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**Herefordshire Woodlands
Pilot Study: Phase 2
Brampton Hill Wood
Duchy of Cornwall Estate
Madley
(SO 40135 35530)**

Herefordshire Archaeology Report No.147

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.

Herefordshire Woodlands Pilot Scheme: Phase 2.
Brampton Hill Wood
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Herefordshire Archaeology Report No.

Herefordshire Archaeology, June 2007.

Summary:

The survey described in this report, (EHE44751), formed part of a pilot study for the Forestry Commission. 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.

Structures were recorded within the wood includes a Medieval field system that has been overlain by Post-Medieval enclosed fields. It also includes evidence of industrial activity in the form of quarrying and it's associated holloways, but there was limited evidence of woodland management. What was clarified was that earthworks previously thought to relate to an Iron Age hillfort and a Saxon dyke were shown to be the result of different processes.

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 1 and 2 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 survey of Brampton Hill Wood, the Duchy of Cornwall Estate, Madley (EHE44751). 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 and until recently recording an accurate location within woodland was often not practicable.

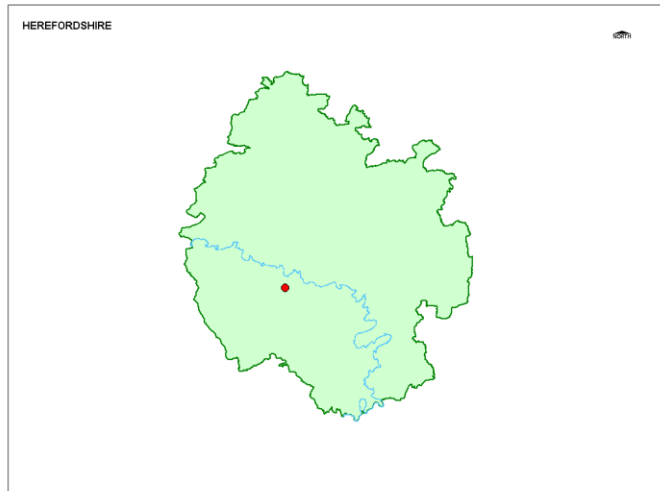
Since 1999 Herefordshire Archaeology has been involved in regular discussions with the Forestry Commission concerning the lack of archaeological data available when management plans are being prepared and applications for Woodland Grant Schemes are submitted. As a result of these discussions, the Forestry Commission has grant aided Herefordshire Archaeology to undertake a two phase pilot study. Phase one took place in 2001-2 and involved the rapid survey of eight areas of woodland in different areas of the county. These woodlands were split into those that are owned and managed by Forest Enterprises, those owned by large private estates, those that have recently been the subject of Woodland Grant Scheme applications and those for which Native Woodland Plans have been or are in preparation.

The survey for each woodland area in the pilot study identified the potential for the survival of archaeological features and sampled the types of features present. The phase two survey consists of re-visiting woodlands identified in the phase one study as being of high archaeological potential and a more detailed survey undertaken. This will illustrate the density of archaeological sites within the woodland and record the relationships between features to enable some degree of understanding concerning the evolution of the woodland. The phase two survey will also expand the phase 1 survey and subject additional woodlands to rapid survey.

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 a 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

Brampton Hill Wood is located at NGR: 340135 235530 in the parish of Vowchurch. It is south of the B4348 and is a mile west of Kingstone



The Historic Landscape Character for Herefordshire describes Brampton Hill Wood (HLC L2.1, [A3, W1, X1]) as former common arable field with straight woodland derived boundaries planted on the same alignment as the surrounding boundaries. (Ray and White, 2003).

Figure 1: Brampton Hill Wood

The geology of Brampton Hill Wood comprises an outcrop of the St Maughan's Formation of the Lower Old Red Sandstone made up of alternating beds of sandstone and mudstone (British Geological Survey 2000). The soils of Brampton Hill Wood are of the Bromyard Series.

