

# Archaeological Survey

Survey is a non-intrusive way of recording upstanding archaeological remains. It is particularly useful for understanding constructional relationships and is used on earthwork sites and those with standing buildings or masonry. Surveys can take a variety of forms; the recording of upstanding features, landscape topography and contour surveys. If upstanding remains are to be excavated it is standard practice to accurately survey the site in advance of excavation. In addition, if the setting of a site or landscape character is disturbed by a development, then a survey of the surrounding area may be required.



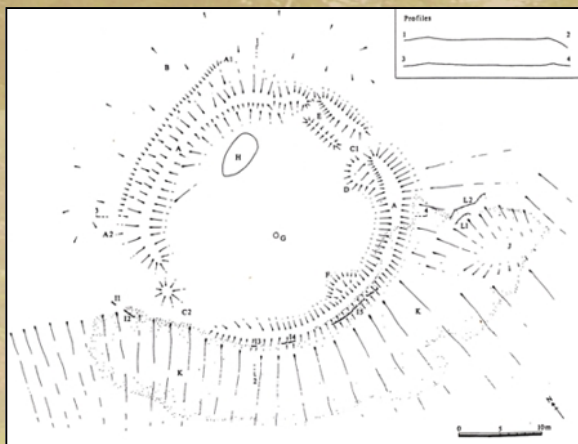
The majority of surveys use specialist equipment such as total stations and GPSs in addition to detailed observations and measurements on the ground.



Survey can reveal relationships between upstanding remains without the destructive impact of excavation, such as this circular structure that postdates the pre-historic rampart running below its far edge.

Surveys can often be enhanced by reference to aerial photographs which help show large features more clearly, as well as the presence of buried features.

A rapid way of assessing the upstanding archaeology and standing structures of large or inaccessible areas, such as woodland, is by the use of a walkover survey. This comprises the systematic walking over a given area with all features plotted onto a base map.

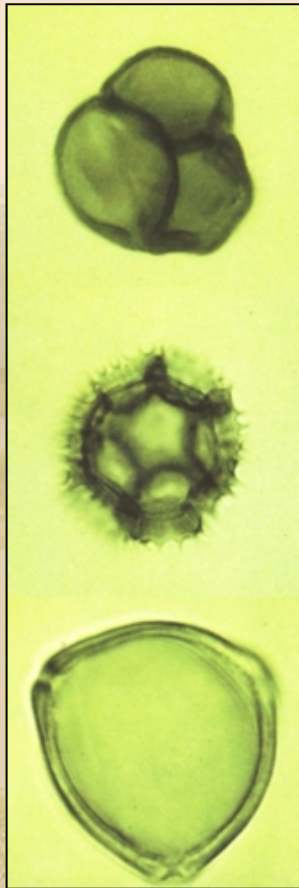


An earthwork survey of an Iron Age hillfort in Northumberland.

Survey is used as part of the recording phase of the planning process. It is a medium expense cost that requires time in the field by a team of usually two or more people depending on the size of the site. It involves the use of specialist survey equipment, GPS instruments and specialist surveying software and drawing packages to produce scale drawings from digital output.



# Palaeoenvironmental Analysis



All plants have distinctive pollen grains which allow them to be identified under the microscope.

Finer-grained sediments accumulating in ox-bow lakes and peat bogs trap and preserve pollen grains and fragments of plants and insects that existed at the time of deposition. These fossil remains can be extracted from sediment samples and identified in the laboratory. When combined with radiocarbon dates from their associated sediments (or the fossils themselves) these records help to build a picture of the plant and insect communities contemporary with past landscapes and their inhabitants.



View across the Till Valley at New Bewick.

The palaeoenvironmental record may contain evidence of human activity such as deforestation, pastoralism and cereal cultivation and hence is strongly complementary to the material archaeological record. Furthermore, in areas where the archaeological record is disturbed or absent, palaeoecological techniques may assume particular importance as the primary means of evaluating the presence and activities of past societies.

Palaeoecological techniques can provide evidence for the environmental setting and land-use activities during earlier periods and, in areas where archaeological materials are disturbed or absent, may also constitute the sole record of former human activities. These records should therefore be considered as an important component of the historic environment. Palaeoecological analysis is a medium cost technique depending on the scale of assessment and requires the use of specialist facilities and staff.



A palaeochannel (an old river course) near New Bewick.