



THE UNIVERSITY OF SYDNEY

Art. Culture.
Antiquities.
Natural history.

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Ancient artefacts provide new insights

A word from the Director, David Ellis

In preparation for upcoming exhibitions in the Chau Chak Wing Museum, our curators have been conducting research into our collections that is revealing new significances and connections to people, locations and events across time and place.

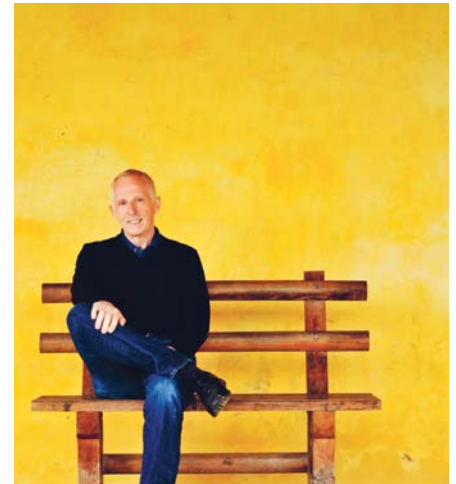
In this issue you can read about discoveries gleaned from ancient artefacts, including our collection of ibis mummies. Using non-invasive neutron tomography, the technology allows us to see into sealed containers assumed to hold mummified remains of ibises. The artefacts will remain pristine at the same time as our knowledge about them advances, and we look forward to sharing these and other discoveries.

The digitisation project is producing stunning images of artefacts and natural history specimens in the collections. The project enables digital access to images and associated data, making the

collections more widely available and useful for research and teaching. To date, more than 25,000 items have been photographed and associated metadata attached to digital records.

We recently purchased a fine three-volume set of Dru Drury's *Illustrations of natural history*, complete with 150 hand-colored engraved plates printed between 1770 and 1782. More than 26 of our Macleay insects are illustrated in this rare first edition, having been purchased, along with a large number of related specimens, by Alexander Macleay in London in 1805 when Drury's amazing collection was sold at auction.

The three volumes were purchased with financial assistance of several donors, among them Mary-Lynne Taylor who donated in memory of her husband, the late entomologist Ted Taylor. The volumes will be among many new items to be exhibited in the new museum.



David Ellis, photo by Martin Ho

Keep up to date with developments of the Chau Chak Wing Museum building at sydney.edu.au/museums

You can also follow us on twitter [@SydneyUniMuseum](https://twitter.com/SydneyUniMuseum), or find us on Facebook.

David Ellis
Director, Museums and Cultural Engagement

Sydney University Museums

Comprising the Macleay Museum, Nicholson Museum and University Art Gallery

The Macleay Museum and the University Art Gallery are now closed as we prepare for the opening of the Chau Chak Wing Museum in 2019.

The Nicholson Museum remains open: Monday to Friday, 10am to 4.30pm and the first Saturday of every month, 12 to 4pm
Closed on public holidays.

The University is closed from 23 December 2017 until 7 January 2018.

General admission is free.

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Muse edited by Luke Parker.

This edition contains names and images of people who have died. We acknowledge that, for some people and communities, these may cause distress and sadness. Where possible, cultural permission to publish has been sought.

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Above: Working with the Macleay collections, photographer David James and object handler Einar Docker. See story page 4

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Above: Fragment of a mosaic ribbed bowl, 75 BC – 50 AD, brown, opaque and white glass, Nicholson Museum, NM56.48.1. Photographed as part of the digitisation project. See story page 4

Front cover and above: Grace Cossington Smith, *Moss Vale window*, 1931, oil on canvas, 35.3 x 45cm, donated through the Hon. RP Meagher bequest 2011, University Art Collection, UA2012.86 See story page 6



Professor Emerita Margaret Harris, artist Celeste Chandler and Dr Michael Spence, Vice-Chancellor and Principal at the unveiling of the portrait in MacLaurin Hall



Archaeological dig at high school

A team of academics, postgraduate students and museum educators from the University of Sydney recently visited Sydney Secondary College in Leichhardt to introduce Year 9 and 10 elective history students to the world of archaeology.

The collaboration between the University and the high school began when the college installed an archaeological dig pit in the school's grounds. The 90 students rotated through a series of activities, including an excavation where they were trained how to dig up objects (painstakingly buried by the teachers) and to follow good archaeological practice by carefully recording finds.

The students used air-drying clay to roll seal impressions from copies of ancient Mesopotamian cylinder seals from the Nicholson collection. They also handled original artefacts from the Nicholson's education collection, an experience that brought them vividly into contact with the past.

Museum education officer Alix Thoeming at work with students during a hands-on session with ancient artefacts

Professor captured for posterity

On Wednesday 19 July this year, a portrait of Professor Emerita Margaret Harris, by artist Celeste Chandler, was officially welcomed into the University Art Collection. The unveiling was part of the Sydney Ideas event, 'Portrait and Place', which included a panel discussion chaired by Associate Professor Jennifer Barrett, with Harris and

Chandler, as well as Dr Ann Stephen, Senior Curator, University Art Collection, and Dr Scott Hill from Sydney Living Museums. Dr Michael Spence, Vice-Chancellor and Principal, officially accepted the portrait into the collection. It now hangs at the west end of MacLaurin Hall, joining another portrait by Chandler, of Professor Nalini Joshi, featured in the last issue of *Muse*.

Nuclear science collaboration

In August 2017, the Nicholson Museum began a new Cultural Heritage Program research project at the Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation (ANSTO) in Lucas Heights, made possible by a \$65,000 grant. The project has analysed four



ancient Egyptian ibis mummies, including two wrapped packages and two ceramic jars. The analysis technique used is neutron tomography, a non-invasive method in which neutrons pass through the objects, allowing for

tomographic reconstructions of the interiors. The method is similar to an x-ray or CT scan, but with different contrast and clarity. The research project aims to determine the content, composition and authenticity of the specimens, and to capture 3D imagery that can be used in digital displays in the new Chau Chak Wing Museum.



One of the ibis mummies and a ceramic jar scanned as part of the project, Nicholson Museum, NM62.584 and NMR35

Sovereign poet

Rebecca Conway explores the extraordinary life of HM Queen Sālote Tupou III of Tonga, the subject of a portrait held in the Macleay's Historic Photograph Collection.



Tonga has been ruled by a line of sacred kings and queens, from the Tu'i Tonga line to the Christian Tu'i Kanokupolu line, for more than a thousand years. Born in 1900, the much loved and respected Queen Sālote Tupou III reigned from 1918–65.

Attending the coronation of Queen Elizabeth in Great Britain in 1953, she reportedly won the hearts of the waiting crowds when, despite rain, she refused to raise the roof of her carriage so she could wave to people. When she died in 1965, more than 50,000 mourners attended her funeral in Tonga.

Apart from her achievements as monarch, Queen Sālote's legacy includes her authorship of more than one hundred compositions, including songs, lullabies, laments and other forms. These were compiled and published together for the first time in both Tongan and English in 2004.

In his foreword to the volume, *Songs & Poems of Queen Sālote*, the Crown Prince wrote that she “was Tonga's greatest poet, who also happened to have been its Queen”.

Punake is the Tongan word for composer. To be a *punake* involves mastery in the combined arts of poetry, oration, choreography and musical arrangement. Emeritus Professor Futa Helu explained the term as an abbreviated form taken from two words: *puna*, to fly, and *hake*, on high. This suggests the emotion and regard in which a *punake* is held.

The tradition was invigorated in the 19th century through patronage by the royal family, which cemented its status and transmission.

Queen Salote championed the art form in the 20th century; as a *punake* she had great talent for composing *heliaki*, a Tongan style of metaphorical allusion. Through her deep knowledge of Tongan history, politics, legends, people and places,

she crafted oratory, song and dance, refining sentences and movements dense in meaning, both drawing from and reinforcing Tongan social mores and aesthetics.

“*Ka e tuku mai ā si'ota faiva*” (Gift me our trades, the arts) reads a line for a *Lakalaka* performance composed by Queen Sālote. Her ‘gift’ in the ‘trade’ contributed to the development of the classical tradition; the *Lakalaka* is today considered the national dance of Tonga. These uniquely Tongan cultural repertoires are listed and recognised as part of the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and continue to be performed as a feature of important celebrations, and events such as coronations.

Rebecca Conway is Curator, Ethnography, Macleay Museum

Image: [HM Queen Sālote Tupou III], photo: Reginald Clifton Firth, c. 1961, signed albumen silver photographic print, Burns Philp & Co. Ltd. collection, Macleay Museum, HP84.60.1816



In October 2015, Sydney University Museums began a project to digitise its extensive collections, and make these accessible through our online collection search portal. We received project funding to employ dedicated teams, made up of professional studio photographers paired with experienced object handling staff, as well as expert photographic staff who are experienced in digital scanning.

In a digital world

Chris Jones and Jacqueline Spedding report on the progress of our extensive digitisation project.

These teams are digitising objects in the collection according to priorities set by the curatorial teams, reflecting research strengths of the collections, as well as objects that are planned to be included in exhibitions within the new Chau Chak Wing Museum. The project is also central to the delivery of digital content in the new building.

As the digitisation project progresses, other unforeseen benefits are becoming apparent. Senior Collections Officer Julie Taylor, who is responsible for the safe and accessible storage of the collections, says the digitisation project has aided her in the management of objects. Julie prints out images produced by the project and attaches them to storage boxes as a way to indicate what is contained within. This simple use of an image has reduced the need for repeated and unnecessary handling, removing the need to always open the box by providing quick visual access to what is inside. Julie has also found that having images helps solve mysteries such as wrong numbers and mislaid objects.

Images of collection items have also enabled curatorial staff to engage and connect with external researchers who are unable to visit the collections in person. Conni Lord, Research Assistant in the Nicholson Museum, is working with our Ancient Egyptian collections. One of the objects she has been focusing on is the wooden coffin of the woman Mer-Neith-it-es, from the 26th Dynasty (664-525 BC). A feature of the coffin is the red



1. A member of our digitisation team, photographer Jean-Francois Lanzarone

2. At work on the Nicholson collections: photographer Tina Fiveash and object handler Zoe Poulos

3. [Athens], photograph by William John Woodhouse, Nicholson Museum, NM2007.4.7

4. Cedar coffin of the woman Mer-Neith-it-es, 26th Dynasty, 664-525 BC, Saite Period, Saqqara, Lower Egypt, Nicholson Museum, NMR.29

5. Holotype of *Areoda leachi* Macleay, 1819, Ruteline beetle, Brazil, before 1819, Macleay Museum



pigment colour on the face, most commonly used to depict the skin colour of a male, with a paler yellow hue used for females.

