

Director's Foreword

Professor Julian Richards
ADS Director

This has been an important year of change for ADS. Over ten years of partnership with AHDS came to an end on 31st March 2008, when that body was formally wound up, and its achievements celebrated at an event to mark the occasion in King's College, London. Although AHRC has withdrawn funding from AHDS, they have agreed to continue to support ADS to provide advice and preservation services for applicants and grant holders in archaeology and related fields. The ADS has also begun the process of developing a new business plan, with all funders now required to bear the full costs of preservation and support, and our charging policy has been refined. The new funding arrangements have also been accompanied by changes in management and reporting and from April 2008 Professor Tim Darvill assumed responsibility as Chair of a reconstituted ADS Management Committee.

Despite the demise of the AHDS the ADS continues to operate within the wider digital archiving environment in the UK and abroad. We have retained and strengthened our close links with the History Data Service and Oxford Text Archive and have signed a joint agreement with their Heads. We are also actively participating in a Network of Centres being coordinated by Professor David Robey on behalf of JISC and we are also members of the Research Data Management Forum being led by the Digital Curation Centre.

We have also looked for partnerships beyond the UK and as reported in our last newsletter we have made special efforts to make sure that ADS is at the heart of developments in standards and archiving in archaeology and the historic environment sectors in Europe and the wider world. We have joined a European archives working party run under the auspices of the Europae Archaeologiae Consilium (EAC), and in April we hosted the second meeting of the Archaeology in Contemporary Europe (ACE) project in York. We also hosted a VENUS workshop on digital archiving of data derived from underwater archaeology in November. The European Union has also confirmed funding for two years for DARIAH (Digital Research Infrastructure for the Arts and Humanities), starting in September 2008, coordinated by the Netherlands Historical Data Archive (DANS). The role of ADS will be to develop an updated and extended version of the ARENA European archives portal, using web-services architecture.

Plans are now well advanced for the development of an archaeological digital archive in the United States, under the auspices of the Archaeoinformatics consortium, hosted by Arizona State University. The ADS has been closely involved in these plans and hopes to lead development of a shared series of standards and Guides to Good Practice, and to promote interoperability. As part of increasing transatlantic collaboration, Internet Archaeology and ADS have also made a successful bid to the Mellon Foundation for a project entitled LEAP II: A Transatlantic LEAP. This will build on the success of the AHRC ICT Strategy project "Making the LEAP: Linking Electronic archives and publications". From March 2009 to April 2011 four exemplar archives and publications will be developed, using projects hosted in Northern American institutions.

Stop Press:

In November the ADS/Internet Archaeology project Making the LEAP: linking electronic archives and publications was named as winner of the Best Archaeological Innovation award.

British Archaeological Awards - Best Archaeological Innovation 2008.

The same project was also Highly Commended in the category of Best Archaeological ICT project.

LEAP project page: <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/leap/>

British Archaeological Awards: <http://www.britarch.ac.uk/awards/>

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ADS Update

ADS

This section covers just a few of the new resources made available via the ADS since the last issue of the newsletter. A quick visit to the Collection History page of our website will provide the complete list. It is also possible to be kept up to date on new releases via the ADS RSS feed available from our home page.

England's Historic Seascapes is a programme of projects funded through the Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund to develop a nationally-applicable method for assessing and mapping the historic character of our present coastal and marine environment: Historic Seascape Characterisation (HSC). In doing so, HSC will extend to the coastal and marine zones the principles of Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) already applied over much of England's land area. (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/projArch/alsf/seascapes.cfm>).

An Urnes style buckle taken from the VASLE Late Saxon Buckles PDF.

