



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

**Herefordshire Woodland  
Pilot Scheme: Phase 1  
Wigmore Rolls  
Herefordshire Archaeology Report  
No.52**

Herefordshire Archaeology, May 2002,  
revised 2004

Report prepared by  
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**Herefordshire Archaeology** is Herefordshire Council's county archaeology service. It advises upon the conservation of archaeological and historic landscapes, maintains the county Sites and Monument Record, and carries out conservation and investigative field projects. The County Archaeologist is Dr. Keith Ray

# Herefordshire Woodland Pilot Scheme: Phase 1

## Wigmore Rolls

Herefordshire Archaeology Report No.52, May 2002, (revised 2004).

### *Summary:*

*The survey described in this report formed part of a pilot study in partnership with the Forestry Commission. A rapid walk over survey was carried out in the woodland concerned. A hand held G.P.S unit was used to record the location of features encountered.*

*The survey identified features associated with most industries commonly associated with woodland. Evidence of quarrying, charcoal burning, saw pits and woodland management boundaries were recorded.*

*In addition to these features a substantial bank and ditch was recorded which marks the parish boundary between Wigmore and Walford, Letton and Newton parish. This was very well defined and appears to have been constructed with scant regard for topography. The straightness of this feature suggests a post medieval date, possibly annexing the northern slope to Walford, Letton and Newton parish for the production of charcoal to support the iron industry at Downton.*

*A length of the medieval park pale was recorded although much of its course is difficult to follow. The earthwork remains of a roughly square, double banked and ditched enclosure were recorded possibly dating from the late prehistoric or Romano-British period. A well preserved medieval motte was also recorded.*

**Disclaimer:** It should not be assumed that land referred to in this document is accessible to the public. Location plans are indicative only. NGR's 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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# **Herefordshire Woodland Pilot Scheme: Phase 1 Wigmore Rolls**

**Herefordshire Archaeology Report No.52, May 2002, (revised 2004)**

## ***Introduction***

This report provides an account of a rapid survey of the northern portion of Wigmore Rolls, (SMR No. 32581). The survey was undertaken as part of a pilot study in partnership with 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 and until recently recording an accurate location within woodland was often not practicable.

Since 1999 Herefordshire Archaeology has been involved in regular discussions with the Forestry Commission concerning the lack of archaeological data available when management plans are being prepared and applications for Woodland Grant Schemes are submitted. As a result of these discussions, the Forestry Commission has grant aided Herefordshire Archaeology to undertake a two phase pilot study. Phase one took place in 2001-2 and involved the rapid survey of eight areas of woodland in different areas of the county. These woodlands were split into those that are owned and managed by Forest Enterprises, those owned by large private estates, those that have recently been the subject of Woodland Grant Scheme applications and those for which Native Woodland Plans have been or are in preparation.

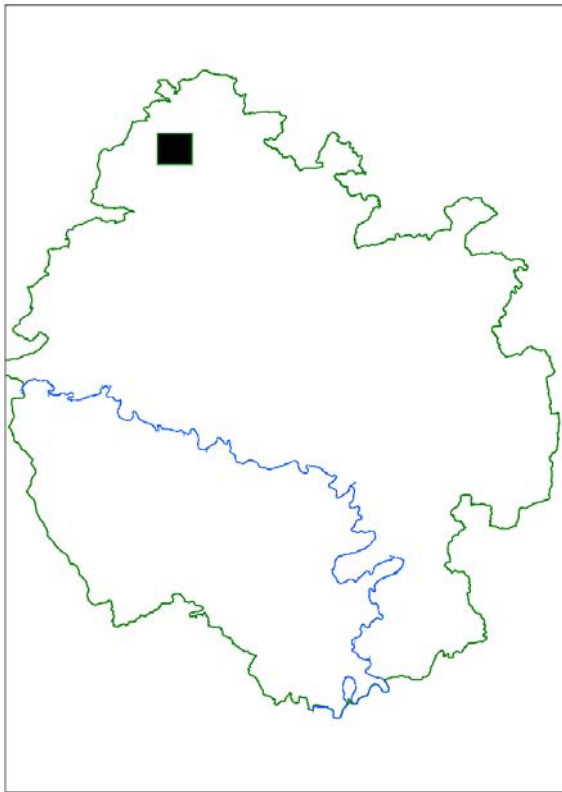
The survey for each woodland area in the pilot study identified the potential for the survival of archaeological features and sampled the types of features present. The stage two survey will re-visit woodlands identified in the stage one study as being of high archaeological potential and a more detailed survey undertaken. This will illustrate the density of archaeological sites within the woodland and record the relationships between features to enable some degree of understanding concerning the evolution of the woodland. The phase two survey will also expand the stage one survey and subject additional woodlands to rapid survey.

