

Grad60I

Cherbury Camp, Charney Bassett

This survey was undertaken to investigate a hillfort site already known from aerial photographic survey and a small previous excavation to contain important Iron Age archaeological features. The geology is sand and limestone of the Corallian ridge.

Geophysical survey provides a method for assessing the density of settlement within a hillfort. Ten of the clearest examples of Iron Age roundhouse gullies are shown in the interpretation below but there are many more possible circular features present in the survey image, often partial, and mostly smaller than the selected ten. In some cases the gullies may be obscured by pits or other magnetic anomalies. Those shown are probably the largest, and vary in size from nine to fourteen metres in diameter.

The central part of Cherbury Camp is dominated by pits but these pits do not extend to the ramparts. The clearest evidence of circular gullies is on the edge of these pit areas, with a few gullies approaching the ramparts. Gullies in the central area may be obscured by the pits, thus distorting the evidence for the location of houses.

There is a very faint indication of a roadway passing directly west across the hillfort from the eastern entrance. This is represented by a faint negative (white) feature which passes through the central, pitted area, but fades away before reaching the western rampart. This road does not appear to divide the hillfort into two zones, and one circular feature is cut by, or cuts, the road near the eastern entrance.

There is some evidence for a double line of ditches just within the ramparts. This is most clearly apparent in the western edge where the survey most closely approached the ramparts. This double line is also visible for a short distance in the south-west, and a single ditch appears in the extreme north-east. These indications strongly suggest a continuous, concentric single or double ditch within the hillfort. This may represent post-medieval drainage channels, or they may be Iron Age features.

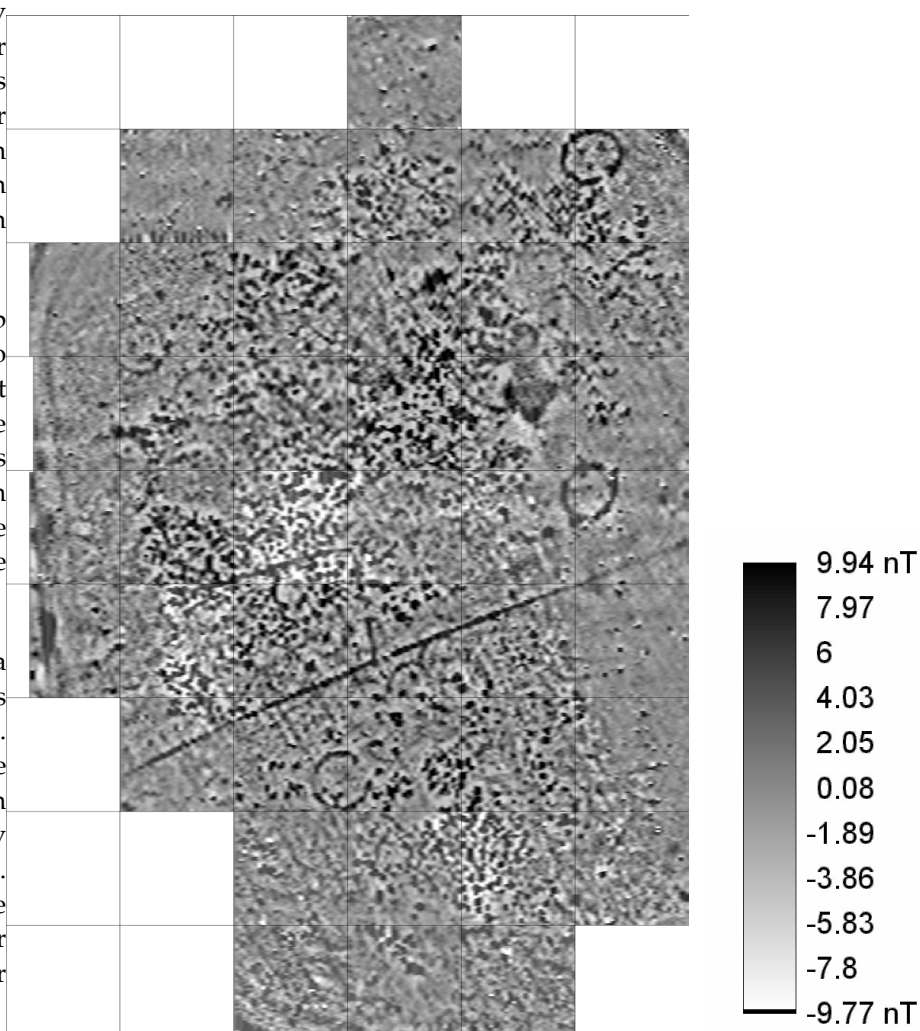


Figure 1. Geophysical Survey of Cherbury Camp, Charney Bassett (Grids are 30 metre squares. North is approximately at the top.)

The geophysical survey of Cherbury Camp provided important new information on its role as a hillfort. The evidence of roundhouses, pits and magnetic enhancement strongly suggests a small community living and working for some considerable period of time within the hillfort. Moreover, the survey has provided important information on the survival of the archaeological material within a Scheduled Monument.

The survey grids were laid out with respect to the ramparts to ensure the survey maximised the number of complete grids and minimised the number of partial grids. The locations of the grids were recorded using GPS. All the grids were walked in a zig-zag style. A 1-metre traverse separation was used with a traverse resolution of 4 readings per metre. The instrument was set to a sensitivity of 0.1 nT.

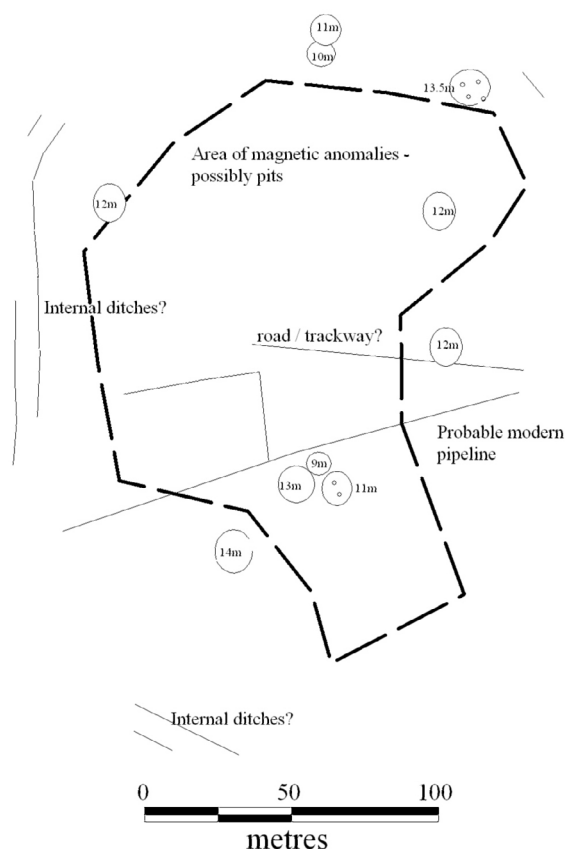


Figure 2. Geophysical Survey of Cherbury Camp, Charney Bassett (Interpretation)..