The Viking and Anglo-Saxon Landscape and Economy (VASLE) Project. In the last fifteen years the role of metal-detected objects in the study of Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Scandinavian England has greatly increased through reporting to the Portable Antiquities Scheme and the Early Medieval Corpus. There are now thousands more artefacts and coins known than a decade ago which, in conjunction with fieldwork, have the potential to revolutionise our understanding of the early medieval period. The Viking and Anglo-Saxon Landscape and Economy (VASLE) project was the first attempt to examine this data on a national scale. Such an approach enables the detailed analysis of the nature of portable antiquities data, the biases within such datasets and the relationship between patterns of recovery and historic settlement. This digital archive released by the ADS is a major outcome of the VASLE project. It contains both a national database for finds dated to AD c.700-1050; and a sites database providing further information about finds recovered from over 65 so-called 'productive sites'. The archive should be used in conjunction with the report: *"Anglo-Saxon landscape and economy: using portable antiquities to study Anglo-Saxon and Viking Age England"*, to be published in *Internet Archaeology*. (http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/archive/vasle_ahrc_2008/)

The Anglo-Saxon Kent Electronic Database (ASKED) was built collaboratively by Stuart Brookes and Sue Harrington to facilitate their PhD researches at UCL Institute of Archaeology, from 1998-2000. The resource at the heart of ASKED is the archaeological evidence for the Anglo-Saxon populations of east and west Kent AD 400-750. The evidence consists of the human skeletal remains, the grave goods and the burial structures from 53 inhumation cemeteries. The elements of its content presented here, act as the pilot database for a much larger corpus of material currently being gathered under the aegis of the 'Beyond the Tribal Hidage Project' - a Leverhulme funded research project being undertaken at UCL Institute of Archaeology. (http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/archive/asked_ahrc_2008/)

Medieval Britain and Ireland indexes is a major new online resource and new venture for the Medieval Archaeology journal and contains extended overviews of results, finds and contexts right back to 1956. The selection each year will aim to cover new evidence from urban, rural, religious, Saxon, Viking or medieval contexts. (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/mbi/>)

The resources detailed above represent only a small fraction of the archives and publications that have been released recently. For example, hundreds of new grey literature reports have also been added to the Grey Literature Library and many new additions have been made to the PhD Library. It goes without saying that a few moments exploring the website will reward the researcher with many items of interest.

A photograph of Gunfleet Lighthouse from the Southwold to Clacton seascape project by Oxford Archaeology.

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Collection Highlights

Here colleagues and collaborators present their personal views on some favourite ADS resources

The Grey Literature Library

Catherine Hardman,
ADS Collections Development Manager

We first established the Library of Unpublished Fieldwork Reports, or as it is colloquially known, the Grey Literature Library (GLL) back in 2003 as a proof of concept idea, borrowing eight grey literature reports from Worcestershire Historic Environment Record to seed the collection, and to show that we could make links from HER/NMR indices to the associated full report. We hoped that this would show the enormous opportunities afforded by the then nascent OASIS system to act as a quick and easy way to create indices and link resources together.

The GLL harvests metadata from other resources, primarily OASIS records but also other resources hosted by the ADS such as reports produced under the Aggregate Levy Sustainability Fund or those produced as part of the works undertaken on the Channel Tunnel Rail Link. The metadata is then reused and made available to search within the GLL but is based on the usual ADS site based searches, where, what and when; a simple but powerful way of reaching results.

From these humble beginnings the GLL has grown steadily, in both the numbers of reports that can be found there, but also the number of users downloading the works; most recently during the period May - July 2008, over 25,000 reports were downloaded from the library. But perhaps even more importantly the success of the GLL has, I believe, fed into discussions and initiatives outside the ADS about grey literature, its role within the archaeological profession, access to past paper reports, and about the issues surrounding the secure archive of current digital grey literature reports.

Associated initiatives include the Archaeotools project, outlined in previous ADS newsletters, looking at developing natural language processing tools to automatically index grey literature and other texts. Certain HERs around the country have started to put grey literature from their own areas on line and we need to think of ways in which these different grey literature digital repositories can be linked together.

But the real reason why the GLL is my favourite collection is that through it we, the ADS, have the opportunity to engage with the wider profession, contracting archaeologists and community groups and to forge closer links with local authority archaeologists too. But the GLL is a little bit like the Lotto, you have to be in it to win it, and we all have to contribute to be able to reap the potentially huge benefits to archaeological research.

Library of Unpublished Fieldwork Reports: <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/library/greylit/index.cfm>.

