

# Museum Services

## Annual Report 2016-17



University  
of Dundee





# Introduction

The past year has been an exceptionally busy one for Museum Services in terms of activity, as in 2017 the University has been celebrating its 50th anniversary as an independent institution. Museum Services has played an important role in this, and the Curator has provided exhibitions, events, alumni tours, podcasts and publications. We have also taken a lead in the worldwide celebrations to mark 100 years of D'Arcy Thompson's *On Growth and Form*, undoubtedly the most influential book ever written in Dundee.

It has been a considerable challenge to support these additional activities on top of our usual programme of learning and teaching support, collections management, research and public engagement - particularly as our externally funded Assistant Curator post came to an end in November 2016.

Despite this, a survey held in spring 2017 revealed a 99% satisfaction rate with the service, with many respondents enthusing about how much Museum Services does for the University and the city:

"The presence of a museum and collection at the University of Dundee is vital on so many levels. It provides a sense of the University's heritage and history, as well as providing a unique resource for its students and a wider audience drawn from the local community."

"The Museum Services does an excellent job".

"Congratulations on a very active and successful service".

"I'm always very impressed by the quantity and quality of the work - a really astounding contribution to the city and to the University."

"Keep up the brilliant work!"

There is clearly considerable support for our work and we hope to be able to realise our potential more fully in the future. Reduced staffing levels have unavoidably meant a reduction in our service this year. While we have continued to prioritise learning and teaching support and public engagement activity, the past year has seen a 48% fall in the numbers of students we have been able to work with, a 53% fall in visitors to the Zoology Museum and a 42% fall in our overall numbers.

Matthew Jarron  
Curator of Museum Services  
Culture & Information  
University of Dundee

[www.dundee.ac.uk/museum](http://www.dundee.ac.uk/museum)



Museum Collections - University of Dundee



@UoD\_Museums

Cover image: detail from *Seagull Town* by Lee John Thomson, acquired from the 2017 DJCAD Degree Show

"Fascinating. A whole new insight to the world!"

- visitor to *A Sketch of the Universe*



"I know that in the study of material things number, order and position are the threefold clue to exact knowledge; and that these three, in the mathematician's hands, furnish the first outlines for a sketch of the Universe"

D'Arcy Thompson, *On Growth and Form*

A SKETCH OF THE UNIVERSE  
Art, Science and the Influence  
of D'Arcy Thompson



## Exhibitions

One of our main aims is to provide an exciting and inspiring exhibition programme. In the absence of a permanent museum building, temporary exhibitions are our principal method of showcasing the collections. During 2016-17 we put on fourteen public exhibitions, mostly in our regular spaces but also at Dundee Science Centre and Edinburgh City Art Centre.

Last year's reduction to the opening hours of the Tower Building led to a significant drop in visitor numbers, so it is pleasing to note that numbers in the Lamb Gallery have increased again, thanks largely to the huge popularity of our *Ballads of Battle* and *Alec Muir* exhibitions. Also very successful was the *Way Back When* photographic exhibition.

As always, some of our exhibitions were created in collaboration with other University staff and students, including *Reanimating H G Wells*, a collaboration with DJCAD and the School of Humanities. Exhibitions like these are an excellent example of how we can help academic staff to engage with a wider audience and can form part of future REF impact submissions.

Undoubtedly the highlight of the year was our collaboration with Edinburgh Museums & Galleries to stage *A Sketch of the Universe – Art, Science and the Influence of D'Arcy Thompson* at the City Art Centre. Kickstarting the centenary celebrations of *On Growth and Form*, the show was highly acclaimed (four star reviews in the *Scotsman* and the *List*) and attracted almost 10,000 visitors.

The Curator also co-organised the Great War Dundee partnership exhibition *Home Front Dundee*, which has toured libraries and other venues around the city since August 2016. He also assisted the School of Life Sciences with their exhibition *HerStory of Science*, looking at notable women scientists at the University.

