

Are Trees Archaeology?

A resource
pack on the
**Archaeology of
Woodlands**

Three
**session plans
and resources**
exploring
Woodland
heritage

Created by Rob Hedge for:

Council for
British Archaeology

The Archaeology of Trees

Background Information for Leaders

For the last 12,000 years, trees have been an essential resource for people in the British Isles. Archaeologists spend a lot of time looking at evidence for the use and management of trees in the past. Frequently, and often frustratingly, we're looking at ephemeral traces. Being an organic material, wood rots, and we're often just left with stains in the ground, or tiny fragments of pollen.

However, there's a huge amount of information to be discovered from looking at living trees and the landscapes they inhabit. If there's one lesson your YACs should take away from looking at the archaeology of trees, it's that 'Nature' is far from natural – virtually every acre of the British Isles has been extensively shaped by human activity, and there are few better places to see this influence up close than in your local trees and woodlands.

Another myth that should be dispelled is that Britain was full of dense, wild forest until we started cutting it all down in recent centuries. The history of our relationship with woods is long and complex. These sessions are designed to give participants an insight into the fascinating landscape history of our woodlands.

Because there's so much variability in woodland size, species, accessibility, historic use and management across the British Isles, some aspects of the sessions are deliberately open-ended. I've tried, where possible, to leave the fine detail up to you – much of it will depend on whether you're able to get access to local woodland, what the nature of that woodland is, what time of year you're able to run the sessions and how much information is available to you from sources such as your local HER.

These three sessions are designed to be run in the following sequence:

- 1. Are Trees Archaeology?**
- 2. Our Woodland's Past**
- 3. Should We Build a Skate Park?**

If you're not able to make a visit to a woodland, sessions 1 and 3 can be run independent of session 2. There's more information on how they can be adapted in the Leader Info Sheets for each session. One good alternative, although it may not be cheap, would be to ask a local coppice craftsman to deliver a workshop or demonstration. The National Coppice Federation have lots of information: <http://ncfed.org.uk/public/> and there's a directory of craftspeople here: <http://coppice-products.co.uk/>

The best time of year for the woodland visit will depend on what you're most interested in seeing! Trees are easiest to identify with their leaves, but you may then miss the wildflowers. Archaeological features such as extraction (quarry) pits, banks and ditches are best viewed when the vegetation has died back, i.e. November – March.

You may wish to explore local folklore surrounding woodlands, and to tie in your activities to any local celebrations or traditions, such as 'Oak Apple Day' (29th May): http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oak_Apple_Day

The 'Further Information and Resources' document should point you in the direction of everything you need to know. The sessions make extensive use of the excellent Woodland Trust resources, and there's plenty more there if you'd like to take an interest further. Internet hyperlinks are correct as of October 2014, but do check that you can find the resources before relying on them for a session!

If you have a local wildlife or nature trust, it would also be worth contacting them to find out if they have any information on local woodlands – never underestimate the importance of local specialist knowledge!

All of the sessions can be run without specialist equipment, although if you have older members who'd like to take on the challenge of a survey in the second session, basic surveying equipment such as 50m tapes, a compass, planning board and some drafting film ('permatrace') would be useful.

Glossary of Woodland Terms

Landscape History can seem embroiled in daunting language, and the study of woodlands is no exception. Here's a very short glossary to explain some of the terms you might come across in the course of your activities that aren't covered elsewhere in the pack:

Ancient Woodland is generally considered to refer to woodland that has existed continuously since before 1600 A.D.

Assarting The practice of clearing woodland, usually for arable cultivation or pasture. Known in northern England as '**ripping**'

Champion 'Champion Countryside' is a term applied to open, planned rural lowland areas with large villages, few woodlands and regular fields, largely in the south and east of England. It is contrasted with 'Woodland Countryside' in the west of England.

Coppice with standards refers to the practice of leaving a few trees to mature while the rest are coppiced, allowing greater diversity in the timber available.

Native Trees Confusing, there is some debate over what constitutes a 'Native' tree, but one definition is that it's a species that arrived in Britain without human assistance since the end of the last Ice Age.

