PAST PARTICIPATE

Grey Mare Field Boundary Bank, Gorwell Farm, Dorset

Archaeological Excavation Report

Prepared by

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Summary

In October 2024, Past Participate conducted a community-based archaeological excavation on Gorwell Farm, Long Bredy, Dorset, as part of an ongoing research project 'The Prehistoric Landscape of Tenants Hill'.

The existing gateway adjacent to the Grey Mare and her Colts chambered tomb was going to be blocked, which necessitated the creation of a new opening toward the eastern end of the same boundary. This provided a rare opportunity to investigate the form and structure of one of the embanked boundaries that are a characteristic feature of this chalkland ridge.

The upper part of the bank was composed of relatively substantial silty layers that were probably formed by the incremental accumulation of decayed organic material, which had built up over centuries or millennia. In contrast, the base of the bank consisted of more compact clayey deposits that had been obtained from a ditch, which extended along the southern side of the boundary.

In total, 51 struck lithic artefacts were recovered during the excavation, together with a burnishing pebble and two Upper Greensand manuports. The earliest piece was a broad blade probably of early Mesolithic date, but most of the assemblage was broadly indicative of a late Neolithic to Bronze Age activity. A few pieces exhibited characteristics of the expedient core reduction strategies associated with later Bronze Age to Iron Age lithic technologies, and it is likely that the boundary was created during this period.

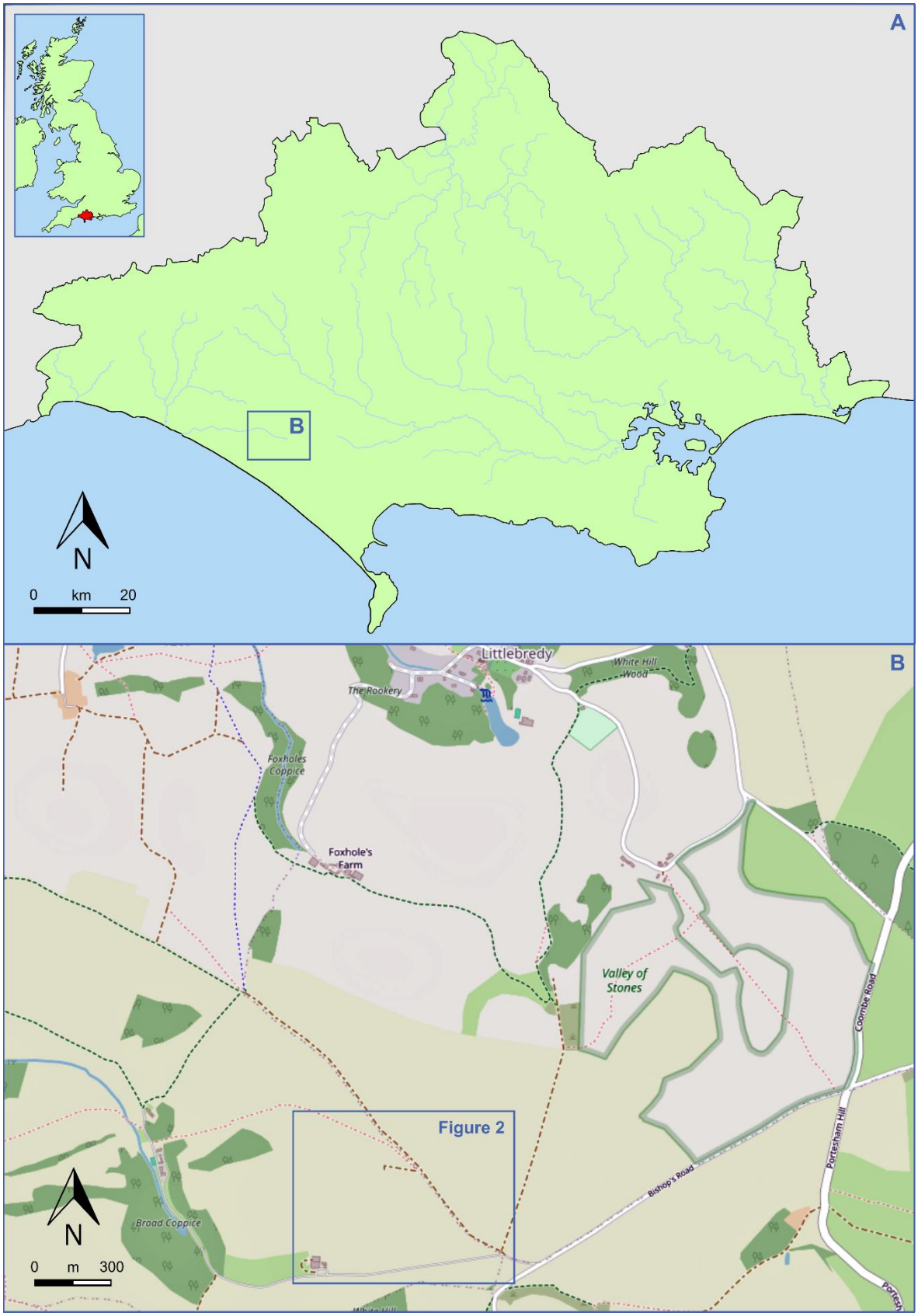

Figure 1: Location of the field containing the Grey Mare and her Colts chambered tomb, Gorwell Farm, Long Bredy, Dorset.
(contains OpenStreetMap data © OpenStreetMap contributors)

1 Introduction

The excavation was undertaken to examine the structure of a hedgebank that forms the northern edge of the field containing the Grey Mare and her Colts chambered long barrow. Historic England had asked the landowners to relocate the existing gateway, which was located immediately to the north-west of the monument (at OSGB NGR: SY 58377 87077), because there was a possibility that livestock and vehicles were impacting sub-surface remains at the end of the mound (Figure 2B). Creating a new opening through the hedgebank provided an opportunity to examine how it was constructed and the potential to recover dating material to determine when it was created.

This investigation formed part of the Tenants Hill Landscape Project, which aims to expand current knowledge of human activity, and the evolution of cultural landscapes, within this area of West Dorset (Figure 1B). The monuments and earthworks on this ridge span the early Neolithic to the late Iron Age or early Romano-British period, beginning with the early Neolithic chambered long barrow, The Grey Mare and her Colts, which was probably constructed in the first half of the fourth millennium BC. Evidence of subsequent prehistoric activity includes the late Neolithic or Bronze Age Kingston Russell stone circle, several Bronze Age round barrows, as well as the later Bronze Age or Iron Age Tenants Hill enclosure, which is surrounded by elements of an associated field system. Tenants Hill and its surrounding landscape represents a microcosm of the wider South Dorset Ridgeway, remaining largely untouched by medieval and later activity.

This report details the results of the archaeological fieldwork and incorporates assessments by specialist researchers who studied the archaeological materials recovered during the excavation.

2 Location, Topography and Geology

Gorwell Farm lies within the administrative district of Dorset, approximately 11km west-south-west of the centre of Dorchester and 13km east-south-east of Bridport (Figure 1).

The trench was located toward the eastern end of an embanked field boundary, which was aligned approximately east west and separated two fields that both belonged to Gorwell Farm (Figure 2). The ground surface on either side of the boundary had an elevation of 202 meters AOD, and occupied a gentle slope, the land falling towards the head of a dry valley located 130 meters to the northwest. This valley descends to the nearest water source at Gorwell Farm. As the ground falls away, its offers extensive views along Tenants Hill, to the north-west, and panoramic vistas of the coastline between Bridport and Lyme Regis to the west.

The fields on either side of the field boundary are utilised as pasture, the grass covering a topsoil described as ‘freely draining slightly acid loamy soil’ (Cranfield University 2025). These soils are derived from superficial deposits of the Clay-with-flints Formation, which cover a relatively narrow strip of higher ground in the field to the north and extend across most of the field to the south (BGS 2005). The upper stratum of the underlying solid geology is the New Pit Chalk Formation.

The OSGB National Grid Reference for the area of investigation is: SY 58485 87052.

