NATIONAL MONUMENTS RECORD

SMR News

ROYAL COMMISSION ON THE HISTORICAL MONUMENTS OF ENGLAND

The Newsletter of the SMR Software Users Group

View from the Chair: The Future of SMR Software

Glenn Foard, County Archaeologist, Northamptonshire.

At the York meeting of the User Group, which I was invited to chair, the RCHME made a proposal to develop a PC based software package for SMRs as an alternative to MONARCH. The software would be developed through a commercial operator who would also provide software support. Given the current financial climate and the priority given by the profession to the resourcing of SMRs this is not a surprising proposal.

The suggestion is to put a working system in place rapidly. This means perhaps 12 to 18 month's software development and data transfer. This timescale is clearly meant to meet the perceived needs of some SMRs. The timescale is intended to ensure that at least a prototype system is in existence for SMRs to make their decisions by the next local government financial round in October.

The software development proposed is probably one that a number of SMRs will welcome as it fulfills their immediate needs.

However, I think there are wider issues which should be kept in mind while the proposal is being considered in the light of the relatively short timescale. The financial investment in developing a new package is not vast, indeed the suggested costs for individual users are incredibly modest.

What will be a substantial commitment for users is the process of implementing a new system, including data transfer, training and other costs. It seems likely that once committed, SMRs will be locked into that system's data structure for up to ten years. A significant number of SMRs may take on the new system. Thus, at the design stage the needs of the archaeological profession on the national scale must be taken into account.

Currently we all run our SMRs largely as independent local records to fulfill immediate local requirements. A process of consultation which assesses the needs envisaged by SMRs for software may produce a very good system that meets currently perceived local needs.

There are two major issues in danger of being missed. At the local level it is increasingly important for archaeology to be integrated with other environmental management. This demands corporate systems comprising database and GIS to enable our data to be viewed alongside nature conservation, rights of way, planning applications and other such data sets. The question of GIS and whether stand alone archaeological packages are right at the local level must await a future article. What I want to focus on here are other longer term requirements of the archaeological profession as we enter the 21st century.

There is ever increasing pressure of work as a result of PPG16 and increasing pressure on budgets and staffing levels in local government. **continued on page 2**

NEWS

People

David Evans, formerly SMR Officer for Avon, becomes Archaeological Officer with South Gloucestershire Council from 1st April 1996

Rob Bourne is the new SMR Officer for the Babtie group, Berkshire.

Bruce Howard and Ian Wykes have joined Hampshire County Council becoming SMR Assistant and Archaeological Assistant (Air Photography) respectively.

Organizations

North Yorkshire County Council Archaeology and Conservation Sections joined to become a Heritage Unit on 1st April 1996. The section continues to serve the county except for the two National Parks and the new York District Council.

Cleveland Archaeology Section has moved to: Sir William Grey House, Clarence Road, Hartlepool, TS24. Telephone: 01429 266522.

Publications

North Yorkshire County Council, 'The Past Around Us: Archaeology in North Yorkshire', a general leaflet on the SMR and the work of the Archaeology Section. For details contact NYCC 01609 780780 x 2331

Northumberland County Council, 'Archaeology in Northumberland 1995-96', from April 1996

Internet

See SMR News on the RCHME web site at **http://www.rchme.gov.uk.**

The Future of SMR Software: **continued from page 1**

How often do we have the time look to the future to see where we need to be in five or ten years' time? There are one or two people out there who are looking to the future, as the recent high profile criticism of SMRs has shown. Our response to such criticism has been a resounding chorus of "give us the resources and we are quite capable of delivering the goods".

In terms of data collection and input there is a fundamental need for human resources. There is also a need for information technology. There have been dramatic changes in the field of information technology over the last three or four years and the rate of change is increasing.

In my view, the potential of the Internet, GIS and IT is such that current archaeological record systems will not be adequate in two or three years time. Let alone five or ten.

Fundamental problems within the archaeological profession, perhaps above all the fragmentation between curator, contractor, university and museum archaeologists demand a rapid solution. There is inconsistency between curatorial action from one county or district to another. PPG16 has set a massive time bomb running - an explosion of data which has yet to hit the SMRs. When this reaches full flow already overstretched services may crack under the strain. This pressure will be particularly great where the record is being developed to the new standards set by the Urban Archaeological Database projects.

