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MURIAU GWYDDELOD HUT AND FIELD SYSTEM
TALSARNAU, HARLECH

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Report No 44



Gwynedd Archaeological Trust Ltd

Ymddiriedolaeth Archaeolegol Gwynedd Cyf

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INVESTIGATIONS AT MURIAU GWYDDELOD HUT AND FIELD SYSTEM

TALSARNAU, HARLECH

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for Gwynedd Archaeological Trust 1992

List of Figures and Plates

Fig.1 General location map

Fig.2 Location of scheduled and cleared areas

Fig.3 Location of recorded lynchets in relation to main concentration of Muriau Gwyddelod hut and field system (based on O.S. aerial photograph)

Fig.4 West facing section of lynchet

Plate 1 View of lynchet section from north

Plate 2 View of lynchet section from south

Introduction

In early May 1992, Cadw : Welsh Historic Monuments were informed of a field clearance operation being carried out at Graig Lwyd by the owner Mr. Hywel Pugh of Tyddyn Sion Wyn, Talsarnau, Harlech, Gwynedd (Fig. 1.) Much of Graig Lwyd is dominated by a prehistoric hut circle settlement and field system, Muriau Gwyddelod (NGR SH 582 303), most of which is scheduled, (Me010.) Inspections by Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments and Gwynedd Archaeological Trust revealed that field clearance had destroyed extensive remains of the monument within one isolated field to the north of the scheduled area, (Figs. 2 and 3.) Further, much of the removed stone from this field had been dumped in a nearby field inside the scheduled area.

Procedures and Results

Mr. Pugh agreed to delay the completion of the clearing within the field until the area had been thoroughly examined by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust. On inspection, it was clear that much of the remains towards the south west corner of the field had not been disturbed, namely a lynchet approximately 20m in length. Mr. Pugh kindly agreed to machine dig a section across the lynchet under the supervision of a Gwynedd Archaeological Trust representative. The 6m long section was recorded and drawn to a scale of 1:20, (Fig. 4.)

From the section, it was clear that the natural aspect of the land sloped from east to west, as reflected by natural 006. Continual ploughing seems to have resulted in the transport of the ploughed soil down the gradient, forming the main body of the lynchet, 005, represented by a light grey clayey gravel, virtually free of any stones. This material was approximately 1m thick. Context 005 was overlaid by two slightly thinner layers, 002 and 004, and may have been the result of later and renewed phases of ploughing. Context 002, located towards the upper level of the gradient, consisted of a light brown silty clay, containing 10% of 0.10m diameter small angular stones. Context 004, located further downslope, consisted of a yellow gritty clay, free of any large stones. Context 003, lying above 004, consisted of a light brown / orange silty clay, up to 0.60m thick, containing up to 70% of large (0.30m+ diameter) angular and rounded stones. These large stones represented the collapsed remains of a field wall, built up against the downslope of the previously formed lynchet, contexts 004 and 002. Gresham 1967, p200, seems to argue in favour of lynchets being formed against *earlier* constructed walls. However, based on the evidence from this particular section, the wall is seen to be constructed above, and is therefore later than the predominating material of the lynchet, 005.

The whole feature was covered by a 0.30m thick layer of modern top soil, 001, representing the most recent evidence of ploughing in the stratigraphy.

The stratigraphic sequence within the section clearly reflects the gradual build-up of the lynchet and subsequently the adjoining wall. Despite an isolated out of context fragment of Romano - British pottery retrieved from the area prior to excavation, no dating material was obtained from the section itself.

Recommendations

Following the recording of the lynchet section, Mr. Pugh proceeded to complete the clearance operation within the field.

Knowing that Mr. Pugh intends to clear additional fields containing remains of the Muriau Gwyddelod hut and field system, a detailed letter has been sent to him by Gwynedd Archaeological Trust urging him in future to give sufficient notice of any clearance work he intends to carry out, thus enabling any archaeological material to be recorded and examined fully.

References

Bowen, E.G. and Gresham, C.A. *History of Meirioneth* Vol. 1. 1967.



