

# 'Dundee and the World'

Educator's Pack



**the mcmanus**  
DUNDEE'S ART GALLERY & MUSEUM

This pack contains information regarding the themes of the 'Dundee and the World' gallery. On our website you can find further resources to explore and activities that can be undertaken within and outwith the gallery.

In the 'Dundee and the World' gallery you can explore an amazing collection of objects and curios and gain a 'snapshot' of the world they came from.

You can reflect on generations of Dundonians' curiosity as they travelled the world at a time when few ventured abroad.

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# The Creation of an International Collection

# Dundee and the World

## The creation of an international collection

***"Then ladies and gentlemen, you have...a museum in which all must take an interest. In the course of time, by the labours of those who sail from our port to distant climes, you will have an admirable collection of curiosities of foreign lands worthy of the study of your citizens."***

The Right Hon the Earl of Dalhousie, the Lord Lieutenant of the County who formally opened the first ever exhibition held in the Free Library and Museum buildings on Sat 1 November 1873

This gallery contains a selection of objects from around the world, brought back from the many cultures Dundonians encountered on their travels. The objects amazed and enlightened people at a time when few ventured abroad.

People from Dundee travelled the world to live, work and trade. These activities were often related to the development of the British Empire (1750-1930).

### **Military: Conflict and Exploration**

Scottish regiments played a key role in the expansion of British power. Military men from Dundee collected material from India, Burma, Ghana, Afghanistan and South Africa.

### **Merchant**

Dundee's commercial interests were wider than whaling and jute. Wealthy entrepreneurs invested heavily overseas, particularly in the United States.

### **Missionary**

Christian missionaries were amongst the earliest explorers overseas.

### **Mystery**

Some items were donated with little or no associated information. Where they came from, their function or cultural significance is still a mystery.



**Photograph of early display at McManus History ethnographic displays c 1890**

## MERCHANT

Dundee's commercial interests were wider than whaling and jute. Wealthy entrepreneurs invested heavily overseas, particularly in the United States.

Dundonian Sir James Key Caird (1837-1916), a jute manufacturer, entrepreneur and philanthropist, was one of the wealthiest men in Britain in the nineteenth century.

A keen collector of Ancient Egyptian artefacts and a personal friend of the celebrated Egyptologist, Sir Flinders Petrie, Caird visited Egypt in 1907. The many archaeological specimens he acquired form the basis of the Museum's collection.

Caird was the major sponsor for Sir Ernest Shackleton's Antarctic expedition of 1914-16 and Shackleton named a boat in his honour. Caird was presented with material collected during the early stages of the expedition.



Photograph of the boat 'James Caird', c1916  
In the Antarctic winter of 1916, Shackleton and 5 companions made the epic voyage from Elephant Island to South Georgia on this 23ft whaler to rescue the stranded crew of the Endurance



Portrait of Sir James Key Caird c1910

He also built a collection of Native American artefacts but little is known about how he came to acquire them. To this day Caird remains an enigma. Although there are visual reminders of his generosity throughout the City, including the Caird Hall, little is known of the man himself.

## MILITARY

Scottish regiments played a key role in the expansion of British power. Military men from Dundee collected material from India, Burma, Ghana, Afghanistan and South Africa.

**Conflict:** Scottish regiments were involved in military conflicts throughout the world and secured lands for the British Empire. Lieutenant Lindsay from Broughty Ferry served in South Africa during the Zulu Wars of 1879.

In a fiercely fought battle at Gingindlovu, 10,000 Zulu warriors attacked Lindsay's brigade. Despite repeated waves of attack, the Zulus couldn't overcome the British forces. They suffered heavy losses and retreated. Lindsay picked up Zulu objects from the battlefield, which he later donated to the Museum.

**Exploration:** The armed forces played a key role in exploring and mapping British territories and this work brought them into contact with native populations.

*Dundee man James Butchart joined the Royal Navy aged 20 in 1859. He became an engineer and served on board HMS Basilisk for her entire commission from 1871-74. HMS Basilisk and her crew were engaged in information gathering and survey work. They carried out the first detailed survey around the north east coast of Papua New Guinea in 1874, creating maps for safe passages for British ships. During this time Butchart acquired artefacts from the area, which he later donated to the Museum.*



**Drawing of  
the battle of  
Gingindlovu**



**Papuan  
Natives of the  
Torres Strait  
c. 1890**

## MISSIONARY

Christian missionaries were amongst the earliest explorers overseas.

