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Herefordshire Woodlands Archaeological Survey: Hall Wood, Much Marcle CP

**Herefordshire Archaeology Report No. 250
February 2008**

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
Archaeological Survey: Hall Wood,
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Summary

The survey described in this report (EHE48126) formed part of the Herefordshire Woodlands Archaeological Survey undertaken in partnership with the Forestry Commission. A rapid site identification survey was carried out in Hall Wood using a hand held Global Positioning by Satellite System to record the location of archaeological features encountered.

Earthwork features were recorded within Hall Wood that illustrates the fluctuating size of the woodland environment through the survival of medieval and post-medieval boundaries. The remains of a fish/duck pond were also identified within the east of the woodland close to Green Farm though the pond is likely to have belonged to the country manor of Hellens.

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 Hall Wood, Much Marcle (EHE48126). 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

Hall Wood is located at NGR: SO 67227 33230 approximately 1.2km east of Much Marcle, in the Civil Parish of Much Marcle.

Hall Wood is located upon a gentle rise within a valley basin to the west of Preston Brook that flows into the River Leadon to the south. Two minor streams both to the north and south of Hall Wood feed Preston Brook. The rise on which Hall Wood is located reaches its summit within the southern half of the wood at a height of 75m OD. The woodland covers an area of approximately 19.7 hectares.



Geologically, the Raglan Mudstone Formation of the Downtonian Series underlies the survey area. This consists of red-brown mudstone and siltstone with some seams of sandstone and mature calcrete (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 a number of records had been made regarding the archaeological resource of Hall Wood.

SMR record 42948

Site name	Hall Wood, east of Hellens	
Parish	MUCH MARCLE	
NGR	SO 6730 3330	
Description	Area of ancient semi-natural woodland lying on the border with Gloucestershire. An investigation is made of the wood, tracing its history and ecology. (1)	
Compiler	Boucher, Magda	
Date of record	28/11/2006	
Period and site type	POST MEDIEVAL	WOOD

SMR record 42949

Site name	Moated earthwork, NW of Green Farm, Hall Wood	
Parish	MUCH MARCLE	
NGR	SO 6700 3300	
Description	Moated earthwork in relict coppice woodland NW of Green Farm. It is connected to a water-filled pond by a long narrow ditch. There is evidence of charcoal fragments in the surface soil of the raised area, suggesting possible charcoal production activities. (1)	
Compiler	Boucher, Magda	
Date of record	28/11/2006	
Period and site type	POST MEDIEVAL	MOAT

Method

Hall Wood was surveyed on 21st 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.

