

Joined-Up Archaeology

This issue of ADS News marks the fifth anniversary of the ADS. You may already have noticed that we have marked the occasion by giving the newsletter a facelift. Over the next few months users will also see changes to the ADS web site, and some significant improvements to the ADS catalogue, ArchSearch, where the latest web technologies and a redesigned database will provide enhanced search and retrieval facilities. We will also be launching HEIRPORT, a new Internet portal for the Historic Environment.

There is a lot of talk these days about joined-up government and joined-up thinking. HEIRPORT puts this into practice by providing a single web gateway from which users can simultaneously search the databases of the ADS, the RCAHMS and the Portable Antiquities Programme, with further targets in the pipeline. At the end of the day users aren't bothered which high quality resources they get results from. By joining up a number of resources HEIRPORT allows users to carry out one search across a number of distributed resources, rather than a series of separate searches of each database. This approach, often described as 'interoperability' (and explained at www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue24/interoperability/) is part of the Government's vision for the future of information provision. It reflects an information landscape in which Internet resources may be linked in any combination by subject matter, target audience, or user interface. One gateway might provide a user-friendly interface geared towards a schools audience, for instance; another might provide access to image collections; another might focus on resources about Scotland. HEIRPORT will provide a map-based interface and keyword searching of Historic Environment Information Resources, aimed at the archaeologically-informed user. It is one of the projects being promoted by HEIRNET, described in this issue of ADS News by Kate Fernie, who has been seconded by English Heritage to promote the HEIRNET objectives. Since our establishment the ADS has worked closely with the CBA and the NMRs of England, Scotland and Wales to enhance access to information. We are delighted to be working within HEIRNET to extend this role.

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ArchSearch Latest

The last six months have seen not only new resources made available but also updates of existing holdings and the return of an old favourite.

Web access to the Library Catalogue of the Society of Antiquaries of London is once again available through the ADS. The Council for British Archaeology has supplied an update of its Archaeological Site Index to Radiocarbon Dates from Great Britain and Ireland. As well as some data cleaning a further 2,500 records have been added to the Index.

New resources include the first instalment of the Bibliography of the Vernacular Architecture Group. Located in the ADS Library, this exciting resource currently contains over 4,600 records. New archives include material from Cottam, an Anglian and Anglo-Scandinavian Settlement in East Yorkshire (1993-5 interventions) and Dunadd, an Early Dalriadic Capital (1980-1 excavations).

Work for the PATOIS project has allowed the ADS to add the three CBA volumes associated with Christ Church Spitalfields excavations to be released ahead of schedule. These volumes are now very difficult to obtain, so the electronic copies are the only realistic way to access these sought-after resources.

Some very exciting developments are also taking place in terms of systems and technological development. Map-based searching has been upgraded and work is advancing on the 'next generation' ArchSearch.

Read on for more details ...

ArchSearch News is brought to you by the ADS technical team: Tony Austin, Keith Westcott and Jo Clarke ([email](#)).

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ArchSearch II: ADS catalogue in line for major upgrade

Semantic searching may be slightly in the future but redevelopment of ADS systems is already well underway. We are working from the bottom up; starting with hardware and software upgrades. Services are now distributed between a number of Sun® servers running under the Solaris operating system. This spreads the load and consequently makes access quicker. The catalogue is being migrated to a recently-installed enterprise level database system, Oracle® 8i. The opportunity is also being taken to restructure the data. Again this will quicken access and also facilitate the application of more complex queries to data held by the ADS. Further, a new enterprise level Web application server has been installed to manage the link between the database and the web server. Macromedia's ColdFusion will truly facilitate the development of the 'next generation' Archarch.

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After a long absence the Society of Antiquaries Library Catalogue is back online. The system has been upgraded using the Voyager library cataloguing system as supplied by Endeavor Information Systems. The catalogue currently contains all books, periodicals and periodical articles catalogued since 1988: circa 11,000 monograph titles, 19,500 periodical articles and around 900 currently received periodical titles. This project is also technically interesting in that it tests an alternative resource delivery strategy. Access is provided through the ADS server located in York with queries passed on to the Antiquaries database server located in London via a private line. In this way the catalogue is always completely up-to-date, immediately making available all material catalogued by the Library up to the day.

