

Meeting of the Advisory Panel on the Archaeology of Burials in England (APABE)

4th February, 2011. Church House, London

Minutes

In attendance. Joseph Elders (Chair), Simon Mays (Secretary), David Hillelson, Sebastian Payne, Margaret Clegg, David Baker, Louise Humphrey, Jane Sidell, Alexandra Nickell, Julian Litten, Holger Schutkowski, Elizabeth Popescu, Robert Clifford, Daniel Antoine, Alison Taylor, Philip Dixon, Jackie McKinley

The Panel observed a moment's silence in memory of William White

- 1) Apologies. Hedley Swain, Maurice Davies, Quinton Carroll, Angela Boyle. A new member, Jelena Beklovac, was welcomed to the Panel.
- 2) Minutes. The Minutes of the 2010 meeting were accepted as a true record.
- 3) Matters Arising. Item 11. British Archaeological Jobs Resource Website. It was unclear whether BS had submitted an accurate advisory note to BAJR to replace the inaccurate advice on human remains presented on their website.

Action: BS

Item 15. No progress has yet been made on the supplemental guideline on non-Christian burials. In view of the fluid legal situation, and the commitment of panel members' time to the post-Mediaeval Research Framework (see Item 6, below), it was decided to leave this in abeyance for the time being.

- 4) The casework advice given by the APABE in the last year. The only formal advice requested was for the Ratcliffe Burial Ground site, Oxford. This project currently awaits a Consistory Court ruling.
- 5) Report on progress with CAHRs. No progress has been made in implementing the use of St Clement's Finsbury for storage of Museum of London human remains. Funding remains a problem, and it is the single largest obstacle to the establishment of more CAHRs. In order to progress this policy, a business model for CAHRs is needed to place before the Churches Conservation Trust.

Action: JE

- 6) Report on progress of the AHRC Knowledge Transfer grant application in collaboration with Leicester University (research framework for post-Mediaeval burials). An application for a Knowledge Transfer Grant has been submitted to AHRC, by Leicester University in collaboration with APABE. The purpose is to disseminate knowledge from the Leicester University project on post-Mediaeval burial in Britain and Ireland, and to craft a Research Framework for post-Mediaeval burials in England. APABE involvement would largely be advisory, but with some substantive input. An APABE sub-committee was assembled in October 2010, consisting of SM, JE, AB, DA, JM, EP, JL and BS, to move this forward. If the application is successful, the research grant will run for 24 months from October 2011, and will fund a Leicester-based research-assistant to work on the project. The outcome of the funding application will be known in summer 2011. Should this grant application fail to receive funding, alternate means of producing the Research Framework will be explored.
- 7) Report on progress on the draft policy paper on the use (and abuse) of DNA analysis. A redraft was tabled by JE. The panel agreed to submit final editing suggestions

forthwith, and SM agreed to submit a paragraph summarising the factors limiting the success of aDNA work.

Action: ALL

- 8) Activities of the Human Remains Subject Specialist Network. MC indicated that the Human Remains SSN was continuing to expand. It is currently considering appropriate responses toward intermediaries who approach museums regarding human remains claiming to act for claimant communities. The SSN was also providing support to museums who had received from a pagan organisation a questionnaire and their own 'guidance' on treatment of human remains.
- 9) Progress with reviews of human remains legislation. Since the last APABE meeting it has become clear that legislative change via a Legislative Reform Order is no longer an option as the risk of failure was too high. However there seems more flexibility within existing legislation than previously thought. Reburial of remains is now no longer routinely inserted by MoJ as a condition upon the issue of Section 25 licences. Deposition in CAHRs, museums or other institutions is legitimate under the current interpretation of the 1857 Burial Act. New application forms for Section 25 licences, and guidance notes to reflect the new procedures, are currently being drafted by MoJ in collaboration with English Heritage, and drafts will be circulated to the sector for comments. The DBGA and infra-structure legislation appears to be less flexible concerning the need for reburial or cremation of remains, but these pieces of legislation affect relatively few archaeological interventions. The new approach will be brought to the attention of archaeologists in suitable ways. Those with Section 25 licences issued between 2008 and 2011 which stipulate reburial after 2 years should approach the MoJ when this term is due to expire if they wish to retain the remains after this time.

Action: RC/SP/SM

- 10) Election of Chair and Secretary. Holger Schutkowski and Angela Boyle were elected to the posts of Chair and Secretary respectively, by unanimous vote. The outgoing Chair and Secretary were thanked for their contributions.
- 11) Any Other Business. RC announced that he would now be leaving APABE due to retirement. He was thanked for his contribution. MoJ will shortly proffer another representative.
- 12) Date and time of next meeting. Friday 3rd February 2012, 1pm. Venue: Church House