

Dinglesden Wood, Peasmarsh, Rye, East Sussex

An Archaeological walkover survey

For Native Woodland Limited

by Steve Ford

Thames Valley Archaeological Services Ltd

Site Code DWP06/52

April 2006

Summary

Site name: Dinglesden Wood, Peasmarsh, Rye, East Sussex

Grid reference: TQ8600 2100

Site activity: Walkover Survey

Date and duration of project: 16/4/06

Project manager: Steve Ford

Site supervisor: Steve Ford

Site code: DWP06/52

Area of site: 6.5ha

Summary of results: A small number of earthworks were noted. A number of previously unrecorded ponds were observed along with two lengths of bank and ditch, probably former field or woodland boundaries.

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Report 06/52

Introduction

This report documents the results of an archaeological walkover survey at Dinglesden Woods, Peasmarsh, Rye East Sussex, (TQ8600 2100) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Ian Walls of Native Woodland Limited, The Studio, 64B The Causeway, Duddingston Village, Edinburgh, EH15 3PZ.

Planning consent is to be sought from Rother District Council to create a new natural burial ground with associated car parking facilities. The walkover survey was requested by Dr. Andrew Woodcock, Archaeological Officer for East Sussex County Council, archaeological advisor to Rother District Council in support of the proposal.

Location, topography and geology

The site is located in the parish of Peasmarsh, 6km west of Rye. It forms part of a much larger woodland area known as Beckley Woods. The site lies at a height of about 60m above Ordnance Datum. The southern portion of the site is on generally level ground but the northern part slopes gently to the north. The underlying geology is Wadhurst Clay (BGS 1980).

The site is occupied by immature deciduous woodland and is traversed south west north east by a forestry road.. The west and south east portions of the wood are relatively open whereas parts of the northern area, where trees are absent, are covered by gorse and brambles, often impenetrably so. Several informal tracks are present some of which have been recently created by vehicles. Some areas of ground disturbance were noted, probably the results of the digging of geotechnical test pits.

Objectives and methodology

The purpose of the walkover survey was to identify any earthworks possibly of archaeological significance. This involved traversing the site at regular intervals of 40-50m separation depending on access and visibility. Any features of interest were noted and their approximate positions determined by pacing.

Results

Several earthwork features were recorded in the woodland and their approximate positions have been sketched onto Figure 2. The most distinct features were 4 ponds not present on the current detailed Ordnance Survey map of the site (Fig. 2). It is unclear if these features were dug as ponds or were clay extraction pits now filled with

water. It seems unlikely that these are natural features caused by subsidence, such as formed by solution hollows on calcareous geologies. There was no obvious dumping of the extracted spoil from these ponds as mounds in adjacent areas.

One of the ponds, on the sloping ground to the north of the site appeared to be fed by two small leats on the upper side and drained by another longer leat on the southern side.

In a small area of ground unusually clear of vegetation in the north eastern portion of the site was observed 3 or 4 feint linear marks more or less aligned parallel to the eastern field boundary and spaced about 4-5m apart. It is possible that these are vestigial traces of narrow ridge and furrow field system of post-medieval date. Alternatively they may also be traces of a tree plantation scheme though none of the current woodland seems to respect these marks nor be planted in systematic fashion in any event.

Two linear earthworks were observed. One was aligned east - west located in the western portion of the site and comprised a shallow bank and ditch about 2m across. It was not visible to the east of the forestry track traversing the site nor beyond the western site boundary. The other earthwork was aligned north- south and was slightly narrower. It disappeared before the southern site boundary, though other earthworks were noted in the woodland beyond the site and road further to the south. The northern end was lost in the vicinity of a pond.

A linear depression just within the site boundary parallel to the modern road was also noted and may be something such as a roadside ditch or drain.

