



National Museums Scotland New Caledonia Collection



COLLECTIONS LEVEL DESCRIPTION

Data Entry form

Title of the Collection	New Caledonia collection, National Museums Scotland
Author(s)	Eve Haddow
Curator responsible for collection (if different from author)	Principal Curator of Oceania, Americas and Africa
Date Completed	9 th June 2014
<p>There are 161 items from New Caledonia. This is a comparatively large collection as there are few items in other Scottish museums.</p> <p>There are two ceremonial axes (<i>n'bouet</i>) with rounded greenstone blades. One has a handle bound with calico and the other with barkcloth. Two pigmented wooden carvings were used to mark an area as tabu. There are two male figures in wood, one a standing ancestor figure. There are also four engraved lengths of bamboo from the 19th century decorated with stories from Kanak society.</p> <p>The collection includes one carved door jamb which would have been placed at the entrance to a chief's house. These carvings represent the ancestors with the top part of the jamb depicting a face and the lower portion carved with repeating diamond pattern. There are also three wooden roof finials, two of which are carved with a face and were transferred from the Arbuthnot Museum in Peterhead in 1966.</p> <p>There are two ceremonial mourning masks topped with a cylinder of woven cane covered in human hair. One of these is from the University of Edinburgh collection, which was transferred to the Royal Museum in 1854. It was collected by Captain Dewar of the British barque <i>Statesman</i> in 1849. The face of this mask has been replaced. Five wooden clubs also came through the University of Edinburgh transfer, one of which has a handle wrapped in plant fibre and ending in balls of flying fox fur.</p> <p>174 items were previously on long term loan from Reverend James Hadfield, a missionary on the Loyalty Islands from 1879-1920. Sixty-three items are now part of the permanent collection including ten stone charms used for differing purposes including the influence of battles, taro growing and the weather. Other items include a woman's skirt of hibiscus fibre, two necklaces of greenstone beads and flying fox fur, and a plume of feathers worn in the hair. There are five Loyalty Islands baskets and a large mat of pandanus leaves.</p>	
<p>Have any aspects of the collection been published? Please provide bibliographic references if available.</p>	
<p>Idiens, D (1982), <i>Pacific Art in the Royal Scottish Museum</i>. Edinburgh: Royal Scottish Museum (A.UC.574; A.1953.173; A.1956.959)</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>	