Director's Foreword

Julian Richards

Professor Julian Richards
ADS Director

Welcome to the 23rd Edition of ADS News. The first half of 2009 has continued to offer a number of exciting opportunities and challenges. Work has continued apace on many existing projects and there has been the addition of a few new ones to our broad portfolio. In particular, this issue headlines on the exciting plans for a complete update and redesign of our highly successful and much used Guides to Good Practice series. This work was briefly mentioned in my last Director's Foreword, but since then, not only has it has been formalised, but work has in fact got underway under the editorship of Kieron Niven. Since their original completion in 2003, these guides, which cover a range of topics from GIS to Digital Fieldwork Archives and from VR to Geophysics, have become a major resource in archaeology and are highly thought of around the world. Indeed it is this international dimension that has facilitated the much anticipated updating work on the guides, with international funding and partners from the USA and Europe participating in the production process and giving us the benefit of their particular national perspectives. For the full story see the article on Page 5.

Also in this issue we present the usual round up of the latest archive releases and of the ADS's work in European projects as well as the regular insight into the archives that are staff favourites. One project discussed in this issue that will be of particular interest to readers who curate, host or deliver archaeological information is an update on the progress of the HEIRNET registry which allows all types of cultural heritage data, from web sites to full blown web services, to be discoverable from a single source. This will greatly enhance the opportunities for the meaningful combination, cross searching and aggregation of numerous data sets. Although the registry is a relatively small project for HEIRNET itself, it is likely to a have a big impact on archaeological data management practice and ultimately on archaeological research.

Finally on Page 7, there is a feature tantalisingly called 'The Shape of Things to Come' this contains the first public details of the ADS's mysteriously named 'RedSquid' project. This project has seen a root and branch overhaul of some of the ADS's most important information management, search and dissemination mechanisms. For regular users the most obvious result of this project will be the launch of the redesigned ADS website, including the updated ArchSearch mechanism. This new site will be released via a public 'Beta' testing phase shortly after the publication of this issue and all users are encouraged to take up the forthcoming invitation to register as a 'Beta' tester for the new site, it's a great opportunity to tell us what would be most useful to you as well as checking out the site's exciting new features.

Red Squid logo

The Shape of Things to Come

Stuart Jeffery, User Services Manager
and
Stewart Waller, Application Developer

Stuart Jeffrey and Stewart Waller give the first insight into a major ADS project to update systems and to redesign the ADS website to refelect...

Over the last decade the ADS website has undergone some significant changes in design. However, the last eighteen months have seen an unprecedented level of activity as ADS development and technical staff are hard at work delivering the cryptically named 'Project RedSquid'. This has involved a root and branch reworking of many of the ADS's most important internal systems. Most particularly it has entailed the adoption of a service oriented architecture, notably using web services, the rationalisation and de-duplication of internal data sources, and the complete reworking of internal and external searches. Although many of theses changes are quite radical, it should be stressed that this project has had no direct impact on ADS systems relating to digital preservation and the long term security of data deposited with us. RedSquid is much more focussed on how people find, access and use the significant volumes of archaeological data we hold as well as in adding value, via sophisticated search mechanisms, to the range of monument inventories and external data sources that we already make cross searchable.

Red Squid logo

Whilst some of these changes may sound dry and technical to many, they will have a very significant impact on how the vast majority of users actually interact with the ADS. The redesign of the ADS website, itself a major challenge given the scale of the site and the volume of material, incorporates a number of new features and approaches that will enhance both the users experience and their ability to access resources for research.

The next issue of *ADS News 24*, due in the autumn, is scheduled to be a special edition entirely dedicated to the launch of the new website and the ADS's new online visual identity. That issue will contain in-depth coverage of all the new features of the website. Here we only have space for a taster of both what the web site will look like, and more importantly, what it can do.

The most obvious change is in the design and visual identity of the website. All our valuable content remains in place, and although there has been a few modifications to the structure of the site, and it will have a new URL, existing links to the ADS website will continue to work. This means that links to pages offering advice and information as well as archives will continue to work without the need for linking sites to update their web pages immediately.

ArchSearch, the ADS cross-searching mechanism has undergone a major revamp, rolling out to service a novel technology for archaeological searches called faceted classification. First trailed at the ADS in 2004, this technology offers significant advantages over more traditional 'type and hope' search boxes, not least an intuitive clickable interface. For more details on faceted classification see the Archaeotools project webpage (URL below). The updated Archsearch also includes a greatly enhanced geospatial interface that allows users to select areas of interest as well as displaying their results on a range of openly available mapping bases.

