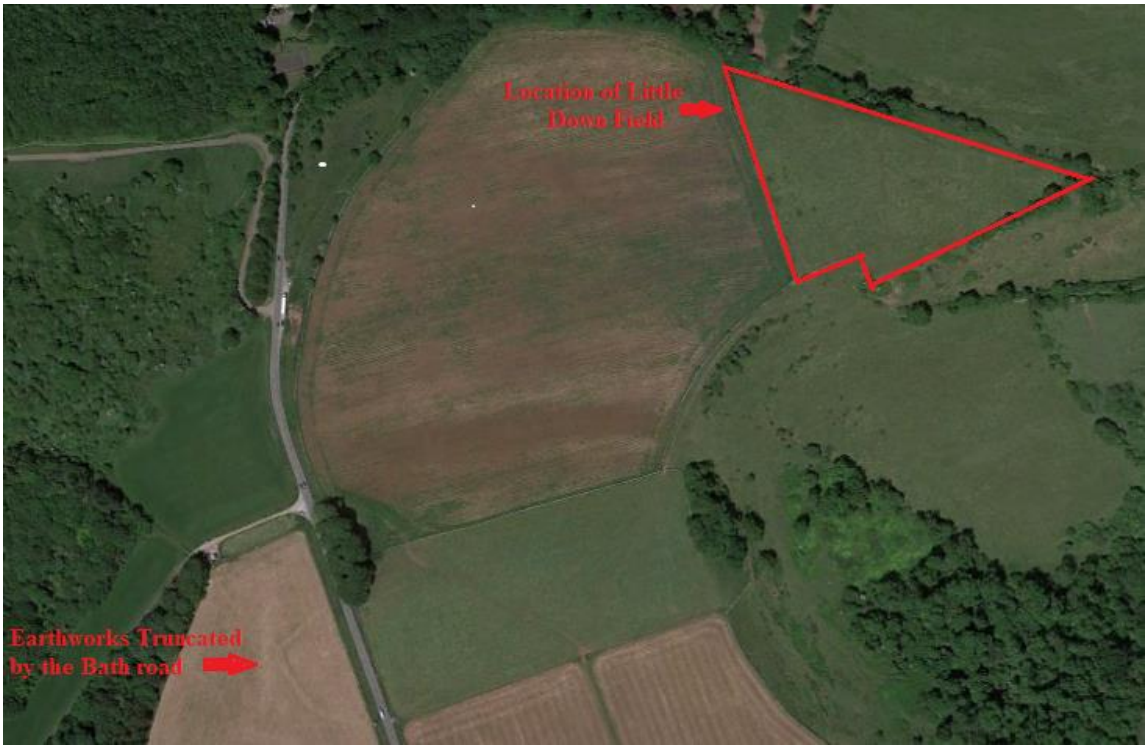
BATH & COUNTIES ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

# Little Down Field, Upper Farm, Upper Langridge, Bath.




## An Element of the Lansdown Environs Archaeology Project (LEAP)

**Authors of the Geophysical Survey John Oswin and Janet Pryke**

**Report Collated by Robin Holley**

**June 2018**

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## Disclaimer

This report has been complied with all reasonable skill, care and attention to detail within the terms of the project design as specified in the written scheme of investigation and within the general terms and conditions of Bath and Counties Archaeological Society © 2018 (BACAS).

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## 1. Summary of results

In March 2018, Bath and Counties Archaeological Society undertook a geophysical survey of extant earthworks known as the 'Romano-British Settlement' in a triangle shaped field to the east of Sir Bevil Grenville's Monument. This site is a scheduled monument, Site No. 1004527. Several anomalies of an archaeological origin are clearly visible. Cut features such as banks, ditches, walls and structural features have been identified on the ground and in both the resistance and gradiometer data.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1. Background synopsis

Bath and Counties Archaeological Society (BACAS) carried out this survey as the first elements of the Lansdown Environs Archaeology Project (LEAP), with the relevant permission obtained from Historic England and the landowners. It is anticipated that other sites may be available for survey over the next few years.

### 2.2. Site location

The site is located at the extreme north-east side of the Lansdown Plateau, centred on ST 72587024 with an average height of 220m above Ordnance Datum. This site is called 'Little Down Field' or the 'Settlement field', and is part of Upper Farm, Upper Langridge, Bath. The scheduled areas straddle the parishes of Charlcombe, Bath and North East Somerset, and Cold Ashton in South Gloucestershire.

**Figure 2. Area map showing the location of Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) coloured red.**

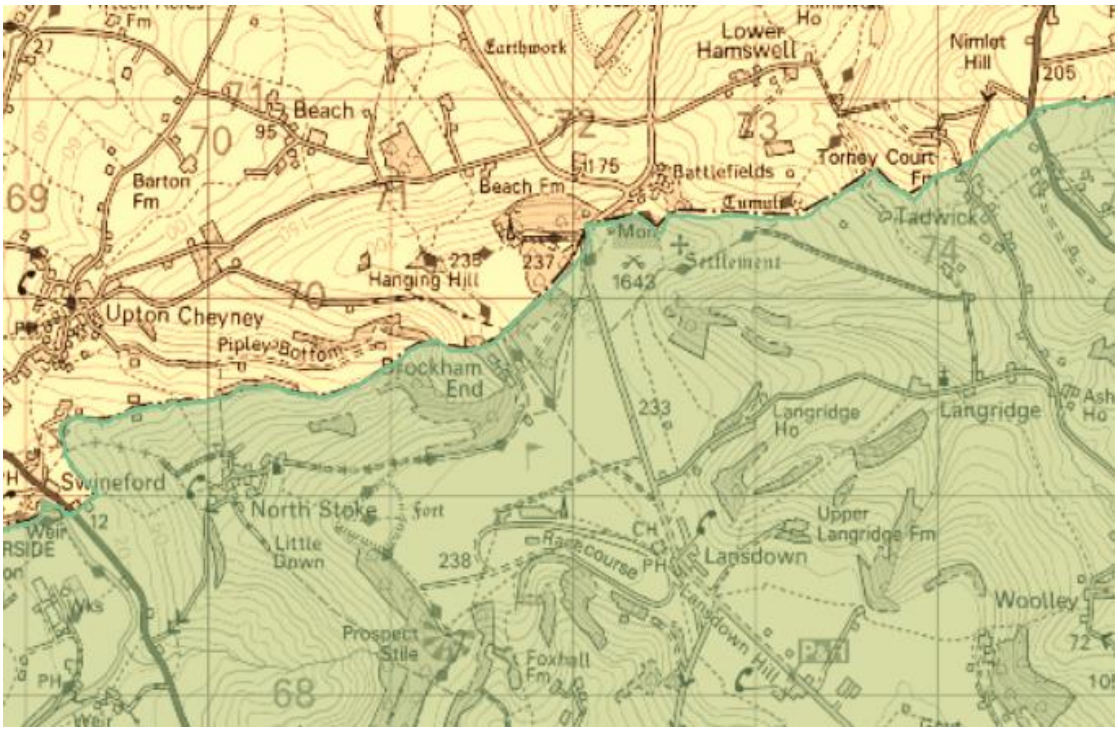


**Figure 3. Area map showing the division between Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) coloured green and South Gloucestershire coloured yellow.**

**Figure 4. OS Explorer Map 155, 1:25000. @ Crown copyright 2015, Licence/Customer Account Number (100060399).✦marks the location of 'Little Down Field' or the 'Settlement Field'**

## 2.3 Description of site

The site is on a north-eastern spur of a plateau on the southern aspect of the Cotswolds; the land in this particular area rises to over 230m and is surrounded by steep sided valleys.

The site consists of approximately 2.54 hectares of undifferentiated grassland. The field is triangular shaped, bounded on the north and south sides by very steep drops which converge at the extreme easterly end to form a point. The western edge of this site is formed by a dry-stone wall which appears to have been built directly onto the foundation of an earlier wall or along the line of an earthen bank. The site slopes gently to the south, and standing earthworks are apparent across the site. The underlying geology of the area consists of oolitic limestones above which is a thin brashy fine loam which is generally free draining and calcareous.

**Figure 5. Satellite Image shows the earthworks in 'Little Down Field'. ©Google Earth.**

**Figure 6. Photograph showing the northern edge of the site, facing east.**

**Figure 7. Photograph showing the earthworks banks and ditches across the middle of the site, facing east.**

**Figure 8. Photograph showing the earthworks banks and ditches across the middle of the site, facing west.**

**Figure 9. Photograph showing the northern edge of the site, facing west.**

## 2.4 Site history and archaeological potential

The site has clearly visible earthworks. It is just to the eastern edge of the site of the Battle of Lansdown (1643) but is better known for its Roman and pre-Roman content and has been associated with pewter production from the finds. It was excavated in the early years of the twentieth century by Thomas S. Bush and was further studied by a group from Kingswood School in the 1960's. Excavations between 1905 and 1908 by Bush uncovered six buildings with pennant tile flooring and also brick and tile was recovered, and drains and two banks, one forming an enclosure, were noted. The finds recovered included lead and iron ore slag, seven stone coffins and other inhumations, 234 Romano British coins 2nd to 4th century, pottery which included Samian and New Forest wares, also sherds from amphora, repaired pots and bases, rims, strainers, colander and body parts, but no complete vessels were found. Other artefacts recovered were items of jewellery which consisted of glass beads, brooches, rings, armlets, necklets, mosaic brooch and bone pins. Metal finds recovered included hobnails, nails, axe, cleats, tweezers, knives, spoons (one manufactured from bronze), horse and pony shoes, a spearhead, a stylus, and iron pincers. Other objects found were animal bones from sheep/goat, cattle and red deer antler, glass, flint objects, spindle whorls, whetstones, ochre, carved stone head of a woman, stone moulds and a currency bar. Most artefacts recovered were Romano-British in date, but Iron Age pottery was recovered from a ditch cut into the oolite stone. Bush's interpretation and observation suggested that this was an industrial site, no mosaic floors were noted, and the 1960's excavations by Kingswood School of part of the site showed one of the buildings to have an apsidal end.