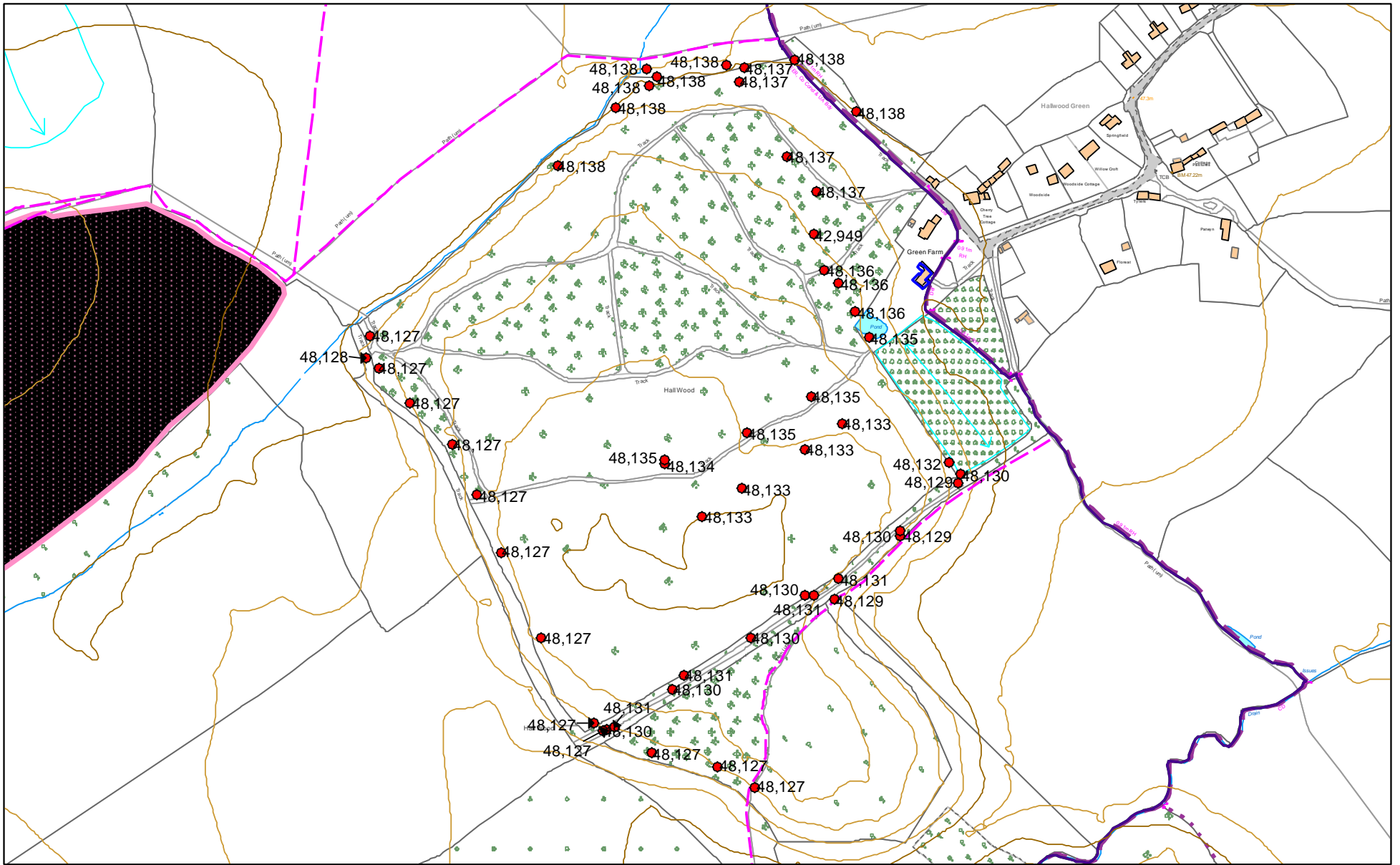
Field conditions

The woodland consists primarily of open broadleaf woodland with areas where coppicing is evident particularly within the north. There was no restriction to the survey caused by the vegetation. The survey was carried out in cold and bright conditions 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 identified within Hall Wood

Scale 1:4000



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Woodland boundaries

According to the 1840 Tithe Map, Hall Wood has altered little over the 168 years, at least in the woodlands general size. The Tithe Map indicates that during early 19th century Hallwood was divided into two compartments the boundary for which was the major carriageway that linked Green Farm with the settlement of Much Marcle. The woodland to the north of the carriageway was Great Hallwood; to the south was Little Hallwood.

