Field Survey, Field Walking and Detecting Survey

Guide 15

BAJR Practical Guide Series
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October 2008 (revised)

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Foreword.

Discovery of new sites and artefacts is what drives all our interest in history archaeology and heritage. Whether it is in the jungles of the Amazon, the deserts of Arabia or more likely, the fields and hills around the place we live. Only by finding new sites, new artefacts and find spots can we build a picture of the human occupation from earliest time to the present. By adopting ‘best practice’, such as set out in this guide you are not adding a sense of purpose to you hobby, whether as an archaeological or historical society or a metal detecting club. The satisfaction in all these pursuits in researching, learning, walking and finding, studying and completing a final report is great. You can share your knowledge with others and be sure that what you have produced is of great use to everyone who holds our past as important and worth the effort.

This guide is intended to perform the dual function of helping local and community archaeology groups, professional and hobbyist metal detectorists learn how to record in the field in a standardised format, that has been formulated with the help of dozens of wonderful individuals and organisations and to whom I am indebted. The first part of the document concerns the fieldwalk and surface collection techniques and methods, the second will deal with field collection and recording using metal detectors and finally there is a section on useful skills such as map reading and coordinates, first aid for finds and equipment.

The appendices contain information on contact details and addresses, sample forms, recording sheets, a database for both Field Survey and Metal detecting and other useful publication details. For a list of county archaeologists and local history centres who will know of local groups in your area please go to Whos Who in the BAJR website and for metal detecting clubs near you contact eitherUKDetectorNet or SARG or look on the BAJR website in the Whos Who section.

You will find these and other links in the useful addresses and websites section.

David Connolly, BAJR
November 2006
Introduction.

As with all ventures, preparation is always the best way to ensure both ‘best practise’ and enjoyment. Randomly picking up ‘stuff’ in random locations in a haphazard manner will result only in a large collections of dirty stones, pieces of pottery and bits of metal that clutter your house rather than tell you and others about the past. A bit of research, a bit of knowledge and a bit of planning can turn make the difference and who knows just what you will uncover. Lost settlements, hidden treasures, evidence of early prehistoric occupation, a villa...a church or graveyard? Who knows?

Start with checking the Historic Environment Collection (HER) - once known as- the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) - this will help both to familiarise yourself with what is already known and help you to read the landscape to suggest where other unknown sites may be located. It will also ensure that none of your work ends up straying even close to a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM). A SAM is protected by law and any unauthorised work within the designated area will result in police, court and a fines or even a holiday at her majesties pleasure. As an added protection for yourself make sure you put a good 50m buffer around a SAM as accidental straying into the area and disturbing the site by removing any artefacts or digging in the ground is still an offence. There can also be other constraints, such as Countryside Stewardship Schemes, Sites of Special Scientific Interest etc... so always check and ask permission before starting.

That said... there is plenty of ground to be covered and how much better to look for new sites. It is very important work, as many unknown sites are being destroyed in the normal course of agricultural practice and other works. I for one would prefer these sites recorded rather than lost forever and it is widely recognised that it is the amateur archaeologist and detectorists that ‘find’ many new sites in the UK at present.

This Guide will describe three separate forms of organised survey and the requirements and suggested methods for each, and include the relevant forms or prompt cards for recording the results, a template for writing up any findings and a series of graphics for inclusion in your reports. If you want to see anything added to this guide or think that anything is wrong, please feel free to contact me and let me know.

Feel free to use this as a guide only and do not feel restricted by it, each site is different, each field is different, each group or individual may have other ways, the main point is to collect data in a way that it will be of use to others and that you enjoy what you are doing.
Requirements for Survey

Field Survey

**Purpose**: To locate sites, buildings and features in a large area and put them into both a typology and a chronological sequence.

**Uses**: Helps to understand the landscape as a whole and tells the story of the development of the area surveyed from the surviving remains.

**Equipment**: OS map (1:25000 is best), copy of 1st Edition OS map #1, Notebook, Camera, 30m Tape Measure & Handtape, Pencil, Pens, several plastic finds bags, clothes and footwear suitable for all weathers and countryside conditions.

**Type of Work Involved**: research in local history centres, libraries and museums :: walking in field recording sites :: entering collected data and collating information :: production of reports

**Essential**: Make sure you have permissions for all the ground you will cover :: Make sure you have a clear boundary to your survey area or you will find you may end up crossing the whole of the UK! New areas can be surveyed after you have finished this one. :: let your local archaeological curator know what you intend and they may give valuable advice or help - as they will be grateful for a well surveyed area and appreciate a well written final report.

Field Walking

**Purpose**: To collect material from an area in a methodical manner to map the location and spread of a buried site.

**Uses**: Helps to date the site from the collected artefacts and give an idea about the layout and type of the site that is being investigated.

**Equipment**: OS map (1:2500 is best), copy of 1st Edition OS map #1, Notebook, Fieldwalk record forms, Camera, 30m Tape Measure & Handtape, spring scales, selection of garden canes, lengths of blue nylon rope, Pencil, Pens, large number of plastic finds bags (one for each square or transect length), clothes and footwear suitable for all weathers and muddy fields.

