

An Interim Report on Archaeological Test Excavations at Cross Lodge and at Windy Ridge, Dorstone, Herefordshire, 2011

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Herefordshire Archaeology
Conservation and Environmental Planning
Planning Services
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Herefordshire Council

An Interim Report on Archaeological Test Excavations at Cross Lodge and at Windy Ridge, Dorstone, Herefordshire, 2011

**NGR: NGR: SO 33 41 and SO 3380 4135
EHE 1967 & 1968**

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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. The County Archaeologist is Dr. Keith Ray.

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Summary

This report discusses the results of test excavations led by Herefordshire Council's archaeological service and The University of Manchester at Cross Lodge, parish of Dorstone, Herefordshire, and at ; SO 33 41.

The project forms part of an ongoing joint partnership investigating prehistoric activity within the southwest of Herefordshire. The investigations aim to improve the knowledge of early migrations, in particular ritual and settlement sites associated with Neolithic activity. The investigations at these two sites form one aspect of the second year stage investigations into this period. Previous to the 2011 work investigations were centred on the English/Welsh border within the Olchon Valley where the Herefordshire Council/Manchester University partnership identified a Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age ring cairn.

The test excavation at Cross Lodge assessed the archaeological potential of a broad low knoll oriented north-west to south-east and located 120m to the east of the putative but unproven (Scheduled) long barrow at Cross Lodge (SMR 1529). Two trenches were investigated, neither of which produced any finds or intercepted any features indicative of cultural activity. The composition of the knoll was found to comprise a natural soil matrix containing numerous well-embedded but randomly occurring large stones and boulders, of presumed peri-glacial origin.

At Windy Ridge, between Dorstone and Peterchurch and overlooking the Golden Valley, a ditch had been located by aerial photography, overlooking and traversing a prominent hill spur. Two trenches each ranging in size from 10m x 3m to 16m x 2m were excavated here as part of exploratory excavations aimed at investigating Early Neolithic activity at a series of prominent hilltops in the Dorstone area. Archaeological features and artefacts were identified that indicate the multi-period use of the site. This occupation may well have included the use of the site as a hill-top enclosure in the fourth millennium BC.

The excavations took place between the 27th June and 26th of July 2011.

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 investigations at Cross Lodge, Dorstone, Herefordshire and at Windy Ridge, between Dorstone and Peterchurch and overlooking the Golden Valley. This Cross Lodge site was selected for excavation as part of a joint project between Herefordshire Council's Archaeology Service and the University of Manchester, investigating evidence for Neolithic activity in southwest Herefordshire. The project focus this year (2011) was hilltop sites and a total of four sites were investigated (Herefordshire Archaeology Report numbers 300, 301, and 302).

These sites were selected due to evidence of earthworks and crop marks identified from aerial photographs. With the exception of Dorstone Hill the sites investigated had not previously been subject to systematic archaeological investigation and so the date and exact nature of the probable features was unknown. They could only tentatively be suggested to be prehistoric hilltop enclosures and the fieldwork this year was intended to test this suggestion and evaluate the nature of these sites.

Cross Lodge was considered likely to provide evidence for a second long barrow, judging from both the characteristic topography of broad low knoll oriented north-west to south-east and for its proximity to a putative but unproven (Scheduled) long barrow (SMR 1529), located 120m to the east of this site.

With the exception of Dorstone Hill, the hilltop sites investigated in 2011 had not previously been subject to systemic archaeological investigation and so the date and exact nature of the probable features was unknown. They could only tentatively be suggested to be prehistoric hilltop enclosures and the fieldwork this year was intended to test this suggestion and evaluate the nature of the sites.

2. Aims and Objectives

CROSS LODGE

The aims of the investigation were to identify any above and below ground archaeological features and associated artefacts to ensure their professional recording and interpretation in order to further understand Neolithic society within the southwest of Herefordshire. The investigation consisted of the excavation of two trial trenches, the purpose of which was twofold; uncovering our prehistoric past and as a training exercise for students of The University of Manchester and the public local to the village of Bredwardine. Training was provided by Site Supervisors from Manchester University.