Osier Beds Areas of boggy or marshy land set aside for the cultivation of willow, a very important source of material for fencing and basketry

Palynology The study of pollen remains from environmental samples, an invaluable tool for reconstructing past woodland environments

Plantation An area of woodland deliberately planted, often single species. Distinct from managed woodland

Royal Forest Confusing, not always woodland! An area of countryside under Crown control, subject to strict laws to protect the game for hunting parties. **Chases** functioned in a similar way, but were usually under the control of noblemen or church foundations.

Withy A thin, flexible willow stem produced by coppicing or pollarding, used for weaving.

Wood-pasture Medieval system of wooded, generally common land, grazed by livestock. Trees were pollarded to protect against damage from the animals.

Reading & further information sources for Leaders

Tree species, identification and survey guides:

Woodland Trust 'Nature Detectives' resources:

<http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk/> - a wealth of activities, ideas and guides to use as inspiration for any further activities or extensions.

The 'Spotter's Guides' can be turned into an ID game which makes an excellent Starter Activity for early arrivers – laminate copies of the twigs and leaves guides, cut them up and get the children to try and match them all up. This also works well when combined with real leaves/twigs! http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk/packs/pack_spotting.htm

Woodland Trust 'Ancient tree hunt' resources:

<http://www.ancient-tree-hunt.org.uk/> - activities, spotter's guides and details of how to get involved and record your local ancient trees, plus a map with details of trees already recorded in your area.

Industrial Treescapes Survey Guide:

This very detailed but really useful guide to woodland survey and feature identification was produced by South Yorkshire Econet. It contains a really good guide to some more unusual worked trees, and a useful page on uses for various different woods.

<http://www.ukeconet.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/ITP-survey-guide-Jan13.pdf>

General reading on woodlands:

Roger Deakin: *Wildwood: A Journey Through Trees*. 2008, Penguin.

A brilliant book about our relationship with woodland, from ancient rites and Medieval craftsmanship to driftwood and cricket bats.

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Wildwood-A-Journey-Through-Trees/dp/0141010010>

Richard Muir: *The New Reading the Landscape: Fieldwork in Landscape History*. 2000, University of Exeter Press

Updated version of a classic textbook in Landscape History. The first chapter, on Woodlands, Forests and Parks, is a really good introduction. Not cheap, but second hand paperback copies are fairly easy to find.

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/New-Reading-The-Landscape-Fieldwork/dp/0859895793>

Francis Pryor: *The Making of the British Landscape*. 2010, Penguin

Wonderfully accessible, engaging and comprehensive overview of our relationship with our land and environment, from the master of archaeological writing. Dip in and out of the index for some really good sections on woodlands.

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/The-Making-British-Landscape-Transformed/dp/0141040599>

Online resources:

Old Maps: <http://www.old-maps.co.uk/index.html>

Comprehensive collection of Ordnance Survey 1:2500 and 1:10,560, from the 1st editions (generally 1870s – 1880s) onwards. Good for initial research and free to view, though they do charge for digital PDF copies (currently £11 – 16).

National Library of Scotland: <http://maps.nls.uk/geo/explore/>

A wonderful online resource with many georeferenced OS 1:10,560 ('six-inch') maps, covering much of England and Wales as well as Scotland.

Heritage Gateway (England): <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/gateway/>

This English Heritage resource enables you to search by postcode or grid reference for records held by local Historic Environment Records (HERs) and national databases such as the list of scheduled ancient monuments (SAMs). Not all HER records are available via Heritage Gateway, so it's always worth contacting your local HER Officer to find out more (see below).

Archwilio (Wales): <http://www.cofiadurcahcymru.org.uk/arch/>

This great website (there's also an Android mobile app) contains the Historic Environment Record data from the four regional Welsh Trusts.

Pastmap (Scotland): <http://www.rcamhs.gov.uk/pastmap.html>

Pastmap contains data from local HERs and the national RCAMHS.

Northern Ireland Sites and Monuments Record:

http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/built-home/sites_monuments.htm

The Northern Ireland Environment Agency maintains the online Sites & Monuments Record (SMR) for the region.

