Wimpole Folly Field Report

During 2013 and 2014 Archaeology RheeSearch Group carried out magnetometry and resistivity surveys on this site to determine whether any archaeological features were detectable.

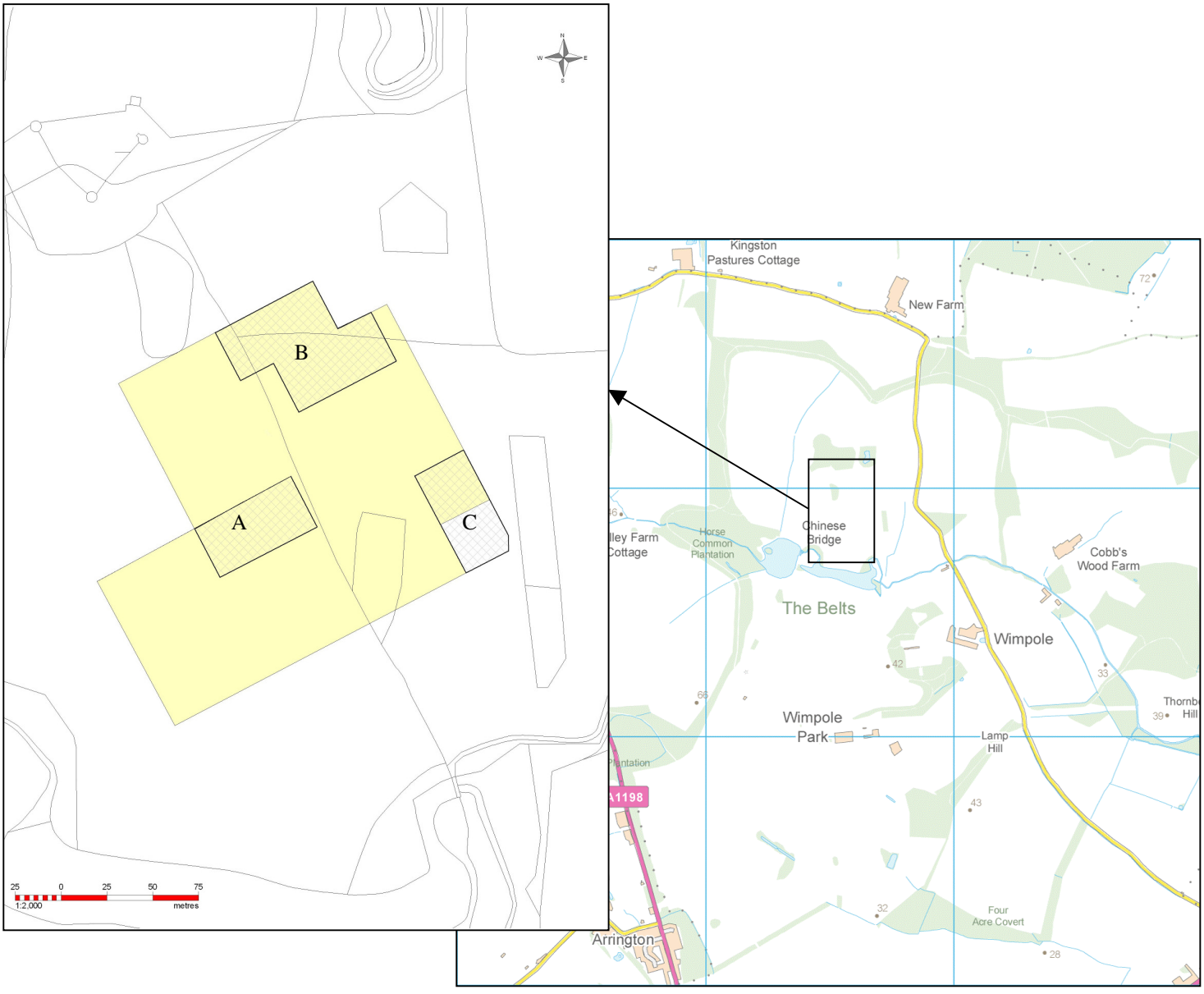
Members participating: Pat Davies, Brian Bridgland, Liz Livingstone, Bruce Milner, Ian Sanderson, Gill Shapland, Maureen Storey and Tony Storey.

