

YCCART 2017/Y6

Gradiometry survey at Wrington Road, Congresbury

**YATTON, CONGRESBURY, CLAVERHAM AND CLEEVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL
RESEARCH TEAM (YCCART)**

General Editor: Vince Russett



Barbed and tanged bronze age flint arrowhead from Congresbury

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Abstract

A gradiometry survey at Wrington Road, Congresbury in 2017, showed evidence for high-strength magnetic anomalies, which could be evidence for iron smelting or pottery kilns. Other features recorded may be occupation evidence, potentially of prehistoric date.

Acknowledgements

A Heritage Lottery Grant enabled the purchase, by YCCCART, of a Geoscan RM 15 resistivity meter and a Bartington Gradiometer 601 without which this survey could not have been undertaken.

This survey would also not have been carried out without the willing permission of the landowner, Mr Collins.

The authors are grateful for the hard work by the members of YCCCART in performing the surveys and Vince Russett for editing.

Introduction

Yatton, Congresbury, Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team (YCCCART) is one of a number of Community Archaeology teams across northern Somerset, formerly supported by the North Somerset Council Development Management Team.

Our objective is to undertake archaeological fieldwork to enable a better understanding and management of the heritage of the area while recording and publishing the activities and locations of the research carried out.

Site location



Fig 1: Location of site

The site surveyed is a field off Wrington Road, Congresbury, 500m NNE of Iwood Farm. It is centred on ST45436369.

Land use and geology

The upper half of the field lies on the Dolomitic Conglomerate of the lower slopes of Broadfield Down, with the lower half on the Mercia Mudstones. There is no public access to this site, which is currently used for grazing, although it has been ploughed in recent years.