Previous fieldwork / records

Prior to the survey taking place the county Sites and Monuments Record was consulted and four sites were identified within the wood:

HSMR	6271
NGR	SO 402 360
TYPE	Camp
PERIOD	Iron Age
DESC	Two observations made – A/ possible hillfort, flint discovered when wood was cut B/ No recognisable earthwork is to be seen on hill that has been reforested.

HSMR	6272
NGR	SO 4017 3596
TYPE	Finds spot
PERIOD	Neolithic
DESC	Neolithic Flints found scattered when wood cut down in 1934-5. Finds included chert spear or lance of Neolithic Northern Ireland type, a scraper of unusual working & uncommon flint.

HSMR 4435
NGR SO 4042 3562
TYPE house and garden
PERIOD C17
DESC Identified on the 1840 Tithe Map.

HSMR 5014
NGR SO 3970 3600
TYPE Dyke/Holloway
PERIOD Saxon – Post medieval
DESC A sunken way runs from Brampton Hill across the main Hereford – Peterchurch road in the direction of Madley. Illustration shows steep bank on the south side of the main road with a sunk way on the other. The bank may be a Saxon dyke across Batcho Pass and the earlier sunken way used as a ditch.

HSMR 34073
NGR SO 4000 3600
TYPE Ancient Woodland
PERIOD Unknown
DESC Hilltop wood with many indicator species of ancient woodland including Herb Paris, Wood Anemone, Bluebell and wood ferns. It was wood with compartments of rough pasture and arable on the 1840 Tithe Map.

Field conditions

Brampton Hill Wood covers the top and slopes of a sandstone outcrop. The western slopes are moderately shallow, whereas the eastern slope is a lot steeper. The topography and undergrowth made the survey possible in all areas.

Survey Conditions

The rapid walkover survey was conducted in March 2004. The weather was predominantly clear and visibility was good.

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 2003 survey results. The significance of recorded features and management implications are then commented upon within the discussion section. Appendix 1 contains a simple data base 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 HSMR, these initials relating to Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record unique numbers.

Medieval field system

The only evidence for medieval activity found within the wood consisted of numerous lynchets. There were two main types, those that marked the outline of the wood and those within it. Marking the outside of the wood were two lynchets (HSMR 44754 and 44755) and these marked the existing woodedge. The first (HSMR 44754) was found predominantly on the west of the wood and consisted of a relatively small drop of c.0.40m out of the wood. The second lynchet was found in numerous places around the wood and again consisted of a drop out of the wood but in this instance the drop was c.1.20m. The second type of lynchet was found within the wood and consisted of three consecutive features (HSMR 44765, 44766 and 44767). These were located on the east-facing slope; all aligned northwest-southeast and each consisted of a drop of c.1.80m

Woodland management features

A single possible saw pit was recorded (HSMR 44756). This measured 4.50m north-south x 1.50m east-west with the spoil bank on the west side. This spoil covers the wood boundary. A second feature (HSMR 44763) of unknown function was found to the east. This consisted of an 8-10m diameter mound, 1m high; it is heavily overgrown and there is possibly a shallow ditch around it. It is possible that this represents the remains of a clearance mound either associated with bringing areas into cultivation or a clearance of stumps etc associated with forestry works.

Two platforms were recorded (HSMR 44774) but these are most likely associated with quarrying (see later).

Two sections of a single trackway was identified (HSMR 44752). The first section extended from the southwest corner of the wood to the northwest corner; it was c.3.50m wide and cut into the upslope c.0.30m; an intermittent bank lined the downslope side. The second section was located along the eastern side of the wood and its dimensions were similar to those previously mentioned.

A single section of Holloway (HSMR 44759) was located in the northwest corner of the wood; it was 5m wide by 1m deep. This was on the line of the previously mentioned trackway as it exits the wood and as a consequence may represent a 'bottle neck' of trackways, indicating possible extraction of either large quantities of wood, or use over a significant period of time.

