

# **Earthwork Survey of Enclosure within Haye Park, Richard's Castle**

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**Herefordshire Archaeology**  
Environment, Planning and Waste  
Places and Communities Directorate Herefordshire Council



# **Earthwork Survey of Enclosure within Haye Park, Richard's Castle**

**Monument No: 6368  
NGR: SO 49200 72236  
Event Number: EHE1907**

**Herefordshire Archaeology** is Herefordshire Council's county archaeology service. It advises upon the conservation of archaeological and historic landscapes, maintains the county Sites and Monument Record, and carries out conservation and investigative field projects.

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# Contents

Summary	4
1. Introduction	5
2. Aims and Objectives	5
3. Location, Topography, Geology and Land-Use	5
4. Methodology	7
5. Current Knowledge	7
6. The Earthwork Survey	10
7. Discussion	16
8. Acknowledgements	17
9. Bibliography	17
10. List of figures and plates	18
11. Archive	18

## Summary:

There has been a number of suggestions concerning the age and use of the enclosure within Haye Park Wood. The fact that the medieval Deer Park Pale runs through the enclosure has led to suggestions that the earthworks all relate to the deer park and that the enclosure may represent the site of a medieval hunting lodge. During the winter of 2013, investigations within Haye Park formed part of a larger project entitled: The Herefordshire Nature Trust Parklands Project. This project involved the recording of ecological and archaeological / historical features within parklands across the county. Ecological and archaeological assets were recorded by volunteers under professional supervision in order to enhance and update the data held within the Biological Record Centre and The Historic Environment Record. The investigations within Haye Park comprised the excavation of a section across the external ditch of a large earthwork enclosure

The enclosure appears to represent the earthwork remains of some form of Late Prehistoric and / or Romano British, defended settlement or farmstead. A single sherd of pottery was recovered from the latest, undisturbed deposit filling the ditch. This has been dated to the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. The location of the sherd of pottery within the soil profile, its un-abraded condition and size, strongly suggest that it was *in-situ* when excavated.

This would therefore provide a date for the latest occupation phase of the monument of the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

During this fieldwork the form of the earthwork enclosure was found to be more complex than traditionally thought and it was felt that the production of an earthwork survey was desirable in order to record the form and character of the enclosure in order to better inform Archaeologists and Historians with regard to its possible construction date and development in more recent times. The survey would also be of use for the continued management of the monument by the Forestry Commission.

The survey identified a number of characteristics of the earthwork's form, previously un-recorded. These included the presence of a counter-scarp bank, clear evidence that the Medieval Deer Park pale cuts through the enclosure and therefore is later than the enclosure, and the fact that the area within the enclosure is terraced into the hill –slope.

Disclaimer: It should not be assumed that land referred to in this document is accessible to the public. Location plans are indicative only. National Grid References are accurate to approximately 10m. Measured dimensions are accurate to within 1m at a scale of 1:500, 0.1m at 1:50 and 0.02m at 1:20m