To find a red-faced female coffin is unusual, though not unique. There are a number of possible explanations; one of the more interesting is based on the concept that ancient Egyptians believed that for rebirth to be possible for a deceased woman, she briefly had to turn into a man.

Images of the coffin in our collection will enable us to seek input from researchers at other institutions, and compare our coffin with similar ones.

Robert Blackburn, Curatorial Assistant in the Macleay Museum, received a request from Dr Paschoal Grossi, who teaches Scarabaeoidea systematics at Universidade Federal Rural de Pernambuco in Brazil, and needed images of *Areoda leachi* to demonstrate taxonomy to his students. The Macleay holds the holotype of this species, the original specimen from which the first description of the species was made. Using macro-photography, the digitisation team were able to provide Dr Grossi with detailed images of the very beetle which forms the epitome of the species.

Crowd sourcing information through social media platforms is another avenue we are exploring. In our last issue of *Muse*, Candace Richards, Assistant Curator in the Nicholson Museum, introduced a project using Flickr to upload images taken by a former curator, William J Woodhouse, during his visits to Greece in the early 20th century. Members of the public have been able to assist us by identifying the location of photographs as well as features such as buildings and monuments. This project was possible because of digitised images of the collection. A similar project, on the Nicholson Museum's visitors' books, is outlined in this issue on page 32.

The digitisation project has photographed more than 25,000 collection objects so far. The resulting images are enabling us to share and manage the collection in ways previously impossible.

Chris Jones is Assistant Collections Manager and Jacqueline Spedding is Senior Collections Officer



4.



5.





Windows on the world

Vivienne Webb looks into artist Grace Cossington Smith's fascination with views through windows.

The University Art Collection holds 22 paintings and drawings by the Australian modernist painter Grace Cossington Smith, spanning nearly 50 years, from around 1915 until 1961, and encompassing a variety of subjects. Several were acquired recently, from the bequest of Justice RP Meagher, and a selection will be on display at the opening of the new Chau Chak Wing Museum. Though we have scant information on many of her works, a recent focus on collection research is bringing to light numerous little-known histories.

One such story relates to the tantalising painting *Moss Vale window* (1931). Cossington Smith often visited the Southern Highlands of New South Wales in the company of family and friends. She painted and sketched numerous views of the area – the University Art Collection also includes a wonderful 1938 painting, *Moss Vale landscape*. Recent investigation has revealed the specific location of the window in Moss Vale and detailed insights about the painting within the context of the artist's life and work.

Over the summer of 1930–31, Cossington Smith went to stay with Miss Dorothy Crace, a friend who lived in Moss Vale, and this painting of her window presents a vivid, layered interior juxtaposed against a sweeping landscape vista. The house that belonged to Dorothy Crace is still standing, as are the hydrangeas outside the window.

Grace Cossington Smith, *Moss Vale window*, 1931, oil on canvas, 35.3 x 45cm, donated through the Hon. RP Meagher bequest 2011, University Art Collection, UA2012.86

Visible through the window in the painting is Throsby Park, a colonial-era rural estate and the earliest land grant in the Southern Highlands. Home to six generations of the Throsby family, it is now in the care of Sydney Living Museums. Throsby Park house remains in view from the Moss Vale garden, although now obscured from the window by trees.

At the time *Moss Vale window* was painted, Cossington Smith was 38 years of age and at an extremely productive point in her career. This work followed her magnificent series celebrating the construction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, which came to a natural conclusion when the arches touched in August 1930. In conversation with art historian and curator Daniel Thomas AM, many years later, the artist recalled that the visit to Moss Vale took place before her mother's death in April 1931, an event that stimulated some of her most evocative depictions of the natural world. So the painting was done in a brief period between two highlights in her oeuvre, one architectonic and the other focusing on landscape.

This window view is domestic in scale and decorative in effect, yet experimental in nature. In 1993, Daniel Thomas quoted the artist, saying "I thought it interesting to put things as they were, in proportion. I hadn't done things like this before the trip to Moss Vale". Thomas concludes that "the insistence on putting 'things as they were' is an insistence on direct, even naïve, observation and on avoidance of conventional formulas for picture making ...". These features are clearly evident in the asymmetrical aspect selected by the artist for *Moss Vale window* which, nevertheless, presents a virtuoso synthesis of composition and colour.

The view looks past the organised stacks of books and faceted surfaces of furnishings, through the vertical divisions of the window and the shine of window glass, towards the other house on a hill. A palette of warm hues intersects the cooler greens of the landscape,

while vibrant splashes of crimson, blue and yellow catch the eye. The horizontal surface of the drop leaf wooden table in the foreground is alone devoid of strong colour, instead reflecting a monochromatic sheen of light and shadow. The gem-like stillness of the interior, and the ordered brushstrokes of the fields and fences, contrasts with the windswept trees and dynamic sky.

A fascination with windows weaves through Cossington Smith's sketch books and paintings. It is instructive to compare *Moss Vale window* with *Through a bow window* (1932), a painting done during an autumn visit to Canberra the following year. Like *Moss Vale window*, the latter is precisely drawn although the trees are even more fluid and energetic, filling the entire window frame. Art historian Bruce James has observed that after this period the artist strove for greater looseness and expressivity.

Windows came to be a dominant thematic in her late paintings, featuring in two other works held in the University Art Collection, including the glorious *Garden from the studio* (1961). During the 1930s and '40s, Cossington Smith was largely concerned with capturing responses to landscape and she painted extensively outdoors. However, complex and unconventional interiors, flooded with light and colour, became increasingly prevalent and significant from the 1950s onwards.

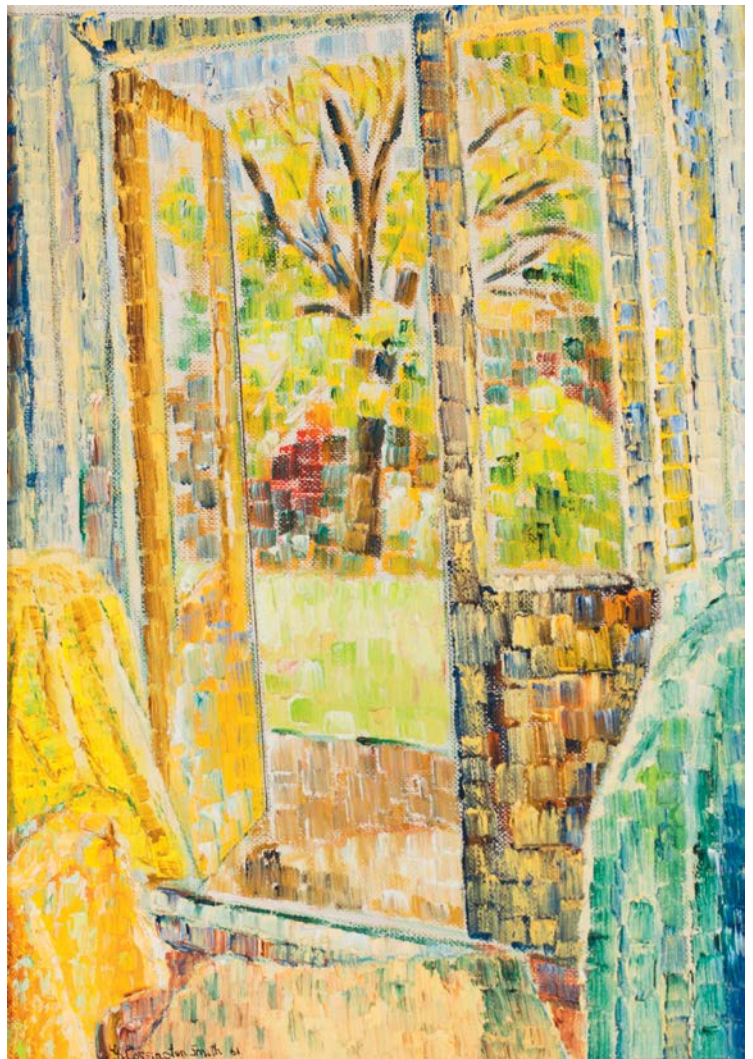
As James has written, "Pictures within pictures, views through windows and reflections typify the works from this point. These were the obsessional devices marshalled by Cossington Smith to gather the wider world in to her private one." In this sense, *Moss Vale window* is both a compelling reflection of its time and yet, in choice of subject, also appears prescient.

Vivienne Webb is a curator and writer currently researching works in the University Art Collection in preparation for the Chau Chak Wing Museum.



Above: A view of the window today. Photograph by Tony Sheffield, ARPS.

Right: Grace Cossington Smith, *Garden from the studio*, 1961, oil on canvas, 39.5 x 27.9cm, donated by the Hon. RP Meagher through the Australian Government's Cultural Gifts Program 2010, University Art Collection, UA2010.115



Travellers to Cyprus, art from Australia



Craig Barker and Diana Wood Conroy have curated an exhibition that tracks a history of engagement by contemporary Australian artists with the archaeology of Cyprus.

Above: Bob Miller, *Paphos Theatre*, 2012, infrared photograph



Bob Miller, photograph of a fragment of a Venetian sgraffito bowl, with a woman's face in profile, inv. no. 8258, excavated from trench 12D, deposit 2867

Over the past two decades, Australian visual artists have participated in the University of Sydney's archaeological excavations at Paphos in Cyprus. This relationship will culminate in October 2017 with the exhibition *Travellers from Australia*, to be held in Paphos as part of the Pafos2017 European Capital of Culture festival. The exhibition explores some of the ongoing connections between archaeology and contemporary art.

The Paphos Theatre Archaeological Project has explored the architectural development of the Hellenistic-Roman theatre over the six centuries of its use in antiquity (c. 300 BC – 365 AD), as well as Late Antique, Medieval and post-Medieval activity on the site. Through the auspices of the Department of Antiquities of Cyprus, and as a result of the generous support of

the Nicholson Museum and the Australian Archaeological Institute at Athens, the project has increasingly explored the surrounding theatrical urban precinct, revealing key Roman infrastructure such as roads and a nymphaeum (fountain house).

