

## Fieldtrip Case Studies

### Roche Abbey and Manor Lodge

#### Organising

The whole concept of the Community Archaeology Project was to get students out of the classroom and into the field to look at archaeological sites and put into practice what they had learnt.

The most cost effective way of arranging these trips is to centre work around English Heritage Sites which allow free access to educational groups of all ages. In the Yorkshire and Humber region these include the following sites:

#### South Yorkshire

Brodsworth Hall and Gardens  
Conisborough Castle  
Monk Bretton Priory  
Roche Abbey

#### North Yorkshire

Aldbrough Roman Site  
Bylands Abbey  
Clifford's Tower (York)  
Eastby Abbey  
Kirkham Priory  
Helmsby Castle  
Middleham Castle  
Mount Grace Priory  
Pickering Castle  
Richmond Castle  
Scarborough Castle  
Rievaulx Abbey  
Wharram Percy  
York Cold War Bunker  
Whitby Abbey

#### East Yorkshire

Burton Agnes Manor House

#### Derbyshire

Bolsover Castle  
Arbour Low Stone Circle  
Peeveril Castle- Castleton

#### Lincolnshire

Gainsthorpe Medieval Village  
Thorton Abbey and Gatehouse

To gain free access to these sites a visit should be booked at least a fortnight in advance via the English Heritage website or by phone. Details are available at: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.19130>

The teachers' guides are excellent and full use should be made of the free familiarisation visit.

Other sites visited included Creswell Crags (<http://www.creswell-crags.org.uk/>) and DIG, York (<http://www.jorvik-viking-centre.co.uk/dig/index.htm>) that had excellent disabled access.

### Touching the earth

An archaeology teaching resource pack for WEA tutors

## Roche Abbey

### Victoria Beauchamp

#### Before Visiting

The visit to Roche Abbey with a group of students with mild to moderate learning difficulties was preceded in the classroom with information about the site based on the English Heritage guidebook and the University of Sheffield's website on Cistercians.

We talked as a group about what life would have been like for a monk living at the monastery, the organisation of the monk's day and the different types of monk who lived at the abbey. We also listened to some Gregorian Chants. The university website contains a presentation which can be downloaded of a flythrough of a reconstructed abbey.

If your budget allows the DVD *The Silent Years* by Hopewell Studios at £13.99 (inc free P&P) provides an entertaining starting point for discussion.

We talked about how the buildings were constructed. This was done based on photographs I had taken of the site on my familiarization visit. (How to build a Cathedral with historian Jon Cannon shown on BBC4 in April 2008 had some excellent insights into the planning and building of large religious structures). Talk about why different materials were used (eg. stone for outer walls, rubble for infill, brick for fireplaces, wood for roof (why does this not survive).

#### The Visit

The site began with a walk around the site and getting students to identify different parts of the abbey. Because of the relatively small scale of Roche this is easy to do. I tried to bring each room to life by getting the students to pretend they were the monks. Where would they have sat in the refectory, who would sit on the raised area, where would they sit in church? Could they remember what type of seats the monks had? What would it have been like to copy manuscripts? Did they think the buildings would be warm or cold? Why was the kitchen upstream of the toilets?

We then looked at the Know Your Place worksheets (based on an idea from English Heritage in their teaching pack CD-ROM: Case Studies - Roche Abbey - Know Your Place). This exercise got students to look carefully at the site and identify where on the plan the photos were (pictured). This particular group of students was very observant and surprised themselves that they could begin to relate what was in front of them to the plan on their worksheet.

The group looking for places on 'Know your Place' Worksheets at Roche Abbey



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We also considered the building materials and why they had been used. (CD-ROM: Case Studies - Roche Abbey - Building Materials). This exercise worked verbally but students found the worksheet difficult and in hindsight I would simplify it for those with learning difficulties.

Taking the fact that churches were built on the ratio of one to the square root of two (as shown in How to build a Cathedral) the last exercise we did was to see if this was the case at Roche. We measured the diagonal of the cloister and found that it was precisely the same length as the nave of the church. This exercise provided the students with an opportunity to work together to establish where the corners of the cloisters were, to untangle the tape measure (problem solving) and to relay information to each other, thus building on their own confidence in taking measurements and communicate with each other. Unfortunately this exercise was so absorbing no photographs were taken.