Post-medieval field system

Three sections of post-medieval field systems were identified during the survey HSMR 44753, 44758 and 44780. The first (HSMR 44753) was evident on both the west and east sides of the wood and consisted of a 3m wide by 0.15m high bank with an internal ditch. It is of note that similar boundaries currently exist outside the confines of the wood. The second boundary (HSMR 44758) is part of the first system on the west side of the wood. The last section of boundary (HSMR 44780) consists of a drop of 0.30m into a ditch.

This ditch is 0.90m wide by 0.15m deep and outside this was a bank 1.20m wide by 0.30m high. Again it was noted that this feature extends out of the wood.

Woodland boundaries

No boundaries of this type were identified during the survey. It appears that existing field boundaries were used to form the current edges of this woodland.

Industrial features

Seven quarries (HSMR No's 44760, 44764, 44768, 44770, 44771, 44772 and 44778) were recorded during the course of the survey. These were located at a number of locations within the wood. Quarrying was particularly dense on the east side of the wood (HSMR 44768, 44770, 44771 and 44772). The size of quarry varied considerably within this area, the largest (HSMR 44771) measures 60m x 25m and the working face is c.18m. Also surrounding the quarry is a significant quantity of spoil and this is located on either side of the previously mentioned trackway (HSMR 44752).

Three sections of holloway were associated with the quarrying activity (HSMR 44762, 44773 and 44775). The first (HSMR 44762) is aligned northwest – southeast and runs through the centre of the wood. It measures 4m wide by 2m deep and runs parallel to the existing forest track. The last two (HSMR 44773 and 44775) are the result of quarrying activity on the east side of the wood. The first extends from the quarry and associated platforms (see below) and leads into the second, larger Holloway.

Two adjacent platforms (HSMR 47774) were identified, associated with the quarrying. They were both c.7-8m in diameter and had an upslope drop of c.1m; no charcoal was evident which suggests that these were storage or building platforms.

Other features

A single dwelling (HSMR 4435) mentioned in Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record was not identified during the survey.

Indications of former land use

The earliest evidence identified within the wood was the presence of medieval lynchets. These indicate that at least part of Brampton Hill Wood was being intensively farmed in the Medieval period.

The Medieval field system has been incorporated into post-medieval enclosed fields. It would appear that some of these, in turn, have been planted as woodland and it is therefore the earthwork remains of field boundaries that form the wood edges and internal compartment divisions.

No evidence was recorded to support the SMR entry regarding the presence of an Iron Age hillfort. It is entirely possible that the Medieval lynchets present on the north-eastern

slope of the wood were mistaken for ramparts forming part of a defensive circuit associated with a hillfort.

Equally the record of a possible 'Saxon Dyke' appears to relate to the earthwork remains of Holloway HSMR 44775. A dyke would comprise a ditch and bank and no such feature was apparent during the survey. It has therefore to be concluded that what was previously recorded as a possible dyke is in fact a section of Holloway.

Evidence of woodland management is limited to several trackways as there are no charcoal burning platforms and only a single saw pit. These are deliberately constructed features but show little wear.

Site and feature condition

The majority of features recorded were well preserved, and over the majority of the survey area, later features did not obscure earlier ones.

Discussion and Implications

Implications regarding the archaeological resource

Due to the topography and geological characteristics of Brampton Hill Wood areas on its eastern side are susceptible to erosion; the relatively shallow soils in conjunction with steep slopes means that there is the potential for large-scale erosion if large areas are clear felled during or prior to periods of heavy or prolonged rainfall. The slopes on the west side are far more shallow so substantial erosion is much less likely.

Implications regarding site condition

Features within the wood generally survive well and relationships can be established between them and later features. Traces of past communications also survive well in the form of holloways and tracks and some can be related to specific features, - primarily quarries.

Implications for future management

Clearance or thinning should be undertaken under appropriate conditions, particularly on the steeper eastern slopes. Brash should be laid over features in areas where machinery is to be concentrated.

Implications for future field work.

This area of woodland has a high potential for the presence of well-preserved archaeological features and it should be possible to recognise relationships between many features and hence produce at least a rudimentary series of phases illustrating the changing management of the woodland.

