



HEIRNET

FISH-HEIRNET

Strategic Meeting – 10th October 2019

Location: Historic Environment Division Offices at 9 Lanyon Place, Belfast BT1 3LP

Time: 11am to 4pm Lunch provided.

Attendance: Dan Miles (HE, FISH), David Thomas (RCHAMW, FISH), Phil Carlisle (HE), Helen Spencer (socantscot), Hugh Corley (IMSIG), Peter McKeague (HES), Keith May (HE), John Murphy (Dept for Communities, NI), Gordon McKenna (Collections Trust), Rhonda Robinson (Dept for Communities, NI), Mike Heyworth (CBA), Margaret Keane (National Monument Services, Ireland), Mark Keegan (National Monument Services, Ireland), Gareth John (National Monument Services, Ireland).

AGENDA

1. Welcome and apologies

Apologies received from Gillian Grayson, Sarah Poppy and Sally Carter

2. Minutes and Actions of the last meeting

Minutes signed off

3. Matters Arising

None

4. Strategic updates – chaired by Mike Heyworth (CBA)

- 4.1 The wider context across the UK – Mike Heyworth (CBA)

MH provided the meeting with an overall personal update on the state of heritage across the UK. The impact of Brexit on public finances was focused on as there is still a huge cloud of speculation and doubt, which is reflected in uncertainty and potential stagnation across industry and the heritage sector. RR confirmed that this was an issue in Northern Ireland in terms of the impact on public finances. In England there has been a one year roll over spending review with a modest uplift of 2% which was welcome but there has still been a huge downturn in funding and issues continue.

MH also spoke about broader issues that are having an impact in particular the new popular

perspective of the past – taking back control, the popular view of going back to the great past – is very worrying. This in addition to the current perspective that experts and knowledge based on data is now out of fashion and that populist views are now all the rage. There are a number of social tensions with which archaeology and heritage sector need to play a roll in this, but these are often perceived as being liberal views.

There is also the new agenda of climate change and environmental issue , archaeologists have a perspective and knowledge about the impact of this in the past – how can our data contribute to this new climate and environmental change agenda? This also has an impact on the archaeology sector, in terms moving away from fossil fuels and the need for more cleaner green energy. There needs to be long term strategies (over 100s of years) rather than just over election periods.

There is also the continued issue of the perceived housing demand – in particular in the South East of England and how this imbalanced regional impact can have the potential of eroding the planning rules, eg new changes to allow 2 story upward extensions, conservation areas not being taken into consideration etc...

But, on the positive, the heritage sector does have a significant role to play in the future – tourism now drives the economy, rather than traditional industries and the weakening pound could lead to increase in foreign tourists. We have a role to play in creating heritage narratives and making data available is one way we can make an impact. But we need to encourage it to be used and to contribute to the wider picture, including policy debates.

4.2 Strategic Update Wales – David Thomas (RCHMW)

In Wales there is renewed interest in closer working between the HERS and the NMRW. A group has been convened to look at the possibility of managing and presenting historic environment data as a single record, and it is currently investigating the legal and technical challenges this might pose.

The HER audit cycle means that all the Welsh HERS will be audited in 2020. We are looking at Historic England's recent experience of auditing as a model for Wales.

The Royal Commission have begun work on the replacement system for the SWISH database and associated online services. They are looking at a modular approach based on open source databases integrated through a middleware solution. This offers a flexible and extendable approach that aligns with other organisations in the cultural and historic environment sectors in Wales and beyond.

Good progress is also being made with the Historic Wales partnership which brings together the cultural bodies eg CADW, Nat Library, Nat Museum looking at various areas including skills development, marketing , back office, and customer services.

The Welsh coastal project, CHERISH, is progressing well but the impact of a no deal Brexit could have a negative impact and future funding is still unknown.

4.3 Strategic Update Northern Ireland – Rhonda Robinson (Dept for Communities, NI)

RR gave an update on the situation in Northern Ireland in respect to recent changes. One of these has been to Archaeological Excavation License (licensed by the Department for Communities) – which is required to carry out an archaeological excavation. 6 open licenses are allowed to be open at the same time, and in order to close these digital location information must be supplied. The change to supplying digital data was brought up through a workshop between companies and universities, and there was a positive response.