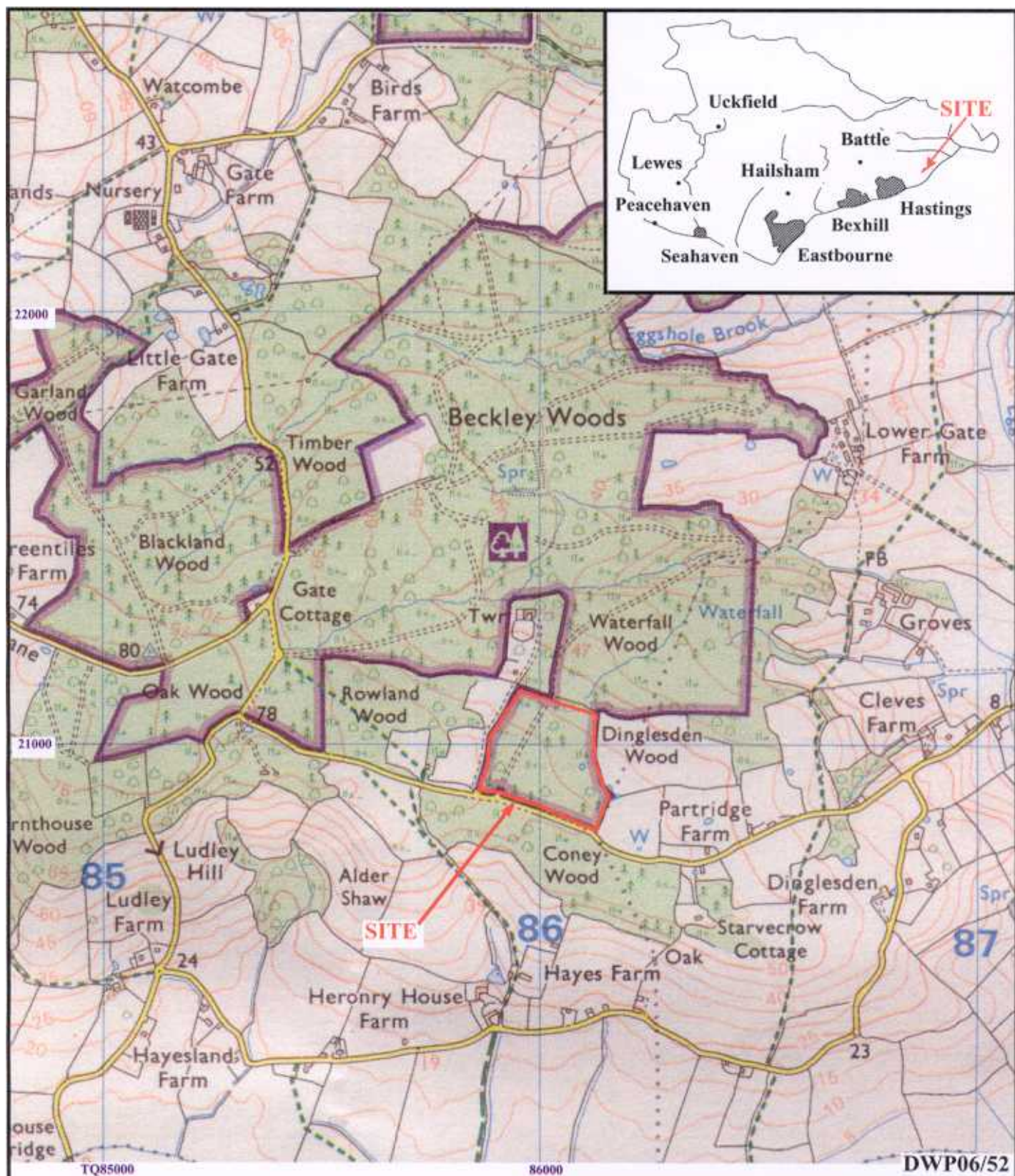
Finally, no artefacts of archaeological interest were noted in the small areas of ground disturbance that were observed.

Conclusion

A small number of earthwork features were noted during this survey. The most evident were several ponds not shown on the Ordnance Survey maps. They are not thought to be of great antiquity though their origins and date are not known. A number of leats are associated with these ponds. A small area representing either cultivation or plantation was observed but is of little or no archaeological interest. Finally, two linear earthworks were observed and which probably represent field or woodland boundaries. Again these need not be of great antiquity and are not obviously of great archaeological interest.

