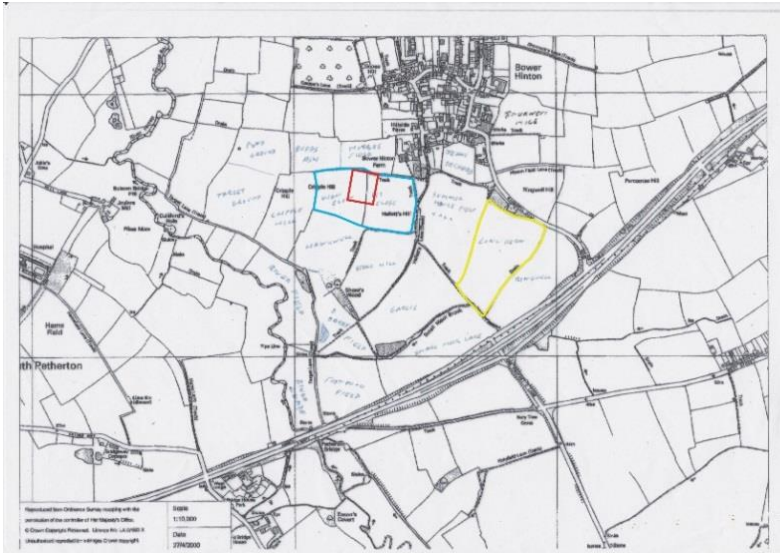
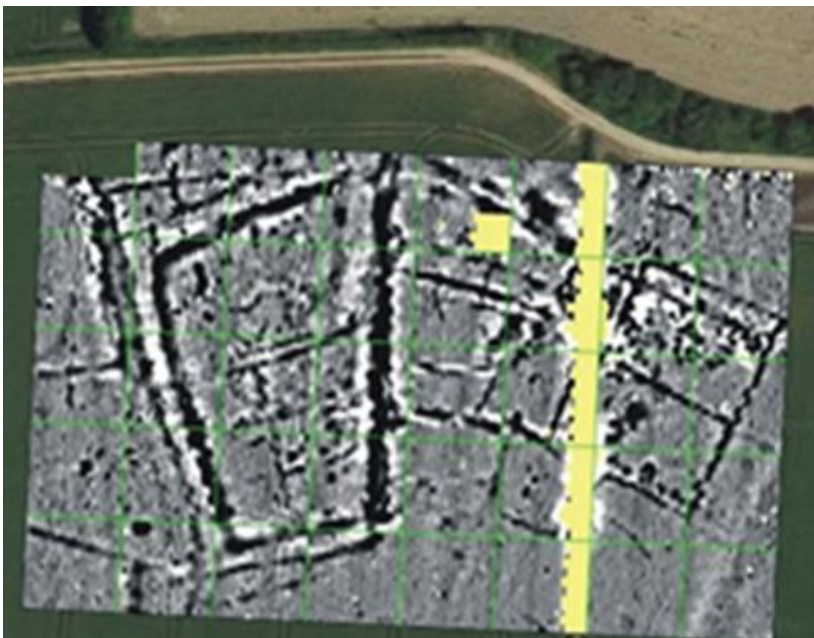


On the Ranch - Bower Hinton Farm: A Roman Rural Settlement

In last month's edition of the newsletter, you may recall the short report about the 'floored area' discovered out at Bower Hinton farm. The farm already has one site logged on the Somerset HER (Historic Environment Record). The fields in question are highlighted on the map below – the field marked in yellow, Long Dern, is already HER registered, whilst High Close and Pits Close, marked in blue, are waiting to be logged on the PAS (Portable Antiquities Scheme) as finds hotspots. Budds Ash is also a find hotspot but outside the target survey area which is marked in red.



Greg Wales and Johnny Marsh, detectorists who've been searching the site for a number of years, joined us to survey a hectare using the open trench as centre.

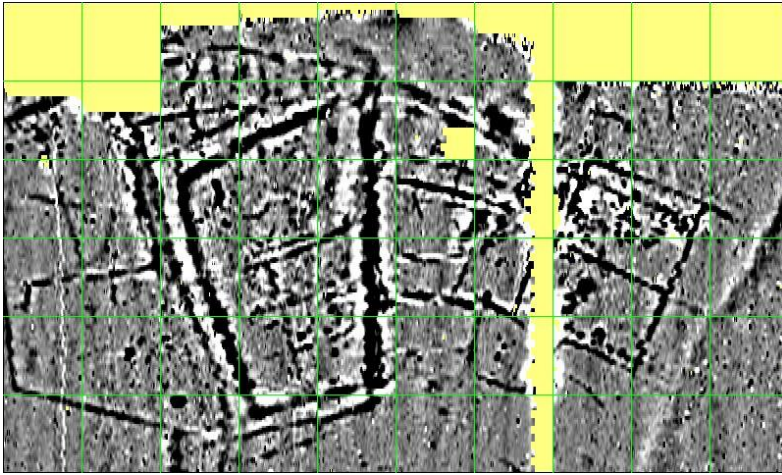


We appear to have located a Roman rural domestic settlement! Based on the results we then extended the survey area north, east and west. Finally, we did some targeted resistance survey. Pits Close has been used as a quarry in the past, though we're uncertain when the quarrying took place. You can see the edge of the quarried area marked as a light-coloured band in the bottom south-east corner of the survey area.

