



Herefordshire Archaeology
Conservation and Environmental Planning
Planning Services
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Herefordshire Council

Woodbury Hill Wood, Moccas A Woodland Survey

Herefordshire Archaeology Report No. 236

Report prepared by

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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.

Woodbury Hill Wood, Moccas

A Woodland Survey

Herefordshire Archaeology Report No. 236

Herefordshire Archaeology, April 2007.

Summary:

The survey described in this report, (HSM No.44690), was undertaken at the request of Natural England in order to ascertain the type, condition and distribution of features of archaeological significance within the wood. A rapid walk over survey was carried out in the wood concerned. A hand held Global Positioning System was used to record the location of features encountered.

The earliest features recorded were the earthwork remains of two round barrows, one of which appears to have had an antiquarian trench cut through it. Both barrows occupy the top of the ridge on the western edge of the plateau.

A number of quarries were identified. Most, if not all, of these were associated with the construction and maintenance of the two phases of stone built deer park wall recorded.

A number of features relating to woodland management were recorded, principally charcoal burning platforms and saw pits. These were predominantly located on the western side of the hill.

A series of tracks / hollow-ways were recorded running diagonally over the saddle of the ridge. Many of these interconnected suggesting that this area was a major route-way for access onto the ridge top from the west. Interestingly none of these features were recorded running over the crest and down the eastern side of the ridge.

Disclaimer: It should not be assumed that land referred to in this document is accessible to the public. Location plans are indicative only. NGR's 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 1:20.

Figures contain material from the Ordnance Survey. The grid in this material is the National Grid taken from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. This material has been reproduced in order to locate the site in its environs.

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Introduction

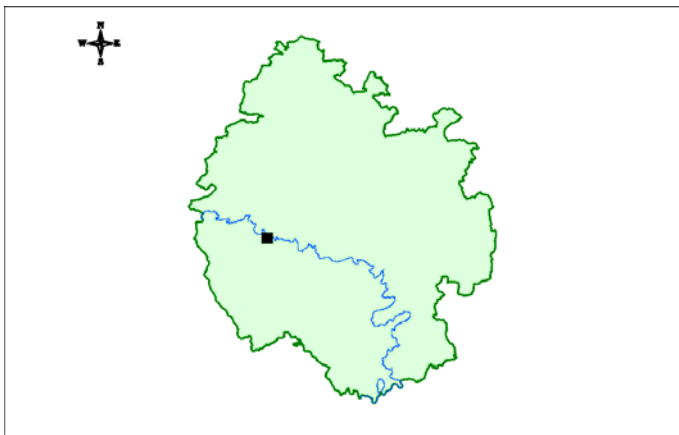
This report provides an account of a rapid archaeological survey of Woodbury Hill Wood, Moccas (HSM No. 44690). The survey was undertaken in order to document the archaeology of the woodland and assist with future management of the site. The survey was undertaken for Natural England after the purchase and inclusion of this land into the Natural England Moccas Deer Park. This survey is in addition to and contiguous with, a survey of the area to the north-east that covers the remainder of the Moccas Deer Park under Natural England management that was undertaken in 2003. (Hoverd, T. 2003. *An Archaeological Reconnaissance survey of Moccas Deer Park*. Herefordshire Archaeology Report No 67).

Woodlands are areas of high archaeological potential in that they have seldom been subjected to the types of disturbance associated with intensive modern agriculture. Relatively little information concerning archaeological sites within woodland has been recorded in the past. Access is often difficult, aerial photographs are of little or no use and until recently recording an accurate location within woodland was often not practicable. It is only when the changes throughout history within a wood have been documented and understood, and put together with ecological information, that a well informed management strategy can be implemented. Woodland boundaries have often moved over the centuries, sometimes expanding to encapsulate and preserve evidence of alternative land-use, e.g. field systems and on other occasions shrinking and being subject to differing forms of woodland management. These variations in land-use within woodland influence the ecological data from that woodland. As such, archaeological survey can contribute significant data concerning woodland history, management history and sequential development. This can provide independent verification of historical change from ecological study.

