

Badgers and Archaeology



Sometimes, just beneath our soil far back as the Stone Age, Bronze

Saxon and Medieval settlements and also 'modern archaeology', such as that from the Second World War. We walk over them many times a day, and are completely unaware of what is actually there. If you live in ancient settlements, such as Durham and York, there is almost certain to be some sort of archaeology right underneath your feet!

surface are amazing remains from as Age, Iron Age, Roman times, Viking,



The archaeology beneath us is laid down in layers, like a giant club sandwich. There might be bones, flint tools, arrowheads, pottery and other great finds.



Understanding how our ancestors lived is important to any civilised society. Remember the old quote: 'A man who does not learn the lessons of history, tends to end up making it!' (Think about it. What do you think it means?)

However, we do know that the secrets of how our ancient ancestors lived can be damaged by the activities of badgers. Unfortunately, badgers will still dig - even when their sett is quite large enough for their family's needs. The easy digging conditions, such as light, well-soil encourages badgers to move in and build their homes. It is estimated



each sett can move tens of cubic meters of soil and scatter ancient remains, The layers become jumbled, so that a lot of the information we could have got out is lost.

Of course, we also have to remember that farming and livestock can also do serious damage to ancient remains. Erecting fences, tree planting and digging ponds can also cause damage to the archaeology beneath us. (Digging a pond is one of the best things you can do for wildlife, but check that it won't damage anything first.) Fence lines can attract poachers with their illegal snares.

Options:

- Erect fencing away from sites of archaeological interest if possible.
- Don't build your pond near to sites. By all means build them somewhere else!
- Avoid planting trees on sites, as the roots can damage archaeology, *(and make it very difficult to excavate!)*
- Get expert advice before you do anything to or near to an archaeological site.

Of course, getting rid of the badgers is **NOT** an option. Culling badgers from an area simply makes a convenient space for other badgers to move into.

The Law: Licensing: development and protection of property

Badgers are protected by the Badgers Act 1991 and also the [Protection of Badgers Act 1992](#), which make it a criminal offence to take, kill or interfere with a badger or its sett. If badgers are damaging archaeological sites, seek advice from Defra, English Nature, English Heritage or your Local Authority Archaeologist. (Quote: The Badger Trust <http://www.badgertrust.org.uk>)

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 allows for licences to be issued for a number of purposes, including development under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and to prevent serious damage to property.

Licences to interfere with badger setts or disturb badgers for development, are issued by the Government's statutory nature conservation agencies (Natural England, Countryside Council for Wales or Scottish Natural Heritage).

Licences to prevent serious damage to property (including land, crops and poultry) are issued by the relevant Government Agriculture Department (DEFRA in England, NAWAD in Wales and SERAD in Scotland). Such licences can allow the interference with, and/or closure of setts. In some cases, licences are issued to allow the killing of badgers, although this is generally a last resort and only a handful of such licences are issued each year.

Licences may be granted by the conservation agencies for interference with badger setts in the course of investigating offences. Such licences are normally issued to Police Wildlife Crime Officers and to others officially involved in this work.

Other purposes for which licences may be granted are science, education and conservation; zoos; tagging and marking; *archaeology*; disease prevention; agriculture and forestry; land drainage; and controlling foxes for the protection of livestock, game and wildlife.

Further advice and information

For advice and information on badger-related issues, contact;

Badger Trust

PO Box 708,

East Grinstead, RH19 2WN

Tel: 08458 287878

E-mail: enquiries@badgertrust.org.uk

Web: www.badgertrust.org.uk

Licensing bodies

Natural England, Tel: 01733 455000

Countryside Council for Wales /Cygnor Cefn Gwlad Cymru, Tel: 01248 385653

Scottish Natural Heritage, Tel: 0131 554 9797

DEFRA (Wildlife Management Team), Tel: 0117 372 8903

NAWAD (Food Farming Development Division), Tel: 01970 627 762

Scottish Environment & Rural Affairs Department, Tel: 0131 244 6360

YOU MUST NOT USE TOOLS WITHIN 10 METRES OF A BADGER SETT