A big driver at the moment is to bring together the sector in NI, which although very small is siloed. This is mainly focused on bringing together the government agencies, commercial and academic sectors – based on the underlying concept of demonstrating the value of archaeology.

This is focused on mainstreaming archaeology more broadly, including the output of the information, in order to demonstrate the value of the information. One way to do this is to create a research framework for NI. One of the issues will be the challenge of commercial companies to agree that their work can fit into research frameworks.

There is the need to review heritage legislation which dates to 1995 and is archaic. The Welsh model is much admired and there is the need for the HER to be better resourced and have a statutory footing. The aim is to have a single historic environment record – but this is not just a name change but also a more holistic approach and change. One way to move this forward is through the Digital Transformation project (see John Murphy's presentation).

There is ongoing work with the national museum over the storage of artifacts by the national museum, NI Depts of Communities and contractors. There is the potential to build a national research archive store.

JM spoke about the excavation record and that there were c. 25 to 30 years of licensed excavation reports – c. 4-5,000 reports that have been stored in house and were being looked at to make these publically available through the creation of discovery metadata and polygons.

JM also spoke about the marine record which had been inherited from the Soc of Maritime Archaeology (Ulster University), which included 3 or 4 spatial datasets eg wreck sites, paleoenvironmental evidence etc... FISH terms were being used to index these records.

JM and RR spoke about some of the issues surrounding the future publication of the Excavation Record, in particular connecting up the geospatial layer with excavation reports. However, when this was broached with the commercial units there were deemed to be no problems. There may have been some concerns over the copyright licenses with English companies.

KM said that under the new OASIS system companies be publishing under a Creative Commons license which will prevent any future issues.

4.4 Strategic Update Ireland - Margaret Keane (NMS, Ireland)

See presentation <http://www.heritage-standards.org.uk/fish-heirnet/>

MK gave an update through a PPT presentation. She spoke about changes associated with Infrastructure projects and in planning regulation, including height restrictions removed. Heritage is important and is being used as by the political lexicons but is not being supported through funding, with the big focus on the biodiversity and environmental side of things. The focus is on the natural landscapes, nature and parks etc with a lack of appreciation on the heritage and understanding that what we see today as natural is the impact of people in the past! There is no join up between the natural and the historic environments.

There is currently a “No deal Brexit budget” with no large funding allocated to government departments.

PM spoke about the situation in HES with a number of climate change impact studies on heritage buildings (HES properties) plus working with natural environmental colleagues looking at coastal erosion eg at Scara Brae. There is also work looking at conservation side of things, eg heatloss in historic buildings etc.

Finally, that although history has not been demoted as a subject from primary school curriculum and was still a core subject, it was under threat.

4.5 Strategic Update England - Keith May (HE)

4.5.1 Historic England change programme - update

Since the last meeting, HE has completed the internal “change programme” resulting in considerable organizational structural changes reflected in changes to names of Teams and Departments. FISH representatives from HE are now in Policy and Evidence Group and include attendees from the Sector Resilience and Skills Department and the Information Analysis Team, which maintains both KOS and Heritage Information Strategy Advice within the Analytics Department. HE continues to support the role of FISH in the sector and will provide staff involvement in terminology development, strategy and convening of meetings. However the loss of one post in KOS has had an impact on our ability to be proactive in maintaining the FISH website and this will have to be undertaken on a reactive basis.

4.5.2 Heritage Information Access Strategy (HIAS) – update

HIAS is now mid-way through its development phase, which is implementing the systems and workflows needed to improve access to heritage information. Some key updates in the various work packages include:

Heritage Gateway (HG) - Work is planned to upgrade the Heritage Gateway, a national portal which provides online access to 60 local authority Historic Environment Records (HERs) and a variety of national heritage datasets. The current Heritage Gateway is over 10 years old, and much in need of an upgrade. Following a workshop and consultation to reach consensus on the minimum requirement for data to be provided by HERs via the Heritage Gateway, a data specification has been prepared and creation of a roadmap to get to HG 2.0 is now underway.