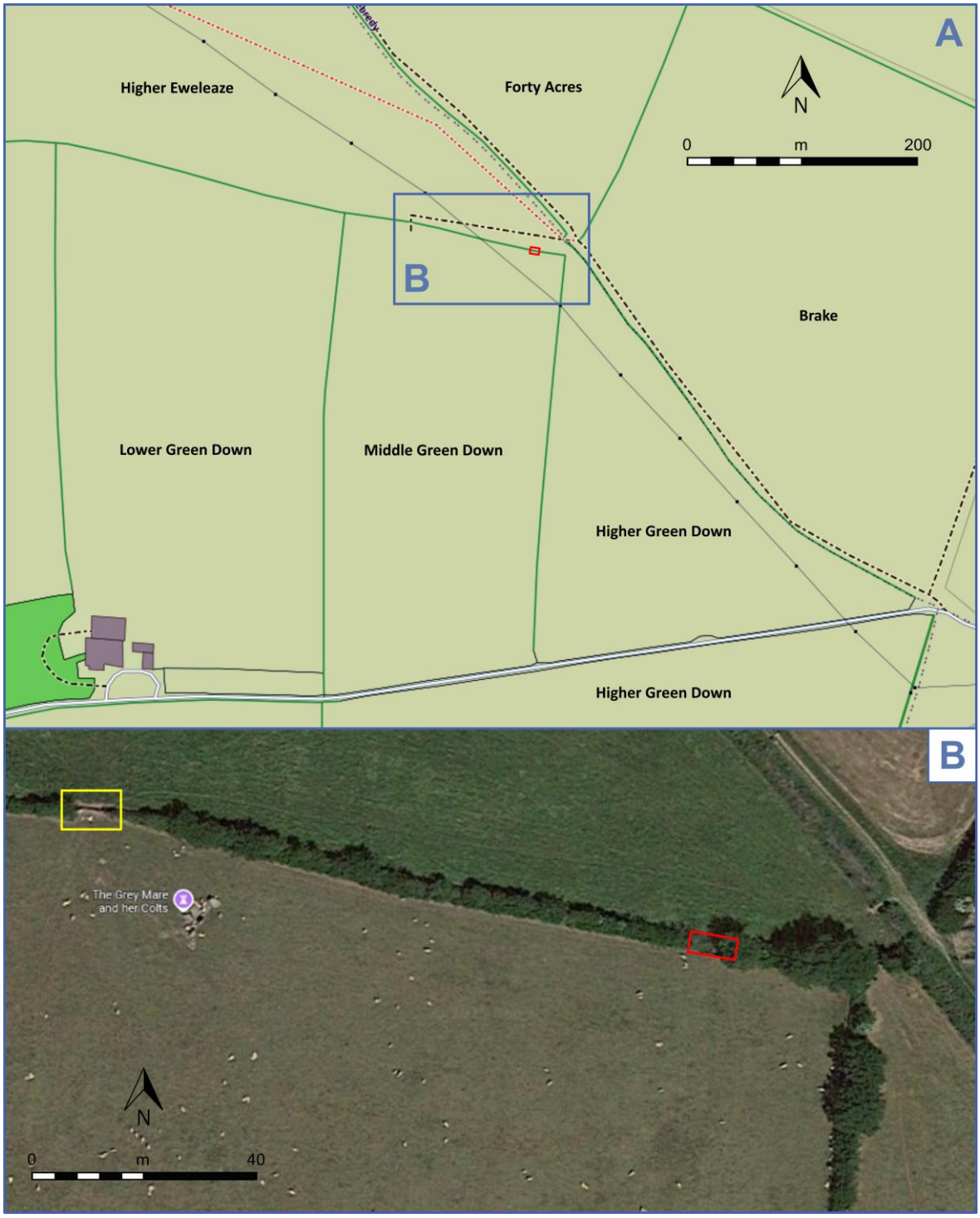

Figure 2: A – the location of the trench (red rectangle), with the names assigned to the fields on the 1840s tithe appointments. B - the location of the trench superimposed on a satellite image, showing its relationship to the Grey Mare and her Colts chambered long barrow and the existing gateway (yellow rectangle).

(A - contains OpenStreetMap data © OpenStreetMap contributors; B - map data: Google, ©2025 Maxar Technologies, imagery date 22 June 2022)

Description	HER No.	NGR	Date
The Grey Mare and Her Colts chambered tomb	MDO1521	SY 583 870	Early Neolithic
Broom Barrow, round barrow (cropmark), Littlebredy	MDO1410	SY 589 869	Early to middle Bronze Age
Bowl barrow, Long Bredy	MDO1522	SY 583 868	Early to middle Bronze Age
Bowl barrow, Long Bredy	MDO1523	SY 586 867	Early to middle Bronze Age
(Possible) bowl barrow, Littlebredy	MDO1408	SY 588 869	Early to middle Bronze Age?
(Possible) bowl barrow, Littlebredy	MDO1409	SY 587 869	Early to middle Bronze Age?
Gorwell Farm, field boundaries	MDO24173	SY 581 867	Early Bronze Age to medieval
Gorwell Deer Park, Long Bredy	MDO1544	SY 578 872	Medieval
Gorwell Farm, field boundaries and cultivation marks	MDO24094	SY 581 872	Medieval to post-medieval
Down Cottage, chalk pits, Long Bredy	MDO24091	SY 577 875	Medieval to post-medieval
Portesham, extractive pits	MDO24182	SY 589 867	Post-medieval
Gorwell Farm, chalk pit	MDO24172	SY 580 867	Post-medieval

Table 1: Dorset HER records relating to sites located within 500m of the area of investigation (centred on SY 5848 8705).

3 Archaeological and Historical Background

The Dorset HER has two entries within the field on the southern side of the field boundary (MDO1521 and MDO1522) and another two in the field to the north (MDO1544 and MDO24091) (Table 1).

The Grey Mare and her Colts chambered tomb (HER No. MDO1521, SM 1002671) is a 24m long sub-oval mound, which is 13m wide at its south-eastern end, defined by a shallow crescent-shaped façade of megalithic sarsen stones, and narrows to 8 meters in width at the north-western end. The central three large sarsens remain upright and are flanked by fallen stones at either side. A large recumbent stone, visible at the top of the mound and resting against the rear face of the orthostats, appears to be the capstone of a chamber. Several smaller orthostats exposed around the edge of the mound may be remnants of a retaining kerb.

The official list entry states that “the parallel quarry ditches, from which the construction material was derived, are preserved as buried features.” However, earthworks corresponding to such substantial quarry features are not visible at modern ground level, despite the proximity of the hedgebank on the northern side of the mound, which has effectively prevented ploughing in this area. This raises questions about the structure of the monument. The assumption that there are

ditches presupposes that the chamber is enclosed within an earthen mound. However, a close examination of the monument reveals that its surface is covered in small lumps and undulations, which would have weathered away if it were made of earth. Additionally, there are no evident animal burrows penetrating the sides of the monument. These factors suggest that the monument is probably a chambered cairn constructed with cobbles and small sarsen boulders collected from the ground surface during the Neolithic period. If this is the case, the orthostatic kerb was erected to retain these smaller stones and give the monument a defined architectural form.

The only recorded intrusive investigation of the monument occurred in the 19th century when:

> "a former tenant of the land…made an exploration some years since, amongst the stones, which resulted in the discovery of many human bones, and a quantity of ancient British pottery in a fragmental state' (Warne 1872, 127).

It is currently unclear whether this 'exploration' just involved the displacement of the capstone, which is implied by the discovery of bones and pottery or also extended to excavation into the side of the mound. Two sub-oval depressions in the north-eastern side of the mound could represent backfilled antiquarian trenches (see Riley, 2008, Fig. 12).

The second monument in this field is a round barrow (HER No. MDO1522, SM 1002748, Grinsell 1959: Long Bredy 16), which is situated 240m to the south of the Grey Mare and her Colts. The monument is denuded but is identifiable as a mound approximately 29m across and up to 1.3m high. The official list entry states that the barrow mound is "surrounded by [a] buried quarry ditch, from which the construction material was derived", but there is no discernible evidence for the presence of an encircling ditch around the barrow. It could have been completely backfilled when the mound was truncated and is no longer visible at ground level. Alternatively, it is possible that a different construction method was employed that did not involve the excavation of a quarry ditches, such as the conspicuous consumption of large expanses of turf.

Another scheduled round barrow is located 290m away, in the adjacent field to the east (HER No. MDO1523, SAM 1002748, Grinsell 1959: Long Bredy 17). This barrow has also suffered significant truncation, with the surviving earthwork having a diameter of 24m and a height of up to 1m. Once again, there is no visible evidence of a ditch surrounding the barrow.

The locations of three other potential round barrows, which probably formed part of this cemetery, are situated on the crest of the hill, to the east of the parish boundary. They are depicted on the Ordnance Survey First Series one inch to the mile map, in the same way as other barrows that are still extant, forming a linear arrangement that was bisected by the old Abbotsbury to Littlebredy road (now the track to Top Parts Dairy) (Ordnance Survey 1811). The name 'Broom Barrow' appears immediately below the most easterly of the mounds suggesting that one of this group was larger or more prominent than most of the other round barrows in this landscape. None of the mounds are shown on the First Edition 25 inch to the mile map, but the field to the east of the track was still labelled 'Broom Barrow', which implies that the name applied to the only mound in that field (Ordnance Survey 1889). Its approximate position on the map of 1811 corresponds to a very slight circular mound apparent as a dark soil mark with a diameter of 20.0m, which is encircled by a 5.0m wide band of much lighter soil (HER No. MDO1410, Grinsell 1982: Little Bredy 31). Two low mounds

located to the west of the track could represent the remains of the other round barrows (HER No. MDO1408, Grinsell 1982: Little Bredy 31a; and HER No. MDO1409, Grinsell 1982: Little Bredy 31b).

There are indications that the field on the northern side of the hedgebank formed part of a small medieval deer park (HER No. MDO1544). A document of 1285 provides the earliest mention of '*Gorewull*' and records that the manor was held by Ralph Wake. The Wake family still held the land in 1349 when a medieval deer park at '*Gorewelle*' was first recorded. The exact proportions of this park are uncertain, but it appears that it extended north-eastward from the modern farmyard, meeting the hedgebank that defines the parish boundary near the Kingston Russell stone circle. It then followed that boundary south-eastwards along the ridge of Tenants Hill until its junction with the boundary investigated during this excavation (i.e., the corner of Higher Eweleaze, see Figure 2A), before returning westward to the farmyard. This would enclose approximately 34ha, including 'Park Coppice', a name which references the deer park and is probably the site of the 'four acres of underwood and herbage' located in the park in 1361.

The need to enclose a deer park indicates that some of the field boundaries at Gorwell were in existence by the 14th century, but the utilisation of hedgebanks to define parish and hundred boundaries indicates that some of these features are much older. Interrelationships with prehistoric monuments provide clear indications that many of these boundaries were initially constructed as elements of an extensive later prehistoric coaxial field system that extended along Tenants Hill and eastward into the Valley of Stones (Teather and Rylatt 2024). The Dorset HER contains entries for two groups of boundary features in the environs of the Grey Mare and her Colts. Cropmarks have highlighted a series of perpendicular ditched field boundaries at the south-west corner of Lower Green Down (see Figure 2B) (HER No. MDO24173) and further field boundaries and cultivation marks survive as earthworks at the northern edge of Park Coppice (HER No. MDO24094).

