

Archive Unit
National
Monuments
Service



**An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta**
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

**Information Booklet on the Services
of the National Monuments
Service Archive Unit
UPDATED June 2021**

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8 June 2021

Contents

Introduction

1. Main Collections

- 1.1. Archaeological Survey of Ireland (ASI)
- 1.2. Reports from Archaeological Investigations
- 1.3. Carved Stone Inventory
- 1.4. Photographic Collection
- 1.5. Miscellaneous

2. Visiting the Archive

Copy of Reading Room Regulations

Contact and Location Details (for printing out)

Introduction

The Archive Unit is a section within the National Monuments Service, Department of Housing, Local Government, and Heritage and was established as a formal unit in 2000. The archive consists of an extensive body of material relating to the archaeological heritage of the State.

The main collections consist of the *Record of Monuments and Places* (RMP) files comprising reports on some 136,800 archaeological sites within the State; c.25,000 excavation reports on the results of licensed and unlicensed excavations; a Carved Stone Inventory collection; underwater survey volumes, including the *Shipwreck Inventory* and *Ports, Piers and Harbours* volumes; and an extensive photographic collection of some 550,000 images of monuments. The archive is also in the process of providing storage for the transfer of paper archives from excavations carried out under licence.

The offices and reading room of NMS Archive are currently located in the Custom House, Dublin, conveniently located within a short distance of bus, rail, Dart and Luas services. The archive is open to researchers every Friday from 10am – 5pm and operates by appointment only.¹

This document is intended to provide an overview of key collections currently available to researchers, advice on conditions for access, and contact details.

1. Main Collections

The collection includes material from:

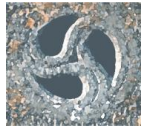
- Archaeological Survey of Ireland
- Reports from Archaeological Investigations
- Carved Stone Inventory
- Photographic Collection

1.1 *Archaeological Survey of Ireland (ASI)*

The purpose of the Archaeological Survey of Ireland (ASI) is to compile an inventory of archaeological monuments in the State. The information gathered is stored on a database (see www.archaeology.ie) and in a series of paper files (commonly known as the *Sites and Monuments Record*): the latter are stored in the National Monuments Service Archive.

The information in the ASI archive was issued on a county basis between 1984 and 1992 titled as the *Sites and Monuments Record* (SMR). The SMR, revised in the light of further research and fieldwork, formed the basis for the

¹ See last page of this document for details on contacts, location and opening times of Archive Unit.



statutory *Record of Monuments and Places* (established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act (1994)). Similar in format to the SMR, these were issued for each county in the State between 1995 and 1998.

The database and archive contain records of all known or possible monuments pre-dating AD 1700 that have been brought to its attention and also include a selection of monuments from the post-AD 1700 period. There are in excess of 148,500 records in the database and over 136,800 of these relate to archaeological monuments.

It is important for researchers to remember that although online database of the Archaeological Survey of Ireland (www.archaeology.ie) provides instant and up to date information on archaeological sites, the hard copy files do tend to contain more comprehensive descriptive and photographic information which should be taken into account when researching.

The paper files, depending on county and classification, can contain descriptive information, field reports, historical references, maps, plans, and photographs and are updated in light of further research.

1.2 Reports from Archaeological Investigations

Archaeological excavations and development-led investigations in the period 1990-2013, resulted in the production in excess of 20,000 excavation reports. These include both licensed (c. 20,000) and unlicensed (c. 3,000) reports and the Archive Unit provides access to submitted hard copy reports.

A database of Irish excavation reports can be accessed at www.excavations.ie – a website not operated by National Monuments Service. It contains summary accounts of all excavations carried out in Ireland from 1970-2007. From this website, researchers can note the excavation licence numbers required when requesting an appointment in the Archive Unit.

Please note, the only format of the licence number accepted by the archive is e.g. 04E1254. Lists may be returned to researchers for correction if they do not adhere to this.

It is also important to note that the Archive Unit can permit researchers to view the reports however copyright rests with the author of the report and researchers will need to contact the author if they wish to photocopy the information or reproduce the information.

1.3 Carved Stone Inventory

A systematic inventory of decorated stonework on particular National Monument sites was carried out and an image/text database of all decorated stone antiquities deemed at risk from loss, theft, or by destruction was compiled in 2004 consisting of approximately 4,000 entries. The associated paper records and photographs were boxed, labelled and are housed in the archive available for consultation.

