

Drawing on relevant primary and secondary data and sources relating to archaeology, develop a publication and dissemination strategy for a case study - *For this assignment I have used the project design from a previous assignment and created fictionalised results, using real place names and expected results from the research project which has not yet taken place.*

The wider context of the Yorkshire Wolds Reconnaissance Project

The project dissemination strategy discussed in this document will build on the project design for the Yorkshire Wolds Reconnaissance Project (YWRP) which forms part of a wider multidisciplinary project involving multiple archaeological investigation teams within Historic England (Andrews, 2024). The Yorkshire Wolds Reconnaissance Project (YWRP) initially aimed to take up-to-date vertical and oblique aerial photographs of the archaeology in the Yorkshire Wolds, to provide the Aerial Survey Investigation Team at Historic England, with the photographic material to conduct further research into the area and produce a new mapping report (Andrews, 2024). Although the YWRP is much smaller in scope than the wider multidisciplinary project, it is important to consider the types of dissemination that can be achieved and to understand how the results from the YWRP can contribute value and complement wider research both within Historic England but also externally.

The scope and aims of the Yorkshire Wolds Reconnaissance Project

The study area of the YWRP was chosen based on the creation of a new National Landscape, previously called an Area of Outstanding National Beauty, within the Yorkshire Wolds Character Area (Andrews, 2024) (Natural England, n.d. a). It seemed appropriate to use the new National Landscape Candidate area as the parameter area in the YWRP to contribute further research on the historical character of this area (Natural England, n.d. b). The main aims for the YWRP included '*Aim 1: To aid in future research and the future management of scheduled monuments in the Yorkshire Wolds. Aim 2: To add to the known information about the Yorkshire Wolds with the likelihood of discovering new sites*' (Andrews, 2024). Having completed the main stages of surveying and photo processing, it seems appropriate to update the aims to include a phase of publication and dissemination. Aerial photographs can pose new opportunities for further research and provide valuable materials for public engagement, the project will now include Aim 3: *To assess any new discoveries and make these available to both heritage professionals and the wider public*. The new aim will cover the range of publication and dissemination opportunities which will be discussed in more detail throughout this document.

Types of output material created in the project and the opportunities they bring

Now that the Yorkshire Wolds Reconnaissance Project's main stages have been completed, a new collection of vertical and oblique photographs is available through the Historic England Archive. Ensuring the photographs are useful for a wide range of audiences means that it is vital to make sure they can be accessed easily. One of the ways that the images are made available is through

the Historic England Aerial Photo Explorer (APEX). This tool enables anybody with access to the internet to view the wide range of aerial photographs taken by Historic England between 2005 and 2024 along with a collection of historical aerial photographs (Grady and Crutchley, 2022). Making the images available was an essential part of this project.

As the YWRP has produced a collection of vertical and oblique photographic material, recording a large variety of archaeological features, a stage of monument recording was added into the methodology to assess the information contained within each image. The monument recording stage is vital to identify and interpret the archaeological features recorded within each photograph. Now that the monument recording has been finalised it is important to consider if any discoveries are worth writing up into a dedicated research report. Not all discoveries are considered 'worthy' of a dedicated piece of research but often sites that are unique or connect to a wider landscape of archaeological activity and can improve or change the overall understanding, are chosen to dedicate extra time for research which is then disseminated into a formal research report.