Developments in information technology do, I believe, offer the potential of a genuine solution to such problems. However, unless we define this wider potential now we may find that a system designed in 1996/7 will not serve us in a few years time.

There must be a genuine debate within the profession about the information system that we need and how it can be achieved. At the very least, the system should be designed in a modular form, so that it can be

expanded to meet longer term requirements.

This might require certain fundamental modifications to the data structure of many SMRs. For example, example, the adoption across the board of the separate recording of Site and of Monument data. This separation was implemented by one or two SMRs in the 1980s and has become more common with Urban Archaeological Databases.

There will be many who ask why should we worry about such longer term issues when we are already overstretched. Others will say, the costs of a national system are beyond the reach of the individual organisations like the RCHME and local authorities that currently fund information systems. To those criticisms I would answer - the costs of doing nothing will be far greater. Indeed if we are not careful others may take up the challenge and we will lose the opportunity to take a leading role in shaping the future of archaeological information systems.

This is a need of the profession as a whole. It is something that we must tackle as a profession and all the possible sources of funding need to be explored.

The creation of a single information system should involve the networking of all SMRs and relevant specialist records at a national level. The concept of ‘key data sets’ must be adopted, with appropriate records maintaining particular ones for use by all of us - saving resources and increasing the reliability of our data. The information system must enable management data as well as archaeological data to be accessed on line from anywhere in the country. Similarly, it must allow coherent and compatible national and local research frameworks to be developed and made accessible. It should enable the direct down-loading into the SMR of fieldwork data and reports from computerised records produced on database, word processor and GIS by contract organisations.

This is surely the only solution to the explosion of data and the rapidly increasing complexity of archaeology as we approach the 21st century. With the continuing rapid fall in the cost of mass storage of digital data and the likely increases in speed of data transfer over the 'information super highway', a national information network will soon be possible. This network would enable cost effective access, not just to reports on line but also to the data which at present is transferred into museum archives. It offers partial solutions to all sorts of current problems, not least the escalating cost of publication and the increasing difficulty in keeping up with what is being published in one’s own specialist research areas.

If we do not create such a system then we will not be able as a profession to handle the information which is becoming available. Neither will we be able to ensure a consistency in curatorial decision making nationwide nor focus the expertise of the profession to the common purpose of exploring and conserving the evidence of the past.

The absurd situation at present is that, through the Internet, I am better informed about what is happening in some aspects of heritage management in the USA than I am about similar issues in the next county! If I am taking decisions about a development scheme affecting medieval urban deposits in Northampton I have no way of knowing that a similar site has been recently explored in, say, Shrewsbury and that the Brief, Specification, Fieldwork Report and Assessment have various lessons for me in preparing my brief and assessing the potential of my site.

These issues should be debated now and a long term goal defined. The stages down that path should be

mapped out so that a new system established for SMRs today can allow the integration of new modules. This will enable it to become an integral part of a national network in the near future. **Glenn Foard.**

MONARCH FOR SMRs:

Simon Walton, RCHME

Progress report:

During the last fifteen months MONARCH for SMRs was supplied to the five Pilot sites, detailed below. Software developments have reflected the experiences of users of both national and local SMR systems and the demands of migrating SMR data.

Essex and Kent SMRs requested a UNIX version of the software. This system development involved investigations into using networking software to link PCs, terminal emulation, and also X windows.

Recent improvements to the SMR application include enhancements to the 'tag loader' used in data migration and new paper reports. A simplified General Enquiries Mechanism (Fast GEM) and revised Management Functions are being developed. A comprehensive task reference manual is now available for users.

Finally, the SMR Data Audit Specification is being revised and will be available in a more generic form in due course. SMRs should now be able to use Data Audits to plan strategic developments, irrespective of their preferred software environment.

Pilot Sites:

DOS sites:

East Sussex - full dataset migrated from the NMR.

Northumberland - full dataset migrated from SMR-Online.

Bedfordshire - sample dataset migrated from existing Dbase software.

UNIX sites

Essex - full dataset to be migrated from the existing Superfile database.