Several medieval or post-medieval quarry pits surround the area of investigation. A chalk pit located just beyond the south-west corner of Lower Green Down (see Figure 2B) was sited at the interface of the Holywell Nodular Chalk Formation and the Zig Zag Chalk Formation (HER No. MDO24172) (BGS 2005). A pit situated just to the east of the entrance to Gorwell Farm was opened over the Lewes Nodular Chalk Formation (HER No. MDO24182). Another group of 'Old Chalk Pits' are depicted on late 19th century Ordnance Survey maps in the field to the north of the hedgebank, the closest of which was located 200m to the north-west of the trench (Ordnance Survey 1889). They constitute the most southerly elements of group of quarries identified as the Down Cottage chalk pits (HER No. MDO24091), which are all at a similar elevation. This suggests that they were sited to exploit a particular chalk stratum, probably the New Pit Chalk Formation, which is characterised by numerous marl seams (BGS 2005; Bristow et al. 1997).

4 Aims and Objectives

There are several indicators that many of the existing field boundaries on this ridge were initially constructed as elements of a later prehistoric field system. On Tenants Hill, slight earthworks represent the denuded remains of two boundaries that formed a droveway funnelling livestock into the large D-shaped enclosure on the promontory to the north (Teather and Rylatt 2024). These

boundaries are not parallel, a factor that demonstrates they were the initial elements of this part of the field system, as existing hedgebanks further to the east run parallel to the drove way's eastern bank, while the western bank is mirrored by the boundaries on that side. Analysis of aerial photographs has demonstrated that the boundaries on Tenants Hill form part of a more extensive coaxial field system that extends right across the Valley of Stones (HER No. MDO24156), northwards toward Littlebredy (HER No. MDO24147), and north-eastwards across Sheep Down (HER No. MDO24290) (Aerial Archaeology Mapping Explorer 2025). Comparable 'regular aggregate'-type field systems have been found across large swathes of Dorset. They are relatively poorly dated (Davey 2013) but are broadly assigned to the Iron Age and Romano-British period (RCHME 1952). They potentially have their origins in the later Bronze Age, with further sub-divisions and enhancements being made throughout the Iron Age (Royale 2011). A key source of evidence demonstrating the prehistoric origins of these field systems is their relationship to Roman roads, which often cut obliquely across them (e.g., Fleming 2021).

The substantial hedgebank that runs along the long axis of Tenants Hill and is abutted by the eastern end of the boundary investigated in this report, has been cut through to provide pedestrian access to the Grey Mare and her Colts. An examination of this narrow opening suggests that the core of the bank is composed of small sarsen boulders. There are also indications that the Grey Mare and her Colts is a chambered cairn constructed from sarsen boulders, rather than an earthen long barrow (see 3, above). These observations prompted a landscape survey to identify visible sarsen boulders on Tenants Hill and Gorwell Farm, leading to the discovery of these stones in the hedgerows in the southern part of this area.

Combining the available evidence, it was hypothesized that the more pronounced hedgebanks to the south of the Kingston Russell stone circle had a core of sarsen boulders that consisted of linear stone clearance heaps created during the laying out of the fields. However, opportunities to evaluate this theory were likely to be relatively rare. Although the boundaries may have existed for millennia, their survival demonstrates that new openings are made very infrequently. The request to relocate the gate situated near the Grey Mare and her Colts (at SY 58377 87077) provided a significant opportunity to evaluate the hypothesis by examining the structure of this hedgebank.

The specific objectives to be addressed by the excavation were:

(1) To determine the construction method, character, and original form of the boundary bank.

(2) To try and recover artefacts or ecofacts that would help to establish the date range for its creation and initial use? How would this fit into the model of landscape evolution that is being developed for Tenants Hill and its surrounding landscape?

(3) Did it seal any earlier archaeological features or a buried ground surface?

The fieldwork conducted in 2024 has largely fulfilled these project objectives and has provided an enhanced understanding of the character of the later prehistoric field boundaries in this landscape.

5 Methodology

The size of the trench was determined by the dimensions of the new opening through the hedgebank, which needed to be wide enough to accommodate a field gate for vehicular access, a flanking pedestrian gate, and the associated gateposts.

The location of the new gateway was selected by Simon Pengelly, who removed the existing hedge to ground level (Figure 3). The edges of the trench were then marked out and surveyed in using survey-grade differential GNSS equipment. It comprised a rectangular area extending 5.0m along the boundary, which was 2.8m wide, amounting to 14m^2.

The surface vegetation and leaf litter were removed by hand down to the interface with the first consolidated deposit. The stripped surface was than cleaned by hand. The sequence of deposits that constituted the earthwork were hand-excavated in a controlled and stratigraphic manner to establish their date, nature, and extent.

Each stratigraphic unit was given a unique context number and written descriptions were made on standard context record sheets. Measured section drawings were made using appropriate scales (1:20 and 1:10) and indicated the height AOD of all principal strata. A UAV photographic survey was conducted after the removal of each deposit enabling the creation of georeferenced photogrammetric 3D models of the earthwork. A digital photographic record was maintained and selected images have been reproduced in this report, with the remainder forming part of the project archive.

All stratified and unstratified finds with the potential to elucidate the nature of human activity and site-formation processes were collected by stratigraphic unit and bagged. All coarse components recovered during excavation were examined by the on-site lithics specialist and any lithic artefacts were retained and bagged as bulk finds, while ceramics were bagged individually. Initial handling and packaging conformed to best practice (Watkinson and Neale 1998).

Artefacts were cleaned and processed prior to their submission to researchers specialising in the examination of archaeological materials. The preliminary results of these investigations have been included as independent appendices to this report and the general conclusions of these accounts have been integrated into the main text.

A team comprising two experienced field archaeologists and a total of 40 volunteers conducted the excavation over a period of eleven days between the 29 September and 10 October 2024.

6 Results

The removal of the hedge and the underbrush exposed the surface of a layer of leaf litter and mottled mid to dark greyish-brown organic silt, (100), which was 3.05m wide and up to 0.09m deep (Figure 3). Up to 40 per cent of this deposit consisted of leaves and leaf fragments, together with ivy vines and frequent shrub and tree roots, the largest of which were up to 0.30m in diameter. The non-organic inclusions consisted of occasional flint pebbles and cobbles, some black silage plastic,

orange polypropylene string, a plastic shotgun cartridge, and five pieces of struck flint, which included a side scraper dating from the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age (Appendix 11.5).

The southern edge of (100) sealed a linear deposit of mid greyish-brown clayey silt, (103), the fill of gully [104], which extended the full length of the trench and was more than 0.50m wide and up to 0.20m deep (Figures 6 and 7). This deposit incorporated some darker grey organic mottles, together with occasional natural flint pebbles and thermal flakes. Lengths of rusty metal stock fencing extended longitudinally along the base of [104], indicating that this 'U'-shaped gully had been created in the later 20th century to contain the base of an earlier sheep proof boundary.

Gully [104] was cut into the subsoil, a slightly mixed mid greyish brown slightly clayey silt, (101), 3.00m wide and up to 0.17m deep. The hedge was actively reworking this deposit, resulting in uneven compaction as it encompassed numerous existing roots and the voids left by decayed roots. The deposit incorporated occasional natural flint pebbles and cobbles, along with a large flint nodule that had been placed on top of the bank, this probably occurring as incidental clearance when the field was cultivated. Subsoil (101) also contained a Portland chert flake, four struck flint flakes, and a chunk of burnt flint. The removal of (101) exposed a layer of moderately friable mottled yellowish-brown to mid brown slightly clayey silt, with small pale grey mottles, (102), which was 2.60m wide and up to 0.17m deep. The presence of numerous roots and root voids resulted in differential compaction that was comparable to (101). Coarse components included occasional natural flint pebbles and thermal flakes, very occasional nodules up to 0.15m across, and a core and four flint flakes with characteristics indicative of late Neolithic and Bronze Age technologies.

The high silt content of (101) and (102) is distinctive and unlike any other deposits examined during Past Participate's previous excavations in this landscape, suggesting that they are not derived from the Clay-with-flints superficial geology. Consequently, it is probable that these deposits have formed over a prolonged period through the gradual decay of leaf litter and other organic material, with a depth of up to 0.34m accumulating over centuries, if not millennia (Figures 6a and 7a). Some of the coarse components within these deposits, such as the larger nodules, may have been introduced through field clearance, while smaller pieces might have been brought up from lower horizons by hedge roots and other forms of bioturbation.

A mounded deposit of slightly reddish to mid greyish brown slightly clayey to clayey silt, with occasional orange clay mottles, (105), 2.20m wide and up to 0.25m deep, was sealed beneath (102) (Figure 4). It incorporated moderate quantities of natural flint pebbles and thermal flakes, together with occasional larger nodules up to 0.15m across, which were concentrated within the southern third of the deposit. It also contained eight struck flint flakes and one or two flecks of charcoal. The higher clay content of (105) suggests that it constituted the upper part of the original bank, which was constructed using material excavated from a ditch running along its southern side (see [110], below). Subsequently, hedge and tree roots had mixed the interface with (102) and introduced silt from the overlying deposit.

The base of the bank consisted of orangey-brown clayey silt, with frequent pale grey mottles and occasional patches of bright orange silty clay, (106). This deposit was over 2.50m wide and up to 0.20m deep and incorporated moderate quantities of natural flint pebbles and thermal flakes. Fourteen pieces of struck flint were recovered from (106), including a core, a core fragment, and a

utilised flake with traits consistent with Neolithic and Bronze Age lithic industries. Some flecks of charcoal were also identified.