This was accomplished by:

- The excavation of two trial trenches, with the intention of uncovering evidence for Prehistoric activity at the site and as a training exercise for students of Manchester University as well as local volunteers.
- Each deposit encountered was investigated fully and recorded in full through a paper record using context/unit sheets of a professional archaeological standard. This data was then imported onto an Excel spread sheet and used to update and provide data for Herefordshire's SMR/HER.
- Within deposits that had the potential for high preservation and datable materials, a sample strategy was implemented in order to ensure the full extent of the site was investigated.
- Both characteristic, individual artefact and group assemblages were recorded providing an x and y axis within the associated deposit as well as a height above sea level. The artefacts were catalogued onsite and entered into a database by Manchester University where the artefacts were identified and processed.
- Each archaeological deposit/feature was recorded and drawn to a scale of 1:20. Trench section-plans were drawn to a scale of 1:10. These accompany the report and database into the archive.

WINDY RIDGE

The aims of the investigation were to explore a feature identified in aerial photography and its surroundings as well as to ensure their professional recording and interpretation in order to further our understanding of Neolithic activity within the southwest of Herefordshire. The investigation consisted of the

excavation of two trial trenches; the purpose was twofold: uncovering our prehistoric past and as a training exercise for students of the University of Manchester and Kyushu University. Training was provided by the Site Supervisor from the University of Manchester, and from Prof Koji Mizoguchi from Kyushu University.

Each deposit encountered would be investigated fully and recorded in full through a paper record using context/unit sheets of a professional archaeological standard. This data would then be imported onto an Excel spread sheet and used to update and provide data for Herefordshire's SMR/HER.

Within deposits that have the potential for high preservation and datable materials, a sample strategy will be implemented in order to ensure the full extent of the site is investigated.

Both characteristic, individual artefact and group assemblages will be recorded providing an x and y axis within the associated deposit as well as a height above sea level. The artefacts will be catalogued on a paper record on-site and inputted into a database at the University of Manchester where the artefacts will be professionally identified and processed.

Each archaeological deposit/feature will be recorded through a scale 1:20 plan and section plans made to a scale of 1:10. These would then accompany the report and database into the archive.

Geology and soils.

The underlying geology consists primarily of the St Maughans Formation with mudstone, siltstone and sandstone. The soils area a mixture of Brown earths over Devonian marl with occasional, interbedded, fine grained sandstones and siltstone in the case of Windy Ridge; and Non calcareous, surface-water gley soils containing both till and head drift of the Vernold Series in the case of Cross Lodge.

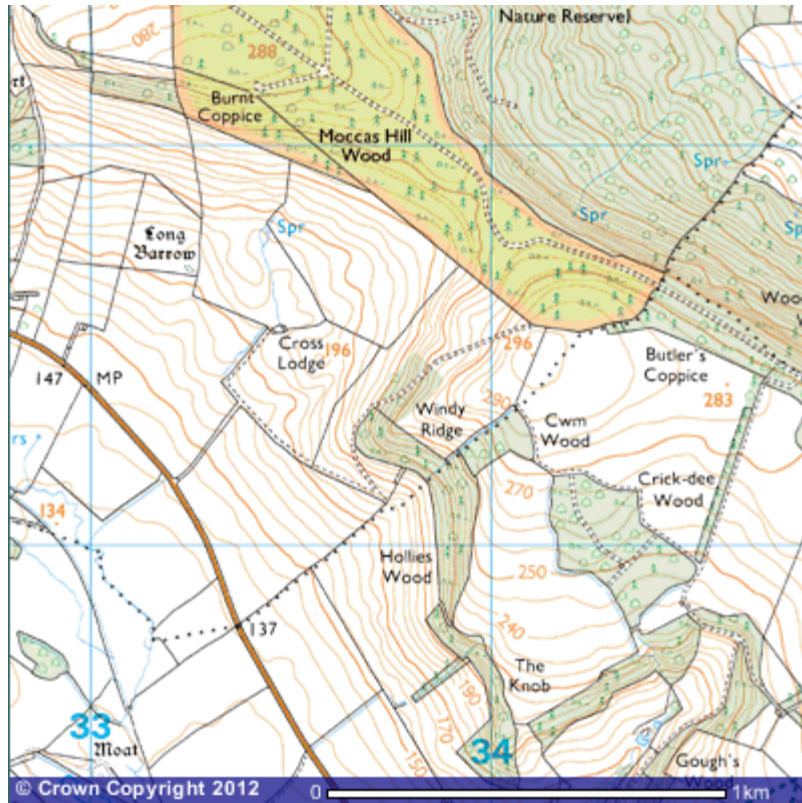


Figure 1: Scale 1:25 000 extract indicating location of Windy Ridge and Cross Lodge (OS crown copyright).

