PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Guidance for Managing the Archaeological and Palaeoenvironmental Resource in the Till-Tweed Valleys, Northumberland, UK

Archaeological Research Services Ltd
And
The University of Newcastle upon Tyne

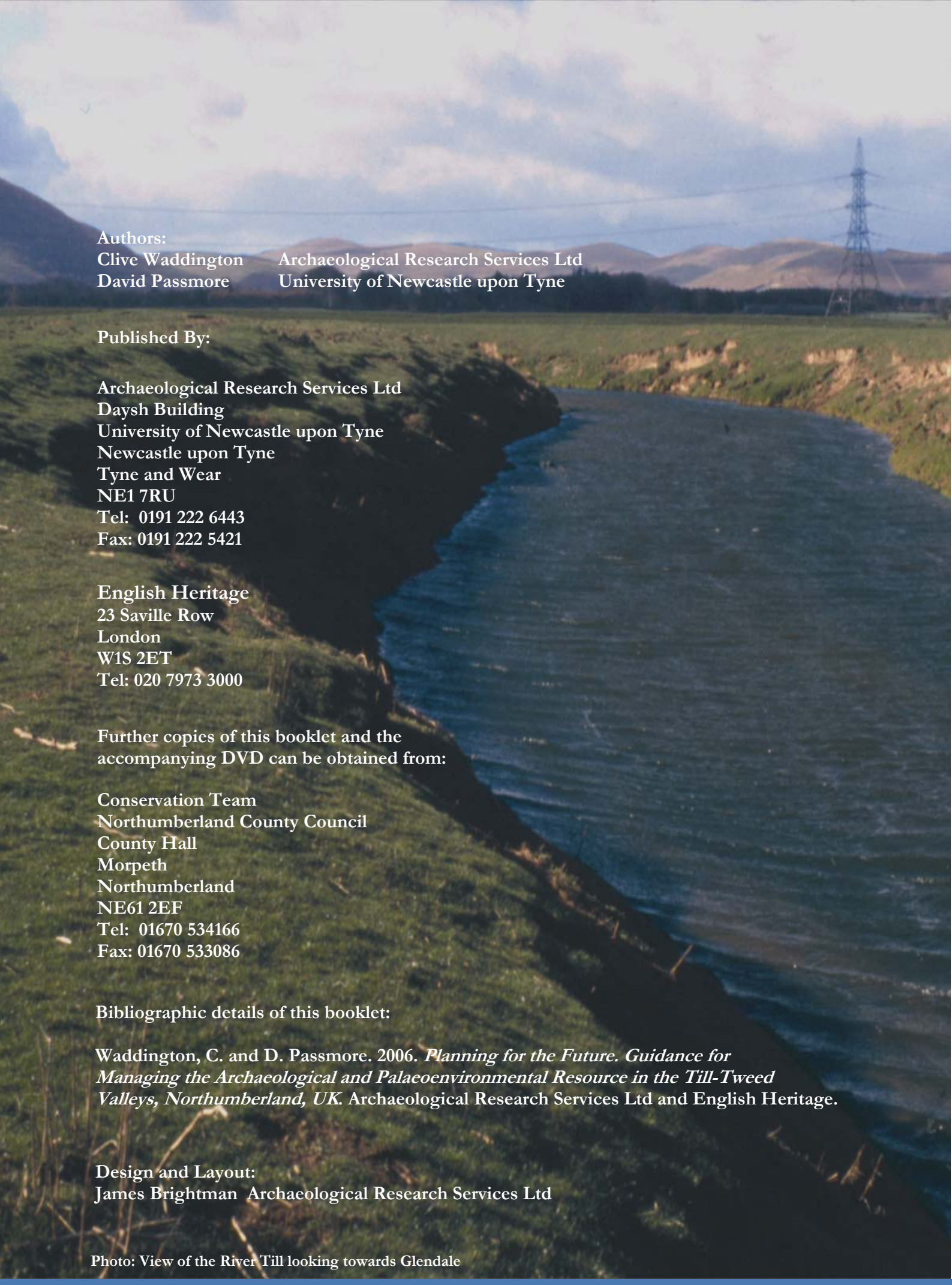

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Photo: View of the River Till looking towards Glendale

Preface

This guidance document aims to provide local authorities, planners, developers, consultants and archaeologists with a tool for managing the archaeological and palaeoenvironmental resource in the valleys of the Till and Tweed in Northumberland. It is primarily applicable to large-scale landscape developments that require an Environmental Impact Assessment rather than small-scale domestic development. This guidance is specific to the north Northumberland landscape although the principles behind it are generic. It has been prepared by the School of Geography at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne and Archaeological Research Services Ltd for Northumberland County Council and English Heritage. The guidance set out in this booklet is intended to be used in conjunction with the digital mapping supplied on a DVD. A separate user guide has been prepared for the digital mapping which works on Arcview™ or Arcmap GIS™ software.