Medieval Monastic Cemeteries of Britain (1050-1600): a digital resource and database of excavated samples

Kieron Niven,
ADS Curatorial Officer

The AHRB-funded 'Medieval Monastic Cemeteries of Britain' resource, released by ADS in 2006, presents an excellent example of a 'joined up' online archive and traditional hard-copy publication. The online resource, consisting of a database, summary site data, detailed burial data and site plans, records a range of information on over 8000 burials from 50 cemeteries spanning England, Scotland and Wales. It is this dataset that forms the basis for the 2005 publication 'Requiem: The Medieval Monastic Cemetery in Britain', a book which identifies and examines the trends in monastic burial practices between 1050 and 1600 on a UK-wide scale. As Roberta Gilchrist points out in a Sept 2005 feature in British Archaeology, the impetus behind this project was the widespread assumption that burial practices in post-12th century Christian cemeteries in the UK contained little evidence of diversity or of individual expression and therefore presented little value in terms of archaeological research. The database goes a long way to show that this is not the case. From simply looking at the resource's online search form it is easy to see that there has been a great degree of variation recorded in the way medieval monastic graves were constructed as well as in the way individuals were inhumed. The online database allows users to search by elements of the grave's construction (shape, base and wall construction, cover, and marker) as well as on aspects of the grave's occupant (age, sex, attitude and position) and wider elements such as land use and county. The result sets from a query of the database are presented in a two-stage format allowing a quick initial overview of results prior to following up individual burial entries in detail.

The detailed results also allow the user to access overall site summaries which in turn are linked to the Downloads section of the archive. The Downloads section is itself available independently of the online database and the files can be accessed either by searching on site name or by location via a map interface. The files available for download vary in terms of each individual cemetery but generally include the cemetery burial data and a site summary. Many of the cemetery datasets also include a CAD site plan which, when used alongside the burial datasets, can be imported into a GIS system and queried spatially. In summary it's not only the scope of this project that I find interesting - a burial database containing over 8000 detailed burial records spanning numerous UK wide sites is no small project - but also the way in which the data has been made available through a number of routes and can be used in a variety of different ways.

Requiem: http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/archive/cemeteries_ahrb_2005/.

The Urban Landscapes of Ancient Merv

Michael Charno,
ADS Curatorial Officer

From both an archaeological and technical standpoint, Merv has been the most interesting and enjoyable archive to work on during my short tenure at the ADS. It is also an exemplar in the LEAP project, so it has an associated publication in Internet Archaeology (IA), see the STOP PRESS on page 3. I worked on the archive as

well as preparing the specialist interfaces for the IA article, which included Web GIS interfaces and streaming media delivery. The Web GIS interfaces allow users to interrogate the spatial data alongside the interpretive text, which hopefully enriches the users understanding of the text. The streaming media for this project is in the form of both audio and video files which are being hosted and delivered via a new University of York service. The audio files are comprised of interviews regarding two areas of the site and their meaning and significance while the video files are movies of the site made by the project team.

For me, this archive was interesting from an archaeological standpoint because of the significance of the site as well as the data produced. Merv is in modern day Turkmenistan and was a major settlement on the Silk Road. The site saw settlement starting in the 6th century BC right through when it suffered a Mongol sacking in 1221 AD, ultimately habitation was re-established and continued into the 19th century. The archive relating to the site contains almost all the types of data we support at the ADS, including text documents (Portable Document Format/OpenOffice Text), digital images (JPEG/TIFF), rotating images (QuickTime VR), geospatial (ESRI Shapefiles and Geographic Markup Language files), audio files (MP3/WAV), and video files (MPG). We have rarely had an archive with this level of diversity of data. Some of the documents available for download are teaching resources for teachers, and while they are specific to Merv, provide excellent templates for teaching archaeology to children. Additionally some of the audio and video files are in Turkmen, which will certainly appeal to our large Turkmen speaking audience.

From a technical standpoint this archive also provided some good material for the dissemination of the project. The archive included a Web GIS, although with the entire spatial data set as opposed to the specific 'views' offered in the IA article. The Web GIS was a standard implementation, but does offer the user a convenient way to interrogate the data without having to download the zipped up shapefiles and aerial photos individually.