#### **Post Visit**

Over lunch in the abbey grounds we talked about what we had found out. For those with learning difficulties, two hours outside and having to think is always draining and the group often got tired and were very quiet on the return journey. This should be considered when planning field activities.

If time permitted the ideal classroom follow up would be to produce posters or a report (depending on the group's capabilities) documenting the visit which would allow for the group to recap on what they learnt and would help to develop their communication skills. Due to lack of photographs this did not happen on this trip but was put down to experience and future trips were much better documented.

## Manor Lodge

### Sally Rodgers

#### Before Visiting

The visit to Manor Lodge (run by Green Estate) with a group of students from the Sheffield Care Trust was preceded in the classroom with information about the site based on the tutor's research (see CD-ROM: Case Studies - Manor Lodge).

The group was introduced to the history of the site, including the period when Mary Queen of Scots was incarcerated there in the 16th century. The learners also browsed the internet to investigate the previous archaeological work undertaken at the site.

A short description of the planned pottery workshop was also given (see CD-ROM worksheets). The planning session concluded with discussions with learners about historic sites they have visited in the past.

#### The Visit

For the first half of the field activity the learners were given a tour of the site which identified different parts of the lodge buildings and the grounds. I tried to give a potted history while describing the remains which have survived above ground and a summary of the buried remains which form the archaeological story.

A number of the learners brought their own knowledge to the tour and we were welcomed very informatively by the Green Estate staff.

Specific detail was given to the key features of John Fox's pottery kiln to introduce the assemblage of 18th century Manor Ware pottery which has been recovered from the lodge.



Learners at Manor Lodge doing a slip-ware activity including wheel-throwing.

For the second half of the session the group took part in a pottery workshop using 18th century techniques of wheel-throwing and decorative slip application. I demonstrated the techniques of pottery manufacture and the learners then worked individually, or in pairs, to try out the decoration processes. A wheel-throwing demonstration was then given and the learners produced their own pots. We then had a discussion about the links of the lodge with John Fox and about the ways in which experimental archaeology can help with our interpretation of the past.



Two examples of the pottery made on the day of the field visit

**Post Visit:**

As with the Roche Abbey study the ideal classroom follow up would be to produce posters or a report (depending on the group's capabilities) documenting the visit which would allow for the group to recap on what they learnt and would help demonstrate new knowledge and skills.

It was also possible to take the thrown pots to be fired so that the learners were able to keep the vessels they had made.

## Mini Project

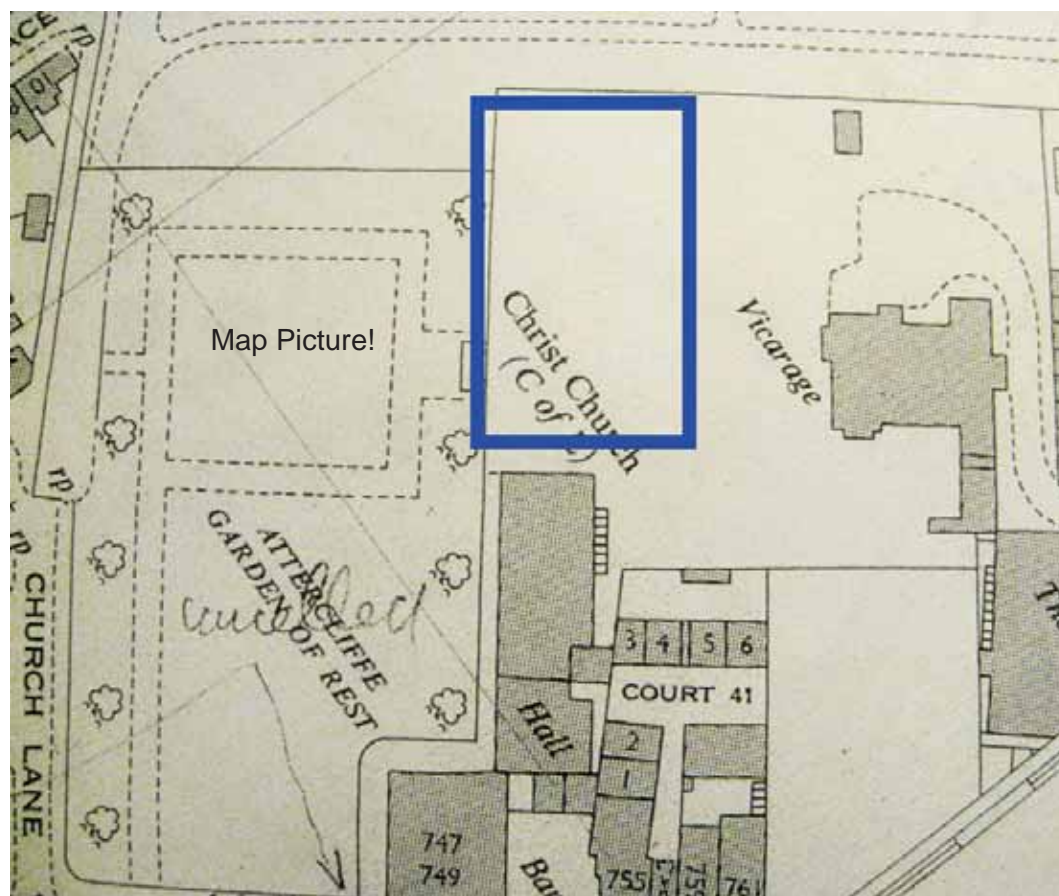
### Archaeological Investigation of the Vicarage Site at Attercliffe.

