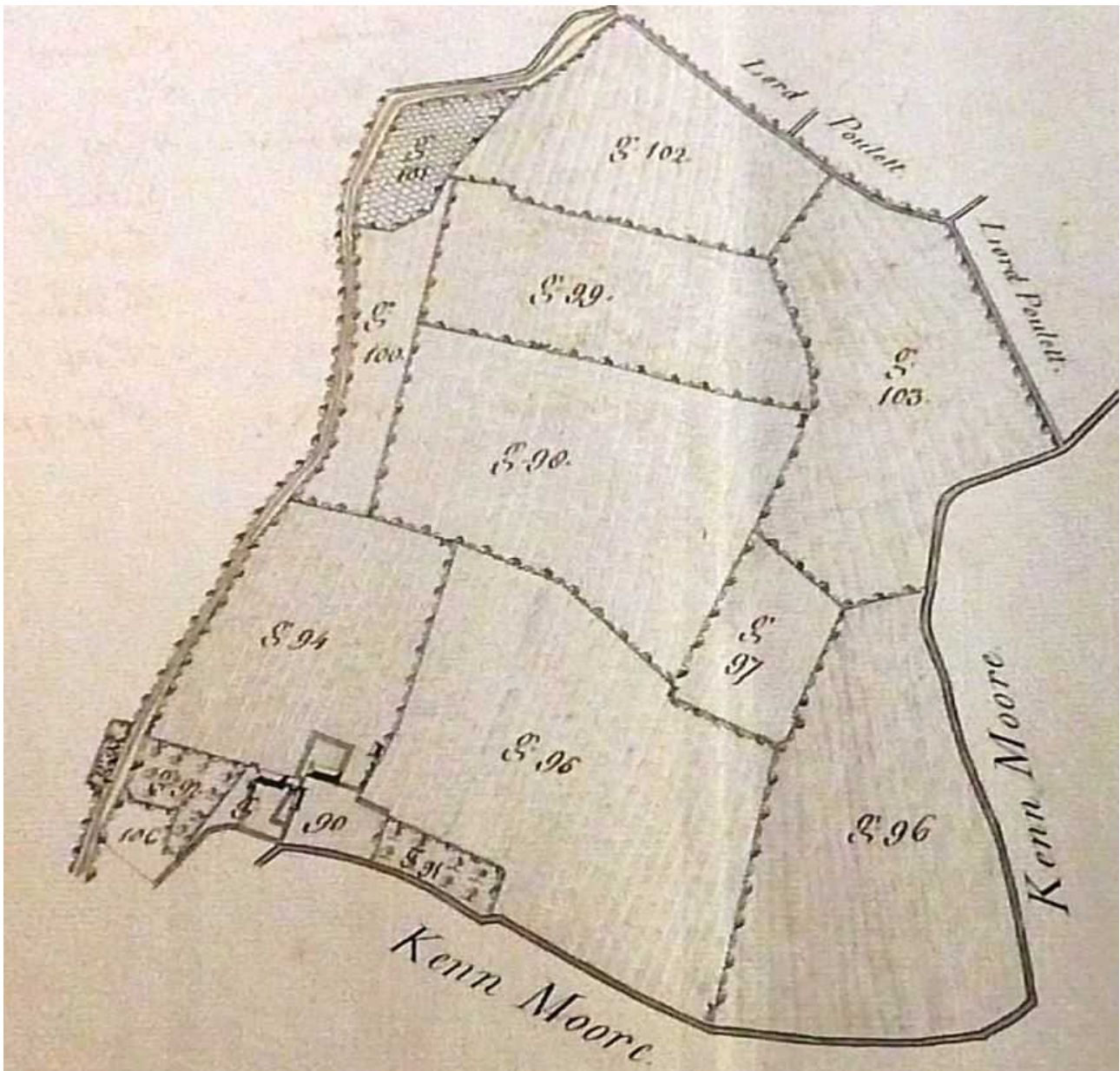


Geophysical survey at Barn Close, Ham Farm, Yatton

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

General Editor: Vince Russett



Ham Farm 1768, map of the Pigott family (courtesy of Mr D Ridley)

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## **Abstract**

*The survey of Barn Close was largely negative, apart from a few relatively recent features. Noticeable, however, given the context, was the lack of any evidence for Roman or medieval occupation or usage.*

## **Acknowledgements**

A Heritage Lottery Grant enabled the purchase, by YCCCART, of 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, David Crossman and the Crossman family.

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 Cleve Archaeological Research Team (YCCCART) is a Community Archaeology team working across northern Somerset.

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 (general)

