

**UNIVERSITY of
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**Unsettling *Nacken chaetrie*: the absence and
presence of Gypsy/Travellers in Scottish museums**

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Abstract

There is evidence that Gypsy/Traveller (*Nacken*) material culture (*chaetrie*) has been collected for almost as long as there have been public museums in Scotland. However, it is rare to see *Nacken* represented in Scottish museums, despite their long history in Scotland.

This absence of *Nacken* from the local and national narratives told in our museums is important because the invisibility of this group has a detrimental impact on their educational, accommodation, justice, health and employment outcomes. It also provides the conditions for prejudices against these groups to thrive. Most research to-date on Gypsy, Roma and Traveller objects in museums focuses on the absence of narratives related to these populations in museums. This thesis explores the past and present material presence of *Nacken* in museums and how it is valued by contemporary *Nacken*. It analyses what makes *chaetrie* invisible in museums and, conversely, how it might contribute to the visibility of *Nacken* in the future.

To answer questions around the presence, absence and absent presence (objects in museums not understood as connected to *Nacken*) as well as to explore contemporary *Nacken* responses to *chaetrie* in Scottish museums, research towards this thesis involved a range of methods. These included archival research, object-based interviews with three *Nacken* individuals, and short-term ethnographic studies with twenty-two participants, across three museums, focused on the development of museum displays, or discussions around display. It draws on concepts including 'Gypsy visibility,' 'racist policies' and the 'heritage cycle'.

Findings suggest that unseen *chaetrie*, present in many museums, requires research and engagement towards improved understanding and use of this material to make clear the historic presence of *Nacken* in Scotland. It has also demonstrated the benefit of contemporary collecting around *Nacken* lives in making museums relevant to *Nacken* today and in allowing museums to represent *Nacken* as a living culture.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Chapter introduction

This research sets out to understand what Gypsy/Traveller material culture is present in Scottish museums, as well as why it is so unseen. It has grown out of my work within museums, in the field of learning and access. I first developed an interest in the material culture of Gypsy/Travellers when I was based at the Highland Folk Museum as Education Outreach Officer for Highland Museums, between 2004 and 2006.¹ In this role, I carried out a series of projects engaging young Gypsy/Travellers with museums, in partnership with Karen MacMaster, The Highland Council's Gypsy/Traveller Development Officer. I later worked as Learning and Access Officer at the Highland Folk Museum from 2006 to 2008 and continued to develop projects with young Gypsy/Travellers.² The main focus of these projects was on bringing young people from a marginalised community into museums and were designed to give them a voice, develop their skills or support their education through culturally relevant activities. It was through this work that I became aware of and interested in the collections related to Gypsy/Travellers—which had formed the basis of these projects—at the Highland Folk Museum. Increasingly, I would notice similar artefacts in other museums but noticed that these objects were often interpreted in ways that ignored their Gypsy/Traveller connections. The Highland Folk Museum is included as a case study in this thesis. My familiarity with the museum and its collections brought both advantages and disadvantages within the research context. While my connections with the museum helped to ease the process of accessing the collections there, the knowledge that I had gained of the collections from within the museum constrained my initial thinking about the objects encountered there. It has been an incredible experience to have my perception of those—and other—collections widened through the process of this research. Bringing together Gypsy/Traveller perspectives and theoretical insights has allowed me to explore the absence, presence and absent presence of Gypsy/Traveller material culture in museums, as well as what can be learned from how museums and Gypsy/Travellers perceive this material.

The remainder of this introductory chapter is split into four sections, beginning with an explanation of the (geographical and thematic) focus of the thesis and how Gypsy/Travellers are understood and will (and will not) be referred to in this thesis.

¹ This role was funded by the Scottish Museums Council (now Museums Galleries Scotland), as part of their Strategic Change Fund. The project, Outreach Long and Wide, aimed to develop models for education work in museums across the Highlands.

² This role was core-funded by The Highland Council and was focused on the Highland Folk Museum.

Following this, I present a problem and the contribution that museums might make toward alleviating it. This is the problem of invisibility of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) populations and the resultant inequalities faced by these populations. While recognising that museums cannot shape national policies in the fields of education, accommodation, employment, health or justice, I argue that they can play a role in making GRT lives visible. I then go on to look specifically at the issue of invisibility in a museum context, in a section on the absent presence of Gypsy/Travellers in Scottish museums. This briefly presents the current situation and its impact and explains further how my interest in this research arose. The research questions that this thesis will engage with are then presented along with a summary of the thesis.

1.2 Terminology and focus

This thesis is based on research undertaken in a specifically Scottish context. Across Britain and Ireland, Gypsy and Traveller populations are recognised to have distinct national identities (this reflects the broader, global picture in which dispersed populations, known overall as Roma, have localised group identities). Although mixing and influence between these groups and travel across borders takes place (now and in the past), these populations are largely understood to have distinctive identities and histories that are mapped to national boundaries (although it should be noted that there is ‘internal diversity’ in each of these national groupings).³

As Becky Taylor has put it, ‘there is no one word that can cover the multitude of peoples who have been called, or might call themselves Roma, Gypsy or Traveller, or any of the national variations of these words over time and place’.⁴ In Scotland, the groups I have worked with and whose associated material culture I have sought to identify, fall under the official policy term, Gypsy/Traveller. According to Lynne Tammi, who was involved in the development of this designation,

Gypsy/Traveller is an official term—negotiated with members of the community in Scotland and used by governments and other policy makers—which aims to recognise, and encompass the diversity of Scotland’s nomadic tribes. However, it is important to note that the term is a contested one both within and outwith the UK

³ C. Clark and M. Greenfield, *Here to Stay: The Gypsies and Travellers of Britain* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2006), 15–6. The reference to internal diversity can be found in S. Ní Shuinéar, “Apocrypha to canon: inventing Irish Traveller history,” *History Ireland* 12, no. 4 (2004). <https://www.historyireland.com/20th-century-contemporary-history/apocrypha-to-canon-inventing-irish-traveller-history/><https://www.historyireland.com/20th-century-contemporary-history/apocrypha-to-canon-inventing-irish-traveller-history/>.

⁴ B. Taylor, *Another Darkness, Another Dawn: A History of Gypsies, Roma and Travellers* (London: Reaktion Books, 2014), 11.

and consequently is not accepted by all families. Indeed many Scottish Gypsy/Travellers prefer to self-define as “Traveller”.⁵

The term Gypsy/Traveller, which is used in Scotland to recognise the diversity of peoples that it encompasses (including European Roma, Romani Gypsies, Scottish and Irish Travellers), covers a broader range of populations than the research presented here focuses on.⁶ In this research I have worked with Travelling populations who have a long history in Scotland, across hundreds of years. As well as defining themselves as ‘Travellers’, there are among them those who identify as Gypsies, as Gypsy Travellers, Romani Gypsies, or as Scottish or Highland Travellers. There is no single term used or identity shared by those known as Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland, as they do not form an homogenous group.⁷ Those involved in this research (as well as wider members of these communities in Scotland) might not all share the same history or identify in the same way. They are, however, linked by the material in museums, often the result of occupations carried out across various historic nomadic populations in Scotland, including pearl-fishing, peg-making, tin-, black- and silver-smithing, wickerwork, pottery- and scrap-dealing. They are also subject to marginalisation and invisibility.

In many of the older sources that reference Scottish Gypsy/Travellers encountered in this research, the term ‘Tinker’ is used. This term has become derogatory, although some Gypsy/Travellers have reclaimed it. In this thesis, the term appears blanked out as either T____ or T____s, except in instances where it is used by a Gypsy/Traveller, in recognition that it should not be applied to Gypsy/Travellers from the outside. Early in my research Seamus McPhee, a Gypsy Traveller artist and activist, offered me terminology that has been helpful in encompassing the groups relevant to this research and the material that might be associated with them. These are the terms *Nacken* (nä·kĭn, meaning Scottish Gypsy/Traveller) and *chaetrie* (chā·trē, meaning objects).⁸ These terms come from the

⁵ L. Tammi, “Across the great divide: the impact of digital inequality on Scotland’s Gypsy/Traveller children and young people during the COVID-19 emergency.” *International Journal of Roma Studies* 2, no 2 (2020): 63.

⁶ There are further Travelling people in Scotland than the Gypsies, Roma and Travellers covered by the term Gypsy/Traveller. These groups have strong cultural identities but did not claim minority ethnic status along with Gypsy Travellers in 2008. They include Showmen, as well as New Travellers. A doctoral research project on the material culture of Showmen was carried out by t s Beall in partnership between the University of Glasgow and the Riverside Museum (part of Glasgow Museums) from 2013–17. More about Beall’s work can be found at: <https://fairglasgow.wordpress.com/https://fairglasgow.wordpress.com/>.

⁷ The impossibility of defining—in any singular way—Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland is expressed by Damian Le Bas, an English Romani Gypsy who says of his attempts to grasp the various histories and identities, ‘When I’m in the company of Travellers from Scotland, I try to wear my southerner’s naivety on my sleeve. I let people tell me what they make of [their history and identity]’, D. Le Bas, *The Stopping Places: A Journey through Gypsy Britain* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2018), 266. As suggested by Le Bas here, when working with Gypsy/Travellers, it is best to ask them how they individually identify and how to describe their community.

⁸ Shamus McPhee, *pers. comm.*, January 28, 2017.

Cant, one of the languages of Scottish Gypsy/Travellers.⁹ *Nacken* is a term of self-reference used by (some) Scottish Gypsy/Travellers and *chaetrie* is a collective noun for things. While not all Gypsy/Travellers would identify with or use these terms, like the objects that will form the focus of this study, they come from Scottish Gypsy/Travellers. In this thesis I use *chaetrie* and *Nacken chaetrie* to refer to objects identified as being linked to Gypsy/Travellers. It should be noted that *Nacken* themselves do not use these terms in this specific way. The discomfort of using unfamiliar terms in my work, however, has been useful in making me—a non-Gypsy/Traveller—remember to try, as far as possible, to see the material from a non-settled perspective; to unsettle my own settled viewpoint.

1.3 The problem(s) of invisibility

In April and May 2018 Ms E. Tendayi Achiume, the UN's special rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, visited the UK. As part of her research, she spoke with GRT in Scotland, as well as elsewhere. In her report, she noted that GRT live in 'horrendous conditions', that the educational situation for these populations is 'grim', that 'Gypsies and Travellers experience poorer physical and mental health outcomes than the rest of the British population' and that, where data is available, it demonstrates an overrepresentation of GRT in the criminal justice system.¹⁰ The inequalities identified in the report are manifold, not least the lack of available data due to systemic inequalities experienced by these populations.¹¹ Achiume observed that the common factor causing these inequalities was the 'state of invisibility, marginalization and exclusion that have been endured by Gypsies, Roma and Travellers'.¹²

⁹ Clark and Greenfield, *Here to Stay*, 16. Further references to these terms can be found in W. Simson, *A History of the Gipsies with Specimens of the Gipsy Language* (London: Sampson, Low, Son and Marston, 1865), 296, 340, 424, ; E. MacColl and P. Seeger, *Till Doomsday in the Afternoon: The Folklore of a Family of Scots Travellers, the Stewarts of Blairgowrie* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), 54; D. Kenrick and C. Clark, *Moving On: The Gypsies and Travellers of Britain*, (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 1995), 52; D. Braid, "The construction of identity through narrative folklore and the Travelling people of Scotland," in *Romani Culture and Gypsy Identity*, ed. T. Acton and G. Munday (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 1997), 40; R. Dawson, *Rokkering, Clecking and Cracking* (Blackwell: Robert Dawson, 2006), various; Robert Dawson, *Empty Lands: Aspects of Scottish Traveller Survival* (Blackwell: Robert Dawson, 2007), 9; S. Stewart, *A Traveller's Life* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2011), 186; M. Lloyd and P. E. Ross, *Moving Minds: Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland* (Edinburgh: MECOPP, 2014), i. Another form of *Nacken*, which can be spelled in a range of ways, *Nyakim*—used in the north east of Scotland—is part of the title of S. Robertson, *Nyakim's Window* (Nairn: Balnain Books, 1989), 7. Please note that in earlier texts that I wrote on my research journey, I used the spelling 'Naken,' including the permission forms found in Appendix II.

¹⁰ United Nations, Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance on her visit to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*, A/HRC/41/54/Add.2 (Geneva: United Nations Human Rights, 2019), 7, 9, 10.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 2, 6.

¹² *Ibid*, 6.

The invisibility of these populations plays a significant role in the inequalities in accommodation, health, education, employment, and access to justice experienced by *Nacken* (Scottish Gypsy/Travellers). It also provides the conditions in which prejudice and racism towards these groups can thrive. Museums are, of course, not involved in the development of housing, health, education, employment, or legal policy work. The invisibility of *Nacken*, however, is something that is perpetuated in many museums. It would be possible to visit most museums in Scotland today and leave again unaware that a separate population has coexisted alongside the settled population in Scotland for at least 500 years.¹³ *Nacken* are far from being the only minority group could be considered invisible in museums and wider society. Work to uncover ‘hidden’ histories of other minority populations in museums recognises the potential importance of museum collections and displays in ‘combating social exclusion and inequality’.¹⁴

While the small number of displays in Scottish museums that acknowledge *Nacken* material culture have the potential to combat the invisibility of these groups, in most of these examples it is not highlighted that what is being represented is a living culture. Even when this is made clear, some visitors come away with ideas, communicated by on-site staff, which threaten the otherwise positive messages of the exhibit. Donald Braid recounted this incident, which took place at the Highland Folk Museum in 1993:

during a visit to the exhibit on Traveller culture in the Highland Folk Museum in Kingussie – amid [textual interpretation] that lauded the old days and commented on the rapid changes in Traveller life and occupation in recent years—a [staff member employed as a] museum guide told me, “The Travellers used to provide a valuable service to the community. They were respected for that. People were glad to see them. But the t_____s these days are a menace to society”.¹⁵

This is not unlike the discretionary actions of front-line staff in other service sectors, which Lynne Tammi has identified as having a detrimental impact on equality of access to services by Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland. Tammi uses Michael Lipsky’s theory of the *street level bureaucrat* in analysing ‘the impact that (negative) social representations have on the ability of Gypsy/Travellers to access public services and provision on a basis of

¹³ An exploration of the various theories of *Nacken* origins is presented in Chapter 2, along with a justification for taking the year 1500 as the starting point for material of interest to this thesis. While this position provides some necessary parameters for approaching museum collections, it does not reflect all *Nacken* understandings of origins and does not fully take account of the presence of Travelling populations prior to the arrival of Gypsies in Scotland around 1500.

¹⁴ J. Dodd, R. Sandell, A. Delin and J. Gay, *Buried in the Footnotes: The Representation of Disabled People in Museum and Gallery Collections* (Leicester: Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, 2004), 4. See also L. Bennison, “LGBTQIA+ Hidden Histories,” *National Museums Scotland* (September 03, 2021) blog.nms.ac.uk/2021/09/03/lgbtqia-hidden-histories.

¹⁵ D. Braid, *Scottish Traveller Tales Lives Shaped through Stories* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2002), 42.

equality'.¹⁶ The work of Lipsky and Tammi demonstrate how the discretionary decision making of public-service workers in the implementation of policies (or, in this case, interpretation) in front-line interactions with the public can override official policy (or messaging). The situation described above by Braid demonstrates how a museum staff member was able to reroute the positive message of the display and perpetuate prejudicial messages about *Nacken*. The impact of this interaction on equality for *Nacken* is not direct but has implications for the representation of *Nacken* in an authoritative (museum) setting. Museums are recognised—among the majority population—to be places of 'authority and trustworthiness'.¹⁷ As has been noted, however, 'the level of trust depends on who is being consulted'.¹⁸ If museums value the trust put in them, this leaves them with a two-fold obligation. They must not only take seriously their position as trusted authorities among the majority population and represent minorities with care, but also work hard to 'forge trust' with minority communities.¹⁹ Working with *Nacken* to better represent themselves in museums, would be a positive way to meet both responsibilities.

1.4 An absent presence in museums

The invisibility of GRT identified by E. Tendayi Achiume across society in the UK, is mirrored in the absence and exclusion of the stories of Travelling cultures in Scotland's museums. Jodie Matthews, who has addressed the representation of Gypsies and Travellers in 'mainstream narratives of Britain's past', including in published works and museums and heritage settings, finds that Romanies (Gypsies and Travellers) are an 'absent presence'.²⁰ Jake Bowers similarly notes that 'the history and culture of Britain's travelling peoples has rarely been visible within public museums'.²¹ Although Bowers' research is focused in the south-east of England, these findings are reflected in museums more widely. While Bowers and Matthews acknowledge some representation of Gypsies and Travellers in a small number of institutions, they both note that the habitual lack of representation of the history of Travelling peoples in museums creates a problem for contemporary populations. Matthews notes that this promotes an inability in settled populations to '(dis)connect [...] the romantic images of the past [...] with communities of

¹⁶ L. Tammi, 'Abstract' to "The Eternal Wanders: Social Representations of Gypsy/Travellers" (PhD. diss., University of Dundee, 2020) <https://discovery.dundee.ac.uk/en/studentTheses/the-eternal-wanders>.

¹⁷ S. Wajid and R. Minott, 'Detoxing and decolonizing museums', in R. R. Janes and R. Sandell, *Museum Activism* (London: Routledge, 2019), 31.

¹⁸ R. R. Janes and R. Sandell, "Posterity has arrived: the necessary emergence of museum activism," in R. R. Janes and R. Sandell, *Museum Activism* (London: Routledge, 2019), 6.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ J. Matthews, "Where are the Romanies? An absent presence in narratives of Britishness," *Identity Papers: A Journal of British and Irish Studies* 1, no. 1 (2015): 79–90.

²¹ J. Bowers, "Gypsies and Travellers accessing their own past: the Surrey Project and aspects of minority representation," in *Travellers, Gypsies, Roma: The Demonisation of Difference*, eds. M. Hayes and T.A. Acton (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2007), 18.

the present'.²² I would further argue that the absence of these histories in museums does as much to prevent the settled population from disconnecting their view of contemporary Travelling populations with the overwhelmingly negative media narratives targeted at these groups. This absence, then, promotes what Damian Le Bas has referred to as 'the pincer of demonisation and romanticisation in which the Romanies [Gypsy and Traveller populations] seem to be permanently trapped'.²³ The lack of counter narratives is dangerous because, as Achuime notes, invisibility leads to multiple inequalities or, as Matthews points out, if 'Romani people are always portrayed as "outsiders" in cultural representation [... they become] excluded from many aspects of [...] politics, society, and culture'.²⁴

My interest in both the presence and the perceived absence of *chaetrie* in Scottish museums grew out of a series of projects I developed and delivered in partnership with the Highland Council's Gypsy/Traveller Development Officer, while at the Highland Folk Museum, 2004–8. I had previously worked with Showmen children in a school setting while teacher training (1999-2000) and was aware of interrupted learning patterns experienced by Travellers as well as of some of the discrimination faced. A project in one of the classes, on Showmen, had a two-fold benefit in providing positive opportunities for the Showmen children in the class to contribute and fostering understanding of Showmen among non-Showmen classmates. As Education and Outreach Officer at the Highland Folk Museum (and later as Learning and Access Curator there), the work undertaken with young Travellers was designed not only to support education but also to both nurture their own sense of identity and tackle prejudice against them. The projects with young Travellers led to my own awareness of the sorts of material acknowledged to have been made by *Nacken* at the Highland Folk Museum. I then became interested in how often similar artefacts were displayed in other museums without anything in the associated interpretation making that link. In this thesis, references to 'acknowledged' items of Gypsy/Traveller material culture (*chaetrie*) denotes items displayed with interpretation that makes the links between these objects and *Nacken* clear.

The aim of my research was, in part, to explore what material linked to *Nacken* could be identified in museums. Helpfully, in 2010–11 Surrey Heritage Museum surveyed museums, libraries and archives across the UK, asking what holdings these institutions had that related to Gypsies, Roma and Travellers.²⁵ The survey (referred to from here as

²² J. Matthews, "Visibly Authentic: images of Romani people from 19th-century culture to the digital age," in *Heritage as Community Research*, eds. H. Graham and J. Vergunst (Bristol: Policy Press, 2019), 65.

²³ Bas, *The Stopping Places*, 85.

²⁴ Matthews, "Where are the Romanies?": 82–3.

²⁵ Surrey Heritage Roma Routes Project, *Research into Roma, Gypsy and Traveller Artefacts and Records Held in the UK* (Surrey: Surrey Heritage, 2012). Please note, the pages in this report are un-numbered.

http://www.shcg.org.uk/domains/shcg.org.uk/local/media/firstbase/research_into_roma_word_final.docx

the Roma Routes Survey) resulted in a report compiling the responses. This report, *Research into Roma, Gypsy and Traveller Artefacts and Records Held in the UK* is referred to here as, the Roma Routes Report. The Roma Routes Survey and Report were carried out by Surrey Heritage as part of an EU funded project that aimed to 'encourage intercultural dialogue between Roma and non-Roma to promote European Roma cultural heritage'.²⁶ Responses (and non-responses) to this survey by Scottish museums were useful in the process of selecting case-study museums for this project. The three main case studies in my research were the Highland Folk Museum, in Newtonmore in the Highlands, which had listed the largest number of objects in its return to the Roma Routes Survey, Auchindrain Township Museum, near Inverary in Argyll and Bute, which made a return—unique across all those reported—stating that it had no relevant objects, and the Clan Macpherson Museum, also in Newtonmore, one of the many museums that did not respond to the survey.

1.5 Research questions and thesis summary

The research questions that this thesis aims to answer are:

- What evidence of *chaetrie* and *Nacken* agency can be found in Scottish museums?
- What does the absence of *Nacken* and *chaetrie* look like?
- How do *Nacken* value *chaetrie*?
- Why is *Nacken chaetrie* so unseen in museums?

In the following chapter, Chapter 2, a review of literature relevant to *chaetrie* in Scottish museums is presented. This chapter examines what museums, academics and *Nacken* have written about the material culture of Gypsy/Travellers. Relevant museum literature largely originates from folk museums or collections, which wrongly gives the impression that the presence of this material is limited to these collections and that *Nacken* operated only in rural areas. Although academic literature examined in the next chapter addresses GRT presence and absence in museum and heritage contexts,²⁷ there is no current academic examinations of the Scottish context. *Nacken* knowledge and the unique perspectives regarding *chaetrie* offered by *Nacken* writers have also been reviewed. These works indicate that *Nacken* value material culture in ways that are distinct from the settled population. The review also encompasses a summary of theories related to *Nacken* origins, especially as they have been understood by antiquaries as well as by

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ N. Ní Laodhóg, ed., *A Heritage Ahead: Cultural Action and Travellers* (Dublin: Pavee Point, 1995), J. Bowers, *Private Past, Public Future* (Hastings: Gypsy Media Company, 2007), Bowers, "Accessing their own past," Matthews, "Where are the Romanies?," D. Gaunt, "Understanding the clashes between historians and Roma activists," *Baltic Worlds* 9, no. 3 (2016), S. Nolan ed., *Traveller Collection at the Hugh Lane Gallery* (Dublin: Hugh Lane Gallery, 2020).

