



University of Aberdeen Museums Papua New Guinea Collection



COLLECTIONS LEVEL DESCRIPTION

Data Entry form

Title of the Collection	Papua New Guinea collection, Aberdeen University Museums
Author(s)	Eve Haddow
Curator responsible for collection (if different from author)	Head of Museums, Library, Special Collections & Museums
Date Completed	26 th August 2014
<p>There are 2,702 items from Papua New Guinea (not including New Britain, New Ireland, Admiralty Islands and Bougainville).</p> <p>The majority of items in this large collection are from the Central, Milne Bay, and Oro provinces of New Guinea mainland with some items from areas around Morobe, Gulf, Western Highlands, and Sepik River, as well as New Britain, New Ireland and Manus (these three have separate collection level descriptions but are politically part of Papua New Guinea). Material has tended to be acquired in groups from one specific collector.</p> <p>2,402 artefacts were collected by Sir William MacGregor who was Administrator, then Lieutenant-Governor, from 1888-98 of the area in south east New Guinea known at that time as British New Guinea. Items were deposited in 1899, 1909 and in 1920 after his death. Within MacGregor's collection, 1,468 items are arms and armour which can be categorised as follows: 651 arrows; 373 spears; 82 wooden sword clubs; 17 bamboo knives; 2 saw fish snout swords; 3 bone daggers; 266 stone headed clubs; 55 bows; 11 shields; and 6 wrist guards. Shields include Kiriwina type decorated with white, red and black, as well as the waisted type in wood wrapped with woven cane, and a wooden shield from the Papuan Gulf area.</p> <p>MacGregor's collection includes 198 lime spatula in wood, whale bone, green stone, cassowary bone, and turtle shell, with some adorned with shell or glass beads. There are four carved wooden spatula attributed to master carver Mutuaga. There are 260 items of clothing or personal adornments including clam shell necklaces, skirts, and headdresses. The skirts include one of the short Trobriand type of red shredded hibiscus with pandanus leaf strips in red and black. The headdresses include headbands of cut shell, those made of cuscus fur and job's tears, and a number of different styles made of feathers. There are twenty-eight conus shell arm bands, fourteen of these are adorned with glass beads, cut shells, wild banana seeds and pandanus leaves. There are two human figures from the Trobriand Islands, one male and one female. There are also five decorated pig figures of wood. There are eight house boards with carved scroll patterns and coloured with red, black and white pigment. In similar colours are eleven Trobriand dance paddles. The collection also contains sixty pieces of barkcloth, mainly from Oro Province.</p> <p>In 1896 Dr Patrick Smith gave twenty-five items including a wooden canoe prow ornament, six carved wooden paddles and a small charm infilled with lime in the form of an animal. Smith also donated five so-called 'man-catchers' thought to have been made for sale to Europeans.</p> <p>In 1904, forty pieces of barkcloth from British New Guinea were donated by Colonel William Allardyce who was legal official and acting Governor of Fiji 1901-2.</p> <p>Ninety-four items were acquired in 1932 from Lord and Lady Stonehaven. Lord Stonehaven was Governor of Queensland from 1925-30 and during that period he and his wife travelled to New Guinea. The donation was part of a wider body of Pacific material, with Lady</p>	

Stonehaven's parents also having also collected Pacific items. They donated wood carvings including a figure in wood from the Tami Islands (ABDUA: 58678). There are twenty-five bilums and ten wooden bowls, six of which are of Trobriand Islands style and four from the Huon Gulf. There is a large canoe model from Wuvulu of the Western Bismark Archipelago, as well as three smaller canoe models.

A collection of fifty-two items were acquired from Neville Moderate collected while he was employed as a professional photographer for the government in Papua New Guinea on assignments in 1962-77. Most of the collection is attributed to specific areas or people. For example, there is a carved spirit board of wood coloured with black and white pigment from a men's house in Kairuku (ABDUA:269966). From Chambri lakes area is a carved wooden hook figure and a spear thrower with carved bird figure. From the Mekeo people at Bereina, Central District, are shell armbands, a wooden pestle and mortar for betel, and two necklaces, one of dog teeth and shell and the other of flying fox teeth.

There is a 19th century ancestral figure (*kandimboang*) of wood with attachments of cut feathers and beads (ABDUA: 63591). This item from the lower Sepik area was collected by Arthur J L Gordon.

The collection includes some human remains. There are fifteen skulls, seven of which are from Goaribari. Each of the skulls has been modified using combinations of plant based paste, wood, cane, feathers and seeds. Some of the skulls have incised patterns. One is known to be an ancestral skull collected by Sir William MacGregor. Thirteen others were collected in 1904 by CS Robinson who was acting Governor of British New Guinea at that time.

The only item from West Papua is a headrest featuring two carved figures, from Geelvink Bay, which was purchased from Sotheby's in 1974.

Have any aspects of the collection been published? Please provide bibliographic references if available.

Reid, RW (1912), *Illustrated Catalogue of the Anthropological Museum, University of Aberdeen* (Various items)

Reid, RW (1912), *Catalogue of Specimens deposited by William MacGregor in the Anthropological Museum, Marischal College, University of Aberdeen in the Anthropological Museum, University of Aberdeen, 1899-1909* (Various items)

Newton, D (1961), *Art styles of the Papuan Gulf*. New York: Museum of Primitive (ABDUA:58693;ABDUA:58684)

Hunt, C (1981), *Shark Tooth & Stone Blade: Pacific Island Art from the University of Aberdeen*, University of Aberdeen (Various items including: ABDUA:63449; ABDUA:63450; ABDUA:63451; ABDUA:63452)

Beran, H (1996), *Mutuaga: A Nineteenth-Century New Guinea Master Carver*. University of Wollongong Press. p.140, no. 8, plate 60 (ABDUA:177); p.141, no. 15, plate 58 (ABDUA:180); p.147, no. 58, plate 81 (ABDUA:1950) & no. 61, plate 84 (ABDUA:1951)

Beran, H (2011), 'The Iconography of the War Shields of the Trobriand Islands of Papua New Guinea: An Interpretation Recorded by Malinowski and Explained by Paramount Chief Pulayasi' in *Pacific Arts Journal*, (New Series) Volume 11, Number 1. (ABDUA:63451)

Gathercole, P & A. Clarke (1979), *Survey of the Oceanian Collections in Museums in the United Kingdom and Ireland*. UNESCO.

Kwasnik, Elizabeth (ed.) (1994), *A Wider World: Collections of Foreign Ethnography in Scotland*. National Museums of Scotland