



Herefordshire Archaeology
Conservation and Environmental Planning
Planning Services
Environment Directorate
Herefordshire Council

Herefordshire Woodlands Archaeological Survey: Yeld's Wood, Orleton CP

**Herefordshire Archaeology Report No. 251
February 2008**

Report prepared by Christopher Atkinson

Contents

Summary
Introduction
Method
Results
Discussion
Acknowledgements
References
Archive
Appendix

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.

Herefordshire Woodlands Archaeological Survey: Yeld's Wood, Orleton CP

Herefordshire Archaeology Report No. 251

Herefordshire Archaeology, February 2008

Summary

The survey described in this report (HSM 45330) formed part of the Herefordshire Woodlands Archaeological Survey undertaken in partnership with the Forestry Commission. A rapid site identification survey was carried out in Yeld's Wood using a hand held Global Positioning by Satellite System to record the location of archaeological features encountered.

Earthwork features were recorded within the wood that illustrate a history of intensive woodland management since the post medieval period, including wood boundaries, charcoal burning platforms, saw pits and networks of hollow ways and terraced track ways with associated collection/storage platforms. Evidence of industrial activities were recorded in the form of quarries and a limekiln.

Disclaimer

It should not be assumed that land referred to in this document is accessible to the public. Location plans are indicative only. NGRs 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.

Contact details: Herefordshire Archaeology, PO Box 144, Hereford, HR1 2YH
Copyright Herefordshire Council 2008

Introduction

This report provides an account of a rapid survey of the southern part of Yeld's Wood, Orleton (HSM 45330). The survey was undertaken as part of a pilot study for the Forestry Commission in order to document the archaeology of woodlands in the county. 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 for site identification, and, until recently, recording an accurate location within woodland was often not possible.

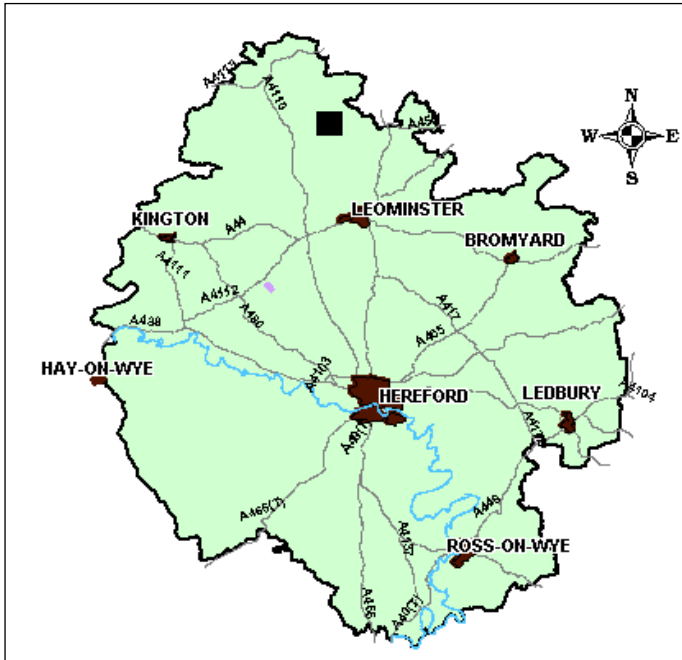
Woodland boundaries have often moved over the centuries, sometimes expanding to encapsulate and preserve evidence of alternative land use, e.g. field systems, and on other occasions shrinking, and being subjected to different forms of woodland management. These variations in land-use inevitably influence the kind of ecological data that can be obtained from different areas of woodland. Archaeological survey can contribute significant data in terms of woodland history, management history and sequential development. This can provide independent evidence of historical change. It is only when the changes throughout history within a wood have been documented and understood in this way that a well-informed management strategy can be implemented.

Since 1999, Herefordshire Archaeology has been involved in regular discussions with the Forestry Commission concerning the lack of archaeological data available when management plans are being prepared and applications for Woodland Grant Schemes are submitted. As a result of these discussions, the Forestry Commission grant aided Herefordshire Archaeology to undertake a study of the woodland resource.

