

F.7 Developing public access and outreach

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F.7 Developing public access and outreach#

HERs have a vital role in assisting the planning process and educating the general public about the value of their local historic environment. Learning about the historic environment can have a number of positive effects: instilling feelings of collective responsibility for its conservation, enriching people's lives and increasing community identity and awareness. HERs as a resource are not as widely known as museums or libraries. Promoting the existence of the HER and demonstrating its potential to a wide audience should be a key element in the role of HER staff.

A survey for English Heritage ([Heritage Counts \(EH 2003\)](#)) highlighted that heritage organisations need to communicate better to a diverse range of audiences. 72 per cent of all people surveyed felt that more should be done to recognise the contribution made by different communities to our heritage and in an English Heritage funded MORI survey ([Attitudes Towards the Heritage \(MORI 2000\)](#)) four out of five people asked agreed that more effort should be made to make the heritage more accessible to them. This section deals with developing an HER audience through publicising the existence of the HER, making the HER relevant and intelligible to the community and physically taking information from the HER into the community. It includes a number of case studies.

This is all very timely in view of the Government agenda on social inclusion and community engagement with the built and historic environment. This was clearly set out in 2002 in a report [People and Places: Social Inclusion Policy for the Built and Historic Environment](#).

F.7.1 Audience development#

There are two key elements in developing an HER audience. Improving existing services for present users and attracting new audiences to the HER. Understanding the HER audience is vital not only to provide a suitable service to current users, but also to identify those groups under-using the resource.

Benchmark 1.3 'Research into User Profiles' recommends maintaining a register of users enquiry types, which could be analysed to identify audiences that are not being reached and need to be developed. A carefully worded questionnaire could be distributed to try to understand why certain

people do not use the HER. Feelings of exclusion, irrelevance, lack of time and access opportunities or sheer ignorance of the resource are all likely to feature and need to be overcome. HER's should consider producing a marketing plan in order to set out clearly how audiences are to be identified and targeted and the sort of methods that could be used for each audience type.

The "[Attitudes Towards the Heritage](#)" survey recommended that the heritage industry could make heritage relevant to more people, and thus develop new audiences, through working to counteract feelings of exclusion. This could be achieved through highlighting particular aspects of the heritage and consultation with local communities or active participation in specific projects. The Anglo-Sikh Heritage Trail is a good example of heritage being made relevant to a minority culture <http://www.asht.info/> through a project focussing on the material traces of that culture's heritage.

Key policy documents for the heritage sector in best practice in engaging different audiences exist in England, Scotland and Wales. In England '*Arts and Sport- Policy Action Team 10, A Report to the Social Exclusion Unit*' (PAT10) was published by DCMS in June 1999 ([DCMS 1999a](#)). In Scotland '*Creating our Future-Minding our Past; Scotland's National Cultural Strategy*' was published by the Scottish Executive in 2000. In Wales the National Assembly has produced "[A Better Wales](#)" ([National Assembly for Wales 1999](#)). The HLF have produced a useful booklet 'Audience Development Plans, Helping Your Application' that offers guidance when applying for HLF funding.

F.7.2 Promoting the HER#

In order to achieve baseline Benchmark 1.4 ([Chitty 2002](#)) English HERS should develop an outreach programme that advocates the HER and promotes its wider use. This is essential in developing new audiences and maintaining and encouraging existing audiences and should be undertaken by all HERs. The HLF may be willing to fund such activities, the EH/ALGAO document "[Unlocking Our Past](#)" (2005) gives specific guidance on applying for HLF funding for increasing public access, education and interpretation. Some HERs may have a long history of outreach activities, whilst others may be starting from a far less advanced position. Promotion can be achieved through a range of media:

Documents#

Basic outreach could be the publication of a leaflet giving details of services and opening hours. These can be elaborated upon and specific leaflets/booklets may focus on regional themes or specific monument types or archaeological periods. An alternative approach might be a newsletter based around the historic environment and highlighting HER information and developments. These promotional documents could be circulated through libraries, museums, and Tourist Information Points. More targeted mailing could include parish councils, parochial church councils and schools and colleges.

