

Archaeological Assessment to
determine site provenance

for

Mr & Mrs Nigel & Joanna
White

Concerning

Land adjacent to Cuckhorn
Farm, Stoke Lacy,
Herefordshire HR7 4HE

January 2016



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Cover: View looking SE at the potential 'motte' at Stoke Cross, Stoke Lacy, Herefordshire

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1 Executive Summary

This Archaeological Assessment was tasked to determine whether the proposed development on land adjacent to Cuckhorn Farm, Stoke Lacy (Herefordshire HR7 4HE) would impact upon a 'possible motte' as described in the Herefordshire Historic Environment Record.

Border Archaeology Ltd (BAL) has reached the following conclusions regarding the potential and significance of the archaeological resource, more specifically, whether the available evidence confirms or questions the status of the 'motte'.

Namely:

The remains of an oval ditched, moated mound, recorded in the Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record as a 'possible motte', lie directly within the site of the proposed development.

No documentary evidence has been found to positively indicate when the mound was constructed and by whom. Moreover, as the surviving remains of the mound and its associated earthworks would appear to have been significantly disturbed by modern cultivation activity and landscaping, it is difficult to reach a definitive conclusion regarding their likely date and function.

However, based on an examination of documentary and cartographic records and the actual form of the earthwork (with reference to similar sites recorded locally and in the wider surrounding area), the balance of probability is that the earthwork represents an artificial mound or 'motte' with the possible remains of a sub-rectangular enclosure or 'bailey' lying immediately to the E of the mound and further rectangular earthworks to the N which may represent fishponds.

The irregular ovoid form of the earthwork, its relatively low height and the presence of an associated enclosure and fishpond to the E suggests that it may not have been built immediately after the Norman Conquest and is more likely have been constructed during the 12th century, during a period when the pattern of land tenure within the extensive manor of Stoke Lacy fragmented with the creation of several subsidiary estates at Hall Place ('le Halle') Lower Hopton and Mintridge.

Documentary records indicate that the mound lies in close proximity to the site of a medieval manorial site called 'le Halle', the predecessor of Hall Place Farm, which is first documented in the early to mid-13th century, when it was granted to Wormsley Priory, a house of Augustinian canons who held the estate until the Dissolution.

The location of the medieval manorial site of 'le Halle' remains uncertain. It may have been located on the site of the present farmhouse of Hall Place or further to the SE.

It is significant that the shape of the oval mound is depicted on the Stoke Lacy tithe map of 1842 (the earliest topographically detailed map of the study area) and that it is respected by the surrounding field boundaries, which strengthens the likelihood of it being a feature of some antiquity.

Summary Conclusion: The oval mound and its associated earthworks appear to represent the remains of a motte and bailey site of 12th century date. Documentary evidence suggests that the earthworks may well have been associated with a manorial site named 'le Halle' which is first recorded in the early 13th century.

2 Introduction

Border Archaeology Ltd (BAL) was instructed by Mr & Mrs Nigel & Joanna White to carry out a programme of Archaeological Assessment (AA) on land adjacent to Cuckhorn Farm, Stoke Lacy, Herefordshire, HR7 4HE (NGR: SO 62527 50579) (*fig. 1*).

This report has been undertaken in relation to a planning application (HCC Planning Ref. P152759/F) for a proposed new build part earth-sheltered dwelling, including a submerged integral garage. The proposed development will directly affect an oval mound listed on the Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) as a 'possible undocumented medieval motte' and the purpose of this Assessment is to determine the status of this feature, whether or not it represents a motte.

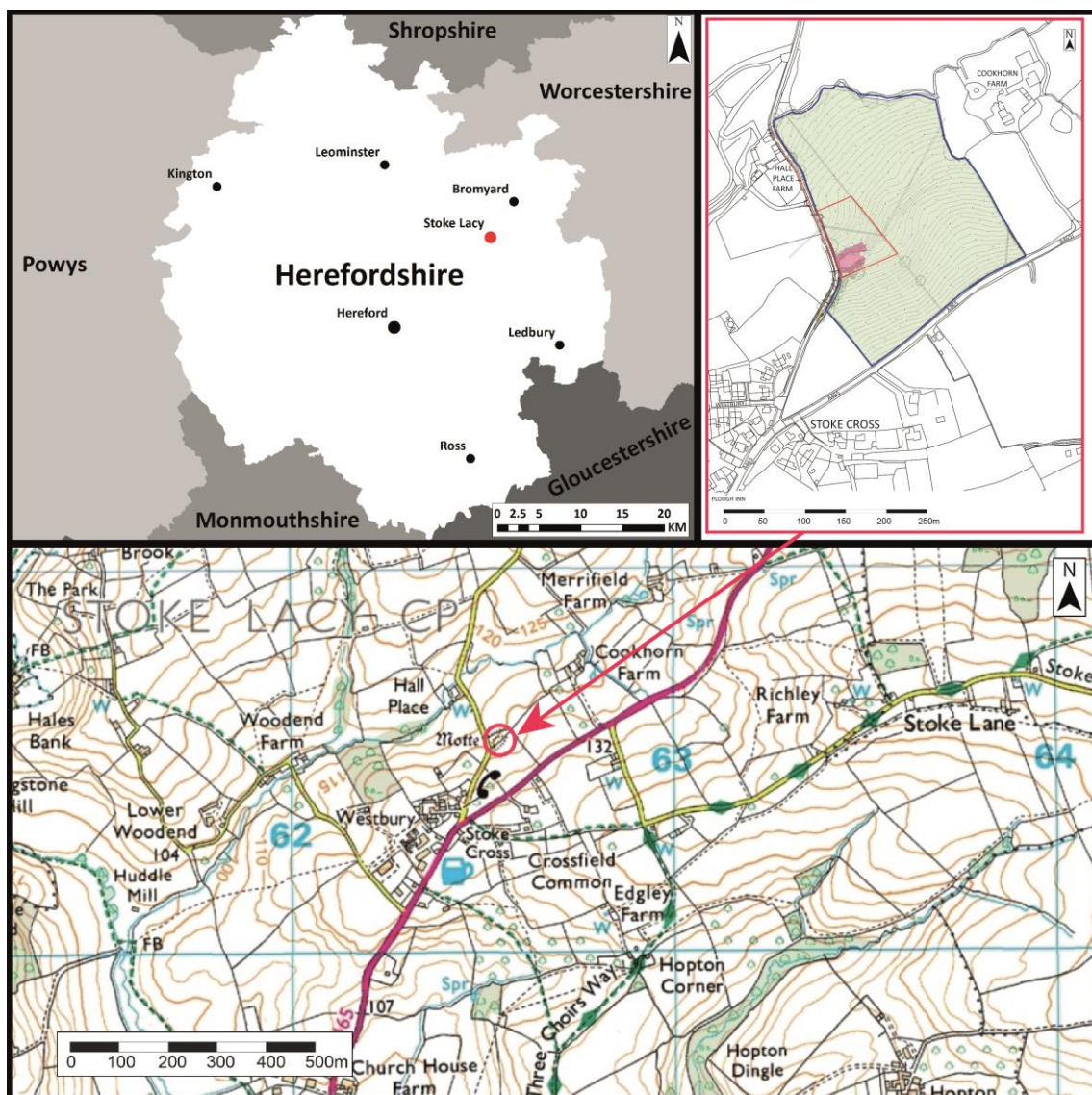


Fig. 1: Site location plan

2.1 Site Description

The site lies to the N of the small hamlet of Stoke Cross, to the N of the village of Stoke Lacy and to the E of the minor road leading from Stoke Cross to Bredenbury. The farmstead of Hall Place is situated approximately 80m NW of the site while Cuckhorn Farm is located about 250m to the NE. The majority of the site is currently laid out to pasture.

The SW corner of the site is dominated by an oval mound, partially surrounded by a ditch, which is covered in trees and undergrowth. The Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record currently lists this feature as representing the site of an undocumented medieval motte (SMR 6664; NGR SO 6254 5054).

2.1.1 Soils & Geology

The area encompassing the site of the proposed development is recorded by the Soil Survey of England and Wales (1983) as consisting of typical argillic brown earths of the 'BROMYARD' series (571b) in the S and the 'ESCRICK 1' series (571p) in the N.

The BROMYARD (571b) series, is described as comprising well drained reddish fine silty soils over Devonian reddish silty shale, siltstone, and sandstone, with some similar soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging, as well as some well drained coarse loamy soils over sandstone. The ESCRICK 1 (571p) series, is described as comprising deep well drained reddish coarse loamy soils over reddish till, with some similar soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging, and some slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged reddish fine silty soils.

3 Methodology

3.1 Aims and Objectives

The specific purpose of this Archaeological Assessment is to determine the status of an oval mound identified within the SW corner of the proposed development site, lying to the E of an unclassified lane leading from Stoke Cross to Hall Place Farm, which has been recorded in the Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record as a 'possible motte' and to determine whether or not the mound actually represents a motte.