Kent - full dataset from the NMR

Exmoor, Dartmoor and Yorkshire Dales National Parks will soon receive MONARCH for SMRs.

Future work

Over the next three months, developments to MONARCH will continue. 'Fast GEM' and the revised Management Functions will become available and minor system change requests and any bugs will be addressed. In the national system, a 'User Friendly Front-End' is to be prototyped and the interface with the Listed Building System evaluated.

A review of data exchange mechanisms will ensure that digital information can be effectively imported to and extracted from the national database.

System support will require a review of the roles and responsibilities of the various parties in close consultation with all users.

Issues to be resolved:

In MONARCH, the RCHME is providing a generic application to meet the diverse requirements of SMRs. Enhancements to the application over the last fifteen months have been in response to change requests from both SMRs and RCHME staff. In some cases, alterations to routines have reflected the needs of individual SMRs. For example, variations in the quality and structure of data have required alterations in the tag data loader.

The MONARCH application, having been designed as a corporate database for the NMR, is a complex and technical product. Although there is no need for detailed technical knowledge to use the system, many SMRs do not possess or have local access to the skills and knowledge required to support MONARCH in the long term.

Demand for development and support by RCHME's IS/IT department (from both RCHME and SMR staff) must be set against a background of decreasing budgetary and staff resources.

There is also a potential for incompatibility between computer services provided by the RCHME and the preferred strategies of local IS/IT departments. At this time, SMRs will benefit from stronger local IT support arrangements. It might also be suggested that the free supply of MONARCH does not offer an equitable distribution of resources to SMRs making alternative software provision.

The Oracle corporation aims to cut support for Oracle version 6 by the end of 1996. Thus, the MONARCH DOS version has a limited lifespan. Soon, the national database will migrate to Oracle version 7 for UNIX systems.

The implications for MONARCH running on PCs are serious. `Personal Oracle', Oracle Version 7, exacerbates differences between UNIX and Windows environments and improvements in the national system will become more difficult to migrate. Full implementation of Oracle 7 for MONARCH for SMRs on PCs would mean a major rewrite. The speed of technological change is such that RCHME cannot guarantee to satisfy all local requirements. It may have to focus on the supply of a single operating environment (UNIX).

The cost of development and support for the application has been significant and yet it is effectively offered free to interested parties. Although SMRs were represented through ACAO in the design and development of MONARCH, their sense of 'ownership' for the product appears to be low. As a result, SMRs have no sense of liability and do not feel that they have close control over requests for its future development. Would a local authority be as keen to use the package if there was a charge for the licence and resources?

Conclusion

In the future the RCHME will need to take a much more realistic attitude towards the supply and support of software, focusing its skill and expertise in facilitation and data standards.

Regional Forum

SMR working parties and County Archaeologist's groups currently exist for most parts of the country, with the exception of London and the south east. A summary of their activities follows.

We would be interested to hear your views on the future of regional SMR working parties; for example whether SMR officers would like to form new groups, particularly in areas not currently meeting.

East Anglian SMR working party

The working party comprises of the counties: Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire. The group was formed to promote common approaches within the region, particularly a wordlist of site and artifact types. The twice yearly meeting provides a forum for SMR Officers to exchange views, ideas and information about SMR projects. For example, enhancement projects (e.g. World War II defences), and progress on national projects (e.g. MARs and MPP). The group can voice concerns from a regional base directly or via the local county archaeologists group. *(Jude Plouviez, Suffolk SMR)*