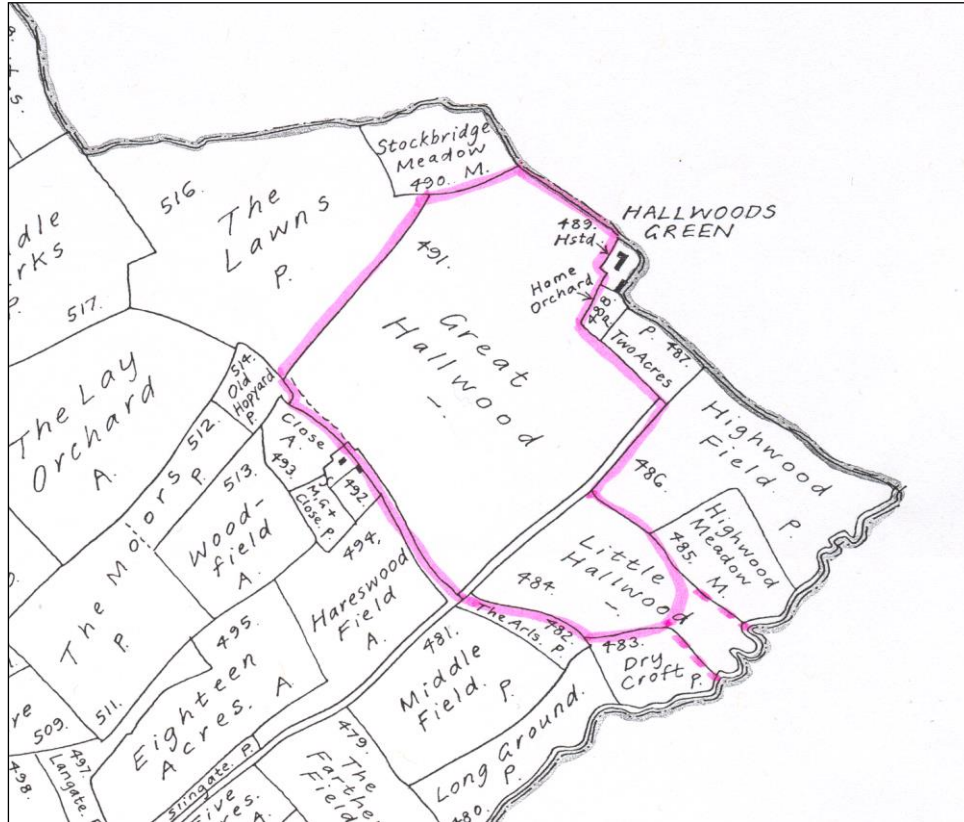


Figure 3: 1841 Tithe Map, the highlighted area depicts the current extent of Hall Wood. The dashed lines indicate the original size of the wood at this date.

During the survey it was identified that at least two stages of boundary are incorporated into the current extent of the woodland. The earliest stage of woodland boundary construction is likely to relate to the medieval period. This early boundary survives within the west and the northeast of the woodland.

The early boundary consists of a substantial bank and ditch (the ditch lines the external side of the wood). The bank measures up to 5m wide and 2m high with the ditch measuring 2m wide and 1.5m deep on completion the boundary appears to have been planted with a hedgerow. Within the west of Hall Wood this boundary is isolated within the wood having been replaced by a modern fence along the western edge of the current woodland track that utilises the course of an earlier hollow way.

Within the west of Hall Wood there is evidence to suggest that the medieval boundary extended further north out of the current extent of Hall Wood, implying that the woodland was considerably larger than is the case today. There is a distinct possibility that the woodland extended to the stream to the north; the woodlands western edge having followed the course of the north aligned sinuous field boundary in use today.