4 Assessment

4.1 Consultation of Archaeological Records

This section analyses the information available from records of archaeological work carried out in the vicinity of the specific study area and discusses its implications for the nature of the archaeological resource within the study area and the likely depth and survival of significant archaeological deposits and features.

4.1.1 Research Methods

The research carried out for this Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment consisted of the following elements:

4.1.2 Evaluation and Study of Archaeological Databases

The Herefordshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and the National Monuments Record (NMR) Swindon were both consulted and lists obtained of all known archaeological sites, listed buildings and Scheduled Ancient Monuments in the study area (the search radius was defined as 500m from the approximate centre of the site at NGR SO 62527 50579).

4.1.3 Evaluation and Study of Primary Sources

Primary documentary sources relating to the study area (including deeds, surveys and tithe apportionments) were consulted at the Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre, Bromyard Local and Family History Centre, the British Library and the National Archives.

4.1.4 Evaluation and Study of Secondary Sources

All published and unpublished works relating to sites and structures of archaeological and historical interest within the study area were examined, utilizing collections held at the Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre, Bromyard Local and Family History Centre, the British Library and the National Archives.

4.1.5 Evaluation and Study of Cartographic Evidence

Historic maps and illustrations (including engravings, paintings and photographs) dating back to the 17th century were consulted at the Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre, Bromyard Local and Family History Centre, the British Library and the National Archives.

4.1.6 Conservation Areas

The site of the proposed development does not lie within any conservation areas.

4.1.7 Scheduled Ancient Monuments

No Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs) lie within the boundaries of the site of the proposed development. The nearest SAM is the churchyard cross in St Mary the Virgin's churchyard, Much Cowarne (c.3.5km to the S of the site of the proposed development).

4.1.8 Archaeological Sites

The Herefordshire County Council Historic Environment Record (HER) and the National Monuments Record (NMR) were consulted to determine the nature and extent of the archaeological resource within the specific study area; the search radius was defined as 500m from the approximate centre of the site at NGR SO 62527 50579.

4.1.9 Site Visit

A site visit was carried out on January 7th 2016 to determine the potential for surviving archaeological remains on the site. The site lies to the N of the small hamlet of Stoke Cross, to the N of the village of Stoke Lacy. It is situated to the E of the minor road leading from Stoke Cross to Bredenbury. The fields encompassing the site extend downslope towards the NW and are chiefly laid out to pasture. Located in the SW corner of the site, adjoining the lane from Stoke Cross towards Bredenbury, is a roughly ovoid mound which is covered in trees and dense undergrowth.

4.2 Site-Specific Historical Background

4.2.1 Medieval

The earliest documentary evidence for the place-name 'Stoke Lacy' is recorded in the Herefordshire Domesday (1086; *DD-H*, 10.63), where it is listed as *Stoches*. Later medieval documents record the settlement as *Stoca* (1102/3), *Stoka* (1143/8), *Stokes* (c1215), *Hodestoca/Oddestoca* (1216/28), *Stok(e)lacy* (1234/9), and eventually *Stoke Lacy* in 1243 (Coplestone-Crow 2009, 202).

The place-name element 'Stoke' is of OE origin, denoting an 'outlying farmstead or hamlet', while the suffix 'Lacy' refers to the de Lacy family who acquired the manor soon after the Conquest (Coplestone-Crow 2009, 202). The manor of Stoke Lacy was part of the de Lacy held 'honour of Weobley', and constituted an important 'fringe estate' on the eastern edge of the de Lacy holdings (Wightman 1966).

Domesday lists Stoke Lacy as being held in demesne by Roger de Lacy and describes the manor as follows:

"...in Plegelgate Hundred, Stoke (*Stoches*). Aelmer (Young) held it; he could go where he would. 10 hides which pay tax. In lordship 3 ploughs; 22 villagers with 6 ploughs; a further 6 others would be possible. 11 slaves (*ferui*). A mill at 5s. Value TRE: £10. Now the same." (*DD-H*, 10.63)

The significance of Stoke Lacy is indicated by its size (10 hides) and value (assessed at £10) and by the fact that, along with Weobley and Fernhill, it was one of only three manors kept in demesne within the honour of Weobley in 1086 (Wightman 1966, 157). It is worth noting that the Domesday Survey does not mention a castle or fortified house (*domus defensabilis*) at Stoke Lacy, which might suggest that no fortification had been built at Stoke Lacy by 1086, although this seems unlikely in view of the evident importance of the manor within the Marcher estates of the de Lacy family.

Roger de Lacy was the son of Walter de Lacy (d.1085), who had been granted a large amount of land in the Anglo-Welsh borders by either William I or William fitz Osbern, Earl of Hereford. In 1096, Roger was exiled for his part in a conspiracy against William II, and his lands passed to his brother, Hugh (d.1115). By the mid-12th century, it appears from the evidence of the Herefordshire Domesday of c.1160 that Stoke Lacy was held from the de Lacys by a tenant named Oddo, of whom little else is known (Galbraith & Tait, 1950, 17).

By the late 12th/early 13th century, it appears that the extensive Domesday manor of Stoke Lacy had been fragmented into three separate landholdings held by tenants (Remfry 1996; 1997). A list of knights fees within the honour of Weobley dated 1242-43 shows that the principal manor of Stoke Lacy, then assessed at 9 hides, had been divided into two unequal portions; the larger portion being held by the Devereux lords of Lyonshall while the Beaufou family held the smaller portion. The 1242-43 survey also reveals the existence of a separate manor at Mintridge (*Muntryche*), situated in the NE part of Stoke Lacy parish, comprising one hide which had been carved out of the 10-hide Domesday manor of Stoke Lacy (Book of Fees, II, 806-7).

Further examination of the documentary records shows that a number of smaller estates were also created by subinfeudation (sub-letting of lands by the demesne tenants) within the manors of Stoke Lacy and Mintringe. One of these smaller sub-tenancies was the manor of Lower Hopton *alias* Hopton Habernel (centred on present-day Lower Hopton Farm) where the heavily damaged remains of a circular moated site remain (RCHME, 1932).

However, the most important of these smaller estates was 'le Halle' (which later became known as the estate of 'Hall Place'). Hall Place Farm is situated about 80m to the NW of the 'motte' earthwork and its estate originally encompassed the site of the proposed development, as evidenced by later documentary records (including property deeds and the Stoke Lacy tithe map). It is likely that 'le Halle' was a sub-tenancy created by the Devereux family, who held the largest portion of the manor of Stoke Lacy in the late 12th-early 13th century.

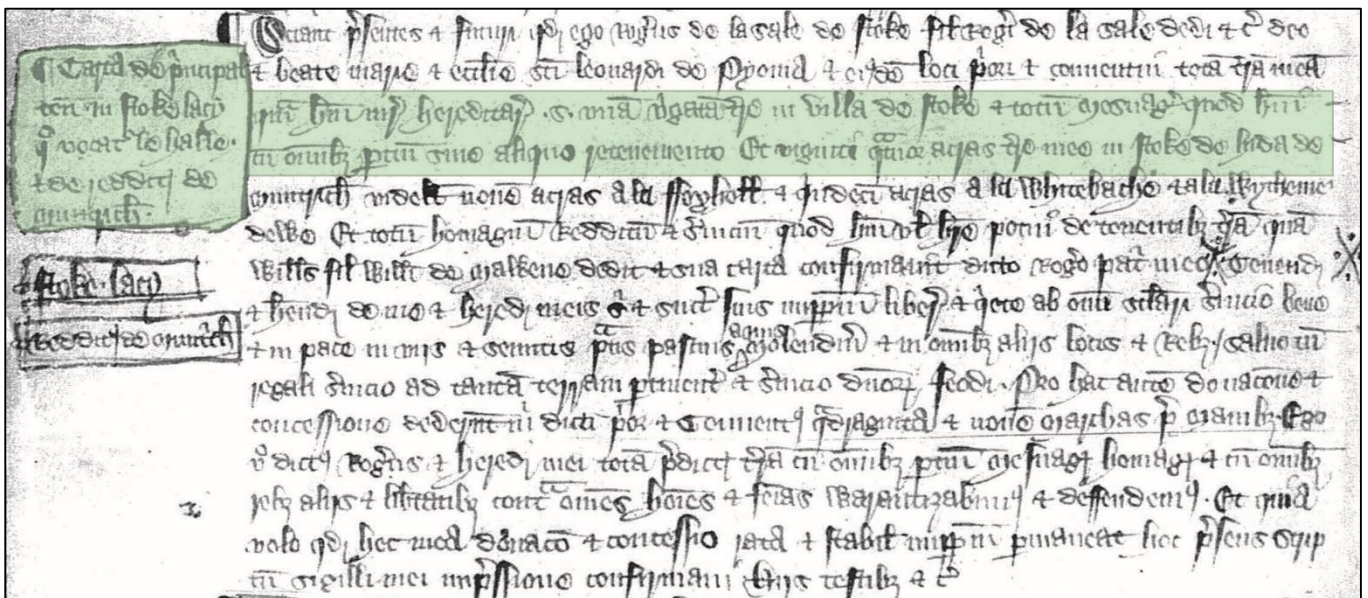


Plate A: Extract from the Cartulary of Wormsley Priory recording the grant of a messuage and a virgate of land in the vill of Stoke by Roger son of Roger de la Sale to the priory, with marginal note recording that this was the 'charter concerning the principal tenement in Stoke Lacy called 'le Halle''
(Reproduced by courtesy of the British Library)

The etymology of the place name 'le Halle' is worth considering briefly; it is evidently derived from the OE word 'heall' denoting a 'hall or manor house'. From this, it may be deduced that there was an important, high-status residence or manor house either at or in close proximity to the site of the present farm by the early-13th century.