4. Methodology

The investigations at Cross Lodge comprised a trial excavation of two trenches. Trench 1 was opened along the axis of the knoll, and Trench 2 perpendicular to this axis, extended southwards down from the summit. Neither trench produced any finds or intercepted any features indicative of cultural activity. The composition of the knoll was found to comprise a natural soil matrix containing numerous well-embedded but randomly occurring large stones and boulders, of presumed peri-glacial origin.

The location of each trench was recorded in relation to a site grid. The sighting of each trench was chosen so as to avoid damage to the surrounding tree coverage and to prevent undue disturbance to nesting wildlife. The excavation was carried out by hand employing the use of spades, shovels, mattocks and trowels. The spoil was located at least 1m to the northwest of the trench. At the end of the investigation, each trench was backfilled by hand.

Each deposit encountered was ascribed an archaeological context number and recorded in the field using a paper record that was later transferred to a digital

EXCEL spread sheet. Each archaeological feature and deposit encountered was photographed to provide a visual record.

5. SMR records.

Listed below are records obtained from Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record. They list relevant records in overlapping areas of radius 500m from both Cross Lodge and Windy Ridge.

Long Barrow, W of Cross Lodge Farm

SMR Number: 1529

Grid Reference: SO 33 41

Parish: DORSTONE, HEREFORDSHIRE

Formerly 149. Neolithic long barrow on a south facing slope above the River Dore. On a slight ridge, in the corner of a pasture field, which slopes gently eastwards into a shallow dry valley. Earthen mound of sub-rectangular form, c.26m long and up to 12m wide. Orientated WNW-ESE, c.2m high with a flat top. From the east end of the mound a slab protrudes at an angle from the ground and may be in its original position. Full description. (1)

Monument Type(s)

1. LONG BARROW (Neolithic - 4000 BC to 2401 BC)

Sources and Further Reading

1. <1>[SHE12158 - Scheduling record: English Heritage Scheduling Section. 1996. Schedule entry. English Heritage. Mon No. 27495](#)
2. <2>[SHE16067 - Bibliographic reference: Grinsell, L.V.. 1993. Herefordshire Barrows. Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club. XLVII 1993 Part III. 299-317.](#)

Protected status

1. Scheduled Monument 27495: LONG BARROW 260M NORTH WEST OF CROSS LODGE

Possible second long barrow at Cross Lodge Farm, Dorstone

SMR Number: 13003

Grid Reference : SO 33 41

Parish : DORSTONE, HEREFORDSHIRE

Possible remains of a second long barrow behind Lodge Farm house. (1) A broad low knoll oriented north-west to south-east and located 120m to the east of the putative but unproven (Scheduled) long barrow at Cross Lodge (SMR 1529) had been suggested as the possible site of a second such barrow. Two trenches were opened here, one along the long axis of the knoll, and another perpendicular to this axis, extended southwards down from the summit. Neither trench produced any finds or intercepted any features indicative of cultural activity. The composition of the knoll was found to comprise a natural soil matrix containing numerous well-embedded but randomly occurring large stones and boulders, of presumed peri-glacial origin. (2)

LONG BARROW? (Neolithic - 4000 BC? to 2401 BC?)

Sources and Further Reading

<1>SHE63 - Bibliographic reference: Index. Hereford City Museum.

<2>SHE18751 - Unpublished Report: Ray, Keith. 2012. Dorstone Excavations 2011: Project Summaries. Herefordshire Archaeology.

