

# Introduction

Dr David Thackray  
HEAD OF ARCHAEOLOGY

The publication of this year's Review coincides with a number of major developments both within the National Trust and in the wider world of heritage, the historic environment and archaeology. Within the Trust, the conclusion of our restructuring provides a new framework for Archaeology, within one professional team, not split, as hitherto between the old Estates and Historic Buildings departments, with the problems that posed for close team working. The discipline now sits alongside the Curators, Conservators, Gardens Advisers, Fire and Security Advisers and Building Surveyors, together led by a new post of Director of Historic Properties, Merlin Waterson, within the Historic Properties branch of the newly formed Conservation Directorate. The Directorate, led by Director of Conservation, Peter Nixon, also includes a Land Use team, led by David Riddle, which includes Nature Conservation, Agriculture, Forestry, Rural Surveying, Land Use Planning and Access and Recreation. So, we have a new structure for Conservation, within one clear framework, with the great potential for building on already close links across the breadth of the Trust's conservation work.

Our new structure includes a small central office team, comprising the Head of Archaeology, Sites and Monuments Record Officer and an Assistant Archaeologist. Three new Territory Archaeologists have been appointed for the three newly created Territories, each with an overview of a number of Regions; these include Rob Woodside, Territory West, Caroline Thackray, Territory South and Mark Newman, Territory North. They have line management responsibilities for the Archaeologists in the 11 new Regions, and for the first time ever, there is a nominated Archaeologist for each Region. As 2002 draws to a close, we are making new appointments for Archaeologists for Northern Ireland and for the East Midlands. For the Trust's Archaeologists, this provides exciting new opportunities, as do the newly emerging links with other new directorates across the organisation, particularly with the Policy and Strategy team and with newly formed Learning and Interpretation teams.

New structures, inevitably, take time and hard work to develop and run smoothly, but we look forward with keen anticipation to taking forward the Trust's work in Archaeology and the wider historic environment within this new framework.

Outside the Trust, the Government's agenda for the heritage sector, set out in *A Force for our Future*, published at the end of 2001, followed on from the report on the sector, *Power of Place*, published in 2000 by English Heritage. *A Force for our Future*, as it is known, is beginning to provide some clear points of focus for the sector. This is the first time any Government has committed itself to the development of a detailed agenda for heritage, and it is up to us within the sector to try and make it work, and to feed back to Government our concerns. Important new initiatives include the launch in December 2002 of 'Heritage Link', an umbrella body for the sector, drawing together numbers of key organisations to address key issues and to provide a clear and unified voice to Government. The Trust has been very actively involved with the establishment of Heritage Link, and we will continue to work very closely with it, as it will provide us with an important new forum for debate and decision making. In England, English Heritage has also recently produced the first *State of the Historic Environment Report*, a milestone in developing a clear analysis of what is happening to historic buildings, monuments and landscapes, and the economic, social and conservation trends that affect their future. We can contribute to this through our own programmes of research and survey of sites, structures and landscapes, and the capacity for systematically monitoring and recording their condition, through our own Sites and Monuments Record. In addition, a new research project has been commissioned from the Institute of Field Archaeology and Atkins Heritage on Measuring the Social Contribution of the Historic Environment'. This will compliment existing research carried out by the Trust in Valuing our Environment.

In Wales, the Trust has been actively engaged with Cadw and the Welsh Assembly to develop a review of the heritage sector in Wales, by taking a lead in convening a milestone conference in July, with key speakers representing the breadth of the heritage sector across Wales. We anticipate that the outcomes of this will include a review, perhaps along the lines of *Power of Place*, which English Heritage published in 2000. Again, the Trust will continue to provide momentum to help take this forward.

Our Review this year spans work across 2001 and into 2002. Perhaps most significant in 2002 was the wonderful event which saw the opening of the new Sutton Hoo visitor centre in March. For an old Sutton Hoo hand like myself, (I was involved in the British Museum's excavations there under Ian Longworth in the late 1960s) and for all who have been involved from the East Anglia Region and through the Project Team, this represented the culmination of a long standing vision. It was made possible by the Trustees of the Annie Tranmer Trust, who so generously gave the site, in the landscape context of the Sutton Hoo estate to the Trust, and by the generosity and partnership of the British Museum and others. The opening by Seamus Heaney was a beautiful lyrical occasion, full of the sort of mystery and symbolism that one would expect of Sutton Hoo. It really was one of the most memorable of days. Angus Wainwright, the Trust's Archaeologist in East Anglia, whose own contribution to the project was very considerable, describes the enormous success of the property throughout the year- far in excess of any expectations.

Keith Ray, Herefordshire County Archaeologist, also reflects the value of partnership in his piece about Croft Castle. This is an innovative and exciting project. It has been developed by Keith and Caroline Thackray and is being developed across a number of Herefordshire properties, with "high potential for local and volunteer involvement, community support, academic research and learning experiences" (below p.7)- to say nothing of the excitement of some radical new discoveries. This is a marvellous example of the importance of partnership working that we have reported in previous years, with other organisations, local authorities and agencies, and something we will continue to work hard at.