The possibility should be strongly considered that the original site of 'le Halle' was located in the vicinity of the 'motte' earthwork to the SE of Hall Place Farm, and that it subsequently moved when the existing farmhouse at 'Hall Place' (a Grade II listed building) was built in about 1600.

The earliest reference to the estate of 'le Halle' occurs in a deed of mid-13th century date registered in the cartulary of Wormsley Priory (a house of Augustinian canons founded c.1216 at King's Pyon) by which Roger son of Roger de la Sale granted 'all my land which I hold by hereditary right, namely one virgate of land in the vill of Stoke and

the whole of my messuage (dwelling) with appurtenances, and 24 acres of my land in Stoke of the hide of Mintridge' (BL Harley MS 3586, f.89v). The compiler of the Wormsley cartulary (writing in the late 14th century) inserted a marginal note next to this deed stating that it related to the '*principal tenement in Stoke Lacy called le Halle*'.

This deed can probably be dated to between c.1228 and c.1260 and is of particular importance as it confirms the existence of an important landholding in the vicinity of Hall Place by the early to mid-13th century. Significantly, no mention is made in Roger de la Sale's deed of a castle at 'le Halle', suggesting that if Roger's messuage was situated on the 'motte' or adjacent to it, the motte had ceased to have a primarily defensive function by the early to mid-13th century.

Wormsley Priory appears to have continued to hold the estate of 'le Halle' or Hall Place until its Dissolution. A number of surviving early-16th century leases detail the renting out of the priory's estates in Stoke Lacy to a succession of tenants. A lease of 1507 grants Percival Mayveyll (Mafelde) and his assignees a '*messuage [dwelling] and carucate of land with the appurtenances called Freemans Land & Hall Place Land in Stokke Lacy*' for a period of 61 years under the yearly rent of £1 10s (HRO F50/79, 272). In 1538, a second lease of the same properties is recorded, this time to a William Buriton, gent. (HRO F50/79, 262).

4.2.2 Post-Medieval

- **c.1550-1800**

Later post-medieval documents and historic maps provide relatively limited information on the 'motte' earthwork, although they do show that, from the 16th century to the late 1920s, it remained as part of the estate of Hall Place Farm.

From the mid-17th century through to c.1795, it appears that the estate of Hall Place was held by the Bennett family. A deed of feoffment dated 10 July 1650 relating to the sale of parcels of arable and pasture in the vicinity of Hall Place Farm by Phillip Bennett to one Richard Smyth of Stoke Lacy makes no mention of a 'motte' or any similar feature being included within the sale. (HRO G37/11/255). The Bennetts (Robert Bennett) were still in possession of Hall Place by the time of 1794 Land Tax Assessment but appear to have sold the estate in 1795.

Isaac Taylor's 1754 map of Herefordshire (*fig. 2*) makes no mention of either Stoke Cross or Hall Place, and no depiction of the 'motte' is provided. Moreover, the road which currently runs to the W of the site and may truncate the W edge of the 'motte' feature, is not depicted on Taylor's map. No inclosure award is available for Stoke Lacy, nor has any estate map or parish map been found showing the topography of the site in appreciable detail prior to c.1800.



Fig. 2: Extract from Isaac Taylor's 1754 Map of Herefordshire
(Reproduced courtesy of Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre)

- c.1800-1880

In 1806, Hall Farm was purchased from Ann and Mary Jenks by a William West of Bredenbury. William West later (in 1818) took out a mortgage on the property (HRO L44/45, F99/A/24), but his financial position did not improve. An indenture of 1820 details the bargain and sale of his land following bankruptcy including '*all that messuage or tenement and farm commonly called or known by the name or names of Freemans Lands and Halloplace, otherwise called or known by the name of Hallplace, situate lying and being in the parish of Stoke Lacy in the county of Hereford, together with the several closes pieces or parcels of arable, meadow, pasture, hop/flop, and wood ground thereunto adjoining and belonging and hereinafter particularly mentioned (that is to say) all that close of meadow land called Cooken Meadow...*' (HRO F9/59)

However, the indenture makes no mention of a 'motte', 'castle' or any similar feature being including within the lands attached to Hall Place.

The 1816 Ordnance Survey drawing of Bromyard and district (fig. 3) is the earliest map source to indicate the alignment of the lane branching off from the Bromyard to Hereford turnpike road (A465) and heading towards Hall Place. It shows the distinctive sharp angled turn made by the lane where it reaches the motte before heading NNW towards Hall Place Farm; however no depiction of the 'motte' earthwork is given. This however is not altogether surprising as the OS surveyor's drawings often omitted detailed depictions of field boundaries and other earthworks, focusing primarily on roads and settlements.



*Fig. 3: Extract from the 1816 Ordnance Survey Surveyor's Drawing of Bromyard
(Reproduced courtesy of Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre)*

The 1842 tithe map and apportionment for Stoke Lacy parish (*fig. 4*) is of key importance as the earliest topographically detailed cartographic source to indicate the presence of the 'motte' earthwork.

The map shows a small ovoid field encompassing the site of the possible motte, which is marked as Plot No. 417 ('Arable adjoining Cookhorn Meadow') and is bounded on its southern side by a substantial linear field boundary marking the N boundary of two arable fields extending upslope to the Bromyard – Hereford road, the eastern field marked as 'Furlong meadow' (Plot 408) and its western counterpart as 'Shop Meadow' (Plot 409).

To the N of Plot No. 417 the tithe map shows a large irregular arable field (Cookhorn Meadow) extending S downslope towards Hall Place Farm, defined on its N edge by a meandering stream forming a tributary of the River Lodon. All three fields were in the possession of John Bydawell, owner of Hall Place Farm since 1830. The presence of field names such as 'furlong' are indicative of an open field system in the vicinity of the site and this is further confirmed by evidence of the tithe map which depicts strip field boundaries (defined by a dotted line) to the S of Stoke Cross and to the N and W of Hall Place.