Prior to further clear felling or other significant extraction of areas within the survey area these areas should be subject to a more detailed walk over survey in order to record and assess the location, archaeological potential and significance of any features present.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the help and co-operation of The Duchy of Cornwall Estate for assistance with access for this survey, and to the Forestry Commission for their commitment to this pilot scheme.

I would also like to thank T. Hoverd, Projects Officer, for his editorial input into this report.

Archive

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

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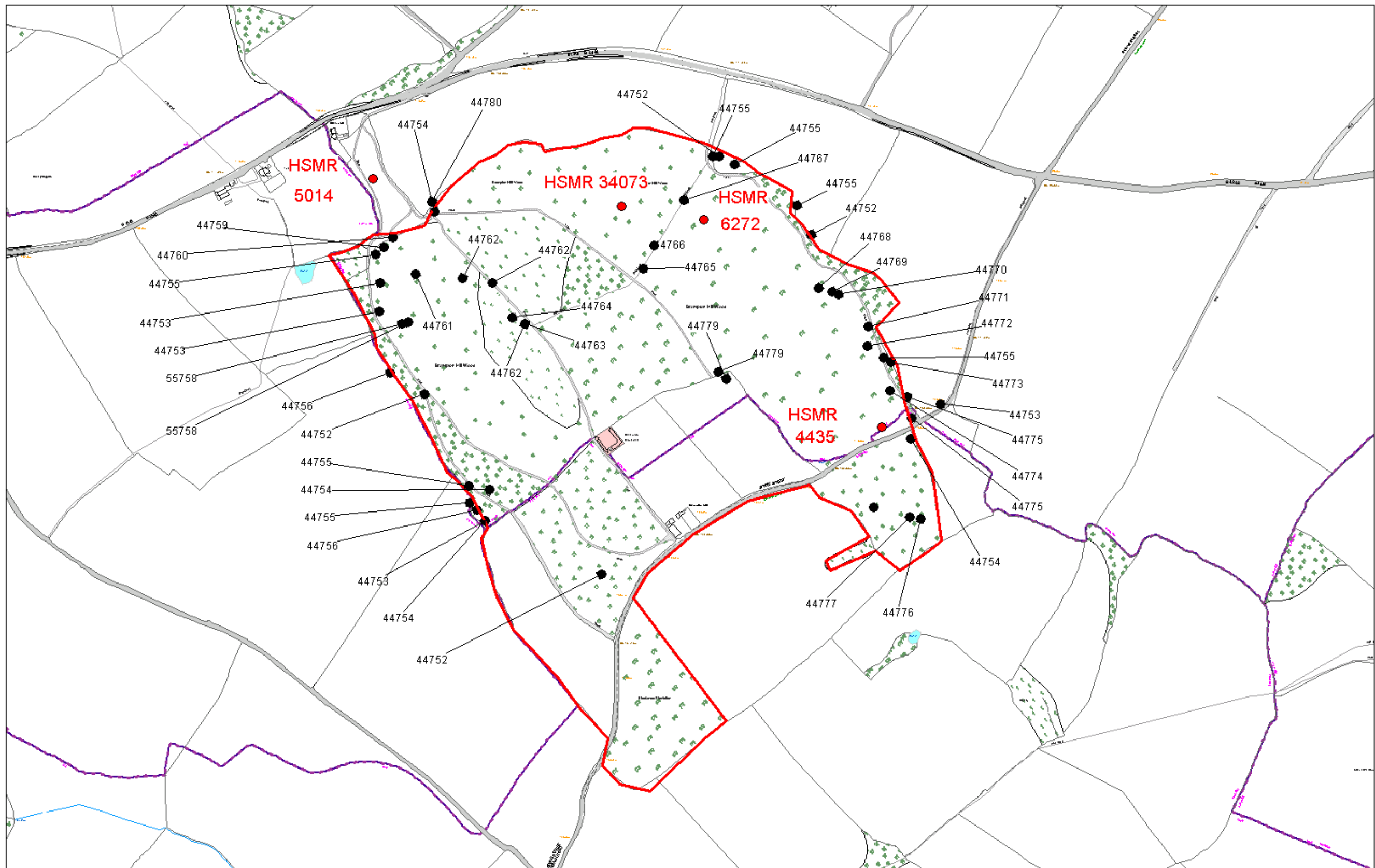


Figure 2: Brampton Hill Wood
Scale 1:1000




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Appendix : Database of features and grid references.

