

Q. Do you have specific research output aims in relation to the Museum of Zoology, such as public engagement through a resulting exhibition, re-display, digital resource?

A. We don't have specific research outputs in mind would depend on what the kind of the findings are and how they relate to collections. Outputs we might expect are public engagement – events, blogs. Could be a display or other forms of interpretation in the galleries. A digital resource. Outputs would also relate to the professional development side of the CDP.

Q. Is the proposed area of research focus agreed after the start of the project to allow for more of an understanding of the collections before settling on this?

A. There scoping phase at the beginning of the project, matching the students' interest with what's in the collection. This will then be agreed by the supervisors. At the end of the first year of the PhD there will be a registration assessment exercise where the focus of the project is formally confirmed by the history faculty.

Q. Can you talk a bit more about the kinds of methods (beyond archival research) you are hoping the student to use. You wrote about field work and collaborating with researchers (scientific and otherwise) working today in the region in the project description, how do you envision this process?

A. There will be an expectation that methods will be interdisciplinary, with projects cutting across museum studies, history and possibly draw in science as well. To connect with social communities in the regions where the collections arise.

However, like any PhD methods can be defined in discussion with the supervisors. No set prescription about the precise methods to be utilized. The student and supervisor team will be able to negotiate and agree depending on the students training and interests, and the specific proposal in view.

Archive work is a crucial part of this. Alongside using specimens and objects. Methods may also include conducting oral history work at times and studying scientific literature closely in addition to the historical one.

Q. Would it be appropriate or helpful to get in touch with the supervisors to share ideas about possible proposals before hand to check their feasibility in relation to the available collections and/or the remit of the studentship?

A. Please do contact the supervisory team if you have specific questions.

Q. Is this project integrated as part of any wider initiatives within the partner institutions? How will the knowledge created be used by the Museum?

Does this project have any formal or intellectual link to the Cambridge Legacies of Enslavement project, in particular the queries around indentured labour?

A. The University of Cambridge has been doing a series of work around colonial legacies and legacies of enslavement in the University of Museums. We have broadened this scope to include legacies of empire as well.

It is also worth bearing in mind that many of our collections across the University of Cambridge museums, across Natural History, World History, Archaeology, Ethnography and Art were often made by the same people. It would make sense to think about these stories collectively.

Wider initiatives within the museum, relates to work already undertaken by the collections supervisor on colonial legacies of Australian mammal collection.

Q. Does 'colonial' mean only specifically British rule in the region or wider European colonial period in South and South east Asia?

Inevitably the Museum of Zoology has collections which connect to the British Empire because of its institutional history. However, the Mascarene Islands is a very layered context of French and British colonialism. Recent literature on the Mascarene Islands identified that the British inherited patterns of rule. Many reasons in this landscape to use a broader context of European colonialism as well.

Q. Could I ask what supervision looks like across a four-person team?

Normally PhD student would only have one supervisor, this is an exciting opportunity as there will be a four person team. The student will meet with the whole supervisory team, as well as getting advice and direction from individual supervisors. Scope for specialist discussion, however the supervisory team will also agree on a direction so you are not split in 4 different ways.

Please note, that although the supervisor team includes someone from the Herbarium we do expect the main questions to focus on the Museum of Zoology, but connecting to the Herbarium.

Q. What level of expertise in zoology is expected?

A. We do not expect a historian of science to have deep level of zoological knowledge. We do expect a level of interest in Natural History and the History of Natural History. We do not expect the student to be a Zoologist.

Q. There have been several articles written about the PhD which characterise it as a project to 'decolonise the dodo'. Did you expect this reaction? These articles seem to have generated a negative reaction to the project. Will anything be put in place to protect applicants from any backlash?

A. The supervisory and CC-EE CDP team has and will put in place systems that will protect and shield candidates as necessary. These measures will be discussed when the candidate is appointed.

The relationship between colonialism and Natural History, is a long-established field and not new in anyway. The project is not specifically about Dodo's and decolonisation is not mentioned in the advert or further details.

Q. Are there key texts recommended on the relationship between Natural History and Colonialism.

- N. Jardine, J. A. Secord, E. C. Spary, *Cultures of Natural History* Cambridge University Press, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/browse-subjects/history/history-of-science-and-technology/cultures-of-natural-history>
- Curry, H.A., N. Jardine, J.A. Secord, and E.C. Spary, editors. *Worlds of Natural History*. Cambridge University Press, 2018 <https://www.hist.cam.ac.uk/worlds-natural-history>

- Waves Across the South: A New History of Revolution and Empire (London: HarperCollins, 2020)
<https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/W/bo108116105.html>
- Platypus Matters: The Extraordinary Story of Australian Mammals
<https://harpercollins.co.uk/products/platypus-matters-the-extraordinary-story-of-australian-mammals-jack-ashby?variant=40108244041806>
- Nature Read in Black and White: decolonial approaches to interpreting natural history collections Das, S., Lowe, M. Journal of Natural Science Collections, Volume 6, pages 4 – 14

Q. Is it alright to apply if you come from a discipline outside of history?

A. Yes, this is an interdisciplinary project. Think about your skills not necessarily disciplines.

Q. Will there be language training opportunities for field work depending on the project/region under question?

A. Committed to language learning at the University. Facilities at the Cambridge University Language Centre and Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies. If the candidate would like to learn a language, in direct relation to the PhD, then this can be negotiated at the start of the PhD.

At the start of a PhD there will be a skills audit – what skills to be developed and how you will do this. Language could be discussed at this point.