Slipping through the net?

Maritime Archaeological Archives in Policy and Practice

Discussion Document

Institute of Field Archaeologists
Maritime Affairs Group

Contents

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Front Cover

Design: Rebecca Causer (HWTMA)

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Diver recording the *Mary Rose* (C.Dobbs, Mary Rose Trust)

Clay pipes from the *Loanda* (Maritime & Coastguard Agency)

Bow section of Princes Channel Wreck (Wessex Archaeology)

Middle Bronze Age finds from Langdon Bay (British Museum)

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All references to 'archives' within the document refer to archaeological archives specifically, unless otherwise stated.

IFA MAG is the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Maritime Affairs Group. The IFA is the professional body representing archaeologists and related professions in the UK, which, among its various roles, produces Standards and Guidance documents for the archaeological community on all aspects of archaeological practice.

The archaeological record, the physical remains of our past, is a finite resource. In the marine environment, it is one that is constantly under threat from the dynamics of currents, tides, storms, human impacts and investigations. Archaeological archives are a nationally important resource; they offer the means to re-access and re-interpret our past, and as a result to re-define and re-articulate our own identity. Yet they are falling through a large gap in policy and practice. They are being dispersed, are deteriorating, remain un-interpreted and un-curated, are sold and sometimes simply abandoned. As this continues, more of our past is placed beyond the reach of the research community, of schools, of community groups, and of the public as a whole.

Currently there is no clear system for the preparation, deposition and curation of maritime archaeological archives. There is a lack of clarity over the roles and responsibilities of the archaeologists, archivists, curators, heritage managers and the various museum, archive and government bodies involved. As more sites are discovered with increased development and greater awareness of the marine historic environment, this problem will only become more acute.

This document has been produced to articulate the current situation through a range of case studies which demonstrate why there is an urgent need to promote dialogue between organisations involved with marine archives. In summary it highlights the need for:

- Policy clarification by stakeholder organisations and clear articulation of respective roles and responsibilities.
- Development and promotion of standards for maritime archives.
- Full integration of maritime archaeological archives into museum collection policies.
- Maritime archaeological representation in archives and museum groups and forums, to improve communication and facilitate better integration.

Urgent issues highlighted include the need for:

- Establishing information networks that connect museum curators and archaeologists with maritime archaeological expertise and promote education and training.
- Assessment of current location and accessibility of maritime archaeological archives, assessment of the nature and number of maritime archives that are being, and will be, generated, and assessment of the collection areas and capacity of receiving repositories, in order to evaluate the various possible strategies to meet future demands (including consideration of whether it would be appropriate to develop a national maritime archaeological archives research and resources centre).'
- Development of selection and retention policies for maritime archives to properly address issues of conservation and curation of ship structure.
- Development of maritime conservation capacity, to fill the gap in expertise, laboratory capacity and financial resources.

The IFA Maritime Affairs Group hope that this document will stimulate debate on this important area. It is intended that responses to consultation on the document will help generate a series of recommendations, in order to support the development of an integrated strategy for our maritime archaeological archives.

1.1 Statement of IFA MAG Position

There is no clear system for the preparation, deposition and curation of maritime archaeological archives. There is a lack of clarity over the roles and responsibilities of the archaeologists, archivists, curators, heritage managers and the various museum, archive and government bodies involved. Maritime archaeological archives are consequently in danger of dispersal as well as physical deterioration; they remain in private hands, are split between a number of receiving bodies, or are too often sold.

Archaeological archives are a nationally important resource. There is no difference in the cultural value of maritime archaeological archives and other archaeological archives. Yet maritime archaeological archives are falling through a gap in policy and practice and there is no coherent long-term strategy to address this problem. As more sites are discovered with increased development and greater awareness of the marine historic environment, the problem will only become more acute. It is vital that the archaeological, archival, curatorial and museums professions engage in this debate now. We need to fill this policy gap.

1.1.1 Archaeological Archives

'Archaeological archives are an essential element of the archaeological resource.'
*(*Brown 2006:1*)*

Archaeological archives, both material and documentary, are crucial to our understandings of the past. The artefacts, drawings, samples, photographs and digital data *together* form a vital connection to the original archaeological site and offer a route to further research and publication, and to re-interpretation and the development of our shared knowledge about our past. They are the sources for public interpretation and museum displays, teaching collections and popular representations of our past in the media and the public imagination.

Moreover, their value and import are being increasingly acknowledged and their management and curation planned, agreed and, in some cases, legislated for. The development of national guidance on the 'creation, preparation, transfer and curation' of archaeological archives (Brown 2006), the success and growth of digital data management initiatives, and the development of online access, as well as new resource and archive centre projects, all attest to this. Their national significance is being acknowledged, alongside the importance of their proper curation and accessibility for archaeological contractors, consultants, researchers, students, managers and curators, as well as the public as a whole.

As increased development and the accompanying archaeological projects alter and dismantle the archaeological record, archaeological archives become our shared heritage, the physical remains of our past.

Definition:
'An *Archaeological Archive* is composed of both the material and documentary record of a site or project. That is, all parts of the archaeological record including finds or artefacts, samples and digital records as well as written, drawn and photographic documentation. (After Perrin 2002:3 and Brown 2006:2).'

1.1.2 Maritime Archaeological Archives

'There is a need for a coherent approach to maritime collections policies and to question the current tendency to 'cherry-pick' maritime assemblages as if they were unrelated collections of curiosities … the underlying problems of splitting collections prior to interpretative work, lack of archival records and apparent inertia about engaging with maritime sites at all, remain.'
(Satchell and Ransley 2006:45)

Nowhere has the pressure of development and the resulting importance of archaeological archives been more recently and rapidly demonstrated, than in the marine environment. However, maritime archaeological archives are not being treated comparably to their 'terrestrial' counterparts. To provide parity with 'terrestrial' archives would require identification of a recipient museum and dialogue between archaeologists and curators to agree standards and conditions of deposition prior to any project beginning. It would require proper conservation, curation and access to those archives after deposition. Yet, there is a lack of appropriate, public, receiving museums and archive centres capable or willing to address maritime archaeological archives. There is a lack of maritime archaeological expertise within the museums sector as a whole. There is insufficient conservation expertise, facilities and funding to deal with the material assemblages within maritime archives. The maritime museum sector, under various resource pressures, has focused on the historical documents and objects already within their collections; yet within the larger museum sector, under similar resource pressures and without clear policy or guidance, maritime archaeological archives are rarely seen as part of their responsibilities or priorities. Most fundamentally, there is a failure to acknowledge that maritime archaeological archives should be addressed in the same manner as other archaeological archives, that they should adhere to the same standards in their production, organisation, deposition and curation.

This has left us with a culture of ad hoc solutions, where negotiations are made on a site-by-site and project-by-project basis. Archives are frequently split prior to interpretation and publication; ownership of material assemblages often remains in private hands. There is little common or accepted knowledge about policy, Best Practice or maritime archival standards. There is simply no coherent long-term strategy. Consequently, thus far, the vast majority of maritime archives have fallen through this policy gap – and are curated, split or sold very much on the basis of luck or the tenacity of individuals involved with the site or project.

Yet, at the same time the maritime archaeological resource faces increasing pressure from development activity that requires more and more archaeological assessments, evaluations, investigations and excavations, all generating further archaeological archives. Recent discussion of the issues surrounding those maritime archives generated by development-driven projects, has been primarily steered by developers and the archaeological consultants and contractors working for them. Without a coherent system, and the responsibilities of each organisation and sector agreed, developers are seeking clarification; and consequently it is they who are driving the agenda, so that discussions address their specific, localised concerns rather than the larger system and questions of public policy (e.g. the Summary Notes of the Unexpected Wrecks Workshop).

There is quite clearly, however, a need for agreement among maritime archaeologists, archivists, curators and government; there is a need for a coherent, long-term strategy, a united front, which presents developers and archaeologists alike with clear guidance on Best Practice and a clear system within which to operate. Maritime archaeological archives should not be treated any differently from other archaeological archives; they are no less culturally important or epistemologically valuable. If we do not deal with these issues, not only are archives in danger of deteriorating physically, or being dispersed, they remain beyond the reach of the research community, of schools and community groups, of the public as a whole.

Definition: '*Maritime, marine, underwater, nautical and intertidal archaeology* all relate to aspects of the same, broad archaeological area. That is,

1) the archaeological remains of seafaring and maritime activity, (including shipwreck, cargo, and other maritime debris, coastal and riverine port and harbour structures, defence installations, and evidence of human exploitation of marine and water resources, such as estuarine fish weirs); and,
2) the archaeological evidence of early human activity that has since been submerged, (primarily, archaeological evidence of prehistoric human inhabitation of former, land surfaces now found within the seabed or eroding from the coast within the intertidal zone).'

1.2 Structure of Strategy Document

This document will map out the current system, the key bodies and organisations involved, along with the issues and gaps in the system, in order to identify priority issues and make recommendations for a future strategy.

Section 2 will address the roles and responsibilities of groups within the current system, highlighting the gaps and any overlaps, and illustrate the system with several brief case studies. Section 3 will briefly describe accepted Best Practice and the archives standards and guidance for terrestrial sites, before addressing the specific issues maritime archaeology will need to overcome to produce a comparable system and set of standards. These include a discussion of information structures and communication issues that need to be improved, as well as specific policy and guidance voids.

Section 4 summarises priority, short-term and long-term issues and lays out recommendations in each case. Finally, it concludes with an outline of the consultation process and proposals for the future development of a maritime archives strategy.

1.3 Case Study: An Illustration of the Current Situation

The Princes Channel Elizabethan Shipwreck, Thames Estuary.

Over the last few years, several illustrative case studies have arisen in English ports as a result of activities related to the maintenance and development of shipping channels. Of these, it was the Princes Channel wreck in the Thames, which raised considerable debate among the maritime archaeological community during 2004-5. The historic nature of the wreck was identified as the result of a grab dredge of obstructions by the Port of London Authority (PLA) as it fulfilled its obligation to maintain shipping channels. After initial assessment of the grabbed material and video taken by the PLA divers, further investigation and subsequent excavation of the disturbed site by an archaeological contractor was deemed appropriate. What remained of the wreck was recovered in 2005 along with a collection of artefacts, including a pewter candlestick, pieces of a leather garment, cannon, a quantity of iron bars, and several ingots (Wessex Archaeology website; Port of London Authority press release; Keys 2004; Firth 2006).

The material assemblage itself was not particularly large by the standards of most archaeological projects, though several of the artefacts were large pieces of ship structure. Moreover, the ship remains were physically well-preserved and particularly significant. The assemblage offered among other things the opportunity to investigate questions about possible covert Elizabethan trade with the Iberian peninsula during Anglo-Spanish hostilities, questions about the nature of the armaments industry in Elizabethan England, and the historically referenced but undocumented process of 'furring' vessels, the late 16th/ early 17th century practice of widening hulls. The assemblage, plans, photographs, documentation and digital data produced an archive of considerable importance. However, it was also one that required substantial analysis, conservation and interpretation prior to publication and subsequent deposition. Moreover, it was one without a receiving body to conserve or curate it.

