

# NORTH PENNINES ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

## Part 3. Altogether Archaeology Research Strategy

February 2017



The Altogether Archaeology Management Committee welcomes comments on this document. Any comments or questions should be sent via the Contacts page of the Altogether Archaeology website. Much further information about Altogether Archaeology, including details of how to join and comprehensive reports on completed fieldwork projects, is available on the website.

[www.altogetherarchaeology.org](http://www.altogetherarchaeology.org)

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***Cover photo.***

*Altogether Archaeology excavations in progress at a Mesolithic settlement site, Cow Green, Upper Teesdale; August 2015.*

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The North Pennines Research Framework consists of three parts. Part 1, the Resource Assessment (by far the largest of the three), and Part 2, the Research Agenda, are bound separately.

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# 1. General introduction to the North Pennines Archaeological Research Framework.

The Altogether Archaeology Management Committee has commissioned this Research Framework to provide a framework for the group's work over the next five years and beyond. The work was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, as part of a start-up grant for which all AA members are most grateful. The Research Framework is intended to be a meaningful and effective, but flexible, document providing a structure against which decisions can be made regarding future archaeological work in the region. Despite its landscape integrity as an upland block, today the basis of the North Pennines AONB, the archaeology of the North Pennines has not previously been studied in an integrated way; rather, it has been either ignored or bits of it have been studied in relation to outlying sections of adjacent lowland landscapes in Cumbria, Durham and Northumberland. This is not to say that much important work has not been done, it has, but often as the result of individual initiatives in particular areas rather than through any overall structured approach.

The spectacular results of the HLF-funded Altogether Archaeology project (2011-2015), managed by the North Pennines AONB Partnership and attracting 580 registered volunteers, have led to the realisation that the archaeology of the North Pennines is worthy of much further study. Volunteers from the project have set up a new group, retaining the name 'Altogether Archaeology', primarily to further the study of North Pennines archaeology. Although the group's remit is to focus on the archaeology of the North Pennines, there is a realisation that the area must not be studied in isolation as there were always close relationships between the uplands and adjacent lowland areas, and indeed areas further afield.

This Research Framework has been largely produced by Paul Frodsham (who conceived and managed the AA project and is currently Archaeological Adviser to the new AA group) through his consultancy, ORACLE Heritage Services. Paul was advised by a small Task Group of AA committee members. The Research Agenda and Research Strategy were discussed by AA members at a workshop in October 2016, after which they were finalised. It should be stressed that the entire Research Framework must be regarded as flexible, and should be regularly updated in the light of new information or new opportunities.

This document is structured to tie in with the current North East and North West Regional Research Frameworks, but with specific relevance to the North Pennines. It stresses work that could reasonably be undertaken by Altogether Archaeology members with appropriate levels of professional support. It sets out a range of recommendations that should provide a sound basis on which to design a number of research projects, with a range of partners, over the next five years and beyond. It should provide a viable basis on which to apply for funding (from a variety of sources) and legal consent (where appropriate)

for work designed to address its stated priorities. It should also be valuable in helping to attract others to come and work alongside the Altogether Archaeology group in a variety of potential partnership ventures.

## **The structure of the North Pennines Archaeological Research Framework**

The entire Research Framework consist of three sections, which can be summarised as responses to three basic questions:

**What do we know?**

**What else do we want to know?**

**How do we find out what we want to know?**

The first of these is addressed by the **Resource Assessment**, effectively an overview of what we know about the archaeology of the North Pennines. The second by the **Research Agenda**, which lists a number of key questions that could potentially be answered through new work. The third is the subject of the **Research Strategy**, to be informed by the workshop; the aim is to combine members' interests with identified research priorities.

The basic thinking behind this entire process is to ensure that our plans for future work are well founded, making applications for funding and (where necessary) consent much more likely to be successful.

Part 1, the **Resource Assessment** presents an up-to-date overview of current knowledge of the archaeology of the North Pennines, incorporating the results of all previous Altogether Archaeology fieldwork and other recent work such as the English Heritage led Miner-Farmer project on Alston Moor. It is structured chronologically, which in some ways is not ideal (eg it does not enable detailed analysis of particular landscapes through time) but is the only viable approach to cover the entire North Pennines from prehistory to present.

Part 2, the **Research Agenda**, identifies significant gaps in current knowledge, assesses the potential for addressing these, and defines some appropriate research initiatives. This is also structured chronologically, to tie in with the resource Assessment. Where relevant, it stresses relationships with priorities identified within the NE and NW regional research frameworks, where work in the North Pennines can contribute meaningfully to wider debates.

Part 3, the **Research Strategy**, presents a series of research priorities based on the conclusions of the Research Agenda, along with suggested methods of implementation and delivery for a range of potential Altogether Archaeology projects that could be developed to address these priorities. Some of these concentrate on particular periods (eg Stone Age), while others are based on themes (eg transport), and others concentrate on particular landscapes through time (eg Holwick).

The Resource Assessment and Research Agenda cover all periods from the Mesolithic through to the present day, structured chronologically with sections

dealing with each of the conventional archaeological periods (Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Roman, Anglo-Saxon, medieval, post-medieval). Relevant period specialists will be consulted and invited to comment on each section, after which appropriate amendments will be made.

Altogether Archaeology members were consulted to ascertain which areas of work are of most interest to them. This consultation took the form of a questionnaire in advance of the production of the draft Research Agenda, and also a workshop at which the Research Agenda and Research Strategy were discussed in detail. This is an important aspect of this project that differs from other Research Frameworks that tend to focus exclusively on the archaeological resource rather than on the people actually doing the archaeology. In this case, the Research Strategy takes on board the wishes of AA members and seeks to marry these with identified research priorities in order to suggest possible future projects that will prove popular with members.

