

# Chapter 2

## Looking Death in the Face

### Different Attitudes towards Bog Bodies and their Display with a Focus on Lindow Man

Jody Joy

*'Death destroys individuality – but not his ... When we look at Lindow Man, we are looking at the present, not the past'* (Jones 2007, 23).

Since the late 1990s there has been an increasing discussion over the 'rights of the dead' and the ethics of storing and displaying human remains in British museums, and academics and museum professionals have questioned what should be done with them when they are discovered (e.g. Bahn 1984; Parker Pearson 1999, ch. 8; Swain 2002; Curtis 2003; Sanders 2009, 183–7; Alberti *et al.* 2009; Sayer 2010, ch. 3). To date, discussions have focused on issues of repatriation and reburial rather than display (Alberti *et al.* 2009, 133). In this chapter the display of human remains is considered with respect to the well-preserved ancient remains from bogs, generally known as bog bodies. Specifically, this chapter will discuss the remains of an adult male discovered in August 1984 at Lindow Moss, near Wilmslow, Cheshire, who has come to be known as 'Lindow Man' (Stead and Turner 1985; Stead 1986 *et al.*; Turner and Scaife 1995; Joy 2009) (**Pl. 1**).

Although all human remains in museums demand special treatment and should be treated with respect (see DCMS 2005), it is argued here that bog bodies are a special category as they are fleshed. Skeletons or cremated remains usually displayed in museums can be viewed at a distance, one step removed from their humanity as the features of people we recognize in everyday encounters, skin, hair, facial features and wrinkles are not preserved. Bog bodies challenge this separation as their skin and hair have been preserved by the bog and details such as facial features and even finger prints can be eerily prominent. This has the effect of bringing the past into the present as they appear to have been 'frozen in time' (Sanders 2009, 220). This is underlined through the creation of facial reconstructions (**Pl. 2**) (see Prag and Neave 1997), which often feature prominently in bog body displays. Creating facial reconstructions is not an exact science. For example, the accuracy of the facial reconstruction of Lindow Man has been questioned because it was produced solely from radiographs (Wilkinson 2007, 265). However, despite these problems, facial reconstructions can be very powerful images, acting as visual reminders that past peoples were 'just like us'.

As Melanie Giles observes (2009, 78), '... it is the appearance of these remains [bog bodies], particularly the faces of the dead, which attract our imagination'. Since they are so well preserved, it is possible to make out facial features and even to read something into the character of the individual – the furrowed brow of Lindow Man or the perceived serenity of the expression on Tollund Man's face. This creates a very different experience when bog bodies are encountered in museums and they can provoke feelings of fascination as well as distress (Jones 2007, 23). Indeed, some critics of bog body displays claim they are a kind of 'pornography of death', a source of 'grim fascination' or 'morbid voyeurism' (see Parker Pearson 1999, 183).

The unusual recovery contexts of bog bodies and their remarkable level of preservation also mean that the interpretations are richer than usual for archaeological remains. Based on the analysis of preserved skin and hair, as well as internal organs and the surrounding peat, it is



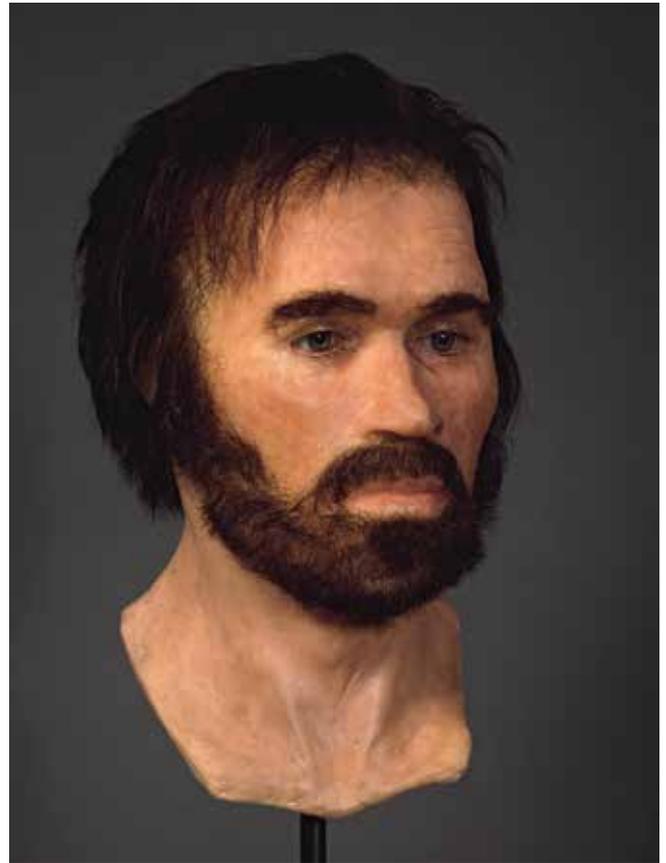
**Plate 1 Lindow Man, discovered at Lindow Moss, Cheshire, August 1984, c. 2 BC–AD 119. British Museum, London (1984,1002.1)**

possible to ascertain details such as the cause of death, their last meal, general health and specifics of their environment, which results in the ability to build complex personal stories or biographies. This individualization is emphasized by giving bog bodies names such as ‘Old Croghan Man’ or ‘Yde Girl’. Linking bog bodies to place names situates them within the present-day landscape, blurring boundaries with the distant past (Sanders 2009, 223).

As a result of these effects, bog bodies have been attributed significance beyond archaeological circles and often attract media attention. Bog bodies have been linked to regional and national identities; included in discussions of reburial and restitution, as well as religion; used as tropes for poetry; and even portrayed as characters in horror films (e.g. the 2009 film *Legend of the Bog* starring Vinnie Jones). The display of bog bodies in museums will be discussed below, as well as the reception of these displays by the general public, but first I will discuss what a bog body actually is and introduce some of the wider debates associated with the display of human remains in museums.

### **What is a bog body?**

‘Bog body’ is a term that describes any human remains, many extremely well preserved, which have been recovered from a bog (an area of wet, spongy ground) (Glob 1969; van der Sanden 1996; Joy 2009, 20). Bog bodies have been found across north-western Europe, specifically Britain, Ireland, Denmark, the Netherlands and north-west Germany, and date from the Mesolithic period to the present day. Some bog bodies are deliberate burials, others are likely to be accidental drownings. It is impossible to be certain how many bog bodies have been recovered as many found in previous centuries were quickly reburied and we only have documentary evidence of their existence (referred to by Van der Sanden (1996, 20) as ‘paper bodies’). The total number could, however, possibly be in the thousands.