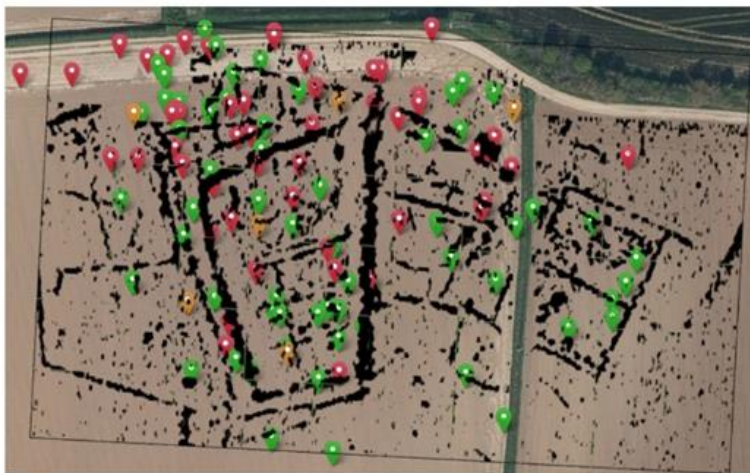
Greg, using his data gathered from detecting, was able to combine his finds distribution map with geophysics survey plot with excellent results (see below). Greg and Johnny have

recovered numerous artefacts from the site, predominately roman, but also Iron Age and Bronze Age.

We also observed and recovered numerous worked flints and pot sherds whilst surveying, all of which will be logged and recorded. Below shows a more detailed image of the gradiometry results:



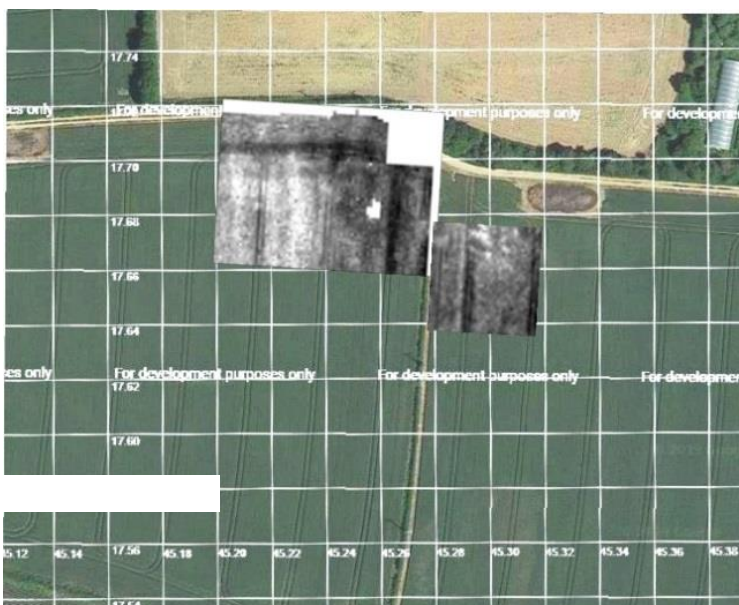
Bower Hinton Farm – High Close / Pit Close
Roman Finds & Extended Gradiometry Results



