



Lincolnshire
Limewoods

Community Heritage in the Lincolnshire Limewoods

Archaeology in Heritage Projects

A Limewoods Guide to Running Heritage Projects No. 2





The Lincolnshire Limewoods Project

The Lincolnshire Limewoods area is set within a unique landscape offering a diversity of flora, fauna, heritage and opportunities for recreation. The Lincolnshire Limewoods Project is a partnership working to protect, enhance and promote the natural and historic landscape and features of this important area.

Limewoods Community Heritage Scheme

A major part of achieving these objectives has been the Limewoods Community Heritage Scheme. This initiative aims to proactively encourage local communities in the Limewoods area to undertake heritage projects through provision of advice, mentoring and direct funding.

The Lincolnshire Limewoods Project wishes to thank all of the volunteers who developed community projects in the Limewoods, whose experiences have greatly shaped this set of guides: Bardney Development Trust, Fiskerton History & Archaeology Group, Wragby Heritage Group, Minting and Gautby Heritage Society.

How to use these guides

This guide is one of a series that uses the experiences of the Limewoods Community Heritage Scheme to offer guidance to other voluntary groups who are looking to undertake their own heritage project. Some information is specific to Lincolnshire but the guides have been developed for use by any group.

The guides are not comprehensive but taken together will provide some inspiration and targeted guidance for those thinking of undertaking a heritage project.

Guides in this series include:

Getting Your Project Started Archaeology in Heritage Projects Using Written and Spoken History Presenting your Project

Contact the Limewoods Project to find out about other publications for the area.





Why Use Archaeology?

Archaeology is a technique for investigating how our environment has developed. It involves the study of the physical evidence of our past: standing buildings; artefacts; buried remains, indeed the whole landscape. It can reveal things that were never written down and employs a diverse range of techniques. This can range from observing the patterns of fields across a county to recording a grain of pollen.

There are a number of reasons you might include archaeology in your heritage project:

- It can enhance other forms of research.
- It can offer volunteering and training opportunities.
- It can provide activities in which the whole community can participate.
- It can form part of or the focus of your project.
- It is tangible and exciting.

Archaeology can be expensive and should be carefully planned. Seek advice at an early stage from a specialist, such as your local authority archaeology department, a local archaeology unit or society. It may be that there is even someone in your local community with the necessary skills.





Planning for the Past

There are a number of ways to plan your archaeology project. You can commission specific surveys from a professional unit. You can hire an archaeological unit to supervise you and help write the reports. You can work with a local amateur archaeological society or you can undertake the work yourselves with an advisor.



The traffic lights in this leaflet act as a relative guide to price and specialist involvement.

Red: Close specialist management and reporting required.

Amber: Costs for materials and some specialist reporting and/or supervision will be required.

Green: Relatively cheap. The work could be done with some advice and cost of materials.



Remember that archaeology is a finite resource and some of the techniques used are destructive and cannot be repeated. Some remains may also be legally protected, either as Scheduled Monuments or Listed Buildings and it is a criminal offence to carry out works on them without consent from the Secretary of State, through English Heritage. You should also be aware that some finds may legally be classed as treasure and will need to be reported to the coroner. If in doubt check with your local authority archaeologist or local Finds Liaison Officer (<http://finds.org.uk/>).





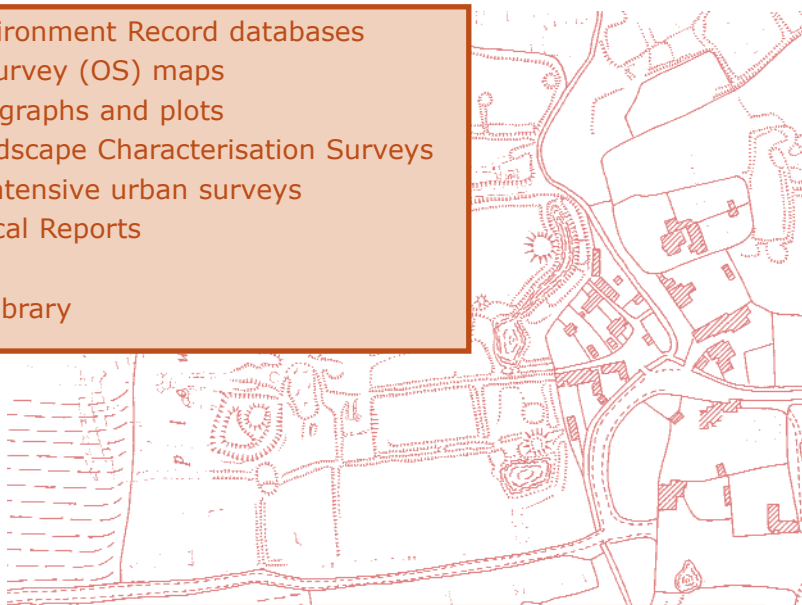
Finding Existing Information

The foremost source of information for archaeology is the Historic Environment Record (HER) held by the County Council (or equivalent). This is a database of known archaeological sites and finds for the area. The National Monuments Record (NMR) is a similar national resource held by English Heritage (EH) at Swindon.