Site liaison: Simon Damant.

Site conditions: Rough grass.

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 stored by Archaeology RheeSearch Group.

Location: TL336519, Wimpole Hall, Cambs.



Location plan: Survey areas
(resistivity survey areas hatched and lettered, magnetometry areas solid)

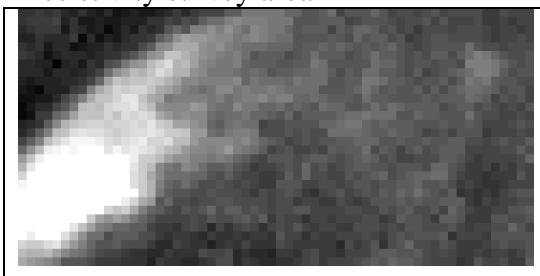
Purpose of survey: The purpose of this survey was to determine if any subsurface features could be detected to identify earlier activity on the site.

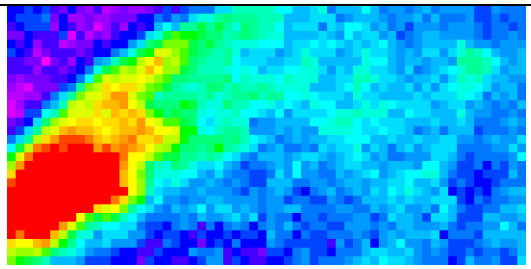
Site topography:
Coarse mown grass field sloping down to the south by approximately 10 m over the survey area.

Results:

The images in this section are orientated for presentation. The images are not to a common scale.
Note that the resistivity survey images below are composites of survey grids carried out at different times making grid balancing problematic.

