



National
Museums
Scotland

International Programme 2014/2015



Cover: Relief fragment in limestone depicting the upper part of the figures of two men carrying caskets above their heads: Ancient Egyptian, from the tomb of Queen Neferu at Deir el-Bahari, Middle Kingdom, 11th Dynasty, c. 2010-1940 BC. On loan to *Ancient Egypt Transformed: The Middle Kingdom* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (5 Oct 2015 – 24 Jan 2016).
Credit: National Museums Scotland

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Bagpipes played by Piper James Richardson V.C., 16th Battalion (Canadian Scottish), Canadian Expeditionary Force, on the day of his death in action in the Battle of the Ancre Heights, October 1916. Loaned to the *Common Cause* exhibition at the National Museum of Scotland in 2014. Courtesy of the British Columbia Legislative Assembly/Visions West Photography of Victoria, B.C.

1. Summary

Our work has an impact across the world. Our international programme and partnerships aim to widen engagement and knowledge of the nation's collection for everyone. Our international work is diverse and widely spread due to the multi-disciplinary nature of our collections, their acquisition histories and the audiences interested in them.

Our international activity is currently focused on nurturing existing international connections and developing appropriate new ones as well as building our network of stakeholders and supporters. International work is an important and high profile element of our overall work. It is also, however, one which is often subject to opportunities and requires significant resource investment.

In the immediate future, we are planning to expand our activity with existing or new partners in Europe, North America, China and Japan. A key element of this will be establishing an international touring exhibition programme and our research programme with international partners. We are also active in securing support for a range of projects from international donors.

Common Cause

The recent exhibition *Common Cause* at the National Museum of Scotland provided an important opportunity to reflect our international connections here in Scotland. A major international exhibition that explored the stories of the Scottish diaspora and the experience of the Commonwealth nations during the First World War, it included objects on loan from Canada, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand made possible by support by the Scottish Government and the New Zealand Lottery. Alongside the exhibition, we hosted the *Global Migrations of the Scottish People* conference since with the University of Edinburgh, which expanded the network on diaspora and military identity. The project was funded by the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the Scottish Government and it was this opportunity and partnership approach that allowed us to achieve this major project.

The following pages outline our recent activities and reflect our future interests.



Prof. Li Chun (IVPP) examining newly discovered fragments of a marine reptile with Dr Tom Challands (Edinburgh University) on the Trotternish coast, Isle of Skye, August 2015.

This field trip was part of a joint international research programme with the palaeobiologists at National Museums Scotland.

Credit: National Museums Scotland

China

We have a strong focus on expanding our reach and contact with cultural institutions in China. Our recent Ming exhibition was a loan of original artefacts from the Nanjing Museum, reflecting the developments and achievements of the Ming period. It included Chinese 'National Treasures' and allowed us to explore our own Chinese collections through our public programme, as well as to reconsider how we might present our own Chinese collections in the future. This work is continuing through development of a new East Asia Gallery at the National Museum (planned for 2018) and an exploration of interest in our touring exhibitions for Chinese markets and beyond.

Our Keeper of Natural Sciences Dr Nick Fraser and Principal Curator Dr Andrew Ross are both internationally recognised researchers in Palaeobiology. Nick has been working with the Institute of Vertebrate Palaeontology and Palaeoanthropology (IVPP), the Chinese Geological Survey and Peking University on a long-term research project (partly funded by IVPP) on Chinese fossils. Andy's work on fossil insects and amber has also developed our interest in collaboration with the Nanjing Institute of Palaeontology in Liaoning Province. The quality of National Museums Scotland's collections in this area is highly regarded. We are now exploring opportunities to develop joint exhibitions and research in future years, including further research comparing fossil dinosaurs in China and on Skye.

Japan

Our historic and contemporary Japanese collections will feature in new gallery developments planned to open at the National Museum in 2018. We will aim to capitalise on opportunities to develop future projects and partnerships during the creation of the new displays, including opportunities for touring exhibitions.

Senior Curator Dr Rosina Buckland's study of our historic Japanese collections has recently involved her in research, conference and digitisation work in different countries. Last year she presented at New York University on 'Divergent Discourses of Aesthetic Appreciation in Bakumatsu and Meiji Japan', looking at the culture of sencha tea-drinking and its associated display practices. On recent visits to Japan, she has delivered a lecture in Japanese on the painter Taki Katei (the subject of her doctoral research), acquired traditional paintings and contemporary jewellery for the Museum's collection, and worked to maintain key relationships with Ainu representatives and curators in Hokkaido. Her research on the 17th-century handscroll painting by Furuyama Moromasa (Edinburgh Central Library) was presented at the European Association of Japanese Studies triennial conference in Ljubljana, Slovenia and is soon to be published in Japan. New information on our Japanese collections is regularly added to our online collections database, including most recently a selection of 343 ceramics from a group donated by David and Anne Hyatt King.



