ANCIENT MONUMENTS LABORATORY GEOPHYSICS SECTION

REPORT ON MAGNETOMETER SURVEY

SURVEY: ROWDEN, WINTERBOURNE STEEPLETON **DATE:** 2 - 3/12/81

Report no. 35/81

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1. SITE

OS grid reference: SY 616 891 **Field no.**

Location: on the S Dorset Ridgeway, a mile south of Winterbourne Abbas

Geology: Chalk

Archaeological evidence: surviving earthworks of LBA/EIA huts and fields

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2. SURVEY

Object: to examine a small hilltop enclosure for associated features, including a possible cremation cemetery.

(a) Magnetic survey

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

(b) Other tests

(i) Magnetic susceptibility:

topsoil: 27.4 **subsoil:** **fill:** **$\times 10^{-6}$ emu/gm (ac bridge readings)**

(ii)

Survey grid measured to: field boundaries

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

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3. Magnetometer survey here covered an area 90 m. square, including a surviving round barrow and the extant remains of an irregularly shaped earthwork enclosure, belonging to an extensive system of related earthworks on the ridgeway and thought to be later prehistoric in age. It was hoped that features within the enclosure might be detectable, and cremations might occur outside this and in the vicinity of the barrow, although these might only be detectable, if at all, in unusually favourable conditions.

RESULTS

The magnetometer traces are shown on plan 2 where significant anomalies are outlined in red. The magnetic response is weak throughout the survey area (magnetic susceptibility of the topsoil - 27.4 x 10^{-6} emu/gm.) but against this background the outline of the enclosure, defined by the anomaly from its ditch, is plainly visible along most of its circumference. There is a rather sparse scattering of small anomalies in the interior which may relate to occupation features such as pits or hearths. The perimeter ditch is not interrupted on the E side where it is intersected by another ditch (E-W) and where the surface indications suggest an entrance-way. Ditches not reflected in the surface earthworks have been detected running N-S through sqs. 2, 5, and 8, and E-W through sq. 4.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The survey has perhaps clarified the outline of the enclosure and its relationship with other ditch alignments some of which were unsuspected and might belong to different periods. Despite the preservation of earthworks here, there must nevertheless have been degradation, and this, along with a poor magnetic susceptibility, has left an incomplete picture. Interior features are thinly represented, but apart from pits and hearths, features such as timber post-holes are unlikely to be detected in these conditions.

There is only a slight increase in soil noise registered in sq. 1 over the position of the barrow, and the intervening ground between this and the enclosure appears to be blank of anomalies that might result from cremation pits. Such features would probably go undetected because of their small scale and low magnetism.

