



# Digital and impact in university museums: the case of Glasgow University's collections

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University  
of Glasgow

Humanities Advanced  
Technology & Information  
Institute

- @ School of Humanities, College of Arts
- Research in Digital Heritage, Museum Studies, Digital Curation, Archive, Records and Information Management
- 3 masters courses:
  - Museum Studies,
  - Information Management & Preservation
  - Computer Forensics and E-Discovery
- UG degree in Digital Media and Information Studies
- Scotland's oldest public museum
- Large, unique & diverse collections recognised - National Significance (c. 1.3 million items)
- Museum(s) [Main, Zoology, Anatomy] & Art Gallery
- Wide range
  - archaeology, numismatics, natural & life science, anatomy, ethnography, scientific instruments, extensive art collection



# The context

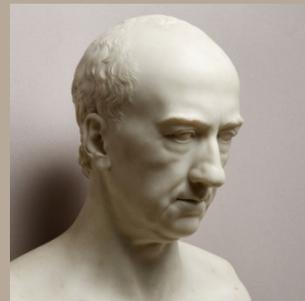
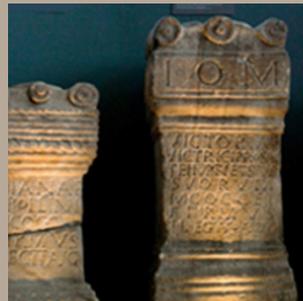
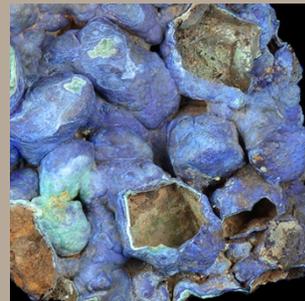
- Museum & heritage studies in a changing world
- Both UoG and The Hunterian undergoing period of change
- The Hunterian is re-positioning itself as a an 'academic museum' service in line with UoG and wider UK HE drivers.
- Placing the Hunterian at the heart of the University
  - Use of collections for teaching and research
  - Strengthening links with all University Colleges
- Collaborations and partnerships outside the University



# The Hunterian – founded 1807

## A Nationally Recognised Collection for Scotland

THE  
HUNTERIAN



# The Hunterian learning offer for public engagement and knowledge exchange

- Expansion of joint College of Arts / Hunterian MSc in Museum Studies (Joint **Lectureship** appointed 2013)
- Following appointment of dedicated **Student Engagement Officer** (2012), expansion in Hunterian work placements and other intern programmes



# Current opportunities for student engagement with the collections

- MUSE (Museum University Student Educators) guides (all students) (55)
- Hunterian Associates programme (PGR) (15 per annum)
- MSc in Museum Studies – Hunterian Exhibition Development course
- other work placements, internships (e.g Museums Galleries Scotland), fieldwork



# HATII Cultural Heritage Informatics course

- For Hons and MSc in Museum Studies
- Aim: Understand characteristics of CH institutions (GLAMs) and how ICT supports their operation
  - Understand use & effect of social media in CH, standards, digital preservation, collections management systems, gaming, interactives and mobiles for interpretation, etc



Behind the Scenes Tour (Zoology Museum attic)



Site visit at the Tall Ship & Riverside Museum

## Future plans for teaching

- New course on “museum communication” for MSc in Museum Studies
  - Importance of learning within a wider communication strategy (both for the Hunterian & the University)
  - Communication and learning at different levels (undergrad, postgrad, research, continuing professional development, lifelong learning / schools, families)
  - Object-based learning: crucial, but underdeveloped
  - Need to effectively prepare graduates for needs of both cultural sector & academic research
- Potential for MSc at GU as centre of excellence for museum studies in Scotland (and beyond)

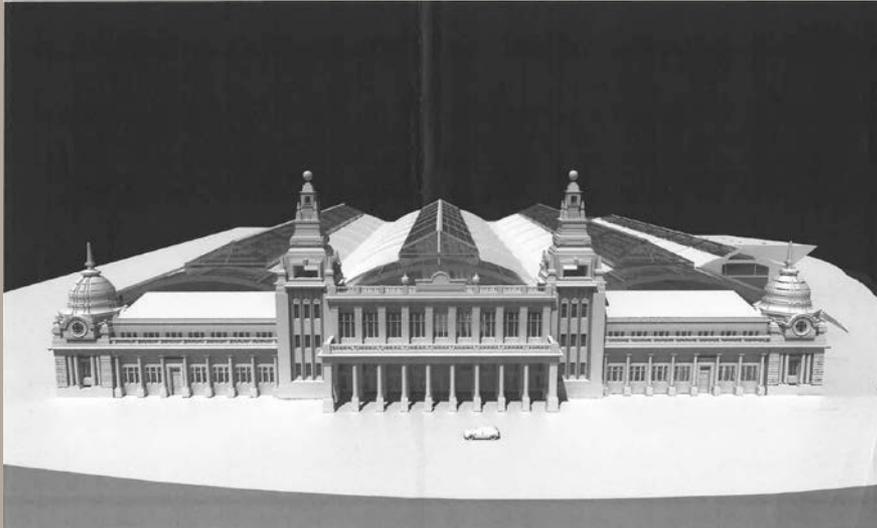


# Current and future developments

- Launch of new collections management system (KE Emu)
  - Web presence, online exhibitions, links and themes cutting across different collections
- Hunterian special exhibition programme exploring transdisciplinary themes: *Scottish Gold* (2014); *Mackintosh Architecture* (2015) *Cradle of Scotland* (2015); *Ingenious Impressions* (2015);
- Launch of *Science Showcase* of rotational exhibits + public programmes showcasing UoG research excellence;
- Plans for new MSc in Museum Education in collaboration with School of Education



# Kelvin Hall development 2014-17: transforming the academic museum



- Rationalisation and co-location of Hunterian collections at central Glasgow landmark venue;
- *Interface with UoG* - Unique UK centre for integrated visual arts, material culture and conservation research, teaching, learning & public engagement;
- *Interface with GM* - Cross-utilisation of UoG and Glasgow Museums collections & Scottish Screen Archive;
- *Collaboration* - A joint UoG/Glasgow Museums hub for developing museum workforce (national, UK, international)

Research project:  
Studying the use of online cultural data

- Kelvin Hall development: test bed for research
  - Stage I: KEmu Hunterian collections catalogues
  - Stage II: Portal together with Glasgow Museums and Scottish Screen Archive
  - Stage III: other case studies outside Glasgow
  - Links with GU Special Collections, Library, Archives

# Research questions

- How do users use the online catalogues
  - e.g. Do they only download text or images?
  - How long do they spent on average and on specific pages?
- What is the kind of interaction they have with the data?
- Are the data published or posted elsewhere (e.g. social media sites)?
- Is there a way of identifying user profiles (beyond just using IP addresses)?
- Did particular media campaigns or exhibitions have any effect on data usage?
- How do these digital resources support research, teaching, community engagement?

## Methodology

- Combination of quantitative and qualitative
- Recording and analysing interactions with online catalogue and digital resources
- Moving beyond Google Analytics?
- Interviews and observations with different user groups, focus group discussions, email and online questionnaires
- Assessing impact

## Wider implications

- Vast number of digital resources created
- Resources spent for creation and maintenance
- Need to understand how they are being used
- From simple to complex questions
- Building body of knowledge, combining case studies, tools

***Thank you!***  
***Ευχαριστώ!***

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George Stubbs, *The Moose*, 1770, commissioned by William Hunter