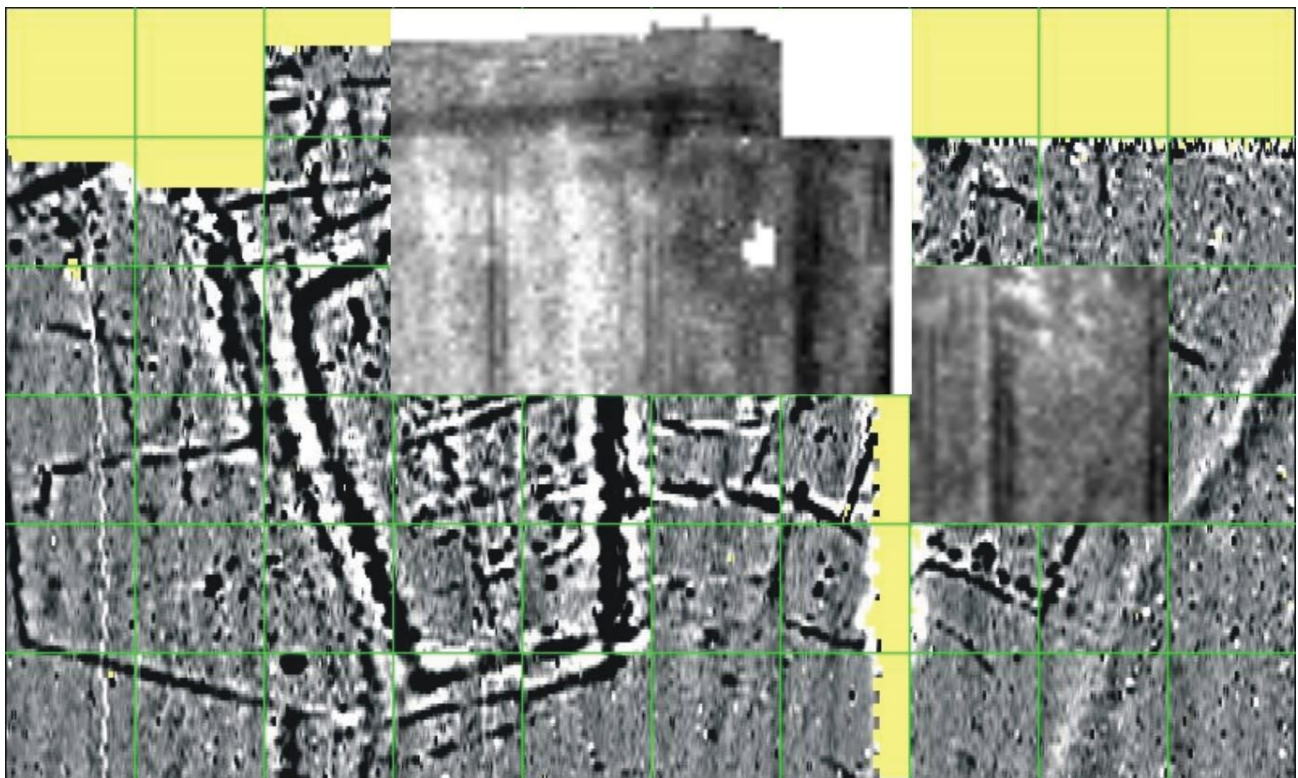
The image to the left, courtesy of Greg Wales, indicates that High Close and Pit Close appear to be a highly active area, the pottery almost seeming to mark where the features are beneath the soil. There appears to be several phases of activity as the features vary in alignment. The trapezoid shaped feature is on a completely different alignment to the linear anomalies running north-west to south-east which does suggest at least two different phases of activity.

We also conducted a targeted earth resistance (resi) survey. Again, we used the open pit to centre on initially, then

extended the survey East into Pit Close. The image below shows the extended resistivity survey area.



Although the results aren't quite so clear as the 'mag' survey, they do show features below the ground not picked up by the 'mag' survey. The results from Pit Close do appear to confirm a large amount of (high resistance) stone beneath the surface, perhaps waste materials from quarrying? However, when the results are overlaid onto the 'mag' results – as below, the results do appear to be showing the same features. The resi survey also picked up the 'tram tracks' of the farm vehicles (the darker linear anomalies running North-South), which operate using the GPS system driving along the same course repeatedly. This may be what we're seeing with the north-south linear.



The other site, already on the HER, is Long Dern which is 502m along the ridge to the east of High Close. Greg and Johnny have also been working on this site for a number of years producing the finds scatter map below.



Bower Hinton Farm – Long Dern – Roman finds

All the finds from this site are available to view on the PAS website or you can use this link: - <https://finds.org.uk/database/search/results/finderID/PAS4FBF97A400153A/county/Somerset> .

We also recorded the open trench 'floored' area and took the opportunity to formalise the small hole and record it as a 1m x 1m test pit:



Rubble 'floor' with quern fragments



South East facing section with burnt layer

The next stage will be to assess, analyse and compile the data gathered into a report which will be deposited with the HER. This will also give us an opportunity to plan and inform any further research work we conduct. It is generally agreed that a similar scale survey focusing on the site at Long Dern is something we should consider for the future.



Neil (Chair of SSARG) and the other one (that's the person contributing this article, Ed) would like to thank Patrick, Duncan, Andrew and all the Palmer family at Bower Hinton Farm for the easy access to the site and for making us all feel so welcome. We would also like to thank Greg and Johnny for the help and support throughout the survey and to pay compliments to the research already carried out on the site. I would also like to thank the SSARG volunteers who not only turned out at short notice but also did more than was asked of them. Reports on our other on-going research plus updates on this site will resume in the next issue of the newsletter.

That's it from me for now so stay classy and always look after ya leathers!

Nigel H'Tron