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# Macleay Museum News

Number 1, March 1993

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## *From the Director's Desk*

The Macleay Museum is facing a time of uncertainty. Long-standing members of staff have left. Lydia Bushell, well known to Museum visitors for twenty years, retired in 1990. Dr Peter Stanbury, Curator and subsequently Director, took up a post with the National Trust last August after twenty five years with the Museum. I have been appointed Acting Director until the end of this year. A Committee of Enquiry is being formed to investigate the role of the Museum in the University community. Our past strengths will be reviewed and new ideas will be formulated to establish a firm foundation for the future.

The Museum needs to build on its past achievements with renewed energy, and bring news of its activities to a wider audience. This newsletter, inaugurated with this issue, is part of a programme to do this. It will appear twice a year, in March and September. The Museum's collections cover natural history, anthropology, scientific instruments and historic photographs which form a basis for exhibitions as well as being valuable research collections. Many of the natural history specimens were collected in the 19th century and the collection of insects (more than half a million of them) had its origin in the late 18th century when Alexander Macleay, then Secretary of the Linnean Society of London, began collecting.

History provides a linking theme between the collections, particularly history of science and Australian history. This has been reflected in several of our temporary exhibitions in recent years. Exhibitions were held to mark the centenaries of the deaths of Miklouho-Maclay (1988) and Tenison-Woods (1989), as well as the centenary of the Museum itself (1988). Other exhibitions have been based on the history of microscopy (1989-90) and the palaeontological history of Wellington Caves, NSW (1992).

The Museum and its collections are used by students from many sections of the University: Anthropology, Architecture, English, Fine Arts, History and Philosophy of Science, History, Industrial Arts, Museum Studies, and Zoology. School groups are also frequent visitors.

The Museum has a continuing relationship with the Historic Houses Trust, which manages Elizabeth Bay House, the former residence of

Alexander Macleay. The Museum has been involved with the Trust in preparing Frances Macleay's letters to her brother, William Sharp, for publication. This newsletter shows some of the range of activities presently engaged in by the Museum and its staff. I hope you find the newsletter interesting and will wish to be kept informed of future Museum activities.

**Dr D.S. (Woody) Horning**  
**Acting Director**

### ***New Exhibition - No Roads, No Fences***

Who ever heard of such a thing? Two women travelling alone in the remotest parts of Australia in the 1930s.

Lucy Craigie and Lilian Layh twice ventured by car into the country's isolated regions. Departing in mid-December 1936, they travelled by Chevrolet from Wollongong to Kalgoorlie, Western Australia. With this experience under their belts, they set off in 1939 across the whole continent in a Studebaker.



Lucy Craigie, Principal of Smith's Hill Domestic Science School in Wollongong, took numerous photographs recording these two journeys. The collection of about 2000 photographs was donated to the Macleay Museum's Historic Photograph Collection in 1992, and forms the basis for a new exhibition ***No Roads, No Fences - Motor Caravan Journeys across Australia in 1936 and 1939.***

Reproductions of about 50 photographs - mainly black & white, some Dufaycolor - show the harsh conditions of Outback life.

*No Roads, No Fences* was opened on 19 February by Joan Kerr, Associate Professor in the University's Department of Fine Arts. The exhibition will remain on display until Friday 17 September 1993.

### *The Macleay Miklouho-Maclay Centenary Fellowship*

The Fellowship was established in 1988 by donations of more than \$60,000 raised by the Miklouho-Maclay Society and the Macleay Museum to provide a fund to enable a Research Fellow to work at the Macleay Museum in the fields of interest of Sir William Macleay and Nikolai Miklouho-Maclay. The object of the Fellowship is to promote work within the Museum, principally in the areas of Anthropology and Zoology but also in Botany and History of Science. The use of the Museum's collections is encouraged.

In 1990, **Dr Lois Tilbrook** was awarded the Inaugural Fellowship. She researched nineteenth-century collectors who contributed to the Macleay Museum's collections. Her work was published as *The Macleay Collectors - A Working Notebook* in 1992.

**Dr Daniel Tumarkin**, of the N.N. Miklouho-Maclay Institute of Ethnography, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, was awarded the 1992 Fellowship. He spent two months in Sydney, researching Australian records relating to the life of Nikolai Miklouho-Maclay (1846-1888). The Museum holds a collection of specimens and artifacts associated with Miklouho-Maclay, donated by his widow in 1889. Dr Tumarkin's research will be incorporated into his forthcoming book on the life, scientific and social activities and academic heritage of Miklouho-Maclay.

The 1993 Macleay Miklouho-Maclay Centenary Fellow will be announced shortly.