Location

Woodbury Hill Wood is located at NGR: SO 3358 4219. The topography of the wood rises to 230m Ordnance Datum, and the wood covers the south-west facing slope as well as the upper plateau of Moccas Park which comprises the southern end of Dorstone Hill.

The solid geology under Moccas Park comprises Old Red Sandstone of the Raglan Mudstone series. Overlying this within the lower park is a variety of fluvio-glacial deposits associated with the late Devensian glaciation. Soils are typically slightly acidic reddish loams. (Harding and Wall, 2000, 22-4)



The Soil Survey Classification identifies the Lower Park and the Eastern Extension as being of Class 1, the lower slopes of the Upper Park and the Plateau as Class 3 and the steeper slopes in the Upper Park as Class 4g and Class 5. The park is grazed by sheep, cattle and deer and is managed as a National Nature Reserve.

Figure 1: Location of Woodbury Hill Wood within Herefordshire.

Previous fieldwork / records

Prior to the survey taking place the county Sites and Monuments Record was consulted. A number of sites have been previously recorded within the wood. These were recorded during a walkover survey of the entire Moccas deer park, (Hoverd, 2003). However due to the dense vegetation cover at that time, only the northern portion of the hill top and the south-eastern portion of Woodbury Hill Wood were surveyed. As a consequence, the survey described within this report concentrated on the areas not accessed during the 2003 report.

Method

Woodbury Hill Wood was surveyed on March 18th 2007. The survey comprised a rapid assessment of the potential of the woodland to contain well-preserved archaeological features. Features were mapped using a hand-held Garmin GPSMAP 60CSx Global Positioning System, enabling a ten figure grid reference to be recorded for each feature. This system is accurate to within approximately 5m under tree canopy.

The wood was walked in transects aligned roughly north-south and approximately 50m to 100m apart. If a large feature was encountered and no other features of archaeological significance can be seen, then this feature was followed and features 50m either side of it recorded. Field observations and grid references were recorded on a dictaphone and transcribed at a later date.

The following survey is only a sample of the woodland and should not be taken as exhaustive or its results as definitive. It is intended to record the type of features present, their state of preservation and their relationships to other features within the woodland.

Field conditions

Woodhampton Wood covers the top and south-west facing slope of a sandstone ridge forming part of Dorstone Hill. Approximately 50% of its area consists of moderate to steep slope, there is a level plateau across the top and some areas on the western slope were very overgrown.

Survey Conditions

The rapid walkover survey was conducted on March 18th 2007. The weather was dry and visibility was good.

The majority of the wood was accessible open woodland, but a combination of steep slopes and high ground cover, on the south-western side of the wood, meant that some localised areas could not be surveyed. Much of the plateau area is covered in dense bramble. Here the combination of undergrowth and lack of slope will undoubtedly have resulted in some of the more subtle features having been missed.

Results (*Figure 2*)

The recorded data from the survey is described in detail within the Results section. This latter section is concluded by a brief discussion highlighting the historical development of the woodland as understood using the 2007 survey results. The significance of recorded features and management implications are then commented upon within the discussion section. Appendix 1 contains a simple database which cross-references each site to the Ordnance Survey National Grid, (NGR), and the series of unique Sites and Monuments “Primary Record Numbers” (PRN), allocated following the transcription. These numbers are referred to within both the text and illustrations. They are prefixed by HSM, these initials relating to Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record unique numbers.