Nacken themselves. At the close of Chapter 2, texts that discuss the decolonisation of museums and GRT are explored, as well as how other minority and, in particular, Indigenous populations are considered in museums.

Following this, Chapter 3 gives an overview of the methods used to approach the research questions. It also examines my own position in this research, as a non-*Nacken*, as well as considering the importance of ethics and trust in this project and the effects that the COVID-19 pandemic had on what took place.

The two chapters described above (a review of literature and description of methods), are followed by four findings chapters, which explore the research questions. The first question—what evidence of *chaetrie* and *Nacken* agency can be found in Scottish museums?—is addressed across the first two findings chapters. In the first of these, Chapter 4, the history of the collecting and display of *chaetrie* is analysed across three time periods and associated collecting themes: the collecting of curiosities (eighteenth and nineteenth century), incidental collecting (nineteenth and early twentieth century) and folk collecting (1930s–70s).

Chapter 5 builds on the previous chapter by presenting findings that extend the range of objects that can be considered *chaetrie*, as well as highlighting *Nacken* agency in the development of museum collections. The wider group of objects was identified through interviews, participant observation and archival research in museums. This chapter is largely based on research undertaken at the Highland Folk Museum, Newtonmore. It also draws on a short project at Perth Museum and Art Gallery and on examples from other museums where relevant. Benefiting from the involvement of Gypsy/Travellers who have been able to bring *Nacken* perspectives, knowledge and insights to the material, this chapter also examines interactions between *Nacken* and museums in the past and how *Nacken* agency (expressed through objects given to museums by *Nacken*) has the potential to challenge or disrupt dominant narratives about *Nacken* and *chaetrie*. Although Chapters 4 and 5 refer to and sometimes list specific examples of *chaetrie* in museums, the aim has not been to offer a comprehensive history or list of *chaetrie* in Scottish museums. Instead, these chapters seek to understand the contexts in which *chaetrie* has been collected as well as what has been, and is considered to be, *chaetrie* from museum and non-museum perspectives (or *Nacken* and non-*Nacken* perspectives).

The third findings chapter, Chapter 6, has grown out of a case study of Auchindrain Museum, near Inveraray. Although this museum was chosen because it noted the absence of *chaetrie* in response to the Roma Routes Survey, it has since then begun a *Nacken*-led collecting initiative, so far unique in Scottish museums. This chapter, therefore, has two distinct parts. In the first part of this chapter, the (past) absence of

chaetrie in Auchindrain and other museums is addressed, while *Nacken* collecting forms the focus of the chapter's second part. In this latter part of the chapter, Auchindrain's new Gypsy/Traveller collection has been considered alongside other *Nacken* collections. Jess Smith had already agreed, at the outset of this research, to allow me to interview her about her own collection of *chaetrie* and three further collections were identified during the course of my research. Information shared by those collecting or connected with these collections has been analysed to develop an understanding of *Nacken chaetrie* in the context of *Nacken* systems of value. Essie Stewart's bough tent at the Highland Folk Museum and Kathy Townsley McGuigan's bowcamp at Auchindrain have also been considered as aspects of *Nacken* knowledge communication and value production in museum contexts in this chapter. Chapter 6, then, explores both the question, what does the absence of *chaetrie* look like? And also—through looking at what *chaetrie Nacken* collect—how do *Nacken* value their material culture?

Bringing the focus back to museum-based collections, the fourth and final findings chapter, Chapter 7, is based around the Clan Macpherson Museum, Newtonmore. It explores why *chaetrie* is so unseen in museums. The Clan Macpherson Museum was chosen from among the many that did not respond to the Roma Routes Survey because I was aware of a unique item of *chaetrie* displayed there with no mention of its *Nacken* connections in the interpretation of the object in the museum. This museum is not unique in having not replied to the Roma Routes Survey, nor in displaying an item of *Nacken* connection. This chapter, then, is used to explore museum processes, in the Clan Macpherson Museum and beyond, to gain an understanding of how the ways in which museums collect, catalogue, categorise and interpret objects can lead to the exclusion of *Nacken* stories from museums. A values-based approach to assessing the significance of collections, in which knowledge of objects can be seen to be generative of value, in turn increasing engagement and the development of further knowledge and values, has been used to analyse these processes. This chapter also draws upon Ibram X. Kendi's concept of 'racist policies' to consider the ways in which museums can (unconsciously) perpetuate the exclusion of *Nacken* narratives.²⁸ The chapter also includes a reflection on the process of rewriting the interpretation of Macpherson's fiddle by Scottish Traveller and writer, Maggie McPhee, and what this can offer by the way of a model of bringing *Nacken* values into museums.

Following this, Chapter 8, the Conclusion, reflects on the extent to which this thesis has answered the questions that it set out to examine and considers possible directions for future research. While this chapter has acknowledged the background experience that I

²⁸ I.X. Kendi, *How to be an Antiracist* (London: The Bodley Head, 2019).

brought to this research, gained from past work with relevant collections, the research journey has involved unlearning much of what I thought I knew. The networks, thinking and experiences that I was able to bring from prior professional contexts, however, provided an invaluable foundation. The involvement of *Nacken*—some from among existing contacts—has, more than anything, allowed me to approach the research questions tackled in this thesis openly.

Throughout the thesis there are references to the extensive applied outcomes that resulted from the research undertaken with *Nacken* participants. These include the building and filming of Essie Stewart's bough tent at the Highland Folk Museum, October 2017 to May 2018 and the events at the museum to launch the new tent (see Chapters 3 and 6); a temporary exhibition at Perth Museum and Art Gallery, developed with members of the Gypsy/Traveller Youth Assembly, for Gypsy, Roma, Traveller History Month 2019 (see Chapter 5); the *Nawken Trail of Aberdeen* leaflet, developed with David Donaldson and Bob Knight, launched at the University of Aberdeen's MayFest 2019 (see Appendix VIII); and the new interpretation of Jamie Macpherson's fiddle, created by Maggie McPhee in a project carried out with Article 12 in Scotland and with Dr Jo Clement (see Chapter 7). During the period of the research, I also contributed to the interpretation of the *Nacken* items displayed in the V&A Dundee's 'Scotland Gallery' (shared with by Gypsy/Travellers for review), shared findings with the Highland Folk Museum to enhance museum records and interpretation, published and featured in articles in GRT publications and developed a collections database of *Nacken chaetrie* at the Highland Folk Museum (Appendix I).

Chapter 2: Exploring knowledge of *chaetrie*

2.1 Chapter introduction

Although this thesis does not seek to classify *chaetrie*, but to understand what material in museums might represent *Nacken*, this chapter examines literature that engages with and shares knowledge of *Nacken chaetrie* within and outwith museum collections. Despite Roma (among whom many *Nacken* do not personally identify, but among whom they are counted by the Council of Europe) being Europe's largest ethnic minority, and GRT being a significant minority ethnic group in the UK, there is a paucity of academic writing related to Roma and GRT material culture and less still about *chaetrie* in a Scottish context. The writing explored here is, therefore, drawn from a variety of contexts, including museum-based, academic, writing related to *Nacken* and from memoirs and other writings by *Nacken* and GRT from within Scotland and beyond it. This literature variously engages with *Nacken* items identified by curators in museum collections (usually at object-level or considering object-types), with academic and other discussions of the representation (or lack of representation) of GRT and Roma in museums and heritage more widely, and with *chaetrie* in lived experience contexts through memoir writing. There is also a consideration of writing and thinking on decolonisation, particularly around the contexts of museums and GRT, and also of other communities that are invisible in museums, in particular Indigenous populations in colonial contexts.

In this chapter I have taken a critical approach, which has involved asking '[w]hat is knowledge? Who owns knowledge? Who gets to be a so-called expert and who is worthy of being cited?'.²⁹ As such, alongside academic and other traditional scholarly material, this review draws upon *Nacken* knowledge as found in published works by *Nacken*. This is not only for critical reasons (in recognising the importance of *Nacken* epistemology in research intimately linked with *Nacken* subject matter) but for practical reasons. Although some basic identification of objects can be gleaned from museum publications, mentioned above, or from those Gypsyologists who wrote of *Nacken* lives in the past, this tends to be knowledge at object level. *Nacken* (as well as GRT) writing, however, offers insights not only into *chaetrie* but also attitudes to *chaetrie*, as well as wider aspects of *Nacken* (and GRT) knowledge.

The various texts drawn upon across this chapter offer insights into what is known (or not) about *Nacken* and *chaetrie* in museums, reflections on the absent presence of GRT in museums and other sites of history-telling, *Nacken* (and GRT) knowledge of *chaetrie* and

²⁹ M. T. Winn, "Foreword: reflections on research that is humanizing," in *Critical Theory in Qualitative Data Analysis in Education*, eds. R. Winkle-Wagner, J. Lee-Johnson and A. N. Gaskew (London: Routledge, 2019), viii.

attitudes to *chaetrie*, and the gaps across these areas towards the formation of research questions. The chapter opens with some insights into how the material culture of *Nacken* and how *Nacken* and *Nacken* culture are understood in museums and the wider heritage sector in Scotland. Following this, five sections explore how museum texts, academic works, *Nacken* writing, and discussions of decolonisation and Indigenisation relate to *chaetrie*, as well as a review of how *Nacken* origins are understood. These sections are outlined below.

The first section in this chapter provides an examination of what is known of *chaetrie* in Scottish museums, and GRT material in museums beyond Scotland, as conveyed in museum literature. In this section, published museum guides, catalogues and other writing related to collections (written variously by curators, academics and academic curators) offer insights into what is known of *chaetrie* and how it is conceptualised in museum contexts in Scotland and elsewhere.

The second section considers the wider picture of the representation of GRT in museums. This is drawn both from academic writing (by GRT academics and non-GRT academics), as well as from GRT writing in non-academic contexts. These writings largely describe the absence and invisibility of these already marginalised groups in museums (and wider heritage) contexts. As well as the lack of representation of GRT narratives in museum contexts, there is—in the Scottish context—a lack of engagement with these issues in academic writing. As such, this section closes with a short examination of the absence of academic engagement with *Nacken* history in Scotland.

In recognition of both the absence of detailed information on *Nacken chaetrie* in mainstream sources and of the richness of detail related to *chaetrie* in the published output of *Nacken*, the third section surveys *Nacken* knowledge of *chaetrie*. These works do not only contain knowledge of objects but also ‘an entirely different way of looking at life’.³⁰ This distinct knowledge system is explored, particularly in contexts relevant to museums, objects and collecting, as well as in the communication and transmission of knowledge. Including these alternative perspectives, which do ‘not quite inhabit the norms of [academia]’, helps to push ‘against the brick walls [...] of power’, as Sara Ahmed talks of ‘diversity work’.³¹

In order to be able to approach research in museums with an idea of what date-range of material is of relevance to this research, there follows a section on the origins of *Nacken*. Although no definitive conclusions have been reached (other than the need for fuller research in this area), certain time periods (and, by implication, associated material) are

³⁰ B. Whyte, *Red Rowans and Wild Honey* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1990), 183.

³¹ S. Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life* (London: Duke University Press, 2017), 91.

discounted from this study. Future research may expand the range of material in museums that could be considered relevant to *Nacken* lives and history.

The final section in this chapter reviews some key literature related to decolonisation and Indigenisation in relation to museums and to GRT. This section also draws upon writing that places museums in colonial and imperial contexts in order to understand tensions between the (imperial, colonial, settled) museum institutions and *Nacken*, their *chaetrie* and knowledge.

2.2 How *Nacken* and *Nacken* material culture are understood in the heritage sector in Scotland

In 1985 Ross Noble, curator of the Highland Folk Museum, introduced The T_____ Encampment exhibit with the following words: 'The museum is justifiably proud of this part of its Collections, for, although, folk-lorists have devoted considerable time and effort to collecting the stories, songs, and language of Scotland's travelling people, little has been preserved of their material culture'.³² Although I will argue that a considerable amount of material culture related to Scotland's Travelling populations reside in museums, I am not surprised that the perception was otherwise. Much of the *chaetrie* that exists in museums is likely unknown as-such to those working in museums. So, although *chaetrie* is present in museums across Scotland, I agree with the report by Historic Scotland (now part of Historic Environment Scotland) published in 2015 following the scheduling of the Tinkers' Heart. The Tinkers' Heart is a set of quartz stones set into an old road near the Rest and Be Thankful in Argyll, which is of significance to *Nacken*. When *Nacken* first approached Historic Scotland in 2012 to ask for it to be scheduled as an ancient monument, but the request was declined. Historic Scotland's initial assessment had been based on traditional forms of value (aesthetic, evidential and historic). Following an appeal, heard through the Scottish Parliament's Petitions Committee, Historic Scotland carried out a reassessment. As part of this, the social value of the site to *Nacken* was taken into account and it was scheduled as an ancient monument in June 2015. The report that was produced to support its scheduling states that '[t]here is widespread acknowledgement that more work is needed to promote and record the distinctive heritage of Travelling communities, both tangible and intangible'.³³

³² R. R. Noble, *Highland Folk Museum, Regional Museum of Country Life: Guide Book* (Inverness: Highland Regional Council, 1985), 7–8. The T_____ Encampment exhibit was put in place at the museum in 1976, this introduction to the exhibit features in a publication celebrating the museum's jubilee in 1985.

³³ G. Findlater, *Tinkers' Heart Scheduling Recommendation* (Edinburgh: Historic Scotland, 2015), 5, section 26. Available online: <https://www.historicenvironment.scot/media/3115/th-scheduling-recommendation.pdf>.

The quotations from Noble and Findlater, above, highlight that there is both a lack of knowledge about *Nacken* and *Nacken* culture, and a lack of acknowledgement of the presence of *Nacken* material not only in museums, but more widely in archaeology and across the heritage sector. The Roma Routes Report, which attempted to combat this lack of awareness, was published by Surrey Heritage in 2012 and has a section on Scotland.³⁴ This study was carried out in order to ‘put [GRT] culture on the map and to find ways of telling non-[Traveller] people about their way of life’.³⁵ Of around 170 museum services in Scotland at the time (representing over 400 museum sites), just twelve museum services and/or individual museums responded to the Roma Routes Survey. Of these, six responded about objects, as opposed to artworks, archive material, books or photographs.³⁶ No definitive number of objects related to GRT can be calculated from these returns, although they suggest a total of between forty and a hundred items across museums in Scotland at the time.³⁷ The effectiveness of this research was limited by both the timescales and resources in which it operated.³⁸ Linked to that, its methodology was by email survey and relied on institutions to a) respond to the email enquiry, b) be aware of artefacts or records in their collections with GRT connections, and c) not discriminate against objects’ GRT narratives. Despite the underreporting detected in this Roma Routes Report, it has provided a valuable tool for selecting case studies for this research and in providing an insight into how museums see their *Nacken* collections (see Chapter 3).

2.3 Museum-related writing about *chaetrie*

Beyond the Roma Routes Report, there are a small number of mostly museum-related publications that acknowledge and elaborate on *chaetrie* in the context of museum collections. The first discussion of examples in museums in Scotland was in Andrew McCormick’s 1906 *The Tinkler-Gypsies of Galloway*. McCormick devoted short sections in chapters on Billy Marshall and the Kilmaurs Marshalls to related items in museum collections. An account of the provenance of the horn mug made by Billy Marshall and the spoon made by his son were given, alongside a photograph of these in the Stewartry

³⁴ Surrey Heritage Roma Routes Project.

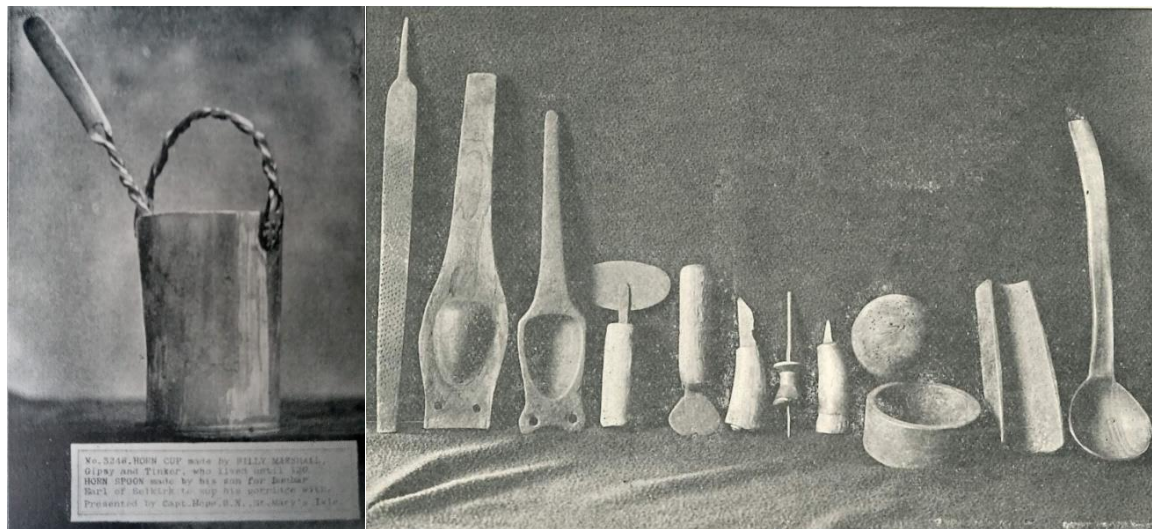
³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ A discussion of the scope of this thesis and why it does not engage with artworks or photographs featuring *Nacken*, follows in Chapter 3.

³⁷ This figure discounts any returns that relate to photographs, archival material or artworks. The Highland Folk Museum listed 22 objects, as well as mentioning two object types (basket work and hornware) for which they listed no specific examples and the bough tent. In addition, South Lanarkshire Museums listed a model Gypsy caravan and a vinyl record featuring music by the Gypsy Orchestra and Glasgow Museums (and Grampian Transport Museum) noted their Reading Van or Vardo. Auchindrain made a return that stated that it had no relevant objects. No other museums listed specific objects but the National Museums Scotland stated that it holds ‘a small number of three-dimensional objects, either made by or relating to Travelling people,’ Surrey Heritage Roma Routes Project.

³⁸ Surrey Heritage Roma Routes Project.

Museum in Kirkcudbright (figure 1).³⁹ McCormick also featured examples of the Kilmaurs hornworking tools and products that were in the Dick Institute in Kilmarnock at the time (figure 2), also providing details of what some of these were called and how they were used.⁴⁰ Additionally, he mentioned items in private collections.



Figures 1 and 2. Billy Marshall's horn mug and a spoon made by his son (left); and a selection of hornworking tools that once belonged to the Marshalls of Kilmaurs (right). Images from A. McCormick, *The Tinkler-Gypsies* (Dumfries: J. Maxwell and Son, 1907), 38 and 146.

Most of the remaining mentions of *chaetrie* held in Scottish museums, is found in publications linked to folk museums. In 1935, I.F. Grant founded the first folk museum in Scotland, the Highland Folk Museum. She wrote two works about the collection she assembled, *Highland Folk Ways* and *The Making of Am Fasgadh*. In the first of these, Grant mentioned *Nacken* and *chaetrie* across the chapters on 'Furnishings and Plenishings of Highland Houses' (in which she mentioned staved vessels, tin lanterns, horn spoons, tumblers and ladles and a tin brander for cooking fish),⁴¹ and 'The Craftsmen' (in which she discussed silver brooches, the work of silversmith, Alexander Stewart, a *skivver*, horn spoons and spoon moulds, powder-horns, silverware and tin-smithing tools, tinware, contemporary mending of tin and basket making, pearl-fishing, a homemade drone [for bagpipes], the making of a tent and the use of a snottum).⁴² In *Irish Folk Ways*, published four years before Grant's *Highland Folk Ways*, E. Estyn Evans similarly mentioned Irish Travellers (Mincéir) across two chapters, those on 'Home-made

³⁹ A. McCormick, *The Tinkler Gypsies* (Dumfries: J. Maxwell and Son, 1907), 37–8.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 145–7.

⁴¹ I. F. Grant, *Highland Folk Ways* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961), 180, 186, 188, 195.

⁴² *Ibid*, 247–9.

Things' and on 'Fairs and Other Gatherings'. In contrast to the many crafts and trades that Grant linked to *Nacken*, however, Evans only mentioned trade in horses, trade in scrap and the making of large creels.⁴³ In almost all mentions of Mincéir, Evans expressed negative attitudes towards these populations. We are told that they were 'sworn enemies of the farmers', although he did go on to tell us they were useful to the farmers' wives.⁴⁴ Evans marked out the itinerant creel-makers from the t____s, stating that the former were 'held in very low esteem, next above the hackler and t____'.⁴⁵ In the context of the fair, Evans included the curious warning that if 'a t____ takes a fancy to your horse you will be wise to sell, for "he will take the good out of it whether or not"'.⁴⁶

That Evans was unable to see Traveller objects even when present is revealed in his short text about the Irish dresser. In this he recounts that the bottom is open, containing 'the crocks, buckets or wooden stave-built vessels (piggins) for holding water or milk', while on the dresser 'are a few bits of "delph" and the tin mugs which have displaced the wooden noggins'.⁴⁷ Through knowledge imparted by visitors or her own observations, Grant knew all of the above mentioned items to be *Nacken*-made or traded: 'The t____s were said to have made the smaller staved vessels', '[t]he charming, gaily patterned milk bowls, some of them made in Perth, were till quite lately peddled round by t____s', 'I was always told that the t____s did a great trade in colourful bowls from Lowland potteries' and 'the t____s [...] turned out very serviceable tin-ware'.⁴⁸ Trade and craft in these areas by Travellers was not restricted to Scotland. As James Browne recounted to Sharon Gmelch, trade in delph and tinsmithing were among a range of occupations undertaken by Irish Travellers.⁴⁹ Claudia Kinmonth has also attributed the staved vessels (piggins and noggins) to itinerant craftworkers.⁵⁰ Although both Gmelch and Kinmonth's work is situated in the Republic of Ireland, it is likely that the Irish Travellers in Northern Ireland were engaged in similar trade and crafts, in fact families of Irish Travellers are known to have lived on both sides of the Irish border.⁵¹

⁴³ E. E. Evans, *Irish Folk Ways* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957), 207.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 200.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 207. It is possible that Evans' assertion that itinerant creel-makers are not t____s was a mistaken outside view. Those who studied with Mincéir in Ireland list basket-making among their crafts, see S. Gmelch, *T____ and Travellers: Ireland's Nomads* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1975), 30–32. I.F. Grant also noted basket making among the occupations or crafts of *Nacken*, see Grant, *Highland Folk Ways*, 249.

