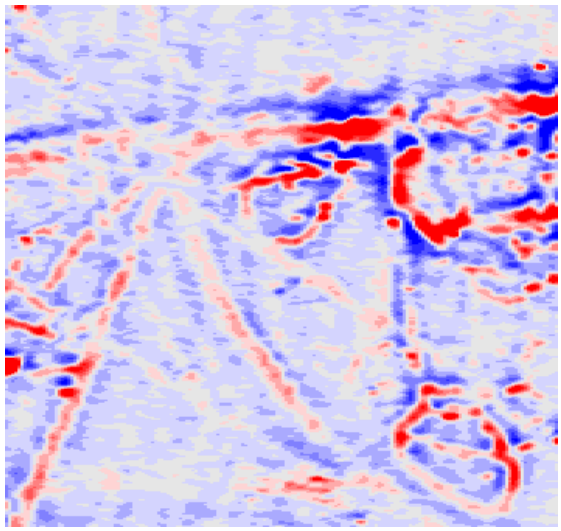
Northamptonshire County Council

Northamptonshire Archaeology

A Geophysical Survey on Land

to the East of Weedon Bec

Northamptonshire



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REGISTERED IFA ORGANISATION

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

NOVEMBER 2004

A GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

WEEDON BEC

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

OCTOBER 2004

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QUALITY CONTROL

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A GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY ON LAND ... , at
WEEDON BEC, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE, OCTOBER 2004

ABSTRACT

Northamptonshire Archaeology conducted a geophysical survey, on behalf of Steve Young of University College Northampton, on land with an area of approximately 1.08 ha at Weedon Bec, Northamptonshire. Gradiometer survey was carried out and revealed evidence of rectangular and oval enclosures as well as ditches and probable pits/postholes.

1 INTRODUCTION

Northamptonshire Archaeology conducted geophysical survey in October 2004 on an area of land with an area of approximately 1.08 ha at Weedon Bec, Northamptonshire (NGR..., Fig 1). The work was undertaken on behalf of Stephen Young of University College Northampton. The aim of the work was to identify the nature of any buried archaeological remains.

2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

The parish of Weedon Bec lies in the valley of the east flowing River Nene, and covers 770 ha of land. Weedon Bec is made up of three settlements. Lower Weedon is on the south side of the River Nene, Upper Weedon lies on a hillside to the southwest, and Road Weedon is north of the river and located at the intersection of the Roman Road of Watling Street (A5) and the A45 (RCHM 1981).

The solid geology of Weedon comprises Lias Clay, the drift geology consists of Glacial Sand and Gravels (http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/index.htm; accessed 04/11/04). The site is flat and at the time of survey was used for arable agriculture.

3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

In Weedon archaeological remains of prehistoric through to medieval date have been discovered. Worked flints recovered from the parish indicate prehistoric activity with Roman activity represented by Watling Street (A5). Earthworks of the medieval and later periods lie within the parish of Weedon Bec (RCHM 1981).

4 METHODOLOGY

All fieldwork was in accordance with English Heritage Guidelines (EH 1995).

Gradiometer Survey

The gradiometer survey was undertaken using Geoscan Research FM36 and FM256 Fluxgate Gradiometers. A total of 12 separate 30m x 30m grid-squares were surveyed in detail. Each grid-square was traversed at rapid walking pace via zigzag traverses spaced at 1m intervals. A sample trigger recorded readings every 0.25m along the traverse.

The data were analysed using Geoplot 3.0 software. Low (negative) magnetism is shown as white and high (positive) magnetism as black in the resultant greyscale plots. The data were processed using an algorithm to remove magnetic spikes, thereby reducing extreme readings sometimes caused by stray iron fragments and spurious effects due to the inherent magnetism of soils. The 'Zero Mean Traverse' algorithm was used in order to remove the variation between adjacent traverses. The data was adjusted to remove occasional data stagger along traverses. No other processing functions were employed. The processed data is presented here in the form of greyscale and interpretive plots (Figs 2 and 3 respectively).

5 SURVEY RESULTS

A complex network of positive linear and curving anomalies probably representing former ditches have been located throughout the survey area. Most striking amongst these was a wide, generally east-west orientated, ditch in the north of the area – possibly an important boundary.

Three sub-circular likely ditched enclosures amidst other small curving and discrete positive anomalies, possibly the remains of prehistoric settlement were identified in the east of the survey area in a region bounded by a gently curving ditch.

The western half of the survey area was dominated by a series of linear ditches. The magnetic intensity of these ditches increased the further to the west that they were detected, suggesting perhaps that settlement activity may be found outside the survey area... .

The remains of ridge and furrow cultivation can barely be recognised in the data over the northern half of the survey.

