

English Heritage and Maritime Archaeology

The first three years

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English Heritage's responsibility for the submerged historic environment of England's Territorial Waters brings new challenges and opportunities.

The expansion of English Heritage's remit to include the seabed off our coast to the 12-nautical mile Territorial Limit, through the passing of the National Heritage Act 2002, represents one of the most significant challenges the organisation has faced since its establishment.

In spatial terms, the increase is approximately three-quarters as much again as the land area of England. More importantly, the seabed contains an immense wealth of archaeological sites and remains, potentially without equal elsewhere in the world in terms of their number and diversity, including extensive inundated prehistoric landscapes as well as evidence of the exploitation of the sea in more recent times.

English Heritage has been given these new responsibilities at a time when the interests of the wider public, and specific stakeholders in the marine and underwater heritage, have risen to unprecedented heights – as seen in the growth of television programmes and other media reports generally. This new role offers a unique opportunity to make a very significant element of the nation's historic and archaeological resource accessible to the wider community of our historically 'maritime' nation.

After the passing of the National Heritage Act 2002, a Head of Maritime Archaeology was appointed, and in the last three years the Maritime Archaeology Team has expanded to include two more archaeologists and an administrative assistant. Paul Roberts and Stephen Trow's *Taking to the Water: English Heritage's Interim Policy on Maritime Archaeology* (2002) and English Heritage's corporate objectives form the framework for the team's work.

New responsibilities

The National Heritage Act 2002 harmonised the roles of the UK heritage agencies by extending English Heritage's remit into the marine zone below the low-water line, modifying the organisation's functions to include:

- securing the preservation of ancient monuments in, on, or under the seabed;
- promoting the public's enjoyment of, and advancing their knowledge of ancient monuments in, on, or under the seabed.

The 2002 Act amended the definition of 'ancient monuments' in the National Heritage Act (1983) and the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979) to include sites in, on or under the seabed (including those comprising the remains of vehicles, vessels, aircraft or movable structures) within the seaward limits of the UK territorial waters adjacent to England.

Another significant change allowed administrative responsibilities in support of the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973, on a UK-wide basis, to be transferred from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to English Heritage. English Heritage now administers the DCMS Advisory Committee on Historic Wreck Sites (ACHWS) and manages the UK Government's contract for archaeological services in support of the 1973 Act, currently held by Wessex Archaeology.

Designated Wreck Sites

English Heritage has assumed responsibilities for the physical management of the 39 historic wreck sites in England's waters, designated under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973

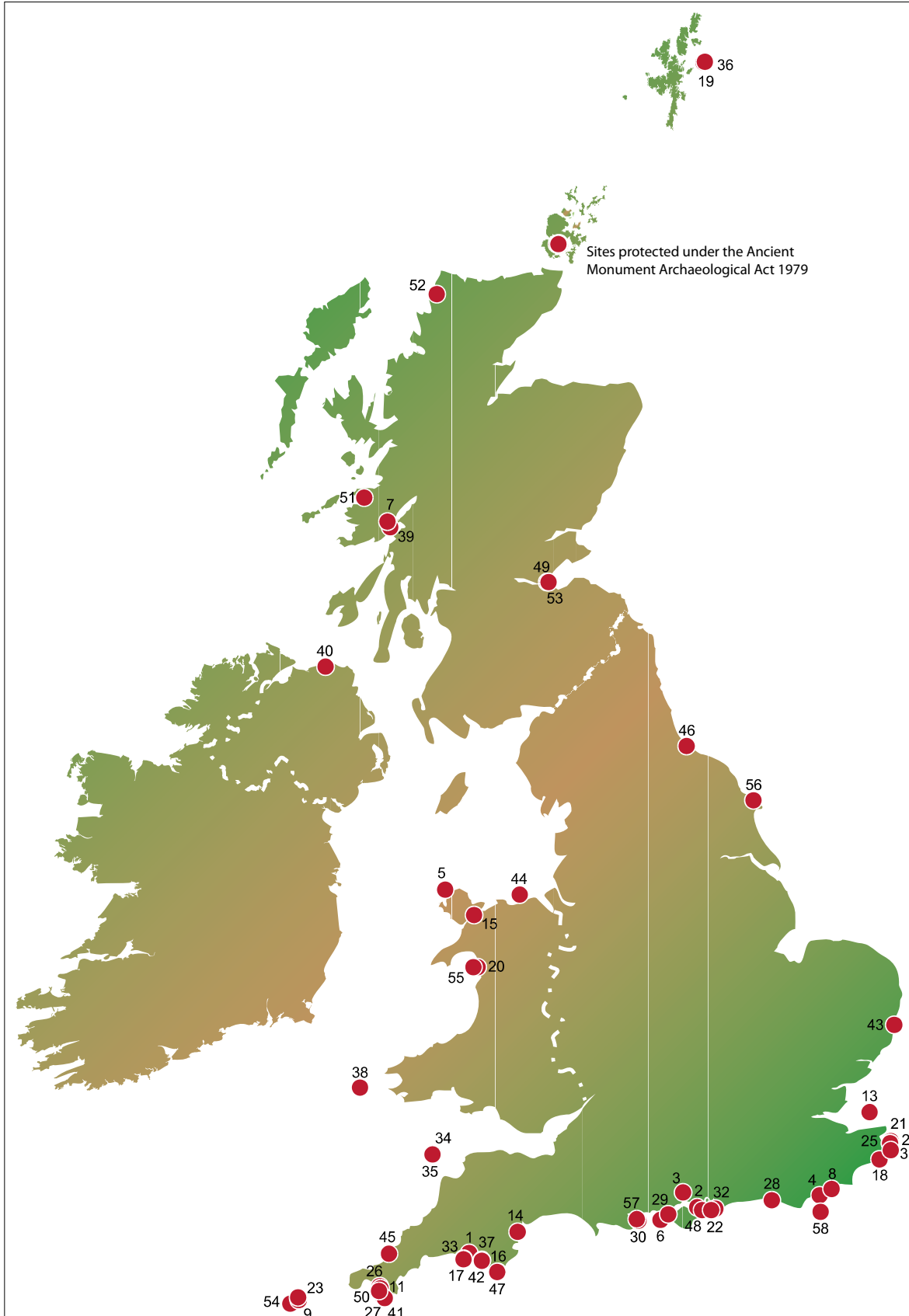
Designated Wreck Sites of the UK protected under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973.

