

**AMGUEDDFEYDD AC ORIELAU CENEDLAETHOL CYMRU**

**NATIONAL MUSEUMS & GALLERIES OF WALES**

**Department of Archaeology & Numismatics**

**A Policy on the Management of Human Remains  
and Return to Country of Origin**

**I Preamble**

1 Human remains from all parts of the world form an important category of material in national museums, most of which have encyclopaedic, universal collections.

2 Human remains in museums are of significant value to archaeologists, ethnographers, anthropologists, medical and biological scientists.

3 Relevant papers and policy documents include:

Code of Conduct for Museum Professionals and Code of Practice for Museums Authorities. The Museums Association (1992)

Museums Ethnographers Group Professionals Guidelines concerning the storage display, interpretation and return of human remains in Ethnographical Collections in United Kingdom Museums (1991)

The Vermillion Accord: Human Remains, World Archaeological congress (World Archaeological Bulletin, November 1989)

**II Management**

1 Human remains which originate from cultures which are recognised as having particular sensitivities over their keeping will not be displayed to the general public.

2 All human remains will be relocated, as soon as funding permits, in separate, appropriate storage areas and will be cared for in a sensitive manner.

3 Access will be restricted to those with legitimate interests such as students, scholars and others with *bona fide* reasons to see the material. They will not be made available to those who may wish to trivialise or sensationalise the specimens.

**III Return**

- 1 The NMGW will always seek, within the limits of its powers, to return human remains where the material is not of scientific importance or where ethical considerations are seen to be of over-riding importance. In general, ethical considerations are likely to arise where the material is very recent and a clear link with living individuals or a living population can be established.

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