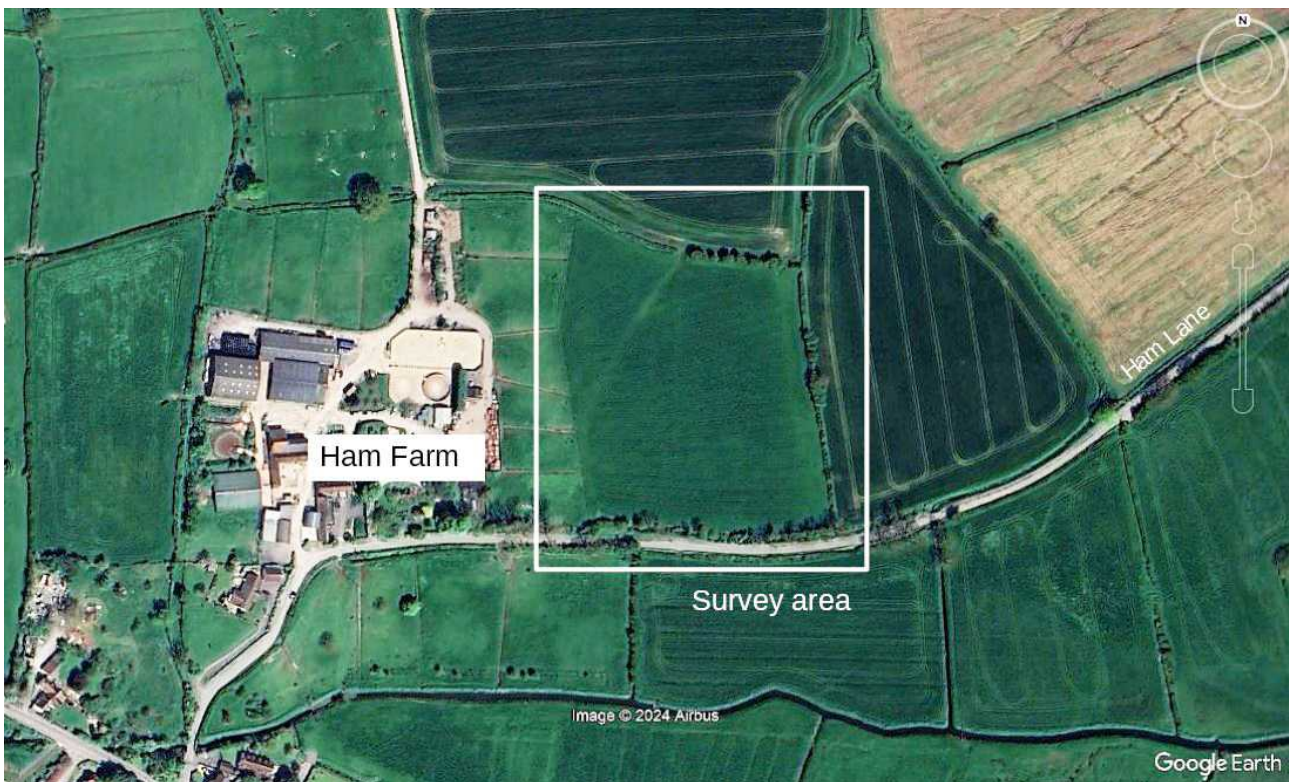


Fig 2: Location (specific)

The survey site lies to the east of Ham Farm, off Ham Lane in Northend, in the parish of Yatton, in the Unitary Authority of North Somerset. The centre of the survey lies at ST41209167342, and some 4.2km from the centre of Clevedon.

Ham Lane, which runs across the southern end of the survey area, marks the edge of the former Kenn Moor common, unenclosed until c1815 (YCCCART 2020; YCCCART 2021b; YCCCART 2022)

### **Land use and geology**

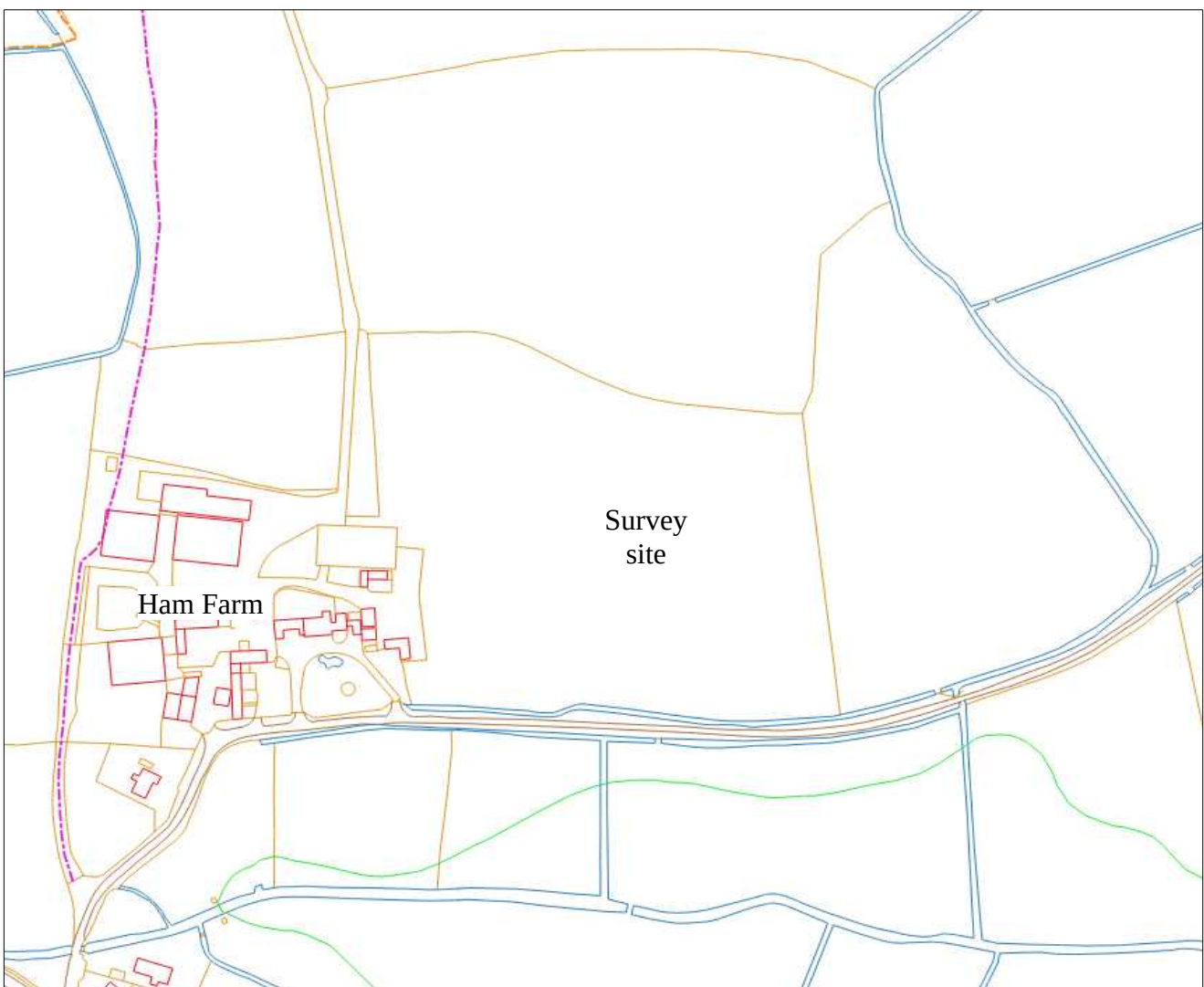
The site lies entirely on the Chara Marl (Keuper marl), which outcrops in the area, and is almost certainly responsible for the choice of this site for the high status Ham Farm. It lies at 6.3-7.8m AOD, above the surrounding alluvium, which is about 1.0m AOD lower.