**Plate 2 Facial reconstruction of Lindow Man**

The extraordinary preservation of bog bodies is due to a number of factors. First, bogs are cold, acidic and lacking in oxygen, which makes them relatively hostile environments for putrefaction. More important is the presence of a kind of sugar called sphagnum, which is released during the decay of the sphagnum mosses that inhabit ‘raised’ or ‘blanket’ bog environments. Sphagnum acts as a natural tanning agent, effectively turning tissues into leather. It also reacts with the digestive enzymes produced by decay-inducing bacteria, effectively immobilizing them where they come into contact with fragments of sphagnum moss (Painter 1995, 99).

The term ‘bog body’ usually refers to human remains dating to the Iron Age, specifically 500 BC to AD 100. This is because bog bodies dating to this time have been seen to share a number of characteristics, first identified by Glob (1969). Many show signs of a violent death, or even ‘overkill’, meaning that far more force or violence was used than was necessary to cause death. Several of these bodies were also deposited naked and were tied down in pools in the bog. Drawing on these characteristics, as well as descriptions of Iron Age peoples by Roman writers, Glob suggested that people deposited in bogs during the Iron Age were the victims of ritual sacrifice and were killed and placed in bogs as offerings to the gods. This interpretation has proven to be very influential and has been developed and contested by various scholars (e.g. Stead *et al.* 1986, 177–80; Ross and Robins 1989; Green 1998; Hutton 2004; Joy 2009).

### **The ethics of displaying human remains in museums**

A discussion of the ethics of displaying human remains in Britain was driven by a call for the repatriation of



**Plate 3 Crown and skull, c. 250 BC–150 BC, discovered in an inhumation burial, part of a large Iron Age cemetery at Mill Hill, Deal, Kent. British Museum, London (1990,0102.28)**

indigenous human remains by groups in North America, Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific (e.g. May *et al.* 2005), as well as the scandal of the unauthorized removal, retention and disposal of human tissue at Alder Hey Children’s Hospital, Liverpool, during the late 1980s and early 1990s (see Jenkins 2011, ch. 1; see Chapter One, this volume).

Increasingly in the last few years, modern-day Pagan groups have vocalized their interest in ancient British human remains as they regard remains like those from the site of Avebury or Lindow Man to be their ancestors (Bienkowski 2006, 9; Restall Orr 2006, 1–4). A number of these groups have even suggested that some human remains stored in museums should be reburied (see Moshenska 2009; Thackray and Payne 2010; Blain 2011, 1025–7; HAD 2011). Although the views of Pagans requesting reburial should be respected, they represent a very vocal minority. In a recent survey commissioned by English Heritage, over 90% of museum goers who were questioned agreed that museums should be allowed to display human remains (see Chapter One, this volume; BDRC 2009, 7). There is also no single ‘Pagan voice’ or group which represents all Pagan views as not all Pagans support reburial (see Restall Orr 2006; Wallis and Blain 2006; Sayer 2010, 203). This makes it difficult for museums as these institutions also have to consider the views of the wider general public and other interested groups such as archaeologists and scientists.

At present there are no clear guidelines on the reburial of ancient British human remains. The Human Tissue Act 2004 only allows national museums such as the British Museum to de-accession human remains less than 1,000 years old, meaning that repatriation of accessioned ancient British remains is currently illegal. In April 2008, the British government reinterpreted the 1857 Burial Act, stating that all archaeologically excavated human remains discovered in

England and Wales should be reburied after two years (Parker Pearson *et al.* 2011). This was intended as a temporary measure until new legislation could be put in place, but it effectively meant that only two years of scientific research into newly discovered human remains, no matter how important, would be possible as no licenses were being granted for the retention of human remains in museums. After a very public campaign by archaeologists, the Ministry of Justice should soon provide a more flexible interpretation of the licence that will once again allow for newly discovered archaeological human remains to be deposited in national museum collections (see Chapter One, this volume). However, these events underline the vagaries of current legislation which are open to different interpretations.

Arguments for the continuing display of human remains in museums centre on their scientific importance, both present and future, as well as the educational advantages of displaying human remains (e.g. Payne 2010, 13). Others stress the benefit derived from seeing dead bodies in a society in which we are otherwise shielded from death (Parker Pearson 1999, 183; Curtis 2003, 30; Sayer 2011).

These debates have prompted the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and institutions such as the British Museum to issue guidelines for the care and display of human remains in museums (DCMS 2005; Trustees of the British Museum 2013). These guidelines suggest that displays are planned in order to encourage visitors to view human remains ‘respectfully’. Respect is a variable concept and definitions diverge widely between individuals and groups with different interests (see Bienkowski 2006, 11). However, the guidelines do set out how human remains should be displayed (DCMS 2005, 20). The underlying principle of the guidelines is that the decision to show human remains should not be made lightly and careful thought must be given to the reasons for and the circumstances of the display. DCMS guidelines stipulate that ‘human remains should only be displayed if the museum believes that it makes a material contribution to a particular interpretation; and that contribution could not be made equally effectively in another way’. Human remains should also be positioned so that people do not come across them ‘unawares’. As one would expect, the guidelines also stipulate that ‘display conditions, like storage conditions should be safe, secure and with stable, monitored environments, which are kept clean and regularly checked for pests and other potential threats’. It is also made clear that ‘displays should always be accompanied by sufficient explanatory material’. This is another critical aspect of the display of human remains that is often highlighted in surveys of the general public and consultation with other interested groups (see Eklund 2007).

An example of the impact of these guidelines on museum display can be seen in the Iron Age Gallery (Room 50) at the British Museum, where Lindow Man is currently located. During a refurbishment of the gallery undertaken in 2006–7, an audit of the human remains on display was conducted. A skull (Pl. 3) and the bones of a child’s lower arm (Morel Collection no. 1985a), which had been used to exhibit a priestly crown and a collection of bracelets, were removed as it was judged that the display of those remains did not make

a ‘material contribution’ to the interpretation being put forward. The decoration on the crown could be viewed equally effectively on a specially constructed mount. The bracelets, and not the human remains, were of interest in a display of grave-goods from the Marne region of France. Similarly, the Manchester Museum decided to remove the head of Worsley Man from display in 2007 as he was displayed on a corridor and was not ‘supported by sufficient contextual information to make sense’ of his death (Giles 2009, 93). The reasons for the continuing display of Lindow Man will be set out as part of the conclusion of this chapter.

### Other bog bodies

In this section the history of the discovery and display of bog bodies from elsewhere will be briefly discussed to serve as a direct comparison to the display of Lindow Man. Discussion will concentrate on Grauballe Man and Tollund Man, both discovered in Denmark in the early 1950s (Glob 1969) and well documented (Glob 1969; Asingh 2007; Asingh and Lynnerup 2007; Asingh 2009; Fischer 2012).