Local Expertise:

Historic Environment Records (HERs):

Find your local HER here:

England: <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/CHR/>

Scotland: <http://scharp.co.uk/guidance/useful-links/>

Wales: Links to the websites of the regional trusts can be found here
http://www.cofiadurcahcymru.org.uk/arch/archwilio_pages/english/about_us.html

Northern Ireland: Managed by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency
<http://www.doeni.gov.uk/niea/built-home.htm>

What are Historic Environment Records?

HERs are databases of all known archaeological sites, findspots and events, usually maintained by local authorities. Their role is to provide information and advice to planners, researchers, students and members of the public.

Most are run by archaeologists, who are generally very keen to support YAC. Most will provide information free of charge for non-commercial purposes, and some councils have Outreach or Community archaeologists who may be able to offer more help.

It is well worth contacting your HER to find out about historic features in your local woodland. They'll be able to tell you about any earthworks, quarry pits or other archaeological features, and may be able to point you in the direction of further sources. They may also be able to provide you with copies of historic OS maps and/or LiDAR surveys, if available.

Are trees Archaeology?

We can discover what tree species once grew by looking at pollen grains: this is called **palynology**

Our native trees arrived in Britain after the end of the **Ice Age**, about 12,000 years ago. Among the first to arrive was birch

The oldest wooden artefact found in the UK is the 450,000 year old '**Clacton Spear**', made from Yew wood

Mesolithic people were woodland experts, gathering fruits & berries and cutting trees to create clearings

By 7,000 years ago, most of Britain was covered by dense mixed woodland known as the '**wildwood**'

By 1000B.C. there was less forest in England than there is today

When Neolithic people began to farm the land, huge areas of forest were cut down to make way for crops, using flint axes - it would have been hard work!

Prehistoric timber trackways such as the '**Sweet Track**', built in Somerset in 3806/7 B.C., allowed people to cross marshy areas. Some have been preserved in peat bogs

Woodlands were carefully managed by Iron Age, Roman and Saxon Britons - they provided fuel, building material, transport, hunting grounds and more

The three oldest trees in Britain are all yews, two in Wales and one in Scotland. They all stand in churchyards, but pre-date the churches. They're thought to be an incredible **5,000 years old!**

We can tell the date a tree was cut down by measuring the size of the rings: this is called **dendrochronology**

By 1086, Domesday Book records show that woodland had increased to 15% of England's land surface

Medieval peasants relied on woodland for firewood, grazing for their pigs, and timber

Building a single medieval farmhouse could use over **300 trees!**

Medieval 'Royal Forests' included strictly controlled woods for hunting deer. Penalties for poachers were harsh!

FACTSHEET

Created by Rob Hedge for:

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Young Archaeologists' Club

Woodland Features ID Guide

PART 1

Coppicing and Pollarding are ancient techniques for managing trees to produce a regular crop of long, straight shoots for fencing, weaving, and furniture-making



Coppice management is when young trees are cut back to ground level. This encourages lots of straight, thin shoots to grow. These can be cut once they reach the size that's needed.

Pollarding is when trees are cut back about 3 or 4 metres above ground level. Like coppicing, this encourages a regular crop of small shoots, but out of the reach of grazing animals such as deer!



Well-managed coppice, Nunnery Wood, Worcester

Pollarding is now quite rare in woodlands, but it can often be seen in urban areas to control growth



This former coppice has been left to 'grow out', leaving multiple thick trunks

This example is a horse chestnut by the River Severn, Worcester



Woodland Features ID Guide

PART 2

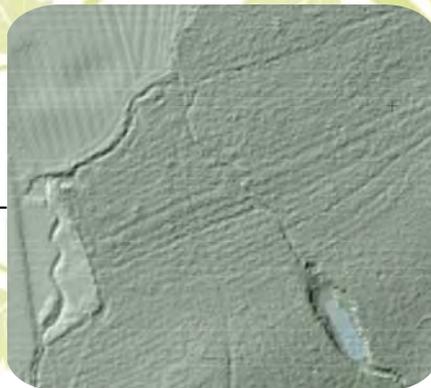
Banks and ditches are often found in ancient woodland. They were used to mark the edge of a wood, or to split the wood into sections to keep grazing animals away from tasty coppices!