It is only when the changes throughout history within a wood have been documented and understood and put together with ecological information that a well informed management strategy can be implemented. 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 subject to differing forms of woodland management. These variations in land-use within a woodland influence the ecological data from that woodland. As such archaeological survey can contribute significant data concerning woodland history, management history and sequential development. This can provide independent verification of historical change from ecological study.

### ***Location***

Wigmore Rolls is located at NGR SO 3940 2700, approximately 1km. west of Wigmore



Village in northern Herefordshire. The woodland comprises the top and sides of a large limestone outcrop. The Historic Landscape Characterisation for Herefordshire lists Wigmore Rolls and its immediate environs as woodland that is surrounded by areas that are characterised by the enclosure of former common arable fields and their subsequent re-organisation particularly on the eastern side of the woodland (K.Ray & P.White, 2003).

The Sites and Monuments Record was consulted prior to the survey and 3 entries were found within the wood.

Figure 1: Site Location.

### ***Method***

Due to the size of Wigmore Rolls only the northern half was surveyed. This took place on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2002. The survey comprised a rapid assessment of the potential of the woodland to contain well preserved archaeological features. Features were mapped using a hand-held Garmin 12 XL Global Positioning System, enabling a ten figure grid reference to be recorded for each feature. This system is accurate to within approximately 10m under tree canopy.

The wood was walked in transects aligned roughly north / south and approximately 50m apart. If a large feature was encountered and no other features of archaeological significance can be seen, then this feature was followed and features 50m either side of it recorded. Field observations and grid references were recorded on a dictaphone and transcribed at a later date.

The following survey is only a sample of the woodland and should not be taken as exhaustive or its results definitive. It is intended to record the type of features present, their state of preservation and their relationships to other features within the woodland.

### ***Field Conditions***

The survey took place on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2002. Weather conditions were dry and slightly overcast during the morning. However this changed to low cloud and light rain during the afternoon.

### ***Results***

The recorded data from the survey is described in detail within the results section. This latter section is concluded by a brief discussion highlighting the historical development of the woodland using the 2002 survey results. The significance of recorded features and management implications are then commented upon within the discussion section. Appendix 1 contains a simple data base which cross references each site to the Ordnance Survey National Grid, (NGR), and the series of unique Sites and Monuments “Primary Record Numbers” (PRN), allocated following the transcription. These numbers are referred to both in the text and illustrations. They are prefixed by HSM, these initials relating to Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record unique numbers.

#### **Woodland Management Features**

A total of nine charcoal burning platforms were recorded. These ranged in size from 6-8m in diameter and comprised a level, circular platform with a pronounced down-slope lip. These were located predominantly on northern or eastern facing slopes. The number recorded is considered to be a relatively low total for this class of monument when the both the size of the area surveyed and the known historical links that this area has with the production of charcoal for both the iron industry and the pottery industry. This may be explained by the topography in that many more charcoal burning platforms may exist within the central area of Wigmore Rolls but this area is often very overgrown rendering them difficult to locate. Charcoal Burning Platforms are easiest to locate on slopes, however, there are few slopes of a gradient suitable for the construction of this class of monument, most become too steep very quickly.

No saw pits were noted during this survey. This suggests that lumber was removed from Wigmore Rolls prior to any production processes taking place. This practice is not

uncommon in Herefordshire and represents a centralised and intensively managed industry. This is reflected in the large numbers of holloways and trackways recorded.