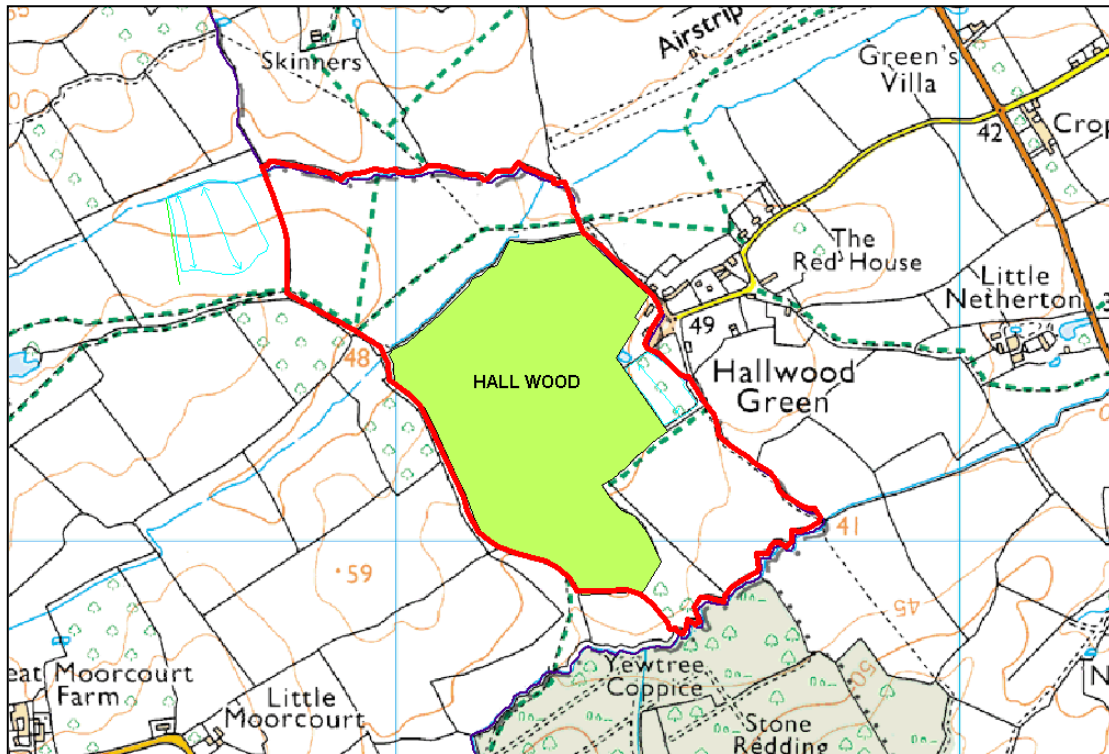


Figure : 1:25000 scale Ordnance Survey Map with the current extent of Hall Wood highlighted (Green) with the possible extent of the medieval woodland outlined (Red).

As the boundary runs southeast it is intersected by a later post-medieval trackway measuring c.10m wide. From its southern edge the medieval boundary continues on a southeasterly course changing from a bank and ditch to a west-facing lynchet. The entirety of this boundary could not be recorded as it lay outside the survey area to the south. However, it is assumed both from observations on the ground and consulting the Tithe Map (see figure 3:) that the woodland boundary during the medieval period continued to the southeast linking with the stream that feeds Preston Brook.

The boundary that lines the eastern edge of Hall Wood is later in date most likely related to post-medieval activity and the claiming of land from the medieval woodland. The boundary HSM 48129 is substantially different in form from the medieval one, the boundary measures 2.5m wide and 1m high, along the internal edge is a ditch c.1.5m wide and 0.5m deep; the boundary bank is planted with a hawthorn hedgerow. It is probable that the boundary is contemporary with the trackway that links Much Marcle with the settlement at Hallwood Green.

The medieval boundary reappears within the northeast of Hall Wood lining the county border that separates Herefordshire from Worcestershire. It survives as an east-facing

lynchet with a ditch along its eastern edge measuring c.2m wide and 1m deep. As the boundary turns to form the northern edge to Hall Wood the ditch has been re-cut to form a modern field drain measuring c.1.5m deep and 2m wide. The medieval boundary eventually peters out turning south away from the current course of the woodland boundary, as it does so it becomes increasingly more difficult to trace as it changes from a bank and ditch to a north-facing lynchet and then just to a ditch before it is no longer traceable.

The woodland boundary that lines the northern edge of Hall Wood consists of a modern fence line and field drain, traces of a post-medieval boundary survive in segments no more than 5m long along this course having been largely removed by modern earth movement.

Fish/Duck Pond

Within the east of Hall Wood approximately 80m northeast of Green Farm the site of a possible fish/duck pond (HSM 42949) was identified. The pond is sub-rectangular, enclosed by a bank 2m wide and 1m high with a ditch on the internal edge measuring 2.5m wide and 1m deep. Within the north half of the feature roughly central to the pond is a raised circular area of ground roughly 5m diameter. Both to the north and south, cutting the bank and ditch is a linear channel. To the north (HSM 48137) this channel runs into the modern field drain associated with the woodland boundary. The channel measures 0.7m wide and 0.3m deep. The channel to the south (HSM 48136) runs down slope linking with the pond associated with Green Farm. The two channels were constructed to drain the pond of water once it was deemed obsolete. The encompassing ditch within the interior of the pool would have also served this purpose.

