

MUSEUM, MAGIC, MEMORY

*Curating Paul Denys
Montague*

JULIE ADAMS

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PACIFIC PRESENCES 8

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Portrait of Paul Denys Montague, c.1912. Photographer unknown. Montague family archive, courtesy of Jennifer Estcourt.

Carved figure in the stores of the Musée de Nouvelle-Calédonie, Nouméa, 2016.

Photograph by Mark Adams. Courtesy of the Musée de Nouvelle-Calédonie.

The Houailou Valley, New Caledonia, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

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** This book deals with the interconnected histories of museums, collecting, colonialism, violence and war in the early twentieth century. Please be aware that it contains images of the dead, as well as images of human remains.

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Paul Montague's collections are dispersed across a number of institutions and I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Tony Eccles at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Paul Sweet at the American Museum of Natural History, Alan Wakefield at the Imperial War Museum, Andy Simpson at the RAF Museum, Brian Hanich at the Western Australian Museum, and Robert Prys-Jones and Gavin Broad at the Natural History Museum, London, as well as staff in the sound archives at the British Library, the Rupert Brooke archive at King's College, Cambridge, and the Cambridge University Museum of Zoology. At Paul Montague's former school, Bedales, I owe particular thanks to Jane Kirby and Ruth Whiting.

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his relatives in the hamlet of Nessakoéa and to share stories and information with them. Above all, I wish to thank my longstanding research companion, François Wadra, for his expertise, sense of humour and passion for objects. And also for his football obsession, which gave us something in common to begin with.

In 2015 and 2017, I travelled to Greece and Macedonia to experience the landscape of what was known as Salonika when Paul Montague fought and died there in World War I. Members of the Salonika Campaign Society and local guides proved excellent companions, particularly Minas Drestillaris, Romeo Drobarov, Julian Keevil, Laura Kinnear, Helen Martyr, Keith Roberts, Gele Stojanovski, Andy Simpson, Julie Wakefield and Adrian Wright. Chairman Alan Wakefield helped bring the Salonika Campaign to life, and has been generous with his time and knowledge ever since. Society members Peter and Helen Saunders were instrumental in the search for Paul Montague's grave and invested much time and energy into that endeavour. In particular, I thank Martin Gibson for his friendship in Salonika and beyond.

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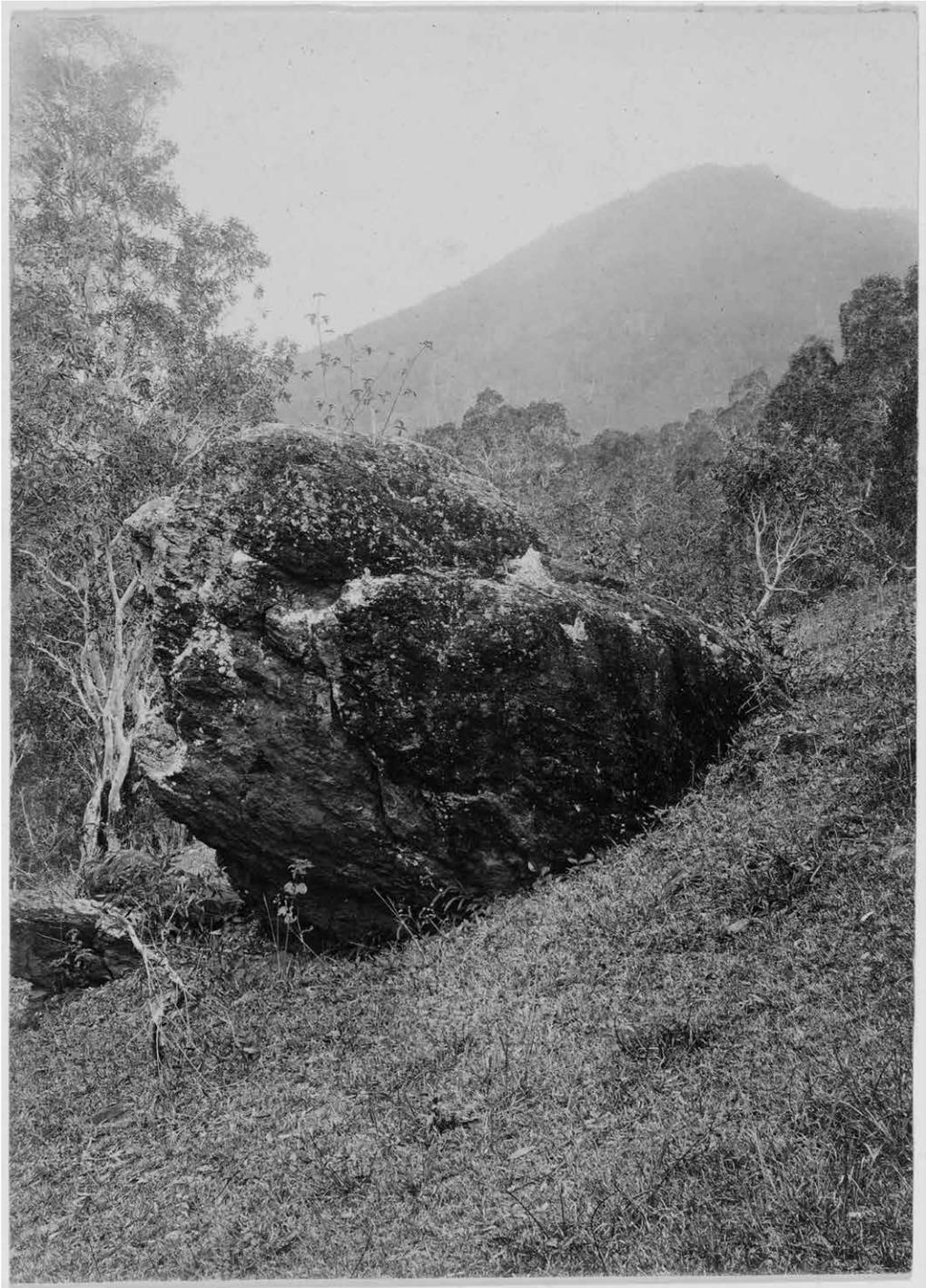
I have been particularly fortunate to be able to collaborate with two exceptional photographers, whose images play an important role in this book. Gwil Owen, based at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology for many years, brought all his experience, as well as his wicked sense of humour, to photographing the Montague Collection. Mark Adams, who was artist-in-residence on the *Pacific Presences* project, invested time, effort and creativity in realising the book's vision. His friendship, especially during our adventures in New Caledonia, and the images he created, are very much appreciated.

Finally, I wish to express my love and gratitude to my family: Jeni, Chris, Ellie and Lily Gaskin and Kate Adams and Gary Stanton. My grandfather, William Norman Sailes (1920-2013), was a pilot with the Fleet Air Arm during World War II and I have thought of him often during the writing of this book. Thanks and love go to John McLeod whose presence in my life means everything.

This book is dedicated with love and heartfelt thanks to my parents, Margaret and Colin Adams. They have been with me on every step of this journey and I have loved sharing it with them. My father, Col, is present on every page and it has been a rare pleasure to ignore his editorial advice, 'spare the adjectives!', in the writing of these acknowledgements.



Walking stick with head carved to resemble a French missionary, collected by Paul Montague in Hienghène, New Caledonia, 1914. Photograph by Gwil Owen.



A stone with magical powers in the landscape of the Houailou Valley, New Caledonia. Known as the Caramna Camor, or the stone that counts everyone, it was considered extremely powerful by local Kanak people. Photograph by Paul Montague, 1914.

PREFACE

Nicholas Thomas

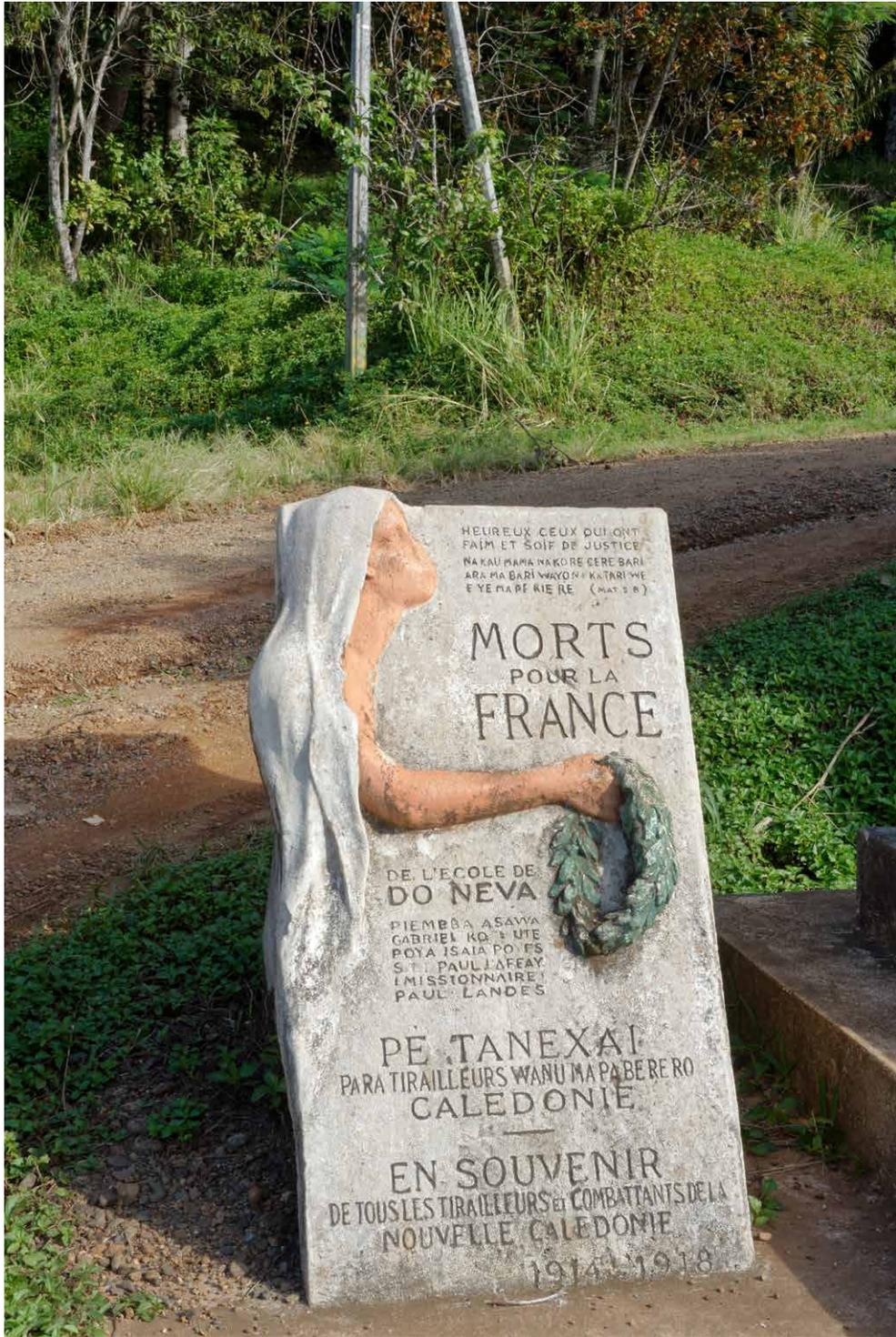
Over 2013-2018, the European Research Council funded *Pacific Presences: Oceanic Art and European Museums*, an ambitious project that explored the extensive collections of art and artefacts from the Pacific region that are cared for in ethnography and world cultures museums across Europe, from Spain to Russia. The team reconsidered famous works of Oceanic art, but put more energy into researching little-known, sometimes vast, collections in museum stores. They made connections across collections, reconstructing the histories of particular art forms and their contexts, and investigating collections made by particular travellers and fieldworkers which were, in many cases, dispersed across numerous institutions and cities.

The project was empowered, above all, by dialogue with Pacific Islanders. We had extraordinarily rewarding engagements with many scholars, curators, artists, elders and community members from Pacific nations and diasporas. Many joined the project for periods as affiliated scholars and visitors. They undertook study visits with us, contributed to joint conference presentations and produced works of art, some acquired by the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. They also wrote or cowrote articles and chapters.

Pacific Presences not only enlarged understanding of Oceanic art history and Oceanic collections in important ways, but it enabled new reflection upon museums and ways of undertaking work in and around them. It exemplified a growing commitment on the part of curators and researchers, not merely to ‘consult’ but to initiate and undertake research, conservation, acquisition, exhibition, outreach and publication projects collaboratively and responsively.

This book is part of a series of eight which represent the research and reflection that the project team and our associates and collaborators engaged in over the five-year period. Julie Adams was Research Associate on a precursor project, *Artefacts of Encounter* (2010-13, supported by the UK Economic and Social Research Council) and was closely involved in the development of the successful application to the European Research Council (ERC) which enabled us to sustain a wonderfully rewarding programme. As Senior Research Associate, Julie co-led the project, prior to taking up a permanent curatorial role at the British Museum.

As she explains in her introduction, this book reflects the serendipity of museum research. In the manner of grant applications, our submission to the ERC had carefully identified a series of case studies, each based around regions in the Pacific: but the six we selected did not include New Caledonia. No sooner had we got started, however, than some research in the archives at our own institution, the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Cambridge, suggested that an unstudied collection made just before World War I deserved more attention. This beautifully written book exemplifies the stories that are waiting to be discovered in museums, and the complex range of issues that can be revealed by undeservedly obscure collections.



World War I Memorial, Houailou Valley, New Caledonia, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

The Houaïlou Valley, New Caledonia

By the side of a road in the Houaïlou Valley, in the South Pacific island territory of New Caledonia, is a small memorial. Carved into the weathered stone are the names of soldiers who died fighting for faraway France in World War I. Most of the names are of local Kanak men. These men were from tribes whose traditional ways of life, their land and possessions were at the same moment being systematically dismantled and confiscated by the European power in whose name they died fighting.

Remembered alongside them on the memorial is a French missionary, Paul Laffay. Laffay had been working at a nearby mission school called Do Neva when war broke out in 1914. In the days before the fighting began, he befriended a young English zoologist. Ostensibly in the area to collect birds and other natural history specimens, the zoologist's interest had turned to the local Kanak people and he had begun acquiring examples of their material culture. A frequent visitor to Do Neva, he spent long afternoons talking with Laffay and with the school's trainee Kanak pastors.

Later, as the missionary and the zoologist were preparing to make the long journey back to Europe and the waiting war, Laffay helped sort and box up his friend's assorted acquisitions. When he finally set sail, the zoologist's boxes journeyed with him and their contents represented all that he had to show for a year of his life. Arriving back in England in early 1915, he travelled to Cambridge and deposited his precious collection into the care of various museums before leaving to fight. By the time the conflict was over, the Kanak men remembered on the roadside memorial, the French missionary and the English zoologist were all dead. But the collection survived.

This book is concerned with the life and afterlives of that collection. In particular, it explores the 250 Kanak artefacts left in the care of the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology by that young zoologist. His name was Paul Denys Montague.



*Archive boxes at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge.
Photograph by Alison Clark.*

Paul Montague's Journal

The archives at the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology are housed in the attic. To reach them, you must ascend a narrow, wrought-iron, spiral staircase situated in one corner of the administrator's office. Inside the archive room, there are hundreds of boxes of varying sizes and colours that contain the history of the Museum's collections. The so-called 'letter boxes', which date back to 1883, hold a special fascination. These unprepossessing cardboard boxes contain the correspondence received each year by the Museum's directors.

In the time of the founding curator, Baron Anatole von Hügel, this amounted to a vast quantity of correspondence: letters zipping back and forth among his network of curators, anthropologists, archaeologists, Christian missionaries and colonial officials, all engaged in the seemingly frantic business of collecting.

Von Hügel's rapacious nature is laid bare in these boxes. One letter reveals him bickering with Horatio Gordon Robley, a notorious dealer in Māori artefacts, over the price of *mokomokai* (tattooed heads). Another shows him shamelessly haggling with the widow of a missionary, trying to secure a collection for a fraction of its worth. In a further example, von Hügel receives sympathy from the flamboyant Italian curator, Enrico Giglioli, after losing out to the British Museum on an important archaeological artefact. Each of these letter boxes is the guardian of a treasure trove of stories waiting to be told. Each handwritten letter is a single thread in a web of connectedness that has objects at its centre. The archive room is scented with a musty paperiness.

In 2013, I climbed the wrought-iron staircase in search of information about Paul Montague. The Museum had been contacted by a French anthropologist, Michel Naepels, who had recently returned from fieldwork in the Houailou Valley.¹ Naepels wondered if we had ever examined the artefacts and documentation associated with Montague's New Caledonian expedition. Thinking it worthy of further investigation, I printed off a series of location codes from the Museum's vast catalogue and set about gathering boxes from around the archive room. It was obvious that I was not the first person to seek out these documents, as they had been ordered to a degree. However, for some reason, they were now dispersed and stored haphazardly on a number of different shelves. Two large hard-backed notebooks and a typed list of objects were in one box, a bundle of A4 pages were in another, while a letter and an envelope containing black-and-white photographs were in a third. One item on my list remained unaccounted for. I cross-checked the codes, which indicated that it was stored in 'Archive Room Two', of which I had no prior knowledge.

Leaving the main archives via the back door, I emerged onto the upper level of the Babington storeroom – home to the Museum's collection of musical instruments from around the world. Continuing past the flickering lights of the computer servers, I saw a door, behind which lay Archive Room Two.

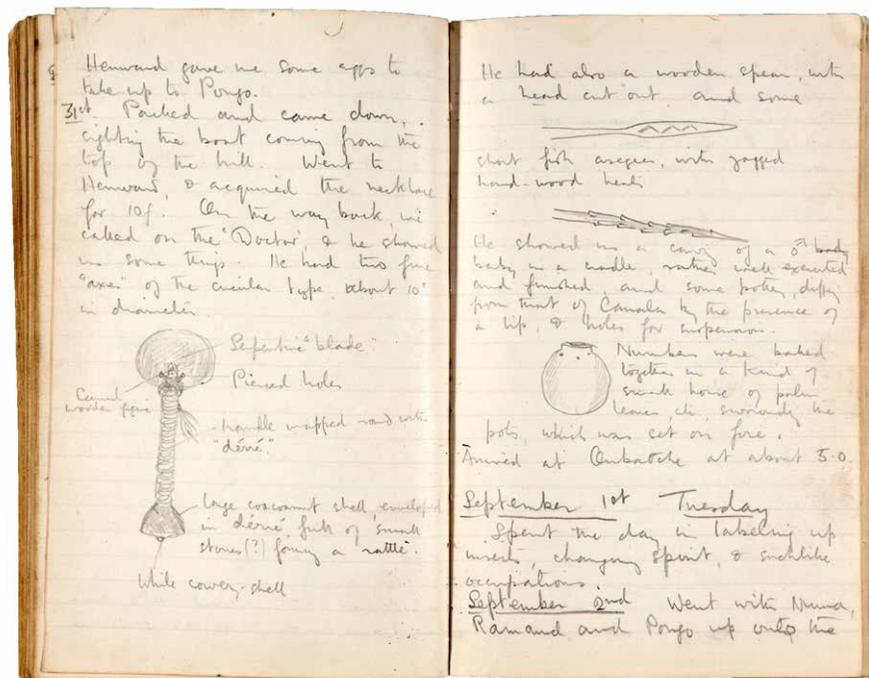
There, in the drawer of a large old-fashioned desk, nestled alongside a photograph of the generously moustached Carl von Hügel (the founding curator's father), I located



The generously moustached Carl von Hügel. Photographer and date unknown.

the item I was seeking – a small, red notebook. Inked in black on the faded front cover were the words: ‘P. D. Montague, Private Journal, Expedition to...’, the final few letters missing, lost under the smudge of a water stain.

My prize was the private record of Paul Montague’s fieldwork expedition to New Caledonia in 1914, which he had filled out daily in his scrawled handwriting. In addition to the journal’s written entries, the notebook included small, skillfully drawn sketches of artefacts. Several were annotated with Kanak terms, and included



Paul Montague's expedition journal. Photograph by Gwil Owen.

descriptions of how the objects were made, as well as how they were used.² There was a note of how much Montague had paid for various items and from whom they were acquired. On the inside back cover were several sketches of what looked like a design for a musical instrument of some kind.

As I scanned the extensive archival material that Montague had deposited, I reflected on this moment of museological opportunity and began to consider where it might lead. Such unexpected discoveries have been identified as key moments in an activity which Nicholas Thomas has termed the 'museum method'.³ Coming across Montague's collection in the archives that day, and being open to its research potential – 'the contingency of discovery' – epitomises Thomas's vision of the creative possibilities fashioned by such a methodology. In a departure from much traditional theory-based academic research, curators and museum workers are trained to value and respond to the unexpected. In a museum setting, researchers are used to 'happening upon things' and to engaging in a 'dialogue' with the objects and collections that actively shape their research. In doing so, they are interested in telling stories which illuminate particular historical and cultural moments, as well as larger histories of global interconnectedness.

In tracking down Montague's journal, I felt as though I had reached a moment of potency. It seemed to be a discovery of sorts, even though the journal was not, in fact, missing. Indeed, it had been hiding in plain sight and was clearly recorded on the Museum's database. Placing the journal carefully back inside its box, I gathered up all the other material and prepared to return to my office. I had found something that was not lost.



*The Maudslay Gallery at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, 2007.
Photograph by Mark Adams.*

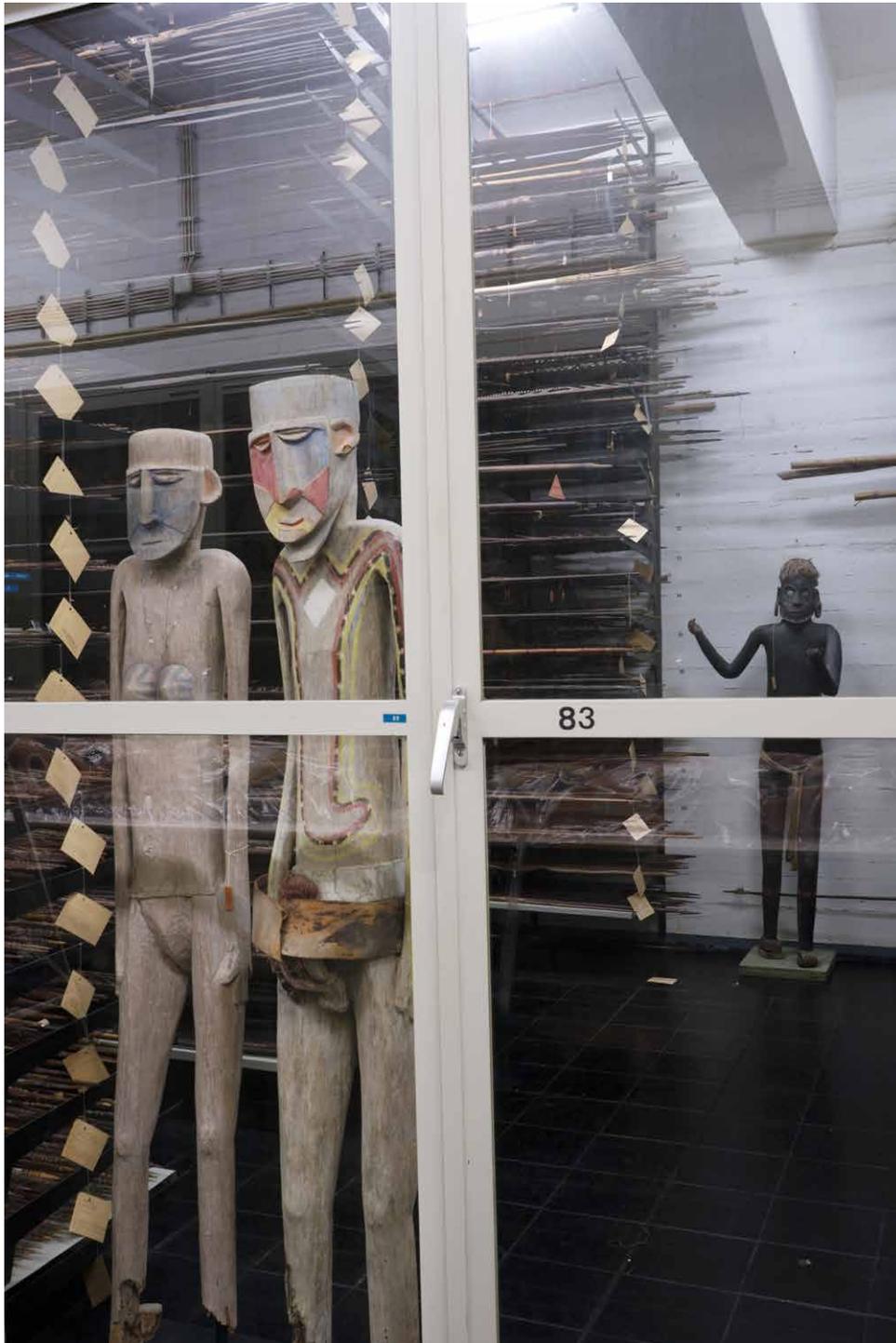
Scattered Things

Museums, like people, lead exterior and interior lives. A museum's permanent galleries, temporary exhibition spaces and public events are its external face, while its behind-the-scenes storerooms, studios and offices might be thought of as its interior realm. Although museum visitors generally understand that the objects they see on display represent only a fraction of an institution's holdings, many, nevertheless, perceive it as lamentable that vast swathes of artefacts are unlikely ever to see the light of day. Critics have argued that collections can be quantified, and the public value of museums assessed, based on the numbers of items they have on exhibition.¹ In essence, their arguments seem to suggest that museum objects have value only when they are on display.

In the twenty-first century, the question of what to do with all of the objects in their stores is one of a number of highly contested issues facing European museums.² In particular, their extensive holdings from regions such as Africa, Oceania and the Americas are at the forefront of these debates. Museum-going audiences are increasingly questioning how 'global collections', readily accessible for them to admire in metropolitan centres such as Berlin, Paris or London, came to be there in the first place. The knowledge that contested collections are languishing in storage only adds fuel to the fire of calls for the repatriation, reclamation and restitution of objects.



The Pacific Presences team (left to right: Alison Murfitt, Lucie Carreau, Nicholas Thomas, Areta Wilkinson, Erna Lilje) working in the stores at the Powell Cotton Museum, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.



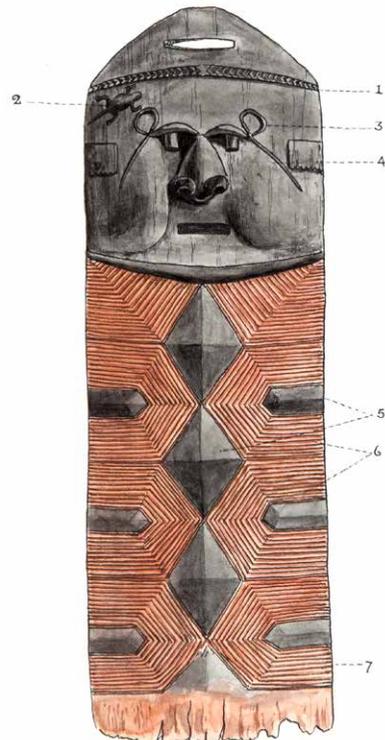
Figures from Vanuatu and Solomon Islands in the stores of the Ethnologisches Museum, Dahlem, Berlin, 2015. Photograph by Mark Adams.

While these are important and legitimate concerns, those involved with the day-to-day interior lives of museums might resist the idea that a collection in storage is a collection in stasis. Indeed, it could be argued that most of the seminal moments in the life of a collection take place within the museum's interior realm. Projects to catalogue, conserve, photograph, research, curate and improve the storage conditions of objects are constantly underway. With ever-increasing regularity, projects instigated by members of Indigenous source communities involve objects being made accessible for research, study and loan by their representatives. Far from embodying a stereotype of 'colonial dustiness', museum storerooms can be vibrant places of meaningful dialogue.³

It was in the context of these debates that the *Pacific Presences* research project was launched in Cambridge, in 2013.⁴ As outlined in the preface to this book, the project set out to trace and explore the extraordinary range of ethnographic collections from Oceania, now held in museum galleries and storerooms across Europe. Its ambitions were to better understand the particular dynamics of their collecting histories, as well as to consider their contemporary significance and enduring dynamism. In other words, it asked: how had objects left the Pacific and what did their presence in Europe mean today?

So it was, in the early days of the project, that I ascended the staircase to the archives at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, and 'discovered' the material deposited by Paul Montague in 1915. There, on my doorstep, I had stumbled across a collection which seemed to epitomise the project's core objectives. Following this discovery, but uncertain of where it might lead and what it might yield, I set out to research the provenance of Montague's New Caledonian collection.

The term 'provenance research' has long been used in the museum world to describe work undertaken to identify artworks unlawfully appropriated during the Nazi era. Recently, however, it has become more widely used by those wishing to document the 'hidden' histories of objects that were acquired during the colonial era. Provenance research into colonial collections is now being actively undertaken by museums across Europe.⁵ New projects are being proposed, funding applications submitted and conferences organised. While this type of research is understood as part of a process by which museums are becoming more transparent about the histories of objects in their care,



Drawing of a carved Kanak door post by Paul Montague, 1914. Photograph by Gwil Owen.

what remains unresolved is what this activity might specifically entail and what its eventual outcomes might be.⁶

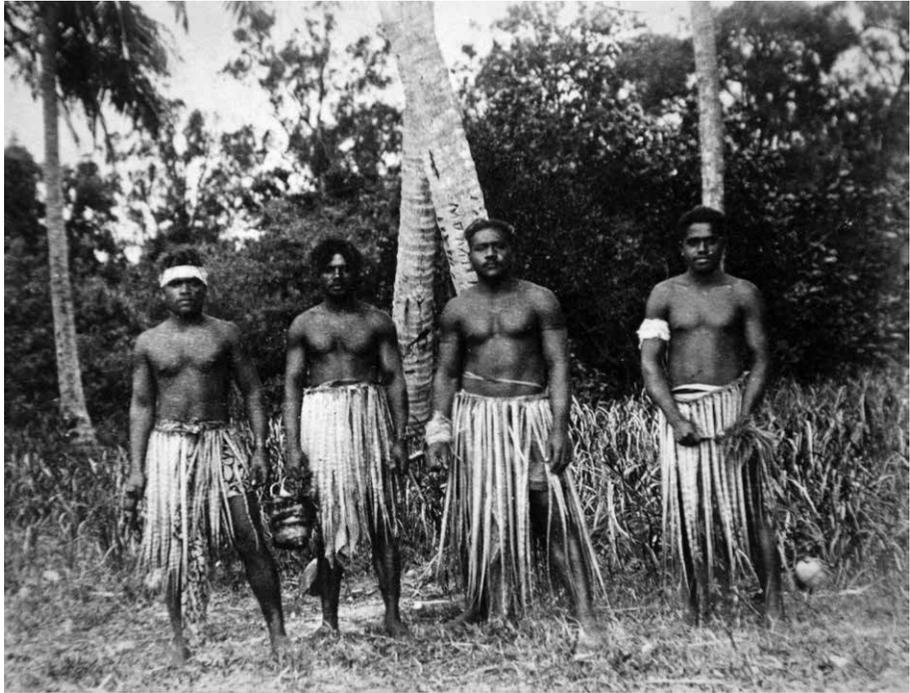
The collection amassed by Paul Montague, with its wealth of accompanying archival material, seemed to me to represent a significant resource on which to base a project of colonial-collecting provenance research. During the 12 months he spent in the field, Montague created a remarkably comprehensive body of documentation. As well as his daily journal, he took numerous photographs, made a series of sound recordings using wax cylinders and produced delicate sketches and carefully annotated line drawings.

He also kept extensive notes detailing how the objects he collected were used in their original context and giving their names in local languages. He then transcribed these notes into a written catalogue of his collection, often including valuable information such as the precise circumstances in which he was able to acquire objects. In addition, once back in Cambridge, Montague penned a draft manuscript of a book he hoped to publish, outlining what he had learned about the lives of the Kanak tribes of the Houaïlou Valley.⁷ The quantity and the range of this archive was unusual for the time and provides a wealth of relevant material for today's researcher.

In undertaking this research, I was interested in finding out what might be discovered by bringing these kaleidoscopic archival materials into dialogue with the artefacts, a century after they had been acquired. In doing so, I hoped to shed light on the context in which the collection was made, as well as create connections with Kanak people in the present.

Once I started, it soon became apparent that thoroughly investigating the provenance of a collection would take time and sustained effort. It would require a multifaceted and multidirectional approach – spatially, intellectually and personally.⁸ For example, to understand what motivated Paul Montague to travel to New Caledonia in the first place, it was necessary to have some insight into his personal history: the influence of his parents and his schooling upon the way he engaged with the world. To understand his collecting methods, and what he was endeavouring to achieve, required knowledge of the scientific and academic milieu to which he was exposed while studying at Cambridge. In addition, to comprehend the historical context of his time in New Caledonia, it was imperative to know something of the country's colonial relationship with France. Specifically, it was important to understand why local Kanak people might have been willing to trade, exchange, sell or surrender certain artefacts to him at that period in time. It was also important to acknowledge that, in some situations – such as his attempts to acquire human remains – Montague did not seek Kanak consent at all and simply took what he wanted. This practice, although abhorrent today, was nothing out of the ordinary at the time, and I was keen to explore how he and his contemporaries rationalised their actions. What in their world view allowed them to consider such behaviour acceptable?

In trying to understand more about the historical and scientific background for his collecting, I was not seeking to justify or ameliorate Montague's behaviour. Indeed, what I learned served only to lay bare the contradictions and casual cruelty inherent in many anthropological acquisitions of the time, where violence, coercion and collecting went hand in hand. However, a close reading of Montague's journal reveals his ambivalence about the practice and politics of collecting. These entangled complexities suggest



Kanak men in the Houaïlou Valley, New Caledonia, 1914. Photograph by Paul Montague.

that Montague, the collector, was not a stereotypical colonial scientist but, rather, someone with wide-ranging cultural interests that were avant-garde in their context. For example, one strong counter-current to the tolerance of rapacious collecting was Montague's contempt for European missionaries and colonisers, whom he accused of dispossessing Kanak people for their own financial gain. Another feature was his friendships with the Kanak men who worked alongside him during his collecting and taught him about their culture. The fact that, despite these friendships, he was not always able to acquire what he wanted is also revealing – as was his surprise when a Kanak man offered to sell him human skulls. While provenance research offers a means of critically engaging with the difficult histories by which objects entered museum collections, it also has the potential to challenge stereotypical assumptions that might otherwise unhelpfully homogenise collectors, ignore Indigenous agency and gloss over complex personal interactions.

In 1915, when Montague returned to Cambridge, his hopes that his expedition would make a notable contribution to the fledgling discipline of anthropology had been dashed by the outbreak of World War I. Like many of his contemporaries, Montague abandoned the prospect of a promising career in favour of joining the fight for King and Country. What motivated this decision is unclear. It may have been a simple act of patriotism, though the death of his younger brother while fighting in France may also have played a part. Whatever the reason, it was a decision that would end his life at the age of 27, while piloting his plane in the skies over Salonika.



Sarigol World War I Military Cemetery, Greece, 2017. Photograph by Julie Adams.

Following the death of their son, his devastated parents, like so many families at the time, dealt with their loss by trying to create a legacy. Despite their best endeavours to find a personal method of curating his New Caledonian collection, they could not prevent it from slipping into a dormant state in Cambridge in the aftermath of the war. Remarkably, though, a century after his death, it was his parents' long-ago efforts to document his life and achievements that made a holistic study of his collecting possible.

Having gained an insight into the more personal areas of Paul's life – thanks, in part, to the generosity of his surviving relatives – it seems important, and potentially valuable academically, that the collection's significance for those other parties who had been touched by its existence should also be recognised and reflected here.

Rediscovering Montague's New Caledonian collection, and researching his story, also presented an important opportunity to engage collaboratively with contemporary Kanak researchers and so open up the collection's potential to a wider spectrum of critical comment and analysis. In this endeavour, I was fortunate to have an existing working relationship with François Wadra, a Kanak archaeologist from Maré in the Loyalty Islands. Wadra, who has carried out archaeological excavations in various locations around the Pacific, also has an interest in collections of Kanak artefacts held in European museums. In 2007, he came to London as part of a research project based at the British Museum and we began working together, tracking down Kanak collections held in UK institutions. Then, in 2009, I travelled to the Loyalty Islands and we curated an exhibition on Lifou, the islands' capital, that featured some of the artefacts and histories we had traced.⁹ Wadra has subsequently visited the UK on

François Wadra and Julie Adams in the stores of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, 2013. Photograph by Mark Adams.



several occasions and we have continued our research, exploring Kanak collections held in museums in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Manchester, Oxford, Cambridge and beyond. As an archaeologist, Wadra is attuned to working with objects. Over time, however, he has also become skillfully attuned to working with museum curators, who eagerly seek his knowledge and expertise to improve their understandings of collections. For his own part, he seeks access to information about Kanak artefacts held in European museums in order to educate young Kanak people about their heritage.

In 2013, the *Pacific Presences* project brought Wadra to Cambridge, to assist with interpreting Montague's collection, and his insights proved essential to the evolution of this book. Here, in its pages, I have sought to capture something of the nature of this collaborative research and our experiences exploring Montague's collection. Frequently, I have strategically enlisted Wadra's encounters with objects in the storeroom in Cambridge as a prism through which to articulate the most pertinent issues raised by the collection and its legacies. Wadra's thoughts, feelings, perceptions and frustrations are documented here, with his permission.

A number of other Kanak people from the region where Montague worked also engaged with his collection during this research, and their various responses have left their mark on this project. In what follows, I have tried to avoid organising or mediating these heterogeneous views. Instead, I have consciously made space for the range and variety of their responses to be charted, while acknowledging, of course, that I am responsible for the manner of their representation.

By adopting a holistic approach to the provenance of the collection, it was possible to unveil multidirectional threads of connection between New Caledonia and the battlefields of World War I; between the collecting of birds and the development of aerial combat; and between the task of remembrance and contemporary museum politics. The work of curating – of bringing objects, documents and people together – enabled the collection's potential to be unlocked and the networks which embed the personal with the professional, the familial with the national, the near with the far, and the past with the present to be perceived.¹⁰

These various threads raise questions about how individuals and communities deal with loss, memory and remembrance. Do new acts of remembering, such as this book, crystallise the past or creatively reshape it?

Despite this journey's convenient starting point – within the walls of the Cambridge institution where I was then employed – provenance research proved to be a far from sedentary activity. Over the years, it has taken me to the valleys of New Caledonia, the World War I battlefields of Greece and Macedonia, the collection stores of the Western Australian Museum in Perth, the American Museum of Natural History in New York, and beyond. Travelling to these multiple locations was necessary because, somewhat counterintuitively, collections are often 'scattered things'.¹¹ Although a collection might start out as a group of specimens or objects collected by an individual in a particular place at a specific time, they are frequently divided up and dispersed.¹² Sometimes this dispersal is a result of the actions of the collectors themselves, who may give pieces to mentors and family members, for example. In other instances, collectors may sell parts of their collection for financial gain or strategically deploy objects across multiple locations in order to enhance their professional reputation. Shifting disciplinary and institutional boundaries can also have an impact on the cohesion of a collection. Montague's zoological specimens and ethnographic specimens, for instance, have lived very different lives since they were removed from New Caledonia. Today, they are housed within different museums, in different cities, across a number of continents. So, to build up a comprehensive picture of the fate of Montague's collection, it was necessary to follow the path of each of these trajectories.

Later, as I was drawing the various threads of this research together, it struck me that the notion of 'scattered things' also resonates with how lives are remembered or, equally perhaps, forgotten. Sifting through the dispersed fragments of Montague's life suggested to me that the way we remember people often takes the form of chance encounters, or snapshots, rather than comprehensive, linear or chronological recollections of an individual's biography. In the writing of this book, I have tried to evoke a sense of these scattered rememberings by curating its sections into a series of interconnected snapshots, or vignettes. I utilise the notion of a vignette, first, in the sense of a brief and evocative description, and, second, as akin to a photograph that pinpoints in miniature an instant of history rich with suggestion. Interwoven among these vignettes, which chart the trajectory of Paul Montague's life and death, are sections which document the work of researching his collection and of Kanak engagements with his collection in the present. This shifting narrative timeline is a conscious attempt to reflect upon the fragmented yet interconnected spheres of his life, his collecting and its legacies.

Such a narrative approach also acknowledges the fact that this book is not a comprehensive biographical study; nor is it intended to be a catalogue of his collection, in any traditional sense. Rather, it attempts to document the nebulous and sometimes serendipitous activity of researching, curating and engaging with a colonial-era collection in the twenty-first century.

As I learned more about the training which Montague would have received as a zoologist, I increasingly became interested in the turn-of-the-twentieth-century preoccupation with the science of taxonomy – the categorisation and naming of objects, plants and animal species.¹³ Perhaps with this in mind, it seemed striking that Paul himself, like many people, was known by a variety of names throughout his life. These names can be roughly mapped to his relationships and the roles he adopted, at different times, with different groups of people. At home, to his family, he was always Paul. At school and later to his Cambridge and Bloomsbury Set friends, he was Pauly. In the army, he was Monty. Following his transfer to the Royal Flying Corps, his squadron called him ‘the Birdman’, reflecting his zoological collecting habits. Today, members of the Salonika Campaign Society refer to him as P.D.M., invoking his initials as an affectionate shorthand.

In an academic publication, it would be standard practice to refer to him throughout as Montague, to signal an appropriate distance between author and subject, and to imply objectivity. Here, however, I have chosen to avoid that approach and have used his various names interchangeably, slipping, sometimes inadvertently, between the formal Montague and the more familiar Paul or Pauly. By doing this, I am deliberately calling attention to, and indeed promoting, the blurring of boundaries which researchers often experience when they spend extended periods of time researching the multifaceted life of an individual. Rather than shielding us from Paul’s many dimensions for the purposes of academic objectivity or detachment, which can never in fact be achieved, I have beckoned them into the frame. In this book, I use the full range of his nomenclature, in keeping with Montague’s shape-shifting life and as a way of displaying in full view my own subjective position as researcher.

The issue of naming is also increasingly contentious in the museum world, as collections have usually been identified by reference to their collector (‘the Cook Collection’, for example, to refer to the objects acquired by Captain James Cook). Inevitably, therefore, the collector’s interaction with the objects has remained prioritised, and their name continues to overshadow the objects’ prior existence and original contexts. This politics of naming is significant, and is not at all to be ignored. However, in choosing to speak of the ‘Montague Collection’ in this book, my intention is not to connote ‘ownership’ but rather to keep in sight the displaced status of its objects, ensuring that the historical circumstances by which they were removed from their place of origin remain perpetually visible. While acknowledging the sensitivities involved, it seems futile to try to deny that Montague’s actions made it possible for us to associate these objects as a distinct body of materials. My use of the phrase ‘Montague Collection’, then, is intended to convey its conditions of possibility and the politics of its curation.

During the planning stages of this book, I decided that images should play an integral role in its structure, conceiving of them as the co-equal and visual equivalent of the book's written vignettes. The intention is that they serve as more than mere illustrations: their aim is to conceptually and aesthetically evoke the scattered and fragmented story of Paul Montague and his collecting. Each category of photograph has been chosen to serve a particular purpose – a taxonomy, if you will. On the following pages, therefore, images relating to Montague's life, work and death are juxtaposed with objects, artworks and historical photographs that reflect on his legacy. The images are intended to function, in some ways, like objects in an exhibition. Their juxtaposition with the vignettes and with each other, within the pages of this book, reflects the selective nature of curatorial work which privileges the telling of certain stories while others go untold, are eclipsed or remain in shadow. At the same time, the images might evoke in the reader the same aesthetic impulses that frequently lead a visitor around an exhibition, occasionally engaging their attention in a non-systematic manner.

As indicated, a variety of types of images are included in this book. Firstly, there are object photographs – that is 'catalogue-style' images – which document some of the artefacts in Montague's collection.



These catalogue-style images have their own aesthetic parameters and constraints, and represent a particular way of encountering an object. For example, they frequently depict objects singly, from one angle and devoid of any context, all of which has a significant effect upon the way a viewer engages with them. How effectively these images capture and convey an object's aesthetic power is largely dependent on the skills of the photographer. I was fortunate to be able to draw upon the expertise of Gwil Owen, who for many years worked as photographer at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Cambridge, to undertake this specialist work.

Carved figure, collected by Paul Montague in Oubatche, New Caledonia, 1914. Montague notes that this figure was known as an Hwainangi. It was placed upright during a ceremony at which a chief spoke about the prosperity of the tribe. If the figure fell over, this was taken as a good sign. However, if the figure remained standing, it was seen as a bad omen. Photograph by Gwil Owen.



Zoe and Paul Montague, c.1893.



Paul Montague's niece, Jennifer Estcourt, and her daughter, Hilary Warren, with a lute Paul made shortly before his death. Devon, 2017. Photograph by Mark Adams.

Another type of object image shows artefacts 'in action', within the setting of a museum storeroom. These photographs present the interior realm of the museum and seek to convey the dynamic lives objects in collections may lead.

The book also contains a great number of archival photographs which have been sourced widely from museums and libraries, as well as from Montague's family, from the school he attended as a child, and from among the many he took during his collecting expeditions.

These black-and-white photos, sometimes faded, torn or creased, do much to evoke a sense of dissonance between the past and the present, and between remembering and forgetting, that was brought to light during my research. This dissonance also applies to objects in Montague's collection in Cambridge that no longer survive in their original Kanak context. By bringing together numerous archival images, I had in mind that they would function as a palimpsest, helping to convey the interconnected layers of loss and remembrance that make up all histories.

Finally, this book includes a number of images made by the photographer Mark Adams.¹⁴ One of New Zealand's most distinguished photographers, Mark was artist-in-residence on the *Pacific Presences* project, tasked with documenting its work and capturing on film the hidden lives of Pacific collections in European museums. Together, he and I, and his antique glass-plate camera, travelled to New Caledonia to follow in Paul Montague's footsteps. There, as well as in the Museum in Cambridge and in Devon with Paul Montague's descendants, Mark created a series of beautiful and powerful images that perfectly align with the intentions of this book. The aesthetic impact of his images derives from his ability to capture the interplay between presence and absence that is so redolent of provenance research and suggestive of how museum collections are made meaningful in the present. His images have brought a vital added dimension to my research and, ultimately, to this book.

It has frequently been observed that there is an emotional and intellectual connection between photography and loss. Most of us who sit down to look through the unremembered faces in a family photo album will testify to experiencing unsettling feelings of relatedness and disassociation, of presence and absence and of memory and loss. In his book *Light in the Dark Room*, Jay Prosser writes that 'the photographic collections we leave when we die are approximations of the life story that remains typically unwritten'.¹⁵ Here, drawing on a range of different types of image, I have tried to imagine that unwritten story of Paul Montague's life and collecting through the visual traces that have remained.

At its core, this book is concerned with unravelling the threads which bind individual lives to momentous historical events. In this way, I hope that it contributes to understandings of the history of museums and the formation of their collections, as well as to histories of global interconnectedness and entanglement. Objects help us narrate our own lives but, in exploring them, we also come to apprehend more keenly the many different lives that have been led.



*A mask acquired by Paul Montague in
Hienghène, New Caledonia, in 1914.
Photograph by Gwil Owen.*

The Masks that Misbehaved

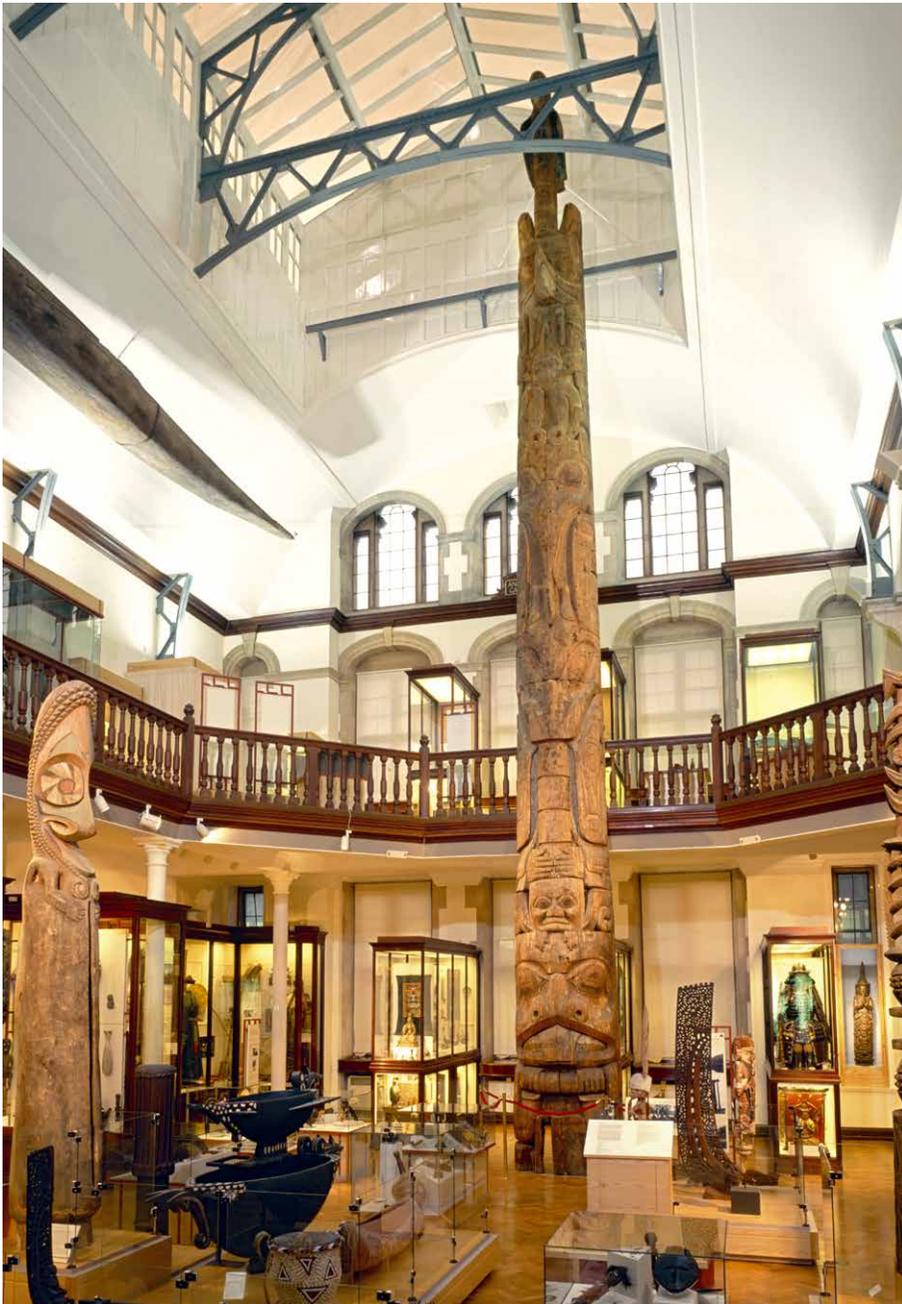
Ninety-nine years after it moved to its current site on the corner of Tennis Court Road and Downing Street, the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology got a front door. Founded in 1884, the Museum outgrew its first home relatively quickly and acquired the Downing Street site, moving to the new premises in 1913. However, it was not until June 2012 that a door onto the busy main road was finally installed.

Before then, visitors were mostly dedicated locals, academic researchers exploring the collections or, less frequently, tenacious tourists clutching a map. To reach the entrance, it was necessary to pass through an archway set back from the main road. This led into a quadrangle where, tucked away in one corner, a small wooden doorway was just visible. For decades, the Museum successfully conveyed the message that visitors were something of an unwelcome nuisance. Those who did make it to the door were likely to find it closed. A sign on the wall explained that the Museum was open to the public only on particular afternoons; otherwise, access was by appointment only.

On the first floor is the Maudslay Gallery, which showcases the Museum's impressive anthropological collections. Named after Alfred Percival Maudslay, a diplomat and archaeologist who was one of the first Europeans to explore the ruins of ancient Mayan cities, the Maudslay Gallery was designed to impress. Architect T.J. Jackson created a balconied atrium to give a sense of space and spectacle and to allow the displays to be viewed from a variety of vantage points. From the upper archaeology floor, visitors can look down and imagine themselves seated in the hulls of canoes from North America and New Zealand which are displayed below. Visitors standing on the first floor are dwarfed, gazing ever upwards towards the summit of a vast totem pole. In fact, there was no totem pole in the collections when Jackson was hired, and it is believed he designed the atrium in the hope that one day a pole would be acquired. If this is true, then it was a gamble. However, given the legendary acquisitiveness of the Museum's founding curator, Baron Anatole von Hügel, it was also something of a foregone conclusion.

The old entrance to the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge. Photograph by Mark Adams.

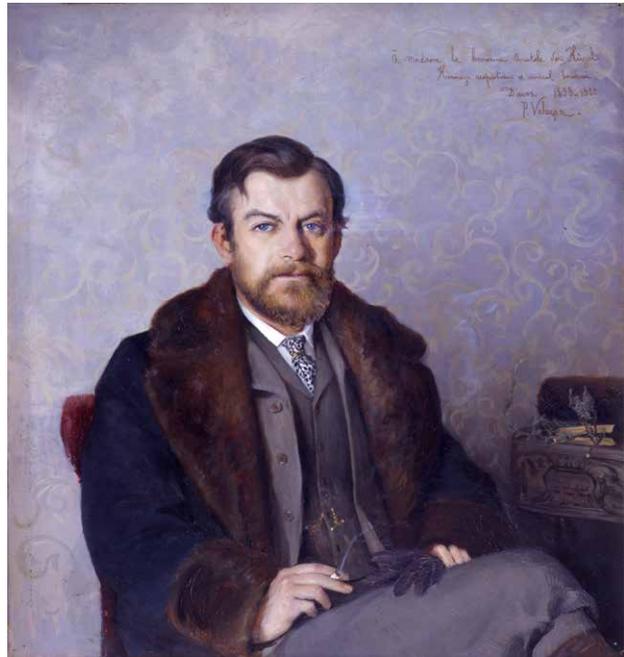




The Maudslay Gallery at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge. Photograph by Jocelyne Dudding.

Those who have written about von Hügel often use words such as ‘dedicated’, ‘charming’ or ‘persuasive’ to describe his talent for collecting and acquiring objects. These accounts report, somewhat euphemistically, that, as curator, he ‘energetically

Baron Anatole von Hügel, founding curator of the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Portrait by P. Voluzan, 1899-1900, oil on canvas.



pursued new acquisitions, drawing upon his vast network of wealthy friends and academics to ‘enhance’ the collections.¹ All this is true and yet it doesn’t quite capture the single-minded, obsessive, manipulative, bullying, truculent character which emerges from the pages of his correspondence.

It is not an exaggeration to say that von Hügel dedicated his life to expanding the collections. Often, he used his own money to fund acquisitions, blurring the boundaries between the personal and the professional – except, with von Hügel, there were no boundaries to be blurred. Everything he did, he did for the Museum. When he was finally forced to resign in 1921, due to exhaustion and ill health, the galleries of the new building on Downing Street were still in the process of being laid out.

Alfred Cort Haddon willingly stepped into the chasm left by von Hügel’s retirement. As the University’s first lecturer in ethnology, Haddon is regarded as the founding father of Cambridge anthropology, and his influence was pivotal in establishing the profile of the Museum. Just as dynamic and persuasive as von Hügel, Haddon recruited graduates in disciplines such as zoology and botany to collect anthropological data and artefacts during their expeditions, and then persuaded them to donate these collections to the Museum upon their return to Cambridge. Publicly, Haddon had always supported von Hügel, despite their differences over how the collections should be utilised. Haddon’s vision was to create a ‘working museum’ where students could engage with objects and ideas rather than a space for the display of ‘curios’. And, during his brief stint as curator, the elderly Haddon seized the opportunity to coordinate the Museum’s exhibitions, making extensive use of the collections that had been donated by his former protégés.²

It seems likely that among the objects Haddon selected for those new displays was a group of magic stones collected by Paul Montague in New Caledonia. The two men had become acquainted in 1909, when Paul entered Gonville & Caius College to study zoology, and they discovered a shared enthusiasm for Pacific Island cultures. Subsequently, Haddon became a mentor, influencing Montague's decision to select New Caledonia as the site for a fieldwork expedition and encouraging him to collect ethnographic artefacts alongside zoological specimens.

In addition to their shared interest in the Pacific, the two men, like many of their anthropological contemporaries, were also fascinated by magic and magical thinking – a belief that events can be influenced and controlled by one's thoughts or actions. Studies of magic became established as a core area of enquiry within the burgeoning discipline of anthropology and retained an appeal for decades to come. 'Magic!', enthused the eminent anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski: 'The very word seems to reveal a world of mysterious and unexpected possibilities!'³

Not only did studies of magic introduce readers to the 'exotic' beliefs of faraway cultures, they also reinforced a Western sense of cultural and intellectual superiority. The Cambridge-based scholar Sir James Frazer (1854-1951) invested his life's work in compiling an exhaustive study of myths and magical beliefs from around the globe. Published in numerous volumes, *The Golden Bough* was a classic work of Victorian evolutionary thinking. Frazer and his contemporaries argued that there was a three-tier hierarchy through which cultures advanced, from a 'magical' stage to a 'religious' stage before finally reaching the pinnacle of the 'scientific' stage. These 'men of the armchair' (as Frazer and other scholars who did not undertake fieldwork have become known) used magical thinking as evidence for the inferiority of non-Western societies.

In 1906, Haddon published his own contribution to the topic: *Magic and Fetishism*. In the pages of this slim volume, he used a range of ethnographic case studies to explore the beliefs of what he referred to as the 'confused notions' of 'primitive peoples'.⁴ Although Haddon had spent time conducting fieldwork in the Torres Strait Islands in the 1880s and 1890s, what he urgently sought was new ethnographic data from which to develop his increasingly elaborate theories. As such, Paul Montague's research in the Houailou Valley, New Caledonia, would have been of particular interest to Haddon, and to the burgeoning discipline of anthropology as a whole, crammed as it was with detailed ethnographic information.

In the manuscript draft of the book he planned to publish, Montague wrote extensively about the Kanak tradition of using magic stones. His vivid descriptions include, for example, notes about how magical power was understood to be transferred from stones to yams at a ceremony that marked the planting of the first yam crops of the season. Touching a yam to a magic stone, he explained, created a causal link between the action and the desired outcome – a successful harvest:

The Pé Mao [yam stones] were kept in the house until the time of planting when they were brought out, laid upon the ground and carefully cleaned with bundles of leaves held between sticks, as they could not be touched. The small stones were used for transferring the magic from the large stones to the yams when planted. The big stones, though most potent, were considered too heavy



Group of magic stones used to encourage the growth of the yam crops, collected by Paul Montague in New Caledonia in 1914. Photograph by Gwil Owen.

and unwieldy to carry out to the yam beds, so only the small ones were taken. These were taken in the fingers between leaves or paper-bark and laid flat along the big stones, thus being filled with additional magic which ran from one into the other. Several were thus treated, put in a basket and taken out to the yam beds. Each yam, as it was planted, was touched with one or more of these stones.⁵

Such detailed insights were invaluable to proto-anthropologists and were perceived all the more highly because they had been observed in person, by the researcher. Unlike the armchair anthropologists, a new generation of fieldworkers, such as Bronisław Malinowski and Paul Montague, ventured out to live among people in places where the boundaries between the realm of the magical and the everyday were dissolved. In New Caledonia, Paul had a number of personal encounters with the mystical and developed a particular fascination with Kanak magic stones, which became the major focus of his research. Rather than being solely a scholar who was interested in thinking about magic, Paul Montague was inclined to be a magical thinker himself.

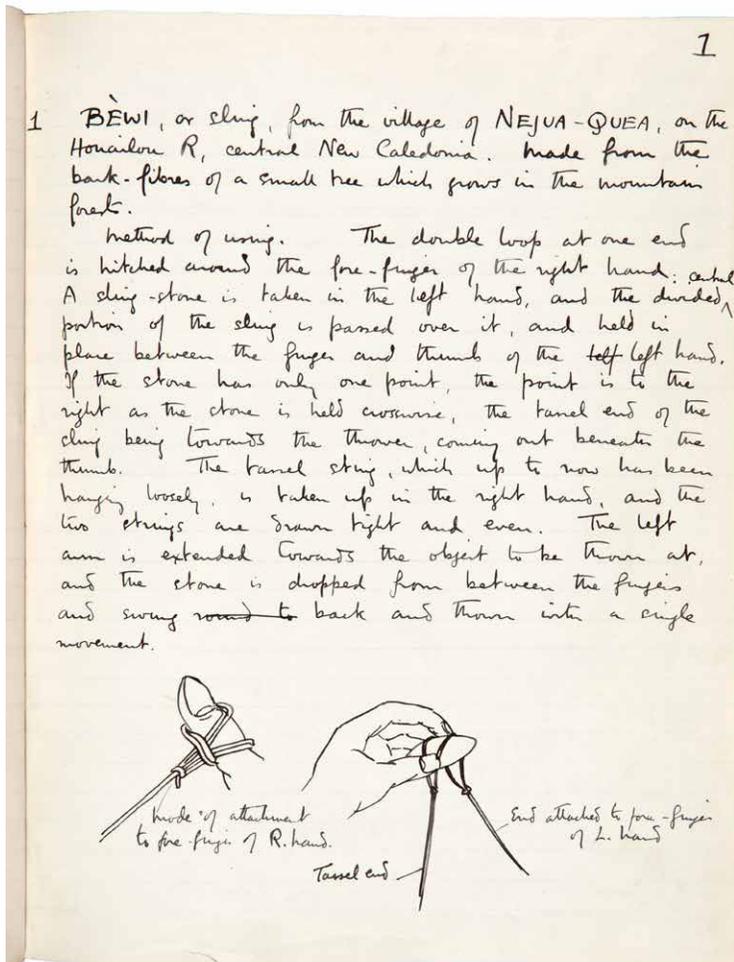
Although studies of magical thinking were in vogue during the early years of the twentieth century, this area has since lost its salience for modern-day anthropologists. By contrast, the ethnographic information collected during Paul's stay in the Houailou Valley has only increased in significance for twenty-first century Kanak communities seeking to recover and regroup following the assault on their traditional ways of life. In 1914, it is unlikely that Paul Montague could have imagined the enduring potency his research would have for Kanak people. And if he had, it would surely have seemed magical.

Few twenty-first century museum curators would admit to being magical thinkers, but nevertheless most are susceptible to the wonders of a well-documented collection. In order to catalogue his New Caledonia collection, Paul Montague purchased a beautiful notebook and decorated it with gold lettering, inscribed along the spine. The title page of this catalogue formally describes the contents thus:

NEW CALEDONIA
MONTAGUE COLLECTION.

M.S. Catalogue compiled by the Collector, P.D. Montague,
B.A., Gonville and Caius College.

N.B. These objects were obtained from the Natives themselves by P.D.M.



First entry in Paul Montague's catalogue of his collection. Photograph by Gwil Owen.

Inside the book, each entry is carefully numbered and corresponds with a handwritten label attached to an object. Montague provides the name of the object in the local Kanak language (or as close an approximation as possible), the village where the object was acquired, a description of its use, the materials from which it is made and, finally, the date of collection. On several occasions – for instance with item 1 (a Bewi or sling) – a fine ink drawing is included to demonstrate the precise method of use. In other cases, the name of the family who sold him the object is included, or the amount he paid is cited.

The penultimate entry in the catalogue relates to the most visually impressive item in the whole collection. It is described as a dancing mask, or *thulou*, and the entry reads:

212: DANCING mask, Thulou. The beard is of Banyan roots, and the feathers, attached to the network, are of the Notu, a species of large fruit pigeon. When this mask is worn, the eyes of the dancer look out through the mouth-hole. In the district where this specimen was obtained the mask appears to have had no particular religious significance, but was used solely as a grotesque 'fancy-dress'. It could be worn by anybody, and its use was not limited to chiefs or men of particular rank ... In the Houailou district the object appears to have been very little known, and none of the old men could say anything very definite about it.

HIENGHÈNE 27.9.14

It is perhaps surprising that such a striking object should find itself catalogued so late in the collection. However, the tone of his written entry suggests there may be a reason for its belated inclusion. The absence of any detailed ethnographic information and the apparent absence of religious significance – its ability to be worn by 'anybody' – seems to have somewhat muted his interest. Unlike the visually unremarkable yet potent magic stones, the mask appears not to have captured his imagination or invoked wonderment.

At the time of Paul Montague's fieldwork, vast quantities of significant ritual and sacred items were rapidly disappearing from the landscape of Kanak ceremonial life. Having endured almost 150 years of contact with Europeans, there was a dramatic decline in the fortunes of Kanak culture in the early decades of the twentieth century. Population numbers reached their lowest in the years up to 1920, while the strategy of missionaries targeting Kanak chiefs as a means of securing large-scale conversions compounded the loss of traditional ways of life. It was a period of tremendous social upheaval and for the Kanak people themselves it was also a time of defeat and despair. 'Just let me drink and die,' one Kanak chief implored a French missionary, Maurice Leenhardt, during his visit to Canala in 1914.⁶ That Paul was conscious of this milieu of melancholy and loss is clear from his draft book manuscript, where he writes about seeing many empty, abandoned villages whose inhabitants:



Kanak carved roof finial and door posts photographed by Paul Montague in New Caledonia in 1914. They are not in the Museum in Cambridge, so were not acquired by him.

