



Community Archaeology Study Days 2008/9



Field-walking Skipwith
With Ian Milsted and Jon Kenny
22nd November 2008

Feedback from the study day:

'Very informative and overall an interesting experience.'

'I thought that the whole day was very well organized and informative.'

Field walking remains one of the most important methods of archaeological investigation. It involves scanning the ground in measured intervals to observe and record any features or artefacts present on the ground surface of a particular area. A large number of finds indicates the possible presence of a more substantial site that will require further investigative techniques. Field walking often occurs on flat, ploughed land because ploughing often brings up buried artefacts. Trained walkers move methodically through the field at specified intervals, allowing for a detailed survey of a site. Field walking is a crucial method of determining the probability of the existence of archaeological material in a certain area.



A large group of thirty-four participants met up to do a field-walking exercise at Skipwith, a village about ten miles south of York. Although a small village, Skipwith has a long history, with evidence of prehistoric occupation in the area. A lecture on proper techniques and possible artefact types to be found preceded the field walking exercise. The field walking took place during the afternoon. The feedback from the day indicates that the exercise was useful and entertaining, with many people expressing interest in further field investigation methods such as finds processing and geophysical survey. Overall, this exercise provided us with a great overview of the importance of field walking to archaeology.