

## **NYCC Historic Environment Record Users Guide**

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### **Introduction**

The North Yorkshire County Council Historic Environment Record consists of a database that indexes supporting hard copy and digital files, in various formats. The data provided in response to HER inquiries is as accurate and as up to date as possible. The HER is constantly being enhanced to ensure it meets national standards and user needs. Because the record changes frequently, information provided in searches, especially that on mapping, should be regarded as *indicative*, not definitive.

### **The HER Database**

North Yorkshire County Council uses a database that links to a Geographic Information System (GIS) – computer mapping - to manage our data effectively.

The database is used to record sites, monuments, finds, archaeological events, historic landscape character and details of designated heritage assets (e.g. Listed Buildings, Scheduled Monuments etc.), as well as the sources of information about these records.

Not everything we hold has been entered into our computer system. The process of adding information is continual. So, we have numerous paper and other record systems, which give more detailed information about records listed in our database (see below for details), and sometimes detail sites that are not yet listed on the database at all.

#### **A note about SMR/HER numbers**

Up until 2002, our HER had 2 numbering systems for HER records – Site Index Numbers and Sites and Monuments record (SMR) Numbers. This dual system complicated management of the records, and the SMR Number system was overly complex. In 2002 it was decided to simplify the numbering system.

The old numbers were retained in the system to allow cross referencing from older reports etc. (these are recorded as Old SMR Number and/or Site Index Number in some database print outs).

In all new reports or cross referencing to the HER, the current numbering system should be used. The most commonly occurring numbers used are easily identifiable.

<b>Prefix</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Example</b>
MNY	Denotes a record for a ' <b>Heritage Asset</b> ' – usually a site, monument or building	MNY36039 – Mesolithic flint scatter, Little Holtby
ENY	Denotes an archaeological <b>event</b> or activity	ENY5935 - Field Walking Survey, A1 Dishforth to Barton Improvement
SNY	Denotes the <b>source</b> of information	This works in a similar way to a bibliography, but because the HER references unpublished material from a variety of sources, e.g. maps, aerial photographs etc. the term 'source' is used. The source record gives details of where the information about a monument, event etc. was found, and where it can be obtained if someone wishes to look at it again.
HNY	Denotes a record for <b>Historic Landscape Character</b>	HNY16 - Easby Moor. An area of unenclosed heather moorland containing considerable evidence of previous landscape character. This is represented by disused sandstone quarrying. The current landscape seems to represent reverted moorland moving from extraction back to unenclosed moorland.

## Things you should be aware of

Absence of certain types of data does not mean that such data does not exist – check with the HER Officer if results are not what you were expecting.

Because not everything we hold has been entered into our computer system, you may find that the HER Officer suggests that you visit the HER in person to assess the collection yourself.

To visit the HER you need to make an appointment. The best way to do this is over the telephone by calling 01609 532331 and asking to speak to the HER Officer. You can also request an appointment by email: [archaeology@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@northyorks.gov.uk)

You may find the HER Officer is able to indicate how likely it is that a visit will be necessary and a quick call to discuss your search can be very useful.

Whilst every effort is made to be as precise and accurate as possible, the location and extent of an event, monument, site, designation or character area on the HER map or database record is **indicative** only. This is especially important for designated sites (e.g. Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings etc.). If you need definitive information, you should always go directly to the designating authority (usually English Heritage). If you are in any doubt, or need direction, please ask. The most up to date information on designations (including long descriptions not held on the HER database) is to be found on the **National Heritage List for England**.

Data provided to *bona fide* researchers, students and academics etc. is provided free on the understanding and expectation that any new or enhanced information revealed by research will be returned to the HER. The reason for this is simple, **if it is not on the HER, it won't be considered when our team gives management or planning advice**, and is therefore at risk of damage or destruction.

Details of giving information back to the HER can be discussed with the HER Officer. We usually ask that researchers send us the results of their work – e.g. relevant book chapter or journal paper offprints, or copies of any reports or gazetteers they compile.

## What collections are in the North Yorkshire Historic Environment Record?

The HER contains the following paper information sources.

**Parish Files** – each civil parish in the North Yorkshire HER area has its own file set containing information about the area. These files contain general archaeological information, details of chance finds and other sources of information.

**Grey Literature Files** – Unpublished archaeological reports, generated via a variety of mechanisms, although principally from the planning process.

**HER Library** – this is a collection of books, Journals, articles and other documents which detail information about North Yorkshire's Historic Environment. This includes an almost complete collection of the Yorkshire Archaeological Journal.

**Card Indexes** – in the early days of the service, these card systems formed part of the core of the HER. We have copies of the Ordnance Survey Archaeology Division cards (partial set), and the Yorkshire Archaeological Society's Survey Cards (unclear if a complete set). Most of the Ordnance Survey card data have been incorporated into the National Monuments record digital systems. The cards are organised by Ordnance Survey quarter sheet.

