

HE 26

Y Pwyllgor Cymunedau, Cydraddoldeb a Llywodraeth Leol  
Communities, Equality and Local Government Committee  
Bil yr Amgylchedd Hanesyddol (Cymru)/Historic Environment (Wales)  
Bill

Ymateb gan: Martin Locock

Response from: Martin Locock

Comment on  
enhancing existing mechanisms for the sustainable management of  
the historic environment

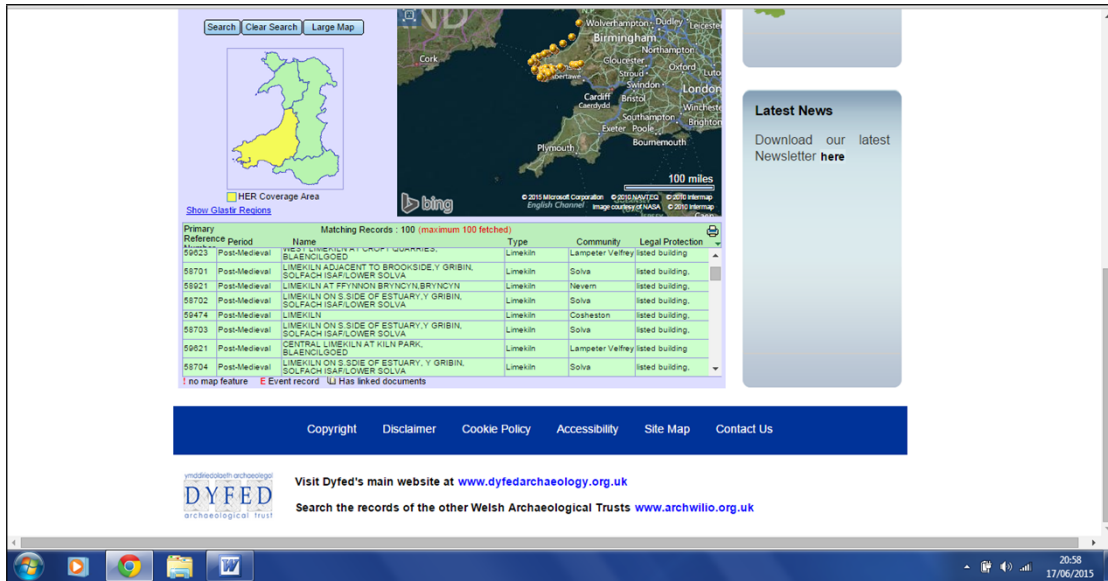
- 1 Currently Historic Environment Records held by the Welsh Archaeological Trusts have been adopted by planning authorities for planning purposes. The HERs have no statutory basis.
- 2 One of the major changes introduced by the *Historic Environment (Wales) Bill* is the statutory requirement that planning authorities create and maintain historic environment records. It is likely that planning authorities will choose to adopt the Historic Environment Record maintained by the relevant Welsh Archaeological Trust rather than develop a new record themselves. The HER will need to meet the benchmarks of the Draft *Managing Historic Environment Records in Wales – Statutory Guidance*, including conformance with the *MIDAS Heritage v1.1* data standard [<http://cadw.gov.wales/docs/cadw/publications/historicenvironment/150429managingherinwales-en.pdf>].
- 3 The HERs currently conform to data standards agreed with RCAHMW including *MIDAS*, an earlier version of *MIDAS Heritage v1.1*.
- 4 I am concerned that HERs will require significant upgrading if they are to be fit for purpose as statutory records.
- 5 As a user of HERs via the Archwilio website familiar with the heritage of Wales I am aware that the quality and completeness of the records they contain is variable. In order to assess how much upgrading will be required, I undertook a review of the current conformance of the data held against the current data standard by a short sampling exercise. As an exemplar I examining arbitrarily-selected HER records included on Archwilio against one data element, Site Type, for which conformance can be readily assessed.

- 6 The Historic Environment Records developed by the Welsh Archaeological Trusts are intended to act as an index to known heritage assets within each area. RCAHMW leads on agreed data standards and has provided grant aid for the Welsh Archaeological Trusts to work on their HERs. The Trusts have undertaken other HER enhancement work through volunteers and other funding.
- 7 HERs currently conform to MIDAS (1988) as applied in Wales. MIDAS includes conforming to an agreed data structure. For Wales, Site Type entries must conform to the RCAHMW 2007 *Thesaurus of Monument Types*<sup>1</sup>. The adoption of a standard terminology promotes the easy searching, analysis and comparison of data across data sets and provides users with clarity. RCAHMW also requires conformance with *Informing the Future of the Past: Guidelines for Historic Environment Records (IFP2) (Second Edition, 2007)*.
- 8 The sampling exercise found that the HERs currently contain data that does not conform to the present standard, by using Site Type entries not included in the *Thesaurus of Monument Types* (see screenshots below).

