

The Coastal Historic Environment

Coastal historic assets are under threat both from erosion and flooding (the rate and frequency of which will increase due to climate change) and from Government's changing approach to coastal management, which now focuses on the development of naturally-functioning, sustainable coasts. Protection by means of sea defences is no longer assured for any coastal assets, so a first priority is to characterise the resource through English Heritage's Rapid Coastal Zone Assessment Surveys. The information gained will aid the development of Shoreline and Estuary Management Plans by Local Authorities, and assist in developing appropriate programmes of conservation or mitigation. The Maritime Archaeology Team is collaborating with Government and other organisations in the development of guidance and protocols. A national research strategy to help manage the coastal historic environment has been developed, and this will underpin future research and management programmes.

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Recording an inter-tidal timber trackway, Breydon Water, Norfolk
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Maritime Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund

The Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund was introduced by the UK Government to provide funds to help address the environmental impacts of marine aggregate extraction. English Heritage is a major distributor of the fund and supports projects that promote environmentally friendly marine sand and gravel extraction and transport. Research projects have been targeted to meet both the Fund priorities and the strategic agenda for England's maritime archaeology. In co-operation with industry organisations guidance, advice and procedural information relating to the extraction development process has also been produced. Through its involvement in the Fund English Heritage has supported a range of timely initiatives, providing new insights into mitigation, assessment, evaluation and potential of the marine historic environment through remote survey and field investigation in England's Territorial Waters.

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Dredger working in the North Sea collecting aggregate © BMAPA

Under the sea and around our coast



Planning frame survey of ship structure On Designated Wreck Site
HMS Colossus, Isles of Scilly. Courtesy of Kevin Camidge

ENGLAND'S MARITIME ARCHAEOLOGY

The English Heritage Maritime Archaeology Team

The seas and shores around England contain an immense wealth of archaeological sites and remains. As an island country that has experienced successive waves of settlements over many centuries, and as a major mercantile, naval, industrial and imperial power, the history of England and the experience of many of its inhabitants has been inextricably linked to its surrounding seas. And, of course, it is only within the last 10,000 years or so that we have been an island, so for many more millennia before that we were part of the landmass of North West Europe.

Maritime archaeology concerns the investigation of such evidence and English Heritage is the Government's advisor on all aspects of the historic environment of England, all the way out to the Territorial Limit 12 nautical miles off our shores. The English Heritage Maritime Archaeology Team provides maritime and coastal archaeology policy development and strategy, promotes standards, manages grants, produces guidance, and takes forward the physical management of England's Designated Wreck Sites.

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ENGLISH HERITAGE

Marine Planning and Development Control

Early evaluation of how development might impact on the marine historic environment is a key consideration in assessing the overall viability of a project, or in the preparation of future planning proposals. English Heritage is an advisor to offshore regulators, such as the Department for Trade and Industry, in their roles in managing development applications.

We encourage a proactive approach promoting early discussion with developers, Government Departments and regulators, so that any survey work to examine the seabed is made available for wider benefit and use. Knowledge of the presence of previously unknown and potentially significant archaeological sites will improve decision-making and promote effective development planning.

We also work to ensure that the historic environment receives appropriate recognition and inclusion within the development of European maritime policy. In support of this objective, we will participate in the formulation of the European marine strategy framework to ensure our interests are integral to the action taken to deliver a sustainable and diverse marine environment.

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England's Designated Historic Wrecks

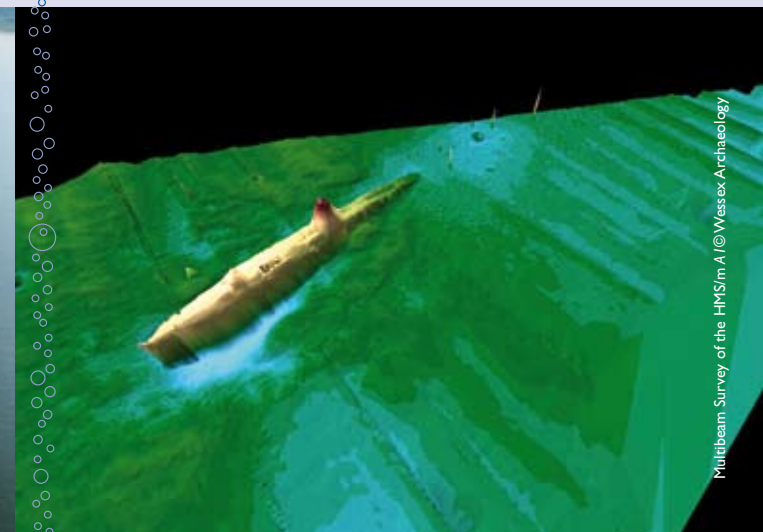
Wreck sites may contain the remains of vessels, their fittings, armaments, cargo and other associated objects or deposits, and they may merit legal protection if they contribute significantly to our understanding of our maritime past. The Protection of Wrecks Act (1973) allows the Government to designate an important wreck site to prevent uncontrolled disturbance and heritage agencies to develop research, education and access initiatives to raise awareness of, and encourage involvement in wreck sites.

The Designated Wrecks in England contain remains ranging from Late Bronze Age cargoes to early submarines. The English Heritage Maritime Archaeology Team advises the Government on designations, manages the licencing scheme that enables access to English sites, and facilitates the Government's Advisory Committee for Historic Wreck Sites.

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Wind farm under construction off the Norfolk coast. © NMR



Multibeam Survey of the HMSm A | © Wessex Archaeology