



The Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust Ltd
Historic Environment Record
Information Services Policy

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Description: This document sets out the HER's policy both for serving the established user base and for developing its audience.

Source: The document *GGAT HER Information Services Policy* has been compiled by The Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust Ltd on behalf of GGAT HER Charitable Trust. This document is based upon and contains information from *The Welsh Archaeological Trusts Regional Historic Environment Records Access and Cost Recovery* (2017), *GGAT HER Cost Recovery Fees policy* (2017), and follows recommendations from *Informing the Future of the Past: Guidelines for Historic Environment Records (Second Edition, 2015)*.

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Historic Environment Record

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1. The Historic Environment Record

1.1. What is a Historic Environment Record?

The Glamorgan-Gwent Historic Environment Record (HER) is the primary source of information on all aspects of the historic environment in South East Wales, maintained by the Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust. The record holds information on over 29,000 archaeological sites and 5,000 events in 12 local authority areas - Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Neath Port Talbot, Newport, Rhondda Cynon Taff, Swansea, Torfaen and the Vale of Glamorgan. The HER is the primary source of information on all aspects of the local historic environment of Wales, and acts as a tool for recording the ongoing process of its interpretation, conservation and management. The Historic Environment Record Manager maintains the database system; it currently runs in a bespoke open source application developed in *PHP* and *mySQL*, accessible through a web browser with linked geographical information system. The digital HER records are supplemented by a large paper-based information system, including historic mapping, aerial photographs, ground photographs, journals, articles and reports.

The HER also contains information provided and maintained by other bodies such as Cadw, RCAHMW, NMW and local authorities as required by Section 35 of the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016.

A public delivery service for the Welsh Archaeological Trusts' HER information, *Archwilio*, was launched in 2010. *Archwilio* provides online access to this core information about the historic environment of Wales, and this is supported by further material held by the four Welsh Archaeological Trusts (WATs).

1.2. What is the purpose of a Historic Environment Record?

The idea behind Historic Environment Records developed in the 1970s, as part of the response to increasing levels of development. Greater levels of development meant that increasing levels of destruction of the historic assets in Britain took place. It was seen as a priority that collections of records were made to list features of archaeological and historical significance that may be affected by development, as a way of managing the redevelopment in many towns and cities. The assumption was, and still is, that if no-one knows that there is a significant site in existence, no attempts to save or record that site can be made, and such will systematically be lost.

Archaeologists, planning officers and heritage managers are not aiming to fossilise our villages, towns and cities. The existence of Historic Environment Records simply means that change can be managed to best serve the needs of the historic environment itself, and to preserve the archaeological resource in the most appropriate way.

The HER is a vital part of the development process and heritage management generally as it underpins all the advice given and recommendations made regarding the management of the archaeological resource. Archaeological contractors who are undertaking research into a development will look at the HER to determine the impact of the proposed works and use this to make recommendations. The planning officers will then be able to use the HER research and subsequent recommendations to decide how to advise planners and developers of the best course of action in relation to that development. It may be identified that, as part of the development, archaeological works of some kind will need to be undertaken. The results of both the initial research which used the HER as a base, and the subsequent programme of works, will then be fed back into the HER to inform other research.

Curatorial archaeologists, or heritage managers, use the information in the HER in the same ways. The information held in the record will determine the advice provided for a range of projects including landscape management plans and the unitary development plans of local authorities. The areas being put forward for management or development are assessed in terms of the historical and archaeological significance (which includes landscape character), which will be determined by the sites, monuments, buildings, artefacts and landscapes recorded in the HER.

The HER is not simply a tool for professional archaeologists, however, it is also a valuable research tool for anybody interested in the local landscape. Queries regarding the information recorded in the HER in any area of the former counties of Glamorgan and Gwent can be dealt with by the Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust HER, whether the focus of an enquiry is looking at a particular type or period of site, or whether it is focussed on a specific geographical area.

1.3. What sort of information is available?

The Regional Historic Environment Records contain information on a wide range of known archaeological sites, monuments and artefacts of periods spanning the Palaeolithic to the twentieth century, as well as archaeological events and includes information on all aspects of human activity in the landscape from early prehistory to the twentieth century without prejudice. The HER database currently contains over 30,000 records covering the whole of Southeast Wales. Information is held in a variety of formats, available for consultation. These include:

- Map based information derived from paper OS maps, historic mapping and the HER Geographical Information System.
- An HER reference library of books and journals.
- A Report Archive of over 3,000 archaeological and heritage reports within the GGAT area.
- Aerial Photographic Collections (yet to be catalogued): includes oblique aerial photographs of locations throughout South Wales, spanning the late 1970s to early 2000. In addition, a photographic archive is currently being digitised and catalogued.
- Further information files and paper records: contain a vast range of unique material including correspondence, sketch plans, maps and site histories which support the digital record.

