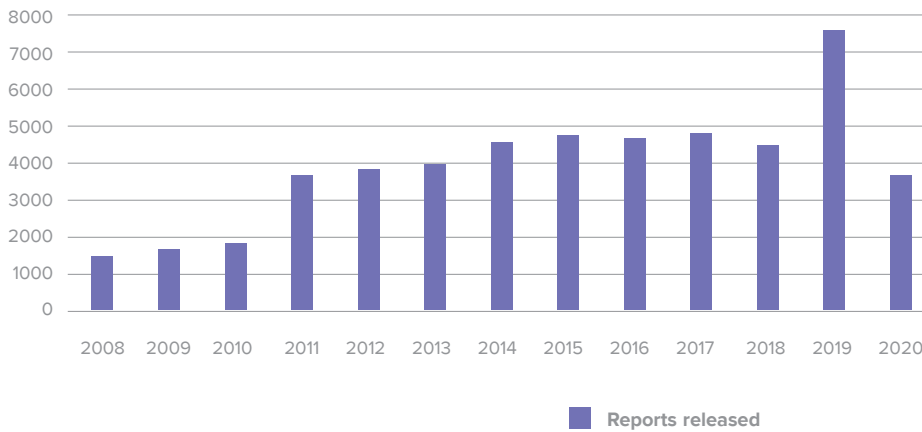


OASIS What has it done for us?

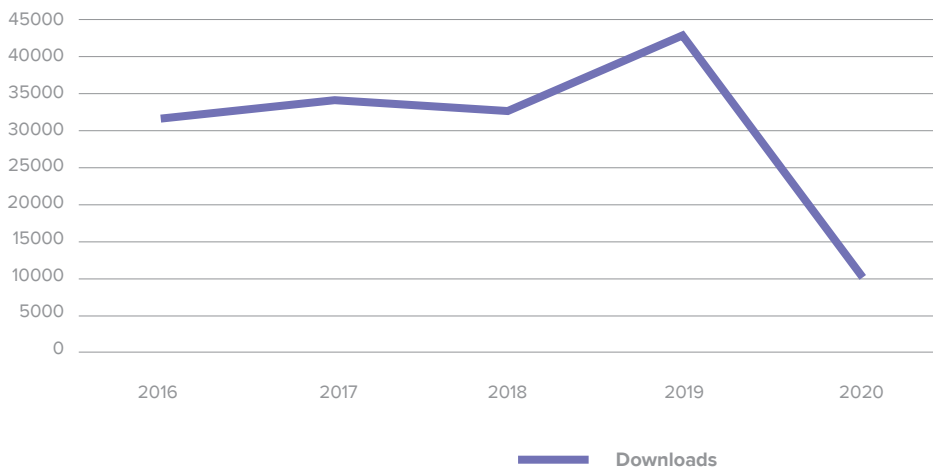
Aisling Nash MCIrA (10477), Ashtree Heritage, and Alison James MCIrA (6059), MSDS Marine

OASIS has been a familiar feature in the landscape of the historic environment sector for nearly 20 years. It is developed and hosted by the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) on behalf of Historic England and Historic Environment Scotland. Over that time, it has enabled the reporting and transfer of information about archaeological investigations from those carrying out fieldwork to Historic Environment Records, national heritage bodies and the ADS Digital Library, and has transformed the way grey literature reports are made accessible online.

Reports transferred from OASIS to ADS library



Downloads



What has been its legacy so far?

While OASIS was first launched in 1999 with a series of pilot projects, the current form has been in place since 2004, initially rolled out in England with Scotland and the maritime zone of Wales quickly following suit. Since this time, OASIS has recorded over 80,000 investigations and facilitated the transfer of over 55,000 digital reports into the Library. The range of projects being recorded on OASIS spans the whole spectrum of the human story from the Palaeolithic to the modern age and includes both maritime and built heritage.

The impact of OASIS on the sector has been significant, in particular in providing open access to a vast body of grey literature reports generated through the planning system. Download figures show that OASIS reports have been accessed over 30,000 times per year, with this figure slowly rising as the Library grows.

OASIS redevelopment

The heritage data landscape is changing and with it, OASIS. In England, there is now a greater emphasis on a more coordinated and simplified data sharing approach through Historic England’s Heritage Information Access Strategy (HIAS). Likewise, Scotland’s Historic Environment Data (SHED) aims to improve access to historic environment information. OASIS will play a key role in these strategies by providing the mechanism to share information and data outputs across the whole sector.

With this in mind, OASIS is being redeveloped in line with feedback from users and supporting these strategic aims. This redevelopment is well underway and will lead to significant improvements to meet the needs of a modern historic environment community. The new OASIS is being designed to record all forms of historic environment investigations, including building recording, maritime and archaeological projects. It is aimed at the whole sector too, including academic and community researchers. Some of the specific changes include

- an improved and easier-to-use interface
- the ability to record accurate spatial metadata
- identifying and linking to physical and digital archives
- modules for recording specialist data
- links to the new generation of Research Frameworks in England and Scotland
- speeding up the process of transferring reports from OASIS through to the ADS Library for public access
- notifications and improved communication between contractor, HER and museum/archive
- use of up-to-date, controlled terminology to index event, object and monument information, which will enable more consistent searching and cross-referencing.

Legacy for the future

The future legacy of OASIS can be expressed in one word: connectivity. With the redevelopment comes the opportunity to broaden the use of OASIS across the whole historic environment sector, thereby enabling it to be more inclusive of all investigations, not just those undertaken as part of the planning process. Linking all aspects of a project, ie reports and archives, will result in a more connected project life cycle while the introduction of museum users will allow greater communication and signposting with regard to archive deposition.

This connectivity will not just be seen through project life cycles but also through the connecting of people from all parts of the sector. With the new form comes the ability to

communicate directly through the system, thereby encouraging the development of relationships leading to a lasting digital legacy for the historic environment.

GET INVOLVED

The new OASIS is due for rollout in the autumn of 2020, following a period of sector-wide testing during the spring and summer of 2020. Historic England has commissioned Alison James of MSDS Marine and Aisling Nash of Ashtree Heritage to run a series of training workshops in the autumn to support the rollout of the new OASIS, which will be open to all users.

If you are interested in attending, visit the OASIS blog to keep up to date with the redevelopment and/or subscribe to our newsletter to find out more about our training workshops.



(<https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/blog/oasis>)



<http://eepurl.com/gbOKrv>

Aisling Nash

Aisling is a freelance heritage consultant and illustrator. With a background in field archaeology, she has extensive experience working in both historic environment records and planning archaeology. She also has experience of outreach and public engagement, principally through her previous role as manager of the Worcestershire HER.



Alison James

Alison is a Director and Project Manager at MSDS Marine with extensive experience in the management of historic shipwreck sites, volunteer involvement, community engagement and education initiatives. Previously Alison spent ten years with Historic England managing England's protected wreck sites and working with the licensed teams and volunteers who work on the sites.