**Type of Work Involved**: research in local history centres, libraries and museums :: walking in field recording sites :: entering collected data and collating information :: production of reports

**Essential**: Make sure you have permissions for all the ground you will cover :: The permissions include the landowner and also check that the area does not impinge on a SAM site :: Make sure you have a clear boundary to your survey area or you will find you may end up crossing the whole of the UK! New areas can be surveyed after you have finished this one. :: let your local archaeological curator know what you intend and they may be able to give valuable advice or help - as they will also be grateful for a well surveyed area and appreciate a the final written report.
Metal Detecting

**Purpose**: To collect metallic objects from the topsoil layers / ploughed layer from an area, location of finds may indicate previously unknown sites and events.

**Uses**: Can help find and date the site from the collected artefacts and also find objects that may have otherwise been lost to study.

**Equipment**: Metal Detector, Headphones, Spade (small - after all, you are carrying it!) & Trowel. OS map (1:2500 is best), copy of 1st Edition OS map #1, Notebook, record form, Camera, Pens, plastic finds bags and boxes with acid free tissue, clothes and footwear suitable for all weathers and muddy fields.

**Type of Work Involved**: research in local history centres, libraries and museums :: walking in fields etc detecting and digging :: entering collected data and collating information :: production of reports

**Essential**: Make sure you have permissions for all the ground you will cover :: The permissions include the landowner and also check that the area does not impinge on a SAM site :: ensure you report all finds (in Scotland) and required finds (in England and Wales) to the relevant group – either Treasure Trove or Portable Antiquities Scheme. Recording of finds over a period of time, may show a pattern which is not immediately apparent. It is important to record 100% of finds and artefacts that may be recordable.

Methods of Survey

**Field Survey :: Method**

**Preparation**

It is important to collect as much information about the area you intend to survey and have a clearly defined goal in mind. This goal may be a survey of an old estate – or the land around your village between two rivers, but whatever the goal is, remember to remain within your survey area but always take into account features that are external. I know this sounds like a contradiction in terms, but the distinction is whether or not the external feature (such as a landmark or site) has a direct relevance to your survey area. Quite often a view or vista would be sighted on a particular hill or perhaps a site in your area is one of a group, some of which are out-with the survey, but are worth mentioning to make sense of the site in your area.

A visit to your local Historic Environment Record centre (previously Sites and Monument Records) and Local Studies centre will let you know what has been done already and the location of all the known sites. Just because the site is recorded and described does not always mean that it is correct, in some cases the site location may be wrong, or what has been described as a burial cairn may be a field clearance cairn. Always check sites in the field and do not be afraid to reassess and re-record, it will always be appreciated.
In the Field

Field survey is best carried out in pairs, with areas divided up amongst those involved. The area of survey should have been carefully selected and studied prior to fieldwalking, unless you are confident and have already taken part in a number of these surveys before. It is a useful exercise to compare a known site from an old map (for example a long gone field boundary, building or mill lade) with what remains on the ground. This will help you to ‘get your eye in’.

Start with your first ‘parcel’ of land and record the visible features first. Remember that hedges, ditches, clearance cairns etc all count, and may build up a picture of land use if recorded. Mark each one on a plan of the parcel of land and then give it a number – a good convention is to have a running list of sites; 1, 2, 3, 4, …… and prefix the site number with the parcel number; 1.1, 1.2, 1.3… his way you will instantly know where each site is from the record number. For sites that form boundaries and so would appear in at least two parcels, just give it the parcel number that you first record it in.

This form of survey often does not allow for detailed examination of the ground and often fields are either grass or under crop (remember your Countryside Code). However, in some cases you may come across areas where there are spreads of artefacts or dark areas in fields. These may represent archaeological sites, or at least evidence of human activity. Record these locations as with the previous sites, though try not to take artefacts from them as you are surveying – not collecting. If you feel you can’t date the artefacts, or the danger of leaving them exposed outways the removal of them, then remember that you now have responsibility for them. These sites can then form the basis of further work in the future and you can return to carry out more intensive survey and collection.

Other sites to record are large tree holes, earthworks (humps and bumps!) locations of gates, stands of trees etc.

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1 A useful formula for hedges is to count the individual species in a 30m stretch and multiply by 100 this will give you an approximate age in years. Repeat over 3 separate sections and the average will be a more accurate date.

2 Plotting the location of tree holes can often show the line of a long forgotten avenue, stands of trees may be remnants of a designed landscape, gates are positioned for a purpose and would always have been on routes.
Each site should have the following details as a bare minimum; just follow the prompts on the Pro-Forma survey sheet. (see Appendix 1)

- Site number – Site Type - Description – Sketch – GPS location – Photograph -

A good way to deal with each site is as follows:

**Surveyor 1** – Takes photographs and notes down details of photo number, site number, direction of photograph. Then takes GPS location data.

**Surveyor 2** – Gives site number, marks site on map, sketches site describes site.

**Surveyor 1 & 2** – If needed then both people can help to make a more accurate plan of the site, and/or discuss what they think about it.

**Back at Base**

Once you have surveyed and recorded every parcel in your area, then it is time to return to warmth and organise your data.

First thing to do is get the information off the record sheets while it is still fresh in your memory. I have provided an database template for you to use, though of course you can use whatever you have or feel happy with. It is important to ‘clean up’ your field records, though they are what is called your Primary Record’ and just as important as the final report.

It is important to organise your records into the 3 main categories:

1. Written record, description and location.
2. Plans, Sketches and graphic location details
3. Photographs

From these records you can then start the work on reporting and illustrating your work. On a clean map, plot out all your sites (in red perhaps) and put the site number next to them. If the survey area is large then you could have a

**Field Walking :: Method**

**Preparation**

Once again, it is recommended that you collect as much background information on the types of sites, materials, previous work and map evidence before actually setting foot in the field.

