

JOINT NAUTICAL ARCHAEOLOGY POLICY COMMITTEE

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Peter Marsden
Senior Sponsor
Department for Culture, Media and Sport
2-4 Cockspur Street
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Dear Mr Marsden

Ships for the Nation - Consultation paper

The Joint Nautical Archaeology Policy Committee welcomes the opportunity to comment on the consultation paper *Ships for the Nation*.

The JNAPC was formed over fifteen years ago from individuals and representatives of institutions who wished to raise awareness of Britain's underwater cultural heritage and to persuade government that underwater sites of historical importance should receive no less protection than those on land. Some summary information on the JNAPC and its members is attached below.

Much progress has been achieved over the last few years with responsibility for marine archaeology in England being passed from DCMS to English Heritage, and the recognition that the terrestrial and maritime is a seamless continuum. DCMS has issued its consultation paper *Protecting our historic environment* and shortly will 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.

The JNAPC believes that *Ships for the Nation* should review its position in relation to these two DCMS initiatives and seek integration wherever possible. Our maritime cultural heritage covers all historic ships whether still afloat, in dry dock, in museums (including excavated ships and boats), and sunken ships that are preserved on the seabed.

We believe there should be a seamless approach to the whole maritime cultural heritage in line with the Government's commitment to deliver a national policy on ship preservation.

In answer to your specific questions:

- a) *Would the creation of a NHSU be an effective way of helping historic ships sector co-ordinate its work better and identify priorities more clearly?*

The JNAPC believes the creation of a permanently funded NHSU would be a positive way of going forward.

- b) *Are there alternative approaches that should be considered?*

We have no specific suggestions

- c) *Does the structure proposed for the NHSU sound right?*

The role and responsibilities of the chairman are unclear and need to be defined.

It is proposed that the chairman advises the Secretary of State, but a review of the NHSU functions show that there is little in which the Secretary of State would wish to be involved other than funding and statutory listing. As far as funding is concerned, it is proposed that the NHSU should be part of the National Maritime Museum, which would therefore be responsible for its grant in aid, and no other major funding is envisaged by DCMS. It is also likely that Statutory Listing responsibility will pass to English Heritage in England. It therefore seems that a link to the Secretary of State would not necessarily be appropriate.

A more appropriate solution could be for the chairman to advise the heritage agencies of the Home Countries. English Heritage, Cadw, Historic Scotland and DOENI already have responsibility for similar historic assets and with greater in-house expertise are probably better placed than DCMS to carry out this responsibility. It goes without saying that suitable extra financial resources would need to be made available to these agencies to cover this responsibility.

There is clearly a great overlap between the NHSC and the NHSU and there would not appear to be room for both. It would be important to see how much of the NHSC could be absorbed into the NHSU. Many of the initiatives in areas such as historic ships and underwater archaeology are undertaken by volunteers who also give much of their time. The transition would need to be carefully managed in order not to lose goodwill.

- d) *Does the list of functions proposed for the new Unit sound right? Are there others which should be considered?*

JNAPC suggests there should be an additional function, which would be to maintain links with other stakeholders interested in historic ships such as maritime archaeologists. It would be appropriate to have a maritime archaeologist on the committee.

- e) *Would a small grants fund have a useful role to play*

Yes, who would fund it and how much (order of magnitude) should this be. This should be new money not out of existing budgets.

- f) *Where should the new unit be located?*

In principle, Greenwich seems the logical place given the National Maritime Museum's involvement with the NHSC and the National Register of Historic Vessels.

However if a more holistic approach is to be taken which involves links with shipwrecks and marine cultural assets, then the NMM has some shortcomings. The NMM has relinquished all responsibility for maritime archaeology, which it appears to have passed to the Mary Rose Trust, a body that is neither national nor suitably organised or funded to undertake this responsibility.

There are clear concerns that the NMM would not encourage a wider view of Historic Ships.

- g) *Should statutory listing of historic ships be introduced?*

In principle, marine historic assets such as historic ships should be capable of being protected by Listing in the same way as any other historic asset.

The question of how this should be done should be undertaken by DCMS in its current Review of Heritage Protection.

- h) *Are there any important issues relating to the preservation of historic ships that you feel are not addressed by these proposals?*

We do not feel that you have considered sufficiently the issue of funding, including that provided by the HLF. This whole initiative will have limited impact unless sensible schemes for funding the conservation and maintenance of historic ships can be devised.

We would like to draw your attention to the plight of the Cutty Sark which will probably close to visitors in the near future unless substantial funds are

found very soon for its conservation. It would indeed be ironic if this were to happen just as the NHSU was set up in Greenwich.