[Picture of Museum Specimens at Hyde Park Barracks]

Natural History specimens were lent for the recent exhibition *Drawing on Nature* held at Hyde Park Barracks. The Museum frequently lends specimens and artifacts from its collections for display by other museums.

### *Staff Notes*

**Lindy Davidson**, the Museum's part-time Administrative Assistant, has a Horticulture Certificate and is an experienced bush regenerator.

**Susie Davies**, BA, DipMuseumStud, is Curator of Anthropology and has recently completed an MA thesis on medals struck at the Sydney Mint between 1858 and 1926.

**Julian Holland**, F.R.G.S., BA, DipMuseumStud, MScSoc, is Curator of Scientific Instruments. With financial support from the Ian Potter Foundation he presented a paper on the retailing of scientific instruments in 19th-century Sydney at the 12th international Scientific Instrument Symposium in Edinburgh last September.

**Woody Horning**, BSc (Forestry), MSc, PhD, is Acting Director and Curator of Invertebrates. His primary curatorial responsibility is the historic insect collection of about 600,000 specimens. Foundation Secretary of the Antarctic Society of Australia and former President of the Linnean Society of New South Wales, he is currently Vice President of the Linnean Society and the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales and Research Associate of Taronga Park Zoo.

**Leigh McCawley**, BA, DipMuseumStud, who has curated the Historic Photograph Collection since 1987 is leaving the Museum this month. Every effort will be made to maintain access to the collection.

**Stuart Norrington**, Biological Technician Certificate, is Vertebrate Collections Manager. As a skilled taxidermist he has mounted a display showing the principal aspects of biological preparation.

### *Schools and the Macleay Museum*



The Macleay Museum with its collections of Australian animal specimens, Aboriginal and Pacific Island artifacts, historic scientific instruments and historic photographs has much to offer school groups at all levels. Some specimens attract great attention such as the skeleton of a human foetus and the Tasmanian tiger (thylacine). The Museum has even been used as a setting for an episode of "Mr Squiggle".

Teachers are encouraged to visit the Museum before bringing groups if they wish to prepare worksheets. The use of worksheets tailored to current class topics can make visits especially effective. Museum staff will be happy to suggest ideas for a worksheet.

The Museum requires all groups to be booked in advance to avoid crowding - phone (02) 692 4354. The Museum opening hours are 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Tuesday to Friday. Visits on Mondays may be available by prior arrangement.

School groups planning to visit the Macleay Museum should consider visiting the Nicholson Museum of classical antiquities at the same time. It is located a few minutes away by foot. Group visits to the Nicholson Museum should be booked separately.

### ***Pacific Islands Book - special offer to schools***

During the International Year of the World's Indigenous People, 1993, the Macleay Museum is offering one of its publications, *South Pacific Islands*, at a special price for school libraries of \$6.00 including postage (normally \$10.50 plus postage). This book, intended to be an introduction to the Pacific Islands, was published in 1984 in conjunction with an exhibition. All the chapters in the book are written by experts in their fields.

The European discovery of the Pacific Islands, from 1521 to the mid-nineteenth century, is briefly detailed as well as the introduction and impact of the whaling industry on the people of the South Pacific. The Pacific is a region of contrasting landforms - continental islands with mountainous regions, coral atolls and reefs. Landforms and land flora of the Pacific are the subject of two chapters in the book. Others describe the artistic traditions of the Pacific (including music and dance), crops and farming systems (traditional and introduced), political systems and Independence. A culturally diverse region, the Pacific is remarkable for the number of languages spoken in proportion to

population, which is much higher than anywhere else. One chapter in the book gives a brief account of the languages in the Pacific, and describes their development and migration into the region.

Colonisation has been experienced by most, if not all, indigenous peoples of the Pacific. Since the late 1960s, Independence has been granted to many Pacific island nations. To understand the indigenous peoples of the Pacific living in the twentieth century, some knowledge of the geography, lifestyles, cultural traditions, history of discovery and colonisation, and current political systems of Island nations is required. This book provides such an introduction.

### *1992 Publications*

(Co-authors not associated with the Museum are marked with an asterisk.)

\*Bolton, H.C., Holland, J. and \*Williams, N.H., 'The Grimwade Milligram Chemical Balance: An Early Australian Attempt to Establish a Scientific Instrument Industry', *Historical Records of Australian Science* 9 (1992): 107-17

Davies, S.M., 'The 1854 Products of New South Wales medal, A Prize and For Services medal awarded by the NSW Commissioners for the 1855 Paris Exhibition' *Journal of the Numismatic Association of Australia* 6 (1992): 3-14

Holland, J., 'Wellington Caves: from history to prehistory', *History of Australian Science Newsletter*, No. 28 July 1992, p. 3

Holland, J., 'Thomas Mitchell and the Origins of Australian Vertebrate Palaeontology', *Journal and Proceedings, Royal Society of New South Wales*, 125 (1992): 103-06

Horning, D.S., Presidential address 1991. 'William John Macleay - entomological lion?' *Proceedings of the Linnean Society of New South Wales* 113 (1992): 3-14.