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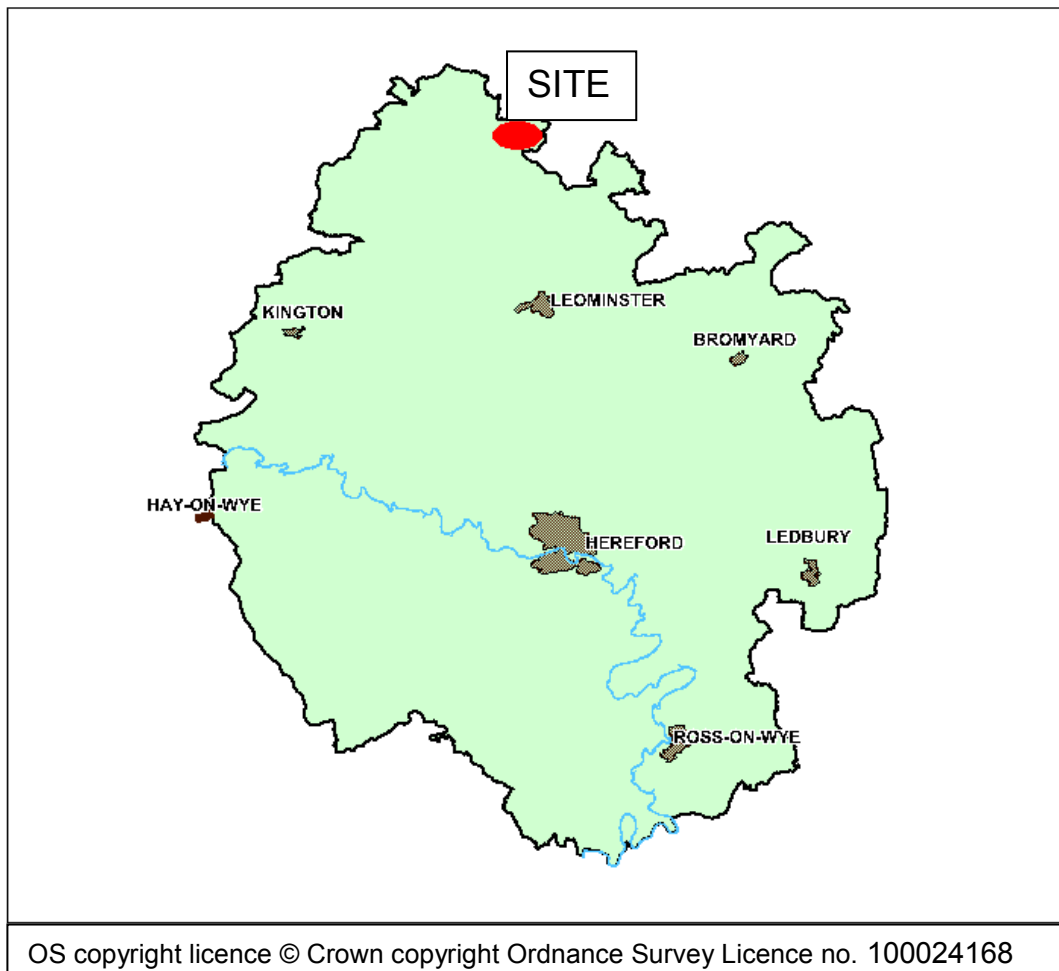
## 1. Introduction

This report provides an account of archaeological survey at Haye Park, Herefordshire, (NGR SO 4920 7223). The survey was required in order to better understand the nature of the earthwork and its relationship with the medieval deer park. The earthwork had not previously been recorded by measured survey and such a survey would advance the interpretation of the monument and aid the continued management of the monument. It was therefore agreed with the land owner (Forestry Commission) that a measured survey should be undertaken.

## 2. Aims and Objectives

The Survey was undertaken as a means of providing a more accurate plan of the earthwork enclosure in order to demonstrate its extent, character and relationship with other features. The survey will also be used as a base for managing the monument in terms of mitigating erosion of the earthworks and actively controlling re-growth and bracken.

## 3. Location, Topography, Geology and Land-use



**Figure 1: Location of the site within the County of Herefordshire**

## Haye Park, Location and Setting

The Site is located in Haye Park Wood, part of Mortimer Forest in the County Parish of Richards Castle, Herefordshire, NGR: SO 9200 2236. It is located west of the B4361 between Overton in the north and Richards Castle in the south. The trench is located on the south side of a large enclosure (SMR 6368) northeast of the Hayes Park car park.

The Historic Landscape Characterisation Survey for Herefordshire (HLC), describes Haye Park wood as woodland, part of the Richards Castle Estate, with the adaptation of enclosures from woodland (HLC 83).

