Digest of the discussion and comments following the afternoon session

Are any of these projects feeding into the English Heritage designation review that's happening at the moment?

Angela Simco – English Heritage has a monuments class description for woods, BUT you cannot schedule a wood. Only the physical features can be scheduled e.g. wood bank or park pale.

English Heritage will be looking at more landscape type designations – ancient woodland etc could be given a different designation.

Jan Wills – Individually, features won't be given a national designation, but locally they are very important, characteristic features.

Tim Yarnell – These woodlands can be described as woodlands with historic characteristics. We need to understand the history of woodlands and the land they occupy.

Woodlands seem to be classified as 'plantations' or 'other'. Many woodlands already have a non-archaeological designation.

Simon Pryor – The Forestry Commission are currenty working on a policy for the management of Ancient woodland, and the results of any surveys would inform that process.

What discussion goes on before these projects. How is information integrated into SMRs?

Nicola Bannister – Integration with SMRs depends upon how results are disseminated. The client should always be informed that a copy of the report will be deposited with the local SMR. The SMR might just make one entry for a piece of work, saying refer to the report.

John Roberts – Most work is now digital, and is / can be structured to feed into SMRs.

Jim McNeil – Survey data is designed to be MIDAS compliant, and will be imported into the GIS as points.

Tim Yarnell – Most projects are based within a County Council context, therefore SMRs can be catered for.

Nicola Bannister – It depends upon who the client is and who holds the copyright. Nicola tries to get something published in the local archaeological proceedings, also in the Woodland Trust annual review.

Simon Pryor - Information needs to be made readily available – one website for everything that landowners can look at.

Jan Wills – Such a website exists, but it only provides information on SAMs. Much more information is held by SMRs, so at the moment, individual SMRs need to be consulted.

Hampshire has a pilot project for web delivered information including SMR data to land managers.

Jim McNeil – Lots of the areas of woodland looked at by the survey had nothing recorded on the SMR prior to the survey, but lots afterwards. To date, no area of woodland that was empty before survey has been empty after.

Jim McNeil – It isn't always easy to get people to come and look at SMRs.

What is the level of technical expertise of the people carrying out survey work in terms of forestry procedures?

Angela Simco - Training is an issue with any community project. Results need to be fed back to the relevant places, but if SMRs are not the appropriate places?

Nicola Bannister – Ian Rotherham is planning a website on woodland archaeology – mentioned at an ancient woodland conference in Sheffield a couple of weeks ago. Also, Nicola wrote a now out of print book for Surrey County Council that might be useful.

R. G. Greenaway – 'Horrified' by data gathering techniques being employed – why not use technology that's available, as people's time is the most expensive element of any survey.

Tim Yarnell – surveyors should always use the best equipment they can afford.

Graham Tait – The Forest of Dean survey uses hand held devices linked to GPS. This is in its infancy within the archaeological community at the moment. Depends on what the data is needed for.

Angela Simco – There are some complexities about archaeological earthworks where physical drawing is needed, rather than sets of points logged on a computer.