Maritime workshop
16th September 2010

Attendees:
Howard Kimberley, Kathryn Pritchard, Sian Rees, Polly Groom, Deanna Groom, Ashley James Meek, Fiona Gale, Adele Thackrey, Andy Davidson, Chris Martin, Terrence Williams, Susan Hughes, Louise Barker, Sue Stallinbrass, Neil Fairburn

Updates and key developments

RCAHMW and the maritime database:
- where possible, correlating wreck records, documentary sources and physical remains
- Using the middle of the Irish Sea as a cut-off point
- RCAHMW as primary record holders – the marine area is now greater than the terrestrial area their records cover!
- One of the drivers behind this massive expansion is the increasing amount of off-shore development, most notably renewable energy and off-shore windfarms
- The database includes the recording of maritime attributes (incl, for example, type of vessel, date of loss, tonnage etc), which will be searchable to allow for more complicated research questions.
- This sets the maritime database into a prime position to be the springboard for future research. GIS capabilities also allow themes to be pulled out of the dataset – for example, trade patterns

Cadw:
- Increase in developer-funded marine geophysics
- Improved capability and experience to respond to offshore marine development proposals, particularly through close working with RCAHMW
- Liaison with Welsh Archaeological Trusts over coastal development; but mechanisms need to be improved
- Marine and Coastal Access Bill bring in requirements for marine spatial planning

Principal research tools

1.maritime database
2.commercial data
3.GIS

Combining these three elements begins to allow complex research questions to be asked

Research priorities, developing from those identified in the original agenda

Early prehistoric being partially addressed through:
-West Coast Paleolandscapes project
-Information gained from conditions imposed on commercial licenses
-Crown Estates study mapping seabed features as part of commercial works,

attempting to produce developer exclusion zones

issues:
-archiving and storage of data
-ground truthing of identified areas of high potential
-how many practitioners have the expertise and/or technology to interpret the data which is coming in?
- in general, mitigation = avoidance …. but what information is that giving us?

future potential:
– developing West Coast project to cover whole of Welsh coastline
– capacity building amongst all practitioners, but particularly amongst all involved with development control offshore
– look at possibilities of integration of the protocol for reporting archaeological finds at sea with Portable Antiquities Scheme in order for better analysis of results?
– Protocols and guidance need to be a; issued in the light of the updated research agenda, and b; signed up to by developers

Shifting coastlines emerged as a cross-cutting research theme, tied in with questions about settlement and the survival of earlier evidence.
Identified issues;
– which rivers were navigable, and for what distance?
– Recognising that, generally, coastline is on the move, can we look for evidence of earlier harbours/jetties/wharves etc.?
– Is there any way to tie studies of ports (used or disused) to studies of local distinctiveness? And can we use clues from urban character to look for evidence of relict shipping / seafaring traditions?
– Much early material is likely to be under mud/silt, and therefore may be protected by SSSI status and nature conservation issues. How can we ground-truth predictions, and do we need to work with nature conservation bodies to try and effect any changes in approaches to conservation and issues like flood-risk management in the light of archaeological potential?
– How did coastal change affect people in the past – what were the impacts on terrestrial settlement (field patterns, land-use etc) and also on the types of vessels being used for sea-faring and any associated infrastructure? What about riverside settlements?

All of these kinds of archaeological evidence are threatened by development pressures, for example marina development, harbour refurbishment, flood-defences or changing approaches to flood defence (managed re-alignment). We need one good example of work done in advance of development (either reactively, to development proposal, or proactive research) in order to hold up an example and work through a methodology of 'building up' the maritime stories through landscape layers:
– portable antiquities and stray finds
– LIDAR
– map regression
– local distinctiveness and characterisation
– building recording
– landscape characterisation

Marine industry

Difficult to detect – there is a need for local knowledge about industries, which can be reflected in place-names, oral histories, family traditions etc
Key industries discussed at the workshop were-
fishing
ship/boat-building (but note that normally very few remains, little/no infrastructure. Importance of images, therefore. Also of interest is the importance of ship building further inland – for example, on forestry and transport. A key question remains – is there a distinctive Welsh boat-building tradition? And how localised is it? Or should we be looking at a Celtic Sea tradition – Cornwall, Ireland, Isle of Man, Wales)
coastal extraction
gathering
kelp industry (pre-1750)
salt – from prehistory to recent past
small 'scratch' industries
How did industries affect settlement? In the absence of unequivocal industrial remains, can we approach industry through settlement studies - "in the negative" ?

In this 'industrial' theme, there are huge numbers of linkages to other research topics – most notably the availability and geography of raw materials, processing technologies, and the development of particular vessels reflecting particular trades.

possible case-study: Anglesey – potash from seaweed, copper mining – possibilities of recording through the 'Arfordir' project? Links to tourism – telling historical stories in addition to the 'beach holiday' image. But needs a clear synthesis of all available information to tell coherent and interesting stories!

Lakes – very under-researched. Should also include riverside work.

Local boat-building
typological records reflecting small-scale geographical differences and regional variations – for example, the Tenby lugger.
Astart for this typological study could be made through the maritime database and the recorded vessel attributes, but a full study would require examination of wreck records and build records, as well as oral history and working with historical vessel enthusiasts (for example, West Wales Maritime Heritage Society) – ultimately, the production of an **compendium of Welsh coastal vessels** (incl definition of terms) should be an overall aim!

action – establish sub-group to take this forward

Wales and the wider world
Impacts of trade – both social and technological
what were the effects of 'exoticism' and looking outwards towards the world?
Do we see Welsh boat-building traditions/skills (if they exist!) tarvelling with Welsh mariners?
The use of shipping and port registers as well as crew-lists for vessels may be able to help us in telling stories about genealogy, shares in vessels, trading patterns etc.
These kinds of stories are very accessible, and great foundation for outreach opportunities/ community projects.

Funding options:

Maritime

investigate the HL funding for landscape partnerships, looking at natural and cultural heritage and incorporating a training element

Location and prospection
− can we locate wooden wrecks by ballast mounds? Looking for stone which is geologically foreign to the area
− how can we effectively undertake long-term monitoring of condition trends on wreck sites – particularly wooden ones – use of ROV ?

Tie-ins with other research agendas
EH maritime research framework is period based, and also contains sections on:
visualisation and dissemination
archaeological archives

Should we be considering following their format?