When the first spade hit the ground at the World Heritage-listed site in 1995, it was not just archaeologists on the excavation team, but also artists, many from the Faculty of Creative Arts at the University of Wollongong. "Including artists in an excavation was an experiment to widen the parameters of research," wrote the founder of the excavation project, archaeologist Emeritus Professor Richard Green, early in the history of the dig.

Making the imaginative connection between the Cypriot past and the Australian present has been the

subject of exhibitions held in Sydney, Wollongong and Canberra since 1996, exhibitions that prefigured the work of the 12 artists in *Travellers from Australia*. For the first time, the visual culture of the archaeologists and artists will come together in Cyprus itself in this exhibition.

The links between art and archaeology were strong in the 19th century when it was necessary for expeditions to take visual artists to record landscapes, architecture and artefacts. Their drawings, and later photographs, reproduced in publications such as the *Illustrated London News*, thrilled readers back in Europe with news of discoveries of ancient cultures in exotic locations.

By the 20th century, the two disciplines separated; an archaeological obsession with

evidence-based interpretation and critical analysis of finds allowed little room for an emotional or creative response. The artists and archaeologists exhibiting together in Pafos2017 are part of a broader renewal of the relationship this century. “By mixing artistic and archaeological images we get a new grammar of looking,” writes Derek Kreckler in the exhibition catalogue.

During the decades of the Paphos project, analogue photography was replaced by digital media, a process traced in the work of photographers Bob Miller and Rowan Conroy. Media artist Brogan Bunt, however, sees the irony of ephemeral digital platforms that cause what was new technology in 2006 to be unusable by 2017. For him, the ancient site has maintained its identity for millennia, while digital virtual heritage is far more fragile than the places it sets out to document and preserve.

Both artists and archaeologists are related in their passion for the material culture of the past, but each has a different way of looking and methodology for understanding the complexity of time and space. Animator Hannah Gee observes that animation “is for me, the physical, material perception of time.” For scenographer Lawrence Wallen, structures existing in the same place across different temporalities led him to identify the many phases of the theatre as a *spatial doppelgänger* from the perspective of time rather than site. The painter and ceramic artist Angela Brennan discerns that the artistic motif crosses between eras, travelling back and forth in a temporal instability, drawing vitality from being in constant circulation.

The archive and its typologies fascinate artists. Sigmund Freud thought that to recover the past was

to embark on a process like that of the investigation of the psyche. Sculptor and photographer Jacky Redgate is obsessed with collecting and retrieving objects, situations and experiences (living entities) into typologies. She reflects: “In my work I approach memories somewhat like an analyst, but perhaps more like a reflective archaeologist.”

Just as artists are preoccupied with the past, archaeologists are consummate artists in skillfully unpicking the fabric of earth. Both are embedded in understanding the development of *techne* or making; the ceramics, metalworking, stone carving, or weaving which were the basis of ancient civilisations. Sculptor Penny Harris points out that these early industries still resonate with contemporary crafts. Her casting and patination process makes a connection to the narratives of archaeology.



1. Derek Kreckler, *Capital, Basilica Chrysopolitissa*, 2010-11, digital photograph on Baryta paper; from documentation of Corinthian capitals in the Paphos Theatre, in Basilica Chrysopolitissa, and in the Apollo Hotel store

2. Diana Wood Conroy, *Flower and tendrils*, 1998, gouache drawing of a fresco from the Paphos theatre

3. Angela Brennan, *Fourteen pots*, 2016-17, stoneware



2.

The unknown builders and makers of the Paphos theatre understood their materials through centuries of innovation; knowing the specific clays and limestone of the region, the intense pigments for painting derived from minerals and earths, the luminosity of glass, and metal for casting coins, tools or jewellery. Contemporary artists in *Travellers from Australia* show a fresh 'grammar of looking' between art

and archaeology, and pay homage to the marvellous artistic lineage of the Paphos theatre. The exhibition is a testament to the strong cultural links between the two island nations, and a desire to think of antiquity more broadly than just the archaeological recording of material culture.

Travellers from Australia will be exhibited at the Old Powerhouse in Paphos from 2–15 October 2017.

More on the excavations can be found at the project's website: www.paphostheatre.org

Dr Craig Barker is Manager, Education and Public Programs, Sydney University Museums. Diana Wood Conroy is Emeritus Professor, University of Wollongong.



3.



No bones about it

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Paul Donnelly reports on an inspiring visit to Les galeries de Paléontologie et d'Anatomie comparée in Paris.

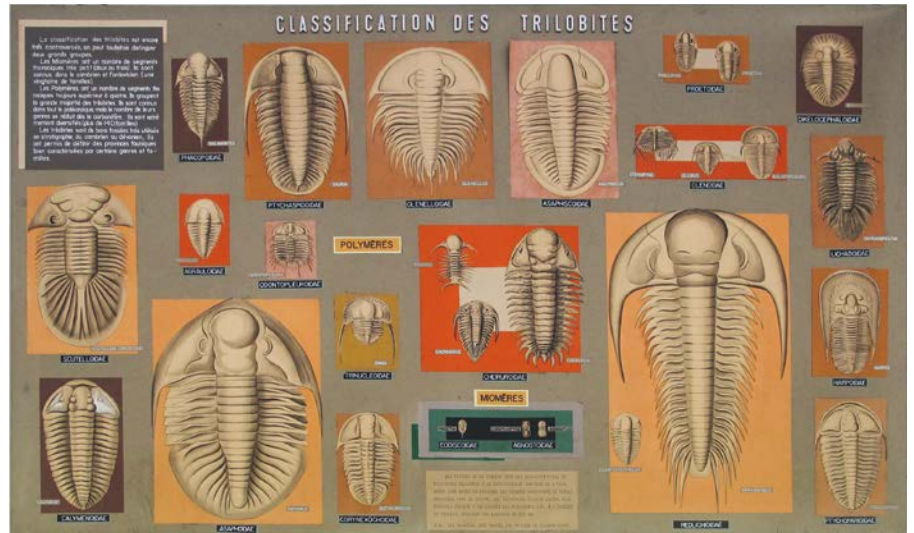
Entering the Galleries of Comparative Anatomy and Palaeontology for the first time is a startling experience. The visitor arrives in the gallery entrance facing a herd of more than 650 tightly grouped skeletons, articulated as if alive, and comprising all the classes of vertebrates – land and sea-dwelling mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish. The massive central group that fills the bulk of the gallery is in forward-facing alignment, seemingly intent on trampling (and swimming) straight over the visitor and out the door into the *Jardin des Plantes*.

For the Paris tourist spoilt for choice, it is among the lesser known of the city's 300 or so museums, but in many other capitals it would undoubtedly be a major destination. To researchers, the

museum's collection of original descriptive specimens (types) and rarities, including the narwhal, makes it a significant collection with ever-increasing potential as genetic analysis develops.

Unique and novel skeletal residents include the 'celebrity pet' rhinoceros of King Louis XV (1710–74) sent by the French Governor of Chandannagar in West Bengal in 1770 and which, after its death following 20 years at the palace of Versailles, was mounted for display in the museum. Observing the anatomy gallery as a whole, the commonalities of skeletal form, in spite of the diversity of species and environmental origins, is a striking and informative visual statement on a shared evolutionary ancestry, or conversely, independent parallel development.

Galleries of Comparative Anatomy and Palaeontology, Paris, 2017; photographs by Paul Donnelly



At 80 metres long and a simple rectangle, the museum is a relatively small purpose-made building with the galleries arranged over three levels – comparative anatomy on the ground level, palaeontology on the first, and a narrow mezzanine gallery at the top dedicated mainly to invertebrates.

Opened in 1898, in time for the 1900 Paris Universal Exhibition, the building – one of five venues of the Natural History Museum situated in the extensive *Jardin des Plantes* – was designed as a delightful and airy structure of brick, metal and glass by the architect Ferdinand Dutert. Fortuitously appropriate to its contents, the design of the museum coincided with the Art Nouveau period, that markedly Parisian style that looked to new inspirations beyond classical and other historical precedents. Drawing on stylised floral motifs, Art Nouveau dominated decorative arts and architecture at the turn of the 20th century.

While this museum is not as sinuous in style as the contemporary and celebrated Metro designs of Guimard, the building's period inclusion of nature, through floral iron-work balconies, provides a welcome vegetative backdrop to the overwhelming fauna.

Another part of the great charm of this institution is the originality of the displays, which include labels and didactics produced in different periods over the last century. At times bordering on neglect, there is nevertheless enough maintenance of the original to suggest authentic appreciation.

In the mezzanine palaeontology gallery, hand-painted watercolour didactic labels (often foxed!) describe the life cycles of trilobites, ammonites and the like. In contrast, the gallery below has sensitively designed portable label boards with updated information inserted into the extensive display of dinosaurs and megafauna.

As with any museum reliant upon relatively static content, opportunities have to be taken to refresh the visitor experience. At the time of my visit there was an artistic intervention among the skeletons by Quentin Garel, *Le Magicien d'os* (*The Bone Magician*). The startlingly realistic sculptures of monumentally oversized skulls in wood, ceramic and bronze were subtly displayed among the skeletons where they were close enough to the colour and texture of their surroundings to blend in, until their massive scale shocked you into focus.

In the context of this whole spectacle, it is heartening to note the University of Sydney's own Macleay collection has skeletal material with origins spanning two centuries, and that William Sharp Macleay (1792–1865) was acquainted with several distinguished scientists including Georges Cuvier (1769–1832) in Paris – the only biologist whose bust graces the entrance in respect of his crucial role in setting up this inspiring place.

The worldwide trend towards a greater appreciation of object-based learning today is increasing appreciation of such collections which, in the case of the Comparative Anatomy, contextualises the otherwise genetic focus of students.

At a time of dwindling university departmental funding and faculties' decreasing ability to maintain and store departmental collections, purpose-built university museums, such as the Chau Chak Wing Museum, are ideally placed with the staffing, expertise and infrastructure to maximise these collections' condition, relevance, use, and access. Our bones will live on!

Dr Paul Donnelly is Associate Director, Museum Content, Chau Chak Wing Museum, the University of Sydney.



Of tell and tomb

Jamie Fraser reminisces on the career of Basil Hennessy, a significant contributor to the history of the Nicholson collection.

