



ALGAO-UK HER Committee – Group updates

Thursday 14th January 2016

Historic England West Midlands Regional Office, Birmingham

8. Regular updates from other meetings:

i. ALGAO England Executive

BW noted that the ALGAO-England Executive last met on 12th November 2015. BW updated the executive on HER-related matters such as HIAS (including Marine HER provision), National HLC, HER Outcomes Framework, HER Strategy, NRHE to HERs Research & Development Phase Project, etc.

Other topics discussed included:

- The Historic Environment Forum (HEF), is discussing guidance, planning fees (to help pay for Historic Environment / Archaeology advice). It was noted that ALGAO was not well represented on the Historic Environment Forum. The ALGAO-UK HER Committee were concerned that there was a lack of engagement with the HEF; and **Action: BW** to recommend to the ALGAO-England Executive that ALGAO tries to be involved with and/or influence the HEF further.
- Culture White Paper: ideas are wanted for this, but it is anticipated that this will not inform legislation or involve any cost. ALGAO to comment on the White Paper.
- Government proposals for planning. ALGAO are ensuring that this includes non-designated heritage assets.
- Archaeology Training Forum.
- Agri-Environment Schemes. The new Countryside Stewardship scheme was estimated to have 4000 mid-tier and 1000 high-tier schemes; but actual figures were approximately 2000 mid-tier and 650 high-tier schemes. It was noted that in 2016, the water capital directive may consult the historic environment sector.
- Value of historic environment staff. It was estimated that each ALGAO member leverages approximately £500,000 of archaeology & developer-funded work. For agri-environment advice, this is estimated to be approximately £900,000 per HER/area. (Over 18 years, there have been approximately £270 million worth of Historic Environment agri-environment options, or £15 million per year)

It was noted that the ALGAO survey on Heritage 2020 will be launched on 19th January 2016.

The next ALGAO England Executive meeting is next week.

ii. HE Listing Group + ALGAO HER liaison meeting

(Previously called "HE HDM/ALGAO HER Liaison"). This group hasn't met since the last ALGAO-UK HER Committee.

iii. HER Forum

The winter HER Forum meeting was held as last year in the lecture theatre at the Birmingham and Midland Institute with 64 attendees. The late withdrawal of one of the speakers caused the programme to be reshuffled slightly but also allowed for more discussion. The morning started with a presentation on the CITiZAN project, concentrating on the ways in which data would be made available to HER, but leading on to a discussion about the use of volunteers and the longevity of the project once the HLF funding ended. This was followed by a demonstration of how the HEROS system was being used for non-core HER activities, such as management recording for the National Botanic Garden of Wales and geo-rectification for the Know Your Place project.

In the afternoon, the potential role of heritage in neighbourhood plans was explored followed by an update on the work on the HER Outcomes Framework project. Finally, the latest progress report on the OASIS/HERALD project was reported. All three topics were followed by an enthusiastic discussion. After the close of formal business, there was a very good turnout for post-meeting networking.

There will be a HER Forum 'Springtime Special' meeting on Wednesday March 9th in the Daniel Gooch Theatre at the Steam railway museum, Swindon. The morning session will take the form of an informal workshop on HER Audits, HER Outcomes Framework and HER Benchmarks. The afternoon session will follow that of the usual HER Forum meetings with presentations on, amongst other topics, Parks and Gardens UK and Archaeological Priority Areas.

The following HER Forum summer meeting is planned for the week-beginning 4th July and will probably take place in London.

iv. HER Local Engagement Group

The group agreed to stop meeting and is not active.

v. FISH

The FISH committee met for a Strategic meeting on 3rd November 2015 in Cambridge. The following topics were discussed:

National Strategies review (Heritage2020 in England, historic environment strategies in Scotland and Wales): Mike Heyworth from the CBA discussed the common threads and differences in strategies across various heritage strategies that are emerging.

National Historic Environment Information Strategies review (SHED, HIAS, Welsh Heritage Bill): The various information strategies that are currently emerging were discussed, noting that there was a divergence of structures in national heritage organisations, leading to slightly different approaches.