### Using and maintaining the North Pennines Research Framework

This Research Framework should be consulted in tandem with the AA Business Plan and Funding Strategy, which was produced at the same time. There is no point in suggesting projects within the Research Strategy that have little hope of attracting funding, so realistic likelihood of funding must be an issue when considering potential future projects.

The Agenda and Strategy presented here are not intended to be restrictive. If opportunities arise for alternative projects then these should not be dismissed simply because they are not identified here as priorities. However, in terms of securing funds for proactive research, the priorities presented here should be used as a guide.

It is recommended that the Altogether Archaeology committee should consider this document annually, and make any changes it considers appropriate to take account of changing circumstances such as new information, new funding options, or new opportunities for partnership working. It is further recommended that a major appraisal of the document should be undertaken every five years, including updating of the Resource Assessment to incorporate results of work undertaken by the Altogether Archaeology group and others.

The AA committee intends to develop its own campaign of research based on this document, but also hopes that other groups, including more local heritage groups in the region and Universities wishing to undertake fieldwork in northern England, will use it to help develop their own projects. There may also be cases in which work within the North Pennines can be incorporated into projects covering a wider area; to this end, the NW and NE England Research Frameworks should also be consulted by anyone contemplating work in this area. Hopefully, this document will be of use to all groups with an interest in the region, and will be used to develop joint initiatives that will collectively contribute to much to our understanding of the ways in which our ancestors have lived in the North Pennines over the past 10,000 years, thus

contributing to an enhanced awareness of, and interest in, the local historic environment amongst current and future local communities.

## 2. Introduction to the Research Strategy

The following list of ten large-scale potential project themes has been drawn up to address the priorities identified in the Research Agenda. While opportunities to address individual priorities suggested in the Research Agenda should be considered if and when they arise, the opportunity to tackle one or two major projects, which address several of the Research Agenda priorities, is the approach favoured by the AA committee. This Strategy therefore presents a range of potential project themes and briefly considers their potential as AA initiatives, before making recommendations regarding the most appropriate way forward. A draft of the Strategy was discussed at length by AA members at a well-attended workshop in Allendale in October 2016; notes made at that event have been incorporated into this version.

It is worth noting at the outset that this exercise is aimed at the development of projects of interest throughout the entire North Pennines; thus the potential themes outlined here do not include recommendations for the long-term detailed investigation of particular areas of landscape through time. There are many parts of the North Pennines that would benefit from such work, as demonstrated by recent work by Rob Young and others at Bollihope (Weardale) where intensive fieldwork spread over a decade, involving university students and local volunteers (including AA members), has uncovered evidence of activity from Mesolithic times through to the present day (Young in prep). Opportunities to undertake such projects are very rare, but should certainly be encouraged, especially where they can be led by local community groups, perhaps in partnership with AA and a university archaeology department.

### The AA membership survey

This Strategy takes on board the results of consultation with AA members in Summer 2016, during which members were asked a range of questions about they would most like to do. The results of this survey are presented in an appendix to this Research Framework. Key results can be briefly summarised as follows:

#### **Periods that members would most like to study.**

1. Early medieval (Anglo-Saxon/Viking)
2. Late Bronze Age & Iron Age
3. Neolithic & Early Bronze Age
4. Roman
5. Medieval
6. Post-medieval
7. Mesolithic
8. Recent

### **Themes on which members are most interested in working.**

1. settlements
2. religion, ritual, burial
3. landscape
4. material objects (finds)
5. industry and mining
6. military
- 7=. agriculture
- 7=. transport
9. food, nutrition, health

### **Archaeological techniques members most wish to undertake.**

1. Excavation - digging
2. Landscape survey - lidar, aerial photos etc
3. Documentary survey
4. Post-excavation and finds analysis
5. Excavation - planning and recording
6. Surveying sites (eg earthworks)
7. Historic building recording
- 8=. Experimental archaeology
- 8=. Geophysical survey
10. Environmental archaeology

While the preferences of AA members should certainly not be the key factor in setting the Research Agenda for the North Pennines, they certainly are very relevant to decisions regarding the nature of project work to be undertaken by the group, and hence to this Strategy.

### **Integrated approaches**

There is unavoidably much overlap between some of the suggestions set out below (eg work relating to Neolithic agriculture would fit equally appropriately into the Stone Age or Farming through the Ages projects), and this should be borne in mind during project planning. It is certainly not intended that AA should attempt to undertake all the projects set out below. However, working in partnership it should be possible to make progress with at least two or three. It is suggested that AA should seek opportunities to work in partnership with Universities and other relevant institutions to explore how best to address some of the suggestions set out here, and consider ways in which the different projects could potentially be funded, before making a final decision about exactly how to proceed.

It is important that the work set out below is not treated as isolated research, but is integrated wherever possible into wider schemes of landscape research and management. In some cases it may be possible to include work at Heritage at Risk (HaR) sites, improving their condition and thus helping to remove them from the HaR Register. Where possible, farmers and others with responsibility for landscape management should be given opportunities to

become involved in some way in AA fieldwork projects. Research should always be linked to public events programmes to involve as many people as possible, and reports of all work must be published on the AA website as well as within archaeological journals and other publications where appropriate.