Assessing the findings from the monument recording phase

In total the monument recording phase resulted in 45 amended monument records and 21 new monument records. Most of the new records represented sections of Medieval settlement activity and field systems in earthwork form. The large number of Medieval earthworks identified that had previously been unrecorded, were most likely due to the restrictions in the original mapping project conducted in the Yorkshire Wolds (Stoertz, 1997). The Yorkshire Wolds National Mapping Project (Stoertz, 1997) was one of the first national mapping projects to be conducted by Historic England and crucially the survey omitted any archaeological features later than the Roman period. All of the mapping was hand-drawn, which was probably a contributing factor that meant the large number of Medieval earthworks in the survey area were not mapped, as some of the areas of ridge and furrow and settlement activity are quite extensive. The results from the YWRP have highlighted a knowledge gap in this area that this project and the wider multidisciplinary project will help to fill. Many of the areas of newly recorded Medieval settlement and field system earthworks have extended previously recorded areas of similar archaeological activity, with one particular area extended quite significantly. Around the area of Sledmere Park and Garden, three new fields of Medieval settlement activity were identified in the monument recording stage and one of the old monument records has been updated to include more detailed information about another field containing Medieval settlement earthworks and field systems, all of which appear to be sections of one large area of Medieval settlement. As the three new areas of archaeological activity are so extensive and form part of a wider area of Medieval settlement activity it has been chosen as an area deemed worthy of more detailed research. The detailed research will include a small mapping phase using the images from the YWRP and this will enable the full results for this small area to be published in a dedicated research report.

Methods of publication and dissemination

The output for the YWRP will be split into three different approaches to ensure accessibility and usability, detailed understanding through interpretation, and finally awareness. The first method of output is through APEX which will enable a wide variety of audiences to access the archived photographic material generated from the project. The second method is broken into two stages, firstly the creation of NMRs (National Monument Records) which are made available through the Heritage Gateway, and a detailed research report which will be published regarding the earthworks surrounding Sledmere Park and Garden. These methods are the best way to ensure that the information is available and that more detailed interpretations of any discoveries are also available for audiences who require further information. Although the information is made available, it is important to include a stage of social media coverage, as this will help point an even wider group of people towards the resources available.

Aerial Photo Explorer (APEX) and community outreach opportunities

The Aerial Photo Explorer (APEX) was created by the Aerial Survey Investigations team at Historic England in 2021, making the aerial photos available via an online platform and extending the range of people who can engage with them, with an estimated total of over 250 million people reached by 2022 (Grady and Crutchley, 2022, p. 13). It has not yet been studied which types of audiences use APEX to engage with heritage, but it would certainly be a tool that we want to encourage local historic societies and community archaeology groups to use. As part of this project, it would be a great opportunity to not only increase the number of people using APEX but also encourage those audiences who may find it a useful resource who aren't already using it to explore the web tool. As part of this project, it would be a good opportunity to combine the benefits of both online skills and heritage-related community outreach to directly benefit a local group in the Yorkshire Wolds. It has been decided that there is an opportunity to engage with a local archaeological interest group in the Yorkshire Wolds and conduct a photo reading session to encourage the use of both the APEX web tool and the project photographs, demonstrating how best to get information from them in a strategic way. The training will cover the locality of the Yorkshire Wolds, and ensure the photographs show places that the local interest group recognise. The photo reading session will cover a range of techniques to encourage the viewer to think about more than just the archaeology within the photographs including, time of year (shadows, tree coverage etc), type of landscape (topography and geology) and land use (different zones i.e. arable/pasture/moorland etc). The session will also provide an opportunity to deliver training on how to use APEX, encouraging future use of the resource in a skilled way. Not only would this type of outreach promote the best use of APEX and provide useful skills in photo reading, but it will also help connect a community to its own heritage which can have a host of social benefits including pride of place and a sense of well-being (Gallou, 2022, p.15). To measure the impacts of the outreach session a questionnaire will be filled in by those taking part both before the session and then again, a month after the session has

taken place. The questionnaire before the session will cover a range of topics including knowledge of APEX and any previous use, desire to use and try new technology for research purposes, scoring how connected they feel to the place they live and how they perceive heritage to have a positive impact on their lives. The questionnaire sent after the session will cover topics such as if they have used APEX since the session and how comfortable they feel using it, how they have used APEX and what for, as well as scoring their connection to where they live and how much heritage plays a part in this again. It is hoped the questionnaire will both rate the success of the outreach session and also gain an insight into how APEX is being used amongst community groups, if at all, it may also show any improvements that the session has made with other social aspects.

