



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

# **Mansell Lacy Medieval Settlement: An Earthwork Assessment**

Herefordshire Archaeology Report No.4

Report prepared by  
Tim Hoverd

## **Contents**

Summary  
Introduction  
Method  
Preliminary Documentary Research  
Results  
Discussion  
Significance  
Acknowledgements  
Archive

**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.

# Mansell Lacy Medieval Settlement: An Earthwork Assessment

Herefordshire Archaeology Report No 4, November 2000, (Revised March 2004)

## ***Summary:***

*Recent aerial photographs revealed two areas of earthworks, (HSM 30166 and HSM 30165), within the present village of Mansell Lacy. The earthworks mark the outlines of a series of plots, extending south from the De Lacy castle and church. These sites strongly suggest that Mansell Lacy was a planned settlement possibly of borough status.*

**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.

Copyright: Text and illustrations, Herefordshire Archaeology.

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.

Contact details: Herefordshire Archaeology, PO Box 144, Hereford, HR1 2YH.

# **Mansell Lacy Medieval Settlement**

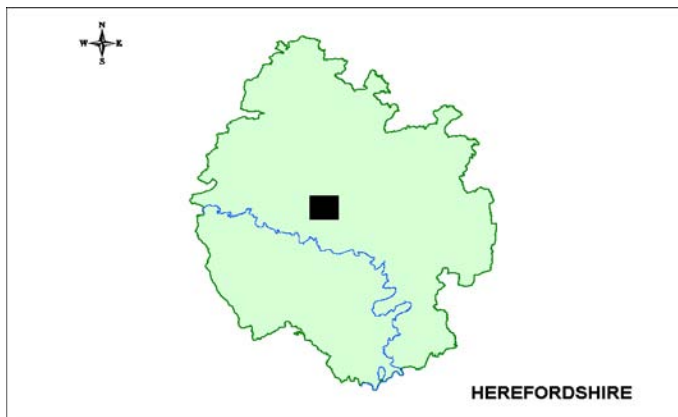
## **An Earthwork Assessment**

### **Herefordshire Archaeology Report No 4.**

Herefordshire Archaeology, November 2000, (Revised March 2004)

#### ***Introduction***

The village of Mansell Lacy lies within Mansell Lacy Parish at NGR. SO 4250 4560, approximately 8km north-west of Hereford city and immediately to the south of Foxley historic park and gardens.



Mansell Lacy has long been recognised as a Shrunken Medieval Village. The settlement extends along a central road linking two junctions / cross-roads. The 13th century church, castle mound and other earthworks are located immediately to the south of the northern-most cross-roads; giving an impression of a nucleated settlement centred around this

