



An Introduction for YAC Leaders

What this project is about

My Place in Time is a project designed to equip YAC leaders with the necessary information and skills to guide YAC members through the experience of finding out about a place which has special meaning for those they mentor. Leaders will be given training in how to use some of the key online resources, such as maps, aerial photography, and information databases that landscape archaeologists use.

Archaeology is not just about digging up things from the past. All round us is evidence that tells us a story about what was once there in the past. To find that evidence, some careful detective work has to be done. Clues to finding archaeological sites and how people lived in the past often turn up in unexpected places above ground, and can be found by looking carefully at things we see every day in the modern landscape around us.

Keen eyes and an inquisitive mind rather than a trowel can reveal evidence about the past just waiting to be discovered. As well as our eyes, we can investigate places using old maps, some cool computer wizardry with special photography and information taken from satellites in space, drones and aircraft. Piecing this evidence together is the job of a type of archaeologist known as a landscape archaeologist – in other words a Landscape Detective.

This project is designed to encourage members of YAC to learn how to be a Landscape Detective by choosing a place that they know, or has some special meaning or memories for them, such as where they live, the local park, favourite football-team ground and so on – it can be anywhere they like – and undertake their own investigation. What was that place like in the past and who has shared it with you?

During the course of the project we will be asking those taking part to send us a Postcard from the Past to show us what they have found about their chosen place, and these will be displayed in a virtual online gallery.



What are we aiming to achieve?

- To provide an online archaeological project for YAC members which also includes an outdoors element when Covid-19 restrictions permit.
- To encourage YAC members to investigate a place that has meaning for them. Who else might have shared that place in the past and how do we find out?
- To help YAC leaders learn in tandem with their members, and thus build up a skills base for future projects and activities.

How do we define 'a place'?

Fundamentally, any place may have a meaning for someone – it is not just old places. However, by encouraging children to use the same tools that archaeologists use to find out information about a place such as maps, aerial photographs, lidar and records, this Landscape Detective approach will broaden their awareness of what information is available for YAC leaders and members alike.



Places can be defined in many ways for the YAC members.

- Where they live
- Where they go to school
- Anywhere that has meaning for them or they spend time away from home and school – market, mosque, football ground, museum, church, shop, wood, park, campsite etc.
- An archaeological site or historic structure
- Perhaps even a fantasy place that can be designed by them and which can include anything from the past such as Romans, Vikings etc.

What places are chosen for investigation will depend on the needs of the local groups and individuals.

How will the project work?

The project comprises four progressive phases of training and support (*Steps*) for YAC leaders and YAC members. The initial training will take place in April and will be followed by a public launch in late July 2021. The project finishes in December 2021. Training will be provided through Zoom sessions (the provisional training programme for YAC leaders is given at the end of this document). YAC leaders will be supplied with a Digital Resource Pack for each *Step*.

To avoid this project seeming like 'extra homework' in a period when children may have been spending a lot of time undertaking online schoolwork, we have designed the *Steps* to be more of a process of exploring for evidence rather than answering questions to a timetable. As a result it is anticipated that it will not be necessary to use all the online sources, and that YAC leaders can apply their own initiative and tailor the task to their members.

For example it may be deemed appropriate to use a single place for all members of one group, or that different area groups might want to form partnerships if a similar theme emerges e.g. WW1, parks etc. There is no need or desire to impose a research structure – the investigation can vary from an individual's chosen place to collective or team approach as needed.

The project is structured in four ***Steps***. For each there will be four online sessions (***Steps 1-4***). At a stage when YAC Group Leaders feel it is appropriate (given local and national Covid-19 restrictions), visits to a place may be organised for members either as a group or members encouraged to visit with parents, guardians etc. (***Step Outside***). This activity could take place at any stage during the life of the project or afterwards. Interim feedback and discussion sessions will be arranged as necessary.

