

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

Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> 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/upload/pdf/Guidance\\_for\\_best\\_practice\\_for\\_treatment\\_of\\_human\\_remains\\_excavated\\_from\\_Christian\\_burial\\_grounds\\_in\\_England.pdf](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/upload/pdf/Guidance_for_best_practice_for_treatment_of_human_remains_excavated_from_Christian_burial_grounds_in_England.pdf)), 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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](mailto:simon.mays@english-heritage.org.uk)

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.

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 (Y. 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. Tim Darvill  
Prof Robert Foley  
Malin Holst  
Prof Martin Jones  
Dr Christopher Knusel  
Andrew Lawson  
Mary Lewis  
Prof M Parker-Pearson  
Mike Pitts  
Dr Joshua Pollard  
Prof Mark Pollard  
Guy Purdey  
Julian Richards  
Prof Charlotte Roberts  
Martin Smith  
Prof Chris Stringer  
Sarah Tarlow  
Prof Julian Thomas  
Nick Thorpe  
Prof G Wainwright  
Mike Wysocki  
Prof Alasdair Whittle