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**Herefordshire Woodlands
Archaeological Survey: Part 1
Timbridge Wood, Mordiford CP**

**Herefordshire Archaeology Report No. 157
December 2004**

Report prepared by Richard Lello

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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

The survey described in this report (HSM 39116) formed part of a pilot study undertaken in partnership with the Forestry Commission. A rapid walk over survey was carried out in Timbridge Wood using a hand held Global Positioning System to record the location of archaeological features encountered.

Features were recorded within the wood that illustrate a history of woodland management since the post medieval period, including woodland boundaries, holloways and trackways. Of particular interest is the possible indication of medieval agricultural activities in the form of a field lynchet.

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.

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Introduction

This report provides an account of a rapid survey of Timbridge Wood (HSM 39116). The survey was carried out in 2004 during the first year of the Herefordshire Woodlands Archaeological Survey following a pilot study undertaken by Herefordshire Archaeology in partnership with, and grant-aided by, the Forestry Commission. The purpose of the survey is to begin 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.

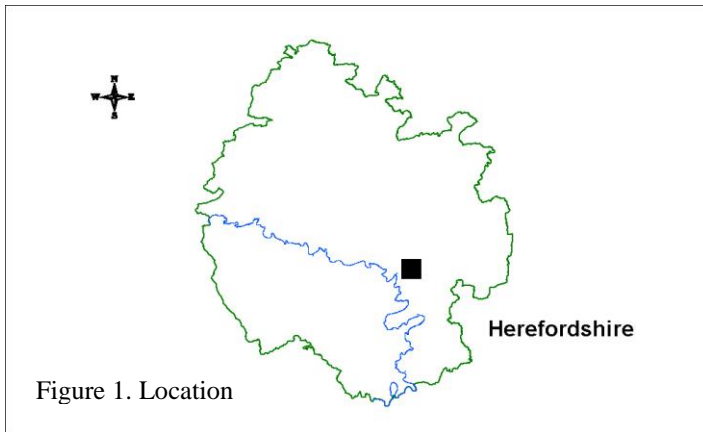
Woodland boundaries have often moved over the centuries, sometimes expanding to encapsulate and preserve evidence of alternative land use, e.g. field systems, and on other occasions shrinking, and being subjected to different forms of woodland management. These variations in land-use inevitably influence 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 two-phase pilot study, phase one of which took place in 2001-2, and phase two took place in 2003. The surveys carried out in early 2004 were designed to continue and expand the programme of pilot studies.

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

Timbridge Wood is located at NGR: SO 5850 3820 in the Civil Parish of Mordiford, approximately 6km east of Hereford. It covers a small conical hill with gentle slopes. The wood is of irregular rectangular shape, approximately 0.3km long and up to 0.25km wide. At the north-east corner, there are 2 small rectangular extensions of the wood: one



to the north, the other to the east, known as Little Timbridge Wood. The south-facing slopes of Timbridge Wood rise from 75m OD to 120m OD at the summit in the northern part of the wood. A spring, now capped, rises on the north-east edge of the wood.

Geologically, the area is underlain by olive, argillaceous and calcareous siltstone of the Coalbrookdale Formation of the Wenlock Series, Silurian System (British Geological Survey, 2000). The bedrock is overlain by typical stagnogley soils of the Stanway Series consisting of seasonally waterlogged, often stoneless, fine silty soils or fine silty over clayey soils, on rock (Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983).

Previous fieldwork and records

A search of the Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) revealed no entries for Timbridge Wood.

Method

Timbridge Wood was surveyed on 4 March 2004. 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 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

Timbridge Wood consists of deciduous woodland with some coppicing. There is an extensive bramble cover, and many fallen branches. Little Timbridge Wood is managed as a coppice.

On 4 March 2004 during the survey the weather was dry, sunny and mild. Visibility was good.

<i>Results</i>

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).

Woodland management features

No direct evidence of post medieval woodland management, in the form of charcoal burning platforms or saw pits, was observed. The thick bramble over much of the wood may have obscured any subtle archaeological features. Indirect evidence of woodland management was observed in the form of 2 holloways and 2 trackways.

