

Farming and Archaeology

The Historic Environment Countryside Advisory Team provides advice for farmers and other landowners on the presence and significance of historic environment features on their land and the wider historic landscape, essentially the setting, within which, features are present.

Working in partnership it is possible to develop management strategies, which will provide increased protection for sites that may be affected by everyday farming practices. Grants may be available to assist with this.

Archaeological remains are irreplaceable and vulnerable. Careful management is therefore essential to ensure that this important heritage survives in good condition. Landowners and farm managers play a vital role, in a partnership with archaeologists, to achieve this aim.

Recognising Archaeology on the ground

Historic environment features on farmland can be identified from a wide range of sources.

Cropmarks and Soilmarks

Even when fields have been ploughed flat the buried archaeology can sometimes be seen from the air. The shadows thrown across young, or ripening, crops can pick out the lines of the walls and ditches of farmsteads and field systems buried below the soil.

Soil marks can sometimes be identified on freshly ploughed land. These can represent walls or burnt material which may indicate the location of hearths or industrial activity.

A change in the farming regime, such as deeper ploughing, may accelerate the decay of such features.



Prehistoric double ditched, circular enclosure and rectangular enclosures, Bredon (Scheduled Ancient Monument 230)

Glyde, M. 2006. Worcestershire County Council

Earthworks

Earthworks are perhaps the most easily visible archaeological remains. 'Humps and bumps' that stand out from the surrounding landscape in pasture may reflect a wide range of features. Examples include the ramparts of Iron Age hillforts and medieval settlement, fishponds and cultivation ridges (ridge and furrow). Advice should be sought before any disturbance, to establish the significance of such features.



Glyde, M. 2006. Worcestershire County Council

Earthworks associated with a deserted medieval village and moated site, Strensham (Scheduled Ancient Monument 31947)

Find Scatters

Ground disturbance, such as ploughing or stock erosion, may reveal surface finds associated with buried archaeological features. Finds might include fragments of pottery, flint, worked stone, bone or metalwork.

Traditional Farm Buildings

Historic farm buildings contribute significantly to local distinctiveness, through their varied forms, use of materials, such as timber framing and brick, and the way in which they relate to the surrounding form and patterning of landscape and settlement.



Many historic farm buildings, such as dovecotes, hop kilns, threshing barns and pigsties, are highly specialised in function and therefore extremely vulnerable to change.

17th century, timber framed threshing barn, Suckley
© Worcestershire County Council Historic Environment and Archaeology Service

The character of farmsteads has been shaped by their development as centres for the production of food from the surrounding farmland. Their principal function has been to house the farming family and workers, store and process harvested crops and dairy products, provide shelter for livestock, carts and implements and produce manure.

Further Information

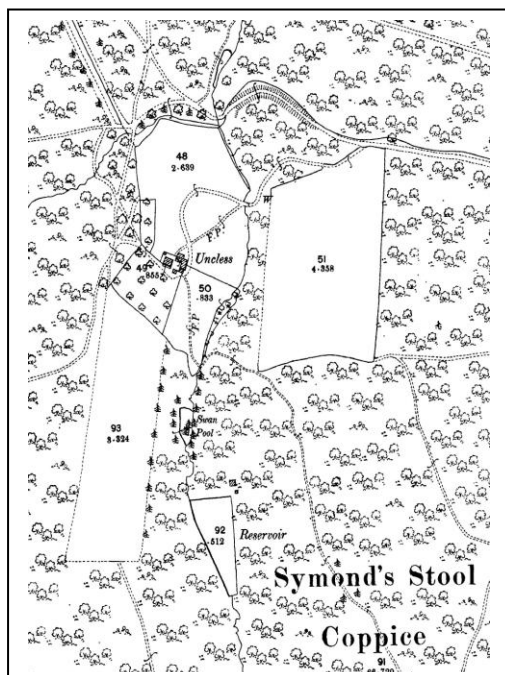
Farmstead Characterisation Project PDF

English Heritage Farmstead Toolkit (www.farmsteadtoolkit.co.uk)