Basil Hennessy,
photograph by
Russell Workman

Recently, the Nicholson Museum began an occasional *In Conversation* series that explores how prominent archaeologists at the University of Sydney have helped shape the Nicholson collection over the last 70 years. Emeritus Professor J Basil Hennessy had an especially close association with the museum from his undergraduate days to his long tenure as the Edwin Cuthbert Hall Professor of Middle Eastern Archaeology. Hennessy died in October 2013, and his absence in our series is deeply felt. As November will mark the inaugural Basil Hennessy Memorial Lecture, it is timely to celebrate his significant contribution to the Nicholson Museum.

In 1947, Hennessy left the Royal Australian Navy and enrolled at the University of Sydney as a 22-year-old undergraduate, taking Professor AD Trendall's new course 'Ancient Art and Archaeology'. This was the first ever archaeology course taught in Australia, and the Nicholson Museum was integral to Trendall's approach. His students acknowledged their fondness of the museum by donating a small Corinthian aryballos,

treasured as a fine example of an Orientalising vessel depicting panthers, sphinxes and a swan [image 1]. Basil Hennessy was one of these students, and the donation marked the start of a stellar career in which Hennessy would swell the Nicholson's collections through the division of finds, and embed the museum as a teaching collection at the centre of academic life.

Cyprus

Although exposed to Trendall's brilliance, Hennessy found himself drawn more to the romantic stories of fieldwork on Cyprus told by James Stewart, Trendall's younger colleague. Perhaps, as Hennessy's own colleague Robert Merrillees would later remark, Basil preferred "something more muscular and out-of-doors than the study of South Italian Greek pottery".

Upon graduation in 1950, Hennessy joined the Ashmolean Museum/University of Sydney Expedition to Cyprus, digging the remarkable Late Bronze Age sanctuary at Myrtou-Pighades. These excavations were the first archaeological project sponsored by



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1. Early Corinthian aryballos, donated by undergraduate students in 1947, Nicholson Museum, NM47.8

2. White painted tankard with animal handles, c. 1750-1650 BC, acquired through the University of Sydney and Australian Institute of Archaeology excavations at Stephania in 1951, Nicholson Museum, NM53.101

the University, and the Nicholson's collection expanded by 400 objects as a result. Moving from temple to tomb, Hennessy then led excavations at the Middle and Late Bronze Age cemetery at Stephania, sponsored by the University and the Australian Institute of Archaeology (Melbourne). Crates of finds were shipped to the Nicholson, and the Myrtou and Stephania materials form the basis of one of the best collections of Cypriot material outside of Cyprus itself.

The Levant

It was in the Levant, however, that Hennessy established himself as a significant player on the archaeological stage. In 1952, Hennessy joined Kathleen Kenyon's historic expedition to Jericho in Palestine. This dig was partly sponsored by the University of Sydney on the understanding that the Nicholson Museum would receive a range of finds for study, teaching and display. That the Nicholson did extremely well from this arrangement was, perhaps, partly due to Hennessy's presence on site. Kenyon was delighted with the young Australian's ability and attitude, writing to Stewart

(in a letter held in the museum's archive) that "Basil Hennessy was absolutely first-class, both on the *tell* and in the tombs. He is one of the most promising, and nicest, students I have had for a long time."

Hennessy completed his PhD under Kenyon's supervision at Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1964. By 1966, he had become the Director of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem (now the Kenyon Institute), from where he joined Kenyon on excavation in Jerusalem. The Nicholson holds 69 Iron Age and Roman objects that Hennessy excavated with Kenyon at Ophel.

The most spectacular discoveries that Hennessy made during this period derived from a Late Bronze Age temple that had been accidentally disturbed during the construction of Jordan's first civil airport near Amman. The Amman Airport Temple, as it became known, yielded a wealth of Levantine, Cypriot, Mycenaean and Egyptian treasures that had been ritually deposited within the temple precinct. Scholars still debate whether the temple served as an ancient



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crematorium or, possibly, a locus for human sacrifice. Hennessy arranged for almost 60 small finds to be sent to the Nicholson, including a pair of exquisite gold earrings [image 3].

Hennessy returned to the University of Sydney as professor, accepting the Edwin Cuthbert Hall Chair of Middle Eastern Archaeology in 1973. This position enabled him to develop Australia's first archaeological projects in the Levant. In 1975–77, he led excavations near the Dead Sea at the late prehistoric site of Teleilat Ghassul, at which he discovered a sacred precinct with some of the region's earliest wall paintings and cultic paraphernalia.

Through Hennessy's excellent relationship with the Jordanian authorities, many of these materials were sent to Australia and are still held by the Nicholson, including an animal-shaped vessel (discussed in detail in Peta Seaton's article on page 20). Furthermore, it was due to Hennessy's influence that Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan presented two lamps and 20 coins on the occasion of his visit to Australia in 1977. These are also held in the Nicholson collection, including a remarkable early Arab gold dinar [image 4].



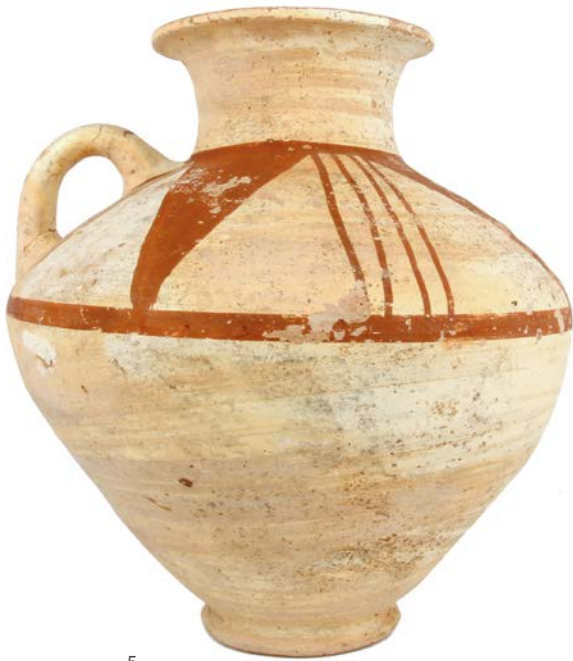
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In 1978, Hennessy commenced excavations at the large, mounded site of Pella in the north Jordan Valley. With an almost continuous occupation sequence from Neolithic to Medieval times, the University of Sydney's Expedition to Pella has enabled generations of archaeology students to hone their field skills and develop broad research interests. I am proud to be one.

Many of the finds were sent to Australia, under the law of Division of the Jordanian authorities, and acquired by the Nicholson Museum for teaching, research and display. Although Hennessy retired in 1990, the Pella expedition continues under the stewardship of his former students, including Stephen Bourke, John Tidmarsh and Pam Watson. Indeed, the fact that Pella is Australia's longest running field-project is a fitting testament to Hennessy's legacy as the father of Middle Eastern archaeology in Australia.

The Nicholson Museum

When Hennessy was appointed Professor in 1973, he filled the Chair left vacant by the untimely death of his mentor, James Stewart. The Nicholson Museum was the foundation for Stewart's hands-on approach. "The Museum is as important to us as a laboratory is to Chemistry," he wrote to the Acting Vice-Chancellor, and his *Handbook of the Nicholson Museum* was a required undergraduate text.



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3. Gold earring, excavated by Basil Hennessy at the Amman Airport Temple, c. 1400-1200 BC, Nicholson Museum, NM75.4

4. Gold dinar, from Umayyad period Jordan, c. 741-742 AD, donated by the Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan on the occasion of his visit to Australia in 1977, Nicholson Museum, NM77.23

5. Chocolate-on-White ware vessel, from Tomb 62 at Pella, Jordan, c. 1550-1450 BC. Excavated by the University of Sydney Expedition to Pella, Nicholson Museum, NM89.51

6. Basil Hennessy with Bob and Hazel Hawke at Pella, 1987

Hennessy closely followed Stewart's lead: he used the archaeological materials he had excavated to teach archaeological drawing; he insisted that students learn to describe and identify artefacts from across the Mediterranean world; and he set tutorial exercises using materials that Australian students had excavated. He also used objects from the collection as part of the fourth-year *viva voce* exams – the merest mention of which would cause generations of students to break out in a nervous sweat.

The Nicholson continues to provide object-based learning for university and school students alike. This success is in large part due to Hennessy's legacies – as an archaeologist who procured for the museum some of its most remarkable artefacts, and as a teacher who developed ways to promote the collection as the best teaching resource of ancient artefacts in Australia.

In November 2017, the inaugural J Basil Hennessy Memorial Lecture will be presented by Dr Stephen Bourke, Director of the University of Sydney Expedition to Pella.

For more information on the lecture, please visit the Near Eastern Archaeology Foundation website: sydney.edu.au/arts/research/neaf

**Dr Jamie Fraser is Senior Curator,
the Nicholson Museum.**



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A sacred animal

Dr Peta Seaton discusses one of Basil Hennessy's most mysterious discoveries.

The archaeological site of Teleilat Ghassul lies on the north shore of the Dead Sea in Jordan. Occupied during the Chalcolithic Copper Age (c. 4500–3900 BC), the site contains vital clues for understanding increasing socio-economic complexity in pre-urban life. Professor J Basil Hennessy led the University of Sydney excavations at Teleilat Ghassul in 1975–77. One of his most fascinating discoveries was a sanctuary containing elaborate cultic materials.

The animal-shaped vessel shown above is an example of one of these remarkable objects. Although broken at the head, its hollow ovoid body with four stumpy legs is intact. The upright circular 'spout' modelled on the top of the animal's back has long intrigued many of us: why is the spout wonky, when all else about the vessel is finely made?

1. Zoomorphic vessel, Nicholson Museum, NM78.166

2. Cornet cup, Nicholson Museum, NM78.173

3. Vessel in the shape of a ram carrying cornets, Gilat, Chalcolithic period, 4500–3500 BCE, pottery, the Israel Antiquities Authority collection, photo © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem



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One day, when arriving early for a lecture at the Nicholson Museum, I sat on the floor in front of the vessel and peered closely at it; I realised that something had actually sheared cleanly off the whole top side and ‘spout’ of the vessel. Could it be that the ‘spout’ was actually an anchor for a missing attachment? In other words, was the animal originally laden, and with what?

The implications of this ‘loaded’ question are profound. One of the most famous objects from the Chalcolithic period is a hollow ram bearing three cornet cups from a sanctuary at Gilat, in the Negev desert of Israel. Could the Nicholson vessel have been similarly laden?