Historical & archaeological context

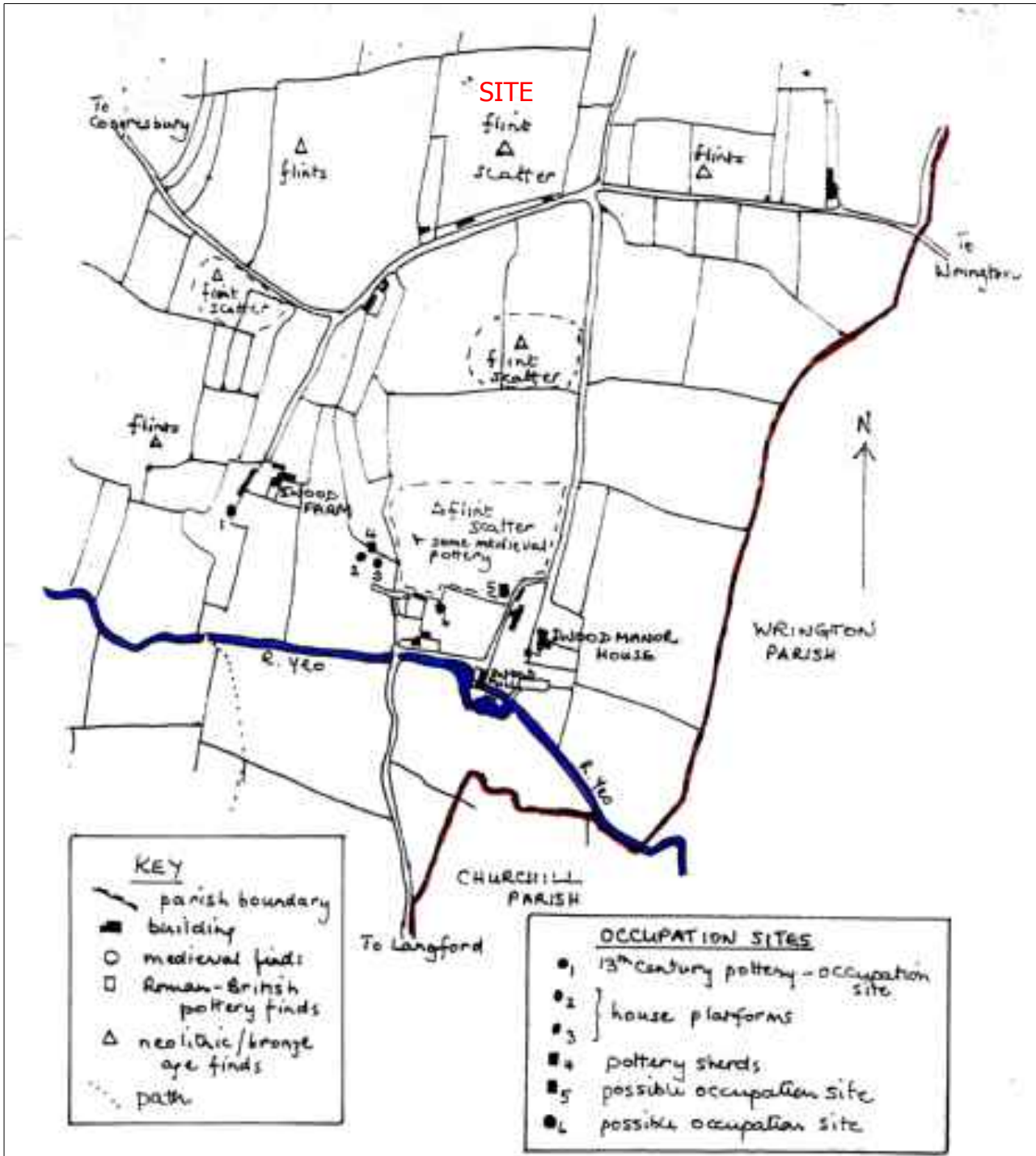


Fig 2: Archaeological finds in the survey area (from Bedingfield 1996)

The site lies on the south facing lower slopes of Broadfield Down, above what appears to be an ancient route from Congresbury to Wroughton.

Fieldwalking was carried out in the early 1980s for the Avon County Council Congresbury parish survey (Broomhead, in prep), where 'A small number of worked Neolithic / Bronze Age flints [were] recovered during fieldwalking. No noticeable concentrations' (North

Somerset HER 07245). It is also notable that flint scatters were recorded in the adjacent field to the south across Wrington Road (HER 07249) ('Several flint scrapers and blades recovered during fieldwalking No noticeable concentrations'), and in the fields adjacent to the W (HER 07246) ('A single, rolled and heavily iron stained flint scraper or blade of the [late] Upper Palaeolithic recovered amongst other flints during fieldwalking') and HER 07247 ('A small number of worked flakes and some burnt flint recovered during fieldwalking. No noticeable concentrations'). It is not clear how significant these finds are. In small numbers, they may represent no more than background 'noise', which is also indicated by the lack of 'noticeable concentrations'.

The survey site represents the easternmost of a group of fields north of Wrington Road, which have a common boundary to their north. It seems reasonable that these are an assart from an early King's Wood, which have later clearly been ploughed, judging by the aratral (ploughing) curves of the boundaries of the fields (especially those at the western end of the group). They include the specifically assart-type field name 'breach' (*Ye Lower Breach* 1736) (SHC T\PH\brc/7). A later assart above is *Ye Upper Breache* 1736 (ibid.). The field surveyed is *Ye Poor Land belonging to Wrington* 1736; *Church Ground or Nine Acres* 1840 (Tithe Apportionment).