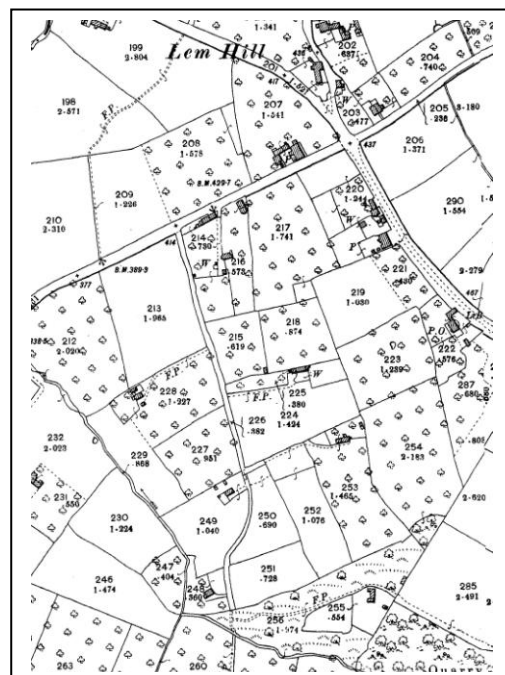
Historic Boundaries and Hedgerows

The landscape of Worcestershire is characterised by diverse field patterns that originate from different periods. These are often complex historic features that combine ancient species rich hedgerows with earthwork banks and ditches that may even pre date the hedgerows.

In addition to hedgerows, parts of the county, including the Bredon Hill area, are partially enclosed by dry stone walls.



Small, irregular enclosed fields associated with starting during the medieval period and later more organised field enclosure, Uncllys Farm, Bewdley © Crown Copyright 100015914



Parliamentary enclosed fields associated with mid 19th century smallholdings around Buckridge, Rock © Crown Copyright 100015914

Documentary Evidence

Evidence of Historic Environment features could derive from information recorded in documentary sources such as historic maps, plans and photographs.

Archaeological and documentary research can be combined successfully to establish the significance of historic environment features and their setting.

Further Information

Worcester Records Office: worcestershire.whub.org.uk/home/wcc-records

The impact of farming

Historic Environment features, such as earthworks, can be well preserved under permanent pasture, so long as erosion from stock is controlled.

Minimising erosion in arable fields can also help to limit damage to below ground archaeology. However, it is inevitable that some farming practices do impact on the historic environment.

Ploughing, subsoiling and panbusting can flatten earthworks and cause extensive damage to below ground archaeology. This damage can sometimes occur over just a few seasons. Over the longer term even shallow ploughing can have an impact. Regular chain harrowing on pasture can erode earthwork sites

Tree planting and invasive scrub can disturb buried archaeology, earthworks and extant structures, through root action.



Mid 19th century, brick target, Upton Ham Rifle Range

Excavation works such as pond creation, new building work and landscaping can impact on below ground archaeology

The restoration of features such as ponds and moats can be beneficial. However, restoration should always take into account, the historic profile and scale of a feature. Historic water features can also contain important environmental deposits within their silts which can be at risk from dredging.

Historic farm buildings are vulnerable to conversion, alteration, dereliction and demolition.



Abandoned 16th century, timber framed, farmhouse, Knightwick

© Worcestershire County Council Historic Environment and Archaeology Service

Environmental Stewardship

Environmental Stewardship is an agri-environment scheme that provides funding to farmers and other land managers in England who deliver effective environmental management on their land. The scheme is administered by Natural England on behalf of Defra. Environmental Stewardship is a key part of the Government and EU funded Rural Development Programme for England 2007-2013, with £2.9 billion of funding to support sustainable agriculture throughout the countryside.

Environmental Stewardship replaces the older Countryside Stewardship and Environmentally Sensitive Area schemes, and is composed of two levels: Entry Level (ELS), or Organic Entry Level (OELS) for Organic farms, and Higher Level (HLS).