### Training and supervision

In line with AA's established ethos, participation in fieldwork projects must be open to all, and appropriate levels of training must be provided for anyone who wants to take part. All fieldwork must be planned to include adequate training, which in many cases can be provided by more experienced members without the need to budget for professional help. Some members have suggested that AA could consider introducing some kind of accreditation scheme, which could be of particular value to those who may wish to move into professional archaeology; thought should be given as to whether such schemes could be integrated into future AA fieldwork.

### Funding opportunities

The AA group now includes many experienced fieldworkers, but there is still a need for professional assistance when planning and delivering excavations and other projects. AA prides itself on undertaking fieldwork to the highest possible standards, and if any of the following projects are to be delivered then it will necessary to buy in academic and professional support from appropriate experts. The AA group has a separate business and funding strategy which is relevant to the funding of its fieldwork programme. However it is worth noting here some sources of funding that could potentially be available. The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) offers funds for community projects through a number of different schemes, and given that the North Pennines extends into both the NE and NW government regions, AA could apply to both the NE and NW offices for funding. For a large project split roughly equally between both regions, an application could be made to the national HLF pot, though such an application would still be managed through one of the regional offices. If AA is prepared to provide opportunities for young people to take part in projects, then funding may also be available through the HLF 'Young Roots' scheme. For a large HLF grant, there may be issues relating to AA's capacity to deliver, as the larger grant schemes generally pay retrospectively, but for smaller grants, a proportion of which is usually paid up front, this should not be a problem.

In some cases, where fieldwork is beneficial for site or landscape management, grants may be available from Historic England and/or Natural England. Other grant-giving schemes should also be considered, some of which are only applicable if AA becomes a charity. Corporate sponsorship should be seriously considered for individual projects. A company involved in transport or industry may perhaps be interested in sponsoring a project studying Roman transport or industry, while an agricultural company may wish to support a project studying the history of farming in the North Pennines. Other large companies may be interested in supporting AA through

community grant schemes, especially if it can be demonstrated that a small grant can be used as matched funding to secure a large grant. Crowd funding is another possibility, where projects are deemed to be potentially of sufficient public interest.

While AA's fieldwork programme should never be dictated primarily by availability of funding, we live in the real world and the availability of funding at any one time may well influence whether one particular scheme is undertaken ahead of another. AA must not become entirely reactive, designing projects specifically to enable particular funds to be accessed, but rather the list of possible projects as set out below should be proactively considered in the light of potentially available sources of funding which will inevitably be a factor in decisions about how to proceed.

### **Working in partnership**

There are often great benefits to be had in setting up projects in partnership with others. In addition to key partners such as funders and Historic England (with whom effective co-operation will be essential if any work is to take place on scheduled monuments), other potential partners include the North Pennines AONB Partnership, Council for British Archaeology (CBA) North, the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne, The Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, the County Council's of Cumbria, Durham and Northumberland, and numerous local societies in and around the North Pennines with interests in local heritage. Such local groups include the Appleby Archaeology Group, Upper Derwent Archaeology Group, Tynedale North of the Wall Community Archaeology Group, the Weardale Society, and the Alston Moor Local History Society. These groups include many people with detailed knowledge of their local areas, some of whom are also members of AA, and it is essential that AA seeks to work in effective partnership with these groups where relevant and avoids the risk of unknowingly 'treading on toes'. Liaison with Durham Cathedral will be essential to any studies of medieval Weardale, while various groups associated with Hadrian's Wall may be interested in work aimed at furthering our understanding of the North Pennines in Roman times. There may also on occasion be value in seeking to develop projects with partners in areas further afield; for example, a project looking at a subject such as the origins of farming in the uplands, or the nature of early medieval settlement in river valleys, could be equally as relevant to other upland areas in the Lake District, Yorkshire or Northumberland, and there may be economies of scale in seeking to set up joint projects involving fieldwork in different places. A range of potential partnership possibilities should be considered when planning future AA fieldwork projects, and it is important that regular dialogue with potential key partners is maintained so that potential AA involvement in projects led by others can be considered at the earliest opportunity. By way of example, at the time of writing, the North Pennines AONB Partnership is leading on the development of 'Fellfoot Forward', a Landscape Partnership project that could potentially attract nearly £3 million of HLF funding, some of which would be available for community archaeology in the Eden Valley.

## 3. Potential project themes

### 1. Landscape survey

Although some areas of the North Pennines are now well surveyed in terms of visible (above-ground) archaeological remains, other areas still remain relatively unexplored. The recent survey by English Heritage of Alston Moor, including modern techniques, most notably the use of lidar, revolutionised our understanding of what was previously considered a fairly barren archaeological landscape. Lidar surveys of the Allen Valleys and Hexhamshire undertaken by AA volunteers have had similar results for those areas, and work underway in the Upper Derwent valley, Weardale and Teesdale should prove no less rewarding. However, many areas of the North Pennines have still to receive this basic level of landscape survey, and the completion of such work should be regarded as a priority. Such lidar surveys, while essential, are not the end of the story as there are many sites buried beneath the peat, or within the ground, that will never show up on a lidar survey. Further survey work, in the form of fieldwalking, test pitting beneath peat, recording particularly interesting areas in more detail using a range of methods, and recording standing structures, is also desirable. Once done, such work will enable detailed contrasts to be made between different parts of the North Pennines, and will be essential to the planning of new research work as well as to informing sustainable landscape management. Although much of this work relates to further possible projects suggested below, there is also a need to ensure that the entire area is surveyed to a basic level, hence the inclusion of 'general landscape survey' in this list of potential projects. Such a project would appeal to a range of AA members, including some who may not wish to partake in excavations.