There was also a large collection of photographs, both scanned and 'born' digital. Rather than dump all these images in ascending order based on file names, simple filters were devised to enable the user to sift through this extensive dataset based on monument type, place, and category. This allows the user to focus the set of images to project defined classifications, which makes the data set significantly easier to navigate and use. This was possible only because the project/depositors provided worthwhile metadata for every single photograph deposited with us. This metadata not only provides necessary information and context for future users of this data, but also enables us as curatorial officers to enrich the Web interfaces into these data sets.

As part of the LEAP project, this archive will hopefully serve as a model for the future integration of online publications and digital archives. However, even as a standalone archive it has unique interfaces for accessing its extensive and varied data types as well as a subject matter that should pique the interest of archaeologist.

Merv: http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/archive/merv_ahrc_2008/.

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Crossword No.4 - Solution

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Set by Time

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We feature a new crossword setter in this issue, *Time* is taking over from *Cryptarch* but the fiendish mixture of cryptic clues, many with an archaeological slant, is maintained. The solution to this issue's crossword will be in the online edition from **27th February 2009**.

This issue the prize will include a £20 book token as well as the usual ADS Guide to Good Practice of choice for the submitter of the first correct solution drawn at random on **February 13th 2009**. Completed puzzles in the PDF version (available from the online edition above) should be posted to us at:

The Archaeology Data Service,
Department of Archaeology,
The King's Manor,
University of York,
York.
YO1 7EP

Alternatively they can be emailed to sj523@york.ac.uk, please remember to include your contact details.

Crossword No.4

[Open a .pdf version to print.](#)

Across

- **1** Chief Italian and ancient Persians puzzled old mathematician. (10)
- **5** Thank God for sacred hill (4)
- **8** Oscar's place, frequented by 1? (7)
- **9** Unfinished stately home used by Romans. (6)
- **11** Territorial Army relay Spanish food. (5)
- **12** Confused orchestra carries the load. (9)
- **14** Broad-shouldered **24 down**. (5)
- **16** Samson's nemesis cut down to size by chef. (5)
- **18** Half of Bond's car found in Birmingham! (5)
- **19** Chaos caused by a single laugh and half-baked singing performance? (5)
- **21** Savages a hundred rules! (5)
- **24** Haggis and a dash of lime, the ingredients for an epic story. (9)
- **25** Revises some edicts. (5)
- **27** English disease sounds like it'll be around for ages. (6)
- **28** Seagoing butterfly (7)
- **29** Drunken smooch in ancient Iraq! (4)
- **30** North-eastern gents hoe raked up ancient monument (10)

Down

- **2** Pictures of Led Zeppelin found in the Stone Age? (4, 3)
- **3** Possessed drama school? Could be the ghost of Stamford Bridge... (7)
- **4** Endless memory? Then no need for this! (4)
- **6** A South African ritual? It's a fair nation. (9)
- **7** Versatile software used to build houses. (5)
- **10** Insect found in a public house by sozzled DI. (5)
- **12** Russian caused confused quest (7)
- **13** Retired with cry of pain for a repair? (7)
- **14** Burnt remains at the end of big party. (3)
- **15** Palaeolithic flint found at the French museum by superman's g-girlfriend? (9)
- **17** Archaeological treasure in broadsheet (3)
- **20** Band in violent skirmish. (5)
- **22** Un-diluted crazy technophobe.(6)
- **23** Most of internet agent disinterred at Yorkshire cemetery. (3, 4)
- **24** Great smell, like 1? (5)
- **26** Lazy mispronunciation of poetry (4)

Set by TIME

Finished or stuck? [Here is the solution.](#)

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Who works in digital archaeology?

Stuart Jeffery, ADS
and
Kenny Aitchison, IfA

The Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) have been producing a critical labour market intelligence document, *Profiling the Profession* on a regular basis since 1999. The third edition has just been released, now as part of a larger project called 'Discovering the Archaeologists of Europe' which gathers data from twelve European countries. This latest edition offers us an opportunity to look at the changes over the last decade with regard to who is working in archaeology whose roles are specifically related to information technology.

