

# Lower Wharfedale National Mapping Programme project



The Lower Wharfedale National Mapping Programme (NMP) aerial survey project was carried out in partnership with [West Yorkshire Archaeology Service \(WYAS\)](#) [↗](#). It covered an area of 1,100 square kilometres, mostly lying within West Yorkshire but also small parts of North and South Yorkshire. The mapping linked the Yorkshire Dales NMP and Vale of York NMP projects. This completed the NMP mapping of the whole of a major river valley from source to sea.



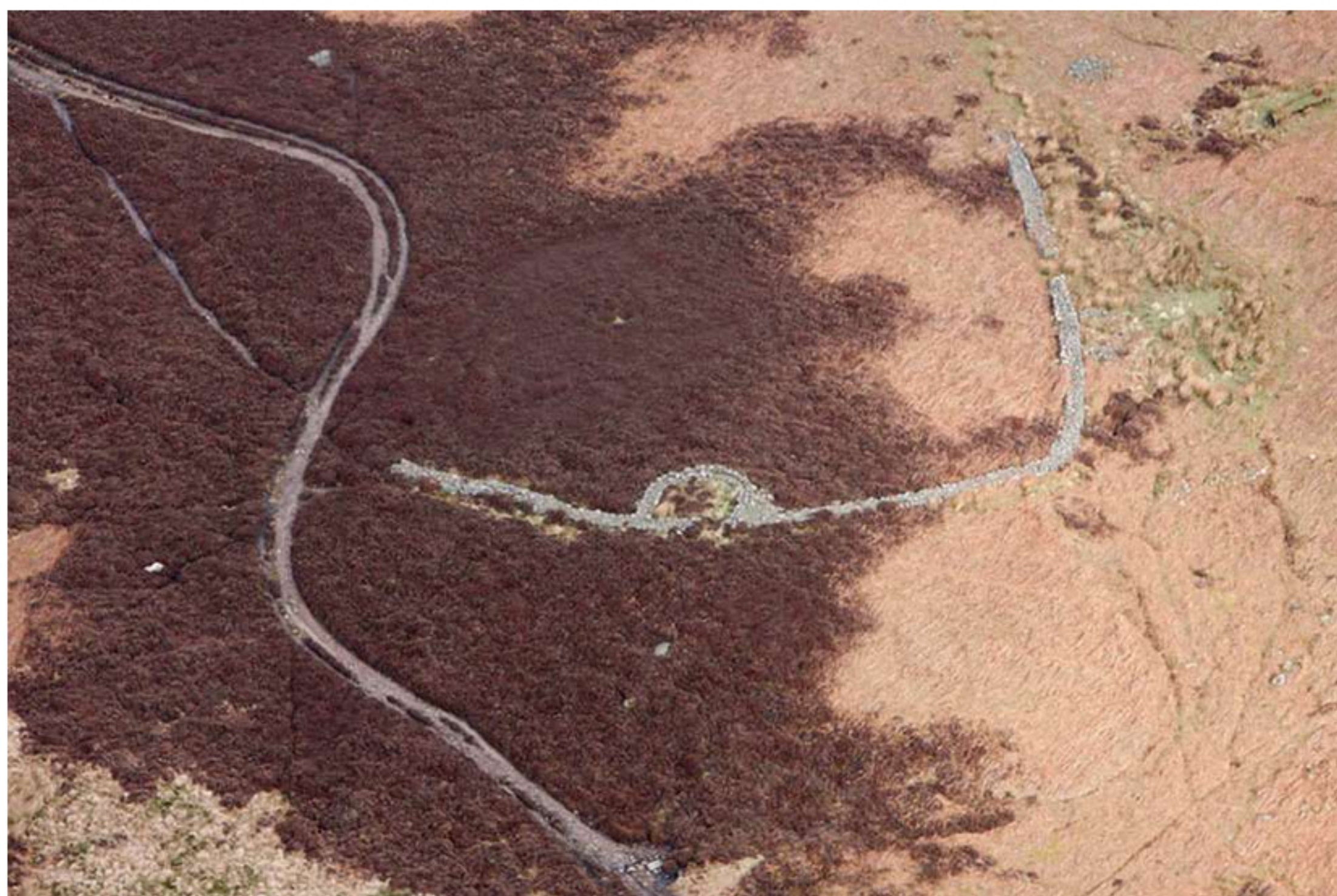
"Round Dikes" enclosure, West Yorkshire photographed on 18-OCT-2007. The enclosure of probable Iron Age date survives as a substantial earthwork in pasture and (NMR 20705/21). © Historic England

## Varying topographies

A broad range of geographical regions was covered by the project. Each of these has shaped past settlement of the landscape and today influences the survival of archaeological features.

In the west lie the Millstone Grit uplands and moors. Here numerous monuments dating from the Bronze and Iron Ages survive as earthworks. These include cairns, two embanked stone circles and the impressive enclosures of Woofa Bank and Round Dikes.

As the River Wharfe flows eastwards from its source in the Yorkshire Dales, its valley gradually shallows. This part of the valley contains designed landscapes, such as that surrounding Harewood House. Further south and east the pasture fields give way to arable agriculture. There are also the extensive open cast mines and spoil heaps of the Westphalian coal measures.



The excavated and partially reconstructed remains of a Bronze Age enclosed settlement on Ilkley Moor, West Yorkshire, photographed on 12-MAR-2009 (NMR 20871/06). © Historic England

## The Magnesian Limestone belt

The eastern part of the project area is defined by a geology of Magnesian Limestone. This is part of the Magnesian Limestone belt that runs up much of the eastern half of England. This region is characterised by gently rolling terrain and well drained soils. These factors greatly assist in the formation of cropmarks. For this reason, the area has been a focus for aerial archaeologists for over 40 years.

The project mapped extensive coaxial field systems with associated enclosures and trackways, of probable Iron Age/Roman date. Other sites mapped on the limestone include a Roman villa at Dalton Parlours and the ritual landscape of Ferrybridge Henge.

This mapping has been combined with the aerial photograph mapping from the Magnesian Limestone NMP project. Together these form the aerial survey section for the Magnesian Limestone in South and West Yorkshire Archaeological Mapping and Assessment Project.



Cropmarks photographed on 14-JUL-2006 reveal Iron Age/Roman trackways, field boundaries and enclosures at Ledston, West Yorkshire (NMR 20566/11). © Historic England