### Discovery

Prior to the 1950s and the discoveries of Tollund Man and Grauballe Man, hundreds of bog bodies were uncovered across north-west Europe (Strehle 2007, 33). The majority were reburied. Some were taken to museums, but no attempt was made to conserve the remains permanently. Consequently, they were left to dry out causing the bodies to shrink and significantly reduce the amount and quality of information recoverable using scientific techniques (Turner 1995; Van der Sanden 1995; Asingh 2009, 49). Only with the discovery of Grauballe Man in 1952 was an effort made to preserve an entire bog body for posterity and display it to the public. This is partly due to the limitations of science at the time when Tollund Man was discovered as well as finds from the 18th and 19th centuries which were either reburied or left to dry out (see Strehle 2007, 33), but is also due to the wider attitudes of museum curators and the general public.

For example, when Tollund Man was unearthed in 1950, his remains were sent by representatives from Silkeborg Museum to the National Museum in Copenhagen. Only his head, right foot and the thumb of his right hand were conserved (Glob 1969, 35; Fischer 2012, 102), and it was normal practice at the National Museum at the time to clean any soft tissues from the bones of bog bodies (Fischer 2012, 101–2). According to Strehle (2007, 33), ‘no attempt was made to conserve the whole of the body. It was seen as being too macabre to exhibit an entire corpse’. Asingh explains that it was ‘on conservation-related and probably, in particular, ethical grounds that Johannes Brønsted, the National Museum’s director, found the human body unsuitable for conservation and future storage as a museum artefact, and absolutely not for exhibition to the public. “It is, you know, a pretty macabre sight”, was the view of a like-minded senior curator’ (Asingh 2009, 12). Others may argue that it was more insensitive to only preserve selected parts of Tollund Man’s body and remove soft tissues from the skeleton.

The influence of Professor Peter Glob was instrumental in transforming these attitudes as he felt that bog bodies

were important for scientific research and should be displayed to the public (Glob 1969, 41; Asingh 2009, 12). Therefore when Grauballe Man was discovered by peat-cutters in 1952, Glob was soon at the site and took the remains to the new conservation workshops at the Prehistoric Museum at Århus, which had been equipped with bog bodies in mind. Grauballe Man soon came to prominence in the national and international press and Glob portrayed him as a tall, well-built man who went to his death as a willing sacrifice. According to Pauline Asingh (2009, 18, 26), this romantic interpretation appealed to a post-war Denmark, with the Danes more willing to see themselves as the descendants of a noble person who made the ultimate sacrifice, rather than the descendants of war-like and violent ancestors. Building on this publicity, and against the advice of the conservator, Glob immediately put Grauballe Man on public display. He was laid in a glass coffin and for the next ten days 18,000 people queued for long periods to view his remains (Glob 1969, 45; Asingh 2009, 24). This period of display cemented Grauballe Man in the consciousness of the public and he became something of a ‘national treasure’ in a way that Tollund Man had not (Asingh 2009, 24–6).

### Scientific research and conservation

Soon after his discovery, Grauballe Man was the subject of an ambitious programme of scientific investigation, voraciously reported on by the press and devoured by the public. As Asingh observes, it must ‘... have given rise to certain ethical and humane scruples when Glob so single-mindedly handed Grauballe Man over to science. Seen with modern eyes, this was a groundbreaking, cross-disciplinary piece of work, the like of which we have first acquired a tradition for in recent decades’ (2009, 37). The extent to which scientific analysis of bog bodies is now commonplace is demonstrated by the two bog bodies recovered in close succession in Ireland, Old Croghan Man and Clonycaven Man, in the early years of this century and now on display at the National Museum of Ireland. These were immediately the subject of a comprehensive scientific examination presented to the public in a popular television BBC *Timewatch* documentary, *The Bog Bodies*.

The only task that remained was the conservation of Grauballe Man’s remains (see Strehle 2007). Again, this was not as simple a decision as it would seem from today’s perspective, where it is standard practice to conserve bog body remains and quite common to place them on public display. As we have seen, the head and right foot of Tollund Man were conserved, but the torso was left to dry out and the soft tissues removed from the skeleton (Strehle 2007, 33; Fischer 2012, 102). Tollund Man’s head was soaked in alcohol and paraffin, but it is thought to have shrunk by approximately 12% during this process (Fischer 2012, 53). Consequently the conservator at Århus, Lange-Kornbak, chose a different method, tanning Grauballe Man like leather by soaking him for 18 months in a vat of water and oak bark, followed by a further soaking in a solution of distilled water and Turkish-red oil. After a final touch up, the results of his conservation were declared satisfactory and from May 1955, Grauballe Man has been on display in the

Prehistoric Museum at Århus (Strehle 2007, 46; Asingh 2009, 67).

### **'Frozen in time': different approaches to the display of bog bodies**

A great deal of emphasis is placed on recreating the context of discovery in the display of bog bodies, creating the impression that they have been freshly exposed and may have 'died yesterday' (Giles 2009, 90; Sanders 2009, 220). For example, a cast of the underside of Grauballe Man was created before he was conserved so that they could display him in the exact position he was found in (Glob 1969, 58). Despite the fact that the body of Tollund Man was not originally preserved, they have made a replica of his body for the current display (Fischer 2012, 105–7). An exhibit at the Landesmuseum Natur und Mensch, Oldenburg, Germany, even displayed a bog body behind a huge slice of peat (see Sanders 2009, fig. 6.3). In this instance, the bog body is almost secondary to the natural phenomenon of the peat layers.

The bodies in the National Museum of Ireland lie prone in the same way as these other bodies, but no attempt has been made to recreate the boggy environment. Rather than creating an impression of being 'freshly found', the four bodies on display are presented on their own in clear glass, creating a 'neutral' or 'forensic' appearance. The bodies are displayed alongside accompanying objects as part of a special exhibition which argues that bog bodies and artefacts were deposited close to ancient boundaries, with bog bodies acquiring a protective function (Kelly 2006). Although there are some problems with this interpretation, such as the assumption of the long continuation of ancient boundaries (see Giles 2009, 87), here the bog bodies form the pivotal part of a coherent intellectual argument. Each of the four bodies is contained within a specially designed oval-shaped 'pod' with information about the body presented alongside each display. This separates the body from the main exhibition and allows visitors to choose if they want to view the body. It also limits the number of people able to see the bodies at any one time (O'Sullivan 2007, 20). Reactions to the bog body display at the National Museum of Ireland are generally positive, although a member of the public complained to the *Irish Times* that she found the exhibition 'inappropriate' and 'upsetting' (O'Sullivan 2007, 18). Outside the display room of Windeby Girl and Rendswühren and Österby Men at the Archäologisches Landesmuseum at Schloss Gottorf, Schleswig-Holstein, Germany, is a board where visitors are invited to post comments on the display. According to Sanders (2009, 184, fig. 6.5), comments fall into two camps: those that feel bog bodies should not be displayed; and those who feel their display in museums is legitimate and worthwhile.