prior to the passing of the National Heritage Act 2002.

A staged approach to the investigation, conservation and management of these Designated Wreck Sites is based on the

development of management plans for each site, in keeping with well-established practice for designated terrestrial sites and monuments. Day-to-day management issues include extensive liaison with all stakeholders, including

- 1 Cattewater
- 2 *Mary Rose*
- 3 *Grace Dieu*
- 4 *Amsterdam*
- 5 *Mary*
- 6 Needles
- 7 *Dartmouth*
- 8 *Anne*
- 9 *Tearing Ledge*
- 10 (revoked)
- 11 *Rill Cove*
- 12 (revoked)
- 13 *South Edinburgh Channel*
- 14 *Church Rocks*
- 15 *Pwll Fanog*
- 16 *Moor Sand*
- 17 *Coronation Offshore*
- 18 *Langdon Bay*
- 19 *Kennermerland*
- 20 *Tal-Y-Bont*
- 21 *Stirling Castle*
- 22 *Invincible*
- 23 *Bartholomew Ledges*
- 24 *Restoration*
- 25 *Northumberland*
- 26 *St Anthony*
- 27 *Shiedam*
- 28 *Brighton Marina*
- 29 *Yarmouth Roads*
- 30 *Studland Bay*
- 31 *Admiral Gardner*
- 32 *Hazardous*
- 33 *Coronation Inshore*
- 34 *Iona II*
- 35 *Gull Rock*
- 36 *Wrangels Palais*
- 37 *Erme Estuary*
- 38 *The Smalls*
- 39 *Duart Point*
- 40 *Girona*
- 41 *Royal Anne*
- 42 *Erme Ingot*
- 43 *Dunwich Bank*
- 44 *Resurgam*
- 45 *Hanover*
- 46 *Seaton Carew*
- 47 *Salcombe Cannon Site*
- 48 *HMS/m AI*
- 49 *Burtisland*
- 50 *Loe Bar*
- 51 *Mingary Castle*
- 52 *Kinlochbervie*
- 53 *HMS Campania*
- 54 *HMS Colossus*
- 55 *The Diamond*
- 56 *Bonhomme Richard*
- 57 *Swash Channel*
- 58 *Holland No. 5*



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existing licences, and cooperation with the police in relation to cases of illegal fishing and diving.

Specifically targeted commissioned work has included Desk Based Assessments on two sites with particular problems of erosion – *HMS Colossus* in the Isles of Scilly and *HMS Stirling Castle* on the Goodwin Sands (Dunkley, 28–9) – to clarify the conservation objectives that will inform their future management. In addition, a site stabilisation trial is being carried out on the *Colossus* because it is suffering unexpected lowering of the levels of protective covering sediments. Further proposals for marine environmental studies to help understand the processes causing change on such sites are also being considered.