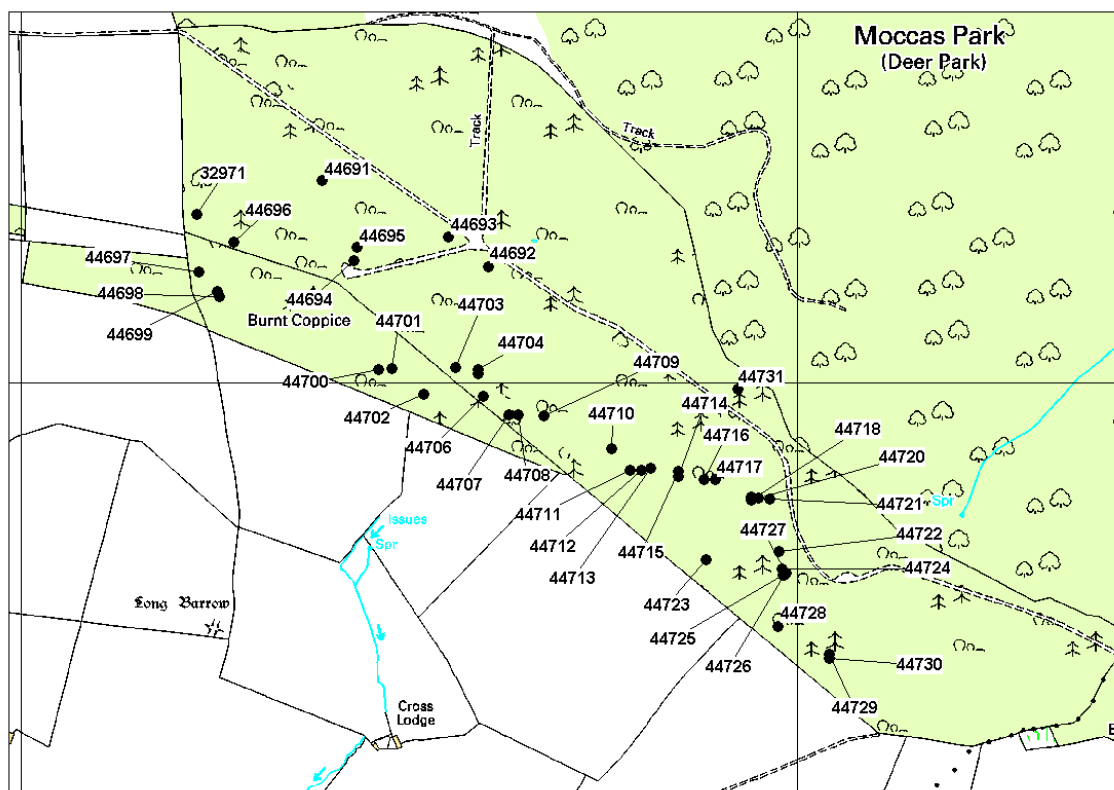


Figure 2: Location of features recorded during the survey of Woodbury Hill Wood.

Prehistoric features.

During the 2003 survey a feature (HSM 32971), was tentatively recorded as a Round Barrow. This was looked at again during this survey and this initial identification can now be confirmed. The feature comprises a 15m diameter mound up to 1.5m in height on the highest point of the crest of the ridge. This feature has been cut into by an antiquarian trench, aligned roughly on a north / south axis.

A second feature of similar diameter but only extending to 1m in height was recorded approximately 150m to the south-east, (HSM 44695). Although less well defined than HSM 32971, its location and regular shape would suggest that this could be a second Round Barrow.

Round Barrows are funery monuments dating from the Bronze Age (2000 – 750 BC). Round barrows are often found in groups known as barrow cemeteries. A number of such cemeteries are known in the county, however, due to subsequent land use, the vast majority of these do not survive as upstanding features and have only been recorded through aerial photography. It would appear that the land management of this part of the Moccas Estate, open pasture followed by woodland has led to the protection of these monuments. HSM 32971 and HSM 44695 should therefore be regarded as being of the utmost significance from an archaeological perspective.

