Heritage Information Access Strategy
Introduction, Background & Update

by
Keith May

The Heritage Information Access Strategy (HIAS)

- HIAS is an initiative intended to secure an improved and more cost effective approach to the **handling of digital heritage data by EH/HE and our partners** particularly in local authority Historic Environment Records (HERS).

- HIAS is intended to resolve long-standing issues of complexity and duplication of effort in the management of, and access to heritage data nationally, in order to improve its utility and attractiveness to users.

The Heritage Information Access Strategy (HIAS)

- HIAS is an EH initiative which will be taken forward with key partners and stakeholders

- Historic England Draft Corporate Plan 2015-18

  Aim 2.6: Identify and protect England's most important heritage

  "With our partners, improve access to information through Historic Environment Records and explore ways of moving towards a single means of accessing historic environment information nationally".

The HIAS Vision

- Good information aids quality decision-making, and this is as true of the management of the historic environment as for any other sphere.

- It is therefore vital to share information in a timely and accessible manner.

- There are opportunities to be grasped in developing new approaches to recording and sharing historic environment information.

8 Principles of Heritage Information Access

Principle 1: Local Authority HERs should be the first point of call for and primary trusted source of investigative research data and knowledge

Principle 2: English Heritage should be the first point of call for and primary trusted source of national datasets such as the National Maritime Record
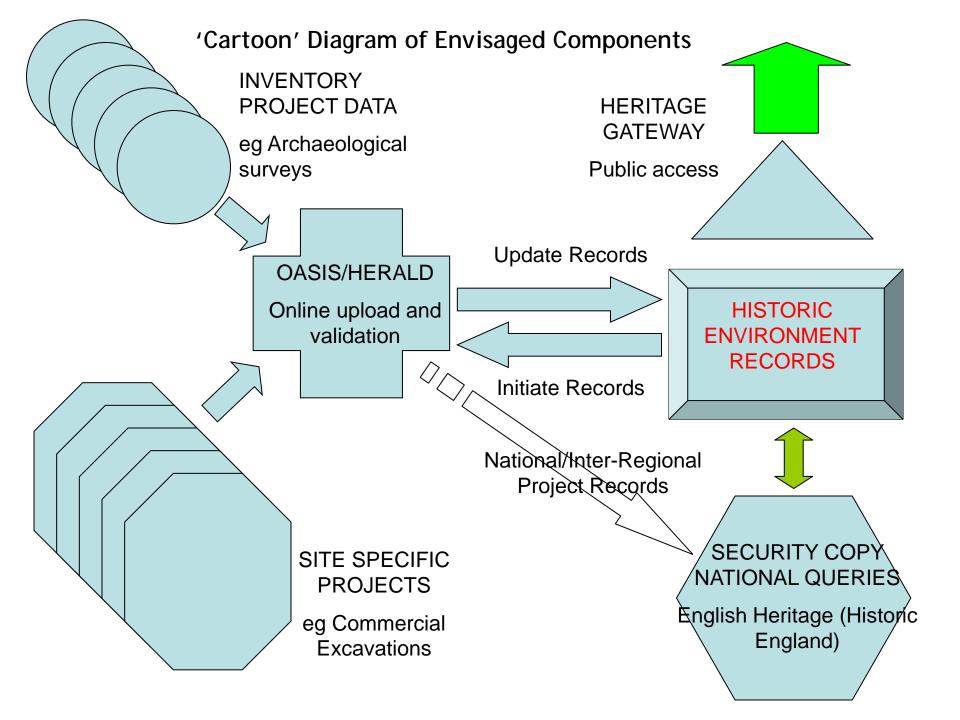
Principle 3: English Heritage should continue to champion the development, maintenance and implementation of standards for the creation, management and storage of digital historic environment data
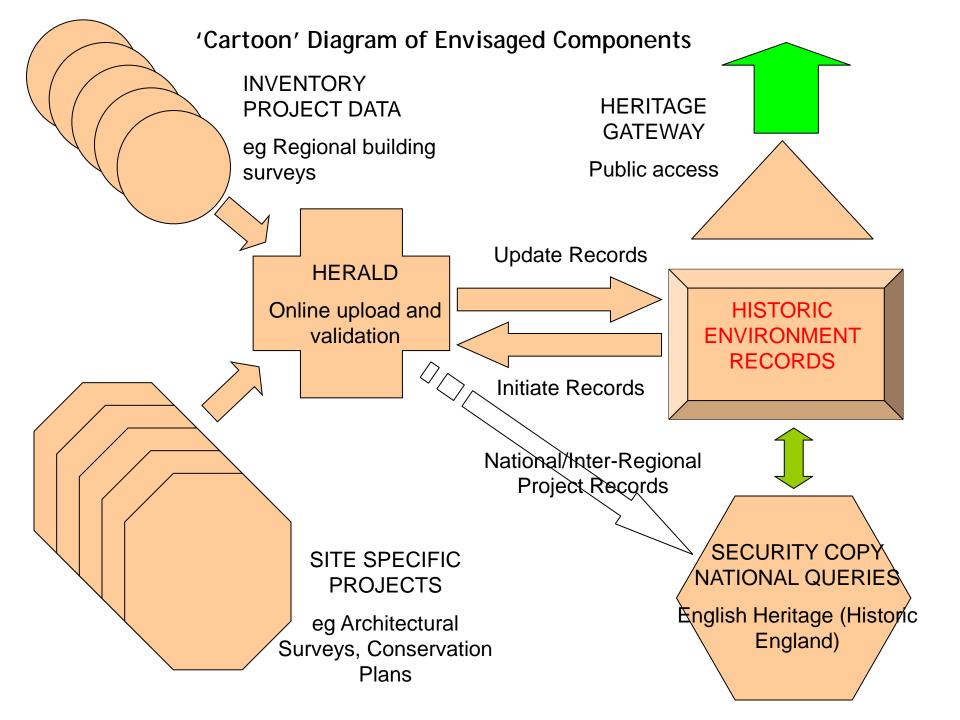
Principle 4: Investigative research data or knowledge should be readily uploaded, validated and accessed online