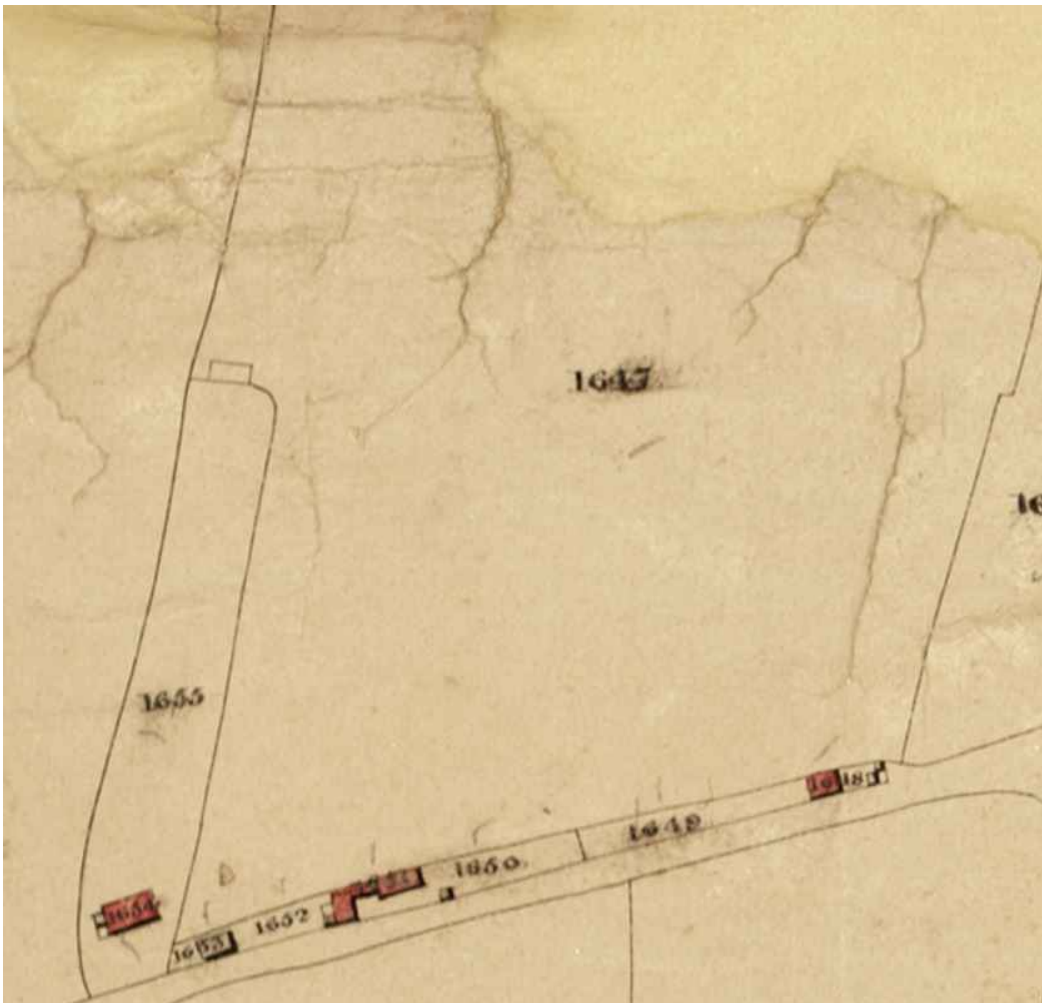


Fig 3: The survey area from the Tithe Map (1840) (SHC D\D/Rt/M/317)

On the Tithe Apportionment, the field is described as in the possession of the 'Second Poor of Wrington'. The poor who were assisted by their parish were called paupers, , and poor people not in receipt of regular parish relief were called second poor. ([https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Introduction_to_English_Poor_Law_and_Parish_Chest_Records_\(National_Institute\)](https://familysearch.org/wiki/en/Introduction_to_English_Poor_Law_and_Parish_Chest_Records_(National_Institute))). Money was raised for emergency funding to be available to this second group by leasing land, and at the time of the Tithe Map, the lessee was one Benjamin Porter.

Two houses (Briarside and Iwood House) between the survey field and the road probably originated as road verge ('squatter') cottages.

Survey objectives

The field was surveyed as part of a general gradiometry survey of the lower slopes of Broadfield Down, where there is the possibility of iron smelting and / or pottery making due to the vicinity of King's Wood. In addition, there is the possibility of some prehistoric occupation being responsible for the flint scatters at this and nearby sites.

Methodology

The survey of the fields was undertaken during the period November 2016 to January 2017 by teams from YCCCART using a Bartington 601-2 gradiometer.

