

Community Archaeology Study Days 2007/8



Aerial Photography: An Introduction to Interpretation

By Yvonne Boutwood and Jane Stone

Poppleton Tithe Barn

Saturday, 24th March 2007

Feedback from the study day:

'Very enjoyable- good balance of presentations and practicals.'

'Very informed and enthusiastic presentations- interesting practical work.'

'A glimpse into another fascinating world- a chance to discover new knowledge- wonderful to experience.'

Aerial photographs provide an excellent method for studying archaeological landscapes.



Looking at sites from the air provides greater perspective of the size, shape and extent of a site. Aerial photography allows archaeologists to see features on and even slightly below the ground surface. Such features include crop marks, earthworks, and soil marks.

By taking pictures that can be compared to older photographs, archaeologists can see how a site changes over time. Aerial photography has greatly expanded our knowledge of past landscapes.

This study day focused on covering the basics of air photo interpretation and mapping. There was a mix of presentations, practical sessions, and displays. The day began with a presentation by Yvonne Boutwood and Jane Stone introducing the use of aerial photographs in archaeology. Next was a discussion about interpreting aerial photographs,



which outlined what features to look for when examining specific photos. After lunch, we looked at using aerial photographs in mapping. We then

looked at two case studies, one at the Vale of York and the other at Sutton on the Forest, to put what we had learned into practice. All in all, it was a very informative and interesting day.

First picture: English Heritage

Second picture: Anthony Crawshaw