Talks and walks#

Events can also be organised to take the HER out into the community. These could include guided walks undertaken by HER staff and using HER information, or talks and lectures to local groups. It is relatively easy to find groups looking for speakers, many will invite presentations on archaeological work, in fact the problem can be having too much demand for such talks, especially where no charge is made. Local history and archaeology societies, Women's Institute groups, Civil Service Retirement groups, Rotary, Lions Clubs and the University of the Third Age (U3A) are all groups likely to welcome a talk. The use of an essentially standard talk, supplemented by local examples for individual groups, can help keep workload on HER staff to a minimum, whilst ensuring relevance and interest for the audience. It is also useful to consider presenting talks and lectures to professional colleagues, such as planners, consultants and architects, often the full potential and value of the HER may not be appreciated. It is a useful method of fostering professional links.

Education establishments#

With the rise of archaeology and related subjects on the curriculum there is a real need for students to learn about and be prepared to use the HER. Presentations to students and staff alike at the start of courses to introduce the HER can be beneficial. Less structured, non-curriculum driven, outreach to children should also be encouraged. The HLF now provide the 'Young Roots' grant (£5,000-25,000) aimed at involving children between the ages of 13-20 in their heritage. The HER could organise a project in conjunction with a local museum or Young Archaeologists Club where expertise with dealing with children's needs already exists.

Whilst there is in many areas particular focus on educational outreach for schools, there is also scope for engagement with higher education, within both universities and adult education.

Exhibitions and events#

Display boards are a useful tool for promoting an HER, and can be used at a wide range of venues and events. This could provide such basic information as what the HER is, who it is maintained by, what it contains, how it can be accessed and the uses to which it could be put. This could form the basis of a manned road show or can be lent out whenever an opportunity provides itself, for example archaeologically based events such as excavation open days, national archaeology days, and more general activities like county shows, local fetes and teacher's conferences or to museums and libraries

The HER can also be promoted when its information is used to produce information for specific display panels, interpretation boards, exhibitions, site-interpretation panels, educational packages, slides or CD ROMs. It should be referenced on such material and further details about the HER and how it can be accessed could be made available.

The work of the HER and its information services can also be promoted through events organised to launch new publications or exhibitions, press releases to inform the media about local discoveries and other activities. Public open days can also provide a good opportunity to encourage new people to come into the HER and use its services.

Inspiring learning for all#

In England, the Museum, Libraries and Arts Council (MLA) have produced a framework that enables the ways in which museums, archives and libraries engage users in learning to be examined and evaluated. It is especially useful for those providing informal learning experiences. 'Inspiring Learning for All' (ILFA) is now high on local, regional and national agendas, and promoted in Scotland through the Scottish Museums Council. Using the framework enables service providers to find out what the people using the service are learning, assesses how well you are achieving best practice in supporting learning and how improvements can be made. Knowledge of and reference to the ILFA framework in funding applications is beneficial. There is no equivalent to the MLA in Scotland; Wales have CyMAL.

Support Networks#

Support networks have been established for education and outreach staff based in museums (GEM: Group for Education in Museums), galleries (ENGAGE: National Association for Gallery Education) and archives (the Society of Archivists Archives in Education Group) which may offer a useful source of ideas and information for HER managers. Local Education Authority staff may also be able to offer advice and help to set up courses or distribute information for local teachers. In many areas, education business partnerships exist which may fund teachers to be released from school to develop resources.

HERs can make use of existing links/frameworks within their host local authority, for example with education, countryside tourism and leisure departments.

The regional HER working parties and the HER Forum provide opportunities for HER managers and staff to discuss new ideas and case studies of outreach work in HERS.

[Historic England](#) and NMRs can also offer information and advice to HER managers who are developing services for public access and outreach.

