

2.4 The field lynchets

Catalogue of features

F884 Tr1 B414231-B390140 Field lynchet Phase: Medieval–post-medieval
Rels: b. (476); c. Building 2 (F890, F892, F929, F955); s.a. F902
Length: 23.2 m Width: 2.6 m Depth: 0.38 m
Description: Shallow linear feature aligned NNE–SSW. At its north end it cut across the natural clay-with-flints, where it was visible as a narrow band of fine brownish-yellow silty clay c.0.3 m wide with a broader band 0.5–0.8 m wide of large broken flint nodules. East of this was a wide swathe up to 2.2 m wide of brownish-yellow silty clay soil mixed with frequent flint gravel and broken flint nodules.
In its southern half it cut across Building 2, where it took the form of a shallow linear hollow cutting through the rubble of F955 and the walls of Building 2. Following excavation it was clear this formed a negative lynchet with a sloping side along its west edge and a flat base. The fill was deepest against the edge of the lynchet gradually thinning downslope.
Fill: (510) Compact dark yellowish-brown clayey soil mixed with broken flint nodules 40–120 mm, small flint gravel and sparse chalk grit and fragments up to 30 mm. The larger flints concentrated in the upper fill and especially along the west edge. The density of flints decreased downwards and eastwards. [Ploughsoil with dislodged building debris.]
Small Finds: 2590 Fe obj., 2591 Fe nails
Samples: 3695 plaster

F902 Tr1 B414231-B450360 Field lynchet Phase: Medieval–post-medieval
Rels: s.a. F884; b. (476); c. F873, F905
Length: 23.2 m Width: 3.2 m Depth: 0.40 m
Description: See F884

F944 Tr2 D213186-D264274 Field lynchet Phase: Medieval–post-medieval
Rels: b. (506) (521) (541); c. F874, F882, F893, F940
Length: >12 m Width: 2.0 m Depth: 0.43 m, 0.6 m, 0.88 m
Description: This feature formed a negative lynchet aligned NNE–SSW and at the point excavated ran alongside the Roman channel F874, though the two were beginning to diverge at the south end of the trench. The lynchet had a flat level base and a sloping side on the west, which appeared to be stepped down at about three different levels. It appears that the field boundary gradually cut back westwards uphill as eroded ploughsoil accumulated in the base.
Fill: There were three cuttings with the different levels of ploughsoil assigned three different numbers in each, but one basic description applies to all.

(541) = (521) = (506) Yellowish-brown clayey soil containing a moderate density of flint gravel 10–25 mm, scattered broken nodules 40–80 mm and rare rounded chalk grit -10 mm. There was a much greater density of grit along the base of the layer, which merged with the underlying sediment. Rare flecks of charcoal, burnt clay and a few burnt flints were present. [Ploughsoil and hillwash accumulation.]

(542) = (522) = (507) This divided into two horizons: a lower horizon dominated by a high density of stones, predominantly flint gravel and broken nodules up to 240 mm with a very little chalk grit in a dark grey silty soil. The upper horizon was predominantly a dark grey fine organic silt with frequent chalk grit and snail shells; against the edge of F944 there were lenses of eroded chalk and chalk marl grit interleaving with the silt. [Sediments of channel F874 churned up by post-medieval ploughing.]

F879 Tr3 C505400 Field lynchet Phase: Post-medieval?

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

Length: >2 m Width: 1.85 m Depth: 0.50 m

Description: Negative lynchet having the form of a sloping scarp cut into the natural slope. The side is gently sloping at an angle of *c.*25 degrees to the base.

Fill: (2) Filling the lower level of the lynchet were large broken flint nodules up to 200 mm, though tending to decrease in size and density to the north, close packed in a matrix of brown silty clay soil containing a moderate density of rounded chalk grit -20 mm and small flint gravel. [Does the preponderance of large stone in the lynchet represent a natural accumulation in the hollow or is there some element of stone clearance to the field edge involved?]

(1) Across the top of the lynchet was a sticky, brown silty clay soil containing infrequent flint gravel up to 50 mm and rounded chalk grit. [Ploughsoil.]

Small Finds: 2558 CuA fibula; 2566 Fe nails

F887 Tr3 C607400 Field lynchet Phase: Iron Age–Roman

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

Length: >2.0 m Width: 2.26 m Depth: 0.35 m

Description: Shallow negative lynchet with flat base and gently sloping very even straight side at an angle of *c.*15 degrees to the base, which was horizontal.

Fill: (1) Friable brown fine silty soil containing a moderate density of rounded chalk grit and an even scatter of broken flint nodules 70–120 mm.

F897 Tr4 D480700-D510760 Field lynchet Phase: Medieval–post-medieval

Rels: b. (483); c. F875, F909

Length: 7.9 m Width: 1.5 m Depth: 0.40 m

Description: This linear feature aligned NNE–SSW had a flat base and sloping west edge cutting in places into the natural clay-with-flints or chalk marl and partly into the walls F875 and F900 to form a negative lynchet. It is on the same alignment as F884/902 and F944.

Fill: (491) and (496) Layers 491, covering F909, and 496 over the channel and surrounding natural comprised a brown or brownish-grey clayey soil containing subangular flint gravel and pebbles up to 60 mm mixed with a scatter of building debris, especially flint blocks, tesserae and mortar dragged up from the floor and walls of F909 and to a lesser extent pennant sandstone and clay tile fragments. [This represented the lowest level of ploughing, which dislodged Roman building material.]

(483) Sealing this was the main bulk of ploughsoil, a brown clayey soil containing a high density of flint gravel and pebbles and a scatter of broken flint nodules. The upper horizon of the ploughsoil which sealed the whole of the trench was greyer and more humic and represents the modern field soil, rather than the soil of the lynchet.