- Data from other holders of Historic Environment information. A memorandum of understanding exists between the RCAHMMW and partner organisations – the four Welsh Archaeological Trusts, Cadw and NMW, to regularly exchange data and to increase public access to archaeological information across Wales. Data from local authorities and that which is specified in Section 35 of the Historic Environment (Wales) Act 2016, which specifically includes:
 - Listed Buildings
 - Scheduled Monuments
 - Conservation Areas
 - Registered Parks and Gardens
 - Historic Landscapes
 - Conflict Sites
 - World Heritage Sites
 - Historic Placenames

1.4. Who has Access to the Record?

Anyone can have access to the data held in the Regional HER. It is a publicly-available source of information and the main types of user fall into the following categories:

- **Trust personnel** – the HER underpins the work of the Trust and provides the basis for advice given by the Curatorial Section for the purposes of development control and heritage management. It is also used by the Contracts Section of the Trust to inform the projects they undertake in north-west Wales.
- **Commercial Enquirers** – Commercial contractors and developers also require access to the information held by the HER in order to conduct their project research. Where a contractor is privately-funded to undertake such work, it is usual for a charge to be levied for the time involved in servicing an enquiry, on a cost-recovery basis.
- **Local and National bodies** – Other archaeological and environmental institutions also have access to the HER data, and these include Cadw, Natural Resources Wales, and the other Welsh Archaeological Trusts. Service Level Agreements are in place with the local authorities and NRW to provide information to them.
- **Academic Researchers** – the HER is a useful resource for academic enquirers (teacher, lecturers, students, post-graduate research fellows etc), for externally-funded research projects (eg AHRC-funded work) or individual projects such as coursework essays or dissertations. A charge may be levied for the time involved in servicing an enquiry for funded projects, on a cost-recovery basis.
- **Public Enquirers** – The HER is used regularly by a wide range of external bodies, communities and individuals to inform their research, work-related activities or community interests, the results of which all feed back into the HER. The public contribute to the enhancement of the HER by contributing information archaeological sites and finds. Public access to the HER collections (physical and digital) is supported

through grant aid to Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust from Cadw and is therefore available free of charge to all non-commercial enquirers. Core information from the digital record is available free of charge for non-commercial purposes via the Archwilio website – www.archwilio.org.uk - and Archwilio mobile application.

Restrictions and charging are set out in *The Welsh Archaeological Trusts Regional Historic Environments Record: Access and Cost Recovery*¹ and in *The GGAT HER Cost Recovery Fees Policy*². Future access will be refused where these policies have not been respected.

1.5. How to Access the Record

Public access to HER information is available through *Archwilio*, the Welsh Archaeological Trusts online HER, www.archwilio.org.uk. *Archwilio* enables users to conduct their own searches of the record either geographically or via a text-based search. A forthcoming mobile phone application for Android will be available via the App Store. However, this data is only suitable for non-commercial use.

For commercial enquiries, large complex enquiries or for further information on records viewed through *Archwilio*, Users will need to contact the HER directly. This is to ensure that they are able to access the most up-to-date information and allows for the consultation of supporting non-digital resources. Formal access to HER information is currently managed through completion of a HER enquiry form³ and acceptance of the terms and conditions of use for the data. The Welsh Archaeological Trusts Access and Cost Recovery Policy, sets out what types of information are available from the HER, what may be withheld, and the reasons for withholding information. On receipt of a completed HER enquiry form, the responsible person will send a summary of the HER information via post or email. However, enquirers are encouraged to visit the HER as considerable additional information is held in our paper records. Anyone is welcome to visit the HER in person, but we request that an appointment is made **in advance** to ensure HER staff are available to aid the enquirer.

The Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust Ltd is committed to developing the accessibility of the Historic Environment Record and it continues to work in partnership with the other Welsh Archaeological Trusts on the development of *Archwilio* and other initiatives.

2. Service Standards and Facilities

2.1. Commitment to User

The Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust Ltd is committed to providing a high quality service. All HER enquirers can expect the following standards of service:

- All enquiries are processed as soon as possible and we aim to respond to all non-commercial enquiries within 15 working days. Commercial enquiry response times are as follows: Priority search – 2 working days (subject to staff availability), non-priority search – 5 to 7 working days.