The completed survey was downloaded to TerraSurveyor and the resultant composite adjusted using the following filters:

Gradiometry

Colour - Red Blue Green 2
Band weight equaliser
Grad shade
Destriped
Despiked
Clip SD2

The report was written in Libre Office 5 Writer.

Photographs were taken by members of YCCCART, and remain the copyright of YCCCART.

Results

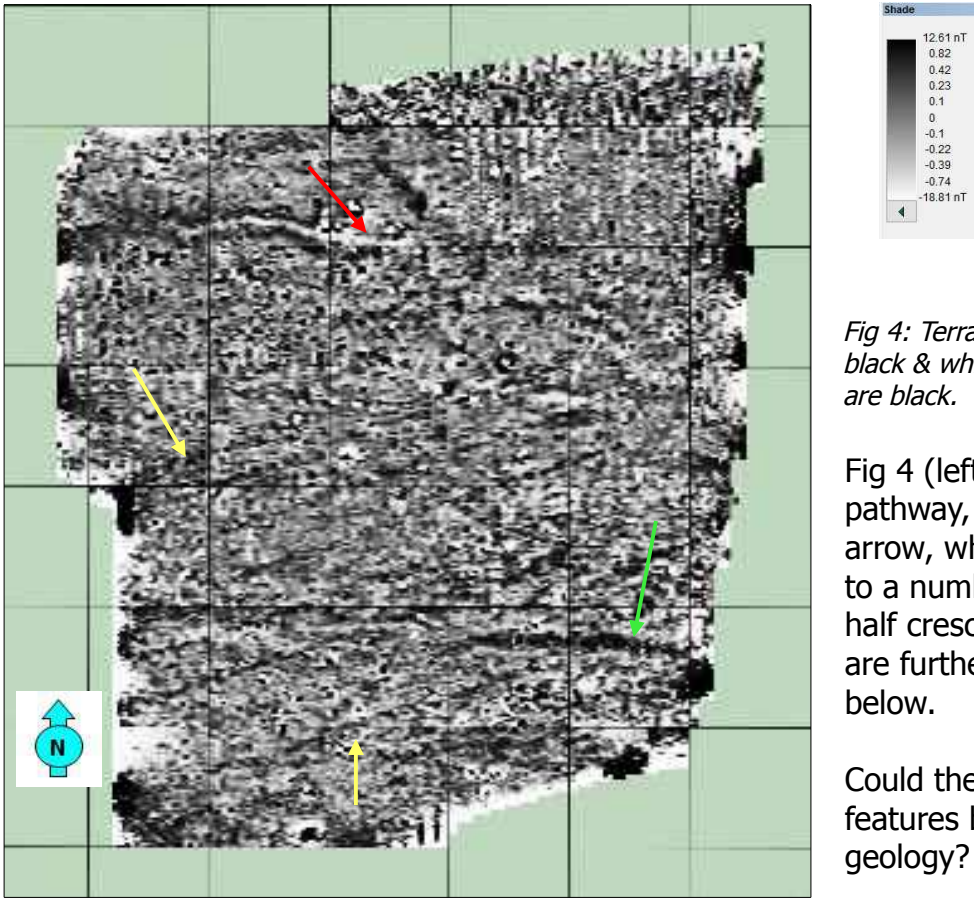


Fig 4: TerraSurveyor shade view black & white image. High readings are black.

Fig 4 (left) shows a possible pathway, indicated by the red arrow, which leads eastwards to a number of circular and half crescent features. These are further illustrated in Fig 5 below.

Could these circular/ crescent features be the result of geology?

There is a faint chance that these might be prehistoric features, such as parts of enclosures, but the strength (or lack of it) of the responses makes this a borderline possibility at best.

A series of parallel black lines as per the examples indicated by the yellow arrows in Fig 4 result from grypes (postmedieval drainage features).

Also show in Fig 4 and indicated by a green arrow is a black line going east - west. This may be the remains of a field boundary. Although current satellite images show no ground features, it is slightly visible on both 1946 and 1991 air photographs in the North Somerset HER, and the 1946 air photo shows its line continued far more obviously in the field to the west. It could therefore alternatively be a non-magnetic service trench from Wrington Road to the adjacent farm.