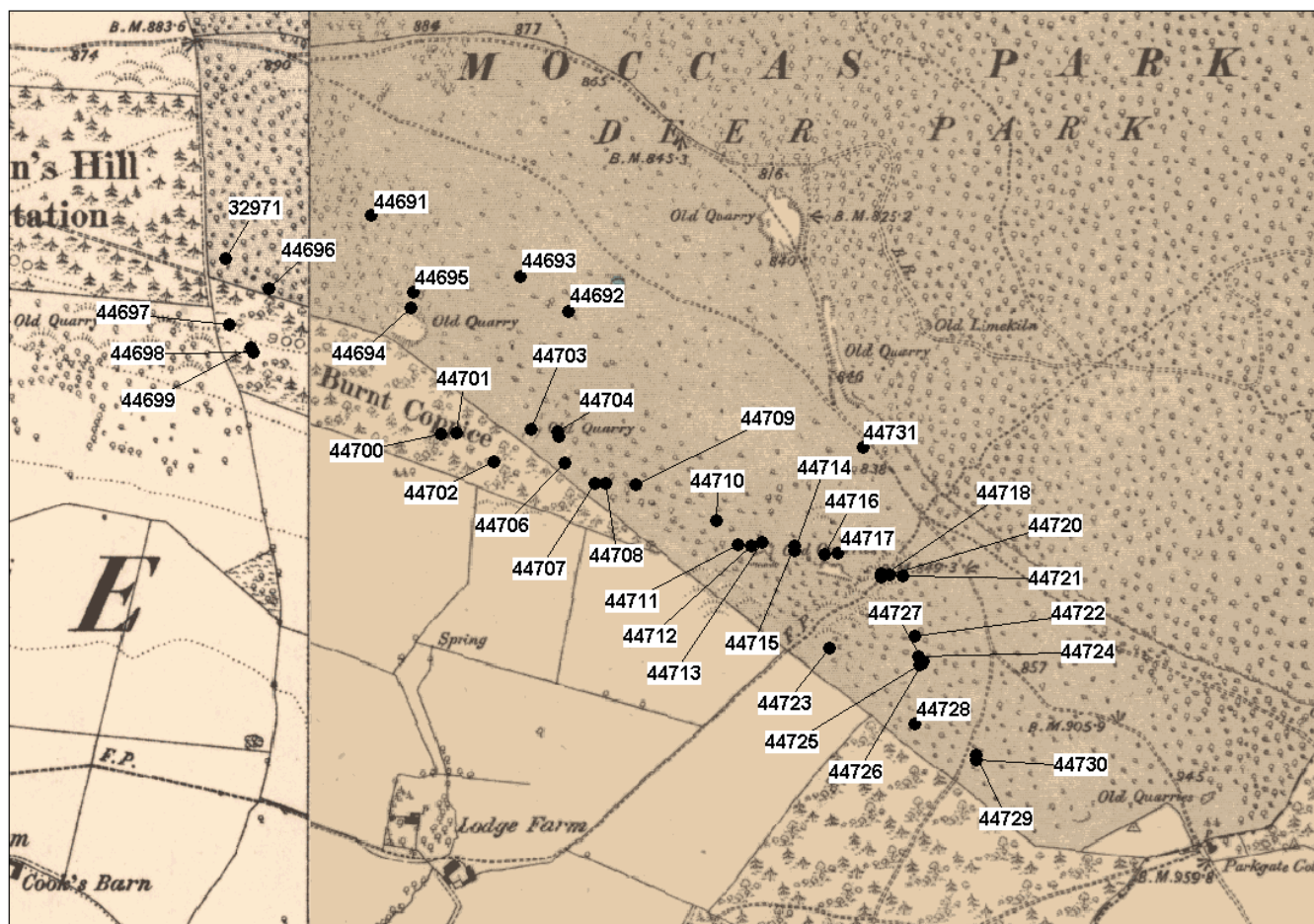


Figure 3: Location of sites in relation to features on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1886

Parkland Features

A number of phases of Deer Park pale / wall were recorded during the survey. A length of wall was recorded, (HSM 44696), which corresponds with the northern boundary between Woodbury Hill Wood and Burnt Coppice. This comprised a length of wall approximately 1m thick which appears to have been systematically robbed down to the present ground surface resulting in a rubble and mortar spread some 2m wide running on a north-west / south-east alignment. The relationship between HSM 44696 and the north / south aligned Deer Park wall is unclear due to a number of re-build phases at this intersection. The north / south park wall continues southwards from this point and appears to end at the south-western corner of Burnt Coppice.