Red Squid logo

Another major enhancement to the web site is the ability for users to register as an ADS user and to access their own ADS workspace 'myADS'. This workspace will offer the ability to save ArchSearch searches for future use, to bookmark ADS pages with notes, to review your own usage history, download results sets in formats such as MIDAS XML and KML and to tailor elements of the websites design and feel to their own taste. Registering will also allow users to select their news and email alerts service to subjects of specific archaeological interest to themselves.

Clearly the release of these new features is an important event for us, therefore we want to be very careful that we get things just right. In order to do this we intend to roll out various elements of this project incrementally allowing for user testing and feedback at each stage.

The first stage of the launch will be a 'Beta' test version of the site on which all ADS users can register to access, experiment with and, hopefully, give us feed back on. It goes without saying that, in the meantime the existing site will continue to function as usual. At the ADS we are looking forward to launching the test site, and getting user feedback, so if you want to take part, but are not on our email list, now would be a good time to sign up.

ADS-ALL email list: http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/ads-all.html.

Archaeotools: http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/archaeotools/.

Problems viewing this page? Here's a list of known or recurring problems and how to fix them
Archaeology Data Service: homepage © ADS 1996-2009 Edited by Ray Moore, email Thursday, 20th August 2009
Cite only: http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/newsletter/issue23/index.html for this page

Staff Update

In May we were very pleased to welcome back Curatorial Officer Jen Mitcham who has been on maternity leave. Jen is a key member of staff with special responsibility for maintaining the OASIS system.

Jen MitchamJen also has a particular interest in the ADS's policy and technical approaches to digital preservation. Jen has returned to the ADS on a part time basis to allow her to make the most of her new arrival.

We are also pleased to report that Ray Moore, who joined our team to cover Jen's post while she was on maternity leave from August last year, will continue his work as an ADS curatorial officer. As reported in the last issue of ADS, Ray has been researching for a PhD on Viking Age Isle of Man at the University of York. This has now been awarded and he will graduate in early 2010, so congratulations are due to Ray for this achievement.

Finally, as reported elsewhere in this issue, Kieron Niven, a curatorial officer of longstanding has taken over as editor of our new updated Guides to Good Practice series. For full details see Page 5.

Problems viewing this page? Here's a list of known or recurring problems and how to fix them
Archaeology Data Service: homepage © ADS 1996-2009 Edited by Ray Moore, email Thursday, 20th August 2009
Cite only: http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/newsletter/issue23/index.html for this page

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.

Wangford microlith and Reculver hand-axe. Painted by B.O. Wymer c.1955 from the Wymer Archive

One of the most intriguing archives ever released by the ADS is the **J. J. Wymer Archive**. This comprises a fascinating collection of notes and images from one of the giants of British Palaeolithic archaeology. The Wymer Archive Project arose out of a perceived threat to Dr John Wymer's personal archive following his death early in 2006. Considered to be a unique record of British Palaeolithic archaeology and including his Field Note Books (1949-2004), it is also a tremendous source of images of archaeology and archaeologists at work from the middle of the last century. (See also the Collection Highlights) http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/resources.html?wymer_eh_2008.

The last few months has also seen the release of two fantastic resources from Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA). The first to be released was **The eastern cemetery of Roman London: excavations 1983-1990**. It covers archaeological excavations conducted between 1983 and 1990 at different sites within an area covering about 12ha in the modern London Borough of Tower Hamlets, to the east of the City of London, which produced evidence for a large Roman cemetery. During these excavations 136 cremation burials and 550 inhumation burials were recorded. This archive contains the extensive and detailed reports from this important site. http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/archive/romcem_eh_2009/

The second archive resource from MOLA is **The Cluniac priory and abbey of St Saviour Bermondsey**, Surrey: excavations 1984-95. This is centred on the site of the Cluniac priory and later abbey of St Saviour Bermondsey. The site, formerly in Surrey and now part of the London Borough of Southwark, is a Scheduled Ancient Monument. Like the eastern cemetery project above, important parts of the digital archive are being made available through ADS as part of the English Heritage Rescue of Complete Archaeological Projects (RECAP) to ensure continued access for researchers. http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/archive/stsaviour_eh_2009/

The Beaker round barrow at West Cotton, Raunds. Photograph taken from the Nene Valley: Archaeological and Environmental Synthesis archive.

