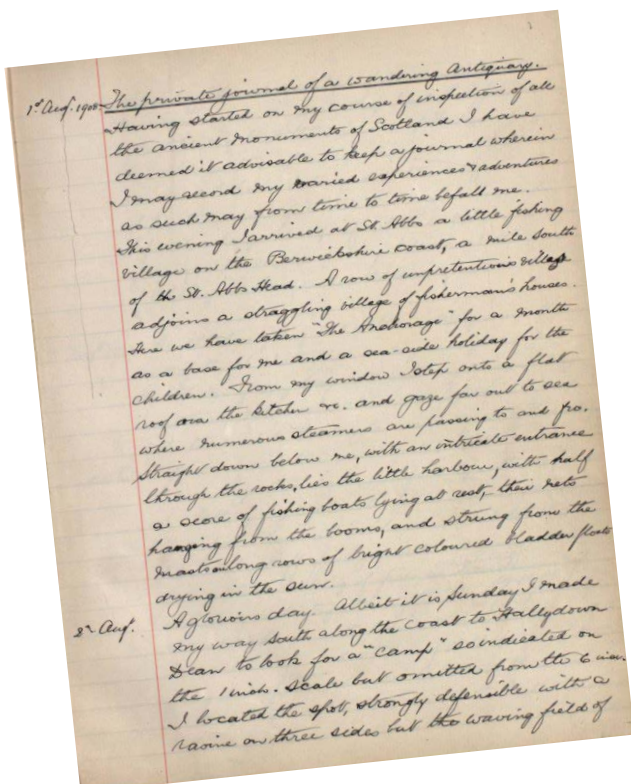# BEYOND THE PHYSICAL

A TIMELINE FOR FUTURE-PROOFING SCOTLAND'S HERITAGE

HES ARCHIVES

Early days...

1908
2 AUGUST

Starting the record by bike, Alexander Ormiston Curle, first secretary to the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS), heads off on his bicycle to inspect 'all the ancient monuments of Scotland'.

1962
1 JUNE

The Scottish Development Department was formed. During the 70s and 80s SDD Investigators documented and provided lasting visual records of buildings throughout Scotland as part of their work.

1966
NMRS IS BORN

The holdings of the Scottish National Building Record (SNBR) and the records of RCAHMS are combined into a single archive: the National Monuments Record of Scotland.

DYK: Creation of the NMRS enabled the two largest ancient monument and historic building collections in Scotland to be combined into a single archive.

1975
JUNE

Following the decision to review the non-statutory category of C-listed buildings, 'vocational students' surveyed the buildings.This collection was made available online during the Digital Projects pilot year.

1970s & 1980s

1978–1981
BUILDINGS OF THE SCOTTISH COUNTRYSIDE

The Countryside Commission for Scotland commissioned a survey of the buildings of Scotland's rural landscape. This collection was made available online during the Digital Projects pilot year.

1983
FOUNDATION OF THE RCAHMS DATABASE

The records of the Archaeology Division of the Ordnance Survey are transferred in their entirety to the National Monuments Record of Scotland. These records hold information on archaeological, architectural, industrial and maritime sites across Scotland.

1988
4 JULY

RCAHMS receives one of the first deposits containing digital material; the project archive for **Excavations at the Peel of Lumphanan, Aberdeenshire** came with a disc.

1980–90s
AT THIS POINT

RCAHMS predominantly receives digital archive deposits on floppy disks. One of the first floppy disks deposited with the NMRS was in 1990 and is from the **Project Archive** for an excavation, of a cemetery and putative chapel site at Newhall Point, Dingwall in 1985.

1990s

DYK: The first digital catalogue record for a physical archive item was created on 26 April 1996 and is a record for a map of Culross.

1991
8 APRIL

Historic Scotland is established as the successor organisation to the Ancient Monuments Division of the Ministry of Works and the Scottish Development Department.

c. 1993
LET ME UPGRADE YOU

With the internet becoming increasingly accessible, RCAHMS implements a (now ubiquitous!) Windows Operating System for the first time, and migrates from the Scottish Government mainframe database system over to a new Oracle® database.

1997
LET'S GET DIGITAL

RCAHMS Photography staff kick off their digitisation programme, buying a Nikon 3 pass film scanner and an A4 flatbed scanner. One of the first images to be digitised is this **photograph from Dalbeattie Gas Works.**

1997
25 SEPTEMBER

The first digital database record for a digital archive image was created and is a record for a digital scan of an RCAHMS survey photograph showing Arbroath town buildings.

HINT: Using the Canmore Zoomify function, can you see the reflection of the photographer?

1998
CANMORE GOES ONLINE

On April 1 Canmore is launched to the public. RCAHMS becomes the first organisation in the world to create a computerised system for the management, presentation and preservation of heritage data.

DYK: CANMORE stands for Computer Application for National Monuments Record Enquiry!

2000s
AT THIS POINT

RCAHMS predominantly receives digital archive deposits on CDs.

2003
SWISH

The database undergoes several developments under the Shared Web Information Systems for Heritage (SWISH) partnership between RCAHMS and its Welsh sister body RCAHMW, including implementing a digital asset management system.

The SWISH partnership was a great example of interorganisation cooperation enabling the improvement of the two national databases!