Surveyed and reported by : A. David. 11th. Feb. 1982
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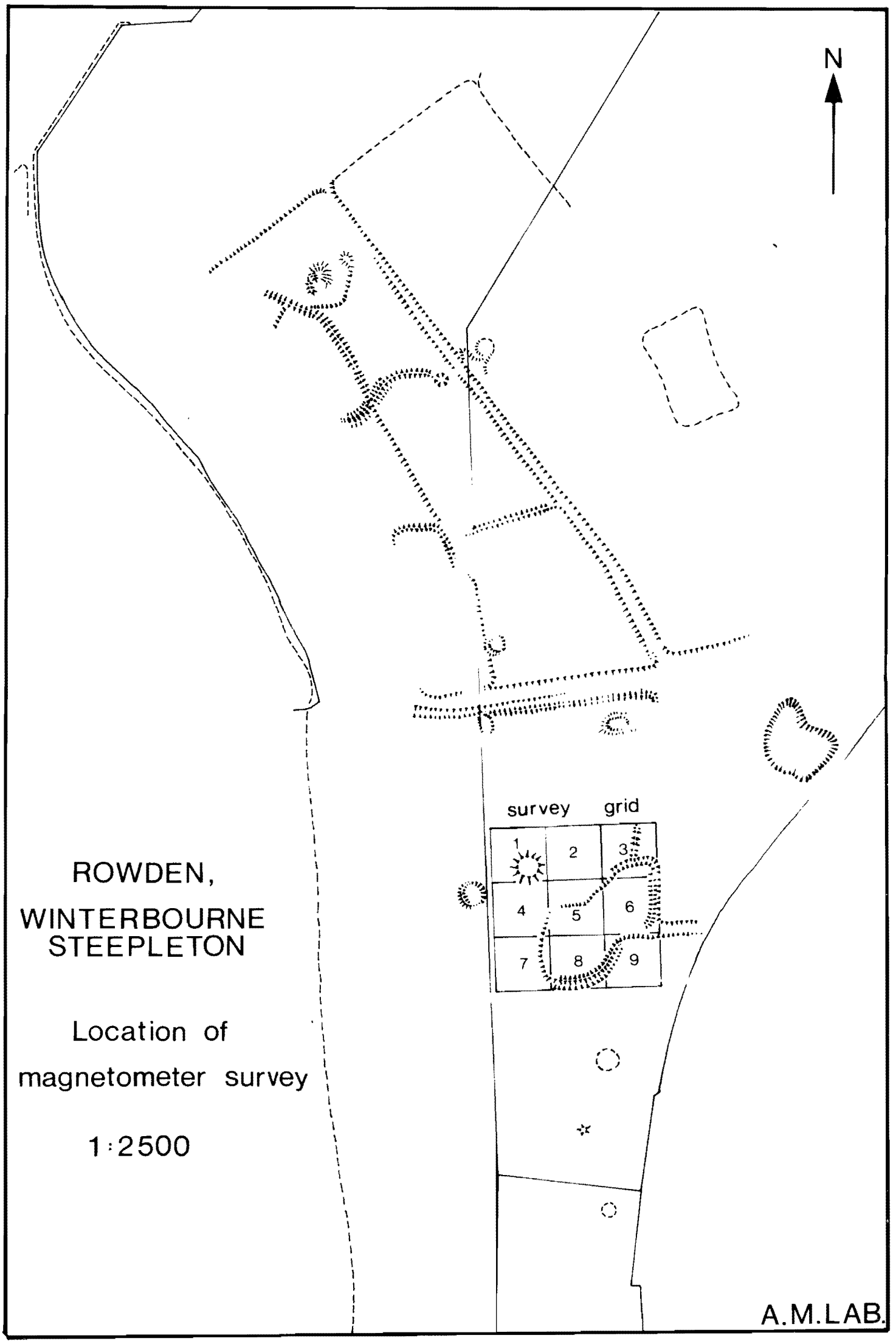
N
survey grid
1
2
3
4
5
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8
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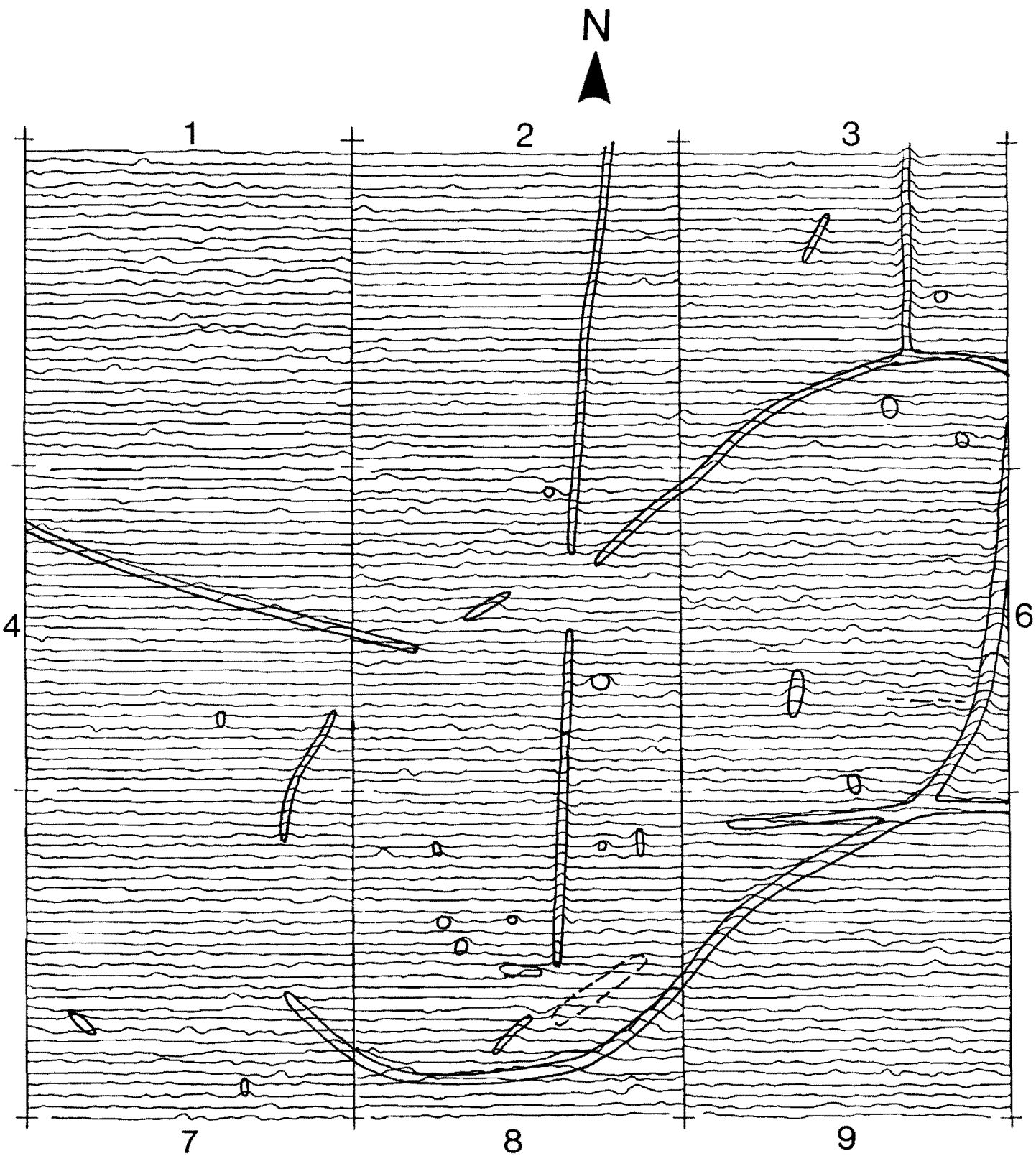
ROWDEN,
WINTERBOURNE
STEEPLETON
Location of
magnetometer survey
1:2500
A.M.LAB.



ROWDEN, WINTERBOURNE STEEPLETON

MAGNETOMETER SURVEY
Interpretation

NG ref. SY 616 891	magnetic anomalies	Survey no. 35/81 Plan no. 2 of 2
1:500	DoE A.M. Laboratory Geophysics Section	