

# Method in the Mapness

Fig.1a. ARCHI Old Maps Finder showing a search for the place name, 'castleshaw' ([http://www.archiuk.com/archi/archi\\_maps\\_os.htm](http://www.archiuk.com/archi/archi_maps_os.htm))

**ARCHI: Old Maps of England, Scotland and Wales and the British Isles**

Use your postcode, placename, co-ordinate, or even your current location, to find old ordnance survey (OS) maps of Britain. Enter a location or click the 'My Location' button in the form below and look for the link to the old map at the top of the list generated from the ARCHI database.

A password is only needed for additional information such as the location of archaeological and historic sites in the area. Otherwise, leave the password box blank.

UK placename, postcode or co-ordinates:  
 OR

Password (ARCHI Members)  
  Show Password

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## Locating Undiscovered Ancient Sites with the New Mapping Feature on the ARCHI Website

Before the Internet, there were two kinds of detectorists – lucky ones and not-so-lucky ones. At least that is what I thought and included myself in the latter group. This didn't frustrate me too much because, like most other detectorists, I gained so many other non-material rewards. Often it was enough to enjoy the fresh country air or marvel at the sight of the morning dew in a spider's web. However, at other times I would ponder on thoughts of this Land's ancestors and wish that the next signal would be a call from them – in the form of something like a Celtic gold stater or a Roman gold *aureus*.

It was after many months of pondering on thoughts like these that I started to question the definition of 'luck'. Was it really a purposeless, unpredictable and uncontrollable force? Or, was it possible to nurture it and encourage it to help me make that special find? I answered "Yes" to this question and set myself the challenge of bringing about a change of luck through my own action.

Unbeknown to me at the time, I had known where to start since early childhood. Those bedtime stories of pirates, and then, when I could read for myself, books like Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island* and then the Indiana Jones films – they all had something in common – maps – treasure maps.

So, this is where I started. Not on maps from fairy tales, though, but with real

maps, because behind many of them lie true stories more unbelievable than fiction.

I started by looking at the contours of the land, the alignments of roads, parish and field boundaries, fieldnames and place names, parish boundaries and cartographer's annotations on the maps of sites of antiquity. I was looking for anything and everything that could firmly put an 'X' on the hitherto un-trodden pastures shown on my copy of the map of the lands I had access to. This 'X' would mark the spot where my luck was about to change and I would find evidence of an ancient site not yet known to archaeology.

You may think that things are much easier and less challenging now we have online map services such as Google, Bing Maps etc. However, even if they are so easily available now, there is still an art to the interpretation of maps for the location of undiscovered ancient sites. This is because that behind the modern maps delivered by, for example, Google Maps, there is a much more complex historical story. Recognising particular landscape features and properties appearing to be hidden, but actually in plain site, could be the key to your quest.

## Free Old Maps Online

In order to make it easier to unravel the historical stories behind modern maps, I've built a new 'Old Map Search' page on the ARCHI website ([www.archiuk.com](http://www.archiuk.com)). You can access the feature on the ARCHI webpage at: [http://www.archiuk.com/archi/archi\\_maps\\_os.htm](http://www.archiuk.com/archi/archi_maps_os.htm) (Fig.1a) or via a standard ARCHI Search at ([To find the locations of 190,000 British archaeological sites, type in a UK Place, Postcode or Co-ordinate in the box below:

Keywords \(Optional\):

New Users: Leave the box below blank and press the Search button.  
 ARCHI Members: Please enter your password.

Show Password

Area to search within:  10 km  5 km  3 km

ARCHI: the database of 190,000 UK archaeological sites.](http://www.</a></p>
</div>
<div data-bbox=)

Fig.1b. Finding old maps using the standard ARCHI Search Form ([http://www.archiuk.com/index\\_form.htm](http://www.archiuk.com/index_form.htm))



[www.archiuk.com/index\\_form.htm](http://www.archiuk.com/index_form.htm)) (Fig.1b). Note that the former webpage has the option of searching for maps in your current location. Even though I say it myself, it is great for when you're out and about with your mobile phone.

