Hunstanton Park, Norfolk. Report on geophysical survey, 1985. Report No. G 4/

The purpose of the survey here was to attempt to locate any traces of archaeological activity that might relate to the occasional finds of Anglo-Saxon inhumations close to Park House Tower. The tower is placed on the crest of a sinuous gravel ridge (an esker) covered in woodland and undergrowth and bounded to north and south by pasture fields. The original finds in 1860 and 1900 - 2 were of some dozen inhumations occurring at a depth of about 3' 6" in heavily disturbed ground immediately to the NE of the tower. No adequate record of the excavations was made, although it appears that an initial trench 'about 16 or 17 feet in length and 4 feet in height' was opened 'about 7 feet NE of the tower', and then extended an undisclosed distance along the ridge (McKenny Hughes, 1901). The excavators believed also that the cemetery must have extended beneath the tower and to have been considerably disturbed during its construction in about 1620. A further burial was found in 1969 close to the position of the earlier finds.

The conditions both above and below ground on the ridge were unsuitable for detailed geophysical survey although it was possible to scan with the magnetometer amongst and between the vegetation. No significant anomalies were detected near the former excavations, but an area of magnetic disturbance was located some 30 m to the SW of the tower (see plan 2) and this may well be of archaeological origin although there was no satisfactory indication of the nature of the features.

The magnetometer scan was extended out into the fields on either side of the ridge and a more detailed recorded survey was made of the accessible open ground nearest to the tower (see plan 1): 30 m traverses with the magnetometer were made at 1.0 m intervals, and the resultant traces are shown on plan 2. These traces tend to confirm the rather negative impression of the scanning: the area is magnetically undisturbed except for reactions to iron litter and a slight natural background noise. Exceptions to this, which may be of archaeological origin, are shown in red on plan 2, but these anomalies are weak and indeterminate - the most promising are in squares 5 and 6 and suggest a pit and perhaps some additional features. Topsoil magnetic susceptibility values of 31.3 and 36.8 x 10^{-8} SI Units/kg suggest that substantial features ought to have been detectable had they existed, although on gravel minor features might go undetected.

In conclusion, therefore, it must be admitted that the survey can add scarcely any positive information to what little is already known of the site. The coverage has of necessity been very patchy and at some distance from the original finds. An area of magnetic disturbance of indeterminate significance was located on top of the ridge, but there is only limited evidence for possible associated archaeological features close to the ridge. It must be emphasized that burials are only rarely directly detectable by geophysical means, and then only on soils more favourable than the gravel at Hunstanton. Occupation remains are more likely to be detectable and might account for the features seen in squares 5 and 6 although the anomalies are weak and are likely to be only an incomplete representation of possible archaeological activity.

