

# A An Introduction to Historic Environment Records

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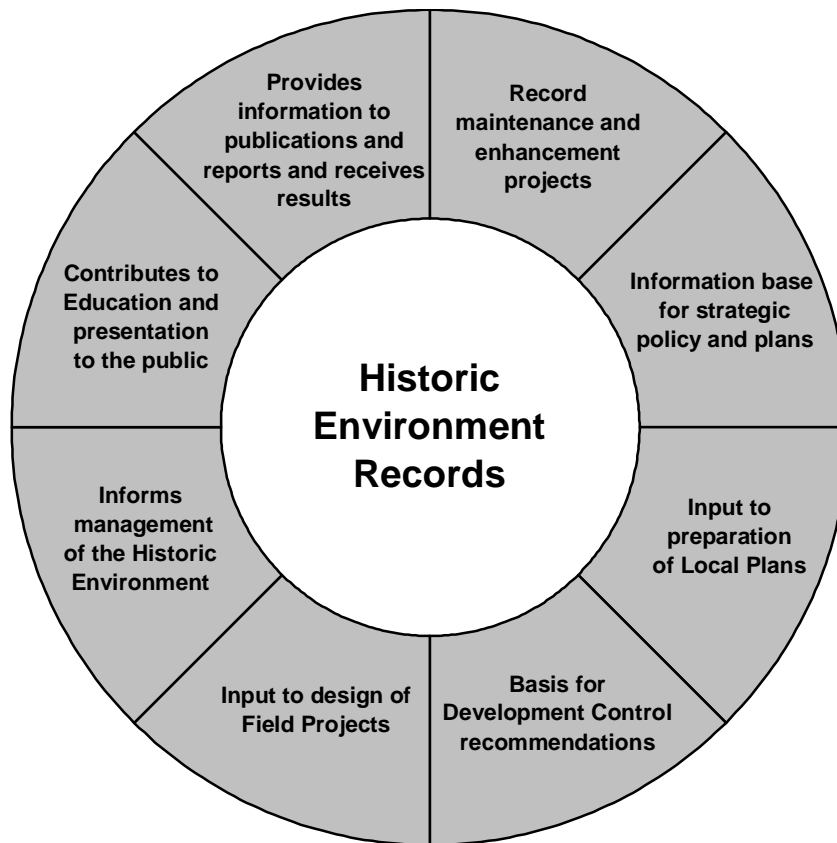
## A.1 What are SMRs and HERs?

SMRs began life in response to the loss of the archaeological resource through urban and rural development. From their original remit of recording archaeological sites, they have been developed to encompass a wide range of information about the historic environment which has been reflected in the change of name in England and Wales from SMR to HER. Today they provide a unique information resource, forming the basis for sustainable conservation and playing an important role in informing public understanding and enjoyment of the local historic environment.

The historic environment includes all aspects of our surroundings that have been built, formed or influenced by human activities from earliest to most recent times. An Historic Environment Record stores and provides access to systematically organised information about these surroundings in a given area. It is maintained and updated for public benefit in accordance with national and international standards and guidance. An HER makes information accessible to all in order to:

- advance knowledge and understanding of the historic environment;
- inform its care and conservation;
- inform public policies and decision-making on land-use planning and management;
- contribute to environmental improvement and economic regeneration;
- contribute to education and social inclusion;
- encourage participation in the exploration, appreciation and enjoyment of the historic environment.

The information held in HER databases and collections thus provides a starting point for management processes, conservation, fieldwork and research into the historic environment and also informs local communities about their area. In turn, many of these activities generate new information which feeds back to HER managers in the form of reports and archives that are used to enhance the HER (Figure. 1).



*Figure 1: The HER 'wheel' drives and is powered by an integrated approach to conservation and understanding of the historic environment.*

### **A.1.1 The information resource**

HERs cover archaeological and historical features and finds, the activities of people involved in investigating the historic environment, sources of information about their areas and the conservation management process. However, in the same way that human activity varied from area to area in the past so too does the information contained in HERs today. This is partly a reflection of variations in past human activity and partly due to differences in the way in which individual HERs have developed, which is expanded on later in this section.

#### **The historic landscape**

In general, HER databases contain information about all of the ancient and historic features and sites in both countryside and town that make up the historic landscape. They range in date from the earliest hominid settlement to the Cold War period. Many monuments and features survive in visible form, and both enrich the public's appreciation of the contemporary landscape and contribute to tourism. Other remains lie buried but can provide valuable enlightenment for this and future generations. Some sites are interpreted from place name or other evidence from maps and historic documents. In addition to this, coastal HERs include a wide range of sites and features reflecting the complex interaction between man and the sea, from remains of vessels to quays and harbours, inshore fisheries and shellfish cultivation as well as submerged landscapes. Individual HERs vary in the extent to which historic buildings, 20th-century structures, parks, gardens, landscapes and finds are represented in their records, but the scope of each should be clearly set out in a recording policy.

## Fieldwork

HER databases contain information about fieldwork carried out in their area, from the earliest antiquarian investigations through to the present-day activities of archaeologists, architectural recorders, surveyors, photographers and others. This information is used to set the known sites and monuments in the area in the context of the pattern of investigation and discovery. It can be used to identify areas for new fieldwork - to fill in apparent 'blanks' in the distribution of monuments - and to inform new understanding or to suggest investigative techniques that may yield good results. On completion of field projects, contractors supply a summary for inclusion in the HER followed by a report on the work. In Scotland, in addition to submission of fieldwork reports to the SMR, summaries are provided to the Council for Scottish Archaeology for inclusion in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*, an annual publication. Fieldwork reports are archived in the NMRS. Similarly in Wales, in addition to their submission to the HER, it is usual for recent fieldwork results to be summarised in the Council for British Archaeology, Wales annual publication *Archaeology in Wales*. Since it is usually some time before the results are published, HERs are an increasingly important source of information about these projects. In England, the development of the *Online AccesS to the Index of archaeological investigationS* (OASIS) project (See sections B.5.4, C.7.3) is enabling contractors and curators to complete online recording forms and should facilitate supply of information from field projects to HERs. OASIS has been introduced for use in England and many HERs and contracting units are registered and using the system. The OASIS pilot is being extended to Scotland in 2006-7. The role of OASIS in Wales is as yet undecided.

## Casework

A growing number of archaeological curators are maintaining databases of their recommendations, the decisions made by planning authorities and grant applications. In some cases, these databases are being linked to the main HER database itself. This information is used to track the progress of planning and other consultations within the wider Archaeology or Historic Buildings Service. Some HERs are beginning to record the processes involved in managing field monuments in their databases in order to plan and monitor the impact of changes in management regimes and repair work.

### A.1.2 HER collections

The information compiled in HER databases has been gathered from the wide range of sources that is summarised below. HER databases can provide catalogues of sources of information on the historic environment in their areas and refer enquirers to both their own reference collections and to material held in local museums, record offices and other repositories. Individual HERs will record the collections used to compile their records in a recording policy and create source/archive records to catalogue these collections within their database.

## Maps

Paper, film and digital copies of Ordnance Survey (OS) maps, supplied under licence, are kept in conjunction with the HER database. They are used to record the locations of monuments and finds, or to show archaeological constraint areas to highlight the potential implications of proposed development. Where paper maps are used, the map scales are normally 1:10,000 for rural areas and 1:2,500 or 1:1,250 for urban areas. Associated material includes map overlays, for example cropmark plots, and copies of historic maps, such as early editions of the OS or tithe maps. These may be held either as paper copy or digital mapping. The use of digital mapping and recording through GIS is increasing, and GIS standards are one aspect which is addressed more fully in this revision of the manual (See Section E).

## **Published materials**

Library collections based on local and national series of archaeological and historical society journals, specialist publications, gazetteers, catalogues and other reference works will normally be held within the HER office.

## **Unpublished materials**

These include fieldwork and other reports, dissertations, statutory protection documentation (for example scheduling notifications), notes and sometimes correspondence. Reports arise from archaeological work undertaken as part of development control or from planned research objectives, such as field survey or excavation of a particular class of monument. These reports may be held either as paper copy or digitally (or both).

## **Photographic materials**

Colour or black and white photographs and slides, digital photographs and videos may be kept by the HER. These derive from fieldwork, such as excavation, survey or planned site visits; or from the recording of finds in archaeological units, museums or specialist laboratories. This material will originate from both the host organisation and also from other organisations and private individuals who will retain title to its copyright. HERs are also recommended to maintain a collection of colour slides of illustrative materials for lecture and presentation purposes.

## **Aerial photography and air-photographic transcriptions**

Colour or black and white, vertical and oblique aerial-photographic prints, negatives and slides are all kept by HERs. Sources of photography include the National Monuments Records for England (NMRE), Scotland (NMRS), and Wales (NMRW), the Cambridge University Committee on Aerial Photography (now Cambridge University Collection of Aerial Photographs (CUCAP), the Ordnance Survey (OS), the Royal Air Force (RAF) and regionally based individuals, including some HERs, taking aerial photographs of archaeological sites. Associated materials include flight traces and indexes. Air-photographic transcriptions may also be held on film, paper and digital map form. HERs hold copies of prints whose copyright (and often the original negative or slide) is retained by the photographer or commissioning organisation.

## **Digital archives**

These include floppy disks, CDs and DVDs, and other media holding digital data in formats which may include: databases, text files, image files, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and Computer Aided Design (CAD) files, geophysical survey files. HERs may acquire this material from contractors following fieldwork and also create digital archive, through programmes of database and GIS compilation, data capture and scanning of slides, photographs or paper documents.

