



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

**A project assessment for research by  
Eardisland Oral History Society at  
Burton Court, Eardisland, Herefordshire.  
Herefordshire Archaeology Report No 9.**

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.

**A project assessment for research by Eardisland Oral History  
Society at  
Burton Court, Eardisland, Herefordshire.**

**Herefordshire Archaeology Report No. 9, December 2000 (Revised July 2004)**

***Summary:***

*Eardisland Oral History Society proposed a study of the landscape in and around Burton Court. This research would examine a number of specific earthwork features and relate them to the wider landscape. Map regression and documentary research would be undertaken together with limited field survey, geophysics and trial excavation.*

*Herefordshire Archaeology were asked to advise on the proposals and in this capacity undertook a field visit with the property owners and members of Eardisland Oral History Society. This report describes the features / areas investigated as part of the field visit and documents proposals for further study.*

**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.

Figure 1 contains 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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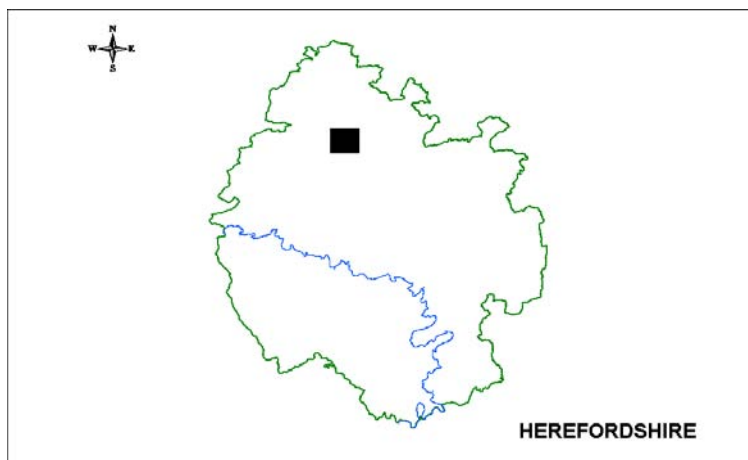
Herefordshire Archaeology, December 2000.

***Introduction***

Burton Court is situated at NGR: SO 423 573, approximately 1.5km south of the village of Eardisland. Burton Court today consists of the main house, a mainly regency and Victorian structure (with the exception of the Great Hall), a servants hall, stable block and approximately 19 acres of land which was formerly the gardens for the court and is now in the main used to commercially grow soft fruit.

The site of Burton Court has been linked to the location of a suggested Iron Age camp and a Roman Staging post. However there is no evidence for the existence of the former and very limited evidence for the latter. Burton is first mentioned in Domesday Book as *Buertune* and in 1137-9 as *Bur (e) ton* possibly meaning “Fort settlement” or equally likely having a connection with a personal name. The manor of

Burton is well documented in Court Rolls between 1331 and 1402 and there are substantial records for the occupation of the Court from the mid 17th century onwards. The estate of 1,050 acres was not broken up until 1950.



**Figure 1: Site location**

Herefordshire Archaeology was contacted by Mr. Paul Selfe of Eardisland Oral History Society, regarding the possibility of conducting research into certain areas within the Parkland. It was suggested that the research project should take in aspects of the house, formal garden, and surrounding Parkland. Herefordshire Archaeology would be available to advise and monitor survey techniques and results, documentary sources and limited excavation; subject to the owners permission.

The site was visited during August 1999 by Dr. K. Ray, County Archaeologist, T. Hoverd, Archaeological Projects Officer in the company of Mr. P. Selfe and

Commander and Mrs. Simpson, the owners. The house, garden, surviving Parkland and lost Parkland were looked at.

## *Discussion*

### **Burton Court**

Whilst much of the house is of Regency and Victorian build, the Great Hall and elements within the cellars are considerably older. The cellar walls are largely of stone and contain a number of construction phases. The cellar beneath the Great Hall may be of particular interest despite being largely filled with earth and gravel. This is due to the fact that during the 17th century the roof of the hall was raised and the purlins and principal rafters replaced. At this time it is believed that the floor may also have been raised. If this were the case it is likely that medieval floor levels remain in the infilled cellar. It is postulated that whilst the only surviving, upstanding, component of the medieval manor house is the Great Hall, its location suggests that further structural remains continue in a north-easterly direction beneath the present drive.

It has long been suggested that the “tump” immediately to the east of the house may represent a motte or castle mound. In recent years Roman and Medieval pottery has been recovered from the mound. The shape and loose nature of this feature would suggest that this represents a landscaped spoil tip derived from the Victorian extension of the house at its western end.

### **The Gardens**

Whilst much of the formal gardens have been lost there are sufficient landscape features from which to gain some idea of their overall layout. The course of the old drive way and Ha-Ha is still visible as are a number of terraces and possible footings for a summer house, Gazebo or other garden feature.

### **The Parkland**

Approximately 600m to the south-west of Burton Court, (NGR: SO 4219 5698), within a pasture field that was at one time parkland are a series of platforms and other more subtle earthwork features (A on Figure 2). It is thought that a number of these features are associated with drainage works, however the platforms or levelled areas may well represent a deserted settlement. The date of such a settlement is likely to pre-date the construction of the parkland.

At NGR: SO 4265 5729, close to Lower Burton Farm are the earthwork remains of a possible farmstead, possibly a medieval pre-cursor to Lower Burton Farm (B on Figure 2). The site comprises a rectangular platform, aligned roughly north – south. The platform is approximately 25m long and 10m wide and has evidence of at least two structures with stone footings. To the north, west and south of the platform is a

holloway approximately 4m wide and 0.75m deep. To the east of the platform is the modern road.