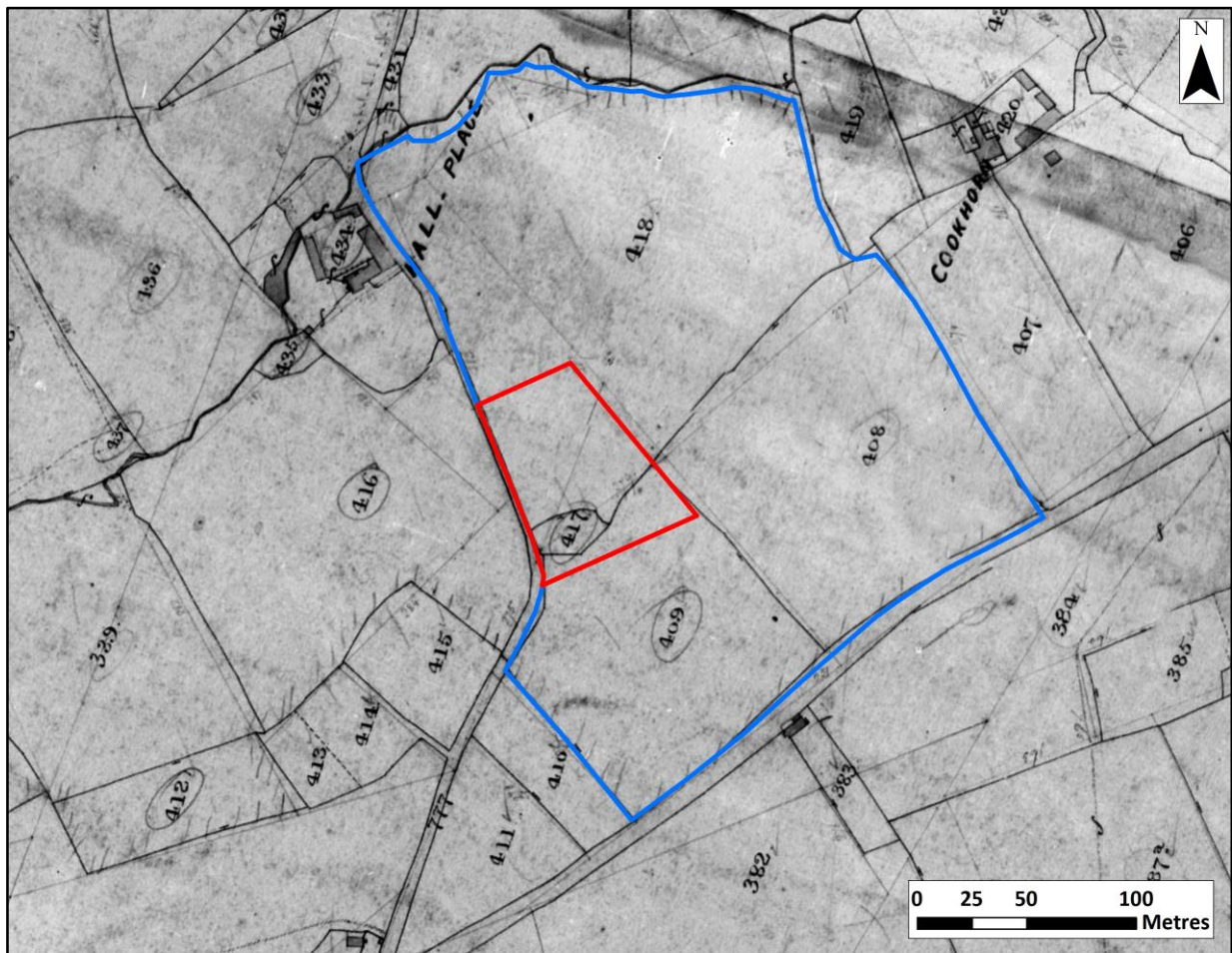


Fig. 4: Extract from the 1842 Tithe Map for Stoke Lacy
(Reproduced courtesy of Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre)

4.2.3 Modern

c.1880-1950

The evidence of the OS 1st edition 25 inch map of 1887 (*fig. 5*) indicates that Plot No. 417 containing the 'motte' earthwork had ceased to be regarded as a separate enclosure and had been merged with 'Cookhorn Meadow', the large arable field extending to the N. The fence or hedge boundary demarcating this ovoid plot appears to have been removed although its former shape is still partially discernible on the 1887 map, defined by an oval copse of trees lying immediately NW of the tree-lined field boundary extending NE-SW from Cookhorn Farm to the lane leading to Hall Place Farm. It is also worth noting that a footpath is shown on the 1887 map leading directly NW from the Bromyard-Hereford road directly up to the site of the 'motte' earthwork.

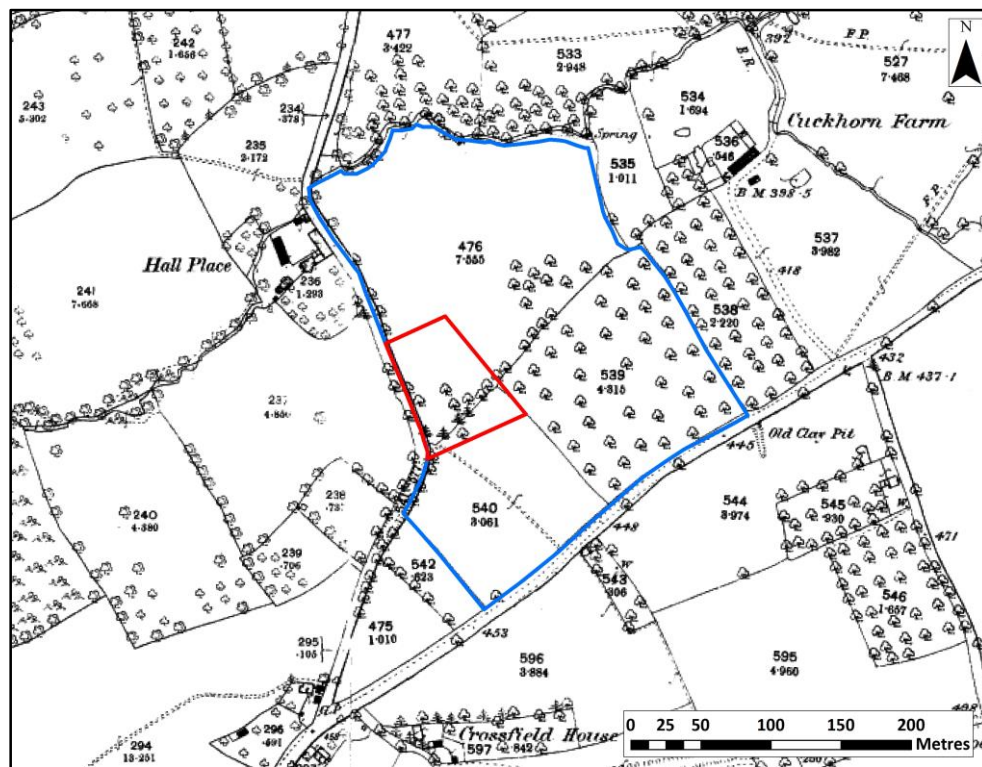


Fig. 5: Extract from the OS 1st edition 25 inch map of 1887 showing the site of the earthwork occupied by a copse of trees
(Reproduced by courtesy of the Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre)

This copse of trees indicating the site of the 'motte' is not depicted on a map accompanying a sale catalogue for the Hall Place Farm estate dated 1888 (*fig. 6*) neither it is shown on the OS 2nd edition 25 inch map of 1904 (*fig. 7*); however the footpath leading NW from the main road to the site of the 'motte' earthwork is shown in both cases.

Sales particulars produced for Hall Place prior to a sale in 1923 (HRO M5/30/22) make mention of the field containing the site of the proposed development, but contain no references to the 'motte', or similar features. Similar particulars were published prior to another sale of the property in 1929 (HRO M5/30/23).

None of these early 20th century maps or sale catalogues indicate the presence of a copse of trees marking the site of the motte; however a later RAF vertical photograph of the area taken in May 1948 indicates the existence of a small, ovoid copse in the location of the motte, adjoining the lane leading from Stoke Cross towards Hall Place Farm (RAF 540/42 Frame No. 5108).

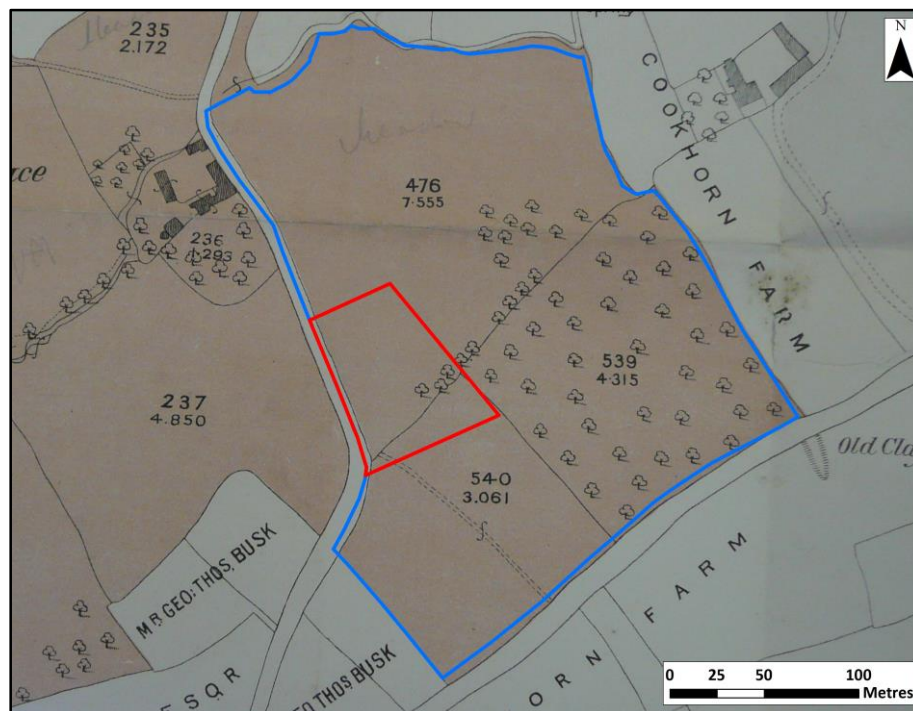


Fig. 6: Extract from a plan accompanying Sales Particulars for Hall Place dated 1888
(Reproduced courtesy of Bromyard & District Local History Society)