A visit to your local Historic Environment Record centre (previously Sites and Monument Records) and Local Studies centre will let you know what has been done already and the location of all the known sites in the area. As you are actually targeting a known site, it is always a good idea to inform the County Archaeologist to let them know what you are up to, how you intend to carry out eh survey and what you will do with the results.
They will either give you valuable support, or be able to point you in directions where support can be found. They are responsible for protecting our shared heritage in each area of the UK and therefore it would be a matter of courtesy to keep them informed.

As each site is different, it will depend on the particular incidence to decide just how you will carry out the survey. A flint rich site might warrant the recording of each find to show distribution, a village site might only require transects to determine the extent of the settlement, a villa or farm would be best recorded by squares. What is important is that you are prepared for both the site and any unexpected changes in plan. Organisation is paramount, and should include the relevant permissions from Farmers, Landowners etc... in writing.

**In the Field**

Field walking can be carried out by any number of people, but one or two nominated individuals should be 'in charge'. They will be the people to set out the squares or transects, number the bags or finds, keep a record of where and what happened. The reason for a structure like this is simply to stop double numbering, confusion and keep a consistent style for the whole project.

**Transect and Square**

The transect and square methods are the most common form of fieldwalking, and are basically variations of a common theme. For a transect, each field walker is given a number of bags, a transect number or letter and the whole group starts in a line at one side of the survey area. The normal transect width is 5-10m wide which allows the individual to view material on either side of their centreline. A good aid to this method is the sighting marker;

> A cane is placed at the start and finish of the transect – for example 5 metres apart along the starting line and 5 metres apart at the end line. A team member then goes half way up the line a places another cane, which is aligned by lining up all three canes by sightline. (see illustration) This is a very accurate method of creating and staying on a straight line and if you have enough blue nylon rope, this can be used to create an actual line on the ground, joining up canes at 50m intervals. This can also be used to create good lines for squares.
Each transect should be marked on a master transect plan. Now you can begin to walk towards the end cane, keeping the middle cane in line with it, as you walk you should pick up all the man made artefacts, pottery, glass etc that you see. Do not worry about picking up ‘non-artefacts’ these can be discarded later... better safe than sorry. You may have already decided on a policy of not picking up certain objects such as roof tiles or bricks, but these should really be considered as valid indicators of activity, and even if not collected for return to base, they should at least be record by weight while still in the field.

After a set number of metres along the transect 5- 10 metres or even 20 metres you will then all set down your bag of finds and number it. (so if you are on Transect 1, you can call the first bag. 1-1, the next 1-2 and so on.) Once again it is all about knowing where you are, which allows you to make sense of the final results.

The alternative, square method, requires the squares of 5, 10 or 20 metres to be laid out beforehand with case at each corner (and blue nylon rope surrounding if you want. and each given a reference code (just like the bag numbering described above) with the position marked on a master plan. The fieldwalker is then assigned a square and collects all man made objects within the boundaries. Once all items have been collected the bag is sealed, numbered and another unwalked square is assigned.

In both these cases it is often best to operate a discard policy which is clearly defined and still records in some way the actual material that was left behind in the field – (for
example you could record that 4kg of slag was recovered but left behind) This would minimise the amount of material that will be removed without distorting the actual data recovery.3

Accurate

In some rare cases it may be that a more precise form of field survey is called for (mainly this will be associated with metallic finds and Metal Detecting Survey) in the case of flint scatters or similar. You will need an accurate plan of the site, and either an EDM / Total Station or GPS to record the exact position. Flags can be put into the ground next to the find, and the site survey controller can assign individual numbers to each find in its’ individual bag, which will correlate with the absolute position. Another method of locating the find or artefact is to measure in from two known points. (see illustration) - It is accepted that under normal circumstances, even in ploughed fields, that finds will not move greatly from the original location, so this method could still show a pattern of artefact distribution that will be of archaeological worth. This is however a methodology to be used only in very rare circumstances – as a great deal of additional equipment, resources and time must be spent in the collection.

Collect all your equipment, collect your bags and ensure they are marked both outside and inside (on waterproof card ideally) with the reference number. Leave the site as you found it. Ensure that the sheets that have the information about the site are all properly filled out. Then you can leave the site.

Back at Base

On returning to the base, you must now begin to quantify and identify your finds, though this in itself will be dependant on the nature of the site, it is best to break them down into the following broad categories.

- Ceramics
  - Pottery
  - Building Materials (Roof Tiles, Bricks)
- Lithics
  - Flints or similar complete tools
  - Flints or similar debutage (waste)
  - Flints or similar Cores
  - Building Stones (worked or shaped)
  - Decorated or carved
- Metals
  - Iron Objects
  - Lead Objects
  - Cu Alloy
  - Precious Metals
  - Slags and industrial waste
- Glass
  - Bottles
  - Window
- Significant Spot Finds (unusual, interesting, special etc like complete pots, handaxes, arrowheads, torcs etc!)

3 Remember to place the discarded material in an area that is unlikely to cause problems in any other further work.
You will need someone who can recognise and identify these items, otherwise you will require the ability to research and collect information on the ‘material culture’ of your area. There is often a large amount of this information to be found in your Local History Centre or Library. Books such as the Shire series or Archaeological Reports for excavations in that region or period will also be invaluable. It is also a good idea to get advice on cleaning the artefacts, as the last thing you want to do is ruin it all for the sake of advice.