Lodge Farm, Dorstone

SMR Number: 5023

Grid Reference: SO 33445 41563

Parish: DORSTONE, HEREFORDSHIRE

Walls of rubble, 2 storeys with later additions on the N & E. (1) Historic farm recorded as part of the Herefordshire Historic Farmsteads Characterisation Project. Present on the Ordnance Survey First Edition and Pre-WW2 maps, but not on the Modern map. (2)

Monument Type(s)

1. HOUSE (17th Century - 1601 AD to 1700 AD)
2. FARM (Post Medieval - 1540 AD to 1900 AD)

Sources and Further Reading

1. <1>[SHE350 - Bibliographic reference: Royal Commission on Historical Monuments. 1931. Inventory of Monuments, Herefordshire South-West, Vol I. Herefordshire South-West, Vol 1. I,57](#)
2. <2>[SHE17621 - Unpublished Report: Preece, Natalie. 2008. Herefordshire Historic Farmsteads Characterisation Project Stage 1.. Herefordshire Archaeology.](#)

Quarry

SMR Number: 40100

Grid Reference: SO 3315 4211

Parish: DORSTONE, HEREFORDSHIRE

Monument Type(s)

1. QUARRY (Post Medieval - 1540 AD to 1900 AD)

Sources and Further Reading

1. <1>[SHE15378 - Cartographic material: Ordnance Survey. 1885. 6 inch to one statute mile, 1:10560, map, first edition OS map. Ordnance Survey. 1st Edition.](#)

Quarry

SMR Number: 40100

Grid Reference: SO 3315 4211

Parish: DORSTONE, HEREFORDSHIRE

Monument Type(s)

1. QUARRY (Post Medieval - 1540 AD to 1900 AD)

Sources and Further Reading

1. <1>[SHE15378 - Cartographic material: Ordnance Survey. 1885. 6 inch to one statute mile, 1:10560, map, first edition OS map. Ordnance Survey. 1st Edition.](#)

Quarry

SMR Number: 40101

Grid Reference: SO 3343 4214

Parish: DORSTONE, HEREFORDSHIRE

Monument Type(s)

1. QUARRY (Post Medieval - 1540 AD to 1900 AD)

Sources and Further Reading

1. <1>[SHE15378 - Cartographic material: Ordnance Survey. 1885. 6 inch to one statute mile, 1:10560, map, first edition OS map. Ordnance Survey. 1st Edition.](#)

Quarry

SMR Number: 40105

Grid Reference: SO 3415 4157

Parish: DORSTONE, HEREFORDSHIRE

Monument Type(s)

- 1.QUARRY (Post Medieval - 1540 AD to 1900 AD)

1.<1>SHE15378 - Cartographic material: Ordnance Survey. 1885. 6 inch to one statute mile, 1:10560, map, first edition OS map. Ordnance Survey. 1st Edition.

Cook's Barn

SMR Number: 45566

Grid Reference: SO 32986 41541

Parish: DORSTONE, HEREFORDSHIRE

Historic Farm recorded as part of the Herefordshire Historic Farmsteads Characterisation Project. Present on the Ordnance Survey First Edition, Pre-WW2 and Modern maps. (1) (2) (3) (4)

Monument Type(s)

1. FARM (Post Medieval - 1540 AD to 1900 AD)

Sources and Further Reading

1. <1>[SHE17616 - Cartographic material: Ordnance Survey. 1893. Ordnance Survey County Series Digital Historical Map Data 1:2500 - Epoch 1. Ordnance Survey/Landmark.](#)
2. <2>[SHE17619 - Cartographic material: Ordnance Survey. 1943. Ordnance Survey County Series Digital Historical Map Data 1:2500 - Epoch 4. Ordnance Survey/Landmark.](#)
3. <3>[SHE17620 - Cartographic material: Ordnance Survey. 2008. Ordnance Survey MasterMap. Ordnance Survey.](#)
4. <4>[SHE17621 - Unpublished Report: Preece, Natalie. 2008. Herefordshire Historic Farmsteads Characterisation Project Stage 1.. Herefordshire Archaeology.](#)