Fig. 1 General location map

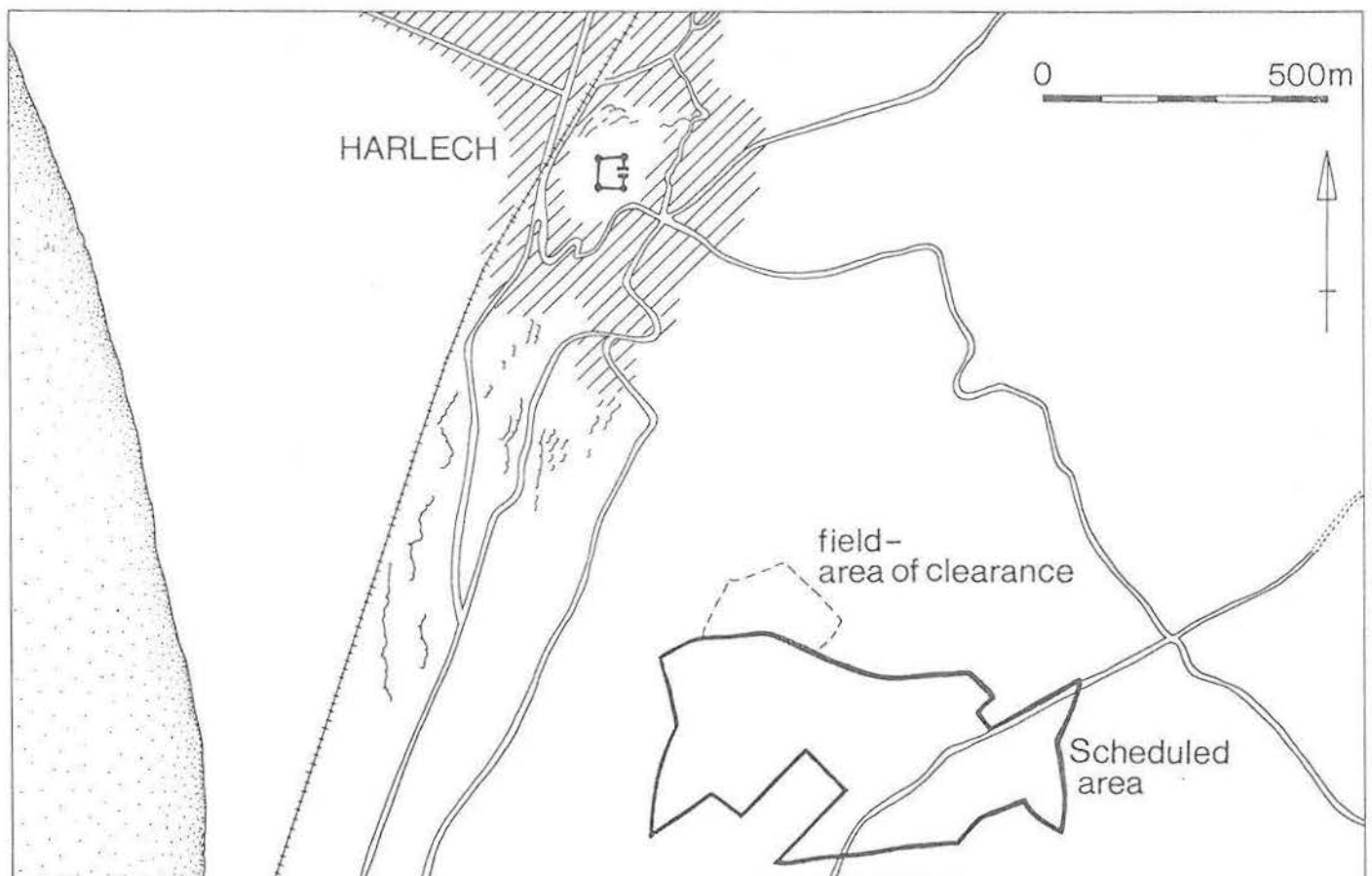


Fig. 2 Location of scheduled and cleared areas

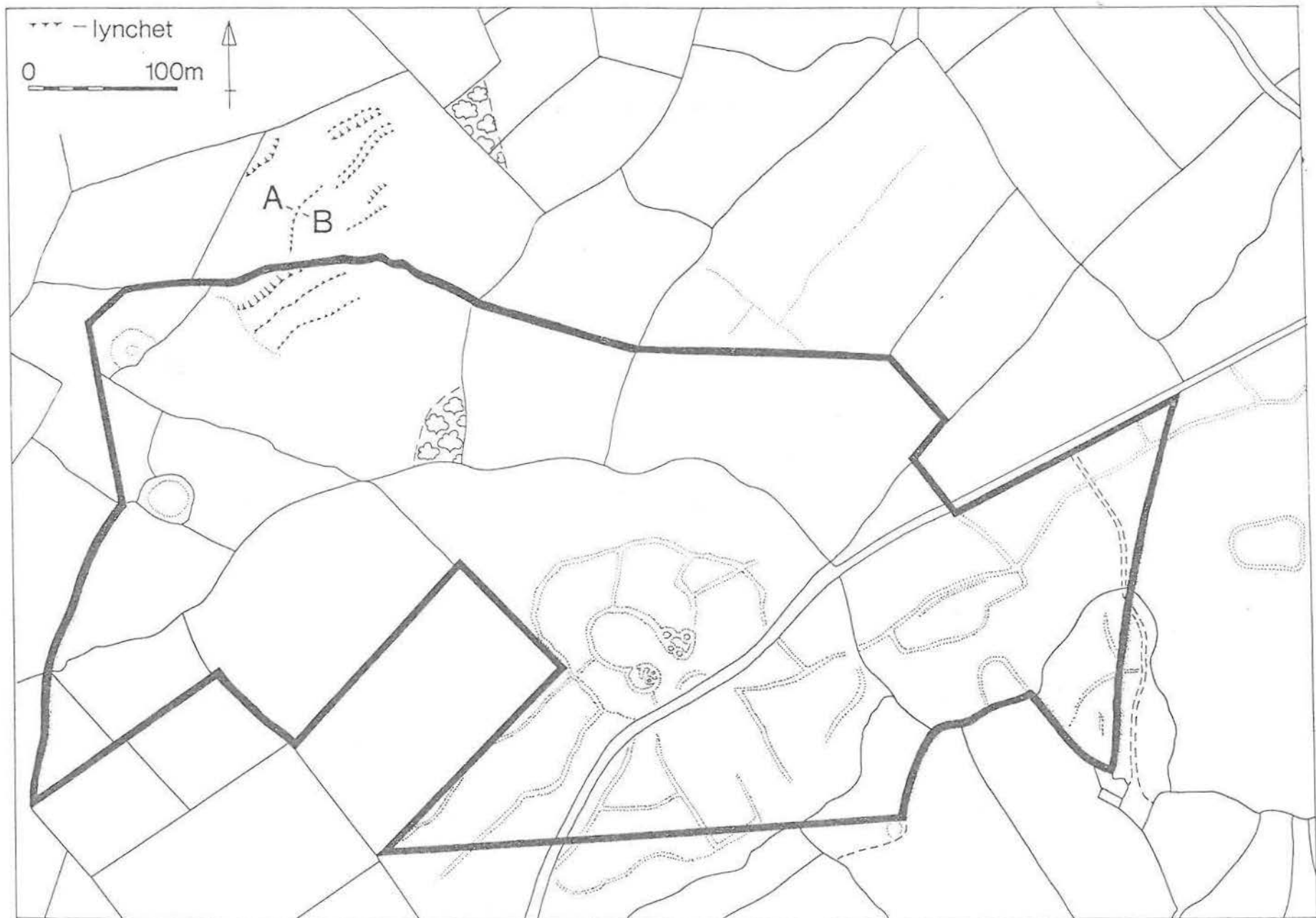


Fig. 3 Location of recorded lynchet in relation to main concentration of Muriau Gwyddelod hut and field system (based on O.S. aerial photograph)