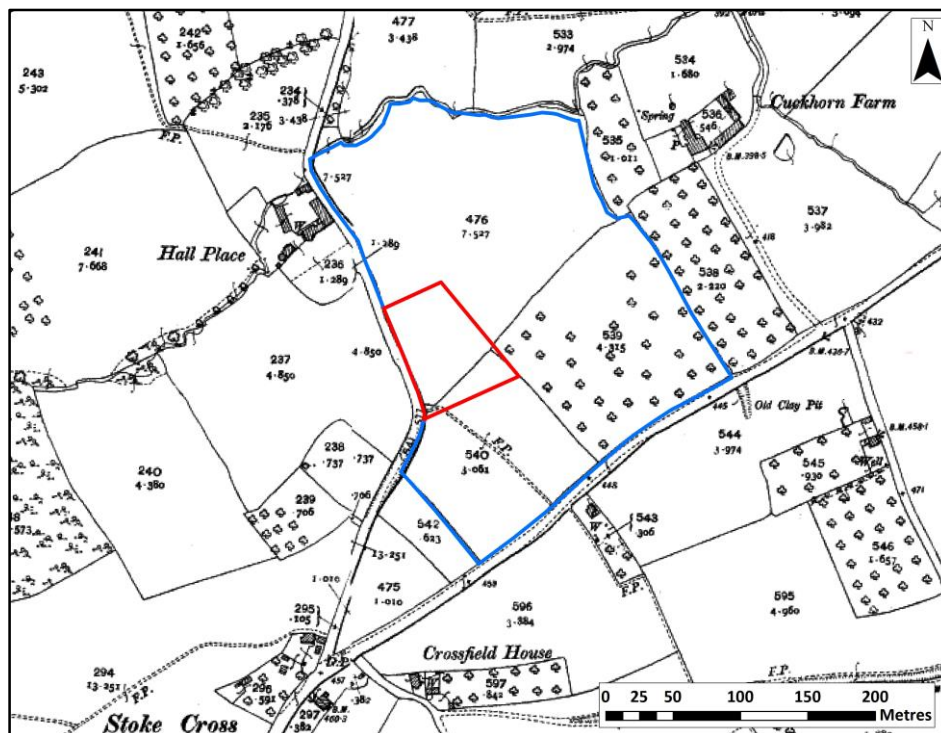


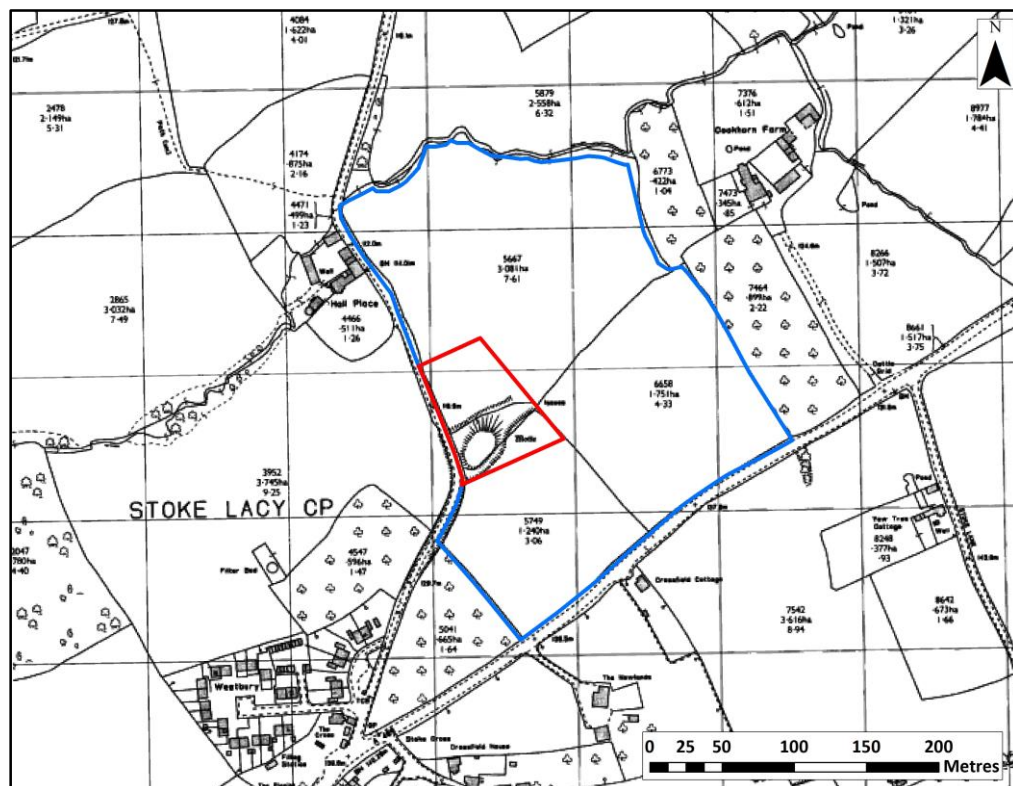
Fig. 7: Extract from the 1904 Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition 1-2500 Map of Herefordshire
(Reproduced courtesy of Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre)

- c. 1950 to present

The 'motte' does not feature on Ordnance Survey 6-inch maps dated 1953 and 1964, although the footpath leading NW from the A465 towards the motte is still shown.

By 1968, there appears to have been an extensive clearance of trees and undergrowth in the vicinity of the 'motte', at which time the Woolhope Club undertook its initial survey (Hickling, 1968, 3-4). The OS 1:2500 map of 1974 (*fig. 8*) clearly shows the ovoid form of the motte and its surrounding ditch, cleared of tree cover. In particular the N arm of the ditch is very clearly defined. Later aerial photographs of the site dated 1999, 2000 and 2009 appear to show tree planting surrounding the summit of the motte.

An aerial photograph of the site taken in May 1999 shows that the substantial NE-SW field boundary bordering the S edge of the 'motte' had been removed by that date and that the boundaries of the two fields extending upslope towards the A465 road had also been removed, presumably to allow more intensive cereal cultivation. Significantly, a number of cropmarks are shown within the fields adjoining the 'motte', consisting of: 1/ the cropmark of a broad NE-SW aligned ditch extending NE from the 'motte' (along the line of the recently removed field boundary) and then curving to the SE, and 2/a pair of elongated sub-rectangular enclosures situated NNE of the 'motte'. These two cropmark features appear roughly to correspond with those identified during a second survey of the site undertaken by the Woolhope Club in 1994 (Stirling-Brown, 1994, 56-7)



*Fig. 8: Extract from the 1974 Ordnance Survey 1:2500 National Survey
(Reproduced courtesy of Herefordshire Archive and Records Centre)*

4.2.4 Conclusions based upon documentary evidence

No documentary evidence has been found to conclusively determine the function and date of the 'motte' earthwork on the site.

However, it can be demonstrated that the earthwork lies in very close proximity to the site of a medieval manorial site called 'le Halle', the predecessor of Hall Place Farm, which is first documented in the early 13th century.

It was evidently a landholding of some local importance, presumably a sub-tenancy of the larger manor of Stoke Lacy, an extensive landholding forming part of the de Lacy honour of Weobley, which had been fragmented into several component estates by c.1200.

At some time between c.1228 and 1260, the 'messuage' (dwelling) and 'principal tenement' of 'le Halle' were granted by Roger son of Roger de la Sale to Wormsley Priory, a house of Augustinian canons who held the estate until the Dissolution.

The exact location of the messuage and principal tenement of 'le Halle' during the medieval period remains uncertain. The messuage may have been situated on the site of the present farmhouse of Hall Place (which dates back to c.1600) or it may have been located further to the SE in the vicinity of the 'motte' and its associated earthworks.

Later documentary evidence, including property deeds and the Stoke Lacy tithe map and apportionment of 1842, demonstrates that the site of the 'motte' lay within the estate of Hall Place Farm from the 18th century through to the early 20th century. Consequently, it can be demonstrated that there was a long-established historic association between the site of the 'motte' and Hall Place.

Of key importance is the evidence of the 1842 tithe map which delineates the site of the 'motte' earthwork as an ovoid plot of land (Plot No. 417) and shows it as being respected by several adjacent field boundaries, which may be taken as a strong indicator of the antiquity of the site.

By 1888, it appears that Plot No. 417 containing the earthwork had ceased to be regarded as a separate enclosure and had been merged with 'Cookhorn Meadow', the large arable field extending to the N. The fence or hedge boundary demarcating this ovoid plot appears to have been removed although its former shape is still partially discernible on the OS 1st edition map, defined by an oval copse of trees.

From the late 19th century appears that the 'motte' earthwork was concealed by a dense plantation of trees and undergrowth and its existence was only revealed following clearance activity in the late 1960s. The extent of the 'motte' earthwork is again clearly discernible on the OS 1:2500 map of 1974.

4.3 Site Specific Archaeological Information

4.3.1 Prehistoric and Roman

There are no prehistoric or Roman features recorded on the Herefordshire HER within the vicinity of the site (based on a 500m search radius).