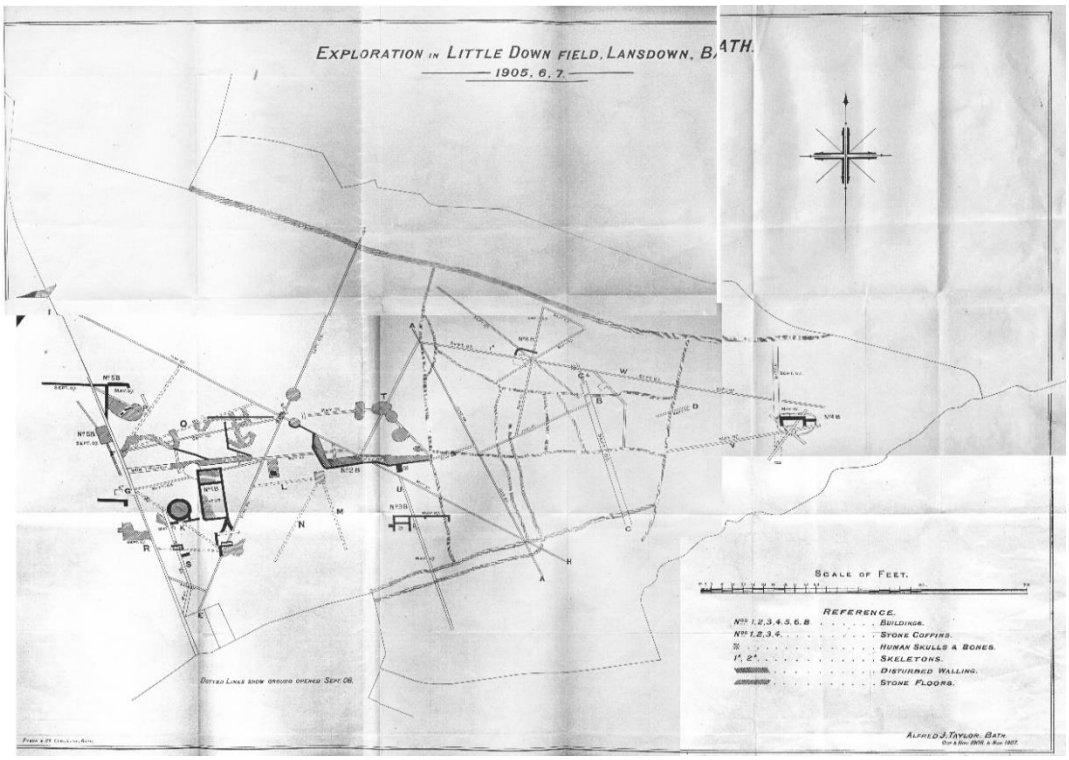


**Figure 10, Bush's plan of 'Little Down Field' showing his interpretation of the site.**

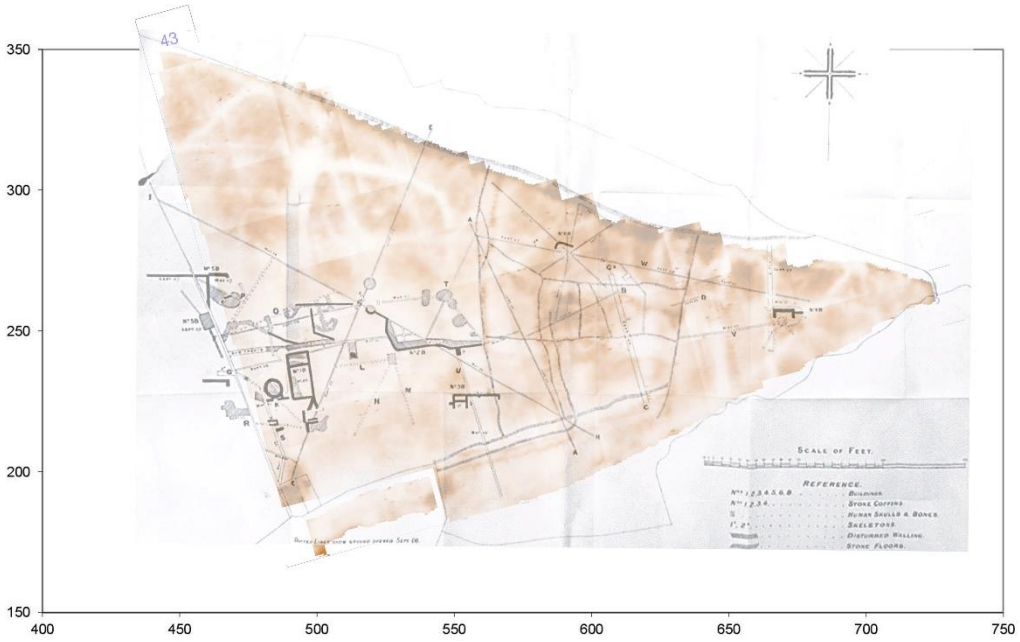


**Figure 11. Bush's map overlaid onto resistivity survey**

**Figure 12. Bush's map overlaid onto magnetometry survey**

## 2.5 Information about archaeological sites in the immediate area

The sites were identified using 'Pastscape'. A 2km radial search based on ST726703 was investigated and documented.

### *2.5.1 Palaeolithic, Neolithic to the Bronze Age*

Find spots are close to, but rarely on, the plateau and are restricted to the northern and western sides.

| Monument Numbers | Map Numbers | National Grid References | Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| 203703 | ST76NW13 | ST718698 | Palaeolithic- Bronze Age flint implements and associated chipping floors. |
| 203812 | ST76NW52 | ST711686 | Late Palaeolithic - Bronze Age flint scatter |
| 204977 | ST77SW42 | ST717702 | Palaeolithic - Bronze Age flint working |
| 205032 | ST77SW42 | ST722714 | Upper Palaeolithic - Bronze Age surface flint scatters |
| 205036 | ST77SW46 | ST733714 | Flint implements |
| 203816 | | ST723688 | Neolithic polished axe fragment. Ashmolean Museum, Accession Number 1958:472 |
| 205026 | | | Neolithic sandstone axe, Freezing Hill |
| 204955 | ST77SW7 | ST705718 | Probable, Neolithic chambered tomb |
| 205031 | | ST723700 | Arrowhead, barbed-and-tanged |

**Figure 13. Table showing the location of Palaeolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age Sites**

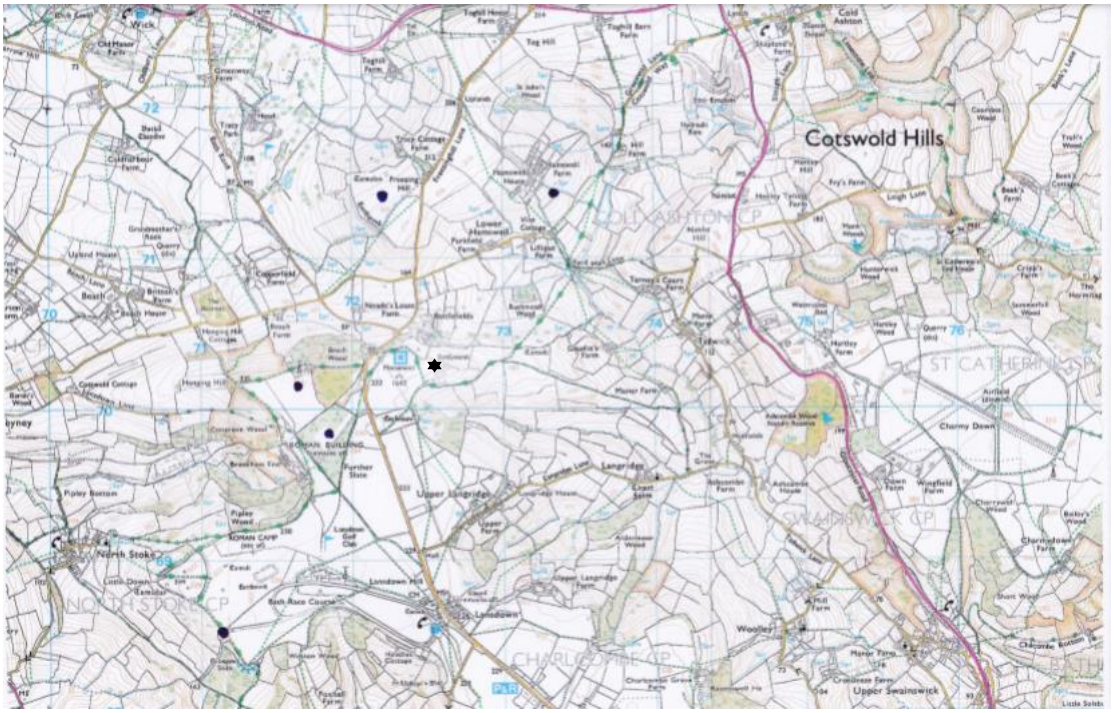


**Figure 14. Map showing positions of Palaeolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age Sites**

### *2.5.2 Bronze Age Round Barrows*

71% of these barrows are on the plateau; of the remaining 29%, 21% are on steep slopes and 8% are located on a ridge.