Three platforms were recorded, (HSM 32584, 32619 and 32620). These ranged in size and shape. HSM 32584 comprises a level area, (rather than a levelled platform), approximately 30m in diameter. Its position on the end of a steeply sided spur makes it a strong candidate for use as a storage or possibly settlement location. The two other platforms appear to be directly associated with the location of a small group of charcoal burning platforms. HSM 32619 comprised a roughly circular platform approximately 20m in diameter, possibly defining a storage area for processed and/or unprocessed material, whilst HSM 32620 was a rectangular platform, approximately 10m long and 8m wide used for either storage or seasonal accommodation.

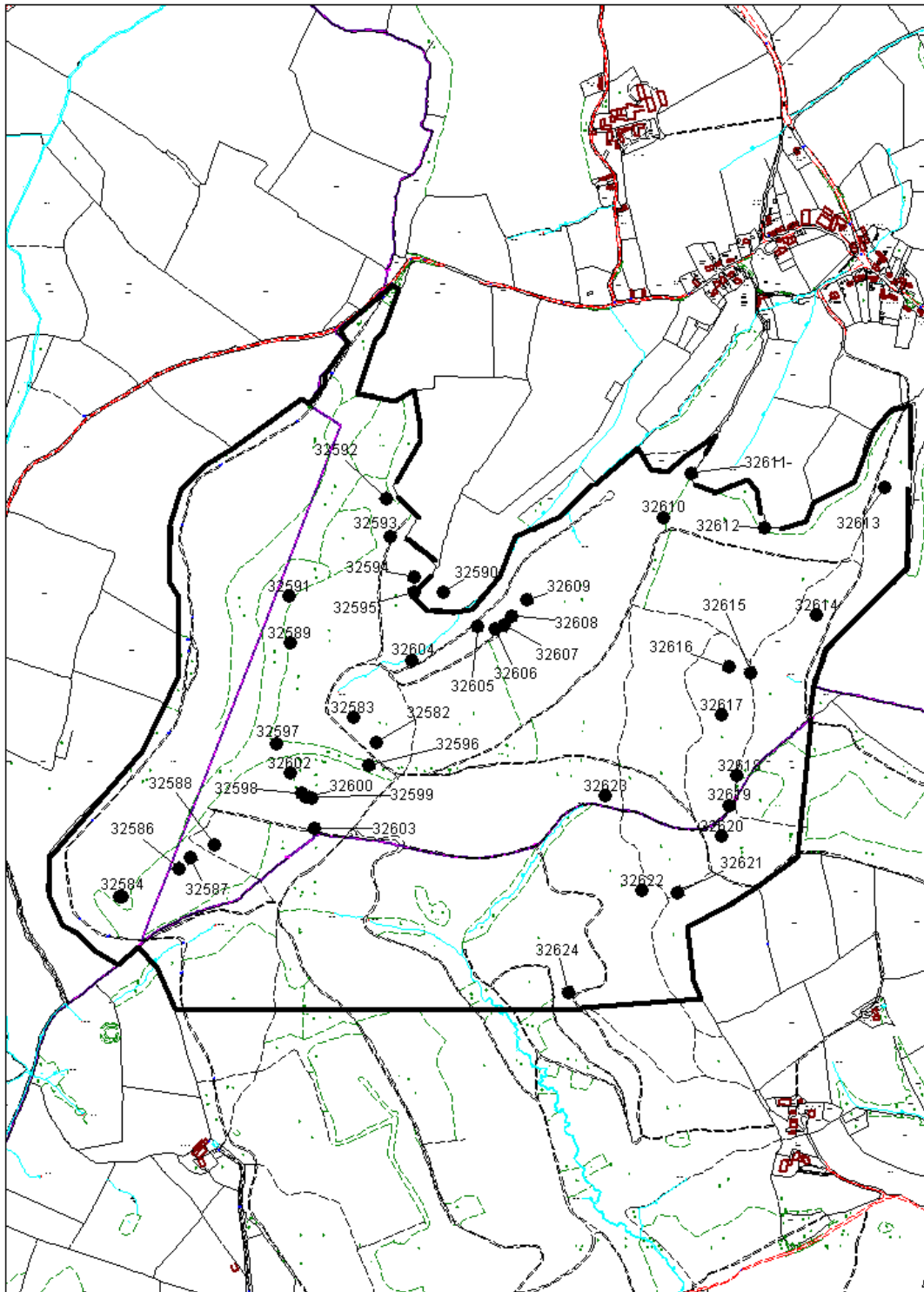
### **Former Land Use**

The site of a possible Bronze Age round-barrow was recorded (HSM 32585). This comprises a small mound approximately 25m in diameter and 1.5m high on the edge of a very steep, north facing scarp slope. It is possible that this could be a natural feature, however its location and 'visual impact' in what may have been at that time a more open environment, means that it cannot be ruled out.