4.3.2 Medieval

In terms of medieval archaeology, the only feature of interest recorded on the Herefordshire HER within the vicinity of the site of the proposed development are the remains of an oval ditched mound and possible associated earthworks to the N and E, recorded on the Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record as a possible medieval 'motte' site (HER 6664).

- **Results of previous investigations**

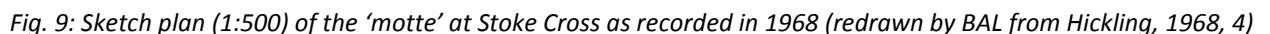
Prior to the late 1960s, this earthwork appears to have been overlooked by antiquarian investigators. The site is not listed in Robinson's 'A History of the Castles of Herefordshire and their Lords' (1869) and whilst a list of 'Ancient Earthworks' is included in Volume One of the Victoria County History of Herefordshire (Page 1908), it makes no mention of the 'motte' at Stoke Cross, only the 'Homestead Moat' at Lower Hopton.

Similarly, the Royal Commission's 'Inventory of the Historical Monuments in Herefordshire' lists two 'homestead mottes' in the parish of Stoke Lacy (located at Lower Hopton and Nether Court), but makes no mention of a 'motte' at Stoke Cross (RCHME, 1932). It is possible that the reason why this earthwork was ignored by these previous investigators is due to the fact that it had been truncated by a late 19th century field boundary (first shown on the 1887 OS map) and had also been heavily obscured by tree planting and cereal cultivation in the fields adjoining the earthwork.

The site appears initially to have been identified as a motte by Richard Kay, a member of the Woolhope Club and a prodigious field recorder of historic sites in Herefordshire and the Marches. In April 1968, a brief survey of the site (including a measured plan) was made by Rosamund Hickling, another member of the Woolhope Club (Hickling, 1968, 3-4). This was followed by a second, more extensive site visit and survey made by Roger Stirling-Brown and Paul Remfry (two leading recorders of castle sites in Wales and the Marches) in November 1994 (Stirling-Brown, 1995, 56-7). The 1968 survey describes the earthwork as a 'moated site' while the later survey refers to it as a 'motte and possible bailey'.

The 1968 survey (Hickling, 1968, 3-4) consists of a brief description of the 'motte' and its surrounding ditch, accompanied by a measured sketch plan at a scale of 1:500 (*fig. 9*). The site is described as being 'halfway down the NW facing slope of a hill, at a point where the slope steepens downwards. The slope has been artificially steepened and a ditch 2-3 feet deep cut at its foot and back into the hillside'. Mention is made of 'a very small stream which has been brought laterally along the valley slope from the main stream in the valley [a tributary of the River Lodon] and flows from NE to SW through the ditch in front of the scarp'. The summit of the 'motte' is said to be 'very level with no indications of either

No mention is made of any adjacent earthworks to the N or E of the 'motte'. Although the dimensions of the earthworks are not given in the 1968 survey, a subsequent record of a field observation by the Ordnance Survey dated 1970 records the earthwork as measuring 27m (NE-SW) × 16m (NW-SE) × 4.5m high (Herefordshire SMR).



Assuming they are correct, these dimensions (albeit approximate) are significantly reduced in comparisons to those given in 1970, particularly in terms of the height of the motte, which appears to have been truncated by more than 50 per cent between 1970 and 1994.

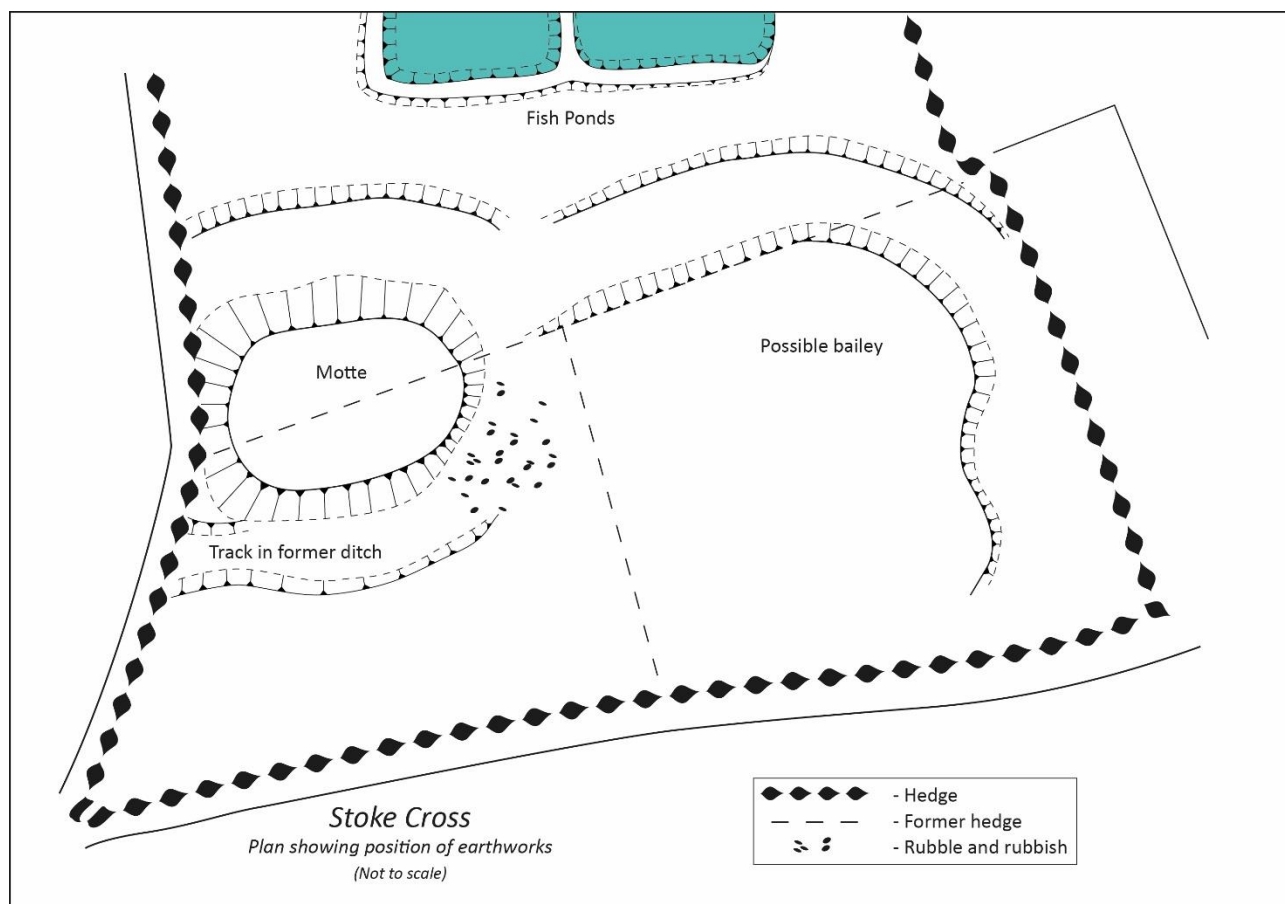


Fig.10: Sketch plan of the motte and associated earthworks (including a possible bailey to the E and fishponds to the N) at Stoke Cross recorded in 1994 (redrawn by BAL from Stirling-Brown, 1995, 57)

It appears from the account given in 1994 that some features recorded in the previous survey had either been obscured or removed entirely by cultivation and landscaping activity. The 1994 survey records that the northern and eastern arms of the ditch surrounding the motte had been ‘recently filled and levelled with rubbish and soil’ and that ‘there is no evidence of a ditch on the north side as the field is ploughed right up to the base of the motte’.

The top of the motte is described as flat (as before) but it is worth noting that ‘a few pieces of stone’ were observed in the 1994 survey as ‘jutting through the topsoil or lying on top of the motte’. The field survey also noted that a shallow trench measuring about 18 inches wide had been dug on the summit of the motte showing what appeared to be the natural clay. It is unclear why such a shallow trench had been excavated in this location and by whom.

Significantly, the possible earthworks of a large sub-rectangular enclosure or ‘bailey’ were observed during the 1994 survey. These earthworks appear to have been revealed following the consolidation of three former fields (recorded as Plot Nos. 408, 409 and 418 on the tithe map) into a single field for cereal cultivation and the removal of the boundaries associated with these fields. It is noteworthy that the substantial NE-SW aligned boundary bank extending along the S side of the motte is described as having ‘a lot of stone’, although precisely where this stone originated from is uncertain.