Surveyed and reported by: A. David. 7th. January 19
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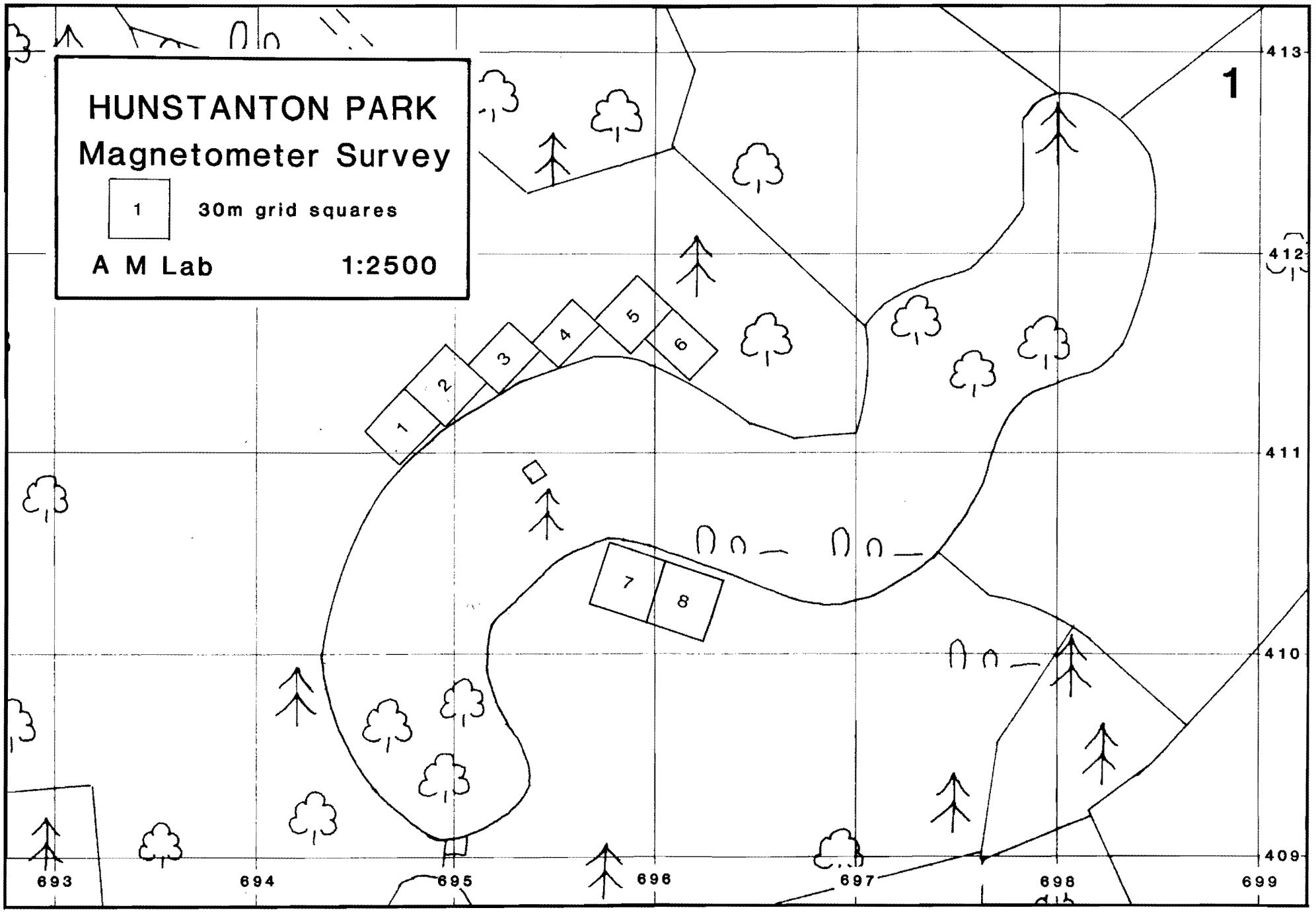
HUNSTANTON PARK
Magnetometer Survey
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30m grid squares
A M Lab