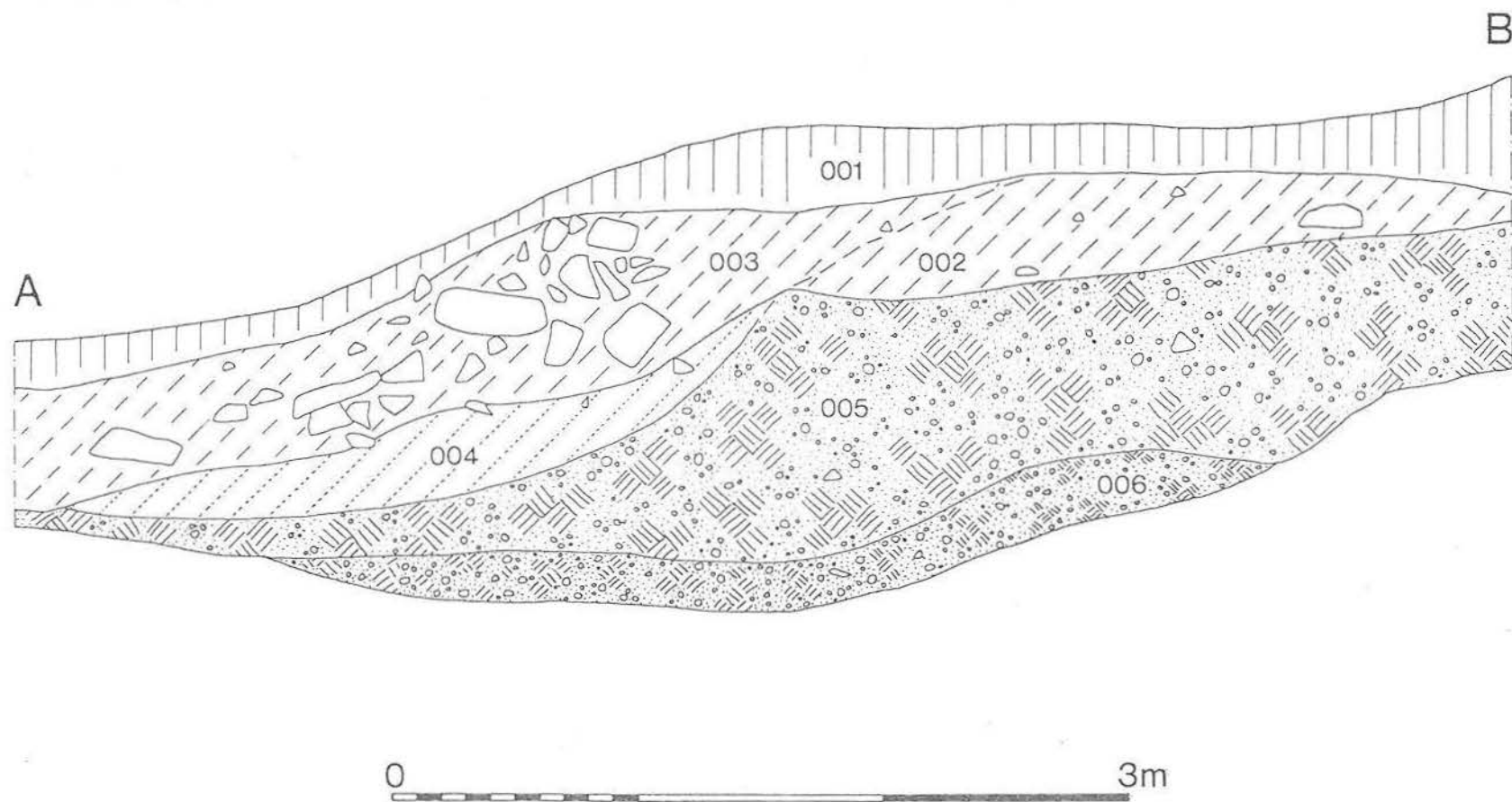


Fig. 4 West facing section of lynchet

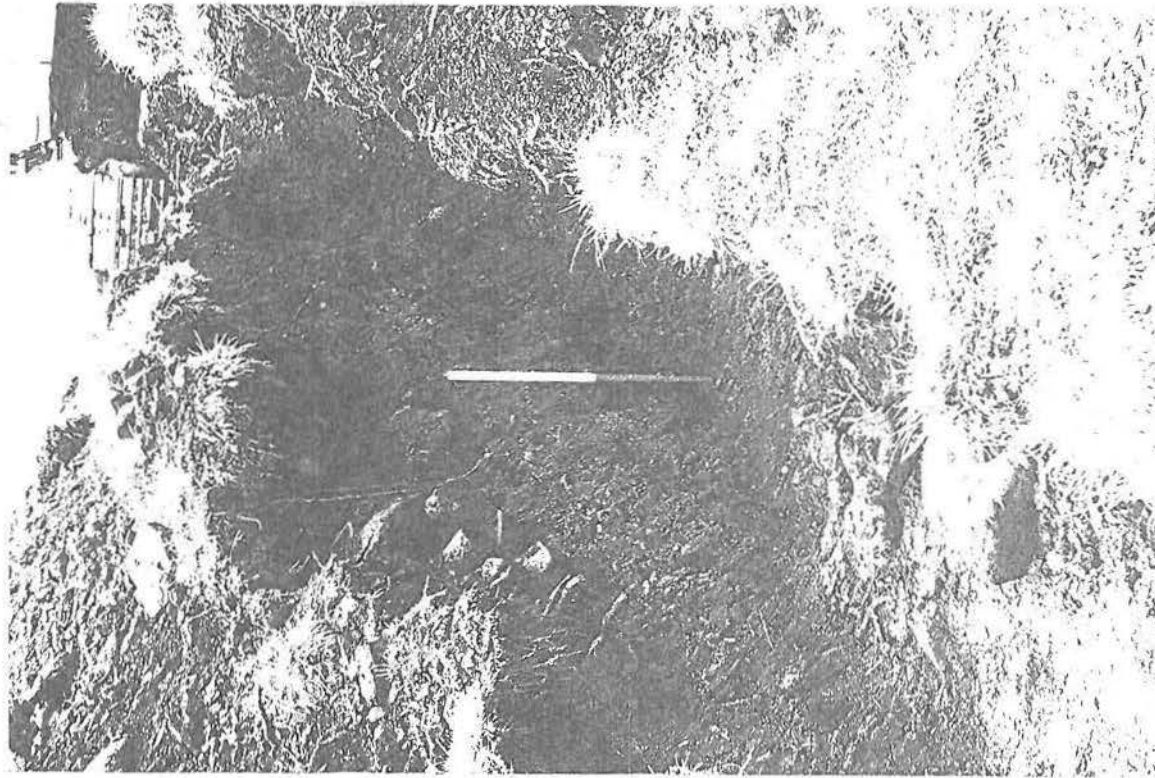