The removal of upper bank material (102) also exposed a deposit of mid pinkish-brown clayey silt, (108), which extended along the southern edge of the trench. This deposit, which was more than 0.45m wide and up to 0.25m deep, was the tertiary fill of a ditch, [110]. Fill (108) incorporated occasional natural flint pebbles and thermal flakes, together with a horizon of larger nodules, up to 0.15m in diameter, which were exposed in the southern section. It also contained six pieces of struck flint, including an end scraper. Its removal exposed a secondary fill, (109), consisting of relatively compact mid greyish brown to buff clayey silt, which was over 0.22m wide and up to 0.12m deep and contained a few natural flint pebbles and thermal flakes. The interface between ditch fill (108) and the bank material was very diffuse, having been mixed by roots. This made determination of the stratigraphic relationships difficult, but the clay content of (105) and (106) implies that most of this material was derived from ditch [110] and, as such, the bank must predate the filling of the ditch; the sequence has been phased accordingly (see Appendix 11.3).

Ditch [110] was a roughly east-west aligned linear feature that was located immediately to the south of the hedgebank. Only a 2.60m long section of the northern edge was exposed and excavated. This indicated that it was over 0.58m wide and more than 0.45m deep. Its spatial relationship to the field boundary indicates that it functioned as a linear quarry that provided material to construct the bank, while also providing another element that would help to make it stock proof (Figure 5).

Ditch [110] had been cut into a slightly pinkish grey-brown clayey-silt, (107), which was up to 0.25m deep. It formed a 1.30m wide band of material that was preserved beneath the bank, indicating that it probably represented a buried topsoil. The upper component of (107) contained some flint grit, pebbles, and thermal flakes, but these became more abundant with depth, forming a dense, 0.04m deep worm-sorted layer at the base of the deposit. Seven pieces of struck flint were recovered from (107), including an early Mesolithic blade, the earliest artefact recovered, and a core fragment. The removal of (107) exposed the surface of a homogenous deposit of pale to mid yellowish-brown clayey silt, (111), which was up to 0.12m deep. Its stratigraphic relationship to (107), and the absence of any artefacts, suggests that (111) was a buried subsoil. It incorporated moderate quantities of natural flint pebbles, thermal flakes, and grit, together a few flecks of charcoal. The upper surface of (111) sloped downward to the north at an angle of 5-10° to the horizontal, reflecting the topography of the land surface prior to the creation of the hedgebank.

The base of (111) was exposed in the side of ditch [110], which also revealed that it overlay a deposit of deep reddish-brown silty clay, (112), with frequent small greyish-brown mottles and moderate to frequent flint grit and occasional flint pebbles (Figure 6). The characteristics of (112) indicated that it was a component of the Clay-with-flints superficial geology.

7 Discussion and Conclusions

The need to move the gateway adjacent to the Grey Mare and her Colts has provided a rare and valuable opportunity to investigate the structure of one of the embanked boundaries that are a characteristic feature of this chalkland ridge.

The resulting archaeological excavation revealed the construction method and original appearance of the boundary, which was noticeably different from the expected form and structure. Observations made elsewhere in this landscape had suggested that the more prominent hedgebanks to the south of the Kingston Russell stone circle might contain sarsen boulders at their core. These stones would have been deposited during clearance of the ground surface when the fields were laid out (see 4, above). However, the excavation demonstrated that this was not the case, and no sarsen boulders or fragments were encountered during the fieldwork. The only large stones uncovered were occasional flint nodules, which were randomly distributed throughout the bank material and which probably represented pieces that were removed from the field's surface during cultivation.

Also unexpected was the discovery of a ditch that extended along the southern side of the boundary and would have been the source of the material that formed the original mass of the bank. There was no visible evidence of this ditch at ground level, and the absence of any flanking earthwork depressions is a common feature of the other embanked boundaries on the ridge.

Instead of being the supplementary products of linear stone clearance, the excavation has provided an indication that many, if not all, of these boundaries could originally have been constructed with material derived from an adjacent quarry ditch. This, in turn, implies that there may have been a more structured approach to the layout and creation of this field system, which would have necessitated a greater investment of time and labour.

It is also notable that the ditch had filled completely, and that these fills were consolidated to the extent that there was no slumping, meaning that the contemporary ground surface had a constant gradient up to the base of the bank. This indicates that a significant amount of time had elapsed since the boundary was created and the quarry ditch had started to fill up. Additional evidence for the passage of an extended period was provided by the substantial silty layers that formed the top of the bank. These deposits were not derived from the Clay-with-flints superficial geology, and they were most likely formed by the incremental accumulation of decayed organic material that had built up over centuries or millennia.

It is hoped that a relatively precise date for the construction of the boundary will be obtained from charcoal contained within bulk samples that were taken from the buried ground surface, (007), and from ditch fills (008) and (009). These samples have not yet been processed, but charcoal was observed during collection, raising the possibility that they will contain carbonised twigs or other short-lived plant remains that will provide a relatively precise date from the land surface buried beneath the bank and from the ditch fills.

The recovery of struck lithic artefacts, together with the absence of any historic material that predated the late 20th century, provided a more generalised indication of the age of the boundary. Most of the flint flakes had fresh edges, which indicated that they were incorporated into the bank before the surrounding area was subject to any significant level of cultivation (Appendix 11.5). The earliest piece was a broad blade, most likely to be of early Mesolithic date, but most of the collection was broadly indicative of late Neolithic to Bronze Age activity, with a few pieces exhibiting characteristics indicative of the expedient core reduction techniques associated with later Bronze Age and Iron Age lithic technologies. In addition, the recovery of two chunks of Upper Greensand from clayey bank material (105) provided another, more tentative, indicator that this earthwork dates to the later prehistoric period. While none of this material was recovered during the

excavation of the Neolithic long barrow on Tenants Hill, there were abundant fire-cracked and unmodified Upper Greensand cobbles in features associated with the Bronze Age roundhouse in the same field (Rylatt 2021, 2024). This variation implies that changes in resource procurement can be used to distinguish these two periods.

A late Bronze Age or Iron Age date for the construction of the boundary bank would conform with the sequence of landscape development identified by previous excavations carried out on Tenants Hill.

8 Recommendations and Further Work

Should the opportunity arise, it would be beneficial to excavate a complete section across the ditch running along the southern side of the boundary. This would help determine its width, depth, and profile, as well as potentially recovering associated artefacts and dating material.

Sources of funding should be sought for the processing of the bulk samples taken from buried ground surface (007) and from ditch fills (008) and (009), and to obtain AMS radiocarbon dates from any carbonised plant remains that they contain, which could indicate when the boundary was constructed.

It would be informative to investigate the substantial hedgebank that runs from north-west to south east and which is abutted by the eastern end of the boundary examined during the present investigation. This physical relationship indicates that the north-west to south-east bank was constructed first, with the bank investigated in this report constructed later. Information could be obtained with minimal intervention by cleaning and recording the sides of the cutting made for the pedestrian gateway located approximately 25m to the east of the 2024 trench. A superficial examination of this opening suggests that the core of this bank is composed of small sarsen boulders, which implies that diverse construction methods were used during the creation of different elements of the field system.

9 Acknowledgements

Past Participate are extremely grateful to Mary, John, and Simon Pengelly for offering us the rare opportunity to investigate one of these field boundaries. Without their interest, encouragement, and assistance the excavation could not have taken place.

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Smith, Steve Town, Steve Trow, Claire Whiles, Tracey Whalley, Tim Wilson, and James Zakiewicz. We would also like to extend our thanks to the EuCAN Dorset Midweek Volunteers who assisted both with the excavation and with the consolidation and profiling of the spoil, which was deposited to form a hedgebank blocking the original gateway.

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Appendix 13.1: Illustrations