Funding and advice through Environmental Stewardship is helping land managers to conserve, enhance and promote the countryside by:

- Looking after wildlife, species and their many habitats
- Ensuring land is well managed and retains its traditional character
- Protecting historic features and natural resources
- Ensuring traditional livestock and crops are conserved
- Providing opportunities for people to visit and learn about the countryside.

Options for managing the historic environment and historic landscape include:

- Stone wall protection and maintenance
- Maintenance of weatherproof traditional farm buildings
- Restoration of traditional orchard
- Management of archaeological features on grassland
- Reduced-depth, non-inversion cultivation on land where there are archaeological features



Traditional Orchard,
Wyre Forest

In addition to annual management payments, Higher Level Stewardship can contribute to the cost of a wider range of capital works projects, such as:

- Parkland Management Plans
- Restoration of historic structures, such as bridges
- Interpretation Panels

Energy Crop Schemes

The Energy Crops Scheme aims to increase the amount of energy crops grown in England in appropriate locations. It offers grants to farmers in England for the establishment of miscanthus and short rotation coppice.

The scheme, part of the Rural Development Programme for England (RDPE), is funded by the European Union, through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

For further information on Environmental Stewardship or Energy Crop Schemes contact Natural England West Midlands

Website: www.naturalengland.org.uk

Address: West Midlands Office
Government Buildings
Block B
Whittington Road
Worcester
WR5 2FR

Email: enquiries.westmidlands@naturalengland.org.uk

Tel: 01905 763355

English Woodland Grant Schemes

The English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS) is the Forestry Commission's suite of grants designed to develop the co-ordinated delivery of public benefits from England's woodlands. EWGS is supported via the Rural Development Programme for England.

The aims of the EWGS are to:

- Sustain and increase the public benefits given by existing woodlands and
- Help create new woodlands to deliver additional public benefit.

For further information contact the Forestry Commission

Website: www.forestry.gov.uk

Address: West Midlands Office
Government Buildings
Block B
Whittington Road
Worcester
WR5 2FR

Tel: 01905 532200

Email: westmidlands.fce@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

Archaeology and the law

Rights of ownership

In most cases (with the prime exception of Treasure), archaeological finds are recognised as the property of the landowner. These include those finds recovered during archaeological fieldwork. Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service will normally recommend that any such finds are donated to the appropriate museum to ensure their long-term preservation. Removal of finds from land without the owner's permission may be classed as theft.

Treasure

The Treasure Act (1996) replaced Treasure Trove legislation and extended the protection of law to a wider range of finds. Treasure is now defined as:

1. Any metallic object, other than a coin, provided that at least 10 per cent by weight of metal is precious metal (that is, gold or silver) and that it is at least 300 years old when found. If the object is of prehistoric date it will be Treasure provided any part of it is precious metal.
2. Any group of two or more metallic objects of any composition of prehistoric date that come from the same find (see below)
3. All coins from the same find provided they are at least 300 years old when found (but if the coins contain less than 10 per cent of gold or silver there must be at least ten of them). Only the following groups of coins will normally be regarded as coming from the same find:
 - hoards that have been deliberately hidden
 - smaller groups of coins, such as the contents of purses, that may be dropped or lost

- votive or ritual deposits.
4. Any object, whatever it is made of, that is found in the same place as, or had previously been together with, another object that is Treasure.
 5. Any object that would previously have been treasure trove, but does not fall within the specific categories given above. Only objects that are less than 300 years old, that are made substantially of gold or silver, that have been deliberately hidden with the intention of recovery and whose owners or heirs are unknown will come into this category.

Under the Act, the finder is responsible for reporting finds to the District Coroner within 14 days. The landowner and the County HER will be notified, although the discovery will be regarded as confidential until the issue of 'treasure' is resolved or in cases where site security or other issues are considered important.

