

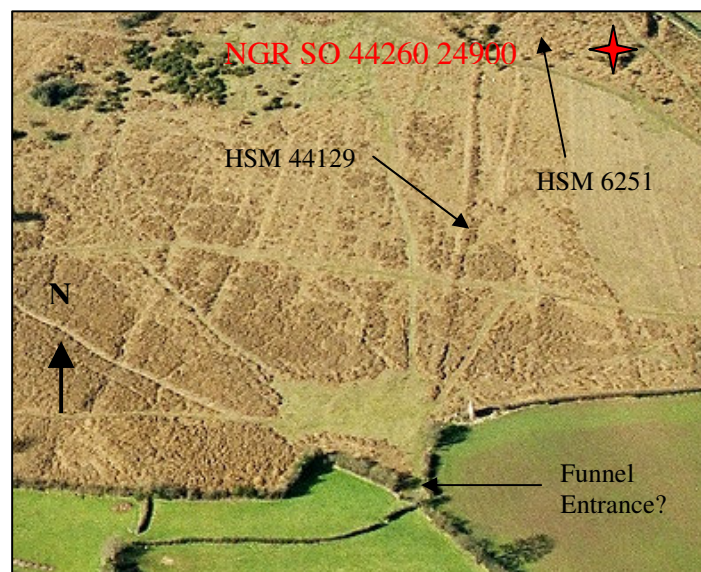
Medieval land management features

Earthworks that appear to relate primarily to the Medieval Period consist of land management features in the form of field boundaries and field systems. Directly to the south of the settlement enclosure HSM 6251 is a series of linear field boundaries aligned on a north – south axis, each of which is spaced between 12m and 14m apart. The boundaries HSM 33817 consist of a low bank constructed of mixed stone and earth, the stone having been gathered to aid clearance for use of the plough. Each bank measures between 1m and 2m wide and up to 0.5m high. Where the modern track crosses over the boundaries to the north the material employed in their construction is visible. The boundaries stretch from the southern edge of the settlement enclosure and gradually peter out as they approach the common boundary. The alignment of the boundaries down the reasonably steep gradient of the common raises the question of why? Had the reason been for the creation of strip fields for farming, then over time the soil would have been subject to erosion as persistent ploughing would have caused the earth to dislodge down slope.

Lining the western edge of this area of field boundaries are two more substantial boundaries which run south from the southwestern corner of the main enclosure (HSM 6251). Boundary HSM 44130 is cut by the modern track way to the south of the enclosure and continues down slope for c.70m before it is cut by an area of later quarrying. This feature continues beyond the area of the quarry but runs on a south-southeast alignment. Like the other field boundaries it comes to an end at the common boundary. In total the boundary measures 2-3m wide and 1m high.

The second boundary HSM 44129 runs from the top of the enclosure's (HSM 6251) southwest corner south to the common boundary. Unlike the other boundaries recorded, HSM 44129 connects with the common boundary at a point where the common juts out to form a funnel which in turn, connects to a field boundary running south away from the common. It would appear that the continuation of the boundary HSM 44129 south was to aid the formation of a funnel entrance onto the common from that direction. The modern field boundary that lines up with the funnel from the south is situated along the course of a disused hollow way that would support the argument for the presence of an entrance onto the common land.

Plate 2: Aerial Photograph indicating the field boundary HSM 44129 and its connection both to the prehistoric enclosure and possible funnel entrance onto the common. © C R Musson



The boundary HSM 44129 measures a maximum of 1.3m high and 2.5m wide, its course runs a distance of 240m before joining with the common boundary and funnel entrance. Due to the scale of this boundary's construction when compared to those noted in the east, it could be suggested that this feature was more than a simple field boundary. Instead the boundary may have acted as a demarcation feature separating one style of land use from the other.