Useful Websites

<https://www.gov.uk/national-curriculum/overview> - National Curriculum (England)

<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/schoolshome/curriculuminwales/arevisedcurriculumforwales/?lang=en> - National Curriculum (Wales)

<http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/> - Learning and Teaching Scotland

<http://www.peoplesnetwork.gov.uk/> - People's Network

<http://www.inspiringlearningforall.gov.uk> - Inspiring Learning for All

<http://www.scottishmuseums.org.uk/> - Scottish Museums Council

F.7.3 Case studies#

Establishing an effective outreach programme: Unlocking Somerset's Historic Environment#

Talya Bagwell, Somerset County Council

This case study concentrates on Somerset HER's recent outreach programme. The Somerset HER is based within the Historic Environment Service (HES), part of the Directorate of Adult and Community Services. A stated service objective is to ensure that the county's historic environment is protected and enhanced through 'Improving public access, understanding and enjoyment'. In 2002 Somerset County Council was awarded HLF money to widen access to, and awareness of, its Historic Environment Record. The main aim of the project was to create online access to the HER database and to undertake a programme of outreach to both widen access to and publicise the resource. (For specific details of the website see Section [F.8.4](#)).

Staff

A new member of staff, an Outreach Officer was employed in October 2002, to promote and facilitate wider access to the Somerset Historic Environment Record by means of improving awareness and quality of the record, and access to the record. The outreach officer undertook a variety of roles mainly designing, writing and distributing promotional material to relevant outlets, organising talks and a roadshow and writing press releases and giving interviews.

Promotional material

The HER had already produced a leaflet detailing its services. This was supplemented with a large poster depicting several archaeological images around the county and featuring the website address and which was circulated to libraries, museums and other notice boards. One of the most useful publicity items was a bookmark with an attractive image and the web address on one side and details of the HER events on the other. 20,000 of these were initially ordered and have proven so popular that a second batch was needed less than a year later. An information sheet about the HER was also produced based around frequently asked questions. Another publicity item was a 'computer top card' (a 'Toblerone' shaped folded card with the web address and an attractive image). Small

adhesive labels with 'Archaeological Information Online' and the web address were purchased and stuck onto all departmental outgoing mail (see figure 60).

Figure 60: Some of the publicity material produced for the HER Outreach Programme. (©Somerset County Council 2007).

Distributing the material

An initial mailshot was undertaken announcing the launch of the online HER and giving details of the resource in advance of the website launch. All libraries and museums in the county were targeted. The computer top cards and bookmarks proved very popular in libraries. The cards were placed on the top of public access terminals and the bookmarks were available on the issuing desk. Libraries were encouraged to have a local history display with relevant books and the posters and other material available.

Material was also sent to all heads of history and geography within the County's secondary schools. The Diocesan Office at Wells kindly provided a contact list for all the Parochial Church Councils in the county and these were contacted and asked to mention the resource in parish magazines and websites, which proved effective. Parish councils were contacted and asked to mention the HER at parish meetings and to display the posters on parish notice boards.

Launch

Once the website was complete an official grand launch event was organised to attract publicity. Coincidentally Somerset Record Office had also just completed an online resource which enabled a joint launch. Professor Mick Aston, of 'Time Team' and also Somerset's first County Archaeologist, agreed to officially launch the website thus capturing media attention and appealing to the general public. The launch was held at the County Museum in Taunton Castle, on 30th September 2003 and was attended by over 100 people. Invitees included heritage professionals, long established HER users, neighbouring HER staff, HLF and EH representatives, council members, education professionals, archive and museum staff, the Lord Lieutenant and the press amongst others. A press pack was put together for the launch with information on both websites. Various heritage and archive displays were arranged in the Great Hall along with dedicated computer terminals enabling people to have a go. A buffet lunch and a photo call were included in the event which was featured in most local and county papers and also made the lunchtime TV news (see figure 61).

Figure 61: Professor Mick Aston, Somerset's first County Archaeologist, launching the website at the County Museum, Taunton Castle on 30th September 2003. (©Somerset County Council 2003).

Web promotion

The HER was also promoted through the World Wide Web. The website (see figure 62) featured on the homepage of the main county council internet site as 'website of the month'. Information was supplied to the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) that directed searchers to the Somerset site (<http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/>) Many parish council, local group and village websites include a link to the resource. The website also features as an example on the [HELM website](#) and is featured as a historical resource website on the BBC website. It is an interesting exercise to type 'Somerset Historic Environment Record' into a search engine and find out exactly where a link has been made. A great variety of websites, from the conventional to the unconventional, had made reference to the resource but none so far has been unwelcome.