The site is currently under semi-permanent pasture. There are no public Rights of Way within the survey area, but it can be glimpsed from Ham Lane to the south

## Historical & archaeological context

Ham Farm was seen in the 18th century as the capital messuage (manor house) of the Manor of Ham and Wemberham. Although this manor does not seem to be mentioned before the 18th century, the perception of Ham Farm as such reflects its high status, as does the possession of a circular dovecote in its front garden (see cover): this is dated by Historic England as 17th/18th century, although the presence of lower nesting holes, later infilled, may imply an origin of at least part of the structure before the advent of the brown rat in the late medieval period (brown rats can jump much higher than the previously dominant black rat, so lower boxes were infilled to prevent rat access to eggs or squabs).

Barraclough (1991) dates Ham Farm to the medieval period: while the current property is later, she may well have been correct about the origins of the site.



*Fig 3: Survey site as mapped in 2009 (OS digital data)*

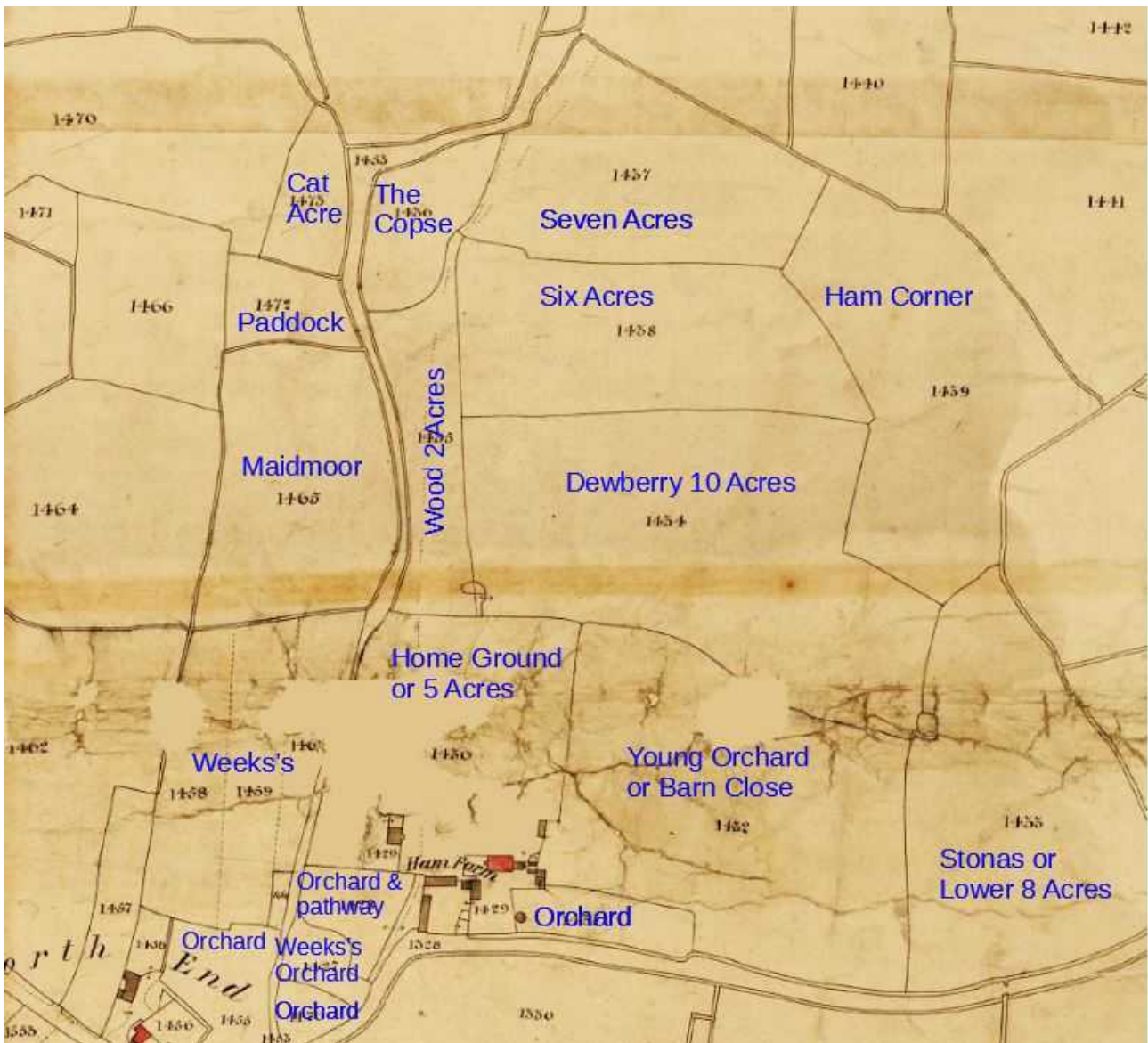


Fig 4: Area and fieldnames from Yatton Tithe (1840)

The fieldnames of 1840 are fairly unremarkable: 'Ham Corner' refers to its proximity to the recently enclosed Kenn Moor; 'Dewberry' (if not a corrupted '-burh' name) is from the plant *Rubus caesius*, a low briar which has this local name; 'Maidmoor' and the adjacent 'Maidmoor Lane' refers to the adjacent 'Meadmoor' (to which the lane leads), a late-enclosed area, with the simple name meaning 'Wetland meadow'.

For placenames west of the lane, see YCCART 2020. Note that the survey area bears names connected with farmstead and / or orchard, as do several fields close to the farmhouse. One thing that stands out from this plan is that the countryside is not immutable and unchanging, but that we should be prepared for placenames to refer to one particular phase of a land parcel's history, which may have happened some time ago, and by the time of the survey is no longer contemporary information.

Ham Farm also formed a landunit in 1768, when it was part of the 1768 Pigott survey.