The PLA were operating on the basis of Best Practice and their ethically informed approach to the marine historic environment within their care. There is limited legislative structure to dictate the nature of the archaeological investigations they commissioned, and no guidance on how the 'polluter pays' principle within which research, analysis, conservation and publication costs could be managed should be applied. These costs would not be insignificant. Thus, the archive was stranded in something of a limbo for sometime, with material stored with the archaeological contractor, in a lake on the south coast and on the quayside on the Thames. None of these groups were negligent in their approach. They were all attempting to work within the parameters of their remit and obligations, however difficult that proved. Resolving the question of where the archive

could be deposited after assessment, analysis and publication was problematic. Whilst some museums were keen to accession elements of the material archive, the collection of ingots or the cannon for example, none were able to consider the archive as a whole (irrespective of whether that included the ship structure).

Discussion is ongoing to resolve this particular case, and to prevent the material archive simply physically disintegrating whilst stranded in the gaps in the system. The ship structure is now under the care of the NAS (Nautical Archaeology Society), the cannon with the Royal Armouries, and the rest of the archive is stored by Wessex Archaeology while discussions are held with the Institute of Archaeology at University College London, to secure future analysis, conservation and research will be completed. This is a case-specific solution, and acknowledged as a 'rescue' resolution rather than an example of Best Practice for maritime archives.

We cannot sustain more shipwreck archives in a similar fashion, but they will be generated as more sites are identified by recreational divers, developers and researchers, sites that will require investigation and in some cases excavation. More than anything, the Princes Channel case serves to illustrate the massive voids in policy and practice when it comes to maritime archives. Problems arise when attempting to agree plans for analysis, conservation, publication and deposition of the maritime site archives prior to excavation beginning.

At the same time, much of the public discourse and rhetoric surrounding cases frequently returns to pieces of ship hull structure and associated timbers, and what is often characterised as the need for conservation and permanent display of the remains (in a comparable way to the *Mary Rose* project), rather than comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the whole assemblage. Such discourse rarely considers reasoned selection and retention policies for ship structure as being a sensible option, or appropriate analysis, conservation, deposition and curation of the archive as a whole being the paramount priority. As there are no commonly accepted routes for the maritime archives, little guidance on the appropriate production, conservation, deposition and curation of archives, and, no clarity over responsibilities – and consequent obligations to provide resources – of groups involved.

2.1 The Current System in Policy: Roles and Responsibilities

'Maritime archaeological archives ought to be dealt with alongside other archaeological archives, rather than addressed by a 'maritime' museums sector that remains primarily interested in the historical documents and artefacts already within its collections, and ill-equipped and unprepared to deal with the archaeological archives produced by excavations.'
(Ransley 2006:55)'

2.1.1 Who's Who?

There are a number of government, museum, heritage, archaeological and archival bodies with remits that either explicitly or implicitly include maritime archaeological archives. Since communication between these groups is one of the first issues that needs to be addressed, below is a brief explanation of some of the key organisations.

Government departments and government-sponsored bodies:

- *DCMS (Department of Culture, Media and Sport) Museums and Cultural Property* – within this department there are two teams that address museum issues, one deals with the MLA and regional museums, the other with national museums.
- *MLA (Museums, Libraries and Archives)* – established in 2000 as the DCMS-sponsored, strategy agency for museums, libraries and archives. It offers grants and funding and promotes strategic programmes.
- *DCMS Historic Environment* – within this department the underwater archaeology team addresses issues related to the marine historic environment and maritime archaeology.
- *EH (English Heritage)* – sponsored by DCMS, and among other roles it is advisor to government on all aspects of heritage and the historic environment (in England, this includes the seabed up to the 12 nautical mile limit).
- *HS (Historic Scotland)* – fulfils a parallel role for Scotland.
- *CADW* – addresses the same issues for Wales.
- *DOENI (Department of Environment Northern Ireland)* – department within which the same roles and responsibilities are carried out for Northern Ireland.
- *NMR (National Monuments Record)* – maintains accessible archives on the historic environment for England, (records information on these sites rather than acting as an archaeological archival repository).
- *RCAHMS (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland)* – responsible for recording, interpreting and collecting information about buildings, sites, and ancient monuments of archaeological, architectural and historical interest (including maritime sites and underwater constructions) for Scotland.

- *RCAHMW (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales)* – is the organisation responsible for surveying, recording, publishing and maintaining a database of ancient, historical and maritime sites, structures and landscapes in Wales.
- *The National Archives* – formed in April 2003 by bringing together the Public Record Office and the Historical Manuscripts Commission, it is responsible for the records of central government and the courts of law (historical documentation and records rather than archaeological archives).

Museum, Archival and Archaeological groups and organisations:

- *UKMCS (UK Maritime Collections Strategy)* – formed in 1998, by 11 key national, non-national, regional and local authority museums, to promote and rationalise maritime museum collections within the UK. Formerly ***UKMCI (UK Maritime Collections Initiative),*** the NMM's collections initiative.
- *ICMM (International Congress of Maritime Museums)* – with 300+ member organisations, the Congress aims to nurture contact, relationships and offer expert advice. Among its stated aims, it explicitly includes the provision of standards and guidance for 'underwater archaeology'.
- *Maritime Curators' Group* – formed in 1991 as a response to ICMM contacts, the group is an information network for maritime curators, which promotes maritime curatorial expertise and is involved in UKMCS.
- *NMM (National Maritime Museum)* – based at Greenwich, with extensive historical archives and maritime art collection.
- *MRT (Mary Rose Trust)* – based at Portsmouth, named 'lead museum for maritime archaeology expertise' within the UKCMS.
- *Museums Association* – established in 1889, includes individual, institutional and corporate members. It lobbies government and sets professional and ethical standards, offering among other things a professional development programme.
- *SMA (Society of Museum Archaeologists)* – promotes archaeology within museums and offers training, advice and expertise to its members.
- *AAF (Archaeological Archives Forum)* – formed in 2002 to address archaeological archives issues, includes heritage agencies, museum groups, archaeologists and government agencies within the forum.
- *IFA (Institute of Field Archaeologists)* – the professional organisation for archaeologists in the United Kingdom. It promotes professional standards and ethics for conserving, managing, understanding and promoting enjoyment of archaeology and our heritage.

A complete glossary of these and other relevant organisations can be found in Section 6 .

2.1.2 Roles and Responsibilities

There is a regrettable lack of clarity concerning the roles and responsibilities regarding maritime archives. Initial work by IFA MAG to request policy clarification from key organisations has most commonly resulted in an acknowledgement that there is no public policy on maritime archives. There is an assumption that since historically there has not been an explicit remit for many of these organisations responsibility must lie elsewhere. At the same time, with increasing resource pressures few organisations are willing to take on 'new' obligations.

The UKMCS transfer and disposal policy, 'Transfer with purpose', is an example of one response to these pressures, as well as an example of how the lack of clearly defined roles with regard to maritime archives is played out within the museums sector. The policy aims to 'dovetail and rationalise collection policies, to make museum collections complementary rather than competitive' (Janet Owen, Head of the curatorial group at NMM, quoted in Mulhearn 2005:30). At the heart of the policy is the dispersal of parts of national collections to regional or 'specialist' museums, where they are considered to have greater relevance. It is an exercise that aims to increase communication between museums and ultimately to promote maritime heritage.

At this point, it is worth reiterating the difference between 'maritime museum collections' (which include historical documents, artefacts, paintings and even isolated archaeological finds) and maritime archaeological archives (both the physical evidence and documentation related to a particular archaeological project). An archaeological archive derives much of its potential and value from its wholeness, as a coherent record of the investigation of one site. This difference is not addressed by the UKMCS policy which does not fully consider archaeological archives. This in turn reflects the peripheral position of maritime archaeology within the maritime museums sector and its low priority position within curation, resource and management considerations.

The Mary Rose Trust has been named as the lead museum for maritime archaeology expertise within the UKMCS (NMM 2003:3). Yet, its acquisition policy is solely concerned with the archaeology and material archive of the shipwreck of the *Mary Rose*. The museum undertakes public interpretation, including displays, teaching and re-enactments and representations, with ingenuity and success. Whilst it may have experience and expertise in museum interpretation, and access to conservation facilities, it is primarily specialised in the curation of the archaeological archive from a single site. The expertise of the organisation is drawn on within UKMCS during the development of strategies and initiatives. While recognising the specific skills of the MRT, it has neither the space nor resources to deal with maritime archives beyond that of the *Mary Rose*, and should not be expected to. It must be questioned why the responsibility for providing advice and guidance on maritime archival standards has been assigned to an independent charitable trust rather than being addressed through the publicly accountable and established structures of national museum and archive bodies.

Example:
'The NMM 'Collection Development Policy' identifies archaeology as one of the collection areas for dispersal or disposal. This is in line with current UKMCS policy, though NMM acknowledges 'the management of this subject area within the UKMCS framework would benefit from further discussion particularly regarding collecting' (NMM 2003).

The treatment of maritime archaeology as a small part of the UK maritime collections, rather than a growing part of the larger archaeological archive that requires active management and curation, typifies an overall lack of understanding about the nature and needs of maritime archives, and the need for consultation and communication with archaeologists and archivists about these issues. It highlights its low status within the archaeological, heritage, museum and archival sectors and the pervasive assumption that responsibility must lie elsewhere.

The labelling of marine derived material simply as 'maritime' often does not recognise its full archaeological significance and value. This also leaves marine prehistoric archaeological material in limbo: not suitable for maritime museums, and not expected at local or regional museums, since in general museum collections policies do not include 'maritime' archives. The arbitrary division of maritime archaeology from other archaeology within the museums sector as a whole is not only illogical, but is detrimental to the proper curation of and access to maritime archaeological archives. An examination of this, alongside a re-articulation of responsibilities has to be a priority.

2.1.3 Legislative Responsibilities

There are some very clear obligations regarding the material elements of an archive under the Merchant Shipping Act 1995. All recovered objects, defined as 'wreck', must be reported to the Receiver of Wreck. The legislation provides a year for the Receiver to determine ownership of the 'wreck' and to establish what will happen to that material. The legislation is derived from a commercial perspective and relates in the most part to salvage traditions; nonetheless it is a legal process through which the ownership of the material archive of all maritime sites must go. Responsibility for reporting material rests with the archaeologist/diver/developer who undertook its recovery, and in many cases the 'wreck' material will eventually legally belong to the finder. This can make ownership questions related to the material archive much less complex. However, it can also place parts of an archaeological archive in private hands, and add to the pressure to disperse an archive. It is the policy of the Receiver to try to place items of historic or archaeological significance into a suitable museum.

Prehistoric occupation material derived from marine contexts is not covered within the Receiver of Wreck system. It is possible that ownership of such material may lie with the owner of the seabed, in most cases the Crown Estate, though this has not yet been properly established. Ownership is not only a key issue with regard to transfer and deposition of whole archives, but also with regard to responsibilities of conservation and treatment of the material archive.