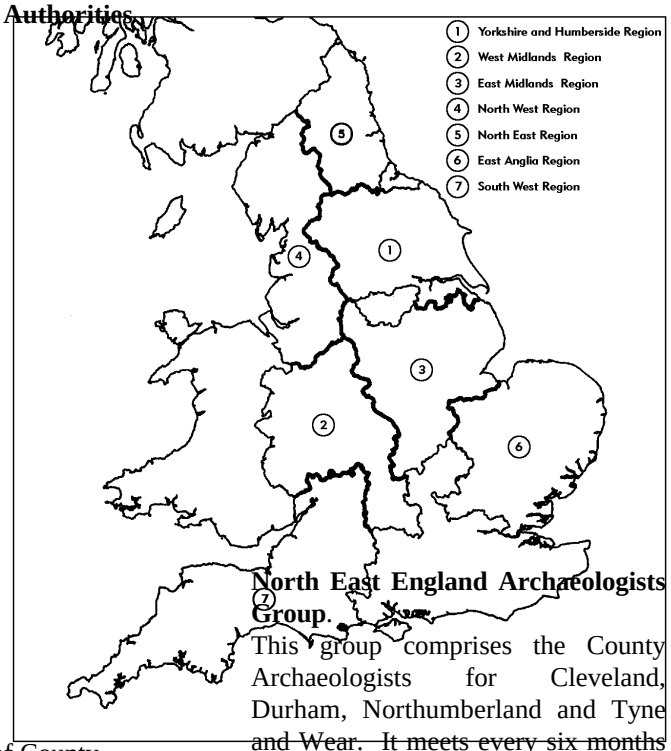
East Midlands SMR Working Party

The working party covers Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire. Representatives from English Heritage, RCHME and the local Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group are invited. Meetings are held every quarter with the venue rotating around the participating SMRs. A formal minuted meeting is held in which each member presents a brief verbal report on any recent matters of interest. This is followed by an informal afternoon session with more detailed discussion of a particular issue or perhaps a demonstration of the latest development of the host's SMR software. The meetings are generally well attended and provide a useful forum for SMRs to share experiences, suggest solutions to particular problems and to discuss matters that affect the region as a whole. *(Mark Bennet, Lincolnshire SMR)*

Yorkshire & Humberside SMR Working Party

This group covers all of Yorkshire, Humberside, Cleveland, the two National Parks and the City of York.

West Midlands Local Authorities Archaeology Forum



This group comprises of County /Borough Archaeologists from West Midlands, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Shropshire and Hereford and Worcestershire.

North West SMR Working Party

The working party covers Cheshire, Cumbria, Greater Manchester, Lancashire and Merseyside. SMR officers and representatives from the RCHME and English Heritage meet every three months. Issues discussed include SMR development, approaches to common enquiries, requests for information from national surveys e.g. MARS. County officers present a Development Control update and difficult or unusual cases are discussed. Occasionally guest speakers are invited to discuss their work in the region, eg. British Gas, North West Water or the Forestry Authority. Representatives from the working party also attend meetings of regional groups, such as the CBA North West Industrial Archaeology Panel and the Conservation, Access and Recreation Advisory Committee of North West Water.
(Jill Collens, Cheshire SMR)

North East England Archaeologists Group.

This group comprises the County Archaeologists for Cleveland, Durham, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear. It meets every six months or quarterly depending on urgency and mainly addresses policy issues for the region.
(Robin Daniels, Cleveland)

South West SMR Working Party

This group had not met since 1990 when the last of the English Heritage regional SMR meetings took place. Since then The South West Archaeological Forum has been formed but this is composed only of ACAO members and has tended to discuss broad policy issues. The SMR group was recently reactivated (specifically to discuss the potential of the RCHME offer of new software) and following a successful first meeting, now intends to meet four times a year. The group comprises of those local authorities that curate SMRs and UADs together with the RCHME and English Heritage.
(Chris Webster, Somerset SMR)

RCHME/SMR software development: Partnership proposal

Neil Lang, RCHME

At the last meeting of the SMR Software Users group, an informal proposal was discussed to extend the range of software options open to SMRs. Currently SMRs have four main options for database management systems:

- to continue with existing software
- MONARCH for SMRs
- commercial SMR packages
- independant software procurement (either in-house or from an external supplier).

MONARCH for SMRs is very suitable for larger SMRs with in-house ORACLE expertise. However, experience with the MONARCH pilot sites suggests that the technical complexity of the system may make it less appropriate for SMRs with limited local expertise or support. It is also possibly overspecified for the needs of some SMRs.

There are few established packages commercially available and their adherence to nationally agreed data standards is variable. Some SMR officers feel that they lack both time and expertise to select the most appropriate package for their needs.

We proposed that a new PC based package might be developed in a partnership between SMRs, the RCHME and a third party software company. The RCHME would provide assistance with data standards and offer financial support to the software company to minimise software costs, while SMRs would take a lead in identifying user requirements.

