

## A.7 HERs as public information services

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## A.7 HERs as public information services#

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

### Searches and resources#

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

### Local people#

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

### Education and life-long learning#

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

### Leisure and tourism#

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

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

## **Commercial enquiries#**

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

## **Promotion and publications#**

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

## **Online access to HERs#**

Increasingly HERs are also using their collections to publish information on the World Wide Web (www) including web-enabling their databases. This may be by individual, bespoke web pages, but many HERs also have their information available through the [Heritage Gateway](#).