Principle 5: The national overview should be delivered online through the Heritage Gateway

Principle 6: Such data or knowledge should not be at risk of loss, fragmentation, inundation (in data), or system obsolescence

Principle 7: English Heritage should, on behalf of the nation, ensure that a security copy of all such data exists in accordance with Principles 3 and 6

Principle 8: Digital data should be supported by material archives in safe repositories accessible to the public.

'Cartoon' Diagram of Envisaged Components

INVENTORY PROJECT DATA

eg Archaeological surveys

OASIS/HERALD

Online upload and validation

SITE SPECIFIC PROJECTS

eg Commercial Excavations

HERITAGE GATEWAY

Public access

Update Records

Initiate Records

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORDS

National/Inter-Regional Project Records

SECURITY COPY NATIONAL QUERIES

English Heritage (Historic England)

'Cartoon' Diagram of Envisaged Components

INVENTORY PROJECT DATA

eg Regional building surveys

HERITAGE GATEWAY

Public access

HERALD

Online upload and validation

Update Records

Initiate Records

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORDS

National/Inter-Regional Project Records

SITE SPECIFIC PROJECTS

eg Architectural Surveys, Conservation Plans

SECURITY COPY NATIONAL QUERIES

English Heritage (Historic England)

The HIAS Vision

- We do have information systems and processes for capturing, maintaining and sharing information developed over a number of years.

- These (especially HERs) are firmly enshrined in the Government's national planning policy framework.

- Some examples:

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- HERs: Public access to monuments and events

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- OASIS: Online entry of events/reports

OASIS FORM - Login page
http://oasis.ac.uk/form/

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM:

Welcome to the OASIS data collection form. Please enter your **username** and **password** below.