HSM	Easting	Northin	Site type	Period	Description
44752	340030	235464	Trackway	Post medieval/ Modern	Forestry track, 3.50m wide, cut into the up slope c.0.30m. Possible bank on the down slope very intermittent.
44753	338923	235574	Field boundary	Post Medieval	Current wood edge. Bank c.1.80m wide x 0.10m high, drop to pasture c.0.60m. Extends to the east and west. Internal ditch c.1.50m wide x 0.40m deep. Evidence of coppicing.
44754	339863	235593	Field boundary/ Wood edge	Post Medieval	Aligned north south, drop off to pasture c.0.40m.
44755	339863	235593	Lynchet/ Relict wood edge	Medieval/ Post Medieval	Butted by previous field boundary, aligned roughly north south, drop out of wood c.1.20m. External ditch c.0.80m wide x 0.10m deep.
44755	339833	235573	Lynchet/ Relict wood edge	Medieval/ Post Medieval	Forms the existing wood edge at this point.
44756	339844	235562	Saw pit	Post Medieval	Possible saw pit. 4.50m north south x 1.50m east west. Spoil bank on west side, extends over wood boundary.
44754	339856	235545	Lynchet/ Relict wood edge	Medieval/ Post Medieval	Extends out the wood at this point forming a field boundary.
44753	339856	235545	Field boundary	Post Medieval	Stops at this location.

44752	339755	235788	Trackway	Post Medieval/ Modern	Forest trackway. As before but now has a ditch on the east side. 0.60m wide, up slope drop c.0.70m.
55758	339742	235846	Field boundary	Post medieval	Bank and ditch. Bank c.1.30m wide x 0.15m high. Ditch on north side c.1m wide x 0.20m deep. Extends up hill from this point.
55758	339732	235843	Field boundary	Post Medieval	Stops at this location.
44753	339698	235863	Field boundary/ Wood edge	Post medieval	Bank c.3m wide x 0.60m high. Internal ditch 0.80m wide x 0.20m deep. Similar features extend outside the wood as field boundaries.
44753	339699	235906	Field boundary/ Woodedge	Post Medieval	Continues at this point but extends outside the wood.
44755	339705	235946	Lynchet/ Woodedge	Medieval/ Post Medieval	Consists of a drop out of the wood.
44759	339705	235960	Holloway	Medieval/ Post Medieval	5m wide x 1m deep.
44760	339719	235974	Quarry	Post medieval	40m diameter, up slope drop (east) c.15m deep.
44761	339752	235919	Lynchet?	Medieval	Heavily overgrown. Drop of 0.90 over 2m distance.
44762	339823	235913	Holloway	Medieval/ Post medieval	Parallel with forest track, 4m wide x 2m deep. Visible to west for 40m.
44762	339867	235906	Holloway	Medieval/ Post Medieval	Cut by modern forest trackway, extends up slope to the east.
44762	339915	235843	Holloway	Medieval/ Post Medieval	Stops at this point.

