

2.3 The enclosure ditches

Catalogue of sections

F871 Tr1 B490335-B580308 Enclosure ditch (E) Phase: Roman

Rels: c. F901

Length: 20.8 m Width: top: 2.78 m; base: 0.3–0.4 m Depth: 1.03–1.07 m

Description: This section of ditch forms part of the northern boundary of the Roman enclosure. The west end was given a separate feature number as the intervening area was obscured by F884/F902 and it was initially unclear whether both sections were continuous. The feature was cut through clay-with-flints at the top, but for most of its depth through chalk marl. The ditch had a V-shaped profile with a wide flat base and straight even sloping sides steep at the base (70–75 degrees) becoming more gentle in the upper part (40–50 degrees).

Fill: (1) Dark brown clayey soil containing a low density of subangular chalk grit, flint grit, pebbles and gravel up to 200 mm and scattered broken flint nodules 50–200 mm. [Natural accumulation of base of ploughsoil in shallow hollow of ditch top.]

(2) Light brown silty clay soil containing a low density of flint gravel and pebbles 10–60 mm and a scatter of small subangular chalk *c.*10 mm, charcoal and fired red clay flecks and fragments of burnt sandstone.

(3) Light brown clayey soil containing a low density of subangular chalk *c.*10 mm, flint gravel and pebbles up to 50 mm and scattered flint nodules 90–300 mm. Several oyster shells, rare charcoal fragments and broken limestone slab *c.*50 mm.

(4) Brown clayey silty soil containing frequent broken flint nodules 30–80 mm, a low density of angular flint gravel and rounded pebbles and subangular chalk 10–40 mm. Occupation debris was fairly frequent including limestone roof slates and clay tile fragments 60–80 mm, charcoal fragments and oyster shell. [Deliberate tip of debris down north side of ditch.]

(5) Dark brown clayey silty soil contained a high density of flint nodules 70–150 mm, a moderate density of angular flint gravel and rounded pebbles and infrequent small subangular chalk. Occupation debris present in the form of frequent charcoal and ash, pottery and oyster shells. [Deliberate tip of occupation debris.]

(6) Brown silty clay soil containing a low density of subangular flint gravel up to 50 mm and chalk 5–15 mm, plus occasional charcoal flecks and a fragment of burnt limestone roof slab. A large body sherd of pottery was found at the base of the layer. [Predominantly natural soil accumulation with the odd bit of rubbish thrown in.]

(8) Brownish-grey clayey soil mixed with fine ash and charcoal contained frequent broken flint nodules up to 150 mm, flint gravel and pebbles, a little subangular chalk *c.*10 mm, several oyster shells, fragments of limestone slates and a block of mortar. [Deliberate tip in lower part of ditch.]

Small Finds: 2608 flint awl; 2570, 2565, 2578 Fe nails, 2581 Fe obj.; 2584 bone pin

Samples: 3640, 3683, 3639 charcoal; 3659–60 stone; 3701 shale; 3651–4 shell

Artefacts: Pottery, clay tile, bone

F873 Tr1 B400370 Enclosure ditch (W) Phase: Roman

Rels: b. F884/902 (510); c. F905

Length: 20.8 m Width: top: 2.5 m; base: 0.35 m Depth: 1.27–1.36 m

Description: Linear ditch, aligned WNW–ESE, formed part of the northern boundary of the Roman enclosure. It had a V-shaped profile, rather irregular with a rounded–pointed base, steep lower sides and more gently sloping at the top. The lower sides were rough and irregular owing to the large number of flint nodules embedded in the chalk marl through

which the ditch was cut.

Fill: (1) Dark brown humic clayey soil containing a little subangular chalk grit, a low density of flint gravel and pebbles 20–50 mm and moderate quantity of broken flint nodules 60–200 mm; scattered charcoal flecks and fragments present. [Natural soil accumulation.]

(2) Dense orange-brown clayey silty soil containing a very low density of flint gravel and pebbles 10–40 mm and scattered chalk grit. Rare fleck of charcoal and fragment of limestone roof slate 150 mm. [Natural soil accumulation.]

(3) Orange-brown clay soil contained a moderate density of broken flints 50–100 mm and a low density of subangular chalk grit, flint gravel and pebbles. [Natural soil accumulation.]