Evidence of a low bank with a possible counterscarp was observed to extend on a roughly ENE alignment (towards Cookhorn Farm) and then curve round to the E and SE towards the main road. The southern arm of the possible enclosure was not identified; however a number of elongated rectangular enclosures were identified downslope, to the N of the motte and possible bailey enclosure, which 'may mark the positions of former fishponds' (Stirling-Brown, 1995, 57)

- **The morphology of the earthwork – general considerations as to typology**

In the absence of entirely conclusive documentary evidence to identify the date and function of the earthwork at Stoke Cross, it is essential to consider its morphology (in comparison with earthworks of similar form and dimensions recorded in Herefordshire and the surrounding region).

Based on the evidence of the 1968 and 1994 surveys and further reinforced by observations made during the site visit, it appears highly unlikely that the mound is a natural feature, particularly in view of the evidence for the presence of a surrounding ditch which had been infilled on its N and E sides (by 1994) and which appears to have originally been fed with water (at least on its N side).

The ovoid form of the mound and its location on a sloping site might superficially appear to resemble a pillow mound (rabbit warren), which could be of medieval or post-medieval origin. However, surviving examples of pillow mounds in Herefordshire (for instance at Croft Ambrey and Wapley Camp) are usually longer, thinner and more oblong in shape than the mound at Stoke Cross. Moreover, the existence of rabbit warrens is often recorded in field name evidence (often referred to as 'coneygars') and no documentary evidence whatsoever has been found in the tithe map or other records to indicate the former presence of a rabbit warren on the site.

Having ruled out the possibility of the earthwork being a natural feature or a rabbit warren, one must therefore consider whether the surviving earthworks represent the remains of a castle or fortified manorial site. Earthwork castles can be categorized broadly as three main types: ringworks, motte castles (without an attached bailey), and motte and bailey castles.

Ringworks are more commonly found in upland areas (where the construction of a motte would be difficult) and tend to have a hollow morphology, characterized by a circular or ovoid bank, wall and ditch encircling a large enclosure (Phillips 2008, 32). Many ringwork castles appear to have been built during the early years of the Norman Conquest (such as at British Camp) although some continued to be built well into the 12th century, such as Breinton Camp near Hereford.

The 'motte and bailey' morphology, distinctive of many early post-Conquest timber castles, appears to be an evolution of the enclosure type castle (Phillips 2008, 29). Liddiard (2003, 9), has suggested that the motte was a special form of castle introduced following the Conquest, and developed to meet the particular needs of the Anglo-Norman aristocracy. The motte, usually tall, conical in profile and circular at the base, probably served a number of functions, including providing extra security for the lord's household and resources by limiting access, offering commanding views of the landscape, and displaying the lord's power within the wider landscape. Many castle sites made use of available pre-existing high ground, such as tumuli, hill-forts, Roman camps, and Saxon burhs. However,

due to the need to locate castles in situations dominating existing settlements, high ground was not always available and mounds were often erected for defences (Phillips 2008, 32).

The bailey was an enclosed and defensible area of ground providing garrison accommodation and buildings such as workshops, stables, and kitchens, fundamental to the running of the castle (Phillips 2008, 40). Baileys tend to survive as flat areas of land surrounded by an earthwork ditch or bank, such as at Hen Domen (Montgomeryshire), where archaeological investigations have shown the bailey to have been tightly packed with buildings (Higham & Barker 1994, 337). The bailey also provided extra defence for the motte, it was often set on the weakest defensible side of the motte (Phillips 2008, 41).

There are also examples of some mottes without baileys, and these sites are often described as motte castles. Largely military in function, these castles appear to have been constructed as frontier outposts or watch towers, to dominate key topographic features, or to control important resources.

Later 12th century motte and bailey castles tend to differ in terms of morphology from the earlier 'motte' types prevalent during the early years of the Conquest, with their earthworks being generally lower, smaller, and less conical. This is partly due to a change in their primary function, as they were now primarily centres of administration and lordship rather than frontier military outposts (Phillips 2008, 17).

In general, 12th century mottes appear often to have been lower and more ovoid as they functioned more as platforms for larger masonry donjons or manor houses, rather than the smaller timber towers of the earlier motte and bailey castles. Nearby examples of these later mottes include the Court House site at Pembridge and Kingsland Castle, both of which represent relatively low ovoid, moated platforms accommodating masonry structures (Shoesmith, 1996).

- **Site-specific considerations as to the form and function of the earthwork**

Based on the typologies for castle earthworks discussed above, can we accurately categorize the earthworks at Stoke Lacy?

From the evidence of the site visit, taken together with the descriptions contained in the 1968 and 1994 surveys and the evidence of historic maps and aerial photographs, it is evident that the earthworks located on the site have been subject to considerable landscaping and disturbance by cultivation activity in the late 19th and 20th centuries. Consequently, the surviving remains clearly do not fully represent their original extent and therefore one must exercise caution in terms of their interpretation.

Nevertheless, when considered in their entirety, the earthworks identified on the site may be described as comprising the following components:

1/ The remains of a small ovoid mound or 'motte', almost certainly artificial, surrounded by a ditch which has been filled in on its N and E sides and obscured on its W side by the post-medieval lane leading from Stoke Cross to Hall Place Farm. It is probable that the remains of the motte have been substantially altered; comparison between the

dimensions recorded in 1970 and 1994 demonstrate that the height of the motte had been reduced from 4.5m to 2.1m.

2/ Immediately E of the motte, the possible remains of a large, sub-rectangular enclosure, possibly a bailey which may extend eastwards almost as far as Cookhorn Farm and SE as far as the A465 road.

3/ A separate pair of rectangular earthworks to the N of the 'motte' which have been interpreted as possible fishponds.

The key distinguishing features of the 'motte' at Stoke Cross are its ovoid shape, its relatively small size (measuring 27m × 16m × 4.5m high in 1970), its stepped profile (steep NW facing slope/much flatter SE face) and its location on sloping ground. The ovoid form of the motte at Stoke Cross and its relatively low height (as existing) suggest that it does not fall into the general category of early Norman mottes as suggested by Phillips, which he characterizes as being generally tall in height and conical in form. The 1994 survey identified stones on the summit of the mound and a considerable amount of stone within the NE-SW aligned boundary bordering the mound on its southern edge, possibly implying the presence of masonry structures in the vicinity.

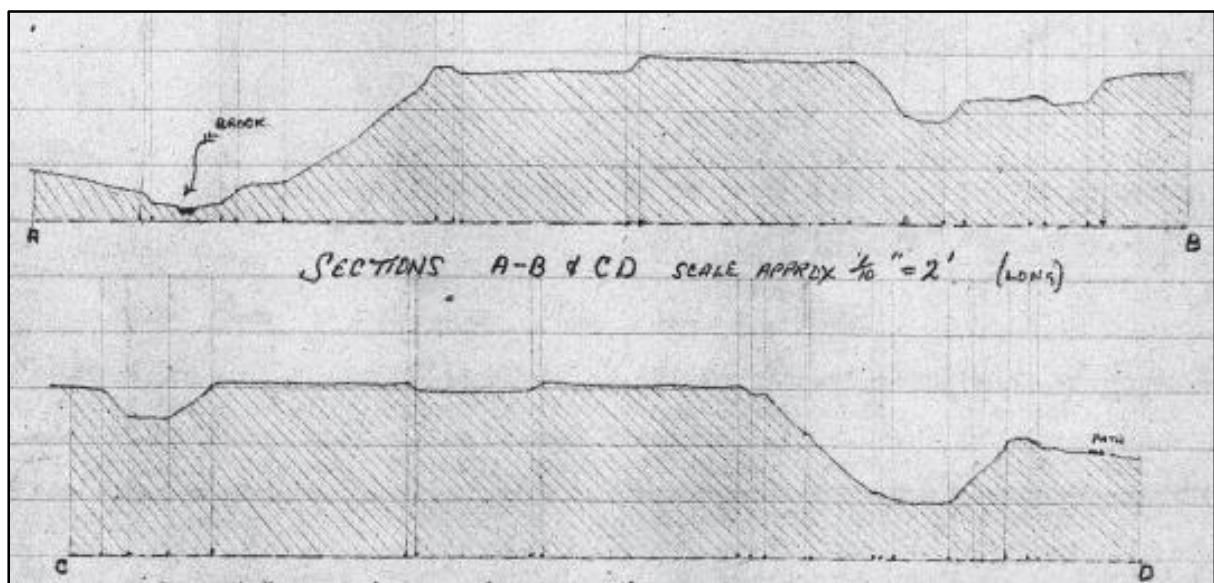


Fig. 11: Section of earthworks at Kentchurch (Kay 1949/1950)

Close parallels may be essayed, in terms of its size, form and profile, with two motte sites at Wacton and Kentchurch (Herefordshire) both of which have been categorized as being of probable 12th century date. The motte site at Wacton, N of Bredenbury, which is also oval in form (measuring 18m across its longer axis and rising to a height of 3.5m) and occupies a shallow hillslope site (SMR 940; NGR SO 6148 5753). The buried footings of masonry buildings have been identified on the motte at Wacton and evidence of a possible bailey enclosure has also been identified to the W of the motte (RCHME, 1932, 195).