Within the current legislative framework, reporting wreck recovery to the Receiver is the only obligation regarding the majority of maritime archives. The Protection of Wrecks Act 1973 places a number of parameters upon archaeological archives from designated historic shipwreck sites, although that currently applies to just 58 shipwrecks in UK waters. Any investigation of designated shipwreck sites will require production of an archaeological project design, which should include agreement over deposition of the project archive. These requirements can be seen as examples of Best Practice within maritime archaeological archives. They are, however, recent refinements of this system; there are ongoing issues with the disparate archives of many of these sites – the majority of which have been accumulated over a number of decades and are not properly deposited or actively curated.

2.2 The Current System in Practice: Examples from seabed to museum, private collection or ebay

As there is no typical path that a maritime archive would follow from seabed to museum or archive centre a few illustrative examples are presented to highlight some of the pitfalls of maritime archives from production to curation.

2.2.1 The varied fate of Protected Wreck Site Archives

Funding, ownership and archive management can be contentious issues on maritime sites; this is often the case even on designated historic wreck sites. Before material is recovered and the production of a site archive is begun there are complicated notions of ownership, both individual and local, that can affect an archive's production and management. The salvage legacy in the UK often has a detrimental effect on the production of archives. Emphasis is placed upon the material assemblage to the detriment of the production of documentary archives, and focus often relates to specific elements of that assemblage.

The archives of many of the shipwreck sites designated under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973, have been dispersed through necessity, and left without proper conservation or curation. Dispersal, and private ownership, is particularly prevalent with older elements of the archives from designated wreck sites (from dive logs and site plans to artefacts themselves), but it is also true of more recent projects and is an issue that inhibits further investigation of these sites.

HMS Colossus, Isles of Scilly

The difficult local politics surrounding the excavation and recovery of a fragile piece of decorative stern carving from the designated site of *HMS Colossus* is a useful, if complex, example. There were involved disagreements both over the discovery and perceived 'ownership' of the site, in which the carving was entangled. Money for excavation of the carving came from a private source, and the negotiation over appropriate conservation and deposition of the carving was drawn out. All the different parties involved (including the government agencies) had their own priorities, very few of which were concerned with the project archive. The archaeologists involved were not able to manage the process, but had to respond as best they could to developments. Such projects both demonstrate and perpetuate the 'make-do' approach to the treatment of maritime archives.

The *HMS Colossus* stern carving will be housed in the Valhalla figurehead collection at the privately run Tropical Gardens of Tresco in the Isles of Scilly. Part of the material archive is housed at the local museum on St Mary's in the Scillies, some is in private hands. The ceramic assemblage recovered in the 1970s is at the British Museum. With copies of elements of the documentary archive at the NMR, EH, and in the most part held by individuals who have worked on the site (recently because an appropriate receiving body with which to deposit them could not be found).

Warship Hazardous, Bracklesham, West Sussex

The designated site of Warship *Hazardous* highlights the situation where local groups investigating wreck sites have little or no access to local museum facilities or support for project archives. Facilities for the local deposition of the archive are a priority, as it is added to on a regular basis as the site erodes and threatened artefacts are recovered and the ongoing process of recording and planning continues. The responsibility for conservation, curation and display is undertaken by the avocational and un-funded Project Group.

Studland Bay Wreck, Dorset

Work on the Studland Bay designated wreck site was undertaken during the 1980s and early 1990s by Poole Museums and local volunteers. It was halted in 1992 after nine years of excavation with funding cuts and plans for publication were ended in 1998 when project funding was cut altogether. Poole Museums took on the material and documentary archives, but analysis and interpretation of the archive was halted. It was only with English Heritage commissioned renewed work on the archive in 2003 that analysis resumed, and the wrought iron gun which was stranded in passive storage at the Royal Armouries was addressed. Ownership of the gun was unclear and funding for its conservation by either museum body was not forthcoming. The gun is now undergoing conservation and a monograph on the site is due for publication in 2008.

2.2.2 The Unprotected Majority of Britain's Historic Wreck Sites

There are any number of examples of maritime sites, particularly shipwreck sites, which have been salvaged rather than excavated in the past, and where the material archive has been sold, dispersed or held in private collections. Addressing the maritime salvage tradition within UK culture has been one of the most significant struggles of maritime archaeology over the last 30 years, one intertwined with the development of the discipline and wider recognition of our national maritime heritage. Though there have been significant changes in government policy, not least with the 2002 National Heritage Act, and in public and industry attitudes, there are still examples of sites where Best Practice, legal structures and international policy and agreements on underwater cultural heritage have been side-stepped. Maritime archives are still at times commodified and addressed not as heritage, but as a commercial resource. This fact goes to the heart of the failure to treat maritime archives as other archaeological archives are treated.

Even 'designation' as one of Britain's most important historic shipwreck sites does not guarantee that site archives will be deposited in a publicly available archive for the benefit of current and future generations. With an estimated 500,000 wrecks lying around the British coast there are many other historic vessels being investigated, the fate of these archives must be addressed.

Die Frau Metta Catharina von Flensburg, Plymouth Sound

Excavation of the wreck of the eighteenth-century Danish brigantine *Die Frau Metta Catharina von Flensburg* has been funded in part by sale of some of the cargo the vessel carried. Located in 1973, in Plymouth Sound, excavation and investigation of the site has been ongoing since 1978 by a small, committed, avocational team of local divers. Items made of the unworked Russian reindeer leather that formed the bulk of the cargo can be purchased online.

The Rooswijk, Goodwin Sands, Kent

The most recent high profile wreck investigation case study is that of a shipwreck of the early eigthteenth century, the Dutch East-Indiaman *Rooswijk*. Officially located in 2004 off Kent in the Goodwin Sands within UK territorial waters (Keys 2005), the vessel had been carrying silver coins and bullion to the Dutch East Indies. This is a site of historic and archaeological significance as an individual vessel, a representative of the Dutch East India Trade and as part of a collection of vessels on the Goodwin Sands.

The work on this site was undertaken in agreement with the Dutch Ministry of Finance, who divested their ownership of the wreck to an individual in return for arrangements for part of the collection to be retained by the Dutch State. Coins from the site have been auctioned in the United States and are currently available on the internet. Attempts were made to stop the export of the coinage for sale, but this revealed a technicality in the export licence process. The area of the seabed in which the wreck lies had not been within UK territorial waters for more than 50 years due to changes in boundary definitions.

2.3 A question of resources, remit or regulation?

There are many potential case studies that could be included here which demonstrate how archaeologically rich material assemblages from wreck sites can be recovered with the intention of selling the collections for profit, and can be legally exported from the UK. This situation is contrary to a number of national and international guidelines, but is not illegal.

In contrast, 'maritime' artefacts from sites on land, even those found in waterlogged contexts requiring considerable conservation, do not fall so easily through the gaps. Since, there are clear obligations and responsibilities under PPG16, the recent find of the Bronze Age logboat in Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire, resulting from archaeological investigations in advance of the installation of a gas pipeline, will be properly conserved and curated. The situation would be far less clear-cut if a similar vessel were recovered during dredging operations.

Clearly conservation costs are one of the main problems for receiving museums and archive centres. Conservation costs are higher and more common for the material assemblages from maritime sites, where organic material often survives in waterlogged conditions. In some cases, this adds further pressure to disperse an archive – if a receiving museum is prepared to conserve a large object from the material archive in return for accession, this is difficult to avoid, since the alternative is often long-term 'passive storage' and an archive that remains in limbo. Unfortunately, it is a questions of resources, remit and regulation. Each of these areas must be addressed if there is to be progress in the treatment of maritime archives.

3.1 Established Archival Policy and Best Practice

Archaeological and archival Best Practice is now well established in 'terrestrial' contexts. The principles of proper production and deposition of an archive have long been part of the archaeological process. The IFA's Standards and Guidance (S&G) includes a specific set for 'the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials', and each S&G defines archives as a necessary consideration requiring proper agreement in all project designs from Desk-Based Assessments to excavation projects:

> 'The specification or project design should contain, as a minimum, the following elements: [including] ... archive deposition' (IFA S&G: desk based assessment, 3.2.12)

and,

> 'The project design should include an agreed collection and disposal strategy for artefacts and ecofacts (see also 3.3.8)' (IFA S&G: Field Evaluation, 3.2.13).

This has, more recently, been further refined with the development of detailed 'Archaeological Archives: creation, preparation, transfer and curation' guidance document by the AAF (Brown 2006). It is intended that an IFA standard based upon this guidance will be issued not long after its publication. It is designed as an updateable 'manual' for all archaeological contractors, consultants, researchers and academics, as well as archivists and museum curators. As such, it defines the approach very carefully, addressing each element of an archive, from drawings to environmental samples, through creation to curation. It is underpinned by five fundamental principles:

1. All archaeological projects must result in a stable, ordered, accessible archive.
2. All aspects of the archaeological process affect the quality of the resulting archive.
3. Standards for the creation, management and preparation of the archive must be understood and agreed at the beginning of any project.
4. Ensuring the security and stability of the archive is a continuous process and a universal responsibility.
5. A project has not been completed until the archive has been transferred successfully and is fully accessible for consultation.

(Brown 2006)

This guidance and the five fundamental principles are equally applicable to maritime archives. In fact, there are areas where guidance and policy is being altered in acknowledgement of this. Artefacts derived from maritime contexts have now been included in the most recent Guidelines for the Portable Antiquities Scheme, and there have been changes in the conditions of licences to recover artefacts from historic wreck sites designated under the Protection of Wrecks Act. However, these changes are still minor and there are specific issues that must be addressed to enable the practical application of the AAF guidance to maritime archives. Currently, even the small changes already made in policy and guidance are not being, and probably cannot under current circumstances be, realised in practice.

3.2 Application to Maritime Archives

The 'Archaeological Archives' document prescribes standards for all elements of archaeological archives at four key stages: creation, preparation, transfer and curation. At each stage, maritime archives face particular issues that hinder the proper application of archival standards. Some are systemic problems, some resource issues and others relate to education and training.

3.2.1 Creation – Management and Standards

The disconnection of maritime archives from the system that terrestrial material follows has produced a gap in understanding and practice over the best approach to producing an ordered and stable maritime archive. Planning of, and agreement over, archive management at the inception of projects is still rare. In general, deposition and then preparation of the archive for deposition, is addressed during the post-fieldwork phase of a project. This lack of ongoing archive management is partly a reflection of the development of the maritime archaeology sector. It reflects problems of finding suitable receiving museums, of planning for conservation of the material archive and of securing the appropriate resources. In the past projects began without consideration and agreement over the associated archive. Maritime archaeology was driven by research and avocational projects and it was possible to raise large collections, including wooden ship hulls, and then subsequently raise money to deals with museum and archive considerations. This is not a feasible approach anymore, and it is imperative to embed archival management agreements in the project planning stages of all maritime archaeology projects.

