

Agency, Encounter and Ethnographic Collecting:
The Royal Navy in Australia, c.1772-1855

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DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Daniel Simpson, declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis uses the Indigenous Australian object collections of the British Museum as a stimulus to explore the history of ethnographic collecting in Australia by the Royal Navy, in the period 1772-1855. From ordinary sailors to the curious surgeons and naturalists who accompanied naval expeditions, object collecting made visible the tangled scientific, imperial and commercial influences which shaped early colonial encounters in Australia and throughout the British Empire. Ethnographic collections, and particularly those at the British Museum, continue to mediate the postcolonial relationship between Britain and Australia, and yet almost nothing is known of the circumstances of their provenance, or of the actors who collected them and dispersed them within museums; the agency of Indigenous Australians themselves is also little understood.

The thesis begins by arguing that scholars have struggled to move beyond the famous collections of Captain James Cook, and observes too that many have misunderstood Joseph Banks' later contribution to naval ethnography. Focusing upon the principal expeditions made to Australia between 1800 and 1850, the thesis charts the growth of object collecting among a range of naval actors interested less in the pursuit of profit than in the expansion and consolidation of a new form of knowledge. Through its study of ethnographic collecting, the thesis offers an original perspective upon early colonial Australian history. The thesis is framed in particular as a contribution to recent work on subaltern knowledges and agencies, both European and indigenous, and adds too to our growing appreciation of the nineteenth-century Royal Navy's participation in and direction of imperial British science.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|---|
| BL | The British Library |
| BM | The British Museum |
| CLA | Caird Library and Archives, National Maritime Museum |
| CRO | Cornwall Record Office |
| DCP | Darwin Correspondence Project, Cambridge University Library |
| INM | Institute of Naval Medicine Historic Library and Archives |
| LSA | Linnean Society Archives |
| NHM | Natural History Museum [London] Library and Archives |
| NLA | National Library of Australia |
| RBG | Archives of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew |
| RGO | Royal Greenwich Observatory Archives |
| RGS | Archives of the Royal Geographical Society |
| RSA | Archives of the Royal Society |
| SALS | Somerset Archives and Local Studies |
| SLNSW | State Library of New South Wales |
| SLQD | State Library of Queensland |
| SLWA | State Library of Western Australia |
| TNA | The National Archives [London] |
| UKHO | United Kingdom Hydrographic Office Archives |

1) ‘Ethnography’, ‘ethnographic’ and ‘ethnographic collecting’

This thesis refers to ‘ethnography’ and to ‘ethnographic collecting’ in its investigation of object collecting in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, rather than to ‘Ethnography’ as a discrete science. In their lower-case forms, I use these terms loosely, because the practices to which I refer were themselves at times vague, contradictory, and lacking in clear purpose. The intention of this thesis is to explore the development (but not necessarily the maturation) of a form of colonial and imperial enquiry based upon the acquisition of objects; one often conducted by non-elite actors, and one only very rarely conducted according to discernible philosophical schema. As such, I might have used the terms ‘anthropological’ or ‘ethnological’ collecting with no ultimate difference in meaning. I have opted for ‘ethnography’, however, as a means to diminish the risk of the thesis being misinterpreted as a discussion of the early history of the scholarly discipline of anthropology, or of the history of biological or racial classification (in consideration of which the term ‘anthropology’ is more often used). Although I comment upon the relationship between ethnographic collecting and the emergence of the disciplines of Ethnography, Ethnology and Anthropology within the thesis, I do not therefore intend for my use of the term ‘ethnography’ itself to imply any comment on the relative status or nature of particular knowledge disciplines.

The second sense of ‘ethnography’ offered by the Oxford English Dictionary is therefore that to which I broadly adhere: ‘A description of peoples, societies and cultures’.¹ In this thesis, ‘ethnographic collecting’ means that form of collecting involved in investigating any of these three categories, and the same applies to ‘ethnography’ more generally. I would add only that participants in ethnographic collecting and the writing of

¹ ‘ethnography, n.’, *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), www.oed.com/view/Entry/64809. Accessed 21 July 2017.

ethnographic texts sometimes used these categories as proxies for discussing the use or existence of natural resources, so that the definition might be extended thus: ‘A description of peoples, societies and cultures, *and things associated with them*’. On these grounds, the thesis is insured against accusations of offering an anachronistic or teleological history. In his recent study of ‘Ethnography and Ethnology’ before Franz Boas, where an extended description of these etymological niceties is similarly attempted, Han F. Vermeulen for instance accuses John Gascoigne of ‘presentism’ for calling Joseph Banks an ‘anthropologist’, in an apparent misunderstanding of Gascoigne’s intentionally vague meaning, which is closer to my own.²

2) ‘Aboriginal’, ‘aboriginal’, ‘Indigenous’, ‘indigenous’, ‘Torres Strait Islander’, ‘Indigenous Australia’, ‘Australian’, ‘Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’

The thesis follow the most recent guidance of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies [AIATSIS], who advise that the term ‘Indigenous Australian’ is a generally acceptable reference to ‘Aboriginal Australian and Torres Strait Islander people’.³ Thus, I use phrases such as ‘ethnographic collecting from Indigenous Australians’, to refer to the practice of collecting objects in Australia and the Torres Strait from people who were thought to be resident either on the continent or in the Torres Strait. Where it is possible to identify the particular geography of those to whom a particular historical actor refers, I use the name and spelling advised by the AIATSIS map of Indigenous Australia, which identifies ‘language, tribal or nation groups’ such as the Wajuk, who are found in what is otherwise called Perth.⁴ I use the lower-case form, ‘indigenous’, where I am not referring to a specific group of indigenous persons.

² Han F. Vermeulen. *Before Boas: The Genesis of Ethnography and Ethnology in the German Enlightenment* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), p. 33. See Chapters Two and Three for a discussion of Gascoigne’s work.

³ AIATSIS website. ‘Indigenous Australians: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people’, <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/indigenous-australians-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-people>. Accessed 8 June 2017.

⁴ AIATSIS. AIATSIS map of Indigenous Australia, <https://aiatsis.gov.au/explore/articles/aiatsis-map-indigenous-australia>. Accessed 8 June 2017.

Introduction

Within an inconspicuous warehouse in London's East End, the British Museum's ethnographic storerooms can be found. Here lie objects which have no history; racks of spears, bundles of arrows, boxes of axes and an innumerable range of other species of thing almost invariably linked by a shared obscurity, being too numerous to grace the Museum's Bloomsbury displays. But there are exceptions. Notable for their polished state, for the cursive inscriptions sometimes written directly onto them, and for their prestigious location at the front of shelves and on examination tables, often awaiting visits from distinguished researchers, the objects collected on the late eighteenth-century voyages of the *Endeavour*, *Resolution* and *Discovery*, under Captain James Cook, have long been pre-eminent. For the first time, this thesis seeks to shift our focus away from these valued objects, and to place it instead on the later generation of forgotten things of naval provenance resident on the darker shelves behind. There are hundreds, if not thousands, of items within the Museum and other British museums' storerooms bearing the revealing label, 'R.N.'. These objects attest to a fascinating but little known history of exploration, encounter and ethnographic collecting conducted by naval servicemen on colonial voyages, in the heydays of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British Empire.

This thesis argues that the sailors of the Royal Navy, under the direction of the British Admiralty, made significant object collections in the first half of the nineteenth century, in a deliberate contribution to the development of ethnographic and imperial knowledge. In keeping with recent postcolonial and political insights, I show that this knowledge was as much the product

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of the agency of subaltern British actors and indigenous peoples as it was the direction of metropolitan luminaries. In this thesis, I demonstrate the considerable interpretative value that such ethnographic object collections possess for historians of Britain's late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century empire. Despite a considerable number of studies focusing on objects collected by Cook, and a growing interest in the politics inherent in the collection of specimens of natural history, historians have long denied analytical scrutiny to ethnographic material acquired on later naval voyages. Naval captains, surgeons, sailors, naturalists and scientific explorers were keen participants in object collecting, and were often among the very first Europeans to explore newly discovered lands. Their activity, however, has almost invariably been considered an unscientific form of 'curiosity', predicated largely on an expectation of personal profit. Rarely have historians considered that collecting may have been a directed activity, or that naval servicemen may have indulged in a science of their own. In spite of what is now a considerable scholarly interest in colonial encounter, and the agency demonstrated by indigenous people when faced with European explorers, the subject of object exchange and the politics resident therein has been strangely absent from associated literature.

I make four enquires of those neglected objects of naval provenance now found extant in the British Museum's storerooms, and of the non-extant collections with which they may once have been associated. First, how were these things understood and valued by their British contemporaries? Did the Admiralty seek ethnographic collections, or was the acquisition of objects instigated and made meaningful by independent communities of sailors and associated actors? Second, what lay behind the decision to acquire an object and to bring it home (or not to do so), and what infrastructures, if any, existed to support this? Whereas sketches and descriptions of collecting and ethnographic specimens might have sufficed as contributions to scientific knowledge, what lay behind the transmission of objects to public or private museums, and how was this done? Third, what can object collections, and records of collecting, tell us about moments of colonial encounter? How did

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objects mediate such meetings, and in what ways might the present popularity of discourse analysis in the scholarly deconstruction of these meetings be improved by a critical analysis of the presence of objects, as well as of the associated mentality of their naval and indigenous participants? Fourth, what was the chronology of ethnographic collecting? Were there peaks and troughs, and if so, why, and with what influence? In short, what can the exploration of ethnographic collecting within this thesis contribute to the history of science and imperial expansion?

I focus my enquiries on the ethnographic collecting which occurred as a product of encounters between the navy and Indigenous Australia in the period 1772-1855. This geographical focus is a product of the thesis' origins, as it was first conceived of as a collaborative project by a British Museum curator, Gaye Sculthorpe, and a historian, Zoë Laidlaw, whose work among the Museum's Australian collections led to the realisation that many possessed a naval provenance that existing academic literature does not adequately explain. The questions I pose here and which I have set out above could be asked of any number of the locations that attracted Britain's interest in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and further research might address northern America and the Arctic in particular. I have chosen to remain with Australia for the sake of maintaining a coherent and manageable topic of study, but it must be observed too that there was something special about the continent to British actors in the years concerned. Between 1772 and 1855, Australia was consistently subject to the interest of British officials involved in the commissioning of naval expeditions and the planning of colonies, not the least of whom was Joseph Banks. Having accompanied Cook to the east coast of Australia in 1770, Banks' early and enduring fascination with Australia helped to ensure that the continent remained a focal point for subsequent nineteenth-century expeditions, as did Australia's potential for resource exploitation and its significant indigenous population. Australia retained its importance to British imperialism long after Banks' death in 1820; it was there that rival French and British voyages travelled before and after the Napoleonic Wars,

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and it was there that battles over imperial influence and access to the Far East continued well into the century's later years.

The thesis begins with Banks' famously acrimonious departure from the voyage of the *Resolution* in 1772, and his subsequent reinvention as a director of, rather than participant in, the burgeoning atmosphere of imperial discovery that had stimulated Cook's first and most famous expedition. This was, I argue, the moment that the later history of ethnographic collecting in the navy began to take shape. With Banks' encouragement and that of his successors, naval expeditions to Australia and the Torres Strait soon continued apace; among others, the voyages of the *Lady Nelson* (1800-1802), *Investigator* (1801-1803), *Mermaid* and *Bathurst* (1817-1822), *Fly* (1842-1846) and *Rattlesnake* (1846-1850) helped to chart the continent's coasts, and were integral to developing knowledge of Indigenous Australia. The thesis discussion ends in 1855, at a time of great change within the navy and British science. Informed by resurgent ideas of racial classification and a nascent evolutionary theory, the foundation of the Ethnological Society of London in 1843, and of the Anthropological Society of London in 1863, framed a period of greater bureaucratic and scientific intervention into the work of naval collectors. In 1855, the retirement of Francis Beaufort as Hydrographer of the Navy, and the closure of the navy's museum at Haslar Hospital in Gosport, underlined a period of transformation in the Admiralty's approach to ethnographic knowledge.

Little is known of the cultural and imperial history of the navy in these years. 'Early and mid-Victorian naval history', as Jane Samson has observed, 'seems curiously untouched by the vibrant academic debate that characterises earlier and later periods'.¹ To this might be added a lacuna in knowledge about the history of ethnographic study, and object collecting in particular, in the early Victorian period. The significance of Australia to

¹ Jane Samson. 'An Empire of Science: The Voyage of *HMS Herald*, 1845-1851', in Alan Frost and Jane Samson (eds.). *Pacific Empires: Essays in Honour of Glyndwr Williams* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1999), 72.

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imperial authorities in Britain between 1772 and 1855 offers the makings of an explanation for the volume of Indigenous Australian objects acquired in these years, and yet scholarly discussion of contemporary naval ethnographic study has referred little to the acquisition or analysis of collected specimens. Simply put, there has thus far been no history of ethnographic collecting by the navy. In a 2013 chapter on the subject of nineteenth- and twentieth-century ‘maritime exchanges’, John MacKenzie, who is one of the foremost historians of British collecting and cultural imperialism, for instance made only a passing reference to the fact that naval sailors collected ‘sometimes for sale, for both metropolitan and colonial museums’.² MacKenzie’s source was a 2008 essay on African artefacts now held in Liverpool.³ There, in the midst of a critical study of imperial exploitation, Zachary Kingdon and Dimitri van den Bersselaar made only the very fleeting claim that to ‘the common sailors [on imperial expeditions], the trade in curiosities was principally a lucrative sideline’.⁴ In turn, their only source of information was a short, if influential, discussion of sailors made by Nicholas Thomas in 1991.⁵

Studies of British museums, and histories of the British Museum in particular, have themselves had very little to say about the relationship between the Admiralty, navy and public or private collections in the first half of the nineteenth century. As with the choice of Australia, my decision to focus principally on the collections of the British Museum is therefore in parts both pragmatic and analytical. Britain’s ‘national collection’, as it came increasingly to be known in the early nineteenth century, was by no

² John M. Mackenzie. ‘Cultural, Intellectual and Religious Networks: Britain’s Maritime Exchanges in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries’, in Miles Taylor (ed.). *The Victorian Empire and Britain’s Maritime World, 1837-1901* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 76.

³ Zachary Kingdon and Dimitri van den Bersselaar. ‘Collecting empire? African objects, West African trade and a Liverpool museum’, in Sheryllynne Haggerty, Anthony Webster and Nicholas J. White (eds.). *The empire in one city? Liverpool’s inconvenient imperial past* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 100-122.

⁴ *Ibid.* 108.

⁵ *Ibid.* 121.

Nicholas Thomas. *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 140.

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means a passive force in the development of naval ethnography. As its prestige grew, so did the attraction of donating collected material to the British Museum. As its authority and remit developed, so too did the museum's demands for the privileged knowledge acquired by the navy. As ethnographic specimens came at certain times to be defined as objects of curiosity, science, medical investigation and imperial scrutiny, their appeal to the Admiralty and to the Museum's curators variously waxed and waned. As a collection of collections, and a museum of museums, the institution's role in devouring the contents of the military, naval and other collections which did not survive the nineteenth century means also that its present and historical contents can be considered and used as an important record of nineteenth-century object collecting as it occurred in a number of different spaces.

The British Museum has further been at the vanguard of recent attempts in Britain to open a dialogue with Indigenous Australian and other indigenous peoples on the subject of the imperial encounters, collecting and exchanges which occurred in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Australia continues at present to negotiate its identity according to battles over its past; a critical, rational and fair appraisal of the exchanges which occurred after the arrival at Port Jackson of the First Fleet of British ships on 26 January 1788, commemorated now both as 'Australia Day' and 'Invasion Day', offers a necessary level of nuance to this fierce and ongoing debate.⁶ From April to August 2015, the Museum's exhibition 'Indigenous Australia: enduring civilisation' highlighted the mediatory capacity of objects by bringing for the first time the history and culture of Indigenous Australia to a twenty-first century British audience. This move toward reconciliation and understanding was echoed in its sister exhibition 'Encounters: Revealing

⁶ Klaus Neumann, Nicholas Thomas and Greg Denning have disagreed over the balance to be struck between histories which allow historical 'blame', and those which have become 'impractically disengaged'. See, for example, Klaus Neumann, 'The Stench of the Past: Revisionism in Pacific Islands and Australian History', *The Contemporary Pacific*, 10 (1998), 31-64. Nicholas Thomas, 'Partial texts: Representation, colonialism and agency in pacific history', *The Journal of Pacific History*, 25 (1990), 139-158. Greg Denning, 'Performing on the Beaches of the Mind: An Essay', *History and Theory*, 41 (2002), 1-24.

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Stories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Objects from the British Museum’, which took place in Canberra from November 2015 to March 2016. A product of this renewed energy was the award-winning ‘Yurlmun: Mokare Mia Boodja’ exhibition at the Museum of the Great Southern in Albany, Western Australia, from November 2016 to April 2017. I was fortunate to be involved in the organisation and opening of this much smaller and local exhibition of fourteen objects collected from the Menang Noongar people, traditional inhabitants of the Albany area.⁷

Through discussion with local curators, community representatives and political officials, the importance of writing a history of the encounters and relationships which occurred between naval explorers and Indigenous Australians in Albany, and throughout Australia, became clear. The ‘Yurlmun: Mokare Mia Boodja’ exhibition demonstrated that there is a story to tell of the involved, intensely personal and often reciprocated interest that sailors took in local culture, its peoples and its objects. We have increasingly succeeded, as in Kingdon and van den Bersselaar’s text, in writing difficult and ‘inconvenient’ histories of our own imperial past, but we have yet to analyse or to explain how or precisely why certain areas, such as Albany, were valued, why and which objects were treasured, and what impact those such as the Menang people had on the British colonial mindset. We had returned objects to Albany on temporary loan, but these moves toward cooperation and mutual understanding were frustrated by the fact that we could not clarify the uses to which they had historically been put, nor the purposes for which they had first been sought. As a product of the growing cultural and political engagements made by the British Museum in this new phase of its history, the significance of this thesis is found in its attempt to answer these questions.

⁷ For a summary, see Gaye Sculthorpe and Maria Nugent (eds.). *Yurlmun: Mokare Mia Boodja ‘Returning to Mokare’s Home Country’: Encounters and Collections in Menang Country* (Welshpool: Western Australian Museum, 2016).

1.1 Methods

In consequence of the research undertaken for this thesis, 126 objects now held by the British Museum were found to originate directly or indirectly from British naval surveys of Australia and the Torres Strait made between 1772 and 1855. These were those of the *Mermaid* and *Bathurst* (1817-1822), *Fly* (1842-1846) and *Rattlesnake* (1846-1850). These 126 objects, which I refer to as ‘extant’ collections, are listed and described within Appendix 3, Appendix 6 and Appendix 7, each of which relates to a particular expedition. Useful both as a reference point and as a summary of current research, these appendices support the thesis discussion by permitting readers the option to trace in a clear and simple manner the historical changes in collecting, in terms both of nature and volume, discussed within the following chapters.

The history of ethnographic collecting and exchange between the Royal Navy and Indigenous Australians in the period concerned cannot be told only through reference to these 126 extant objects, however. Such is the paucity of knowledge concerning naval collecting in the nineteenth century that these specimens by themselves offer no reliable foundation upon which to make inductive judgements about the circumstances of, or reasons for, their acquisition. Further, they make no contribution to our understanding of collecting, or the absence of collecting, on the other important naval surveys conducted in this period. Notably, the earlier but significant voyages of the *Lady Nelson* (1800-1802) and *Investigator* (1801-1803) appear not to have furnished the British Museum, or any other museums, with associated collections that may be found extant today. For this reason, the thesis methodology extends current methods for examining the history of naval collecting beyond extant object collections alone. By additionally investigating what are here termed ‘non-extant’ collections, the thesis seeks to identify and to explain the historical processes of retention and elimination which shaped the museum collections we are able to visit and examine in the present.

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The term ‘non-extant’ collections refers in part to objects which formerly resided in Britain or elsewhere, but which can no longer be located in their physical form. However, the term also includes object collections which may never have been intended for transport to public or private collections, and which may not therefore have travelled much beyond the area in which they were first found. As such, the thesis’ study of non-extant objects is not intended principally as a contribution to the history of museum collecting. Though curatorial factors such as exchange, loss, damage and poor cataloguing may explain in part the disparate numbers of objects associated with particular expeditions now at the British Museum, and though some objects were certainly given to, or can now be found at, different museums in Britain and throughout the world, I suggest that we must turn elsewhere in order to adequately explain why the collections made by some expeditions can now be found extant, whereas many others cannot. To understand in their entirety the practices which structured and governed ethnographic enquiry by naval personnel in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, I propose that it is necessary to deconstruct the often assumed connection between collecting and keeping. A feature of such study in this period was a longstanding but forgotten debate about the relative merits of what this thesis terms ‘intentional’ and ‘incidental’ collecting practices.

Intentional collections are those which were made according to a desire to bring an object or objects home, and to thereafter retain them in a collection, whether public or private. By contrast, incidental collections were made by persons who were not concerned with retaining the objects in question. In other words, incidental collections were ancillary to broader processes of enquiry which were not themselves dependent upon, or legitimated solely by, the continuing existence of the object or objects acquired. Once the distinction between these two types of collecting is realised, a new history and range of naval ethnographic practices associated with the acquisition of objects can be identified and examined. Collecting, as I argue below, was a product of multifarious concerns, encompassing anything from the need

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simply to placate an indigenous person to the use of objects as botanical or geological proxies.

The history told by this thesis is therefore in part one of the changing and intersecting regimes of intentional and incidental collecting which governed naval ethnographic enquiry in the period concerned. In order to identify and to distinguish between intentional and incidental collections, the thesis examines the various routes through which objects now extant came to be in the British Museum. The thesis also conducts a close reading of the official journals published after the completion of the voyages discussed by this thesis. A constant and interesting feature of these journals, which were almost invariably published with Admiralty assistance, is the presence of written reports of collecting found within them. Sometimes vague but often detailed, the journals' authors (usually but not always the expeditions' captains or principal naturalists) used references to collecting as a means to highlight their interest and engagement in forms of ethnographic enquiry mandated both by their instructions and their various personal interests. I have used these written reports in order to compile Appendix 1 and Appendix 2, which detail the non-extant collections, both intentional and incidental, made by the *Lady Nelson* and *Investigator*. With the exception of Appendix 5, each of the remaining appendices also incorporate the non-extant collections associated with the voyages to which they relate, therefore broadening our understanding of collecting upon them. In total, 499 non-extant object collections were identified.

The thesis discusses the many contributions that these 499 non-extant objects make to our understanding of the history of naval ethnographic collecting, and to our appreciation of the 126 extant objects now in the British Museum. Used collectively, the lists of extant and non-extant objects within the appendices chart changing practices of ethnographic collecting within the Royal Navy, as differing emphases were placed upon the need to bring objects home. Though the appendices must be considered only an indication of the true extent of collecting which occurred in the period

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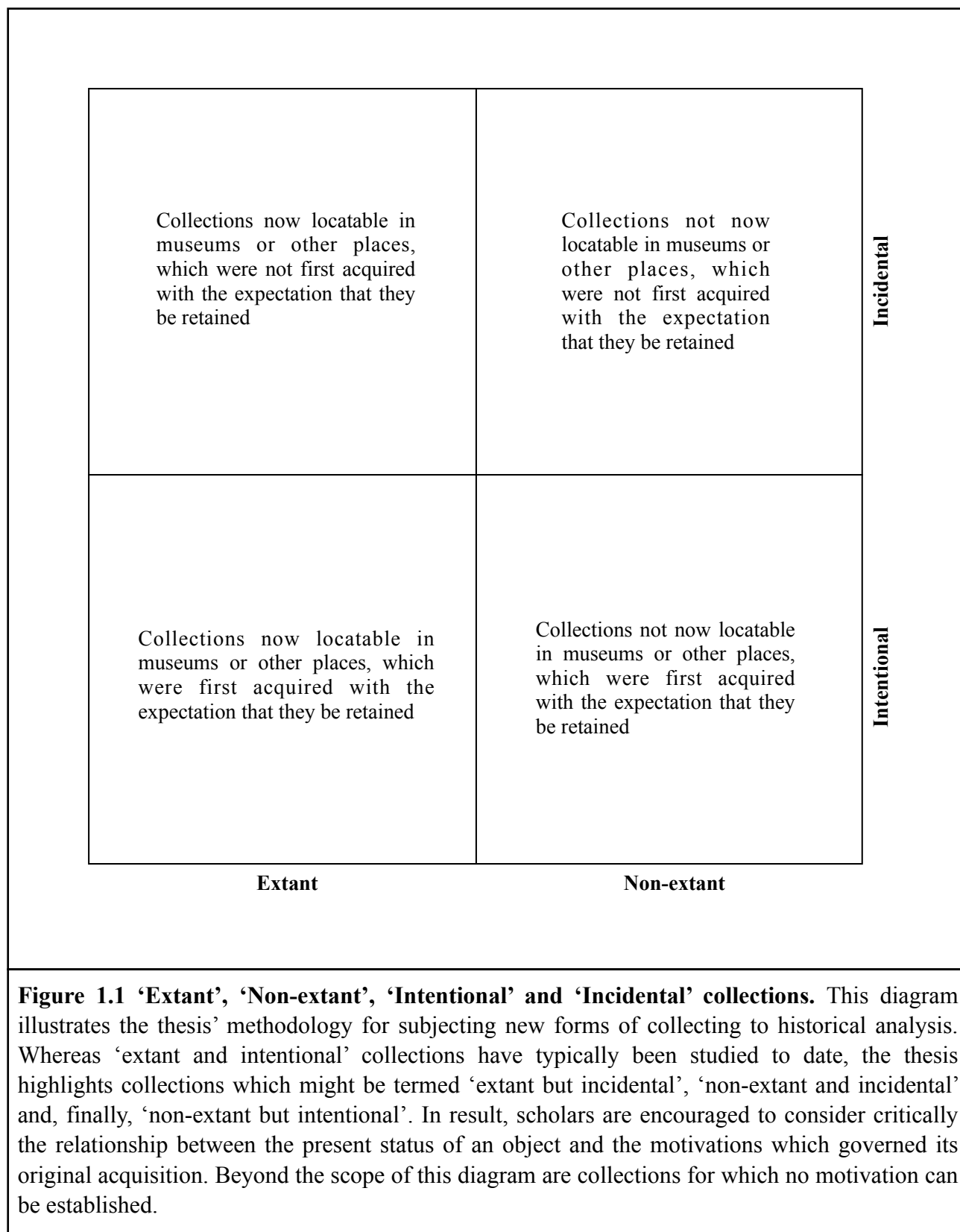
concerned, the patterns which they identify are rationalised and expanded upon throughout the thesis discussion. There, I explain the many ways in which both intentional and incidental collections reflected ethnographic interests and scientific priorities within the navy of the time. I also discuss the various historical processes by which some collections came to be ‘intentional but non-extant’, and others ‘extant but incidental’ (see Figure 1).

The thesis’ identification and analysis of collections both extant and non-extant, intentional and incidental, is essential to understanding a history of collecting that was itself highly experimental, and governed variously by empirical, textual and visual modes of representation. An important strength of the thesis methodology is the opportunity it therefore allows for reconciling equally disparate methods of scholarly analysis. An important influence in my thinking has been Amiria Salmond’s (née Henare’s) 2005 study, *Museums, Anthropology and Imperial Exchange*, in which the call is made for scholars in the humanities and social sciences to pay more attention to museum objects.⁸ There, Salmond advises a return to empirical modes of study as a means to counter the theoretical excesses of a recent ‘linguistic turn’ in anthropological scholarship. By contrast, this thesis’ methodology seeks to combine rigorous object-based study with insights arising from critical discourse analysis and other linguistic tools. Further, the thesis’ study of intentional and incidental modes of object collecting offers a historical counterpoint to Salmond’s own focus upon uncovering new anthropological data within museum collections. With minor exceptions, the case for what peculiarly historical insights might be gained by historians from a critical study of ethnographic object collections has not yet been comprehensively made.⁹

⁸ Amiria Henare. *Museums, Anthropology and Imperial Exchange* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁹ For an interesting exception (discussed below), see Robin Torrence and Anne Clark. “‘Suitable for Decoration of Halls and Billiard Rooms’: Finding Indigenous Agency in Historic Auction and Sales Catalogues”, in Sarah Byrne, Anne Clark, Rodney Harrison and Robin Torrence (eds.). *Unpacking the Collection: Networks of Material and Social Agency in the Museum* (New York: Springer, 2011), 29-54.

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The thesis methodology is born from the productive exchange of ideas, expertise and methodological approaches made possible by its association with both a museum and a university. The Arts and Humanities Research Council's Collaborative Doctoral Awards, of which this thesis is a product, have helped to reproduce the relationships found within university museums, notably the Pitt Rivers Museum at Oxford and the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology [MAA] at Cambridge, while drawing upon a wider range of researchers, historical sources and disciplinary perspectives. It is no coincidence, for example, that one of the most interesting and influential recent studies of nineteenth-century ethnographic collecting in a neglected geographical area originated itself as a Collaborative Doctoral Award project. Claire Wintle's 2013 study *Colonial Collecting and Display* offered a unique perspective on the history of an extant museum collection in the United Kingdom, by associating it with the ethnographic work performed by British travellers to the Andaman and Nicobar islands in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁰

Wintle's work might have been expanded, however, by a focus upon both extant and non-extant objects. Wintle draws upon Igor Kopytoff's 1988 essay, 'The cultural biography of things', in her study of what she calls 'tangible' and 'three-dimensional' objects held at Brighton Museum & Art Gallery, noting that such things have 'come to be seen as central to the forging of social relationships across empires, newly recognised for their ability to act as intermediaries between individuals and communities of different cultures'.¹¹ Thus, in tribute to recent work on 'object biography', Wintle's book 'follows the same group of objects through their chronological "careers", asking how, and in what conditions, they were

¹⁰ Claire Wintle. *Colonial Collecting and Display: Encounters with Material Culture from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2013).

¹¹ *Ibid.* p. 2.

Igor Kopytoff. 'The cultural biography of things', in Arjun Appadurai (ed.). *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 64-95.

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made meaningful'.¹² It is worth considering, however, whether or not this very particular focus upon extant objects is helpful to Wintle's historical study. For an extant collection to be chosen, for example, it had to be accessible and sufficiently labelled, and it had to permit inductive judgement. This may have influenced Wintle's choice of objects associated with two well-known colonial officials, and the wife of a third: Edward Horace Man, Richard Carnac Temple and Katherine Sara Tuson. The history told focused in consequence in large part upon 'the private and professional agendas' of these figures, and so understood collecting almost exclusively in terms of the colonial function of bringing intentional collections to British museums.¹³

For much the same reason, the history of object collecting in the British Empire has often been written only in terms of the history of museums, or of official collecting expeditions. In such studies, the twentieth century finds abundant representation; the superior recording practices, development of colonial anthropology and sheer volume of extant and well-recorded objects by which the century is distinguished have proven a fruitful area for research. An obvious example is Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn's 1998 edited collection, *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum*.¹⁴ Here, interesting and important questions regarding the impact of imperial intrusion on indigenous material cultures, as well as the impact of 'the power relations of colonialism' on the European interpretation of objects, are asked exclusively from the perspective of intentional and extant collections.¹⁵ The volume is intended in part as an introspective curatorial practice, whereupon 'the role of the museum is problematised both historically...and in the present'.¹⁶ In another example,

¹² Wintle. *Colonial Collecting and Display*, p. 7.

See also Chris Gosden and Frances Larson. *Knowing Things: Exploring the Collections at the Pitt Rivers Museum, 1884-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

¹³ Wintle. *Colonial Collecting and Display*, p. 7.

¹⁴ Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn (eds.). *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1998).

¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 1.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 4.

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Sarah Longair and John McAleer's 2012 *Curating Empire: Museums and the British Imperial Experience*, explored the particular relationship between the building of museums and the maintenance of empire.¹⁷ Among the most widely cited books in this field is Chris Gosden and Chantal Knowles' 2001 study *Collecting Colonialism: Material Culture and Colonial Change*.¹⁸ Here, the ethnographic collections made by four museum workers in early twentieth-century Papua New Guinea are used to emphasise the insights that the study of material culture can provide into colonial relationships. Since 1996, such studies have been especially popular in relation to Australia itself. There, the emphasis has been placed more upon collectors than museums, and yet elite or 'official' collectors are still most favoured.¹⁹

A focus on 'official' collecting, generally in the twentieth century, has grown in tandem with highly functional and bureaucratic understandings of collecting as a practice, in which the intentional collection and transfer of an object to a museum is nearly always assumed. In their introduction to *The Makers and Making of Indigenous Australian Museum Collections*, Nicholas Peterson, Lindy Allen and Louise Hamby attempt to outline the existence of certain chronological 'modes' of collecting, beginning with 'unsystematic collecting' until 1880, 'social-evolutionary theory' collecting from then until 1920, and 'collecting under the influence of "before it is too late"', from 1920 to 1940.²⁰ A more influential text, Susan Pearce's *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition*, has often been used as a starting point for studies of historical collectors, but is

¹⁷ Sarah Longair and John McAleer (eds.). *Curating Empire: Museums and the British Imperial Experience* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012).

¹⁸ Chris Gosden and Chantal Knowles (eds.). *Collecting Colonialism: Material Culture and Colonial Change* (Oxford: Berg, 2001).

¹⁹ See, for example, Tom Griffiths. *Hunters and Collectors: The Antiquarian Imagination in Australia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Susan Cochrane and Max Quanchi (eds.). *Hunting the Collectors: Pacific Collections in Australian Museums, Art Galleries and Archives* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2007). Nicholas Peterson, Lindy Allen and Louise Hamby (eds.). *The Makers and Making of Indigenous Australian Museum Collections* (Carlton: Melbourne University Publishing, 2008).

²⁰ Peterson et al. *The Makers and Making*, p. 8.

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similarly general in its offering of certain collecting ‘modes’ and chronologies.²¹ Sarah Byrne, Anne Clark, Rodney Harrison and Robin Torrence’s 2011 edited collection, *Unpacking the Collection: Networks of Material and Social Agency in the Museum*, by contrast, attempts to reconstruct the multiple agencies which surround objects, but again limits its scope by assessing only intentional and extant objects now found in museums.²² The editors recommend Actor-Network Theory [ANT] as a means to ‘reconceptualise’ such agencies, noting that ‘ANT emphasises the extent to which almost all social relations are mediated by way of material things, and that all actions are simultaneously material *and* conceptual, physical *and* symbolic’.²³ It is not clear, however, that this adds much to the text’s analysis, and I largely avoid this level and type of theory in this thesis. Though the notable contributions to scholarship of Bruno Latour and others are examined and alluded to where appropriate, the thesis pays more subtle tribute to their influence, taking for example the existence, importance and dynamism of intellectual and object-mediated networks as given.²⁴

Beyond its contribution to the manner in which we think about museums and collected objects, the thesis builds upon and challenges aspects of four other areas of historical research. Scholarly attitudes toward sailors and subaltern knowledges are dealt with most directly, and are explored immediately below. The thesis contributes also to our understanding of early ethnographic and anthropological thought, and to the role of the navy in facilitating it. I comment at various stages, especially within Chapters Two, Three and Four, on the natural history collections acquired in parallel with ethnographic objects, and the manner in which these categories often merged. Finally, the thesis contributes to postcolonial approaches to intercultural encounter and indigenous agency. The next two sections of this introductory discussion outline the thesis’ handling of these research themes.

²¹ Susan Pearce. *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1995).

²² Byrne et al. *Unpacking the Collection*.

²³ *Ibid.* p. 10.

²⁴ See, for example, Bruno Latour. *Science in Action* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1987).

1.2 Rethinking John Marra

As a category of analysis, sailors are essential to the thesis' attempt to understand the ethnographic collections made by the navy in Australia and the Torres Strait between 1772 and 1855. First identified by David Mackay as one of Banks' principal 'agents of empire' in relation to the collection of plant specimens, sailors were integral to the 'emergence from lethargy' of British science in the late eighteenth century.²⁵ Though the work of other actors on-board naval voyages, such as surgeons and naturalists, is also explored here, sailors were the largest but now least known source of ethnographic material in this period. Whereas problems in analytical scrutiny relating to surgeons and naturalists are mostly quantitative (there being a need for greater and more detailed research), the most pressing issues which attend the scholarly treatment of sailors are more qualitative.²⁶ With respect to the study of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century imperial collecting, the assumption that sailors collected only for profit, or in an entirely unscientific manner, has been a factor in the wider neglect afforded to the study of ethnographic enquiry in these years. The 'relative silence of Jack Tar' in primary historical documents, as Don Leggett put it in his 2011 survey of new cultural historiographies of the navy, has allowed such uncritical invocations to trump analytical scrutiny of what exactly sailors were doing.²⁷ Promising attempts to reinterpret the navy 'as primarily a social institution and cultural force', and to enter the mindset 'of

²⁵ David Mackay. 'Agents of empire: the Banksian collectors and evaluation of new lands', in David Phillip Miller and Peter Hanns Reill (eds.). *Visions of Empire: Voyages, Botany and Representations of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 53.

²⁶ See Chapters Two, Three and Four for a detailed discussion.

For a recent study of seaborne naturalists, see Glyn Williams. *Naturalists at Sea: Scientific Travellers from Dampier to Darwin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).

²⁷ Don Leggett. 'Review Essay: Navy, nation and identity in the long nineteenth century', *Journal for Maritime Research*, 13 (2011), 155.

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naval men within British imperial culture', have lately been made by Mary Conley, Jan Rüger and Isaac Land, but much remains to be done.²⁸

The ways in which historians think about the collections made by sailors in the uncharted period of naval history identified by Samson (from the late eighteenth to early twentieth century) have been shaped to a great deal by the comparative wealth of research focusing upon voyages made before 1800, in particular those of Cook. While extant objects have driven functional and bureaucratic understandings of collecting and imperial museums in the latter period, object exchange on the voyages of Cook and his contemporaries has to date been often the province of anthropologists and historians of anthropology alone, who seek to draw ethnographic or anthropological insights from objects, the original collection of which is usually assumed to have been driven by a form of 'curiosity' unmediated by scientific interest. The Cook voyages' popularity and interpretative dominance is in part a symptom of the volume of associated objects now found in the collections of the university museums principally involved in promoting such study: Pitt Rivers and the MAA. The voyages' popularity can however be attributed also to the fact that these were among the earliest and most famous global and imperial expeditions in British history; the erroneous impression that they often encountered previously 'undiscovered' indigenous peoples, in conjunction with the ambitious attempts that have since been made to find and record every ethnographic specimen collected upon them, have furnished scholars with an attractive subject matter and a considerable audience.²⁹

The assumption that ethnographic study did not take place on Cook's voyages is found most prominently in Adrienne Kaeppler's 1978 text

²⁸ Mary Conley. *From Jack Tar to Union Jack: representing naval manhood in the British Empire, 1870-1918* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009). Jan Rüger. *Great naval game: Britain and Germany in the Age of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). Isaac Land. *War, Nationalism and the British Sailor, 1750-1850* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

²⁹ For a critique of the supposedly objective status of specimens collected from previously 'undiscovered' peoples, see Thomas. *Entangled Objects*, p. 5.

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“Artificial Curiosities”.³⁰ Here, Kaeppler sought to catalogue all known ‘Cook objects’, but argued that they were not taken seriously as scientific specimens by their original collectors, who desired them more as commodities, or ‘curiosities’ to be sold or kept as souvenirs. More recent studies tend to accept that some form of ethnographic enquiry may have occurred on these voyages, but rarely attempt to understand the motivations of ordinary sailors, or even of Cook and his naturalists themselves; more often, such work concentrates on the anthropological insights provided by the objects in question.³¹ In 2016, Nicholas Thomas, Julie Adams, Billie Lythberg, Maia Nuku and Amiria Salmond’s volume, *Artefacts of Encounter: Cook’s Voyages, Colonial Collecting and Museum Histories*, championed this method in its investigation of two hundred Cook objects now at the MAA as an insight into ‘indigenous cultures at the formative stages of their modern histories’.³² In 2017, John McAleer and Nigel Rigby argued that many of Cook’s objects were collected ‘because they were perceived to have scientific value’, but explored the contemporary valuation of such objects only in relation to their public appeal, as a means to fill and to promote exhibitions and educational displays.³³

The neglect which continues to attend the contemporary study of ethnography on the *Endeavour*, *Resolution* and *Discovery* has occurred in spite of the fact that numerous very engaging accounts of official and subaltern efforts could easily be written. Few attempts, for example, have been made to get to the bottom of exactly what happened on 14 May 1774, when a gunner’s mate on the *Resolution*, John Marra, plunged off the ship’s deck in a desperate attempt to remain at Tahiti. Plucked from the water,

³⁰ Adrienne Kaeppler. *“Artificial Curiosities”*: being an exposition of native manufactures collected on the three Pacific voyages of Captain James Cook, R.N. (Honolulu: Bishop Museum Press, 1978).

³¹ See, for example, Simon Schaffer. ‘Visions of empire: afterword’, in Miller and Reill (eds.). *Visions of Empire*, 337.

³² Nicholas Thomas, Julie Adams, Billie Lythberg, Maia Nuku and Amiria Salmond (eds.). *Artefacts of Encounter: Cook’s Voyages, Colonial Collecting and Museum Histories* (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2016).

³³ John McAleer and Nigel Rigby. *Captain Cook and the Pacific: Art, Exploration and Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), pp. 162-167.

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Marra was assumed at the time a frustrated deserter in search of a ‘pretty wife’; his emphatic protest that he hoped in fact to become the island’s first ethnographer was treated with derision (and the skepticism was understandable).³⁴ Seemingly only one historian, Tom Ryan of the University of Waikato, has since sought to restore Marra’s reputation. Ryan argues briefly but convincingly that Marra could not have been ‘the semi-literate misfit he is generally assumed’, because he subsequently wrote and published a journal, vindicating his ethnographic interests.³⁵ Ryan observes that this was made possible by the Admiralty’s failure to consider that ordinary seamen could write such documents, which it did not therefore seek. Though a search was put in place once Cook discovered that Marra’s diaries had escaped his notice, the fact that they were eventually ignored, not being ‘worth regarding’, speaks volumes about the contemporary contempt for what was nevertheless an energetic and involved ethnographic interest among sailors.³⁶ That Marra was Irish, Ryan suggests, may imply the existence of further hierarchies in permissible knowledge.³⁷

Ryan does not comment, however, on the scientific context in which Marra operated. We do not know why Marra thought his studies worth undertaking, whether he expected to attract any particular audience, and if so at whom his investigations might have been aimed. Though I confine my attention in this thesis largely to sailors who made ethnographic collections and associated investigations on voyages operating in the first half of the nineteenth century, it is these questions that I seek to answer. At the heart of the issue, perhaps, is the degree to which the collections made by sailors like Marra may be considered to have been ‘curiosities’, and if so, the question of what exactly is meant by that term. Though Kaepler was unwilling to

³⁴ Tom Ryan. ‘Blue-Lip’d Cannibal Ladies: The Allure of the Exotic in the Illicit *Resolution* Journal of Gunner John Marra’, in Allan Smith (ed.). *Bright Paradise: Exotic History and Sublime Artifice: the 1st Auckland Triennial* (Auckland: Auckland Art Gallery, 2001), 89-95.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 90.

John Marra. *Journal of the Resolution’s Voyage* (Dublin: Caleb Jenkin; John Beatty, 1776).

³⁶ Ryan. ‘Blue-Lip’d Cannibal Ladies’, 89.

³⁷ *Ibid.* 90.

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admit that eighteenth-century forms of ‘curiosity’ bore any relation or relevance to scientific study, and therefore that collected ‘curiosities’ possessed any scientific value, this conclusion is not now widely shared. Scholars including Katie Whittaker and Nicholas Thomas have since demonstrated that ‘curiosity’ collections were deeply embedded within British intellectual culture, and quite capable of being understood *simultaneously* as products of passion and as legitimate units of knowledge.³⁸ The decontextualised visual representations of ethnographic specimens often associated with Cook’s voyages, Thomas suggests, are evidence of a contemporary struggle to distinguish ‘licensed’ forms of curiosity from practices of collecting then considered largely commercial and unscientific. The passionate debates which then abounded about authorised and unauthorised forms of curiosity, says Thomas, are amply demonstrated in a journal passage written in 1774, two months following Marra’s frustrated sojourn at Tahiti, by the naturalist to the *Resolution*, Johann Reinhold Forster:

Today a Saylor offered me 6 Shells to sale, all of which were not quite compleat, & he asked half a Gallon brandy for them, which is now worth more than half a Guinea. This shews however what these people think to get for their Curiosities when they come home, & how difficult it must be for a Man like me, sent out on purpose by Government to collect Natural Curiosities, to get these things from the Natives in the Isles, as every Sailor whatsoever buys vast Quantities of Shells, birds, fish, etc. so that the things get dearer & scarcer than one would believe, & often they go to such people, who have made vast Collections, especially of Shells, viz. the Gunner & Carpenter, who have several 1000 Shells; some of these Curiosities are neglected, broke, thrown over board, or lost.³⁹

³⁸ Katie Whittaker. ‘The Culture of Curiosity’, in Nick Jardine, J. A. Secord and E. C. Spary (eds.). *Cultures of Natural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 75-90. Nicholas Thomas. ‘Licensed Curiosity: Cook’s Pacific Voyages’, in John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (eds.). *The Cultures of Collecting* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), 117-136.

³⁹ Michael E. Hoare (ed.). *The Resolution Journal of Johann Reinhold Forster, 1772-1775* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1982), p. 254.

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Here, Forster suggested that his ‘Natural Curiosities’ were qualitatively different from the ‘Curiosities’ of sailors; the term itself did not therefore do the work of distinguishing legitimate enquiry from practices associated only with commercial gain. Forster ‘associated his own interest with that of the Government and public’, says Thomas, ‘while representing the sailors as acting from a mercenary greed’.⁴⁰ Thomas’ analysis is compelling, but more remains to be said about what, if not greed, the sailors’ ‘curiosity’ collections may really have represented. In the absence of an explanation for the gunner (who worked alongside Marra) and carpenter’s extraordinary collection of shells, subsequent historians have been less critical in their use of Forster’s passage, which has been reproduced extensively in studies of expeditionary science. Forster’s argument has sometimes been taken at face value, and so used to illustrate the difficulties faced by scientific naturalists, both on the Cook voyages and subsequently, to collect in an environment supposedly distinguished by the acquisitive and frenetic commercial behaviour of the naval sailors who accompanied and surrounded them.⁴¹

In pursuit of a firmer understanding of sailors’ curiosity, it is perhaps necessary to distinguish between what ‘curiosities’ represented once they reached a collection on land, and the functions they fulfilled while at sea. Though it is interesting to consider how the extensive literature on, and theories about, the *Wunderkammer* and elite cabinets of curiosity in Britain and Europe might inform our understanding of maritime collecting, as does Janelle Schwartz in her study of ‘Captain Cook’s Cabinet’, naval expeditions did not simply create floating cabinets of curiosity of their own.⁴² Metropolitan fashions and debates about authority, methods of

⁴⁰ Thomas. ‘Licensed Curiosity’, 135.

⁴¹ See, for example, Tiffany Jenkins. *Keeping their Marbles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 26; Gwyneira Isaac and Barbara Isaac. ‘Uncovering the demographics of collecting: A case-study of the US Exploring Expedition (1838–1842)’, *Journal of the History of Collections*, 28 (2016), 212; Fanny Wonu Veys. *Unwrapping Tongan Barkcloth: Encounters, Creativity and Female Agency* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), p. 55.

⁴² Janelle A. Schwartz. ‘Captain Cook’s Cabinet: The Making of an Arctic Imaginary’, in Janelle A. Schwartz and Nhora Lucía Serrano (eds.). *Curious Collectors, Collected Curiosities: An Interdisciplinary Study* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 63-73.

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display and the manner of categorising an eclectic range of specimens certainly greeted naval collections on their return, but did not necessarily inform or shape their initial acquisition. It is important not to forget the fact that naval collecting was very often a product of Admiralty instruction, which brought with it a peculiar range of priorities. Though Thomas argues convincingly, for example, that the practice of decontextualising ethnographic collections through illustrations and engravings was used to transform such things into more authoritative scientific specimens, and so to distinguish the work of collectors such as Forster from that of ordinary sailors, it is equally important to observe that this mode of representation was, in the nineteenth century, often clearly implicated in the Admiralty's struggle to effectively police the acquisition, dissemination and analysis of the ethnographic specimens it sought.⁴³ In this later period, ordinary sailors also created decontextualised object illustrations of their own.⁴⁴

Little has been written about what the term 'curiosity' might have meant within this seaborne world of naval ethnographic enquiry. In official parlance, at least, I argue in this thesis that its use was not so common as might be supposed; the Admiralty instructions associated with the expeditions here discussed often shunned the word 'curiosity', and seemingly deliberately. Though inconsistent in their offering of an alternative vocabulary with which to refer to collected things, the instructions clearly mandated a more focused line of enquiry than the term itself would permit. At various stages, directions to collect referred, for example, to 'articles of the dresses and arms of the natives', 'Arms Utensils and Ornaments', and 'the state of the arts, or manufactures [of Indigenous Australians]'. As discussed above, the references to intentional and incidental collections found within naval journals were often similarly explicit. Their purpose being to delineate the collections acquired, rather than to make reference to collecting in general, specific descriptions were given of the objects in question, and the word 'curiosity' was seldom used.

⁴³ See Chapter Three, section 3.2.

⁴⁴ See Chapter Six, section 6.4.

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It is in the unpublished letters, diaries and journals of the naval collectors themselves that the term ‘curiosity’ is most often found. To read these is to become aware of a rich and theatrical culture of acquisition and exchange on naval expeditions, through which one glimpses the complex and esoteric world best and most famously described by Greg Dening.⁴⁵ Objects were traded not only between sailors and indigenous peoples, but between communities of sailors themselves. The rights to acquire collected ‘curiosities’, or to purchase the ‘trade gear’ necessary for their initial acquisition, were a source of tension and sometimes of argument; ‘curiosities’ were thus enrolled within the negotiation and reproduction of informal hierarchies, but were capable also of creating and disrupting formal naval discipline. More positively, collecting often helped to bridge the divides between upper and lower decks. In the absence of certifiable experts or established systems of value, and in consequence of the fact that moments of encounter offered collectors of all ranks largely equal opportunities to make acquisitions, ‘curiosities’ allowed for a democratic form of scientific enquiry sometimes to be practiced without restriction.

Thomas’ discussion of the ambiguity of ‘curiosity’ both as a knowledge practice and as a term is well-supported by the collectors here discussed, many of whom saw no contradiction in enrolling within ethnographic investigations those ‘curiosities’ they avowedly first acquired merely as sources of entertainment, or as items for exchange. For this reason, ‘curiosities’ were sometimes perfect examples of what I refer to as incidental collections. Though they suffered many contemporary usages in the period discussed by this thesis, the most enduring definition of ‘curiosity’ or ‘curiosities’, as a reference to objects acquired, may be said to have been approximately, if never explicitly, as follows: ‘an item or items of potential but unclear value, not belonging to any established field of enquiry, but likely relevant to the construction of knowledge’. For the

⁴⁵ Greg Dening. *Mr Bligh’s Bad Language: Passion, Power and Theatre on the Bounty* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

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purposes of this thesis, this is my own meaning of the term. As I have explained in the ‘Notes on Terminology’ which precede the introduction, however, I seek to avoid linguistic and semantic confusion, and to explore a wider and more specific range of practices, by employing instead the language of ‘ethnographic’ collecting and collections, when referring to object acquisitions made in the pursuit of knowledge.

1.3 Naval collecting and the history of ethnography and anthropology

To date, discussions of the navy’s contribution to the construction of ethnographic and anthropological knowledge have seldom examined the extent to which the scientific forms of curiosity discussed above stimulated the production of valuable data. Instead, nineteenth-century debates about the ‘science of man’ are said to have been largely the privilege of metropolitan elites such as James Cowles Prichard. According to this view, the collections made by naval sailors and associated ‘amateurs’ are best interpreted as a form of ‘fact gathering’; the ‘field collectors’ in question were supplied with instructions and questionnaires published by Prichard and other ethnologists, and therefore did not pursue research questions of their own.⁴⁶ Though it is undoubtedly the case, as Michael Bravo has shown, that such directions did indeed allow naval ‘surveyors and explorers’ to become a reliable and respected source of ‘field observations’ toward the second half of the nineteenth century, this is to tell only part of a rich and complex story.⁴⁷ The scientific instructions which the Admiralty itself gave to naval expeditions were often less prescriptive than those provided by ethnologists, and so encouraged naval collectors to conceive of and to pursue their own investigations. Naval collectors were not, therefore, wholly

⁴⁶ See, for example, Michael Bravo. ‘Ethnological Encounters’, in Jardine, Secord and Spary (eds.). *Cultures of Natural History*, 344.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

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akin to Steven Shapin's 'invisible technicians', whose work was intimately directed by recognised scientists, but not credited by them.⁴⁸

As discussed above, the intentional and incidental forms of collecting permitted by the Admiralty's often ambiguous directions were implicated in a wide and often experimental range of naval ethnographic practices. The chapters below draw attention, for instance, to the implicit taxonomy of object nomenclature; though no formal system existed, sailors incorporated and ordered collected objects into European systems of understanding and value. When the naval master's mate John Septimus Roe observed in relation to a collection made in Australia in 1817, for example, that 'The fishgig is an instrument with which they spear fish, & is in reality a spear', he followed a wider trend of creatively subdividing ethnographic objects into hierarchical categories reminiscent of more systematic classificatory regimes.⁴⁹ To Roe, the 'fishgig' was understood almost as a species of the genus 'spear'. When objects were by contrast incommensurable with European traditions, their collectors were less likely to name them using English words, and the collections were more likely to be valued (as taxonomically novel specimens). We see this in 'Boomerang' and 'Didjeridu', where the indigenous term has been retained.⁵⁰

Among historians of anthropology, Efram Sera-Shriar has led related attempts to expand the study of historical anthropological thought beyond the boundaries of the history of the scholarly discipline; to extend, in other words, the work of George Stocking to the disparate practices which existed in early nineteenth-century Britain.⁵¹ Since his 2013 study, *The Making of British Anthropology, 1813-1871*, Sera-Shriar has begun to consider critically the role of the navy in gathering ethnographic data.⁵² Though Sera-

⁴⁸ Steven Shapin. 'The Invisible Technician', *American Scientist*, 77 (1989), 554-563.

⁴⁹ See Chapter Four, section 4.6.

⁵⁰ The tables found within the Appendix offer further examples of the contemporary terminology used to describe collected objects.

⁵¹ George W. Stocking. *Victorian Anthropology* (New York: The Free Press, 1987).

⁵² Efram Sera-Shriar. *The Making of British Anthropology, 1813-1871* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013).

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Shriar affords a certain agency to naval ethnographers, his work is largely concerned with the assistance that such actors provided to metropolitan figures, and to Prichard in particular. Sera-Shriar's recent study of the ethnographic observations made by Phillip Parker King, on the 1826-1836 South American voyages of the *Adventure* and *Beagle*, is perceptive in examining King's approach, but does not explain for whom King was acting or to what degree his work was a function of Admiralty concerns (discussed in Chapter Four of this thesis).⁵³ In addition, though promising in its effort to interrogate the work of naval figures, Sera-Shriar's study does not move much beyond King, the voyage's captain, in order to examine the actions of the assistants, naturalists and ordinary sailors who facilitated the survey's work.

In line with the discussion of the last section, this thesis by contrast makes a consistent effort to explore how ethnographic enquiries were made throughout the naval hierarchy. I consider the history and prestige of object collecting relative to other naval ethnographic practices, including visual documentation, textual reportage and philological enquiry.⁵⁴ In doing so, I draw inspiration from Bravo's study of the whaling captain William Scoresby, which examined the particular merits of collecting as a technique of social and scientific 'improvement' between the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁵⁵ Within Chapters Six and Seven in particular, the thesis follows other studies of contemporary scientific practice by considering the differences in nature and purpose of what might be termed 'amateur' and 'professional' forms of naval collecting.⁵⁶ Though I do not

⁵³ Efram Sera-Shriar. 'Tales from Patagonia: Phillip Parker King and early ethnographic observation in British ethnology, 1826-1830', *Studies in Travel Writing*, 19 (2015), 204-223.

⁵⁴ For a study of naval draughtsmanship as a scientific methodology, see Bernard Smith. *European Vision and the South Pacific* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). For a study of the value of images as proxy specimens, see Martin Rudwick. 'Georges Cuvier's paper museum of fossil bones', *Archives of Natural History*, 27 (2000), 51-68.

⁵⁵ Michael Bravo. 'Geographies of exploration and improvement: William Scoresby and Arctic whaling, 1782-1822', *Journal of Historical Geography*, 32 (2006), 512-538.

⁵⁶ See, for example, Jean-Marc Drouin and Bernadette Bensaude-Vincent. 'Nature for the people', in Jardine, Secord and Spary (eds.). *Cultures of Natural History*, 419-423.

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argue that these categories would have been recognised at the time, I suggest that they help us to consider how and why certain techniques, and persons, came to be favoured. Here, a ‘professional’ collector is defined as one who was employed to work on a voyage in a scientific capacity, whether as an ethnographer or not. An ‘amateur’, by contrast, is one who was not employed to undertake such investigations, and who did not possess any relevant background or professional training.

In relation neither to professionals nor to amateurs, however, has naval object collecting yet been considered rigorously within a study of the development of ethnography and anthropology in Britain. Sera-Shriar commented in an article published in 2014 that King collected various objects from Indigenous Australians according to ‘military concerns’, but did not see this as a significant part of King’s ‘observational practices’.⁵⁷ In a 2004 study of naval contributions to the Pitt Rivers Museum, Alison Petch suggested that the navy made large ethnographic collections, but did not examine the motivations of the ‘field collectors’ in question.⁵⁸ The most recent attempt to theorise nineteenth-century naval collecting appeared in 2008, in a survey article of ‘Maritime Collections at Bristol’s City Museum and Art Gallery’ by Sue Giles.⁵⁹ Here, Giles offers a useful analysis of the names and locations associated with extant naval collections now at the Bristol museum. In her discussion of the theories and practices which informed collecting, Giles reminds us not to assume that clear disciplinary boundaries existed at the time. John Erskine Field Risk and Joseph Beete Jukes, both of whom joined the voyage of the *Fly*, were ‘usually naturalists, not anthropologists’, she suggests, whose ‘main interest was in natural

⁵⁷ Efram Sera-Shriar. ‘What is Armchair Anthropology? Observational Practices in 19th-century British Human Sciences’, *History of the Human Sciences*, 27 (2014), 34.

⁵⁸ Alison Petch. ‘Collecting Immortality: the field collectors who contributed to the Pitt Rivers Museum, Oxford’, *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, 16 (2004), 127-139.

⁵⁹ Sue Giles. ‘Maritime Collections at Bristol’s City Museum and Art Gallery’, *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, 20 (2008), 94-105.

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history, a category in which they might or might not include the indigenous people'.⁶⁰

The ambiguous boundary between ethnography and natural history is of great relevance to our understanding of the collections made in the period covered by this thesis, and has been the subject of numerous interesting discussions. In line with Giles' argument, a common conclusion has been that contemporaries were generally more concerned to explore what could be included, rather than excluded, from natural history, which was a popular but amorphous category of study. Often associated with plants and animals in particular, perhaps the simplest workable definition of the pursuit of natural history might read thus: 'the study of things considered to be natural'. Necessarily implicit to all forms of natural history, then, was an equal consideration of those things which might be considered *unnatural*, whether as a corruption of a supposedly natural order of things, or as an instance of the divine.⁶¹ For this reason, a creative tension existed between the study of natural history and the study of man.⁶²

This productive ambiguity was often apparent in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century museum collections, and in earlier cabinets of curiosity, as George Stocking, Katie Whitaker, Stacey Sloboda and many others have shown.⁶³ There, the chaotic display, or deliberate juxtaposition, of ethnographic and natural history specimens provoked and challenged visitors to consider again the boundaries between different types of object. It remains, however, entirely reasonable to suggest that most if not all contemporaries would have considered animals, plants, fossils and

⁶⁰ *Ibid.* 98.

⁶¹ For a study of the relationship between these arguments and the expansion of colonialism, see Surekha Davies. *Renaissance Ethnography and the Invention of the Human* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

⁶² John Gascoigne. 'The Royal Society, natural history and the peoples of the "New World(s)", 1660-1800', *The British Journal for the History of Science*, 42 (2009), 539-562.

⁶³ George W. Stocking. *Objects and Others: Essays on Museums and Material Culture* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1986), p. 7. Whitaker. 'The Culture of Curiosity', p. 75. Stacey Sloboda. 'Displaying Materials: Porcelain and Natural History in the Duchess of Portland's Museum', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 43 (2010), 459.

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geological specimens to be those things which sat most comfortably within the semantic and conceptual boundaries of ‘natural history’, across which objects created by man *might* be permitted to travel in certain circumstances and contexts, whether in the form of a deliberate argument or as special pleading. It is for this reason that I refer separately to natural history specimens and to ethnographic specimens in this thesis, while nevertheless paying attention to the manner and moments in which these categories were dialectically constructed, deconstructed and merged.

Though my use of the term ‘ethnographic’ refers in a descriptive sense to practices associated with the study of man in the nineteenth century, Bravo and Gillian Beer have shown that the word itself, along with ‘ethnography’ and ‘ethnology’, in fact originated in the 1830s and 1840s amid such efforts to determine how or whether to include human beings within the scope of natural history.⁶⁴ At the ninth meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1839, and within the Ethnological Society of London after its foundation in 1843, ethnologists such as Prichard investigated the physical and civil histories of foreign peoples, and the distribution of human ‘races’ across the globe. It was only after 1863, notes Bravo, that the term ‘anthropology’ came to be widely used, with more explicit reference to physical and anatomical investigations of ‘race’.⁶⁵

After Bravo and Sera-Shriar, one of the clearest calls to consider the role of the navy within these arguments and developments has come from Bronwen Douglas, who suggests that the transition away from discussions of the ‘natural history of man’ toward emergent forms of anthropological thinking, between the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, was intimately associated with ‘seaborne ethnography’, and the information it returned.⁶⁶ In a study of the naval captain Frederick William Beechey’s 1825-1828 voyage

⁶⁴ Bravo. ‘Ethnological Encounters’, 339. Gillian Beer. ‘Travelling the other way’, in Jardine, Secord and Spary (eds.). *Cultures of Natural History*, 325-327.

⁶⁵ Bravo. ‘Ethnological Encounters’, 356.

⁶⁶ Bronwen Douglas. ‘Seaborne Ethnography and the Natural History of Man’, *The Journal of Pacific History*, 38 (2003), 4.

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of the *Blossom*, Janet Owen offers one of the only detailed analyses of how these changes may in turn have impacted upon the collection of ethnographic specimens.⁶⁷ Observing that ‘real scientific curiosity’ existed in relation to ethnography among Beechey and his contemporaries, Owen examines the shifting ways in which such objects were understood within ‘Enlightenment’ and ‘Darwinist’ paradigms.⁶⁸ Though valuable, Owen’s work makes an assumption similar to that identified above in relation to sailors as ‘field collectors’ by implying that naval actors such as Beechey are best considered almost passive agents of wider ideological trends concerned in the maintenance and ‘acquisition’ of empire. In what I have already suggested is a common feature of such studies, Owen’s focus on the Enlightenment and Darwinism does not adequately appreciate the Admiralty’s particular interest in ethnographic specimens, as it existed at the time. ‘Admiralty instructions made no specific reference to the scientific importance of collecting ethnographic material at this time but focused on the physical sciences’, says Owen.⁶⁹ This was true of the direction (if not the collections) of the voyage of the *Blossom*, but not of its predecessors and successors. In 1816, as I explore in Chapter Four, the Second Secretary to the Admiralty John Barrow published a memorandum for use on a range of imperial voyages, in which was outlined the importance of collecting ‘the arts, or manufactures’ of ‘different tribes’ throughout the British Empire.

1.4 Indigenous agency and postcolonial histories of Australia

The thesis champions the study of object collecting and material exchange as a contribution to recent, postcolonial, efforts to include indigenous perspectives and voices within the history of the British Empire and of Australian settlement. The study of indigenous ‘go-betweens’, raised most notably by Simon Schaffer, Lissa Roberts, Kapil Raj and James Delbourgo

⁶⁷ Janet Owen. ‘Collecting artefacts, acquiring empire: Exploring the relationship between Enlightenment and Darwinist collecting and late-nineteenth-century British imperialism’, *Journal of the History of Collections*, 18 (2006), 9-25.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.* 13.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* 14.

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in *The Brokered World*, and more recently by Shino Konishi, Maria Nugent and Tiffany Shellam in *Indigenous Intermediaries*, has stimulated a wealth of research on the significant but often ‘hidden’ roles played by indigenous persons in the expansion and consolidation of empire.⁷⁰ Much of this debate has centred upon Pacific and particularly Australian histories of intercultural contact, but the idiosyncrasies of specifically naval encounter are still largely unexplored.⁷¹ Complex interactions between sailors and indigenous peoples formed the bulk of naval encounters; their often overlooked agencies need to be understood in relation to a mutually productive process, or to what Michael Davis has called the ‘intersection’ of knowledge systems.⁷² In relation to naval culture particularly, there remains a need to follow Greg Denning in considering these encounters as highly theatrical and performative moments, susceptible to idiosyncrasies and nuances specific to the personalities, and histories, of those involved.⁷³

Where indigenous agency is not obvious in the reports of naval and other explorers, or was intentionally disguised, Bronwen Douglas has offered a solution based in the ‘lexico-semantic’ study of indigenous ‘countersigns’. This influential technique is used both to recover the actions of indigenous peoples and to examine the mindset of British explorers in relation to the broader epistemological paradigms mentioned above in relation to Owen. Colonial texts, says Douglas, are ‘infused by counter-hegemonic impressions of subversion by the colonized’. The ‘perceptions, reactions, and representations of the purportedly dominant were affected by the agency

⁷⁰ Simon Schaffer, Lissa Roberts, Kapil Raj and James Delbourgo (eds.). *The Brokered World: Go-betweens and Global Intelligence, 1770-1820* (Sagamore Beach, MA: Science History Publications, 2009). Shino Konishi, Maria Nugent and Tiffany Shellam (eds.). *Indigenous Intermediaries* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2015). See also Felix Driver. ‘Hidden histories made visible? Reflections on a geographical exhibition’, *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 38 (2013), 420-435.

⁷¹ See, for example, Tiffany Shellam. *Shaking Hands on the Fringe: Negotiating the Aboriginal World at King George’s Sound* (Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 2009).

⁷² Michael Davis. ‘Encountering Aboriginal Knowledge: Explorer Narratives on north-east Queensland, 1770 to 1820’, *Aboriginal History*, 37 (2013), 32.

⁷³ See particularly, among his rich canon of work, Greg Denning. *Beach Crossings: Voyaging Across Times, Cultures and Self* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

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of the supposedly subjugated'.⁷⁴ Douglas' argument is in part vulnerable to the charge that the hegemonic discourses or 'presuppositions' supposed to have governed the work of colonial explorers, and to have been countered by indigenous peoples in 'the volatile stew of cross-cultural encounters', were too inconsistent or subtle to realistically detect in the writings of most contemporary actors.⁷⁵ The historian Randolph Cock, for instance, has rejected the idea that 'the scientific servicemen and civilians who conducted surveys around the globe were, at best, the unwitting pawns of malevolent Machiavellian forces'.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, the search for indigenous agency in European prose has yielded promising results. Douglas has shown that in moments of doubt or uncertainty, the dominant discourse of exploration became ambiguous, and so too did language itself. The otherwise rational actor, when faced with perplexing or threatening indigenous behaviour, might for example make ambiguous accusations of 'treachery' and 'savagery', in a departure from staid ethnographic or philosophical discourse.⁷⁷

I draw upon Douglas' theories at length in Chapter Three, and use them in a more general manner throughout the thesis in whole. The critical study of language is essential to understanding and deconstructing naval reports and journals, and is important too in the identification and analysis of intentional and incidental collections. Nevertheless, I consider the study of collecting and of the exchanges which occurred in result to be an equally viable methodology in its own right. Whereas the search for countersigns might begin at random in the pages of European texts, for example, the study of collecting offers a more focused set of practices, discourses and agencies for the postcolonial historian to explore. How, when and why, for instance, did

⁷⁴ Bronwen Douglas. *Science, Voyages, and Encounters in Oceania, 1511-1850* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 20.

⁷⁵ Bronwen Douglas. 'Philosophers, Naturalists, and Antipodean Encounters, 1748-1802', *Intellectual History Review*, 23 (2013), 393. Douglas. 'Seaborne Ethnography', 4.

⁷⁶ Randolph Cock. 'Scientific Servicemen in the Royal Navy and the Professionalisation of Science, 1816-55', in David Knight and Matthew Eddy (eds.). *Science and Beliefs: From Natural Philosophy to Natural Science, 1700-1900* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 99.

⁷⁷ Douglas. 'Philosophers, Naturalists, and Antipodean Encounters', 403.

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moments of exchange occur, and on whose instigation? How were exchange rates negotiated, and on whose terms? Extant collections, as Robin Torrence and Anne Clark found in their study of museum storerooms and auction house catalogues, can be used to chart the reactive indigenous manufacture of ethnographic specimens according to the desires of European collectors, just as the ‘trade gear’ supplied to the navy took into account regional preferences.⁷⁸ Given sufficient imagination and attention to detail, as Philip Jones demonstrates in *Ochre and Rust*, scholarship grounded in extant collections can also uncover the indigenous agencies imbricated in the more functional and bureaucratic histories of collecting reviewed above.⁷⁹ In turn, the study of intentional and incidental collections allows for more directed forms of lexico-semantic analysis of European journals, for example in the relative meaning of reports of ‘buying’, ‘thieving’, ‘confiscating’, ‘borrowing’, ‘saving’, ‘purchasing’, ‘acquiring’, ‘exchanging’ and, indeed, ‘collecting’, in either direction. Such reports also open up the study of ‘counter-collecting’, in which can be explored the acquisitive tendencies and motivations of indigenous peoples, who seem sometimes almost to have amassed museums of European objects of their own.

As a blend of scientific and cultural enquiry, political negotiation, imperial necessity and intercultural understanding, the exchange of objects was intrinsic to colonial encounter. Collecting reveals not only indigenous presence but the equally neglected agency of sailors and colonial explorers, allowing us to investigate in a more realistic and pragmatic way the various forces at play in moments of intercultural contact. A collection made by a sailor, for example, could plausibly and without contradiction embody the fulfilment of his instruction to acquire ethnographic specimens, his wish to follow up a line of enquiry of his own, his need to establish friendship or avoid conflict with a certain indigenous person, and a wish to make a future profit; the specimens he receives may be entirely decided by the indigenous

⁷⁸ Torrence and Clark. “‘Suitable for Decoration of Halls and Billiard Rooms’”, 29-54. See also Robin Torrence and Anne Clarke. ‘Excavating ethnographic collections: negotiations and cross-cultural exchange in Papua New Guinea’, *World Archaeology*, 48 (2016), 181-195.

⁷⁹ Philip Jones. *Ochre and Rust* (Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 2007).

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person in question, who may well have arranged the meeting and decided its terms. In such cases, perhaps, a single collection could be both intentional *and* incidental. Beyond such intensely personal moments of negotiation, which were often recorded in vivid detail, sailors' collections bear witness to much broader imperial processes. In my examination of the peaks and troughs of collecting, and of the Admiralty's ambivalent approach to the acquisition and retention of objects, there emerge new insights into the operation of the British Empire and the colonisation of Australia.

1.5 Structure of the thesis

The thesis' argument is contained in six chapters, within three sections. The thesis is structured chronologically, but each section addresses a broadly different theme, based upon the four research questions listed above. Each chapter, with the exception of Chapter Five, follows a voyage or expedition of particular, contemporary, significance to the exploration of Australia. The first thesis section is titled 'The Banksian Inheritance'. Here, Chapters Two and Three explore Joseph Banks' interest in and influence on the ethnographic collecting undertaken by the Royal Navy in Australia between 1772 and 1802, with a particular focus on the voyages of the *Lady Nelson* (1800-1802) and *Investigator* (1801-1803). The principal intention of this first section is to reshape academic understanding of Banks' role as an early patron of naval collecting in general, and of ethnographic study in particular. Whereas it is widely understood that Banks was a powerful figure in the contemporary Royal Society, and that he had an involved interest in certain subsections of natural history, I show that scholars have failed to appreciate the detrimental effect this had on the development of other knowledge disciplines, especially the study of foreign object specimens and their creators. Banks' power and status were, I argue, crucial factors in the low importance accorded to ethnographic specimens at the turn of the nineteenth century.

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Chapter Two understands these issues from the perspective of infrastructure. Naval collectors on imperial voyages relied upon physical infrastructure, such as the provision of an adequate ship and materials necessary for trade, and upon a bureaucratic and scientific infrastructure, upon which a collection might be kept, made official, transferred and understood. After 1772, Banks was increasingly decisive in the operation and maintenance of both such infrastructures. The chapter begins with an exploration of early ethnographic work in Australia performed by, among others, Matthew Flinders and George Bass in the *Tom Thumb* (1795-1796). It then contrasts this with the work undertaken by the *Lady Nelson* under James Grant. By comparing the instructions given to Grant both officially and unofficially by Banks and his Admiralty superiors, I show that Grant and the Admiralty's early interest in developing an ethnographic knowledge tradition already begun in Australia was disrupted by Banks' concern for an alternative range of specimens. Significantly, I show that Banks' interests were narrow relative to those of his contemporaries. By positing a hitherto unknown link between the voyage of the *Lady Nelson* and the collecting philosophy of the Portland Museum at Bulstrode Hall, in Buckinghamshire, I suggest that the early history of ethnographic collecting might have been different in the absence of 'the despotism of Joseph Banks'.

Chapter Three continues this line of enquiry with a more particular focus on the origins and history of the voyage of the *Investigator*, which Flinders captained during his first circumnavigation of the Australian continent. Observing that Banks was crucial to the organisation of the voyage, and that seemingly no object specimens were brought to England in consequence, I offer further evidence for the impact of Banks' apparent lack of interest in extant ethnographic collections. I question whether non-extant or incidental collections were considered more valuable. Finding that reports of collecting and ethnographic investigation were abundant in sailors' contemporary journals, I develop my argument that ethnographic collecting was not necessarily premised on the intentional retention of specimens. Using a discourse analysis of Flinders' journal, as well as those of his

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contemporaries, I show that collecting was governed by various personal and political tensions. In so doing, I critique the reliance upon dominant colonial mindsets endemic to the linguistic techniques deployed in recent studies of Indigenous Australian agency. The complex behaviours of individual sailors in connection with the varying accuracy of their texts qualifies attempts by such studies to detect indigenous countersigns within British documents. I argue instead that the study of collecting provides a superior glimpse into the various agencies of both Indigenous Australian and British actors.

The second section of the thesis is titled 'Transitions'. Here, Chapters Four and Five explore the growing number of intentional and incidental object collections made in Australia by naval expeditions in the years after the Napoleonic Wars. I show that Banks' death in 1820 was accompanied by growing Admiralty interest in ethnographic collections, but I seek wider answers to the question of why many of the earliest and in many cases largest known collections of Indigenous Australian objects were made after 1815. Chapter Four posits that this was a period in which older forms of 'curiosity' collecting both competed and merged with innovative forms of object-based study, given license by the increasing adoption of the navy as a scientific infrastructure by the Admiralty of the time. In this context, ethnographic collections served as 'boundary objects', being open to a range of interpretations and disciplinary usages. The chapter conducts a detailed investigation of those actors known to have collected ethnographic specimens on-board Phillip Parker King's 1817-1822 survey of the Australian coasts. By identifying in turn the collections of King, his two lieutenants and his botanist, I evaluate the relative contemporary importances of acquiring or recording objects, illustrating them and sending them either to public or private institutions.

Chapter Five charts the Admiralty's developing interest in acquiring intentional and extant collections of ethnographic specimens after the King expedition's return. More broadly, I examine in detail the metropolitan

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reception of the knowledges embodied in the intentional and incidental collections made on-board voyages of discovery to Australia in the first half of the nineteenth century. I do so by tracing the origins, development and legacy of Haslar Hospital Museum, a naval institution created in 1827 that was dedicated to the acquisition and display of pathological and imperial specimens collected by naval surgeons and scientific explorers. Following its closure in 1855, the hospital museum donated a large number of Indigenous Australian and other ethnographic objects to the British Museum, but little of its history has thus far been written. The chapter argues that Haslar was in fact a significant ‘third force’ in the contemporary collection and study of imperial specimens. I examine the museum’s relationship with the British Museum, as well as the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, in my investigation of the reasons for which Indigenous Australian and other objects were collected and displayed in this period. I focus in particular on Haslar Hospital Museum’s positive contribution to the careers of naval actors including Alexander Collie, John Richardson and Thomas Henry Huxley, as part of the thesis’ wider study of the alternative spaces of scientific investigation provided by the navy in the nineteenth-century British Empire.

The third and final section of the thesis is titled ‘Professionalisation’. Here, Chapters Six and Seven explore ethnographic collecting in the navy from the perspective of the professionalisation of scientific knowledge in Britain after the early 1830s, and the inception of disciplined forms of ethnographic enquiry in the British metropole following the creation of the Ethnological Society of London in 1843. I do not argue that naval collectors developed into disciplined professionals in this period, or that their efforts were necessarily recognised as such. Rather, I explore how new ideas of ‘scientists’ and ‘fact-gatherers’ were adopted and challenged by the navy in relation to ethnographic collecting. An emerging sense of who and what counted as ‘amateur’ or ‘professional’, I suggest, helped to organise and to demarcate the ethnographic knowledges acquired on the period’s voyages in a way not before seen. I structure Chapters Six and Seven by investigating

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in turn ideas of ‘amateur’ and ‘professional’ collecting on the principal naval voyages to Australia made in the period concerned. These were the *Fly* (1842-1846), and *Rattlesnake* (1846-1850). Though each chapter offers a different focus, the purpose of this section is to show that naval ethnographic knowledge was the product of both ‘amateur’ and ‘professional’ actors and influences in the period before the development of disciplinary anthropology.

Chapter Six begins with an analysis of the learned British societies which emerged in the 1830s, and of their relationship to naval collecting. The creation of the Geographical Society of London in 1830, and the recognition of the Hydrographic Office as a scientific branch of the Admiralty in 1831, were important influences in the development of naval science in a period shaped by considerable official interest in northern Australia and the Torres Strait. In addition, the 1830s saw moves toward the formalisation of sailors’ education on imperial expeditions, and calls for specimen collecting on naval voyages to be made more official. The 1842 departure to Australia of the *Fly* therefore offered one of the first opportunities to witness and to test the place of ethnography within the Admiralty’s increasingly bureaucratised scientific organisation in relation to emergent imperial concerns. Using as a stimulus the extant collections pertaining to this period of the British Museum, I question whether specimen collecting among amateur naval actors was considered a subsidiary form of ethnographic investigation, relative to the work of the naturalists and ‘gentlemen collectors’ carried out on the same voyages. I find some evidence for this theory, but complicate it through an examination of the unpublished journals of the naval clerk John Sweatman, who combined intentional and incidental forms of collecting with a detailed ethnographic study of the Torres Strait, in an attempt to position himself among the leading ethnographic experts of the day.

Chapter Seven explores the work which occurred in parallel among ‘professionals’ on-board the *Fly* and *Rattlesnake*. I examine the relative statuses of Admiralty-recruited scientists such as the geologist Joseph Beete

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Jukes and the naturalist John MacGillivray, but I also extend the discussion found in Chapter Five by investigating the increasing prestige then associated with graduates of Haslar's museum, such as Huxley. Contrary to established scholarly opinion, I find that the work of 'amateur' sailors was generally more concerned with the collection and interpretation of supposedly objective scientific knowledge in these years. The story of 'professional' ethnographic collectors in the navy between 1842 and 1855 is one of the advancement of object-based imperial scrutiny as a technique of colonial exploitation. In the metropole, actors such as Jukes and MacGillivray also earned a reputation as some of the nation's first popular ethnographers, as public interest grew in Indigenous Australian and other foreign objects and cultures. I illustrate these points in the chapter by exploring how Jukes and MacGillivray used extant, non-extant, intentional and incidental ethnographic collections in their respective essays on the desirability of constructing a settlement at Cape York, in the Torres Strait. However, I observe that such actors were considered 'amateurs', too, in relation to metropolitan luminaries such as James Cowles Prichard.

PART ONE

The Banksian Inheritance

**The ‘despotism’ of Joseph Banks?
Naval infrastructure and the origins of ethnographic
collecting in Australia**

He swore and stamped upon the Warfe, like a Mad Man, and instantly ordered his Servants and all his things out of the Ship...This was a loss to me, but upon the whole, it has always been thought that it was a most fortunate circumstance for the purpose of the Voyage that Mr Banks did not go with us; for a more proud and haughty man could not well be, and all his plans seemed directed to shew his own greatness...¹

The Royal Navy embodied from its beginning the potential to act as a powerful infrastructure for the collection, study and circulation of ethnographic and other scientific specimens throughout the British Empire. Distance being tyranny, this was as true in relation to Australia as it was possible to be.² Questions about the realisation of the navy’s potential to facilitate collecting, and the nature of its infrastructural role, lie at the heart of this thesis, but in this chapter I tackle them most explicitly. I look too at another form of tyranny altogether. In 1772, Joseph Banks famously discovered the importance of a critical understanding of the capacity of ships, and of the Admiralty to entertain his pretensions, when his plans for the voyage of the *Resolution* ran aground in the face of James Cook’s more pressing demand that his ship remain afloat. Banks’ subsequent departure from the expedition heralded a period in which scientific collecting on naval voyages was increasingly directed and digested by him, being no longer the

¹ ‘Memoirs of the early life of John Elliott’, BL, Add MS 42714, fols. 10-11.

² Geoffrey Blainey. *The Tyranny of Distance: How Distance Shaped Australia’s History* (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1986).