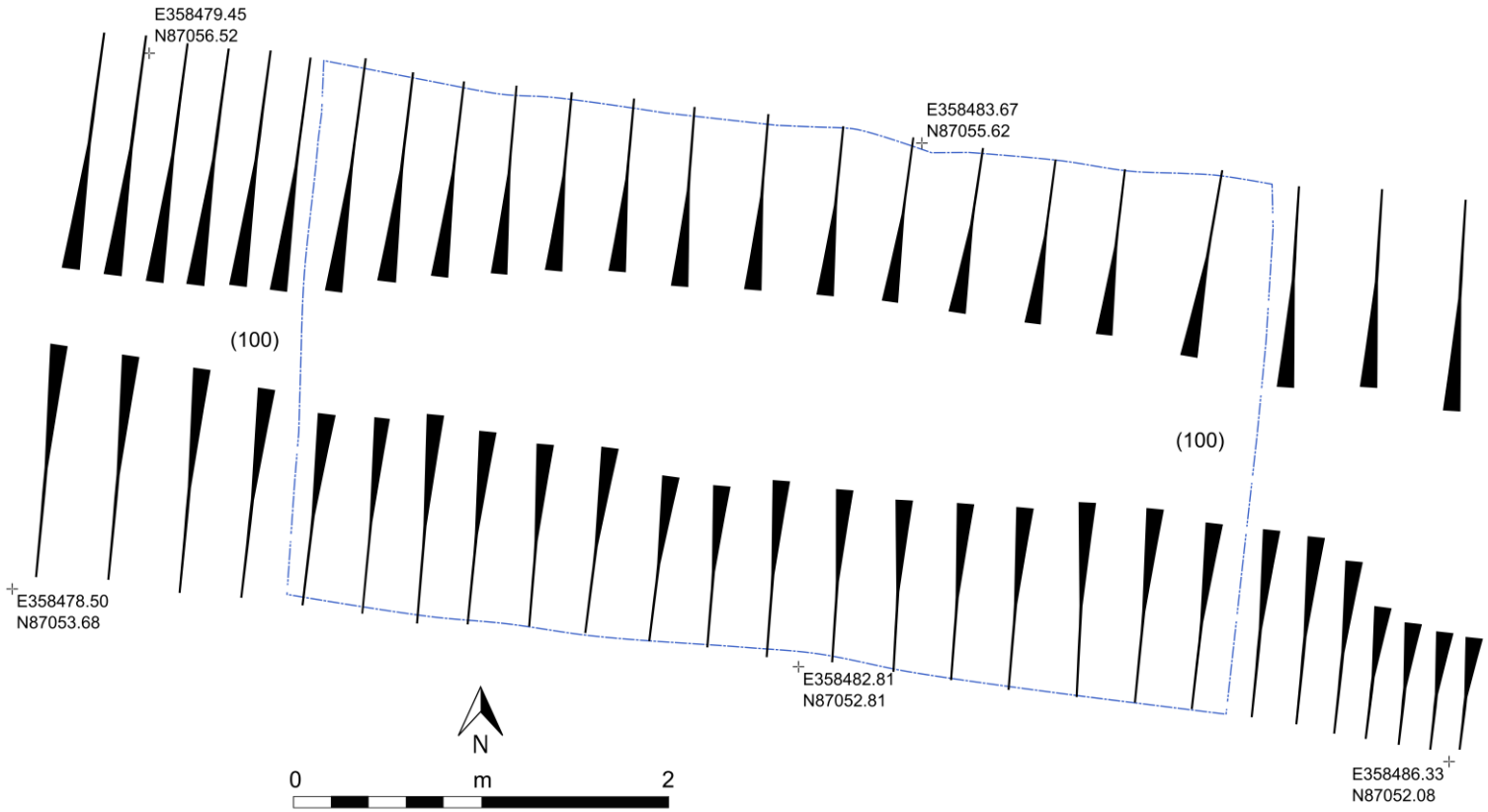


Figure 3: Pre-excavation plan indicating the form of the boundary bank after the removal of the hedge. The footprint of the trench is outlined in blue. Scale 1:40.

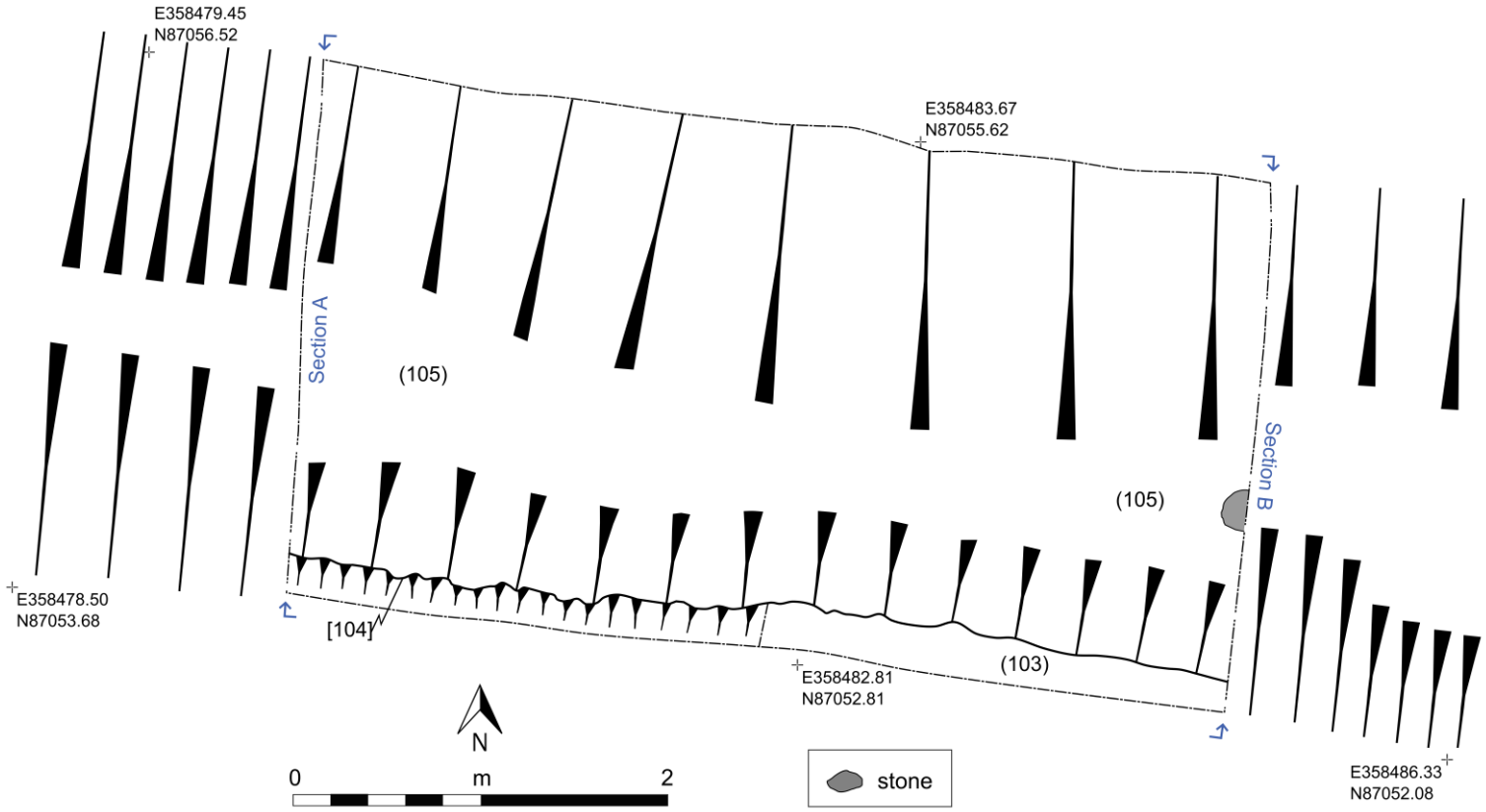


Figure 4: Plan of the boundary bank following the removal of the earliest silty layer, (102), showing the form of the earthwork created by the clayey material that was extracted from the quarry ditch, [110] (see Figure 5). Scale 1:40.

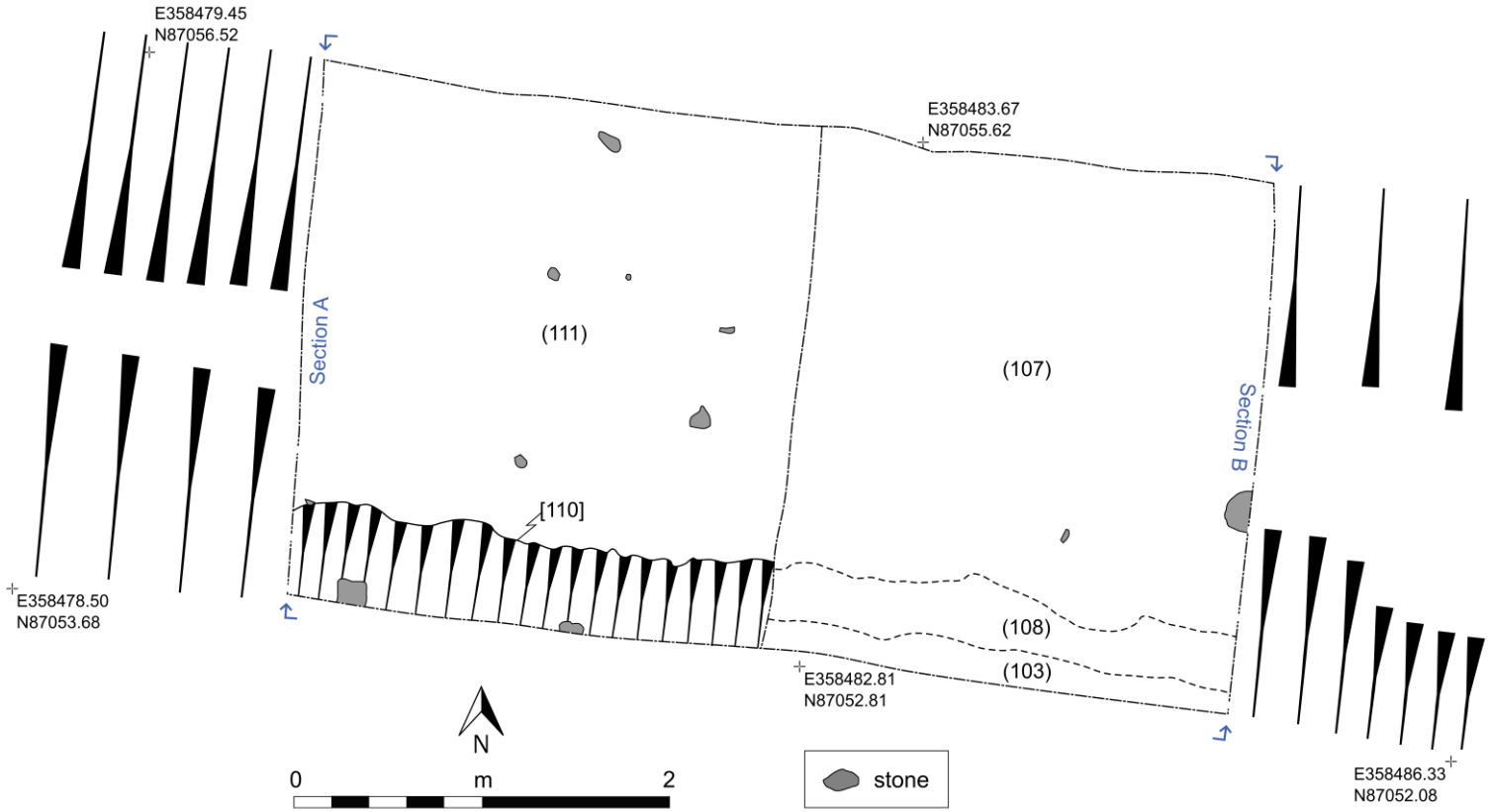


Figure 5: Post-excavation plan indicating the location of quarry ditch [110] and its position relative to the broader form of the present boundary bank. Scale 1:40.