Resistivity survey area A

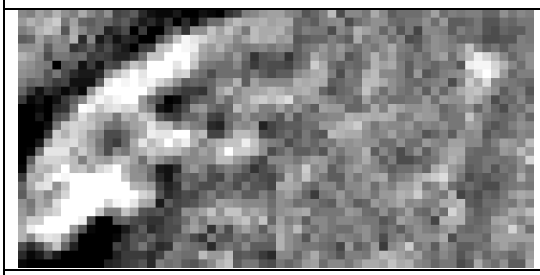


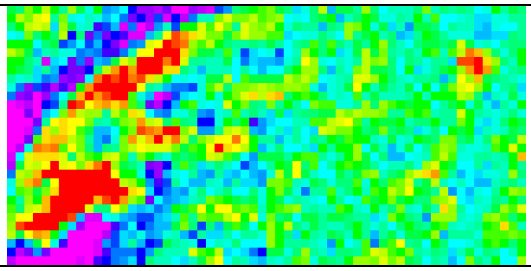


Resistivity 60 m x 30 m

Raw data

N





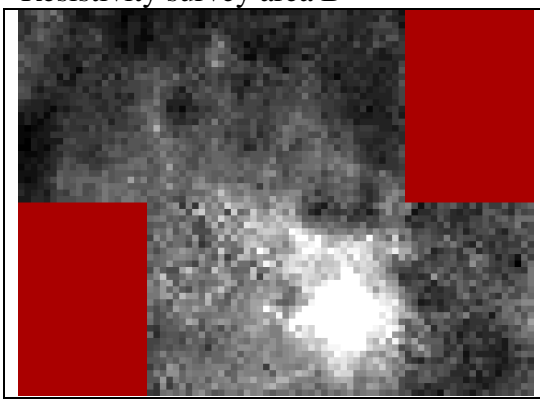
High pass filter 5

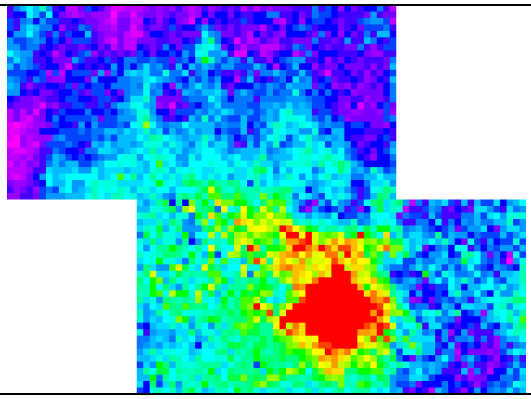
N

(black – low, white – high)

(purple/blue – low, red – high)

Resistivity survey area B