Interpretation and the publication of the Sledmere Park and Garden Medieval complex research report

During the monument recording stage, both new and updated records were created, which also link to a corresponding OASIS record, which is useful for a whole range of audiences. The National Monument Records are also available on the Heritage Gateway which can be a useful port of call for local planning authorities and those doing desk-based assessments. The abundance of new monument records created in the YWRP has highlighted the need for further study of Medieval earthworks in the area, providing a sizable source of information for a new in-depth topical study of the Medieval landscape of the Yorkshire Wolds more widely. At the end of every financial year, period-based summaries are written up for the monuments recorded as part of the monument recording which is done for all flights over a year. It will be useful to write a dedicated summary of the Medieval period in the Yorkshire Wolds and add this information to the Yorkshire Wolds research strategy to ensure information is up to date and provide details of any gaps in understanding. The audiences that input to and use research frameworks include local planning authorities, contractors, academics, and local societies which means that it is important to include any new information that increases or changes the overall understanding of the archaeology in the area (Research Frameworks, 2025a). The Yorkshire Wolds Research Strategy is a great way to reach a wide range of audiences, but it does not necessarily have a high value to those who may want more detailed or site-specific information.

As the scope for this project is fairly small compared to the wider multidisciplinary project, it seemed realistic to conduct a small research project, to be able to publish a highly detailed site-specific research report. The dedicated research report will explore the landscape surrounding Sledmere Park and Garden, which will not only highlight the nature and extent of the Medieval activity but also provide a snapshot of the character of Medieval activity across the Yorkshire Wolds character area. Another motivation for selecting the Sledmere area is the location of the Registered Park and Garden which sits at the heart of the dedicated research report area. Sledmere Park and Garden is a country park, open to the public for most of the year. Publishing a

report based on an area that is well-known by those living locally within the Yorkshire Wolds and visited by those coming from further away is a good way to encourage engagement through the familiarity of a particular place. Writing a research report on the area around Sledmere Park and Garden may help to bolster a sense of 'place attachment' for those living locally, helping to form stronger community bonds and identity which have been linked to improving overall social well-being (Gallou, 2022, p.15-17). It is a tactical decision to use the name of Sledmere Park and Garden in the research report title as a mechanism for wider public engagement through familiarity with the site, which is hoped to serve as an entry point into engaging with archaeology in the wider Yorkshire Wolds area. Not only is it the goal of this project to engage with a variety of audiences but the type of engagement should be meaningful and have a positive impact on people's lives. Measuring the success of the research report will, however, be extremely difficult and will only be gauged by how popular the report is. The Historic England website can allow employees to see how many times the report is clicked on; this does not indicate who is reading it or even if people are reading the report in its entirety which unfortunately makes this an ineffective way of measuring the true impact of the report beyond the number of people opening it.

Discussion of relevant past social media posts and their use for this project

It is copacetic that we use the research data and photographs created from the YWRP to create useful outputs and outreach opportunities but ensuring that the information created is discoverable can be another challenge entirely. One way that the research report and the photographs available on APEX can be made more discoverable is through social media posts. At Historic England the archaeology department as a whole has a dedicated account on X previously known as Twitter, separate from the main organisational Historic England account on X. Historic England also has a main organisational account on LinkedIn which can also be a useful way of sharing information to a different audience. The two platforms, X (Twitter) and LinkedIn have slightly different audiences where X seems to attract quite a wide audience, alternatively, LinkedIn has quite a specialised professional audience attracting engagement from others working or studying within an archaeological sphere (Rocks-Macqueen, 2012, p.3). This is not to say that X doesn't cater to the specialist either, but the wide groups of users can enable greater interactions with people from a range of backgrounds who have an active interest in archaeology but don't necessarily work or study in the sector (Huvila, 2013, p.22). The social media platform X does come with its limitations only allowing 140 characters, but it can still be a useful place to share images and short informative work achievements or highlights as well as link to other mediums, which for our purpose can include the research report and the APEX online webpage (Huvila, 2013, p.25). Some previous examples highlighted in Figures 1 and 2, show the types of posts the Historic England archaeology account has posted on X in the past and the different levels of engagement which include the number of views, likes, comments, and reposts.