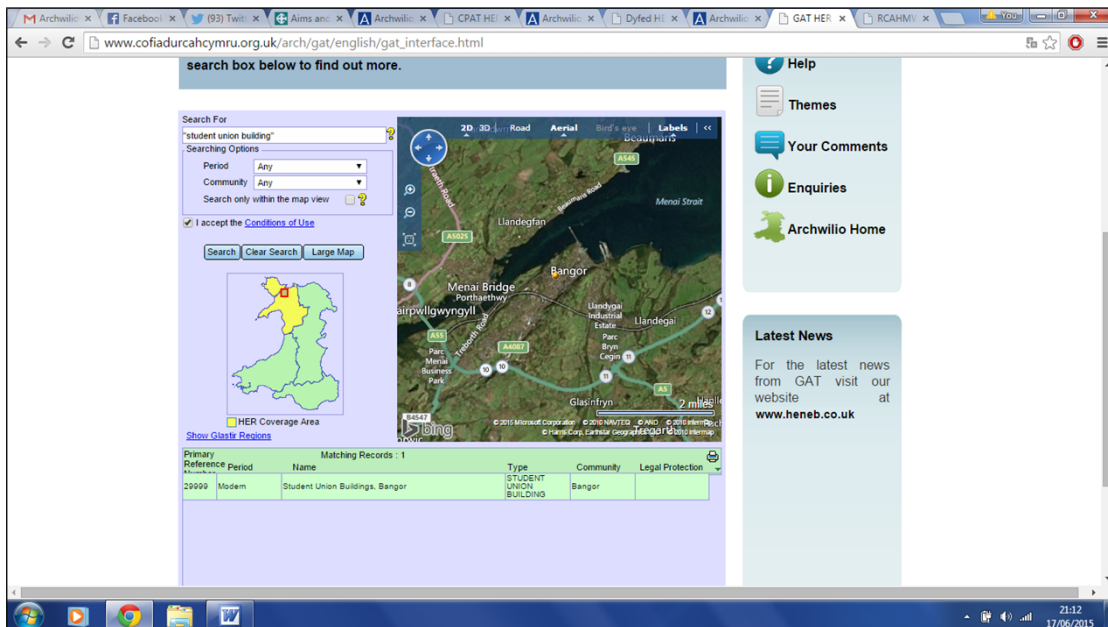


Platform hut – not a permitted term (should be Hut platform or Long hut)

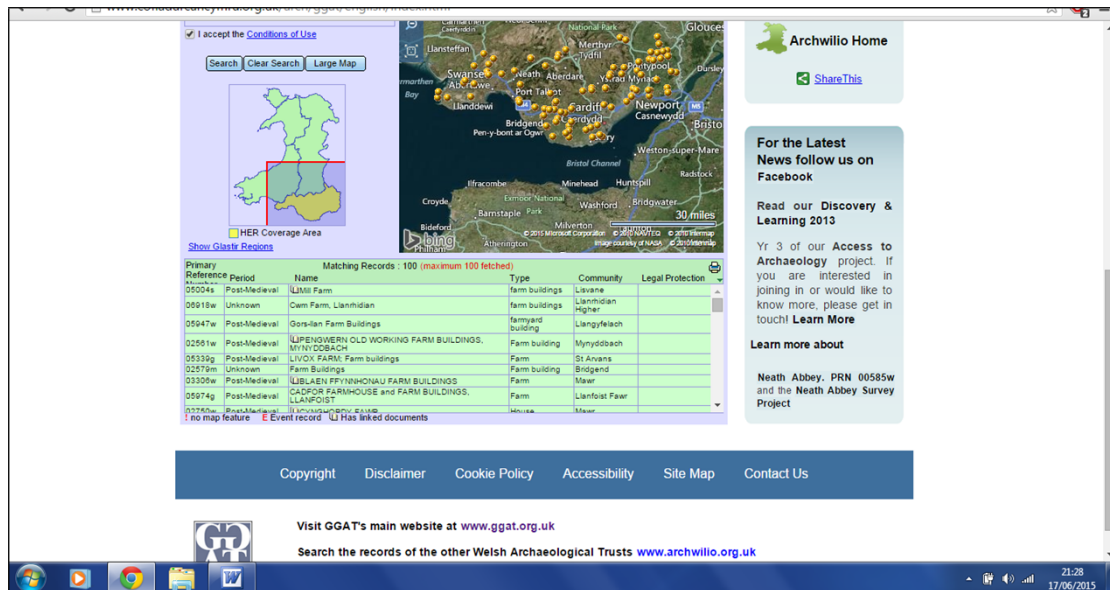
<sup>1</sup> <http://orapweb.rcahms.gov.uk/apex/f?p=200:1:108649889670713::::>



Limekiln – not a permitted term (should be Lime kiln)



Student Union Building – not a permitted term



## Farm buildings and Farmyard building - not permitted terms

- 9 Upon enquiry, the HERs advised that these records had been incorporated into the HER from separate data sets compiled by others (within the Trusts and external).
- 10 *Informing the Future of the Past: Guidelines for Historic Environment Records* (IFP2) (Second Edition, 2007) is at: <http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/ifp/Wiki.jsp?page=SectionD.4>

### “Importing data sets

The new data should conform to any vocabulary control or data standards that have been agreed for the main database.”

- 11 The imported records had not been validated against the current data standard for Site Type (RCAHMW *Thesaurus of Monument Types*) upon import, and as a result the HERs as a whole do not conform to the *Informing the Future of the Past: Guidelines for Historic Environment Records*.
- 12 It may well be that other data elements in the HERs are also non-conforming at present.
- 12 If the Trust HERs are to be adopted by planning authorities to meet the requirement of the Bill and the Statutory Guidance, they will need to conform to *MIDAS Heritage v1.1*. In order to do so, significant additional resources will need to be invested in enhancing the HERs to address the more stringent requirements of *MIDAS Heritage v1.1* and to resolve existing issues with conformance.

- 13 The scope of the required work and the resource implications would need to be assessed following a detailed review of the current status of the HERs. Although some additional funding has been allocated to assist the HERs, in the absence of such a review there can be no confidence that this is sufficient.
- 14 I am Martin Locock BA MCIfA FHEA. I have worked in Welsh archaeology since 1991, and has published research throughout Wales. I served as Trustee for Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust 2006-2014 and am a member of GGAT. The views expressed are my own.

18/6/15