Discussion on the development of OASIS (HERALD) including BIAB: Louisa Matthews gave an overview of the on-going OASIS redesign, with *lite*, *standard* and *plus* levels and a changed workflow.

Presentation - INSPIRE: Peter McKeague from Historic Environment Scotland discussed INSPIRE. In Scotland, both designated and undesignated historic environment sites are considered to be part of INSPIRE, and web map services and web feature services are published to provide this. It was noted that the Ordnance Survey has changed their presumption to publish policy.

Presentation – ResearchSpace: Dominic Oldman from the British Museum gave a presentation on [ResearchSpace](#). The objectives of this open source project were data enrichment, data harmonisation and investigating computer reasoning and interface. This is done using knowledge representation and Semantic Web technologies; for example using tools for search rather than by thesauri.

Presentation - A Regional HER Review: Sally Croft from Cambridgeshire HER gave a presentation on the HERs in the East of England region.

Other business:

HIERNET register: It was noted that Historic England Heritage Information Partnerships Team will investigate this, and it's relationship between Heritage Gateway and data.gov.uk.

Next meeting: FISH technical meeting (spring) – Worcester? May/June 2016? FISH Strategic meeting (autumn) – Scotland? November 2016?

MIDAS revision workshop: possibly sometime soon? Before the next meeting?

Representation: It was decided that Sal Croft and Sam Mellonie will be attending members of the FISH committee, to represent the HBSMR User Group.

Action: GT to get someone from the FISH Terminology Working Group to send a reminder to HERs (via HER Forum) about how they can submit candidate terms to the various thesauri.

vi. HBSMR User Group

The most recent User Group meeting was hosted by Worcestershire County Council at the Hive building in Worcester. The next meeting will be hosted by Milton Keynes in May 2016.

The role of the User Group Co-ordinator has now passed from Rob Edwards and Moya Watson to Sam Mellonie (Central Bedfordshire Council) and Sally Croft (Cambridgeshire County Council). ExeGesIS have welcomed two new staff Abby Hunt and Emily Penniford. HBSMRv5 is scheduled for release in 2016 and installations will be undertaken as part of the Annual Service Visit program once available.

The Scottish HBSMR user group has been established, with their first meeting held in October 2015. Allowing Scottish users to have greater involvement, key areas discussed included geospatial attribute recording in HBSMR/Map Link v.5, progress on SHED and importing data from the annual CANMORE downloads supplied by HES.

ExeGesIS have recently closed a consultation (8th Jan) on the proposed introduction of full-text indexing in SQL Server for HBSMRv5, as discussed at the HBSMR User Group meeting in Worcestershire. "Full-text indexing" is an SQL Server database technology that permits high performance flexible text queries in a manner that is more sophisticated than currently possible in HBSMR. For example a search for "Romans" could operate correctly against information held in summary, description, and period classifications to find records from the Roman period or mentioning "Roman" or "Romans"; at present it could only search one field and would fail to find singular instances of the term.

ExeGesIS are putting together an online portfolio of HBSMR customisations to enable all users to see the kind of customisations that are possible. It will be available on the documentation website.

vii. BHUG Meeting Report

Met after HER Forum meeting 8th December 2015.

Present: Nick Boldrini (Durham & Chair), Tim Grubb & Anna Morris (Gloucestershire), Chris Webster (Somerset), Nick Davis (Historic England, Observer)

Apologies: Rebecca Casa-Hatton (Peterborough), Sarah Botfield (Peterborough), Alan Whitney (Hampshire), James Kenny (Chichester), Rachel Grahame (Tees), Jennifer Morrison (Tyne and Wear), Elizabeth Williams (Northumberland), Chris Martin (Clwyd-Powys)

HIAS We briefly discussed the potential impact of HIAS work on BHUGs. The generic point was made that when any API's are created, then BHUGs need to be considered, but that it would be up to individual BHUGs to sort out their end to link any API to their HER software.