The role of 'Computing Officer' is defined in the profiling the profession methodology as covering a number of job titles which include words such as 'IT', 'geomatics' and 'data'. The number of 'Computer Officer' roles has risen extensively from 1999 to 2008 with an increase from 12 to 43 (see Figure 1.) This is a far greater increase than the increase in the number of archaeologists in general, representing an increase of from 0.5% of the total in 1999 to 0.8% in 2003 and 1.6% in 2008 (the total number of 'all archaeologists' for whom detailed data was recorded for each year was 2132, 2280, 2650 respectively). This increase should not be unexpected given the ever increasing adoption of digital technologies into archaeological practice as well as the need to manage the computer systems of small and medium sized archaeological businesses. In fact in 2003 74% of responding organisations identified information technology as a skills gap. Interestingly, this skills shortage is identified as a 'non-archaeological' skills gap, possibly highlighting an attitude that some level of information technology skills are still not seen as core to the archaeological skill set and even where the handling of archaeological data, is not necessarily seen as a specifically archaeological task. This is at odds with the growing recognition of archaeological informatics as one of the range of vital specialisms that constitute the discipline.

Figure 1: *The number of Archaeological Computing Officers in the UK.*

It should also be borne in mind that it is also likely that in addition to the increase in 'Computing Officers' roles that information technology skills have in fact continued to be garnered by archaeologists that see themselves primarily falling under other roles. This is attested to by the fall in the number identifying an IT skills gap from 74% in 2003 to 68% in 2008, although this is obviously still a very wide spread gap.

From a digital preservation point of view it is not clear that this increase in 'Computing Officers' is necessarily matched by an increased in a general awareness in approaches to archiving of digital data as opposed to its generation and manipulation. This is perhaps indicated by the actual fall in the number of people employed in the 'Archives Officer' role, in 2003 there were 20 full or part-time individuals in this role, but in 2008 there was only 18 (no figures were gathered in 1999).

Figure 2: *Average salaries, Computing Officers in dark purple, average in blue.*

Further examination of the statistics related to the 'Computing Officer' role also highlights some very positive changes in the role since 1999. Figure 2 shows the average salaries for the categories 'All Archaeologists' and 'Computing Officer'. In 1999 'Computing Officers' lagged behind the average, but by 2003 had managed to overtake their colleagues, further consolidating their advantage in 2008. Figure 3 shows the relative numbers of male and female archaeologists in the role, by 2008 the gender balance was nearer the ideal at 54%(M) to 46%(F) which compares favourably with the average. 59%(M), 41%(F).

All the above data are drawn from the *Profiling the Profession 2007-08* document, available from the IfA at the URL below, which provides many more fascinating insights into the archaeological labour market than can be given here. This includes, detailed confirmation of what many archaeologists have felt to be true for years i.e. that in comparison to the general work force, archaeologists are better qualified, but worse paid than the average, as well as being significantly less diverse.

Figure 3: *Computer Officers by gender, green is male, blue is female.*

Archaeology Labour Market Intelligence, *Profiling the Profession 2007-08* (PDF):

http://www.archaeologists.net/modules/icontent/inPages/docs/lmi%200708/Archaeology_LMI_report_colour.pdf (6.0Mb).

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Nuts and Bolts at the ADS.

**Tony Austin,
ADS Systems Manager**

Are you the kind of user who actually wonders what kind of machinery is used to magic up all the ADS data to your desktop? If so, read on as our systems manager gives another instalment of his occasional series on the hi-tech nitty-gritty at the ADS.

The Arts and Humanities Data Service (AHDS) provided off site data storage to various data centres including the ADS. Following the unfortunate demise of the AHDS (see previous issues and the Director's Foreword) the ADS needed to locate a new off site deep storage facility. Following negotiations with the UK Data Archive (UKDA) based at the University of Essex the ADS now has a dedicated 3.3 TB server hosted in Essex. The UKDA provide support including regular tape backup. An initial agreement is for a three year period with options to renew.