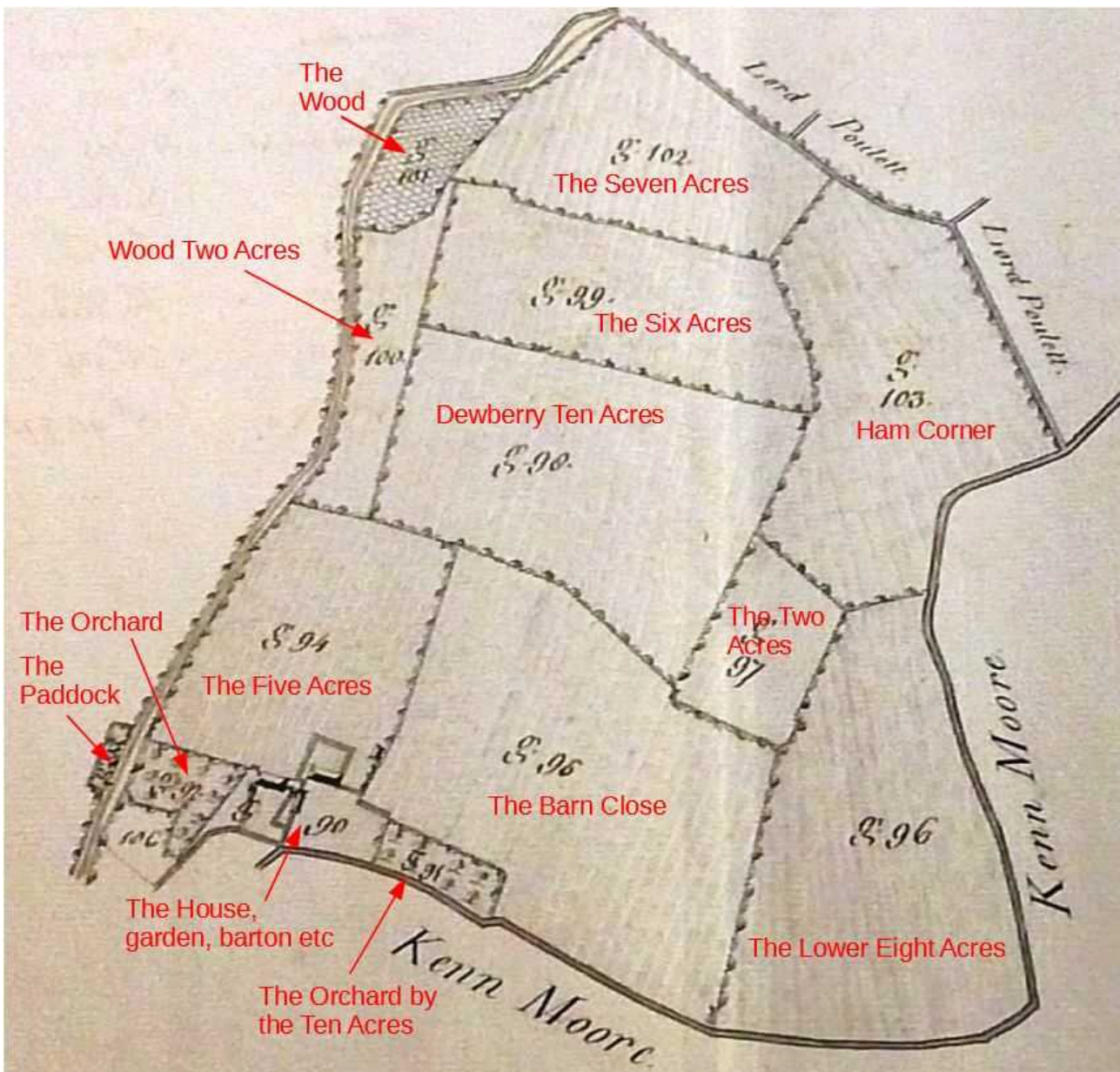


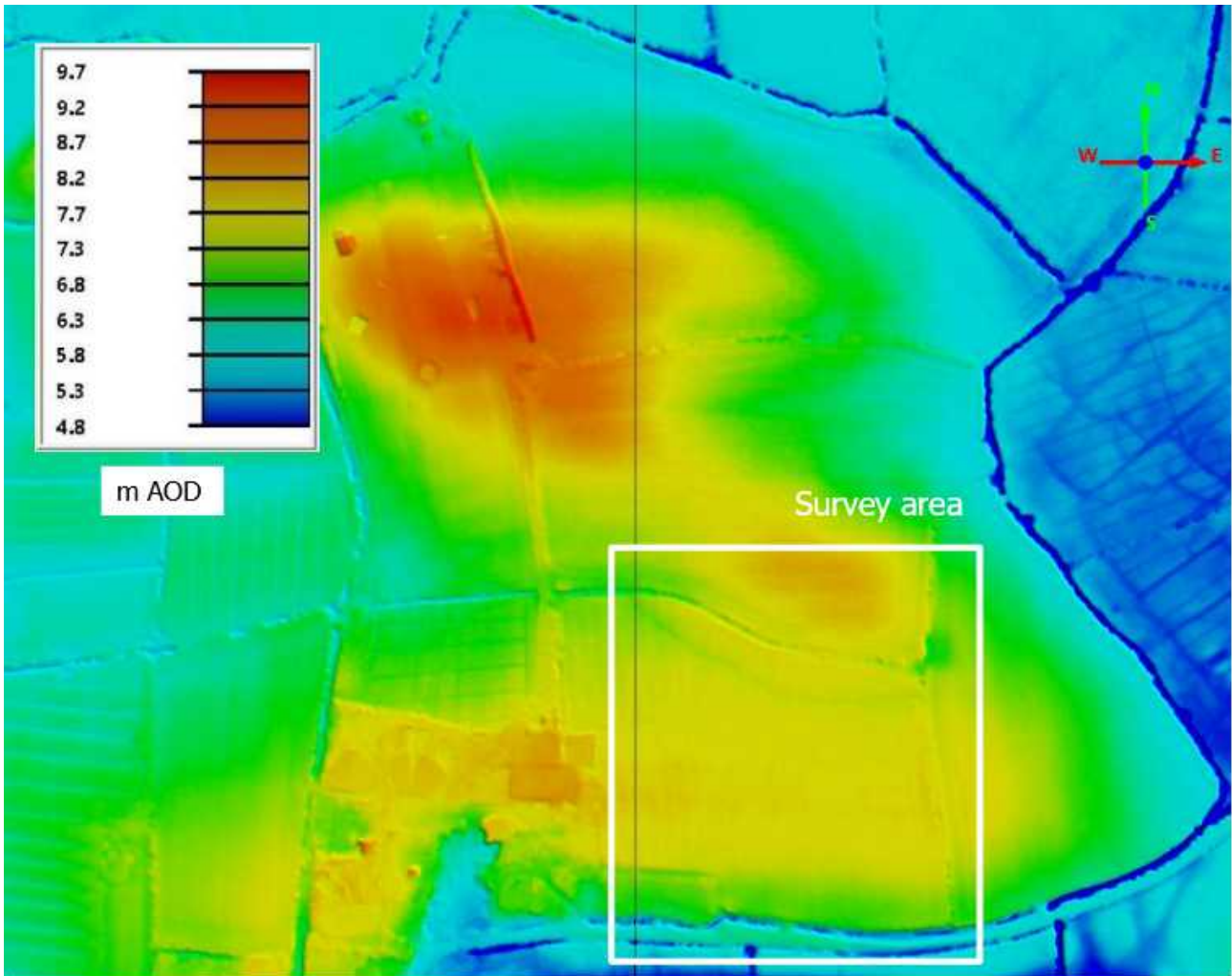
Fig 5: Ham Farm tenancy unit (tenant: Joseph Blew) (from Pigott map book of 1768, courtesy Mr David Ridley)