Once you have the artefacts cleaned, you can then look at them in more detail and weigh or count the artefacts. Remember that in some cases you may be putting a bias into the report if you count 56 tiny blue and white pottery fragments and 2 huge sherds of a medieval pot and see that as less blue and white by weight or more blue and white by number of sherds. Always record the absolutes, such as weight, number etc but add details that you feel may be important in the interpretation and understanding of these results. You should work with the assumption that you will pass the information to a stranger and this will be all they have to go on, without the benefit of your personal knowledge.

Plot out the finds onto a plan (perhaps using the symbols suggested in the report template. This is a tried and tested way of seeing patterns within the site. It can often show structure locations or uses, such as working areas. Collate and interpret your raw data into a structured report of the aims, methods, results, interpretation and additional information you have collected on the site. This can then be handed to the local history centre and county archaeologist for all to use in the future.

**Metal Detecting :: Suggested Method**

**Preparation**

As with all work out in the field, it is useful to do some background research to ensure that you are looking in probable places, rather than just randomly. It is true however that much of the country has never been looked at closely, and new sites may turn up where none were expected before. I would expect that you would know ‘your’ area well, and often a combination of research in the Local History Centre\(^4\) and this knowledge of the topography and other clues will help to guide the most likely locations where sites could be found.

It is very important that sites that are either protected by Scheduling are avoided, as it is illegal to detect on these sites. It is also best to check with the landowner if they are in a Countryside or Rural Stewardship scheme as they are asked to protect archaeological features on the land, and permission must be sought prior to detecting.\(^5\) It should of course be mentioned that DEFRA and the associated farming schemes are not just about protecting archaeological sites, but also about the environment as a whole and so due consideration should be given to all the issues, whether it is a natural habitat or a fragile environment.

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\(^4\) see the list of these centres in the BAJR Who’s Who section

\(^5\) DEFRA have produced a statement on this issue, as have Historic Scotland
It is also advisable to have both a letter of permission and an agreement with the landowner as to how any material will be shared (including payment for Treasure Trove items). Remember that all material collected in Scotland is covered under Treasure Trove.

In the excellent website Our Past History – http://www.ourpasthistory.com/metal/ you will find a more detailed account of what is now expected, but to summarise, it is good practice to prepare a plan that:

1. explains the reason for detecting.
2. acknowledges the presence of SAM or other archaeological sites
3. details the area that will be detected
4. details the dates that it will be detected
5. explains the reason for detecting in a CSS area.
6. shows that the detecting is to the advantage of the fragile archaeological record, by conserving artefacts that may be damaged in ploughing, or shows the presence of particular sites in an area.

At http://www.ourpasthistory.com/metal/structured-metal-detecting-on-css-land you will learn about carrying out detecting on CSS land.

If you have this sort of plan prepared in writing, then it not only shows you are responsible and serious about what you are doing, but also means you have thought about what you are doing, dealing with specific areas with a purpose, rather than random searching. It could also be used as an aid for approaching DEFRA (or other relevant body) for permission if necessary.

In the Field

The method for carrying out detecting is often dictated by several issues, from type of ground to the potential for objects and artefacts being found. This document suggests three methods, which would not only provide a framework for detectorists, but also archaeologists and amateur groups to adopt as a best practice methodology. The idea, as with all surveys in the field is to collect enough relevant information to understand the sites and how they fit into both the chronology and the landscape – therefore a record, no matter how simple, should be taken. (see appendix 3 for the relevant record sheets). The conservation of the site as a resource in itself must be considered, just as much (if not more so) as conservation of the recovered artefacts.

Level 1 (Speculative Search)

Fill in the site record sheet and carry a enlarged map of the area, a photocopy of an OS map would be suitable. Begin by scanning the field in any way that you are used to. Remember that you do want to cover as much of the area as possible, and if you are an individual, a pair or a group then you want to coordinate as much as possible so that you are not all covering the same patch of ground over and over again. If you discover an artefact then remember the rules of detecting and the countryside, dig down a maximum of 12-18” to stay within the topsoil, excavating in situ artefacts would destroy the whole
context of the object or objects, there is nothing to stop you from reporting the location and returning to excavate with an archaeologist from the local council.6

This form of survey will allow a field to be covered quickly and with a minimum of recording. It can lead to this field being subjected to more intensive Level 2 or 3 survey. The location of important finds or concentrations of other artefacts such as pottery, slag or flint can be roughly sketched on the plan of the area for future reference and recording. This form of survey should be seen as a prospection of a new area where it is just as important to know where there are no sites, just as much as there are. At this level, there will be little depletion of the artefact resource at a normal finds rate.

Level 2 (Gridded Analytical survey)

If the site does seem to productive, it may be worth while narrowing down your search to areas. This might seem a bit excessive, however, if you try and remember where everything was in a field then you will soon find that you lose track. This system is very similar to the Fieldwalking described above and is carried out in exactly the same way. Divide the area into grid squares of either 10 or 20 metres in size using canes with little flags (to remind you where they are and stop you from poking your eye out) mark out these squares on your plan and number each square. Everything you collect in that square can be deposited into a bag for examination and to see if there is a pattern to the distribution. A good method of numbering the squares is to lay them out like a game of battleships, with lettered rows and numbered columns.

This method should show if there are discrete concentrations of finds, which might show if there is a settlement or areas of activity, even a battle can be seen in the results, if recorded.