## **A.1.3 Informing services**

### **Strategic and local plans**

HERs are used to help in the framing of strategic and local policies for conserving the historic environment. They are consulted to help determine the allocation of areas for development, although it is important to recognise that an apparent lack of archaeological features on an HER might reflect lack of fieldwork rather than absence of sites.

## **Planning and development control**

HERs play a key role in providing the information base for recommendations made by archaeological 'curators' in response to planning applications and other proposals. The scale of HER input will vary with the size of particular schemes: major infrastructure projects such as road and rail schemes require considerable numbers of records to be trawled and analysed. HERs are key sources of information for desktop assessments and provide background information used by archaeological contractors in the design of field projects. The results from developer-instigated fieldwork projects are then fed back into the HER.

## **Managing monuments in the landscape**

This is one area in which the information held in HER is becoming increasingly used proactively, for example as it has been recently in England in the selection of monuments for consideration in English Heritage's Monuments Protection Programme (MPP). HERs formed a major source of information for the Monuments at Risk Survey (MARS) into the condition of field monuments in England (Darvill and Fulton 1998). HERs also form the basis for the selection of sites where improved management regimes or repair work would be beneficial. Whilst there has been no programme comparable to MPP in Scotland, Historic Scotland has in the past funded SMRs to compile Non-Statutory Registers of Monuments of Schedulable Quality. Under the terms of the Scottish planning guidance these are to be regarded as equivalent to scheduled sites in their treatment in development plans and the development control process. Non-Statutory Registers have been completed for most of Scotland. In Wales, Cadw sponsor a number of annual pan-Wales thematic surveys aimed at assessing the schedule of ancient monuments, making recommendations for new scheduling and identifying other monument and landscape management issues.

HERs in England have been a source of information for the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, a grant scheme which was first piloted in 1991. It aims included the conservation of archaeological sites and historic features, by adapting land management practices. This scheme is now being replaced by a new agri-environment scheme, Environmental Stewardship, with two tiers – the Entry Level Scheme (ELS) and the Higher Level Scheme (HLS). HERs supply information on the archaeology of the area, together with recommendations as to the optimum method of land management. English Heritage is helping local authorities to employ Countryside Archaeological Advisors, whose role is to extract information from the HER and advise farmers and landowners on land management.

SMRs have been used in Scotland since 1997 as a source of archaeological information in connection with agri-environment grant application schemes, initially the Countryside Premium Scheme superseded in 2000 by the Rural Stewardship Scheme. Chargeable desk based archaeological audits are supplied by the Scottish SMRs for inclusion in farm conservation plans required as part of grant applications.

Since 1999 Tir Gofal, the all Wales agri-environment scheme, has promoted the conservation and sympathetic management of individual monuments and the wider historic landscape through the introduction of whole-farm management plans tied to annual payments. The historic environment of each farm entering the scheme is assessed, using information in the HER and targeted field visits, and specific management recommendations produced for individual monuments and the historic landscape in general. In addition to advice on the management of individual features the scheme also funds landowners to undertake a range of capital works to improve the condition of archaeological monuments and historic buildings.

## **Education and presentation of sites to the public**

Alongside their role in informing the planning and management process, HERs make a contribution to education through the use of their information and resources by schools,

universities and the general public. HERs provide information for use on display panels at monuments and also for booklets, guides and trails aimed at a 'popular' audience.

## A.2 How and why did SMRs and HERs develop?

Systematic records of archaeological and historic monuments began to be created in 1908 when the Royal Commissions (RCHME, RCAHMS, RCAHMW) were set up and instructed to make an inventory of the ancient and historical monuments of their respective countries. For example, the warrant for the RCHME required the Commission 'to make an inventory of the Ancient Monuments and Constructions connected with or illustrative of the contemporary culture, civilisation and conditions of life of the people in England covering the period from the earliest time to the year 1700'. The remit also included identification of 'those which seem most worthy of preservation' (RCHME 1992). In Scotland the cut-off date was initially set at 1707, the date of the union of the English and Scottish parliaments.

In fact, the OS had been depicting antiquities on maps since 1791. From the 1920s, its Archaeology Division developed a card-index system and a network of local correspondents provided this with information. Local records of field monuments and finds, often based on information collected by these correspondents, began to be developed by many museums.

During the 1960s there was a growing awareness of the rate at which archaeological sites were being damaged or destroyed and a need for the information amassed by the Royal Commissions and the OS to be available to the local-authority planning system. The Committee of Enquiry into the Arrangements for the Protection of Field Monuments (the 'Walsh' Committee, which covered England, Wales and Scotland) recommended the strengthening of existing legislation for the protection of ancient monuments, and concluded that the local-authority system could in future play a vital part in identifying and moderating threats to the historic landscape. It recommended that county planning authorities maintain a record of field monuments and that county councils should consider appointing archaeological officers to provide professional archaeological assistance (Walsh 1969). Following publication of the Walsh report, national networks of archaeological officers and SMRs began to emerge in England and Wales in the 1970s. Oxfordshire is generally credited with establishing the first SMR (Benson 1974). Similarly in 1974-75, SMRs were established in the four newly formed Welsh Archaeological Trusts thereby providing a national coverage across Wales.

In Scotland the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland produced a document in 1974 entitled "*Archaeology and Local Government*" in advance of the re-organisation of Scottish local government in 1975. The first local authority appointment was in Stirling County Council in 1974, before transfer to Central Regional Council in 1975, and the first direct appointment to a Regional Council was at Grampian Regional Council shortly thereafter.

In 1983 the OS's Archaeology Division was transferred to the Royal Commissions. The OS card index became part of the national archaeological records in the three national areas. The card index provided an essential source of information, which was used to establish many local SMRs.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the respective government departments, Royal Commissions and national agencies were concerned with the structure, content and development of local SMRs. In England, English Heritage (and earlier the Department of the Environment (DoE)) and the RCHME supported enhancement projects and initial computerisation based on the AN32 recording form for scheduled monuments and the 'Superfile' database program. In 1989 the RCHME was given the lead role in respect of SMRs (continued by EH following merger) and subsequently supported fieldwork and recording projects in SMRs, and the development of data

and recording standards (such as RCHME and ACAO1993a). During the 1990s the RCHME assisted in the development of software for SMRs. This culminated in the launch in 1998 of an SMR software package (Historic Buildings, Sites and Monuments Records (HBSMR)) jointly developed with the ALGAO and exeGesIS SDM Ltd.

In Scotland equivalent roles were played by the Scottish Development Department's Historic Buildings and Monuments Division, later Historic Scotland, and the RCAHMS. Currently Historic Scotland helps fund SMR development and the RCAHMS provides technical assistance. The Scottish bodies have not led software development for SMRs, but instead concentrated their efforts on trying to extend the geographical coverage of the Scottish SMRs by provision of pump-priming grants, firstly from the RCAHMS and later Historic Scotland, with the RCAHMS providing basic data from the national record. Now that the geographic coverage of SMRs in Scotland is almost complete, the focus of attention of both the national bodies and the local SMRs has switched to securing a national strategy for SMR development through the auspices of the Scottish SMR Forum. In Scotland SMRs have not yet achieved comprehensive recording of the archaeological potential of the country. Fieldwork and research results in significant SMR enhancement through new discoveries each year for large areas of Scotland, particularly in the upland zone.

In Wales the four HERs are owned and managed by the Welsh Archaeological Trusts (WATs) and thereby provide a uniform coverage across the whole country. From 1980 the original paper records underwent computerization, and considerable enhancement, although here the process was led by individual Trusts, following the 'Oxford model' and using a variety of software and hardware, with funding and support from various private initiatives and government agencies (such as job creation and employment training schemes). Latterly Cadw, and since 1989 RCAHMS under the oversight role for local HERs identified in its Royal Warrant, have taken a more formal role in Welsh HERs, with initiatives now coming from the Extended National Database for Wales partnership and the Strategic Framework for Historic Environment Records in Wales working group.

The WATs are independent charitable trusts, part funded by the Welsh Assembly Government to provide regional archaeological services. Some additional financial support is provided by a number of the local authorities. The Royal Commission for Ancient and Historic Monuments in Wales provides task specific grant aid for maintaining and enhancing the HERs, while funding to support public enquiries is provided by Cadw.

Following the publication of *This Common Inheritance* (DoE 1990b), government planning guidance was issued in the national areas. The DoE's *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning* (PPG16) appeared in 1990 (DoE 1990a), for England, in 1991 (Welsh Office 1991) for Wales and for Scotland National Planning Policy Guideline (NPPG) 5 (SDD 1994a) and Planning Advice Note (PAN) 42 in 1994 (SDD 1994b). These recognised the importance of archaeological sites and emphasised both that archaeology is a material consideration in making planning decisions and the key role of SMRs in providing information for decision-making. Following the publication of the planning guidance, the 1990s saw a significant rise in the number of archaeological projects carried out in response to development proposals. This increased both the amount of information entering SMRs and the demand for that information from users. These changes sometimes gave rise to backlogs as SMR staff fulfilled the dual roles of planning advisor and also SMR manager. Another consequence of the planning guidance was competitive tendering for archaeological projects and it is now normal for a number of archaeological contractors (whether local authority units or independent companies) to compete for work in any area. This has emphasised the importance of SMRs as a central access point for information.

