

Consultation on the formation of a new Advisory Panel on the Archaeology of Burials in England (APABE)

Feb 2nd 2009

In 2005 the Church of England, English Heritage and the Home Office, as the three national organisations with statutory obligations for issues regarding the archaeology of burial, agreed to the setting up of the Advisory Panel on the Archaeology of Christian Burials in England (APACBE) as a source of consensus professional advice on the archaeological treatment of human remains in Christian graves.

This panel has proved to be very successful in promoting a consistent approach to relevant religious, ethical, legal, archaeological and scientific issues, but this has thrown into relief the lack of a similar source of advice covering non-Christian remains. The Church of England, English Heritage and the Ministry of Justice (which has taken over the former Home Office responsibilities for regulating the exhumation of human remains) therefore consider that the creation of a single source of advice covering all burials in England over 100 years old would be appropriate and timely. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport supports this initiative.

It is therefore proposed that the existing panel be dissolved and be replaced with a new body, the Advisory Panel on the Archaeology of Burials in England (APABE). The aim of this new Panel would be to support curators, practitioners and others in interpreting the guidance documents issued in 2005 by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (<http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/GuidanceHumanRemains11Oct.pdf>) and by English Heritage and the Church of England (<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/human-remains-excavated-from-christian-burial-grounds-in-england/>), and to produce new guidance where necessary.

This consultation asks for your comments on this proposal. In particular we would be grateful for your views on:

- whether a single panel for advice and the promulgation of good practice on issues connected with all ancient burials in England would be useful.
- whether, in addition to representatives of the three national organisations with statutory responsibilities for archaeological burials, any new panel should include representatives of archaeologists, osteologists and museum staff. If you agree, it would be helpful to learn whether there may be other groups or organisations whose representation on the panel would assist in providing relevant, well-informed, advice to the archaeological sector.

This consultation closes on 1st May 2009, submissions are invited by letter or, preferably, e-mail, to Simon Mays: English Heritage, Fort Cumberland, Eastney, Portsmouth PO4 9LD. email: simon.mays@english-heritage.org.uk. Please make it clear whether you are making comments as an individual or as a representative of a group or organisation (we would value either).

Any interested organisation or individual is very welcome to comment on this proposal. We would be grateful if you would pass on this invitation to any other such groups or individuals who you think may wish to comment. Details of this consultation are also available on the APACBE and English Heritage Websites: <http://www.britarch.ac.uk/apabe/>

An analysis of the responses received, and the decision taken in the light of those responses, will be placed on the APACBE and English Heritage websites in due course.

Joseph Elders & Simon Mays
Acting for the Church of England, English Heritage and the Ministry of Justice

List of Consultees

Organisations:

ALGAO
Association for Environmental Archaeology
Board of Deputies of British Jews
British Association for Biological Anthropology and Osteoarchaeology
British Museum
Cadw
Council for British Archaeology
Hindu Council UK
Historic Scotland
Honouring the Ancient Dead
Institute of Field Archaeologists
Manchester Museum
The Museum of London
Museums Association
Museums Libraries & Archives Council
Muslim Council of Britain
Natural History Museum
Network of Sikh Organisations UK
Oxford Archaeological Unit
Pagans for Archaeology (Yvonne Aburrow)
The Prehistoric Society
Rescue: the British Archaeological Trust
Royal Archaeological Institute
Salisbury & South Wiltshire Museum
Society of Antiquaries of London
Society of Museum Archaeologists

Subject Specialist Network on Human Remains
Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers
Subject Committee For Archaeology
Wiltshire Heritage Museum
Wessex Archaeology
York Archaeological Trust

Individuals:

Daniel Antoine
Megan Brickley
Prof R Bradley
Prof D Brothwell
Prof Martin Carver
Prof Andrew Chamberlain
Margaret Cox
Prof Timothy Darvill
Prof Robert Foley
Malin Holst
Prof Martin Jones
Dr Christopher Knusel
Andrew Lawson
Mary Lewis
Prof Mike Parker-Pearson
Mike Pitts
Dr Joshua Pollard
Prof Mark Pollard
Guy Purdey
Julian Richards
Prof Charlotte Roberts
Duncan Sayer
Martin Smith
Prof Chris Stringer
Sarah Tarlow
Prof Julian Thomas
Nick Thorpe
Prof G Wainwright
Mike Wysocki
Prof Alasdair Whittle