⁴⁶ Evans, *Irish Folk Ways*, 261.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 72.

⁴⁸ Grant, *Highland Folk Ways*, 175, 180, 249 and I. F. Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh* (Edinburgh: NMS Publishing, 2007), 116.

⁴⁹ S. Gmelch, *T____ and Travellers: Ireland's Nomads* (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1975), 28.

⁵⁰ C. Kinmonth, "Noggins, 'the nicest work of all': traditional Irish wooden vessels for eating and drinking," *Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies: Journal of the Irish Georgian Society* 18 (2015): 142.

⁵¹ N. Joyce, *Traveller: An Autobiography* (Dublin: Gil and Macmillan, 1985), 40.

Evans' negative tone contrasts to Grant's discussions of the contributions of *Nacken*. This may in part be because of the way in which the knowledge communicated in these two works was generated. Grant's book was written following twenty years running the Highland Folk Museum, learning from the objects and engaging with visitors—including *Nacken*—who encountered the collections. The knowledge she gathered through her visitors is presented alongside book-based research. In contrast, Evans' work predates the founding of the Ulster Folk Museum by a year, and the opening of the museum to the public by seven years. Evans, therefore, did not have Grant's opportunity to learn from museum visitors.⁵² Evans was also based in Belfast and it may be that his urban experience of Irish Travellers was distinct from Grant's rural experience in the Scottish Highlands. In Gmelch's work on Irish Travellers in the Republic of Ireland, she noted that Mincéir there were increasingly urbanised after the end of WWII and that some of the work they carried out caused friction with other city dwellers.⁵³ It should be noted that this experience was not universal, and Nan Joyce recounted being welcomed in Belfast in the 1950s and 60s.⁵⁴ Tensions between Mincéir and non-Mincéir, however, are reflected in Evans' work.

In *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, published posthumously in 2007, Grant included a range of details about *Nacken* and *chaetrie*, this time over a greater spread of chapters. Chapters on 'Iona', 'Perthshire and Angus', 'Workers in Wood and Iron', 'Other Crafts' and 'Kingussie' include mentions of *Nacken* and *chaetrie*. Across these chapters she recounted encounters with *Nacken*, including observations of a family who travelled by boat, *Nacken* visiting the museum, and an account of *Nacken* building a tent on the museum site.⁵⁵ She also acknowledged several *Nacken* occupations, including work in silver, horn, wood (staved vessels), their making of dirk handles, pearl-fishing and mending of tin.⁵⁶

Across both her works on the collections at the Highland Folk Museum, Grant mentioned generic object-types that *Nacken* were known to make or use as well as highlighting specific objects in the collection. Most of the generic mentions relate to object-types represented in the collection: staved vessels, horn spoons, ladles and tumblers, tin lanterns, pottery, dirk handles and powder-horns. Some of the items she mentioned, however, were not collected by her, including boats used by *Nacken* and tents. Although Grant included a chapter in *Highland Folk Ways* on 'Sea Fishing and Boats', this did not mention either the seafaring boats that the *Nacken* she observed in Iona used, nor the flat

⁵³ Gmelch, *T_____ and Travellers*, 44, 52.

⁵⁴ Joyce, *Traveller*, 31, 76.

⁵⁵ Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 36, 172, 128.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 127–8.

boats used by pearl-fishers.⁵⁷ During Grant's time, tents were temporarily represented on site, but none became a permanent feature of the open-air aspect of the museum.

Grant's Highland Folk Museum inspired others to develop folk collections elsewhere, including Greta Fairweather Michie in Glen Esk and Jean, Lady Maitland, in Glamis. Publications associated with both these collections mention examples of *chaetrie*, including tin lanterns and milk-house utensils, staved vessels and other vessels in wood and horn, clothes pegs, horn spoons, pottery traded by *Nacken*, as well as a portable anvil for shoeing horses.⁵⁸

A pamphlet, *Grist to the Mill*, which accompanied a display at the Agricultural Museum by the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland (NMAS) in 1981, has a section on T____-made baskets.⁵⁹ This includes some information from a local informant, John White, a *Nacken* basketmaker who worked in Edinburgh's Grassmarket during the 1950s and 60s. Although no mention is made in the pamphlet, the National Museums Scotland (which includes the collections of the NMAS) have a child's rattle made by John White, who is named in the online catalogue as Johnnie 'T____' White (SH.2000.113).

Common themes across these published works that refer to *chaetrie* in museum contexts include their links to folk collections, the focus on items traded by *Nacken* or on tools used by them and, conversely, the small number of details about personal objects. This is not to say that no collections existed outwith the folk museum context, but that objects in other collection contexts have not been written about as, and may not have been understood as, *chaetrie*. What it does mean is that the perception—from available museum publications—is that *chaetrie* is specifically associated with folk museums and that *Nacken* are inherently rural. The extent to which *Nacken* are considered to be rural is to some extent demonstrated in the way in which White's rattle is displayed. Although John

⁵⁷ An image of a pearl-fisher in one of these boats can be found in D. M. Duncan, "Caesar was in search of pearls," *Scotland* 2, no. 2 (1936): 38. A related image appears in I. MacLean, "The Pearl Fishers: the search for Scottish river pearls," in *The Complete Odyssey: Voices from Scotland's Recent Past* ed. B. Kay (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1996), 172; Betsy Whyte described her father's flat-bottomed boat in B. Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom* (Edinburgh: Chambers, 1979), 22; Sandy Stewart also described boats used by *Nacken* in R. Leitch, ed., *The Book of Sandy Stewart* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1988), 42. Although Grant considered the seafaring *Nacken* that she encountered on Iona to be 'unusual', *Nacken* often travelled between islands on boats, see: D. F. Ranking, "A Family of Shelta-speaking and Romani-speaking Highland T____s," *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* 2 (1890), 319; S. Stewart, *Queen Among the Heather: The Life of Belle Stewart* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2006), 48; D. Williamson, *Tales of the Seal People* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1992), 35; R. S. Crearie, "Caravan people and sea T____s: types and circuits of the wandering folk," *Scotsman*, October 08, 1958; Neat, *The Summer Walkers*, 48.

⁵⁸ M. F. Michie, *Glenesk: The History and Culture of an Angus Community*, eds. A. Fenton and J. Beech (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2000), 212; V. McAlister and J. Compton, *Angus Folk Museum* (Edinburgh: National Trust for Scotland, 1994), 13; H. Cheape and G. Sprott, *Angus Country Life: A Companion to the Angus Folk Museum, Glamis* (Edinburgh: National Trust for Scotland, 1980), 30, 35.

⁵⁹ A. Fenton, *Grist to the Mill* (Edinburgh: National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, 1981), 40.

White was known for making and selling wicker ware in the urban context of Edinburgh's Grassmarket, his rattle is displayed at the National Museum of Countrylife.

In several instances in the works examined here, the information presented by the museum has not been linked to specific items in the collection. This vagueness is perhaps due to concerns over stating links where there are no verifiable connections, such as between *Nacken* trade and specific items of pottery in collections. In the case of the NMAS publication, more words (memories and information) were collected from John White than objects, so in a section on baskets, information from White was included but no mention was made of the single (non-basket) item that had been collected from him.

Despite the identification of examples of *chaetrie* in writing related to folk collections, this has had little impact on how similar material is understood, recorded, written about and interpreted in other museums. There is no literature offering an overview of *chaetrie* in museums and what writing there is presents a limited view both in terms of the range of museums and material considered. *Nacken* agency in museum collections is also largely missing from accounts. Both McCormick and Grant offer examples of interactions between *Nacken* and museums or other collectors, but these short anecdotes are undeveloped.⁶⁰

2.4 Academic literature – an exploration of absence

Beyond writing that has come from museums, there is a small body of relevant academic literature. With next to no academic texts specifically on *chaetrie* in museum collections, the writing analysed here is drawn from beyond Scotland. This literature mainly relates to the representation of GRT peoples in museums and heritage more widely. In this body of work, the authors overwhelmingly discuss the absence of these peoples from the narratives presented in museums. In a report aiming to encourage Gypsies and Travellers to be able to access museums, libraries and archives in the South-East of England, Jake Bowers states,

[t]he community feels not so much barred or actively discriminated against as omitted—or written out of local and national British history. Some might argue this is a far more insidious and powerful form of racism. Those who write a nation's history, or even present a nation's history, have the power to consign individuals and entire communities into the limelight or the shadows.⁶¹

The nation's history referred to by Bowers is told across local and regional as well as national museums. The exclusion of these narratives is perhaps because, as Jodie Matthews has pointed out, 'Romani identity potentially complicates conservative notions of

⁶⁰ Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 36, 128, 172; Grant, *Highland Folk Ways*, 248–9; McCormick, *The Tinkler-Gypsies*, 145.

⁶¹ J. Bowers, *Private Past, Public Future* (Hastings: Gypsy Media Company, 2007), 21.

national identity in Britain'.⁶² In Ireland, this absence has also been noted in heritage interpretation. Mincéir and sociologist, Sindy Joyce, observes that in Galway the 'historical denial of Traveller ethnicity has permitted local authorities to either deliberately or subconsciously render the historical presence of Travellers and Traveller culture in the urban area invisible'.⁶³

In a more specific example, Jo Clement, British Gypsy writer and researcher, in her thesis on 'the depiction and concealment of Traveller life in Thomas Bewick's engraved "tail-pieces"',⁶⁴ recalled her,

walk beside the imposing railings of the Ironwork Gallery [in the V&A]. This diverse assemblage is a public display of fortification: architectural ramparts, ornate locks and their keys, iron both wrought and cast to communicate a clear message: *Keep Out*.⁶⁵

Here Clement expresses discomfort and feelings of being excluded in her proximity to these symbols of landownership and the shutting out of her people, displayed in a museum context. In the pamphlet, *Moveable Type*, an output of Clement's practice-led PhD, this theme is developed in the poem, 'Ironwork, V&A'.⁶⁶ As well as noting that the items displayed were used to lock out Romani Gypsies, she notes the absence of the homelier iron items that might have represented her people:

But the iron pots we wrought, have not weathered here
or found their place amongst the crested railings, locked gates⁶⁷

Underlying the poem is Clement's awareness that, for all the apparent exclusion of GRT objects, it is likely that among the items displayed in the V&A's Ironwork Gallery, some will have been made by Gypsy, Roma or Traveller smiths. Although the V&A would normally only refer to known or nameable makers, without discussion of their ethnicity of background, Clement feels another layer of exclusion here.⁶⁸

Moving beyond the strictly academic, two publications on the representation (or lack of) of Mincéir in Irish museums and heritage include a mixture of academic, curatorial, activist, artist, ethnographer, practitioner and community contributions. These are *A Heritage Ahead*, published by Pavee Point in 1995, and *Traveller Collection at the Hugh Lane Gallery*, published in 2020. Across the very broad range of perspectives presented, terms

⁶² Matthews, "Where are the Romanies?": 84.

⁶³ S. Joyce, "Mincéirs Siúladh: An ethnographic study of young Travellers' experiences of urban space" (PhD. diss., University of Limerick, 2018), 151.

⁶⁴ S. O'Brien, "Foreword," in J. Clement, *Moveable Type* (Newcastle: New Writing North, 2020), iii.

⁶⁵ J. Clement, "Moveable Type: How might a contemporary ekphrastic practice illuminate Traveller representations in Thomas Bewick's tail-piece prints?" (PhD diss., University of Newcastle, 2019), 179.

⁶⁶ J. Clement, *Moveable Type* (Newcastle: New Writing North, 2020), 16.

⁶⁷ Extract from 'Ironwork, V&A', in Clement, *Moveable Type*, 16. Included here with the permission of Dr Jo Clement.

⁶⁸ J. Clement, *pers. comm.*, July 20, 2021.

such as ‘unrecorded’, ‘silence’, ‘invisibility’ or ‘invisible’, ‘excluded’, or ‘cultural denial’ set the tone.⁶⁹ Although *Traveller Collection at the Hugh Lane Gallery* refers to a tinsmithing display at the ‘Museum of Country Life, opened in Mayo in 2001’,⁷⁰ and a ‘permanent Traveller exhibition’ at Cork Public Museum, the main message is of absence, from history writing and also representation in museums.⁷¹ Where there is presence in museums and archives, a linked concern is expressed regarding the absence of Traveller perspectives.⁷²

In his introduction to his book of Traveller stories Oein deBhairduin, a Mincéir and contributor to the Hugh Lane Gallery publication, elaborates on the exclusion of Irish Travellers from processes of national narrative-making in Ireland:

The hallways and archives of our national institutions—the National Folklore Collection, the National Library and the National Museum—brim with beautiful recordings, research, photographs and manuscripts about us. However, most of this was gathered by settled people rather than by Travellers. This took the recording and presenting of our culture out of our control and denied us the opportunity to contextualise it. The vast majority of what the settled community believe they know about Travellers comes from other settled people and, in the light of our history, this needs to be challenged. The importance of the cultural jewels of a marginalised community being reclaimed and retold by its members cannot be overstated.⁷³

The omission of these narratives is in part due to the exclusion of these populations from roles in heritage institutions and from the processes in which museums record and interpret collections.⁷⁴ Talking more widely of international Roma experiences, David Gaunt states that ‘[i]n most countries the Roma have little influence over the schools and textbooks, national museums, TV, radio, and other major media—all of which are essential for creating, disseminating, and repeating an official version of the past’.⁷⁵

Lack of representation in museums has, in one museum in Norway, led to the ‘slow and uncertain process’ to ‘secur[e] a forgotten national minority’s rights to their own culture’.⁷⁶ These quotations come from an article about a long-term project at Glomdal Museum in Elverum in which the museum worked with (and continues to work with) representatives of

⁶⁹ Ní Laodhóg, ed., *A Heritage Ahead*, 7, 15, 23, 24; Nolan ed., *Traveller Collection*, 8, 35, 60.

⁷⁰ Nolan ed., *Traveller Collection*, 66.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 28.

⁷² M. Collins contribution in ‘Selected transcript from round table discussion in Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre, 21 June 2018’, in Nolan ed., *Traveller Collection*, 34–5.

⁷³ O. DeBhairduin, *Why the Moon Travels* (Dublin: Skein Press, 2020), viii.

⁷⁴ It is hoped that things may be beginning to change and in February 2022, Oein DeBhairduin joined the National Museum of Ireland in a temporary post as Traveller Culture Collections Development Officer. Here in Scotland, the positive change to *Nacken* representation at Auchindrain, which has been made possible through the employment of Kathy Townsley McGuigan is discussed in Chapter 6.

⁷⁵ Gaunt, “Historians and Roma activists,” 41.

⁷⁶ Å. A. Brekke, “Coffee and cigarettes: on trust-building processes between the Norwegian Government and the Romani Traveller community,” in *Challenging History in the Museum: International Perspectives*, eds. J. Kidd, S. Cairns, A. Drago and A. Ryall (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2014), 116.

the Norwegian Romani/Tater communities to develop an exhibition about their history.⁷⁷ Even in articles about this rare project to make Romani/Tater lives more visible, however, words such as ‘invisibility’, ‘forgotten’, ‘marginalised’ and ‘absent’ are still in evidence.⁷⁸ The case studies of this exhibition by Mari Møystad and Åshild Brekke are welcome in offering examples of how museums can work with culturally nomadic populations. These projects, however, are presented as models, transferable to museum work with a range of marginal groups. While this is an important use of these case studies, it is also vital for museums to consider building on the small number of projects that happen, and develop relationships and engagement, with GRT.

Another work, which takes a wider view, beginning with general observations about nomadic and migrant heritages, concludes that museum structures are at odds with mobile heritages.⁷⁹ Although this work engages more directly with migration than nomadism (the focus is the ‘global nomad’, those who migrate from point A to point B, rather than those whose movement is an ongoing and cultural aspect of their lives), it does support observations of the silencing of nomadic voices and stories. The authors state that:

Dominant forms of heritage have been complicit in the construction and perpetuation of this exemplary notion of the nation state based on ideologies of territorial rootedness and the stability of sedentism. Heritage has thus often been an arena for silencing other, mobile or nomadic, forms of living with and relating to the past that might now call its hegemony in question.⁸⁰

Another work, by a co-author of the above, also draws on the tensions between ‘nomadic thinking’ and ‘place-bound heritage’, although it too distances itself from ‘specific social groups manifesting certain nomadic traits’.⁸¹ It is of interest, however, because in reviewing ethnographies of the relationship between some nomadic groups and heritage practices, Appelgren finds that,

[a nomadic] relationship to the past and to place differs in significant ways from the expectations of the global heritage regime [...] and can thus partly shed some light

⁷⁷ Ibid, 115–22. This exhibition is also discussed in two further articles published in English: Å. A. Brekke, “A question of trust: addressing historical injustices with Romani people,” in *Museums and Communities: Collections and Collaboration*, eds. V. Golding and W. Modest (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 178–92; M. Ø. Møystad, “‘Latjo Drom’ – the good journey? The Glomdal Museum’s engagement with the culture and history of Romani/Travellers,” in *Towards New Relations Between the Museum and Society*, eds. K. Pabst, E. D. Johansen and M. Ipsen (Oslo: ICOM Norway, 2016), 109–29.

⁷⁸ Brekke, “Coffee and cigarettes”, 115, 116; Brekke, “A question of trust”, 178, 179, 185, 186; Møystad, “‘Latjo Drom’”, 110.

⁷⁹ R. Harrison, S. Appelgren and A. Bohlin, “Belonging and belongings: on migrant and nomadic heritages in and for the Anthropocene,” in *The New Nomadic Age: Archaeologies of Forced and Undocumented Migrations*, ed. Y. Hamilakis (Sheffield: Equinox, 2018).

⁸⁰ Ibid, 5.

⁸¹ S. Appelgren, “Heritage, territory and nomadism: theoretical reflections,” in *Vägskälens kul-turarv – kulturarv vid vägskäl. Om att skapa plats för romer och resande i kulturarvet* ed. I. M. Homberg (Gothenburg: Makadam Förlag), 243, 244.

on the challenges official heritage institutions face when setting out to recognize the heritage of these groups.⁸²

He goes on to warn against “heritagizing the nomad” [... which] would run the risk of [...] extending sedentism and the territorializing form of heritage’, seeing nomadic peoples as being in direct opposition to heritage processes.⁸³

One of the points that Matthews makes in her work on the absent presence of Romanies in (mainly) written histories of the British Isles is that the system in which these works are written and published is racist (systemic or institutional), rather than the individual writers who omit these histories from their writing.⁸⁴ Consequently, Mathews offers no specific examples of history books that neglect to mention Romanies. While I would agree with this point, I will offer up one example from museological literature that overlooks Romanies, not to point out racist bias in its omission, but because it demonstrates the level of absence of these populations in thinking and writing around museums. *Museum Activism*, published in 2019, offers a ‘wide-ranging’ discussion of museum practice that ‘address[es] inequalities, injustice and environmental challenges’.⁸⁵ This publication is clearly rooted in social justice agendas and includes chapters on decolonising, refugees, working class history, queer activism, Holocaust memorial institutions and much more, across a total of thirty-four essays. This is not a racist work. The index, however, does not include Roma/ Romanies/ Gypsies/ Travellers and the single occurrences of the words ‘Roma’ and ‘Romani’ in the body of the work appears in a statement that qualifies who the victims of the Nazi genocide were: ‘the Jews, the Roma of Eastern and Southeast European origin, the Sinti (Romani minority groups living in Western and Central Europe), homosexuals, and other persecuted groups’.⁸⁶ There is no further elaboration or indication of work with or representation of these groups. This is despite Roma being the largest minority ethnic group in Europe as well as its most disadvantaged.⁸⁷ Although the publication aims to be inspirational rather than encyclopaedic, the engagement with GRT populations sits in the ‘untapped potential’ of museums, rather than among the ‘extraordinary range’ of work currently undertaken.⁸⁸

⁸² Ibid, 249.

⁸³ Ibid, 253.

⁸⁴ Matthews, “Where are the Romanies?”: 82.

⁸⁵ R. R. Janes and R. Sandell, eds., *Museum Activism* (London: Routledge, 2019), i.

⁸⁶ D. I. Popescu, “Memory activism and the Holocaust memorial institutions of the 21st century,” in Janes and Sandell, *Museum Activism*, 329. It should be noted that museums have been criticised in the last decade for not properly acknowledging the murder of Roma and Sinti during the Holocaust, see “Gypsy Council wins victory in the fight for more rights and recognition of the Roma Holocaust,” *Travellers Times*, August 11, 2016.

⁸⁷ M. Bona, “How widespread is anti-Roma prejudice?,” *Voxeurop*, August 06, 2018.

⁸⁸ Janes and Sandell, *Museum Activism*, i, iii. It should be noted that one of the contributing authors to this volume, Brekke, is author of two of the works cited earlier in relation to the engagement project and

In academic writing in Scotland, the history of *Nacken* is under-researched. In her monograph on Scottish Gypsy and Traveller girls in education, Geetha Marcus offers an overview of pre- and post-devolution (1998) research related to GRT. She has found that pre-devolution works focus on English, Welsh and Irish contexts, while in the post-devolution context most work on Scottish Gypsy/Travellers relates to education, health and employment.⁸⁹ This more recent focus is understandable in the context of the life experiences of GRT peoples, for whom these issues reflect the inequalities that immediately impact day-to-day life. This is expressed well by Rosaleen McDonagh, who has said of Irish Travellers, ‘within our community sometimes, and rightly so, art [and museums] would be the last thing on our agenda, because we have to fight for our basic human rights’.⁹⁰ This, then leaves a gap in research in Scotland around Gypsy/Traveller representation in museums and heritage.

As Marcus also pointed out in her research, ‘[t]here is very little new or recent research on the history [...] of Gypsies and Travellers in Scotland’.⁹¹ The problems arising from this lack of academic engagement with the history of *Nacken*, are further elaborated on in section 2.6 of this chapter.

The academic literature that engages with GRT representation in museums tends to either reflect an absence of representation or an absence of involvement in that representation. A further level of absence regarding GRT in heritage is evident in Scotland, where there has been found to be an absence of discussion of *Nacken* in academic scholarship in the areas of history, heritage and museums.

2.5 *Nacken* knowledge

One of the main reasons for the absent presence of *Nacken* in museums and heritage, as identified by George Findlater, is the lack of work ‘promot[ing] and record[ing] the distinctive heritage of [*Nacken*], both tangible and intangible’.⁹² But it would be wrong to state that, beyond writing associated with folk museums, there is nothing written about Gypsy/Traveller material culture in Scotland. This section seeks to situate my research in an understanding of *chaetrie* as described and recognised by *Nacken*. In seeking to

exhibition at Glomdal Museet. A choice has been made here, however, by the author or editors, to highlight a different aspect of museum activism.

⁸⁹ G. Marcus, *Gypsy and Traveller Girls: Silence, Agency and Power* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 44–6.

