



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

**Herefordshire Woodlands
Archaeological Survey,
Part 1
Lady Coppice and Steep Hill
Madley**

**Herefordshire Archaeology
Report No. 148
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Report prepared by
D N Williams

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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 Archaeological Survey, Part 1

Lady Coppice and Steep Hill

Madley

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Summary:

The survey described in this report (EHE44781), formed part of the Herefordshire Woodlands Archaeological Survey undertaken in partnership with the Forestry Commission. A rapid site identification survey was carried out in the wood concerned, using a hand held Global Positioning System to record the location of the features that were recognised as having archaeological significance.

The earliest and only evidence of medieval activity was a series of lynchets. These and the rest of the survey area were overlain by a Post-Medieval field system as indicated primarily by the field boundaries. Evidence of industrial activity was also identified in the form of quarries and their associated platforms and routeways. It is suggested therefore that the wood on Steep Hill was planted after the quarrying stopped and was planted to hide the effects of quarrying. What is not clear is whether the wood on Lady Coppice was planted at the same time as no quarries were identified within this portion of the survey area. What is clear within both areas of woodland is that there are no woodland management features. This suggests that if the wood was utilized as a resource it was extracted from site rather than processed on-site.

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 Lady Coppice and Steep Hill (EHE44781). The survey was carried out in 2004 within year 1 of the Herefordshire Woodlands Archaeological Survey which followed 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 practicable.

Woodland boundaries have often moved over the centuries, sometimes expanding to encapsulate and preserve evidence of alternative land-use (for instance, field systems) and on other occasions shrinking and being subject to differing 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 concerning woodland history, management history and sequential development, and 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 has grant aided Herefordshire Archaeology to undertake a two phase pilot study, Phase One of which took place in 2001-2, and Phase 2 took place in 2003. The surveys carried out in early 2004 were an extension to this initial pilot work.

The survey for each woodland area identifies the potential for the survival of archaeological features and samples the types of features present. Further planned survey may re-visit woodlands identified in the 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 the relationships between features to enable some degree of understanding concerning the evolution of the woodland.

Location

Lady Coppice and Steep Hill is located at NGR: 339152 236658, within the parish of Madley. The woodland covers the top of two adjoining hills and the “valley” in between and the maximum elevation is approximately 80m OD (Ordnance Survey, 1998).

The soils for this area are derived from the Bromyard Series of reddish brown, silty soils over soft siltstone and coarse sandstones. (Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983).



The Historic Landscape Characterisation Study for Herefordshire describes Lady Coppice (including the Birches) as an estate division (G2.10) consisting of sub-rectangular fields with sinuous boundaries (B1 F3). Steep Hill consists of a parallel-orientated system (C2.1) where sinuous sub rectangular boundaries predominate (HLC 363), (Ray and White, 2003).

Figure 1: Lady Coppice and Steep Hill Location.

Previous fieldwork / records

Prior to the survey taking place the Herefordshire County Sites and Monuments Record was consulted and a single site was found within the wood.

HSMR	41321
NGR	SO 3949 3667
TYPE	Gravel pit
DATE	Post Medieval

Method

The primary survey work at Lady Coppice and Steep Hill took place on January 2004. 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 Silva Multinavigator 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 comprises only a rapid appraisal of the woodland and should not be taken as exhaustive or its results as entirely 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

The weather during the survey was fine and dry and visibility within the wood was generally good. Ground cover was occasionally dense, especially on the southwest facing slope of Lady Coppice.

Results (Figure 2)

The recorded data from the survey is described in detail within this results section. This section is concluded by a brief discussion highlighting the historical development of the woodland as understood using the 2004 survey results. The significance of recorded features and management implications are then commented upon within the subsequent 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

Three possible lynchets were recorded during the survey (HSMR 44788, 44789 and 44790) and all three were found on the southwest facing slope of Lady Coppice. All three were slight features only visible on the trackway due to dense undergrowth on both sides. All three consist of a clearly visible drop of c.0.40m over a distance of c.6m. It is to be noted that other ‘drops’ were identified during the survey but these have been singular features that may or may not be lynchets (see woodland boundaries)

Post-Medieval Field System

Two field boundaries were located with the woods (see also woodland boundaries). The first (HSMR 44786) runs parallel with trackway 4 (see below). It consists of a bank 2.50m wide x 0.50m high. That this represents a field boundary is further substantiated by the fact that it extends out of the wood. The second boundary (HSMR 44804) is aligned roughly southwest – northeast and consists of a bank c.1.50m wide x 0.20m high.