Mary Slessor, (1848-1915) grew up in poverty in Dundee. Inspired by the example of David Livingstone, she became a missionary in the Calabar region of south-east Nigeria. A national role model, she inspired many Scots to take up missionary work. She arrived at the Calabar mission in 1876.

She lived a frugal life with only a few personal possessions. Much of the Calabar material in the Museum was donated in her name by missionaries such as Dr Peter Rattray who had worked alongside her or from colonial officials with responsibility for the areas in which she worked.

Dundee and the world features many interesting objects linked to her such as her diary excerpts and compass she used to navigate her way through dense jungles in uncharted territories.



**Portrait of Mary  
Slessor as a young  
girl c1860**

Mary Slessor with the people of Ekenge, 1890. The Okoyong people lived in largely unknown territory of dense forest between the Cross and Calabar Rivers. Mary Slessor was the first European to live and work amongst them.



## MYSTERY: What...Where...Who...How?

Every museum has objects in their collection about which little is known. Originally objects in this gallery were collected as curios – exotica from abroad. There was little interest in their origin, their age or what they meant to the people who made them.

Today curators record all known information about an object when it enters the Museum. We research the objects and often consult with colleagues from other institutions before agreeing to add the object to the permanent collection.

This selection of objects poses many questions. Most of the items don't have any supporting information. We don't know who donated them and in a few cases we're not even sure which countries they are from. Perhaps you can help?

Generations of Dundonians remember the shrunken head, though it hasn't been displayed for 40 years. Assumed to be human, recent research has revealed that this may not be the case.

Loaned to the Museum in 1923 it was described as a "war trophy-head from the head-hunters of the Amazon".

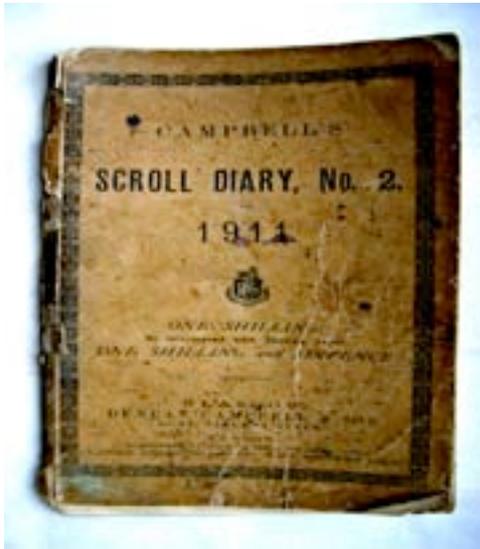
Making shrunken heads, called *tsantsas* was a Shuar tribe ritual. Traditionally Shuar men took enemy heads to avenge the death of a relative. The taking and shrinking of heads was not seen as a violent act, but part of a ritual, which pacified the spirit of the victim. In certain circumstances, the Shuar made 'substitute' heads from sloths and monkeys. Both practices ended in the 1960s.

To nineteenth century travellers, shrunken heads were seen as exotic curiosities and there was a huge demand for them by collectors. Many fakes were produced at this time by other peoples using Shuar methods.



Shrunken head

**Anthropologists have examined this head and doubts that it is human. The obvious snout and soft downy hair on the side of the face suggest that it is a monkey.**



### **Mary Slessor's Diary, 1911**

This diary was written the year before Slessor's death. Its pages record every day events such as courts, markets and attendances at church services. It also describes hardships and her failing health.

**Bear claw necklace, c 1850-1880**  
Winnebago people, Lake Michigan  
Donated by Sir James K Caird, 1896  
Grizzly bear claws, otter fur edged with brown bear fur

Dew claw necklaces were prized possessions of warriors who had proved themselves to be fearless. The size and strength of the grizzly bear made him a formidable opponent.



### **Ritual Procession**

**Geographical origin unknown, Africa, Ethiopia?**

**Metal, wood - Donor unrecorded**

The only information on this object is a written label reading 'Boase & Co Ltd, Clavourhouse, Bleachfield'. A jute processing firm, it became Low & Bonar, which closed in the 1960s. The item possibly entered the collection at this time but either wasn't given a museum number or it had been lost. The jute association suggests a link to India, but the style of the figures are African, possibly Ethiopian.

**Shield 'Ishlangu', pre 1879**  
South Africa, Natal, Zulu  
Ox hide supported by a wooden spine

Donated by Lt C Lindsay, 1879  
This lightweight shield is made from a single ox hide and supported by a wooden spine. Designed to block attacks by hand weapons, it was ineffective against the firearms of the British forces.