... have been turned onto the reserves and their houses, including many magnificent examples of native architecture and wood-carving burned to the ground while their irrigation terraces costing hundreds of years of patient work, have been turned over to a few lean and half-wild cattle.⁷

Against this backdrop, when the Swiss naturalist Fritz Sarasin visited New Caledonia in 1912, he was able to procure a large collection of more than 750 artefacts. Sarasin spent a short time in the Houaïlou Valley and was astonished at the attitude of the tribes who – when they learned of his presence – gathered together many ancient objects with the intention of offering them for sale, including major architectural carvings, magic stones and other valuable artefacts. Sarasin compared the scene to that of an ‘open-air ethnographic museum’, noting that he was ‘spoiled for choice’. Speculating on the possible motivations for this large-scale abandonment of their traditional artefacts, Sarasin suggested that social disaffection had brought about a fundamental shift in the status of these objects. They had become ‘vestiges of an epoch now passed that no longer have value for the current generation.’⁸

As Kanak people were witnessing the systematic dismantling of their culture, they were simultaneously becoming reluctant participants in a cash economy, though with little means of accessing money themselves. Perhaps this explains why Paul Montague was able to acquire the spectacular *thulou* mask in the Hienghène region, bought from an old man for 20 francs on Sunday, 27 September 1914. In an era of such desperation and displacement for the Kanak people, his purchasing of the mask cannot be seen simply as a financial transaction. Rather, such acquisitions must be recognised as complex and frequently fraught encounters; each one representing a particular moment when an object passed, irreversibly, out of Kanak hands. Cumulatively, these transactions accrue significance: every purchase of a basket or agreement to sell a mask illuminates the inequalities at the heart of such collecting. And through his own acquisition of artefacts, Paul Montague is implicated in these practices of colonial dispossession, practices that brought about what has been described as the ‘scattered heritage’ of the Kanak people.⁹ Today, this heritage survives, dispersed around the world, in the form of the thousands of Kanak artefacts residing in museum collections. Similarly, the relationships forged between collectors and colonised peoples during those long-ago encounters in far-distant places also survive and are present every time a box is opened in a museum store and an object taken out from it.

In early 2014, the *thulou* mask was undergoing conservation work in Cambridge in preparation for an exhibition I was curating about Paul Montague, to mark the centenary of the outbreak of World War I. For many years, the mask had been housed under a staircase in the stores. Sharing this space was another mask of a similar type, purchased for the Museum by von Hügel at a London auction house in the early twentieth century. These masks were prepared for display by trainee conservators as part of their final-year research project. Weeks of careful activity had seen the trainees cleaning individual feathers and painstakingly wrapping a thin layer of delicate gauze around the masks’ human-hair top section, to try to prevent any shedding. Eventually, the time came for the two masks to be placed upon new, specially constructed mounts, so that they could be photographed.



The thulou mask acquired by Paul Montague in Hienghène, New Caledonia, in 1914, being photographed by Gwil Owen at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, in 2014. Photograph by Julie Adams.

The Museum's photographer, Gwil Owen, had set up a studio in a nearby lecture room and the first hurdle was to manoeuvre the masks out of the stores, through the gallery space, into the lift and down one floor to this makeshift studio. The conservators looked on anxiously, fussing as if the masks were celebrities on their way to a photo shoot, preening their feathers and adjusting their voluminous hair at every pause in proceedings. However, problems began as soon as we attempted to lift the masks. First, the mask collected by Paul Montague slipped out of position on its mount, lurching forward and leaving the head sitting at a precarious angle. Next, the supporting mount for the mask bought by von Hügel started to collapse, sinking dangerously close to the floor and sending a conservator diving forward, grabbing the pole to halt its descent. We paused, secured the masks back into position and considered how to proceed. But each time we tried to move them, something went wrong.

With us in the stores that day was François Wadra, the Kanak archaeologist, who was working with me on the exhibition. François whispered that the masks might be deliberately misbehaving. There might be some tension between them, he suggested. After all, they were originally from different tribal areas whose inhabitants may not have been on good terms. After years confined in too-close proximity under the stairs, he thought the masks were seizing this chance to address some long-stifled grievances.

Several hours passed before we were forced, reluctantly, to admit defeat and reschedule the photography for the following week. It was a shame, I said, that François would be back home in New Caledonia and would not be there to witness the photo shoot, but he dismissed my concerns. His presence, he thought, might not be helping. Having a Kanak visitor in the room might only be exacerbating the situation, encouraging the masks in their mischief. With him out of the way, they might calm down.

When we reconvened the following week, everything went smoothly. The masks were led placidly through the gallery and travelled in the lift like well-behaved visitors. We carried them into the lecture room and manoeuvred the first one into position. Outside term-time, the lecture room is used as a pop-up exhibition space and, at that time, its walls were hung with a display of barkcloths from across the Pacific Islands. While the mask collected by Paul Montague basked in the glare of the bright studio lights, its companion was turned away from the action. This mask, about which nothing is known before its sudden appearance in a London auction house, stood facing the wall. Averting its gaze, the mask waited patiently, contemplating a beautiful pastel-coloured barkcloth from the island of Aitutaki.



Leopold Agar Denys Montague, in spats, at home in Devon. Photographer and date unknown.

The Collecting Instinct

On 14 January 1902, the Montague family was preparing to attend a concert. A small programme survives to mark the occasion, its now-flimsy pages detailing the evening's entertainment. Slightly unusually, perhaps, the Montagues were both the concert's audience and its performers. The illustrated programme was probably made by Leopold, Paul's father. The front cover features a tree, coloured in several shades of blue and framed within an inked black border. On the back is what looks like an imagined family crest.

The first half of the evening's entertainment involved a number of musical offerings from the four Montague children. The youngest, Ruth, then aged only five, was to perform two songs, including a rendition of 'The Three Little Kittens'. After an interval, the second act consisted of a play, *Little Red Riding Hood*, written by Leopold. The list of characters suggests that his version of the classic fairytale diverged creatively from the original. Paul, then aged 12, was cast in the role of a Mrs Jink. His older sister Zoe, aged 14, was to play the Fairy of the Glade, while his brother David, aged eight, was the wolf. Ruth was Little Red Riding Hood.

Playwriting was one of a multitude of tasks to which Leopold Agar Denys Montague could turn his hand. A published author of children's books and plays, he had originally been an army man, serving in the Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry cavalry regiment until his marriage to Amy Lind in 1886.

Leopold's father bought his son out of the army after his wedding, believing it was inappropriate for married men to work. As a result, Leopold was fortunate enough to have the time and resources to indulge his passions, of which there were many. He was an amateur archaeologist who played an important role in the excavations of Roman Exeter. He was an avid committee joiner and an historian of the Devon region, where he lived all his life. He was a talented wood carver, creating furniture for the family home, Penton, in the market town of Crediton. A number of his carvings have been retained by the family, including two beautiful,



Programme from a Montague family concert, 1902.



Leopold and Amy Montague, around the time of their marriage in 1886. Photograph by E. Denney & Company, Exeter.

sturdy chairs with intricate scrollwork backs. One has the name 'Amy' carved into it and the other, 'Leopold'.

Above all else, though, Leopold was a collector. At the age of ten, he had become an enthusiastic numismatist (collector of currency). Later, as he got older, his interests

expanded to include the collection of gems, amulets and seals, as well as Greek, Roman and Egyptian antiquities. After his death in 1940, some 800 items from his collection were bequeathed to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter. Today, a small part of this collection is on display in the Museum's 'Finders Keepers?' gallery. An exhibition label sums up his achievements: 'Leopold Agar Denys Montague: Soldier, author and antiquities collector'. An accompanying photograph shows Leopold sitting at home, in one of the rooms at Penton. In the black-and-white image, he looks up from reading a book to stare at the camera. He appears to be wearing spats and is seated in a chair that he probably carved himself. He is surrounded by photographs of his children.

For many years, Leopold wrote a column called 'The Collector's Room' for *The Bazaar Exchange and Mart*. This cheap newspaper was a ubiquitous presence in British homes in the early twentieth century. Now better known as a means of trading secondhand cars, in earlier times it functioned as a space where anonymous buyers and sellers could trade in exotic curios, rare plants, boats and children's toys – anything and everything was for sale. The paper has been credited with democratising the world of collecting. It was, in a sense, a non-digital precursor to eBay.¹

Realising that there was a burgeoning market in 'ethnographical specimens', Leopold dedicated a number of his columns to the subject. In particular, he wrote giving advice to the 'growing fraternity' who were fascinated by traditional weapons, such as clubs and spears. Finding that there was little literature dedicated to such items, he decided to refashion his columns and, in 1921, published them in book form under the title *Weapons and Implements of Savage Races*. Despite the unfortunate title, Leopold hoped to showcase the skill and aesthetic sensibilities of non-Western cultures. In the introduction he muses on what he believes to be a universal human interest in weapons:

To most of us, whether we have the collecting instinct or not, there is a peculiar fascination connected with the strange weapons ... coming from the less civilized parts of the world ... These curious clubs of polished wood, spears barbed with human bones, and swords edged with sharks' teeth take us mentally to the coral islands of the Pacific, and call up reminiscences of many a tale of adventure in the South Seas; whilst the sight of African fetishes, war knives and throwing spears instantly transports an imaginative individual to the mysterious forests of the Dark Continent, suggesting perils encountered by Stanley and other explorers, human sacrifices, and what not.²

The book's title page states that the publication is 'fully illustrated by the author from specimens mostly in his collection'. And, indeed, Leopold had begun to acquire ethnographic weapons for himself. Soon the walls at Penton were no longer visible, submerged beneath spears and clubs from around the world, including Fiji, Angola, Tonga, Nigeria, New Zealand, Somaliland and Australia.

The book's chapters on Australia and New Caledonia refer to specific weapons that, Leopold remarks with fatherly pride, were collected and 'brought home by my son, the late P.D. Montague'. If part of his ambition for this book was to create a legacy for his son's work, then Leopold was not alone in this sentiment.

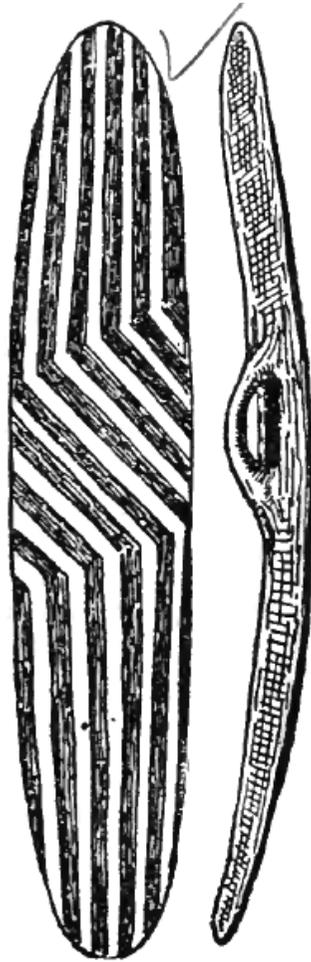


FIG. 24.—Shield bought from a Native at Onslow, West Australia.

*A page from Leopold Montague's 1921 publication, *Weapons and Implements of Savage Races*, showing a shield collected by Paul in Onslow, Western Australia and now in the collections of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter.*

For the Montague family, as for millions of others, the conventional trajectory of heirlooms – as things that are handed down from a predecessor to a descendant – had been disrupted and reversed as a result of World War I. Tragically and unexpectedly, Leopold found himself inheriting objects, photographs, documents – all the ephemera that make up a life – from his son. He clearly felt an onerous responsibility to try to ensure that Paul's work was not forgotten and that his collection would contribute to the newly established discipline of anthropology.

Letter from
Leopold
Montague to
Baron Anatole
von Hügel, dated
15 November
1918.

Penton,
Crediton,
N. Devon.

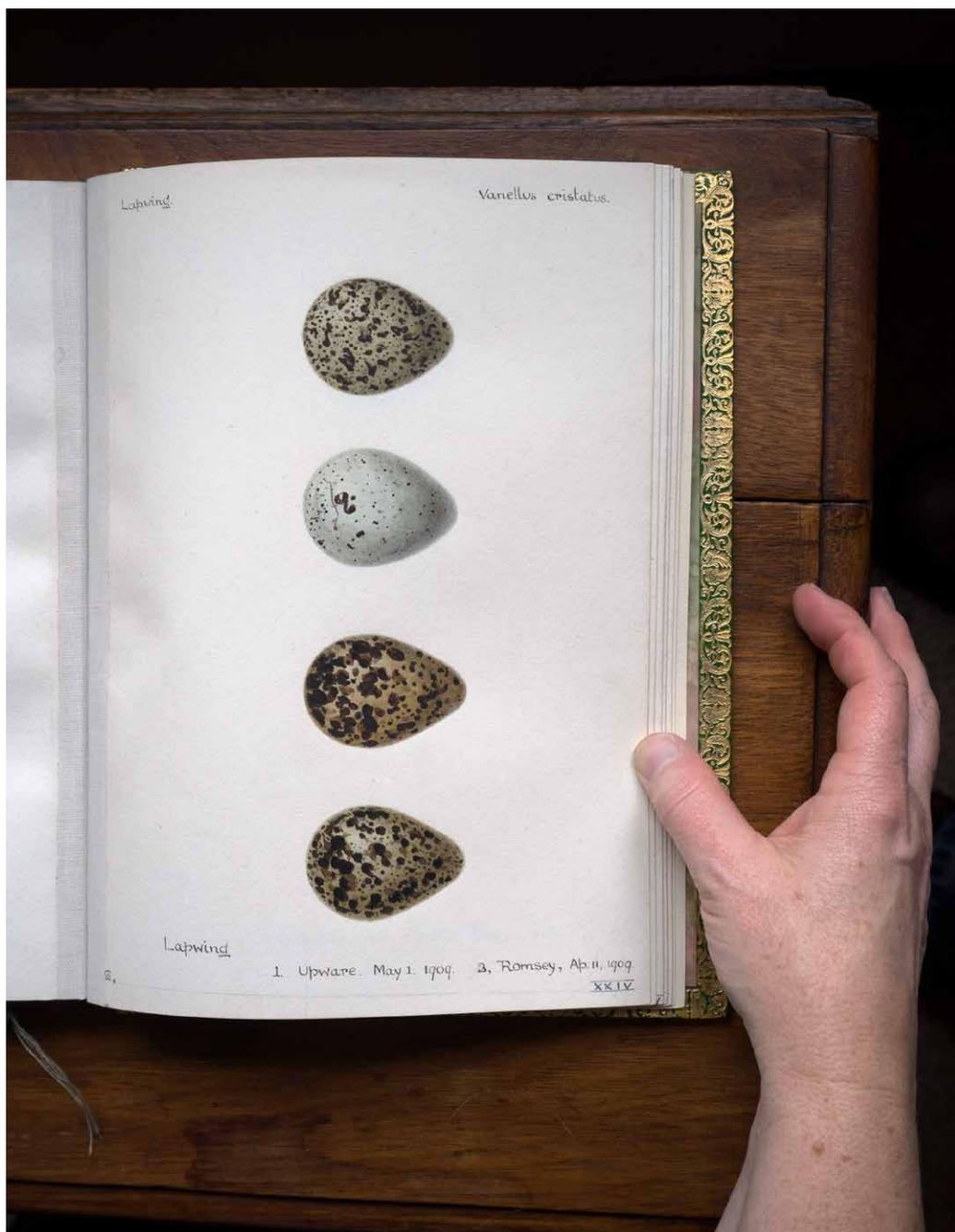
Novr. 15th 1918.

Dear Sir,

I understand from Professor Haddon that you are cataloguing the collection of New Caledonian ethnographical specimens brought home by my late son P. D. Montague, and require illustrations made from some of them. If this is so, I shall be pleased to make drawings of any you may care to send me, and will be responsible for

As a collector, Leopold's first thought was to turn to the comfort of material things. He would, he decided, contact the Museum in Cambridge and offer his assistance to the curator and keeper of Paul's acquisitions. On 15 November 1918, just four days after the war's end, Leopold wrote to Baron von Hügel, proposing to make illustrations of Paul's New Caledonian collections. If the Museum would agree to send the objects to Devon, he would take responsibility for covering all the associated costs and charge nothing for his time. It was all he could think of to do.

Leopold's letter has survived and is carefully filed among the pages of the 1918 'letter box', in the Cambridge archive room. Hoping to find a response, I scoured the books of outgoing correspondence for the year 1918, looking for von Hügel's answer to Leopold's plaintive request. Seeing nothing, I continued into 1919 and then beyond, but could find no trace of a reply.



Lapwing eggs collected and painted by Paul Montague in 1909. Photograph by Mark Adams, 2017.

Questions of Science

It might seem that Paul Montague inherited the ‘collecting instinct’ from his father. However, if one doubts that such traits are transmitted through bloodlines, perhaps it might be more accurate to say that he had been imbued with a collector’s instinct, via some kind of genealogical osmosis. Growing up at Penton, he was surrounded by objects but, more than that, he was surrounded by displays of objects. The family home bulged with coins, seals and smaller objects laid out in table-top cases, while clubs, shields and spears covered the walls. Collections were an ever-present feature of the Montague home and they permeated Paul’s senses. Unlike his father, however, Paul’s particular interest was the natural world.

As a child, Paul and his younger brother David were avid oologists. Oology – the study and collection of bird eggs and nests – was a popular pursuit in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and children were encouraged to take it up as a way of spending time outdoors in the fresh air. A small photograph album, marked in pencil with David’s initials, is one of the only possessions to survive from his short life. It is filled with black-and-white photographs of birds. Some of the pictures in David’s album mirror those belonging to Paul, so the two brothers must have shared the hobby and worked together on it. One such duplicated image is of two eggs in the nest of a stone curlew. Photographed by the brothers from slightly different angles, the images are dated 1910, when David would have just turned 16 and Paul was home from Cambridge for the summer. Another duplicate photo shows a swan sitting on its nest, its wings gracefully arced, its head tilting away from the brothers and the intrusive gaze of their cameras. The shine of the silver gelatin print is still luminous, despite its age.

For David and Paul, as for many, oology was motivated by a scientific curiosity and they carried it out with serious purpose as well as youthful enthusiasm. Having taken an egg from a nest, collectors would make a hole in the shell and place it to their lips, blowing firmly to destroy and void its contents. The rarer the bird, the more desirable and the more



A swan on its nest. Photograph by David Montague, c.1910.

valuable their eggs – and the more endangered the birds became. The unfortunate and destructive consequences of the removal of eggs from their nests was seen as a necessary, unavoidable, part of the endeavour.

By the early decades of the twentieth century, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds was arguing that there was a link between the activities of oologists and declining bird numbers in Britain, and the hobby became discredited. Despite protestations from fanatical oologists, who argued that the removal of eggs merely prompted the birds to lay another clutch, the taking of wild birds' eggs was made illegal in 1954. Today, oology's reputation remains tarnished, the practice incomprehensible to contemporary ornithologists. Ironically, however, the vast collections of eggs amassed by those early collectors are now an important scientific resource, providing researchers and conservationists with insights into birds and their nesting habits.

In Britain, the largest early oological collections are housed in the Natural History Museum's display and research facilities at Tring in Hertfordshire. Their founding collection includes some 200,000 birds' eggs that formerly belonged to Lionel Walter, the second Baron Rothschild. Walter, as he preferred to be known, eschewed the business of banking that had made his family enormously wealthy, and instead devoted his time to amassing zoological specimens. In 1892, aged 24, he opened his own museum at Tring to make his collections accessible to the public. Walter was particularly interested in the cassowary, the large, flightless bird native to northern Australia and New Guinea. He was also fond of zebras, which he trained to pull him around in his carriage, and was once photographed riding on the back of a giant tortoise while wearing a top hat.¹

Following his death in 1937, he bequeathed his collections, the museum buildings and the land on which they stood to the Natural History Museum. Throughout his life, Walter remained a fervent oologist and helped to found the Jourdain Society, which dedicated its time to defending the actions of oologists against the onslaught



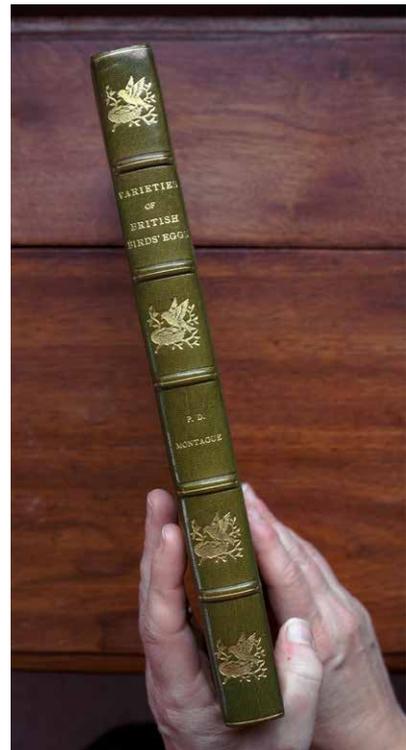
Lionel Walter Rothschild (1868-1937) and his zebra-drawn carriage. Photographer and date unknown.

of early twentieth-century criticism. Oology was responsible for the near-extinction of many species before it was outlawed and, even after that, members of the Jourdain Society refused to accept the new regulations and continued to acquire eggs, risking imprisonment and large fines. These men were able to perform questionable feats of intellectual disconnect, compartmentalising their passion for the study of birds from the catastrophic consequences of their actions. The thrill of collecting was everything.

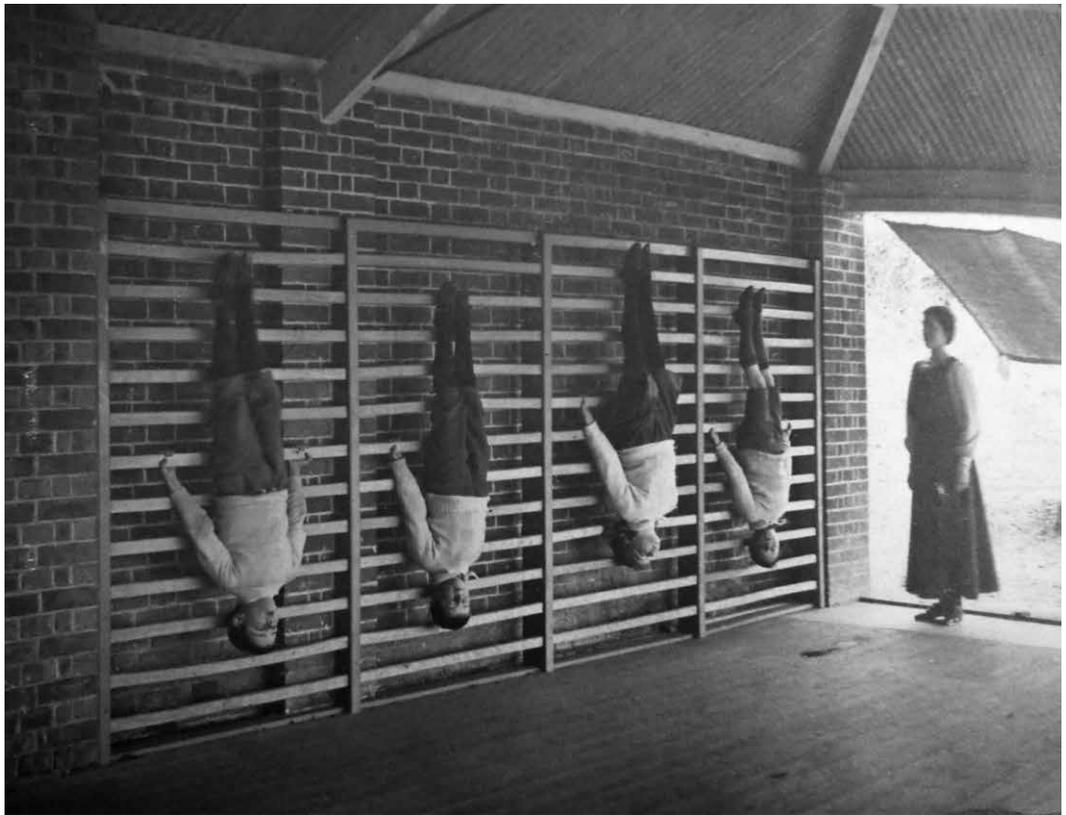
Paul was a great bird lover but even his own modest collection would have involved him taking entire clutches of eggs from nests. Yet, as he saw it, the rationale for his actions was no less than the advancement of Western scientific knowledge. From a young age, he was *au fait* with the process of removing items from their context for the purposes of study and research, reproducing each egg he collected as a delicate watercolour that would have required hours of effort. Later, he bound these illustrations together to create a slim, smart, leather volume. He gave it a title in gold lettering along the spine: *Varieties of British Birds' Eggs* by P.D. Montague.

The pages include multiple illustrations of the eggs of each species. The illustrations are labelled: the species name is given in English and repeated in Latin, along with the details of where and when the eggs were found. 'Herring Gull. Michistone, off Boscastle. May 17th 1909' reads one entry, beneath three beautiful images of speckled gull's eggs, two pale brown and one shiny blue-grey.

It was through oology that Paul learned how to assemble and order his own collections and how to present what he had learned to others. When he became a pupil at Bedales School, he gave lectures on birds which were thoughtfully structured and illustrated using lantern slides of photographs he had taken himself. He took along specimens of eggs that could be passed around the audience for careful examination. It was through his passion for birds that Paul began to explore the relationship between art and aesthetics and science and nature and to think about curating. These ideas and interests chimed perfectly with Bedales' distinctive philosophy.



Varieties of British Birds' Eggs by P.D. Montague. Photograph by Mark Adams, 2017.



Seeing the world differently – a Bedales' gym class c.1908. Photographer unknown.

Work of Each for Weal of All

When John Haden Badley opened Bedales School in 1893, he was aged 28 and utterly disillusioned with the British education system. Public schools like Rugby and Eton, he felt, were fixated on the classics, while their deeply authoritarian regimes fostered a self-interested, competitive spirit. His vision was to create an environment where children were encouraged to think differently. He gave Bedales its motto: 'Work of each for weal of all'. (Weal, in this context, means 'well-being'.) So, while independent thinking was admired and encouraged, it was not to be pursued to the detriment of others.

For Badley, education required the application of 'head, heart and hand'. His focus was on 'the development of creative intelligence ... intellectual and emotional tendencies and the formation of interests, purposes and ideals'.¹ The interests he expected his pupils to pursue were radical for the time. Boys, as well as girls, should learn to cook and sew, and all pupils should undertake gardening and farm work: bees, cows and chickens were kept, fruit was grown and milk was churned. An aptitude for music was highly valued, as was the ability to draw accurately, while classes in bookbinding were offered. There were fixed times 'for attending to the daily bodily needs' and the daily routine began each morning with a cold sponge bath. Physical exercise was considered vital for good health so most afternoons were spent outdoors.



Learning to dance at Bedales, c.1908. Photographer unknown.

Even if the weather was bad, boys could box and girls fence in the School's covered quadrangle. All pupils had dance lessons so that they would be able to participate in social occasions 'without discomfort to themselves or others'.²

In a photograph, taken sometime around 1908, a Bedales gym class is in full swing. Hanging upside down from the bars, the boys resemble skydivers caught in that first freefalling moment before their parachutes open. Frozen in mid-air, and frozen in time, they seem to be manifesting Badley's ambitions for his pupils to see the world from a different perspective.

Unsurprisingly, not everyone appreciated what Badley was trying to achieve. Indeed, Bedales might not have survived its early years without the relatively large contingent of pupils from mainland Europe and Badley's decision to admit girls from 1898. In those years, parents who opted to send their children to Bedales were widely regarded as being 'cranks and simple-lifers and socialists'.³

Leopold and Amy Montague hardly fitted any of those criteria yet they chose to send Paul and, even more unusually, their eldest daughter Zoe, to be educated there. In 1900, when the siblings arrived, Zoe would have been one of only nine girls. In fact, Zoe's Bedales experience did not last long and she quickly transferred to a school nearer home in Devon. It is not clear whether she wanted to leave or was withdrawn by her parents, but the many challenging and austere aspects of Bedales life may have been a factor. A family story recalls Leopold and Amy's shock at seeing a gaunt and dishevelled Zoe returning home for the holidays following a term at Bedales. But, despite her departure, Paul stayed on and thrived.



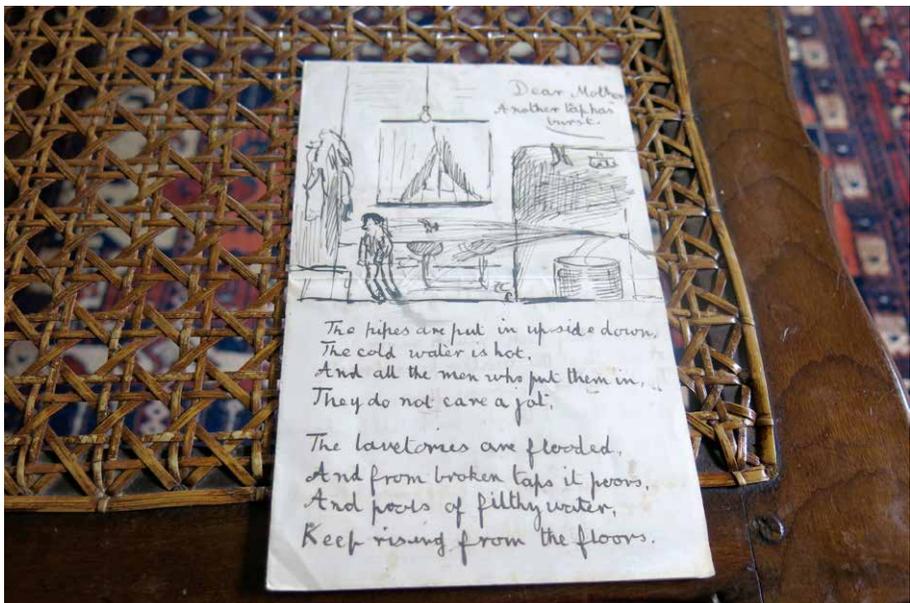
*Zoe and Paul Montague,
c.1896. Photographer unknown*

When the Montague children arrived, the School had recently moved into new premises on the slopes of the North Downs. The buildings were still a work in progress – snow drifted down corridors as there was no roof in places, and there was a notable absence of heating. Paul captured the bleak conditions in a poem he sent home to his mother. Illustrated by a sketch of a forlorn-looking child, shivering in a bathroom, the poem begins:

The pipes are put in upside down
The cold water is hot
And all the men who put them in
They do not care a jot!

In 1907, the School launched its own newspaper. The *Bedaes Chronicle* included contributions from staff and students and its pages captured the mundane and the magnificence of school life.

Recently, the School's archivist, Jane Kirby, has been digitising the *Chronicle's* early editions and through its columns a vivid impression of Paul emerges.⁴ At Bedales, he was known as Pauly and his involvement in school activities was prodigious. Pauly was a key member of the Scientific Society, giving lectures on birds. He was also a regular participant in the Debating Society, shamelessly resorting to jokes and witty interjections in an attempt to sway the audience. He was musical, playing the violin in the school orchestra, and enjoyed sports of all kinds. Most of all, however, he was known for his contributions to the infamous Bedales 'Merry Evenings'. These evenings consisted of concerts, plays and sketches written and performed by the pupils for



Letter written by Paul Montague to his mother Amy, c.1901.

the amusement of staff and students alike. The *Chronicle* records many such 'Merry Evenings' and Pauly's inimitable contributions to them. In an issue dated July 1908, there is even a poem that exudes anticipation and excitement about his latest exploits. Titled 'On the Rumour of a New Play by P.D.M.', the first verse reads:

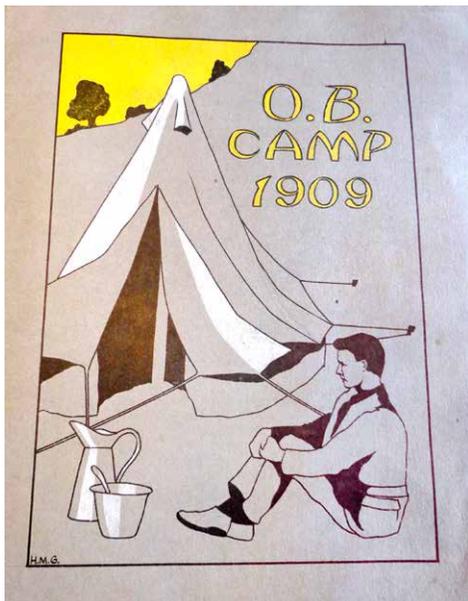
Friends, I heard a rumour new
That P.D.M. has writ for you
Such a play! If this be true,
Come, render thanks to Montague.
For Pauly's plays
On Saturdays
Are finest of all;
Then let us pray,
Give us the play
If it's composed by Paul.

Ten years later, in March 1918, when the news of Paul's death had been confirmed, the *Chronicle's* front page editorial mourned him and paid him this tribute: 'No Bedalian has had a greater share in building the best traditions of the School'. For John Haden Badley, the loss of so many former pupils in the war was devastating. He had anticipated that their connections to Bedales would endure and that they would become role models for the next generation of its students.

By this stage, some Old Bedalians, or OBs, as they were known, had established their own summer camps, as well as organising other reunions. Such get-togethers perpetuated Bedalian traditions of outdoor sports and music, and always culminated in a 'Merry Evening'. It was a way of maintaining friendships and reliving shared

experiences. Badley encouraged them, often attending himself to foster enduring relationships and demonstrate his commitment to the idea of Bedales as a family.

In August 1915, Paul Montague attended what would turn out to be his last OB gathering. A summary was published in the *Chronicle* and its undercurrents make disturbing reading. The paper reports that Pauly was in exuberant form. During the day, he contributed a lecture on birds, performed folksongs on a lute that he had recently made himself, executed witty parodies of teachers, and had



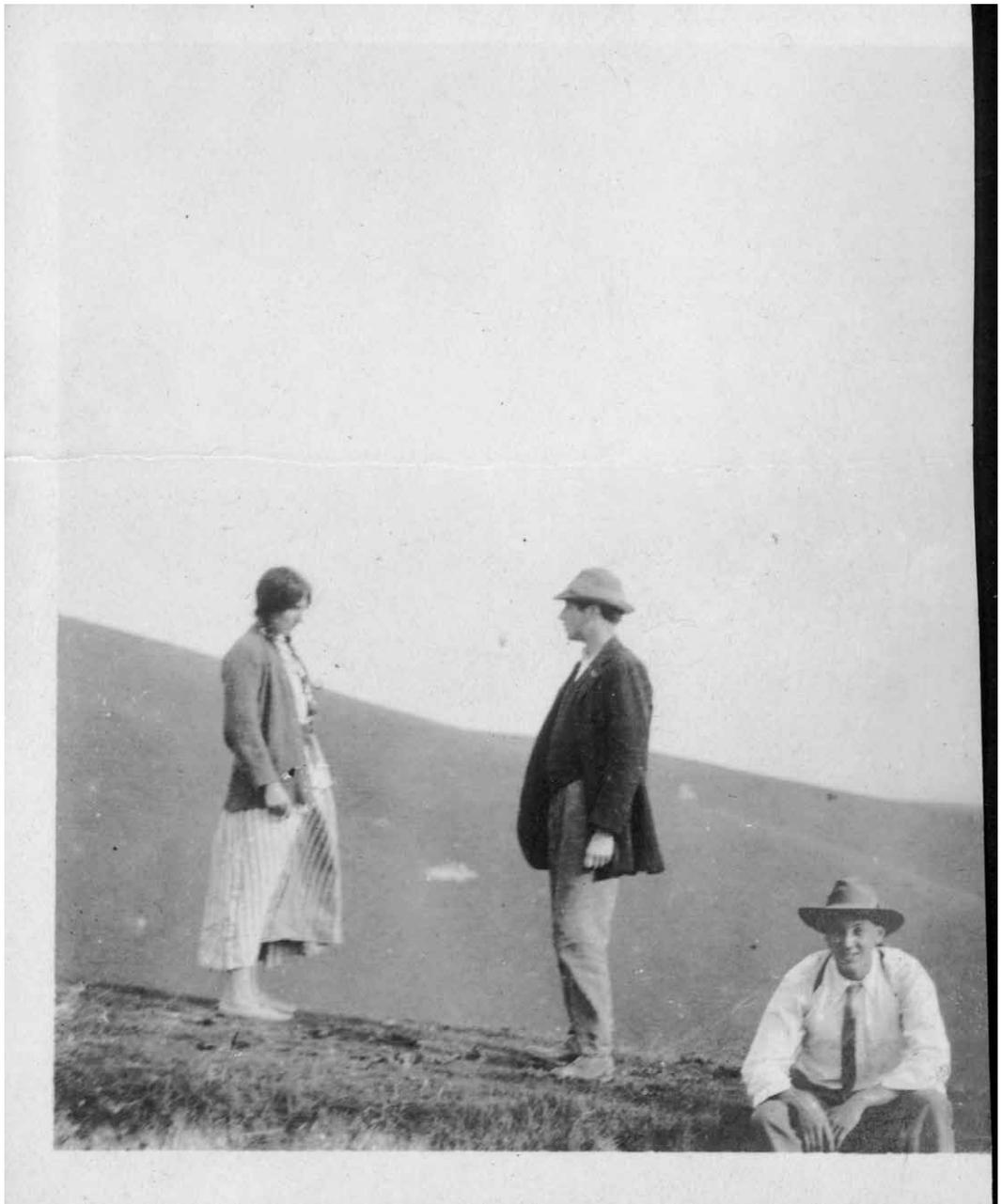
Front cover of the record of the Old Bedalians' Summer Camp, 1909.



Pauly Montague in his Bedales school uniform. Photographer and date unknown.

a starring role in the evening's dramatic production. It was only five months since his younger brother, David, had been killed in action in France at the age of 20. Reading between the lines of the *Chronicle's* account, a sense of foreboding seems to have permeated Pauly's character. His exaggerated 'howls and [his] fall down the stairs of the stage' suggest an air of recklessness, of mania almost, as does the frantic 'wild savage dances' he performed in the Old Hall after tea. It is difficult to escape the feeling that the catastrophic consequences of the war were beginning to unsettle these young Bedalians.

Like the boys photographed in the School's gym, Pauly may have felt himself freefalling into a future that was spinning out of his control. The world he had known had been turned upside down.



*A photograph belonging to Pauly Montague that has been cut in two.
Photographer and date unknown, c.1910.*

The Severed Photograph

In January 2015, one of Paul Montague's nieces, Susan Blacker, came to the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. She brought with her a selection of Paul's personal possessions that the family still treasures. These mementoes of Paul's life include an old violin, now carefully restored and in the care of a musically talented member of the family; the top section of a lute that Paul had inlaid with decorative tiles, and a large bundle of photographs wrapped in brown paper. The photographs were mostly uncaptioned and the people they featured mostly unremembered.

One image in particular caught my eye because, intriguingly, it appeared to have been cut in half and one section apparently lost. The surviving part of the picture shows three figures in a landscape. A man, crouching towards the front of the shot, is smiling at the camera. But the other two figures, a man and a woman, face towards each other and away from the lens. The woman's head is lowered, her gaze averted from the man, who looks intently at her. Why, I asked Susan, might the picture have been cut in two? Was it that Paul had only wanted to remember the people shown? Or perhaps, she replied, he had been trying to forget whatever had been in the other half of the image – meaning the act of cutting was a deliberate act of excision. I asked Susan if she recognised any of the



Susan Blacker, Paul Montague's niece, holding a lute made by Paul, on her visit to Cambridge in January 2015. Photograph by Julie Adams.

people in the image but she did not. Still, there was something curious and compelling about this severed photograph and the stories that it suggested.

By the summer of 1911, Paul Montague had become part of a group known as the Neo-Pagans, which counted the poet Rupert Brooke among its members. Paul had left Bedales two years earlier to go up to Cambridge to study Natural Sciences. The *Bedales Chronicle* reported that, on the day of his departure, as the cab pulled away down the drive, Bedalian pupils and staff alike ‘cheered him off from dormitory and classroom windows’, adding that Paul’s absence would be of ‘great regret to the whole school’.

After settling in at Cambridge, however, Paul’s life continued much as it had. Indeed, many of his former schoolmates were now his fellow undergraduates. The *Chronicle* even carried a regular column called ‘OBs at Cambridge’, which kept current pupils up to date with the exploits of their predecessors.

Included in an edition of the *Chronicle* from November 1910 is a report of an OB afternoon tea held in John Layard’s rooms at King’s College, Cambridge. Layard, who went on to become a highly regarded anthropologist, was a talented musician who had played cello alongside Pauly in the Bedales orchestra. Paul was there that day for tea, along with 12 other Old Bedalians. The group had chosen Layard’s rooms as they were the largest, but the number of guests soon exhausted his supply of crockery and Layard was forced to leave the party to scavenge additional cups from his neighbours.

Among the group waiting for tea to be served were Barbara Lupton and Helen Vinogradski, both OBs now studying at Newnham College. Although Newnham had been one of the first Cambridge colleges to admit women, their attendance at the tea was only possible due to the presence of an official college chaperone. The chaperone, so the *Chronicle* reports, found the occasion rather an ordeal. She was quite on edge, never sure what ‘Pauly was going to say next’ or whether it was ‘quite proper for the girls to address their host as “Skinny”’.

Unlike the zealous chaperone, Bedalians were relaxed and comfortable in each other’s company. At school, they had been encouraged to be confident around the opposite sex, to be confident in their own bodies and to focus on developing friendships that were meant to be asexual. Headmaster John Badley ‘seems genuinely to have believed that sexuality would be defused and that, in adolescence, boys and girls would remain just good friends.’¹ Badley’s particular educational model was unorthodox in many ways, but never more so than in its vision of gender relations, a vision which he pursued with a determined *naïveté*. In his writings, Badley extolled ‘wholesomeness, cleanliness and naturalness’ as the keys to success for coeducation. For him, ‘warm affection and comradeship were natural’, while feelings of a sexual nature were unnatural. Sexual feelings were ‘dealt with by ridicule, by calling them “silly”, but fundamentally they were viewed with distaste.’² Close friendships between the sexes were encouraged and were as much a part of Bedalian life as fresh air, camping out, climbing, naked swimming and a love of nature.

For all these reasons and more, Bedales stood apart from traditional English public schools such as Rugby or Eton. And the Old Bedalians stood apart too. Whether at Cambridge or Oxford, OBs tended to gravitate towards each other, forming groups that were remarkable in their social ease. They appeared glamorous and exotic and, when they got together, they enacted a bohemian Bedalianism that proved hugely attractive to others.



A photograph belonging to Pauly Montague which shows a group of Old Bedalians on a climbing trip to the Lake District. Photographer and date unknown.

Two OBs who were already well established in Cambridge by the time of Paul Montague's arrival were Justin Brooke³, whose father had founded the Brooke Bond tea business, and Jacques Raverat, an artist and the son of a French businessman. In October 1906, the two young men had befriended Rupert Brooke, soon after he arrived in Cambridge to read classics at King's College.⁴ Through them, Brooke became enamoured of the Bedales philosophy, drawn to its lack of regard for convention and its carefree spirit. Everything about it was gloriously antithetical to his own conservative upbringing and Rugby schooling. He took up camping, relished swimming without clothes and cultivated an interest in the natural world. He wrote of his new lifestyle: 'I wander about bare foot and almost naked, surveying Nature with a calm eye. I do not pretend to understand Nature, but I get on very well with her, in a neighbourly way'.⁵

In the summer of 1909, Brooke decided to relocate to the picturesque village of Grantchester, three miles outside Cambridge. There he endeavoured to become more Bedalian than the OBs themselves, boasting to friends: 'I ... wander in the woods or by the river. I bathe every morning and sometimes by moonlight, have all my meals (chiefly fruit) brought to me out of doors, and am as happy as the day's long'.⁶ Brooke, whose physical beauty had already secured his reputation as something of a Cambridge celebrity, came to epitomise a romantic, idealised, Bedalian way of life. His social circle expanded to include ever more OBs, including Pauly, and the whole group was given the nickname 'the Neo-Pagans' by Virginia Stephen (later Woolf).

Woolf, who would subsequently write of her irritation with the whole Neo-Pagan enterprise, claimed Rupert was to blame for the vast number of young people walking about Cambridge barefoot and ‘sharing his passion for bathing.’⁷ Notwithstanding this complaint, Virginia herself briefly succumbed to the allure of Neo-Paganism and one evening swam naked with Rupert at Grantchester.

As the OBs matured and morphed into Neo-Pagans, however, the intense but asexual friendships they had forged at school became more and more difficult to maintain. Badley’s utopian vision bred a legacy of confused innocence in his former pupils, which made the transition to adulthood both fraught and frightening. Very few of the group had managed to negotiate the realities of a sexual relationship.

Rupert Brooke had already begun to be frustrated with the impotence of this aspect of Neo-Paganism when, in May 1908, he met and fell in love with a young Bedalian named Noël Olivier. Noël was the embodiment of the School’s ethos – she was independent, intelligent and a great lover of the outdoors. With her three like-minded sisters, the Olivier girls established themselves at the centre of the Neo-Pagan group, organising camping trips and walking holidays and becoming the focus for many of the romantic intrigues and intimacies that began to entangle them. Although she was attracted to Rupert, Noël found the intensity of the feelings he declared to have for her overwhelming. Although they would later become secretly engaged, she was never comfortable with his turbulent outbursts and it appears as though she would have preferred a Bedalian-style courtship of comrades.⁸

Pauly Montague, who had known her first, was also secretly in love with Noël Olivier. For years, until it was pointless to do so any longer, he played by the Bedales’ rules, keeping his emotions in check and not causing a scene.

Noël Olivier is almost certainly the woman who appears in the severed photograph that Paul kept in his collection of memorabilia. Her hair is plaited in the way she liked to wear it and her posture is slightly rounded at the shoulders, as it is in other photographs. The man crouching at the forefront may be Justin Brooke, a good friend of both Paul and Rupert, and a key member of the Neo-Pagan set. The identity of the man who has turned to face Noël is less certain. It could be Rupert Brooke – there is



*Noël Olivier, c.1909.
Photographer unknown.*

definitely something of a physical resemblance. The man who may be Rupert stares at Noël. The camera, which is probably being operated by Paul, stares at them both. Noël looks intently at the ground and meets the gaze of neither.

If it really is Rupert Brooke in the half-remaining image, then this photograph is surely an important addition to the known corpus of Brooke images, especially given the presence of Noël Olivier in the same shot. Perhaps, hereafter, it will enjoy a new afterlife, appearing in one of the many books that continue to be written about Brooke, remembering, mourning and mythologising the beautiful, talented young poet whose potential was cut short by war.

In many ways, Paul Montague and Rupert Brooke led parallel lives that were only briefly intertwined. But unlike Brooke, whose poetry made him famous after his death, Paul's life has gone largely unremembered. Like the missing part of the photograph, his once-vibrant presence has been excised and he has slipped from our view.



Noël Olivier, Maitland Radford, Virginia Stephen [Woolf] and Rupert Brooke at the Clifford Bridge Camp, 1911. Photographer unknown.

Dining-Room Tea

In August 1911, Virginia Woolf (then still Virginia Stephen) set out to join a Neo-Pagan camp at Clifford Bridge on the edge of Dartmoor National Park. It was an eight-mile walk from the nearest train station and she and her companion, Kathleen Cox, were exhausted by the time they reached their destination in the late afternoon. When the two women arrived in camp, however, they found it deserted – the campers, including Paul Montague, having trekked over to the town of Crediton to visit his family and take afternoon tea at their home, Penton.¹

Virginia's decision to leave the order and comfort of her London life to join a camping expedition in Devon epitomised the growing friendship between members of the Neo-Pagan group and the 'Bloomsbury Set' of writers, artists and intellectuals. That summer of 1911 is often referred to as their 'summer of love'.²

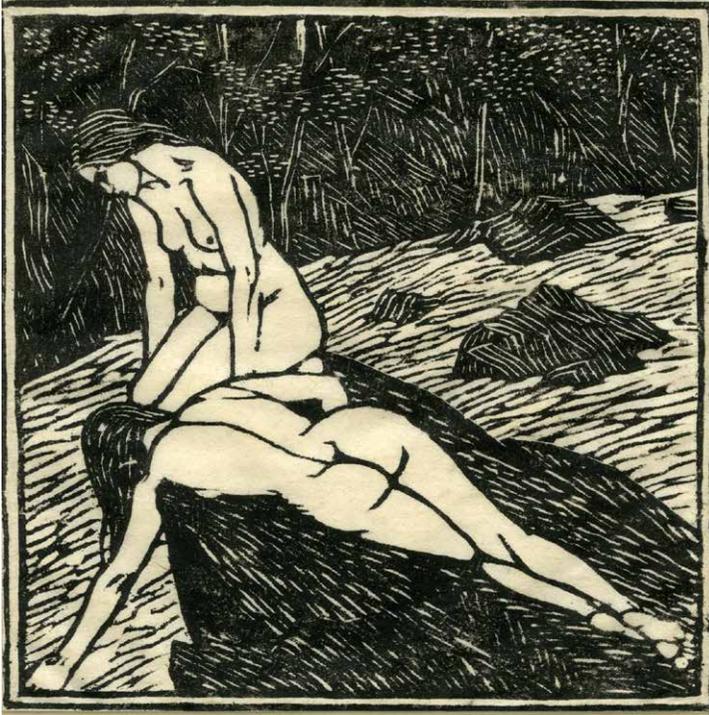
In early August, Virginia had gone to stay with Rupert Brooke in Grantchester and it was during this visit that the two swam naked together in Byron's Pool. The painter Duncan Grant also visited Grantchester, and Lytton Strachey – the archetypal Bloomsburyite – temporarily took up lodgings in Cambridge. By then, as his frustrations with Noël Olivier grew, Rupert had become infatuated with Kathleen Cox. Kathleen (known as Ka) was friends with Virginia and it was Ka's idea that the two groups spend time together at Clifford Bridge.

The prospect of 'Bloomsbury under canvas' did not appeal to everyone.³ Lytton Strachey had no intention of camping, preferring to stay in nearby lodgings instead. Lytton's brother, James, who was in love with Rupert, spent one 'miserable night under a bush, wrapped in a blanket' before finding alternative accommodation. The economist and Bloomsbury member, John Maynard Keynes, on the other hand, was a convert to camp life and wrote to his father with the news: 'The hard ground, a morning bathe, the absence of fresh food, and no chairs, don't make one nearly so ill as one would suppose'.⁴

For 18 days, the campers hiked, swam, talked, argued, laughed and ate together. Brynhild Olivier, one of Noël's sisters, was in charge of the cooking and in the evenings after dinner Paul entertained the group, playing Elizabethan songs on the gittern he had handcrafted himself. Inevitable outbreaks of tension and bickering could not spoil what was a glorious, magical time.

Gwen Raverat, granddaughter of Charles Darwin and a talented artist, captured the essence of these Neo-Pagan camps in her wood engravings. In one, titled *Women Bathing*, two women have removed their clothes and are sitting on a rock in the middle of a river. The pair seem oblivious to the world around them and are instead absorbed in the sensory pleasure of the flowing water; one has stretched out a hand, to feel it running over her skin. Although created some years later, the image harks back to the carefree, liberated days when the Neo-Pagans embraced nudity and nature in equal measure.

As early as 1909, Rupert Brooke had attempted to set down in writing a form of 'Neo-Pagan manifesto'.⁵ In a letter to Jacques Raverat, his close friend and key member of the group, Brooke proclaimed that the Neo-Pagans would 'be children seventy-years,



Women Bathing
by Gwen Raverat,
1920.



Penton – the Montague family home, c.1950.

instead of seven'. They would '*live* Romance, not *talk* of it' and they would embrace their time on earth, finding a haven in 'Laughter and Bodies and Flowers and Love and People and Sun and Wind', rather than deferring pleasure to a 'pale serene' Christian heaven.⁶ Ultimately, this utopian vision was never fully realised but, in August 1911, the Clifford Bridge campers did their best to be true to its spirit.

On the day of Virginia's arrival in camp, when the group had hiked to Crediton to take tea, Leopold Montague was not at home so Paul's mother Amy, assisted by his younger sister Ruth, hosted the campers in the family's grand dining room.

The summer afternoon was warm and the atmosphere was filled with laughter and the jokes of friends. At some point, Rupert removed himself from the group and sat down in a quiet corner to write. The poem, which he called 'Dining-Room Tea', evokes the pleasure he felt in that moment, surrounded by those he loved. It begins:

When you were there, and you, and you,
Happiness crowned the night; I too,
Laughing and looking, one of all,
I watched the quivering lamplight fall
On plate and flowers and pouring tea
And cup and cloth; and they and we
Flung all the dancing moments by
With jest and glitter. Lip and eye
Flashed on the glory, shone and cried,
Improvident, unmemoried;
And fitfully and like a flame
The light of laughter went and came.
Proud in their careless transience moved
The changing faces that I loved.⁷

'Dining-Room Tea' remains one of Brooke's most popular works. Its poignant attempt to both still and distill time – to mark that which 'went and came' as 'unmemoried', not yet consigned to the past tense of 'loved' – underscores the fragility of happiness and its fleeting presence in a world of 'changing faces'. No wonder, perhaps, that subsequent generations of readers have been struck by its magic.

At the end of that summer afternoon in 1911, Amy Montague suggested the group visit Crediton Fair to see a production of a play. Afterwards, as dusk fell, the Neo-Pagans finally headed back to camp and the waiting Virginia.

More than a century after that summer of love, in August 2015, Paul's niece, June Alexander, offered to take me to visit Penton. Aged 92, June had not been back to the house since its sale in the 1950s following the death of her grandmother, Amy. Unfortunately, the prospect of our visit had resulted in sleepless nights for June; she was worried that she was spending more time thinking about the past than the present. Penton, and memories of her childhood, had begun to 'haunt' her, she said.

At the house, we were greeted by the current owners, Roy and Anne Webber. Roy had inherited the house from his father, Maurice, who had himself purchased the property from the Montagues. Finding the house too large to manage, Maurice had divided it



*June Alexander,
Paul Montague's
niece, walking in the
grounds of Penton
in August 2015.
Photograph by Julie
Adams.*

in two, selling off part of the property to raise funds. Today, Roy and Anne continue to live in one half, which they have renamed The Beeches. The dining room where Rupert Brooke wrote his poem is in the part of the house they sold off. Nevertheless, Roy revealed, they are frequently contacted by Brooke enthusiasts, asking to visit the property, keen to absorb the atmosphere that inspired Rupert's poetic imagination. The visit by Paul's niece, June, was the first time they had welcomed back a member of the Montague family, and they served up tea and cakes in her honour.

Sitting in what had once been the Montagues' formal lounge, the Webbers seemed to be dwarfed by the vast architecture they were inhabiting. As we drank our tea, Roy, Anne and June began to talk about the past, and stories and memories began to flow. As all three suffer from poor hearing, I attempted to facilitate the conversation by loudly repeating what one person had said so that the others might hear it. However, after a few confused minutes, I gave up and let the fragments of various disconnected statements float between us.

After tea, we walked through the grounds to the old stables and June pointed out a loft where Paul had once built a small boat. For its inaugural voyage, he took members of the family out on a nearby lake, whereupon the boat sank almost immediately. Only his mother Amy remained unconcerned and, as the voluminous folds of her dress ballooned out in the water, she floated serenely back to shore. As we stood looking up at the loft, I recalled a conversation with another of Paul's nieces, Jennifer, in which she described how, as a child, she had climbed the ladder up to the stables to see her dead uncle Paul's old bicycle. With no one else around, she would close her eyes and grasp its handlebars, hoping for some of Paul's musical abilities to be passed to her. By this act of magical transference, she fervently hoped to become a better musician; a great musician, as she believed he had been.

As June and I strolled back across the lawn, the front of the house came once more into view. The shadowy outline of Penton's old arched entrance was still visible through the painted plasterwork, despite having been bricked up decades ago as part of the severing of the house in two.

In August 1911, when the house had still been a whole, Rupert Brooke posted his poem 'Dining-Room Tea' to his publisher from the post office in Crediton. It would later appear in the only collection of his poems to be published in his lifetime.



Penton in 2015. Photograph by Julie Adams.

As a way of thanking the Montagues for their hospitality, the Neo-Pagans invited Amy and Ruth out to their Clifford Bridge camp. Ruth rode there on her pony while her mother cycled alongside, and they did not return home until well after dark. In camp, they were treated to a meal of stew that Pauly had prepared and in which someone discovered a rogue button. Later, Ruth watched Rupert swimming up and down in the river. He looked ‘very beautiful’, she recalled.

The fleeting love affair between the Bloomsbury Set and the Neo-Pagans did not last beyond the end of the year. In the autumn, Rupert moved to London into rooms close to the British Museum. There in the galleries he would rendezvous with Ka Cox, with whom he was now passionately involved. Rupert’s former flame, Noël Olivier was also in London, living with her parents in St John’s Wood and studying to become a doctor. Paul was in Cambridge planning his first major zoological expedition and early the following year set sail for Australia. Over the Christmas of 1911, Rupert became ill. Convinced that Lytton Strachey was scheming to set up Ka with a rival love interest, his behaviour deteriorated into paranoia and he eventually had a breakdown. The arcadian summer of the Neo-Pagans was over.

In October 1924, Gwen Raverat wrote to Virginia Woolf, reflecting on the doomed experiment of Neo-Paganism: ‘Anyway, it’s all over long ago,’ she wrote. ‘It died in 1914 I should think, though it was sick before ... It doesn’t seem to have been a really successful religion, though it was very good fun while it lasted’.⁸ Any wistful air of regret in Gwen’s letter is muted by her reference to the harsh realities that overshadowed everything, once the events of 1914 began to take their toll. Neo-Paganism may have been ‘fun while it lasted’ but time had moved on.



*A spectacled hare wallaby collected by Paul Montague on 8 August 1912 on Hermite Island, Montebello Group, Western Australia, and now in the collections of the Museum of Zoology, Cambridge.
Photograph by Rachel Howie.*

A Spectacled Hare Wallaby

In the collections of Cambridge University's Zoology Museum is a spectacled hare wallaby. Stuffed and stored for over 100 years, the small creature has seen better days. A cardboard label dangles forlornly from one paw. Sitting in its storage box, the wallaby looks poised, ready for action, perhaps plotting an escape after all this time. But it remains forever tethered by the strips of black Plastazote foam pinned along the length of its tail, reluctantly fulfilling its scientific destiny. The cardboard label records that the wallaby was a female and that she was caught by Paul Montague on 8 August 1912 on Hermite Island, one of the Montebello Group that lie off the coast of Western Australia.

At the time of his expedition, these small creatures were one of only two endemic mammals living on the islands. Writing about them in his journal, Paul predicted a bleak future, suggesting the species would soon be extinct:

It is unlikely that it will exist for many years longer, as it is one of the most defenceless animals that can well be imagined. It is easily dislodged from its hiding-place amongst the spinifex, from which it often rises in an awkward fashion, tripping up and rolling over before getting away. Though it is able to hop swiftly for a short distance, it rapidly becomes exhausted, and is not difficult to obtain by simply running after it and catching it by the tail.¹

It is not clear why Paul selected the Montebello Islands as the site for his first overseas zoological expedition. It was certainly an ambitious choice, both financially and organisationally. The decision may have been at the suggestion of his Cambridge mentor, Alfred Cort Haddon, who had himself undertaken zoological research in Australia. Or it may simply be that Paul had harboured a desire to travel to Australia since his school days.

In 1908, the Bedales' syllabus included a special project focusing on the Australian continent. The project required students to assemble a portfolio of work, including essays on Australia's environment, climate and history, and to produce illustrations of its flora and fauna. Some of this project work has survived in the School's archives. In one essay, a pupil imagines themselves as a recently arrived migrant to Australia, writing home to a fictitious relative. 'Dear Elizabeth', this imagined correspondence begins:

Out here in Australia it is very different to England, it seems so dusty and hot. All the vegetation is so different too, it is really all scrub and gum trees. The animals are very queer, they seem so small and funny.

Another essay begins authoritatively: 'The history of Australia is one of exploration and peaceful settlement. There is little or no history to record before the coming of the white man'. For these pupils, Australia was an alien land, utterly unimaginable without constant comparison to England. This strangeness or othering of the vegetation and

the animals also extended to Australia's original inhabitants. In an essay titled simply 'Natives', one pupil asserts:

The native Australians bear a certain resemblance to the negroes but are lower in the scale of civilization: since the arrival of Europeans in their country, they are rapidly dying out.²

Below this, the student has carefully shaded a map of the continent to illustrate the areas where Indigenous Australians could be found, clinging to their traditional ways of life. Small strips of coastline in the far north-east and the west of the continent have been coloured a burnt orange.

The archipelago of islands known as the Montebellos lies 80 miles off the Pilbara coast of north-western Australia. The islands are known to have been inhabited by Indigenous Australians until about 5,000 years ago, when sea levels rose and they became less accessible from the mainland. The Montebellos attracted the interest of Europeans towards the end of the nineteenth century, when a pearling industry was established. But, by May 1912, when Paul Montague arrived on Hermite Island, the largest of the group, it was uninhabited. Its most recent European resident, a Mr Haynes, had been forced to abandon his pearling operation following a devastating cyclone. Paul set up camp around the deserted corrugated iron shacks that Haynes had left behind and this served as his headquarters and home for the next three months.

Initially, Paul was disappointed by what he perceived as the 'general scarcity' of wildlife on the islands.³ This apparent scarcity caused him serious anxiety and initially



Paul's Hermite Island camp, 1912. Photograph by Paul Montague.

made it impossible for him to collect the quantity or diversity of specimens he had hoped. He began to fear that his inaugural expedition would turn out to be a failure.

To help fund the expedition, he had agreed to collect specimens for several important institutions and reneging on these commitments seemed unconscionable. He had obligations to supply specimens to the Natural History Museum in London, to the Zoology Museum in Cambridge and to the Western Australian Museum and Art Gallery in Perth. In addition, he had persuaded the Royal Society to donate £50 towards his costs. Still that wasn't sufficient, so Leopold and Amy Montague agreed to contribute some of their own money. The expedition journal that Paul began writing during the long voyage out to Perth is filled with cramped columns of figures, vigorously crossed out and replaced with new calculations in a cycle of desperate accounting.⁴

To compensate for the islands' apparent 'scarcity of life', Paul worked relentlessly day and night, using lanterns during the hours of darkness to catch insects and moths. He spent many patient hours documenting the colonies of northern white-headed ospreys that laid their eggs on Tremouille Island, photographing their young on the nest.

He went out in a boat to collect crustacea as well as other marine life, including several specimens of shovel-nosed rays. He identified two new subspecies of birds and quickly informed the *Austral Avian Journal* of his discoveries. When he was not actively collecting, there was much work to be done preparing and preserving the specimens, to ensure that they would not rot or be eaten by rats.

The dissonance of Paul's sense of scarcity in the islands and his frantic collecting do not seem to have struck him as contradictory. Indeed, he deliberately employed a narrative of 'scarcity' to imbue his collecting with a sense of urgency and significance. This was compounded by his conviction that the fauna that did exist was facing the very real danger of complete extinction. He concluded that although the Montebellos were 'a somewhat barren region', it was:

of great importance that the fauna of these small islands should be studied and recorded as soon as possible, for the indigenous animals are disappearing so rapidly before introduced species that in a very few years' time little or nothing will remain.⁵



Osprey chicks on the nest, Tremouille Island, 1912. Photograph by Paul Montague.



A catfish collected by Paul Montague in the Montebello Islands. Its accession was recorded in the Western Australian Museum's 'Day-Book for Fishes' by W.B. Alexander in 1913.



A view in the Montebello Islands, 1912. Photograph by Paul Montague. In 1952, the islands were used by the British government to test atomic weapons.

This stark vision of impending extinction has much in common with arguments being mobilised by anthropologists also working in this period. The paradigm of 'salvage ethnography' constructed a sense of purpose for anthropological efforts to document the lives of Indigenous peoples before they 'disappeared' in the face of colonisation, missionisation and the effects of introduced European diseases. As it turned out, however, while the Montebello archipelago would escape those particular depredations, Paul's forebodings were to have an unimagined and dramatic vindication.

Thirty-eight years after he had departed, at 8.00am on 3 October 1952, the Montebello Islands were the site of detonation for Britain's first atomic bomb.

This first device, similar in size to the one that had destroyed the Japanese city of Hiroshima, was exploded from below the waterline in an old navy frigate, HMS *Plym*, anchored near to Tremouille Island where Paul had photographed ospreys on their nests.

Only seconds after detonation, Australian sailors standing on the decks of ships positioned close by observed the bomb 'sucking up millions of tons of mud' from the ocean floor in a vertical column. Seawater, sediment, turtles, fish and seabirds were sucked up too and were instantly vaporised. Attempting to escape the contaminated waters, thousands of turtles scrambled out of the sea and up onto Tremouille Island, where their skeletons were later discovered by Australian sailors and British scientists, who were sent to investigate the after-effects of the blast.⁶

In 1956, four years after the initial testing took place, the British government decided to push ahead and test two further bombs in the Montebellos. It is reported that the force of the final blast was five times greater than the bomb dropped on Hiroshima and damage to habitat and loss of wildlife was truly apocalyptic. While the British Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, declared: 'We have made a successful start,' it was a devastating end to this chapter in the Montebello story. The atomic testing seemed to echo Paul Montague's prophetic claim that 'in a few years' time, little or nothing will remain' on the islands.

Shortly after Paul's expedition ended, he received a formal letter of thanks from Mr Bernard Woodward, the Director of the Western Australian Museum and Art Gallery. In the letter, Woodward expressed his trustees' gratitude and 'highest appreciation' for Paul's endeavours, which had transformed the Museum's formerly limited collections from the Montebello Islands. The trustees were, he writes, particularly pleased with the condition of the specimens they received.⁷

To further demonstrate his satisfaction, Woodward allowed Paul to select a number of Aboriginal artefacts from the Museum's stores to take home with him to England. Among the 19 items he chose were a shell necklace, several clubs and shields, two boomerangs, a dish described as a *murda murda* and a carved boab nut. Upon arriving back at Penton, Paul gave these artefacts to his father, Leopold, for his personal collection. Later, after Leopold's death, they were transferred into the care of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter where some can be seen today, on display in their galleries.