(6) Brown silty clay soil mixed with a low density of flint gravel, pebbles *c.*30 mm and subangular chalk up to 20 mm and a moderate density of chalk grit and flint nodules 60–120 mm. A fragment of clay tile 40 mm was also present. [Mainly erosion of clay-with-flints and chalk marl from ditch sides.]

(7) Compact clayey silt containing blocks of chalk marl 30–150 mm, a moderate to high density of chalk grit and angular flints and broken nodules 50–120 mm. [Natural erosion of ditch sides.]

Samples: 3672 stone

Artefacts: Pottery, clay tile, bone, stone, flint, shell, tesserae

F901 Tr1 B580300 Enclosure ditch: recut Phase: Roman

Rels: b. (476); c.b. F871

Length: >20.8 m Width: top: estimated, 1.4 m; base: 0.22 m Depth: 0.75 m

Description: Linear ditch aligned ESE–WNW forming the northern limit of the Roman enclosure in its early phase. The ditch had a V-shaped profile with a flat base and moderately to steeply sloping sides at an angle of 45–65 degrees to the base. The northern side had been completely cut away by F871, the later phase of enclosure ditch.

Fill: (9) Light brown clayey silt with paler mottling from chalk marl contained a moderate density of chalk grit, a little flint gravel and scattered broken flint nodules up to 200 mm. [Natural erosion of ditch sides: primary silting.]

F905 Tr1 B410355 Enclosure ditch: recut Phase: Roman

Rels: b. (476); c.b. F873, F902/F884; c. Nat.

Length: >20.8 m Width: base: >0.3 m Depth: 0.84–0.87 m

Description: Linear ditch aligned WNW–ESE formed the northern limit of the Roman enclosure in its early phase. It had been destroyed along its north side including part of the base by the later recut F873. It had a V-shaped profile with a roughly cut flat base and steeply sloping side (60–80 degrees).

Fill: (4) Dark brown clayey soil mixed with frequent charcoal fragments and flecks and containing a little rounded chalk grit up to 10 mm and few small flint fragments. [Deliberate tip of occupation debris.]

(5) Compact light brown chalky clay silt contained a high to moderate density of rounded chalk grit and rounded–subangular pieces up to 10 mm, plus rare flint gravel and broken nodules *c.*30–70 mm. [Natural erosion of chalk marl from sides of ditch.]

Artefacts: Pottery, bone

F882 Tr2 D210195-D115220 Enclosure ditch Phase: Roman

Rels: b. (481); c.b. F944; c. F893

Length: >10.5 m Width: top: 1.4–2.2 m; base: 0.36 m Depth: 0.68–1.1 m

Description: Linear ditch aligned WNW–ESE formed the southern boundary of the Roman

enclosure. It had a squarish terminal at its east end, which in a later phase was filled in slightly to form a more rounded terminal. The ditch profile was V-shaped with a fairly wide flat base and even sloping sides at an angle of 50–55 degrees to the base.

Fill: 3/(1) Filling the upper half of the ditch was a reddish-brown clay or clayey soil containing a moderate to high density of flint nodules 60–150 mm and scattered small angular flint gravel and chalk up to 30 mm. A few fragments of bone were present in the section but no other occupation debris was apparent. [Redeposited clay-with-flints; deliberate infill and levelling of the ditch.]

3/(2) Greyish-brown silty clay soil contained a few scattered, broken flint nodules *c.*70 mm, a little flint gravel *c.*40 mm, rounded chalk grit and a scatter of charcoal fragments and flecks. The chalk increased in density towards the ditch sides and base. [Largely natural erosion of sides and soil accumulation.]

3/(5) Large amorphous lumps of chalky marl containing small angular flints 5–30 mm and a scatter of broken flint nodules 80–140 mm. These blocks of redeposited natural lay in a light brown clayey soil mixed with flint gravel, pebbles and grit and containing scattered broken flint nodules and flecks of charcoal. This thick dump infilled the ditch terminal. [This dump of redeposited natural chalk marl appears to have been part of deliberate infilling of the terminal, possibly to create a passageway alongside the channel.]

3/(3) A fairly thin layer infilled the base of the ditch, composed of greyish-brown silty clay mixed with a moderate density of small rounded chalk and small flint gravel, plus scattered flecks of charcoal. [Primary erosion from upper lip of ditch and silting.]