You can record what you find in each square… pottery, flint etc. or seal them in a bag and put the grid number on it with a permanent marker. This method of collection does suit more intensive work later, where you can look carefully at the finds from each square. This level of survey may lead to the final rank of field collection

6 Ensure the archaeologist is aware that you and the landowner have claimed this item as Treasure Trove and that the excavation is to ensure that additional information is preserved – A written statement will ensure there is no dispute. A hoard or a boat burial - the more that is recorded, the more we will all learn about our past.
and so records of previous work will be just as important and can be seen as analytical. Each site is different of course and it may be just as suitable to collect and record each square in the field before disposing of them sensibly. It would not be a good idea to find lots of pottery and then collect and dump it all in the same place, without recording the location. This would only lead to confusion later on, if this area is found again by other people. It should be considered at this level of retrieval, whether there is a value to be gained from collecting more than a representative sample to determine the type or period of the site, over collection will begin to deplete the resource and also the information that could be gained.

**Level 3 (GPS located Intensive survey)**

The final level of field survey would require some form of GPS location device (ranging from the handheld (circa 5-6m accuracy) to the differential GPS systems that bring in mm accuracy). This will only take place on a known and documented site of archaeological interest. At this point the detectorists should consider the merit and research questions that would justify intensive and potentially destructive collection. This does not preclude detection, but a research plan should be in place and local involvement and archaeological collaboration should seriously be considered. Purpose and plan will mean that what is collected at this intensive level will be of great value.

**In all cases the Basic Rules of Detecting will apply.**

1. Have an agreement with the landowner and ensure no SAM site (or other archaeological sites that are protected) is touched.
2. Dig only small holes
3. Dig only in disturbed soil (do not burrow down 3ft!)
4. Always return the ground back to how you found it.
5. Acknowledge that as soon as an artefact is removed from the ground it is now your responsibility and should be looked after using the appropriate method. (see the PAS website for a guide to conservation)

Reproduced here is the Code of Conduct produced by the NCMD.

Please also see their website for more details: [http://www.ncmd.co.uk/index.htm](http://www.ncmd.co.uk/index.htm)

**The National Council for Metal Detecting Code of Conduct**

1. Do not trespass. Obtain permission before venturing on to any land.
2. Respect the Country Code. Do not leave gates open, and do not damage crops or frighten animals.
3. Wherever the site, do not leave a mess or an unsafe surface for those who may follow. It is perfectly simple to extract a coin or other small object buried a few inches below the ground without digging a great hole. Use a suitable digging implement to cut a neat flap
(do not remove the plug of earth entirely from the ground), extract the object, reinstate the grass, sand or soil carefully, and even you will have difficulty in locating the find spot again.

4. If you discover any live ammunition or any lethal object such as an unexploded bomb or mine, do not disturb it. Mark the site carefully and report the find to the local police and landowner.

5. Help keep Britain tidy. Safely dispose of refuse you come across.

6. Report all unusual historical finds to the landowner, and acquaint yourself with current NCMD policy relating to the Voluntary Reporting of Portable Antiquities.

7. Remember it is illegal for anyone to use a metal detector on a protected area (e.g. scheduled archaeological site, SSSI, or Ministry of Defence property) without permission from the appropriate authority.


9. Remember that when you are out with your metal detector you are an ambassador for our hobby. Do nothing that might give it a bad name.

10. Never miss an opportunity to explain your hobby to anyone who asks about it.

Several Agencies (including the NCMD and FID) have endorsed this Code of Practice as representing ‘Responsible Detecting’ (BAJR would also like to remind people that there is another place to record finds… the UKDFD. - We are of the mind that if the finds are recorded, and the data ends up in the relevant Historic Environment Record you are being responsible). The more you record – beyond the legal requirement - the more we all know about our past.

Before you go metal-detecting

1. Not trespassing; before you start detecting obtain permission to search from the landowner/occupier, regardless of the status, or perceived status, of the land. Remember that all land has an owner. To avoid subsequent disputes it is always advisable to get permission and agreement in writing first regarding the ownership of any finds subsequently discovered (see www.cla.org.uk / www.nfuonline.com).

2. Adhering to the laws concerning protected sites (e.g. those defined as Scheduled Monuments or Sites of Special Scientific Interest: you can obtain details of these from the landowner/occupier, Finds Liaison Officer, Historic Environment Record or at www.magic.gov.uk). Take extra care when detecting near protected sites: for example, it is not always clear where the boundaries lie on the ground.

3. You are strongly recommended to join a metal detecting club or association that encourages co-operation and responsive exchanges with other responsible heritage groups. Details of metal detecting organisations can be found at www.ncmd.co.uk / www.fid.newbury.net.

4. Familiarising yourself with and following current conservation advice on the handling, care and storage of archaeological objects (see www.finds.org.uk).

While you are metal-detecting

5. Wherever possible working on ground that has already been disturbed (such as ploughed land or that which has formerly been ploughed), and only within the depth of ploughing. If detecting takes place on undisturbed pasture, be careful to ensure that no damage is done to the archaeological value of the land, including earthworks.

6. Minimising any ground disturbance through the use of suitable tools and by reinstating any excavated material as neatly as possible. Endeavour not to damage stratified archaeological deposits.

