



**Historic Environment: online training event,  
9<sup>th</sup> February 2022, 11.00 – 12.30**

**Introduction**

This free CWA online training event was intended to introduce participants to the principles of recording and managing archaeology in the woodland environment. Speakers were Matt Ritchie (Archaeologist for Forestry and Land Scotland) and Megan MacInnes (Local Development Worker for Applecross Community Company).

**Agenda**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Who</b>
11:00	Introductions, online protocol	Piers
11:05	What is woodland archaeology? Historic Environment in a woodland context? Physical footprints, archive references and biological indicators Why is archaeology the historic environment important? Responsibilities as land managers, legislation. Designations (SM's, Listed buildings, Designed landscapes) Where to find information about what is already recorded, where to get advice, desk based and field audits/surveys.	Matt
12:00	Break	
12:05	Experience from Applecross	Megan
12:25	Managing archaeology	Matt/Megan
12:45	Q&A / discussion (questions posted to chat & read out by participants)	Piers

**Event report**

**Piers Voysey** welcomed delegates, explained housekeeping arrangements. The programme and speakers' details having been circulated in advance, Piers asked Matt and Megan to introduce themselves by describing one of their magical archaeological moments. For Matt this was exploring a newly discovered souterrain and for Megan, exploring the documented lives of people who had lived in the now derelict Torgarve township.

**Matt Ritchie** explained that a common thread for him in relation to archaeology is 'stewardship'. The historic environment record in a woodland might be buried deposits, structural features or legacies in the flora (e.g. tree pollards and coppice). Woodlands can be stable environments for archaeology. Heavy shading will reduce the growth of vegetation over the features, clear the forest and the features might disappear under bracken; but there is the risk of disturbance from operations and windblow.

Key references for woodland managers are the Scottish Forestry Strategy and UK Forestry Standard, with the priority to protect and conserve, identify and manage cultural and historical value in relation to significant heritage features. Scheduled monuments, listed buildings, battlefield sites and designed landscapes are legal reference points and any works affecting such sites must be licensed.

Matt was keen to emphasise that not all scheduled monuments are significant and not all significant sites are scheduled.

When establishing the significance of a feature, key questions might be:

Is it rare? Is it accessible? Is a particularly good example? Is it connected to other features across the wider landscape? Is it connected to contemporary culture? Does it create a sense of place? Does it have aesthetic value, e.g. adding to landscape character.

When surveying a woodland or planting plan area, survey the wider countryside to establish links or patterns with other features. Detailed surveys establish the baseline for future monitoring, which could determine how a site is managed.

**Megan MacInnes** described how Torgarve wood (14.5ha at Applecross, with 8 ha of Sitka spruce planted in 1972) was purchased by the community in part because it contained a rich archaeological chronology from pre to recent history.

Careful and detailed survey and planning, involving an archaeological surveyor, preceded clear-felling the spruce with archaeology and limestone caves carefully protected. Works were carefully monitored and machine operators engaged in laying out extraction routes, protecting archaeology and monitoring the risk of windblow as felling progressed.

There is now a big task for volunteers to complete the removal of brash from historic features. Do they consider grinding out the stumps on some, more ephemeral sites, such as hut circles? Do they build replica features to aid interpretation of the sites?

There is a lot of potential for different forms of interpretation at Torgarve and estate and parish records have enabled them to identify the occupants of some of the more recently abandoned cottage ruins.

## **Q&A**

There were few questions, but in relation to surveys, Matt pointed out that an archaeological survey might still leave many questions unanswered. Unless a feature is at risk of being disturbed, detailed surveys might not be required.

## **Event recording**

The event recording is available on our YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/tbMr4i3V0Fo>

## Resources

Historic Environment Resource Guide: <https://forestry.gov.scot/images/corporate/pdf/historic-environment-resource.pdf>

Identifying the Historic Environment in Scotland's Forests and Woodlands: <https://forestry.gov.scot/publications/forests-and-the-environment/historic-environment/71-identifying-the-historic-environment-in-scotland-s-forests-and-woodlands>

Conserving & Managing Trees & Woodlands in Scotland's Designed Landscapes <https://forestry.gov.scot/publications/39-conserving-and-managing-trees-and-woodlands-in-scotland-s-designed-landscapes/viewdocument/39>

John Wright, 2021. A spotters guide to countryside mysteries.

Richard Muir, 2004. Landscape Encyclopedia

## CWA events and services

CWA organises regular training events on a broad range of topics: see our website for details of upcoming events <https://www.communitywoods.org/newsandevents> Please get in touch [jon@communitywoods.org](mailto:jon@communitywoods.org) if you have an idea for a training event that we could organise.

We send out a monthly e-bulletin with details of relevant funding opportunities, news, events and jobs & a quarterly e-newsletter with updates and stories from Scottish community woodlands. Sign up to our mailing list here [eepurl.com/g-JJ0L](http://eepurl.com/g-JJ0L)

Follow CWA on social media for regular updates on relevant funding opportunities, news, events and jobs: Facebook [www.facebook.com/Communitywoods](http://www.facebook.com/Communitywoods), Twitter [@CommunityWoods](https://twitter.com/CommunityWoods) & Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/communitywoods/>

CWA moderates a Google Group where people involved in community woodlands can come together to share their experiences, advice & ideas. Email [joanna@communitywoods.org](mailto:joanna@communitywoods.org) to be added to the e-group.

Attendees	Organisation (where known)
Damon Thomson	Strathnairn Community Woodland
Douglas Wilson	Assynt
Betty Wright	Gearrchoillie Community Wood
Stuart Kimsey	Forestry & Land Scotland
Nick & Margaret Bryant	Reelig Community Wood
Donald Schiach	Aird Community Trust
Jim Murray	Aird Community Trust
Andrew & Felicity Thomson	Comrie Community Wood
Deborah Kirby	Stronafian Forest
Valerie Hodgkinson	Applecross
Gordon Carmichael	Jura