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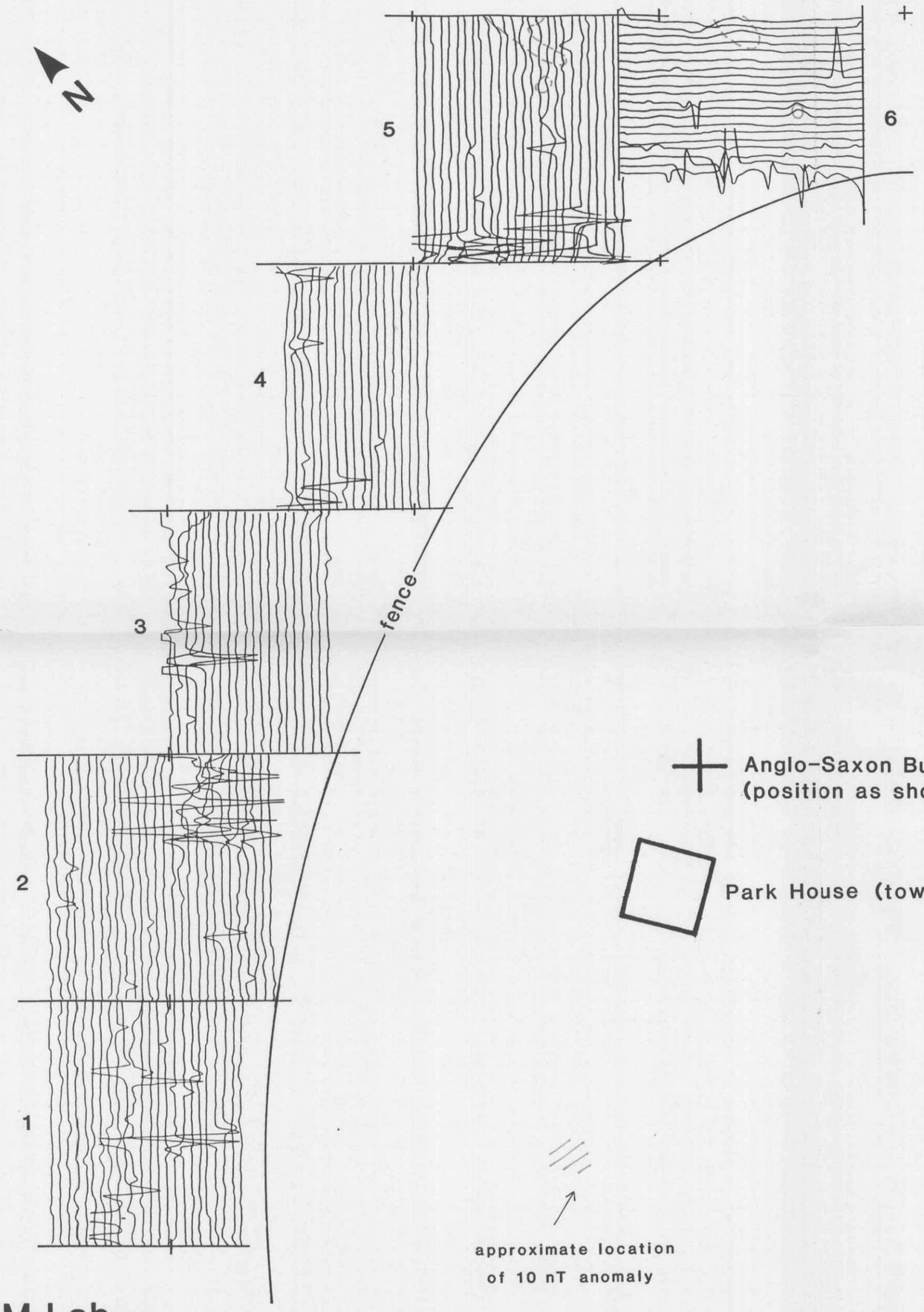
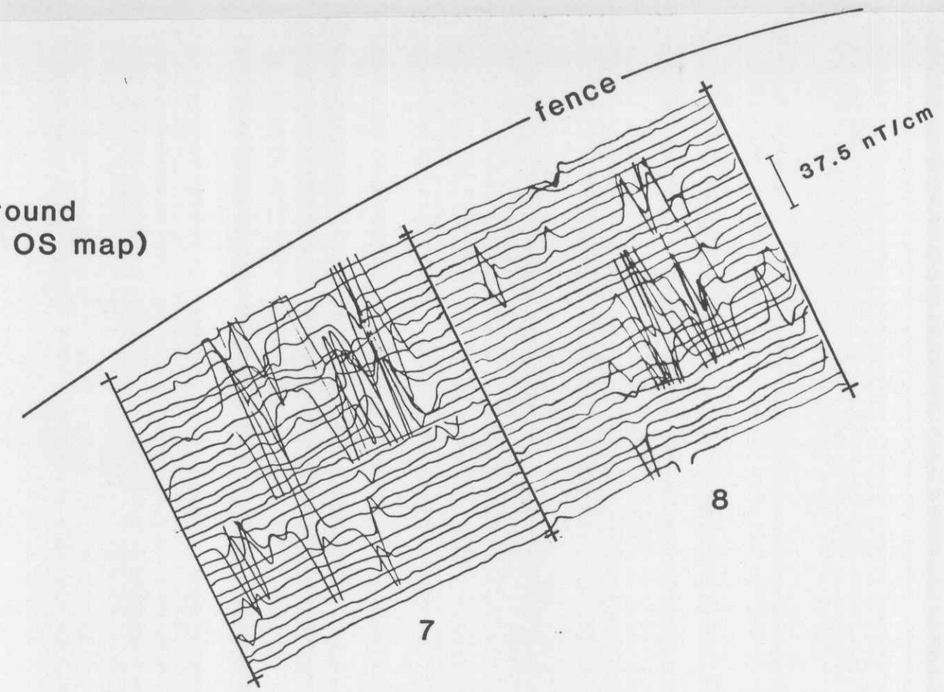
HUNSTANTON PARK, NORFOLK:

Magnetometer Survey 1985



Magnetic anomalies o ○



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