

## A statement by the Nautical Archaeology Society on the management of HMS *Victory* 1744.

Over recent months the Nautical Archaeology Society (NAS) has been closely following the proposed management of the wreck of HMS *Victory* (1744), an internationally important shipwreck and grave of over 1100 Royal Navy sailors, which was lost in a storm in the English Channel in October 1744.

From media reports the NAS understands that it is proposed that an intrusive archaeological investigation of HMS *Victory* (1744) be undertaken by *Odyssey Marine Exploration* and that the costs of undertaking the investigation would be met by allowing the contractor to sell artefacts from the site.

Not only is this heritage management model not in accordance with the NAS Statement of Principles it is not in accordance with the Rule 2 of the Annex to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage. The UK government has publicly endorsed the Annex and general principles of the Convention and stated that it should be followed as best practice.

As the proposed management plan for the wreck of HMS *Victory* (1744) is apparently contradictory to the stated UK policy the NAS is confident that the UK government will not allow the intrusive investigation of the wreck by *Odyssey Marine Exploration* to go ahead. The Society looks forward to learning more from the UK government as soon as possible about alternative plans for how this important cultural heritage will be managed in accordance with the Rules of the Annex and internationally accepted best practice for underwater cultural heritage.

The Nautical Archaeology Society (NAS) is a charity registered in England and Wales (Registration number 264209) and registered in Scotland (Registration number SC040130). The Society is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales (Company number 01039270).

The Nautical Archaeology Society was formed to actively involve members of the public, locally, nationally and internationally in preserving and studying their maritime heritage. The NAS believes that preserving a record of the past is vital, and it is important that this record is as accurate as possible. For this reason, over the last thirty seven years, the NAS has worked towards advancing education in nautical archaeology at all levels; towards improving and standardising techniques in survey, excavation and reporting; and towards publishing detailed and comprehensive journals, newsletters and guides on maritime heritage.

The NAS is governed by a "Statement of Principles" which was adopted by the Society in 2007. Principle 4 of the Statement states that the Society will:

*"use its best endeavours to: act in accordance with the letter and the spirit of international codes of practice and charters that are designed to protect and preserve the underwater cultural heritage; and will adopt best international practice in its dealings with the cultural heritage"*

Principle 5 states that the NAS will:

*"not associate itself with, nor derive a profit or advantage from, the sale of cultural heritage material for private benefit. This clause is not intended to apply to the disposal of such material to a bona fide cultural institution for conservation, research or public display or to the payment by such an institution of a reward for the remuneration of expenses or the furtherance of activity that supports and promotes the understanding or management of cultural heritage"*

### **Dated: 9th July 2012**

The NAS Statement of Principles can be found at:

[www.nauticalarchaeologysociety.org/about/pdfs/NASStatementofPrinciples\\_2007.pdf](http://www.nauticalarchaeologysociety.org/about/pdfs/NASStatementofPrinciples_2007.pdf)