Back to the Nicholson storeroom to reinspect a fragmented cornet cup (above) found close by the animal in the sanctuary at Ghassul. Diligent restoration had, not unreasonably, reconstructed a typical

cone-shaped base to the cup. But what if the cornet never had a base – could it be a missing load? With the help of Senior Curator Dr Jamie Fraser and Assistant Curator Candace Richards, we are investigating the possibility that the Nicholson Museum holds a rare example of a cultic loaded beast, emblematic of an emergent religious iconography associated with some of the earliest public ritual in the Middle East.

Sometimes it pays to be early for a lecture at the Nicholson Museum.

Dr Peta Seaton AM studied archaeology with Professor Hennessy (1977–80) and has excavated at Teleilat Ghassul.

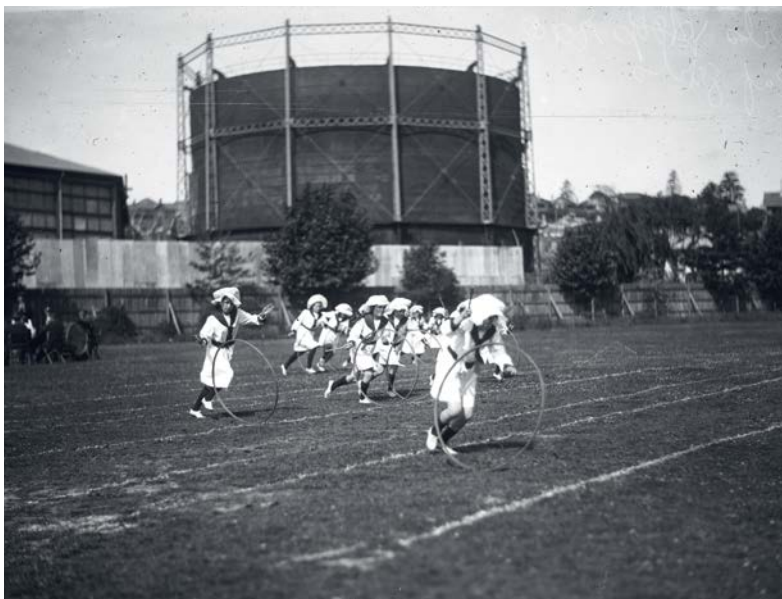


Not so very different

Glass negatives, from the Macleay's Historic Photograph Collection, reveal a novel sports day, reports Jan Brazier.



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1. Rope wrestling, annual sports day, Rushcutters Bay, photographer unknown, 1925, Macleay Museum, HP83.67.85

2. Deaf and Blind Boys' pyramid, annual sports day, Rushcutters Bay, photographer: Hall & Co, 1920, Macleay Museum, HP83.66.837

3. Hoop race for deaf girls, annual sports day, Rushcutters Bay, photographer unknown, c.1920, Macleay Museum, HP83.67.69

In 1912, a new children's sports day took place in Sydney – an event initiated by Harold Earlam, the new Superintendent at the New South Wales Institution for the Deaf, Dumb and the Blind at Darlington. Deaf and/or blind children competed in races and gymnastic displays at Sydney Grammar School's Weigall sportsground at Rushcutters Bay.

From 1914 until 1941 (except for 1935 when sickness brought a cancellation) the sports day became an annual event, held at Rushcutters Bay, except from 1930 to 1932, and from 1936, when the sports were held at Sydney University Oval. In 1942, the institution building was requisitioned by the Defence authorities and school activities were disrupted.

Earlam, appointed Superintendent in 1911, was a progressive educationalist. He extended the use of speech therapy for deaf children and the use of braille for blind children. Outdoor classrooms and sports were introduced to increase the children's confidence and physical wellbeing.

A public charity, the New South Wales Institution for the Deaf, Dumb and Blind, had grown out of the Deaf and Dumb Institution founded in 1860; it was renamed in 1868



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4. Hurdle race, annual sports day, Rushcutters Bay, photographer unknown, 1926, Macleay Museum, HP83.67.81

5. [Spectators at the Blind and Deaf Sports Day, Rushcutters Bay], photographer unknown, c.1920, Macleay Museum, HP83.67.62

6. The New South Wales Institution for the Deaf, Dumb and Blind, Sydney, photographer: NSW Government Printing Office, Macleay Museum, HP2012.64.10

when blind children were included. The facility provided education for children with hearing and sight impairments, most of whom also boarded there. From 1872 until 1957, the institution was located on City Road in Darlington. The building was purchased by the University of Sydney in 1961.

At the annual sports day a varied program of races and exercises was staged. For the deaf children, there were races and hurdles for both boys and girls. Deaf boys raced in sacks, wrestled on ropes, and showed strength and balance in gymnastic tableaux. Deaf girls ran skipping and hoop races, danced around the maypole and ran a race called 'catch the train'. Blind children ran flat races guided by the sound of a whistle, and played musical chairs; boys competed in tug-of-war and girls in skipping races. Prizes were awarded at the end of the day.

The objectives of the annual sports event were to develop the physique of the children, encourage a love of outdoor sports and pastimes and promote a healthy spirit of rivalry. For an institution reliant on fundraising, the event also aimed to raise funds for the gymnastic costumes and materials for games needed throughout the year. Importantly, it gave the public an opportunity to see the school's work in action and appreciate the demonstration of physical fitness and abilities by students.

Reports of the sports day appeared in the press, often with photographic coverage. The *Sydney Morning Herald* reported on 16 September 1937 on the silence of the games, except for the music of a band and comments by onlookers, as an "eerie quietness". Newspaper articles often expressed "pathos" for the "afflicted" children, but concluded that the happy faces expressed the same joy as "ordinary" school children in receiving prizes, cakes, sweets and soft drinks. Excitement and congratulations were expressed not by cheering but by signs and gestures. The merriment and enjoyment of all led to the conclusion that – "It is not very different, after all, from the world known to most of us."

Jan Brazier is Curator, History Collections, Macleay Museum.



The gift of history

Jude Philp and Miranda Johnson report on a special workshop highlighting the often overlooked history of women in the Pacific.

Left: The tapa piece from Pitcairn, Macleay Museum, ET84.163

This year, the successes of William Bligh's surveying abilities, rather than his failure as a captain, were explored in a reality television program of his journey. It was a new narrative from the fateful voyage of HMS *Bounty*; but what can we learn when the attention is shifted away from Bligh and the *Bounty* men altogether?

This was the task given to students from the Master of Museum and Heritage Studies and history honours programs, in a museum-focussed history course this year. Their focus was on a particular piece of cloth, one small but remarkable survivor of the history of those who took the *Bounty* from Bligh's command and sailed to a new future on Pitcairn Island.

The idea for the class started with a visit by Pauline Reynolds, a descendant of one of the pioneering

Tahitian women of the *Bounty*. In 2008, she had come to visit the Nicholson Museum to see a piece of tapa that was associated with Ellen Christian, the great granddaughter of Fletcher Christian, the infamous leader of the *Bounty* mutiny. Pauline contacted Jude Philp to find out more about that rare piece, the beginning of a five-year conversation about the few remarkable pieces of her heritage held in the Macleay collection. Inspired by Pauline's insights, we started thinking about how that piece, and the stories of family and unity that it invoked, might work in academic teaching.

The *Bounty* women and their descendants have been largely left out of the written record, but their knowledge and history is recorded in the many gifts of their bark cloth that now reside in museums across the world. Pauline had talked of these materials as giving voice

to her maternal ancestors and opening a pathway to learn directly from them – a vital balance to the common Bligh-soaked history. We reasoned that researching the wealth of material objects that the women created on Pitcairn and Norfolk Island would give the history students an opportunity to grapple with other histories and other ways of making history. For the museum students, an opportunity could be created to see the potential in collections for history-making, as well as the effect that biases in history can play.

As part of the course, students attended a workshop on tapa-making, which brought together Pauline and her distant cousin, printmaker Jean Clarkson, both founding members of the 'Ahu Sisters, a group founded to relearn and revive the techniques of their Tahitian ancestors.

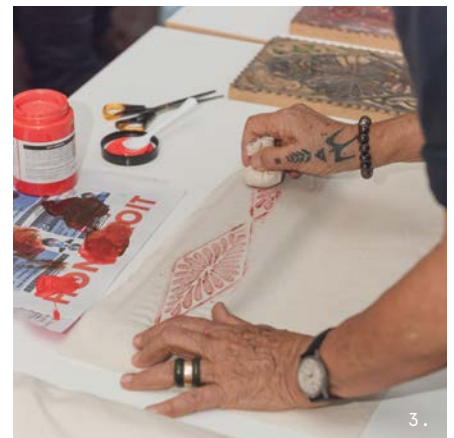
A University of Sydney graduate and famed printmaker, Jean introduced the class to a range of tapa printmaking practices. These included printing with leaves, stencils and beautiful carved woodblocks. That one of these blocks came from a previous workshop Jean ran at Auckland's Paremoremo prison demonstrates how beneficial to learning and wellbeing such programs can be.

In the workshop, the process of printing, and of thinking about Pacific tapa-making, itself a group practice, drew the class together in a different way than discussions or textual research. As Jean explained to us, in tapa-making and printing, artists express their individuality in the context of collective tradition. Using our hands as well as our minds helped us to reflect on and put into practice what we had learned from the books, articles, and conversations we had with other experts throughout the semester. Jean and Pauline inspired us to keep looking for the histories imprinted on the beaten mulberry bark, as well as on the page.

More than 'art' or 'cloth', the fabric of women's work is one of the principal forms of gift that unite many nations and people across the Pacific. Cloth may be made for a gift, or portions of a single piece of tapa cloth may be cut and distributed to dignitaries, family and loved ones.

In 1891, Stephen Christian gifted Norfolk Island visitor, Mr Jeffery, a portion of a cloth that had been made at Pitcairn. Jeffery in turn cut that piece in two and gave half to Mrs Penfold. In 1984, when the sisters EM Andrews and EC Bootle (great-nieces of the archaeologist Sir Grafton Elliot Smith, see related story on page 32) gifted 100 ancient Egyptian items to the Nicholson, a separate gift to the Macleay was included, the small piece of red bark cloth made by the women of Pitcairn.

Dr Jude Philp is Senior Curator, Macleay Museum, and Dr Miranda Johnson is Lecturer, Department of History, the University of Sydney.