The aim of the fieldwork was to provide students from a number of groups to participate in an archaeological investigation using the non-invasive and invasive techniques we discussed in the classroom. This took place at a variety of levels depending on the group's ability with some of the more able learners assessing the documentary evidence available and interpreting the results of the resistivity survey and the assemblages collected during the excavation period. The advantage of using the land owned by the WEA was that we did not need special permission to excavate but out of courtesy we informed South Yorkshire Archaeology service and provided them with a design brief.

A final report comprising the historical data, geophysics results and interpretation of the artefacts will be submitted for inclusion in the Sites and Monuments record at the conclusion of the project.

#### History of the Site

Christ Church was built as part of the Million Act between 1822 and 1826. The old vicarage appears to have already existed; the one on the site today was built in 1908. We were looking for evidence of the old vicarage gardens, old buildings that may have existed and any personal belongings that may have been dropped.

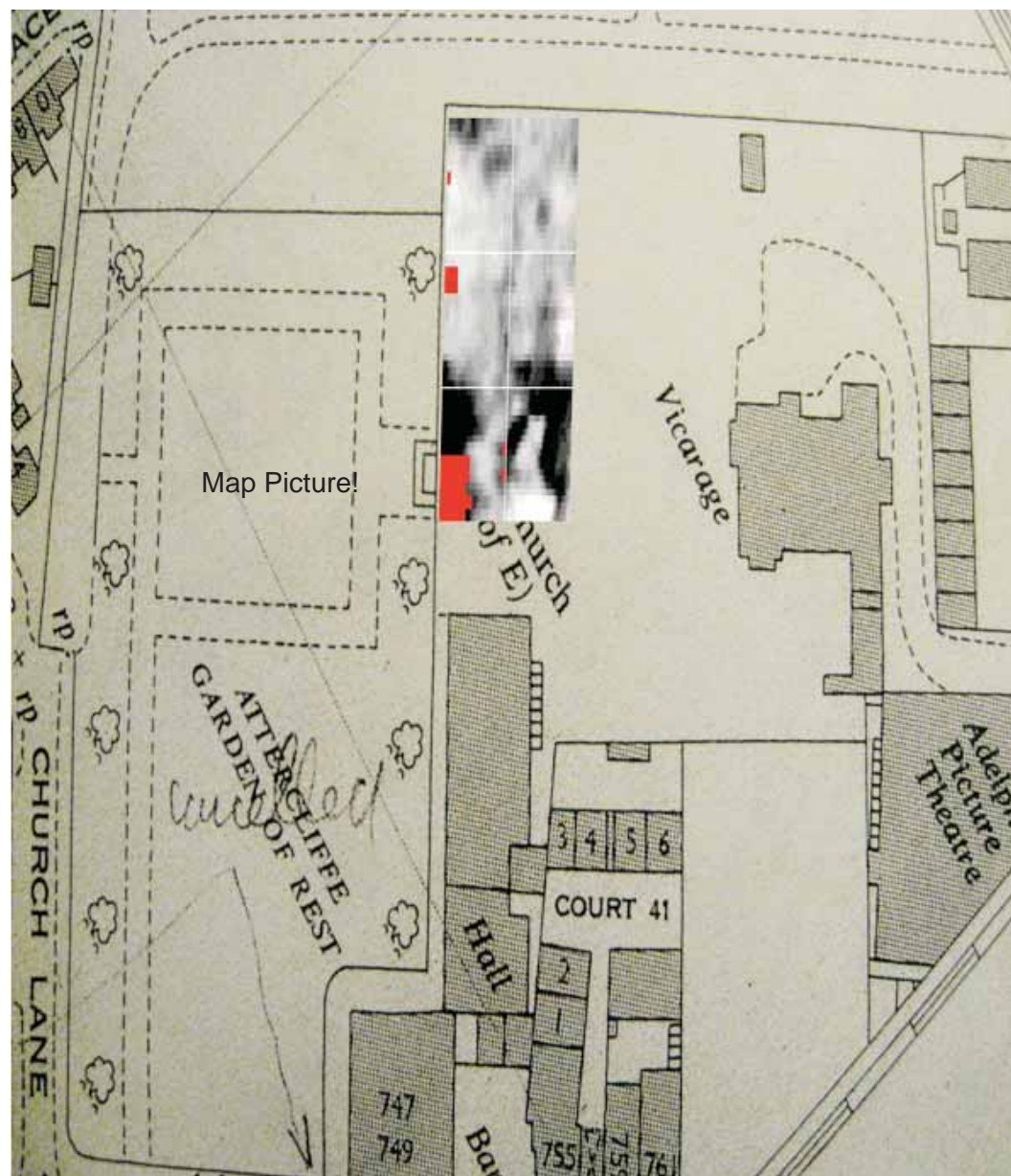


1953 1:2500 map of the area. (Local Studies Library).  
(Blue box signifies area under investigation)

Mapping: Offset mapping was used to mark the boundaries and key features of the site. It was carried out with two groups, one showing the principal of the mapping technique, the other how to use tape measures and improve basic numeracy skills. One group used a dumpy level to obtain some heights across the site and these were added to the map created.

Resistivity Survey: Twelve 10x10m squares were set and samples were taken at every metre.

Early indications suggested that there is a structure not marked on the maps in the area under investigation. The Geophysics was carried out by three groups. This allowed us to double check the data collected and see what difference the weather made (snow, rain and fine) to the results.



Geophysics results overlying the 1953 OS Map