Data is regularly synchronised from local storage in York to the remote server in Essex using SSH (Secure Shell) tunnelling which employs sophisticated encryption during the transfer. Synchronisation software is then used to compare source and destination copies to ensure the success of a transfer. The existence of identical copies of ADS data in geographically remote locations should allow efficient recovery from all but the most extreme of disasters!

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From heathland to hi-tech.

**Kate Sharpe (pictured), NADRAP
and
Catherine Hardman, ADS Collections Development Manager**

Amongst the outcrops and boulders of northern England keen eyes may spot an array of mysterious symbols carved into the rock surfaces. These curious marks vary from simple, circular hollows known as 'cups' to more complex patterns with cups, rings, and intertwining grooves. Many are in spectacular, elevated locations with extensive views but some are also found on monuments such as standing stones and stone circles, or within burial mounds. The carvings were made by Neolithic and Early Bronze Age people between 3500 and 6000 years ago. The original meaning of the symbols is now lost but they provide a unique personal link with our prehistoric ancestors.

Since 1999, English Heritage has been developing a strategy for the management and understanding of rock art in England. A review of rock art studies was commissioned from Bournemouth University and University College London, and the resulting report set out six proposals for improving the current state of British rock art. These formed the basis for English Heritage's Rock Art Management, Access, Study & Education Strategy (RAMASES), which provided a framework for directing future work on rock art. The first of these proposals recommended the development of a national database of all known rock carvings in England. The Northumberland and Durham Rock Art Pilot Project (NADRAP) was conceived in 2000 and managed by Northumberland and Durham County Councils with funding from English Heritage. It was developed as a pilot for the creation of a standardised recording strategy and rock art archive that would be publicly accessible on line. The project ran for five years and involved around 100 volunteers. New recording methods were developed and over 1500 rock art panels were captured using a variety of approaches including photography and photogrammetry. The current condition of each panel was assessed and potential threats also noted. This information will help heritage managers make informed decisions about conserving and managing the rock panels for the future. A number of specialist studies were also undertaken, including landscape surveys, an analysis of sandstone weathering, and the use of laser scanning for monitoring erosion.

These fascinating carvings are threatened by a combination of human and natural factors; many have already weathered away or been lost to activities such as quarrying. There is a continuing need to record and conserve these ancient marks so they can be studied and enjoyed by future generations. England's Rock Art database (ERA) is a major step towards that goal. ERA currently covers the counties of Northumberland and County Durham, which both have major concentrations of rock art. It is intended that it will one day provide a record for all of England's rock art.

Volunteers at work recording the Morwick Rock Shelter site, Northumberland. (Image: NADRAP).

The online database provide numerous ways of searching for specific rock arts sites including sophisticated map searches and a highly innovative interface that allows the user to search by motif. For example, the researcher can select the following motifs from a gallery:

and the resulting search will return sites where these motifs are known to occur. This searchable database is a significant new research resource for all archaeologists.

As well as lots of useful information on how to find out more about rock art and extensive image galleries of some of the most exciting rock art sites, motifs and landscapes. For the very young researcher the site also holds spot the difference games and a great fun "chisel your own panel" rock art game for everyone to enjoy.

England's Rock Art: <http://www.archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/era/>.

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Staff Update

Gary Nobles, our second IFA/HLF bursary placement, finished in March this year. We are happy to report that Gary is continuing to take full advantage of the range of skills he developed during his time with us and has recently been appointed as SMR assistant at Gloucester County Council.

Long serving ADS Curatorial Officer Jen Mitcham is currently on maternity leave and we are very pleased to welcome Ray Moore to the team to cover her post from August this year. Ray, originally from the Isle of Man, studied archaeology at Lampeter and Liverpool before researching for his PhD on Viking Age Isle of Man at the University of York. His research explored some sophisticated reflexive approaches to GIS and the presentation of multi-layered narratives via multi-media web platforms. However, he is currently concentrating on improving his web development skills here at the ADS. His first archive, Rill Cove Find Recording Project (by Kevin Camidge) has already been completed and released. The principal aim of the project was to produce a record of the objects recovered from the protected wreck site between 1976 and 1992 and the archive features documentation, an image gallery and a downloadable database..

Rill Cove: http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/resources.html?rill_ch_2008.

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