The landscape has formed over many millennia creating a complex patchwork of landforms that have the potential to host archaeological and environmental remains dating to different periods. Particularly sensitive areas include extensive spreads of sand and gravel. Being free-draining, level, close to fresh water but free from flood-risk, these areas have always formed important foci for settlement. These areas have been mapped and analysed in detail as they are the areas most at risk from aggregate extraction. Other parts of the landscape are no less sensitive, the rich upstanding archaeology of the Cheviot Hills being a case in point, but these areas face fewer immediate development-related risks.

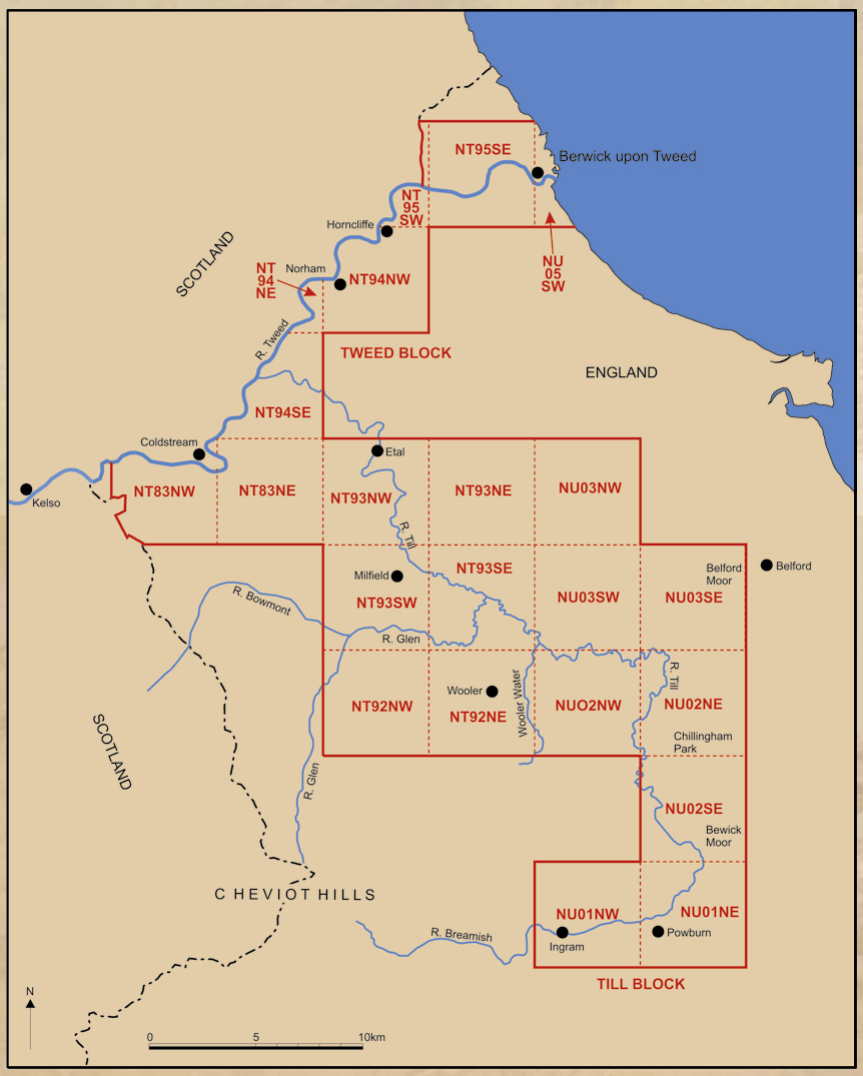
Aggregate extraction in the Till valley.

North Northumberland is exceptionally rich in archaeological remains and includes many hundreds of crop mark sites visible on aerial photographs, as well as upstanding remains that are most common in the uplands. Protecting this important heritage is vital as it underpins the character, history and enjoyment of the region as well as attracting important tourist spend.

This guidance has resulted from the Till-Tweed Geoarchaeology Project, an initiative funded by DEFRA and English Heritage through the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF). The authors are indebted to the many specialists and professionals who have contributed to this project particularly Alex Bayliss, Yvonne Boutwood, James Brightman, Chris Burgess, Sarah Cole, Jacqui Cotton, Basil Davies, Alison Deegan, Tim Gates, Richard Hewitt, Steve Houghton, Jacqui Huntley, Ben Johnson, Jonathan Last, Matthew Oakey, Sara Rushton, David Smith, Jennie Stopford, Daniel van den Toorn, Tim van der Schriek, Liz Williams and Kate Wilson.