### **Summary**

We can see from this brief examination of the discovery and display of bog bodies from elsewhere that until the discovery of Grauballe Man, people in Denmark had very different attitudes towards bog bodies. The influence of Glob in changing people's attitudes is clear. He established the practice of scientific examination, conservation and display

of bog bodies. Glob's book, *The Bog People*, which was published in English (Glob 1969), played a key role in placing bog bodies into the international public imagination (Sanders 2009, 17). As far as the author is aware, all well-preserved bog bodies that have subsequently been discovered have been conserved and put on public display. Many old finds have also been recovered from museum stores and are on view to the public.

### **Lindow Man: history of recovery and display**

#### **Discovery**

Receptions and reactions to bog bodies and their display will now be explored through the example of Lindow Man. On 1 August 1984, a well-preserved human leg was uncovered on the conveyor belt of a peat-cutting company located near Wilmslow in Cheshire (Turner 1986; Joy 2009). The police were informed and the leg was taken away for investigation. The county archaeologist, Rick Turner, heard about the discovery from a local reporter and went out to the site the following day to investigate. He inspected the peat-cutting and found a flap of skin, which looked to be part of a human body. He returned on 6 August and the area was excavated. A block of peat containing the body was removed and taken to the mortuary at the nearby Macclesfield General Hospital. Although archaeologists were certain that the human remains were ancient, the police were investigating a murder in the area and wanted to be certain beyond doubt that the remains were not modern. By 17 August, radiocarbon dating had shown that the body was at least 1,000 years old. In the meantime, the landowners presented the remains to the British Museum and on 21 August the body was taken to London, where on 24 September the process of removing the peat from the body began. To aid the process, X-rays were taken. Progress was slow as his body had to be kept below 4°C in order to delay the onset of decay. The remains were revealed to be the upper torso of an adult male. It took five days to excavate the body from the peat and progress was filmed for a BBC *QED* documentary. A correspondent from *The Sunday Times* was also present (Stead 1986). The discovery was announced to the press in the second week of the excavation (see **Pl. 4**) and it received worldwide coverage. The press named the body Pete Marsh, but he was called Lindow Man by the scientists investigating his remains (Stead 1986, 16). Reports on the initial discovery and scientific investigation concentrated on his antiquity, scientific discoveries and the context of his death, specifically its violent nature and how he ended up in the bog. Depending on the expert consulted, Lindow Man was variously portrayed as a murder victim (Nurse 1984) or as a ritual sacrifice (Gillie 1984). When the *QED* film was screened in April 1985, it was watched by more than 10 million people. Early in 1986 the programme also won the British Association for the Advancement of Science award.

The remains of Lindow Man were then the subject of a comprehensive scientific investigation. This continued until December 1986 (see Stead *et al.* 1986). However, throughout the process, the primary concern appears to have been to conserve the body. As Stead states, '... to excavate, record, investigate and display, but essentially to preserve it' (1986,

14). In the middle of December 1984, Lindow Man was handed over to the conservators who had to devise a suitable method of conserving his body (see Omar and McCord 1986; Omar *et al.* 1989; Daniels 1991; Daniels 1996). A number of methods were considered, but the conservators eventually settled on freeze-drying. This had been routinely used on waterlogged wood since the 1970s, but this was the first time that the method had been used to preserve a human body. Freeze-drying removes moisture by sublimation. Unlike air drying, this preserves cell structure and reduces shrinkage. The possibility of shrinkage was further reduced by first of all soaking Lindow Man's remains in a solution of polyethylene glycol (Omar and McCord 1986). Initial assessments of the freeze-drying process were positive. The shrinkage of the body was less than 5%. Although the body was now less flexible, it could be handled more easily. There was also a noticeable lightening of skin colour and no discernible odour coming from the body (Omar and McCord 1986, 20).

### Exhibition

Lindow Man was first put on public display at the British Museum in July 1986 as part of the *Archaeology in Britain* exhibition, situated in Rooms 49–50. The exhibition closed in February 1987 and at the request of the Director of the Manchester Museum, Lindow Man was loaned to the Manchester Museum for six months until October 1987. The loan proved extremely popular with up to 2,000 visitors per day and it was extended into 1988. It was during this time that a campaign to return Lindow Man to the north-west began, headed by local woman Barbara O'Brien. Headlines such as 'Pete should stay in the North', 'He is ours', 'The body snatchers' and 'Tug-o-war over body from the bog' appeared in local and national newspapers throughout the summer and autumn of 1987. Local MPs even became involved. Debate also turned to the 'north–south divide' with local opinions such as 'London has everything. He should be kept here...' being forcefully expressed (Anon. 1987). Perhaps the most memorable feature of the campaign was the song *Lindow Man we Want you Back Again*, performed by pupils from Lindow Primary School in November 1987.

Despite the campaign in the north-west, as outlined above, the legal title to Lindow Man had been handed over to the British Museum by the landowners shortly after his discovery and Lindow Man was returned to the British Museum in 1988. On his return he was redisplayed in the Central Saloon Galleries 36 and 37. The showcase was positioned alongside and facing the Hinton St Mary mosaic. In this location the body was subject to high levels of natural light (see Bradley *et al.* 2008). Concerned about the effect of the light on his body, the display was altered. Fluorescent lights were switched off and a solid back and canopy were added to the display case in an attempt to shield the body from light. The showcase was also reoriented so that the canopy sheltered Lindow Man from light spilling through the skylights. Other than a second loan to Manchester Museum from March–September 1991, Lindow Man remained in the Central Saloon until 1997 when he was moved to his current position in the Iron Age Gallery (Room 50).