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privileged vocation of those who ventured out to sea.³ In this time, Banks was lauded as 'the first man of scientific education' to undertake a voyage of discovery:

and that the first which turned out satisfactory to this enlightened age. He was, in some measure, the first who gave that turn to such voyages, or rather to their commander, Capt. Cook, as guided and directed as well those that came after, as that in which he was personally concerned.⁴

In this first chapter of Part One of the thesis, I explore Banks' appropriation of the navy as a collecting infrastructure following his transition from scientific voyager to metropolitan patron, 'guide' and facilitator of imperial expeditions in 1772. In the decades after the voyage of the *Resolution*, efforts to tame and to control the intellectual output of naval expeditions became explicit. The advantages and potential of naval vessels for scientific discovery were perceptible to all; British ships were already engaged in imperial voyaging, and brought with them a workforce that was, in theory, easily disciplined. Most vessels offered security as well as sufficient dry space for the storage of collections, as Cook and Banks had so amply demonstrated. As important records of ethnographic and other scientific enquiries, expeditionary reports were strictly controlled in the centuries which followed the formation of the Board of Longitude in 1714.⁵ Submission to the Admiralty of the journals, diaries and logbooks of a ship's officers and crew was a common (if sometimes contested) condition of drawing pay; here were recorded the most interesting and important observations made upon voyages of discovery.⁶ The mere fact that things

³ See, for example, John Gascoigne. *Science in the Service of Empire: Joseph Banks, the British State and the Uses of Science in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 127.

⁴ Edward Hasted. *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*, vol. 6, 2nd ed. (Canterbury: W. Bristow, 1798), p. 407.

⁵ See, for example, Sophie Waring. 'The Board of Longitude and the funding of scientific work: negotiating authority and expertise in the early nineteenth century', *Journal of Maritime Research*, 16 (2014), 58.

⁶ Innes M. Keighren, Charles W. J. Withers and Bill Bell. *Travels into Print: Exploration, Writing, and Publishing with John Murray, 1773-1859* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), p. 30.

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written down were likely to be read, and to be thought important, was enough to excite the intellectual energies of a new generation of sailors.

The study of Banks' relationship with the Admiralty and of his role as a patron of early nineteenth-century imperial knowledge is far from new, but the question of the infrastructural importance and character of the navy as a collecting institution has rarely been addressed. As suggested in the thesis introduction, the result has been a tendency among historians to consider the navy a largely passive force. Whereas it is interesting and relevant to consider the manner in which imperial science was mediated by its naval infrastructure, and to ask in what instances ships' captains, officers and sailors might have conducted investigations and recorded data according to their own interests, or resisted and challenged official direction, scholars have often chosen instead to concentrate upon those to whom naval knowledge was ultimately returned. Kenneth Morgan's recent work on the *Investigator* expedition is not alone in foregrounding Banks' particular agency to the extent that the reader is left to imagine the navy and Admiralty officials as mere tools of an era steeped in Banksian hegemony.⁷ As a result Banks and the navy have been seen as the same disinterested actor, the product and producer of a coherent imperial project in these years. Banks was an 'essential facilitator' of Matthew Flinders' ambitions for the *Investigator*, writes Morgan, and a 'promoter' of science 'in the service of empire', in the eponymous words of John Gascoigne.⁸ According to this logic, the navy's contemporary scientific pursuits are best understood as inseparable from the concerns of Banks himself.

Such formulations of Banks' role as the ostensibly objective fulcrum of early nineteenth-century imperial science, I argue, are the mistaken product

⁷ Kenneth Morgan. 'Sir Joseph Banks as patron of the *Investigator* expedition: natural history, geographical knowledge and Australian exploration', *The International Journal of Maritime History*, 26 (2014), 235-264.

⁸ Gascoigne. *Science in the Service of Empire*.

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of an enduringly hagiographic tradition in the histories concerned.⁹ With regard to ethnographic study and collecting we discover a line of enquiry pursued with much interest by early nineteenth-century colonial and naval officials, but one which did not engender support from the centre of expeditionary administration at Soho Square. The comparatively superior value and importance of plants and animals to the imperial actors of the time has masked our appreciation of the highly partisan nature of Banks' preference for natural history, and its adverse influence upon the contemporary circulation of material knowledge. By giving actors within the navy a voice and an agency of their own, and by separating Banks' concerns from the disembodied and ultimately imagined priorities of empire, I propose that ethnographic study fell victim to a Banksian hierarchy in spite of its intrinsic philosophic promise and utility to the instigation and reproduction of colonialism. Banks was, in the language of Kurt Lewin's influential theory, a corrupt 'gatekeeper', whose tendency to mediate imperial knowledge and collecting according to his own interests is not yet sufficiently appreciated.¹⁰

The first half of this chapter accordingly makes a revisionist case against the uncritical use of Banks as a conduit for wider imperial concerns in the years after 1772. I show that much scholarly thinking on the importance of collected objects in these years tends to be seen from Banks' perspective alone, while operating almost exclusively by limited reference to the collections of Cook's voyages. Through an examination of Banks' metropolitan connections as well as his correspondence with Australian officials, I challenge the significance that some have assigned to his role in sending ethnographic specimens to public and private museums. In the process I seek to undermine related formulations of Banks' growth as a patron of the study of Indigenous Australia in the late eighteenth and early

⁹ Gascoigne himself makes reference to this trend in his discussion of Banks as a 'father figure' in the Australian national identity. See John Gascoigne. *Joseph Banks and his abiding legacy* (London: Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, 2001).

¹⁰ Kurt Lewin. 'Forces behind food habits and methods of change', *Bulletin of the National Research Council*, 108 (1943), 35-65.

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nineteenth centuries. In the second half of this chapter I argue that the necessary conditions for systematic ethnographic study in Australia arose in 1800, with the arrival in Sydney of the colony's first dedicated surveying vessel, the *Lady Nelson*. This early infrastructure for naval scientific investigation and collecting pre-empted the more successful and better understood expedition of its successor, the *Investigator*, yet arose in consequence of the peculiarly local concerns of the naval lieutenant and third Governor of New South Wales, Philip Gidley King. Ultimately, however, the story of the *Lady Nelson* aped that of earlier expeditions; its initially catholic approach to useful knowledge soon gave way to the unequal demands of the Banksian imperative.

2.1 Banks and ethnography before 1800

Existing analyses of Banks' ethnographic interests tend to conclude one of two things: he is said to have been either an enthusiastic collector who operated within an unscientific paradigm of curiosity, or a scientific collector who did much to define the later discipline of anthropology. In both arguments there is the implicit suggestion that Banks' behaviour was indicative of wider trends in the construction of scientific knowledge, but a lacuna remains with respect to if or how Banks assisted others in furthering this study after 1772. Our knowledge of Banks' use of the navy as an infrastructure for botanical collecting, for instance through the use of plant cabins, does not extend to an understanding of the relative importance of ethnographic study.¹¹

Since there are few records concerning the existence, provenance or movement of ethnographic object collections in late eighteenth-century Britain, the debate about Banks' interests and influence has often focused instead upon the then popular practice of illustrating ethnographic objects in

¹¹ See, for example, Alan Frost. *Sir Joseph Banks and the Transfer of Plants to and from the South Pacific, 1786-1798* (Melbourne: Colony Press, 1993).

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a style reminiscent of the taxonomic display of specimens of natural history. Nicholas Thomas has questioned whether these non-extant and incidental specimens were objects of scientific interest.¹² Actual or depicted 'artifacts', Thomas argues, 'were not specimens in any meaningful sense: they were not the objects of any theoretical discourse of systematic inquiry; there was nothing akin to Linnaean classification that could be applied to ethnographic objects'.¹³ Rather, such illustrations were 'part of an expressive work that licensed [Banks'] science'.¹⁴ Amiria Salmond has treated this issue rather differently. '[Adrienne] Kaeppler and others have argued that artefacts were not taken seriously by Enlightenment collectors', she argues, but 'significant efforts were made...to construct typologies for the vast range of artificial curiosities then converging on the imperial centres of Europe...Banks, for instance, commissioned illustrations of the artefacts collected on Cook's voyages that grouped objects according to geographical origin and function'.¹⁵

The nature of Banks' appreciation of his object collections thus remains a point of debate, and one which has operated largely by reference to the semantics of historical images. In a similar fashion, studies of the circulation of ethnographic material in London at the turn of the nineteenth century have often conflated Banks' unquestionable centrality to this process with the supposition that his own valuations and interpretative priorities were the embodiment of broader trends. In general, historians of this period follow Salmond's line of thinking by considering Banks an early student and patron of ethnographic study. Following his appointment as President of the Royal Society in 1778, and as an advisor to the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew from 1797, Banks became a trustee of the British Museum and in consequence a 'museum "agent" in the market for natural history', as Neil

¹² Nicholas Thomas. 'Licensed Curiosity: Cook's Pacific Voyages', in John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (eds.). *The Cultures of Collecting* (London: Reaktion Books, 1997), 116-136.

¹³ *Ibid.* 130.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 133.

¹⁵ Amiria Henare. *Museums, Anthropology and Imperial Exchange* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 71.

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Chambers has put it.¹⁶ According to Gascoigne, the study of natural history was allied to the collection of ethnographic objects in the minds of many contemporaries, including Banks, in consequence of their shared origins in antiquarianism.¹⁷ In his study of Banks' interest in 'cultural anthropology', Gascoigne argues that 'the association between antiquities and natural history as different parts of the culture of the virtuoso...suggests one reason for the fact that those interested in natural history often extended their interests to the collection of anthropological artefacts'.¹⁸

Such studies tend therefore to state that Banks encouraged the collection of ethnographic objects in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and for reasons other than curiosity, patronage and gift-exchange alone. To Chambers, as much was made obvious by the actions of sailors in donating their objects to Banks, and by the latter's role in arranging the British Museum's early South Seas Room after 1808.¹⁹ In all, however, the arguments made by Chambers, Gascoigne and Salmond do not stand up to significant scrutiny; seemingly the only foundation for supposing that Banks must have encouraged the collection of objects is that he sometimes received them. It is difficult, as Chambers himself observes, to reconcile Banks' supposed interest in ethnography with his frequent 'indifference of tone to the so-called "Modern Artificial Curiosities"' donated to the British Museum, as well as with his failure to catalogue these objects or indeed to provide any documentation or interpretative support.²⁰ As suggested above, it is difficult in the present to locate much evidence of early object specimens given by Banks to the British Museum, other than the 'Cart Loads' associated with the *Endeavour*.²¹ The fact that very few ethnographic objects with a late eighteenth-century provenance can now be found in the

¹⁶ Neil Chambers. *Joseph Banks and the British Museum: The World of Collecting, 1772-1830* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), pp. 25-32.

¹⁷ John Gascoigne. *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment: Useful Knowledge and Polite Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 119-159.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 135-136.

¹⁹ Chambers. *Joseph Banks and the British Museum*, p. 16.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.* p. 12.

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Museum's stores in fact has much to do with Banks' refusal to purchase the collections of the Leverian Museum in 1806. According to contemporary reports, Banks valued this significant collection of early Indigenous Australian and other ethnographic materials rather less than he did his own reputation; Banks declined to acquire the objects because he 'hated' the museum's owner, Ashton Lever, 'and therefore hate[d] his collection'.²²

The little-examined possibility that Banks may actually have frustrated the development of ethnographic study in this period is further suggested by his lack of interest in encouraging others to make relevant acquisitions in the process of imperial expansion. In the aftermath of his departure from the *Resolution*, Gascoigne suggests that Banks 'appears to have encouraged William Anderson...to extend his activities as surgeon and naturalist on board Cook's second and third great voyages to include ethnology', but supports this claim only with the observation that Anderson's collection of 'natural curiosities' and 'specimens...of humankind' were donated to Banks following Anderson's death.²³ In fact, Banks did much to adversely influence the character of ethnographic collecting on Cook's voyages even after his departure in 1772. By supplying his friend Charles Clerke, who sailed with Cook in the *Discovery*, with forty bronze replicas of Maori patus bearing his own family crest, Banks inverted the collecting process by giving to the Maori an ostensibly superior form of their own implements; it is difficult to imagine more traditional wood and stone objects being traded in return, and one is led to ask in consequence what if any interest Banks might have had in them.²⁴

The idea that Banks was capable of using his power and influence in a manner prejudicial to scientific endeavour is now seldom expressed, but things were not always so; Banks' contemporaries in the late eighteenth century were familiar with his tendency to prioritise a narrow and self-

²² James Grieg (ed.). *The Farington Diary by Joseph Farington, R.A.*, vol. 3. (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1924), p. 273.

²³ Gascoigne. *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment*, p. 144.

²⁴ Jeremy Coote. 'Joseph Banks's Forty Brass Patus', *Journal of Museum Ethnography*, 20 (2008), 49-68.

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interested range of concerns. In 1784, Banks' disagreement with the mathematician Charles Hutton, and his role in Hutton's subsequent departure from the Royal Society, caused a group of outraged members to question Banks' credentials for the presidency. A published broadside, *An History of the Instances of Exclusion from the Royal Society...with strictures on the formation of the council, and other instances of the Despotism of Sir Joseph Banks, The Present President, and of his incapacity for high office*, bemoaned the system of patronage that Banks was said to have installed.²⁵ Most pertinently, it declared:

who knows, after all, (we speak upon more than conjecture) how many papers have been stifled, and how many subjects of science have been discouraged, by the same caprice and love of dominion, which has dictated so many [of Banks'] other innovations[?]²⁶

Although it is unlikely that the disenfranchised mathematicians of the Royal Society intended to include any form of ethnographic enquiry within their list of the subjects 'stifled' by Banks, the aspersions which they cast on his patronage are revealing. With reference to Australia in particular, the possibility that ethnographic collecting was essentially 'discouraged' is apparent in the difficulty one encounters when searching for even the slightest evidence that Banks sought Indigenous Australian object specimens from or for British collectors, museums or scientific institutions. Indeed, in Banks' communication with Australian colonial officials, one struggles to detect any signs of an ethnographic interest whatsoever. The subject of Indigenous Australians is seldom broached in Banks' surviving correspondence with Arthur Phillip and John Hunter, the first and second governors of New South Wales, and where such information was conveyed it often seems to have been offered only second-hand. On 2 July 1788, Phillip told Banks that 'of the Country all I know is communicated to Mr Nepean [Evan Nepean, Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department.], & to whom I must beg to refer you. He will tell you that I

²⁵ Anonymous. *An History of the Instances of Exclusion from the Royal Society* (London: J. Debrett, 1784).

²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 24.

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have traced the natives thirty miles inland and seen smoke'.²⁷ On 24 March 1791, Phillip informed Banks that 'of the natives very little information has been obtained, & what I have sent to Mr Nepean I send merely because I suppose something will be expected, you will see it of course'.²⁸ Here, Phillip implied that Banks might be interested in such information, but the letter reveals that he was not motivated to send Banks any particular personal communications on the subject; nor does Phillip's correspondence with Nepean appear to have been designed as a proxy for conveying ethnographic information to Banks.

The level of interest in objects collected from Indigenous Australians was much at odds with that suggested by the large collections of flora and fauna that Phillip sent to Banks in these years. Whereas it would have required no great effort to include ethnographic material within such conveyances, there is no suggestion that this was the case either in Banks' correspondence with Phillip or in the itemised lists of collected material that were sent in tandem. On 10 July 1788, for example, Phillip sent to Banks a large shipment including a stuffed Kangaroo and various other animal skins, five cases of preserved seeds and plants, and 'a small box of gum'.²⁹ One of the only object specimens sent to Banks from Australian colonisers in this era was a small stone hatchet discovered by Philip Gidley King at Norfolk Island in 1792. The find of several such hatchets appeared to suggest that the island was either visited or settled by other humans, and accordingly threatened to complicate King's efforts to establish a local penal colony. For this reason the transfer of one of the hatchets to Banks reflected a mixture of curiosity and colonial necessity. 'Respecting the stone ax which you will find in one of the Boxes', wrote King on 8 May 1792, 'I will not absolutely vouch for the truth of its being found in the place mentioned to me, but the men who

²⁷ Arthur Phillip to Joseph Banks, 2 Jul. 1788. SLNSW, Papers of Sir Joseph Banks [PSJB], Series 37.05, CY 3005/22.

²⁸ Phillip to Banks, 24 Mar. 1791. SLNSW, PSJB, Series 37.14, CY 3005/78.

²⁹ Phillip to Banks, 10 Jul. 1788. SLNSW, PSJB, Series 37.06, CY 3005/29-31.

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first found some of the stone hatchets...I do not think would tell a falsehood'.³⁰

In so far as it applied to the study of mankind, Banks-inspired contemporary collecting by colonial officials focused instead upon human remains. Even in this, however, Banks was not himself seeking to encourage any particular line of scientific enquiry. In 1787, Banks was asked to source Indigenous Australian skulls by Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, professor of medicine and inspector of the museum of natural history at the University of Gottingen, who sought to use them in the course of his attempt to classify the human 'races'.³¹ The ensuing quest for skulls revealed that Banks was capable of ordering specific collections whenever he wished; his considerable influence over Australian officials was evident in his ability to pressure Phillip to risk violence by supplying the skulls through whatever means necessary. In the event, Phillip resorted to studying Indigenous Australian funerary customs with a view to stealing from graves. On 26 March 1791, Phillip wrote to Banks to explain that this was more difficult than he had supposed:

I am sorry that I cannot send you a head, after the ravages of the small pox, numbers were seen in every part, but the natives burn their bodies, some may be found hereafter...³²

Gascoigne considers this discussion of ritualistic customs an additional proof of 'both Banks's and Phillip's interest in the ethnological study of Australia'.³³ He implies, however, that Phillip's remarks on the prevalence of cremation were written before he learnt of Banks' wish to acquire skulls, or that they were otherwise unrelated to it. In fact, the opposite was true, and thus it is more accurate to say that this apparent 'ethnological' interest existed only in relation to Banks' wish to appease Blumenbach. Indeed, Banks remained uninterested in acquiring skulls for his own purposes once

³⁰ Philip Gidley King to Banks, 8 May. 1792. SLNSW, PSJB, Series 39.004, CY 3005/290.

³¹ Gascoigne. *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment*, p. 128.

³² Phillip to Banks, 26 Mar. 1791. SLNSW, PSJB, Series 37.15, CY 3005/81.

³³ Gascoigne. *Joseph Banks and the English Enlightenment*, p. 151.

Blumenbach's shelves had been filled. In a letter to King dated 8 April 1803, Banks wrote that a skull which King had sent to him 'was very acceptable to our anthropological collectors & makes a figure in the museum of the Late Mr Hunter now purchased for the public'.³⁴ The skull was 'among the best' specimens that Banks had received, but only because it 'is said to have caused some comical consequences when opened at the Customs House'.³⁵

2.2 The colonial situation

Banks' lack of interest in nascent ethnographic study was much at odds with its development elsewhere. A more complex and involved interest existed in early New South Wales, in consequence of the colony's frequent contact with Indigenous Australians. The British Marine officer Watkin Tench's 1793 text, *A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson in New South Wales*, was for example devoted in large part to descriptions of local indigenous people, and their interaction with the British colonisers.³⁶ Before 1800, however, there existed no competent infrastructure to facilitate or extend such local enquiries. Between the arrival of the First, Second and Third Fleets and the advent of the colony's first dedicated surveying vessel, the *Lady Nelson*, scientific study of the continent's resources and indigenous population necessarily reflected the limitations of the young settlement. Matthew Flinders and George Bass, who explored various locations south of Port Jackson between 1795 and 1799, chose to mock the diminutive scale of their own ventures, at this time the only such exploratory effort, by naming both of the tiny boats first acquired for the purpose the *Tom Thumb*. Their invocation of this farcical protagonist of English folklore inverted the loftier pretensions of earlier voyages; whereas *Endeavour* and *Resolution* embodied serious imperial purpose, *Tom Thumb* conjured a sense of childish adventure and quixotic expectation:

³⁴ Banks to King, 8 Apr. 1803. SLNSW, PSJB, Series 39.076, CY 3005/552.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Watkin Tench. *A Complete Account of the Settlement at Port Jackson in New South Wales* (London: G. Nicol and J. Sewell, 1793).

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The mighty Thomas Thumb victorious comes;
Millions of Giants crowd his Chariot Wheels,
... They frown, and foam, and roar
While *Thumb*, regardless of their Noise, rides on.
So some Cock-Sparrow, in a Farmer's Yard,
Hops at the Head of an huge Flock of Turkeys.³⁷

The journal which Flinders kept at the time suggests that he and Bass were deterred from pursuing encounters or putting together a collection by the *Tom Thumb*'s small size and the absence of effective security.³⁸ Their necessary proximity to Port Jackson had an impact upon the friendliness of those whom Flinders and Bass nevertheless met. The 'Port Jackson natives', wrote Flinders in his account of the *Tom Thumb*'s 1795-1796 forays into Georges' River and Port Hacking, 'seemed more violent than any others', but many avoided Bass, his red waistcoat leading them to mistake him for a 'Soja'.³⁹ Greater distance and a means of safer encounter with people less acquainted with European visitors were therefore considered preconditions for the production of new knowledge. In his resultant abandonment of the conventional discursive style of expeditionary accounts, Flinders deferred instead to the genre of adventure. The sharks which followed the *Tom Thumb* and tormented Bass and Flinders were referred to as 'sea monsters', who 'appeared to have a great inclination for us'.⁴⁰ In place of ethnographic description, one finds language similarly reminiscent of earlier tales of discovering mythical creatures.⁴¹ Following an unintended encounter in 1796 after the *Tom Thumb* capsized near Illawarra, south of Sydney, Flinders applied this discourse to Indigenous Australians in order to make a jocular, folklorist comparison with the English working class:

³⁷ Henry Fielding. *The Tragedy of Tragedies; or the Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great* (London: J. Watts, 1731), pp. 12-13.

³⁸ Matthew Flinders. 'Narrative of voyages in the *Tom Thumb* Sep 1795-Apr 1796, George's River to Port Hacking', CLA, FLI/9/A.

³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 15.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* p. 20.

⁴¹ For a survey, see Surekha Davies. *Renaissance Ethnography and the Invention of the Human* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

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the wild stare of their eyes, - the smile which they forced: - formed a compound upon the rough, savage countenance, not unworthy the pencil of a Hogarth.⁴²

The encounters which took place within the early settlement at Sydney allowed for a more systematic mode of study, although one disposed toward examining the relationship between the colonisers and local indigenous people. In this context, Flinders drew more sophisticated insights about local Indigenous Australian society from the objects he had seen in use. Interestingly, Flinders seems by 1799 to have developed a social philosophy of his own. The provision of fishing nets and the replacement of spears, in his view:

would cause a characteristic difference between the manners, and perhaps the disposition of these people [those given nets], and of those who mostly depend upon the spear or fizegig for a supply. In the one case, there must necessarily be the co-operation of two or more individuals, who therefore, of mutual necessity, would associate together. It is fair to suppose, that this association would, in the course of a few generations, if not much sooner, produce a favourable change in the manners and dispositions even of a savage. In the other case, the native who depends upon his fizegig or his spear for his support, depends upon his single arm, and, requiring not the aid of society, is indifferent about it, but prowls along, a gloomy, unsettled, and unsocial being.⁴³

Similar perceptions of the intimacy which existed between the objects owned by Indigenous Australians and their social disposition were used as a justification for deterring intentional collecting as a social and scientific practice. As governor, Phillip banned such behaviour in 1788 on the grounds that it caused resentment among Indigenous Australians and thus hindered

⁴² Flinders. 'Narrative of voyages in the Tom Thumb', p. 13.

⁴³ David Collins. *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales* (London: A. Strahan, 1804), pp. 512-513.

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the establishment of friendly relations.⁴⁴ In his 1804 history of New South Wales, the deputy judge advocate and lieutenant-governor David Collins explained that those who kept their ethnographic collections violated the rights of an indigenous population unable to act in its own interests: 'Their spears and shields, their clubs and lines, &c. are their own property; they are manufactured by themselves, and are the whole of their personal estate'.⁴⁵ After 1788, theft and disobedience to Phillip's demands remained commonplace among convicts, who:

were everywhere straggling about, collecting animals and gum to sell to the people of the transports, who at the same time were procuring spears, shields, swords, fishing-lines, and other articles from the natives, to carry to Europe; the loss of which must have been attended with many inconveniences to the owners, as it was soon evident that they were the only means whereby they obtained or could procure their daily subsistence; and although some of these people had been punished for purchasing the articles of the convicts, the practice was carried on secretly, and attended with all the bad effects that were to be expected from it.⁴⁶

Among the very earliest ethnographic collections to reach Europe from Australia, then, were many objects representing little more than the efforts of transported convicts to improve their situation; the seemingly considerable desire of 'the people of the transports' to collect these objects alongside 'animals and gum' nevertheless implies a certain intellectual currency. In spite of Phillip's reticence toward collecting, it appears probable that a large number of Indigenous Australian objects circulated within late eighteenth-century Britain. By 1793, in fact, Tench was already able to claim that 'very ample collections' of Indigenous Australian objects 'are to be found in many museums in England', but he did not specify which ones.⁴⁷ Phillip's own willingness to collect skulls for Banks suggests that he

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p. 18.

Tench suggests the prohibition on collecting was first made in 1790. See Tench. *A Complete Account*, p. 91.

⁴⁵ Collins. *An Account of the English Colony*, p. 385.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* p. 18.

⁴⁷ Tench. *A Complete Account*, p. 190.

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could circumvent his own orders when necessary, and indeed in his capacity as governor there are numerous reports that Phillip received Indigenous Australian objects as products of encounter and gift exchange. The journal of John White, a surgeon who sailed with the First Fleet, makes several references to occasions where he joined Phillip in exchanging European goods for Indigenous Australian objects as a means to stimulate friendship.⁴⁸

White himself was among the earliest of the naval explorers to assemble an Australian collection, which he sent to his London friend Thomas Wilson, a member of the Linnean Society. The collection consisted in the main of Australian fauna, but included several 'Implements of New South Wales', including 'a War Spear, Fish Gig, Hatchet, a Sword, and Basket'.⁴⁹ The objects, which Wilson transferred to the Leverian collection (and which were accordingly lost in 1806, as explained above), are illustrated in watercolour in White's journal, where they sit incongruously at the end of a long list of plates featuring Australian fauna. As was common in amateur discourses of this kind, the abundant plants and animals of New South Wales and other colonies disguised the geographical limitations placed upon their compilers, who lacked the means of extensive travel but nevertheless sought to make representative studies. Ethnographic collections were by contrast often limited to the relatively narrow range of objects that could be procured from local indigenous people. Nevertheless, and in a method quite distinct from that of Banks and other early explorers, White's years in New South Wales allowed him at least to attempt an accurate inventory of the indigenous fauna and 'implements' of the world around him.

⁴⁸ See, for example, John White. *Journal of a Voyage to New South Wales* (London: J. Debrett, 1790), p. 166.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p. 292.

2.3 The *Lady Nelson*

On 18 March 1800, the *Lady Nelson* set sail from Portsmouth to Australia under the command of the naval officer James Grant. The schooner was unique in several ways. Built according to new designs by the naval officer John Schank, the *Lady Nelson* was the first to feature a sliding centre-board keel, which allowed it to navigate shallow waters and 'sail faster, steer easier, tack and wear quicker and in less room'.⁵⁰ The *Lady Nelson*'s sliding keel comprised a perfect infrastructure for shallow coastal exploration, and thus encapsulated the schooner's wider historical significance as the first dedicated surveying vessel to be placed under the exclusive control of the colony of New South Wales. Hitherto, local officials had commanded a small number of ships, including the *Buffalo* and *Porpoise*, that had been built in the main as a means to carry stores. From 1798-1799, Flinders and Bass had sailed through the Bass Strait to Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania) on the cumbersome colonial-built sloop *Norfolk*. When, in November 1800, the *Norfolk* was stolen by a party of mutinous convicts, the ship's inadequacy was demonstrated by the fact that the colony's governor considered it no great loss. 'Nothing but inevitable destruction awaits those who have seized the *Norfolk*', King declared.⁵¹ The ship had been dormant in harbour for good reason; the convicts would have no escape from 'the almost certain dangers they have to encounter from a leaky vessel [with] rotten sails'.⁵²

The arrival of the *Lady Nelson* thus signalled a step change in the dedication and resources that were afforded to colonial surveying and associated collecting in Australia in the early nineteenth century. At a time in which the shape and character of the Australian continent remained largely unknown, the decision to commission a capable vessel with the explicit purpose of

⁵⁰ Arthur Aitkin (ed.). *The Annual Review, and History of Literature; for 1804* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1804), p. 41.

⁵¹ F. M. Bladen (ed.). *Historical Records of New South Wales*, vol. 4 (Sydney: Charles Potter, 1896), p. 254.

⁵² *Ibid.*

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carrying out relatively small scale surveys was decidedly unusual. Most contemporary actors looked forward to circumnavigating the continent in its entirety, and attention focused most particularly upon the discovery of a river that might carry expeditions into the Australian interior. In 1798, Banks attempted to send the explorer Mungo Park to Australia to carry out the first comprehensive inland exploration, but his ambitions were dashed when the Admiralty refused to agree Park's expenses, leading him to settle instead in London.⁵³

The subsequent and by contrast parochial voyages of the *Lady Nelson* were not at all what Banks had envisaged, and served too as a disappointment to Flinders, who had by 1800 grown tired of serving such narrow colonial interests. Suspecting, correctly, that he had been shortlisted as an ideal candidate to captain the *Lady Nelson*, it is no coincidence that Flinders was ultimately unable to take command of the vessel owing to the fact that he departed Australia for England on-board the *Reliance* in the same month that the *Lady Nelson* first left England for Australia. Before leaving, Flinders sent a letter to his friend Christopher Smith, the East India Company's botanist to Calcutta, in which he explained his position:

The thing is my dear friend I am tired of earning a pittance, and as it were living from hand to mouth, whilst others with no better claim are making hundreds and thousands...I want to be my own master, and not subject to the caprices of whomsoever the Lords above may please to set over me...between ourselves, I have some hopes that my relatives in England will advance me two or three thousand pounds to forward my mercantile plans...You may judge from all this, my dear friend, that I am no bigot [not beholden] to the naval service; the truth is, I am no bigot to any. The honours of being an honest man and rankd as a gentleman, is sufficient for me.⁵⁴

Flinders' tone comes as something of a surprise. His wish to leave the naval service is quite at odds with Flinders' established persona as a capable and

⁵³ Banks to Mungo Park, 21 Sep. 1798. SLNSW, PSJB, Series 25.01, CY 3008/204-205.

⁵⁴ Matthew Flinders to Christopher Smith, 14 Feb. 1800. 'Matthew Flinders: Correspondence - written by Flinders, 1795-1801', CLA, FLI/4/1.

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dedicated Australian explorer, but was misinterpreted by Morgan, Flinders' most recent biographer, who writes that the subject of the letter was to appeal to Smith 'with a request to aid Bass, a gentleman for whom he had "the greatest respect and esteem", should a situation arise in which he could help Bass's mercantile plans'.⁵⁵ While it was Flinders' plans for which help was sought, it remains possible that his letter to Smith was the expression only of a temporary grievance, or perhaps a ploy to earn Smith's help and approbation for a career with the East India Company, should no naval employment arise superior to the command of the *Lady Nelson*. By the time the *Reliance* arrived at Spithead in September 1800, for instance, Flinders had seemingly changed his mind. Immediately after landing, the aspirant explorer wrote to Banks to set out his vision for what would shortly become the voyage of the *Investigator*. Shrewdly written, the letter appealed to Banks' own passions:

The interests of geography and natural history in general, and of the British Nation in particular, seem to require, that this only remaining considerable part of the globe [Australia] should be thoroughly explored. The brig *Lady Nelson* has lately been sent out partly with this view...If Sir Joseph Banks will excuse me, I presume she must be very inadequate to the task, as perhaps would any single vessel...Sir Joseph Banks will immediately see that two vessels ought to be employed upon it, one of which, at least, ought to be considerably larger than the *Lady Nelson*. Then a person or persons could be accommodated who should examine the natural productions of this wonderful country, for surely what has already been found is materially different from all others; and the mineralogical branch would probably not be the least interesting.⁵⁶

Although the *Investigator* was destined to be remembered as foremost a geographical and cartographical exercise, Flinders was aware that Banks' own passions rested with the nature of the collections that might be made in the process. In Flinders' change of heart about working for the East India Company and in his remonstrations over the remit of the *Lady Nelson* we

⁵⁵ Kenneth Morgan. *Matthew Flinders, Maritime Explorer of Australia* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), p. 37.

⁵⁶ Flinders to Banks, 6 Sep. 1800. SLNSW, PSJB, Series 65.01, CY 3009/181.

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are led to understand that contemporary actors planned expeditions according to radically different interpretations of purpose and scale. In the event, the Company contributed £1,200 in 'table money' to the *Investigator* voyage, without explaining 'the subject, either of the sum, the manner in which we are to obtain it, or when'.⁵⁷ The 'real reason for the allowance', according to Banks, was to 'encourage the men of science to discover such things as will be useful to the Commerce of India'.⁵⁸ In this way, Flinders was ultimately able to reconcile his naval and mercantile desires.

Amid such overlapping personal and imperial ambitions, the significances and idiosyncrasies of the *Lady Nelson* have been lost; some historians conflate the voyage's conceptual origins with that of Flinders' and Banks' near simultaneous but ultimately unrelated plans for the *Investigator*. According to the principal historian of the *Lady Nelson*, Ida Lee, the *Lady Nelson*'s assignment to Sydney as a surveying vessel occurred in consequence of the Admiralty's wish to outpace France in doing the same. 'In 1799 the news reached London that the French were fitting out an expedition to survey unknown portions of Australia', writes Lee, and thus 'the Admiralty were quickly stirred to renewed activity, and decided to send the *Lady Nelson* to Sydney'.⁵⁹ Here, Lee confuses the function of the *Lady Nelson* with what is said by many to have been the true role of the *Investigator*.⁶⁰ In such formulations, the scientific and mercantile factors discussed above are considered subservient to the imperial necessity of responding to Nicolas Baudin's impending intention to depart upon an expedition to Australia in command of the *Géographe* and *Naturaliste*.

In reality, the *Lady Nelson* was commissioned for reasons that were largely or wholly unrelated to the contemporary plans of Flinders, Banks and the Admiralty. The vessel was first conceived of as a means to explore the

⁵⁷ Flinders to Banks, 10 May. 1801. SLNSW, PSJB, Series 65.17, CY 3009/224.

⁵⁸ Banks to Flinders, 1 May 1801. SLNSW, PSJB, Series 65.16, CY 3009/223.

⁵⁹ Ida Lee (ed.). *The Logbooks of the 'Lady Nelson'* (London: Grafton & Co., 1915), p. 4.

⁶⁰ See, for example, Jean Fornasiero, Peter Montreath, and John West-Sooby (eds.). *Encountering Terra Australis: The Australian Voyages of Nicolas Baudin and Matthew Flinders* (Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 2004).

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vicinity of New South Wales by the colony's future third governor, King, who had fortuitously returned to England in 1796 after suffering an attack of gout. Upon learning of his forthcoming appointment as the successor to Hunter, King saw an opportunity to address the colony's inability to carry out local surveys. Simply put, the distinction between the future excursions of the *Lady Nelson* and the *Investigator* was that the latter vessel would stay in Australia only temporarily, and inevitably return the fruits of its research to England; expeditions of this sort necessarily dismissed local concerns in favour of science and cartography on a global scale. King sought by contrast to purchase a vessel that would act according to the colony's particular needs, and found in the newly built *Lady Nelson* an ideal candidate. In order to prise the schooner from the grasp of the Admiralty's Transport Board, King sent a hastily-written appeal to Banks in March 1799:

I wanted much to see you respecting a proposal of one of Captn Schanks' late-built vessels of 60 tons burthen, being sent to N.S. Wales as a Colonial vessel for the purpose of surveying &c, the numerous good qualities & high character which every professional person entertains of that vessel (the *Lady Nelson*) induces me to think she would be a great acquisition to the colony seeing how very unequal the *Porpoise*...as the schooner [likely, the *Norfolk*] now in the Colony is in a rotten state, the necessity of this vessel being sent will appear more obvious, & the cost to Government is only £890, would not Lieut. Flinders be a proper person to command such a vessel[?]⁶¹

Banks was slow to respond, and at first reluctant to help. King persisted, broaching the subject once more in May and again in July, and was finally awarded the *Lady Nelson* for the use of the colony shortly thereafter.⁶² The loss of the *Lady Nelson* was viewed with lasting irritation by the Transport Board, which in 1802 refused to provide money for the *Lady Nelson* to be used as a Tender to the *Investigator*, on the basis that it was now a colonial vessel:

⁶¹ King to Banks, 20 Mar. 1799. SLNSW, PSJB, Series 39.043, CY 3005/408-409.

⁶² King to Banks, 26 May. 1799. SLNSW, PSJB, Series 39.048, CY 3005/418-1419.

King to Banks, 12 Jul. 1799. SLNSW, PSJB, Series 39.050, CY 3005/422-423.

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having consulted the Transport Board on the subject, and being informed by them that “[when] the *Lady Nelson* was sent to New South Wales...instructions were, upon arrival at the settlement to deliver up the vessel with all her stores &c to the Governor or Commander in Chief of the Colony, from which time she was to be considered as no longer in any respect in the Pay, or under the direction of that Board”...we are of opinion it will be advisable that the *Lady Nelson* should be considered as a Tender to the *Buffalo* while employed in the business of surveying...⁶³

In short, since the *Lady Nelson* was now King's responsibility, it was advised that he use it to support the vessels under his own command, in this case the *Buffalo*, rather than those under direct commission from the Admiralty, this being the situation of the *Investigator*. In a sign of the uncertainty that reigned over the authority and status of the navy's vessels and servicemen once they had been employed in Australia, this decision was almost immediately reversed.⁶⁴ In another sign of such confusion, Grant, who commanded the *Lady Nelson* in Flinders' stead, was forced to resign his captaincy in 1801 when the losses he had sustained after being remunerated according to 'Colonial Pay' rather than that 'to which he was entitled by his rank' grew to more than £14.⁶⁵ This confusion, and the antipathy it caused, were to have dire consequences for the collections that were made upon the vessel's early surveys.

Upon its arrival in Australia, the *Lady Nelson*'s opportunities to collect were many. Under Grant's captaincy, the *Lady Nelson* became the first European ship to pass through the Bass Strait from west to east, and conducted numerous examinations of Hunter River between 1800 and 1801. In these years, Grant was tentatively under the control of both the governor, King, who was responsible for directing his voyages, and the British Home Secretary, William Henry Cavendish Cavendish-Bentnick, the third Duke of Portland, who issued the original instructions pertaining to the *Lady*

⁶³ Navy Office to King, 15 Feb. 1802. 'Board of Admiralty, In-Letters', CLA, ADM/B/203.

⁶⁴ Philip Gidley King to Evan Nepean, 9 Nov. 1802. UKHO, MISC 6, fol. 7.

⁶⁵ Bladen. *Historical Records of New South Wales*, p. 906.

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Nelson's purpose and conduct. The orders, which were first sent by Portland to Hunter and King, specified that Grant should:

note in his journal...such articles of the produce of the soil & the manners of the inhabitants as he shall deem worthy of notice... procure a knowledge of Natural History of the Country the Customs of the inhabitants...[and] to deliver to you on his return original journals in which his Proceedings of all kinds have been minuted & also such seeds of plants, trees, shrubs & animals vegetables or minerals & such articles of the dresses and arms of the natives as you shall think worthy the attention of his majesties ministers or of the Royal Society & be transmitted by you to his majesties notice...⁶⁶

This was the first time that the collection of ethnographic material from Indigenous Australians had been explicitly ordered, and it is evident that Portland saw little distinction between such objects and specimens of natural history. The 'dresses and arms of the natives' promised to reveal new information about the nature of Indigenous Australia and the resources and opportunities that it offered. Even if such things were regarded with little interest by government ministers, they might still be of use to the Royal Society; they were not destined for museums. Portland's focus upon 'dresses' is interesting in light of Simon Schaffer's observation that representations of exogenous cultures on the late eighteenth-century 'London stage' were distinguished by considerable concern over 'the veracity of native costumes and designs'.⁶⁷ In representing Polynesians, Schaffer argues, minor details were very important: 'Taste and decoration... mattered most at such major sites as Bulstrode House, where the Duchess of Portland's collection was arranged by Daniel Solander'.⁶⁸ The Duchess of Portland, Margaret Bentinck, was Cavendish-Bentinck's mother, and so it is likely that her ethnographic interests and taxonomic displays informed her son's direction of the *Lady Nelson*.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* p. 59.

⁶⁷ Simon Schaffer. 'Visions of empire: afterword', in David Phillip Miller and Peter Hanns Reill (eds.). *Visions of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 337.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

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The connection between the two Portlands is important because it reveals the intellectual underpinnings of a catholic approach to collecting that might otherwise seem unstructured and therefore, in the minds of some, unscientific. The collections of the Portland Museum, which were auctioned in 1786, had formerly composed the country's largest and most famous assortment of specimens of natural history, art and manmade objects. Here, early attempts were made to reconcile 'artificial curiosities' with their counterparts in the field of natural history. According to Stacey Sloboda, the museum collections 'hovered productively between the model of an early cabinet of curiosities, where materials prized for their singularity, curiosity, or rarity were set in relation to one another, and the modern Enlightenment museum, in which disparate materials and forms were catalogued and systematized'.⁶⁹ The catalogue to the Portland collection reproduced this technique in its references to 'Curious Snuff Boxes' as well as 'Curious [wax] Seals', which featured alongside the more conventional 'curiosities' of foreign cultures.⁷⁰ While some scholars have since considered the displays too eclectic to be meaningful, Beth Fowkes Tobin rejects the idea that the Portland Museum was a 'mere self-aggrandizing accumulation'.⁷¹ Rather, Tobin argues, the collection provoked 'a thoughtful visual engagement with larger questions about relationships between cultural and natural objects'.⁷²

2.4 Collecting and the problem of authority

Whatever his motivations, the bifurcation of naval authority between Britain and New South Wales in the early nineteenth century complicates our understanding of the use of colonial ships for making collections in the

⁶⁹ Stacey Sloboda. 'Displaying Materials: Porcelain and Natural History in the Duchess of Portland's Museum', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 43 (2010), 459.

⁷⁰ *A Catalogue of the Portland Museum* (London: Skinner and Co., 1786), p. viii.

⁷¹ Beth Fowkes Tobin. 'Virtuoso or Naturalist? Margaret Cavendish Bentinck', in Line Cottegnies, Sandrine Parageau and John J. Thompson (eds.). *Women and Curiosity in Early Modern England and France* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), p. 229.

⁷² *Ibid.*

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manner Portland proposed, as it calls into question the ability of British imperial officials to control the nature of the materials obtained. The history of the *Lady Nelson* alerts us too to the presence of multiple agencies in the direction of contemporary collecting, and offers an important insight into the distorting influence of the Banksian hierarchy upon contemporary scientific endeavours both within and nominally outside of Banks' control. Despite having only superficial relevance to the organisation and conduct of the *Lady Nelson's* expeditions, Banks was able to shape the collecting that was carried out in a manner prejudicial to Portland's instructions, and so to the early ethnographic study of Indigenous Australia.

Although Portland understood well how the *Lady Nelson* might function as a naval collecting infrastructure, he was ultimately naive in his expectation that the infrastructure would be used to send the desired range of specimens from Australia to England. Crucially, Portland underestimated the degree to which his instructions for a catholic collection were vulnerable to the competing appeal of collecting according to the Banksian hierarchy. Initially, at least, this would not have seemed a likely eventuality, for the *Lady Nelson* was sent to Australia without any scientific person on-board. There being no plans for the schooner to return to England, Banks and others were prevented from employing any collectors. In consequence, the responsibility for acquiring specimens fell to the captain, Grant, who was ordered to transfer all such acquisitions to the governor, King. In the event of 'any person being sent with him to assist him as a Collector of natural history' after he arrived in New South Wales, it would become Grant's responsibility to 'confine himself in some degree to the more immediate business of the naval department and leave the Collecting...to the care of the Collector', who would nevertheless be subject to the same requirement to surrender his acquisitions to the governor.⁷³ With such a person on-board, the *Lady Nelson* would fully achieve its potential as an infrastructure for the acquisition and secure transport of useful collections. Grant was to assist any potential collector by:

⁷³ Bladen. *Historical Records of New South Wales*, p. 59.

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sending him in boats to such places as appear likely to be productive of curiosities, & by sharing men both to assist him in carrying such heavy articles as he may have occasion for ashore or may think proper to bring on board & also to accompany him for his defence against the natives & to facilitate as much as possible all such researches.⁷⁴

As such, the *Lady Nelson* offered a means of reaching interesting things, a supply of manpower to acquire them and a source of security if encounters became violent; these were the qualities missed most by Bass and Flinders in the *Tom Thumb*. In practice, this physical infrastructure worked well: the whaleboats, for example, did not capsize so often as had the *Tom Thumb*, and nor did the *Lady Nelson*, which succeeded in exploring shallow waters, narrow inlets and wide rivers. In his 1804 account of the colony, Collins lauded the vessel's success. The *Lady Nelson* exemplified the desirability of a colonial fleet made up of small, agile ships:

By means of a few such vessels as the *Lady Nelson*, well commanded, and furnished with instruments requisite for carrying on a maritime survey, the necessary knowledge of the coast...would soon be obtained. Large vessels are not wanted for such a survey, nor indeed are they fit for the purpose [being] proper to be employed only when they are to survey an unknown coast...⁷⁵

This physical infrastructure for surveying and making collections was designed to operate in parallel with a notional system emanating from assumptions of naval discipline, gentlemanly conduct and imperial order. This is what Schaffer calls 'an imaginary system of control'.⁷⁶ In theory, sailors and dedicated collectors would do as their captain told them, the captain would do as his instructions ordered, and the governor of the colony would do his best to facilitate the Home Secretary's wishes by exercising his influence upon Grant and forwarding the *Lady Nelson*'s collections to the desired persons in England. The latter system, being entirely political, was far from secure in a period marred by incomplete and highly ambiguous

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Collins. *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales*, p. 544.

⁷⁶ Simon Schaffer. "'On Seeing Me Write": Inscription Devices in the South Seas', *Representations*, 97 (2007), 105.

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understandings of the official relationship between British officials and the colonial fleet. For this reason, it disintegrated almost immediately. It took no time at all for Grant to realise that his interests would be better served by ignoring Portland and acting as a collector for Banks. In consequence, no official collection was returned to England.

Importantly, Grant had been appointed to take the *Lady Nelson* to New South Wales before even he was ranked as a lieutenant; his friendship with Schanck ensured him this role, which in light of Flinders' inability to take command of the ship upon its arrival in the colony soon metamorphosed into that of captain of the only functional surveying vessel in Australia. In the absence, too, of a naturalist, Grant found himself in a rare and privileged position. Although lacking in formal education, Grant wrote to Banks four days before the *Lady Nelson* departed England in order to offer his services:

Nothing Sir could give me greater Pleasure or Satisfaction than being allowed the Honor of Communicating from time to time my Sentiments and Observations on the different Natural Productions I may meet with. An innate Principle for Studying & observing Nature in all her works...affords my particular delight. These principles imbibed when very young under the tutelage & Care of Dr Anne Chalmers Professor of Medicine at the Kings College at Aberdeen.⁷⁷

Grant's language exposed his attempt to enhance his social position through the captaincy of the *Lady Nelson*. Banks' reputation was such that writing him a letter would have seemed a daunting task, and the latter's choice of words is careful and sometimes pained; 'innate principle', 'affords my particular delight' and 'principles imbibed' suggest recourse to a dictionary or learned friend. The content of the message was also misleading. Anne Chalmers was not a professor of medicine, this being the position of her husband, John Gregory; her relationship to Grant appears to have been more in the role of nanny or early tutor.⁷⁸ The letter is deliberately ambiguous, too, about whether Banks was being promised an intentional collection of

⁷⁷ James Grant to Banks, 14 Mar. 1800. SLNSW, PSJB, Series 23.23, CY 3008/98.

⁷⁸ David Brewster. *The Edinburgh Encyclopaedia*, vol. 10 (Philadelphia: Joseph and Edward Parker, 1832), p. 116.

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objects, or just a series of observations and descriptions. Grant's instructions stipulated that all things acquired on the *Lady Nelson* were to be given directly to King, and so it would seem that he was wary of making any specific assurances on paper.

Grant nevertheless desired to bring a private object collection home. He circumvented his instructions by maintaining a secret collection, over which King would have no control. Eight days before he retired from the *Lady Nelson* in a fit of dudgeon over his pay, on 31 August 1801, Grant wrote again to Banks revealing that he had retained the most interesting specimens from the surveys the schooner had made thus far:

The Natural Productions of this place both Animal, Vegetable and Mineral are great & wonderful - I have sent you my Dear Sir a few productions from Western Port & Hunters River a Box containing Minerals in the care of Mr Balmain from the country - Also a West India Pilot which is the only book I had fitt for the purpose between the leaves of which you'l find some New Plants especially of the Fern Tribe you'l also find the Native Tobacco Plant in flower. The Book being Charts I have sent it by Captn Hunter of the ship Albion to be delivered to Capt Schank for you - Hunter being a sailor the Custom House Officer will hardly take his Charts from him - But above all there is a small Chest of Drawers I have sent Captn Schank under Balmain's care which I fear must go to the Customs House - Lett me intreat you to get it out; for in it is mosses of many different sorts for you; & seeds; some of which I have extracted from the crops of Birds besides a vast number of shells & birds - for Captn Schank - The seeds are mostly from Hunters River and all new - I further begg leave to inform you that the first land I made on the Western side of this Territory proved to be a cape which I named Cape Banks in honor of you... I particularly am anxious about the Chest of Drawers for there are so many different things in it - Native Beeds & Netts &c &c that I shall not be able to gett again - also some descriptions of things by myself.⁷⁹

Grant was as unafraid of admitting subterfuge as he was appearing obsequious. The collection, itself illicit, was sent to England through an

⁷⁹ Grant to Banks, 23 Aug. 1801. SLNSW, PSJB, Series 23.24, CY 3008/99-101.

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extraordinary range of conduits in order to escape King's attention. Being unable to press plants properly, Grant's technique of storing them within the pages of the *West India Pilot* was designed to dry them and to keep them safe, but served too as a method of hiding them from customs officials; everything else was hidden within his chest of drawers, which Grant addressed to Schank in the hope that it might also escape the notice and charges of the customs house. Although Grant had collected according to Portland's catholic scheme, he did so with the intention of dividing the collection between Banks, Schank and himself. Grant paid particular attention to those objects in which he knew Banks to be interested, and which might therefore encourage him to pay for the retrieval of the rest; these Grant referred to explicitly, and occasionally underlined. It is not clear for whom the 'Native Beeds & Netts' were intended, but it seems possible that Grant wished to make these a part of his own collection. Grant valued such objects as products of his rare and fleeting encounters with Indigenous Australians, but placed them at the bottom of the list. The flora and fauna were by contrast ranked highly, and according to the scientific vogue of taxonomic distinction.

Those things too big to smuggle were surrendered to King in compliance with Grant's orders, and recorded in detail. On 21 April 1801, at Churchill Island, Grant noted in his journal that:

my second mate, having been sent up the river for fresh water, returned with part of a canoe, which he had found sunk near the mouth, together with the two paddles belonging to it, and some line used in fishing. This canoe differed from any before seen, as it was framed with timber, and instead of being tied together at the ends was left open, the space being afterwards filled with grass worked up with strong clay. This specimen together with whatever else I collected was deposited, according to the orders I received, with Governor King.⁸⁰

Here, the canoe is afforded a certain taxonomic honour of its own due to its unique build; Grant was demonstrating the difference between curiosity and

⁸⁰ James Grant. *The Narrative of a Voyage of Discovery Performed in His Majesty's Vessel The Lady Nelson* (London: C. Roworth, 1803), p. 138.

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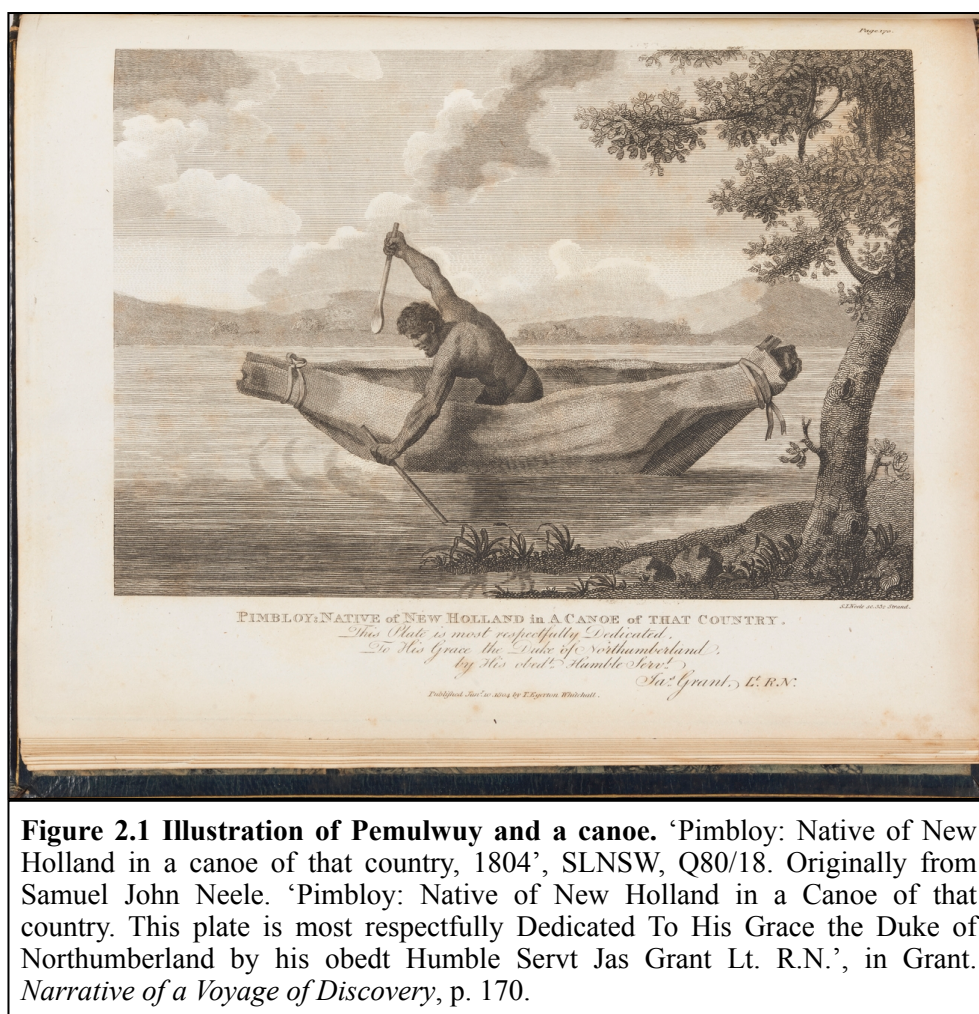


Figure 2.1 Illustration of Pemulwuy and a canoe. ‘Pimblooy: Native of New Holland in a canoe of that country, 1804’, SLNSW, Q80/18. Originally from Samuel John Neele. ‘Pimblooy: Native of New Holland in a Canoe of that country. This plate is most respectfully Dedicated To His Grace the Duke of Northumberland by his obedt Humble Servt Jas Grant Lt. R.N.’, in Grant. *Narrative of a Voyage of Discovery*, p. 170.

useful specimen. Interestingly, Grant’s deference in the final sentence seems designed to insulate him from any suspicion of wrongdoing.⁸¹ The dissatisfaction with working merely as the captain of a parochial colonial survey which Grant nevertheless exposed in his attempted relationship with Banks aped that attitude which had caused Flinders to shun the *Lady Nelson* in the first place; low pay and limited opportunities for promotion focused the minds of the two young sailors upon alternative means of social or financial progression. In his *Narrative*, Grant’s ethnographic illustrations

⁸¹ The paddles collected on 21 April 1801 appeared in London in May 1802, when Banks deposited them in the British Museum. This may have been a rare instance of Portland’s infrastructure working correctly, if they arrived as the product of a conveyance from King to Banks. It seems equally possible, however, that the paddles formed part of the collections sent home illicitly by Grant in August 1801, four months after their collection. See Chambers. *Joseph Banks and the British Museum*, p. 28.

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were similarly deferential. A drawing of the Bidjigal man Pemulwuy in a different canoe (Figure 2.1) combined classical imagery, ethnographic discussion and aristocratic patronage; the Duke of Northumberland, to whom it was dedicated, was said to have first conceived the idea of the sliding keel later built by Schanck into the *Lady Nelson*.⁸² By dedicating the plate to Northumberland Grant sought, in a manner, to 'collect' the canoe and Pemulwuy for him, through the medium of their likeness. For Grant, then, incidental and non-extant collections could be valuable; they attested to his scientific knowledge and to his compliance, but furnished him too with a relatively inexpensive means of sourcing aristocratic favours.

Grant's ambition and competitive spirit were detrimental to the relationship between the *Lady Nelson's* crew, as well as the collections eventually offered to King. When, in March 1801, the *Lady Nelson* was joined on its survey of the Bass Strait by the naturalist George Caley, who had been sent to New South Wales in 1798 as a plant collector for Banks, Grant again applied his official instructions in a calculated manner. By attempting to confiscate Caley's collections, Grant sought to ensure that he remained Banks' sole agent upon the schooner. As much is apparent in a furious letter sent by Caley to Banks following the *Lady Nelson's* return:

I went a voyage to Bass Strait in the Lady Nelson...Here I met with what I never shall agree to. Because I would not give the Capt. every thing I collected, which he had not got, he was affronted, and one day, because I would not give him a bird's skin, he told me he would have all what I had collected, for he had got orders from the Gov. to seize everything. I was well aware that he wanted them to give to the Gov. On our return, meeting with foul winds, we were obliged to put into Botany Bay, where I left the Brig; but previous to this, Lieut Grant used the Governor's orders, which specified that every person on board, that had collected curiosities, or kept journals, were to deliver them to him sealed, and then they were to be given to the Gov. These

⁸² 'John Schanck, Esq', *The Annual Biography and Obituary, for the year 1824*, vol. 8 (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1824), p. 397.

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measures put a stop to the people being so eager to collect anything. In this case a little liquor will gain more than restraints.⁸³

King, it will be recalled, was himself under obligation from Portland to forward these collections to England. Although Caley drew a distinction between Banks and the imperial science that Portland, King and the *Lady Nelson* were supposed to be facilitating, his refusal to allow his collections to be surrendered according to Grant's instructions was predicated upon a suspicion that King, too, ultimately sought them for selfish reasons. On 22 December 1800, Caley warned Banks that King was 'anxious to establish a Botanic Garden' of his own; his distrust of the colonial government thus foreshadowed the actions of later botanical collectors in Australia such as William Baxter, who in 1829 'threatened to throw his hard-won botanical specimens into Sydney harbour rather than surrender them to the government-run botanic garden'.⁸⁴ King and Caley had fallen out earlier in 1800 when the *Speedy*, on which both travelled to take up their respective roles as governor and Banksian collector, was delayed for thirteen days at the Cape of Good Hope when Caley disappeared on an extended bout of collecting. 'I can say' wrote Caley of this incident, 'that Gov. King venting his passion at me was not agreeable, and I was strongly persuaded not to proceed with him to New South Wales'.⁸⁵ Writing to King, Banks appealed for patience, and sympathised with his experience of Caley. 'Had he been born a gentlemen', Banks observed, 'he would have been shot long ago in a duel'.⁸⁶ The relationship between the two worsened upon arrival in Australia, where King ordered Caley to surrender a large percentage of his future collections. This demand was premised, too, upon the belief that Banks was only interested in botanical specimens. As Caley explained to Banks:

⁸³ George Caley to Banks, 25 Aug. 1801. SLNSW, PSJB, Series 18.032, CY 3680/483-484.

⁸⁴ Caley to Banks, 22 Dec. 1800. SLNSW, PSJB, Series 18.032, CY 3680/474. Jim Endersby. 'A garden enclosed: botanical barter in Sydney, 1818-39', *The British Journal for the History of Science*, 33 (2000), 313.

⁸⁵ Caley to Banks, 25 Aug. 1801. SLNSW, PSJB, Series 18.032, CY 3680/483.

⁸⁶ Banks to King, 29 Aug. 1804. SLNSW, PSJB, Series 39.090, CY 3005/657.

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His Excellency, (soon after we had arrived in the colony) told me I must get him a duplicate collection of specimens of plants, to this I objected, and he never asked me afterwards for the like. But when I went to him to get an order to be received on board the Lady Nelson, he told me you [Banks] only wanted specimens of plants and seeds, and that all other things I collected belonged to him, however I did not tell him whether I would give him anything or not...I cannot contrive what he wants such articles for unless they are designed as presents, whereby his name may be recorded in the annals of Natural History, or for the public benefit.⁸⁷

Caley's suspicions were valid. In advance of King's return to England in 1807 following the end of his tenure as governor, he made preparations to send a large amount of collected material back to London on-board the *Buffalo*, to be placed under Banks' care. King instructed Banks to divide the boxes among a variety of the most important and influential figures then connected to science, politics and naval exploration.⁸⁸ Here, the line between patronage and collecting for the benefit of scientific knowledge was blurred; the Secretary of State for the Colonies (then Robert Hobart, the Earl of Buckinghamshire), received a box of minerals, as did Charles Greville, an antiquarian, mineralogical collector and fellow of the Royal Society. Four boxes of 'natural curiosities' were sent to Banks. Nine more were destined for a series of figures including the Earl of Darnley, the Lord Commissioner of the Admiralty, Samuel Bentham - who was then Inspector General of Naval Works, and Everard Home, a surgeon and Fellow of the Royal Society with links to naval medicine. Several logs of indigenous woods were sent to the Naval Office. Six further boxes were sent with no recorded recipient, and may therefore have defaulted to Banks' care. These contained 'war instruments and other articles, Human Bones and Head, Animals, Skins, a Cabinet of Insects, Shells, Minerals, Dried Plants, about 25 planks &c of different woods [and] Six live Birds'. Finally, King sent a range of items belonging to 'the Officers', which included 'seventeen boxes

⁸⁷ Caley to Banks, 25 Aug. 1801. SLNSW, PSJB, Series 18.032, CY 3680/484.

⁸⁸ 'Schedule of Articles the production of the South Seas on board His Majesty's Ship Buffalo In Governor King's Care', 19 Nov. 1807. SLNSW, PSJB, Series 39.104, CY3005/738-739.

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of Birds, Skins, - shells, Insects - Seeds, Dried Plants, Tools Utensils &c weapons of the natives, 45 Planks and Logs of different kinds', six more live birds and a further '45 planks of wood'. So sizeable were King's collections that a returning convict on-board the *Buffalo*, James Hardy Vaux, later described the scene as a morbid sort of 'Noah's Ark'.⁸⁹

2.5 Conclusion

Following his departure from the *Resolution* in 1772, Banks' influence over naval collecting was, if not entirely 'despotic', certainly a highly partisan and damaging counterweight to the catholic approach to scientific investigation then prevalent in the Admiralty and British Government. Whereas current scholarship casts Banks as a patron and conduit of wider imperial concerns, it is more accurate to say that Banks sought to further his own passions; his particular interest in botanical specimens was prejudicial to the development of other collections, and to nascent ethnographic study in particular. In this Banks was sometimes an active force, who organised expeditions and appointed collectors to further his own concerns. More often, perhaps, the 'despotism' of the Banksian imperative was more subtle. Flinders, Grant and King approached Banks themselves, finding in Soho Square a willing, wealthy and unusually particular customer for their collections; only here might rare and valuable specimens be exchanged for the social and professional capital they desired.

The first solicitations for Indigenous Australian objects came not from Banks or his scientific contemporaries, but from officials involved in colonial expansion and settlement. To naval and political actors in Britain and Australia, ethnographic collecting was a necessary constituent of maritime surveying, which applied a range of scientific, geographical and cartographical exercises to the same ends. The success or failure of this

⁸⁹ James Hardy Vaux. *Memoirs of James Hardy Vaux, a Swindler and Thief* (London: Hunt and Clarke, 1827), p. 152.

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process, I have argued, is best understood in terms of the parallel operation of the physical and notional infrastructures exemplified by the early surveys of the *Lady Nelson*. The means of reaching collections and of returning them to Britain were far more complex than is generally supposed. The febrile atmosphere of early New South Wales, in conjunction with then unclear understandings of colonial and imperial authority, allowed actors such as Flinders, Grant, King and Caley to circumvent the more objective albeit less profitable demands of imperial authorities such as Portland in favour of the established hierarchy favoured by wealthy metropolitan collectors. Caley, it seems, considered his relationship with Banks as reason enough to ignore Grant and King, and therefore Portland's orders.

For these reasons, the systematic acquisition and scientific study of ethnographic specimens from Australia, whether intentional or incidental, was rendered an unlikely prospect after 1772. In my discussion of Grant, I have shown that the likelihood of an intentional collection being made official was determined to some extent by the difficulties that would otherwise arise in attempting to convey it privately. Where these difficulties were insurmountable, incidental collections, such as of Pemulwuy and his canoe, sufficed as a means to solicit patronage. The 'collection' of Pemulwuy and of the canoe's likeness show too that incidental collecting circumvented the moral and pragmatic obstacles faced by those who sought to retain the specimens they acquired. In the next chapter, I investigate the incidental collections made during the subsequent survey of the *Investigator*. In view of this chapter's findings, I ask whether their apparent precedence over intentional specimens was a symptom of the Banksian hierarchy, and thus a corollary of an associated lack of scientific infrastructure upon which they might be conveyed. In anticipation of Part Two of this thesis, I investigate also to what degree incidental specimens in fact competed with intentional ones, as contemporary actors debated the best means of articulating and shaping new ethnographic knowledge.

Objects, agency and the discourse of naval encounter, 1801-1803

On their join[in]g us, wch they did only three in number & without arms, they demanded their nets, wch we returnd to them.¹

On the morning of Saturday 31 July, 1802, the noted naturalist and Kew botanist Robert Brown found himself in a difficult situation. In the course of an effort to improve the ethnographic collections held on-board the *Investigator*, then more than halfway through its circumnavigation of the Australian continent, he was caught by the Badtjala people of Fraser Island, in eastern Queensland, in possession of a half dozen of their fishing nets, which had been left unattended on the beach. As Brown was challenged, admonished and finally forced by the Badtjala people to sell a quantity of his trade gear in return for only half as many nets, he was likewise deprived of any notions of European superiority that he may have held. Ignominious though this might have been, it was fortunate indeed for Brown that the men failed to notice also the human skull he had exhumed and stolen some moments earlier from a nearby Badtjala grave, and packed among his various kit. Potential violence was therefore avoided, and yet the incident remained so embarrassing for the expedition's captain, Matthew Flinders, that he entirely neglected to mention it in the expedition's official journal. Fortunately, others upon the expedition were less reticent. There exist at

¹ T. G. Vallance, D. T. Moore and E. W. Groves (eds.). *Nature's Investigator: The Diary of Robert Brown in Australia, 1801-1805* (Canberra: Australian Biological Resources Study, 2001), p. 231.

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least three detailed accounts of the incident, but each tells the story in its own, divergent way.²

Brown's 1802 troubles at Fraser Island raise two areas worthy of analysis, which constitute the basis for this chapter, as well as an approach to be developed throughout the thesis in whole. First, we are offered a perspective upon the relation of encounter to the *Investigator's* various scientific pursuits, which have traditionally been considered in isolation from the crew's contact with Indigenous Australians. Second, we are invited to consider the politics of collecting and material exchange, as well as the significance of discourse, ideology and individual agency in furnishing historians with the source material upon which we rely. Each area of analysis offers its own methodological insight; that objects and encounter can be viewed as contributions to the realm of scientific investigation, and that the rationale for and insights of such investigations were highly influenced by social and political considerations. Objects, I argue, were foundational to the construction of an ethnographic identity in the early nineteenth century, considered both as a scientific persona for European explorers to adopt, and as an interpretative frame under which Indigenous Australians could in consequence be subsumed. As I suggest in Chapter One, this mode of analysis relies upon a critical understanding of the pragmatics of early naval ethnography, the absence of which has done much to restrict the conclusions and insights of existing literature in this field.

² Only four members of the *Investigator* expedition left written records still locatable in the present. These are Matthew Flinders, Robert Brown, Peter Good and Samuel Smith. Flinders' manuscript material is archived and digitised in a number of locations (see footnotes below), while his *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, 2 vols. (London: G. and W. Nicol, 1814) is accessible online and in print. The records of Robert Brown, Peter Good and Samuel Smith have been amalgamated and reproduced as dedicated texts by later scholars. See T. G. Vallance, D. T. Moore and E. W. Groves (eds.). *Nature's Investigator: The Diary of Robert Brown in Australia, 1801-1805* (Canberra: Australian Biological Resources Study, 2001). Phyllis I. Edwards (ed.). *The Journal of Peter Good: Gardener on Matthew Flinders Voyage to Terra Australis 1801-03* (London: Bulletin of the British Museum [Natural History], 1981). Peter Montreath (ed.). *Sailing with Flinders: The Journal of Samuel Smith* (Adelaide: Corkwood Press, 2002). Unless otherwise referenced, the quotations and extracts from these individuals used below are taken from these edited volumes.

3.1 Science, philosophy and the *Investigator*

In Chapter Two I demonstrated how a nascent, ambiguous and poorly-policed infrastructure for the intentional acquisition of ethnographic specimens on-board the colonial brig *Lady Nelson*, supported by the Home Secretary William Henry Cavendish Cavendish-Bentinck, was no match for the more direct appeal of collecting according to the Banksian hierarchy. Here, I explore ethnographic collecting on-board the near-contemporaneous 1801-1803 expedition of the *Investigator*, which differed in its larger size, grander scientific ambitions and closer reliance upon metropolitan direction, both from the Admiralty and from Joseph Banks. Having established that there was little scientific market in London for ethnographic specimens in this period, a consequence of Banks' direction of the Royal Society and influence within contemporary intellectual networks, I explore the incidental and now non-extant collections made on-board Flinders' expedition. These collections permitted an avenue of study independent of the navy's famous scientific patron, and so demonstrate the personal as well as scientific interest which Flinders and his crew took in Indigenous Australian objects. In this chapter, I explore how such activity negotiated a dynamic relationship between official instructions, notions of proper conduct and the equal agency of Indigenous Australians. I extend my discussion of Banks' influence but develop also our knowledge of the Admiralty's own motivations and interests with respect to ethnographic science.

Collecting and scientific investigation on the *Investigator* expedition was a product of the urgently encyclopaedic desire to attain knowledge of the Australian continent which arose in early nineteenth-century Britain. As suggested in Chapter Two, the *Investigator*'s scientific remit was associated with imperial fears concerning the contemporary intentions of France, and more particularly Nicolas Baudin's 1800-1804 Australian expedition. Whereas Banks had been an unofficial influence on the voyage of the *Lady Nelson*, his role in the organisation of the *Investigator* expedition was more

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explicit. Banks' patronage was crucial to Flinders' initial appointment, and Banks was responsible too for selecting, appointing and to an extent directing the voyage's scientific contingent. Accordingly, botanical, meteorological, hydrographical, zoological and astronomical knowledges were prioritised. Of the scientists on-board, Brown (formerly an army surgeon) was responsible for natural history, with an emphasis upon Australian botany; this he explored with the help of his assistant gardener, Peter Good. The 'practical miner' John Allen was also recruited to the survey. Most famously, and with perhaps the greatest degree of Admiralty investment, the artists Ferdinand Bauer and William Westall were retained on-board, with the instruction that they sketch everything and anything of particular note.³ Flinders, as we have seen in Chapter Two, was desperate in these years to earn prestige and to make money; he solicited social and scientific capital on-board the *Investigator* by making a series of reports and observations for the Board of Longitude. After 1802, Flinders arrogated to himself responsibility for observations in astronomy, and sought to maximise the benefit to his family name by working in collaboration with his brother, the naval lieutenant Samuel Ward Flinders.⁴

Historians have debated the extent to which the control afforded to Banks by the Admiralty was an admission of his superior ability to arrange expeditions of this kind. Kenneth Morgan's 2014 study, 'Sir Joseph Banks as patron of the *Investigator* expedition', depicts Banks almost as the sole agent of the voyage's preparation, and an 'essential facilitator for Flinders' ambitions'.⁵ In an older contribution, David Mackay was concerned more

³ The surgeon Hugh Bell and astronomer John Crosley also joined the expedition, but seem not to have been considered among the expedition's scientific elite. Crosley left the voyage at Cape Town, suffering from sea sickness. For a detailed study, see Juliet Wege, Alex George, Jan Gathe, Kris Lemson and Kath Napier (eds.). *Matthew Flinders and His Scientific Gentlemen: The Expedition of H.M.S. Investigator to Australia* (Welshpool: Western Australian Museum, 2005).

⁴ See, for example, 'Correspondence and related papers regarding observations made on voyages of discovery', Papers of the Board of Longitude, University of Cambridge, RGO 14/68, image 79, p. 41r.

⁵ Kenneth Morgan. 'Sir Joseph Banks as patron of the *Investigator* expedition: natural history, geographical knowledge and Australian exploration', *The International Journal of Maritime History*, 26 (2014), 235.

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with the question of why ‘the government, and the Admiralty in particular, entrusted so many official concerns to a civilian’.⁶ As Mackay suggests, the explanation may be that an overburdened Admiralty simply lacked the resources and energy to make a more decisive contribution, and so created a vacuum which Banks filled.⁷ Both historians nevertheless acknowledge that the Admiralty was undoubtedly at Banks’ mercy when it came to the practical decisions involved in arranging the *Investigator*’s supplies. With respect to encounter, Flinders appealed directly to Banks to enquire about the necessary ‘articles for barter’ (Figure 3.1). Banks’ recommendations were readily accepted by John Jervis, the First Lord of the Admiralty, Thomas Troubridge, also a Lord of the Admiralty, and John Markham, of the Admiralty Board, who in turn passed them to the Admiralty Office, where they were approved.⁸

| | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Axes - 100 | Red Beads - 50 | Medals of his Maj. - 1000 |
| Hatchets - 500 | Green white beads - 50 | Hand organs - 1 |
| Adzes - 300 mostly small | Yellow beads - 50 | a chest of fire works |
| Hammers - 100 | Earrings - 100 | Musquets, large 10 |
| Casks of nails - 4 of sizes | Brass wire for bracelets &c | Dust shot - 6 bags |
| Cross-cut saws - 10 | Red ribband or gartering 500 yards | Shot no. 6 - 6 bags |
| Pit saws - 10 | Blue, 500 | - No. 4 - 10 |
| Hand-saws - 100 | [illegible] | - No. 2 - 12 |
| Pocket Knives - 500 | Red caps - 200 | - No. 1 - 12 |
| Gardners &c - 100 | Blankets - 200 | Swan shot - 20 |
| Scissors - 500 pairs of sizes | Red cloth - 200 yards | Small buck shot - 20 |
| Files - 500 of sorts | Blue cloth - 200 yards | Large - 20 |
| Carpenters chests 2 complete | Thread - 30 [?] of each colour | Buck and swan shot casters |
| Looking glasses 500 of sorts | Large kneedles - 10,000 | Lead for casting |
| Blue beads - 50 strings | | |

Figure 3.1 Reproduction of a list of proposed trade gear sent by Matthew Flinders for Joseph Banks’ approval in 1801. Flinders to Banks, 8 Feb. 1801. SLNSW, Papers of Sir Joseph Banks [PSJB], Series 65.06, CY 3009/199.

⁶ David Mackay. *In the Wake of Cook: Exploration, Science & Empire, 1780-1801* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1985), p. 20.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ F. M. Bladen (ed.). *Historical Records of New South Wales*, vol. 4 (Sydney: Charles Potter, 1896), pp. 344-345.

The volume of trade gear supplied to the *Investigator* is interesting in light of the fact that no ethnographic collection was ultimately returned home. Just as the brass patas which Banks commissioned for the *Resolution* reflected his apathy toward making an ethnographic exchange, the trade gear was seemingly intended more as a means to earn favour and to solicit vital resources such as wood and water.⁹ Whereas negotiations over trade gear demonstrated a sophisticated knowledge of indigenous preferences (for example the decision to acquire white beads rather than green), this knowledge was used by Banks and Flinders to ensure the practical success of the expedition rather than to consolidate ethnographic knowledge for its own sake. No extant collection associated with the *Investigator* has yet been found in Britain, and only one (non-extant) object has since surfaced elsewhere.¹⁰ The published journal of the expedition, Flinders' *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, features no ethnographic object illustrations, and so it does not seem likely that objects were taken home, illustrated, and then traded privately in the manner practiced by subsequent explorers including Phillip Parker King.¹¹ In spite of this, the introduction to the first volume of *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, which is nearly two hundred pages long, makes abundant reference to 'prior discoveries in Terra Australis' concerning the nature and material culture of the continent's indigenous inhabitants. Possibly, this older knowledge was included in order to enhance the journal's sales to a public audience, who might otherwise have been disappointed by the relative disregard given to the subject.¹²

A caveat is that Flinders' return from Australia to England was famously difficult. Flinders' protracted detention at Mauritius occurred after the loss, in turn, of many of his belongings as a consequence of the wreck of the

⁹ See Chapter Two, section 2.1.

¹⁰ See Chapter Three, section 3.3.

¹¹ See Chapter Four.

¹² The commodification of ethnographic knowledge is discussed in Innes Keighren, Charles Withers and Bill Bell (eds.). *Travels into Print: Exploration, Writing and Publishing with John Murray, 1773-1859* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), p. 8.

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Porpoise in 1803, and thus there is extremely little probability of him having brought back any objects himself, whether he wished to or not.¹³ The majority of the expedition's acquisitions were nevertheless saved from a similar fate by Brown and Bauer's decision to remain with them in Sydney in 1803, when a replacement for the wearied *Investigator* was being sought.¹⁴ On their arrival in London, the expedition's surviving Australian collections comprised ten cases in total, in which were packed plants, birds, 'quadrupeds', insects and minerals.¹⁵ With the possible exception of three boxes of 'miscellaneous articles', no ethnographic items were listed or otherwise mentioned.

That this was another sign of the 'despotism' of Banks is suggested by the considerable priority that was by contrast afforded to avowedly 'anthropological' studies on Baudin's rival expedition. A colonial ethnographic museum for the display of the expedition's collections was planned in Paris from the outset by the Société des observateurs de l'homme, under the intended orchestration of Louis-François Jauffret.¹⁶ The society's plans for the museum were inserted within the official instructions for the expedition with the assistance of the naturalist Georges Cuvier and the philanthropist-philosopher Joseph-Marie Degérando, and so helped to stimulate the seaborne ethnographic investigations of Baudin and the expedition's naturalist, François Péron.¹⁷ This was, some argue, an important factor in the birth of an ethnographic and anthropological tradition in France.¹⁸ Jean Fornasiero, Peter Montreath and John West-Sooby attribute the contrast with Flinders' expedition to the 'more

¹³ Hugh Bell to Joseph Banks, 4 Apr. 1804. SLNSW, PSJB, Series 67.02, CY 3009/358.

¹⁴ The return of the collections was further delayed by Brown's refusal to support a plan by the Governor Philip Gidley King to store all material in the repaired *Investigator*'s hold. In consequence, a disgruntled King threatened to refuse his help in providing an alternative. See Philip Gidley King to Robert Brown, 9 May 1805. BL, Add MS 32439, fol. 170.

¹⁵ Robert Brown to Joseph Banks, 13 Oct. 1805. BL, Add MS 32439, fol. 183.

¹⁶ George W. Stocking. 'French Anthropology in 1800', *ISIS*, 55 (1964), 134-150.

¹⁷ Stephanie Anderson. 'French Anthropology in Australia, the First Fieldwork Report: François Péron's "Maria Island - anthropological observations"', *Aboriginal History*, 25 (2001), 231.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

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disinterested engagement with the Aborigines' that Péron and Baudin could pursue as representatives of a nation that supposedly was not complicit to the same degree in settlement-building.¹⁹ They observe, however, that all 'anthropology...had its place in the Europeans' imperial endeavours', and propose that these early nineteenth-century expeditions were in the process of negotiating a transition from the outmoded philosophy of noble savagery to one of comparative racial hierarchy.²⁰

The struggle to locate intentional or extant collections, or dedicated reports, similarly led Bronwen Douglas to consider ethnographic enquiry on the *Investigator* in terms of more subtle philosophical and discursive practices. In a 2013 paper, 'Philosophers, Naturalists, and Antipodean Encounters, 1748-1803', Douglas explores the relationship between Flinders' actions and what are supposed to have been then dominant 'Enlightenment visions of Man'.²¹ Indigenous Australians were, in this formulation, the unwilling recipients of an imperial gaze mediated by the contemporary fashions of early nineteenth-century Enlightenment science.²² In contrast to Fornasiero et al., Douglas rejects the notion that race played any significance in either expedition; 'Flinders' occasional ethnological musings compare the relative "superiority" in appearance, material culture or degree of (civil) society attained by different groups', she writes, 'but the stadial logic in such passages is always environmental rather than racial'.²³ Flinders and Baudin were 'cautious pragmatists who used moderate, non-racialized language and ignored or were indifferent to the still embryonic...mode of racial taxonomy which the natural history of man had recently begun to embrace'.²⁴ In spite of these differences, Douglas, Fornasiero, Montreath and West-Sooby collectively maintain that a belief in the presumed extinction of Australia's

¹⁹ Jean Fornasiero, Peter Montreath, and John West-Sooby (eds.). *Encountering Terra Australis: The Australian Voyages of Nicolas Baudin and Matthew Flinders* (Kent Town: Wakefield Press, 2004), p. 358.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Bronwen Douglas. 'Philosophers, Naturalists, and Antipodean Encounters, 1748-1802', *Intellectual History Review*, 23 (2013), 387-409.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.* 404.

²⁴ *Ibid.* 409.

Indigenous population was at the heart of all such historical investigations, which therefore sought to gather local knowledge ‘before it was too late’.²⁵

3.2 Collecting, encounter and Admiralty bureaucracy

While ambitious in scope, and interesting in their findings, the analyses belonging to Douglas, Fornasiero, Montreath and West-Sooby have failed to offer a compelling account of Flinders’ and others’ engagement in colonial ethnography, in the absence of extant objects.²⁶ The privileging of figures such as Flinders, Baudin and Péron as the most likely conduits of a pervasive enlightenment ideology has occurred at the expense of an equally sophisticated investigation of other members of their various crew. Further, the uncritical yet widespread assumption that all such actors were complicit in expecting Indigenous Australia’s imminent decline has occluded study of historical behaviours targeted at assimilating indigenous knowledge, or at the incorporation of indigenous people into the imperial project; this was colonial necessity, rather than enlightenment philosophy. A comparison may therefore be drawn with my introductory critique of Nicolas Peterson, Lindy Allen and Louise Hamby’s text, *The Makers and Making of Indigenous Australian Museum Collections*, which also relies heavily upon the extinction paradigm to rationalise what they suppose to have been the development of systematic ethnographic collecting in tandem with increasingly racialised and pejorative attitudes toward an ultimately doomed colonial ‘other’.²⁷

²⁵ See, for example, Fornasiero et al. *Encountering Terra Australis*, p. 371, and Douglas, ‘Philosophers, Naturalists, and Antipodean Encounters’, 387.