You can apply for information remotely from both sources but it is usually best to arrange to view the HER as the staff may be able to offer help and advice. You can also use their other resources including:

Lincolnshire also has data sets at the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire and Lincoln City Council holds a detailed database for the City.

- Historic Environment Record databases
- Ordnance Survey (OS) maps
- Aerial photographs and plots
- Historic Landscape Characterisation Surveys
- Extensive/Intensive urban surveys
- Archaeological Reports
- Parish Files
- Reference Library



Online resources:

access to HER and NMR information: www.heritagegateway.org.uk
interactive maps showing designated archaeology: www.magic.gov.uk
EH information on archaeology and buildings: www.pastscape.org.uk



Aerial Photographs



Some archaeological sites are best seen from the air, when they affect the colour of soil or crops. Similarly, earthworks can be seen best from the air, casting shadows when the sun is low. The results can be captured by aerial photographs (APs) and mapped to great effect.

Oblique APs are taken from an angle with a hand held camera. They are best for revealing earthworks and are most commonly taken specifically for viewing archaeology.

Vertical APs are usually taken from a fixed camera and are good for locating and mapping crop or soilmarks or landscape changes. They are most commonly taken for military or professional surveys.

The National Monuments Record holds a collection of aerial photographs and local authorities have limited collections of oblique and vertical aerial photographs. There are plenty of online sources but these are not necessarily taken at the right time of year. Interpreting and plotting APs is best done with experience.



You might consider engaging a specialist to research the APs and plot them, or run a seminar for your group.



Earthworks of the Moats at Wragby and the medieval village.

Fieldwalking Surveys

Where archaeological remains survive below ground they contain artefacts, such as flint tools, pottery, animal bone, brick and tile. When the fields are ploughed these finds are brought to the surface. Walking the fields and picking up and plotting the artefacts can find new sites as well as inform about the nature of the remains, how far they extend and how old they are.



Fieldwalking is a good way to get people involved in your project, including metal detector users. It can be done on a single field or over a whole parish but it does require organisation.



Consider...

- specialist advice.
- who will be involved.
- obtaining permission from landowners.
- timing your surveys to avoid damage and maximise retrieval.
- planning your materials: bags, canes, tapes, pens etc.
- how you will record the finds and plot them.
- where and when you will clean, mark and store the finds.
- engaging specialists to tell you about the finds.
- who will write a report.

Medieval Pottery around Wragby Moated Earthworks



The same field at Wragby showing where medieval pottery was found.

At **Wragby** the local group hired a specialist to examine oblique aerial photographs of the area around their moated site. The results showed a series of roads, fields and house sites that had been flattened by ploughing. These represented the former medieval village. A member of the group was an archaeologist and had fieldwalked over the area of the village. They plotted the fieldwalking results over the APs to identify areas of settlement and enhance their site interpretation.



Earthwork Surveys

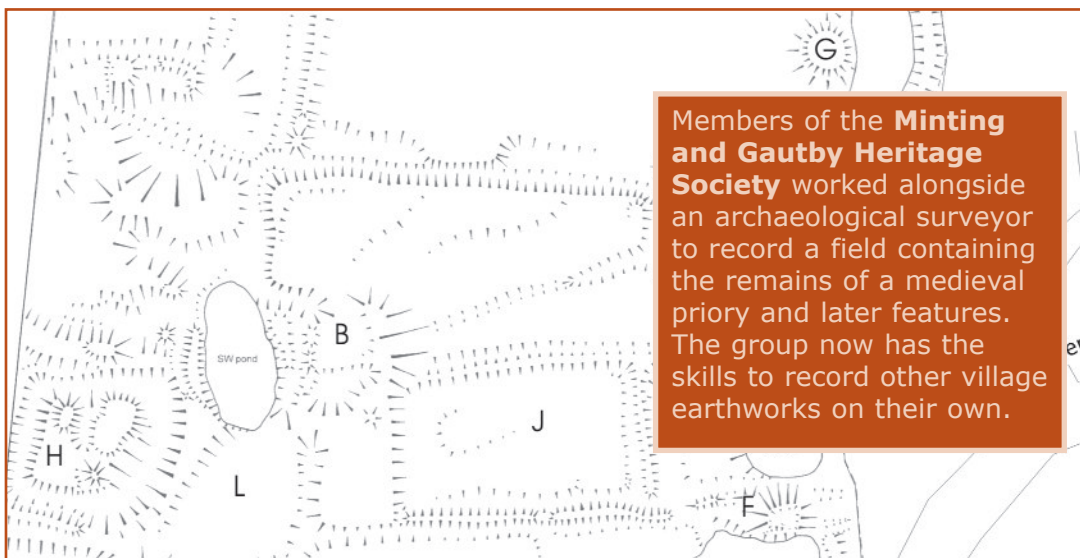
Many sites, particularly medieval villages, moats or fishponds survive as earthworks. Mapping them can provide a clearer picture of what they represent, how old they are and how they have evolved. Such surveys offer opportunities for volunteering and learning the skills to undertake surveys of your own.