7. Recording findspots as accurately as possible for all finds (i.e. to at least a one hundred

8. Respecting the Country Code (leave gates and property as you find them and do not damage crops, frighten animals, or disturb ground nesting birds, and dispose properly of litter: see www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk).
After you have been metal-detecting

9. Reporting any finds to the relevant landowner/occupier, and (with the agreement of the landowner/occupier) to the Portable Antiquities Scheme, so the information can pass into the local Historic Environment Record. Both the Country Land and Business Association (www.cla.org.uk) and the National Farmers Union (www.nfuonline.com) support the reporting of finds. Details of your local Finds Liaison Officer can be found at www.finds.org.uk, e-mail info@finds.org.uk or phone 020 7323 8611.

10. Abiding by the provisions of the Treasure Act and Treasure Act Code of Practice (www.finds.org.uk), wreck law (www.mcga.gov.uk) and export licensing (www.mla.gov.uk). If you need advice your local Finds Liaison Officer will be able to help you.

11. Seeking expert help if you discover something large below the ploughsoil, or a concentration of finds or unusual material, or wreck remains, and ensuring that the landowner/occupier’s permission is obtained to do so. Your local Finds Liaison Officer may be able to help or will be able to advise of an appropriate person. Reporting the find does not change your rights of discovery, but will result in far more archaeological evidence being discovered.

12. Calling the Police, and notifying the landowner/occupier, if you find any traces of human remains.

13. Calling the Police or HM Coastguard, and notifying the landowner/occupier, if you find anything that may be a live explosive: do not use a metal-detector or mobile phone nearby as this might trigger an explosion. Do not attempt to move or interfere with any such explosives.

Back at Base

As with all the survey techniques, it is important to record what you have actual found (or not) to aid you and others in the future.

Listed below are the minimum requirements for each level of survey. (You can of course do more if you wish)

Location Map (levels 1, 2 & 3)
Site Map (levels 1, 2 & 3)
Grid Plan (levels 2 & 3)
Find Plan (level 3)

Description of Location (level 1, 2 & 3)
Description of site (level 2 & 3)
Description of Finds – general (level 2 & 3)
Description of main Finds – specific (level 2 & 3)
Details of important finds (level 3)
Details of Site – periods, type etc (level 2 & 3)

Photograph of location (level 1, 2 & 3)
Photograph of Site ((level 2 & 3)
Photograph of finds in-situ (level 3)
Detail photography of important finds (level 1, 2 & 3)
More information can be found from

PAS - http://www.finds.org.uk/
Treasure Trove (Scotland) - http://www.treasuretrovescotland.co.uk/
OurpastHistory - http://www.ourpasthistory.com/metal/
SARG - http://sarg-online.co.uk/phpBB2/index.php
UKDetectorNet - http://www.ukdetectornet.co.uk/
UKDFD (UK Detector Finds Database) http://www.ukdfd.co.uk/
Creating a report

Taken from:
INSTITUTE OF FIELD ARCHAEOLOGISTS
Standards and guidance: field evaluation (1994) (revised 2001)

Non-technical summary
This should outline in plain, non-technical language the principal reason for the work, its objectives and main results. It should include reference to authorship and commissioning body.

Introductory statement
These could include acknowledgements, circumstances of the project such as planning background, the archaeological background, an outline nature of work, the site description (including size, geology and topography, location), when the project was undertaken and by whom.

Aims and objectives
These should reflect or reiterate the aims set of in the project design or specification.

Methodology
The methods used, including the detail of any variation to the agreed project design or specification should be set out carefully, and explained as appropriate.

Results
These should be set out as a series of summary objective statements, organised clearly in relation to the methods used, and describing both structural data and associated finds and/or environmental data recovered. Descriptive material should be clearly separated from interpretative statements. Technical terminology (including dating or period references) should be explained where necessary if the report is aimed at a largely non-archaeological audience. The results should be amplified by the use of drawings and photographs; and by supporting data contained in appendices.

Conclusions
It is appropriate to include a section which sums up and interprets the results and puts them into context (local, national or otherwise). Other elements should include a confidence rating on techniques used, or on limitations imposed by particular factors (eg weather or problems of access). Recommendations on further work may also be required, but in most circumstances within the planning framework this will be the responsibility of the relevant planning archaeologist or curator.

Archive location
The final destination of the archive (records and finds) should be noted in the report.

Appendices
These should contain essential technical and supporting detail, including for example lists of artefacts and contexts or details of measurements, gazetteers etc.

Illustrations
Most reports will need the inclusion of one or more illustrations for clarity; as a minimum a location plan should be included. Any plans or sections should be clearly numbered, easily referenced to the National Grid and related to the specified area.

References and bibliography
A list of all sources used should be appended to the report, including electronic sources.
Appendix 1 : Field Survey Pro Forma

Project ID
ID for your Project (an Alpha Numeric designation) for example a survey carried out in the Anytown Farm land could have a code of AFS 05 (Anytown Farm Survey in 2005)

Site ID
Each new site will receive a unique number (it would be acceptable to use a decimal point to show elements within a main site (so a farm could be site 02 but within you could subdivide into 02.1 - Well 02.2 – barn 02.3 – house … etc etc.

SMR ID
If the site has already been recorded and reported within the Historic Environment Record of the local council archaeology service there will be a site number associated to it..

NUMLINK
An additional unique number will also be available to link this ‘known’ site into a national database held by either English Heritage, the ADS or RCAHMS for example.

SITE NAME
The geographic component of the name should match the nearest named map feature. It may also include the nature of the site where it is a landscape feature such as a Castle, Cairn, Church etc….ie “Soroby, Old Parish Church, Tiree” Or “Ballencrief Farm Enclosure”

ALTERNATIVE NAME
The ‘ALTERNATIVE NAME’ field contains any alternative names by which the site is or has been known. This may include alternative spellings or names shown on historic maps.