A large rectangular earthwork enclosure was recorded during the survey (HSM 32597). This is approximately 60m long and 50m wide and is located on a gentle south facing slope and appears to be double ditched on all but its northern side. It is similar in both shape and topographic location to enclosures previously recorded at Bircher Common and on the Foxley Estate and is thought to represent the remains of an Iron Age or Romano-British farmstead. The presence of this class of monument would suggest that during the Iron Age or Romano-British period the environs of much of Wigmore Rolls was more open, much being kept as permanent pasture. No field banks or lynchets were recorded in association with this feature. This is partly due to a large area of more modern disturbance to its south and its proximity to an area of thick brash and undergrowth to its west and north.

A medieval Motte or ringwork was recorded, (HSM 32589). This had been previously recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record. However, its exact location was uncertain. This comprises a low mound approximately 20m in diameter surrounded by a bank and ditch. It is located on the end of a small spur overlooking the village of Adforton. This monument is in a good state of preservation. It is likely that this feature would have been used as either a look-out post or beacon position during the medieval period. This would have necessitated a significant area to its south being kept free of trees and undergrowth.

Two areas containing strip lynchets were recorded. HSM 32592 comprised a 2m high lynchet aligned south-west / north-east running slightly down-slope on a north facing slope. The second area, (HSM 32617), was more extensive comprising a series of four lynchets, each approximately 1.5m high and 20m apart, and on a similar alignment to lynchet HSM 32592, again situated on a north facing slope. These features appear to be the continuation of the medieval open fields which once surrounded this area and



**Figure 2: Location of earthworks recorded during the survey**

illustrate the demand for arable land and lengths to which people were prepared to go to create viable arable land during the medieval period

A single phase park pale was recorded (HSM 32603). This comprised a 1.5m high and 2m wide bank with a 2m wide and 0.5m deep ditch on its eastern side and aligned roughly east/west. This feature continues into the southern portion of Wigmore Rolls but is very overgrown due to recent clear-felling in some areas. The pale can be traced for approximately 80m further to the west before it is truncated by a series of tracks and other later features. It is possible that holloway HSM 32610 follows the line of the park pale and in doing so has eroded it. It would appear from this section of surviving park pale that the deer park enclosed the western half of Wigmore rolls only.

### **Woodland Boundaries**

A number of woodland boundary banks and compartment boundaries were recorded. These were predominantly post-medieval in origin and relate to woodland division associated with differing coppicing regimes etc. These usually consist of a straight bank and ditch running either perpendicular to the hill-slope or along the contour dividing the wood up into blocks, e.g. HSM 32595, 32604, and 32605. However, two banks and ditches appear to be of greater antiquity. HSM 32590 comprises a bank and ditch which has been re-cut in the post-medieval period but appears to go out of its way to enclose the motte or ring-work, (HSM 32589) and the upper portion of the spur on which this feature is sited. HSM 32591 consists of a 3m wide bank, 1m high with a ditch on its southern side 3m wide and 0.75m deep. This is unusually large for a post-medieval boundary and may relate to part of the medieval organisation of the woodland.

### **Indications of former land use**

The features recorded within the northern portion of Wigmore Rolls suggest that the area has changed substantially through time. The rectangular enclosure, which typologically has been identified as a farmstead enclosure, indicates that this area was farmed during the late prehistoric period or Romano-British period. This type of feature is not uncommon within Herefordshire, similar sites have been recorded on Bircher Common and on the Foxley Estate and at Haye Park. Many such enclosures are associated with extensive field systems.

The presence of a small motte suggests that at least the spur on which it stands was not wooded during the early medieval period. Woodland would have severely compromised both its defensive and visual capabilities.

The presence of an area of lynchets indicates that Adforton had an extensive common field system including more marginal areas such as the steep slope on which these lynchets occur.