¹ Insert link

² Insert link

³ Inset link

- A standard HER search will involve searching of a number of datasets specified on the HER Enquiry Proform
- Where possible, data will be supplied in the format specified by the enquirer.
- We aim to provide adequate facilities for any user of the HER.
- We provide a comfortable working space for visitors to the HER.
- We are committed to improving our service to meet expectations of the user.
- Services are available to users bilingually.

2.2. Opening Hours & Contact

The HER is open to visitors daily (by appointment only) from Monday to Friday 10.00am – 1.00pm and 2.00pm – 4.00pm. Enquirers should contact:

The Historic Environment Record
 Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust Ltd.
 Heathfield House
 Heathfield
 Swansea
 SA1 6EL

Tel. (01792) 655208
 Fax. (01792) 474469
 Email. her@ggat.org.uk

Insert Map

2.3. Signing In

Visitors to the HER are required to sign in at reception. For security reasons, all umbrellas, bags and briefcases must be left in the secure reception area and not taken into the HER Search/ Study rooms without prior permission. Digital cameras and phone cameras can be used as a means of copying information but permission to do so must be sought in advance.

2.4. User Facilities

- A car park with space for visitors is available at the front of the Trusts premises.
- Conveniences are located on the ground floor of the building.
- A search room with IT facilities is available for advanced users of the HER. For enquirers who are unfamiliar with the HER, dedicated staff are available to provide instruction and guidance.
- Conference facilities are available on request.
- Free information leaflets.
- Supervised access to the HER Reference Library containing collections on a range of local archaeology books and journals.
- Printing and photocopying facilities are available.
- The GGAT offices have disabled access and all HER facilities are located on the ground floor of the building. Designated staff are also on hand to provide support and assistance with accessibility. Unfortunately, at this time the Trust offices do not have disabled toilet facilities. In line with the Disability Discrimination Act

2004, GGAT is committed to access for all and will make reasonable adjustments to provide an equal level of service to all users.

2.5. Copyright

Users of the HER must abide by all copyright and other legal restrictions that may apply to information held in the record. Supplementary records may include material of which the copyright is held by other organisations. The Data Protection Act 1998 also governs the release of certain types of information.

Digital cameras or mobile phones with fitted imaging devices can be used as a means of copying information, however permission needs to be sought in advance and the appropriate copyright acknowledgement used.

Users will be required to acknowledge the use made of HER information in any document or published report. For outputs containing HER data, the following statement should be used:

“© Derived from information held by the GGAT HER Charitable Trust, Database Right.”

3. Access and Charging Policy

The Welsh Archaeological Trusts have produced *The Welsh Archaeological Trusts Regional Historic Environments Record: Access and Cost Recovery document*. The document outlines the type of information available from a HER, what may be withheld, and the reasons for this. The policy aims to supply all information required by the user in order for them to access the HER.

In conjunction with this, enquirers must read and agree to the conditions of access outlined on the HER enquiry form before an enquiry will be processed.

All non-commercial enquiries are dealt with free of charge. However, reasonable costs will be recovered when dealing with enquiries of a commercial nature; this charge is levied to cover the cost of staff time to conduct and process the enquiry as requested on the HER Enquiry form and associated invoices. The *GGAT HER Cost Recovery Fees* policy outlines the service charges and facility fees that will apply to a HER enquiry. Costs arising from the use of GGAT facilities (photocopies and copy materials) will be recovered for all enquiries.

Charges will not be made for access to the online record, *Archwilio*, but it must be emphasised that the online data is not suitable for use in any commercial or development-related enquiries.