The introduction in England of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment* (PPG 15) in 1994 (DoE 1994a) extended the PPG 16 approach to the historic

environment as a whole. Welsh Office Circular 61/96 *Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas*, introduced in 1996 in Wales as an equivalent to PPG15 and amended under circular 1/98 (Welsh Office 1996c and 1998), takes a less holistic approach but covers roughly the same themes and areas. However, the early intergration of historic buildings into Welsh SMRs has helped to promote the 'PPG16 approach' to planning matters in the historic environment. The generally equivalent document for Scotland, National Planning Policy Guideline (NPPG) 18 (SDD 1999) *Planning and the Historic Environment*, is not as detailed, but is accompanied by the *Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas*. In some authorities in England, this prompted the development of integrated record systems containing information including both historic buildings and archaeology. The move to integrated databases has been slower in Scotland with only one or two SMRs to date classifying themselves as Historic Environment Records.

Until the mid-1990s in England most SMRs were operated by county councils or, in the former metropolitan counties, were jointly funded by district councils. In Scotland they were operated by the Regional Councils, in one region with joint funding from the district councils after 1994. This pattern changed after local government reorganisation following Local Government Acts, of 1992 for England and 1994 for Scotland. This resulted in England in the creation of a number of unitary authorities, mainly in urban areas with high population densities, with the two-tier system of county and district councils continuing elsewhere, and in Scotland in a system of unitary authorities. Some of the new unitary authorities have chosen to establish their own archaeological services and SMRs, whilst others have contracted out archaeological services under a joint arrangement, often with a neighbouring county council, under the terms of service-level agreements. In Scotland there are several joint arrangements and three unitary authorities buy in a service from a local heritage or amenity trust.

The Welsh SMRs, being operated by the WATs and therefore outside local authorities, have kept the same geographical boundaries since their inception in the 1970s. Originally conceived to cover the then newly created counties of 1974 the SMRs have continued to provide services to successive county, district and, since 1996 unitary authorities, under partnership arrangements and with each authority adopting the relevant SMR by formal resolution. Dislocation due to local government re-organisation has therefore been largely avoided in Wales.

In the 1990s a joint English Heritage-RCHME initiative created a series of Urban Archaeological Databases (UADs) in England. Some are effectively HERs for major historic towns, for example Chester; others are the enhancement of part of an existing HER such as Northampton. There is no such equivalent in Scotland but since 1977 Historic Scotland has funded the production of the Burgh Survey series which summarises the historical and archaeological evidence for Scotland's medieval burghs. These are available to the Scottish SMRs but practice differs in respect of the incorporation of relevant data into the SMRs. There has been no systematic incorporation of the Burgh Survey information into the relevant SMR.

In 1999 the RCHME and English Heritage were merged to create a single organisation, English Heritage, concerned with the recording, protection and management of the historic environment in England. As the Government's statutory advisor on heritage conservation, archaeology and the management of the historic environment, English Heritage remains concerned with the effective application of HERs to heritage management at both local and national levels and has continued the former RCHME's lead role. Its NMR continues to work to support inter-operability between local and national heritage information records.

This has not been paralleled by similar mergers in Wales or Scotland. In Scotland, Historic Scotland and the RCAHMS remain separate bodies. Historic Scotland provides some SMR support grant and relies on the RCAHMS for technical advice in this respect. To facilitate co-ordination of SMR development, a Scottish SMR Forum, comprising Historic Scotland, the RCAHMS, the Scottish SMRs, and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), was

formed in 2000. The Forum has produced an unpublished report of the Operational Roles of SMRs and published a Co-Operation statement between Scottish SMRs and the RCAHMS ([http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/RCAHMS\\_smr.doc](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/RCAHMS_smr.doc)). Within the Scottish SMR Forum, the SMR Technical Working Group discusses information related issues. At the end of 2004 the SMR Forum participants agreed in principle to work together to incorporate online SMR data into *Pastmap* (<http://www.pastmap.org>) which currently provides access via the internet to GIS data on scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings, the records of the NMRS (Canmore), and Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes provided by Scottish Natural Heritage. SMR information began to be incorporated in Pastmap from late 2005 with more SMRs due to add their data in due course.

In February 2000 English Heritage was asked by the Government - jointly by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) - to co-ordinate an important and wide-ranging review of all policies relating to the historic environment. This was published as *Power of Place: The future of the historic environment* (English Heritage 2000). In its response, *The Historic Environment: A Force for Our Future* (DCMS 2001), the Government committed itself to holding a consultation on the future of HERs. This was carried out in 2003 and included a draft two-stage benchmarking standard *Historic Environment Records: Benchmarks for Good Practice* (Chitty 2002). The results were published together with the findings of the Heritage Protection Review as *Review of Heritage Protection: The Way Forward* (DCMS 2004). The results showed support for statutory status and standards. In parallel English Heritage commissioned a report assessing the resources required to bring all the HERs in England up to the 1<sup>st</sup> stage benchmark (Baker, Chitty and Edwards 2004).

There has been no equivalent support for statutory status for SMRs from the Scottish Executive, but the issue of standards is being covered by the Scottish SMR Forum and a report, which will set out digital standards for data submission to SMRs by archaeological contractors, has been prepared with the assistance of grant aid from Historic Scotland and is available via the internet (ASPIRE – <http://www.aspire-resource.info>).

The Welsh Assembly Government, through Cadw, has encouraged the Welsh Archaeological Trusts to secure the HERs as publicly accessible records should any Trust cease to operate. Alongside this Cadw, through the *Strategic Framework for Historic Environment Records in Wales* (Cadw 2005), has recognised the *HER Benchmarks for Good Practice* (Chitty 2002) and funding for the HERs from the RCAHMS is currently being targeted to enable Welsh HERs in the first instance to achieve the stage one benchmarks. Despite this there has been no statement from the Welsh Assembly Government in support of statutory status of HERs.

The development of SMRs and HERs is more fully described elsewhere (for example in Baker 1999a, 1999b, Benson 1974, Burrow 1984, Gilman 1996 and 2004, RCHME and ACAO 1993b. Hunter and Ralston 1993 and 2006, and Robinson 2000).

## **A.3 Who manages HERs?**

Local authorities and most National Park authorities maintain records of the archaeological, built and natural environment. Specialist staff are employed to curate these records and also to provide specialist advice for land-use planning and public information services. Some major landowners, such as the National Trust and the Ministry of Defence, also maintain similar records, which are used to manage their landholdings for conservation, but not for development control purposes.

### **A.3.1 Local government tiers**

HERs and Listed Buildings Records may be maintained by county councils, unitary authorities or district councils, or by Trusts under service-level agreements on their behalf. Where based within local authorities HERs are normally managed by the highest tier in local government, the county or unitary authority, although some districts have elected to manage their own HER. For economies of scale other authorities may choose joint arrangements to provide the recommended services (by buying in service from a neighbouring authority or trust, or combining resources to fund a joint service). Some Scottish SMRs are maintained by organisations separate from local authorities, for example in Orkney and Perth and Kinross. In Wales unitary authorities utilise the regional HERs of the Welsh Archaeological Trusts, and in some instances operate their own record systems using WAT HER data. Local authority historic environment services obtained from the WATs are effectively supported directly with Welsh Assembly Government funding.

### **A.3.2 Local government departments**

Where they are held directly within local authorities, HERs often form part of the Planning, Environment and Economic Development Department or Directorate. Although the name of the grouping varies from authority to authority, the HER normally sits alongside records for listed buildings, ecology, rights of way and other aspects of countryside management. There is a growing tendency for these records, particularly in England and Wales, to be combined to form integrated databases for the historic environment; examples include the Essex Historic Environment Record and the Staffordshire Environmental Planning Unit. Whilst this is also happening to some extent in Scotland there are structural barriers in some areas to the creation of HERs because of the nature of the arrangement for SMR and advice provision.

In some authorities, rather than being part of a planning department, the HER may form part of the Libraries, Museums and Leisure Services Directorate. This departmental location has enabled these HERs to develop their public-information-service and education role more actively than those based within planning services. However, they may be less well placed to develop links with other environmental information systems.

### **A.3.3 Staff**

All HERs should have qualified professional staff (Benchmark 4.5). HERs normally form part of a wider service for archaeology or the historic environment. These services vary in size considerably from one authority to another according to the extent of the area covered, resources available and whether or not fieldworkers and historic buildings advisors are included within the service as well as planning advisors and HER staff. In recognition of this variation, this manual will refer to roles and responsibilities that require a staff resource within the service rather than to actual posts.

Traditionally an HER officer has served two key roles, as an information manager responsible for developing the record and providing information services, and in a planning context providing information and advice for assessment of the implications of development proposals. In recent years use of the record for pro-active management of the historic environment, though input to policy and initiatives such as MPP and agri-environment schemes has gained greater prominence. Additionally, HERs are increasingly being developed for greater public benefit through programmes of outreach and promoting use of the records for research and education at all levels. All of these roles need a clear allocation of time and resources. In particular, it is essential to ring-fence time to maintain and develop the HER information system against the pressures of responding to planning casework and other enquiries. Many HERs consider that separate posts are required to cover these roles, with the larger HERs having several posts with

both an HER manager and HER assistants, sometimes with specific roles such as Outreach Officer.

## A.4 National heritage legislative and policy framework

HERs operate within a complex framework of legislation and government policy guidance, which together provide for the protection and management of the historic environment and its presentation to the public. A summary of key legislation is given in Panel 1. The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979, is a UK-wide Act, although part II relating to archaeological areas was never introduced in Wales or Scotland. Other legislation is more nation-specific. (see Panel 1).