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1. Pieces of copper that once lined the *Bounty* were also given as gifts, Macleay Museum, ETN.2004

2. Jean Clarkson

3. At the workshop, Jean Clarkson demonstrating the application of dye

Artangentye – working together

“Indigenous curation is a curation of people rather than things. From Latin, curator is linked not just to object care but to healing, curing. Rather than cure objects – in the sense of preserving – Indigenized curators heal the estrangement between people and their belongings, they restore and re-story.”

David Garneau, Aboriginal Canadian artist and curator, 2016



Rebecca Conway and Shaun Angeles
Penangke explain their perspectives
on collaborating across collections.

Arnernte Elders, photograph
by Walter Baldwin Spencer,
1894, Horn Expedition
to Central Australia,
photographic print, Macleay
Museum, HP85.26.90

Arrernte Elders dressed for performance, photograph by Walter Baldwin Spencer, 1894, Horn Expedition to Central Australia, photographic print, Macleay Museum, HP85.26.89

Rebecca Conway, Curator, Ethnography, Macleay Museum

One of the most rewarding aspects of my curatorial role working with the Macleay's cultural collections is meeting members of source communities. The learning from these custodians and their relationships and interactions to material in the collections are often powerful and profound; people talk and sing to objects, they meet them as family members, ancestors, and as Elders reaching out from the past to remind and teach them about their rights and responsibilities.

Being able to play even a small role in sharing and making collections accessible is a great honour. The relationships and re-storying that come from such interactions are vital to understanding and reinvigorating the objects themselves, their Indigenous interpretations as well as our shared histories in Australia. How we work together with these collections today is part of the continuum of such narratives and the lives of the objects.

In June 2017, we had the pleasure of hosting Shaun Angeles Penangke, the Artwe-kenhe (men's) collection researcher at the Strehlow Research Centre in Alice Springs. The centre is a vast repository of Arrernte cultural heritage, including some 1200 sacred objects, thousands of images, film footage and in-depth documentary resources. Shaun spent three days with curator Matt Poll and me, looking at Arrernte-related objects, archival documents and images held by the University. These included secret-sacred artefacts, the 1930s fieldwork notes of anthropologist, Olive Pink, and a large collection of original photographic prints from the 1894-95 Horn expedition to Central Australia.



Shaun reviewed restricted material with Matt, made reconnections with several important sacred artefacts and commenced proceedings for repatriation. We were also grateful to draw on his knowledge and expertise in the examination of historic photographs of Arrernte and their Country.

Arrernte language names for some sites and places featured in images have been documented and, with Shaun's assistance, we hope to continue this work. A number of historic images restricted by non-Arrernte curators have now been reclassified as suitable for public viewing. It was a great opportunity for us to have materials reviewed by a cultural specialist, and we would like to continue to work together to bring out the full meaning of these collections.

**Shaun Angeles Penangke, Curator,
Artwe-kenhe (men's) collection researcher,
Strehlow Research Centre, Alice Springs**

Collaborative work between museums is of immense importance to Arrernte people. Due to the negative effects of historical events, the Arrernte community has become disenfranchised from large portions of our cultural heritage; the most devastating being the removal of our treasured ancient sacred artefacts from their Ameke-ameke (sacred site) to the dark lonely cupboards of museums and other collecting institutions. Therefore, this type of cross-institutional work becomes critical to Arrernte families in allowing us to influence and control the way in which our cultural heritage is managed and utilised. This is an important first step towards *apurte-ileme*, consolidation of Arrernte related collections.

Through our work at the Strehlow Research Centre, we estimate that approximately 5000–6000 sacred artefacts originating from Central Australia are held in museums throughout Australia. This estimate does not include the collections of international museums, which would potentially increase this figure to more than 10,000.

It has always been the responsibility of Arrernte men to care for and maintain the power of such artefacts, which are inextricably linked to our majestic cultural landscape and family groups. To better

understand the current circumstances regarding Aboriginal people's health and wellbeing, it is imperative to reflect on the damage the removal of sacred artefacts caused to our land, culture, and traditional roles as initiated men.

The collaboration with the Macleay Museum is an important step towards reinstating cultural protocols into the management of artefacts and collections. It also provides the Arrernte community with an opportunity to discover exactly where some of our artefacts have been deposited; our Elders want to know where the personal property of their fathers and grandfathers is. Our beautiful artefacts are very dear to our people; even to know one exists within this country provides a weird sense of relief and content to Arrernte Elders.

With the removal of our artefacts came the end of many ceremonies; the systematic destruction of our people's purpose had begun. Our culture has suffered greatly, but hopefully and ironically, because of the existence of these collections and this type of collaborative work, we can repair and revitalise some important lost practices by reacquiring artefacts and associated knowledge held within the institutions.

On behalf of the Arrernte people of Central Australia, I thank the staff of the Macleay Museum for caring for our Arrernte collection over a long period of time, and for providing this opportunity to visit and work inside the institution.

I envisage this as the start of a productive relationship between the University and the Arrernte community, with the Macleay Museum an important conduit in the revitalisation of Arrernte culture and wellbeing.

Thank you.

Eastern Arrernte Elder, Alan Drover (right) with Shaun Angeles Penangke, Artwe-kenhe (men's) and collection researcher at the Strehlow Research Centre, Alice Springs, photograph © Adam Macfie, Strehlow Research Centre, 2017



Magic boxes

Jude Philp, with Ngan Ying (Cherry) Mak and Wai Ping (Jackie) Lau on unlocking the mysteries of the Macleay Museum's historic cabinets.

Each year, we welcome interns from Hong Kong universities. This year, our interns Ngan Ying (Cherry) and Wai Ping (Jackie) worked on various projects, including the recording of an exciting day when we disassembled one of the museum's historic display cabinets.

As holder of the oldest natural history collection in Australia, the Macleay is significant in the history of museums. The collections were started by Alexander Macleay in the late 18th century in England and include the historic furniture built for the purpose of housing the objects. It was within Chippendale-manufactured cabinets that Alexander, his son William Sharp and nephew William John worked initially to understand and identify the relationships between species.

In the late 19th century, more cabinets were built to exhibit the collections when the Macleayan Museum moved from the family home at Elizabeth Bay to the University of Sydney. When the Macleay gallery space was created

within the roof of the building, the enormous cabinets were brought through the second floor windows and up into the attic, through what is now a sealed-up floor-area of concrete.

As the Macleay Museum prepares for the next chapter in its history, as part of the Chau Chak Wing Museum, the re-use of the cabinets is being explored, including the logistics of how the cabinets might be moved from their current location. In May 2017, the museum undertook a test case to determine if it was possible to disassemble and move the cabinets from the building in which they have been standing for more than a century.

Ian Thomson, a historic cabinetry specialist, worked on one of the cases to unravel the mysteries of its construction. The cabinets are made of Australian red cedar (*Toona ciliata* var. *australis*). Once abundant in rainforests along the east coast of Australia, its usefulness for carpentry was discovered soon after the arrival of Europeans. It became

the colony's third largest export by 1798, for use in cabinetry, musical instruments and boatbuilding. However, by the time these cabinets were moved to the University, in March 1890, red cedar was becoming less common locally.

Ian suspected that each cabinet could be separated into three smaller sections and thus more easily moved out of the museum. Years of internal modifications and paintwork to obscure joins meant that one of the cases needed to be deconstructed to test his theory.

These 'magic boxes' have stored and exhibited thousands of collection items, and they have contributed to the history of zoology. We look forward to seeing their continued use in new ways within the Chau Chak Wing Museum.

Jude Philp is Senior Curator, Macleay Museum. Ngan Ying (Cherry) Mak and Wai Ping (Jackie) Lau were the 2017 Macleay Museum placements from Hong Kong Baptist University's internship program.

After relocating the collections stored in one of the cases, and after the removal of all interior non-original fittings such as lights and shelves, the first step was to unscrew the hinges and remove cabinet doors.



Next, by scraping back sections of paint, seams and screws were made visible, confirming that three separate sections of cabinet units were lined up in one case. The screws were removed and the painted seals carefully separated.



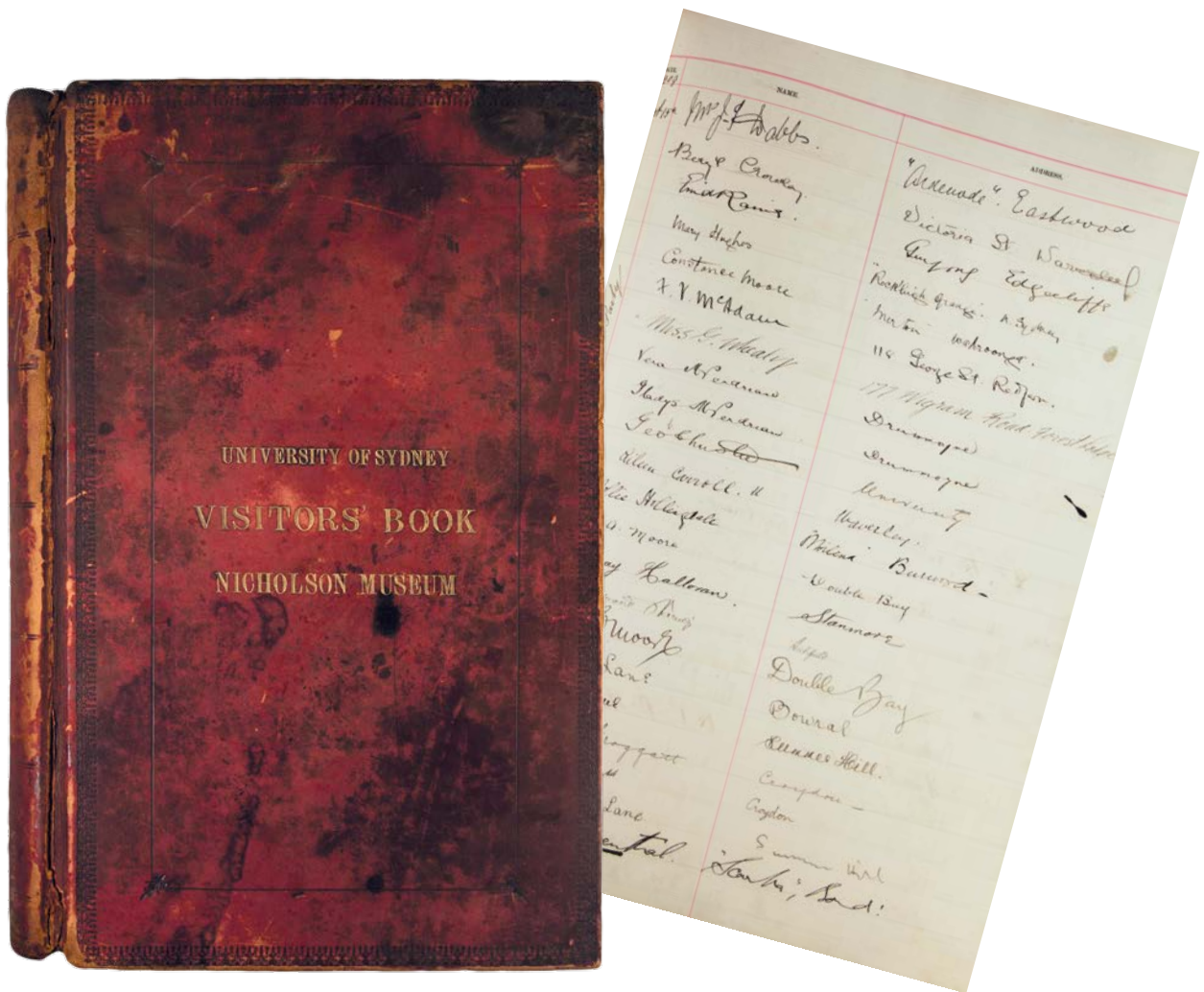
The screws holding the pelmet were removed and the top section lifted off. The cabinet was then able to be deconstructed into separate modules.