A deeply cut holloway (HSM 39127) enters Timbridge Wood on the north side, and gave access to the northern part of the wood. A modern road follows the course of the holloway, giving access to Warsaw Farm on the east side of Timbridge Wood. On the north side of the summit, a holloway (HSM 39120) gave access to the north-east part of the wood, including Little Timbridge Wood.

A trackway (HSM 39117), generally aligned north to south, gave access to the eastern part of the wood. This trackway is now used as forestry trackway, and it turns east near the northern edge of the wood to link with the farm access road (HSM 39127). A low bank (HSM 39119) extends northwards from the trackway (HSM 39117) at the point where it turns to the east. The bank continues to the northern edge of the wood, marking the earlier route of the trackway. Near the southern end of the trackway (HSM 39117), a trackway (HSM 39118) extends to the east and gave access to the eastern part of the wood.

The major access to Timbridge Wood was located on the north side at NGR SO: 5860 3830. A further access point may have been located on the east side near Warslaw Farm

(NGR: SO 5865 3820). The present access point on the south side of the wood is modern, associated with forestry activities.

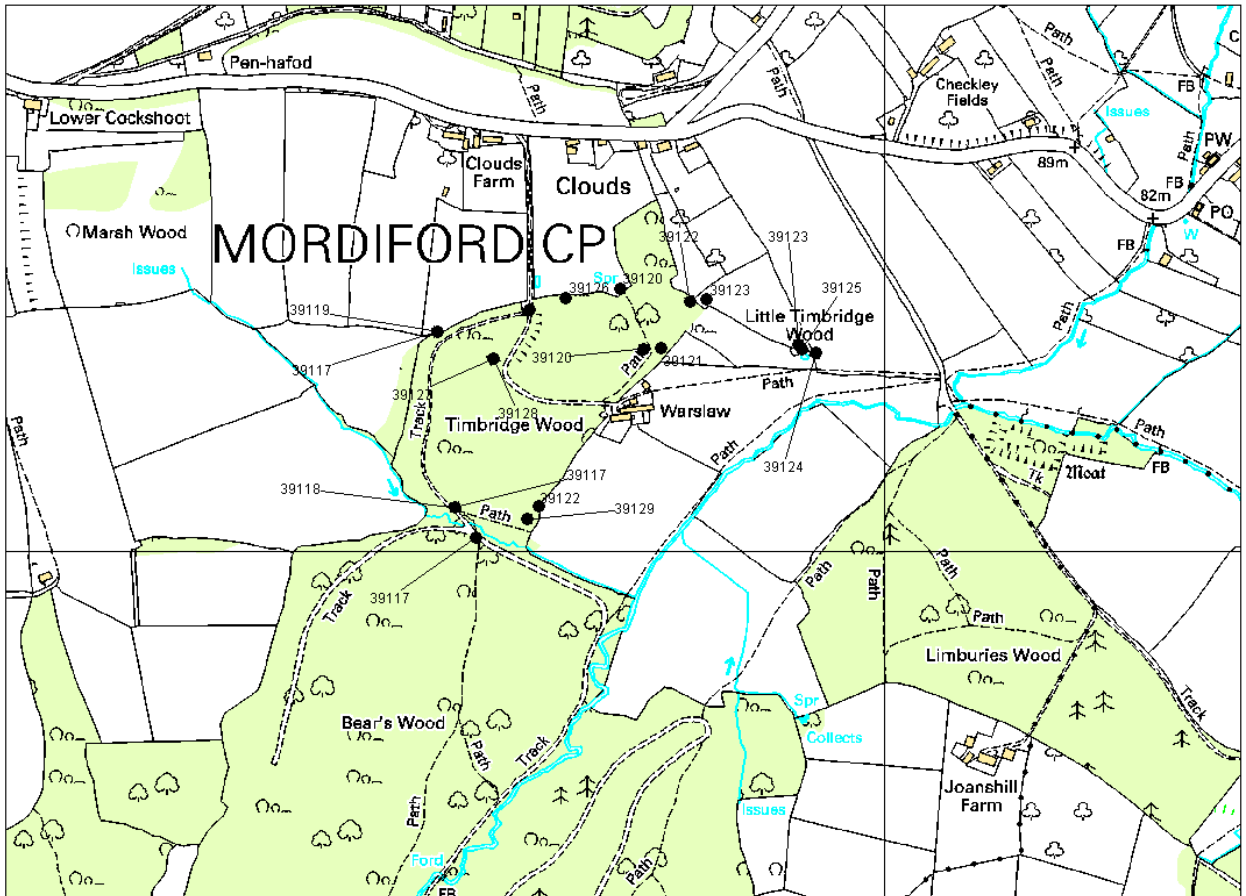


Figure 2: Location of features recorded within Timbridge Wood.

Woodland boundaries

Four features identified as woodland boundaries were recorded. The northern edge of Timbridge Wood is marked by a curving bank (HSM 39126) aligned generally east to west. The bank is very eroded, and is in the form of a lynchet, 1m high, facing north into pasture, with a line of deciduous tree stubs. At its eastern end, the bank turns to the south-east (south of the spring) and extends 40m into the wood where it merges with holloway HSM 39120, which at this location is a trackway. The bank is cut by holloway HSM 39127 at the northern access point to the wood, and continues to the south-west as an eroded bank, 0.25m high, 0.5m wide, with a ditch on the north side. The ditch has vertical sides, and is well-maintained as a drainage ditch.

The eastern edge of Timbridge Wood is marked by a bank and ditch (HSM 39122). The bank is low and eroded, and the shallow ditch on the east side is barely perceptible.

The northern edge of Little Timbridge Wood is marked by a bank and ditch (HSM 39123). The bank is low and eroded with a line of deciduous tree stubs; the shallow ditch