⁹⁰ R. McDonagh, contribution in “Selected transcript from round table discussion in Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre, 21 June 2018,” in *Traveller Collection at the Hugh Lane Gallery*, ed. S. Nolan (Dublin: Hugh Lane, 2020), 37. McDonagh makes it clear in the fuller transcript that when she refers to ‘art’, she is also referring to museums.

⁹¹ Marcus, *Gypsy and Traveller Girls*, 44.

⁹² Findlater, *Tinkers’ Heart Scheduling Recommendation*, 5, section 26.

unsettle my own perspective and that of curators in museums in Scotland, this review examines the *Nacken* knowledge that frames the research that follows.

There are few openly *Nacken* academics writing about GRT experiences in Scotland, although Professor Colin Clark has written works cited here for their insights into the origins and geographic location of Gypsies and Travellers across the Britain and Ireland, their occupational niches, as well as on the racism faced by GRT in Scotland.⁹³ He has also written and contributed to two pieces on decolonisation and GRT. These pieces are not specifically about museums but have relevance to them and are discussed later (see section 2.7).⁹⁴ A few works by *Nacken* contributors can also be found in scholarly publications, including Stanley Robertson's article on "Scottish Travelling People" in *The Individual and Community Life*, part of the Compendium of Scottish Ethnology, and Willie Reid's essay, "Scottish Gypsies/Travellers and the folklorists," in *Romani Culture and Gypsy Identity*.⁹⁵ This section, however, will additionally draw on texts produced beyond strictly academic contexts.

Just as Indigenous knowledge is acknowledged to contribute useful and unique perspectives to policy and thinking on climate change and other aspects of conservation and sustainability, so *Nacken* knowledge is called upon here to inform research into the material culture of Gypsy/Travellers in Scottish museums.⁹⁶ Written works by *Nacken*, in a variety of forms, provide unique knowledge and insights into the identification of objects, as well as understanding the distinct attitudes and value *Nacken* have towards material culture. The recent recognition of alternative, or Indigenous, knowledge systems in museums is exemplified in Margo Neale and Lynne Kelly's work, *Songlines: The Power*

⁹³ Kenrick and Clark, *Moving On*, 20, 24–6, 51; Clark and Greenfields, *Here to Stay*, 15–6; C. Clark, "Not just lucky white heather and clothes pegs: putting European Gypsy and Traveller economic niches in context," in *Ethnicity and Economy: Race and Class Revisited*, eds., C.S Fenton and H.K. Bradley London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 183–98; C. Clark, "Sites, welfare and 'barefoot begging': Roma and Gypsy/Traveller experiences of racism in Scotland," in *No Problem Here: Racism in Scotland*, eds. N. Davidson, M. Liinpa, M. McBride and S. Virdee (Edinburgh: Luath Press, 2018), 145–161.

⁹⁴ C. Clark, "'If you build it ...' On decolonising Romani knowledge, history and practice—the launch of the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture," *Coalition for Racial Equality and Rights* (June 08, 2017) <https://www.crer.scot/post/2017/06/08/guest-blog-if-you-build-it-on-decolonising-romani-knowledge-history-and-practice-the>; E. Brooks, C. Clark and I. Rostas, "Engaging with decolonisation, tackling antigypsyism: lessons from teaching Romani Studies at the Central European University in Hungary," *Social Policy and Society* 3 (2021): 1–12.

⁹⁵ S. Robertson, "Scottish Travelling People," in *The Individual and Community Life* eds. J. Beech, O. Hand, M. A. Mulhern and J. Weston (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2005), 313–28; W. Reid, "Scottish Gypsy/Travellers and the folklorists," in *Romani Culture and Gypsy Identity*, ed. T. Acton and G. Mundy (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 1997), 31–9.

⁹⁶ For example, the work of Zoe Todd, an 'expert in Indigenous perspectives on freshwater fish conservation'. Todd shares her publications, philosophy and perspectives on her website: <https://fishphilosophy.org/> [Accessed October 14, 2021]. Todd also speaks to alternative ontologies, see in particular, Z. Todd, "An indigenous feminist's take on the ontological turn: 'Ontology' is just another word for Colonialism," in *Journal of Historical Sociology* 29, no. 1, (2016): 4–22.

and Promise.⁹⁷ This is the first in a series published in conjunction with the National Museum of Australia, recognising Aboriginal Knowledge (or First Knowledges, as the series is called). One of the authors, Margo Neale, writes from the perspective of embedding 'Aboriginal culture and knowledge in the museum context'.⁹⁸ Although work to bring 'alternative knowledges' into museums is currently 'theorised and debated within the context of activism', it is proposed that 'this collaborative and integrated approach to knowledge creation' will be a more fully integrated and accepted part of museum practice in the future.⁹⁹

Like Aboriginal people, about whom the 'prevailing assumptions' are that 'we [...] had [...] no knowledge system, no history, only myths and legends', *Nacken* are also presented as a people without a written history.¹⁰⁰ However, in addition to a rich oral tradition, since 1979—when the first *Nacken* memoir was published—there is a growing body of *Nacken* literature. Many of these are memoirs or collections of stories and songs, reflective of what Sheila Stewart has referred to as the legacy of tales and ballads that has been gathered and transmitted across generations and, in turn, centuries.¹⁰¹ These texts offer insights not only into the everyday *chaetrie* of *Nacken* lives but also into the attitudes *Nacken* have towards possessions and material things, as well as to the environment, the authorities and identity. These works represent 'a separate and distinct way of perceiving life and the world, as opposed to that of "official" society'.¹⁰² As Sheila Stewart wrote, 'we have our own knowledge'.¹⁰³

Nacken memoirs and other writings have been useful in shaping my own understanding of what might be considered *chaetrie*, as well as how *Nacken* relate to authoritative institutions, among which museums can be counted. Some also directly recount interactions between *Nacken* and museums.¹⁰⁴ Others provide a history of *Nacken* in Scotland or elements of *Nacken* history.¹⁰⁵ *Nacken* memoirs have not only been important in introducing *Nacken* voices, but also women's voices. This is important as it corrects 'an

⁹⁷ M. Neale and L. Kelly, *Songlines: The Power and Promise* (Melbourne: Thames and Hudson, 2020).

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 4.

⁹⁹ M. McFadzean, L. Dale-Hallett, T. Mauri and K. Moulton, "Inside out/outside in: museums and communities activating change," in Janes and Sandell, *Museum Activism*, 263

¹⁰⁰ Neale and Kelly, *Songlines*, 3; Reid, "Scottish Gypsy/Travellers and the folklorists," 36.

¹⁰¹ S. Stewart, *A Traveller's Life* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2011), 108.

¹⁰² Hamish Henderson quoting from Gramsci's *Letteratura e Vita Nazionale* (presumably Henderson's translation): H. Henderson, "It was in you that it a' began.' Some thoughts on the Folk Conference", in *The People's Past: Scottish Folk, Scottish History*, ed. E. J. Cowan (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1980), 13.

¹⁰³ Stewart, *A Traveller's Life*, 150.

¹⁰⁴ Leitch, *The Book of Sandy Stewart*, 80; E. Stewart, *Up Yon Wide and Lonely Glen: Travellers' Songs, Stories and Tunes of the Fetterangus Stewarts*, ed. A. McMorland (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012), 13.

¹⁰⁵ Robertson, "Scottish Travelling People," 313–28; J. Smith, *The Way of the Wanderers* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2012); S. McPhee, *Heroes ... or Raj Hantle?* (Perth: Perth and Kinross Council, 2015).

authored gender imbalance' in '[a]ccounts of Scottish Gypsy and Traveller life [by outsiders]'.¹⁰⁶

It should also be noted that *Nacken* memoirs and story collections are important cultural repositories. As DeBhairduin has noted of the Irish context, 'Travellers [... keep] custody of songs, crafts and tales that contain unique understandings of our time and place'.¹⁰⁷ This could equally be applied to *Nacken* in Scotland, as Willie Reid describes *Nacken* as 'custodians of traditional culture', which not only consists of 'treasures that have been preserved throughout the centuries' but which preserves the 'distinctiveness of Gypsy/Traveller culture and identity'.¹⁰⁸ Writing of the European Roma, Michael Stewart (a non-Roma anthropologist) has observed, they have 'not had much access to public space for [...] cultural activity', which instead takes place elsewhere.¹⁰⁹ But Stewart rejects the idea that Roma are a people with no history. He talks of 'memories as possessions'.¹¹⁰ This resonates with the work of Sheila Stewart, who uses terms more usually associated with objects—such as gift, legacy, inheritance or collecting—for stories, songs, language and culture.¹¹¹ Michael Stewart's assertion of the importance of 'autobiographical memory' to a Roma sense of history,¹¹² and his identification of memories as possessions, suggests that *Nacken* memoirs (and stories) might be considered one of the spaces where *Nacken* culture takes place—a place where memories (as objects) are kept.

Delaine Le Bas has pointed out that people who are nomadic share knowledge in a very different way to people who are settled.¹¹³ The use of storytelling to pass on knowledge is both explicit and implicit in *Nacken* writing. As Duncan Williamson tells us 'stories were told and retold and passed on, stories were the education'.¹¹⁴ Williamson and others have also written about the importance of education about and from nature.¹¹⁵ Care for nature is also both explicitly and implicitly communicated in *Nacken* writing. In her memoir, Jess Smith recalls her mother's words that '[w]hen travelling folks camp in the countryside they just leave it as they found it, nothing taken, or abused. You see, this would offend Mother

¹⁰⁶ Marcus, *Gypsy and Traveller Girls*, 2. This is also noted in Brooks, Clark and Rostas, "Engaging with decolonisation, tackling antigypsyism": 3.

¹⁰⁷ DeBhairduin, *Why the Moon Travels*, vii.

¹⁰⁸ Reid, "Scottish Gypsy/Travellers and the folklorists," 37–8.

¹⁰⁹ M. Stewart, "Remembering without commemoration: the mnemonics and politics of Holocaust memories among European Roma," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 10, no. 3 (2004): 571.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 573.

¹¹¹ Stewart, *A Traveller's Life*. This is discussed in greater depth in Chapter 6 of this thesis.

¹¹² Stewart, "Remembering without commemoration": 572.

¹¹³ Delaine Le Bas, speaking at an event, "Rewriting the archive with Southend Museums," as part of the Essex Book Festival (June 17, 2021).

¹¹⁴ D. and L. Williamson, *The Genie and the Fisherman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 8.

¹¹⁵ D. Williamson, *The Horsie-man: Memories of a Traveller 1928–1958* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1994), 16; S. Robertson, *Reek Roon a Camp Fire* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2009), 106–10.

Nature'.¹¹⁶ Jess Smith, as well as writing memoirs based on her life as a *Nacken* and on the history of *Nacken*, has also contributed to a collection of nature and environmental writing.¹¹⁷ Similarly, the poetry of David Morley, an English Romani poet, ecologist and naturalist, not only explores themes related to his Gypsy heritage but also of environmental concerns and the natural world,¹¹⁸ while Sheila Stewart's activism was not only in support of *Nacken* rights but widened to issues such as disarmament.¹¹⁹

Like the value of nature in the works of *Nacken*, the value of stories and songs is not just told to us, but demonstrated, as they are present in almost all types of *Nacken* writing. In addition to the many books of *Nacken* stories, most *Nacken* memoirs, life stories, histories, biographies and autobiographies written by and/or about *Nacken* have stories (and sometimes songs) interspersed throughout the text.¹²⁰ In one story, told by Stanley Robertson, necessity, invention and wisdom are pitted against the (evil) Green Gadgie (non-*Nacken*) of Knowledge.¹²¹ Here, *Nacken* values and knowledge systems are seen in opposition to settled ones; wisdom learned through living and doing is valued more highly than schooled knowledge.

One of the reasons that it is important to look at what *Nacken* say about material culture is that *Nacken* appear to display attitudes to things that are at odds with those of non-*Nacken*. For example, Roger Leitch tells us that 'Sandy [Stewart]'s outlook resembled that of an older philosopher at variance with the modern ideals of a materialistic age'.¹²² Similarly, David Campbell noted that Duncan Williamson had a 'total lack of regard for possessions' and Timothy Neat describes Travellers as having an 'unpropertied lifestyle'.¹²³ This is also reflected in the writing of Betsy Whyte, who published the first *Nacken* memoir, *The Yellow on the Broom*, in 1979. In this work she recounts that '[f]ew travellers put much value on any material thing', going on to describe things that are

¹¹⁶ J. Smith, *Jessie's Journey* (Edinburgh: Mercat, 2002), 51.

¹¹⁷ J. Smith, "The Ruling Class", in *Antlers of Water*, ed. K. Jamie (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2020), 195–204.

¹¹⁸ D. Morley, *Fury* (Manchester: Carcanet, 2020).

¹¹⁹ Stewart describes her activism around Gypsy/Traveller rights in S. Stewart, *A Traveller's Life* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2011), 148, 223. A photograph of Stewart attending a protest alongside a group with placards proclaiming 'Make Homes – Not Arms' on June 01, 1982, can be found in S. Stewart, *An Ancient Oral Culture* (Ratray: Sheila Stewart, 2000), 33.

¹²⁰ Leitch, *The Book of Sandy Stewart*; Robertson, *Reek Roon a Camp Fire*; Smith, *The Way of the Wanderers*; E. Stewart, *Up Yon Wide and Lonely Road: Travellers' Songs, Stories and Tunes of the Fetterangus Stewarts*, ed. A. McMorland (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012); Stewart, *An Ancient Oral Culture*; Stewart, *Queen Among the Heather*; Stewart, *A Traveller's Life*.

¹²¹ Robertson, *Reek Roon a Camp Fire*, 17–27.

¹²² Leitch, *The Book of Sandy Stewart*, xvii.

¹²³ D. Campbell and D. Williamson, *A Traveller in Two Worlds, vol. 1* (Edinburgh: Luath Press, 2011), 9; Neat, *The Summer Walkers*, 195.

treasured but given away, as well as proscriptions against hoarding and selfishness, and the *Nacken* tradition of burning the possessions of the dead.¹²⁴

Early in the book, she tells us,

Few eyes were free of tears as we went our different ways. The women gave each other earrings or brooches or whatever most treasured possessions they had. The men were doing the same: handing over treasured whippets, even offering their bagpipes, and blessing each other before taking their leave.¹²⁵

This recollection of the giving and exchange of things when two families part after some weeks camped together, resonates with descriptions found elsewhere. For example, Sharon Gmelch observed this among Irish Travellers:

Possessions [...] are frequently changed. Adults and children alike often “swap” or trade their belongings including carts, horses, radios, clothing, rings and religious medals. One cart had four different owners in two months. And Red Mick’s accordion [*sic*] changed hands five times before it came back to him in a swap. Travellers even trade their shoes and boots [...] Travellers tire of their possessions quickly. Hence, if an item is not swapped, it might be discarded after a period of time. John Maugham once praised a pair of boots he had purchased, “I had ‘em for nine months and they were still as good as the day I bought them”. When asked what happened to the boots, he replied, “I gave ‘em away [...] just got tired of lookin’ at ‘em”.¹²⁶

Peter Goodwin (not a *Nacken* but who writes of knowledge gained from *Nacken*) noted similar attitudes in the home of Mary McCormick, in which ‘a casual disregard for material things meant [...] nearly everything was replaced at least once a year from the local auction sales’.¹²⁷ Michael Stewart similarly found that ‘in everyday life objects of daily use are passed on to others, almost as if with the deliberate intention of preventing them from acquiring the smell and feel of the past’.¹²⁸

Nacken have been shown to have different attitudes to material culture and a largely non-materialistic approach to stuff. However, although in Sheila Stewart’s work *chaetrie* is all but absent, in most *Nacken* memoirs objects are present in the stories of their lives. These objects might form a less stable presence, but they are there. *Nacken* memoirs provide useful insights into some specific aspects of *chaetrie*. Although the *chaetrie* found across the published output of and about *Nacken* is too much to list here, there are some key aspects. Reading across a number of texts it is possible to trace recurring object types as well as areas of differentiation, for example between tent types and a non-standardisation

¹²⁴ Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom*, 104, 131, 132, 176. The direct quotation can be found on page 132.

¹²⁵ *Ibid*, 13.

¹²⁶ Gmelch, *T_____ and Travellers*, 96. Swapping is also noted by Sandy Stewart in Leitch, *The Book of Sandy Stewart*, 36.

¹²⁷ P. J. Goodwin, *The River and the Road: Journal of a Freshwater Pearl-fisher* (London: Robert Hale, 1985), 74–5.

¹²⁸ Stewart, “Remembering without commemoration,” 566.

of tools. The importance of *chaetrie*, however, seems to be less about the objects themselves but in the way they manifest aspects of culture. For example, musical instruments are valued because music creates a space for entertainment and for the sharing of story and song, as well as being a means by which to make a living.¹²⁹ This way of making a living was (and is for some still) a cultural approach to making money, that allowed *Nacken* to mix work and leisure and to work for themselves.¹³⁰

The *skivver*, the *snottum* and the Gypsy pinnie are all items that have (or had) a particular place in *Nacken* culture and lives. The *skivver*, described by Belle Stewart in *Till Doomsday in the Afternoon*, was used by *Nacken* women to secure a shawl that held a child on their back.¹³¹ This allowed women to care for their children (literally holding them close) and to work. As such, the *skivver* is an embodiment of what Becky Taylor identifies as a 'key feature of Travellers' economic activities[...]: the family nature of much of their work', also described by Clark as 'family-based self-employment'.¹³² The various uses for a *snottum*, primarily a hook to hold a pot over the fire, are described by Duncan Williamson and the distinctive Gypsy pocket or pinnie is described in several places.¹³³ Other items embody craft skills, traditional occupations, recycling and reuse, and skills transmission. There is also evidence of the use of mainstream (non-*Nacken*) material, which becomes *Nacken* through absorption into *Nacken* life and life ways, for example prams. The fullest description of this form of adoption and transformation of material can be found in Damian Le Bas' *The Stopping Places*.¹³⁴ Although Le Bas is an English Romani Gypsy, his outline of a 'Gypsy aesthetic' (a Gypsy look or style developed through the careful selection of mainstream clothing and objects according to Gypsy taste and lifestyle) reflects processes that take place among *Nacken* too.

Although similarities in taste and style can be detected (among *Nacken* as well as between *Nacken* and other GRT), there are areas where distinction occurs too. While many *Nacken* travelled in similar ways and undertook a similar range of occupations or crafts, there seems to have been no standard type of accommodation or style of tent lived in, nor a universal set of tools for each craft. For example, pearl-fishing 'jugs' could range

¹²⁹ S. Douglas, *Last of the Tinsmiths: The Life of Willie McPhee* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2006), 95–7; Robertson, *Reek Roon a Camp Fire*, 2, 173–4.

¹³⁰ Douglas, *Last of the Tinsmiths*, 96.

¹³¹ MacColl and Seeger, *Till Doomsday in the Afternoon*, 19–20.

¹³² B. Taylor, *A Minority and the State: Travellers in Britain in the Twentieth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 28; Clark, "Not just lucky heather and clothes pegs," 184.

¹³³ The uses of the *snottum* are described in unnumbered central pages in Williamson, *The Horsieman*. The pinnie or pocket are described in the following: Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom*, 41; Williamson, *The Horsieman*, 7–8; Campbell and Williamson, *A Traveller in Two Worlds* 1, 30; T. Neat, *The Summer Walkers: Travelling People and Pearl-fishers in the Highlands of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1996), 190–1; Lloyd and Ross, *Moving Minds*, 88–91.

¹³⁴ Le Bas, *The Stopping Places*, 61–3.

from a small piece of glass to custom-made viewer.¹³⁵ Between these two, a range of other items were adapted by replacing the base with a sheet of glass, including dried milk tins, tin jugs, cooking pots, berry luggies (pails) and boxes.¹³⁶ According to Eddie Davies, the only other piece of equipment required was a pearl stick or ‘rod’ made from hazel, although he also sometimes used waders.¹³⁷ Others also made and used boats, and had a variety of implements (designed for or adapted for) gathering mussel shells, opening them and containing any pearls that were found.¹³⁸

A recent publication, which contains photographs of a series of objects selected by *Nacken* to represent themselves and their culture, alongside information about the object, has been produced by MECOPP (Minority Ethnic Carers of People Project).¹³⁹ This book, *Moving Minds*, was published to accompany an exhibition of the same name. Structured specifically around objects that have meaning to their owners and including a range of historical as well as contemporary objects, this publication has provided invaluable insights into what *Nacken* value today. The ‘Moving Minds’ exhibition is analysed alongside other collections of *Nacken chaetrie* in Chapter 6.

Across the writing of *Nacken*, academic and non-academic from 1979 to the present, there is a wealth of knowledge about *chaetrie* and how *Nacken* relate to *chaetrie*. This writing—alongside the contribution of *Nacken* participants in this research—has been invaluable in bringing *Nacken* perspectives to my understanding of the material culture of Gypsy/Travellers encountered in museums.

2.6 Timescales of material of interest in museums—understandings of *Nacken* origins

At the outset of my research, I had planned to avoid discussions of *Nacken* origins. In part, because it is a contested area and in part because for most *Nacken* identity does not reside in a fixed sense of origins. In order to determine what range of material held in museums is of relevance, however, some consideration of applicable timescales has been necessary. Most discussions of the origin of *Nacken* begin with disclaimers regarding the lack of documentary or other evidence for the theories set out. The arrival of Gypsies into Scotland in the late fifteenth century is largely undisputed. Who the nomadic populations that were already in Scotland—with whom the Gypsies are said to have mixed—is, however, open to question.

¹³⁵ Goodwin, *The River and the Road*, 109; Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom*, 22.

¹³⁶ Goodwin, *The River and the Road*, 39–40, 44, 109; Neat, *The Summer Walkers*, 21, 28, 112.

¹³⁷ Neat, *The Summer Walkers*, 111–112.

¹³⁸ Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom*, 22; Goodwin, *The River and the Road*, 40 105; Lloyd and Ross, *Moving Minds*, 116–7.

¹³⁹ Lloyd and Ross, *Moving Minds*.

In his chapter in a work on Gypsy identity, Willie Reid, a Scottish Gypsy Traveller, included a review of the three main theories of *Nacken* origin that have been proposed over time, which he describes as ‘indigenous, Indian and fusionist’.¹⁴⁰ These various theories have been understood in a range of ways by *Nacken* themselves, as described in published works and other writing. *Nacken* origins have also been understood in a variety of ways by antiquaries and those encountering material that might be connected to *Nacken*. Theories put forward by *Nacken* as well as by antiquaries (and, later, curators) will be examined here. Through this process, I offer the justification for the selection of a time period (and therefore associated material) of relevance to this research.