- In England English Heritage is responsible for the scheduling of monuments and the listing of historic buildings on behalf of the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport in accordance with the primary legislation. The listing of buildings was transferred to English Heritage from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) in April 2005. Other changes will be introduced as a result of the Government's consultation *The Review of Heritage Protection: The Way Forward* (DCMS 2004).
- In Scotland where there is devolved government, culture is a devolved matter and Scottish Ministers are responsible for scheduling and listing. Historic Scotland, an agency of the Scottish Executive, advises Scottish Ministers on conservation matters. Scottish Ministers also receive advice from the Historic Environment Advisory Council for Scotland (HEACS), formed following the abolition of the Ancient Monument Board for Scotland and the Historic Building Council for Scotland in 2003 under the Public Bodies Act 2003.
- In Wales responsibility for the heritage is devolved to the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG) who are responsible for scheduling and listing. Cadw, an executive agency within the WAG, are responsible for advising Welsh Ministers on such matters and for the day to day operation of heritage legislation.

### World Heritage Sites

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) World Heritage Convention provides for the identification, protection and presentation of cultural and natural sites of outstanding universal value. Currently, there are 23 sites in Britain (16 in England, 4 in Scotland, 2 in Wales and 1 in Northern Ireland). The Antonine Wall in Scotland is to be proposed for nomination as part of a distributed single trans-national World Heritage Site (the Frontiers of the Roman Empire) to include Hadrian's Wall. Although there is no special legislation, impact on a World Heritage Site is a material consideration in the planning process as set out in planning guidance (PPG15 (England), Planning Policy Wales (Wales) and NPPG 18 (Scotland)).

### Scheduled monuments

Central government (DCMS in England, Historic Scotland in Scotland, Welsh Assembly Government in Wales) has sole responsibility for enforcing legislation on scheduled monuments. With the exception of works defined in the Ancient Monuments (Class Consents) Order 1994, scheduled-monument consent must be granted by the relevant Ministers in the national countries for all works, including archaeological excavations.

### Listed buildings

Local planning authorities are responsible for granting and refusing consent to alter or demolish a listed building in consultation with the relevant national agencies and the statutory amenity societies. There is a right of appeal to the relevant Ministers advised by the respective national agencies body (English Heritage, Historic Scotland, Cadw). For England, English Heritage also

maintains a Register of Buildings at Risk (grades I, II\* and structural scheduled monuments). In Scotland a similar register is maintained by the Scottish Civic Trust on behalf of Historic Scotland which fully funds the programme (see [www.buildingsatrisk.org.uk](http://www.buildingsatrisk.org.uk)). Some local authorities also maintain a list of locally important buildings which will be taken into account in the planning process.

### **Conservation areas**

Local planning authorities are responsible for granting conservation-area consent for new developments and the demolition of any building within conservation areas.

### **Protected wrecks**

The DCMS is responsible under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973 for the protection of wrecks, issuing licences for survey or excavation and for enforcing legislation in England. Historic Scotland (Scotland), Cadw (Wales) and DoENI (Northern Ireland) are responsible within their respective territories. At the beginning of 2005, there were fifty-seven designated wreck sites in UK waters (Figure 2) In Scotland Shetland Council holds a lease of an area of the seabed which covers c 15 wrecks.

### **Registered parks, gardens and battlefields**

English Heritage has assembled a Register of Parks and Gardens of special historic interest and another for historic battlefields in England. These registers are used to alert owners and others to the significance of an area of land. Although no additional statutory controls are available, planning authorities are recommended to take account of these sites in preparing development plans (DoE 1994a). Parks and gardens registers exist under similar circumstances in Wales. Since 1998 Registers of Landscapes of Outstanding and Special Historic Interest have been published for Wales, and while these are also non-statutory, planning authorities are advised to take account of registered historic landscapes when preparing development plans and under certain circumstances when considering planning permissions. No battlefields register exists for Wales. In Scotland there is an Inventory of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes. Consultation must take place with Historic Scotland in respect of any planning applications affecting an Inventory site under The Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992. There is no battlefield register for Scotland, although Historic Scotland has commissioned pilot research to produce an informal list.

### **Portable heritage**

Portable objects are covered by various protection measures. The Treasure Act 1996 (applies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland) which came into effect in September 1997 defines 4 categories of treasure. A revised [code of practice](#) was issued in 2002. Objects covered by the Act must be reported to local coroners, and to encourage the reporting of objects classed as treasure, the market value of the find is paid to finders or landowners. Finders of metal objects not considered treasure and other archaeological objects from non-scheduled sites are encouraged to report their finds under a voluntary scheme, the Portable Antiquities Scheme. This has established a national network of Finds Liaison Officers (FLOs) in England and Wales, based in museums or HERs ([www.finds.org.uk](http://www.finds.org.uk)). FLOs provide a point of contact for finders in each area, as well as liaising with metal detectorists and HERs. Objects that are fixed to listed buildings are also protected under the legislation for listed buildings. English Heritage has published guidance on portable antiquities in relation to its own sites, funded projects and scheduled monuments *Our Portable Past* (English Heritage 2006).

Scotland is subject to separate Treasure Trove law which differs significantly from that obtaining in England and Wales. It encompasses two categories of material, Treasure Trove (*sensu stricto*) which is restricted to precious items and associated objects which have been concealed; and

*bona vacantia* which covers all objects (made of any material) whose original owner or rightful heir cannot be traced, irrespective of the circumstances of deposition. All such finds must be reported to the Crown Office, although if the Crown exercises its rights to ownership and claims an object, the finder is normally eligible for a reward equivalent to its market value. Claimed finds are allocated to an appropriate museum. Unclaimed finds are returned to the finder.

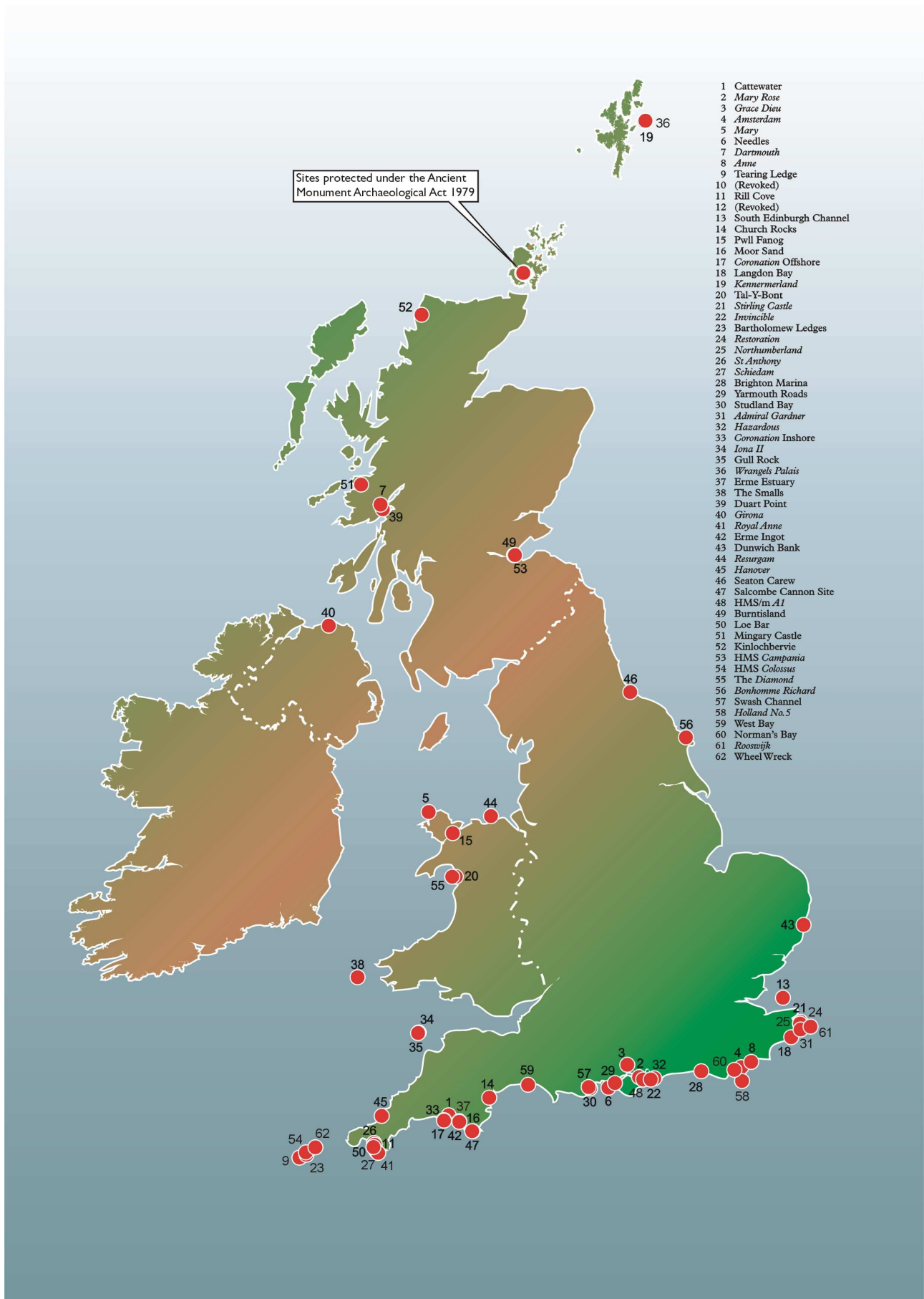


Figure 2: Designated wreck sites (March 2007)

## Ecclesiastical buildings

Churches and other religious buildings may be listed but alterations or building works may also be controlled by special codes of practice. For example, the Church of England and the Church in Wales require the issuing of a Faculty by the Chancellor of the Diocese for alterations to a church, churchyard or church furnishings. Advice to the diocese is given by diocesan archaeologists who are normally in contact with their local HERs. DAC advisors are sometimes a member of staff within a local authority historic environment service. Other denominations have similar schemes. In Scotland internal alterations to listed churches are exempt from the need to obtain listed building consent, although external alterations still require consent. The Church of Scotland refers decisions about internal alterations to its Committee of Artistic Matters, the Scottish Episcopal Church refers internal alterations to its Diocesan Advisory Committee, and internal alterations to Catholic churches are the responsibility of individual priests. Many Scottish churches were built after the Reformation on new sites, off the sites of the pre-Reformation churches and cemeteries. Most pre-Reformation cemeteries are maintained by the local authorities, but the law is complex regarding ownership of these cemeteries. Some of the pre-Reformation church and cemetery sites are scheduled ancient monuments.