View the catalogue at <http://sal.ads.ahds.ac.uk/>

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More maps: ADS launches *another* map interface

In the last issue of this newsletter it was noted that the ADS was moving towards providing larger-scale maps in order to allow users of ArchSearch to undertake refined geo-spatial searches.

This has now become a reality. Click on the opening outline map of Great Britain and you are zoomed into detailed mapping covering a 30 kilometre square centred on where you clicked. If your click was slightly out you can navigate to adjacent map squares. Once in position simply select the size of the search area and click on the detailed map at the centre of your area of interest.

This new level of map detail builds on previous simple 'point and click mapping', but allows for much more precision in the selection of resources. In addition, the geo-spatial footprint of each resource in the catalogue has allowed the ADS to connect with other online resources, including low resolution aerial photographs supplied by getmapping.com, and OS mapping from streetmap.com. Though relatively simple to create, these links demonstrate the opportunities for interoperability between geo-spatial resources where they are described appropriately.

The next stage, as part of a major upgrade of ArchSearch, will be to link 'clickable map' searching to other metadata used to describe resources. For example, linking to when and what would allow the user to click on a map and search for Roman (when) Villas (what) in a defined area!

The map-based interface to the catalogue will also be attached to the front of HEIRPORT, the ADS's prototype Z39.50 portal, demonstrating the potential of geospatial searching across different on line databases held in various different locations

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Learning the Lingo 3: Reading electronic publications

Readers will be familiar with our regular "Learning the Lingo" column, reporting latest news on the PATOIS project. In this issue we have invited Pete McKinney of the Humanities Advanced Technology and Information Institute at Glasgow University to discuss work that they are doing towards the completion of the project.

Technology is fundamentally changing archaeology. The discipline has always created large amounts of data, but digital media have changed how data is represented, analysed and disseminated. Technology is also changing the data itself both through new methods of collecting, and providing possibilities for archaeologists to present data in new ways.

As well as being a partner on the PATOIS project, the Humanities Advanced Technology and Information Institute (HATII) has been contracted to create one of the suite of four tutorials that make up PATOIS. The tutorial being created by HATII explores electronic publication in archaeology. The tutorial addresses practical and theoretical issues surrounding the online use and presentation of archaeological research, using Internet Archaeology as an example.

The module is split into four discrete sessions: understanding images; geographic distributions of data; accessing large datasets online; and a concluding session that develops skills learned and offers directions to other online journals and resources. The first session, on the visualisation of data, teaches students about the types of images that have been used, how to assess virtual realities, and how images are used to represent different datasets. The second session follows the lead, discussing graphs and maps as pictorial representations of data. The third session introduces online interfaces that allow users to interrogate raw data from excavations. Thus, students are introduced to the 'integrated archive and publication' only possible with on line publications.

Data is the foundation upon which hypotheses are built; it is therefore vital that students learn how to discover, search and utilise them. Yet electronic publications - which use the latest technical wizardry to wrap their data - require different critical skills to interpret than conventional monograph or journal publications do.

The tutorials on e-publication respond to this need. The main aim of the tutorial is to foster an understanding of the opportunities and dangers that online publication offers. Exposing students to these digital resources will not only enhance their own research, but push archaeology as a discipline into further exploiting technology. Conversely, they will help foster an understanding of how technology can continue to evolve archaeological practices.

Pete McKinney, P.McKinney@hatii.arts.gla.ac.uk HATII, University of Glasgow. For more on PATOIS visit the PATOIS website at: <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/patois/>

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Joined-Up Archaeology

The ADS has been assisting a major research programme at the University of Southampton. A substantial award from the Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB) has enabled the Archaeology Department at Southampton to develop an electronic lithics collection for archaeology.