Heritage Gateway - The generic point above applies, but an issue was pointed out with the documentation for this, which seems to be tied into particular Microsoft products to enable the database to Polygon linking. Again, this should be about process not particular software, as not all users have access to the software.

OASIS/HERALD - Of the users there, none were active OASIS users, though all had some interest in being able to link to DOIs of Grey literature reports, and recognised the value of the GL library as an archive. However, this meant there were no issues identified regarding importing/exporting of data between HERs and OASIS - other than the generic one above.

National Security Copy - Though unclear at the moment, it was assumed that this would involve producing an Entity Relationship model of the HER software, and dumping the data out in standard CSV files. This was felt unlikely to be a major issue for BHUGs, as most software allows this fairly easily. The only issue might be if the data was requested in a particular format eg XML or other, as this would probably require more help to achieve.

Maritime - This was seen as a data exchange issue, and it was suggested that using a similar methodology to that suggested for the NMR to HER data exchange would be appropriate.

viii. OASIS Management Board

The last meeting was in October in Edinburgh which I was not able to attend so this report is taken from the minutes.

Country round-ups:

England. England has passed the 25,000 forms milestone.

There has been an uptake or re-uptake of OASIS in Cumbria, Dorset, Leicestershire, Isle of Wight, and at the National Trust HER. Still good figures: Berkshire and Suffolk.

Surrey still have low numbers of forms validated and have declined proxy validation.

Warwickshire are also struggling. Herefordshire have lost HER capacity and are accruing a backlog.

Scotland. Last 6 months has seen a continued rise in with 141 records completed over the summer. There's been a reduction in 'Waiting for HER to Validate' records thanks to converted efforts to clear the City of Edinburgh backlog.

Wales. Discussions with CPAT had got underway again. It is hoped to have discussion with the HEROS system developer to trial something quite similar to OASISLite

Northern Ireland. Discussions are on-going to take up OASIS

Other items see minutes.

ix. Report from regional HER Forums

a. East of England HER Forum

Bedford Borough:

The Bedford Borough Historic Environment Team is working with the HE NMP Team on an NMP project for the whole borough. Work experience student continues to enhance WWII records. A further £25million pounds worth of cuts have been announced over the next 4 years, on top of the £81million pounds already saved. We already charge for briefs and quality checking of the archaeological process but may have to consider further funding options for our team of two.

Central Bedfordshire: Moved from Windows XP to 7 but still some IT issues following migration from Citrix 4.5 to 6.5 and aborted server move, currently working without Library Link. 20% through continuing work on improving summary descriptions and ensuring all paper records held in box files properly referenced in digital record. Coming to end of Forward Plan 2012-15, have produced a revised Forward Plan for 2016-18 which has gone out for consultation. A bid for further digitisation has been submitted for inclusion in corporate Financial Plan (2016 onwards). Enquiries are up at this time compared with the last couple of years. We now give out HER Search Numbers which have to be quoted by consultants/contractors so that DC Officers can see that the HER has been consulted properly. The Secrets of the Sands HLF funded project across the Greensand Ridge continues and the historic environment dominates three of the four consultant projects which have just reached the draft report stage. The area is likely to be branded as 'Greensand Country' with further delivery projects to follow. Central Bedfordshire have not yet corporately undertaken any INSPIRE work. The HER is likely to include basic metadata when tools are purchased. Have provided a quote to Thames Water for a new 5 year licence for data, to replace the previous 2 year agreement. No budgetary or accommodation threats expected over the next financial year (though continue to have no HER room and lack of small meeting rooms for visitors).

Cambridgeshire: Haven't been able to progress re-recruitment so HER/Archive post is still vacant (hoping to fill in 2016). Project work postponed until 2016. Overall, sticking to routine tasks rather than big projects at the moment until third team member is recruited. Enquiries are ever increasing (106 last quarter). The second of our two Bradford University placement students is currently working with the HER. Financial review in Council has resulted in new Target Operating Model with 40% less internal funding by 2020. We received 38 HEFER Consultations (12 higher and 26 mid tiers) covering over 10,000 ha of the county. We will be charging for 8 of these, once the charging mechanism is in place. We timed out on 2 but did not pass any. At the outset of the stewardship window, 88% of our Mon dataset had been reviewed for SHINE.