Barraclough (1991) states:

*Joseph Blew came from Winscombe and was occupying Ham Farm in 1777 when it is called a 'capital messuage' in his lease from John Pigott. This means that it was the manor house of the Manor of Ham and Wemberham, which Poulett did not own. Therefore it is probable that a house has stood on this site for many centuries. Joseph died in 1784 and his widow and sons James and Joseph continues as occupiers.*

How long this manor had existed is perhaps questionable. Barraclough does not quote, nor is there any available evidence of (say) medieval origins, perhaps other than the above mention, and the possession of a dovecote, supposedly a prerogative of the 'Lord of the Manor'.





*Fig 6: Lidar image of survey area*

The field was named 'The Barn Close' in 1768, presumably after an agricultural building in or near the field: this may be a recent change of name, since the small orchard to the south was at that time named 'The Orchard by the Ten Acres', and Barn Close measured exactly 10.0 acres in 1903 (OS Epoch 2).

In 1840, the field was partly named 'The Young Orchard' (Fig 4 above) and the OS plan of c1900 (below) shows this orchard apparently in full heart, as indeed, it had in 1885 (OS plan, Epoch 1).

Sadly, air photographs from 1946 (Fig 8 below) and 1971 chart the depletion of this orchard, and the trees had been cleared by 1991. This was not uncommon when subsidies were being paid for the removal of old orchards.

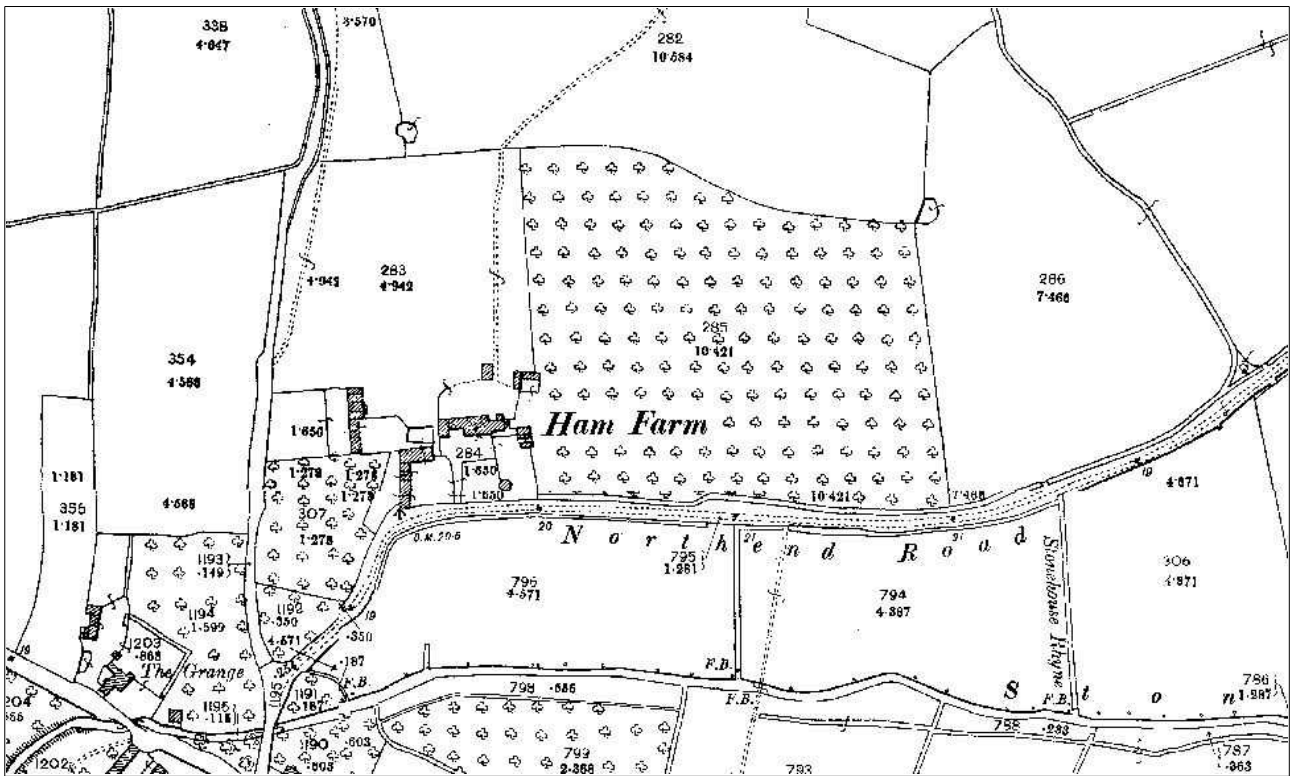


Fig 7: Barn Close c1900 (OS Epoch 2)



Fig 8: Barn Close in 1946 (RAF air photograph)

This 1946 air photograph, however, is of interest in that it clearly shows the former ditch

dividing the 'Orchard by the Ten Acres' of 1768 from Barn Close, and the earthwork of a curving ditch towards the north side of the field, cutting off a narrow strip: at the east end of this strip were some vague earthworks which could just be the remains of a short-lived agricultural building that gave the field its former name, but this is not clear enough to be certain.

Replanting of orchards is not unusual, though: the 'Young orchard' field name is not uncommon throughout the Northmarsh: locally, apple trees seem to be productive for about a century, and then need replacing.