National Record of the Historic Environment (NRHE) to HERs

Central to HIAS is the principle that local authority HERs should be the first port of call for terrestrial investigative research data, including information currently held in Historic England's National Record for the Historic Environment (NRHE). To underpin this, Historic England has begun a five year programme to transfer the terrestrial data from the NRHE to HERs. Procedures are being put in place to ensure the data transferred to HERs from HE is securely backed up and protocols developed to ensure the continuance of access to that HER data should its host no longer provide adequate resources to maintain it. It is also crucial to ensure that transferred data is still accessible to HE staff and the public through the Heritage Gateway,

OASIS - As part of HIAS we are funding and supporting the redevelopment and roll-out of the new OASIS system for nationwide reporting of historic environment investigation events, which is hosted by the Archaeology Data Service.

HE Internal systems - Arches developments

A new database Warden has been developed in the arches software to migrate data records from the former AMIE system which is being de-commissioned. The migration has provided the opportunity for considerable work on data cleaning. Continuing work is now being undertaken to replace AMIE's current function of recording data from HE's own internal investigation teams, and to enable the most effective data flows and sharing of that data with other relevant historic environment organisations.

Reference Data Management – This HIAS work package is about managing the transfer of the national thesauri data, which has previously been managed as part of AMIE, to a new Reference Data Management system (RDM) developed in Arches software. It is intended that any new RDM system will include the current functionality provided by the Linked Open Data HeritageData Vocabularies.

4.5.3 UKRI Infrastructure Roadmap

This UKRI report is seen as “an initial analysis of the landscape of research and innovation infrastructures” that are available to UK researchers and innovators. HE has been involved as an Independent Research Organisation (IRO) in feeding Heritage digital infrastructure requirements into this UKRI strategic initiative particularly through AHRC channels.

4.5.4 Work Digital / Think Archive - A standard and guide to managing digital data generated from archaeological investigations

This is being launched imminently and will be initially hosted on the Archaeology Archives Forum Website. Funded by Historic England, it is taking forward some of the recommendations in the Mendoza report on archaeological archives. The two main recommendations are the implementation of Data Management Plans (DMPs) and the need to digitally archive in a trusted digital repository. The key points are attached (by Dan Miles).

The next stage is to create an online version on the ClfA website and to update the current suite of ClfA standards and guidance to reflect this new guidance. An implementation strategy is also underway to help build the standard and guidance into working practices.

4.5.5 Standard for the Characterisation of Pottery Wares and Fabrics

The draft Standard for the Characterisation of Pottery Wares and Fabrics has been out to consultation and is now being updated with the comments. A mock-up of what a database could look like is currently being developed at by Historic England using ARCHES. The standard has identified a number of controlled vocabularies used to describe pottery wares and fabrics (moving away from just the forms) which will be reviewed by the pottery research groups (Prehistoric, Roman and Post Roman).

4.5.6 Lithic term consultation

The need for an improved and consistent controlled vocabulary for lithic artefacts recorded in HERs and other databases has been highlighted by recent HER enhancement projects for early prehistory. These identified that the 'the current thesauri terms are not fit for purpose' and recommended that 'a new list of lithic terminology should be developed and agreed by a panel of specialists and deployed ahead of further early prehistoric HER enhancement work' (Cattermole, A. 2018. A Review of Historic Environment Records Enhancement Projects for the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic). A new structure for recording lithics has been proposed and a number of new terms. This has been to FISHTWG initially and is now out to consultation with lithic specialists.

4.5.7 Research Frameworks

The development of the digital platform for research frameworks is now in BETA testing and the content from the North West, East of England, East Midlands and South Yorkshire frameworks is being populated. Further work to link this to OASIS to provide a feed is underway. Watch this space....

4.5.8 FAIR Principles

In order to demonstrate Historic England support for the FAIR Principles various HE staff are interested in different ways they can be introduced and embodied in work practice at HE and within the wider Heritage sector. It is anticipated further work will be needed by different teams to explore what adoption of FAIR means in practice, who in HE would be affected, any resources and responsibilities which might need costing, and how such endorsement should be referred to in any documentation or guidance. The FAIR principles are also expected to be included in recommendations arising from the Work Digital / Think Archive standard and guidance for digital archiving project.