**Other Files** – we have additional files organised by topics and themes, to house records that do not easily sit elsewhere, e.g. sources that may span a number of parishes, such as pipeline or road schemes.

### **Other Digital Data**

The HER also holds some digital data provided by other organisations, but is not a digital archive for this data.

**National Mapping Program data** – the National Mapping Program is an English Heritage funded project to map archaeological sites from aerial photographs. Where projects have created coverage for the North Yorkshire County Council HER area, this has been obtained and is available via our GIS. The data varies from scanned data (scanned from manual plots) through to born-digital data which as well as depicting an area, holds information about what the depiction shows e.g. the type of monument shown, its date etc.

**Community Archaeology Project Data** – this is data created by projects carried out by Community Archaeology Groups or Societies. The data has been provided to inform the HER. The long term aim is to incorporate this information into HBSMR, but this is subject to resource and Copyright issues being resolved.

## **Aerial Photograph Collections**

Our collection of aerial photographs was moved to the County Records Office ([www.northyorks.gov.uk/archives](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/archives)) in 2011. The following is therefore for information only. HER users should approach the Records Office for access to aerial photograph collections.

**Oblique Aerial Photographs** – we have a large collection of these photographs taken by North Yorkshire County Council staff, and others, over the years. Some of these are detailed below, though the list is not comprehensive. The collection is organised by map sheet. This collection is partially indexed and a list of photographs that cover a certain area can be produced relatively easily.

**Vertical Aerial Photographs** – we have a number of surveys of the HER area taken from the 1940's through to the most recent coverage in 2001/2002. These are organised by run number, and hard copy index maps are available to determine which photographs are relevant to an area.

Specific Aerial Photographic Collections held at North Yorkshire County Records Office

RAF River Ouse Flooding 1982 Verticals

RAF River Ouse Flooding 1982 Obliques

Scarborough 1949 Obliques

Meridian North Riding Vertical Survey 1971 -1973

Meridian Coastal Survey Verticals 1965

River Swale Verticals 1962

River Wiske Corridor Verticals 1996

RAF Verticals – Post war (1940's) – various areas (not complete coverage)

Meridian West Riding Vertical Survey 1967 – 1971

Hunting Vertical Survey 1973

ANY Collection 1977 - 1991

A64 York to Malton Dualling 2001 Obliques

Department of Transport A1 Walshford to Dishforth Obliques July 1990

ANY Collection 1977 - 1991

## **Online Sources of Information**

The North Yorkshire County Council HER is available online via the Heritage Gateway. There is a document on the Heritage Gateway detailing the limitations of the data available through this facility and why using this source would not be sufficient for desk based assessment. However, the information may still provide useful background for other uses.

[www.heritagegateway.org.uk](http://www.heritagegateway.org.uk)

Information on designated sites can be found online via the **National Heritage List for England:**

<http://list.english-heritage.org.uk>

### **Other Online Sources**

These overlap with HER data to a greater or lesser degree – please ask the HER Officer for an explanation if you need one. Our aim is to cross reference to these sources where possible, and this obviously means the overlap varies over time.

- **National Monuments Record** (also referred to as the National Record of the Historic Environment) at <http://pastscape.english-heritage.org.uk>. This is also searchable via the Archaeology Data Service and the Heritage Gateway.
- **The Archaeology Data Service** <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk>. Search over a million records relating to all aspects of British Archaeology and further afield. Also houses the Grey Literature Library of unpublished archaeological reports.
- **Parks and Gardens UK** [www.parksandgardens.ac.uk](http://www.parksandgardens.ac.uk) The database is also searchable through the Heritage Gateway
- **Finds** Portable Antiquities Scheme database at [www.finds.org.uk](http://www.finds.org.uk)
- **Fieldwork and Research**
  - English Heritage Excavation Index* is available via the Archaeological Data Service and through the Heritage Gateway (see above).
  - Archaeological Investigations Project* is available at <http://csweb.bournemouth.ac.uk/aip/aipintro.htm> covers the period 1990-2010.
  - BIAB Online* – British & Irish Archaeological Bibliography [www.biab.ac.uk](http://www.biab.ac.uk)

Fieldwork/event databases all overlap to some degree, but each has something the other does not, so all are worth checking.

## **Museums, Libraries and Archives**

County Record Offices and other archives can be found at [www.a2a.org.uk](http://www.a2a.org.uk)

For museums that cover North Yorkshire, details can be found at

[http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/sma\\_map](http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/sma_map)

Local Studies and other libraries information can be found via the North Yorkshire County Council website at [www.northyorks.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/libraries).

Leonora Goldsmith  
**Historic Environment Record Officer**  
North Yorkshire County Council  
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