A dish described as a murda murda, presented to Paul Montague by the Western Australian Museum in recognition of his work on the Montebello Islands. Now in the collections of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter.





A spectacled hare wallaby collected by Paul Montague and now in the collections of the Western Australian Museum. Photograph by Julie Adams, 2018.

In Cambridge, one of the spectacled hare wallabies Paul collected has recently escaped storage and is now on display in the Zoology Museum's newly renovated galleries. Despite this unexpected change in its circumstances, the wallaby's rather mournful appearance inevitably conjures up thoughts of a former life spent roaming through the spinifex in a pre-atomic age.

Remarkably, and despite everything, these animals are still roaming the islands of the Montebello archipelago. Thanks to the work of the Montebello Renewal Project, Hermite Island – where Montague established his camp – is now the site of an innovative environmental experiment. Today, the land where Paul had collected specimens and where, later, millions of irradiated turtles had crawled ashore to die, has become a wildlife sanctuary, serving as a kind of ark and receiving endangered species whose habitat is now under threat from a giant natural-gas processing plant on nearby Barrow Island.⁸ The fluctuating fortunes of the Montebello Islands demonstrates both a fragility and an extraordinary resilience that has a clear and powerful resonance in the contemporary world. The success of the Montebello Renewal Project is epitomised by the abundance of breeding turtles that have returned to nest there.



Paul Montague emerging from his tent, in the field, New Caledonia, 1914. Photographer unknown.

In the Field

In the early summer of 1914, a group of distinguished scholars set sail from Britain, bound for Australia to attend a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Among the scholars was a contingent of anthropologists that included Alfred Cort Haddon, William Halse Rivers, Bronisław Malinowski and John Layard, the Old Bedalian who had hosted the tea party in his capacious Cambridge rooms.

Several of the group had made plans to carry out fieldwork research in the region after the conference concluded. In the event, their plans were thrown into turmoil before the delegation had even reached Australia. On Tuesday 4 August, just after some of the party had departed Cape Town aboard the *SS Euripides*, Britain declared war on Germany. John Layard, whose fieldwork in New Guinea had to be abandoned, captured something of the mood of the group upon hearing the news: ‘nobody on board really believed that war had broken out ... Europe was then so far away’.¹

When war broke out, Paul Montague was also a long way from home. After returning from the Montebello Islands in 1913, and having published a report of his findings in *The Geographical Journal*, he promptly embarked upon the planning of another ambitious expedition. By October of that year, he had left England once again, this time bound for New Caledonia. The *Bedales Chronicle* – always keen to keep up with his adventures- reported his departure:

Paul Montague has gone off again on a research expedition to New Caledonia, and judging by the magazine of small arms he took with him, he is well prepared to withstand the appetites of the wild inhabitants. It is very sad to think that we shall be without him for so long.²

Paul arrived in the capital, Nouméa, on New Year’s Eve 1913, and would spend the next 12 months exploring the islands. He was in the Houailou Valley in August 1914 when war was declared. From the time he left for the Pacific in October 1913, until his death in October 1917, he would spend only a few brief months in England.

The *Chronicle’s* casual remark about New Caledonia’s ‘wild inhabitants’ and their ‘appetites’ is a reference to the then-popular trope of the ‘South Sea Islander cannibal’. In fact, the stereotype of the cannibal had long pervaded European imaginings of Pacific Islanders and was perpetually employed to reinforce the idea that these island peoples were ‘savages’. In the New Caledonian context, accusations of cannibalism questioned the very humanity of the islands’ Kanak inhabitants.

The spectre of Kanak cannibalism can be traced back to 1793 and the arrival in Balade, on the north-east coast of the Grande Terre, of the French explorer Joseph Antoine Bruni d’Entrecasteaux. In his voyage journal, Bruni d’Entrecasteaux penned a bleak assessment of the Kanak people declaring: ‘They can be classified as being among the most ferocious of people.’³ The encounters between Bruni d’Entrecasteaux,

his crew and the people of Balade mark the beginning of what has been called the long history of the ‘humiliation’ of the Kanak people.⁴

Nineteen years earlier, Captain James Cook and his crew aboard the *Resolution* had been the first Europeans to sight New Caledonia. Cook gave the islands their name, claiming that the mountainous scenery reminded him of Scotland. In September 1774, the *Resolution* landed at Balade – the same site that the French would later visit – and spent nine days there exploring the area and mixing with the local people. The French and British reflections on their encounters could not have been more different. Cook had nothing but praise for the locals, declaring that they were ‘a strong and robust active well made people, courteous and friendly and not in the least addicted to pelfering [sic], which is more than can be said for any other nation in this Sea.’⁵

Alongside this pleasing absence of petty thievery, Cook was impressed with the obedience local people showed to their chief, noting that they behaved ‘with all the civility imaginable’. Cook recorded the chief’s name as Teabooma.⁶

While at Balade, the *Resolution’s* artist, William Hodges, made two portraits of local people in red chalk. Although their names were not recorded, the portraits are intimate and striking sketches of specific individuals.⁷ The image of a woman includes small



Man of New Caledonia by William Hodges, May 1773. This Kanak chief is wearing a headdress known as a tidi with a spear thrower tucked into its fibres.

details, such as the tattoo markings on her chin, while a man is shown wearing a woven headdress into which he has tucked his spear thrower. This headdress, known as a *tidi*, is a sign of status and denotes that he is a person of rank. Perhaps it is a portrait of Teabooma, the chief, whom Cook has begun calling 'my friend' in his journal.

Eager to cement this special relationship, Cook decided to honour Teabooma with a gift, and gave some thought as to what would make an appropriate present. Finally, he decided to confer upon Teabooma two Polynesian dogs he had been given in Tahiti. As New Caledonia's indigenous fauna included no mammals other than a large species of bat known as a flying fox, these dogs would have made an extraordinary gift; as exotic as elephants or giraffes would have been to Europeans when they first encountered them. It apparently took some effort to persuade Teabooma that he was to be allowed to keep the dogs. Once he was finally convinced, however, he could 'hardly contain himself for joy'.⁸

It is difficult to account for the variation in the British and French records of their encounters with the residents of Balade.⁹ Like all navigators and, indeed, like most of Europe, Bruni d'Entrecasteaux had read Cook's accounts of his voyages of 'discovery'.¹⁰ He had noted Cook's positive descriptions of New Caledonia and was surprised to find that the people he met did not live up to Cook's assessment. He petulantly observed that the people were not *quite* as 'handsome' as Cook's account had led him to believe. In fact, he claimed, they looked extremely thin and malnourished and seemed to be going hungry. Rather than being able to supply the French with provisions, as Bruni d'Entrecasteaux had hoped, they were themselves desperate to try to gain food from the French. This has led some historians to speculate that the tribes were experiencing a period of famine when the French arrived.¹¹ Whatever the circumstances, the French crew's initial attempts to trade with men in canoes were brought to a swift halt after the French realised several of their handkerchiefs had been stolen. And, after further instances of items of clothing and weapons being pilfered, Bruni d'Entrecasteaux became frustrated and angry, ranting that the thefts were 'audacious' and that the British had clearly been seduced and misled by the islands' cunning inhabitants. From that point on, the French were set against the Kanak and looked only for signs of their savagery.

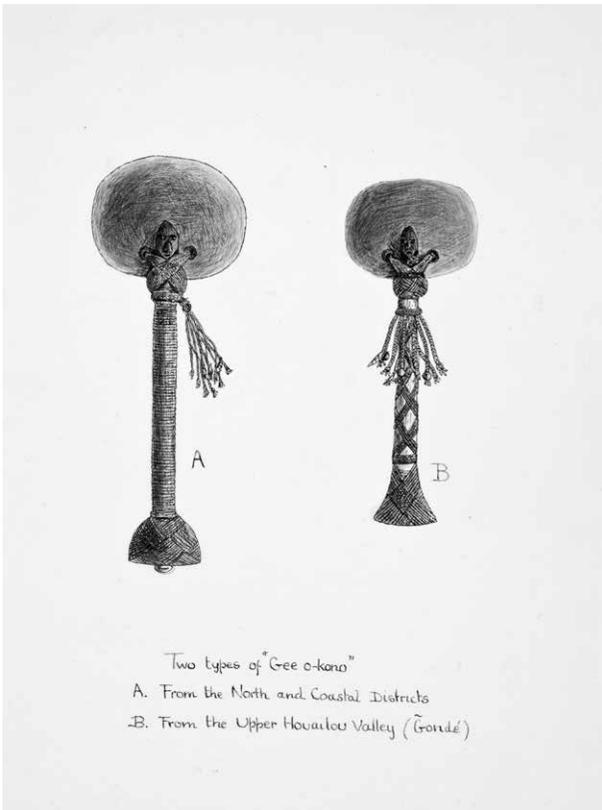
One encounter in particular seems to have been the catalyst for the French captain's dramatic accusations of cannibalism. On 22 April 1793, a Kanak man presented the French crew with what appeared to be a human bone. The French looked on in horror as the man's companions began to gnaw at the remnants of flesh hanging from it. Afterwards, the bone was passed to the ship's naturalist, Monsieur La Billardière, for examination and he confirmed that it was human.

Several days later, a group of Kanak men swam out to the French ship, bringing with them an object they called a *nbouet*. This striking object consists of a beautifully shaped and polished serpentine blade, attached to a wooden shaft, wrapped in white barkcloth and decorated with strands of plaited flying-fox fur.

As this was the first time the French had seen such an object, they were intrigued and enquired about its purpose. Without hesitation, one of the Kanak men proceeded to act out the dissection of a human body, using the *nbouet's* blade, and the subsequent eating of the flesh. The French were appalled. Bruni d'Entrecasteaux's judgement was swift, dramatic and damning. In his journal he concluded: 'I declare that these people are cannibals. They crave human flesh.'¹²



A blade from a ceremonial axe (gee o-kono), in the process of being polished and drilled for mounting. Collected by Paul Montague in the Houaïlou Valley in 1914. Photograph by Gwil Owen.



Two types of "Gee o-kono"
A. From the North and Coastal Districts
B. From the Upper Houaïlou Valley (Grondé)

*Ceremonial axes drawn by Paul Montague c.1915. This is the type of axe that Bruni d'Entrecasteaux and his crew called a *nbouet* and asserted was used to cut human flesh. Photograph by Gwil Owen.*

It is unclear what the intention of the 'mime' indicating the purpose of the *nbouet* might have been. Perhaps the aim was to intimidate, or perhaps it was a hoax, a joke at the expense of the French. Whatever the facts, the French condemnation was decisive, the Kanak people were savages of the worst kind: cannibals.

Paul Montague sketched two examples of what the French had called a *nbouet* during his own fieldwork in New Caledonia. He recorded the name of this valuable artefact as a *gee o-kono*, using the language of the tribes of the Houailou Valley, with which he was most familiar.

However, Paul did not collect a *gee o-kono*, which perhaps suggests that, by the time of his visit, few remained in circulation. Alternatively, it may be that Kanak people were not interested in trading a rare and prized object for what he had to offer.

If local people weren't interested in what he had to trade, they were, according to his journal, certainly interested in other aspects of his expedition. They were intrigued by the vast array of zoological equipment he had with him: the collecting trays, nets, storage boxes and various chemicals used to preserve specimens. And they were interested in his weapons. Paul had brought with him a number of guns that he used in collecting zoological specimens, rather than to ward off 'hungry natives', as the *Bedales Chronicle* had provocatively suggested. Local people were also curious about his camera and in the photographs he was taking with it. As he had done in the Montebello Islands, Paul was photographing the scenery and wildlife to create images to use as illustrations in future publications. However, unlike in the Montebellos, where he had focused his lens solely on the flora and fauna, in New Caledonia he started photographing people.

In the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology is a small collection of photographs taken by Paul in New Caledonia. Of these, seven are of local people. Like Cook's artist William Hodges before him, Paul did not always record the names of these individuals. However, they are portraits of people with whom he has clearly established some kind of relationship. As Paul is the photographer rather than the photographed, he is largely an absent presence in the expedition images. In fact, it was not until Paul's niece, Susan Blacker, gave me an envelope containing family photographs that an image of Paul in 'the field' came to light. This solitary photograph has been carefully mounted within a cardboard frame. On the reverse, his mother Amy has written: 'Paul Montague in New Caledonia in 1914'.

In the image, Paul appears to have been caught emerging from his tent in the early morning. He seems still slightly groggy: his eyes are closed and he has yet to dress for the day. Despite the apparently unplanned nature of the image, its composition seems to so perfectly capture a Bedalian idyll that it might almost have been staged. In the background, the summit of a majestic mountain peak is just visible through an early morning mist that still hangs in the valley. Paul has set up camp in a glade, encircled by graceful niaouli trees. On the ground near the entrance to his tent is a pot for boiling water and two cups from which tea will soon be consumed. Standing in the centre of the shot, Paul radiates all the familiar confidence of an Old Bedalian at a summer camp. Stripped to the waist and wearing nothing but a cotton sarong, he appears completely at ease, as comfortable in his own skin as he is in the exotic landscape. This image has been years in the making.



'Lifou boys' – Upiko and Nanine, who were employed by Paul Montague and worked with him collecting zoological specimens, 1914. Photograph by Paul Montague.

Lifou Boys

Selecting a compatible fieldwork companion is a challenging task. Professional compatibility and complementarity are not the only criteria – there is also the small matter of personality to consider. Perhaps for these reasons, many researchers opt to conduct solitary fieldwork research. Yet, however confident Paul Montague may have felt about travelling to New Caledonia in October 1913, he chose not to go alone.

Paul's fieldwork companion was Robert Harold Compton, a talented botanist who had been a fellow student at Gonville & Caius College. The two men were not close friends but they were equally ambitious. In terms of personality, Compton was cautious; Paul headstrong. Compton was patient; Paul impulsive. Robert Harold Compton was certainly no Neo-Pagan, but Paul had learned from his Montebellos experience how costly it was to organise and execute an overseas expedition. If he and Compton worked together, he persuasively argued, these costs could be shared.

During their time in New Caledonia, Harold Compton would make extensive collections of the islands' flora, identifying several new genera and species. He would go on to have a distinguished career, becoming Director of the Kirstenbosch National Botanical Gardens in Cape Town in 1919.¹ Later, he assisted with the publication of an article documenting several rare species of dragonfly that Paul had collected. Authored by the natural historian Herbert Campion in 1921, this scientific treatise would be the only aspect of Paul's New Caledonian research ever to be published.² To his family and friends, Robert Harold Compton was known as Harold but Paul Montague called him Pongo.

In October 1913, Pauly and Pongo boarded the German steamer, the *Königin Luise*, at Southampton. True to form, Paul was late, arriving at the last minute to discover Harold having a 'blue fit', concerned that he was not coming and that 'all the prophecies were fulfilled!' During the long voyage, Paul wrote to Noël Olivier's sister Brynhild, known as Bryn. In the letter, he conjures up a vivid picture of life on board and of his fellow passengers, along with witty anecdotes about the bizarre meals being served up from the galley. According to Paul, these consisted of dishes he mischievously dubbed 'Different Sausage', 'Tripes Provençales', 'Rostboeuf [sic] Moderne' and 'Green Herring'. The voyage was characterised, he wrote, by 'an extraordinary mixture of red tape discipline and absolute disorder'. In his luggage, Paul was carrying his gittern, the one he had played for Noël, Brynhild and the others at the Neo-Pagan camp.

At the end of December, after a brief stopover in Sydney, Pauly and Pongo transferred to the *Caledonian*, and sailed for the islands, arriving in the capital, Nouméa, on New Year's Eve 1913. It was on this second voyage that Paul began writing his 'Private Expedition Journal'. Unlike the vivid and entertaining tone of his letters home, however, the journal is initially businesslike, focusing on practical matters such as finding accommodation and sourcing supplies. He makes no mention of New Caledonia's magnificent coral reef and turquoise lagoon, which he must have seen as he sailed into Nouméa.



New Caledonia's reef from the air, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

Likewise, the journal contains no description of the rugged mountain ranges, nor of the majestic Mount Panié, New Caledonia's highest peak. And, for the time being at least, he is uninterested in the abundant forests of niaouli trees, with their papery bark and grey-green leaves. Instead, the journal details his frustrated wrangling with the bureaucratic French colonial administration, as he and Harold attempt to acquire gun licences and the necessary permits for hiring a boat.

The French took possession of New Caledonia in 1853, with plans to establish a penal colony. Between 1864 and 1897, France sent some 22,000 of its convict population to be imprisoned there. During the same period, indentured labourers from Vietnam, Japan, Java, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu (the New Hebrides) were also transported to New Caledonia to work on plantations or in mines, to construct public works and to act as domestic servants. Subsequent waves of settlers arrived in the 1890s and 1920s, in a bid to try and establish coffee and cotton industries. Despite these significant influxes, the islands' Indigenous Kanak population remained in the majority until the middle of the twentieth century.³

The process of French colonisation involved policies that deliberately disenfranchised the Kanak people by alienating them from their land. Many tribes were moved onto reserves, far from their traditional areas, and Kanak people were forced into labour, had limitations placed on their freedom to travel and had to obey rigid curfews. Uprisings became common and were brutally repressed. In the French press, Kanak people were depicted in derogatory and dehumanising ways. Many reports portrayed them as cannibals.

A year or so before Paul and Harold arrived in Nouméa, a series of articles describing life in New Caledonia under French rule were published in *The Sydney Morning Herald*. In the second instalment, published in March 1912, and titled *Scenes in the Bush*, a reporter describes journeying out from Nouméa to explore something of the countryside, and is overwhelmed by the island's great natural beauty.⁴ Sitting down for dinner in an 'open kiosk thatched with kanaka grass', the reporter gushes over the impressive views of mountains, tropical vegetation and sparkling streams, declaring 'there is perhaps no spot on the globe more ideally perfect for diners'. The impressive *menu du jour* includes oysters served with lemons, turtle soup, fresh fish, huge crabs and 'mangoes of abnormal size'. The food is served by 'scrupulously clean Javanese

waiters with glossy black hair' and is of such a standard that 'the most epicurean Frenchman could have found no grounds for complaint'.

For this reporter, New Caledonia's sophisticated and cosmopolitan character is only overshadowed by the sight of 'heaps of seashells' surrounding the kiosk where he is eating. French residents have informed him of their meaning. They were used by Kanak tribes to indicate a ceremonial site. Specifically, the journalist notes, 'they mark the spots of former feasts of the cannibals. Truly a sinister significance in New Caledonia'. As he sits dining in this beautiful location, the reporter finds he is unable to prevent his thoughts from returning to stories of cannibalism. Although he has enjoyed a gastronomic feast, he remains haunted by 'the sustained thought of former days – and the seashells!'.

Other newspapers printed similarly salacious accounts. In 1856, *L'Echo du Pacifique* published a letter from an unnamed 'French gentleman' under the headline 'Life Among the Cannibals of New Caledonia'. The 'gentleman' begins: 'I am now in the midst of the savages', adding, 'I consider myself as having been completely beyond the pale of civilization. They are cannibals and I have been present at several feasts of human flesh'. Strangely, having survived these feasts, the writer is keen to encourage other colonial settlers to take up residence in the unpopulated countryside which, he announces, has much to offer. He, himself, has opted to settle at Canala on the east coast, where the local 'savages' apparently call him the 'chief of the whites'. He has purchased 'the finest hill you ever saw' and has begun to cultivate the surrounding area with cotton trees and cocoa plants. The 'cannibals' are assisting him in building a fine home and storehouse, 'the whole constituting the finest property possible in the island'.⁵

These articles perfectly illustrate how accusations of savagery and cannibalism serve to legitimate a colonising agenda. Characterising people in this way makes it easier to treat them as less than human. Their land is yours to take. In fact, you are 'cultivating' it in a way that they had failed to do. Their labour can assist you in the building of magnificent properties, while they are squeezed into smaller and smaller areas and finally moved onto reserves. Their cultural traditions – songs, dances, weaving, carvings – do not count as culture. Their art is not art. Their clothes are not even clothes. 'They are naked, absolutely naked,' writes the French gentleman in his letter to *L'Echo du Pacifique*. Then, in the next sentence:



'View of typical niaouli country', New Caledonia, 1914. Photograph by Paul Montague.

‘Their warriors wear a scarf about two feet long made of the bark of trees and a headdress surmounted with a white plume.’

Paul Montague was not immune from using such derisive language. Soon after arriving in Nouméa, he wrote again to Noël’s sister Brynhild Olivier, outlining the plans he and Harold Compton had made to circumnavigate the Grande Terre, now that they had finally secured permission from the governor to purchase a boat:

We have a cutter and two savages from the Loyalty Islands, who collect, cook, wash up and help to carry the kit up into the mountains in the interior from convenient spots on the coast. Begging their pardons, there are no savages in the Pacific – they are all far more advanced than ourselves in most respects ... though some of them are addicted to the consumption of human flesh.⁶

Paul’s relationship with these two Kanak men began when an English shopkeeper heard that he and Harold were looking for assistants and advised them to hire ‘Lifou boys’ – that is, men from the island of Lifou, one of the Loyalty Islands that lie off the east coast of the Grande Terre. On Monday 12 January, the shopkeeper came to their hotel saying that he had ‘two Lefu [sic] boys for our inspection’. So, later that day, Paul and Harold went down to see them and having ‘found them satisfactory... we engaged them.’⁷

After a brief period during which these two young men are referred to simply as ‘the boys’ in Paul’s journal, more personal relationships begin to develop. Before long, he refers to them by name, as Upiko and Nanine, individuals with whom he is forging friendships. Eleven days after their first meeting, the three companions visit the museum, where Paul records that an ‘amusing conversation’ ensued about the carvings on display and he shocked them with his low opinion of European missionaries. A month later, on 23 February, Upiko and Nanine are required to nurse him after his thumb was severely burned following an ill-advised attempt to rid his tent of mosquitoes using gunpowder. Thereafter, Paul makes regular mention of them in his journal, reflecting on their individual qualities. Nanine is the more careful of the two and can skilfully skin zoological specimens after they have been shot. Upiko, on the other hand, is a talented marksman whose ability to shoot birds greatly enhances Paul’s collections. His physical prowess and agility also impress Paul: ‘Upiko almost walks up trees!’, he remarks on 22 April.

While Harold Compton went out gathering flora on his own, Upiko and Nanine spent most of their time assisting Paul with his collecting. Harold was not possessed of a Neo-Pagan sensibility and he always preferred to return to the boat to sleep, while Paul, like Upiko and Nanine, spent the night under canvas. Among Paul’s photographs from the expedition is one of Harold. Sitting on a rock, he is dressed sensibly and practically, with his arms and legs covered to protect them from bites, scrapes and stings. His beard, though long, is tidy and he has what appears to be a pair of binoculars around his neck. He is the epitome of an intrepid explorer.

Also among Paul’s collection of expedition photographs are several images that portray Upiko and Nanine. One shows them standing in camp, perhaps in the early morning, as there are plates and other debris scattered at their feet along with an extinguished candle from the night before. Each man holds a small axe, possibly

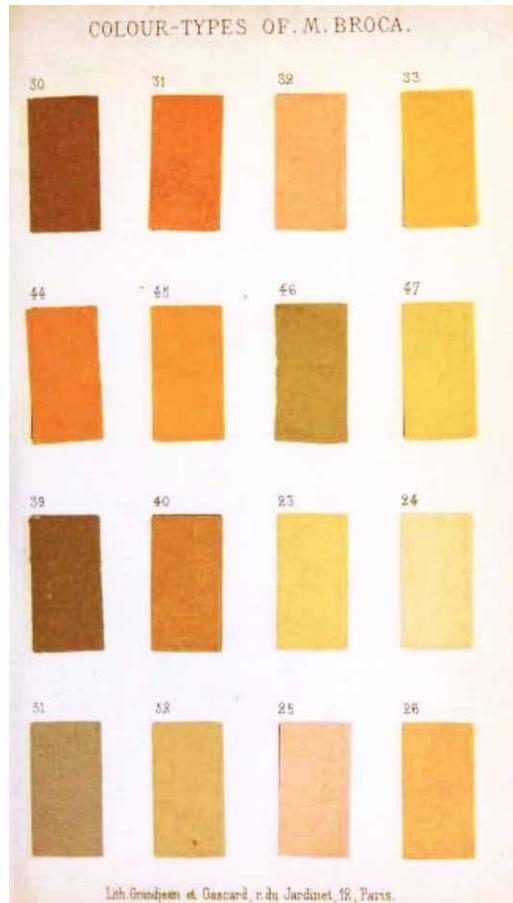
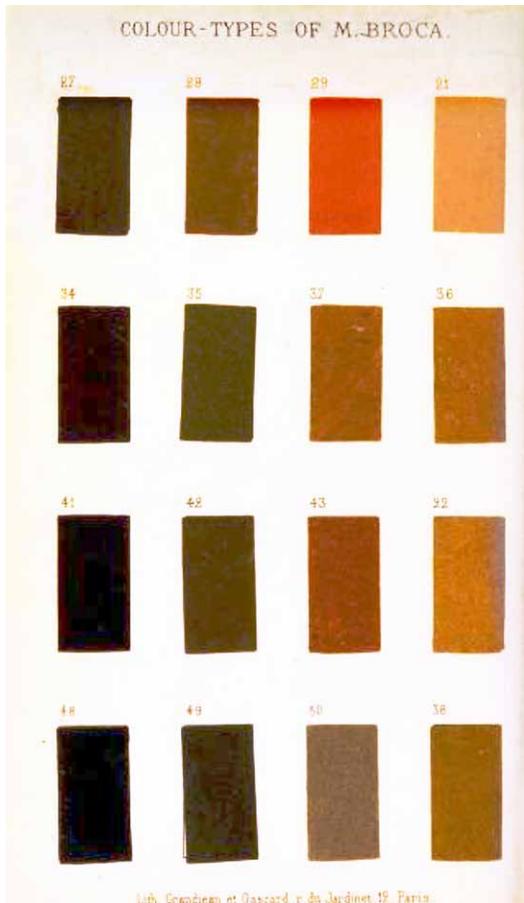


Robert Harold Compton, 'Pongo' (far right), in New Caledonia, 1914. Photograph by Paul Montague.

indicating they are about to gather firewood. Both appear at ease, confident in their stance and in the way their eyes regard the camera. Their expressions suggest a relaxed familiarity, an engagement with the process of making the photograph and a willingness to participate in its production.

Photographing people in the field was not always as straightforward as this image appears to suggest. According to the 1912 edition of a publication called *Notes and Queries on Anthropology: For the use of travellers and residents in uncivilized lands*, researchers should follow this helpful advice: 'Some people will not consent to be photographed and must be taken instantaneously, without their knowledge'.⁸ It seems clear that Paul had no need to resort to such underhand tactics to photograph Upiko and Nanine. While none of the men can escape the frame of their own context, their relationships have moved somewhere beyond the confines of 'researcher' and 'assistant'. Instead, this photograph suggests the men have become fieldwork companions.

Looking at this photograph of Upiko and Nanine alongside the picture of Paul emerging from his tent, it is striking that they seem physically to mirror each other. Bare-chested and dressed only in a sarong, Paul has appropriated their clothing and taken to emulating his Kanak friends, while at the same time distancing himself from his Cambridge companion, Harold Compton. Paul and the 'Lifou boys' are adorned with 'native' nakedness, a patterned European cloth wrapped tightly round the waist.



The 'Colour Charts' published in the first edition of Notes and Queries on Anthropology: For the use of travellers and residents in uncivilized lands, 1874.

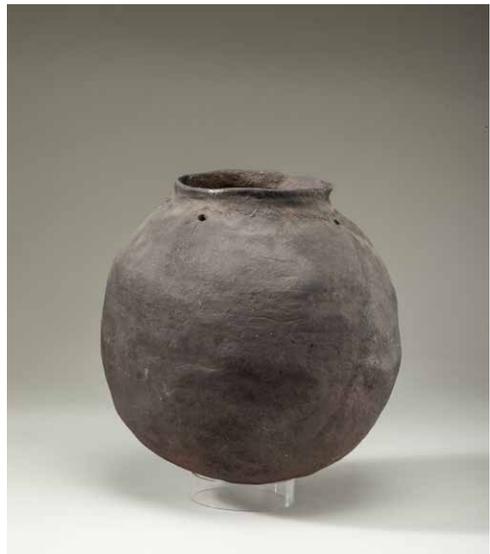
Notes and Queries

Paul Montague's Cambridge college, Gonville & Caius, has long been associated with the study of the natural sciences. As far back as the sixteenth century, one of the College founders – the physician John Caius (pronounced 'keys') – was in the vanguard of the study of natural history. Way ahead of his time, Caius pioneered a fieldwork approach to his scientific research, preferring to undertake personal observations and experiments than to rely on the work and theories of others. It was his own strong connection to the study of the natural sciences, and his desire to forge a career as a zoologist, that influenced Paul's decision to enrol at Gonville & Caius when he went up to Cambridge in 1909.¹ Alongside his fellow Natural Science students, Paul was trained how to systematically collect, assemble, order, document and classify. To study zoology was, in many ways, to study collecting. And Paul knew how to think like a collector.

Alfred Cort Haddon, Paul's mentor at Cambridge, had also begun his career as a zoologist. It was this interest that had taken him to the Torres Strait Islands, north of Australia, in 1888. Ten years later, Haddon returned as leader of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition. This now-legendary expedition has been credited with formulating the practice of what would become anthropological fieldwork. In reality, many aspects of this methodology were already well-established, commonplace practices in the natural sciences of zoology and botany.² Anthropological fieldwork is, in many respects, a development of the techniques employed and refined by naturalists who, as far back as John Caius, had regularly spent time 'out in the field'.

During Haddon's time in the Torres Strait, he began to apply his experience of collecting zoological specimens to the collection of items of material culture.³ Ethnography – the systematic study of and the collecting and recording of a group's culture – was a relatively recent phenomenon. Importantly, the actual theory and process of creating a collection, like many other aspects of anthropological research, were still being defined. How should a researcher go about collecting ethnographic material? What form should such a collection take? Was it simply an assemblage of whatever a

A cooking pot collected by Paul Montague in Oubatche, New Caledonia in 1914. He notes that this type of pot was made by women and used for steaming taro, yams and bananas. Photograph by Gwil Owen.



researcher had been able to acquire? Or should it be a systematic attempt to document every aspect of the life of a particular group? Was it as important to collect an everyday item, such as a spade from the fields or a pot, as it was to collect a rare ceremonial mask? All these questions required serious consideration and careful forethought.

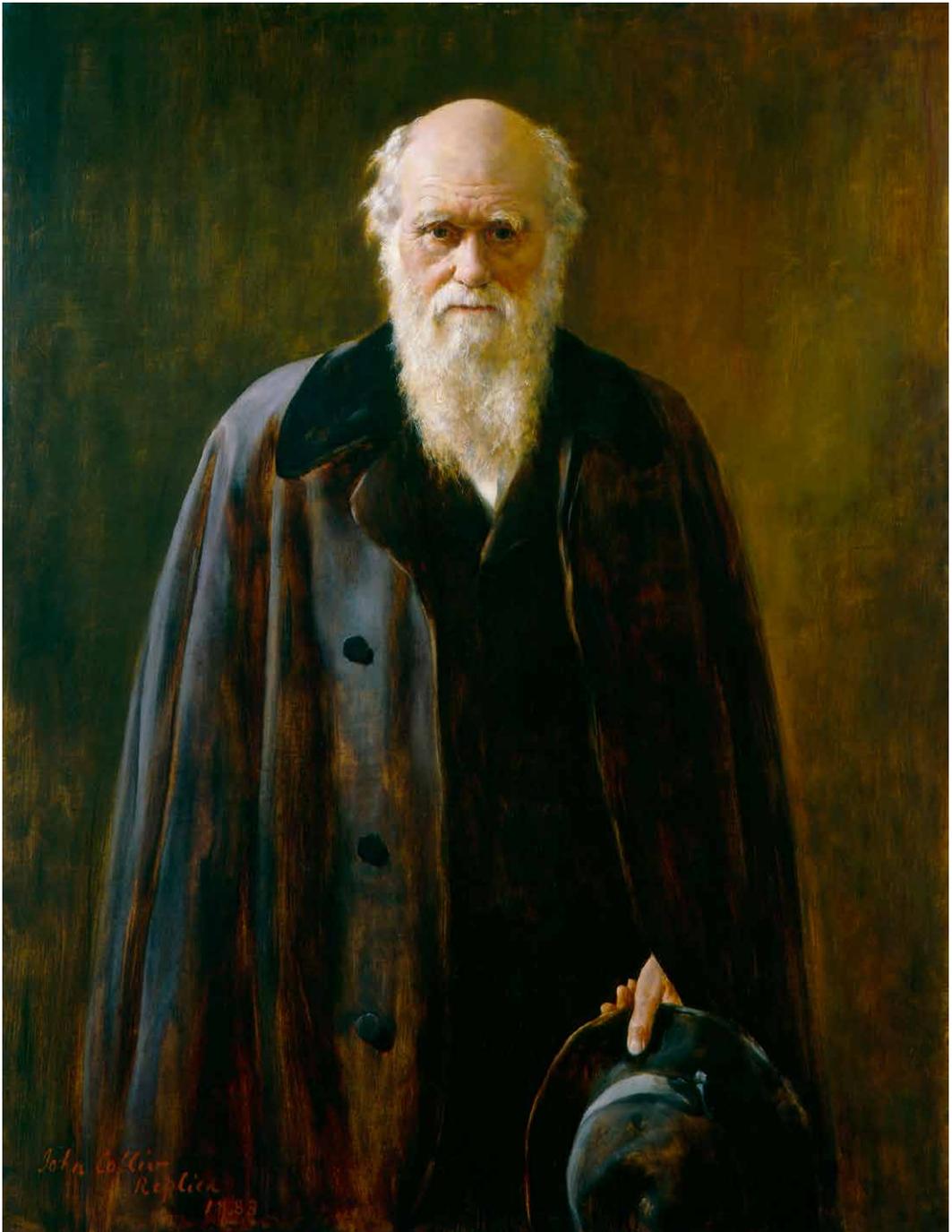
For those seeking advice and guidance, the small publication *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* offered assistance. This book served as a kind of instruction manual for a discipline in the process of creating itself. First published in 1874, under the title *Notes and Queries on Anthropology: For the use of travellers and residents in uncivilized lands*, the book was drawn up by members of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. An editorial committee was tasked with appointing experts in various fields to draw up questionnaires that could be used to elicit ethnographic information. Grouped into 100 sections, with headings such as 'Games and Amusements', 'Painting and Tattooing' and 'Social Relations and Taboo', the questionnaires were templates designed to assist non-specialists in collecting accurate data and 'to enable those who are not anthropologists themselves to supply information which is wanted for scientific study of anthropology at home'.⁴

It was hoped that this pocket-sized volume would generate an influx of anthropological data from the regions of the world which had not yet had extensive contact with Europeans but which were beginning to undergo rapid changes due to their encroaching influence.

In the first edition of *Notes and Queries*, Charles Darwin was tasked with preparing the questions for section nine: 'Physiognomy'. His questionnaire deals with physical expressions and facial features and characteristics, in an attempt to chart whether the countenance of a 'native' matched that of a European experiencing similar emotions. In Darwin's question three, he suggests establishing whether, 'when a man is indignant or defiant, does he frown, hold his body and head erect, square his shoulders and clench his fists?' Question six seeks to discover if humour can be read cross-culturally: 'When in good spirits do the eyes sparkle, with the skin a little wrinkled round and under them, and with the mouth a little drawn back at the corners?' By the time he gets to his fifteenth question, however, even Darwin seems unconvinced by this sort of methodology, asking: 'Can guilty, or sly, or jealous expressions be recognised? though I know not how these can be defined'.⁵ To these authors of *Notes and Queries*, 'natives' were alien in their strangeness; no aspect of their humanity could be assumed or taken for granted.

To assist with producing accurate physical descriptions of natives' hair, eyes and skin colour, *Notes and Queries* included several charts which resemble the colour sample charts produced today by paint manufacturers. The *Notes and Queries* 'Colour Types' consist of 32 small, rectangular samples of potential hair and skin colours, ranging from a deep black through to a pinky cream. Other shades to choose from include a rather unlikely olive green and a permatan orange. The aim was to use these colour charts in conjunction with a list of accompanying questions to try to ascertain how skin colour might alter in different scenarios – following exposure to heat, for example.

Travellers were also urged to carry callipers and measuring tapes in their luggage, so that accurate measurements of natives could be taken. Of particular interest was the measurement of the skull, used in the popular science of craniometry. For this dubious area of investigation, the *Notes and Queries* question setter, Dr Bette, cautioned the



Charles Darwin by John Collier, 1883.

amateur that, while any measurements they could procure would be useful, the ideal solution would be to bring samples of skulls 'back to England, where they can be examined and measured by experts'.⁶

In the early editions of *Notes and Queries*, practical details were sparse when it came to the process of seeking out, negotiating and obtaining ethnographic items. In the 1874 edition, this topic appears as section 97 of 100. There is a page headed 'Anthropological Collections' but this is followed by a number of blank pages. Perhaps no one was felt to be sufficiently qualified to contribute, or maybe publication deadlines meant that this section was not prioritised. Whatever the reason, it was not until the book's second edition, published in 1892, that advice for the would-be ethnographic collector first appeared. Charles Hercules Read, from the British Museum's Department of British and Mediaeval Antiquities and Ethnography, was drafted in to compile the relevant section. According to Read:

It is of importance to obtain from natives any portable specimens of their handiwork, tools, weapons, dress, ornaments, fetishes, &c., and where possible, the native descriptions of the objects, whether the tools, for instance, are for any special work, &c. Models should be secured where the originals cannot be obtained or are too large for transport, e.g., canoes, houses, &c., Not only are the finished objects worth collecting, but also the raw material used in their manufacture, where this has any special character ... The commonest things in use are generally the most valuable from an ethnological point of view, though masterpieces of native art are of artistic value and therefore should not be despised. At the first moment of leisure the objects should be labelled with the locality where they were obtained, and their use, and any other particulars. Never trust to memory alone.⁷

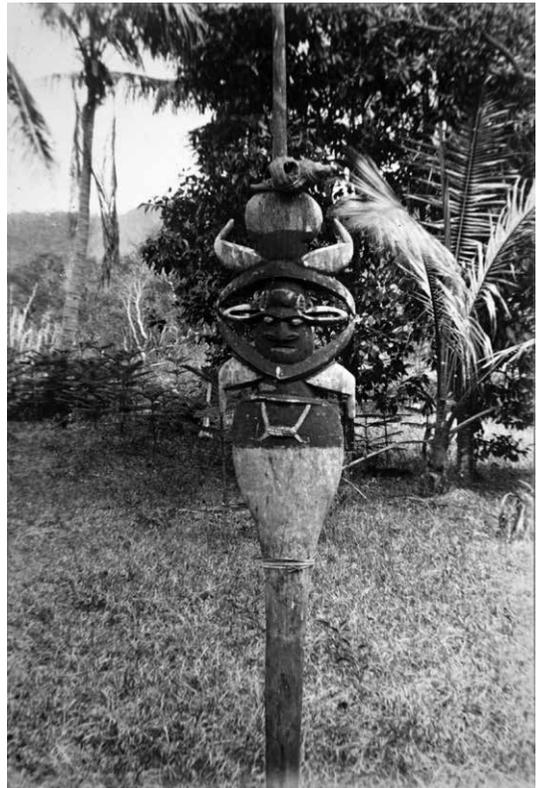
Later editions of *Notes and Queries* began to reflect the change in its readership, which included fewer general travellers and more academics who had a formal training in anthropology or, at least, had been trained in fieldwork research methods.⁸ In addition, educators, administrators and officials in the colonial service, who were being posted overseas, were encouraged to receive some basic training in anthropological methods, and many enrolled on a one-year course offered by Alfred Haddon in Cambridge. Haddon, who referred to *Notes and Queries* as 'that invaluable little book', drew extensively on its contents in his teaching and later became involved in its editorial policies.⁹

Paul Montague would, no doubt, have owned a copy of the latest edition and probably packed it in his luggage for his voyage to New Caledonia. Flicking through its pages, he would no longer have found the 'Colour Types' charts, which by this time had been removed, but he would have found useful advice on the best way to preserve and pack artefacts to ensure they survived the voyage home. Also included was a 'General Note on the Collection of Specimens' that proclaimed:

Every collection of examples of a people's arts and industries should illustrate two principal things:- (1) The native adaptation of local or imported materials to local needs by native methods of construction and decoration; and (2) Social and religious ideas connected with manufacture and use.¹⁰

In other words, a researcher should endeavour to understand more than simply *what* people were making and *how* objects were being made. For a collection to be academically credible, its collector needed to understand *why* things were being made. Such information, if properly researched and presented, could transform a collection from a random assemblage of interesting artefacts into a cohesive representation of a culture. To collect just for the sake of collecting was a mistake. As *Notes and Queries* made clear: 'To collect specimens of native work merely because they are pretty and without ample notes to identify and explain them is useless'.¹¹

Alfred Haddon's influence on Paul Montague's career extended beyond the choice of destination for his second zoological expedition. Crucially, it was Haddon who also urged Paul to include a study of Kanak culture in his research, and to document his findings thoroughly, making use of every new technology available. Haddon had made pioneering use of photography, film and sound recordings during his fieldwork in the Torres Strait Islands and he fervently encouraged his protégés to follow suit. In its 1912 edition, *Notes and Queries* included an appendix on photography for the first time. Armed with 'that invaluable little book', Paul carried Haddon's message into the field. And he was not alone. In the valleys of New Caledonia, or among the tribes of New Guinea, or with the Plains Indians of the Rocky Mountains, Haddon's students were being guided by him about what ethnographic fieldwork and collecting should involve, and what it should not.



A carved roof finial photographed by Paul Montague in Gondé, 1914.



*The Deardorff camera owned by Mark Adams, on location in New Caledonia, 2016.
Photograph by Julie Adams.*

The Deardorff Camera

The advice offered by the 1912 edition of *Notes and Queries* to would-be photographers in the field was disarmingly straightforward – avail yourself of the best possible equipment. Simply put, the recommendation was to ‘take as large a camera as possible’. In the field, size mattered. The ideal instrument, the book noted, should give the photographer maximum flexibility and be adaptable for making a variety of image types:

The camera should have a double or triple expansion, for it is sometimes necessary to photograph an object at its natural size or even slightly larger, and this cannot be done unless the bellows rack out far enough. There should be a rising front, and a swing back with vertical and lateral movement ... For hot damp climates it is essential that the camera be made of well-seasoned wood, and brass-bound.¹

Paul Montague took this sort of camera with him to New Caledonia in 1914 and proved remarkably adept at using it. He shared Alfred Haddon’s enthusiasm for the benefits photography could bring to the discipline of anthropology, and he proved to have a good eye for its ability to exploit new ways of seeing. But what can be successfully captured in a photograph is far from a straightforward business. In 2016, when I retraced Paul’s journey, I had a similar, antique camera as a travelling companion. Haddon would surely have approved.

An antique Deardorff large-format camera makes for a high-maintenance companion. Aside from its significant weight, it is easily damaged and does not respond well to the rigours of air travel. Mark Adams, the camera’s owner and operator, who was travelling with me to New Caledonia, is always justifiably nervous when he has to hand the Deardorff over at airline check-in desks and sees it slide out of sight along the conveyor belt. So often has the camera’s carrying case been opened and searched by airport security that Mark has taken to placing a note inside, pleading with staff to handle it as carefully as possible. Despite his pleas, this delicate and elderly camera is broken with some regularity. It is both costly and time-consuming to repair.

Mark’s Deardorff is beautifully constructed from mahogany and brass. It has expanding ‘bellows’ which extend out, accordion-like, but can also be folded almost flat, helping to increase its portability. In composing an image, Mark disappears beneath a large blackout cloth and attempts to make sense of the camera’s inverted optics. In the darkness, under the cloth, the world appears strangely framed because the captured image appears both upside down and flipped left to right in the ground-glass viewfinder. Once the image has been composed to his satisfaction, Mark loads up a sheet of film and makes an exposure. As an exposure can last several minutes, there is always a sense of mystery around the resulting image. Unless what is being



Mark Adams at work in Berlin, 2015. Photograph by Julie Adams.

photographed holds its position exactly, there will usually be something of a discrepancy between what the photographer has seen in the viewfinder and what emerges once the image is developed.

Mark Adams is one of New Zealand's leading photographers. Although he acknowledges that he learned 'bugger all' in art school and, in fact, taught himself how to use cameras, his work has become internationally admired and is widely collected. In recent years, he has been making images that reflect on the presence of Pacific artefacts in European museums – both their display in galleries, and also their hidden lives in the vast storage facilities of these institutions. Mark had been invited to become artist-in-residence on the *Pacific Presences* research project, and he was in this role when we embarked upon our journey to New Caledonia.

In Cambridge, prior to departure, Mark and I pored over Montague's photographs wondering how we might imaginatively recreate in the present some of his images of the past. We also discussed how Mark might document the fieldwork I was planning to undertake in the Houailou Valley, where I hoped to reconnect local people with objects Paul had collected. To achieve this aim, I planned to take with me a specially produced booklet that included images and information about the collection to distribute to community groups in the region. I hoped this booklet would facilitate discussions to both illuminate the past and encourage future collaborative research.

For curators working in ethnographic museums, undertaking fieldwork is not always possible, because of cost and time pressures. As a result of being institutionally bound, museum curators have long been regarded as somewhat removed from



Sharing images: 'digital repatriation' with elders at Bourail, New Caledonia, 2016. On the right are François Wadra, and Yamel Euritein and Edmond Saumé of the Musée de Nouvelle-Calédonie. Photograph by Mark Adams.

anthropology's theoretical developments. In response and in recent decades, some museums have pioneered a particular type of fieldwork that has reconnected curators with the practice of field-based research and invigorated ethnographic museums as sites of theoretical innovation, as they were in Haddon's day.

This enterprise, known as digital repatriation, involves curators and museum-based researchers 'repatriating' objects, in digital form, to the communities from which they originated. Although this digital repatriation can be achieved remotely – via online databases, catalogues and electronic file sharing – it has become a growing practice (where funds permit) for curators to travel to communities of origin, taking with them photographs of collections to share and discuss with relevant groups.²

In early June 2016, Mark Adams and I rendezvoused in Nouméa at the Musée de Nouvelle-Calédonie, where we met with curators Edmond Saumé, Yamel Euritein and the Museum's collection manager, Marianne Tissandier-Pommes, to outline the purpose of our visit. I explained that we planned to travel to the Houaïlou Valley and visit particular sites where Montague had spent time, to share images of objects with local people. At the last minute, just as we were about to leave, my research colleague François Wadra arrived unexpectedly, carrying a large motorcycle helmet which he proceeded to place in the middle of the table. After offering a cursory greeting, he launched into an extended monologue about where we should go and what we should do when we got there. It was a relief to learn that he would be accompanying us.

The next morning our group headed off for the Houaïlou Valley, with Edmond and Yamel leading the way in their four-wheel drive vehicle, and François, Mark and



On the Col des Roussettes, Houaïlou Valley, New Caledonia, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

I following in our tiny, silver hire car. Outside Nouméa, the hills got steeper and our car began to struggle. With Mark focused on trying to coax the necessary power from the engine, I tried to keep my eyes on the tail-lights of Edmond and Yamel's car in the dawn gloom, to make sure we didn't miss our turning. As we drove, François kept up a constant narration about the landscape from the backseat. A lone pine tree at the top of a promontory indicated a former site of ceremonial significance, he informed us, while the faint ridges running along the side of hills revealed the remains of ancient taro terraces.

Houaïlou is about halfway up the east coast of the Grande Terre, just over the border into what is known today as the country's Northern Province. The Houaïlou River snakes inwards from the coast, and the hills are covered with lush vegetation and dense forests of tree-ferns, stately New Caledonian pines and native niaouli trees. We were driving first to the town of Bourail, on the west coast, before crossing over to Houaïlou. The road that connects the two is tortuously winding and the 70km drive from one side to the other seems to take an eternity. The road first twists and turns towards the summit of



the evocatively named Col des Roussettes (Hill of the Flying Foxes), before immediately beginning the equally steep and winding descent down to Houailou.

Along the route, the valley's many villages are hidden from view, their presence only discernible by roadside stalls selling fruit and grilled chicken, or bus stops covered with reggae-inspired graffiti. Bob Marley is a particular favourite and features heavily in the Kanak psyche as a symbol of political resistance through music.

Our first stop in the Houailou Valley was Gondé, a village that Paul Montague had first visited on Wednesday 22 July 1914. In his journal, Paul recorded that the morning had broken with a 'dead calm', leaving him stranded on board his boat for several hours at the entrance to the Houailou River. At about 10 o'clock, a breeze picked up and he began to weave the boat slowly up stream, pausing for several hours for the water to rise sufficiently to cross a sand bar, before finally dropping anchor at a small pier near Gondé. Having hastily unloaded his luggage and equipment, Paul found rooms at a small hotel run by Georges Voisin, a French settler, and his wife, Maria, a local Kanak woman. While rooms were being prepared, Paul was given an 'excellent' haircut by a

Kanak man in the hotel bar. Later, he wrote in his journal about the striking landscape with its 'steep serpentine hills'.

The relationships Paul formed with the tribe at Gondé, and with the nearby tribe at Nessakoéa, were what sparked his interest in Kanak culture. A significant number of the objects he acquired were collected here and the book he drafted, based on his fieldwork, was titled 'Ethnological Notes from the Houailou Valley'. As it was such a pivotal site in his development as an anthropologist, I was keen to visit these villages for myself and, while we drove along, I stared out of the car window, wondering what was in Paul's mind as he prepared for those first encounters. What did he expect his welcome might be?

As we rounded a steep bend, Yamel and Edmond pulled off the road and parked in a layby. Mark tucked our car snugly into the space behind and we climbed out into the fierce sunlight. We were standing on the banks of the gently flowing Houailou River and, pointing towards the next bend in the river's path, Yamel told us that we were looking at the site where the Voisin's hotel had once stood and where Paul had received that 'excellent' haircut.

Although the building no longer exists, Yamel explained that the tribe at Gondé remember its location and also Maria, the Kanak woman who had helped to run it. As we considered the hotel's absence, Mark began shooting images on his small digital camera. It would make a good photograph for the Deardorff, he said, but the light wasn't right; we would need to return towards the end of the day to see what might be possible. We went back to our vehicles, ready to drive on towards Gondé, where we were scheduled to meet with the tribal elders. But Mark sat in the driving seat for several minutes, apparently absorbing the atmosphere, the light and the scenery, before he started the engine, and we pulled back onto the road behind Edmond and Yamel, heading towards Gondé.

Later that day, Mark and I returned to the layby and began to unpack the Deardorff. François, Yamel and Edmond had driven to Bourail for the night; we would follow once

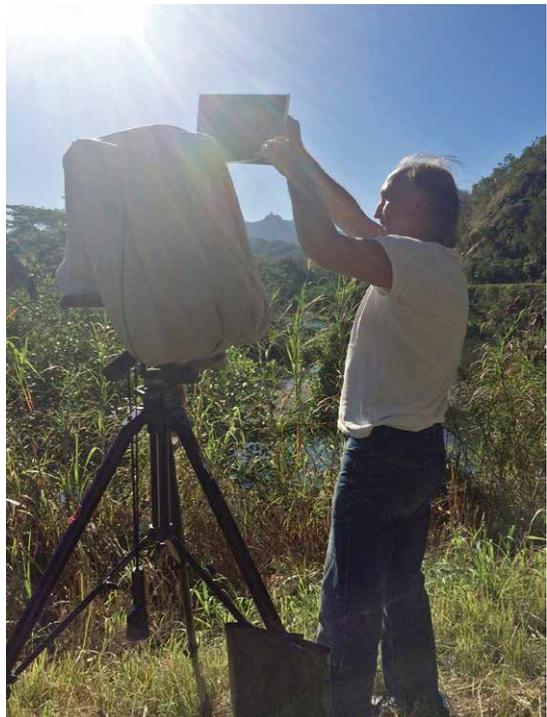


The site of the hotel owned by Maria and Georges Voisin, near Gondé, Houailou Valley, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

the shot had been taken. The sun was now lower in the sky, although the heat was still intense. While Mark busied himself assembling the camera, I stood by the roadside, keeping an eye out for passing cars to try to ensure they could see us on the sharp bend. My mind was flooded with the day's events, which had been extremely fraught. The discussions with the chiefs at Gondé had been tense and punctuated by long and hostile silences. The presentation of the book and the sharing of images had not been welcomed as I had hoped. I was reminded of a talk given at a conference by a Native American museum director, Jim Enote. He had asked, if 'digital surrogates' were so good, why didn't the museums keep them and allow the objects themselves to be returned to the communities?³ The men at Gondé had precisely echoed Enote's sentiments.

It had been a long and eventful day but Mark was convinced that the scene of the absent hotel would make a good photograph. His quiet concentration was punctuated every few minutes by the approaching roar of a car, each one packed with young Kanak men. Slowing slightly for the bend, they would spot Mark first, before noticing the Deardorff standing anachronistically on the riverbank. Shouts, whistles and whoops emerged from the passing vehicles along with thumbs-ups and waves.

One car came to a halt in the middle of the road to get a closer look. Hesitantly, I began to try and explain what we were doing, but they already seemed to know who we were and why we were there. 'You've been at Gondé!', one man said. I nodded. 'That is good' he said, decisively. Unsure whether it was good or not, I managed to reply simply, 'Merci'. The driver put the car back in gear and sped away, leaving Mark, the Deardorff and me to contemplate the site of the now-absent hotel and the dissonance of our first day in the field.



*Mark Adams at work near
Gondé, Houaïlou Valley, 2016.
Photograph by Julie Adams.*



A high-ranking chief and his wife at the village of Gondé, 1914. Photograph by Paul Montague.

At Gondé

In one of Paul Montague's fieldwork photographs, an old man is seen standing alongside a woman who is dressed in a hibiscus-fibre skirt and wearing a shell arm ornament. The man holds a ceremonial axe with a round greenstone blade, of the type described during the voyage of Bruni d'Entrecasteaux, when he excoriated the Kanak people as 'cannibals'. This ceremonial axe reveals the man's status as a chief, as does his position in front of a thatched house with its large carved roof finial. A second carved finial has been planted in the ground next to the couple, and has been adorned with numerous large triton shells. This photograph was taken at Gondé, the closest village to the hotel where Paul took rooms when he arrived in the Houailou Valley in July 1914.

Gondé was to become a significant place for Paul's fieldwork and his collecting activities. He spent a considerable amount of time with the tribe and acquired more artefacts there than in any other location. In his journal, he documents some of these transactions under the heading 'List of articles obtained at Gondé'. The list includes an *amur*, or sleeping mat, two mallets for beating barkcloth and two magic yam stones that an old Kanak man dug up for him from the roots of a coconut tree. Although his writings do not make clear the specifics of every transaction, the majority of objects appear to have been acquired by means of financial purchase. For example, on 3 August, Paul writes that he has bought 'a fine bunch of roussette-fur string, a fine spear and a thrower ... for 7 francs'. On another occasion, he writes that he has dined with an old Kanak man, having earlier photographed him at work on his yam plantation, and



*Shell arm ornaments with flying-fox fur cords collected by Paul Montague at Gondé in 1914. He recorded that they were known as *aisu* in the local language and were worn by men and women on the upper left arm. Photograph by Gwil Owen.*



The hut where the men of Gondé awaited our arrival in 2016. Photograph by Julie Adams.

from him ‘bought a basket, a fine digging stick and an implement for making holes for planting taro. Total 5 francs’. Several shell armlets, like the one worn by the woman in the photograph, are also in Paul Montague’s collection. Acquired in Gondé, he sketches in his catalogue how they were worn and gives their name as *aisu* in the local language.

In June 2016, when Mark, Edmond, Yamel, François and I arrived in Gondé, our purpose was to share the specially produced booklet, containing photographs and information, with people we met. As our cars pulled into the village and parked on a grass verge, three men were waiting for us, outside what appeared to be a disused community centre. They greeted us formally and led us to a thatched hut, similar to the one in Montague’s photograph of the chief but which was open at the sides.

The men sat down behind a table. We noticed that a second table had been set up facing theirs, so our group sat down behind that. Shafts of sunlight streamed into the hut, which was hot even though it was still relatively early. The men stared at us across the table divide with serious expressions. It was quiet; no one spoke. I tried to catch François’ eye but he got up and walked over to the edge of the hut, looking out into the distance to the hills beyond.

Eventually, Yamel began to speak, softly, in French, explaining to the men that we had come to share information with them about the collections made by Montague. Yamel handed round copies of the booklet and drew the men’s attention to images of several objects that had been collected in Gondé itself: a basket, a bamboo comb

A hair comb made from bamboo and engraved with the face of a European, collected by Paul Montague at Gondé in 1914. Photograph by Gwil Owen.

decorated with the face of a European and a rare curved flute called a *hndor*.

The man sitting in the centre of the group took the book in his hands, flicked through a couple of pages and then let it fall back to the table where it lay. The air felt heavy. I wasn't sure how to proceed. Should I try to break the spatial dynamics by getting up and walking over to where the men sat? I wanted to behave appropriately but what exactly that might entail at this moment I wasn't sure. The impasse was broken when a car pulled up and several young men and a boy alighted and sat down. One of the new arrivals picked up the book and began whispering to his neighbour, animatedly pointing things out on the pages.

Suddenly, the most senior man spoke. We had come at a bad time, he said. The majority of the tribe's elders were away from the village so it wasn't appropriate for us to be there, or for us to look around or take photographs. We assured him that we had no intention of taking any photographs without their permission. I walked over to where François stood and, with him translating, we began to describe something of the work we had been doing over the years, locating and researching Kanak collections in British museums. François explained how we had been tracking down these 'forgotten' artefacts and sharing information with people in New Caledonia by distributing photographs of these objects in their museum settings. The purpose was to educate people, François said, particularly young Kanak, about 'what had been taken from them'. The men listened carefully but did not make eye contact with either of us. Looking down at the table, the senior man asked in a flat voice: 'What good are photographs? Why have you brought us photographs of objects that were stolen from our ancestors? What good are they to us? When will the objects themselves be returned?'

I started to speak about museums trying to build relationships with communities, but quickly felt the flimsiness of the words, hearing how unconvincing they must have sounded. Here in Gondé, the objects collected by Montague functioned like time capsules, connecting those in the present with the painful realities of the past. They exposed the troubling histories that had led to the circumstances in which we all now found ourselves. Standing in a village in New Caledonia, looking at photos of Kanak objects held thousands of miles away in Cambridge, I was reminded of William Faulkner's famous observation: 'The past is never dead. It's not even past.'¹





The first site of Christian worship in Gondé, built around 1896. Several years later, a chapel was built a short distance away. Photograph by Mark Adams, 2016.



Visiting the chapel and a memorial to the first Gondé chiefs to convert to Christianity, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.



The unexpected lunch at Gondé, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

Having voiced his frustrations, the senior man sat silently again. He looked weary. Turning to Yamel, he muttered some words and pointed towards his large truck parked nearby. ‘Jump in’ Yamel said, ‘He wants to show us around.’ To my surprise, a tour of the village ensued, with the men acting as narrators and guides. We stopped and got out so that they could show us the site of an old chapel. They explained that it had been built under the guidance of a Kanak pastor named Joané Eurimindia, and a local chief, Baptiste Thebeui, at the beginning of the twentieth century. The pastor had welcomed the French missionaries, Maurice and Jeanne Leenhardt, to Gondé when they first arrived in the region in 1902. Maurice had been struck by the beauty of the village with its chapel, which was still under construction at the time. His conclusion was that ‘these people have taste.’²

Finally, our tour stopped at a house, outside which was a long table that had been set for a meal. Laid out on a vinyl tablecloth were platters piled high with green bananas, taro and yams, a raw onion salad dressed with vinegar and large bowls of *bougne* – a traditional Kanak dish of meat and vegetables marinated in coconut milk and cooked for several hours in an earth oven. Women wearing the local style of loose, smock-like dress (called *robe mission*) emerged from the house with baskets of sliced bread and jugs of water. It dawned on me that this meal must have been planned days in advance. This generous hospitality was always going to be the culmination of our visit. The tense, difficult, dialogue that had preceded did not contradict the preparation of this meal. It was a necessary part of the same process and it enabled us to sit down and eat together.

Over lunch, the senior man told me of his despair for the future of young people of the area, who rarely finish school and have little hope of finding jobs, which he blamed on continuing French rule. He told us of a meeting he had attended, organised by local

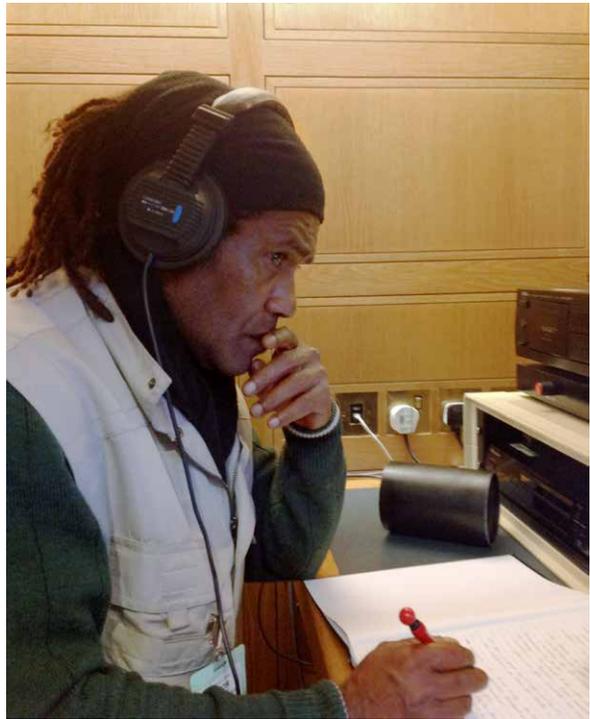
elders to address the issue of marijuana use among their young. One of the youths had responded by issuing a challenge to the elders to come up with an alternative – if they could offer him some hope of a better life, he had said, he would happily give up the drug.

A hundred years earlier, it was alcohol rather than marijuana that was having a devastating impact on the Kanak youth. The French missionary, Maurice Leenhardt, believed that many chiefs were motivated to convert to Christianity in an attempt to offer their people hope and an alternative to the excessive, desperate drinking that was taking hold.³ Paul Montague, too, was convinced that the epidemic of drinking he observed would only hasten the disintegration and ultimate disappearance of traditional Kanak culture. He believed that the photographs he was taking, the objects he was collecting and the information he was gathering could in some way assist in preserving cultural knowledge, even if it removed these items from their setting in the Houaïlou Valley and transferred them to a museum setting in Cambridge.

This belief in the urgency of gathering as much information as he could, as quickly as possible, had motivated Paul to invest in a ‘cylinder phonograph’. He planned to make sound recordings with it – another layer of Kanak culture that could be collected and preserved. The prototype of the cylinder phonograph was invented by Thomas Edison. It captures sounds using a horn attached to a diaphragm. The sound causes vibrations in the air that travel down the horn and make the diaphragm vibrate. In turn, the diaphragm connects to a stylus that presses into a wax-covered cylinder capable of holding approximately three minutes of material. Paul purchased a dozen or so cylinders and added them to his ever-expanding pile of luggage before leaving for New Caledonia. It was 11 months into his expedition before he finally used this bulky and cumbersome equipment.

His recordings still survive. Originally, they had been deposited at the Museum in Cambridge and were stored there for many years before being transferred to the British Library. Today, they are cared for by the Library’s sound archive, which has expertise in storing and digitising such material. Each of Montague’s cylinders is dated and tantalisingly labelled, with titles such as ‘Hndor solo’, ‘Doru – song from a dance’ or ‘Ururua – a house song’. The labels reveal that the recordings were all made in quick succession, in November 1914, at the village of Gondé.

In 2013, François Wadra and I contacted the sound archive and went to the British Library in London to listen to the wax-cylinder recordings. A librarian guided us to a sound booth, where we donned our headphones and sat in a state of great anticipation as the librarian pressed play. To our intense disappointment, almost nothing was audible. The wax cylinders had deteriorated over time and all that remained was a loud scratching sound similar to the buzz of distortion on an untuned television set. Cylinder after cylinder revealed nothing but crackle. The penultimate recording was labelled as being a ‘set oration (hereditary)’ performed by an ‘aged chief, Omea Yaino’. François explained that it would probably be a chief reciting a genealogy. To have access to genealogical knowledge and to be able to remember and then recite generation after generation of family history was a highly valued skill and the mark of a great chief. Suddenly, through the distortion of the cylinder, a distant lone voice emerged. Speaking rhythmically in a local language, the voice chanted repetitively. Despite barely being able to hear him and neither of us understanding what he was saying, François and I sat



François Wadra in the British Library, London, 2013, listening to the sound recordings made by Paul Montague in Gondé a century earlier. Photograph by Julie Adams.

in a state of wonder, transfixed and transported in our imaginations back to the scene of this century-old recording.

There, in the village of Gondé in November 1914, a Kanak chief and a young zoologist sat down together and engaged in a common endeavour – capturing this powerful genealogical knowledge using the magic of wax-cylinder technology. As François and I sat in hushed reverence, it occurred to me that, while these recordings were being made, the technological innovations that would shape World War I were also emerging and, as a result, millions of life lines would soon be irrevocably altered.