The legacy of maritime archives from past projects demonstrates how the creation and maintenance of documentary elements of an archive have been approached. Questions over the ownership of site plans and other documentary material has translated into a reluctance to deposit work in a publicly accessible repository. There are of course some exemplary examples of archive management, and of innovative ways of making an archive publicly accessible, for example the archive of the wreck of the *Earl of Abergavenny*. Such examples demonstrate that archive creation and management is a training and educational issue. This can be addressed by providing the right information and resources to those involved in projects. Currently, archival management is not explicitly addressed in any of the Nautical Archaeology Society training courses aimed at the avocational sector, though equally none of the five, active maritime archaeology Masters programmes include it within their core courses.

Example: 'Twenty years of investigation and excavation of the *Earl of Abergavenny* by the Weymouth Underwater Archaeological Group has resulted in the production of a website which covers extensive historical and documentary research as well as the excavation. They have also produced a CD-ROM of the complete archive that covers the field archive, including the finds database, as well as historical documentation, research papers and specialist reports.'

3.2.2 Preparation – Conservation, Selection and Retention Policies

One of the most problematic issues during the preparation of a maritime archive for deposition is conservation of the material archive. Panter's review of the maritime archaeological conservation sector in the UK highlights three issues that the profession must address in order to meet increasing demands upon it, these are: a need for more trained and experienced maritime conservators, increased laboratory capacity and adequate financial resources in place to enable this (Panter 2007). In short, there is a deficit in the capacity of the maritime conservation sector. Securing proper conservation for all elements of a material archive that will be deposited is not simple, and will become increasingly difficult as demand increases. As an appropriate maritime archives system is clarified and matures, the underdevelopment of the maritime conservation sector, (in part itself a result of the lack of previous, structured system for maritime archives), needs to be addressed.

Another significant element of the problems surrounding conservation of the material archive is the pervasive presumption that the whole material archive must be conserved, deposited and curated. For example, the discourse surrounding the treatment of the remains of the Newport ship is strikingly similar to that concerning the Princes Channel shipwreck. There was a perceived necessity for preservation of the actual, physical ship timbers, visible from the beginning of the 'Save Our Ship' campaign. This has been influenced by the *Mary Rose* and Sweden's *Vasa* project, which have embedded the imperative to conserve and display whole hulls as an essential part of understanding our shipwreck heritage rather than considering the alternatives. There is a lack of debate over excavation and recording standards, material and documentary archives, interpretation and publication. Instead an assumption is made that proper treatment of the material archive means conserving and archiving it all.

Funding the conservation of all pieces of ship structure within new maritime archives would be unsustainable; there is no practicable way museums and other receiving repositories could house, curate and display them. Proper recording of the ship structure, and potentially conservation and archiving of particularly significant elements of it, negate the need for this. The practice of selecting appropriate parts of the material assemblage for submission with the material archive is well established within Best Practice (and is articulated within the AAF guidance document); not every ceramic sherd, roof tile, or wooden timber will be included in a 'terrestrial' archive. Reasoned debate and practical agreement over a selection and retention policy for maritime archives is therefore crucial. If accepted selection and retention standards are not implemented, the biggest pressure on maritime conservation capacity and expertise produced by a developed archival process will be derived from ship hulls and timbers.

Example: 'A medieval ship, now known as the Newport Ship, was identified in 2002 during construction of a new Arts Centre next to the River Usk, in Newport, Wales. The archaeological excavation and subsequent programme of recording and conservation were supported, and at times driven, by a local and then national campaign. More than 1700 pieces of the vessel structure were recovered and are now undergoing recording and analysis. It is a remarkable case not least because of 'the importance of this emotional ground-swell to the successful recovery of the ship'
(Roberts 2004:158).

3.2.3 Transfer – Ownership and Receiving Museums

Problems over ownership of artefacts within the material archive, and questions of transfer of title to receiving bodies, is often perceived as a stumbling block for maritime archives. The role of the Receiver of Wreck under the Merchant Shipping Act, and the entitlement in some cases of a salvage award to those who recover 'wreck', is seen as complex and a significant difficulty. However, it is comparable to the process on land in England where landowners retain all rights of ownership to archaeological materials found on their land, (with the exception of items classified as Treasure). To address this protocols concerning copyright of documentary archives and transfer of title for material archives have been established. There is need for such protocols to be produced for maritime archives.

It is hard to establish where within this process it is best to discuss the lack of museums and repositories willing or able to receive maritime archives, since it touches on so many stages. The process of identifying a receiving museum or archive ought to be undertaken at the planning stages of a project. However, this process is complicated by museum collections policies. There is often pressure to disperse material archives between several receiving bodies in a 'cherry-picking' process. Such cases legitimise the notion that maritime archaeological archives are simply a collection of artefacts – curiosities from the sea - rather than a coherent whole that together have significant evidential value, and ought to deposited and curated as such.

3.2.4 Curation – Access, Security and Public Ownership

Long-term security and active curation that enables access to archives are the chief curatorial concerns for maritime archives. There is very little specialisation, no expert support network or training in maritime archaeology, among museum archaeologists or in the wider museums sector. There is also little experience or expertise within the maritime museum sector of curating and enabling access to maritime archaeological archives. Very few substantial shipwreck archives currently reside within public archives. There is certainly no maritime equivalent to the type of archive like the London Archaeological Archive & Research Centre (LAARC), which not only curates and provides access to London's archaeological archives, but also actively promotes research into the material.

One of the primary issues for appropriate deposition of maritime archives is finding a public receiving body, in order to secure the future of the archive. Public ownership, and therefore long-term security, is a significant problem. For example the Mary Rose Trust is not a public body but an independent charitable trust, should the charity find itself in difficulties the future of the archive could be under threat.

Public ownership also results in public accountability; it secures scrutiny of standards of curation and access to archives. Maritime archaeological archives are often held by privately owned displays and heritage centres, including many items from some of the 58 nationally-important sites designated under the PWA in the UK. As these centres are privately owned, standards of curation and access to the archive cannot be prescribed or ensured and there is nothing to prevent the sale or dispersal of those artefacts, of that crucial element of the site's material archive. The question of public ownership and public access to maritime archives, both old and new, needs to be addressed.

Example:
'The London Archaeological Archive and Research Centre (LAARC) holds archives from over 5000 sites and projects in the Greater London area going back 100 years. It facilitates access and further research into these archives through catalogues on its website, as well as open days, educational and community projects. While physical access to archives is by appointment at the centre itself, which is open from 9am - 8.30pm during the week.'

3.3 Communication and Dialogue

The historic isolation of the maritime archaeology community from the archives and museums sectors is evident both on the ground and at policy level. The lack of maritime archaeological involvement in archive or museum groups and forums means that maritime archives have not been addressed in initiatives such as archive resource centres. This situation must be rectified through improved communication and representation.

The position of maritime archaeology within the MLA's Specialist Subject Network (SSN) initiative requires clarification. The initiative, (which grew out of the MLA's Renaissance in the Regions which has nine regional 'hub' museums), is intended to provide curatorial expert support to regional museums in a variety of specialist areas. The November 2004 seminar to launch SSNs presented UKMCS as an exemplar of the proposed networks, and one of the new SSNs initiatives is supporting the British Archaeology Network. Maritime archaeology's position in this system reflects the problems of the current situation, rather than resolving them. Instead of being embedded in the archaeology network maritime archaeology is isolated in a maritime one.

At a regional level dialogue between museums and maritime archaeologists needs to be improved to utilise their pooled experience. Some regions have developed effective collaborations, for example the Isle of Wight Museums Service are one of the few county based museums to engage with maritime sites and archives. A productive relationship with the Hampshire and Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology has developed which enables research and investigation of maritime sites around the Island to be undertaken with available support and advice on conservation and archives. These examples of local communication can be fostered and encouraged.

Without active dialogue there is little hope of realising the potential of older archives, particularly those dispersed between several organisations. To enable the archaeological potential of these older and unpublished archives to be realised an active network is required which enables access, research and managed curation of archives as a whole. This would be the first step towards producing the 'stable, ordered and accessible' archives of the AAF Guidance.

In addition to problems with the management of archives from wreck sites there are a range of isolated finds from the marine zone for which there is no established route for their recording, research or access by the public. There is no requirement, as there is on land, for a maritime Historic Environment Record to be maintained by local authorities. As a result groups of finds from a similar area, which could indicate a shipwreck or submerged prehistoric settlement, may not be recorded, and hence their potential connection remains unrealised. During the 2001 Wreck Amnesty run by the Receiver of Wreck, when divers and sea-users were encouraged to report unregistered finds, 300 finds were reported from one wreck alone. Held by different individuals this kind of dispersed archive is of no research value unless there are routes for recording and collating the information.

Definition: 'A Historic Environment Record (formerly known as a Sites and Monuments Record or SMR) records the location and basic information about all known sites, monuments and isolated finds. They are used as both research and planning tools, for local government, developers and consultants, as well as archaeological researchers and individual members of the public.'

3.4 Policy and Guidance Voids

Despite the applicability of IFA Standards and Guidance and the AAF 'Archaeological Archives' Guidance to maritime archives, this has not thus far been borne out in practice. As outlined this is due to systemic problems, a lack of dialogue between the key groups, lack of knowledge of the issues and the presumption that responsibility lies elsewhere.

Enabling the application of these archaeological and archival standards to maritime archives requires higher level policy prescribing their implementation. There must be clear recognition of the principles of these S&G in the policy of key organisations such as the Crown Estate (as owner of most of the UK seabed), DCMS and the MLA, without this there will be no real motivation for systemic change. This would not require a shifting or redefining of policies, it would simply require an articulating of those principles and responsibilities that remain un-expressed.

There is also a significant need for a change in museum collections policies across the sector, including regional and national museums, so that maritime archaeology is addressed alongside other archaeology. At the same time, UKMCS policy must recognise the difference between maritime archaeological archives and maritime collections and promote an archaeological perspective.

There is a need for promotion of policy and S&G through education of maritime archaeologists, museum curators, archaeologists and archivists. Promotion of policy must include clarification of the responsibilities of developers and those within the marine industry for the archives generated when they are obligated to commission archaeological investigations and projects.

Without this clarification, there is no impetus to drive systemic change, and the current confusion over where funding and resources ought to be sought for proper creation, preparation, transfer and curation of maritime archives will remain.

4.1.1 Priority Issues

- Recognition of the varied problems impeding the proper treatment of maritime archives, despite their value and importance, by the relevant government, heritage, museum, archive and archaeology organisations.

- Policy clarification by stakeholder organisations and an articulation of their respective roles and responsibilities.

- Development and promotion of standards and guidance for maritime archives, which integrate with AAF 'Archaeological Archives' guidance and IFA standards and are accessible to both the professional and avocational community.

- Full integration of maritime archives into museum collections policies and production of a strategy that recognises the archaeological value of these archives and properly considers their specific curatorial needs.

- Maritime archaeological representation in archives and museum groups and forums, to improve communication and facilitate better integration.