Ancient woodland may conceal even older features. The ridges along this path in Nunnery Wood, Worcester, are the remains of medieval 'ridge and furrow' agriculture, dating from centuries before the woodland grew, when the area was open fields

Many ancient trees aren't very tall - just like humans, they don't go on getting taller for ever! Signs to watch out for are very wide trunks, a 'gnarled' look and hollows in the trunk. This ancient oak is probably over 400 years old

LiDAR imagery can help us identify these features beneath the tree cover. Woodland ponds like the one at the bottom right are often filled-in quarry pits



Lots of other creatures have long and complex relationships with our woodlands. This small copse in Norfolk is home to a rookery which was first recorded in the village in the Domesday book, nearly 1000 years ago!

Woodland Place Names

Woodland makes up about 11% of Britain's land surface. A thousand years ago, there was about twice as much forest. Domesday Book records suggest that about 15% of the area covered by the survey was woodland, compared to 8.4% of the same area today.

Clues to the location and use of some of these lost woodlands can be found in place names. Here are some to look out for. Can you see any of these in your local area?

SOURCE: Richard Muir, 2000. *The New Reading The Landscape*.

Name	Meaning	Name	Meaning
wood	A wood	hurst	A wooded hill
with, worth		hanger	A wood on a slope
shaw, shay, shave		hay	Hedge, sometimes also an enclosure in a wood, assart or the hedge around a deer park; can be small wood in farmland
coed			
lund, lound, land			
skew, scoe	Wood, sometimes single-species wood		
shaw	Band of wood on the edge of a field, specific to The Weald, SE England	ridding	Assarted land
rewe		rode	
grove		reed	
ley	Small wood	royd	Assarted land in the Yorkshire Wolds
den, dene	A clearing, or a wood	sart	
copse	Woodland 'swine pasture' for pigs	stocks	
fall	Associated with coppiced woodland	stubbings	Holly wood, where holly was grown for winter fodder
hag(g)		ovenham	
spring		hollins	
copy		storth	
panel	Woodland glade, lawn	stock	Tree stump
launde		stump	
ryth		field	
thwaite	A clearing	bere	A grove

Are Trees Archaeology?

ACTIVITY SHEET

BACKGROUND

For as long as humans have been on the earth, wood has been vital to our survival. Can you imagine life without using wooden objects? Before the invention of modern materials like plastic, it was even more important, and woodlands were carefully managed by people in the past. Today we're going to find out how and why people have used woods, and how you can spot clues to our woodlands' past.

INSTRUCTIONS

You will need:

- Woodland Trust ID sheets
- 'Are tree Archaeology?' Factsheet & Woodland Placenames Sheet
- Woodland Features ID Guide
- Background Information
- Paper and pens

What to do:

Your leaders will introduce the session. Can trees be archaeology? What do you think?

Activity 1: What were trees used for in the past?

- Use the Factsheet to get you started. How many different uses for trees can you think of? Look at the Woodland Trust ID sheets, and the examples of different species. Each species has different uses. What uses might oak and willow have had in the past?
- There are lots of superstitions and folklore based on trees. Can you think of any?

Activity 2: What were trees used for around here?

- Woodlands vary across the country. What types are common in your local area? What were they used for?
- Use the Woodland Features ID Guide to help you find out how you might be able to identify trees that show signs that they've been used by humans.
- Placenames can give us clues as to where there might be old woods, and what they might have been used for. Using modern and historic maps of your area, and the Woodland Placenames sheet, see if you can identify any interesting woodlands.

Activity 3: Will there be bears?

- Your task is to prepare for a trip to a local woodland:
How do you get permission?
What do you need to take?
What will you be looking for?
We don't want to lose you! How will you keep safe?
and finally... Will there be bears?!

Use your new knowledge to plan your outing. What will you be looking for, and how will you spot it?
Have you found anything on the maps that you'd like to investigate?

TOP TIPS:



Not all trees on old maps are woodland! If you see trees drawn in neat rows, they could be orchard plantations.
Lots of woodland has disappeared over the centuries.
Can you find 'lost' woodland placenames on the maps?

Are Trees Archaeology?

