



Community Archaeology Study Days 2007/8



Studying Place Names

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Studying place names provides us with fascinating information about our towns and cities. They may tell us about influential or well-known people of the area, such as local rulers or prominent landowners. They may reflect important landscape features, including hills or streams, field names can also help understand the resources used in the past or indeed inform us about a type of settlement. We can learn which cultures inhabited the area at any given time, such as the Celts, Romans, Norse or Norman French. We can find out what famous events occurred nearby, including battles. Place names may also reflect the folklore or mythology of an area. An example of a place name here in North Yorkshire is Aldwark, which is an Anglo-Saxon/Old English word meaning 'old fortification'. Place names thus reflect the changing histories and landscapes of a particular area.

