

# Landscape archaeology



## What is landscape archaeology?

Landscape archaeology looks at people from the past and the landscapes in which they lived. Using Google Earth we can look at landscapes from above and this can give us clues as to how the area was used in the past and who was living there.

Have a look at Google Earth images of your local area and see if you can spot any of the following features. You too can become an armchair landscape archaeologist!

### 1. Ridge and Furrow



During medieval times, peasants did most of their work for the Lord of the Manor, but were sometimes given strips of land to grow their own crops. The land was ploughed in long strips because it was very difficult for the ploughs to turn. Over the years, a ridge and furrow pattern became clear as the ploughing caused soil to be piled up into ridges. If you can spot this feature in your local area it is likely that this area was part of a medieval village.

This photo shows ridge and furrow in a field to the south-west of York.

### 2. Hillfort



Most hillforts were constructed in Iron Age Britain between 200BC and 43AD when the Romans conquered the country. The Romans occupied some of the hillforts but others were abandoned. Many places located near hillforts end in 'bury' meaning 'fort'. It is thought that some hillforts used to act as large holding pens for cattle and horses.

This photo shows a hillfort south of Wroughton near Swindon.

### 3. Amphitheatres



Roman amphitheatres were an area used for shows and entertainments such as bear fighting and gladiator spectacles. This amphitheatre was located just outside the Roman town of Corinium (which is now Cirencester) and would have held about 8,000 spectators. The entertainment would take place in the middle and wooden seating would be placed on the mounds. This amphitheatre was constructed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD.

**This photo shows a Roman amphitheatre to the west of Cirencester.**

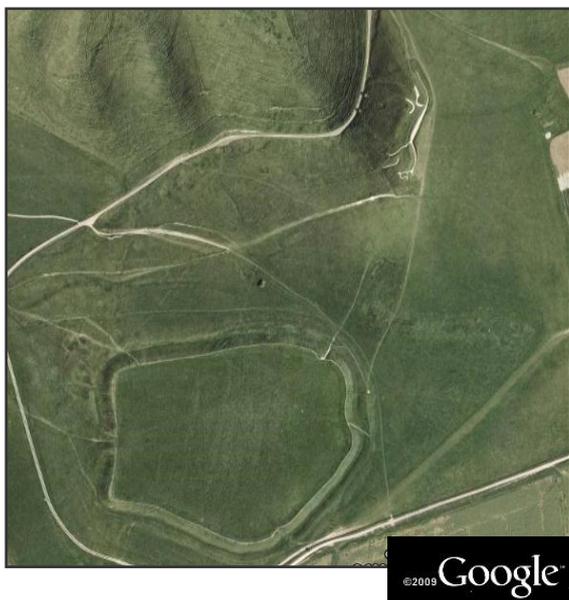
### 4. Barrows



A barrow is a tomb which usually has several different chambers. This barrow is one of the longest in the UK at about 100m and was constructed about 3600 BC. It was in use for about 1,000 years. This barrow can be recognised by the large stones at the entrance which would have sealed the tomb.

**This is a photo of a longbarrow located a few kilometres south of Avebury in**

### 5. Chalk figure



Chalk figures are common in the UK and are where the grass has been removed to leave the chalk underneath. Most commonly these are in the form of white horses, however, do take other forms such as the Cerne Abbas giant. Many of these figures are not ancient but usually date back a few hundred years. The main exception to this is the Uffington white horse which dates back to about 1000 BC. The purpose of this horse is unknown but is likely to have religious significance.

**This photo shows two aspects of landscape archaeology – a hillfort and a white horse. These can be found near the village of Uffington in Oxfordshire.**