## **Site and feature condition**

In general, features within the northern portion of Wigmore Rolls were well preserved except in the areas of mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century planting and clear felling. The steepness of many of the slopes suggests little potential for the existence of settlement or industrial features. However, woodland boundaries, usually running straight up and down these slopes do occur. The large quantity, and high density of forestry tracks in some areas obscure older features which makes understanding the historical development and full archaeological potential of some areas problematical.

## ***Discussion and Implications***

### ***Implications regarding the archaeological resource***

In general the northern half of Wigmore Rolls contains a wide range of often well preserved features many of which are of high archaeological significance. The rectangular enclosure survives well, however severe damage could be caused to this important structure if extraction of soft woods is undertaken during wet weather using unsuitable machinery.

The motte is again well preserved. This is located in a more marginal area under deciduous woodland. Care should be taken when tracking plant through this area and the monument would benefit from total clearance of tree cover.

The course of the park pale has been severely damaged by both modern and historic woodland management practices. Every attempt should be made to minimise further impacts concerning this monument.

### ***Implications regarding site condition***

Woodland boundary banks and compartment boundaries generally survive well as do other woodland management features and features relating to former land-use. Some relationships can be established between the woodland management features and earlier features.

### ***Implications for future management***

Existing access routes should be used for future management and extraction of the woodland. The density and overall state of preservation of such a wide range of features suggest that little damage has occurred in recent years. Care should be taken to avoid further damaging areas containing woodland management features, particularly those located on the more level, and therefore wetter, ground. The areas containing and in close proximity to the motte, the enclosure and the park pale are particularly significant and particular attention should be paid to their survival.

### ***Implications for future field work.***

This area of woodland has potential for the presence of well preserved archaeological features and it should be possible to recognise at least rudimentary relationships between

many features and hence produce a basic phasing illustrating the changing management of the woodland and the extent of former land use. A more detailed survey may detect more subtle relationships and provide greater clarity concerning the organisation of both internal boundaries and route-ways in addition to the phasing of the woodland boundary and the circuit of the park pale.

### ***Discussion***

The survey of the northern half of Wigmore Rolls provides an important insight into past woodland management and land-use. The woodland management features recorded suggest an intensively managed, mixed woodland with both coppice and an over-storey of standards. The large size of some charcoal burning platforms indicate prolonged use. This survey has identified a range of well preserved features within the wood reflecting the main uses of the wood from the medieval period onwards.

The motte or ringwork has survived well and occupies a commanding position overlooking Adforton. It is assumed that when in use the area surrounding it was not woodland as this would severely compromise its defence and look out capabilities.

The large, roughly square enclosure is of great interest. The erosion of the banks compared to the ringwork and other features suggest that this could date from the late prehistoric period, probably the Iron Age. The enclosure appears to have a double bank and ditch around it and is similar in size to two enclosures on Bircher Common, an enclosure on the Foxley Estate and one within the woodland at Haye Park.

The parallel banks and ditches, (HSM 32598-32601), to the south of the enclosure can not be interpreted at this time.

The park pale survives in fragmentary form. Attempts were made during the survey to trace its northern route but this has not been achieved with any certainty. The intensive woodland management from the post medieval period onwards has made the recognition of length of this feature almost impossible.

### ***Acknowledgements***

Herefordshire Archaeology would like to acknowledge the help and co-operation of the Forestry Commission and of the land owner.

**Archive**

1 dictaphone tape  
1 transcription record  
1 Excel Database  
1 Mapinfo file  
This document