Colchester: In 2015, after five years without enhancement, the UAD has now started to be updated again (following the upgrade to HBSMR v.4 in March 15) and the backlog is slowly being cleared. The dataset for the rest of the Borough has been recently (in September 15) obtained from Essex CC, and the two datasets were integrated by Exegesis in November 15 thus expanding the area of the UAD to the entire Borough. Work has now begun to edit and update this dataset. Also in November, the Council approved the introduction of modest charges to cover the costs of undertaking commercial searches, consistent with most other Local Authorities in the region. The charges will be introduced shortly, once an online payment form has been developed. It is also anticipated that the new planning advisory

charges (also approved by the Council in Nov) will cover the cost of enhancing the UAD, i.e. to cover the costs of entering the information generated by projects through the planning system; funding has been also secured through S106 agreements for several developer projects.

Essex: No update provided.

Hertfordshire: No update provided.

Norfolk: 27% reduction in budget announced, with a loss of 55 FTE staff. Restructure in progress, will likely include loss of post recently departed by Alice Cattermole. Scheduled ICT hardware refresh happened and software update to Windows 7 has finally happened although incurred a great deal of disruption to the team in the process. Digitisation is still going on though.

Peterborough: Intending to undertake a revised HER audit soon. Database is transferred and data cleansing is in progress. PCC planning team is working with counterparts in Fenland District Council to deliver an improved and more cost-effective service, however the Archaeology Services of PCC and Cambridgeshire CC remain separate and have not been affected. HER staff undertaking training to do some of the required digitisation themselves.

Suffolk: The Archaeological Service has as part of SCC undergone a restructure and is now part of Natural and Historic Environment Service (NHET) and relocated to another office in Bury St Edmunds. HER paper files are still in storage, so the HER is running a reduced service. The Ipswich UAD project Officer is now in post and the project underway.

b. East Midlands HER Forum

All East Midland HE services are still recovering from the impact of budget cuts over several years and most are anticipating further cuts to their authorities' budgets over the next several years. The following are the major items of interest.

In **Derbyshire**, an undergraduate placement with the HER as been in post since December. It is a mature student from the Department of Archaeology at Sheffield University. A Lidar project reviewing the existing Lidar data for the Derwentwise project area has identified almost 200 new sites which have now been added to the HER. A contract has been let to commission a flight to collect some new data at a higher resolution for the wooded areas. This will take place over the winter. Resources have been included to add any new sites to the HER. A Heritage at Risk project is due to start soon. Arch Heritage, Trent and Peak Archaeology and Locus Consulting have been appointed to manage the project and Exegesis have developed a web site in discussion with the HER and the consultants.

In **Leicester** HER Chris Wardle has retired. Unsure what provision has been made for the HER. There are no HER specific contact details on the Heritage Gateway.

Leicestershire has a part time HER assistant continuing to work with the HER officer on a three monthly rolling contract. This is an extremely useful and helpful addition to the HER staffing and some of the backlog is being tackled.

The **Lincoln** Heritage Database has just completed an audit for Historic England and are now pursuing an action plan to address the issues raised. A new database system continues to be actively considered and the Arches system is high on the list at the moment.

Lincolnshire HE services have been part of a restructure that has been partially completed but is now on hold. Further cuts to LCC income have been announced following the spending review and further pressure on the departmental budgets will be a fact of life for several years. At the moment there is no further information on how this will affect the HE services.

Northamptonshire HER will, from the beginning of 2016, have a new member of staff at the HER. Charlotte Walker is taking over, after covering one day a week for the last few months.

North Lincolnshire the HE staffing is stable at the moment.

