

## Guidance Notes

As humans have been settled almost continuously within the British Isles for the past 12,000 years, with sporadic periods of settlement before that, even the most unassuming location may contain sites of archaeological significance. These can range from prehistoric sites or Roman settlements to structures from the industrial revolution or the two wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. All of them need to be taken into account when planning what to do with the land.

If you are thinking of planting a new wood, or extending an existing one, you will need to consider carefully the piece of land which you intend to use. Some features may leave clear traces on the surface of the ground, but others that are equally important may be less visible. They may include:

- Stone-built structures such as ruined buildings, WWII emplacements and industrial remains.
- Earthworks such as prehistoric burial mounds and enclosures.
- Cropmarks caused by the presence of underground archaeological features such as buried stone walls, foundations and other underground structures. These are most clearly visible from the air, although sometimes they are clear enough to see from the ground, and are caused by differential growth of vegetation.

Some sites, for example those that are waterlogged, have a high potential for containing important deposits and evidence of past land-use. Some sites (Scheduled Monuments) have special protection, and damaging them is against the law. Even sites that are not Scheduled are protected by the Whole Farm Code on land that receives payments from the government, and there are financial penalties for not looking after them properly.

## Woodland and the historic environment

The creation of new woodland can help enrich the cultural and environmental history of Wales, provided trees are chosen to suit the historic environment character of the area in which they are planted. This can be done by:

- Planting trees that traditionally were grown in your area. For example, wood in the uplands areas of Wales were traditionally dominated by Oak, Silver Birch and Hazel, whereas lowland also contain other trees such as Ash and Wild Cherry, with Beech in some areas, and Alder and Willow in wet places. Look at ancient woodlands near the new site to see what would be most appropriate.
- Avoiding artificial looking plantations with trees in perfectly straight lines.
- Registered parks and gardens were often originally planned to include non-native trees, so plans for new planting should consider including exotics. Cadw should be consulted to discuss what is appropriate.
- Some areas have never been wooded. Here, it would be better to introduce trees as an orchard if this was traditional, such as on the Gwent Levels.

## **How does woodland creation affect archaeology?**

Whilst tree planting trees can enhance the historic environment, it also have an adverse effect if done without sufficient attention to any archaeology on the site:

- The planting process itself can destroy buried archaeological deposits.
- As the tree becomes established, root growth can disturb buried archaeological features, artefacts and deposits.
- The growth of understory vegetation can damage above ground features, weaken stone structures and hide earthwork features.
- Windthrow can cause trees to uproot and damage both above and below ground archaeology

If potential for damage is a concern, part of the site may have to be designated as a planned open space to prevent damage, or be excluded from the woodland altogether.

## **Woodland creation under Glastir**

If you are applying for a Glastir woodland creation grant, you must comply with a series of additional requirements. Your woodland planner must consult the regional Archaeological Trust to see whether there are any sites of historical interest that need to be taken into consideration when drawing up the plan.

## **Independent woodland creation**

Your regional Archaeological Trust always welcomes enquiries from people thinking of creating new woodland outside the Glastir scheme. They will be able to tell you if there are any historic environment features you will need to take into account.

- Contact your local Welsh Archaeological Trust (such as GGAT) during the planning stage for advice and guidance
- Provide detailed information to relevant historical services during the planning phase  
Do not plan to plant trees on any known archaeological sites

**For more information and advice on archaeology and woodland creation in**

**South East Wales, contact the Heritage Management team at the Glamorgan-Gwent**

**Archaeological Trust. Email [hmggat.org.uk](mailto:hmggat.org.uk) or telephone 01792 634225 or 01792 634227.**

