



# National Museums Scotland Kiribati Collection



# COLLECTIONS LEVEL DESCRIPTION

Data Entry form

<b>Title of the Collection</b>	Kiribati collection, National Museums Scotland
<b>Author(s)</b>	Eve Haddow
<b>Curator responsible for collection (if different from author)</b>	Principal Curator, Oceania, Americas and Africa
<b>Date Completed</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> September 2014
<p>There are sixty items from the Republic of Kiribati.</p> <p>The collection includes structured body armour of woven coconut fibre decorated with lozenge shapes. This was acquired in 1899 from the Distington Museum, Cumbria which housed the collection of Joseph Ritson Wallace who travelled in the Pacific in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Also of woven coconut fibre is a man's garment in two parts worn underneath the outer armour, and another item of under armour for the torso. There is a helmet of woven fibre in the form of a beehive which was purchased from J D Webster, also in 1899.</p> <p>There are three items of dress including a woman's girdle of pandanus. There is also a belt formed of turtle shell, pearls, shell discs and grass. Another belt of pandanus leaf, coconut fibre and shells is from the collection of Harry G Beasley.</p> <p>Seven items were acquired from Dr JG McNaughton who ran the hospital in Funafuti, Tuvalu from 1916-17. Tuvalu was previously named Ellice Islands and formed the Gilbert and Ellice Islands with Kiribati. These items include a basket, a sleeping mat of woven pandanus leaf and a model house.</p> <p>There are two fishhooks of stalactite from Banaba Island, which come from the University of Edinburgh dating them pre-1854. A fishing float used for catching flying fish from Onoatua Atoll is thought to be from the collection of Admiral Edward Henry Meggs Davis. He was commander of HMS <i>Royalist</i>, 1890-3 The float was purchased with nine other items from Kiribati from the taxidermists E Gerrard &amp; Sons in 1904. The other items include five neck ornaments and a water bottle formed of a coconut with carrying handle from Abemama Island. Two of the neck ornaments are of cut conus shell, one of shark's teeth, one of grampus teeth and the other of human hair terminating in glass beads. Also from Admiral Davis's collection, acquired through Harry G Beasley, is a wooden club.</p> <p>There are sixteen daggers or swords of wood with rows of shark's teeth attached with coconut fibre, and six spears and two spear heads of the same materials. There is an unusual shark tooth sword with a blade of whalebone, purchased from W D Webster in 1897 (A.1897.160).</p>	
Have any aspects of the collection been published? Please provide bibliographic references if available.	
Idiens, D (1982), <i>Pacific Art in the Royal Scottish Museum</i> , Edinburgh: Royal Scottish Museum (A.1897.165; A.1897.322.3; A.1899.47)	
Fancy, H (2009), <i>The Life and Interesting Times of Joseph Ritson Wallace</i> . UK: Kevin Dranfield (A.1899.251)	
Gathercole, P & A. Clarke (1979), <i>Survey of the Oceanian Collections in Museums in the</i>	

Produced as part of *Pacific Collections in Scottish Museums: Unlocking their knowledge and potential* project 2013-2014. For full information and resources visit [www.nms.ac.uk/pacific](http://www.nms.ac.uk/pacific)

*United Kingdom and Ireland. UNESCO.*

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