Each separated piece was carefully numbered with chalk on the timbers for later reassembling, before being wrapped for storage.



All images of the dismantling of the Macleay cabinets by Wai Ping (Jackie) Lau.



On history's page

Three volumes of visitors' books record the names and addresses of visitors to the Nicholson Museum from 1863–2001. [Candace Richards](#) introduces an online volunteer project to transcribe these signatures and unlock their stories.

Above left: Nicholson Museum visitors' book, volume 3, 1 August 1906 to 26 October 1952

Above right: Inside the book, volume 3, page 88, 1909



1. View of the entry room of the Nicholson Museum 1885–1909

2. View of Egyptian collection of the Nicholson Museum 1885–1909

When the University of Sydney's Museum of Antiquities (then colloquially known as the Nicholsonian Museum) first opened, in what is now known as the Oriental Studies room, the display was an eclectic array of artefacts and curiosities. From 1863, visitors to the new museum were asked to record their names and addresses in a leather-bound register that rested on a small table at the entrance.

The visitors to the new museum were as varied as the collections they came to see.

An analysis of the visitors' book from 1870, the year of Edward Reeve's first catalogue of the collections, reveals that, in addition to local visitors from Sydney's then rapidly expanding suburbs, the museum

welcomed scholars, students and tourists from across Australia as well as from New Zealand, New Caledonia, Hong Kong, South Africa, Berlin, Vienna, Hungary, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Although very few visitors left comments (the books were designed to record names rather than comments) the collection clearly had a lasting impression on some visitors. On 21 November 1885, a 14-year-old Grafton Elliot Smith signed the book. On that visit, Smith would have seen framed mummy wrappings and hieroglyphic inscriptions, the collection of Egyptian sculpture including the Pharaoh Horemheb resting on the floor, and the coffins of Meruah and Padiashhaket.

Smith would return to the University of Sydney as a medical student, later becoming a demonstrator in the Department of Anatomy before taking up the Professorship of Anatomy in Cairo in 1901. It was there he began his work on ancient Egyptian mummification, researching the royal mummies held in the Cairo Museum and developing new techniques and processes for anatomical research.

From Cairo, Smith and his wife wrote many letters to their family in Australia and sent small archaeological items including amulets, mummified kittens, and fragments of bandages from the Royal Mummies. The family collection, including the correspondences, was donated to the Nicholson Museum in 1984 by

3.



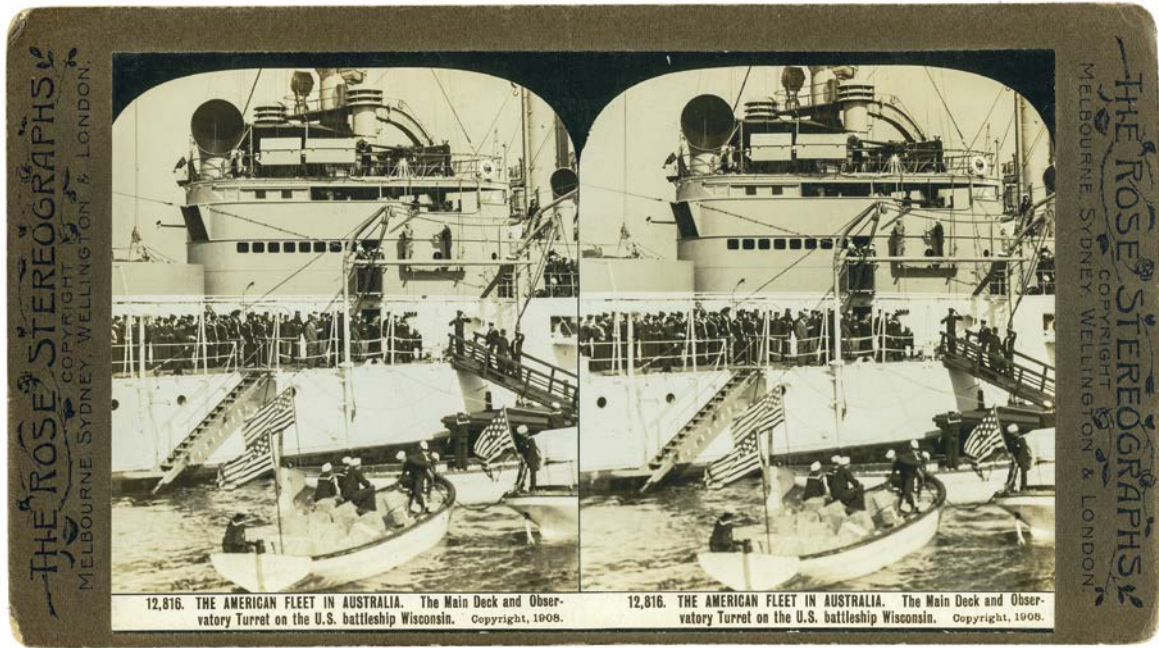
Smith's grandnieces, EM Andrews and EC Bootle (see related story on page 25).

In 1909, Smith relocated to the University of Manchester and became one of the first anatomists to use x-ray imaging to analyse ancient Egyptian mummified remains. In September that year, the Nicholson Museum welcomed another Australian medical professional, Dr E Maynard Pain, who had also relocated to Cairo. Pain was also a University of Sydney alumnus and was in Sydney on the lecture circuit discussing his work as a medical professional and missionary in Egypt.

While the visitor books are filled with the names of University staff, students and alumni, there are many others who connect the Nicholson Museum to the vibrant history of colonial and early federation Sydney. One of the most significant events for Sydney after Federation was the arrival of the Great White Fleet on 20 August 1908. The fleet was a show of United States naval strength around the world, and was eagerly welcomed by Prime Minister Alfred Deakin along with more than 500,000 spectators (impressive when one considers that the population of Sydney was only 600,000 at the time).

The officers and seamen from the 16 battleships and various escort ships of the fleet descended on Sydney and, according to newspaper reports of the time, spent their time exploring the sights and breaking hearts. Two sailors from the *USS Wisconsin* inscribed their names in the Nicholson visitors book: Guy Lamar from Kansas and Geo[rge] F Miller from Friend, Nebraska.

There are many stories waiting to be unlocked from the 944 pages of names in three volumes of visitor books. This year, with the help of an online community of volunteers, we are aiming to transcribe each page. The system we are using is



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DigiVol, a crowdsourcing platform, created by the Australian Museum in collaboration with the Atlas of Living Australia. It allows members of the public to digitally volunteer and contribute their knowledge to help make museum data more accessible.

Through this project, we hope to continue to reveal the characters and stories of those who have been inspired by and contributed to the rich history of the Nicholson Museum.

The visitors' books are currently on display in the exhibition *Alpha and Omega* in the Nicholson Museum.

Candace Richards is Assistant Curator, Nicholson Museum.

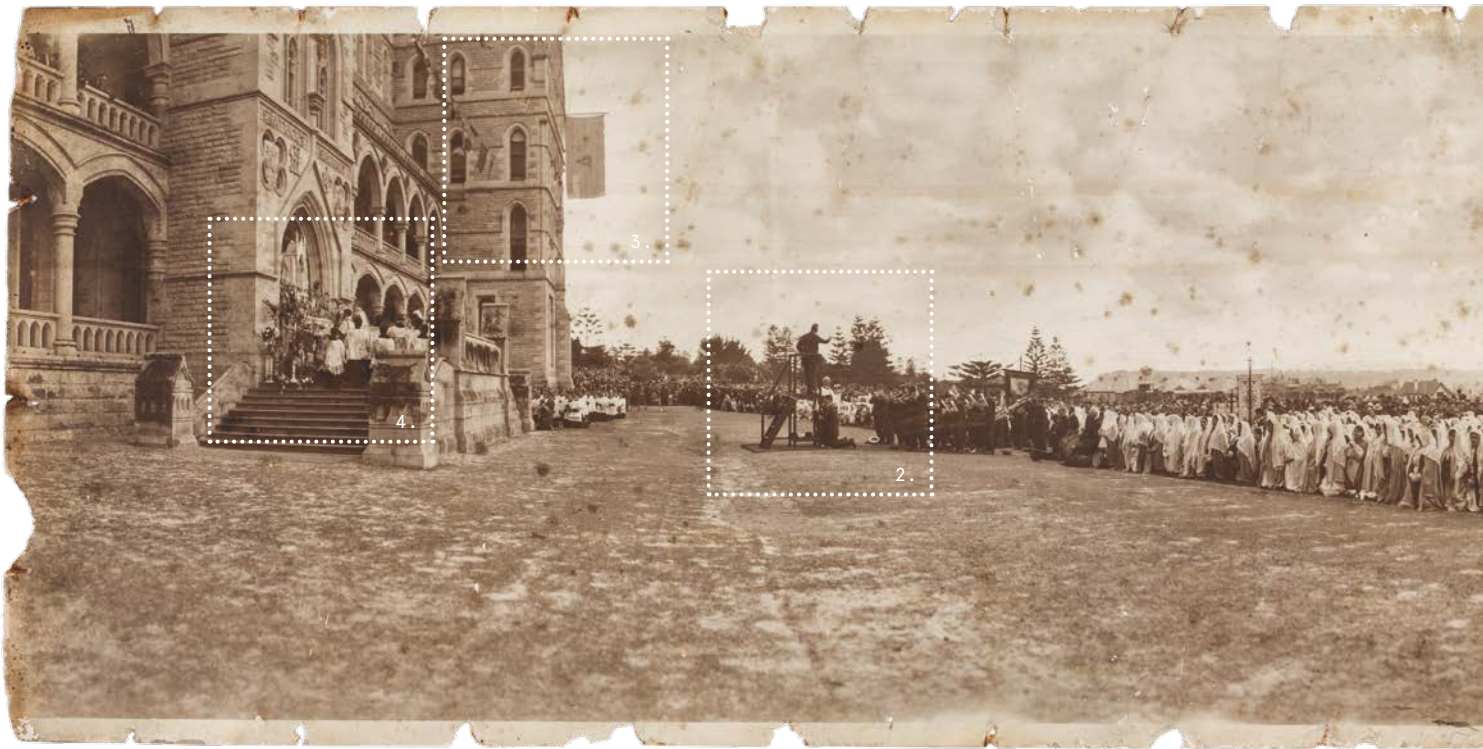
3. Mummified kitten, Late-Roman Period (712 BC - 364 AD), Egypt, from the collection of Sir Grafton Elliot Smith, Nicholson Museum, NM84.3

