



Hatt House, Lower Sapey, Worcestershire:  
archaeological survey

Huw Sherlock and P J Pikes  
2001



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Principal Archaeologist: Huw Sherlock BA, Diparch, MIFA

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*Hatt House, Lower Sapey, Worcestershire: archaeological survey  
2001*

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Client: Mr & Mrs Savage, Hatt House owners

Text: Huw Sherlock and PJ Pikes

Project Manager: Huw Sherlock

Cover Photograph: Hatt House



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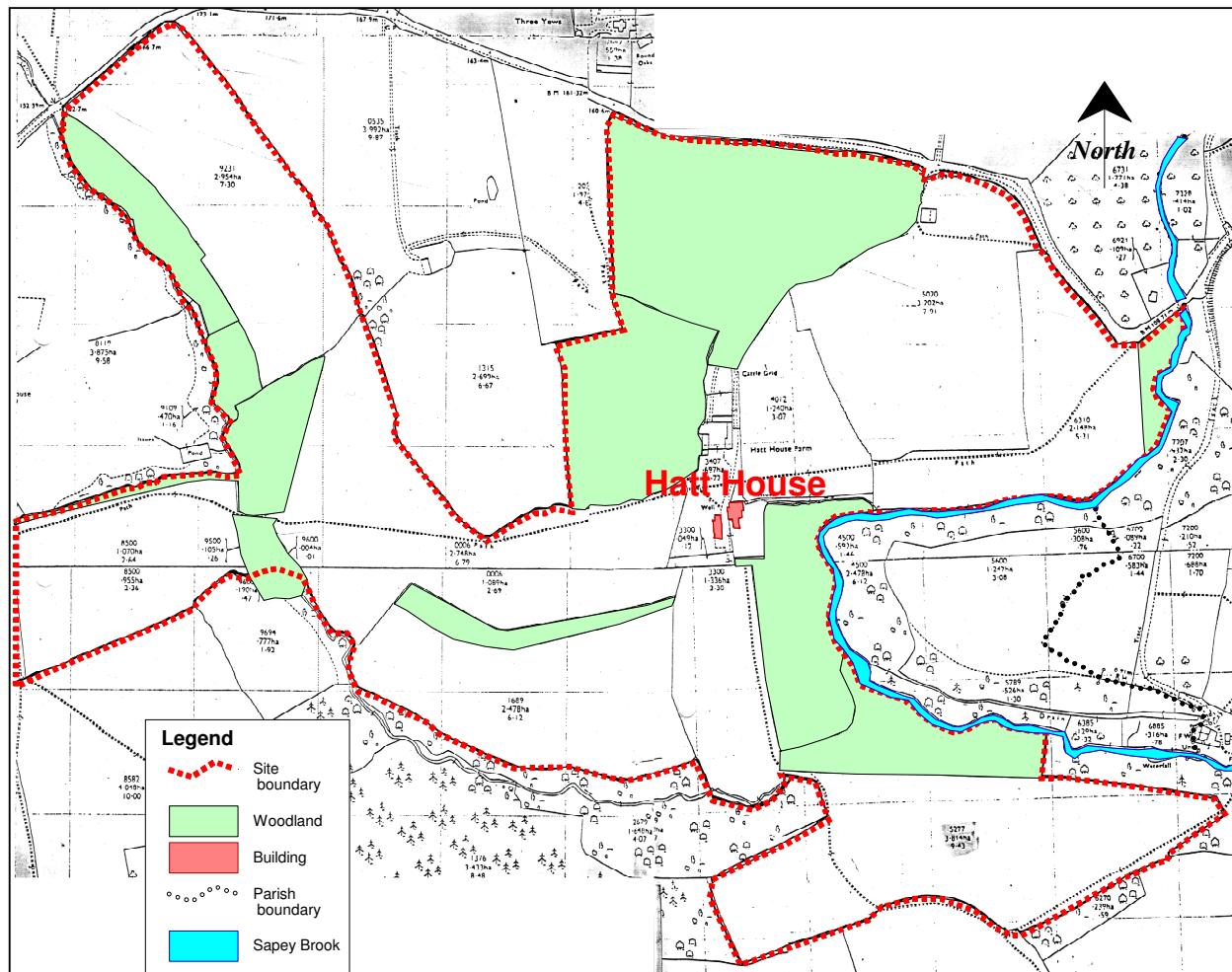
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Figure 1: Location plan of the site.