Nottinghamshire HE services have lost two staff members leaving three staff to develop the HER, do the DC work and deliver on commitments to community projects. The HER is up and running with the exeGesIS HBSMR software, and staff are currently looking at developing input to the Heritage Gateway. There were fewer issues on the data migration than expected.

c. London HER

In November we found out that as part of the CSR Historic England would have its funding cut by about 10% over the next four years. We are still waiting to get the letter of confirmation from DCMS about this, and if there are any instructions as to how this cut is implemented.

How the cuts are managed will have an impact on GLAAS as we have a number of people on secondment, temporary contract, or maternity cover.

Also in November we upgraded to HBSMR v4. There are still a number of issues which need to be resolved, but they seem to be more to do with our IT system, than HBSMR itself.

d. North East HER Forum

There hasn't been a NE Regional Meeting since the last ALGAO HER Committee, next one is due at beginning of March.

e. North West HER Forum

There hasn't been a meeting of the group since the last ALGAO HER meeting. The next meeting will be in Chester at a date to be confirmed in February.

It was noted that Lancashire County Council's had published proposals to close its Archaeology Service (including its HER). This will have a wider impact as Ken Davis, the HER Officer, has been working on the Cumbria HER as well, as a service-level agreement. Cumbria's HER has been without an officer in post for a couple of years now.

The ALGAO-England Executive and the Historic England HIPs team were aware of this proposal; and rapid Audits are underway at both authorities. The Historic England HIPs team will make any comments about this proposal via the relevant Historic Environment regional team.

The ALGAO-UK HER Committee strongly advised that **Action: BW** to strongly recommend that the ALGAO-England Executive ensure that robust responses to the proposal are made by the ClfA, CBA, Historic England and Rescue, and from the ALGAO-England Executive directly. (There was concern that the ALGAO-England Executive might not consider that it was their policy to make these comments; but if this was the case the ALGAO-UK HER Committee urge them to revisit this policy).

f. South East HER Forum

Our last regional meeting was on 1st October, so I haven't got any new meeting minutes to report since the last ALGAO-UK HER Committee meeting.

g. South West HER Forum

Attendees. Tim Grubb & Anna Morris (Glos), Samantha Bax (Glos City), Chris Webster (Somerset), Nick Davis (EH), Tom Sunley & Emma Whitcombe (Wilts), Sue Watts (Devon), Stephanie Knight (Devon), Claire Pinder (Dorset), Felicia Davies (Know Your Place Project), Pete Insole (Bristol), Paul Driscoll (S. Glos), Dan Smith (N Somerset)

Apologies. Hal Bishop (Torquay), Alexandra Richards (Dartmoor), Catherine Dove & Shirley Blalock (Exmoor), Andrew Armstrong (Glos City).

Regional round-up

Exmoor National Park (Catherine Dove by email)

One piece of news you can pass on is that I am now dropping down from full time to part time (working Mon-Weds), with the other two days not currently due to be filled. A new project has been started looking at historic signposts, which has come about from external interest.

Dartmoor National Park (Alexandra Richards by email)

- Lost part of our HERO provision in April this year (Sue Watts; she is still at Devon CC though), so we are down to me working 2 days a week, although I am involved in some extra project work as part of our Moor than Meets the Eye HLF project here. This is helping to improve the state of the HER and constitutes an extra day and a half per week most weeks.
- Since the external hosting of the HER (which I'm sure Devon will update on more fully), things are mostly ok, although the speed of the GIS is shockingly bad and there were some inevitable teething problems. Overall, an improvement though.
- Countryside Stewardship has been a nightmare with the new website etc.; the uploads have failed to work on almost every occasion and some of the consultation responses have not registered but I think everyone is in the same boat with it.
- We don't know what will happen with my post beyond next March; depends on the overall Grant etc. that the National Park gets from government

Wiltshire

TS reported that they did 100+ Stewardship applications with DC officers doing some of them. The HLC project has been extended to April 2016 to enable the report to be written. The

Wiltshire and Swindon Farmstead Project is ongoing with a strong volunteer component and links to the Wiltshire Building Record. Cleaning data for the Stonehenge Tunnel project. The archives and conservation teams are being cut. Aiming to go onto Heritage Gateway and use Know Your Place to deliver information. Simon Crutchley (Historic England) delivering some Lidar training.