4.1.2 Short-term Issues

- Assessment of location and accessibility of existing maritime archaeological archives, alongside evaluation, and, as appropriate, mapping, of current collection areas for maritime archaeological archives.

- Assessment of the nature and number of maritime archives that are being, and will be, generated, alongside assessment of the capacity of receiving repositories, in order to evaluate the various possible strategies to meet future demands, (including consideration of whether it would be appropriate to develop a national maritime archaeological archives research and resources centre) .

- Development of maritime archaeological expertise within museums, establishing information networks that connect museum curators and archaeologists with maritime archaeological expertise and promotes education and training.

- Development of selection and retention policies for maritime archives to properly address issues of conservation and curation of ship structure.

4.1.3 Long-term Issues

- Development of archaeological archive expertise within both academic and avocational maritime archaeological training, and the development of links between university departments and maritime archaeological archive research.

- Development of the capacity of receiving repositories and provision of the resources required to meet the increased demands on physical and curatorial capacity.

- Development of maritime conservation capacity, to fill the gap in expertise, laboratory capacity and financial resources.

- Development of a structure/organisation which provides advice and guidance on maritime archaeological finds and archives.

- Development of maritime components for HERs.

4.2 Conclusions

In December 2006, IFA MAG organised a working seminar on maritime archaeological archives 'In Policy and Practice'. The seminar provided the opportunity to identify all the disparate issues facing maritime archives and the current position of key groups and organisations involved. Both presentations and the broad discussions that followed, articulated the scale of the problems and the gaps involved in proper management of maritime archives, and that there is effectively no coherent system in place at present. It demonstrated both the failures of the current situation and the will among those present to support productive change.

The discussion and information shared at the seminar will contribute to the AAF 'Archaeological Archives' Guidance and feed into development of an IFA S&G on archaeological archives. It has also fed into the development of this discussion document, and provided impetus for the process of consultation and the subsequent development of an integrated strategy for maritime archaeological archives. This strategy will provide the framework within which a programme of initiatives and projects can be developed to begin to address many of the varied issues facing maritime archives. Therefore, responses to the issues raised in this document are sought, and in particular, your views on the current situation as it has been mapped out and the issues summarised in Section 4.1.

To conclude, the archaeological record itself, the physical remains of our past, is a finite resource. The dynamic marine environment poses threats to this cultural heritage from currents, tides, storms and human impacts. Archaeological archives are a nationally important resource; they offer the means to re-access and re-interpret our past, and as a result to re-define and re-articulate our own identity. Yet maritime archives are falling through this large gap in policy and practice. They are being dispersed, are deteriorating, remain un-interpreted and un-curated, are sold and sometimes simply abandoned. As this continues, more of our past is placed beyond the reach of the research community, of schools, of community groups, and of the public as a whole.

Responses should be sent by Friday 20th April 2007, to Tim Howard at:
tim.howard@archaeologists.net
Or by post to:
Maritime Archives Consultation, Institute of Field Archaeologists, SHES, Whiteknights, University of Reading, PO Box 227, Reading. RG6 6AB

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Government departments and government-sponsored bodies:

DCMS (Department of Culture, Media and Sport) Museums and Cultural Property – within this department there are two teams that address museum issues, one deal with the MLA and regional museums, the other with national museums.

MLA (Museums, Libraries and Archives) – established in 2000 as the DCMS-sponsored, strategy agency for museums, libraries and archives. It offers grants and funding and promotes strategic programmes.

DCMS Historic Environment – within this department the underwater archaeology team addresses issues related to the marine historic environment and maritime archaeology.

EH (English Heritage) – sponsored by DCMS, and among other roles it is advisor to government on all aspects of heritage and the historic environment (in England, this includes the seabed up to the 12 nautical mile limit).

HS (Historic Scotland) – fulfils a parallel role for Scotland.

CADW – addresses the same issues in Wales.

DOENI (Department of Environment Northern Ireland) – department within which the same roles and responsibilities are carried out for Northern Ireland.

Receiver of Wreck – based within the Marine and Coastguard Agency, the Receiver deals with all reports of wreck recovered around the UK upholding the rights of both finder and owner.

Museums, museum groups and organisations:

National Museums of Scotland - cares for Scotland's museum collections and presents them to the public through museums. Provides advice and expertise to the museums community across Scotland.

National Museums and Galleries of Wales – advances education of the public through developing, caring for and encouraging access to the Museum's collections for the benefit of society in perpetuity.

UKMCS (UK Maritime Collections Strategy) – formed in 1998, by 11 key national, non-national, regional and local authority museums, to promote and rationalise maritime museum collections within the UK . Formerly ***UKMCI (UK Maritime Collections Initiative),*** the NMM's collections initiative.

ICMM (International Congress of Maritime Museums) – with 300+ member organisations, the Congress aims to nurture contact, relationships and offer expert advice. Among its stated aims, it explicitly includes the provision of standards and guidance for 'underwater archaeology'.

Maritime Curators' Group – formed in 1991 as a response to ICMM contacts, the group is an information network for maritime curators, which promotes maritime curatorial expertise and is involved in UKMCS.

NMM (National Maritime Museum) – based at Greenwich, with extensive historical archives, and maritime art collection .

Royal Naval Museum – Core funded museum based in Portsmouth Historical dockyard. Remit for collecting Naval artefacts and advising the MOD.

Royal Armouries- Core funded museum based around the Royal collections of arms and armour with a main site in Leeds and secondary site in Fort Nelson. They have an interest in collecting guns from the sea.

MRT (Mary Rose Trust) – based at Portsmouth, named 'lead museum for maritime archaeological expertise' within the UKMCS .

Museums Association – established in 1889, includes individual, institutional and corporate members. It lobbies government and sets professional and ethical standards, offering among other things a professional development programme.

MDA – UK lead for documentation and the management of information about museum collections. Over 25 years setting professional standards and helping museum professionals maintain them.

SMA (Society of Museum Archaeologists) – promotes archaeology within museums and offers training, advice and expertise to its members.

Collections Link – national advisory service for collections management, online at www.collectionslink.org.uk.

Records and archive groups and organisations:

NMR (National Monuments Record) – maintains accessible archives on the historic environment for England, (records information on these sites rather than acting as an archaeological archival repository).

RCAHMS (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland) – responsible for recording, interpreting and collecting information about buildings, sites, and ancient monuments of archaeological, architectural and historical interest (including maritime sites and underwater constructions) for Scotland.

RCAHMW (Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales) – is the organisation responsible for surveying, recording, publishing and maintaining a database of ancient, historical and maritime sites, structures and landscapes in Wales.

The National Archives – formed in April 2003 by bringing together the Public Record Office and the Historical Manuscripts Commission, it is responsible for the records of central government and the courts of law (historical documentation and records rather than archaeological archives).

The National Council on Archive - supports archive services throughout the UK in making applications for lottery funding. This support is offered to record offices and other institutions which hold archives and, through them, to everyone who cares for or uses

archives.

AAF (Archaeological Archives Forum) – formed in 2002 to address archaeological archives issues, includes heritage agencies, museum groups, archaeologists and government agencies within the forum.

ADS (Archaeological Data Service) - supports research, learning and teaching through digital resources, curates digital data and promotes good practice in the use of digital data in archaeology, providing technical advice to the research community.

Archaeological groups and organisations:

IFA (Institute of Field Archaeologists) – the professional organisation for archaeologists in the United Kingdom. It promotes professional standards and ethics for conserving, managing, understanding and promoting enjoyment of archaeology and our heritage.

ALGAO (Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers) – represents archaeologists working for local authorities and national parks throughout the UK, co-ordinating and presenting members views.

ICOMOS - works to promote the world-wide application of theory, methodology and scientific techniques to the conservation, protection and enhancement of monuments and sites

JNAPC (Joint Nautical Archaeology Policy Committee) - raises awareness of British underwater cultural heritage as well as developing proposals for legislative reform.

ACHWS (Advisory Committee on Historic Wreck Sites) - advises Government on the suitability of wreck sites to be designated for protection on the grounds of historical, archaeological, or artistic interest in accordance with the terms of the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973.

NAS (Nautical Archaeology Society) – Act as a focus for interest in underwater archaeology and provide training courses for avocational divers.

Other relevant groups and organisations:

Crown Estate – one of the largest property owners in the United Kingdom, including more than 55% of the UK's foreshore and large areas of seabed.

The National Trust – works to preserve and protect the coastline, countryside and buildings of England, Wales and Northern Ireland

This section contains a brief summary of policy, or position statement, about maritime archaeological archives from 16 organisations:

1. English Heritage
2. Historic Scotland
3. Department of Environment for Northern Ireland
4. Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)
5. The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA)
6. National Museums of Scotland
7. Royal Naval Museum
8. The Royal Armouries
9. National Maritime Museum
10. Archaeological Archives Forum
11. Society of Museum Archaeologists (SMA)
12. Receiver of Wreck
13. Ministry of Defence
14. The National Trust
15. UKMCS
16. RCAHMS

IFA MAG contacted a total of 20 key organisations to make policy enquiries. This brief study was limited to email enquiries and internet research, and though far from comprehensive, provides an introductory overview of the current situation in the UK.

Email enquiries asked questions about each organisation's policy regarding maritime archaeological archives, primarily whether there was in fact current policy, and how the organisation saw its role or responsibilities regarding maritime archaeological archives. In addition, where appropriate, more specific questions were asked about museum collections policies, or policy over splitting of archives between receiving bodies, for example.

Thanks go to those who responded to these enquiries, as well as apologies for any errors that may have appeared during the compilation of individual responses into a single document. As far as possible, responses have been reproduced as received, so we are most grateful for those who responded with formulated summary statement documents. However, this document should be considered only a clarification of policy based on IFA MAG enquiries and an articulation of IFA MAG's understanding of those policies, rather than public statements of policy by those organisations included.

1. English Heritage, the NMR and maritime archaeological archives

The National Heritage Act 2002 harmonised the roles of the UK heritage agencies by extending EH'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; and
- 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.

The National Heritage Act 2002 specified that English Heritage may defray or contribute towards the cost of:

- any survey, excavation or other investigation undertaken in respect of any protected wreck;
- the removal of any protected wreck or of any part of any protected wreck to another place for the purpose of preserving it; or

- the preservation and maintenance of any protected wreck.

In 2002, English Heritage published *Taking to the Water* (Roberts & Trow 2002) essentially identifying a "seamless" approach to maritime archaeology in England.

Management of England's Designated Wreck Sites

We are taking a management or conservation plan approach to England's Designated Wreck Sites to identify, by consensus, priorities for action according to the specific needs of individual sites whether that is backlog publication, archive assessment, or physical assessment. In archive-related initiatives on Designated Wreck Sites we would endeavour to follow best practice.

National Monuments Record

Maritime archaeological archives are a relatively new area for the NMR and we are still developing policy, therefore a definitive statement cannot be made at this stage.