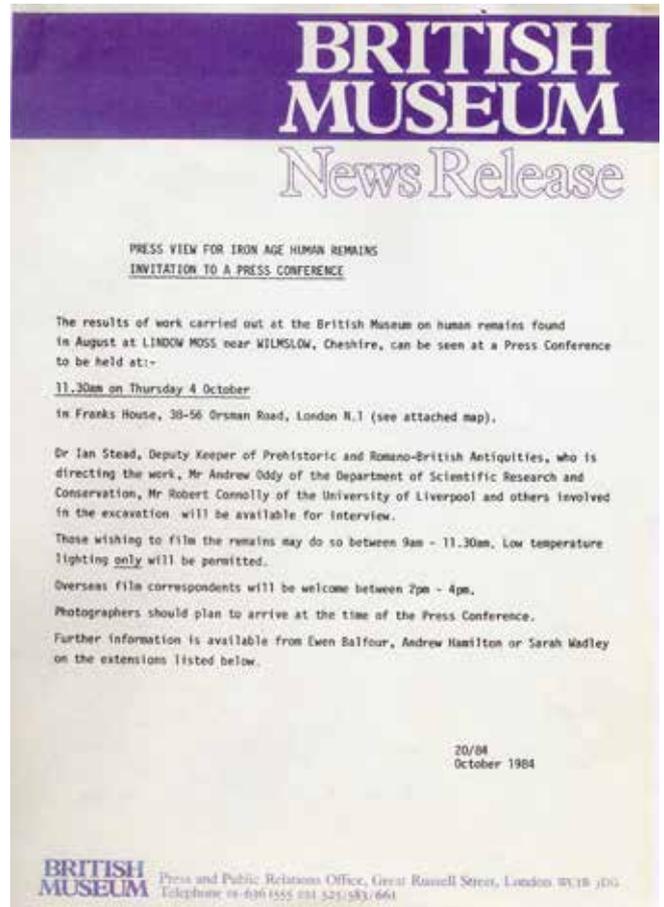


Plate 4 Press release announcing the discovery of a bog body at Lindow Moss

### Interpretation of death

The interpretation of Lindow Man's death has been the source of much debate (see Joy 2009, ch. 4). In two articles published in the *Times Literary Supplement*, the historian Ronald Hutton (2004) and the former British Museum curator and current head of research JD Hill (Hutton 2004; Hill 2004), discussed the dominant interpretation by leading authorities on Iron Age religion that Lindow Man was the victim of a ritual sacrifice, in particular that he suffered a 'threefold death' and died in the Iron Age (e.g. Ross and Robins 1989; Green 1998, 177). This was the account presented on the original display panel positioned alongside Lindow Man and the weight of these interpretations have caused the death of Lindow Man to be widely interpreted as the ultimate proof of the occurrence of human sacrifice in prehistoric Britain.

However, as Hutton (2004) argues, the proof is far from definitive. Current dating evidence, which dates Lindow Man's death to 2 BC–AD 119 (Gowlett *et al.* 1989), means he is equally likely to have died in the Roman period as in the Iron Age. This is important as it removes the death of Lindow Man in time significantly away from the deaths of many of the continental bog bodies discussed as sacrificial victims by Glob (1969). There are also discrepancies in the account of the extent of Lindow Man's injuries. In the original report of his discovery and subsequent scientific investigation, Iain West, a pathologist at Guy's Hospital, suggests Lindow Man was struck on the head twice (West 1986) and suffered a heavy blow to the back which resulted

in a broken rib. The animal sinew found around his neck was used as a garrotte and caused his neck fracture, and at the same time it quickened the flow of blood from a deep cut to his neck. This violent death is interpreted by West as being suggestive of a ritual sacrifice and this reading was taken up by Stead in the conclusion of the report (West 1986, 80; Stead 1986, 180). These different injuries were later interpreted as a 'three-stage' or 'triple death' (Ross and Robins 1989, 45–9). However, in the same report (Connolly 1986), and an earlier article (Connolly 1985), Robert Connolly of Liverpool University provided a very different account and interpretation of Lindow Man's injuries. According to Connolly, the wound to the neck and the broken rib occurred after his recovery from the bog. Connolly agrees with West that the two blows to the top of the head were not immediately fatal, but rendered Lindow Man unconscious. His broken neck was caused not by the use of the animal sinew as a garrotte, but rather by a heavy blow to the back of the head and the animal sinew is interpreted as a necklace. The 'ligature marks' around his neck could have been caused by the sinew as the body bloated when it was submerged in the pool. Following this account of Lindow Man's injuries, Connolly (1985, 17) concludes that Lindow Man is more likely to have been the victim of a violent robbery than a ritual sacrifice.

Lindow Man could therefore have been the subject of a ritual sacrifice or an unfortunate robbery victim. Other interpretations are also possible. For example, the animal sinew could have been used as a tether and Lindow Man could therefore be an executed prisoner. In 2010, following these debates, the exhibition panel detailing the account of Lindow Man's death was updated for his display at the British Museum (see below).

### **Recent exhibitions**

Recent refurbishment of the prehistoric galleries prompted the British Museum to offer Lindow Man on loan to the Manchester Museum for a period of one year from 19 April 2008–19 April 2009. This loan was organized as part of the British Museum's Partnership UK scheme, which makes British Museum exhibits more accessible to people throughout the country. The two earlier exhibitions at Manchester had presented the 'life and times' of Lindow Man, as well as the latest scientific discoveries (see Sitch 2009, 51). The 2008 exhibition was very different, as Bryan Sitch asserts: 'the Manchester Museum wanted to engage a new generation of people from Manchester and the North-West with one of Britain's most famous archaeological discoveries, to stimulate public debate about how human remains are treated in museums and other public institutions, to display the body in a respectful manner and to explore different interpretations of the body' (Sitch 2010a). Consultation was at the heart of the Manchester Museum's preparations for the 2008–9 exhibition as, in a series of meetings, they sought the views of a variety of interested groups, including archaeologists, Pagans and members of the local community (see Sitch 2007).

The result, *Lindow Man: A Bog Body Mystery*, was an innovative and thought-provoking exhibition, which sought to illustrate how Lindow Man means different things to

different people by presenting his story through the eyes of seven individuals, including the peat-digger who found him, an archaeologist, a forensic scientist, two museum curators, someone from the local community and a Druid (Sitch 2010b). In addition to interview extracts and Iron Age artefacts loaned by the British Museum, the exhibition was supported by personal objects including peat spades, laboratory equipment, a Pagan wand and items contemporary to the time of his discovery, such as a Care Bear (Sitch 2009, 52). Reaction to the exhibition was mixed. Some critics liked the multivocal approach and the fact that no 'right way' of interpreting Lindow Man was presented (Burch 2008). Others criticized the apparent lack of information on the Iron Age, stating that the exhibition was more about the 1980s than the life and times of Lindow Man (Schofield 2008). Comments left by visitors to the exhibition were similarly contrasting (see Sitch 2009, 52–3). While many liked the inclusion of modern-day perspectives and objects, more traditional museum goers clearly expected a straightforward presentation of Iron Age life and some struggled with the polyvocal approach. This problem was recognized by the Manchester Museum and more Visitor Service Assistants were put in place to provide assistance throughout the course of the exhibition.