Dorset

CP reported 47 Stewardship applications with the usual browser problems but nothing serious. Moved office twice to facilitate hot-desking but are able to keep paper documents, space for volunteers and storage for events kit. NMP Marshwood Vale commencing at the end of the year.

Gloucestershire

Spending most of our time dealing with recent switch to Windows 7 and move of all the Council's servers to Corsham. ArcMap particularly problematic when running over the network. Around 70 Stewardship applications with over a third arriving in one 48 hour period.

Gloucester

SB updated the meeting on the progress with work to edit the Gloucester City HER and integrate records from Gloucester Museum and the Excavation Unit.

Bristol City

Forthcoming hot-desking office move will remove physical access to the HER (for users) and the physical archive will also be removed to storage. Current staff consist of PI, Bob Jones and 3 Conservation Officers. Audit revisit is ongoing. Local list (not just buildings) was recently adopted and will be updated every quarter. HER is a big part of the new Heritage Framework for the city.

Devon

SK reported that Graham Tait has moved to Coventry HER, and Ann Dick has left after latest re-organisation and not been replaced. SK working half a week. Devon has been running an externally hosted version of HBSMR for 6 months and there have been some problems with speed. Also having to use new hardware and hot-desk. Tithe maps are completely scanned but are not yet accessible and the EUS is nearly complete with draft reports online. The East and Mid Devon River Catchments NMP project is nearly complete and there is a new NMP project for the Blackdown Hills. 100 Stewardship applications.

South Gloucestershire

PD Currently undergoing an IT transformation project to shut servers and move to Microsoft Azure which will be remotely available to allow access to the 'Know Your Place' and the 'A Forgotten Landscape' projects. SHINE was not done because of the pressure of other work.

Somerset

CW reported that the HER has been part of the South West Heritage Trust for 11 months. Nothing much has changed although the organisation is very archives-focussed. The HER website project has collapsed but it is hoped that the code can be re-purposed. Looking at the HEROS system and may use this to drive the website. Tithe map rectification project is almost complete (50 remaining out of 400).

North Somerset

DS currently working 3 days per week as HER Officer and there is a newly appointed Conservation Officer with limited experience. DS is concentrating on searches and does a little bit of editing for each however there are problems with HBSMR. Vince Russett due to retire after Christmas. DS currently running a successful project at Middle Engine Pit (a HAR site) in Nailsea

AOB

Know Your Place

FD described the planned expansion of the Know Your Place project out of Bristol and into South Gloucestershire, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Somerset. There will be a workshop in November for the HER Officers of these authorities.

h. West Midlands HER Forum

Staffing Updates:

Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust: Funding will come via grant-aid from CADW, with quarterly and five year work programmes monitored by RCAHMW.

Coventry City Council: Graham Tait is now in post as HER Officer.

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust: No staffing changes to report.

Herefordshire County Council: Both Lucie Dingwall and Melissa Seddon have both now left Hereford. It is hoped that the HER Officer post will be retained. A member of the field unit (Peter) is covering HER related work at the moment.

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council: Sandwell are still without a HER officer, with archaeology and HER related functions being split between Conservation Officer (Mark Stretton) and two other officers. They may look at charging to help support this service.

Shropshire Council: Shropshire has lost two Conservation Officers, although one post has been replaced by Ben Williscroft (who has moved from his role as Conservation Officer at East Staffordshire Borough Council). The service and staff are currently seconded to the newly established trading arm/business but it is likely that they will be TUPE transferred as of April 2016. They are looking at succession planning as Penny Ward is hoping to retire at the end of May 2016.