| Monument Numbers | Map Numbers | National Grid References | Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| 203691 | ST76NW9 | ST712683 | Cairn and possible Barrow |
| 203728 | ST76NW26 | ST714686 | 3 Bronze Age Round Barrows |
| 203731 | ST76NW23 | ST719687 | 2 Round Barrows |
| 203734 | ST76NW24 | ST72568 | 2 Confluent Round Barrows & 1 Single Bowl Barrow |
| 203755 | ST76NW31 | ST728693 | Cairn with possible Barrow Iron Age Inhumation |
| 203791 | ST76NW43 | ST710688 | Round Barrow |
| 204977 | ST77SW21 | ST721703 | Round Barrows |
| 203704 | ST76NW14 | ST714691 | Barrow |
| 203725 | ST76NW21 | ST711689 | 2 Round Barrows, Fused Copper & Gold Plated Bronze 'Sun disc' |
| 203794 | ST76NW44 | ST714688 | Round Barrow |
| 203752 | ST76NW30 | ST707688 | Possible Bowl Barrow |
| 205020 | ST77SW30 | ST702702 | 2 Round Barrows |
| 205033 | ST77SW43 | ST716700 | Burnt Human Bone Barrow Site? |
| 204969 | ST77SW11 | ST737704 | 2 Round Barrows |
| 205012 | ST77SW26 | ST724713 | Round Barrow (site of) and inurned cremations |
| 204966 | ST77SW10 | ST722715 | Barrow |
| 203782 | | ST737683 | Bronze Age Knife |

**Figure 15. Table showing the location of Bronze Age Round Barrows sites.**

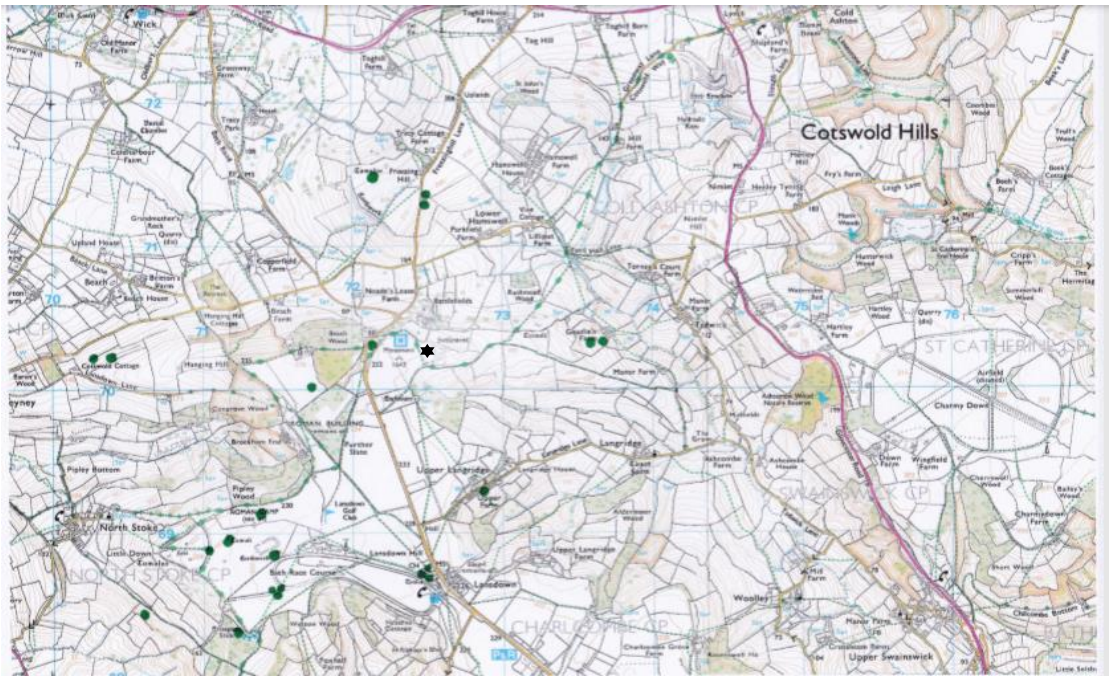


**Figure 16. Map showing the positions of Bronze Age Round Barrows.**

### *2.5.3 Iron Age*

Most sites are on the plateau or very close to it.

| Monument Numbers | Map Numbers | National Grid References | Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| 203737 | ST76NW25 | ST721669 | Earthworks remains of a possible Iron Age Enclosure |
| 203785 | ST76NW41 | ST735686 | Romano-British building with Early Iron Age Pottery |
| 203817 | ST76NW57 | ST732688 | Iron Age Burial Pit |
| 203755 | ST76NW31 | ST728693 | Bronze Age Cairn with possible Iron Age Inhumation |
| 203710 | ST76NW16 | ST709689 | Earthwork remains of an Iron age Promontory Fort or Univallate Hillfort |
| 203749 | ST76NW29 | ST715697 | Romano British Site with possible Iron Age Enclosure with Pottery and Coin |
| 204958 | ST77SW8 | ST720714 | Iron Age Linear Earthworks on Freezing Hill |

**Figure 17. Table showing the location of Iron Age sites.**

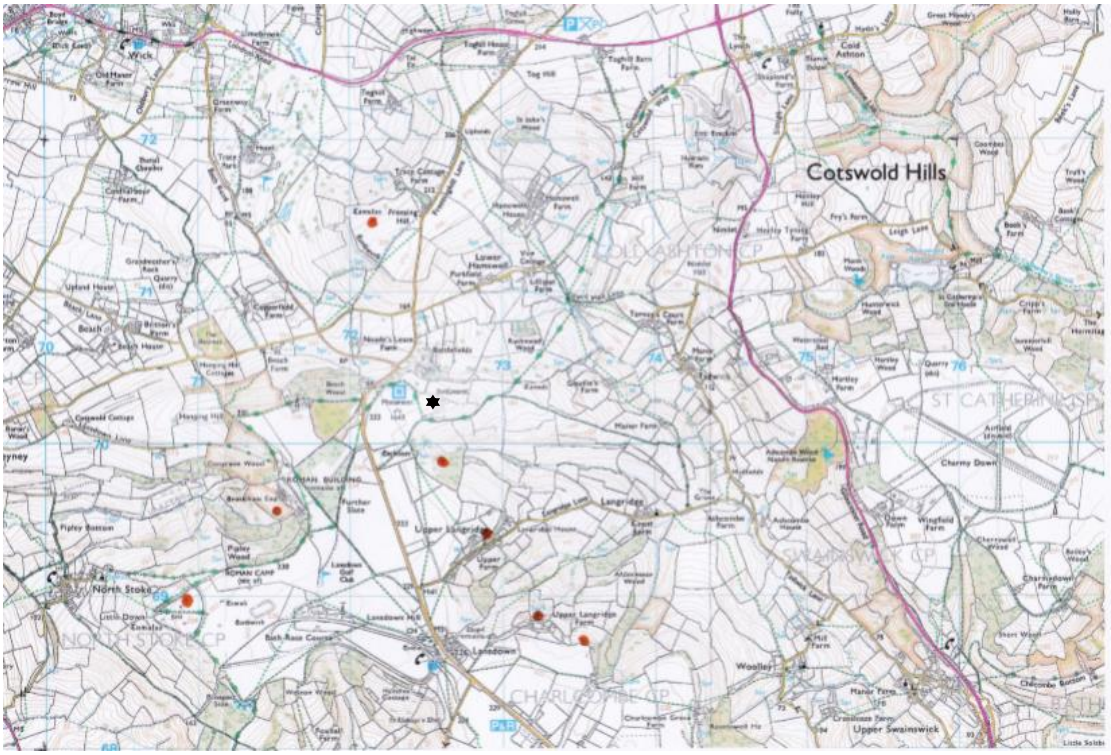


**Figure 18. Map showing the positions of Iron Age Sites**

### *2.5.4 Romano-British*

Located mainly to the north-west and south-west of the site, but scattered sites are known to the south-east which includes the City of Bath (*Aquae Sulis).*

| Monument Numbers | Map Numbers | National Grid References | Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| 203785 | ST76NW41 | ST735686 | Three roomed Roman building, It was occupied in the 1st/2nd and late 3rd/4th centuries AD; possibly a villa site. Some early Iron Age pottery was also recovered. |
| 203788 | ST76NW42 | ST703694 | Roman stone coffins and large amount of Roman pottery and coins, also the remains of a building, possibly a villa site. |
| 205006 | ST77SW24 | ST719701 | Circular columns, (site of), probably Romano-British, but possibly C18th. |
| 205009 | ST77SW25 | ST726702 | Little Down Field. Site of a Romano-British settlement consisting of a D-shaped enclosure with evidence of industrial activities including iron and pewter working, and associated inhumations. Coin evidence suggests occupation from the mid-2nd century to the late 4th/early 5th century. The site was possibly associated with a temple. |
| 203719 | ST76NW19 | ST714689 | Earthwork remains of a possible Roman or Medieval rectangular enclosure; ridge and furrow are also visible -Lansdown Camp |
| 203713 | ST76NW17 | ST710691 | In 1887 inhumations, one in a limestone coffin, were found; in 1911 excavation uncovered Roman building remains, tile and pottery; a well and a stone coffin were found in 1930 on Lansdown Golf Course. Possibly the site of a villa. |
| 203749 | ST76NW29 | ST715697 | Roman settlement (possibly a villa) and Prehistoric or Roman enclosures (possible field system) at Brockham End. Fragments of dry walls, a well, three stone coffins containing skeletons, an altar, occulist's stamp and pottery sherds dating from the 1st to 4th century were found. An Iron age coin and pottery were also found |
| 203813 | ST76NW53 | ST715690 | Probable Roman field system identified on Bath Race Course and on the adjacent golf course. Some banks and ditches have been identified on aerial photographs but some have already been noted in association with the possible medieval enclosure (ST 76 NW 19). |
| 204989 | ST77SW17 | ST720703 | A mound thrown up by quarrying operations yielded Romano-British potsherds, and a coin of Athelstan's reign |
| 204994 | ST77SW20 | ST710 700 | A Roman building was discovered along the Upton-Bath road. Finds included a ring, fibulae, coins and a millstone along with glass and pottery. |
| 205016 | ST77SW28 | ST709711 | Site of a Roman building |
| 205022 | ST77SW32 | ST712706 | The Avon SMR claims a Roman villa was reported |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | here by Scarth, yet he only reports a Roman camp on the Via Julia. |
| 205021 | ST77SW31 | ST716715 | Supposed site of a Roman villa recorded in the 19th century. |
| 204952 | ST77SW6 | ST707719 | A Roman villa was excavated at Cold Harbour Farm in 1865; the coins indicate occupation from the mid-3rd to the late 4th century AD. Surface finds of Roman pottery, tile and slag. |
| 205015 | ST77SW27 | ST711714 | Excavation of a possible Roman villa and/or an industrial site producing hypocaust and roof tiles and bricks, possible clay pit. (Possibly the same site as ST 77 SW 33.) |
| 205023 | ST77SW33 | ST710717 | Supposed site of a Roman villa, excavated in the 19th century; possibly a duplicate of ST 77 SW 27. |