Southampton has long been the repository for an extensive collection of archaeological rock samples from the UK. The AHRB Resource Enhancement grant will allow this collection to become more widely accessible through digitisation. The ADS has been involved in the process from the start, with practical advice and technical solutions.

Once complete, the the project will provide an interactive database, available through the World Wide Web, incorporating large quantities of data and images.

We first approached the ADS while planning the project to seek advice about technical issues. The ADS was able to suggest solutions for the highly specialized nature of the project that helped us to overcome technical complexities. The ADS was also able to provide guidance about the 'Technical Appendix' an essential element of all major AHRB grants. This provided a convincing case for funding.

ADS involvement did not stop once the application had been approved. If anything, collaboration has been extended since the grant was received.

The project began in June and a trial database is being constructed. The ADS suggested using Oracle and ColdFusion software, which will provide a portable and robust system. The ADS has provided a remote user account allowing the project team to use the ADS's own Oracle servers. The ADS are also part of an Advisory Group that will meet regularly during the project. When the final database has been constructed and the front-end user interface has been designed, the new digital lithics resource will be made available through the ADS. Even after the project has been completed, the database will remain dynamic and continue to expand - and it is through the ADS's ongoing support that this will be possible./p>

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Parishes without End, For Ever and Ever? Fyfield Take Two

Prof Peter Fowler, Director of the Fyfield and Overton Downs project, takes up where Damian Robinson left off in the last issue of ADS News.

Technology and the archival structure of the ADS has caught up with a need long perceived. It is a privilege to become a pioneer in electronic archaeological archiving.

The four 'layers' of the Fyfield archive work at different levels and for different constituencies. People may read layer 1 ('pop' book) for fun, and layer 2 (monograph) for interest and disagreement. Technology allows me and others to continue adding to the archive at layer 3 (digital archive), and to interrogate electronically large chunks of data and interpretation for alternative and probably better understandings. If you need to know what is in the primary archive (layer 4) dial up FWPs 61 and 89 (the boxed finds and paper archives).

This structure complements the traditional monograph by bedding it in a matrix of ideas and data. No value distinction is made between the four 'layers': the whole, not just the monograph, is the publication. It is unlikely we have it right first time, but experience will tell. Thousands of 'hits' on the site in its first year hint at a usage from which feedback will come.

Work continues. The project is 'finished'; long live the project.

Prof Peter Fowler

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Piloting OASIS in the English Heritage regions

It has long been recognised that the flow of information between monument records, contracting units and the research community could be improved.

The OASIS project - a collaboration between the ADS, English Heritage and the Archaeological Investigations Project, funded by the Research Support Libraries Programme - is working to manage these information flows better.

OASIS has allowed an electronic data submission form to be developed. This form will be trialed in the forthcoming pilot by an SMR in every EH region with a group of field units. The form will be used by the units to inform the relevant monument records of the completion of specific research work, such as the deposition of 'grey literature' reports. The information will then be validated and passed to the ADS. In this way, the on line index will be kept up to date. OASIS will also begin to provide enhanced access to the 'grey literature' itself. While these reports could be consulted at the local SMR or at the NMR, digital access to them would vastly increase their impact. So, as part of the forthcoming pilot, every time a report is submitted to an SMR a digital version of it will be submitted to the ADS. This will create an on line library of grey literature for developer-funded archaeology in England.

It is hoped that, through OASIS, information about the latest archaeological discoveries can be passed to the research community within a few months of the work being completed. The availability of this information will have far-reaching consequences for archaeological teaching, learning and research in England.