Approximately 100m to the west of this site is an area of ridge and furrow (C on Figure 2), on a low hill top (103m O.D.). This is bounded on its western side by a

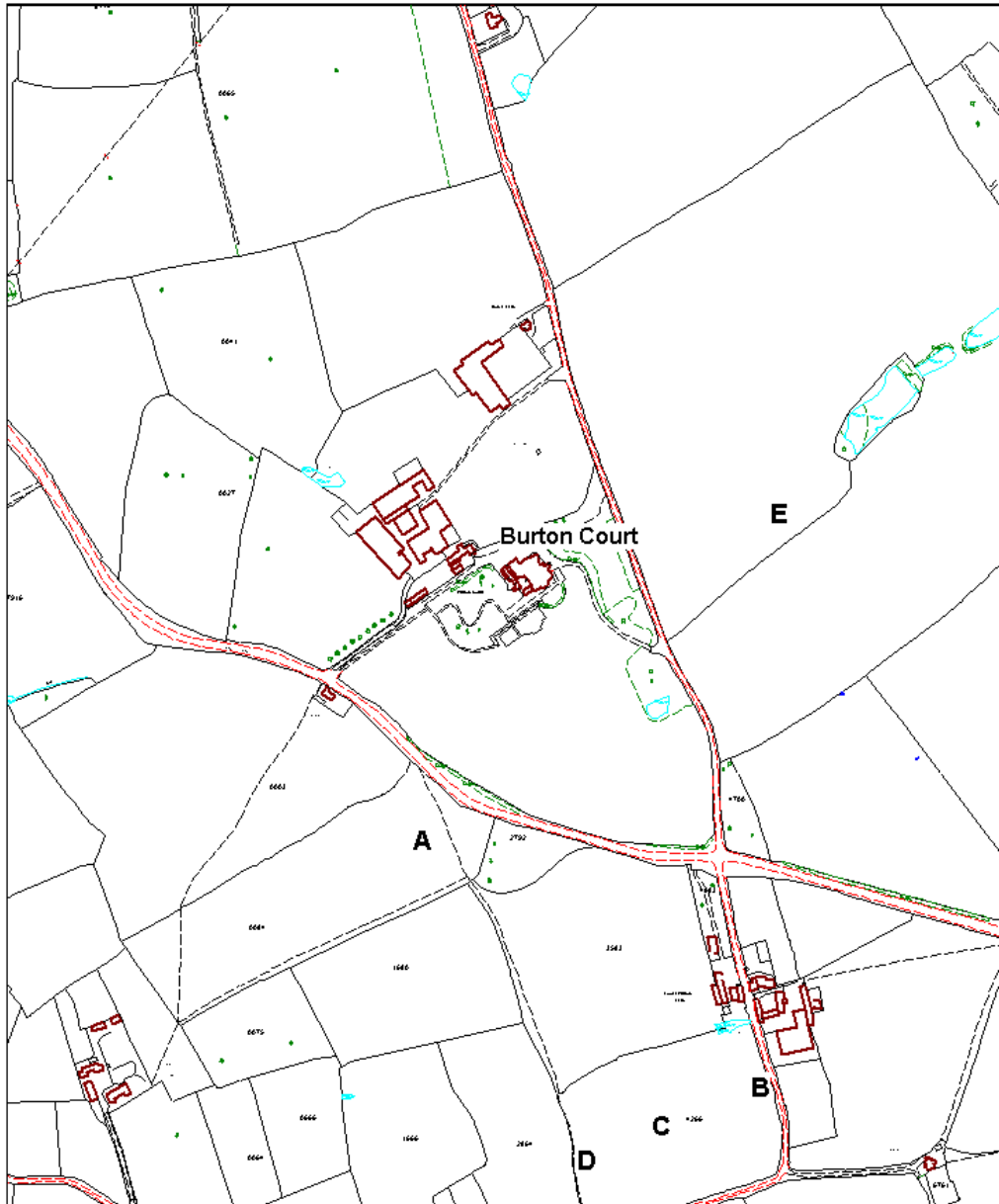


Figure 2: Location of features noted during the field visit.

NORTH



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deeply cut holloway, (D on Figure 2), which appears to have once run from Lower Burton to Burton Court or possibly continuing north to Eardisland.

At NGR. SO: 4253 5732, to the south – west of a lake in the parkland, is a depression containing a number of low, flat-topped mounds (E on Figure 2). The depression is trapezoidal in shape and may have been a former pool or lake. It is however situated above the spring that feeds the lower pools. It is possible that it represents the soak-away for the drains from Burton Court and that the features within it are the remains of oisier beds.

### *Conclusions*

From this rapid walk-over survey it can be concluded that there is scope for a wide ranging study to be carried out within the environs of Burton Court. This may include:

- An initial documentary search in the county Site and Monuments Record, the County Record Office and local libraries in order to assess the amount of information immediately available concerning the court and its environs.
- Building survey, with particular reference to the cellars at the court and their relationship to the ground floor plan.
- The study of any documentary sources available concerning the development and running of the house and estate.
- Field survey of surviving earthworks, including features relating to the formal gardens and parkland. This may include geophysical survey.
- Limited, small scale, investigation of some of these features under the close guidance of staff from Herefordshire Archaeology.
- The survey and mapping of specimen trees within the parkland and formal gardens.

It is anticipated that the results of this study will be published by the Eardisland Oral History Group.

### ***Acknowledgements***

Herefordshire Archaeology would like to thank Commander and Mrs. Simpson, Mr. P. Selfe.

### ***Archive***

This document.

### ***Further Publication***

A note on this fieldwork is to appear in CBA publication, West Midlands Archaeology, 43, for 2000.

### **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.