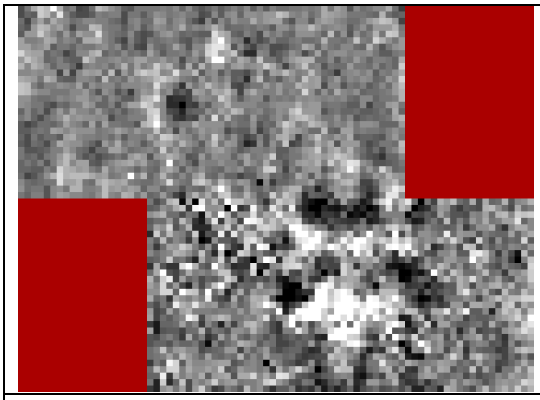
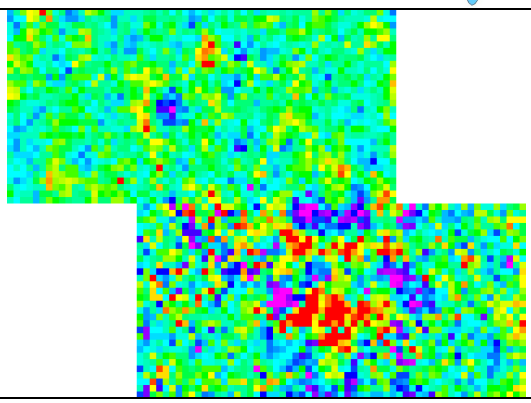




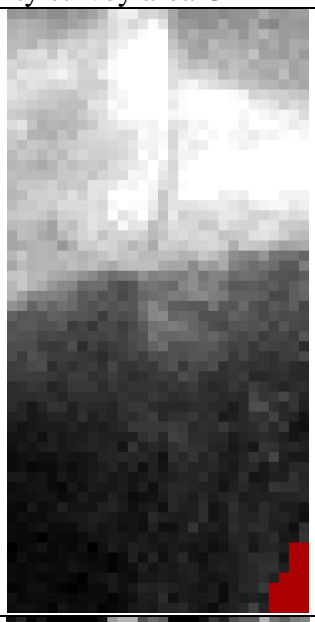
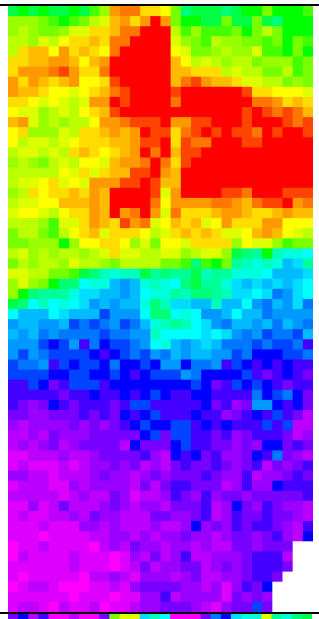
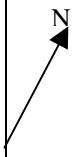
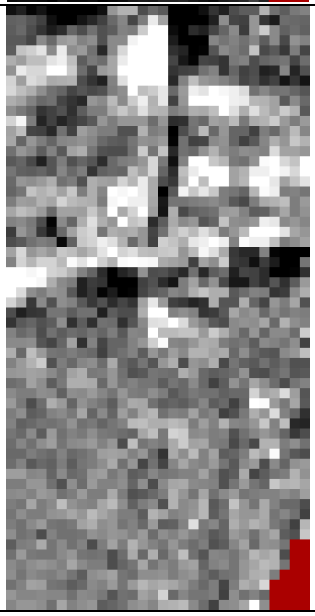
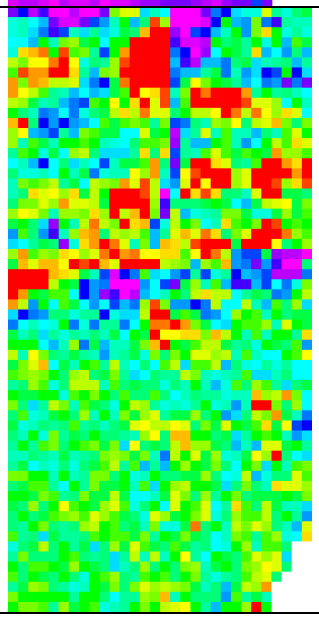
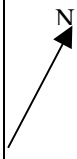
Resistivity 80 m x 60 m

