

JOINT NAUTICAL ARCHAEOLOGY POLICY COMMITTEE

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Mr Ian Cameron
Culture Media and Sport Committee
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Dear Mr Cameron

Maritime Heritage and Historic Ships – Select Committee

The Joint Nautical Archaeology Policy Committee welcomes the opportunity to make a written submission to the Select Committee.

The JNAPC responded to the DCMS consultation on Ships for the Nation in October 2003 and believes that most of the comments made then are relevant to your examination today. A copy of our response is therefore attached.

The JNAPC believes that the Maritime Heritage includes a very wide spectrum of interests as well as historic ships. It covers:

- The remains of ships (a) underwater (b) in the inter-tidal zone (c) floating (d) docked (e) on land in museums or as buried archaeological sites.
- The ship building yards, dockyards, buildings and navigational systems associated with them.
- The culture and life-style of those that sailed the vessels..
- Maritime trade and maritime industrial processes.
- Oral testimony to the UK's maritime past.

From the above it is apparent that no single item should be seen in isolation. We believe there should be a seamless approach to the whole maritime cultural heritage both within the DCMS and across all government departments. For example the MOD retains

responsibility for naval ships and shipwrecks, DfT administers the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 and the Receiver of Wreck, FCO is lead department with DCMS on the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, DEFRA and DTI issue licenses for work on the seabed affecting the maritime heritage, and the Crown Estate is the owner of the seabed.

When we responded to the DCMS consultation in October 2003 we pointed out that DCMS had already issued its consultation paper *Protecting our historic environment* and would shortly be launching its consultation paper *Protecting our marine historic environment* with the intention that the marine historic environment should be considered as part of the whole historic environment.

We suggested that DCMS should include historic ships within these two consultation processes and seek integration wherever possible. This has clearly failed to happen and historic ships have not been included in any of the current proposals for improved designation or protection. They have effectively “fallen down the crack”, which regrettably shows a lack of joined-up government.

The JNAPC would welcome the opportunity to give evidence to the Select Committee to expand upon these views.

Yours sincerely

R A Yorke
Chairman