*Jeanne and Maurice Leenhardt, French missionaries in New Caledonia in the early 20th century.
Photographer unknown.*

Cursing the Kaiser

In the early morning of 13 November 1902, a young bride arrived in Nouméa from France. Standing impatiently with her bags on the deck of the *Polynesia*, Jeanne Leenhardt waited to disembark and discover something of the island and its people, among whom she had come to live and work. Included in her luggage was a case of equipment for collecting specimens, prepared by the Natural History Museum in Paris, at the request of her new father-in-law.¹

Her husband, Maurice, had been ordained in Montpellier's Protestant chapel only days before they set sail. Over 500 people had crammed into the church to witness his ordination ceremony. Jeanne's sophisticated, intellectual, Parisian family were seated next to Maurice's down-to-earth parents in the pews. The families, united by their faith, listened as Maurice spoke of the urgent task that lay ahead of him and his new wife in their imminent posting to New Caledonia. 'The Christian church seems nowhere as pure as in the missions,' declared Maurice, to the congregation, 'God only knows, it is the young churches in pagan lands who will provide us with the fresh blood needed for the vitalisation of our tired milieux.'² It was this passionate vision for the role of overseas missions that had convinced the Paris Evangelical Missionary Society to appoint the youthful, inexperienced, Maurice Leenhardt as their first permanent representative on the Grande Terre of New Caledonia.

Fleeting traces in the journal of Paul Montague and in the letters of Maurice Leenhardt reveal that the two men came to know each other during the fateful year of 1914. Maurice is mentioned four times in Paul's journal, although on each occasion his name is recorded in passing, with little explanation or details of these encounters. On 30 October, Paul writes: 'Went out beating in the afternoon and dined with Leenhardt.' Other entries suggest a more purposeful aspect to their meetings, with the pair discussing and exchanging ethnographic information: 'Leenhardt tells me that he has taken down songs from various parts of the island,' says one entry. And, in another, Paul notes that his Kanak acquaintance Maria Voisin 'absolutely denies Leenhardt's tale about the curing of illness by the family totems'. A final mention comes on a page of notes titled 'Diseases', after which Paul has written 'Leenhardt' in brackets, suggesting that Maurice is the source for the information that follows about Kanak understandings of sickness and its causes.

Traces of their relationship also survive in Leenhardt's papers. In a letter to his parents, Maurice dismisses the dismal efforts of French anthropologists to research Kanak culture or to carry out fieldwork in New Caledonia. Instead, he says, he has his hopes pinned on an ethnographic study of Houaïlou being undertaken by 'Montague, the young English naturalist'.³

A sepia-toned photograph of Maurice and Jeanne Leenhardt shows them wearing serious expressions and sensible clothes. Huddled side by side reading a book, Maurice's wedding ring glints and catches the light of the camera. His hand appears to be guiding their eyes to a single point on the page, while the intertwining of their arms as they lean

in to one another, engrossed in this shared activity, suggests theirs is a partnership of equals. Indeed, during the decades that the Leenhardts spent in New Caledonia, Jeanne was involved in every aspect of missionary work. This included teaching female students at the school they established in the Houaïlou Valley, working alongside Maurice in his efforts to translate the Bible into local Kanak languages and taking responsibility for the day-to-day running of the mission. Despite the collaborative nature of the Leenhardts' endeavours, the contributions made by the 'wives of missionaries' (as they are ubiquitously described) are almost always overlooked.

Emma Hadfield suffered the same fate. She worked in New Caledonia's Loyalty Islands for decades, missionising with her husband, James, for the London Missionary Society and publishing a book about her experiences in 1920.⁴ During her time in the Loyalty Islands, Emma amassed a vast collection of ethnographic objects which she systematically ordered and documented using *Notes and Queries on Anthropology* as her guide. Yet her contribution to ethnography has largely been obscured from the historical record. In museums in Edinburgh, London, Cambridge and Oxford, the objects she collected, and later sold to raise funds, are catalogued simply as the 'James Hadfield Collection'.

This wilful neglect of missionary wives serves to falsify the reality of Pacific missionising. Protestant missionary organisations strongly urged new recruits to marry before being posted overseas. Unlike their Catholic contemporaries, it was hoped that these newly married couples would embody the values of a Christian family and set an example to the people among whom they would be working. As a result, many young missionary trainees experienced life-changing events at a rapid rate, propelled from ordination ceremony to wedding ceremony to swift departure overseas.⁵ The trepidation these young couples must have felt, once the whirlwind of ceremonies ceased and they found themselves on a boat halfway to a strange land, can only be imagined. Certainly, any optimistic expectations that Jeanne may have had regarding her new life were dampened during the couple's meeting with the mayor of Nouméa, shortly after their arrival. 'So what have you come here for?' he asked. 'In ten years, there won't be any *Canaques* left!'.⁶

Jeanne and Maurice disliked Nouméa, with its colonial overtones, and found little to detain them there, departing after only three days for the Houaïlou Valley, aboard the *Saint Antoine*. On arrival, they dutifully heeded the advice offered by the mission HQ to 'do nothing for at least six months' other than keep their eyes and ears open and 'above all, to become competent in a local tongue'.⁷

By the time Paul Montague met the Leenhardts, just over a decade later in 1914, Maurice was fluent in the Aijë language of the Houaïlou people. The Leenhardts had built their mission on the banks of the river, on a 32-acre plot purchased from a French settler named Girard. They called the mission Do Neva, which translates as 'the true land'. This name had been chosen soon after their arrival during a meeting of local chiefs in the nearby village of Gondé. The assembled crowd had discussed various options late into the night before, finally, one chief suggested Do Neva. It was adopted immediately and work soon commenced on building a school and living quarters for trainee pastors.⁸ The Leenhardts themselves took up residence in Girard's former home.



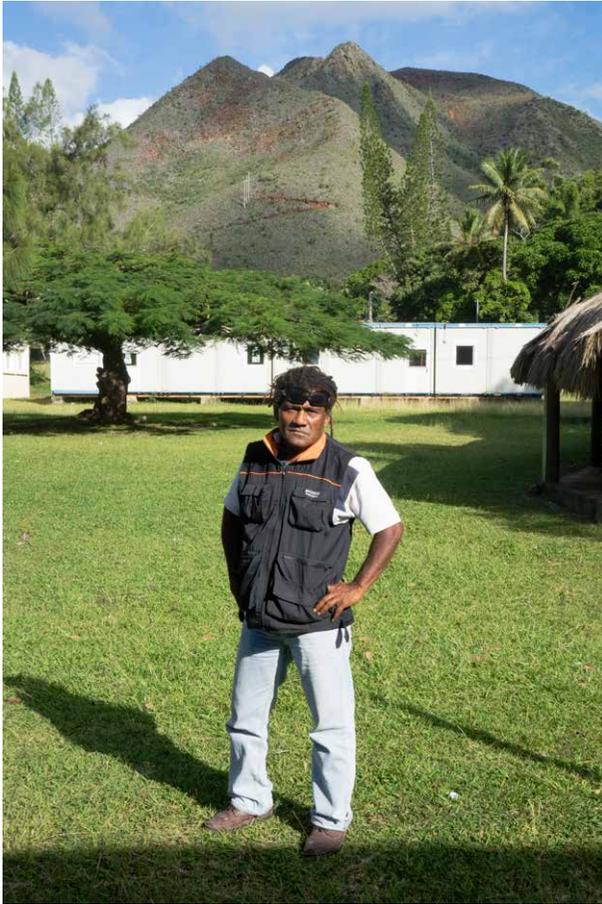
*Do Neva, the mission school established by the Leenhardts in the Houaïlou Valley, 2016.
Photograph by Mark Adams.*

In 1912, the mission's students and local tribespeople built a second house to accommodate the arrival of another missionary, Paul Laffay, who had been appointed to assist the Leenhardts in their work. By this stage, the mission complex also included a bakery, a mill, a workshop, a washhouse and a farm with various agricultural outbuildings.

In 1991, the site was accorded historical monument status and, in 2003, to mark the centenary of its founding, the old buildings were restored and new ones added to accommodate its contemporary purpose as a school and agricultural college. On 25 October 2003, this restored Do Neva was inaugurated by André Leenhardt, a descendant of Jeanne and Maurice.

Today, the old school sits resplendently refurbished at the centre of the green, flat site, located alongside the Houaïlou River on the valley floor. It is surrounded by an architectural mish mash of portacabins, alongside more permanent single-storey buildings with verandas and a traditional-style Kanak hut with open sides and a conical thatched roof. The area is naturally enclosed by steep foothills that quickly rise to become rugged mountains looming over everything, creating an impression of being inside a stadium or amphitheatre. It is easy to imagine that this sense of enclosure could feel either benignly protective or menacingly claustrophobic, depending on the weather conditions.

In June 2016, when Mark Adams and I visited with François, Edmond and Yamel, Do Neva was bathed in soft afternoon sunlight from clear blue skies. Almost casually, François revealed that he had been a pupil there as a boy, sent by his father who was ambitious for his son to receive the best possible education. François recalled how he and his friends would hoard biscuits, sweets and chocolate like treasure and escape with



François Wadra reliving his youth at the Do Neva school, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

their stash up into the hills behind the school to gorge on them at one sitting. He didn't look particularly happy to be back at this site of his youth. Mark took a photograph of him standing, hands on hips, as though assessing a scene of past misdemeanours.

Yamel pointed out a petroglyph that had been set into the wall of the school, to the right of a large window: a Kanak intervention in this site of European transformation.

The presence of the Leenhardts in the Houaïlou Valley was probably influential in Paul Montague's decision to base himself there. Maurice, a charismatic, complex character and experienced observer of all things Kanak, would have been a useful mentor and sounding board for Paul's newfound fascination with the local culture. The Leenhardts' chaotic home – full of incident, activity, noise, animals and young children – would have been a comforting reminder of his own childhood home back in Devon. The dining room at Do Neva was the main hub of the mission's activity and the setting for endless meetings, planning sessions and debates. Dinner plates were quickly pushed aside to make room for pages of Bible translations, maps upon which to plot routes to villages as-yet unvisited, and ethnographic notes marked up with questions to ask Boesouou Erijisi, Maurice's Kanak informant, teacher and confidante. Dinner guests were encouraged to discuss science, literature, art and music with the



The chapel at Gondé, the village where Jeanne and Maurice Leenhardt first appreciated the Kanak aesthetic, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

Leenhardts' children in a bid to allay Jeanne and Maurice's concerns about their lack of a traditional education. Late into the evening, Kanak pastors waited patiently to speak to the Leenhardts about theological doctrine and tribal concerns.⁹ Paul would have dined here on numerous occasions and, perhaps, taken along his gittern with which to entertain the children after dinner.

At one end of the dining room, standing watch over all the comings and goings, was a life-size plastercast replica of a statue from the galleries of the Louvre. *The Winged Victory of Samothrace*, which depicts Nike, the Greek goddess of victory, was a particular favourite of Jeanne's father, André Michel. André was a highly-respected art historian and curator, who passed the figure every day as he walked to his office in the Louvre, and had arranged for the replica Nike to be made.¹⁰ What Jeanne made of the huge, winged, headless female figure is not recorded. It is intriguing to imagine what might have been in André's mind as he despatched this extraordinary gift from Paris to his beloved daughter, far away in New Caledonia. Perhaps this embodiment of female victory, standing proudly on the prow of a ship, chimed with his vision of Jeanne, bravely sailing across the ocean to take the word of God to those who needed it.

If, indeed, that was André Michel's vision then it was sadly misplaced, because the Leenhardts were far from pioneers of Protestant Christianity on the island. Kanak missionaries from the Loyalty Islands had been performing that role for almost half a century prior to Jeanne and Maurice's arrival. Since the 1860s, under the influence of the London Missionary Society, Kanak pastors had been working to establish the Protestant faith across the Grande Terre. In particular, they had focused on the east-coast areas, such as Houailou, where they had connections through traditional trade

routes as well as ritual exchanges and marriages. These Kanak pastors, known as *natas* (which translates as ‘messenger’ in the *Nengone* language of the Loyalty Island of Maré), had also travelled further afield, missionising as far away as New Guinea and the Islands of the Torres Strait.

The Leenhardts’ early experiences in the Houaïlou Valley took their missionary zeal in a different, more immersive, direction. In Gondé they met the tribe and saw the church being built under the guidance of *nata* Joané Eurimindia and local chief Baptiste Thebeui.

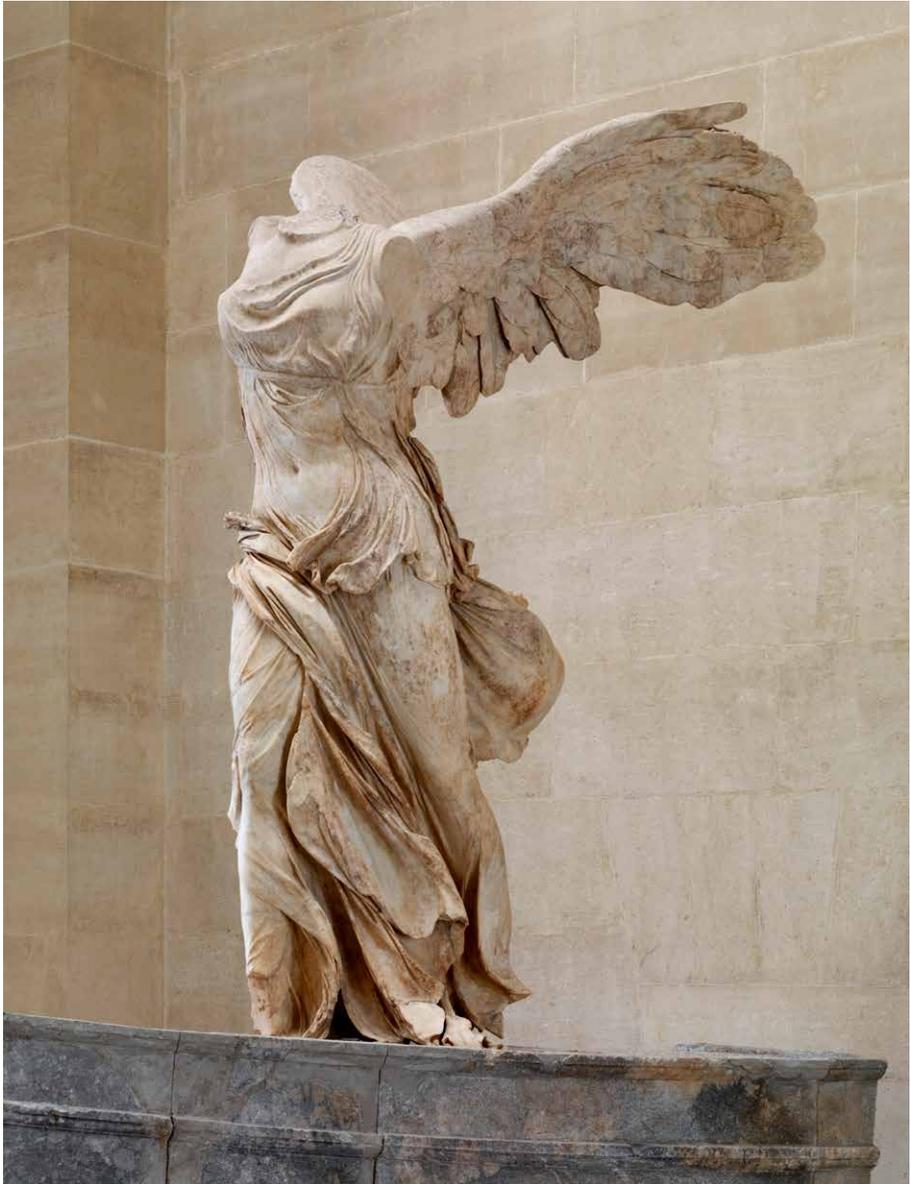
There, Leenhardt had his first opportunity to appreciate the beauty of the Houaïlou landscape and to explore the layout of the village and tree-lined alleyways, nestling in the surrounding valley with its winding river and towering mountains. The visit to Gondé also afforded Jeanne time to witness something of Kanak daily life. She was charmed when she heard members of the tribe chanting ‘Christian litanies combined with multiplication tables’.¹¹ All this made the couple question what they had heard from a missionary colleague, who had claimed that Kanak ‘family life existed only to a very inferior degree’ and that their ‘moral sense’ could, at best, be described as ‘degraded’.¹² In Gondé, the Leenhardts felt an immediate affinity for the aesthetics of Kanak culture and an empathy for the Kanak people.

This revelation did not blind Maurice and Jeanne to the many threats and challenges facing Kanak culture. In a letter to his parents, Maurice summarised the conflict he felt between his role as a missionary and the daily struggles of the Kanak people, claiming ‘we had been given the picture of a people throwing itself into the arms of a good Jesus; but I find little except the proud Canaque ... who ... would rather not have children at all than see them exploited by the whites’.¹³

It was against this backdrop of conflict and concern that the Leenhardts were forced to face the implications of France’s colonial presence when war broke out in August 1914. Rather surprisingly, Maurice saw this development as an opportunity to combat the French administration’s entrenched negativity towards Kanak tribes. He began encouraging young Kanak men to enlist and was instrumental in establishing a Kanak battalion to participate in the fighting. This show of loyalty to France, he hoped, would demonstrate to the administration, as well as to New Caledonia’s growing number of French settlers, that the Kanak population had something positive to offer to the war effort and that they were not destined simply to succumb to despair and alcoholism.

In Nouméa, rumours had begun to swirl about the recall of officials to France. The optimism of the early months, that the war would be over by Christmas, had begun to fade, to be replaced by an ominous realisation that matters would not be resolved quickly or easily. Around this time, Paul Montague learned that his brother David was being trained for battle. The long reach of a world war had stretched to the Pacific.

Towards the end of 1914, Paul paid one of his regular visits to the Leenhardts at Do Neva and an extraordinary event unfolded. In a letter written by Maurice to his parents, Maurice describes an afternoon when he, Paul Laffay and Paul Montague were gathered in the dining room at Do Neva to discuss the latest news of the war.¹⁴ Fearful of the reports of German successes, the three men made a pact. Together, they would place a curse on the Kaiser.



The Winged Victory of Samothrace in the galleries of the Louvre. Jeanne's father sent a cast of this figure from Paris to New Caledonia as a gift to his daughter, which witnessed the infamous 'cursing of the Kaiser'.

To enact this curse, they sought out a rare and potent Kanak magic stone and invoked its power. Watched over by Nike, the Greek winged goddess of victory, two Protestant missionaries and a scientist sought the power of a magic stone to bring about victory for the Allied Forces of Britain and France and defeat for the German Emperor. Leenhardt ended the letter to his parents by saying: 'Let us hope that this will bear fruit...'



A group of men and a chief at the village of Nessakoéa in the Houaïlou Valley, 1914. The chief wears a belt made from cowry shells strung on to flying fox fur cord. Photograph by Paul Montague.

A Belt of Cowry Shells

The soft afternoon light at Do Neva provided the perfect conditions for the Deardorff camera. Mark suggested that he attempt a shot of the historic school and its beautiful setting, so he began to unload the equipment from the car. François wandered off in search of any members of staff who might remember him from his misspent youth, while Edmond and Yamel reclined in the grass under a large tree. Some time later, after Mark was satisfied with what he had achieved, we began the drive back towards Bourail with the sun getting low in the sky. We had not gone far when Edmond and Yamel pulled off the road. As our car slowed, I noticed two monuments set back on the left-hand bank. The first was the size and shape of a gravestone, with a rather eerie-looking stone-figure emerging from its rear, draped in a white cloth with a featureless face. The figure's hand reached out, holding a wreath. A verse from the book of Matthew was inscribed at the top of the stone: *'Heureux Ceux Qui Ont Faim et Soif de Justice'* –



Paul Laffay, the French missionary who worked alongside Maurice Leenhardt and cursed the Kaiser with Paul Montague. Laffay was killed in the fighting at Monastir in 1917.

'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice.' Commemorated beneath this text were the names of the men from the Do Neva mission who had fought and died for France in World War I: Piemeba Asavva, Gabriel Romute, Poya Isaia and Poyes Svep. Listed along with the Kanak soldiers was the missionary Paul Laffay.

Of the three men who had cursed the Kaiser that day in the dining room at Do Neva, only Maurice Leenhardt survived the war. The two young Pauls, who had been Leenhardt's friends, and in whose potential he had such high hopes, were killed within a few months of each other, fighting in the Salonika Campaign.

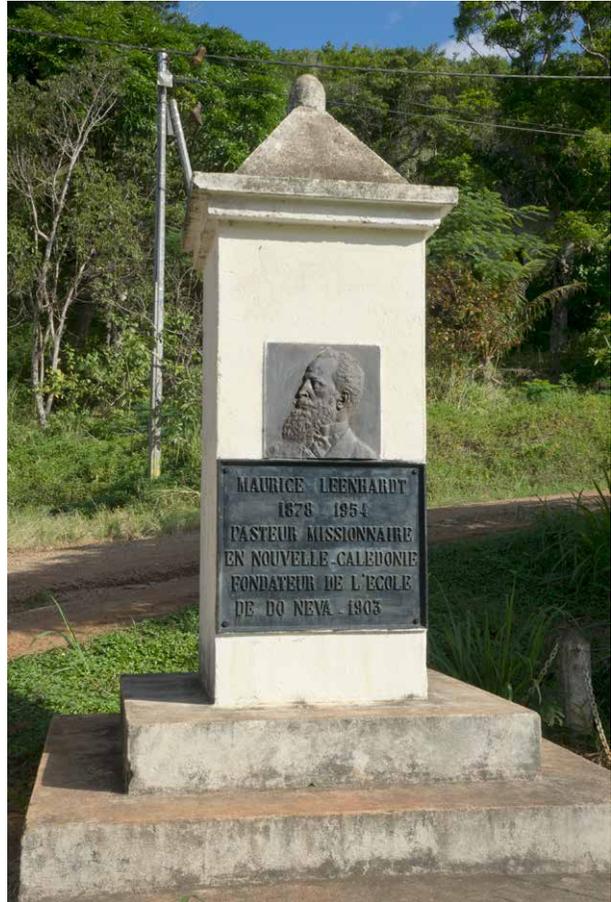
Paul Laffay had been extremely popular with the Houaïlou tribes, despite the relatively short time he had spent in the valley. Recalled to France in 1915, he underwent basic training at the École Militaire de Saint-Maixent, where he urgently petitioned his superiors to be allowed to accompany the Kanak troops to the Front, saying that it was his 'duty'.¹ His pleas were ignored and he was despatched to fight at Monastir where, on 28 March 1917, he was shot through the head and died instantly. His brother arrived in the area a few days later, hoping to fight by his side and was himself killed shortly after. Upon learning of Paul Laffay's death, the *natas* gathered at Do Neva to mourn his passing. A distraught Maurice Leenhardt read aloud a message that Laffay had penned before he departed for the Front:

Natas, I say to you: to God! We'll meet up there in heaven, where there
can be no war. Be strong in the work that God has entrusted to you. Bright
Caledonia! She will live if you give her your life. To God, natas, I love you and
may God be with you!²

In response to Laffay's death, Joané, the pastor from Gondé, wrote to the directors of the mission in Paris on behalf of all the *natas*. The letter, which was translated from the local Houaïlou language into French by Leenhardt, and published in the *Journal des Missions Évangéliques*, describes their deep distress. It concludes by saying 'we think of him ceaselessly, and so wish he would return to us.' The inclusion of his name on the monument near Do Neva attests to their remembrance. In death, Paul Laffay was granted what had been denied to him in life – his wish to accompany his Kanak comrades.

The second of the roadside monuments was dedicated to Maurice Leenhardt. It consists of a white column sitting atop a stepped plinth, with two lead plaques affixed to the front. On the first plaque is a portrait of Maurice. Depicted in profile, wearing a suit and high-collared shirt, his receding hairline is compensated for by a full and bushy beard. His head is tilted upwards, giving him a slightly haughty appearance. The second plaque recalls his achievements as a pastor and a missionary, marking in particular his founding of the school at Do Neva.

The war years proved a tragic turning point for Leenhardt and his missionary work. His decision to actively work with the French authorities to recruit Kanak men to fight proved disastrous and his life descended into turmoil as the news of mounting death tolls filtered back to New Caledonia. Leenhardt's reputation with the tribes was further damaged when he became unwillingly embroiled in a second wave of even more coercive recruitments, which saw him repeating the authorities' empty promises of better lives for Kanak men who agreed to fight.³ This time, however, the chiefs were less willing to send



Memorial to Maurice Leenhardt on the road to Do Neva, 2016. His wife Jeanne is not remembered here. Photograph by Mark Adams.

their young men to die in this faraway war. Then, in 1917, he was again caught between worlds when he was called as a witness at the trial of 70 Kanak rebels accused of leading an uprising.⁴ Soon after, Maurice and Jeanne retreated to France for a sabbatical, where Maurice concluded, bleakly, ‘we’ve accomplished very little.’⁵

In 2016, our small group gathered around the roadside memorials together, studying the names and reflecting on the distance those men had travelled to fight and die. In the quiet afternoon, I shared the story of the cursing of the Kaiser with François. He grinned, relishing the idea of Christian missionaries resorting to Kanak magic in an attempt to change the course of history. Before climbing back into the car, I circled Maurice Leenhardt’s monument searching in vain for some mention of Jeanne.

The following morning, we drove back across the Hill of the Flying Foxes and down into the Houailou Valley once again. This time, we were heading towards the small hamlet of Nessakoéa between Gondé and Do Neva, pronounced Nesha-Qweya and spelled Nejuá Quéa by Paul Montague in his journal. Paul had established a close connection with the tribe there and several of the objects listed in his catalogue were obtained locally. One of these objects is particularly striking and unusual. It is a belt made from 17 shiny, white cowry shells, strung onto a length of flying-fox fur cord.



A belt of cowry shells, fit for a chief. Collected by Paul Montague in Nessakoéa in 1914. Photograph by Gwil Owen.

According to Paul's notes, it was known as a *nimu* and would have been worn by a chief. I had always admired the belt's intricate construction, believing it to be one of the most beautiful pieces in Montague's collection.

The New Caledonia flying fox (*Pteropus vetulus*) is endemic to the islands and highly prized. In the past, almost all prestigious Kanak artefacts incorporated strands of its red-brown fur: clubs belonging to chiefs had lengths of flying-fox fur cord wrapped



Emmanuel Kasarhérou visiting the stores in Cambridge to research Paul Montague's collection, 2014. Emmanuel's family are from the village of Nessakoéa. Photograph by Alison Clark.

around their shafts, while necklaces worn by women of high-status were created by threading greenstone beads onto its long delicate strands. The relative scarcity of the fur was a key factor in its prized status, so those preparing the cords would cleverly roll fine lengths of fur over the top of an existing base of twined coconut fibre, creating the illusion of thick, plump strands. To make an object such as the cowry shell belt would have required great expertise and many hours of patient labour.

In the autumn of 2014, this belt became the focus of attention when two curators travelled from Paris to Cambridge to examine the Montague Collection. Emmanuel Kasarhérou and Roger Boulay have spent many years researching and assembling an inventory of Kanak artefacts held in European museums.⁶ Their ultimate aim is to establish a database which can be accessed by those wishing to identify precisely what objects are held in which institutions.

Emmanuel was especially interested in Montague's fieldwork in the Houailou Valley because his family are from there and some live in the village of Nessakoéa.

On the first day of Emmanuel and Roger's visit to Cambridge, we worked in the Museum's storeroom, poring over objects, images and notes. Roger sketched particular pieces, while Emmanuel set up his tripod and camera and began measuring and documenting some greenstone adze blades. I retrieved the cowry shell belt from its box and placed it on the bench in front of us, before scanning Montague's catalogue to read aloud the relevant entry:

186: Belt, NIMU, of cowry shells, MBOUI, strung upon flying fox fur string, DÉRÉ. Worn by chiefs upon public occasions, visits etc.

NEJUA QUÉA, 25.11.14

Struck by its diminutive size, we discussed how it was far too small to be worn as a belt, even by a young child. I turned back to the notes while Emmanuel began searching through Montague's photographs, saying he was looking for one image in particular. Suddenly he stopped. 'There!', he said, 'There is the belt.'

The photograph in question is the most captivating and intriguing of all the images Paul took in New Caledonia. Taken in the village of Nessakoéa, it shows a group of men gathered around a wooden figure that has been carved atop a post. Each man stands straight backed, staring directly and confidently into the camera. Each has a club over one shoulder, while the men at the outer edges of the group also hold long spears, the tips of which can just be seen in shot. At the back of the group, a young boy stands elevated above the heads of the men. Hand on hip, his expression is proud, his head cocked slightly upwards. On closer inspection, it is clear he is standing on the back of a horse, whose head is obscured by the men standing in front of it. Balancing bareback on the horse, the boy is the epitome of youthful swagger.

At first glance, it is easy to miss the cowry shell belt. Certainly, it wasn't being worn by any of the men, who all have cotton sarongs wrapped around their waists, *à la mode*. As he continued to study the image, Emmanuel pointed at the central feature of the photograph – the wooden figure. It had been adorned with items associated with chiefly status: a headdress known as a *tidi*, into which a spear thrower had been tucked; a penis sheath; a flying-fox fur waist band and, finally, the belt of cowry shells. It began to dawn on us that we had mistaken the meaning of Montague's object description in his catalogue. In fact, he had recognised the figure wearing the belt for what it was: a chief. In his cataloguing of the belt, the blurring of the boundaries between person and object saw him record it accurately, he simply neglected to mention that, in this case, the chief in question was a carved wooden one.

Extraordinarily, Emmanuel said he recognised the figure – he had seen it previously in the storerooms of the Musée de Nouvelle-Calédonie in Nouméa. Although curators there knew something of its history, they had no secure date for its collection nor knowledge of the specifics of where it had originally stood.

Montague's photograph, along with his catalogue notes, could fill these gaps in its provenance. In late 1914, this wooden chief had stood on Kanak land at Nessakoéa. While Montague's catalogue documents his acquisition of the belt in November 1914, the absence of the figure itself from his collection in Cambridge suggests that he was not responsible for its removal. Perhaps he had been satisfied with the beautiful belt or, perhaps, he had tried to acquire the figure too but the tribe had been unwilling to part with such an important carving. Certainly, the protective stance of the men surrounding the figure in Montague's photograph, and its fine appearance, suggest a powerful connection. The connection between the tribe and the figure had obviously been severed at some point later, when their fortunes declined and they came under increasing pressure to leave their land and relocate to reservations. Disrobed and divested of its ornaments, the

figure may have stood out in the open for a period, a silent witness to the failing fortunes of its people, before it was uprooted and transferred to Nouméa.

Today, unearthed and transplanted to a museum storeroom, the figure stands embedded in a steel base alongside several others, all of which have been removed from their places of origin and are in exile in Nouméa. Huddled together in the stores, some of them covered in white Tyvec sheets to protect them from dust, they are memorials to another time.



Figure of a carved wooden chief from the village of Nessakoéa, now in the stores of the Musée de Nouvelle-Calédonie, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

At Nessakoéa

When photographer Mark Adams and I visited the Musée de Nouvelle-Calédonie in June 2016, we were allowed behind the scenes and given access to the stores to photograph the carved wooden chief from Nessakoéa. As Mark worked quickly, preparing his camera equipment to capture the chief in his new realm, I stood eye-to-eye with the figure. It clearly matched the one in Montague's photograph, despite its slightly more forlorn appearance, deprived of its elegant accoutrements. The large crack running down its face, just visible in the picture, has continued to expand and now extends down its torso. Several other large cracks have appeared, giving it a striking striated appearance. One feature, only visible now that it is disrobed, is that of a long, extended index finger. In Montague's image, both the figure's hands are obscured from view by a thick waist band of flying-fox fur cords wrapped around the body. The significance of this pointing finger is not clear. It may be that its downward trajectory was to indicate the ground upon which it stood, proclaiming a sense of belonging to a particular place. Once, this place was the village of Nessakoéa in the Houaïlou Valley; now, the finger points to the unforgiving concrete floor of a museum storeroom.

The following day, as the sun was rising, our team of Mark, François Wadra and me, as well as curators Edmond and Yamel, congregated at a roadside service station on the outskirts of Nouméa, ready to drive out to the Houaïlou Valley. By 5am, we were already en route, heading towards Nessakoéa. That morning, having descended the Col des Roussettes, we drove further towards the coast than we had on our previous visit. Past the turn-off for Gondé, we continued driving for a further 15 minutes or so until Yamel and Edmond's car came to a sudden halt at a sharp bend, before turning right up a steep driveway. Mark steered our vehicle in the same direction and, as we pulled into a clearing surrounded by tall trees, I glanced over my shoulder to see five men seated on the veranda of a concrete house, awaiting our arrival. A small, skinny dog padded over and Yamel and Edmond began unloading their car, which was stuffed with baguettes, bottles of orange squash, tins of Nescafé instant coffee and powdered milk. We had also brought bales of brightly patterned Chinese-produced cloth, called *manou*, an essential gift, presented as part of a ceremony known as the *coutume* which takes place at all Kanak gatherings.¹ To these bales I added a length of 'English' cloth, decorated with delicate pink roses and purchased in Cambridge weeks earlier. François had stressed previously that, although bales of Chinese-made cloth had replaced traditional barkcloth in such ceremonies, its significance and meaning remained the same. It is the gesture and the acknowledgement of tradition that is important. Placing a copy of the booklet about Montague's collection on top of the cloth, we presented ourselves and our offerings to the man who seemed to be the most senior member of the group. The man's knees looked painfully swollen. At his side, a pair of crutches leaned against the wall of the house.



Looking at Montague's field photos at Nessakoéa, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

After the formalities were over, a space was cleared on the table among the baguettes and instant coffee tins and we began laying out A4 images of objects. The five men, all members of the same extended family, were related to the Kanak curator Emmanuel Kasarhérou, who had visited the Museum in Cambridge to study Montague's collection. Several young children hung around in the background and, after several minutes, a young girl of about ten joined us and stood quietly by the table looking at the images. She spoke a little English and wrote 'My name is Djeine' in careful letters in my notebook.

Slowly, the men began to talk, sometimes in French and sometimes in their own language. Although the majority of the objects Montague collected are no longer in common use, the men were familiar with them and were quick to nod in recognition or offer some insight into how they would have been used in the past. What they sought, more eagerly than photographs of objects, was the information in Montague's written notes. At the mention of the name of a particular family, heated debates commenced about whether any descendants survived and, if so, their possible location now.

François drew the group's attention to the black-and-white photograph of the carved wooden chief, said to be from Nessakoéa, and explained about the cowry shell belt in Cambridge, as well as the existence of the figure itself at the museum in Nouméa. From the porch of the house, the old man with the swollen knees, whose name was Daniel Bonwé, held the photograph up at arms' length in front of him, peering out at the landscape as if to try to reassemble the scene in his mind. We all became engrossed in this enterprise. Using the undulations of the hills in the background of the photograph as a guide, we began to hypothesise as to where the carved chief may once have stood. At some moments, it felt tantalisingly possible – surely a certain dip in the trees was the same one shown on the right of the photograph. But then, the next minute, all certainty

slipped away and eventually Daniel lowered the copy of the photograph and let it fall into his lap. He said that the landscape had changed beyond all recognition as a result of the planting, by European settlers, of vast quantities of coconut trees for copra, crops of coffee plants and orchards of lychee trees.

Later, Mark unpacked the Deardorff camera and began assembling it to take a photograph of the scene. As the men looked on with growing curiosity, Edmond removed a black folder from his rucksack and began leafing through pages of typed text, each stored in an individual plastic wallet. The typed pages were from Montague's notes, which Edmond had been transcribing and translating into French. Having identified a specific page, he began to read aloud:

The Pe Norro ro Merrimé or the thunder stones of Merrimé:

These two large rocks are situated on the north bank of the river, just below Nejuá Quea [Nessakoéa]. The magical manipulation of these stones came under the thunder totem of the Quea family, and this family was responsible for all the thunder stones in the neighbourhood. Their secrets were entrusted to an old man. The two rocks are benevolent and bring only beneficial thunder showers without accompanying destruction. The exact manipulation I was not able to discern, but they were touched with the leaves of several trees and herbs²

The men of Nessakoéa listened in silence, absorbing this description of a landscape that was all around them yet nowhere to be found. When Edmond paused, an intense exchange took place within the group and one of the men, Joel Nei, walked over to his car, climbed in and drove away. From inside the house, women's voices and a television could be heard. François looked up and said to Mark and me: 'It's OK. He is coming back.'

A man called Kapoipa Kasarhérou rose to speak. He thanked us for travelling to Nessakoéa to bring the collection to their attention. Having listened to what Montague had written, he said he now understood that there was a connection between Nessakoéa and Cambridge. This connection, he continued, had been forged a hundred years ago but its echoes could be heard in the present. He pointed to a photograph in the booklet of his relative, Emmanuel, examining Montague's collection in Cambridge. Just then, Mark said he was ready to take the photograph and shouted for us all to hold still. As he did so, Kapoipa Kasarhérou held the booklet up as if to reassert this point of enduring connectedness.

The sound of a car skidding on the stones of the drive indicated that Joel Nei had returned. As he walked towards us, I saw he was carrying a basket that resembled a fruit bowl, covered with a piece of cloth. Placing it carefully on the table, he removed the fabric with the flourish of a magician to reveal several stones of various shapes and sizes. In the past, Joel explained, his family had been the ones responsible for keeping the rain stones and he wanted us to know that, despite the passage of time, a few examples remain in their possession.



At the village of Nessakoéa with Djeine, Daniel Bonwé, Brenda, Lucien, Julie Adams, Joel Nei, Edmond Saumé, François Wadra, Kapoipa Kasarhérou and Yamel Euritein, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.



The basket of stones brought by Joel Nei to show to the group at Nessakoéa, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.



*During the passing round of the stones, Djeine holds a precious greenstone axe blade, 2016.
Photograph by Mark Adams.*

The rain stones sat on the table amidst the images of the ones Montague had collected. Joel picked up a stone and passed it to the man on his right, Lucien, who rolled it thoughtfully from one palm to the other before handing it to the young girl, Djeine. In the basket, along with the rain stones, was another heirloom that Joel also wanted us to see – a large greenstone blade that would once have been part of a ceremonial axe. Montague had collected three similar blades while in Nessakoéa, each at a different stage of the polishing process that would render the stone shiny and translucent. François wanted us to document these objects so Mark picked up his digital camera and began photographing the stones as they were removed one by one from the basket. After they had been photographed, according to François' strict instructions, they were passed around the group for us to examine. Solemnly, we each held a stone in our hands for a moment before passing it on to the next person. There seemed to be something magical in this shared experience.



François Wadra at work in the stores in Cambridge, 2013. Photograph by Mark Adams.

Magic Stones

François Wadra is always careful to twice-photograph the Kanak artefacts he encounters in museum collections. First, he uses his digital camera to capture the image. Then, immediately afterwards, he takes the same shot again on his phone. These images he uploads to Facebook as soon as possible, so that people back home in New Caledonia can see what he has seen. There is a sense of urgency driving his work that is unlike the usual measured pace of much museum work.

In 2013, François visited the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Cambridge to study the objects acquired by Paul Montague. As a trained archaeologist, François has a specific eye for collections work. He is concerned with an object's physical properties, its function and how, or whether, its function has been understood by the collector. He is less interested in the particularities and peculiarities of collectors themselves. Once, he complained impatiently: 'I have the feeling that in the end I will get to know more about the collectors than the objects themselves. Labels tell you who collected it but I say so what? What I want to know is who made these objects? How were they made? Which ceremonies were they used in? That is what Kanak people want to know!'¹

In Cambridge, François was especially keen to see the 38 magic stones that Montague had collected. These stones look as they would in the natural world, almost all being unmodified by human hands. Montague collected many examples, carefully labelling each one to indicate his understanding of its purpose and wrote extensively about their power and significance.

Magic stones were used to ensure crops, like taro or yams, were plentiful or that rain fell; they could be used to strike down an enemy or to make someone fall in love with the holder of the stone. Powerful stones belonged to specific clans and were rubbed with a mixture of special herbs to make them more efficacious. Montague wrote of them:

It might almost be said that there is not a conspicuous rock or stone of peculiar shape ... that is not looked upon as a nature spirit commanding some natural force. There are thunder rocks, cyclone rocks, rocks which burn down houses, which give warnings to enemies and which rule the products of the forests ... These rocks, it must be understood, are not looked upon as the dwelling places of spirits, but as the spirits themselves in the form of rocks.²

While magic stones were still widely used at the time of Montague's expedition, they were being systematically targeted and removed by missionaries. Both Catholic and Protestant missionaries condemned their use and encouraged people to destroy them or to give them up as evidence of their conversion to Christianity. The fundamental role stones played in connecting Kanak people to their environment made them an obvious target for missionaries hoping to break the association between Kanak people, their land and their traditional way of life. Missionaries frequently focused their efforts



*The Rerha Paya, or 'house post' stone near Ai, Houaïlou Valley, New Caledonia, 1914.
Photograph by Paul Montague.*



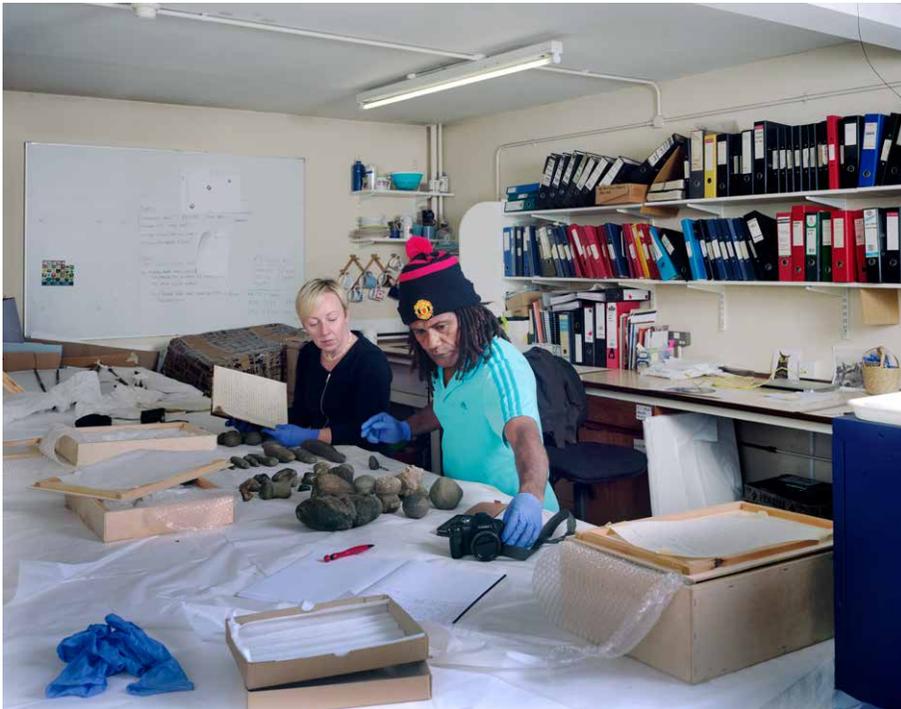
Taro stones collected by Paul Montague in New Caledonia in 1914. Photograph by Gwil Owen.

on converting chiefs, as a means of securing large-scale conversions of their followers. This effective strategy only compounded the loss of traditional ways of life.

It was in this context that Kanak people resorted to selling or giving away their sacred objects, such as magic stones. And it was in this context that Montague was able to collect so many of them.

In the Museum's storeroom, François removed the stones from their tissue-lined boxes and laid them out along a workbench. Most bore a label upon which Montague had recorded their particular purpose. Looking at the stones, we saw that he had deliberately acquired, documented and labelled multiple examples of the same 'type' of stone. We wondered why. Why, for example, had he collected five taro stones? Unlike a group of spears which may each have distinguishing features, such as a design carved onto the shaft or a decorative feather, these stones are grey, round, visually unremarkable and almost identical. It seemed that Montague saw things differently. In seeking out multiple examples, he had understood each one to be distinct, worthy of attention and a valuable addition to his collection, rather than as interchangeable equivalents.

In the storeroom, the act of laying out the stones together as a group was insightful. Of course, this sort of juxtaposition is a familiar aspect of curation because objects are not usually displayed on their own. However, in this case the process produced something of a revelation about Paul Montague's methodology. François proposed that, in his labelling of the stones, Montague had been attempting to structure his collection using a Kanak taxonomy. In doing so, he chose not to classify the stones as 'magic'; he didn't order them according to size, shape or appearance, nor was he worried about acquiring multiple examples. Instead, he curated them as he believed they would have



Laying out the magic stones in the stores in Cambridge. Photograph by Mark Adams, 2013.

been understood in the Kanak world. For example, the label on a taro stone reads: ‘Pe Mwa: a stone to make taro grow’. It is a statement of fact, unmediated by any clause that could distance him from this claim, such as ‘a stone *believed* to make taro grow’ or ‘*said by natives* to make taro grow’. In classifying the stone as a *Pe Mwa*, rather than as a ‘magic stone’, Montague disorients his Western scientific training that would have sought to separate the world of the magical from the world of the rational. This detail might seem insignificant, but it is not.

The French philosopher Michel Foucault described his own overwhelming sense of disorientation upon coming across a fictitious taxonomy of animals in an essay by Jorge Luis Borges. In the essay, Borges invents a taxonomy, quoting from an old ‘Chinese encyclopaedia’, that divided animals into seemingly random categories such as ‘frenzied’, ‘fabulous’ or ‘belonging to the Emperor’. What was striking to Foucault was how the unsettled feeling he experienced, when encountering Borges’ alternative system of seeing, led him to understand the arbitrary nature of the way we structure our world.³

In that spirit, it is worth considering what it might signify if, for example, the Museum was to adopt Montague’s approach and catalogue the stone as a *Pe Mwa* rather than as a ‘magic stone’, or to display it in an exhibition with a label that simply reads: ‘*Pe Mwa*: a stone that makes taro grow’. How challenging would it be for a visitor to encounter a stone presented within an alternative taxonomy? Similarly, would it be possible for a curator to resist the urge to provide a cultural translation, to make

the stone more familiar and readily comprehensible to the Museum's (largely) non-Indigenous audience?

Although Montague had died before having to consider how his collection might be displayed, when we stepped back to view the stones laid out on the workbench, a glimpse of his vision seemed to have been revealed.

In the present, François worked on, systematically examining and photographing each stone. As he did, Mark Adams began setting up his own camera, aiming to document the scene. Lights were erected and sheets of film unpacked ready to be loaded into the Deardorff camera. Amid the bustle, François barely looked up. I asked him if many magic stones survived in New Caledonia. He said not, although he cautioned that this did not mean they had been forgotten. Indicating the stones laid out on the workbench, François said: 'The object itself is here but the spirit of the object is still with those people back home.'



Sleeping mat, amur (detail), collected by Paul Montague in the village of Gondé in August 1914. Photograph by Josh Murfitt.

The Fate of Mats

On 2 August 1914, Paul Montague collected an item described as a 'sleeping mat' in the village of Gondé in the Houaïlou Valley. Traditionally, large finely plaited mats, made by women from strips of dried pandanus leaves, were highly valued in Kanak culture. Requiring many hours of labour and great skill to create, these mats were presented along with other gifts at important ceremonies such as weddings. Weavers from the Houaïlou Valley were particularly renowned for their mats, which were traded for shells with the coastal groups of the Canala region. However, by the early decades of the twentieth century, the production of plaited mats and baskets and, more significantly, the transmission of the knowledge required to make them, had dramatically declined.

Emma Hadfield, a missionary with the London Missionary Society, bemoaned the loss of these skills in her book *Among the Natives of the Loyalty Group*, published in 1920.¹ Working in the Loyalty Islands for over 40 years, Emma and her husband James amassed a vast collection of Kanak artefacts which they later sold to museums across Britain to help fund their retirement. In common with many missionaries of that era, the Hadfields apparently saw no contradiction in mourning the loss of a particular aspect of traditional Kanak culture, such as weaving, while their collecting habits were simultaneously contributing to the demise of traditional life.

Today, the mats sold in the stores of Nouméa are mostly manufactured in Tahiti. They are made from coconut leaf and produced in vast quantities, so are much less finely woven. It is not easy to find Kanak women who are still creating pandanus mats, although in some places the skills are gradually being revived.

One Sunday morning in June 2016, photographer Mark Adams and I went in search of a 'traditional' mat at a local market in the town of Bourail. The plan was to photograph a weaver and purchase a mat for accession into the collections of the Museum of Anthropology and Archaeology in Cambridge but it soon became clear that this would be a difficult, if not impossible, task. I chatted to several women working on the stalls, many of whom said they did not know how to weave. Others said they did know but did not have the time to dedicate to picking and preparing the leaves, let alone to actually making a mat.

One woman, whose name was Melanie Rolland, told us that she had taken up crocheting as a less time-consuming alternative, working in the evenings after her children were in bed. Tucked away in carrier bags beneath her fruit and vegetable stall, she had a selection of brightly coloured crocheted items. She retrieved them one by one and carefully laid them out among the fruit for us to see.

A small sky-blue bag, lined with brightly patterned cloth, caught my eye. In shape, it resembled the bags formerly carried by Kanak men, a very fine example of which had been collected by Paul Montague at Oubatche in September 1914. He noted that they were used to carry 'important odds and ends when going on a journey'.



*Melanie Rolland from
Bourail, New Caledonia,
with some of her
crocheted creations, 2016.
Photograph by Julie
Adams.*



Two baskets collected by Paul Montague. The one on the left has a flying-fox fur cord and would have been used to carry important items on a journey. Photograph by Gwil Owen.

The form and function of the two bags was much the same, although the material and techniques used to create them were altered. I knew that, if François Wadra had been with us, he would have pointed out the cultural continuities symbolised by Melanie's crocheted bag. Anthropological theories about 'rupture' and the loss of tradition in Kanak culture are a source of tremendous irritation to him. In an essay discussing objects such as this contemporary crocheted bag, he had written:

The fact that they are made from new materials does not change their fundamental function, or the role of those who use them ... The idea that Kanak are disconnected from their culture, or that there has been a break with tradition because they no longer know how to make an object or engage in certain activities is an illusion, because they are constantly living their culture. If cotton has replaced barkcloth, if cash has replaced traditional money or if bags of rice have replaced yams ... their function and their meaning remain the same.²

In other words, a break in the use of traditional materials does *not* amount to the break-up of Kanak culture. Expressing the view that there is no living relationship between Melanie's crocheted bag and the plaited 'odds and ends' bag, collected by Paul Montague a hundred years earlier, fails to recognise the creative continuity involved and underestimates the determination of Kanak people to endure, adapt and survive. Prompted by these thoughts, I decided to purchase the crocheted bag from Melanie for the Museum in Cambridge.



A crocheted bag made by Melanie Rolland, purchased for the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, in 2016. Photograph by Josh Murfitt.



Rolling out the amur (sleeping mat) in the galleries in Cambridge in 2013. Photograph by Julie Adams.

Sensing the potential for a greater sale, Melanie brought out two jaunty crocheted hats: one a sky-blue beret and the other a sun hat in blue and yellow wool. One for me and one for Mark, she suggested persuasively.

In 2013, when François Wadra was in Cambridge, he was keen to see the mat collected by Paul Montague from the village of Gondé. During a previous visit, we had been unable to locate it in the Museum's stores but, on this occasion, we were successful. I proceeded to retrieve the mat from the back of a high shelf, before carefully manoeuvring it down a ladder and a staircase into the Bevan workroom. This mat is the only one Paul collected and, in fact, is the only mat from New Caledonia in the Museum's collection. Rolled and wrapped in plastic, the mat had been protected from the effects of the thick layer of dust that had accumulated on the plastic's outer surface. It obviously hadn't been looked at for a long time but, through the grubby covering, the fineness of the weaving was clearly visible.

The fate of the Gondé mat – lying, untouched for years, in the Museum's stores – is by no means unique. However, it is a reminder that within ethnographic collections there is often an unwritten hierarchy of objects. Wooden figures and other examples of carving, such as canoe prows and house posts, are, without doubt, considered the most 'desirable'. Even objects which exist in vast quantities, such as shields and clubs, would be ranked highly. At the opposite end of the spectrum, barkcloth and mats fare far less well. The legacies of a colonial-era gender-bias are certainly at play here, but the fact

that these biases continue to be enacted in the present is perhaps more surprising, as is the very real consequences this hierarchy has for the fate of objects. In the case of mats, their fate in museum collections can generally be summarised as lamentable. Firstly, their delicate natural fibres are prone to deteriorate over time. Secondly, they tend to be large, so are difficult to handle and store. In the past, mats were often folded up and kept in boxes, causing deep creases to form along the fold lines. Stored in this way, mats begin to ossify, setting fast, and requiring intervention from specialist conservators to release them from the confines of their folds. An ultrasonic mister can be used to restore humidity and allow the fibres to become pliable again, but this is a labour-intensive process which is unlikely to be undertaken unless the mat has been selected for an exhibition or is to be photographed for publication.

In addition, there is the curatorial challenge of differentiating between mats from the various Pacific Islands. Many are made using the same materials (such as pandanus or coconut leaf) and, if they lack any ornamentation, closely resemble each other. In the absence of an accurate collection history, mats frequently get catalogued as 'Oceania unprovenanced', any further distinction being impossible. A mat catalogued in this way almost certainly faces a life of anonymity in storage, spending its days folded away in a box, or rolled on a rack, and rarely rescued from obscurity.

At the time Paul Montague was collecting, it was common for curators of ethnographic material to classify as 'duplicates' multiple examples of the same type of object. As a result, if a collection contained a number of 'Oceania unprovenanced' mats, for example, some were not formally accessioned into collections. Instead, they were logged and kept as duplicates, meaning they were dispensable and able to be exchanged or bartered with other institutions or collectors for more desirable pieces. In the colonial era, metropolitan museums were able to significantly bolster their collections through such duplicate exchanges. A museum in the Netherlands might trade spears from Dutch New Guinea with a museum in the UK. In return, they might seek to obtain ornaments from a British colonial territory such as New Zealand.

Conceptualising objects as disposable duplicates is a fascinating but largely underexplored legacy of the interconnected histories of colonialism and ethnographic museums. These duplicates are the discernible echoes of empire. They spend their days in limbo, both present and not present in collections (due to not being officially accessioned). Most major ethnographic museums are dealing with the burden of this historical museological practice, having to make difficult decisions about what to do with objects that are not strictly part of their collection but to which they have a duty of care. These duplicates, these spectral presences, haunt curators. With ever-increasing pressures on storage space, it is not always feasible to start accessioning large numbers of objects into already-crowded collections. And even if there were the necessary space and staff resources to register them, duplicates almost always have no associated provenance documentation.

There is a further challenge in establishing the biographies of mats. The English word 'mat' implies an item placed on the floor. However, in the Pacific, finely made mats – such as plaited pandanus mats – have a wide range of functions and would never have been used as floor coverings. Fine mats were often worn around the waist or used as sleeping blankets. Others were made for carefully wrapping newborn babies



Madame Pulue Siman, an expert weaver from the island of Lifou, who made the mat now in the British Museum, 2009. Photograph by Julie Adams.

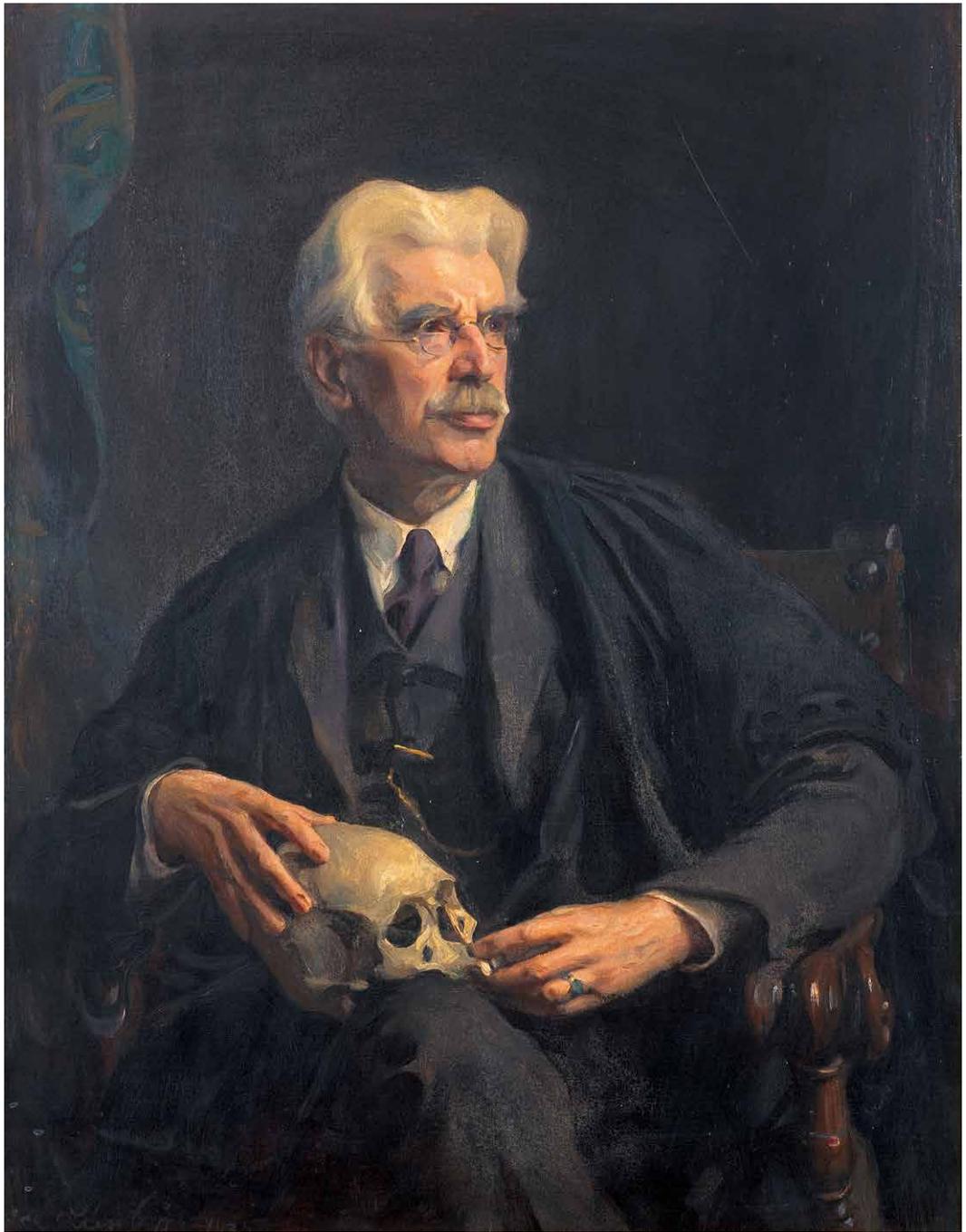
or to respectfully cover the dead. Many were created to be given away as prestigious gifts at ceremonies. The skills and time invested in making them are an indication of their cultural value, yet these factors have been frequently overlooked or gone unseen by European collectors and institutions. Instead, Pacific textiles of all kinds were categorised using the homogenising term, ‘mat’, and this misattribution persists in museum catalogue systems today.

A similar fate befell Māori cloaks, many of which were also referred to as mats in the early contact period. However, over time, as understandings of Māori culture grew, these garments were gradually reclassified as cloaks and recognised as items of clothing which required a skilled hand to create. The term ‘cloak’ has a particular resonance in the English language, often being associated with royalty and those of status, and, today, Māori cloaks are considered among the most precious items in Pacific collections. In the taxonomical world, mistaken attribution can have a profound impact on whether an object is accessioned, how it is stored, whether it is researched and, possibly, whether it is ever exhibited. Such are the contingencies of museums.

Somewhat predictably, when François and I tried to examine the mat that Montague collected in the Bevan workroom, it proved to be too large, so we carried it out into the Museum’s galleries and unrolled it there. Montague’s handwritten label described it as a

‘Sleeping Mat’, called an *amur* in the local Kanak language. The strips of pandanus were extremely fine and narrow, and François marvelled at how long it would have taken the weaver to prepare them. Some of the strips were lighter than others, suggesting that the weaver had placed them out in the sun to bleach and then brought the two together to create a pattern during the process of weaving.

Despite its fragile nature, and the passing of a century, the *amur* was in remarkably good condition. François reminded me of a mat that he had commissioned especially for the British Museum, back in 2009.³ Made by an elderly weaver on the island of Lifou, it is the only Kanak mat in the whole of the British Museum’s Pacific collection, a matter of some pride for François. Turning back to admire the century-old mat, he expressed a hope that, in a hundred years, Kanak researchers would be able to visit the British Museum to study the mat he had commissioned, and appreciate its intricate construction. As we began to re-roll Montague’s mat in preparation for its return to storage, François suggested that we invoke a magic stone to ensure such an outcome.



Portrait of Alfred Cort Haddon, 'The Headhunter', by Philip Alexius de Laszlo, 1925.

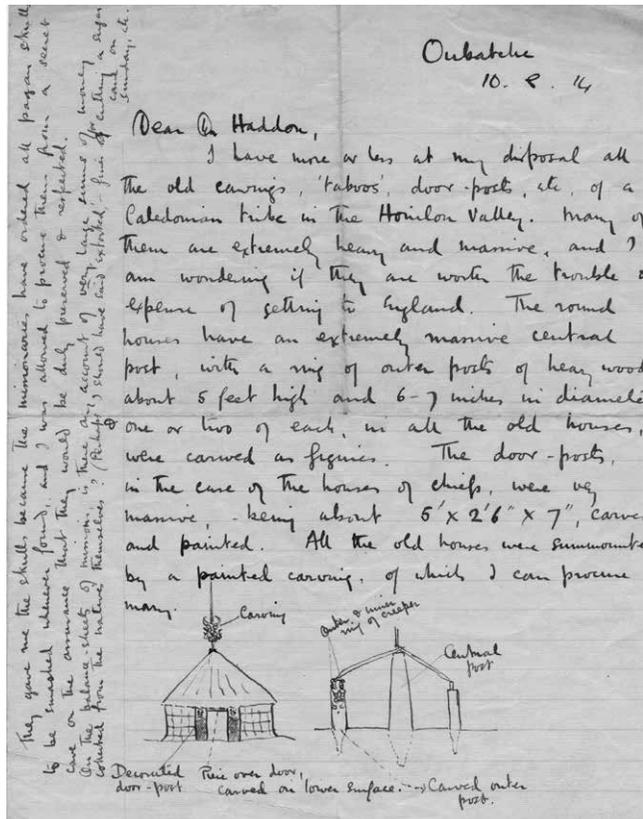
Haddon the Headhunter

Paul Montague's mentor, Alfred Cort Haddon, had a tentacular influence on the careers of his protégés that could not be constrained by the bounds of the University of Cambridge. Even while they were out in the field, he often kept up regular correspondence with former students, advising them and keeping up to date with their exploits. On 10 August 1914, less than a week after Britain had declared war on Germany, the two men were in contact as Paul wrote from New Caledonia with exciting news. He makes no mention of the conflict in his letter; indeed, he wastes no time on the etiquette of polite letter writing and instead launches straight into the important business of collecting:

Dear Dr Haddon,

I have more or less at my disposal all the old carvings, 'taboos', door posts, etc. of a Caledonian tribe in the Houailou Valley. Many of them are extremely heavy and massive, and I am wondering if they are worth the trouble and expense of getting to England.¹

Letter from Paul Montague to Alfred Cort Haddon, dated 10 August 1914. Photograph by Julie Adams, 2014.



He continues by describing the carvings that are ‘more or less’ at his ‘disposal’ with the aid of several illustrations, attempting to demonstrate his anthropological competence by reassuring Haddon that he is thoroughly documenting their cultural context:

I am collecting full details as to the names, significance, etc, of the various parts. The natives say that all the carving is very old ... I can get the stuff to the coast by water, and the whole business, including freight would cost £20 or under ... If it is worth while [sic], let me know at once and I will see to it.²

Interestingly, just as with the carved wooden chief from Nessakoéa, these ‘extremely massive’ carvings are not among the 250 items Paul deposited in the Museum in Cambridge in 1915. So, perhaps his euphemistic ‘more or less at my disposal’ turned out to be more ‘less’ and less ‘more’ than he had led Haddon to believe. Or perhaps Haddon, perennially short of money, was unable to guarantee the necessary funds. Alternatively, the timing of the letter, so soon after the outbreak of war, might be another indication of why this transaction did not materialise. Whatever the reason, Montague’s letter does not end there. Almost as an afterthought, he writes: ‘I have the skulls of 5 chiefs ... if you would like them. One has a beautiful round hole in the back of the head’.

Alfred Cort Haddon had a fascination for skulls. As a child, the young Alfred somehow managed to get his hands on several for his very first collection. Once, hoping to give his sisters a fright, he arranged the skulls on a shelf in his bedroom and lit them with candles to create an eerie effect. The girls were disappointingly unperturbed. They called him the ‘headhunter’ and the nickname stuck.³

Haddon was a large, charismatic man with an irrepressible energy and drive. A colleague spoke of his ‘intense vitality in every movement and gesture’.⁴ He was also tenacious, determined to succeed in whatever endeavour he undertook. During the 1880s, when Haddon was chair of zoology at the Royal College of Science in Dublin, he took part in an expedition to dredge the deep waters off the west coast of Ireland for new marine species. While busy on this expedition, he could not resist an unexpected and unorthodox opportunity to indulge his passion. Having learned of a derelict church that contained human remains and, having waited until darkness had fallen, Haddon and a colleague set out, sacks in hand:

We two climbed over the gate, went down the enclosure which is practically a large graveyard, disturbing some cattle, stumbled along and entered the church, tumbling over the grave stones. In the corner we saw by the dim light the skulls in a recess in the wall. There must have been 40 or more, all broken, mostly useless, but we found a dozen which were worth carrying away, only one however having the face bones. Whilst we were thus engaged we heard 2 men slowly walking along the road ... When the coast was clear we put our spoils in the sack and cautiously made our way back to the road. Then it did not matter who saw us. The sailors wanted to take the sack when we got back

to the boat but Dixon would not give it up ... So without any further trouble we got the skulls aboard ... and no one except our two selves had any idea that there are a dozen human skulls on board and they shan't know either.⁵

In Haddon's remembering, what is essentially an exercise in grave robbing has become an escapade of high jinks. The breathless tone of the way he recounts his story betrays his excitement as the two men 'climb', 'stumble' and 'tumble' their way into the church. Once inside, there is a lull, a held breath, as Haddon comes face-to-face with his prize. In the dim light, he assesses the skulls that lie shattered and scattered in the recesses of the church. A dozen are selected, then it is back to the action, loading the 'spoils' into sacks before hurriedly retreating to the ship.