6 CONCLUSION

The gradiometer survey located a number of magnetic anomalies that are likely to represent both buried ditched enclosures and other ditches. The eastern half of the survey would appear to represent the enclosures, ditches and pits of a prehistoric enclosed settlement. Linear anomalies reflecting ditches have also been discovered to the west, suggesting possible further activity beyond the surveyed area.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

English Heritage 1995 *Geophysical Survey in Archaeological Field Evaluation*, Research and Professional Services Guideline, **1**

RCHM 1981 *An Inventory of the Historical Monuments in the County Of Northampton, Volume III: Archaeological Sites in North-West Northamptonshire,* Royal Commission On Historical Monuments England

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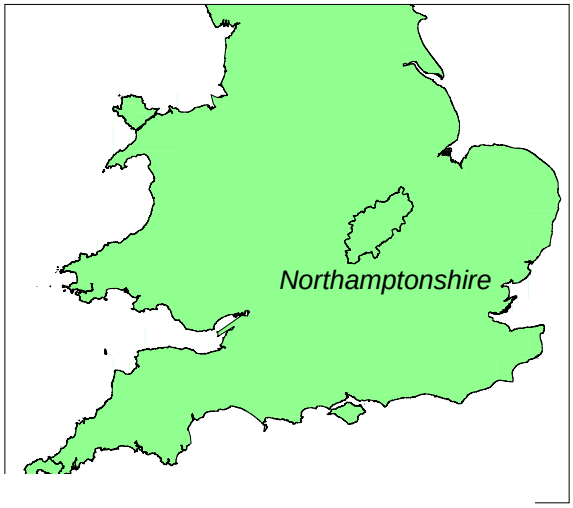
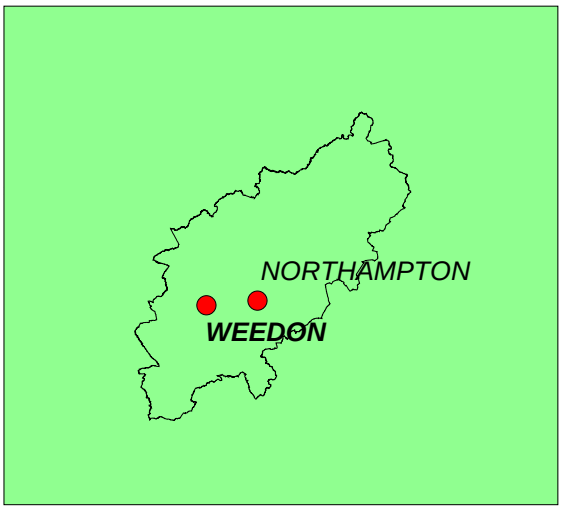