Armed with the results of basic landscape survey, particularly interesting areas can be chosen for detailed topographic survey, enabling contrasts and comparisons to be drawn between different areas within the North Pennines and areas elsewhere, leading inevitably to the development of new questions and new project designs with which to address them.

#### **Potential as an AA project**

Basic landscape survey using lidar is absolutely essential work that will underpin future project planning and also inform future sustainable landscape management. It lies in with landscape and landscape survey which scored well in the AA members' survey, and potentially covers all archaeological periods (except the Mesolithic). It also has the advantage that can be done largely indoors, with no need for complex planning or negotiations with landowners. It is also relatively cheap, with funding potentially available from HLF. AA members have already undertaken much work in this field, and have

developed a highly successful methodology. A project to cover most of the east half of the North Pennines, run by the AONB, is already underway, and many AA members are expected to take part in this. Another project along similar lines to cover the western North Pennines should be set up. AA could play the lead role in this, or it could be done by the AONB or another partner, with AA playing a role. This could be done as an AA project over the next 2 or 3 years, but certainly not as the main project as it doesn't involve sufficient fieldwork.

## **2. Palaeoenvironmental work**

Almost every period summary in the Research Agenda highlights the need for a better understanding of the environment. While some useful work has been done in places, notably in Upper Teesdale, a huge amount remains to be done. The nature of the North Pennines landscape means that the potential for techniques such as pollen analysis, linked to archaeological record, is huge. The possible manipulation by Mesolithic communities of the natural wildwood, the impact of the first farmers, the nature of later prehistoric farming, the Roman and later lead industries, and the founding of new villages in early medieval times all had impacts on the environment which can be studied using a range of palaeoenvironmental techniques. While this work could be undertaken piecemeal, as part of other projects, a single project aimed at a better understanding of the environment and the ways in which it has changed over the past 10,000 years, linked to activities of people, would represent a key piece of work of very great value to ecologists and others as well as archaeologists. It would also be of value to studies attempting to assess the potential future impact of global warming, so would be of great practical value as well as academic interest. Given the wide-ranging beneficiaries of such a project, funding may well be available from a range of sources not generally relevant to archaeological work. The problem for AA is that much of the work is specialist in nature, requiring experienced workers and complex laboratory facilities; it is therefore not generally suitable for volunteers. However, it remains a priority, so must be included here. There may be ways of working with a University to set up a project looking into the past landscapes of the North Pennines that could involve AA members in some ways, and there may even be some members who would like to get involved in the nitty-gritty of pollen analysis and other techniques.

### **Potential as an AA project**

Although this work is crucial, it is unfortunately not very suitable as an AA project. A more appropriate course of action would be for AA to lobby the experts in this field (in particular at Durham and Newcastle Universities - Depts of Geography as well as Archaeology) to try and get some work done in the North Pennines. If there are ways in which some members can get actively involved in the work then that would be great, and it would no doubt be good for the Universities to be seen to be working in partnership. It may be that this work would be better undertaken in smaller chunks, as elements of other

projects, rather than as one large project. The recommendation for now is to discuss some possibilities with appropriate potential partners.

### 3. The Stone Age

A project could be designed to address a number of the priorities identified for the Mesolithic and Neolithic/Chalcolithic. This could include analysis of lithics, fieldwalking (to build on recent important work undertaken by volunteers in the Eden valley), predictive modelling and test-pitting in the uplands, and small-scale excavation at carefully chosen sites such as Staple Crag, the potential Allendale henge, and the Lunedale stone circle. Detailed survey and small-scale excavation of rock art sites could also be included, as could further investigations at Long Meg. This project would cover the so-called 'Mesolithic-Neolithic transition' that saw the fundamental changes associated with the introduction of agriculture; a project looking at the origins of farming could well prove to be of interest to many present-day farmers who may not previously have considered themselves as interested in archaeology. At the end of the Neolithic, it could also include further work linked to the spectacular AA discoveries at Kirkhaugh, including perhaps a search for Chalcolithic copper mining sites (which could reasonably be classified as very late Neolithic rather than early Bronze Age).

#### Potential as an AA project

This project would include a wide range of fieldwork initiatives, thus making it potentially a good AA project. There would be the potential for a big 'set piece' excavation each year for perhaps three years, which some members have said they would like, with smaller scale work at other places at other times. The big project could perhaps be at Long Meg, building on the important work already done here by AA, and at the same time working with Historic England to make an important contribution to the management of the site.

Analysis of lithics now in museums (including finds from excavations and fieldwalking, and stray finds such as polished stone axes) could be undertaken by volunteers after attendance at a training workshop. This would enable comparisons to be made between different areas, as well as giving members a better understanding of lithics and the ways in which the study of lithics can provide information about stone age societies. This important work might be of interest to members who may not be keen or able to go digging.

Although the Mesolithic does not feature highly in the results of the AA membership survey, the Neolithic does. There are many good reasons for combining the two, as suggested, here, but most work could focus primarily on the Neolithic if that is what members would prefer. AA has amongst its membership Rob Young and Paul Frodsham, who played key roles in the production of the Mesolithic and Neolithic chapters of the North East Regional Research Framework (NERRF), and both would be available to help develop and deliver a project along these lines.

By including work linked to early farming, the project would generate interest within the farming community. There is a great deal of local interest in rock art, and AA would probably attract dozens of new members if undertaking rock art research.