LEADER INFORMATION SHEET

SESSION AIM

To introduce the importance of trees throughout human history, and to convey the idea that living woodlands hold clues to life in the past, both in the trees they contain and in other associated features

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

General

- Woodland Placenames Sheet
- 'Are Trees Archaeology?' Factsheet
- Woodland Features ID guide
- Pens, paper
- Flipchart/whiteboard, if available

Activity 1

- Woodland Trust ID sheets
- Woodland Features ID guide
- If available, specimen twigs or small branches and leaves

Activity 2

- Historic Maps of local woodland
- HER information, if available
- Maps of the local area (including place-names)

NOTES ON RUNNING THE SESSION

If you can't make a later visit to a local wood, part 6 can be replaced with a short look at identifying 'Ancient trees' using the Woodland Trust's activities (see resources sheet).

Having examples of twigs and leaves, if possible, really helps the children to understand the properties and uses of different trees. Contrasts are good: try presenting children with a sturdy oak twig next to a willow wand, both equally essential for most of our history, but for very different reasons.

SESSION PLAN

1. **Starter Activity:** Woodland ID game (10 mins)
2. **Introduction:** Are trees archaeology? What do the children think? (10 mins)
3. **Activity 1:** What were trees used for in the past? (30 mins)
4. **Break** (10 mins)
5. **Activity 2:** What were trees used for around here? (30 mins)
6. **Will there be bears?** Plan your visit to a local wood. (20 mins)
7. **Round up, pack up.** (10 mins)

RISKS TO CONSIDER

- If you're using specimen twigs or branches, make sure you check them for splinters.
- Warn the children not to wave sticks around or poke each other with them!

VARIATIONS/EXTENSIONS

- Think about the problem for archaeologists of finding out how people used trees in the past, when most of the evidence rots away!
- How can we tell what they did? In what conditions can wooden structures and artefacts survive?
- How does pollen and dendrochronology evidence help us? What are the limitations?

LINKS TO EXTERNAL RESOURCES

Woodland Trust ID sheets:

http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk/packs/pack_spotting.htm

Our Woodland's Past

ACTIVITY SHEET

BACKGROUND

This session will explore the archaeology of woodlands close up! Can you spot clues to your woodland's past? You'll look at ancient trees, try to uncover the secrets of the lumps and bumps and find out what flowers can tell us about the history of a wood.

INSTRUCTIONS

You will need:

- Woodland Trust ID sheets
- Background information
- Pens, paper and a clipboard to record your research
- Woodland Features ID Guide
- Industrial Treescapes & Ancient Tree Survey Guides

What to do:

Your leaders will introduce the activity and divide you into groups.

Activity 1: What types of trees are there in this wood?

- Use your Woodland Trust ID sheets. How many species can you find? Are there lots, or are there not many? What do you think the number of species could tell us?
- How old do you think the trees might be? Are they all a similar age, or are there young and old trees? What might this tell us?

Activity 2: What traces of human activity can you see?

- Use your Woodland Features ID Guide. Can you see any evidence of coppicing or pollarding? Are there any signs of quarry pits, ponds, banks or ditches? Check the background information for any clues.

Activity 3: What can flowers tell us?

- Woodland wildflowers often flower earlier than non-woodland species, before the leaves are on the trees. Why might they do this?
- Because they are very slow to spread to new areas, some species help to tell us that a wood has been around for hundreds of years. Use the guides to help you. Can you spot Bluebells, Wood Anemone, Primrose or Dog Violet?

Activity 4: Can you find a special tree?

- What do you think is the oldest tree you've found? What species is it, and how old do you think it might be? Can you think of any historical events it would have lived through? Use your Ancient Tree Survey Guide to record it, including its location.



TOP TIPS:

Use the background information to help you search for clues in Activity 2. Banks, ditches and pits can sometimes be hidden behind vegetation, so look closely, but tread carefully! Old maps can be very useful!

Our Woodland's Past

LEADER INFORMATION SHEET

SESSION AIM

To explore the idea that trees are 'living archaeology', investigate local woodland history and to put the identification skills learnt in 'Are Trees Archaeology?' into practice.