Two large dipole responses in the results (see Fig 5 below) could be the result of intense burning, and thus potential kiln or smelting sites. One is, however, very close to the edge of the field, and thus may be debris in the field boundary, or even a domestic bonfire site.

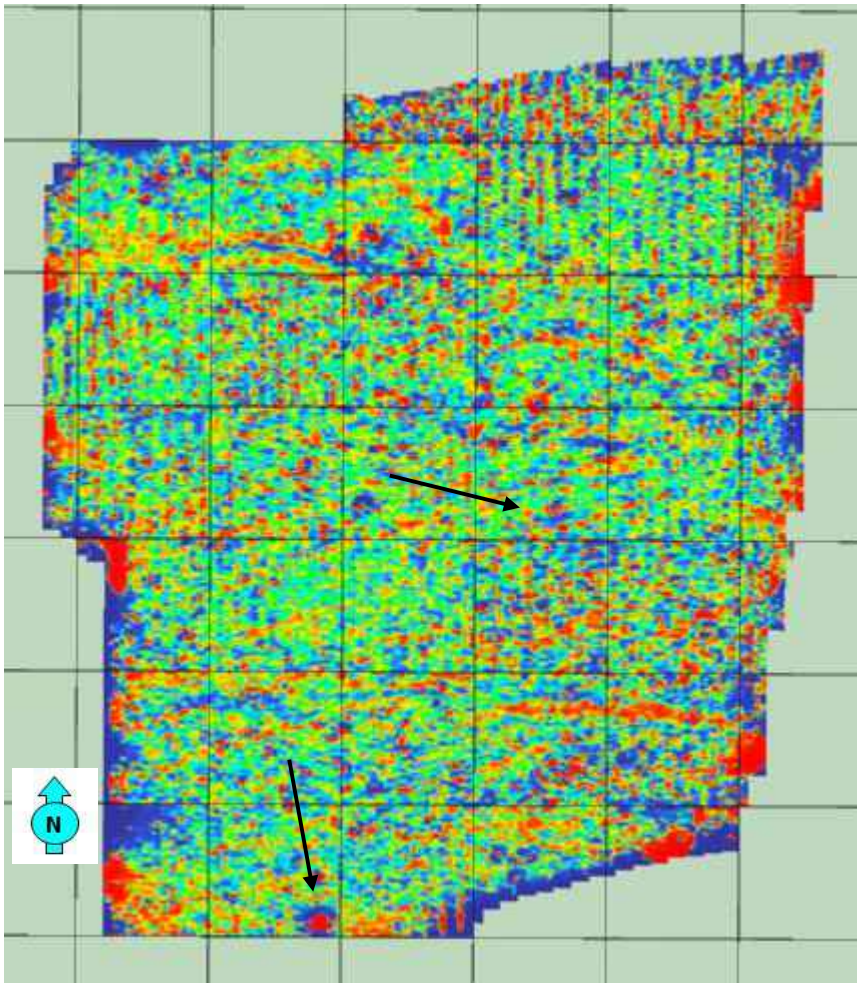
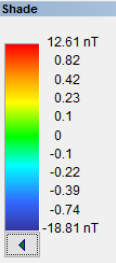


Fig 5: TerraSurveyor shade view colour image. High readings are red.



The two black arrows indicate the two dipoles mentioned above.

The 'dappled' area of responses in the four grids at the lower right of this image is also of some interest: this may well be the result of occupation and/or industrial activity.

The potential prehistoric features (see above) look less convincing in the colour results, although two (one at top left and one towards top right) are still visible and have potential.



Fig 6: Survey results superimposed on Google Earth (2017)

Recommendations for further work

It would be worth carrying out some resistivity survey over the trackway and the potential oval features, to check if they are archaeological in origin.