1/(1) Thick deposit in the ditch top of reddish-brown clay soil mixed with a large quantity of broken flint nodules 50–150 mm, flint gravel 10–50 mm and infrequent small chalk and charcoal flecks. [Deliberate infill of redeposited natural clay-with-flints.] Equivalent to 3/(1).

1/(2) Greyish-brown clayey soil contained a moderate density of broken flint nodules 50–120 mm, most of which had rolled to the ditch centre and rare flint gravel 25–50 mm and chalk grit. A lens of burnt debris, rich in charred grain, mixed with some charcoal and ash formed a distinct tip down the north side with a separate more dispersed tip of charcoal and ash down the south side. [Deliberate tips.]

1/(3) Dark greyish-brown clayey soil containing a high density of broken flint nodules 50–130 mm, flint gravel *c.*15–30 mm and chalk grit distributed fairly evenly throughout the layer. Flecks and fragments of charcoal occurred commonly throughout the layer. [Deliberate tip.]

1/(4) Infilling the ditch base was a dark brownish-grey clayey silty soil containing a moderate density of chalk grit, flint gravel 5–30 mm and occasional larger flint nodules up to 90 mm. Within the layer was a distinct thin lens of charcoal fragments and charred grain and much of the upper half of the layer was discoloured by a high density of fine charcoal. [Deliberate tip.]

Small Finds: 2580 Fe nails, 2585 fe obj.

Samples: 3641–2 burnt material; 3889–92, 3896 flotation; 3684 charcoal

Artefacts: Pottery, clay tile, bone

F893 Tr2 D105233-D230235 Enclosure ditch

Phase: Roman

Rel: b. (481); c.b. F882, F944; c. Nat.

Length: 13.0 m

Width: top: 1.4–1.65 m; base: 0.22–0.26 m

Depth: 0.46–0.7 m

Description: Linear ditch, aligned E–W, forming the southern side of the Roman enclosure in its early phase. The ditch was fairly shallow with gently sloping irregular sides and the wide flat base stepped down into a deeper narrow slot. This could represent an earlier phase cut, truncated by a recut ditch with a wide flat base. The section at the west side of cutting 1 was

particularly suggestive of this; however this was not borne out by the east face.

Fill: 1/(1) Reddish-brown clay soil contained a very low density of flint gravel *c.*20 mm, rare flint nodules *c.*80 mm and chalk grit plus a few charcoal flecks. [Natural soil accumulation possibly eroded hillwash.]

1/(2) Reddish-brown clayey soil mixed with frequent flint gravel and broken flint nodules 50–130 mm, a little chalk grit and rare charcoal flecks; a large potsherd lay flat near the top of the layer in the western section. The layer only filled the narrow slot in the ditch base at the west end, but thickened eastwards to fill the full depth of the ditch.

1/ and 3/(4) Over the top surface of the ditch were four or five patches of carbonized grain and possibly charred straw or charcoal. These were at first thought to be the result of recent agricultural activity of burning stubble, but in view of the tips of carbonized grain within F882, they probably represent part of the ditch fill. [Deliberate tips.]

3/(1) Small rounded chalk *c.*10 mm compacted in fine chalk and chalk marl and containing a scatter of broken flint nodules up to 140 mm and smaller angular flints 10–60 mm. [Redeposited chalk marl natural dumped to infill ditch top.]

3/(2) Reddish-brown clayey silt soil contained a scatter of large angular flint nodules 80–150 mm and a moderate density of angular flints 20–60 mm, rare chalk grit and few discrete lumps of chalk marl.

3/(3) A thin layer infilling the irregular basal slot consisted of brown clayey silt soil and frequent flint grave 10–40 mm and chalk grit. [Primary silting of eroded soil.]

Artefacts: Pottery, bone, flint

F888 Tr3 C708400 Enclosure ditch Phase: Roman

Rels: b. (501); c.b. F928; c. Nat.

Length: >2.0 m Width: top: 2.2 m; base: 0.12–0.3 m Depth: 1.27 m

Description: Large V-shaped ditch, aligned N–S, cut through clay and chalk marl at the top and into solid chalk at the base. It had a narrow flat base with fairly steeply sloping sides at an angle of *c.*60 degrees on the east and 50 degrees on the west. It had been recut along its west edge by F928.

Fill: (5) Brown silty clay containing almost no stone: rare chalk grit up to 10 mm and rare angular flints up to 70 mm. [Natural slow soil accumulation/development in upper half of ditch.]