This may be supported by the presence of field systems to the west. HSM 43915, 43918, 43919 and 43920 mark the positions of a number of parallel lynchets aligned north - south on a slope. The lynchets are spaced between 12m and 14m apart with the edge of the lynchets facing west. The surface of each is devoid of any stone, which may have been extracted or cleared for the construction of the field boundaries to the east. As to the purpose of the lynchets, their alignment down hill would not aid the use of plough but instead resulted in soil erosion. One suggestion is that the north/south aligned lynchets marked an area employed as an upland hay meadow.

Within the northwestern portion of this area of lynchets are two narrow platforms aligned east – west. Each is no more than 7m wide and would appear primarily to act as a simple break in slope to aid movement between the lynchets recorded above. HSM 43913 measures c.20m in length on which there are no surface features. The other is HSM 43917 and is similar in length, both platforms naturally dissolve into the slope of the common, it may be that the two continued east and west but due to land movement or later activity they have been removed. Alternatively the platforms may have been constructed for the storage of agricultural equipment or perhaps as stances for timber-framed structures.

To the north of this lynchet system is the remains of a sinuous bank and ditch boundary HSM 44130. This feature is traceable from the east of Black Pool and continues southeast parallel to the modern track. The feature runs for c.100m on this alignment before turning to the south and terminating along the tracks northern edge.

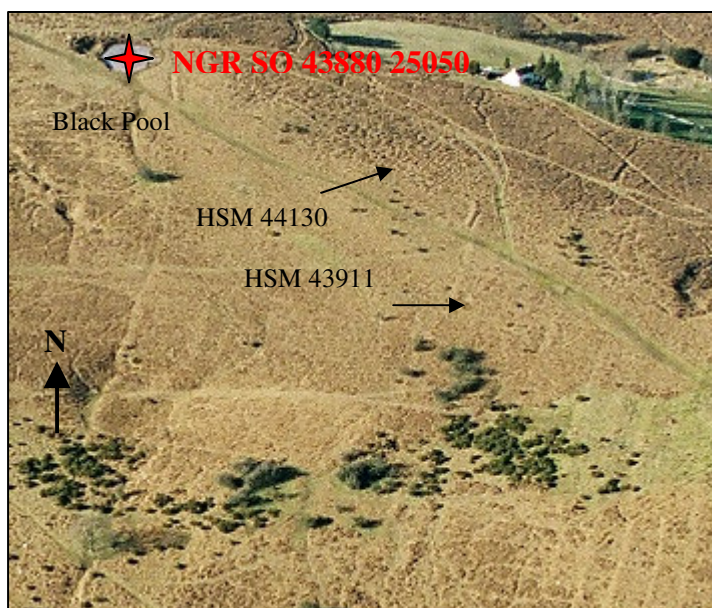


Plate 3: Aerial Photograph indicating the site of the boundary HSM 44130 to the southeast of Black Pool. The north-south aligned lynchets are visible to the south. © C R Musson

This feature may mark the extent of intensive farming on the common during the medieval period separating the arable land to the south with the pasture to the north. It is possible that this feature continued south as boundary HSM 43911 which ran to the south of the modern track. The bank runs south before turning to the west before meeting the platforms connected to the lynchets HSM 43915, 43918, 43919 and 43920.

Within the northwest corner of the main enclosure HSM 6251 a pair of sinuous but parallel boundaries were recorded HSM 44128. The western-most runs north from the enclosure ditch with the eastern most boundary visible cutting through the northern rampart of the enclosure, continuing south before petering out at the eastern edge of the western enclosure bank, approximately 10m from the southwest corner of the enclosure. Interestingly the linear demarcation boundary HSM 44129 ends c.4m to the south of boundary HSM 44128. Due to the proximity and similar alignment of the boundaries it is not impossible that they represent the same feature. To the north of the main enclosure the two parallel boundaries turn northwest but become lost in the bracken growth.

Further areas relative to medieval land management are apparent within the west and north of the common. These features relate to strip lynchets or agricultural terraces resulting in terracing of the hill slope to form narrow linear surfaces to allow for easy ploughing. Amongst the system of lynchets are a series of platforms, though no surface features remain visible; it is probable that they were employed for supporting the agricultural activities upon the common.