Ham Farm - Crossman 14 - SLRM lidar



Fig 9: Detailed lidar survey (courtesy of Richard Pearson)

The detailed lidar survey shows the northern internal ditch very clearly: its line is not represented on any known map, and it may only be a temporary feature: it does seem from Fig 9 to have no relationship to the underlying N-S features.

## **Survey objectives**

The survey was part of a larger project to map geophysical responses over a larger area of countryside in the vicinity of Ham Farm, attempting to give some context to the known Roman remains and landscapes NE of the site (YCCCART 2019)

## **Methodology**

The survey of the fields was undertaken during the period April to October 2024 by teams from YCCCART using a Brtington 601-2 gradiometer

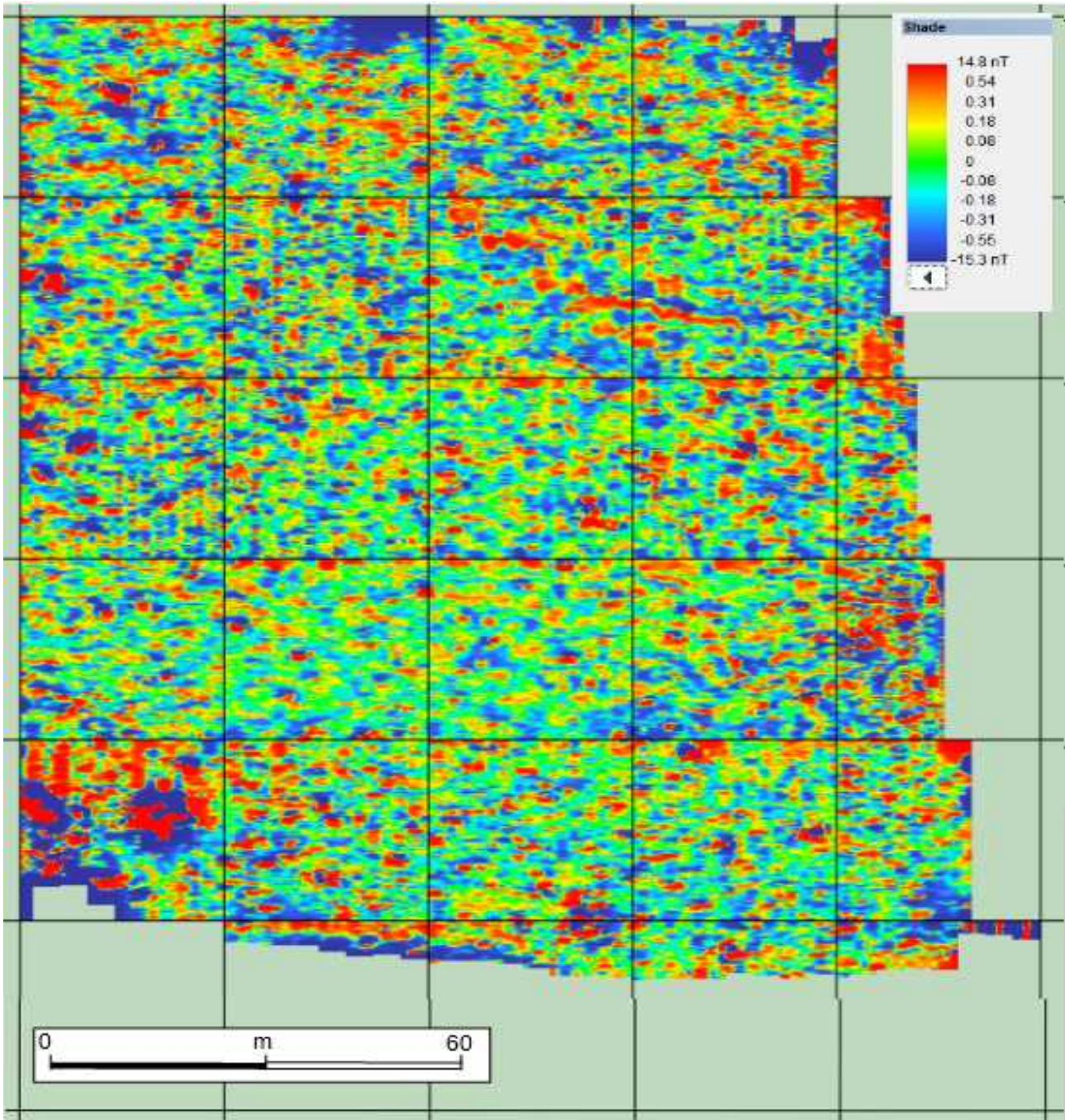
The completed survey was downloaded to a TerraSurveyor programme and the resultant composite adjusted using the following filters:

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 10: Gradiometry results field Crossman 14*

The results for this field are fairly negative (although see fig 12 below for some possibilities).

The large disturbance bottom left is very close to an active farm unit, so is highly likely to be due to farm debris used in the backfilling of the ditches around the small orchard to the south of the surveyed field.