Woodland management features

A single charcoal burning platform (HSMR 44782) was recorded. This measured 10m in diameter with an up slope drop of 0.30m. No saw pits were recorded within Lady Coppice and Steep Hill.

Woodland boundaries

The boundary of the wood is wood is marked in numerous ways. Surrounding Lady Coppice, on all sides except the north (boundary between the two woods), the boundary consists of a drop out of the wood of c.0.40m (HSMR 44784). That this is of some antiquity is indicated by the intermittent presence of both hawthorne and pleaching along its length. It was noted in one section of the western boundary (HSMR 44783) that this Hawthorne and pleached boundary was also present without the “drop” out of the wood.

On the east side of Steep Hill, the “drop” out of the wood becomes a single bank (HSMR 44793). This measures 1.20m wide x 0.15m high and no associated ditch is visible. As this boundary continues to the east i.e. in the southeast corner of Steep Hill, this feature is given a second number (HSMR 44801) to show that at this point the boundary has become a “relict” feature due to small-scale wood expansion to the south. The existing wood boundary then continues to the northeast as a wire fence (HSMR 44802).

The northwest corner of Steep Hill is the most complicated as it consists of numerous boundary types. The first is associated with a holloway (HSMR 44807) and consists of a substantial bank that runs parallel to the Holloway; it measures 3.50m wide x 1.20m high. The wood has expanded beyond this point and now follows a drop (HSMR 44812) out of the wood, (similar to HSMR 447843) and marks the northern side of the wood. The western edge of the wood is marked primarily by a single bank (HSMR 44812) measuring 1.20m wide x 0.15m high. The last section of boundary, HSMR 44813, consists of a bank 1.30m wide x 0.40m high, but with an internal ditch measuring 1m wide x 0.15m deep.

Industrial features

Four quarries, (HSMR 44798, 41321, 44808 and 44815). The first (HSMR 44798) was located on the western side of then wood and measured 6-7m east-west x 10-12m; also associated with this was a platform (HSMR 44799, see below). The second area of quarrying (41321) was located in the northeast corner of Steep Hill and was more substantial than the first. It was aligned roughly southwest-northeast and measured 70m x 30 x 15-20m deep. Also associated with this feature were a series of spoil heaps (HSMR 44806) and a substantial Holloway (HSMR 44807, see below). The third potential quarry (HSMR 44808) is a substantial size and further work needs to be undertaken to establish whether this is a natural result of erosion. It is a linear quarry, aligned roughly northeast-southwest and measures 25m x 5m wide x 0.60m deep. Within this feature was a platform (HSMR 44811, see below), which tends to suggest evidence of either building or storage.

Three platforms were identified during the survey, and both appear to be associated with areas of quarrying. The first (HSMR 44799) is located in the southeast corner of Steep Hill and is associated with quarry 17. It measures 8m in diameter; it has an up slope

curved drop of c.1.20m, with a bank on other three sides, c.3m wide x 0.20m high. The second (HSMR 44796) consists of a complex of four platforms also associated with quarrying (HSMR 44798); there is abundant spoil; and the complex covers an area of c.20m x 10m and has an entrance in the west. The third platform (HSMR 44811) was located within quarry HSMR 44808; it was roughly square, c.6-7m east west, with a c.0.40m drop off on down slope side.

Holloways and tracks

Numerous holloways were identified but their use appears to vary. The first type, HSMR 44803 and 44807, are the result of Post-Medieval quarrying. The first (HSMR 44803) was only identified at one point during the survey, it was c.6-7m wide and over 1m deep. The second was associated with quarry HSMR 41321. It was c.3m wide, it had an up slope drop (including quarry spoil) of 8-9m and on the down slope is a bank, 3.50m wide x 1.20m high. This may also represent a relict woodedge as mentioned above (see Woodland Boundaries). The second type of Holloway appears to be associated with wood extraction (HSMR 44787). It was identified on the west side of Lady coppice in association with two trackways (HSMR 447854 and 44792) and clearly marks the entrance/exit to the wood.

Buildings/Structures

A single structure was identified (HSMR 44800) and it consisted of a modern concrete water tank; it was aligned roughly northeast-southwest and measured 4m x 1.20m.

Former land use

The earliest evidence identified was the Medieval lynchets indicating medieval farming activity. These were small but significant features, but were only identified on the southwest facing slope of Lady Coppice. No other evidence of Medieval activity was noted.

This Medieval landscape was in turn overlain by a post medieval field system and it is within this later system that the wood was inserted.