The pond itself measures 25m (north-south) by 15m (east-west) and is up to 1m deep. It is likely the site was employed as a fish pond until the addition of the raised ground within the north of the pond which suggests the site became a duck pond, the raised ground having acted as an island suitable for nesting.

Communication links

Within the south of Hall Wood on a northeast-southwest access is a major trackway measuring c.10m wide. The trackway originally connected Much Marcle with the small settlement of Hallwood Green but has since been cut by the establishment of fields to the west. Within the woodland the trackway remains with a boundary upon its northern and southern edges (HSM 48130 & HSM 48131). It is likely these boundaries were formed as part of the trackway acting as compartment boundaries for the woodland but also as drainage channel for the track. Each boundary consists of a bank measuring 3m wide and 1.5m high with the ditch measuring 2m wide and 1m deep. To the west both boundaries overlay the earlier medieval woodland boundary (HSM 48127) at the point where the early boundary is cut by the trackway.

At least one other post-medieval hollow way was identified within the north of the wood aligned on a roughly east-west axis. The hollow way (HSM 48135) runs west from the

pond associated with Green Farm. It measures a maximum of 7m wide and 1.5m deep and peters out upon a natural rise in the topography close to a possible platform (HSM 48135)

The hollow way that lines the western edge of the medieval boundary (HSM 48127) is likely to be contemporary with the boundary. It was certainly in use during the post-medieval period as is clear from the 1840 Tithe Map (see figure:). It is clear that originally this hollow way formed a raised trackway (HSM 48128) toward the northwest corner of the current woodland where the trackway and the original medieval woodland boundary continued to the north indicating Hall Wood to have been considerably larger than it is today.

Discussion and implications

Indications of former land use

The current woodland boundary within Hall Wood largely follows the earlier medieval and post-medieval boundaries as visible on both the Tithe and 1st Edition Ordnance Survey maps. The site of a fish/duck pond within the woodland indicates the use of the woodland resource not only for industry (i.e. coppicing) in the past. The woodland boundaries relating to the post-medieval period reflect periods of shrinkage to the wood for the purpose of forming new farmland. The surviving medieval boundaries suggest that the woodland was considerably larger than is the case to day having extend to the north and south linking with the stream that would have acted as natural boundaries.

Site and feature condition

The survey recorded features that predominately related to post-medieval land and woodland management with the exception of the surviving medieval woodland boundary within the west and northeast of the woodland. The majority of features recorded were well preserved and coherent.

Implications regarding the archaeological resource

The archaeological features throughout Hall Wood are well preserved with little or no disturbance having been caused by woodland management.

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 woodland boundaries with routes of communication e.g. hollow ways, trackways and raised trackways) that link sites of settlement avoiding too much disturbance to the woodland interior.

Implications for future management

Existing access routes should be used for future management and extraction of the woodland. The surviving medieval woodland boundary and it's overall state of preservation could be learned from further, more detailed survey particularly in regards to the original size of Hall Wood.

Implications for future fieldwork

This area of woodland has a high potential for the presence of well-preserved archaeological features around its edges and to a lesser extent interior. 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.

Discussion

This rapid survey has identified features associated most commonly with woodland environments. In particular the woodland boundary where it is possible to assess the changing size of Hall Wood. The medieval woodland boundary allows use to interpret the wood as being more extensive than is currently the case, originally the area covered by the wood may have been twice the size. The post-medieval period brought about a distinct change in the woodland with the claiming of land for farming purposes within the southeast and north as is evident from the distinctly smaller/lesser scale woodland boundaries found within these locations today.

There is relatively little information within the interior of the woodland to suggest any industrial activity other than coppicing. The site of a fish/duck pond gives some insight into at least one activity within the wood and likely connected to farming for the Lord of the Manor at Hellens.