(6) Brown silty clay soil contained a low density of stone evenly scattered throughout, mainly small subangular chalk grit -20 mm and a few angular flints 20–40 mm and broken nodules *c.*80 mm. [Natural accumulation of soil and marl eroded in from ditch sides and adjacent ground surface.]

(7) Sticky orange-brown silty clay mixed with a high density of subrounded chalk *c.*20 mm and grit plus a scatter of broken angular flint nodules 70–120 mm. [?Initial erosion of clay-with-flints from ditch lip.]

(8) Large tabular broken flints 80–170 mm long lying flat in a matrix of orange- brown silty clay soil. [Natural primary erosion of flints and clay from ditch sides.]

Small Finds: 2617 CuA frag; 2667 Fe nails

Samples: 3681, 3873 slag

Artefacts: Pottery, clay tile, bone, flint, oyster shell

F928 Tr3 C701400 Enclosure ditch: recut Phase: Roman

Rels: b. (501); c. F888, Nat.

Length: 118 m Width: top: 1.5 m; base: 0.4 m Depth: 0.9 m

Description: Ditch, aligned N–S, with V-shaped profile with wide dished base and even sloping sides, both at an angle of about 50 degrees to the base. It was cut into the top west

half of the earlier enclosure ditch F888, so that the east side is entirely cut through ditch fill, the west side into chalk and marl and the base into solid chalk. This would appear to be the reverse of the pattern in the north and south sections of the enclosure ditch, where the deeper ditch appeared to be the later, cutting the shallower one.

Fill: (1) Sticky brown silty clay soil contained a low to moderate density of subangular chalk grit -10 mm and occasional broken flints up to 60 mm. [Natural development of soil in ditch top.]

(2) Flint nodules, some broken, 80–200 mm and a broken limestone roof slab 120 mm lay flat forming a thin stony horizon across the width of the ditch. They lay in a matrix of brown silty clay soil. [There may be some element of deliberate activity implied, possibly stones cleared from the adjacent field thrown into the hollow in the ditch top, unless a phase of arable cultivation might have moved stones downslope into the ditch.]

(3) A thick layer of sticky brown clay containing a low density of chalk, mostly grit and fragments *c.*10 mm. A scatter of broken angular flints 30–80 mm concentrated down the west side close to the ditch edge. [Natural soil accumulation probably mainly eroded/washed in from the surface upslope.]

(4) Across the base of the ditch was a thin layer of angular–subrounded chalk 10–70 mm in a sticky light brown silty clay. [This probably represents trample of broken chalk into the base of the ditch during the process of recutting.]

Small Finds: 2679 Fe frag.

Artefacts: Pottery, bone, stone, flint

F881 Tr3 C428400

Enclosure ditch

Phase: Iron Age

Rel: b. (482); c. Nat.

Length: >2 m

Width: top: 1.68–2.0 m; base: 0.2–0.26 m

Depth: 0.9 m

Description: Linear ditch aligned N–S with V-shaped profile. The base was slightly dished and rounded and the sides sloped at an angle of 40 degrees on the west and 48 degrees on the east. The upper edges splayed out at a slightly shallower angle. At the north end the base stepped down, cut to a slightly deeper level.

Fill: (1) Brown clayey silty soil containing a moderate density of chalk fragments and grit up to 20 mm, with broken flints 70–180 mm largely distributed along the top of the layer. [Natural accumulation of soil, possibly hillwash erosion from ploughing or slow soil development in shallow hollow in ditch top. Flints probably represent later ploughing bringing down larger stone out of clay-with-flints natural.]

(2) Sticky orange-brown silty clay soil mixed with small chalk grit.

(3) Orange-brown silty clay soil mixed with chalk grit and fragments up to 30 mm. Within this was a very high density of large flint nodules, some broken, 80–200 mm. The flints tended to dominate towards the centre of the ditch, while the fill was more soily to the sides. [Rapid natural accumulation probably resulting from ploughing upslope with large stones rolled to the centre of the hollow.]

(4) Greyish-brown silty soil mixed with a high density of rounded and subrounded chalk 5–40 mm and infrequent small broken flints *c.*50 mm. [Natural erosion of chalky marl sides of ditch.]

(5) Basal layer of brown silty soil containing small angular and subangular chalk up to 60 mm, but most *c.*20 mm. [Primary silting with some erosion of sides.]

Artefacts: Pottery, bone, flint