The survey of each woodland area identifies the potential for the survival of archaeological features, and samples the types of features present. Further planned surveys may re-visit woodlands identified during rapid reconnaissance surveys as being of high archaeological potential, and will involve a more detailed survey. This will illustrate the density of archaeological sites within the woodland, and record relationships between features to enable some degree of understanding concerning the evolution of the woodland.

Location

Yeld's Wood is located at NGR: SO 46718 68354 approximately 1.9km northwest of Orleton, in the Civil Parish of Orleton.



Yeld's Wood is located upon the summit of a roughly northeast-southwest aligned ridge. The woodland occupies the steep north-facing slopes and the gentle south-facing slopes. The woodland covers an area of approximately 45.3 hectares.

Geologically, the survey area is underlain for the most part by the Aymestry Limestone Formation of the Ludfordian Series and consisting of limestone, thinly bedded to nodular with calcareous mudstone. Down the north-facing slope of Yeld's Hill is a layer of limestone associated with the

Lower Bringewood Formation. Along the gentle south-facing slopes of the hill is a limestone horizon of the Lower and Upper Leintwardine Formation (British Geological Survey, 2000).

Previous fieldwork and records

A search of the Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) indicated that prior to the walkover survey no archaeological features had been previously identified within Yeld's Wood.

Method

Yeld's Wood was surveyed on 7th February 2008. A rapid assessment was undertaken of the potential of the wood to contain well-preserved archaeological features. A hand-held Garmin 12 XL Global Positioning by Satellite System was used to map features, and a ten-figure grid reference was recorded. This system is accurate to within approximately 10m under tree canopy.

The wood was walked in transects aligned north to south or east to west, approximately 50m or 100m apart. Where a large feature was encountered, and no other features of archaeological significance could be seen in the vicinity, the feature was followed and any other features up to 50m on either side of it were recorded (where conditions allowed). Field observations and grid references were recorded using a dictaphone, and transcribed later.

Information recorded included a description of features observed, their state of preservation, and relationships to other features within the wood. This survey is only a sample of the wood and should not be taken as exhaustive, or its results as definitive.

