

Fact Sheet for Archaeological Advisors

To help the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973 achieve its aim of conserving important examples of the nation's shipwreck heritage, several safeguards have been established to ensure that work carried out on designated wreck sites is to acceptable archaeological standards. Work on designated sites can only be carried out under a licence issued by the National Assembly for Wales.

Licences for intrusive archaeological investigations, such as excavation, are issued only where there is an accredited archaeologist directing the work. Licences for non-destructive investigations, such as survey work, are sometimes issued to groups who have limited archaeological experience, and it is in these circumstances that an external Archaeological Advisor is needed to supply the necessary expertise. For this to work effectively there has to be positive involvement from the Advisor, not just reaction to the request for occasional advice from the team. The Advisor needs to maintain regular contact with the Licensees, and maintain a good working relationship.

It is important for the Advisor to keep in touch with what is happening on the site. Ideally this would be by periodic visits to the site whenever work is taking place. If this is not possible then regular contact with the team is essential, even if only by telephone, so that any difficulties can be discussed and the progress of the work monitored.

Licensees may not always be aware of their lack of archaeological knowledge, particularly if they have extensive experience of 'working' without proper guidance on historic wreck sites that are not protected by law. The Advisor will often have to help raise the team's level of archaeological consciousness and may need to encourage them to become involved with the Nautical Archaeology Society's training scheme (details available from the Nautical Archaeology Society, Fort Cumberland, Fort Cumberland Road, Eastney, Portsmouth, PO4 9LD).

The Advisor's work need not be particularly time consuming, unless he or she decides to play a more active part in the work on and off the site. However, archaeologists taking on the role of an Advisor will often have to spend some time on the following:

- 1 Helping the team formulate a Research Design before applying for a licence and a Fieldwork Strategy before work begins on the site.
- 2 Assist the team with writing the report on the season's activities.
- 3 Ensuring that adequate site records are maintained, and that the archive is deposited in a recognised repository and copied to the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, Ffordd Penglais, Aberystwyth SY23 3BU. Tel: 01970 621200. Email: nmr.wales@rcahmw.gov.uk
- 4 Advising the team on methods of disseminating information about the site through publications, lectures, etc.

Recommended Reading

Dean, M, 1988, 'Guidelines on Acceptable Standards in Underwater Archaeology'. Scottish Maritime Studies Development Association, St Andrews. ISBN 1-871170-00-1.

The Nautical Archaeology Society, 1992, 'Archaeology Underwater: The NAS Guide to Principles and Practice', Archetype Press, London. ISBN 1-873132-25-5.

Contact Address

Cadw, Designations Section, Plas Carew, Unit 5/7 Cefn Coed, Nantgarw, Cardiff CF15 7QQ.
Tel: 03000 295017 Email: Cadw@gov.wales