Dr Damian Robinson ([email](#)) For more on the OASIS project and the data entry form, see <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/>

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HEIRNET: historic environment information resources

In 1998, the Historic Environment Information Resources Network (HEIRNET) was formed by the Council for British Archaeology with the NMRs for Scotland, Wales and England, the ADS and representatives from national agencies, museums, universities and national societies. Its aim is to find strategies to help members work together so that their information resources are easier to access for conservation, education, research and by those with a general interest

HEIRNET began by surveying historic environment information resources, suggesting ways to improve access. The subsequent report (<http://www.britarch.ac.uk/HEIRNET/rep1.html>) recognised the need for HEIRs to develop independently and recommended the creation of a network of HEIRs underpinned by shared standards.

The first step in this process has been the creation of an on line register of HEIRs. The register, developed with technical support from the ADS, was launched at the IFA conference in March 2001 and can be seen at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/HEIRNET.html>. The register is still growing but already provides an invaluable way of finding out about the growing number of HEIRs. As well as the register, HEIRNET is developing a technical advice service for those who manage HEIRs with the aim of promoting standards for both data and interoperability.

An exciting development, made possible by compatible data standards, has been the creation of a prototype Z39.50 portal. HEIRPORT, developed by the ADS and the University of Kent, offers simultaneous searching of databases held by the ADS, the RCAHMS and the Portable Antiquities scheme (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/heirport/>).

Kate Fernie ([email](#)) For more on HEIRNET, contact Kate or see the HEIRNET website at <http://www.britarch.ac.uk/HEIRNET/>

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All change at the ADS: new faces and new jobs ...

The last six months have seen a rapid series of changes in the ADS staff, and their responsibilities.

In March 2001, Prof Rosemary Cramp stepped down as Chair of the ADS Advisory Committee, to be replaced by Vice Chair, Dr Jeremy Huggett. Dr Huggett is now joined by Prof Timothy Darvill of Bournemouth University as Vice Chair, with Dr Mike Heyworth continuing his role as Vice Chair.

Kate Fernie was originally seconded to the ADS from English Heritage for twelve months to work on developing content for PATOIS. That period has been extended for another twelve months, partly to complete the review and dissemination stages of PATOIS, but also with a new role as a research officer for the HEIRNET consortium.

Pete McKinney of the Humanities Advanced Technology and Information Institute at Glasgow University has also been working for the ADS for the last few months as a partner in the PATOIS project.

Perhaps the biggest change to the ADS, however, came in July when Damian Robison, Collections Development Manager, won a British Academy Post-Doctoral Fellowship. This prestigious award allows Damian to return to Bradford University to concentrate on his long-term research interests in the archaeology of Pompeii. He will thus leave the ADS at Christmas 2001 to take up his new appointment.

Damian's successor as Collections Development Manager, Catherine Hardman, will take up post in December, allowing for a period of transition. Catherine currently works for Cumbria County Council on a series of extensive urban surveys. She is a graduate of the universities of Bradford, Leeds and York.

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Geophysics Guide to Good Practice released

The last while has also seen rapid developments in the publication of the AHDS's Guides to Good Practice Series.

October saw the launch of the fourth in the series, Geophysical Data in Archaeology, a Guide to Good Practice by Armin Schmidt of Bradford University.

The Guide follows the whole process of geophysical survey in archaeology, from specification at the planning stage, through project design, project planning and archiving. It looks in some detail at the development and documentation of data through the life-cycle of a project, such as 'desk-top' research, fieldwork documentation, analytical processes and dissemination of results.

Geophysical data present particular challenges to archiving since they are not as widely used as 'conventional' data types like images or texts. Thus, the Guide makes a significant contribution to the preservation of geophysical datasets. The web-based dissemination and archiving of geophysical data offers a unique test case in the use of archived digital data.

The Guide is currently available in digital copy from the ADS website, though paper publication is imminent.

Other guides in the series have been selling well: the guide for GIS is now out of print. Work continues apace on new guides, including a guide for Computer Aided Design (CAD) which is due for release in the New Year. A cross-disciplinary guide for Virtual Reality is also in an advanced state of readiness, currently undergoing review and commentary in anticipation of release.

The AHDS Guides to Good Practice Series is on line at the ADS website with links to all current guides: <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/goodguides/g2gp.html>

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