Username: [   ]

Password: [   ]

Login

Please note: The OASIS form is intended to be used for the reporting of **current** archaeological projects only. Please see FAQ for further clarification

Please remember to keep your details up to date using the 'Change your details' link on the menu bar once you have logged into the form.
It is particularly important that the e-mail address stored within OASIS is current as this is the method by which we will keep you informed about your records.

If you do not have a username and password and you wish to enter details of your fieldwork/project please register.

If you have registered and have forgotten your password please request a new password.

Return to the Project Main Page

[Scheduled maintenance period: **Tuesdays 8-9am**. The website may be unavailable during this period.]

Please e-mail English Heritage for OASIS help and advice

The HIAS Vision

- EH Excavation Index: Archaeological Events

English Heritage NMR Excavation Index for England
English Heritage, 1998 (updated 2011)

Introduction

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ENGLISH HERITAGE

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Fax: 01793 414707

Send e-mail enquiry

Resource identifiers

ADS Collection: 304

Search this resource

The Excavation Index (EI) is a guide to the archaeological excavations and interventions carried out in England since the earliest days of scientific archaeology, and an index to the location of the excavation archives and finds. It is part of the National Monuments Record, England's heritage archive. This archive contains over 12,000,000 items covering the archaeology and architecture of England including air photographs, historic and modern photographs, digital indices, and documents.

Compiled & updated since 1978, the EI currently comprises some 76,000 records of archaeological events the majority encompassing excavations, evaluations & watching briefs since 1960, geophysical surveys an fieldwork funded by English Heritage & its predecessors. The recent addition to the Index of such activities as desk-based assessments and fieldwalking reflects the close partnership developed with the Archaeological Investigations Project of Bournemouth University under the auspices of the OASIS Project funded by the Research Support Libraries Program.
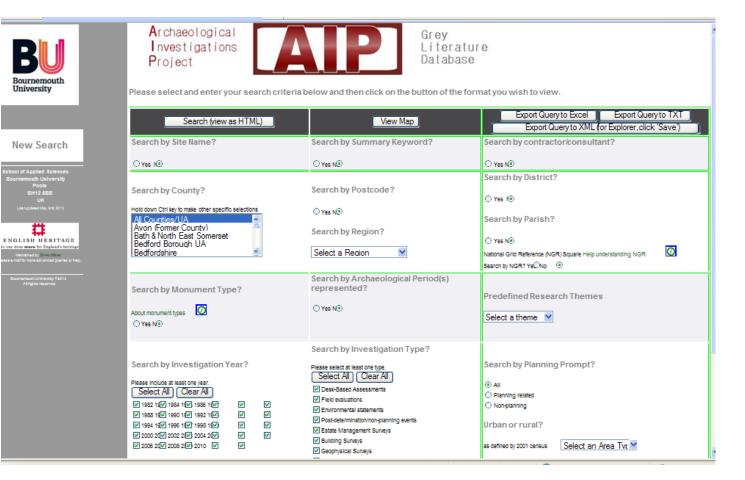
Right: 1908 Excavations at Avebury from NMR Publications Photographic Library © English Heritage NMR. Just one of over 60,000 archaeology projects recorded in the Excavation Index for England.

The EI is updated with information from a wide range of published and non-published sources. Trawling of relevant journals, reports and monographs is augmented by direct data exchange with a number of contractors and curators across the country.

The EI fields supplied for each event to the Archaeology Data Service form a subset of the full computerised record held at the National Monuments Record and comprise:

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- Archaeological Investigations Project

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- Unpublished fieldwork reports

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- Heritage Gateway: cross-search across multiple datasets

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- **BUT**… Some of these systems duplicate parts of others, some have gaps, or they are not up to date…

- The variety of systems and their lack of integration create significant challenges for interrogation and understanding at a national scale…