SITE TYPE
A brief classification of the type of the site. Where multiple site-types have been recorded from a single area, they should appear in the SITETYPE field separated by a semicolon. For example, farm, villa, wall, well, hut circle, earthwork etc..

PERIOD GENERAL
(BCE = Before Common Era  CE = Common Era)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period Type</th>
<th>Date Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower Palaeolithic</td>
<td>500000 – 150001BCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Palaeolithic</td>
<td>150000 – 40001BCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Palaeolithic</td>
<td>40000 – 1001BCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mesolithic</td>
<td>10000 – 4001BCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Neolithic</td>
<td>4000 – 3001BCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Neolithic</td>
<td>3000 – 2201BCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Bronze Age</td>
<td>2500 – 1501BCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Bronze Age</td>
<td>1600 – 1001BCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Bronze Age</td>
<td>1000 – 701BCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Iron Age</td>
<td>800 – 401BCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Iron Age</td>
<td>400 – 101BCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Iron Age</td>
<td>100BCE – 42CE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman</td>
<td>43 – 409CE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Medieval</td>
<td>410 – 1065CE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medieval</td>
<td>1066 – 1539</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Medieval</td>
<td>1540 - 1700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18th Century</td>
<td>from 1701 - 1800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PERIOD SPECIFIC
A precise date where possible or a century

MAP SQUARE
the Letter designation ie NT or NS
NGRE

This field requires 6 figures, if you do not have information this accurate you can use trailing zeros e.g. 659045 158623 is accurate to within a tolerance of 1m, however you could give 659000 158600 which would have a tolerance of 100m. Please ensure you show tolerance value accuracy so that trailing zeros are not mistaken for actual values.

NGRN

This field requires 6 figures, if you do not have information this accurate you can use trailing zeros e.g. 659045 158623 is accurate to within a tolerance of 1m, however you could give 659000 158600 which would have a tolerance of 100m. Please ensure you show tolerance value accuracy so that trailing zeros are not mistaken for actual values.

ACCURACY

- Within 1m
- Within 5m
- Within 10m
- Within 50m
- Within 100m
- Other: See Record

TOPOGRAPHY

- Broad valley floor: The floodplain of a broad valley containing a mature river.
- Dry valley floor: In the bottom of a dry valley with steep slopes on either side.
- River valley floor: In the bottom of a river valley with steep slopes on either side.
- Valley side: On a slope, but significance of location is proximity to a river or stream.
- Cliff base: At the base of a cliff (inland or on the coast).
- Cliff top: At the top of a cliff (inland or on the coast).
- Flat: On level ground.
- Marsh or Bog: In a boggy landscape.
- Island: On an island surrounded by water.
- Inter-tidal zone: In the area between mean high water and mean low water.
- Shoreline: By the sea, but out of the inter-tidal zone.
- Lakeside: On the edge of a lake.
- River bank: Immediately adjacent to a river.
- Mountain: On a mountain.
- Knoll: On an area of slightly raised ground in an otherwise flat area.
- Hill top: On the highest point of a given hill.
- Brow of hill: Ground not sufficiently level to described it as a ledge.
- Plateau: On a broad flat expanse with downward slopes on at least three sides.
- Promontory/Spur: On land projecting out into an area which is generally lower than it.
- Ridge: On a linear stretch of land with downward slopes on both sides.
- Ledge: On a level area on a hill side with an abrupt change of slope to front and rear.
- Terrace: On a level stretch along the side of a slope.
- Saddle: On the area of flatter ground between two crests on a hill.
- Slight slope: On a slope with a gradient.
- Moderate slope: On a slope with a gradient >5m.
- Steep slope: On a slope with a gradient >20m in 500m.

LANDUSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimal cultivation</th>
<th>Disturbed grassland</th>
<th>Land boundary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultivation to a depth &lt;0.25m</td>
<td>Regularly improved grassland</td>
<td>Mineral extraction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivation to a depth &gt;0.25m</td>
<td>Grassland, undetermined</td>
<td>Subterranean feature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivated land, undetermined</td>
<td>Orchard</td>
<td>Deciduous native woodland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marine coastland</td>
<td>Thoroughfare</td>
<td>Deciduous introduced woodland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter-tidal</td>
<td>Verge</td>
<td>Mixed woodland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastland above high water</td>
<td>Waste ground</td>
<td>Coniferous plantation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastal saltmarsh</td>
<td>Recreational usage</td>
<td>Undetermined woodland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cliff and related features</td>
<td>Other landuse</td>
<td>Parkland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other coastal features</td>
<td>In use as building</td>
<td>Scrub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running fresh water</td>
<td>Built over</td>
<td>Other woodland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standing fresh water</td>
<td>Churchyard</td>
<td>Wetlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heathland</td>
<td>Garden</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONDITION
A visual assessment of the sites condition, taking into account the amount of ‘completeness’
and compared with other similar sites.
Destroyed :: Poor :: Moderate :: Good :: Excellent :: Unknown :: Not Applicable

COUNCIL
The name of the authority in which the site lies.

DETAILS
This may include a brief description of the site, an interpretation of its date and function, and
details on its history and condition when last visited. This field may contain information on the
site drawn from a variety of sources, compiled over time. These sources may disagree over the
interpretation of the date and function of the site, and may indicate how the site’s condition has
altered over time. All this information is useful, included with your own record.

Date of Record
The date on which you visited and recorded the site.

