C.7 Event records

C.7 Event records#

This section of the manual will look at the information recorded in event records in more detail.

C.7.1 A constant feature of HER databases#

Once an event has taken place it cannot be repeated and in the same way, once an event record has been created on an HER database it should not need to be changed. Events are simply factual records of who did some work, when, where and how. However, it may be necessary to add information at a later date about the location of finds, archives or digital data produced during the event.

C.7.2 Core data standards for events#

The minimum information recommended for event records is:

- **PRN**: a number that uniquely identifies the event record in the HER
- **Name**: a descriptive name by which the event may be identified
- **Event type**: the type of work carried out during the event, for example geophysical survey
- **Grid reference**: an OS grid co-ordinate locating the event
- **Administrative Unit**: the administrative area in which the event falls, for example county/district/parish
- **Organisation**: the body responsible for undertaking work on site
- **Person**: people responsible for undertaking work on site
- **Date**: the date range when the event took place.

C.7.3 OASIS (On-line AccesS to the Index of archaeological investigationS)#

The core data standards for events as outlined in C.7.2 form the backbone of an OASIS record. (see also C.8.1)

Background#

The OASIS project aims to provide access to the large and growing body of archaeological grey literature and to make it available to researchers and teachers. OASIS is a collaborative venture between the Archaeology Data Service (ADS), Historic England, and the Archaeological Investigations Project (AIP).

From the early 1990s, English Heritage funded an annual data collection exercise to compile an index of archaeological investigations across England. The results have been published as annual hard copy volumes, *The Gazetteer of Archaeological Investigations in England*, issued as supplements to the *British and Irish Archaeological Bibliography*. An archive copy of the database which provides the information for the printed volumes published to date has been deposited

with English Heritage. English Heritage also maintains a separate database of archaeological interventions which was begun by the former RCHME in 1978 *The Excavation Index*. By 1998 this held records for over 55,000 archaeological interventions in England. Data was collected from a variety of sources, combining bibliographic recording with direct supply in the form of reports, proformas and microfilm. The scope of the Index covers both invasive and non-invasive methods of fieldwork. holding basic data on the location and results of fieldwork. From September 1998 selected fields from the Index have been available on the Internet via the ADS on-line catalogue ArchSearch (http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archsearch/), together with the related Microfilm Index.

The OASIS project was developed in response to the need to provide a single unified index to archaeological investigations, a means of accessing the associated grey literature and an online method by which the index could be maintained. A major achievement of the project was to integrate the AIP records with the Excavation Index to provide a single concorded list. The concordance programme delivered a fully unified record for archaeological interventions in England to 1998. Where a fuller electronic copy of a report is available on-line, either on the ADS server or on the web site of the contractor or HER it is possible to include the URL of the resource as a bibliographic reference. As curators begin to require deposition of digital reports and as they make them available on the Internet it will be possible to build up an online virtual library of grey literature, directly linked from the index.

OASIS also aims to use IT to ease the flow of information from those undertaking fieldwork to the wider archaeological community, while ensuring that validation and quality assurance are not lost. The current situation involves tremendous duplication of effort. OASIS aims to capture the data once, hold it in a database, and then to allow all those parties who have a legitimate interest in it to access it. An on-line web-based Data Submission Form has been created, which is being used to inform the relevant monument records of the completion of specific field or post-excavation tasks, such as the deposition of ?grey literature? reports or of archives. The report can be completed on-line to provide details of all aspects of the intervention required by the local planning authority. Once the form has been completed to the satisfaction of the contractor it is saved within the OASIS database. HERs are allowed access to the same database to participate in checking and enhancing the records on-line. It is recognised that the diversity of local practices will mean that the information flow may vary according to region and the OASIS form and database holdings module is flexible enough to accommodate the various roles required by the different organisations involved. At periodic intervals a copy of all new validated Excavation Index records will be supplied to the ADS and made available on-line via ArchSearch.

A full Scottish version has now been developed and was launched in October 2006.

HER use of the OASIS form#

An Historic Environment Record (HER) will see a list of all of the projects in their area when they log on to OASIS. The status column will tell them whether the project is ready to be validated by the HER or is still undergoing completion by the archaeological unit. In the screen shot below all the fully completed OASIS projects are hidden from view to avoid cluttering up the list. The HER can view all the data in the new project and amend and add to it as necessary. They may want to allocate an HER event number to the project in the project details section of the form for example. Once they have viewed the data they can validate it by ticking a box at the bottom of each section of the OASIS form. Once the HER has fully validated a record, an e-mail will be sent to the relevant HER informing them that the OASIS record is ready to be checked by them.

Figure 15: Example of a project summary page from the OASIS form (© Archaeology Data Service 2003).

After validation an HER may sign off the record and download the project data as XML. For more detailed instructions about how to use the OASIS form go to http://oasis.ac.uk/

HERs can promote the use of the OASIS recording form by contractors by making it a requirement in development control briefs or requesting a copy of the OASIS summary sheet within their grey literature reports. Example wording for use within a brief can be found below.

At the start of work (immediately before fieldwork commences) an OASIS online record http:// oasis.ac.uk/ must be initiated and key fields completed on Details, Location and Creators forms. All parts of the OASIS online form must be completed for submission to the HER. This should include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy should also be included with the archive).

(See also Section B)

C.7.4 A typical event record#

Figure 19 shows how an event may be recorded in an HER database (in this case Durham County Council's bespoke HER Software).

Figure 16: How an event may be recorded in an HER database (Durham County Council 2015).