A small number of antiquaries and curators have engaged with *Nacken* origins or the connections between *Nacken* and people of the past. Language used by antiquaries connected to the NMAS in the late nineteenth century indicates an understanding at the time that early historic (1st millennium AD) travelling smiths were in some way analogous with contemporary travelling populations, or *Nacken*. There is no extensive writing on the subject from antiquaries of the time, but parallels were drawn between the travelling *Ceards* of Scotland’s past and the craftworking and metalworking *Nacken* who these antiquaries would have encountered around them. For example, in 1889, Alexander Brook, a silversmith by trade who was to become curator of the NMAS in 1902, wrote that the ‘Tara and Hunterston brooches [...] have been ascribed to the *ceards* [*sic*]’.¹⁴¹ The Hunterston Brooch, dated to around 700 AD, was purchased for the NMAS in 1891. The year before the Hunterston Brooch was purchased, the NMAS acquired three items from a contemporary *Nacken* in the Highlands. In their museum catalogue, published in 1892 these were described as ‘two large brooches of peculiar form, one of silver, the other of silver and copper, recently made by a *Ceard* in Highlands’,¹⁴² and as a ‘finger-ring of silver, with monogram AEI on top, made by a *Ceard* [*sic*]’.¹⁴³ These items—made over 1000 years apart—were described as made by *Ceards* in publications linked to the Society of the Antiquaries of Scotland in 1889 and 1892 respectively. At the end of the nineteenth century, then, the term *Ceard* was used to describe both the eighth-century makers of the Tara and Hunterston brooches and a contemporary *Nacken* maker encountered in the Highlands. This, of course, does not evidence a direct link between these two groups, nor that those using these terms considered these linkages to be direct.

¹⁴⁰ Reid, “Scottish Gypsy/Travellers and the folklorists,” 31.

¹⁴¹ A. J. S. Brook, “Notice of a Silver Brooch with Black Letter Inscription and Ornamentation in Niello, the Property of Miss Steven of Bellahouston, and of a Large Brass Highland Brooch with Incised Ornamentation, the Property of Mrs W R Mitford, 33 Coates Gardens, Edinburgh,” *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 23 (1889): 196.

¹⁴² Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, *Catalogue of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 1892), 363 [NMAS:NG 146, 147].

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, 366 [NMAS:NJ 53].

It does, however, indicate that—among antiquaries at the time—contemporary and ancient nomadic smiths were thought of together, using the same terminology. Dictionary entries also demonstrate that the term *Ceard* (Scottish Gaelic, or *Caird* in Scots) was considered synonymous with *T_____* (a more commonly used term for *Nacken* at the end of the nineteenth century).¹⁴⁴

While most antiquaries of the time have left us no indication of the extent to which they believed these *Cearde*s—ancient and contemporary—to be linked, David MacRitchie engaged more fully with this subject.¹⁴⁵ MacRitchie founded the Gypsy Lore Society in 1888 and was later vice-president of the Society of Antiquaries from 1917–20, having been a Fellow of the Society since 1882. In a work published in 1894, he stated that ‘people [...] designated [Gypsy because ...] they lead a wandering, unsettled life [...] are known by various other names; of which the most popular in Scotland are *t_____* or *tinkler*,—and, in earlier times, *caird*’.¹⁴⁶ MacRitchie not only saw these as similar terms, but also saw them describing a continuity of people with shared (nomadic) identities. In another work he explicitly made direct connections between those he termed ‘gipsies [*sic*]’ and ancient Britons. He opened his book, *Ancient and Modern Britons*, with a visit to a museum:

Whoever has gone into one of our Antiquarian Museums, and glanced with some curiosity [...] at [the ...] relics of a remote past,—has soon, in all likelihood found himself speculating upon the nature of the people who made and used these things.¹⁴⁷

In later reflections on some of these ancient users and makers of objects, MacRitchie proposed that contemporary *Nacken* could be identified with and were the descendants of prehistoric people, stating that ‘this swarthy nomadic race [...] formed part of the substratum of the [...] nation in the dark ages’.¹⁴⁸

The existence of peripatetic craftworkers carrying out a range of crafts in ancient times is not in doubt. The use of the term *Ceard* in the works of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland presented above hints at the attempts by antiquaries and archaeologists to understand the history of these mobile craftworkers. That contemporary *Nacken* populations might provide insights into who these groups were (or at least how they might

¹⁴⁴ See the *Scottish National Dictionary* entry for *Caird*. https://dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/caird_n1_v1 and *A Dictionary of the Older Scots Tongue* entry for *Kard*. https://dsl.ac.uk/entry/dost/kard_n.

¹⁴⁵ David MacRitchie (1851–1925) founded the Gypsy Lore Society in Edinburgh in 1888, alongside Francis Hinde Groome. MacRitchie had been a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland from 1882 and would become its vice-president from 1917–20.

¹⁴⁶ D. MacRitchie, *Scottish Gypsies under the Stewarts* (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1894), 1.

¹⁴⁷ D. MacRitchie, *Ancient and Modern Britons: A Retrospect*, vol. 1 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Co., 1884), 3.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 138–9.

have lived) is an ongoing feature of scholarship, particularly around metalworking.¹⁴⁹ The itinerant smith was perhaps given fullest expression in the work of archaeologist V. Gordon Childe. In a reversal of terminology use, Childe used what at the time (the 1930s) was the contemporary term for *Nacken*, T____, to describe the itinerant smiths he detected in the prehistoric landscape:

The remaining [non-votive] hoards belonged to traders and normally contain several examples of each type of tool, weapon or ornament [...] Some at least seem to have belonged to travelling t____s, bartering metal products which they were prepared to finish off on the spot to suit the taste of the customer [...] another group of hoards [...] characterized by the presence of [...] scrap metal collected for remelting [...] probably belong to gangs of travelling t____s who went round the countryside repairing broken tools and collecting scrap metal at a time when the demand was peculiarly intense.¹⁵⁰

By the 1950s this was not only a feature of Childe's ongoing work, but that of others working with material culture. Writing in 1956, Ian Finlay (at the time, Assistant Keeper in charge of the silver collections at the Royal Scottish Museum) called upon scholarship of the Gypsyologists to understand aspects of craft production in Scotland's past:

In the Highlands all fine metalwork, and much of the stone-carving and other craftwork of good quality, has been attributed to the class of artificers known as *ceardan* [...] 'T____' is one of the dictionary meanings given for *ceard*. These *ceardan* formed a caste of their own.¹⁵¹

Finlay provides a citation for this latter claim from an article by MacRitchie in the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*.¹⁵² He then went on to refer to an antiquarian text which mentioned an ancient (Irish) *Ceard* recycling metal and to Charles Leland's theory that

¹⁴⁹ A. Heald, "The interpretation of non-ferrous metalworking in early historic Scotland," in *Pictish Progress: New Studies on Northern Britain in the Early Middle Ages*, eds. S. T. Driscoll, J. Geddes and M. A. Hall (Leiden: BRILL, 2011), 227; M. Carver, J. Garner Lahire and C. Spall, *Portmahomack on Tarbat Ness: Changing Ideologies in North-East Scotland, Sixth to Sixteenth Century AD* (Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 2016), 315–6, Index; M. Carver, *Portmahomack: Monastery of the Picts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 179.

¹⁵⁰ V. G. Childe, *The Bronze Age* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930), 44–5. This publication is contemporary with the beginning of I. F. Grant's work, which led to the founding of the Highland Folk Museum. Writing in the 1960s, at the end of her time developing the collection, Grant referred to *Nacken* as T____s throughout, while also noting that this was no longer the 'polite' term for these populations. Born only five years apart and working with material culture in the 1930s–1950s, it is likely that Grant and Childe had a common understanding of the term T____. Grant used this term to refer to the contemporary population that she encountered as well as the eighteenth and nineteenth-century makers of material that she collected. Childe used the term, not to accurately define the itinerant metalworkers of the Bronze Age, but to demonstrate an analogous understanding of these two groups. Childe seems to have used the term in order to say to his readers, the evidence I have found from the past suggests it was used by a group of people similar to this group, familiar to you today.

¹⁵¹ V. G. Childe, *The Prehistory of European Society: How and Why the Prehistoric Barbarian Societies of Europe behaved in a Distinctly European Way* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1958), 138, 163–4.; I. Finlay, *Scottish Gold and Silver Work*, ed. H.S. Fotheringham (Crawley: The Strong Oak Press, 1990), 148.

¹⁵² D. MacRitchie, "Irish T____s and their language," *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* 1, no. 6 (1889): 355. In this text MacRitchie drew parallels across time between contemporary Irish Travellers and nomadic peoples of the past and clearly reiterated that T____ and *Ceard* were synonymous terms in both Irish and Scottish languages.

Shelta (or Gammon), the language of Mincéir (Irish Travellers), derived from a language of the Picts.¹⁵³ Here, Finlay appears to have been trying to work out who these ancient craft producers were. In his writing he has brought together knowledge of contemporary *Nacken* and other nomadic populations to form an understanding of those who had created items he was encountering in the museum collections.

The 1950s also saw the establishment of the School of Scottish Studies at the University of Edinburgh, founded in 1951 by Calum Maclean and Hamish Henderson. *Nacken* became important sources for their work and archive. In a reversal of thinking, work published by antiquaries and archaeologists that used *Nacken* in the present as a way into understanding the creators and users of ancient material from the past was used by ethnologists to explain the origins of contemporary *Nacken*. Where Childe, Finlay and others had found *Nacken* (who they knew as 'T____s') to be a way into understanding past models of working and living, Henderson and others saw the antiquarian discussions of ancient *Ceards* as a narrative through which the origin of *Nacken* could be accounted for. Henderson's position was that, although it is 'impossible to speak with certainty of their origin [...] it seems likely that [*Nacken*] are the descendants of a very ancient caste of itinerant metal-workers whose status in tribal society was probably high'.¹⁵⁴ For Henderson, these theories of ancient origin were supported by the antiquity of the stories and songs that were found among *Nacken* informants. For example, in discussing one of the tales told by Duncan Williamson, Henderson noted that since 'it can be shown that the culture of the Scottish travellers [*sic*] often reflects aboriginal Celtic folkways, the possibility exists that the travellers' Bartimeus [a wise blind beggar who appears in *Nacken* storytelling] is a far-out relative of the hereditary "breeves" or law-givers among the Celts who travelled around dispensing justice, or resolving disputes'.¹⁵⁵ Henderson also recalled the 'first song I recorded from Ailidh Dall [...] *Am Bron Binn*, is one of the oldest songs in Europe [dated to ...] 500 AD'.¹⁵⁶

Following Henderson, a number of other Scottish ethnologists have taken a similar view of *Nacken* history and origins, including Roger Leitch, Sheila Douglas, Timothy Neat and

¹⁵³ Finlay cited, as had MacRitchie in his *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society* article (see above) W. F. Wakeman, "On the crannog and antiquities of Lisnacrogghera near Broughshane, Co. Antrim (second notice)," *Journal of the Royal Historical and Archaeological Association of Ireland* 9 (1889): 99. Finlay also made an uncited reference to C. G. Leland, *The Gypsies* (Boston: Broughton, Mifflin and Co., 1882), iv-v, 371.

¹⁵⁴ H. Henderson, "T____s, the," in David Daiches, *A Companion to Scottish Culture* (London, 1981), 377.

¹⁵⁵ H. Henderson, "Introduction," in D. Williamson and L. Williamson, *A Thorn in the King's Foot* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1987), 23.

¹⁵⁶ Neat, *The Summer Walkers*, 73.

Hugh Gentleman.¹⁵⁷ Within Scottish ethnology in museums this also had an influence, particularly discernible in the published output linked to the Highland Folk Museum. Grant, in reflecting on the *Nacken* who she encountered through her work in the museum, tells us,

[t]he t____s, whom it is now thought more polite to refer to as ‘the travelling people’, always told me they were Romany (in other words Gypsies) but I think that they could claim a more interesting ancestry as being the descendants of the *cairdean* (cairds), the old travelling craftsmen of the Highlands who were in the days of oral tradition the recorders and preservers of the great Gaelic epics and poetry.¹⁵⁸

Similarly, Ross Noble, curator of the Highland Folk Museum between 1976 and 2004, understood *Nacken* to have been,

an integral part of the Highland way of life since the Celts arrived in the Highlands, ushering in the Iron Age. The specialist iron workers of this warrior people, the cairds or ‘cairdean’ (Gaelic) were itinerant craftsmen, moving from encampment to encampment. They form one of the roots of the travelling [*sic*] people today.¹⁵⁹

Beyond the work of Scottish ethnologists, sociological texts that examine GRT lives in the present, also look to describe the past lives and formation of these populations. Donald Kenrick and Colin Clark, writing of Irish Travellers, state that ‘there is historical and linguistic evidence for placing their origin as a separate ethnic group [...] even before the coming of the Celts to Ireland’.¹⁶⁰ Of the population in Scotland, they describe *Nacken* as a ‘nomadic group formed in the period 1500–1800 from intermarriage and social integration between local nomadic craftsmen and immigrant Romanies’.¹⁶¹ This text, however, also goes on to include a fuller discussion of *Nacken* origins, which states that, ‘[a]ccording to some sources, Travelling people in Scotland can trace their roots back as far as the Twelfth century [...] while] many Scottish Travellers claim roots that pre-date even these written records’.¹⁶²

Some of these understandings of origins have been put forward in the writings of Scottish *Nacken*. Duncan Williamson, Stanley Robertson, Jimmy MacBeath, Jess Smith and Shamus McPhee, have each presented origin theories, which include descent from the

¹⁵⁷ Leitch, *The Book of Sandy Stewart*, xxii; Douglas, *Last of the Tinsmiths*, 1; Neat, *The Summer Walkers*, 223–4; H. Gentleman, “Communities on the move,” in *Scotland’s Domestic Life*, ed. S. Storrier (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2006), 788.

¹⁵⁸ Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 127.

¹⁵⁹ Noble, *Highland Folk Museum*, 7–8.

¹⁶⁰ Kenrick and Clark, *Moving On*, 20.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² The dating of *Nacken* presence in Scotland to the Twelfth century is often related to two pieces of documentary evidence. One is the reference to a man named as Jacobi tinkler in the *Liber Ecclesie De Scon*. A transcription of this Twelfth century manuscript was published in 1843, see Cosmo Innes (ed.), *Liber Ecclesie de Scon* (Edinburgh: Bannantyne Club, 1843), 30. The other is the existence of Farandman Laws during the Twelfth century in Scotland. These laws protected travelling merchants ‘identified a group known as “tinklers,” Kenrick and Clark, *Moving On*, 51.

Picts, from Egyptian slaves brought by the Romans, from eleventh-century kings or twelfth-century craftworkers and merchants (possibly themselves an undocumented arrival of Gypsies, predating those recorded in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries).¹⁶³ These theories, which have been shared by *Nacken*, are variously based on historical scholarship, family stories and linguistic analyses, or a mixture of these. Other *Nacken*, however, date their origins to more recent events, including displacement following the Battle of Culloden in 1746.¹⁶⁴ Similarly, in Ireland, while some propose the antiquity of Mincéir, others claim that these populations began life on the road following the Great Irish Famine (1845–52).¹⁶⁵ It should be noted that this latter claim regarding Irish Traveller origin has been strongly criticised by Sinéad Ní Shuinéar, who has convincingly argued that the promotion of this interpretation of Mincéir history was politically motivated in programmes assimilation in 1960s Ireland.¹⁶⁶

In the absence of broader engagement with *Nacken* history in scholarship in Scotland, Henderson's position has gone reasonably unchallenged in discussion of *Nacken* origins. Reid, whose overview of origin theories was referenced earlier, has criticised some of the ways that *Nacken* have been defined from the outside:

All this concentration on the ancient [...] presented a [...] distorted image of the Scottish Gypsy/Traveller. We were viewed as noble savages [...] as an ancient people whose culture and lifestyle was static [...] In reality, these researchers created for us the culture of nostalgia: a Golden Age, a culture that had its day, a culture that was fast disappearing.¹⁶⁷

Reid goes on to state that '[i]t is frustrating that there have hardly been any writers or researchers who wish to challenge the "accepted" notions that sprang from the 1950s. Debate concerning the identity of Scottish Gypsy/Travellers is stifled and stagnant'.¹⁶⁸ In Ireland, a similar observation has been made by Ní Shuinéar. She points out, at the close of her article on Irish Traveller origin theories, that 'circular logic has ensured that no qualified researchers have taken up the challenge of researching Traveller history, on the

¹⁶³ Williamson and Williamson, *The Genie and the Fisherman*, 6–7; Williamson, *The Horsieman*, 11–12; Roberston, "Scottish Travelling People," 313; H. Henderson, in *Come a ye tramps and hawkers*, by Jimmy MacBeath (London: Selection Records, 1960), Sleeve notes on 7" vinyl record ; Smith, *Way of the Wanderers*, 26; S. McPhee, *Gypsy Traveller History in Scotland* (Glasgow: Iriss, 2017), available at: <https://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/reports/gypsy-traveller-history-scotland>.

¹⁶⁴ Neat, *The Summer Walkers*, 223; Robertson, "Scottish Travelling People," 314.

¹⁶⁵ Among those who argue for ancient origins of Mincéir are Charles Leland, Artelia Court, Christopher Griffin: C. G. Leland, *The Gypsies* (Boston: Broughton, Mifflin and Co., 1882), iv-v, 371; A. Court, *Puck of the Droms: The Lives and Literature of the Irish T_____s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) 8–27; C. Griffin, *Nomads Under the Westway: Irish Travellers, Gypsies and other Traders in West London* (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire, 2008), 30–7.

¹⁶⁶ Ní Shuinéar, "Apocrypha to canon".

¹⁶⁷ Reid, "Scottish Gypsy/Travellers and the folklorists," 35–6.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 36. The lack of recent research into *Nacken* history and origins has also been pointed out by Geetha Marcus: Marcus, *Scottish Gypsy and Traveller Girls*, 44.

grounds that there isn't any. We need scholars who can chase up, read and interpret original source materials'.¹⁶⁹

None of this is to say that any of the theories that have gone before need be discounted. What needs to happen is for these various origin stories to be explored. A more important question than how scholars of archaeology, material culture or anthropology see the continuity or otherwise of these populations, is how these nomadic groups in the past viewed themselves. Sharon Gmelch, in writing about Mincéir, reflected on questions that might be asked of the proposed connections between Irish Travellers and ancient craftworkers (which could be similarly applied to theories in Scotland). In her chapter entitled, "Where did they come from," she stated that,

[m]etal working is one of the oldest traditions on the road [...] As early as pre-Christian times, itinerant whitesmiths working in bronze, gold and silver travelled the [...] countryside making personal ornaments, weapons and horse trappings [...] Just how many itinerant smiths there were; whether they travelled in family groups; and to what extent they identified themselves as a distinct class in these early years is unknown.¹⁷⁰

Taylor, in her history of Gypsies, has grappled with similar questions. Here she acknowledges the 'dispersed heritages' of those who have come to be known as Gypsies, as well as of the 'pre-existing peripatetic groups' who they encountered across Europe.¹⁷¹ One of the major challenges she identifies for historians is that 'we have no way of knowing what [these groups] thought, or how they would like to be described'.¹⁷² While Taylor's concern is mainly around how these groups should be named in history writing, these questions echo Gmelch's reflection on whether ancient itinerant metalworkers saw themselves as a distinct people. Taylor's use of 'proto-Gypsy', to describe the ancestors of the Gypsies as they left India, is helpful here. Just as these groups became identified (and racialised) as Gypsies by those who encountered them as they progressed through Europe, so the ancient mobile groups (often associated with a range of crafts) in Scotland could be described as proto-*Nacken*. These groups are to an extent formed by pressure and categorisation from the outside, which is similar to Mary Burke's argument that T_____s in Ireland have been constructed as Other.¹⁷³ Following her own questions, Gmelch concluded that there was a likely continuity between historic metalworkers and craftworkers and the Mincéir she encountered in 1970s Ireland, while also recognising that '[n]ot all the Travelling People originated at the same time'.¹⁷⁴ Ní Shuinéar takes this

¹⁶⁹ Ní Shuinéar, "Apocrypha to canon".

¹⁷⁰ Gmelch, *T_____s and Travellers*, 8–10.

¹⁷¹ Taylor, *Another Darkness, Another Dawn*, 12, 19.

¹⁷² *Ibid*, 19.

¹⁷³ M. M. Burke, *T_____s': Synge and the Cultural History of the Irish Traveller* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹⁷⁴ Gmelch, *T_____s and Travellers*, 8, 10.

further and reminds us that the ‘internal diversity’ among Travellers in Ireland and elsewhere, is not sufficiently recognised.¹⁷⁵

From the discussions outlined above, it can be said that it is likely that not all *Nacken* originated at the same time in the past, just as it is known that not all *Nacken* identify in the same way today. There is also more that could be done regarding the understanding of *Nacken* origins and how they might relate to the *Ceards*. Some contemporary *Nacken* certainly consider the travelling smiths of the past to be ancestors and if there are such connections this has an implication for a range of material in museums, which would then fall in the scope of the material culture of *Nacken*. Ethnologists working with *Nacken* from the 1950s conflated the two—working forward from antiquarian and archaeological works, in which contemporary *Nacken* and ancient *Ceards* were described as analogous. If Taylor and Burke are correct, investigations into when this sense of identity was formed is crucial in unpicking when and how these groups became a people. This also suggests that proto-*Nacken* indeed formed a distinct population in the past, if only initially by shared patterns of moving and working. How and when such groups developed their shared (but separate to the majority population) cultural values (including rules regarding cleanliness and how the belongings of the dead are dealt with) that are discernible in *Nacken* (and wider GRT) populations today, is also left unanswered. A recent piece of work arguing for *Nacken* indigeneity to Scotland proposes that travelling, or more specifically, a distinct relationship with the land and with sites across that land (experienced through movement across it), is a key aspect of *Nacken* cultural and ethnic identity.¹⁷⁶ As this distinctive relationship with the land may have developed in a proto-ethnic group who were distinguished from (and by) a majority static population by dint of their mobility, this may offer avenues for future research.

In the meantime, it is important to recognise is that *Nacken* do not rely on origins for their sense of identity. Much of their sense of identity lies in their cultural heritage, characterised by Willie Reid as folklore, or by Sheila Stewart as a legacy of stories, songs and language.¹⁷⁷ In the current absence of the deeper level of scholarship called for by Reid and Ní Shuinéar, it is impossible to accurately outline or date the origins of *Nacken* in Scotland. The identity of the peripatetic craftworkers already present in Scotland requires further research, particularly around when they began to ‘regard [themselves], and be regarded by others, as a distinct community by virtue of certain characteristics’.¹⁷⁸ In this

¹⁷⁵ Ní Shuinéar, “Apocrypha to canon”.

¹⁷⁶ D. Donaldson, “Indigenous Scots: an examination of the indigeneity of Scotland’s Nawken” (M.A. diss., University of Aberdeen, 2020).