### Tower Foyer Gallery

*Scenic* (1 July – 27 August 2016) - landscape paintings and drawings

*Print Room Dundee* (3 September – 29 October 2016) – work by a new Dundee printmaking group

*Reanimating H G Wells* (5 November – 23 December 2016) – a project by Graphic Design students from DJCAD working with the School of Humanities

*Recent Acquisitions* (14 January – 25 February 2017) – new additions to the Museum Collections

14  
EXHIBITIONS  
28,790  
VISITS TO THE LAMB  
GALLERY

*Way Back When - Student Photographs by Walter Simms 1968-73* (4 March – 6 May 2017) – photographs of the Art College and Dundee

*Evocation* (13 May – 15 July 2017) – an exhibition for the Ignite Festival and Scotland's Year of History, Heritage & Archaeology

## Lamb Gallery

*Ballads of Battle - Joseph Lee, Poet and Artist* (27 August – 3 December 2016) – an exhibition with Archive Services on the Dundee Great War poet

*Alec Muir* (7 January – 25 March 2017) – a retrospective of the renowned painter and Art College graduate

*Good Vibrations – The University in 1967* (14 April – 1 July 2017) - an exhibition to celebrate the University of Dundee's 50 years as an independent institution

*Stewart Carmichael – Celtic Visions* (15 July – 30 September 2017) – a major loan exhibition of the Dundee artist

## D'Arcy Thompson Zoology Museum

*Botanica Mathematica* (2 – 30 June 2017) – textiles inspired by mathematical biology

## Dundee Science Centre

*Animals & the Environment and Medicine & Health* (27 October 2016 – present) – displays from the Zoology and Medical History collections.

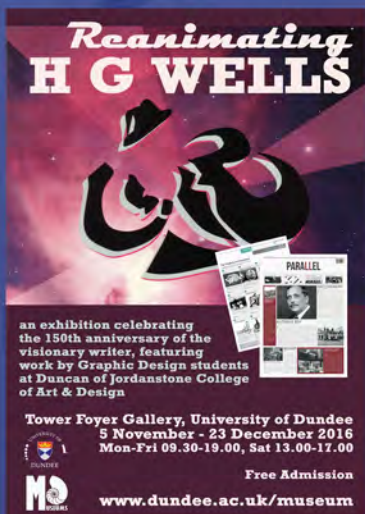
## Edinburgh City Art Centre

*A Sketch of the Universe: Art, Science and the Influence of D'Arcy Thompson* (19 November 2016 – 19 February 2017)

## Loans

As well as curating our own shows, in the past year we lent 192 items from the collection to other exhibitions on campus, including three exhibitions in LifeSpace, two in CentreSpace and one in Cooper Gallery.

We also lent 103 objects to external venues – 93 of these were to Edinburgh City Art Centre for our exhibition *A Sketch of the Universe*. We also lent navigational instruments to the Frigate Unicorn and medical equipment to Perth Drama Club for use as props.



**Reanimating H G WELLS**

an exhibition celebrating the 150th anniversary of the visionary writer, featuring work by Graphic Design students at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design

Tower Foyer Gallery, University of Dundee  
5 November - 23 December 2016  
Mon-Fri 09.30-19.00, Sat 13.00-17.00

Free Admission

[www.dundee.ac.uk/museum](http://www.dundee.ac.uk/museum)



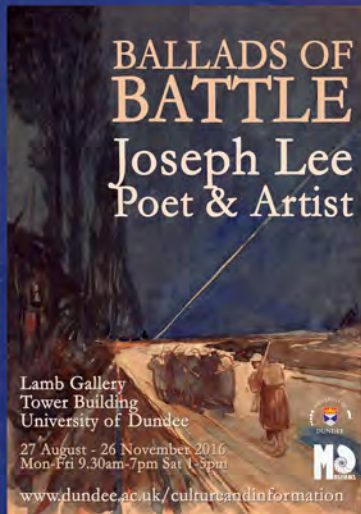
19 NOVEMBER 2016 - 19 FEBRUARY 2017

**A SKETCH OF THE UNIVERSE**  
Art, Science and the Influence of D'Arcy Thompson

ADMISSION FREE

CITY ART CENTRE  
2 Market Street, Edinburgh EH1 1DS  
0131 224 2100  
edcc@cityartcentre.org.uk

Edinburgh City Art Centre  
Edinburgh City Art Centre  
Edinburgh City Art Centre