## Heritage Protection Review

In England and Wales changes are anticipated following the Government's consultation *The Review of Heritage Protection: The Way Forward* (DCMS 2004) and *Protection of historical assets in Wales: a consultation paper* (National Assembly for Wales: Welsh Assembly Government 2003). This included proposals for a unified list combining listed buildings, scheduled monuments, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields and for devolving consent procedures to local authorities.

### Panel 1: The national legislative and policy framework for HERs

#### Primary legislation

***Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979:*** [Applies to UK (although Part II pertaining to archaeological areas was never introduced in Wales or Scotland)]. Consolidates earlier legislation on the definition and protection of scheduled monuments and authorisation of works affecting scheduled monuments. Also provides for rescue excavation in designated areas of archaeological importance.

***Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990:*** [England and Wales] Covers the designation of listed buildings and conservation areas and the authorisation of works by local planning authorities.

***Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Scotland Act 1970:*** [Scotland] Covers the designation of buildings of special architectural or historic interest 'with a view to the guidance of planning authorities in the performance of their functions under this Act'.

***Protection of Military Remains Act 1986:*** [UK] Requires a licence to be obtained to disturb the remains of crashed military aircraft

***Protection of Wrecks Act 1973:*** [UK] covers the designation and protection of wrecks of historical, archaeological or artistic importance in UK territorial waters. Section 2 covers dangerous cargoes.

**National Heritage Act 1983, 2002:** [England] The 1983 Act established the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission (known as English Heritage) and delegated the functions of scheduling of ancient monuments and listing of historic buildings. The National Heritage Act 2002, took effect on 1 July 2002, and broadens the powers of English Heritage in two ways. It allows English Heritage to become involved in underwater archaeology in English territorial water and to trade in overseas countries.

- Historic Scotland was created as an agency in 1991 and was attached to the Scottish Executive Education Department, which embraces all aspects of the cultural heritage, in May 1999.
- Cadw, created in 1984, is the agency with the complete range of responsibilities for the conservation, presentation, and promotion of the built heritage of Wales on behalf of the Welsh Assembly Government. It is a part of the Welsh Assembly Government and hence part of the devolved powers of the government of the principality.

**Town and Country Planning Act 1990:** [England and Wales] The principal instrument of town and country planning law, setting out the requirement for local authorities to prepare development plans.

**Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997:** [Scotland] The principal instrument of town and country planning law, setting out the requirement for local authorities to prepare development plans. To be extended by the Planning (Scotland) Act in 2007 (passed by the Scottish Parliament in 2006).

**Treasure Act 1996:** [England and Wales]: Replaced the common law of treasure trove and defines treasure and the reporting procedures. It introduced the voluntary recording of archaeological finds not defined as treasure.

The Treasure Act 1996 Code of Practice (Revised) 2002 [England and Wales] updates the Code of Practice first issued in 1997. The Code sets out the guidelines to be followed by the Secretary of State when considering whether or not treasure should be offered to a museum or to the finder or to any other person, when determining a reward and when deciding whether to disclaim the Crown's title to treasure. It also provides guidance for finders, museums, coroners and others who are concerned with treasure.

The Act does not apply to Scotland. Under the *regalia minora* common law rights of the Crown in Scotland, it is the prerogative of the Crown to receive all lost and abandoned property which is not otherwise owned. There is a narrow definition of treasure trove per se, involving precious items which have lain concealed, but in practice this is overridden by and subsumed within the wider legal concept of *bona vacantia* (or ownerless goods). The Crown Office in Scotland has the duty, overseen by the Scottish Executive, to claim *bona vacantia* on behalf of the nation.

**Merchant Shipping Act 1995:** [UK] Replaced earlier legislation and covers the reporting and ownership of salvage from wrecks.

### Statutory Instruments

**Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995:** [England and Wales] Defines a site of archaeological interest as a site registered in an SMR adopted by a local authority.

**Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Scotland) Order 1992:** Defines a site of archaeological interest as a site which has been included in a Sites and

Monuments Record held by any local authority before the coming into force of this Order;

***Ecclesiastical Exemption (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Order 1994:*** [England and Wales] Exempts buildings in use for religious purposes by specific denominations from the local authority planning process where acceptable procedures for controlling works are in place.

***Ancient Monuments (Class Consents) Order 1994:*** [ UK] and ***Ancient Monuments (Class Consents) (Scotland) Order 1996:*** Permit specific works to scheduled monuments.

***Hedgerow Regulations 1997:*** [England and Wales] Aims to control the removal of important hedgerows through a system of prior notification. This specifically mentions hedgerows included in the local SMR.

**England: Planning guidance issued by the DCLG (formerly ODPM, formerly DETR, formerly DoE)**

***PPG 9, 1994:*** [England] Guidance on nature conservation and land use planning.

***PPG 12, 1992:*** [England] Covers the preparation of development plans by local authorities including the role of environmental assessments in plan preparation.

***PPG 15, 1994:*** [England] Explains the role of the planning system in the protection of historic buildings, conservation areas and other elements of the historic environment.

***PPG 16, 1990:*** [England] Advises on assessing the archaeological implications of development and early consultation with SMRs in assessing the impact of planning applications.

***PPG 20, 1993:*** [England] Sets out policy for coastal areas and gives guidance on the Heritage Coast.

**Scotland: planning guidance issued by the Scottish Executive**

***SPP1, 2002:*** [Scotland]: Sets out the key principles and the Executive's priorities for the system to guide policy formulation and decision making towards the goal of sustainable development.

***NPPG 18, 1999:*** [Scotland]: Accompanied by Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas, deals primarily with listed buildings, conservation areas, World Heritage Sites, historic gardens, designed landscapes and their settings. Explains the role of the planning system in the protection of historic buildings, conservation areas and other elements of the historic environment.

***NPPG 5, 1994:*** [Scotland] Sets out the Government's planning policy on how archaeological remains and discoveries should be handled within the development plan and development control systems. Advises on assessing the archaeological implications of development and early consultation with SMRs in assessing the impact of planning applications.

***PAN 42, 1994:*** Supports NPPG 5. It includes advice on the handling of archaeological matters within the planning process and on the separate controls over scheduled monuments under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

**Wales: planning guidance issued by the Welsh Assembly Government (formerly The Welsh Office)**

***'Planning Policy Wales'***, March 2002: [Wales] provides the strategic policy framework for the effective preparation of local planning authorities' development plans. (Chapter 6 relates to the historic environment encompassing UDPs, Conservation Areas, development control, World Heritage Sites and historic parks and gardens). This is supplemented by 20 topic based [Technical Advice Notes \(Wales\)](#) needs password access (TANs). Procedural guidance is given in Welsh

Office / National Assembly for Wales circulars.

**Welsh Office Circular 61/96: Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas as amended by Welsh Office Circular 1/98, Planning and the Historic Environment: Directions by the Secretary of State for Wales** Sets out the latest available policy guidance which relates to the built heritage.

**Welsh Office Circular 60/96: Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology:** Provides advice on the handling of archaeological matters within the planning system. It supplements guidance in Planning Guidance (Wales): Planning Policy 1996 and Planning Policy Wales 2002.

### **Voluntary Codes of Practice**

**Code of Practice for Seabed Developers: Joint Nautical Archaeology Policy Committee, 1995:** [UK] Encourages seabed developers to seek advice on maritime archaeological potential in line with overall assessment of a development's environmental impact.

**Code of Practice for Treasure Act, DCMS, 1996:** [England and Wales] A voluntary programme to record archaeological objects not covered by the provisions of the Treasure Act.

## **A.5 Local authorities and planning**

One of the reasons why local authorities maintain records of the archaeological, built and natural environment is to regulate development and the use of land and to protect and enhance the environment of their local area. The implications of development proposals on the historic environment are assessed against the HER and specialist advice is given to development control officers within the local planning authority.

### **A.5.1 Development plans**

Structure, local and unitary development plans are the main way that local authorities make sure that their conservation policies are integrated with other planning policies. Archaeology, buildings and natural environment information services should be consulted during the preparation of plans in line with *PPG 12* (DoE 1992a) and *Planning Policy Wales* (see Panel 1). In Scotland *SPP1* (Scottish Executive 2002) states that one of the primary objectives of the planning system is “to maintain and enhance the quality of the natural heritage and built environment” (para.4), that planning should encourage sustainable development by conserving important historic and cultural assets (para. 7), and that the National Planning Policy Guidelines are a material consideration in development control (para. 51) – archaeology is covered by NPPG 5, whilst NPPG 18 covers the Historic Environment. In particular, development plans should make reference to the existence of the HER and both Local Plans and Unitary Development Plans should state that the HER will be used in the assessment of development proposals. English Heritage has published guidance on conservation policies in both strategic and local plans in England (English Heritage 1993). No equivalent existed in Scotland at the time of writing.