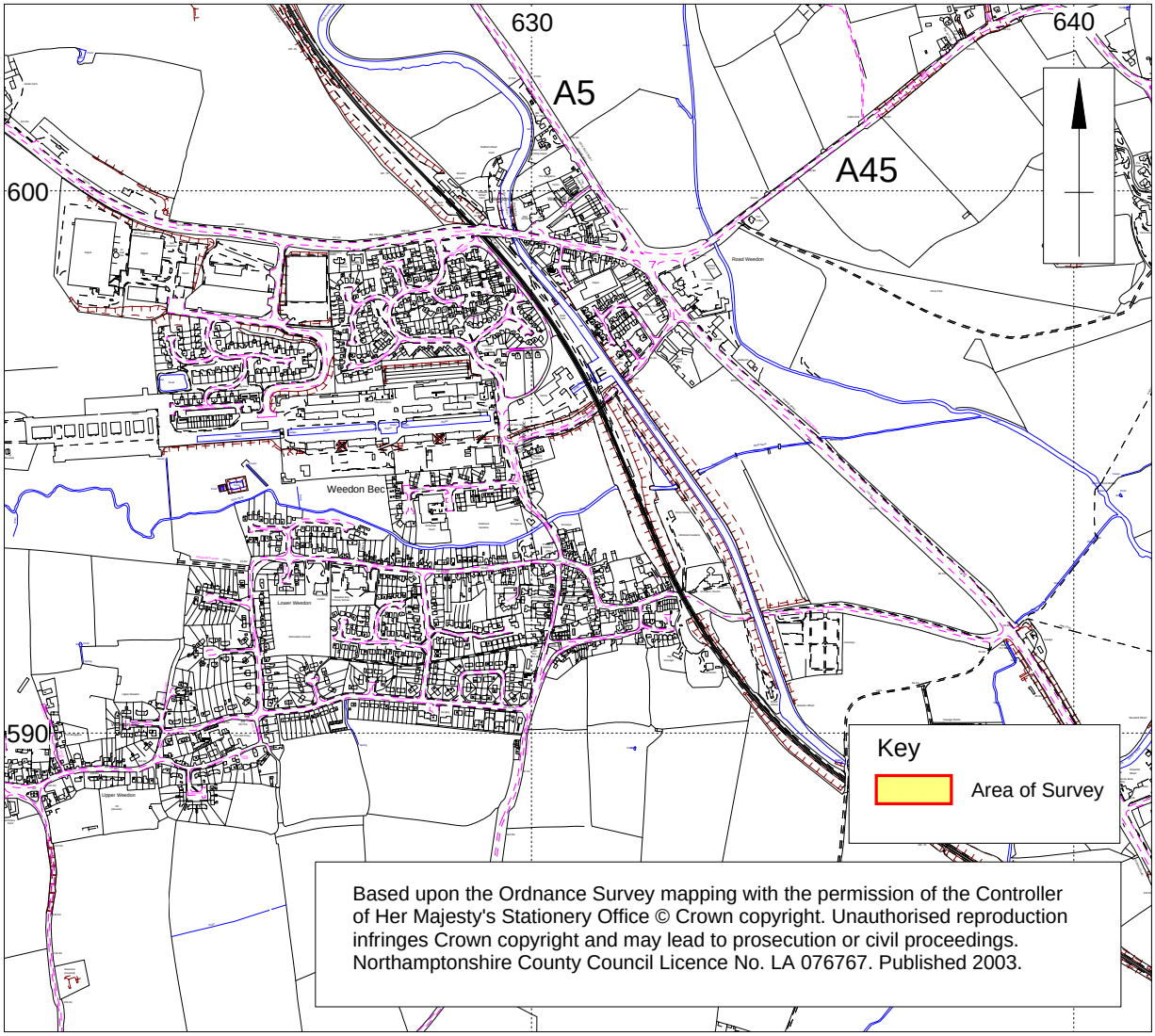
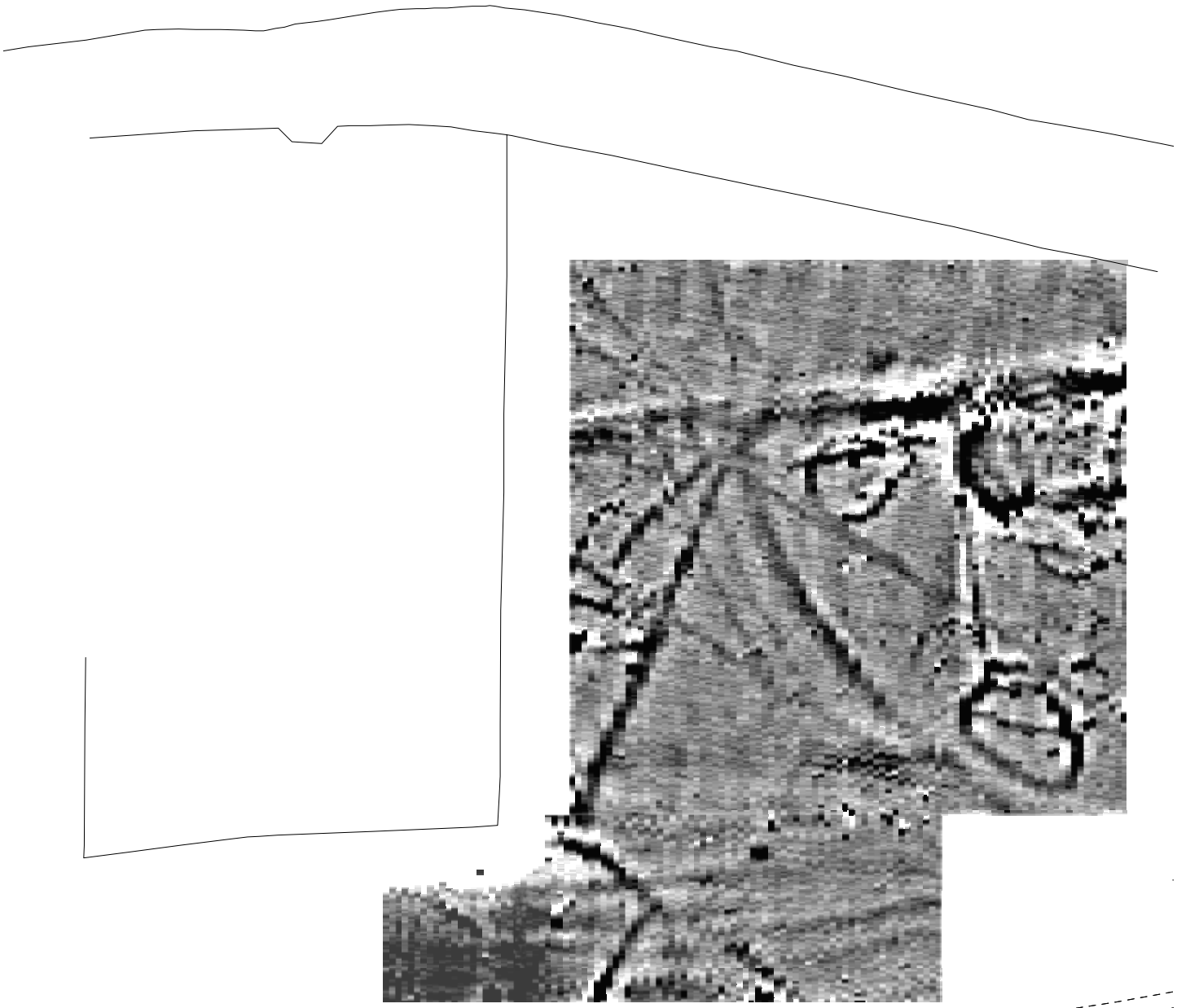