Specialists at Durham University would be keen to work with AA on a project like this, guaranteeing academic credibility for our work. Academic funding sources may be available that would not be available without the University's involvement.

The project would include work in both the NE and NW regions, so funding would potentially be available from both HLF regions, or from the national HLF pot. The fact that the work would link both regions should be seen as a strength. If a major project at a high-profile site like Long Meg was included then there would be much scope to raise funds through crowd-funding, and probably also through corporate sponsorship.

#### **4. Epiacum and the Roman landscape**

The Roman fort of Epiacum (Whitley Castle) at Alston is undeniably one of the most important archaeological sites in the North Pennines. Recent survey has demonstrated that extensive remains of a vicus (civilian settlement) survive outside the fort. Only a couple of small-scale excavations have ever taken place here, one in the nineteenth century and one in the twentieth, the results of both demonstrate the huge potential for further work. Work at Epiacum could be linked to analysis of the wider Roman landscape, in particular the relationship between the Roman world and the lives of native farmers. Small-scale excavation of a number of Iron Age or Romano-British farmsteads should be included. The project should include work to establish the nature of the Roman road network, including detailed survey of the entire Maiden Way between the forts at Kirkby Thore in the south and Carvoran in the north, and clarification of the nature of other possible Roman roads, such as the assumed Corbridge-Epiacum road recently investigated by AA near Hexham racecourse, and the road shown in OS maps over the moors south of Stanhope. Analysis of possible Roman lead mining sites should also feature, as could other industrial sites of potential Roman date.

##### **Potential as an AA project**

Although Roman archaeology was not near the top of the list of AA members' preferences, Epiacum is so important that it has to be included in this Strategy. Any work here should be planned and delivered in close partnership with Epiacum Heritage Ltd, the company set up to oversee the management of the fort within its surrounding landscape. There is a chance that a project focussing on Roman transport and industry could attract funding from companies engaged in present day transport and industry in the North Pennines, which could perhaps be used as matched funding to attract further grants. A project along these lines would also tie in with initiatives within the

Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, and may also attract interest from the Universities of Durham and Newcastle (and others).

Perhaps the best approach at the present time is to acknowledge the potential importance of a project along these lines, and to offer support to its development and delivery, but encourage Epiacum Heritage Ltd to take the lead. Epiacum Heritage Ltd is currently looking at a range of options relating to research, conservation and interpretation, and may be interested in playing a role in a project covering the wider Roman landscape. Other potential partners, including some based within the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, may also be interested in a collaborative project based on Epiacum and the Roman North Pennines.

## 5. The Missing Centuries

This suggested project covers the period that archaeologists tend to refer to as the 'early medieval', extending from the end of Roman rule in the early fifth century through until the Norman Conquest of 1066, taking in the post-Roman 'Dark Ages', the Northumbrian Golden Age of Cuthbert and Bede, and the Viking era. The term 'The Missing Centuries' is re-used from an AA project module of the same name, and illustrates how little we know the six and a half centuries covered by the early medieval period in the North Pennines.

A project could be set up specifically to examine various aspects of North Pennines early medieval archaeology, in which experts at Durham University should be invited to participate. The project could undertake work designed to tie in with all the priorities for the early medieval period identified in the Research Agenda. This could include a comprehensive place-name study which should provide useful results relating to Anglo-Saxon and Viking (and possibly also medieval times) times. It could also include field survey and excavation at a sample of possible early medieval sites, together with further investigation of important sites of known early medieval date such as St Botolph's (Frosterley), Wydon Eals and Simy Folds. Detailed recording of all churches containing possible pre-Conquest stonework should also be included. Without doubt, a project along these lines would add much to our understanding of what is currently a very poorly understood period of North Pennines history.

### Potential as an AA project

The results of the recent AA members survey demonstrate that this is by some way the most popular period, with members keen to undertake work that would improve our knowledge of it. This interest in the early medieval period has clearly been fuelled to a large extent by the fascinating results of the AA work at St Botolph's, Frosterley, which prior to that work was classed only as a medieval chapel. It is unlikely that investigations elsewhere will prove quite so spectacular, and great care will have to be taken in choosing which sites to focus upon, but nevertheless this has great potential as an AA project. It can

include a range of work to tie in with members' preferences as illustrated by the results of the survey, and work would be spread all around the North Pennines.

Collaboration with Durham University would be essential. There may also be potential for collaboration with the Auckland Castle Trust and other bodies concerned with early Christianity. Interpretive work relating to St Botolph's could also be included, including displaying the finds at Weardale Museum and the installation of a replica cross and information panel on Frosterley village car park, immediately adjacent to the site..

Funding may be available through the HLF, possibly from both NE and NW regions, or from the national pot. Securing match funding may prove difficult, as work will not be focussed on any particularly large or well-known sites, but small sums are potentially available from various sources and in any case HLF may well be prepared to fund a high percentage of a well-designed community initiative along the above lines.