²⁶ Fornasiero and West-Sooby have contributed fascinating accounts of encounter more generally, for instance in Jean Fornasiero and John West-Sooby. ‘Cross-Cultural Inquiry in 1802: Musical Performance on the Baudin Expedition to Australia’, in Kate Darian-Smith and Penelope Edmonds (eds.). *Conciliation on Colonial Frontiers: Conflict, Performance and Commemoration in Australia and the Pacific Rim* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), 17-35.

²⁷ Nicolas Peterson, Lindy Allen and Louise Hamby (eds.). *The Makers and Making of Indigenous Australian Museum Collections* (Carlton: Melbourne University Publishing, 2008), p. 8.

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The essential methodological problem with such studies concerns the manner of their resort to the critical study of language and philosophical discourse. The linguistic and abstractive techniques which have frequently been applied to the history of ethnographic investigation on the voyage of the *Investigator* are rarely supported by an understanding of the social, scientific and political realities, motivations and agencies of the actors involved. Michael Davis' 2013 study 'Encountering Aboriginal knowledge: Explorer narratives on north-east Queensland, 1770 to 1820' (to which this chapter is in part intended as a response), for instance investigates a number of extracts written by Brown without attempting to understand his own personal motivations, nor his adherence to Banksian or official instruction.²⁸ In consequence, many of the nuances of Brown's ethnographic encounters, such as at Fraser Island in 1802, are lost to Davis' analysis. Deference is instead made to broader philosophical paradigms, such as in Davis' comment that representations of local people were 'caught between the noble and the ignoble savage'.²⁹ As I argue below, the study of the discourse associated with both intentional and incidental collecting allows for a superior insight into the contemporary construction of ethnographic knowledge. This is because written reports of collecting demonstrate more closely the presence and operation of a range of influences encompassing European preconceptions, individual agency, indigenous agency, and adherence to competing Banksian and Admiralty imperatives.

In the metropolitan context too, an exploration of the relative priority given to ethnographic study by actors responsible for the *Investigator* expedition helps us to uncover and to chart the tensions which existed at the time. Whereas the Banksian hierarchy certainly dissuaded actors such as Flinders from collecting ethnographic specimens, it is for instance important not to overstate Banks' influence on the collections made on-board the *Investigator*. If the case is made too strongly that incidental collecting

²⁸ Michael Davis. 'Encountering Aboriginal Knowledge: Explorer Narratives on north-east Queensland, 1770 to 1820', *Aboriginal History*, 37 (2013), 29-50.

²⁹ *Ibid.* 29.

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offered a venue for an otherwise repressed ethnographic interest, we risk under-appreciating the Admiralty's own engagement with this line of study. Indeed, the Admiralty was itself ambivalent about Banks' influence over its surveys. A strong indication of the Admiralty's particular willingness to support ethnographic enquiry on the *Investigator* could be detected in a letter of instructions sent to its scientific contingent on the eve of their departure. The letter, though unsigned, seems to have been written by Jervis, Troubridge and Markham.³⁰ Some assume Banks to be the author of the instructions, but in later correspondence he interpreted them in a manner which implied that they were not his own work.³¹ In the letter, the Admiralty drew attention to its interest in the collections the scientists might make, but also drew a line between its own authority and that of Banks, who might otherwise have challenged or contradicted their investment in the expedition's scientific output, whether intentionally or not. 'In order to prevent all misunderstanding between the Lords commissioners for executing the Office of Lord High Admiral of the United Kingdom & the persons employed by their Lordships as scientific assistants', the letter began:

Their Lordships have been pleased to issue the following instructions & commands, to be obeyd by all persons so employd, & it is expected that every person so employed do sign his names in testimony of his acquiescence in the terms on which their Lordships are pleased to employ him.³²

This ensured that the scientists would understand themselves to be employees of the Admiralty, and not of Banks. If the Admiralty harboured concerns about Banks' influence, the unusual decision to order the scientists to sign the instructions personally was surely their expression. The 1801

³⁰ 'Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to Scientific Assistants onboard H.M.S *Investigator*, 29 Apr. 1801'. BL, Add MS 32439, fol. 31. This assumption is based upon Jervis, Troubridge and Markham's joint authorship of the official instructions to the expedition, which were written two months later, on 22 June, and subsequently printed in Flinders. *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, vol. 1. p. 12.

³¹ See, for example, 'Copy of a letter received by Matthew Flinders from Banks', June 1801. SLNSW, PSJB, Series 65.26, CY 3009/250.

³² *Ibid.*

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letter accorded the Admiralty complete control over the scientists' various collections, and made clear that each person's salary was intended to apply 'as a full compensation for the whole of his time', thus eliminating the potential for private endeavours or acquisitions. A situation resembling the ambiguous status of Caley on the *Lady Nelson*, where he sat at the intersection of Banksian, parliamentary and colonial systems of control, was perhaps something they wished especially to avoid. Although the scientists signed the orders at Soho Square, where the expedition's collections were temporarily stored on their return, the instructions stated explicitly that the original intention was for the specimens to be 'considered as the property of the Public & lodgd in the Depot of the Admiralty'.³³ The signatures were witnessed by Banks, but were made also in the presence of the Secretary to the Admiralty, John Nepean, who afterwards delivered the signed instructions to the Navy Office.³⁴ With as little ambiguity as possible, the instructions ordered that:

all Journals Remarks Memorandums Drawings Scetches collections of Natural History & of Habits Arms Utensils Ornaments &c of every kind [must] be delivered up on the return of the ship, to such persons as their Lordships shall direct to receive them.³⁵

Ethnographic specimens were therefore regarded with an interest and importance comparable to that afforded to specimens of natural history. This occurred in spite of the contemporary absence of a singular term to reference such study; the four categories listed (Habits, Arms, etc.) referred to those items which would most likely be found, but it is evident from the instruction to acquire items 'of every kind' that the purpose was to work toward a more coherent disciplinary paradigm for investigations of this nature; this was naval ethnography in the making. The results, as was becoming traditional, were to be published in a printed journal of the expedition 'similar to the Publication of Capt. Cookes voyage', which

³³ BL, Add MS 32439, fol. 32.

³⁴ 'Copy of "Draught of an Undertaking &c"', 12 Jan. 1801. SLNSW, PSJB, Series 63.09, CY 3009/29.

³⁵ BL, Add MS 32439, fol. 31.

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would offer the synthesis of Australia's character and resources which Banks, the government and naval authorities of the time so keenly desired. In their attempt to solicit ethnographic specimens, however, the Admiralty acknowledged that such items would only be acquired if there was some possibility of them being kept by the individuals responsible. As seen in Chapter Two, James Grant was at the time struggling to motivate the crew of the *Lady Nelson* to collect ethnographic objects which they would later be forced to surrender on the vessel's return to port. The pragmatics of converting curiosities into usable specimens may therefore explain why the Admiralty seemingly did not act as a permanent repository or source of ethnographic or other collections at this time. In this light, it is interesting to observe that no reference was made in Flinders' instructions to the storage of objects within museums, the Admiralty seemingly being more concerned with the 'illustration & embellishment of the intended publication'.³⁶ One witnesses this line of thinking in the letter's proviso that:

after such descriptions, Drawings and Scetches as shall be found necessary for the Illustration and Embellishment of the intended Publication shall have been Selected by such Persons as their Lordships shall be pleased to appoint, and such Specimens of Natural History Arms Implements Habits Ornaments &c as their Lordships think fitting shall have been applied to such purposes as their Lordships shall approve, the remainder...shall be at the disposal of the persons who have collected them all this however on condition that each person shall during the Voyage have behaved himself.³⁷

Here, then, was a method for managing the curiosity trade; the assimilation of items of particular interest into the voyage's intellectual output was reliant upon ransoming collections on condition of good behaviour. The value of extant collections was perhaps inferior to the insights that might be gained from non-extant or incidental ones, in the form of 'descriptions, Drawings & scetches', and as much was apparent in the work of the *Investigator's* artists, as I discuss below. For a collected object to become a

³⁶ BL, Add MS 32439, fol. 32.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

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scientific specimen it had, nevertheless, to be collected by the right sort of person, even if the person in question wanted to keep it for himself. In contrast to those given to the *Lady Nelson*, which did not have a scientific contingent upon which to rely, the Admiralty's orders applied only to those drawing a salary as a scientist. This would seem to have been a missed opportunity, for ordinary sailors displayed a sophisticated interest in ethnographic objects on the *Investigator* expedition, and were often more canny about the means to acquire it. On the morning of the expedition's first encounter with Indigenous Australians, at King George Sound, an ordinary seaman named Samuel Smith for instance recorded in his diary how collecting had already begun apace:

A Traffick took place, exchanging their spears for different trinkets... They are so Carefull of their [Kangaroo] skins that you cannot purchase them for any Trinkets; their Features are Quite awfull having such large Mouths & long teeth. Every part Exhibits the Attitudes & Manners of A compleat Savage. Their spears are from 8 to 12 Feet in Length.³⁸

Smith's use of phrases such as 'Attitudes & Manners' indicates his attempt to make an ethnographic engagement. Smith had measured the spears, made an effort to describe the Menang people's appearance, and even offered a philosophical appraisal. In a later entry he recorded how, eventually:

Traffick ceas'd, for their spears being their chief commodity, they took care to hide them in their way to us, & as for their skins, our people knew their Veneration for them, therefore did not attempt to purchase them. On our first interview with them, they seem'd surprised, which gave us reason to think they had never before seen Europeans.³⁹

Here, Smith again used a structured style of written reportage which began with, and was legitimated by, his account of a form of object exchange dependent upon prior knowledge of indigenous preferences and

³⁸ Montreath. *Sailing with Flinders*, p. 32.

³⁹ *Ibid.* p. 35.

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idiosyncrasies. In each case ethnographic commentary, whether in reference to physical appearance, or to the Menang's behaviour upon encountering Europeans, was preceded by a testament to collecting, an embodiment of scientific authority. Smith's use of capitals, especially in 'Veneration', bears some comparison to those earlier employed by Grant, who had written to Banks of his 'innate Principle for Studying & observing Nature'.⁴⁰ As with 'innate Principle', 'Veneration' was an unnecessary and incongruous term, and so draws our attention to Smith's wish to adopt an authoritative scientific voice. Smith's language in relation to collecting thus embodied his attempt to position himself as an ethnographic scientist. The continuous shift between 'us' and 'them' hints at the associated consolidation of a 'European' identity at King George Sound, but it is more difficult to detect whom Smith specifically sought to include under 'us' and 'our people'. It is probable that we are entering the scientific world of the *Investigator's* ordinary seamen, here, for Smith often distinguished himself and others from the expedition's scientific contingent, whom he referred to as 'Our Gentlemen'.⁴¹

Smith's records help us to understand boundary figures such as Peter Good, who although an assistant of Brown, did not possess the same intellectual standing as the other scientists. Perhaps it is therefore no coincidence that it was Good who did the most to demonstrate how important it was for the *Investigator's* scientists to be able to likewise acquire specimens freely, to keep them, and where this was not possible, to be recognised as their original collectors. The gardener-assistant had signed his name under the various conditions given by the Admiralty only to forget almost immediately what they had said; fearing that Brown might in future outflank him by presenting all such collections as his own, Good accordingly appealed to Banks for clarity. Good relied less upon capitals than Grant and Smith but his writing, while advanced, was obviously careful. Banks, we learn once again, was an intimidating person to address:

⁴⁰ See Chapter Two, section 2.4.

⁴¹ Montreath. *Sailing with Flinders*, p. 31.

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It is with regret I have to state to you a fact that my memory is not sufficient to retain distinctly all the articles of the appointment which I signed. - Owing to my not fully comprehending from hearing them once read over the extent of their meaning, a matter of considerable uneasiness has risen in my mind. - To the best of my recollection one article states that at our return to England every article of our collections of Natural History and curiosity etc. shall be given up to a person or persons appointed by the Lords commissioners of the Admiralty. But with a view to encourage activity and industry in collecting, their Lordships declare that after having selected what they think proper for the British Museum &c the remainder shall be returned to the persons who collected them to be disposed of by them at their pleasure...The Miner and I were [later] told that we must give up every article of our discovery and collections of every kind to Mr Brown when collected to be by him labeld and stored up &c. So that it appears to me that every article of our industry and collections shall become the immediate property of Mr Brown.⁴²

We do not have Banks' response to Good's letter, if one was given, but he would likely have reassured Good that labelling and storing all such collections, as seems to have been the chosen procedure, was simply a matter of ensuring that their origin and nature could later be understood. The letter reveals that the Admiralty's instructions were taken seriously by their signatories, and suggests too that collectors such as Good were no longer attempting to collect directly for Banks. The difference with Grant, in this respect, was quite considerable. Good's reference to the British Museum is intriguing in view of the fact that the Admiralty had been explicit that all collections were destined to be stored in a somewhat mysterious institution, the 'Depot of the Admiralty', to which they twice referred. The 'Depot', of which few other records seem to exist, appears not to have been Soho Square or the British Museum. The 'Depot' was very possibly not even a physical place. What the letter seems to be telling us is that the Admiralty sought not to transfer the entirety of the *Investigator's* collections to Banks'

⁴² Peter Good to Joseph Banks, 6 May. 1801. SLNSW, PSJB, Series 63.58, CY 3009/147.

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custodianship, either at Soho Square or the British Museum, as a matter of course. Neil Chambers misses this nuance in his commentary on the eventual transition of the *Investigator*'s natural history collections to Bloomsbury. Observing, perhaps incorrectly, that 'from the beginning the collections made were to be passed on to the British Museum after being assessed at Soho Square', Chambers suggests that Banks constantly 'reminded' the Admiralty to transfer the collections to Bloomsbury after the *Investigator*'s return.⁴³ Likewise, Morgan observes that the instructions were signed in Banks' presence but omits to mention the specific manner in which they invoked the Admiralty's authority, and nor does he comment on Nepean's presence.⁴⁴ A more interesting interpretation of the period following the collections' return is that Banks in fact sought to extract from the Admiralty's possession a range of specimens which it was not necessarily able, or willing, to share. There was no official basis to Good's belief that objects would inevitably be sent to the British Museum; his assumption that they would reveals how close and apparently inextricable Banks was to the control of Admiralty knowledge at the time.

3.3 Agency and the genesis of naval narrative

This chapter has shown thus far that the absence of any extant or intentional collections associated with the *Investigator* voyage has the potential to mislead us about the various interests which existed in relation to collecting at the time. An intentional collection was originally sought by the Admiralty but it was destined to be kept only temporarily, as an enticement to sailors to collect interesting things. It seems however that no intentional collection ever arrived in England, for nothing relevant was apparently recorded at the time, or has surfaced in the country since. Ethnographic study on Flinders' expedition may therefore have focused only on incidental collections.

⁴³ Neil Chambers. *Joseph Banks and the British Museum: The World of Collecting, 1772-1830* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), p. 52.

⁴⁴ Morgan. 'Sir Joseph Banks', 245.

It is possible that the Banksian hierarchy shown in Chapter Two to have been so destructive to the returns of the *Lady Nelson* operated in a similar way in relation to the collections of the *Investigator*. Flinders' 'scientific assistants' may have chosen to collect, investigate and describe ethnographic specimens during the course of the voyage, but to dedicate all storage space to natural history. Just as Grant's earlier use of a form of visual documentation to 'collect' Pemulwuy and his canoe served to circumvent the challenges that would have been posed by an intentional collection, for example, it is undoubtedly the case that draughtsmanship in particular rivalled collecting as a means to record the ethnographic discoveries made upon the *Investigator*.⁴⁵ Analyses of Westall's work have shown that the artist possessed a keen ethnographic interest, and one supported by Flinders and his crew.⁴⁶ We have seen already that such visual forms of documentation were themselves sought and given legitimacy by the Admiralty, which referred in its instructions to 'Drawings and sketches'. Practically, these saved space and time (for they were often worked up later), and offered a means to acquire specimens too bulky or unwieldy to be themselves brought upon the ship. In his study of Georges Cuvier's contemporary creation of a 'paper museum of fossil bones', Martin Rudwick has referred to such images as 'proxy specimens', which allowed collected objects to be replicated and given greater mobility.⁴⁷ Of a similar approach, Westall's sketch of Yanuwa memorial stones, or 'Kundawira', offers strong evidence.⁴⁸ As discussed below, however, Flinders' reluctance to dispossess Indigenous Australians of objects thought to be particularly significant to their culture, or way of life, may have played an equal part in

⁴⁵ For a related discussion, see Bernard Smith. *European Vision and the South Pacific* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 192-197.

⁴⁶ John J. Bradley and Amanda Kearney. "'He painted the law": William Westall, "stone monuments" and remembrance of things past in the Sir Edward Pellew Islands', *Journal of Material Culture*, 16 (2011), 25-45.

⁴⁷ Martin Rudwick. 'Georges Cuvier's paper museum of fossil bones', *Archives of Natural History*, 27 (2000), 51-68.

⁴⁸ William Westall. 'View of Sir Edward Pellew's Group, Gulf of Carpentaria, December 1802', CLA, ZBA7944.

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his decision not to remove the stones, for he suspected that they played a role in remembering the dead.⁴⁹

The notes, journals and diaries of other persons on Flinders' expedition nevertheless attest to the fact that a considerable volume of object collecting did indeed take place. It is vital to remember, however, that these records were constructed in the knowledge that they would later be inspected by the Admiralty as well as a public audience. A critical 'lexico-semantic' inspection of incidental collections therefore has the potential to reveal the relationship between popular and scientific forms of ethnographic investigation, the pragmatics of naval scientific enquiry, and the contemporary interests of Admiralty officials such as Jervis, Troubridge and Markham.⁵⁰ With respect to current scholarship, a critical analysis of the discourse of collecting simultaneously lends itself to now popular efforts to identify countersigns within such records, which form an alternative methodology for linguistically historicising ethnographic study on-board the *Investigator*. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, the present popularity of investigating countersigns as a means to detect 'hidden' evidence of indigenous activity in expedition records, and in particular the contribution of intermediaries, is to a great extent founded upon the problematic assumption that, as the supposedly hegemonic party in such encounters, the European perspective is already exhaustively understood. Oft-quoted yet ultimately insubstantial theories of 'noble savagery', racial hierarchy and 'collecting before it was too late' consequently take the place of any detailed or critical understanding of what various European actors, particularly contemporary sailors, might have been trying to achieve.

The most obvious benefit of an approach grounded in the study of non-extant and incidental collections for theories concerning countersigns and intermediaries is that we gain a deeper understanding of precisely why

⁴⁹ Bradley and Kearney. "He painted the law", 32.

⁵⁰ I have borrowed this term from Bronwen Douglas. See, for example, Bronwen Douglas. *Science, Voyages, and Encounters in Oceania, 1511-1850* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 20.

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indigenous agency was erased or emboldened in historical records. In the introduction to their recent volume *Indigenous Intermediaries: New Perspectives on Exploration Archives*, Shino Konishi, Maria Nugent and Tiffany Shellam suggest that ‘most scholars now recognise that indigenous people were not simply overlooked by historians of exploration, but were often deliberately effaced in published explorer accounts’.⁵¹ Even where indigenous people were included, they continue, ‘their contributions to the exploration enterprise and its outcomes would invariably be obscured by their being reduced to “mere servants” or “unnamed assistants”’.⁵² This is problematic; the assumption that writers of expedition narratives were invariably deceitful is not always borne out in the relevant material, and seemingly depends upon the *ad hominem* declaration that, as Europeans, all such actors were inevitably and irredeemably concerned with the establishment of hegemonic power by means of the textual subordination of indigenous people.

To return to the events of Saturday 31 July 1802, when Brown was caught thieving fishing nets on Fraser Island, it seems more than apparent that objects and exchange played a pivotal role in shaping encounter and ethnographic study, and that the nature of indigenous agency in achieving this was a source of particular debate. Below is Flinders’ published account of the incident, an extract from *A Voyage to Terra Australis* (Figure 3.2). It recounts the immediate circumstances of the expedition’s landing on Fraser Island. In relation to the arguments discussed above, it must first be observed that although the first paragraph reads in many ways as an account of the ineffectiveness of Bungaree as an intermediary, and in particular of his inability to translate between the two parties, there is no obvious effort to disguise his participation. Notwithstanding Bungaree’s own contributions, however, it is equally clear that objects and ethnographic collecting were the most important means of establishing mutual understanding. The scoop nets

⁵¹ Shino Konishi, Maria Nugent and Tiffany Shellam (eds.). *Indigenous Intermediaries: New Perspectives on Exploration Archives* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2015), p. 5.

⁵² *Ibid.*

and the spear-thrower are used by Flinders in interestingly diverse ways. One learns, for instance, that the nets allowed for an ethnographic comparison to be made, as they were seen to be peculiar to the Badtjala people. In turn, this was evidence of the Badtjala's ample diet and so accounted for their relatively 'fleshy' appearance, as well as the singular tumour on their knuckles. Similarly, their ignorance of the use of Bungaree's woomera was seen to indicate a lack of contact with other indigenous groups. Conversely, the discussion of canoes evidences the use of indigenous peoples' habits to infer the existence of absent ethnographic specimens.

| 10 | A VOYAGE TO | [East Coast. | Hervey's Bay.] | TERRA AUSTRALIS |
|------------------------------|--|---|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 1802. July. Friday 30. | <p>In order to give the botanists an opportunity of examining the productions of Sandy Cape, I determined to remain here a day; and some natives being seen upon the beach, a boat was sent to commence an acquaintance with them; they however retired, and suffered Mr. Brown to botanise without disturbance. Next morning the brig anchored within a quarter of a mile of the shore, to cover our landing parties; and the armed boats being moored at grapnels, out of the reach of the natives, we separated into three divisions. The naturalist's party, consisting of six persons, walked along the shore towards the upper part of the bay; Mr. Murray and his people went to cut wood for fuel; and the party with me, also of six persons, including my native friend <i>Bongaree</i>, went towards the extremity of Sandy Cape. Several Indians with branches of trees in their hands, were there collected; and whilst they retreated themselves, were waving to us to go back. <i>Bongaree</i> stripped off his clothes and laid aside his spear, as inducements for them to wait for him; but finding they did not understand his language, the poor fellow, in the simplicity of his heart, addressed them in broken English, hoping to succeed better. At length they suffered him to come up, and by degrees our whole party joined; and after receiving some presents, twenty of them returned with us to the boats, and were feasted upon the blubber of two porpoises, which had been brought on shore purposely for them. At two o'clock the naturalists returned, bringing some of the scoop nets used by the natives in catching fish; and we then quitted our new friends, after presenting them with hatchets and other testimonials of our satisfaction. . .</p> <p>These people go entirely naked, and otherwise much resemble the inhabitants of Port Jackson in personal appearance; but they were more fleshy, perhaps from being able to obtain a better supply of food with the scoop nets, which are not known on the southern parts of the coast. I noticed in most of them a hard tumour on the outer knuckle of the wrist, which, if we understood them aright, was caused by the stretcher of the scoop coming in contact with this</p> | <p>part in the act of throwing the net. Our native did not understand a word of their language, nor did they seem to know the use of his <i>womerah</i> or throwing stick; for one of them being invited to imitate <i>Bongaree</i>, who lanced a spear with it very dexterously and to a great distance, he, in the most awkward manner, threw both <i>womerah</i> and spear together. Nothing like a canoe was seen amongst these people; but they must have some means of passing over the water to short distances, since I found, in 1799, that Curlew Islet, near the head of this bay, had been visited.</p> | 1802 July Saturday | |
| Saturday 31. | | | | |

Figure 3.2 Matthew Flinders' first published account of his July 1802 visit to Fraser Island. Extracts from Flinders. *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, vol. 2, p. 10.

While enlightening, this seemingly straightforward narrative of encounter and of Flinders' study of ethnographic specimens masked a context fraught with political difficulty, as well as a diversity of contemporary responses. These become more apparent once we compare the textual content of *A Voyage to Terra Australis* with its earlier manifestations, and to the records of other members of the expedition. The final narrative in fact went through at least three stages of drafting; first, Flinders made observations in the diary he kept with him during the expedition; these he then reproduced more formally in the ship's logbooks.⁵³ Thirdly and somewhat latterly in consequence of his detention on Mauritius, the logbooks were edited again for the official publication. The passages concerning the spear-thrower, or woomera, are among the most enlightening in this respect. They reveal that Flinders went to great lengths to edit and to shape accounts even of a seemingly trivial nature, and so to influence Admiralty and popular perceptions of Indigenous Australians (Figure 3.3). The original passage read (approximately) as follows:

nor did they seem to know the use of his [Bungaree's]
 throwing stick; for on one of them being asked to
 use it, he threw his stick and spear away toge
 in a very awkward manner
 -ther ^ but ^{not} better than one of us would have done.⁵⁴

⁵³ The first two volumes of the journal which Flinders kept with him on the expedition are now held (and digitised online) by the Mitchell Library, of the State Library of New South Wales, where they are identified as 'Matthew Flinders - Journal on HMS 'Investigator', vol. 1, 1801-1802', SLNSW, Safe 1/24, and 'Matthew Flinders - Journal on HMS 'Investigator', vol. 2, 1802-1803', SLNSW, Safe 1/25. Their handwritten nature and the frequent presence of corrections suggest strongly that these are Flinders' original, contemporaneous records. Much of the text contained in these volumes is reproduced in Flinders' logbooks, which were also completed during the course of the expedition. Owing to the absence of corrections in the latter source, and the presence therein of alterations made in the former, it can be deduced that the logbooks were completed shortly after Flinders recorded his original observations in the journals. The logbooks are now held by The National Archives, Kew, where they are catalogued as 'Investigator: Journal kept by Captain Matthew Flinders', ADM 55/75 and ADM 55/76. While evidently a logbook, Flinders' own title for these records was 'Journal of a voyage to Terra Australis in His Majesty's Ship Investigator by Matthew Flinders - Commander. 1801-1802-1803-1804. in two volumes'. They were intentionally written, therefore, as an early draft of his final work, *A Voyage to Terra Australis*.

⁵⁴ 'Matthew Flinders - Journal on HMS "Investigator"', vol. 2. SLNSW, p. 23.

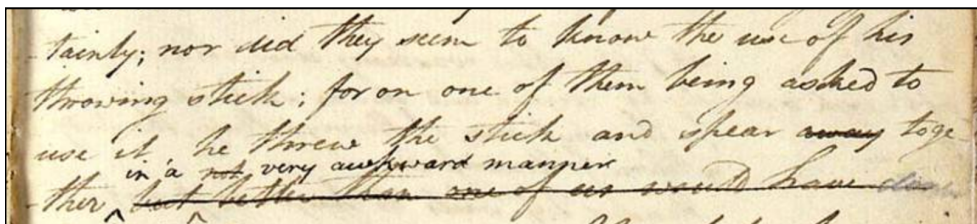


Figure 3.3 Matthew Flinders' contemporary account of his July 1802 visit to Fraser Island. Extract from 'Matthew Flinders - Journal on HMS "Investigator"', vol. 2. SLNSW, p. 23.

The various revisions made here (written, to judge from the darker ink, at a later date) reveal that Flinders had the final publication of his account of the expedition in mind, when recording and editing his initial observations. Flinders' original modesty in admitting that the sailors of the *Investigator* would have fared no better in throwing spears with the woomera has been effaced in order to create a hierarchy of ability between, on the one hand, Bungaree and the British crew, and on the other the Badtjala people. When Flinders later recorded the same passage in the expedition's logbooks, he changed it to read as follows:

...nor did they seem to know the use of the stick (woomera) with which he [Bungaree] threw his spear, for one of them being asked to use it, very awkwardly threw the spear and the stick away together.⁵⁵

By this stage it seems Flinders had learned the name of the spear-thrower. In the final version, as we have seen, much of the passage remained the same, but with the exception that Bungaree's superiority became more firmly established:

on them being invited to imitate Bungaree, who *lanced* a spear with it *very dexterously and to a great distance*, he, in the *most awkward* manner, threw both womerah and spear together.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ 'Investigator: Journal kept by Captain Matthew Flinders', TNA, ADM 55/75, p. 131.

⁵⁶ Flinders. *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, vol. 2, p. 10. My emphasis.

Flinders' fondness for his intermediary Bungaree seems therefore to have grown over the intervening period; the various revisions here allow for an insight into the consolidation of his memories of the event, and apparently of an increasing desire to represent Bungaree as a more able figure than ordinary Indigenous Australians. We see also that object signifiers played a role in considerations of indigenous ability; the reference to Bungaree having a 'stick' became less pronounced over time, and is absent in the final passage, where the more sophisticated sounding 'womerah' takes its place. Other sections within Figure 3.2 suffered a similar series of revisions. The nature of some, however, is so subtle that comparison with other accounts from the expedition is necessary. With respect to Brown's acquisition of the scoop nets, some evidence of the tension this caused is apparent in Flinders' writing. The final version, as we have seen, read thus:

At two o'clock the naturalists returned, bringing some of the scoop nets used by the natives in catching fish; and we then quitted our new friends, after presenting them with hatchets and other testimonials of our satisfaction.⁵⁷

Revealingly, the language of collecting is not used here. The naturalists returned while 'bringing' the nets, but we do not learn how they were acquired or whether they were eventually kept. It is impossible to know, from this passage, whether the net collection was intentional. The Admiralty, who were keen to acquire any objects made in consequence of such encounters, would have been no wiser on this matter after examining Flinders' own logbooks and journals. His first and second accounts of the naturalists' scoop net collection read thus:

⁵⁷ The same passage has been analysed in Davis' 'Encountering Aboriginal Knowledge'. Davis does not consider the genesis of the passage, nor competing accounts in the journals of Brown, Good or Smith. In consequence, the political implications go unnoticed.

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[1] Two natives from among our party went forward to meet the naturalist who returned soon after bringing some of the scoop nets which the natives use to catch fish. At 2pm we left the shore and embarked on board the Lady Nelson.⁵⁸

[2] At 2 o'clock the naturalist party returned, bringing some of the scoop nets which the natives use to catch fish; and soon after we left the shore and embarked on board the brig.⁵⁹

The tension between the passages concerns, in this instance, the departure of two Badtjala men to meet the returning 'naturalist party', or singular 'naturalist', Brown. The reason for Flinders' omission of this fact in his second and third accounts is revealed by Brown's own record of the incident, which he made in his journal:

Near the beach on our return we found what I suppose was the tomb of one or perhaps several of the natives. It consisted of three branches about 7 or 8 feet high stuck perpendicularly into the ground, 2 of wch were connected by a cross branch at the top. Under these lay the bones of a man the Skull being tolerably perfect. I brought it off. Not far from the beach we found about a dozen fishing nets of the Natives, part of which we carried off leaving a hatchet & red night cap in their stead, but seeing some of us the natives approaching towards us we took up the hatchet &c. On their join[in]g us, wch they did only three in number & without arms, they demanded their nets, wch we returned to them but again bargained for some of them, giving them 2 hatchets and 2 red night caps in return wch they seemed to take as an equivalent.⁶⁰

The extract is representative of many passages in Brown's notes, which demonstrate a keen desire to observe, engage with and record his experiences of the Indigenous Australians with whom he came into contact. Brown deployed an indiscriminate curiosity as the expedition's naturalist,

⁵⁸ 'Matthew Flinders - Journal on HMS "Investigator"', vol. 2. SLNSW, p. 22.

⁵⁹ 'Investigator: Journal kept by Captain Matthew Flinders', TNA, ADM 55/75, p. 131.

⁶⁰ Vallance et al. *Nature's Investigator*, p. 231.

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and often applied the language and insights of his early medical training to the study of indigenous characteristics. He may have considered these under his purview as part of the investigation of natural history. There are far more observations on the relative appearance, manners, customs and material culture of Indigenous Australians in Brown's notes than one might expect from a naturalist concerned only with the study of flora and fauna. In spite of this, Brown's ethnographic interests have since received very little acknowledgement.⁶¹ Brown's ethnographic approach is most evident in a record made following an encounter with the Darumbal people of Shoalwater Bay in coastal Queensland, in August 1802. Following a 'friendly interview with them', Brown made notes on their size, strength, teeth, weapons, implements, medical condition (one man seemingly being afflicted, as was by then already not uncommon, with smallpox), clothes, language, canoes, and even the manner of their favoured facial expressions, 'a smack of the lips produced by strongly contracting the muscles of the mouth & then suddenly relaxing them'.⁶² The list-like method which Brown employed evidences an attempt to assemble a comprehensive ethnography. In relation to the objects they had with them, he wrote:

Their weapons. Spears of hard wood, of the usual length, no Womara's, Shields of wood & not remarkably light, handle cut out of the solid wood, form oblong, rounded on the sides & ends, size about 1½ foot long. Waddies as at Port Jackson &... in the shape of a half moon. Some with nets fastnd round their necks. None of them painted with ochre, some blackned wit charcoal.⁶³

The description is concise and workmanlike, and apparently intended as part of a wider synthesis of Indigenous Australia. Although Brown did not

⁶¹ This is particularly evident in Davis' aforementioned study, 'Encountering Aboriginal Knowledge', where discussion of Brown's interest in ethnographic enquiry is limited largely to moments where his botanising is interrupted by indigenous agency, and is therefore afforded no primacy of its own. In consequence, Davis fails to acknowledge the need for a more detailed study of Brown, and opts instead to 'read against the grain', in an effort to identify countersigns.

⁶² Vallance et al. *Nature's Investigator*, p. 259.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

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mention whether he collected any objects on this occasion, there is evidence that some specimens may have been acquired during the expedition. One month before the Fraser Island encounter Brown reported that Bauer had submitted a wooden club for his inspection:

Mr Bauer found the short club of a native. It resembles those of the natives about Port Jackson wch they call Waddies. It was marked in circles of zig zags equidistant & pretty regular. The surface where grasped was rough.⁶⁴

The shift between tenses here is curious. At the time of writing Brown seems no longer to have had the Waddy in his possession ('it *was* marked', 'the surface...*was* rough'), and yet the use of the present ('it *resembles*') appears to suggest the contrary. In the passage written at Shoalwater Bay, Brown referred to objects more abstractly, without reference to possession or tense. The tactile observation, 'rough', gives a sense of presence that is also missing from the Shoalwater Bay observations. The implication may be that before making the observation in his diary Brown had already packed the object away, or returned it to Bauer, after having inspected it. In favour of the latter prospect, David Maberley notes in his 1999 study of Bauer that an Australian 'Aboriginal club' was found at Bauer's house in Vienna, Austria, after his death in 1826.⁶⁵ Some returning collections may therefore have escaped the Admiralty's notice, and been kept as curiosities. There are similar indications of an ethnographic interest in Brown's correspondence with Banks. Reporting the *Investigator's* famous encounter with Baudin's survey, which took place on 8 April 1802, Brown informed Banks that, among others, Baudin had on-board 'two mineralogists & one Zoologist who is also anthropologist'.⁶⁶ This was a reference to Péron, who is said to have coined the term 'anthropologist' himself and who seems, therefore, to

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p. 191.

⁶⁵ David Maberley. *Ferdinand Bauer: The Nature of Discovery* (London: Merrell Holberton, 1999), p. 121.

⁶⁶ Robert Brown to Joseph Banks, 30 May. 1802. BL, Add MS 32439, fol. 63.

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have proudly declared his new title to Brown.⁶⁷ The emphasis which Brown placed upon the term implies that the study of humankind was seen to have some particular relevance; it may be that Brown considered the absence of a similar expert on-board the *Investigator* to be detrimental to the relative intellectual success of the British expedition.

One learns from the 1802 Fraser Island extract that Brown's interest in indigenous people also extended to the collection of human remains. Hitherto, our awareness of the occurrence of such practices on the *Investigator* expedition has been limited to events which occurred some months later, in January 1803, when a Yolngu man was shot in the back after an apparent misunderstanding.⁶⁸ Following this, according to Good, 'the Surgeon Cut off his Head & took out his Heart & put them in Spirits'.⁶⁹ Brown, who did not likewise mention the incident, was similarly reticent about his own involvement in such morbid activity; the unusually stunted sentence in his 1802 account at Fraser Island, 'I brought it off' (the next sentence was forty-three words longer) is a particularly evocative example of the political and personal tensions occasioned by this form of scientific investigation. There is a related silence concerning the fate or location of the skull upon Brown's meeting with the three Badtjala men (rather than two, as Flinders had reported). We must assume that it was placed out of sight, and that its absence was not noticed until after the *Investigator*'s departure from Fraser Island.

The negotiation which ensued between Brown and the Badtjala men offers an intriguing insight into the nature of exchange at the time, and particularly in light of Flinders' decision not to record it officially. Brown seemed almost indignant, or perhaps simply surprised, that the men 'only three in number & without arms' had the temerity to 'demand' the return of the scoop nets

⁶⁷ See, for example, Gordon W. Hewes. 'Historical Notes: On Francois Péron: The First Official Expedition Anthropologist', *Current Anthropology*, 9 (1968), 287-288.

⁶⁸ Douglas. 'Philosophers, Naturalists, and Antipodean Encounters', 396.

⁶⁹ Edwards. *The Journal of Peter Good*, p. 112.

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from what would have been an armed party of the *Investigator*'s naturalists and four other naval men.⁷⁰ Brown had engaged in the then popular practice of simply leaving trade gear in stead of collected objects, it having what was assumed to be an equal or greater value to what had been acquired. In this case, we are given a rare insight into how this was perceived by indigenous people on the receiving end of such a poor and one-sided transaction. We learn from Brown's notes that a formal system of barter was nevertheless entered into by the Badtjala men, but only after the nets were once again in the latter's possession. In a striking example of indigenous agency, the Badtjala men managed to double Brown's payment, giving him in exchange only half as many nets. The Badtjala eventually received two hatchets and two red night caps, 'wch they seemed to take as an equivalent'.

The incident was omitted in Flinders' own account in favour of a narrative of friendship. This seems to have been a symptom of Flinders' frequent efforts to present his expedition and himself as something of a diplomatic envoy. At the time, the abilities, organisation and future utility of Australia's indigenous population was still largely an unknown quantity, and it would have been an unpopular captain indeed who left a record of his responsibility for creating such tensions and discontent as might imperil future European explorers. Having, however, received no instructions to govern his relations with indigenous people, Flinders appears to have taken this decision himself, and to have passed it down to his crew.⁷¹ With almost comic understatement, Smith once recorded an incident at King George Sound in 1801, when the Menang people's boldness and acquisitive agency caused problems of its own:

⁷⁰ Flinders. *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, vol. 2, p. 10.

⁷¹ Flinders. *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, vol. 1, p. 9.

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because our Men wou'd not give them [a party of Menang men] a small Tommyhawk, they began to throw pieces of Wood at them, which Exasperated our men, but Orders being so Humane towards the Natives that we must put up with every thing but heaving spears.⁷²

One detects a similarly diplomatic line of thinking in Flinders' angry response to the death of the Yolngu man at Blue Mud Bay, after which he castigated those responsible for 'having acted so contrary to my orders'.⁷³ In writing this, Flinders was taking part in a kind of narrative performance which highlighted his own, relative, morality. Brown's own observations, by contrast, are thought not to have been written with publication in mind. Although Brown's occasional recourse to an explanatory narrative style appears designed to educate and inform later readers, those experts who have since spent more than two decades deciphering his diffuse, chaotic and unpunctuated papers argue persuasively that no efforts were subsequently made to expose his records to a wider audience.⁷⁴ It would seem, however, that even this is no guarantee of the accuracy of Brown's account. Perplexingly, the diary of Peter Good, who accompanied Brown throughout the incident, offers a third and again different interpretation of what occurred on Fraser Island:

on returning we fell in with a human skeleton which appeared to have been burried there for some sticks were stuck in the ground and many boughs had been laid over the body all was now decayed except the bones which was tolerably entire - we found fresh water in pits in several places in one place - near the Shore & we found a number of fishing nets executed with much ingenuity almost equal to european manufactor the Cordage seemed to be made from a kind of rush very neatly plaited. one was brough on board but Captain would not permit any more to be took from the Natives 20 or 30 of which were assembled on the Beach with the Captain & boats Crew at our return & had freely given or exchanged their Net ware as I believe no other implements of theirs were seen.⁷⁵

⁷² Montreath. *Sailing with Flinders*, p. 32.

⁷³ Flinders. *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, vol. 2, p. 197.

⁷⁴ See Foreword, in Vallance et al. *Nature's Investigator*.

⁷⁵ Edwards. *The Journal of Peter Good*, p. 82.

Good was more candid about the reason for Brown's acquisition of nets which, we learn, were considered to be well-made, and thus worthy of collection. Significantly, Good's language therefore valued the aesthetic over the functional (they are not, for instance, referred to as 'scoop' nets). Whereas Flinders and Brown described these as scientifically useful acquisitions, Good's records show that this might have been a secondary interpretation, and one only arrived at in consequence of their examination of an object initially acquired for its attractive appearance. The fact that Brown's party seem to have stolen as many as they could carry is also suggestive of this interpretation. The nets therefore asserted themselves a certain agency in determining the nature of the ethnographic insights which Flinders and Brown could make at Fraser Island. Good observes, however, that the nets were the only item of material culture which they were able to collect, since 'no other implements' were seen. This, in turn, suggests that the expedition was indeed attempting to make representative ethnographic collections of the societies it encountered.

Although Good's journal was not immediately published, or indeed completed (he did not survive the voyage), he seems to have had an Admiralty and perhaps later a popular audience in mind. There are for instance now familiar tensions in the passage in relation to collecting. Good does not mention Brown's acquisition of the skull, and nor does he refer to the fact that the returning party had been prevented from collecting a large number of nets. In fact Good ignored indigenous agency entirely, in what must be considered a deliberate manner. A hint of the trouble which had occurred can be detected only in Good's otherwise unnecessary justification for the party's acquisitions: 'the Natives...had *freely* given or exchanged their Net ware'.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, we also find an entirely new observation in Good's passage, which is that one net had been brought on-board but that Flinders 'would not permit any more to be took'. This alludes to another

⁷⁶ My emphasis.

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revealing silence in Flinders' own records; it would seem that he himself became involved in preventing too many nets from being acquired, and thus perhaps causing friction with a people who relied upon such objects for their subsistence. As discussed in Chapter Two, Flinders had by 1799 developed a theory equating the presence of fishing nets with peaceable and cooperative indigenous societies, and he would have been aware also of Arthur Phillip's former prohibition on forms of collecting that might cause those societies internal discord.⁷⁷ Since he considered Indigenous Australians who relied solely on spears to be destined to remain 'gloomy, unsettled, and unsocial' beings, Flinders prioritised his concern for their welfare and for the success of the colony over the instructions of the Admiralty, and so frustrated Brown's own scientific interests.⁷⁸ This being contrary to orders, it is no surprise that Flinders declined to record this particular evidence of his diplomatic and moral virtue within any version of his journals.

Good's observation that Flinders was liable to order the return of collected objects is substantiated by an observation Brown made five days later. In circumstances so similar that they would seem to be related, Brown observed how, at Port Curtis (some 140 miles north of Fraser Island):

some of the party here thought proper to carry on board nets & other implements of the natives, wch Capn Flinders very properly orderd to be returned the following day.⁷⁹

Brown's obsequiousness here is revealing, since he had behaved in an identical manner only one week before. In fact, he seems to have done so again. While concluding his thoughts on the people of this area two days later, Brown observed that:

⁷⁷ See Chapter Two, section 2.2.

⁷⁸ David Collins. *An Account of the English Colony in New South Wales* (London: A. Strahan, 1804), p. 513.

⁷⁹ Vallance et al. *Nature's Investigator*, p. 238.

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Their fishing implements, particularly their nets, were exactly similar [to those at Fraser Island], their baskets the same, their canoes of bark in size & form like those in the vicinity of Port Jackson. In each canoe we found a small quantity of cord, [and] a large shell probably for baling the canoe. The sides of the canoes were kept at a proper distance by means of this cord tied across.

In one of the canoes I left a small adze & at a little distance along with the nets, baskets &c, which had been taken the first day but returned by Capn Flinders order I left a red night cap...⁸⁰

Brown's ethnographic reportage here is interrupted by a disjointed account of the return of nets and baskets, seemingly by him, which had previously been taken by a party of sailors of which he was a part. He mentioned his careful placement of two objects: an adze and a red cap. Surprisingly, it seems therefore that a precisely similar sequence of events had again unfolded. Brown had taken nets and also, on this occasion, baskets, with or without the consent of their owners, and had been forced to return these items by a presumably irate Flinders. Although Brown was careful not to impeach himself by admitting to having acquired the latter series of nets, it would seem from his being ordered to return them that he is the likely suspect. Indeed, the use of the passive in the first extract, 'carried on board' becomes active in the second '[the nets] had been *taken*', perhaps in an admission of guilt. Again, there is no mention of the incident in Flinders' journals, where he opted for a relative if revealing silence, in place of a record of the way he prioritised diplomacy over the Admiralty's instructions to acquire ethnographic specimens.⁸¹ It is perhaps now impossible to explain why Brown decided to leave the adze at the opposite end of the canoe from the red cap, and to place the red cap among the returned nets and baskets.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* p. 244.

⁸¹ This is true of all versions of Flinders' journal. In the first, at least, he acknowledged the naturalists' discovery that 'they use the same kind of scoop net as in Hervey's Bay [off the west coast of Fraser Island]'. See 'Matthew Flinders - Journal on HMS "Investigator"', vol. 2. SLNSW, p. 39. Good likewise did not mention the collection, but also remarked that the nets appeared similar to those 'at Sandy Cape'. See Edwards. *The Journal of Peter Good*, p. 84.

That this seems, to him, to have been a rational and consequential thing to do underlines most clearly the difficulty of fully comprehending sailors' contemporary mindsets, and so of the dangers of making generalisations. At best, it might be ventured that Brown intended the red cap to represent an apology, and the adze a present.

3.4 Conclusion

The three contrasting and contradictory accounts which exist of Brown's attempt to acquire nets at Fraser Island in 1802 attest to the social and political dynamics of collecting on the *Investigator* expedition. The morning of 31 July was fraught with tension as Brown sought to smuggle nets onto the ship while escaping the notice of his captain, Flinders, and of the Badtjala people to whom they had previously belonged (and from the latter's perspective, still belonged). In a reversal of what we might normally expect from a moment of collecting, Flinders actively dissuaded his crew from acquiring specimens which the Badtjala people were only too willing to sell, if only for the right price. Somewhere in the midst of this activity a skull lay concealed, acquired on a whim and destined for subsequent obscurity. We do not know what would have been made of its loss. Brown's attempt to make objective scientific collections in spite of these difficulties paints him as an almost quixotic figure, oblivious to the realities, and dangers, of the world around him. That evening, when writing up their journals, Flinders, Brown and Brown's assistant, Good, each recorded their own account of the story. Here, they selectively included, or omitted, those details which cast them in a bad light, or which contradicted their sense of purpose. They wrote in the knowledge that their Admiralty superiors, and perhaps later a public audience, would read what they said.

Few accounts of collecting, not least on the *Investigator* voyage, are quite so rich. It is rare to find a seemingly trivial incident such as this appearing in as many as three separate texts, and we are led to conclude in consequence that

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Brown, Good and Flinders themselves appreciated the complexities and significances of what had occurred. The duplicity which a comparative reading of their records reveals casts into doubt the veracity of other accounts of object collecting, but suggests too that it is in accounts of collecting that the various influences and controversies which governed ethnographic enquiry are most visible. I have made these observations at this early stage of the thesis in order to highlight the methodological advantages of a critical study of collecting, as well as the imperative to understand naval enquiry in its own terms. Significant advances in our understanding of encounter have been made by Davis, Douglas, Fornasiero, Montreath, West-Sooby and others, but the increasing application of critical linguistic theory has outpaced our understanding of the most basic features of the world in which these primary texts were written. Few have applied these techniques to the study of collecting, and this in spite of the fact that collecting was often the very first and most consistent activity in which European and indigenous actors engaged.

I have argued that the need to make incidental collections on-board the *Investigator* voyage was to some extent driven by the knowledge that extant specimens would bring their collectors little credit in Britain. Although the Admiralty was interested in acquiring ethnographic specimens, its vague statements about the uses to which they would be put, expressed in the unclear reference to its 'depot', would have done little to dissuade actors such as Flinders from collecting according to anything other than the Banksian hierarchy discussed in Chapter Two. Though the expedition was of a much grander scale, the intentional ethnographic collections returned by the *Investigator* seem to have been smaller in number than those known to have earlier been smuggled home in Grant's chest of drawers. By putting Banks in charge of the selection of Flinders' 'scientific gentlemen', the Admiralty unintentionally ensured that the specimens acquired would reflect the particular preferences of its famous scientific patron. In the next chapter, and section, of the thesis, I explore the increasingly intentional nature of the collections made after the end of the Napoleonic Wars of 1803-1815.

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Flinders' incarceration on Mauritius between 1803 and 1810 symbolised the cessation of naval ethnographic enquiry in this period, and his death in 1814 underlined a wider sense that it was time for something new.

PART TWO

Transitions

**Collecting in transition:
The surveying voyages of Phillip Parker King, 1817-1822**

Admiralty 26 Sep 1820

My Dear Sir,

I hear that you have got some account of an Unicorn from the Himalaya? Pray let me know all about it, as I am much interested about both the beast & the mountains.

Yours very faithfully,

*John Barrow*¹

Appointed to the council of the Royal Society in 1815, the Second Secretary to the Admiralty John Barrow was one of many naval beneficiaries of the end of the Napoleonic Wars. The disruption the wars caused, between 1803 and 1815, had put a swift end to the enthusiastic period of colonial voyaging and Antipodean collecting discussed in the previous chapters. By the resumption of peace in 1815, many of the established authorities upon the matter were either ailing or gone; Philip Gidley King never fully recovered from his return to England, and nor did Matthew Flinders, who died in 1814, the day after the publication of his long delayed *A Voyage to Terra Australis*.² Only Banks remained to coordinate the completion of the charting of the continent, but this resumed shortly before he too passed away, on 19 June 1820. The years which followed necessarily witnessed the

¹ John Barrow to Robert Brown, 26 Sep. 1820. BL, Add MS 32440, fol. 256.

² In poor health, King was replaced as governor by William Bligh in 1806. Matthew Flinders. *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, 2 vols. (London: G. and W. Nicol, 1814).

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rise of new rationales and methodologies to govern colonial exploration, encounter and exchange, and so too did collected ethnographic specimens in this period come to possess a new range of meanings, attributions, and later trajectories within the institutions of early nineteenth-century science. In Banks' absence, the discipline grew and expanded, but many things remained unchanged. This was a period of transition, rather than of abrupt difference, in which new and established attitudes toward the acquisition of ethnographic objects and specimens of natural history both competed and merged.

The rise of Barrow, who to some extent filled Banks' shoes, stimulated the development of a closer and more engaged relationship between naval collecting and scientific knowledge. Barrow had been seeking unicorns since 1797; his 1820 letter to Flinders' former naturalist, Robert Brown, demonstrated something of the dynamism, curiosity and intellectual persistence of the famous promoter of exploration.³ Barrow was also a strong advocate of the first Australian survey of the post-Napoleonic period, a little-known expedition which sought to finish Flinders' work in charting the continent's northwest coastline between 1817 and 1822.⁴ In a peculiarly revealing episode of history, Philip Gidley King's son, the naval lieutenant Phillip Parker King, was chosen to command the expedition, and so to complete a generational shift in the early nineteenth-century understanding of Indigenous Australian material culture.⁵ The crew of the expedition's two surveying vessels, *Mermaid* and *Bathurst*, collected more than four hundred objects during the survey's four voyages, thus setting a record for the largest

³ Siegfried Huigen. *Knowledge and Colonialism: Eighteenth-century Travellers in South Africa* (Brill: Boston, 2009), p. 228.

It was only in 1881, owing to the work of another Robert Brown, that the unicorn was finally consigned to the status of myth. See Robert Brown. *The Unicorn: A Mythological Investigation* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1881).

⁴ See Marsden Hordern. *King of the Australian Coast: The Work of Phillip Parker King in the "Mermaid" and "Bathurst" 1817-1822* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2003), which remains the only comprehensive account of this history.

⁵ This was no coincidence. See S. A. Cavell. *Midshipmen and Quarterdeck Boys in the British Navy, 1771-1831* (Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2012), for an analysis of the importance of familial patronage in the post-1815 Royal Navy.

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ethnographic collection yet to have been made in Australia. Their reasons for doing so, however, have received no sustained analysis; why and how, one might ask, did certain individuals collect so many objects, and for what reason was this activity recorded with such equal vigour? What was the impact of Banks' death upon contemporary collecting, and in what manner did collections reflect colonial activity at the time? Appendix 3 and Appendix 4 reveal that few of the survey's intentional or incidental collections survive today. Those which do nevertheless represent a significant number of the very earliest known Indigenous Australian objects anywhere in the world.

In the analysis below, I employ the idea of a 'transition' between successive paradigms of naval collecting and exploration, in order to explain the difficulties involved in understanding King's collections, and the period in which they were acquired. After 1815, enduring networks of patronage in London, which had shaped the behaviour of King's father, increasingly found themselves in tension with the incipient yet strengthening authority of the Admiralty over naval collections. Throughout King's survey, the agency of individual naval personnel in shaping the acquisition and dissemination of new ethnographic knowledge also operated in tension with emergent metropolitan direction. In effect, signs emerged between 1817 and 1822 of the arguments, problems and opportunities which governed the subsequent creation of an array of semi-autonomous naval and military museums, as explored in Chapter Five, and the development of an increasingly bureaucratised naval scientific infrastructure, under Francis Beaufort, as described in Chapters Six and Seven.

Originating as they did in a period of transition, the objects collected on King's survey themselves occupied a transitory state; they were, in Susan Leigh Star and James Griesemer's formulation, 'boundary objects', which 'inhabit[ed] several intersecting social worlds and satis[fied] the

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informational requirements of each of them'.⁶ Jim Endersby has demonstrated the utility of applying Star and Griesemer's ideas to the study of collections, and in this chapter I follow suit.⁷ In the absence of a 'consensus over the aims of a common [scientific] project', Endersby argues, the collection of specimens in early colonial Australia facilitated cooperation between actors possessing different scientific interests and levels of formal education.⁸ Although I explore the collection of ethnography rather than, as in Endersby's case, botany, I seek to show that the collections made during King's survey were similarly employed in many different, albeit cooperative, ways. This was the work of a number of different actors, and occurred within a series of later institutional environments. The objects were, in this sense, 'plastic enough to adapt to local needs and the constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites'.⁹

This plasticity of form has gone unheeded in previous analyses, such as those which focus wholly upon the uncodified and so ostensibly unscientific nature of 'curiosity', or that of Efram Sera-Shriar, who has argued rather statically that King's acquisition of 'native weapons' was predominantly a military concern, directed by an Admiralty that feared for the wellbeing of its sailors.¹⁰ Tiffany Shellam, in her analysis of King's encounters with Indigenous Australians, has argued to the contrary that 'the weapons that King received [were] a treasure to collect - a prize to take home', being also 'necessary knowledge and proof of the success of the voyage and of cross-

⁶ Susan Leigh Star and James R. Griesemer (eds.). 'Institutional Ecology, "Translations" and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907-39', *Social Studies of Science*, 19 (1989), 387-420.

⁷ Jim Endersby. 'A garden enclosed: botanical barter in Sydney, 1818-39', *British Journal for the History of Science*, 33 (2000), 313-334.

⁸ *Ibid.* 334.

⁹ Star and Griesemer. 'Institutional Ecology', 393.

¹⁰ Efram Sera-Shriar. 'What is Armchair Anthropology? Observational Practices in 19th-century British Human Sciences', *History of the Human Sciences*, 27 (2014), 34.

cultural encountering'.¹¹ Shellam's analysis does not, however, investigate more deeply what the necessities of this knowledge might have been; the similar focus, here, upon 'native weapons' and 'prizes' fails also to account for the diverse range of ethnographic objects that King and others acquired, or the multitudinous reasons for their doing so. The passivity implied in 'received', finally, reminds us of Chapter Three's discussion of unacknowledged agency, as it reinforces Sera-Shriar's implication that King possessed little agency of his own in collecting.¹² The following analysis offers a new and different perspective on the collections of the *Mermaid* and *Bathurst*, in which I not only complicate our understanding of King, but expand our knowledge of his survey by exploring three other collectors on-board his expedition, and so four different interpretative 'sites' of knowledge.¹³ Following the available source material, I interrogate in turn the collections of the survey's captain, King, its botanist, Allan Cunningham, and its two Master's Mates, Frederick Bedwell and John Septimus Roe.¹⁴

4.1 Imperial rivalry and the scientific organisation of King's expedition

Relative to the intricate preparations made for the *Investigator* and earlier voyages, King's expedition was born in a moment of panic and haste. In late 1816, intelligence had arrived in London that France was once again planning to survey the Antipodes, this time under the command of Louis de

¹¹ Tiffany Shellam. *Shaking Hands on the Fringe: Negotiating the Aboriginal World at King George's Sound* (Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 2009), p. 14.

¹² A consequence, perhaps, of the move toward recuperating the agency of those encountered; we are reminded here of an equally poor historiography concerning the motivations of naval sailors.

¹³ See David Livingstone. *Putting Science in its Place: Geographies of Scientific Knowledge* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), pp. 17-86.

¹⁴ The later careers and reputation of these collectors, with the exception of Bedwell, has rendered their personal papers and journals open for scrutiny. Much incidental detail comes also from King (see later in this section), who reported upon the collections of his closest officers but not individually upon those of the crew. Appendix 3 and Appendix 4 reveal something of the actions of other collectors on-board the survey, although little else is known.

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Freycinet, on-board the *Uranie*. Britain had planned to recommence its own expeditions as early as 1814, but it was this which did the most to catalyse the nation's efforts. Something of the alarm Freycinet caused in London is evident in a diary entry written by Roe, at the beginning of King's expedition:

A French ship of war under command of Captain Freycinet (who sailed as Commodore Baudin's first lieutenant) being at this time fitting out at Brest, and on the point of sailing on a scientific voyage to the South Pacific Ocean, recalled the attention of the British Government to the unfinished service afore which they had several years ago despatched Capt Flinders; and under the idea that Freycinet was on the eve of sailing to Finish the incomplete work of his former commander...the admiralty resolved upon sending out Lieut King with all possible despatch.¹⁵

Such was the rapidity of the survey's organisation that King, Bedwell and Roe were instructed to travel to Australia on a transport ship, the *Dick*. In 'the great hurry of our departure', wrote Roe, the survey's crew were forced to cover their own expenses and 'pay the master of the *Dick* the sum of £60 each for our mess'.¹⁶ These factors had a considerable impact upon the sailors' victuals, which were acquired after their arrival in Sydney. At the time, the colony was struggling; finding himself short of the appropriate navigational instruments, King sent several begging letters to his most immediate superior, the Secretary of the Admiralty John Wilson Croker, and Henry Goulburn, then Under-Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, commenting to the latter that 'the naval stores here are so ill calculated to the equipment of a Vessel and particularly one going upon discovery that I have been obliged to leave without many things which are very essential'.¹⁷ With respect to trade gear, which would facilitate encounter and collecting, an itinerary produced by Roe recorded that the crew had only managed to

¹⁵ John Septimus Roe. 'Diary 27 August - 18 November 1817', SLWA, JSRP, ACC 491AD/8, p. 1.

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 2.

¹⁷ Phillip Parker King to Henry Goulburn, 9 Dec. 1817. SLNSW, MLMSS, 4429.

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acquire '37 small files - part for barter with the natives', '72 large files - for the natives', and 'four old axes'.¹⁸

There had as such been little time to organise the scientific element of King's expedition. The difference between the preparation of his and Flinders' voyages was striking; in terms of trade gear alone, as described in Chapter Three, the *Investigator* had been furnished with fifteen thousand objects, a difference of more than thirteen thousand percent. It is intriguing to consider to what extent this was a symptom of Banks' relative lack of participation in King's voyages. Given the urgency with which King and his crew were despatched, the comparison with the *Investigator* is perhaps unfair, and yet it remains the case that Banks had very little to do with the *Mermaid* and *Bathurst* between 1817 and his death in 1820. The only exception to this was Banks' employment and direction of the survey's botanist, Allan Cunningham. Banks had been involved with Cunningham before King's arrival, however, and shortly before his death Banks ordered Cunningham to leave the survey in favour of a different venture.¹⁹ Curiously, Banks seems never to have written directly to King, whose original appointment to the navy Banks had facilitated in a favour to King's father, the former governor. Nor, it appears, did the younger King ever send letters to Banks. When King sought patronage, as discussed below in relation to Croker, he turned instead toward Admiralty officials. Whereas earlier sailors such as James Grant had written to Banks unsolicited, neither did he likewise feature in the correspondence or diaries of King's two lieutenants.

It would seem, then, that Banks' influence, though extant, was declining after 1817. King's decision not to solicit the famous scientific patron's assistance appears to have been echoed by his Admiralty superiors, who were then transitioning in turn away from their traditional reliance upon Soho Square. It was for this reason, perhaps, that King's instructions were at

¹⁸ 'Inventory of the *Mermaid* at Port Jackson'. SLWA, JSRP, 301A/1, 124.

¹⁹ See Chapter Four, section 4.4.

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times both ambiguous and confused, especially in relation to communicating the Admiralty's scientific and imperial interests. Before departure, for example, the survey was given a hastily-edited memorandum concerning the desirable pursuits of officers on voyages of discovery. The memorandum had initially been written in 1816 by the Second Secretary to the Admiralty, Barrow, as a means to direct James Kingston Tuckey's 1816 expedition to South Africa, to explore the Congo River.²⁰ In April 1816, the Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, Henry Bathurst, had forwarded a revised version of the memorandum to the Governor of New South Wales, Lachlan Macquarie, as a means to direct the explorer John Oxley's expedition into the region's interior, which departed in March 1817.²¹ Bathurst took care to make Oxley's instructions more relevant to Australia, and thus demonstrated a desire to develop Britain's already nuanced knowledge of the various ethnographic idiosyncrasies of the geographical regions it pursued. While Tuckey's instructions had for example expressed an interest in 'The occupation and means of subsistence [of indigenous peoples], whether chiefly, or to what extent by fishing, hunting, feeding sheep or other animals, by agriculture or by commerce', Oxley's asked only about 'fishing, hunting and agriculture'.²² There were, of course, no indigenous sheep on the Australian continent, and so Bathurst appears to have suspected that Indigenous Australians did not practice any form of animal management, other than hunting. It was from Bathurst, too, that King received a version of the memorandum, but it is revealing to note that his own copy retained the original reference to feeding sheep; it otherwise displayed only subtractions from, rather than revisions to, Tuckey's original guidance.²³

²⁰ James Hingston Tuckey. *Narrative of an Expedition to explore the River Zaire* (London: John Murray, 1818), p. xxxi.

²¹ John Oxley. *Journals of Two Expeditions into the Interior of New South Wales* (London: John Murray, 1820), p. 360.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Phillip Parker King. *Narrative of a Survey of the Intertropical and Western Coasts of Australia* (London: John Murray, 1827), vol. 1. p. xxxiii.

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The 1816 memorandum nevertheless expanded significantly on the instructions regarding ethnographic study which had been given to earlier Australian expeditions. Here, commerce governed scientific enquiry. The memorandum expressed an interest in the potential profit which might be derived from an assimilation of indigenous knowledge in new colonial arenas. It enquired, for example, about ‘Precious Metals or stones; how used or valued by the natives’, and sought information on the use and presence of plants which seemed:

applicable to any useful purposes, whether in medicine, dyeing, carpentry, etc.; any scented or ornamental woods, adapted for cabinet work and household furniture, and more particularly such woods as may appear to be useful in ship-building; hard woods for tree-nails, block-sheaves, etc.²⁴

Most importantly with respect to ethnographic collections, the memorandum asked that the expedition take an interest in ‘the state of the arts, or manufactures, and their comparative perfection in different tribes’.²⁵ The purpose of examining ethnographic objects in this manner was seemingly in part to indicate which peoples might be considered the most civilised, and indeed later commissions on settlement building, such as at Cape York, used material culture as a proxy for determining the aptness of local Indigenous Australians for assimilation into or co-existence with a proposed British community.²⁶ A final clause asked that King investigate ‘the principal objects of their several pursuits, as mentioned in the preceding paragraphs’.²⁷ This appears to have referred to objects in the material sense (spears as an object of warfare), rather than in the abstract (warfare as the object of spears), as it appeared below the paragraph enquiring about agricultural and commercial activities. The purpose of enquiring about domestic or other implements in this manner was not made clear in the memorandum, but it may again have related to the ethnographic interest in

²⁴ *Ibid.* p. xxxii.

²⁵ *Ibid.* p. xxxiii.

²⁶ See Chapter Seven, section 7.3.

²⁷ King. *Narrative*, vol. 1. p. xxxiii.

cultural sophistication embodied in the query concerning ‘the state of the arts, or manufactures’.

4.2 King’s non-extant collections

Whatever the rationale for the enquiries mandated by King’s instructions, it is clear that ethnographic knowledge was deliberately sought. Interestingly, however, there was no specific instruction to bring home an intentional collection. Incidental collections would have been entirely sufficient to fulfil Barrow’s demands in the memorandum. Written reports of collecting could demonstrate the relative affinity of Indigenous Australians for trade, while descriptions of the objects collected in result would add another dimension to naval knowledge of the sophistication of their creators. In a manner similar to that described in Chapters Two and Three, visual depictions, or what Martin Rudwick has called ‘proxy specimens’, would be easy to acquire, maintain, reproduce and move between different persons.²⁸ There is evidence of this technique in King’s published account of his four voyages, *Narrative of a Survey of the Intertropical and Western Coasts of Australia performed between the years 1818 and 1822*, which was first released in two volumes in 1827.²⁹ The *Narrative*, which had first been submitted for Admiralty inspection, and then to its publisher for public dissemination, in fact contains twelve illustrations of objects encountered by the survey (for example, Figure 4.1). By comparison, there are two ethnographic illustrations in Grant’s *The Narrative of a Voyage of Discovery*, and none in Flinders’ *A Voyage to Terra Australis*.³⁰ King’s illustrations satisfied the direction to look at the ‘comparative perfection’ of the arts and

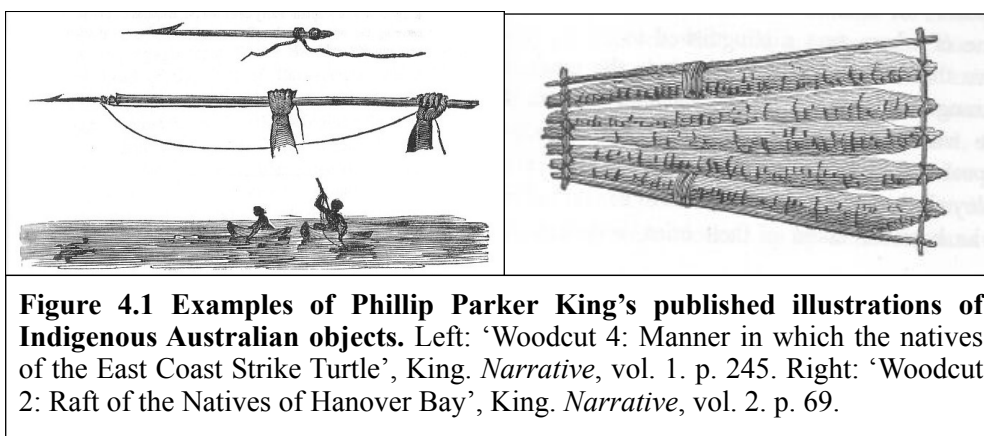
²⁸ Martin Rudwick. ‘Georges Cuvier’s paper museum of fossil bones’, *Archives of Natural History*, 27 (2000), 51-68.

²⁹ For an account of the *Narrative*’s publication history, as well as the role of John Murray in organising travel narratives at the time, see Innes Keighren, Charles Withers and Bill Bell (eds.). *Travels into Print: Exploration, Writing and Publishing with John Murray, 1773-1859* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015).

³⁰ James Grant. *The Narrative of a Voyage of Discovery Performed in His Majesty’s Vessel The Lady Nelson* (London: C. Roworth, 1803).
Flinders. *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, 2 vols.

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manufactures of certain Indigenous Australian peoples, as well as the ‘principal objects’ of their daily lives. Eight of the illustrated objects relate exclusively to industry or domesticity, while four depict weaponry. The captions provided with these illustrations often detailed the manner of their usage, and any peculiar features; the *Narrative* became a visual museum, of sorts, which compensated for the absence, in that time, of an extant and intentional collection. The book was intended, as King put it, both to ‘amuse the general reader’ and to ‘give information to the navigator’.³¹



The numerous references to collecting in the *Narrative* reveal a similar bifurcation of purpose, with regard to the need to measure a capacity for trade, and to describe Indigenous Australian objects. An occasion in which a series of gifts given to Jaburrara people in what is now Western Australia were found abandoned on a beach was for instance reported with much consternation, as it contradicted the assumptions of power and control felt to arise from the possession of trade gear.³² During a period of extensive collecting and exchange with Menang people at King George Sound in 1821, King displayed a similar apathy toward his collections as objects of interest in themselves; he observed, for instance, that ‘the knives, spears, and hammers which did not require much labour to manufacture were always ready for barter, particularly the first, but the greater part were, like

³¹ King. *Narrative*, vol. 1. p. 41.

³² *Ibid.* p. 43.

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Peter Pindar's razors, only made for sale'.³³ The 'natives', he said, 'finding we took everything, were not very particular in the form or manufacture of the articles they brought to us'.³⁴ The objects were acquired by King and his crew all the same. Descriptions such as this had an allegorical function, explaining an idealised form of colonial exchange and trade, and thus King's adherence to his orders. As much can be seen in Figure 4.2 (below).³⁵ The pencil sketch depicts in considerable detail an occasion of trade with Tiwi people at Melville Island, on 17 May 1818. King drew himself offering an axe in return for a basket containing fruit and water, in a seemingly harmonious exchange. The Tiwi were shown to be affable, and to possess a common humanity; in the image, one is carrying a child upon his shoulders.

King's sketch is misleading, however. Though the agency would appear to be with the British crew, their attempt at trade in fact occurred in the context of an attempt to regain a theodolite stand which had been left unattended on a beach the previous day, and in consequence lost to the Tiwi. On similar occasions, the loss of various items as a consequence of indigenous agency gave another rationale for acquiring Indigenous Australian things. King's retributive 'confiscation' of important objects punished the people in question for their ignorance of British conventions of property and exchange, and thus sought to correct in a non-violent way the supposedly thieving tendencies of indigenous people. Whereas a canoe was for example confiscated from Kunibidji people on 29 March 1818 as a consequence of their 'theft' of several wooding-tools and station flags, the loss of the survey's theodolite-stand was a more serious circumstance, it being useful to the survey's ability to locate itself. This necessitated the more diplomatic exchange system described in King's pencil-sketch, which nevertheless failed to effect the return of the theodolite-stand, there being no item of comparable quality for the survey to trade. In a striking sign of indigenous

³³ King. *Narrative*, vol. 2. p. 137.

³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 134.

³⁵ Phillip Parker King. 'Interview with the natives at Luxmore Head in Melville Island', SLNSW, PXC, 767, 42.



Figure 4.2 Object exchange at Melville Island, 1818. Detail from Phillip Parker King. 'Interview with the natives at Luxmore Head in Melville Island', State Library of New South Wales, PXC 767, 42. The original image is approximately 15 by 23cm.



Figure 4.3 A detail from Figure 4.2. On the right, King sketched himself exchanging a hatchet for a basket. On the left, a figure standing on one leg seems to have attracted the attention of other Indigenous Australians. This figure may be Bungaree, a Kuring-gai man who accompanied King in the *Mermaid* as an intermediary and interpreter.

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agency, King was obliged to continue the survey without the stand, leaving him, as he put it, ‘thoroughly disgusted with them’.³⁶

Appendix 4 demonstrates the remarkably detailed manner in which King recorded his various ethnographic acquisitions, including the baskets depicted in Figure 4.3. While such a synthesis was likely not envisaged by King, the table quantifies the collection of approximately four hundred objects throughout the course of the expedition. As I discuss below, it also furnishes us with the contextual detail necessary to unpack the survey’s extant collections, detailed in Appendix 3. The objects listed in Appendix 4 were referenced in the body of the *Narrative* in a number of ways. After a meeting with Guugu-Yimidhirr people at Endeavour River on 30 June 1819, King for example recorded that ‘Mr Bedwell obtained a shield from one of them, of a crescented shape, and painted with black stripes’.³⁷ On 17 August, at the Goulburn Islands, King reported finding some stones, a spear ‘made of the mangrove tree, hardened and made straight by exposing it to fire’, and a ‘throwing stick, of hard wood...only two feet in length, and not near so large or long as that used by the natives of Endeavour River’.³⁸ Such is the dissonant manner of some of these observations within the body of King’s prose that it is possible to make a comparison with what Jean Fornasiero and John West-Sooby have called the ‘narrative interruptions’ of science present in records of the Nicolas Baudin expedition, which navigated Australia between 1800 and 1804.³⁹ Fornasiero and West-Sooby argue that the inclusion of a series of incongruous scientific dialogues throughout the text evidences a clash of genres in a literary product designed to be consumed both popularly and as a dissemination of scientific discoveries. In his *Voyage de Decouvertes aux Terres Australes*, Baudin’s naturalist, François Péron, struggled to entwine scientific or other

³⁶ King. *Narrative*, vol. 1. p. 114.

³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 214.

³⁸ *Ibid.* p. 266.

³⁹ Jean Fornasiero and John West-Sooby. ‘The Narrative Interruptions of Science: The Baudin Expedition to Australia (1800-1804)’, *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 49 (2013), 457-471.

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observations with the need to tell a story, thus expressing unclear boundaries between travel literature and intellectual analysis.⁴⁰

King's records of collecting, which occur on more than twenty occasions, were likely therefore a textual attempt to demonstrate his adherence to the Admiralty's orders; the location of these observations within his prose demonstrates well the fact that, like Péron's dialogues, they did not yet belong within the discourse of contemporary science. As Chapter One observes, the use of English words to refer to these objects nevertheless underlined an effort to classify them according to an existing taxonomy.⁴¹ The *Narrative* in fact contained a scientific appendix, in which were placed essays upon Australia's geography, geology, entomology, flora and fauna. Since there was no ethnographic category, King's observations about Indigenous Australian people, and their objects, did not appear within the appendix. It is clear however that his observations were not intended simply to 'entertain the reader', for they are found also in King's logbooks, which were created for the near-exclusive reference of the Admiralty. On occasion, the references to collections entered therein contained more detail than those described in the *Narrative*. An example of this is the Hanover Bay collection of 8 August 1821, whereupon a detailed list of collected objects, including '2 catamarans', '35 spears', '6 stone spear-heads' and '5 or 6 stone hatchets', is found in King's *Log of the Proceedings of H.M. Surveying Vessel Bathurst*.⁴² The *Narrative*, by contrast, does not mention the number of spear-heads, nor the existence of the stone hatchets. As such, the detail provided in the *Log* offered an otherwise rare inventory of the typical possessions and treasures of the Worora people, while the *Narrative* served as a space to provide a detailed description of the objects in question, while adding also a certain lustre to a collection of items which King later sought to circulate in London.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* 464.

⁴¹ See Chapter One, section 1.3.

⁴² 'Bathurst: Log kept by Captain P P King. Surveying Australia', TNA, ADM 55/8, p. 31.

4.3 King's extant collections

The relative importance of textual and visual reportage over the maintenance and return of intentional and extant collections of Indigenous Australian specimens left open a series of alternative avenues for the objects themselves. It was not the case, as Appendix 3 shows, that collections which might have been permitted to remain incidental were simply borrowed, described and returned to their former owners. Since the Admiralty possessed neither an obvious rationale nor an infrastructure to accumulate intentional collections, as described in Chapters Two and Three, the status of these and other naval specimens as official property remained ambiguous.⁴³ In Banks' absence, no explicit mention was made of collecting for the British Museum, and there appears not to have been any other actor willing or able to maintain or mediate the relationship between the two official institutions. King demonstrated his apparent freedom to collect for whomsoever he wished in his private correspondence with his superior, the Secretary to the Admiralty John Wilson Croker, written at the beginning of the survey. In a remarkably bold letter dated 27 February 1817, King suggested that:

If there is any subject interesting to you that I can employ my leisure time in collecting, rest assured, Sir, nothing will give me greater pleasure than in being made use of by you; I have the honor of being employed by you in a public service, let me have the pleasure of being so in a private way and by gratifying you [you will] confer an honor upon [me].⁴⁴

⁴³ The Admiralty's apparent lack of interest in amassing colonial collections in this period contrasts sharply with the situation in France, where a colonial ethnographic museum had been envisaged by Louis-François Jauffret as early as the 1800-1803 Baudin expedition. For an account of the 'school for naturalist voyagers' instituted at the Museum of Natural History in Paris, in 1819, see Richard W. Burkhardt, 'Naturalist's Practices and Nature's Empire: Paris and the Platypus, 1815-1833', *Pacific Science*, 55 (2001), 327-341.

⁴⁴ Phillip Parker King to John Wilson Croker, 27 Feb. 1817. SLNSW, MLMSS, 4429.

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King's message is reminiscent of Grant's attempt to bribe Banks into patronising him some seventeen years before, and was evidently intended as a means to earn favour.⁴⁵ It is revealing that King considered himself and (presumably) others on his expedition to have a license to acquire items for unofficial purposes, and that he was confident enough to directly petition his own superiors. In contrast to the scientific contingent of the *Investigator* voyage, King and his crew received no instruction to consider themselves remunerated 'for the whole of [their] time', and for this reason they felt able to make private collections while they were not actively working.⁴⁶ King sought therefore to take advantage of his privileged position in much the same manner as had his father. A scrupulous public servant with a growing reputation for exposing scandals and bribery in the military services, however, Croker was an extraordinarily poor choice of candidate as King's desired patron; he replied in a manner that reminded King of his official duties. On 3 March 1817, Croker wrote:

I am much obliged by your offer but in fact I can have no interest or curiosity about any objects but those which naturally belong to your public mission so that your attention to the latter will be in truth the greatest favour you can do me.⁴⁷

There was here a suggestion that King ought not to waste his time upon private endeavours. Croker further implied that if he were to accept King's offer he would simultaneously undermine his own position; thus, he was permitted no personal 'interest or curiosity' as an employee of the Admiralty. Interestingly, however, Croker did not entirely censure King's attempt to make a private collection. In this light, it is interesting to compare Croker's 1817 response to another letter received by King during the course of his subsequent survey of South America, which departed in 1826. There, a clear indication was given of the extent to which the Admiralty's interest

⁴⁵ See Chapter Two, section 2.4.

⁴⁶ 'Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to Scientific Assistants onboard H.M.S *Investigator*, 29 Apr. 1801'. BL, Add MS 32439, fol. 31.

⁴⁷ Croker to King, 3 Mar. 1817. SLNSW, MLMSS, 4429.

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in expeditionary collections had since developed. The letter, from Barrow, revealed that King had not yet reformed his old ways:

Sir, I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to refer you to that part of your Instructions of the 16th of July 1824, which directs you to collect, and to order your officers to collect, Specimens of Natural History, the whole of which you are therein given to understand are to belong to the Public, and to acquaint you that their Lordships having ascertained that considerable collections in the different departments of Natural History have been received by private Individuals from the Vessels under your orders, my Lords desire that you will state how it has happened that such a disregard of their Instructions has taken place, and why you have yourself thought fit to address Packages to Individuals which ought to have been addressed directly to their Lordships' Secretary according to your orders.⁴⁸

Managing the King family had long been Barrow's speciality, as was the suppression of the Banksian forms of patronage in which they engaged. A former resident of the Cape Colony as its auditor general, it had been from Barrow that George Caley hid for thirteen days in 1800, when the *Speedy* visited on its way to Australia.⁴⁹ In perpetual fear of 'restraint', Caley had neglected to meet Barrow for fear of losing collections intended for Banks; for much the same reason Philip Gidley King had to an extent tolerated Caley's flight.⁵⁰ Facing similar difficulties as late as 1829, it is possible that Barrow's letter to the younger King was a symptom of a struggle between him and Croker concerning the latter's more liberal attitude to networks of collection and patronage existing outside of the Admiralty. Here, Barrow petitioned for Croker to be sent specimens in accordance with orders about which Croker seems not to have been duly concerned. Given Barrow's fierce advocacy for the development of naval science, explored in Chapter Six, it is not unreasonable to suspect that he may have overstated the Lords of the Admiralty's own intervention into the fate of King's collections. It is

⁴⁸ Barrow to King, 16 Apr. 1829. SLNSW, MLMSS, 4530/2.

⁴⁹ See Chapter Two, section 2.4.

⁵⁰ Philip Gidley King to Joseph Banks, 15 Feb. 1800. SLNSW, Papers of Sir Joseph Banks [PSJB], Series 39.058, CY 3005/452.

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true, however, that the directions for the South American survey had been very specific: ‘You are to avail yourself’, they read, ‘of every opportunity of collecting and preserving Specimens of such objects of Natural History as may be new, rare or interesting...the whole of which must be understood to belong to the public’.⁵¹

Chastened, perhaps, by Barrow’s letter, King thereafter donated at least some of his Tierra del Fuego object collections to the British Museum, to which the institution dedicated two display cases in its earliest ethnographic gallery.⁵² In contrast, curators at the British Museum complained as late as 1835 that ‘None of his [King’s] collection came to the Museum after his survey of New Holland’.⁵³ In response to an official enquiry, George Samouelle, a curator of the Museum and a collector of insects, explained that James Hunter, a naval surgeon who joined the *Mermaid* in April 1820, was the only member of King’s expedition to offer him any specimens:

I have known expeditions go out, as was the instance with Captain King; I never received a single specimen from him when Captain King made his survey of New Holland; but Mr Hunter, a surgeon who accompanied Captain King, came to the Museum, and very laudably and generously offered to me to make a selection from his collection, which was very extensive, of insects as would be useful to the Museum. I did so, and it took me two days to make that selection, which was presented to the Trustees; but what went with the collection of insects which Captain King made, I know not.⁵⁴

The language here, of making ‘offers’ and being ‘laudable’ or ‘generous’, reveals that the Museum was reliant upon goodwill, rather than the collectors’ adherence to official orders. This was a consequence of the fact that King was not given any explicit instructions governing the fate of his ethnographic and natural history collections, while carrying out the

⁵¹ Robert FitzRoy. *Narrative of the Surveying Voyages of His Majesty’s Ships Adventure and Beagle* (London: Henry Colburn, 1839), p. xvii.

