

D.5 HERs and enhancement projects

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D.5 HERs and enhancement projects#

For HERs the maintenance of the basic information base from standard sources and fieldwork is a continuous process. As well as this day-to-day work, HER managers are recommended to plan enhancement projects to fill gaps and enhance the quality of their records. Such gaps in content or issues concerning quality are often identified by HER Audits (see [B.2.4](#)). In some cases the need for enhancement to comply with national standards will be considered to be so important that it is made a priority and funded from core budgets. An example of such a project can be found in Section [D.6.1](#). In other cases different strategies for record enhancement can be adopted, some involving participation in national projects and programmes, some working with other departments within local authorities, others working with local societies and specialist-interest groups.

This section aims to present examples of some types of projects and programmes that are currently collecting information about aspects of the historic environment. Some case studies of projects run by HERs are also included.

D.5.1 National projects and programmes#

At any one time, [Historic England](#), Cadw and Historic Environment Scotland may be involved in a number of projects and programmes which are developed in response to research and knowledge of the resource. Many of these involve partnerships with local authorities and others and some carry funding and offer opportunities to enhance HERs (either through work carried out in-house by HERs or from data available from the [Historic England/NMRS](#)).

Research frameworks#

A research framework may identify weaknesses in knowledge of the resource for a particular period or theme and suggest strategies for addressing the gap. They include national and regional frameworks. Regional research frameworks aim to provide an assessment of land use, settlement, environment, economy and society in a regional context and to provide a framework for curation, decision-making and research. HER enhancement might be planned in the light of a regional research framework or national thematic framework

Useful websites

Historic England: <http://www.historicengland.org.uk/research/approaches/research-principles/revise-research-strategies/>

Regional Research frameworks ? England:

East of England: <https://www.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/revise-framework-east-of-england/>

[East Midlands](#)

North East <http://www.durham.gov.uk/pages/Service.aspx?ServiceId=6666>

West Midlands <http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/historycultures/departments/caha/research/arch-research/wmrrfa/index.aspx>

[Table of current Research Frameworks in England](#)

National Research frameworks ? Wales:

<http://www.archaeoleg.org.uk/index.html>

National Research frameworks ? Scotland:

ScARF - The Scottish Archaeological Research Framework - <http://www.scottishheritagehub.com/>

Regional Research frameworks ? Scotland:

[North East Scotland Regional Research Framework](#)

[Argyll Archaeological Research Framework](#) - in development

South East Scotland Archaeological Research Framework (SESARF)- in development

National Mapping Programme (NMP) England#

This is a long-term programme to map the archaeological resource known from aerial photography and to provide a more reliable framework for classifying and dating sites.

Monuments Protection Programme (MPP) England#

This was a site-evaluation programme which added to the schedule of nationally important sites and to revised, confirmed or (in some cases) de-scheduled existing sites.

Burgh surveys Scotland#

Historic Scotland commissioned the Burgh surveys series. The main objective of the Burgh surveys was to identify those areas, which are of archaeological and historic interest and require sensitive treatment in the event of proposed development. However the series is also of more general interest in that it examines the geography and topography of each town, its historic buildings and the origins of its street names.

Intensive and extensive urban strategies#

This programme of intensive and extensive archaeological surveys aims to provide up-to-date assessments of the surviving resource in urban areas and to improve databases. The intensive

urban surveys, covering major historic towns and cities, are leading directly to the creation of Urban Archaeological Databases (UADs). The information derived from extensive surveys, covering the smaller historic towns of England (with similar surveys to also cover major conurbations) is held within the local HER. A growing number of the town assessment reports from the extensive surveys are appearing on the ADS web site (see list at <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/>).

Historic landscape characterisation (HLC) England#

This programme aims to inform landscape conservation strategies in the context of planning and agricultural policies (see also [E.5](#)). One aim is to help landowners to commission historic landscape surveys to inform 'whole farm management plans' under the Countryside Stewardship (now Environmental Stewardship) and Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) programmes of Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). HLC can also provide useful input to [DEFRA's Environmental Stewardship Entry Level and Higher Level Schemes](#).