It is not clear from the survey results which followed next, but it was either quarrying or wood extraction and there is evidence of both. It is common within Herefordshire however for woodlands to 'cover' the results of quarrying and it may be the same in this case, i.e. the quarries appear to post date the Post-Medieval period and pre date the insertion of the woods. It is also noted that ware on the trackways is minimal (except at the wood entrance/exit) possibly indicating that wood extraction has only taken place over a limited period of time.

Discussion and Implications

Site and feature condition

The topography and geology of Lady Coppice and Steep Hill dictates that certain areas, are susceptible to erosion; the relatively shallow soils in conjunction with steep slopes means that there is the potential for erosion if large areas are clear felled during or prior to periods of heavy or prolonged rainfall.

Implications regarding the archaeological resource

The features recorded during this survey were generally well preserved. With the exception of additional access tracks being constructed there is little threat to their survival

Implications for future management

Care should be taken if further access ways and extraction routes are to be constructed. However, the lack of internal boundaries facilitates the planning of a route or routes that would have minimal impact on the archaeological resource.

Implications for future field work.

This area of woodland has a medium 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. It would be of interest to establish the extent of the lynchets (covered in undergrowth at time of survey) and also to clarify the function and formation of what is currently identified as a quarry (HSMR 44808).

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.

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 Herefordshire *Studies in Archaeology Series, Vol 1*
 Herefordshire Archaeology. Hereford.

Archive

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

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.

Appendix 1: Database of features and grid references.

HSM No.	Easting	Northing	Site type	Period	Description
44782	339152	236658	Charcoal burning platform?	Post Medieval	10m diameter, up slope drop (south) 0.30m. Down slope, eroded bank, 5m wide x 0.10m high.
44783	339142	236649	Wood edge	Post Medieval	No bank or ditch, tree lined, some coppice evident.
44784	339149	236645	Wood edge	Post Medieval	At this point there is a drop down to pasture c.0.40m, follows contour, hawthorn lined.
44785	339147	236592	Trackway	Modern	Extends to the west, heavy ground cover, visibility poor.
44785	339091	236424	Trackway	Modern	Solid bramble either side.
44786	339010	236392	Field boundary	Post Medieval	North of previous trackway. Bank 4m wide x 0.30m high, ditch on south side. 1.50m wide x 0.20m deep.
44786	338973	236405	Field boundary	Post Medieval	Cut by trackway 4.
44786	338960	236384	Field boundary	Post Medieval	Existing wood edge, parallel with trackway 4. Bank 2.50m wide x 0.50m high. This is definitely a field boundary as it extends out of the wood as well.
44787	338963	236383	Holloway	Post Medieval/ Medieval	At this point the trackway becomes a holloway, parallel with previous field boundary. Field boundary on west side, east side c.1.50m deep.
44787	338941	236412	Holloway	Post Medieval/ Medieval	Holloway extends out of wood into open pasture.
44786	338926	236349	Field boundary	Post Medieval/ Medieval	Boundary continues to the west, but existing wood edge bends at this location.
44792	338962	236330	Trackway	Modern	Extends to the south.
44784	338985	236169	Wood edge	Post Medieval	Consists of a drop down of 1m. Relict hawthorn and pleaching evident.
44788	338979	236198	Lynchet?	Medieval	6-7m, drop off on down slope 0.40m.
44789	338970	236211	Lynchet?	Medieval	Second slight feature, part of strip lynchet system.
44790	338971	236221	Lynchet	Medieval	Third small strip visible only on course of trackway. Both sides overgrown. Trees present c.15-20 years old, significant tree stumps are present.

