



Gorffennol Digidol Digital Past - 2020

DELIVERING THE ARCHIVE - A MODULAR APPROACH

David Thomas, Head of Public Services, and Tom Pert, Online Development Manager,
[Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales](#)

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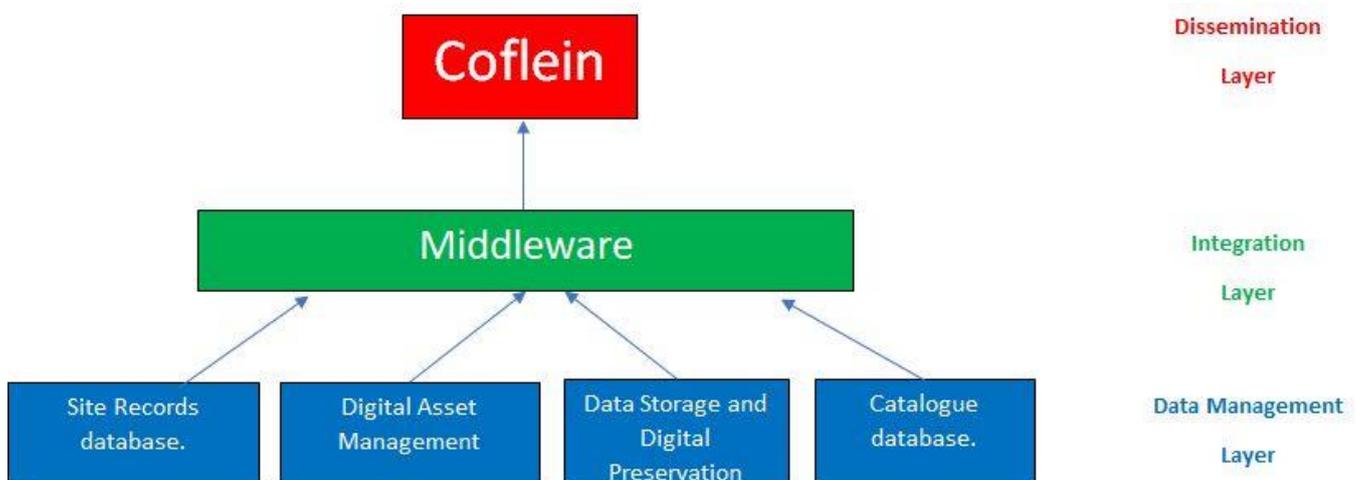
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The SWISH (Shared Web Information Services for Heritage) Partnership was created in 2002 as a way for the Royal Commissions of Scotland and Wales to share development of information systems to manage, and make available, the contents of their respective archives. The front-end of the Welsh commission's archive, Coflein, was launched a year later, and continues to be the vehicle through which the inventory of sites, associated archive records, and digital content, are delivered to the public. With over 400,000 users per annum, Coflein is a fundamental element of the Commission's public services, and gives access to nearly 120,000 site records, over 400,000 catalogue records, and over 170,000 digital items.

Though the SWISH partnership continues to deliver a robust and innovative solution, the decision to move away partly reflects a change in the nature of the partnership following the merger of the Scottish Royal Commission and Historic Scotland. It also reflects Welsh Commission's wish to develop a more flexible solution, build skills and understanding within the organisation, and align with other cultural organisations in Wales.

Initial investigations for a replacement were based on a like-for-like solution, but it soon became apparent this would require considerable, and costly, bespoke development. As the investigation continued the opportunities offered by a modular approach, adopted by organisations such as Amgueddfa Cymru and Manx Heritage, became apparent. These include lower cost, flexible design, and reduced reliance on a single provider.

The development project based on the modular approach is due to be completed at the end of March 2020. It uses a cloud hosted information layer based on the ARCHES for site-based data, and Access to Memory (AtoM) for catalogue information. Both are open-source, with the former built on the MIDAS data standard and the latter on ISAD(G). Potential data storage options with the National Library of Wales will offer the opportunity for a collaborative approach to digital preservation in the future, while digital asset management services will be delivered through iBase. The middleware solution is Knowledge Integration's CIIM, which will integrate the information layer and deliver it to a redesigned Coflein on-line service.



Biography

David Thomas is Head of Public Services at the Royal Commission. He has worked at the Commission for over twenty years and was part of the team that created the on-line service Coflein in partnership with the former Scottish Royal Commission. He is currently Convener of the Forum for Information Standards in Heritage.

Tom Pert is the Online Development Manager at the Royal Commission. He is responsible for developing the website and other services, and also leads the innovation strand of the People's Collection. He is manager of the Commission's Digital Delivery project.