### Geology and land use

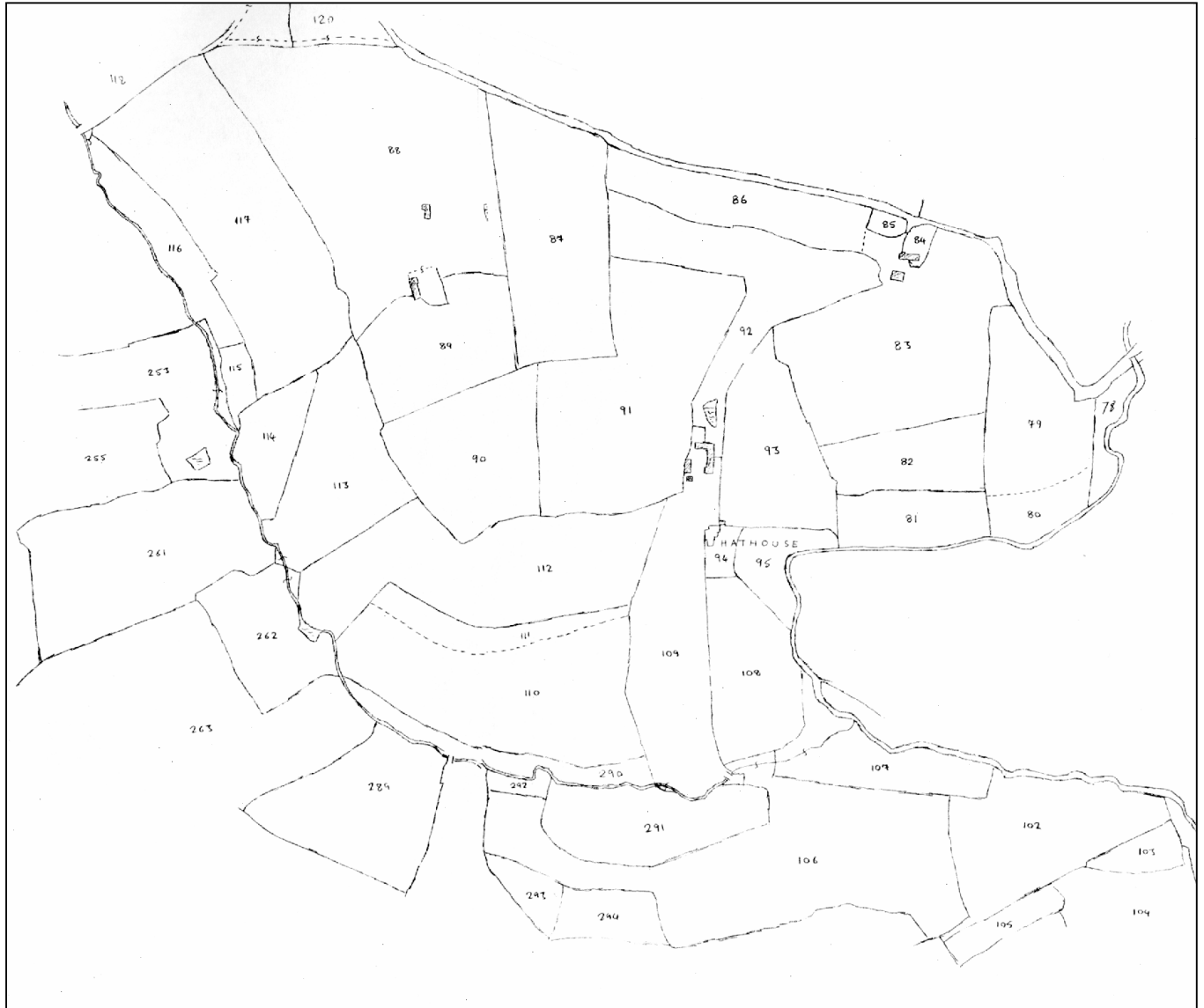
The solid geology of the area is beds of the Lower Old Red Sandstone including Downtonian (British Geological Survey Ten Mile Map, South Sheet, Third ed. (Solid) 1979). The land is predominantly in use as rough pasture with orchards and mixed woodland.