**Appendix 1: Database of features and grid references.**

SMR No	East	North	Site type	Period	Description
32582	3914	7005	holloway	unknown	c. 6m wide and 1.5m deep
32583	3909	7010	holloway	unknown	c. 5m wide and 1m deep
32584	3860	6972	Possible building site	unknown	c. 40m wide
32585	3861	6972	charcoal burning platform	Post-medieval	c. 5m back from the edge of the scarp slope
32586	3872	6978	Possible Barrow/small knoll	Prehistoric?	c. 25m in diameter and quite circular with a max. height of c. 1.5m
32587	3875	6980	charcoal burning platform	Post-medieval	c. 7m in diameter and just to the S/E of the scarp edge
32588	3880	6983	charcoal burning platform	Post-medieval	c. 5m in diameter
32589	3896	7025	motte or ring work	Medieval	c. 20m in diameter
32590	3922	7036	wood bank and ditch	Post-medieval	bank is 2m wide and 0.5m deep, the bank is c. 1m high and 2m wide
32591	3895	7035	bank and ditch	Medieval	bank is c. 3m wide and 1m high and the ditch is c. 3m wide and 0.75m deep
32592	3916	7056	lynchet	Medieval	c. 2m high and is aligned SW/NE
32593	3917	7048	holloway	Post-medieval	runs on a N/S axis parallel to a modern track
32594	3922	7039	charcoal burning platform	Post-medieval	c. 8m in diameter
32595	3922	7036	wood bank and ditch	Post-medieval	ditch is to the NW of the bank and is 2m wide and 0.5m deep, the bank is c. 1m high and 2m wide
32596	3912	7000	holloway	Post-medieval	running roughly N/S and is 6m wide and 1m deep

32597	3893	7004	corner for an enclosure	Prehistoric	5m wide and 0.75m deep ditch external to a 5m wide and 1m high bank
32598	3898	6994	bank and ditch	unknown	c. 4m wide and its bank is c. 6m wide and 1.5m high
32599	3899	6993	bank and ditch	unknown	c. 4m wide and the bank is c. 1.5m high
32600	3899	6993	bank and ditch	unknown	c. 6m wide and 1.5m wide
32601	3900	6993	ditch	unknown	bank almost 10m wide
32602	3896	6998	charcoal burning platform	Post-medieval	facing south
32603	3901	6987	earthwork park pale	Medieval	bank is c. 1.5m high with a 2m deep ditch on its eastern side
32604	3921	7022	compartment boundary	Post-medieval	bank is c. 2.5m wide and 1m high, the ditch is 2m wide and 0.5m wide and aligned E/W
32605	3935	7029	compartment boundary	Post-medieval	NW/SE which meets the E/W boundary
32606	3939	7028	ditch	Post-medieval	c. 5m wide with a bank c. 1m high and 4m wide
32607	3940	7029	charcoal burning platform	Post-medieval	immediately up slope of the ditch
32608	3942	7031	charcoal burning platform	Post-medieval	8m diameter
32609	3945	7034	compartment boundary	Post-medieval	this has a bank c. 1.5m wide and 1m high with a ditch c. 1m wide and 0.5m deep
32610	3974	7052	holloway	Post-medieval	4m wide and 1m deep
32611	3980	7061	wood bank	Post-medieval	on the present edge of the wood
32612	3995	7050	wood banks or compartment bank and ditches	Post-medieval	ditch is c. 1m wide and bank is 1.5m wide and 1m high
32613	4020	7058	wood bank	medieval	3m wide and 1m high with a ditch to its up slope side which is 3m wide
32614	4006	7031	bank with ditch	Post-medieval	2.5m wide bank with ditch on its up slope side
32615	3992	7019	ditch	Post-medieval	running roughly N/S and curving to the SW after c. 50m

32616	3988	7020	holloways, tracks and large dtiches	Post-medieval	c. six of them all aligned NW/SE
32617	3986	7010	lynchets	medieval	each lynchet is c. 20m away from the next and they are all about 1.5m high
32618	3989	6998	charcoal burning platform	Post-medieval	facing NE
32619	3988	6991	platform	Post-medieval	c. 20m in diameter and facing NE
32620	3986	6985	platform	Post-medieval	c. 10m by 8m
32621	3977	6973	compartment boundary	Post-medieval	bank is 3m wide and 1m high and has a ditch on its eastern side, 3m wide and 0.5m deep
32622	3969	6973	ditch	Post-medieval	c. 5m wide and 2m deep
32623	3962	6993	compartment boundary	Post-medieval	bank is c. 2.5m wide and a ditch c. 3m wide and 1m deep
32624	3954	6952	compartment bank	Post-medieval	c. 2m wide and 1m high and the ditch is 2m wide and 1m deep
32625	3952	6951	charcoal burning platform	Post-medieval	c. 7m in diameter and facing SW
32626	3959	6969	compartment boundary	Post-medieval	consisting of a ditch with a bank on either side. Bank is c. 2m wide as is the central ditch and 0.5m deep

### **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.

