

A.6 What are the links to other records

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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 were developed by local government archaeology services or contracting units under an [English Heritage](#) programme that involved resource identification, database development and the preparation of a management strategy, this is now the responsibility of [Historic England](#). 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, with an agreement with other HERs in the area as to who maintains the record for the town/city in

question, to avoid duplication. Additional information on UADs is available on the [Historic England 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. 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 Government through Cadw (Wales) or Historic Environment 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 palaeo-environmental sites as monuments. In Scotland there is the Scottish Wetlands Archaeological Database, commissioned by Historic Scotland, which is not yet incorporated into the HERs (<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.

Local Lists

Many local authorities create and maintain lists of local historic buildings and sites. They come in many forms and names, and can be compiled by various sources including civic societies. Local Lists are an important part of heritage protection, and should form part of a legible and coherent hierarchy of heritage assets, supporting the idea that whilst not all heritage assets are of national interest that does not mean that they are not significant in other ways. As providers of information HERs should aim to incorporate Local Lists, but must also be aware of the potential problems associated with some of these datasets, carefully considering the value of adding poor quality lists.

See [Local Listing and HERs](#) for a case study on Local Lists in Lincolnshire.

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. In Scotland, Historic Environment Scotland acts as the national repository for archaeological archives, both paper and digital. 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](#) is the focus for discussion of HER issues, and includes Historic Environment Scotland and the National Trust for Scotland, as well as local authority HERs and SMRs, and others. The four Welsh HER Managers meet regularly to discuss similar matters to their colleagues in regional HER fora in England.

Regional offices #

[Historic England](#) has established local 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 Historic England projects and programmes. The Historic England 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#

Historic England curates a wide range of information and archive collections relating to the historic environment and makes them available to the public. This includes the National Record of the Historic Environment ([NRHE](#)), a national database of monuments, buildings and maritime sites linked to a GIS system. It contains entries for over 400,000 monuments and 80,000 events. There is currently (2019) a project to devolve this information to HERs and merge the datasets, which will take place over the next 5 years.

The [Historic England Archive](#) 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.

Historic England acts as the contact point for queries concerning all designated assets on the National Heritage List for England ([NHLE](#)), including: [scheduled monuments](#), [listed buildings](#) and sites on the registers of [parks and gardens](#), and [battlefields](#). Historic England also issues a free licence to HERs to hold its copyrighted material.

Heritage Information Partnerships and the Data Standards Unit of Historic England offer advice to HERs and maintain controlled terminologies such as the [Thesaurus of Monument Types](#).

Natural England manage [SHINE](#) - the Selected Heritage Inventory for Natural England, a single, nationally consistent dataset of undesignated historic environment features from across England that could benefit from management within agri-environment schemes. The data is created by Local Authority Historic Environment Records (HERs), with each archaeological site assessed against a set of national selection criteria ([Natural England, 2013](#)). Data from each HER is merge into the national SHINE dataset which consists of over 60,000 records.

Scotland#

Historic Environment Scotland ([HES](#)) investigate and record architectural and archaeological sites and landscapes across Scotland. The National Record of the Historic Environment for Scotland 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 [RCAHMW](#) staff. Indexes to the information, including core site data, formed the RCAHMW's contribution to the [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 information in the four Regional HERs is available through the [Archwilio web site](#). The HERs also form part of the 'Extended National Database (END) Partnership' which includes the RCAHMW's records, [Cadw SAM](#) and [Listed Building](#) Records, and the National Museum Wales' ([NMW](#)) artefact records. Core data from each partner's digital records are made available through the [Historic Wales website](#).

ALGAO Specialist Committees#

Within [ALGAO:UK](#) a network of subject committees address specific areas of interest at strategic level. The [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) and twice yearly meetings. The HER Forum is chaired by one of its members and co-ordinated by Heritage Information Partnerships at Historic England. Although originally set up by English Heritage (prior to responsibility for HERs being transferred to Historic England) 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, [Historic England](#) 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: archaeologydataservice.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.

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 ([ARIADNE](#)) and HERs ([PLANARCH](#)).

Web site:

- ARIADNE: <http://ariadne-portal.dcu.gr/>