**Figure 19. Table showing the location of Romano-British Sites.**

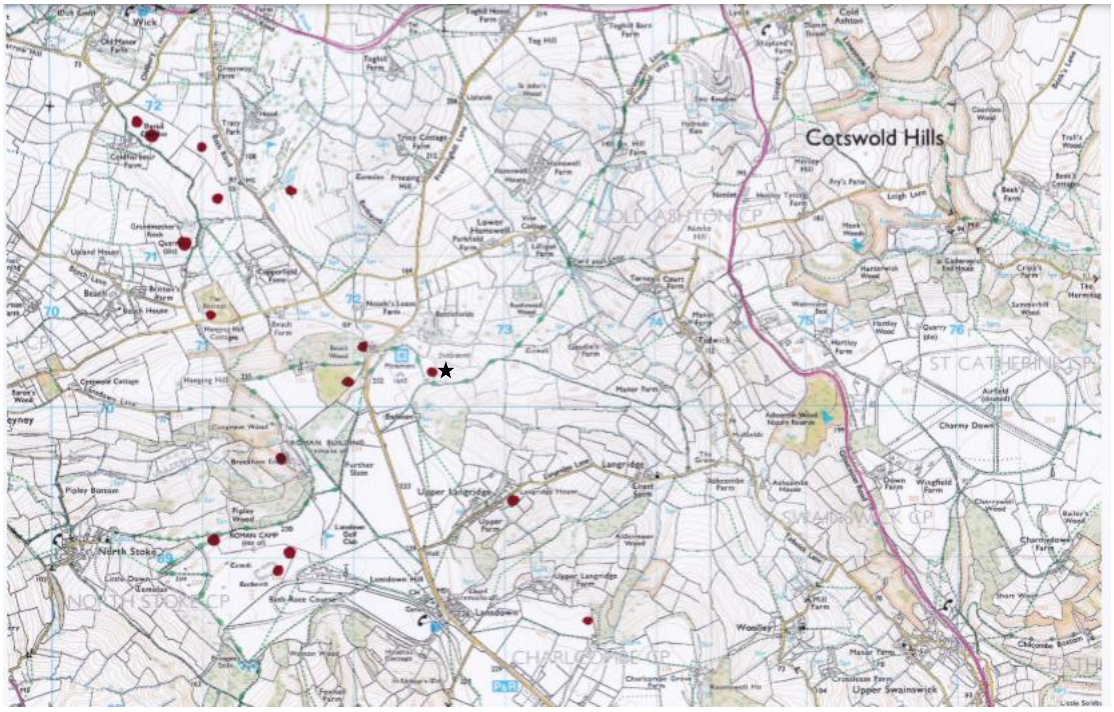


**Figure 20. Map showing the positions of Romano-British Sites**

### *2.5.5 Sites of Unknown Date*

| Monument Numbers | Map Numbers | National Grid References | Description |
|---|---|---|---|
| 984210 | | ST 729686 | Possible enclosure and/or lynchets, of unknown date, seen as earthworks |
| 984213 | | ST 726689 | Rectilinear enclosure, of unknown date, seen as an earthwork |
| 1379934 | ST77SW82 | ST722720 | A field system of prehistoric origins incorporating a series of parallel banks 9 metres wide and 0.2 metres high set 10 to 20 metres apart. Medieval and post medieval reworking is evident. |

**Figure 21. Table showing the location of sites not datable to any specific period.**

**Figure 22. Map showing the positions of sites not datable to any specific period.**

## 2.6 Acknowledgements

The Authors would like to express our sincere thanks to Mr and Mrs Bravin of Upper Farm, Upper Langridge, Bath (land owners) for giving us permission to enter onto their property to carry out an archaeological geophysical survey.

Special and grateful thanks are due to Melanie Barge, Inspector of Ancient Monuments, Historic England who granted us a Section 42 licence and for her overall support; Richard Sermon, Bath and North East Somerset, Senior Archaeological Officer, for his advice, encouragement and assistance; Mark Corney and Lisa Brown for the their comments; and to Lynn Amadio who spent a considerable time researching and documenting the sites in the immediate area, her report is attached.

The geophysical survey at Little Down Field was totally dependent upon contributions from numerous individuals. The authors would particularly like to thank members of the Bath and Counties Archaeological Society who braved inclement conditions on a very exposed site to help in the survey. Members participating were Robert Arkell, Rick Buettner, Mick Edmunds, Heather Greenwood, Sandra Heward, Nick Jones, John Knapper, Henry Lowe, Anna Matheson, Ian Perkins, Les Phillips, John Richards, John Samways, Lawrie Scott, Annie Somers-Hall and Oliver Stanley. Also thanks go to Rick Buettner for taking photographs of the site.

## 3 Methodology

### 3.1 Date of fieldwork

The survey was carried out between Tuesday 20th and Thursday 29th March 2018 in very inclement weather conditions.

**Figure 23. Photograph portraying the extreme conditions endured by the geophysics team!**

### 3.2 Grid locations and method used.

The field was laid out in 20 m grid squares, starting from an origin, arbitrarily called 1000, 1000. This point had been located as a national grid reference and its height OD was also provided. Location and height of grid points and of earthworks were measured using a Sokkia SET5W total station. Results of the earthwork survey are still in preparation.

The magnetometer was a Bartington 601-2, taking 4 readings per metre along lines 1 m apart, 1600 readings per full square. Although we had problems with its battery, we were able to complete the survey. Data were analysed using INSITE software.

Twin-probe resistance was used over the whole site, using a TR/CIA device and a Geoscan RM15. These operated at 2 readings per metre along lines 1 m apart, 800 readings per full square. Two of the grids were degraded by striping effects, although inspection of the data has not been able to find the cause of this. This has, however, been mitigated. Data were analysed using INSITE software.

A magnetic susceptibility survey was undertaken using a Bartington MS2. Random locations were measured, and their Ordnance Survey grid coordinates measured using a hand-held GPS device. Approximately 600 data points were recorded across the site. Results were transcribed to spreadsheet and presented using DPlot software. The very high readings on the southern edge appear to be genuine.

Four resistivity profiles were taken using the TR/CIA resistance meter with 32 probes. This gave line lengths of 31 m. Ideally, half-metre probe spacing would have been used, but the need for long lines coupled with time and weather constraints meant that 1 m spacing had to be used. Data were analysed using RES2DINV full version, including physical profiles of the ground, measured by dumpy level.

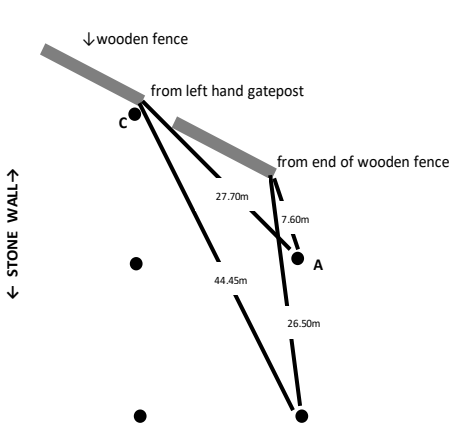

**Figure 24 & 25. Plan showing how the site can be relocated and a grid plan of the site.**

Distances of posts at north end of second row from the stone wall alongside the Cotswold Way to gate and wooden fence at north end of field. From posts A and B the end of the third row (north from 0 marker) can be triangulated. Post C is 1.0m from the fence and 1.25m from the left-hand gate post.

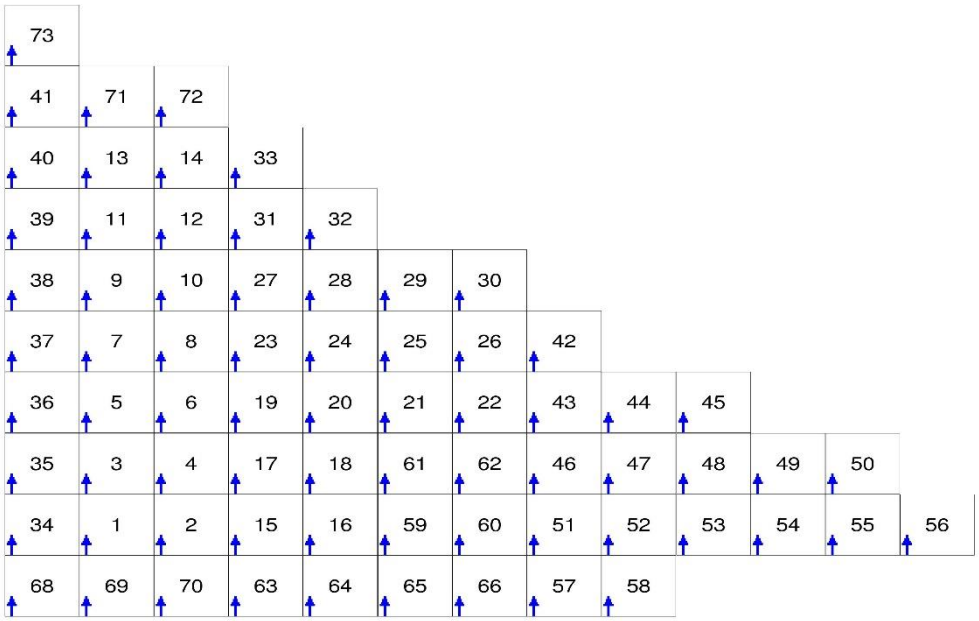


**Figure 26. Grid layout for the magnetometer survey.**

## 3.3 Magnetometer survey

**Figure 27. Little Down Field, Magnetometer Survey Results.**

Magnetometry has provided a very busy plot. This is manifest not just as sets of lines but also as a generally speckled effect over a triangular area. The magnetic response is noticeably calmer at the eastern end and along a narrow northern strip. The soil is particularly black over the whole field, in contrast to the more orange colour in the field to the west, with the wall marking the divide between them. Bush's paper suggests large quantities of ferrous (reduced iron oxide) in this dark soil, but that is an unlikely cause as black soil extends to the farthest east.