## **6. Sacred North Pennines**

Consultation with AA members demonstrates that 'religion' is a subject of great interest to most. A project to study aspects of religion through the ages could address many priorities identified within the Research Agenda, cutting across the different period divisions, and would be very popular amongst members, no doubt also attracting many new members. It is, however, an immensely complex subject, and much effort would be required to design a project to investigate a range of sites of different periods within a coherent overall project framework. A few years ago, a project outline was developed for a project entitled 'Sacred North Pennines', which could easily be resurrected by the AA group. This suggested a range of different archaeological survey and excavation projects at sites including Neolithic rock art, Bronze Age burials, Roman shrines and temples, early medieval cemeteries and churches, medieval churches, and post-medieval chapels. A detailed survey of Blanchland could also be included. An exploration of the links between Durham and the eastern North Pennines since medieval times, involving sites such as Westgate Castle (and Stanhope Park) and Muggleswick Grange, could be key part of the project. Links between other religious establishments, such as Lanercost Priory and Hexham Abbey, and parts of the uplands should also feature. The existing proposal also included a suggestion to study potential 'sacred places' in the landscape, such as waterfalls and unusual landscape features, and to think about how these may have featured in peoples' lives in the distant past, perhaps linked to ethnographic studies of Australian aborigines, Native Americans and other pre-industrial communities from around the world.

### **Potential as an AA project**

This could be designed to meet all the members' preferences as expressed in the recent survey, including a range of survey and excavation projects. It

would address many priorities in the Research Agenda. Funding would potentially be available from HLF (NE and NW regions, or the national pot). Several ideas presented as elements of other potential projects would be equally at home here, including further work at Long Meg that could be spread over three or more seasons to provide a single main project that several members have suggested would be a good idea. A range of smaller-scale fieldwork projects, at sites such as those suggested above, could then be arranged to run in addition to this.

There would be numerous potential partners for a project such as this, including potentially Durham Cathedral and several churches. The Auckland Castle Trust, which is planning a major new exhibition about religion through the ages, may also have a role to play.

If the project is carefully structured to include sites of all periods, spread throughout the North Pennines, then the results would collectively make for a very fascinating publication.

The Dept of Archaeology at Durham University is awaiting a decision (due in spring 2017) on funding for a proposed major new community project on the archaeology of religion in the north-east. If this goes ahead then AA will be able to play key role in it, working alongside university personnel to deliver fieldwork modules in and around the North Pennines. It would be prudent to await a decision on this before deciding how, if at all, to proceed with a new AA project along these lines.

## **7. Transport and communications**

A key theme that has emerged during the compilation of this Research Framework is the extent to which distribution patterns of sites, of all periods, appear to be in large part explained by reference to networks of transport and communication. Essentially this means natural routeways (see, for example, discussions in the Resource Assessment relating to Mesolithic campsites, Neolithic rock art, Neolithic axes, Roman Stainmore, and early medieval settlement). In post-medieval times, the construction of new roads and railways had a dramatic impact on life in the North Pennines, and the present-day settlement pattern has much to do with recent advances in transport and communications. A fascinating project could be designed to focus on developments in transport since prehistoric times, showing how natural routeways, Roman roads, turnpike roads and railways have all played key roles in the development of society in the North Pennines over the past 10,000 years.

### **Potential as an AA project**

This project is included here as it would help address a number of priorities identified in the Research Agenda. Although transport did not score highly in the members' survey, this would not be just about transport, but about the

ways in which a whole range of sites and artefacts, and indeed the way people have lived in the landscape, have been influenced by transport and communications over the past 10,000 years. The concept of transport and communications merely provides the thread on which a large number of potentially fascinating fieldwork projects could be hung.

There is much overlap with other suggested projects, so much of the work suggested here could be achieved without the need for this one, though it does provide a potentially neat approach to a wide range of fieldwork possibilities, including survey and excavation, in addition to documentary research for later periods. Although neither 'Romans' nor 'transport' featured highly in the results of the members' survey, the recent project on the apparently Roman road on Hexham Fell did prove immensely popular with members, so this proposal should not be dismissed out of hand.

Funding would potentially be available from a range of sources, including possible commercial sponsorship from companies engaged in transport and communications businesses, especially those based in northern England.

## **8. Farming through the Ages**

A project designed to study the origins and development of farming, from the Neolithic to the present day, would be of interest to many present-day farmers and land managers, as well as AA members. This would be of relevance to all the period summaries in the Research Agenda. In particular, Bronze Age cairnfields, late prehistoric/Roman field systems, medieval field systems, and post-medieval land improvements. With regard to the latter, it could include much documentary research (including perhaps a survey of field names) as well as fieldwork.

The availability of lidar, and the results of lidar surveys covering Alston Moor, the Allen valleys, Hexhamshire, the Upper Derwent valley, Weardale and Upper Teesdale, represent an ideal basis on which to develop a project looking at field systems. Investigating the origins of farming in the North Pennines, and the links with pre-agricultural (late Mesolithic) communities, would be problematic given the lack of known sites, but would nevertheless be interesting.

A project designed to look primarily at farming could also address other subjects relating to land management and the exploitation of 'natural' resources, such as woodland and moorland management, hunting and fishing, all of which have been (and still are) important issues relating to the management of the landscape and the lives of people within it.

A potential problem is that farming shouldn't really be studied in isolation from settlement as the two go closely hand-in-hand, so there is a risk of a project focusing primarily on farming becoming rather unwieldy. For example, the

numerous late prehistoric settlements discussed in the Resource Assessment should be investigated along with their field systems, not separately.

### **Potential as an AA project**

This has a lot in its favour. Without doubt much important and interesting work could be done to classify and date various forms of field system, and produce models of developments through time in different parts of the North Pennines. It may attract participation from people who work in farming but have not in the past considered themselves as interested in archaeology. This potential to involve new people may also help attract funding. The potential mix of fieldwork and desk-based research is a strength. However, a potential major problem is that any investigation of ancient agriculture will have to include an element of palaeoenvironmental research, and the problems involved in attempting this as part of a community venture have already been discussed under theme 2, above. This could perhaps be done in partnership with a university, but it would probably not be cheap. Although farming has been crucial to the lives of people in the North Pennines ever since the Neolithic, and there is much potentially exciting work to do to improve our understanding of its history, agriculture did not figure highly in the survey of AA members' interests. Consequently, it is perhaps not an overarching theme that should be developed at the current time, although aspects of agriculture will inevitably feature if any of the other themes discussed here are developed into large-scale projects.

