

Fieldwork guidelines – tips to stay safe

Thanks for taking part in the Ancient Tree Inventory. Here are some basic guidelines to consider when you're out and about.

Get the landowners permission

Get permission from the landowner if you wish to record a tree on private land.

Wear the right clothing and footwear

Check the weather forecast before going out and consider packing extra layers or waterproofs. Wear suitable footwear – sturdy boots, with good ankle support and grip.

Take some extras such as a bottle of water, small first aid kit or sunblock in summer.

Be aware of rough ground and look out for roots, rabbit holes and brambles that might trip you. Don't attempt to traverse terrain unless you feel it's safe to do so.

Pair up or make sure someone knows where you are

Carry a charged mobile phone if possible, but bear in mind that in some areas the signal is weak. Make sure someone knows where you're going and when to expect you back. Make sure they know what to do if they can't contact you.

Trees can be dangerous

Take care around low, broken or hanging branches. If necessary record from a safe distance and avoid recording trees in high winds. If weather conditions deteriorate, consider finishing early.

Be aware of livestock

Check agricultural pasture for livestock before entering. If approached by cattle, remain calm and quiet, if cattle become aggressive or spooked leave the field by the nearest means of escape.

In the event of cattle attacking a dog, release the lead and move away. A dog is usually more agile than a person and will most likely be fine.

Don't enter pasture that contains a dairy breed of bull, if in doubt seek advice from the site manager or contact the farmer or grazier.

Never approach cattle nursing calves.

Take care around wildlife

Don't approach deer during rut.

Avoid bee or wasp nests. Use insect repellent as necessary.

If spotted, don't approach adders or other snakes.

Biological hazard

Cover any cuts or scrapes with a waterproof dressing before going out.

Avoid getting river, canal, pond or stream water in mouths or cuts. If contact occurs clean and rinse as soon as possible. If, after contact with water, flu like conditions occur seek medical advice immediately.

Ticks are most active between May and October in areas of tall vegetation such as grass or bracken, especially those populated by deer. Avoid tick bites by wearing long-sleeved shirts and trousers tucked into socks. Inspect skin for ticks at the end of the day, including your head, neck and skin folds (armpits, groin, and waistband). Remove ticks using a tick removal tool. Check that pets don't bring ticks home in their fur. If you feel ill following a tick bite immediately consult your doctor.

Don't eat berries or fungi unless you are 100% confident of their identity.

Wash your hands thoroughly on your return home. Avoid contact with prickly or stinging plants and toxic hairy caterpillars, which can irritate skin.

Stay safe near water

Take notice of warning signs. Supervise children closely. Never get close to deep or fast flowing water if you're alone.

Look after the environment

Avoid disturbing any wildlife. Clean your footwear thoroughly. Take your litter home with you.