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E-Review

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E-REVIEW

Electronic Media Reviews

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The E-review section evaluates electronic resources, websites, digital archives, blogs, mailing groups and multimedia relevant to our discipline. For this themed issue of *CMAS* we have examined several electronic resources in the field of underwater archaeology and heritage management. The reviews are followed by short descriptions of other online resources, compiled on the basis of suggestions and comments by Dr Joe Flatman.

UNESCO Underwater Cultural Heritage

http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php-URL_ID=34463&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html

The UNESCO Underwater Cultural Heritage website, which is currently under development, comprises well-informed and illustrated pages, which provide a good introduction to the study, protection and management of underwater archaeological sites around the world. The website includes links to the UNESCO 2001 Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, which can be downloaded as a pdf in English, French, Spanish, Russian, Arabic, Chinese, and Portuguese.

Alongside information on the content and working of this convention, the website also hosts a well-produced online film, which could easily serve as a short but effective introduction for teaching purposes. The website is easy to navigate, and well-illustrated throughout with a range of online photographic galleries, with some fantastic pictures.

The website hosts links to a wide range of maritime archaeological exhibitions and museums of underwater archaeology, and even contains an extensive (although not complete) list of universities and institutions around the world that offer courses in underwater archaeology. Interesting for the general public, but perhaps especially for professionals and academics, is the section on National Inventories of Underwater Cultural Heritage Sites, which has links to national databases and websites around the world. Overall, this subsection of the UNESCO website is a very useful introduction to underwater archaeology for professionals, students, and the wider public.

US National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration Ocean Explorer

<http://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/welcome.html>

Ocean Explorer provides information on the scientific and educational projects of the US National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Linking marine natural and cultural heritage management agendas on a global scale, the website contains a considerable amount of useful information for professionals and students interested in underwater cultural heritage. The section on explorations is very detailed, with information on the aims, work and results of past and present explorations, with many sections containing a wide range of multimedia presentations, such as films, virtual reality, podcasts, slideshows, interactive maps, blogs, and so forth. The website also includes excellent educational materials and an extensive library section.

Although this is a fantastic resource for the dedicated user, the website feels rather 'overloaded' and would benefit from a clearer design and user interface, especially to keep up with the multitude of online media offered. NOAA are trying to deal with this through RSS-feeds, emails and Twitter, keeping users informed of new findings and project information (although here again, it is quite easy to get lost in the multitude of information). However, getting lost can sometimes be a fun exercise, and the NOAA website contains enough interesting and useful information to make a visit very worthwhile.

Museum of Underwater Archaeology

<http://www.uri.edu/mua/>

The Museum of Underwater Archaeology (MUA) is a small but wonderful online 'museum', created to help underwater archaeologists and maritime historians present their research to the public via the Internet. More an internet platform than a conventional museum, MUA hosts online project journals, information on current projects in the field, three online 'exhibitions', teacher packs, a news section, and a blog.

The MUA website works by inviting scholars, institutions and students to present their research, comments and links, and in doing so becomes a useful presentation platform. The website clearly reflects the passion and dedication of its contributors and members, and has an inviting and optimistic feel to it. The contributions by graduate students are especially promising; MUA even offers internships in working for the website. As an online museum, however, MUA still has to develop. The three current project-specific 'exhibitions' are online transformations of seasonal field reports, rather than true exhibitions; although their adaptation for the general public is well done and the reports are important in their own right.

The biggest strength of the website lies in its project journals and field reports, allowing the reader to follow projects closely, coupled with a range of clickable maps that link to underwater archaeological projects hosted on the websites of MUA and other organizations. The news and blog sections of the website are equally well designed, although fierce discussion is lacking given the relatively small number of posts — something that deserves to change in the future, especially considering its potential in including students worldwide.

Short list of other resources

Advisory Council on Underwater Archaeology

<http://www.acuaonline.org/>

The Advisory Council on Underwater Archaeology is an international advisory body on issues relating to underwater archaeology, conservation, and submerged cultural resources management.

Nordic Underwater Archaeology

<http://www.abc.se/~pa/uwa/>

This site is run by the incredibly enthusiastic Swedish avocational archaeologist Per Åkesson. The website's name is disingenuous as it includes a wealth of information on sites, tools and techniques from around the world, many written by the pre-eminent experts in their fields of research.

Institute of Nautical Archaeology (INA)

<http://www.inadiscover.com/>

The INA is a non-profit private research institute affiliated to the Nautical Archaeology Programme at Texas A&M University. This is the home organization of many of the world leaders in maritime archaeology, most famously Professor George Bass. The website includes extensive information on INA's fieldwork around the world since the 1960s.

PAST Foundation

<http://www.pastfoundation.org/>

PAST is a non-profit educational and research team based in the US that puts together partnerships on projects in archaeology and anthropology, focused on maritime archaeology, and makes the work available to students and the public through field schools, documentary film, and interactive web access.

Archaeology Data Service – Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund Marine Projects Archive

http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/projArch/alsf/search_maritime.cfm

This site, hosted by the Archaeology Data Service, contains the project archives for all marine projects commissioned by English Heritage since 2002, under the terms of the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund, a government–industry collaboration to enhance joint-working on the management of heritage sites discovered during marine aggregates extraction in UK waters. The archive provides details of dozens of different projects that have transformed our understanding of the UK territorial sea zone's heritage.

Nautical Archaeology Society (NAS)

<http://www.nasportsmouth.org.uk/>

The NAS is a voluntary organization providing resources, training, publications and meetings for everyone interested in underwater archaeology. It is also the provider of an internationally accredited training scheme in use around the world.

National Trust Climate Change

http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/main/w-chl/w-countryside_environment/w-climate_change.htm

The National Trust, one of the UK's major coastal landowners, is at the forefront of monitoring coastal climate-change impacts. Their website has details.

Hampshire and Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology (HWTMA)

<http://www.hwtma.org.uk/>

The HWTMA promotes interest, research and knowledge of maritime archaeology and heritage in Great Britain. The section on maritime archaeology education is especially worth a visit.

Contact

The E-review section of *CMAS* is a work in progress. We very much welcome comments and assistance from our readers to increase its scope and effectiveness, as well as suggestions for electronic resources (with or without written reviews) for consideration in future E-reviews.

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