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 Dr. Neil Rimmington, Country Side Advisor, 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	Easting	Northing	Site type	Period	Description
48127	366992	233319	Woodland Boundary & Raised Trackway	Medieval	North-south aligned relict woodland boundary running parallel to the modern boundary. The relict boundary consists of a bank with a ditch along its western edge. To the west of the boundary is a raised platform/trackway that measures c.5m wide and stands 2m high. The ditch measures 1m deep and 2.5m wide. The bank stands 1m high and 2m wide.
48127	366999	233292	Woodland Boundary	Medieval	Woodland boundary turns south consisting only as a bank. The bank measure 3-4m wide and 1m high.
48127	367025	233264	Woodland Boundary	Medieval	Woodland boundary bank continues south. The bank forms a 2m high west facing lynchet at this point.
48127	367060	233230	Woodland Boundary	Medieval	The woodland boundary continues as a bank measuring 4m wide and c.2m high.
48127	367080	233188	Woodland Boundary	Medieval	The woodland boundary continues to the south with the reappearance of a ditch along its western edge measuring 1m wide and 0.3m deep.
48127	367100	233141	Woodland Boundary	Medieval	The woodland boundary continues to the south, the bank is in the form of a west-facing lynchet.
48127	367133	233071	Woodland Boundary	Medieval	The woodland boundary continues to the south.
48127	367176	233001	Woodland Boundary	Medieval	The woodland boundary is cut/interrupted by a major southwest to northeast-aligned carriageway.
48127	367187	232995	Woodland Boundary	Medieval	The woodland boundary reappears on the southern edge of the carriageway and continues to run south.
48127	367224	232976	Woodland Boundary	Medieval	The woodland boundary is continuing to the south visible as a 3m wide bank standing 1.5m high. A ditch has reappear along its western edge measuring 1.5m wide and 0.5m deep.
48127	367278	232965	Woodland	Medieval	The woodland boundary continues

			Boundary		to the south.
48127	367309	232948	Woodland Boundary	Medieval	The woodland boundary continues to the south. It is in the form of a west-facing lynchet measuring 2m high. The boundary continues south exiting the survey wood at this location.
48128	366989	233301	Raised Trackway	Medieval	Raised trackway peters out as the modern woodland track overruns the course of the earlier track.
48129	367374	233102	Woodland Boundary	Post-Medieval	A woodland boundary enters the survey wood from the southeast. It consists of a bank measuring 1m high and 2.5m wide. It has a ditch along its western edge measuring 1.5m wide and 0.5m deep.
48129	367429	233154	Woodland Boundary	Post-Medieval	Woodland boundary continues to the east along the southern edge of the major carriageway.
48129	367476	233198	Woodland Boundary	Post-Medieval	Woodland boundary continues east exiting Hall Wood.
48130	367478	233205	Boundary	Post-Medieval	Boundary aligned east west along the northern edge of the carriageway. It consists of a bank with a ditch along its southern edge. The ditch measures 2m wide and 0.5m deep. The bank measures 1.5m high and 3m wide.
48130	367428	233158	Boundary	Post-Medieval	Boundary continues to line the northern edge of the carriageway.
48130	367350	233106	Boundary	Post-Medieval	Boundary continues to line the northern edge of the carriageway.
48130	367306	233071	Boundary	Post-Medieval	Boundary continues to line the northern edge of the carriageway.
48130	367241	233028	Boundary	Post-Medieval	Boundary continues to line the northern edge of the carriageway.
48130	367184	232994	Boundary	Post-Medieval	Boundary continues to line the northern edge of the carriageway. It ends running onto the woodland boundary HSM 48127.
48131	367193	232997	Boundary	Post-Medieval	Boundary aligned east-west along the southern edge of the carriageway. It consists of a bank with a ditch along its northern edge. The bank measure 3m wide and 1.5m high. The ditch measures 2m wide and 1m deep.
48131	367250	233040	Boundary	Post-Medieval	Boundary continues to line the southern edge of the carriageway.
48131	367358	233105	Boundary	Post-Medieval	Boundary continues to line the southern edge of the carriageway.
48131	367378	233119	Boundary	Post-Medieval	Boundary comes to an end as it is cut by the ditch of the woodland boundary HSM 48129.
48132	367469	233215	Saw Pit	Post-	Saw Pit measuring 7m long, 4m