A length of possible park pale was recorded within Burnt Coppice, (HSM 44702). This comprised a sharply cut ditch approximately 1.5m wide and 0.75m deep with a slight bank on its southern side. This feature is very straight and runs on an east / west axis from the southern edge of Burnt Coppice up to the north-western boundary between Burnt Coppice and Woodbury Hill Wood. At SO: 33594 42981 a further section of deer

park wall begins (HSM 44706). This is constructed into the bank of HSM 44702 at the point where it meets the projected line of HSM 44696 on the boundary between Burnt Coppice and Woodbury Hill Wood. From this point, the deer park wall continues in a straight line to the south-west, to form the south-western boundary of Moccas Deer Park.

Industrial features

Features associated with what could be termed “industry” could cover a wide range of activities. However, for the purposes of this survey the term “industrial features” refers principally to either large scale but localised extraction, or, widespread but small scale quarrying. Such industrial activity would include deep, open cast quarrying, linear quarrying and areas of shallow delves, along with associated infrastructure e.g. access tracks, storage platforms, etc.

A total of thirteen quarries or areas of quarrying were identified during the survey. HSM 44691 comprised a series of shallow delves covering an area of approximately 40m east / west and 20m north / south located on the plateaux.

A 20m diameter and 3m deep quarry, (HSM 44694), was recorded on the southern edge of the plateaux. This has almost cut into the southern edge of Barrow HSM 44695. Its associated spoil has been levelled and used as a turning area for vehicles.

The remainder of the quarries, (HSM 44697, 44699, 44703, 44704, 44705, 44708, 44709, 44713, 44717, 44718 and 44730), were all recorded on the south-western slope. These are predominantly linear in form and were almost certainly used to supply building stone used for the construction and upkeep of the Deer Park Wall. This can be seen particularly in quarry HSM 44703, in which quarried stones have been stacked on edge ready for removal. The uniform size and thinness may suggest that these were intended as capstones.

Associated with a number of these quarries were access tracks. These usually comprised a 2.5m wide track running from a quarry, or area of quarrying, diagonally across the slope at a constant angle, (HSM 44698, 44718, 44719 and 44729). Of these four examples three tracks appear to end close to the deer park wall. HSM 44729 runs from quarry HSM 44730 and continues under the deer park wall suggesting that this quarry not only pre-dates this phase of wall construction, but that this quarry may have provided stone for a purpose other than the construction of the wall.

Woodland management features

A total of four charcoal burning platforms were recorded. These ranged in size from 6-9m in diameter and in the main comprised a level, circular platform with a pronounced down-slope lip. Charcoal is also usually evident as a ground scatter or within animal burrows particularly within the down-slope lip.

HSM 44693 comprises a 7m diameter platform located on the plateaux. The south-western edge has been truncated by a modern woodland track. The location of this platform may be of some significance in that it is either the only platform on the plateaux or, that due to the lack of slope and heavy undergrowth over much of the plateaux, this is the only example which has been recorded and as such means that this class of monument is under-represented.

The remainder of the charcoal burning platforms, (HSM 44712, HSM 44721 and HSM 44728), were all located at roughly mid-slope along the south-western face of the hill. Charcoal burning platform HSM 44712 was cut into the top of a spoil heap associated with quarry HSM 44713.