Geologically, the Haye Park wood is underlain by siltstone and limestone beds of the whitcliffe formation of the Upper Ludlow shales. The upper slopes to the northwest are underlain by siltstones and mudstones of the lower and upper Leintwardine formations. To the east and southeast lie sandstone and mudstone beds of the Downton Castle Sandstone formation of the lower Old Red Sandstone (British Geological Survey, 2000, Earp and Haines, 1971).

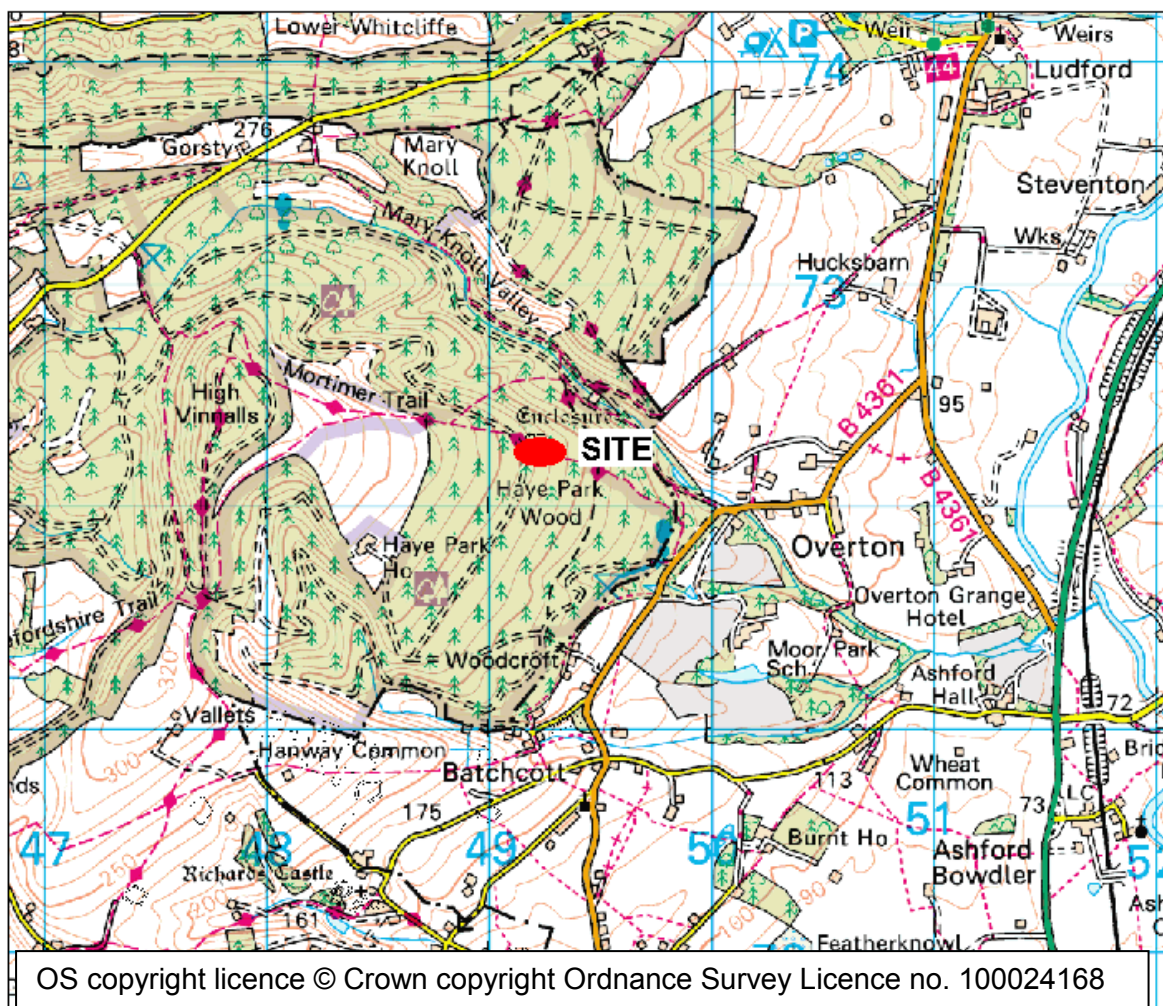


Figure 2: Location of site investigated within this report.