The western portion close to the wall, some 30 m wide has a large amount of activity, both straight and curved lines, and these appear to continue under the wall. Within this may be buildings reported by Bush, but the evident patterns do not correspond to the features shown in that earlier report. Rectilinear ditch-like features to the north of this area look Roman in origin, and a possible post-hole structure appears to be part-covered by the wall. A little to the south of this is a half circular feature, which could represent a round house, but there is a concentric curve to its north-east.

A round feature towards the northern edge has a ditch line extending south, and a large curving ditch immediately east of this impinges. This is sub-circular with a diameter approaching 50 m, with a large gap at the south. The ditch extends further south than the enclosure but is not clear in magnetometry. At its termination, it is joined by a ditch from the north-east, and appears to have another circular feature, these both being about 10 m diameter. This will be discussed further in the section on twin-probe resistance.

There is another round feature 10 m diameter just to the south of the sub-circular enclosure with smaller rounds to the south, south-east and north. The modern wall line also lies over a possible round feature, so only half of it shows. This also has a rectangular feature showing as a negative anomaly, possibly walls, immediately to its south-west.

There is also a possible round house in the northern corner of the sub-circular feature, but this is cut by a ditch line which obscures it.

The attached picture shows the possible circular features, including that at the far eastern end of the site.

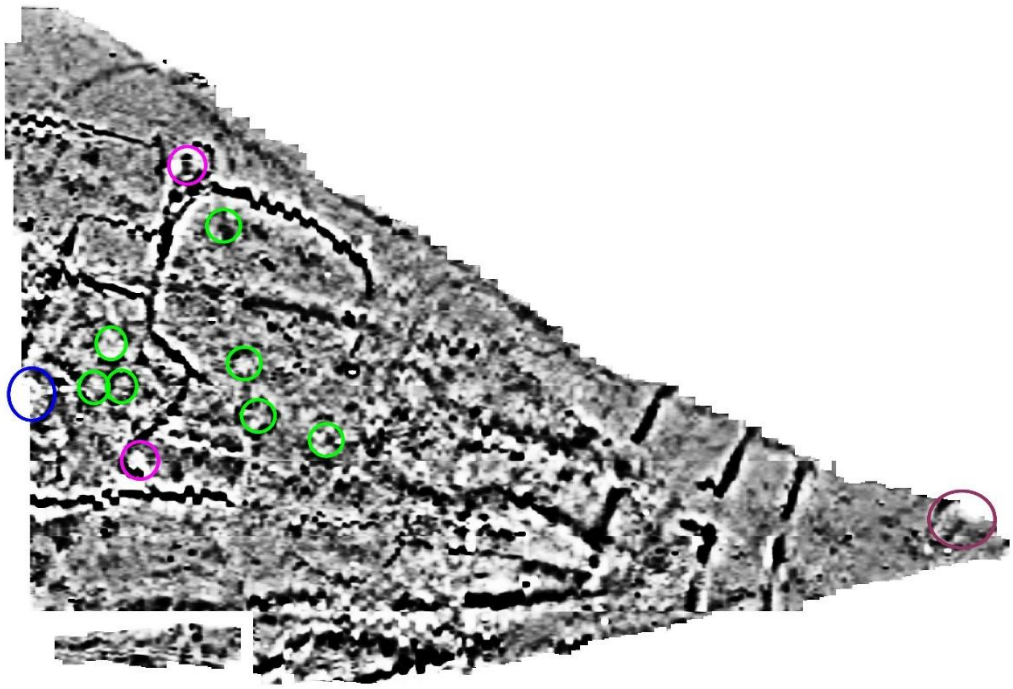

**Figure 28. Survey results showing possible circular features?**

Several strong ditch lines run east-west without regard for any other features.

At the centre of the survey area, a rectangular structure with a possible eastern entrance is enclosed by an east-west rectangular feature, 40 m by 15 m.

Towards the southern edge is a strong east-west line which turns and heads straight to the northern edge. This may be a boundary for the site, although there is an oval structure partly showing as a negative anomaly just to the south of this on the southern slopes. This will be discussed further under magnetic susceptibility. The portion of the boundary heading north appears to be interrupted by a round feature, possibly with a trackway heading west from it.

This north-heading ditch also appears to be one of a set of three which cordon off the far eastern portion of the site, which terminates in a sharp point. These ditches give the appearance of having been laid out radially from the far eastern tip. The middle ditch appears from this plot to have a central causeway with ‘wing’ ditches on the western side. It is possible though, that these represent part of some independent structure set right across the ditch. The inner ditch also appears to be broken at the centre, and again this may be due to some structure extending across it, as there is a faint shadow on its eastern side.

The far eastern tip contains an interesting structure which gives the impression of an incompletely shown oval structure containing a short linear feature. Its incompleteness may be due to the proximity of a wire fence, so that the magnetometer could not scan it completely, or it could be that this part of the tip has been quarried away from below as there is a cliff downwards here of five metres or more. This is an intriguing area, which rather suggests an ‘inner sanctum’ of probably Iron Age date.

### 3.4 Twin Probe Resistance survey

The twin-probe resistance survey was surprisingly good for detecting ditches, which are seen in profuse numbers across this site. This is quite dramatic but can make the plot quite difficult to follow. The large sub-circular enclosure is plainly visible and the broad curving ditch to its west more visible than on magnetometry. Curiously, this enters a large area of rather lower resistance where it is almost lost. There are faint signs of it terminating in a large circular feature some 30 m north of the southern edge. The northern terminus is also marked by a large circular feature just beyond the sub-circular enclosure, this time set into much higher resistance. Other ditches extend beyond it to the northern edge.

The low resistance area is strange in that this was shown by Bush to have buildings and other features, but it is not obvious why this area should be so wet. It is in the middle of a gentle slope, and it appears to be surrounded by ditches on three sides and the wall on the fourth side. This is an area of busy magnetometry including negative magnetic lines. According to Bush, there were masonry buildings in here too.

Careful study of the data in detail (see colour plot, Figure 31) can just bring out the presence of the rectangular building (shown in red), but there is no sign of the circular building. There are three circles (not one) where resistance values drop even lower, but none of these correspond with that building in the plan. It is possible that these lower values originate from some more recent use in animal husbandry of this part of the site. Note that this (colour) plot extends northwards from the southern wall only, and only as far as the 1000 E line of our local grid.

**Figure 29. Photograph of the team carrying out a Twin Probe Resistance survey**

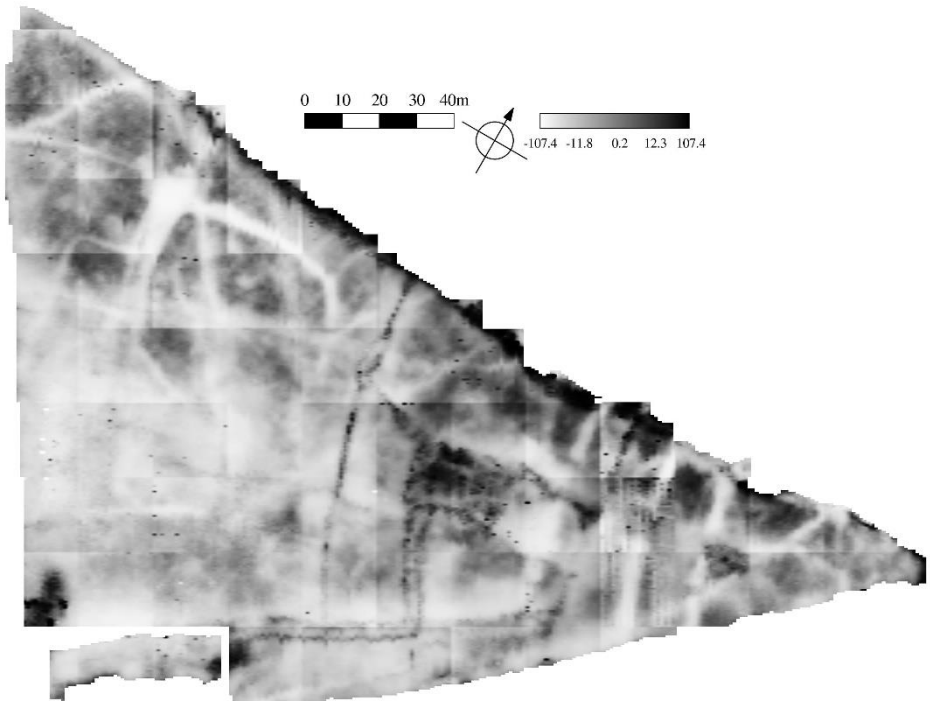


**Figure 30. Little Down Field, Twin-Probe Resistance Survey Results.**

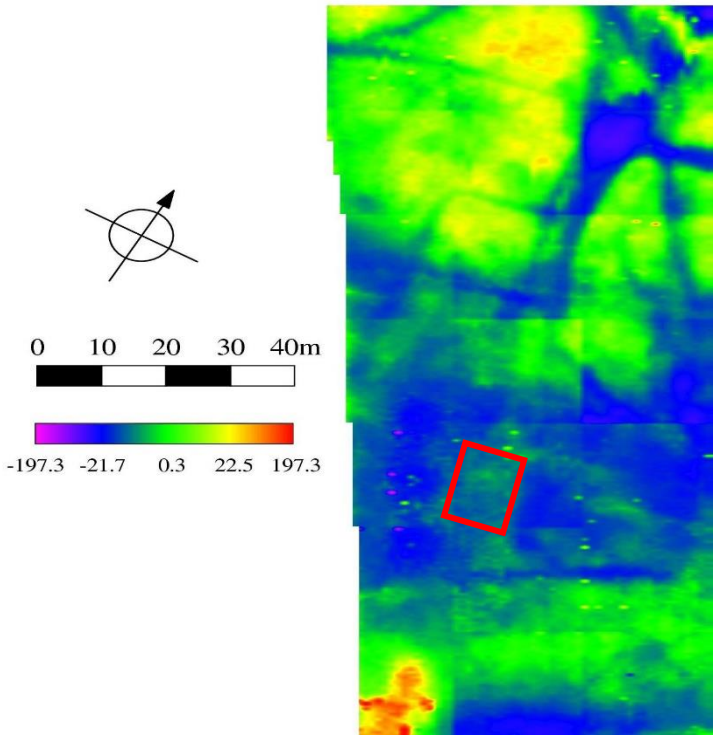


**Figure 31. Coloured survey results which might show building (in red)**

It may be that there has been extra soil build-up in this area, possibly from more recent use, and these buildings are now at the limit, or below, of detection by resistance using a half-metre probe separation. However, Bush's account does not suggest that the buildings are particularly deep.