Please email the archive if you require a list of sites contained in this record series.

1.4 Photographic Collection

The photographic collection is extensive and includes 400,000 images with the same quantity of negatives, approximately 100,000 slides and 90,000 digital images. Approximately 5,000 images are added to the collection annually. The oldest images date from 1857, but the vast majority of the collection derives from the systematic photographing of monuments which was commenced by the State in 1955.

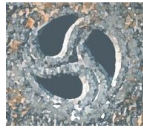
The Photographic Archive is distinct from the Archive Unit's opening day to researchers. Please contact Tony Roche for appointments: photoarchive@housing.gov.ie or 01-8883924.

1.5 Miscellaneous

Smaller collections retained by the archive include the *Sites and Monuments Record* maps and associated lists; *Record of Monuments and Places* maps and associated lists; and *Urban Archaeological Survey* bound volumes.

The *Urban Archaeological Survey* comprises a report on settlements where a village, town or city had been granted borough status, prior to 1700AD. This unpublished survey is presented as a series of county volumes with text, maps and survey drawings of key structures and photographs.

We also have a copy of the *Shipwreck Inventory* for coastal counties, compiled by the Underwater Archaeology Unit (UAU), and volumes of the *Ports, Piers & Harbours*. It is recommended that you contact UAU for the most up to date information as they are currently developing a database which will be accessible through our website.



2. Visiting the Archive

Viewing of files is by appointment only on Friday between 10am and 5pm. The reading room will close for lunch from 1pm to 2.15pm on this day. During this time, researchers will be required to leave the building and return to reception for access at 2.15pm.

Researchers are asked to present themselves to reception of the Custom House (Beresford Place side), state they are visiting the National Monuments Service Archive, and a staff member will then meet them and direct them to the reading room.

Due to current staffing levels and the fact that our collections have been relocated off-site, it is imperative that requests for access are submitted in advance, with the list of files required (in numerical order) to be received by staff no later than the Tuesday prior to your appointment.

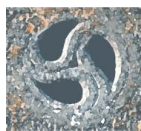
Every effort will be made to accommodate requests for appointments however researchers will need to take particular care in completing request forms as any overlooked files will not be available for access until the next opening day.

There are two options for requesting files:

- a) A *File Request Form* is available to download on www.archaeology.ie and this can be completed and submitted by email to nmarchive@housing.gov.ie
- b) A general email with a full list of files required can be sent and the *File Request Form* can then be completed on the day of the visit

Researchers can request a maximum of 60 files on any one visit. From experience, very few researchers get through more than this amount in one sitting. If more files are required, please contact the Archive Unit to make arrangements.

Unfortunately, due to the recent relocation of our collections, tours of the archive facilities and information on the collections of the archive by the Archivist, as well as a short introduction to the work of the Archaeological Survey of Ireland, which had previously been made available to students, are currently not available.



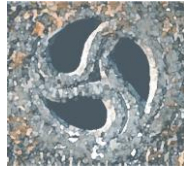
Reading Room Regulations - **UPDATED**

These regulations are in place to ensure the security and preservation of the collections in our care, and to provide for the overall security and comfort of our readers.

1. The National Monuments Service (NMS) Archive is open Fridays 10.00am - 5.00pm. It will close for lunch from 1pm to 2.15pm on this day.
2. All members of the public requiring access for research purposes are requested to make an appointment in advance of their visit either through contacting the Archivist at 01-8883922 or at nmarchive@housing.gov.ie.
3. Readers should be aware the files are now stored off-site so in order to guarantee the correct files are requested and retrieved, particular care must be taken when submitting a list of files. Therefore we require that a list of files or the completed forms (available on www.archaeology.ie) must be submitted, in numerical order, no later than the Tuesday before their appointment.
4. Request Forms must be fully completed on the day of their appointment, if they have not submitted them. Continuous failure to comply may affect future appointments.
5. Only material for taking notes, including personal computers, may be brought into the Reading Room. Coats, jackets, hats (unless being worn), bags, handbags, briefcases, umbrellas and other belongings must be left on or beside the racks provided. NMS Archive will not accept responsibility for readers' property.
6. In order to minimise the liability of damage to the archives, food, drink, pens, ink, fluorescent or other markers, correction fluids or adhesives of any kind may not be brought into, consumed or used in the Reading Room. Pencils only, which are available in the Reading Room, may be used for taking notes.
7. Readers must not make or receive calls on mobile phones. Mobile phones must be turned off or placed on silent mode when in the Reading Room.
8. Photography is not permitted. The use of copying and tracing devices is prohibited.
9. Readers should avoid causing any disturbance that is likely to distract or inconvenience other readers and/or Archive staff.
10. Readers may be supplied with surrogate copies, i.e. photocopies, if the Archivist considers the originals to be in poor physical condition.
11. Readers are requested not to rearrange archives in any way and are particularly requested not to write on the records. If readers become aware of inconsistencies in the records, please inform Archive staff.
12. Archive collections may not be removed from the Reading Room.
13. Archives are subject to copyright and must acknowledge the Archaeological Survey of Ireland if they wish to publish or reproduce information from the records. Permission must be obtained from the author of excavation reports in order to publish or reproduce information contained in them.
14. In cases of any dispute concerning the implementation of any of the above rules, the final decision rests with the staff of NMS Archive.

