



National Museums Scotland Pitcairn Collection



COLLECTIONS LEVEL DESCRIPTION

Data Entry form

Title of the Collection	Pitcairn collection, National Museums Scotland
Author(s)	Chantal Knowles
Curator responsible for collection (if different from author)	Principal Curator, Oceania, Americas and Africa
Date Completed	6 March 2014
<p>The Pitcairn Island collection consists of four artefacts. Although small in number, there are few artefacts from Pitcairn in Scottish museums.</p> <p>There are two basalt implements and two pieces of barkcloth 'ahu. All were accessioned to the University of Edinburgh Museum which predates the National Museums Scotland founding in 1854, therefore all artefacts are from the early nineteenth century.</p> <p>The implements are made of basalt and may have been made on Pitcairn or brought to the island with the mutineers from HMS <i>Bounty</i> and their Tahitian companions. Basalt implements are known from the region and A.UC.107.12 is an adze blade, the second item (A.UC.107.13) is a large fragment from an implement such as a pounder or a sculpture. It is unlikely to be a barkcloth beater as these are made of wood or whalebone.</p> <p>The two pieces of barkcloth (A.UC.359 and A.UC.360) are similar in size and style. Both comprise a large white length of barkcloth with additional decorative elements patchworked, dyed and stamped onto the fabric. They are both <i>tiputa</i> or ponchos and similar to the example held in Aberdeen University Museums. Both pieces were collected by crew members of HMS , the Royal Navy exploration ship commanded by Sir Frederick Beechey (1825-26). HMS <i>Blossom</i> was anchored at Pitcairn Island in December 1825.</p> <p>Pauline Reynolds, a Pitcairn Islander, visited the collections in October 2006 as part of a Winston Churchill travel scholarship. She noted that two fragments of Pitcairn Island tapa now in the Bishop Museum, Hawai'i are attributed to the Royal Scottish Museum and were most likely strips cut from the two 'Ahu' in the NMS collections. She also suggested that the two basalt items were most likely a Polynesian type adze and a fragment of a sculpture. An associated item in the NMS Military History collections is M.1938.100, a belt that belonged to Young, one of the HMS <i>Bounty</i> mutineers.</p>	
<p>Have any aspects of the collection been published? Please provide bibliographic references if available.</p>	
<p>Reynolds, P (2008), <i>Pitcairn Tapa: 'Ahu no Hitiaturevareva</i>. Huahine, French Polynesia: 'Ana'ana Publishing. (A.UC.360)</p> <p>Gathercole, P & A. Clarke (1979), <i>Survey of the Oceanian Collections in Museums in the United Kingdom and Ireland</i>. UNESCO.</p> <p>Kwasnik, Elizabeth (ed.) (1994), <i>A Wider World: Collections of Foreign Ethnography in Scotland</i>. National Museums of Scotland</p>	