Names
Name of recording team (initials will be fine if referenced to a main project list of participants)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project ID</th>
<th>Site ID</th>
<th>SMR ID</th>
<th>NUMLINK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Site Name**

**Alternative Name**

**Site Type**

**Period - General**

**Period Specific**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAP SQUARE</th>
<th>NGRE</th>
<th>NGRN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ACCURACY**

Within 1m  -  Within 5m  -  Within 10m  -  Within 50m  -  Within 100m  -  Other: See Record

**TOPOGRAPHY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad valley floor</th>
<th>Dry valley floor</th>
<th>River valley floor</th>
<th>Valley side</th>
<th>Flat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mountain</td>
<td>Knoll</td>
<td>Hill top</td>
<td>Brow of hill</td>
<td>Plateau</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promontory/Spur</td>
<td>Ridge</td>
<td>Ledge</td>
<td>Terrace</td>
<td>Saddle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cliff base</td>
<td>Cliff top</td>
<td>Marsh or Bog</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slight slope</td>
<td>Moderate slope</td>
<td>Steep slope</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Island</td>
<td>Inter-tidal zone</td>
<td>Shoreline</td>
<td>Lakeside</td>
<td>River bank</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LANDUSE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimal cultivation</th>
<th>Cultivation to a depth &lt;0.25m</th>
<th>Cultivation to a depth &gt;0.25m</th>
<th>Cultivated land, undetermined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marine coastland</td>
<td>inter-tidal</td>
<td>Coastland above high water</td>
<td>Coastal saltmarsh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other coastal features</td>
<td>Running fresh water</td>
<td>Standing fresh water</td>
<td>Heathland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undisturbed grassland</td>
<td>Disturbed grassland</td>
<td>Regularly improved grassland</td>
<td>Grassland, undetermined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allotment</td>
<td>Orchard</td>
<td>Thoroughfare</td>
<td>Verge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waste ground</td>
<td>Recreational usage</td>
<td>Other landuse</td>
<td>In use as building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Churchyard</td>
<td>Garden</td>
<td>Land boundary</td>
<td>Mineral extraction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deciduous native woodland</td>
<td>Deciduous introduced woodland</td>
<td>Mixed woodland</td>
<td>Coniferous plantation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parkland</td>
<td>Scrub</td>
<td>Other woodland</td>
<td>Wetlands</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONDITION**

Destroyed :: Poor :: Moderate :: Good :: Excellent :: Unknown :: Not Applicable

**Date of Record**

/ / Names
## Appendix 2: Field Walking Pro Forma

Sample Fieldwalking record sheet. (ie A1, A2, A3 etc) (mark finds or concentrations on the square)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site name:</th>
<th>Square size:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date:</td>
<td>/ /</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recorders:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Square:</th>
<th>Square:</th>
<th>Square:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Ceramics –
CBM -
Lithics -
Metal –
Glass –
Other –

Notes and reference numbers of significant finds and
One way to represent your fieldwalking results is in a visual image, from this it is immediately apparent that although there is a ‘background noise’ of 3-7 sherds of recent ceramics,

Now it is clear that a similar concentration of glass fragments suggests a site in that area. (It turned out that the site was a tavern dated from c. 1580s -1824 when it was demolished.) This example shows why accurate records can help locate sites after collating data back at base.
Appendix 3 : Metal Detecting Pro Forma

Recording significant artefacts will require a more detailed level of information.

It should be in a format that will fit easily into either the Portable Antiquities Scheme [http://www.finds.org.uk/index.php](http://www.finds.org.uk/index.php) or UKDFD databases.
[http://www.ukdfd.co.uk/](http://www.ukdfd.co.uk/)

This is a sample of what could be your standard record sheet.

![Field Recording Finds Card](image-url)
**Appendix 4: Taking a grid reference**

Taking a grid reference could not be easier in the UK. Here’s how:

As with a graph, on a grid square ‘point zero’ is in the left hand bottom corner. The numbers on the bottom and left of your map are the number of kilometres along and up from that ‘point zero’. These are the figures used when giving a map or grid reference, and must be given in the right order.

Grid References are given in an internationally accepted format which is **Identification Letters, Eastings, Northings**.

Identification Letters you already understand, **Eastings** are the numbers along the bottom of the map and **Northings** are the numbers up the side of the map. It follows then that ‘Grid Reference NT 0250’ is a point which is 02 km to the east and 50 km to the north of point zero on Grid Square NT.

As this is a four digit reference dealing in whole kilometres i.e. 01 and 50, this means that it refers to point zero of a square kilometre.

**Accuracy**

A four figure reference identifies a square kilometre of the map. To add accuracy we divide the 1 km square up again into 10 meter squares and use an eight figure reference. Take the letters first (NT), then the easting square number (64) plus a hundredth division of that square (52), and repeat for the northing (37)+(69). Refer to the **illustration** for the grid reference NT 6452 3769, a fictitious site in a field.

It follows then that an eight figure grid reference refers to a 10m square on the map, which is a useful co-ordinate for our purposes. 100 square meters is not such a big area and in favourable circumstances you should be able to visually see it all and find what you are looking for.

**A good way to remember the order for grid references - Along the hall, then up the stairs!**

Refer to the illustration and your own maps to get the idea of taking and finding grid references.

Alternatively… get a GPS, they are cheap and accurate to 3-5m.. make sure you get a WAAS enabled, and if you want, get a GIS system that you can down load and view your finds on.