Five saw pits were recorded during the survey. The earthwork remains of this class of monument comprise an oval or rectangular depression between 3m and 6m in length, 1.5m wide and 0.30-0.50m deep, with spoil on the down-slope side. A single saw-pit was recorded on the plateaux area. This was 8m long and 4m wide and aligned roughly east / west.

A total of sixteen lengths of track or hollow-way were recorded. These can be divided into two main categories: Route ways directly associated with quarrying or woodland management, and route ways associated with access onto the crest of the hill. The first category is represented by track-way HSM 44698, which leads directly to quarry HSM 44699, hollow-way HSM 44719 which runs from quarry HSM 44718, and track-way HSM 44729 which runs from quarry HSM 44730.

The remainder of the tracks and hollow-ways appear to run diagonally, up-slope over the shoulder of the hill and onto the top of the ridge. Many of these interconnect suggesting that a number of these routes were in use at the same time. This suggests periods of heavy use, either seasonally, or for a more sustained period connected to specific events either directly associated with woodland management or connected to wider activities on the Moccas estate.

Discussion and Implications

Site and feature condition

The majority of features recorded were well preserved, and little evidence for recent disturbance from felling or extraction was noted during the survey. The round barrow HSM 32971 appears to have been subjected to an antiquarian excavation, probably in the late 18th or 19th century, although no record of this work has so far been traced. A number of large conifers are growing on the mound itself, and in the immediate vicinity of the monument. It would be desirable from a management point of view for some of these to be removed in order to minimise the impact of tree throw damage to the monument. The second barrow (HSM 44695) lies within the recently clear felled area of the woodland. No new planting should take place on the monument.

The various phases of deer park pale and / or wall should be looked at in greater detail. This would not only provide a greater understanding of the development of this part of the park but may well also tie in with existing documentary sources which survive from the 18th and 19th centuries. Much of the walling survives to its full height however, there are significant stretches which have collapsed or are going to collapse in the near future.

Implications regarding the archaeological resource

The plateaux area of Woodbury Hill contains a number of archaeologically significant features, (barrows and a possible enclosure). There will almost certainly be additional features within this portion of the wood which have not been recorded due to their subtle nature and the lack of slope. With this in mind, future woodland management of this area should include the minimal use of machinery, particularly in and around the wetter areas.

The use of heavy machinery on or in close proximity to the two round barrows should be avoided.

The use of heavy machinery in close proximity to the boundary walls should be avoided in order to minimise further collapse.

Implications regarding site condition

Archaeological features within the wood were generally well preserved. A number of trees need to be removed from barrow HSM 32971 in order to minimise disturbance of the monument by tree throw and root disturbance.

Several sections of the deer park wall are in need of attention, some need re-building from the ground up.

Implications for future management

Existing access routes should be used for future management and extraction of the woodland. The density and overall state of preservation of such a wide range of features suggest that little damage has occurred in recent years. Care should be taken to avoid further damaging areas containing woodland management features, particularly those located on the more level, and therefore wetter ground.

Implications for future field work.

The significance of the two round barrows recorded on the crest of the hill cannot be over-emphasised. It is a very rare occurrence to discover the upstanding remains of this class of monument, particularly such comparatively well preserved remains. The fact that barrow HSM 32971 appears to have been subjected to an antiquarian excavation may provide an opportunity to re-evaluate this excavation and record the deposits and stratigraphic matrix encountered within it, without further damaging the monument. It may be possible to extent the antiquarian trench in order to assess the survival of the surrounding ditch.

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Acknowledgements

Dr. Keith Ray, County Archaeologist, for his editorial input into this report.

Archive

1 Dictaphone tape
1 Transcription Record
1 Excel Database
1 Mapinfo data file
This document

Appendix: Database of features and grid references.