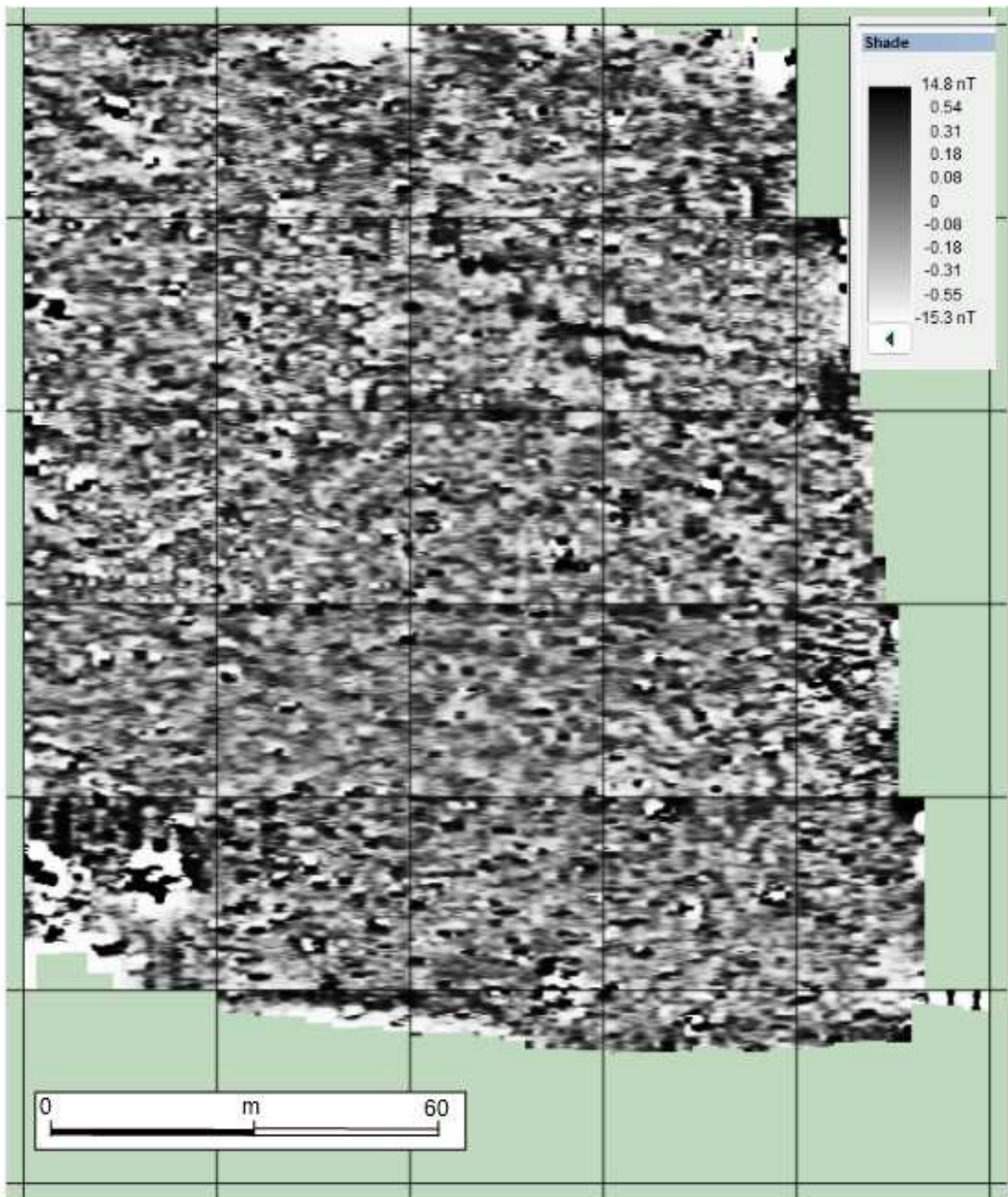


Fig 11: Gradiometry results, field Crossman 14

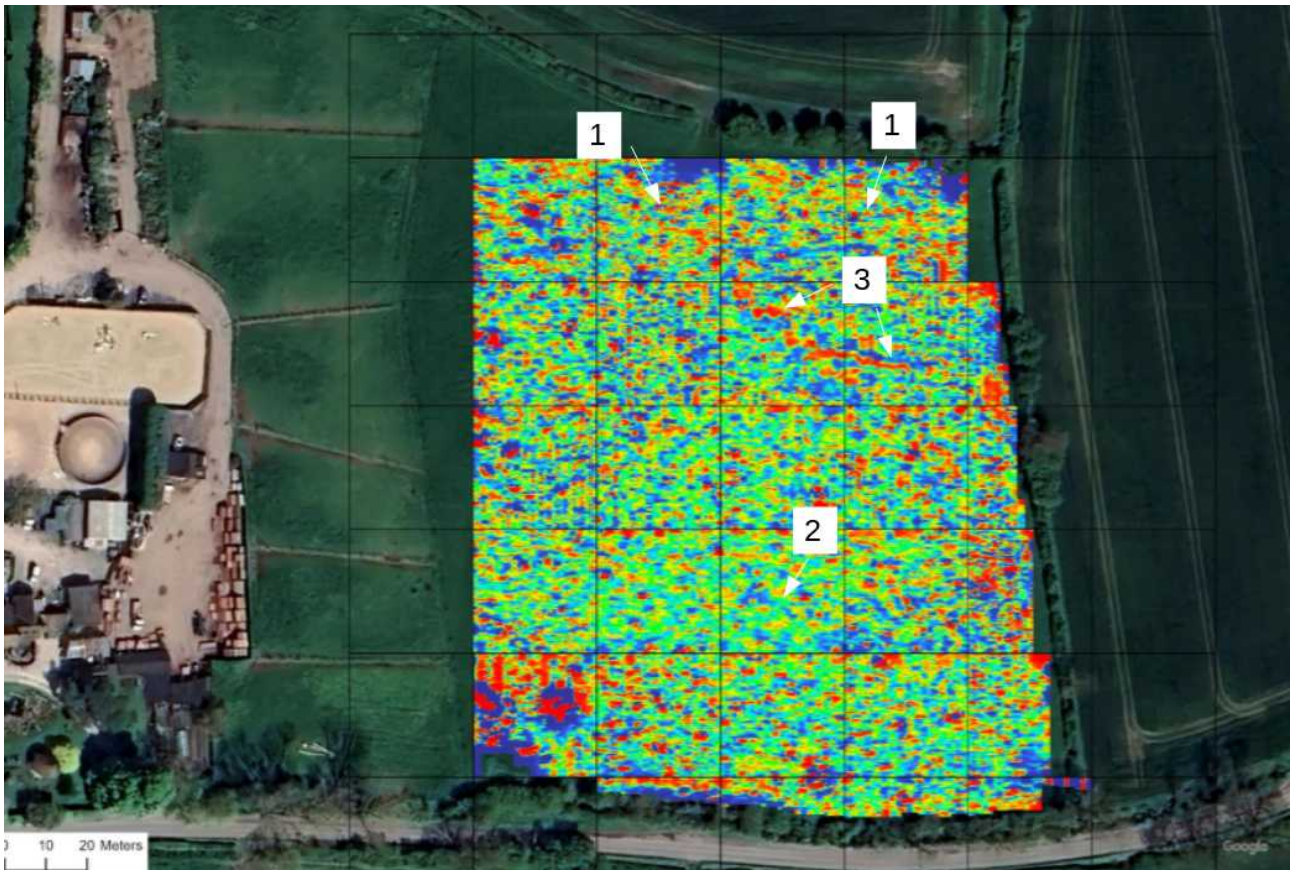
Potential features are shown in Fig 12 below. The history of this field, probably originally an arable ground (and its northern boundary has a curiously aratral-like curve), followed by use for a century or so as an orchard, with remains of trees subsequently grubbed out, has likely destroyed or greatly degraded any archaeological features at the site.