⁵² See, for example, *Synopsis of the Contents of the British Museum* (London: G. Woodfall, 1832), p. 7.

⁵³ *Report from the Select Committee on the Condition, Management and Affairs of the British Museum* (London: House of Commons, 1835), p. 604.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 273-274.

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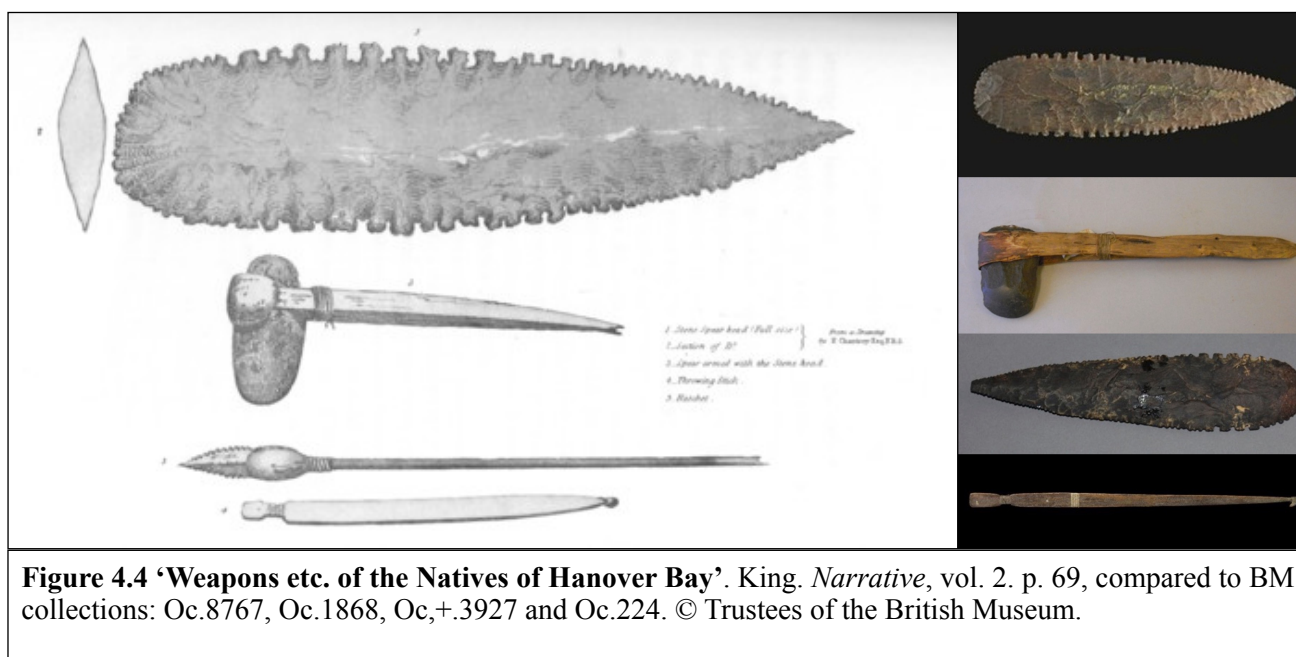
Australian survey. It seems probable that the 1824 instructions to which Barrow's furious communication in 1829 referred were therefore designed as a response to King's behaviour in Australia. If so, the loss of the collections of the *Mermaid* and *Bathurst* stimulated a more greatly proprietorial attitude in the Admiralty toward the scientific acquisitions made upon naval voyages. As seen in earlier chapters, the *Lady Nelson*, under Grant, had collected in a period distinguished by inadequate oversight and an incomplete infrastructure. Flinders, on the *Investigator*, had collected under the patronage of a respected scientific authority, Joseph Banks. The death of that authority, whose ambiguous position on the boundaries of scientific collecting and gentlemanly patronage had made him a uniquely acceptable recipient of collections from sailors and naval officials alike, marked the beginning of a period in which sterner questions were asked about the fate of interesting and useful specimens.

Appendix 3 reveals that new, mostly private, beneficiaries were found for the collections made upon King's 1817-1822 voyages. At present only two such items originating from King's personal collections are known about with any certainty, and yet the convoluted, if not entirely random, manner in which they have come to be in the British Museum suggests that his list of private recipients was much longer. The objects, a spear and spear-head, are both from Hanover Bay, and have thus been accorded an 1817-1822 provenance by curators at the British Museum on the basis that King's survey was one of the only expeditions to visit the area, on Australia's remote northwest coast, in the first half of the nineteenth century. Both objects were acquired for the museum by Augustus Wollaston Franks, who started collecting such items while an assistant in the Department of Antiquities in 1851.⁵⁵ The spear, known now as Oc.224, was acquired from the collection of Sir James Vallentin, a distiller and Knight Sheriff of London. The spear-head, now catalogued as Oc,+3927, was acquired by

⁵⁵ Marjorie Caygill and John Cherry (eds.). *A.W. Franks: Nineteenth-Century Collecting and the British Museum* (London: British Museum Press, 1997).

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Franks from a sale of the possessions of Albert Denison, the 1st Baron Londesborough, in 1888.



Two additional items in Appendix 3 suggest another side to King's behaviour, upon his return to Britain. These are the spear-head now known as Oc.8767, and an axe, labelled Oc.1868. Both belong also to the collection made at Hanover Bay on 8 August 1821, which occurred, notoriously, in consequence of an effort to punish a group of Worora people for spearing King's surgeon in the back upon the crew's departure from an otherwise friendly meeting. After failing to fatally shoot the man identified as responsible for the spearing, who was afterwards traced 'by the blood for half a mile to the border of a mangrove inlet' and then lost, King instead confiscated two catamarans, which contained what he and others considered to be a treasure-trove of valuable objects.⁵⁶ Four of these, including Oc.8767 and Oc.1868, and likely also Oc,+3927, are known to have returned to Britain with King, for all were later drawn in detail by the portrait sculptor Francis Leggatt Chantrey (Figure 4.4). These appear to have been trophy

⁵⁶ King. *Narrative*, vol. 2. p. 68.

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objects, representing as they did a narrative of violent reprisal for a perceived wrongdoing by the ‘treacherous’ people of Hanover Bay. It is revealing that King chose not to submit for illustration rather less threatening items, such as the baskets and fishing lines acquired in the same incident.

The spear-head Oc.8767, which was one of several found within ‘a small bundle of bark, tied up with more than usual care’, was purchased for the British Museum by Franks in 1873. Franks had obtained it in turn from the collections of the Museum of the United Service Institution [USI].⁵⁷ It is much less clear where the axe spent much of the nineteenth century, and to what end; the object documentation states simply that it was donated by the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in 1866.⁵⁸ It is impossible to say for sure whether or not King was responsible for donating the items to Kew and to what is now RUSI in the first instance; certainly, neither was given away upon the completion of Chantrey’s drawings in 1825, for the USI opened for the first time in 1831, and Kew’s ethnobotanical collection was exhibited only after 1847. Given what we know about the extent to which King valued these items, it seems probable that the spear-head, at least, was donated by him personally, and that it had remained in his possession throughout the intervening years; he first became a member of the USI in 1832.⁵⁹ King was therefore capable of facilitating both public and private collections.

⁵⁷ Object biographies and related information can be found at the British Museum’s online database, ‘Collections Online’.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Annual Report of the Naval and Military Library and Museum* (London: Naval and Military Library and Museum, 1832).

4.4 Allan Cunningham's botanical objects

A week before departing Gravesend, Kent, on-board the *Dick*, King was first instructed to expect upon his arrival in Australia a 'Mr A Cunningham a Botanist now in New South Wales who has received the orders of Sir Joseph Banks to attend you'.⁶⁰ King was ordered also to 'engage any other person if there be such in the Colony who possesses a competent knowledge of Mineralogy or Natural History. Mr [William] Puckey has been pointed out as such by Sir Everard Home and if you find his qualifications correspond with the Character which has been given of him you will not fail to secure his cooperation'.⁶¹ The botanist, Cunningham, had for some time since been employed in Australia by Banks as a collector for the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. Cunningham's proximity to Sydney, on account of his prior appointment to Oxley's New South Wales expedition, likely offered a convenient solution to the need to find such 'scientific persons' quickly. As it happened, Cunningham was the only eventual member of the expedition to possess any particular scientific education; King left Puckey behind on the grounds that he 'bears so bad a character for drunkenness that I am afraid to take him'.⁶² A missionary from New Zealand, Puckey fell out of bed drunk and died some ten years later.⁶³

Cunningham's collections offer an alternative perspective upon the role of objects within the scientific and imperial output of the 1817-1822 survey. His appointment was a means to further the extractive agenda of the expedition, and so expressed the close nineteenth-century relationship between colonial botany, economy and empire.⁶⁴ Banks' instructions to

⁶⁰ Bathurst to King, 8 Feb. 1817. SLNSW, MLMSS, 4429.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² King to Goulburn, 9 Dec. 1817. SLNSW, MLMSS, 4429.

⁶³ 'Domestic Intelligence', *The Monitor* (Sydney, NSW). 12 Nov. 1827.

⁶⁴ See, for example, Londa Schiebinger. *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2007).

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Cunningham, dated 13 February 1817, betrayed a familiar eagerness to outcompete France:

I have sent to you an order to join Lieut King, in a Voyage of Discovery on the W & N.W Coasts of New Holland, in which it is very much wished that he may anticipate the French, who are fitting out a ship of the same purpose; this will give you an opportunity of collecting plants, which could by no other means be obtained, & of enriching the Royal gardens at Kew with plants which otherwise would have been added to the Royal Gardens at Paris, & have tended to render their Collection inferior to ours.⁶⁵

For naturalists such as Cunningham, the difficulties attending scientific research in Australia had changed very little since the turn of the nineteenth century. The fury that had been directed by King's father at one of Banks' previous collectors, George Caley, was echoed in an entirely similar fashion by the actions of Lachlan Macquarie, who had served in the post since 1809.⁶⁶ After arriving in Sydney under the impression that his position warranted him official assistance, Cunningham managed to draw the Governor's ire. Macquarie made this entirely apparent in a letter to Banks which complained in remarkably ill-tempered fashion of 'this unbred illiterate man whose only pretensions to personal attention from me arose from the opinion you have entertained of his usefulness in the line of his profession'.⁶⁷ Macquarie's subsequent refusal to help in any substantial manner had a considerable impact upon Cunningham's ability to obtain adequate provisions for collecting on the impending voyage, or even to house himself in Sydney.⁶⁸ Banks' loyalty to his collector was nevertheless unswayed; 'I fear there is some jealousy in your Governor in favour of his Colonial Botanist [Charles Frazer]', he wrote, reassuring Cunningham that

⁶⁵ Joseph Banks to Allan Cunningham, 13 Feb. 1817. RBG, Kew Collectors V11a - Cunningham Correspondence 1817-1831 [KCL], KCL/8/5.

⁶⁶ This relationship is examined in more detail in Endersby. 'Botanical Barter', 318-319.

⁶⁷ Lachlan Macquarie to Banks, 18 Dec. 1817. RBG, KCL/8/5. Such was the tone of this letter, which Banks forwarded to Cunningham, that the latter copied it out entirely in code. The message was deciphered by L.A.S. Johnson at Kew in 1962.

⁶⁸ Endersby. 'Botanical Barter', 319.

‘he is soon to come home, & is likely to be replaced by a more *scientific* Gov.’.⁶⁹

Another difficulty arose in consequence of Banks’ death in June 1820, which left Cunningham, and the scientific fruits of the expedition, at something of a loss; hitherto Cunningham had directed the survey’s official botanical collections to Soho Square, where the most part, if not all, were then forwarded to Kew. Banks seems however to have grown tired of the flora of the northwest coast, for he asked in a letter dated April 1820, during the survey’s third voyage, that Cunningham ‘not be called away again’, and that he proceed instead upon an expedition to the Australian interior, again in Oxley’s company.⁷⁰ After Banks’ death in June, however, Cunningham was instead supervised by William Townsend Aiton, Superintendent at Kew, who seems on the contrary not to have cared very much about what Cunningham was doing. In a rather melancholic letter addressed to Aiton in 1821, Cunningham complained of having been ‘left entirely at my disposal, and holding no instruction from yourself or others of my superiors at home to direct me in this distant land’.⁷¹ He likely did so as a means to query his pay, but also to explain his decision to again join King when he next set sail; ‘it is absolutely necessary to my embarkation onboard HMS Brig’, he wrote, ‘to state for your information the motives that have determined me to accompany Mr King on his 4th voyage...I have scarcely a doubt of these shores being ever visited again in my time, after their actual charts have been determined’.⁷² Cunningham therefore saw in Banks’ death an excuse to continue his adventures in King’s company.

King’s observations, detailed in Appendix 4, reveal that Cunningham did not restrict his acquisitions to native botany. The *Narrative* records that Cunningham collected, or was involved in collecting, items including a turtle peg, fishing rod and basket. It is difficult to say if, and if so how many,

⁶⁹ Banks to Cunningham, Aug. 1817. RBG, KCL/8/5.

⁷⁰ Cunningham to William Townsend Aiton, 24 May. 1821. RBG, KCL/8/5.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² *Ibid.*

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objects from the 1817-1822 survey Cunningham sent to Kew, or elsewhere. The lists that Cunningham created to record the collections he made upon the expedition feature only his plant specimens.⁷³ There is a very incidental suggestion, however, that at least one object made the voyage. In a letter to Aiton dated 1821, which detailed the contents of several boxes of plants that he was sending home, Cunningham mentioned that ‘I have selected some very important living plants for the Royal Gardens, which I have pack’d w the Native Club...in Case 5’.⁷⁴ In tune with our knowledge that at least one other item (and perhaps even the same item, Oc.1868) from the 1817-1822 survey was later sent to join the ethnobotanical collections at Kew, it is interesting to consider what Cunningham’s motivations in collecting objects might have been. Evidence of the influence of contemporary botanical expertise upon the collection of what are now considered ethnographic specimens may add, for example, another dimension to our understanding of the historical meaning of the survey’s surviving collections.

An ethnobotanical consciousness is most discernible in Cunningham’s treatment of objects made from native woods. The inclusion within King’s instructions of a demand to investigate ‘such woods as may appear to be useful in ship-building’ was no coincidence; a contemporary crisis in post-1815 ship-building had focused the Admiralty’s attention upon the discovery of new species of timber in unexplored colonial forests, and especially those which might facilitate the replacement of oak in the construction of durable and watertight naval vessels.⁷⁵ Revealingly, Cunningham was particularly perceptive in this regard during the course of the survey’s first encounter with Indigenous Australian people in Western Australia, on which occasion a Jaburrara man was dragged on-board the *Mermaid* by Bedwell, along with his canoe, and after which a friendly intercourse was somehow achieved between the survey’s crew and other Jaburrara people on a nearby island. Upon examining the canoe,

⁷³ ‘Cunningham Miscellaneous, 1816-1838’, RBG, KCL/8/3.

⁷⁴ Cunningham to Aiton, 12 Mar. 1821. RBG, KCL/8/5.

⁷⁵ For a historical survey, see Robert Albion. *Forests and Sea Power: The Timber Problem of the Royal Navy, 1652-1862* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1926).

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Cunningham's commentary displayed a not uncommon combination of botanical intrigue and ethnographic observation:

We were at a loss to know the kind of wood of which this simple kind of float, or bark was made. It is about a foot diameter, and might be 7 or 8 feet long, solid and cylindrical, but tapering slightly towards the extremes, which were detach'd pieces joined by means of sticks forced into the ends of the main piece - They sit upon it about the middle, astride, allowing their legs to hang down in the water, or can at pleasure, place their feet horizontally along the float, parking the heel on its fore point. Practice and habit have enabled them to sit so in equilibria, as to prevent their bark foundering with them; and when they wish to advance rapidly, they incline their body forward, put their feet in motion, and paddle with their hands.⁷⁶

The composition and origin of the canoe is the subject of this extract, after which comes the ethnographic discussion; the '-' separates these two modes of enquiry, thereby allowing us to judge Cunningham's own particular interpretative priority (that which comes first). Upon landing on the island, Cunningham used a similar style of observation in reference to local huts. In a list of specimens he had collected that day, he mentioned 'some shrubs of the *Atriplicina* before noticed, & of which the native huts were made'.⁷⁷ On another occasion, Cunningham reported observing 'a Tree (of the head of which, the few natives of the Western Interior make their spears), discovered on Mount Prophet'.⁷⁸ Perhaps the best example of this style of enquiry occurred in an observation which Cunningham made on 20 June 1819, with respect to a number of baskets which had been collected by Roe and others at Rockingham Bay. It is useful to look first at King's own discussion of these baskets, which appears in his *Narrative*, as here one detects the presence of Cunningham's expertise, which had allowed King to speak about the objects with some authority:

⁷⁶ 'Journals and Letters', NHM, Allan Cunningham Manuscripts [ACM], vol. 3, p. 49.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.* p. 52.

⁷⁸ 'Notes and Remarks', NHM, ACM, vol. 1, p. 13.

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An open wicker basket, neatly and even tastefully made of strips of the *Flagellaria indica*, was obtained from one of them by Mr. Roe, in which they carry their food and fishing lines; besides which each native has his gourd, the fruit of the *Cucurbita lagenaria*, which grows plentifully on all parts of the beach, and furnishes a very useful vessel to these simple savages for the purpose of carrying water.⁷⁹

The taxonomic knowledge embodied in these descriptions was not King's own, although in his quest for authority he led the reader to assume that it was; an entry in Cunningham's remark-book bearing the same date contains a reference to the fact that he had collected a specimen of *Cucurbita lagenaria* (referred to as a plant but also in fact a basket), and so it would seem that he and King had discussed the species together. The observations which Cunningham made beneath the record of his *Cucurbita lagenaria* collection reveal much about his own attitude toward ethnographic objects:

Note: The discovery of this plant, "the Bottle Gourd", as an indigenous production clears up the mystery (to us) as to how the natives became possessed of the gourds for holding water. I likewise satisfied myself that the reed or cane used by them, split in threads, to sew the ends of their Canoes is not of *Bambusa*, but of *Flagellaria indica* which abounds everywhere on this coast.⁸⁰

Cunningham erroneously thought that Australia possessed no indigenous species of bamboo; thus, on occasions where the survey discovered objects made from species of *Bambusa*, the objects were considered to have been of Malay origin, rather than Indigenous Australian.⁸¹ The survey's encounter of a Malay fleet in Australian waters, as well as the discovery of what was assumed to be a Malay canoe, led to an often repeated assumption in the survey's records that there existed an exchange relationship between the two nations, which had as such been deduced in large part in consequence of their ethnographic collections.⁸² In fact two species of bamboo are indigenous to northern Queensland, where Rockingham Bay is located.

⁷⁹ King. *Narrative*, vol. 1. p. 203.

⁸⁰ 'Notes and Remarks', vol. 2. p. 19.

⁸¹ See, for example, King. *Narrative*, vol. 1, p. 265.

⁸² King. *Narrative*, vol. 1. p. 73.

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These are *Neololeba atra* and *Mullerochloa moreheadiana*.⁸³ We learn from the extract that Cunningham's confusion about the canoes and baskets which the survey had collected was nevertheless circumvented by his discovery of the Bottle Gourd, and of *Flagellaria indica* on Australian soil; his collection of these plants demonstrated that such materials, which had been shown to be useful in their incorporation within Indigenous Australian modes of manufacture, or which were already known to be useful but not to be local, were in fact available for the Australian colonies to exploit; the objects' utility as botanical proxies had therefore been reasserted.



Figure 4.5 Bicornual cane basket acquired at Rockingham Bay, North Queensland. BM. Oc.1980,Q.692. © Trustees of the British Museum.

⁸³ Donald Franklin. 'Taxonomic interpretations of Australian native bamboos (Poaceae: Bambuseae) and their biogeographic implications', *Telopea*, 12 (2008), 179-191.

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The perambulatory manner of this mode of object investigation tempts one to question why Cunningham did not simply ask the people he encountered about the botanical origin of their productions; attempts to understand Indigenous Australian languages were common, and Cunningham produced vocabulary lists in consequence.⁸⁴ Of the more than forty English words that Cunningham sought to translate into indigenous languages, however, none referred to plants.⁸⁵ The assumption that many objects were in fact Malay might offer one explanation. The sophistication of items such as the Rockingham Bay baskets (see Figure 4.5) led to skepticism among some explorers as to whether they had really been created by Indigenous Australians. We see this in King's description of the baskets as 'neatly, and even tastefully made', a countersign which alludes to a certain element of surprise.⁸⁶ Another explanation is suggested by Philip Clarke, who has found that Cunningham frequently employed indigenous intermediaries as collectors.⁸⁷ The problem, Clarke suggests, is that Cunningham neither mentioned nor credited the help that he received. We might attribute this to Cunningham's dislike of Indigenous Australians, whom, he once told Banks, 'appear to be but a few gradations above the Ape; they are perhaps as Original Specimens of mankind in the Rudest savage state, as can be produced in any part of the world'.⁸⁸ An associated explanation may be that Cunningham was unwilling at least to appear to be deferring to another authority. Endersby's account of the jealous nature of colonial Australian botany gives credence to the idea that Cunningham would have preferred to champion a more authoritative investigative technique in governance of his collecting, however improbable it might sound.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ See, for example, 'Allan Cunningham - Miscellaneous papers, ca. 1822-1883', SLNSW, A 1752, p. 19.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ King. *Narrative*, vol. 1, p. 203.

⁸⁷ Philip Clarke. *Aboriginal Plant Collectors: Botanists and Australian Aboriginal People in the Nineteenth Century* (Kenthurst: Rosenberg Publishing, 2008), p. 74.

⁸⁸ Cunningham to Banks, 25 Sep. 1818. 'Journals and Letters', vol. 3, L/3, 4.

⁸⁹ Endersby. 'Botanical Barter'.

See Shino Konishi, Maria Nugent and Tiffany Shellam (eds.). *Indigenous Intermediaries* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2015) for various accounts of European disavowal of the role of intermediaries.

4.5 The Mountnorris collection

In the midst of the Natural History Museum's archive of Cunningham's 1817-1822 journals, there is a piece of paper bearing a list of plant names written by Banks, who had sought to sort and categorise the records returned by his colonial botanist. The document has an interesting title, because it is incomplete:

Specimens of Plants collected in the Mermaids' 1st voyage (1817-18)
by Mr
sent by Lord Mountnorris Sept 1819.⁹⁰

'Mr who?', we might ask. Banks, it seems, did not know. It is tempting to imagine his pencil hovering over this blank piece of parchment, resolving, perhaps, to return on some future date, when the required knowledge had been discovered. We are led in consequence to deduce several things. It would seem, firstly, that another botanical collector was operating on King's survey, even in spite of Cunningham's employment as the expedition's official botanist. Secondly, we learn that this other collector was addressing his specimens to a contemporary aristocrat; George Annesley, then known variously as Viscount Valentia and Lord Mountnorris, was a figure of some high regard. From 1808 to 1810 Annesley had served as Member of Parliament for the 'rotten borough' of Yarmouth, having in his younger years undertaken much exploration in Asia and Africa, in consequence of which he published a travel account in 1809, *Voyages and Travels to India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abyssinia, and Egypt*.⁹¹ A member of the Linnaean Society and a Fellow of the Royal Society, Annesley was an orientalist; several wings of his family home, Arley Castle, were transformed into a museum containing a particularly rich array of Egyptian statues and relics.⁹²

⁹⁰ 'Notes and Remarks', vol. 1. p. 31.

⁹¹ George Annesley. *Voyages and Travels to India, Ceylon, the Red Sea, Abyssinia, and Egypt* (London: William Miller, 1809).

⁹² 'Obituary: Earl of Mountnorris', *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 22 (1844), 425-426.

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The publication of his second book in 1815, the eight-page pamphlet *Short Instructions for Collecting Shells*, alludes to Annesley's equal interest in acquiring specimens of natural history.⁹³

With regard to the theme of transition, Annesley's actions in sending specimens to Banks while apparently withholding the name of his collector revealed not only Banks' declining influence as a privileged node in the circulation of Australian specimens, but also the existence of an element of professional jealousy in this contemporary exchange network. In theory, Annesley's collector on-board the survey would have received no help from Cunningham, who had been told by Banks in no uncertain terms that:

Should any new Plant sent...by you to Kew appear in any other Garden an Enquiry will be immediately set on Foot to Find out in what way...it was procured & if...it Proves to have been obtained from you in any Circuitous manner whatever[,] your having Parted with...it will be deemed a breach of the Fidelity you owe to your Employers.⁹⁴

This made it all the more necessary to identify the 'Mr' of the Mountnorris collection; it must have seemed especially galling for Banks to learn that another individual was acquiring the as yet unknown flora of Australia's northwest coastline and circulating it, presumably, both within and outside the networks centring upon Kew. Cunningham was forbidden from sharing duplicates, but there was no way to prevent other members of the survey's nominally unscientific crew from acquiring botanical specimens. We learn a little more about how the relationship between Banks and Annesley operated from a letter dated 14 October 1819, in which Banks sought to obtain some birds in Annesley's possession. The latter had also acquired these from the first voyage of the 1817-1822 survey:

⁹³ George Annesley. *Short Instructions for Collecting Shells* (London: Brettell and Co., 1815).

⁹⁴ Cited in Endersby. 'Botanical Barter', 319.

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...they are a very interesting collection from a country which has not hitherto contributed to our [The British Museum's] collections. I venture to submit to your lordship this, they would be received with much gratitude should you think proper to destine them for the British Museum...Such a gift would establish a fair claim for your lordship to be elected a trustee of that interesting establishment which I really think a fair object of ambition to every man of literature.⁹⁵

The absence of a dedicated natural history collector on King's expedition, it would seem, had allowed such specimens to escape Banks' official purview; Annesley had sent them to him for inspection and cleaning, but not necessarily as items of exchange. Banks' eagerness to acquire the birds, demonstrated in the perhaps unscrupulous offer (seemingly declined) of a trusteeship, was qualified also by the subtle suggestion that Annesley, a 'man of literature', was not an appropriate custodian for such rare specimens. Annesley's ability to acquire animal collections from the survey (the existence of which was denied by King in the appendix to his *Narrative*) warrants a similar suspicion.⁹⁶ The degree of patronage the survey afforded Annesley is evident in the geographical nomenclature of King's *Narrative*, in which islands and coastlines were commonly dedicated to important figures; one only has to take a boat from Mountnorris Bay in the present-day Northern Territory, perhaps stopping at Valentia Island on the way to Annesley Point, to realise King's impressive navigational feat in accommodating all three titles of the aristocratic collector. Since there is no other reference to Annesley in the *Narrative*, nor any mention in that text or in the official correspondence of any collector of botany other than Cunningham (in spite, as we have seen, of King's otherwise scrupulous records of the survey's acquisitions), one can conclude that the expedition

⁹⁵ Banks to George Annesley, 14 Oct. 1819. BL, Add MS 19347, fols. 267-274.

⁹⁶ King. *Narrative*, vol. 2. p. 410. The introduction to King's appendix states that 'With respect to the collection which has been formed upon this expedition, it is to be regretted that the gleanings of the Animal Kingdom, particularly of quadrupeds and birds, should have been so trifling in number; and that the students of Natural History should have suffered disappointment in what might, at first view, be fairly considered to have arisen from neglect and careless attention to the subject; but as the principal, and almost the only, object of the voyage was the survey of the coast, for which purpose a small vessel was justly considered the most advantageous, accommodation for a zoological collection was out of the question'.

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had colluded in making a private, if not secret, collection for this influential contemporary patron.

The link between Annesley and the 1817-1822 survey is an important one, as it is suggestive of the origins of another largely unknown collection originating from Australia in this period. An auction at Arley Castle, held some years after Annesley's death in 1844, yielded a quantity of early Indigenous Australian objects, including three spears, three boomerangs, two clubs, two net bags, a spear-thrower, a fishing line and a headband.⁹⁷ Annesley seems not to have catalogued his museum, nor to have recorded their collector, for the auctioneers incorrectly attributed the majority of these objects to New Zealand.⁹⁸ The collection was first acquired by the banker and collector Henry Christy, from whom it was acquired in turn by Franks, for the British Museum, in 1865. More recent expertise has identified a range of provenances, all of which overlap with the geographical remit of King's expedition. One item was indeed from New Zealand, but the rest are Australian, having originated variously from Hanover Bay, Bathurst, Port Jackson, Lizard Island and Clarence River, in New South Wales. Those which coincide with the survey's known collections include a net bag now labelled Oc.1898, which is attributed to Lizard Island but is not dissimilar to one collected at nearby Cape Tribulation, by Cunningham, on 18 June 1821. More convincingly, a spear-thrower, Oc.982 (Figure 4.6), which is attributed to Hanover Bay, bears a strong resemblance to the spear-thrower from Hanover Bay confiscated on 8 August 1821 and illustrated for King by Francis Chantrey; while it does not appear to be the same object, King recorded that several examples were obtained from Worora people on that date.

⁹⁷ Catalogued in part by Vincent Megaw. 'Something Old, Something New: Further Notes on the Aborigines of the Sydney District as Represented by Their Surviving Artefacts, and as Depicted in Some Early European Representations', *Records of the Australian Museum*, 17 (1993), 33.

⁹⁸ Farebrother, Clarke and Lye. *Arley Castle, Staffordshire: catalogue of the valuable contents of the castle* (London: J. Davy and Son, 1852).



If the Arley Castle collection is indeed from King's survey, then it is perhaps the oldest and most complete single collection of early Indigenous Australian ethnographic specimens known to survive today. This point was made in Vincent Megaw's 1993 paper, 'Something Old, Something New', in which he wrote that the Arley Castle collection's origin is 'obscure in the extreme', as 'There is no evidence that the Valentias had any direct or indirect connection with the Colony of New South Wales in its early years even though the son of the ninth Viscount did travel in the Middle East and India between 1802 and 1806'.⁹⁹ The difficulty of identifying this connection, as we have seen in Annesley's apparent refusal to share the identity of his collector with Banks, seems in fact to have had much to do with the obfuscatory practices of the period, during which it was necessary for several reasons to mask the identity of one's collector and collections from both an increasingly interfering Admiralty and a competitive network of contemporary metropolitan savants. With respect to the identity of 'Mr', we see this also in Annesley's correspondence with members of the

⁹⁹ Megaw. 'Something Old, Something New', 33.

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Linnaean society, whom he sought to interest in his Australian collections, the provenance of which he would not willingly confirm. Writing to James Edward Smith, the founder of the Linnaean Society, between March 1821 and August 1823, Annesley made several evasive references to his ‘New Holland collections’. On 26 March 1821 Annesley informed Smith that:

I have received a large collection of seeds from my young protege who is surveying Australia & also some bulbs...many of which are growing & I am in hope will be new as they are from the N E coast. He also sent me some specimens of which you shall have the first choice...If Lady Smith wants any additional temptation to pay a visit this summer, pray tell her I have a small addition to my collection of shells, from Australia & that probably I can spare a few which may be acceptable to her. I may even receive another collection from the same place before she comes.¹⁰⁰

In August 1823, after the return of the expedition to England, Annesley wrote to Smith again, apparently in response to a query concerning the identity of his collector. This time he was more specific, if not entirely so:

The Collector was a young Lieutenant of the Royal Navy & of course not very scientific. I believe he was as careful as a small vessel... & much professional duty would permit. He added greatly to my collection of shells - which was his principal object & our friend [the entomologist William Sharp] Macleay owes to his labours some additions to his collection of Insects - He is now at home but I hope will not long remain so.¹⁰¹

The letters provide a series of clues; Annesley’s collector had been employed to collect shells, and so was doubtless equipped with a copy of *Short Instructions for Collecting Shells*, for whom the text may even have been written. It seems that he had, in the event, acquired for Annesley a very diverse collection of Australian curiosities, including not only shells but also plants, birds and insects. Such is the apparent lack of structure in these colonial acquisitions that it seems likely that the early Australian object

¹⁰⁰ Annesley to James Edward Smith, 26 Mar. 1821. LSA, Papers of Sir James Edward Smith [PSJES], GB-110/JES/COR/7/84.

¹⁰¹ Annesley to Smith, 26 Aug. 1823. LSA, PSJES, GB-110/JES/COR/7/86.

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collection acquired by Christy from Annesley's museum had been sent in tandem, and by the same collector. Indeed, in remarking that his 'young protege' was 'now at home but I hope will not long remain so', Annesley suggested that he had only one such connection to the naval expeditions of the time. The reference to a lieutenant on the survey leaves only two possible candidates: King's assistants, John Septimus Roe and Frederick Bedwell. Since we learn in a letter from the former that the employment of the latter had occurred in consequence of the fact that 'his patron, as I before suggested, is Earl Mountnorris', it seems beyond doubt that Bedwell, who was later to name his family home 'Valentia', can be identified as Annesley's collector, and so as the original source of the Arley Castle collection.¹⁰²

Bedwell did not keep a journal while participating on the expedition, and nor does any correspondence relating to him or his collections appear to exist today. King's ever-helpful observations, outlined in Appendix 4, reveal however that Bedwell was indeed making collections of natural history and ethnographic specimens throughout the survey. Specifically, he acquired a shield and spear-throwers from the Guugu-Yimidhirr people, a spear from the Iwaidja, and a fish pot from the Wunambul. Bedwell is recorded collecting shells on several occasions, and is implicated in other ethnographic collections at Endeavour River, Hanover Bay and King George Sound, in 1821. What little can be known about Bedwell comes from Roe's letters and the navy's own records, the latter of which state that he joined in 1810, and served in the Peninsular Wars.¹⁰³ Roe's correspondence with his father hinted at the influence of Bedwell's social standing in his appointment to the surveying expedition; at a time when naval positions were scarce, Roe was surprised to learn that his companion could not draw:

¹⁰² John Septimus Roe to James Roe, 21 Feb. 1817. SLNSW, John Septimus Roe letters [JSRL], Series 03.

¹⁰³ William O'Byrne. *A Naval Biographical Dictionary* (London: John Murray, 1849), p. 66.

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He has already applied to me for some instructions in that line, in answer to which I frankly told him that I had really so much to do for myself and had wasted so much time for others, that I could not positively undertake to teach him.¹⁰⁴

Bedwell had recently returned from an appointment to the *Northumberland* as Master's Mate, which in 1815 escorted Napoleon Buonaparte to exile at St. Helena; according to some sources, the young naval officer and the captive Emperor used to practice duelling.¹⁰⁵ While Bedwell's appointment to King's survey represented enduring structures of elitism and privilege within the navy of the time, his simultaneous appointment as a private collector demonstrated also the burgeoning opportunities then open to naval servicemen to engage with, and shape the future of, colonial science. Owing to his military experience, King seems often to have used Bedwell to manage the violence that would sometimes occur in consequence of the pursuit of encounters and collections. In soliciting a meeting with the Jaburrara man seen passing the *Mermaid* on a canoe on 26 February 1818, as discussed in the previous section, King recorded for instance how Bedwell achieved this only after 'seizing him by the hair, in the act of diving, and dragging him into the boat'.¹⁰⁶ On numerous occasions it was Bedwell, too, who was sent to secure canoes which the survey wished to confiscate, and it was he who helped to locate the objects acquired at Hanover Bay. During the course of King's more diplomatic effort to bring an Indigenous Australian man, 'Jack', on-board the survey, the captain recorded how Bedwell's collecting could also sometimes serve a more practical purpose:

It was intimated to him [Jack] that he should tell his companions of this new arrangement. Mr. Bedwell accordingly took him on shore, and purchased all the spears the natives had brought down, that, in case they should feel angry at his leaving them, they might have no weapons to do any mischief with.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ J. S. Roe to J. Roe, 21 Feb. 1817. SLNSW, JSRL, 1807-1829, Series 03.

¹⁰⁵ Loftus Dun. *They Came as Strangers* (New South Wales: Loftus Dun, 1995), p. 9.

¹⁰⁶ King. *Narrative*, vol. 1. p. 38.

¹⁰⁷ King. *Narrative*, vol. 2. p. 135.

It would seem, however, that the majority of Bedwell's collections were acquired to appease the curiosity of his patron at Arley Castle. Annesley seems not to have wished to circulate them any further, leading to what appears to be the remarkably intact and consistent collection now in the possession of the British Museum. Bedwell's acquisitions represent again the indiscriminate approach to natural and artificial productions which defined so much collecting at the time, and yet there remains the possibility that some objects may have joined the national collection rather earlier, and as ethnographic specimens, if Annesley's competitor and fellow collector, its trustee, had not passed away in 1820.

4.6 The Roevial Museum

The last 1817-1822 collector here discussed, John Septimus Roe, was a peculiarly contradictory figure. Like Bedwell, Roe was an avid collector of curiosities, and yet his were destined not for patronage or scientific society, but for his own museum, which he set up jointly with his brother William and father James, then the reverend and rector of Newbury. To this end, it was affectionately named 'The Roevial Museum'.¹⁰⁸ While only twenty at the time of the survey, Roe was already proficient in the skills required of a surveyor - drawing, charting and navigation - as a consequence of his earlier commissions on-board the *Rippon* and *Horatio*. Prior to this, Roe had been educated in the Mathematical School at Christ's Hospital, London.¹⁰⁹ Roe would later become one of the founding figures of modern Australia, where by some he is still remembered fondly as 'the father of Australian explorers'.¹¹⁰ In June 1829, Roe became the first Surveyor General of Western Australia, and was involved in planning the towns of Perth and Fremantle, as well as cultural institutions such as the Swan River

¹⁰⁸ J. S. Roe to J. Roe, 23 Apr. 1823. SLNSW, JSRL, Series 05.

¹⁰⁹ Malcolm Uren. 'Roe, John Septimus (1797-1878)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Australian National University: National Centre of Biography, 2016), <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/roe-john-septimus-2600/text3575>. Accessed 12 August 2017.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*

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Mechanic's Institute, which housed a considerable library and natural history collection, and which later became the Western Australian Museum. The foundations of these later efforts were laid during Roe's experiences on-board King's Australian survey, where we encounter a young and somewhat immature individual who nevertheless already sought to define Britain's knowledge of Australia on his own terms.

Roe's engagement with the enthusiastic behaviour which defined many of the expedition's encounters offers a perspective upon the 'unofficial' side of collecting - that which did not seek to serve the goals of the Admiralty, of Kew, or of the survey's aristocratic patrons. Roe once described himself as a collector among many, who were, as he put it, 'perfectly curiosity mad'.¹¹¹ Roe's desire to keep his collections, and to articulate them within the space and ideology of a museum, however, secures him against the claim that sailors on naval voyages sought only to acquire objects in a random manner, or for profit. The trajectory of Roe's objects, which would later occupy the shelves of some of England's earliest ethnographic collections, instead demonstrates again the role of early nineteenth-century naval personnel in establishing this new science. Roe's simultaneous contribution to hydrography, and in particular his prowess as a draughtsman and geographer, has been explored in an article by Felix Driver and Luciana Martins.¹¹² There, the authors demonstrate Roe's embodiment of the 'Humboldtian paradigm' through the detailed visual observations of foreign coastlines found in his naval logbooks, which they define as 'tools of knowledge, crafted at particular moments, in particular places and in particular ways'.¹¹³

¹¹¹ J. S. Roe to J. Roe, 28 Sep. 1821. SLNSW, JSRL, Series 05.

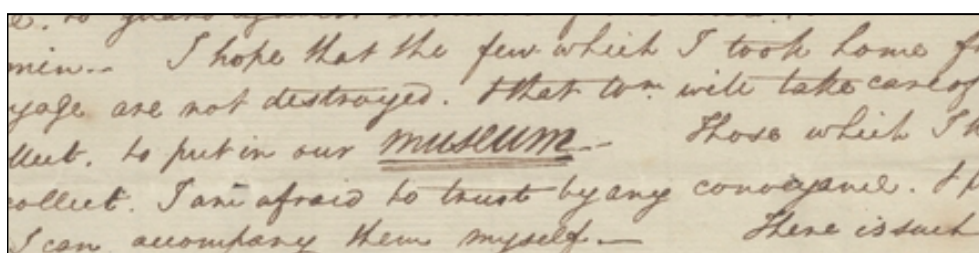
According to Appendix 4, approximately eighty percent of the survey's collections were acquired by ordinary sailors, although little else can be known about the origin, or fate, of these collections.

¹¹² Felix Driver and Luciana Martins. 'John Septimus Roe and the Art of Navigation, c.1815-1830', *History Workshop Journal*, 54 (2002), 144-161.

¹¹³ *Ibid.* 157.

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Driver and Martins' paper does not consider the place of Roe's ethnographic observations within his visualisation of the contemporary Australian environment. While Roe's illustrations tended to feature idealised representations of areas of particular beauty, the logbooks in which they are found also echoed King's methodology in keeping careful record of colonial encounters. They remark upon sightings of smoke, which were assumed to indicate the presence of indigenous people, and Roe was careful also to describe the objects the survey encountered. On several occasions Roe made remarks such as 'found a wooden canoe with an outrigger', which alluded not only to the presence of Indigenous Australian people, but to the relative sophistication of their 'manufactures'.¹¹⁴ In his private letters, however, Roe's descriptions of Indigenous Australians were superficial and sometimes racist; his desire to create a museum was not necessarily a sign of his interest in, or respect for, those who created the objects he collected. We see this in Roe's letters to his father, James Roe, which provide an excellent account of the narrative of the survey through the eyes of its junior officer.¹¹⁵ Many were dedicated almost entirely to the establishment of the museum, a word which was often capitalised, italicised, and underlined, up to three times, for added emphasis (Figure 4.7).



... I hope that the few which I took home for
yours are not destroyed. That you will take care of
them. To put in our MUSEUM. Those which I
collected. I am afraid to trust by any conveyance. If
I can accompany them myself. These issued

Figure 4.7 Museum. Extract from J. S. Roe to J. Roe. 22 Mar. 1819. SLNSW, JSRL, Series 04.

¹¹⁴ 'Log on board HMS Mermaid 30 July 1818 - 1 November 1819', SLWA, JSRP, ACC 491AD/3, 208.

¹¹⁵ Roe's correspondence with his family for the years 1807-1829 was recently purchased from the J. S. Battye Library by the Mitchell Library, where it has been digitised. Other digitised items from Roe's correspondence are still held exclusive by the Battye Library.

The first record of Roe's collecting can be found in a letter dated 14 August 1817, which revealed that collecting on the survey had commenced even before the *Dick* reached Sydney. Roe's first impression of Indigenous Australians is worth reproducing at length, if only for the dissonant levels of astonishment and scorn with which he described his encounters:

The natives of this country have the most quick & penetrating eyes of I think any nation in the world, for the unexampled rapidity and precision with which they will discern any distant object with the naked eye, is truly astonishing. I have heard it remarked by those who ought to know something about it, that it is not equalled any where. They are in their persons and manners the most miserable set of human beings that ever existed - at least to our judgements - but perhaps their own ideas quite the contrary. They are a very ugly race of beings & built quite out of all proportion, the arms & legs bearing a greater resemblance to the Orang Utans than those of ordinary men, on account of being so uncommonly slender.¹¹⁶

Roe's invocation of the Orang-utan reflected something of an unfavourable and highly racialised discourse among sailors at the time. The letter makes several references to a communal knowledge, such as 'those who ought to know' and 'our judgement', which reveal something of the shipboard culture of the *Dick*, and so of the conversations which would have abounded below deck in discussion of this newly encountered people. It seems that Roe had somehow contrived to test the eyesight of the Indigenous Australians he encountered; as a surveyor himself, this would have been the most tempting category for comparison.¹¹⁷ Roe's description of his first collections contained a similar ambiguity in judgement:

¹¹⁶ J. S. Roe to J. Roe, 14 Aug. 1817. SLWA, JSRP, '14 August 1817. Ship Dick off the South West Cape of New Holland in the Indian Ocean. Letter No. 3', p. 5.

¹¹⁷ This brings to mind the 'dynamometer' strength tests to which Péron subjected the various Indigenous peoples he encountered. See, for example, Miranda Hughes. 'The Dynamometer and the Diemenese', in Homer Le Grand (ed.). *Experimental Enquiries* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1990), 81-98.

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I have several of their spears & fishgigs by me, which I will send you by the first opportunity - Some of the former are 12 feet in length, made of the wood of the country & pointed very sharp with a hard heavy wood similar to ebony - They throw them with great precision in which they are assisted by another piece of wood called the throwing stick, which is about 2 feet long & barbed at one end - against this barb the end of the spear is pressed by the left hand; the right holding the other end of the throwing stick, & embracing the spear with the thumb of one finger at the same time. In this position, the throwing stick & spear being held over the right shoulder or nearly so, the latter is thrown in the same manner as a girl would throw a stone. The fishgig is an instrument with which they spear fish, & is in reality a spear, with a great many barbs at unequal distances from each other. The workmanship is very rude and rough - There are a great many more weapons etc made use of by the natives which might be interesting in a voyage, but in a letter & penned by so poor a hand can afford little or no amusement, and will occupy more time & space than I can well spare from what I have hereafter to yarn about.¹¹⁸

Here we find a countersign, in Bronwen Douglas' formulation. Roe's obvious desire to establish the supremacy of his own culture was in tension with his wish to collect what he nevertheless regarded to be interesting and novel specimens of Indigenous Australian material culture. That he had not managed to acquire a spear-thrower, which were often treasured far more than the spears they propelled (as one might value a firearm to a greater degree than its ammunition) reveals something of the dynamics of this early Australian encounter.¹¹⁹ The functional description here, if not the ethnobotanical sophistication, is reminiscent of Cunningham's manner of describing the Jaburrara canoe, and so is indicative of an ethnographic method. Roe demonstrates again, however, a greater willingness than Cunningham to make a value judgement; the comparison to how a girl might throw stones was intended to provoke his father's humour, and so to

¹¹⁸ J. S. Roe to J. Roe, '14 Aug. 1817'. p. 6.

¹¹⁹ Bronwen Douglas. 'In the Event: Indigenous Countersigns and the Ethnohistory of Voyaging', in Margaret Jolly, Serge Tcherkezoff and Darrell Tryon (eds.). *Oceanic Encounters: Exchange, Desire, Violence* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2009), 175-198.

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belittle the manufacturers of his collection. The relative importance of the museum over the nature of the specimens is evident also in the manner of the contrast between Roe's imperative to send the objects 'by the first opportunity', and his relative reluctance to describe in more detail a collection of 'rude and rough' workmanship which might in itself 'afford little or no amusement'.

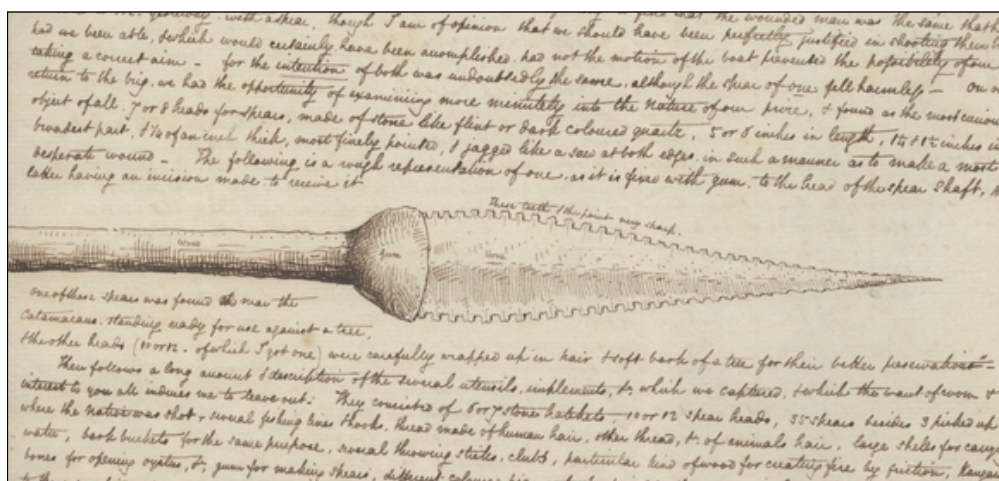


Figure 4.8 'These teeth and the point very sharp'. Extract from J. S. Roe to J. Roe. 28 Sep. 1821. SLNSW, JSRL, Series 05.

Roe's correspondence nevertheless demonstrates that he was deliberate in his collecting. The Roevial Museum, it seems, had different wings under the orchestration of his younger brother and his father. To the former were sent a series of conchological, botanical and entomological collections, with a great emphasis upon new and interesting insects; this was justified to William with the surely misguided claim that it might encourage 'visits from pretty girls, whose admiration and pretty prattle are doubtless ample remuneration for loss of time'.¹²⁰ Roe's father, a clergyman, was rightly more interested in ethnographic collections, for it was to him that Roe addressed items including 'one long case of spears, etc' upon arriving home from the survey, in 1823.¹²¹ Roe also described to his father the Hanover Bay collection, in which context we learn once more about the curious

¹²⁰ J. S. Roe to William Roe, 3 Jul. 1828. SLWA, JSRP, ACC 563A/2D. '3 July 1828 to 4 August 1828'.

¹²¹ J. S. Roe to J. Roe, 23 Jun. 1823. SLNSW, JSRL, Series 06.

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package of spear-heads, numbering '10 or 12, of which I got one'.¹²² This acquisition may have been sent to his father, for it was illustrated vividly in a letter dated 28 September 1821, a month after the incident occurred (Figure 4.8). As Driver and Martins put it, 'the weapon pierces the text of a personal letter, interrupting its flow and giving a much more immediate sense of co-presence', than Chantrey's illustration, in which a similar object (Oc.224) also appears.¹²³

Roe's letters also offer an insight into the mechanics of his and others' collecting. On 22 March 1819 he remarked to his father that:

there is such a total want of brown paper in this colony that I have been prevented from making a very large collection of the plants of the country, which are said to amount to about 40,000 different species; having a botanist onboard, the method of preserving them & insects is constantly before our eyes.¹²⁴

Roe always referred to Cunningham, in this manner, as 'the botanist'. As rival collectors, perhaps, the two seem not to have been friends. Although Cunningham was forbidden from sharing his duplicates, we learn here that his method, at least, helped Roe and Bedwell to better organise their own acquisitions, and on numerous occasions the two captain's assistants collected together. In a letter dated 5 November 1819 Roe recounted a meeting with Guugu-Yimidhirr people at Endeavour River:

we were visited by upwards of 20 of them...Presents of biscuit, beads, iron tools, fish hooks etc kept us on amicable footing with them, and in return Mr Bedwell obtained from one of them a curious shield made of a light wood that grows very abundant in the woods - this shield having 2 spearholes in it shewed that they were sometimes at war. No other curiosities were obtained from them as they appeared cautious in endeavouring to conceal their spears, which we nevertheless could

¹²² J. S. Roe to J. Roe, 28 Sep. 1821. SLNSW, JSRL, Series 05.

¹²³ Driver and Martins. 'John Septimus Roe', 153.

¹²⁴ J. S. Roe to J. Roe, 22 Mar. 1819. SLNSW, JSRL, Series 04.

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perceive among the bushes, though were unwilling by approaching them to give any cause for distrust.¹²⁵

It is curious that Bedwell managed to acquire a shield at Endeavour River, for it was here that James Cook landed almost fifty years earlier, as a means to repair the *Endeavour*, and on which occasion he too acquired a now famous bark shield, thought to be that known to the British Museum as Oc1978, Q.839. Descriptions of both reveal the two to be similar; Bedwell may have been aware of this earlier acquisition (the survey carried several copies of Cook and Banks' journals), and so acquired his own shield deliberately. King recorded himself doing the same thing two weeks later, after finding and describing 'an apparatus for striking turtles which has been noticed by Captain Cook', in a canoe that was also from Endeavour River.¹²⁶ Roe's records demonstrate his similar excitement about this early form of Australian tourism, for he observed how 'we occupied the precise spot on which Captain Cook had pitched his tents'.¹²⁷ Nevertheless, another reason for Roe's interest in the shield is apparent from an illustration in his personal logbook (Figure 4.9), which contained in rough the notes and observations that would later be entered into his official logs. The back pages were reserved for illustrations and sums, and so it is here that we find a pencil sketch of the shield, as well as a sketch of a *Pandanus*, or Screw Pine, and one of the baskets collected from Tiwi people at St Asaph's Bay one month earlier (and described by King in relation to the loss of his theodolite). The caption below the illustration of the basket reads:

Baskets of St Asaph's Bay; for water, provisions etc, obtained from the natives. Supposed to be made of the sheaths of the foliage or large squamae embracing the stems of the *Pandanus* or Screw Pine - a *Seaforthia Elegans* a sp. of Palm.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ J. S. Roe to J. Roe, 5 Nov. 1819. SLNSW, JSRL, Series 04.

¹²⁶ King. *Narrative*, vol. 1. p. 231.

¹²⁷ J. S. Roe to J. Roe, 22 Mar. 1819. SLNSW, JSRL, Series 04.

¹²⁸ J. S. Roe. 'Logbook on board HMS Mermaid 18 May 1818 - 24 January 1819', SLWA, JSRP, ACC 2162AD/4, pp. 180-181.

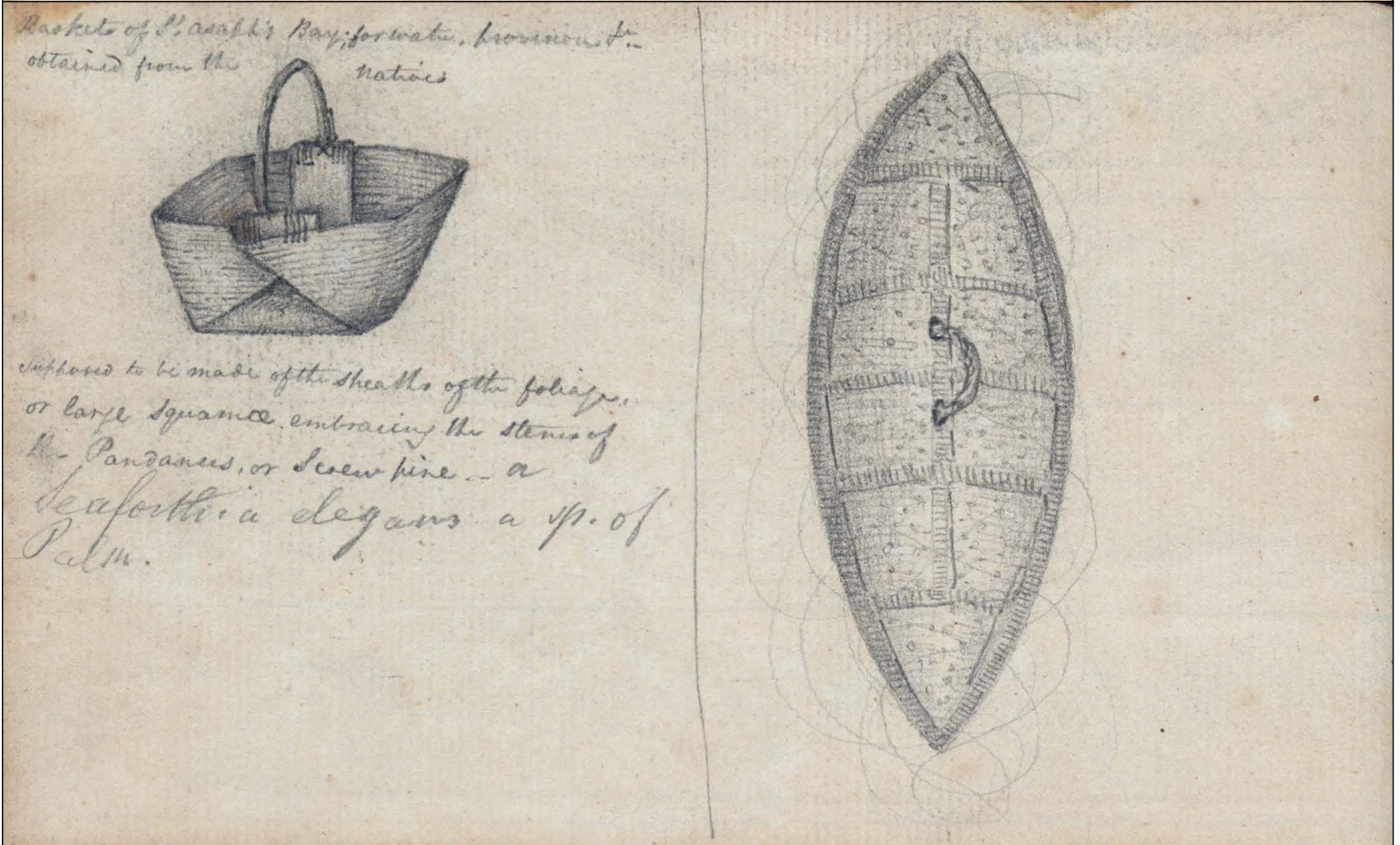


Figure 4.9. John Septimus Roe's ethnobotany? Consecutive pages in John Septimus Roe. 'Logbook on board HMS Mermaid 18 May 1818 - 24 January 1819', SLWA, JSRP, ACC 2162AD/4, pp. 180-181.

The shield and *Pandanus* are not captioned, but the implication is that Roe was recording the source of his collections in a manner similar to Cunningham, who had no doubt furnished him with the botanical knowledge contained in the description; *Seaforthia Elegans*, known now as *Archontophoenix cunninghamiana* (Bangalow), was one of Cunningham's best known Australian discoveries.¹²⁹ Roe may, as such, have been attempting to say that the shield had grown from the same species of tree as the basket. In this sense, and as a token, too, of Cook's voyage, the shield was very much a boundary object. We see here that Roe's attitude toward ethnography had increased in sophistication during the survey; his attempt to apply Cunningham's ethnobotanical methodology to his own collections, and to apply his skills of observation and perception to a visual-scientific analysis of the shield and baskets, is as surprising as it is revealing. It would seem that the experienced botanist and young surveyor had worked together in interpreting their collections after all. The fact that these illustrations appeared only in the context of Roe's logbook, however, underlines the uncoded and still experimental nature of this mode of investigation. The somewhat incongruous placement of the shield, and the idle manner in which it has been doodled upon, reveal Roe's incomplete attempt to assimilate these objects into a coherent interpretative paradigm.

It is not known whether any objects from Roe's collection survive today. The fact that many are recorded as having been sent to and received by 'The Rev. James Roe, Rectory of Newbury, Berks' suggests that at least some might remain in England, whether labelled or not. A tourist guide for Newbury dated 1838 reveals that the planned Roevial Museum did indeed come into fruition:

¹²⁹ Clarke. *Aboriginal Plant Collectors*, p. 72.

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a private museum here, the property of the Rev. James Roe, is well worth the inspection of the privileged visitor; it has been pronounced the finest collection in the county, unequalled alike by the rarity and variety of the subjects and their admirable arrangement.¹³⁰

Upon James Roe's death in 1838, however, the collection was dispersed. His will instructed that the 'articles comprised in my museum [are] to form part of my residuary personal estate upon trust and subject nevertheless to the payment of my just debts, funeral and testaments and expenses'.¹³¹ In consequence, the 'extensive and valuable Museum of Curiosities', as it was then described, was sold off by auction, in an apparently complete state, in May 1842.¹³² Nevertheless, Newbury's rector was no isolated figure, and so it is possible that some objects may earlier have been dispersed through private networks. The visitors' books of the Museum of the Royal Naval Hospital at Haslar, which forms the subject of the next chapter, record that 'Rev James Roe, Rector of Newbury, Berks', visited the ethnographic and natural history collections on 31 May 1833, in the company of 'Everard Home, R.N'.¹³³ This was Sir James Everard Home, an eminent British naval officer of the Australian station at Sydney, and son of the noted surgeon Everard Home, who had died the previous year. Home senior had been keeper and trustee of the Hunterian Museum, and was one of the few recipients of natural history specimens from King's survey. Upon the expedition's return, King had presented him with a live dingo, which he understandably declined to keep; it found a new home at the Royal Menagerie of the Exeter Exchange.¹³⁴ Home likewise received a frilled-neck lizard, *Chlamydosaurus kingii*, from Cunningham, which was deposited in the collections of the Hunterian.¹³⁵ This intricate network of collectors, museums and individuals connected in various obscure ways with the

¹³⁰ James Pigot. *Pigot and co.'s pocket atlas, topography and gazetteer of England* (J. Pigot & Co., 1838), p. 26.

¹³¹ 'Will of Reverend James Roe, Clerk Rector of Newbury, Berkshire', TNA, PROB, 11/1902/118.

¹³² 'To Naturalists, Collectors of Curiosities, &c', *The Times*. 09 May. 1842.

¹³³ 'Museum. Royal Hospital Haslar. Names of Visitors', INM, 31 May 1833.

¹³⁴ King. *Narrative*, vol. 2. p. 412.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 426.

1817-1822 survey likely decided the fate of at least some of Roe's object collections.¹³⁶ His father's visit to Haslar in 1833, one suspects, may have coincided with a donation.¹³⁷

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has quantified and analysed the Indigenous Australian object collections made upon Phillip Parker King's Australian expedition of 1817-1822. I began by using Appendix 3 and Appendix 4 to demonstrate the disparity between the extant and non-extant ethnographic collections acquired by the survey, in terms both of their size and scientific purpose. The tables reveal that existing analyses of King's collections have been too linear in their interpretation of the objects' various roles and abstractions, past and present, and too myopic with respect to the identity and agency of their collectors. The chapter in consequence employed Star and Griesemer's formulation of 'boundary objects' in order to explore the various historical meanings these collections possessed within the actions of four different collectors and so, broadly, four different 'sites' of investigation. Owing to the diversity of uses to which they were put, I have suggested that these objects reflect upon a more general period of transition in contemporary imperial collecting. King's expedition straddled the moments shortly before and after Banks' death, an event which left the scientific direction of the expedition, and Cunningham in particular, in a state of pronounced confusion. Though the survey's proximity to the end of the Napoleonic Wars meant that it had also necessarily to navigate the reorientation of Britain's naval power and imperial interests, Banks' death was an equal factor in the Admiralty's growing efforts to take decisive ownership of the scientific direction and collections of its expeditions.

¹³⁶ James Roe was also in regular correspondence with the British Vice-Admiral Richard Goodwin Keats, who was a factor in John Septimus Roe's initial appointment to King's expedition. See, for example, James Roe to Richard Goodwin Keats, 2 Jan. 1817. SALS, DD\CPL/42.

¹³⁷ See Chapter Five for an analysis of the Haslar collection.

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I have shown that King's use of intentional and incidental collections was comparable to that of James Grant, who captained the *Lady Nelson* between 1800 and 1801. Chantrey's illustration of King's Worora specimens preserved their likeness, and so removed the need for the objects themselves to be kept as ethnographic records. Likewise, King's own creation of such decontextualised visual representations of ethnographic specimens attested to his scientific ability, in a manner comparable to that shown by Nicholas Thomas to have earlier been used by Johann Reinhold Forster.¹³⁸ As I argued in the introduction to this thesis, however, this was not always about scientific reputation alone; in consequence of ambiguous understandings of the Admiralty's ownership of collected specimens following the loss of Banks as their traditional recipient, King felt free to disperse his collections privately once the illustrations were complete.

So flagrant was King's behaviour that he was a factor in the Admiralty's subsequent adoption of much stricter demands for the return and public ownership of naval collections. These appeared in King's 1824 instructions for the voyages of the *Adventure* and *Beagle*, and were reiterated in his 1829 scolding from John Barrow. More scientific actors on King's survey attempted to use ethnographic specimens to adjudicate Indigenous Australians' relative cultural sophistication, but the objects served too as ready syntheses of the presence, character and utility of Australian flora, which helped similarly to direct the imperial and economic success of the colony. It is in the ambivalent scientific methodologies of Cunningham and Roe that one glimpses most clearly a sign of the later development of an ethnographic methodology and consciousness, in the actions of naval collectors. As discussed in the next chapter, the military and naval museums which were shortly to emerge were a corollary of the growing desire of colonial servicemen such as Roe to collect, interpret and disseminate exogenous knowledge and material culture. Though the Bedwell-Annesley

¹³⁸ Nicholas Thomas. 'Licensed Curiosity: Cook's Pacific Voyages', in John Elsner and Roger Cardinal (eds.). *The Cultures of Collecting* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), 135.

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connection attests to the survival of older forms of aristocratic patronage, Annesley's ability to acquire items unavailable to Banks presents the most striking example of the changing dynamics of collecting at the time. After 1815, prestigious specimens were becoming gradually more attainable, and by a much greater variety of people.

**Medical collecting on the frontiers of natural history:
The rise and fall of Haslar Hospital Museum, 1827-1855**

*Are you aware that there is a museum attached to Haslar Hospital,
which has been formed from specimens collected by the King's officers
in various parts of the globe?*

- Only from hearsay; I have never seen it.

So replied John George Children, assistant keeper of natural history collections, to a question posed by the House of Commons' 1835 Select Committee on the Condition, Management and Affairs of the British Museum.¹ Eight years earlier, one of the country's oldest naval institutions, the Royal Hospital Haslar, had created a space in which to house the voluminous collections of the naval surgeons and other medical officers it variously trained, accommodated and dispatched throughout the British Empire. In the years leading to 1835, this privileged relationship with new imperial knowledge helped Haslar Hospital Museum to grow so successful that it challenged the Committee's efforts to ensure the British Museum maintained its reputation as the nation's de facto repository of natural history specimens and ethnographic objects; by this stage Haslar welcomed one thousand visitors annually, and held more than 7,659 specimens to illustrate subjects as diverse as ethnography, antiquity, zoology, botany, geology and anatomy.² Throughout the 1840s, Haslar Hospital Museum

¹ *Report from the Select Committee on the Condition, Management and Affairs of the British Museum* (London: House of Commons, 1835), p. 225.

² See Figure 5.7.

The museum was known by several titles. Burnett variously referred to the institution as 'Haslar Hospital Museum' and 'The Museum of the Navy Medical Department'. This chapter uses the former title.

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would make various claims to its own, privileged status as a national collection, thus rejecting the Committee's proposal that its contents be examined 'with the view to the appropriation of valuable specimens'.³ The tentative relationship which had emerged between the Admiralty, naval collecting and the British Museum in the years after Phillip Parker King's return from Australia was, for the time-being, at an end.

In its discussion of Robert Brown, naturalist to the *Investigator*, Chapter Three drew upon evidence that surgeons and others with medical training often engaged in ethnographic study while on-board voyages of discovery in Australia. As seen in Chapter Four, the nascent form of environmental and racial enquiry employed by Brown was less evident in the work of naturalists, such as Allan Cunningham, who specialised in botany or other subsets of natural history alone. For Cunningham, objects were more relevant as proxies for ethnobotanic knowledge and as an indication of the availability of natural resources. The medical underpinnings of ethnographic collecting in the early nineteenth-century thus warrant further investigation. In this chapter, I elucidate and extend this line of enquiry by introducing the surgeon-collector into the thesis' account of the Royal Navy's influence upon and participation in nineteenth-century ethnographic study and associated scientific knowledge. I do so by examining the rise and fall of Haslar Hospital Museum, from its establishment in 1827 to the sudden loss of its collections in 1855, when the majority were transferred to the British Museum and similar institutions.

The British Museum initially received almost three hundred Haslar objects from the Lords of the Admiralty, through John Liddell, and later acquired over two hundred more from the collector Henry Christy, who had also received a share of Haslar's collections.⁴ Although the history of Haslar, and of its surgeons, necessarily relates to a broader geographic field than

³ *Report from the Select Committee*, p. 601.

⁴ In total, 293 ethnographic objects were received by the British Museum in 1855. See BM. *Acquisitions: General Antiquities: Jan. 1853 to Dec. 1855*, vol. 3.

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Australia alone, the thirty-eight Indigenous Australian objects catalogued from its collections thus far are imbued with a special significance. These specimens compose one of the earliest and largest extant collections from the continent. Although the loss of Haslar Hospital Museum's original catalogue, in conjunction with the fact that many of its specimens were not labelled, have frustrated attempts to date objects that may even have an eighteenth-century provenance, the knowledge that these items were collected in the first half of the nineteenth century has rendered them the subject both of international and intensely local interest.⁵ By offering the first comprehensive study of the museum, its curators and its collectors, this chapter seeks therefore to salvage and to assess what can be known about the origins of a highly significant collection of ethnographic specimens, and the reasons for which these, and other objects, were first collected and displayed.

The history of Haslar Hospital Museum itself forms an important component in our understanding of the infrastructure of naval enquiry, as well as of the growth of a more greatly proprietorial attitude in the Admiralty after 1822 concerning the fate of naval collections. In spite of the Admiralty's increasing investment in scientific research in England after the 1830s (a subject explored in detail in the next chapter), Haslar's story is one of persisting tension within the Admiralty and among its surgeons regarding competing interpretations of the navy's scientific purpose, and in particular its relation to the British Museum and the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, which formed two additional nodes as members of a tripartite network for the metropolitan study of exotic specimens. At present, scholarly awareness of Haslar remains scant.⁶ Although the naval hospital museum was in some

⁵ In 2016, several Haslar objects were exhibited for the first time in Albany, Western Australia, where they were originally collected by the naval surgeon Alexander Collie. For an account of the exhibition see Gaye Sculthorpe and Maria Nugent (eds.). *Yurlmun: Mokare Mia Boodja 'Returning to Mokare's Home Country': Encounters and Collections in Menang Country* (Welshpool: Western Australian Museum, 2016).

⁶ There has been little academic interest in the museum and library thus far. For an exception, see Margaret Lattimore. 'Early naval medical libraries, personal and corporate', *Journal of the Royal Naval Medical Service*, 69 (1983), 107-111.

ways a unique institution, this deficiency of understanding is in part a symptom of well-established gaps in the history of science and of natural history. First, there is no particular literature on the subject of the hospital museum as a space of imperial learning in the nineteenth century.⁷ This is compounded by even less awareness of what happened in specifically naval medical institutions.⁸ Thirdly, an enduring inclination to treat surgeon-collectors, and indeed collectors in general, as ‘fact gatherers’ rather than producers of knowledge necessarily occludes study of centres of enquiry, or in the Latourian sense of ‘calculation’, beyond obvious localities, or within privileged or little-known networks.⁹

The relationship between medical collecting and natural history collecting, called by Janet Browne ‘one of the most interesting questions’ in the history of biogeographical science as long ago as 2001, therefore remains little understood. Whereas surgeon-collectors have often been considered only ‘the means of production’ for the work of sanctioned science by the metropolitan elite, my discussion of Haslar seeks to reverse such assumptions.¹⁰ As Christopher Lawrence has shown, naval surgeons were first recognised as ‘officers and gentlemen’ in 1805, and thereafter came increasingly to consider themselves as scientific experts in their own right.¹¹ Not merely a store of objects awaiting learned visitors, Haslar Hospital

⁷ Medical museums as a general category of analysis are also deserving of greater attention. For exceptions, see Ellen Adams. ‘Shaping, collecting and displaying medicine and architecture: A comparison of the Hunterian and Soane Museums’, *Journal of the History of Collections*, 25 (2013), 59-75. Jonathan Reinartz. ‘The Age of Museum Medicine: The Rise and Fall of the Medical Museum at Birmingham’s School of Medicine’, *Social History of Medicine*, 18 (2005), 419-437.

⁸ On which there is no apparent literature.

⁹ For an analysis of this argument, see A.M. Lucas and P. J. Lucas. ‘Natural History “collectors”: exploring the ambiguities’, *Archives of Natural History*, 41 (2014), 63-74.

Bruno Latour. *Science in Action* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1987).

¹⁰ Janet Browne. ‘Natural History collecting and the Biogeographical tradition’, *Historia, Ciencias, Saude - Manguinhos*, 8 (2001), 960. Janet Browne. ‘A Science of Empire: British Biogeography before Darwin’, *Revue d'Histoire des Sciences*, 45 (1992), 453-475.

¹¹ Christopher Lawrence. ‘Disciplining disease: scurvy, the navy, and imperial expansion, 1750-1825’, in David Phillip Miller and Peter Hanns Reill (eds.). *Visions of Empire: Voyages, Botany and Representations of Nature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 85.

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Museum was itself an infrastructure, or ‘means of production’, for the new and democratic knowledge that was increasingly being produced by the navy’s surgeons, with the assistance of naval captains and interested sailors, in the first half of the nineteenth century. Though the chronology of Haslar’s development was comparable to that of the museums of the East India Company and the London Missionary Society, its collections were thus associated less with public, commercial, oriental or religious modes of display.¹² While its science was often informed by the concerns of naval surgeons, Haslar Hospital Museum was not a peripheral or even an essentially specialist place of investigation, and thus the neglect afforded to the study of specifically medical natural history is not entirely to blame. Before its reorganisation in 1855, Haslar Hospital Museum was one of the principal authorities on, and destinations for, the imperial collections of nineteenth-century surgeons, naval servicemen and scientific explorers.

5.1 Origins and growth

Haslar’s museum, founded in 1827, resided at an institution of considerable importance to nineteenth-century naval science and bureaucracy. Having first opened in 1753, Haslar was the oldest and best known of the Royal Naval Hospitals, and was responsible for training and accommodating a significant number of the navy’s surgeons and medical personnel, ahead of their assignment to overseas voyages. The institution cared for convalescent sailors and ‘naval lunatics’, but was necessarily also a lively meeting point at the centre of a much greater network, being located in Gosport, near Portsmouth, where a large number of vessels and voyages of discovery (including those of Matthew Flinders and Phillip Parker King) were variously victualled, despatched and decommissioned. As a locus of naval

¹² See Jessica Ratcliff. ‘The East India Company, the Company’s Museum, and the Political Economy of Natural History in the Early Nineteenth Century’, *Isis*, 107 (2016), 495-517, and Chris Wingfield. “Scarcely more than a Christian trophy case”? The global collections of the London Missionary Society museum (1814-1910), *Journal of the History of Collections*, 29 (2017), 109-128.

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medicine, Haslar also earned considerable acclaim; it was here that much pioneering work on a cure for scurvy took place under one of the hospital's physicians, James Lind, and Haslar was for a time home also to many other notable individuals, including the explorer Edward Parry.¹³ As a training ground for the navy's surgeons, one of Haslar's best known exports was the biologist and Darwinist Thomas Henry Huxley.

A corollary of the period of transition identified in Chapter Four, plans for a museum and library at Haslar first arose in the aftermath of the Napoleonic Wars. In 1816, medical officers within the British Army took advantage of the new peace by establishing a collection of morbid anatomy at the Royal Naval Hospital, Chatham, under the patronage of Prince Frederick, the Duke of York and Albany.¹⁴ Such was its success in educating young medical officers that similar establishments were soon planned at the hospitals of Haslar and Plymouth. The task of planning and constructing Haslar's own museum was given to the naval physician William Burnett, following his appointment to the Victualling Board of the Navy and as Inspector of Hospitals in 1822.¹⁵ Burnett was thereafter promoted to Physician-General of the Navy, in 1831, to Inspector-General in 1841, and finally to Director-General of the Medical Department of the Royal Navy in 1843. Burnett had previously served as Physician and Inspector of Hospitals to the Mediterranean Fleet, from 1810, and had been appointed as the Medical Officer in Charge of Prison Hulks at Chatham in 1813. Between 1822 and his retirement in 1855, and perhaps in consequence of these various experiences, Burnett was to prove a keen supporter of hitherto lacking structures of formal medical education in the navy. Aided by an atmosphere

¹³ For histories of the hospital, see William Tate. *A History of Haslar Hospital* (London: C. Griffin & Co., 1906). A. L. Revell. *Haslar: The Royal Hospital* (Gosport: The Gosport Society, 1978). Eric Birbeck, Ann Ward and Phil Ward (eds.). *The Royal Hospital Haslar: A Pictorial History* (Stroud: The History Press, 2013).

¹⁴ 'A Fasciculus, containing nine Lithographic Anatomical Drawings; from Preparations in the Museum of the Army Medical Department at Chatham', *The Medico-Chirurgical Review*, 3 (1825), 57.

¹⁵ For details of Burnett's life and career, see David McLean. *Surgeons of the Fleet: The Royal Navy and its Medics from Trafalgar to Jutland* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010).

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of scientific and educational reform, Haslar's museum and library introduced well-defined spaces for medical education, and offered the possibility of formal interaction between junior surgeons and the hospital's experienced physicians. Haslar's size and proximity to Portsmouth led it to amass far more extensive and diverse collections than those which had since 1816 furnished the hospitals at Chatham and Plymouth. At a time in which medical curricula within the navy was highly unstable, the place of natural history and of ethnography within Haslar Hospital Museum would form a point of continuous discussion throughout Burnett's career.¹⁶

The phrenologist James Scott was the earliest member of Haslar's medical staff to take charge of the scholastic functions of the library and museum, following his appointment as Haslar's first Librarian, Lecturer and Curator of the Museum in 1827.¹⁷ From 1830 onwards, Scott also served as Principal of Haslar Lunatic Asylum, and was thus among the hospital's most distinguished staff until his retirement as a result of poor health (and probable exhaustion) in 1838.¹⁸ Scott used the space provided by the library to give weekly lectures to the hospital's medical staff. According to a report compiled for *The Lancet* in 1832, these concerned 'the diseases of seamen, and of tropical climates', being also 'replete with sound doctrine and practical information'.¹⁹ In a practice which required the prior distribution of warning cards to ward off unsuspecting visitors, the size of the new museum permitted post-mortems to be carried out inside, and thus allowed for the direct transformation of organs and other matter into pathological

¹⁶ This was more the case at Haslar than at the museums of other naval hospitals, including Chatham, many of whom transferred surplus collections to Haslar's museum in 1835. See Tait. *A History of Haslar Hospital*, p. 66.

For an account of surgical training in Portsmouth in this period, see Richard Briddle. "As His was Not a Surgical Case it was Not My Duty to Attend Him": The Surgeon's Role in the Nineteenth-Century Royal Dockyards', *Medical History*, 57 (2013), 559-578.

¹⁷ 'Victualling Board, In-Letters and Orders', CLA, ADM/C/749.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ 'Present State of the Medical Profession in the British Navy', *The Lancet*, 17 (1832), 635.

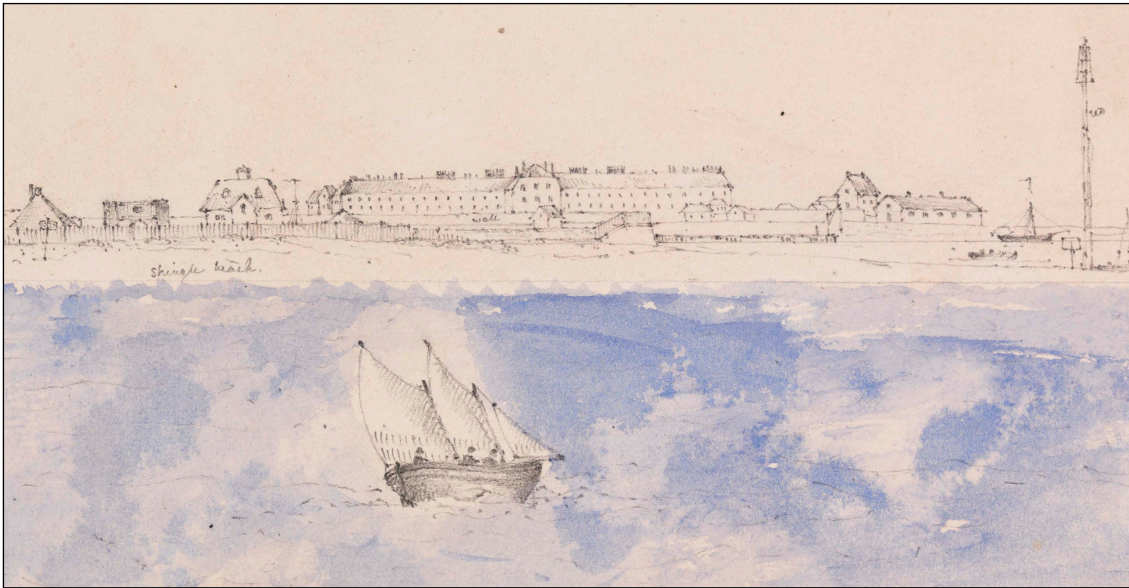


Figure 5.1 ‘Entrance of Portsmouth Harbour, from East Shore’. Detail from a sketch by John Septimus Roe, showing the front of Haslar Hospital in 1823. J. S. Roe. ‘Sketchbook October to November 1823’, SLWA, JSRP 563A/4, p. 7.

