MANAGING ARCHAEOLOGY:
Evaluation techniques that reduce uncertainty

The following pages present case studies that highlight the importance of field evaluation in a successful project. Field evaluation ground-tests what might be found and frequently supports pre-planning consultation or a planning application: for infrastructure projects, it may contribute to a more detailed understanding of a chosen site or route. It can involve a wide range of intrusive or non-intrusive fieldwork techniques to prospect for archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts, and to establish nature and extent.

The first case study outlines the approach to the assessment and evaluation of archaeological potential and impact from a mega-project, the construction of the High Speed 2 (HS2) rail link, emphasising the importance of using competent, accredited professionals to design and deliver appropriate programmes of work.

The second outlines how metal detecting and fieldwalking have been under-utilised as archaeological evaluation techniques and how these two approaches can be combined in a cost-effective way.

The third sets out the case for using a wider spectrum of techniques for evaluation, arguing that a phased approach supports more targeted, question-led trial trenching and, ultimately, better decision-making.

The final case study explains that the first stage of archaeological evaluation often involves non-intrusive techniques such as geophysical survey. It includes the recent advances in archaeological geophysics and how using the right technique can support positive outcomes for clients and developers.

These case studies illustrate some of the evaluation techniques and approaches used to manage archaeology and reduce uncertainty, and we hope that they inspire those who are undertaking archaeological projects to seek advice and support from a CIfA-accredited professional.

Approaches to evaluation and assessment for linear infrastructure

Metal detecting as an evaluation technique

A geoarchaeological approach to evaluating large land parcels

Placing geophysical survey at the centre of archaeological and heritage services