

The East Midlands Archaeological Research Framework Project

Introduction

This project forms part of the Regional Research Frameworks initiative promoted by English Heritage in collaboration with local authorities, in order to provide an effective yet flexible structure for decision making regarding archaeological research. In the East Midlands the initiative was taken by the Sites and Monuments Record Working Party, representing local authority archaeologists for the five counties of the region; Derbyshire, Leicestershire and Rutland, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Nottinghamshire.

The three-stage structure envisaged by English Heritage in *Frameworks for our Past* (Olivier 1996) has been adopted, which sees the *research framework* as comprising.....

- 1) *The Resource Assessment*: an overview of the current state of knowledge and understanding in the region which allows the setting of....
- 2) *The Research Agenda*: recognition of the potential of the resource, gaps in our knowledge and an unprioritised list of research topics. The *Agenda* informs.....
- 3) *The Research Strategy*: a prioritised list of research objectives (seen as flexible over time), furthered by implementing specific *Research Projects*, the results of which would be fed in to the resource, leading to changes in the agenda and thus the strategy.

The Draft Resource Assessment

The East Midlands decided that the best way to tackle the first stage of the framework, *the resource assessment*, was to hold a series of period-based seminars with an invited audience drawn from all sectors of the archaeological community within the region and interested parties from outside. Each period-based seminar comprised presentations from each of the five counties during the morning followed by a discussion in the afternoon. The morning presentations summarised the resource for each county and highlighted items for inclusion in a research agenda. The afternoon discussion, led by a chair and discussant, sought to focus the results of the morning by identifying the potential contribution that the region could make to national agendas and where the major gaps in knowledge lay.

A series of eight period-based seminars were held at County Hall, Leicester between April 1998 and March 2000.

- 1) 22/4/98 The Palaeolithic and Mesolithic
- 2) 28/1/99 The Neolithic and Early Bronze Age
- 3) 31/3/99 The First Millennium BC (the Later Bronze and Iron Ages)
- 4) 26/5/99 The Roman Period
- 5) 29/9/99 The Anglo-Saxon Period
- 6) 8/12/99 The Medieval Period
- 7) 26/1/00 The Post-Medieval Period
- 8) 22/3/00 The Modern (Industrial) Period

It was recognised that the county resource assessment presentations formed a useful resource in their own right, as well as providing the basis for the next stage of the research framework. It was agreed that their publication on the internet would be an effective way of circulating this information widely as well as acting as a forum for consultation. Many of the texts have been expanded since the initial presentation to incorporate feedback, whilst others remain the texts as given with bibliographic information appended. As stated in the summary above, these drafts should be viewed as working documents which will be updated overtime. Copyright concerns over the illustrations originally incorporated into the document have meant that many of these have been omitted from the web version, but it is hoped to include these in future versions. Collectively these chapters form a document *A Draft Archaeological Resource Assessment for the East Midlands* which provides the basis of a synthetic publication which is currently being written entitled *An Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda for the East Midlands*.

The Archaeological Resource Assessment and Research Agenda Publication

The second phase of the project has involved appointing authors to write an overview chapter for the region during each period, which will summarise the resource and couple it with a proposed research agenda. The publication will comprise twelve chapters as follows.

- 1) The Context of the Research Framework. *Nick Cooper (ULAS) / Jon Humble (EH)*.
- 2) The Environmental Background. *Angela Monckton (ULAS) with Jacqui Mulville (EH)*.
- 3) Palaeolithic: *John McNabb, Lecturer in Prehistory, University of Southampton*.
- 4) Mesolithic: *Andy Myers, Sites and Monuments officer for Derbyshire County Council*.
- 5) Neolithic and Earlier Bronze Age: *Patrick Clay (ULAS)*
- 6) Later Bronze Age and Iron Age: *Steve Willis, Research Fellow, University of Durham ..*
- 7) Roman Period: *Jeremy Taylor, Research Fellow, University of Leicester*
- 8) Anglo-Saxon (c.400 to 850): *Alan Vince, Archaeological Consultant .*
- 9) Medieval (from 850 to 1500): *Carenza Lewis, Archaeological Consultant*.
- 10) Post-Medieval (1500-1750): *Paul Courtney, Archaeological Consultant*.
- 11) Modern (1750-1960): *Garry Campion, University of Northampton*.

12) Research Themes *Nick Cooper (ULAS) with Jon Humble (English Heritage).*

The draft chapters of this publication are due for completion by the beginning of March 2001 and will be posted on this web site for consultation by the end of March. A series of meetings to discuss the final form of the *Research Agenda* are scheduled for late April-June 2001, with the revised drafts posted here and the final publication draft due for completion by the Autumn following a period of consultation.

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