Fig 1 Site Location

Scale 1:1000



+/- 3nT Black/white

N

Fig 2 Gradiometer Survey Results

Scale 1:1000

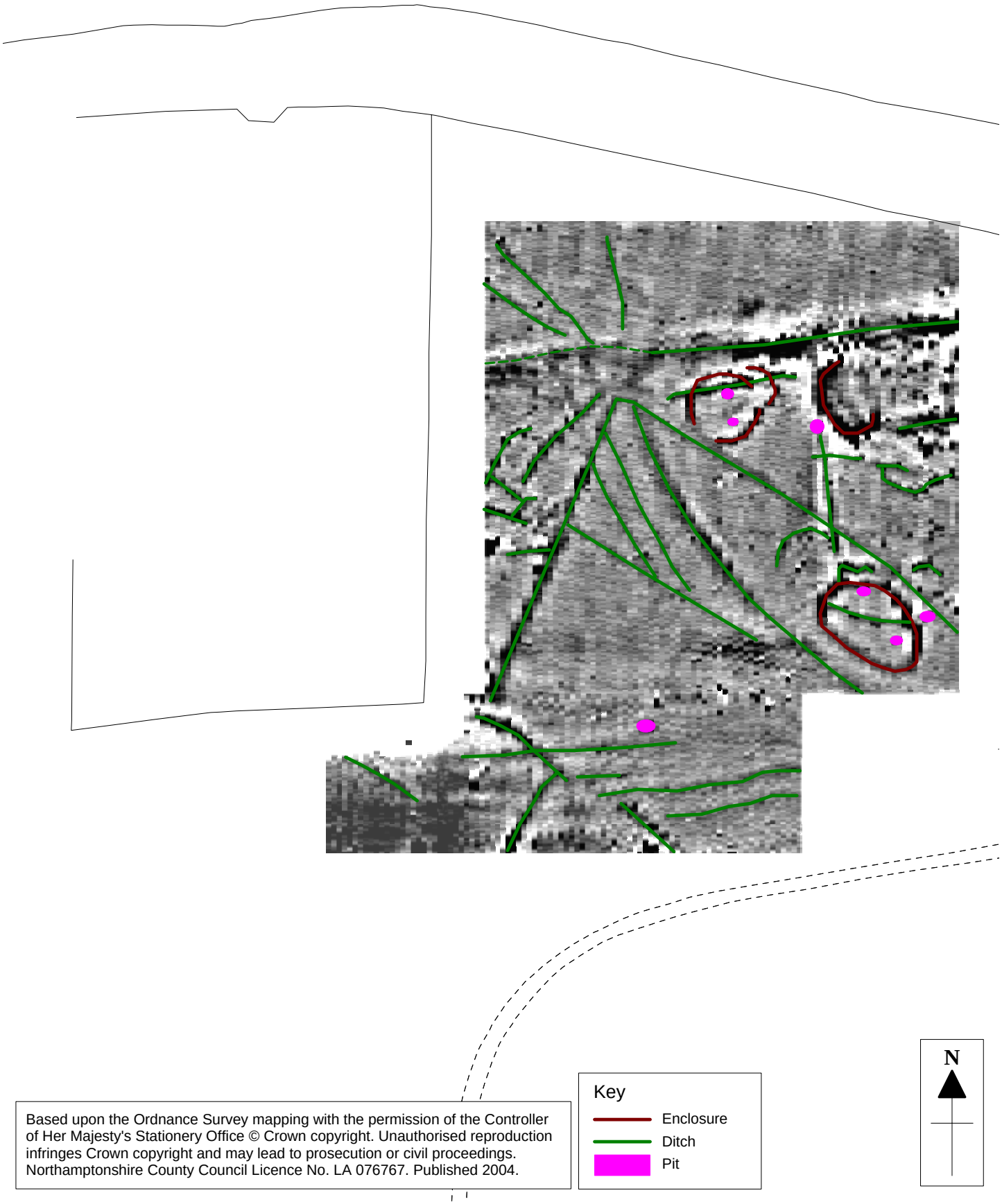


Fig 3 Gradiometer Survey Results with Interpretation