How the historic environment guidance works

Today terms such as 'sustainable development', 'conservation' and 'partnership' are all too familiar but articulating these ideals into practical initiatives on the ground is seldom easy. Use of the same comprehensive data to inform developers, strategic planners and local authorities is one way in which co-operation and consensus can be built to achieve these ideals. The Till-Tweed study has produced a detailed data set underpinning this guidance that can assist the local planning authorities, developers, business, historic environment managers and research institutions alike.



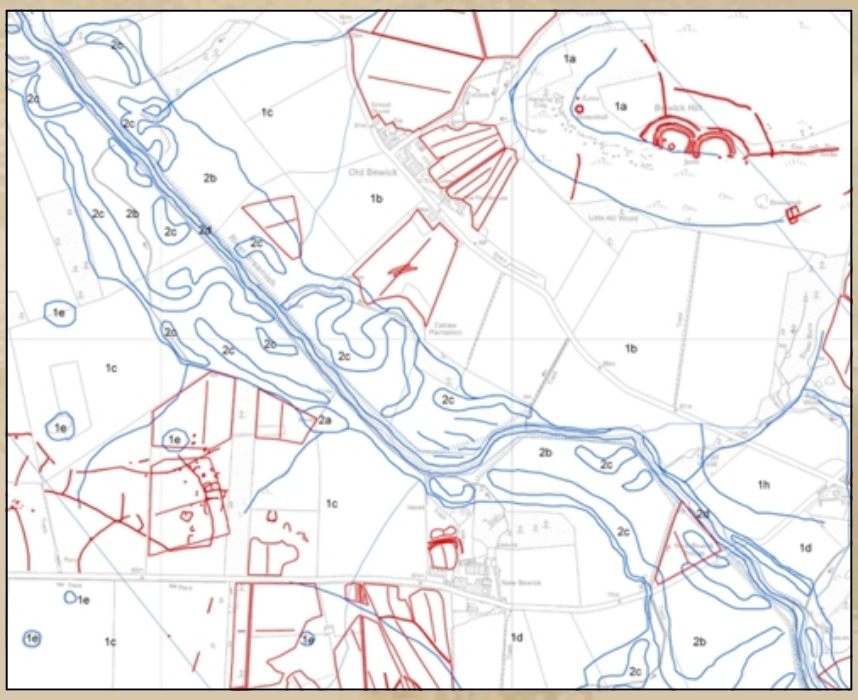
Ordnance Survey quarter sheets covered by this guidance.

The basis for this guidance is a series of 1:10,000 maps in digital format that cover the Till (including part of the Breamish) and lower Tweed valleys in Northumberland. The maps contain layers of information that show the following:

- The location of all sites and findspots on the Historic Environment Records (HERs) (formerly known as SMRs).
- Detailed plots of all archaeological sites visible on air photographs including crop marks.
- The location of all fieldwalking findspots recorded in the study area.
- Types of landform, with particular attention to areas of sand and gravel and the alluvial valley floor.

Previous research in the area (see Passmore *et al* 2002)[1] has shown that there is a direct link between certain types of landforms and certain types of archaeological and environmental remains (e.g. sand and gravel terraces were particularly favoured areas for Neolithic monuments and Anglo-Saxon settlements). In some instances they may overlie earlier sediments that may contain earlier remains. This is important as it means that the planning response to proposed developments on different types of landform can take this into account. It also allows areas of higher and lower sensitivity to be identified.

Crop mark of a late prehistoric enclosure on a gravel terrace above the Tweed at St. Cuthbert's Farm(© Tim Gates).



Landform element map extract from the Till-Tweed Geographical Information System (GIS) showing the area around Old Bewick (See Table 1 for explanation of landform codes).

Taking sediment core samples is one of the most widely used prospection techniques for palaeoecological study.

Different types of landforms are also subject to different kinds of development and impacts on the historic environment (e.g. house building on valley sides, drainage of the alluvial valley floor for agriculture, power lines across the various landforms, aggregate extraction across sand and gravel terraces). Consequently, this guidance is primarily driven by understanding the origin and age of the landform on which any given development is planned.

[1]Passmore, D. G., C. Waddington and S.J. Houghton. 2002. Geoarchaeology of the Milfield Basin, northern England; towards an integrated archaeological prospection, research and management framework. *Archaeological Prospection* 9: 71-91.