#### **4. Methodology**

The survey was undertaken by Herefordshire Archaeology staff during April 2014. The site had recently been cleared of natural regeneration growth, particularly young silver birch, areas of bracken and brambles had also been cut back with in the interior of the enclosure. A leica TCR 110 total station survey instrument was used where possible to record the tops and bottoms of earthworks. Where vegetation made this problematic, a Garmin 60CSx global positioning unit was used to record points. Recorded survey points were converted into RDX format and run through Autocad prior to being imported onto a GIS layer for mapping onto the Ordnance Survey mapping.

#### **5. Current Knowledge**

The Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record records two possible origins of the enclosure (HER 6368). The first, recorded in 1934 by the Royal Commission on Ancient Monuments, suggested that the enclosure possibly represents the remains of a homestead moat, and the second, suggested by the Ordnance Survey in 1972 that this is the “possible site of a lodge almost certainly connected to the park”. Both of these suggest that the site is of Medieval origin.

Further work was undertaken by Richard Lello (2003). Lello not only gave a more complete description of the site but also noted that a large ditch, thought to be part of the Medieval Deer Park Pale appeared to cut the enclosure in half and on this evidence, suggested the enclosure was not related to the deer park and that its origins may be far earlier.

The enclosure (HER 6368) is located on the South side of Haye Park Wood at NGR SO 349161 272294. It is rectangular, aligned north to south, approximately 85m long on the west side. The enclosure consists of a ditch with an inner bank on the west and south sides and an outer bank on the north and east sides. It is generally in a good state of preservation, but is cut on the east and west sides by a medieval park pale (HER 33652) and by a footpath (Mortimer Trail). The ditch on the west side of the enclosure has been damaged by a modern forestry road, and the site is covered with immature conifers, birch, bramble and bracken.

Lello also recorded that this enclosure is similar in form and dimension to enclosures identified only 5km away on Bircher Common i.e. HER 7021 that is only c.5m larger. These enclosures are identified as either Iron Age or Romano-British dating from 500BC to 400AD.

Fieldwork during the winter of 2013 which formed part of a larger project entitled: The Herefordshire Nature Trust Parklands Project. This project involved the recording of ecological and archaeological / historical features within parklands across the county. Ecological and archaeological assets were recorded by volunteers under professional supervision in order to enhance and update the data held within the Biological Record Centre and The Historic Environment Record. The

final Phase of the project included the more detailed investigation of a range of parkland features within Moccas Park, Brampton Bryan Park and Haye Park.

The investigations within Haye Park comprised the excavation of a section across the external ditch of a large earthwork enclosure within Haye Park.

The enclosure appears, therefore, to represent the earthwork remains of some form of Late Prehistoric and / or Romano British, defended settlement or farmstead. The original ditch was rock cut to a depth of 1.85m and was 2.6m wide. The material excavated from the ditch was used to form the bank or rampart and the small external counterscarp bank. It appears that this may have been rapidly filled to form a 2.6m wide and 1.4m deep ditch before more gradually filling up. Later, it was re-cut in order to create a 1.8m wide and 1.1m deep ditch which appears to have been allowed to gradually fill up with erosion product from both the rampart and the counterscarp bank. A single sherd of pottery was recovered from the latest, undisturbed deposit filling the ditch. This has been dated to the 1st or 2nd century AD. The location of the sherd of pottery within the soil profile, its un-abraded condition and size, strongly suggest that it was in-situ when excavated. This would therefore provide a date for the latest occupation phase of the monument of the 1st or 2nd century AD.

## **Survey Results**

The survey has shown that the enclosure comprised a roughly square internal area measuring approximately 65m east – west and 70m north – south. The principal earthwork is a bank (rampart) and ditch. The ditch is generally approximately 6m wide and is relatively gentle in profile. There is the earthwork remains of a counterscarp bank around the north, south and eastern sides it has been destroyed on the western side.