¹⁷⁷ Stewart, *A Traveller’s Life*, 108.; Reid, “Scottish Gypsy/Travellers and the folklorists,” 38.

¹⁷⁸ Extract from the legal arguments outlined by Lord Fraser in the *Mandia Vs Dowell Lee* case, as quoted in C. Clark, “Defining ethnicity in a cultural and socio-legal context: the case of Scottish Gypsy/Travellers,” *Scottish Affairs* 54 (2006): 42.

thesis, in order to work within a date range of relevant material in museums, this thesis follows Clark and Kenrick's dating of *Nacken* origins as a 'nomadic group formed in the period 1500–1800 from intermarriage and social integration between local nomadic craftsmen and immigrant Romanies'.¹⁷⁹ I therefore take 1500 as a starting date for objects of interest to this thesis, but also recognise that future research has the potential to expand the range of material that could be considered as connected to *Nacken* (in both extending date ranges and in drawing in wider perspectives). This is as much a pragmatic decision as anything, as it provides a manageable range of material for this research to consider.

2.7 Decolonisation, Indigenisation and unsettling

While the above discussions might impact what material is considered to be *Nacken chaetrie* in museums, a deeper question is how *chaetrie* in general is (mis)understood from a museum/non-*Nacken* perspective. Mary Burke's conclusions, that '[s]edentary representations of people of the road have shaped the legal, cultural, and social frameworks that members of that community are forced to negotiate in their contacts with dominant society' should have implications for how museums address their past and future in relation to the material culture of *Nacken* in their collections.¹⁸⁰ As such, what role can museums play in the development of 'a dialogue between settled and nomadic to emerge, so that an unexamined sedentary consensus that has perpetuated its privileges for far too long against a minority that it rarely even acknowledges to be its Other might finally become visible'?¹⁸¹

Nacken and wider GRT populations are recognised, not only in the text above but also elsewhere, to have colonised-adjacent experiences and status.¹⁸² As Ken Lee put forward:

while Romanies have never been colonized through dispossession of land in the same way as indigenous peoples, in many other respects they can be considered as colonial subjects—victims of imposed discursive (mis)representations and structural inequalities, marginalized, patronized, exploited, stripped of language, culture, dignity.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ Kenrick and Clark, *Moving On*, 20.

¹⁸⁰ Burke, "T____s," 274.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 275–6.

¹⁸² Brooks, Clark and Rostas, "Engaging with Decolonisation, Tackling Antigypsyism": 2; K. Lee, "Belated travelling theory, contemporary wild praxis: a Romani Perspective on the practical politics of the open end," in *The Role of the Romanies: Images and Counter-images of 'Gypsies'/Romanies in European Cultures*, eds. N. Saul and S. Tebbutt, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2005), 31–2; Taylor, *Another Darkness, Another Dawn*, 16; T. Acton and A. Ryder, "Recognising Gypsy, Roma and Traveller history and culture," in *Gypsies and Travellers: Empowerment and Inclusion in British Society*, eds. J. Richardson and A. K. T. Tsang, (Bristol: Policy Press, 2012), 138; R. Ramsay, "Unsettling Naken (*sic*) chaetrie in Scottish museums," *Journal of Museum Ethnography* 32 (2019): 63.

¹⁸³ Lee, "Belated Travelling Theory, Contemporary Wild Praxis," 33.

Becky Taylor also notes that ‘Gypsies were treated in a similar manner to Europe’s colonial subjects’ and Thomas Acton and Andrew Ryder have noted the importance of anti-colonial and anti-racist organisations as models in the development of Gypsy, Roma, Traveller History Month.¹⁸⁴ While most *chaetrie* in Scottish museums does not ‘fit within standard narratives of colonial acquisition’, which is generally understood as a ‘coercive pattern of collecting’, its treatment in most museums follows the colonial pattern of the suppression of ‘[marginalised] experiences [...] by mainstream narratives’.¹⁸⁵

While GRT are recognised to have essentially been colonised, museums are recognised to have been developed as part of the apparatus of colonial and imperial endeavour.¹⁸⁶ In recognition of this, this thesis has engaged with relevant scholarship around postcolonial/anti-colonial approaches to museum collections. The following section explores what discussions of decolonisation and Indigenisation can bring to thinking around museum collections and their relation to GRT populations. It asks what these concepts might bring to a fuller understanding and use of *Nacken* material in museums.

As noted by Ethel Brooks, Colin Clark and Iulius Rostas,

[a]s part of colonial management and governance, science, and the creation of archives – along with museums and laboratories dedicated to understanding the cultures, people, languages and everyday lives of the colonised – a body of knowledge about Europe’s Others was produced.¹⁸⁷

If *Nacken* are to be represented in museums, not as ‘Others’ but as an equal and co-existing part of Scotland’s story, the hegemony of settled knowledge and perspectives needs to be disrupted. Here models of museum work that seeks to decolonise or reIndigenise museum collections are considered.

Although a range of models for decolonisation have been used in or proposed for museum contexts, there are some commonalities. These include a recognition of the hegemony of the dominant culture in museums (identified as Eurocentrism, non-

¹⁸⁴ Taylor, *Another Darkness, Another Dawn*, 16; Acton and Ryder, “Recognising Gypsy, Roma and Traveller history and culture,” 138.

¹⁸⁵ L. Peers, “‘Ceremonies of renewal’: visits, relationships and healing in the museum space,” in *Museum Worlds: Advances in Research I* (2013), 140, 145.

¹⁸⁶ Brooks, Clark and Rostas, “Engaging with Decolonisation, Tackling Antigypsyism,”: 2; D. Hicks, *The British Museums: The Benin Bronzes, Colonial Violence and Cultural Restitution* (London: Pluto Press, 2020), 4; A. A. Azoulay, *Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism* (London: Verso, 2019), 1; L. Peers, “Decolonizing as a permanent process: PRM relations with the Haida Nation, 1998–2018,” *Journal of Museum Ethnography* 32 (2019): 46; B. Oncuil, *Museums Heritage and Indigenous Voice: Decolonising Engagement* (London: Routledge, 2015), 28–33; T. Bennett, “The ‘shuffle of things’ and the distribution of agency,” in R. Harrison, S.. Byrne and A. Clark, *Reassembling the Collection: Ethnographic Museums and Indigenous Agency* (Santa Fe: School of Advanced Research, 2013), 40; A. J. M. Henare, *Museums, Anthropology and Imperial Exchange* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 13; T. Richards, *The Imperial Archive: Knowledge and the Fantasy of Empire* (London, Verso, 1993), 3, 14–5, 111–2.

¹⁸⁷ Brooks, Clark and Rostas, “Engaging with Decolonisation, Tackling Antigypsyism”: 2.

Indigenous hegemony, or [British] nationalism, depending on the context) and a need to be conscious of the legacies and history of museum institutions, which lie under a 'colonial shadow'.¹⁸⁸ This awareness is a recognition that 'although the political formation of colonialism [has] officially come to an end, within institutions such as [museums], colonialist logic [continues] to inform structures and practices'.¹⁸⁹ Awareness of and critical engagement with these histories is seen as an important and first step towards enacting 'institutional and structural change through long-term critical intervention'.¹⁹⁰ An examination of the hegemonising history of museums as they relate to *Nacken* can be found in Chapter 4.

Disruption, interruption, subversion, unease, discomfort, transgression and inversion,¹⁹¹ are terms invoked for the processes required to 'challenge historical erasure', counter 'institutional narratives' and 'decentralize' dominant hegemonic culture.¹⁹² Offered in place of these are—ideally—a 'multiplicity of voices [... and] different perspectives' and 'access to alternative knowledges [and ...] alternative ways of doing things', gained through collaboration, shared authority and co-curation.¹⁹³

Rachael Minott's writing on decolonisation in museums does not shy away from the complexities, either of the process (and conversely the frustratingly unnuanced outcome that can result in these difficult endeavours) or of the museum context in which decolonial effort takes place. Minott both recognises the positive intentions and progress made in contemporary museums, which include the '[ethical] represent[ation of] history, [the] addressing [of] imbalances in power [... and work to make] buildings and content accessible to all', and at the same time the legacies of 'power hierarchies, paternalism [and] ideas of quality' that museums are yet to address and which serve to exclude.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁸ S. Forni, J. Crooks and D. Fontaine, "Activism, objects and dialogue: re-engaging African collections at the Royal Ontario Museum," in Janes and Sandell, *Museum Activism*, 188; McFadzean, Dale-Hallett, Mauri and Moulton, "Inside out/outside in," 263; R. Minott, "Avoiding the single story by creating a single story: simplification and erasure in representing diverse histories," *Journal of Museum Ethnography* 32 (2019), 88–91; F. Bodenstein and C. Pagani, "Decolonising national museums of ethnography in Europe: exposing and reshaping colonial heritage (2000-2012)," in *The Postcolonial Museum: The Arts of Memory and the Pressures of History*, eds. I. Chambers, A. de Angelis, C. Iannicello, M. Orabona and M. Quadraro (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 39.

¹⁸⁹ Forni, Crooks and Fontaine, "Activism, objects and dialogue," 192.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 186; Minott, "Avoiding the single story by creating a single story": 86.

¹⁹¹ Forni, Crooks and Fontaine, "Activism, objects and dialogue," 188; Minott, "Avoiding the single story by creating a single story"; Bodenstein and Pagani, "Decolonising national museums of ethnography in Europe," 48; J. Giblin, I. Ramos and N. Grout, "Dismantling the master's house: thoughts on representing empire and decolonising museums and public spaces. An introduction," *Third Text* 33, nos. 4–5 (2019), 471; Clark, "If you build it ...".

¹⁹² Minott, "Avoiding the single story by creating a single story": 91–2; Forni, Crooks and Fontaine, "Activism, objects and dialogue," 188.

¹⁹³ Forni, Crooks and Fontaine, "Activism, objects and dialogue," 189; McFadzean, Dale-Hallett, Mauri and Moulton, "Inside out/outside in," 263.

¹⁹⁴ Minott, "Avoiding the single story by creating a single story," 89.

Beyond the improved representation of marginalised minorities, decolonisation has an ultimate aim to eradicate ‘persistent and biased behaviours, policies, and systems’, as well as the ‘deconstruction and replacement of hierarchies of power that replicate colonial structures’.¹⁹⁵

Some Indigenous people working in museum contexts with clear colonial legacies, however, find decoloniality problematic, arguing that ‘the coloniser remains at the centre of a process that is supposed to centre the colonised’.¹⁹⁶ In response, Puawai Cairns, Kaihāpai Mātauranga Māori (Head of Mātauranga Māori) at Te Papa Museum, has adopted Indigenisation and reIndigenisation (or reMāorification for the specific context in which she and her colleagues work) as processes by which to engage with Māori collections. Rather than starting with the colonial experience, this way of working ‘buil[ds] through [colonialism], beyond it, and in spite of it’.¹⁹⁷ This work recognises that ‘the value of an object is intrinsically linked to [...] the ongoing participation of its people’ and seeks to support that continued connection.¹⁹⁸ Laura Peers, in her work bringing together Blackfoot communities and Blackfoot material culture in museum collections, has also engaged with alternatives to postcolonial [and, by implication, decolonial] theories.¹⁹⁹ She has proposed that postcolonial theories risk ‘obscuring particular indigenous cultural perspectives’.²⁰⁰ In this Peers draws on the work of Elizabeth Edwards, quoting the following from her work: ‘it is necessary to destabilize those dominant theories and find other tools and methodologies that draw on indigenous categories and practices’.²⁰¹ Peers also sees absence as a significant aspect of Indigenous experience of museums, seeing ‘the absence of heritage items [as] a profound presence in the lives of Blackfoot peoples’.²⁰² Like Cairns, Peers finds the connections or relationship between Indigenous peoples and cultural objects found in museums to be of central significance. Peers found that ‘embodied interactions with [these objects] evoked social relationships with ancestors’ and tapped into ‘personal, family, or community’ histories.²⁰³ These understandings of Indigenous connections to museum collections and of Indigeneity itself, fit with Tim

¹⁹⁵ Forni, Crooks and Fontaine, “Activism, objects and dialogue,” 193; Giblin, Ramos and Grout, “Dismantling the master’s house”: 471–86.

¹⁹⁶ P. Cairns, “Decolonise or indigenise: moving towards sovereign spaces and the Māorification of New Zealand museology,” *Te Papa* (February 10, 2020) <https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2020/02/10/decolonise-or-indigenise-moving-towards-sovereign-spaces-and-the-maorification-of-new-zealand-museology/>

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ While postcolonial and decolonial theories have different origins in distinct disciplinary traditions, both address ongoing colonial structures and institutions in post-independence or other post-colonial contexts.

²⁰⁰ Peers, ““Ceremonies of renewal’... ,” 138.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid, 140.

²⁰³ Ibid, 144.

Ingold's assertion that Indigenous identity and belonging is derived from the 'unfolding of [...] relationships within which each comes into being'.²⁰⁴

The literature discussed in this section—which both sees *Nacken* as colonised and museums as colonial—demonstrates that systems in museums support the ongoing erasure of *Nacken* narratives in museums. In this research project, it is not possible to carry out the 'long-term critical intervention[s]' required to 'affect institutional and structural change', but short-term interventions will be used in an attempt to bring alternative perspectives and knowledge into museums and to suggest ways forward for *chaetrie* found in museums.²⁰⁵ Following Acton and Ryder's lead, I will use decolonial and anti-racist lenses to examine museum processes and policies in relation to *chaetrie*, as well as providing space to include *Nacken* perspectives and experiences. The short-term interventions will be discussed more fully in Chapter 3. The findings related to the exploration of museum processes and the integration of alternative perspectives can be found in Chapter 7. This chapter focuses on the case study of the Clan Macpherson Museum and draws upon the previous Clan Chief, William Macpherson's use of the term institutional racism, as well as Ibram X. Kendi's more recent work on anti-racism.²⁰⁶ It also examines the process of including *Nacken* voices, experiences and values in the museum.

Burke's conclusions, mentioned earlier, suggest that systemic changes are required to de-sedentarise *chaetrie* in museums. As such, I have chosen the term unsettling (rather than decolonising or Indigenising) to acknowledge the distinct context of GRT (as non-colonised groups who have been subject to colonising practices). This term not only fits well among the decolonial practices of disruption, interruption, subversion, unease, discomfort, transgression and inversion, but it also provides as antithesis to a settled cultural hegemony. Stuart Hall, in his paper, "Whose Heritage? Un-settling 'The Heritage', re-imagining the post-nation," similarly uses unsettling to describe a process by which 'mainstream versions of the Heritage [...] rewrite the margins into the centre, the outside into the inside'.²⁰⁷ The methods discussed in the next chapter, aim to place *Nacken* and their relationship with *chaetrie* at the heart of the process of unsettling. In unsettling the understanding of *Nacken* material culture in museums, I hope to shed light on the primacy

²⁰⁴ T. Ingold, *Perceptions of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill* (London: Routledge, 2000), 148–9.

²⁰⁵ Forni, Crooks and Fontaine, "Activism, objects and dialogue," 186.

²⁰⁶ Kendi, *How to be an Antiracist*.

²⁰⁷ S. Hall, "Whose Heritage? Un-settling 'The Heritage', re-imagining the post-nation," in *Third Text* 49 (1999–2000), 10.

of a settled perspective, which has led to the 'Othering' of *Nacken* in Scotland, in order that we might move beyond this to bring *Nacken* presence into museums.²⁰⁸

²⁰⁸ Ramsay, "Unsettling Naken [sic] chaetrie in Scottish museums," 63.

Chapter 3: Finding methods to explore *chaetrie* in museums

The challenge of serious cultural criticism is to bring the insights gained on the periphery back to the centre to raise havoc with our settled ways of thinking and conceptualization.

G.E. Marcus and M.M.J. Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment with Human Sciences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 138.

3.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter describes the methods that were selected to answer the research questions identified in the Chapter 1. It opens with an examination of my position as a researcher. As outlined in my position statement, awareness of my place in the research affected my selection of methods. The methods are then discussed in turn under the subheadings of archival and object research; interventions and observations; finding *Nacken* absence; *Nacken* collections; *Nacken* value of *chaetrie*; and museum processes: how *chaetrie* becomes hidden. Each describes the research undertaken and situates it in relevant theoretical and practical frameworks. Reflections on trust and ethics, and the impact of COVID-19, follow. Finally, there is a short section on decisions taken regarding the thesis scope.

This thesis both examines museum practices and *Nacken* values, as each relates to *chaetrie*. While my background in museums makes me an ‘insider’ researcher regarding museum processes, my personal identity makes me an ‘outside’ researcher regarding *Nacken* values, knowledge and lived experience. Conversely, however, I have sought to examine museums from an outside (etic, or observational) position and *Nacken* from an inside (emic) position. As such, I have sought to centre the perspective of *Nacken* since I believe that the conditions (invisibility of *Nacken* and *chaetrie* in museums) need to change and I am seeking to critically engage with the processes and systems in museums that bring about those conditions.

As outlined in Chapter 1, the lack of visibility of *Nacken* in museums contributes to a wider invisibility and marginalisation of these populations. This, in turn, negatively impacts health, education, and employment, as well as justice outcomes for *Nacken*.²⁰⁹ The aim of the thesis, as defined in Chapter 1, is to gain an understanding of what *chaetrie* can be found in museums in Scotland and to explore why it is unseen. This has involved examining the presence of *chaetrie*, its absence and its absent presence in museum collections. These three areas of study are explored through three separate case study

²⁰⁹ K. Bhopal, *White Privilege* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2018), 32–4.

museums. Additionally, by considering the social value of this material to contemporary *Nacken* and examining what and why *Nacken* collect themselves, this thesis offers insights into how museums can work with *Nacken* to improve representation. Critical engagement with museum practice as it relates to *chaetrie* is undertaken with the aim of identifying areas for positive change in museum practice in this area.

3.2 Position statement

Two main areas of study form the focus of this thesis: *Nacken* material culture in museums in Scotland and *Nacken* attitudes to collected *chaetrie*. My background is in museums, where I worked mainly in learning and access roles. This was useful for the first aspect of this research, particularly having previously worked with *Nacken* community members in museum settings. However, like many of those working in museums in the UK, I am an 'able bodied, female and identify as White'.²¹⁰ I am also non-*Nacken*. This limits my understanding of *Nacken* culture, which can only ever be partial and is inevitably subject to certain unconscious preconceptions, and a potential implicit bias, that I bring to the research. Like Séamus Nolan and Eve Olney, who carried out an art and ethnographic project exploring the representation of Irish Travellers in archives, artworks and cultural institutions, my main concern in carrying out this research was that I am from outside *Nacken* culture.²¹¹ This concern has had an impact on the methods selected.

My aim in researching with *Nacken* experts was to explore *Nacken* knowledge and value of *chaetrie*. In this part of my research I did not seek a detached position, instead attempting to hear and reflect the voices of the research participants. As an outside researcher (non-*Nacken*), I sought methods that would ensure that the expert perspectives of *Nacken*—who bring unique knowledge and lived experience to this study—would be visible in the research. I took up the invitation of critical theorists to 'consider [my] tools' as part of a process of challenging colonised methodologies.²¹² Borrowing from critical ethnography, interaction with others towards alternative ways of thinking, has been an important aspect of this study.²¹³ As far as possible I have tried to take an open approach to the literature, archives, objects, observations and interviews, allowing them to lead me into areas both expected and unexpected. How these methods

²¹⁰ Minott, "Avoiding the single story by creating a single story," 91. Although here Minott's quotation present 'assumptions that prevail about museum staff', she has based this upon statistics available in: England, Arts Council England, *National Portfolio 2018–22: equality analysis* (London: Arts Council England, 2017) and England, Arts Council England, *Diversity in Major Partner Museums* (London: Arts Council England, 2015).

²¹¹ E. Olney, "Report and recommendations from ethnographic workshops: April–June 2018," in Nolan, *Traveller Collection at the Hugh Lane Gallery*, 24.

²¹² Winn, "Foreword," viii–ix.

²¹³ J. Thomas, *Doing Critical Ethnography* (London: SAGE Publications, 1993), 32.

have been employed towards including *Nacken* perspectives is discussed more fully throughout this chapter.

The relative advantages and disadvantages to the insider or outsider positions of those who carry out research related to the experiences of Gypsy, Roma and Travellers are a matter of live debate.²¹⁴ In the field of heritage, the advantages and disadvantages of being an insider researcher was discussed by the Travellers' Cultural Heritage Research Team who undertook oral history research to document Irish Traveller pasts in the 1990s.²¹⁵ This group identified both pros and cons to being a Traveller (insider) researcher. One of the main advantages was that interviewees were more relaxed with interviewers from their own culture. As this is linked, in part, to trust, trust-building was an important aspect of my research with *Nacken* and this is discussed below in the section on ethics and trust.

Utilising my experience in museums, the methods used to explore how *Nacken* identify, understand and value *chaetrie* were rooted in bringing people together with collections and creating opportunities for discussions, the development of displays and display text. These methods were used to '[uncover], [read] and mak[e] visible to others critical perspectives and possibilities for alternatives'.²¹⁶ As demonstrated in the previous chapter, *Nacken* have a distinct knowledge system to the majority population in Scotland. These alternative ways of thinking and seeing have, as far as possible, been reflected in the research findings.

3.3 Describing what was done

During the period of research, a mix of methods were used to gain an understanding of the absence and presence of *chaetrie* in museums, to work out why so much is unseen and to understand how it is understood and valued by *Nacken*. These included archival research in museum archives, intervention-based participant observation of the development of exhibits and displays (or discussions related to these processes), as well as object interviews, in which conversations were developed around objects marked out as significant by the interviewee in their home or museum store. In other situations,

²¹⁴ A summary of both the shift towards Roma knowledge-production and the resistance to it by some scholars is summarised in the online lecture, C. Clark, "Roma knowledge-production—examining the critical turn in Romani studies," *Barvalipe Roma Online University* (December 08, 8 Dec. 2020). <https://youtu.be/TGK0B92ufLY>. In this talk, Clark cited two recent pieces of writing that have interacted with the debate surrounding the move towards 'critical Romani studies'. These pieces were: Y. Matras, "Letter from the outgoing editor," *Romani Studies* 27, no. 2 (2017), 113–23; M. Stewart, "Nothing about us without us, or the dangers of a closed-society research paradigm," *Romani Studies* 27, no. 2 (2017), 125–46.

²¹⁵ Travellers' Cultural Heritage Research Team, "Travellers on research," in Ní Laodhóg, *A Heritage Ahead*, 28–35.

²¹⁶ G. E. Marcus and M. M. J. Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment with Human Sciences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 133.

objects selected by me, based on research, were used to prompt discussion, with the opportunity for the interviewee to move beyond the objects I had chosen. Archival research was undertaken due to the nature of the subject, about which little has been published. The methods bringing together *Nacken* and objects were selected for the exploration of the contemporary community significance and understanding of *chaetrie*. They were designed with my position in mind, recognising both my experience (in museums) and my lack of lived experience (of *Nacken* life and culture).

