



Community Archaeology Workshop: 6

Workshop 6 - Approaching Fieldwork
Saturday 17th September 2005

Praise for workshop 6:

"Workshop 6 had a relaxed atmosphere and helpful staff, good visual support and very good lectures...it was great to see such enthusiasm about the subject!" Jean Arthur, participant

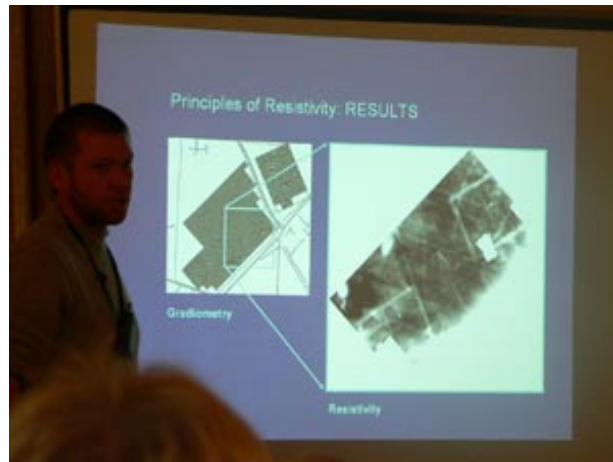
"(Workshop 6 had) good presentations pitched at the right level of knowledge in a nice location" Participant

"We feel lucky to have the opportunity to benefit from these sessions" Susan Major, participant

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Workshop 6 was another successful workshop - it was well-attended, set in a nice location and fortunate enough to have fine weather! The day began in the beautiful surroundings of The King's Manor with talks by Ben Gourley and Steve Dobson, two Technicians from the Department of Archaeology at the University of York. Ben began by outlining the general principles of archaeological fieldwalking and surface survey. This included useful information on how to set out a survey grid, how to relate your grid to an Ordnance Survey map, how to carry out fieldwalking and how to manage the data from your survey



After a short break, Steve Dobson gave an introduction to Geophysical Survey, outlining the general principles of Magnetometry, Resistivity and Ground Penetrating Radar. The instruments used to conduct these different types of survey were available for participants to look at and handle. Steve also explained the importance of using a survey grid for Geophysical surveys and described when and under what conditions the different methods could be applied.



After lunch, we moved to the Minster Library Gardens, part of the Dean's Park. The aim for the afternoon was to give the participants hands-on experience of laying out grids and carrying out a geophysical survey.

We started by getting everyone to have a go at laying out grids, using diameters and triangulation to get two 20m grids laid down with tapes and pegs. The group was then given a demonstration about how to use the resistivity meter, taking readings every 0.50m along 1m traverses in each grid.



Everybody got to have a go at using the equipment. Other tasks included moving the tapes along the grids and plotting the positions of the grids on a plan by tying them into buildings and boundaries in the Dean's Park.

True to form, this workshop was not without its surprises. We were all amused and delighted when a classical Quartet set up next to our survey to rehearse for a wedding reception that would take place there later in the day! Their music gave the survey a very ambient and relaxed feel!

At the end of the day Ben and Steve gave a demonstration of how to use a Magnetometer. It was not possible to carry out a magnetometer survey with so many people as the machine is very sensitive to metal and requires the operator to have no metal on their person or clothes. However, the demonstration was very useful and gave participants a chance to see how the equipment is used.



Results

The results of the resistivity survey have been processed by Ben and Steve at the University of York. One of the grids shows a couple of potential features below the ground, including an anomaly running diagonally across the grid and another linear feature that may be related to drainage. The data from the other grid experienced some technical difficulties due to the nature of the survey and the terrain and therefore the results were not able to tell us anything about that grid. For more information about the results please contact Eliza Gore, who is preparing a technical report about the survey for English Heritage.

Thanks to all who took part in the survey and to Ben and Steve for running such an excellent and useful workshop. If you wish to contact either Ben or Steve about their work you can find their contact details on the University of York website at <http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/arch/staff/Staff.htm>.

Thanks also to the Dean and Chapter of York Minster for allowing access to the park for the survey in the Minster Gardens, and to Keith Emerick from English Heritage, for providing

permission to carry out the Geophysical Survey on a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

For more information on carrying out a Geophysical survey and interpreting the results see the Archaeology Data Service's Guide to good Practice at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/goodguides/geophys/>

Contact

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