Figure 62: An example of the map page of the website, showing Bronze Age barrows in the parish of Priddy, Somerset. (©Somerset County Council 2007 and ©Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. 100023366. 2007).

Talks, lectures and demonstrations

All the archaeological and historical societies affiliated to the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society were contacted with details of the resource and the offer of a talk. This had to be done well in advance as most societies organise their programme over a year ahead. A standard talk was prepared detailing a brief history of archaeological recording in the county, the establishing of the HER, its contents, information sources and uses. The last section of the slideshow concentrated on local examples of HER records and was tailored to each group's location. The talk concluded with a demonstration of the on-line resource (using a stand-alone version on a laptop as most venues lacked internet access) and proved very popular. Other groups who had heard about the talk by 'word of mouth' were soon contacting the Outreach Officer on a regular basis. These have included WIs, U3A groups, civil service retirement groups and other charitable groups. This continues unabated.

Demonstrations of the resource were offered to district colleagues as well as county council members. The demonstration to district planners was given in conjunction with the Development Control Archaeologist and Conservation Officer. **Roadshow**

As well as talks and a drop-in exhibition (see figure 63) a roadshow was organised to reach members of the general public. The roadshow comprised a set of display panels manned by the outreach officer with a laptop and data projector to demonstrate the online resource. Sixteen of the County's libraries and 5 five museums each hosted the day event. Each event was publicised beforehand and information sent to the venue staff in order that they could answer any questions. The response was very variable. Some venue staff made a huge effort on the HERs behalf and put on special displays as well as pointing out the event to people they thought would be interested.

Visitor interest varied from highly specific enquiries and lengthy discussion with the Outreach Officer to people skimming the display and taking some of the promotional material. The Outreach Officer soon learnt to take other sources of information along to events, as people often wanted different types of information. Information was frequently requested on such things as opportunities to get involved, especially for children, what to do with finds already made, contact details of local groups, details of educational courses and details on ongoing excavations. A one-stop archaeological shop seemed to be in demand. Some negative response was also met in a location under consideration for a wind farm. The Outreach Officer liaised with the Development Control Archaeologist in advance of any visits to understand any specific local situations.

Figure 63 One of the one day drop in exhibition/demonstrations of the online Historic Environment Record. (©Somerset County Council 2007).

Joint events

A number of joint events were organised with the Somerset and Dorset Finds Liaison Officer (FLO) and were highly beneficial. The events consisted of finds surgeries and demonstrations and displays. Combining the two services meant that more people were attracted and the finding of archaeological artefacts could be placed in a historic environment context to finders. The importance of reporting such individual find spots to supplement and enhance the existing record was emphasised.

The exhibition boards were also very useful for adding an HER presence to related events. The Somerset boards have featured in excavations open days, a European Cultural Heritage Initiative, PAS/BBC 'Hidden Treasure' day, several archaeological conferences and a local exhibition on WWII monuments.

Media

Media interest was successfully generated initially through the launch event and sustained by keeping the media informed through regular press releases and in some cases direct contact. The press releases were through the Somerset County Council Press office and published on the county Internet site. Every talk and day event was publicised in advance. This resulted in a number of news articles and several radio interviews.

The website featured on the front of the County Council's newsletter *Your Somerset*, distributed to 224,000 households throughout the county. An article also appeared in the *North Taunton News* that has led to a regular feature detailing local sites.

Schools

The scope of the HER outreach programme was deliberately limited with regard to school children. It was felt that in the first phase of the project adequately targeting schools and younger children was too big a task to tackle properly. However some basic outreach work was undertaken. Initially all secondary schools were sent details of the resource with posters, bookmarks and computer top cards to display. All tutors of A Level archaeology and countryside management courses in the county were invited to attend a workshop about the resource with demonstration of the online facility. A presentation was made to a county heads of history conference and the exhibition displayed. The traditional annual lecture to Bristol University landscape archaeology MA students was continued.