Some training with a specialist is a good idea.

Consider...

- a scale best suited to the site, for instance 1:500 or 1:1000.
- familiarising yourself with survey conventions.
- including a scale and north arrows etc. on your plan.
- recording fixed points on a map, to tie your survey into 'real space'.
- that you can survey with only a couple of 30m tapes and canes.
- comparing your results with other earthwork sites.



Members of the **Minting and Gautby Heritage Society** worked alongside an archaeological surveyor to record a field containing the remains of a medieval priory and later features. The group now has the skills to record other village earthworks on their own.

A guide to surveying can be found at www.britarch.ac.uk/msrg
Understanding the Archaeology of Landscape, English Heritage 2007.

Geophysical Survey

Geophysical Survey offers a reasonably rapid way to prospect for archaeology or to map detail on sites that are known. There are various techniques, all requiring specialist equipment and interpretation, but none damage the remains in any way. While operating the equipment is reasonably simple, opportunities for meaningful volunteering are limited. However, demonstrations and discussions over interpretation are well worthwhile.

Consider...

Magnetometer survey measures differences in the magnetic properties of the soil. Best for settlements and industrial remains. Rapid.

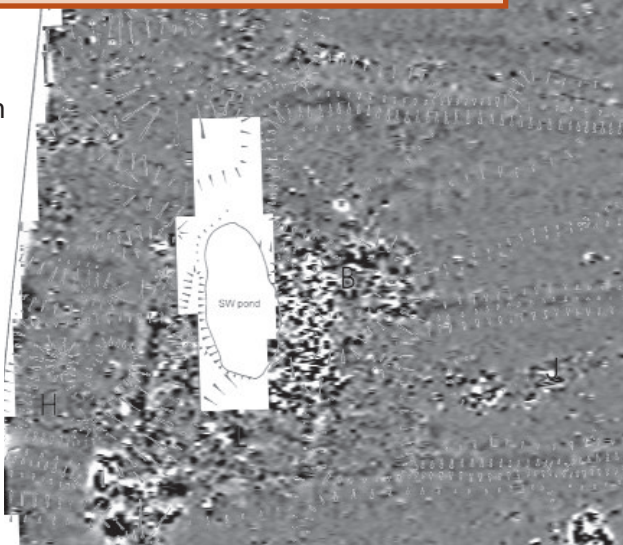
Earth Resistance survey measures differences in the electrical conductivity of the soil. Best for buried masonry but not suitable for wet ground. Moderately fast.

Radar bounces electromagnetic radiation against features beneath the ground to give a series of sections through the ground. Best for objects, deposits and voids, particularly in urban areas. Rapid.

www.helm.org.uk/upload/pdf/Geophysical_LoRes.pdf

Factors such as geology, land use, metal fences and debris, power lines and even weather can affect the results. Best results require experienced manipulation and interpretation. It is best used alongside other techniques such as earthwork survey, fieldwalking and excavation.

The Minting Priory was also investigated using magnetometer survey.





Excavation

This can be the most exciting of techniques to use and when suitably supervised offers excellent opportunities for group involvement. It can form the focus of a project or be used as a research tool. However, it is a destructive technique and although sampling can reduce the damage, correct and careful recording is necessary.

Consider...

- why you are excavating and what you are likely to find?
- who owns the land?
- how big an area will be excavated and how deep will it be?
- who will supervise?
- who will provide the equipment and store the finds?
- how the post-excavation report will be produced?



At **Skendleby**, AP and geophysical surveys had identified a possible medieval chapel site. The group arranged with a local archaeological unit to strip an area of the site with a machine. The group then participated in exposing the chapel and sampling the remains. Finally the site was covered over and preserved. A book was produced by the group with contributions from the archaeologists.



Buildings

Archaeology can be used on standing, as well as buried remains. Examining the fabric of buildings can lead to discoveries that further your research in other areas. It can provide you with specific information for the interpretation of a building, a church, for example. No specialist equipment is necessary, just a keen eye and some knowledge of architectural styles. For more in-depth surveys specialist advice is advisable.



Consider...