Haddon may have been a tenacious and determined collector but his avidity is not entirely free of conscience. His retelling of the events of that night contains hints of unease, disquiet and contradiction. The language he uses - 'spoils', 'sack', 'carrying away' - evokes a robbery, while his concluding remark 'and they shan't know either' echoes the petulant defiance of a child. Haddon realises that his actions might be seen as morally dubious and, although he does not let this stop him, a troubling sense of the contradictions of collecting is also tangible. To combat his unease, Haddon prioritised the pursuit of 'scientific knowledge' and this became his moral compass; it would orientate him for almost all of his distinguished career.

In 1888, during his first expedition to the Torres Strait Islands, Haddon began to think about shifting the focus of his work from zoology to anthropology. Having travelled there to study the marine life - in particular, sea anemones - he befriended the local fishermen. They took him out in their canoes in the early mornings before the heat got too intense. Skirting the islands' reefs, the men fished, smoked and talked. They questioned him about European words and customs and he did his best to act as a cultural translator. As a result of these discussions, Haddon realised how quickly Islanders' lives were changing. He perceived their traditional culture as poised on the edge of a precipice, about to be lost to European influences. Believing they were facing radical, irreversible change, he felt compelled to act. And when he returned to Britain, he turned his attention to anthropology and began lobbying for funds for a second expedition.⁶

It took ten years but finally, in 1898, Haddon returned to the Torres Strait as leader of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition. With him was a team of specialists, each recruited for their individual expertise to document particular aspects of Islander life. William Halse Rivers, who later became known for his pioneering work treating shellshock victims in World War I, was to focus on psychological observations. Rivers, whose reputation as a leading experimental scientist of the day was already established, brought to the team an intellectual rigour and gravitas. His presence would ensure that its findings would be taken seriously by the scientific community. The linguist Sidney Ray was a leading authority on Melanesian languages, while the medic Charles Seligman, a late addition to the group, proved himself an excellent anthropologist with an interest in local diseases. Other members of the group focused on studying music and rhythm, and in recording the work of the expedition on film and by using wax-cylinder sound recordings.⁷



The Cambridge Expedition to Torres Strait, 1898. Alfred Cort Haddon, seated centre, is surrounded by the other members of the expedition.

In a photograph, often reproduced in books about the expedition, members of the team are seen gathered on a beach on the island of Mabuia. At the centre sits Haddon. The men are dressed ‘island style’ in crumpled shirts and linen trousers rolled up to their ankles. They are sunburned and barefoot, with broad-rimmed hats and bushy beards.

Their months together bonded them to each other and to Haddon. Indeed, the team were grateful to Haddon for affording them this opportunity and they learned much about how to carry out fieldwork under his tutelage. In turn, he always maintained a proprietorial pride in their subsequent careers. He boasted of luring Rivers into anthropology and was bereft when Anthony Wilkin, who had been the expedition’s official photographer, died from dysentery in Egypt at the age of 24.

The Torres Strait expedition is credited with establishing fieldwork as the defining methodology of anthropology but, as Haddon and his men discovered, fieldwork also defines the fieldworkers themselves.

In the islands, Haddon took responsibility for recording physical measurements, observing manners, customs and legends, and studying decorative art. He was also the expedition’s self-appointed collector, tasked with acquiring objects that – he believed – were in danger of becoming ‘lost’ to posterity. Included in this category of endangered ‘objects’ were human skulls. In particular, Haddon was keen to collect the decorated

skulls that Islanders kept as memorials to ancestors and which were used as powerful tools in sorcery.

During his 1888 expedition, Haddon, keen to avoid linguistic confusion, sketched a skull on a piece of paper and went around showing it to local people, making it clear what he was after. Despite their cultural importance, under certain circumstances some people were prepared to supply him with what he wanted. As a result, a number of these decorated skulls made their way back to Britain and into museum collections, where they remain today. Haddon even called his published account of his work: *Head-hunters Black, White and Brown*, a wry and tacit acknowledgement of how central his quest for skulls had become. The book, which was hugely popular, contains an entry for 'skull collecting' in its index and frequent descriptions of his efforts to obtain them. 'I was very desirous of making a collection of skulls,' he records on page 92 and, on another page, 'I was very anxious to obtain some skulls'. On Mabuia, he offered musical instruments to local children if they would bring him skulls. In other instances, he asked Islanders outright: 'Me fellow friend belong you fellow. 'Spouse you get me head belong dead man ... What for I get you fellow trouble?'⁸

For Haddon, the cultural significance that skulls may have had for local people, be they Irish or Islander, was of secondary concern to the scientific impulse of collecting, curating and teaching. In Cambridge, a decorated skull could be used in a lecture to students about mortuary rituals or it could be displayed in an exhibition at the Museum about Islander headhunting practices and the trade in enemy skulls. Alternatively, it could be sketched for an illustration in one of the large volumes of *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits*, the publication of which was overseen by Haddon.

In 1901, he resigned from his position in Dublin to concentrate full-time on his career as an anthropologist and the lectureship in ethnology that Cambridge University had created for him the year before. Despite his investment in the scientific paradigm, Haddon was aware of the paradox at the heart of ethnographic collecting. It was this: artefacts were in danger of disappearing, mainly due to changes to traditional lifestyles. Anthropologists like Haddon believed these artefacts needed to be preserved. In collecting them, they accelerated their disappearance by removing them into the holdings of European museums, where they became objects of academic research and public curiosity. Reflecting on the role he had played in this process of removal and relocation, Haddon declared:

They know, poor souls, that they have now no need for these things, but they *have* need for baccy. Never again will anyone have the chance I have ... I really have had wonderful luck.⁹

This 'need' for imported tobacco ('baccy') at the expense of traditional artefacts was, for Haddon, a lamentable but inevitable outcome of the increasing European incursion into the Pacific. In these circumstances, his presence at a precise moment in history afforded him a unique opportunity and he intended to seize it. One group's cultural decline was another's good fortune.

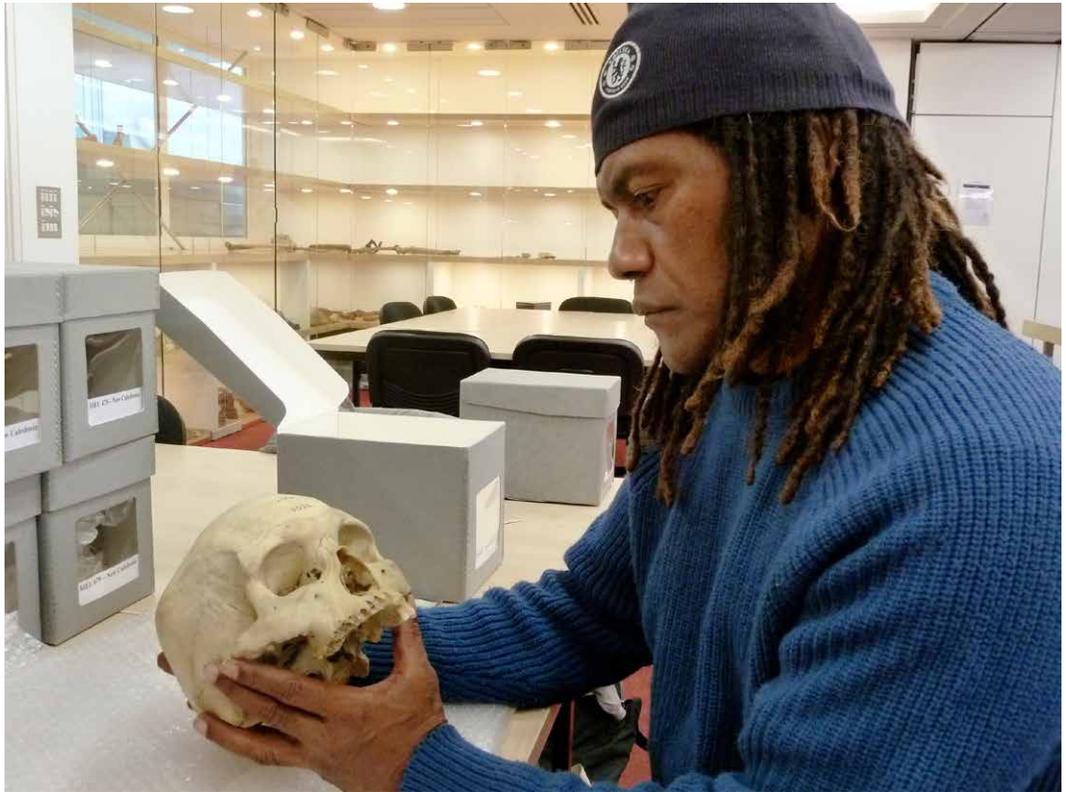


Zugubal dance group from the Torres Strait Islands visiting the Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology, Cambridge, in June 2015. Photograph by Jocelyne Dudding.

In 1925, to mark Haddon's 70th birthday, a dinner was held in his honour at Christ's College, Cambridge. Displayed in the dining hall were three portraits commissioned by the University from the Hungarian-born society painter, Philip de Laszlo. Haddon and de Laszlo had hit it off and instead of the one portrait he had planned to produce, de Laszlo ended up painting three, each one a different interpretation of the by-then silver-haired Haddon. The artist's favourite of the three portraits shows Haddon seated, dressed in his black academic robes. In his lap he holds a skull, his hand grasping the top of the cranium, as though gauging its size. Wearing his glasses, he is staring off to one side of the canvas, avoiding eye contact with skull and viewer alike. The thickly applied oils render Haddon's grey-white hair, and the skull's crisp white bone, luminous. An elderly, accomplished man of science, he appears content to be immersed in his thoughts and memories of a scientific life well lived.

In 1998, a delegation from the Torres Strait Islands travelled to Cambridge as part of the commemorations to mark the centenary of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition. The visitors included descendants of the people with whom Haddon had worked. As they stood below de Laszlo's portrait, they were said to have spoken of their esteem for Haddon with 'glowing affection'.¹⁰ While in Cambridge, the group also visited the Museum and spent time with curators looking through the vast collections Haddon had assembled: turtleshell masks, feather headdresses, baskets, musical instruments, canoe ornaments and more than 20 pipes used for smoking 'baccy'.

What might Haddon have made of such a visit? Could he have imagined that a hundred years after his expressions of concern for the fate of their culture, which had led him to mount an expedition to the other side of the world, that an expedition would be mounted by Torres Strait Islanders travelling in the opposite direction? Or would such imaginings have seemed beyond the realm of rational probability?



*François Wadra researching the provenance of Kanak ancestral remains in Cambridge in 2014.
Photograph by Julie Adams.*

‘Took Five Skulls. Returned to Camp’

Despite the obvious anachronism of Alfred Haddon’s skull collecting activities, museums today continue to wrestle with the conundrum of what to do with ancestral remains in their collections. While visitors appear largely untroubled by the ever-popular displays of Egyptian mummies, there is a growing sense of public disquiet about the presence in European museums of human remains from formerly colonised peoples. Simultaneously, representatives of many of those formerly colonised peoples are petitioning for the remains of their ancestors to be returned. Despite legislation being passed in 2004, which enabled a number of major museums in the UK to repatriate such remains, an unresolved tension persists between their perceived potential value to ‘science’, and their ‘cultural’ value and significance for communities of origin. As such, a large number of human remains, including the skulls that Paul Montague mentioned so flippantly, in his 1914 letter to Haddon, can be found in institutions around Britain.¹

In Cambridge, the Duckworth Laboratory is the University’s repository for human remains. Home to the Leverhulme Centre for Human Evolutionary Studies, the Duckworth is, according to its website, ‘one of the world’s largest’ such repositories, and contains the remains of ‘approximately 18,000 individuals.’² It is here that the skulls Montague collected now reside, having been transferred from the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology for specialist care and storage. In March 2014, François Wadra and I were granted an appointment and walked the short distance from the Museum to the Duckworth site on Fitzwilliam Street. Its edifice displays only discrete signage.

The storage facilities for the Duckworth’s holdings are beneath the busy streets of Cambridge, and it was here that we met its director, Professor Marta Mirazon Lahr, who had kindly agreed to host us at short notice. Professor Lahr confirmed that the Duckworth did indeed have skulls documented as having been collected by Paul Montague, and she steered us towards several aisles which contained holdings from the various regions of Oceania: ‘Polynesia’, ‘Melanesia’, ‘Micronesia’. Each aisle was lined with shelves, on which were sitting small grey cardboard boxes with clear plastic fronts that faced outwards. Through each plastic window, a human skull was visible. As we proceeded down the aisles, past the boxes containing individual skulls, we came to a halt in front of a series labelled ‘MEL’, for Melanesia, followed by a number and the words ‘New Caledonia’. The director consulted her notes and pointed to 13 boxes, each one containing a skull apparently collected by Montague.³ A collections manager stepped forward and carefully removed the boxes, placed them on a trolley and wheeled it to an area at the front of the room which contained a large table and chairs. We sat down and looked at the boxes in front of us. Struck by their number, François expressed surprise and asked, ‘Why are there so many?’ After all, the letter to Haddon had mentioned only five skulls. The director left the room to retrieve the accession register for us to cross-check. Perhaps there was some mistake, she suggested.



*A view of irrigated terraces planted with taro crops, near the village of Gondé, 1914.
Photograph by Paul Montague.*

In the Houailou Valley, 2 August 1914 began as a ‘very fresh, misty morning with a heavy dew’, according to Paul Montague’s journal. After he had breakfasted with Maria and Georges Voisin at their hotel, he decided to spend the day searching for a species of large gecko. Strolling out of the village and along the sinuous track running alongside the river, he turned off the path and tacked into the forest to begin what would prove to be an unsuccessful hunt for the elusive gecko. As he walked, local people recognised him and called out greetings. Now that he had established himself in the area, people regularly approached him, offering all kinds of advice about the best place or time of day to obtain particular wildlife specimens. They understood that he was a *collector* and that this entailed the taking of things: animals, birds, insects, plants and also objects. They also understood that this process entailed the giving of things such as money and tobacco. What they understood about the reasons for his collecting, what its purpose might be and to what end, is less certain.

After returning empty handed from the forest, Paul ate lunch before ‘heading down to the tribe’, as had become his habit on most days. There, he spent the afternoon talking with people about their traditions and customs. He wrote in his journal that, although many were now Christians, they were still living largely according to their old beliefs and practices. He went on: ‘When a certain degree of familiarity has been established, it is surprising how much more will be found to remain of the old ways than is generally imagined.’⁴



A 'taboo' marker, used to indicate a site which should not be entered, in the Houailou Valley, 1914. Photograph by Paul Montague or Harold Compton.

Late in the afternoon, a local chief invited him to visit and he went to the chief's house, a large conical thatched hut that was the focal point for the tribe's ceremonial life. Paul admired its complex internal construction and sketched the technique of lashing the roof beams together in his journal. Nearby, he noticed another house, standing seemingly abandoned and entirely overgrown. When he asked the chief why it was no longer in use, he was told it was under a 'taboo' and that he should go no further. However, he was unable to ascertain why the taboo had been placed on the building and why it was off limits.

As evening fell, there was the usual singing, dancing and drinking. Paul always carried his gittern with him when he visited the tribe, and so probably joined in the merriment. Later, around the fire, he talked with Maria Voisin about Kanak beliefs regarding death and the afterlife. Finally, late in the evening, he purchased 'very cheap' a number of artefacts including several prestigious strings of shells, beads and bones, known as Kanak currency, and two valuable greenstone adze blades.

The next morning, he rose early and went hunting for birds. In the afternoon, as he was resting in his room at the Voisins' hotel, a Kanak man whom he had met with the tribe the previous night arrived and asked to see him. The man was carrying a bag containing human skulls.⁵

At the Duckworth Laboratory, the director explained something of the history of the collection. As with other human remains brought to Cambridge as a result of anthropological expeditions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the skulls collected by Montague would have originally been classified as 'objects' and stored



A section from a string of Kanak currency, a valuable item presented and exchanged at important ceremonies such as weddings. Made from flying fox fur, plant fibres, red wool, carved sections of pearl shell and bone. Collected by Paul Montague in Nandia [Nindiah] in 1914. Photograph by Gwil Owen.

as part of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology's collections. After World War II, however, the University decided to centralise its various holdings of human anatomy, osteology and other human biological materials, as well as the osteological remains of non-human primates. This led to the creation of the Duckworth Laboratory which, in 2001, moved to a new purpose-built facility.

Turning to the accessions register, Professor Lahr showed us the relevant pages which detailed the transfer, on 15 March 1924, of the skulls from Baron von Hügel. Looking more closely at the cramped handwriting, however, the entry in the register revealed that the skulls were actually 'bought' from von Hügel, rather than being transferred between the two University departments. By 1924, von Hügel had officially retired and was no longer working at the Museum so it may be that he purchased the skulls privately from Montague and sold them on later. This would also explain their absence from the handwritten catalogue of Paul's collection that he prepared in 1915.

The Duckworth records showed that the skulls had been collected 'from caves' in New Caledonia by a 'Mr Montague'. While we absorbed this information, François asked if he could look more closely at the skulls. Lifting the first gently from its box, we saw that its accession number had been inscribed in large black ink numerals across the forehead. François stared hard at the skull but said nothing. Then he pointed out some additional writing on the side of the skull and a small cardboard label tied to the top of the jawbone. On the skull, the registration number had been repeated, along with the words: 'New Caledonia Montagu Coll.' [sic]. The text on the small label was in pencil and was in Montague's hand. It read: 'Tribe of Panié, N. Caledonia. From tabu [taboo], disused since Catholic conversion. 22.8.14.'

Label written by Paul Montague documenting one of the skulls he collected in New Caledonia in 1914, now held in the Duckworth Laboratory, Cambridge. Photograph by Julie Adams, 2014.



François said that Panié was on the northeast coast of the Grande Terre, many miles from the Houailou Valley. This skull, along with several of the others, must have belonged to a different set than the ones described in the letter to Haddon.

Paul Montague wrote in his journal that Maria Voisin began to weep when she saw the bag containing human skulls that had been brought to him by the man from the local tribe in August 1914. Maria told him that she recognised one skull as being that of a relative. She was certain it was him because of a hole from a former wound in the back of his skull. She recalled that this man had been wounded by a sling stone in a fight but had survived and gone on to live for many more years. This was the skull Paul described in his letter to Haddon as having the 'beautiful round hole in the back of the head'. From Maria, he learned that these skulls belonged to members of an important family named 'Beréowa' and that she was related to them in some way. In this emotionally charged atmosphere, she tried to explain that, unlike some other Kanak people, she was not 'dur' – 'hard' – but the man who had brought the skulls and offered them for sale was different, she said, they meant 'nothing at all' to him. She continued, '*Mais, moi, je ne suis pas comme ça*' – 'But me, I am not like that'.

Later that night, Paul awoke from a nightmare and wrote in his journal that he had been 'haunted'. In this vivid dream, an old Kanak man had been in the room with him. Leaning over, the old man put his lips close to Paul's neck and whispered two words in the Houailou language. Suddenly awake, he sat bolt upright and called out 'What? *Qui est-la?* (Who is there?)', but the room was empty and he was alone.

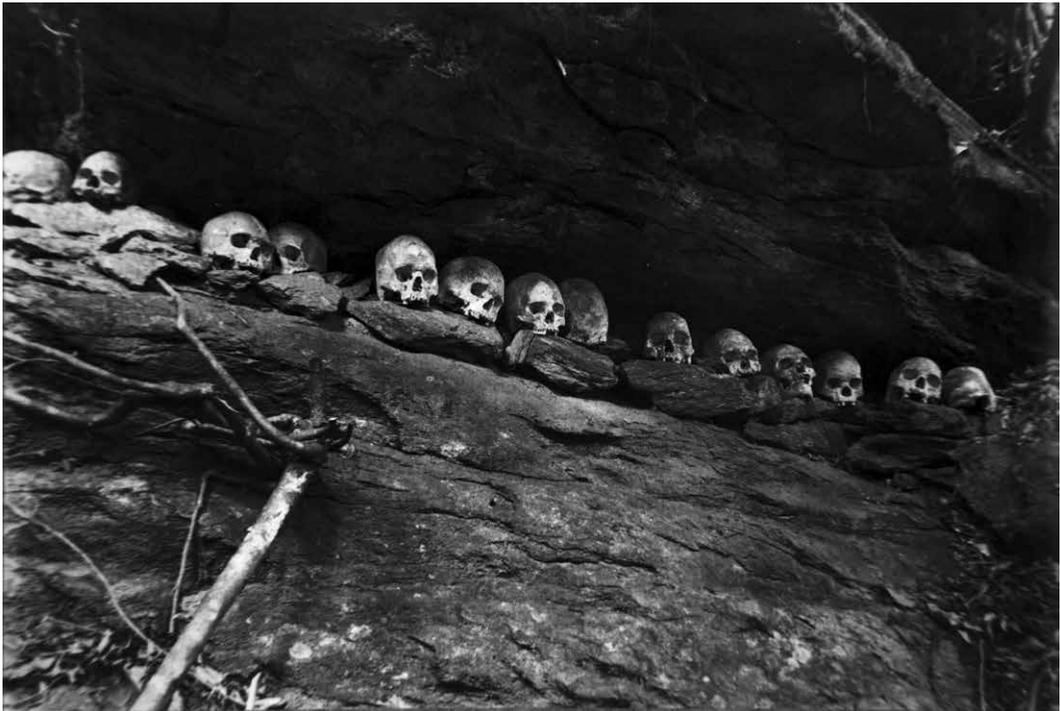
In the Duckworth Laboratory, we systematically examined each of the skulls to see if there were any more labels which might give further clues to their provenance, but there were none. One skull had a hole visible at the rear and François confirmed that it was about the size of a sling stone. This seemed to suggest that it was the skull of the relative of Maria Voisin. I opened my laptop and brought up Montague's letter to Haddon on the screen, so that we could read it again. Like most of his correspondence, it was messy: littered with crossings out, poor spelling and casual punctuation, with paragraphs squeezed in later, as new thoughts occurred to him. His letters almost always included small, annotated, sketches. In the letter of 10 August 1914, he had

turned the paper horizontally on its long edge and filled the slim margin with the following cramped words:

They gave me the skulls because the missionaries have ordered all pagan skulls to be smashed whenever found, and I was allowed to procure them from a secret cave on the assurance that they would be duly preserved and respected.⁶

The letter concludes rather enigmatically, with Paul signing off: ‘Yours sincerely, The Liar’. Perhaps this was an established in-joke between Paul and his mentor. Alternatively, it was maybe a coded hint to Haddon that the account given in the letter was not entirely truthful. Either way it was certainly apt, as his story of how he came to acquire the skulls does not match that in his journal.

Turning back to the small pencil-written label, attached to a skull’s jawbone, it now seemed certain that Montague had acquired skulls on at least two occasions. Once, in the Houaïlou Valley in early August and, later, on 22 August, in Panié. Again, I brought up the relevant pages of his journal on my laptop and scanned through them. At about 1pm on 20 August, Paul Montague wrote, he and Pongo Compton arrived at the village of Tao, near the base of Mont Panié, New Caledonia’s tallest mountain, which they were keen to try to ascend. There, they met an old ferryman who told them that there was a rock shelter nearby which housed ‘some skulls’. Montague and Compton arranged to meet the

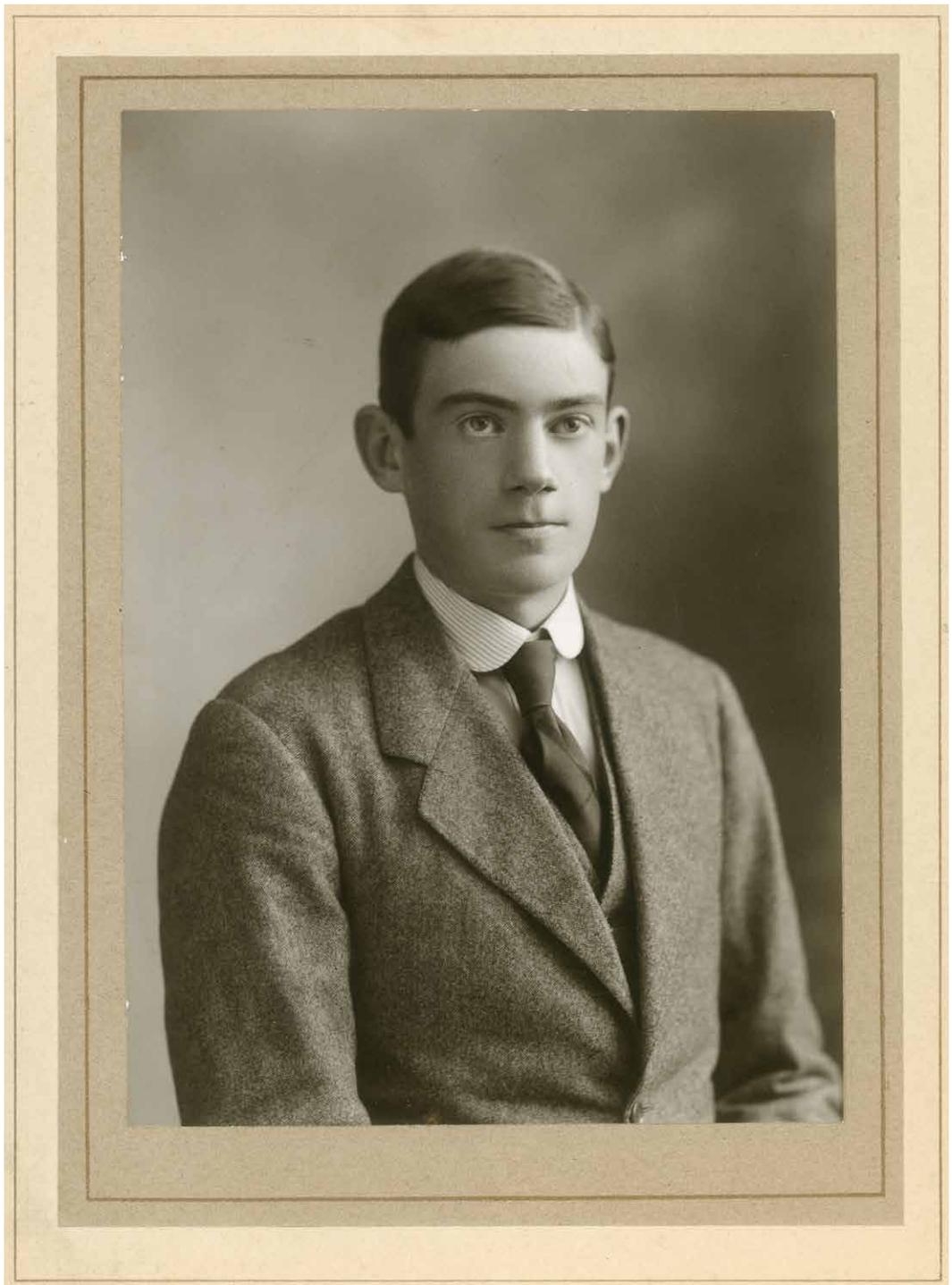


Skulls on the ledge of a cave, 1914. Photograph by Paul Montague.

ferryman the following day and returned to their boat to unpack their equipment and belongings. The entry for the next day, Friday 21 August, reads as follows:

Started off with Pongo, and met the ferryman on the road. He took us up to the rock, in a patch of forest by a small creek on the side of the hill. There were several small caves with bones in them, and a shelf under an overhanging rock with a row of skulls. In all cases except one, the lower jaw was missing. Took photographs. Near the rock was the root of a creeper, tied into a knot. It had been done when small, and the creeper had grown. It may have been a taboo. Amongst the debris & bones in one hole, found a number of old blue glass beads, which had evidently formed a necklace. Took 5 skulls. Returned to camp.

As François and I ascended from the underground repository and re-emerged onto the street, he remained silent for some time, apparently lost in thought. Despite being an archaeologist, he said eventually, there had been something confronting about seeing the skull with its accession number written, almost tattoo-like, across its forehead. But even more than that, his thoughts had been exercised by the presence of Montague's small handwritten label, which clearly determined the provenance of that skull to Panié. Could the existence of that label make the skull's return to New Caledonia one day possible? What would it take? he asked.



*Felix David Montague, who died at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle on 10 March 1915, aged 20.
Photographer and date unknown.*

A Foreign Field

On 4 August 1914, a day after Paul Montague had taken possession of the Beréowa family skulls, and had been haunted by a dream, Britain declared war on Germany. Before this momentous news arrived in the Houaïlou Valley, he spent the evening in the guesthouse talking to Maria and Georges Voisin and listened to Georges express his outrage with missionaries and their pernicious influence on the Kanak people. In his journal, Paul recorded their conversation:

Georges is very down on the missionaries. They simply pillage the blacks. They teach them to desecrate the bones and despise all the customs and handiwork of their forefathers because they believe in different superstitions to themselves. They make them pray all day long instead of working, forbid dancing, and singing, other than hymns, and make them pay them money, nominally to support the mission. They make a huge profit over ethnological specimens, telling the natives they are works of the devil and must be given up for nothing.

His decision to underline the words ‘forbid dancing, and singing’, with thick, dark pencil strokes makes it clear where his own sense of outrage lay. If he had any flicker of conscience or was troubled by the equivalence between missionaries desecrating Kanak human remains or profiting from the collecting of artefacts, and his own actions, it went unrecorded.

It took less than 24 hours for the news from Europe to reach Houaïlou. In the lull before it did, Paul began packing up his collections ready for transportation back to England. On 5 August, he wrote in his journal: ‘First news of the war’. Then, the following day, just as he was preparing to travel north, up the coast of the Grande Terre towards Panié, he had a troubling encounter with an old Kanak woman who arrived at the guesthouse. She had brought a single rose and told him she wished to leave it with the skulls now in his possession, as ‘a tribute’.

According to Paul’s journal, he informed her that she was too late, and that he had already boxed them up and nailed the crates shut. After this blunt exchange, the old woman walked out to the jetty, where the crates were waiting to be loaded onto the boat, with Paul following behind. Standing a few feet back, he watched as she ‘wept bitterly’ and pushed the petals, one by one, through the cracks in the crates.

By the time of Paul’s departure for home, the first flurry of what he described as ‘excitement about the war’ was being replaced by a sense of foreboding. Although there are no further direct references to the fighting in his journal, in early November he notes that Georges Voisin is ‘very depressed’ about everything: the war, the price he can achieve for his crops of copra and the lack of rain to water them.



Greenstone necklace, known as a mejir. These were worn by women and were highly valued, including by Europeans, who avidly acquired them. Collected by Paul Montague in Oubatche on 9 September 1914. Photograph by Gwyl Owen.

The speed with which news travelled, as well as the regular arrival of letters from family and friends, means he would have been aware of the shift in mood back in Britain, where the optimism of the 'over by Christmas' headlines had seeped away.



An old man standing in a field of yams, near the village of Gondé, 1914. Photograph by Paul Montague.

Certainly, he would have known that, by early November, his younger brother David was en route to France as a lieutenant with the 2nd Battalion, Lincolnshire Regiment.

Aged 20 when war was declared, Felix David Montague had already followed in his father's footsteps and chosen a career as a professional soldier. Compared with the armies of the standing French, Russian and Germans, the British army had only a small number of trained officers. In times of war, it was assumed that they could rely on the country's many public schools to provide the young men needed to step up and provide leadership.¹

Amy and Leopold Montague had decided not to send their younger son to Bedales. Instead, they opted to educate him at a public school closer to home in Devon. Little is remembered of David's life or personality beyond his interest in nature and the passion he shared with Paul for egg collecting expeditions in the countryside. In a rare photograph that survives in the possession of the family, his youthful face displays a rather blank expression. His lips are pursed, his hair is slicked down and his ears protrude. His body looks slightly too big for the smart suit it is inhabiting.

By the time war broke out, David was stationed at the British garrison on Bermuda serving under Lieutenant-Colonel George Bunbury McAndrew. The battalion returned home as soon as possible and was almost immediately posted to the Western Front, landing in France in early November 1914. It is not known whether David had been

enjoying the adventure of living in tropical Bermuda, or if he had found comradeship among the men of his battalion. Neither are there any surviving letters to indicate how he adapted to life in the trenches. The official record, however, shows that his battalion was ordered to take part in the battle of Neuve Chapelle, the first major engagement on the Western Front of 1915, in which troops from Britain, Canada and India fought alongside each other.²

In March 1915, France was still experiencing cold, wintry weather and conditions at the front deteriorated further as the fighting commenced. This poor weather severely hampered the Allies' efforts, including those of the Royal Flying Corps, which was due, for the first time, to carry out tactical bombing raids on designated targets. The evening before the battle at Neuve Chapelle, the Allied Commander, Lieutenant-General Sir Henry Rawlinson, issued the following special order to the 40,000 troops assembled along a three-kilometre stretch of the French countryside:

The attack which we are about to undertake is of the first importance to the Allied Cause. The Army and the Nation are watching the result ...³

At 7.30am on 10 March, a huge gun nicknamed 'Granny' gave the signal for the fighting to commence. This was followed by a 35-minute bombardment, directed in part by reconnaissance aircraft. If the nation *had* been watching that morning, they would have witnessed the rapid and successful advancement of Allied troops through German frontline trenches. Soon after, though, the Allies became hopelessly marooned and exposed in the gap between the first and second enemy lines. It was here that the majority of the 11,200 Allied fatalities occurred. Losses among the German army were estimated to be similar in number. The severe weather made the recovery and burial of the dead a formidable challenge.

David Montague did not live long enough to endure the worst of the conditions. He, along with five officers from his battalion, as well as their commanding officer, George Bunbury McAndrew, were dead by the end of the first day of the battle. The exact circumstances of David's death are not known. Battlefield reports note that his battalion sustained heavy losses from German artillery bombardments. During one, David's commanding officer had his right leg almost completely blown off by a shell. Having been hit, it is said that McAndrew asked to be lifted up so that he could continue to watch the progress (if that is what it can be called) of his men. One report blamed the high casualty rate among Allied Forces on the 'impetuosity' of inexperienced troops.⁴

The tragic events of that day in March 1915 were perpetuated for the Montague family by the official bureaucracy of war. Almost ten years after the death of her younger son, Amy Montague was contacted by the Imperial War Graves Commission. David's body, she learned, was about to be exhumed from the cemetery at Laventie, where it had lain since his death, and moved to the Rue-Petillon Military Cemetery at Fleurbaix. There, his grave would be marked with an official headstone and, on payment of a fee, the family could select an inscription with which to commemorate his sacrifice.⁵

The Montagues' response to this news can be found detailed on a War Graves Commission 'Headstone Personal Inscriptions' form. The paperwork records Amy as his next of kin and indicates that she requested his headstone be inscribed with the



Two of the fallen Allied troops at Neuve Chapelle, 10 March 1915. Photographer unknown.

phrase: 'God Gave Him Eternal Youth', at a cost of six shillings and five pence, or threepence and a halfpenny per letter.

The names of 15 other soldiers are listed on the same War Graves form, although three are recorded only as 'Known Unto God'. Two families, including one from Boston, Massachusetts, opted to leave the stone free of any personal inscription, perhaps unable to meet the required cost. Others chose short, simple and affordable epitaphs such as 'R.I.P.'. The longest, which comes in at 54 letters and a cost of 15 shillings and ninepence, reads: 'Grant Him O Lord Eternal Rest & Let Light Perpetual Shine Upon Him'.

At the time of David's death, the French authorities were responsible for the burial of Allied soldiers, including their own. Such was the scale of the casualties that hundreds of cemeteries were springing up across the vast battlefields of northern France and Flanders. In the circumstances, it was proving difficult to keep up with the required rate of burials, let alone ensure that information about the dead was being accurately recorded. Perhaps for this reason, David's date of death is wrongly noted in some official paperwork as being 11 March, and his initials incorrectly given as A.D. rather than F.D. Montague.

Eventually, the mounting scale of losses led to the Allied authorities' decision to ban the exhumation and repatriation of soldiers' bodies. For the Montague family, this meant that David's exile would be permanent and that he would not be coming home to a family burial plot in Devon. In the face of criticism, the authorities argued that there were both practical and philosophical reasons for the ban. In the chaos of the battlefields, bodies (or parts of bodies) were often unidentifiable or were quickly buried where they fell. Any suggestion that bodies might be repatriated would

merely give false hope to grieving families. Philosophically, the Graves Registration Commission (forerunner of the Imperial War Graves Commission), as well as many soldiers themselves, felt strongly that the fallen, who had fought together and died together, should not be separated in death.⁶

These sentiments were reiterated by a committee which was asked to consider plans for the design and long-term maintenance of war cemeteries. The committee, chaired by the then-director of the British Museum, Sir Frederic Kenyon, presented its report in November 1918, recommending that bodies should not be repatriated. In addition, it was proposed that all graves be made uniform in appearance, so that class and rank distinctions would not be visibly discernible.⁷

In France, where the land had been so ravaged by the war, arguments about repatriation of the dead dragged on for years. Despite repeated official promulgations stating that the dead must remain where they lay, those families who disagreed and had sufficient funds took advantage of an illegal trade which saw corpses secretly disinterred and transported across France to be reunited with their families. Finally, in September 1920, the French government capitulated and agreed that families could, if they wished, have their loved ones brought home at state expense. Over the next three years, approximately 300,000, or 40%, of the French fallen were moved.⁸

Among those who would be repatriated was Paul Laffay, the young French missionary who had cursed the Kaiser with Paul Montague in the Houailou Valley and whose request to fight with the Kanak troops had been refused. On 15 July 1922, the



The Rue-Petillon Military Cemetery at Fleurbaix, France, where David Montague was buried some ten years after his death. Photographer and date unknown.

French newspaper, *L'Intransigeant*, carried the headline 'Le rapatriement des morts de Salonique' and went on to list the names of 75 soldiers, including Paul Laffay, whose bodies were being returned to the Département de la Seine.⁹

British families wishing to pay their respects to the dead of foreign fields had limited options. They could, as thousands did, write to the Graves Registration Committee asking for the location of the cemetery where their relative was buried and requesting a photograph of the grave. For some, this was not enough and they decided to travel to the battlefields to see for themselves the sites where their loved ones lay. For the large numbers of people who undertook this journey, some assistance was offered by the St. Barnabas Hostels. This service was established in 1919, in response to the growing plight of families who were found lost and wandering around the French countryside, seeking a particular cemetery but with no idea how to find it. For a small fee, St. Barnabas employees would meet families off the boat at Calais and accompany them, by car, to the cemetery and then back to a hotel where they could rest before returning to the UK the following day. To keep costs down, families could travel out on the night boat and thus be able to make a day trip possible, dispensing with the need for a hotel stay.¹⁰

It is not known whether Amy and Leopold ever made such a pilgrimage. Either way, the news that their son was to be exhumed from his 'corner of a foreign field', as it was evoked in Rupert Brooke's famous poem, could only have caused them further turmoil. A decade after his death, David was not yet able to rest in peace.



Sketches found in the pages of Paul Montague's notebooks in the archives at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge. Photograph by Julie Adams, 2013.

Such Terrible Things

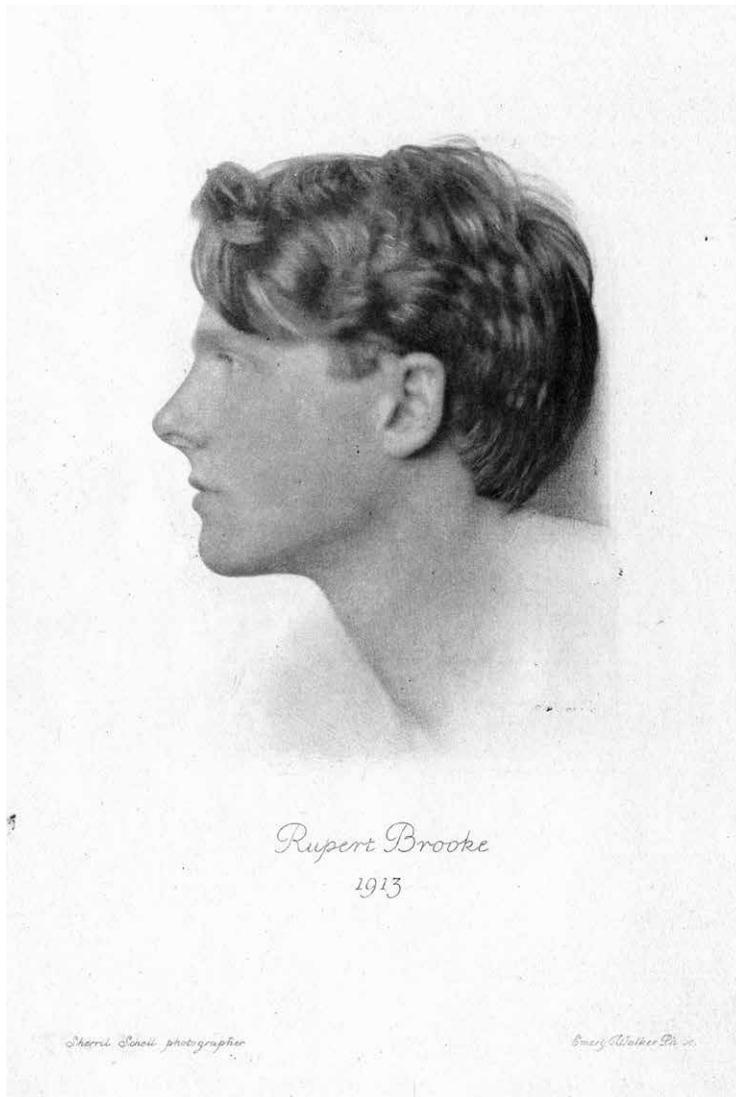
When David Montague was killed in March 1915, Paul was somewhere out in the Pacific Ocean. The return voyage from New Caledonia to Britain, and towards the waiting war, would take two months. It is not clear whether he learned of his brother's death en route, or whether the information reached him only after he had disembarked and travelled to Devon to be reunited with his parents. There is no doubt that David's death would have cast a pall over Paul's homecoming. Nevertheless, the tragic news did not alter the decision he had already made regarding his own future: he would enlist as soon as he was able to get his New Caledonian collections in order.

Against the backdrop of news from the Front, Paul knew that he must work fast to catalogue all that he had collected, although he also knew that this was an enormous undertaking. The vast quantity of zoological specimens he had amassed had to be sorted and the labels and documentation carefully cross-checked. The majority of these specimens would go to the Natural History Museum in London. However, the hundreds of birds he had collected were destined to become the property of the wealthy Australian ornithologist and fanatical oologist, Gregory Macalister Mathews, who had contributed to the cost of Paul's expedition. A postal receipt, tucked among his papers in the archives in Cambridge, shows that Paul was posting boxes of specimens back to England all the time he was away. The contents of one parcel, despatched from Nouméa with a declared value of 200 francs, were described as '50 *peaux des oiseaux*' (50 bird skins). Many more boxes had travelled back with him on the ship and now required his attention.

After spending several weeks at the Natural History Museum, Paul travelled to Cambridge. There, when he was not working frantically to produce the catalogue for his ethnographic collections, he had the chance to reacquaint himself with his mentor Alfred Cort Haddon, visiting him at his home at weekends and getting to know his family. After the war, Haddon wrote to Professor Harmer at the Natural History Museum, reflecting on the time he and Paul had spent together in the lacuna between Paul's return from the Pacific and his departure for the Front. 'Did you know Paul Montague?', he asked. 'He was a most charming and talented boy. I anticipated a distinguished career for him. My people at home were very fond of him'.¹

Although being back in Cambridge afforded Paul the opportunity of catching up with old friends, he found the lives of many Old Bedalians to be as tumultuous as his own. Some were exempt from fighting due to medical issues, while a few others were planning to conscientiously object, if conscription came into effect. Most, however, were readying themselves to enlist or had already done so and were dispersed to various campaigns.

John Haden Badley, the Bedales headmaster, had always gone to great efforts to attract European families to the school, so that, when war came, some OBs found themselves fighting on opposite sides. Students who had been friends and who had



Rupert Chawner Brooke, 1913. Print made by Emery Walker, after Sherril Schell.

spent years studying together were now officially enemies. Herr Hine, one of the School's language teachers, was recalled to Germany in July 1914 and was killed in September of the following year. Despite the prevailing anti-German propaganda in Britain, Badley wrote a warm tribute to Hine in the *Bedales Record*, stating: 'We shall not soon forget his devotion to the School ... and though he died fighting in the ranks of our enemies, none of us will think of him as anything but a true Bedalian.'²

Paul's friend Rupert Brooke, a true Bedalian in spirit despite never having attended the School, was also dead. While sailing on a troop ship towards the Gallipoli Peninsula in April 1915, he had died from a streptococcal infection. The man who had epitomised

the Neo-Pagan ethos and had also penned its manifesto, proclaiming the group would 'be children seventy-years instead of seven', was gone before his 28th birthday. Not wishing to have him buried at sea, Brooke's comrades hastily arranged for a grave to be dug in an olive grove on the Greek island of Skyros and Rupert quickly passed from the realm of the living into that of myth.

While Paul had been out in New Caledonia, Brooke had also travelled to the South Pacific, visiting Samoa, Fiji, New Zealand and, most notably, Tahiti, where he may have fathered a child with a Tahitian woman, according to some myth makers. In May 1913, Brooke had fled England to attempt to escape the complexities of his personal life. He was, he said in a letter: '... in love, in different ways, with two or three people. I always am.'³ One of those 'two or three' people was Noël Olivier, the young woman who had also been the subject of Paul's affections and who features in the severed photograph that Paul kept with his possessions. Although no letters between Paul and Noël have survived, there is evidence to suggest that the two had maintained a connection and that he was probably still in love with her when he saw her on his return to England in 1915.

It was the pursuit of this evidence that led me to consult the Rupert Brooke papers, held in the archives at King's College, Cambridge, in the early summer of 2015. As a result of some sustained internet searching, several documents had come to light which I hoped would provide further insight into Paul's personal life and, perhaps, throw new light on his state of mind during this period. Frustratingly, I was forced to wait several days before being granted an appointment, as it was the exam period and the archive was closed. Finally, the day arrived and I walked the short distance from the Museum on Downing Street to King's College and entered a wisteria-covered building, located to the left of the College lawn. The main archive room is dominated by a large table which is surrounded by shelves lined with various editions of Brooke's poetry, as well as copies of the many biographies that have been written about him. The walls are appropriately decorated in the style of a Vanessa Bell painting, adding to the atmosphere.

Encouragingly, the archivist explained that, alongside their extensive Brooke collections, they also care for material belonging to his many friends and associates. I asked to see several letters listed on their catalogue as having been written by Paul Montague, and the archivist retreated to a back room to seek them out.

When they arrived, the documents consisted of two letters and a postcard which had been sent to Noël Olivier's sister Brynhild.⁴ In chronological order, the first letter was dated 2 November 1913 and was the letter that Paul had written while sailing to Sydney, en route to New Caledonia, aboard the ship the *Königin Luise*. Its friendly tone and amusing anecdotes convey a closeness and familiarity between the two but nothing more. The letter ends with Paul sending his best wishes to Bryn's husband, Hugh Popham, as well as to any other 'friends who may be in the vicinity'. The next piece of correspondence was an undated letter written from Nouméa. Where the date would usually appear, Paul had written: 'Haven't the faintest idea'. The opening paragraph was both mysterious and intriguing. It began with the greeting: 'Dear Bryn' which Paul had crossed out – almost angrily, it appeared – and replaced it with the more formal 'Dear Mrs Popham'. It continued:

It is not from any particular inclination that I am writing now, but because I believe I promised to do so, and, being a man of my word, of course, I must. I have a dim recollection of having done so before, but I have absolutely no written evidence, absolutely none, and that is what counts.⁵

The remainder of the letter was taken up with his descriptions of New Caledonia: its beautiful scenery, its irritating mosquitoes, the unimpressive quality of the wine and the fate of its people under French rule. I was unsure what to make of the bizarre opening lines but their tone, along with the crossing out of the familiar 'Dear Bryn', seemed to suggest that something had occurred to alter their relationship. While the sentence about 'written evidence' seemed to be indicating that he had destroyed some letters between them, or was, perhaps, suggesting that she should do so.

Confused by the opaqueness of Paul's letter, I decided to contact his niece, Jennifer Estcourt, to ask what she thought. Once, during the early stages of my research, I had tentatively raised the issue of Paul's sexuality with his elderly nieces, wondering aloud about his unmarried status at the relatively late age of 27, as well as the infamous sexual fluidity of his Neo-Pagan and Bloomsbury acquaintances. They insisted that, according to their mother, Paul had been a great lover of women. Perhaps, I hypothesised, this strange letter to Bryn Olivier suggested that they had been lovers and that she had called off the attachment once Paul was safely removed to New Caledonia. But to be embroiled in a relationship with Bryn when she had only recently married Hugh Popham, to whom Paul had explicitly sent his best wishes in the earlier letter, seemed unlikely even by Neo-Pagan standards. Perhaps, there was a more straightforward explanation: that Bryn was acting as a mediator between Paul and her sister Noël, whom it seemed Paul had always cared for.

It was only later, after I had left the Brooke archive and was back at my desk at the Museum, that it occurred to me that there might be further, relevant correspondence filed under Bryn Olivier's name, held in the files. Irritated with myself for such an oversight, I called the archivist and, upon discovering that they did indeed have more documents, made an appointment to return as soon as possible.

On the phone, I asked Jennifer Estcourt if she had ever heard her mother or grandmother mention Bryn or Noël's names in relation to Paul. She said not. However, she did recall a family story in which Paul came striding into the dining room at Penton and cried out, to the astonishment of his mother and sisters: 'Damn it! Why won't she love me?' Whoever Paul was in love with, it seems clear that his feelings were not reciprocated.

On my return to the archives, I was presented with a large file that contained many more letters associated with the Olivier sisters.⁶ It took several hours to read every one, looking for any mention of Paul Montague. Towards the end, however, I came across a letter from Bryn to her husband, Hugh, dated 31 August 1915.

That year, despite the bleakness of the times and with the news arriving about the loss of friends almost daily, Noël and Bryn Olivier determined to continue the tradition of a Neo-Pagan summer camp. After some discussion, they chose Pewsey in Wiltshire, where they had holidayed once before with Maynard Keynes, Rupert Brooke and others. Bryn made the arrangements and it was agreed that the group would take

along their canoes, to spend as much time as possible on the water. Bryn's letter to Hugh revealed that the small gathering included herself and Noël, Justin Brooke, and Paul and his younger sister Ruth.

The letter did not say much about life in camp but, instead, was almost entirely taken up with her recounting of a dramatic scene in which Paul had played a central role. 'Such terrible things have happened,' she wrote to Hugh in the letter, 'that I hardly know how to begin.'

These 'terrible things' had apparently been triggered by the arrival in camp of James Strachey. James, the younger brother of the writer Lytton Strachey, was a popular member of the Neo-Pagan group; however, on this occasion, his presence had apparently thrown the 'poor passionate Paul' into a 'gloomy fury'. Bryn's letter makes it clear that Paul was indeed in love with Noël and that he had hoped, with Rupert Brooke no longer on the scene, to finally convince her of the depth of his feelings. Instead, to his great shock and despair, Noël announced that she and James Strachey were romantically involved and were secretly engaged. The blow to Paul's plans can only have been magnified by the fact that, as far as anyone knew, James had only ever been interested in men and had, for years, been in love with Rupert. The unexpected revelation of the liaison between James and Noël meant an unhappy conclusion to Paul's long-held hopes. According to Bryn, Paul had been distraught at the news and his behaviour became quite 'intolerable', requiring him to be temporarily removed from camp by a friend living nearby. When Paul returned the next evening, he had a long talk alone with Noël and the following morning, when the group awoke, they discovered that Paul and Ruth had packed up their things and gone. In her letter, Bryn summarised the situation to her husband, displaying both irritation at her sister's behaviour and a cold assessment of Paul's sufferings:

It's very dreadful – he's such a frightfully nice person and might really have been put out of his misery days ago – I can't help feeling. I only wish I'd really known. I would have told him – it's all this bloody secrecy that's so fashionable. Much as I love James I would rather Noël were married to Pauly – tho' he's still a lot to learn. However there you are!⁷

Paul and his sister travelled back to Devon together, but the memory of the events at Pewsey lingered on in their memories. Jennifer Estcourt said that her mother, Ruth, never forgave the Neo-Pagans and would have nothing to do with them after the war.

For his part, following his flight from the camp, Paul enlisted and, in October 1915, underwent his army medical.

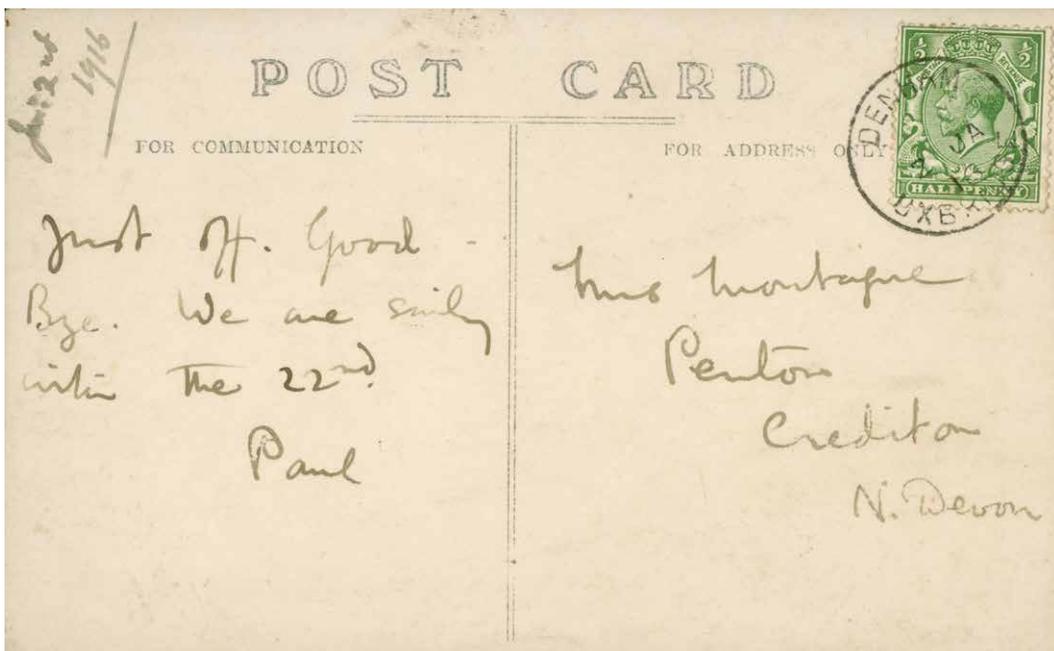
Information recorded on Army Form E.536, now held in the National Archives at Kew, documents his height as being 6 feet and 3/4 of an inch, and his eyesight as being excellent. The form required that he declare, upon his honour, that he had 'never suffered from any serious illness or injury' and that he was not 'suffering from any mental or physical infirmity'. Despite the recent emotional turmoil he had suffered, following the death of his brother and rejection by the woman he loved, Paul avowed on the form that his mental state was good.⁸



'Poor passionate Paul'. Paul Montague, c.1913. Photographer unknown.

A few weeks after his medical, on 11 November, Paul received his commission as a second lieutenant and joined the newly formed 20th (Northern) Battalion, Rifle Brigade. Then, in the final weeks of 1915, he received news that the battalion was to be posted to Egypt for overseas garrison duty. There, they would be tasked with protecting vulnerable sites in both Egypt and Palestine, facing the forces of the Ottoman Empire, who had signed an alliance with Germany in August 1914.

After three months of frantic work, Paul had to walk away from Cambridge, from the Museum and from his New Caledonian collections. He was leaving behind a grieving family, and a series of fractured personal relationships, and was sailing into an uncertain future.



The 'Just off' postcard sent by Paul to his mother Amy just before sailing for Egypt.

Just Off

On the eve of sailing for Egypt, Paul wrote several postcards to friends and family informing them of his imminent departure. Two of these cards have survived. One, written to his mother, reads: 'Just off. Good Bye. We are sailing with the 22nd [Battalion]. Paul'. The second postcard is stored in the file of documents belonging to Bryn Olivier, and held with the Rupert Brooke papers, in Cambridge. It reads:

Good bye! Just off. Send along the photos of camp, if you can remember them, to 20th Battalion, R.B. c/o G.P.O. Paul.

The request for photos of the summer camp at Pewsey suggests that Paul wanted to carry with him a physical reminder of his friends and, perhaps, that he had reconciled himself to the painful news of Noël's involvement with James Strachey. Certainly, it seems significant that Bryn was a recipient of one of the postcards he dashed off in a hurry, just as his ship was preparing to sail. It is also intriguing that she chose to keep it safe for decades afterwards, despite 'poor passionate Paul' being the cause of the turmoil and upheaval that had unfolded at the camp. One explanation for why she kept the postcard is because it carries Paul's photograph on the reverse.

In the photo, he is seen seated among a group of six men, presumably members of his unit, all dressed in full army uniform. The other five men are moustached and are staring directly into the camera; most have attempted a grin. Paul's face is clean shaven. He looks rather pale, very young, and stares off to one side, away from the gaze of the



Paul Montague (right) in uniform on a Real Photographic Post Card.

lens. All the men hold walking sticks and are wearing puttees, the long strips of cloth wound around the legs from ankle to knee, to provide protection and support.

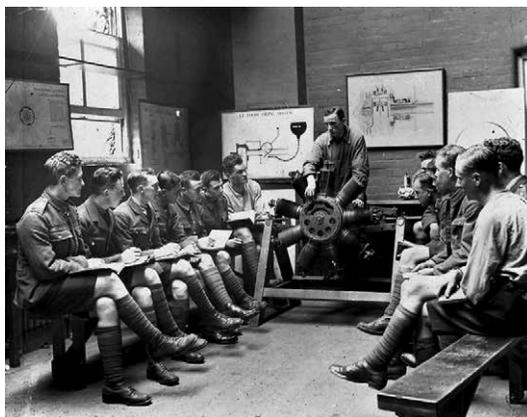
Images such as the one taken of Paul and his 20th Battalion companions are known as Real Photographic Post Cards (RPPC). These 'personalised' mementoes were usually made by high-street studios or roving photographers, touring army training camps touting for business. Soldiers would purchase a small number and despatch them to their loved ones prior to heading off to the Front. Millions had been circulated by the end of the war. Despite their numbers, examples from World War I have become sought-after items among deltiologists – the term given to collectors of postcards. They are marketed and sold via online auction sites where they regularly sell for in excess of £10 each.¹

The postcards were printed by hand, directly from a negative onto photographic card, and had a postcard-style reverse where the purchaser could write a message. Although there was limited space, the brevity and directness of Paul's messages is striking. There seems to be little room for sentiment, even when writing to his mother. This approach became a feature of his wartime communications. He was usually matter of fact, and very often ironic, in his descriptions of the risks to which he was exposed. Perhaps this *sangfroid* was a coping strategy; and a way of sparing his loved ones difficult details.

Paul posted his cards from Denham Army Training Camp in Buckinghamshire, where he was stationed before embarking for Egypt. His basic training was designed to improve physical fitness, instil discipline and instruct recruits in the fundamental military skills required to be a soldier. Much time was spent marching on the parade ground. After several weeks, recruits progressed to handling weapons, digging trenches and marching at night. In the early days of the war, the men leading this training were often elderly officers who had been brought out of retirement. Many of them had fitness issues of their own. One shouted his parade-ground instructions from the comfort of his bath chair, while another was reported to weigh over 20 stone, making it a struggle to find a horse strong enough to carry him.²

The conditions in many of the training camps were also challenging. They were often overcrowded, with not enough accommodation huts available, so many recruits had to sleep in tents and endure wet and cold weather. In the evenings, the men were largely free to entertain themselves. At Denham Camp, a nearby parish hall became a hub for them to meet, talk and organise games and concerts. No doubt Paul would have seized the chance to contribute to any musical occasions.

When not marching, he would have had the opportunity to observe the exploits of the men of the Royal Flying Corps (RFC), which was also based at Denham. The RFC had been formed in 1912 as an aerial branch of the British army. Trainees underwent basic military training but also attended lectures and demonstrations on subjects such as mechanics and the construction and function of engines. If they passed, and successfully completed a series of physical tests designed to assess their balance and co-ordination, then trainees were presented with a white band to put around their caps. This band marked them out as 'Flight Cadets'.³



Training to be a pilot in the Royal Flying Corps, c.1915. Photographer unknown.

From the parade ground at Denham, Paul would have witnessed these cadets trying to put into practice what they had learned in the classroom. The RFC's flimsy planes, however, often failed to perform in the way pilots had been led to expect. Frequently, they crash-landed as a result of inexperience and human error. Most planes were single seater so instructors had to impart their knowledge from the ground, and then stand back and watch as their pupils took to the air while trying to work it out for themselves. It is an understatement to say that pilot training was dangerous. Of the more than 14,000 pilots killed during World War I, some 8,000 died in training.⁴

Despite the dangers, Paul watched the exploits of the RFC with a sense of envy. And he was not alone. Flying cadets lived on their nerves and were renowned for enacting a certain kind of cavalier irreverence. Their behaviour when off duty, along with the state of their uniforms, often fell below acceptable standards for other troops but they were somehow able to get away with it.⁵ When war broke out, the RFC was quickly oversubscribed, with a long waiting list, despite the risks.

Paul's battalion sailed from Liverpool in early 1916, arriving in Alexandria on 16 January. Two ships, the *Olympic* and the *Grampian*, were used to transport the almost 1,000 men. Compared to those sent to the Western Front, the wartime experiences of these battalions were relatively quiet and uneventful. They undertook patrols, guarded prisoners of war and provided security for visiting officials. They were eventually disbanded in August 1919, with any remaining men being absorbed into the 12th Battalion, the Royal Hampshire Regiment.⁶

It must have been a great relief to Amy and Leopold Montague to learn that Paul would not be going to the Western Front. His letters home reassured them that the war was providing him with many of the same opportunities he had enjoyed during his expeditions to New Caledonia and the Montebello Islands. He was collecting and documenting zoological specimens, taking photographs and getting to know local people. Paul assured his parents that he had 'a good deal of time on my hands'. The closest he had come to danger resulted from the erratic behaviour of an Arabian horse he purchased from 'an old Bedouin' and which he had been riding in the desert. The horse, he said, 'has rather a tendency to stop dead at the top of a bank, have a good look and then take it standing, which is rather disconcerting!'

After a few months, however, Paul grew increasingly frustrated with the mundane duties to which his battalion had been assigned. In the summer of 1916, he wrote to tell his sister Ruth that he had taken some decisive action to relieve the boredom:

I am still here looking to the welfare of the Turk ... But never mind, it may not last long, as my name is now on the waiting list of the R.F.C. and I hope to begin training in anything from 1-3 months.⁷

During 1917, experienced RFC pilots were redeployed from the Sinai and Palestine campaign to set up a new flying school in Egypt, and Paul found himself in the right place to pursue his ambition. In joining the RFC, he knew he was taking a massive risk. Mindful of the dangers he faced, and the obvious concern his parents would feel, Paul warned his sister:

By the way, don't tell my fond parents about The Flying Corps. One must do something nowadays.⁸



Cicada at Plaine des Lacs, New Caledonia. Photograph by Paul Montague, 1914.



Paul Montague and his gittern in a Sydney photographic studio, 1913. Photographer unknown.

The Drowned Lute

When Paul Montague had written to Bryn Olivier from on board the *Königin Luise*, sailing from Southampton towards Sydney in 1913, he had made sure to include news of his closest companion: his favourite musical instrument. Amidst the strange new surroundings and fellow passengers, he wrote, the gittern was ‘quite happy, but a little shy at present’.¹

Gitterns are Elizabethan lute-like instruments, the precursor of the guitar. In true Bedalian style, Paul not only composed his own, often bawdy, songs with which to entertain friends, but also designed and made the instrument himself. This gittern travelled with him to New Caledonia and was by his side throughout his fieldwork. During a brief stopover in Sydney, Paul had visited a photographer’s studio to have his portrait taken. In the photos, he poses in various stances; in some he is seen wearing a hat. His gittern, however, is ever present; he is playing it in every shot.

Paul’s childhood had been filled with music and at Cambridge his talents continued to be admired and much sought after. The Gonville & Caius College newspaper, *The Cain*, records his frequent participation in concerts and recitals. From his first term, his musical abilities were singled out for praise: ‘P.D. Montague delighted the audience with the richness of the tone he elicited from his instrument,’ reads a review of his violin solo of Sulzer’s *Sarabande* at the Lent term concert of 1910. A year later, he and a fellow student’s rendition of a Mendelssohn violin duet ‘especially delighted’ the audience.² Outside these formal musical settings, however, the gittern was his instrument of choice.