The aim would be to identify core SMR functions, incorporating these with nationally agreed data standards into a database running under Windows. The database would be sufficiently flexible so that additional modules could be added by the end-user (or by the software company), and would include an end user report writing tool.

Following a positive response at York, a survey was undertaken of the options for software development being considered by SMR officers. 39 SMRs responded to the survey and a summary of their responses is presented in the table at the bottom of the page.

Of those SMRs who replied, 9 were happy with existing software and 3 with MONARCH for SMRs. The first choice for 16 SMRs was in-house software development. For 9 SMRs first choice was the partnership proposal with RCHME. Selection of commercial software or 'other' developments were first choice for only 3 SMRs.

Most SMRs whose first choice was in-house software development suggested the partnership option would be their second preference. 5 SMRs stated in-house development as their second choice.

Preferred Software.

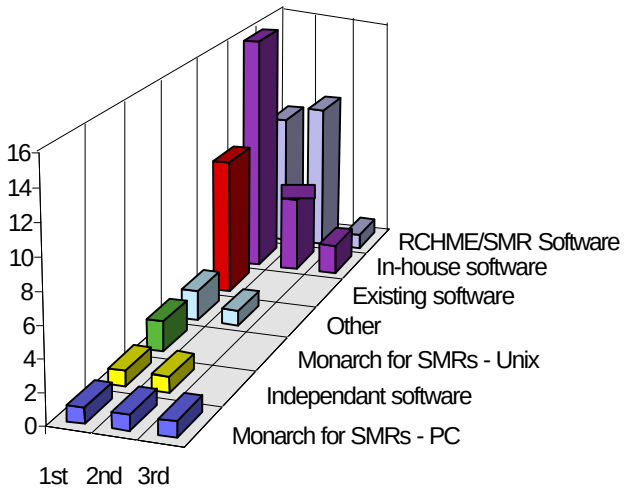
23 SMRs expressed preferences for particular software packages:

Access	11 SMRs
Fox Pro	5 SMRs
Dbase IV or V	2 SMRs
Visual Dbase	1 SMR
Oracle	2 SMRs
Adabas	1 SMR
Superfile	1 SMR

The results of the survey suggest that the majority of SMRs do intend to replace their current software and the majority are considering either Access (48%) or a member of the dBase family (35%). Both are broadly compatible (Access and Foxpro, for example are both produced by Microsoft and readily exchange data) and are likely to form the core of the proposed SMR partnership software.

We are currently discussing the proposal with ALGAO's SMR sub-committee, as the representative body for SMRs. The proposal will only be viable if there is clear majority support from the SMR community.

While the York meeting and this survey show very clearly there is a strong demand for new software, we msut be careful to remember that the database is a means to an end. While there are clear economies of scale from developing a single package rather than 30 individual applications, the standards underlying the database and recording practice will have a greater influence in determining compatibility than use of the same software.



SMR Options for software development in the next two years.

The role of the SMR in a Public Inquiry: a case study

Mark Stevenson, North Herfordshire District Council

In 1993, the Field Archaeology Section of the North Hertfordshire District Council was commissioned to produce two desk based assessments of the proposed northern and eastern routes for a Baldock bypass.

Central to the data collection was the SMR, of which aerial photographs proved the dominant source. The database for the eastern report was increased from 94 to 175 monuments and from 66 to 104 for the northern, the increase included a probable cursus, multiple parallel ditches, ring ditches and a possible Romano-British farmstead.

The main area in which the database was unable to assist, was in terms of historical data, field boundaries, tracks and woodland. Extensive details were obtained from both the County record office and private individuals to permit detailed maps of the historical landscape to be compiled.

Arising from the desk based assessment work, I would formulate three main points:

Always check source material detailed in the SMR, particularly air photographs as a fresh pair of eyes will often see new details, and therefore those setting Briefs for projects should specify such a requirement.

Extensive consideration of the historical landscape must be given and the basis upon which such detail can be assimilated into the SMR should be provided.

The person reviewing the source data should have an intimate knowledge of the locality and therefore be able to readily understand a monument's context.