Possible Neolithic Activity, Windy Ridge, Dorstone

SMR Number: 52221

Grid Reference: SO 3380 4135

Parish: DORSTONE, HEREFORDSHIRE

At Windy Ridge between Dorstone and Peterchurch and overlooking the Golden Valley, a ditch had been located by aerial photography, overlooking and traversing a prominent hill spur. In the first excavation trench opened here, the upper levels of the ditch were found to have been removed by Early 19th Century quarrying. The latter was indicated by the removal of stone from a natural rock outcrop and the dumping of waste to fill most of a hollow beside the outcrop, and was dated by the presence of clay pipe stem fragments. However, the basal silts of the surviving lower portion of the ditch produced a single leaf-shaped arrowhead from a very small slot cut across it. While this could have been residual it is provisionally regarded as a likely indicator of construction of the 4th millennium. A second trench was excavated close to the end of the spur. This produced no finds, but intercepted a large area of burning either signifying the presence of a charcoal burning terrace, or of a bonfire, set within deliberately-place stone kerbing. (1)

Monument Type(s)

1. DITCH (Neolithic - 4000 BC? to 2401 BC?)
2. OCCUPATION SITE (Neolithic - 4000 BC? to 2401 BC?)

Sources and Further Reading

1. <1>[SHE18751 - Unpublished Report: Ray, Keith. 2012. Dorstone Excavations 2011: Project Summaries. Herefordshire Archaeology.](#)

Field boundary, Dorstone and Peterchurch

SMR Number : 5275

Grid Reference : SO 3408 4140

Parish : DORSTONE, HEREFORDSHIRE

PETERCHURCH, HEREFORDSHIRE

Very slight traces of ditch with curved SW end & straight NW side. Slight depression which v noticeably retained water more than the surrounding ground.
(1)

DITCH (Undated)

Sources and Further Reading

<1>SHE9530 - Verbal communication: Roberts, J P. 05/1983. Correspondence and notes from the County Archaeological Officer. SMR Card.

8. Trial Excavation Results

CROSS LODGE

Trench 1

An area for investigation was identified a broad low knoll oriented north-west to south-east and located 120m to the east of the putative but unproven (Scheduled) long barrow at Cross Lodge (SMR 1529). Two trenches were opened here. Trench 1 was located along the axis to the knoll, and Trench 2 was opened perpendicular to the axis in order to explore the nature of such feature. Neither trench produced any finds or intercepted any features indicative of cultural activity. The composition of the knoll was found to comprise a natural soil matrix containing numerous well-embedded but randomly occurring large stones and boulders, of presumed peri-glacial origin.



Plate 1: View of Cross Lodge from Windy Ridge.

The topsoil, context/unit (001) consisted of a light greyish brown loam with occasional inclusions of angular stones. The topsoil measured c.13 cm in length and overlay context (002).

Context/unit (002) represented the latest sequence and consisted of medium brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of large angular stones. This context measured c.5 cm in length and extended to the limits of the trench. This unit overlay (005).



*Plate 2: Trench 1
looking South.*

Context/unit (005) consisted of natural soil matrix containing numerous well-embedded but randomly occurring large stones and boulders, of presumed periglacial origin.

Trench 2

Context/unit (003) consisted of greyish brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of angular stones. This unit measured c. 13 cm in length and it extended to the limits of the trench. Context (003) is same as (001).

Context/unit (004) was defined as Medium brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of large angular stones. This context measured c.5 cm in length and it extended to the limits of the trench. This context overlay (006) and is same as (002).



Plate 3: Trench 2 looking to the south - west.

Context/unit (006) consisted of natural soil matrix containing numerous well-embedded but randomly occurring large stones and boulders, of presumed periglacial origin.

WINDY RIDGE

Trench 1

The site for investigation was located at the top of the spur, cutting through the feature initially identified in aerial photography and clearly visible in the ground through differences on vegetation growth. Trench 1 measured 10m x 3m and was located nearby a rock outcrop. The intention of the investigation at this location was to explore the enclosure-like feature identified in aerial photography.

The topsoil, context/unit (001) consisted of a light reddish brown clayey silt of loose compaction with occasional inclusions of small rounded pebbles. The topsoil measured c.27cm thick and overlay deposits (002) (003) (004) and (005).

Context/unit (002) consisted of a fine layer averaging from 30 cm to 5cm depth of a very compacted gravel deposit with occasional inclusions of charcoal flakes located on the northernmost area of Trench 1. This context measures c. 3m length and 1.5m width and overlay the bedrock (003).

The bedrock (003) consisted of a grey brown fractured mudstone/sandstone, deduced to be the result of glacial freeze/thaw action.