Field conditions

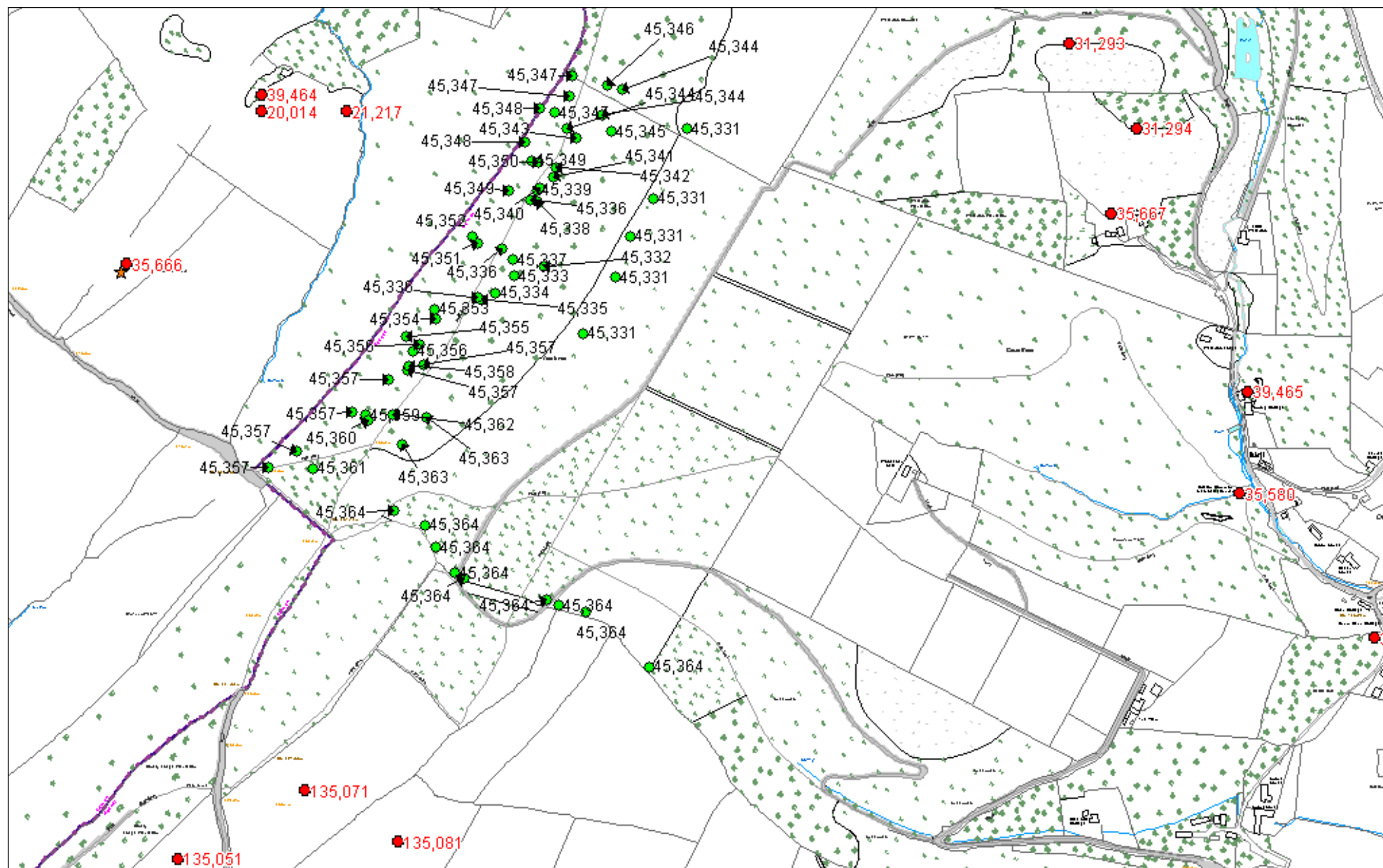
Modern Conifer plantations cover much of the woodland, particularly along the summit and south-facing slopes of Yeld's Hill. Open broadleaf woodland is concentrated along the north-facing slopes of Yeld's Hill. In areas of modern plantation access to survey was restricted by the density of the planted conifers.

During the survey, the weather was cold and bright with good visibility.

Results

Recorded archaeological features are described below, and the historical development of the woodland is discussed briefly. The significance of the archaeological features and management implications is then commented upon.

Each archaeological feature has been assigned a unique Sites and Monuments Primary Record Number, prefixed by HSM (Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record). In this report each feature is identified by its HSM number. The appendix contains a simple database in which each feature is cross-referenced to its HSM number and to the Ordnance Survey National Grid (NGR)



Archaeological features recorded within Yeld's Wood.

Scale 1:6000



Reproduced from Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office.
Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
Herefordshire Council. 100002+168. 2007.

Herefordshire Council,
ICT Services Division,
Thorn Office Centre,
Holme Lacy Road,
Rotherwas,
Hereford, HR2 6JT.
Tel: 01432 260160
Email: helpdesk@herefordshire.gov.uk

Woodland management features

Evidence for post-medieval woodland management was observed in the form of charcoal burning platforms, saw pits and boundary banks. Additional evidence includes collection or storage platforms, hollow ways and track ways.

The surviving evidence for charcoal production is concentrated upon the north-facing slope of Yeld's Wood where the disturbance caused as a result of modern plantation is relatively absent. Two charcoal burning platforms were recorded within this area (HSM 45345, 45352). All are located close to a modern forestry road or trackway that are likely to follow the course of an earlier route.

Each charcoal burning platform consists of a level platform, generally circular in form up to 8m in diameter, depending on the state of preservation. Where these platforms are located on a slope, a cut is present on the up slope side, and a 'lip' of spoil on the down slope side. Charcoal fragments are often present.

Closely associated to the charcoal burning platforms are a total of 14 saw pits cut into the north-facing slope. Each feature varies in size ranging from 4m long, 2m wide and 0.3m deep to 7m long, 3m wide and 0.5m deep. The upturned soil is located along the northern edge of each saw pit.