References

Bedingfield, G. 1996	<i>Iwood: How long has it existed as a discrete settled unit and how did this affect its economy?</i> (MA Thesis, Bristol) Available at: http://www.ycccart.co.uk/index_htm_files/Iwood%20G%20Bedingfield%20part%201%20revised.pdf
Broomhead, R.A. (in prep)	<i>Congresbury, the History of a Landscape</i> Unpublished manuscript in the YCCART archive

Authors

Chris Short and Vince Russett July 2017

Appendix

Site record

YCCART Site Survey		
Project – Collins 16 – Congresbury Kilns projects		
Survey date	25 January 2017	
Report date	25 January 2017	
Type /Instrument	Grad 601	
	Pace :1.3 m/s Lines/m : 1 Range:100nT Volume: High Sensors:2	Grid size: 30m x30m Pattern : Zig Zag Samples/m:2 (grid 1 only on 26/3/15 as reference) Samples/m:4 (other grids) Audio: On Threshold:30nT Reject:50 Hz
Location	Collins 16	
Ref	none	
Site name	Collins 16	
Landowner	Alan Collins	
Tenant		
HER ref		
Site type	Open land	
Description	Grass land	
Period		
Geology		
Land use	Grazing	
Survey team and conditions		
10/11/2016	Team	Pete Wright, Ian, Ferdie, Arthur Langley. Phillipa
	Weather	Bright, sunny but cool
15/12/2016	Team	Pete Wright, Ferdie, Arthur Langley. Phillipa, Janet
	Weather	Damp, overcast
5/1/2017	Team	Pete Wright, Ferdie, Arthur Langley, Janet
	Weather	Bright, sunny but cold, frost underfoot
19/01/2017	Team	Ferdie, Arthur Langley, Janet. Phillipa, Ian, David
	Weather	Bright, sunny but cold, frost underfoot
25/01/2017	Team	Ferdie, Arthur Langley, Janet. Phillipa
	Weather	Grey, cold, dry underfoot

Survey area		notes		readings		
		size	walk direction	max	min	mean
Date	Grid number					
		Setting out base line and grids for whole field				
	1	30 x 30	South	+5.8	-4.6	-0.6
	2	30 x 30	South	+52.6	-13.4	-1.0
	3	30 x 30 ignore these results – grid repeated as grid 4	South	+100	-99.5	-13.0
	4	30 x 30 – repeat of grid 3	South	+100	-100	-1.4
	5	30 x 30	South	+96.9	-10.0	-0.6
	6	30 x 30	South	+22.8	-14.6	-2.3
	1	30 x 30 repeat	South	+47.4	-100	-1.3
	2	30 x 30 repeat	South	+71.0	-14.3	-1.4
	3	30 x 30 repeat	South	+47.6	-12.1	-2.1
	4	30 x 30 M & R 4 traverses wire fence at side	South	+0.6	-10.0	-2.6
	5	30 x 30	South	+45.1	-14.0	-1.4
	6	30 x 30	South	+58.2	-81.1	-1.5
	7	30 x 30	South	+7.8	-10.9	-1.7
	8	30 x 30	South	+7.7	-36.9	-2.0
	9	30 x 30	South	+24.4	-16.4	-2.4
	10	30 x 30 M & R 4 traverses wire fence at side	South	+5.5	-15.3	-3.3
	1	30 x 30	South	+7.3	-3.6	+0.5
	2	30 x 30	South	+98.5	-74.7	-0.4
	3	30 x 30	South	+10.7	-7.3	-0.9
	4	30 x 30	South	+23.4	-19.6	-0.8
	5	30 x 30	South	+7.3	-12.5	-1.4
	6	30 x 30 M & R last 2 trav 4 trav in total wire fence at side	South	+43.0	-64.5	-1.9
	7	30 x 30	South	+11.7	-50.9	-1.3
	8	30 x 30	South	+18.8	-7.2	-1.4
	1	30 x 30	South	+8.7	-13.1	-1.6
	2	30 x 30	South	+12.6	-36.4	-2.0