## **9. Lead mining and industrial archaeology**

Industry, in particular lead (and silver) mining and quarrying, has been crucial to the story of life in the North Pennines from prehistoric times to present. A great deal of work has been done on the post-medieval mining heritage of the North Pennines, which in general terms is well understood, although there is much to discover about individual sites and mining landscapes, as is clearly demonstrated by the AA work at Nenthead, and the recent lidar surveys of industrial landscapes in Allendale. This project, which would attract support from a range of specialist groups as well as the North Pennines public, could undertake a range of tasks linked to industrial activity through the ages, potentially beginning with a search for Bronze Age copper mining sites. Roman and medieval industry would be important elements. Lidar surveys could be used as an initial basis on which to choose sites to investigate. A selection of the known seventeenth-century woodland lead smelting mill sites could also be subject to ground survey, which could reveal the degree of consistency in layout and scale adopted in the early decades of the industry. Some documentary research findings are available to complement this, but further documentary research would be important alongside fieldwork.

When working on the often very extensive mining landscapes of the North Pennines, it is important to attempt integrated survey, linking what is conventionally classified as 'archaeology' with geological and ecological

aspects of the landscape. A method for integrated survey and monitoring is currently being trialled by the OREsome North Pennines project, led by the North Pennines AONB Partnership, with which several AA members are involved.

### **Potential as an AA project**

Given the international importance of the area's industrial heritage, it is only right that due consideration is given by the AA committee to the development of a project based primarily on industrial archaeology.

The AA project completed much important work at post-medieval industrial sites including Nenthead, Killhope and Dukesfield, and hundreds of 'new' industrial sites were recorded during the lidar surveys of the Allen valleys and Hexhamshire. This work reflects the crucial importance of industrial archaeology to the heritage of the North Pennines. However, industry and mining came only fifth out of nine categories in the league table of members' interests, so the development of an industrial project is not a priority from this point of view.

The investigation of the industrial heritage is in many ways a specialist field. Organisations such as the Nenthead Mines Conservation Society, the Friends of Killhope, and the Northern Mine Research Society are perhaps better placed than AA to lead on the development of a North Pennines industrial archaeology project.

Much important work, including two fieldwork projects at early (prehistoric and Roman) mining sites, is scheduled to be completed by the OREsome North Pennines project over the next couple of years, and AA members have the opportunity to participate in this. Consequently, although the key importance of industrial archaeology within AA's heartland is fully acknowledged, this is not the time to consider the development of a new large-scale industrial project. It makes more sense to await the results of the OREsome project, then discuss possible new work with a range of appropriate partners, including those mentioned above.

## **10. Artefact studies and the North Pennines Virtual Museum**

There is much work that could usefully be done to enhance our understanding of artefacts of all periods, including famous finds such as the Heathery Burn hoard (now in the British Museum) and the finds from the Kirkhaugh grave, but also less well known but still important objects such as Roman finds from Epiaum (including finds from the AA molehill surveys), the timber coffins from Wydon Eals, the stone cross and head from St Botolphs (Frosterley), and lithics from AA excavations at Cow Green. Some of this work is recommended within some of the above suggested projects, but depending of how much is achieved elsewhere, a separate project could be set up to record and study a range of artefacts from prehistory through to present, including many found

during AA fieldwork. This may well attract participation from members who do not wish, or who are unable, to 'go out and get muddy'. Although AA members have made some extremely significant discoveries, it is often the case that once an excavation is over the finds are removed from site and the excavators have no further involvement in their study. A project along these lines would enable people to re-engage with these objects, and others, in an extremely positive way, as well as enabling much potentially useful research which is almost guaranteed to come up with many fascinating results of great interest to AA members and others.

### **Potential as an AA project**

AA projects to date have tended to concentrate on sites and landscapes, with detailed analysis of finds left to professional experts. However, post-excavation work and finds analysis features reasonably highly in the results of the members' survey, meaning that many members are clearly keen to do more work with artefacts. Several members contributed to the North Pennines Virtual Museum (NPVM) that was set up as part of the AA project, in partnership with the Weardale Museum, to showcase a selection of archaeological finds from the North Pennines. There is much scope for enhancement of the NPVM, and this could be done as part of a project to study a range of finds, including some from AA excavations, in more detail. Such a project would not be appropriate as a main AA project, as it would not involve fieldwork, but it would enable members to work closely with a range of interesting artefacts and potentially contribute to some of the priorities identified in the Research Agenda. Such a project should involve a range of partners such as the Bowes Museum, Tullie House and the Great North Museum, and include input from many specialists. It could be linked to a travelling exhibition that could feature at various venues (including Killhope and the above-named museums), and a public conference that would be of very great local interest. Recent discussions with the Weardale Museum have led to the suggestion of a permanent exhibition dedicated to Altogether Archaeology discoveries, especially those in Weardale; this is something that could potentially be delivered in association with the enhancement of the Virtual Museum.