As well as the various ditches, there are also possible pits both inside the sub-circular enclosure and to the west of it.

There are signs of a former building, probably post-mediaeval in the far south-west of the plot. There is a second building on the very south, bisected by the north-going length of wall.

This area, apparently featureless on the surface, is bounded on the east by a curving wall, which looks like it has been laid out radially from the eastern tip, even though that is some 150 m away. To the east of this, earthworks are very evident. Ditches still continue in some profusion.

At the centre of the plot is a rectangular structure within a rectangular enclosure. These are fully evident on the ground, as is the narrow track with right angle bend which goes to its western end. This area is terminated by the north-going line which was discussed in the magnetometry section. Then there are the radial ditches (also clear in magnetometry) which cordon off the eastern tip.

Both inner ditches can be seen to be interrupted by high resistance features. The eastern of these looked like a cairn which had been 'donutted' but which corresponds with building remains shown on Bush's plan.

A ditch curving from the south goes into this cordoned off area (faintly visible in magnetometry), and there are features visible to the very tip, but these are not sufficiently clear to discern their nature.

The northern edge of the plot is marked by high resistance. This will be discussed further in the following section.

## 3.5 Magnetic Susceptibility Survey

Plan of the site showing where readings were taken across the whole area (there are gaps, but no major omissions).

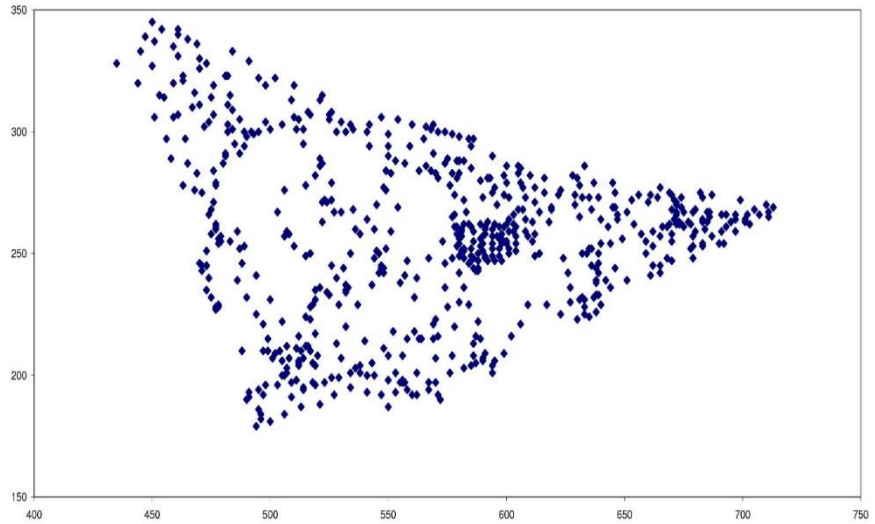


**Figure 32. Plan of the site showing where readings were taken.**

The magnetic susceptibility plot complements the magnetometer survey. Although it only measures the surface to a depth of about 75 mm, it appears to show higher readings in areas where the magnetometry is busy, whereas the more placid parts of the magnetometry generally correspond to lower susceptibility readings. Note that the X and Y coordinates measure Eastings (ST 72000 plus number shown) and Northings (ST 70000 plus number shown) directly as all randomly chosen points were located by handheld GPS. The shape of the survey area has been smoothed by the graph-drawing routine.

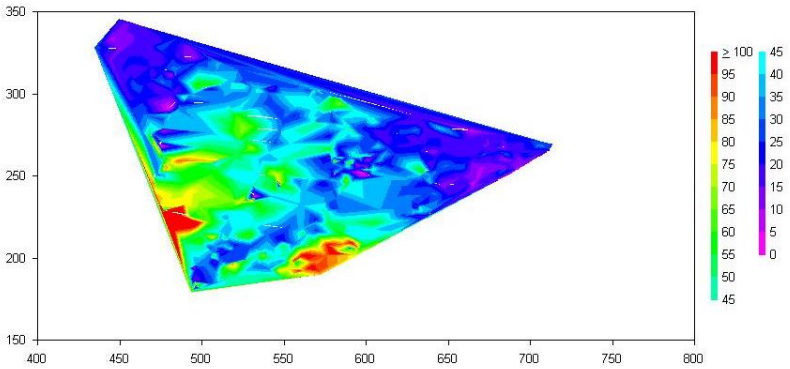


**Figure 33. Survey report in colour.**

There are two areas of particularly high readings. Those to the west, against the wall are close to Bush's indicated site of buildings. The southern area is of interest as it is below the southern boundary line discussed in the section above, and on the steep southern slope. This suggests it may be an area of waste tipping.

### 3.6 Resistivity profiles

Profile positions:

q1 from 955, 1100 to 986, 1100
q2 from 1040, 1080 to 1060, 1100
q3 from 1047.5, 1040 to 1078.5, 1040
q4 from 1100, 1018 to 1131, 1018

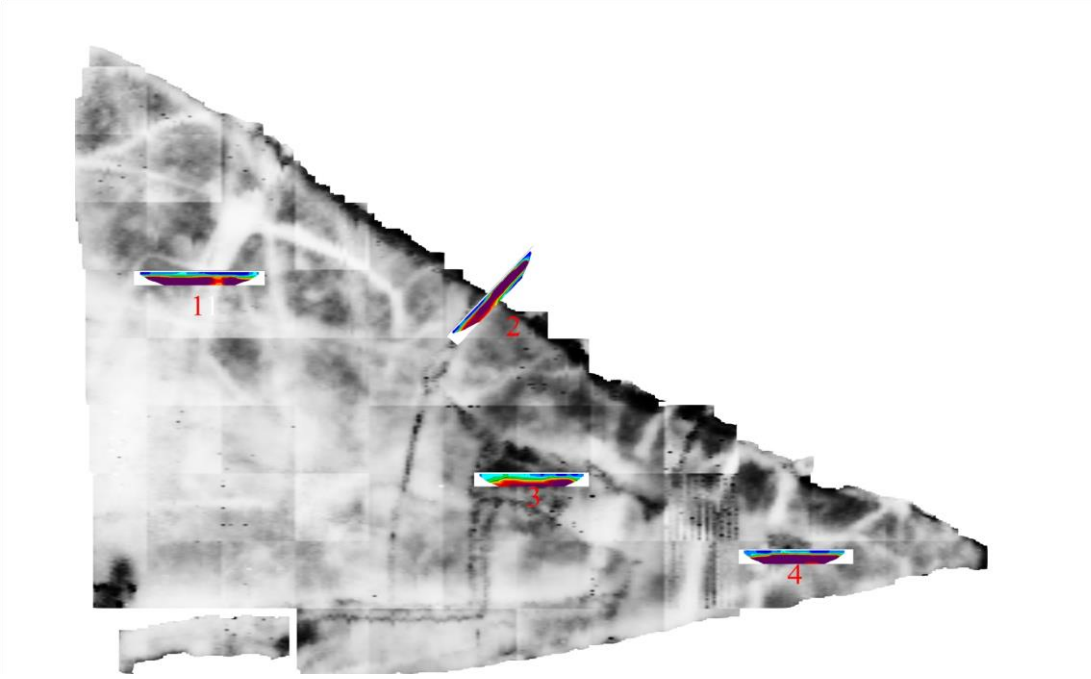


**Figure 34. Location of the Four Resistivity Profiles Relative to the Twin-Probe Survey**

**Figure 35. Photograph showing Resistivity Profiles being undertaken.**

Only four profiles were done and these all used 1 m spacing in order to maximise ground researched. This was the last day of survey and finished in unworkably wet conditions with a broken trolley unusable for transporting the heavy looms. Ideally, there would have been at least one more complete day of profiling, and these profiles would, after inspection of the four above, been done at half metre spacing, as the underlying rock was found to dominate below 1 m, thus compressing the useful data.

The four plots are shown overlaid on the resistance plot so that their location can be seen and also the features they were trying to elucidate. These plots are shown here without ground contour data, although the plots presented below have height data added in order to indicate unevenness of the ground. This is most evident in profile 2 which went diagonally over the northern edge and down the slope.

The first profile, the westernmost was across almost flat ground, in spite of all the ditches apparently running through it. This portion of the field was remarkably even despite the amount of archaeology Bush found below it.