It has been reported in the press that funding was rejected by HLF over two years ago which, had it been made available, would have secured its future. Whilst recognising the importance of conserving smaller vessels, the conservation of an iconic ship of national importance such as Cutty Sark should be addressed with urgency under the Government's commitment to deliver a national policy on ship preservation.

The Cutty Sark is also of major importance for London and Greenwich in promoting tourism, access, education, cultural objectives, and local regeneration. We note from Appendix C that the Cutty Sark received HLF funding of £406,000 whereas SS Great Britain and HMS Trincomalee received £7.7 million and £4 million respectively.

We would be pleased to respond to any further questions or issues if you felt that was appropriate. It would also be appreciated if you would include JNAPC on your list of consultees in future.

Yours sincerely

R A Yorke
Chairman

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JOINT NAUTICAL ARCHAEOLOGY POLICY COMMITTEE

THE JNAPC - PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

The JNAPC was formed over fifteen years ago from individuals and representatives of institutions who wished to raise awareness of Britain's underwater heritage and to persuade government that underwater sites of historical importance should receive no less protection than those on land.

The JNAPC launched *Heritage at Sea* in May 1989, which put forward proposals for the better protection of archaeological sites underwater. Recommendations covered improved legislation and better reporting of finds, a proposed inventory of underwater sites, the waiving of fees to the Receiver of Wreck, the encouragement of seabed operators to undertake pre-disturbance surveys, greater responsibility by the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for their historic wrecks, proper management by government agencies of underwater sites, and the education and the training of sports divers to respect and conserve the underwater historic environment.

Government responded to *Heritage at Sea* in its White Paper *This Common Inheritance* in December 1990 in which it was announced that Receiver's fees would be waived, the Royal Commission on the Historical Monuments of England would be funded to prepare a Maritime Record of sites, and funding would be made available for the Nautical Archaeology Society to employ a full time training officer to develop its training programmes. Most importantly the responsibility for the administration of the 1973 Protection of Wrecks Act was also transferred from the Department of Transport, where it sat rather uncomfortably, to the then heritage ministry the Department of the Environment. Subsequently responsibility passed to the Department of National Heritage, which has since become the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

The aim of the JNAPC has been to raise the profile of nautical archaeology in both government and diving circles and to present a consensus upon which government and other organisations can act. *Heritage at Sea* was followed up by *Still at Sea* in May 1993 which drew attention to outstanding issues, the *Code of Practice for Seabed Developers* was launched in January 1995, and an archaeological leaflet for divers, *Underwater Finds - What to Do*, was published in January 1998 in collaboration with the Sports Diving Associations BSAC, PADI and SAA. The more detailed explanatory brochure, *Underwater Finds - Guidance for Divers*, followed in May 2000 and *Wreck Diving – Don't Get Scuttled*, an educational brochure for divers, was published in October 2000.

The JNAPC continues its campaign for the education of all sea users about the importance of our nautical heritage. JNAPC published its proposals for legal change in *Heritage Law at Sea* in June 2000 and its *Interim report on the Valletta Convention* in 2003. JNAPC has been working with English Heritage and DCMS on the forthcoming consultation paper on protecting the marine historic environment.

Members of the Joint Nautical Archaeology Policy Committee

Chairman

Robert Yorke

Organisations

Association of Local Government Archaeological Officers
British Sub-Aqua Club
Council for British Archaeology
Hampshire & Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology
Institute of Field Archaeologists
ICOMOS
National Maritime Museum
National Museum & Galleries of Wales
National Trust
Nautical Archaeology Society
Nautical Archaeology Society / Training
Professional Association of Diving Instructors
Shipwreck Heritage Centre
Society for Nautical Research
Sub-Aqua Association
UK Institute for Conservation
Wessex Archaeology

Paul Gilman
Jane Maddocks
George Lambrick, Alex Hunt
Garry Momber
David Parham
Christopher Dobbs
Gillian Hutchison
Mark Redknap
Rob Woodside
Lucy Blue
Chris Underwood
Suzanne Pleydell
Peter Marsden
Alan Aberg
Stuart Bryan
Amanda Sutherland
Antony Firth

Individual representation

Sarah Dromgoole
Valerie Fenwick
David Tomalin

Michael Williams

Affiliations

University of Leicester
previously CBA
previously County Archaeologist,
Isle of Wight
University of Wolverhampton

Observers

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English Heritage
English Heritage
Environment Service, Northern Ireland
Historic Scotland
Maritime and Coastguard Agency, Receiver of Wreck
Ministry of Defence
Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical
Monuments of Scotland

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