



Detail of painted illustrations on pith. Export ware, Guangzhou, China, Qing Dynasty, 19th century. Rebecca Marr © Stromness Museum

# East Asian Collections in Scottish Museums Highlands and Islands

## Highlands and Islands

(Argyll and Bute, Eilean Siar, Highland, Orkney, Shetland)

Dingwall Museum

Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, Highlife Highland

Nairn Museum

Shetland Museum and Archives

Stromness Museum, Orkney

## Dingwall Museum

**Location of Collections**      Town House  
High Street  
Dingwall  
Ross-shire IV15 9RY

### Published Information

Online collections:      Not currently available

*A Wider World* Collections Review (1994):      Not surveyed

### Collection Overview

The museum has 4 East Asian artefacts in its collection.

#### China

No known Chinese artefacts.

#### Japan

4 objects, including one kimono and three swords (possibly Japanese).

#### Korea

No known Korean artefacts.

# Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, Highlife Highland

**Location of Collections**      Castle Wynd  
Inverness  
IV2 3EB

## Published Information

Online collections:      Not currently available

*A Wider World* Collections Review (1994): 20 objects

## Collection Overview

The 'ethnographic' collections are believed to have been transferred to National Museums Scotland in the 1980s. However, c.11 items of East Asian origin remain in the collection, including half a dozen costume items and some decorative art items. In general, these items are being held due to the provenance of the collector/collection rather than a specific interest in the origins of the objects themselves, as these geographic areas are outside current collecting policy.

### China

c.8 items. The collection includes shoes, vases, some coins and possibly other costume items.

### Japan

c.3 items, including a few ivory carvings.

### Korea

No known Korean artefacts.



## Nairn Museum

**Location of Collections**      Viewfield House  
Viewfield Drive  
Nairn IV12 4EE

### Published Information

Online collections:      Not currently available

*A Wider World* Collections Review (1994):      Not surveyed  
Nairn Literary Institute: 38 objects

### Collection Overview

There are 11 items in total.

#### China

11 items. The collection includes shoes for bound feet, chopsticks, a kettle, tea, pipes, an abacus and wooden figures, all donated by Mr William Gordon of Ivybank, Nairn in the late 19th century.

#### Japan

No known Japanese artefacts.

#### Korea

No known Korean artefacts.

### Known Donors

Donor	No of Objects	Key objects / object types
Mr William Gordon	11	Chinese artefacts

# Nairn Museum

## Introduction

### 1. Dealers – Collectors

Mr William Gordon of Ivybank, Nairn was possibly one of the early donors whose artefacts formed the museum collection c.1860.

## East Asian Collections

### China

#### 2. Metalwork

There is a kettle in the collection.

#### 4. Ceramics

The museum has a rice bowl.

#### 8. Fibre/Bamboo/Wooden Structures

There are wooden chopsticks in a box, two opium pipes, an abacus and two wooden figures in the collection.

#### 11. Miscellany

There is a block of tea.

Fig. N/N Embroidered woman's shoes, China, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), probably 19th century © Nairn Museum



Fig. N/N Embroidered woman's shoes, China, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), probably 19th century © Nairn Museum



# Shetland Museum and Archives

**Location of Collections**      Shetland Museum & Archives  
Hay's Dock  
Lerwick  
Shetland ZE1 0WP

## Published Information

Online collections:      Not currently available

*A Wider World* Collections Review (1994): 2 objects

## Collection Overview

Shetland Museums and Archives has very little material from East Asia.

### China

Broken crockery of Chinese origin from an 18th-century wreck. There is an inkwell and pencil case brought back from East Asia by a sailor.

### Japan

No known artefacts.

### Korea

No known artefacts.

## Known Donors

Donor information for these items was not obtained.



# Stromness Museum, Orkney

**Location of Collections** 52 Alfred St  
Stromness KW16 3DH

## Published Information

Online collections: <https://www.stromnessmuseum.org.uk/collections>

*A Wider World* Collections Review (1994): 20 objects

## Collection Overview

There are 39 East Asian artefacts in the collection. The provenance of many of these items is not known.

### China

32 items. Within the collection there are shoes, an opium pipe set, a divination compass, paintings on pith, a chopstick set, a bell, an incense vessel, a comb and a lock.

### Japan

7 items. This collection includes Japanese bone china, an export lacquer chest, sword with fittings, and a fragment of a rifle butt from the First World War.

### Korea

There are no known Korean artefacts.