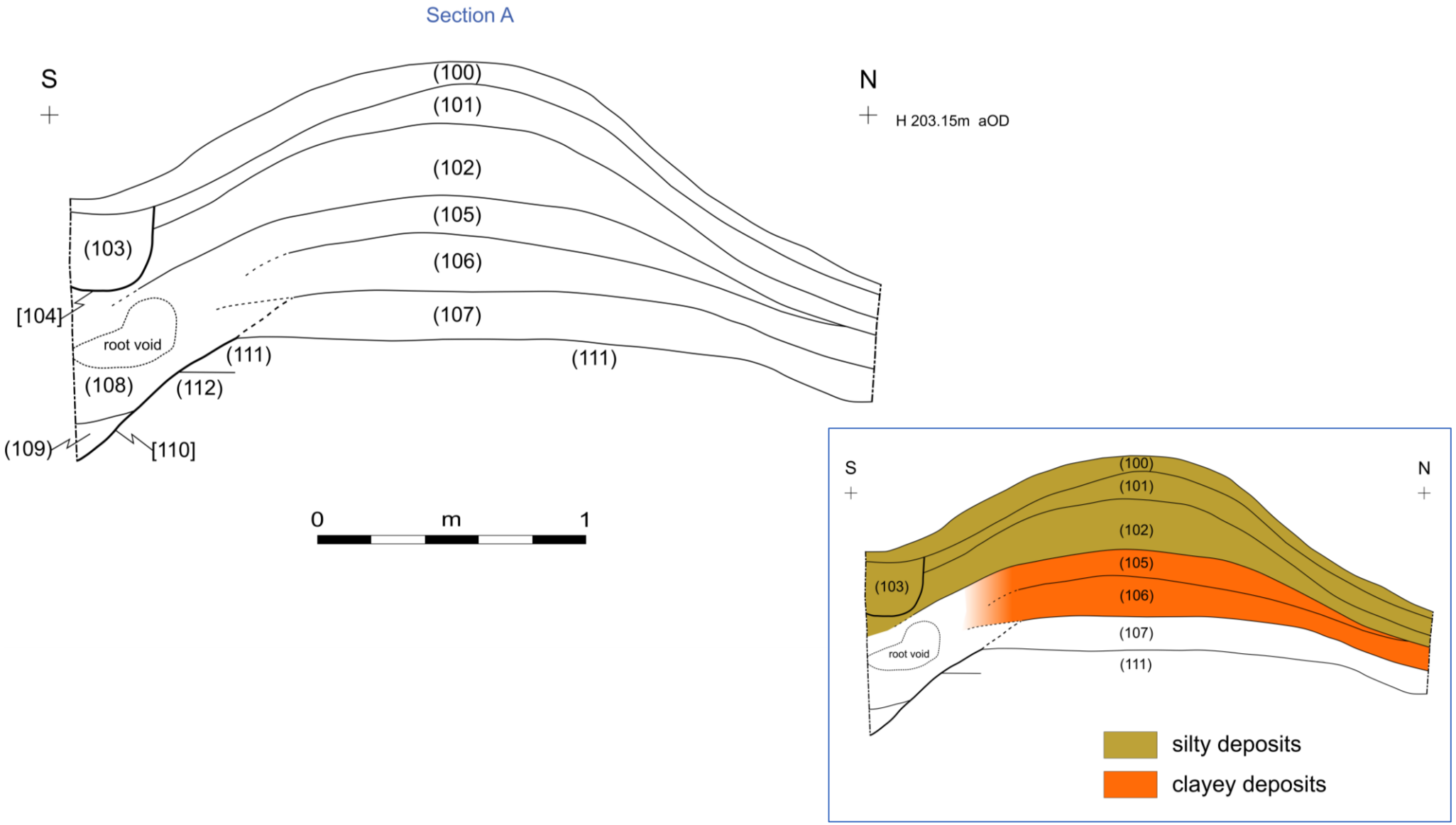


Figure 6: The east-facing section of the boundary bank (bioturbation had significantly reworked the lower part of the southern end of the section, creating a large void and merging context boundaries); Scale 1:20. The smaller interpretative section shows the extent of the silty deposits, that were probably derived from degraded vegetation, and the clayey deposits that were extracted from ditch [110].

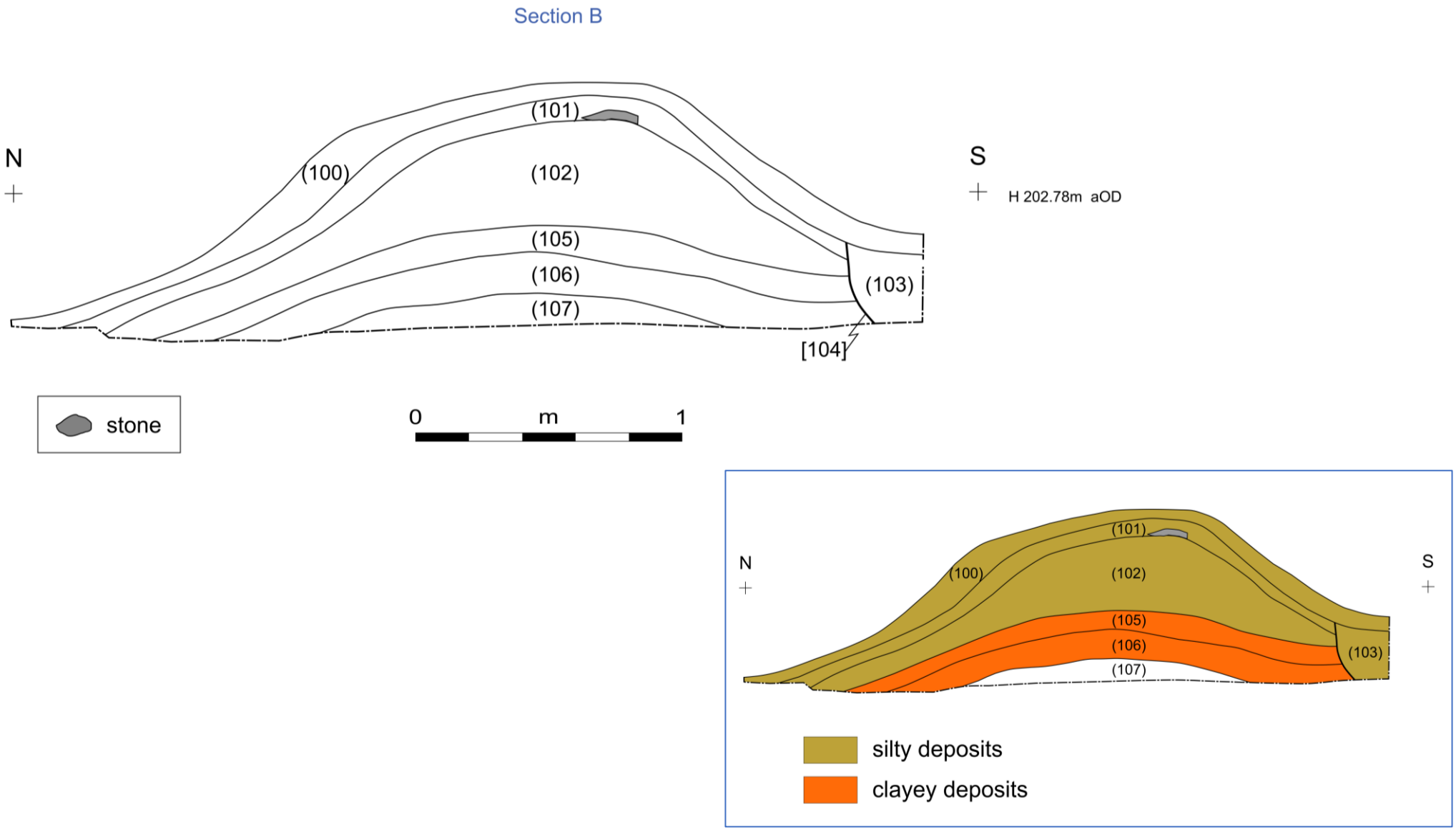


Figure 7: The west-facing section of the boundary bank; Scale 1:20. The smaller interpretative section shows the extent of the silty deposits, that were probably derived from degraded vegetation, and the clayey deposits that were extracted from ditch [110].

Appendix 11.2: Photographs

Plate 1: The field boundary, looking north, showing: A – the trench under excavation to create a new opening; B – the original gateway partially filled with spoil from A; C – the Grey Mare and her Colts chambered tomb; D – desire lines formed by livestock moving toward gateway B.

Plate 2: Pre-excavation photograph of the boundary bank following the removal of the hedge, but with vegetation still masking the surface of (100). North at the top of the image.