Survey area		notes		readings		
		size	walk direction	max	min	mean
Date	Grid number					
	3	30 x 30 M & R last 3 trav	South	+8.3	-100	-5.7
	4	30 x 30	South	+33.0	-8.7	-1.3
	5	30 x 30	South	+33.6	-18.8	-1.0
	6	30 x 30	South	+15.3	-15.4	-1.5
	7	30 x 30	South	+22.4	-14.6	-1.6
	8	30 x 30 Partial 13 trav Wire fence	South	+6.5	-100	-6.4
	9	30 x 30	South	+16.1	-17.8	-2.5
	10	30 x 30 Partial 12 trav Wire fence and gate area	South	+59.1	-55.0	-3.5
	1	Ignore all data	South	-	-	-
	2	30 x 30 M & R metal gate and cattle trough	South	+46.1	-99.9	-3.6
	3	30 x 30 M & R	South	+49.4	-100	-2.8
	4	30 x 30 possible burning near this grid	South	+13.6	-96.8	-2.5
	5	Partial M & R 3 traverses	North	+46.4	-11.2	-9.5
	6	Partial M & R 6 traverses	North	+97.9	+0.9	+7.6
	7	Partial M & R 7 traverses	North	+22.3	-16.2	+6.7
	8	Partial M & R 8 traverses	North	+50.0	-8.7	+8.7
	9	Partial M & R 9 traverses	North	+33.6	-8.1	+7.7
	10	30 x 30 M & R	North	+100	-100	+4.4
	11	30 x 30 M & R	North	+35.5	-21.8	+5.7
	12	30 x 30 M & R	North	+21.5	-4.4	+6.8
	13	30 x 30 M & R 7 traverses	North	+13.1	-7.2	+6.8
Wire fence surrounding the whole of this field						

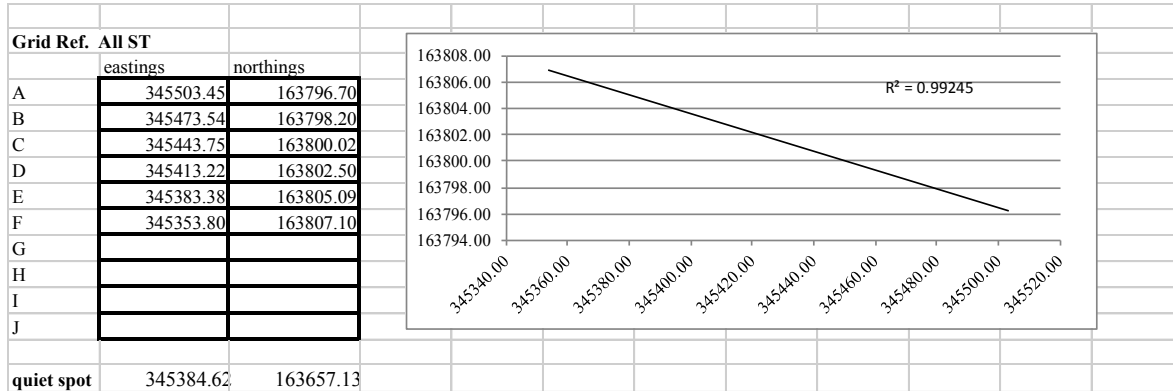
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	5	30 x 30	South	+7.3	-12.5	-1.4
	6	30 x 30 M & R last 2 trav 4 trav in total wire fence at side	South	+43.0	-64.5	-1.9
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	8	30 x 30	South	+18.8	-7.2	-1.4
	1	30 x 30	South	+8.7	-13.1	-1.6
	2	30 x 30	South	+12.6	-36.4	-2.0
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	11	30 x 30 M & R	North	+35.5	-21.8	+5.7
	12	30 x 30 M & R	North	+21.5	-4.4	+6.8
	13	30 x 30 M & R 7 traverses	North	+13.1	-7.2	+6.8
	Wire fence surrounding the whole of this field					

Setting out detail

Position A on base line – 12.50m to north fencepost & 20.60m to south fencepost – both fencepost with white paint mark

Position of quiet spot –
 E 345384.62
 N 163657.13



Terrasurveyor grids