## Known Donors

Donor	No of Objects	Key objects / object types
Jean Crichton	4	
Captain Jobson	2	

## **Stromness Museum, Orkney**

### **Introduction**

#### **1. Dealers – Collectors**

The provenance of most of the objects in the East Asian collection is not known. Captain Jobson donated several of the Chinese objects. Jean Crichton presented the museum with gifts of Japanese bone china in 1996.

#### **2. East Asia and Scotland (evidence of Scottish interest in the wider world)**

More research needs to be done in order to understand the provenance of the objects in the collection.

#### **3. Star Objects – Objects of historical, national or international significance**

The Manchu footwear with the thick, elevated sole are interesting inclusions as many other museums only have examples of shoes for bound feet. The complete opium pipe set with original storage box is also a useful reference to museums which may have parts of opium pipes in their collections.

Fig. E53 Divination compass (Ch. *fengshui luopan*), China, 19th century.  
Rebecca Marr © Stromness Museum



Fig. E54 Nit comb, China, 19th century - early 20th century.  
Rebecca Marr © Stromness Museum



Fig. E232 Collection of painted works on pith. Export ware, Guangzhou (formerly Canton), China, 19th century. Rebecca Marr © Stromness Museum





Fig. E47 Embroidered Manchu woman's shoe, China, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), probably 19th century. Rebecca Marr © Stromness Museum



Fig E45 Embroidered child's shoe, China, Qing dynasty (1644-1911), probably 19th century. Rebecca Marr © Stromness Museum





## East Asian Collections

### China

#### 1. Works on paper/silk/pith

The museum has a framed collection of 20 paintings on pith, depicting butterflies and insects, illustrations of Chinese methods of torture, and figurative scenes.

#### 2. Metalwork

There are three bronze items, a cast-bronze spherical bell, a modern lock, and a cast-bronze incense vessel with looped handles and three small feet. The incense burner has a reign mark on its base, which reads Xuande period (1425-1435), Ming dynasty (1368-1644), and the vessel is likely to be made at a late date.

#### 6. Carved Ivory/Stone/Wood

The collection has a fine-toothed bamboo comb, or nit comb, with simple decorative carvings. Captain Jobson donated a dining set, or 'trousse' set, comprising bone or ivory chopsticks, a hunting knife and a tortoiseshell carrying case.

#### 7. Textiles (Dress/Embroidery)

There are four pairs of shoes, two of which are silk embroidered shoes with raised platforms, worn by Manchu women. In this collection, there is also a pair of child's embroidered tiger-head shoes.

The museum also has one rectangular embroidered case with woven silk cords and tassels.

#### 8. Fibre/Bamboo/Wooden Structures

In the collection there is a deconstructed opium pipe housed in a wooden case. The museum also has a divination compass (Ch. *fengshui luopan*) that was donated by Captain Jobson. The text on the back of the compass reads: 'Made by Fang Xiushui of Xiuyi in Xin'an' (*Xin'an Xiuyi Fang Xiushui zao* 新安休邑方秀水造). Xiu yi (Xiu town) in Xin'an (Huizhou Prefecture in Anhui Province) was a centre for compass manufacturing.

# Japan

## 2. Metalwork

There is one sword in the collection with a damaged blade and worn sword guard (J. *tsuba*). The hilt is wrapped, polished sharkskin dressed with sword ornaments (J: *fuchi*, *kashira*, *menuki*).

## 4. Ceramics

According to the museum's records, there is a small collection of bone china with enamel decoration that is associated with Japan. The service includes a sugar bowl with lid, suggesting that the items were made for an export market or were in fact produced in Europe. The ceramics were gifted by Jean Crichton.

## 5. Lacquer

There is one small lacquered cabinet (J. *kodansu*) in the collection, possibly of Japanese manufacture. The decorative style is not typical of Japanese domestic lacquerware; however, the structure of the cabinet, with two front-opening, hinged doors and four concealed drawers, is Japanese in style. The cabinet is decorated with a black lacquer ground with designs of sparrow, butterflies and camellias in gold. This item provides an example of late 19th-century export lacquer.

## 8. Fibre/Bamboo/Wooden Structures

Within the collection there is a fragment of an Arisaka rifle butt retrieved from the wreckage of HMS *Vanguard* after it was blown up in Scapa Flow on 9 July 1917. At the start of the First World War (1914-1918) the UK faced severe shortages of all military equipment and Arisaka rifles were purchased from Japan for use by the British forces.