The Beaker round barrow at West Cotton, Raunds.
Photo: Northamptonshire Archaeology.

Also of note is the Nene Valley: Archaeological and Environmental Synthesis, Northamptonshire Archaeology and Exeter University. The Nene Valley has been subjected to extensive mineral extraction over the years. This resulted in many large and small excavations that have produced large bodies of environmental data. When combined with the complete mapping of the crop mark data this makes the archaeological data for the Nene Valley unusually extensive. This project was designed to present the evidence of the character of the relationship between the environmental and archaeological record and variations in the watertable for the Nene Valley from its source in Northamptonshire to Peterborough. http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/archive/nenevalley_eh_2009/

Heirnet logo

Work has continued on the HEIRNET registry, first mentioned in ADS News Issue 20. Whilst the register itself has continued to act as a valuable resource for recording information on all manner of historic environment information resources, the need for a more sophisticated register for web services was acknowledged as far back as 2007. A register capable of holding technical information on web services (in addition to web sites, RSS feeds or Z39.50 services etc.) was identified as a desirable outcome from the HEIRNET 'Data Sans Frontières' conference held at the British Museum. This register will act as a central

point of discovery, and specification, for all historic environment web services that seek a wider audience, whether simply by user access or by 'mashing-up' or aggregating with other appropriate services.

The good news is that the new registry will be demonstrated to the next HEIRNET meeting scheduled for July and (subject to approval) will be released and promoted to the wider community shortly thereafter.

HEIRNET: http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/heirnet/index.cfm

Problems viewing this page? Here's a list of known or recurring problems and how to fix them
Archaeology Data Service: homepage © ADS 1996-2009 Edited by Ray Moore, email Thursday, 19th August 2009
Cite only: http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/newsletter/issue23/index.html for this page

Collection Highlights

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

An archive from the archives

Ray Moore

Ray Moore,
ADS Curatorial Officer

The Henry MJ Underhill Archive, from Oxford University's Institute of Archaeology is a collection of magic lanternslides that were used to illustrate a series of unpublished lectures given by Henry Underhill between 1895 and 1907. What these pictures implicitly illustrate is the nature of the archaeological eye during the late nineteenth century, a time when the discipline was making its first tentative steps from an antiquarian pastime to an academic subject in its own right. Yet, Underhill's intellectual development seems to run somewhat contrary to the development of the archaeological discipline, after an interest in the natural sciences his attention was switched to ethnography and folklore, but it was this same mix of science and art that formed the foundation the discipline.

The slides implicitly testify to wider changes in the approach to antiquity at this time, showing many of the core techniques that form the key elements of modern representation of the past. Here are the maps with cardinal directions, the plans with appropriate scale, all conceived with the objective eye. This apparent tension between objective and subjective is reiterated by Underhill's use of the latest cutting edge technology, photography, to depict some of the oldest remains in the country. As if to augment this scientism the slides are largely devoid of people; yet at the same time the human presence itself is pervasive - buildings, the ploughing, the telegraph wire etc. - all representative of ongoing human endeavour. Also evident is an inherent tension between the past and present. Perhaps because they are devoid of human figures, the slides prescribe a somewhat mythological status to the remains they illustrate, as if they somehow spontaneously appeared, harking back to the disciplines origin, and Underhill's original interest, in folklore. There is also a place within the collection for that standard of modern archaeological discourse, the reconstruction photograph, or as Underhill calls it a 'restoration'. Also apparent within the working photographs, which are the basis for the hand-painted lanternslides and included in the collection, is the rehearsed and somewhat manicured composition that is characteristic of modern archaeology. If one thing is learnt from these slides it is that while archaeology continues to develop with the addition of new technologies and methodologies, the same essential themes are ever present.

The archive interface is uncomplicated and uncluttered, comprising a list of thumbnails arranged in discrete subject groupings that reflect the lectures, and it is nice to see that the authors have made the content rather than the technology the central theme of the deposit.

THE UNDERHILL ARCHIVE: http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/resources.html?underhill_na_2004.