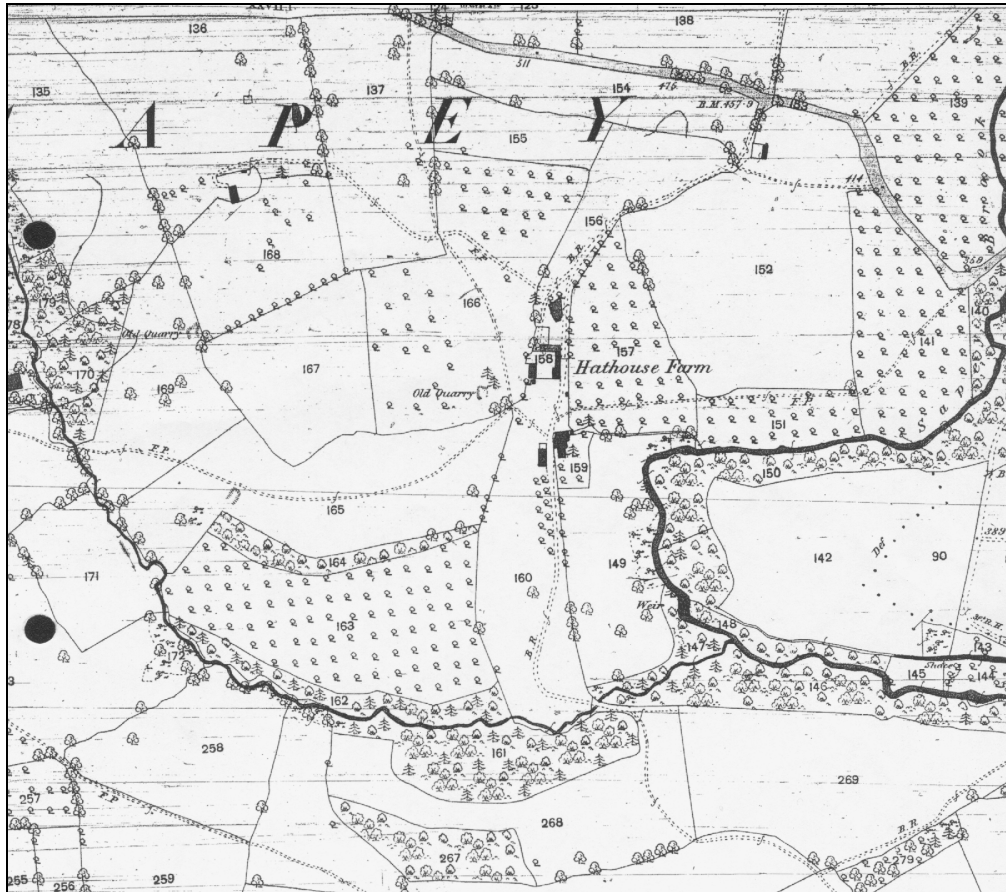
**Figure 2: Showing the boundaries of the land holding and the various woodland compartments.**

## The Background

At present the site covers 28 hectares, of which 7 hectares are under woodland. Hatt House Farm was de la Hatte in 1290, atte Hatte in 1327 and Hattsitch appears in 1602. The first element is probably OE hætt – hat, and Mawer and Stenton (1927) suggest that the name is derived from a local feature or building having a resemblance to a hat. The house is a grade II listed building. The listing states that the house is seventeenth century in date, with early eighteenth and nineteenth century alterations. The larger part of the property, including Hat House was part of the Hope Estate in 1841.