*Plate 4: Windy Ridge
Trench 1 in foreground and
Trench 2 in the distance.*

Context/unit (004) consisted of a very compacted medium orangey brown silty clay measuring 30-15 cm thick with thick with frequent inclusions of rounded stone. A concentration of medium angular sandstone slabs were identified in this

horizon and interpreted as discarded material from 19th century quarrying activity. Two pipe fragments (001, 005) were identified in this context. Unit 004 overlays deposits (006).

The natural Context/unit (005) consisted of very compacted light orange pink clay found directly below 001 on the southern edge of the Trench 1. A 0.5m x 0.5 m sondage was conducted on the south-east extreme of Trench 1 to corroborate the nature of this layer.

Context/unit (006) consisted of a light brown silty clay measuring 30-10 cm with frequent charcoal inclusions. The formation of this layer is described as product of hill wash post-dating quarrying activity. A series of flint fragments (004, 006, 007) were recovered in this context. However, these findings might have been incorporated into this context either as product of hill wash or as quarrying disturbance. This context overlay (008) and (009).

Context/unit (007) consisted of a light brown silty clay elongated feature characterised as a charcoal spread. A flint flake (003) was recovered in this context. Unit (007) overlay (009).

Context/unit (008) was characterised as a concentration of angular sandstone slabs (20 to 30 cm) which were originally conceived of as a possible structure but that were finally defined as discarded material from quarrying activity. This context overlay (009). Giving the difficulties confronted in removing some of the slabs, at this stage, Trench 1 was half sectioned and only north-east section was explored further.

Context/unit (009) consisted of compacted dark brown silty clay measuring 20-10 cm with occasional rounded stones and charcoal flakes. This context is defined as product of hill wash and it contained a flint fragment (009) and a fragment of pipe (010). This context overlay (005), (010) and (012).

Context/unit (010) consisted of a medium to dark brown silty clay measuring c. 30 cm with frequent charcoal inclusions. This context was identified as an upper fill to the ditch (012) and overlay (011).

Context (011) consisted of medium orangy brown sandy clay with frequent charcoal inclusions. This context was defined as a lower ditch fill, however, it was not possible to determine whether this was the primary deposit of the ditch due to time constrictions and to the restricted area of excavation. An early Neolithic leaf-arrowhead (011) was recovered in this context. This context overlay (012).



Plate 5: Trench 1, detail of ditch, context (011).

Context (012) consisted of a U-shaped cut 1m in length with rounded corners and steep sides, identified as a ditch running across Trench 1 on a east/ west direction and of possible Neolithic date as diagnosed by the recovery of a leaf-arrowhead (011).

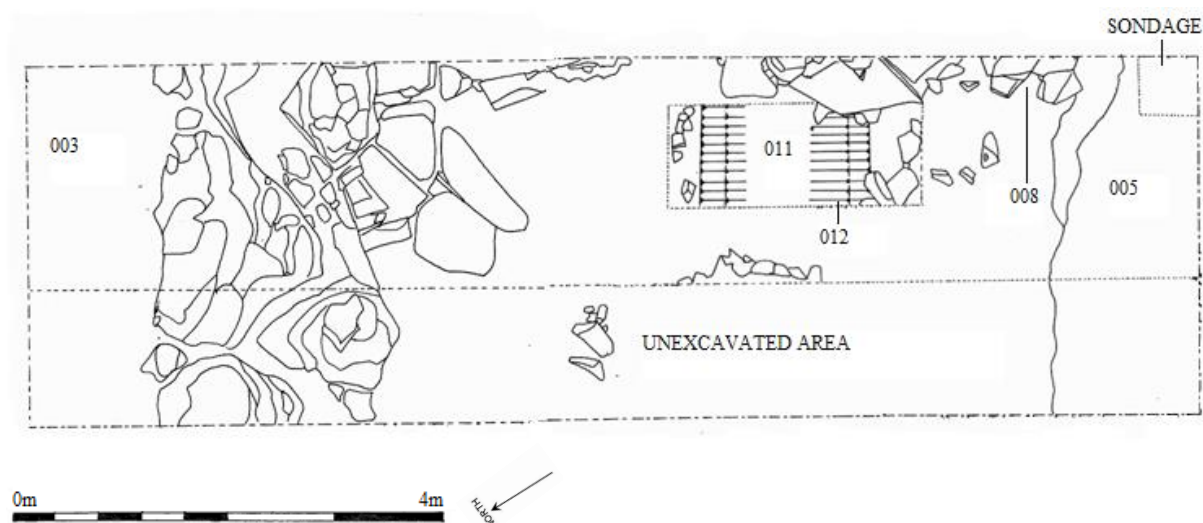


Figure 2: Plan 007 of Trench 1 showing contexts (003), (005), (008), (011), (012). Note area left unexcavated.