Some potential features:

1 is the surprisingly faint response to the known earthwork/ditch seen on air photographs and lidar (Figs 8 & 9), Presumably, the feature has not been backfilled, but simply eliminated gradually over the years.

2 Small rectangular potential feature, 13m x 5m, possibly an agricultural feature such as an old haystack mound.

3 A fairly 'ragged' linear feature, not corresponding to any map or air photographic original known.



*Fig 12: Interpretation of possible archaeological features*

The lack of any features (such as ridge and furrow) relating to medieval usage, or any recognisable Roman features is explicable as having been more than likely to have been expunged by later uses, such as orchard.

## Recommendations for further work

This site requires no further work

## References

Barraclough, M. 1991	A history of Yatton. Yatton Local History Society, Yatton <i>Available at <a href="http://ycccart.co.uk">ycccart.co.uk</a></i>
YCCART 2019	Geophysical surveys at Ham Farm, Yatton, 2018 (interim report) <i>Available at <a href="http://ycccart.co.uk">ycccart.co.uk</a></i>
YCCART 2021	The Inclosure of Kenn Moor, Somerset: Part 1: The text of Kenn Moor and Cleeve Hill Inclosure Award (SHC D\RA/9/6) <i>Available at <a href="http://ycccart.co.uk">ycccart.co.uk</a></i>
YCCART 2021b	The Inclosure of Kenn Moor, Somerset 1810-1815: Part 3: The allotments <i>Available at <a href="http://ycccart.co.uk">ycccart.co.uk</a></i>
YCCART 2022	The Inclosure of Kenn Moor, Somerset 1810-1815: Part 2: The maps of Kenn Moor and Cleeve Hill Inclosure Award (SHC D\RA/9/6) <i>Available at <a href="http://ycccart.co.uk">ycccart.co.uk</a></i>

## Authors

Vince Russett

## Date

2024-12-07



## Appendix: Day sheet extracts

Survey area		notes		readings		
Date	Grid number	size	walk direction	max	min	mean
18/04/2024		Setting out base line and grids for base line and first row				
	1	30x30	N	+48.3	-10.0	-0.1
	2	30x30	N	+69.9	-12.7	-1.1
	3	aborted	N	Ignore data		
	4	aborted	N	Ignore data		
	5	30x30	N	+11.0	-9.4	-0.8
25/04/2024	6	30x30	N	+23.4	-100	-2.0
	1	30x30	N	+10.7	-11.5	+0.5
	2	Partial M & R	N	+15.6	-7.5	+0.9
	3	Partial M & R	N	+17.3	-100	+0.6
	4	30x30	N	+23.4	-18.2	+0.7
09/05/2024	5	30x30	N	+8.4	-5.6	-0.6
	1	30x30	N	+12.2	-12.7	-0.9
	2	30x30	N	+3.3	-5.3	-0.9
	3	Partial	N	+25.3	-65.3	-1.5
	4	30x30	N	+32.6	-19.4	-0.9
	5	30x30	N	+6.2	-5.5	-0.6
	6	30x30	N	+18.6	-20.0	+1.3
	7	30x30	N	+34.8	-85.5	+0.6
16/05/2024	8	Partial	N	+4.4	-4.6	+0.5
	1	30x30	N	+38.4	-3.7	+10.2
	2	30x30	N	+18.0	+3.2	+10.0
	3	30x30	N	+20.7	+5.5	+13.2
	4	30x30	N	+20.0	+8.4	+12.9
31/10/2024	5	Partial	N	+99.3	-53.9	+12.8
	1	30x30	N	+11.1	-7.5	+0.3
	2	30x30	N	+12.2	-3.4	+0.3
	3	30x30	N	+8.5	-6.0	+1.2
	4	30x30	N	+8.4	-5.6	+1.1
07/11/2024	5	Partial	N	+100	-71.9	+1.7
	1	30x30	N	+99.2	-85.3	+0.5
	2	30x30	N	+9.8	-2.5	+1.4
	3	30x30	N	+8.2	-5.2	+1.1
	4	30x30	N	+27.7	-24.1	+1.0
	5	Partial	N	+8.5	-11.1	+0.6
	6	Partial M & R	S	+4.6	-100	-15.5
	7	Partial M & R	S	+37.4	-50.8	+1.2
	8	Partial M & R	S	+18.5	-100	-0.2
	9	Partial M & R	S	+3.7	-4.6	0.0

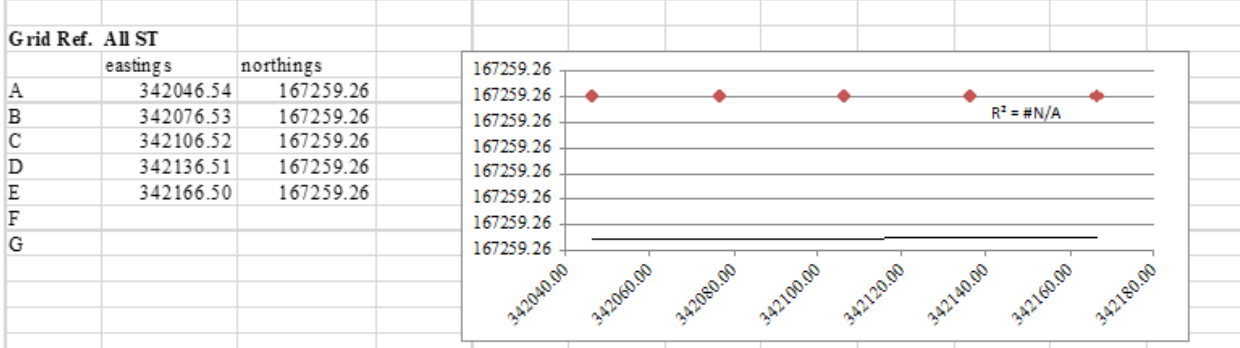


**Grid layout**

Setting out detail

Position C post nearest gate - 7.9m to gatepost N and 10.4m to gatepost NW

Position of quiet spot – [342092.26E 167403.79 N](#)



**GPS**



**TerraSurveyor grids**