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

General

- Printouts of background research
- Pens, paper, clipboards

Activity 1

- Woodland Trust ID sheets

Activity 2

- Historic Maps of local woodland
- HER information, if available
- Woodland Features ID guide

Activity 3

- Industrial Treescapes Survey Guide

Activity 4

- Ancient tree Survey Guide

NOTES ON RUNNING THE SESSION

A lot of the practicalities and details of this session will depend on where and when you're running it. If wildflowers aren't likely to be visible you could lengthen activities 1&2, or do the survey variation. Depending on the number of children, you may want to split them or remain a single group. Bear in mind that if the area you're covering is large, you'll need to allow time to move between activities.

LINKS TO EXTERNAL RESOURCES

Woodland Trust ID Sheets:
http://www.naturedetectives.org.uk/packs/pack_spotting.htm

Industrial Treescapes Survey Guide:
<http://www.ukeconet.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/ITP-survey-guide-Jan13.pdf>

Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Hunt Resources:
<http://www.ancient-tree-hunt.org.uk/>

SESSION PLAN

1. **Starter Activity:** Species spotting using Woodland Trust ID sheets (10 mins)
2. **Introduction:** Present background info (from Ancient Tree Survey, HER or other) and introduce tasks. [Split into three groups] (10 mins)
3. **Activity 1:** What types of trees are there in this wood? (20 mins)
4. **Activity 2:** What traces of human activity can you see? (20 mins)
5. **Break** (10 mins)
6. **Activity 3:** What can flowers tell us? (20 mins)
7. **Activity 4:** [Come back together] Can we find a special tree? Record it, measure it, take photos (20 mins)
8. **Round up, pack up.** (10 mins)

VARIATIONS/EXTENSIONS

- Older members can be tasked with producing a 'measured sketch' plan of the woodland, marking concentrations of types of tree, worked/ancient trees, flowers and any archaeological features such as ponds or banks, using the information gathered by the other groups.
- Additional equipment required for this: Planning board, drafting film, 6H pencils, long (50m) tapes, compass.
- A great guide to sketch plans can be found in the RCAHMS recording guide, available from <http://www.scotlandsruralpast.org/>

RISKS TO CONSIDER

Besides general slips, trips and falls and uneven ground, be very wary of extraction pits, ponds and banks, especially during summer months when vegetation can hide the edges.

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Council for
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YAC
Young Archaeologists' Club

Should we build a Skatepark?

ACTIVITY SHEET

BACKGROUND

Using your new knowledge of woodland archaeology, you're going to take on different roles and try to decide whether ancient woodland should be cut down to build a skatepark. Local young people want somewhere nearby to skate. There aren't many suitable places to put a skatepark, but the local farmer is willing to sell some woodland. Trouble is, the woodland contains some ancient trees and some archaeological features. What should happen?
It's up to you!

INSTRUCTIONS

You will need:

- Role card (this will be given to you by the leaders)
- Old maps and information about the features in your woodland
- Craft equipment, pens and paper to make notes and create a poster
- Woodland Features ID Guide

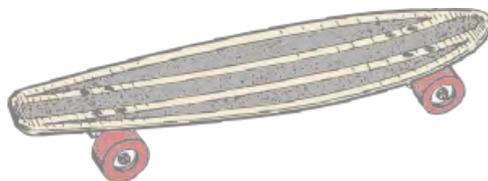
What to do:

1. Your leaders will introduce the activity and divide you into groups. Each group will be given a 'Role Card'. In your groups, discuss your role and think about their feelings about the skatepark.
2. Look at all the evidence you have, and apply your skills as Woodland Detectives!
What damage would be done by cutting the trees down?
Are there any really important trees that might be affected?
Are there any other archaeological features that might be affected?
What benefits would the skatepark bring?
Whose interests do you have to consider? Who uses the woodland?
3. Decide on the opinion that your Role would have. Create a poster to tell people what you think, and to try and persuade them that they should listen to you!
4. You now have 3 minutes to tell the rest of the club what you think, and why. Listen carefully to the other groups' arguments, because...
5. ...You're now going to have an open debate. Should the skatepark be built? Have other groups' arguments helped to change your mind? Or are you still sure?
6. Finally, the leaders will decide. Will you win the day? Will the skatepark be built?
It's up to you!

TOP TIPS:



Think about the opinions of other groups. If you can understand what they want, and what they're worried about, it will help you in the debate.



