



READING THE LANDSCAPE

a practical introduction to

interpreting archaeological surface remains

Evidence of the past isn't always hidden below ground. If you've ever noticed humps and bumps and puzzled about what they might mean, then this course is for you!

This Masterclass is aimed at **anyone** with an enquiring mind who wants to learn how to decipher surface traces of past human activity. We place a strong emphasis on the **basics**: close observation and thinking. These simple skills can transform your understanding of a historic site or landscape, yet are often neglected, as people turn too quickly to hi-tech solutions instead such as lidar, drones and geophysical survey. This course is about learning how to look at evidence we can see around us – without any need for special equipment.

"We guarantee your walks in the countryside will never be the same again!"



LANDSCAPE MASTERCLASS

12 – 14 August 2022

Join

Prof Stewart Ainsworth
(*Time Team's landscape
archaeologist*)

and

Al Oswald
(*landscape archaeologist
University of York*)

in the landscape surrounding Epiacum
Roman fort in the North Pennines Area
of Outstanding Natural Beauty



More details
overleaf

What will this Masterclass teach me?

If you are a beginner, this Masterclass will give you the tools you need to start to read any rural landscape for yourself.

If you already have some experience, we will aim to stretch and improve your abilities. The outdoor teaching environment is informal and we encourage group discussions and independent thought, so please come prepared to work in teams, share ideas and defend your views. The training will include:

- How to recognise patterns in the rural landscape, identify key details and narrow down uncertainties till you reach an interpretation you feel confident about.
- How to understand 'earthwork stratigraphy' to get an idea of the date of a particular feature, and read how landscapes develop through time.
- How to use other sources of evidence, including lidar and old maps, to refine the interpretations you've reached.
- How to record your observations through notes and sketches.



Previous participants have gone on to attend our more advanced Masterclasses and, in some cases, to undertake their own research and make important discoveries of their own.

Where will the Masterclass be held?

The training weekend takes place on an upland farm at the spectacular Roman fort at Whitley Castle (known to the Romans as Epiacum), just a couple of miles north of the small market town of Alston in the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Postcode CA9 3BG; OS Grid Ref NY695 487). The event is hosted by Epiacum Heritage CIO Registered Charity No 1178087.

What will we be doing?

A fair amount of walking, looking and thinking! We will examine a whole range of lumps and bumps (earthworks) in and around the Roman fort. This landscape contains surface remains of many different periods, and you will learn how to decode them using simple human skills – observation and analysis.

When's the Masterclass happening?

Training will take place between the evening of Friday 12th August and the afternoon of Sunday 14th August. The Friday evening is an informal indoor presentation in a local community hall followed by two full days outside on site.

What's provided?

We will provide the teaching and all necessary materials plus an evening meal on the first night and lunches/snacks during the training.

Where can I stay?

Accommodation is not provided, so you will need to make your own choice (we can help by providing you with an accommodation list and it may be possible to stay on the farm in your own tent or campervan).

What should I bring?

This is an outdoors course on the hills of the North Pennines. Above all, you should bring warm and wet-weather clothing and boots.

Who are the trainers?

- Prof. Stewart Ainsworth FSA, MClfA, formerly a senior investigator with English Heritage; *SharedPast* (Community and Volunteer Archaeology Support Group) archaeologist and *Time Team's* resident landscape archaeologist.
- Al Oswald FSA. After 5 years as Stewart's boss, Al sought out a less stressful lifestyle studying for a PhD at the University of York, where he also teaches the field investigation parts of all the archaeology courses.

Cost - £250

Contact Steve.Bentley@epiacumheritage.org