Of the many items of equipment and paraphernalia that Paul took with him to New Caledonia, his gittern became one of his greatest assets. He soon discovered that, for the people of New Caledonia, the importance of music, song and dance cannot be overstated. Following his own fieldwork experiences in the Torres Strait Islands, Alfred Cort Haddon returned convinced that an anthropologist needed to be more than simply a scholarly and scientific researcher. It was useful, he stressed, for an anthropologist to be an artist, a linguist and, importantly, a musician.³

Interspersed in the pages of Paul’s journal are his various attempts to transcribe the musical notations of Kanak songs. However, his efforts are often scored through or unfinished, perhaps because he knew that he could rely on the wax-cylinder recordings. With the exception of the barely audible genealogical chant, all the recordings he made in the field were musical. These included something described as a ‘house song or *ururua*’, and a song to accompany a dance, known as a *doru*. Two recordings also feature a musical instrument called a *hndor* – a rare curved flute which was played to mark important ceremonial occasions such as funerals.

All these intriguing, potentially extraordinary recordings are now lost to distortion and the vagaries of technology. In some ways, it would have been better if Paul had ‘backed-up’ his recordings by notating the songs in his journal.



A musical instrument known as a hndor, collected by Paul Montague in Gondé. Photograph by Gwil Owen.

During his fieldwork, Paul commissioned an old man from Gondé to make him a *hndor* flute for his collection. As he worked, the old man described how the *hndor* was played once the young yams had been planted, because they had ‘the magical property of making the yams grow quickly’. Paul was careful to document this connection between the playing of the *hndor* and the success of a yam harvest. He also collected several other Kanak instruments, including a bark ‘clapper’ for creating a percussive rhythm during dances.

On the inside cover pages of Paul’s expedition journal is evidence that he had also begun planning and designing a new instrument for his own use. This time, he had decided to make a lute. The numerous pencil sketches, scattered across the cover pages, give a sense of how he imagined the overall design would take shape, as well as detailed close-ups of the planned vaulted back and ornately carved central sound hole. One of the first things he acquired upon his return to England was an instruction manual to help him create this instrument. Then he set about gathering the materials he needed for its construction.

Sketches in Paul Montague's New Caledonian journal of the lute he planned to make upon his return to England. Photograph by Julie Adams, 2013.



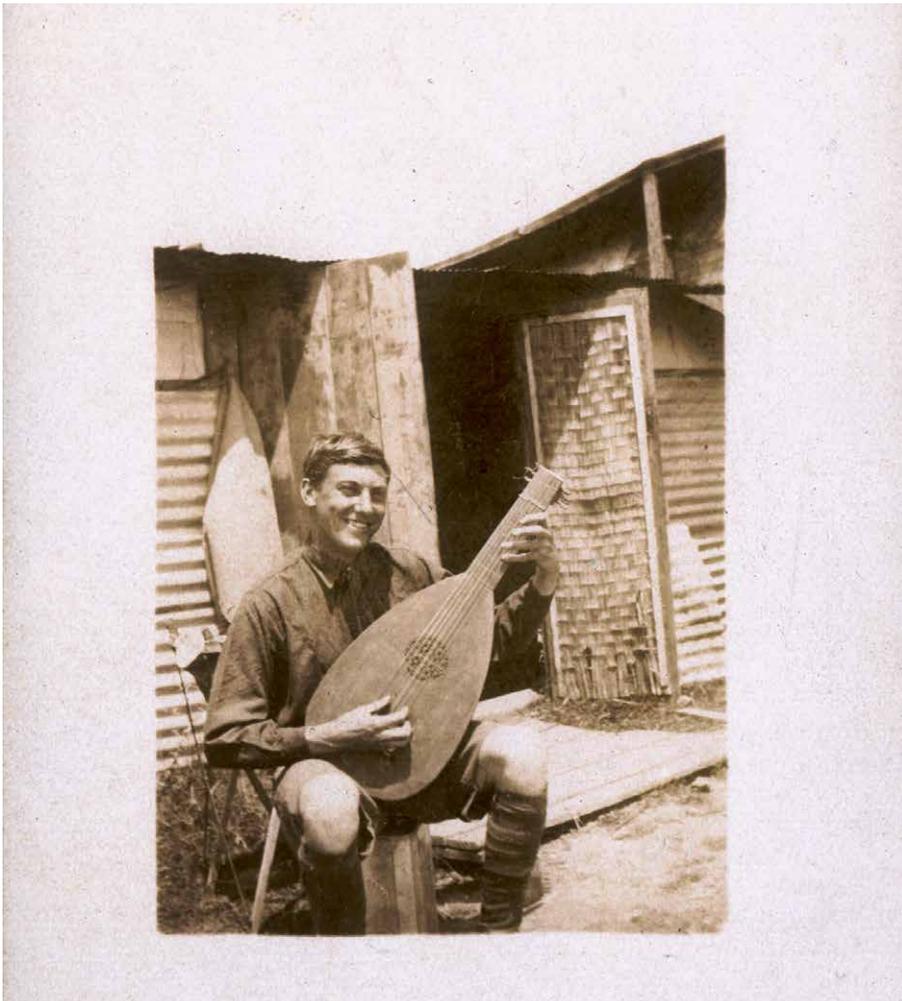
In 1916, when Paul was posted to Egypt with his battalion, it was this new lute that travelled along with him, while his gittern remained safely at home. In August, he wrote to his sister Ruth from Egypt to say that he had a lot of spare time on his hands and had begun to make sections of a second lute. Could she, he asked, dig out his lute-making book and send it to him? He wasn't sure exactly where at Penton he had left it but she might, he helpfully suggested, 'locate it somewhere in the smoking-room'.⁴

Aside from making this new instrument, he reported that, a few days earlier, he had watched as 3,000 Turkish prisoners were marched into Cairo, stripped naked and their possessions confiscated. Many, he told Ruth, had hidden coins and valuables in 'various parts of their anatomy'. One man's body, when shaken by a warder, released a shower of English sovereigns which fell to the ground and scattered in all directions.

Seven months later, as a newly qualified pilot, Paul set sail from Alexandria bound for the port of Salonika (Thessaloniki) in Greece, and active service with the Royal Flying Corps. On the morning of 8 March 1917, while sailing among the Greek islands, his ship was torpedoed at 7.45am, when Paul was still in bed. In a letter sent back to Bedales and published in the *Bedales Record*, Paul recounted the story: 'There was not much of an explosion but the ship shook a good deal'. Having quickly pulled on a lifebelt, he went to assist with the lowering of the lifeboats. For about an hour and a quarter, the ship sank evenly, while Paul and the second officer hurried to get the injured into boats. Then, as the ship began to list dangerously, he scrambled back to his cabin to collect 'a few things of sentimental value' which were, by now, scattered to the four corners of the room. Among them, he wrote in a letter to Ruth, was a photograph of 'my lady' who has 'broken my heart' and 'grieved me more than words can tell'.

There was just time to snatch up some money and his treasured lute before he and the second officer jumped into the sea and headed out towards a liferaft. In his letter to Bedales, written only ten days after the sinking, Paul adopted a typically nonchalant tone in his retelling of this drama: 'We were no sooner in the water, swimming to the raft when the ship sank'. He goes on:

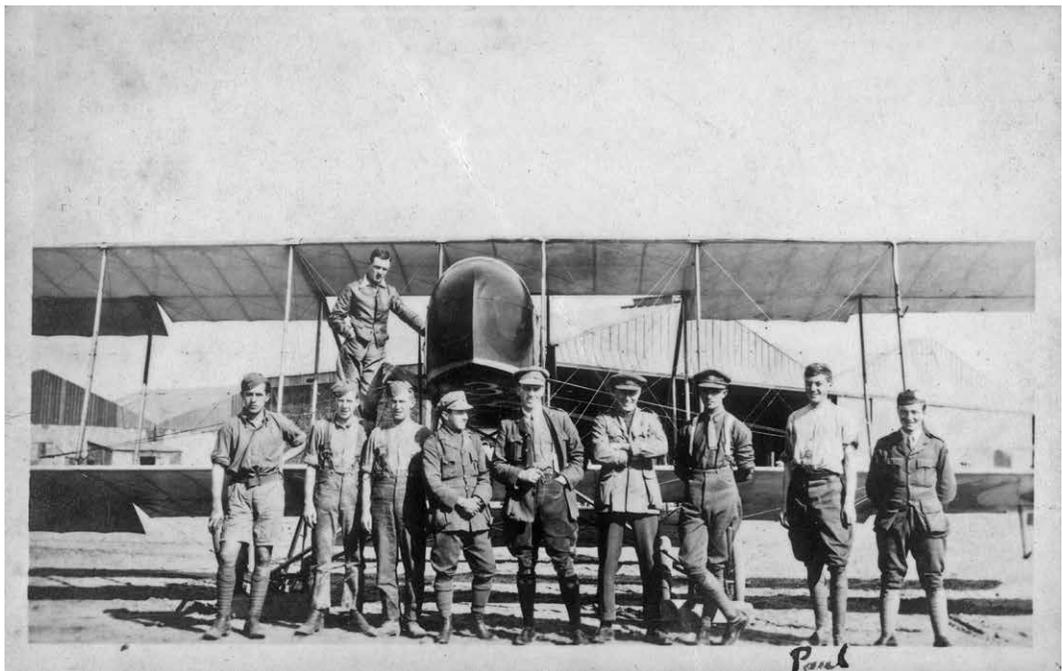
All the machinery rattled down with a roar; the foremast fell on two boats, which themselves fell back into the water, and she slid down in a few seconds in a sea of foam and steam ... we got from the raft on to a capsized boat, and pulled out all the damaged people we could get to.⁵



The drowned lute being played by Paul in Egypt, prior to his departure for Salonika. Photographer unknown.

The survivors – Paul included – were rescued by a cruiser and taken to Crete, from where they eventually set sail for Salonika once more. On this second voyage, however, he was travelling alone, without his constant companion. Although he had been able to retrieve the lute from his cabin, it had not survived the turmoil of the sinking.

In a letter to Ruth, written shortly after arriving in Salonika, the loss of the lute was evidently still weighing heavily on his mind, and he describes how he tried to save it from ‘the flood’ and carry it with him onto the raft. In the chaos, however, he could not hold on to it, and it slipped from his grasp. ‘My lute was drowned,’ he laments. ‘As it floated away, I recited the burial service.’⁶



Trainee pilots of the Royal Flying Corps, Egypt, 1916. Amy Montague has 'labelled' Paul, second from the right. Photographer unknown.

Weather to Fly

In late 2015, a moustached kingfisher was captured on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. The discovery and subsequent killing of this small bird was reported in newspapers around the world. In Britain, the *Daily Mail's* headline of 10 October proclaimed: 'American scientist tracks down one of the world's rarest birds and then KILLS IT for "research"'.¹ In the article that followed, the *Mail's* reporter used the terms 'slaughter' and 'slaying' to describe the actions of Dr Chris Filardi of the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), the researcher at the centre of the storm.

Filardi had spent decades searching for the moustached kingfisher, a species so elusive that it was referred to as the 'ghost bird of the Solomon Islands'. In September 2015, he reported on the Museum's Facebook page that he had caught a single male in a mist net, 'a gorgeous, strong and raucous' bird, and then 'photographed it ... euthanized and prepared the bird as a scientific specimen'. In the wake of widespread condemnation, the National Audubon Society invited Filardi to write a piece for their website, giving him the opportunity to explain his actions to its concerned members.²

Despite having evaded scientists for decades, these gaudy blue-and-orange kingfishers were not strictly speaking endangered, Filardi explained. The birds' talent for avoiding capture meant simply that the species was 'poorly known'. The killing of this one bird would have no impact on the survival of the species as a whole. Filardi was at pains to highlight the involvement of Solomon Islanders in the search for the bird. In fact, elders of local tribes had led his expedition to sites which the birds were known to frequent, and had also shared stories of eating *mbarikuku* – their own name for the kingfisher. For Islanders, Filardi argued, the bird was 'unremarkably common'. Concluding with a passionate appeal to those he felt had misunderstood the context for his actions, he wrote:

Through a vision shared with my Solomon Island mentors ... the Moustached Kingfisher I collected is a symbol of hope and a purveyor of possibility, not a record of loss.³

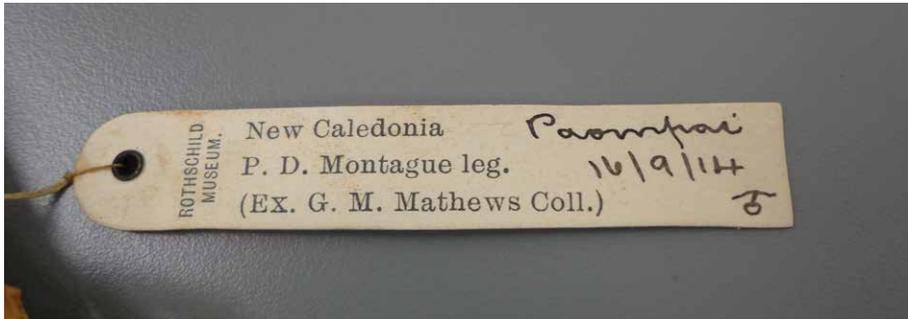
Today, the moustached kingfisher he caught is one 'symbol of hope' among millions of others that constitute the ornithological collections of the AMNH. Their storage facilities, located on Manhattan's Upper West Side, are home to the controversial kingfisher, as well as the hundreds of taxidermied birds collected by Paul Montague in New Caledonia in 1914. Such skins, which have been retained for the purposes of scientific study, are referred to by museums as 'voucher specimens'.

When I visited AMNH on a freezing day in January 2018, Paul Sweet, collection manager and colleague of the kingfisher catcher, kindly offered to show me Montague's bird collections. I was intrigued to learn how they had come to be in New York rather than in London or Cambridge. As far as I knew, Montague had no connection to anyone in the city. As we squeezed into a small and ancient lift, Paul Sweet asked me which



Some of the New Caledonian whistlers collected by Paul Montague and now in the collections of the American Museum of Natural History, New York. Photograph by Julie Adams, 2018.

birds in particular I wished to view. The specimens, he explained, were organised by species rather than geography. As a result, the species we were seeking determined which floor we would need to visit. He seemed somewhat surprised when I said that I had no preference, as my interest was in the collector and not the collected. I was hoping that, by viewing these samples of Montague's fieldwork, I would learn more about the man. In that case, as they were stored close by, Sweet suggested we start with the whistlers.



Label documenting the complex story of migration that these birds have undertaken.
 Photograph by Julie Adams, 2018.

When we emerged from the lift on a lower level, there was an overpowering stench of chemicals to which Sweet appeared entirely oblivious. Turning right off a gloomy corridor, we entered a large room full of metal cabinets, stacked from floor to ceiling. Unlocking one, he climbed a ladder and began rummaging around before locating a tray and returning. On the tray, lying on their backs and organised in rows, were multiple specimens of a delicate little bird with a bright yellow breast, white neck and dark head.

As if further restriction on their movement was required, their legs had been bound together with the string of two large labels. Balls of white cotton, which had been used to stuff the inside of skins once the organic matter had been removed, stared blankly out of empty eye sockets. This, Sweet explained, was the New Caledonian whistler (*Pachycephala caledonica*). For a long time, this bird was thought to be conspecific with the Melanesian whistler but the New Caledonian variety differs slightly, having a grey rather than a black hood, a narrower breast band and a more slender beak. Its habitat includes humid forest regions from sea level up to about 1,000 metres. It is relatively sedentary and eats insects, seeds and small snails.

Glancing at the labels, I recognised the names of places in New Caledonia that identified where the birds had been collected. One label, dated 14 November 1914, read 'Houailou River'.

Picking up first one bird and then another, Sweet turned them over carefully in his hands and asked me if Montague had worked alone. I told him about Upiko and Nanine, his Kanak colleagues, who had become expert at catching and skinning specimens. Sweet said he could spot tiny differences in the way these birds had been prepared, suggesting they had been skinned by more than one person. Skinning a bird is an art, he said, and an individual's own technique left a visible imprint on the specimen: a kind of artist's signature. After years of working in the stores, he could spot a signature and assess the skill of the skinner. He judged Montague's birds to be moderately well prepared, although he saw evidence of a slight carelessness. The sheer number of specimens, which all shared the same acquisition date, led Sweet to believe Montague was working at high speed or as part of a team. I speculated that he might have been hurrying to keep up with the number of specimens Upiko and Nanine were catching. Nowadays, Paul Sweet told me, the art of skinning is disappearing as more technologically advanced methods, such as freeze drying, are developed.

One of the two long labels tied to each bird charted their arrival into the collections in New York, while the other revealed traces of their journey prior to that point. Alongside Montague's name, each label also read: 'Ex. G. M. Mathews Coll.:', a reference to the Australian ornithologist who had financially supported the New Caledonian expedition. I also noticed that each label had 'Rothschild Museum' printed at the top, and I asked Sweet how the various pieces of the chain – Montague, Mathews, Rothschild, American Museum of Natural History – fitted together. He directed me to an article written in the 1930s by a former curator entitled 'Moving a Museum', which told the incredible story of a mass migration of thousands of stuffed birds from one continent to another.

The story begins with the wealthy Australian, Gregory Macalister Mathews, who moved to England in the early twentieth century. Inspired by a visit to the British Museum, Mathews decided to prepare a comprehensive catalogue of Australian birds. He immediately began acquiring specimens for this ambitious project, including Montague's birds from New Caledonia. Despite this all-consuming task, he was never particularly interested in the creatures themselves. He was 'essentially a bibliophile' and birds were simply a necessary step in helping him to achieve his publishing goal. This he achieved over the course of 17 years, with the monumental twelve-volume series: *The Birds of Australia*.⁴

Perhaps because he was somewhat detached from the subject of his collecting, Mathews subsequently offered to sell his more than 40,000 specimens to Lionel Walter Rothschild – the famously fanatical oologist, trainer of zebras, lover of cassowaries and owner of Tring Zoological Museum. So Montague's New Caledonian specimens were transferred from Mathews to Tring. There they remained until October 1931 when, after years of extravagant acquiring and saddled by huge debts, Rothschild was reluctantly forced to sell the greater part of his bird collection. In pursuit of the sale, he contacted a friend who was a trustee at the American Museum of Natural History. The Museum, recognising the significance of what they were being offered and the value of keeping the collection intact, set about raising the necessary funds. Eventually, thanks to a large donation from the family of American businessman Harry Payne Whitney, the Museum acquired the Rothschild collection and Montague's birds were in flight once again.

In February 1932, Robert Cushman Murphy, curator at AMNH, was despatched to England to begin packing up Rothschild's vast bird collection ready for shipping to New York. Murphy later wrote an essay reflecting on his experiences during the four-month packing period. For him, Tring was a fantastical place of wonder and magic. However, the enormity of what lay ahead somewhat dampened his spirits. In the absence of any kind of written catalogue, Murphy approached his task with a growing sense of dread: 'Behind all the packing, loomed the distant spectre of *unpacking*'.⁵

Forced to create a systematic way of documenting as he went along, Murphy and his team got to work on the laborious task of wrapping the larger birds in sheets of newspaper, while the smaller specimens were slipped between layers of cotton and stored in pasteboard boxes before being stacked in larger crates. In his essay, Murphy expressed his immense gratitude to the assistants who worked alongside him. The only time the pace of their work slowed, he reported, was when they paused to read articles in the newspapers being used to wrap the birds. The newspapers were old, yellowed,



The birds carefully packed by Robert Cushman Murphy and his team, ready for transportation from Tring Museum to the American Museum of Natural History in 1932. Photograph by Robert Cushman Murphy.

and dated back to the days of World War I. Occasionally, Murphy recalled, 'one of my English helpers was caught and held spellbound by a headline in *The Times* which awakened, perhaps, some burning memory of Flanders'.⁶

By the time Murphy and his team of war-veteran packers had finished, they calculated that almost 280,000 specimens had been wrapped, packed and crated up, ready for the voyage to America. It was the largest bird collection ever to have been transferred from one place to another. Somewhere in the shipment, lying side by side and tucked into cotton-lined boxes, were Paul Montague's yellow-breasted New Caledonian whistlers.

In the Montague family archive, there is a photograph of Paul as a trainee pilot. Amy Montague has labelled this image, inscribing his name on the photograph's lower front border and also writing 'Paul Montague, Egypt' on the reverse. In the picture, Paul is posed with a group of men in front of a biplane; he is standing slightly forward of the rest. Unlike the rather formal atmosphere of the Real Photographic Post Card, the group of men in this image appear relaxed. Hands on hips, their uniforms are dishevelled, shirt sleeves rolled up and trousers tucked into their puttees. They exude a certain jaunty self-confidence; Paul grins at the camera.

When he arrived in Salonika as a trained pilot, Paul maintained this air of casual confidence. In the words of his commanding officer: 'He was tall, good looking and had delicate manners. In his dress he was as untidy as a schoolboy and when he blushed – as he often did – he looked like one.' Between sorties, he had found time to build a new lute to replace the one that had drowned. It had a 'sweet tone' and he used it to 'beguile the summer nights with medieval ballads ...'. In an official history of his RFC squadron, it is noted that, if Paul was needed, 'he could usually be found embedded in the thatched roof of some local cottage, only the soles of his boots visible. A tug on the boots and he would emerge, grimy, but grasping a clutch of eggs'.⁷ As a result, he was given the nickname 'the birdman' by his fellow airmen.

Beneath this shallow veneer of music, laughter and comradeship, however, the life of a pilot was physically, psychologically and emotionally challenging. By the time Paul began to fly, the number of pilots being killed was making it difficult to train replacements quickly enough. Some pilots arrived on the Front with less than 24 hours' flying experience. For others, their first sortie would also be their last.⁸ Inferior planes ensured they were easy targets for German fighters. Despite the risks, in Salonika flying did not even represent the greatest threat. Instead, the most effective enemy of the British was the malaria-bearing mosquito, and ten times as many soldiers entered hospital there with malaria as with wounds caused by enemy action.⁹

In the photograph of Paul Montague as a trainee pilot, the flimsy-looking plane, considered obsolete even at the time, looms behind him. He stands with his companions, grinning and laughing, in front of this insubstantial aircraft; documentary evidence of the war's newest endangered species. Kept, carefully, by his family for over 100 years, it is a reminder of the fleeting fragility of life and of Paul's own impending airborne absence. On 19 March 1917, not long after he had arrived in Salonika, and with a little over six months left to live, Paul wrote a note to his sister Ruth, portraying the bleak reality of life as a pilot:

Dear Ruthy,

I am now in the dismal and out-of-the-way place known as Salonique, and my hands are very cold as you can probably judge by my writing. I should think this place would be rather pretty in the summer, but then the mosquitoes counteract that, and one is almost certain to get a fever...

When its not snowing, its raining. And when its not raining, its blowing. And when its not blowing, one has to fly...

Yours affectionately,

Paul¹⁰



A view in 'Salonika', 2015. In World War I, the frontline ran from Albania to the mouth of the River Struma in Greece. Photograph by Julie Adams.

The Forgotten Front

On a May morning in 2015, a few miles outside the village of Star Doiran in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, a tractor wound its way along a rough and stony path towards the summit of Kosturino Ridge. Feeling cramped and being uncomfortably bounced around in the vehicle's large trailer, I was with 15 members of a World War I battlefield tour group. At the outset of our journey, clambering into a tractor trailer had seemed like an amusing adventure. Ninety minutes of uneven ground later, we had given up any pretence of having fun. This interminable ride had become a test of physical endurance. Muscles spasmed and joints began to ossify. Julian Keevil, a large and extraordinarily genial American, was sprawled out at one end of the trailer. Unable to bend easily due to impending knee replacement surgery, Julian could do nothing except lie helplessly and await rescue. Beneath his bushy moustache, his ever-ready smile had hardened to a grimace. Sitting up front and grinning broadly, Alan Wakefield displayed no sign of discomfort at all. From time to time, he pointed to things on a folded map and chatted animatedly to the tractor driver. Alan, the guide for our tour group, is chairman of the Salonika Campaign Society and Head of the First World War and Early Twentieth Century Conflict collections at the Imperial War Museum.

Having finally reached the summit, we were hoisted out of the trailer one by one and stood around stretching our legs.



Members of the Salonika battlefield tour group disembark after a gruelling tractor ride, 2015. Photograph by Julie Adams.

When we were able to take in our surroundings, the views across the valley were dramatic. Alan helped to situate us in the landscape by pointing out what had now become familiar natural features: the Devil's Eye, the Grand Couronné, Pip Ridge and La Tortue (the turtle). Every hill, ravine, ridge and gully had been given a name by Allied troops and these names now served as reference points, a way of visually mapping the battles that had been fought there. During the Salonika Campaign, this whole area was known by British troops as 'The Birdcage', because of its extensive barbed-wire fortifications.¹

The Salonika countryside is strikingly beautiful. From our base in Macedonia, at the lakeside Hotel Romantique in Star Doiran, it was only a short walk along Marshal Tito Street to the foot of steep hills covered with almond trees, vineyards and thyme, which grows everywhere underfoot. The leaves are crushed as you walk, releasing their sweet scent and perfuming the air. The earth is shallow, dry and stony and, although climbing is not particularly difficult, descending is challenging and it is necessary to tread carefully to avoid slipping. The Hotel Romantique was largely empty apart from our group, and the lake was completely devoid of swimmers, paddlers, boating enthusiasts or fishermen. A waiter told us that Lake Doiran was named after a beautiful woman who had been captured by an Ottoman raider, and who chose to throw herself into its dark waters rather than accept her fate.

In the early mornings, our group would set out in a small minibus, with packed lunches, bottles of water, sunscreen and insect repellent loaded into flimsy carrier bags. During our explorations of the nearby battlefields, we were accompanied by



Alan Wakefield, Chairman of the Salonika Campaign Society, setting the scene, 2015. Photograph by Julie Adams.

several local guides, mostly police and ex-army men who had fought in the Balkans conflicts of the 1990s. These men knew the tracks and paths we would be taking and were prepared for emergencies, should anything go wrong. On the minibus on the first day, Alan had recounted the story of a previous tour member who had the misfortune of slipping and fracturing both her wrists. The day of the tractor ride was to be our longest and most challenging trek yet and, as we began picking our way along a narrow path on Kosturino Ridge towards a disturbingly distant lookout point, I tried not to think about how long it would take to get to a hospital, even with the assistance of expert local guides.

Alan's *modus operandi* was to take us to sites which had been the settings for pivotal moments in the campaign. Once there, he would give a brief overview of what had occurred: facts and figures, usually casualties of the fighting. Then he would delve into the archives, in the form of letters and journals written by the men who were there.

Alan read some of these century-old experiences aloud while we stood still in the landscape and listened. More than simply conveying the horrors of war, these recollections captured the gruelling nature of everyday life for the armies of the Salonika conflict; from the freezing winter climate to the scorching summer heat and mosquitoes. Each season brought its own demands. Writing home in the spring of 1917, Infantryman Private Christopher Hennessy recalled:

Before we'd gone far it began to rain, lightly but steadily, and we were soon soaked ... Owing to the bad condition of the road the column began to straggle and men got themselves well in rear of their platoon. The danger was that men might drop out from sheer fatigue, so as far as his own condition allowed each man kept an eye on his mate. In this desolate country any man falling out unnoticed would certainly have had his lot.²

Many of the soldiers wrote about the near impossibility of carrying out the tasks assigned to them, due to the challenging terrain. In stifling summer heat, the men were forced to roll up their sleeves and drive 'their steel picks into the rocks'.³ During winter blizzards, they worked through the night to keep trenches free of snow, despite the fact that 'nature filled again faster than man could empty'.⁴

After we had listened to these stories of struggle on Kosturino Ridge, Alan explained that we could either return the way we had come or opt to hike down to the road, which would take around four hours. Despite the heat and the arduous nature of the path that lay ahead, most people chose to hike. Julian Keevil reluctantly agreed that, due to his knees, he had no choice but to climb back into the tractor trailer. He waved us off with an agreement to rendezvous in a bar at the bottom of the hill.

During the long descent, I stuck close to Gele, a guide who was older than the others and who kept to the rear of the group, herding us and making sure that no one fell behind. Every so often he bent down and retrieved something from the path before handing it to me: a bullet, a ball of iron shot, fragments of shrapnel; the rusting remains of a heel from an army boot. These material remnants of war still litter the landscape, despite the passing of almost 100 years. At first, I was amazed at how Gele could spot

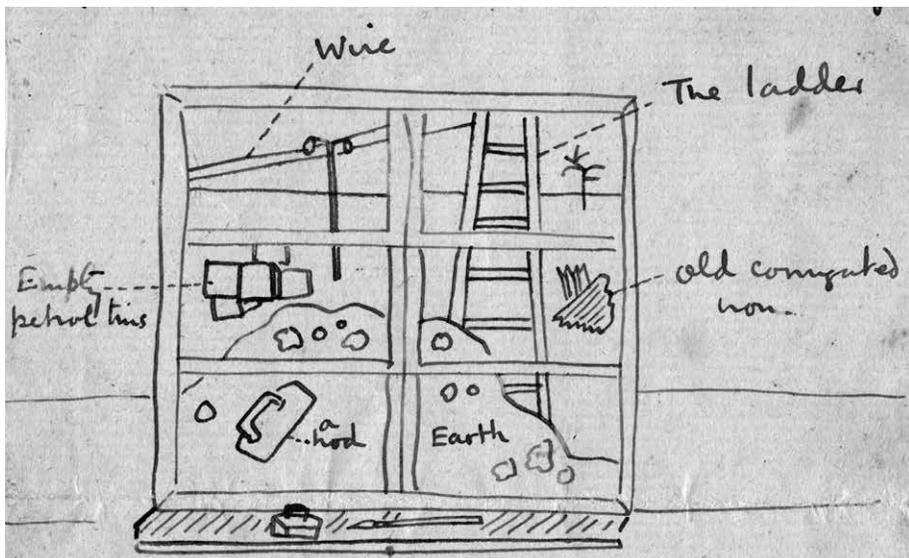


A littered landscape: walking through a former battlefield in Salonika with shot everywhere underneath, 2015. Photograph by Julie Adams.

the tiniest flash of metal but soon my own eyes adjusted and I began to pick out the debris scattered all around us, lying only partially covered by a thin layer of soil.

After an hour or so of hard walking, as we paused to rest, an extremely old man emerged from a shepherd's hut and shouted something to us. One of our guides, a police officer by the name of Romeo Drobarov, shouted back and the old man approached lugging a heavy bucket of freshwater for us to recharge our bottles. Romeo offered him some food from a packed lunch and the old man departed, having shaken our hands with a broad and toothless smile.

As we got underway once more, Romeo asked me about Paul Montague. All the local guides knew of him: to them he was the pilot whose plane had come down in a field not far from where we now stood. As we walked, I talked to Romeo about Paul's life before he was a pilot – his zoology, his collecting, his time in New Caledonia and his fascination with Kanak magic stones. Gele said something to Romeo, who translated: Gele wanted me to know that in Macedonia they also had traditional beliefs about the power of certain stones. A few steps further on, Gele stopped to pick up a peach-coloured piece of quartz from the ground and passed it to me. The stone sparkled in the sunlight. 'Magic,' he said, laughing.



The 'beastly ladder' as drawn by Paul Montague in a letter to his sister Ruth in 1917.
 Photograph by Julie Adams, 2015.

During World War I, Salonika became known as the 'forgotten Front'. Georges Clemenceau, the French statesman, dismissed its troops as 'The Gardeners of Salonika', because they did more digging than fighting.⁵ The campaign became the butt of music-hall jokes in Britain, with comedians singing a ditty, 'If you want a holiday, go to Salonika...'⁶ Few people, including many of the troops sent to fight there, had previously heard of Salonika or knew that such a place existed. For families such as the Montagues, this made letters home even more important, although the darkening tone of Paul's correspondence would surely have been a cause for concern.

Writing to his sister Ruth on 19 March 1917, Paul complained about the bitter cold. Frequently, he and his fellow pilots returned from sorties with large blisters of frostbite on their faces because of exposure to the elements at altitude. Even writing the letter had been a struggle because his hands were shaking uncontrollably with the cold. In the letter, he seems persistently distracted. He begins by narrating the dramatic sinking of his ship en route from Crete, before asking for news of the liaison between Noël Olivier and James Strachey. He describes drinking some fairly average locally produced wine that tasted like sherry and laments the unending nature of the war. On page two, he includes a small annotated sketch of the view from a window in the camp. It depicts a desolate scene: discarded empty petrol tins, piles of earth, old corrugated iron and wire defences. A ladder is propped up to the right of the picture. Towards the end of the letter, Paul returns to the sketch: 'There's a beastly ladder leaning up against the window,' he observes, 'And I'm sitting right under it. Do you think it is unlucky, please?'⁷

As the Salonika battlefield tour group made our way down from Kosturino Ridge, Romeo began sharing stories that local people tell about the war. One, in particular, lodged in my mind and I wrote it down in my notebook as soon as I returned to the Hotel Romantique that evening. The story related to the freezing winter of 1915,

when many Allied soldiers were trying to survive in bitter conditions without adequate supplies of basic items such as warm coats or tents. In those early days of the campaign, a drastic lack of equipment meant that men often 'headed into the mountains wearing lightweight khaki-drill'.⁸ Even men lucky enough to have heavier clothing complained that their overcoats were 'frozen hard, and when some of the men tried to beat theirs to make them pliable to lie down in they split like matchwood'.⁹ Unable to keep themselves warm, the troops suffered terribly and many died or were hospitalised with frostbite. Romeo told us that, one evening, local shepherds out with their flocks on the hillsides around Kosturino had overheard the screams of a battalion of soldiers trying to forge a river. So icy was the water that the men were literally freezing to death as they waded, screaming out in terror as they realised they could go no further. Nowadays, Romeo said, shepherds sometimes report hearing the haunting echoes of those poor men's screams when they are out late at night with their flocks.

As we emerged from a forest and into the glare of the sun, we were reunited with Julian Keevil, who had survived the return tractor ride seemingly unscathed, and was waiting for us with a beer in his hands. In the warm afternoon, it was hard to imagine the suffering of those freezing soldiers. Yet, mindful of the numerous small acts of remembering that we had carried out that day, I wondered if they might be considered a form of atonement to the fallen of the 'forgotten Front'.

Upon returning to Cambridge, I organised a final photography session for Paul Montague's collection. Despite the list of objects already being ambitious, I had also brought along one of the bullets that Gele had passed to me during the walk at



The Pé Doké, or red devil stones, collected by Paul Montague in Gondé in November 1914. Originally taken from a cave containing skulls near Canala, these stones were known to be extremely dangerous. Photograph by Josh Murfitt.

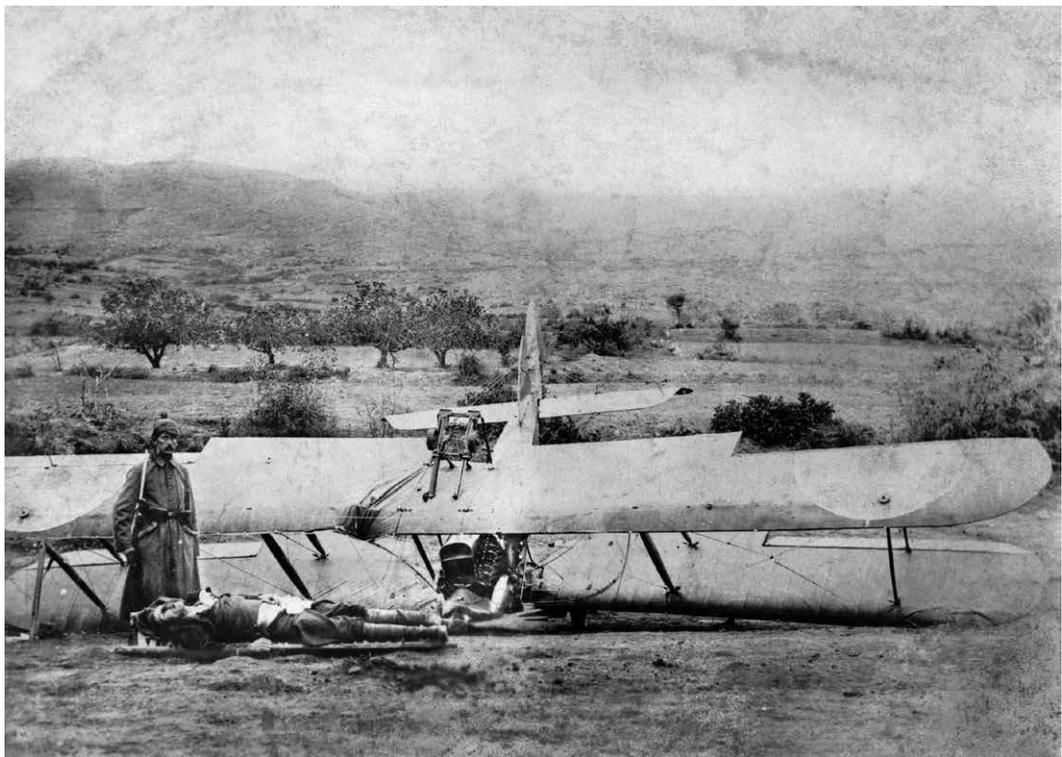
Kosturino Ridge. I was hoping that photographer Josh Murfitt would not mind this addition to his workload.

The first objects to focus on that day were a pair of heart-shaped magic stones with holes drilled in the top and a length of twisted-fibre cord that served to join them together. In his journal, Paul wrote that the stones were known as the *Pé Doké* or 'red devil stones'. They were known to be 'extremely dangerous' as they were possessed by a kind of 'devil': anyone who came into contact with them could become seriously ill. Paul had been given the stones by his friend, the hotel owner Georges Voisin. Voisin himself had acquired them from a 'white man', who had taken them from a cave containing skulls near Canala. In the cave, they had been suspended from the top of a spear which had been planted into the earth.

The people in the Houaïlou area had heard rumours about these stones, which could be used to exact revenge on an enemy. The stones' owner would select an intended victim and shortly afterwards this unfortunate person would be afflicted by an illness, accident or some slight injury which would result in their death. Paul wrote that people 'evinced the utmost horror when they saw me touch them,' certain that he would be cursed and fall ill. Paul claimed that the *Pé Doké* in his possession had been responsible for the deaths of 'many men'. Reflecting on the power of the stones and witnessing their effect on the people of the Houaïlou Valley, he concluded that their lethal potential was 'probably true, if the victim knew the *Doké* had been used against him'.¹⁰

In the photography studio, Josh was arranging the stones on the grey paper backdrop. The cord connecting them was fragile, which made the task more complicated, but he was finally able to manoeuvre them into a position that evoked some sense of their dynamism. Remembering how horrified the locals had been when Montague had handled these 'red devil' stones, I recalled the visit to Cambridge of the Paris-based Kanak curator Emmanuel Kasarhérou and his own reaction when these stones were being arranged during a photographic session. He and his non-Kanak colleague, Roger Boulay, were busy taking pictures for their research, documenting Kanak collections in museums around the world. When it came time to capture images of the magic stones, Kasarhérou announced that he had no intention of touching them himself. Instead, he laughingly suggested that he would be subcontracting that task out to Boulay. After all, he was not Kanak so the stones could not harm him.

Later, after their visit was over, I reflected on this encounter between an experienced curator, now living in the French capital, and the magic stones from his ancestral home. For him, the removal of the stones from their place of origin had clearly not diminished their cultural significance. Their past is present. Their salience endures.



Paul Montague's crashed plane, 29 October 1917. His body lies in front of the aircraft and is being watched over by a German soldier. Photograph by Emile Paquot.

The Aeroplane Competition

In early December 1907, a notice was published in the pages of the *Bedales Chronicle* announcing that the school was to hold its first Aeroplane Competition. Pupils were invited to design and manufacture model planes and submit them for rigorous test flights to assess their aerodynamic capabilities. The competition was scheduled for 8 December and the aircraft would take to the air from the school's upper corridor. The plane that flew furthest would be declared the winner.¹

Paul Montague joined forces with a fellow pupil, Eric Newnham, who was a declared aeroplane enthusiast and author of an essay titled 'The Progress of Human Flight', which had been published in the same edition of the *Chronicle* that had carried the announcement of the competition. In the essay, Newnham set out his imagined vision for the future uses of aircraft, accurately predicting the role that planes would play in combat, and boldly asserting: 'Aeroplanes are undoubtedly the war machines of the future.'² For most people at the time, the idea that pilots would soon be engaged in deadly air-to-air combat was barely conceivable.

Certainly, the British army itself seemed to have no specific vision for the use of aeroplanes as fighting machines when war broke out in 1914. In fact, when the Royal Flying Corps (RFC) was established in 1912, it had only a handful of planes in active service, none of which were armed or capable of dropping bombs.³ But if the army was slow to grasp the lethal potential of its aircraft, model plane-builder and precocious essay-writer Eric Newnham was not. Less than a decade after the competition at Bedales – and sooner, perhaps, than even Newnham could have imagined – the future he had foreseen arrived.

The model plane which Eric and Paul designed and constructed had elegant triangular wings, a gently curved keel in the front and a rudder at the back. The propeller consisted of two thick wooden blades driven by twisted elastic. On the day of the competition, a large crowd gathered as ten aircraft were submitted for careful scrutiny, before each one in turn was launched 'from a height of about eighteen feet' along the school's upper corridor. In front of the assembled crowd, Montague and Newnham's plane triumphed. On its maiden flight, it soared for a distance of 69 feet. The aircraft was then recalled and launched again for a second time, to ensure that the first attempt had not been a fluke. Once more it flew 69 feet, more than 20 feet further than any of the other entries. Victory was theirs, along with the first-prize winnings of eight shillings, and the celebrations began.⁴

In 1914, during the early days of the war before aerial combat had become established, a British reporter was sent to France to gauge how the war effort was progressing. During an interview with a French artilleryman, near Albert on the Western Front, the two men suddenly became aware of the buzz of an aircraft somewhere overhead. Instinctively, the artilleryman flinched and looked anxiously skywards. Turning to the reporter, the artilleryman exclaimed: 'There is that wretched bird that haunts us all!'⁵



A single-seater BE12 aircraft of the type being flown in Salonika in World War I. Photographer unknown.

Three years later, in March 1917, Paul was a newly qualified pilot, posted to join No. 47 Squadron Royal Flying Corps, in Salonika. The squadron had been formed in May 1916 and sailed for Salonika soon afterwards, arriving in early October. The squadron had been summoned by the army commander of the British Salonika Force to patrol the enemy Bulgarian lines, which had the advantage of holding the high ground.⁶ From their base at Yanesh, just behind the Doiran Front, the air crews spent most of their time documenting and supplying vital information about enemy positions to the artillery. Henry Albert Jones, a pilot who later penned *Over the Balkans*, a history of No. 47 Squadron's wartime activities, described the day-to-day work of those who flew:

The corps squadron's duty is to provide the corps command with information of all enemy movements ... to mark down the position of enemy batteries, dumps, strong points, etc., to photograph these positions and the enemy trench systems; and to keep this information up to date.⁷

This crucial work was carried out by a pilot and an observer. The pilot focused on keeping the plane airborne, often while being shelled by anti-aircraft fire, and the observer attempted to establish the distance of enemy targets by firing upon a battery and accurately judging 'the fall of the shot'. The observer was required to convey this information to the ground in real time, using a wireless transmitting set from his position in the cockpit. Observers also had to be good map readers and remain calm under fire from the ground. Importantly, and above all else, observers could not be

overweight. In the early days of the war, the flimsy structure of the planes meant that only men under ten stone were considered for the role.⁸

It was rare for an aircraft to return to base without 'a series of holes made by anti-aircraft shells', and it was common for pilots and their observers to be hit.⁹ In *Over the Balkans*, Henry Jones recalled a dogfight he experienced while working as an observer. Writing in a matter-of-fact style, he described how during one particular skirmish he was first 'hit in the stomach', before also receiving 'a hit in the mouth and an explosive bullet in the left hand'. His pilot, also shot, 'fainted twice in the machine from loss of blood'. Having plummeted hundreds of feet, the pilot regained consciousness and managed to wrestle back control of the plane, before making a miraculous 'perfect landing' back at the aerodrome. Despite his superhuman efforts in getting his plane and observer safely back to the ground, the pilot did not survive his wounds. But Jones recovered and flew on.¹⁰

Over the battlefields of Salonika, the wind whipped through the valleys and heavy clouds covered the tops of mountains, making it difficult to navigate by compass. Turbulence could be extreme and Jones wrote that 'No one who was on this front will forget the Vardar winds'.¹¹ Unlike their French counterparts, who despatched some of their most modern machines to Salonika, the RFC aircraft were slow, unwieldy and wholly unsuited to aerial combat. As lighter, faster and more manoeuvrable planes were developed and deployed on the Western Front, the RFC sent older, inferior machines to the war's 'side-show' campaigns. Reflecting on the experiences of the Salonika squadrons, Henry Jones, in his trademark neutral tone, observed: 'The Balkans were a subsidiary theatre of war, and the best had to be made of the material to hand'.¹² Pilots faced threats on three fronts, being simultaneously exposed to danger from the climate, from the enemy and from the frequent failures of the aircraft they were flying.

In a series of letters to his friends at Bedales, Paul Montague described several near-fatal experiences, including one in May 1917 when the engine of his plane cut out. As usual, his approach is to downplay this dramatic incident:

I had rather an amusing crash at Salonika a few days ago ... I was taking off towards the sea ... when just over the low cliff on the edge of the aerodrome my engine conked right out. I just had time to make a flat turn towards the land when I was obliged to land on the sea. There was a very strong wind, so I was going at sixty miles at least, and when the under-carriage caught the water it turned the machine right over, and she went nose down with such a jerk that she broke clean in half. I found myself hung upside down in my belt in the black and abysmal depths of the ocean, but I soon got clear ... and came to the top. I looked around for the observer ... and saw him just landing. He had been pitched clear of everything ... I swam ashore with his baggage, meeting in the water at least fifty officers and mechanics with their clothes on who, thinking we must have been killed, had come out in great haste to render first aid.¹³

Paul's arrival in Salonika had coincided with the preparations for the first major British offensive of the campaign. For the duration of the battle, the pilots of No. 47 Squadron were tasked with providing aerial observation; however, their efforts were severely hampered because many attacks took place at night and, even during daylight hours, visibility was severely restricted as great clouds of smoke and dust billowed up from the battlefields. This offensive, known as the First Battle of Doiran, ultimately cost the lives of over 5,000 men and achieved very little. It was thwarted by the superior strength of the Bulgarian fortifications, as well as the enemy's greater experience of fighting on mountainous terrain. Nevertheless, the role of No. 47 Squadron was praised by a senior officer, who wrote expressing his 'great appreciation of the zeal shown by all ranks and the good work performed during the operations' and acknowledging 'the strain imposed, not only upon pilots and observers, but also upon other ranks of the Royal Flying Corps in carrying out their duties at high pressure'.¹⁴

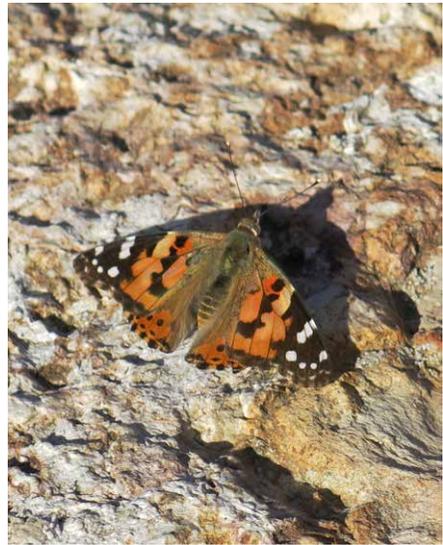
The early days of Paul's flying career could hardly have been more fraught, yet any sense of the fear he must have experienced, or the extreme stress he was under, is masked by a veneer of bravado that was typical of the time. In this spirit, in the letter sent to his friends at Bedales, the dramatic landing on water becomes a 'rather amusing crash', while an encounter with an enemy aircraft having lost all engine power is described as a 'stunt'. Despite the omnipresent risk of injury and death, the pioneering aviators of World War I adopted a 'stiff-upper lip' attitude. Or at least that was the attitude they affected. One historian notes that these young pilots brought 'the world of the English public school' to their role in combat. Often, the same historian writes, when a man was killed, 'the custom was to carry on as though nothing had happened, to drink and sing, to shed no tears'.¹⁵

Yet, this *esprit de corps* came at an individual cost. At the conclusion of the First Battle of Doiran, Paul Montague was transferred out of his squadron and moved to a sick convoy. While under investigation for symptoms that included dizziness, shortness of breath and chest pains, he passed the time playing his lute and singing songs for the entertainment of his fellow patients. Unlike the majority of men who were suffering from recurrent malaria, Paul was diagnosed with tachycardia, a fast and irregular heartbeat that can be brought on by stress and anxiety.¹⁶ Whatever the conclusions of the medical staff at the casualty station, it wasn't long before he was discharged back to the aerodrome at Yanesh and flying once more.

Whenever he was able to, and perhaps to mitigate some of the stress he was under, Paul took the opportunity to continue his zoological research, going out to collect specimens and looking for bird nests. He rode one of 'several quite decent horses in the squadron' and adopted 'two young magpies' that he kept as pets.¹⁷

What became of Paul's Salonika ornithological collections is not known. However, a large number of Lepidoptera, including many fine specimens of red admiral butterflies and hesperia moths, were returned to his family after his death, along with the rest of his personal belongings. Not having had time to 'set' them, he had taken care to enclose each specimen within the folds of a small piece of paper and had written the locality of its collection on the front of each makeshift envelope. In May 1918, Amy Montague forwarded these last specimens to Professor Harmer at London's Natural History Museum, where they were accessioned into the collections.¹⁸

A butterfly resting on a grave in a military cemetery in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 2015. Photograph by Julie Adams.



The months of August and September 1917 were relatively quiet for No. 47 Squadron. However, in October, the unit suffered a succession of losses. On 29 October, Paul Montague and another second lieutenant, John Richard Francis Gubbin, were part of a flight of five planes that headed out across enemy lines to attack Cestovo Dump – ‘an oft-visited objective’ according to Henry Jones.¹⁹ During the raid, the group was attacked by eight German scouts. In the ensuing dogfight, Gubbin was hit by a round of

machine-gun fire, which almost severed his left arm. Then he was hit for a second time and lost consciousness. After crash landing and being captured, Gubbin died of his wounds two weeks later, having first had the chance to send a letter to his wife letting her know what had become of him.²⁰

That day, Monty, as his squadron called Paul Montague, was flying a BE12, the single-seater version of the BE2, which was the standard reconnaissance plane of the RFC. Designed in 1912, it was described as extremely stable but was also notoriously sluggish and hopelessly unfit for the manoeuvres required in aerial combat.²¹ One of Paul’s fellow pilots, who made it back to Yanesh, reported seeing three enemy scouts diving Monty’s plane, forcing him to execute a deliberate spin in an attempt to throw them off. Just managing to straighten out, he was attacked again and was seen spinning for a second time, a few thousand feet below the other planes. ‘This time’, the pilot reported, ‘His machine appeared to be out of control’. Monty did not return to base and he was reported ‘missing in action’.²²

For a pilot, an uncontrolled spin was a most dreaded scenario. Robert Smith-Barry, a pilot who has been described as ‘the man who taught the air forces of the world to fly’, is credited with developing strategies that enabled pilots to recover from dangerous spins.²³ Despite the development of these Smith-Barry techniques, however, the survival of a pilot forced into a spin depended as much on luck as it did on skill.

No British crew saw Paul Montague crash, so what happened next can only be speculation. If he had been able to pull out of the spin and succeed in bringing his BE12 back under control, he would have urgently needed to find somewhere to land his damaged aircraft. Having twice come under fire, his plane would no doubt have sustained several direct hits, and he himself might have been injured. He would have had no choice but to attempt a forced landing.

The RFC had resisted issuing parachutes to pilots, despite them having been successfully tested. This reluctance stemmed from a fear that, by providing the possibility of an escape, they might encourage pilots to abandon their aircraft.²⁴ It was not until September 1918, almost a year after Montague's crash, that the decision was taken to fit single-seater planes with parachutes. By the time the decision was implemented, however, the war was over.

Some time after Monty was reported missing in action, a photograph was dropped over the Yanesh aerodrome by an enemy plane. In the foreground of the image, a BE12 can be seen. Behind it are fields of olive trees, gently sloping upwards towards the steep ridges of distant hills. Although the front section of the plane is clearly crushed and has



The cross left in remembrance of Paul Montague in the field where he died, 2015. Photograph by Julie Adams.

collapsed inwards, the aircraft looks otherwise intact. Laid out on the ground, in front of the plane, is the body of a pilot. In a strange and disconcerting mirroring, the pilot, like his aircraft, appears largely unscathed. Apart from a slightly unnatural parting of the lips and the dishevelled condition of his jacket, which has ridden up to expose the bare flesh of his stomach, it seems possible that he might shake himself off, get up and walk away. Standing guard at the pilot's head is a moustached and armed man wearing a large buttoned coat and hat. Staring out of sunken cheeks and looking at the camera, this man is a German soldier.



Martin Gibson, Romeo Drobarov and Alan Wakefield discussing the site of Paul Montague's fatal crash, 2015. Photograph by Julie Adams.

Accompanying this photograph, when it was dropped over the Yanesh aerodrome, was a note (this was a common practice between enemy squadrons at the time). The note informed No. 47 Squadron that the plane in the photo had been shot down on 29 October and the pilot killed. The message said the pilot had 'met with a hero's death' and had been buried with due honours. A memorial stone had also been placed over his grave. According to the note, as the pilot's name was not known and no identification could be located on the body, the stone currently bore no inscription. However, the note continued, if his name and date of birth could be supplied, that absence would be rectified. A reply should be sent c/o 'Bulgarian Airmen'.²⁵ The number of the BE12 in the photo matched that of Monty's missing plane.

During our tour of the Salonika battlefields in 2015, Alan Wakefield, Chairman of the Salonika Campaign Society, brought a small wooden cross with him when we visited the site of Paul Montague's crash. The cross had a poppy at its centre and the words 'In remembrance' printed underneath. As we walked through the field, Alan and Romeo – the local policeman who was acting as our guide – kept consulting the photograph of the crashed BE12, pointing out the same range of hills rising up in the background. This photograph had enabled Romeo and his team of local guides to correctly identify Montague's crash site only a few years earlier.

Looking around, it was striking that, in those dramatic and no-doubt panicked final minutes, Paul had identified this particular field in which to land. To my eyes, it almost resembled an airstrip, and I said as much to Romeo. He slowly shook his head, however, and pointed out the pitted and uneven surface. What Paul could not have discerned from the air is that the field had once been the site of an ancient cemetery. Over the years, Romeo explained, looters had excavated the graves in search



A fragment from a pot, discarded by looters and found in the field where Paul Montague crashed. Photograph by Josh Murfitt.

of valuables and had only half-heartedly refilled them. Small mounds and troughs of disturbed stones were everywhere. When Monty had brought his plane down, it had probably snagged on the earth from one of these grave mounds, catapulting him first forwards and then quickly backwards in his seat, snapping his neck. The Birdman of Salonika was dead, aged 27, his flying career having lasted a little over six months. In death, he was laid out on a field of stones.



*The stone that wept. A petroglyph collected by Paul Montague in Hienghène, October 1914.
Photograph by Gwil Owen.*

The Stone that Wept

In 2017, the body of a Kanak soldier who had fought with the French on the Western Front was exhumed and repatriated to New Caledonia. Kalepo Wabete had been killed on 28 October 1918, just a few days before the end of the war. A century later, on Armistice Day 2017, his body was reburied on his home island of Tïga. After the reburial, his descendant, Tëhiëné Emile Wabete, who had travelled to France to accompany the body home, posted a message on Facebook thanking the All Blacks New Zealand rugby team for joining him in singing 'Amazing Grace' under the Arc de Triomphe during a visit to the French capital. In December 2017, the French Prime Minister, Edouard Philippe, paid his respects to Kalepo Wabete by visiting his grave and placing a spray of flowers in his memory. The government of New Caledonia said the ceremony was 'to pay homage to New Caledonians who defended the values of the French republic'.¹

At the outbreak of war, Kanak people were not classed as French citizens and were, therefore, exempt from conscription but from January 1916, along with other French colonial subjects, they became eligible to enlist.² Almost 1,000 Kanak troops were sent to France and became members of the Bataillon Mixte du Pacifique as auxiliaries attached to different regiments and performing a variety of tasks. When called to the Front, notably as part of the Chemin des Dames offensives, they formed small units and served as grenade throwers and stretcher bearers, before later becoming involved in combat.

Few details were recorded about the experiences of the Kanak men who served and, for many years, their stories and sacrifices were almost entirely forgotten.³ However, the historian Sylvette Boubin-Boyer interviewed a handful of elderly survivors, decades later when they were in their late eighties and nineties. One recalled a comrade, an old



Kanak infantrymen during World War I. Photographer unknown.

soldier from Canala, who always carried his protective magic leaves into battle, and who was killed on the day he neglected to put them in his pocket before heading out. Another remembered the horror he felt at the death of a man called Wahéa, who was blown to pieces by a shell and whose heart was subsequently discovered lodged in the branches of a tree. He said the Kanak troops could never get used to marching at night in the rain and cold.⁴

When the troops arrived back in New Caledonia, the missionary Maurice Leenhardt observed a change in their attitudes. He recognised that the war had revealed an uncomfortable conflict between the mission's desire to pacify Kanak tribes and its support for the war in Europe. One of his Kanak students observed: 'At the beginning ... it was the thoughtless imitation of the whites that led us to war'. Leenhardt himself feared that there would be a large-scale rejection of Christianity. The 'mentality of the elders is returning', he noted.⁵

In reality, however, this 'mentality' had never gone away. Before the war, Leenhardt recorded the story of one chief whose young child was taken ill with dysentery. Writing in his journal from the mission school, Do Neva, Leenhardt recalled that the chief had little Christian faith and still maintained a connection to the ancient beliefs and gods of his people. When his child became sick, he consulted a traditional healer who told him that the problem lay in this duality: although his family had taken the word of God, they were still invoking their old gods. As a result, the child was caught in the liminal space between these two belief systems. The healer warned that nothing would change until this conflict was resolved. The chief immediately took up his most important magic



*The Caron Norro or
Chief of the Thunder
Stones, collected by
Paul Montague in
Nessakoéa in 1914.
Photograph by Gwil
Owen.*

stone and surrendered it to Leenhardt, before destroying several others. Tragically, despite his sacrifice, the child died. Inconsolable and still lost between worlds, the chief sold his remaining stones to Paul Montague.⁶

According to Montague's notes, the largest of the magic stones in his collection was known as the 'Chief of the Thunder Stones'. In the draft of his unpublished book, he states that it was 'formerly kept near Neja Quéa [Nessakoéa]' and was considered to be 'very dangerous – so much so that it was kept buried in the ground with only just the point protruding'.⁷ Only one old man knew how to invoke its destructive power.

In 2013, as we were unpacking the stone from a box in the Bevan storeroom in Cambridge, François Wadra speculated that this might be one of the stones from the bereaved chief who had turned his back on his beliefs to try to save his child. On examination, its powerful appearance did not seem to have diminished and it was easy to imagine how awe inspiring it must have seemed to all those who saw it in the Houailou Valley. The stone's surface has a strange papery appearance, perhaps reflecting what Montague was told about its provenance – that it had originally been a stalagmite and had been carefully excavated from a cave. Now transplanted to Cambridge and nestling in a tissue-lined box, the stone still exuded potency.



The Bonhomme rock formation at La Roche Percée beach, near Bourail, New Caledonia, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

As we placed it on the workbench, we noticed that it was able to stand upright without support, despite a rather precarious lean. Looking at the stone, we agreed that it resembled the Bonhomme, a striking rock formation located at Roche Percée (pierced rock) beach, near Bourail on New Caledonia's west coast. The rock is called Bonhomme (gentleman) because it looks like the head of a man in profile, wearing a hat. On Roche Percée beach, it sits alongside the ruins of an archway in the cliff, which gave the beach its name and which was destroyed by a landslide in 2007. Both natural wonders attract tourists with their cameras.

They are also sites of great cultural significance for the local Kanak tribes – the place from which the spirits of the deceased are said to depart the realm of the living. Paul Montague recorded in his draft manuscript what he understood from the people of the Houailou Valley of the beliefs surrounding this sacred location:

The spirit, or Bao, of the dead man or woman is supposed to haunt the earth for a short period and may occasionally be seen in its old haunts being a source of great terror to the living ... After this period, which seldom occupies more than a day or two, the Bao proceeds upon its journey ... Entering [a cave] it plunges from a high rock into the deep water with a splash that resounds and echoes throughout the chamber and can be heard all over the Houailou Valley by those who may be listening. The sound is likened to a low peel of thunder, or the boom of a distant gun and is heard with relief by the mourning relatives of the deceased, for it is looked upon as a sign that the spirit will trouble the earth no more.⁸

Despite the collapse of the 'pierced rock' archway in the landslide of 2007, a tunnel, which is still believed to be the entrance to the cave of the spirits, survives unseen beneath the waves. Today, the beach is a favourite of surfers, being one of only a few in New Caledonia to experience significant waves.

During World War II, the bay was home to the Kiwi Club, where New Zealand troops came to relax and unwind. Nine kilometres from the beach is the Bourail World War II Cemetery, a further reminder of the role New Caledonia has played in world conflicts. Here, in a beautifully landscaped and carefully maintained site, are the graves of 242 New Zealand and Pacific Islands war dead. When photographer Mark Adams and I visited in 2016, we walked among the graves, picking out the names of people from the islands of Kiribati, Bougainville, Mono, Guadalcanal, and others. Had their spirits, I wondered, departed for home via the cave at Roche Percée? At the northern end of the cemetery, behind a large stone cross mounted on a plinth, is a memorial to over 300 New Zealand and Western Pacific forces who have no known grave at all.

In Cambridge, following our reminiscences, François turned his attention from the Chief of the Thunder Stones to a stone lying next to it on the bench. What, he asked, had Montague had to say about it? Consulting the paperwork, I told him that it came from the Hienghène region on the north-east coast of the Grande Terre and that Montague collected it on 22 September 1914. Unusually, he did not give the Kanak name and records it simply as 'an ancient carved stone, the use of which nothing is known'. This untypical lack of insight suggested a number of possibilities: either he



Bourail World War II New Zealand Military Cemetery, New Caledonia, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

had acquired it without the knowledge or consent of local people and was not therefore able to understand anything more about it, or it might imply that, for some reason, Kanak people were unwilling to share their knowledge with him.

In fact, the stone is a petroglyph, an ancient form of rock carving found across New Caledonia. These petroglyphs mostly appear on large boulders and rocks found in the landscape. However, this stone is small, approximately 20cm in height, making it possible for Montague to transport back to Cambridge.

Although the existence of petroglyphs was noted by some of the earliest European visitors to New Caledonia, for many years it was argued that they could not have been created by the Indigenous Kanak inhabitants. Instead, various bizarre theories were advanced to account for their presence. The most pervasive claimed that the origins of this art form lay with a previous wave of culturally superior inhabitants who had subsequently died out or relocated elsewhere. The author of one early influential report about petroglyph sites, Marius Archambault, wrote in *L'Anthropologie* in 1901:

What seems to me to be certain from now on, and that I want to bring into the light of day, is that these monuments ought not to be attributed to the tribal kanaks who occupy the island at present.⁹

Archambault was not alone in wilfully denying any link between Kanak people and the creation of the petroglyphs. Indeed, it was not until the 1960s that scientists began recording Kanak histories about their creation, and not before the 1990s that the first detailed study of this art form was undertaken. Today, over 700 petroglyph sites have

been recorded in New Caledonia, with over 4,500 motifs being documented. According to the archaeologist Christophe Sand, this represents only a 'small sample of the actual sites present', with more being discovered all the time.¹⁰

Contesting a Kanak origin for these rock carvings epitomises a specific kind of European thinking, one that underpinned the colonial endeavour. European powers frequently denied, ignored or denigrated the artistic and cultural achievements of Indigenous peoples whose land and livelihoods they were in the process of appropriating. Archambault's withering assessment of the Kanak people, among whom he lived and worked as a postman and part-time archaeologist, did not stop him from amassing a large collection of Kanak artefacts, including several petroglyphs. In 2013, some of the stones he collected were on display in the exhibition *Kanak: L'art est une parole*, at the Musée du quai Branly – Jacques Chirac in Paris. In the exhibition catalogue, curators Emmanuel Kasarhérou and Roger Boulay reflected upon the lasting damage caused to the Kanak psyche in the colonial period, by those like Archambault who sought actively to denigrate Kanak culture.¹¹

By contrast, Paul Montague appears to have been in no doubt that Kanak people were the creators of the petroglyphs, which, for him, were a logical extension of the phenomenon of magic stones, and he was determined to document what he could about them. In a journal entry for 9 November 1914, he expresses a growing awareness of the scale of the task on which he has embarked: 'There are so many rocks in the vicinity with legends attached to them. These must all be photographed and the legends taken down accurately'. It is this sense of urgency and a desire to be systematic



Enveloped cross motifs on a petroglyph in New Caledonia, 1914. Photograph by Paul Montague.