In terms of its height and stepped profile, the Stoke Cross mound can also be compared usefully with the remains of another motte recorded at New Buildings Farm, Kentchurch (SMR 3980; NGR SO 4216 2700). On this site, a mound was formed by cutting a ditch, in the shape of an angular 'C', into the natural edge of the stream bank. The construction method is quite evident as the inner mound is the same height as the surface of the surrounding fields (Phillips 2008, 211). This is remarkably reminiscent of Stoke Cross, where the motte appears to be cut into the natural slope of the field and the NW face is much steeper than the opposite SE side.

The irregular ovoid form of the earthwork, its relatively low height and the presence of an associated bailey enclosure and fishponds to the E suggest that it probably falls into the category of later Norman motte and bailey castles. It was probably constructed during the late 12th century, during a period when the pattern of land tenure within the extensive manor of Stoke Lacy fragmented with the creation of several subsidiary manorial estates at Hall Place ('le Halle') Lower Hopton and Mintridge.

4.4 Gazetteer of Monuments and Listed Buildings on the Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record in the vicinity of the site (centred on NGR: SO 62527 50579)

Table 1: Monuments Recorded in the Vicinity of the Site on the Herefordshire SMR

Number	Type	Name	Date	NGR
6664	Earthwork	Possible Motte	Medieval?	SO 625 505
41140	Extraction Pit	Clay Pit, S of Cuckhorn Farm	Post-med.	SO 627 505
46655	Historic Farmstead	The Sough	Post-med.	SO 622 508
46656	Historic Farmstead	Hall Place	Post-med.	SO 624 506
46657	Historic Farmstead	Cuckhorn Farm	Post-med.	SO 627 507

Table 2: Listed Buildings Recorded in the Vicinity of the Site on the Herefordshire SMR

Number	Grade	Name	Date	NGR
DHE5151	II	Hall Place	C17	SO 624 506
DHE5152	II	Barn Adjoining Hall Place on N	C17 -C18	SO 624 506
DHE5153	II	Wall SE of Hall Place	C18	SO 624 506
DHE5154	II	Barn NW of Hall Place	C17	SO 624 506
DHE5155	II	Barn & Hop Kiln SW of Hall Place	C18 – C19	SO 624 506

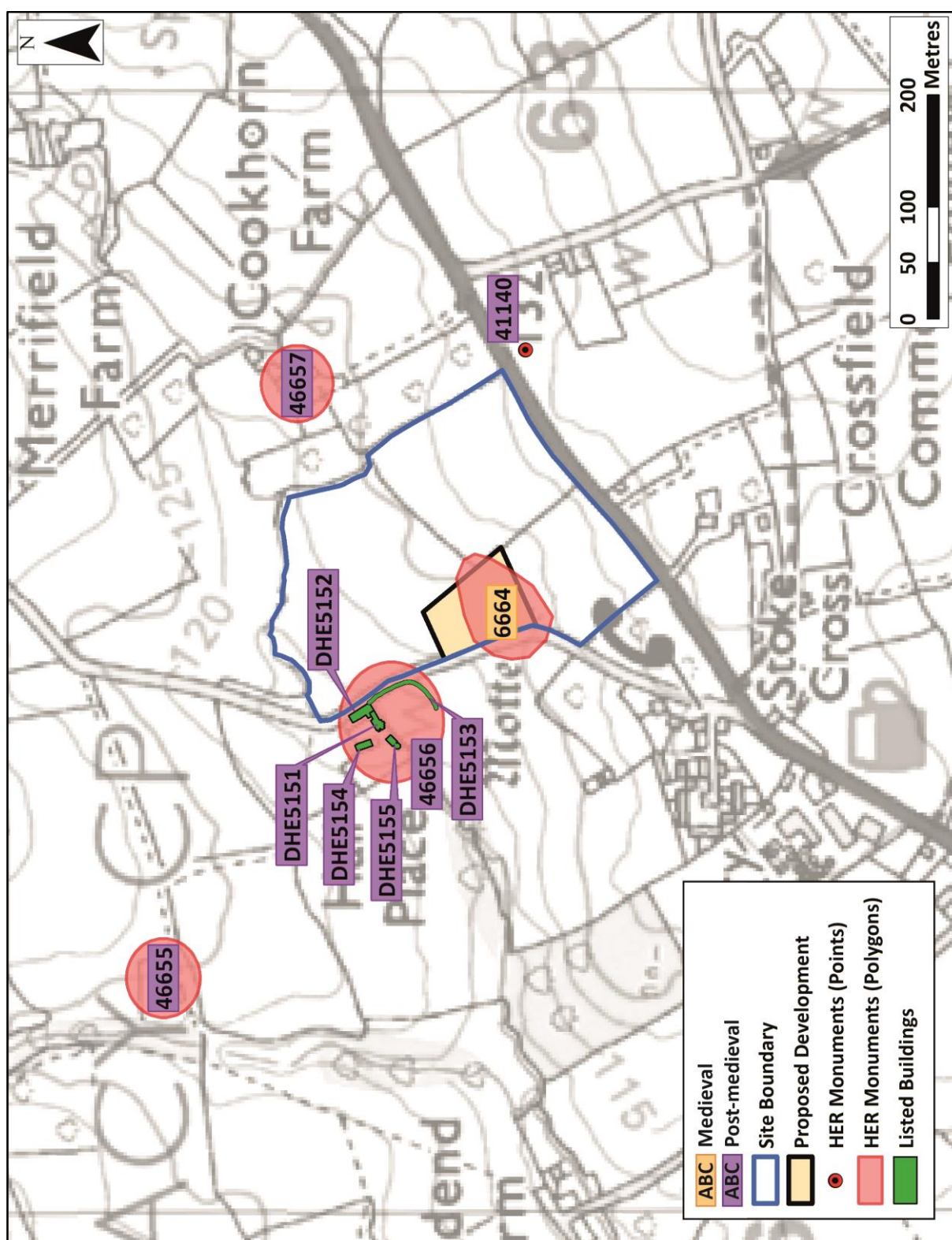


Fig. 12: Archaeological features and listed buildings recorded in the vicinity (500m) of the site of the proposed development (based on consultation of the Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record)

5 Site Visit

BAL undertook a site visit on the 7th of January 2016 to determine the potential for surviving archaeological remains on the site. The site lies to the N of the small hamlet of Stoke Cross, to the N of the village of Stoke Lacy. It is situated to the E of the minor road leading from Stoke Cross to Bredenbury.

The SW corner of the site is dominated by an ovoid shaped mound oriented roughly ENE-WSW, measuring approximately 22m × 16m × 2m in height and partially surrounded by a ditch on its S and SE sides. The mound is situated on a gently sloping site, extending downslope from SE to NW, and appears to have been partially truncated on its W side by the lane leading from Stoke Cross to Hall Place Farm. The slopes of the mound and its summit are heavily obscured by trees and undergrowth.

There was no visible trace of the ditch previously recorded in 1968 as having surrounded the mound on its N and E sides; it appears that this ditch was filled in at some point before 1994.



Plate 1: View looking SE at the potential 'motte'



Plate 2: View looking NNE at the potential 'motte'



Plate 3: View looking NE at the potential 'motte'



Plate 4: View looking NE at the ditch to the S of the potential 'motte'

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Herefordshire Archives and Records Centre

Microfilm copy of Wormsley Priory Cartulary (BL Harley MS 3586)

1650 Feoffement between Phillip and Mary Bennett of Hall Place and Richard Smyth (HRO G37/11/255)

1793 Copy of Extracts of C16th Leases Relating to Religious Houses in Herefordshire (HRO F50/79)

1818 Mortgage Taken Out by William West on Lands Called Freemans Land and Halls Place in Stoke Lacy (HRO L44/45, F99/A/24)

1888 Sales Particulars for Hall Place

1923 Sales Particulars for Hall Place (HRO M5/30/22)

1929 Sales Particulars for Hall Place (HRO M5/30/23)

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8 Cartography and Aerial Photography

John Speed's 1610 Map of Herefordshire

Isaac Taylor's 1754 Map of Herefordshire

1816 Ordnance Survey Surveyor's Drawing of Bromyard

1842 Tithe Map for Stoke Lacy

1887 Ordnance Survey 1st Edition 1-2500 Map of Herefordshire

1904 Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition 1-2500 Map of Herefordshire

1974 Ordnance Survey 1-2500 National Survey

Report Title		Report Ref	
Archaeological Assessment to determine site provenance – Land Adjacent to Cuckhorn Farm, Stoke Lacy, Herefordshire		BA1602CFSL	
Report written by		Stephen Priestley MA & Owain Connors MA PhD	
Report edited by		George Children MA MCIfA, Stephen Priestley MA & Neil Shurety	
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