

APPENDIX A

Timeline of Additional Research Carried Out By LSAG&M Curatorial Team

w/c 2 August:

Officers contacted Museum Ethnographers' Group via online contact form.

w/c 16 August:

Officers emailed Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford, and Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology, Cambridge.

Officers contacted Heather Bonney, curator of human remains at Natural History Museum, via online contact form.

Officers received an initial response from Trish Biers, Curator, the Duckworth Laboratory, Centre for Human Evolutionary Studies, Cambridge, and Museum Representative on the Board of Trustees for the British Association of Biological Anthropology and Archaeology.

w/c 23 August:

Trish Biers discussed the issue with a colleague in India, with whom she is researching issues around human remains in Indian collections.

w/c 6 September:

Officer received a response from Heather Bonney: The NHM only considers repatriation when it receives a request from communities, and they have not received any requests from India; HB is also not aware of any other museum having received a request for, or repatriated remains to, India, or of any formal route or process for doing so at the moment.

Officers received a response from Faye Belsey at Pitt Rivers Museum: PRM has only ever returned remains in response to claims from communities; if we do want to pursue repatriation, she recommends community consultation and contacting the Indian High Commission.

w/c 5 October:

Officer received an email from Trish Biers passing on a message from Veena, her colleague in India. Veena has offered to take the remains in her lab in Deccan College, where they could be scientifically analysed and kept as part of a larger existing collection of Indian human remains. She did not feel it would be appropriate to involve the local South Asian community in Leamington due to cultural differences in the origins of the remains and of the local community here. Trish Biers adds that she has the facilities to do the same kind of analysis in Cambridge, should we wish to pursue that route.

w/c 22 November:

Officers had a video consultation with Trish Biers. She has offered to carry out three types of analysis should we wish to bring the remains to Cambridge: visual inspection and comparison with other remains (at no cost); isotopic analysis of tooth enamel, which is non-destructive and could narrow down the remains to a general region of origin (under £100 per sample); DNA analysis of teeth, which is destructive but has the potential to narrow down the origins more specifically,

though it also might not offer any useful information (in the hundreds of pounds per sample)

The remains could also be transferred to the collection at Cambridge where they would be contextualised, and where culturally sensitive treatment is a priority. If we choose to dispose of the remains ourselves, Trish notes that burial is not culturally appropriate to their region of origin. Cremation would be more culturally appropriate, but it would not be in accordance with DCMS/Museums Association guidelines as it is destructive and non-reversible.