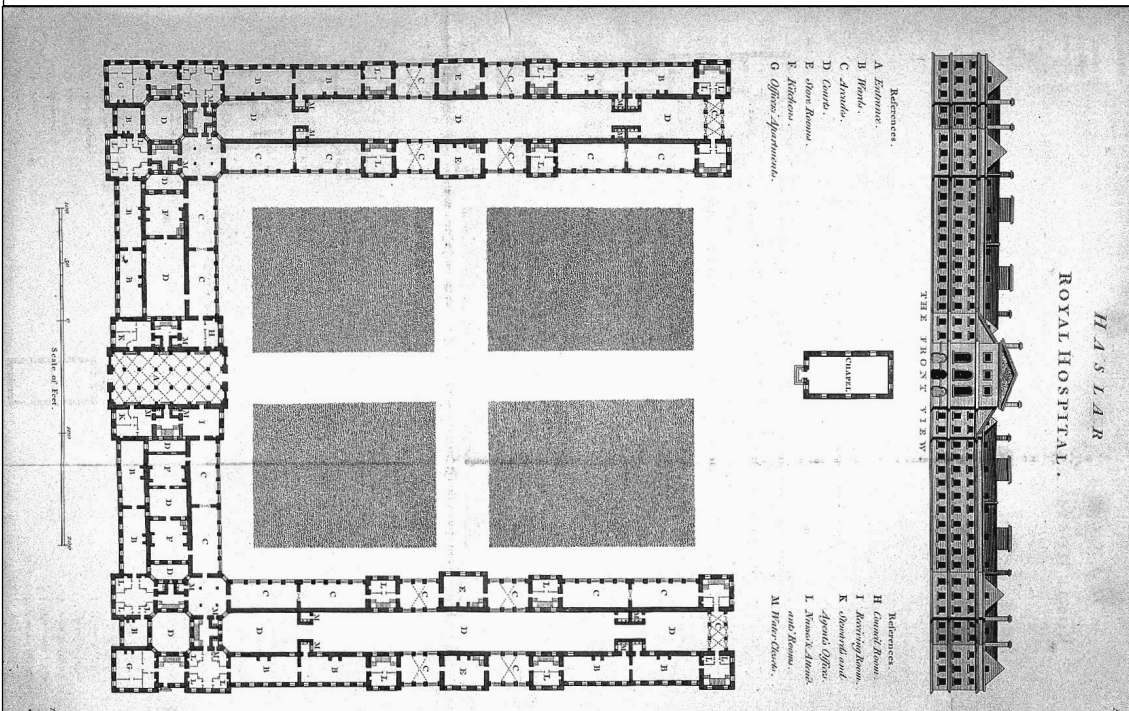


Figure 5.2 A 1789 plan of Haslar Hospital. After 1827, the museum and library were located within E Block (initially a store room), adjoining the front left centre of the square (when facing the chapel). John Howard. *An Account of the principal lazarettos in Europe* (London: J. Johnson, C. Dilly and T. Cadell, 1789), plate 19.

exhibits.²⁰ Scott's work in the library was supported by an initial award of £400 for library books, which was supplemented by an annual budget of £150 thereafter.²¹ The museum, on the other hand, was expected to be largely self-sustaining. Specimens of morbid and comparative anatomy arose as a by-product of surgical procedures, while all other objects arrived free as donations from returning surgeons and other naval officers, many of whom were tasked specifically to act as the museum's appointed collectors.

Before the museum first opened on 26 June 1827, Haslar had already amassed a significant collection of natural history and medical specimens. These were previously stored in cupboards within the hospital's wards.²² As earlier chapters have observed, there was no obvious infrastructure at this time to support the dissemination and analysis of the navy's collections, and it was this which gave credence and Admiralty support to Burnett's plan to establish an eclectic collection at Haslar. In spite of numerous initial difficulties, wrote Burnett in 1828, 'I am confident however that I shall ultimately succeed, and that the Institution will prove both a benefit and a credit, to the Medical Department of the Navy'.²³ Burnett's timing was fortuitous, as his efforts occurred at a time in which the Admiralty was beginning to take a sterner attitude toward the fate of collections made upon naval voyages. One year later, as we have seen, King was able to satisfy the Second Secretary to the Admiralty John Barrow's demand that his South American collections be considered 'public' by offering them to several different institutions, and it is known that at least some of the collections made upon the voyages of the *Adventure* and *Beagle* eventually reached Haslar's collections.²⁴ The museum and library were therefore strictly

²⁰ According to a card left in the museum's visitors' books. See 'Museum. Royal Hospital Haslar. Names of Visitors', 2 vols., INM, [Haslar Visitors' Books], 29 May. 1838.

²¹ 'Entry Book of reports to the Admiralty by Sir William Burnett as Physician, later Medical Director-General of the Navy', TNA, ADM 105/70.

²² Tate. *A History of Haslar Hospital*, p. 65.

²³ William Burnett to William Townsend Aiton, 4 Jan. 1828. RBG, Directors' Correspondence [DC] 44/50.

²⁴ See Chapter Four, section 4.3, and Chapter Five, section 5.3.



Figure 5.3 The original room of Haslar Hospital Museum. The photograph is undated, but the bust on the left, of John Pakington, was installed in 1860. The image thus depicts the museum following the disposal of many collections in 1855. Spears in the upper left corner, and what appear to be gourds in the extreme left-hand cabinet, suggest however that such objects continued to be offered to the collection in subsequent years. Courtesy Haslar Heritage Group.



Figure 5.4 A room within Haslar Hospital Museum. The tiled flooring and drain suggest this is the space added to the museum in 1850, being a ward ‘in the upper room of the opposite building’. Courtesy Haslar Heritage Group.

medical spaces only in theory; the absence of any local curricula for medical training coincided with a near Humboldtian desire to facilitate what had by then become the privileged and established expertise of sailors and naval surgeons on a range of exotic and imperial subjects; Scott's programme of medical lectures, while initially popular, soon shrank in quantity and attendance, and were replaced with a broader curriculum, which included specific sessions on natural history, after 1838.²⁵

One of the earliest accounts of the museum does much to evidence the degree to which Burnett envisaged an expensive, authoritative and catholic destination for the various collections of the navy's medical personnel. Appearing in 1829, it described:

two elegant rooms, the lower superbly fitted up with mahogany cases, commodious seats, &c, as a library and lecture-room for the delivery of lectures to the medical pupils; the upper finished in the most costly style of Grecian design, for the reception of a museum; the table and upright cases being of solid mahogany, with brass ornaments, and the whole arrangement strikingly tasteful. It already contains many curious specimens in morbid anatomy, and a considerable number of foreign birds, insects, shells, minerals, plants, &c, principally presented by the medical officers of his Majesty's navy. From the peculiar advantages possessed by this museum, and the professional acquirements of its directors and supporters, it may be expected to become particularly rich and valuable in morbid and comparative anatomy, as well as highly interesting as a general collection.²⁶

While it is undoubtedly true that Haslar's museum would soon become an interesting and diverse collection, the suggestion that it had been created with a high degree of professionalism is less convincing. The passage above derived, in fact, from a far less flattering appraisal which had been offered

²⁵ 'Alphabetical list of gentlemen attending introductory lectures', TNA, ADM 305/101.

²⁶ 'Provincial Occurrences in the Counties of England, and in Wales, Scotland, and Ireland', *The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal*, 3 (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1829), 372.



Figure 5.5 Former Indigenous Australian Haslar Hospital Museum objects now in the British Museum. Top left: BM Oc1855,1220.169. Top right: BM Oc1855,1220.175. Middle: BM Oc.4764. Bottom: BM Oc.4774 (this last object acquired by Alexander Collie). All images © Trustees of the British Museum.

one year earlier by two local intellectuals (perhaps related) named Henry and Julian Slight. As fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons and, in the former's case, the Honorary Librarian to the Portsmouth Philosophical Institution, the Slights had good reason to fear the competitive threat which Haslar posed, as a 'general collection', both to the Portsmouth Institution's own museum and, perhaps, the Hunterian. There may, however, have been some truth in their commentary. Haslar's display cases, they wrote, were:

of solid mahogany...but extremely ill adapted for the purposes for which they are intended, being too deep, and not calculated to preserve the specimens from the ravages of insects &c. The arrangement in the museum of the Portsmouth Institution, though by no means so costly, is infinitely better adapted. The specimens are as yet but few, and the anatomical preparations of little interest...²⁷

The Slights were implying that Burnett's financial power as a member of the Victualling Board rather outweighed his scientific and technical credentials, with respect to the skilled arrangement and storage necessary in a museum. Indeed, much of the actual work was undertaken by an otherwise inexperienced labourer named John Barron, who was placed in charge of arranging and preparing all exhibits.²⁸ While this was not unusual at a time in which trained experts were lacking, Barron's appointment as one of the museum's sole members of dedicated staff was a symptom of the fact that, by 1828, the Admiralty's patience and patronage had already begun to wane.²⁹ As much was apparent in a letter which Burnett addressed to William Townsend Aiton, then Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew, in January of that year.³⁰ The letter was in response to an urgent missive that Aiton had sent to Burnett some days earlier, asking whether he intended also to build a botanical garden at Haslar; a possibility which Aiton

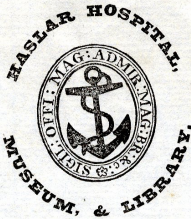
²⁷ Henry Slight and Julian Slight (eds.). *Chronicles of Portsmouth* (London: Lupton Relfe, 1828), p. 131.

²⁸ 'Entry Book of Reports', TNA, ADM 105/70.

²⁹ For a relevant discussion see Susan Sheets-Pyenson. *Cathedrals of Science* (Montreal: McGill-Queens' University Press, 1988), p. 38.

³⁰ Burnett to Aiton, 4 Jan. 1828, RBG, DC 44/50.

Department of the
Physician General
of the Navy.



Admiralty, *Sept. 25. 1841.*

Sir,

I have much pleasure in acknowledging

Vespaertilia Leprosus your Contribution, as per Margin, to the Museum
Commissio of A.M.S. and Library established at the Royal Naval
District Antix. Hospital at Haslar, for the benefit of the
Caractus Volitans. Medical Officers of the Navy, and to request that
Coleba you will accept my thanks for the support you thus
Lepidoptera } *Insecta.* afford to the Establishment.
Coleoptera }
Polypus —
Spongia —

N.B. The whole of the above in good preservation.

I am, Sir,

Your very humble Servant,

W. Burnett

Inspector Physician General &c.

To Mr C. S. Keven
Asst. Surgeon R.N.

MY/14/7/21

Figure 5.6 Letter of gratitude for donations made to Haslar Hospital Museum. William Burnett to Assistant Surgeon Charles Thomas Simpson Keven. 25 Sep. 1841. CRO, MY/14/7/21. Reproduced courtesy of Cornwall Record Office.

evidently feared. For this reason the letter also offers further evidence of the competitive threat which Haslar had begun to pose to similar institutions. In a manner which would have failed to entirely reassure, Burnett wrote:

regarding the intended establishment of a Botanical Garden at Haslar...I beg to assure you that there is no present intention as far as I know, of doing so. It is very true that the subject has often occupied my mind, and I hope some time or other if God spares me that I may be able to prevail upon the Higher Powers to allow me to commence it: but at this moment, when so many reductions are taking place, I fear it would be worse than useless to bring forward any proposals conceiving it. It is an object, however, of which I shall never lose sight...³¹

This must have seemed incongruous given the presumably considerable expense of Haslar's library and museum. Since, however, there is strikingly little mention of the source of these projects' funds in the Victualling Board's associated reports, it is not unreasonable to suspect that Burnett, whose career was dogged by accusations of dubious or outwardly unscrupulous financial behaviour, had contrived to pay for them in a manner that was not entirely legitimate.³² Indeed, Burnett's patronage of the museum and of Haslar, which continued until his retirement in 1855, always sat uncomfortably with his official duties as the navy's Physician-General and Director-General, which required him to be based not at Haslar, but at Somerset House in London, from where much of the museum's business was accordingly conducted. While Scott was theoretically in charge of the directorship of the museum, for example, there is evidence from as late as 1850 that Burnett took charge of writing and signing letters of gratitude for donations; these were addressed from the Admiralty buildings, but carried a dedicated 'Haslar Hospital Museum & Library' seal (Figure 5.6). In many

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² 'Victualling Board, In-Letters and Orders', CLA, ADM/C/749.

These included, but were not limited to, allegations that Burnett received a bribe of 'twenty or thirty pounds' in return for making a naval appointment in 1849. See 'Gossip of the Week', *The Medical Times*, 19 (1849), 281.

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cases the letters concerned objects which had first arrived in London, before being conveyed to Somerset House and finally to Gosport. In this manner Haslar's collections were able to grow beyond those arriving in Portsmouth, and the museum's territory accordingly encroached upon that of rival institutions in London. A supporting infrastructure emerged for the conveyance of such specimens to Haslar with the opening of a direct train line for naval business between Portsmouth and London in 1840, and by the construction of a branch line to Gosport in 1841.³³

Burnett's persistent if unofficial advocacy was aided by his duties as an inspector to the navy's hospitals, which allowed him to visit Haslar frequently, and so to follow the museum's progress. In his ensuing reports, Burnett made frequent appeals for further funding and organisational assistance.³⁴ Many of these concerned Barron, whose work was instrumental to the museum's ability to function, and who in consequence Burnett was always eager to please. In 1832, for instance, Burnett proposed that Barron, who 'stuffs the Birds &c and otherwise prepares all specimens of Natural History in a very superior manner', be called 'Keeper of the Museum' (the title 'Curator' being taken already by Scott), with an associated increase in pay.³⁵ In 1841, Burnett made a further appeal to rename Barron 'Conservator of the Museum', and for his pay to be increased again.³⁶ At this stage, Barron was described as 'a first-rate character as a preparer of and setter up of specimens of Natural History and Anatomy in all their branches superior to any man...either in or out of London'. So 'truly valuable' were his services, Burnett continued, that his loss would even threaten 'the interests of science'. Indeed the museum was, by this stage, 'in daily fear that he may be enticed from us (which would be an irreparable loss), by the offer of higher wages'. The request for Barron's promotion was granted, only for a further request to be made, the following year, that he no

³³ 'London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway Company', *The Railway Times*, 9 (1846), 1156-1157.

³⁴ 'Entry Book of Reports' (incomplete, five volumes), TNA, ADM 105/68, 105/70, 105/71, 105/72, 105/73.

³⁵ *Ibid.* 105/70.

³⁶ *Ibid.* 105/73.

longer be ‘mustered with the labourers, which is not at all consonant with his present designation’.³⁷

Burnett’s inspection reports were a principal site of negotiation for the navy’s scientific ambitions, as it was here that the need for a natural history and ethnographic collection was repeatedly impressed. A crucial moment arose in 1833, when an exponential growth in non-medical specimens began to push the museum toward its limits. Amid an appeal for more space, this necessitated that Burnett explain why he wanted to continue to accession material other than the anatomical specimens which formed a key part of his surgeons’ medical training:

I was perfectly aware from the beginning that this might be the case [he wrote], as from the small number of Patients in the Hospital during a period of Peace and the difficulty there is for conducting Morbid Anatomy on Shipboard, I could not but foresee, that the specimens of Natural History would soon outrun those of Morbid or comparative Anatomy though any attention to the latter has never for one moment ceased...but I have a great reluctance to discourage entirely the acquisitions of specimens of natural history many of them of great beauty and finely preserved, and which I feel hereafter will not only prove beneficial to the medical officers of the Navy, but also reflect credit on them.³⁸

The relative peace of the post-1815 period, it seems, made Haslar’s museum the favoured project of naval surgeons largely unencumbered by the need to treat patients. Through his appeal to the beauty of the specimens and the skill with which they were preserved, Burnett nevertheless suggested that the museum’s collections were valuable for the prestige they brought to the museum as evidence of naval surgeons’ scientific and intellectual credentials. Here, a comparison can be made between Haslar and a contemporary institution in America: the United States Naval Lyceum. In his recent study of the latter museum, Steven Lubar has argued that its

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.* 105/70.

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creation at Brooklyn Navy Yard in 1833, in the midst of a period of naval reform, was intended as a means to ‘improve the quality and standing of navy officers’.³⁹ As well as a way to provide public education, then, the Naval Lyceum was designed to increase sailors’ social standing. Given the similar impetus to naval reform which existed in England in the early 1830s, Burnett may have hoped that his mention of potential ‘credit’ would likewise find in his superiors a sympathetic audience.⁴⁰ Unlike the Naval Lyceum, however, Haslar’s museum was peculiarly associated with medical and scientific research, and thus Burnett was compelled to work harder to justify its eclectic range of specimens. It is not difficult to see why the Admiralty may have grown frustrated at their abundance; Burnett’s inventory of the museum for the period 1832-1833 (Figure 5.7) revealed that the institution’s 346 anatomical specimens were then vastly outnumbered by well over 7,000 objects pertaining to natural history and other subjects, including 600 ethnographic objects referred to as ‘Specimens in Rude arts’. In quantity, these came second only to shells and botany; they equalled mineralogy and entomology as subjects of interest to the navy’s surgeons. Burnett’s request for more space seems to have been unsuccessful, however, for he made further appeals in 1838, 1839 and 1842, until an additional room was finally granted (at the expense of several ‘refractory lunatics’) in 1852.⁴¹

³⁹ Steven Lubar. “‘To Polish and Adorn the Mind’: The United States Naval Lyceum at the Brooklyn Naval Yard, 1833-89”, *Museum History Journal*, 7 (2014), 85.

⁴⁰ See Chapter Six.

⁴¹ ‘Entry Book of Reports’, TNA, ADM 105/70.

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| Return of the state of the Museum of the Navy Medical Department from October 1st 1832 to October 1st 1833 | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|---------|-----------|------|
| Description | | Remained | Since added | Damaged | Remaining | |
| 1st Anatomy | Natural | 40 | 16 | " | 56 | |
| | Morbid | 200 | 26 | " | 226 | |
| | Comparative | 40 | 24 | " | 64 | |
| | Total | 280 | 66 | " | 346 | |
| 2nd Natural History | Animal Kingdom | Mammalia | 45 | 7 | " | 52 |
| | | Birds | 450 | 128 | 6 | 572 |
| | | Reptiles | 76 | 42 | " | 118 |
| | | Fishes | 80 | 20 | " | 100 |
| | | Insects | 600 | 700 | 100 | 1200 |
| | | Shells (species) | 630 | 170 | " | 800 |
| | | Crustacea & Zoophytes | 230 | 20 | " | 250 |
| | | Nests & Eggs | 33 | " | 10 | 23 |
| | | Total | 2144 | 1087 | 116 | 3115 |
| | | Vegetable Kingdom | Specimens in Botany | 1000 | 1500 | " |
| | Mineral Kingdom | Specimens in Mineralogy | 600 | " | " | 600 |
| | Casts | 12 | " | 2 | 10 | |
| | Coins | 438 | " | " | 438 | |
| | Antique Vases | 30 | " | " | 30 | |
| | Specimens in Rude arts | 600 | 20 | " | 620 | |
| | Total | 1070 | 20 | 2 | 1098 | |

Figure 5.7 Reproduction of table within TNA, ADM 105/70. The arrangement of the table betrays Burnett's attempts to win the Admiralty's patronage for his museum. Anatomical specimens are placed first, even while forming the smallest collection. The third section highlights the absence of a singular classificatory term for the objects listed therein. Many of the collections in the 'since added' column, especially those which are botanical, likely refer to specimens collected by Alexander Collie in Western Australia.

5.2 Early collecting at Haslar: Alexander Collie and the Edinburgh connection

While the Admiralty's patronage was never guaranteed, it certainly tolerated Burnett's ambitions for Haslar, and the free reign the latter was given ultimately helped the museum to gain a reputation for research and scientific expertise which placed it in a much superior category to that of its rivals. Founded in 1832, the museum of the United Service Institution in London (also known as the Naval and Military Museum) also sought to draw upon the collections of returning naval and military personnel, but often struggled to be taken seriously.⁴² In an eloquent defence of its collections written in 1849, one member bewailed that he had 'often heard this Society run down as a mere *curiosity shop*'.⁴³ By contrast, one of Haslar's principal advantages was its ability to commission learned individuals within the naval service to act as its own appointed collectors on high profile expeditions, and to display collected objects on their return in an authoritative space of learning. Two years before the museum opened, Burnett had already employed a young naval surgeon, Alexander Collie, to act as a surgeon and collector on-board the *Blossom*, which departed Portsmouth on a voyage of discovery to the Pacific and the Bering Strait in 1825, under the command of Frederick William Beechey.⁴⁴

Collie's appointment as Haslar's first collector underlined the existence and significance of a network of medically-trained Edinburgh graduates within the navy of the time. Collie shared this background with Burnett and Scott,

⁴² For a survey, see Neil Ramsey. 'Exhibiting Discipline: Military Science and the Naval and Military Library and Museum', in Neil Ramsey and Gillian Russell (eds.). *Tracing War in British Enlightenment and Romantic Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 113-131.

⁴³ Bosquecillo. *A Visit to the United Service Institution in 1849* (Whitehall: Parker, Furnivall, and Parker, 1849), p. 1.

⁴⁴ For an account of Collie's life, see Gwen Chessell. *Alexander Collie: Surgeon, Naturalist & Explorer* (Perth: University of Western Australia Press, 2008). For an account of the voyage of the *Blossom*, see Frederick William Beechey. *Narrative of a Voyage to the Pacific and Beering's Strait*, 2 vols. (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1831).

the latter of whom was a member of the Edinburgh Phrenological Society, as well as Collie's friend and confidant. Scott seems, therefore, to have been instrumental in recommending Collie to Burnett.⁴⁵ Collie was also known to Flinders' former naturalist Robert Brown, now Keeper of the Banksian Botanical Collection at the British Museum, who had been trained, too, at the University of Edinburgh.⁴⁶ Burnett's successor as Director-General, John Liddell, was also a graduate of Edinburgh's medical school. Recently, a scholarly consensus has emerged that men of this provenance made peculiarly effective naturalists and collectors; E. Charles Nelson's study of the life of John Scouler, a Scottish naturalist, naval surgeon and contemporary of Collie, suggests that this was equally true of the University of Glasgow and other Scottish institutions.⁴⁷ The interesting subject of Scottish medical education and its impact upon imperial discovery still lacks a comprehensive literature, or even a single, definitive text; it is thus one which this chapter seeks in part to promote.⁴⁸ As seen in Chapter Three, Scottish graduates such as Brown tended to expand upon the narrow remit of the Banksian hierarchy by conducting ethnographic studies even when given no official instruction. The broad medical curricula within Scotland's universities at this time, a legacy of the Scottish Enlightenment, likely helped fashion practical, engaged and experimental graduates, who learned not to discriminate between studies of the human body, the human race, and the natural world.⁴⁹ Scottish explorers accordingly played a key role in furnishing museums with ethnographic objects as well as flora, fauna and human remains.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Chessell. *Alexander Collie*, p. 101.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* p. 60.

⁴⁷ E. Charles Nelson. *John Scouler (c. 1804-1871), Scottish Naturalist: A Life, with Two Voyages* (Glasgow: The Glasgow Natural History Society, 2014).

⁴⁸ Interesting work has been done in the context of Ireland. See, for example, S. Karly Kehoe. 'Accessing Empire: Irish Surgeons and the Royal Navy, 1840–1880', *Social History of Medicine*, 26 (2012), 204–224.

⁴⁹ For insights into the Scottish Enlightenment, Scottish medical education and the study of mankind, see László Kontler. 'Mankind and its Histories: William Robertson, Georg Forster and a late Eighteenth-Century German Debate', *Intellectual History Review*, 23 (2013), 411–29. New research is currently being undertaken on this subject by Linda Anderson Burnett and Bruce Buchan.

⁵⁰ Scottish explorers were well represented in early colonial Australia. See Don Watson. *Caledonia Australis: Scottish highlanders on the frontier of Australia* (Sydney: Vintage, 1984).

For these reasons, Burnett likely considered Collie ideally qualified for the task of putting together Haslar's first official collection; his appointment to the *Blossom* in 1825 and the construction of Haslar's museum and library in 1827 seem to have been deliberately timed. This was not necessarily the Admiralty's particular intention, for it had on Barrow's recommendation employed its own naturalist, and a civilian rather than a naval officer, George Tradescant Lay, upon Beechey's voyage. As King was to discover in his own letter from Barrow some years later, this was a period in which the Admiralty took a much stronger position on the ownership of collected specimens.⁵¹ In May 1825, the Lords of the Admiralty instructed Beechey that:

As we have appointed Mr. Tradescant as naturalist on the voyage, and some of your officers are acquainted with certain branches of natural history [a reference to Collie], it is expected that your visits to the numerous islands of the Pacific will afford the means of collecting rare and curious specimens in the several departments of this branch of science. You are to cause it to be understood that two specimens, *at least*, of each article are to be reserved for the public museums; after which the naturalist and officers will be at liberty to collect for themselves.⁵²

The order that such collections go to 'public museums' was another reason why the Naval and Military Museum, which limited its membership to service personnel, inevitably suffered; it had been caught, in other words, between the changing paradigms of collecting for curiosity, and collecting for the benefit of public knowledge. So long as Collie's collections were transmitted to Haslar (which admitted the public free of charge) it is clear that he could not expect to experience any problems, even if his own collecting risked subverting that undertaken by Lay. In spite of its status as a national collection, the British Museum had no authority to request Collie's collections in this period, either. Upon hearing of Collie's subsequent

⁵¹ Barrow to King, 16 Apr. 1829. SLNSW, MLMSS, 4530/2.

⁵² Beechey. *Narrative of a Voyage*, p. xi.

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appointment to the *Sulphur*, Children (assistant keeper of natural history collections) applied to the Colonial Office to request it to direct Collie to collect for the British Museum, but was rebuffed on the basis that ‘in that case they had no influence’.⁵³ Subsequently, the House of Commons’ 1835 select committee suggested that the regulation respecting the surrender of naval specimens be ‘so far altered as to enable the Trustees of the British Museum to select valuable specimens of what by that regulation is considered as public property’, but it is unclear whether this was ever effected.⁵⁴

Writing home in 1825, Collie made clear that his initial appointment to the *Blossom* was intended to serve naval interests only:

[Burnett] in a rather flattering manner, [wished] me to collect specimens of Natural History for the Naval hospitals of Haslar and Plymouth, praised my assiduity & told me that I might have any thing I required for preserving the different specimens...He bade me in a jocular way prepare myself for becoming Lecturer at one of the above-mentioned hospitals.⁵⁵

The appointment of Scott as Lecturer two years later suggests that Burnett may not have been joking; Collie’s fortunes might have been different, perhaps, if he had taken the offer seriously. The high degree of confidence Burnett placed upon Collie was vindicated over the course of his three years on-board the *Blossom*. As a collector, Collie was unusual for his considerable ability and interest in negotiating intercultural encounters. During the *Blossom*’s visit to the Bering Strait, Collie acquired for Haslar a large number of harpoons and other material from the Arctic peoples of North America.⁵⁶ Collie’s botanical collections were also worthy of note. However, while collectors such as King sought merit in new natural history

⁵³ *Report from the Select Committee*, p. 243.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 202.

⁵⁵ Alexander Collie to George Collie, 1 Jun. 1825, cited in Chessell. *Alexander Collie*, p. 101.

⁵⁶ The objects are now at the British Museum, where they are catalogued as: Am1985,Q.18, Am.4735.b, Am.4735.a and Am1855,1220.220.

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discoveries, Collie wrote to various scientific elites to express his ‘general dislike to the very fashionable system of naming [new specimens] after individual persons’, and ordered that nothing he found was to be named after him.⁵⁷ In a similar manner, Collie construed his work for Haslar as a contribution to scientific knowledge, rather than as an exercise for the public benefit. In 1829, Collie instructed Scott, now Haslar’s librarian, that his comprehensive notes from the *Blossom* expedition, which ran to eight volumes, were not to be ‘exposed to the public more than is necessary for the good of the Museum’.⁵⁸

Collie’s collecting for Haslar on-board the *Blossom* was so successful that it threatened to cause considerable embarrassment to the expedition’s official naturalist, Lay, who proved to be an inferior collector, and one not much disposed to improving himself. As a consequence of the expedition’s accordingly small and insignificant collection of plants, Beechey’s return to England in 1828 was met with a cold reception from William Jackson Hooker, then the Regius Professor of Botany at Glasgow University, and one of the nation’s central authorities on botanical research. By means of apology, Beechey explained to Hooker that:

I am extremely sorry to find that our collection of plants has turned out so indifferently and that the duplicates are so few. I cannot in any way remove the blame, if any there be, from the shoulders of our collector [Lay], whose chief recommendation from Mr Barrow was, that he was a collector and not a finished naturalist...The error I fear was in [his] being over fond of the violin (if indeed he had any knowledge at all of preserving botanical specimens) for I really believe there was not ten days throughout the voyage in which he did not, when he was able, play seven hours at least, much to the annoyance of those who were within reach of his music. I believe him to have been a very unfit person for the situation and have heard on

⁵⁷ Collie to William Jackson Hooker, 27 Dec. 1828. RBG, DC, 44/54.

⁵⁸ Alexander Collie. ‘Letters 1828-1835’ [transcription of original manuscript], NLA, MS 109. p. 9.

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land complaints from other quarters, of his ignorance in particular, as from yourself...⁵⁹

For his own part, Lay did little to improve the situation by subsequently writing to Hooker to demand £40 for his work in collecting the voyage's plants.⁶⁰ Owing to Lay's ineptitude and Collie's success, the voyage of the *Blossom* was therefore the moment when the employment of naval surgeons came to be seen in some quarters as a cheaper and much superior means of securing good natural history collections. This was certainly true of Beechey who, 'being so tired of Lay', declared never again to take 'another professed naturalist' on any future expedition.⁶¹ In line with the discussion of the next chapter, Barrow and Beechey were also impressed with the work of uneducated sailors on-board the *Blossom* expedition. Barrow later praised the lieutenant John Wainwright for having sent to him 'a number of useful remarks', but was particularly effusive about the work of a mate, William Smyth, who had sent to him 88 drawings, 'besides a book full of objects of natural history'.⁶²

With respect to the dearth of specimens collected on-board the *Blossom*, the situation was made worse by the fact that Beechey had promised to give part of them to Collie, he being 'certainly deserving of a set'.⁶³ Such was the deficit in new knowledge, however, that Beechey nevertheless loaned Hooker the entirety of Collie's notes and botanical acquisitions. This caused Collie to send Hooker a letter explaining his embarrassment over their rough nature, as well as some tips for deciphering their content. He also explained that he would need some to be returned, as 'a Museum is established at Haslar Hospital for which I was expressly engaged by the heads of the naval medical department to collect objects of natural history'.⁶⁴ Hooker was evidently impressed, however, for in December 1828 he offered to introduce

⁵⁹ Frederick William Beechey to Hooker, 28 Feb. 1828. RBG, DC, 61/8.

⁶⁰ George Tradescant Lay to Hooker, 16 Jan. 1829. RBG, DC, 44/93.

⁶¹ According to a letter from John Richardson to Hooker, 21 Sep. 1835. RBG, DC, 62/112.

⁶² 'Minute Book No. 1. Nov. 1825 to Feb. 1832', UKHO, MB1, f. 213.

⁶³ Beechey to Hooker, 28 Feb. 1828.

⁶⁴ Collie to Hooker, date unknown. RBG, DC, 53/105.

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Collie to various luminaries in Sydney ahead of the latter's subsequent voyage to New South Wales on-board the *Sulphur*.⁶⁵ In return, Collie offered to make Hooker a collection; 'I may be allowed the necessary articles for collecting & preserving specimens from the admiralty', he wrote, 'in which case you would have the admiralty botanical specimens on their arrival in England'.⁶⁶ This was on the understanding that Hooker would then 'send [any duplicates or unwanted specimens] to Commissioner Burnett MD Victualling Board Somerset House'.⁶⁷

Collie and Lay first visited Haslar's museum together on 27 September 1828 (see Figure 5.8), and so appear to have remained on friendly terms following the *Blossom*'s return.⁶⁸ The legacy of Collie's much superior collecting continued to cause trouble one year later, however, as Beechey struggled to praise his conduct without insulting Lay's. In a letter to Hooker regarding the publication of the official narrative of his survey, Beechey explained that:

Mr Collie undoubtedly gathered more than all the others put together; and perhaps some of the officers furnished nothing at all that was new. I think it would be proper, all things considered, to say the collection was made by Mr. Lay (Naturalist) and the officers of the ship in general, but in particular, by Mr Collie the surgeon, who during the absence of Mr Lay zealously undertook the care of the departments with which he was interested - or something to that effect - but we must not call Mr Collie a Naturalist or deprive the officers of the little merit that may be due to them.⁶⁹

Reports of collecting in naval journals, as discussed in Chapter Three, therefore remained highly disingenuous; the final version reads as Beechey had suggested but, while thanking Collie for his 'unremitting attention to natural history', fails to pay Lay, who is said to have been ill for much of the

⁶⁵ Collie to Hooker, 27 Dec. 1828. RBG, DC, 44/54.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ Haslar Visitors' Books. 27 Sep. 1828.

⁶⁹ Beechey to Hooker, 22 Nov. 1829. RBG, DC, 44/13.

voyage, any credit whatsoever.⁷⁰ There is a related silence on the subject of ethnographic collections acquired on-board the *Blossom*; having less prestige than botanical materials, one discovers far less mention of such objects in associated correspondence or expeditionary reports. This was in spite of the fact that Beechey, with Collie's help, 'certainly purchased many items for his ethnographic collections' while on-board the *Blossom*, as John Bockstoce has shown, and compiled 'an Eskimo vocabulary' as well.⁷¹ According to Janet Owen, ethnographic collecting on the *Blossom* was undoubtedly scientific, but lacked 'detailed research questions or instructions...although the selection of material was probably very representative it was primarily influenced by what was available'.⁷²

The ethnographic collections that Collie made on his subsequent expedition to New South Wales and his later period of residency in Western Australia are among the only items in the British Museum's collection of former Haslar objects that can be dated with any certainty. These consist of an axe, three knives, a spear-thrower and a spear-head.⁷³ Collie arrived in Australia on-board the *Sulphur* in 1829, and died in 1835; his name appears on the labels of some of these objects, and can sometimes be found written on the objects themselves. Collie never returned from Australia, and thus followed in the footsteps of King and John Septimus Roe, who had, in turn, established new lives with the Australian Agricultural Company and as Surveyor-General of Western Australia. Collie became a friend and associate of Roe, who witnessed his will.⁷⁴ After settling in Albany in 1831, Collie was appointed a Justice of the Peace, and later gained the post of Colonial

⁷⁰ Beechey. *Narrative of a Voyage*, vol. 1, p. 315.

⁷¹ John Bockstoce. *Eskimos of Northwest Alaska in the Early Nineteenth Century* (Oxford: Pitt Rivers Museum, 1977), p. 13.

⁷² Janet Owen. 'Collecting artefacts, acquiring empire: Exploring the relationship between Enlightenment and Darwinist collecting and late-nineteenth century British Imperialism', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 18 (2006), 14.

⁷³ These are catalogued at the British museum as Oc.4771, Oc.4772, Oc.4774, Oc.1980, Q.740, Oc.4758 and Oc.4768.

⁷⁴ B. C. Cohen. 'Collie, Alexander (1793–1835)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Australian National University: National Centre of Biography, 2016), <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/collie-alexander-1911/text2267>. Accessed 12 December 2016.

Surgeon as a result of Burnett's enduring patronage.⁷⁵ In this period, Collie continued to collect for Haslar. The axe, knives, spear-thrower and spear-head suggest an involved interest in local Menang culture, and an inclination toward that which was rare; the three knives demonstrate the use of bottle-glass, quartz and resin in local systems of manufacture, as does the axe, which incorporates stone and gum; the spear-head in turn features fine fibre thread.

5.3 Haslar as a centre of enquiry

Following Collie's success, nearly all of the nineteenth-century's subsequent voyages of discovery employed individuals acting for Haslar in some way (there being always a need for surgeons to accompany such expeditions). Following the departure of the second voyage of the *Beagle* in 1831, Burnett received various collections from the expedition's captain, Robert Fitzroy.⁷⁶ A very large number of objects arrived at Haslar in the years after 1835, following the *Sulphur*'s new command as a survey ship in the Pacific Ocean.⁷⁷ This included material from the naval officer Charles Elliott (who used the vessel to transmit material gained from his employment as Master Attendant to the staff of the Chief Superintendent of British Trade, in China), a 'Captain Dawkins' (based in Hong Kong), Robert Austin Bankier (a surgeon of the navy based in Port Essington, in north Australia), Andrew Sinclair (also a naval surgeon) and finally Edward Belcher (who had accompanied Beechey to the Pacific and subsequently captained the *Sulphur*).⁷⁸ Following the departure of the surveying vessel *Herald* to Australia and the Fiji Islands in 1852, Burnett also received specimens from

⁷⁵ Chessell. *Alexander Collie*, p. 164.

⁷⁶ Again, this can be inferred from surviving collections. See *List of the Specimens of Mammalia in the Collection of the British Museum* (London: The British Museum, 1843), p. 176.

⁷⁷ These are listed in John Edward Gray, John Gould, John Richardson and Richard Brinsley Hinds (eds.). *The Zoology of the Voyage of H.M.S. Sulphur: under the command of Captain Sir Edward Belcher, during the years 1836-42*, 2 vols. (London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1843-1845).

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

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the surgeon John Goodridge, and assistant surgeon John Denis Macdonald.⁷⁹ Burnett's continued agency in supporting such work was subsequently made clear by Macdonald, who explained how he had been appointed 'with the object of augmenting the Haslar Museum. Sir William Burnett furnished us with everything that we asked for, in the form of collecting materials for the museum at Haslar, and we subsequently collected for the British Museum'.⁸⁰ As a result of this work Macdonald was promoted 'rather speedily' to the rank of Surgeon, as he put it, and soon elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.⁸¹

Haslar Hospital Museum's development as a valuable and well-connected institution was undoubtedly the result of Burnett's patronage over a period of twenty-eight years. It is less convincing to suggest that Burnett had as much to do with the growth of the museum's scientific and intellectual reputation, other than with respect to the rarity of the specimens he helped to procure. Perhaps the greatest virtue of Burnett's direction was his unwillingness, or inability, to clearly articulate the purpose of the natural history and ethnographic collections which he pressed the Admiralty to entertain. Whereas Jessica Ratcliff has for example remarked in her study of the museum of the East India Company that the 'relative independence' given by officers and colonial administrators by virtue of their geographic distance was a problem for those seeking to 'centralize the processes of accumulation', collectors for Haslar were permitted to pursue their own interests and expertise.⁸² The museum's collections therefore grew highly diverse, and were much responsive to the changing scientific tastes and interests often developed by surgeons themselves.

Burnett was no naturalist, and so might in any case have struggled to direct the nature and content of Haslar's 'processes of accumulation'. In 1833, his

⁷⁹ *Report and Evidence of Committee on Position of Medical Officers of Army and Navy; Order in Council, July* (London: House of Commons, 1866), p. 174.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁸² Ratcliff. 'The East India Company', 502.

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work as a ‘Gentleman much devoted to Science, and Institutor of a Museum of Natural History at Haslar Hospital’, nevertheless saw him elected to the Royal Society on the recommendation of, among others, Basil Hall, Gilbert Blane, John Barrow, Francis Beaufort and John Edward Gray.⁸³ There, Burnett lobbied for Haslar’s museum, and promoted its research. In 1854, Burnett read to the society a paper by MacDonald on ‘the Anatomy & Affinities of *Phyllirrhoe bucephala*’.⁸⁴ Beyond this, however, Burnett’s scientific standing was limited to a patent he received in 1838 for a lucrative zinc chloride solution developed as a means to reduce costs associated with preserving Haslar’s specimens, and cleaning the hospital’s wards, in a process still referred to as ‘Burnettisation’.⁸⁵ The zinc chloride solution was notoriously unreliable, being credited with fatally poisoning a man in 1861, and even for derailing the construction of America’s Union Pacific Railroad when, in 1870, claims that it would preserve the durability of the track’s cottonwood infrastructure were proven entirely false.⁸⁶ Burnett’s zinc chloride solution was criticised most recently in 2007, when scientists at the Natural History Museum realised that the former Haslar specimens then in their care exhibited very clear differences in the quality of their preservation, depending upon whether they had been acquired before or after 1855, the year in which Burnett finally retired (and his conservation methods, it seems, accordingly ceased).⁸⁷

Burnett also attracted much condemnation, along with Scott (the latter for having defended the former), as an ostensibly reclusive, egoistic and even ‘corrupt’ individual in 1831, when he angered much of the naval medical

⁸³ ‘Burnett, Sir William’, RSA, EC/1833/05.

⁸⁴ ‘Observations on the Anatomy & Affinities of *Phyllirrhoe bucephala*’, RSA, AP/37/6.

⁸⁵ David McLean. ‘Protecting wood and killing germs: “Burnett’s Liquid” and the origins of the preservative and disinfectant industries in early Victorian Britain’, *Business History*, 52 (2010), 285-305.

⁸⁶ ‘Some remarks on a case of poisoning by Sir William Burnett’s solution of chloride of zinc’, *The Lancet*, 77 (1861), 29-30.

Anthony J. Bianculli. *Trains and Technology: Tracks and Structures* (Delaware: University of Delaware, 2003), p. 19.

⁸⁷ Kristian Murphy Gregersen. ‘Zinc Chloride in Liquid Preservation’, *natSCA News*, 11 (2007), 2-4.

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establishment and in particular the journal *The Lancet* by demanding that his officers make compulsory contributions to the cost of his own portrait, in what became known as the ‘Burnett-esteem tax’.⁸⁸ Burnett’s project with the museum and library, as such, might have had much to do with the construction of his own image. The appointment to Haslar in 1838 of the famous naval surgeon, naturalist and arctic explorer John Richardson, following Scott’s resignation, therefore did much to improve the museum’s fortunes; Richardson was appointed as the hospital’s Chief Physician, but it was made clear from the outset that he would be responsible for supporting and improving the museum’s collections.⁸⁹ Prior to this, Richardson had achieved fame and a scientific reputation in consequence of his appointment to John Franklin’s first arctic expedition, in 1819. While preparations for the expedition were underway, Richardson formed influential friendships with Joseph Banks and the naturalist John Edward Gray, later of the British Museum.⁹⁰ Richardson was subsequently praised for having done much to save the exploring party from famine, and following his return from Franklin’s second expedition in 1823 became Chief Medical Officer at the Melville Hospital in Chatham.⁹¹ Here, Richardson spent much of his time compiling the four volumes of his *Fauna Boreali - Americana*, which described the specimens he had collected in North America.⁹²

Richardson did not supersede Scott in the title ‘Curator’. This was awarded instead to Barron, who was instrumental in performing the quotidian tasks associated with the museum’s proper functioning.⁹³ Nevertheless, Richardson was a very active presence; one of the immediate benefits of his

⁸⁸ See, for example, ‘Sir William Burnett: Corruption in the Admiralty’, *The Lancet*, 16 (1831), 759-762.

⁸⁹ See next page.

⁹⁰ John Mellraith. *Life of John Richardson* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1868), p. 65.

⁹¹ *Ibid.* p. 123.

⁹² John Richardson. *Fauna Boreali - americana*, 4 vols. (London: John Murray, 1829-1837).

⁹³ It is unclear exactly when John Barron became curator of the museum. Following the appointment of Barron’s son, Charles, as his successor in 1850, however, Burnett wrote that he was to ‘succeed his father as Curator of the Museum’. ‘Entry Book of Reports’, TNA, ADM 105/68.

appointment was the arrival into the museum's care of 1,919 species of 'North American Plants', which likely composed the entirety of the botanical collections Richardson had made upon the second Franklin expedition.⁹⁴ Richardson's main interest however was in ichthyology, and so his time at Haslar also saw the addition of a considerable number of fish. 'Having charge here of a museum', he informed Hooker in 1841, 'I am looking in all directions for materials to increase it, and as fish had been more neglected previous to my coming here than the other divisions of the anatomical kingdom I turned my attention chiefly to them'.⁹⁵ Richardson's appointment to Haslar also brought the museum into closer contact with other notable scientific authorities. As a friend and correspondent of Charles Darwin, with whom he shared advice and traded numerous specimens, as well as Gray, of the British Museum, Richardson was able to increase awareness of Haslar's museum, and to develop its reputation in prestigious networks.⁹⁶ After 1838, frequent visitors to Richardson and the museum included not only Darwin, Hooker and Gray, but also the biologist, comparative anatomist and palaeontologist Richard Owen.⁹⁷ At Haslar, Richardson also traded birds with the noted ornithologist John Gould, who visited the museum frequently.⁹⁸

Richardson refused to allow the greater proximity to Bloomsbury and Kew effected by his appointment to diminish the museums' traditional rivalry as institutions demanding an equal share of new collections and associated knowledge. Following his return to England in 1842 after a period of collecting in Australia for Kew, the British Museum and Haslar on-board the *Sulphur*, the naval surgeon Andrew Sinclair for instance wrote to Hooker to describe 'the gentle contentions between Mr Gray & Dr Richardson at the

⁹⁴ British Museum. *Return to an Order of the Honourable The House of Commons* (London, 1857), p. 20.

⁹⁵ Richardson to Hooker, 20 Mar. 1841. RBG, DC, 63/365.

⁹⁶ Charles Darwin to Richardson, 30 Dec. 1851. DCP, Letter no. 1466H, <http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/DCP-LETT-1466H>. Accessed 28 April 2016.

⁹⁷ John B. Richardson. 'A Visit to Haslar, 1916', *Journal of the Royal Naval Medical Service*, 2 (1916), p. 333.

⁹⁸ According to sources compiled by Ann Datta. See Ann Datta. *John Gould in Australia* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1997), p. 448.

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Museum about what each is to have'.⁹⁹ The argument this caused, said Sinclair, 'was interesting to see'. In 1852, the collections made by the naval captain Henry Kellett during the *Herald's* 1845-51 circumnavigation of the globe became the subject of argument between Richardson and the British Museum's trustees after they were split between the two institutions. As was later reported in *The Athenaeum*, Richardson complained that he could 'make but little' scientific use of those kept at Bloomsbury, 'for the Trustees [of the British Museum] refused to allow him to take the specimens away, whilst his duties at Haslar Hospital prevented him from coming to London to examine them'.¹⁰⁰ At this, *The Athenaeum* expressed surprise, remarking that 'the request for a loan of specimens which could not have been injured by removal or examination' was not unreasonable, given that the *Herald* collections were in any case 'probably amongst the boxfuls of bones known to lie rotting in the cellars of the Museum'.¹⁰¹ According to this respected periodical, then, Haslar Hospital Museum was a decidedly superior choice of institution for important collections to be sent and studied.

The period after 1838 was nevertheless one of increasing cooperation between the three centres of enquiry at Haslar, Kew and the British Museum. Sinclair and Macdonald, as we have seen, were among many collectors tasked to represent all three institutions in these years. A similar agreement existed in 1843 to govern the division of the collections of Benjamin Bynoe, who had been surgeon on-board the third voyage of the *Beagle* throughout the course of its survey of the Australian coasts. Correspondence between Richardson and Hooker shows that the former was able to transmit boxes of Bynoe's collections to Kew even after Burnett had 'mistakenly' sent them to Gosport.¹⁰² By this stage Hooker and Richardson were also working together to persuade the Admiralty, via Barrow, to fund

⁹⁹ Andrew Sinclair to Hooker, 2 Nov. 1842. RBG, DC, 69/308.

¹⁰⁰ 'The Zoology of the Voyage of H.M.S. Herald', *The Athenaeum Journal of Literature, Science and the Fine Arts - for the year 1852* (London: James Holmes, 1852), 1205.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² Richardson to Hooker, 31 Dec. 1843. RBG, DC, 63/372.

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the publication of various zoological and natural history texts.¹⁰³ The extent of the network between the three institutions, and of a shared interest in a wide range of subjects, was most visible in 1850 when an early draft of William Hulme Hooper's *Ten Months among the Tents of the Tuski* was received first by Richardson, conveyed by him to Hooker and then sent by Hooker 'to the care of Mr Gray', who in turn gave it back to Richardson on the latter's next visit to Bloomsbury.¹⁰⁴

Richardson himself published several accounts of expeditionary collections, and managed in return to acquire many of the objects described therein for Haslar's museum. This was the case not only with the returns of the *Sulphur* but, as discussed above, at least half of those made by the *Herald* under Kellet.¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, one of Richardson's most consequential actions while at Haslar, in retrospect, was his role in appointing Huxley to the *Rattlesnake* in 1846. Huxley's letters record how he was 'ousted from the museum', shortly before the expedition began:

Sir J. Richardson (who has shown himself for some reason or other a special good friend to me) told me that he had received a letter from Captain Owen Stanley, who is to command an *exploring expedition* to New Guinea (not coast of Africa, mind), requesting him to recommend an assistant surgeon for this expedition - would I like the appointment?¹⁰⁶

To remain, at least for the moment, with Huxley's employment at Haslar's museum, it must be said that little can be known of the type of education such young surgeons received. The exact content of the lectures given by Scott and others was not recorded, although it is known that Richardson

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ William Hulme Hooper. *Ten Months among the Tents of the Tuski* (London: John Murray, 1853).

Richardson to Hooker, 12 Jan. 1850. RBG, DC, 63/385.

¹⁰⁵ John Richardson. *The Zoology of H.M.S. Herald* (London: Reeve & Co., 1852).

¹⁰⁶ Leonard Huxley. *Life and letters of Thomas Henry Huxley*, vol. 1. (London: Macmillan and Company, 1913), p. 27.

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encouraged specific sessions on natural history after 1838.¹⁰⁷ Even before this, it seems more than probable that those given by Scott, who maintained an interest in phrenology and its relation to mental function, would have featured crania, natural history and ethnography to some extent. Following his departure from Haslar in 1838, Scott demonstrated his particular interest in Indigenous Australians after travelling to New South Wales as Surgeon Superintendent on-board the passenger ship *Bussorah*, in 1839. There, Scott met with a network of former friends from Haslar, and observed local Aboriginal people, recording on one occasion a visit to ‘an encampment of native blacks near Plashett [in the Hunter Valley]. Saw them throw the “boomerang” and spears and catch and devour several Opossums and a large species of grub’.¹⁰⁸

It is worth noting too that Richardson’s practice of categorising fish as a division of the *anatomical* kingdom hinted at the underlying relationship between medicine and natural history, as it existed at Haslar Hospital Museum. The fish were not specimens of a purely encyclopaedic curatorial interest, but rather a means to illustrate relationships between the bodily structures of a range of animals, including humans. This methodology suggests a framework through which ethnographic specimens may also have been understood. Appearing as they did among comparative anatomy, it is possible that the various ethnographic collections were seen also as anatomical specimens, showing geographic and cultural variations of a single form, as in masks, shields and weaponry. In this manner, the museum’s arrangement would have preempted the more explicit evolutionary typological philosophy of Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt-Rivers, who observed in 1891 that ‘when, as in the case of most prehistoric objects and many of the arts of savage nations, the dates cannot be given, then recourse must be had to the sequence of type, and that is what I term

¹⁰⁷ TNA, ADM 305/101.

Richardson to Hooker, 30 April. 1838. RBG, DC, 62/120.

¹⁰⁸ James Scott. ‘A journey to the colony of N.S.W. in 1839 and return to England’, SLNSW, MLMSS 2906, p. 20.

“Typology”¹⁰⁹ According to Figure 5.3, collections of spears at the museum were for instance displayed together.

Discussions of natural history and ethnography within the museum were also a necessary part of preparing surgeons like Huxley for the unique circumstances of colonial and imperial encounter; specimens in these fields allowed for a ready appraisal of the cultures and geographies such surgeons were likely to meet, and indeed the boundary between the two was not always clear. Material culture in the form of weaponry offers the most obvious example of interpretative hybridity in this fashion. There is a wealth of evidence that poisonous arrows in particular were collected and studied at Haslar from at least the 1850s.¹¹⁰ It was necessary to assimilate a range of imperial knowledges in order to reduce the threat that such objects posed to the navy’s sailors; surgeons needed to know which indigenous societies possessed poisonous arrows or projectiles, and where they could be found. In a medical sense, it was important to know what plant or animal toxins were present in which objects, and therefore how to cure them, but one also had to be aware of the actions and behaviours one might avoid as a means to prevent such weapons being used in the first place; this required cultural understanding.

Reports accompanying the museum’s object specimens were collected within Haslar Hospital Library after 1827.¹¹¹ These often appeared at the back of surgeons’ medical journals, in a space dedicated to ‘General Remarks’. In this manner, the journals’ pages reproduced the Humboldtian operation of the museum as a space where associated but different forms of

¹⁰⁹ Augustus Henry Lane Fox Pitt-Rivers. ‘Typological Museums, as exemplified by the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford and his provincial museum in Farnham, Dorset’, *Journal of the Society of Arts*, 40 (1891), 115-122.

¹¹⁰ See Chapter Five, section 5.5. I have developed this argument in my forthcoming book chapter, ‘Poisonous Arrows and Unsound Minds: Hysterical Tetanus in the Victorian South Pacific’, in Sally Shuttleworth, Emilie Taylor-Brown and Melissa Dickson (eds.). *Progress and Pathology: Medicine and Culture in the Nineteenth Century* (Forthcoming: Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018).

¹¹¹ These can now be found in the TNA, ADM 101 series.

knowledge were collected together. Every two years after 1830, a gold medal was awarded to the naval medical officers whose journals demonstrated ‘the most distinguished proofs of skill, diligence, humanity and learning in the exercise of their professional duties’.¹¹² The medals, funded by a bequest from the Scottish physician Gilbert Blane, bore the inscription *mente manaque*, meaning ‘with mind and hand’, and thus encouraged scientific research.¹¹³ The survival of Haslar’s library as a historical collection reveals that interested visitors throughout this period also had access to a range of associated texts, including for example an 1817 edition of Johanne Stephenson’s *Disputatio physica de humani generis varietatibus*, an 1836 copy of James Cowles Prichard’s *Researches into the physical history of mankind*, and an 1859 edition of Robert Gordon Latham’s *Descriptive ethnology*.¹¹⁴ Prichard himself visited the library and collections with his wife and son in September 1848, while in the process of reworking his ‘Ethnology’ chapter for the Admiralty’s forthcoming *A Manual of Scientific Enquiry* (see below).¹¹⁵ Even after the ethnographic and natural history specimens at Haslar were moved in 1855, the journals and library continued this line of work; the journal of the surgeon Peter Comrie, who served on the *Basilisk* while at the navy’s Australian Station in 1874, featured sections on comparative anthropology, botany, zoology and geology.¹¹⁶

¹¹² John Herschel (ed.). *A Manual of Scientific Enquiry* (London: John Murray, 1849), pp. 485-487.

¹¹³ ‘Awards of the Gilbert Blane Medal for medical theses by RN surgeons’, TNA, ADM 105/106.

¹¹⁴ I am grateful to Jane Wickenden, Historic Collections Librarian at the Institute of Naval Medicine in Gosport, for sending details of the library’s contents. It is not known exactly when these items were acquired, but many arrived as the result of a bequest from the naval surgeon Robert McKinnal, in 1838.

¹¹⁵ Haslar Visitors’ Books. 12 Sep. 1848.

¹¹⁶ ‘Medical and surgical journal of Her Majesty’s Ship Basilisk for 1 January to 15 December 1874 by Peter Comrie’, TNA, ADM 101/244.

5.4 Haslar as a national institution

It was owing to the museum's growth under Richardson that Burnett increasingly came to refer to Haslar as a 'national institution' after 1842. In one of his inspection reports for that year, Burnett described how the museum 'continues to improve under the care of Dr Richardson...[it] has now in some measure become a national one, and is visited by great numbers of persons'.¹¹⁷ The following year, he added that Richardson:

has devoted a great share of affection to this Establishment and its progressive improvement, and arrangement is commensurate with the Doctors' high character, and I feel the day is not distant, when it will be considered an object of great national interest as containing some of the fairest and best specimens of morbid Anatomy as well as objects of Natural History in these Kingdoms.¹¹⁸

But what did Burnett mean by national? We have seen that by 1843 Haslar's standing was comparable to that of Kew and the British Museum, when measured in terms of its access to new collections. This was a considerable advancement upon its position eight years earlier, when the 1835 Committee had suggested that Haslar's specimens could be or ought to be transferred from Gosport to Bloomsbury. With respect to science, the museum reached its peak after 1850, following the retirement of John Barron in favour of his son, Charles (now Curator), who proved to be highly ambitious and scientifically adept.¹¹⁹ In 1851, the museum also acquired the surgeon and naturalist William Balfour Baikie, who did much to identify and to promote its contents. In an 1852 letter to *The Zoologist*, for instance, Baikie sought to encourage more scientific visitors to the museum. Since 'additions from all parts of the world are frequently augmenting its treasures', he wrote, 'I doubt not, well managed as it is, that it will ere long vastly increase in

¹¹⁷ 'Entry Book of Reports', TNA, ADM 105/73.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ 'Entry Book of Reports', TNA, ADM 105/68.

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scientific value'.¹²⁰ In another sign of the institution's growth, *The Lancet* called in 1851 for Haslar to become a national centre for the 'systematic instruction' of 'every assistant surgeon in Her Majesty's service'.¹²¹ While the same work could be done at Chatham or Plymouth, *The Lancet* opined, 'The library and museum at Haslar, the asylum for lunatics, and the size of the building, are all in favour of that establishment'.¹²² The degree to which a diverse education was in favour at Haslar in that year was also made clear by Burnett's offer of leave to all members of staff who wished 'to visit the great Exhibition of all nations', by which he referred to the Great Exhibition of 1851.¹²³ In 1852, a new room was added to the museum.¹²⁴

This was also a period in which the Admiralty's own attitude to science began to mature; its publication, in 1849, of *A Manual of Scientific Enquiry* finally gave official purpose and direction to the collecting activity of naval servicemen.¹²⁵ In 1854, Haslar continued this tradition by publishing its own guide to scientific collecting, *A Manual of Natural History*.¹²⁶ The *Manual* was composed by the younger Barron in association with Baikie and Arthur Adams, another of the hospital's assistant surgeons, and a fellow worker in the museum.¹²⁷ The *Manual's* more than seven hundred pages contained many hints on how to collect and to preserve collections of natural history, but consisted in the main of guides on identification and classification. While Haslar's *Manual* contained no specific section on ethnography, in contrast to the Admiralty's own publication, it did suggest that 'all traces of man should be most carefully attended to, as being of more than ordinary interest'.¹²⁸ The influence on its contents of the museum's ethnographic

¹²⁰ William Balfour Baikie. 'Some Account of the Zoological Museum at Haslar Hospital', *The Zoologist*, 10 (1852), 3613-3615.

¹²¹ 'Suggestions for the Systematic Instruction of Naval Medical Officers at Haslar and other Naval Hospitals', *The Lancet*, 57 (1851), 392.

¹²² *Ibid.*

¹²³ 'Entry Book of Reports', TNA, ADM 105/68.

¹²⁴ Baikie. 'Some Account of the Zoological Museum', p. 3615.

¹²⁵ Herschel. *A Manual of Scientific Enquiry*.

¹²⁶ Arthur Adams, William Balfour Baikie and Charles Barron (eds.). *A Manual of Natural History* (London: John Van Voorst, 1854).

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* p. 688.

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collections was sometimes discernible. A discussion on tortoises ends with the observation that ‘in a really economical point of view they are not of much importance, the principle product which they yield being “Tortoise-shell,” so extensively employed in the arts and manufactures [of the ‘inhabitants of the country in which they are found’].¹²⁹

Another means to judge the museum’s ‘national’ status was suggested by Burnett, who claimed that ‘great numbers of persons’ were visiting by 1842. The interest of working class or uneducated persons in natural history museums in this period (and indeed educated visitors as well) is now a topical and productive area of discussion, but little can be said about how Haslar’s own visitors may have received the museum, and challenged or contributed to its claims of knowledge.¹³⁰ There are two exceptions in the form of accounts written by visitors to the museum in 1847 and 1854. The first appeared in a ‘pictorial and literary sketch-book of the British empire’, published in London by a slightly puzzled Charles Knight. Here, Haslar was described as a significant landmark which included:

a range of apartments...devoted to a Museum of Natural History: not very closely connected, perhaps, with naval affairs, or Hospital affairs; but still, as the contents have resulted from various donations, and as they relate in part to the professional knowledge of the medical officers of the establishment, they ought to be welcomed.¹³¹

The 1854 account was much more enthusiastic. It appeared in an American publication, *The Illustrated Magazine of Art*, thus revealing a burgeoning international interest in Haslar’s collections. Here, the museum was described as:

¹²⁹ *Ibid.* p. 55.

¹³⁰ See, for example, Agusti Nieto-Galan. *Science in the Public Sphere* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015).

¹³¹ Charles Knight. *Knight’s tourist’s companion through the land we live in* (London: Nattali and Bond, 1853), p. 15.

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a well-arranged and tolerably extensive collection of skeletons of human beings, mammalia, birds, fishes, reptiles, serpents, and other species; stuffed and preserved fishes; some stuffed animals, and a very good collection of birds; some strange-looking weapons - axes, knives, etc.- from savage tribes; a Chinese shield, made of wicker-work - a curious material to ward off a blow, but bearing upon it a painting of a hideous face, to frighten the foes away; a few fossils; Captain Cook's speaking trumpet, and some other relics; and various articles which our space will not allow us to point out. Altogether the museum is an interesting collection; it has been formed principally by donations from naval officers and others, who "go down unto the sea in ships," and bring from foreign climes their varied curiosities.¹³²

Although we cannot always know with such precision what visitors thought of the museum, nor what first attracted their gaze, Burnett's claim that Haslar received many visitors can be quantified in result of the fortuitous survival of the museum's Visitors' Books, which attempted to record the name, profession and residence of all persons who visited the museum between 13 September 1827 and 1 February 1853, after which date their pages become abruptly blank.¹³³ The records owe their continued existence to staff at the Royal Navy's Institute of Naval Medicine, in Gosport (a descendant of the research programmes first undertaken at Haslar), who continue to sign the Books on ceremonial occasions. Comprising two volumes, the Books offer a unique record of social history through their chronicling of the backgrounds of early and mid-nineteenth century visitors to Haslar Hospital Museum; they feature many interesting and significant names, including not only that of John Septimus Roe's father, James Roe, but of Collie and Lay, and also Sir John Franklin, who visited the museum with a party of friends on 24 October 1830.¹³⁴ The question of agency arises here once again, however, as there is no guarantee that the records were kept consistently. A party of women who visited in 1848, for example, was so

¹³² 'A Visit to Haslar Hospital, near Portsmouth, England', *The Illustrated Magazine of Art*, 4 (1854), 330.

¹³³ I am grateful to Jane Wickenden, of the Institute of Naval Medicine, for identifying these records and for allowing access to them.

¹³⁴ Haslar Visitors' Books, 24 Oct. 1830.

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large that the list of their names simply ends ‘ad infinitum’. There is proof, too, that the museum’s visitors were as keen as those in the present to leave their own, idiosyncratic marks. We see this in the visits of persons who left their names variously as ‘Mr Nobody’, ‘John Bull’ and ‘Cove out of Luck’, as well as in the appearance of rather more kings and queens of Europe than are otherwise recorded in history.

The charts below nevertheless demonstrate that some idea of the museum’s history can be gleaned from these records. In order to give a sense of the popularity of the museum between 1827 and 1853, the data is derived from a count of the genders, professions and residences of all who are recorded as visiting the Museum in discrete years, taken at four-year intervals between 1828 and 1852.¹³⁵ In order to distinguish between those who would have visited Haslar in consequence of an associated employment within naval or military service and those who, unless visiting patients, might be considered dedicated visitors to the museum, the charts distinguish between ‘Naval or Military visitors’, ‘Dedicated Visitors’, and those who were ‘Uncategorisable’, having left no record of their profession. While the title ‘Naval or Military’ has been used, visitors in this category overwhelmingly gave their profession as ‘Assistant Surgeon’. The data reveals that 9,190 people in total visited Haslar Hospital Museum in the seven years in question, of whom 2,709 were ‘Dedicated’ visitors, including 805 women. If an average yearly visitor number is calculated without regard to historical trends, the data suggests that the total number of ‘Dedicated’ visitors between 1828 and 1852 would have approached ten thousand, or thirteen

¹³⁵ Visitor numbers in 1827 and in 1853, when the records begin and end, have not been included as neither year is complete. The data is based upon a manual count of the visitors recorded in the Books, with the exception of 1828 and 1832, where the very large number of visitors is calculated by multiplying the average number of entries per page with the number of pages representing each year, and by then manually counting Dedicated Visitors, who were much fewer. The well-kept nature of the Books in this period guarantees a reasonable level of accuracy. Naval or Military visitors were identified by rank or profession, as are ‘Dedicated Visitors’. ‘Uncategorisable’ visitors are those who left no profession. ‘Female Visitors’ are those who left the prefix ‘Miss’ or ‘Mrs’, the title ‘Spinster’ or ‘Lady’ or a forename implying their gender. The four-year intervals were chosen as a means to balance the work required in manually identifying visitors per year with the need to arrive at a reasonably detailed picture of visitor trends.

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thousand if 'Uncategorisable Visitors' are included.¹³⁶ The total visitor figure, including those from a naval or uncategorisable background, would in this case be more than thirty-two thousand.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ There being on average 387 dedicated visitors per year in the seven years in question, and there being 25 years in total, the figure would be 9,675. When 'Uncategorisable Visitors' are included, the figures are 511 and 12,782 respectively.

¹³⁷ There being on average 1,313 Total Visitors per year, the figure over the same period would be 32,825.

Chart 1 Table of Visitors to Haslar Hospital Museum in four-year intervals, 1828-1852

| Year | Naval/ Military Visitors | Dedicated Visitors | Of whom Dedicated Female Visitors | Uncategorisable Visitors | Total Visitors |
|-------------|---|-------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1828 | 2775 | 62 | 9 | 30 | 2867 |
| 1832 | 1561 | 77 | 18 | 56 | 1694 |
| 1836 | 316 | 458 | 113 | 127 | 901 |
| 1840 | 213 | 702 | 233 | 118 | 1033 |
| 1844 | 264 | 713 | 263 | 333 | 1310 |
| 1848 | 209 | 452 | 114 | 120 | 781 |
| 1852 | 273 | 245 | 55 | 86 | 604 |

Chart 2 Number of Visitors to Haslar Hospital Museum in four-year intervals, 1828-1852

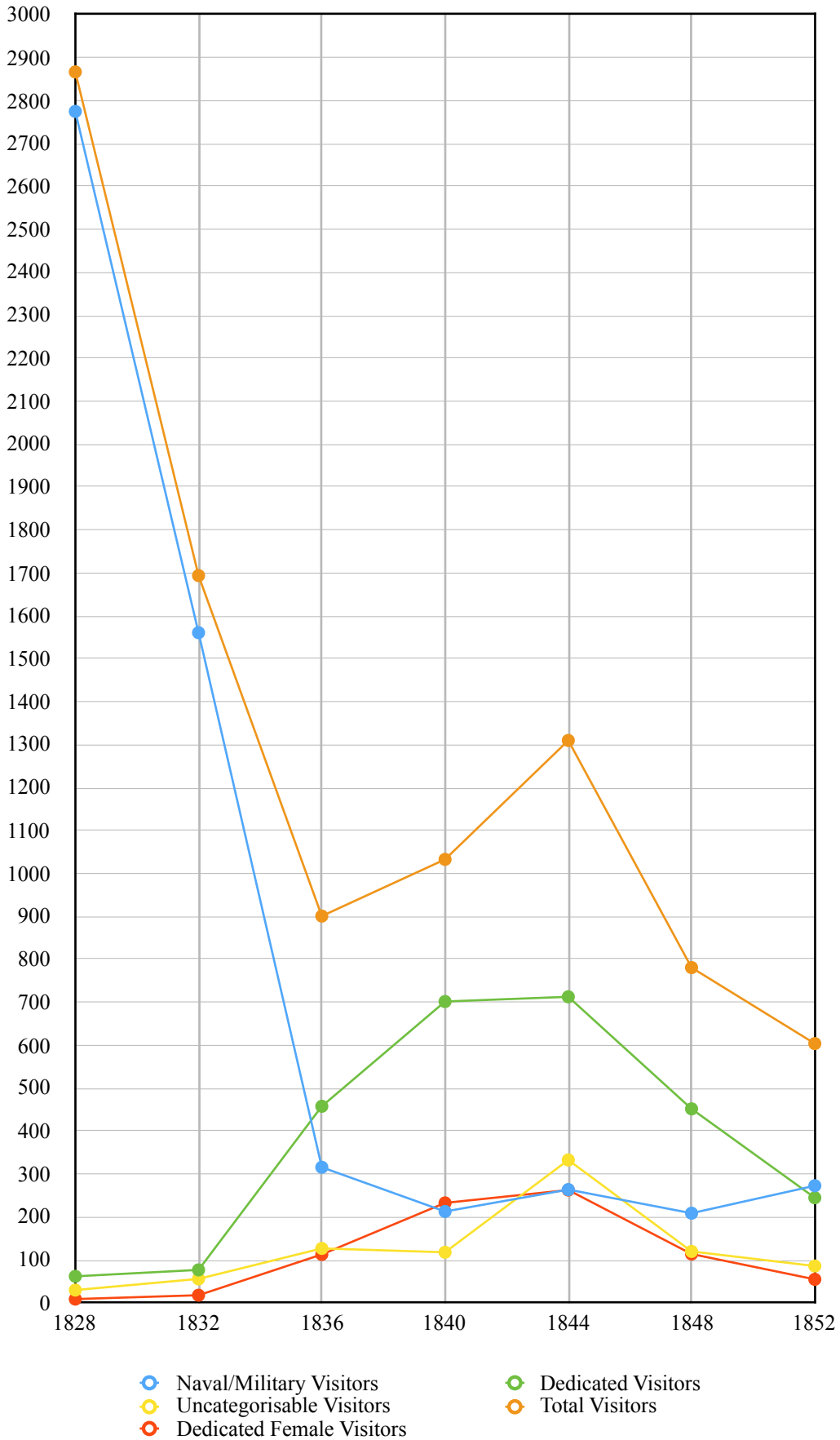


Chart 3 Recorded residences of Dedicated Visitors to Haslar Hospital Museum in 1828, 1840 and 1852, where frequency of place name greater than two in at least one year

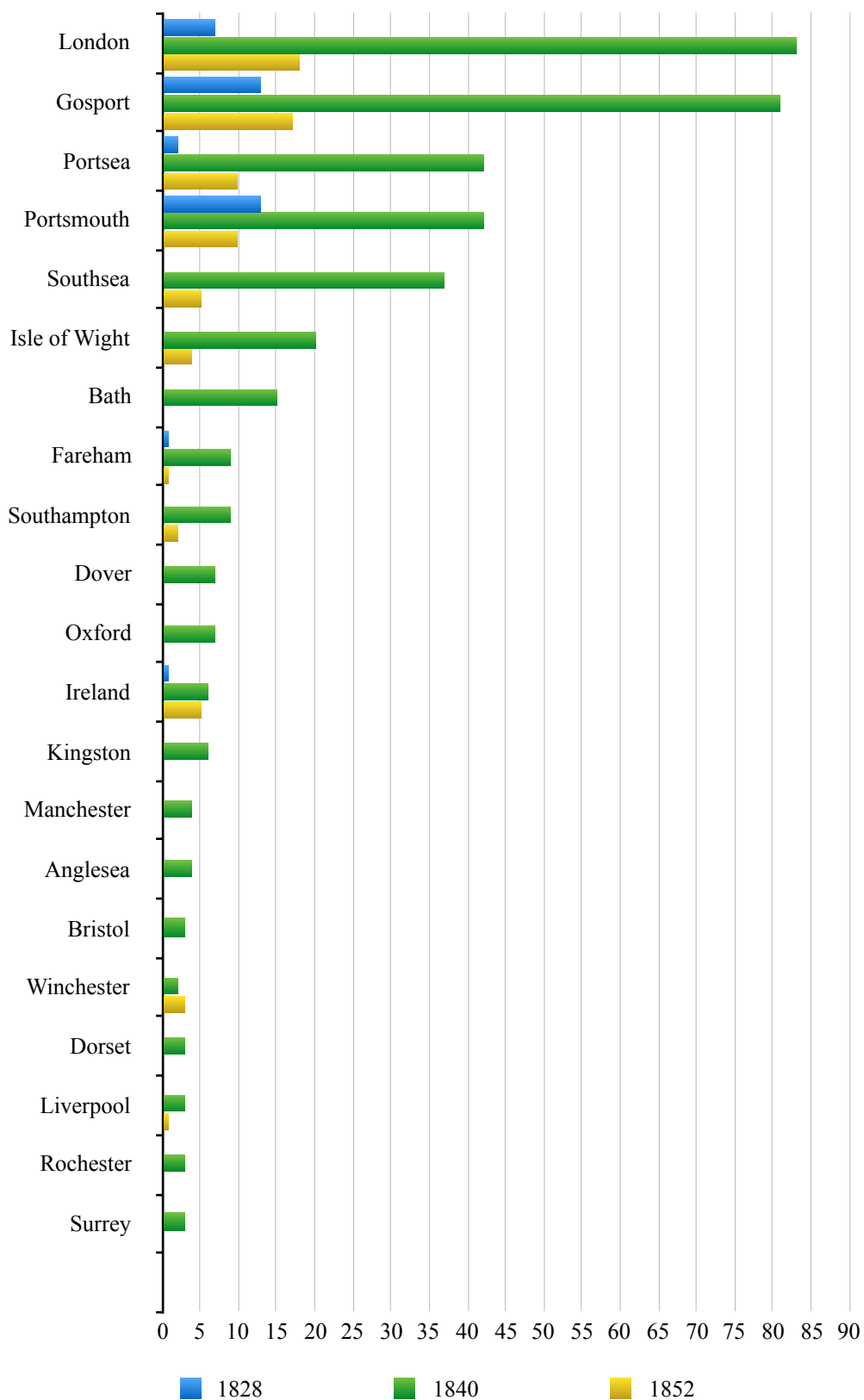


Chart 4 Recorded professions of Dedicated Visitors to Haslar Hospital Museum in 1828, 1840 and 1852, where frequency of profession greater than two in at least one year



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The charts certainly support Burnett's claim that the museum's popularity rose in the 1840s. From 1828 to 1832, visitors were almost exclusively 'Naval or Military'. From 1836 until 1853, the number of 'Dedicated Visitors' far outstripped those with a service background, reaching its peak in 1844, when more than seven hundred people visited in one year. The decline in 'Naval or Military' visitors after 1836 is less puzzling than it would first appear, for it was the consequence of a decision not to record the names of all persons attending lectures within the museum, as had previously been the case, and far fewer names were duplicated as a result.¹³⁸ Indeed, while assiduously well kept as a record of the museum's several thousand 'Naval or Military' visitors in 1828, the books demonstrate a much laxer attitude toward the recording of all such names and identities after 1832. This decline in standards was associated with the increasing probability that visitors would sign in their own hand after 1832, at which stage the Books' style becomes considerably less uniform.

The number of 'Uncategorisable' visitors would seem to follow the trend of 'Dedicated' visitors, perhaps indicating that the majority of those who were uncategorisable did not belong to a naval or military profession. With respect to their residence and profession, it is clear that Haslar's 'Dedicated' visitors represented a wide segment of the general public.¹³⁹ While most came from the surrounding area, including in particular Gosport and Portsmouth, it is interesting to see that a very large number of people travelled from London; in 1840, in fact, more Londoners visited than did residents of Gosport, thus supporting our impression that the museum by then possessed a considerable reputation. With respect to professions, it is evident that 'Gents' or 'Gentlemen' assumed the largest cohort, while students (of whom many medical), merchants, surgeons, 'Ladies' and solicitors followed closely behind. There was a consistent gender imbalance

¹³⁸ The contrast between 1828 and 1836 is especially clear.

¹³⁹ Data concerning residence and profession is arranged in three twelve-year intervals in order to allow manageable data-gathering and a sense of change over time. In order to show frequent residences and professions, the charts measure place names and professional titles which occurred on more than two and three instances in each year respectively.

in Haslar's audience, which was ameliorated to some extent by the fact that the hospital's nurses, if they did visit, seemingly did not record their name or profession. Further, after 1832 the number of 'Female Visitors' to the museum rose at a higher rate than did the average number of 'Dedicated' visitors. In 1840, the very large number of total 'Dedicated' visitors was associated with a considerable range of professions, including a strange and lively mix of carpenters, spinsters, watchmakers, dissenting ministers, brewers and dress-makers. In all, one is given an impression of a highly popular institution which was able to draw upon visitors from far afield. The collections at Haslar attracted people from all ranks and classes, and thus reflected their eclectic subject matter in a diverse and multifaceted audience.

5.5 The museum in decline

By 1854, Haslar Hospital Museum had reached the peak of its success. Under Richardson, the collection had diversified and grown, and now attracted an audience ranging from schoolchildren to the brightest minds of the period. The publication of *A Manual of Natural History*, in tandem with the growing scientific reputations of Baikie and Barron, signified the museum's increasingly active role in intellectual culture. It seems that we must accordingly turn to a catastrophist explanation, rather than a gradualist one, to explain the sudden transferral of the museum's ethnographic, botanical and zoological collections to the British Museum, to Kew, and to the collector Henry Christy in 1855. The closure of Haslar Hospital Museum as a space of broad intellectual enquiry in these years was much at odds with its own success, the Admiralty's then growing investment in scientific endeavour, and even the attempts of its own surgeons, through the medium of their journals, to continue to assimilate imperial knowledge in subsequent decades. The transfer of Haslar's collections to the British Museum was not, therefore, an attempt to expose the rich collections of a small and little-known institution to a national audience that it did not otherwise have; in the shadow of the Great Exhibition of 1851, this had been the fate of other

provincial collections.¹⁴⁰ As late as 1854, the Admiralty's specialist interest in its collections was growing, not declining.

The Visitors' Books again provide some clue to the museum's fortunes. While figures were considerably down on the heights of the 1840s, the abrupt cessation of visitors to Haslar's collections on 1 February 1853 (the last being a Mrs Chiles of Southampton) suggests that the museum closed almost immediately. One cause of this may have been the 'unexpected arrival of 700 cases of scarlet fever at Haslar Hospital in 1853', as *The Lancet* reported in a subsequent appeal for naval hospitals to be better prepared for 'sudden emergencies'.¹⁴¹ According to Richardson's son, John B. Richardson, this 'great epidemic' led the hospital's medical wards to become 'so crowded that the patients overflowed into the surgical wards and, indeed, into all available places'.¹⁴² Patients may therefore have been housed in the library and museum, requiring their closure to the public. This is not quite sufficient as an explanation, however, for we know from *The Illustrated Magazine of Art* that the museum continued to receive visitors in 1854; it may have been that the practice of keeping the Books ended as a result of the turbulence brought about by the epidemic.

An associated, if more convincing explanation, relates to Burnett's retirement as Director-General of the Medical Department of the Navy in 1855, and to Richardson's resignation as Medical Inspector of Haslar later that year. This was also the year in which Parry died and Francis Beaufort retired as Hydrographer to the Navy, thus signalling a period of general disruption. Burnett's retirement was not in itself controversial, as he was then 76 years old. Upon his departure, however, Burnett's position was taken not by Richardson, who was the obvious candidate, but by John

¹⁴⁰ See, for example, Geoffrey N. Swinney. 'A natural history collection in transition: Wyville Thomson and the relationship between the University of Edinburgh and the Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art', *Journal of the History of Collections*, 11 (1999), 51-70.

¹⁴¹ 'The Lancet. London: Saturday, August 14, 1869', *The Lancet*, 94 (1869), 237-240.

¹⁴² Richardson. 'A Visit to Haslar, 1916', p. 336.

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Liddell, who had in 1844 been appointed the navy's Inspector of Fleets and Deputy Inspector-General of Haslar. According to the contemporary media, Richardson's resignation in April was proof of his outrage; 'Sir John Richardson...has consequently sent in his resignation', wrote *The Times*, 'he being the senior medical officer of the service, and not liking to serve under a junior, Sir John Liddell standing two below him on the list'.¹⁴³ Richardson denied this in a letter sent to *The Times* the following day:

Sir, - In your paper of yesterday it is said that I have resigned my situation as inspector of this hospital because I could not serve under a junior officer. That was not my motive for tendering my resignation, and I have never said that it was. I beg, therefore, that you will do me the justice to let this correction of the error of your reporter appear in your next publication.¹⁴⁴

An overlooked explanation for Richardson's departure from Haslar is the fact that his youngest son, Edward Kendall Richardson, had died in the hospital (from scarlet fever), aged ten years old, under his care that same year.¹⁴⁵ Whatever the case, however, Liddell's tenure in charge of Haslar began with a radical rearrangement and disposal of its collections, in what must have seemed close to vandalism to Richardson and Burnett. Acrimony is perhaps implicit in the timing of the collection's disposal, which was effected within two months of Liddell's promotion and Richardson's retirement. The speed at which things changed, and the consequent obscurity of Haslar's collections, revealed the importance but also the delicacy of the museum as a space for medical and scientific enquiry; Liddell seemingly did not share Burnett and Richardson's belief that the collections belonged within a space of naval medical education, but neither did they find much meaning in subsequent repositories, including the British Museum. Being denuded of their situation as naval collections within a space of medical learning and natural history, Haslar's specimens lost their identity as objects of science, education and intellectual research.

¹⁴³ 'Naval and Military Intelligence', *The Times*. 23 Apr. 1855.

¹⁴⁴ 'To the Editor of The Times', *The Times*. 25 Apr. 1855.

¹⁴⁵ McIlraith. *Life of John Richardson*, p. 244.

The fluid nature of Haslar's objects upon their departure from the museum can be seen in Baikie's various attempts to disguise Liddell's order to deaccession much of Haslar's ethnographic material with the claim that these items were in fact of botanical relevance to Kew, where a museum of economic botany had opened in 1847.¹⁴⁶ In a letter to Hooker dated 28 May 1855, Baikie wrote:

I sent you today a box of odds and ends [from Haslar's museum]...I have, besides dried plants, several other things to send, *as produced in the Vegetable Kingdom* as native clothes, specimens of cotton, mats, native nets &c.¹⁴⁷

This implied a search through Haslar's outgoing collections for objects which might at some stage have been plants. Three days later, Baikie sent a hurried note to explain that he had 'forgot to mention that in the box I sent a few days ago, there is a long shaped seed-vessel...used by the natives for poisoning spears & arrows', which Hooker would do well to handle carefully.¹⁴⁸ In the following weeks, Baikie sent to Kew further ethnographic specimens, now economic botany, including 'some ornamented mats' and 'some specimens of native cloth'.¹⁴⁹ Interestingly, Baikie also sent mats to the British Museum on 4 June 1855, but chose at this stage to refer to them as '*Ethnological specimens*'.¹⁵⁰ These were received by Edward Hawkins, the Keeper of Antiquities, along with detailed notes on their cultural origins. Such was the speed at which Haslar was deaccessioning material in this period that Baikie made sure to request the

¹⁴⁶ For a history of William Jackson Hooker's museum, see Caroline Cornish. *Curating Science in an Age of Empire: Kew's Museum of Economic Botany* (PhD thesis: University of London, 2013).

¹⁴⁷ William Balfour Baikie to Hooker, 28 May. 1855. RBG, DC, 59/16. My emphasis.

¹⁴⁸ Baikie to Hooker, 31 May. 1855. RBG, DC, 59/17.

¹⁴⁹ Baikie to Hooker, 2 Jun. 1855. RBG, DC, 59/18.