Proof of Evidence: quantification

The Public Inquiry began on the 25th April 1995 and ended on 26th May, three days of which were allocated on the floor of the Inquiry to deal with archaeological matters. Towards the end of the proceedings, the Inspector visits key sites in the field.

In addition to documentation placed on deposit as core or supplementary archive, the Proof of Evidence had to be submitted prior to the start date.

It is not appropriate to indicate areas of agreement or dispute between the archaeological witnesses. I wish to consider the appendix to the NHDC Proof of Evidence that dealt with the archaeological statistics and its translation into a quantifiable form.

Approach 1 - *count*

A basic measure, applied by counting the number of monuments affected and the total percentage of each monument within areas of possible land uptake. The ratios between routes were then compared.

Approach 2 - *category*

5 distinct categories of monument were quantified:

1 Local Importance

2 Possibly of Regional Importance

3 Regional Importance

4 Possibly of National Importance

5 National Importance

The preceding exercise was repeated by category, obtaining the average percentage affected to enable the sum of averages for the combined categories to be determined.

Approach 3 - *scoring*

Developing from the basic facts, the next step was to add a measure of importance to the figures. The approach selected was to take the category numbering as a value rating so that in simple terms, a nationally important site was worth five and a locally rated monument one point.

The preceding statistics were then repeated. Firstly, the number of monuments per route per category were multiplied by the category 'score' to provide a 'weighted' total so that routes could be compared. Taking the 'weighted' values per category and multiplying with the average percentage of monuments affected, generated a 'weighted' total for each route option. In short, the single number acquired per route incorporated the following :

Monument frequency

Percentage of monuments affected.

Perceived 'quality' of a monument.

Approach 4 - *area*

The preceding basic sequence of statistical stages was then pursued with monument counts per degree of inclusion within each road option being produced. Three divisions were employed: 95-100%, 50-94% and below 50%. The monument counts were then split into category groups to enable impacts to be compared.

The rest of the Appendix for the Proof of Evidence considered the areas represented by Scheduled sites and Archaeological Areas in relation to the areas of proposed land uptake. A 'scoring' was then applied, respectively 5 and 3 to illustrate possible impact. The Appendix was concluded by considering areas covered by field survey and apparent 'blank' areas, with such areas representing lack of archaeological evidence rather than areas devoid of archaeological remains.

Conclusion

The statistical data was of key importance to the 'evidence'. All the statistics and discussions on the floor of the Inquiry and the references to map work, all arose from the desktop assessments and the catalogue of monuments derived from the SMR, its own source material and the historical evidence. As a result of the many weeks involved working through both the assessments and the Inquiry, it became clear that accuracy and the reviewing of all sources are the foundations for a professional presentation where the 'evidence' is under such intense scrutiny.

Listed Building System

Dawn Abercromby, RCHME

The computerization of the statutory lists of historic buildings is nearing completion. This is a tripartite project between the Department of National Heritage (DNH), English Heritage (EH) and the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England (RCHME). EH was responsible for developing imaging software for scanned data, a system to produce list recommend-ations/approved lists and the enquiry mechanisms for listed buildings. RCHME was responsible for data capture: managing the scanning; quality assuring the optical character recognition (OCR) of the text in the lists and indexing every list entry. The Listed Building core data standard takes account of national and international recommendations on architectural and archaeological data. National Grid References were not available from the lists, EH hope to add these in the coming year.

The RCHME has now delivered to EH the indexes to 363,788 list entries contained in the Greenback and Blueback volumes released before the end of March 1996. Images of pages and machine-readable texts of every greenback list entry and their amendments are linked to the index records. The OCR of these images was better than anticipated, 85% of the text is > 99.5% accurate. The text will be improved further by EH next year.

The final Listed Building System (LBS) has several integrated components. Bespoke enquiry panels utilize the structured indexes and/or free text searches are possible. Users can access associated text files on screen or select standard reports. The enquiry system is windows based ORACLE 7 with an additional reporting tool *Crystal Reports*. The text of the list entries and the scanned images are held in an EDM system produced by TRIMCO.

Once user testing of the LBS is complete, the RCHME, EH and DNH will have access to the LBS data. EH will update the system once the usual approval has been given by the DNH. EH will index using a case management system, under development. The EH index records will be scrutinized by the RCHME who are responsible for ensuring that data standards are maintained and developed in accordance with the appropriate working parties, which include SMR representation.