**BALLADS OF BATTLE**  
Joseph Lee  
Poet & Artist

Lamb Gallery  
Tower Building  
University of Dundee

27 August - 26 November 2016  
Mon-Fri 9.30am-7pm Sat 1-5pm

[www.dundee.ac.uk/cultureandinformation](http://www.dundee.ac.uk/cultureandinformation)



**ALEC MUIR**

Lamb Gallery, University of Dundee  
7 January - 25 March 2017  
Mon-Fri 9.30am-7pm Sat 1-5pm

Free Admission

[www.dundee.ac.uk/museum](http://www.dundee.ac.uk/museum)

**"Wonderful, nostalgic, vivid, full of atmosphere, beautiful!"**  
- visitor to *Alec Muir* exhibition



## Permanent Displays

The main development of the year was the launch of a new permanent display for the Tayside Medical History Museum at Ninewells Hospital, showing some of the highlights from our extensive medical collections. Formally opened on 7 December, the new displays have been widely praised.

The D'Arcy Thompson Zoology Museum continues to be our principal permanent display, open regularly on Friday afternoons during the summer, and for special events throughout the year.

Much more could be made of both venues with additional staff dedicated to learning and engagement. In the Zoology Museum, visitor numbers have fallen by 53%, largely because of the cancellation of our popular schools programme.

We also continue to display artworks around the campus. 44 works of art were hung this year, in eight different locations around campus. The largest project was a display of 20 pictures in Psychology's corridors in the Scrymgeour Building. Unfortunately we are unable to keep up with the growing demand to supply artworks for schools and departments given our current level of resources.

**“Thanks for all your help with the paintings in Psychology. The selection is fantastic and the corridors and stairwells are now transformed. The place really does have a different feel.”**

- Professor Nick Hopkins

**44**  
ARTWORKS PUT  
ON DISPLAY  
AROUND THE  
CAMPUS



## Collections

During the past year, 551 items were catalogued and added to our museum database, bringing the total number of accessioned items in the collection to 31,261. These include neurosurgical instruments from Ninewells; equipment from the former Tay Estuary Research Centre; and comparative anatomy specimens from the Centre for Anatomy & Human Identification.

With the help of funding from Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design, we continued to acquire a selection of art and design pieces from the Degree Show. DJCAD also purchased works to add to the artists' book collection, abcD. Other purchases include comics art by Carlos Ezquerro; an etching by J M Moyes, one of the first specialist tutors at Dundee School of Art (now DJCAD); and a large print by Japanese artist Macoto Murayama from last year's successful exhibition.

Donations made to the collections in the past year include drawings and sketches by Minnie the Minx artist Jim Petrie, gifted by his daughter; paintings by former DJCAD tutor Bob McGilvray, donated by the artist; a portrait of biochemistry lecturer Robert P Cook, gifted by his son; and a collection of praying mantis specimens collected by former Life Sciences researcher Stefan Engelhardt. We are very grateful to all the generous donors responsible for these and other gifts.

Allied to this, our volunteers have been steadily adding images of those parts of the collection that had not previously been photographed. A total of 4,872 images were added to the database last year. One of our student interns also uploaded a selection of photos of our scientific instruments onto Wiki Commons.



## Audiences

A key aim of the museum service is to extend our reach to allow as many people as possible to enjoy and be inspired by our amazing collections. As well as our exhibitions and permanent displays, we stage a variety of special events aimed at attracting different audiences. 33 public events were organised in the past year, including:

Our regular programme of evening events in the D'Arcy Thompson Zoology Museum, which this year included creative writing, a biomathematics-inspired knitting workshop and a talk on the role of women in Dundee's whaling industry

Various events to tie into our Joseph Lee exhibition, including the first performance of J F Heyde's song settings *Ballads of Battle* and *Songs of Somewhere* in over 90 years, as part of the University's popular lunchtime concert series

A walking tour along Old Hawkhill to accompany the *Way Back When* exhibition, as well as a reminiscence event featuring Duncan of Jordanstone College alumni from the 1970s

Special openings and tours for Doors Open Days and the University's 50th anniversary alumni weekend, for which we also organised a very successful screening of rarely seen films of the University at DCA

Over 900 people also attended talks by the Curator at public events (including Dundee Literary Festival, the Greatest Minds lecture series of Perthshire Society of Natural Science and a Patrick Geddes day at Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh) or to external organisations (such as the Dundee Naturalists Society, Coldside History Society and the McManus 168 group). Several of these events tied into the centenary celebrations for *On Growth and Form*, for which the Curator has so far been invited to speak in New York, Amsterdam, London, Plymouth and Edinburgh, as well as various events in Dundee, with lots more to come in 2017-18!



