

A Journey Through Archaeology

Episode 2 - How Do We Know Where To Look?

We have learnt that planning and preparation is needed before an archaeological dig. Archaeologists can only dig where they have permission and where there is a need to help record remains that might be otherwise lost. There are a number of different sources of information that can help them learn more about a site:

- Maps from different periods
- Old photographs and drawings
- Written historical records, such as legal documents or personal accounts
- Reports from previous archaeological digs



Archaeologists call this preparation '**desk-based research**'; using existing sources of information about the history of a potential site to identify what archaeology may remain. It is one of the necessary steps when choosing how to rescue and preserve any archaeological material that might be negatively affected by new building work.

Activities

YAT's archaeologists are preparing for a new dig using the following historical sources. Take a look and complete the activities on the next page:



Land ownership document with records of a factory, 1956 AD

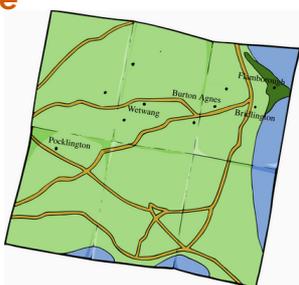


Archaeological report about digging up a Roman fort in area, dating to 240 AD



Map of the area, 1770 AD

Map of the area, 1986 AD



Area photographs showing a large house, 1902 AD

Land ownership document with records of a farm, 1525 AD



1. The different sources collected together for this desk-based research give a good idea about the use of the land over time. Can you put them in chronological order? **Write or draw your ideas on the timeline below:**

**Oldest
source**

**Most recent
source**

2. The sources suggest that the same area of land was used for different types of buildings over time.

Can you think of any evidence that might be left behind by different jobs or activities here? **Write your thoughts in the bubble:**



Do Your Own Study!

Another method of learning about a site is by talking to local people and recording their personal knowledge and memories of a place. This is called **oral history**.

Conduct an Oral History interview with an adult, such as a family member or teacher, about a particular place in your area to find out how it has changed over time. This could be the street you live on, your school, a place of worship or somewhere else that your adult has known longer than you!

Record your interview on the form on the next page.

After your interview, read back over the answers your interviewee gave. Can you spot anything that could be useful to an archaeologist wanting to dig in this area?

Remember, keeping a note of changes to an area is always useful for preserving a record what happened in the past and may help future archaeological work.



Name of adult:

Date of interview:

Name/Address of site:

What is your connection to this place? (e.g. where I live, or a place I regularly walk through)

How long have you visited this place?

Can you think of any new buildings that have appeared on this site since you first came here?

Can you think of any buildings that used to be here but are now gone?

Have any of the roads or footpaths changed?

What do you think is the biggest change that has taken place here?

Have any important events taken place in this place?

Do you know anything about the history of this place that you would like to share?

Thank you for taking the time to answer my questions today.