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Trial Trenching: Based on the results and the collective decision made by the students and tutors 4 trenches were opened on the site. This allowed plenty of room for everyone to be involved. Trench 4 was opened up using a grid system based on Sir Mortimer Wheeler's methods. This allowed small areas for the children involved in the project to excavate which were not too daunting or would allow too much damage to be done if they got over enthusiastic.

#### **Processing of Finds**

All groups took part in the processing of the finds. This ranged from simple 'pot washing' and sorting of materials to detailed recording and drawing of the finds.

#### **Health and Safety:**

All students were advised of the risks of excavating. All were advised to wear gloves and to wash their hands. Students were advised of the risk of tetanus and asked to check their last vaccinations.

All trenches were marked with tapes to stop members of the public falling in.

#### **The Outcomes**

- All students were engaged in the field work
- Disabled access – laminate floorboards found in a local skip made an excellent path allowing wheelchair access onto the site
- A hoe was used to enable the wheelchair user to excavate
- The dumpy level was adjusted to the height of the wheelchair
- Those with learning difficulties enjoyed the physical challenges
- Activities such as mapping and geophys interpretations were adjusted to suit the learning needs
- More able learners were introduced new aspects of archaeology such as historical documentation and interpretation
- The activity provided a feeling of inclusiveness which meant that all students felt their work was valued
- Students were able to relate what they had learnt in the classroom to the activities they carried out in the field
- Students saw the process of planning, survey, excavation and post excavation

From an organizational point of view the time taken to plan, excavate and process the findings was much greater than initially thought and the following should be taken into account when planning a community dig.



**The Attercliffe project would not have been possible without the work of the Archaeologists in charge so a special thanks go to:  
Nicola Thorpe, Chris Sykes and Victoria Beauchamp.**