Various societies, community groups and alumni reunions also visited our exhibitions and collections during the past year, including the Ardler Friendship Group, Dundee Association for Mental Health and the Red Hat Society.

We also aim to connect with audiences globally through our online resources. Thanks to Caroline Erolin from the Centre for Anatomy & Human Identification, we have added further 3D scans of specimens from our zoology collections to our website. These are also made available as a free learning resource through the Sketchfab website, where our site has so far had over 18,000 views.

**“The guided tour was absolutely fantastic. Matthew Jarron was brilliant. I would go again given the chance.”**

*– visitor to A Sketch of the Universe exhibition tour*

**1,118**  
PARTICIPANTS IN  
**33**  
SPECIAL EVENTS



# Students

The University of Dundee is renowned for the quality of its student experience, and as a university museum, supporting our students is one of our most important priorities. In the last year, 1,295 students from 27 undergraduate or postgraduate courses at the University made use of our collections and staff expertise as part of their coursework or individual projects; 560 of these involved direct contact with museum staff.

## Undergraduate

Anatomy  
Animation  
Architecture  
Art & Philosophy  
Biological Sciences  
Biomedical Sciences  
Digital Interaction Design  
DJCAD General Foundation Course  
Environmental Science  
Fine Art  
Graphic Design  
Illustration  
Jewellery & Metal Design  
Physics  
Product Design  
Textile Design  
Time Based Art & Digital Film

## Postgraduate

MLitt Comics Studies  
MLitt Creative Writing  
MSc Animation & VFX  
MFA Art, Society & Publics  
MFA Arts & Humanities  
MSc Medical Art  
MLitt/MSc & PG Diploma in  
Archives & Records Management  
MSc & PG Diploma in Records  
Management & Digital Preservation

plus

English for International Students preparatory course  
DJCAD International Summer Experience Programme

1,295  
STUDENTS  
FROM  
27  
COURSES USE THE  
COLLECTIONS

There is great potential for developing this support further - as was demonstrated last year, the addition of one member of staff would allow us to double the number of students we are able to work with.





Particular highlights this year were *Reanimating H G Wells*, for which Graphic Design students created work inspired by the visionary author for an exhibition in the Tower Foyer Gallery; *Atelier Meter*, in which Product Design and Digital Interaction Design students studied old measuring devices from the collections then created new ones in response; and two 3d scanning projects by Medical Art postgraduates using specimens and models from the Zoology Museum.

We also provided four formal work placements for undergraduate and postgraduate students from the Universities of Dundee, St Andrews, Aberdeen and Leicester, plus informal work experience for a further 10 Dundee students or graduands.

Students from various other institutions also came to use the collections, including Dundee & Angus College, Perth College and the University of Glasgow. The Curator also continued to teach evening classes in film history for Continuing Education. This programme has, unfortunately, also been cut by the University, but a new organisation, Lifelong Learning Dundee, has now been

**“Thank you for the best internship I could have hoped for. I learned so much from you and can’t thank you enough for all the hands-on practice I was given”**

**– Niko Sanguinetti, MLitt student on placement**

**“The day ended with a historic tour by the university curator Matthew Jarron (a special shout out!). He really brought the history of Dundee to life to many there and personally it helped me understand and like Dundee more.”**

**– blog by an overseas student after the Curator’s campus tour in Freshers Week**

315  
ENQUIRIES  
91  
RESEARCH  
VISITS

## Research

Supporting the local and international research community is an important part of our service. During the past year the Curator answered 315 enquiries on such varied topics as the role of digital technology in medical museums; the 18th-century painter John Smibert; the mechanics of cow feet; and many enquiries relating to D'Arcy Thompson's *On Growth and Form*.