44763	339915	235843	Mound/kiln	Post medieval	8-10m diameter x 1m high mound. No masonry visible, heavily overgrown. Possible shallow ditch around mound.
44764	339897	235853	Quarries	Post Medieval	Surrounding the previous mound is a series of shallow depressions. 6 visible c.4m diameter x 0.80m deep.
44765	340092	235927	Lynchet	Medieval	Aligned northwest-southeast, following contour. A drop of 1.80m over 3.50m distance.
44766	340109	235962	Lynchet	Medieval	Aligned northwest-southeast, following contour. A drop of 1.80m over 3.50m distance.
44767	340184	236064	Lynchet	Medieval	Aligned northwest-southeast, following contour. A drop of 1.80m over 3.50m distance.
44755	340196	236097	Lynchet	Medieval	Existing woodedge. Bank c.2.50m wide, heavily eroded, external ditch, 1m wide x 0.35m deep. Tree lined, 150-200 years old?.
44752	340206	236098	Trackway	Post Medieval/ Modern	Up slope drop c.0.90m.
44755	340228	236085	Lynchet/ Woodedge	Medieval/ Post Medieval	Drop out to pasture 1.10m into external ditch, 0.80m wide x 0.10m.
44755	340322	236023	Woodedge	Post Medieval	Heavily overgrown. Slight bank, 1m wide x 0.10m high. Exterior ditch 1m wide x 0.40m deep.
44752	340344	235978	Trackway	Post medieval/ Modern	Junction, also extends to the west.
44768	340354	235898	Quarry	Post Medieval	Cut into up slope, 20m diameter x 7-8m deep (west). Surrounded by spoil.

44769	340374	235892	Spoil	Post Medieval	Spoil fan associated with previous quarry, but cut by modern forest trackway. 10m diameter platform (top of spoil) east side drop 5m.
44770	340384	235888	Quarry	Post Medieval	Cut into up slope, 20m diameter x 7-8m deep (west). Surrounded by spoil.
44771	340428	235839	Quarry	Post Medieval	Parallel to trackway, 60m north-south x 25m. Up slope drop (west) c.18-20m. 4 significant spoil heaps on other side of trackway.
44772	340427	235810	Quarry	Post Medieval	50m north-south x c.30m wide. Up slope depth 15-20m, spoil surrounds trackway.
44755	340451	235792	Lynchet/ Woodedge	Medieval/ Post Medieval	Drop to pasture 2.50m, exterior ditch 1m wide x 0.30m deep. Overgrown.
44773	340462	235785	Holloway	Medieval/ Post medieval	Extends to the north, 2.50m wide. Follows contour and is between 0.20m and 0.80m deep. Part of quarrying activity.
44774	340461	235742	Platform	Post Medieval	Two platforms, 7-8m diameter, up slope curved drop 1.20m, down slope drop c.1m. No charcoal visible.
44775	340487	235733	Holloway	Medieval/ Post Medieval	Aligned east-west, 3-3.50m wide x 1.50m deep, visible in both directions for 50m.
44775	340493	235700	Holloway	Medieval/ Post Medieval	Continues at this point.

44754	340492	235669	Lynchet/ Woodedge	Medieval/ Post Medieval	Consists of a drop of 0.30m.
44776	340507	235548	Lynchet?	Medieval	Consists of a shallow drop of 0.25m, tree stumps along it.
44777	340491	235551	Lynchet	Medieval	Drop of 1m over a distance of 2m, aligned northwest-southeast, follows contour.
0	340437	235566	Woodedge	Modern	No banks or ditches.
44753	340536	235722	Woodedge/ Field boundary	Post Medieval	Bank 1m wide x 0.40m high, internal ditch 1m wide. Abundant pleaching x 0.20m deep.
44778	342291	235738	Quarry	Post Medieval	Linear quarry?, Aligned east west, 15-20m long x 4m wide. South side c.4m deep
44779	340217	235760	Woodedge	Post Medieval	Eroded bank, 2-2.50m wide x 0.15m high. Possible Field boundary.
44779	340205	235771	Woodedge	Post Medieval	1.80m wide x 0.40m high, tree lined, occasional coppice, no pleaching.
44754	339780	236014	Lynchet/ Woodedge	Medieval/ Post Medieval	Drop to pasture fields of c.1m.
44780	339777	236029	Woodedge/ Field boundary	Medieval/ Post Medieval	Drop down of c.0.30m into ditch. This is 0.90m wide x 0.15m deep. Outside this is a further bank, 1.20m wide x 0.30m high. This bank then extends outside the wood.

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.