Staffordshire County Council: The Environmental Advice Team is now reduced to 6 (Manager, Principal Archaeologist, HER Officer, Ecologist, Biodiversity Officer and Landscape Officer) following redundancies. Debbie Taylor (Landscape Archaeologist) currently remains on secondment with AMEY, so is still effectively not doing any work for Environmental Advice team; it appears that this secondment will be made permanent, with Debbie likely to be TUPE transferred to AMEY. Once this transfer is complete it is hoped that there will be the capacity to buy back some of her time to support our planning related functions. We are currently in discussions with Districts over implementation of a system to charge developers for planning advice etc and if this is successful it will hopefully support the buying in of Debbie's time.

Warwickshire County Council: Keith Elliot is now in post meaning that there are now 5 full time officers at Warwickshire (with 2 planning assistants and 2 HER assistants). Ideally they would like to make all of these externally funded (currently 2 of the posts are, with the other 2 only temporary at the moment).

Wolverhampton City Council: The service appears to be fairly stable and is not in line for any cuts at the moment. A combined Black Country Archaeology Service has been mooted, although at the moment this is looking at the planning side only.

Worcester City Council: Steve Macleish (former Conservation Officer) has now left the service to work as assistant inspector at Historic England. They are currently recruiting a replacement for Steve and they will be responsible for ongoing programme of character area appraisals. James Dinn is still covering work of Tree Officer. They have a new Chief Executive (Sheena Ramsey), who appears to be sympathetic to heritage and the new corporate plan mentions it specifically.

Worcestershire County Council: Adrian Scruby has joined the County Council and is providing planning advice (replacing Mike Glyde). Andy Weobley is acting as HER Officer. A scrutiny report identified the staff of the service as its greatest asset and recommended that it is left 'as is'. They are trying to make the service more commercially viable as a whole and are managing to retain their field staff at the moment and they feel confident that they will be able to maintain their current staffing levels.

Other News:

Countryside Stewardship: HERs have been very busy with the new Countryside Stewardship Schemes, with each authority dealing with the following: Shropshire: 48 mid-tier and 23 higher-tier; Worcestershire: 51 applications in total; Warwickshire: 38 in total; Herefordshire: 35 mid and 22 higher; Staffordshire: 28 mid and 14 higher. Coventry: 1 mid-tier only. All HERs had some teething problems with downloading etc and we are still awaiting resolution over charging.

Parks and Gardens Trust: Shropshire Council and Worcestershire County Council have been working with their respective Parks and Gardens Trusts to improve relationships and sharing of data.

Young Archaeologists Club: Sheena Payne-Lunn announced that she was stepping down from the Worcester YAC, although is continuing to support them in the transition.

HEROS Wales: Jeff Spencer gave a demonstration of the Welsh HEROS system.

Date and Venue for Next Meeting: Warwickshire County Council have agreed to host the next meeting in late April, although the date and venue are yet to be confirmed.

i. Yorkshire and The Humber HER working party

We have not had a regional meeting since the last one for Yorkshire and Humber yet.

x. ALGAO Maritime Committee

The committee last met on 2nd December 2015.

CITIZAN - The meeting was attended by Stephanie Ostrich, who answered some of the committee's questions about the CITIZAN project, such as mechanisms for deposition of data, the range of volunteers (how many not already involved in archaeology, demographics, how to evaluate the broader social value of heritage), how stretches of coastline to monitor would be targeted given the large area to cover, recording of finds and liaison with the Receiver of Wreck, and how interest would be sustained once the project funding ceased.

HIAS – Joe Flatman explained the context to the proposed National Marine Heritage Dataset. The committee felt that the proposals should not challenge the key role of local authorities, and was particularly concerned about the separation of maritime and terrestrial records. On the coast, particularly at a landscape level, the record should be seamless. The question of where to draw the boundary between the datasets was discussed, as was the deposition of maritime archives. It was likely that there would be workshops in spring to look at the issues.

Coastal Concordat – 14 local authorities had adopted the principles of the Concordat, others who were engaged in projects implementing the principles would be encouraged to sign up.

