

Community Archaeology Study Days 2007/8



Studying Townships

With Steve Moorhouse

Saturday, 11th August 2007

Feedback from the study day:

'Well presented, clear and very helpful.'

'In depth coverage of an interesting and useful topic with direct relevance to community archaeology.'

The study of townships provides insight into the way towns developed over time. Information can be gathered about the types of features and buildings within a township to determine its size and extent during specific time periods. It is possible to get a sense of how a township developed back in the Medieval or even Roman periods. Boundary elements, often natural features, can be examined to differentiate the historical boundaries between settlements. The fact that certain townships were distinguished from each other promotes an investigation of social relations between different towns. Thus, townships can supply us with useful information about the social as well as physical development of specific areas.

This study day, which included about seventeen participants, consisted of an investigation into how to differentiate separate townships and what kinds of township features can be seen. Boundary elements were discussed, including the word origins of many features such as hills, woods, or stones. We also looked at different kinds of artificial mounds such as cairns and tumuli. Examining such features provided us with more information about how people in the past formed towns. Community groups can use this knowledge to distinguish possible township boundaries in their future investigations.

