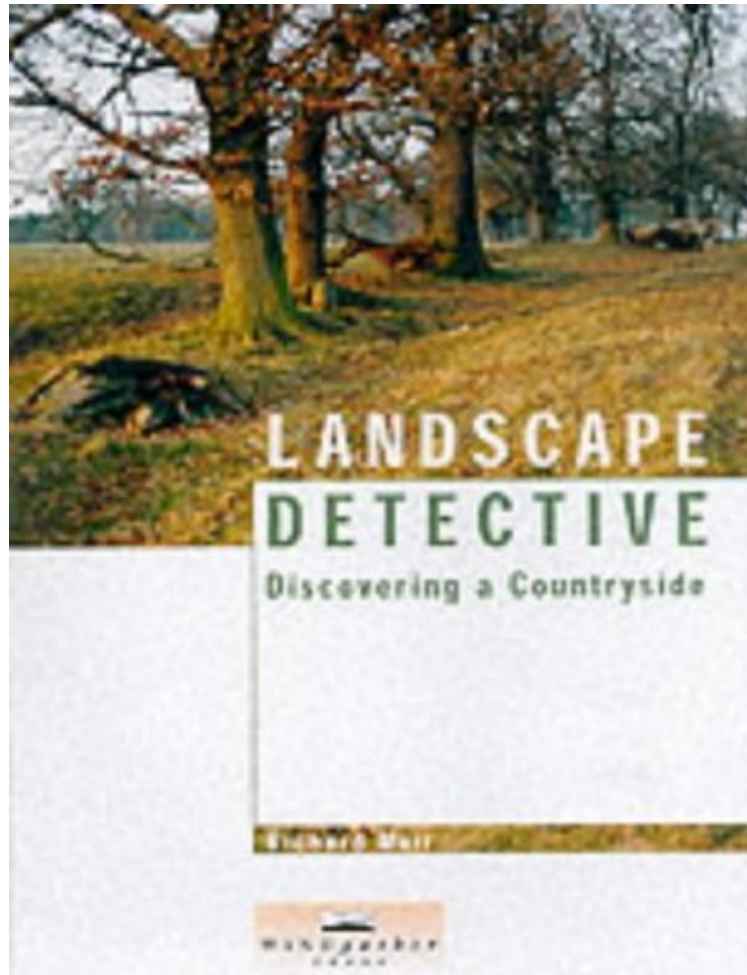


(Free and download) Landscape Detective: Discovering a Countryside

## Landscape Detective: Discovering a Countryside

*Richard Muir*

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**Richard Muir : Landscape Detective: Discovering a Countryside** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Landscape Detective: Discovering a Countryside:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. "Landscape Detective" is a great find By Wade Tarzia I first encountered Muir's writing 20 years ago in his "Riddles of the British Landscape," and I jumped to buy "Landscape Detective" when I first saw it. For anyone buying this kind of book, my best guess is that a combination of archaeology, history, place-names, and map-obsession are key components of your personality -- this book will well satisfy these areas. Muir traces the history of an English village from the times when Romans built a road through the region up to the final period of major landscape renovation in the mid-1800s, with a focus on the late medieval period. He teaches us ways to read the various phases of landscape change as both peasant cultivator and landowner each adapt the land to their needs. Time goes by, social organization changes, land-use shifts, history reaches in its fingers of raid, pestilence, and, more quietly, the simple coming and going of farming, expansion, designing. People

leave the traces of their land-conception behind in the place-names mentioned in old documents or still in use until recent times. Peasants shape the land with the kind of plough they use and with their method of turning large ox teams; then the Victorians come along one day and leave plough-furrows of a different sort -- the straighter closer-packed lines of a steam-driven winch plough. Humans and plants and animals leave their signatures behind. Muir will take you through this roughly 2-square mile vill and almost 1400 years of its time. His writing is accessible, and to this American reader, his style has that pleasant aura of "talky Britishness" that is more interesting than utilitarian. My only complaint is that he does not provide a short glossary of terms (some of them can be found in a typical home-dictionary, but some not). He explains several terms, but the American reader not accustomed to the British experience of landscape-heritage would like to be brought up to speed on more of these basics. Surely, his first concern was the British reader, but given his popularity across the seas, I think a nod toward a slightly different reader may have helped. -- Wade Tarzia, March 2003

The countryside is a gigantic puzzle which contains within it the keys to its own history. This book takes the reader through the process of landscape detection, by way of a journey through a fascinating landscape in the Yorkshire Dales; The countryside is a gigantic puzzle which contains within it the keys to its own history. This book takes the reader through the process of landscape detection, by way of a journey through a fascinating landscape in the Yorkshire Dales. Richard Muir shows how exploring landscape history can be compared to investigating a crime. The detective analyses different kinds of evidence to construct what happened, when and why. Along the way he or she has to interpret all sorts of complex material. Gradually, as the evidence accumulates, the past comes

About the Author Dr. Richard Muir is one of Britain's leading landscape historians. He is the author of *The New Reading the Landscape* (2000) and many other books. He edits the journal *Landscapes*, which is also published by Windgather Press