Relief fragment in limestone depicting the upper part of the figures of two men carrying caskets above their heads: Ancient Egyptian, from the tomb of Queen Neferu at Deir el-Bahari, Middle Kingdom, 11th Dynasty, c. 2010-1940 BC. On loan to *Ancient Egypt Transformed: The Middle Kingdom* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (5 Oct 2015 – 24 Jan 2016).
Credit: National Museums Scotland

North America

We are currently exploring opportunities with potential venues in the US for our planned international touring exhibition programme. We aim to continue to make major loans to high profile international venues, such as the recent loans to material for two different exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York: *Art of the Kongo* (17 Sept 2015 - 3 Jan 2016) and *Ancient Egypt Transformed: The Middle Kingdom* (5 Oct 2015– 24 Jan 2016).

Our research programme includes a number of significant links with institutions in North America. We have a significant collaboration with the Field Museum, Chicago and our Natural Sciences team's research includes excavations at major Triassic sites in North Carolina and work with North Carolina Science Museum, Virginia Museum of Natural History and the American Museum of Natural History. Noted research by Keeper of World Cultures Dr Henrietta Lidchi, in historic and contemporary Native American Art and specifically Southwestern jewellery, recently resulted in the publication of a major book, 'Surviving Desires: Making and Selling Jewellery in the American Southwest' with the British Museum Press/University of Oklahoma Press.

Expanding the reach, impact and knowledge of our collections is important and collaborating with international networks is key. One example of the breadth of our participation is our involvement in the GRASAC research alliance (The Great Lakes Research Alliance for the Study of Aboriginal Arts and Cultures). This is an international collaboration of researchers based in universities, museums and indigenous communities working together to digitally reunite Great Lakes heritage that is currently scattered in many museums and archives internationally. Results of our current research into military collections dating from the 18th century were presented by Dr Lidchi to 'Indigenous Heritage of the Great Lakes' at the Woodland Cultural Centre Brantford, Ontario in 2014.



Silver flagon with repousse decoration of biblical scenes, from Traprain Law, 410 - 425 AD loaned to *The Magi: Legend, Art and Cult* at Museum Schnutgen, Koln
Picture Credit: National Museums Scotland

Europe

Our reach across Europe reflects the multi-disciplinary nature of our collections. Activity has to date been mainly collections related, involving major research collaborations (often with European Union funding), lending and professional communications via conferences or museum policy advice and support. We intend to broaden this engagement through, for example, aiming to include European venues in our planned international touring programme.

Current research activity includes work on Silurian Brachiopoda with the Geological Museum, Natural History Museum of Denmark and collaborations with the Mammal Research Institute, Polish Academy of Sciences, Bialowieza. We also participate in professional networks like the European wildcat genetics research group, the European Ethnographic Museum Directors Group and UNIVERSEUM: the European Academic Heritage Network.

Dissemination of research is also a regular activity, for example, Dr Fraser Hunter, Principal Curator of Archaeology, was invited to attend the international conference, 'Iron Age Gold in Celtic Europe' in Toulouse. He spoke on 'The Blair Drummond gold hoard: regional styles and international connections in the later Iron Age'.

International Loans Programme

Examples of support for major exhibitions in Europe have included significant loans of:

- A Roman flagon from the Traprain Law hoard (which depicts the Magi hurrying on their journey with gifts and the Virgin Mary depicted in contemporary fashions of the Roman upper classes) to The Magi-Legend, Art and Cult at the Museum Schnutgen, Cologne, Germany as part of a series of events devoted to the magi, whose remains arrived in the cathedral in 1164, transforming the city into a centre of pilgrimage
- The Famille rose porcelain punch bowl c.1747 (which depicts the portrait of the Duke of Cumberland and the Battle of Culloden) and a backsword presented to Prince Charles Edward Stuart to *Rulers of Hanover to England's Throne 1714-1837* to Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum Hanover, Germany. This exhibition, which was part of five exhibitions running throughout the region, explores how this was possible, the exchange of culture and science between London and Hanover.
- 32 pieces from the Skailh hoard to *Clontarf 1014: Brian Boru and the Battle for Dublin* at the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin. The Battle of Clontarf anniversary exhibition challenged the perception that the battle was a great victory for the Christian king of Ireland, Brian Boru, defeating the pagan Vikings and driving them out of Ireland. Viking and Irish weapons, typical of those used in the battle, featured alongside hoards of precious silver objects and religious treasures.



Casualty of War: A portrait of Maharaja Duleep Singh by The Singh Twins. Commissioned by National Museums Scotland (supported by the British Council). National Museums Scotland's collections featured in exhibitions, *From Stromness to the Punjab: Sir John Login, Maharaja Duleep Singh and the Treasures of Lahore* at Stromness Museum and *Indian Encounters* at the National Museum in 2014–15.