**Figure 3: Part of the tithe map of Sapey Pitchard (Lower Sapey), 1841.**



**Figure 4: Extract from the 1885 OS 1<sup>st</sup> Edition 1:2500 plan**

By 1885, the date of the first edition Ordnance Survey map (see figure 4) all the woodland currently on the site was well established and several of the larger fields were in use as orchards. In 1841 one field (110 on the tithe map, see figure 3), called 'Lumbar Cot Hopyard' is listed as being in use as an orchard and hop-yard.

A number of quarries are marked on the 1885 map, which may well have provided stone for farm buildings. The two cottages called 'Hat Hitch' on the 1841 tithe map were not in the ownership of the Hope Estate at that time. By 1885 only one building is shown at this location, so presumably the ownership had changed and the stone was re-used elsewhere.

In 1885 the main access routes to the house were from the road to the north, as is currently the case, and also by way of a trackway from the south leading over a packhorse bridge (see plate 1). This track joins another leading from Hope Mill to the west at a point approximately a quarter of a mile further south. From here the track runs south towards the settlement at old Lower Sapey and the parish church of St Bartholomew. The old church<sup>1</sup>, dating from the early 12<sup>th</sup> century, stands on the site of what was the original settlement of Lower Sapey. Sapey is mentioned in a deed of Offa in 781 and in 1086 Osbern fitz Richard held 3 hides in Sapey.<sup>2</sup> Lower Sapey was previously known as Nether Sapey and Sapey Pitchard; the latter is used for the tithe map. Upper Sapey is a parish on the other side of the county boundary, in Herefordshire.

<sup>1</sup> Worcestershire Sites and Monuments Record WSM 05589  
<sup>2</sup> Victoria County History of Worcestershire, volume IV, p 328





**Plate 1: Bridge carrying the old track from Hatt House to Lower Sapey.**

## **The Woodlands**

### **The Western Woodlands - Land parcels 8332, 8825, 9315, 9500 and 9510**

This area of the property was owned and occupied separately from Hat House Farm. All the rest of the present property formed part of the farm, apart from the area around the two cottages at Hathitch (Hat Hitch), which was owned by Sir Thomas Edward Winnington, bart and occupied by William Peacey Osbern (see below). Hat House Farm was owned by James Seward and occupied by Benjamin Rea.

#### **Land parcels 8332 and 8825**

Grid ref. 8332 – SO68840 61330; 8825 – SO68890 61250

Area 8332 - 0.295 ha; 8825 - 0.361 ha

Tithe map – Sapey Pitchard (1841)

116, name - Old Hill Ashbed, use - wood

owner - Reverend Francis Henry Barber

occupier - William Smith

A stretch of woodland along the banks of the stream which forms the western boundary of the property. This is likely to have been woodland for a long period of time.

#### **Land parcel 9315**

Grid ref. SO68930 61150

Area 0.227 ha

Tithe map – Sapey Pitchard (1841)

115, name - Tillage and Ashbed, use - arable and rough

owner - Daniel Henry Maddox

occupier – Thomas Hill

Now, as it was in 1885, this is a continuation of the previous stretch of woodland. This was apparently less wooded in 1841. However the fact that it is an 'ashbed' suggests a temporary destruction of what was essentially a coppice. It is arable and rough, rather than pasture, and so would allow regeneration of the coppice.

**Land parcel 9510**

Grid ref. SO68950 61100

Area 0.612 ha

Tithe map – Sapey Pitchard (1841)

114, name – Broomy Bank Ashbed, use - coppice

owner – James Seward

occupier – Benjamin Rea

Coppice in 1841, this seems to have been used continuously as woodland.

**Land parcel 9500**

Grid ref. SO68950 61020

Area 0.105 ha

Tithe map – Sapey Pitchard (1841)

Part of 261, name - Long Meadow, use- pasture

owner – George Talbot

occupier – John Hill

This small patch of woodland on the west bank of the brook formed part of Long Meadow in 1841. It is marked as woodland on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map but may have been fairly recently established at that time.