4.6 Strategic update from Scotland – Peter McKeague (HES)

Alex Adamson, Susan Hamilton and Peter McKeague

Scotland's Historic Environment Data (SHED) Strategy is a sector-wide initiative to improve access to information about Scotland's historic environment. The key aim is to work in partnership in order to protect, promote and enhance Scotland's historic environment through coordinated activity to improve the data, and the associated systems and processes.

The SHED Strategy is being undertaken under the umbrella of the SMR Forum, which brings together many of the bodies that create and maintain records about Scotland's historic environment.

The SHED strategy is now half way through its ten year programme.

There are three active workstreams

Workstream 1 – Portal (PastMap) –which provides online access to all protected sites data, the National Record of the Historic Environment and most HER datasets through a map based browser.

Since relaunch in March 2018 we have witnessed a significant growth in site usage from around 7,500 users /23,000 views per quarter to over 26,000 users / 66,600 views per quarter.

Workstream 2 – Standards

The SMR Forum [Technical Working Group](#)ⁱ continued to undertake the tasks of SHED Workstream 2, and spent time refining the actions list to reflect where we are at the SHED halfway point and what to focus on in the remaining five years

Workstream 3 – Comms

The [website](#)ⁱⁱ continues to be maintained, through the SMR Forum. A talk was given to the Association for Geographic Information (AGI) Scotland Event at which SHED and Workstream 4 were discussed.

Workstream 4 – Other Records

Pilot projects looking at different aspects of linking data have been carried out. Gazetteers

have been identified as an area where work was required as place can act as a 'spine' for linking records. From this, a Workshop was held with interested parties, including the Scottish Government, and we are in the early stages of submitting a bid to the UK Geospatial Commission for funding for the development of a Definitive Gazetteer for Scotland. Pilot linking projects were completed, linking datasets held by HES and the Glasgow Women's Library (Memorials to Women in Scotland), the Jacobites exhibition at the NMS and prehistoric material held in Glasgow Museums. We are actively looking for other small pilots to increase our knowledge of the best approaches to take.

Polygonisation

The Borders, Stirling and Clackmannanshire Polygonisation Project is progressing, with the Stirling and Clackmannanshire portions recently completed. The methodology being used for the Borders means that polygons are created in advance of large projects (e.g. road and rail corridors), and as a result are often in use within the planning system almost immediately after creation.

Other activities: Contributing to the delivery of the SHED Strategy is a measure of the success in the [HES Annual Operating Plan 2018-19](#)ⁱⁱⁱ, and sector activity continues to be monitored in the [Delivery Plan](#)^{iv} for [Scotland's Archaeology Strategy](#),^v

Going forward

Develop partnerships for Workstream 4

Hold the first SHED forum in early 2020 to reflect on work done and prioritise the next 5 years
Polygonisation partnerships continuing, Stirling & Clackmannanshire is finished and Borders continues.

Work on internal systems is underway, improving the way we hold and manage data. This is accompanied by data upgrade and tidying, including upgrading the period data we hold. Work we are doing includes linking people and organisation to site records, and improving workflows within the organisation, so we can keep track of how records are progressing through the system.

Heritage Hub

HES holds a lot of information about historic places but it is spread across many websites, databases and documents. It is next to impossible for anyone to identify all of the information and archive that we hold about any given site. We want Scotland's heritage information to be universally accessible and useful. Our ambition is to create a single state of the art digital service through which everyone who wishes to, and for whatever purpose, can gain access to Scotland's national record of the historic environment. Through the Heritage Hub project, we will start to deliver this ambition.

Other

PM added that there were some issues over the coverage of archaeological advisers and HERs with some gaps and concerns that posts lost will not be backfilled.

The merging of the two HES buildings in Edinburgh is being progressed.

HES is looking at getting funding to create a gazetteer of place names through geospatial funding.

PM says that work with Sterling University continues to create polygons to describe the extent of sites for monument records, but there have been some issues with this.

Update by HS on ScARF

ScARF is currently working on 4 regional research framework projects – South East Scotland, Highland, Scottish Islands (Western Isles, Shetland & Orkney) and Perth and Kinross. We recently had events in Shetland and Perth and Kinross to gather data, research questions and discuss priorities.