is on the south side. The feature does not extend to the west along the northern edge of Timbridge Wood, where the boundary between the wood and an orchard is marked by a modern fence. A very eroded bank and ditch (HSM 39125) marks the southern edge of Little Timbridge Wood, and continues to the east as a field boundary.

The western edge of Timbridge Wood is marked by a modern drainage ditch. On the south side of the wood, the boundary is marked by a meandering stream.

Agricultural features

A lynchet (HSM 39129) was recorded in the southern part of the wood. The feature is aligned east to west following the contours of the slope; it is 0.5m high, faces south, and extends eastwards into pasture. It is cut by the bank and ditch (HSM 39122) marking the eastern edge of Timbridge Wood.

Other features

Two pits were recorded. A pit (HSM 39124), located at the eastern end of Little Timbridge Wood, is circular, 5m in diameter and 3m deep, with no evidence of a spoil heap. This feature is marked on the Ordnance Survey 1:25 000 map (1998) as a pond; a local resident identified it as a World War II bomb crater.

A semi-circular pit (HSM 39128) is located in the central part of the wood where it is cut by the modern access road (also the route of a holloway, HSM 39127) to Warslaw Farm. Both pits are of similar proportions, and are likely have similar origins as post medieval clay extraction pits, or as World War II bomb craters.

A straight ditch (HSM 39121), aligned north-west to south-east, was recorded in the northern part of the wood. The ditch runs down slope, and functioned as a drainage channel for the spring (now capped) at the north-east corner of the wood.

Evidence of former land use

The parish of Mordiford Tithe Map of 1841 records Timbridge Wood as woodland. The limited evidence recorded during the survey supports the interpretation of Timbridge Wood as managed woodland since the post medieval period. Several holloways and trackways giving access to all areas of the wood were recorded, and they are also shown on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition map of 1887.

The woodland boundaries observed during the survey are essentially the same as those recorded on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition map and on Bryant's *Map of Herefordshire* of 1835. The northern boundary is marked by an eroded bank. The eastern boundaries (including Little Timbridge Wood) are marked by banks and ditches, also eroded.

