



Community Archaeology Study Days 2006/7

STUDY DAY 1: Investigating Ancient Woodland

Hagg Wood, Dunnington. Sunday 9th April 2006

Feedback from the study day:

"Another very successful day, with a good number of participants, a knowledgeable tutor and excellent presentations." Participant

"Very interesting subject in a good, warm venue; many thanks for a very interesting day" Participant

"I enjoyed meeting different people and seeing different places." Participant

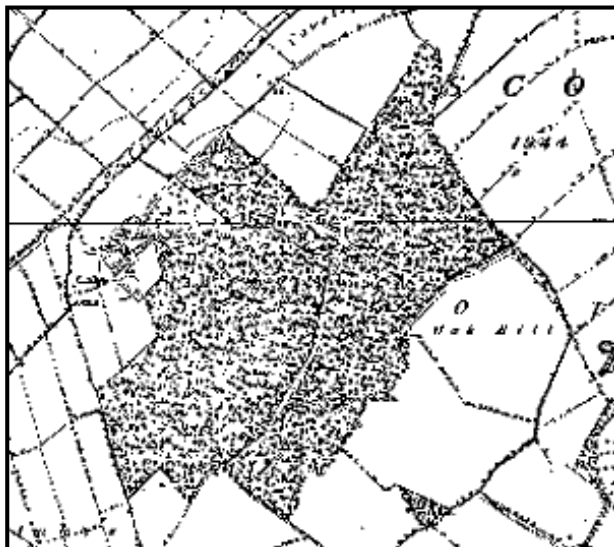
"I particularly enjoyed the opportunity to visit Hagg Wood." Participant

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CONTACT

The new programme of study days for 2006–7 began on Sunday 9th April in Holtby Village Hall. Twenty-nine people had signed up to learn about ancient woodland and the day began with a talk from Barbara Hickman from the Woodland History Group.

Barbara began by giving a general overview of the history of woodland. We then moved on to look at ways of identifying historic woodland. The following clues can help researchers to find ancient woodland:



- Historical records
- Place-names (such as Hagg, Bank and Spring)
- Maps (in particular 19th-century first edition OS maps)
- Shape (ancient woods are more irregular, plantations usually square or rectangular)
- Banks and ditches (can indicate ancient boundaries, as can streams and parish boundaries)
- Coppice and pollard (look for coppiced or pollarded trees)
- Location
- Flora

Barbara then went on to list the indicator species used to identify ancient woodland. These were broken down into three categories:

- 1) Very rare plants found only in ancient woods (such as Wood Anemone, Early Purple Orchid, Wild Columbine, Yellow Archangel, Toothwort, Oxalis, Greater Butterfly Orchid, Herb Paris and Dogs Mercury)
- 2) Plants that usually grow in ancient woods but also grow elsewhere (eg. hedgerows) (such as Bluebells, Wild Garlic, Wild Strawberry and Primroses)
- 3) Plants that occur in all woodlands (such as Herb Robert, Wild Raspberry, Stinging Nettle, Bramble, numerous Ferns)



After lunch the group went for walk around Hagg Wood, a semi-natural ancient woodland in the parish of Kexby. Barbara and Rosalind Maggs, Chair of Friends of Hagg wood, gave a guided tour through the woods, pointing out indicator species, coppiced trees, earthworks and woodbanks. This part of the day was greatly assisted by the presence of Steven Moorhouse, a landscape historian who will be helping Friends of Hagg Wood with a survey of the woodland, and Barry Wright, an expert on Archaeobotany. Anyone interested in helping with the project in Hagg Wood, please get in touch with the Community Archaeologist.



Thanks very much to Barbara for preparing such an interesting presentation and to Rosalind Maggs, Steve Moorhouse and Barry Wright for their input to the day.

Contact

For further information on Community Archaeology in Greater York please contact Jon Kenny on 01904 663020 or email jkenny@yorkarchaeology.co.uk

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