



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

**Herefordshire Woodlands
Archaeological Survey,
Part 1
Limburies Wood, Fownhope
& Mordiford**

**Herefordshire Archaeology
Report No. 156
December 2004**

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.

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Summary:

The survey described in this report (EHE42876), 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.

A series of linear earthworks were recorded within the wood which appear to represent a medieval boundary bank, defining an area around a possible medieval industrial site.

Earthwork features were recorded within the wood that illustrate the intensive use of the woodland resource in the late and post medieval periods. These included saw pits, charcoal burning platforms, quarries and woodland management boundaries.

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 Limburies Wood, Fownhope and Mordiford (EHE42876). 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

Limburies Wood is located at NGR: SO 5921 3787, within the parishes of Fownhope and Mordiford approximately 8 km east of Hereford city. The woodland covers northern sides of a gentle slope at an elevation of between 80m and 120m OD (Ordnance Survey, 1998).

Geologically, the survey area is underlain for the most part by the Woolhope Limestone Formation of the Wenlock Series, consisting of nodular limestone and siltstone. To the south and east lies the Haugh Wood Formation of the May Hill Sandstone Group (Llandovery Series), consisting of green-grey sandstone and siltstone. (British Geological Survey, 2000).

The Woolhope Limestone is overlain by stagnogleyic argillic brown earths of the Yeld Series, consisting of well-drained fine loamy calcareous soils and fine silty soils with clay-enriched subsoil. The bedrock of the Haugh Wood Formation is overlain by typical stagnogley soils of the Stanway Series, consisting of seasonally waterlogged fine silty soils with clay-enriched subsoil (Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983).



The Historic Landscape Characterisation Study for Herefordshire describes Limburies Wood as woodland surrounded by fields to the east and south derived from the enclosure of former common arable areas, (HLC 381). The field boundaries to the north and west are more degraded due to more recent boundary loss but are still aligned on the common arable.(HLC 363), (Ray and White, 2003).

Figure 1: Limburies Wood Location.

Previous fieldwork / records

Prior to the survey taking place the county Sites and Monuments Record was consulted. However, no entries were found indicating the discovery of sites within the survey area, and it is therefore assumed that no fieldwork that has resulted in a published record has taken place here previously. However, immediately to the north-east of the survey area are a series of earthworks described as:

HSM 6497, (SAM 31967)

Site Name: Moat, Pentaloë Brook, Fownhope
Parish: Fownhope
NGR: SO 5918 3811
Description: Series of ponds possibly incorporating a moated homestead.
Period: Medieval

The site has been re-interpreted following a recent field visit and it is now suggested that the earthwork features relate to a medieval or post-medieval industrial complex.

Method

The primary survey work at Limburies Wood took place on March 2nd 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.

Results (Figures 2 and 3)

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 HSM, these initials relating to Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record unique numbers



Figure 2: Extract from the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1887