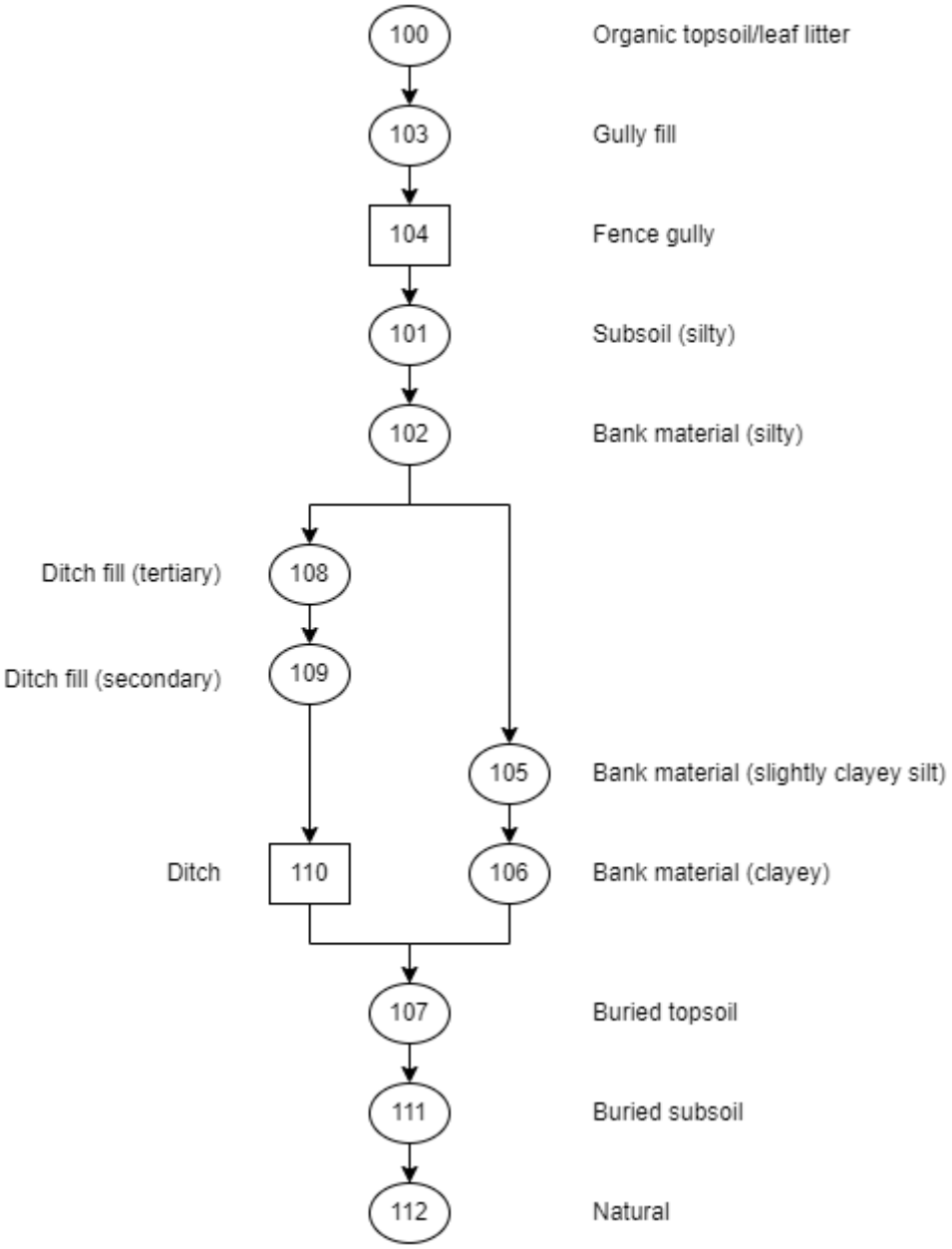
Plate 3: The exposed surface of subsoil (101) following the removal of the organic leaf litter layer (100), showing the large flint nodule that was placed on top of the bank, probably during incidental clearance associated with cultivation. Looking south. Scale 2m.

Plate 4: The exposed surface of bank material (105), following the removal of silty layers (101) and (102), with the dark band of gully [104], created for an earlier stock fence, extending along the top of the trench. South at the top of the image.

Plate 5: East-facing section through the bank. Showing the grey organic layer, (100), at the top, the layers of bank material - (101), (102), (105), and (106), the buried subsoil layer exposed by the removal of the bank, (111), and ditch [110] running along the southern side of the boundary. Scales 1m and 2m.

Plate 6: Post-excavation image of the trench. Showing the buried topsoil, (107), and ditch fill (108) to the left of the vertical scale, and buried subsoil (111) and the northern edge of ditch [110] to the right. South at the top of the image. Scales 1m and 2m.

Appendix 11.3: Site Matrix



Appendix 11.4: List of Archaeological Contexts

Context No.	Type	Description
100	Layer	Leaf litter – mottled mid to dark greyish-brown silt, 3.05m wide and up to 0.09m deep, incorporating significant quantities of leaves and leaf fragments (40% by volume), tree and shrub roots (up to 0.30m diameter), and ivy vines, together with natural flint pebbles and cobbles (<1% by volume), black silage plastic, orange polypropylene string, a plastic shotgun cartridge, and some struck flint. Seals (103).
101	Layer	Subsoil – slightly mixed mid greyish brown slightly clayey silt, 3.00m wide and up to 0.17m deep. Deposit had variable compaction, as it encompassed numerous roots and root voids and contained occasional natural flint pebbles and cobbles (up to 0.07m across - <1% by volume), together with one large flint nodule placed on top of bank, and some struck flint. Cut by [104], seals (102), truncated by [104].
102	Layer	Upper bank material – moderately friable mottled yellowish-brown to mid brown slightly clayey silt, 2.60m wide and up to 0.17m deep, with small pale grey mottles. It had variable compaction, as it encompassed numerous roots and root voids, and contained occasional natural flint pebbles, thermal flakes, and very occasional nodules up to 0.15m across, together with some struck flint (potentially introduced from lower deposits by bioturbation). Sealed by (101), seals (105) and (108), truncated by [104].
103	Fill	Fill of [104] – mid greyish-brown clayey silt, >5.50m long, >0.50m wide and up to 0.20m deep, abutting southern side of the hedgebank. It incorporated some darker grey organic mottles, together with occasional natural flint pebbles and thermal flakes. The base of the deposit incorporated pieces of rusty sheep fence, which extended longitudinally along [104]. Sealed by (100).
104	Cut	Modern gully to contain base of sheep fence – roughly east-west aligned linear feature, with a 'U'-shaped profile, >5.50m long, >0.50m wide and up to 0.20m deep. Cuts (101), contains (103).
105	Deposit	Bank material – mounded deposit of slightly reddish mid greyish brown slightly clayey to clayey silt, 2.20m wide and up to 0.25m deep, with occasional orange clay mottles. It incorporated moderate quantities of natural flint pebbles and thermal flakes, together with occasional larger nodules up to 0.15m across within the southern third of the deposit. It also contained some struck flint and one or two flecks of charcoal. Northern and southern sides of upper surface sloped at 30° to the horizontal. Sealed by (102), seals (106).
106	Deposit	Lower bank material – orangey-brown clayey silt, >2.50m wide and up to 0.20m deep, with frequent pale grey mottles and occasional patches of bright orange silty clay. It incorporated moderate quantities of natural flint pebbles and thermal flakes, together with some struck flint and a few flecks of charcoal. Upper surface was roughly horizontal but northern and southern edges sloped at 20° to the horizontal. Sealed by (105), seals (107).

Context No.	Type	Description
107	Layer	Buried topsoil – slightly pinkish greyish brown slightly clayey-silt, 1.30m wide and up to 0.25m deep, containing flint grit and natural flint pebbles and thermal flakes, which became a relatively dense 0.04m deep worm-sorted layer at the base of the deposit. It also contained some struck flint. Cut by [110], sealed by (106), seals (111).
108	Fill	Tertiary fill of [110] - mid pinkish-brown clayey silt, >0.45m wide and up to 0.25m deep. It incorporated occasional natural flint pebbles and thermal flakes, together with a localised band of larger nodules, up to 0.15m in diameter, which were exposed in the southern trench section. It also contained some struck flint. Sealed by (102), seals (109).
109	Fill	Secondary fill of [110] – relatively compact mid greyish brown to buff clayey silt, >0.22m wide and up to 0.12m deep, which incorporated a few natural flint pebbles and thermal flakes. Sealed by (108).
110	Cut	Ditch – roughly east-west aligned linear feature running along the southern side of the hedgebank; only the northern edge exposed, >2.60m long, >0.58m wide and >0.45m deep. Cuts (107), contains (108) and (109).
111	Layer	Buried subsoil – homogenous deposit of pale to mid yellowish-brown clayey silt, >2.50m wide and up to 0.12m deep. It incorporated moderate quantities of natural flint pebbles, thermal flakes, and grit, together a few flecks of charcoal. Upper surface slopes down toward the north at 5-10° to the horizontal reflecting topography of land surface prior to creation of hedgebank. Sealed by (107), truncated by [110], seals (112).
112	Layer	Natural – deep reddish-brown silty clay, with frequent small greyish-brown mottles, >0.43m deep, which incorporates moderate to frequent flint grit and occasional pebbles. Only exposed in basal component of ditch [110]. Sealed by (111), truncated by [110].

Appendix 11.5: The Struck Flint and Modified Stone

Grey Mare Field Boundary Bank, Gorwell Farm, Dorset (GMF 24)

Jim Rylatt

1 Introduction

A total of 51 pieces of struck flint and chert were recovered during the excavation of a field boundary bank on Gorwell Farm (Table 1). The collection primarily consists of unmodified flake debitage (43 pieces – 84.3%). Recurrent morphological traits indicate that most of the material is the product of freehand hard hammer percussion and is broadly characteristic of Neolithic and Bronze Age core reduction strategies. One piece is a product of blade technologies that were utilised during the Mesolithic and, to a lesser extent, the early Neolithic.

The fieldwork also recovered two pieces of Upper Greensand, and a flint pebble utilised as a small rubber or burnishing tool (Table 2).

Context No.	Core	Core fragment	Side scraper	End scraper	Utilised flake	Blade	Flake	Chunk/chip	Total	Weight (g)
100			1				4		*5*	*109.1*
101							5	1	*6*	*99.4*
102	1						4		*5*	*218.3*
105							8		*8*	*79.1*
106	1	1			1		11		*14*	*221.9*
107		1				1	5		*7*	*120.4*
108				1			5		*6*	*175.4*
Total	*2*	*2*	*1*	*1*	*1*	*1*	*42*	*1*	***51***	***1023.6***

Table 1: Composition and distribution of the struck lithic assemblage.

2 Methodology

All the artefacts were examined, and attributes were recorded to determine the characteristics of the reduction technologies, together with an assessment of the functional potential of the different elements of the assemblage. The presence of surface patination, surviving cortex, and evidence for burning or heat treatment was also noted, and each piece was weighed. Selected artefacts were examined with x6 and x20 hand-lenses to determine whether there was any evidence for localised modifications that are indicative of use.