After the exhibition at the Manchester Museum, Lindow Man then went on display at the Great North Museum, Newcastle, in the exhibition *Lindow Man: Body of Evidence* (August–November 2009). In stark contrast to the Manchester exhibition, this was a more traditional exhibition, complete with models of roundhouses, the prominent display of Iron Age objects and an interactive video exploring how Lindow Man had died. It is interesting that this exhibition has generated far less debate than *Lindow Man: A Bog Body Mystery* amongst academics and the public.

### **Summary**

We have seen how Lindow Man has been the subject of major public and media attention. At the time of his discovery, people were fascinated to learn about the discoveries being made about his life on a daily basis. This is reflected in the huge audience figures for the BBC documentary charting the scientific investigation of his body. Interestingly, there was no debate at the time concerning whether Lindow Man should be conserved and put on public display, and discussions focused rather on how to preserve his remains. Later on, a strongly held sentiment that his remains should stay in the north-west meant that public and press attention focused on this debate. The decision by the Manchester Museum in a recent exhibition to present his remains in a different way was arguably sparked by wider debates in the discipline concerning how museums should care for human remains. As public reactions to this exhibition demonstrate, debates driven within the museum profession do not necessarily marry with the concerns and reactions of the public (see Jenkins 2011). This is demonstrated by the lack of attention and debate surrounding the more traditional exhibition of Lindow Man at the Great North Museum and underlined by public enquiries to the British Museum relating to Lindow Man. A very high proportion of public enquiries regarding

Lindow Man, roughly 75%, are from university students investigating the ethics of displaying human remains in museums. Questions from members of the public tend to concern details about Lindow Man's life and death, rather than whether or not he should be on display which is not questioned.

We can also see how Lindow Man has been appropriated into wider debates with diverse motivations (see Sayer 2010, 70). Many academics have based their careers on particular interpretations of bog bodies and professional reputations have been built and put on the line. Furthermore, although there was clear local affection for Lindow Man, as museum documentation and the opinions of people interviewed at the time in the local press make clear, the campaign to return him to the North-West was also driven by underlying tensions between a regional and a national museum and their right to major archaeological discoveries, as well as the north-south divide in Britain, in particular the view that 'all the good things go to London'. Finally, Restall Orr (2006) and others used the display of Lindow Man at Manchester Museum as a platform to put forward particular views on religion and the reburial of archaeological remains.

### Displaying Lindow Man

In this final section, the present display of Lindow Man is described and assessed. As a conclusion, in the light of recent debates concerning display and reburial, the argument for his continuing display will be put forward.

#### *The present display of Lindow Man*

Lindow Man has been on permanent display at the British Museum for over 20 years and has been in his current location in the Iron Age Gallery, with his display largely unaltered, since 1997. He is displayed in a square case which is at hip-level. Two sides of the square are accessible to the public, while the other two sides support a canopy over the display case (PI. 5). On one of these two sides is a photograph of the find spot, Lindow Moss. Surrounding the case is a metal handrail, which now supports two small information panels. To one side of the display on a nearby wall is a third, much larger display panel with a further image of Lindow Moss on it. Lindow Man sits on a bed of specially treated bark chippings, which are inert for conservation reasons but are designed to replicate the dark peat of a bog. Although he was originally deposited face-down in the bog, he has been inverted for display to lie face-up.

Although the display case is over 15 years old, it is very reliable and it maintains temperature to within 1° of 20°C and relative humidity to within 2% of 55%. These conditions are constantly monitored by museum staff. The intensity of light in his display case is now carefully controlled to between 30–50 lux, as it was discovered that previous exposure to strong light had caused his skin to lighten (Bradley *et al.* 2008).

#### *Assessing Lindow Man's display*

The current display was put in place before the DCMS guidelines for the display of human remains were drawn up. Nevertheless, it fortunately follows the recommendations found in the DCMS guidelines. In addition to careful

environmental monitoring, Lindow Man is positioned in one corner of the gallery, away from the main thoroughfare and therefore fulfilling one of the guidelines stipulated by the DCMS and already outlined in this chapter that where possible human remains should be displayed in an area of the gallery which is specially partitioned or in an alcove (DCMS 2005, 20). However, the current space is not ideal and with unlimited resources it would be completely revised. For example, although the lack of space restricts the number of people able to view the body at any one time, it often becomes overcrowded. This is not helped by the fact that his remains are only visible from two sides. The height of the case also makes it difficult for wheelchair users and children to view Lindow Man's remains. Finally, the position of the main information panel, on the opposite wall, often causes confusion as people search for information about Lindow Man. Following some of the methods employed to display the bog bodies at the National Museum of Ireland, Lindow Man could be displayed in his own pod, allowing people to make a choice of whether or not to view his remains. His case would ideally be accessible all the way round with the height lowered slightly to improve visibility. Lindow Man is already positioned alongside a cabinet displaying artefacts associated with 'making a living', many dating to the 1st century AD. This case is full of objects, such as spindle whorls and weaving combs, which were used by people in their day-to-day lives. On the back of his exhibition case there is also a display panel detailing the types of houses most people lived in. Although no explicit connection is made, it is hoped that visitors make this association between Lindow Man and everyday life in the past. To clarify this link, a small exhibition space on the subject of life in the 1st century AD could be established, separate from the current gallery and with Lindow Man at its centre. This would reinforce the connection between people and the artefacts on display.

To achieve these aims, Room 50 needs to be completely rearranged and any major revisions to Lindow Man's display will have to wait for the next gallery refurbishment. In the meantime, small improvements have been made. Questionnaires show that visitors expect to see sufficient explanatory material when human remains are put on display. They want to know when the person died; how old they were; how they died; what sort of life they led; and what they looked like. Some people have also indicated that stories about the lives of past peoples are important to them. DCMS guidelines also stipulate that displays of human remains should have 'sufficient explanatory material' (DCMS 2005, 20). With this in mind, as well as the issue of people searching for the wall panel, information accompanying Lindow Man has been updated. In addition to the large panel explaining the context of his discovery and the circumstances of his death, two smaller panels were added explaining the scientific investigation and preservation of his body, as well as outlining the questions surrounding the extent of his injuries (PI. 5).