¹⁵⁰ Baikie to unknown recipient, 4 Jun. 1855. *Christy Correspondence*, BM, Department of Africa, Oceania and the Americas [AOA]. My emphasis.

return of the box in which the objects arrived, he now being ‘short of packing cases’.¹⁵¹

The mats now at the British Museum were originally collected by Baikie in consequence of his appointment as surgeon and naturalist to Macgregor Laird’s 1854-55 Niger expedition, and for this reason he was able to supply relevant documentation.¹⁵² In general, however, the British Museum and Christy were given little assistance in interpreting their new collections. The former received ‘an extensive collection of *Ethnographical* objects’, as they were now defined, on 9 June 1855, and approximately two hundred more were added to the British Museum in 1865, following Christy’s death.¹⁵³ While there are various reports of a catalogue of Haslar’s contents, it was not passed by Liddell to Christy or to Augustus Wollaston Franks, who was responsible for receiving the ethnographic specimens at the British Museum.¹⁵⁴ This led Franks to write to Liddell on several occasions, to enquire whether he might see the ‘register or inventory’ in question.¹⁵⁵ Liddell’s responses were evasive, however, and Franks appears to have soon given up on the hope of discovering the origins, or collectors, of the objects received from Haslar, and in consequence they remain largely unknown. As late as 1873, Franks could be found complaining about the poor record keeping of the period under review. ‘It may be noticed’, he grumbled, that:

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵² See, for example, BM. Af1856,0218.10.

¹⁵³ *Accounts of the income and expenditure of the British Museum, for the financial year ended 31st March 1856* (London: House of Commons, 1856), p. 14. My emphasis.

BM. *Book of Presents, 1854-1861*, vol. 5., p. 123.

¹⁵⁴ In 1853, an assistant surgeon at Haslar named Andrew Clark was appointed the first ‘Conservator of the Pathological Museum of the London Hospital’. Contemporary reports state that this was a consequence of the museum’s specific desire for a catalogue to be prepared, since ‘Clark had previously been engaged in similar work at Haslar Hospital Museum’. ‘Obituary: Sir Andrew Clark’, *The British Medical Journal*, 2 (1893), 1060.

¹⁵⁵ Augustus Wollaston Franks to John Liddell, 22 Sep. 1856. BM, AOA. Eth. Doc 1171.

the greatest of English explorers, Captain Cook, must have had very large collections...Unfortunately, the value of his specimens is much diminished by the absence of any proper account of the places from which they were derived...An instance connected with Arctic exploration may [also] be noticed. In the well-known expedition in the *Blossom*, under Capt. Beechey, [some collected objects] seem to have been given by Surgeon Collie to the Haslar Hospital, and on the breaking up of a portion of that museum were sent to the British Museum; scarcely any of them were labelled, and it is only by accident that the probable origin of them has been traced. If a careful selection had been made at the time for the national collection, the manners, customs, and arts of the western Esquimaux would have received a full illustration.¹⁵⁶

5.6 Conclusion

Franks' attitude does much to illustrate the changing ways in which ethnographic objects were seen in this period. His claim that the specimens would have been better illustrated in the British Museum, while dubious, exemplifies the versatility of such collections, as well as the inevitable frustration of those later generations of curators and academics who seek and have sought to impose new conceptual schema upon accumulations of objects, the recording and association of which remains highly cultural and institutionally specific. While Haslar did have a catalogue and some form of labelling system, this was not a period in which comparative ethnographies, nor encyclopaedic indexes of manners, customs and 'arts' were attempted or even thought desirable. But neither were the contents of the Haslar museum intended only to entertain its visitors. Instead, the collections at Haslar represented an investment in the information being returned from naval surgeons and explorers. While interesting in themselves, the objects held in the museum contained the promise of future insights into useful knowledge.

¹⁵⁶ Augustus Wollaston Franks. 'Further enquiries and observations on Ethnological Questions connected with Arctic Exploration', *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 2 (1873), 304.

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In many cases, their utility was already explicit within typological or ethnobotanical study, in innovative and experimental lectures and in their adoption within emerging medical science, itself vital to the instigation of encounter and colonial settlement. In practice, the collections were an attempt to manifest what Browne might call a Humboldtian philosophy; a belief in the interrelatedness of natural, material and medical enquiry.

The loss of its collections in 1855 did not signal the end of Haslar Hospital Museum, although its recovery was frustrated by Baikie's departure upon a new expedition in 1857, and his death in 1864, which was also the year in which Liddell retired. The post-1860 period witnessed further circulations of objects and categories of display, in which ethnographic specimens were again included and withdrawn; these notably included specimens from the *Challenger* expedition, of 1873-1875, collected by the surgeon Alexander Crosbie.¹⁵⁷ According to William Tait's 1906 history of the hospital, the museum had by this stage catalogued 11,585 specimens.¹⁵⁸ Liddell's attempts to clear seemingly superfluous collections therefore met its match in the enduring tendency of naval officers to deposit a diverse range of objects upon their return from voyages. Barron, who remained until 1884, continued Richardson's work by describing and exchanging zoological collections with the British Museum until at least 1868.¹⁵⁹ The museum met its end, finally, with the closure of Haslar Hospital in 2009.

It is interesting therefore to observe that reports, visits and associated ephemera regarding the hospital museum are considerably harder to find in the post-1855 period. With the exception of Barron, the museum's investment and involvement in the construction of scientific knowledge seems to have declined in parallel with the museum's popularity as a national institution. The 1827-1855 period can accordingly be thought of as a distinct and interesting moment in the history of the museum, and so in the

¹⁵⁷ Tait. *A History of Haslar Hospital*, p. 67.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.* p. 66.

¹⁵⁹ Charles Barron to Albert Karl Ludwig Gotthilf Günther, 5 Aug. 1868. NHM, DF, ZOO/200/1/68.

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history of nineteenth-century natural history and medical collecting. The rise and fall of the museum had much to do with the creation and loss of a specific infrastructure for imperial enquiry; one given meaning by the patronage of Burnett and more particularly Richardson, as well as by an ambivalent but curious Admiralty bureaucracy. The growth of a more proprietorial attitude in the mindset of Barrow and others following Phillip Parker King's return from Australia in 1822 legitimated the interests of naval surgeons, and in tandem with the end of the Napoleonic Wars promoted the development of official collections. In the next chapter and thesis section, I look more closely at what happened on-board naval voyages in this period, and in what ways surgeon-collectors for Haslar cooperated with the rest of their ship's crew. Beechey's insistence in 1829 that ordinary officers ought not to be deprived 'of the little merit that may be due to them', and his encouragement of Collie's pretensions as a scientific amateur at the expense of the better-established Lay, foreshadowed a period in which a scientific form of ethnographic collecting was practiced at all levels.

PART THREE

Professionalisation

**The turn to the north:
Amateur collecting in northern Australia and the
Torres Strait, c. 1830-1850**

When obliged to have recourse to the superficial remarks of vulgar travellers, sailors, traders, buccaneers, and missionaries, we must often pause, and, comparing detached facts, endeavour to discover what they wanted sagacity to observe.

In writing the above statement, the late eighteenth-century Scottish historian William Robertson lamented the ostensible difficulties inherent in the synthesis of knowledge collected by privileged albeit uneducated explorers.¹ By featuring them on the title page of his 1833 travel narrative, *Excursions in New South Wales*, the naval lieutenant William Henry Breton therefore made rather a strange choice.² Did his publisher, Richard Bentley, append them without his consent, in order to make a mockery of Breton's long account of his tour of Australia, or did Breton choose them himself? If it was the latter, was Breton simply being modest? Or was he in fact contemptuous of 'armchair' observers like Robertson, and thus inclined to sarcasm? Inside, Breton's preface revealed that he was indeed being ironic. Here, Breton described his observations on Australia as an 'unvarnished account, of the actual state of things in this portion of the globe'.³ Contrary to the work of the 'respectable' people, whose propensity for 'making mis-statements' had lured naive emigrants into 'undertaking a voyage of nearly 16,000 miles', Breton presented himself as an honest, knowledgeable and

¹ William Robertson. *The History of the Discovery and Settlement of America* (Manhattan: Harper & Brothers, 1777), p. 140.

² William Henry Breton. *Excursions in New South Wales, Western Australia and Van Dieman's Land* (London: Richard Bentley, 1833).

³ *Ibid.* p. ii.

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down-to-earth commentator on the progress of the colonies.⁴ He was, to his own mind, one of the only authors, and authorities, who could be trusted.

Breton's arrival in Australia, on half-pay, in 1830 was symptomatic of the heightened interest afforded to that region in these years; his bitterness was a sign of attendant tensions. For our own purposes, scientific exploration and naval ethnographic collecting in Australia in the 1830s was increasingly shaped by particular interest in the continent's northern regions, from Melville Island to Cape York and the Torres Strait. Once again, this was a product of Britain's imperial concerns. In his opening address to the Geographical Society of London in 1830, John Barrow argued that greater exploration of the areas 'left quite unexplored by Captain King' would, in tandem with the construction of new settlements, beget a series of strategic and commercial benefits.⁵ These included access to the local trade in sea-cucumber, much valued by Chinese consumers, but encompassed also a vaguer desire to 'keep out' rival nations in anticipation of the region's future development.⁶ Since 1824, settlements at Melville Island and Raffles Bay had facilitated British access to China; their collapse in 1828, and the wreck of the ship *Charles Eaton* in 1834, stimulated new efforts to construct a bigger, better colony, and to finish charting the notoriously dangerous but strategically vital Torres Strait.⁷ In 1838, Phillip Parker King was among those who persuaded Barrow to order the construction of a new settlement at Port Essington on the Cobourg Peninsula, and in 1842 the *Fly*, under Francis Price Blackwood, was despatched from London to undertake a long-awaited survey of the region's waters.⁸ One particular location loomed large

⁴ *Ibid.* p. iii.

⁵ J. M. R. Cameron (ed.). *Letters from Port Essington, 1838-1845* (Darwin: Historical Society of the Northern Territory, 1999), pp. 1-3.

'Royal Geographical Society, Dec. 12th.', *The Nautical Magazine and Naval Chronicle for 1837* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., 1837), 49.

⁶ Jordan Goodman. 'Making Imperial Space: Settlement, surveying and trade in northern Australia in the nineteenth century', in David Killingray, Margarete Lincoln and Nigel Rigby (eds.). *Maritime Empires: British Imperial Maritime Trade in the Nineteenth Century* (Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2004), 131.

Cameron. *Letters from Port Essington*, p. 1.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Goodman. 'Making Imperial Space', 131.

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amid this contemporary effort. As a ‘very convenient place’ for ships to water and anchor on the ‘outer route’ from Cape York to the eastern coast of Australia, Darnley (Erub) Island became the focus of a mix of navigational, commercial and ethnographic scrutiny (see Figure 6.1 and Figure 6.2).⁹

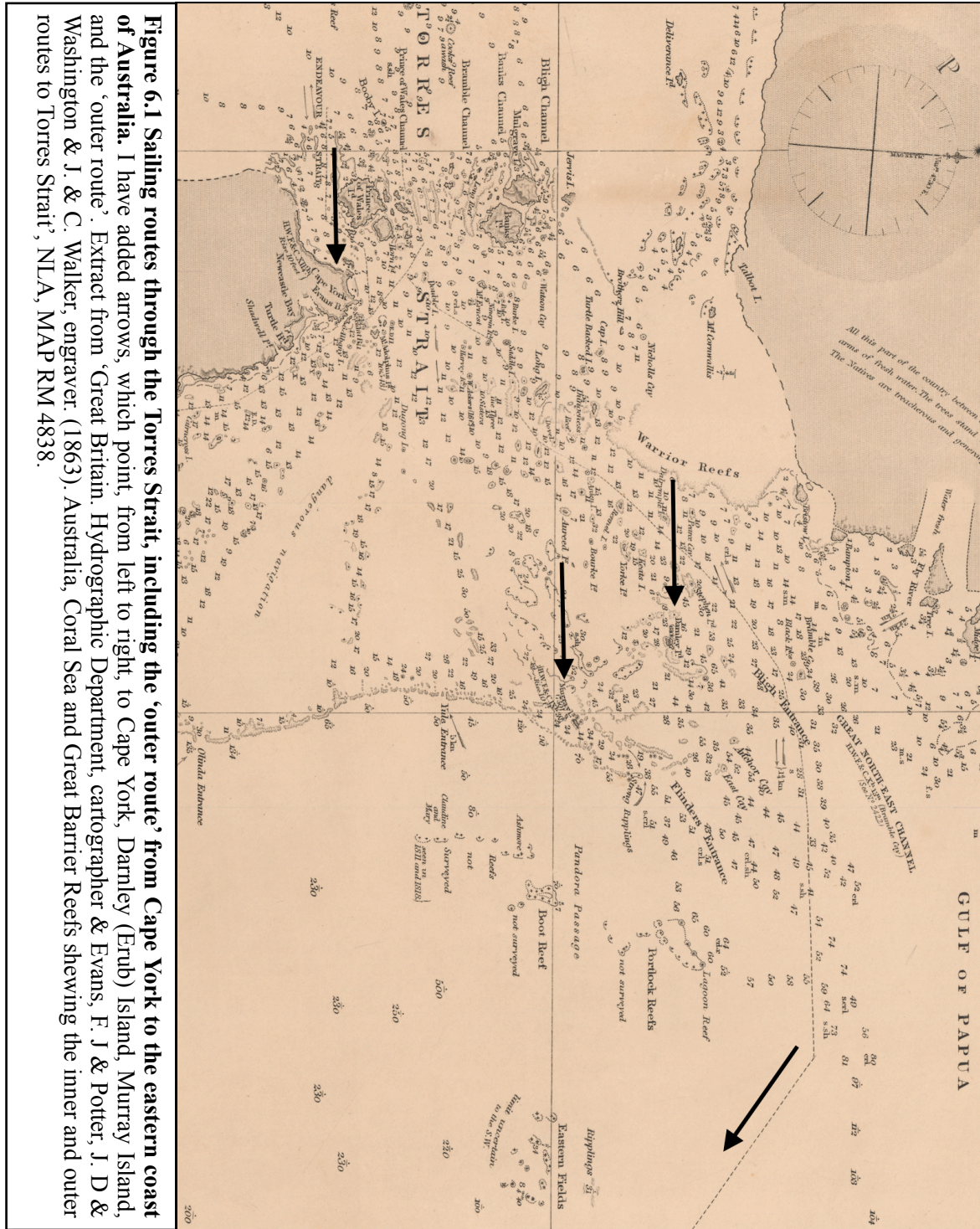


Figure 6.1 Sailing routes through the Torres Strait, including the ‘outer route’ from Cape York to the eastern coast of Australia. I have added arrows, which point, from left to right, to Cape York, Darnley (Erub) Island, Murray Island, and the ‘outer route’. Extract from ‘Great Britain. Hydrographic Department, cartographer & Evans, F. J & Potter, J. D & Washington & J. & C. Walker, engraver. (1863). Australia, Coral Sea and Great Barrier Reefs showing the inner and outer routes to Torres Strait’, NLA, MAP RM 4838.

⁹ ‘Navigation of the Pacific Ocean’, *The Nautical Magazine and Naval Chronicle for 1859* (London: Simpkin, Marshall and Co., 1859), 556-557. Francis Price Blackwood to Francis Beaufort, 13 Aug. 1845. UKHO, OD 78, p. 77.

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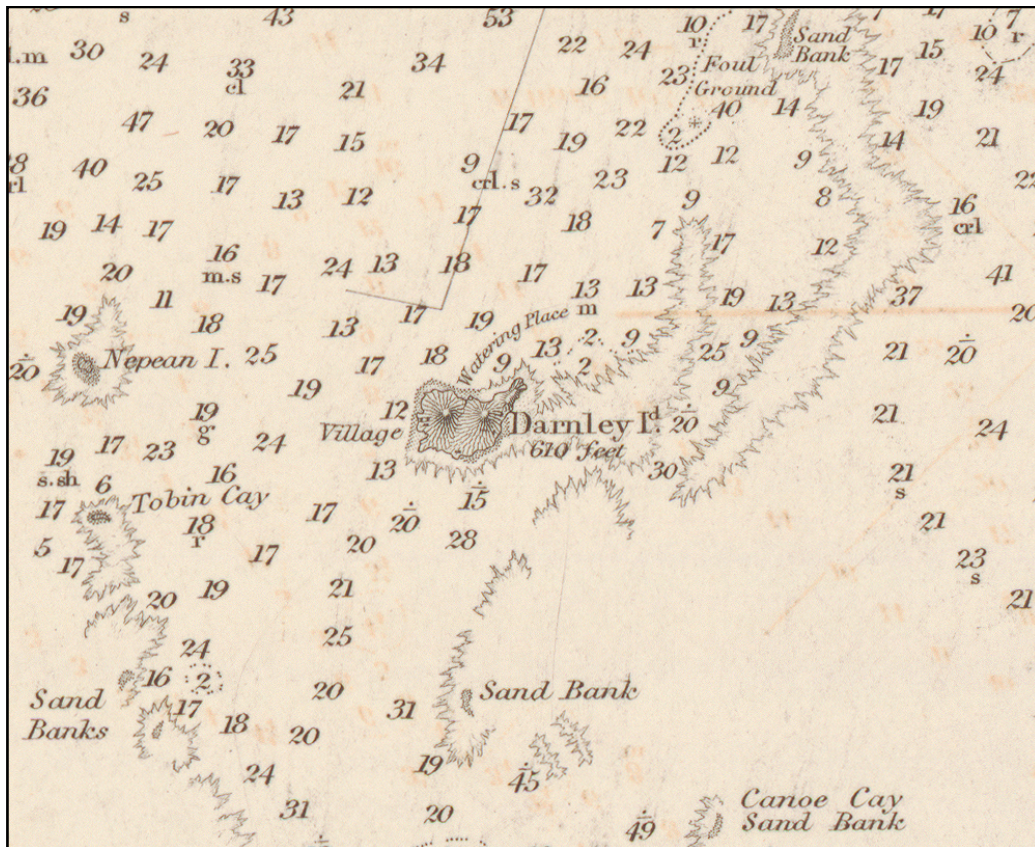


Figure 6.2 A map of Darnley (Erub) Island. The map highlights the importance of Darnley Island as a ‘Watering Place’, and records the location of an indigenous ‘village’. This was included as a sign of a civilised culture, and suggests an expectation of welcome. Extract from ‘Great Britain. Hydrographic Dept & Blackwood, F. P & Bate, R. B & J. & C. Walker. (1847). Torres Strait, northeast entrance along the coast of New Guinea’, NLA, MAP British Admiralty Special Map Col./82.

Jordan Goodman proposes that one method of understanding the creation of this ‘geocommercial space’ in the 1830s is to explore ‘the articulation between the making of imperial space away from the metropolis and within the metropolis itself’.¹⁰ In particular, ‘the articulation between the colonial environment and landscapes and metropolitan museums through the agency of natural history, ethnographic collections and painting’.¹¹ Some aspects of this line of enquiry are explored in Chapter Five. The ‘turn to the north’ that began in the 1830s (to coin a phrase) greatly influenced the nature of the collections at Haslar Hospital Museum and the British Museum; one of the rarest and most interesting specimens from the former, for example, is a

¹⁰ Goodman. ‘Making Imperial Space’, 129.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

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Murray Island mask likely acquired in the Torres Strait between 1835 and 1855.¹² The emerging consensus within this period between colonial surveying and ethnographic study helped these institutions to carve out their own ‘spaces’ within imperial science. In this chapter and the next, I explore the interrelation of two further factors in the contemporary ‘articulation’ of imperial expansion and ethnographic collecting, with regard to northern Australia and the Torres Strait. First, in Britain, developments in naval education and scientific organisation beginning in the 1830s gave renewed credibility to ethnographic study and collecting on imperial voyages. Second, at Port Essington and throughout the Torres Strait, an entrepreneurial spirit associated with fast-paced settlement building and maritime exploration, bolstered by largely friendly relations with the region’s indigenous peoples, helped to stimulate a wave of object collecting and commercial-ethnographic scrutiny.

The following two chapters explore these themes by investigating in turn ‘amateur’ and ‘professional’ contributions to mid-nineteenth century naval collecting in northern Australia and the Torres Strait. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, I define an ‘amateur’ as a person not employed in the navy, or otherwise trained, to undertake scientific investigations. By contrast, I refer to persons who were employed in order to pursue scientific investigations as ‘professionals’. In my study of amateur collectors in particular, I draw upon Anne Secord’s study of working-class and manual workers’ participation in nineteenth-century natural history, and their associated rejection of top-down diffusionist models.¹³ Whereas Secord’s artisan botanists found a space for science within ‘the pub’, however, the more intimate environment of the ship permitted fewer opportunities for segregated study. For this reason I query, too, to what extent Steven Shapin’s discussion of ‘invisible technicians’ may help us to understand the

¹² BM. Oc1855,1220.169.

¹³ Anne Secord. ‘Science in the Pub: Artisan Botanists in Early Nineteenth-century Lancashire’, *History of Science*, 32 (1994), 269-315. See also Anne Secord. ‘Corresponding Interests: Artisans and Gentlemen in Nineteenth-Century Natural History’, *The British Journal for the History of Science*, 27 (1994), 383-408.

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construction of ethnographic knowledge in this context.¹⁴ Though different spaces for analysis and investigation literally existed between ships' various decks, naval ethnographic research was more often a collaborative endeavour; there existed a dynamic relationship between codified and latent knowledges, methodologies and expertise in the navy of the period.

The contemporary voyages of the *Fly* (1842-1846) and *Rattlesnake* (1846-1850) attest to the role played by the navy in the development of ethnographic study in the years immediately preceding broader and more widely recognised metropolitan developments in the field, in particular the revival of the Ethnological Society of London in the 1860s and its merger with the Anthropological Society in 1871.¹⁵ Surpassed only by Barrow's fascination with the Arctic, Australian settlement and exploration was pivotal to the growth of ethnographic study in this earlier period. Object collecting by a range of actors on-board contemporary naval voyages composed a key part of this since neglected atmosphere of overseas encounter and investigation. As Breton's narrative amply showed, naval servicemen were increasingly forthright in their claims to collect privileged, unvarnished knowledge, and their rights to analyse and to share it.

A theme of Chapter Five was the Admiralty's ambivalence toward the work being undertaken by the medical department of the navy at Haslar Hospital Museum. The story of the institution's expansion and decline between 1827 and 1855 had more to do with the fortunes of a network of global medical collecting undertaken by surgeons, and directed by William Burnett, than it did the Admiralty's growing interest in ethnographic investigation. In this chapter and the next, I look at the developments and collecting activity which took place in parallel on-board naval voyages; the presence of surgeon-collectors, amateur collectors and professional collectors on colonial surveys meant that there were in effect two or even three spaces of

¹⁴ Steven Shapin. 'The Invisible Technician', *American Scientist*, 77 (1989), 554-563.

¹⁵ See Efram Sera-Shriar. *The Making of British Anthropology, 1813-1871* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013).

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simultaneous ethnographic enquiry on such ventures. As William Ashworth reminds us, no particular notions of acknowledged expertise existed in the navy at this time, and accordingly there was seldom a strong sense of official direction.¹⁶ Only by the end of the nineteenth century, Ashworth observes, did ‘the introduction of new naval institutions and reforms in the education both of ship architects and of naval officers’ allow for any ‘certification of [scientific] credibility’ in the navy.¹⁷ In the period 1830-1850, ‘amateurs’ such as Breton were not therefore considered unprofessional. Amateurs instead formed part of an emerging demographic of sailors whose enquiries resembled those of naturalists within specific, salaried positions, but who were not similarly remunerated. Just as ‘tender’ or support ships such as the *Bramble* both assisted and diversified the surveys of flagship vessels such as the *Fly*, on-board actors of differing social and scientific status variously worked alone and jointly to investigate the peoples they encountered and the objects acquired in result.

This chapter focuses in particular upon amateur work on-board the *Fly*, but considers its extension and reproduction upon the subsequent and related voyage of the *Rattlesnake*. In terms of the cast of personalities introduced thus far in the thesis, this chapter’s focus approximates most closely to my brief discussion of the ordinary seaman Samuel Smith, who attempted a number of collections and ethnographic engagements on the *Investigator* expedition (1801-1803), and seemingly for no reason other than a wish to associate himself with the construction of knowledge.¹⁸ Whereas Smith did not offer his collection to any public institutions, the voyage of the *Fly* was peculiarly rich in terms both of the number of amateur collectors and investigators on-board and the quantity of objects they subsequently gave to what was increasingly considered the ‘national collection’ of the British Museum (see Appendix 6). One of the ship’s lieutenants, John Matthew Robert Ince, its paymaster and purser John Bell and one of its mates, Edwin

¹⁶ William Ashworth. ‘Expertise and authority in the Royal Navy, 1800-1945’, *Journal for Maritime Research*, 16 (2014), 103-116.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 113.

¹⁸ See Chapter Three, section 3.2.

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Augustus Porcher, respectively donated to the British Museum twenty, sixteen and one Indigenous Australian objects, following the *Fly*'s return in 1846. In so doing, they exceeded the level of extant Indigenous Australian collections given to the Museum by the earlier King, Flinders and *Beagle* voyages combined.

The Bell, Ince and Porcher collections thus raise several questions. Was the behaviour of these amateur collectors anomalous, or did their collecting reflect a new desire among those 'below deck' to make a contribution to knowledge for the public benefit? If so, what was peculiar or significant about the nature and historical context of the *Fly*'s voyage to northern Australia and the Torres Strait? I do not believe that this activity was anomalous, and I make my case below. By investigating the developments in Admiralty science and naval education which occurred in this period, and through an exploration of better known personalities such as the entrepreneurial explorer George Windsor Earl and the *Bramble*'s outspoken clerk John Sweatman, I propose that Bell, Ince and Porcher formed part of a generation of sailors who made purposeful contributions to ethnographic knowledge. Following the transitive period of naval collecting identified in Chapters Four and Five, ethnographic study had gained new popularity, and showed signs of granting the illusive 'scientific credence' hypothesised by Ashworth. The *Fly*'s amateur collections were not donated according to official agreement between the Admiralty and British museums, nor were they offered only in consequence of an adherence to official instructions. They were not made by surgeons and therefore were less likely to find their way to Haslar. Individuals like Bell, Ince and Porcher, I argue, were instead responding to the febrile atmosphere of self-improvement, scientific opportunity and commercial exploitation that arose in connection with the Admiralty's resurgent interest in northern Australia and the Torres Strait. Though less visible than captains and naturalists, they were not precisely akin to Shapin's 'technicians', nor entirely neglected 'support workers' working toward a common goal; museum donations made these collectors

visible, and attested to their ability to decide upon and to follow enquiries of their own.¹⁹

6.1 Knowing the collectors

Very little is known about Bell, Ince and Porcher, and it is not my intention here to expand their biographies significantly. Before I can explore what their behaviour reveals about the general shape of amateur ethnographic collecting in the navy after 1830, however, it is necessary at least to set out the basic points of who they were and what they might have thought they were doing. As was the case with the ostensibly lowly but in reality well-connected Master's Mate Frederick Bedwell, for example, Lieutenant Ince's obscurity, rank and lack of education are entirely misleading qualities.²⁰ Ince was also predominantly interested in shell collecting but like Bedwell was able to expand and to consolidate his interests because of his family connections. Ince was the nephew of the zoologist John Edward Gray, who was an expert on conchology and the British Museum's keeper of Zoology from 1840 to 1874.²¹ Ince's mother, Frances, was a well-known shell collector.²² Ince's aunt and Frances' sister, Maria Emma Smith, was also a noted conchologist and algologist; she married Gray in 1826.²³ Like Bedwell, Ince also collected for the entomologist William Sharp Macleay, who had emigrated to Australia in 1839, and received from Ince an assortment of natural history specimens and skulls in 1845.²⁴ These connections may in part explain Ince's impressive career; he entered the navy in 1828, became a lieutenant in 1841 and was promoted to the position

¹⁹ Shapin, 'The Invisible Technician', 554.

²⁰ See Chapter Four, section 4.5.

²¹ Gray referred to this relationship explicitly in the appendix to Joseph Beete Jukes. *Narrative of the Surveying Voyage of H.M.S. Fly*, vol. 2 (London: T. & W. Boone, 1847), p. 339.

²² Eugene Coan and Richard Petit. 'The Publications and Malacological Taxa of William Wood (1774–1857)', *Malacologia*, 54 (2011), 14.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ John Matthew Robert Ince to William Sharp Macleay, 17 Apr. 1845. SLNSW, MLMSS 6116.

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of commander in 1846, before he died in Hong Kong in 1850.²⁵ Ince's connections and career do not however explain his interest in ethnography, which appears to have surpassed conchology with respect to the collections he made on-board the *Fly*.²⁶ In 1846, Ince donated to the British Museum eleven spears, a spear-thrower and a club from Port Essington, a further two spear-throwers from Cape York and Swan River, two boomerangs from Port Phillip and Sydney, and two combs and a tobacco pipe from the Torres Strait.²⁷ This, I propose, gives weight to the conclusions concerning the contemporary growth and amorphous nature of ethnographic study detailed below.

Remarkably, Ince's ethnographic collection was larger in size than that made by the *Fly*'s official naturalist Joseph Beete Jukes, who I introduce in Chapter Seven. The tendency within the navy outlined by Ashworth for social links to invert scientific authority is therefore apparent with respect to the *Fly*'s lieutenant, as is the potential for amateur energies to rival professional ones. It is clear from Jukes' published account of the voyage that Ince's amateur status was no obstacle to his participation in scientific investigations; Ince's insights and opinions were written down and taken seriously.²⁸ Ince often joined Jukes on collecting trips, and seemingly as a naturalist in an unofficial capacity.²⁹ This may have had as much to do with Ince's connections to Gray and Macleay as it did his scientific curiosity. Ince's fellow lieutenant on the *Fly*, John Erskine Field Risk, for instance also collected a number of objects from the Torres Strait, and specifically Darnley Island, including a turtle-shell mask and a bamboo head-dress, but his work was not likewise mentioned by Jukes.³⁰ In 1846, Risk gave his collection to the Bristol Institution for the Advancement of Science,

²⁵ 'Ince, John M R', TNA, ADM/196/36/1616.

²⁶ Jukes. *Narrative of the Surveying Voyage of H.M.S. Fly*, vol. 2, p. 339.

²⁷ See Appendix 6.

²⁸ Joseph Beete Jukes. *Narrative of the Surveying Voyage of H.M.S. Fly*, vol. 1 (London: T. & W. Boone, 1847), p. 62.

²⁹ *Ibid.* p. 57.

³⁰ Bristol Museum. E1013. See also Alfred Court Haddon. *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits*, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935), p. 198.

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Literature and the Arts (now Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery), which was founded in 1823.³¹ There it was eventually rescued from obscurity by the anthropologist and ethnologist Alfred Court Haddon, who used it to inform the observations he made during the Cambridge Torres Strait expedition of 1898.³²

Nevertheless, Jukes sometimes also recorded making trips with the *Fly*'s purser and paymaster John Bell.³³ In 1846, Bell presented sixteen objects to the British Museum. The collection consisted of thirteen spears from Darnley Island, a bow and bow string from the same location, and a carved drum from Papua New Guinea which Bell likely also collected at Darnley Island.³⁴ Bell further made at least one donation to the Museum of the United Service Institution: a three-foot high 'tortoise-shell figure of a boy' (Figure 6.5) which he managed to acquire at Darnley Island in return for an axe and a certain amount of Jukes' envy (the naturalist having by then no more room for collections in his cabin).³⁵ For the purposes of this chapter, Bell is a more interesting figure than Ince because his rank was comparable to (although superior than) that of John Sweatman, the better-known clerk on-board the *Bramble*, which assisted the *Fly*'s survey of the Torres Strait. Bell is also the first collector mentioned thus far in the thesis who can be associated with a British Museum object despite having no obvious familial, educational or political links to intellectual networks; he is the strongest indication, as such, of the rise of amateur collectors after the 1830s. Sweatman, who I discuss later in this chapter, emerged from comparative obscurity as an expert ethnographer of the Torres Strait after a manuscript copy of his journal (the second volume of a two volume work, the first of which is now lost) was purchased by the Mitchell Library in Sydney from London's Museum Bookshop in 1926.³⁶ Sweatman's narrative

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Jukes. *Narrative of the Surveying Voyage of H.M.S. Fly*, vol. 1, p. 401.

³⁴ BM. Oc1846,0806.6.a-c, Oc1846,0806.3, Oc1846,0806.4.a-d, Oc1846,0806.1.

³⁵ Jukes. *Narrative of the Surveying Voyage of H.M.S. Fly*, vol. 1, p. 193.

³⁶ Jim Allen and Peter Corris (eds.). *The Journal of John Sweatman* (Brisbane: University of Queensland Press, 1977), pp. xiii-xxx.

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and Bell's collection thus attest to the development of an ethnographic consciousness among the petty officers employed on naval voyages of discovery in this period. Sweatman's equivalent on-board the *Fly*, the clerk Thomas Millery, likewise assembled 'a copious vocabulary of about 800 words of the languages of Torres Straits', but he did not survive the voyage.³⁷

Lowest in rank among those here discussed and responsible for the smallest related collection, the *Fly*'s Mate Edwin Augustus Porcher is also an interesting figure. The *Fly*'s survey was Porcher's first voyage, and being only a mate he was the least likely to find time and space to put together a collection. In spite of this Porcher managed to acquire and subsequently to donate to the British Museum a drum from Papua New Guinea that was likely collected at Darnley Island owing to the great resemblance it bears to the objects there collected by Bell and Jukes.³⁸ Porcher was an amateur draughtsman as well as a mate; his sketches evince a strong ethnographic interest through their depiction of objects and indigenous peoples.³⁹ Many of Porcher's sketches were completed in collaboration with the *Fly*'s official draughtsman Harden Melville, and several compose a less skilled version of the Melville illustrations that were later reproduced in Sweatman's journal.⁴⁰ The ambiguous but cooperative relationship between 'amateur' and 'professional' collectors in this period was accordingly found also in artistic production; likewise, the development of object-based ethnographic study was as much apparent in draughtsmanship as it was in collecting. As discussed further in Chapter Seven, this alternative medium gives some insight into the thought processes behind collecting, as well as the sophistication of amateur work. One of Porcher's sketches, 'Pacific Ocean, a native canoe meeting strangers off the Murray Islands' (Figure 6.3), for instance demonstrates a critical perspective now frequently championed by

³⁷ Joseph Beete Jukes to Beaufort, 5 Jul. 1846. UKHO, IL - J.

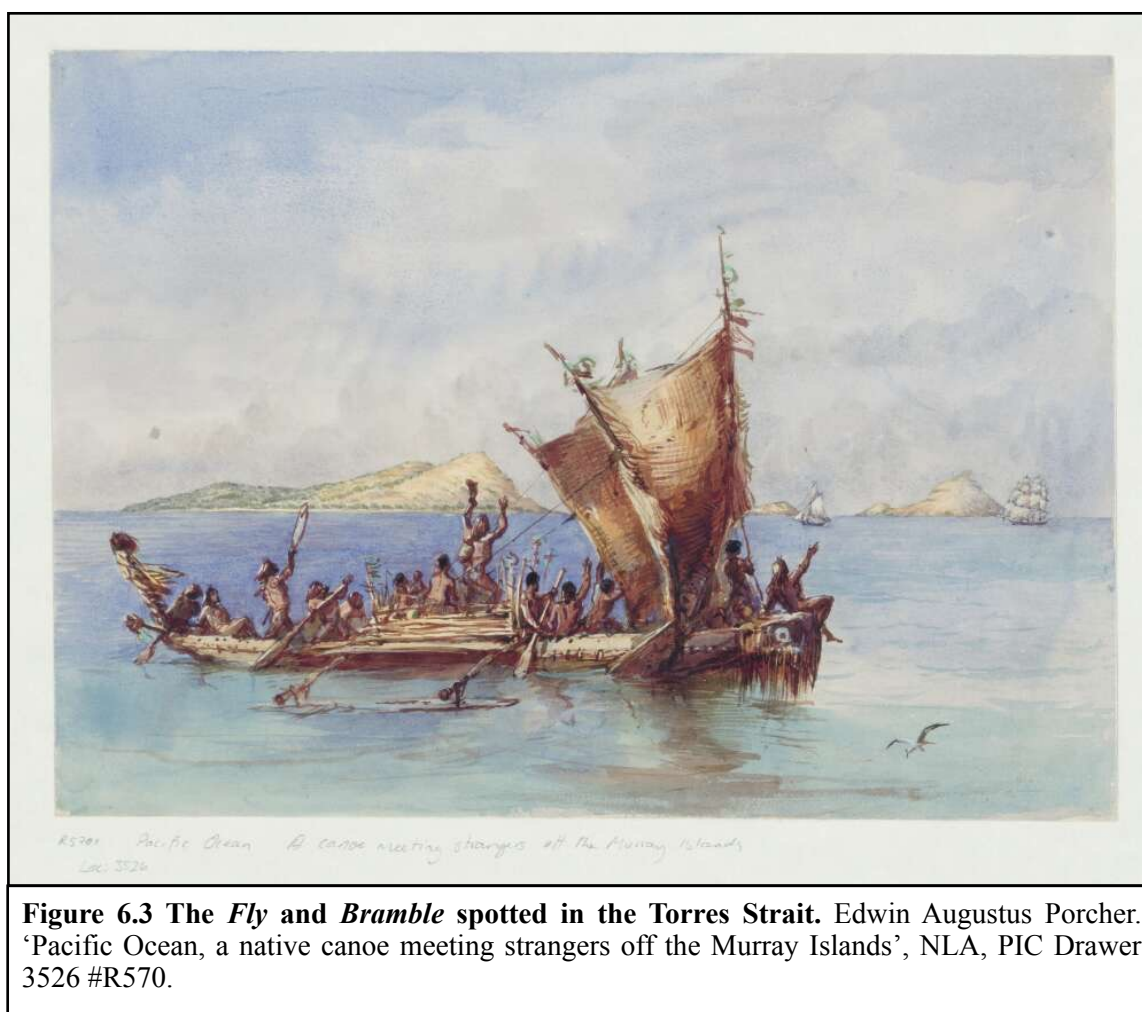
³⁸ BM. Oc.8833.

³⁹ See, for example, Edwin Augustus Porcher. 'A dagger and wooden scoop taken out of a hut in New Guinea on 30th [May] 1845 [picture]', NLA, PIC Drawer 3524 #R5699.

⁴⁰ See Chapter Seven, section 7.1.

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historical scholars by imagining the *Fly*'s arrival in the Torres Strait from an indigenous perspective.



In all, the work of the amateur collectors can be known for one or both of two reasons. First, objects were donated personally by these individuals to the British Museum, as well as some smaller provincial or specialist institutions. Second, the collections were recorded in contemporary journals, and especially within the journal later published by Jukes. In his narrative of the voyage and in his subsequent actions, Jukes collapsed the boundaries between different forms of collecting identifiable in King's earlier work by simultaneously referencing the collection of objects and their subsequent circulation (see Figure 6.4, and Appendix 6). Whereas the journey from Australia to British museums of objects collected on King's voyages was often unplanned, the collections made on-board the *Fly* were sent quickly to

museums and deliberately tracked in the knowledge that there was something to gain from associating an extant object with its historical and geographical origins.⁴¹ In other words, there was now the semblance of an

Koiyop being down in the gun-room, I persuaded him to sell me his wig, which he told me was made of the hair of young Duppa of Erroob. He wore his own black hair short under his wig, which he seemed rather reluctant to part with, asking for a looking-glass, "perper," to see how he looked without it, and saying, "keimear naeg," "men laugh," as if he thought they would laugh at him without it.* For a good knife, however, he let me have it; but the next day I found him provided with another.

At eleven o'clock I accompanied Captain Blackwood in the Midge to visit Dowar and Waier. After passing one or two sunken patches of coral, we beat up in a clear deep passage between Maer and Dowar. At this end Maer slopes very steeply down from the summit of the ridge into the sea without any beach. Dowar is likewise very steep,† but has a small sandy flat at its northern end, on which were some huts in a grove of cocoa-nut trees, and several people awaiting our approach. We continued our course, however, for Waier, which is

* This wig is now in the British Museum.

† They called the peak both of Maer and Dowar "pasaer," as they did that of Erroob, so that it is probably their general name for a hill.

Figure 6.4 A literary reference to an intentional collection. The notes here provide an example of Jukes' method of linking the objects of his ethnographic discussion to collections then and now extant at the British Museum. Jukes. *Narrative of the Surveying Voyage of H.M.S. Fly*, vol. 1, p. 200.

⁴¹ See Chapter Four.

ethnographic discipline; the objects were no longer negotiating the boundaries of qualitatively different modes of study. Jukes' journals make six references to the fate of collected objects following the *Fly*'s return, and he must therefore have interviewed the amateur collectors for this purpose between the end of the voyage in 1846 and the publication of the journal in 1847. Examples include the reference to Bell's 'tortoise-shell statue', which is illustrated in Jukes' journal and also identified in a footnote as being 'now in the Museum of the United Service Institution' (Figure 6.5).⁴² It is notable that those collectors who can be identified through recorded donations to the British Museum, namely Bell, Ince and Porcher, are in fact the only members of the *Fly*'s crew said by Jukes to have engaged in such work. Risk's decision to send his collection to the Bristol Institution seems therefore to have underlined his inferior status among the amateur collectors, and so exposes the existence of a hierarchy of inclusion within Jukes' journal, as well as among those members of the crew who worked 'below deck'.

6.2 The Royal Navy and British science after 1830

Though Ashworth is correct to suggest that formal scientific accreditation in the navy emerged only in the late nineteenth century, the developments within amateur and professional ethnographic practice with which I am concerned were, at least in part, the product of a series of organisational and scientific initiatives undertaken by the Admiralty in the 1830s. These were implicated also in the turn to the north then apparent in Australian exploration and settlement, and may help to explain Bell, Ince and Porcher's behaviour. Sophie Waring argues that the Admiralty was in effect 'intervening' in a late Georgian scientific crisis.⁴³ In 1830 the mathematician

⁴² Jukes. *Narrative of the Surveying Voyage of H.M.S. Fly*, vol. 1, p. 193.

⁴³ Sophie Waring. 'The Board of Longitude and the funding of scientific work: negotiating authority and expertise in the early nineteenth century', *Journal for Maritime Research*, 16 (2014), 56.

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Charles Babbage gave voice to a general atmosphere of discontent when he bemoaned the disorganised state of English science in his *Reflections on the decline of science in England*.⁴⁴ In these years, the Admiralty was already becoming increasingly involved in directing and bringing together a range of disparate institutions. Perhaps the most significant move was the appointment of the naval post-captain and Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society Francis Beaufort to the position of Hydrographer of the Royal Navy in 1829. Although nominally concerned only with navigational matters the Hydrographic Office, established in 1795, soon began to encourage the navy's investigation of natural history and a range of other scientific pursuits.⁴⁵ Like Barrow, Beaufort was a naval personality much reminiscent of Joseph Banks; a keen student of science who was soon to become the Admiralty's 'de facto scientific advisor' it was he, according to Adrian Webb, who was principally responsible for the Hydrographic Office's official recognition as a scientific branch of the Admiralty in 1831.⁴⁶

Beaufort was also influential in the establishment of the Geographical Society of London in 1830, at which Barrow and John Franklin joined him as founding members.⁴⁷ The society was created as a means to 'promote and diffuse' geographical knowledge and it accordingly maintained a close relationship with those responsible for directing naval exploration; one of the society's first proposals, as discussed above, was to 'collect and distribute information regarding New Holland, or as it is now more generally called, Australia'.⁴⁸ In subsequent years the Society continued to offer a rare space for specifically Australian matters to be heard. In 1835, the surgeon Thomas Braidwood Wilson, a Fellow of the society, published

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

Charles Babbage. *Reflections on the decline of science in England and on some of its causes* (London: B. Fellowes, 1830).

⁴⁵ Adrian Webb. 'More than just charts: hydrographic expertise within the Admiralty, 1795–1829', *Journal for Maritime Research*, 16 (2014), 43-54.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 52.

Alfred Friendly. *Beaufort of the Admiralty* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1977), p. 289.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.* p. 288.

⁴⁸ Christopher Lloyd. *Mr Barrow of the Admiralty* (London: Collins, 1970), p. 160.

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an account of his travel to Raffles Bay, Melville Island, Swan River and King George Sound, in an attempt to assist the Society's efforts to persuade the government of 'the manifold advantages likely to result from colonising the north coast of New Holland'.⁴⁹ In 1836, the Society supported George Grey's ill-fated plan to survey possible sites for settlement in north-western Australia; in 1839 it received in return a report 'on the domestic manners and social life of the aborigines of S.W. Australia', whom Grey encountered and studied at Perth.⁵⁰ As early as 1837, meetings of the society featured presentations of ethnographic and natural history specimens, such as those of the Scottish explorer Andrew Smith.⁵¹ In support of such studies by amateur naval officers and sailors, the Society would subsequently become a major voice in calls for the promotion of naval education.

In the 1830s, pressure for improved naval education more often came from the Hydrographic Office through the medium of the *Nautical Magazine*. According to Megan Barford, Beaufort effectively incorporated this publication into the institution's purview in 1836.⁵² In 1839 the periodical drew attention to the British nation's burgeoning scientific curiosity, and suggested that learned sailors might offer a remedy:

Literary societies and mechanics' institutes, are now thickly planted over the land, and the members of such associations look earnestly to the wanderers on the ocean, for contributions to their Museums, and for aid in their scientific researches...How valuable are such auxiliaries: yet, we need not remind our maritime readers how many things have been passed unheeded by them.⁵³

⁴⁹ Thomas Braidwood Wilson. *Narrative of a voyage round the world* (London: Sherwood, Gilbert, & Piper, 1835), p. viii.

⁵⁰ George Grey. 'On the domestic manners and social life of the Aborigines of S. W. Australia', 15 Feb. 1839. RGS, JMS/13/23.

⁵¹ 'A Sketch of the Progress of Geography', *The Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, 7 (1837), 187.

⁵² Megan Barford. 'Fugitive Hydrography: The *Nautical Magazine* and the Hydrographic Office of the Admiralty, c.1832-1850', *The International Journal of Maritime History*, 27 (2015), 208-226.

⁵³ 'The Mariners' Club', *The Nautical Magazine and Naval Chronicle for 1839* (London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1839), 327.

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This may have been written with the contemporary growth of the museums at Haslar and the United Service Institution in mind. The establishment of the latter institution, in 1832, had been achieved in part thanks to Beaufort's direction.⁵⁴ As seen in Chapter Five, it nevertheless proved a poor rival to Haslar's scientific eminence. There were earlier precedents for recognising amateur contributions, however. 'Sir Joseph Banks', the *Nautical Magazine* continued, once 'declared, that the most rare collection of plants and seeds he ever received, was from the hands of a man [the mate of a merchant ship] totally unacquainted with botanical science'.⁵⁵ The employment of sailors as object collectors could thus be effective, and more so if those sailors had received a basic education. Readers who had spent time at sea would understand the frustration of having access to valuable specimens and yet no means of identifying the most lucrative. Here, the *Nautical Magazine* was in tune with wider thinking. As observed in Chapter Five, the British Museum had criticised the Admiralty in 1835 for its inability to provide 'some competent person' to collect specimens of natural history on the *Sulphur*'s voyage to Australia; the curator John George Children observed that all such requests were repeatedly ignored.⁵⁶ Gray, then an 'extra assistant' in the museum's Natural History department, complained similarly that:

I do not think that the Admiralty, the Colonial Office, and I might add the Foreign Office also, afford us the assistance which, as the National Museum, we have a right to expect from them. When collections are made by expeditions sent out by the Government, I think that the specimens brought home should be sent to the Museum; but this has rarely been done.⁵⁷

As discussed in Chapter Five, Gray was particularly incensed by Alexander Collie's exclusive collecting for Haslar.⁵⁸ This, perhaps, lay at the heart of

⁵⁴ Neil Ramsey. 'Exhibiting Discipline: Military Science and the Naval and Military Library and Museum', in Neil Ramsey and Gillian Russell (eds.). *Tracing War in British Enlightenment and Romantic Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 113-131.

⁵⁵ 'The Mariners' Club', 328.

⁵⁶ See Chapter Five, section 5.2.

⁵⁷ *Report from the Select Committee on the Condition, Management and Affairs of the British Museum* (London: House of Commons, 1835), p. 242.

⁵⁸ See Chapter Five, section 5.2.

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Ince's subsequent decision to send a large number of objects to his uncle's care. More widely, Haslar's success helped to persuade the Admiralty and British Government, through pressure from the British Museum, to invest in an infrastructure for naval science. In 1837, the Admiralty confessed itself 'anxious to extend the advantages of education to the petty officers, seamen, marines, and boys of the fleet'.⁵⁹ For this reason, it created the position 'Seaman's Schoolmaster'.⁶⁰ Following the closure of the Royal Naval College in Portsmouth in the same year, this meant that sailors and officers were increasingly trained at sea.⁶¹ Any willing and competent person on-board a voyage could take up this new role, which encouraged the atmosphere of amateur investigation in which Bell, Ince and Porcher seemingly thrived. The nominated 'Schoolmaster' was tasked to 'blend' young sailors' scientific education 'with that general system of education which it is desirable that every gentleman who entered the navy should possess'.⁶²

A key tension within this period concerned the extent to which sailors were permitted a scientific agency of their own. Breton's text, with which I began this chapter, alludes to just some of the arguments which flourished at the time. Following his 1830 broadside on the poor state of British science, Babbage was an important influence in the development of the British Association for the Advancement of Science [BAAS], founded in 1831. Here, contemporaries like William Whewell sought to demarcate legitimate science as the province of men with 'theoretical insights and mathematical training', being often products of the mathematical tripos at Cambridge.⁶³ At the 1833 meeting of the BAAS, Michael Reidy has shown that Whewell's creation of 'scientist' as a term was intimately concerned with his thoughts on the role of the 'Subordinate Labourers' responsible for gathering tidal

⁵⁹ 'Memorandum', *The Nautical Magazine and Naval Chronicle for 1837* (London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co., 1837), 848.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Harry Dickinson. *Educating the Royal Navy* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), p. 57.

⁶² 'Naval Chronicle', *The Nautical Magazine and Naval Chronicle for 1837*, 324.

⁶³ Michael Reidy. *Tides of History: Ocean Science and Her Majesty's Navy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), p. 238.

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data, who were composed almost entirely of sailors.⁶⁴ Thus, sailors were used as a key and early example of how the bottom of a new scientific hierarchy, predicated upon the synthesis of empirical knowledge, might look. As Randolph Cock has argued, however, sailors were not necessarily willing to surrender their own interpretative agency, the growth of which has been charted in the previous four chapters of this thesis. The ‘experience of observing and collecting’ tidal data, says Cock, ‘led the more curious and enthusiastic of this class [sailors] to begin offering their own, in some cases superior, theories’.⁶⁵ Tidal specialists within the navy such as Frederick William Beechey soon managed to research and to publish their own work. In consequence, Cock argues, the first half of the nineteenth century was one in which the navy was ‘heavily and deeply involved, from the Admiralty Board down to the midshipman and, in some cases, the seamen, in promoting, supporting, organising, executing and publishing the results of, investigations into many of the major scientific questions of the day’.⁶⁶

As seen in Chapter Five, Beechey’s encouragement of naval science and collecting was an important factor in Collie’s success on-board the 1825-1828 voyage of the *Blossom*. In consequence of the many relative failures of Barrow’s appointed naturalist, George Tradescant Lay, Beechey was also strongly in favour of supporting scientific activity among his own sailors, which encompassed ethnographic collecting.⁶⁷ The captain of the 1842-1846 voyage of the *Fly*, Francis Price Blackwood, was very much of the same mind. Blackwood was influential in the appointment of naturalists to the *Fly*’s voyage (see Chapter Seven) and the associated encouragement of intellectual endeavour. A member, alongside Beechey, of the Raleigh Club which had preceded the Geographical Society, and a member and

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p. 240.

⁶⁵ Randolph Cock. ‘Scientific Servicemen in the Royal Navy and the Professionalisation of Science, 1816-55’, in David Knight and Matthew Eddy (eds.). *Science and Beliefs: From Natural Philosophy to Natural Science, 1700-1900* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 97.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 110.

⁶⁷ Janet Owen. ‘Collecting artefacts, acquiring empire: Exploring the relationship between Enlightenment and Darwinist collecting and late-nineteenth-century British imperialism’, *Journal of the History of Collections*, 18 (2006), 9-25.

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honorary secretary of the latter institution from 1830 and 1853 respectively, Blackwood was himself chosen to lead the voyage because of his ‘activity and taste for scientific pursuits’.⁶⁸ After the voyage’s return to England, he developed these by donating to the University of Cambridge’s Philosophical Society a large quantity of ornithological specimens, a decision which no doubt helped in his immediate appointment to the university as a member of Jesus College.⁶⁹ ‘This gentleman’, the geologist Adam Sedgwick later recorded, ‘after returning from a long and perilous voyage of discovery, put on the Academic dress, and resided a year amongst us’.⁷⁰

While at Jesus, Blackwood wrote to Beaufort for support to publish Jukes’ journal of the *Fly*, and used his own experiences to petition the Geographical Society to continue its investment in naval scientific investigation.⁷¹ Blackwood’s relation to Cambridge thus complicates our understanding of the university’s role in the promotion of Whewell’s scientific hierarchy. Writing to the Geographical Society’s secretary William Humble in 1847, Blackwood proposed that a letter be sent with Beaufort’s permission to all surveying voyages as a means to solicit sailors’ conversion into ‘practical geographers’.⁷² A year previously, the *Nautical Magazine* had reiterated its claim that ‘by some simple regulation, which would not interfere with the duties of the service, naval officers, above all other persons, have it in their power to assist materially the efforts of men of superior mind in advancing science’.⁷³ The difference with Blackwood was that he believed amateurs to possess a sufficiently capable mind of their own. In his letter to Humble, Blackwood suggested that:

⁶⁸ Clements Robert Markham. *The Fifty Years’ Work of the Royal Geographical Society* (London: John Murray, 1881), p. 129.

‘Report of the Council to the Thirty-fifth Annual General Meeting of the Society’, *Monthly notices of the Royal Astronomical Society*, vol. 15 (1855), 110.

⁶⁹ Adam Sedgwick. *A Discourse on the Studies of the University of Cambridge* (London: John W. Parker, 1850), p. 346.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Blackwood to Beaufort, 2 Nov. 1846. UKHO, Incoming Letters Prior to 1857, B1-B300, p. 50.

⁷² Blackwood to William Humble, 12 May. 1847. RGS, RGS/CB3/93.

⁷³ ‘Port Royal’, *The Nautical Magazine and Naval Chronicle for 1846* (London: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1846), 364.

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a considerable addition to our stock of Geographical knowledge, and very valuable papers to place in the Journals of the Society might be made by communications received from officers who are employed in the numerous surveying vessels; that many of these officers would be happy to make such communications and correspond with the society were it intimated to them that their letters would be gratefully received of which I can speak from my own personal knowledge. That most Captains of Surveying Ships are members of the Society, but their time is too much occupied by...duties & correspondence to be able to give from time to time such matter as they would wish to the Society - but that other officers on board whose time is not so fully occupied, would be able & willing to do so and that by making one or more of these officers 'Honorary Associates' for the time of their employment & sending them copies of the Journal, they would take it as a compliment which they would gladly repay by very useful and interesting matter concerning the countries and coasts they are surveying...for it must be recollected that these Gentlemen are the Practical Geographers whose information would be most precise and valuable. It would have moreover the good effect of letting the public and the Society judge of the observations and intelligence of these young men and bring them into notice.⁷⁴

During his time on the voyage of the *Fly*, Blackwood had similarly encouraged scientific activity for the public benefit by taking pains to communicate to the 'officers and others on board' an order received from Beaufort that 'one specimen of whatever may be collected by them or any individual on board the two ships will be considered as public property and at their Lordships' disposal'.⁷⁵ It might therefore be argued that amateur collectors such as Bell, Ince and Porcher donated objects to the British Museum simply because they were acquiescent to the captain's orders, and wished to build private collections. This was certainly the rationale for amateur collecting implied by the instructions, which in a convention dating as far back as the *Investigator* expedition simply lacked faith in the prospect

⁷⁴ Blackwood to Humble, 12 May. 1847. RGS, RGS/CB3/93.

⁷⁵ Blackwood to Beaufort, 24 Apr. 1842. UKHO, Captain's Letters, SL 29, 31.

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that amateur collectors would wish to serve the public good.⁷⁶ However, it is equally possible and perhaps more convincing to argue that amateur collectors were actually imbued with a sense of purpose and importance by the fact that one specimen of any and all collections they made would now in a sense be *legally* destined for a public collection with the Admiralty's official assistance. A value had been set upon amateur contributions.

Significantly, those who collected on the *Fly* were able to choose the public locations to which their objects were sent, and to be recorded as the specimens' original collectors. In result amateur collectors were, to use Blackwood's phrase, now 'brought into notice' thanks to his relative generosity in permitting them to decide for themselves where their collections would go. In contrast, the work of amateur collectors, including Ince, on the subsequent voyages of the *Rattlesnake* and *Herald* (1852-1861) was masked by the fact that almost all collected specimens were recorded as having been donated by the ships' captains. In spite of his death from illness in 1850, the *Rattlesnake*'s captain Owen Stanley was credited with the donation of 192 objects from the *Rattlesnake* expedition to the British Museum in 1851; Henry Mangles Denham, captain of the *Herald*, presented 30 objects in 1857.⁷⁷ Several objects were associated with the voyages' naturalists and officers, but there were no records of individual collectors comparable with Bell, Ince and Porcher. This represented a philosophy more closely aligned with that of Whewell and the *Nautical Magazine*, which restricted the effective role of amateurs to that of anonymous auxiliary informants 'for men of superior mind'.⁷⁸ Paradoxically, the growth of amateur collecting in the navy after 1830 therefore made it less likely that individual collectors would be respected or recognised. The *Fly* was an exception, but by the time of the *Rattlesnake* and *Herald* surveys, object collecting was almost a normal part of the crew's daily work.

⁷⁶ See Chapter Three, section 3.2.

⁷⁷ See, for example, BM. Oc1851.0103.132, Oc1982,Q.135.

⁷⁸ 'Port Royal', 364.

6.3 George Windsor Earl's 'commercial ethnography'

Ethnographic collecting in this period did not always purport to be an 'objective' scientific endeavour. Owing in part to the peculiar atmosphere apparent in northern Australia and the Torres Strait after 1830, the amateur collectors on-board the *Fly* were motivated by imperial and commercial exploitation in a manner more pronounced than that of earlier actors such as King. Blackwood's contributions notwithstanding, a less scrupulous influence upon Bell, Ince and Porcher's world, and that of northern Australian settlement in the 1830s more generally, was the English entrepreneur, navigator and explorer George Windsor Earl. An early member of the Royal Asiatic Society and a corresponding member of the Ethnological Society of London (founded 1843), Earl's 'boundless enthusiasm' for northern Australia was, according to Bob Reece, a decisive factor in Barrow's decision to order the establishment of a settlement at Port Essington.⁷⁹ Earl was also intrinsic to the region's development as a 'geocommercial space'; the energetic capitalist, 'empire-builder' and son of a captain and ship-owner combined his early experience as a midshipman in the East India Company with a knowledge of Australia acquired after his emigration to the Swan River Colony in 1830 in order to emerge as one of the principal conduits for the Admiralty's interest in settling the continent's north.⁸⁰ 'Notable gaps in his first-hand knowledge did not inhibit Earl from presenting himself as an authority on a wide range of subjects' after his arrival at Port Essington in 1838, as Reece drily observes.⁸¹ This confidence led Earl to publish two pamphlets promoting settlement, and to convey a series of related memoranda to the Colonial Office.⁸²

⁷⁹ Bob Reece. 'The Australasian Career of George Windsor Earl', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 65 (1992), 46.

⁸⁰ Alan Powell. 'Enterprise in Tropical Australia by George. W. Earl', *The Great Circle*, 25 (2003), 58.

⁸¹ Reece. 'The Australasian Career of George Windsor Earl', 46.

⁸² See below.

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The *Fly*'s amateur collectors were undoubtedly inspired by the mercantile and scientific success which Earl enjoyed in spite of his poor education and meagre political connections. Sweatman took several of Earl's writings with him on the outward voyage of the *Bramble*, and investigated the advantages and natural resources of Port Essington in a manner which deliberately sought to extend Earl's conclusions.⁸³ Not least in consequence of his appointment as Government interpreter for indigenous communities at Port Essington in 1838, and as the area's magistrate and commissioner of crown lands in 1843, Earl encapsulated the atmosphere of change and scientific opportunity then prevalent in the region.⁸⁴ In the 1830s and 1840s, Earl was in contact with the Geographical Society, where his reports on the resources and peoples of northern Australia and the Torres Strait reached a keen audience, of which Blackwood was a part. In 1845, he sent the Society a range of specimens including 'cloth manufactures of the Indian Islanders together with a specimen of metal ore and two spear-heads obtained from the Cobourg Peninsula'.⁸⁵ 'I fear the former are not much suited to the pursuit of your society, as they are connected rather with ethnography than with geography', he wrote.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, Earl was able to use these objects to illustrate the nexus of European settlement, resource exploitation and indigenous encounter then emerging in the continent's north:

I was induced to collect them from having observed that the state of the cloth manufacture in the different islands of the archipelago gave a very fair example of the comparative civilisation of the inhabitants... The two spear heads and the specimen of ore are from the mountains lying inland from the Cobourg Peninsula on the north coast of Australia, and as I was never able to visit these mountains personally, they form the only productions I was able to obtain that could lead to

⁸³ John Sweatman. 'Journal of a surveying voyage in H.M.S. *Bramble*, 1842-1847', SLNSW, A 1725, p. 264.

⁸⁴ Paul Thomas. 'Interpreting the Macassans: Language exchange in historical encounters', in Marshall Clark and Sally K. May (eds.). *Macassan History and Heritage* (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2013), 77.

'Law Intelligence', *The Australian* (Sydney, NSW). 30 Aug. 1843.

⁸⁵ George Windsor Earl to Julian Jackson, 10 May. 1845. RGS, RGS/CB3/247.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

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any conclusions with regard to their geological structure; but from the circumstance of one of the same description being found on the north coast near Cape Wessel where granite is abundant, I suspect that these mountains will be found to be of the same formation. The spear heads and the ore, the latter being used by the Australians to paint their bodies a red colour form an article of barter between the mountaineers and the natives of the coast the latter given in exchange [for] iron and clothes that they have obtained from the Garrison at Port Essington or from the Macassan Trepang fishers.⁸⁷

The two spear-heads and a series of other objects were also discussed in purely ethnographic terms, being ‘the best attempt at manufacture that I have met with among the poor Australians’.⁸⁸ Earl’s initial desire to make his investigations strictly relevant to the Society’s geographical interests soon gave way to the production of more explicitly ethnographic treatises, as he shaped the Society’s interest in the subject. His 1845 missive ended by asking the Society to ‘let me know if you would like a continuation [of his ethnographic commentary] and I will then go to Torres Strait, New Guinea etc’.⁸⁹ Having received an assurance that this would be appreciated, Earl sent a more detailed report in 1846, ‘On the Aboriginal Tribes of the Northern Coast of Australia’.⁹⁰ Here, he discussed the putative ancestry, material culture and historical dispersion of the region’s indigenous peoples. The report began with what was essentially an advert for the merits of this new form of scientific investigation, and is therefore strongly suggestive of the importance of amateur geographic exploration in Australia for the development of British ethnography in this period:

The manners and customs of the native inhabitants of a newly explored country present an interesting subject of inquiry, and by placing on record, at the earliest period of our acquaintance with them, the distinctive features of the different tribes of which they are

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ George Windsor Earl. ‘On the Aboriginal Tribes of the Northern Coast of Australia’, *The Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, 16 (1846), 239-251.

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composed, many peculiarities, interesting to the researches of the geographer and the ethnologist, may be preserved, which the progress of civilization, and the consequent increase of intercourse between them, would tend to obliterate.⁹¹

As discussed in Chapters One and Three, it is difficult to analyse actors such as Earl according to the conventions which dominate work on the early history of anthropology. Efram Sera-Shriar's various discussions of Victorian anthropology and 'ethnology in the metropole', with their attendant focus on 'informants' (in the style of the *Nautical Magazine*) and racial classification, offer few tools for understanding Earl's experimental practices, or his interest in the relative sophistication of 'tribes' and apparent lack of interest in notions of race.⁹² Sera-Shriar's focus on metropolitan luminaries also misses the underlying commercial motivations which governed the work of many naval collectors and colonial entrepreneurs. Earl for instance simultaneously pioneered a highly commercialised form of ethnographic collecting that was not likewise aimed at the Geographical Society. In his 1846 *Enterprise in Tropical Australia*, Earl discussed Indigenous Australians in a chapter titled 'Sources of Labour', in which he promoted their employment as 'fishers, herdsman, and even as seamen'.⁹³

Similar observations informed Earl's related but later study, *A Handbook for Colonists in Tropical Australia*. Here, ethnographic observations were used as a means to encourage settlement, and ethnographic collections were interpreted from the perspective of economic botany.⁹⁴ In relation to the study of Australian flora, Earl's methods were similar to those earlier conceived by Allan Cunningham, but were invariably more explicit.⁹⁵ Like Cunningham and John Septimus Roe, Earl commented in particular upon

⁹¹ *Ibid.* 239.

⁹² See, for example, Efram Sera-Shriar. 'Ethnology in the metropole: Robert Knox, Robert Gordon Latham and local sites of observational training', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 42 (2011), 486-496.

⁹³ George Windsor Earl. *Enterprise in Tropical Australia* (London: Madden and Malcolm, 1846), p. 115.

⁹⁴ George Windsor Earl. *A Handbook for Colonists in Tropical Australia* (London: Trubner & Co., 1863), p. 43.

⁹⁵ See Chapter Four, section 4.4.

baskets made from *Pandanus* trees, the leaves of which were ‘exceedingly strong and flexible, and...used by the natives to make baskets, which are generally so closely woven as to hold liquids. No palm produces leaves equal to this for making leaves and bags’.⁹⁶ In a similar manner, Earl spoke of bamboo found ‘on the shores of Van Diemen Gulf and the Gulf of Carpentaria, and on the N. E. coast, from Rockingham Bay to Cape York’.⁹⁷ This, he wrote, was ‘applied by the natives...in the construction of their sole musical instrument, a hollow bamboo, from which they produce a sound by blowing through it somewhat similar to that of the drone of a bag-pipe’.⁹⁸ Meanwhile, the properties of the *Casuarina* tree could be inferred from the fact that ‘the natives use it to make their heavy war clubs’.⁹⁹ Owing to such use, colonists had likewise discovered a way of ‘splitting [the wood] into shingles for roofing’.¹⁰⁰

6.4 John Sweatman: archetypal amateur naval ethnographer?

Amateur collecting on naval voyages was likely performed with similar themes in mind; a single object could represent privileged ethnographic, commercial and geographical insights on which an otherwise insignificant person with scientific pretensions could stake their claim. This interpretation of the actions and collections of Bell, Ince and Porcher can be assessed and substantiated thanks to the fortuitous survival of an intriguing historical document: the journal of one of their contemporaries, the *Bramble*’s clerk John Sweatman. The journal also offers insights upon those, like Sweatman himself, who would otherwise have escaped the historical record. As mentioned above, the document surfaced in a London bookshop in 1926, where it was purchased by the Mitchell Library in Sydney. In the eighty-year period between the *Fly*’s return and then, it appears to have gathered

⁹⁶ Earl. *A Handbook for Colonists in Tropical Australia*, p. 73.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.* p. 72.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 69.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

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dust, perhaps most likely in a neglected library or a family collection, and the first volume is missing. Owing to its substantial ethnographic commentary (the document is approximately 90,000 words), Sweatman's journal has since been used to assess and to expand Haddon's later work on the ethnography of the Torres Strait; forty pages alone are dedicated to the 'manners and customs' of Torres Strait Islanders. While largely narrative, the journal contains significant work on regional vocabularies, and features a number of original illustrations made by Sweatman, Melville, Porcher and others during the *Fly*'s survey.

The history and historical value of the journal are less well charted. In 1977, Jim Allen and Peter Corris published an edited version of the handwritten manuscript; their introduction to the edition is the only work that has been done to examine the journal's origins and purpose.¹⁰¹ Allen and Corris track Sweatman's younger years in London and his schooling at London's King's College. That is about all that is known of Sweatman's background before he joined the *Fly* as a clerk on 18 February 1842, then aged only seventeen. The editors note that the handwritten journal purchased by the Mitchell Library was compiled by Sweatman in 1849 using his original notes and diaries from the *Fly*.¹⁰² It is apparent from the style and composition of the journal that Sweatman wrote it with the intention of it being widely read (it has a contents page, for instance). Allen and Corris offer several explanations for the fact that the journal was never published; Sweatman's many insulting remarks concerning the *Bramble*'s captain Charles Yule, his occasional plagiarism of Jukes' work, and the perceived irrelevance of his insights following the publication of Jukes' journal are offered as contributory factors.¹⁰³ Sweatman seemingly lacked the financial resources and intellectual clout to attract Admiralty or other funding for his work. Though Sweatman often mentioned Jukes, he was not likewise referred to in Jukes' journal, and thus we are once again made aware of the varying status

¹⁰¹ Allen and Corris. *The Journal of John Sweatman*, pp. xiii-xxx.

¹⁰² *Ibid.* p. xxii.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.* p. xx.

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of the *Fly*'s amateur ethnographers. Sweatman's position on the survey's second ship, the *Bramble*, perhaps infers a further hierarchy in turn.

Allen's and Corris' observations are here expanded with four short notes, which further our understanding of Sweatman and inform the discussion below. First, Sweatman's full name was John Mary Sweatman, after his mother, who died, aged 23, three years after he was born.¹⁰⁴ Sweatman's father was a physician at the Middlesex Hospital; also called John Sweatman, he was a friend and contemporary of the anatomist and theologian Charles Bell.¹⁰⁵ The younger Sweatman's literary ability and scientific interests may therefore have been a product of this medical background. Sweatman's father died at home aged 39 in 1839, leaving his son an orphan at the age of fourteen.¹⁰⁶ Only one month previously, Sweatman had enrolled at King's College with the help of £22 from his father. Allen and Corris note that this was the school's full fee, which was payable because the younger Sweatman had failed to find sponsorship.¹⁰⁷ The editors' puzzlement about why Sweatman did not continue his education can therefore be explained by a sudden bereavement and presumable financial hardship. With this in mind, the young and well educated boy's enlistment in the navy is much easier to explain. A testament to its development from the 1830s onward, the navy offered Sweatman escape, adventure and an atmosphere of scientific endeavour that would satisfy his intelligence, and expand his education.

Another new and relevant insight is that Sweatman was mentioned in the *Illustrated London News* on 5 August 1848, within an article on the 'New Route for the Australian Mails through Torres Strait'.¹⁰⁸ In a sign of the

¹⁰⁴ 'Deaths. London and its Vicinity', *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, vol. 98 (London: J. B. Nicholas and son, 1828), 379.

¹⁰⁵ Erasmus Wilson. *The History of the Middlesex Hospital* (London: John Churchill, 1845), p. 254.

¹⁰⁶ 'Deaths', *The Times*, 20 Sep. 1839.

¹⁰⁷ Allen and Corris. *The Journal of John Sweatman*, p. xviii.

¹⁰⁸ 'New Route for the Australian Mails through Torres Strait', *The Illustrated London News*. 5 Aug. 1848.

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importance of ethnographic study to this new colonial arena, as well as to burgeoning public interest in the ‘wild people’ of the region, the *Illustrated London News* embellished its report with various accounts of an incident involving the *Fly*’s confrontation with indigenous people at Cape Possession in Papua New Guinea. The report made two references to Sweatman’s own account of the incident and one to a report by Yule, and was illustrated with a drawing by Melville that is identical to one found in Sweatman’s journal.¹⁰⁹ Sweatman is quoted at length but the quotation does not match that found within the version of his journal now in Sydney. The origins of the article can be linked to an 1846 letter from Blackwood to Beaufort, which makes clear that its publication was a consequence of the Admiralty’s initial unwillingness to fund an official narrative of the voyage. In 1846, Blackwood warned Beaufort that if the Admiralty would not help, he was willing to ‘place myself in communication with the “Pictorial London News” and let them do it’.¹¹⁰ Although the Admiralty relented and helped to publish an official narrative in 1847 (see below), Blackwood seems to have decided to carry out his threat in part. The newspaper was permitted to access Melville, Sweatman and Yule’s records, and to publish a brief extract from the voyage.

The implication of this is that Sweatman’s journal was not a private diary but an official account of his work upon the expedition. Its surrender by the Admiralty to the *Illustrated London News* and later return to Sweatman suggests that the latter’s remarks on Yule were no barrier to its publication. Sweatman was therefore vindicated in part for assuming that his amateur contributions would be valued. One of the more radical inferences that could be made is that Sweatman actually intended his journal to be the definitive account of the *Bramble*’s surveys, and perhaps even of the *Fly*’s. Blackwood’s 1846 letter to Beaufort made clear that there was no official

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

Sweatman. ‘Journal of a surveying voyage’, plate 43.

¹¹⁰ Blackwood to Beaufort, 2 Nov. 1846. UKHO, Incoming Letters Prior to 1857, B1-B300, p. 50.

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plan for a published narrative in the style of the earlier works of King and Flinders:

Mr Jukes to whom I delegated all my interest in the matter showed his notes to [John] Murray [the Admiralty's publisher] who utterly declined all concern in it - Australia being as Murray said quite overwritten - now, although it be true that our work has been uninteresting...there is something (if not interesting to the fashionable reader) at least to the voyager and seaman there is matter that might be useful - and, though I cannot get up fine language...to make a book sell, yet I think a short & concise account of our voyages is due to those who sent us as well as to those who were concerned in the voyage.¹¹¹

If Sweatman was aware that no official narrative was originally planned with a view to later publication, it is possible that he attempted to seize the initiative himself. Murray's disinclination to publish more on the subject of Australia may have been one reason why Sweatman ultimately failed (the job eventually went to the publishers T. & W. Boone). Alternatively, the similarities between Jukes' and Sweatman's work may be evidence that the two collaborated to some extent, or even that each built upon the work of the other at some stage before the matter of who would have the privilege of authoring the official text had been finally decided. If so, Jukes evidently emerged the victor; he began the first volume to his narrative of the *Fly*'s survey with an expression of gratitude to Blackwood for having 'so kindly waived in my favour the privilege of publishing the narrative of our late voyage'.¹¹² The wording, here, implied that there had been some form of competition. Whatever the case, it is striking that an amateur and relatively insignificant figure such as Sweatman might have harboured such grand pretensions; the format and content of his journal do much to confirm the sense of equality in scientific opportunity perceived to exist at the time.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹¹² Jukes. *Narrative of the Surveying Voyage of H.M.S. Fly*, vol. 1, p. iii.

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Sweatman's journal was evidently intended in part as an ethnographic treatise. Such is its detail that his observations have since been used in commentary on subjects as diverse as indigenous alcohol production, ceremonial trade, animal management and the region's historical demographics.¹¹³ In keeping with my observations in Chapter Three, the dominant imperial ideologies and theories of man on which historians have generally relied in their analyses of nineteenth-century colonial encounter are conspicuously irrelevant to Sweatman's work; 'no mere echoes of popularized philosophies, Sweatman's judgements...derive their freshness from direct observation', as Allen and Corris note.¹¹⁴ Nevertheless, Sweatman may have been guided in part by metropolitan ethnologists. In 1839, a meeting of the BAAS had resolved to form a committee to design and publish a pamphlet advising ethnographic researches. Among the members of the committee were James Cowles Prichard, Charles Darwin, Thomas Hodgkin and Ince's uncle, Gray. In 1841, an ethnographic guide appeared in result: 'Queries respecting the Human Race, to be addressed to Travellers and others'.¹¹⁵ A forerunner of Prichard's 'Ethnology' chapter in the Admiralty's 1849 *A Manual of Scientific Enquiry*, the guide advocated an encyclopaedic approach recognisable in Sweatman's work, the first (and lost) volume of which may have made this link more explicit.¹¹⁶ Contrary to the position of Whewell and the *Nautical Magazine*, the guide's reliance upon untrained travellers expressed an optimism about the independent empirical and theoretical work that naval servicemen in particular might produce. There was a hint of tension, and a definite attempt to persuade, in its introductory matter:

¹¹³ See for example, Ian McNiven. 'Precarious islands: Kulkalgal reef island settlement and high mobility across 700 km of seascape, central Torres Strait and northern Great Barrier Reef', *Quaternary International*, 385 (2015), 39-55.

¹¹⁴ Allen and Corris. *The Journal of John Sweatman*, p. xxvi.

¹¹⁵ *Report of the Eleventh Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* (London: John Murray, 1842), pp. 332-339.

¹¹⁶ James Cowles Prichard. 'Ethnology', in John Herschel (ed.). *A Manual of Scientific Enquiry* (London: John Murray, 1849), 253-267.

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The Committee has...further to express its desire that the Association may continue its support to the interesting subject of Ethnography... Britain, in her extensive colonial possessions and commerce, and in the number and intelligence of her naval officers, possesses unrivalled facilities for the elucidation of the whole subject; and it would be a stain on her character, as well as a loss to humanity, were she to allow herself to be left behind by other nations in this inquiry.¹¹⁷

Many of the sections within Sweatman's journal focusing upon ethnographic description are dedicated to developing such research, being detached from his main narrative. At the end of the journal are five plates devoted to the illustration of 'weapons and implements' from Australia, the Torres Strait and Papua New Guinea.¹¹⁸ As suggested above, Sweatman echoed Earl's style and confidence by combining this knowledge with insights designed to further the British imperial and commercial interests to which the Committee also alluded. As a 'mercantile port', he wrote:

I do not see any advantage there would be in Port Essington: Mr Earl talks a good deal and with great truth, on the great consumption of English goods by the Malay Islanders and the exorbitant duties exacted by the Dutch government on all such and therefore concludes that all the natives of the archipelago would gladly flock to an English port to buy these manufactures at a cheaper rate, but I quite agree with Jukes in thinking that as far as regards the independent islands the shortest and best plan would be for a vessel to take goods there at once...¹¹⁹

Sweatman's background helps to explain the idiosyncrasies of his writing, as well as the fact that his work is peculiarly cursive and legible (for a sample, see Figure 6.6). His use of latin terminology and certain social imagery removed him in part from other amateur investigators such as Bell, Ince and Porcher. On one memorable occasion, Sweatman remarked that a

¹¹⁷ *Report of the Eleventh Meeting of the British Association*, p. 332.

¹¹⁸ Sweatman. 'Journal of a surveying voyage', pp. 355-363.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 264.

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‘native of New Guinea’ had a waist ‘taughtened to an extent which would astonish even a boarding school miss’.¹²⁰ Sweatman’s observations and narrative nevertheless do much to illuminate the ambiguous forms of collecting and scientific investigation which occurred on-board the survey. Notably, we gain a sense of a frenetic world of curiosity trading that is quite unmentioned by Jukes. While Sweatman was careful to assemble accurate vocabulary lists and offered a sophisticated commentary upon the cultures and customs he witnessed, he was surprisingly frank about getting ‘a very good collection of curiosities’, seemingly for personal gain.¹²¹ On one occasion, also at Papua New Guinea, Sweatman recorded making ‘a number of gaudy headdresses of scarlet cotton & beads on purpose for them and with these I could generally command the market and soon got my cabin full of “curios”’.¹²² There is a revealing contrast here with the work of the more ‘professional’ Jukes, whose pretensions to scientific objectivity allowed less interplay between public and private desire.

Sweatman frequently combined his own great liking for ‘curios’ with an evident wish to record an accurate ethnography of the Torres Strait. Often, he commented upon the relative ease or difficulty with which he could acquire an object as a means of measuring its cultural significance; curiosities could, as such, become incidental ethnographic collections.¹²³ The clerk relied heavily upon Melville, the survey’s official draughtsman, to provide accurate sketches of the objects he discussed, and it must have been with the artist’s agreement that these later featured so extensively in Sweatman’s journal. Superior versions of the illustrations that Sweatman used appeared also in Jukes’ journal, and on at least two occasions he referred to the same objects. The ‘tortoise-shell figure of a boy’ collected by Bell and mentioned by Jukes was for example illustrated and discussed by Sweatman (Figure 6.5), who noted also that it ‘is now in the museum of the

¹²⁰ *Ibid.* p. 191.

¹²¹ *Ibid.* p. 287.

¹²² *Ibid.* p. 183.

¹²³ *Ibid.* p. 85.

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United Service Institution'.¹²⁴ At Oomaga (Keats) Island in the Torres Strait, Sweatman referred to another object described and illustrated in Jukes' journal, 'a curious image...made of wood about four feet high and intended to represent a bird perched upon two fish' that had been 'procured' from a local hut.¹²⁵ Whereas Jukes simply described it, Sweatman observed that it had been 'broken up' after being found too 'bulky' to be stored on-board.¹²⁶ Fortunately, 'Melville had made a sketch of it, a copy of which I [have] subjoined [to the journal]'.¹²⁷



Figure 6.5 The 'tortoise-shell figure of a boy' collected by John Bell and later donated to the United Service Museum. Illustrated in Sweatman. 'Journal of a surveying voyage', plate 33 (image on the left), and Jukes. *Narrative of the Surveying Voyage of H.M.S. Fly*, vol. 1, p. 193 (image on the right).

¹²⁴ *Ibid.* p. 62.

¹²⁵ Jukes. *Narrative of the Surveying Voyage of H.M.S. Fly*, vol. 1, p. 168. Sweatman. 'Journal of a surveying voyage', p. 12.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

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Sweatman's journal thus illuminates a world far less organised than Jukes cared to admit, and one in which there existed a multitude of subtle and overt social and scientific positioning. Sweatman only very rarely deferred to rival authorities when making his observations. A common theme was that the ordinary sailors ranked below him were less respectful of valuable objects, and of their makers' sympathies. As a figure somewhat aloof from the *Bramble's* crew, Sweatman was removed also from the conventions of bonhomie and masculinity which governed what he evidently considered to be lower forms of collecting. Following a visit to Darnley Island, Sweatman once for instance remarked that 'our people, who (being Sunday) had an afternoons' leave on shore to collect eggs for their messes, amused themselves with shooting them with the bows and arrows they had obtained from the natives of Erub!'.¹²⁸ The most revealing insight into the negotiation of masculinity, gentility and scientific status on-board the two vessels, however, concerned a period of trade at Cape York in 1846, when Sweatman complained that the *Bramble's* 'men' would often ignore the niceties of trade and exchange:

I have often been bartering with a native for a piece of tortoiseshell or something of the kind, trying to satisfy him with a fair price, when a man has come up, snatched the article out of the native's hand & giving him a piece of tobacco in exchange walked off with it regardless of the remonstrances of the black. If I attempted to interfere or to say that *I* was bargaining for that article, I would only be told that "he had as good a right to trade as I" or perhaps some still more insolent answer. Nor was this the worst, I witnessed one case of actual theft by one of our men who found a very curious tortoiseshell mask in the bush and straightaway walked off with it; the native to whom it belonged followed and claimed his property but this man positively refused to give it up and ultimately took it on board the schooner & sold it to little Wright from whom I afterwards bought it again. After this people would have been greatly surprised and would have exclaimed against the "treachery" of the natives if a man had been speared!¹²⁹

¹²⁸ *Ibid.* p. 16.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 285-286.