Our other articles all reflect the great breadth of work, which the Trust's Archaeologists have achieved. The value of carefully designed palaeo-environmental research at Lyveden, Northants is described in an exciting piece by Mark Newman. Rob Woodside and Gary Marshall both take important conservation projects dealing with the restoration of designed landscapes, Croome Park Worcestershire and Stowe Landscape Gardens, Buckinghamshire, as opportunities to demonstrate the contribution that archaeology can make to understanding and managing such projects. Jeremy Milln's article on traditional asparagus growing at Formby, Lancashire, is a wonderful and moving insight into the combination of oral history and field archaeology in bringing the history of a place alive. The importance of the Trust's Sound Archive is not widely enough appreciated, and I am delighted that Jeremy has brought the value of this little known part of the Trust's work to our attention. Perhaps we will see more examples in future issues.

The accounts from the Regions of work undertaken throughout 2001 and, in some cases into 2002, are impressive, as is the list of properly prepared reports for publication or archive that derive from them. I am particularly grateful to Caroline Thackray for her longstanding work in initiating, collating and continuing to edit these Reviews; and to Martin Hyde and Sarah Kamp for their help in the administration of the project. I hope that our new structure will enable us to disseminate this work more widely in the future and I do hope that all our readers will enjoy this year's account of the ongoing archaeological work of the Trust.



*National Trust Archaeologists at Myres Head lead mine, Cumbria, October 2001.*

JOHN LATHAM/NTPL

# An evolving resource

## THE NATIONAL TRUST SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD, 2002 AND BEYOND

Jason A. Siddall

NTSMR OFFICER, CIRENCESTER

### **Background**

*For over twenty years the National Trust has maintained a Sites and Monuments Record (often referred to as the SMR). This computerised record holds information on management, monitoring and primary site research. All of this material forms a key resource for understanding, research and life long learning and to promote the conservation of the historic environment of National Trust properties.*

*The National Trust SMR covers all types of monuments within the landscape that range from Prehistoric to present day periods. It covers monuments that are of international, national or of local interest. This helps to create a fuller picture of the historic environment, lending sense and a framework to understanding and management of National Trust properties.*

*At present this resource has over 40,000 monuments recorded. With only a third of National Trust properties surveyed the likely total number of monuments will be over 100,000. Presently the data and associated archives are worth over £4,971,000.*

*As part of ongoing development and promotion of the National Trust SMR resource the SMR Officer has undertaken a number of projects during 2001-2002.*

### **Development of Data Standards**

The importance of common data standards is very important; it allows cross-domain searching and integration of resources. Through its SMR Officer and as an attending member of the Forum of Information Standards in Heritage (website <http://www.mda.org.uk/fish/>), the National Trust has become a key player in the development and maintenance of data standards. This forum has representatives from the entire UK and is dedicated to the development of terminologies and data standards for heritage recording. During the winter months the NTSMR Officer secured a Millennium Award from the Sharing Museums Skills Award to go on a six-month secondment to English Heritage based at the NMRC (National Monuments Record Centre) in Swindon. The benefits of this secondment have set the National Trust SMR as a model of terminology and data standards, with the National Trust becoming a list owner of terminologies promoted by the forum. In 2002 the SMR Officer began regular joint liaison meetings with the NMRC staff to discuss issues and strategy for the development of SMR's nationwide. Also a final agreement with the NMRC was signed up to, to make the National Trust SMR 100% compliant to national terminology standards.

### **Promotion of the SMR and development of research potential**

Academic understanding and research is a cornerstone to the development of understanding in the historic landscape. The SMR is a key resource to make information to become accessible in an integrated and easy manner to National Trust staff, researchers and students.

The SMR Officer has recently developed a series of common agreements to share and access information from a number of organisations in the UK. Firstly the summer of 2001 saw the National Trust sign up to a common access agreement with English Heritage and the NMRC. This allows Trust staff to gain access to archives free of charge under free copyright from English Heritage.

In the winter of 2001 the NTSMR Officer negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding between the Archaeology Data Service (ADS website <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/>) and The National Trust Archaeology section. The ADS is dedicated and funded to promote life long learning in the sphere of Historic Environment. The benefits of this project are substantial, allowing the Trust to receive free advice on the digitising of its substantial archaeological archives and the hosting of a fraction of its SMR onto the internet through the ADS university portal to research resources. The National Trust content 'went live' in August 2002, and since then more students and researchers have contacted staff to gain information and conduct research on National Trust Properties. The ADS internet portal (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/>) provides cost effective access to the resources of the National Trust record and promotes life long learning and development of its research potential within universities.

A further project has been managed by the SMR Research Assistant to digitise key elements of the archaeology archive to allow for wider access, while maintaining the integrity and preservation of the material. This project will be a phased process of digitisation of reports, indicative images, plans and documents. All of this material is an integral part of the 'Monuments' element held as part of the SMR integrated resource.

### **Development of the National Trust SMR**

With such a key resource, it is necessary to manage it correctly and make it as widely available as possible. Since 2001 research into the development of the SMR has culminated in a project run jointly by the Archaeology Section and the National Trust's IT department. Its outcomes will provide a justification and business plan for the SMR's future development that will enable it to meet the objectives of the National Trust Strategic Plan.

### **Closing comments**

Its width and breadth of content and the compliance to accepted national data standards make the SMR a national leader in its field. It allows us to manage information in an effective and efficient manner, providing timely advice and information to staff and students to promote life long learning and understanding and the ability to further enhance the enjoyment of National Trust properties.