Primary schools were targeted through an archaeology competition planned with the help of an education consultant. All Key Stage Two teachers were sent details of the competition through the schools' intranet site and the internal mail system. The competition was for schools to propose an investigation into a local archaeological question. The prize was help from the HER staff in answering the question using HER information and structured activities. The winning schools were each given a morning's session on the website and shown a variety of historical sources (see figure 64). A guided walk was also undertaken and further work is planned as a result of the exercise (see figure 65). The children are currently writing up their work, which will be displayed on the Historic Environment Service website.

Figure 64: Rachel Shaw, Education Consultant, giving a talk on using the HER website to local school children, many of whom were far more adept at picking it up than most of the adults (©Somerset County Council 2007).

Figure 65: Taking a local school on an historic walk around their village based on HER information. This is the starting point of a planned local studies project for next term. (©Somerset County Council 2007).

Results

The effects of the online and the outreach programme upon the HER have been positive. The number of written queries has decreased markedly and when they do appear the requests for information are far more structured and focussed. Telephone enquiries can often be satisfied with the website address. Many more requests for information come in to the HER via email, directly from the website and can be answered in the same way. Visits to the HER continue and are also more structured and focussed on what the user wishes to see.

The outreach programme has also been directly responsible for new sites being identified and information added to existing sites. Errors in need of correction have also been brought to our attention. The talk and exhibition are still in demand. Widening access to Somerset's HER has also assisted in strengthening the Service's Best Value Inspection results.

Nationally the website has also been well received with many enquiries from national colleagues into methods and companies used to achieve the end result. A critique in the [HER News \(Schofield 2004\)](#) stated that, of all the current online HERs Southampton Archaeology Undergraduates found Somerset's the 'clear favourite' as it is 'user-friendly' and a 'very concise, easily manoeuvrable site' with 'the greatest degree of accuracy and thoroughness'.

Buckinghamshire HER#

Kim Biddulph, Buckinghamshire County Council

The Buckinghamshire HER is based within Culture and Heritage and is part of Planning and Environment; but is in a different directorate from both museums and libraries. The Buckinghamshire HER is currently undertaking an HLF project to create an online HER. Several outreach activities are part of this project.

- A National Archaeology Day event was undertaken in conjunction with the National Trust at the King's Head pub in Aylesbury. HER information was used to create an activity based around aerial photographs. HER information was also used to write a heritage trail around the town.
- An HER display was held at the Buckinghamshire County Show 2004.
- The HER Officer has undertaken a series of archaeological guided walks with local rambling associations using information from the HER.
- A rolling exhibition has been created and is being taken around libraries. It consists of the HER on a laptop and a selection of aerial photographs and has generated significant local interest.

In order to develop the HER audience further work is planned to create online educational packages for children. These are to be piloted in local schools in 2005.

Contact: Kim Biddulph Unlocking Buckinghamshire's Past Project Officer

For more information see: <http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/LocalEducationAndOutreach/>

Worcestershire HER#

Deborah Overton, Worcestershire County Council

Worcestershire HER is based within the Historic Environment and Archaeology Service. There is one full-time post to cover outreach and education. A number of activities are undertaken:

- Young Archaeologists Club. A new branch was launched in January 2004, and had 78 members by the end of the year. Monthly events have included visits to the Archaeological Service, local museums and monuments and various activities such as building a prehistoric log boat, excavations, finds washing and sorting, surveying and fieldwalking.
- A number of talks are undertaken on request, and can be aimed at a wide range of audiences from primary school children through to adults.
- Undergraduate lectures are given at University College, Worcester.
- Anglo-Saxon activities are also taken into the schools and can include a replica skeleton with grave goods and making a clay pot. Several topic-based teacher's packs and activities have been produced. A recent project involved running an archaeological lunchtime club for a local high school.
- A CD and web pages have been produced in conjunction with education specialists on the theme of *Return to the Source*. These are period-based resources based on real archaeological artefacts and designed to fit in with the curriculum and be used in class by teachers and also by students independently. They have been well received.
- The HER provides a number of opportunities for volunteers and work placement students to work with the HER. We also take on 12 work experience placements from local schools for a specific week of archaeological fieldwork and research as an HER enhancement project.
- Every year at least eight guided walks are offered as part of the WalkPast series, for example exploration of a shrunken village to examine evidence of its former extent from earthworks and surviving buildings.
- There is an annual day-school summarising that year's archaeological activity in the county, with presentations by HER staff and other specialists.
- Displays are also produced for local libraries and community centres and local events such as fetes, craft shows and medieval fairs. Parish-based displays are also produced for local societies.