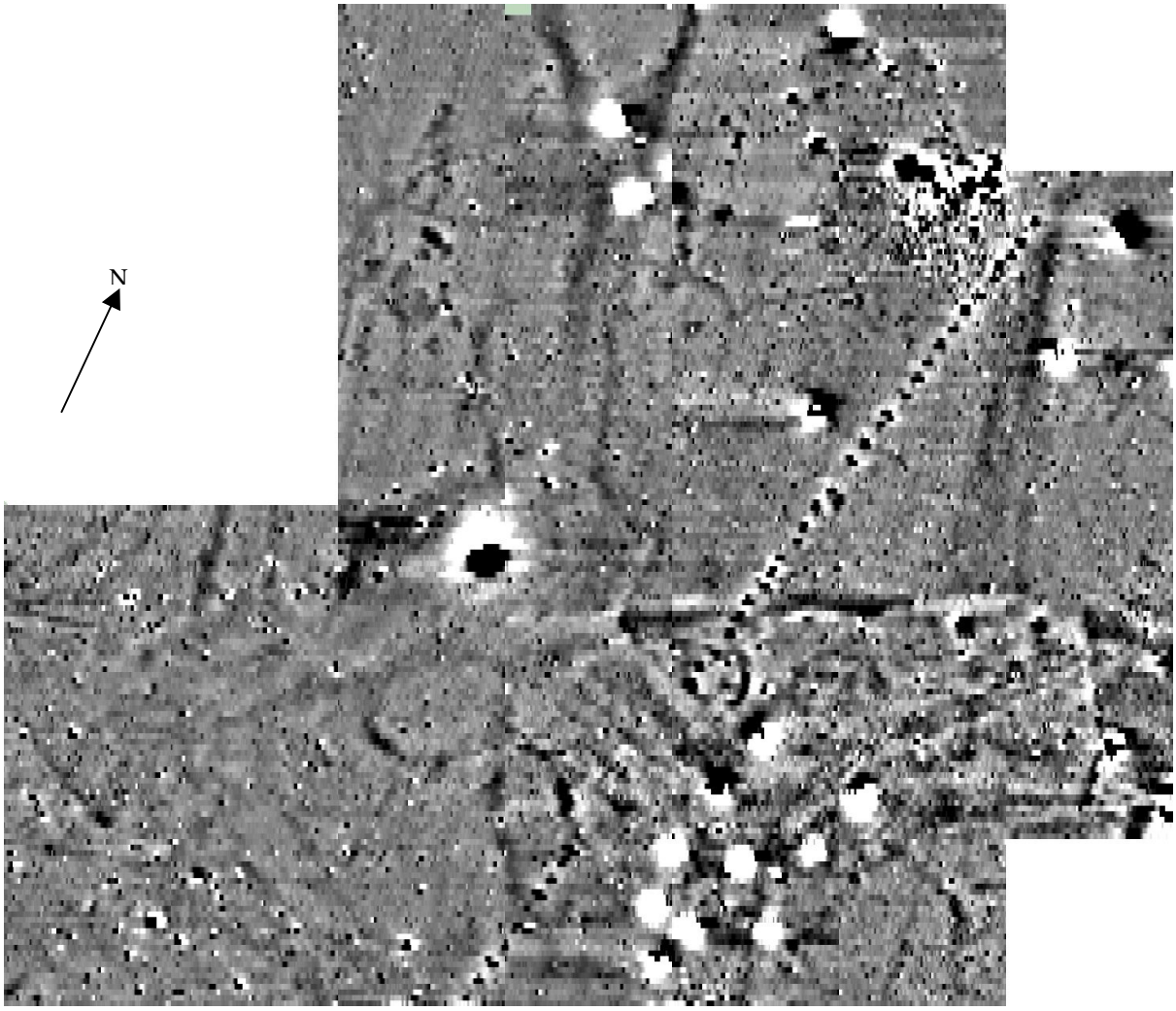
Raw data

N

		High pass filter 6
(black – low, white – high)	(purple/blue – low, red – high)	

