**Participant Information Sheet**

**Baggage for the Beyond? Contemporary UK grave goods practices and their meanings**

Ethics application ID - 4710799

**Principal investigator (PI):** Dr Jennifer Riley**Mentor:** Professor Vikki Entwistle

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take some time to read the following information carefully. Please ask if anything requires further clarification.

### What is the purpose of the study?

Grave goods – clothing and objects deposited alongside dead human bodies, when buried or cremated – have long been a subject of archaeological interest, but are also important and widespread in the UK today. Many and diverse people put significance by, and attribute complex meaning to, depositing such objects: yet, these practices have not been thoroughly studied. This project explores these practices and meanings, and will produce outputs for deathcare practitioner and public audiences.

### Why have I been invited to take part?

This study is open to anyone with experiences of UK funerals and / or grave goods practices since the year 2000, provided they are older than 18. You have indicated that you would be willing to share your insights and perspectives concerning contemporary grave goods, as a person who has experienced bereavement and/or someone with professional experience and expertise in UK funerals.

### Do I have to take part?

This participant information sheet has been produced to help you decide if you would like to take part in this study. If you do decide to participate, you will be free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason, with no detriment to you. In some cases, it may not be possible to delete some or all existing data or aspects of your participation (for example, after analysis begins, which will likely be late 2024). Please contact the PI as soon as possible to indicate that you would like to withdraw.

### How do I give my consent to participate in the study?

If you are happy to participate, you will be asked to complete and sign a consent form (either in hard copy, via an online survey, or using an electronic signature) before the interview begins.

### What does taking part involve?

You will be invited to arrange a time for an interview with Dr Riley on a date to be agreed with you. The interview will require approximately one hour and be conducted online using Microsoft Teams. Dr Riley will take two recordings of the interview: one via Microsoft Teams’ recording function, and the other on a handheld Dictaphone.

The interview will explore your experiences, opinions, uncertainties and/or plans concerning grave goods. The interviews are designed to be flexible and conversational, and you can ask for clarification as you go. You are also free to decline to answer any given question. You can ask to see the interview outline in advance if this would be helpful.

### Are there any risks associated with taking part?

Talking about death, dying, bereavement and funerary practices – especially for people to whom you are close – can be emotional and may be distressing. Dr Riley understands this, and has experience conducting research interviews on these topics. If you feel upset during the interview, we can pause the conversation, take a break, or stop altogether, depending on your wishes.

### Are there any benefits associated with taking part?

The study is not designed to benefit you directly, though people do often report finding it helpful to talk about their experiences and opinions relating to topics such as bereavement. Your participation will directly contribute to the study’s capacity to meaningfully inform future practice and policy concerning UK deathcare.

### What will happen to my data?

Your name, demographic information and contact details will be used and stored to: monitor the demographic diversity of the sample; arrange an interview; thank you afterwards; and (if you agree) let you know about the research findings when they are available.

Your interview will be transcribed by an external company approved by the University of Aberdeen. This is standard practice for many research studies, and the companies contracted maintain the same high standards of confidentiality and data security as the University. If this is a concern, you may request that Dr Riley transcribes your interview personally. A secure file transfer service (ZendTo) will be used to transfer audio files and transcripts between the University and the transcription company.

Interview recordings and transcripts, as well as identifiable, contact and demographic information, will be stored securely in folders within the University of Aberdeen secure server structure, with access restricted to the PI (Dr Riley) and project mentor (Professor Entwistle). All interview data are labelled with a code number. The key linking the identifiers to participants’ identities will be stored in a password-protected spreadsheet (accessible only by the PI (Dr Riley) and project mentor (Professor Vikki Entwistle).

All study data will be retained in accordance with the University of Aberdeen Research Data Management Policy for 5 years after the project end date and thereafter permanently deleted in accordance with University IT data security procedures. University requirements and the provisions of the UK Data Protection Act 2018 will apply at all times. You can consult the University’s Privacy Notice for Research Participants for further information on how we manage your data - <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/about/privacy/research-participants-938.php>. You can also contact the University’s Data Protection Officer [dpa@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:dpa@abdn.ac.uk) or 01224 272596.

### Will my participation be confidential?

Transcripts will be pseudonymised before they are analysed or shared beyond the PI (Dr Riley) and mentor (Professor Entwistle). Study data and findings will be reported in a way that ensures no one can work out who supplied the data, for example, by omitting or changing small details/using a code number or fictitious names. Your pseudonymised information may also be seen by university governance staff who work to make sure that the research is being done properly.

### How will I find out about the results of the study?

The consent form contains a clause which allows you to indicate whether you are happy for the PI to contact you with information about project findings. The project is currently due for completion at the end of 2026.

It is anticipated that findings will be used in: research meetings, presentations, journal articles, magazine or newspaper coverage, a project website, an online exhibition, radio broadcasts, and a book about the study. Plans are in place to ensure that many of the resources produced from the project are accessible without cost and written with non-specialist audiences in mind.

### Who is funding and/or sponsoring the study?

This study is being funded by the Leverhulme Trust under their Early Career Fellowship scheme.

### Who has reviewed the study?

The research has been approved by the Committee for Research Ethics and Governance in Arts, Social Sciences & Business, University of Aberdeen on the 18th October 2024.

### Contact Details

If you have any general queries, require further information about the study or would like to withdraw your consent to participate, please contact the PI - [jennifer.riley@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:jennifer.riley@abdn.ac.uk)

If you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, you can contact the Chair of the Committee for Research Ethics & Governance in Arts, Social Sciences & Business, Dr Elizabeth Curtis- [elizabeth.curtis@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:elizabeth.curtis@abdn.ac.uk).

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### Thank you for considering taking part in this study.