- A specific exhibition was organised with the Portable Antiquities Scheme, City Museum and Record Office to show how the heritage of a particular parish could be reconstructed from different sources. The HER provided the concept, text and picture research.
- The HER is committed to providing equal access for outreach activities and there is an emphasis on providing outreach for those with disabilities. We have been working with local clubs for adults and children with special needs. The HER has links to the RNIB in Worcester and sessions using both real pottery sherds and replica vessels with Braille labels has been specifically created for use with visually impaired students. We have also worked with a number of disabled volunteers and there is an awareness of the need to provide wheelchair access at all events.

Cambridgeshire HER#

Quinton Carroll, Cambridgeshire County Council

Cambridgeshire HER is part of the County Council's 'Heritage Services'. To a large extent the HER contributes to outreach activities co-ordinated by another part of the service, but additionally the HER provides talks and exhibitions in response to specific requests

In 2004 the HER trialled the use of libraries as venues for archaeological road shows to raise awareness of the resource. It is also supporting library local history initiatives through putting on events based on HER information. These are based in local studies libraries and are tied into local history months. The events normally take place on a Saturday morning and consists of a member of staff, display boards, leaflets, a version of the HER on a laptop and finds from archaeological excavations from the area. Some of these events have been in conjunction with the County Record Office. Libraries have more money and staff available for publicity and are always looking for ways to broaden their appeal as learning centres. Working in partnership offers the HER a better use of limited resources in reaching the public.

Events are publicised in a leaflet that can be downloaded at <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/archaeology>

Oxfordshire HER#

Susan Lisk, Oxfordshire County Council

Oxfordshire HER is based within Archaeological Services in 'Environment and Economy' at Oxfordshire County Council. A range of outreach activities have been undertaken:

A development control workshop for the local Young Archaeologists' Club (YAC.) The children were shown four sets of HER information, which they had to use to evaluate a mythical planning application. This exercise was followed by a site visit to the area in question.

A useful partnership has been formed between the HER and the Ashmolean Museum. In conjunction with the Ashmolean Museum the HER organised a National Archaeology Day event featuring Romans and Roman sites in the locality. The venue was a local shopping mall and activities included trying on Roman costume and designing and creating Roman style pottery and other artefacts. The HER provided an identification service for any object brought along to the event, used the HER to demonstrate to people the evidence known about in their locality and also collected any information on new sites arising from the event.

The partnership with the Ashmolean is continuing with two further HLF projects on historic Oxfordshire. These are based on the archives of archaeologists that have worked in the county and aims to increase access to them. Relevant links to the HER entries are being added as well as information about the HER.

Another future plan is to work with the Ashmolean Museum to produce information on the Anglo-Saxons in Oxfordshire for both year 3 and year 6 children.

Humber HER#

Ruth Atkinson, Humber Archaeology Partnership

The Humber HER is based within the Humber Archaeology Partnership, a joint archaeology service for the East Riding of Yorkshire and Kingston upon Hull City Council. The other half of the service is a contracting unit.

An interesting example of outreach has been a session held with a Youth Initiative Group working with 12-18 year olds. The Youth Initiative Group is aimed at young people at risk of social exclusion. The aim of HER involvement was to foster a sense of place as well as offering insights into alternative careers. Members of the Group's youths visited the HER and were shown the sort of information held on the record relating to their community. Although appearing initially disinterested the youths were enthused by the visit and began to place a value on their historic environment. Subsequently many took photographs of the buildings on the record, which they then sent to the HER for inclusion in the record.

Peterborough City Council HER#

Ben Robinson, Peterborough City Council

The Peterborough HER is held within Peterborough City Council Archaeology Service and based at Peterborough Museum and Art Gallery. The museum has dedicated education officers and planning and implementing outreach activities is relatively easy.