## **4. Recommendations**

This Strategy highlights a number of project themes that could address priorities highlighted within the Research Agenda. It is hoped that a number of partners will be interested in working with the Altogether Archaeology group to develop and deliver some of the work suggested here, ideally by helping to deliver one or more of the above projects. The document should be made available on the AA website, and any potential partners interested in undertaking any research within the North Pennines invited to contact the AA committee to discuss possible collaboration.

While all of the above suggestions have their merits, and none should be dismissed out of hand, taking on board all the information contained within this Research Framework, including the preferences of AA members, it is suggested that the AA Management Committee should concentrate on the following as the main AA project theme for the next three years:

### **Theme 5. The Missing Centuries**

**This recommendation is made for a number of reasons, including the following:**

**It addresses key questions relating to the biggest ‘gap’ in our current understanding of the archaeology of the North Pennines**

**There is considerable scope for significant and exciting discoveries, with a range of sites at locations throughout the North Pennines potentially available for survey and excavation.**

**The early medieval period was top of the league table, by some distance, of the periods that AA members would most like to study.**

**A project along these lines could include a wide range of work, including fieldwork (survey and excavation) and documentary research. It would thus provide opportunities for all members to play an active role doing work in which they are particularly interested, and also potentially attract many new members.**

**It would build on important work already done by members, in particular at St Botolph’s Chapel, Frosterley, but would also include work at a range of sites spread throughout the North Pennines.**

**It would be of relevance not only to the North Pennines, but also more widely to the north of England, addressing many issues set out in the North-East and North-West regional research frameworks.**

**There are many potential partners with whom to develop and deliver a project along these lines, including Durham Cathedral and Durham University in addition to local museums and heritage groups.**

**A project along these lines could also include interpretive work alongside new research. In particular, it could include a joint initiative with the Weardale Museum to present and interpret the finds from St Botolph's Chapel (and other AA projects), perhaps linked to the provision of on-site interpretive material (including a replica of the early medieval cross) in Frosterley. Such work would help to render the project of great potential value to many other people in addition to AA members.**

This is not the place to discuss a project along these lines in any great detail, but the information presented here does provide a basis for an outline Project Design. Clearly there is much work to be done to build a coherent project, and secure the necessary funding, but this recommendation is the result of a comprehensive process and is suggested as the most appropriate research theme for AA over the next few years. It hits all the relevant buttons, most of them quite hard, and has a good chance of attracting support and funding from a range of partners.

A second recommended theme which could be developed in a joint project with the above recommendation, or as a separate initiative, is:

### **Theme 1. Landscape Survey**

This would build on the impressive results of the Lidar Landscapes surveys completed of Hexhamshire and the Allen Valleys, and (at the time of writing) soon to be completed surveys of the Upper Derwent Valley, Weardale and Upper Teesdale. Similar surveys are also planned for other parts of the North Pennines. As noted above, the results, while impressive, demand more detailed recording and investigation of many places on the ground. In many ways, this is ideal work for AA members, building on experience gained through participation in earlier fieldwork and making use of the considerable survey expertise which many members now have.

The results of the lidar surveys contribute substantially to our understanding of many periods from the Neolithic to the post-medieval, with one notable exception - the early medieval. Not a single site of certain early medieval date has been recorded in any of the areas subjected to lidar survey. This cannot be because people were not living in these areas between the fifth and the eleventh centuries; it must be the result of one of two factors, or a combination of the two. Either their settlements are not subject to discovery through lidar (eg, they were built in timber, leaving no surface trace, or their settlements now lie buried beneath medieval and later developments), or they lived in settlements that we have recorded, but to which we have assigned earlier or later dates (eg 'Romano-British settlements, or medieval villages). A consideration of why no early medieval settlements have been recorded through lidar would thus necessarily have to include analysis of some sites

currently classified as Roman or medieval. Such work could be incorporated within the recommended project focusing on the Missing Centuries, or it could be included within a wider project looking in more detail at the results of the lidar surveys, including analysis of sites of all periods.

If the above two themes are accepted as the key ones on which to focus for the next few years, then the the AA Management Committee must decide whether to integrate them together within a single project, or to seek to develop two separate projects. There are advantages and potential drawbacks to each approach.

Should the above suggestions prove impractical for whatever reason, then the following project themes, which also hit most of the relevant buttons, could be investigated as a possible alternatives:

**Theme 4. The Stone Age.**

**Theme 6. Sacred North Pennines.**

**Theme 10. Artefact studies and the North Pennines Virtual Museum.**

As noted elsewhere, the North Pennines Research Framework and the Altogether Archaeology Research Strategy must be flexible. Should circumstances render one of the other potential project themes presented in Section 3, above, particularly pertinent, (for example if a partner wishes to play a lead role, or if funding becomes available) then due regard should be given to undertaking that project instead of, or in addition to, the above recommendations.

As an alternative to the above approach, AA could decide to go with a number of smaller projects, without the need for an overarching theme, perhaps grouped together within a single initiative in a similar way to the AA project. If the individual elements are well planned and clearly designed to address one or more of the priorities in the Research Agenda, and adequate funding can be secured, then this would be by no means an unreasonable approach. Indeed, such a project could be defined as having been drawn up specifically to address a combination of research priorities and members' interests. However, discussion with members and with the Management Committee leaves little doubt that a single structured project to study 'The Missing Centuries', ideally linked to some general landscape survey to build on the 'Lidar Landscapes' surveys completed to date, is the ideal way forward.

Regardless of progress over the next few years, this entire Research Framework should be updated from time to time, with a major assessment and (if appropriate) overhaul every five years to take account of new information and opportunities.





# Altogether Archaeology

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