Other commissioned research includes archive assessment and enhancement to bring together the disparate interests and highly variable standards of work on Designated Historic Wrecks over the past 30 years.

Wider issues

The future protection of the marine historic environment resource must involve central and local government, industry, other stakeholders and the general public, so a considerable amount of time has been invested in building the required frameworks and relationships with other government departments and agencies. Development control and wider consultation duties are steadily increasing in parallel with the Government's promotion of broader Marine Stewardship initiatives. English Heritage now receives, and comments on, approximately 25 consultations per month relating to all areas of the English marine zone: large-scale marine aggregate extraction, offshore wind-farm installations, gas pipelines, electric cables, coastal defence, and port and coast edge constructions.

English Heritage now participates in various local and regional organisations with interests in the marine historic environment, such as the Dorset Coastal Forum, the North East Forum on Maritime Archaeology, and the Hampshire and Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology.

Commissioned work has been specifically targeted according to strategic priorities to promote under-studied or vulnerable areas. For example, basic site evaluation work has been commissioned on the Bouldnor, off the Isle of Wight, on a submerged prehistoric landscape that includes worked flints dating to approximately 7,000 BP. Similarly, a significant effort is being made to increase the awareness and capacity of all the teams of English

Heritage by strengthening links with officers with coastal responsibilities in the regional offices and the centre; providing training, desk instructions, information and a source of specialist advice; and factoring the marine historic environment and maritime heritage generally in major English Heritage strategic and policy initiatives (for example, *State of the Historic Environment Report 2003* and *Modern Military Framework Strategy 2004*).

Effective and coordinated management of the marine historic environment requires the ability to take a strategic level overview, whether the concern is to plan the future direction of conservation activity and funding, to provide sustainable responses to development and other pressures for change, or to prioritise research funding. The England's Historic Seascapes project (see *Conservation Bulletin 47*, Hooley, 31–3), stimulated by the need for fully contextualised responses to marine aggregates extraction, aims to provide such an overview by GIS-mapping of marine historic character. Wessex Archaeology has been commissioned to trial the project methodology in Liverpool Bay, drawing together a range of marine cultural and natural environment datasets to understand and map the historic dimension of the wider environment, beyond the unevenly distributed and variable data from previous archaeological work. This project's GIS database will enable us to participate fully in partnership with our fellow agencies for the natural environment in the Government's development of an integrated marine spatial planning system.

Wind farm under construction off the Norfolk coast: one of the many growing pressures on the marine environment. By 2010, 10% of the energy used in Britain should be generated by renewable sources, and at least another 17 coastal wind farms are to be built over the next decade.



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The natural environment affects the submerged historic environment: lobster burrowing on the Mesolithic site off Bouldnor, Isle of Wight.

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Reforming heritage protection

On 26 March 2004 in Ramsgate Maritime Museum, David Miles, then Chief Archaeologist for English Heritage, launched the DCMS's consultation paper, *Protecting our Marine Historic Environment: Making the System Work Better*. The paper set out the key issues and questions in relation to marine historic environment designation and sought to provide

- a positive approach to managing the marine historic environment, which will be transparent, inclusive, effective and sustainable, and which will be central to social, environmental and economic agendas at both a local and national level;
- a legislative framework that protects the marine historic environment but enables appropriate management techniques to be applied and to evolve.

The consultation period ended on 31 July 2004, and the DCMS is now reviewing the responses prior to issuing its recommendations to Ministers.

The way ahead

The Maritime Archaeology Team has made significant advances against a background of ever-expanding commercial development of the marine zone and a slowly growing understanding of the archaeological potential of what lies within it. However, it is clear that there is a wider range of functions that we are not yet able to carry out, either fully or in part, because of resource limitations. Key omissions include:

- development of appropriate research agendas;
- clarification of what actually comprises the maritime archaeological resource, and its

- relationship to assets such as historic ships, maritime museums and coastal properties;
- issues of jurisdiction, management and administration (national, regional and local) that cross the environmental divide of the low water mark;
- increasing the capacity of the maritime archaeological sector in academia, contract archaeology and local authorities;
- promoting best practice in the existing maritime archaeology sector;
- increasing our understanding of the marine historic environment and of relative preservation in different marine burial environments;
- understanding the numbers, potential and nature of threats to existing sites, particularly drowned prehistoric landscapes.

The recent restructuring of the Archaeology and Historic Buildings Departments within English Heritage has offered the opportunity to take a more strategic approach in addressing the marine historic environment and maritime heritage objectives, sharing tasks with teams other than Maritime Archaeology where appropriate, thus making better use of limited resources.

REFERENCES

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