Further Information

Portable Antiquities Scheme: www.finds.org.uk

Worcestershire County Coroner: www.whub.org.uk/HMCoroners/

Metal Detecting

Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service is happy to advise landowners in order to establish whether their land contains known historic environment features and whether it is appropriate to allow metal detecting. The landowner is strongly advised to enter into a formal agreement with any detectorist who is given permission to search their land.

If your land is currently under a Countryside Stewardship or Environmental Stewardship agreement contact Natural England for further advice and guidance.

Designated Assets

Some historic environment features are considered to be of national importance and have therefore been designated by English Heritage.

There are 156 Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs), 15 Registered Parks and Gardens and over 5500 Listed Buildings in Worcestershire (excluding Worcester City).

SAMs

The word 'monument' covers the whole range of archaeological sites. Scheduled monuments are not always ancient, or visible above ground.

The designation of an archaeological site or landscape as a Scheduled Monument means that written consent from the Secretary of State, Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC), is required prior to the commencement of works affecting that monument.

An owner of a SAM should be sent an official notification by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) which will explain the restrictions that this brings. In essence, it is an offence to carry out any ground-breaking work on a SAM without prior consent. It is also against the law to use a metal detector on a SAM.



Scheduled Motte and
Bailey (SAM 279,
Clifton upon Teme

Registered Parks and Gardens

Since the 1980s, there has been a national record of nationally significant historic parks and gardens, which make a rich and varied contribution to our landscape. This record, known as the *Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest in England*, now contains nearly 1450 sites.

Although inclusion of an historic park or garden on the *Register* in itself brings no additional statutory controls, local authorities are required by central government to make provision for the protection of the historic environment in their policies and their allocation of resources.

Listed Buildings

Listing protects a building from unauthorised demolition, alteration or extension and ensures that its special interest is taken into account when proposals are put forward that may affect its character or appearance.

Decisions as to which buildings are listed are taken by the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport, who is required by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to compile a list of buildings of special architectural or historic interest.

For further information about Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens and Listed Buildings contact English Heritage West Midlands

Website: www.english-heritage.org.uk

Address: The Axis
10 Holliday Street
Birmingham
B11TG

Email: westmidlands@english-heritage.org.uk

Tel: 0121 625 6820

Human Remains

Human remains and disused burial grounds are protected by law. A licence from the Home Office is required before disturbing any human remains where their presence is known or suspected. Should human remains be discovered accidentally then the Coroner should be informed, as well as the County Archaeological Service.

Help us to help you

A landowner may not be aware that there is a site of archaeological interest on their land.

Consultation with the historic environment and archaeology service is a mandatory requirement of a Higher Level Stewardship application and Energy Crop Scheme application. However, if you are considering Entry Level Stewardship or an English Woodland Grant Scheme there is no specific requirement to consult with us. Nonetheless we would welcome your enquiry and offer a comprehensive advisory service to assist with historic environment conservation.

For further Information contact the Historic Environment Countryside Advisory Team on 01905 855597

Historic Environment Countryside Adviser

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Historic Environment Advisory Assistant

Emily Gough egough@worcestershire.gov.uk

Useful Contacts

Department of Culture, Media and Sport

Website: www.culture.gov.uk

Address: Department for Culture, Media and Sport
Heritage Protection Branch (SMC)
2-4 Cockspur Street
London
SW1Y 5DH

Worcestershire County Council Museum




Address: Hartlebury Castle
Hartlebury
Kidderminster
DY11 7ZX

Website: worcestershire.whub.org.uk/home/wccindex/wcc-museum-index.htm

Tel: 01299 250416

Downloadable PDFs

Environmental Stewardship

- [ELS Handbook 2nd edition October 2008 \[2.83 MB\]](#) 
- [ELS Handbook Addendum May 2009](#) 
- [HLS Application Handbook 2nd edition October 2008 \[2 MB\]](#) 
- [HLS Options, Capital Items and Management Conditions Handbook 2nd edition October 2008 \[1.6 MB\]](#) 