

Digest of the discussion and comments following the morning session

Discussion of the value of ecological surveys

The value of carrying out ecological survey depends upon the aims of the survey – e.g. are you just looking to add sites to the SMR? Rapid survey can be carried out initially, with locations being revisited later if necessary, including looking at ecological data at this stage.

It was noted that there are approximately six plants that can suggest the presence of buried archaeological deposits and are worth recording. Although it may be worth making a more general record of species present in a particular area of woodland as it is not only the presence of certain species, but also the absence of other species could indicate that archaeological deposits are likely to be present.

Discussion of approaches to woodland survey

Different levels of survey can be used to meet specific objectives, and each survey should be 'fit for purpose'.

Dave Hopkins - The aim of an initial survey should be to clarify the basic knowledge. After that, a more targeted approach is required, according to the need of the project.

Tim Hoverd - The following two tier system is used in Herefordshire:-

1. Firstly a 40 to 50ha per day, rapid and non-exhaustive survey that records the type of sites and the areas of impenetrable woodland. This preliminary survey can record the types of sites, their location, and damage.
2. Secondly a more in-depth and detailed survey can be undertaken of specific areas identified during the rapid survey

Discussion of presentation of woodland survey information

Simon Prior – Presentation of the survey information is important. History can be a good way in to encourage good management / better protection.

Jan Wills – As archaeologists we need to do more than just put dots on maps, we need to tell a 'story'.

Tim Yarnell – This 'story' includes the management of the woodland over time.

Angela Simco – Some of the woodlands in the East Midlands have a rich 'story' – but also the woodlands contribute to the broader archaeological 'story' of the region.

John Roberts – In Wales, the introduction of the Ancient Woodland Grant schemes, should hopefully include a narrative, rather than 'dots-on-maps'.

Discussion of funding sources

Jan Wills – There is a clear potential for looking at archaeology in Woodland. However, there is often a difficulty in routine funding sources for archaeology within a woodland management programme. Any comments / thoughts?

Tim Yarnell – Scottish and Welsh schemes for woodland have made a provision for initial (walkover) archaeological survey.

Simon Prior – There is a realisation of both positive and negative aspects of the historic environment. The historic environment should influence and encourage good management.

Nicola Bannister – Training and field visits for woodland managers can highlight archaeological sites and their potential.

Tim Hovard – In partnership between Herefordshire County Council and the Forestry Commission, there has been initial funding for initial (walkover) surveys. This funding can then be put together with other funding sources.

Bill Klemperer – There is a curatorial issue in that sites / grant schemes have to be selected to visit. Also who takes the lead in the funding – is this the Forestry Commission? English Heritage fund some countryside advisors.

Tim Yarnell – The Forestry Commission fund some methodological work, as part of its research budget. Looking towards delivering survey and management of the historic environment on the ground; few councils have the resources to fund forestry work, but possibly a few countryside advisors can take this forward. There is money in this; tackling social inclusion, education, history, etc.

Bill Klemperer – There is not money from development (PPG16), so we need to look at a very wide range of funding sources.

Simon Prior – There is a ‘trade off’ from taking money from other (often worthy) budgets. Many private landowners have money and need a ‘story’ to be told.

Jerry Gissop – There is a need to use initiative in getting archaeological work done. Possibly more can be done by using and training forestry workers.