Scattered amongst all of these features is a network of trackways and levelled platforms. The platforms are likely to have acted as collection points or foundations for temporary shelter as there is no surface material to suggest otherwise. The trackways run north-east to south-west across the slope and vary from 2m wide to 5m wide.

Woodland boundaries

According to the 1840 Tithe Map, Yeld's Wood is a relatively new creation, at least along the summit and south-facing slopes. The Tithe Map indicates that the north-facing slope of Yeld's Hill formed what was Orleton Common and is likely to have consisted of open woodland as is visible today. Upon the summit and extending down the south-facing slopes the land appears to have been employed for either pasture or as arable, the land having been divided into a series of rectangular fields.

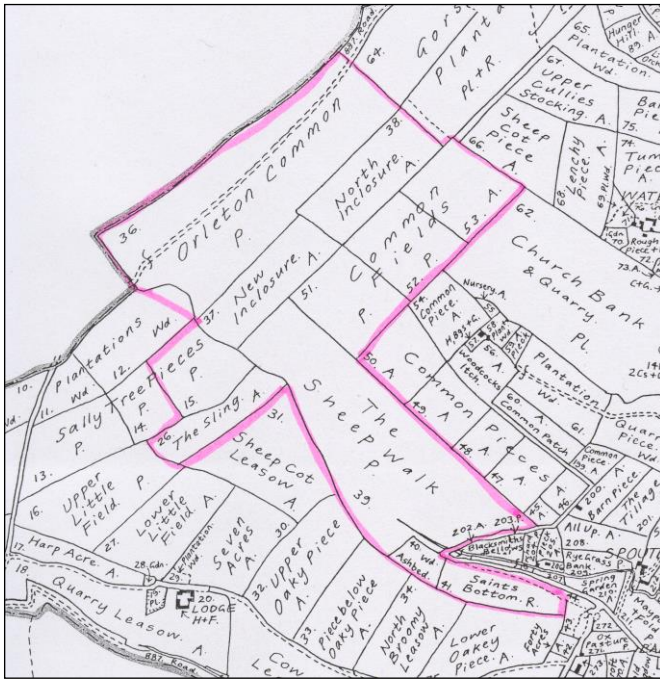


Figure: 1841 Tithe Map, the highlighted area depicts the current extent of Yeld's Wood.

The current woodland upon Yeld's Hill post-dates the production of the 1890 First Edition Ordnance Survey and was likely formed during the early to mid 20th century.

However, preserved within the current woodland are a number of the field boundaries depicted on both the Tithe Map and First Edition Ordnance Survey. Yeld's Wood is largely enclosed by the original post-medieval field

boundaries that survive as narrow banks c.1m wide and up to 0.5m high with a planted hedge of hawthorn and beech.

The modern plantation introduced during the 20th century has largely removed the earlier field boundaries that might otherwise have survived within the interior of Yeld's Wood. The best-preserved boundary lines the summit of Yeld's Hill and survives marking the border between the modern plantation and the open woodland associated with what was once Orleton Common. The boundary (HSM 45331) is aligned approximately northeast-southwest and measures 1.5m wide and c.0.5m high. Along its northern edge is a terrace roughly 5m wide and suggestive of a track way. The boundary is traceable for c.300m before it turns south into the conifer plantation where it peters out.

The fragmented remains of a boundary (HSM 45364) within the southwest of Yeld's Wood survives running parallel to a sinuous hollow way. The boundary consists of a bank c.1.7m wide and 0.7m high and was likely formed through upturned soil from the hollow way. The hollow way measures up to 4m wide and 2m deep, it runs southeast for c.50m before it peters out due to modern management. The boundary continues to the southeast and is interrupted at numerous points by the forestry track before it links with the course of the woodland boundary marking the southern edge of 'The Sheepwalk'.

The northern edge of Yeld's Wood forms the Parish Boundary, separating the parishes of Orleton and Aymestry. The boundary survives as a raised trackway with a bank along its northern edge. The trackway measures 5m wide and stands c.0.7m high. The parallel bank along the tracks northern edge is 1m wide and 0.5m high.