Thank you for your cooperation.

*National Monuments Service Archive
Room G62, Custom House, Dublin 1
Phone: 01-8883922
Email: nmarchive@housing.gov.ie
Website: www.archaeology.ie*



Archive Unit

National
Monuments
Service

Room G62, Custom House, Dublin 1

Opening Times: Fridays 10am-5pm. Closed for lunch 1pm-2.15pm.

Email: nmarchive@chg.gov.ie to make an appointment

Archive Material: SMR files; Excavation Reports – licensed, unlicensed, directions, consents, diving, geophysical; RMP Maps & Lists; Urban Archaeological Surveys; Shipwreck Inventories; Ports Piers & Harbour Volumes; Carved Stone Inventories

Staff Information

Rachel Barrett

Archivist

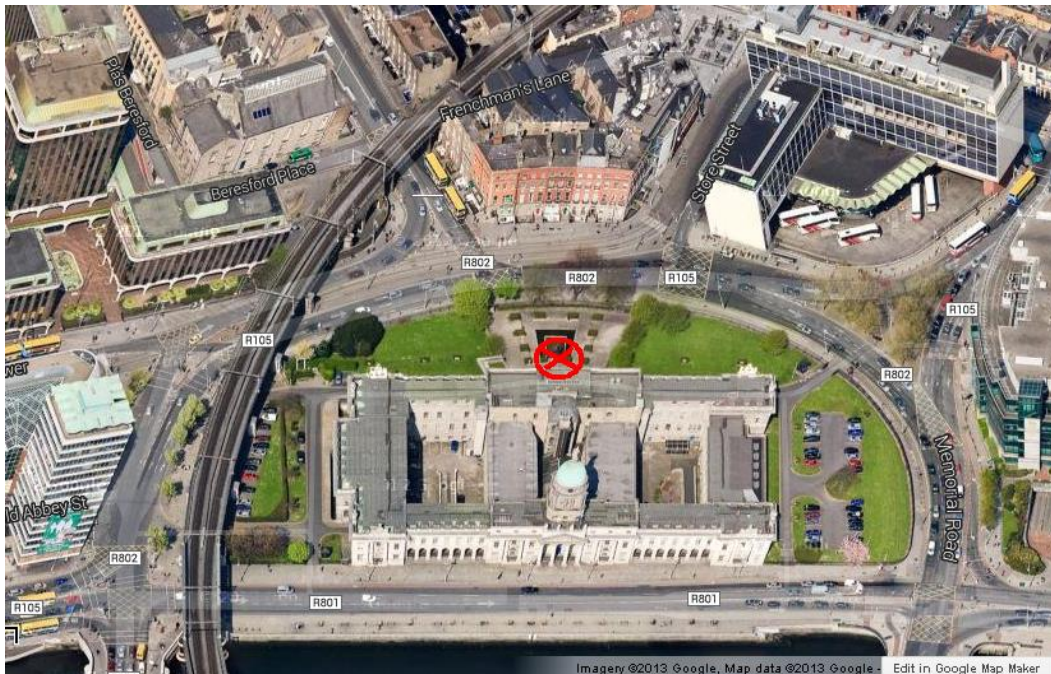
Archive Appointments,
SMR/Excavation Report/Archive queries
01-8883922

Edward Bourke

Senior Archaeologist

Archaeological Archive Deposit Enquiries
01-8883920

Location of NMS Archive Unit Offices & Reading Room



Entrance to Custom House Reception is the gate opposite Liberty Hall ONLY

Please note – there is no public parking available on the grounds.