Plate 1 View of lynchet section from north

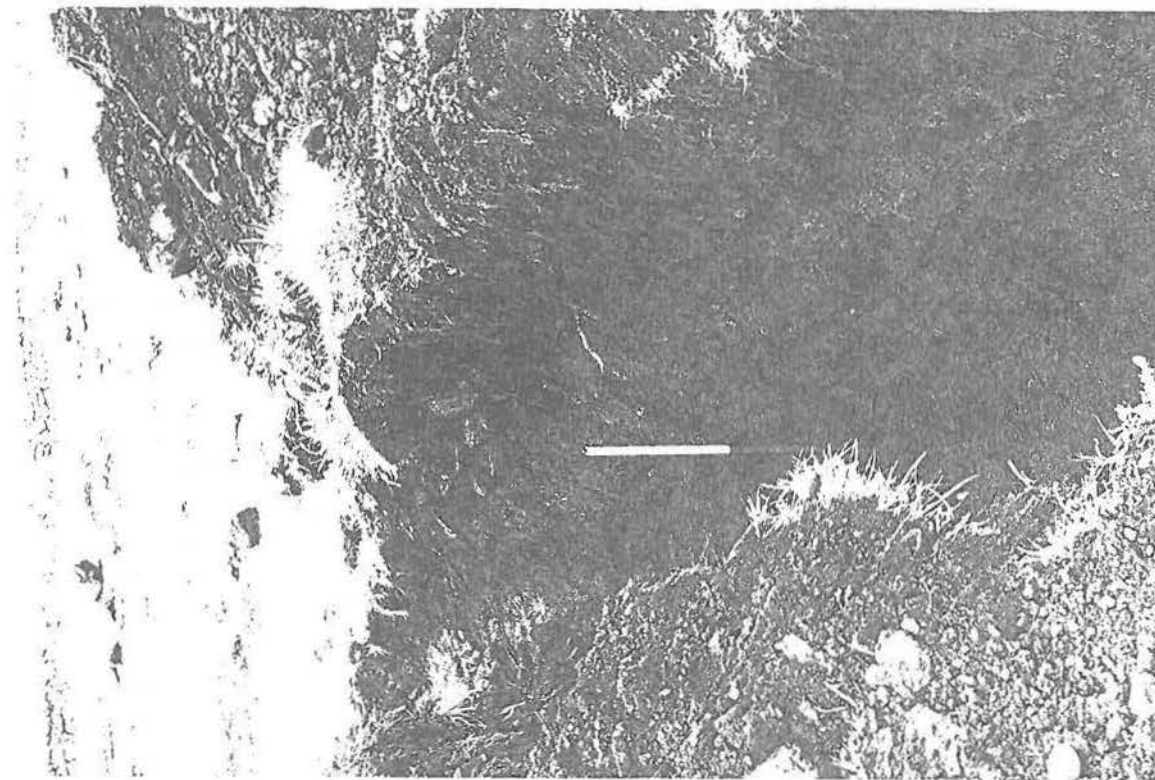


Plate 2 View of lynchet section from south