Some evidence of localised change in woodland boundaries is recognised, however. In the north-east part of Timbridge Wood, the boundary bank is aligned north-west to south-east, within the present woodland. This indicates that the 2 rectangular extensions of the

wood to the north and to the east (Little Timbridge Wood) are recent, but predate the Tithe Map of 1841. In that case, the bank and ditch on the north and south sides of Little Timbridge Wood represent earlier field boundaries.

On the east side of Timbridge Wood, the Tithe Map records a homestead (now called Warslaw Farm) and five small rectangular fields. The fields are aligned north-west to south-east, and extend from the eastern edge of Timbridge Wood to the Pentaloe Brook. This is likely to be indicative of assarting during the post medieval period. Earlier, Timbridge Wood may have extended further east to the Pentaloe Brook, the boundary of the parishes of Mordiford and Fownhope. Additional evidence of an earlier, more extensive woodland is provided by field names recorded on the west side of the present Timbridge Wood, including Little Wood Field, Bushy Ground, and Stockhall Ridge.

A lynchet recorded in the southern part of Timbridge Wood, cut by a later bank and ditch marking the woodland boundary, may be the result of agricultural activities. If this is the case, the lynchet is likely to be of medieval, or prehistoric, date. This would indicate that Timbridge Wood, or at least the southern part of the present wood, dates to the late medieval or post medieval period. The lynchet extends east into pasture, becoming very eroded. It does not appear to coincide with a former field boundary aligned north-west to south-east, recorded by the Tithe Map of 1841. It has been suggested (above) that the small rectangular fields east of Timbridge Wood are the result of post medieval assarting; the lynchet, therefore, represents an earlier period of farming activities.

No clear evidence of industrial activity was observed. Two pits of similar dimensions were recorded. They may both be post medieval clay extraction pits, or World War II bomb craters.

Discussion

Site and feature condition

Most of the archaeological features recorded in Timbridge Wood are in a poor state of preservation. This applies particularly to woodland boundary features and trackways. This is likely to be the result of forestry activities, and agricultural activities on the edges of the wood. Several holloways and trackways continue to be used and maintained as forestry or farm access routes.

Implications regarding the archaeological resource

Archaeological features are at risk as a result of direct damage caused by intensive forestry activities including road construction and clear felling, and by agricultural activities at the woodland edge. Where these activities occur on hillsides, there is a significant threat of erosion due to the fine silty character of the soil.

Implications regarding site condition

Where archaeological features survive, it is sometimes possible to determine functional and chronological relationships. Limited evidence of functional relationships observed

during the survey includes the articulation of holloways or trackways with access points to the woodland, providing evidence of patterns of transportation and communication, and the organisation of economic activities indicated by woodland and field boundaries. Evidence of chronological relationships is provided by the cutting of the lynchet on the eastern woodland boundary, the location of the north-eastern woodland boundary indicating the expansion of the woodland, and assarting or the encroachment of woodland for agricultural purposes on the east side of the wood.

Implications for future management

A long history of human activity relating to woodland management and agricultural activities, dating from as early as the medieval period, can be demonstrated at Timbridge Wood. Many of the activities are recorded in the archaeological record. Archaeological features may be at risk, however, particularly as a result of intensive forestry and agricultural activities. Preservation of archaeological features can be enhanced through well-informed management strategies that recognise both the value and the non-renewable nature of the archaeological resource. This applies particularly to linear features, such as the lynchet, holloways, trackways and woodland boundary banks.

Implications for future fieldwork

The rapid survey of Timbridge Wood has identified a small number of surviving archaeological features associated with woodland management, patterns of communication and economic organisation, and agricultural activities dating, possibly, from the medieval period. It is unlikely that a more detailed archaeological survey would be productive.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the commitment and 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.

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<i>Archive</i>

1 Dictaphone Tape
1 Transcription Record
1 Excel Database
1 Mapinfo Data File
This Document

Appendix: Database of features and grid references

Note: Eastings and Northings shown below on the database include an additional first digit which should be omitted for location of the NGR, e.g. 358534 238016 represents SO 5843 3801.