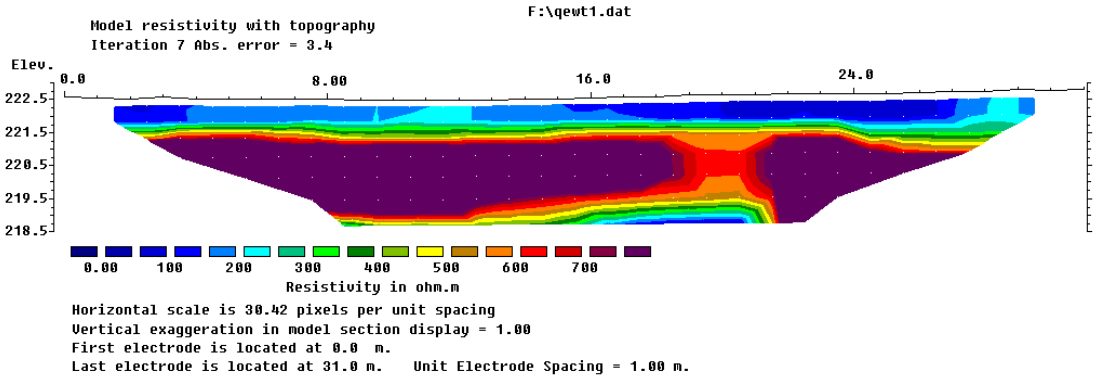


**Figure 36. Resistivity Profile 1.**

The plot does show the small ditch intersected by the west end of the profile. The large ditch is evident by the large patch of dark blue from 16 to 27 m and also by the notch cut into the bedrock, and this has become well soaked in the bottom of the ditch.

The second profile ran diagonally across the northern edge of site, so proceeded from a flat start just incorporating the curving ‘wall’ line over the break of slope and steeply down. This is not as steep as the ground as profile was approximately at 45 ° to the steepest slope.

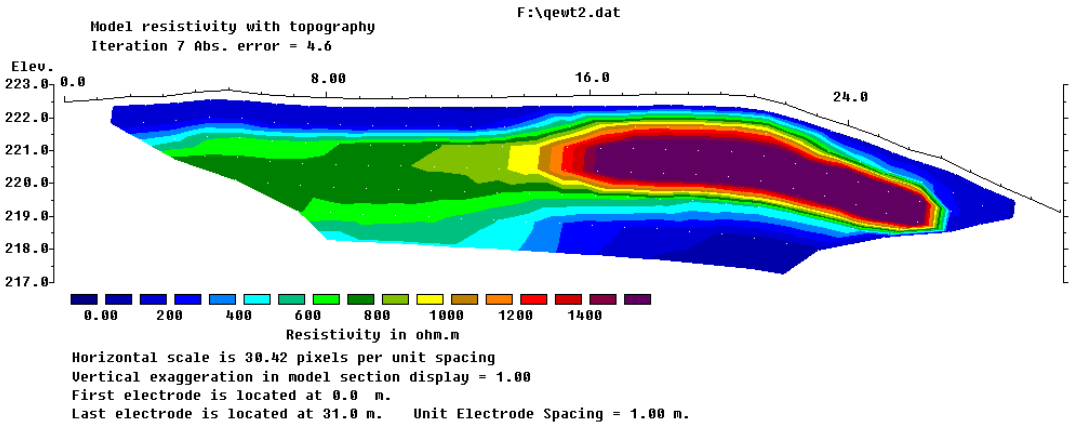


**Figure 37. Resistivity Profile 2.**

The ‘wall’ can be seen at 6 m as a surface bump and there is some unevenness in the underlying rock, possibly indicating a ditch rather than wall. The high resistance line may then be up cast. There is also no sign of a wall at the break of slope around 21 m. The apparently higher resistance just within the edge of the plot may then just indicate thinner soil, where there has been erosion.

The third profile was across the ‘building within an enclosure’, and also the trackway which was at its western end. The earthworks here are very pronounced, but at 1 m scale rather than at the 3 m depth of the plot.

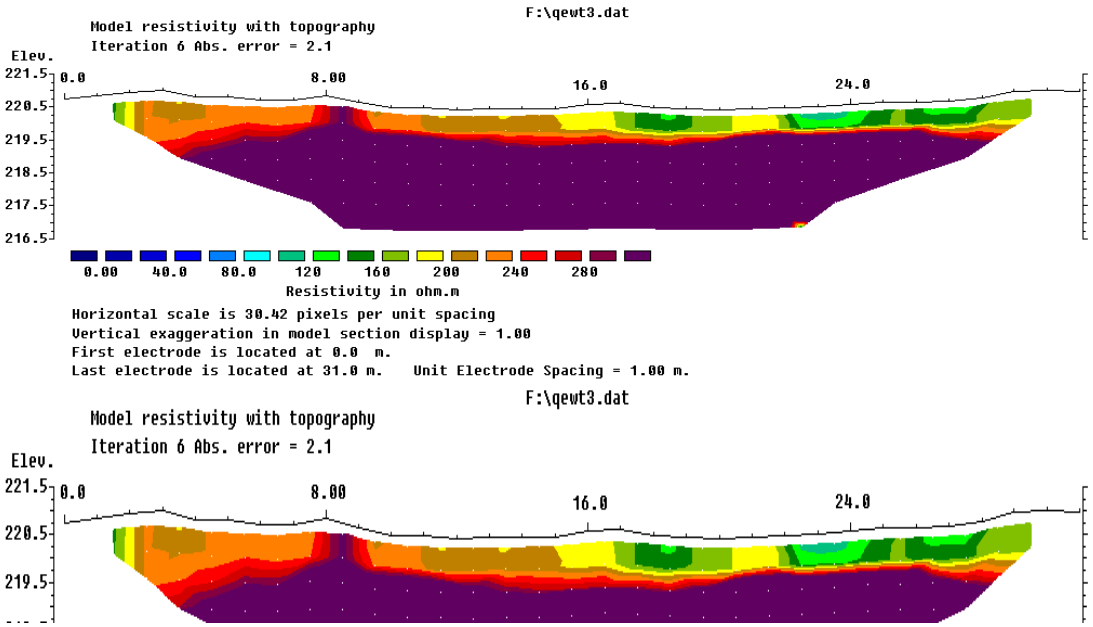


**Figure 38. Resistivity Profile 3.**

The lower portion of Figure 38 is the plot of profile 3 repeated with the bottom cut off and the vertical scale exaggerated so you can better see the lumps and bumps. The banks of the trackway can be seen here at 4 and 8 m, with a wall visible at 8 m. At 28 m, the ground rises to the surrounding enclosure bank. The building only shows as moderate resistance with a few upstanding walls between 11 and 22 m. Possibly another profile offset to the south may have shown more detail, but the real benefit would be from repeating the work with half metre spacing, however that would require 3 profiles to cover the length.

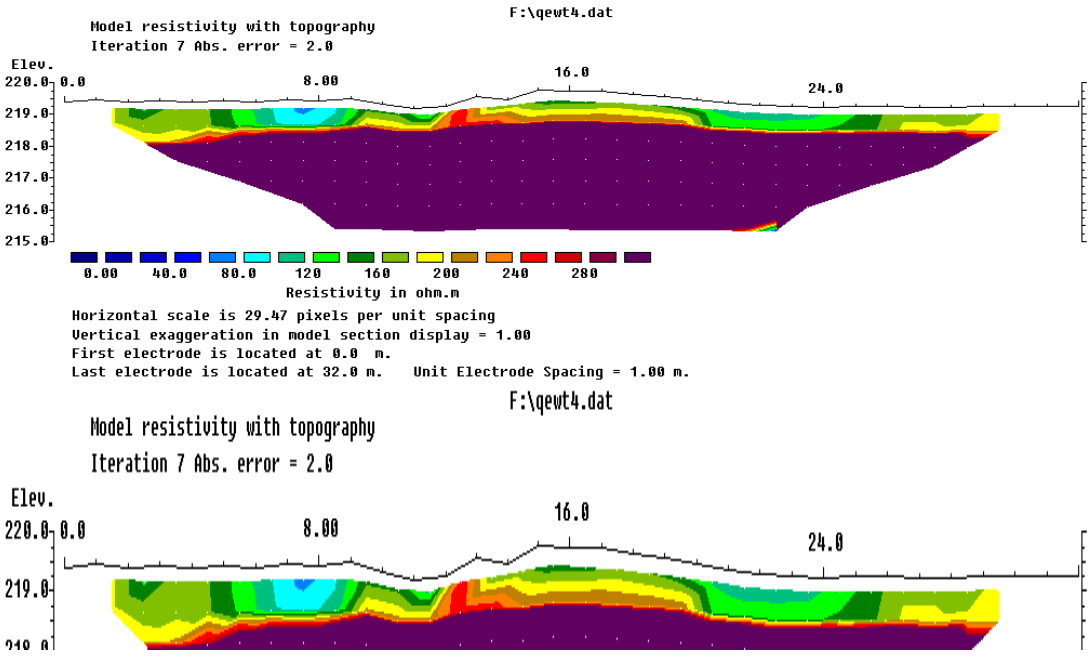


**Figure 39. Resistivity Profile 4.**

Likewise, with the fourth profile, Figure 39 is the full depth profile together with a truncated version with the height scale exaggerated to see the lumps and bumps. This crosses the earthwork which looks like a 'donutted' barrow blocking the innermost of the three radial ditches at the east end. The ditch itself is at 8 m and is quite shallow with a flat bottom. Ditch digging probably stopped when it hit bedrock. The 'barrow' goes for 9 m and is centred on 16 m. However, there is a wall-like feature at 13 m, and this may relate to the building which Bush shows in this vicinity. Beyond this is a wide shallow ditch down to the bedrock. This is mainly a ditch which runs diagonally to the north edge, but a number of ditches cross just by here.

More profiles around would help to elucidate the feature, but overall, it looks more like a pile of rubble than a barrow.