In September 2004, the *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act* came into force. This requires Local Planning Authorities in England and Wales to have a Local Development Framework in place by Spring 2007. These will replace the existing system of Unitary Development Plans, Local Plans and Structure Plans. A [Guide for Heritage Groups on Local Development Frameworks](#) is available on the [Heritage Link web site](#). In Wales Local Planning Authorities will be required to prepare and maintain up to date development plans which are to be called local development

plans (*Planning: Delivering for Wales – Initial Guidance Note on Implications For Development Plans In Wales of The Planning And Compulsory Purchase Act* (Revised Version October 2004) (National Assembly for Wales: Welsh Assembly Government 2004)).

### **Other plans and strategies**

Local authorities also issue other plans, strategies and planning guidance, for example estuary management plans, minerals and waste plans, and rural strategies. Although some of these plans are not statutory, they do have significance and receive careful consideration from both planning authorities and planning inspectors (England and Wales)/ Inquiry Reporters (Scotland).

### **A.5.2 Planning advice**

The information contained in HERs is used to form the basis of professional advice about the implications of proposed developments on the cultural heritage. This advice is given in the context of the planning guidance notes outlined below.

#### **Planning and archaeology**

England: **Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 16 Archaeology and Planning** (DOE 1990a) pulls together and expands existing advice within the current legislative framework. Planning authorities are recommended to make full use of the expertise of the county archaeological officer and to compile and maintain an HER as the basis for assessing the archaeological implications of development. Early consultation with county archaeological officers and the HER is recommended to reduce potential conflicts between the needs of development and archaeology.

Scotland: **National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) 5 Archaeology and Planning**: (SDD 1994a) contains broadly similar recommendations. It sets out the Scottish Executive's planning policy on how archaeological remains and discoveries should be handled under the development plan and development control systems, including the weight to be given to them in planning decisions and the use of planning conditions. More detailed advice on planning procedures and the separate controls over scheduled monuments is given in the associated **Planning Advice Note (PAN) 42 Archaeology - the Planning Process and Scheduled Monument Procedures** (SDD 1994b)

Wales: **Planning Policy Wales** (National Assembly for Wales: Welsh Assembly Government 2002), and **Welsh Office Circular 60/96 Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology** (Welsh Office 1996b): pull together and expand existing advice within the current legislative framework. Planning authorities are recommended to make full use of the expertise of the regional archaeological services provided by the Welsh Archaeological Trusts and where appropriate their own archaeological officers and to adopt or maintain an HER as the basis for assessing the archaeological implications of development. Early consultation with archaeological advisors and the HER is recommended to reduce potential conflicts between the needs of development and archaeology.

#### **Development Plans**

England: **PPG12 Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance** (DoE 1992a) provides guidance for the preparation of the various development plans and requires local planning authorities to take account of concerns for conservation of the environment and the built and archaeological heritage. There is no Scottish equivalent – see references to *SPP1* above in Development Plans.

Wales: **Planning Policy Wales** (National Assembly for Wales: Welsh Assembly Government 2002), and **Welsh Office Circular 61/96 Planning and the Historic Environment: Historic Buildings and Conservation Areas** (Welsh Office 1996b): provide guidance for the preparation of the various development plans and require local planning authorities to take account of concerns for conservation of the environment and the built and archaeological heritage.

### **Planning and the historic environment**

England: **PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment** (DOE 1994a) provides a full statement of government policies for the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas and other elements of the historic environment.

Scotland: **NPPG 18 Planning and the Historic Environment** (SDD 1999); deals primarily with listed buildings, conservation areas, world heritage sites, historic gardens, designed landscapes and their settings. The primary source of guidance on the Scottish Ministers' interests and responsibilities in relation to listed buildings and conservation areas is provided in the *Memorandum of Guidance on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas (revised 1998)*

Wales: **Planning Policy Wales** (National Assembly for Wales: Welsh Assembly Government 2002), and **Welsh Office Circular 60/96 Planning and the Historic Environment: Archaeology** (Welsh Office 1996b): provide a full statement of Welsh Assembly Government policies for the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas and other elements of the historic environment.

In addition to the above, the value of HERs is recognised in a number of other Acts and government policy statements (see Panel 1) except in Scotland where the only reference to SMRs may be found in *Planning Advice Note (PAN) 42* (SDD 1994b), paras. 12-15.

### **Adoption of the HER by the local authority**

In England and Wales, HERs will normally be adopted by resolution by their local authority in line with the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (see Panel 1). In the absence of statutory status for HERs, adoption goes some way towards ensuring the continuance of HER services and provides a useful way of explaining their importance to councillors.

## **A.6 What are the links to other records?**

HERs are one of a number of information providers operating at national and local levels (Figure 3). These other bodies curate information that both complements and provides a new dimension to the information held by HERs. For example, museums may curate artefacts found locally and registered as sites on the HER. Environmental records hold information about trees, hedgerows and species that sets the archaeological landscape recorded in the HER in its wider landscape context. Record Offices hold archives which may provide the source and supplementary documentation on sites recorded by an HER. HERs help their users by including 'signposts' or cross-references in their databases to places where other information can be found.

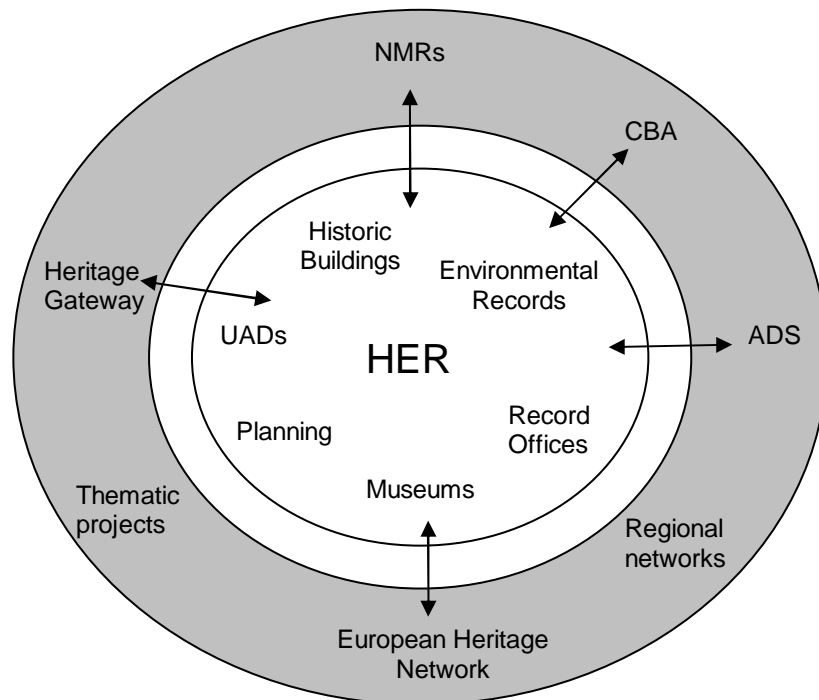


Figure 3: HERs and other records

## A.6.1 Local connections

### Urban Archaeological Databases (UADs)

In England records of the historic urban cores of modern towns have been developed by local government archaeology services or contracting units under an English Heritage programme that involves resource identification, database development and the preparation of a management strategy. The database element of this programme is a specific type of HER, similar in content to a 'normal' HER but generally including additional detail about stratified urban deposits. Some UAD projects enhance part of an existing HER rather than operating as a new, separate database. Once strategies for managing the urban archaeological resource have been prepared, the UAD should either be integrated into the HER for the area or maintained separately as an HER and brought up to the 1<sup>st</sup> stage HER benchmark as a minimum with an agreement with other HERs in the area as to who maintains the record for the town/city in question to avoid duplication. A map showing the towns covered by UADs is available on the [English Heritage web site](#).

There are no UADs in Wales or Scotland, although a pilot UAD has been developed for Perth using local rather than national criteria.

### Historic buildings

HERs should include information about listed and other non-listed historic buildings (for example those included in local lists, where these exist) and provide an integrated service for archaeology and the built environment in order to satisfy benchmark 2.1 of *Benchmarks for Good Practice* (Chitty 2002). However, many local planning authorities maintain separate Listed Buildings Records for use by their historic buildings conservation officers. These are often paper-based records incorporating the lists published by the DCMS (England), Welsh Assembly Government through Cadw (Wales) or Historic Scotland (Scotland) and files containing conservation and monitoring reports and details of buildings at risk surveys. Ideally conservation officers will use and contribute information to their local HER.

### Environmental records

Records of the natural environment (including ecology, geology, biological species) have traditionally been maintained separately from records of the historic environment. A few local authorities have brought together archaeology, buildings and the natural environment to create integrated environment teams. Some HERs record palaeoenvironmental sites as monuments. In Scotland there is the Scottish Wetlands Archaeological Database, commissioned by Historic Scotland, which is not yet incorporated into the SMRs (<http://www.geo.ed.ac.uk/swad/>).

### **Planning authorities**

Planning authorities maintain records of planning applications, the decisions made and any conditions attached. Some HERs include information in their databases about the recommendations made by planning advisors to planning authorities, whilst in other authorities this data is held in separate databases.