Figure 1: An X post from the @HE_Archaeology account, sharing that a new upload of aerial photographs has been uploaded to the Air Photo Explorer (HE Archaeology, 2024a)



Figure 2: Right – An X post from the @HE_Archaeology account sharing the publication of a new research report using an aerial image of the site (HE Archaeology, 2024b)

Figure 1 shows that the use of aerial images to engage the public with a post can be quite successful with over 8.5 thousand views and 53 likes. The amount of reposting also helps the post to reach more people which is one of the great functions of the X platform. To share the photographs taken during the YWRP, it would be good to post an 'APEX Update' style X post, similar to the post in Figure 1. This would share with the public the new selection of photographs

which cover the area of the Yorkshire Wolds, using one of the images taken to further engage people with the post and give them an example of some of the material available. When choosing an image for this post it would be a good idea to select a photograph that is easily understandable as archaeology and visible, such as a strong earthwork feature which can be further described in a small caption. The images used for social media posts tend to be more 'picturesque' images that display clear archaeological features presented in an aesthetic way to ensure they are attractive to the audience and encourage engagement both with the post but also the content that is trying to be signposted. As shown in Figure 2, aerial images can also be used to signpost research reports, this would be a good way to capture the initial interest of the viewers on X and direct them where to read more information about similar content. For this project creating an X post in the 'research report' style would be the most suitable way to attract more people to read the report, showing where they can find it and giving them a snapshot of what to expect.

The archaeology department at Historic England has some control over what gets posted on Historic England's dedicated Archaeology X account, as there are staff working within the archaeological investigation teams who have direct input and control of what gets shared. In contrast, it seems more difficult to access the main organisational Historic England accounts on LinkedIn and X, which are controlled by a dedicated communications team. It would be great to get better access to these accounts and have more input into the types of posts showing archaeological content, as Figures 3 and 4 show that the main organisational account has better reach to larger audiences with Figure 3 having over 17 thousand views and 352 likes and Figure 4 having 730 likes which is substantially more than the posts on the HE Archaeology X posts. The posts which use aerial images on the main organisation account on X and LinkedIn tend to have a more corporate message associated, whereas the HE Archaeology account on X is more specific to archaeology. It is unfortunate that the details of the research won't be posted on the main organisational accounts, as there is great potential to reach a different audience both on the X main account and on LinkedIn with audiences who are more likely to work within the archaeological commercial and academic sectors. LinkedIn also allows for longer descriptions and captions to attach alongside images, as demonstrated in Figure 4, this is a feature which would be ideal for posts like the ones which will be used for the YWRP. The HE Archaeology account on X has approximately 86,800 thousand followers whereas the main organisational account has approximately 244,300 thousand followers on X and 117,536 followers on LinkedIn (as of 06/01/2025). There is a large audience which could potentially be tapped into, and it is certainly an area which should be approached by the Historic England Archaeology X account and those wanting to share their work on it. Better communication between the Archaeology teams and the Communications team within Historic England could aid in future publication of research and help to reach even more audiences. Getting access to LinkedIn and being able to post from the HE Archaeology team would also benefit measuring the outcomes of the social media posts; LinkedIn allows accounts to see the demographic of people who view and engage with posts and how many

people are following links which can be useful to measure how effective the posts are at directing people to research reports and the APEX website.