- Up to date HER information is routinely used for temporary exhibitions and which illustrate scope and role of the HER.
- Talks and visits to local groups are regularly undertaken.
- Teacher resource packs, containing simplified SMR information, are currently being developed for use in schools.
- The HER has a formal relationship with the local college where students on GCSE, A/AS, and degree level courses are offered learning support.
- In the last two years the HER has worked with a local school to devise and run a day event for gifted and talented 13-15 year olds. The aim is to provide more of a challenge than conventional lessons. The day involves a problem-solving scenario that requires knowledge and understanding of HER information to resolve. Evidence has to be put together to argue for or against a housing development. This involves using the HER database and GIS, an exercise that is particularly enjoyed. The day culminates in the children meeting a 'hard-nosed developer' to whom the evidence has to be presented and argued.

Highland Council: Engaging the Public in Their Heritage#

Dorothy M. Maxwell, Principal Projects Officer, Highland Council

The Highland Council's Archaeology Unit is located within the Planning and Development Service. The three full time staff provide an advisory service for the Highland Council, public utilities and private developers and also advise upon forestry and agricultural schemes. It is a fundamental value of the Unit that archaeology can and should include everyone. It is about ourselves and our whole environment, and helps to define the Highland identity ? past, present and future.

There has been a huge increase in the level of development-led archaeological work since the introduction of NPPG5. The Unit works closely with the Development and Building Control section

providing advice and information on all planning applications submitted within 40 per cent of mainland Scotland.

Highland Archaeology Week began in 1994 to provide feedback to local communities on the results of this activity, and to raise awareness of archaeology in general. For this reason, developers are required to ensure that the results of any archaeological work are presented to the local community. Highland Archaeology Week provides an opportunity for them to meet this requirement.

Highland Archaeology Week is co-ordinated and promoted by the Archaeology Unit. It has grown from small beginnings to be a large community event celebrating our heritage. This is only made possible through the goodwill of the members of the public and assorted Agency staff who organise events and give their time for free. This partnership working is key to the Week's success.

The 2004 event, the eleventh, was the biggest to date. Over 130 events took place across the Highland area, with 4,340 attendees. Forty six percent of these attendees were visitors to the area, generating a substantial economic benefit. In total 91 per cent of attendees rated events this year as superb or very good - an increase from 76 per cent last year.

Events ranged from the more formal 2 day seminar 'What's New in Highland Archaeology?' where heritage professionals present the results of their work, to Countryside Ranger led walks (some in costume), museum workshops for children such as 'Make a Pictish Mask', special displays in local Heritage Centres, to a 'Junior Time Team' event. Many museums and heritage centres offer free or discounted admission during the week, and some open specially. One presented an evening of 'Story Song and Music inspired by the world of Prehistory'.

There are no criteria for events to be part of Archaeology Week ? anything which is offered is accepted, as long as there is some kind of heritage link. This has led over the years, to the broad festival of culture, arts and heritage on offer, and has helped local communities take ownership of the Week, rather than it being perceived as a Council operated and facilitated event. Wherever possible events and activities are free of charge to encourage social inclusion and community participation.

Protection and promotion of archaeology go hand in hand. Development Control protects and retains the resource; Highland Archaeology Week makes use of this resource to enable communities to participate in and benefit from their heritage.

More and more these days there is an awareness of the value sites have for local communities and the local economy. To assist with requests for assistance with local heritage projects a series of "Access to Archaeology" projects has been undertaken over recent years

Each area project has produced a tourist leaflet and an audit of the most accessible and interpretable sites which can then be used to develop community and sustainable tourism projects. **A Rural Inverness Audit** forms part of the latest phase of this project and was completed in June of this year.

To conclude?#

The promotion of the archaeological resource has many benefits for a fragile area such as Highland. The Council is keen to enable economic development to sustain the many fragile and remote communities. Events such as Archaeology Week promote tourism during the notoriously quiet shoulder months.

Equally the Council aims to enable, foster and develop communities confident in their heritage. The work undertaken by the Archaeology Unit helps to develop the community sense of identity and heritage, along with a sense of community ownership of their heritage.

Archaeological sites in Highland are seen not just as monuments to the past, but as a resource which enables communities to connect to their own past, and develop their own local and cultural identity. These sites also act as an educational resource and can assist with sustaining the local economy.