The NMR core position in respect of terrestrial archaeological archives is to support local deposition of archaeological archives, both documentary and finds, in line with general policy within the archaeological community in England. While the NMR does hold some historic documentary archives (but no finds archives) for terrestrial excavations we see our primary role in this area as being the maintenance of a national inventory of monuments and interventions signposted to the location of associated archives via the Excavation Index and the associated OASIS project. For the marine environment the NMR's monument inventory extends to the 12 nautical mile limit.

The NMR currently has custody of documentary archive (but no finds) for a number of Designated Wreck Sites transferred to us by the Archaeological Diving Unit. These are not properly catalogued as yet, so public access is limited. We would in principle be willing to accept further documentary archive relating to Designated Wrecks while a national policy is developed, but would welcome clarification of scope and scale.

The future

English Heritage is keen to promote best practice and we have a role in the development of standards and policy, together with promoting improvements through our grants programme, and through advice given to regulators, including the following:

- We have developed ourselves or supported a range of related policy, guidance and standards initiatives, for example: *Marine Aggregate Dredging and the Historic Environment: Guidance Note* (BMAPA and English Heritage 2003), *Conservation Principles* (English Heritage 2006a), and *Our Portable Past* (English Heritage 2006);
- We have supported the initiation of the Archaeological Archives Forum (AAF) recommended standards, and would support its continued development to adequately include all archaeological archives derived from any environment;
- We support the archiving of materials, data and documents, according to the AAF recommended standards wherever possible;
- Elements have been introduced into the OASIS project to address the evaluation of records of marine interventions;
- We have included marine digital data archiving in the Big Data project, and would be interested in supporting a Workshop to specifically address the issues of marine historic environment data specification;

References

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Ian Oxley, Head of Maritime Archaeology, English Heritage, November 2006

2. Historic Scotland

1. Does HS have a public policy on maritime archaeological archives? If so, is it publicly available?

1.1. Historic Scotland (HS) is an Executive Agency of the Scottish Executive charged by Scottish Ministers with responsibility for safeguarding the historic environment and promoting its understanding and enjoyment. HS carries out the responsibilities of Scottish Ministers with regard to archaeological and built heritage matters which extend offshore to the limit of Scotland's Territorial waters (12 nautical miles from the coast). Operational policy for this aspect of work is stated in *Conserving our Underwater Heritage* (HS 1999).

1.2. The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) is the national body of survey and record of the historic environment (including all underwater structures and wrecks within Scotland's Territorial waters).

1.3. Considering these roles, HS defers to RCAHMS in respect of archiving policy.

2. Are there any guidance documents on the production, deposition and curation of maritime archaeological archives?

2.1. As stated above, HS defers to RCAHMS in respect of guidance on archiving matters.

3. Finally, how does HS see its responsibilities and role with regard to maritime archaeological archives?

3.1. Liaison between HS and RCAHMS is the subject of a concordat (2003) which states that both agencies will work together to:

- preserve, survey, record and assist the public understanding of, and enthusiasm for, the historic environment.
- promote public access to the sites, the information and the collections and archive that they control.

3.2. *Conserving Our Underwater Heritage* states that, in performing its duties HS will endeavour to ensure publication and proper archiving of all material arising from our stated objectives and policies (policy 4.3)

3.3. For the 2007 financial year, standard conditions for grants issued through the Archaeology Programme include:

- Submission of a brief report of work to Discovery and Excavation in Scotland (published annually by the Council for Scottish Archaeology)
- From 1 April 2007, details of the project must be submitted using the OASIS protocol
- A copy of the archive must be submitted with RCAHMS

General guidance notes for applications to the Archaeology Programme are available online (HS 2005). Some more specific guidance on archiving and publication of grant-aided projects is provided in *Publication and archiving of archaeological projects* (HS 1996).

3.4. It is a standard condition on licences issued under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973 (Survey, Surface Recovery, Excavation licences only) that:

- Licensees deposit a copy of the archive with RCAHMS.
- Licensees must submit a summary report to Discovery and Excavation in Scotland.

Guidance notes for the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973 are in the process of being updated but it is hoped that these will be available on the HS website in the future.

3.5. Similar conditions to those required under 3.4 are normally applied to Scheduled Monument Consent granted for survey and excavation under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

References
Historic Scotland, 1996, *Publication and archiving of archaeological projects*. Historic Scotland Operational Policy Paper 2. Copy available from Historic Scotland, Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh.
Historic Scotland, 1999, *Conserving the underwater heritage*. Operational policy paper HP6. Copy available at http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/underwater.pdf
Historic Scotland and RCAHMS, 2003, *A concordat between HS and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland*. December 2003. Copy available at http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/rcahms.pdf
Historic Scotland, 2005, Historic Scotland archaeology grants programme: a guide. Copy available from Historic Scotland, Longmore House, Salisbury Place, Edinburgh. http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/archaeology/archaeologygrants.htm

Philip Robertson, Scheduling Team, Historic Scotland's Inspectorate, 11 October 2006

3. Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland, Environment and Heritage Service

[Summary compiled by IFA MAG.]

The Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland, Environment and Heritage Service act as agents of the DCMS and MCA, and regularly attend ACHWS (Advisory Committee for Historic Wreck Sites) meetings. As a Government body, it is bound by and seeks to enforce existing legislation and policies, as well as inputting into consultation documents, including the proposed Marine Bill.

Neither DOE generally, nor EHS specifically, has a specific policy on maritime archaeology, although it pursues best practice in all aspects of archaeological projects. It is consulted, along with The Centre for Maritime Archaeology in the University of Ulster: Coleraine (CMA), on development projects that affect the marine environment under FEPA and other legislation. There are a number of maritime/inter-tidal features protected through scheduling and the department is also involved in maritime initiatives as the Belfast Lough Study Case and Strangford Lough Study Group.

The CMA remains the main source of, and repository for, maritime archaeological archives, much of which they themselves generate. EHS holds a Monuments and Buildings Record (MBR) which contains information related to a wide range of built heritage features. The biggest part of the record relates to archaeological features, but it also has material on industrial archaeology, defence heritage, etc. The CMA manages, and is largely responsible for enhancing, the maritime archive and they have just been awarded a contract to work for EHS carrying out survey, bringing forward suggestions for scheduling, and preparing publications. Just over 600 of the sites recorded in the inter-tidal zone of Strangford Lough are incorporated within the Sites and Monuments Database at the CMA. Ultimately all of the maritime sites and associated records will be incorporated in the Monuments and Buildings Record.

4. Department of Culture, Media and Sport

DCMS refers to MLA policy and strategies on issues related to archaeological archives, including those derived from maritime contexts.

5. The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA)

1. *Does the MLA have a public policy on maritime archaeological archives?*
   If so, is it publicly available?

The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) is the lead strategic agency for museums, libraries and archives. We are part of the wider MLA Partnership, working with the nine regional agencies to improve people's lives by building knowledge, supporting learning, inspiring

creativity and celebrating identity. The Partnership acts collectively for the benefit of the sector and the public, leading the transformation of museums, libraries and archives for the future.

MLA does not have a policy on maritime archaeological archives. The Archives Task Force of 2004 (convened by MLA on behalf of the DCMS) remarked on the fragmentation of archives, and we have been working to develop a broad range of policy initiatives and work programmes which place the wider archives sector firmly in the context of government priorities e.g. learning, communities, regeneration, young people, diversity, identity and citizenship. Our approach is to advocate on behalf and for a wide range of archival institutions and archival collections within that broad framework. I am not aware of any central government or local government policies that specifically cover maritime archaeological archives.

2. *Are there any guidance documents available on the production, deposition and curation of maritime archaeological archives*?

We would recommend that institutions follow the appropriate archives sector best practice guidelines for the care and disposition of their collections, irrespective of the type of collection. We champion the keeping of archives in the best possible conditions, and promote the fullest and widest means of public access to such collections. The National Archives' Framework of Standards describes the ideal standards which the TNA recommends.
See (http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives/framework)

The most commonly cited archival standard is BS 5454. The Public Services Quality Group of the National Council on Archives has published a Standard for Access to Archives which covers desirable public access requirements.
See http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archives/psqg/access.htm

The MLA sponsored "Collections Link" Collections Link is a collaboration of more than 20 national professional groups, bodies and associations who are responsible for providing advice and support to museums, archives, libraries and other collections-holding organisations. The aim of the service is to provide a single point of access to best practice in the care and management of collections.
See http://www.collectionslink.org.uk/index.html?sid=3Dbfda0cddb3dc1773e4e1c60 45bd1d48c

3. *Do you have a position on splitting archives between receiving bodies?*

MLA, as a strategic development body does not hold collections. We do not as a matter of course get involved in negotiations about individual collections; that is a matter for depositing and receiving bodies. We would however strongly advise institutions to follow archival conventions and best practice in maintaining provenance and original order in collections and the archival integrity of a collection.
However, there are occasions where splitting a collection may be justified in order to safely secure a collection, provide suitable accommodation, or offer optimum access benefits to users.

4. *How does the MLA view the respective roles of the British Archaeology SSN and UKMCS in providing archaeological expertise on the treatment and curation of maritime archaeological archives?*

MLA has funded the SSNs under the Renaissance in the Regions programme as mechanisms for sharing scholarship, collections and collections expertise, research and interpretation skills, in order to improve the way museums understand and use collections, for the benefit of their audiences. We would expect the SSNs to take demonstrate a full understanding of the breadth of their respective specialisms and work with partners and other networks where appropriate. It is up to an SSN to decide its priorities, based on such discussions and analysis.

5. *Finally, how does the MLA see its responsibilities and role with regard to maritime archaeological archives?*

MLA seeks to advocate for the archives domain at the highest level with government and funders to ensure greater investment in the sector, to raise standards of stewardship and raise awareness of archives for all. MLA, as non-departmental public body of the DCMS is a strategic development agency primarily concerned with the development of publicly accessible archive collections. Where such collections are in private hands, and where they are not publicly accessible, MLA has limited opportunities to intervene. Where archives are in private ownership, there is very little legislation that governs acquisition, care and disposal.

In addition:
The MLA Archives Task Force reported to Government in 2004, making recommendations to make archives better looked after, better understood and better used. These are available from the MLA website: www.mla.gov.uk

6. National Museums of Scotland

[Summary compiled by IFA MAG from discursive responses from Dr Alison Sheridan, Head of Early Prehistory, and Dr David Caldwell, Keeper of Scotland & Europe.]

In Scotland, documentary archive material automatically goes to the National Monuments Record for Scotland; this is the practice with all excavation documentary archives. Museums housing the artefactual and structural finds are entitled to get a copy of such documentation for their files.

National Museums of Scotland are very interested in Scotland's maritime archaeological heritage but at present do not have that written in to its collecting policy, though there may be a need to consider this. It has publicly available, collecting policies, framed on a Departmental basis.

In practice, its approach has always been reactive. However, it has been pragmatic, for example, in helping fund projects like the excavation of HMS Dartmouth and another 17th century wreck, both lost in the Sound of Mull. It endeavours to remain up-to-date on other ventures that could prove important to the nation and require NMS input, such as the efforts to find and excavate the ferry that sank in 1633 with Charles 1's `treasures' on it.