Context No.	Upper Greensand fragments	Flint burnishing pebble	Weight (g)
105	2		1348.1
106			74.0
109		1	66.4
Total	*2*	*1*	***1488.5***

Table 2: Other stone objects.

3 Raw Materials

The principal raw material utilised was flint (50 pieces – 98.0%), but the collection also contained a single piece of Portland chert. Most of the flint has a pale to mid grey opaque matrix, but the assemblage also contains a small amount of dark grey opaque, cherty grey opaque, and brownish-grey and greyish-brown semi-translucent pieces.

Areas of cortical surface are preserved on 30 pieces of flake debitage (Table 2) and all the retouched pieces and cores/core fragments. Most of these pieces have cortex with a solid matrix that is buff or a slightly darker brown colour, a thickness of 1 to 8mm, and a surface that is frequently pitted or fissured, with larger areas have irregularly curved surfaces. These are characteristics of the nodular flint found both within the Clay-with-flints Formation covering the top of the chalk ridge and the underlying bedrock from which the superficial geology is derived, the New Pit Chalk Formation (BGS 2005). Most of the flint in the upper component of the Clay-with-flints Formation is relatively small, with a high incidence of recorticated thermally fractured surfaces and insipient fractures. As such, it is unlikely to been utilised except in expedient circumstances. Previous excavations on Tenants Hill have demonstrated that the Clay-with-flints contains localised clusters of larger nodules, up to 0.25m across, which would be suitable for quartering to create cores (Rylatt 2021). Nevertheless, it is doubtful that the locations of these concentrations would be easily identifiable from the ground surface, making it likely that suitable nodules were primarily obtained from fortuitous exposures, such as tree throws and animal burrows, both on the plateau and along the flanks of Tenant's Hill.

	No.	Percentage
Primary	0	0
Secondary	30	68.2
Tertiary	14	31.8
Total	44	**100**

Table 2. Reduction sequence for flake debitage.

Several pieces preserve cortical surfaces that are thin, rounded, and abraded providing an indication that they are derived from secondary deposits, such as beach pebbles, which could have been obtained from Chesil Beach. These artefacts include the flake of Portland chert from (101) and the flake of caramel brown semi-translucent flint from (107), both of which are non-local forms that were undoubtedly brought onto the site. A small flint pebble rubber or burnishing stone from (109) could also have been sourced from the beach or may have been a remnant of Middle Eocene Bracklesham Group sheet deposits, which once covered the area (BGS 2005).

4 Condition

There were six pieces with irregularly chipped or abraded margins that are the product of unintentional post-depositional modification (11.8% of the collection); one piece from contexts (100), (102), (16), and (107) and two from (105). This low incidence of damaged pieces contrasts with material recovered from nearby excavations on Tenants Hill where up to 49.5% of assemblages had been modified by agricultural activity (Rylatt 2021). This suggests that most, if not all, of the lithic assemblage was either buried by or integrated into the bank material prior to the commencement of arable cultivation, whether this occurred during the later prehistoric period or from the post medieval period onwards.

5 The Assemblage

5.1 Burnt Flint

The assemblage included one piece of burnt flint, an irregular chunk without flake surfaces, which was recovered from (101). It had been heated to around 350°C, which had discoloured the cortical surfaces and had started to alter its crystalline structure resulting in the formation of potlids and insipient cracks, but these did not seem to run through the body of the piece suggesting that temperatures had not got much higher (Purdy and Brooks 1971; Purdy 1975; Sergant *et al*. 2006).

5.2 The Struck Flint

5.2.1 Debitage

The collection contained 44 pieces of debitage: 42 flakes, a utilised flake, and one blade fragment (Table 1).

The proximal and medial fragment of a blade, from (107), had morphological traits indicative of Mesolithic or early Neolithic reduction technologies. It was a product of a broad blade industry and had scars of four similar removals from same platform and a snapped truncation scar, the form and proportions favouring an early Mesolithic date (c. 10,000 BC to 7000 BC). A flake recovered from (106) had been detached from a blade and flake core and preserved scars of four roughly parallel-sided removals. It had traits consistent with earlier Neolithic industries.

Most of the flakes were morphologically consistent with the relatively unstructured forms of freehand hard hammer reduction, which are indicative of the initial stages of core preparation and reduction and/or of late Neolithic and Bronze Age lithic industries (40 pieces of flake debitage). These flakes were predominantly broad, with pronounced bulbs of percussion and a high incidence of deep butts. Some of these flakes were particularly crude and irregular, which is potentially indicative of a lack of skill and/or that they were the products an expedient process. Dorsal scars suggest that the flake debitage was primarily detached from single-platform cores, but 15 pieces had scars indicative of multiple-platform core reduction. None of the flake debitage associated with these later industries exhibited any evidence of platform edge maintenance during core reduction.

5.2.2 Cores

Two cores and two core fragments were recovered (Table 1). They were all flake cores that were morphologically consistent with later Neolithic and Bronze Age lithic industries and both complete

examples had multiple platforms. The core recovered from (102) had produced a series of hard hammer flakes from at least three unstructured platforms. Several irregular flake surfaces indicated that the nodule had been worked despite having inherent flaws, which would have restricted the quality and character of its products. The other complete core, from (106), had scars of at least 16 hard hammer flakes that were removed from six unstructured platforms. Reduction had taken place in a very irregular and expedient manner, with multiple irregular flake terminations, and several surfaces having insipient bulbs of percussion from failed removals. As a result, it had been discarded before exhaustion due to a lack of viable platforms. These relatively crude and expedient reduction strategies are typical of later Bronze Age and Iron Age industries (Young and Humphrey 1999; Ballin 2002).

It is notable that no single-platform cores were recovered, given the ratio of single-platform to multiple-platform flake debitage (29 : 15) (see 5.2.1, above). This suggests that most cores were initially reduced from a single platform until errors and flaws prevented further reduction. In most instances the cores were then rotated until another suitable platform was found and were worked in an unstructured manner until exhausted or abandoned.

One of the core fragments, from (107), was the proximal fragment of a thick flake, with flakes removed from both lateral edges. While it could potentially have been part of a retouched tool, the pronounced spurs between the removals along one edge suggest otherwise. Additionally, the presence of two insipient bulbs of percussion along one side of the ventral surface and another on the other side further argues against this possibility.

5.2.3 Retouched Pieces

The assemblage contained two pieces that had been modified by secondary retouch, a side scraper from (100) and an end scraper from (108). In addition, there was a utilised flake from (106), with use-wear polish indicative of expedient use as an end scraper.

The side scraper from (100) weighed 46.5g and was manufactured on a large hard hammer flake, with a deep butt and thick cross-section. The proximal half of one lateral edge had been irregularly retouched by removing small semi-abrupt flakes to create an irregular denticulate edge. This modified edge had spalling along the dorsal margin and an intermittent band of diffuse polish along the ventral margin. The end scraper, from (108), weighed 34.8g and was manufactured on another robust hard hammer flake. The distal end had been abruptly retouched by the removal of two roughly parallel-sided oblique flakes (although these could have been remnants of removals from an earlier platform), and further small spalls and chips were detached along the resultant dorsal margin. This formed a relatively expedient tool that was probably created for a specific task and saw limited use before being discarded.

The utilised piece from (106), represented the proximal and medial fragment of a hard hammer flake with a deep butt and a thick cross section. The distal end has been broken off creating an abrupt transverse edge. A narrow band of diffuse polish extended the full length of the ventral margin of this truncation scar, suggesting that the flake had been utilised as an expedient scraper.

5.3 Other Stone

A small stone rubber or burnishing pebble was recovered from (108). It was a water rounded sub-oval flint pebble, measuring 51 x 37 x 24mm and weighing 66.4g. Cortex covered its entire surface, but one of the broad sides was naturally flatter and had been abraded, removing the outer surface of the cortex over an area of 46 x 25mm, at the centre of which was an area of diffuse polish extending

approximately 18 x 11mm.

Two pieces of Upper Greensand were recovered from (105). The smaller fragment may have been a crude flake detached from a larger piece, as it had a flat natural surface with a bowed inner margin, possibly a bulb of percussion, while one of the perpendicular edges was less weathered and rounded. Although the larger piece, weighing 1151g, had no evident signs of modification or utilisation, both chunks were derived from strata located beneath the chalk and must have been deliberately brought onto the hilltop from one of the flanking valleys; either Gorwell 850m to the west or Foxholes Farm 1.1km to the north.

6 Discussion

Interestingly, the boundary bank contained a relatively large assemblage of struck flint (51 pieces from 14m^2, equating to 3.6 pieces/m^2). The struck lithic assemblage comprised 86.3% debitage, 7.8% cores and core fragments, and 5.9% tools and utilised pieces. The assemblage is dominated by hard hammer flakes and most of this material exhibits morphological characteristics typical of later lithic industries, ranging from the late Neolithic to the Bronze Age, and potentially including some pieces manufactured in the Iron Age.

The assemblage also two pieces with morphological traits that are indicative of the deliberate curation and structured reduction of cores (3.9% of the assemblage). These are attributes of late Mesolithic and early Neolithic industries focussed upon the production of bladelets, blades, and gracile flakes. The blade from (107) is indicative of limited human activity during the early Mesolithic, while the flake from (106) could relate to activity that was broadly contemporaneous with the construction and use of the Grey Mare and her Colts chambered tomb.

Notably, there was a low incidence of post-depositional damage, indicating that the lithic material was probably covered or incorporated into the bank before any form of cultivation occurred in the surrounding area. While this might be expected, as enclosing a field with a boundary is often a precursor to cultivation, it also serves as a proxy for the period of creation, as relatively fresh lithic artefacts were the only artefacts recovered from the bank.

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