4. Stereoscopic photograph, 'The American Fleet in Australia. The Main Deck and Observatory Turret on the US battleship *Wisconsin*' 1908, Rose Stereograph Company, Sydney, NSW; Macleay Museum HP2014.3.1264

5. Faience Bes Amulet, Late Period (712-332 BC), Egypt, from the collection of Sir Grafton Elliot Smith, Nicholson Museum, NM84.74



5.



Revealing details

Chris Jones zooms in on one of the recently digitised objects from the collection, a panoramic photograph of a festive day.

[Detail 1]

First marched more than a thousand Children of Mary, in their blue mantles and white veils, each conference following its own standard.

All images: [The Celebration of the Feast of Corpus Christi at St Patrick's Seminary, 14 June 1914], photographer unknown, 26 x 110cm, Macleay Museum, HP84.27



As part of our collection-wide digitisation project, we are copying material in the historic photograph collection, providing access to content previously not readily accessible. Much of the collection is in the form of glass plate negatives, film negatives and lantern slides. For these formats, scanning creates more easily viewable images, enabling more details to be identified in the cataloguing. Larger photographic prints, too big for the scanner, are being copied by a digital camera. Creating digital copies makes the collection accessible and understandable in new ways.

One of the larger photographic formats we are digitising is the panorama. The nature of this format – long and narrow – presents challenges in copying; the images need to be photographed in sections, and then ‘stitched’ together digitally. An advantage of this process is the resulting high resolution image, enabling details to more easily be visible.



[Detail 2]

The whole of the processionists, the multitude and the priests joined in singing the music, being led by the band, and directed by Mr. W. Asprey (conductor of St. Mary's Cathedral choir) from an elevated position.



[Detail 3]

On the towers flags snapped in the breeze, the Commonwealth flag, and Erin's green banner – the golden harp without the crown – being prominent, and from the central tower to the side great strings of bunting were stretched.



[Detail 4]

The reverence that prevailed on all sides was impressive. The little altar of white and gold, fragrant with the choicest flowers, held all in awe. The silence was broken only by the lazy surf that rolled gently on the beach below.

One such panorama is a photograph taken at the Feast of Corpus Christi at St Patrick's Seminary in Manly on Sunday 14 June 1914. The event was also the celebration of the seminary's silver jubilee, and attracted a large crowd, with reports of the day published in a number of newspapers. The report in *The Catholic Press* was especially detailed; when read in conjunction with the panorama, the photograph brings a reality to the scene, and the article provides descriptive colour and emotion.

The article sets the scene describing the "invasion" of Manly by 20,000 people arriving by ferry, tram and car. The procession walked through the streets toward the seminary, the spectacle inspiring a poetic response from the journalist:

The men and boys walked in their regalia and sashes; the maidens in their veils and cloaks; the school girls in their whitest frocks. There came waves of blue, of scarlet, of green, brightened here and there by the gleam of gold. It was a symphony of glowing, changing colour, that sweetened the hillside like a touch of spring.

Chris Jones is Assistant Collections Manager, Sydney University Museums

All quotes from: 'Celebrating the Feast of Corpus Christi: Beautiful Scene at Manly', *The Catholic Press*, Sydney, 18 June 1914, p. 22-23

Making history



1.



2.

1. Recent visitors to the Macleay's cultural collections: Shaun Angeles Penangke (left), Artwekenhe (men's) collection researcher from the Strehlow Research Centre, Alice Springs and Frédéric Keck, from the Musée du quai Branly, Paris.

2. Professor Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, former director of the British School at Rome and scholar of Pompeii, examines his LEGO representation in the model.

3. Macleay curator Matt Poll (right) with artists Francis Marshall and Billy Peter Pareroultja, at the Inkuntji Artists stall at Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair 2017. Inkuntji is a member-based, not-for-profit Aboriginal art centre situated in the community of Inkuntji (Haasts Bluff), Northern Territory.

4. In May, Sydney University Museums held a Vision and Values Workshop at the Women's College to assist with planning for the new Chau Chak Wing Museum. The day was facilitated by Tania Rhodes-Taylor, Vice Principal, External Relations (left) and Kerry Capsanis, Head, Brand and Marketing Services.

5. In May, we bid a fond farewell to Damien Stone, a dedicated volunteer of many years and subsequently a part of our collections management team. Damien has left Sydney for warmer climes in Queensland.



3.



4.



5.

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Whether you want to view an exhibition or attend a talk, we have plenty on offer.

For more information and to view the latest timetable, visit sydney.edu.au/museums and click on 'What's on'. Unless otherwise stated, all events take place at the Nicholson Museum.

November 2017

Monday 6 November, 3.30–4.30pm
(and each consecutive Monday)

Weekly tours of the Nicholson Museum

Join Nicholson Museum staff for weekly tours, with a different collection focus each week.

Cost: free

Wednesday 15 November, 6 for 6.30pm

A small woman and a big tell: What Jane Dieulafoy found at Susa

Heather Rossiter is an independent researcher and author.

Cost: \$40, \$30 for Friends and their guests, \$10 for students. Includes light refreshments.

Tuesday 28 November, 5.30pm

Resurrecting Pompeii

Dr Estelle Lazer, University of Sydney

Venue: Eastern Avenue Auditorium

Talk presented in conjunction with the Department of Classics and Ancient History and Sydney Ideas

December 2017

Saturday 2 December, 2–3pm

Camino de Santiago: treading the ancient path to the end of the earth*

Judy Roberts is an Honours graduate in Classical Archaeology, University of Sydney, and an international tour guide.

Cost: free

Wednesday 6 December, 6pm

From Euclid to the computer: tracing a line through mathematics

A Macleay Museum talk at the Nicholson: Matthew Connell, Principal Curator, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, Sydney

Cost: free

Saturday 16 December, 10am–4pm

University Info Day

The Nicholson Museum will be open for the University of Sydney's annual Information Day



Cacatua leadbeateri, Major Mitchell's Cockatoo, mounted specimen, Macleay Museum, NHB.1649



Head of Tanit, coin, Greek, c.350-270 BC, Nicholson Museum, NM2004.713

Current exhibitions

Please note: the Macleay Museum and the University Art Gallery are now closed as we prepare for the public opening of the Chau Chak Wing Museum in 2019.

Nicholson Museum

- *Alpha and Omega: tales of transformation*
- *The sky and the sea: ancient Cypriot art*
- *Lego Pompeii*
- *Death Magic*
- *Memento: remembering Roman lives*
- *Tombs Tells and Temples: excavating the Near East*
- *Actors, Athletes and Academics: life in ancient Greece*

All Nicholson Museum exhibitions are ongoing.

Follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/sydneyunimuseum or find us on Facebook by searching for 'Sydney University Museums'.

All details are correct at the time of publication, however, events may change due to circumstances beyond our control. Please visit our website for up-to-date information: sydney.edu.au/museums

If you wish to contact the Macleay Museum, the Nicholson Museum or the University Art Gallery, please see inside front cover for our details.

MUSE

January 2018

Thursday 18 January, 10am-4pm Children's School Holiday Activity Day

Join us at the Nicholson Museum for a fun-filled day for kids aged 5-12 years.
Cost: free

Tuesday 30 January, 6pm Art and Performance: Two decades of archaeology at the ancient theatre of Paphos, Cyprus

Dr Craig Barker,
Sydney University Museums
Cost: free

February 2018

Saturday 3 February, 2-3pm Along the Silk Road*

Professor Alison Betts,
University of Sydney
Cost: free

Wednesday 7 February 2018, 6pm Colonial Mandarin: the life and times of Alexander Macleay

A Macleay Museum talk at the Nicholson: Botanist, educator and writer Professor David Mabberly AO, will talk on Alexander Macleay's world and launch James Donaldson's book *Colonial Mandarin*
Cost: free

Wednesday 21 February, 6 for 6.30pm

Stories from the Storeroom: Amarna's frescoes reconstructed

In this exclusive event for Friends of the Nicholson Museum, key museum team members will present on ongoing research and conservation of the Nicholson Museum's Egyptian fresco from Amarna.

Cost: \$30 for Friends of the Nicholson Museum and their guests. Includes light refreshments.

* Sponsor of the 2018 series *Postcards from the Past*





Bichrome IV ware jug, Cyprus, Cypro-Archaic I period 750-600BC, Nicholson Museum, NM47.28, image by Michael Myers

The sky and the sea: ancient Cypriot art

Ongoing exhibition
Free admission

Explore the artistic traditions and unique style of ancient Cypriot art at the Nicholson Museum.

Nicholson Museum
The Quadrangle
The University of Sydney

Opening hours:
Monday to Friday, 10am to 4.30pm
First Saturday of each month, 12 to 4pm
Closed on public holidays.
sydney.edu.au/museums



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