HSM No.	Easting	Northing	Site type	Period	Description
44691	33387	42259	Quarry	Post-medieval	Area of shallow delves c. 25m square
32971	33226	42215	Round Barrow	Bronze Age	15m diameter with antiquarian trench through centre
44692	33601	42148	Saw Pit	Post-medieval	8m long 2m wide
44693	33549	42187	Charcoal Burning Platform	Post-medieval	7m in diameter and cut by modern track
44694	33428	42156	Quarry	Post-medieval	20m diameter and 3m deep, spoil to south made into modern turning area
44695	33432	42173	Barrow	Bronze Age	15m diameter almost cut by quarry and badger damage on western side.
44696	33473	42180	Deer Park Wall	Post-medieval	2m wide spread of rubble along top of break of slope
44697	33427	42142	Quarry	Post-medieval	Linear quarry 30m long with 2.5m high working face
44698	33455	42110	track	Post-medieval	Track leading to small quarry, mostly covered by spoil from quarry above.
44699	33460	42115	Quarry	Post-medieval	Small working face c. 1.5m high and 5m long
44700	33459	42016	Holloway	Post-medieval	3.5m wide, 1.5m deep leads to gate at field edge.
44701	33476	42017	Holloway	Post-medieval	5m wide, 1m deep runs from kink in hedge line.
44702	33517	41984	Holloway	Post-medieval	1.5m wide, very straight, runs to south-east. Partially used as later pale.
44703	33558	42019	Quarry	Post-medieval	20m diameter with stacked walling stone abandoned.
44704	33587	42016	Quarry	Post-medieval	20m in diameter, shallow
44705	33588	42011	Quarry	Post-medieval	8m long and 5m wide,

					shallow.
44706	33594	41981	Deer Park Wall	Post-medieval	Wall on line of holloway
44707	33627	41958	Holloway	Post-medieval	3m wide, 1m deep on North-east / south-west axis. Crossed by wall
44708	33639	41958	Quarry	Post-medieval	8m long and 1.5m wide
44709	33672	41956	Quarry	Post-medieval	Area of delves /linear quarrying c. 50m square.
44710	33760	41914	Holloway	Post-medieval	2.5m wide, 1.5m deep, runs west and south.
44711	33783	41887	Holloway	Post-medieval	3m wide, 1.5m deep. Very straight, runs to the south.
44712	33798	41886	Charcoal Burning Platform	Post-medieval	6m diameter cut into top of spoil heap.
44713	33810	41889	Quarry	Post-medieval	20m in diameter
44714	33845	41879	Saw Pit	Post-medieval	6m long 1.3m wide
44715	33845	41885	Saw Pit	Post-medieval	6m long 1.3m wide
44716	33878	41875	Saw Pit	Post-medieval	5m long 1.2m wide
44717	33893	41875	Quarry	Post-medieval	25m long, 8m wide and 5m deep.
44718	33939	41848	Quarry	Post-medieval	12m long, opens into holloway
44719	33939	41852	Holloway	Post-medieval	Runs from quarry on north/south axis 3m wide and 2m deep.
44720	33949	41851	Holloway	Post-medieval	3m wide and 2m deep on north/south axis
44721	33963	41849	Charcoal Burning Platform	Post-medieval	7 m diameter, facing west
44722	33975	41782	Holloway	Post-medieval	On south-west/north-east axis
44723	33881	41771	Holloway	Post-medieval	On south-west/north-east axis
44724	33979	41760	Holloway	Post-medieval	On south-west/north-east axis
44725	33980	41751	Holloway	Post-medieval	On south-west/north-east axis
44726	33982	41752	Holloway	Post-medieval	On south-west/north-east axis, joins holloway
44727	33984	41754	Holloway	Post-medieval	On south-west/north-east axis, joins holloway

44728	33974	41686	Charcoal Burning Platform	Post-medieval	8m in diameter
44729	34040	41650	Track	Post-medieval	Runs under deer park wall, opens into quarry
44730	34040	41645	Quarry	Post-medieval	8m by 10m
44731	33922	41991	Saw Pit	Post-medieval	6m long and 1.5m wide.

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.

Dr. K. Ray, County Archaeologist.