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Having access to superior quantities of trade gear, Sweatman recorded how he had hatched a plan with certain of his friends and Yule, his captain, to ‘spoil the market at once by giving our more valuable articles on all occasions and for far less than their value’.¹³⁰ Yule, it seems, was powerless to assert any formal discipline to govern moments of exchange. The plan succeeded, Sweatman wrote, as ‘the natives always brought their goods to us first and when on shore kept them back in the bush where we could go up and trade but where...the men did not care to venture’.¹³¹ Sweatman’s vocabulary lists helped him to ‘ask for anything we wanted and to arrange about its price’.¹³² To the crew’s dismay, Sweatman therefore took advantage of his position as clerk, his resultant access to resources, and his ethnographic knowledge to gain better access to interesting collections:

This galled the people more than anything; the abuse & insolence we received for all this was beyond everything, the men talking *at* us on the lower decks so that we could hear it in our berth, mimicking us etc but this we were used to. We knew we had the best of it, and did not care, and I managed to make a very good collection of curiosities.¹³³

The impression given here is of Sweatman as an intellectual and somewhat arrogant figure, bullied by his inferiors but immune from their mutterings and mockery by virtue of his rank. Absent from his account was any impression that objects were being collected for public or scientific benefit, or even that the claim to be acting for such purposes would confer an advantage; the ‘curiosities’ acquired by Yule and Sweatman were qualitatively no different from those of the mutinous men on the ‘lower decks’. Though Sweatman alluded to the transfer of Bell’s collections to the United Service Museum, his desire to create and record ethnographic knowledge was not therefore accompanied by any faith in the intellectual merits of preserving an intentional collection for posterity. How, then, to

¹³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 287.

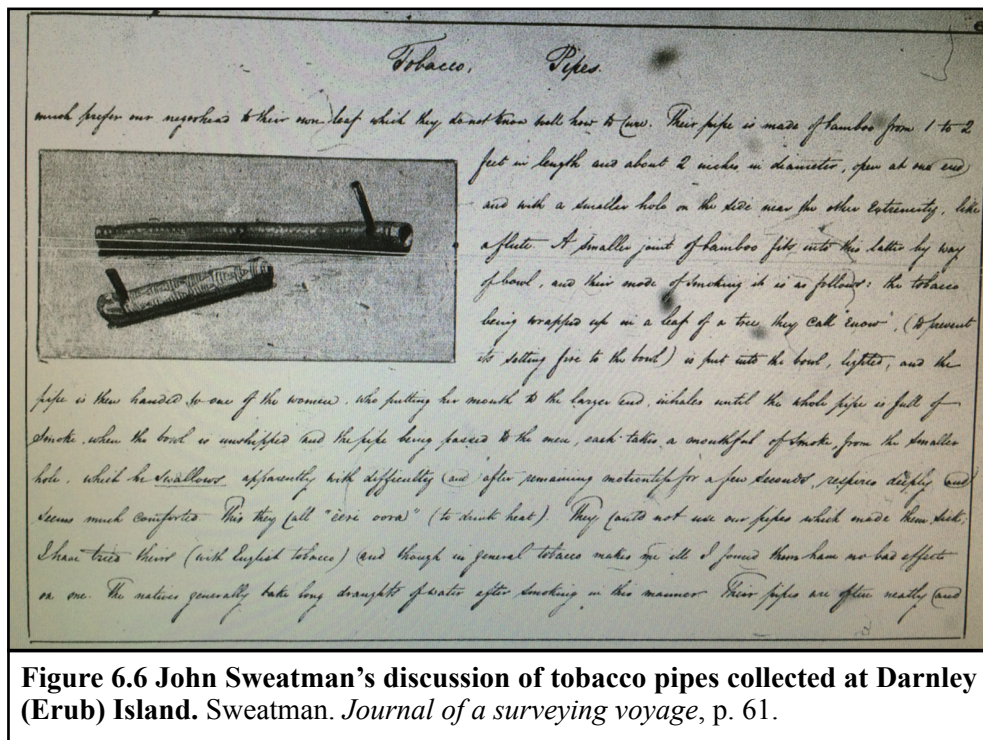
¹³¹ *Ibid.*

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*

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place Bell, Ince and Porcher into this world? The lieutenant and purser possessed a superior rank, and were on friendlier terms with the *Fly*'s naturalist, Jukes, and yet compared with Sweatman in their amateur desire to contribute knowledge. Possibly they lacked the latter's unusually developed literacy and intellect, a product of his background and unconventional path into the navy, and their donations to museums occurred because they were not therefore able to offer comparable ethnographic commentaries written in the 'fine language' envied by Blackwood. This interpretation is supported by the fact that the BAAS committee's 1849 guide made only very minimal reference to the collection of objects; the ethnological guidance given therein could in general be answered only by means of the dense and detailed prose found within Sweatman's journal.¹³⁴ The committee assumed, in short, a pronounced degree of education, literacy and access to paper and leisure-time in those who followed its advice; they would likely not have envisaged the recruitment of individuals such as Bell, Ince and Porcher into the emerging ethnographic discipline.



¹³⁴ 'Works of Art', for instance, were to be 'sought and preserved', but no indication was given as to the desirable fate of these preserved materials. *Report of the Eleventh Meeting of the British Association*, p. 337.

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Porcher's subsequent donation of a drum to the British Museum further aids the impression that object collecting formed an alternative ethnographic methodology among the ordinary sailors whom Sweatman variously outcompeted and derided; it may have been individuals very similar to Porcher who could be heard muttering darkly about the clerk's superior access to collections. The desire for curiosities among this class of people was considerable, but with the exception of Porcher their concern with assisting the 'national collection' is difficult to gauge. Although it would have been extraordinarily difficult for an ordinary seaman to protect and keep hold of anything except a very small object long enough to secure its passage into a museum, it is entirely possible that they might have worked alongside their superiors in this vein; this may explain why the object collected by Porcher is very similar to those acquired at Darnley Island by Ince and Jukes. In the passage quoted above from Sweatman's time at Cape York, the man reprimanded (at least from a safe distance) for stealing a tortoiseshell mask was for example reported to have sold it to a sailor named Wright, the Master's Assistant.¹³⁵ It may be assumed from these details that the thief had very little means of trade, encouraging him to steal in return for a supplement to his wage. While not a selfless scientific action, this would have required a reasonable knowledge of which specimens were rare, valuable, and thus worth the consequences of stealing, which as Sweatman noted included the risk of being 'speared'.¹³⁶

More objective collaboration between the lowest and highest ranks of sailors is difficult to trace, but it certainly occurred as late as the voyage of the *Herald*, when one midshipman, Tom Chanter, included within his 'Remark Book' a series of sketches by, or copied from, the ship's surgeon,

¹³⁵ Sweatman. 'Journal of a surveying voyage', p. 286.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

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John Denis Macdonald.¹³⁷ As detailed in Chapter Five, Macdonald was collecting for Haslar, and his work on the voyage led to his election as a Fellow of the Royal Society.¹³⁸ Chanter's 'Remark Book' contains no narrative prose, but rather a series of sketches of subjects relating to ethnography and natural history. The most interesting example is a hand-drawn copy of an illustration by Charles Alexandre Lesueur, artist upon the 1800-1804 Nicolas Baudin expedition, of seventeen objects from 'Nouvelle-Hollande', including a shield, baskets, clubs and a boomerang (Figure 6.7).¹³⁹ Intriguingly, Chanter titled the drawing 'Australian Machines', and may thus have approached object collecting from the industrial and mechanical perspective embodied also within Thomas Mitchell's contemporary 1853 patent for a 'Boomerang Propeller'. It is a mystery quite how Chanter managed to access the drawing, which was published in a rare and valuable 1807 'atlas' by François Péron, but the most likely inference is that Macdonald had brought it with him on-board the *Herald* as a reference to early work on Australian ethnography and natural history.

In a sign of the development of scientific study among all ranks of sailors on naval surveys, Chanter appears therefore to have assisted Macdonald's collecting, and attempted too to learn from him, for there are numerous sketches of plants and other objects which Chanter had created himself.¹⁴⁰ The 'Remark Book' bears similarities to Sweatman's journal, which contained drafts of sketches by the *Fly*'s draughtsman, Melville. Chanter can also be compared with Porcher, who both collected and illustrated a number of objects in spite of his low rank. Negotiations as to the relative importance of intentional and incidental collections of ethnographic objects

¹³⁷ Thomas Scott Chanter. 'Remark book of Tom Chanter', SLNSW, DL PX 153. Page 235 of Chanter's 'Remark Book' compares closely with a series of images in John Denis Macdonald. 'Observations on the natural affinities and classification of gasteropoda', *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London*, 8 (1856-1857), 385-393.

¹³⁸ See Chapter Five, section 5.3.

¹³⁹ François Péron. *Voyage de Découvertes aux Terres Australes* (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1807), p. xxii.

¹⁴⁰ See, for example, Chanter. 'Remark book of Tom Chanter', p. 94.

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apparent in King's earlier work thus persisted into this period.¹⁴¹ For sailors such as Chanter, Porcher and Sweatman, perhaps, this had as much to do with pragmatism as it did preference between the two forms of ethnographic evidence. In the next chapter, I explore further in what ways the 'articulation' of knowledge through sketches and collected objects was relevant to the wider development of professional ethnographic practice from 1842-1861.

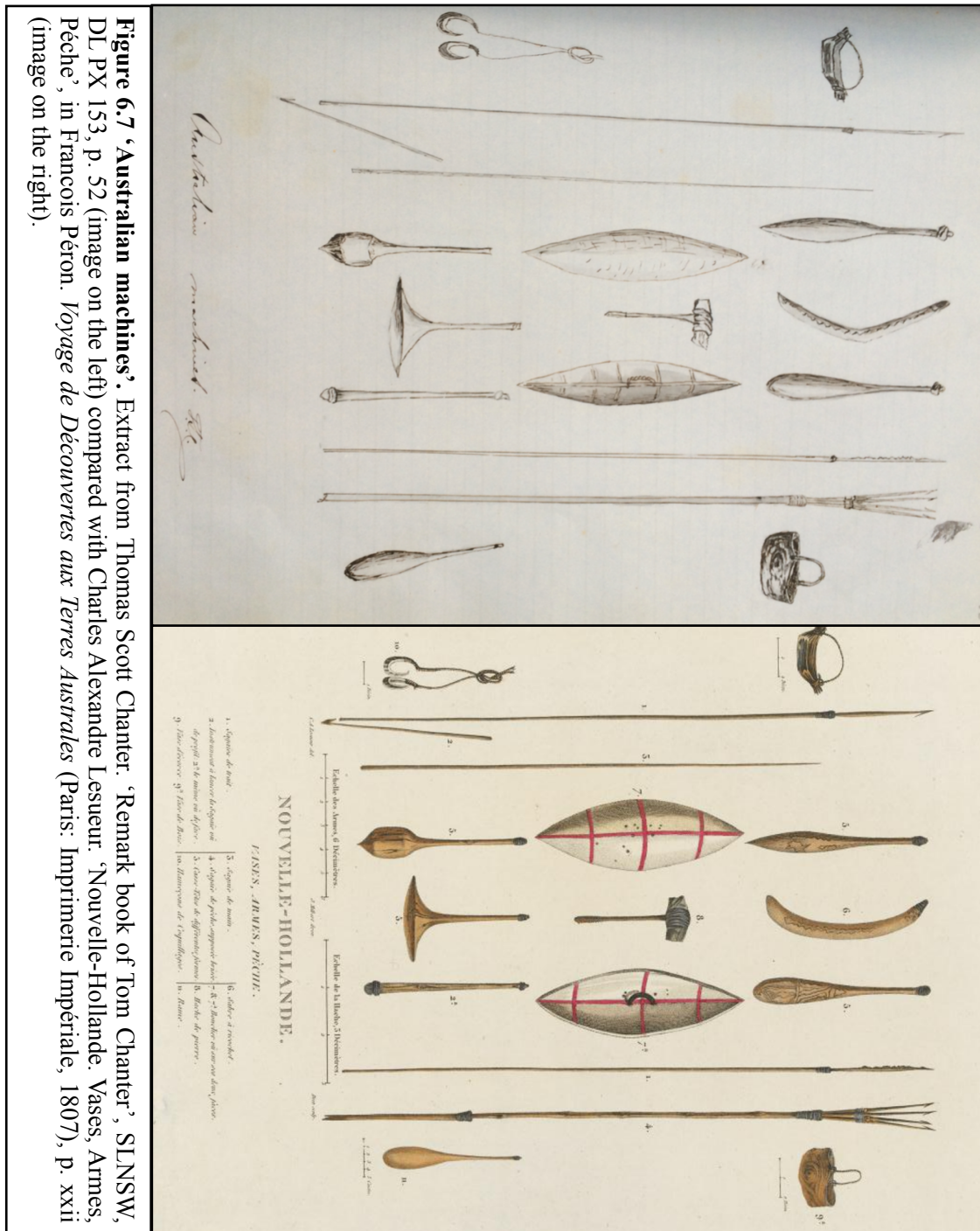


Figure 6.7 'Australian machines'. Extract from Thomas Scott Chanter, 'Remark book of Tom Chanter', SLNSW, DL PX 153, p. 52 (image on the left) compared with Charles Alexandre Lesueur, 'Nouvelle-Hollande. Vases, Armes, Pêche', in François Péron. *Voyage de Découvertes aux Terres Australes* (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1807), p. xxii (image on the right).

¹⁴¹ See Chapter Four.

6.5 Conclusion

After 1830, developments in British science and naval education influenced the quantity and character of ethnographic collecting on colonial voyages. This chapter has shown that an intimate relation existed between the Admiralty's 'turn to the north' in Australia and the development of the BAAS, Geographical Society and Hydrographic Office. While the simultaneous development of Haslar Hospital Museum was implicated also in this new atmosphere of naval science and ethnographic scrutiny, I have argued that the disciplined work of Burnett's surgeon-collectors ought to be distinguished from the activity which increasingly took place under Admiralty, and specifically Beaufort's, direction. The emerging classification of the British Museum as Britain's 'national collection' influenced the sense that collecting should take place for the public benefit, and that extant and intentional collections should be favoured over incidental ones. By insisting upon its receipt of the imperial collections made on naval voyages, the British Museum did much to promote a new atmosphere of object-based imperial and colonial study, and thus made possible the conditions necessary for the growth of an ethnographic discipline.

The British Museum's insistence that it benefit from the work of naval collectors, in tandem with the development of naval education in these years, also gave credibility to the work of amateur scientists in the navy. Despite frequent calls for naval officers to be transformed into scientific auxiliaries, I have shown that Ashworth is correct in his argument that few distinctions in scientific rank or ability were apparent in the navy at the time. Naturalists, surgeons, officers, clerks and sailors worked both alone and jointly to analyse and synthesise the ethnographic, colonial and geographic knowledge to which they were uniquely privileged; this was a more egalitarian world of scientific opportunity than that discussed by Secord and Shapin. From the work of Earl and Sweatman, it is clear that

6. THE TURN TO THE NORTH

such actors did not consider themselves simple informants for metropolitan minds. I have argued nevertheless that ‘amateurism’ offers a valid and useful perspective upon the work which took place on-board the *Fly* and *Rattlesnake*. Individuals like Bell, Ince and Porcher possessed few instructions or opportunities to carry out scientific work, but this meant also that they were unconstrained by any particular expectation. We are made to appreciate the extent to which their collective decision to offer objects to the British Museum and other institutions revealed their desire to contribute to scientific knowledge, and so to gain in status. A recurring theme has been that of mimicry, and it is this which gives credence to my argument that naval ethnographic collections emerged from the interplay between amateur and professional knowledges. Sweatman was ‘mimicked’ by those sleeping in the decks below him both mockingly and with respect to his collecting; simultaneously, he copied the work of his only established superior, the *Fly*’s naturalist Jukes. Likewise, Porcher built upon the work of Melville, and Chanter borrowed from Macdonald. I leave for the next chapter the question of what defined professionalism, and to what extent professionals in turn borrowed and learned from amateurs.

Collecting on the eve of evolution

Know then, thyself, presume not God to scan;

*The Proper study of Mankind is Man.*¹

Alexander Pope's 1734 *Essay on Man* has rarely been associated with the nineteenth-century voyages of the *Fly* (1842-1846) and *Rattlesnake* (1846-1850), but in certain ways it was of considerable relevance to contemporaries and the work they performed. The naturalist John MacGillivray, who travelled on-board the *Fly* in a semi-official capacity and the *Rattlesnake* in an official one, had a penchant for sending anonymously-written articles to the *Sydney Morning Herald*. There, MacGillivray's controversial thoughts on the surveys' progress and the state of the Australian colonies were published under an irreverent line from Pope's *Essay*: 'Sworn to no master, of no sect am I'.² MacGillivray's strong sense of himself as a detached and independent observer, though responsible in part for his expulsion in 1855 from the subsequent voyage of the *Herald*, encapsulated an atmosphere of scepticism toward authority found also in the earlier bitterness of William Henry Breton's prose. Alongside that of his 'professional' contemporaries Joseph Beete Jukes and Thomas Henry Huxley, MacGillivray's work on-board the *Fly* and *Rattlesnake* lent itself too to the central message of Pope's 1734 *Essay*. Pope's call for men to study man rather than God found a new resonance in these years, as 'professional' scientists on Admiralty voyages moved increasingly toward the study of ethnology. Pope's verse was popularised in 1851, one year after

¹ Alexander Pope. *An Essay on Man*, 2: 1-2 (1733).

² 'Remarks on Port Essington', *Sydney Morning Herald*. 15 Oct. 1845.

the *Rattlesnake*'s return, by the philologist Robert Gordon Latham, who used it as a stimulus for his influential ethnological text, *Man and his Migrations*.³ With Huxley's particular help, questions of human variety, race and evolution were soon to become the focus of considerable debate.

We last encountered Huxley in Chapter Five, where it was observed that he was 'ousted' from Haslar Hospital Museum in 1846. Huxley's hopes of remaining at the hospital as a resident surgeon were dashed when the Admiralty overruled John Richardson by appointing its own candidate in his place. Shortly thereafter, Huxley accepted an offer from Richardson and the museum's founder, William Burnett, to join Owen Stanley's *Rattlesnake* voyage, on which Huxley worked as an assistant surgeon with a brief to undertake scientific research. 'Our object', he wrote at the time, '[is to] form one grand collection of specimens and deposit it in the British Museum or some other public place, and this main object being always kept in view, we are at liberty to collect and work for ourselves as we please'.⁴ Shortly after the *Rattlesnake*'s return, however, Huxley pre-empted MacGillivray by decisively scuttling his chances of remaining within the Admiralty's employ. In an 1854 broadside in the *Westminster Review* titled 'Science at Sea', which masqueraded as a review of MacGillivray's 1852 *Narrative of the Voyage of H.M.S. Rattlesnake*, Huxley took aim at what he considered the Admiralty's deficient investment in scientific research, and the poor way it had accommodated him.⁵ The Admiralty's 1849 *A Manual of Scientific Enquiry*, wrote Huxley, was 'little better than an attempt to look well with the public upon false pretences'.⁶ The *Rattlesnake* had been one of the first

³ Robert Gordon Latham. *Man and his Migrations* (London: John Van Voorst, 1851), p. 10.

⁴ Leonard Huxley (ed.). *Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley*, vol. 1. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), p. 36.

It is curious that Huxley made no mention of collecting for Haslar. With respect to the voyage of the *Rattlesnake*, perhaps, the British Museum was able to make a stronger claim as the *de facto* repository of naval specimens. Haslar may, however, have been what Huxley referred to as 'some other public place'.

⁵ Thomas Henry Huxley. 'Science at Sea', *Westminster Review*, 61 (1854), 98-119.

⁶ *Ibid.* 107.

voyages to return after the publication of the *Manual*, but it was of little help at a time in which no other official support was given.

The navy accordingly lost one of its principal advocates of the new ethnological science at the very moment that such researches began to mature. The Ethnological Society of London, which I alluded to briefly in the last chapter, had for instance been founded in 1843 as an offshoot of the 1837 Aborigines' Protection Society [APS]. In 1845, the British Museum opened its first 'Ethnological Gallery'. Huxley, whose support for ethnological and later evolutionary theory did much to inspire Alfred Cort Haddon, observed in 'Science at Sea' that he and his contemporaries on-board the *Fly* and *Rattlesnake* expeditions had been active in promoting the study of indigenous cultures. Owing to his and others' ethnographic collections, the public could now 'see for themselves in the British Museum' the relative progress of indigenous societies in the 'useful arts, as exhibited in pottery, cloth, cordage, nets, sails, and weapons of all sorts'.⁷ Associated vocabularies and studies of indigenous cultures in the voyages' journals, Huxley suggested, 'possess no less attraction for the student of the young but rapidly growing science of Ethnology', and many had been sent directly from the survey to Latham.⁸ Subsequently, Huxley lectured on ethnology as Fullerian chair at the Royal Institution from 1866-1869, and became president of the Ethnological Society of London in 1868. Huxley did not forget the value of object collecting, noting for example in 1865 that the Aboriginal Australian boomerang revealed how 'the tracing of the distribution' of such complex and unusual inventions 'may afford valuable ethnological hints'.⁹

⁷ *Ibid.* 118.

⁸ *Ibid.* 117.

⁹ Thomas Henry Huxley. 'On the Methods and Results of Ethnology', in Thomas Henry Huxley (ed.). *Collected Essays*, vol. 7, *Man's Place in Nature and Other Anthropological Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1894), 213.

Contrary to the terminological note in the thesis introduction, this chapter uses the terms 'Aboriginal Australians' and 'Torres Strait Islanders', in preference to 'Indigenous Australians', where it is necessary to distinguish between peoples who inhabited the Australian mainland and the Torres Strait archipelago.

7. COLLECTING ON THE EVE OF EVOLUTION

Naval ethnographic collecting in the second half of the nineteenth century became increasingly responsive to these nascent metropolitan forms of institutional expertise and direction. The results of all such ethnographic researches in this period were more obviously political than those undertaken earlier in the century, being rarely able to avoid expressing or implying comment upon newly contested theories of race and evolution, which themselves embodied religious divisions. A stance informed by monogenesis, a generally Christian belief in the unity of the human race, governed much naval research in consequence of the Anglican physician James Cowles Prichard's authorship of the 'Ethnology' chapter of the Admiralty's 1849 *Manual*.¹⁰ After 1850, an increasingly Christian ethos within the navy likely militated too against the employment of advocates of more secular polygenist belief (that there is more than one human race, and that these races do not share a common origin). The *Herald* expedition of 1852-1861, for instance, was already much inflected by philosophies of improvement and humanitarianism; the *Herald*'s naturalist Berthold Seemann investigated indigenous cultures according to strong racial views, and was apt to share his theories on 'improvability'.¹¹ By the time of the *Challenger* expedition of 1872-1876, evangelical and missionary impulses within the navy had conspired to form a strong Christian counterpoint to secular and racial theories of cultural inadaptability or stasis.¹² The forces behind such work resembled and extended the Christian Quakerism that had been an important force in Thomas Hodgkin's 1837 organisation of the APS.

Such questions are, however, largely beyond the scope of this thesis. By the time of the *Rattlesnake*'s return in 1850, the forces which influenced ethnographic collecting were beginning to evolve beyond recognition, and

¹⁰ James Cowles Prichard. 'Ethnology', in John Herschel (ed.). *A Manual of Scientific Enquiry* (London: John Murray, 1849), 253-267.

For a related discussion, see Efram Sera-Shriar. 'Arctic observers: Richard King, monogenism and the historicisation of Inuit through travel narratives', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*, 51 (2015), 23-31.

¹¹ Jane Samson. "'That Extensive Enterprise": HMS *Herald*'s North Pacific Survey, 1845-1851', *Pacific Science*, 52 (1998), 287-293.

¹² For a survey, see Richard Blake. *Religion in the British Navy, 1815-1879* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2014).

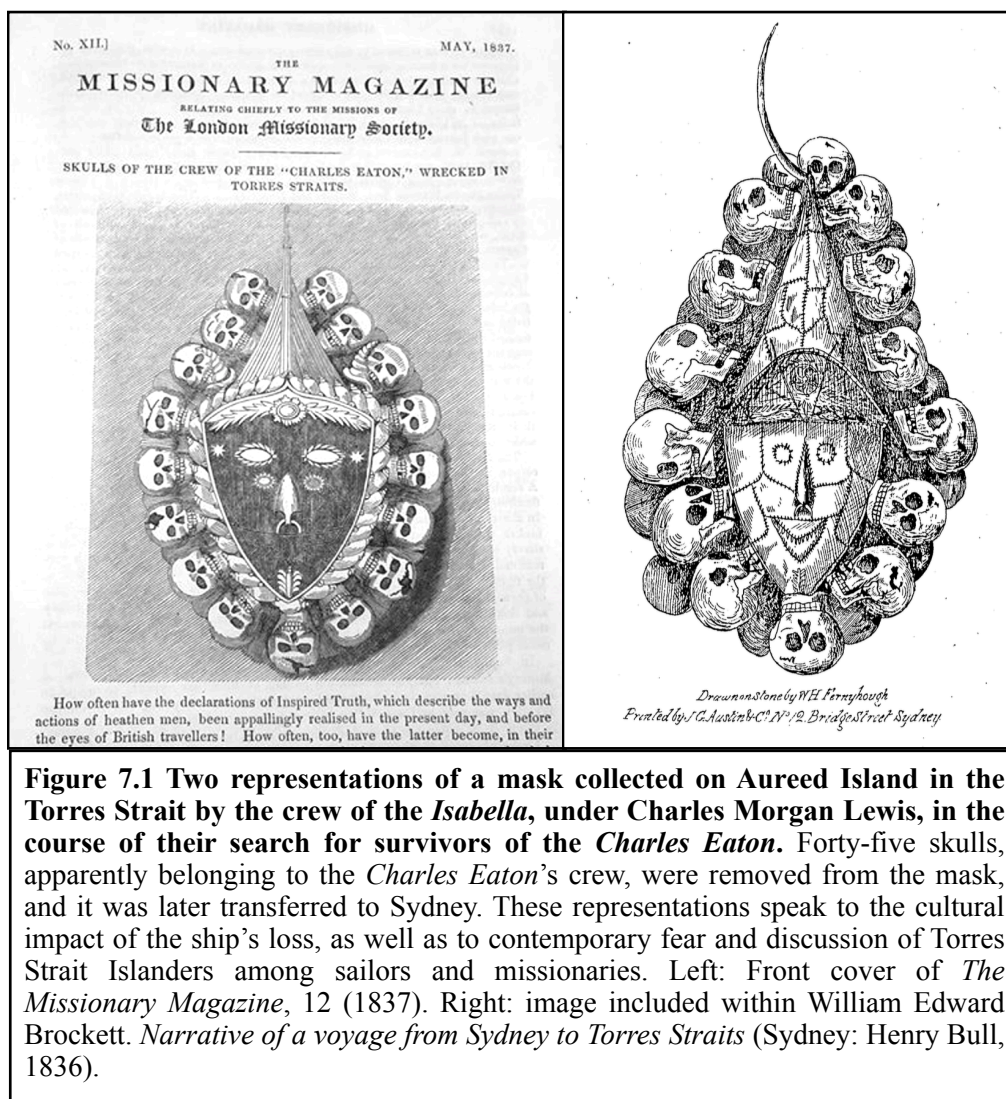
deserve a dedicated study of their own. Following the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859) and more particularly *The Descent of Man* (1871), Aboriginal Australians were to become the principal focus of anthropological and particularly social anthropological thought in Britain, as Lester Hiatt has shown.¹³ In this chapter, I explore the mid nineteenth-century investigations in Australia and the Torres Strait which preceded these later initiatives; the work of 'professional' scientists and naturalists on-board the *Fly* and *Rattlesnake* expeditions attests to the dynamic interaction of ethnographic collecting and nascent ethnological theory between 1842 and 1850. In so doing I bring to its conclusion this thesis' study of ethnographic collecting in the navy after 1772. MacGillivray, Jukes and Huxley made collections and investigations similar to those of their 'amateur' contemporaries, and sometimes cooperated with them. However, they were more likely to do so according to colonial and metropolitan direction. As naturalists and, in Huxley's case, both a naturalist and an assistant-surgeon, MacGillivray, Jukes and Huxley largely drew their interests and audiences from outside the naval service. Sometimes they appealed explicitly to colonial and metropolitan interests, as was the case in their correspondence with periodicals and figures including Latham and Darwin. At other times, they retrospectively edited their notes to make them more relevant to the growing prestige of ethnographic study, often setting themselves up as ethnological scientists rather than informants. The conventions of curiosity, commercial scrutiny and imperial prospecting outlined throughout this thesis and particularly within Chapter Six nevertheless continued to hold their appeal. Against this, the enduring ambivalence and institutional agency of the Admiralty and its officials played a role of its own in the making of the *Fly* and *Rattlesnake's* ethnographic collections.

¹³ Lester Hiatt. *Arguments about Aborigines* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

7.1 Torrid science

The 1846-1850 voyage of the *Rattlesnake* was a product of the *Fly*'s failure to complete its survey of northern Australia, the Torres Strait and the southern coast of Papua New Guinea. Francis Price Blackwood, captain of the *Fly*, complained to Francis Beaufort in 1845 that his initial enthusiasm had been exhausted by what had turned out to be 'as bitter and uninteresting a bit of work as ever came from the Hydrographic Office'.¹⁴ In sharp contrast to earlier surveys of the Australian mainland, the Torres Strait and northern Australian regions posed serious navigational difficulties, and were inhabited by an indigenous population distinguished by its mobility and hostility to European explorers. As discussed in Chapter Six, the wreck of the *Charles Eaton* in 1834 and the subsequent murder of its crew formed an ominous backdrop to the *Fly* and *Rattlesnake* expeditions, on which rumours abounded about the region's fearsome population (Figure 7.1). In its entirety, the Torres Strait archipelago resembled a giant synaptic network; its islands were like nerve cells, and between them every dangerous passage stretched sailors' nerves to breaking point. The names of the expeditionary ships *Bramble*, *Rattlesnake* and *Fly* themselves aptly though quite unintentionally reflected the dangers of waters in which hidden perils, violent encounters and a prevailing atmosphere of poor health and disease often necessitated sailors to flee at a moment's notice. The abandonment of the British settlement at Port Essington in 1849 and the failed attempt to succeed it at Cape York left a lasting impression on the region: at present the only significant settlement near the Coburg Peninsula, Darwin, is some one hundred miles southwest of the ruins of Port Essington. Cairns, the major city of far north Queensland, lies nearly five hundred miles south of Cape York.

¹⁴ UKHO, SL 29, pp. 76-77. Cited in Jordan Goodman. *The Rattlesnake* (London: Faber and Faber, 2005), p. 14.



Frayed nerves were detectable among Blackwood and Stanley in particular. Though, as we have seen, Blackwood supported the *Fly* and *Bramble*'s work in making ethnographic investigations on the relative oases of the Darnley and Murray islands, the insights arrived at did nothing to shake his paranoia about the 'savages' of the region, and nor does he seem to have consulted Jukes, John Matthew Robert Ince or John Sweatman for more enlightened views. 'At some of the smaller islands in the Centre of the Straits - the inhabitants are I believe Cannibals', Blackwood wrote to Beaufort in 1845, 'which is certainly not the case at Darnley or Murray's Islands - where the natives have abundance of food'.¹⁵ As a 'general rule', however, Blackwood

¹⁵ Francis Price Blackwood to Francis Beaufort, 13 Aug. 1845. UKHO, OD 78, p. 77.

observed that ‘savages should never be trusted’.¹⁶ The *Fly*’s master Frederick Evans agreed, explaining that the Torres Strait Islanders were ‘a warlike race, very dissimilar to the natives of Australia...Bold, ferocious and unused to privations, dexterous in their use of weapons, possessed of large and fast canoes, and equally at home on the sea and on land’.¹⁷

Sailors’ ethnographic investigations did not therefore meld as seamlessly with military and imperial discussion of the region’s indigenous populations as they had done in earlier years.¹⁸ This was a symptom of the contemporary drift toward the metropolitan governance of such research, which brought about a different set of questions. The situation was worse on the *Rattlesnake*, as Jordan Goodman has shown. Huxley’s later animosity toward the Admiralty was predicated in part on his experience of Stanley, an ‘ass’ and ‘little skipper’, whose timorousness and fear of Indigenous Australians led him to avoid landing or leaving the ship whenever possible.¹⁹ A similar atmosphere existed on the *Bramble*, which served as a tender to the *Rattlesnake* as well as the *Fly*. Sweatman’s contempt of his captain Charles Yule was echoed by his successors on the 1846-1850 voyage. Charles James Card, clerk on-board the *Rattlesnake*, observed for instance how Yule once ‘took it into his head that the *Bramble* was going to be attacked’, and accordingly ordered a marine to fire at nearby Indigenous Australians, killing three.²⁰ ‘Yule thinks he has done something very brave and says he thinks they have got a pretty good lesson’, wrote Card, ‘while it is the opinion of nearly every one on board that it [was a] great piece of treachery on the part of old Yule and that he deserves to have a couple of spears through him the first time he lands’.²¹

¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 78.

¹⁷ UKHO, OD 79, p. 18.

¹⁸ See Chapter Four, section 4.2.

¹⁹ Jordan Goodman, ‘Losing it in New Guinea: the voyage of HMS *Rattlesnake*’, *Endeavour*, 29 (2005), 64.

²⁰ Charles James Card Diaries [CJCD], 4 Sep. 1849. SLQD, 2770/2.

²¹ *Ibid.*

Though the dangers posed by the Torres Strait and its inhabitants concentrated Blackwood, Stanley and Yule's attention on the need to finish their surveys safely, the captains' ambivalence about engaging in scientific research was grounded also in fears originating closer to home. A spectre of professionalism haunted these surveys even though there existed few hierarchies in scientific attainment. Between 1842 and 1850, contemporaries were newly conscious of their relationship to increasingly codified forms of knowledge. It has been seen that Blackwood encouraged the transformation of his inferiors into 'practical geographers', but he simultaneously struggled to identify a role for himself. As observed in Chapter Six, Blackwood was appointed to the 1842-1846 expedition on the basis of his scientific interests, but he later demurred from the task of writing up the *Fly*'s official journal for a metropolitan audience; this Blackwood left to the naturalist, Jukes. Likewise, Stanley planned from the outset of his expedition to share the work of publishing a voyage narrative with MacGillivray, but the latter was left to complete it alone after Stanley died from illness in 1850, following the *Rattlesnake*'s return to Sydney.²²

Blackwood's excuse for not writing a *Narrative*, that he was unable to 'get up fine language', exposed his antipathy about a new and elite generation of scholarly explorers.²³ Blackwood's decision to enrol at Cambridge after the survey's end, aged 37, was likely the consequence of his impression that captains with scientific ambitions were no longer free to undertake untrammelled researches on naval expeditions. A symptom of the innovations in naval education and scientific investigation explored in Chapter Six, the instructions given to Blackwood and Stanley so promoted the work of naturalists, officers and ordinary sailors that the two captains were largely denuded of any particular responsibility. The *Fly*'s instructions blandly prompted Blackwood to support whatever subjects of interest 'may readily occur to every officer who is zealous in obtaining, and desirous of

²² John MacGillivray. *Narrative of the Voyage of H.M.S. Rattlesnake*, vol. 1 (London: T. & W. Boone, 1852), p. 5.

²³ Blackwood to Beaufort, 2 Nov. 1846. UKHO, Incoming Letters Prior to 1857, B1-B300, p. 50.

benefiting mankind by *communicating useful information*'.²⁴ Worse still, Stanley's orders, written after John Barrow's retirement from the naval service, were almost exclusively hydrographical.²⁵ By contrast, earlier captains such as Phillip Parker King had been entrusted with complex scientific enquiries, and used their privileged position to set themselves up as authorities (rather than information gatherers) on a range of scientific matters. Indeed, King himself haunted Stanley's expedition, which he occasionally joined; various signed scrawls and commentaries on Stanley's scientific drawings, discussed below, show that King took it upon himself to assess and correct Stanley's contemporary research.²⁶

Tensions apparent in the appointment of civilian experts to the *Fly* and *Rattlesnake* expeditions demonstrate that Blackwood and Stanley nevertheless guarded jealously the privileged knowledge and investigations of the navy's sailors. Huxley's later complaints in 'Science at Sea' centred on his disappointment and surprise that naturalists and scientific collectors were given few specific privileges. Since notions of scientific expertise were themselves contested, the degree to which the title 'naturalist' conferred any particular claim to professionalism was a source of division. Beaufort in particular was a greater advocate than the navy's captains of the intrusion of figures from outside the naval service. To the latter's disappointment, for instance, Beaufort appointed Jukes to the *Fly* without considering Blackwood's own wishes. A geologist from Birmingham, Jukes had been appointed geological surveyor to the colony of Newfoundland in 1839, but was refused the chair of Geology at University College London in 1841. Jukes was familiar both with Darwin, who had returned from the second voyage of the *Beagle* in 1836, and William Whewell, who had recommended Jukes as surveyor to Newfoundland. Jukes therefore represented aspects of the Cambridge school of metropolitan scientific

²⁴ Joseph Beete Jukes. *Narrative of the Surveying Voyage of H.M.S. Fly*, vol. 2 (London: T. & W. Boone, 1847), p. 259. My emphasis.

²⁵ MacGillivray. *Narrative of the Voyage of H.M.S. Rattlesnake*, vol. 1. p. 1-10.

²⁶ Owen Stanley. 'Voyage of H.M.S. Rattlesnake: Vol 1'. SLNSW, SAFE/PXC 281, fol. 70.

synthesis against which Blackwood was to some extent opposed. Though Jukes wrote in January 1842 that he found Blackwood likeable and supportive, his respect was not reciprocated.²⁷ Tellingly, Blackwood supported instead that vein of scientific enquiry which belonged more exclusively to naval surveyors. He took his revenge by instructing the Admiralty's victualling department to bolster its support of the *Fly*'s draughtsman, Harden Melville, at Jukes' expense:

I consider it most important that the draughtsman - who is a young man of very superior talents, should be well supplied - indeed to say the truth, I consider him far beyond the Naturalist in importance. So much so, that I think we have not enough in having one only.²⁸

In consequence, Jukes was left without money even to buy the materials necessary for storing collected specimens.²⁹ Blackwood's frustration at Jukes' appointment nevertheless paled in comparison with his feelings about the arrival on-board the *Fly* of the natural history collector John MacGillivray, over which he had even less control. The son of William MacGillivray, a respected Scottish naturalist and ornithologist, the younger MacGillivray's appointment by Beaufort was the result of patronage and privilege; from 1841 he had sourced specimens for the avid and aristocratic collector Edward Smith-Stanley, thirteenth earl of Derby.³⁰ Wrote Blackwood to Beaufort in March 1842, again with some words aggressively underlined:

I have received an order to take a Mr MacGillivray aboard and "land him wherever he may wish" - may I ask whether I am merely to give him a passage or if he is to be attached to the Naturalist on all of the voyage which he appears to consider will be the case? If he is a clever fellow, his services will be of course valuable...but if not - we should have three Naturalist men [probably a reference to Ince] - one of

²⁷ C. A. Browne (ed.). *Letters and Extracts from the Addresses and Occasional Writings of J. Beete Jukes* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1871), p. 132.

²⁸ Blackwood to Beaufort, 27 Mar. 1842. UKHO, SL 29, p. 31.

²⁹ Jukes to Blackwood, 21 Feb. 1842. UKHO, SL 29, p. 23.

³⁰ See Stephen Lloyd. *Art, Animals and Politics: Knowsley and the Earls of Derby* (London: Unicorn Press, 2016).

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whom we might certainly be well rid of - it appears also he is collecting for Lord Derby - so that I would ask permission to let him stay with us depend on Mr Jukes' report of his knowledge and usefulness...³¹

Stanley, of the *Rattlesnake*, was better disposed toward scientific gentlemen, but again MacGillivray was not the first choice to serve as his expedition's nominated naturalist. According to Goodman's research, the German physician Ernest Dieffenbach was originally recommended to Beaufort by William Jackson Hooker.³² A symptom of the spirit of capriciousness seemingly endemic at the time, Stanley refused to take Dieffenbach because he considered him 'troublesome'.³³ In consequence, following the *Fly*'s return, Stanley appointed MacGillivray to the *Rattlesnake* after chancing upon him and Blackwood in June 1846 on a train between Portsmouth and Plymouth.³⁴ It was owing to another chance meeting, in New South Wales in 1848, that Stanley likewise invited as a guest onboard his survey the marine artist Oswald Brierly.³⁵ It may have been at Portsmouth in 1846 that Stanley first decided to find a suitable surgeon-naturalist among the persons then working at Haslar Hospital Museum; a letter he sent to Richardson resulted in Huxley's employment, as we have seen. Interestingly, the rejected naturalist Dieffenbach had been an important influence in the creation of the Ethnological Society of London in 1843, where he read one of the first papers delivered to the society, 'The Study of Ethnology'. There, Dieffenbach praised the merits of the British Empire for encouraging the new science: 'Ethnology begins with Ethnography', he wrote, 'with an authentic description of the physical condition of each nation'.³⁶ Dieffenbach's main appeal to Hooker and Beaufort as a naturalist for the

³¹ Blackwood to Beaufort, 17 Mar. 1842. UKHO, IL -B, 27.

³² Goodman. *The Rattlesnake*, p. 30.

³³ *Ibid.* p. 31.

This may have been a reference to the various controversies which surrounded Dieffenbach's earlier travels in New Zealand. For a study, see Thom Conroy. *The Naturalist* (Random House New Zealand, 2014).

³⁴ Goodman. *The Rattlesnake*, p. 31.

³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 125.

³⁶ Ernest Dieffenbach. 'The Study of Ethnology', *Journal of the Ethnological Society of London*, 1 (1848), 18.

Rattlesnake would therefore have almost certainly been his expertise in this new and interesting area of study.

Various signs point toward the possibility that Blackwood and Stanley promoted draughtsmanship as a rival ethnological discipline; one which related more closely to the expertise of sailors, but focused equally upon the study of indigenous characteristics and collected material.³⁷ These voyages engaged, in other words, in a more explicit form of the debate described in Chapters Two, Three, Four and Six between objects and visual documentation, or ‘proxy specimens’, as rival modes of collecting and representing ethnographic knowledge.³⁸ Blackwood’s advocacy for Melville’s work is the most certain indication of this line of thinking, and its fruits can be seen in the expedition’s surviving coastal views. Here, illustrations of canoes by Melville invade the blank spaces of the *Fly*’s survey of the Torres Strait (Figure 7.2). Elsewhere, various scenes of Torres Strait Islander villages and cultural customs drawn by Melville evince a similarly strong interest in ethnographic objects; Melville’s ‘A Native Dance at Darnley Island’ depicts the manner in which a series of specimens collected by the survey would originally have been used (Figure 7.3). Stanley’s employment of the marine artist Brierly, a decision he took independently in 1848, betrays a similar intention, as does a book of sketches which Stanley made on the *Rattlesnake* voyage. There, one finds ten close studies of collected objects, decontextualised and labelled in the pseudo-taxonomic manner discussed by Amiria Salmond in her study of Joseph Banks (Figure 7.4).³⁹

In a manner comparable with that identified in Chapter Two and Chapter Four, the relative merits of keeping and illustrating objects were therefore

³⁷ For a survey, see Bernard Smith. *European Vision and the South Pacific* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).

³⁸ Martin Rudwick. ‘Georges Cuvier’s paper museum of fossil bones’, *Archives of Natural History*, 27 (2000), 51-68.

³⁹ Owen Stanley. ‘Voyage of H.M.S. *Rattlesnake*: Vol 1’. SLNSW, SAFE/PXC 281, fols. 98-108.

Amiria Henare. *Museums, Anthropology and Imperial Exchange* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 71.

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subject to debate. The difference with the work undertaken on-board the *Fly* and *Rattlesnake* was that actors on these expeditions engaged in more conscious rivalry, and in general restricted themselves to one medium of ethnographic enquiry; just as Melville and his protégé Edwin Augustus Porcher refrained from writing treatises on ethnography and natural history, Jukes and MacGillivray made few attempts to sketch the things they encountered and collected. Interestingly, Huxley alone seems to have crossed these boundaries. As both an assistant-surgeon and a naturalist, and as a civilian only recently and somewhat indecisively engaged in naval service, Huxley was something of a boundary figure himself. Though best known for his work on marine invertebrates on-board the *Rattlesnake*, Huxley also engaged in a series of sketches and measurements of indigenous peoples, which would later inform his bullish support of Darwin's theory of evolution.⁴⁰ Huxley's eclectic studies and influences therefore did much to underline the fruits of an education within the museum at Haslar Hospital.

⁴⁰ Iain McCalman. *Darwin's Armada* (London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009), pp. 151-197.

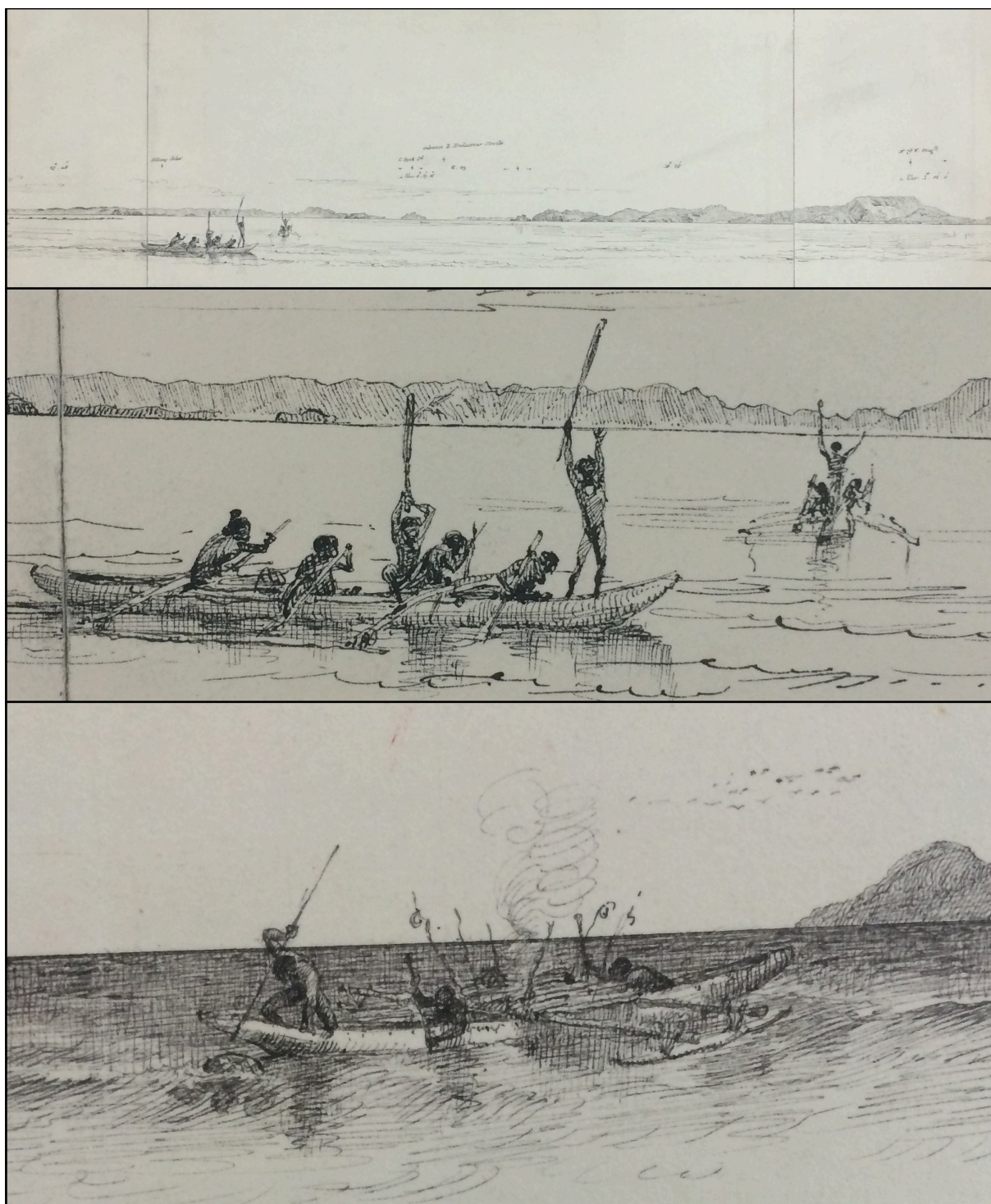


Figure 7.2 Canoe illustrations on the *Fly*'s coastal views. Highly detailed ethnographic additions such as these were common, and were seemingly added by the draughtsman, Melville. The images also capture, in both a figurative and strategic sense, the manner in which Torres Strait Islanders disrupted the survey's work. Extracts from Francis Price Blackwood. 'Appearance of Possession Isles at Eastern Entrance of Endeavour Strait Fairway to pass between Endeavour Island and Woody Isles', TNA, ADM 344/1707.



Figure 7.3 A Dance at Darnley (Erub) Island. Melville's sketch of a Darnley Island dance was evidently created using detailed sketches of collected objects. The image was used in Sweatman's journal but not that written by Jukes, who preferred to abstract the objects from their context. Nevertheless, Melville appears to have been the illustrator of all the images above. Top: Harden Melville. 'A Native Dance at Darnley Island', NLA, PIC Volume 8. Bottom left and bottom right: Extracts from Jukes. *Narrative of the Surveying Voyage of H.M.S. Fly*, vol. 1, p. 176 and p. 178.

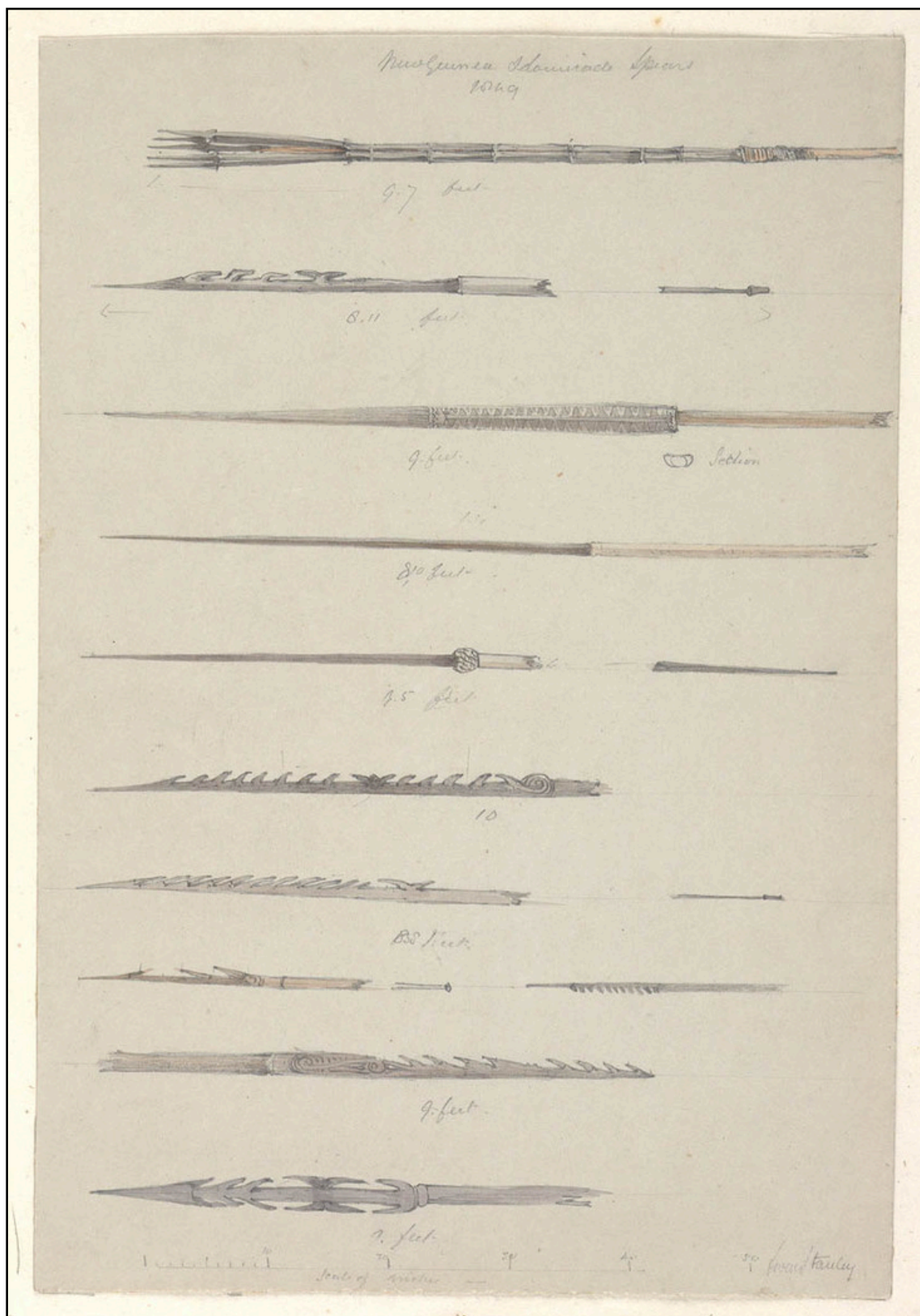


Figure 7.4 An example of Owen Stanley's ethnographic sketches. The spears, drawn and measured by Stanley and collected in Papua New Guinea and the Louisiade Archipelago, demonstrate the captain's interest in ethnographic collections. They attest, too, to the comparative work that could be done through illustration. Owen Stanley. 'Voyage of H.M.S. Rattlesnake: Vol 1'. SLNSW, SAFE/PXC 281, f. 98.

7.2 Ethnography among petty officers

Notwithstanding the nervousness of the captains and the unclear remit of the draughtsmen and naturalists, ethnographic collecting flourished on the *Fly* and *Rattlesnake*. The development of ethnology, in conjunction with the more general atmosphere of improvement and opportunity identified in Chapter Six, undoubtedly played an important role. For the first time on a voyage explored by this thesis, extant and intentional Indigenous Australian collections on and from the *Fly* were more numerous than incidental ones. With respect to the legacy of the *Rattlesnake*, the total number of extant Indigenous Australian objects is vastly superior to the voyage's incidental collections. Appendix 6 and Appendix 7 further reveal that both amateur and professional actors on these expeditions respected their duty to send collections to the British Museum, in accordance with what had become the default position among non-Haslar collectors by 1846.

Though unacknowledged by historians of this period, ethnographic collecting on the *Rattlesnake* in particular was conceived as a deliberate contribution to ethnological knowledge. Beyond the specific contributions of MacGillivray, Jukes and Huxley explored below, ambitious petty officers on Stanley's voyage developed the ethnological pursuits begun by Sweatman and the clerk Thomas Millery on-board the *Fly*. After discovering upon the *Rattlesnake*'s arrival at Cape York in October 1848 that a fearful Stanley would permit only commissioned officers to land, the clerk Charles James Card for instance fretted that he would be unable to attain 'some view of the manners and customs of the natives on the main land'.⁴¹ Card referred often to a desire to conduct philological research in the manner of Prichard, but in sharp contrast to Sweatman (who wrote admiringly of Torres Strait Islander cultures) couched this in highly racist terms which betrayed also his

⁴¹ CJCD, 7 Oct. 1848. SLQD, 2770/1.

fear of indigenous peoples. For Card, intercultural encounter was a necessary evil of ethnological research.

Like Sweatman before him, Card's authority as a scientist was uncertain and insecure; he similarly delighted in the deficiencies and misfortunes of his rivals. Brierly was mocked in particular for his forays into ethnology. On one occasion, Card ridiculed Brierly for attempting to play a drum which had been collected by the ship's crew.⁴² On another, Card reported how a fantastical story told by an indigenous informant 'was of course a "Brierley", who gets up some very ridiculous yarns sometimes'.⁴³ As David Moore has shown, Brierly spent much of his time on-board the *Rattlesnake* creating copious notes on Torres Strait Islander languages and customs, and may therefore have intruded upon Card's own enquiries.⁴⁴ In another parallel with Sweatman, Brierly was almost obsessively concerned with the collection of Torres Strait Islander vocabularies, but like Card seems to have struggled to build a comparable rapport in moments of encounter. Tellingly, the majority of Brierly's work was based upon interviews with Barbara Thompson, a shipwrecked Scotswoman who joined the *Rattlesnake* in 1849 after having lived for five years among Kaurareg people.⁴⁵

Card was loathe to waste opportunities to conduct researches of his own. On 16 October 1846, we learn that a number of the Yadhagana people of Cape York slept for a full night on-board the *Rattlesnake*.⁴⁶ A party of sailors including a delighted Card seized the opportunity to gather a vocabulary, but nevertheless chose only to interview a Yadhagana child, apparently thinking him easier to coerce. In rather sinister language, Card recounted how:

⁴² CJCD, 25 Aug. 1849. SLQD, 2770/2.

⁴³ CJCD, 23 Aug. 1849. SLQD, 2770/2.

⁴⁴ David Moore. *Islanders and Aborigines at Cape York* (Canberra: Humanities Press, 1979).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ CJCD, 16 Oct. 1846. SLQD, 2770/1.

The canoe having drifted away last night with the tide, the niggers that were on board were obliged to remain all night; in the evening we got one of the little boys down below and got as many native words as we could, all of which we put down on paper; after all this we gave him some biscuit and tea and took him to the others who were by this time very quietly stowed away in the hammock netting with the cloth over them where they remained very quiet until this morning when they went on shore.⁴⁷

Words, then, had a currency; inscribed or ‘put down on paper’, they could be preserved, traded and shared. This was a power-laden, asymmetric exchange; extractive (‘got’) and exploitative in a manner more subtle and yet just as violent as that sometimes apparent in object collecting. Card hinted at regret for an apparently difficult process: ‘after all this’. Interestingly, the acquisition of words was one of the only forms of ethnological collecting advised in the British Association for the Advancement of Science’s 1841 ethnological guide, which was similarly premised more upon extracting knowledge than the encouragement of mutual understanding.⁴⁸ By 1846, however, the navy had begun to consider the acquisition of ethnographic objects an equally desirable pursuit, and one communicable to a broader (museum or public) audience. Among the little Yadhagana boy’s interrogators was another of the *Rattlesnake*’s petty officers, the captain’s steward Robert Gale. Though united with Card and Sweatman in terms of his bureaucratic vocation and the relative leisure which it afforded, Gale was uniquely privileged among this class of aspirant ethnographers by his role as keeper of the voyage’s collections. Thirty-six Indigenous Australian objects, collected between 1847 and 1848, are listed in a notebook which Gale kept on the *Rattlesnake* voyage, the front and back covers of which respectively but indecisively read ‘List of Shells Stones &c’, and ‘Shells’ (see Appendix 7).⁴⁹ Here, Gale also recorded thirty-

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Report of the Eleventh Meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science* (London: John Murray, 1842), pp. 332-339.

⁴⁹ Robert Gale. ‘Lists of shells, stones, birds and other creatures found’, CLA, JOD/284/3.

nine specimens in geology, ninety-five in ornithology, twelve in ichthyology and an uncertain number in conchology.

Under a list of ‘implements etc’, we find evidence that the *Rattlesnake* sought to acquire systematic ethnographic collections in Australia at Moreton Island, Rockingham Bay, Weymouth Bay and Cape York. Gale recorded these collections alongside notes on the objects’ uses and contributed also a series of sketches. Commentary such as that ‘2 war spears & 3 throwing sticks from natives of mainland [were] obtained by our own people in Weymouth Bay for a few articles of clothing’ implies that Gale had privileged rights to all specimens acquired. That this was the official collection is indicated also by the fact that several of the listed items appear in Stanley’s sketches (Figure 7.5). The Rockingham Bay baskets which had earlier fascinated and perplexed King and John Septimus Roe for instance featured prominently in Gale and Stanley’s work, after one was acquired in June 1848 from Djirbalngan people on the Barnard Islands (Figure 7.5 and Figure 7.7). Curiously, however, none of the objects recorded in Gale’s notebooks were later given to the British Museum. Nor are the collecting locations of Moreton Island, Weymouth Bay and Rockingham Bay represented by the twenty-two extant Indigenous Australian objects from the *Rattlesnake* now in the Museum’s stores. A further sign of difficult conditions on-board, Gale fell out with Stanley before the survey’s end, and was forced to disembark at Sydney in 1849.⁵⁰ It is possible, therefore, that Gale took the collections with him. More probably, Gale robbed them of their value by retaining the notebook in which their provenance and use were recorded, and in which they were numbered and described.⁵¹ Acrimony and a degree of pettiness therefore damaged the *Rattlesnake*’s ethnographic collection.

⁵⁰ Robert Gale. ‘Diary, 1847, 1848 & 1849’, CLA, JOD/284/1.

⁵¹ Gale’s notebook was acquired by the National Maritime Museum in 1976, from a source other than the Admiralty. This supports the conclusion that it was never submitted for official inspection. I am grateful to the National Maritime Museum for giving a brief account of its provenance, the specific details of which it is not at liberty to disclose.

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As observed in Chapter Six, it is difficult to identify individual ethnographic collectors on-board the *Rattlesnake* voyage because Stanley was recorded posthumously as the sole collector of twenty of the British Museum's twenty-two extant Indigenous Australian specimens from the expedition. It is likely that this was more a product of the standardisation of ethnographic collecting as part of the official scientific remit of naval expeditions in these years than it was a testament to Stanley's collecting. Revealingly, many of the *Rattlesnake* objects now in the Museum's stores bear labels which record the dates on which the specimens were collected. The labels do not name the objects' collectors but make brief commentaries on their use, in a style identical to that within Gale's notebook. A skirt now in the Museum (Oc 1851,0103.13.a) for instance bears a label reading 'Petticoat worn by females of Darnley Id Obtained Voy. of H.M.S. Rattlesnake Dec. 17. 1849'. This information suggests that the labels were attached to the objects during the course of the voyage. As they are all written in the same hand, this seems to have been done by the same person; the handwriting resembles Gale's, but not conclusively so (Figure 7.8).

The *Rattlesnake* labels invariably record collections made in 1849, and therefore in all likelihood attest that Gale decided to stop recording objects in his notebook after 1848, and to secure the information to the objects instead. This would explain how it came to be that the extant collections at the British Museum derive only from places visited toward the second half of the *Rattlesnake* voyage, whereas the objects recorded in Gale's notebook were acquired only from the locations that the expedition visited first. The loss of the intentional collections in Gale's notebook and the survival of the intentional specimens now extant in the Museum therefore chart the professionalisation of systematic ethnographic collecting on the *Rattlesnake* voyage. Gale revised his methodology with the innovation of affixing labels, which ensured that the objects would not be rendered meaningless by the loss of physically separate information relating to their geographical origin and function. Quite unintentionally, Gale's decision to create labels insured the latter half of the survey's collections against his apparent act of sabotage

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in 1849, when he departed the *Rattlesnake* with the notebook recording the provenance of the expedition's earlier acquisitions. If this analysis is accurate, the crew of the *Rattlesnake* collected fifty-eight Indigenous Australian objects in total.

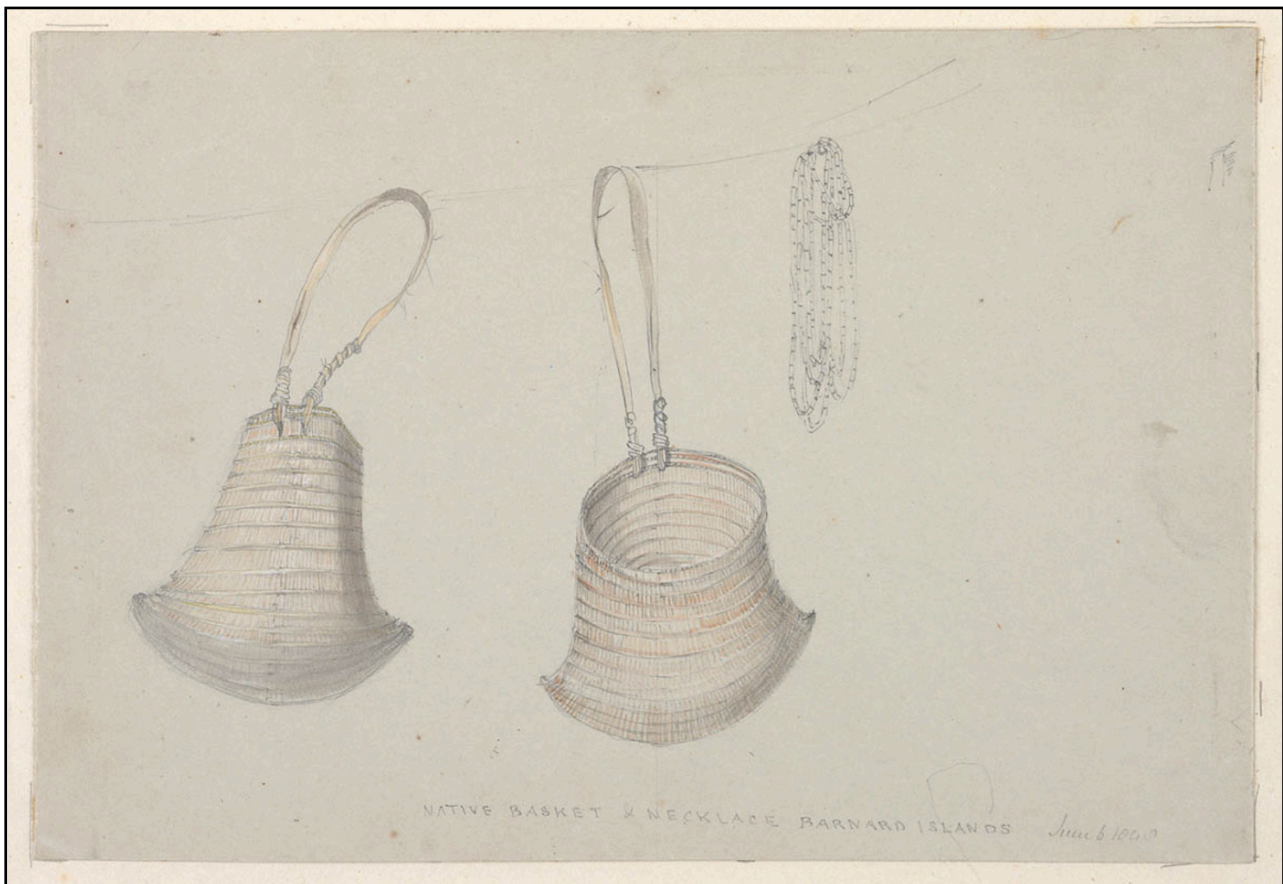
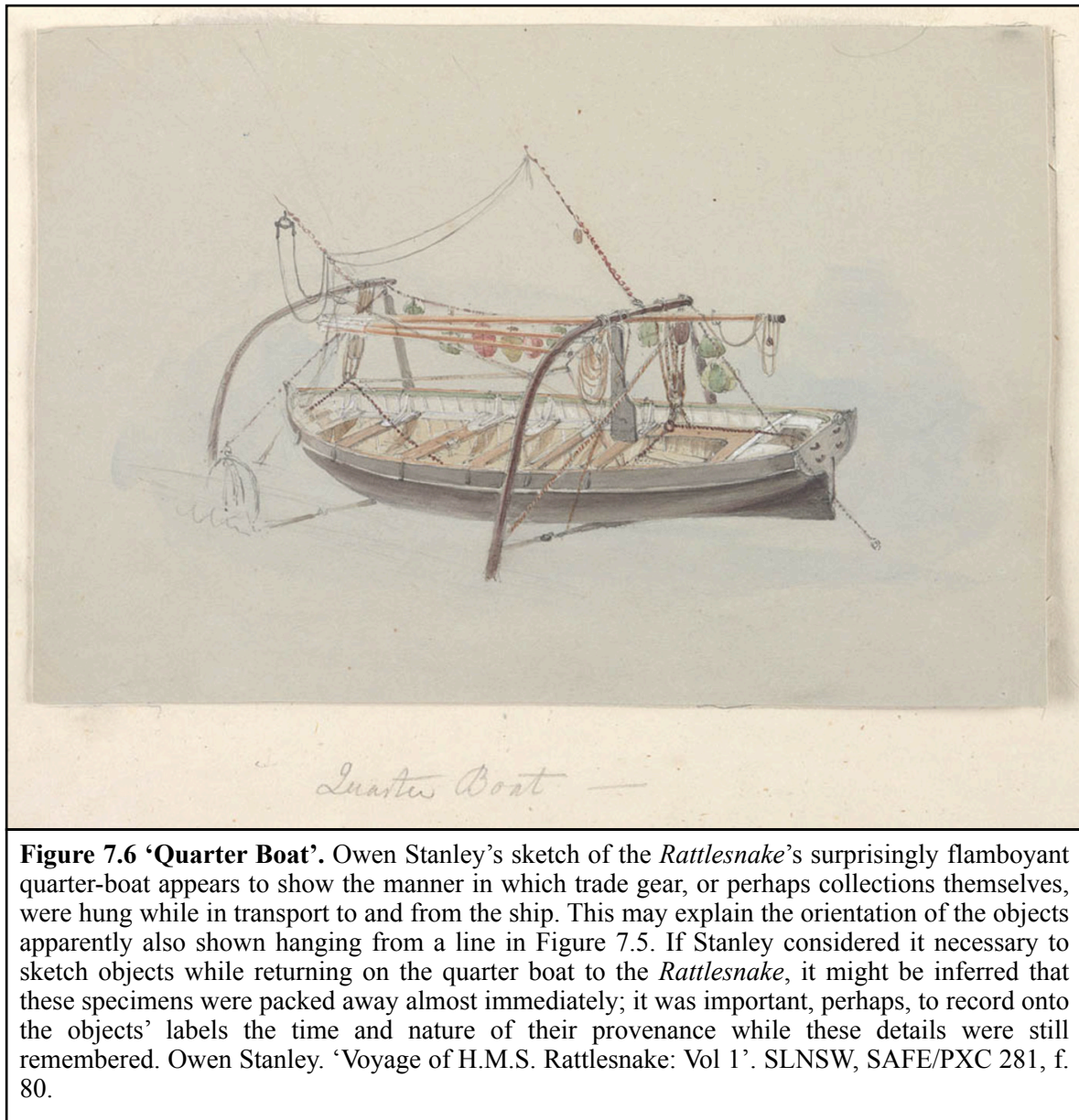


Figure 7.5 Owen Stanley's sketch of baskets recorded in Robert Gale's notebook. Owen Stanley. 'Voyage of H.M.S. Rattlesnake: Vol 1'. SLNSW, SAFE/PXC 281, f. 104.



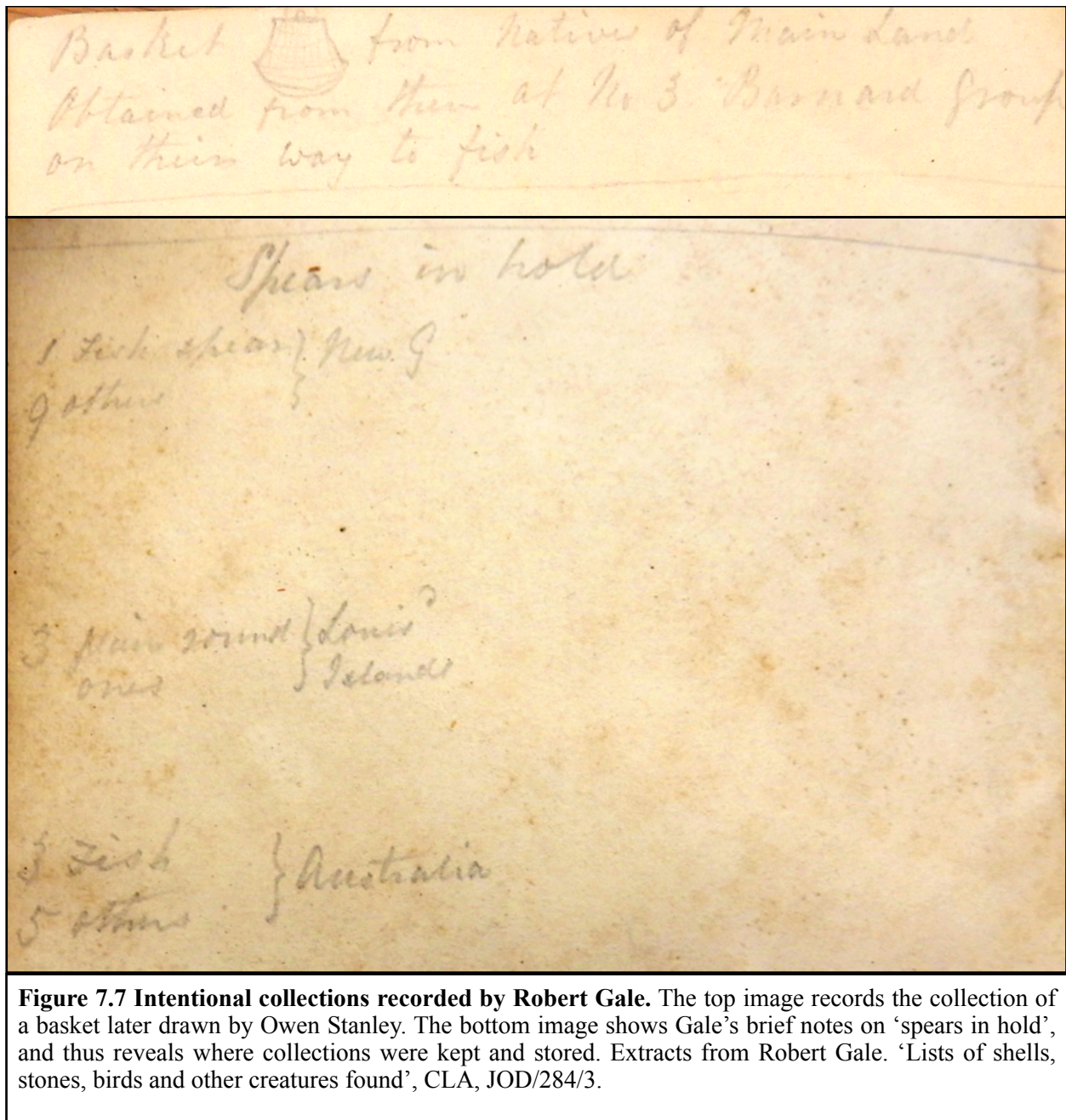


Figure 7.7 Intentional collections recorded by Robert Gale. The top image records the collection of a basket later drawn by Owen Stanley. The bottom image shows Gale's brief notes on 'spears in hold', and thus reveals where collections were kept and stored. Extracts from Robert Gale. 'Lists of shells, stones, birds and other creatures found', CLA, JOD/284/3.

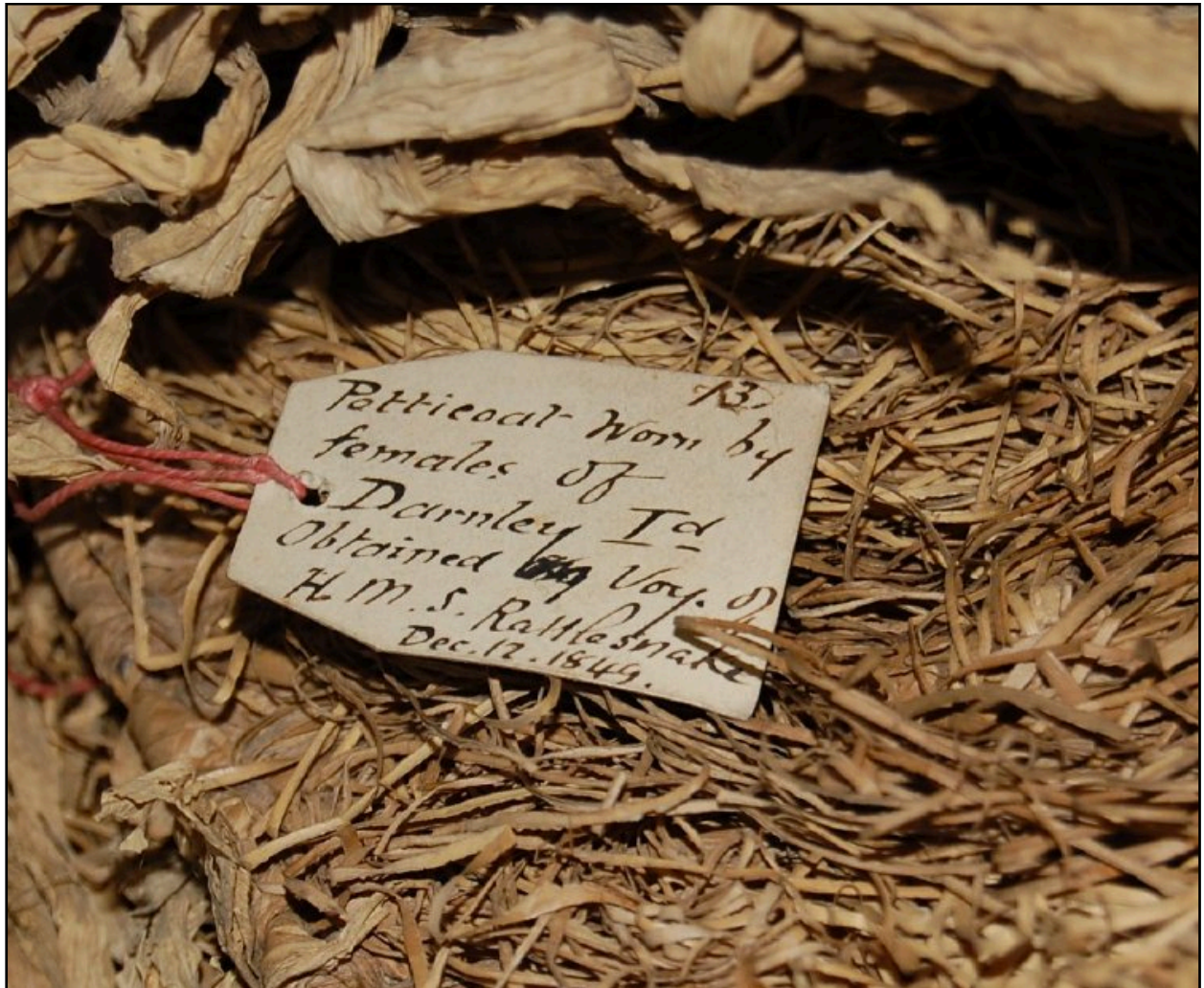


Figure 7.8 Label attached to BM. Oc1851,0103.13.a. © Trustees of the British Museum.

7.3 The naturalists' ethnographic collections

Appendix 6 and Appendix 7 make for interesting reading, with respect to Jukes, MacGillivray and Huxley's relative approach to ethnographic collecting. Jukes was evidently the most diligent collector, as he both recorded moments of collecting and donated objects to the British Museum. This parity was reflected in the fact that the number of recorded collections associated with Jukes (twelve) is identical to the number of objects he donated to the British Museum, although only three objects were the same. In total, the *Fly* made twenty-nine incidental or non-extant collections and forty-nine intentional and extant ones. It may have been a consequence of his role as a collector for Stanley that MacGillivray contributed nothing to the *Fly*'s ethnographic collection. As the appointed naturalist to the *Rattlesnake*, however, little seems to have changed. Though MacGillivray was no longer collecting privately, his *Narrative* for the voyage refers only to one, incidental and non-extant, collection, a boomerang found at the Barnard Islands which understandably attracted his interest as it had been painted green.⁵² Two extant Indigenous Australian *Rattlesnake* objects now at the Museum were collected by MacGillivray, as was a specimen of barkcloth from Papua New Guinea, but he appears not to have acquired any other ethnographic specimens. In turn, only three extant objects from the *Rattlesnake* voyage can be associated with Huxley, all of which were acquired in Papua New Guinea, and given by Huxley to the Museum only in 1869.⁵³

To consider, first, to what degree naval, imperial and commercial motivations influenced the naturalists' research, the forces which governed

⁵² MacGillivray. *Narrative of the Voyage of H.M.S. Rattlesnake*, vol. 1. p. 92. Whereas the majority of the *Rattlesnake*'s collections were attributed to Stanley and are therefore anonymous, some allowance seems to have been given to Jukes, MacGillivray and Huxley to record donations as their own. As such, it seems unlikely that the true extent of their own collecting was masked by the conventions of anonymity which disguised the contributions of amateur collectors.