- looking for changes in materials or 'scars' in the walls.
- examining window shapes and decorative features.
- examining roof lines and rafters.
- making a plan and taking photographs.
- using this in combination with documentary research.



While investigating the history of his land, John Laver discovered medieval stone and reused beams in the fabric of his house as well as foundations of earlier buildings in his garden. Advice from buildings experts reinforced his conclusions from other research that his 17th century house was built on the site of an earlier, much grander property and perhaps was once part of the medieval priory of Minting.





Landscape



Because the landscape in which we live is a product of human interaction we can also study it through archaeology. The shape and nature of field systems, roads and settlements can betray information about their date and evolution and how people used the space they lived in. In particular looking at changes in the soil structure and natural sediments can help to build up a picture of the landscapes in which our ancestors lived.

The landscape of the past may be very different to what we see today and almost certainly supported different varieties of wildlife and plants.

Establishing the evolution of the environment can help us to understand more about how people may have used resources in the past, for food, fuel, defence or social interaction.

Auger surveys are one way to map sediments and reconstruct past landscapes: from marsh to fen to farmland for instance. Sampling these deposits can tell us more about what plants and animals inhabited these areas and how they were used.

APs can also show old river systems and islands in once waterlogged landscapes.





Woodland

Recently, woodland has become more of a focus of archaeological study. They were once largely ignored due to poor access and visibility. Tree roots were also considered to be very damaging to remains. Now they are recognised, not only as preserving a great variety of traditional archaeology, but also possessing archaeology unique to themselves.



Consider...

- if you have ancient woodland in your area.
- how your woodland has changed in size and shape?
- how your woodland has changed in management and function?
- whether your woodland contains archaeological remains.
- whether there are any maps or records of woodland in old documents.

Surveying woodland can be undertaken as a workshop and volunteer activity.

Woodlands have always played an important part in the landscape. Ancient Woodland - woodland that has a continuous history back to at least 1600 AD - is recognised as an historic asset.

Natural and semi-natural features within woodland, such as trees and flowers, can also be used as indicators of former use. Pollarded trees for instance can indicate ancient woodland grazing. Certain plants e.g. bluebells, wood anemone and small leaved

lime, can be indicators of ancient woodland.

Historically, woodland has had varied uses: standard trees for timber, coppicing for poles or as grazing. These uses will be reflected in the form and type of trees within a wood. They will also be recorded in old documents. Occasionally you may come across ancient trees that have survived for hundreds of years.



Pioneering research into the Lincolnshire Limewoods in the 1970s helped to shape our present understanding of how woodland develops.



Making Sense of your Research

Whether you have collected a great deal or only a small amount of data, its potential may not seem immediately apparent. A good starting point in making the best use of your archaeological data will be a familiarity with the archaeological context of your area. The most recent books and articles will help you to put your findings into some sort of context and allow you to assess your data critically.

Consider...

- looking for patterns in the data by plotting your information on OS maps: examine their distribution in relation to the natural or historic landscape.
- looking for comparisons in the area or further afield: sites like yours may have been excavated in the next parish.
- thinking about the questions you want the data to answer: do you want to know a date, a function or an extent?
- using the results in combination with other research, whether archaeological, oral, natural or documentary.
- keeping an open mind and admitting that you do not know everything.



Check local archaeological journals for articles on local research, e.g. *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology Journal*. Some areas have period based publications summarising current thinking, e.g. *History of Lincolnshire Series*. Both are published through the Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, Jews Court, Lincoln.



Artefacts and Archives



You may generate a considerable amount of material from any work that you do: written and drawn records, artefacts or even samples of soil. If you have engaged a professional archaeologist to undertake the work then they will know how to deal with this material. If your group are taking responsibility for the work then it would be wise to take advice, indeed some form of supervision is always advisable. You will also need to cost for any archiving materials.

Consider...

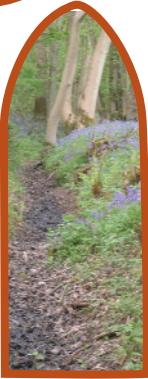
- all records should be checked and cross referenced.
- all pencil drawings should be copied over with ink and/or scanned.
- all artefacts should be washed, marked, labelled, bagged and boxed.
- all records should be made available through the museum and archives office.
- a report should be prepared and deposited with the HER.

As well as a report, an archive of all the material will need to be prepared and eventually deposited with a suitable museum. There will need to be a project code and an accession number for all the archived material and this can be provided by the museum where the material will be stored.



Information on best practice can be found in the Lincolnshire Archaeology Handbook at:

<http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/residents/environment-and-planning/conservation/archaeology/lincolnshire-archaeological-handbook>



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Lincolnshire Limewoods Project Partnership

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Natural England / West Lindsey District Council / Woodland Trust