### **Museums**

Museums hold collections of objects and are the primary location for archaeological archives resulting from fieldwork relating to their sphere of interest. They play a vital role in curating such archives, containing as they do ‘...all parts of the archaeological record, including the finds and digital records as well as the written, drawn and photographic documentation’ (Perrin 2002). Their collection catalogues, which may or may not be computerised, hold references to objects identified in local HERs. Where possible, HERs also hold cross-references between the locations where objects were found or excavated and the catalogue number and name of the museum in which they are held, together with any associated archives.

### **Record offices**

Record offices, whether county based as in England and Wales or the various unitary and joint archives in Scotland, hold documents, photographs, maps and other archives relating to their local area. Some HERs have close contacts with their local record office and some HER databases include cross-references to material held there.

## **A.6.2 Regional networks**

### **Regional HER working parties**

ALGAO members within England have established a network of regional groups, coincident with the government regions, for HER staff and, in some cases, for planning archaeologists. These groups provide a valuable forum for HER managers to discuss working practices, data standards and to work together on regional initiatives such as the preparation of a research framework for the region. There are no equivalent regional groups in Scotland or Wales. The Scottish SMR Forum formed in 2000 and representing Historic Scotland, the RCAHMS, the Scottish SMRs, and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) is the focus for discussion of HER issues. The four Welsh HER Managers meet regularly to discuss similar matters to their colleagues in regional HER fora in England.

### **Regional offices**

English Heritage has established regional offices to provide a local base for ancient monuments inspectors and historic buildings advisors. Each HER is covered by a designated ancient monuments inspector who provides a first point of contact for conservation advice and information about English Heritage projects and programmes. The English Heritage regional offices have also established regional historic environment fora. These have a broad membership of public, voluntary and private bodies to provide a clear focus for historic environment issues, for example contributing to regional ‘State of the Historic Environment’ reports. There are no regional

offices of Historic Scotland, but both the listed building and the ancient monuments inspectorate are organised on an area basis. There are no regional offices in Wales.

### **A.6.3 National networks and resources**

#### **National Records**

The national records of England, Scotland and Wales curate a wide range of information and archive collections relating to the historic environment of their respective countries and make them available to the public.

##### ***England***

English Heritage's National Monuments Record (NMR) curates a wide range of information and archive collections relating to the historic environment and makes them available to the public. The NMR maintains a national database of monuments, buildings and maritime sites linked to a GIS system and contains entries for over 400,000 monuments and c.80,000 events. The NMR also curates a collection of over 2.5 million air photographs, some 3 million ground photographs, 32,000 books, 300,000 maps and a growing collection of plans, architectural drawings and reports. The collections provide complete aerial coverage for England and other photographic coverage of a wide range of topics such as English towns, gardens, houses, churches and cathedrals, industrial sites and railway stations.

The NMR acts as the contact point for queries concerning scheduled monuments, listed buildings and the registers of parks and gardens, and battlefields. The NMR also issues a free licence to HERs to hold NMR copyrighted material.

Heritage Information Partnerships and the Data Standards Unit of the NMR offer advice to HERs and maintain controlled terminologies such as the *Thesaurus of Monument Types*.

##### ***Scotland***

The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) is responsible for recording, interpreting and collecting information about the built environment. The National Monuments Record for Scotland (NMRS) is the principal archive of collections for Scotland's archaeological, building and maritime heritage. There are several million items in the collections comprising photographs, drawings, manuscripts, aerial photographs and other visual and documentary material including digital archives.

##### ***Wales***

The National Monuments Record of Wales (NMRW) holds the national collection of information about the archaeological, architectural and historical heritage of Wales and provides a public information service, drawing on both archival and published sources and benefiting from specialist advice from RCAHMS staff. Indexes to the information, including core site data, form the RCAHMS's contribution to the developing Extended National Database for Wales. Currently there are over 1.25 million photographs, 70,000 plans and drawings and 50,000 historic maps in the collections in addition to thousands of surveys and reports. Coflein is the online interactive mapping and database for the National Monuments Record of Wales (NMRW)

In Wales the HERs form part of an 'Extended National Database (END) Partnership' of heritage organisations records which includes the RCAHMS's records, Cadw SAM Records, and the National Museums and Galleries of Wales archaeological collections. Core data from each partner's digital records are exchanged and regularly updated and made available for both internal purposes and for public access.

An index to all of the records from the partners, including core data from all records, is available on line through the CARN (Core Archaeological Record iNdex)

Website: <http://www.rcahmw.org.uk/data/carn> (this is also relevant to A.8.5).

### **ALGAO Specialist Committees**

Within ALGAO:UK a network of subject committees address specific areas of interest at strategic level. The Historic Environment Records (HER) Committee informs, advises and acts for the Executive Committee and membership of ALGAO on the development and maintenance of historic environment records, the database and GIS applications involved and data standards.

### **IHBC**

IHBC represents building conservation professionals working in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, with connections to the Republic of Ireland. The Institute aims to establish, develop and maintain the highest standards of conservation practice, to support the effective protection and enhancement of the historic environment, and to promote heritage-led regeneration and access to the historic environment for all. IHBC members come from a range of professional disciplines in the public, private and voluntary sectors, including conservation officers, planners, architects, and regeneration practitioners.

### **Historic Environment Records Forum**

The HER Forum exists to bring those with an interest in HERs together to exchange ideas and assist each other. It consists of an e-mail discussion list ([www.jiscmail.ac.uk/herforum](http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/herforum)), twice yearly meetings and published *Historic Environment Records News* now part of the *Heritage Gateway*. The HER Forum is chaired by one of its members and co-ordinated by Heritage Information Partnerships at the NMR. Although originally set up by English Heritage for English HERs the forum has members representing Wales and Scotland as well as subscribers to the email list from other parts of the world. In Scotland the SMR Forum brings together national and local bodies with an interest in the development of HERs, and there is a separate email Scottish SMR discussion list which includes non-SMR members.

## **A.6.4 Wider context**

### **The Archaeology Data Service (ADS)**

The ADS forms part of a distributed national electronic resource established with funding from the academic community to improve the accessibility of information resources to researchers. The ADS holds metadata catalogues which provide an index to databases held by HERs, the NMRs and others, and also holds digital archives deposited by field archaeology units and national organisations. Information collected by the ADS is available on the internet through ARCHSearch, a search tool which identifies sources of information and, in some cases, provides a link to databases posted on the internet by organisations such as the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS), some HERs and thematic projects.

Web site: <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/>

### **Thematic projects and local studies**

Topical or thematic surveys are carried out by local studies groups, archaeology and history societies, special interest groups and national agencies. The surveys include national projects

creating records of monuments of a particular period or type, for example the Defence of Britain project. The groups and societies organising these surveys hold libraries, archives, collections and increasingly databases of information that complement HER holdings. HER managers often work with these groups and societies, supplying information as well as aiming to incorporate new information and enhance their own databases at the end of the project. An on-line discussion forum, *Historic Environment List For Projects and Societies*, has been set up to promote co-operation and sharing of ideas/information between survey projects and special interest groups and societies involved in recording all aspects of the historic environment.

Web site; <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/helps.html>

### **European Heritage Network**

In recent years there have been several collaborative projects involving the member states of the European Union. The European Heritage Network, is looking at the policy and legislation framework for heritage conservation across Europe. A multi-lingual thesaurus is being developed for the project to support retrieval of information across the member states. Other projects are working to provide trans-national access to archives (ARENA) and HERs (PLANARCH).

Web sites:

Arena            <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/arena>

Planarch        [www.planarch.org](http://www.planarch.org)

## A.7 HERs as public information services

HERs are a starting point for any enquiry about the local historic environment. They aim to distil what is known about sites in their area on their databases and direct enquirers to additional sources of information.

### Searches and resources

HER databases provide a way of searching for sites by their location, period, type and other characteristics. HER record maps, both on paper and in GIS, are an excellent way of identifying sites and areas of interest. The databases provide an index to the files, books, reports, plans, sketches and photographs held by HERs. They also contain references to original archive material held in local record offices, information about sites held in other databases and sometimes references to objects held in local museums.

### Local people

Many people contact HERs wishing to know more about their local area. Some enquiries are very specific, for example house owners or potential buyers researching the history of their house, garden or other land, perhaps in advance of a planning application, or to help prepare management proposals. Enquiries can also be very general, for example a local studies group may spend several years researching the history of a parish.

### Education and life-long learning

School teachers consult HERs to relate national history to local examples of monuments or buildings. Local studies also provide a starting point for many adult-education projects. HER managers work with local schools and colleges to prepare packs for students and with universities to provide information that forms the starting point for research excavations and other projects. HER data also contributes to post-graduate research.

### Leisure and tourism

Many HER managers are involved in producing materials for their authorities' leisure services departments. HER materials are used to prepare interpretation panels and leaflets about sites that can be visited in their local area.

Many HERs have outreach programmes and take part each year in 'Heritage Open-Days' and the 'National Archaeology Days' organised by the Council for British Archaeology's (CBA's) [Young Archaeologists Club](#) and other special events (see also [Council for Scottish Archaeology](#)). These days aim to promote public enjoyment of the historic environment. HER managers take part by preparing displays or giving presentations based on the information held in their databases and collections.

### Commercial enquiries

Most HERs are regularly consulted by archaeological contractors and other commercial users. HER materials are used to assess the implications and potential costs of developing a particular piece of land. The majority of HERs charge commercial users a fee to cover the staff costs involved in meeting their requests.

### Promotion and publications

Many HERs use their collections to prepare annual reports, leaflets, site interpretation panels, popular books, educational materials and to organise events. Increasingly HERs are also using

their collections to publish information on the World Wide Web (www) including web-enabling their databases.