It maintains a strong relationship with the Receiver of Wreck, who generally discusses all finds from the sea round Scotland with NMS first. NMS would, generally, seek to acquire any finds that pre-date AD 1100 found in a marine context. Past acquisitions of this kind include a Middle Bronze Age gold torc found in the Minch off the island of Harris, a gold bangle of Viking age from the Sound of Jura, a flint axehead found in the sea off the west of Scotland, and a flint flake found in Doggerland during oil coring some years ago.

NMS also has specialist maritime conservation expertise, including in-house waterlogged organics facilities.

7. The Royal Naval Museum

As a general rule we do not accept any archaeological material into the collection except in exceptional circumstances and then only after due consultation with other appropriate bodies. We therefore have only a few items within the collections from archaeological sites, most of which were collected before we formally set out our collecting criteria within an Acquisition Policy agreed by our Trustees.

The extracts, below, are those which make specific reference to the collecting of archaeological material from our current Acquisition and Disposal Policy, which was reviewed earlier this year. The full document is not published but is available on request to interested parties.

1. Existing collections, including the subjects or themes for collecting

1.3 Artefact Collections

Archaeology

Existing archaeological material is limited to a few curios, weaponry raised from the Mary Rose in the 19th century, and items relating to excavation work on wrecks with sovereign rights.

2. Criteria governing future collecting policy, including the subjects or themes for collecting

2.3 Artefact Collections

Archaeology

Archaeological collections relevant to the Museum's purpose will not normally be accepted unless accompanied by excavation archives or field notes; items may be acquired, including by purchase, as stray finds or by excavation, but items will not be accepted if their discovery is believed to have been made by illegal, see paragraph 8e.

8. Acquisition Procedures

a. The Museum will exercise due diligence and make every effort not to acquire, whether by purchase, gift, bequest or exchange, any object or specimen unless the Trustees or responsible officer is satisfied that the Museum can acquire a valid title to the item in question.

b. In particular, the Museum will not acquire any object or specimen unless it is satisfied that the object or specimen has not been acquired in, or exported from, its country of origin (or any intermediate country in which it may have been legally owned) in violation of that country's laws. (For the purposes of this paragraph `country of origin' includes the United Kingdom).

c. In accordance with the provisions of the UNESCO 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property, which the UK ratified with effect from November 1 2002, and the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003, the Museum will reject any items that have been illicitly traded. The governing body will be guided by the national guidance on the responsible acquisition of cultural property issued by The Department of Culture Media and Sport in 2005.

d. The Museum will not acquire any biological or geological material.

e. The Museum will not acquire archaeological antiquities (including excavated ceramics) in any case where the Trustees or responsible officer has any suspicion that the circumstances of their recovery involved a failure to follow the appropriate legal procedures, such as reporting finds to the landowner or occupier of the land and to the proper authorities in the case of possible treasure as defined by the Treasure Act 1996 (in England, Northern Ireland and Wales) or reporting finds through the Treasure Trove procedure (in Scotland).

Further, in respect to artefacts recovered from underwater sites, the Royal Naval Museum will not knowingly acquire or exhibit artefacts which have been stolen, illegally exported from their country of origin, illegally salvaged or removed from commercially exploited archaeological or historic sites in recent times.

f. Any exceptions to the above clauses 8a, 8b, 8c, or 8e will only be because the museum is either:

- acting as an externally approved repository of last resort for material of local (UK) origin; or
- acquiring an item of minor importance that lacks secure ownership history but in the best judgement of experts in the field concerned has not been illicitly traded; or
- acting with the permission of authorities with the requisite jurisdiction in the country of origin; or
- in possession of reliable documentary evidence that the item was exported from its country of origin before 1970.

In these cases the Museum will be open and transparent in the way it makes decisions and will act only with the express consent of an appropriate outside authority.

8. The Royal Armouries: Maritime Collections

1. **Do you have a collections policy that addresses maritime archaeological archives? If so, is it publicly available?**
   The Royal Armouries has a duty to collect arms & armour and related items under the National Heritage Act 1983. Maritime items have entered the collection from the earliest times in the development of the museum, which claims to be one of Britain's oldest museums. Maritime acquisitions are not treated differently in principle from any other acquisitions, although their conservation needs may be very different from other objects in practice. The collections policy is being revised and will be available publicly when complete. The Royal Armouries' mission statement, vision, conservation policy and acquisitions since 1998 are available on the museum's website. There is also a history of the museum on the site.

   The artillery collection as it is existed in 1976, including many maritime pieces, was published as *The Ordnance* Vol 1 of the catalogue of the Royal Armouries [no further volumes to date] HMSO, 1976. Inquiries made to the curatorial staff are answered as fully as possible, using the records of the museum as appropriate.

2. **Are there any guidance or standards documents on the preparation, transfer and curation of maritime archaeological archives - or addressing the issue of those held by more than one receiving body?**
   The Royal Armouries is an accredited museum under the MLA Accreditation Scheme and follows current best practice in maintaining its collections and archives database. It does not treat maritime archives in any special way compared with other material.

3. Answer : See Note 2
4. **Finally, how does the NMM see its responsibilities and role with regard to maritime archaeological archives in general?**
   The Royal Armouries has historically taken an active role in the acquisition of arms & armour, notably ordnance, recovered from maritime sources, including foreshore and indeed just above the level of MHWS.
   It has also acted, rather informally, as a place of last resort for maritime-recovered ordnance, where chance finds have been held in treatment tanks at Fort Nelson, not necessarily with a view to the acquisition of the object in question. In some cases, the ordnance belongs to another museum or archaeological trust. The management of this facility is currently under review.
   Generally, the museum is in favour of the principle that preservation and recording *in situ* is the most practicable approach to the management of maritime archaeology so that excavation and recovery constitute a last resort.

Notes

The Royal Armouries has its headquarters at the Royal Armouries Museum, Leeds. The artillery museum is at Fort Nelson, near Portsmouth, Hampshire, while its historic home remains at HM Tower of London. It also is in partnership with the Frazier Arms Museum in Louisville, Kentucky, USA. www.royalarmouries.org

9. National Maritime Museum

1. **Do you have a collections policy that addresses maritime archaeological archives? If so, is it publicly available?**

1.1 The National Maritime Museum's (NMM) Collection Development Policy 2003-2007 (CDP) is a publicly available document and can be accessed through the Museum's website (www.nmm.ac.uk/server/show/ nav.00500200g003), or by contacting the Museum.

1.2 The collection policy outlines the Museum's collection remit in relation to its mission, and addresses the maritime archaeological archives currently held by NMM within this context. A review of the collecting policy is undertaken every five years in order to continue to ensure that it fully supports research, display and education projects central to the Museum's objectives.

1.3 The collection policy also operates within the United Kingdom Maritime Collections Strategy (UKMCS) framework, of which the NMM is a lead museum and founding member. The UKMCS partners are building a tradition of working together and of managing collections as a 'distributed national collection' rather than as resources of individual institutions. The aim is to make the best use of the profession's finite resources by sharing expertise and identifying lead responsibility for particular collection areas to reduce the likelihood of duplication across the sector. This may include re-distribution of existing collections, where practicable, to the most appropriate repository in terms of providing public access and collections care.

1.4 UKMCS was founded in 1998 and is a network of organisations with maritime collections across the country. There are eleven lead museums, each of which take responsibility for leading on collecting and related matters in specific subject areas. For example, the Mary Rose Trust is the lead museum for 'maritime archaeology and archaeological conservation' in terms of skills and expertise.

1.5 The NMM Collection Development Policy regards the collection as a living and evolving entity – shaped by carefully considered acquisition and dispersal. The Policy is a fundamental component of the Museum's overall Collection Reform Programme which aims to improve the ways in which the Museum looks after collections in its care and makes them accessible. The Collections Reform Programme receives funding from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, and further details of the Programme can be found on the NMM website in the form of notes from a public meeting held regarding the Programme itself (www.nmm.ac.uk/server/show/ ConWebDoc.19515).

1.6 The maritime archaeology collections currently cared for at the NMM are primarily a 'random' mixture of important artefacts and fragments of archive that have little intellectual integrity as an overall collection. Many are on loan from other organisations and do not belong to the NMM. Other material, although owned by the NMM, belongs intellectually with archives which are mostly housed elsewhere.

1.7 The NMM is currently undertaking a full audit of this collection as one strand of its overall Collection Reform Programme, and has identified much of this material as candidates for re-location to a more appropriate museum that can better support its public access and collections care. In the majority of cases, it is hoped that it will be possible to re-unite material with the primary archaeological archive held elsewhere of which it should be part. No material will be disposed of unless a new more appropriate home can be found.

2. Are there any guidance or standards documents on the preparation, transfer and curation of maritime archaeological archives - or addressing the issue of those held by more than one receiving body?

The NMM is an accredited museum under the MLA Accreditation Scheme, and as such follows the documentation and transfer guidelines laid down in 'SPECTRUM: The UK Museum Documentation Standard'.

The NMM is not aware of any guidance or standards documents on the preparation, transfer and curation of maritime archaeological archives specifically, but is aware of such documentation produced by the Society of Museum Archaeologists for archaeological

archives generally that could perhaps provide a useful start point for the IFA if they are considering work in this area

2.3 The issue of archaeological archives held by more than one receiving body raises a number of interesting points. As noted above, NMM is committed to working to ensure that collections are housed by the organisation which can provide the most appropriate care, context and access. For example, the Museum is actively reviewing its archaeological archives and where material is split between NMM and other organisation(s), and it is appropriate to bring the archive together at that location, will seek to progress this.

2.4 Where dispersal of maritime archaeology archives is undertaken by NMM, it will be carried out in line with the Museum's written Disposal Policy, (as approved by the Museums Libraries and Archives Council) and will conform to sectoral standards and guidelines.

3. How does the NMM view its responsibilities towards those archaeological archives already within its collections?

3.1 As noted above, the NMM is an accredited national museum under the MLA Accreditation Scheme and all of its collection is looked after to a high standard of professional care.

3.2 As noted above, the NMM policy is to review its maritime archaeology collections and determine whether the interests of the artefacts and archival material are best served at NMM or elsewhere – in terms of relevance, public access, integrity and collections care.

3.3 All archaeological material remaining in the collection after this process will continue to be looked after to the high standards set by the Museum and made publicly accessible.

3.4 NMM will continue to collect material relevant to the Museum's mission and objectives as set out in the Collection Development Policy. Within the UKMCS context, the Museum has a subject and thematic approach to collecting rather than being driven by object type. This may include collecting material from maritime archaeology contexts where appropriate, but no acquisition will be made in such a way that is detrimental to the integrity of an overall archaeological archive.

4. Finally, how does the NMM see its responsibilities and role with regard to maritime archaeological archives in general?

