



National Museums Scotland Kiribati Collection



COLLECTIONS LEVEL DESCRIPTION

Data Entry form

Title of the Collection	Kiribati collection, National Museums Scotland
Author(s)	Eve Haddow
Curator responsible for collection (if different from author)	Principal Curator, Oceania, Americas and Africa
Date Completed	5 th September 2014
<p>There are fifty-nine 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-19th 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 two items of dress including a woman's girdle of pandanus. 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>A water bottle of coconut shell with carrying handle from Abemama Island is from the collection of Admiral Edward Henry Meggs Davis, commander of HMS <i>Royalist</i>, 1890-3 (Davis catalogue no. 604). The bottle is one of nine other items from Kiribati purchased from the taxidermists Edward Gerrard & Sons in 1904 also thought to be from the Davis collection. The other items include a fishing float used for catching flying fish from Onoatua Atoll and five neck ornaments. 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. An unusual shark tooth sword with a blade of whalebone, was purchased from W D Webster in 1897 (A.1897.160). There are two fishhooks of stalactite from Banaba Island, which come from the University of Edinburgh dating them pre-1854.</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.1897.165; A.1897.322.3; A.1899.47)</p> <p>Fancy, H (2009), <i>The Life and Interesting Times of Joseph Ritson Wallace</i>. UK: Kevin Dranfield (A.1899.251)</p> <p>Gathercole, P & A. Clarke (1979), <i>Survey of the Oceanian Collections in Museums in the United Kingdom and Ireland</i>. UNESCO.</p>	

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

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