**The Woodland on the Sapey Brook**

The Sapey Brook is the dominant natural feature in the local landscape. It is deeply ravined and its steep banks are likely to have had used for coppicing for a considerable period.

**Land parcel 6914**

Grid ref. SO69690 61150

Area 0.251 ha

Tithe map – Sapey Pitchard (1841)

78, name - Ashbed, use - coppice

owner – James Seward

occupier – Benjamin Rea

This small patch of woodland on the west bank of the Sapey Brook, was a coppice in 1841 and is likely to have maintained much of its character since. It is marked as woodland on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map.

**Land parcel 3900**

Grid ref. SO69400 60950

Area 0.457 ha

Tithe map – Sapey Pitchard (1841)

95, name - Plantation, use - wood and rough;

108, name Bath Meadow, use – pasture

owner – James Seward

occupier – Benjamin Rea

The northern part of this parcel (tithe map, 95) was plantation in 1841 and the larger southern part (108) pasture. The 1st edition OS map shows a few scattered trees in this field with 'rough' marked at the eastern edge against the stream.

This area seems therefore, not to have been woodland in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.



**Plate 2: The Sapey Brook.** Recent exceptional rainfall has led to the bed of the stream and much of the bank being washed away.

**Land parcel 4500**

Grid ref. SO69500 60850

Area (total area - NB not all of this land parcel is Hat House Property) 3.07 ha

Tithe map – Sapey Pitchard (1841)

107, name - Ashbed, use - coppice

owner – James Seward

occupier – Benjamin Rea

This area of woodland on the south bank of the Sapey Brook, was coppice in 1841. It is marked as woodland on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map.

### **Lumbar Cot Plantation**

#### **Land parcel 1694**

Grid ref. SO69150 60950

Area 0.348 ha

Tithe map – Sapey Pitchard (1841)

111, name - Plantation, use - wood

owner – James Seward

occupier – Benjamin Rea

In 1841 this strip of plantation woodland divided Lumbar Cot Meadow (tithe 112, part of modern land parcel 0006) on the north, from Lumbar Cot Hopyard (tithe 110, modern land parcel 1689) on the south. It is marked as woodland on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map.

This plantation appears to occupy a medieval field strip of the type which is visible in the field to the south - see plate (3).

### **The Present Orchards**

These land parcels were orchards in January 2001. Only parts of these were orchards in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **Land parcel 3628**

Grid ref. SO69350 61300

Area 3.384 ha

Tithe map – Sapey Pitchard (1841)

85, name – garden (to Hat Hitch cottages which stood to the east, in what is now land parcel 5020)

86, name – Sling Meadow, use - pasture

owner – Sir Thomas Edward Winnington, bart

occupier – William Peacey Osbern

91 (part of), name – Banks Orchard, use - pasture and orchard

92, name – Hathitch Meadow and fold, use - pasture

owner – James Seward

occupier – Benjamin Rea

This modern orchard is a composite of what were three whole parcels and part of another in 1841.

The southern part of the orchard was part of Banks Orchard (see below). The central part was the pasture known as Hathitch Meadow. To the north of Hathitch Meadow lay Sling Meadow which was also pasture.

To the east of Sling Meadow, and also now incorporated into this land parcel, was a garden belonging to Hathitch cottages. This garden, and what is now land parcel 5020, were owned and occupied separately from Hat House, that is by Sir Thomas Edward Winnington, bart and William Peacey Osbern respectively. The two cottages, now-demolished, stood in the northern part of this field.

#### **Land parcel 2714**

Grid ref. SO69250 61130

Area 1.937 ha

Tithe map – Sapey Pitchard (1841)

91 (part of), name – Banks Orchard, use - pasture and orchard

owner – James Seward

occupier – Benjamin Rea

This orchard remained the same size in the 1880s as it was in 1841. It has subsequently been truncated, its northern portion being incorporated into land parcel 3628 above.

#### **The Lost Orchards**

These areas were used as orchard in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but are no longer used as such. This loss should be viewed within the context of English orchards in general, which suffered a loss of over 50% in the 20th century.