Industrial features

Across the survey area only two minor mineral extraction sites were identified and both located along the north-facing slope of the hill within close proximity of each other. The material extracted was limestone an important industry of the post-medieval period being closely connected to woodland management and the production of lime for construction or agricultural purposes.

During the investigation one previously unrecorded limekiln site was identified. The kiln HSM 45360 is located within the northwest of Yeld's Wood upon the north-facing slope beneath one of the major east-west aligned track ways that line the hill. The production of lime was one of the key activities within Yeld's Wood during the post-medieval period. The limekiln HSM 45360 is in a poor state of preservation due to subsidence but would originally have consisted of one north-facing furnace built of local stone. The site measures c.15m diameter and stands c.3m high. The stone built furnaces were overlain by an earthen mound, which has gradually weathered and collapsed covering all but a small portion of the stone structure.

It is likely that the majority of archaeology relating to past activity upon Yeld's Hill has been removed. This is particularly so along the summit and south-facing slopes of the hill where conifer plantations have been introduced.

Discussion and implications

Indications of former land use

The current compartment boundaries within Yeld's Wood follow the earlier boundaries that formed the post-medieval enclosed field system visible on both the Tithe and 1st Edition Ordnance Survey maps. Besides the remains of the post-medieval field system features were identified associated to woodland management and lime production within what was Orleton Common.

Site and feature condition

The survey recorded features that predominately related to 19th century land and woodland management with the exception of the Parish Boundary that divides Aymestry from Orleton that is likely to have a much older, possibly Medieval date. The majority of features recorded were well preserved and coherent with the exception of the limekiln (HSM 45360) that has been affected by subsidence and collapse of the surrounding hill slope. Many of the boundaries relating to the post-medieval enclosed field system were badly truncated due to 20th century conifer plantation.

Implications regarding the archaeological resource

The archaeological features are well preserved within the north of Yeld's Wood where the activity relating to the establishment of conifer plantations has been absent. Within the south considerable damage caused by modern plantation and clearance techniques has impacted the archaeological resource.

Implications regarding site condition

Where archaeological features survive, it is sometimes possible to determine functional and chronological relationships. Examples of functional relationships observed during the survey include the association of resource extraction sites, e.g., charcoal burning platforms and quarries, with hollow ways and collection/storage platforms that facilitated the removal of woodland and mineral products to places of processing and consumption outside the woodland. In areas of modern plantation these relationships are more difficult if not impossible to establish between sites and features.

Implications for future management

Existing access routes should be used for future management and extraction of the woodland. Within the north of Yeld's Wood the density and overall state of preservation of a wide range of features suggest that additional information concerning land-use and woodland management could be learned from further, more detailed survey of particularly the limekiln and associated features.

Implications for future fieldwork

This area of woodland has a high potential for the presence of well-preserved archaeological features around its edges and in its northern portion. It should be possible to recognise relationships between many features and hence produce a series of phases illustrating the changing management of the woodland and the extent of former land use. A more detailed survey might indicate more subtle relationships regarding the woodland management and lime production within the vicinity.

Discussion

This rapid survey has identified features associated with most industries commonly linked with woodland. Evidence of quarrying, charcoal burning, saw pits and woodland management boundaries were recorded.

It is clear that the majority of Yeld's Wood has been subject to intensive 20th century timber extraction and plantation that is likely to have removed any surviving archaeological features relating to past field management or prior woodland management. However enough survives within the north of the wood within the area that once formed Orleton Common to establish that management of the woodland on the common has been consistent for at least 200 years.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the co-operation of the Forestry Commission and Forest Enterprise.

I would like to thank Dr. Keith Ray, County Archaeologist, and Tim Hoverd, Archaeological Projects Officer, for their advice and editorial comments in the preparation of this report.

References

British Geological Survey (2000) *Ludlow, England and Wales Sheet 181, Solid and Drift Geology. 1:50,000 Provisional Series*. Keyworth, Nottingham: British Geological Survey.