- Approaches to data access globally are changing…

- Resource pressures mean finding the most efficient way of managing information…
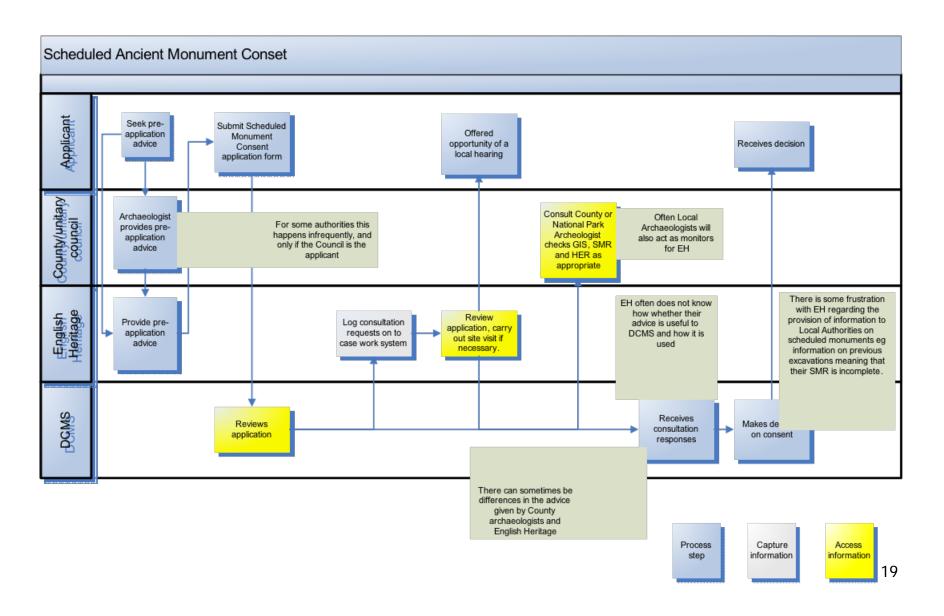
HIAS Programme

Initiation Phase

- Governance
- Communications – internal/external
- Engagement – external advisory board
- Literature Review
- Business Process Mapping of Historic Environment Information (see - next slide)

Next step - Transition to Phase 2

- Work packages
- Building the business cases

HER21 BPM: Scheduled monument consent – "as is"

Scheduled Ancient Monument Conset

Applicant
- Seek pre-application advice
- Submit Scheduled Monument Consent application form
- Offered opportunity of a local hearing
- Receives decision

County/unitary council
- Archaeologist provides pre-application advice
- For some authorities this happens infrequently, and only if the Council is the applicant
- Consult County or National Park Archeologist checks GIS, SMR and HER as appropriate
- Often Local Archaeologists will also act as monitors for EH

English Heritage
- Provide pre-application advice
- Log consultation requests on to case work system
- Review application, carry out site visit if necessary.
- EH often does not know how whether their advice is useful to DCMS and how it is used
- There is some frustration with EH regarding the provision of information to Local Authorities on scheduled monuments eg information on previous excavations meaning that their SMR is incomplete.

DCMS
- Reviews application
- Receives consultation responses
- Makes decision on consent
- There can sometimes be differences in the advice given by County archaeologists and English Heritage

Legend:
- Process step
- Capture information
- Access information

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Governance

HIAS Programme Board

EH currently, Steve Trow SRO

Keith May (Strategy Lead), Simon Hawkins (Programme Manager), Barney Sloane, Gill Grayson, Dave Batchelor, Lynda Bennett, Duncan Brown, Mike Evans, Steve Slade, Will Holborow, Martin Newman, John Cattell, Joe Flatman, Sandy Kidd, Anthony Streeton.

HIAS Advisory Board

EH, ALGAO, IHBC, IfA, CBA, ADS, FAME, RIBA, Planning Officers Society, Archaeological Archives Forum, Society for Museum Archaeology, Joint Committee of the National Amenity Societies

Academic research community – The Subject Committee for Archaeology

Commercial built environment sub-sector – The Archaeology History Practice and Kathryn Sather Assoc