Reference

BGS 1980 *British Geological Survey* sheet 320/321 solid and drift edition, 1:50000, Keyworth

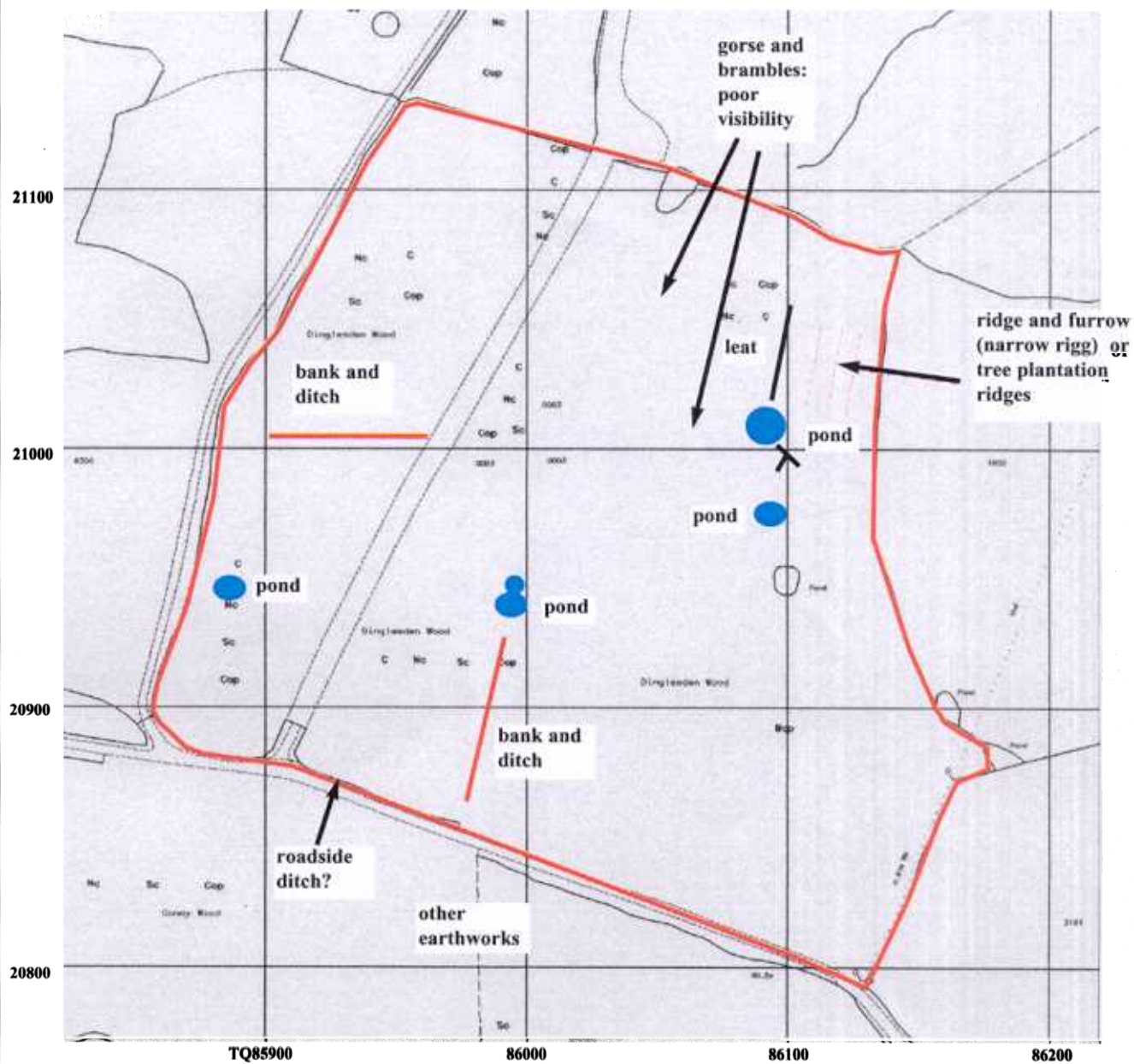


**Dinglesden Wood, Peasmarch, Rye,
East Sussex, 2006
Archaeological Walkover Survey**

Figure 1. Location of site within Peasmarch and East Sussex.

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Figure 2. Detailed location of site.

Scale: 1:2500.

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