© The Singh Twins: www.singhtwins.co.uk

Indian Collections

We have continued interest in exploring opportunities for collaboration with India. Our main interests include collections development, skills and knowledge exchange.

In this past year, we have continued our dialogue with the key institutions in India and contributed to the UK/India strategic review by the British Council. Our Director recently spoke at the major 'Museums Transformation' Conference in Delhi and Kolkata and our Head of National & International Partnerships accompanied the UK Secretary of State's visit to formally renew the Cultural Agreement between the UK and India. We are now exploring with colleagues in India opportunities to share knowledge and explore relationships between collections in both countries, with an ambition to identify beneficial joint projects. We are also keen to explore how we can further build on the Scottish Government's MOU with the State of Bengal and contribute to the Scotland's new India Plan.

Ancient Egyptian Collections

Developing the reach and profile of our Ancient Egyptian collection is a priority for the organisation, involving major research collaborations and plans for future exhibitions, including a new permanent Ancient Egypt gallery at the National Museum of Scotland from 2018 onwards.

Curator Margaret Maitland continues to develop links to expand the potential surrounding the hugely significant and internationally important Ancient Egyptian collection at National Museums Scotland. Collaboration with other institutions such as the Ministry of Antiquities Egypt and the British Museum has revealed that some areas of the collection are far more important than previously recognised. Margaret has worked with the Egypt Exploration Society (EES) and recently lectured on her new research on early excavated material from A H Rhind, W M F Petrie and E Ward. Margaret's research is revealing much about the importance of the excavator, A H Rhind and his impact on archaeological practice as well as new links between our collections and others nationally and internationally. In collaboration with Lore Troalen, Analytical Conservator, we have presented the analytical study of Bronze Age Egyptian gold jewellery to many visiting international researchers and conferences overseas



Mixed media work entitled *The Storyplace (A History of Two Worlds)*, pastel, pencil, Swarovski crystal and wash on paper: Australia, Danie Mellor featured in the exhibition *Primordial* at the National Museum of Scotland in 2014
Copyright: Danie Mellor

Pacific Collections

Our significant collections from the across the Pacific region are being developed further through a network of important relationships with source communities and other collections worldwide.

The Edinburgh International Festival exhibition *Primordial: SuperNaturalBayiMinyjirral* by acclaimed contemporary Australian artist Danie Mellor at the National Museum of Scotland included his response to selected objects in the World Cultures collection of National Museums Scotland, and his own indigenous and European heritage. A new contemporary piece, a bronze sculpture of a kangaroo, and 3 large works on paper were created for the exhibition reflecting these historic holdings.

We recently undertook a major national review of collections from the Pacific region in museums across Scotland, funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. This resulted in rich, new information on the relationships and links between Scotland and the Pacific. Work included a fieldwork trip by Project Curator, Eve Haddow, to Vanuatu funded by the Strathmartine Trust and the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. This visit resulted in dialogue with the community there about missionary activity on the islands (and the collecting that resulted from it) and a deeper understanding of the collections held at National Museums Scotland. The project also established links between the holdings in Edinburgh, Aberdeen and North Ayrshire museums linked through colonial activity in Papa New Guinea. The Vanuatu and Papa New Guinea connections are both now developing as part of major international research projects.

African Collections

Following our collaboration with Museum of Malawi on the 'Museums as Agents of Change' international skills exchange project, we began further fieldwork with them in April 2014 to research the patronage, production and use of printed cotton cloth in Malawi by political organisations and churches. Dr Sarah Worden secured support from the Art Fund's Jonathan Ruffer Curatorial Awards. This provided co-funding for travel to the Textile Society of Americas bi-annual international symposium 'New Directions: Examining the Past, Creating the Future' at the University of Los Angeles, where Sarah presented the results of her research.



Spherical water jar of porcelain with underglaze blue decoration of carp, lion-dogs and children within roundels, with lid bearing a moulded finial of carp amid spume: Japan, Hirado Mikawachi, 1780–1880 featured in *Masters of Japanese Porcelain* at the National Museum of Scotland 2015. Presented by David and Anne Hyatt King through the Art Fund. Credit: National Museums Scotland

2. Looking Forward

Our priorities over the coming year will include:

- Forging links with key partners in North America and developing our work with the American Foundation of National Museums Scotland
- Exploring wider partnership opportunities in support of our strategic interests, particularly in North America, China, Japan, Hong Kong and Europe
- Expanding our international interests by establishing an international touring programme with a range of venues
- Delivering a focussed international research programme and its public dissemination
- Forging closer links with exemplar institutions with shared interests, particularly to expand upon our collections interests
- Developing our stakeholder networks (within Scotland and beyond) to ensure we are strategically well positioned and responding to opportunities for development.

Expanding international engagement opportunities at home through special exhibitions and research

3. Contact Us

Feedback on the content of this report is welcome.

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