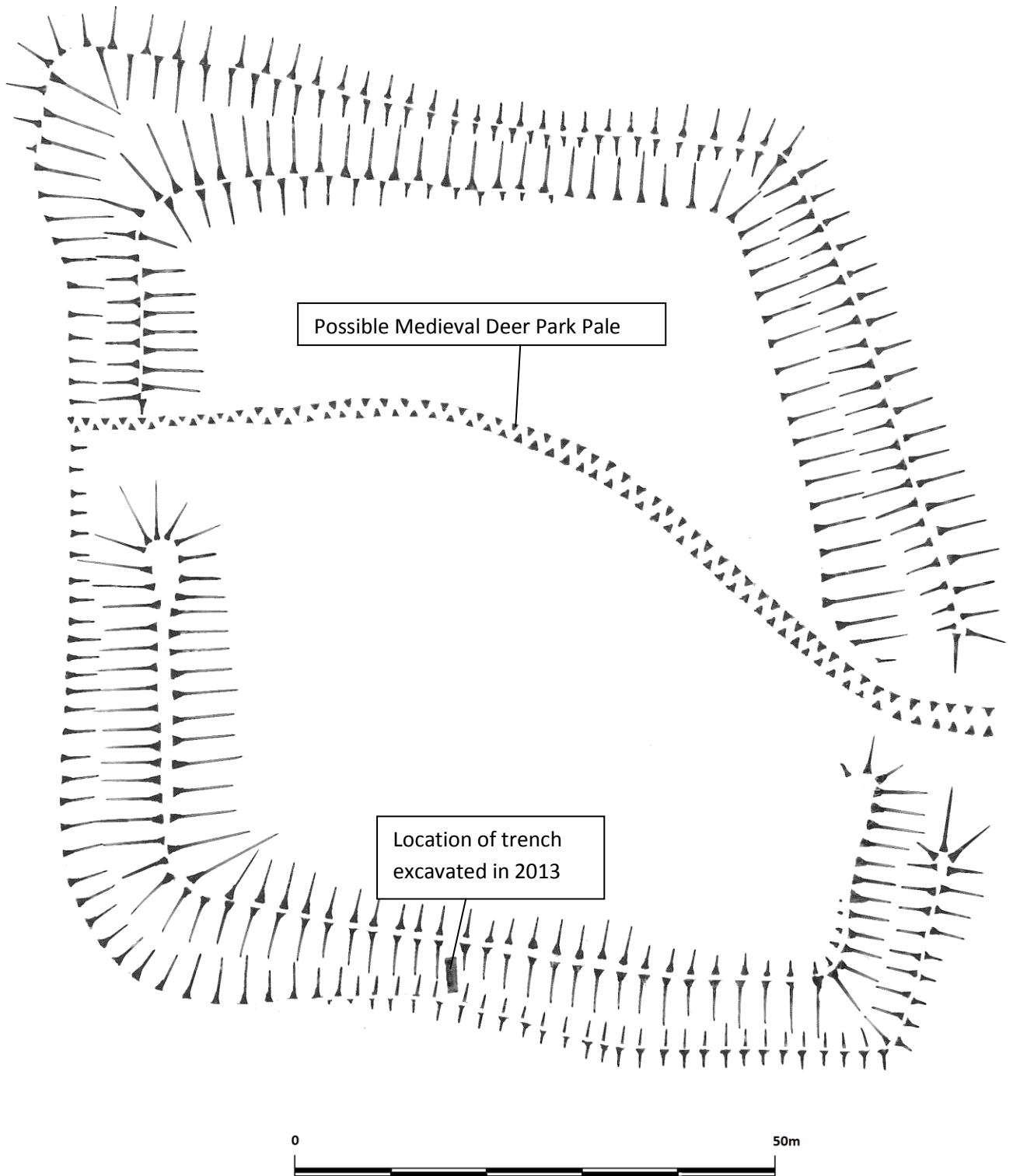
A major forestry track has been constructed along the western ditch of the enclosure. This has resulted in the loss of the western edge of the ditch and also any counterscarp bank which may have existed on this side. It is suggested that the ditch and counterscarp bank along the western side of the enclosure were wider and more prominent than around the remainder of the enclosure. The north-western corner shows the ditch widening and the counterscarp bank becoming more substantial. This however is difficult to be sure of, due to the lack of evidence for the counterscarp bank along the western side, it having been removed by the construction of the track.