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
45331	346634	268653	Boundary	Post-medieval	Woodland boundary aligned east-west along the summit of the ridge. The boundary measures 1.5m wide and 0.5m high. A trackway c.4m wide lines its northern edge.
45331	346661	268697	Boundary	Post-medieval	Boundary continues east.
45331	346700	268779	Boundary	Post-medieval	Boundary exits the woodland into an adjacent feature where the feature is ploughed out.
45331	346616	268604	Boundary	Post-medieval	Boundary continues west.
45331	346578	268538	Boundary	Post-medieval	Boundary runs into an area of modern plantation where it is lost.
45332	346532	268617	Saw Pit	Post-medieval	Saw pit aligned east-west with spoil mound along its northern edge. It measures 4m long, 2m wide and 0.5m deep.
45333	346497	268606	Platform	Post-medieval	Sub-rectangular platform cut into the north-facing slope. It measures 2.5m wide and 6m long.
45334	346474	268586	Saw Pit	Post-medieval	Saw pit aligned east-west with spoil mound along its northern edge. It measures 5m long, 2m wide and 1.3m deep.

45335	346459	268578	Saw Pit	Post-medieval	Saw pit aligned east-west with spoil mound along its northern edge. It measures 6m long, 2.5m wide and 1m deep.
45336	346453	268581	Trackway	Post-medieval	Terraced trackway aligned east-west. It measures 5m wide and cut into the north-facing slope.
45336	346482	268638	Trackway	Post-medieval	Trackway continues to the east.
45337	346495	268625	Saw Pit	Post-medieval	Saw pit aligned east-west with spoil mound along its northern edge. It measures 5m long, 2m wide and 0.3m deep.
45336	346516	268695	Trackway	Post-medieval	Trackway continues to the east.
45338	346524	268693	Saw Pit	Post-medieval	Saw pit aligned east-west with spoil mound along its northern edge. It measures 5m long, 1.5m wide and 0.5m deep.
45339	346524	268707	Platform	Post-medieval	Platform cut into north-facing slope measuring 3m diameter.
45340	346527	268710	Saw Pit	Post-medieval	Saw pit aligned east-west with spoil mound along its northern edge. It measures 5m long, 2m wide and 0.5m deep.
45341	346543	268722	Platform	Post-medieval	Platform cut into north-facing slope measuring 4m diameter.
45342	346546	268733	Saw Pit	Post-medieval	Saw pit aligned east-west with spoil mound along its northern edge. It measures 7m long, 3m wide and 0.5m deep.
45343	346570	268769	Saw Pit	Post-medieval	Saw pit aligned east-west with spoil mound along its northern edge. It measures 5m long, 2m wide and 0.3m deep.

45344	346559	268779	Trackway	Post-medieval	Terraced trackway running southeast from the trackway HSM 45336. It measures c.3m wide.
45344	346600	268796	Trackway	Post-medieval	Trackway turns east.
45345	346611	268776	Charcoal Burning Platform	Post-medieval	Charcoal burning platform measuring 4m diameter. It is cut into the north-facing slope and has a lip on its northern edge.
45344	346624	268825	Trackway	Post-medieval	Trackway continues to the east exiting Yeld Wood.
45346	346606	268830	Platform	Post-medieval	Platform cut into the north-facing slope. It measures 2m diameter.
45347	346565	268842	Trackway	Post-medieval	Terraced trackway cut into north-facing slope. It measures 3m wide.
45347	346561	268817	Trackway	Post-medieval	Continuation of trackway.
45347	346545	268798	Trackway	Post-medieval	Trackway peters out to the west.
45348	346526	268803	Trackway	Post-medieval	Raised trackway aligned east-west. It measures c.5m wide and has a low bank, 0.5m high, 1m wide running along its northern edge.
45348	346510	268764	Trackway	Post-medieval	Trackway continuing to the west.
45349	346517	268742	Trackway	Post-medieval	Terraced trackway aligned east-west and measuring 3m wide.
45350	346525	268740	Trackway	Post-medieval	Terraced trackway aligned east-west and measuring 2.5m wide.
45349	346491	268707	Trackway	Post-medieval	Terraced trackway continuing to the west.
45351	346454	268645	Saw Pit	Post-medieval	Saw pit aligned east-west with spoil mound along its northern edge. It measures 7m long, 2m wide and 1m deep.