The DNH has recognized the RCHME lead role in dissemination to the public. The development of electronic access and dissemination to local authorities has yet to be discussed, although it is planned to include representation of local authorities in this process. The launch of a full service to local authorities is likely to be late spring 1997 following market research of user involvement in services.

Enquiries should be directed to Dawn Abercromby at the RCHME (01793 414782).

Maritime Archaeology

Ben Ferrari, RCHME

The compilation phase of the national inventory of maritime archaeology is now complete. The project began in 1992 and since then has created some 31,000 records on MONARCH.

Recording work at the national level focused on two major sources. The shipwreck index of the Hydrographic Office yielded information on known wrecks and features regarded as probable wrecks. Richard and Bridget Larn's shipwreck archive provided the RCHME with several decades of documentary research.

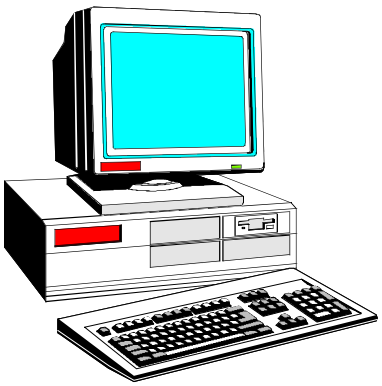
The national recording programme was preceded by a pilot project which identified sources of data best accessed at the local level. During the national programme the RCHME supported a number of projects which both enhanced the national record and highlighted the importance of locally based recording for the future.

Cleveland County Archaeology Section undertook a recording project in 1993 covering the area from Seaham in County Durham to Whitely in North Yorkshire. This work did much to raise awareness of maritime archaeology in the North-East.

RCHME encouraged the *Friends of the Lancaster Maritime Museum* in their recording projects by providing documentation and advice.

A joint project with Kent County Council commenced in 1994. The resources reviewed included: Port of London Authority wreck records; Spritsail Barge Society list of barge hulks; Port of Medway Archives; the Cinque Ports Archive and aerial photographs. In 1995 the Plymouth City Archaeologist initiated a study of the management issues associated with the archaeology of Plymouth Sound. The RCHME also contributed to a rapid data gathering exercise focused on the sub-tidal resource.

A non-technical report on the compilation project will be published shortly and discussions have begun concerning data exchange. The Maritime section looks forward to the future development of the maritime record.



Data Standards for Spatial Information on the Historic Environment in Geographical Information Systems

Neil Lang, RCHME.

Information on the heritage (whether it be archaeological sites and monuments, buildings or findspots) has been mapped and recorded digitally for over ten years. This trend is growing rapidly, particularly in the context of local government cultural resource management (CRM) applications of GIS.

Although certain GIS special interest groups (such as GISARCH) have been established to promote the interchange of ideas, there has been little discussion among the heritage community of the application of standards to spatial information. Developments have often tended to be localised and on occasion, there appears to be limited awareness of relevant initiatives amongst developers of new systems. RCHME, in association with English Heritage and the Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers proposes to set up a working party on data standards to address some of these issues.

Amongst the topics we would like to cover are:

- standards for data capture
- standards for depiction
- standards for data transfer

We currently see the primary aim of the working party to be the production of an advisory paper (or papers) covering best practice, for which we will seek the active collaboration and endorsement of the Association for Geographic Information (AGI) and the Ordnance Survey.

We would also see a role for the Working Party in disseminating summary information on GIS systems which are using heritage information, in order to broaden awareness and promote effective networking. The need for rapid progress in these areas appears to be widely agreed and we would hope to produce an information sheet by late Autumn, and the first of the standards papers by Spring 1997.

Your comments on the scope and content of this initiative, including the composition of the panel are invited. We would particularly welcome views on the appropriate balance to ensure that the varied interests of the heritage community are fully represented while keeping the panel to a manageable size. We would welcome expressions of interest from organisations and individuals who would be able to contribute to the Working Party and also from persons who would like to be kept informed of its progress.

These should be addressed to:
Neil Lang,
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Kemble Drive,
Swindon SN2 2GZ.

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