To give you an archaeological context to the map, the search will also give you a list of archaeological sites and historic monuments from the ARCHI database within 10km of the location you choose.

## Place Names and Maps to Discover Ancient Sites

If you read my previous article on the 'Secrets of Field Names' (*Treasure Hunting*, January 2015), you will be aware that the place name element 'Castle' has an association with Roman sites. Hence, in order to find all UK places with this element in their name (and possibly Roman sites), I first did a search on the ARCHI Ancient Placename Finder at: <http://www.archiuk.com/archi/placename.htm> and found the name 'Castleshaw' (from Castleshaw Resrs (SD 99 09)) in my area of interest.

I then typed this place into the Old Map Finder Form on the ARCHI website ([http://www.archiuk.com/archi/archi\\_maps\\_os.htm](http://www.archiuk.com/archi/archi_maps_os.htm)) and chose the 2nd place with that element (i.e. Castleshaw Resrs (SD 99 09)). Doing this will bring up a list of Search Results from the ARCHI Database of British Archaeological Sites and Historical Monuments near this place and also a link to a Satellite, Road and



Fig.3. Satellite, road and historical O.S. old map overlay of Castleshaw Reservoirs.

Fig. 4. Historical O.S. Map of Castleshaw 'Camp' (Historical Map via the National Library of Scotland's map service (<http://maps.nls.uk/>))



Fig.5. Google satellite image of the 'CAMP' shown on the Historical O.S. Map of Castleshaw (Fig.4) showing the Scheduled Roman Fort at Castleshaw, Saddleworth, Greater Manchester.

Fig.6. Google Terrain Map showing the topography of the land around the Scheduled Roman Fort.



Click here -> [for Archaeological and Historic Sites Data in this area.](#)

Fig.7. Example ARCHI Search Link on the Map Overlay Page.

Historical Ordnance Survey Old Map overlay (Figs.2 & 3). Zoom into the map in Fig.4 and look for the 'CAMP'. Once you have found the 'CAMP', move it to the centre of the map and click 'Satellite' and zoom into the satellite image (Fig.5).

This terrain map shows that the Scheduled Roman Fort at Castleshaw was positioned on the side of a small hill in a sheltered valley within an otherwise exposed moorland area. This Scheduled Ancient Monument is the site of Rigodunum, a Brigantian settlement. It has clear views up and down the valley, although it is overshadowed by higher ground on all sides and lies along the Deva Victrix (Chester) to Eboracum (York) Roman road (source Wikipedia). Also, my own research has shown at least two other Roman forts with a similar topology to this one. Further, note the name 'Dirty Lane'.

There is a body of evidence which associates negative names such as Dirty/Foul (i.e. Foul Causeway) with Roman sites.

## Finding Nearby Undiscovered Ancient Sites

The Roman fort at Castleshaw is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, so clearly it is protected by law and hence off bounds to detectorists. It is open to the public though, so is well worth a visit, even if it is just to walk around and get a feel for how it sits in the landscape. Maybe on a particularly blustery day your imagination may get the better of you and you hear the whispers of its former inhabitants telling you the stories of their lives.

However, the point of this article is to bring reality to your dreams in the form of solid evidence. So, there is a link on the map overlay page which when clicked

will search for Archaeological and Historic Sites and Monuments in the area (Fig.7). If you're actually in the field (so to speak), there is also a link to download and install the ARCHI Discover Archaeology Android App to use with your Android mobile device. Note that the iPhone version should be available towards autumn 2016.

Some of the sites in the lists will also be Scheduled and out of bounds to detectorists. However, many others won't. I concentrate on the less spectacular pottery, coin and artefact find spots because these are often in areas not yet explored. I also cross-reference the find spot locations with nearby place names marked on various map sources. So, once you have confirmed with the authorities and the landowner that the area of your 'X' is available to search, your luck may be about to change. In fact even just looking at the maps and place names in the area around the example above, I can already see what looks very much like a previously unknown Iron Age Settlement with a later, possibly Roman, field system... [TH]