4.1 The National Maritime Museum's responsibilities and roles are defined by its mission and Collection Development Policy, within the context of the UKMCS.

4.2 The archaeological archives currently held at the Museum were largely collected during the late 1970's and 1980's, when government funding was received for an active archaeology team at NMM. When this government funding was withdrawn during the 1980's, the NMM re-focused its activities and moved away from active fieldwork and collecting to the adoption of a collegiate approach to policy initiatives. The UKMCS was established in 1998 and the NMM has worked within this framework ever since.

4.3 As a government sponsored body, the NMM is represented as an observer on the JNAPC, and is happy to work alongside its UKMCS colleagues to support the work of the JNAPC in the most effective and appropriate way.

4.4 The Museum does not plan to actively acquire further maritime archaeological archive material and is currently engaged in a process of review of the archaeological archives it holds.

4.5 The Museum strongly supports the principle that preservation in situ is the most appropriate approach to the management of maritime archaeology, and that excavation should only be considered as a last resort.

10th November 2006

10. Archaeological Archives Forum

The AAF has not yet had opportunity to debate maritime archaeological archives in detail, so comments from Hedley Swain, AAF Chair, are included but should be considered his own views rather than those of the AAF.

'Maritime archives should be treated in the same way as terrestrial archives with the proviso that they are likely to provide particular challenges and therefore need some particular solutions. This implies that all of the guidance and standards for best practice in terrestrial archives should be used for maritime archives.

In addition, suitable repositories are needed that can cope with the particular demands of maritime material, most notably large amounts of waterlogged organic material or other finds with special conservation needs. For terrestrial sites local and regional museums are normally the best repositories. However, at present there are very few museums that have the necessary facilities and expertise to curate large and complex archives from maritime sites so special arrangements need to be made. I believe there should be a designated national, or several regional repositories for taking maritime material. Clear guidance is also needed for maritime archives where they differ from terrestrial ones. AAF with IFA may need to step in to provide this.'

[Edited by IFA MAG]

11. SMA Position Statement on Maritime Archaeological Archives

The Society of Museum Archaeologists believes that terrestrial and maritime archaeological archives are subject to common principles of creation and curation. As a result there must be a consistency of approach towards both types of archives. In the past, however, this has not been the case and it is now generally recognised that there are problems with the way that maritime archaeological archives are treated and stored.

We recognise the following key principles:

- A maritime archaeological archive is defined as the total assemblage of artefacts, ecofacts and records from an excavation as deposited in a museum.
- The same standards of recording, excavation, sampling and object conservation should apply underwater as on land sites.
- Deposition and storage of the archive should be in an appropriate accredited (or registered) museum to ensure that minimum standards in the care and use of the archive are maintained.
- A museum must ensure that it secures legal title to any archive that it acquires.
- The integrity of the archive should be respected with a consequent presumption against it being split up for any purpose.

There is a strong presumption in favour of retention of the archive in perpetuity in a museum.

Detailed discussion is required on the following points relating to maritime archaeological archives:

- The concept of a maritime collecting area should be defined and agreement reached between museums over individual maritime collecting areas. It may be appropriate to identity a number of regional and local museum services located around the coast of the UK, in addition to the National Maritime Museum and other nationals, as recipient museums.

- Consideration must be given to the relationship between the UK's legislative framework as it relates to the concept of wreck and the key principles stated above, particularly in relation to legal title.
- Appropriate resources must be made available for the curation of maritime archaeological archives.
- Appropriate training must be provided for museum archaeologists and others in the curation of archaeological archives.

Guidance on selection, retention and dispersal of maritime archaeological archives should be prepared.

Philip J Wise, Chairman, Society of Museum Archaeologists, 10 November 2006

In addition, the SMA also offered specific responses to the following questions:

1. *Does the SMA have a public policy on maritime archaeological archives?*
We do not have as yet a public policy in this area.

2. *Are there any guidance documents or training available on the transfer, deposition and curation of maritime archaeological archives?*
There is some limited guidance available on the transfer, deposition and curation of maritime archaeological archives. In particular 'Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections' produced by the Museums and Galleries Commission in 1992 has a short section 'Guidelines for underwater sites' (page 17). This document is now somewhat out of date and is in the process of being revised by the SMA for eventual web publication. I am not aware that the SMA (or any other body) has ever offered training on maritime archaeological archives, but this is certainly something that we will consider in a future training programme.

3. *Do you have a position on splitting archives between receiving bodies?*
The SMA believes that the integrity of an excavation archive should be maintained and is consequently opposed to the splitting of archives between receiving bodies.

4. *Finally, how does the SMA see its responsibilities and role with regard to maritime archaeological archives?*
Museum archaeologists may be regarded as the end users of maritime archaeological archives with responsibility for their long-term preservation and presentation. As a result we would argue that we have a key role at all stages of the archive process including its creation.

12. The Receiver of Wreck

The Receiver of Wreck primarily deals with recovered wreck material. This is reflected in our Historic Wreck policy, which is geared towards artefactual archives.

The following statement, which is our summarised policy statement on Historic Wreck, is publicly available on our website, where it has been for a number of years.

"The Receiver of Wreck recognises the importance of archaeologically and historically significant material and is committed to trying to keep collections together and on display in a public museum, preferably in a location close to the find site."

The Receiver of Wreck is obliged to work within the general context of the provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995, but within that framework, we endeavour to ensure that proper consideration is given to the historic or archaeological significance of artefacts and that this is reflected in our discussions regarding disposal.

Sophia Exelby, Receiver of Wreck, 8 November 2006

13. The Ministry of Defence

[Summary compiled by IFA MAG]

Since the MOD is not a heritage agency it does not have a formal position on maritime archaeological archiving. It does, however, endeavour to follow current best practice and guidance on any project it undertakes that involves a marine archaeological element. This mirrors its strategy on land where IFA and EH (MAP2 as was) guidance are followed where PPG16 works are undertaken. In those cases, the archaeological archives are deposited with the appropriate local registered museum on completion of post-excavation and publication.

14. The National Trust

[Summary compiled by IFA MAG]

The National Trust currently has no specific policy on maritime archaeological archives, though this is an area it is planning to consider as part of a review of its full archaeological Policy, Standards, and Guidance notes. At present, maritime archives would, however, come under its general archiving policy, and guidance notes, which are available to the public. Any maritime archives already within its collections will currently be curated in the same way as other archives. Although this policy is also being considered for review.

It should also be noted that The National Trust has just produced a publicly available document entitled 'Museums: Policy from Practice'. This is available for download from their website, and hard copy will be available at the IFA MAG seminar.

15. UKMCS

The UKMCS does not currently have a policy document on Maritime Archaeological Archives. However it does in principle support the IFA-MAG initiative that is promoting awareness of the current situation with respect to maritime archaeological archives within the UK.

In particular, UKMCS feels that it can help by:

- encouraging its members to integrate a policy on maritime archaeological archives into their museum collection, selection and retention policies and address issues of conservation and curation of ship structure.
- increasing the information networks that connect museum curators with archaeologists. This process has already started as the JNAPC have recently accepted UKMCS representation onto their group (carried out by the Mary Rose Trust as the UKMCS' Lead Museum on Maritime Archaeology expertise).
- encouraging the Maritime Curators Group to invite organisations such as the SMA to join their meetings.
- contributing to a survey to re-evaluate the extent of current maritime archaeological archives within UKMCS and MCG museums and assess the capacity for the future.

16. The RCAHMS

History, role and coverage

The Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) maintains the database of the antiquarian heritage of Scotland. This comprises archaeological, architectural and maritime entries, and is made publicly available through the website; archive material is held and public enquiries are answered in Edinburgh.

RCAHMS draws maritime information from bibliographic and documentary sources, participates in the activities of the *Nautical Archaeology Society* and the *Society for Nautical Research*, and co-operates willingly with other statutory, professional and amateur bodies. We are the normal place of deposition for working material from excavations and survey carried out throughout Scotland, and gratefully receive information and archive material from divers or other researchers. RCAHMS cannot conduct underwater survey or excavation, and rarely reconnoitres intertidal areas. Nor do we maintain a record of ship models or of preserved vessels in museums

or private hands. Enquiries outwith the scope of the database may be referred to *Historic Scotland*, the *National Archives of Scotland*, the *National Library of Scotland*, or other institutions.

Information is held on shipwrecks, maritime losses, and other underwater and intertidal remains within and around Scotland; maritime records are frequently integrated with the related classifications of *Defence*, *Transport and Communications* and *Industrial*. Sufficient information is provided to indicate the history, significance and (where appropriate) context of each entry, but no attempt is made at evaluation or recommendation for preservation.
The database of about 250,000 records currently includes over 14,319 maritime entries, this figure should rise to about 25,000 over time as new records are added and the collation of information continues. The following categories may be recognised:
Casualties: 12,409 (86.5%) – losses (confirmed or otherwise) recorded from historical or documentary evidence, and cited with inferred location. Records within this category serve to indicate the major areas of loss for historical, planning or development control purposes.
Wrecks: 1458 (10.1%) - demonstrable remains located to an appropriate degree of accuracy. Records within this category typically contain relatively lengthy textual accounts, and may be accompanied by working material from excavation or survey.
Obstruction: 250 (1.7%) – defined and located areas of anchorage debris etc
Aircraft: 56 (0.4%) – recorded losses, typically with inferred location. (Systematic input of records within this category has not yet started).

Canmore/Canmap record structure

Each *CANMORE* entry comprises up to four elements, only the first two of which need be present:
Heading: defines the entry by location (place-name, sea area, National Grid Reference and lat/long), name (where known), quasi-administrative area and type of vessel or other remains.
Text: details the history of study of the wreck or recorded loss
'Archive' or 'Collection': lists available drawings, photographs and manuscript or typescript records.
'Bibliography' or 'References': lists books, journals, magazines and other relevant printed or published sources (most of them held in the RCAHMS library).

Access and enquiries

Enquiries take three forms:
Self-service from the database: *CANMORE* (wordsearch-based) and *CANMAP* (GIS-based) systems are available through the website; please read the introductory notes before starting a search. You will be asked to self-register and create a password, but there is no charge for this service.
Personal enquiry at RCAHMS premises: Enquiries are answered during normal office hours. The library contains a wide range of books and journals while the Commission's archive material, that received from other contributors, and the Commission's extensive holding of vertical air photographs are available on request. Please telephone in advance if you are coming from a distance, if you wish to use archive material or vertical air photographs, or if you wish to consult a specific curator. Opening hours and a location map will be found in the website; there is no charge for this service but photocopying and photographic services are at cost.
Database downloads and printed reports: Digital (*ACCESS*) downloads and printed reports of entries relating to specific areas or categories may be obtained on written application to the Depute Curator, RCAHMS. Details of these services, together with the service charges applicable, will be found in the website.

Both the database as a whole and its maritime component are incomplete: further information, deposits of archive material and suggestions for improvement are always welcome.
Bob Mowat, Maritime Curator, RCAHMS, 8 December 2006 Website: www.rcahms.gov.uk