

OLIVER'S BATTERY

GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY 1974

The monument known as Oliver's Battery at Basing, Hants, is a roughly rectangular raised earthwork edged by a bank and ditch. In one corner a circular mound breaks the line of the main earthwork, and in the adjoining corner is the outline of a possible rectangular sub-enclosure.

Principally supposed to be a Cromwellian battery, the topography also suggests a motte and bailey, a moated manor and possibly an Iron Age enclosure or encampment. In addition, written sources refer to Friars Croft, or Friarscroft, in the region, which implies a monastic association.

The object of the survey was therefore to provide some clues to the historical nature of the site by prospecting the area for internal features.

The fluxgate gradiometer was used with the automatic recording system; borings were made with a 1" coring auger at points of interest. The accompanying plan shows the survey layout, on which the borings are marked a, b, c and d.

Apart from several very strong iron anomalies only one feature suggesting occupation was found, marked 'a' on the plan. This contained particles of brick, charcoal etc and is probably a rubbish pit. It was not possible to insert the auger to any depth at points b, c and d - consistently not more than 10 cms at b - which gave no more information about their content.

Although the absence of detected occupation does not exclude the possibility of undetectable remains, the slender evidence points most to the theory of a Cromwellian battery. It is not improbable, however, that these very substantial iron anomalies might be due to agricultural causes, or, more likely, to the World War II activities of the Home Guard. Trial trenching would be of great value.

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D HADDON - REECE
A BARTLETT

Ancient Monuments Laboratory, Geophysics Section.

OLIVER'S BATTERY, BASING

Magnetometer survey 1974

1 : 100

● = iron anomaly

A M Lab Geophysics Section