HSM	Eastings	Northing	Site type	Period	Description
39117	358534	238016	Trackway	Post medieval	Aligned NW-SE, 3m wide, cut 1m on NE u/s, enters Timbridge Wood from Bear's Wood as a forestry trackway. Good
39117	358510	238050	Trackway	Post medieval	Further position to NW of trackway 39117, j/w trackway 39118
39118	358510	238050	Trackway	Post medieval	Aligned E-W, 2m wide, extends E from j/w trackway 39117. Poor
39117	358490	238250	Trackway	Post medieval	Further position to NW of trackway 39117, turns E at this location
39119	358490	238250	Bank	Post medieval	Aligned N-S, 0.25m high, 0.5m wide, extends N from trackway 39117 to N edge of wood. Poor. May mark original alignment of trackway 39117
39120	358725	238230	Holloway	Post medieval	Aligned NW-SE, 1.5m wide, 0.5m deep, overgrown by trees. Good
39121	358744	238232	Ditch	Post medieval	Aligned NW-SE, 0.5m wide, 0.35m deep, dry. Fair
39122	358778	238284	Bank and ditch	Post medieval	Aligned NE-SW on E edge of wood, bank 0.5m high, 0.5m wide, eroded, ditch on E 0.25m wide, 0.15m deep. Poor
39123	358796	238287	Bank and ditch	Post medieval	Aligned E-W on N edge of Little Timbridge Wood, bank 0.25m high, 0.5m wide, eroded, line of stubs along bank, ditch on S side, 0.5m wide, 0.10m deep. Poor
39123	358900	238236	Bank and ditch	Post medieval	Further position of bank and ditch 39123 at NE corner of Little Timbridge Wood
39124	358920	238226	Pit	Post medieval?	Circular, 5 dia, 3m deep, eroded. Poor. Clay extraction?/World War II bomb crater?
39125	358905	238230	Bank	Post medieval	Aligned E-W, eroded bank, lynchet 0.5m high facing S into pasture, extends W from SE corner of Little Timbridge Wood. Poor. Marks S edge of wood, extends E as field boundary
39125	358780	28233	Bank and ditch	Post medieval	Further position to W of bank 39125 at SW corner of Little Timbridge Wood, bank 0.2m high, shallow ditch on S side 0.5m wide, very eroded. Continues to SW as bank and ditch 39122 on E side of

					Timbridge Wood
39120	358698	238299	Trackway	Post medieval	Further position to NW of holloway 39120, now a trackway, cut by ditch 39121 which has several channels at this location
39121	58698	38299	Ditch	Post medieval	Further position to NW of ditch 39121, several channels at this position drain a spring which arises on N side of wood, cuts trackway/holloway 39120
39126	358636	238289	Bank	Post medieval	Aligned E-W, eroded bank, lynchet 1m high facing N into pasture, with line of stubs. Poor. Changes direction at this location, extends to SE within wood for 40m, merges with trackway 39120
39126	358595	238275	Bank	Post medieval	Further position to W of bank 39126, cut by access road to Warslaw Farm aligned N-S. Continues W as bank and ditch marking N edge of Timbridge Wood, bank 0.25m high, 0.5m wide, eroded, ditch on N side, 0.5m wide, 0.25m deep, maintained as drainage ditch
39127	358554	238219	Holloway	Post medieval	Aligned N-S turning to W, 2m wide, 3m deep. Good. Modern access road to Warslaw Farm follows course of earlier trackway
39128	358554	238219	Pit	Post medieval?	Semi-circular, 5m x 3m, 3m deep, on W side of holloway 39127. Good. Clay extraction?/WWII bomb crater?
39122	358605	238051	Bank and ditch	Post medieval	Further position to SW of bank and ditch 39122 on E side of wood
39129	358592	238037	Lynchet	Medieval?	Aligned E-W, 0.5m high, facing S, extends E into pasture, eroded. Poor

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.