



SUMMARY OF OFFICIAL MINUTES

2nd MEETING OF THE UK NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE BLUE SHIELD

English Heritage, 1 Waterhouse Square, London, 9 July 2013

Updates

Ratification of Hague Convention: DCMS have formally applied for parliamentary time in the next session to allow the UK to ratify the Hague Convention. (*After the meeting the DCMS confirmed that a bid has been made for parliamentary time to introduce a Bill which would ratify the Hague Convention.*) There is increasing good will and a sense of urgency within DCMS for ratification. UKBS have been in discussion with the MoD over the last few months in preparation for ratification.

Syria: *Heritage for Peace*, a very small NGO, have been compiling information about heritage sites in Syria and providing training to both sides in the conflict. They have been seeking support, which has been declined by a number of organisations. ANCBS agreed to publish their list of top 20 cultural sites and the wording for a press release from *Heritage for Peace* and UKBS was agreed on 4th July. Both the press release and the list are on the ANCBS website. Other lists are being compiled by Durham University's Fragile Crescent Project, the American Department of Defense, and the American Department of State. The lists will be publicised as widely as possible, through websites, contacts, MoD and NATO and sent to the UNESCO 2nd Protocol Committee. However, the lack of significant Syrian archives and libraries was identified on the lists – BS will work to collect information to assist in their protection. BS is in discussion with the MoD about the format of such lists and what information they need in order to agree a template, taking into account what was prepared for Libya, Iraq, Mali and Syria to date. The aim is to form a joint working group with UKBS and MoD, and then NATO to develop protocols etc.

ICOMOS-ICORP Committee on Risk Preparedness: SC, the Vice-Chair, provided a briefing on ICORP, the International Committee for Risk Preparedness. The group provides both practical guidance for those working on the ground and also high level strategic advice. The UK members are shortly to debate whether to establish a UK group for ICORP (FM). It will be good to ensure that while the work of ICORP and Blue Shield complement each other that there is not unnecessary duplication. There is overlap between the members, and ICORP would normally focus on the built heritage, while Blue Shield's remit includes collections, archives – moveable and immovable heritage.

Links with Resilience Sector: Resilience now resides with the Department of Communities and Local Government, and deals with Civil Contingency. Key documents are being revised including Site Clearance, Flooding (East Anglian Surge) and Mass Fatalities. A NW Heritage Group has been set up by the English Heritage Fire Advisor, headed up by English Heritage. The formerly named DCMS/National Trust/English Heritage Practical Salvage Course is delivered under the chairmanship of EH. To date 480 people have been trained, ie., c.100 per annum.

Emergency Plans for UK World Heritage Sites: Emergency Plan templates are under development for UK sites such as Ironbridge, which is at risk of landslide. Others are invited to participate in the development of the template.

The Chilcott Inquiry: it is due to report in July 2013. It is hoped that one of the recommendations is ratification of the Hague Convention at the earliest possible opportunity.

A Decade of Conflict (NATO Report): Following the aerial bombardment of Libya NATO have been considering lessons learnt at their Lessons Learnt Centre in Portugal. Four recommendations are made in the December report the key one that NATO should develop CPP doctrine. However, the report has not been accepted. <http://www.jallc.nato.int/newsmedia/reports.asp#fsdof>

Conferences: Notices were shared on forthcoming conferences.

Blue Shield: Organisation and Launch

- **Charitable Status:** UKBS will investigate the potential of charitable status
- **Website:** The website is in progress, and use of the Blue Shield logo has been approved.
- **PR Strategy:** The PR strategy will need to be in place in good time for the launch of UKBS in Spring/Autumn 2014. The Board is considering how best to progress this
- **Advisory Board:** It was agreed that time can be taken to gather together the right people with the right level of knowledge and expertise, with the required access to appropriate networks.
- **The Official Launch:** Ideas for the formal launch of UK Blue Shield were discussed, such as an exercise, either during the launch itself or in the month or so leading up to the launch, the presence of a senior ministerial figure, a reception or launch, possibly at the Banqueting Hall, perhaps a conference on cultural property protection. Sponsors will be needed. The launch is likely to be September 2014.
- **Draft Mission and Functions of the UKBS:** This document is to be adopted and to be a living document to be adapted as the need arises.
- **Adoption of 4 Tier Approach as UKBS Policy:** The Board agreed to adopt the 4 Tier Approach as official policy.
See Stone P.G. 2013. A four-tier approach to the protection of cultural property in the event of armed conflict. *Antiquity* 87 (335): 166-177

Member Activity:

- **Board members have been involved in:** meetings on illicit trafficking with ICOM, Police and Customs, speaking at *Protection of Cultural Property in Asia*, in Bhutan (sponsored by Interpol and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs); speaking at a Swedish museums seminar on *Fire Prevention and Recovery* in Stockholm; developing a workshop on Cultural Heritage and Disaster Risk Management in Urban Areas, covering both natural and armed conflict, looking at the challenges and solutions for communities as well as cultural heritage; contributions to the recent conference of British International Corporate Lawyers; commenting on key Resilience documents with the Department of Communities and Local Government; developing World Heritage Site Emergency Plan templates.
- **AHRC Network Grant:** BS will put together a bid for an AHRC Network Grant which will aim to get a group of universities and other organisations together, including the MoD, and hold 4-5 seminars across the country on topics such as criteria for lists etc.