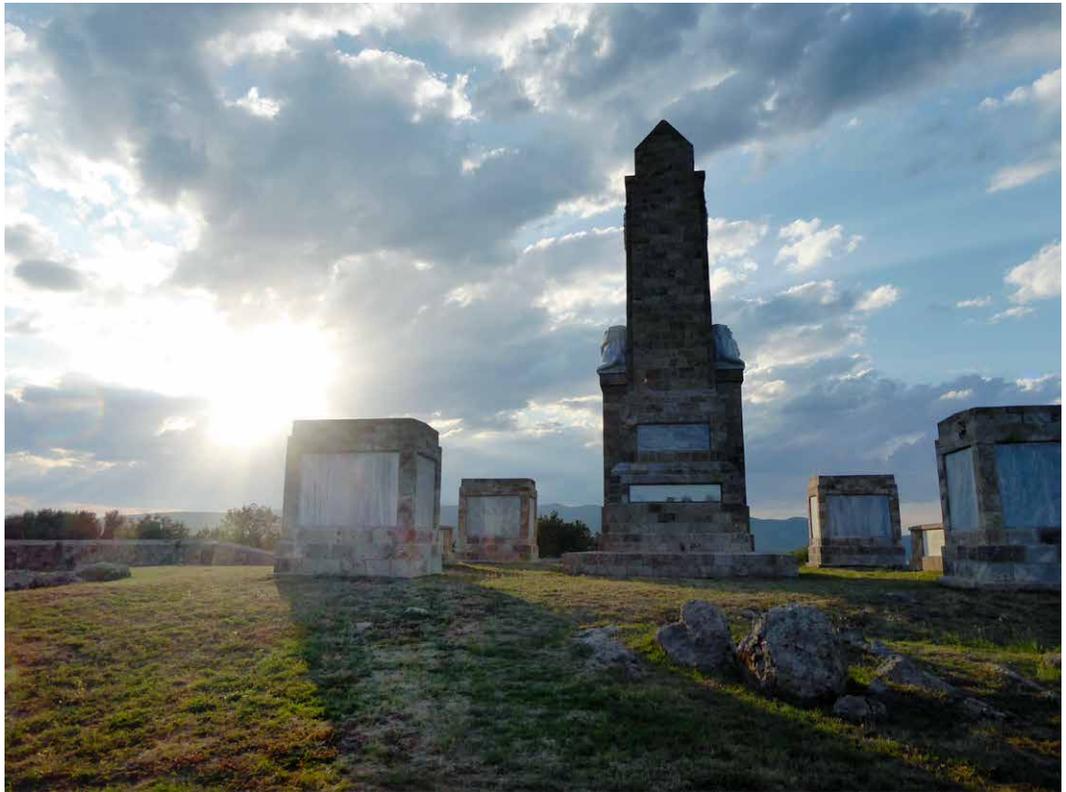
and thorough in his method of working that makes the lack of information about the small petroglyph he collected even more surprising.

In 2014, when Roger Boulay and Emmanuel Kasarhérou visited from Paris to research Paul Montague's collection, I wanted to ask them about the residual potency of these stones, despite their century-long displacement from their place of origin. Over lunch, we discussed the possibility of the Cambridge Museum lending some of the stones to New Caledonia for an exhibition, but the prospect caused Kasarhérou some concern. It was too much of a risk, he explained. If something happened while the exhibition was taking place, for instance if someone was injured or became unwell, the stones would be blamed. By association, he would be blamed for agreeing to let the exhibition take place. And, in turn, the Museum in Cambridge would be blamed for lending the stones in the first place. Their power, it seemed, was far from dormant.

Working side by side in the Bevan storeroom, François and I decided to cross-reference the motif carved on the petroglyph collected by Montague, using a typology created by archaeologist Christophe Sand. We quickly ascertained that it was known as the 'enveloped cross'. This cross is the most common of the motifs that have been documented and is found on nearly 20% of sites.¹²

François picked up the stone and ran his fingers across the grooves on its surface. Then, pausing and studying it more closely, he pointed out that one part of its surface appeared darker than the rest, almost as if it was wet. Removing a glove, he tentatively touched the area and confirmed that it felt damp. The dark patch took up about a third of one side of the stone and it did, indeed, feel moist. There was also a faint smell of dampness emanating from the stone, such as there is on a pavement after it has rained.

Returning it to the workbench, François took a step backwards and stared intently at the stone. I began to run through various scenarios, including possible temperature changes between the stores and the workroom. After a moment's consideration, François said simply: 'The stone is crying'. When I enquired why this might be so, he replied that it was taking the opportunity of a visit from a Kanak person to demonstrate its power and to try to effect a change in its circumstances. I wondered aloud what specifically the stone was trying to achieve. François said he thought that it was expressing a desire to be removed from this museum setting and returned to New Caledonia. Considering this striking assertion, I realised it was not simply a veiled comment about the sad fate of objects housed in museums far away from their communities of origin. Nor, I concluded, was it a subtle advocacy for the stone's repatriation. For François, it was clear: the tears the stone was weeping were a sign that it wanted to be released from the confines of the 'double life' it had been leading. Caught between two worlds, New Caledonia and Cambridge, and having endured a century in exile, the magic stone was experiencing the call of home soil.¹³



*The Doiran Memorial to the Missing, Greece, near the border with Macedonia, 2017.
Photograph by Julie Adams.*

Memorial to the Missing

Close to the border between Greece and Macedonia, a kilometre further along a rough farm track from the Doiran Military Cemetery, stands the Memorial to the Missing of the Salonika Campaign. Sited atop a steep hill, the imposing structure is visible from a distance and its grounds provide extensive views across the surrounding countryside to Lake Doiran. The site selected for this official act of remembering lies roughly at the centre of the line held by the Allied Forces for two years, and is where some of the campaign's most intense fighting occurred in 1917-18.

Sir Robert Lorimer, a Scottish architect who had established a reputation as a historic house restorer, was commissioned by the British government to design this memorial. In fact, Lorimer's commissions were extended to include a series of 'memorials to the missing' when his restoration work stalled and then dried up, due to the war. In addition to the memorial at Doiran, he designed the Chatham Naval Memorial, the Portsmouth Naval Memorial and the Plymouth War Memorial.¹ Lorimer's memorials are variations upon a theme, all of them featuring a large stone obelisk surrounded by a series of plinths that bear the names of the fallen. He also had a particular fondness for reclining lions. The memorial at Doiran is no exception, and two charismatic lions, carved in pale stone by the monument's sculptor Walter Gilbert, flank its tall obelisk. Gilbert has styled the lions' tails so that they wrap neatly around their hind quarters; their front paws are crossed elegantly one over the other. One lion has an aggressive, snarling expression and stares out over the area that was held by Bulgarian troops during the war. The second lion – which looks rather more wistful, perhaps mournful – has been positioned to face out towards the surrounding hills and ravines where the Allied troops fought and died.

As with all the Salonika sites of remembrance, the Memorial to the Missing is immaculately and painstakingly maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. It is a place

The stone lions, one snarling, designed by Sir Robert Lorimer. The Doiran Memorial, Greece, 2015. Photograph by Julie Adams.



of commemoration for the more than 2,000 servicemen and women who died and whose graves are not known.²

In 2015, as the minibus carrying members of the Salonika Campaign Society snaked its way slowly up the hill towards the memorial, our progress was temporarily slowed by a campervan. The van's engine was struggling to cope with the incline. It had UK number plates and a sticker of the Australian flag in one window. Underneath the flag were the words 'Live, Laugh, Love'. Inside the van was a university professor from Melbourne, who was of Greek descent. Chatting in the small car park at the top of the hill, he told us that he was partway through a tour of the region's World War I cemeteries. It was taking much longer than he had anticipated. In the late afternoon sun, the professor joined our group as we milled around the obelisk, scanning the names of those whose bodies had never been recovered. I found that of Lieutenant P.D. Montague chiselled into the stone of an outer plinth, one of only a handful of men from the Royal Flying Corps to be commemorated here.

It was not unusual for World War I pilots who failed to return from an operation to be reported as 'missing in action'. However, it was relatively uncommon for a pilot's body never to be formally identified or its location clearly established. This can be explained, in part, by the high esteem in which pilots were held by the opposing forces. Even across enmity's divide, there was empathy and a mutual respect. As one British airman observed, 'we flyers had a lot in common'.³ These shared sympathies usually ensured that, when an aircraft fell into enemy hands, the crew were well treated. It also meant that every possible effort was made to inform the other side about the fate of a pilot who had been shot down.

In the case of Paul Montague, the dropping over the Yanesh airfield of the photograph of his wrecked plane is evidence that this convention was observed. No. 47 Squadron supposedly provided his personal details by a reciprocal 'drop' over enemy lines but, despite good intentions on both sides, something went astray. As a result, Paul's service details were never reunited with his body and his grave remained unmarked.

Then, almost a decade after his death, the photographer whose image of Paul's stricken aircraft had drifted down from the skies above Yanesh, made contact with the British government. The photographer's name was Emile Paquot and, in the spring of 1925, he wrote a letter to the Secretary of State for War in London.⁴ At the time, Paquot was living in the Alsace-Lorraine region of France, which had been annexed by Germany after their victory in the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71. During World War I, Paquot explained in his letter, he had served in the German army on the Greco-Macedonian Front. The letter, written in German and translated by a British War Office official, continued:

In 1917, I was present when a British aeroplane was shot down by German troops in the neighbourhood of Lake Doiran. The aeroplane was marked No. A.4040. The British pilot was dead and the aeroplane wrecked. At the time I took a photograph of this aeroplane and also of the dead British airman who can be easily recognised in the picture. Would it not be possible to identify

this pilot so that I might communicate with his relatives for the purpose of giving them this photograph which would no doubt be very precious to them. Hoping my request will be granted.

I have the honour,
Emile Paquot

It seems Paquot was unaware that his photograph had been dropped over the aerodrome at Yanesh and that, as a result, Montague's fate had been officially established. This information would have been conveyed by No. 47 Squadron up through the chain of command, making its way back to London and, eventually, to Amy and Leopold in Devon. For Paquot, the plight of this pilot, whose name he had not known and whose body he had captured on film, was evidently still weighing on his mind. This concern is evident from the tone of his letter, in particular his reference to the impact Paul's death would have had upon his family. Ten years after taking the photo, it was still on Paquot's mind and had clearly become a kind of torment to him.

It is uncertain whether Paquot's photograph had indeed been passed on to Amy and Leopold at the time. Perhaps because of its gruesome nature, officials in Whitehall decided to spare them the inevitable distress. Although official confirmation had put an end to any uncertainty about his fate, the absence of a known grave became Amy's own unbearable torment.

Amidst all the carnage and chaos of the Western Front, the fate of her youngest son, David, had, at least, been carefully chronicled, from his initial identification and burial, through to his exhumation and subsequent orderly reburial. Amy refused to accept that the same could not be achieved in Paul's case. In her desperation, she clutched at every possible lead, including – according to family history – information provided by psychics and mediums. She began attending seances, along with the myriad other families who were bereaved and traumatised and seeking comfort.

In 1923, Amy made contact with H.A. Jones, following the publication of his book *Over the Balkans and South Russia: Being the History of No. 47 Squadron Royal Air Force*. Jones' reply survives in the Montague family archive. In his letter, he thanks Amy for her kind words about his book, saying her appreciation is 'ample repayment to me for my work on 47's history'. In the next paragraph, he turns to address Paul's fate. 'I suppose I do not know,' he writes, 'if the Bulgarians got the news which we dropped about him.' However, he goes on to suggest 'if the grave still exists, it should be an easy matter to identify it and have a cross placed over it.' He closes by promising to assist in any way he can: 'I will have the records looked into at once,' and signs off: 'Believe me ...'⁵

There is also a second letter from Jones in the Montague family archive. This time, his confident claims have crumbled into stark realities. 'I had hoped,' he begins, 'that after all this time, I would be able to write you news of the finding of Paul's grave. I am sorry I cannot.' Jones states that it is his dearest wish 'to pay a visit to the Front in Salonika and whilst there locate it for myself ... and perhaps later I may be able to afford a trip out there. But I cannot see the possibility just yet.' Jones' plans for such a mission may now seem far-fetched but, in the absence of all hope, his offer must have provided some small reassurance to Amy that Paul would not be forgotten.

In March 1925, Emile Paquot's letter had entered the bureaucratic labyrinth of Whitehall. From the Ministry of War, it was forwarded across London to the Air Ministry, where it was promptly sent back again, accompanied by a rather tersely worded note from the Secretary of the Air Ministry. It was, the Air Ministry asserted, the responsibility of the War Office to take whatever action it deemed appropriate. Paquot's correspondence, the Air Ministry had ascertained, appeared 'to refer to Second Lieutenant P.D. Montague who was killed in action on the 29th October 1917'. An official stamp indicates that the note and Paquot's original letter arrived back at the War Office on 23 March 1925.

By 31 March, a note had been dictated, typed, signed by one E.J. Barkham, and despatched to Emile Paquot. This letter informed him that it was against the practices of the War Office to disclose the addresses of deceased officers. However, Barkham suggested, if Paquot so wished, he could forward any correspondence to the Undersecretary of State, who would ensure it was conveyed to the relatives of the late P.D. Montague 'who would appear to be the dead Officer of whom you have a photograph'.

That was not the end of the matter, however. The next stage in this chronology of official communications is a second letter from Paquot, dated 28 April 1925. Once again, he pleads to be given the address of the airman shown in his photograph so that he may contact the deceased's relatives. Perhaps Paquot, a non-English speaker, had not understood E.J. Barkham's instructions. Whatever the cause of his confusion, Paquot's second request received a further reply from the War Office. In a letter dated 8 May 1925, a second official (the signature is illegible) replies, repeating the rule that they do not release the details of an officer's next of kin. And so ended Paquot's frustrated attempts to assist the Montague family and achieve some closure of his own.

Ironically, the record of Paquot's bewildering brush with British bureaucracy is now to be found among thousands of other official documents carefully filed at the National Archives. These written exchanges of mutual incomprehension share a file that documents Paul Montague's war service and untimely death. It seems unlikely that Paquot found a way of contacting the Montague family, through official channels or otherwise. Certainly, there is no record in the family archive that Amy became aware of Paquot's interest in the fate of her son. If Paquot had been in touch, Amy Montague would almost certainly have seized upon him as a vital source of information, which might have led to the discovery of her son's burial place. Instead, it seems that a combination of linguistic misunderstanding and bureaucratic officiousness prevented the two sides from connecting, and a vital opportunity for the family to learn more was missed.

There is, however, another piece of evidence about the fate of Paul's body. Within the photographic archives of the Imperial War Museum in London, a second image of the crash site has also survived.⁶ This image, formerly in the possession of Ernst Wilhelm Reinhold of the Imperial German Army, is now available to view in the Imperial War Museum's photographic archive.

Reinhold's photograph shows the crash site from a different angle to that captured by Emile Paquot. Indeed, just visible at the right edge of the shot is a camera mounted on a tripod, which is probably the one being used by Paquot. This additional image reveals that a second cameraman also captured the events of that day.



German and Bulgarian troops examining Montague's plane, October 1917. Photograph possibly by Ernst Wilhelm Reinhold.

In the photograph which belonged to, and was perhaps taken by, Ernst Wilhelm Reinhold, a group of close to 20 soldiers can be seen at the crash site. One man is in the process of climbing into the BE12's cockpit, perhaps searching for some means of identifying its pilot. The others are huddled in two main clusters. One group, to the right of the shot, are gathered around what looks to be a large pallet, or wooden crate, onto which Paul's body has been placed. He has been secured to the pallet with broad straps, apparently ready to be moved. In the centre of the image, beyond the forlorn shape of the buckled aircraft, is a figure standing upon the bed of a wooden cart. In his hands he holds the reins of two horses, or mules, which stand patiently, awaiting the inevitable burden of the wooden pallet and body.

This photographic evidence suggests that Paul's body was in the process of being moved. The field where his plane came down – the field with the ransacked graves – was not to be Paul Montague's final resting place.

In 2015, when I visited the crash site with the Salonika Campaign Society, Alan Wakefield asked me to say a few words about Montague's work and the legacy of his New Caledonian collections. I had taken along an iPad, complete with some images, to give members of the group some visual sense of the objects he had collected. I also wanted to convey an impression of New Caledonia and its people, as the majority of the group had no knowledge of the islands or their location. Among the images I had selected was one of Montague's Kanak companions, Upiko and Nanine. However,

when it came to it, I struggled to find the right words to explain their story. I searched my memory for something tangible to say about these two men, but found there was nothing of substance. In his journal, Paul had started by calling them, patronisingly, ‘the Lifou boys’ and, later his erratic spelling of their names seemed to blur their individual identities. As is always the case in such representations of Indigenous peoples, these young men were rendered in terms not of their own making. Their stories and subjectivities were unreachable and irretrievable, suspended beyond the frame that held them captive to our gaze. Other than their exploits, as recorded in Paul’s journal, and their appearance in three of his field photographs, nothing is known of their lives prior to this period, or indeed after it.

When I had shown their photographs to people in the Houailou Valley, during my visit in 2016, no one had recognised them. One possible explanation was provided by François Wadra, who told me that men from the Loyalty Islands, such as Lifou, often came over to the Grande Terre to work as pastors with the London Missionary Society teams. Perhaps it was their knowledge of English, courtesy of the missionaries, that brought these men into Montague’s orbit. As I showed the members of the Salonika Campaign Society tour group some of the remarkable objects in Montague’s collection, I realised that I knew more about the objects’ biographies than I did about Paul’s Kanak collaborators. In the absence of documentary evidence about their lives, I wondered how they might be reinserted into the story of the collection and its future legacy, whatever that might be. Studying the photograph on my iPad, their very existence felt ephemeral,



Missing in action – Upiko and Nanine, 1914. Photograph by Paul Montague.

as they appeared blurry and over-exposed; faded out as a result of some technical flaw with the image. Even the camera, it seemed, was erasing them from history.

At the Memorial to the Missing, our group was readying to board the minibus and commence the steep descent of the hill. Before we departed, Alan Wakefield was trying to organise us into a huddle for a group photograph. He does this on each trip so it can be posted on the Society's Facebook page. Afterwards, nobody seemed in a hurry to leave. Minas Drestiliaris, one of the Greek members of the group, brought out a bottle from his rucksack. Small plastic cups were filled with an innocuous-looking clear liquid. One sip revealed it to be far from innocuous, and people could be heard to gasp and then laugh, wiping away tears from their eyes. Hoping to avoid a second helping of this potent spirit, I moved away to the boundary of the memorial, showing an interest in the long-stemmed white flowers which were growing there. Moving closer, I was surprised to see that they were irises, as I had only ever seen the purple variety. Seeing that they were growing everywhere in abundance, I picked a single stem and placed this scented token of remembrance on the narrow ledge of the plinth below Paul Montague's name. Having refilled our cups, Minas suggested a toast: 'To all those who are missing' he said, before knocking back his drink in a single gulp.



A white iris at the Memorial to the Missing, 2015. Photograph by Julie Adams.



*War memorial dedicated 'to the men of Cambridgeshire, the Isle of Ely, the Borough and University of Cambridge who served in the Great War 1914-1919 and in the World War 1939-1945'.
Photograph by Gwil Owen, 2014.*

In Cambridge

In December 2014, with the World War I centenary commemorations underway and the exhibition about Paul Montague open in Cambridge, Alan Wakefield of the Salonika Campaign Society contacted me and asked to visit the Museum. The Society conducts research and promotes awareness about the Salonika Campaign. It aims to remember all those who served through its journal, publications, lectures, battlefield tours and Remembrance Day participation. The Society's members were familiar with Paul Montague from his time in the Royal Flying Corps, and it was research conducted by Alan and his colleagues that brought about the identification of the site of Paul's fatal crash. Alan explained that the Society was interested in learning more about the other aspects of Montague's life and seeing some of the objects he had collected while in New Caledonia. We selected a mutually convenient weekend for a small group to come to Cambridge to visit the exhibition and spend time in the stores. To the Society, Paul Montague is affectionately known as P.D.M.

In Britain, there is no official memorial dedicated to the Salonika Campaign. Perhaps the nearest thing to a site of remembrance is to be found in the village of Burghclere in Hampshire, where the National Trust cares for a series of murals on the walls of the Sandham Memorial Chapel. The chapel, now considered to be one of the greatest of all war memorials, is dedicated to Harry Sandham, an ordinary soldier who, like Paul Montague, served in Salonika. Sandham survived the war but died soon afterwards as a result of his greatly weakened health. It was Sandham's sister Mary and her husband who financed the creation of this extraordinary memorial. But the chapel's realisation was the work of the artist Stanley Spencer.¹

Spencer, who had also served in Salonika, drew upon his experiences with the 68th Field Ambulance and later with the 7th Battalion Royal Berkshires, to create the immense paintings which adorn the walls of the chapel. Many of these works, which Spencer had first conceived of while recovering from malaria in Salonika in 1918, depict the mundane realities of life for those who fought in that campaign. They show men cooking rashers of bacon, preparing for a kit inspection and caring for their mules. As Spencer himself said, these images deliberately 'don't look like war pictures'.²

In one of the Sandham murals, *Reveille*, soldiers are shown within a tent, struggling to dress and carry out their morning ablutions from beneath the protection of their mosquito nets. Above them, a swarm of mosquitoes hovers, menacingly. To the right of the painting, the tent's canvas opening has been pushed aside as soldiers burst in to pass on momentous news to their comrades: the war is over. Spencer's decision to juxtapose this moment of 'victory' with a scene that portrays Salonika's deadliest foe – the mosquito – suggests that, for these soldiers, safety is far from guaranteed. Rather, the suspended mosquito nets, which drape and cling to the soldiers' bodies, give them an eerie, spectral aura.



Reveille by Sir Stanley Spencer, 1929, oil on canvas. Sandham Memorial Chapel, Hampshire.

Indeed, for many Salonika veterans, the end of the fighting did not mean an end to suffering. Harry Sandham, for whom the chapel was commissioned, suffered from continual ill health, after repeatedly contracting malaria. Paul Montague, too, had suffered from malaria and wrote to his family complaining about the ever-present mosquitoes.

Stanley Spencer's genius lies in his ability to bring a sense of grandeur and scale to small moments of individual struggle and suffering. His murals offer a counterpoint to public memorials, such as the Cenotaph in London, which concentrate on collective rather than individuated experience, repositioning and glorifying military death as a sacrifice for the nation and the wider empire.

In the aftermath of the war, the headmaster at Bedales, John Haden Badley, was also faced with the difficult task of commissioning an appropriate memorial to his former pupils. Unsurprisingly, he resisted the temptation to erect the kind of obelisk-centred, leonine-flanked memorial that was becoming the official symbol of remembrance across Britain and beyond. Badley was also strongly resistant to the concept of the 'Glorious Dead', complete with its imperial echoes. From the beginning of the war, he was sensitive to the conflict's contradictions in terms of his cosmopolitan students. As a result of these concerns, Badley was determined that any memorial should be inclusive. And, as with all things Bedalian, it had to have a practical purpose.

Not all institutions were prepared to be so magnanimous in the immediate aftermath of the fighting. In Cambridge, those responsible for creating a memorial to the King's College fallen, which is housed in the chapel, struggled to know what to do with Hungarian-born Ferenc Békássy. Békássy, like his fellow Kingsman Rupert Brooke, had been an intellectual, a talented poet and a favourite of Noël Olivier's. He had also died in the war, fighting on the enemy side.

Before going up to Cambridge, Békássy had been a pupil at Bedales. In 1907, he had teamed up with a pupil called Hitchens to build an aircraft for the Aeroplane Competition. Hitchens and Békássy's plane came in fourth place, managing a distance of 26 feet and six inches, comparing rather unfavourably with Montague and Newnham's triumphant 69 feet. When war broke out, Békássy, like all Hungarian men between the ages of 19 and 42, was ordered to report for military duty. He was recorded as saying to a friend, as they bade farewell: 'I don't so much mind being wounded, but I don't want to be killed; I have too many good friends. They make life so attractive.'³

In fact, Békássy died almost immediately after entering the trenches on the Eastern Front in June 1915. He was injured and left behind in a position that had been abandoned by his comrades, before later being discovered and removed to a Russian hospital where he died from his wounds.

In 1920, when the 'War List of King's College 1914-1918' was compiled, Békássy's name was omitted from the record. A year later, when the final touches were being made to the memorial, a compromise was reached and it was agreed that he could be included, though only if he were listed separately.⁴ As a result, Békássy's is a lone name, carved into the stone of an



Ferenc Békássy, an Old Bedalian and Cambridge graduate who was killed in the war, is remembered separately in King's College Chapel to the friends who meant so much to him. Photographer unknown.



The Memorial Library at Bedales School, built in 1921. Commissioned by headmaster John Haden Badley and designed by Ernest Gimson. Photograph by Julie Adams, 2016.

adjacent wall, set apart from the men he had studied alongside, and who had been the friends that had meant so much to him.

In the same year that the King's College memorial was unveiled, the Bedales Memorial Library was officially opened. Designed by Ernest Gimson and admired as one of the finest Arts and Crafts buildings in Britain, the memorial to the 66 students and four staff killed in the war is breathtaking. It is a symphony in wood, with a high vaulted ceiling, vast curved arches, solid trunk-like pillars and smooth glossy floors.

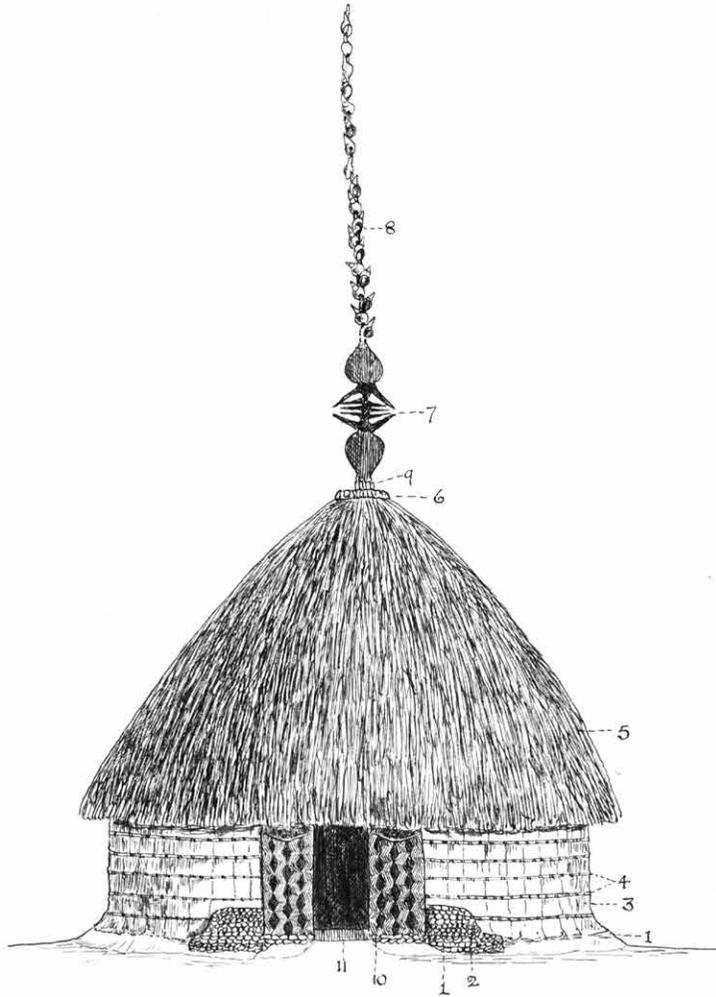
Arranged as a series of book-filled bays, set back from a central hall, the names of the dead are clustered into small groups. Each group of names is carved above a window frame at the end of a bay. In this memorial, the dead are by no means the centre of attention. The library remains a focus of school life and is a functioning, bustling space of learning for twenty-first century Bedalians. The promise of future potential that comes with the arrival of each new school year sits quietly juxtaposed with the names of those whose potential was obliterated by the war. It is exactly the fitting and poignant memorial that Badley had strived to create.⁵

At Gonville & Caius, as at King's College, they chose to remember their war dead in the chapel. There, the names are carved into simple wooden panels which hang on the walls of the chapel's small foyer. Arranged alphabetically, the names are presented alongside the year each man was admitted for study. In 2015, Mark Adams and I went along with the Dearnorff camera to photograph the memorial. Having first secured permission from the College authorities, we presented ourselves at the Porter's Lodge,



Roll of honour for the fallen of World War I in the chapel at Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, 2015. Photograph by Mark Adams.

where we attracted only a cursory interest. ‘Everyone is researching the war nowadays,’ one of the porters told us. Inside the chapel, I struggled to locate Montague’s name in the dim, murky light. As Mark had to take the film back to New Zealand to develop it in his studio, the image from the chapel was not immediately available to view. Later, he emailed me a copy. It was only then that I saw how effectively he had captured the struggle to pick out an individual name from among so many, in the chapel’s fading light.



Paul Montague's drawing of a Kanak chief's hut, known as a case. This drawing is one of three annotated illustrations he made to use in the book he hoped to publish. Photograph by Gwil Owen.

Object Lessons

Almost seven months after the death of Paul Montague, the Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, as it was known at the time, published its annual report for 1917. Mindful of the paper shortages brought about by the war, the Antiquarian Committee decided not to include lengthy descriptions of all that had been acquired and accessioned in the preceding 12 months. Nevertheless, the significance of a collection from New Caledonia was duly noted:

An important addition has also been made to this collection by a joint gift of Professor Bevan and Baron Anatole von Hugel. It comprises over two hundred carefully selected objects, including some remarkably fine serpentine adze heads, obtained in 1914 from the natives by P.D. Montague, B.A. Gonville and Caius College, Lieut. R.F.C. After his return to England, Montague spent some time at the Museum in describing the specimens in a detailed catalogue. He subsequently joined the R.F.C., and was killed in action in Macedonia in October 1917. In him Anthropology has lost a most promising and conscientious student.¹

Alongside this recognition of lost potential, the report provides an insight into the circumstances surrounding the acquisition of Montague's collection. It also casts new light on his association with the Museum and the financing of his expedition.

Firstly, the collection is described as being a 'joint gift of Professor Bevan and Baron Anatole von Hugel', the Museum's highly acquisitive curator. In the statement of accounts, it is recorded that Paul received a total of £13 in exchange for the objects and had not, therefore, donated his collection to the Museum. This monetary transaction suggests that Montague's fraught financial situation, as evidenced by the scribbled columns of calculations in the pages of his expedition journals, was a pressing issue. This problem was no doubt exacerbated by

One of the 'remarkably fine serpentine adze heads' collected by Paul Montague and mentioned in the Museum's annual report for 1917. Photograph by Gwil Owen.



the fact that he had used some of his own funds to purchase a significant portion of the collection. Even if he had wished to become a benefactor, he did not have the means. Secondly, the annual report confirms that Montague returned to Cambridge to personally document the collection prior to enlisting. During this period, he worked intensively, compiling the handwritten object catalogue, with its typed title page, careful illustrations and precise descriptions, using his fieldwork notes and journal as *aides-memoir*.

There is, however, an intriguing aspect to the Museum's annual report: its use of the phrase 'over two hundred carefully selected objects'. Who was doing the selecting, I wondered? Did it imply that von Hügel was picking out and purchasing only what he thought was of interest, while rejecting other specimens? If so, what had happened to the pieces he rejected? Or was the use of the term 'carefully selected' a recognition of the judgement exercised by Paul in the field?

Also intriguing is the inclusion of the statement 'obtained ... from the natives'. Nowhere else in the 1917 acquisitions report is such a phrase used. Perhaps this was merely coincidental. After all, the 'ownership' was clearly attributed to three Europeans: Montague, Bevan and von Hügel. However, might this phrase also be interpreted as a tacit recognition that their 'provenance' involved some Kanak agency? Montague himself had used a similar formulation on the title page of his catalogue, writing: 'N.B. These objects were obtained from the Natives themselves'. I thought once again of the Kanak men, Upiko and Nanine, who had worked closely with Paul for almost all of his year-long stay in New Caledonia. Contrary to my mournful presumption that their involvement in the shaping of the collection had been erased from history, it now seemed that a recognition of their role had existed a century earlier.

Scanning afresh through the pages of the catalogue, I was reminded of its significance in the manner in which it captures and documents the dynamics of Montague's collecting. More so than in his journal, with its focus on the weather, mosquitoes and the myriad frustrations of everyday life. More so too, than in the pages of his half-finished book, *Ethnological Notes from the Houailou Valley, New Caledonia*, for which he clearly had in mind a more academic readership. It is in the pages of his catalogue that the specifics of obtaining objects 'from the Natives themselves' come to life. Perhaps here is the written evidence of a collective endeavour and here is where Upiko and Nanine's missing histories might begin to be retraced. This raises the question of whether the collection's provenance should more accurately be attributed to all three men. And how might this be reflected in the collection's museum biography?

Contemporary critics of curatorial practice might have some sympathy with an analogy that equates museums with memorials to the missing – the missing, in this case, being the Indigenous people who frequently played crucial roles in the formation of collections, but whose names are only rarely visible. In this case, however, the Kanak presence *had* been recognised and documented – indeed Montague's catalogue includes frequent references to precise family names and details of locations where objects were acquired. What is 'missing' from this collection is a holistic approach to the curation of its constituent ingredients – objects, specimens, photographs, sound recordings and written material. These missing links are not the result of a failure of imagination by



The problem with labels: an example attached to a Kanak skirt, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, 2013. Photograph by Julie Adams.

the collector. Instead, they reflect the realities of the afterlife of collections once they are accessioned into a museum.

When Montague's collection had originally been accessioned in 1917, his written fieldwork narratives and the objects themselves had gone their separate ways, without the information contained in the former being formally associated with the latter. While understandable in terms of differing storage requirements, this process has the undesirable result of making it harder to explore the rich potential for meaningful research, curatorial exploration and display. To add a further layer of obfuscation, the photographs Montague had taken in New Caledonia – some of which could only be properly identified by reference to his journal – were also hived off and stored in the Museum's photographic archive. As a result, the Montague Collection had effectively become a museological diaspora, the various constituents in dispersed spaces across the Museum site.

Today, it remains standard practice for museums to store written archives, photographs and objects separately. In larger institutions, these may be kept in entirely different buildings. In smaller museums, some archives may not be catalogued at all, and knowledge about them resides only in the memory of longstanding staff members. But the implications surrounding the fate of dispersed and fragmented collections are significant. Although online catalogues offer the potential to reunite disparate elements of a collection, if written information is not catalogued accurately with the objects it relates to, at the point when they enter a museum, the ties that previously bound



Examining some of the Kanak stones held in the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, in 2013. Photograph by Julie Adams.

the various elements together are severed. From that point on, it usually requires the efforts of a researcher focused on better understanding the history of a collection, to reunite them and unlock their potential.

With this in mind, I set myself the task of exploring the transformative potential of reuniting objects and archives in a holistic manner. I selected one particular object from the Montague Collection. I chose a rain stone, because these magic stones had so clearly fascinated him, and he was thorough in noting his understanding of their particular purpose.

My next step was to search the Museum's database, the main resource available to both staff and to external researchers, which can be accessed via the Museum's website. Having typed in the stone's object number (1917.118.150), it took only a few seconds for the correct record to pop up on my screen. I consulted the fields I thought might contain the most relevant and interesting information. The 'Object name' field said 'Stone, charm'. The 'Object description' field yielded 'Rain stone'.

Next, by means of a comparison, I went back to Montague's original documentation – his journal, his draft book and, particularly, the object catalogue. Based on these three sources, I developed the following alternative provenance description for the stone, imagining how it might be presented in a future exhibition:

Rain Stone: Pé Ndé Wé Ne Va
Purchased from the Mi family, Nandia [Nindiah?], Houailou Valley
 7 December 1914

A stone for causing rain. The surface appearance of the stone represents heavy clouds and bad weather. The Mi family, to whom the stone belonged, had the sun as their totem and people came from all over the valley to consult them for the purpose of influencing meteorological conditions. To manipulate the stone, it was placed in a stone basin which was filled with water. Leaves and herbs were added, along with taro stones, representing the crop which the rain would most benefit. The stone was left for several days until it was seen to move. A young coconut was then laid upon the basin and the whole thing thrown into the sea towards the south-east, the direction from which beneficial rains arrived. A short prayer to the ancestors was offered as the basin was thrown.

Such stones were passed from father to son, but the manipulation of the most powerful stones was usually carried out by old men whose infirmities were understood to be a direct result of their responsibilities. In some cases, individuals could make use of the stones of another family. Payment was made in the form of food and gifts, which were presented to the local chief.

Paul Montague purchased this stone from the Mi family for 1 franc in 1914, a time when Kanak people were under pressure to give up traditional ways of living and missionaries were ordering them to discard their magic stones.

What this exercise of reconnection, reinterpretation and contextualisation demonstrates is the possibility for expanding understandings about the life of an object. I was reminded of François' frequent and acerbic comment about museum exhibitions: 'What I want to know is who made these objects? How were they made? Which ceremonies were they used in? That is what Kanak people want to know!²² If this alternative (albeit lengthy) label was to appear in an exhibition, would it go some way to addressing François' concerns that museum labels are, essentially, a form of cultural appropriation? And might it also go some way to challenging the criticism that museums privilege the telling of certain stories while others go untold, are eclipsed or remain in shadow? In this imagined label, it is the Mi family who become the primary agents in how the object is understood and appreciated. For his part, Paul Montague serves as the channel through which both the – finally reunited – information and the stone itself came to leave the Houailou Valley and make its way across the globe to a museum in Cambridge.



*Jennifer Estcourt, her husband Noel, daughter Hilary and Hilary's children visiting Cambridge in 2014.
Photograph by Julie Adams.*

The Burned Letters

In 2004, three pieces of barkcloth collected by Paul Montague were assessed, measured, photographed and carefully rolled around cardboard tubes as part of a project to improve their storage. At the time, the project researcher also transcribed information found on the Museum's pre-digital, card-index catalogue and entered it into the computerised database. This process revealed that a numbering error had occurred at some point in the history of these objects. The accession number in the museum database is 1917.118.58.A-C. However, on the old index card relating to barkcloth B, someone has scribbled a note that reads: 'Some screw up has occurred!!!'. Barkcloth C, also has a note which reads: 'Probably screwed up in re-numbering'.

Cross-checking Montague's object catalogue quickly confirmed that some 'screw up' had indeed occurred. Instead of there being two white cloths and one red, the labels indicate that two of the cloths are red and one white. This may seem to represent a small, maybe insignificant, detail but mislabelling can sometimes lead to mistakes of cultural and historical significance. Fortunately, in this instance, Montague's catalogue cleared up the confusion and was also able to provide further information, revealing that both white pieces of cloth were collected in the village of Gondé on 2 August 1914. Paul gives the name for this type of cloth as *awa*.

The red piece was collected in Houailou, in December. It is thicker, apparently made from the bark of the banyan tree and is known as *mboe* or *mber*. Once again, his object catalogue proved to be a valuable asset.

In 2014, I brought barkcloth A down from the racks and into the Bevan storeroom in preparation for a visit from Paul Montague's niece, Jennifer Estcourt, accompanied by her husband Noel, their daughter Hilary and Hilary's three young children. The family had travelled up from Devon to view the small exhibition about Paul's collection, to which they had kindly lent the beautiful lute he had made while serving in Salonika. Behind the scenes at



Section of fragile barkcloth, known in the Houailou Valley as awa, collected by Paul Montague in Gondé in August 1914. Photograph by Gwil Owen.



Group of barkcloth beaters, known in the Houailou Valley as dulu, collected by Paul Montague in Gondé and Nessakoéa in 1914. Photograph by Gwil Owen.

the Museum, the family also visited the stores to see more of the collection than we were able to include in the displays.

As I unrolled barkcloth A ready for their visit, it was obvious that it had become extremely fragile. As a precaution, and not wanting to risk damaging the object, I decided to unroll only one small section, suspecting that they were more likely to be interested in the polished serpentine axe blades or the cords made from flying-fox fur. Surprisingly, however, the children were particularly drawn to the barkcloth. They wanted to know how the bark of a tree could be turned into cloth. In turn, they each handled one of the solid wooden beaters from the collection, which would have been used to pound the bark. They were impressed with the beaters' weight and the evident skill required to produce such a fine cloth. They noticed how deftly the maker had narrowed the cloth to a point at one end, which then became a fine plait, terminating in a fringe. The plaited section appeared to have been dyed red, although a century later the dye had faded to reddish-brown.

In his journal, Montague records that, in the village of Gondé, the cloth known as *awa* was used to wrap dead bodies. He writes that a body was laid out on the ground with 'the knees bent up to the stomach, the arms tucked in at the elbow with the hands lying upon the chest'. The corpse was then wrapped in cloth and the body placed in a tree and allowed to rot. In the case of one chiefly family, the bodies were wrapped with their limbs straight out and left in a tree for five days, after which time their heads were removed, wrapped in *awa* and hidden in a cave for safe-keeping. Montague says that he understands it is the men who beat the *awa* while the women do the weaving. But he includes a question mark next to this statement, suggesting he is uncertain about this finding. Upon hearing these details, the children in the storeroom seemed more

interested than ever, particularly when they saw a small sketch Paul had made in his journal to illustrate how the dead body was positioned for wrapping.

In fact, at the time he was writing, such 'tree-burials' had been made illegal and he was not personally witness to any of these abandoned practices. Instead, as he makes clear in his unpublished book, the details were conveyed to him by the 'old people of the tribes of Neja Quéa [sic] and Gondé, who surreptitiously maintained aspects of their traditional beliefs. Chapter 5 of his manuscript, titled 'Social Organisation and Customs', contains an extensive description of the treatment of the dead, including details of the ceremonies which constituted pivotal moments in the year-long period of mourning that followed the death of an important person. These details included the responsibilities of the chief mourners, known as *avi*, who were tasked with caring for the corpse. Only the *avi* were allowed to touch the body and it was their responsibility to wrap the corpse in barkcloth and place it into a 'kind of crate of wood', ready to be taken to the burial site. The careful management of these interactions between the living and the dead was important, he understood from the 'old people', because 'the dead would very often return to claim relations, particularly mothers who had died and left young children ... When it was thought probable that the dead would return ... barriers were put up on the foot-paths which were supposed to keep the spirit away'.¹ As the Estcourt family visit concluded, I was struck once again by the potential of objects to connect with people across time and space.

A month before the centenary of Paul Montague's death in October 2017, Alan Wakefield was planning his usual tour of the battlefields for members of the Salonika Campaign Society and asked if I wanted to join them. He said there would be a smaller group than usual, as many people were saving up to attend the centenary commemorations scheduled for 2018. I had not anticipated joining another tour but then found myself swept along by a plan formulated by Peter Saunders, a member of the Society.

Peter had developed a particular interest in P.D.M's story and believed he had identified a cemetery which was most likely to be his burial place. Enthusiastically, he emailed a summary of his research findings, which included screenshots taken from Google Earth to support his hypothesis. He had called the document: 'To Interested Parties Regarding the Search for Paul Denys Montague's Grave'. I noticed from the email chain that many other members of the Society had chipped in with their own opinions. A debate, it seemed, was in full flow.

Peter argued that a cemetery situated to the west of the village of Josifovo was the most likely location. 'This graveyard,' he explained, 'sits precisely on the site of the German aerodrome known as Hudova (now Udovo)'. He encouraged readers to examine the images in an attached folder and added: 'To back up this hypothesis I can now present further evidence regarding the existence of a graveyard on the above site today'. Further details and annotated maps followed, before he concluded: 'This is our best chance of finding a grave for poor old P.D.M.'

As Peter acts as a full-time carer for his wife Helen, he was unable to travel to Salonika himself. But, he suggested, somebody else might visit the cemetery to try to identify the grave.



A sketch in the pages of Paul Montague's notebooks in the archives in Cambridge. Photograph by Julie Adams, 2014.

In the years immediately after the war, Amy Montague's worst fears that Paul would be forgotten seemed set to be realised. Misinformation about the Salonika Campaign, combined with a general ignorance about where Salonika was located and its importance to the Eastern Front, resulted in a kind of national forgetting. As the war was drawing to a close, the Bishop of London, Arthur Winnington-Ingram, whose forthright support for the war effort had earned him a reputation for controversy, as well as the nickname 'the belligerent bishop', published a public admonishment in *The Times*.

Printed on 8 November 1918, the headline read: 'Our Army in Salonika. A Gallant Force. Testimony of the Bishop of London.' By the second paragraph, the bishop, who had just completed a tour of the Campaign's battlefields, was in full voice: 'But now, before I turn my face homewards,' he writes, 'I want to say a word, Sir, through your paper to my fellow-countrymen at home.' He continues:

We have not appreciated at anything like its full value the fortitude, courage and wonderful success of the Salonika Army, and they have a sore and disappointed feeling that they are neglected and despised. A music-hall song, which ought never to have been allowed to be sung: 'If you don't want to fight, go to Salonika' has been gall and wormwood to those who had almost reached the limits of endurance.²

As parents of a son who had gone to Salonika to fight and would not be returning to them, the Montagues must have been experiencing the limits of their own endurance. Plans for public memorials did not assuage the sense of urgency that had seized Amy and Leopold Montague. Deciding to take matters into their own hands, they set out to secure meaningful legacies for their lost sons. Documents held within the collections of a number of institutional archives record their efforts. In Cambridge, the Museum holds the letter Leopold wrote to Baron von Hügel, only days after the armistice, offering his services as a cataloguer of Paul's New Caledonia collection. In the National Archives is correspondence relating to Leopold's request that Felix David be posthumously awarded a campaign medal for his service in France.

For Amy, the priority was the search for Paul's grave, and her letters written years later, to H.A. Jones, the historian of No. 47 Squadron, are evidence of her tireless determination. As if trying to ensure some future purpose for Paul's work, Amy also tried to catalogue his photographs and documents, carefully boxing them up and annotating them wherever possible with relevant contextual information. Because of this, Paul's photographs from the Montebello Islands have survived, wrapped in brown paper and accompanied by a note in Amy's hand, providing what information she had been able to glean about when and where the images had been taken. In her note, she appears to be addressing an absent yet foreshadowed future reader for whom these photographs might conceivably have some significance.

The historian, Jay Winter, has written that the Great War 'brought the search for an appropriate language of loss to the centre of cultural and political life'.³ While this search continued at a national level, Amy and Leopold Montague's archived letters are vivid illustrations of that struggle being experienced within a single, bereaved family. One letter in particular, written by Amy before the war had ended, conveys the depth of the Montagues' sense of loss. Written to Professor Sidney Harmer, Keeper of Zoology at the Natural History Museum, in May 1918, Amy writes:

Dear Professor Harmer,

Thank you for your kind letter about my son Paul. In losing him, I feel I have lost all I ever hoped for, or set my heart upon. And he was my only surviving son, for his young brother was killed at the battle of Neuve Chapelle in 1915. Paul was killed in an air-fight with three enemy aeroplanes on October 29th last year. I hope that all he was able to do in his short scientific career will not be lost ...

He made a collection of butterflies and moths in Macedonia last summer, and these were sent home with his things a few weeks ago. They are not 'set' but are enclosed in small pieces of paper with the locality written on them. There are a large number of specimens. Shall I send them to you? I am quite sure that he would have wished that anything of interest and scientific value which he was able to collect should become the property of the Museum of Natural History, or of the museum at Cambridge. Baron von Hügel bought from him a number of ethnological specimens...⁴

The remaining pages of the letter are taken up with questions regarding the fate of the collections Paul had already left in the Museum's care. In particular, she wondered what had become of those he had made on the Montebello Islands.

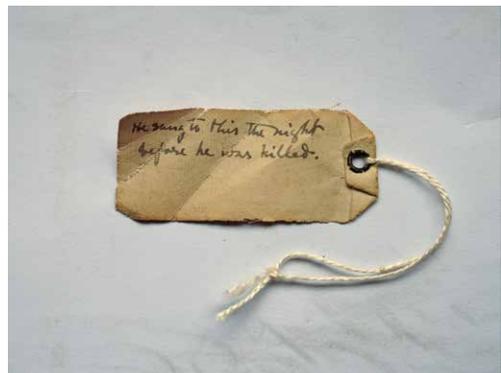
The reverberations of Amy's letter are traceable in the archives of London's Natural History Museum. These take the form of a series of increasingly irate memos exchanged between Professor Harmer and his staff, as they frantically tried to locate the specimens, which seem variously to have been forgotten, not yet registered or entirely misplaced.

Leopold and Amy's activities suggest they were trying to 'curate' Paul's life through his collections, with some future audience in mind. In her letter to Professor Harmer, Amy is trying to persuasively enlist his assistance in ensuring Paul's collections are safely accessioned into the Museum. It is as if their presence within those walls offers both the means to mitigate loss and the method of creating a legacy – the tantalising possibility that the pain of one might be made more bearable by the promise of the other.

One further detail, revealed in Amy's letter to Professor Harmer, is her mention that Paul's 'things' had been returned to them at Penton. Among the zoological specimens, books and correspondence returned to their care were his more personal possessions. These included the lute he had made in Salonika, following the loss by drowning of his previous instrument. He had been heard playing the new lute to fellow patients in the casualty clearing station where he had been sent in May 1917 while under investigation for an irregular heartbeat. Later, according to H.A. Jones' accounts, Monty had regularly played bawdy ballads in the evenings for the entertainment of his squadron.⁵

When Paul's niece, Jennifer Estcourt, first showed me this lute, during my visit to her home in Devon, she carefully carried the instrument into the lounge and placed it on a coffee table. On top, she put a small, museum-style label, pierced with a hole, through which cotton string had been threaded. The writing of this label, a small act of parental curation, seemed the most poignant of all. In Amy Montague's hand it read:

Lute made out of broken aeroplanes by Paul Montague while on active service in Macedonia – 1917. He sang to this the night before he was killed.



The label written by Amy Montague and tied to Paul's lute when it was returned to her after his death. Photograph by Mark Adams, 2017.

Despite Paul's parents' sustained efforts at memorialisation, however, I learned from Jennifer that, before Amy died, she left instructions for all her letters from Paul to be burned without being read by any other family members. When I asked Jennifer about this during a recorded interview in 2015, she confessed that she had done the burning. She told me:

I thought very hard about this and I thought I should honour her wishes and I did destroy them and I never looked at them. I burned them in the garden, but now I wonder. It was fairly close then, you see; if it had been two or three generations on maybe I wouldn't have felt that she was looking over my shoulder.

In September 2017, only three of us signed up for the Salonika Campaign battlefield tour – myself, Martin Gibson, a long-time member of the Society, and Laura Kinnear, curator of the Holst Birthplace Museum in Cheltenham. Gustav Holst had been posted to Salonika at the end of the war in his role as Musical Organiser for the YMCA. His task was to entertain the thousands of troops still awaiting demobilisation. Laura was planning to mount an exhibition about Holst's Salonika experiences as part of the 2018 commemorations and was keen to get a sense of the landscape for herself.

Because we were a small group, Alan Wakefield was able to tailor an itinerary to cater to our interests. So, after we had finished exploring the sites Holst had frequented in Thessaloniki, we crossed over the border into Macedonia, stopping en route at the Memorial to the Missing, near the border point at Doiran. After a night at the Hotel Romantique, we left the next morning to search for the cemetery Peter Saunders suggested was the likely location for Paul Montague's grave. With Macedonian police officer Romeo Drobarov again as our guide, we set out, first taking a short diversion to a small farm, where the farmer wanted to show Alan a track which snaked steeply upwards through his land before opening out into what had formerly been an artillery position during the war. Alan was considering including this as a new location on his 2018 tour. On our return, we took a shortcut down a shingled slope and Martin slipped, cutting his arm badly. Romeo calmly took charge, cleaning and bandaging the wound before we tentatively continued our descent. Back at the farm, the farmer's wife brought out strong coffee and small glasses containing dates drizzled with honey, which we ate in the sunshine.

We continued on to the village of Josifovo, the farmer having offered to accompany us in his car. Romeo travelled with him and they led us to the village cemetery, which we quickly established had only graves dating back to the 1950s or so. The farmer told Romeo that he thought he remembered a second, older cemetery nearby, so we climbed back into the cars and headed off to find it. Several wrong turnings later, we did indeed locate a second cemetery, at the far end of a long track. Here, the graves appeared to be significantly older.

Perhaps, I thought, we were on the verge of finding Paul Montague's grave, 100 years, almost to the day, since his death. Despite the passing of time and the fact that all those most closely connected to him were dead, I felt a responsibility to them weighing on my shoulders. Peter Saunders had supplied us with text that represented



Searching for Paul Montague's grave, Salonika, 2017. Photograph by Julie Adams.

the sort of inscription German troops might have written to mark the grave of an unknown airman. As we discussed how to proceed, Romeo and the farmer stood smoking, apparently unconvinced by Peter's hypothesis.

Undaunted, the rest of the group spread out, each taking a quadrant of the site. I headed to the back right-hand corner of the cemetery, where the graves looked to be oldest, and began walking hopefully up and down the rows. It took less than five minutes to realise that the search was doomed to failure. The cemetery, abandoned many years ago, was now in a state of terrible disrepair. Many of the headstones had toppled over or simply crumbled away. Those which were still standing were impossible to read, as the writing was eroded and worn by the weather or covered with moss. I tried lifting some of the collapsed stones to see if I could find any clues on the reverse but there was nothing. I tried rubbing away some moss, which served only to remove the top layer of skin from my fingertips, leaving them raw and bloodied. It was a dispiriting conclusion to a search which I had naïvely hoped would end in success. Alan, Martin and Laura said they had reached the same conclusion and that they would wait for me in the car.

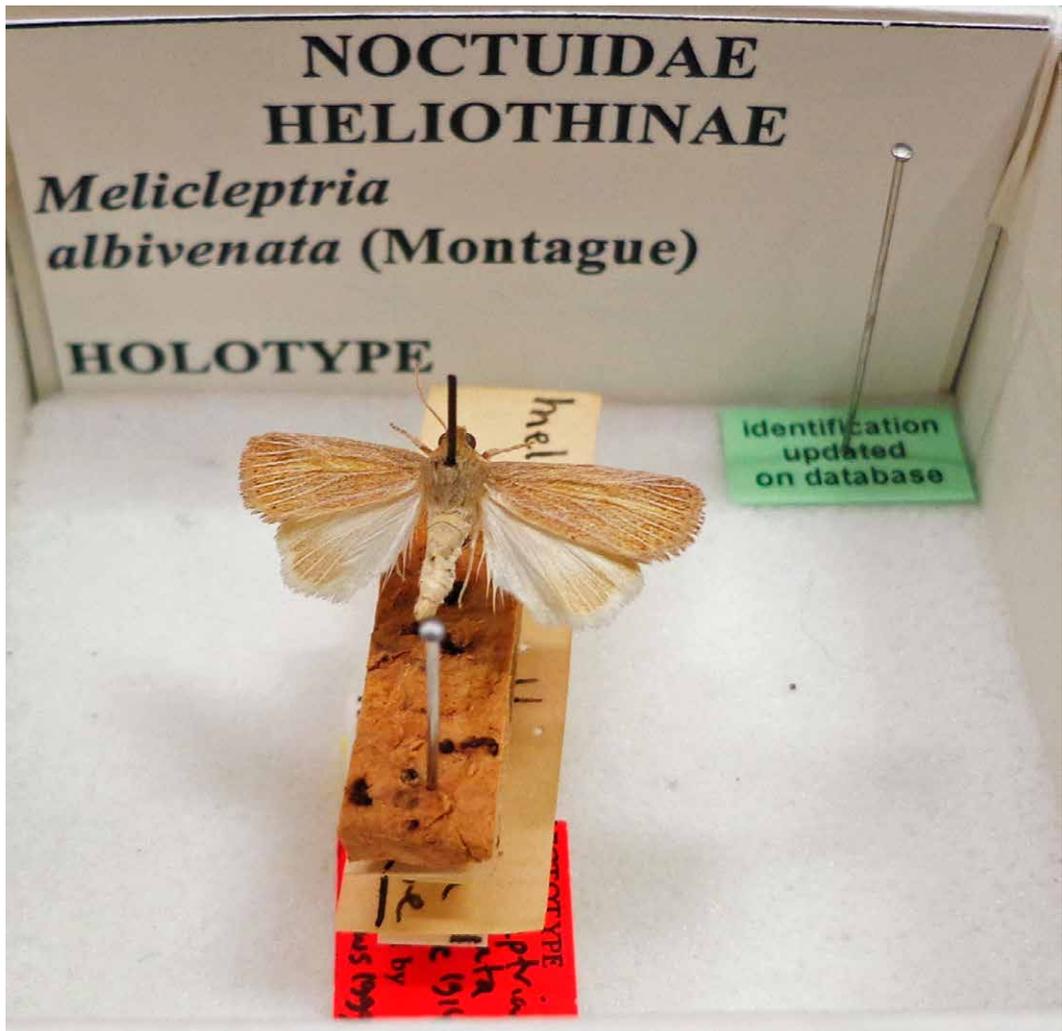
Sitting on a pile of rocks, possibly former grave stones, I recalled the letter H.A. Jones had written to Amy Montague in 1921 with his optimistic, if unrealistic, suggestion that he would travel to Salonika and locate the grave as soon as he could afford to. It seemed to me then that I, too, had fallen prey to the same over-optimism.

Taking out my camera, I began photographing the wreckage of the cemetery, thinking it might be usefully evocative for this book. As I was considering potential shots, a small brown bird flew down from a tree and landed on a bush nearby. I gave it a



Watching, Salonika, 2017. Photograph by Julie Adams.

glance and continued my photographic survey. Several minutes later, I noticed that the little brown bird had not moved, even though my wanderings had brought me within a very few steps of where it was sitting. I moved even closer and raised my camera to ‘collect’ the image, while all the time the bird just sat there, gazing inquisitively in my direction.



The 'Montague Moth' collected in the Montebello Islands and now in the stores of the Western Australian Museum, 2018. Photograph by Julie Adams.

Shadow Clubs

In the lacuna between the end of the Great War and the erection of the ubiquitous public memorials, countless bereaved families shared the Montagues' struggle to find a way to commemorate their lost loved ones. Amy and Leopold, forced to look beyond acts of official mourning, found solace in their own small acts of curation. They put their faith in science to achieve some kind of legacy for Paul, and it did not let them down.

A small moth from the zoological collections that Paul made in the Montebello Islands would become a permanent legacy of his work. The moth, which was scientifically described in 1914, was classified as the first known example of its type. This makes it a holotype, a valuable original specimen that identifies a new species. Even if a better specimen is subsequently found, the holotype can never be superseded. This small creature was given the name *Melicleptria albivenata* (Montague).

In 2018, when I visited the Western Australian Museum stores, the tiny moth was brought out for inspection. Holotypes are rare and exciting discoveries, considered to be the most significant pieces in natural history collections. As such, they have to be stored and conserved to high standards that meet the Code of International Zoological Nomenclature. The moth, with its delicate creamy-brown wings, was kept separately from the many other moths in the stores and was carried out in a special white box. Pinned in place, its status as a holotype was clearly marked in capital letters on the box. The moth appeared overwhelmed by its labels, one of which was written in Paul Montague's hand. The museum staff explained that, in scientific terms, Montague's collection had assumed a particular significance, formed as it was prior to the ecological devastation wrought on the Montebellos by Britain's nuclear testing. For today's researchers, his specimens now offer valuable insight into the islands' wildlife prior to that cataclysmic event.

Once Paul's New Caledonian collections were catalogued, several other species were also named after him and so a scientific legacy for his brief career was assured. In many ways, the story of the *Melicleptria albivenata* (Montague) moth epitomises the unexpected afterlives of objects and specimens in museum collections. Despite its physical fragility, the moth has survived for over a century in storage and, through its classification as a holotype, it has achieved a prized scientific status. Whether Amy and Leopold ever learned about the significance of the Montague moth is not known. A century on, its scientific importance would surely have provided them with some comfort. Whether they ever had an opportunity to visit the Museum in Cambridge to view Paul's remarkable New Caledonian collection is also unclear. Nevertheless, the rest of their lives can be pieced together from family recollections and fleeting references to their activities in public life.

In 1926, when he was in his mid-sixties, Leopold Montague sat for an official photographic portrait.



Leopold Agar Denys Montague. Photograph by Lafayette, 1926.

The image shows him in profile, his hair and moustache whitened with age. Although the background is blurred, it seems likely that the photograph was taken at his home, Penton, as the chair in which he is seated resembles one that he carved himself. This photograph is now in the collections of the National Portrait Gallery, where Leopold is catalogued as an 'Army Officer, Justice of the Peace and antiques collector'. His standing in public life was clearly deemed important enough to warrant national recognition. As for Amy, there is no official portrait in existence but that does not mean that she lived her life in his shadow. The Devon History Society records that,



Amy Julia Mary Montague. Photograph by E. Denney & Co's Fine Art Studio. Date unknown.

after the death of Paul's younger brother David, Amy worked at the Red Cross hospitals in Crediton and Exeter. She was also said to have installed gymnasium bars in a room at Penton to provide rehabilitation for wounded patients. Earlier, in the 1890s, she had been an active Suffragist, serving as the founding secretary of the Women's Social and

Political Union (WSPU), which campaigned for women to be given the vote. In the summer of 1908, she led an Exeter contingent to a 'Votes for Women' demonstration in Hyde Park and shared a platform with Christabel Pankhurst, one of the cofounders of the WSPU. After the war, when women over 30 attained the franchise, Amy urged them to vote not for a specific party but for the 'betterment of the world'.¹

Five years before Leopold's portrait was taken, he had published his *magnum opus*: *Weapons and Implements of Savage Races*. The book reflects the collecting instinct that Paul had imbibed in his childhood and that had pervaded the family home. In the preface, Leopold noted that the study of weapons was being taken up by an increasing 'fraternity' of enthusiasts, but that reliable information about 'ethnographical specimens' remained scarce. His stated intention was to address this gap in knowledge. In the book's introductory chapter, Leopold presents an unflattering assessment of a 'typical' member of the weapon-collecting 'fraternity' – passionate, but largely ignorant, about the objects in his collection. Dismissing their tendency to display such collections as mere decorations 'on the walls of the entrance hall or staircase of many a residence', he asserts that collectors often have only 'a very hazy notion of what they really are and where they came from'.² Clearly, Leopold considered himself a cut above these poor unfortunate and naive amateurs.

In these circumstances, it is ironic to recall that almost every inch of wall space in Penton's grand hall was hung with clubs, which Leopold had curated – organising his vast collection into related series, and displaying them *a la mode*, in fan shapes. It is possible that some of the clubs on display had been presented to Leopold by Paul on his return from New Caledonia. Certainly, two Kanak examples illustrated in Leopold's book, and identified as being part of his own collection, are similar to ones Paul sold to the Cambridge Museum. Whatever their provenance, Leopold's clubs fanned out across the walls of Penton's entrance hall, up the grand staircase and onto the landing. For at least a decade after his death in 1940, they were the first thing visitors saw when they came to call.

When I visited Penton with Paul's niece June Alexander in August 2015, the old entrance hall had gone. Instead, the current owners, Roy and Anne Webber, showed us a photograph of how it had been at the time of the Montagues. The couple wanted us to marvel at the ornately carved wooden staircase and balustrade commissioned by Leopold, which had once graced the hallway. Roy explained that, when the house had been divided into two separate properties, the whole staircase had unfortunately been ripped out. But even so, the staircase had an afterlife, and it was subsequently bought by the poet Ted Hughes and installed in a property he had recently acquired in Devon.

The ornate staircase in the photograph was indeed impressive. But something else about the image caught and held my attention. As part of the renovations, the walls in the hallway must have been stripped of their wallpaper because the slabs of stone underneath had been laid bare. And there, clearly visible, were the ghostly shadows of Leopold's clubs. Perhaps they had once been varnished to enhance the attractive lustre of the wood. If so, the varnish must have soaked through the wallpaper over time and gradually been absorbed into the stone itself.



The shadow clubs. The staircase at Penton, where Leopold's collections were displayed for many years. Photographer and date unknown.

In the photograph, two distinct groups of clubs can be seen. On the upper part of the wall, above the staircase, a group with narrow shafts and relatively flat heads can just be discerned. On the lower section of the same wall, a second group can be seen, with distinctive forms that suggest that they are likely to be Fijian in origin. Noting my fascination, Roy Webber kindly agreed that I could take the photograph away for copying.

On the long train journey back to Cambridge, I removed the photo from the envelope and stared at it. Although the clubs themselves had gone, something of their presence remained. These shadow clubs have continued to linger long in my memory. For me, it is tempting to regard these spectral outlines as also tracing Paul Montague's posthumous fortunes as an apparition at once visible and lost.



Birdman of Salonika by Rebecca Jewell, 2014.

2015.1

In 2014, the artist Rebecca Jewell created a work inspired by a forgotten life. Commissioned by the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, she was tasked with making a piece that reflected on the life and collecting of Paul Montague. The work was to feature in the small exhibition being planned to mark the centenary of Montague's expedition to New Caledonia, as well as to commemorate the anniversary of the outbreak of World War I.

At the heart of Jewell's artistic practice are concerns that resonate with those which shaped Paul Montague's character and career: the act of collecting, the work of museums and the afterlives of objects within such institutions. In the 1980s, Jewell spent time in Papua New Guinea. There, she witnessed the cultural significance birds had for the Gamugai people among whom she lived. She witnessed their use of feathers to adorn their bodies, creating headdresses and other ornaments, which she began to photograph and sketch. Later, during an internship at the British Museum, Jewell came across numerous examples of such headdresses in boxes on the Oceania floor of the Museum's ethnographic store. That journey of transformation – from bird to item of adornment to museum object – she has been contemplating in her art ever since.¹

While researching Paul Montague's life and collections prior to making the artwork, Jewell found that many aspects of his story chimed with her own, particularly his interest in natural history, art and the Pacific. In Cambridge, he may even have encountered some of her distant relatives, who were part of the Neo-Pagan set with whom he was acquainted.

The work she went on to create is composed of a giclée print of a BE12 aeroplane, similar to the one flown by Paul in World War I. Over the image of the plane, she has collaged domestic duck, goose and turkey feathers. Employing an innovative technique, she hand-printed images onto the feathers using oil-based inks and an etching press. Each delicate feather captures a 'moment' from Montague's life. There are portraits of him as a boy in his Bedales uniform, strumming a gittern in a Sydney-based photographic studio en route to New Caledonia and in a suit and tie shortly before leaving for war in 1915.

