



National Museums Scotland New Britain Collection



COLLECTIONS LEVEL DESCRIPTION

Data Entry form

Title of the Collection	New Britain collection, National Museums Scotland
Author(s)	Eve Haddow
Curator responsible for collection (if different from author)	Principal Curator, Oceania, Americas and Africa
Date Completed	27 th August 2014
<p>There are ninety-three items from New Britain. This is a comparatively large collection as there are few items from New Britain in other Scottish museums.</p> <p>There are two carved dance wands in lightweight wood limed and coloured with red and blue pigment (A.1882.53.8, A.1882.53.9) from the Tolai of the Gazelle peninsula. One is carved with a human figure. Both were purchased from London taxidermists E Gerrard & Sons in 1882. Also used in dance is a carved wooden club coloured with red, partially wrapped with leaves and decorated with feathers.</p> <p>In the collection is a head ornament worn by men in the Tolai area, composed of cut shells, dog's teeth and feathers on plant fibre (A.1897.263). Another head ornament is a ring of woven plants edged in cut shells with a single red bead attached.</p> <p>Seven items are from the collection of Captain Zembsch who was Consul General of Samoa from 1879-83. One of these items is a man's collar of red cotton decorated with finely cut shells, glass beads and blue and yellow fibre (A.1897.322.10). A string of shell money is associated with the missionary Reverend George Brown.</p> <p>There are three masks in the collection. The first is an early twentieth-century <i>kavar</i> mask from the Baining people. There is a mask of painted wood and fibre representing a figure from the Tolai and part of a mask of painted bark which previously hung in a men's house. This is probably from a Sulka mask and was collected in New Britain in 2003. In addition to the Baining mask are two Baining dance staffs (A.1967.749; A.1967.750).</p> <p>From the Arawe is a shield, collected in 1910, and a complementary contemporary shield used in dance was collected in 2003 by Chantal Knowles, previous Principal Curator of Oceania, Americas and Africa with another shield now at the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford. Knowles collected a total of 44 items, including two from the Papua New Guinea mainland, while on fieldwork in New Britain in 2003. This includes the Sulka mask described above, baskets, printed cotton, shell and fibre arm ornaments, and shell money.</p> <p>Two stone hatchet heads from the Duke of York islands (currently part of East New Britain province) purchased in 1882 via Edward Gerrard and Sons.</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.1954.183)</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</i></p>	

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