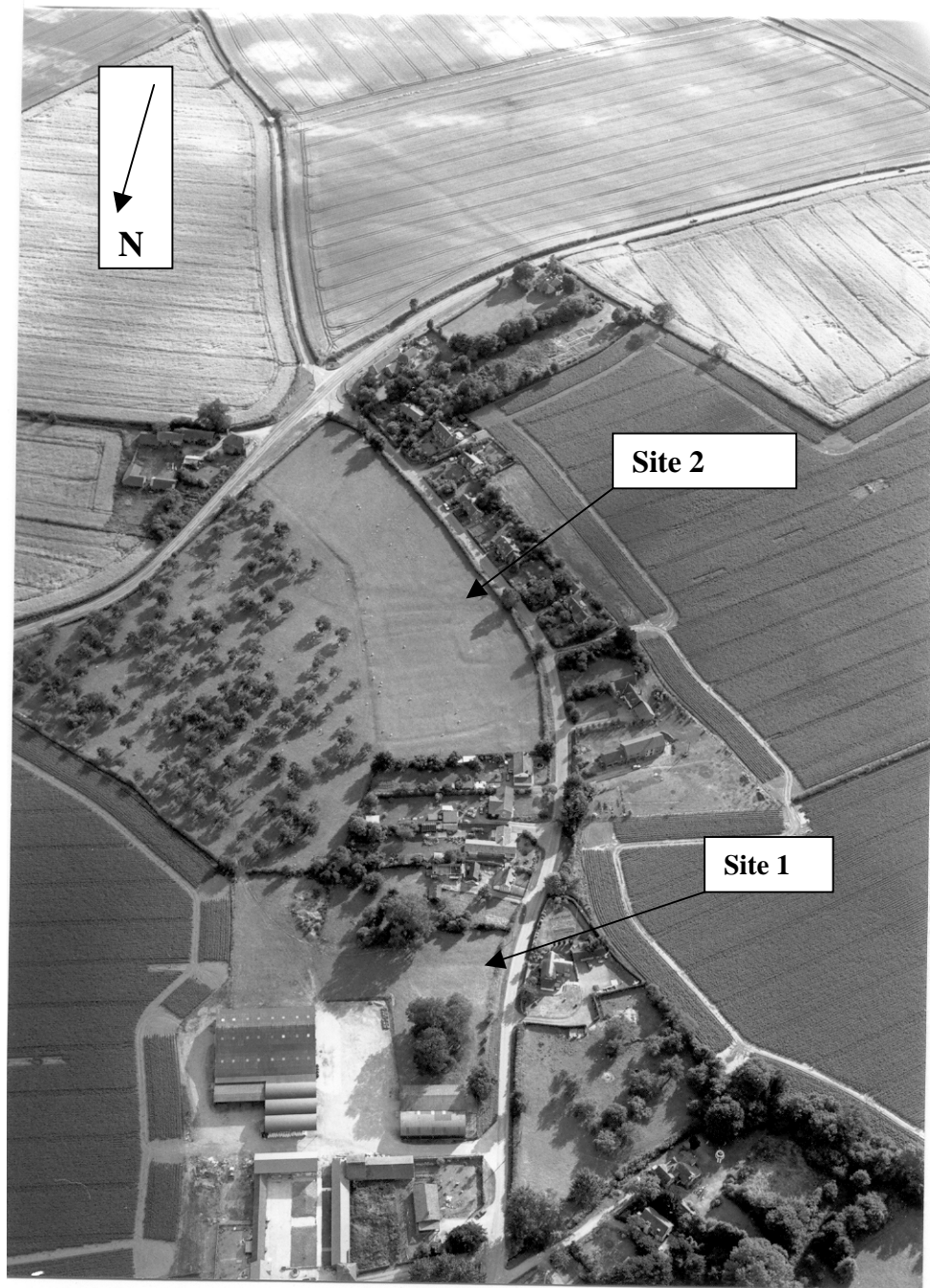
**Figure 1: Location Plan**

cross-roads and gradually spread southwards. A number of houses and farm buildings in the village date from the 16th and 17th centuries. Their locations and boundaries suggest the re-use of an earlier, planned settlement with a high degree of burgaging.

#### ***Method***

Aerial Photographs have identified two areas within the present village which contain well preserved earthworks associated with medieval and post-medieval settlement layout, providing information concerning settlement expansion and contraction.

A map regression for the area illustrates that this modern development respects significantly older boundaries.



**Figure 2: Aerial Photograph showing the position of features within sites 1 and 2.  
(Ref: 96.MB.0393.1430)**

### ***Preliminary Documentary Research***

Preliminary documentary and cartographic research reveals that site 2 is marked as *borough field* on the Tithe Map, possibly suggesting that this settlement is a candidate for medieval borough status.

### ***Results***

#### **Site 1**

SMR No. 30166      NGR: SO 4237 4543

This site is approximately 30m wide and 60m in length and currently under pasture and is bounded to the north and east by Court Farm, and to the north-west by the main village road. Included within this site is a disused pit (purpose unknown). Other earthworks include a series of linear ditches at right-angles to the road, suggesting the presence of burgrave plots. Whilst no evidence is apparent from aerial photographs or from inspection on the ground, it is reasonable to suggest that these burgages were fronted by house or building platforms. Certainly its location, midway between the two cross-roads would have been a prime site for early development.

#### **Site 2**

SMR No. 30165      NGR: SO 4220 4530

This site is located at the south-western end of the village immediately to the north of the southern cross-roads. The area covered by the earthworks is approximately 200m long and 60m wide and is currently under pasture. The area to the east of the earthworks is under old orchard and pasture. The site consists of a banked enclosure running from the rear of the burgrave plots at site 1, parallel to the road and returning to meet the road approximately 25m to the north of the cross-roads. The banked enclosure is very distinct and has an average height of 0.75m above the ground level of the rest of the field. At the south-eastern corner of the banked enclosure, the eastern boundary continues to the main Hereford to Kington road as a ditch.

The area within the enclosure is approximately 0.5m higher than the surrounding field and can be divided into two distinct portions, the northern half and the southern half.

The southern half of the enclosed area is quite flat, no features are visible from aerial photographs or from a site inspection.

The northern portion of the enclosed area contains a high density of earthworks, visible both from aerial photographs and on the ground. Many of the earthworks consist of linear

features, (possibly as many as six), associated with the formation of burgage plots. Each linear ditch is approximately 15m apart. Fronting the road are a number of building or house platforms which appear to correspond to the linear burgaging. Towards the northern edge of the site is a particularly deep ditch which appears to have been diverted around two building platforms, suggesting that it was a holloway or access track leading to fields to the rear of the burgage plots. Close to the south-western corner of the northern area of the enclosure is a 15m square platform, possibly for a Post-Medieval industrial or agricultural complex.

From the density and arrangement of the earthworks within this area it may be concluded that a number of development phases are apparent. It is suggested on the basis of the evidence from the Aerial Photographs and a site visit that Mansell Lacy was originally laid out as a planned settlement, with boundaries and burgaging filling the space between the two cross-roads. It would appear that, from the evidence in site 2, although laid out and delimited by a boundary bank, part of this area was never used, indicating that the settlement did not grow as large as was anticipated.

## ***Discussion***

### **Possible Threats**

The southern-most burgage ditch in site 2 has recently been subjected to the dumping of waste soil and building rubble, presumably from a local development site. Almost half the length of this feature has been filled. The site is on the edge of the present village and has a road frontage, making it a possible area for village expansion.

Site 1 is in close proximity to Court Farm, around which there has already been considerable agricultural development, including the construction of a number of new barns / warehouses. The site may therefore be considered as a prime area for future agricultural or infill development.

### **Possible Protection**

Due to the good state of preservation of earthworks on both sites and the threat posed by future development or land-use change, it is suggested that both sites be subject to protection in line with the Monument Protection Programme.

## ***Significance***

The earthworks apparent on both sites are highly significant and suggest that the medieval village of Mansell Lacy was planned rather than organic in origin. The field

name “*Borough Field*” may also be significant and suggests that Mansell Lacy may have been a planned borough with a well defined urban form.

### ***Acknowledgements***

Herefordshire Archaeology would like to thank Mr. C. Musson for his aerial photographs.

### ***Archive***

Aerial Photograph Ref: 96. MB. 0393, Film Ref: 1430, 24<sup>th</sup> July 1996  
This document.

### ***Further Publication***

A note on this 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.