His work as a zoologist is represented by images of some of the specimens he collected, today scattered across institutions around the world. On the underside of the plane's wing, Jewell has collaged images of the watercolours Montague made of birds' eggs as a young man. Important ceremonial artefacts from New Caledonia are also depicted, including a series of magic stones. On one feather is an image of a hair comb he collected during his fieldwork in the Houailou Valley. The comb's previous Kanak owner had engraved an image of a European face, which appears to be that of a French soldier, testifying to the cultural upheavals taking place during the period Montague visited. Several other feathers show the museum labels that document the objects he brought back to Britain, which are now stored in the collections in Cambridge. They

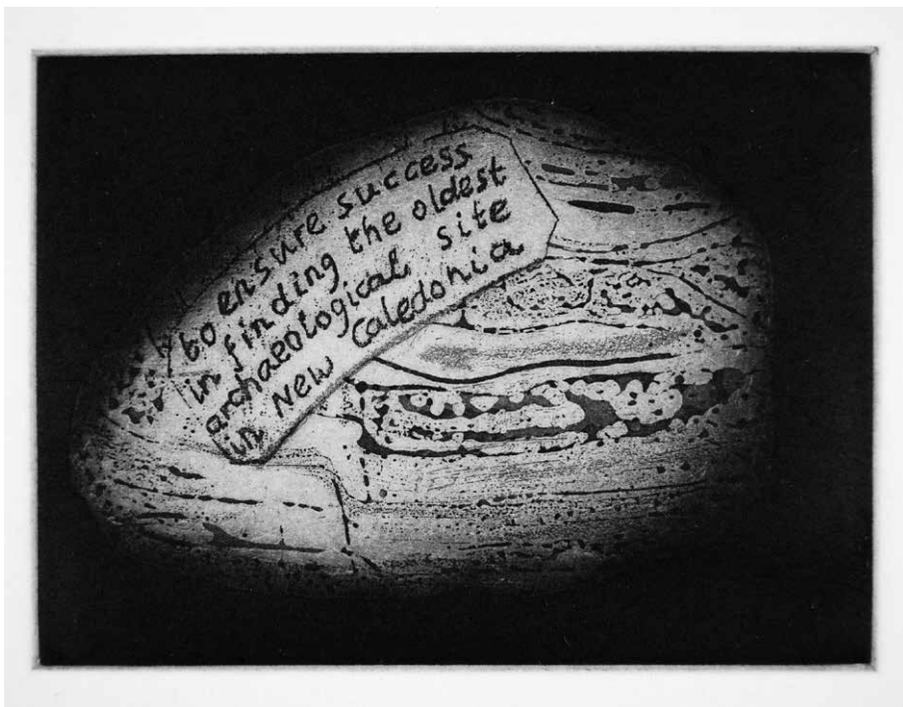


Detail from Rebecca Jewell's Birdman of Salonika, 2014.

reference the process of description and cataloguing to which 'things' are subjected as they are transformed into museum objects.

In the finished work, Jewell endeavoured to come up with a single image that could simultaneously evoke the many strands of his life, interests and experiences. The image of the plane is, she says, 'laden with items that attempt to tell the story of this extraordinary man.'

Jewell first learned of Paul Montague's collections some years before she was commissioned to create the work. In 2009, she was preparing an exhibition about the use of magic and charms across cultures. During her research, she became intrigued



Stone Charms of New Caledonia by Rebecca Jewell, 2009. This image shows François Wadra's stone which would have the power to 'ensure success in finding the oldest archaeological site in New Caledonia'.

by the collections of magic stones in museums and wanted to learn more about them. While she was researching the exhibition, François Wadra came to London and the three of us met up so that Rebecca could interview him about the role of magic stones in traditional Kanak culture. Jewell was particularly fascinated by the range of tasks for which the stones could be called upon. One stone, collected by a missionary in New Caledonia, is labelled: 'To give strength to the legs when climbing a mountain'. Another states: 'To cause death to an enemy', while another says: 'To give confidence in addressing a chief'. At the end of the interview, Rebecca asked François what power he would ascribe to a magic stone, if he could choose. Without hesitation, the ambitious archaeologist in him replied, 'To ensure success in finding the oldest archaeological site in New Caledonia'.

As a means of thanking him for the information he had shared, Jewell created an artwork depicting the stone he had imagined. François was pleased with the gift and took it home to New Caledonia.

Later, Jewell incorporated an image of Wadra's 'archaeologist's stone' in a limited-edition concertina book and included it in her exhibition when it opened at the Rebecca Hossack Gallery in London. Titled *Stone Charms of New Caledonia*, a copy of the book was acquired by the British Library and subsequently accessioned into its collections.² This sequence of events seems to epitomise the infinite creative potential of collections and objects to inspire and encourage a reimagining of the past in the present. What

began as Wadra's playful imagining of a stone became transformed and made material in Jewell's charcoal rendering. Then, as the result of yet another transformation, the imagined stone was published in book form, a copy of which is now numbered and catalogued in the British Library.

In Cambridge, after the exhibition about Paul Montague's life and work had finally closed, Rebecca's artwork was accessioned into the collections of the Museum and was given the number '2015.1'. Too large to fit in a box, the work was mounted on the walls of the Bevan storeroom, where it now shares a space with the 250 artefacts that Paul collected in New Caledonia.

As I worked on the official paperwork involved in accessioning this new acquisition, I began to conceive of Rebecca's piece as a kind of visual biography. Rather than being a traditional account of someone's life, the work embodies the entangled, multidirectional layers of loss and remembering that bind people and objects across space and time. The effect of printing images onto the feathers' fragile strands evokes for me the ephemeral nature of life, while the process of collaging suggests the palimpsestic way we narrate our lives and remember those who are gone. Jewell called her work *Birdman of Salonika*. For now, it represents the final chapter in the curating of Paul Montague.



*Club known as a Quaiarru
collected by Paul Montague in
Nessakoéa in 1914. Photograph
by Gwil Owen.*

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Summary of the collections

Although this book is not intended to be a catalogue of the collections amassed by Paul Montague, it is hoped that the following information will prove useful to future researchers.

Collecting in the UK, prior to 1913

Natural History Museum, London

Montague presented a number of birds collected in the Scottish Isles to the Museum in 1913. They were registered with the number 1913.5.12.1-29.

Expedition to the Montebello Islands, Western Australia, 1913

Montague spent three months in the Montebello Islands, from May-August 1913.

Western Australian Museum, Perth

Most of the zoological specimens collected during this expedition were presented to the Western Australian Museum. Those that have survived include five spectacled hare wallabies, two black rats, fish and other marine life, and a holotype moth: *Melicleptria albivenata* (Montague).

University Museum of Zoology, Cambridge

The Museum holds 25 specimens from the Montebello Islands, the majority of which were collected by Montague. These include two spectacled hare wallabies (A12.61/1, A12.61/2), black rats, crabs and other marine life.

See: www.museum.zoo.cam.ac.uk

Natural History Museum, London

Specimens from the Montebello Islands came to the Natural History Museum directly from Montague, as well as via the Royal Society, which had contributed to the cost of his expedition. Only a few are traceable today on the Museum's online catalogue. These include four spectacled hare wallabies, all of which have 1913 as the year of their registration. A number of birds were accessioned with the number 1913.4.20.1-30. The Museum's archives contain a list of butterflies and moths that were apparently accessioned into the collections but with no registration numbers. Further correspondence in the archive suggests that many more specimens would originally have existed. These may not have survived or may, over time, have lost their association with Montague.

Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter

Over 800 items from Paul's father's collections were presented to the Royal Albert Memorial Museum in Exeter after Leopold's death in 1940. Included among them are objects that can be identified as having come from Paul's time in Western Australia. In his expedition journal, Paul mentions acquiring a shield 'from a native at Onslow' and Leopold identified this shield in his 1921 publication *Weapons and Implements of Savage Races* (p. 43). This shield is numbered 33/1953/27a in the Exeter collections.

Following his Montebellos expedition, the Western Australian Museum presented Montague with a group of Indigenous Australian artefacts from its own collections. These 19 artefacts included a carved boab nut, boomerangs, a digging stick, a necklace and ornament. Many of these artefacts can be matched with those now in Exeter, including a dish (described in the original Perth documentation as a *murda murda*), which came from the Pitjantjatjara people and was originally collected in the Kookynie District of Western Australia by someone called Dodd. In Exeter, this dish is numbered 33/1953/28.

See: <https://rammuseum.org.uk/collections/>

Family archive

Montague's family have his expedition journal and a series of black-and-white photographs he took while in the Montebello Islands in their care. None of the photographs are annotated but several locations are identifiable, as they are reproduced in publications about his expedition.

Publications

P.D. Montague, 'New subspecies of birds from the Monte Bello Islands, N.W.A.' *The Austral Avian Record*, Vol. 1, No. 8 (March 1913).

P.D. Montague, 'A report on the fauna of the Monte Bello Islands', *Proceedings of the Zoological Society of London*, Vol. 4, Issue 3 (1914), 625-652.

P.D. Montague, 'The Montebello Islands', *The Geographical Journal* (July 1913).

Expedition to New Caledonia, 1914

Montague spent approximately 12 months in New Caledonia, from January 1914.

American Museum of Natural History

The bird collections he amassed while in New Caledonia are today housed in the American Museum of Natural History, as the result of a complicated series of institutional transfers (see 'Weather to Fly'). There are over 300 birds logged in the database as having come from Montague and the skins are numbered from 216394-731788.

See: www.amnh.org/research/vertebrate-zoology/ornithology

Natural History Museum, London

As with Montague's collections from the Montebello Islands, there is uncertainty about the fate of the majority of the zoological collections presented to the Natural History Museum. A quantity of insect specimens survive with the collection number 1918-87 and these include 74 Neuroptera, 1190 Coleoptera, 362 Odonata, 51 Diptera, 56

Rhynchota, 128 Hymenoptera and 107 Lepidoptera. A further collection of insects from New Caledonia was accessioned in 1946 with the number 1946-210. It is unclear whether these were a subsequent donation from the Montague family or whether these had been in the Museum for some time and were only accessioned later.

British Library Sound Archive

Montague made a series of sound recordings in the village of Gondé. His original wax cylinders are now held by the British Library Sound Archive and are catalogued on its database. They have been digitised, although at the time of writing are not available to listen to online. The condition of the recordings is poor and they are difficult to hear. The following descriptions are taken from Montague's own notes:

C671/330: *Hndor* solo (a *hndor* being a bamboo flute)

C671/329: *Hndor* solo

C671/328: *Hndor* solo

C671/327: *Doru* (dance song), performed by Membuiro and Dao with percussion accompaniment [these are recorded in sections with the remaining parts featuring on C671/326 and 325]

C671/326: *Doru* [dance song, as above]

C671/325: *Doru* [dance song, as above]

C671/324: *Ururua* (house song), performed by Djeu-Nur Beréowa and Poya Rapekiya [recorded in sections with the remaining parts featuring on C671/323 and 322]

C671/323: *Ururua* [house song, as above]

C671/322: *Ururua* [house song, as above]

C671/321: Set oration (hereditary) for *Quie*, Omea Vaino (aged chief) with vocal group and drums [recorded in two parts with the remaining part featuring on C671/320]

C671/320: Set oration [hereditary, as above]

Duckworth Laboratory, University of Cambridge

Fourteen human skulls, collected by Montague in New Caledonia, were purchased by the Duckworth Laboratory from Baron von Hügel, founding curator of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, in 1924. These were accessioned on 15 March 1924 and notes in the register state that they had been 'obtained from caves by Mr Montague'. The skulls are numbered 6002-6015; however, there is some doubt about the provenance of number 6013. Montague described two instances of acquiring human skulls in his expedition journal. In early August, in the Houailou Valley, he was given five skulls by a local Kanak man. A Kanak woman informed him that these had belonged to members of the Beréowa family. Later in August, he visited a rock shelter near Mont Panié and described taking 'five skulls'. As there is no further mention of collecting human remains in his journal, it is not possible to account for the provenance of the remaining skulls now in the Duckworth Laboratory.

Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge

Photographs

A series of approximately 30 fieldwork photographs taken by Paul Montague is held in the Museum's photographic collections. The precise number is unclear because Robert Harold Compton, Montague's fieldwork companion, also took a number of images now held in Cambridge. The 30 or so images I believe to have been taken by Montague depict people, landscapes and wildlife, and were mainly taken in the Houaïlou Valley. They are scanned and catalogued on the Museum's database, which is accessible online.

Archives

The Museum's archives contain a wealth of material associated with Montague's New Caledonian collections:

OA2/9/11: Private expedition journal

OA2/9/8: Hardback catalogue of Paul Montague's collections; hardback notebook with pencil notes describing the Kanak culture of the Houaïlou Valley; three pen-and-ink drawings

OA5/2/16: Notebook containing several journal entries, sketches and notes

DOC 398: Twelve drawings of Kanak clubs

DOC 399: Draft manuscript of Montague's book: *Ethnological Notes from the Houaïlou Valley, New Caledonia*

DOC 400: Letter from Montague to Alfred Cort Haddon, dated August 1914

Objects

The Museum holds around 250 objects collected by Montague. The number is not precise as certain objects, like a group of sling stones for example, may be given a single number despite having numerous constituent parts, as is standard practice within many museums. In the table that follows, I have used Montague's handwritten catalogue as the starting point and then attempted to match items with records on the Museum's database. I have included his interpretation of the Kanak names for artefacts and also the places where he acquired these items, but additional information about their use can be found in the original document. For those wishing to start with the collection as it exists within the Museum today, a search can be undertaken using the online database (<http://collections.maa.cam.ac.uk>). Where there is some uncertainty regarding the match between the Museum's database and the handwritten catalogue, I have used a question mark.

It is helpful to note that Montague devised a phonetic method of transcribing Kanak names to convey a sense of their pronunciation. Here, I have reproduced the terms he used in the catalogue.

Object	Kanak name, as recorded	Montague's number	Museum number	Place collected
Sling	Bewi	1	1917.118.67	Nejua Quea [Nessakoéa], Houaïlou Valley
Sling	Bewi	2	1917.118.68	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Sling stone	Mewi	3	1917.118.71	Nejua Quea [Nessakoéa], Houaïlou Valley
Sling stones		4-7	1917.118.73 1917.118.74 1917.118.75 ?	Tribe of Ignambi, Oubatche
Sling stones	Mewi	8-17	?	Nejua Quea [Nessakoéa], Houaïlou Valley
Sling stone bag, used by a boy	Kai Mewi	18	1917.118.70	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Sling stone bag [Museum states the bag contains 32 stones but Montague does not mention them]	Kert Piu	19	1917.118.69	Tribe of Ignambi, Oubatche
Sling stones	Paik	20-22	1917.118.86 1917.118.87	Hienghène
Club	Quaiarru	23	1917.118.110	Nejua Quea [Nessakoéa], Houaïlou Valley
Club	Quaiarru	24	1917.118.111	Nejua Quea [Nessakoéa], Houaïlou Valley
Club		25	1917.118.112	Nandia [Nindiah], near Houaïlou
Walking stick		26	1917.118.113	Hienghène
Spears used in war of the finest quality	Djeu Ndaia	27-31	?	Nejua Quea [Nessakoéa], Houaïlou Valley
War spears	Djeu	32-40	1917.118.96 ?	Medoéa [Medaouya], Houaïlou River
Heavy war spears	Djeu Ndoi	41-44	1917.118.104 1917.118.105 1917.118.200 1917.118.201	Nejua Quea [Nessakoéa], Houaïlou Valley
Spears with decoration around the middle	Djeu Wandii	45-49	1917.118.184 1917.118.185 1917.118.186 1917.118.187 1917.118.188	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
War spears	Djeu	50-53	1917.118.189 1917.118.190 1917.118.191 1917.118.192	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Light war spears with decorated ends		54-56	?	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Short spears		57-60	?	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Spears decorated to be used in Quie dance	Djeu Wandii	61-62	Z5496 or 1917.118.135 1917.118.136	?
Spear	Nda	63	1917.118.193	Hienghène
Spear	Nda	64	1917.118.194	Hienghène
War spears decorated with flying-fox fur		65-66	1917.118.195 1917.118.196	?Hienghène

Object	Kanak name, as recorded	Montague's number	Museum number	Place collected
Large war spear decorated with flying-fox fur		67	1917.118.197	Oubatche
Spears		68-69	1917.118.137 1917.118.132A	?
Spears used in war of the finest quality	Djeu Ndaia	70-71	1917.118.198 1917.118.199	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Spear thrower	Nur	72	1917.118.106	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Spear thrower	Nur	73	1917.118.107	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Spear thrower	Nur	74	1917.118.108	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Spear thrower used in ceremonies	Hive	75	1917.118.138	Tribe of Tchamboue, Oubatche
Spear thrower		76	1917.118.109	Hienghène
Bow	Djinget	77	1917.118.88	Tribe of Ignambi, Oubatche
Arrows		78-80	1917.118.89A 1917.118.89B ?	Tribe of Ignambi, Oubatche
Stone for causing rain	Pe Qua	81	1917.118.149	?
Stones for causing rain	Pe Nde We Ne Va	82a-c	1917.118.150 1917.118.151 1917.118.152	Mi Family, Nandia [Nindiah], near Houaïlou
Stones for making taro grow	Pe Mwa	83-85	1917.118.153 1917.118.154 1917.118.155	Mi Family, Nandia [Nindiah], near Houaïlou
Stones for causing rain		86a-b	?	Mi Family, Nandia [Nindiah], near Houaïlou
Stone used to make one sexually attractive	Pe Mbo / Pe Gna	87a	1917.118.144	Nandia [Nindiah], near Houaïlou
Stone used to make one sexually attractive	Pe Mbo/Pe Gna	87b	1917.118.145	Nandia [Nindiah], near Houaïlou
Stone used to get a son	Pe Mbo	88	1917.118.142	Nejua Quea [Nessakoéa], Houaïlou Valley
Stone which endows a leader with precision when throwing a spear in battle	Pe Nur	89	1917.118.146	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Stone for making yams grow	Pe Mao	90	1917.118.156	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Stone for making yams grow	Pe Mao	91	1917.118.157	Nejua Quea [Nessakoéa], Houaïlou Valley
Stone for making yams grow	Pe Mao	92	1917.118.158	Medoea [Medaouya], Houaïlou River
Stone for making yams grow	Pe Mao	93	1917.118.159	Nandia [Nindiah], near Houaïlou
Stones for making yams grow	Pe Mao	94-95	1917.118.161 ?	Medoea [Medaouya], Houaïlou River
Stone for making yams grow	Pe Mao	96	?	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Stones for making taro grow	Pe Mwa	97-102	1917.118.162 Z 15281E ?remaining	Medoea [Medaouya], Houaïlou River Neja Quea [Nessakoéa]
Stone for catching eels	Pe Oua	103	1917.118.167	?
Stone for catching eels	Pe Oua	104	?1917.118.173	Medoea [Medaouya], Houaïlou River

Object	Kanak name, as recorded	Montague's number	Museum number	Place collected
Stones for catching eels	Pe Oua	105-6	1917.118.169 ?	Medoea [Medaouya], Houaïlou River
Stone for catching eels	Pe Oua	107	1917.118.170	Nejua Quea [Nessakoéa], Houaïlou Valley
Stone for catching eels	Pe Oua	108	1917.118.172	Buriari [?Boreare], Houaïlou Valley
Chief of the thunder stones	Caron Norro	109	1917.118.147	Nejua Quea [Nessakoéa], Houaïlou Valley
Stone to produce thunder	Pe Norro	110	1917.118.148	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Stone for catching eels	Pe Oua	111	1917.118.171	Nejua Quea [Nessakoéa], Houaïlou Valley
Stone for making yams grow	Pe Mao	112	1917.118.160	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Sultan fowl stone	Me Ga	113	1917.118.165	Tiawai-i family, Mbire Aru, near Nandia [Nindiah], Houaïlou Valley
Stones used to curse an enemy ('Red Devil stones')	Pe Doke	114	1917.118.143a-b	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Petroglyph		115	1917.118.141	Hienghène
Wooden carving, used as an oracle	Hwainangi	116	1917.118.140	Hienghène
Adze blade of serpentine	O-Kono	117	1917.118.39	Nandia [Nindiah], near Houaïlou
Adze blade of serpentine	O-Kono	118	1917.118.42	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Adze blade of serpentine	O-Kono	119	1917.118.40	?Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Adze blade of serpentine	O-Kono	120	1917.118.41	?Nejua Quea [Nessakoéa], Houaïlou Valley
Stone blade for making spears	Gee-Paik	121	1917.118.46	Oubatche
Stone blade for making spears	Gee-Paik	122	1917.118.47	Oubatche
Stone blade	O-Kono	123	?1917.118.44	Medoea [Medaouya], Houaïlou River
Stone blade		124	?1917.118.45	Canala
Half-finished serpentine blade for ceremonial adze (first stage)	Gee-O-Kono	125	1917.118.114	Nejua Quea [Nessakoéa], Houaïlou Valley
Half-finished serpentine blade for ceremonial adze (second stage)	Gee-O-Kono	126	1917.118.115	Nejua Quea [Nessakoéa], Houaïlou Valley
Half-finished serpentine blade for ceremonial adze (final stage)	Gee-O-Kono	127	1917.118.116	Nejua Quea [Nessakoéa], Houaïlou Valley
Knife of serpentine		128	1917.118.48	Hienghène
Spade	Zoi	129	1917.118.59	Nejua Quea [Nessakoéa], Houaïlou Valley
Tool for planting taro	Bioin	130	1917.118.61	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Digging stick	Kwiu	131	1917.118.60	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Barkcloth	Awa	132	1917.118.58a	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Barkcloth	Awa	133	1917.118.b	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Barkcloth	Mboe/Mber	134	1917.118.c	Houaïlou
Women's garment	Nerun Ne Awa	135	1917.118.13	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Women's garment worn during Quie ceremony	Nerun Ne Quie	136	1917.118.204	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley

Object	Kanak name, as recorded	Montague's number	Museum number	Place collected
Women's garment worn during Quie ceremony	Nerun Ne Quie	137	1917.118.202	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Women's garment worn during Quie ceremony	Nerun Ne Quie	138	?1917.118.14b	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Women's ceremonial garment	Pombeet	139	1917.118.133	Oubatche
Women's ceremonial garment	Pombeet	140	?	Oubatche
Garment worn by young girls at ceremonies	Hmanda	141	1917.118.134	Tribe of Tchamboue, Oubatche
Sleeping mat	Amur	142	1917.118.14	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Rain cloak	Derre	143	1917.118.15	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Basket for washing a root called Dima	Kelork	144	1917.118.23	Tribe of Ignambi, Oubatche
Basket for washing a root called Dima	Kelork	145	1917.118.25	?Oubatche
Basket for carrying shellfish	Kai	146	1917.118.24	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Flat basket used by men to carry items on a journey	Kert	147	1917.118.27	Oubatche
Basket	Kai	148	1917.118.26	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Gourd bottle	Kai [same word as for basket in Houaïlou region]	149	1917.118.30	Oubatche
Gourd bottle	Kai	150	1917.118.28	Oubatche
Gourd bottle		151	1917.118.29	?Hienghène
Gourd bottle in net		152	1917.118.31	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Barkcloth beater	Dulu	153	1917.118.50	Nejua Quea [Nessakoéa], Houaïlou Valley
Barkcloth beater	Dulu	154	1917.118.51	Nejua Quea [Nessakoéa], Houaïlou Valley
Barkcloth beater	Dulu	155	1917.118.53	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Barkcloth beater	Dulu	156	1917.118.54	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Barkcloth beater	Dulu	157	1917.118.55	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Barkcloth beater	Dulu	158	1917.118.56	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Barkcloth beater	Dulu	159	1917.118.52	Nejua Quea [Nessakoéa], Houaïlou Valley
Barkcloth beater	Baratt	160	1917.118.57	Oubatche
Adze used to make canoes	Gee Paik	161	1917.118.38	Oubatche
Needle used for sewing barkcloth walls in huts	Wa	162	1917.118.33	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Needle used for sewing barkcloth walls in huts		163	1917.118.34	Oubatche
Needle for thatching roofs		164	1917.118.32	Oubatche
Net for catching crayfish		165	1917.118.65	?Hienghène
Net for catching crayfish		166	1917.118.66	?Hienghène
Tool for making nets to catch mullet	Di-Zi-Ke	167	1917.118.62a	Nandia [Nindiah], near Houaïlou

Object	Kanak name, as recorded	Montague's number	Museum number	Place collected
Tool for making nets to catch crayfish	Ndi	168	1917.118.63	Oubatche
Tool for making nets to catch turtles		169	1917.118.64	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Food dish		170	1917.118.17	Oubatche
Flute	Hndor	171	1917.118.126	Oubatche
Flute	Hndor	172	1917.118.127	Oubatche
Flute with black wax around nodes	Hndor	173	1917.118.128	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Flute with black wax around nodes	Hndor	174	?Z 42983	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Bark percussion instrument		175	1917.118.129	Nandia [Nindiah], near Houaïlou
Bark percussion instrument		176	1917.118.130	Nandia [Nindiah], near Houaïlou
Conch trumpet		177	1917.118.125	Ne, Lower Houaïlou Valley
Fire stick		178	1917.118.16	Hienghène
Shell arm ornament	Aisu	179	?1917.118.10	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Shell arm ornament	Aisu	180-183	1917.118.12 1917.118.8 1917.118.9	Nejua Quea [Nessakoéa], Houaïlou Valley
Shell arm ornament	Aisu	184	1917.118.11	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Shell arm ornament	Guguit	185	?Z 31992	Oubatche
Belt of cowry shells	Nimu	186	1917.118.7	Nejua Quea [Nessakoéa], Houaïlou Valley
Charm worn around neck	Ndorro	187	1917.118.6	Oubatche
Scraper/yam knife with flying-fox fur cord	Tongoni	188	1917.118.37	Oubatche
Cooking pot	Tjipindji	189	1917.118.21b	Oubatche
Cooking pot	Tjipindji	190	1917.118.21a	Oubatche
Cooking pots		191-192	1917.118.20 1917.118.18	Hienghène
Pot		193	1917.118.22	Tanghène River, near Hienghène
Pot	Hgout	194	1917.118.19	Canala
Pot	Hgout	195	?Z 5494	Canala
Necklace of serpentine beads (with length of flying-fox fur cord – separate)	Mejir	196	1917.118.5	Oubatche
Currency made of lizard bones	Miu Bwarre	197	1917.118.117	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Currency of the lowest value ('white money')	Miu me	198	1917.118.118	Nandia [Nindiah], near Houaïlou
'Head of the money'	Go Miu	199	1917.118.119	Nandia [Nindiah], near Houaïlou
Container for currency	Coin	200	1917.118.121	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
Container for currency	Coin	201	?	?
Container for currency	Coin	202	?	Gondé, Houaïlou Valley
'Head of the money'	Go Miu	203	?1917.118.120	Nandia [Nindiah], near Houaïlou
Container for currency	Coin	204	?	Nandia [Nindiah], near Houaïlou

Object	Kanak name, as recorded	Montague's number	Museum number	Place collected
Pearlshell knife/scrapper	Hrarra	205	1917.118.36	Gondé, Houailou Valley
Pearlshell knife/scrapper	Hrarra	206-207	Z 31993 1917.118.35	Gondé, Houailou Valley
Comb	Mege	208	1917.118.4	Gondé, Houailou Valley
Comb with engraved face	Mege	209	1917.118.3	Gondé, Houailou Valley
Piece of quartz used for shaving		210	1917.118.2	Tribe of Tchamboue, Oubatche
Nuts used for blackening eyebrows		211	1917.118.1	Tribe of Tchamboue, Oubatche
Dancing mask	Thulou	212	1917.118.131	Hienghène
Message carrier		213	1917.118.139	Hienghène

Family archive

The family holds the only photograph of Paul Montague taken during his expedition to New Caledonia (see 'In the Field').

Publications

H. Campion, 'Odonata collected in New Caledonia by the late Mr. Paul D. Montague', *Annals and Magazine of Natural History*, 9th series, 8, 33-67.

Salonika, 1917

Natural History Museum, London

A collection of insects, including over 400 Lepidoptera, collected while Montague was serving in Salonika as part of the Royal Flying Corps, was donated to the Museum by his mother Amy after his death. They were accessioned with the registration number 1920-61.



At Nessakoéa, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

List of illustrations

Cover Images

Portrait of Paul Denys Montague, c.1912. Photographer unknown. Montague family archive, courtesy of Jennifer Estcourt.

Carved figure in the stores of the Musée de Nouvelle-Calédonie, Nouméa, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams. Courtesy of the Musée de Nouvelle-Calédonie.

The Houailou Valley, New Caledonia, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

Front Matter

Walking stick with head carved to resemble a French missionary, collected by Paul Montague in Hienghène, New Caledonia, 1914. Photograph by Gwil Owen. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (1917.118.113).

The Stone that Counts Everyone, New Caledonia, 1914. Photograph by Paul Montague. MAA Photo Collection: OAC.9.5_014. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge.

The Houailou Valley, New Caledonia

World War I Memorial, Houailou Valley, New Caledonia, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

Paul Montague's Journal

Archive boxes at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge. Photograph by Alison Clark. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge.

The generously moustached Carl von Hügel. Photographer and date unknown. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (Doc 141).

Paul Montague's expedition journal. Photograph by Gwil Owen. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge.

Scattered Things

The Maudslay Gallery at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, 2007. Photograph by Mark Adams.

The *Pacific Presences* team (left to right: Alison Murfitt, Lucie Carreau, Nicholas Thomas, Areta Wilkinson, Erna Lilje) working in the stores at the Powell Cotton Museum, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

Figures from Vanuatu and Solomon Islands in the stores of the Ethnologisches Museum, Dahlem, Berlin, 2015. Photograph by Mark Adams.

Drawing of a carved Kanak door post by Paul Montague, 1914. Photograph by Gwil Owen. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge.

Kanak men in the Houailou Valley, New Caledonia, 1914. Photograph by Paul Montague, 1914. MAA Photo Collection: P.3993, © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge.

Sarigol World War I Military Cemetery, Greece, 2017. Photograph by Julie Adams.

François Wadra and Julie Adams in the stores at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, 2013. Photograph by Mark Adams.

A carved wooden figure, collected by Paul Montague in Oubatche, New Caledonia, 1914. Montague notes that this figure was known as an *Hwainangi*. It was placed upright during a ceremony at which a chief spoke about the prosperity of the tribe. If the figure fell over, this was taken as a good sign. However, if the figure remained standing, it was seen as a bad omen. Photograph by Gwil Owen. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (1917.118.140).

Zoe and Paul Montague, c.1893. Photographer unknown. Montague family archive, courtesy of Jennifer Estcourt.

Paul Montague's niece, Jennifer Estcourt, and her daughter, Hilary Warren, with a lute Paul made shortly before his death, Devon, 2017. Photograph by Mark Adams.

The Masks that Misbehaved

A mask acquired by Paul Montague in Hienghène, New Caledonia, in 1914. Photograph by Gwil Owen. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (1917.118.131).

The old entrance to the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge. Photograph by Mark Adams.

The Maudslay Gallery at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, University of Cambridge. Photograph by Jocelyne Dudding. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge.

Baron Anatole von Hügel, founding curator of the Cambridge Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Portrait by P. Voluzan, 1899-1900, oil on canvas. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (2013.14).

Group of magic stones used to encourage the growth of the yam crops, collected by Paul Montague in the Houailou Valley, New Caledonia in 1914. Photograph by Gwil Owen. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge.

First entry in Paul Montague's catalogue of his collection. Photograph by Gwil Owen. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge.

Kanak carved roof finial and door posts photographed by Paul Montague in New Caledonia in 1914. They are not in the collections in Cambridge so were not collected by him. MAA Photo Collection P.70305. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge.

The *thulou* mask acquired by Paul Montague in Hienghène, New Caledonia, in 1914, being photographed by Gwil Owen at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, in 2014. Photograph by Julie Adams.

The Collecting Instinct

Leopold Agar Denys Montague, in spats, at home in Devon. Photographer and date unknown. Montague family archive, courtesy of Jennifer Estcourt.

Programme from a Montague family concert, 1902. Montague family archive, courtesy of Jennifer Estcourt.

Leopold and Amy Montague, around the time of their marriage in 1886. Photograph by E. Denney & Company, Exeter. Montague family archive, courtesy of Jennifer Estcourt.

A page from Leopold Montague's 1921 publication, *Weapons and Implements of Savage Races*, showing a shield collected by Paul in Onslow, Western Australia and now in the collections of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter.

Letter from Leopold Montague to Baron Anatole von Hügel, dated 15 November 1918. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge.

Questions of Science

Lapwing eggs collected and painted by Paul Montague in 1909. Photograph by Mark Adams, 2017.

A swan on its nest. Photograph by David Montague, c.1910. Montague family archive, courtesy of Susan Blacker.

Lionel Walter Rothschild (1868-1937) and his zebra-drawn carriage, Photographer and date unknown. © Natural History Museum Picture Library: 2047.

Varieties of British Birds' Eggs by P.D. Montague. Photograph by Mark Adams, 2017.

Work of Each for Weal of All

Seeing the world differently – a Bedales' gym class c.1908 Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Bedales School.

Learning to dance at Bedales, c.1909. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Bedales School.

Zoe and Paul Montague, c.1896. Photographer unknown. Montague family archive, courtesy of Jennifer Estcourt.

Letter written by Paul Montague to his mother Amy, c.1901. Montague family archive, courtesy of Jennifer Estcourt.

Front cover of the record of the Old Bedalians' Summer Camp, 1909. Courtesy of Bedales School.

Pauly Montague in his Bedales school uniform. Photographer and date unknown. Montague family archive, courtesy of Jennifer Estcourt.

The Severed Photograph

A photograph belonging to Pauly Montague that has been cut in two. Photographer and date unknown, c.1910. Montague family archive, courtesy of Susan Blacker.

Susan Blacker, Paul Montague's niece, holding a lute made by Paul, on her visit to Cambridge in January 2015. Photograph by Julie Adams.

A photograph belonging to Pauly Montague which shows a group of Old Bedalians on a climbing trip to the Lake District. Photographer and date unknown.

Noël Olivier, c.1909. Photographer unknown.

Dining-Room Tea

Noël Olivier, Maitland Radford, Virginia Stephen [Woolf] and Rupert Brooke at the Clifford Bridge Camp, 1911. Photographer unknown. © National Portrait Gallery (NPG 13124).

Women Bathing by Gwen Raverat, 1920. 15cm x 15cm © The Trustees of the British Museum (1924,0209.122).

Penton – the Montague family home, c.1950. Photograph courtesy of Roy and Anne Webber.

June Alexander, Paul Montague's niece, walking in the grounds of Penton in August 2015. Photograph by Julie Adams.

Penton in 2015. Photograph by Julie Adams.

A Spectacled Hare Wallaby

A spectacled hare wallaby collected by Paul Montague on 8 August 1912 on Hermite Island, Montebellos Group, Western Australia, and now in the collections of the Museum of Zoology, Cambridge. Photograph by Rachel Howie.

Paul's Hermite Island camp, 1912. Photograph by Paul Montague. Montague family archive, courtesy of Susan Blacker.

Osprey chicks on the nest, Tremouille Island, 1912. Photograph by Paul Montague. Montague family archive, courtesy of Susan Blacker.

A catfish collected by Paul Montague in the Montebello Islands. Its accession was recorded in the Western Australian Museum's 'Day-Book for Fishes' by W.B. Alexander in 1913. Photograph by Julie Adams, courtesy of the Western Australian Museum, 2018.

A view in the Montebello Islands, 1912. Photograph by Paul Montague. In 1952, the islands were used by the British government to test atomic weapons. Montague family archive, courtesy of Susan Blacker.

A dish described as a *murda murda*, presented to Paul Montague by the Western Australian Museum in recognition of his work on the Montebello Islands. Now in the collections of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter. Photograph courtesy of Tony Eccles. © RAAM.

A spectacled hare wallaby collected by Paul Montague and now in the collections of the Western Australian Museum. Photograph by Julie Adams, courtesy of the Western Australian Museum, 2018.

In the Field

Paul Montague emerging from his tent, in the field, New Caledonia, 1914. Photographer unknown. Montague family archive, courtesy of Susan Blacker.

Man of New Caledonia by William Hodges, May 1773. This Kanak chief is wearing a headdress known as a *tidi* with a spear thrower tucked into its fibres. © National Library of Australia.

A blade from a ceremonial axe (*gee o-kono*), in the process of being polished and drilled for mounting. Collected by Paul Montague in the Houailou Valley in 1914. Photograph by Gwil Owen. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (Z6863).

Ceremonial axes drawn by Paul Montague c.1915. This is the type of axe that Bruni d'Entrecasteaux and his crew called a *nbouet* and asserted was used to cut human flesh. Photograph by Gwil Owen. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge.

Lifou Boys

'Lifou boys' – Upiko and Nanine, who were employed by Paul Montague and worked with him collecting zoological specimens, 1914. Photograph by Paul Montague.

© Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (P.3994.ACH1).

New Caledonia's reef from the air, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

'View of typical *niaouli* country', New Caledonia, 1914. Photograph by Paul Montague.

© Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (OAC.9.5_021).

Robert Harold Compton, 'Pongo' (far right), in New Caledonia, 1914. Photograph by Paul Montague. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (P.70308.ACH2).

Notes and Queries

The 'Colour Charts' published in the first edition of *Notes and Queries on Anthropology: For the use of travellers and residents in uncivilized lands*, 1874.

A cooking pot collected by Paul Montague in Oubatche, New Caledonia in 1914.

He notes that this type of pot was made by women and used for steaming taro, yams and bananas. Photograph by Gwil Owen. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (1917.118.21b).

Charles Darwin by John Collier, 1883. A copy of a work made in 1881. Oil on canvas.

© National Portrait Gallery (NPG 1024).

A carved roof finial photographed by Paul Montague in Gondé, 1914. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (P.4002.ACH1).

The Deardorff Camera

The Deardorff camera owned by Mark Adams, on location in New Caledonia, 2016. Photograph by Julie Adams.

Mark Adams at work in Berlin, 2015. Photograph by Julie Adams.

Sharing images: 'digital repatriation' with elders at Bourail, New Caledonia, 2016. On the right are François Wadra, Yamel Euritein and Edmond Saumé of the Musée de Nouvelle-Calédonie. Photograph by Mark Adams.

On the Col des Roussettes, Houailou Valley, New Caledonia, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

The site of the hotel owned by Maria and Georges Voisin, near Gondé, Houailou Valley, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

Mark Adams at work near Gondé, Houailou Valley, 2016. Photograph by Julie Adams.

At Gondé

A high-ranking chief and his wife at the village of Gondé, 1914. Photograph by Paul Montague. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (P.4001.ACH1).

Shell arm ornaments with flying-fox fur cords collected by Paul Montague at Gondé in 1914. He recorded that they were known as *aisu* in the local language and were worn by men and women on the upper left arm. Photograph by Gwil Owen © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (Z6917 & Z6918).

The hut where the men of Gondé awaited our arrival in 2016. Photograph by Julie Adams.

A hair comb made from bamboo and engraved with the face of a European, collected by Paul Montague at Gondé in 1914. Photograph by Gwil Owen. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (1917.118.3).

The first site of Christian worship in Gondé, built around 1896. Several years later, a chapel was built a short distance away. Photograph by Mark Adams, 2016.

Visiting the chapel and a memorial to the first Gondé chiefs to convert to Christianity, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

The unexpected lunch at Gondé, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

François Wadra in the British Library, London, 2013, listening to the sound recordings made by Paul Montague in Gondé a century earlier. Photograph by Julie Adams.

Cursing the Kaiser

Jeanne and Maurice Leenhardt, French missionaries in New Caledonia in the early twentieth century. Photographer unknown. Image courtesy of Daniel Proulx.

Do Neva, the mission school established by the Leenhardts in the Houaïlou Valley, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

François Wadra reliving his youth at the Do Neva school, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

The chapel at Gondé, the village where Jeanne and Maurice first appreciated the Kanak aesthetic, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

The Winged Victory of Samothrace in the galleries of the Louvre. Jeanne's father sent a cast of this figure from Paris to New Caledonia as a gift to his daughter. It witnessed the infamous 'cursing of the Kaiser'. © Musée du Louvre, Dist. RMN-Grand Palais / Philippe Fuzeau.

A Belt of Cowry Shells

A group of men and a chief at the village of Nessakoéa in the Houaïlou Valley, 1914. The chief wears a belt made from cowry shells strung on to flying-fox fur cord. Photograph by Paul Montague. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (P.3999.ACH.1).

Paul Laffay, the French missionary who worked alongside Maurice Leenhardt and cursed the Kaiser with Paul Montague. Laffay was killed in the fighting at Monastir in 1917. © Défap-Service Protestant de Mission, Paris.

Memorial to Maurice Leenhardt on the road to Do Neva, 2016. His wife Jeanne is not remembered here. Photograph by Mark Adams.

A belt of cowry shells, fit for a chief. Collected by Paul Montague in Nessakoéa in 1914. Photograph by Gwil Owen. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (Z 6914).

Emmanuel Kasarhérou visiting the stores in Cambridge to research Paul Montague's collection, 2014. Emmanuel's family are from the village of Nessakoéa. Photograph by Alison Clark.

At Nessakoéa

Figure of a carved wooden chief from the village of Nessakoéa, now in the stores of the Musée de Nouvelle-Calédonie, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

Looking at Montague's field photos at Nessakoéa, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

At the village of Nessakoéa with Djeine, Daniel Bonwé, Brenda, Lucien, Julie Adams, Joel Nei, Edmond Saumé, François Wadra, Kapoipa Kasarhérou and Yamel Euritein, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

The basket of stones brought by Joel Nei to show to the group at Nessakoéa, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

During the passing round of the stones, Djeine holds a precious greenstone axe blade, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

Magic Stones

François Wadra at work in the stores in Cambridge, 2013. Photograph by Mark Adams.

The *Rerha Paya*, or 'house post' stone near Ai, Houailou Valley, New Caledonia, 1914. Photograph by Paul Montague. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (OAC.9.5_17).

Taro stones collected by Paul Montague in New Caledonia in 1914. Photograph by Gwil Owen. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge.

Laying out the magic stones in the stores in Cambridge, 2013. Photograph by Mark Adams.

The Fate of Mats

Sleeping mat, *amur* (detail), collected by Paul Montague in the village of Gondé in August 1914. Photograph by Josh Murfitt. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (1917.118.14).

Melanie Rolland from Bourail, New Caledonia, with some of her crocheted creations, 2016. Photograph by Julie Adams.

Two baskets collected by Paul Montague. The one on the left has a flying-fox fur cord and would have been used to carry important items on a journey. Photograph by Gwil Owen. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (Z 6988 & Z 10508).

A crocheted bag made by Melanie Rolland, purchased for the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge in 2016. Photograph by Josh Murfitt. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge.

Rolling out the *amur* (sleeping mat) in the galleries in Cambridge in 2013. Photograph by Julie Adams.

Madame Pule Siman, an expert weaver from the island of Lifou, who made the mat now in the British Museum, 2009. Photograph by Julie Adams.

Haddon the Headhunter

Portrait of Alfred Cort Haddon, 'The Headhunter', by Philip Alexius de Laszlo, 1925.

Courtesy of The Haddon Library, University of Cambridge.

Letter from Paul Montague to Alfred Cort Haddon, dated 10 August 1914. Found in Montague's papers in the archives of the Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology, Cambridge. Photograph by Julie Adams, 2014.

The Cambridge expedition to the Torres Strait Islands, 1898. Alfred Cort Haddon, seated centre, is surrounded by the other members of the expedition. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (N.23035.ACH2).

Zugubal dance group from the Torres Strait Islands visiting the Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology, Cambridge, in June 2015. Photograph by Jocelyne Dudding. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge.

'Took 5 Skulls. Returned to Camp'

François Wadra visiting the Duckworth Laboratory, Cambridge, in 2014. Photograph by Julie Adams.

A view of irrigated terraces planted with taro crops, near the village of Gondé, 1914. Photograph by Paul Montague. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (OAC.9.5_012-2).

A 'taboo' marker, used to indicate a site which should not be entered, in the Houaïlou Valley, 1914. Photograph by Paul Montague or Harold Compton. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (P.3991.ACH1).

A section from a string of Kanak currency, a valuable item presented and exchanged at important ceremonies such as weddings. Made from flying-fox fur, plant fibres, red wool, carved sections of pearl shell and bone. Collected by Paul Montague in Nandia [Nindiah] in 1914. Photograph by Gwil Owen. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (1917.118.120).

Label written by Paul Montague documenting one of the skulls he collected in New Caledonia in 1914, now held in the Duckworth Laboratory, Cambridge. Photograph by Julie Adams, 2014.

Skulls on the ledge of a cave, 1914. Photograph by Paul Montague. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (P.3998.ACH1).

A Foreign Field

Felix David Montague, who died at the Battle of Neuve Chapelle on 10 March 1915, aged 20. Photographer and date unknown. Montague family archive, courtesy of Susan Blacker.

Greenstone necklace, known as a *mejir*. These were worn by women and were highly valued, including by Europeans, who avidly acquired them. Collected by Paul Montague in Oubatche on 9 September 1914. Photograph by Gwil Owen. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (Z 6923).

An old man standing in a field of yams, near the village of Gondé, 1914. Photograph by Paul Montague. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (OAC.9.5_010).

Two of the fallen Allied troops at Neuve Chapelle, 10 March 1915. Photographer unknown. © IWM (Q.67854).

The Rue-Petillon Military Cemetery at Fleurbaix, France, where David Montague was buried some ten years after his death. Photographer and date unknown. Courtesy of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Such Terrible Things

Sketches found in the pages of Paul Montague's notebooks in the archives at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge. Photograph by Julie Adams, 2013.

© Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge.

Rupert Chawner Brooke, 1913. Print made by Emery Walker, after Sherril Schell.

© The Trustees of the British Museum (1915,0729.2).

'Poor passionate Paul'. Paul Montague, c.1913. Photographer unknown. Montague family archive, courtesy of Jennifer Estcourt.

Just Off

The 'Just off' postcard sent by Paul to his mother Amy just before sailing for Egypt. Montague family archive, courtesy of Jennifer Estcourt.

Paul Montague (right) in uniform on a Real Photographic Post Card. Montague family archive, courtesy of Jennifer Estcourt.

Training to be a pilot in the Royal Flying Corps, c.1915. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of the RAF Museum.

Cicada at Plaine des Lacs, New Caledonia, 1914. Photograph by Paul Montague.

© Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, OAC.9.5_19.

The Drowned Lute

Paul Montague and his gittern in a Sydney photographic studio, 1913. Photographer unknown. Montague family archive, courtesy of Jennifer Estcourt.

A musical instrument known as a *hndor*, collected by Paul Montague in Gondé. Photograph by Gwil Owen. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (1917.118.128).

Sketches in Paul Montague's New Caledonian journal of the lute he planned to make upon his return to England. Photograph by Julie Adams, 2013. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge.

The drowned lute being played by Paul in Egypt, prior to his departure for Salonika. Photographer unknown. Montague family archive, courtesy of Jennifer Estcourt.

Weather to Fly

Trainee pilots of the Royal Flying Corps, Egypt, 1916. Amy Montague has 'labelled' Paul, second from the right. Photographer unknown. Montague family archive, courtesy of Susan Blacker.

Some of the New Caledonian whistlers collected by Paul Montague and now in the collections of the American Museum of Natural History, New York. Photograph by Julie Adams, 2018.

Label documenting the complex story of migration that these birds have undertaken. Photograph by Julie Adams, 2018.

The birds carefully packed by Robert Cushman Murphy and his team, ready for transportation from Tring Museum to the American Museum of Natural History in 1932. Photograph by Robert Cushman Murphy. © Natural History Museum Picture Library (5973).

The Forgotten Front

A view in 'Salonika', 2015. In World War I, the frontline ran from Albania to the mouth of the River Struma in Greece. Photograph by Julie Adams.

Members of the Salonika battlefield tour group disembark after a gruelling tractor ride, 2015. Photograph by Julie Adams.

Alan Wakefield, Chairman of the Salonika Campaign Society, setting the scene, 2015. Photograph by Julie Adams.

A littered landscape: walking through a former battlefield in Salonika with shot everywhere underneath, 2015. Photograph by Julie Adams.

The 'beastly ladder' as drawn by Paul Montague in a letter to his sister Ruth in 1917. Photograph by Julie Adams, 2015.

The *Pé Doké*, or red devil stones, collected by Paul Montague in Gondé in November 1914. Originally taken from a cave containing skulls near Canala, these stones were known to be extremely dangerous. Photograph by Josh Murfitt. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (Z 6951).

The Aeroplane Competition

Paul Montague's crashed plane, 29 October 1917. His body lies in front of the aircraft and is being watched over by a German soldier. Photograph by Emile Paquot. © IWM (Q110611).

A single-seater BE12 aircraft of the type being flown in Salonika in World War I. Photographer unknown. © IWM (Q63795).

A butterfly resting on a grave in a military cemetery in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, 2015. Photograph by Julie Adams.

The cross left in remembrance of Paul Montague in the field where he died, 2015. Photograph by Julie Adams.

Martin Gibson, Romeo Drobarov and Alan Wakefield discussing the site of Paul Montague's fatal crash, 2015. Photograph by Julie Adams.

A fragment from a pot, discarded by looters and found in the field where Paul Montague crashed. Photograph by Josh Murfitt.

The Stone that Wept

The stone that wept. A petroglyph collected by Paul Montague in Hienghène, October 1914. Photograph by Gwil Owen. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (1917.118.141).

Kanak infantrymen during World War I. Photographer unknown. © Archives de Nouvelle-Calédonie.

The *Caron Norro* or Chief of the Thunder Stones, collected by Paul Montague in Nessakoéa in 1914. Photograph by Gwil Owen. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (1917.118.147).

The Bonhomme rock formation at La Roche Percée beach, near Bourail, New Caledonia, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

Bourail World War II New Zealand Military Cemetery, New Caledonia, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

Enveloped cross motifs on a petroglyph in New Caledonia, 1914. Photograph by Paul Montague. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (P.70309).

Memorial to the Missing

The Doiran Memorial to the Missing, Greece, near the border with Macedonia, 2017. Photograph by Julie Adams.

The stone lions, one snarling, designed by Sir Robert Lorimer. The Doiran Memorial, Greece, 2015. Photograph by Julie Adams.

German and Bulgarian troops examining Montague's plane, October 1917. Photograph possibly by Ernst Wilhelm Reinhold © IWM (HU90669).

Missing in action – Upiko and Nanine, 1914. Photograph by Paul Montague. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (P.3992.ACH1).

A white iris at the Memorial to the Missing, 2015. Photograph by Julie Adams.

In Cambridge

War memorial dedicated to 'the men of Cambridgeshire, the Isle of Ely, the Borough and University of Cambridge who served in the Great War 1914-1919 and in the World War 1939-1945'. Photograph by Gwil Owen, 2014.

Reveille by Sir Stanley Spencer, 1929, oil on canvas. Sandham Memorial Chapel, Hampshire. © The National Trust (NT790186 © The Estate of Stanley Spencer/Bridgeman Images).

Ferenc Békássy, an Old Bedalian and Cambridge graduate who was killed in the war, is remembered separately in King's College Chapel to the friends who meant so much to him. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Bedales School.

The Memorial Library at Bedales School, built in 1921. Commissioned by headmaster John Haden Badley and designed by Ernest Gimson. Photograph by Julie Adams, 2016.

Roll of honour for the fallen of World War I in the chapel at Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge, 2015. Photograph by Mark Adams.

Object Lessons

Paul Montague's drawing of a Kanak chief's hut, known as a *case*. This drawing is one of three annotated illustrations he made to use in the book he hoped to publish. Photograph by Gwil Owen. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge.

One of the 'remarkably fine serpentine adze heads' collected by Paul Montague and mentioned in the Museum's annual report for 1917. Photograph by Gwil Owen. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (Z 6861).

The problem with labels: an example attached to a Kanak skirt, Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, 2013. Photograph by Julie Adams. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (Z 5459).

Examining some of the Kanak stones held in the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge, in 2013. Photograph by Julie Adams.

The Burned Letters

Jennifer Estcourt, her husband Noel, daughter Hilary and Hilary's children visiting Cambridge in 2014. Photograph by Julie Adams.

Section of fragile barkcloth, known in the Houaïlou Valley as *awa*, collected by Paul Montague in Gondé in August 1914. Photograph by Gwil Owen. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (1917.118.58a).

Group of barkcloth beaters, known in the Houaïlou Valley as *dulu*, collected by Paul Montague in Gondé and Nessakoéa in 1914. Photograph by Gwil Owen. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge.

A sketch in the pages of Paul Montague's notebooks in the archives in Cambridge. Photograph by Julie Adams, 2014.

The label written by Amy Montague and tied to Paul's lute when it was returned to her after his death. Photograph by Mark Adams, 2017.

Searching for Paul Montague's grave, Salonika, 2017. Photograph by Julie Adams.

Watching, Salonika, 2017. Photograph by Julie Adams.

The Shadow Clubs

The 'Montague Moth' collected in the Montebello Islands and now in the stores of the Western Australian Museum, 2018. Photograph by Julie Adams.

Leopold Agar Denys Montague. Photograph by Lafayette, 1926. © National Portrait Gallery (NPG x48831).

Amy Julia Mary Montague. Photograph by E. Denney & Co's Fine Art Studio. Date unknown.

The shadow clubs. The staircase at Penton, where Leopold's collections were displayed for many years. Photographer and date unknown. Courtesy of Roy Webber.

2015.1

Birdman of Salonika by Rebecca Jewell, 2014. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (2015.1).

Detail from Rebecca Jewell's *Birdman of Salonika*. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (2015.1).

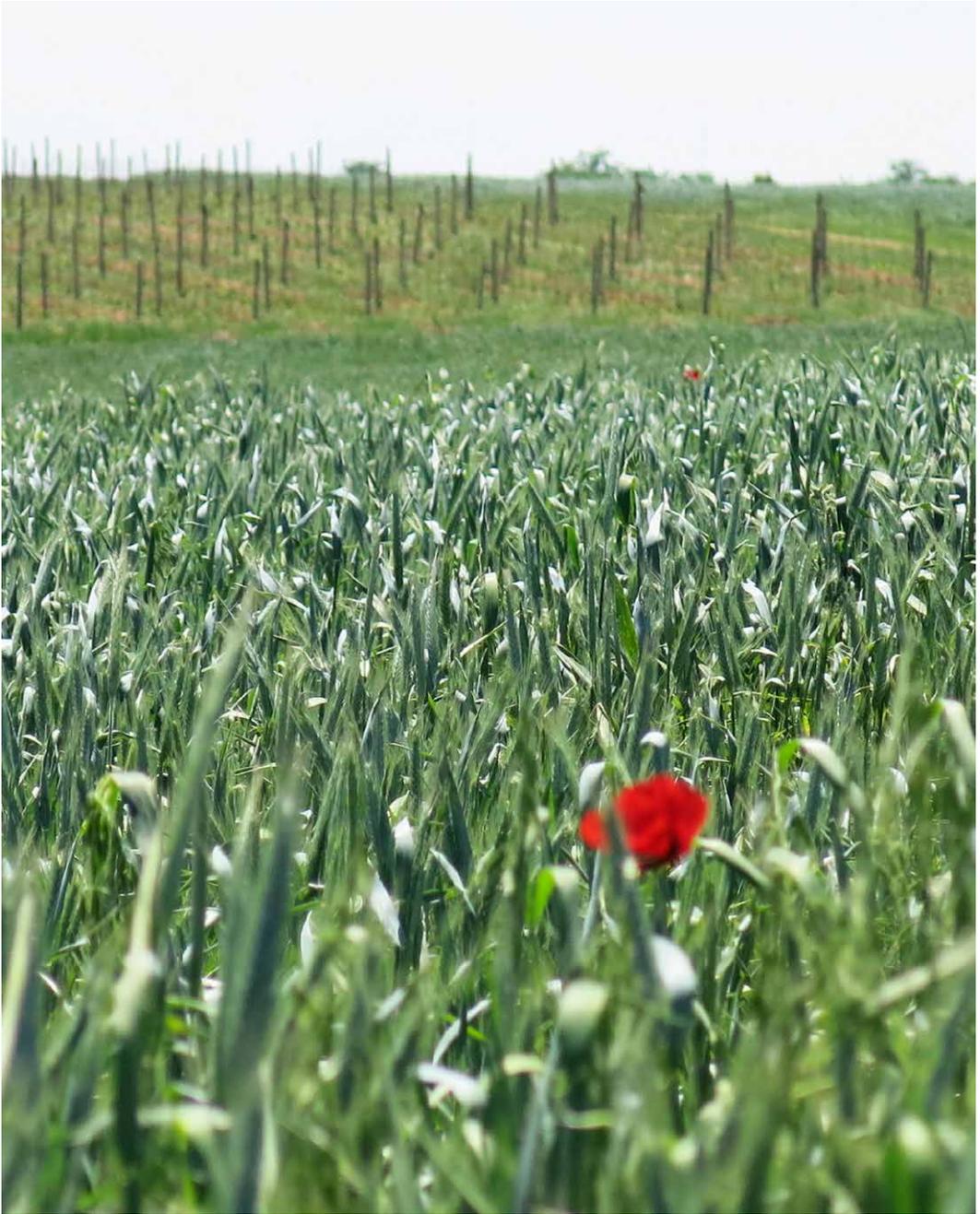
Stone Charms of New Caledonia by Rebecca Jewell, 2009. This image shows François Wadra's stone which would have the power to 'ensure success in finding the oldest archaeological site in New Caledonia'.

End matter

Club known as a *Quaiarru* collected by Paul Montague in Nessakoéa in 1914. Photograph by Gwil Owen. © Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge (1917.118.111).

At Nessakoéa, 2016. Photograph by Mark Adams.

In Salonika, 2015. Photograph by Julie Adams.



In Salonika, 2015. Photograph by Julie Adams.

Notes

Paul Montague's Journal

1. See Michel Naepels, *Conjurer la guerre violence et pouvoir à Houaïlou, Nouvelle-Calédonie* (Paris: Éditions de l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2013), for a brief discussion of Paul Montague's fieldwork.
2. Kanak is the preferred term used to describe the Indigenous inhabitants of New Caledonia. New Caledonia, which is made up of a main island – the Grande Terre – the Loyalty Islands and the Isle of Pines, became a French colony in 1853. Significant Kanak resistance to French rule has been an ever-present aspect of its history. In 2018, a referendum on independence resulted in New Caledonia voting to remain part of France. Today, approximately 39% of the overall population is Kanak.
3. Nicholas Thomas, 'The museum as method', *Museum Anthropology* 33 (2010), 6–10. See also 'The museum as method (revisited)' in Philipp Schorch and Conal McCarthy (eds), *Curatopia: Museums and the Future of Curatorship* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019), 19–28.

Scattered Things

1. National Museum Directors' Conference: *Too Much Stuff? Disposal from Museums* (United Kingdom: 2003), accessed from www.nationalmuseums.org.uk.
2. I refer specifically to the situation in European museums, due to their histories of holding large collections from countries colonised by the European empires.
3. Nicholas Thomas, 'The museum as method' (2010), 6.
4. *Pacific Presences: Oceanic Art and European Museums* was a project funded by the European Research Council (funding number: 324146) from 2013 to 2018. A number of publications relating to the project can be found at www.sidestone.com/books/?q=pacificpresences. In particular, *Pacific Presences Volume 2* (Leiden: Sidestone, 2018), gives an overview of the range of research undertaken.
5. Larissa Förster, Iris Edenheiser and Sarah Fründt, *A conference on postcolonial provenance research: Introduction to the conference anthology*, translated from a German anthology of contributions to the conference: 'Provenienzforschung in ethnologischen Sammlungen der Kolonialzeit' [Provenance research on ethnographic collections from the colonial era] held on 7–8 April 2017, organised by the Working Group on Museums of the German Anthropological Association and the Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich.
6. See Chris Gosden, Frances Larson and Alison Petch, *Knowing Things: Exploring the Collections at the Pitt Rivers Museum, 1884–1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), for the findings of a project which looked at the provenance of 19th and early 20th century collections.

7. Paul Montague, *Ethnological Notes from the Houaïlou Valley, New Caledonia*, unpublished manuscript (n.d.).
8. Here, I am thinking of Michael Rothberg's *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2009), in which he argues that awareness of one historical event enables greater attentiveness to others.
9. François Wadra came to London as part of the British Museum's *Melanesian Art Project*, which was funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (2005–2010) and led by Lissant Bolton and Nicholas Thomas. An essay discussing the exhibition mounted on Lifou can be found in the project's summative publication: Julie Adams, 'Echoes of the past: Images of objects on the Loyalty Islands' in Lissant Bolton, Nicholas Thomas, Elizabeth Bonshek, Julie Adams and Ben Burt (eds), *Melanesia: Art and Encounter* (London: The British Museum Press, 2013), 318–321.
10. See Eelco Runia, 'Presence' in *History and Theory* 45 (2006), for a consideration of the interplay between the past and the present.
11. The phrase 'scattered things' was used in the life writing of John Aubrey in the 1670s and 1680s. His work is discussed by Hermione Lee in *Biography: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 36–38.
12. For a critique of the 'naturalism of the collection' see Nicholas Thomas, *The Return of Curiosity: What Museums are Good For in the 21st Century* (London: Reaktion Books, 2016).
13. Edward Burnett Tylor, who was appointed Professor of Anthropology at Oxford in 1895, espoused a taxonomic approach to studying culture in his 1871 work *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Art, and Custom* (London: J. Murray).
14. Mark Adams and I are not related. See <https://ocula.com/artists/mark-adams> for a brief biography and examples of his work.
15. Jay Prosser, *Light in the Dark Room: Photography and Loss* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005), 8.

The Masks that Misbehaved

1. See Mark Elliott and Nicholas Thomas (eds), *Gifts and Discoveries: The Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, Cambridge* (London: Scala, 2011), for an overview of the history and collections of the Museum.
2. Alison Hingston Quiggin, *Haddon the Head Hunter: A Short Sketch of the Life of A.C. Haddon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1942).
3. Bronisław Malinowski, *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1948), 50.
4. Alfred Cort Haddon, *Magic and Fetishism* (London: Archibald Constable & Co., 1906).
5. Paul Montague, 'Chapter 6: Religion and magic of the natives of the Houaïlou Valley', in *Ethnological Notes from the Houaïlou Valley, New Caledonia*, unpublished manuscript (n.d.), 36.
6. James Clifford, *Person and Myth: Maurice Leenhardt in the Melanesian World* (Duke University Press, Durham and London, 1992 [1982]), 46.
7. Paul Montague, 'Introduction', in *Ethnological Notes from the Houaïlou Valley, New Caledonia*, 2.

8. Fritz Sarasin, *La Nouvelle-Calédonie et les îles Loyalty, Souvenirs de Voyage d'un Naturaliste* (Paris: Fischbacher, 1917), 194–201.
9. Jean-Marie Tjibaou used the phrase 'scattered heritage', cited in Emmanuel Kasarhérou, 'The inventory of Kanak collections in Europe: Stolen heritage or common heritage to revive?' in Sandra Ferracuti, Elisabetta Frasca, Vito Lattanzi (eds), *Beyond Modernity: Do Ethnography Museums Need Ethnography?* (Rome: Espera – Libreria Archeologica, 2013), 105.

The Collecting Instinct

1. Heidi Egginton, 'In quest of the antique: *The Bazaar, Exchange and Mart* and the democratization of collecting, 1926–42' in *Twentieth Century British History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).
2. Leopold Agar Denys Montague, *Weapons and Implements of Savage Races: Australasia, Oceania and Africa* (London: The Bazaar, Exchange & Mart Office, 1921), 1–2.

Questions of Science

1. For an overview of the Rothschild Collection see: www.nhm.ac.uk/our-science/departments-and-staff/library-and-archives/collections/rothschild-collection.html (accessed 06/04/2020).

Work of Each for Weal of All

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2. Roy Wake and Pennie Denton, *Bedales School: The First Hundred Years* (London: Haggerston Press, 1993), 34.
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4. See Emmanuel Kasarhérou and Roger Boulay (eds) 'La colonie et son imagerie: l'humiliation', in *Kanak Lart est une parole* (Paris: Actes Sud, 2013), 189–217.
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Haddon the Headhunter

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Shadow Clubs

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1. See www.rebeccajewell.com for more information.
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MUSEUM, MAGIC, MEMORY

In 2012, a chance encounter between a curator and a century-old expedition journal occurred in the archives of a Cambridge museum. The journal was written by a young anthropologist, Paul Denys Montague, and recorded his travels in the South Pacific Islands of New Caledonia in 1914, where he became fascinated with the culture of the local Kanak people. Returning to Cambridge at the outbreak of World War One, Montague deposited his journal and a collection of Kanak objects in the Museum of Archaeology & Anthropology and left to join the Royal Flying Corps. A talented artist, musician and member of Rupert Brooke's 'Neo-pagan' set, his promising career was cut short when his plane was shot down in Salonika in 1917.

Montague's research and the objects he collected lay untouched for a century. Their rediscovery brought these materials and the histories they contained to new life, opening up a range of contemporary connections between past and present, Britain and New Caledonia, Europeans and Kanak, the idea of the museum and the art of curation.

Museum, Magic, Memory explores the complex encounters between history, biography, museology and collecting that characterise the work of curation in the twenty-first century.