A ScARF evaluation was carried out in 2019 and this has been used to plan for the next three years, with our latest funding bid submitted to HES to continue the project to end March 2023. ScARF is well used across the sector and increasingly used for planning and commercial projects, considered ‘robust’ and essential to be maintained and updated. Areas for improvement include – greater consistency, better editorial and version control and an updated and more useable website. Many of these issues were already being looked at with the current ScARF website redevelopment.

We are using the Landward/HE digital research framework platform which was piloted by the SE Scotland RRF and have now created a new WordPress site for ScARF. Work is ongoing with editing, design and testing the new site before we make it live. We are also working on retrofitting existing research questions into the digital platform and providing guidance for writing new research questions. These questions will then be linked to the new OASIS form and provide a mechanism for automatic updating of questions in the future as records of archaeological investigations are submitted to Oasis/DES .

We are also working with HES on plans for a ‘Research Portal’ - a website to link to unfinished/unpublished archaeological work (initially funded by HES- but with an aim to expand so other work can be added). Also looking at making more ‘databases’ available via ScARF relating to Scottish archaeology alongside the ‘Tracing the Lines’ - Grooved Ware data.

Lunch 13:00 -14:00

5 The Discovery Programme - Anthony Corns (DP)

See presentation <http://www.heritage-standards.org.uk/fish-heirnet/>

AC gave a review of the last 10 years of work that the Discovery Programme has been involved including projects supporting archaeological data integration, including Spatial Heritage & Archaeology Research Environment I.T., ArchaeoLandscapes Europe and the ARIADNE Project. Other examples of involvement in projects include working on the CHERISH coastal recording project and creating 3D models for Icons Ireland.

AC also explained their involvement in Europeana and in E-RIHS – European Infrastructure project.

6 Northern Ireland Digital Transformation project - John Murphy (NI)

See PPT for JM's presentation in which he described the work being undertaken on heritage data.

7 ADS update – abroad and at home – Tim Evans (ADS)

For a full report on ADS work in 2018 see:

<https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/about/annualReports.xhtml>

TE gave an update on various projects that the ADS are involved in including ARCHAIDE, a European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme project to create a new system for the automatic recognition of archaeological pottery from excavations. There are a number of products now available, including a semantic web database, vocabularies. However, sadly the catalogues that were scanned as part of the project have not been made available due to copyright issues.

Other projects that the ADS are involved in are ARIADNE plus project <https://ariadne-infrastructure.eu/>, and SEADDA (saving European archaeology from a digital dark age) which aims to establish a priority research area in the archiving, dissemination and open access re-use of archaeological data. It will bring together an interdisciplinary network of archaeologists and computer scientists; experts in archaeological data management and open data dissemination and re-use. <https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA18128/#tabsName:overview>

TE also gave an update on the HERALD project to develop OASIS with BETA launch still scheduled for March 2020. The ADS are also undertaking an internal project to look at the search on the ADS digital library – including biab, eprints, journals etc which are all slightly different.

7.1 Action on KM to talk to Holly Wright of ADS about European terminologies/languages....

8 The collections Trust Update – Gordon McKenna (Collections Trust)

<https://collectionstrust.org.uk/resources-start/>

GM described the close link between museum accreditation and Spectrum (museum standard), eg that there are 9 procedures in Spectrum that are used as part of the accreditation process.

November 2018 museum accreditation requirements were updated and the section on sustainability was removed which although it makes it simpler, this is not good for moving forward. CT relooked at the Spectrum procedures in advance of changes in the accreditation process and the website has been updated to reflect this.

Work that needs to be done is to look at the vocabularies associated with the procedures and publish them. The CT has enquired with Phil Carlisle (PC) about how this can be done through the RDM being created and heritage.org. They would like to get them online in skos by the end of the financial year.

GM spoke about how useful it will be for software providers to be able to use them in linked data format

CT has also been involved in a number of European projects and with the Corsham Institute on a digital preservation project - *Preservation to Preservation*.