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Should we build a Skatepark?

LEADER INFORMATION SHEET

SESSION AIM

To provide an introduction to the way in which decisions about archaeology, heritage and the environment are considered in the planning process, and to give members a chance to put their knowledge of woodland archaeology into practice.

MATERIALS AND RESOURCES

General

- 'Are Trees Archaeology?' Factsheet
- Woodland Features ID guide
- Pens, paper
- Flipchart/whiteboard, if available

Activity 1

- Role Cards

Activity 2

- Historic Maps
- HER information, if available

Activity 3

- Craft equipment to make a poster

NOTES ON RUNNING THE SESSION

If you've been able to visit a local wood, use it as a case study. If you've got information from your local HER, this will be very useful, as it forms the basis of Planning Archaeologists' decisions.

Hopefully, the previous sessions have introduced the idea that woodlands have been managed, used and altered by humans over millenia. This session should help to teach participants that the issues of woodland management are still important, and have real consequences. There's no right or wrong answer - it's a balance between preservation of heritage and the needs of modern communities.

SESSION PLAN

1. **Starter Activity:** (10 mins)
2. **Introduction:** Set the scene, divide into groups and assign roles (10 mins)
3. **Activity 1:** Discuss the role, and their feelings about the proposal (10 mins)
4. **Activity 2:** Look at the evidence. How does it fit with their views? (10 mins)
5. **Activity 3:** Create a poster that summarises the group's position (20 mins)
6. **Break** (10 mins)
7. **Debate:** Each group has 3 minutes max. to present their case, followed by open debate. Chair (leader) to summarise and adjudicate. (40 mins)
7. **Round up, pack up.** (10 mins)

VARIATIONS/EXTENSIONS

- Older members could take on the role of the planning committee and adjudicate on the debate.
- Consider introducing ideas on sustainability and environmental impact 'offsetting'. Can you 'offset' the removal of ancient trees? How could choice of materials and construction methods help to minimise the impact of a skatepark?

RISKS TO CONSIDER

- Use of craft materials (e.g. scissors, glue)
- Behavioural factors: you may find the debate is dominated by vocal participants - try to ensure that all who wish to, get to speak, and be alert to boisterous or intimidating behaviour.

Should we build a Skatepark?

ROLE CARDS

Adapted from the Woodland Trust's 'Environmental Interaction' Activity

YOUNG RESIDENTS

We want the skatepark - Our nearest one is miles away so we have to rely on parents to take us, or skate in the roads. Even for those who don't skate, it'd be great to have a place nearby to hang out. We could host events, hold competitions, and learn how to take responsibility for the park.

PARENTS

Some of us want the park, because we're fed up of driving our children to the nearest one. But some of us are worried about a new park out in the woods - who's going to keep an eye on things? Will it be safe? And how is it going to be paid for?

FARMER & LANDOWNER

I'll be sad to sell the woodland and see the trees go - it's been in my family for years. But trees don't bring in any cash. Food prices are low, farmers are having a hard time, and I need the money!

LOCAL MP

I understand why the young people want a skate park, and if it helps to stop them causing a nuisance on the streets I'll be happy. But my party want to try to protect the environment, and cutting down woodland won't help that. I've got to think about what my voters want if I'm going to win the next election, and young people can't vote!

LOCAL RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

We're worried about young people skating on the roads and pavements - they don't seem to look where they're going and elderly people are quite frightened. A skatepark would be a good idea, but who would look after it? And lots of local people enjoy walking in the woods - we don't want to lose all those lovely trees.

WOODLAND TRUST

We're very worried about the plans. The trees are healthy and really valuable: they're wildlife habitats for birds and insects, they absorb carbon dioxide and they're part of the local community. They've been here longer than we have - we don't have the right to cut them down just for a skatepark! We'd like to see a skatepark in the area. You could even build it from local timber. But we think you should find somewhere else to put it!

ARCHAEOLOGISTS

The woodland is an important archaeological resource - it has been managed for hundreds of years, and as well as the trees it contains lots of archaeological features which we've identified from our surveys. If you want to go ahead with the skatepark, you might have to pay for an archaeological excavation: how would you find the money to pay for that?