The Palaeolithic in the 21st Century

Tim Evans

Tim Evans,
ADS Curatorial Officer

While an undergraduate at the very end of the last century, a generous friend gave me a second-hand copy of John Wymer's 1968 classic 'The Lower Palaeolithic Archaeology of Britain'. The volume with its abundance of catalogues, drawings and photographs was, and still is a much-loved companion. Within a few years I had gained the resources to purchase (albeit again second hand!) Wymer's seminal 1999 work 'The Lower Palaeolithic Occupation of Britain', the key reference work in Palaeolithic studies in the UK. Fast-forward a few years and I find myself looking at some more of Wymer's drawings, this time on a computer screen courtesy of one of the more recent additions to the ADS collections, the J.J. Wymer archive.

John Wymer

This forms the first part of a project commissioned by English Heritage through the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF) to secure the survival of Wymer's personal archive. As part of the development of the archive, and in order to disseminate to public and professional audiences the full benefits of knowledge gained through past work in advance of aggregates extraction, John Wymer's Field Note Books (spanning 1949-2004) have been digitised and presented via the ADS website. The ADS interface presents the eight volumes in an 'e-book' fashion, allowing the user to flick through as if they were reading the real thing at their desk at home. In addition, and because the text on each page has been recorded in an accompanying database, the user can enter their own search terms to look for a particular site, artefact or even person.

The notebooks themselves contain a mixture of hand-written notes, drawings, and photographs, with the photographs in particular providing a unique personal touch (look out for early photos of famous archaeologists!). I'm sure it will be of great use to scholars of early prehistory or just those with an interest in the working methods of one of the most important British archaeologists of recent years. Users may like to note that the second part of the archive project - encompassing Wymer's card index, the basis of the English Rivers Palaeolithic Project (TERPS) - will be released as a digital archive via the ADS later this summer.

However, don't stop there! If you follow the link at the top of the page you'll navigate to the homepage of all the Aggregates Levy archives held by the ADS (an unlucky 111 at the time of writing!). Because of the intrinsic quaternary nature of river gravels there is a substantial number of Palaeolithic based archives contained within. All of these, unsurprisingly, build on and look to enhance Wymer's work by creating a research and management strategy for the Palaeolithic resource in Southern Britain. My favourites from this category include: the Palaeolithic Rivers of Southwest Britain or PRoSWEB project and the Palaeolithic Archaeology of the Sussex/Hampshire Coastal Corridor.

Handaxe from Broom - Dorset and Devon (from the PRoSWEB archive)

The former synthesises the archaeological evidence for the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic occupation of Southwest Britain and encompassed desktop resource assessment and geoarchaeological fieldwork. The digital archive contains a small library of reports and technical appendices detailing fieldwork such as environmental sampling and scientific dating, an image gallery. It also contains a database of find spots and museum collections that combines data derived from the Southern Rivers Palaeolithic Project (the pre-cursor to TERPS) with new find spots identified through this project. The latter project sought to identify and characterise the Palaeolithic archaeology in the study area through the creation of a GIS. The project archive contains this GIS as well as a lengthy report that helped define the differing Palaeolithic archaeological potential for the study region and similar to PRoSWEB, builds on recent and ongoing projects (such as the SRPP) in order to increase our collective knowledge. Although these two projects may not immediately stand out as important, when viewed together - and with the other ALSF Palaeolithic archives - they form a significant corpus of information for the period and an important resource for industry and researchers.

When viewed alongside Wymer's notebooks, they also highlight how archaeology in the UK has fundamentally changed over the last 60 years; from the black and white photos of field visits and pre-health and safety excavations to the more recent commercially led climate of hardhats, management plans and GIS. However, I'm glad to say that all archives can sit side by side, and are accessible at the click of a button.

THE J.J. WYMER ARCHIVE: http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/resources.html?wymer_eh_2008.

THE PRoSWEB ARCHIVE: http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/resources.html?proswb_eh_2007.

PALAEOLITHIC ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE SUSSEX/HAMPSHIRE COASTAL CORRIDOR:
http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/resources.html?pashcc_eh_2007.

Crossword No.5 - Solution

[Return to Crossword](#)

Crossword Number 5

CONGRATULATIONS to Dr Gina Muskett of the World Museum, Liverpool who wins this months prize.