There is also an interesting report out - *The UK's research and innovation infrastructure: opportunities to grow our capability* - see page 83. The document can be accessed from this page: <https://www.ukri.org/research/infrastructure/>

DM spoke about CT attending international conferences including the ICON conference in Kyoto and the CT annual conference on controlled terminologies which PC and DM presented at on ARCHES and FISH/archaeological object vocabularies, respectively.

There was an enquiry about the lists of accredited museums in England and in Scotland:

ACE list of accredited museums – <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/document/list-accredited-museums-uk-channel-islands-and-isle-man>

Scotland there is a list on the Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) website: <https://www.museumsgalleriescotland.org.uk/accreditation-recognition/accredited-museums-in-scotland/>

There continued to be a discussion on the need for controlled vocabularies in museums.

Action – to talk at the next FISH meeting about how we can promote jointly controlled vocabularies use in museums

9 'Towards a Spatial Data Infrastructure for Archaeology' Peter McKeague (HES)

See presentation <http://www.heritage-standards.org.uk/fish-heirnet/>

10 EAA Community for FAIR Sharing and Synthesis – Keith May (HE) & Peter McKeague (HES)

KM and PM spoke about their presentations and sessions at the Bern EAA 2019 conference and that there was interest from a number of European colleagues on developing closer links. This has been building recently with a number of FISH related sessions over the past 5 years. The potential is to create an EAA group which would meet there each year and have aims, objectives etc...

In principle everyone agreed that this was a good idea, but there were concerns that it would just be the same faces and another closed discussion group which would peter out without any definition of group aims or overarching requirement for such a group.

TE spoke about the ADS's involvement in SEADDA – "Saving European Archaeology from the Digital Dark Age" which Julian Richards and Holly Wright (ADS) are involved in. SEADDA aims to establish a priority research area in the archiving, dissemination and open access re-use of archaeological data, and includes proposers from 26 COST and four international partner

countries. It will bring together an interdisciplinary network of archaeologists and computer scientists; experts in archaeological data management and open data dissemination and re-use. It will create publications and materials that will set out the state of the art for archaeological archiving across Europe and recommendations to mitigate the crisis. For more information on SEADDA see: <https://www.cost.eu/actions/CA18128/#tabs|Name:overview>

AC is involved in this and maybe there would be the potential to arrange a FISH meeting alongside a SEADDA one, and see how a wider group can be developed.

10.1 Action on KM to look further into this

10.2 Action on DM to speak to JR on planning a FISH meeting around a SEADDA meeting in York

11 FISH Admin Update

A very brief discussion about needing to organise a Summer FISH meeting to reengage with HERs and their work and to look at FISH management, FISHTWG and communication.

11.1 Action on DM and DT to meet up and discuss FISH management and to set a date for the summer.

Close 16:00

No.	FISH-HEIRNET Strategic February Meeting: 2018	Owner	Notes
4.2.1	Action to look at the FISH list at the level of European representation	DM	Transferred to KM
No.	FISH-HEIRNET Strategic Autumn Meeting: 25th October 2018	Owner	Notes
4.6.1	Action to write up a supporting statement for the FAIR Principles to put it on the FISH website.	Dave Thomas, and Dan Miles	
4.7.1	Action to talk to the PAS about working more closely with FISH	Julian Richards	
No.	FISH-HEIRNET Strategic Autumn Meeting: 25th October 2018	Owner	Notes
7.1	Action to talk to Holly Wright of ADS	KM	

	about European terminologies		
10.1	Action to look further into developing an EAA information management group	KM	
10.2	Action on planning a possible FISH meeting around a SEADDA meeting in York	DM and JR	
11.1	Action meet up and discuss FISH management and to set a date for the summer.	DM and DT	

ⁱ <http://smrforum-scotland.org.uk/smr-twg/>

ⁱⁱ <http://smrforum-scotland.org.uk/shed/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/archives-and-research/publications/publication/?publicationId=aabb21ef-36b0-4746-9712-a8c700d4290a>

^{iv} <http://archaeologystrategy.scot/files/2017/01/SAS-Delivery-Plan-16Jan2017.pdf>

^v <http://archaeologystrategy.scot/files/2015/08/ScotlandsArchaeologyStrategy.pdf> , Objective 2.5.1.