Horning, D.S., 'Published material received for the 1992 Whitley Awards of the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales.' *Australian Zoologist* 28 (1992): 74-76.

Horning, D.S., (Book Review, 1992 Whitley Medal). 'Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, Division of Entomology. *The Insects of Australia. A Textbook for Students and Research Workers*. Second Edition. Volumes 1 and 2', *Australian Zoologist* 28 (1992): 76-77

Horning, D.S., (Book Review, 1992 Whitley Award, Best Zoological History Book). 'G. Monteith. *The Butterfly Man of Kuranda, Frederick Parkhurst Dodd*', *Australian Zoologist* 28 (1992): 78.

Horning, D.S. (Book Review, 1992 Whitley Award, Highly Commended Certificate). 'N.L. McKenzie, R.B. Johnston and P.G. Kendrick (Editors). *Kimberley Rainforests of Australia*', *Australian Zoologist* 28 (1992): 82.

Tilbrook, L. *The Macleay Collectors - a working notebook* (Sydney: The Macleay Museum, 1992)

\*Willis, P.M.A., Davies, S.M., and \*Osborne, R.A.L., 'Important vertebrate fossils from the palaeontological collections of the Department of Geology and Geophysics, University of Sydney', *Journal and Proceedings, Royal Society of New South Wales*, 125 (1992): 113-18

## *Object Lesson*

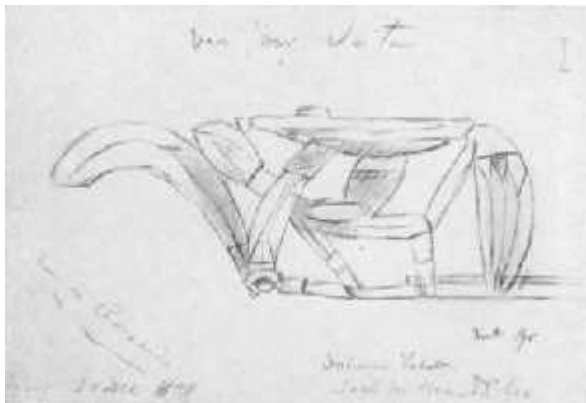
Museums are full of intriguing artifacts. Consider, for example the curious object in the picture. It is carved from a single piece of soft wood and shows the figure of some kind of animal surmounted by a shark.

The remains of an old paper label stuck on the artifact says "Solomon Islands, Presented by Dr Cox". The label is in the handwriting of George Masters, the curator of William Macleay's personal collection and subsequently the first curator of the Macleay Museum when it was established at the University.



Dr James C. Cox (1834-1912) was a prominent Sydney doctor with an enthusiasm for natural history. He built up a private collection of which land shells from Australia and the South Pacific were a prominent feature. Cox was a Trustee of the Australian Museum as was William Macleay. They were both committee members of the Entomological Society of NSW in the 1860s and were subsequently closely associated in the Linnean Society of NSW (founded in 1874).

Sydney was the principal port for South Pacific Shipping. Cox encouraged ships' captains to acquire shells for him and also Pacific artifacts. William Macleay recorded in March 1879 that he 'got a few Solomon Island things' from Cox, possibly including this ornamental carving. Cox's interest in Solomon Island artifacts continued. In April 1881, at a meeting of the Linnean Society of NSW, Cox exhibited 'a small figure-head of a canoe from the Solomon Islands, representing probably a deity carrying a mask', regarded as a very antique specimen of Island art.



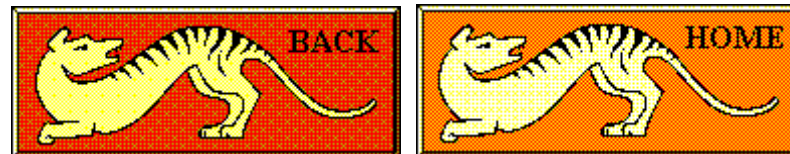
The present artifact appears also to be a prow ornament from a canoe. It was examined and drawn by the visiting Russian ethnologist, Nikolai Miklouho-Maclay, in December 1878. There are two sketches, now in Russia, one of which is reproduced here.

Miklouho-Maclay himself visited the island of Simbo (now Eddystone Island) in the Solomons some months after seeing Dr Cox's collection. There he sketched the carved prowboards of canoes as well as the local inhabitants and scenery.

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**334,016 Visitors**  
since January 12, 2000