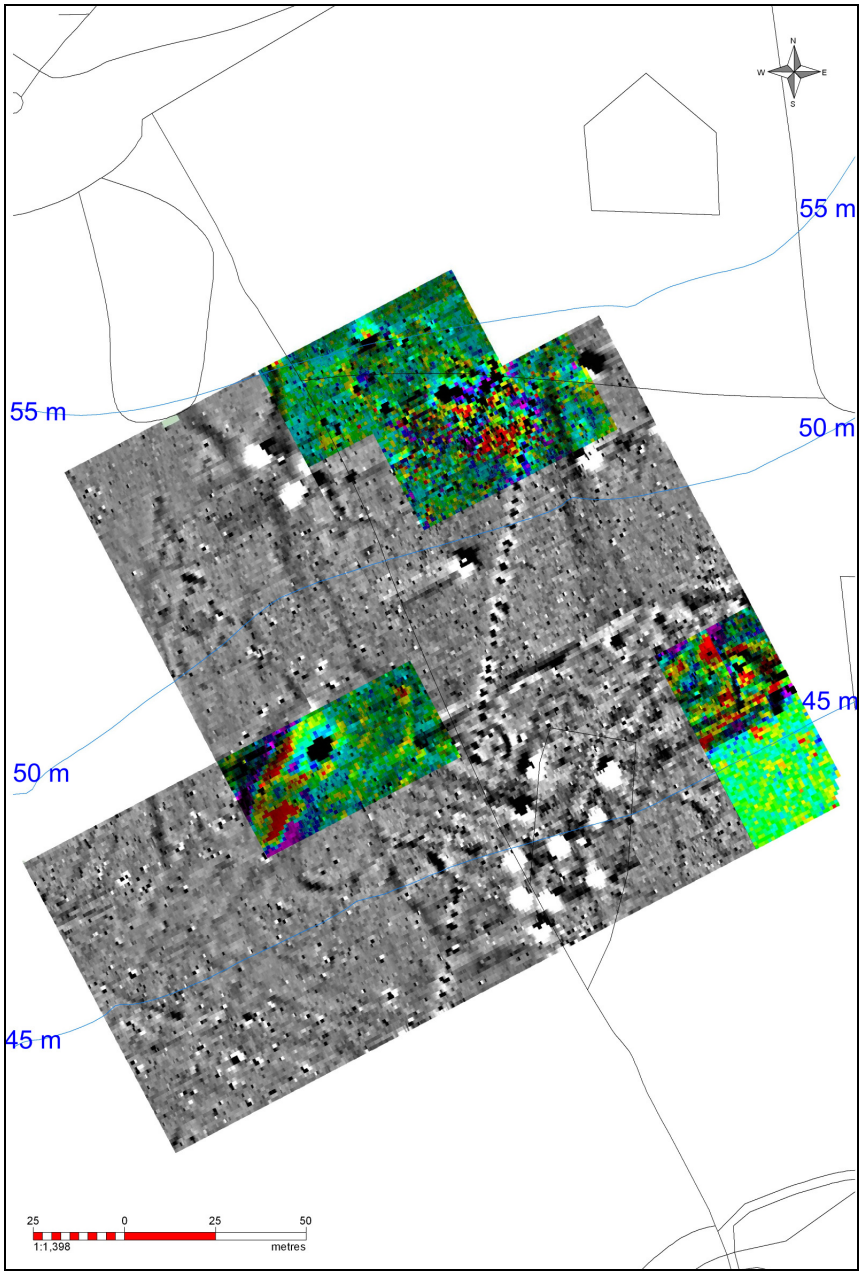
Resistivity survey area C

		Resistivity 30 m x 60 m Raw data 
		High pass filter 5 
(black – low, white – high, red – null)	(purple/blue – low, red – high, white – null)	