# 4 Conclusions

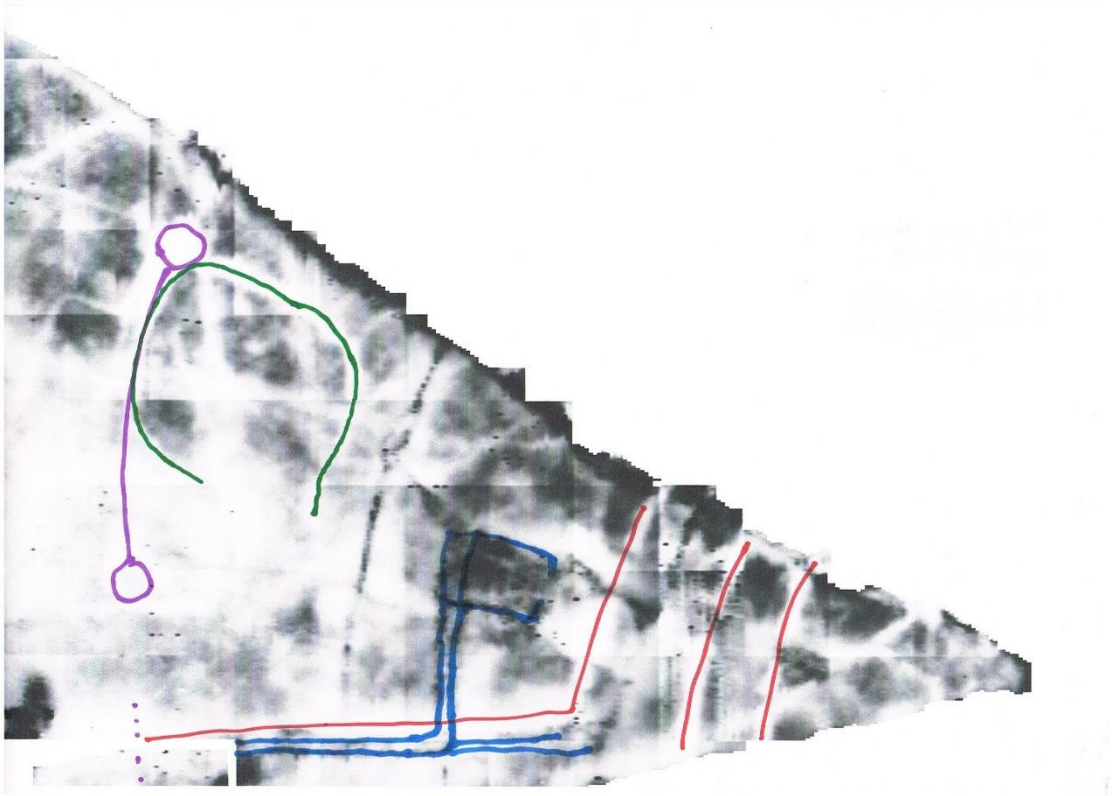

**Figure 40. Sketch plan over the results which were discussed with Mark Corney and Lisa Brown.**

There are a number of intriguing features about this site, both in the geophysics and in the topography. The site appears to be a mass of ditches, and there are pronounced earthworks over part of it, but not over the western half. Bush explored much of the site with long, narrow trenches, which are not clear in the survey, but he also investigated some areas more extensively, and our results do not show the features he found.

This is particularly the case on the western part of the site. Apart from some disturbance and vehicle tracks in the far south-west, the area is devoid of earthwork. This is a large area, larger than Bush's excavations, yet Bush claimed buildings there and magnetometry indicates a busy area. The resistance plot shows low resistance with but faint indication of any structure. It is possible that structures are below the detection capability of 0.5 m spaced probes, but Bush's report does not suggest great depth, and the bedrock seems to be no more than 1 m down where profiles were taken. Although the resistance here appears very low, all values are significantly higher than may be found on clay soils, so it is unlikely the buildings are being masked. It is possible that for some reason, the soil has been mounded up here artificially for agricultural reasons since the excavations, but that is unlikely. Ground

levels east of the wall are generally lower than those to the west. It almost suggests that the structures found were dismantled on excavation, but that is not what the text suggests.

Bush mentions that part of this field and the field to the west had been ploughed extensively and this had flattened earthworks, but that is unlikely before the 20th century, particularly in such a remote field.

As well as the busy magnetometry, the magnetic susceptibility readings are particularly high in the region where these buildings are expected. Surface readings may have been enhanced when soil was turned over during the excavations, and there may have been agricultural effects since then, but the south-west corner does seem to have been an area of high activity.

The other area of high magnetic susceptibility was on the steep slopes on the southern edge of the site. This appears to be below the earthworks and on a slope unsuitable for general use. Either there was some specialist activity there which did not register by other geophysical methods, or perhaps this was used for tipping waste material.

The principal area of activity in magnetometry, resistance and earthwork is the central portion of the field, contained on the west by a curving line of high resistance and on the east by an apparent ditch also with high resistance beside it. This area generally had moderate levels of magnetic susceptibility. A rectangular building within a longer rectangular enclosure appears to have been the focus of this area, and a trackway was taken deliberately to it, involving a right-angle bend. A strip of land to the north of this complex up to the edge of the northern scarp appears much quieter in terms of magnetic signature.

The quieter area also extends to the far eastern tip, but this is not devoid of activity. The magnetometry shows three ditches crossing the promontory, but it is possible that the western ditch is the bound of the industrial central area. The central and eastern ditches do appear to have been laid out to cordon off the eastern tip. Both ditches appear to have a central break, but study of magnetometry and resistance together suggests that these cross-ditch features may have been later structures. Indeed, Bush seems to have found rectangular footings across the easternmost.

The far eastern area cordoned off does appear quieter from the geophysics. There does appear to be an oval feature near the tip. It appears incomplete, but it is only visible in magnetometry and the proximity of iron fences degraded results. These rather suggest a pre-Roman sanctuary area at the tip.

The other feature most likely pre-Roman is a sub-circular enclosure some 50 m across in the north-west part of the site, and there are possibly round house signatures in and close to it. These together suggest an area of prehistoric use taken over and overwritten in Roman fashion. The question that remains is whether this promontory could be counted as a ‘hillfort’ in a broad definition of the word.

In terms of location, that title would be fitting: not only are there superb distant views across to the Severn Estuary and beyond, but local contact down the Swainswick

Valley, most of the Lansdown plateau and across the narrow col to the unfinished hillfort site on Freezing Hill. Indeed, this and Freezing Hill dominate an easy pass which can then be used to ascend the Cotswold plateau.

Just across the Lansdown plateau, on the west side, is Little Down hillfort, which is very similar. It is a pointed promontory with steep enough north and south sides to be protective. It does have ramparts protecting it from the level approach across the plateau, although these appear to be incomplete.

The question is, did this site ever have defences on its western side? It would have needed these to protect it from the level approach across the plateau. It is possible that the curving dark line in resistance 160 m from the eastern tip is such a line, but that is also the start of the earthworks, and more likely demarcates the Roman 'industrial' area. The better candidate would be the broad curving line just to the west of the sub-circular enclosure. There is no sign of it on the ground, and it has a well-defined large round northern end, which is not typical of defences. At its southern end, it merges into the area of low resistance, although there are faint signs of a similar rounded end.

The problem with this as defence is that leaves large gaps to south and to north before the steepness of the slope restricts movement.

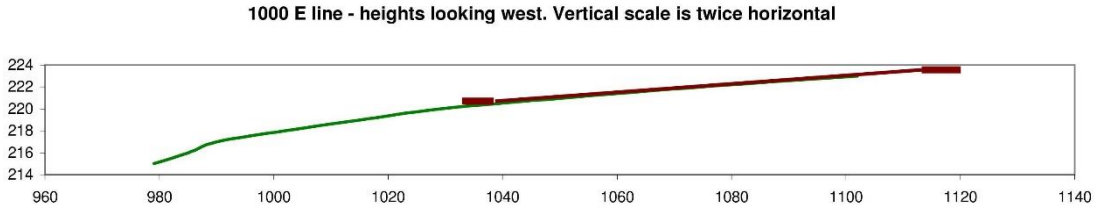


**Figure 41. Diagram showing cross section of field.**

The plot shows the approximate gradient looking west along the line 1000 E on our local grid. The brown represents the length of the ditch, with its two terminals. The green line is ground level. It continues to rise gently for another 10 m or so to the north before plunging over the edge. To the south, steep gradients do not restrict movement for some 40 m.

There are other examples of hillforts which have large gaps at the edges of their defences, including Hinton and Horton, on promontories a few miles to the north on the Cotswold edge, and Nettlecombe Tout in central Dorset.

Alternatively, there could have been defences, now erased, to the west of the wall. LiDAR does not cover that part of the plateau, so cannot help. There are faint signs of earthworks in that field, but not following a north-south line. Any protective cross ditch could only be found by geophysical survey in that field.

The cordoned off eastern end might lead one to suspect that it was within a hillfort, as is the case of Musbury Castle near Axminster, Devon. The large, sub-circular enclosure is also probably pre-Roman but may be of a later date within the Iron Age.

Consideration of the site as a hillfort must therefore remain dubious.

The final feature worthy of remark is the large number of ditches evident across, and even, along the site. These are even more evident in resistance than in magnetometry. Those of north-south orientation would tend to drain water to the south, and east-west ditches on the south side would tend to collect that run-off.

It does suggest that at some point in the use of the site, management of water has been important in living, or in the processes carried out there. It is not clear whether these are contemporary with its Roman or pre-Roman use or whether they are later insertions for farming use. It does suggest that there is no easy water supply and that collecting and channelling the (abundant) rainwater has been necessary up here.

The programme of geophysical surveying was largely successful in identifying the date, character, condition and extent of the underlying archaeology in ‘Little Down Field’ site. The survey results confirmed that beneath the topsoil, deep stratified archaeological deposits still survive at the site. Possible structural features were noted across the site, which almost certainly are associated with Romano-British industrial workings although little evidence was found from the survey suggesting earlier interventions. Further work is required with the landowner’s permission in adjoining fields west of the site.

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