## A.8 The future

*An Assessment of SMRs in England* (Baker 1999a), *Scotland* (Baker 1999b) and *Wales* (Baker unpublished) has shown that their development has been uneven and often on an ad hoc basis. However, more recent research such as the *SMR Content and Computing Survey* (Newman 2002), has shown that the situation is improving. The government HER consultation results, *HER Benchmarks for Good Practice* (Chitty 2002) and *Resource needs for SMRs and UADs to reach the first stage benchmarks* (Baker, Chitty and Edwards 2004) (relating to England) have shown a way forward for future continued improvement in the key areas described below.

### A.8.1 Strategic development and co-ordination

Recent years have seen much greater co-operation between the key national organisations with an interest in the development of English HERs (English Heritage, ALGAO, RCAHMW, RCAHMS, IHBC, DCMS and MLA) since RCHME, ALGAO and English Heritage signed a co-operation statement containing agreed key principles governing SMR development in 1998 (RCHME, ALGAO and English Heritage 1998). The statement set out a shared vision of a national network of heritage records maintained to common standards and accessible to a wide variety of users. Since 1998, this partnership has underpinned a number of projects, including the SMR assessment (Baker 1999a), and preparation of a framework document for the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to guide bids from HERs for funding, recently updated as '[Unlocking Our Past](#)' (EH/ALGAO 2005).

Following the Baker report (Baker 1999a) ALGAO produced a strategy for HERs (ALGAO 2000) which set out the Association's intention to work with the national partners to:

- Develop national standards for the compilation of HERs and other heritage records.
- Encourage research into the development of a country-wide network of heritage information systems.
- Build relationships between the historic environment and the wider environmental fields.
- Find resources to address backlogs and to broaden the coverage of HERs to encompass the historic environment as a whole.

In England, English Heritage, ALGAO, IHBC, DCMS and MLA meet regularly in an HER Working Party which has taken the lead in such initiatives as the first edition of this manual as well as its revision, in the *Benchmarks for Good Practice* (Chitty 2002), *Resource needs for SMRs and UADs to reach the first stage benchmarks* (Baker, Chitty and Edwards 2004) and a framework document for Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) support for HER Outreach, *Unlocking Britain's Past* (HLF 1999) and *Unlocking Our Past* (English Heritage/ALGAO 2005). The challenge for the future is for the partners to successfully influence both national and local government to provide greater stability and increased resources to support the further development of HERs.

Similarly partnership in Wales between Cadw, RCAHMW, NMGW and the WATs has led to the *Strategic Framework for Historic Environment Records in Wales* (Cadw et al 2005).

In 2003 the Scottish SMRs and the RCAHMS agreed a Co-operation Statement (published in 2005) which sets out their aim to work together in a number of areas: liaison, on-line resources, user feedback and analysis, workshops and training, joint services, education and tourism and research. ([http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/RCAHMS\\_smr.doc](http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/RCAHMS_smr.doc))

## A.8.2 Data standards

There is now a widespread acceptance of the importance of data standards and three key platforms for this, the event-monument-source data model, the high level MIDAS (Lee 1998) standard and the national reference data terminology lists (INSCRIPTION) have already been agreed by HERs and NMR in England/Wales. These high level standards are available on the web site for use by any HERs. No comparable work on data standards has taken place in Scotland, but agreement to co-operate on these is included in the Co-operation Statement between SMRs and RCAHMS (RCAHMS 2005). More detailed data standards are being developed in Scotland under the auspices of the ASPIRE project (<http://www.aspire-resource.info>) and the Scottish SMR Forum.

These standards have and will inevitably develop in the light of practical experience and in response to new areas. A forum for discussing developments in data standards is already in place, the Forum on Information Standards in Heritage (FISH); its work and that of other standard-setting groups will continue. Challenges for the future will include developing standards for archaeological spatial data, an aspect currently being addressed and working towards common standards for heritage information across the UK. (See B.6, E.4)

## A.8.3 Research frameworks

Many archaeologists have long recognised the need for a framework for regional archaeological research and are responding positively to the English Heritage recommendation for the publication of research frameworks. These documents provide a structure within which decisions can be taken on the protection, management and recording of the archaeological resource at local levels and relate national strategies to those needs. Recent examples are the archaeological research frameworks for East Anglia (Glazebrook 1997; Brown and Glazebrook 2000) and the Greater Thames Estuary (Williams and Brown 1999) which provide an assessment of the archaeological resource of these regions and highlight areas where HER enhancements or links between neighbouring HERs need to be developed. In 2005 English Heritage published a national Research Framework (English Heritage 2005b; 2005c). Wales is similarly engaged in producing a national framework and current progress toward this can be seen at <http://www.cpat.org.uk/research>. Scotland is presently at an earlier stage of the process although the need for frameworks is recognised.

## A.8.4 Access and education

Until recently, apart from a few pioneering HERs, most had limited resources to devote to widening use of their records. Since the Heritage Lottery Fund published a framework document *Unlocking Britain's Past* (HLF 1999) updated as *Unlocking Our Past* (English Heritage/ALGEO 2005) to guide HER bids with an emphasis on outreach, education and access projects the position has changed. Several HERs in England including Cheshire, Essex, Durham, Herefordshire, Kent, Northumberland, Somerset, and Warwickshire have been successful in securing HLF funding for such projects. In 2002-03, a proof of concept project, *Accessing Scotland's Past* ([www.accessingscotlandspast.org.uk](http://www.accessingscotlandspast.org.uk)), was piloted between RCAHMS and two Scottish SMRs. Some HERs have also been able to take advantage of other government initiatives, such as the [New Opportunities Fund](#) (NOF) and the New Libraries Network. All these should enable greater public access to HERs, both directly through the provision of office space and computer access and remotely via libraries, record offices and the internet. The exciting and innovative projects that are now being developed should result in a broader awareness of HERs and their importance. Public interest and enthusiasm for the historic environment and

conservation, partially developed through popular television programmes, is also being harnessed to develop a two-way flow of information between HERs and local people with an interest in learning more about, and recording, their local historic environment.

### A.8.5 Wider perspectives

In recent years, at a national and international level, a number of initiatives have been developed to co-ordinate information systems and services for archaeological and architectural conservation. One example is the Historic Environment Information Resources Network, or HEIRNET, a consortium of UK bodies seeking to facilitate common standards and support communications links between information systems relating to the historic environment. A report, *HEIRNET: Users and their Uses of HEIRs* (Grant, A. 2002) prepared for this consortium on the increasing numbers of Historic Environment Information Resources (HEIRs) (see <http://www.britarch.ac.uk/HEIRNET>) recommended that:

- a central register of HEIRs should be created and supported by the community of information systems, which has now been created at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/heirnet/index.cfm>
- a technical advisory facility should be established to help projects to use data standards and data structures that assist inter-operability and to bring research results to wider audiences
- funding agencies should take concerted action to ensure that the creators of information systems incorporate accessibility and inter-operability.

Such moves are timely and may help archaeologists improve their input to the new regional organisations recently set up by government (such as regional development agencies, regional cultural consortia). The developing regional structure in England provides an opportunity for establishing improved arrangements for the protection and enhancement of the historic environment through closer co-operation and the development of partnerships between local-authority archaeologists and others with a concern for the historic environment. At the international level there is also a growing trend towards co-operation, both in terms of the creation of international standards such as the Comité International pour la Documentation (CIDOC), and through joint projects funded for example by the various European Community schemes. (See also CARN under A.6.3 above)

### A.8.6 From SMRs to HERs: evolution or revolution?

The development at both national and local level of a more integrated approach to the management of the historic environment has led to a widening of information sources which are now broader in scope than what was understood by the term 'SMR'. It is in part this which has led to a change of name to 'Historic Environment Record'. This has proceeded by consensus following discussion by the HER Forum and adopted by EH and ALGAO at their HER working party. Most English and Welsh HERs now contain a record of the built heritage, some contain details of palaeoenvironmental sites and/or links to geological and ecological records. This approach has not yet been adopted in Scotland.

Statutory status, the proposed portal for the historic environment (the Heritage Gateway, a NMRE initiative in collaboration with ALGAO and IHBC see A.2.8), the trend towards integration of archaeology, the built environment and biological records is in line with national government policy towards modernisation. The *Modernising Government White Paper* (HMSO 1999) set out a timetable for government departments to deliver services to the public which 'join up' functions currently served by different departments (for Scotland, see <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Government/Open-scotland>, and also the [PastMap](#) project that

provides access to the Scottish National Archaeological and Architectural Datasets that are maintained by Historic Scotland, RCAHMS, Scottish Natural Heritage and some SMRs). Government departments are required to develop a timetable for implementing electronic services that are available for 24 hours each day. These requirements give increased impetus to HERs to enhance their databases, adopting GIS, digitising collections and meeting the *Benchmarks for Good Practice* (Chitty 2002) to provide greater public access in line with the Government's stated objective of access for all, not just a few. Overall, these pressures, with the moves towards regional structures by national government, will pose the question of whether the current structure of HER provision can adequately resource the needs of a more 'joined-up' approach to the historic environment.

Statutory status proposed for England, the proposed portal for the historic environment (the Heritage Gateway, an NMR initiative in collaboration with ALGAO and IHBC), Pastmap in Scotland and Coflein and Historic Wales) and the greater interoperability being provided by FISH through their interoperability toolkit will continue to open up new challenges and opportunities for HERs in the future.