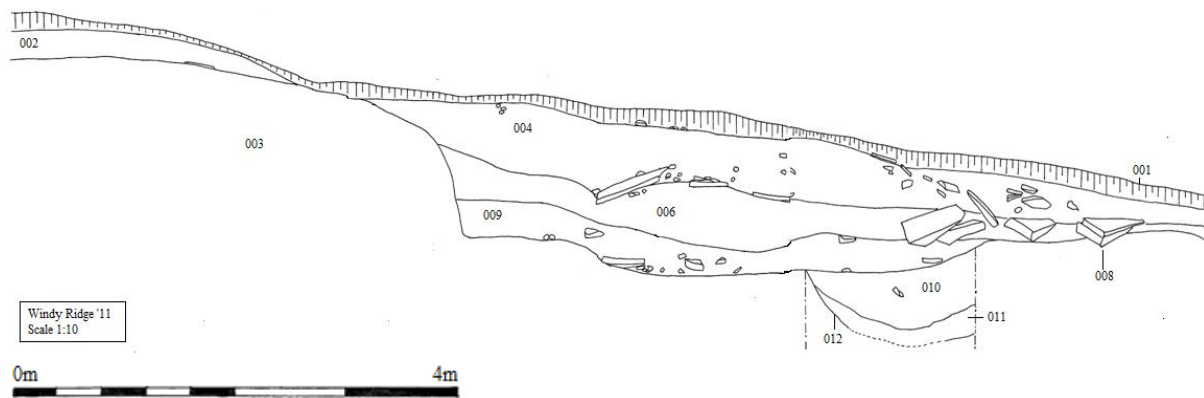


Figure 3: South-east facing section (006).

Trench 2

A trench measuring 16x2m was excavated as the bottom of the spur. The trench was positioned in order to investigate a flat area located on the inner side of the ditch identified in aerial photography.

The topsoil, context (001), was defined light reddish brown silty clay with concentrations of charcoal in patches towards the middle of the trench. The topsoil measured 20 to 30cm in depth. It covers the entire trench (16x2m) and overlay (002), (003), (004), (005), (006), (007), (008), (009).

Context/unit (002) consisted of medium orange brown compacted clay, measuring 15 to 20 cm in depth and limited to the south-east end of the trench. This unit overlay (003).

Context/unit (003) was the natural, consisting of very compacted orange pink clay. Context/unit (004) consisted of reddish brown compacted clay with occasional charcoal flakes. The intensity of the charcoal inclusions increases towards the area of burning (005). This unit is 4m in length and 2m in width and it measures c. 20cm in depth. It overlay (006).

Context/unit (005) was defined as dark brown compacted clay with charcoal spreads. This context is same as (004), however, a different context number was given to designate the central area of burning. It overlay (003). Context/unit (006) consisted of orange brown very compacted clay with charcoal spreads and cracked sandstone slabs result of heating. This context measures 2x1m in length and it is 1m width, and overlays (007).

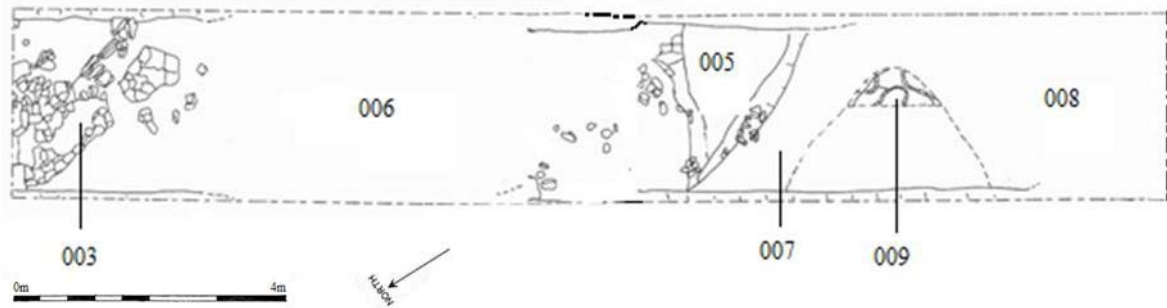


Figure 4: Trench plan of Trench 2.