44791	339097	236389	Earthwork	Unknown	Linear, drop of 0.20m then a 0.50m wide shelf, then a drop of 0.15m. Extent not visible due to undergrowth. May be the result of modern transport.
44784	339165	236385	Wood edge	Post Medieval	Consists of a drop c.0.40m out of the wood.
44785	339170	236444	Holloway	Medieval/ Post Medieval	Very shallow, 4.50m wide x 0.40m deep, extends to the southwest, obscured.
44793	339183	236454	Wood edge	Post Medieval	Wood edge becomes a bank beyond this point. 1.20m wide x 0.15m high. No ditch evident to suggest field boundary.
44794	339291	236503	Platform	Post Medieval	10m north-south x 8m east-west, east side drop c.1m, drop off on west side.
44795	339301	236485	Platform	Post Medieval	Rectangular, Aligned north-south, c.15m x 7m. Spoil on two sides c.1m high. South side marked by a drop onto the platform c.1.40m. These two platforms are related, forming a small complex in the base of the valley.
44793	339309	236484	Woodedge	Post Medieval	Bank, 2.50m wide, drop 0.20m down to pasture outside the wood. Inside the wood it drops 0.50m to the base of a ditch. Ditch is 0.90m wide, 0.30m deep on the north side. This continues to be the south side of the previous platform.
44793	339371	236462	Relict Woodedge	Post Medieval	Continues at this point, east end is a pond. This woodedge is now c.20m east of the existing wood boundary.
44796	339361	236452	Platform	Post Medieval	Four platforms, associated with quarrying, abundant spoil, area c.20m x 10m, entrance in the west.
44797	339371	236462	Pond	Post Medieval	Pond, associated with quarrying or possibly processing of raw material, it may even be the water source for the buildings downslope. 10-12m north-south x 8-10m east-west x 1.30m deep. Fed by stream on the east side.
44798	339392	236465	Quarry	Post Medieval	East of pond, 6-7m east-west x 10-12m.
44799	339404	236458	Platform	Post Medieval	8m diameter, up slope curved drop c.1.20m, bank on other three sides c.3m wide x 0.20m high, no charcoal visible.
44800	339411	236453	Water tank	Modern	Concrete water tank, aligned northeast-southwest, 4m x 1.20m.
44801	339396	236434	Relict woodedge	Medieval/ Post Medieval	Significant bank running uphill from this point. 6m wide x 0.90m high, occasional hawthorn. Wood has expanded slightly.

44802	339385	236421	Woodedge	Modern	Existing woodedge, marked only by wire fence.
44801	339410	236419	Relict woodedge	Medieval/ Post Medieval	Continues at this point.
44801	339441	236401	Relict woodedge	Medieval/ Post medieval	Continues at this point.
44801	339448	236401	Relict woodedge	Medieval/ Post Medieval	Ends at the existing woodedge (wire fence)
44802	339436	236437	Woodedge	Modern	Existing woodedge, marked only by a wire fence.
44803	339416	236429	Holloway	Medieval/ Post Medieval	6-7m wide at this point.
44804	339368	236459	Field boundary	Post Medieval	Extends to the northeast. Bank c.1.50m wide x 0.20m high, coppicing evident.
41321	339493	236650	Quarry	Post Medieval	Aligned roughly southwest-northeast, 70m x 30 x 15-20m deep.
41321	339465	236700	Quarry	Post Medieval	West end of quarry.
44806	339501	236698	Spoil heap	Post Medieval	Spoil associated with previous quarries.
44807	339505	236728	Holloway	Medieval/ Post Medieval	Possibly associated with previous quarrying. 3m wide, up slope drop (including quarry spoil) 8-9m, down slope is a bank, 3.50m wide x 1.20m high. This may also represent a relict woodedge.
44807	339502	236730	Holloway	Medieval/ Post Medieval	Continues at this location.
44808	339418	236753	Quarry	Post Medieval	Linear quarry. Aligned roughly east-west, 25m x 5m wide x 0.60m deep.
44809	339368	236733	Platform	Medieval/ Post Medieval	4-5m diameter, up slope drop 0.20m, semi-circular bank on other three sides, 1.20m wide x 0.20m high.
44810	339375	236733	Platforms/ quarries	Post Medieval	Area of ground disturbance, series of scoops of various sizes. Marl quarries or habitation site?.
3044811	339392	236732	Platform	Post Medieval	Roughly square, 6-7m, drop off on down slope 0.40m.
44808	339359	236702	Quarry	Post Medieval	Linear quarry, second reading.
44808	339319	236676	Quarry	Post Medieval	Linear quarry, third reading.
44807	339350	236815	Holloway/relict wood edge	Post Medieval	Still visible at this point. Downslope bank/relict woodedge still present. Currently 20m from existing edge.
44807	339334	236853	Holloway	Post Medieval	Holloway bends to the east, not visible outside the wood.

44812	339420	236844	Woodedge	Medieval/ Post Medieval	Consists of a drop out of the wood c.0.50m.
44813	339337	236845	Woodedge	Medieval/ Post Medieval	Consists of a bank 1.20m wide x 0.15m high.
44813	339327	236830	Woodedge	Medieval/ Post Medieval	Existing and relict wood edge meet at this point.
44813	339271	236661	Woodedge/field boundary	Post Medieval	Bank 1.30m wide x 0.40m high, internal ditch 1m wide x 0.15m deep.
44814	339271	236661	Trackway	Post Medieval/ Modern	Cuts previous woodedge.
44815	339230	236625	Quarry	Post Medieval	Shallow, eroded. 15-20m diameter, east side 2.50m deep, west, natural topography, with slight bank on it. 4.50m wide x 0.10m high.