2003
AT THIS POINT

The Digital Archive gains its first staff member and a 'Digital Archiving: Implementation Strategy' is created which establishes RCAHMS' framework and procedures for the curation and management of digital archive material.

2003
CATALOGUING FACT!

The first born-digital photograph to be archived is this digital **survey photograph** showing an inscription of Wallace's Putting Stone, on Raeberry Hill in Dumfries and Galloway.

2010s
AT THIS POINT

RCAHMS predominantly receives digital archive deposits on data storage devices, USB flash drives and memory cards. The uptake of flash storage leads to floppy disks becoming obsolete.

2010
NERD ALERT!

As part of the ongoing SWISH Partnership, a new system is developed to move from a flat to a hierarchical archive catalogue system in line with international archive cataloguing standards. An improved version of this hierarchical system is still in use today.

2014
DIGITAL ARCHIVE GETS LOCKED DOWN!

A secure Digital Archive system is established by syncing the cataloguing data with the archive file storage and streamlining access permissions, improving collections management, ensuring the safe, controlled guardianship of digital archive collections.

2015
1 OCTOBER

Historic Environment Scotland (HES) is born following the merger of RCAHMS and Historic Scotland.

2016
QUARANTINI ANYONE?

HES Archives establishes a stand-alone Quarantine System to safely receive and process digital archive material, further protecting our collections from viruses and malware, and improving our digital curation programme.

2017
1 APRIL

HES Archives establishes the first iteration of the Digital Projects, formed to significantly increase the digital accessibility of HES Archives collections. Collections digitised and archived in that year included the List C survey, Buildings of the Scottish Countryside and Aerial Photography.

2017
6 JULY

HES Archives achieve ARA Accreditation, becoming one of only seven archives in Scotland to be awarded this status. The accreditation panel praised the archive's 'impressive' delivery, particularly in developing its digital offer.

2019
HEAD IN THE CLOUD!

Digital Projects trials receiving digital archive material via secure online transfer. HES Archive staff are looking to implement this as the primary transfer method.

2019
14 JANUARY

The remit of the Digital Projects is expanded to include the cataloguing of HES Archives born-digital holdings, comprising hundreds of digital archive deposits relating to Scotland's built environment.

2019
2 FEBRUARY

The first item catalogued from the digital archive holdings by Digital Projects is this **survey photograph** from the Project Archive for Proposed Hydro-electric Scheme at Arie, Callander, held in our Scotia Archaeology Collection.

2019
JULY

Digital Projects make the first batch of digitised Historic Scotland Photographic Library photographs, focusing primarily on Abbeys, available on Canmore.

2019
AUGUST

After careful treatment from our in-house Conservation team, the Ordnance Survey Index Cards, the backbone of Canmore, are sent out for digitisation by our external contractors.

2019
SEPTEMBER

HES Archives utilises Kryo Flux machine in order to read, access and preserve archive information held on legacy floppy disks, which would otherwise be unaccessible. **Read our blog for more info.**

2020
CANMORE HITS ONE MILL(ION)!

On 20 January Digital Projects archive the one millionth item – it's a born-digital standing building **survey photograph** of Davidson's Mill, Aberdeen, deposited by Cameron Archaeology Ltd.

2020
13 MARCH

HES Archives publishes the **Digital Repository policy** suite, establishing our long-term commitment and approach to the preservation and curation of our digital holdings.

2020
MARCH

At this point the Digital Projects team has processed over 50,000 born-digital files from the digital archive holdings. This includes photographs, reports, vector drawings and illustrations, laser scan data, video footage and more!

2020
APRIL

Digital Projects make the Scottish Development Department (SDD) Collection digitised photographs available online. A public callout is announced to help identify unidentified images in the collection: see our **blog** and **BBC article.**

2020s

DYK: Almost 800,000 Pyramid Tiff files had to be created by IT to allow you to use zoom in Canmore.

2020
SEPTEMBER

Digital Projects make the second batch of Historic Scotland Photographic Library digitised photographs available online. This batch largely depicts guardianship monuments, including archaeological sites, castles and industrial buildings.

2020
2 OCTOBER

Canmore images are now zoomable, making our archives more accessible than ever and significantly increasing Canmore's research value.

2020
2 OCTOBER

Volume Viewer functionality is launched, enabling the relationship between individual pages to be represented as a volume on Canmore for the first time, meaning digitised volumes can be browsed more easily online.

2020
OCTOBER

HES Archives submits an application to be certified as a Trusted Digital Repository against the Core Trust Seal Trustworthy Data Repositories Requirements. Certification will ensure confidence in our commitment to the management of our digital archive.

2021
JANUARY

Digital Projects make the third batch of digitised Historic Scotland Photographic Library digitised photographs available online. This batch mainly depicts conservation actions throughout Historic Scotland's operations.

Today...

DYK: In the space of four years our team has more than doubled Canmore's digital holdings.

2021
FEBRUARY

Following collection re-appraisal, Digital Projects make 9,926 digitised photographs from the Scottish Power Collection available online. The photos depict the construction and interiors of Scottish Power stations.

2021
MARCH

Following extensive work by our Conservation team, the Estate Exchange collection is made available online for the very first time by Digital Projects.

2021
CELEBRATIONS ARE IN ORDER!

Digital Projects have made over half a million digital files available online via Canmore over the course of the project, significantly reducing HES Archives' 'invisible' collections.