155 of these were from University of Dundee staff and students while 160 were external researchers. 91 research visits were made to view material from the collections, 58 from within the University and 33 from external researchers, including PhD students and academics from France, Germany, Japan, South Africa and the USA.

The creation and dissemination of new knowledge relating to our collections is also an important aim, and in the past year the Curator has published papers in the *Journal of the Scottish Society for Art History* and *Mechanisms of Development*. He has also been editing a new book of essays about *On Growth and Form* to be published later in 2017.





## Partnerships

As a small service we are always keen to work in partnership with other organisations to maximise the impact and effectiveness of what we do, though this is another area where we have had to cut back on our activities. Some of the projects undertaken in the past year were:

**Fluid Preservation Course** – with help from the School of Life Sciences, we hosted a training course on preservation of fluid specimens. Staff and volunteers from the University, Ninewells Hospital and other museums worked on specimens from our zoology and pathology collections.

**Angus Moth Project** – Museum Services was one of three local museums whose moth collections have been better catalogued and recorded as a result of this joint project led by The McManus: Dundee's Art Gallery & Museum.

**Great War Dundee** – Museum Services was one of the founding partners of this city-wide initiative, and the Curator was co-organiser of the touring exhibition *Home Front Dundee*, which was launched in Lochee Library in August 2016 and has since toured libraries and other venues around the city. Unfortunately our staffing loss has meant that the Curator has had to resign from the Great War Dundee committee.

**Discovery Walk** – following the huge success of phase one in 2016, the second phase of this public art project in Slessor Gardens is now underway, hoping to create another five plaques. The Curator has supplied text and images for some of these but again has had to resign from the committee due to our staffing loss.

Matthew continues to serve as Secretary of the Abertay Historical Society and is a member of various other networks and collaborations including the Dundee Cultural Agencies Network, the Scottish Society for Art History, the Tayside Museums Forum and UMis (University Museums in Scotland).



## Staff

### Curator

Matthew Jarron

### Assistant Curator

(until 23 Nov 2016)

Hope Busák

### Volunteers and Work Placements

Lynsey Alexander

Lauren Beatty

Richard Blackmore

Susanne Boersma

Cathy Caudwell

Jonathan Cochrane

Danielle Dray

Ilana Dresdner

Chloe Feller

Kieran George

Sophie Haddon

Rachel King

Liz Louis

Anna McEwan

Heather McNab

James McPake

Angela Mehlert

Caitlin Meldrum

Louise Quirion

Nicolla Sanguinetti

Olivia Sears

Vida Tadayon

As always, our volunteers are an invaluable resource and the service simply would not be able to function without them. We also receive advice and support for collections held by specific schools and departments from various honorary curators and contacts:

*Civil Engineering Collection* – Tom Dyer

*Comics Art Collection* – Chris Murray

*D'Arcy Thompson Zoology Museum* – Brian Eddy and Liz Laken

*Dental School Collections* – Mark Hector, Gavin McKay and Sam Cadden

*Duncan of Jordanstone College Collection* – Calum Colvin

*Law Collection* – Robin White

*Mechanical Engineering Collection* – Lyall Mitchell

*Pathology Collection* – Richard Oparka

*Psychology Collection* – Nick Wade

*Physics Collection* – Sandy Fitzgerald

*Tayside Medical History Museum* – Michael Murphy

*Visual Research Centre Collections (including Artists Book Collection Dundee)* – Adam Lockhart and Hazel McDonald

The Tayside Medical History Museum also continues to receive support from an informal museum committee.

# Finance

Operating Budget 2016-17: £14,220  
Scottish Funding Council annual grant: £11,500

We also maintain the remainder of the Fine Art Fund set up in 1960 for the benefit of the University's art collections. This stood at £2,144.59 at 1 Aug 2016 and £3,914.95 at 31 July 2017.

Grants awarded:

£3,668 (Museums Galleries Scotland grant to work with animator Brendan Body on a visualisation of our archaeopteryx fossil cast)

£5,877 (Museums Galleries Scotland grant for a new environmental monitoring system)

£945 (National Fund for Acquisitions grant to purchase two prints by Todd Siler)

£800 (Dundee & Angus Bid Fund Award for our forthcoming *On Growth and Form 100* conference)

