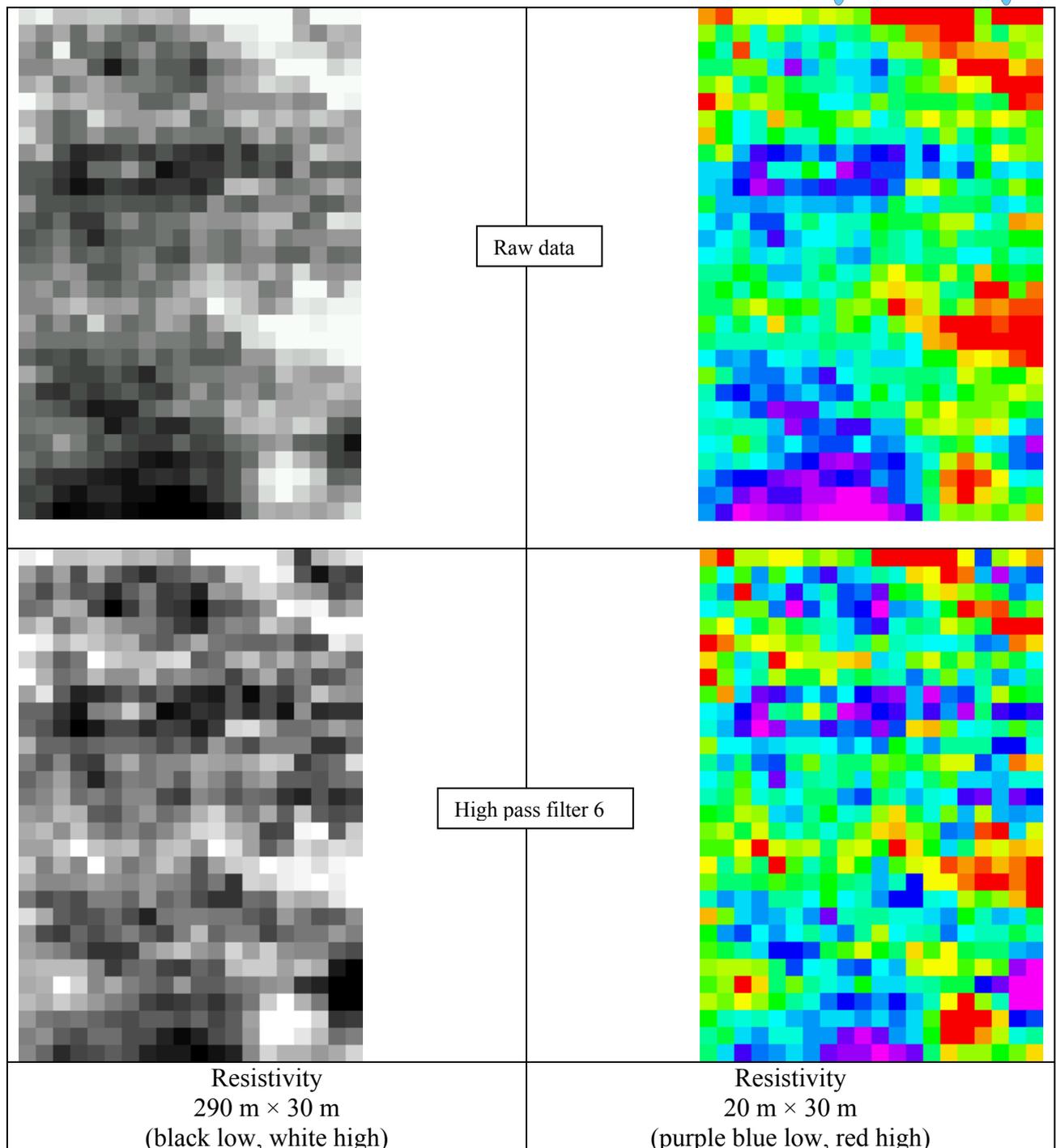


This resistivity survey was carried out on two separate visits collecting data from two adjacent 30 m × 30 m grids on each visit. It proved impossible to balance the readings between the visits due to a large change in the soil moisture conditions. The images above represent the best matching that could be achieved.