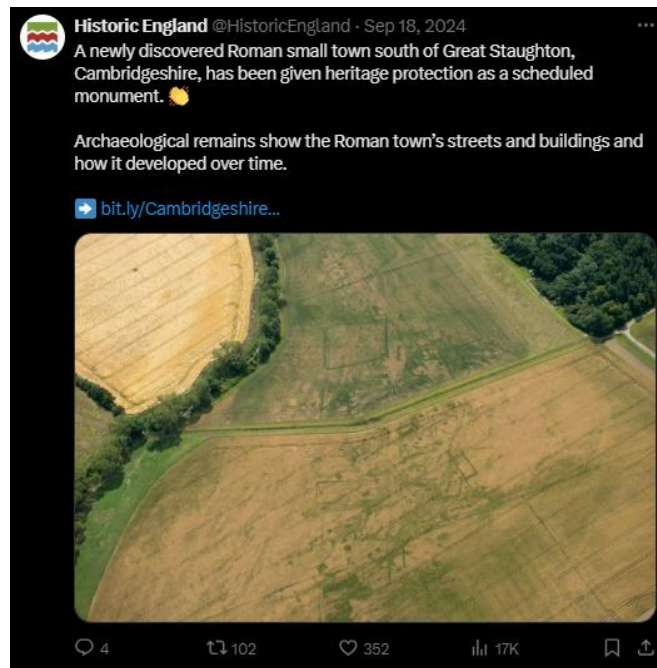


Figure 3: An X post from the main organisation X account shown using aerial photos to share a new scheduled monument status granted to a newly discovered Roman Town in Cambridgeshire (Historic England, 2024a).

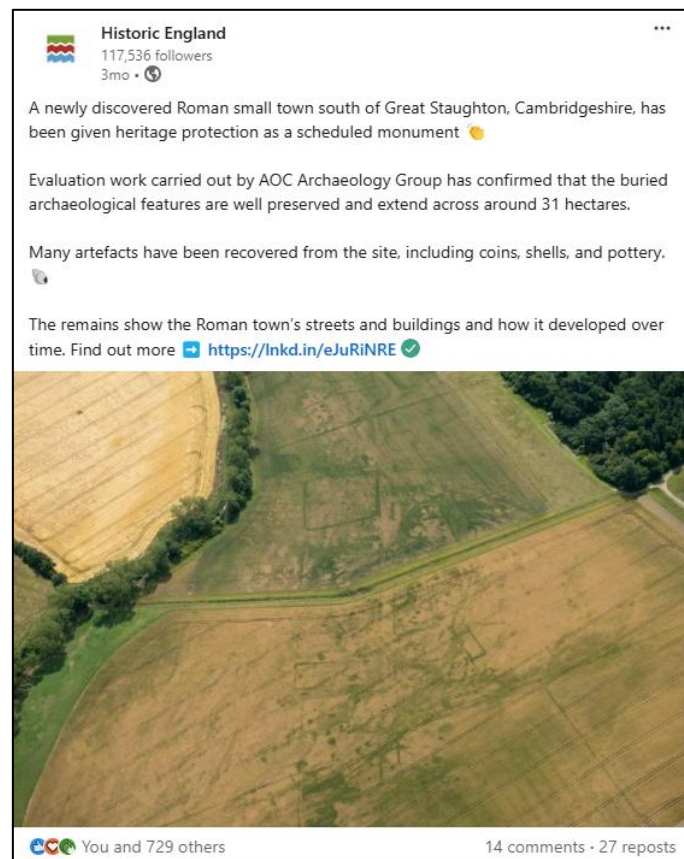


Figure 4: A LinkedIn post from Historic England's organisational account, the same post as on the X account but LinkedIn allows for a longer more detailed description (Historic England, 2024b).

Recommendations

It is recommended that the dissemination methods discussed in this document be implemented to best achieve the aims of the overall YWRP and more widely to align with the Historic England Corporate plan values(*Figure 5*).

Passion	We share our love of the historic environment to inspire and energise people
Learning	We listen and learn, and pass on this knowledge to others
Collaboration	We work with partners and we work together to achieve great things
Openness	We communicate in a way that's understandable, available and useful to everyone
Responsibility	We are accountable to the public and we always act with integrity

Figure 5: Historic England Corporate Plan values 2023-2026 (Historic England, 2023).

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