Historic Landscape Characterisation Wales#

Historic landscape characterisation in Wales has taken a different form to that in England, but its aims are similar in informing landscape planning agri-environment schemes such as Glastir. Information about the mechanics of the HLC and its implementation can be seen on the Countryside Council for Wales web site at <http://www.ccg.gov.uk/landscape--wildlife/protecting-our-landscape/historic-landscapes.aspx>

Historic Land-use Assessment Scotland#

The Historic Land-use Assessment ([HLAmap](#)) is an analysis of past and present land-use maintained by Historic Environment Scotland. HLAMAP is a web-based presentation of this data that allows the user to view the data by Historic Land-use Type, Period or Category as well as by Relict Period, and to print out a report of any selected area. As with HLC in England and Wales, HLAMAP can help to inform land management initiatives such as [Rural Development Programme](#)(Scotland). (See also [E.5.11](#))

The Scottish Wetland Archaeology Database#

The Scottish Wetlands Archaeological Database (SWAD) was an Historic Scotland (HS) commissioned project designed primarily to produce a fuller understanding of the potential of Scottish wetland archaeology. As it now stands there are over 6,000 records in the database. <http://www.geo.ed.ac.uk/swad/>

The Scottish Palaeoenvironmental Archive#

A national archive (funded by Historic Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage), to serve four main purposes:

- To identify and protect from destruction sites of key scientific interest and value.
- Inform decision makers such as the government, conservation bodies, scientists.
- Enhance public awareness of palaeoenvironmental sites in Scotland.
- Help to direct research in Scotland.

<http://xweb.geos.ed.ac.uk/~ajn/spad/index.html>

D.5.2 Local authority partnerships#

Most HERs have the opportunity to enhance their information resources through partnerships with other departments within their local authorities. There are three principal forms of partnership which

are of potential benefit. These are: collaborative working with staff within corporate Information Technology sections; corporate GIS systems and interdepartmental collaborative projects to develop multimedia resources for public benefit. Another development in many authorities is the integration of archaeology, historic buildings and natural environment records.

Partnerships with corporate IT sections#

Many local authorities or national bodies have specialist IT sections. Collaboration with the specialists in these sections can help to ensure appropriate use of IT resources and input to developing specific IT aspects of HERs. An example of a collaboration between an HER and an IT section can be seen in Section [D.6.2](#).

Corporate GIS#

Many departments within local government maintain GIS layers. These normally include archaeology, Rights of Way, ecology and strategic planning and may also include minerals extraction and flood risk areas. Often this means that different spatial layers are available across a corporate network, some intended for general use by the various departments (for example OS map layers), some maintained for a specific purpose.

Multimedia#

Many HERs have good links with other information providers based in local libraries, museums, record offices and archives. All these contain information in their catalogues and accession registers that provide useful sources for enhancing HER databases. Perhaps more exciting to potential users are the photographs, historic maps and documentary archives that they hold.

In some areas, collaborative projects are creating multi-disciplinary cultural-heritage resources drawing on materials from different locations. This may involve digitisation projects to scan and capture historic maps and documents, images of sites and museums objects and associated database development about the sites, catalogues and bibliographic material. For an example of such a project see Section [D.6.2](#). or [D.6.3](#).

Integration#

In some authorities, HERS, Historic Buildings Records and, sometimes, natural environment records are being brought together. This means that a range of new information is accessible about:

- Listed buildings and conservation officers' reports
- Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) for geological and geomorphological sites
- SSSIs (for example ancient woodland and grassland, water meadows, peat-filled kettle holes, etc) also often have an historic landscape implication
- Information available from English Nature or Scottish Natural Heritage
- Sites managed by local wildlife trusts.

D.5.3 Local groups and societies#

Many local societies have programmes of research, some of which lead to the publication of site gazetteers and the deposit of materials with local HERS. Local societies may also be provided with copies of HER maps and print-outs which they update based on their knowledge. As with the national thematic recording programmes, an important consideration for HERs is the form in which information will be deposited.

Where possible, HER officers should aim to work with local societies to agree a standard recording form that incorporates the HER's core standards and reflects national data standards. Ideally,

guidance should be offered to society members on how to complete the recording forms, possibly through training days. HER officers should allow time to check the quality of information while it is being collected. In England and Scotland Local Societies have received grants to undertake archaeological projects from the Local Heritage Initiative fund, but this scheme has now come to an end. These grants have enabled local groups and HER staff to work together on enhancement projects. For an example of this see Section [D.6.2](#).