The *Steps* can be characterised as follows

Step 1 – Find your place

Three online websites will be used to view mapping (see Section 5.2 and Table 3). This *Step* is the foundation to build on any work children may have already done at school (using Digimap for Schools for instance), but using other online map resources which will help them with the history, archaeology, and changes over time of a place. As not all YAC members (or leaders) will be at the same level before they start this phase is to allow exploration of the place and its surroundings with maps and learn how to manipulate the information to suit their own needs, skill-level and pace.

Step 2 – How do we find out about old buildings or archaeological sites?

This will show where and how to get hold of publically available, online heritage information about a place and its surroundings.

Step 3 – Delve a little deeper

This *Step* will explore a small range of other publically online resources which are not obviously ‘history and archaeology’ but might help understand what a place may have looked like in the past (e.g. Britain From Above), what other information is available which might tell you about the environment (e.g. MAGIC; BGS Viewer), or information related to benchmarks in time (e.g. Online Domesday).

Step 4 – Clever techy stuff

What other evidence can we see that isn’t on maps and documents? This *Step* is to help appeal to slightly older members with a techy interest. Satellites, drones and aircraft can help us discover archaeological sites. Much of the UK has been scanned using lasers in the sky and an incredible amount of undiscovered and unrecorded archaeological information can still be found using something called *lidar* (an acronym for Light Detection and Ranging). This *Step* will be a general introduction to two lidar sources that are easily accessible to view online, and one that can be downloaded for free for more advanced work.

Step Outside – Explore and look for clues outside! (optional and dependant on local circumstances)

If it can be done safely, undertake an investigation out in the open air. Look at some of the things that have been seen on the maps and aerial photographs and at the same time look for other evidence. Do some of the things you have seen on maps etc. still survive? Old buildings have often had bits added or bits taken down and often have a different use. Compare and question why and when that happened. Are there any lumps and bumps in the fields or park that might indicate that something was once there – like an old building or castle perhaps? Some villages have got bigger and some have shrunk. Sometimes, even entire villages have disappeared and new towns have appeared. The more you look the more you will see how your place may have changed through time.

Postcard from the Past

Groups and members will be invited to tell us about their place using any media they wish

- a digital postcard (perhaps containing a Google Earth image, photograph, or sketch map on one side, and a short story about what was found).
- a traditional handwritten postcard (perhaps with a sketch or drawing) sent through the post
- a video presentation
- a voice recording
- a Powerpoint presentation

Finale – Whatever the format, ‘postcards’ will be placed within a digital gallery on the YAC website. A prize of £50 to buy equipment will be awarded to the lucky group whose entry is drawn from a ‘lucky-dip’ by *Maia the Landscape Mole Detective*.



Training and Events Schedule

Zoom: Introduction and Step 1 Training Workshop

Date: 10 April 2021

Length: 1.5 hours

Aims

- Introduction to the project and the team members
- Project Structure and Overview
- Step 1 Training
- Discussion and questions

Session to be recorded and made available to YAC Leaders.

Feedback and guidance session (Step 1)

Date: May 2021 (date to be confirmed)

Length: 1 hour (adaptive as necessary)

Aims

- Open forum for YAC leaders to discuss ideas for projects. These discussions will help the team tailor Steps 2-4 training to respond to actual case studies.

Public launch:

Date: July 2021

Zoom: Step 2 Training Workshop

Date: August 2021 (date to be confirmed)

Length: 1.5 hours

Aims:

- Résumé of feedback
- Step 2 Training
- Discussion and questions

Session to be recorded and made available to YAC Leaders.

Zoom: Step 3 Training Workshop

Date: September 2021 (date to be confirmed)

Length: 1.5 hours

Aims:

- Résumé of feedback from Step 2
- Step 3 Training
- Discussion and questions

Session to be recorded and made available to YAC Leaders.

Zoom: Step 4 Training Workshop

Date: October 2021 (date to be confirmed)

Length: 1.5 hours

- Résumé of feedback from Step 3
- Step 4 Training
- Discussion and questions

Session to be recorded and made available to YAC Leaders.

Zoom: Finale

Date: December 2021 (date to be confirmed)

Length: 15 mins

Evaluation

Date: December 2021 (date to be confirmed)