#### **Land parcel 6310**

Grid ref. SO69630 61100

Area 2.148 ha

Tithe map – Sapey Pitchard (1841)

79 name – Holly Brook Orchard, use - arable and orchard

80 name – part of Holly Brook Orchard, use - pasture and rough

81 name – Lower Pear Tree Orchard, use - pasture and orchard

owner – James Seward

occupier – Benjamin Rea

Although plot 80 on the tithe is part of Holly Brook Orchard the description suggests that it was not functioning as such in 1841. By the time of the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map Holly Brook Orchard had been united and is marked as an orchard, as is the still separate Lower Pear Tree Orchard.

#### **Land parcel 5020**

Grid ref. SO69500 61200

Area 3.202 ha

Tithe map – Sapey Pitchard (1841)

82 name – Hathitch Orchard, use - arable and orchard

83 name – Hathitch Meadow, use - pasture

owner – Sir Thomas Edward Winnington, bart

occupier – William Peacey Osbern



The southern part of this parcel was orchard in 1841. The 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map shows that the boundary between the two fields had been removed and Hathitch Orchard had ceased to exist by that date.

#### **Land parcel 4012**

Grid ref. SO69400 61100

Area 1.240 ha

Tithe map – Sapey Pitchard (1841)

93 name – Upper Pear Tree Orchard, use - pasture and orchard

owner – James Seward

occupier – Benjamin Rea

This was still an orchard on the 1<sup>st</sup> edition OS map.

### **The Archaeological Features**

#### **Earthworks**



**Plate 3: Looking north west showing the well-defined scarp of a lynchet running north west to south east across the field marked 110 (Lumbar Cot Hopyard) on the tithe map. Note the ash pollards at the top of the bank which are part of a series of very old ash trees in the area.**

This well-defined earthwork runs across the break of slope of the bank and is mirrored by a series of lynchets on the opposite side of the valley. These were undoubtedly the result of ploughing which has caused a build up of soil.



**Plate 4: Looking west across to the opposite side of the valley. A series of lynchets are clearly visible.**

## Trackways



**Plate 5: Looking north showing a well defined trackway leading from the packhorse bridge around the shoulder of the hill to Hatt House.**

This trackway was one of the two major routes linking Hatt House to the outside world. This track crosses the stream immediately to the south, passing over the packhorse bridge (see plate 1) and joining a track leading to Hope Mill (also part of the Hope Estate in the nineteenth century) but also with the track leading to Lower Sapey. The well defined nature of the track indicates that it has been in continual use for a long period of time. The size and good design of the packhorse bridge itself indicates that this was an important route along which valuable goods may have been transported. It seems very likely that corn and flour would have been taken to and from Hope Mill along this route. The stonework of the bridge, still largely in good order, is in need of some attention to ensure it remains well preserved.

## The Weir

The mill dam is constructed of roughly faced, regularly coursed stone with a rubble infill. It is approximately 3.5 metres high and 15 metres wide. The remains of the weir are visible in front of the dam wall, but only a fragment of the original fabric survives. Recent heavy rain has swollen the Sapey Brook to such an extent that a breach in the western bank now means that the water is no longer cascading over the dam but has cut a new channel to one side. This recent damage has uncovered a series of waterlogged wooden stakes driven into the bed of the stream (see plate 7). These stakes were noted during a previous visit to the site may relate to an earlier phase of dam construction (Sherlock & Pikes 2001). More of the timber structure was exposed by further flood damage to the dam and weir. A series of v-shaped incisions on the surface of one of the stakes may indicate that some sort of ratchet apparatus may have been in use at some time, possibly to control a sluice gate. Dendrochronological dating of these stakes might provide further information, and urgent remedial works to protect the dam from further flood damage are vital.



