



National Museums Scotland Papua New Guinea Collection



COLLECTIONS LEVEL DESCRIPTION

Data Entry form

Title of the Collection	Papua New Guinea collection, National Museums Scotland
Author(s)	Eve Haddow
Curator responsible for collection (if different from author)	Principal Curator, Oceania, Americas and Africa
Date Completed	28 th September 2014
<p>There are 1030 items from Papua New Guinea (not including the Admiralty Islands, the Western Islands, Bougainville, New Britain and New Ireland).</p> <p>This large collection is mainly from the 19th and early 20th century.</p> <p>Ten items are associated with HMS <i>Basilisk</i> which visited Papua New Guinea in 1873. This includes a canoe paddle, a fishing spear, and a ceremonial greenstone axe from D'Entrecasteux islands.</p> <p>112 items are associated with Andrew Goldie, a trader who was based in Port Moresby in the 1870s. This collection is largely Massim style with some items specifically attributed to D'Entrecasteux and Trobriand islands. Thirty-eight items are clothing and personal ornaments including feather head ornaments and women's skirts. Five items are attributed to the Papuan gulf including a bird figure, a piece of barkcloth and two carvings in wood, one of which represents a face.</p> <p>A collection of thirty-six items acquired in 1898 are associated with Kilmarnock-born Sir Hugh Muir Nelson who was Premier of Queensland, 1893-8. It was during this period that he visited New Guinea. The collection is largely of Massim style material (22 items). As well as materials used in betel chewing, there is a head pad for carrying pots from the Trobriand islands and a mat of pandanus leaves. From the Papuan Gulf is a barkcloth mask from the Elema people and two pieces of barkcloth. Another piece of barkcloth is from Oro province. There are a further nine items including an upper body garment of job's tears seeds and an ear ornament of tortoise shell.</p> <p>Several collections are connected with missionaries. There are thirty-one items collected in Oro province by Reverend Wilfred Henry Abbott, a missionary from 1898-1900. This collection includes several head ornaments, a belt worn in mourning, three axe heads and two complete axes, and two ornaments described as men's fighting masks. One of these is of shell and the other of boar's tusks. Eighteen items were collected by Reverend Samuel MacFarlane of the London Missionary Society. Sixteen are attributed to Fly River district including a wooden club for killing dugong, two stone charms and a paddle with bird carving.</p> <p>In the entire collection there are 22 stone headed clubs, 35 Massim sword clubs, and three other wooden clubs. There are 13 shields including a relatively rare undecorated wooden shield from the Trobriand islands (A.1887.639). There are forty-four spears ranging from late 19th century to late 20th century examples.</p> <p>There is one item from West Sepik District which is a wooden spirit figure from Karawari River purchased from Hermann Marc Lissauer in 1968. Six items are from East Sepik district including an early 20th century Maprik house board with male figure from the Abelam, also purchased from Lissauer (A.1966.757). Forty-nine items are attributed to Sepik River including a kandimboang figure from the mouth of the Sepik bought in 1906 from WO</p>	

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Oldman; an early 20th century modelled pottery roof finial of the style made in Ibaum village; and a carved pigmented wooden bowl purchased from Hamburg dealer Johann FC Umlauff in 1929. Fourteen of the Sepik River items were bought from Lissauer in the 1960s. A Trobriand islands canoe ornament was also purchased from him in 1970.

A total of 426 items are from the Milne Bay province or identified as Massim style, sixty-seven of these are lime spatula and there are twenty lime containers, eighty items of clothing and personal ornaments, thirty-two arrows, two Trobriand dance shields, four carved wooden staffs, and four figures, one of which is attributed to master carver Mutuaga (A.1951.392)

From the collection of Harry G Beasley, there are fifty-seven artefacts acquired by the museum, 1947-54. Twenty-one of these are from Milne Bay province, and twenty-three are from the Gulf area including four charms carved from a young coconut and a tool used for trimming nets.

113 items were acquired from George and Sue Argent who worked around Morobe province in 1969-73. While working as a botanist and teacher respectively, they collected forty-eight bilums and twenty-five pieces of pottery, most of which is Adzera style, as well as arrows, barkcloth, stone tools and fishing materials.

The collection at National Museums Scotland represents the broadest geographical range from Papua New Guinea in Scotland. This is due to periods of focussed collecting where the institution has actively sought to expand the breadth of the collection.

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

Idiens, D (1982), *Pacific Art in the Royal Scottish Museum*. Edinburgh: Royal Scottish Museum (A.1897.7; A.1897.193; A.1899.66; A.1899.82; A.1900.352; A.1906.433; A.1930.275; A.1939.269; A.1947.43; A.1948.375; A.1951.368; A.1966.726)

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

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