#### **Conclusions: why should Lindow Man remain on display?**

In a recent discussion questioning if museums should display the dead, Alberti *et al.* ask 'what is it that you can say about



**Plate 5 Display of Lindow Man (August 2013) showing the arrangement of case and text panels in the Iron Age Gallery at the British Museum**

the past or another culture which you can only say by having human remains on display' (Hill, quoted in Alberti *et al.* 2009, 139). The answers provided by Alberti *et al.* (2009, 139) range from 'nothing', 'sometimes quite a bit', to 'lots'. The position adopted here is that expressed in the DCMS guidelines and the middle-ground conveyed by Alberti *et al.* (2009), namely that it is right to display the dead but only in those circumstances where the argument being put forward cannot be made by other means. Bog bodies are argued to be one of these special cases because they are recognizable as real people, providing an actual and tangible link to the past. These qualities mean that links to past practices and material culture can be made which would otherwise not be possible, with Lindow Man for example described as 'the everyman of British prehistory' (Joy 2009, 5). As they look like they may have died yesterday, their display also provides a context in which mortality and humanity can be explored. It is these qualities which also mean that great care and attention must be made to reduce the possibility of bog bodies being the subject of a kind of voyeurism. To some extent it is unavoidable, but risks can be mitigated by adopting approaches set out by the DCMS guidelines and examples such as the display at the National Museum of Ireland.

Questionnaires show that visitors to the British Museum expect to see human remains on public display (e.g. Eklund 2007, 41), and evidence from broader studies demonstrates that museum-goers are largely supportive of the display of the dead (BDRC 2009; Sayer 2010, 96–7). However, as has been demonstrated by recent debates and by the example of Grauballe Man, public reactions can change quickly. Scientists, professional archaeologists and museum curators cannot make an exclusive claim to human remains. Equally, we cannot ignore wider debates and concerns by hiding behind the importance of science. Consultation with the public and other interested parties is very important if the archaeology and presentation of human remains is to continue to be relevant in the future (see Moshenska 2009, 815; see Chapter One, this volume). It is the responsibility of museum curators to listen to and consult the public through

questionnaires and debate, to continue to promote research of human remains and to disseminate new research and ideas through popular publications and museum displays.

Returning to Lindow Man, the details we have been able to reconstruct about his life and death are compelling and trigger genuine fascination amongst visitors. Like other bog bodies, Lindow Man is especially thought provoking because he is fleshed. It is possible to imagine how he may have looked as a living human being. His face is full of character with a deeply furrowed brow and small ears. Many visitors comment on the fact that he looks no different from people today. It is this link to past people that Lindow Man communicates best and would be impossible to replicate if he was not on display.

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Julia Farley and Bryan Sitch for providing information and commenting on previous drafts of this chapter. Thank you also to the editors for their useful feedback. All errors remain my own.

### Bibliography

- Alberti, S.J.M.M., Bienkowski, P., Chapman, M. and Drew, R., 2009. 'Should we display the dead?', *Museum and Society* 2009 7(3), 133–49.
- Anon. 1987. 'Pete should stay in the north', *Wilmslow Express Advertiser*, 13 August 1987.
- Asingh, P., 2007. 'The man in the bog', in Asingh and Lynnerup 2007, 15–31.
- , 2009. *Grauballe Man: Portrait of a Bog Body*. Århus.
- and Lynnerup, N. (eds), 2007. *Grauballe Man: An Iron Age Bog Body Revisited*. Højbjerg.
- Bahn, P.G., 1984. 'Do not disturb? Archaeology and the rights of the dead', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 3(1), 127–39.
- BDRC 2009. *Research into Issues Surrounding Human Bones in Museums* ([http://www.babao.org.uk/index/cms-filesystem-action/eh%20opinion\\_survey\\_report.pdf](http://www.babao.org.uk/index/cms-filesystem-action/eh%20opinion_survey_report.pdf), accessed July 2012).
- Bienkowski, P., 2006. 'Persons, things and archaeology: contrasting world-views of minds, bodies and death', paper delivered at the conference 'Respect for Ancient British Human Remains: Philosophy and Practice', Manchester Museum, 17 November 2006 ([http://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/medialibrary/documents/respect/persons\\_things\\_and\\_archaeology.pdf](http://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/medialibrary/documents/respect/persons_things_and_archaeology.pdf), accessed July 2012).
- Blain, J., 2011. 'Neo-shamanism: pagan and "neo-shamanic"

