

HONOURING THE ANCIENT DEAD

HAD

Honouring the Ancient Dead is a British initiative that advocates respect for what are commonly called 'human remains' and their related funereal artefacts. HAD believes that the term 'human remains' is, in itself, not respectful of the continuing value of the person to contemporary communities and, so, prefers to use the term 'ancestor' for people who previously inhabited these isles.

HAD addresses concerns about the way in which some museums and archaeologists store, analyse and display the tangible evidence of ancient British ancestors.

There is no formal staff structure to HAD. Instead, HAD is an initiative open to all. Its remit is to express the importance of the spiritual, religious, social and cultural value of ancestors to us today. HAD's aims centre on calling for care of every ancestral body.

HAD's work is based upon the following foundation:

- As human beings we have a duty of care towards every other human person.
- As integral and influencing members of the community, the ancestral dead retain their personhood.
- Personhood entails the need for respectful interaction.

We believe that conflict is always to be avoided in any debate and so emphasise the need for consultation with all interested parties. HAD queries where organisations assert sole custody of ancestors. HAD will work for reburial or repatriation where appropriate, but holds neither as mandatory, always seeking the most honourable solution with all voices heard. HAD:

- Provides a voice for groups and individuals who are concerned about the care of our ancestors in Britain.

- Aims to ensure that these people are included in any consultation and decision-making process relating to these ancestors.

The HAD website (www.honour.org.uk) is designed to inform people of the work it does and the projects it is involved in. It contains a wealth of information, including:

- HAD's Statement of Intent.
- HAD's Definitions of terms often used in the debate over treatment of ancestors, which explain why we feel there is a need to act differently.
- How HAD is working with the Government, the heritage sector and other organisations.
- Articles on some of the issues surrounding the care of the physical evidence of ancestors.
- Further information on the projects HAD is, or has been, involved in.

'Your Local Museum' is one of HAD's key projects. This is a database of British museums that hold ancestral bodies, in particular those of ancient British provenance. HAD is working with concerned individuals and groups, encouraging people to explore their own local museum(s) and speak to the staff there. If you would like to be involved, please contact HAD using the contact details below and it will provide you with an introduction to a member of staff at the museum and brief you both with more information on the background and aims of the project.

HAD is always happy to hear from people who want to get involved or simply comment on its work. If you would like to get in touch, please email HAD at research@honour.org.uk. Alternatively you may also contact the HAD office by post at the following address.