

ANCIENT MONUMENTS LABORATORY GEOPHYSICS SECTION

REPORT ON MAGNETOMETER SURVEY

SURVEY: KING HARRY LANE, ST. ALBANS

DATE: 16-17/9/81

Report no. 19/81

1. SITE

OS grid reference: TL 130 066

Field no. 0567

Location: to the SW of St. Albans, along the E side of Bedmond Lane

Geology: glacial gravel over Upper Chalk

Archaeological evidence: the area lies just outside the Verulamium Wall and is adjacent to the Verulamium-Silchester road, and a Belgic cemetery.

2. SURVEY

Object: to locate any archaeological features

(a) Magnetic survey

Magnetometer	:	fluxgate
Survey	:	automatic and scanning
Setting	:	10 gammas/cm.
Scale	:	1 : 200

(b) Other tests

(i) Magnetic susceptibility:

topsoil:	subsoil:	fill:	$\times 10^{-6}$ emu/gm (ac bridge readings)
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(ii)

Survey grid measured to: field boundaries

Plans/charts enclosed:	1	-	Location plan (1:2500)
	2	-	magnetometer traces (1:500)

3. Magnetometer survey of this strip of land between Bedmond Lane and the housing estate to the E was attempted by a combination of scanning and detailed recorded survey. The latter covered an area of open ground, divided into 30 m. squares, as shown located on the enclosed plan. 30 m. magnetometer traverses were plotted at 1.0 m. intervals, and the resultant traces, with possible archaeological anomalies outlined, are shown on plan 2.

Apart from background soil noise and the frequent and exaggerated reactions to iron litter in the topsoil and on the surface, there is little else to distinguish the magnetometer traces. The evidence for archaeological activity is extremely scarce, and only a few anomalies have been outlined and these are of uncertain nature and widely distributed across the area. Substantial occupation or settlement here would almost certainly produce more convincing anomalies than these, although slight remains and especially graves could very well pass unnoticed. The linear anomaly, near the centre of the survey (a dashed line on the plan) is the response to a small ditch visible at the surface and presumably post-Roman.

Scanning (observing the magnetometer signal without recording) confirmed the presence of a known ditch to the NE of the survey area, but elsewhere, where the ground was accessible, the impression was much the same as that noted over the recorded area. Scanning over the remainder of the area, covering some 350 m. to the SW showed the presence of iron litter to be so extensive as to completely obscure any subtler signal from buried archaeology.

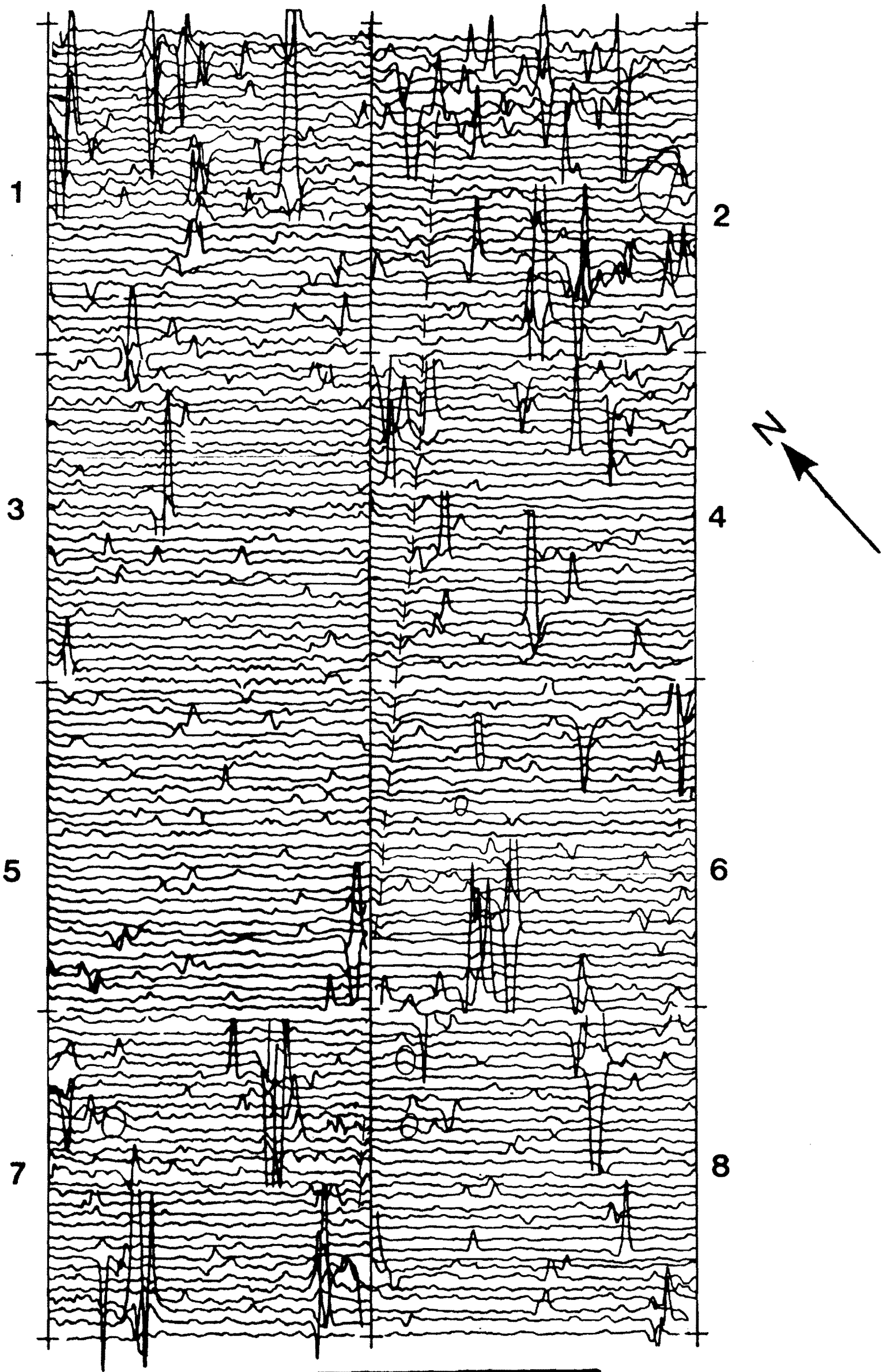
CONCLUSIONS


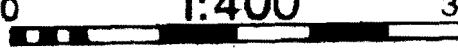
Excavation has already taken place to the NE of the field, between the survey squares 1 - 8 and King Harry Lane. Elsewhere within the threatened area, where trees and undergrowth have allowed, magnetometer survey has provided little more than negative evidence. The recorded survey has not shown the presence of substantial archaeological activity in that particular area, and it is unlikely that major settlement or occupation features would have been missed. In the extensive field to the SW, however, dumps of rubbish and iron interference have quite concealed any evidence that might be present.

Surveyed and reported by : A. David.
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11th. Feb. 1982.

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KING HARRY LANE, ST. ALBANS		
MAGNETOMETER SURVEY		
NG ref. TL 130 066 + grid pegs		
magnetic anomalies 		
0 1:400 30m 		
Survey no. 19/81 Plan no. 2 of 2	DoE A.M. Laboratory Geophysics Section	