The inside of the enclosure has been subjected to a degree of levelling. The site naturally slopes from west to east and it appears that the builders of the enclosure have decreased the angle of slope by terracing into the hill-slope within the western half of the enclosure and deposited the resulting material onto the eastern, (downslope) half of the enclosure which has effectively levelled out the site. This can be seen in the lack of bank along the eastern boundary.

The original entrance appears to be on the eastern side of the enclosure. Although interfered with by the insertion of the later park pale and a degree of erosion from the public footpath, both the internal bank and the counterscarp bank terminals to the



south of the line of the park pale, appear to be original and unaltered. The apparent entrance on the western side is less credible, although cannot be completely discounted, due to the disturbance caused by the park pale and the forestry track.



**Figure 3: Survey drawing rendered as a hachure plan including the park pale and the location of the 2013 trench.**

No features relating to the use of the enclosure were apparent during the survey. This may be due to the fact that despite regular, active management in terms of vegetation control, the ground cover remains too high and uneven to enable any surviving features to be recorded.

## **7. Discussion**

The survey has recorded the earthwork remains of an enclosure known to date from at least the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD (Hoverd & Williams 2014). The survey has confirmed much of Lello's (2003) thoughts concerning the layout and type of monument and has also confirmed beyond any reasonable doubt that the presumed Medieval park pale cuts straight through the enclosure and is not related to it in any way.

This is unusual in that, other park pales appear to respect pre-existing earthworks either by using the ramparts as part of the pale (as at Croft Ambrey) or by completely enclosing the earthwork within the park (as at Wapley Hill) in order to utilise the earthwork in some way. It would have been considerably easier for the park pale to have run along the northern or southern ditches of the enclosure rather than to have been cut through the enclosure with the added inconvenience of cutting through the rampart material. This may suggest that either, the boundaries of the deer park were laid out in a planned and inflexible way, not taking into account minor topographic features, or, that the feature which cuts through the enclosure is not part of the park pale but rather some form of watercourse or drain.

It can be concluded that the earthwork enclosure is relatively well preserved and would benefit from continued and sustained management. It would be desirable for the conifer plantation, which closely surrounds the southern, eastern and northern sides, to be removed in order to make the counterscarp bank more visible and to protect this feature from wind blow damage.

The unusual course of the apparent park pale feature may suggest that this does not represent the medieval park pale. Further work tracing the course of the rest of this feature may lead to a better understanding of its purpose and date. It is possible (and more conventional) that the park pale runs somewhere to the north of the enclosure (possibly along the top of the break of slope for Mary Knoll Valley) and that the enclosure was included fully within the deer park.

Whilst the mixture of survey and small scale excavation has determined that the enclosure is Romano-British in date, it is still unknown exactly how this monument was used. The date provided by the single sherd of pottery from the latest ditch fill, only provides a possible end date for its use. It is highly likely that this monument was initially constructed during the early Iron Age, approximately 500 – 300 BC.

## **8. Acknowledgements**

Herefordshire Archaeology would like to acknowledge the help and co-operation of The Forestry Commission, in particular Alan Reid and Peter Kelsall for their regular help and co-operation.

## **9. Bibliography**

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## **10. List of Figures and Plates**

Figure 1: location of site within the county

Figure 2: Location of site within the parish

Figure 3: Survey plan of earthworks

## **11. Archive**

2 RDX files

1 Mapinfo file

1 inked drawing

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