45352	346448	268652	Charcoal Burning Platform	Post-medieval	Charcoal burning platform cut into north-facing slope. It measures c.4m diameter.
45353	346403	268567	Saw Pit	Post-medieval	Saw pit aligned east-west with spoil mound along its northern edge. It measures 4m long, 1.5m wide and 0.5m deep.
45354	346404	268555	Saw Pit	Post-medieval	Saw pit aligned east-west with spoil mound along its northern edge. It measures 5m long, 2m wide and 0.3m deep.
45355	346370	268535	Saw Pit	Post-medieval	Saw pit aligned east-west with spoil mound along its northern edge. It measures 3m long, 1m wide and 0.2m deep.
45356	346378	268518	Platform	Post-medieval	Rectangular platform measuring 5m wide and c.10m long. The platform may represent a relict trackway.
45356	346385	268525	Platform	Post-medieval	End of platform.
45357	346390	268501	Trackway	Post-medieval	Terraced trackway cut into the north-facing slope. It measures 3m wide.
45357	346371	268495	Trackway	Post-medieval	Continuation of trackway. It measures c.5m wide for a distance of 7m at this location suggesting the presence of a platform.
45358	346372	268500	Platform	Post-medieval	Platform cut into the north-facing slope, it measures 4m diameter.
45357	346348	268484	Trackway	Post-medieval	Continuation of trackway beyond the platform. It measures 3m wide.
45359	346321	268442	Saw Pit	Post-medieval	Saw pit aligned east-west with spoil mound along its northern edge. It measures 3m long, 1m wide and 0.3m deep.

45360	346325	268437	Lime Kiln	Post-medieval	Site of a limekiln that survives largely as an earthwork. The foundations for its north-facing entrance survive partially visible. The kiln itself consists of a raised earthwork, collapsed in the centre.
45357	346306	268445	Trackway	Post-medieval	Continuation of trackway to the west.
45357	346241	268400	Trackway	Post-medieval	Continuation of trackway to the west.
45357	346208	268381	Trackway	Post-medieval	Trackway comes to a end close to exiting the wood.
45361	346260	268379	Quarry	Post-medieval	Linear quarry cut into north-facing slope measuring c.10m long and 5m wide, it measures c.3m deep.
45362	346354	268442	Saw Pit	Post-medieval	Saw pit aligned east-west with spoil mound along its northern edge. It measures 2.5m long, 1m wide and 0.5m deep.
45363	346393	268440	Platform	Post-medieval	Platform cut into north-facing slope. It measures c.5m diameter.
45363	346364	268408	Quarry	Post-medieval	Quarry measuring 6m diameter and 3m deep.
45364	346355	268330	Hollow Way & Boundary	Post-medieval	Hollow way aligned north-south. Its western edge is lined by a woodland boundary bank measuring 1m wide, 0.5m high. The hollow way measures c.4m wide and 2m deep.
45364	346391	268313	Hollow Way & Boundary	Post-medieval	Hollow way and boundary continue to the south.
45364	346404	268286	Hollow Way & Boundary	Post-medieval	Hollow way peters out where as the boundary continues south.

45364	346426	268256	Boundary	Post-medieval	Boundary is cut by modern forestry track. The boundary measures 1.5m wide and 0.7m high.
45364	346438	268250	Boundary	Post-medieval	Continuation of boundary beyond the forestry track. It runs south into an area of modern plantation.
45364	346535	268224	Boundary	Post-medieval	Continuation of the boundary to the south.
45364	346549	268218	Boundary	Post-medieval	Continuation of the boundary to the south.
45364	346581	268210	Boundary	Post-medieval	Continuation of the boundary. From this location it marks the boundary of Yeld Wood.
45364	346655	268146	Boundary	Post-medieval	Boundary forms an east-facing lynchet measuring 0.7m high.

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.