3.3.1 Archival and object research

Chapters 4 and 5 explore the question of what evidence of *chaetrie* and *Nacken* agency can be found in Scottish museums. To examine the presence and agency of *Nacken* in museums, archival and object-based research was undertaken, mainly at the Highland Folk Museum in Newtonmore but also the Stewartry Museum in Kirkcudbright, the Dick Institute in Kilmarnock and National Museums Scotland. The Highland Folk Museum was selected as a case study because I was aware of *chaetrie* recognised (and previously displayed) there. I had seen the display which had been curated by Ross Noble in the 1970s and also developed projects around this material when I worked at the Highland Folk Museum (2004–8). The Highland Folk Museum's response to the Roma Routes Survey also included a longer list of objects than any other museum in Scotland. The museum's return to the survey listed 22 specific items as well as collection level descriptions of object types thought of as having a connection to *Nacken*. The aim of this archival research was to find out more about what was recorded about the objects in accession records and museum catalogues, as well as what traces there were of interactions with *Nacken* in these records.

This research involved borrowing methods from archaeology and approaching museums and their archives as a field-site to uncover the histories hidden from sight. This is familiar in museum studies, as pointed out by Geoffrey N. Swinney, who states that '[f]or museum studies the material sites of the museum and its documentation are themselves "a field site"'.²¹⁷ This idea includes bringing an 'archaeological sensibility' to the storeroom,²¹⁸ the assembling or reassembling of collected material,²¹⁹ the exploration of the history of

²¹⁷ G. N. Swinney, "What do we know about what we know? The museum 'register' as museum object," in *The Thing About Museums: Objects and Experience, Representation and Contestation*, ed. S. H. Dudley (London: Routledge, 2017), 34.

²¹⁸ C. Wingfield, "Reassembling the London Missionary Society Collection: experimenting with symmetrical anthropology and the archaeological sensibility," in *Reassembling the Collection: Ethnographic Museums and Indigenous Agency*, eds. R. Harrison, S. Byrne and A. Clark (Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research, 2013), 61–87.

²¹⁹ S. Byrne and E. Tetehu, "Exposing the heart of the museum: the archaeological sensibility in the storeroom," in *Reassembling the Collection: Ethnographic Museums and Indigenous Agency*, eds. R. Harrison, S. Byrne and A. Clark (Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research, 2013), 210–1.

workplaces (or digging where you stand),²²⁰ as well as the use of an “archaeological sensibility” [to explore that which is] “hidden from history”.²²¹ This form of research had not previously been undertaken at the Highland Folk Museum.

During the course of the wider background reading and research into museums in Scotland, as well as through the archival research related to museum collecting at the Highland Folk Museum, a sense of how and why *Nacken chaetrie* ended up in museums over time was elicited. This thematic history of the collecting of *Nacken chaetrie* can be found in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 moves from the general picture of collecting across Scotland to the examination of a specific example. While Chapter 4 takes more from Lindqvist’s method of identifying how the ‘results of history are still with us’,²²² Chapter 5 presents the results from the ‘excavation’ of the Highland Folk Museum archives and store in terms of what it reveals about the presence of *Nacken chaetrie* and agency there.

As an external researcher at the Highland Folk Museum, I had access to the three main catalogues or entry files of I. F. Grant, the founder and curator (1935–54), George ‘Taffy’ Davidson, the second curator (1955–76) and Ross Noble (1976–2003). Access was also given to what the museum referred to as their ‘NMAS catalogue’.²²³ As this latter catalogue is contained across a series of drawers situated in a working office, these were more difficult to make use of regularly. All of these catalogues were paper-based, in a variety of forms.

Grant’s catalogue exists as a lever-arch file of typed pages, which contain the data that Grant compiled retrospectively towards the end of her time at the museum. Each entry includes:

- Object number (made up of a letter that represents a collecting or display category, e.g. ‘Tools’, ‘Crafts’, Jewelry [sic], followed by a unique numerical identifier)
- Object name (e.g. horn spoon)
- Materials, object details, maker (where known)
- Associated place (if known)
- How collected (lent, donor/presented/ given by, collected, bought) and from whom

²²⁰ Hicks, *The Brutish Museum*, xii. Here Hicks draws on the theories of Sven Lindqvist, who created a movement in Sweden in which workers were encouraged to write the histories of their workplaces.

²²¹ R. Harrison, ‘Reassembling ethnographic museum collections’, in *Reassembling the Collection: Ethnographic Museums and Indigenous Agency*, eds. R. Harrison, S. Byrne and A. Clark (Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research, 2013), 5.

²²² S. Lindqvist, ‘Dig where you stand’, *Oral History*, vol. 7, no. 2 (1979), 28.

²²³ I did not understand initially what these initials stood for in this context but over time it became clear that during the 1970s the museum collections had been reclassified using the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland (NMAS) numbering system (still in use at that time in the NMAS) to unify the collection previously categorised under two separate systems utilised by the previous curators.

Access was also given to Grant's accounts books (journals, which include details of object purchases), her contacts book and entry notebook. In Grant's files, it was usually evident what material Grant considered to have been made by *Nacken*, as she recorded these as 'T_____ made'. She also bought from *Nacken*, who were usually unnamed; instead these tend to read 'b. from T_____s' (i.e. bought from *Nacken*). These written records are supplemented by photographs of displays during Grant's time at the museum and further archival material, including correspondence, which were made available to me.

After Grant retired in 1954, the museum was taken over by the four Scottish universities at the time. As the lead university in this venture, the University of Aberdeen installed their Honorary Curator of Silver, Paintings, Etc., George 'Taffy' Davidson, as the new curator.²²⁴ He and his wife lived in the museum during the summer months, returning to Aberdeen each winter. Davidson's catalogue folder is much slimmer than Grant's. It consists of typed pages recording objects as they entered the museum. The object number includes the year in which each object was given to the museum, followed by a number signifying the order in which it arrived. Additionally, there are also notes that usually include donor and place where the object was collected from, materials and object measurements. Sometimes there is also further information about the object and its wider associations. During my research, I successfully applied for a Scottish University Research Collections Associate Studentship (SURCAS), which allowed me to visit the University of Aberdeen's Museums and Special Collections. Files in Marischal Museum and the University's archive include letters sent by Davidson from the Highland Folk Museum to his employers in Aberdeen, as well as other relevant papers. These communications detail objects not recorded in his catalogue. They also provide insights into his friendship with *Nacken* dealers in antiques, including John and Alfred Yates and George and Tom Williamson. Among the other items in these archives is an unpublished guide to the museum, which highlights further objects collected in his time and sometimes outlines *Nacken* connections. There are few photographs from Davidson's time at the museum, but in 1962, a film was made in which some of the displays he developed can be seen.²²⁵

Both Grant's and Davidson's catalogues, as well as other material produced by them, were searched for references to objects given by, bought from, made by, or otherwise associated with *Nacken*. Additional object types of interest were identified through published works related to the museum, wider publications related to this and other

²²⁴ Please note, Davidson's job title at the University of Aberdeen was, 'Honorary Curator of Silver, Paintings, Etc.'

²²⁵ *Highland Folk*, directed by Hans Neiter (Scotland: Anvil Films, 1962), 35mm film.

https://movingimage.nls.uk/film/2238?search_term=highland%20folk%20museum&search_join_type=AND&search_fuzzy=yes.

museums as well as from works written by *Nacken*. This was used to develop a database of objects in the collection that could be linked to *Nacken*. The database is colour coded to indicate how the objects are connected (see Appendix I, a separate Excel database listing objects at the Highland Folk Museum linked to *Nacken*).

Accession registers compiled by Ross Noble were also made available. During Noble's time, collecting was not the main focus of activity for the museum. Instead, resources were channelled into the redisplay and reclassification of the collection, the revival of 'heritage in action' events (live interpretation activities previously used by Grant as part of the interpretation of the museum), and the development of a larger open-air site. The process of reclassifying the collection was undertaken to align the collection under one numbering system. This aspect of the museum's archive is known as the 'NMAAS catalogue' because Noble, having worked for the NMAAS as a roving curator, adopted its numbering system. It exists as a series of index cards featuring information taken from the earlier entry books and catalogues, as well as information from the objects themselves, alongside the new 'NMAAS' number. I was also given access to archival boxes of correspondence, photographs and museum flyers and texts from across the museum's history. These were searched for traces of *Nacken* involvement in the museum. Of particular significance to my research were Noble's development of a T_____ Encampment display and the storytelling and craft demonstration activities that Duncan Williamson was invited to carry out on the museum site, traces of which were found in the archive (the new tent built by Essie Stewart on the museum site as part of this research is discussed in Chapter 6).

As an external researcher, I was not given access to the museum's digital Adlib catalogue. During my time researching at the museum (2017–8), the catalogue, was at an early stage of development and I was informed that access would not be of much benefit. Also, at this time, an externally funded project was taking place to enhance the digital catalogue records of the museum's vernacular craft collections. This project, carried out by Documentation Assistants Helen Pickles and Rachael Thomas focused on hornware, baskets, straw work (including bee-skeps), treen (small wooden objects, including the staved bickers), Barvas Ware and textile craft hand tools (including heckling implements). There were clear crossovers between our areas of research, and we exchanged information and thoughts on these collections.²²⁶ In February 2018, Helen Pickles asked

²²⁶ Both Helen Pickles and Rachael Thomas have gone on to develop museum projects with *Nacken*. As well as being involved in supporting Kathy Townsley McGuigan to develop the Gypsy/Traveller Collection at Auchindrain, Thomas has researched *Nacken* connections at Gairloch Museum (<https://grthm.scot/place-names-exploring-the-long-history-of-the-gypsy-traveller-community-within-the-gairloch-area/>) and is also researching similar links in the collections at Nairn Museum, Rachael Thomas, *pers. comm.*, September 28, Sept. 2021. Pickles has developed interpretation in an online platform that includes a focus on the bough tent, as part of the 'Folk and Fabric' project at the Highland Folk Museum.

what term(s) for *Nacken* it would be helpful to include in the keywords section of relevant digital records.²²⁷ I sent a list of terms and indicated that this would be helpful to add both to items with a secure, provenanced connection, as well as those with a likely connection.²²⁸

As well as access to the archive records of the museum, I was also given access to the store. Time in the store allowed me to locate and photograph objects identified in the catalogue as being *chaetrie*. A bay of shelves was set aside where some of the *chaetrie* could be relocated as a group of objects.²²⁹ I am grateful to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland for funding that supported me to travel to the Highland Folk Museum. This was helpful towards the planning of research with *Nacken* in the store, which will be discussed in the next section. Their grant also provided funds to subsidise accommodation for participants who attended this event.²³⁰

As part of the archival and object research, I also made short visits to three other museums where I was able to view objects and museum records related to relevant collections at the Dick Institute in Kilmarnock (April 3, 2018), the Stewartry Museum in Kirkcudbright (September 07, 2018) and the National Museum Scotland's Granton Store and the National Museum of Scotland (November 08 and 20, 2018 respectively). These visits were useful in offering access to a wider range of material and to explore and compare approaches to documentation and record keeping. I was also assisted in understanding processes around basket-making and hornworking by Jimmy Williamson (*Nacken* storyteller and basketmaker) and Bill Steele (non-*Nacken* hornworker). They generously provided a demonstration of their craft on December 21, 2017 and April 06, 2018, respectively.

3.3.2 Interventions and observations

Following the identification of *chaetrie* in museums, I wanted to gain a better understanding of that material and how *Nacken* perceive and value the collections found in these contexts. As this thesis argues that *Nacken* have an alternative perspective to the

²²⁷ Helen Pickles, *pers. comm.*, February 13, Feb. 2018.

²²⁸ During 2018 Helen Pickles and Rachael Thomas added 'T____, Tinkler, Traveller, Ceard, Caird, Naken, Gypsy' (reflective of the terms applied to *Nacken* in the reading I undertook as part of the research) as keywords in the "Associations" tab of 175 records. These records are mainly of horn tumblers and spoons, although also include some of the staved bickers and some of the baskets. Helen Pickles, *pers. comm.*, August 25, Aug. 2021. I have since sent a fuller list of objects that the findings of my research indicate should also be associated in this way.

²²⁹ Although Grant's catalogue included a small section that was titled 'T____ possessions', as well as subsections in the 'Tools' category for 'T____ tinsmith tools' and 'T____ hornwork tools', these had been reclassified in the NMAS system and, as the layout of the store is based on the catalogue, these items had been dispersed across the store.

²³⁰ Accommodation was part funded by this grant and partly by MECOPP, who were a key partner in the organisation of the event planned for the museum store.

majority population, it was important to find ways of exploring this. As such, the event was planned as a short-term ethnographical study, using observational as well as interventionalist techniques.²³¹ This was planned to take place in the museum store of the Highland Folk Museum. Additional opportunities arose and further short-term ethnographies were carried out around museum display-based interventions as well as around the building of a bough tent and bowcamp.²³² Each of these involved bringing people and things together to think through questions of value. These encounters are described below.

Initially one main ethnographic event in the store was planned with MECOPP, who were able to help me to recruit participants.²³³ I met with Michelle Lloyd from MECOPP in June 2017 and we discussed the possibility of an event in the Highland Folk Museum store at a date to be decided through ongoing consultation. I was also invited to attend one of the MECOPP residentials in September 2017.²³⁴ Being at the residential allowed me the chance to introduce my research to members of the community, to hear their thoughts and feedback and to have informal conversations with those who were there. This was an important and unexpected positive to the development of the process as it helped me to gain the trust of the community who would be participants in the event in the Highland Folk Museum store.

Just a month before the residential, in August 2017, I met Essie Stewart at the Highland Folk Museum. During the visit we went to see the tent that had been erected to replace the one she had built at the museum in 2008.²³⁵ Her tent had fallen into disrepair and been identified for rebuilding in 2017. Having heard that the museum planned to reconstruct it, I had contacted the museum to offer to arrange involvement by *Nacken* in the process.²³⁶ This offer was not taken up. By chance, on the day we visited in August 2017, Liz English had just joined the museum as Curator (Large Object Collections) and her responsibilities included the museum's collection of buildings. Liz English met with

²³¹ This form of research is described in S. Pink and J. Morgan, "Short-term ethnography: intense routes to knowing," *Symbolic Interaction* 36, no. 3 (2013): 351–61.

²³² Bough tent and bowcamp here are roughly synonymous terms for *Nacken* summer tents. The slight difference in these terms reflect the ways in which the builders refer to them. Essie Stewart calls her structure a bough tent (named after the boughs used in its construction), while Kathy Townsley McGuigan talks of a bowcamp (camp being a *Nacken* term for a tent and bow in reference to its overall shape). The terms that they use are those used in their family and geographic area and their tents are also reflective of family and geographic styles. Tents at one time were built and lived in throughout the year and there are a range of styles of tent and associated terms for the various types of tent used for different purposes and seasons.

²³³ MECOPP works to support minority ethnic carers in the Lothians, Perth and Kinross and Argyll areas of Scotland. One of the groups they work with are Gypsy/Traveller carers.

²³⁴ MECOPP runs two residential weekends for the Gypsy/Traveller carers it works with each year. These are provided for respite and carers can access a range of therapeutic and cultural activities while there.

²³⁵ R. Ramsay, "Scottish Travellers: the northern bow tent," *Vernacular Building* 38 (2014–15): 73–84.

²³⁶ Rhona Ramsay, email to Graham Cross, January 06, Jan. 2017.

Essie Stewart and me at the site of the new tent and heard Essie Stewart's concerns. It had been built without *Nacken* input, was made of unsuitable materials and was, therefore, inappropriate in its representation of *Nacken* culture. Over the coming months, Liz English and I worked on funding applications to Historic Environment Scotland, Museums Galleries Scotland and the Scottish Book Trust for Essie Stewart's time and expertise, as well as materials, to construct a new tent, to film the process, and for the museum to host an event around its construction.

The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland provided funding to subsidise MECOPP to hold a residential in Newtonmore in 2018. It was planned to coincide with the Festival of Museums in May 2018, which included Essie Stewart's building of the tent, storytelling, paper flower-making (which some of the MECOPP attendees demonstrated), the 'Moving Minds' exhibition and an evening of films.²³⁷ On the following day, eighteen *Nacken* had agreed to meet me in the museum store to look at objects and discuss the possibility of reexhibiting some of the material.

The store visit was designed as a short-term ethnographical study to check my understanding of *chaetrie*, as well as to analyse how *Nacken* value material connected to *Nacken* lives in museum collections. The invitation to create an exhibit was intended as an 'interventional as well as observational' activity.²³⁸ While Pink and Morgan describe environments that are more familiar to the participants as being the preferred location for short-term ethnographies of this sort, this activity was planned for the museum store. This was partly for practical reasons—the store is where the objects are located—but also follows the work of James Clifford and others who have used the museum store as a 'contact zone'.²³⁹ As the questions that these activities were intended to answer were around what *chaetrie* is in museums and how it is valued, they took place in the museum store, rather than in an environment more familiar to the participants, described as the preferred location of this type of research by Pink and Morgan.²⁴⁰ These interventional methods were intended to produce 'alternative ways of knowing about and with people', and also about and with objects.²⁴¹

²³⁷ The films show were Timothy Neat's *The Summer Walkers* (1979) and Jess Smith's *A Sense of Identity* (2017).

²³⁸ Pink and Morgan, "Short-term ethnography," 352.

²³⁹ J. Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 188–91. See also, Byrne and Teteh, "Exposing the heart of the museum," 199–228 and Peers, Peers, "'Ceremonies of renewal'..." 136–57.

²⁴⁰ Pink and Morgan, "Short-term ethnography," 359.

²⁴¹ Pink and Morgan describe the use of short-term ethnography to discover more about 'people and the environments of which they are part', and so the interventions and observations in their research took place in environments of relevance to participant lives and to their questions as researchers. *Ibid*, 359.

During the visit to the store, participants were given the opportunity to view a range of material identified, in the course of my archival research, to have links with *Nacken*. This included a display of material purchased from *Nacken* scrap and antique dealer, Wullie Riley (see Chapter 5), as well as a small selection of *Nacken*-made craft items from the museum collection. Luggage labels and pencils were made available for group members who wished to leave a response to individual objects. A seated discussion took place around the table with the craft objects (figure 3). The objects and an invitation to create a display on the museum's open wagon in the store formed the starting point for the discussion.²⁴² I took part as a participant observer of the discussion but also intervened occasionally through asking questions of the group to explore their responses further. The discussion was, however, largely led by the group and, following their lead, the focus shifted from what objects the museum had to what objects the museum was missing. It was made clear to group members that they did not have to stay in the store but could come and go from the activity as they felt comfortable. The three male participants stayed for a short time and then left to sit in an area outside the store where seating and refreshments were provided.²⁴³ They did not return but the remaining participants stayed throughout the session. It should be noted that although the research also included an interview with David Donaldson, it has largely been informed by female *Nacken* perspectives. After our seated discussion, a group of eight women participated in a walk-round of the store, in which they pointed out objects which they felt connected to or that were familiar to them. One participant also requested to see the pearl-fishing gear, which had not been included in the displays, and this was also made available.

²⁴² The Highland Folk Museum's visitor experience is mainly situated in the museum's open-air site, where old buildings have been relocated and reconstructed to offer an insight into life in the past. The open store, where our activities took place, is accessed by the public by appointment or on booked tours, which would normally take place weekly during the months May to October. There are very few glass case display opportunities across the museum, the main one is in the open store. At the time, this showcased objects that had been the focus of the museum's vernacular craft project, which had recently been carried out by Helen Pickles and Rachael Thomas. When I had enquired about the group making a display this glass case was, therefore, unavailable but the open trailer, which had been the focal point of Ross Noble's 'T_____ Encampment' was available for development into a display. The group was clear in their preference for a glass case display.

²⁴³ It is not unusual for *Nacken* men to opt out of interactions with non-*Nacken* institutions. As noted by MECOPP, '[w]omen often represent the public-facing contingent of the community [... while] Gypsy/Traveller men often go unheard because they rarely take part in consultations. MECOPP, *Men Aloud: engaging with Gypsy/Traveller men in Scotland report* (Edinburgh: MECOPP, 2022), 1.



Figure 3. *Nacken* experts in the Highland Folk Museum store, May 20, 2018. © Rhona Ramsay.

I had gained permission to make an audio recording of this session, which I then planned to transcribe. To aid my own listening experience and help in the identification of participants in the recording, I took notes throughout the process. After the event I discovered that the recording equipment had failed. In response I made detailed reflective notes of the discussions that had taken place, based on the notes taken during the event, as well as written responses to objects made by participants.

The invitation to create a display was not taken up by the group, but the response given by participants offered useful insights into how the group considered museums, museum displays and the objects that I had selected to discuss. As a result, an alternative short interventionist activity offering *Nacken* participants a glass-case display opportunity and more choice in object selection and display development was sought. Following a presentation of my research findings attended by Dr Mark Hall, Collections Officer at Perth Museum and Art Gallery, I was invited to repeat this presentation for his colleagues.²⁴⁴ After this, I met with members of the collections and learning teams to discuss possible contacts for future work between the museum and local *Nacken*.²⁴⁵ As a result of this meeting an opportunity arose to develop an exhibition with the Gypsy/Traveller Youth Assembly, through Article 12 in Scotland, at Perth Museum and Art Gallery.²⁴⁶ A case was identified for a small display, which was planned for Gypsy, Roma, Traveller History Month (GRTHM) in June 2019. To help with the development of this display the museum provided digital images of their social history collections. In April 2019, Gil Gilles of Article

²⁴⁴ This took place at the University of Stirling as part of the Centre for Environment, Heritage and Policy series of lunchtime talks on February 05, Feb. 2019.

²⁴⁵ This talk took place at Perth Museum and Art Gallery on March 01, 2019.

²⁴⁶ Article 12 in Scotland works with marginalised young people across Scotland to help them to access their human rights.

12 in Scotland was able to share images of the collections, which I had compiled into a document accompanied by notes of possible connections, with members of the Gypsy/Traveller Youth Assembly. Two members of the Gypsy/Traveller Youth Assembly then met with me and Mark Simmons, Collections Assistant, at Perth Museum and Art Gallery in May 2019. Participant expenses were covered to allow them to attend the museum in-person. Following a tour of the store led by Mark Simmons, the two young Gypsy/Travellers and I used a meeting room at the museum to select objects for the display (using images of available collections printed onto A4 sheets) and to discuss how the group would like these to be interpreted. Notes from this meeting, alongside input from a former member of the Gypsy/Traveller Youth Assembly who I met separately at Perth Museum, formed the basis of the text that accompanied the objects. I drafted text and circulated it to Gil Gilles, the participants and to Mark Simmons. The exhibit was displayed at Perth Museum and Art Gallery from June 15 to July 29, 2019. The interpretation, developed by those involved brought new (and for me, unexpected) perspectives to the objects selected for display. These demonstrate both the otherwise unseen connections in museum collections and how these might be used to communicate aspects of *Nacken* culture and heritage in museums (figure 4).