Resistivity results; central area B



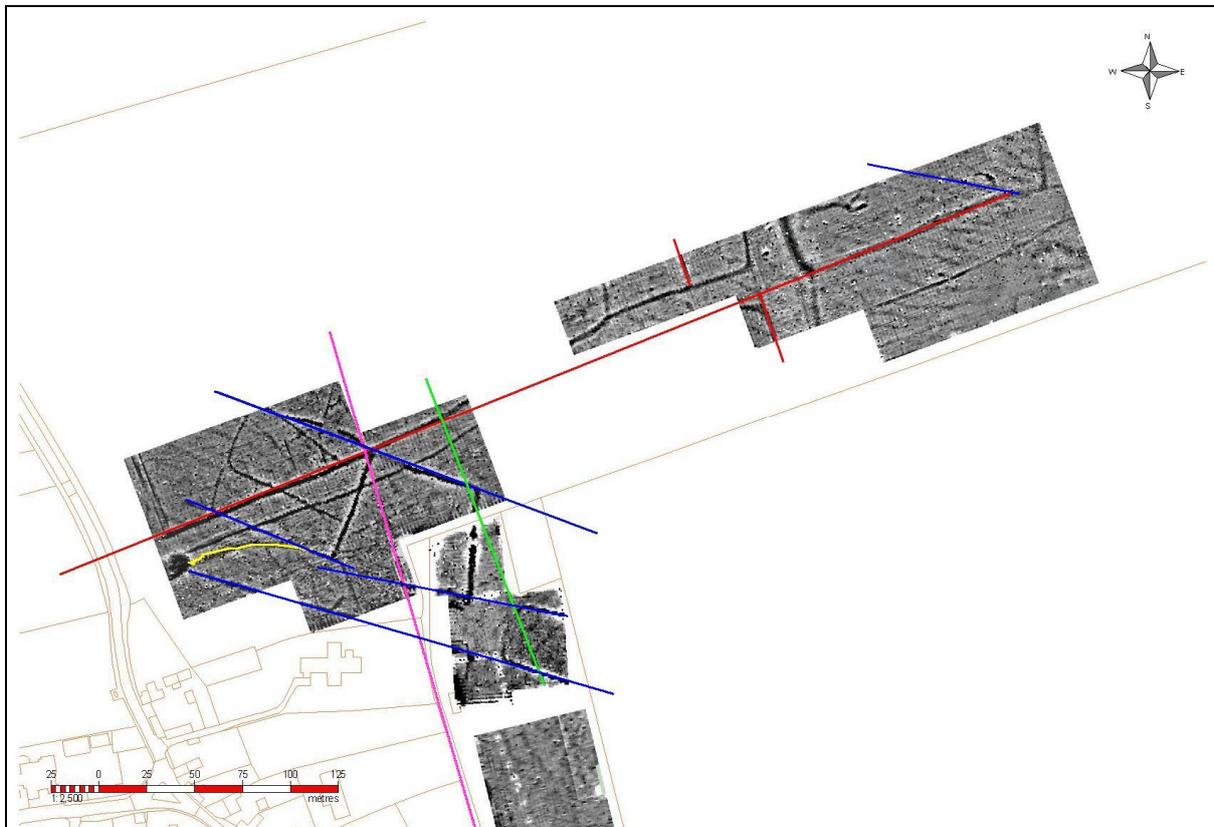
Resistivity results; southern area C



Magnetometry

The magnetometry results show at least two different rectilinear alignments, indicated in red or blue on the image below. Features on the red alignment are grouped around a trackway which is very straight at either end but much less so in between. This is particularly noticeable at the left side of the eastern magnetometry image above. The trackway appears to

be displaced at a junction of trackways in the eastern survey. Features on the blue alignment show a marked deviation as they cross into the paddock to the E of the church.



Some indicative alignments and features

Resistivity

The main feature of the resistivity results from the eastern survey area A is a strong, wide (about 4 m) low resistance band on the red alignment. A similar but narrower strip normal to the main band occurs towards the W of the survey. There is also a more diffuse and interrupted low resistance band on the blue alignment terminating near the junction of the northernmost grid with the larger survey area. A similar short segment occurs towards the W end. The high resistance features in this survey area are more difficult to interpret as the cropping line was on the red alignment and higher resistance often occurs along tractor tracks, though this does not preclude the possibility of wall foundations. The higher resistance values in the grid to the N do not conform to this pattern and may represent building foundation remains despite not giving clear rectilinear forms.

The central area B resistivity survey was carried out to explore the intersection of the two alignments shown in the magnetometry results. In itself the survey reveals little coherent pattern but the results are discussed below in relation to the magnetometry results.

The southern area C resistivity likewise forms no distinct pattern but is discussed further below.

Magnetometry and resistivity results

Magnetometry and resistivity detect different physical characteristics. The response, or lack of response when considered in relation to the other technique can add to the available evidence.



With respect to the eastern resistivity survey (A), the major low resistance band is wider and runs to the W of the adjacent, parallel magnetometry line and across the track line. It also matches up to the slightly broader and fainter magnetic signal to the S. Closer examination suggests there might be weaker low resistance and magnetic responses parallel to the E. An area of low resistance values on the western side of the survey matches the magnetic line. It is particularly noticeable that the strong wide (about 4 m) magnetometry line within this resistivity survey area has no corresponding distinct resistance response.

The central resistivity survey area B has a distinct high resistance area at the point of intersection of the widest magnetic lines. It also has another area of high resistance apparently respecting the blue alignment signal towards the opposite side of the red alignment trackway, bracketing that magnetic line with a similar area of low resistance. The southern resistivity survey (C) has a band of low resistance which may extend the blue alignment magnetic signal although there is no corresponding magnetometry response. A larger area would need to be surveyed to make any further comment.

Discussion:

The responses suggest a pre-Roman farm complex with a defensive skewed square compound (blue alignments) and a Roman field and track system (red alignments) which was extensively modified. This may have been utilised in the Anglo-Saxon period as shown by the non-linear central portion of the trackway. The trackway may have continued through the Roman site identified 800 m to the E².

A central landscape sighting feature must have existed for a considerable period as shown by the intersection point of the two major alignments, which is also intersected by an extension of the E side of the planned housing plots (purple line) along the street in Thriplow.

The yellow line on the magnetometry features image corresponds to the line of the Langford Way shown on the draft inclosure map, which continued along the present field boundary.

The N-S portion of the red alignment junction may correspond to the pre-inclosure Cambridge Way route.

The green line in the above image shows a narrow but distinct magnetometry line in the previous work¹ extrapolated over the present survey area. The same line is present in the current results, but is incomplete and indistinct, its presence however does suggest that the red alignment field system extended further to the S.

Conclusion:

A multi-period series of field systems has been located.

Raw data are available as separate appendices.

Magnetometry readings: 4/m, 1 m separation.

Resistivity readings: 1 m interval, 1 m separation.

¹ Previous work entitled “Thriplow Tumulus Site Report” by Dr I Sanderson, 2008 deposited with Cambridgeshire Heritage and Environment Record.

² “Bath house field interim report 1” by Archaeology RheeSearch, 2008 deposited with Cambridgeshire Heritage and Environment Record.