- interactions with archaeology', in *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Ritual and Religion*, ed. T. Insoll, 1017–31. Oxford.
- Bradley, S., Fletcher, P., Korenberg, C., Parker, J. and Ward, C., 2008. 'A review of the colour and condition of Lindow Man 20 years after conservation', *Studies in Conservation* 53, 273–84.
- Brothwell, D., 1986. *The Bog Man and the Archaeology of People*. London.
- Burch, S., 2008. 'Lindow Man: a bog body mystery, Manchester Museum [exhibition review]', *Museums Journal* 108(7), 46–9.
- Connolly, R.C., 1985. 'Lindow Man – a prehistoric corpse', *Anthropology Today* 1(5), 15–17.
- , 1986. 'The anatomical description of Lindow Man', in Stead *et al.* 1986, 54–62.
- Curtis, N.G.W., 2003. 'Human remains: the sacred, museums and archaeology', *Public Archaeology* 3, 21–32.
- Daniels, V. D., 1991. 'From peat to public: two bog bodies "live" again', *Museum International* 43 (2), 118–20.
- Daniels, V., 1996. 'Selection of a conservation process for Lindow Man', in *Human Mummies: A Global Survey of their Status and the Techniques of Conservation*, ed. K. Spindler, H. Wilfing, E. Rast-Zissernig, D. zur Nedden and H. Nothdurfter, 173–81. New York.
- DCMS (Department for Culture, Media and Sport) 2005. *Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museums* ([http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference\\_library/publications/3720.aspx](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.culture.gov.uk/reference_library/publications/3720.aspx), accessed July 2012).
- Eklund, K., 2007. 'Displaying the dead: visitor attitudes towards the display of human skeletal remains at the British Museum', unpublished MA dissertation, University of London.
- Fischer, C., 2012. *Tollund Man: Gift to the Gods*. Stroud.
- Giles, M., 2009. 'Iron Age bog bodies of north-western Europe. Representing the dead', *Archaeological Dialogues* 16(1), 75–101.
- Gillie, O., 1984. 'Scientists unwrap Iron Age Briton', *The Sunday Times*, 16 September 1984.
- Glob, P. V., 1969. *The Bog People: Iron Age Man Preserved*. London.
- Gowlett, J.A.J., Hedges, R.E.M. and Law, I.A., 1989. 'Radiocarbon accelerator (AMS) dating of Lindow Man', *Antiquity* 63, 71–9.
- Green, M., 1998. 'Humans as ritual victims in the later prehistory of Western Europe', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 17(2), 169–89.
- HAD 2011. *Reburial Handbook*, March 2011, Version 5 ([http://www.honour.org.uk/system/files/HAD+Reburial+Handbook+vi\\_0.pdf](http://www.honour.org.uk/system/files/HAD+Reburial+Handbook+vi_0.pdf), accessed July 2012).
- Hill, J.D., 2004. 'Lindow Man's moustache – another version of death in the peat bog', *Times Literary Supplement*, 5 March 2004, 15.
- Hutton, R., 2004. 'What did happen to Lindow Man?', *Times Literary Supplement*, 30 January 2004, 12.
- Jenkins, T., 2011. *Contesting Human Remains in Museum Collections: The Crisis of Cultural Authority*. London.
- Jones, J., 2007. 'Riddle of the bog', *Guardian*, 21 June 2007, G2, 23–5.
- Joy, J., 2009. *Lindow Man*. London.
- Kelly, E.P., 2006. *Kingship and Sacrifice: Iron Age Bog Bodies and Boundaries*. Dublin (Archaeology Ireland Heritage Guide no. 35).
- May, S.K., Gumurdul, D., Manakgu, J., Maralngurra, G. and Nawirridj, W., 2005. "'You write it down and bring it back...that's what we want" – revisiting the 1948 removal of human remains from Kunbarlanja (Oenpelli), Australia', in *Indigenous Archaeologies: Decolonising Theory and Practice*, ed. H.M. Wobst and C. Smith, 110–30. London.
- Moshenska, G., 2009. 'The reburial issue in Britain', *Antiquity* 83, 815–20.
- Nurse, K., 1984. 'Man victim of muggers', *Daily Telegraph*, 5 October 1984.
- Omar, S. and McCord, M., 1986. 'The handling and conservation of Lindow Man', in Stead *et al.* 1986, 17–20.
- , McCord, M. and Daniels, V., 1989. 'The conservation of bog bodies by freeze-drying', *Studies in Conservation* 34, 101–9.
- O'Sullivan, J., 2007. 'Bog bodies', *Heritage Outlook* (Winter 2006–Spring 2007), 18–20.
- Painter, T.J., 1995. 'Chemical and microbiological aspects of the preservation process in sphagnum peat', in Turner and Scaife 1995, 89–103.
- Parker Pearson, M., 1999. *The Archaeology of Death and Burial*. Stroud.
- , Schadla-Hall, T. and Moshenska, G., 2011. 'Resolving the human remains crisis in British archaeology', *Papers from the Institute of Archaeology* 21, 5–9.
- Payne, S., 2010. 'A child's gift to science', *British Archaeology* 112, 12–13.
- Prag, J. and Neave, R., 1997. *Making Faces: Using Forensic and Archaeological Evidence*. London.
- Restall Orr, E., 2006. 'Human remains: the acknowledgement of sanctity', paper delivered at the conference 'Respect for Ancient British Human Remains: Philosophy and Practice', Manchester Museum, 17 November 2006 ([http://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/medialibrary/documents/respect/human\\_remains\\_the\\_acknowledgement\\_of\\_sanctity.pdf](http://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/medialibrary/documents/respect/human_remains_the_acknowledgement_of_sanctity.pdf), accessed July 2012).
- Ross, A. and Robins, D., 1989. *The Life and Death of a Druid Prince: The Story of an Archaeological Sensation*. London.
- Sanders, K., 2009. *Bodies in the Bog and the Archaeological Imagination*. Chicago.
- Sayer, D., 2010. *Ethics and Burial Archaeology*. London.
- , 2011. 'Who's afraid of the dead? Archaeology, modernity and the death taboo', *World Archaeology* 42(3), 481–91.
- Schofield, J., 2008. 'Lindow Man: Manchester Museum gets bogged down' (<http://www.manchesterconfidential.co.uk/Culture/Architecture/Lindow-Man-Manchester-Museum-gets-bogged-down>, accessed July 2012).
- Sitch, B., 2007. 'Lindow Man consultation, Saturday 10th February 2007' (<http://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/aboutus/ourpractice/lindowman/fileuploadmax10mb,120485,en.pdf>, accessed in January 2009).
- , 2009. 'Courting controversy – the Lindow Man exhibition at the Manchester Museum', *University Museums and Collections Journal* 2, 51–4.
- , 2010a. *Case Study: Lindow Man Temporary Exhibition* (<http://www.umg.org.uk/2010/08/27/case-study-lindow-man-temporary-exhibition/>, accessed July 2012).
- , 2010b. 'Consultation or confrontation: Lindow Man a bog body mystery', in *The Museum Community: Audiences, Challenges, Benefits*, ed. N. Aberby, A. Adler and A. Bhatia, 392–419. Edinburgh.
- Stead, I.M., 1986. 'Excavation and examination', in Stead *et al.* 1986, 14–16.
- and Turner, R.C., 1985. 'Lindow Man', *Antiquity* 59, 25–9.
- , Bourke, J.B. and Brothwell, D. (eds), 1986. *Lindow Man: The Body in the Bog*. London.
- Strehle, H., 2007. 'The conservation of Grauballe Man', in Asingh and Lynnerup 2007, 32–50.
- Swain, H., 2002. 'The ethics of displaying human remains from British archaeological sites', *Public Archaeology* 2, 95–100.
- Thackray, D. and Payne, S., 2010. *Avebury Reburial Request Summary Report, April 2011* (<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/content/imported-docs/a-e/avebury-reburial-request-summary.pdf>, accessed July 2012).
- Trustees of the British Museum 2013. The British Museum Policy on Human Remains (available at [http://www.britishmuseum.org/about\\_us/management/museum\\_governance.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/about_us/management/museum_governance.aspx)).
- Turner, R.C., 1986. 'Discovery and excavation of the Lindow bodies', in Stead *et al.* 1986, 10–13.
- , 1995. 'Recent research into British bog bodies', in Turner and Scaife 1995, 108–22.
- and Scaife, R.G., 1995. *Bog Bodies: New Discoveries and New Perspectives*. London.
- Van der Sanden, W.A.B., 1995. 'Bog bodies on the continent: the developments since 1965, with special reference to the Netherlands', in Turner and Scaife 1995, 146–67.
- , 1996. *Through Nature to Eternity: The Bog Bodies of Northwest Europe*. Amsterdam.
- Wallis, R.J. and Blain, J., 2006. 'The Sanctity of Burial: Pagan Views, Ancient and Modern, paper delivered at the conference 'Respect for Ancient British Human Remains: Philosophy and Practice', Manchester Museum, 17 November 2006 (<http://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/aboutus/ourpractice/respect/fileuploadmax10mb,136200,en.pdf>, accessed July 2012).
- West, L., 1986. 'Forensic aspects of Lindow Man', in Stead *et al.* 1986, 77–80.
- Wilkinson, C., 2007. 'Facial reconstruction of Grauballe Man', in Asingh and Lynnerup 2007, 260–71.