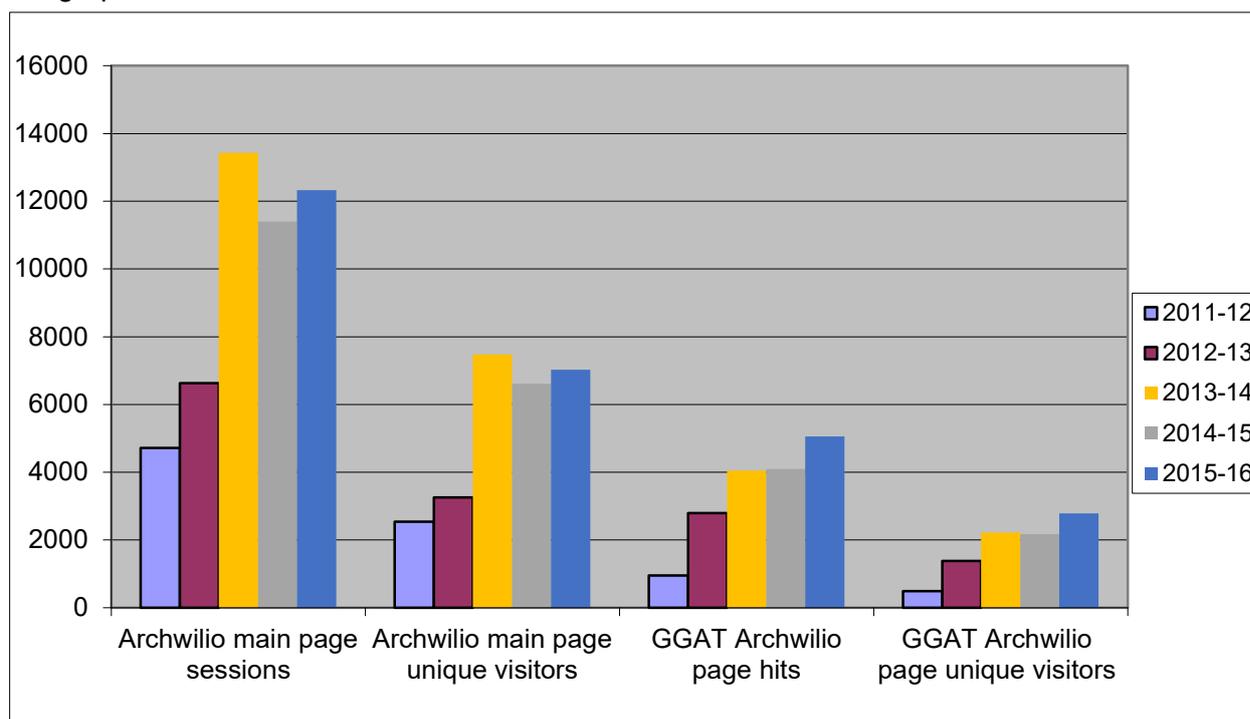
4. Research into User Profiles and Service Satisfaction

The Glamorgan Gwent Historic Environment Record is required to maintain a record of the Users of the HER. This is done using a database, which is compiled under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998. This data is entered into the HER Enquiries Database which can be easily interrogated to provide a quick and regular statistical analysis of our service.

The table below shows the total number of HER consultations and visits to the Trust over the last decade.

Financial Year	Total Consultations	Visits to Trust
2010-2011	236	13
2011-2012	252	19
2012-2013	147	9
2013-2014	212	21
2014-2015	232	9
2015-2016	203	17

The graph below shows the number of hits for the *Archwilio* website since 2011.



4.1. Who are the main HER user groups?

- Students
- Researchers
- General public
- Farmers
- Local historians/archaeologists
- Local authorities
- Utility companies
- Welsh Government
- Developers
- Contractors

4.2. What type of information is recorded in the HER Enquiries database?

Each enquirer is allocated a unique HER reference number that is used to deal with their request for information; this number is quoted in any further communication. Other

details such as name, company, date of receipt, date of response and nature of enquiry are recorded in the database. All information contained within the HER enquiry log (and associated paper records) is held in accordance with the 1998 Data Protection Act. This information will only be used to monitor the services offered by The Glamorgan Gwent Archaeological Trust. It will not be provided to any outside bodies or agencies.

4.3. How is feedback gained from the various HER Users?

GGAT is dedicated to the delivery of an excellent standard of service and operation. However, in order to identify our strengths and weaknesses and assess what steps need to be taken to provide a more effective level of service, feedback is important. A Historic Environment Record User Feedback survey is sent every quarter to all HER user groups including both remote enquirers and visitors to the Trust. In addition the *Archwilio* website provides opportunity for comments and feedback through its online blog <http://ggather.wordpress.com/>.

Feedback of curatorial services is also obtained through various heritage outreach activities by the completion of feedback forms. These include an assessment of the services offered by the HER whilst exhibiting at such events.

4.4. How are HER service complaints registered?

Grievance procedures are outlined in *The Welsh Archaeological Trusts Regional Historic Environments Record: Access and Charging Policy*. All grievances relating to the HER service should be addressed to:

The Welsh Archaeological Trusts Committee
c/o Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust
41 Broad Street
Welshpool
Powys
SY22 7RR

Any grievances relating to GGAT should be addressed to:
The Chief Executive
Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust Ltd
Heathfield House
Heathfield
Swansea
SA1 6EL