Useful Websites

Local Heritage Initiative England <http://www.lhi.org.uk/>

Local Heritage Initiative Scotland <http://www.snh.org.uk/wwc/communities/comm-grants.asp>

D.5.4 Universities#

University research excavations and fieldwork continue to be an important source of information about the historic environment. HER managers are recommended to establish good contacts with any universities that are active in their areas and, as with other fieldwork programmes, to discuss arrangements for the deposit of information and archive. HER managers may also wish to work with their university contacts to identify possible research topics for students interested in working in the local area. Liaison with the ADS may be useful as a source of information about university-based archaeology. An example of HER enhancement resulting from partnership between a university and an HER can be seen in Section [D.6.5](#).

D.5.5 National Thematic Recording Projects#

A number of thematic records have been or are being created at a national level by special interest groups. Some of these involve major programmes of fieldwork and trawls of documentary sources in response to a perceived threat to an element of a resource that is under-represented in HERs. Others have arisen in response to the interests and enthusiasms of specialist societies. Many have the potential to attract funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund because of their potential for involving members of the public as volunteer fieldworkers and researchers.

Many of these recording projects start with the collection of information from HERs [Historic England](#) and the NMR but go on to include original fieldwork and research. Most are willing to share the information that they compile with HERs, sometimes by providing digital data, record cards or reports or alternatively by publishing their results in print or on the internet. By complying with data standards (including recording metadata), these recording projects are enabling interoperability between different database systems mounted on the internet (see [B.9](#) and [D.4](#)).

An important consideration for HERs is how far they will be able to specify the format in which any information is to be deposited with them. Ideally, thematic projects would collect data in accordance with the data standards laid out in MIDAS and use the reference-data lists that make up INSCRIPTION (as well as ASPIRE in Scotland). This general principle has already been achieved for a number of projects (undertaken with collaboration from [Historic England](#), the NMRs, CBA, the MDA and ADS) which plan to offer digital data to (or have already made their data available to) to HERS, for example:

- the Defence of Britain Project: <http://www.britarch.ac.uk/projects/dob>
- Portable Antiquities Scheme: <http://www.finds.org.uk>

The Countryside Agency's Local Heritage Initiative (LHI) was a good example of a scheme that had the potential to result in new sources of information to enhance the HER. However, the LHI came to an end on 31st March 2007, when it was subsumed into the broader Heritage Lottery Fund programmes.

Special-interest groups#

A well-known feature of British life is the number of societies and special interest groups that exist around the country. Many of these have now begun to compile databases and to create records about sites of special interest to them. Although many of them have been working outside the main focus of interest of most HERs, some of their activities are increasingly becoming recognised as important. Examples include:

- the Survey of the Jewish Built Heritage <http://www.jewish-heritage-uk.org>
- the Airfield Research Group <http://www.airfield-research-group.co.uk>
- the Association for the Study and Preservation of Roman Mosaics <http://www.asprom.org>
- the Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture <http://www.crsbi.ac.uk>
- the National Inventory of War Memorials <http://www.ukniwm.org.uk/>
- the Public Monuments and Sculpture Association <http://www.pmsa.org.uk>
- the Tiles and Architectural Ceramics Society <http://www.tilesoc.org.uk>

Details of these and other projects can be found on the HEIRNET register. <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/heirnet/index.cfm>

An email discussion list exists to promote discussion and collaboration between these groups. HER managers can also use this list to promote cooperation between HERs and recording projects. <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/helps>

D.5.6 Finding out more#

HERs may benefit from using the research tools described below as a starting point to find out more about the information that is available and to help to devise enhancement projects:

- Historic England maintains a list of contacts working with national thematic projects and in special interest groups
- the BIAB provides a useful search tool
- the ADS Catalogue provides an information gateway to archives and data and is developing pointers to special-interest datasets
- the CBA website is a useful starting point for information (see also Archaeology Scotland)
- the Public Record Office can provide information about the archival network.

Useful websites:

Archaeology Data Service (ADS) <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/>

Council for British Archaeology <http://new.archaeologyuk.org/>

Archaeology Scotland <http://www.archaeologyscotland.org.uk/>

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

HEIRPORT <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/heirport/>

Society of Antiquaries Library catalogue <http://sal.ads.ahds.ac.uk/>

Heritage Lottery Fund <http://www.hlf.org.uk>

Historic England <http://www.historicengland.org.uk/>

Historic Environment Scotland <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/>

Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales <http://www.rcahmw.org.uk/>

Scottish SMR Forum <http://smrforum-scotland.org.uk>