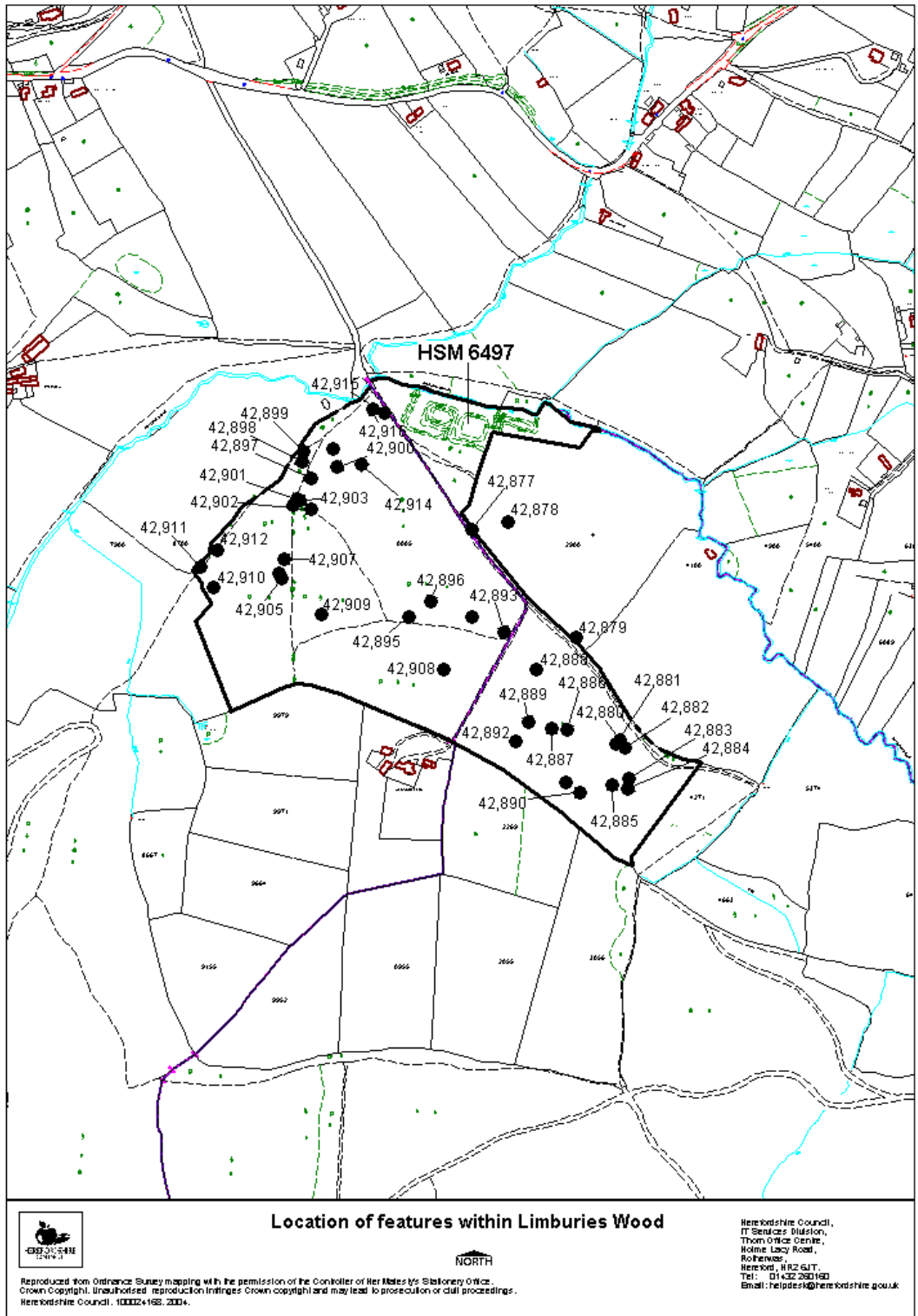


Figure 3: Location of features recorded during the survey.

Woodland management features

A total of eight charcoal burning platforms were recorded. These ranged in size from 5-10m in diameter and in the main comprised a level, circular platform with a pronounced down-slope lip. This is an unusually low number to record within such woodland and it is suggested that the lack of natural slope within some areas of the wood means that such features either do not show up well or that there was little need to construct a well defined platform. Therefore the small number of charcoal burning platforms recorded is probably not an accurate reflection of the scale of charcoal burning industry taking place within the wood during the post-medieval period.

Five saw pits were recorded within Limburies Wood. The earthwork remains comprise an oval depression between 4 and 6m in length, 1.5m wide and 0.3- 1.0m deep with spoil on their down-slope sides.

These were arranged in two distinct groups. HSM 42880, 42881 and 42882 were clustered immediately to the west of a 25m long and 8m wide platform, (HSM 42883). It is presumed that this was used as a storage area for lumber either awaiting processing or awaiting collection after processing. HSM 42912 and 42913 were located close to the current entrance to the wood. The location of these features suggests a well organised approach to timber production and processing.

Woodland boundaries

Five woodland boundary banks were recorded during the survey. These reflect the changing shape and extent of the wood from the medieval period into the post-medieval period. There appears to have been at least two phases of woodland re-organisation within Limburies Wood:

1. During the medieval period the woodland boundary was further to the north of the present wood. This comprised a 4m wide bank with a ditch on either side which runs diagonally across the field between the wood and the Pentoloe Brook, (HSM 42878). This is aligned on a north-west / south-east axis and its northern ditch was used as a trackway or routeway and is apparent on the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1887. The woodland boundary bank kinks round the southern side of the earthwork remains of a building (HSM 42879) before presumably running into the present wood, (although its exact route is uncertain due to the insertion of a more modern track), at this point. The eastern boundary of the medieval wood is represented by a 4m wide bank, again ditched on either side, (HSM 42887). This is aligned north-east / south-west and can be traced as it runs upslope to the present southern edge of the wood at which point it appears to continue to the south suggesting that the wood extended south as well as north in the medieval period, (This is supported by the presence of a charcoal burning platform within the now pasture field, immediately to the north of the boundary bank).
2. During the late medieval period or early post medieval period a rectangular area appears to have been enclosed by the construction of a bank and ditch (HSM 42896). This comprised a 3m wide and up to 1m high bank which runs initially

south west before turning through 90 degrees to run on a north-western alignment. The location and orientation of this feature would suggest that it is directly associated with the probable industrial site HSM 4297. It is however unclear whether the construction of the boundary bank affected the land-use within the rectangular area or whether it was used as an internal woodland boundary.

Industrial features

A total of seven quarries or areas of quarrying were recorded during the survey. These were all located close to the north-western boundary of the wood. And in the main comprised small linear delves up to 25m in length. It is assumed that these were excavated for the extraction of lime for agricultural improvement.

Hollow ways

Eight sections of hollow way were identified during the survey. The majority of these appear to be associated with quarrying. Hollow way HSM 42911 runs from quarry HSM 42910 whilst holloway HSM 42890 runs from quarry HSM 42891. It is likely that hollow ways HSM 42901-3 are also either related to quarrying or woodland management. Hollow ways HSM 42893 and HSM 42895 run parallel to each other and follow the western boundary of the late medieval or early post-medieval enclosure bank and ditch (HSM 42869) and appear to be communication routes rather than routeways leading to a specific point.