Set by CRYPTARCH

Crossword No. 5

Across

1. To shout on is rude at Anglo-Saxon burial site. (6,3)
8. Borat is one apparently. (6)
9. Disembarks on a promontory for a form of archaeology. (9)
10. Is this the real you? (3)
11. Final bit above the lobe may inspire deep affection. (6)
12. King puts law before right. (5)
14. Crude type of drum.(3)
15. Isotopes just won't agree on this gathering. (4)
17. The wind that blows no good? (3)
18. Gong holds nothing to woodwind instrument. (4)
21. Seabird found hiding amongst geisha girls. (4)
22. Inland fires may signal a Holy Island. (11)
25. Type of cap seen associated with the north. (3)
27. Confuse, we hear, 365 times a year! (4)
28. To dehydrate? (**5** found here). (10)
29. Orcadian tomb found distressed, shame and woe. (8)
30. A heavenly body? (5)

Down

1. Europe's biggest mound may perhaps half hide 'Surly Bill'. (7,4)
2. Manx Parliament troubles Lady and the North Western leaders (7)
3. Bernini cheekily holds a place for his
4. Gaulish settlement yields Opium mixed with Palladium. (7)
5. Rosemary may be a recipe for (nautical) disaster. (4,4)
6. Clovis point dating is controversially political eh?(11)
7. Ooh…long cry about the order of events. (10)
13. What's discarded may interest the archaeologist. (7)
16. What a door is when its not. (4)
19. A kind of mythical creature that splits itself in half. (3)
20. Closely examine any seal that's been broken. (7)
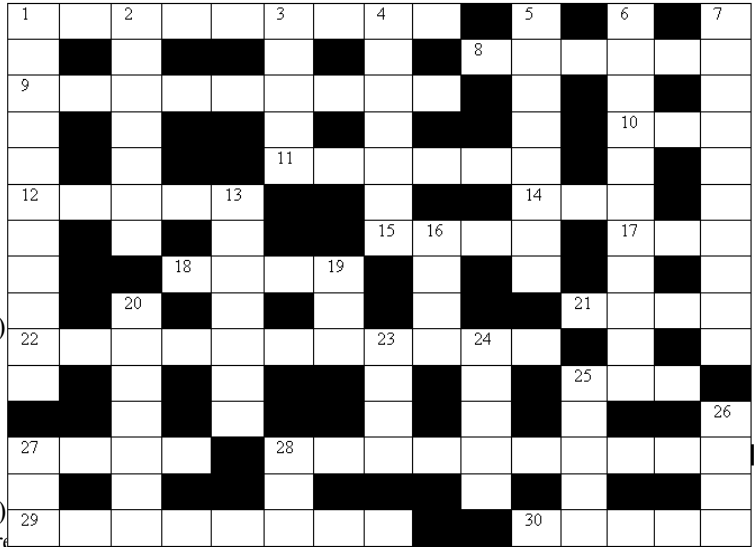**23.** A girl easily distracted to begin with, matured. (4)
24. Northern area produces mother of pearl. (5)
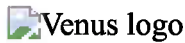**25.** I tear roughly and make angry (5)
26. Metallic minerals found in core samples (4)
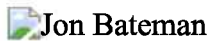**27.** Mad, deranged, hold back! (3)
**28.** The Bureau for Alien Affairs trapped a spaceship. (3)

Set by Cryptarch

Venus logo

European Project Update

Jon Bateman

Jon Bateman,
ADS Curatorial Officer

This summer sees the conclusion of one of the ADS's most challenging projects. Funded by the European Union under the Sixth Framework Programme the Virtual Exploration of Underwater Sites (VENUS) project began in 2006 and various phases of the project have been reported on in earlier issues of ADS News. These phases included ADS staff working on site with an international team of maritime archaeologists and underwater surveyors in locations such as Marseille in France and Sesimbra in Portugal.

Amphora on the Port-Miou C wreck, Marseille (top), and the wreck site viewed from the submarine
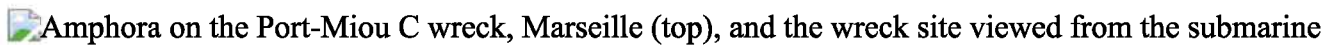
At the core of the project was the development of new recording techniques for automatically surveying bathymetry and undertaking photogrammetry of underwater sites. It also explored the production of sophisticated three dimensional representations of them that can be interrogated by an expert audience as well as being explored by a wider public audience. These processes, whilst interesting in themselves, will ultimately have little meaning in the long term unless their digital outputs can be captured, made sustainable and preserved over time.