				Medieval	wide and 1.5m deep. Spoil mound lines its southern edge.
48133	367381	233246	Hollow Way	Post-Medieval	A roughly east-west aligned hollow way measuring 4m wide and 0.5m deep.
48133	367350	233225	Hollow Way	Post-Medieval	Hollow way continues at a depth of 1m.
48133	367298	233194	Hollow Way	Post-Medieval	Hollow way continues at a width of 6m.
48133	367265	233170	Hollow Way	Post-Medieval	Hollow way peters out within a natural rise in the topography.
48134	367234	233214	Platform	Post-Medieval	Possible platform levelled into the north-facing slope. It measures c.4m diameter and cut to a depth of c.0.1m.
48135	367234	233217	Ditch / Trackway	Post-Medieval	Ditch aligned east-west measuring 0.5m wide and 0.2m deep. It is likely connected with modern drainage.
48135	367302	233239	Ditch / Trackway	Post-Medieval	The ditch continues but is associated with a temporary track through the woodland, most likely connected to modern woodland management.
48135	367355	233269	Ditch / Trackway	Post-Medieval	Continuation of the ditch and trackway.
48135	367403	233318	Ditch / Trackway	Post-Medieval	Ditch has petered out, with the track linking with the current route way parallel to the woodland boundary.
48136	367391	233339	Drainage Channel	Post-Medieval	Drainage channel aligned north-south. It links with the northern edge of the pond associated to Green Farm. The ditch measures 1m wide and 0.5m deep.
48136	367378	233362	Drainage Channel	Post-Medieval	The drainage channel continues.
48136	367366	233373	Drainage Channel	Post-Medieval	The drainage channel links with the southern edge of a relict sub-rectangular fish/duck pond (HSM 42949)
48137	367360	233437	Drainage Channel	Post-Medieval	Drainage channel aligned north-south. It links with the fish/duck ponds northern where it then runs down slope toward the woodland edge. It measures
48137	367335	233466	Drainage Channel	Post-Medieval	Drainage channel continues
48137	367296	233527	Drainage Channel	Post-Medieval	Drainage channel continues
48137	367300	233539	Drainage Channel	Post-Medieval	Drainage channel exits the woodland linking with the modern field ditch parallel to the woodland boundary.
48138	367392	233503	Woodland Boundary	Medieval	Woodland boundary consisting of a bank with a ditch along its eastern edge. The bank measures 2m high

					and 4m wide. The ditch is 2m wide and 0.7m deep.
48138	367342	233546	Woodland Boundary	Medieval	Woodland boundary turns to an east-west alignment. The ditch has been utilised and re-worked to act as a modern field drain.
48138	367285	233541	Woodland Boundary	Medieval	Woodland boundary continues to the west
48138	367220	233538	Woodland Boundary	Medieval	Woodland boundary continues to the west.
48138	367228	233532	Woodland Boundary	Medieval	Woodland boundary turns away from the modern wood edge and runs southwest as a lynchet c.1m high
48138	367222	233524	Woodland Boundary	Medieval	Continuation of relict woodland boundary as a bank 2m wide and 0.7m high. The associated ditch is not visible.
48138	367194	233506	Woodland Boundary	Medieval	Continuation of the woodland boundary. The ditch has reappeared along its northern edge measuring 0.5m wide and 0.2m deep.
48138	367146	233459	Woodland Boundary	Medieval	Continuation of the boundary. The bank is heavily eroded with only the ditch remaining visible. It measures 1.5m wide and 0.3m deep. After this position the boundary peters out within the wood.
42949	367358	233402	Duck / Fish Pond	Post-Medieval	Sub-rectangular fish/duck pond. It measures c.25m long (north-south) by 15m wide. The site is enclosed by a bank 4m wide and 1.5m high. It is likely to have originally been a fish pond before a small island within the north of the pond was added to promote the habitat for ducks. A ditch that lines the interior edge of the encompassing bank links with channels HSM 48136 and HSM 48137.

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.