Context/unit (007) consisted of reddish brown compacted clay with occasional charcoal flakes. The intensity of the charcoal inclusions increases towards an area of burning (007). This unit is 3m in length and 2m in width and it measures c. 20cm in depth. It overlay (003).

Context/unit (008) was defined as grey very compacted clay with frequent inclusions of charcoal flakes. This is identified as an area of burning activity and it measures 2m in length and 1.5m in width. It overlay (003).

Finally, context/ unit (009) consisted of orange brown very compacted clay with charcoal spreads. This context measures 2x1m in length and it is 1m width, and overlays (003).

Trench 2 produced no finds, but intercepted a large area of burning either signifying the presence of a charcoal burning terrace, or of a bonfire, set within deliberately-place stone kerbing.

9. Discussion

The test excavations undertaken at these two sites in June – July 2011 were designed primarily to establish whether there was any archaeological potential at all at these locations. They were further designed to establish, if at all possible, the nature of any cultural activity attested by any remains encountered.

In both instances, the first objective was successful. It was established that the putative mound at Cross Lodge that lies to the north-east of the undoubted mound (that is nonetheless of uncertain origin) designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument was of natural origin.

The ditch identified through aerial photography at Windy Ridge was considered likely to be the result of Neolithic activity, drawing from comparable well-known early Neolithic enclosures identified in other regions of the British Isles.

A number of discrete areas of past human activity were identified within the two trenches opened in July 2011 at Windy Ridge, Dorstone as part of the Bredwardine – Dorstone area prehistory project.

Trench 1 helped exploring into the nature of the ditch that identified in aerial photography. However, the upper levels of the ditch were found to be removed by Early 19th century quarrying. The latter was indicated by the removal of stone from a natural rock outcrop and the dumping of waste to fill most of a hollow beside the outcrop, and was dated by the presence of clay pipe stem fragments. Due to the nature and sheer size of the discarded slabs, the excavation of the site proved challenging at times, and did not allowed the discovery of the ditch until the last days of excavation.

Below the mound of discarded slabs, the ditch was finally identified. Judging from the process of excavation of this feature, it was a U-shaped ditch which, therefore, helps sustaining the possibility to be in front of a Neolithic structure. Moreover, the basal silts of the surviving lower portion of the ditch produced a single leaf-shaped arrowhead from a very small slot cut across it. While this could have been residual, it is provisionally regarded as a likely indicator of construction of the 4th millennium BC. The positive results obtained at this site as well as the location of the trench (near a rock outcrop) did not only instigate another season of excavation at the site but helped determining the location of future trenches.

A second trench was excavated close to the end of the spur in order to explore the nature of a terraced area located in the inner side of the circular ditch identified in aerial photography. Whilst this trench produced no finds, it was defined as a large area of burning. More than one episode of burning was located in this trench. However, the sequence in which these episodes took place could not be clarified due to the lack of stratigraphic sequencing between these areas. The activity identified in this trench was defined as either a charcoal burning terrace or a bonfire, set within deliberately-place stone kerbing.

viii. Acknowledgments

Herefordshire Council and Manchester University would like to convey their gratitude to Simon Quan and the Trustees of the Wilmaston Estate for their permission and support of the investigations upon their land.

Thank you to Natural England for allowing derogation and investigations to commence at Windy Ridge.

A special thank you is due to all of the volunteers and students who took part in the investigations, without their help the investigations would not have been a success.

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George Turner
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Validation

Herefordshire Archaeology operates a validation system for its reports, to provide quality assurance and to comply with Best Value procedures.

This report has been checked for accuracy and clarity of statements of procedure and results.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Ray', followed by a period.

Dr. K. Ray, *MBE FSA MIFA*
County Archaeologist
Herefordshire Archaeology