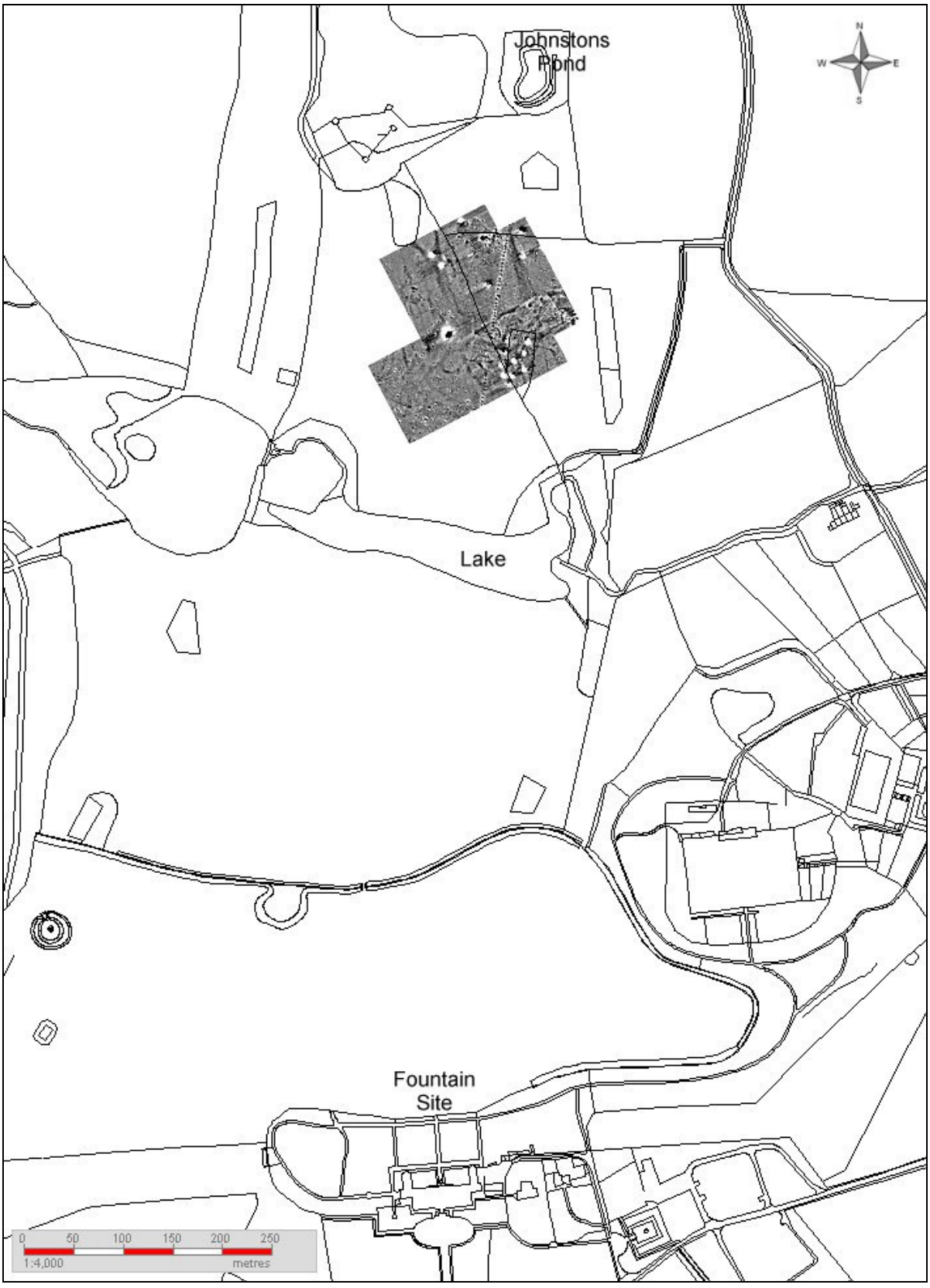


Magnetometry survey 210 m x 180 m range +3 to -3 nT

Superimposition of magnetometry results on an aerial photograph.



Magnetometer and resistivity surveys with contours shown in blue



Magnetometry results in a general context

Discussion:
The main features in the magnetometry survey are a scattering of large point anomalies and an interrupted line running almost N—S. The point anomalies are mainly due to metal fencing around trees and the interrupted line may be the water supply pipe from Johnston's pond to the fountain site near Wimpole Hall (appendix A). The largest of the magnetic point anomalies in resistivity area A had no visible features on the ground and produced only a minor response within the resistivity results. It is worth noting that there were high resistivity values along the N side of the magnetic feature and a few on the S and W sides which may be associated with the magnetic response.
Close to the N edge of the magnetic survey there is a large point anomaly with an associated area of magnetic noise which is often characteristic of building scatter, The resistivity results for area B show a cluster of high values in this location and a wider cluster of high values to the S between the noisy area and the line of the pipe, with a focus of very low values across the point anomaly itself. No pattern indicating structural foundations is discernible within either the magnetic or resistance results, but the coincidence of the strong magnetic and resistivity responses suggests unusual activity. This area is on the edge of the Staplidge way shown on Hare's map of 1638.
Resistivity area C shows a distinct boundary almost along the edge of the magnetic survey area. The resistivity results show very little differentiation S of this line. On the boundary there is a line of high resistance values with a line of low values next to it. This would suggest a wall foundation line. The magnetometry results in this area are slightly noisy in a discrete band running W from the N part of area C indicating subsurface disruption. The remainder of the N part of this resistivity survey area has a number of high value areas and short lines bisected N—S by a narrow line of low values. The high value lines do not readily form rectilinear patterns which would indicate building foundations but that cannot be ruled out.

Appendix A
Before the present landscape around Wimpole Hall, developed by 'Capability' Brown around 1772, there was a formal garden in the area to the North of the Hall. A map (Kipp 1705) shows parterres and water fountains. To organise a head of water a height differential was necessary. The method used was to tap into a natural spring at what is now known as Johnston's Pond (TL336521) at 65 m above sea level and pipe the water to the fountains at 40 m above sea level. The results from the magnetic survey above show evidence for a pipe which, if the line is extended, intersects with the Pond. The lower end has been obliterated by Brown's construction of the lake. Some evidence of the physical nature of the pipe was discovered by Mr. Damant who found lengths of hollowed out elm tree trunks when the main lake was dredged. The site of a fountain complex (TL335511) has been identified in surveys by Archaeology RheeSearch Group and by excavations by the Cambridge Archaeological Field Group.