



COW ROAST, NORTHCHURCH, HERTFORDSHIRE

GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY, SEPTEMBER 1976

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Following an agreement with ERCU Bedford to examine the proposed route of a possible road re-alignment beside the A41 at Cow Roast for archaeological remains, a geophysical survey was undertaken of the two areas shown hatched on the attached plan.

As the Roman settlement to the south-west of the present A41 had been demonstrated by previous survey work to provide strong results with a fluxgate gradiometer, this instrument was chosen for the examination of the fields in question.

It was found that the area marked green on the plan was entirely covered by motor car debris from the used car business situated there; accordingly, no work was attempted there.

The area marked in red was covered by scanning - a technique which involves walking over the field along lines about 15 to 20 metres apart, watching the instrument for abnormal response and examining in greater detail any promising regions. The sampling width is sufficiently fine for such a site as the Cow Roast Roman settlement. Anomalies of an archaeological nature were only found in the southern corner of the south-eastern corner of the field, extending about 50 metres along the southwestern edge. These anomalies, of magnetic strength between 5 and 10 gamma, suggested buried pits, together with amorphous features about 5 metres across. On closer examination all other anomalies in the field showed responses more likely to be buried iron, probably agricultural because of the absence of archaeological type features around them. The background soil noise was of the order of 3 gamma.

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