13. Country updates.

i. ALGAO Cymru

Historic Environment (Wales) Bill: This Bill is still progressing through its various stages within the Welsh Government. The results of the first round of public consultation have been processed and as far as is known there have no major objections. The Bill is still on course to go before the Senedd in spring 2016 and thereafter receive royal ascent.

The results of various consultations carried out by the Government have resulted in a number of proposed amendments, most of which are relatively minor. However two more significant ones have surfaced, which I will outline at the meeting.

Historic Environment Data Standards Working Group for Wales: The first stage of a revamp of the Historic Wales website has been completed and a new landing page has been prepared which better explains the purpose of the site. This page is presently undergoing an internal consultation.

Natural Resources Wales: Progress with Natural Resources Wales on the Memorandum of Understanding with the Welsh Archaeological Trusts has been slow. However, the Memorandum which sets out how NRW interfaces with the Trust's Heritage Management Services should now be signed in February. However certain key appendices are still missing and the mechanism for payment for services to be provided by the WATs is still not clear.

Glastir (all Wales agri-environment scheme): At the risk of being repetitive (again) I will simply repeat what I said last time

“The hold up in funding for work on the production of Historic Environment Feature management reports under the Glastir scheme continues, as the new contract governing this work still awaits finalization. This is now causing acute staffing problems and if funding is not secured soon it may not be possible to produce the reports for 2016 within the given time frame as staff will have been redeployed or lost.”

It is now quite unrealistic to consider that any work required by Glastir in 2015-16 can be done before the end of the financial year. We understand that Glastir staff have been dealing with the lack of historic environment advice by simply not approving any part of any farm management plan that has involved Historic Environment Features!

Roman Rural Settlements: The Leverhulme Trust project looking at Roman Rural Settlement has now completed its data gathering for Wales and the preliminary results were presented at a one day seminar in Cardiff on November 4th. CPAT gave a short presentation

on behalf of Welsh curators which highlighted some of the project's successes and one or two of its potential failures.

ii. Scottish SMR Forum

The Scottish SMR Forum met on 24 November, 2015. BW attended this meeting.

Inverclyde Council – Still no archaeology service provision.

Aberdeen City Council - An SLA is being drawn up by Aberdeen City Council with the Archaeology Service for Aberdeenshire, Moray and Angus Councils to provide archaeological advice and to maintain the HER. Once the SLA is in place a new post will be created.

Dumfries and Galloway Council – The HERO post has been dropped and the service has been reduced to a single post.

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar – Western Isles Council - After Debbie Anderson left to take up a post with the CBA in York, her post has been left vacant pending a service review. Kevin Murphy, the assistant archaeologist, has had his temporary contract renewed until the end of the financial year.

SHED Strategy - A workshop was held on 26 Nov hosted by the Built Environment Forum Scotland (BEFS) for stakeholders from throughout the heritage sector in Scotland. The workshop was well attended and provided an opportunity for lots of feedback about prioritisation of projects for how the SHED Strategy goes forward into implementation of actions.

iii. Historic Environment Scotland

The merger between Historic Scotland and RCAHMS took place on the 1st October 2015 and the processes of bringing the two bodies together are still ongoing, with priorities being shared services such as facilities, HR and IT. The Chief Executive, David Middleton, took up post in early November and has been meeting staff across Historic Environment Scotland.

More information on the new body is available here:

http://www.rcahms.gov.uk/rcahms_media/files/news/hes_external_pack.pdf

Within the Data and Recording team at HES, there has been recent focus on the implementation of the [SHED Strategy](#), which included attendance at a workshop organised by BEFS (Built Environment Forum Scotland) and attention is turning to the development of the HES Survey and Recording Strategy, which will help implement the HES Corporate Plan (currently out for [consultation](#)) and the sector-wide [Our Place in Time](#).

Late last year, the Historic Landuse Assessment Project completed, with full coverage for all of Scotland. The data is available on the [HLAmap](#) website. The [Scotland's Urban Past Project](#) also continues to develop, with varied projects across the country.