⁵³ BM. Oc 5396, Oc 5394, Oc 5395.

the work of the amateur scientists explored in Chapter Six evidently impacted also upon Jukes and MacGillivray's behaviour. As the prospective authors of the *Fly* and *Rattlesnake*'s respective narratives, their official investigative remits were wider than that of Huxley. Since the two expeditions were instructed to report in part upon desirable locations for future Australian settlements, Jukes and MacGillivray channelled George Windsor Earl by writing extensively on the relative merits of Port Essington and Cape York. Upon the completion of the *Fly*'s survey, Blackwood sent a series of letters to Edward Smith-Stanley, 14th earl of Derby (then Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, and the son of MacGillivray's patron).⁵⁴ The letters contained Jukes and MacGillivray's commentary on the strategic and geographical merits of Cape York. Interestingly, both considered their insights upon the sophistication of Torres Strait Islanders relative to Aboriginal Australians to be relevant to the location of a future settlement, and in this deliberation objects played a crucial role. 'Their ornaments, their weapons, their houses and canoes all shew them to be a superior race', Jukes wrote.⁵⁵ Moreover:

in their bartering they desire only useful articles as knives and axes and accept beads and ornaments only as presents. From these and other reasons I think they are capable of great improvement in the arts of life.⁵⁶

Specimens acquired in consequence of trade were also of interest. From the Torres Strait and Papua New Guinea, Jukes suggested, acquisitions of 'natural and artificial curiosities...would be valuable articles of commerce as specimens of Natural History'.⁵⁷ Unable completely to separate his scientific and commercial concerns, Jukes argued that a settlement at Cape York would beget 'great results...ultimately perhaps to commerce, certainly and directly to Science or to scientific curiosity'.⁵⁸ Writing to the *Sydney*

⁵⁴ 'Admiralty: Miscellanea. Cases. Port Essington', TNA, ADM 7/766.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

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Morning Herald as well as in his *Narrative*, MacGillivray offered similar commentary on the benefits of Cape York.⁵⁹ Though less inclined to collect objects, MacGillivray included similarly extensive descriptions of the respective material cultures of the peoples encountered by the *Fly* and *Rattlesnake*. In regard to colonisation, the manufactures of ‘the Murray and Darnley Islanders’ showed them to be ‘of a much higher intellectual standard than the Australians, and consequently more likely to appreciate any humanizing influence which might be exercised for their benefit’.⁶⁰

Whereas MacGillivray, like Huxley, was in general more concerned to pursue his own scientific interests, Jukes’ correspondence with Beaufort makes clear that his own attitude toward collecting reflected a considerable willingness to work according to the Admiralty’s concerns. Nevertheless, Jukes’ letters expose too the way in which he grew increasingly disenchanted with naval science. In a manner reminiscent of Huxley’s later complaint, Jukes wrote a furious letter to Beaufort after arriving back in England in 1846, ‘the etiquette of discipline being now at an end’.⁶¹ Some days previously, an overzealous officer of the customs house in London had poured away the preservative spirits within Jukes’ specimen jars, apparently suspecting him of smuggling alcohol. By the time they were received by John Edward Gray at the British Museum, the *Fly*’s organic specimens were almost ruined. The incident highlighted the surprising lack of support which the Admiralty gave to its naturalists. ‘Allow me to say’, wrote Jukes:

that in common I have no doubt with others in similar situations to my own I have felt great want of some person with whom to correspond officially, under whose orders I might act, & to whom I might apply for instructions, directions & advice, of some department in short or recognised authority to receive my collections and observations, to give system to efforts which must otherwise be desultory and incomplete, and allow me to add to afford increased pecuniary means

⁵⁹ ‘Remarks on Port Essington’, *Sydney Morning Herald*. 15 Oct. 1845.

⁶⁰ MacGillivray. *Narrative of the Voyage of H.M.S. Rattlesnake*, vol. 1. p. 320.

⁶¹ Joseph Beete Jukes to Beaufort, 5 Jul. 1846. UKHO, IL - J, p. 287.

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of action in unforeseen emergencies and to take advantage of unexpected opportunities.⁶²

In spite of these troubles, Jukes' 'dry collections' numbered an impressive five thousand, consisting in part 'a collection of native weapons, ornaments and instruments, a small antique statue from Java, and other matters'; Jukes mentioned too that he had inherited 'about 800 words of the languages of the Torres Straits' from Millery, the *Fly's* late clerk.⁶³ If he intended for this to consolidate his reputation as a proficient and enlightened scientific explorer, Jukes was to be disappointed. In consequence perhaps of the newly humanitarian spirit toward indigenous peoples fostered in part by the APS, the naturalist's account of his collections and adventures, published as the *Fly's Narrative*, received an excoriating review in *The Athenaeum*. The casually brutal language often apparent in such texts was much opposed by the magazine's reviewer, John Abraham Heraud. Although Jukes was 'a traveller who feels that we stand in moral relations as well towards the savage as the civilized', Heraud observed, he had betrayed himself as a potential murderer. 'He is not ashamed to state', Heraud wrote, quoting from Jukes' *Narrative*:

that "though far, I hope, from abetting cruelty, I could make great allowances for any one who, under such circumstances as I have detailed [violent attacks on the *Fly's* crew] *took a larger revenge than the strict justice of the case demanded*. I felt that the life of one of my own shipmates, whatever his rank might be, was far dearer to me than that of a wilderness of savages, - and that to preserve his life or avenge his death I could willingly shoot a dozen of these black fellows..."⁶⁴

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Jukes to Beaufort, 16 Jul. 1846. UKHO, IL -B, p. 57.

⁶⁴ 'Narrative of the Surveying Voyage of H.M.S. Fly', *The Athenaeum Journal of Literature, Science and the Fine Arts - for the year 1847* (London: James Holmes, 1847), 859.

‘Mr Jukes should have remembered’, Heraud observed, ‘that it is the triumph of the moral and cultivated man to regulate and subdue [his emotions]’.⁶⁵ He chastised Jukes too for carrying out various thefts:

While exploring “the great house” of which we last week gave the description, our voyagers made free with some of its contents. They took away, without permission, besides two pigs, certain curiosities, such as a skull, hatchet, and drum, - which we are told are now deposited in the British Museum. These things Mr. Jukes calls “spoils”; and it was not, he records, until after the pigs were eaten “that the reflection occurred to me that we had in fact *stolen* them.” Future travellers, when they complain of the tendency to theft on the part of the natives, would do well to recollect this incident.⁶⁶

The time had come, Heraud concluded, ‘for European science and commerce to determine that their intercourse with those distant islands shall be regulated in accordance with the dictates of humanity and justice’.⁶⁷ Infuriated, Jukes appealed to his friend, the geologist Andrew Crombie Ramsay:

Bye the bye, in the second review of the *Athenaeum* of my book, they have a go at me about shooting the black fellows; and say ‘Mr. Jukes should recollect it is the triumph of the moral and cultivated man to subdue such resentments,’ &c. What a lark! Fancy their addressing me gravely as a moral and cultivated man! How I should like to get the chap that wrote that [the review had been anonymous], in a boat-cruise of New Guinea; keep him out for three days in a heavy sea; feed him on salt-beef, rum, and tobacco; make him sleep on a board in a flannel-shirt and no pillow; and then take him into a scrimmage with a lot of black fellows. I’d then ask him how he felt in his morality and cultivation, and whether they sat easy on his stomach, or not.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* 859.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 861.

⁶⁸ Browne (ed.). *Letters and Extracts*, p. 306.

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Though defensive of his resort to violence, Jukes tellingly made no defence of his theft of objects; the hatchet and drum referred to are still at the British Museum (Oc1846,0731.16 and Oc1846,0731.1). Though he evidently found it frustrating, Jukes' encounter with *The Athenaeum* highlighted the narrowing boundaries between the genres of adventure writing, scientific discovery and ethnological research in which he participated, but naively attempted to keep apart. Swashbuckling accounts of violent conflict were now critically examined by the same moralistic and humanitarian audience that had stimulated more objective ethnological study as a means to encourage the understanding and protection of indigenous peoples.



Figure 7.9 'Places where a native shot'. Joseph Beete Jukes included on part of a map of north-eastern Queensland a key 'A. B.', referring to 'places where a native shot'. Possibly, this was intended as a guide to places where future explorers might anticipate a hostile reception. Extract from 'Part of Great Barrier Reefs : [between Cape Upstart and Hervey's Bay / cartographer, J.B. Jukes]', NLA, MAP RM 3932.

7.4 Monogenism and Polygenism

Notwithstanding his remarkable denunciation of the Torres Strait as a ‘wilderness of savages’, Jukes catered separately to his ethnological audience. The naturalist included at the back of the second volume of his *Narrative* a chapter, ‘On the Ethnology of the Indian and Pacific Oceans’, in which he set out his credentials as an ethnological explorer. In more staid discourse, Jukes began by announcing his ‘diffidence’ about contributing to a science that he had ‘never made my study’, but then launched into a comprehensive attack upon monogenist thought.⁶⁹ Although Jukes drew upon personal correspondence with Latham, and was complementary toward Prichard, he rejected arguments for the essential interrelatedness of the three ‘principal races’ of the Indian and Pacific Oceans: ‘1. The Malayo-Polynesian. 2. The Papuan. 3. The Australian’.⁷⁰ This line of argument would later earn Jukes a letter from Darwin, forwarding the praise of the polygenist physician John Crawford, and a measure of Darwin’s own.⁷¹ Whereas, to some, Aboriginal Australians bore strong resemblance to people encountered throughout the Torres Strait and Papua New Guinea, Jukes wrote that apparent similarities between ‘savages’ were misleading:

in proportion as different races of men approach more nearly to the simple state of the savage, so do the differences between them become less in amount and therefore less obvious to the transient observer, while at the same time these slight differences may be as characteristic and important as much larger variations between more civilized races.⁷²

In an echo of his commentary on the desirability of a settlement at Cape York, Jukes used collected objects in his ethnological chapter as a means to highlight his views on the inadequacy of the ‘Australian race’ relative to

⁶⁹ Jukes. *Narrative of the Surveying Voyage of H.M.S. Fly*, vol. 2, p. 232.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Charles Darwin to Jukes, 8 Oct. 1847. DCP, Letter no. 1125, <http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/DCP-LETT-1125>. Accessed 2 August 2017.

⁷² Jukes. *Narrative of the Surveying Voyage of H.M.S. Fly*, vol. 2, p. 233.

Torres Strait Islanders. Jukes' polygenist views led him to distinguish Aboriginal Australians from Torres Strait Islanders and Papua New Guineans north of Cape York. 'They ['Australians'] are wholly destitute of agriculture and of all manner of manufacture of any kind of material, or tool, or implement, beyond their few weapons, and a rude stone hammer, and some simple nets and baskets', Jukes wrote.⁷³ Nevertheless, two 'remarkable' objects also suggested that 'Australians' were racially distinct:

the throwing-stick for darting the spear, and the well-known weapon, called the boomerang. The latter is quite peculiar to the Australians, but something like the throwing-stick is, I believe, known among the Esquimaux. Neither have ever been mentioned as met with among any Papuan race.⁷⁴

Taken in its entirety, Jukes' *Narrative* therefore tempts us to question whether his ethnographic collecting was predicated in part or even in whole upon a wish to vindicate his belief in polygenesis. A prospective ordinand in his younger years, Jukes appears to have enlisted his Australian collections within a wider effort to reconcile polygenist theory with the biblical account of man's creation. Though monogenesis sat more comfortably with the Bible, attempts to combine Christian faith with polygenism were not unheard of, as Terence Keel has shown.⁷⁵ Theological matters were undoubtedly on Jukes' mind while on the *Fly*, as a long letter sent home to a friend in 1844 attests.⁷⁶ On the subject of his religious opinions, Jukes wrote that he had 'much sympathy' with the 'sceptical frame of mind', it being 'closely connected with a noble instinct of inquiry and search for truth, which God has implanted in the human mind'.⁷⁷ Here, Pope's verse, particularly his order to 'presume not God to scan', was invoked once again. Having abandoned his theological career in favour of Geology while at Cambridge, where he studied alongside Darwin under the auspices of Adam

⁷³ *Ibid.* p. 243.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* p. 245.

⁷⁵ Terence D. Keel. 'Religion, polygenism and the early science of human origins', *History of the Human Sciences*, 26 (2013), 3-32.

⁷⁶ Browne (ed.). *Letters and Extracts*, p. 407.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

Sedgwick, Jukes had form in pursuing scientific controversies in contemporary religious belief. This interpretation goes some way to explaining the terminology of a letter sent by Jukes to Darwin in 1847, in which he lamented the loss of his collections. ‘All my spiritual exercises’, he wrote, ‘procured on the Australian coast, are now buried in the deep, deep sea of the vaults of the British Museum’.⁷⁸

Whereas Jukes incorporated objects into his argument for polygenesis, MacGillivray offered a case for monogenist belief, and built it instead upon collected words. Like Jukes, MacGillivray corresponded with Latham and Prichard, and included within his journal several ethnological sections which he knew would be of interest to contemporaries in England. In contrast, however, MacGillivray focused less upon the collection of objects than the philological theories which allowed him through the medium of language to identify ‘junctions’ between the ‘Papuan’ and ‘Australian’ races.⁷⁹ The Kaurareg people of Prince of Wales Island were of particular interest as a supposedly intermediate group; their culture was reminiscent of Papua New Guinea but their pronouns, according to Latham, identified them more with Aboriginal Australians at Cape York.⁸⁰ Though Jukes also commented on indigenous vocabularies he managed this only, as we have seen, after obtaining a list of words from the deceased clerk Millery.

In his comparably brief discussion of objects, MacGillivray acknowledged Jukes’ argument that boomerangs and spear-throwers offered one means to ‘trace the proximate origins of the Australians’, but disagreed with Jukes’ conclusion that such objects signified the distinctiveness of the ‘Australian’ race.⁸¹ Rather than collect for himself, MacGillivray found his time better spent searching the halls of the British Museum for comparable specimens; he directed readers to an Egyptian ‘fowling-stick’ resembling the Boomerang, in ‘Egyptian Room, Case 36, 37, No. 5646’, and to a spear-

⁷⁸ Browne (ed.). *Letters and Extracts*, p. 305.

⁷⁹ MacGillivray. *Narrative of the Voyage of H.M.S. Rattlesnake*, vol. 2, p. 82.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.* p. 83.

thrower from the Aleutian Islands of the Bering Sea, ‘in Ethnographical Room of British Museum, a specimen in case 16’.⁸² Whether or not this was an implicit attack upon Jukes’ earlier-expressed views it is impossible to say. The impression that the two naturalists were to some degree in deliberate conflict on the subject of human origins was however suggested also by Jukes’ own subtle criticism of MacGillivray’s theories. Anticipating the publication of the *Rattlesnake* journal, Jukes suggested in his concise chapter on the languages of the Torres Strait that MacGillivray’s philological work had thus far been inconclusive.⁸³ As linguistic similarities threatened polygenist theory, Jukes sought to reject comparisons between the languages of Australia and the Torres Strait. However, he managed to do so only in terms of the quality of indigenous speech, rather than its content. The ‘enunciation of the Torres Strait islanders is remarkably clear and distinct’, Jukes wrote, whereas Aboriginal Australians’ speech was ‘always more or less of a jabber’.⁸⁴ The ‘islanders’ always ‘took much pleasure in teaching us their language’, in contrast to the ‘apathetic and easily tired Australian natives’.

7.5 Canoes in Australia

Intentional and incidental collecting on the *Fly* and *Rattlesnake* voyages thus melded in numerous ways both with nascent ethnological theory and developing conventions of scientific expertise and professionalism. With a view to the legacy of these expeditions, however, the most consequential form of object-based study undertaken on-board concerned specimens which could hardly in their physical form be collected at all. Canoes have appeared recurrently in this thesis as a form of object which presented difficulties and opportunities to British naval explorers; collectors on the

⁸² *Ibid.* p. 84.

⁸³ Jukes. *Narrative of the Surveying Voyage of H.M.S. Fly*, vol. 2, p. 275.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.* p. 276.

Note here the similarity with Card’s own terminology and contempt for Indigenous Australians.

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Lady Nelson discovered a canoe but could carry only its paddles, Matthew Flinders drew insights from the absence of Indigenous Australian canoes while on the *Investigator*, and King on the *Mermaid* and *Bathurst* managed to acquire canoes only through theft and confiscation, and even then only temporarily. The size and weight of canoes, in conjunction with the importance they possessed to their makers, militated against all but the most determined efforts to study them and to bring them to Britain. For this reason, there are only two Aboriginal Australian canoes in the British Museum, acquired in 1906 and 1936.⁸⁵ To sailors, perhaps, these were nevertheless the objects which presented the most obvious affinities and means of comparison between themselves and those they encountered.⁸⁶

The *Fly* and *Rattlesnake*'s survey of northern Australia and the Torres Strait greatly accelerated naval and metropolitan interest in canoes, and the cultural insights they contained. 'Large and fast', as the *Fly*'s master called them, canoes symbolised the danger, agency and mobility of the region's threatening and sometimes hostile inhabitants. Such were their complexity and variety that canoes became a means of comparison between the archipelago's indigenous cultures. Canoes offered, too, a series of insights communicable more by men such as Brierly, who could draw them, than by Jukes, Huxley and MacGillivray, who were largely left to describe them in writing. For all involved in their study, however, one of the chief difficulties attending the investigation of canoes concerned the best manner of isolating them from their passengers. During instances of trade at sea, which were the most common form of encounter in the Torres Strait, the canoe could hardly be studied in detail; illustrations of canoes in such circumstances were useful in showing how they were operated, but the presence of persons onboard tended to obscure the finer details. As discussed, Blackwood nevertheless encouraged such work by allowing Melville to draw detailed

⁸⁵ BM. Oc 1906,1015.1, and Oc 1936,1030.1.a-b.

⁸⁶ Steven Hooper has made a similar case in relation to naval encounters at Tahiti. See Steven Hooper. *Pacific Encounters: Art & Divinity in Polynesia, 1760-1860* (London: The British Museum Press, 2006), pp. 18-19.

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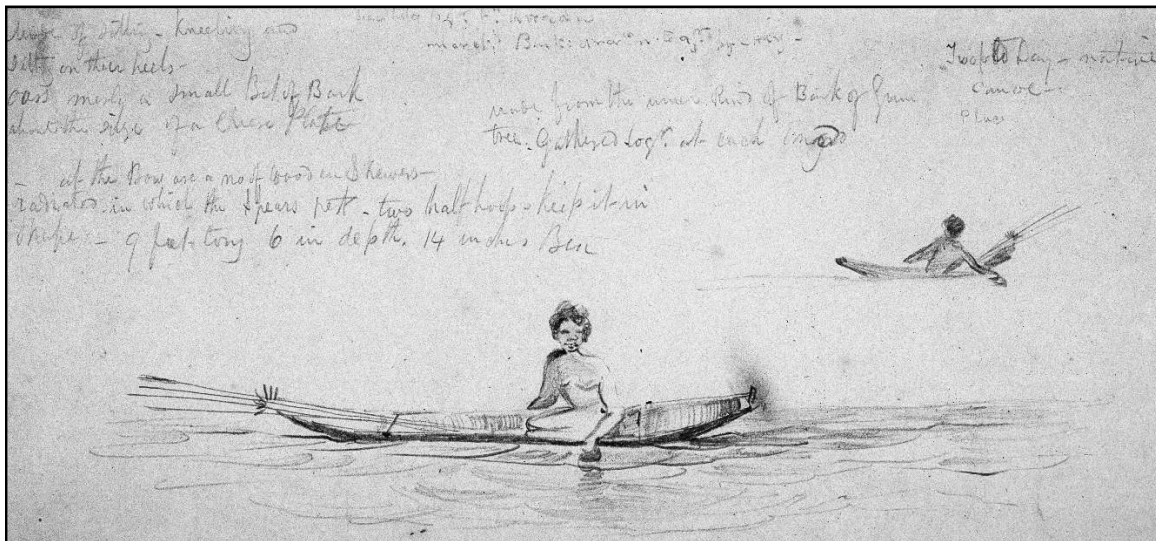


Figure 7.10 Canoes, encounter and exchange on the *Rattlesnake* voyage. Top: Oswald Brierly's notes on and sketches of bark canoes encountered at Twofold Bay, New South Wales. Oswald Brierly. 'Journal of a visit to Twofold Bay', SLNSW, A 535. Bottom: Dugout canoes, shown in Owen Stanley's sketch of trade and exchange between the *Rattlesnake* and people encountered in the Louisiade Archipelago. Owen Stanley. 'Voyage of H.M.S. *Rattlesnake*: Vol 1'. SLNSW, SAFE/PXC 281, f. 84.

sketches of canoes on his coastal views. Brierly, who had studied naval architecture, engaged in and promoted equally skilled drawing while on the *Rattlesnake* by sharing detailed instructions on how best to illustrate ‘the particulars of canoes’.⁸⁷ Intriguingly, MacGillivray once managed to circumvent this methodology by somehow contriving to make a model of a canoe that had docked alongside the *Rattlesnake*; the naturalist gave the model to the British Museum, where it remains, and then inserted an illustration of the model into his *Narrative* (Figure 7.11).⁸⁸

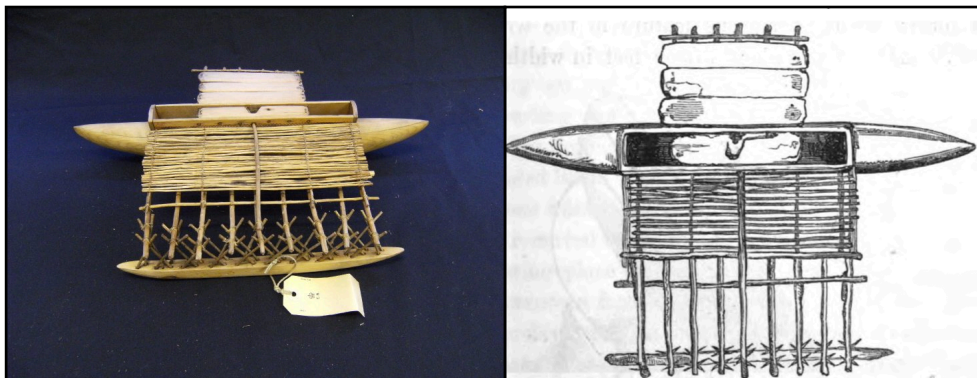


Figure 7.11 Modes of representing an encountered canoe. Left: Model of a canoe made on-board the *Rattlesnake* and later donated to the British Museum. BM. Oc1851,0103.11. © Trustees of the British Museum. Right: A sketch of the same canoe reproduced in MacGillivray. *Narrative of the Voyage of H.M.S. Rattlesnake*, vol. 1, p. 205.

Less objectively, the *Fly* and *Rattlesnake*’s study of canoes was advantageous to metropolitan ethnologists chiefly because they were so difficult to acquire and to describe. Of all the objects appearing in this thesis, none excited such passions as did those canoes of northern Australia and the Torres Strait described by Jukes, Brierly and MacGillivray. In 1861, the Ethnological Society of London published volume one of its *Transactions*, the first such publication since the decline of its *Journal* in 1856. Here, the polygenist Crawford (the society’s president), argued that

⁸⁷ Oswald Brierly. ‘General Shipping Notes H.M.S. Rattlesnake 1849-1850, H.M.S. Meander 1850-1851’, SLNSW, A 512, p. 39.

⁸⁸ BM. Oc 1851,0103.11.

MacGillivray. *Narrative of the Voyage of H.M.S. Rattlesnake*, vol. 1, p. 205.

Aboriginal Australians could be proven an ‘original’ race because they possessed no canoes, and accordingly could not have arrived in Australia from elsewhere.⁸⁹ Though only a brief remark in a larger essay, ‘On the classification of the Races of Man’, Crawford sparked a heated debate in *The Times* and *The Athenaeum*. Though Crawford did not mention his source, he had undoubtedly used the ethnological chapter within Jukes’ *Narrative*, about which he had effusively written to Darwin.

In connection with his criticism of Aboriginal Australian objects, discussed above, Jukes’ *Narrative* had stated that ‘Over the largest part of the coast they were utterly ignorant of any kind of canoe, or any method of passing on the water, until they were visited by Europeans. In those parts where canoes were known, they seemed to have acquired the idea from the islanders of Torres Strait’.⁹⁰ This was in defiance of the fact that models of canoes from as far south as Tasmania had been displayed at the Great Exhibition of 1851.⁹¹ In truth, Aboriginal Australians manufactured a range of watercraft, including bark canoes and rafts.⁹² Jukes was correct, however, that the larger, ‘dugout’, canoes used by Aboriginal Australians in Arnhem Land and Cape York had been brought from elsewhere, if not from Torres Strait Islanders then the Makassarese fishermen who visited Australia from Indonesia on seasonal winds.⁹³ In the Torres Strait, where outriggers were more common, canoes and associated woods native to Papua New Guinea formed an essential item of trade between indigenous peoples.⁹⁴

What is most interesting about the argument which appeared in the pages of *The Times* and *The Athenaeum* is the insight it provides into the requisite

⁸⁹ John Crawford. ‘On the Classification of the Races of Man’, *Transactions of the Ethnological Society of London*, 1 (1861), 363.

⁹⁰ Jukes. *Narrative of the Surveying Voyage of H.M.S. Fly*, vol. 2, p. 243.

⁹¹ See BM. Oc1851,1122.3.

⁹² Robert Edwards. *Aboriginal bark canoes of the Murray Valley* (Adelaide: South Australian Museum, 1972).

⁹³ Scott Mitchell. ‘Foreign contact and Indigenous exchange networks on the Coburg Peninsula, northwestern Arnhem Land’, *Bulletin of the Indo-Pacific Prehistory Association*, 15 (1996), 181-191.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

evidential and professional standards then necessary to participate in the debate. Though it was the naturalist Jukes' argument to which notice had been brought, Brierly, the former itinerant marine artist, was the most vociferous in his reply. On 29 January 1862, *The Times* reported Crawford's conclusions, and it was there that Brierly first learnt of his claim. Having risen to the position of 'graphic naval historian' during the Crimean War, Brierly was now working directly under the patronage of Queen Victoria; he had profitably abandoned his ethnographic interests in favour of other imperial concerns. Nevertheless, Crawford's claims could not go unanswered. Brierly was initially good-tempered, remarking in a letter to *The Athenaeum* that in fact the *Rattlesnake* had seen hundreds of canoes.⁹⁵ One month later, however, Jukes responded with a letter of his own, which paid minimal attention to Brierly's claims.⁹⁶ Now working for the Geological Survey of Ireland, Jukes repeated his argument that Aboriginal Australians 'had not the remotest notion of a canoe nor any kind of water conveyance whatever', with the proviso that many had in fact built canoes 'derived...from the Papuan Islanders'.⁹⁷ Jukes concluded that Australia possessed in any case no indigenous wood capable of being made into a canoe.

Some days later, a philanthropist and merchant named Daniel Cooper, who was later to become a New South Wales politician, opined that in fact 'Mr J. B. Jukes...is wrong in his statement', because canoes had been mentioned in a lecture on Aboriginal Australia found 'in the catalogue of the Natural and Industrial Products of New South Wales for the exhibition of 1862'.⁹⁸ Though not yet represented by extant specimens, then, the evidence of canoes given by the 1862 International Exhibition added some authority to Cooper and Brierly's claims. One day later, on 12 March, an incensed Brierly wrote again to *The Athenaeum*, in response to Jukes' letter. There, he

⁹⁵ 'Miscellanea', *The Athenaeum Journal of Literature, Science and the Fine Arts. January to June, 1862* (London: James Holmes, 1862), 304.

⁹⁶ 'Canoes in Australia', *The Athenaeum Journal of Literature, Science and the Fine Arts. January to June, 1862* (London: James Holmes, 1862), 331.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.* p. 363.

simply quoted at length those passages within Jukes and MacGillivray's *Narratives* which mentioned Aboriginal Australian canoes.⁹⁹ Rather than criticise Jukes, however, Brierly concluded that 'Mr Crawford attacks everything opposed to his own views with so much impetuosity, that he seems scarcely to allow himself breathing-time to ascertain existing facts'.¹⁰⁰ Curiously, Brierly made no reference to his own extensive notes, nor to his many drawings of canoes; these forms of evidence, it seems, would not have qualified for the debate. Nevertheless, the amateur, Brierly, was ultimately successful. One week later, a chastened Jukes wrote again, apologising for his 'hastily-written note', and stating that 'Sir D. Cooper and Mr Brierly are, of course, [correct] beyond all question'.¹⁰¹

7.6 Conclusion

When the *Rattlesnake* arrived in Chatham in November 1850, it brought with it the first systematic ethnographic collection ever to have been made by the Royal Navy in Australia. In doing so, the *Rattlesnake* built upon the vast but less structured collections of its predecessor, the *Fly*. Somehow, the transfer of these important and interesting objects to the British Museum's new ethnological gallery was achieved in spite of the nervousness of the voyages' captains, the pronounced disaffection of their naturalists and the torrid conditions of northern Australia and the Torres Strait. The professionalisation and, perhaps, normalisation of naval ethnographic collecting between 1842 and 1850 was perceptible here as well as in Jukes' reluctant but dutiful donation of his specimens to the British Museum. As much could be read, too, from the fact that a superior collection was made by the *Rattlesnake* even in spite of the relative disinterest of its naturalists, MacGillivray and Huxley, and the death of its captain, Stanley. That this was a consequence at least in part of the developing bureaucracy of the

⁹⁹ *Ibid.* p. 396.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.* p. 431.

hydrographic office under Francis Beaufort was evident in the rise of a new generation of ethnographers from the voyages' clerical class: John Sweatman, Charles James Card, Thomas Millery and Robert Gale.

Categorizations of amateur and professional practice in these years would be irredeemably anachronistic if directly imposed, but are useful as a means of thinking about the variety of contemporary ethnographic researches which occurred, and the tensions which existed between them. I suggested in Chapter Six that Sweatman, Ince and Porcher's collecting was ultimately idiosyncratic, but that their researches were encouraged and welcomed by a new atmosphere of naval science. These men were amateurs in the sense that they sought not to appeal to any particular scientific authority, and were not employed to undertake scientific investigations; they collected according to their own interests, and took the initiative to donate their objects to British museums. On the *Rattlesnake*, the work of scientists of comparable status was more obviously professional, but their individuality was lost; there was no analogue of Sweatman's highly original research. Card and Gale instead deferred to metropolitan concerns; their extensive vocabulary lists masked their individual curiosity, as did the anonymous labels affixed to object specimens, which offered only basic observations on matters of origin and application. In the work of naval draughtsmen a professionalism to rival that of the civilian naturalists was evidently desired, but little came of Melville and Brierly's work. Revealingly, Melville later abandoned all pretence to scientific authority; his experiences on-board the *Fly* were published anonymously as a book intended for children: *The Adventures of a Griffin on a Voyage of Discovery*.¹⁰²

I began this chapter with the observation that the *Rattlesnake*'s return to England in 1850 is an apt point on which to end the thesis. The reinvigoration of the Ethnological Society in the 1860s, in conjunction with parallel developments in racial and evolutionary debate, transformed the

¹⁰² Harden S. Melville. *The Adventures of a Griffin on a Voyage of Discovery* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1867).

7. COLLECTING ON THE EVE OF EVOLUTION

nature and scope of naval ethnographic collecting. Five years after the *Rattlesnake*'s return, in 1855, the ethnographic researches of the medical department of the navy, at Haslar Hospital, also abruptly changed. Early signs of these later developments were visible in Jukes and MacGillivray's respective approach to objects, which made the concurrent maturation of the navy's own museum-based methodology appear ironically out of date. Jukes mourned the loss of his specimens to the British Museum, where he felt they would go to waste. Paradoxically, MacGillivray shunned ethnographic collecting on the *Rattlesnake* in favour of the philological study of indigenous vocabularies, but spent considerable time in the Museum's galleries in an effort to hypothesise the origins of remarkable objects. New to Jukes, MacGillivray and Huxley's work was a debate on human origins, whereupon adversaries took up positions on the respective merits of monogenist and polygenist thought. This helped to structure and to rationalise ethnographic research, but introduced too a newly political atmosphere. After 1850, arguments abounded about the ancestry of canoes, and much rode on the kinship of ancient Egyptian spear-throwers and Indigenous Australian boomerangs.

Conclusion

Ethnographic collecting was a constant and important feature of the Royal Navy's exploration of Australia, and of its encounters with Indigenous Australians, between 1772 and 1855. Collecting was both directed and undirected, random and purposeful. It changed with the tides; it had a history. The first comprehensive exploration of imperial ethnographic collecting by British sailors and associated maritime explorers in any region of the world, these most general conclusions are the thesis' most important. The principal message that specialist or merely curious readers should take away from this study is the thesis' rejection of the argument that sailors acquired ethnographic specimens in a largely unplanned and unscientific manner, or only as a means to make a financial gain. Within the rich and complex confines of naval vessels, seaborne communities of sailors, surgeons, ethnologists and naturalists variously worked together and in isolation to gather, and to analyse, new ethnographic knowledge. At only one stage in my research have I found reference to ethnographic materials being sold by their original collectors; the most common time prices were associated with objects, in fact, was when collectors were obliged to pay duties on materials moving through customs houses.¹ Though the sale of ethnographic specimens undoubtedly did occur, the dearth of evidence offered or available for this presumptive practice suggests that other, rather more interesting things were afoot. These I have explored in this thesis, and I set out my more substantial conclusions below.

¹ See Chapter Seven, section 7.3. Joseph Beete Jukes' claim that 'natural and artificial curiosities...would be valuable articles of commerce as specimens of Natural History' suggests a fruitful area of research, in line with my discussion on page 353.

8. CONCLUSION

The thesis has shown that naval ethnographic enquiry was a dynamic and democratic practice founded on the making of both intentional and incidental collections. In regard to the first category, the thesis has investigated 126 extant objects pertaining to the period 1800-1855 now located in the storerooms of the British Museum. These objects, enumerated in the Appendix, attest to the ethnographic work of the crews of the *Mermaid* and *Bathurst*, and *Fly* and *Rattlesnake*, as well as to the combined efforts of the naval surgeons who contributed for three decades to Haslar Hospital Museum. In response to the gap it has identified in the scholarly understanding of these objects, the thesis concludes that all can be placed within a coherent narrative of naval collecting, informed by three main motivations. Broadly put, the donation of 112, or 89%, of these objects was attributable to the Admiralty and its sailors' desire to contribute to ethnographic knowledge, and in the process to enhance their scientific reputation. Of these 112 objects, 72, or 64%, were given directly to the British Museum by collectors on voyages of discovery whose directions explicitly ordered the acquisition of ethnographic specimens. From Haslar Hospital, 34%, or 38 objects, attest to the scientific enquiries launched more particularly by the navy's surgeons. Two objects, or just under 2%, came to the British Museum in the nineteenth century from museum collections other than Haslar. Twelve objects, or 10% of the total number of extant collections discussed by the thesis, instead came to the British Museum from private hands, having been collected as a means to satisfy private patrons.

In an original contribution both to the study of museum collections and to ethnographic collecting as a historical practice, the thesis has argued that these 126 extant objects must be understood in relation to the non-extant collections acquired in parallel, whether intentionally or incidentally. If the entirety of the non-extant collections enumerated in this thesis were to be placed in a notional storeroom to neighbour that of the British Museum, they would comprise 499 objects in total. Derived from contemporary journals, these objects attest to entirely different forms of collecting, hitherto

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unnoticed by the historians who have focused principally upon the institutional history of museums, and the anthropologists or historians of anthropology who have used extant museum objects in their study of indigenous societies, with particular reference to those acquired by James Cook. As I first suggested in the thesis introduction, the majority of these 499 non-extant objects attest to historical processes of enquiry in which the making of a collection was used to infer knowledge beyond, as well as about, the immediate things obtained. As such they reveal as much about the navy's contemporary ethnographic investigations as those things extant in the present, if not more. This point was made most thoroughly in Chapter Three, where the intimate relationship between the official orders given to naval expeditions and the content of their written reportage, in relation to collecting, was first identified.

Again, the dominant motivation for incidental collecting identified by the thesis was therefore to satisfy Admiralty instruction; reports of collecting answered official curiosity about the relative location, nature and quality of manufacture of Indigenous Australian things. Often, these reports were accompanied by dense written or visual descriptions which permitted the knowledge content of the collection to be reproduced in a manner impossible with a single, extant object. In the period 1772-1817 at least, the politics and pragmatics both of indigenous encounter and of the conveyance infrastructure of material acquisitions to Britain militated against the collection and dissemination to different persons of multiple instances of taxonomically identical things, insofar as species or genera of ethnographic collections could be said to exist. Where objects did indeed have taxonomic distinction, this was usually a function of their value as proxies to collectors interested in the location, utility and nature of natural history specimens. The pursuit of new plants in particular informed the collection and disposal of manufactured objects. However, the thesis found too that spear-heads and other stone specimens facilitated both geological and ethnogeological enquiries. Additional practices such as the collection of vocabulary, the organisation of interviews, the making of sketches and even the subtle

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disarming of indigenous people were dependent upon forms of collecting not necessarily influenced by a desire to retain objects. For this reason, collecting was sometimes a necessary corollary of the disposal of trade gear, itself intended as a means to render encounters safe, to establish superiority, and to solicit assistance in finding necessities such as wood or water. In all cases, collecting was a ritual of colonial encounter, and the exchange of objects was a product of indigenous agency as much as it was European. The acquisitive tendencies of indigenous peoples revealed in moments of exchange, and their understanding of and participation in trade itself, were in turn enrolled within British adjudications of their relative capacity for European civilisation.

The tables found within the Appendix chart changing practices of naval collecting. The chronology of collecting between 1772 and 1855 was a shift away from small intentional and incidental collections, seen in the work of James Grant and Matthew Flinders, toward increasingly large numbers of intentional and incidental collections, now more likely to be found extant. Objects became, in other words, of increasing interest to naval explorers after the departure of the *Lady Nelson* in 1800. Though intentional collections were sought, incidental collections largely satisfied the informational requirements of Grant and Flinders' expeditions; kept long enough to be drawn and commented upon, the transfer of the objects themselves to Britain was by no means a straightforward process. The voyages of Phillip Parker King, Francis Price Blackwood and Owen Stanley were by contrast associated with the acquisition and transfer to Britain of substantial ethnographic collections. On the voyages of the *Fly* and *Rattlesnake*, ethnographers such as Joseph Beete Jukes collapsed the boundaries between different forms of collecting by associating objects featured in ethnographic or ethnological discussions with their physical counterparts in British museums. This act of bringing together different perspectives and exposing them to the public represented the maturation of object-based naval ethnographic research. It served, to borrow from Simon Schaffer's thoughts on the history of geography, to create more or less of a

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‘distinctive linkage of descriptive realism, systematic taxonomy, and comparative analysis’.²

The thesis is the first work to recognise the role of the Admiralty and its captains in directing ethnographic collecting, and so in shaping the patterns of acquisition described above. The thesis’ discussion of the Admiralty and British Museum’s early to mid-nineteenth century relationship is also new. The three sections of the thesis described in turn the changing regimes of collecting under Joseph Banks, John Barrow and Francis Beaufort. By coincidental alliteration, William Burnett, Frederick William Beechey and Francis Price Blackwood also played a major role in the acquisition of ethnographic specimens. Whereas historians have traditionally exaggerated Banks’ role in augmenting British ethnographic collectors and collections, and underplayed that of nineteenth-century Admiralty officials, the thesis concludes the opposite. From 1772 to 1820, the ‘despotism’ of the Banksian era militated against ethnographic collecting by denying ethnographic specimens a reception at Soho Square comparable to that afforded to natural things. The absence of a perspicuous physical or notional infrastructure for the acquisition and transfer of these specimens from Australia to other institutions in Britain, such as the Admiralty or Royal Society, further dissuaded the early collection of an ethnographic knowledge that was nevertheless sought by contemporaries such as William Henry Cavendish Cavendish-Bentinck and Margaret Bentinck.³

Chapters Four and Five charted the rise of Barrow in the years after Banks’ death. The reinvigorated climate of peacetime scientific enquiry in the navy which followed the end of the Napoleonic Wars was shaped by the emerging forms of knowledge, and the new patrons, that were necessarily sought in Banks’ absence. In these years, Barrow worked to promote and to protect the collections made on voyages of discovery; his desire to receive

² Simon Schaffer. “‘On Seeing Me Write’: Inscription Devices in the South Seas”, *Representations*, 97 (2007), 91.

³ See Chapter Two, section 2.3.

8. CONCLUSION

intentional collections put him on a collision course with collectors such as King, whose penchant for object-based visual and textual descriptions permitted them to engage simultaneously in the disposal of collected specimens among friends and patrons. Barrow also struggled against the institutional inertia of Admiralty officials such as John Wilson Croker, who continued to lack an infrastructure for receiving and disseminating imperial knowledge. After the return of King's Australian expedition, the Admiralty's inability to handle naval collections traditionally classified as 'public' led Barrow to promote the transfer of collected specimens to museums. Shortly thereafter, the House of Commons' 1835 Select Committee on the Condition, Management and Affairs of the British Museum armed the institution's curators with the initiative to make increasingly forthright demands, as representatives of Britain's revitalised 'national collection', for the receipt of objects brought to the country by its navy. The British Museum curators of the period thus advocated for a coherent imperial system of knowledge acquisition, analysis and synthesis.

Barrow was not partial to any particular institution, however; the British Museum had to compete with a plethora of learned societies and specialist collections. Though the museum of the United Service Institution in London, founded in 1832, attracted a large share of naval specimens, scientific investigation and intellectual prestige were more commonly associated with Haslar Hospital Museum, founded in 1827 by the medical department of the navy under William Burnett. Here, a similar desire existed to consolidate the navy's scientific reputation. In this, Barrow and Burnett were joined by Frederick William Beechey, a captain and advocate of naval science who assisted Haslar's first collector, Alexander Collie, in making one of the country's earliest collections from the Arctic peoples of North America. Haslar's association with surgeons and naval medicine nevertheless placed it outside of Barrow's immediate understanding and influence. Chapter Five concluded that this now forgotten institution was regarded by its contemporaries as one of the foremost centres of natural history and ethnographic investigation in early to mid-nineteenth century

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Britain. Contrary to recent scholarly efforts to incorporate imperial surgeons as well as sailors into the role of fact gatherers for a largely metropolitan tradition of British science, the thesis has shown that Haslar was regional but not peripheral; a consequential space of active and independent naval enquiry. Here, a contemporary eclecticism in medical research, informed by the Scottish universities from which many naval surgeons were drawn, saw ethnographic objects assimilated within surgeons' Humboldtian study of the human condition. At Haslar, ethnographic specimens were therefore investigated, exhibited and used as teaching tools according to an unusually well-defined interpretative framework. As much was true of the behaviour of the trained surgeons referred to throughout the thesis in whole, being evident for example in the work of Robert Brown on Flinders' 1801-1803 circumnavigation of Australia.

The transfer of the majority of the collections of Haslar Hospital Museum to the British Museum in 1855 was associated more with tensions internal to Haslar than with the Admiralty's desire to direct the movement and interpretation of scientific knowledge. The neglect thereafter shown to these collections highlighted the contradiction between the British Museum's claim to be the natural depository of imperial collections and its failure to exhibit or interpret them in a meaningful fashion. In their study of the growth of the Hydrographic Office under Beaufort after 1829, Chapters Six and Seven concluded similarly that a metropolitan emphasis upon the application of the navy for fact gathering in this period related little to ethnographic collecting, given the dearth of persons or institutions in Britain by whom such objects might be analysed. Though Beaufort promoted the atmosphere of intellectual enquiry which gave encouragement and meaning to the work of collectors on the *Fly* and *Rattlesnake*, his support of William Whewell's call for naval servicemen to be considered only a means of production of unsynthesised knowledge was resisted by those lower down the chain of command. Blackwood in particular called for sailors to be recognised as scientists in their own right. Attendant tensions were visible in the recruitment of civilian naturalists to naval voyages, which Beaufort

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encouraged but Blackwood strongly opposed. Finding their captains unwelcoming, and the Admiralty's support superficial, civilian and naval naturalists such as Jukes, Thomas Henry Huxley and John MacGillivray were driven from the navy.

The thesis' study of the Admiralty's direction of ethnographic enquiry is limited by the absence of verbatim records concerning Banks, Barrow, Burnett, Beechey, Beaufort and Blackwood's attitude toward ethnographic specimens. Though strong evidence of an institutional ethnographic interest exists in the form of printed instructions, the individual responses of these various figures have been deduced either from their approach to collecting more generally, or the returns made by the voyages they directed or influenced. It is not satisfactory simply to claim that this silence was indicative of the lack of an explicit position, or an unspoken assumption that ethnographic specimens contained an implicit value. Though this may have been the case, further investigation of these individuals' records and correspondences may bring more material to light. Nevertheless, the thesis has been more successful in linking their ethnographic interests to the history of British imperialism, which was intimately involved in the direction and support of contemporary scientific pursuits. In its study of Blackwood's timidity and Jukes' theological violence, Chapter Seven commented upon the metropolitan and social politics which tied together empire, humanitarian activism and ethnographic collecting. John Abraham Heraud's 1847 observation that objects then and still at the British Museum were originally stolen by Jukes forms a fascinating link to present political debate, highlighting the reflexive and introspective practices, and questions of ethics and modernity, through which legacies of empire were, and still are, negotiated. A contemporary and correspondent of Charles Darwin, Jukes' own travels and participation in polygenist debate are undoubtedly worthy of further investigation.

In relation to both intentional and incidental collections, the thesis commented further upon the relationship between ethnographic collecting

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and empire. Finding that the scientific study of ethnographic objects was never more than a nascent activity in metropolitan Britain at least until the formation of the Ethnological Society of London in 1843, the thesis explored the extra-scientific purposes which collected specimens served. In many cases these were associated with the pursuit of colonial expansion. As early as 1802, Flinders' discussion of scoop nets linked object-based study with the politics of Australian settlement; his rationale for not keeping them was similarly implicated in a desire for colonisation to progress smoothly. Likewise, King's 1817-1822 collections aided commentary on indigenous weaponry and the relative potential of Indigenous Australians to be 'civilized'. After the 'turn to the north' of the 1830s, ethnographic collections were again used to adjudicate the racial and cultural affinities of the region's indigenous peoples, but served also to map trading relationships and the location and nature of valuable resources. Between 1842 and 1850, the makings of a 'commercial ethnography' closely affiliated with the Ethnological Society was detected in the enquiries of sailors and associated explorers such as George Windsor Earl. To contemporaries, the manufacturing skills and abilities of Indigenous Australians indicated a promising new market, and a source of colonial labour.

The first forms of disciplined collecting by naval servicemen identified by the thesis occurred during the voyages of the *Fly* and *Rattlesnake*. There, sailors such as John Sweatman and Charles James Card betrayed an awareness of the pursuits of the Ethnological Society; they also appear to have followed the directions of the British Association for the Advancement of Science's 1841 guide, 'Queries respecting the Human Race, to be addressed to Travellers and others'. In a further contribution to the little-known relationship between independent naval collecting and the emergence of ethnology and anthropology, the thesis found that 'amateur' ethnographers of this kind were often petty officers, a rank which afforded the time and leisure to make sustained scientific investigations. Nevertheless, the thesis demonstrated that their work formed part of a more general atmosphere of ethnographic enquiry practiced on ships at all levels,

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from ordinary sailors to ‘professional’ naturalists. Answerable more directly to metropolitan ethnologists such as James Cowles Prichard, Jukes, MacGillivray and Huxley were uniquely able to relate such research to new scientific fashions, such as the debate over monogenism and polygenism. In this, Jukes and MacGillivray demonstrated the dynamism of object-based study; their commentary on the relative sophistication of the material cultures of northern Australia and the Torres Strait melded the commercial and imperial interests identified above with their own philosophical and theological appraisals of the history and unity of the human race.

Chapter Six’s discussion of Sweatman’s abortive attempt to write a narrative of Blackwood’s 1842-1846 voyage revealed that the privilege to publish was not necessarily meritocratic. In a tradition dating back to John Marra, of the *Resolution*, sailors struggled to make their researches widely known, or to earn professional recognition.⁴ The thesis argued that the large number of intentional collections given to the British Museum after 1830 were nevertheless a product of sailors’ strong desire to assist ethnographic research. Persons who considered themselves unable or unqualified to reciprocate Sweatman’s dense reportage, such as John Bell and Edwin Augustus Porcher, saw in object collecting a means to earn a measure of scientific capital. Free, at least until 1846, to choose the destination to which their objects would be sent, the contemporary growth in the donations which sailors made to the British Museum indicated its growing prestige. Though intentional collections were given to the British Museum most frequently by expeditions ordered to make ethnographic collections, as remarked above, the thesis has shown that both the original acquisition and later destination of these objects were almost entirely dependent upon the inclinations and interests of sailors and other naval collectors, who donated them directly. Being themselves unaware of the particularities of the Admiralty’s ethnographic interests, the objects which naval servicemen acquired and gave away reflect upon a hitherto unrecognised subculture of ethnographic

⁴ See Chapter One, section 1.2.

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investigation on voyages of discovery. It was not until the 1842-1846 voyage of the *Rattlesnake* that the thesis found evidence of a systematised, anonymised and disciplined programme of naval ethnographic collecting, directed by a captain and appointed clerk and donated to the British Museum in a manner designed to disavow the politics, particularities and idiosyncrasies of its assemblage.

The thesis' most important conclusions therefore concern the intimate moments of exchange which occurred between the navy and Indigenous Australians on their first and subsequent meetings. Here one glimpses the subtle interplay of the two supposedly subaltern agencies most directly responsible for the extant and non-extant ethnographic collections known about today. Many historians see in these moments the distillation, the purest expression, of the hegemonic discourses and knowledge systems then thought to characterise European behaviour. Countersigns, or moments of particular violence, are said to reveal the clash between European knowledge systems and those of the Indigenous Australians they encountered. To a certain extent this was undoubtedly true; Bronwen Douglas' countersigns have been detected and interpreted to great effect. The thesis found, however, that explications made at the philosophical level have displaced analysis at a material level in much the same way that imperial analyses of the metropole used to forget the periphery. I have shown that the study of naval collecting, the who, how, when, what and at what cost of object exchange, offers an original and uniquely promising means and method for assessing the practical interplay of European and indigenous agency in moments of direct relevance and consequence to the expansion and consolidation of the British Empire. This becomes possible only when Indigenous Australians, British sailors, captains, surgeons and naturalists' ethnographic collections are taken seriously. As an insight into these moments, there is something intriguing in the paradox between John Septimus Roe's 1821 description of himself as 'perfectly curiosity mad' and his simultaneous, serious and sustained effort to create a provincial museum that was later to link his quietly studious father with the dynamic exhibitions

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then underway at Haslar.⁵ Likewise, there is a peculiarly telling paradox between John Sweatman's 1846 pride in his 'very good collection of curiosities', his talent in negotiating encounters and his extraordinary effort to write the first ethnographic and ethnological treatise on the Torres Strait.⁶ 'Curiosities', I have argued, were often therefore perfect examples of incidental collections.

The thesis has been the first to survey this new history, the contours of which necessarily remain unclear; the need to return in reasonable time, to present discoveries and to make a case for future explorations precluded an analysis of greater depth. The most obvious limitation concerns geography; Chapters Five and Six focused upon the *Fly* and *Rattlesnake*'s encounters in Australia and the Torres Strait, paying little heed to their equal interest in Papua New Guinea, from where many objects were acquired in result. Throughout, the thesis reviewed voyages which surveyed Australia exclusively, or to a much greater extent than elsewhere. Much would be gained, in future, by turning to voyages such as the *Sulphur* (1836-1842), which visited a considerable range of nations and peoples. This would allow us to ask how Indigenous Australian objects were understood in relation to those of other cultures, and so to examine the comparative work which undoubtedly occurred on-board naval voyages. The insights gained from the thesis' particular focus upon Australia nevertheless suggest that there would be equal merit in making other, similarly coherent, imperial 'case studies' of naval ethnographic collecting; perhaps especially in north America and the Arctic. It would be valuable, too, to compare cultures of ethnographic collecting on naval voyages with parallel acquisitions of botany and other categories of natural history. Were these practices equally ubiquitous, or was it the case that the absence of metropolitan expertise and written taxonomic

⁵ See Chapter Four, section 4.6.

⁶ See Chapter Six, section 6.4.

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criteria in relation to ethnography made it a uniquely attractive and accessible science?⁷

Future research might turn also to the reception of these objects at home. There is an entire history of subaltern collecting for peripheral museums not covered here.⁸ Nor does the thesis contain much comment on the mechanics of the ethnographic trade: customs houses feature regularly in the material brought forward in the chapters above, but just how important were they in filtering ethnographic collections through considerations of specimens' relative value? The other direction of ethnographic trade also deserves more scrutiny: where, when and how were objects made for trade with Indigenous Australians and other foreign peoples? What might be gained from looking more widely at 'counter-collecting', by which I refer to the objects sought and acquired by Indigenous Australians in moments of encounter? How might we continue, as historians, to write new histories of objects and encounter through collaboration with Indigenous Australian communities in the present? The thesis' implications for future research are broad, but all are dependent upon fostering and extending the willingness of the academic community to recover these difficult histories, to seek answers within and outside of museums, and at last to turn our gaze to the horizons beyond the eighteenth-century voyages of Cook.

⁷ From 1817-1822, the naval lieutenant Frederick Bedwell demonstrated an ability and willingness to collect plants, shells and ethnographic specimens. However, he did so for a private patron from whom he received scientific instructions. See Chapter Four, section 4.5.

⁸ Nicholas Thomas has recently explored the relevance and potential of a greater scholarly engagement with regional collections. See Nicholas Thomas. *The Return of Curiosity: What Museums are Good For in the Twenty-first Century* (London: Reaktion Books, 2016).

Note

The tables below chart the extant and non-extant collections discussed by the thesis. Extant collections have been derived from the records of the British Museum. Non-extant collections have been derived from the principal published literatures relating to the voyages concerned. The tables are not therefore exhaustive; unless otherwise stated, they omit objects referred to in unpublished sources. Nevertheless, the tables map the growth of object collecting by the Royal Navy in Australia and the Torres Strait between 1772 and 1855. Beginning with voyages on which few if any collections were made or retained, the tables demonstrate the parallel growth of both intentional and incidental forms of collecting. In tandem with the discussion above, the tables direct readers to the objects which attracted the particular attention of contemporary explorers; under the heading ‘Group’, the tables indicate the language group and approximate region of the Indigenous Australian peoples from whom these objects were acquired. Under the headings ‘Items acquired’ and ‘Exchanged for’ (which relate mostly to non-extant collections), I have reproduced the language used by the collectors themselves. The intention is to achieve some further insight into how these objects were understood, and to demonstrate the workings of what I have referred to as the ‘implicit taxonomy of object nomenclature’.¹ ‘Turtle peg’ and ‘throwing stick’ suggest a utilitarian perspective, for example, whereas the resort to Indigenous Australian languages evident in ‘Boomerang’ and ‘Didjeridu’ highlights the incommensurability of certain objects relative to European cultural and linguistic traditions. Unknown values have been left blank.

¹ See Chapter One, section 1.3.

Appendix 1

Non-extant collections of Indigenous Australian objects made on-board the *Lady Nelson*, 1800-1802, derived from James Grant. *The Narrative of a Voyage of Discovery Performed in His Majesty's Vessel The Lady Nelson* (London: C. Roworth, 1803).

| Date | Location: State: Group: | Collector | Item(s) acquired | Total | How acquired | Exchanged for |
|-----------------|--|-----------|---|-------|-----------------|---------------|
| 28 Feb. 1801 | Hawkesbury River: NSW: Kuring-gai | J. Grant | Net bag | 1 | Exchanged | Bread |
| 21 Mar. 1801 | Churchill Island: VCT: Boon wurrung | W. Bowen | Part of a canoe, two paddles, fishing line | 4 | Found | n/a |
| 18 Jul. 1801 | Hunter River: NSW: Kuring-gai | J. Grant | Possum-fur net | 1 | Exchanged | Handkerchief |

Appendix 2

Non-extant collections of Indigenous Australian objects made on-board the *Investigator*, 1801-1803, derived from Matthew Flinders. *A Voyage to Terra Australis*, 2 vols. (London: W. Bulmer and Co; G. and W. Nicol, 1814).

| Date | Location: State: Group: | Collector | Item(s) acquired | Total | How acquired | Exchanged for |
|-----------------|---|-----------|---|-------|-----------------|--|
| 15 Dec. 1801 | King George Sound: WA: Menang | Crew | Implements | 2? | Exchanged | Iron and toys |
| 30 Apr. 1802 | Port Phillip: VCT: Boon wurrung | Crew | Arms | 2? | Exchanged | A shag [rug] and some trifling presents |
| 31 Jul. 1802 | Fraser Island: QLD: Badtjala | R. Brown | Scoop nets | 2? | Found | |
| 30 Oct. 1802 | Murray Island: QLD: Meriam | Crew | Necklaces, bows and arrows, clubs | 8? | Exchanged | Iron |
| 20 Nov. 1802 | Allen Island: QLD: Gayardilt | Crew | Two spears, spear- thrower | 3 | Exchanged | Red worsted caps and fillets...a hatchet and an adze |

Appendix 3

Present state of deduction concerning extant Indigenous Australian objects in the British Museum possibly originating from the voyages of the *Mermaid* and *Bathurst*, 1817-1822, these being the only objects known (to the author) in any museum with such a provenance.

| Museum no. | Object | Location collected: State: Group: | Past locations | Collector: Given to: Donated By: | Evidence |
|------------------------|---------------|---|----------------|--|---|
| Oc.982 | Spear-thrower | Hanover Bay: WA: Worora | Arley Castle | F. Bedwell?: G. Annesley: H. Christy: A.W. Franks | F. Bedwell-Annesley connection & BM Documents |
| Oc.+. 3927 | Spear-head | Hanover Bay: WA: Worora | Albert Denison | King Crew: A. Denison: A.W. Franks | Appearance and BM Documents |
| Oc.8767 | Spear-head | Hanover Bay: WA: Worora | RUSI Museum | P.P. King: RUSI Museum: A.W. Franks | Appearance and BM Documents |
| Oc. 1980, Q. 692 | Basket | Rockingham Bay: QLD: Djirbalngan | | J.S. Roe?: British Museum | King's <i>Narrative</i> |
| Oc.977 | Club | Bathurst: NSW: Wiradjuri | Arley Castle | F. Bedwell?: G. Annesley: H. Christy: A.W. Franks | F. Bedwell-Annesley connection |
| Oc.4061 | Net Bag | Port Jackson: NSW: Eora | Arley Castle | F. Bedwell?: G. Annesley: H. Christy: A.W. Franks | F. Bedwell-Annesley connection |
| Oc.1898 | Net Bag | Lizard Island/ Cape Flattery: QLD: Guugu-Yimidhirr | Arley Castle | F. Bedwell?: G. Annesley: H. Christy: A.W. Franks | F. Bedwell-Annesley connection |
| Oc.979 | Boomerang | Port Jackson: NSW: Eora | Arley Castle | F. Bedwell?: G. Annesley: H. Christy: A.W. Franks | F. Bedwell-Annesley connection |

APPENDIX

| Museum no. | Object | Location collected: State: Group: | Past locations | Collector: Given to: Donated By: | Evidence |
|------------|-----------------------------|---|-------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Oc.978 | Boomerang | Port Jackson: NSW: Eora | Arley Castle | F. Bedwell?: G. Annesley: H. Christy: A. W. Franks | F. Bedwell-Annesley connection |
| Oc.956 | Spear | NSW | Arley Castle | F. Bedwell?: G. Annesley: H. Christy: A. W. Franks | F. Bedwell-Annesley connection |
| Oc.955 | Spear | Port Jackson: NSW: Eora | Arley Castle | F. Bedwell?: G. Annesley: H. Christy: A. W. Franks | F. Bedwell-Annesley connection |
| Oc.944 | Fish Spear | Port Jackson: NSW: Eora | Arley Castle | F. Bedwell?: G. Annesley: H. Christy: A. W. Franks | F. Bedwell-Annesley connection |
| Oc.4062 | Fishing Line | Port Jackson: NSW: Eora | Arley Castle | F. Bedwell?: G. Annesley: H. Christy: A. W. Franks | F. Bedwell-Annesley connection |
| Oc.110 | Boomerang | Clarence River: NSW: Bundjalung | Arley Castle | F. Bedwell?: G. Annesley: H. Christy: A. W. Franks | F. Bedwell-Annesley connection |
| Oc.4063 | Head-band; head-ornament | Port Jackson: NSW: Eora | Arley Castle | F. Bedwell?: G. Annesley: H. Christy: A. W. Franks | F. Bedwell-Annesley connection |
| Oc.6224 | Spear | Hanover Bay? WA: Worora | | Sir James Vallentin?: A. W. Franks | Appearance and BM Documents |
| Oc.1868 | Axe | Hanover Bay? WA: Worora | Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew | P. P. King?: Kew Museum of Economic Botany? (Hooker): A. W. Franks | Appearance and BM Documents |

Appendix 4

Non-extant collections of Indigenous Australian objects made on-board the *Mermaid* and *Bathurst*, 1817-1822, derived from Phillip Parker King. *Narrative of a Survey of the Intertropical and Western Coasts of Australia*, 2 vols. (London: John Murray, 1827) and Phillip Parker King. *Log of the Proceedings of H.M. Surveying Vessel Bathurst*, TNA, ADM 55/8. In bold are items which may be extant.

| Date | Location: State: Group: | Collector | Item(s) acquired | Total | How acquired | Exchanged for |
|-----------------|---|------------|----------------------------|-------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 26 Feb. 1818 | Rocky Head: WA Yaburrara | Crew | Canoe | 1 | Confiscated | |
| 29 Mar. 1818 | Macquarie Strait: NT: Kunibidji | F. Bedwell | Canoe (Malay?) | 1 | Confiscated | |
| 16 Apr. 1818 | Raffles Bay: NT: Iwaidja | Crew | Basket | 1 | Found | |
| 21 Apr. 1818 | Middle Head: NT: Iwaidja | F. Bedwell | Spear | 1 | Found | |
| 23 Apr. 1818 | Knocker Bay: NT: Iwaidja | Crew | Three Clubs, Canoe | 4 | Confiscated | |
| 24 Apr. 1818 | Point Smith: NT: Tiwi | Crew | Canoe | 1 | Found and Returned | |
| 17 May. 1818 | St Asaph's Bay: NT: Tiwi | P. P. King | Two Baskets | 2 | Exchanged | A few chisels and files |
| 20 Jun. 1819 | Rockingham Bay: QLD: Djirbalngan | Crew | Baskets and Turtle Pegs | 4? | Exchanged | Fishing Hooks and Lines |
| 20 Jun. 1819 | Rockingham Bay: QLD: Djirbalngan | J. S. Roe | Basket | 1 | Obtained | |
| 30 Jun. 1819 | Endeavour River: QLD: Guugu- Yimidhirr | F. Bedwell | Shield | 1 | Obtained | |

APPENDIX

| Date | Location: State: Group: | Collector | Item(s) acquired | Total | How acquired | Exchanged for |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|-------|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| 14 Jul. 1819 | Cape Bowen: QLD: Mutumiu | P. P. King, F. Bedwell and A. Cunningham | Turtle Peg | 1 | Found | |
| 17 Aug. 1819 | Goulburn Islands: NT: Maung | Crew | Throwing Stick, Spear | 2 | Found | |
| 21 Jul. 1820 | Cape Clinton: QLD: Darumbal | J. S. Roe | Fishing Line | 1 | Gifted | |
| | | P. P. King | Boomerang | 1 | | |
| 30 Jul. 1820 | Endeavour River: QLD: Guugu- Yimidhirr | P. P. King, F. Bedwell and J. S. Roe | Throwing Sticks | 2? | Exchanged | Some grains of indian corn |
| 02 Aug. 1820 | Endeavour River: QLD: Guugu- Yimidhirr | J. Hunter | Turtle Peg | 1 | Found | |
| 07 Sep. 1820 | Katers Island: WA: Wunambul | F. Bedwell | Fish Pot | 1 | Found | |
| 18 Jun. 1821 | Cape Tribulation: QLD: Kuku- yalanji | A. Cunningham | Fishing Rod, Basket | 2 | Found | |
| 07 Aug. 1821 | Hanover Bay: WA: Worora | Bundell | Opossum Fur Belt | 1 | Exchanged | Fish |
| 07 Aug. 1821 | Hanover Bay: WA: Worora | P. P. King | Club | 1 | Exchanged | Fish, Clasped Knife |
| 08 Aug. 1821 | Hanover Bay: WA: Worora | Crew | 2 Catamarans, 35 Spears, 6 Spear- heads, Baskets, Tomahawks , Throwing Sticks, Fire- Sticks, Fishing Lines, Hatchet, Iron Knife | 56? | Confiscated | |
| 24-30 Dec. 1821 | King George Sound: WA: Menang | Crew, F. Bedwell & P. Baskerville | 100 Spears, 30 Throwing Sticks, 40 Hammers, 150 Knives, Clubs | 322 | Exchanged | Ship's biscuit |

APPENDIX

| Date | Location: State: Group: | Collector | Item(s) acquired | Total | How acquired | Exchanged for |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|-----------|---------------------|-------|-----------------|------------------|
| 09 Feb. 1822 | Cunningham Point: WA: Nimanburu | J. S. Roe | Hatchet Heads | 2? | Found | |

Appendix 5

Extant Indigenous Australian objects now at the British Museum but formerly at Haslar Hospital Museum, donated to the British Museum by either John Liddell or Henry Christy.

| Museum number | Object | Approximate location collected: State: Group: | Date acquired by the British Museum | Acquired from Henry Christy or Sir John Liddell? | Original collector |
|------------------|--------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| Oc 1855,1220.158 | Head-band | | 1855 | J. Liddell | |
| Oc 1855,1220.170 | Mask | Murray Island: QLD: Meriam | 1855 | J. Liddell | |
| Oc 1855,1220.174 | Bag | Port Essington: NT: Iwaidja | 1855 | J. Liddell | |
| Oc 1855,1220.175 | Basket | Port Essington: NT: Iwaidja | 1855 | J. Liddell | |
| Oc 1855,1220.176 | Bag | Encounter Bay: SA: Kaurna | 1855 | J. Liddell | |
| Oc 1855,1220.177 | Didjeridu | Port Essington: NT: Iwaidja | 1855 | J. Liddell | |
| Oc 1855,1220.178 | Spear-head | | 1855 | J. Liddell | |
| Oc 1855,1220.179 | Spear-head | | 1855 | J. Liddell | |
| Oc 1855,1220.180 | Spear-head | | 1855 | J. Liddell | |
| Oc 1980 Q.740 | Spear-head | King George Sound: WA: Menang | 1855 | J. Liddell | A. Collie |
| Oc 4697 | Smoking-pipe | | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | |
| Oc 4752 | Spear | | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | |
| Oc 4753 | Spear | | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | |

APPENDIX

| Museum number | Object | Approximate location collected: State: Group: | Date acquired by the British Museum | Acquired from Henry Christy or Sir John Liddell? | Original collector |
|---------------|---------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| Oc 4754.a-b | Spear | | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | |
| Oc 4755 | Spear-thrower | | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | |
| Oc 4756 | Spear-thrower | Swan River: WA: Wajuk | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | |
| Oc 4757 | Spear-thrower | WA | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | |
| Oc 4758 | Spear-thrower | King George Sound: WA: Menang | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | A. Collie |
| Oc 4759 | Spear-thrower | WA | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | |
| Oc 4760 | Spear-thrower | NSW | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | |
| Oc 4761 | Club | Port Essington: NT: Iwaidja | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | |
| Oc 4762 | Club | Port Essington: NT: Iwaidja | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | |
| Oc 4763 | Club | | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | |
| Oc 4764 | Club | | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | |
| Oc 4765 | Boomerang | NSW | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | |
| Oc 4766 | Boomerang | | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | |
| Oc 4767 | Axe | WA | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | |
| Oc 4768 | Axe | King George Sound: WA: Menang | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | A. Collie |
| Oc 4769 | Axe | King George Sound: WA: Menang | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | |
| Oc 4770 | Knife | WA | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | |
| Oc 4771 | Knife | King George Sound: WA: Menang | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | A. Collie |
| Oc 4772 | Knife | King George Sound: WA: Menang | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | A. Collie |
| Oc 4773 | Knife | WA | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | |

APPENDIX

| Museum number | Object | Approximate location collected: State: Group: | Date acquired by the British Museum | Acquired from Henry Christy or Sir John Liddell? | Original collector |
|---------------|------------------|---|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------|
| Oc 4774 | Knife | King George Sound: WA: Menang | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | A. Collie |
| Oc 4775 | Nose-ornament(?) | | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | |
| Oc 4800.a | Arrow | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | |
| Oc 4800.b | Arrow | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | 1860-1869 | H. Christy | |
| Oc 5053 | Fishing-net | | 1868 | H. Christy | |

Appendix 6

Extant and non-extant collections of Indigenous Australian objects made on-board the *Fly*, 1842-1846, derived from British Museum database and Joseph Beete Jukes. *Narrative of the Surveying Voyage of H.M.S. Fly*, vol. 1 (London: T. & W. Boone, 1847).

| Extant collections | | | | | Non-extant collections in regular text; in bold are intentional collections recorded in Jukes' <i>Narrative</i> . These are aligned with their associated records at the British Museum | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------|----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Museum No. | Object | Location collected: State: Group | Collector | Date acquired by the British Museum | Date | Location: State: Group: | Collector | Item(s) acquired | Total | How acquired | Exchanged for |
| Oc 1846,08 06.4.a-d | Bow-string | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | J. Bell | 1846 | 21 Feb. 1843 | Port Bowen: QLD: Darumbal | J. B. Jukes | Spear | 1 | Exchanged | Knife |
| Oc 1846,07 31.6 | Skirt | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | J. B. Jukes | 1846 | 4 Mar. 1843 | West Hill: QLD: Guwinmal | J. B. Jukes | Club | 1 | Exchanged | Bottle |
| Oc 1846,07 31.5 | Skirt | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | J. B. Jukes | 1846 | 2 May. 1843 | Cape Cleveland: QLD: Bindal | J. B. Jukes, Crew | Two Baskets, necklace, armlets | 5? | Exchanged | Sugar, bottles, other trifles |
| Oc 1846,08 09.5.b | Fish-spear | Port Essington : NT: Iwaidja | J. M. R. Ince | 1846 | 5 May. 1843 | Cape Upstart: QLD: Yuru | J. B. Jukes | Girdle, shell-ornament | 2 | Gifted | |
| Oc 1846,08 09.5.c | Fish-spear | Port Essington : NT: Iwaidja | J. M. R. Ince | 1846 | 17 Jun. 1843 | Cape Melville: QLD: Mutumui | J. B. Jukes | Spear | 1 | Thrown at Jukes | |
| Oc 1846,08 09.5.d | Fish-spear | Port Essington : NT: Iwaidja | J. M. R. Ince | 1846 | 25 Jun. 1843 | Cape Direction : QLD: Uutaalnganu | Crew | Spears | 2? | Exchanged | Bottles, biscuit, ribbon |
| Oc 1846,08 09.5.e | Fish-spear | Port Essington : NT: Iwaidja | J. M. R. Ince | 1846 | 6 Aug. 1843 | Murray Island: QLD: Meriam | Crew | Bow and arrows | 2 | Exchanged | Iron and knives |
| Oc 1846,08 09.5.f | Fish-spear | Port Essington : NT: Iwaidja | J. M. R. Ince | 1846 | 21 Mar. 1845 | Dalrymple Island: QLD: unknown | Crew | Ornament | 2? | Exchanged | Tobacco and Iron |
| Oc 1846,08 09.1 | Tobacco-pipe | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | J. M. R. Ince | 1846 | 22 Mar. 1845 | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | J. B. Jukes | Petticoat | 2 | | |

APPENDIX

| Extant collections | | | | | Non-extant collections in regular text; in bold are intentional collections recorded in Jukes' <i>Narrative</i> . These are aligned with their associated records at the British Museum | | | | | | |
|--------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|-----------|-------------------------|-------|--------------|--------------------------|
| Museum No. | Object | Location collected: State: Group | Collector | Date acquired by the British Museum | Date | Location: State: Group: | Collector | Item(s) acquired | Total | How acquired | Exchanged for |
| Oc 1846,08 09.2 | Comb | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | J. M. R. Ince | 1846 | 29 Mar. 1845 | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | Crew | Bows and arrows, curios | 6? | Exchanged | Knives, axes and tobacco |
| Oc 1846,08 09.3 | Comb | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | J. M. R. Ince | 1846 | 1 Apr. 1845 | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | J. Bell | Tortoise-shell figure | 1 | Exchanged | Axe |
| Oc 1846,08 09.5.a | Fish-spear | Port Essington : NT: Iwaidja | J. M. R. Ince | 1846 | 11 Apr. 1845 | Murray Island: QLD: Meriam | Crew | Bow and arrows | 4? | Exchanged | Knives and axes |
| Oc 1846,08 09.5.g | Fish-spear | Port Essington : NT: Iwaidja | J. M. R. Ince | 1846 | | | | | | | |
| Oc 1846,08 09.6.a | Spear | Port Essington : NT: Iwaidja | J. M. R. Ince | 1846 | | | | | | | |
| Oc 1846,08 09.7.a | Spear | Port Essington : NT: Iwaidja | J. M. R. Ince | 1846 | | | | | | | |
| Oc 1846,08 09.8 | Spear | Port Essington : NT: Iwaidja | J. M. R. Ince | 1846 | | | | | | | |
| Oc 1846,08 09.9 | Spear | Port Essington : NT: Iwaidja | J. M. R. Ince | 1846 | | | | | | | |
| Oc 1846,08 09. 10 | Spear-thrower | Port Essington : NT: Iwaidja | J. M. R. Ince | 1846 | | | | | | | |
| Oc 1846,08 09.11 | Club | Port Essington : NT: Iwaidja | J. M. R. Ince | 1846 | | | | | | | |
| Oc 1846,08 09.12 | Spear-thrower | Cape York: QLD: Yadhaigna | J. M. R. Ince | 1846 | | | | | | | |

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| Extant collections | | | | | Non-extant collections in regular text; in bold are intentional collections recorded in Jukes' <i>Narrative</i> . These are aligned with their associated records at the British Museum | | | | | | |
|---------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------|--------------|---------------|
| Museum No. | Object | Location collected: State: Group | Collector | Date acquired by the British Museum | Date | Location: State: Group: | Collector | Item(s) acquired | Total | How acquired | Exchanged for |
| Oc 1846,08 09.13 | Spear-thrower | Swan River: WA: Wajuk | J. M. R. Ince | 1846 | | | | | | | |
| Oc 1846,08 09.14 | Boomerang | Sydney: NSW: Eora | J. M. R. Ince | 1846 | | | | | | | |
| Oc 1846,08 09.15 | Boomerang | Port Phillip: VCT: Boonwurrung | J. M. R. Ince | 1846 | | | | | | | |
| Oc 1846,07 31.17 | Spear-thrower | QLD | J. B. Jukes | 1846 | | | | | | | |
| Oc 1846,07 31.9 | Bottle | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | J. B. Jukes | 1846 | | | | | | | |
| Oc 1846,07 31.8 | Bottle | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | J. B. Jukes | 1846 | | | | | | | |
| Oc 1846,07 31.10 | Bow | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | J. B. Jukes | 1846 | | | | | | | |
| Oc 1846,07 31.7 | Bottle | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | J. B. Jukes | 1846 | | | | | | | |
| Oc 1846,08 06.3 | Bow | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | J. Bell | 1846 | | | | | | | |
| Oc 1846,07 31.1 | Drum | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | J. B. Jukes | 1846 | | | | | | | |
| Oc 1846,07 31.2.a-b | Tobacco-pipe | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | J. B. Jukes | 1846 | 21 Mar. 1845 | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | J. B. Jukes | Tobacco-pipe | 1 | | |

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| Extant collections | | | | | Non-extant collections in regular text; in bold are intentional collections recorded in Jukes' <i>Narrative</i> . These are aligned with their associated records at the British Museum | | | | | | |
|---------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|----------|------------------|---------------|
| Museum No. | Object | Location collected: State: Group | Collector | Date acquired by the British Museum | Date | Location: State: Group: | Collector | Item(s) acquired | Total | How acquired | Exchanged for |
| Oc 1846,08 06.1 | Drum | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | J. Bell | 1846 | | | | | | | |
| Oc 1846,07 31.3 | Mask | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | J. B. Jukes | 1846 | 29 Mar. 1845 | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | J. B. Jukes | Mask | 1 | Exchanged | Knife |
| Oc 1846,07 31.18 | Bag | QLD | J. B. Jukes | 1846 | | | | | | | |
| Oc 1846,07 31.4 | Wig | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | J. B. Jukes | 1846 | 14 Apr. 1845 | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | J. B. Jukes | Wig | 1 | Exchanged | Knife |
| Oc 8833 | Drum | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | E. A. Porcher | 1873 | | | | | | | |
| Oc1846, 0806.6.a -c | Spears (13) | Torres Strait | J. Bell | 1846 | | | | | | | |

APPENDIX

Appendix 7

Extant and non-extant collections of Indigenous Australian objects made on-board the *Rattlesnake*, 1846-1850, derived from British Museum database; John MacGillivray. *Narrative of the Voyage of H.M.S. Rattlesnake*, 2 vols. (London: T. & W. Boone, 1852); Robert Gale. 'Lists of shells, stones, birds and other creatures found', CLA, JOD/284/3.

| Extant collections | | | | | Non-extant collections (John MacGillivray) and intentional collections since lost (Robert Gale) | | | |
|--------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|------------------------------|-------|
| Museum No. | Object | Location collected: State: Group: | Collector | Date acquired by the British Museum | Date | Location: State: Group: | Item(s) acquired | Total |
| Oc 1851,0103 .13.a | Skirt | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | O. Stanley | 1851 | John MacGillivray collections: | | | |
| Oc 1851,0103 .13.b | Skirt | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | O. Stanley | 1851 | 12 Jun. 1848 | Barnard Islands: QLD: Djirbalgan | Green Boomerang | 1 |
| Oc 1851,0103 .172 | Spear | Cape York: QLD: Yadhaigana | O. Stanley | 1851 | Robert Gale collections: | | | |
| Oc 1851,0103 .132 | File | Moa Island: QLD: Unknown | O. Stanley | 1851 | Oct. 1847 | Moreton Island: QLD: Yuggera | Baskets | 2? |
| Oc1851,0103.85 | Basket | Moa Island: QLD: Unknown | O. Stanley | 1851 | Oct. 1847 | Moreton Island: QLD: Yuggera | Necklace | 1 |
| Oc 1851,0103 .49 | Head-band | Cape York: QLD: Yadhaigana | O. Stanley | 1851 | Oct. 1847 | Moreton Island: QLD: Yuggera | Girdle | 1 |
| Oc 1851,0103 .169 | Girdle | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | J. MacGillivray | 1851 | Oct. 1847 | Moreton Island: QLD: Yuggera | Twine and rough material | 2? |
| Oc 1851,0103 .41 | Dance-mask | Cape York: QLD: Yadhaigana | O. Stanley | 1851 | Oct. 1847 | Moreton Island: QLD: Yuggera | Firestick | 1 |
| Oc 1851,0103 .122 | Armlet | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | O. Stanley | 1851 | Oct. 1847 | Moreton Island: QLD: Yuggera | Waddy | 1 |
| Oc 1851,0103 .109 | Harpoon | Moa Island: QLD: Unknown | O. Stanley | 1851 | May 1848 | Gould Island, Rockingham Bay: Djirbalgan | Armlet | 1 |
| Oc 1851,0103 .54 | Girdle | Moa Island: QLD: Unknown | O. Stanley | 1851 | May 1848 | Gould Island, Rockingham Bay: Djirbalgan | Fish hooks | 2? |
| Oc 1851,0103 .62 | Sculpture | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | O. Stanley | 1851 | May 1848 | Gould Island, Rockingham Bay: Djirbalgan | Apparatus for obtaining fire | 1 |

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| Extant collections | | | | | Non-extant collections (John MacGillivray) and intentional collections since lost (Robert Gale) | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|---|--|---------------------------|-------|
| Museum No. | Object | Location collected: State: Group: | Collector | Date acquired by the British Museum | Date | Location: State: Group: | Item(s) acquired | Total |
| Oc 1851,0103 .171 | Spear-thrower | Cape York: QLD: Yadhaigana | O. Stanley | 1851 | May 1848 | Gould Island, Rockingham Bay: Djirbalgan | Net | 1 |
| Oc 1851,0103 .33 | Head-ornament | Moa Island: QLD: Unknown | O. Stanley | 1851 | Jun. 1848 | Barnard Islands: QLD: Djirbalgan | Fish spear | 1 |
| Oc 1851,0103 .42 | Necklace | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | O. Stanley | 1851 | Jun. 1848 | Barnard Islands: QLD: Djirbalgan | Basket | 1 |
| Oc 1851,0103 .131 | Girdle | Moa Island: QLD: Unknown | O. Stanley | 1851 | Jun. 1848 | Britomart inlet [Deeral]: QLD: Yidinjdji | Necklace | 1 |
| Oc 1851,0103 .55 | Mask | Mount Ernest Island: QLD: Bundjalung | O. Stanley | 1851 | | Fitzroy Island: QLD: Yidinjdji | Paddle | 1 |
| Oc 1851,0103 .128 | Drum | Cape York: QLD: Yadhaigana | O. Stanley | 1851 | 29 Jul. 1848 | Barnard Islands: QLD: Djirbalgan | Bag | 1 |
| Oc 1851,0103 .130 | Breast-ornament | Moa Island: QLD: Unknown | O. Stanley | 1851 | 27 Sep. 1848 | Weymouth Bay: QLD: Kuuku-ya'u | War spears | 2 |
| Oc 1851,0103 .63 | Fishing-line | Moa Island: QLD: Unknown | O. Stanley | 1851 | 27 Sep. 1848 | Weymouth Bay: QLD: Kuuku-ya'u | Throwing sticks | 3 |
| Oc 1851,0103 .43 | Necklace | Erub (Darnley Island): QLD | O. Stanley | 1851 | Sep. 1848 | Weymouth Bay: QLD: Kuuku-ya'u | Ear ornament | 1 |
| Oc 1978, Q. 331 | Fishing-line | Endeavour Strait: QLD: Yadhaigana | J. MacGillivray | | | Cape York: QLD: Yadhaigana | Basket | 1 |
| | | | | | | Cape York: QLD: Yadhaigana | Turtle peg | 1 |
| | | | | | | Cape York: QLD: Yadhaigana | Necklaces | 2 |
| | | | | | | Cape York: QLD: Yadhaigana | Fishing lines and hooks | 4? |
| | | | | | | Cape York: QLD: Yadhaigana | Carvings in tortoiseshell | 2 |
| | | | | | | Cape York: QLD: Yadhaigana | Shield | 1 |
| | | | | | | Cape York: QLD: Yadhaigana | Pipe | 1 |

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Alexander Collie: 44/54, 53/105.

Andrew Sinclair: 69/308.

Frederick William Beechey: 44/13, 61/8.

George Tradescant Lay: 44/93.

John Richardson: 62/112, 62/120, 63/365, 63/372, 63/385.

William Balfour Baikie: 59/16, 59/17, 59/18.

Incoming correspondence (William Townsend Aiton):

William Burnett: 44/50.

Kew Collectors V11a - Cunningham Correspondence 1817-1831 [KCL]:

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Joseph Banks: 8/5.

Outgoing correspondence (Allan Cunningham):

William Townsend Aiton: 8/5.

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ADM/C/749. 'Victualling Board, In-Letters and Orders'.

JOD/284/1. Robert Gale. 'Diary, 1847, 1848 & 1849'.

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