**Plate 6: Showing the dam wall. The damage caused by recent flood damage can be clearly seen - the stream no longer cascades over the dam and several large trees have fallen over it.**





**Plate 7: Showing the timber construction immediately behind the dam wall. The post in the foreground has a series of v-shaped cuts along its inner surface.**

## Conclusions

The available cartographic and documentary evidence indicates that the bulk of the woodland on the site is either derived from deliberate planting or has naturally regenerated. As at the neighbouring property, Hope Mill, the subject of an earlier survey, the woodland occupies marginal land that is either too steep or infertile for arable use (Sherlock and Pikes, 2000).

Clear evidence for areas of the woodland having been in use as coppice is reflected in both the field names and by the large numbers of coppice stools. In addition to the coppiced areas a number of old ash pollards are still present on the site. These are a good example of how careful management can prolong the lifespan of native trees. Several of the wooded areas, and in particular the areas designated as orchards in the tithe apportionment can be shown to have changed in use over the last 160 years.

Other economic activity on the site is represented by the series of small quarries on the site. These were probably in use for a relatively short duration and provided stone for the domestic and agricultural buildings in the immediate area.

The features relating to the use of the Sapey Brook to provide power for Hope Mill also underline that this was an important source of revenue. The mill dam and weir are very substantial features that deserve further study. These features have been badly damaged by the recent dramatic floods and need urgent attention, both to fully record the timbers that are now exposed, and to prevent further damage being caused to the stonework.

Evidence of the land use on the site in the medieval period is represented by the very large lynchets (see plates 3 & 4). The size of these features indicates that the area was supporting a relatively large population during this period.

## Appendix: 1841 Tithe Apportionment and Modern Land Parcel Numbers

Modern parcel No.	Tithe Map, 1841				
	No.	Name	Land use	Owner	Occupier
6914	78	Ashbed	Coppice	James Seward	Benjamin Rea
6310	79	Holly Brook Orchard	Arable & orchard		
	80	Part of Holly Brook Orchard	Pasture & rough		
	81	Lower Pear Tree Orchard	Pasture & orchard		
5020	82	Hathitch Orchard	Arable & orchard	Sir Thomas Edward Winnington, bart	William Peacey Osbern
	83	Hathitch Meadow	Pasture		
	84	Hathitch two cottages & gardens			
3628*	85	garden			
	86	Sling Meadow	Pasture		
	91	Banks Orchard	Pasture & orchard		
2714					
3628*	92	Hathitch Meadow & fold	Pasture		
4012	93	Upper Pear Tree Orchard	Pasture & orchard		
3407	94	Hathouse Homestead	Garden &co		
3900*	95	Plantation	Wood & rough		
5277	102†	Mill Piece	Pasture		
	106†	Bank Orchard	Pasture		
4500‡	107	Ashbed	Coppice		
3900*	108	Bath Meadow	Pasture		
3300	109	Mill Orchard	Pasture		
1689	110	Lumber Cot Hopyard	Hops & Orchard		
1694	111	Plantation	Wood		
0006	112	Lumber Cot Meadow	Pasture		
	113	Broomy Bank	Pasture		
9510	114	Broomy Bank Ashbed	Coppice		
9315	115	Tillage & Ashbed	Arable & rough	Daniel Henry Maddox	Thomas Hill
8332	116	Old Hill Ashbed	Wood	Reverend Francis Henry Barber	William Smith
8825					
9231	117	Old Hills	Arable	George Talbot	John Hill
8500	261	Long Meadow	Pasture		
* modern land parcel numbers appearing twice in list † tithe map fields now under two separate ownerships ‡ modern land parcel under two separate ownerships					

## Bibliography

Tithe Commissioners, 1841, Tithe Apportionment for Sapey Pitchard Parish, Worcestershire. Public Record Office

Mawer, A and Stenton, F M, 1927  
Cambridge

*The Place-Names of Worcestershire,*

Sherlock, H D and Pikes, PJ, 2000

*Hope Mill, Lower Sapey, Worcestershire.  
A Tier Two Archaeological Survey*

## Cartographic References

Tithe Commissioners, 1841

Sapey Pitchard Parish Tithe Map

Ordnance Survey, 1885

1<sup>st</sup> Edition 1:2500 County Series – Worcestershire  
sheet XXV.5

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