Building on work carried out by the ADS with English Heritage (the 'Big Data project' see ADS News Issue 17) the VENUS project enabled an in depth look at some of the problems specific to maritime archaeology data format as well as with VR formats (often involving proprietary software) and those associated simply with large volumes of data. It would not be right to say that all potential problems presented by these highly complex datasets and their convoluted data management processes have been resolved. However, the guide to maritime archaeology data and the exemplar archive (from the dive at a wreck in Port-Miou, near Marseille) represent a significant step forward in integrating these problematic and voluminous datasets into conventional digital archiving strategies such as the OAIS reference model.

VENUS: http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/venus/

Problems viewing this page? Here's a list of known or recurring problems and how to fix them
Archaeology Data Service: homepage © ADS 1996-2009 Edited by Ray Moore, email Thursday, 20th August 2009
Cite only: http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/newsletter/issue23/index.html for this page

ADS Guides to Good Practice get a major update.

Guides to Good Practice logo

The much used ADS Guides to Good Practice (G2GP) are being enhanced with new and updated content.

Kieron Niven

**Kieron Niven,
Editor, Guides to Good Practice.**

From January of this year, the ADS began work on a collaborative two-year project to revise and develop our series of Guides to Good Practice. The current set of six ADS guides, still freely available from our website, were published between 1998 and 2002 with the aim of providing guidelines for creating, documenting and archiving digital resources commonly produced by archaeological projects. However, due to rapid developments over the last few years both in computing and archaeology, the time has now come to revisit these guides and to revise and expand them where necessary.

The new guides project aims to not only encompass important revisions to the existing six ADS Guides to Good Practice but will also see the development of a number of entirely new documents covering areas such as marine and terrestrial remote scanning, GPS, digital audio and digital video. Where possible, previous authors have been asked to revise their existing content and new authors, from both Europe and the US, have been enlisted to contribute to the development of the new guides covering new themes and areas.

Digital Antiquity

Remora 2000 submersible being launched

The project to develop the Guides has largely come about as a result of the involvement of the ADS with Digital Antiquity. Digital Antiquity is a US based initiative, funded by the Mellon Foundation, with the aim of creating "a collaborative organization devoted to enhancing preservation and access to digital records of archaeological investigations". As a result of our involvement in this project a major aim of the revised guides is to develop the basis for workflows for the creation of digital datasets that can be effectively archived both by Digital Antiquity's tDAR repository in the US and by the ADS in the UK.

Involvement in the Digital Antiquity project has also meant that our revised Guides to Good Practice can, and in fact need to, extend their scope to include variations in data creation and usage beyond those currently practiced in the UK. In order to incorporate US variations, the development of the new guides will involve close collaboration with teams in the US at both the University of Arkansas and Arizona State University, both of whom are major partners in Digital Antiquity.

In addition to the Digital Antiquity project, other ADS projects are also planned to feed into the revision and development of the new guides. ADS involvement in the European VENUS project has already resulted in a new guide focussing on marine remote scanning and photogrammetry. This guide is currently available via the VENUS project page on the ADS website and will form the basis for an expanded marine guide to be released alongside our other new Guides to Good Practice.

In addition, the incorporation of findings from the 2006 ADS Big Data project, together with the revision of the existing Guide to Good Practice on aerial photography and terrestrial remote sensing, will see a significant contribution to the new set of guides from English Heritage funded projects.

Wiki

As a direct result of the new guides being contributed to by a wide range of authors from a number of different countries, the Guides to Good Practice are being created, revised and expanded within a wiki environment as a purely online set of publications. The use of such collaborative technology is hoped to make the creation and revision of the new guides a faster and more immediate process which will also allow contributions from a range of people at a number of different levels. It is also hoped that the use of wiki technology will also make any future major revisions a far easier process.

At present the new Guides to Good Practice are currently under development but will be publicly available from January 2011.

GUIDES TO GOOD PRACTICE (current versions): http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/goodguides/g2gp.html

DIGITAL ANTIQUITY AND tDAR :http://www.digitalantiquity.org/.

http://www.tdar.org/.

Problems viewing this page? Here's a list of known or recurring problems and how to fix them
Archaeology Data Service: homepage © ADS 1996-2009 Edited by Ray Moore, email Thursday, 20th August 2009
Cite only: http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/newsletter/issue23/index.html for this page