Discussion and Implications

Site and feature condition

Feature recognition was difficult in some areas within the wood due to gentleness of slope and areas of level ground. This means that some classes of earthwork e.g. charcoal burning platforms and storage and stacking areas / platforms, are almost certainly under-represented particularly within the north-western portion of the wood.

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 rapid survey has recorded a number of features associated with past woodland management and former land use. These would suggest that the entire area surveyed has been intensively managed as woodland from the late medieval period onwards. Further clarification regarding the association between the enclosure bank and the industrial site

would be desirable. This however would require access into the field on the eastern side of the wood. Further research concerning the supposedly industrial site would also be desirable as this may have considerable bearing on surrounding land use and organisation.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the help and co-operation of the owner of Limburies Wood

The Forestry Commission for their commitment to this survey scheme.

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

Archive

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

Appendix 1: Database of features and grid references.

HSM No.	East	North	Site type	Period	Description
42877	359183	238010	Woodland Boundary Bank	Post Medieval	1m wide runs along NE boundary
42878	359220	238018	Woodland Boundary Bank	Medieval	4m wide and 0.5m high, runs SE through field then S into wood
42879	359290	237899	Building Platform	Medieval	15m square with remains of stone walls, 42877 kinks round it
42880	359335	237793	Saw pit	Post Medieval	5m long and 1.5m wide
42881	359332	237789	Saw pit	Post Medieval	4m long
42882	358328	237776	Saw pit	Post Medieval	4m long
42883	359345	237753	Platform	Post Medieval	25m long and 8m wide, associated with saw pits
42884	359343	237742	Charcoal Burning Platform	Post Medieval	6m in diameter and facing east
42885	359328	237746	Platform	Post Medieval	3.5m square associated with 42883
42886	359281	237804	Platform	Post Medieval	3m wide and 4m long
42887	359265	237805	Woodland Boundary Bank	Medieval	4m wide, aligned north / south with 2.5m wide ditch on either side
42888	359250	237866	Charcoal Burning Platform	Post Medieval	7m in diameter
42889	359242	237812	Charcoal Burning Platform	Post Medieval	6m in diameter
42890	359295	237739	Holloway	Post Medieval	Runs west to quarry 42891
42891	359280	237749	Quarry	Post Medieval	Shallow quarry 10m square and 1.8m deep
42892	359229	237791	Charcoal Burning Platform	Post Medieval	7m in diameter
42893	359216	237904	Holloway/Ditch	Medieval?	2.5m wide and 1m deep with bank on NE side
42894	359184	237920	Holloway	Post Medieval	3m wide and 0.4m deep, runs parallel to 42893
42895	359118	237920	Holloway / Ditch	Medieval?	Bank on northern side, runs parallel to 42893
42896	359141	237936	Bank and Ditch	Medieval	4m wide bank up to 1m high with ditch on eastern side

42897	359018	238063	Quarry	Post Medieval	20m square and up to 4m deep
42898	359009	238080	Quarry / delve	Post Medieval	15m long and 2m deep
42899	359010	238090	Platform	Post Medieval	Level platform just outside wood associated with 42897
42900	359045	238075	Bank and Ditch	Post Medieval	Runs out of the wood to the brook, runs under spoil heap
42901	359004	238041	Holloway	Post Medieval	Runs to the SSE
42902	359018	238031	Holloway	Post Medieval	Meets 42900 and runs east
42903	359006	238040	Holloway	Post Medieval	2.5m wide and up to 0.7m deep
42904	359000	238035	Quarry	Post Medieval	80m long, 3m deep and up to 15m wide, aligned N/S
42905	358988	237959	Quarry	Post Medieval	Semi-circular and 15m in diameter
42906	358985	237965	Platform	Post Medieval	Level platform c. 6m long and 3m wide on top of spoil in quarry
42907	358990	237980	Quarry / delve	Post Medieval	Small delve 5m in diameter
42908	359154	237865	Charcoal Burning Platform	Post Medieval	8m in diameter
42909	359028	237922	Charcoal Burning Platform	Post Medieval	5m in diameter
42910	358918	237950	Quarry	Post Medieval	15m square with spoil on its west side
42911	358904	237972	Holloway	Post Medieval	Runs west from quarry
42912	358922	237989	Saw Pit	Post Medieval	6m long, 2m wide and 1.5m deep
42913	359041	238093	Saw Pit	Post Medieval	5m long, 1.5m wide and 1m deep
42914	359069	238077	Charcoal Burning Platform	Post Medieval	8m in diameter
42915	359093	238130	Woodland Boundary Bank	Medieval	3m wide bank up to 1m high with ditch to NE. Runs west
42916	359081	238134	Charcoal Burning Platform	Post Medieval	6m in diameter, cut into 42915

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.