Figure 4. Gypsy, Roma, Traveller History Month (GRTHM) 2019 display by members of the Gypsy/Traveller Youth Assembly at Perth Museum and Art Gallery. Although the objects they chose were from the past they wrote interpretation that related these objects to their lives today. © Rhona Ramsay.

As well as working with groups, I also met with three individuals to talk directly about specific aspects of museum collections or displays at the Highland Folk Museum. The first of these meetings was with Essie Stewart on October 15, 2018. I made an audio recording of the conversation with Essie Stewart that took place in a series of locations across the Highland Folk Museum site. These were in the Highland Folk Museum store, at Lochanhoulie House on the museum site (a relocated building that used to be close to Carrbridge and was one that Essie Stewart knew from her time on the road), at the now rebuilt bough tent, and in the farm area of the site (figure 5). The objects and locations encountered provided prompts for this conversation. This was followed by an interview with David Donaldson in Aberdeen on October 17, 2018. At the building of Essie Stewart's tent on May 19, 2018, he had shared a memory of seeing Essie Stewart's first tent at the museum as a young boy and his feelings about seeing his community represented at a

museum. He agreed to be interviewed about this experience. The third was with Jess Smith who visited the Highland Folk Museum store to view the items that had been identified as having been bought from her Grandad, Wullie Riley. This took place on December 17, 2018. These interviews and conversations were transcribed and have been invaluable in offering insights into *Nacken* perceptions of museums, how objects in them are valued, as well as how objects are perceived and valued outwith these settings. On May 11, 2019, I also met with Kathy Townsley McGuigan at the National Museum of Scotland. This was not planned as a research trip, but reflections on the discussions that we had have been important to my understanding of aspects of *Nacken chaetrie* in Scottish museums. In some ways, this visit operated in a similar way to the development of the GRTHM display at Perth, in that the discussion and selection of objects that we looked at together were led by Kathy Townsley McGuigan.



Figure 5. Essie Stewart's bough tent at the Highland Folk Museum, Newtonmore. © Rhona Ramsay.

Archival and collections-based research, as well as interviews and ethnographic studies (based on short-term interventions in which *Nacken* participants were invited to interact with and redisplay collections) have contributed directly to this research. Each of these interviews, conversations, observations and interventions has resulted in, not only new knowledge, but more significantly alternative perspectives regarding this material. The reflections and learning from these are explored in Chapter 5.

3.3.3 Finding *Nacken* absence

While this research takes the position that most museums have unidentified or unacknowledged items of *chaetrie*, it is clear that some museums will have no material that is connected to *Nacken*. In most cases, absence is more difficult to identify than presence; here one of the responses to the Roma Routes Survey offered a useful way in. Among the twelve returns made by accredited museums in Scotland, Auchindrain made the unique acknowledgement of an absence of objects. I had planned to explore this absence, its implications and mitigations through interviews with curatorial staff, examination of interpretative materials and an analysis of the impact of the employment of *Nacken* in contributing to alternative approaches to visibility. While these were carried out and are discussed in the opening to Chapter 6, during the period of my research the museum began, in 2018, to actively collect *chaetrie*. Led by *Nacken* staff member, Kathy Townsley McGuigan, this initiative was the fullest expression of the work the museum developed as a result of the awareness it had of the absence of *chaetrie* (outlined in their response to the Roma Routes Survey). Auchindrain's Gypsy/Traveller collection became one of the *Nacken* collections analysed in the second part of Chapter 6 and is discussed in the section below.

3.3.4 *Nacken* collections

As well as studying collections of *chaetrie* in museums and *Nacken* responses to this material, I was also keen to find out more about collections gathered by *Nacken* themselves, both within and outwith museum contexts. What did *Nacken* select to represent their own culture and how are these examples of *chaetrie* valued? Initially, the main focus for this aspect of activity was a study of Jess Smith's collection of material related to Scottish Travellers. Jess Smith generously agreed to a visit from me to see this collection and to hear more about the items that she had gathered.²⁴⁷ I visited Jess Smith to interview her about and photograph her collection on October 18 and 20, 2017.

During the course of my research, opportunities became available to study additional *Nacken* collections in a range of contexts. I was already aware of MECOPP's 'Moving Minds' touring exhibition. It was not until later in the research process, however, that I became aware of a wider group of collections that might be analysed together. One was the Gypsy/Traveller collection at Auchindrain begun in 2018 (mentioned above).²⁴⁸ In the

²⁴⁷ Jess Smith takes items from this collection to communicate her culture at events and talks. Depending on the context and what she wants to communicate, she sometimes takes banners with photographs instead of objects or a combination of the two.

²⁴⁸ R. Ramsay, R. Thomas and K. Townsley McGuigan, "From intangible to tangible and back again – developing Auchindrain Township's Gypsy/Traveller collection," *Social History in Museums* 45: 7–18.

same year, Jess Smith put me in touch with David Chappell, a descendant of John Yates, who let me know of the existence of the John Yates Collection at the University of Aberdeen, and I saw the MacDonald Collection, an artwork created by Shannon MacDonald, which combines photographs of family heirlooms alongside memories about these objects shared by family members (figure 6).



Figure 6. Shannon MacDonald's artwork, 'The MacDonald Collection', on display at Summerhall, Edinburgh, 2018. The work comprises a series of objects belonging to her family, and accompanying memories featured in text to the left. © Rhona Ramsay.

As Farm Supervisor, Kathy Townsley McGuigan's role at the museum is not collections based, but as a *Nacken* member of staff she performs the role of Gypsy/Traveller subject specialist at the museum. She has used her contacts and trust within the community to begin to collect material from *Nacken* in Argyll. The museum has kindly shared the collections records for this collection, which have been co-produced by Rachael Thomas and Kathy Townsley McGuigan. I was also able to interview the director and the curator on August 07, 2018. While researching the collections at the University of Aberdeen, I was able to study the John Yates Collection. This collection had entered the University of Aberdeen Museum Collection in 1951, shortly after Yates's death. It appears to have been his personal collection. The objects and associated entry records were examined on July 16 and 23, August 13 and 27 and September 10, 2018. I viewed Shannon MacDonald's

artwork, 'The MacDonald Collection', at Summerhall's 'Out of Sight, Out of Mind' exhibition on October 12, 2018 (figure 6).²⁴⁹

I also included MECOPP's 'Moving Minds' exhibition in this analysis. I had first seen this in August 2015, when it was displayed as part of the Just Festival in Edinburgh's Fringe Festival but I revisited it at the Birnam Institute (January 28, 2017), the Edinburgh Museum (May 27, 2017), the Glasgow Women's Library (May 12, 2018) and the Highland Folk Museum (May 18, 2018). Over this time, the display expanded to include new objects selected by individuals for their significance to them. In Edinburgh the 2-D display was accompanied by some of the objects usually only featured in photographs, which had been borrowed from the owners, and in each of the locations craft demonstrations were put on by *Nacken* women involved with MECOPP.

As well as analysing collections, I was also able to be a participant observer of the construction of Essie Stewart's bough tent at the Highland Folk Museum and Kathy Townsley McGuigan's bowcamp at Auchindrain. Although not *Nacken* collections, as such, these work in similar ways to the Gypsy/Traveller collection at Auchindrain—selected by *Nacken* families or individuals to represent their culture in a museum. Essie Stewart took us through the process of gathering hazel, bending the hazel boughs and building the bough tent in November 2017 and May 2018. This was filmed by Shona Main, resulting in the film, *The Tent that Essie Built: The Tent Shall Stand When the Palace Shall Fall*.²⁵⁰ Kathy Townsley McGuigan and her family have constructed a bowcamp at Auchindrain annually since 2015. I was able to observe the camp on August 5, 2017 and to observe and participate in its construction on August 7, 2018.²⁵¹

3.3.5 *Nacken* value of *chaetrie*

I began the analysis of these *Nacken* collections in October 2019.²⁵² As I did not want to risk overlaying my settled perspective on the interpretation of the data gathered from *Nacken* participants about *chaetrie*, I took the decision to use Daniel Baker's 'Gypsy visuality' framework in this analysis. Baker, an English Romani Gypsy artist and researcher, developed this framework as part of his doctoral research at the Royal

²⁴⁹ Shannon MacDonald kindly gave me permission to analyse her artwork alongside the other *Nacken* collections: Shannon MacDonald, *pers. comm.*, November 02, Nov. 2019.

²⁵⁰ *The Tent that Essie Built: The Tent Shall Stand When the Palace Shall Fall*, directed by Shona Main (Newtonmore: Highland Folk Museum, 2019), <https://grthm.scot/essie-stewart/>.

²⁵¹ Prior to starting as a research postgraduate, I took up an opportunity offered by SGSAH for students to visit Auchindrain to test and give feedback on their handheld digital interpretation devices. This took place on July 28, 2016. While I was there, I was able to meet with Kathy Townsley McGuigan and see the bowcamp in situ at the time.

²⁵² After starting this analysis on Jess Smith's collection, the 'Moving Minds' collection and Auchindrain's Gypsy/Traveller Collection, I contacted Shannon MacDonald, in November 2019, to ask her permission to include the 'MacDonald Collection' in this analysis.

College of Art in London. In his thesis, he points out that an ‘emphasis on the written and spoken word’ of Gypsies and Travellers in academia has meant that most studies of Romani cultural output have focused on ‘song, performance, oral history, linguistic investigation, poetry and literature’.²⁵³ Baker calls for a move beyond this to a better understanding of Gypsy visuality, a broad category encompassing material culture more widely. As he states,

I use the term Gypsy visuality to mean qualities found in artefacts that originate from and/or circulate within Gypsy communities; qualities which might describe a Gypsy “style”. Gypsy visuality describes a visual sensibility that extends beyond the art object to include décor as well as objects admired by Gypsies such as ornately decorated crockery, and other ephemera of Gypsy daily life.²⁵⁴

The categories included in Baker’s Gypsy visuality framework (table 1, page 80) are reflective of Gypsy culture and recognise ‘the cultural, social and geographic differences that determine the production and reception of artworks’.²⁵⁵ Although Baker refers here to ‘artworks’, I believe that this can be widened to artefacts, as it is in-keeping with Baker’s definition of artwork or visuality, which he ‘extends beyond the art object to include [...] objects’.²⁵⁶ Using this framework in my analysis is a way of decolonising my methods by ‘resisting the oppressive efforts [...] to define and shape and] to control the identity and narrative of the colonized [*sic*]’.²⁵⁷ It has been used to analyse data in a way that ‘speak[s] to the communit[y] in which [I] work, learn from and with, and who depend on [researchers] to be responsible with the stories, artifacts [*sic*] and experiences they have shared with us’.²⁵⁸

For the data analysis, I broke down the transcripts, notes and text from interviews, observations, as well as text developed by *Nacken* for displays, into chunks as they related to an object or small number of related objects (for example, Jess Smith had a group of handmade clothes pegs and these were analysed together). These blocks of data were then coded according to Baker’s framework. For example, in talking about the significance of the pegs, Jess Smith named people who had made or given them to her (coded as community/family), how they were made (countryside; contingency; traditional skills) and the painted decoration on one (figure 7), making it particularly prized (ornament). The datasets analysed were the transcripts from interviews of Jess Smith

²⁵³ D. Baker, "Gypsy Visuality: Gell's Art Nexus and its potential for artists" (PhD diss., Royal College of Art, 2011), 17.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 12.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 3, 23. Baker links this culturally situated analysis to the work of post-colonial theorists who reject universalism in the reception of art.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 17.

²⁵⁷ J. M. Forbes, "A culture of values: rethinking school quality and culture through Fanonian critical theory," in *Critical Theory and Qualitative Data Analysis in Education*, Winkle-Wagner, Lee-Johnson and Gaskew, 167.

²⁵⁸ Winn, "Foreword," ix.

regarding her collection, the text elements of Shannon MacDonald's 'The MacDonald Collection' artwork (in which family members shared what they felt was significant about the objects), the text accompanying objects in the 'Moving Minds' exhibition (in which the object's owner explains why they chose the object), and the documentation related to the Gypsy/Traveller Collection at Auchindrain (see section 3.3.4).



Figure 7. Painted clothes peg made by one of Isa Johnstone's sons, one of Jess Smith's 'prized possessions.' © Rhona Ramsay.

The clearest factor of most significance, both across each collection of objects and across the collections as a whole, was connection to family and/or community. This was initially concerning, as it seemed likely that this would have been the expected response from any group of people. To gain reassurance regarding the veracity of the analysis that set family and community at the forefront of how these objects and collections are valued, I returned to the raw data and carried out a thematic analysis.²⁵⁹ This involved observing themes from across the transcripts, notes and text and logging patterns of recurring topics. The observation of themes was carried out more than once to facilitate the emergence of patterns.²⁶⁰ This process not only allowed me to check the validity and relevance of Daniel Baker's Gypsy Visuality framework, but to expand the framework for use in this alternative context.

²⁵⁹ The use of more than one method in the analysis process in order to increase validity can be referred to as 'triangulation': G. Guest, K. M. MacQueen and E. E. Namey, *Applied Thematic Analysis* (California: SAGE Publications, 2012), 86.

²⁶⁰ Repetition (of certain themes) within transcript material is seen as a common 'theme-recognition', but repetition of the process of identifying and applying themes and their codes is also an 'iterative approach', in which text is read and reread, coded and recoded: *Ibid*, 66, 70.

When I reviewed the themes that surfaced from a thematic analysis, two main findings became evident. The first was that family and community remained the main factor that gave an object value (an explanation of the reasoning for this is provided in Chapter 6 with the other findings from this process). The second was that a small number of themes, which were not explicitly listed in Baker's framework, also emerged. Most of these could be added to existing categories in his framework, for example nature added to countryside and animals added to wildlife. Table 1, on the following page, shows the categories of Baker's Gypsy visuality framework as well as the additions identified through the thematic analysis.

The categories that are new (freedom/mobility, language/stories/song, remembrance/gift and new skills and activities) are present in this revised framework due to its concern with collections of objects, rather than primarily with aesthetics. Although Baker's definition of Gypsy visuality extends to objects, what is analysed here is the relationship between people and objects and the significance that these objects hold for them. Baker's categories deal with the outward expression of Gypsy aesthetics, whereas my research has sought to enquire into underlying feelings of connectedness to objects. While these are linked, as both are related to values held by Gypsies and Travellers, one is outwardly or visually expressed, while the other is situated in the (underlying) connections and associations that people have with the objects. With this slightly extended analytical tool, I revisited the original data and reanalysed to form the final results.

For Baker, viewing *chaetrie* from a *Nacken* perspective is important because the 'lack of attention to Gypsy visuality denotes a gap in knowledge which reflects the Gypsy's marginal status in society. This in turn promotes a state of "unseen-ness" which maintains an attitude of ambivalence towards Gypsy communities across Europe'.²⁶¹ As mentioned in Chapter 1, this unseen-ness (invisibility) is manifest not only in society at large but also in museums. As Baker notes, 'Gypsy visuality has been reflected only in a small number of collections around Britain'.²⁶² This is a reminder of the clear distinction between presence of objects in museums, and the representation or presence of *Nacken* in those spaces. The examples cited by Baker were all Romani-run, displaying Gypsy wagons and items related to Romani culture. In these instances, Romani Gypsies had clear agency in the presentation and representation of their culture in these museum settings. In using Baker's framework to analyse *Nacken* collections, I hoped to discover what *Nacken* were

²⁶¹ Baker, "Gypsy Visuality," 17.

²⁶² Ibid, 12. In an associated footnote, Baker was only able to list three institutions which did reflect this, two of which had closed in 2009, a single example remaining open at the time he was writing. None were in Scotland.

representing of themselves in their collections. Chapter 6 discusses the analysis of these *Nacken* collections.

Daniel Baker's Gypsy visuality framework	Updated version for analysis of <i>Nacken</i> collections
Flashiness	Flashiness
Allure	Allure
Enchantment/Entrapment	Enchantment/Entrapment
Ornament	Ornament
Diversion	Diversion
Discordance	Discordance
Contingency	Contingency
Functionality	Functionality
Performance	Performance
Community/Family	Community/Family
Home	Home
Traditional skills	Traditional skills
	Traditional occupations
Wildlife	Wildlife
	Animals
Countryside	Countryside
	Nature
Gender	Gender
	Language/Story/Song
	Freedom/Mobility
	Remembrance/Gift
	New skills and activities

Table 1. Daniel Baker's Gypsy Visuality framework adapted for use in exploring the value of *Nacken chaetrie* to *Nacken*.

3.3.6 Museum processes: how *chaetrie* becomes hidden

In order to explore how *chaetrie* can become invisible in museum collections, the Clan Macpherson Museum in Newtonmore was selected as a case study. They had made no return to the Roma Routes Survey, although they were far from alone in this. I had visited the museum in 2006, however, and encountered there Jamie Macpherson's fiddle (figure 8). The interpretation at the time made no mention of the fact that Macpherson had been hanged for being a Gypsy and so I was surprised when I later learned of this connection. The display of items of *chaetrie* without information to indicate their *Nacken* connections is also not uncommon in museums. What made this museum an ideal candidate as a case

study was the prominent display of the fiddle as well as the historical evidence of its connection to *Nacken*.²⁶³



Figure 8. Jamie Macpherson's broken fiddle, at the Clan Macpherson Museum, Newtonmore. © Clan Macpherson Museum.

The research undertaken towards this case study initially involved an interview with Ewen MacPherson, a trustee of the Clan Macpherson Museum Trust, as well as Chair of the museum's Exhibitions Committee, to explore the decisions taken regarding the interpretation of the fiddle. This took place on October 10, 2017. I was also given access to the associated clan and museum records related to this object and to a development plan written for the museum in the 1980s. These various sources offered insights into how this item became hidden in plain sight; how it became what Jodie Matthews has termed an absent presence (Matthews' work is discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.4).²⁶⁴ Alongside other examples of museum documentation practices encountered across this research, the process at the Clan Macpherson Museum was analysed towards understanding how and why the fiddle's *Nacken* connections became unseen. A values-based analysis has been useful in seeing the ways in which collections research can result in new knowledge and new values as well as opening up new engagement. Depending on whose values are foregrounded, these cycles can also reenforce existing narratives and exclude as well as draw in alternative perspectives, knowledge and values. I had initially considered also analysing these museum processes in the context of institutional racism, in part because of the Clan Macpherson's connection to this terminology through their last Clan Chief,

²⁶³ The fiddle is considered one of the treasures of the Clan Macpherson and has been displayed throughout the Clan Macpherson Museum's history. As well as a large body of writing regarding Macpherson and his fiddle, which make it clear that he was a Gypsy, the transcript of the trial at which he was sentenced to death for being a Gypsy has been published: J. Stuart (ed.), *The Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, vol. 3 (Aberdeen: The Spalding Club, 1846).

²⁶⁴ Matthews, "Where are the Romanies?"

William Macpherson.²⁶⁵ Instead, Ibram X. Kendi's work on racist policies, which he has developed as an alternative to institutional racism,²⁶⁶ was used in this analysis, looking at how museum policies and procedures (often unconsciously) categorise and judge, include and exclude as well as elevate and downgrade.

During his interview, Ewen Macpherson offered me the chance to rewrite the interpretation so that it could be updated in the museum. I turned this down, suggesting instead that it was something that could be done with *Nacken* community members. Quite unexpectedly an opportunity to do this arose at the end of 2020. I was contacted by Jim MacPherson, a board member of the Clan Macpherson Museum and member of the Exhibition Committee. He had read an article in which I stated that the 'presence of material such as Jamie MacPherson's [*sic*] fiddle offers museums the opportunity to participate in debate around the issue of past and present treatment of *Naken* [*sic*]'.²⁶⁷ The Clan Macpherson Museum had received Covid recovery funding from Museums Galleries Scotland and were going to be redeveloping the museum and reinterpreting the collections. I was offered, again, the opportunity to write new text to accompany the fiddle. In discussion with Jim MacPherson, it was agreed that I could carry this out with *Nacken* community members. Towards this, I contacted Eilidh McLeod of Article 12 in Scotland, who was able to involve Maggie McPhee, a Scottish Traveller and emerging writer. In order to support Maggie with the writing side of the project, we were able to involve Jo Clement, British Gypsy, poet and researcher, who—although based in the North-East of England—was able to join us for online workshops. The project took place between February and April 2021 and resulted in a piece of writing that makes clear both the injustice of Macpherson's death, as well as the fiddle's *Nacken* connections. Maggie gave permission that I could include reflections regarding this interventionist participatory observation activity. These reflections are included in Chapter 7.

3.4 Trust and ethics

The nature of this research, which has involved working with people from a culture not my own, and one that is marginalised in Scotland, meant that ethical considerations in the research design were of high importance. This was not just about avoiding any risk to the participants but also involved reflections on how to carry out research with no financial cost to the participants and as little inconvenience to them as possible. This necessitated

²⁶⁵ Although the term institutional racism had its roots in the US Civil Rights and Black Power movements in 1960s, it was brought to mainstream attention in the UK through the Stephen Lawrence Enquiry, carried out by William Macpherson, at the time Clan Chief of the Macphersons (this report is also known as the Macpherson Report).

²⁶⁶ Kendi, *How to be an Antiracist*, 18–9.

²⁶⁷ Ramsay, "Unsettling *Naken* [*sic*] chaetrie in Scottish museums": 77.

finding ways to fund travel, accommodation and catering for time spent with groups and individuals.

The issue of trust in carrying out projects with any group is of importance, but with *Nacken* groups in particular, who are often more suspicious of intrusion by non-*Nacken*.²⁶⁸ I had a positive starting point due to my interactions with *Nacken* in my earlier work at the Highland Folk Museum. Working with previous contacts and partners, I was able to sensitively increase my network of participants. This was mostly achieved through introducing my research to potential participants through meetings and activities, such as the MECOPP residential in September 2018.²⁶⁹

Following the procedures laid out by the University of Stirling's ethics committee, each participant received information about my research project.²⁷⁰ They were also given an outline of what their own involvement would be and how I planned to use and store the data generated, as well as their right to leave the process at any time. Finally, a consent form gave each expert a chance to indicate what aspects of the research process they were willing to take part in. This included an opportunity to choose to be named or anonymised in the research, as well as for them to agree or decline to have their photographs taken and audio recordings made. In recognition of the lack of *Nacken* voices heard in museums as well as in research and in handing over elements of power in the research relationship, I gave participants the opportunity to be named in the write-up.²⁷¹ All participants who met with me at the Highland Folk Museum store agreed to being named.²⁷² When we met as a group at the Highland Folk Museum store, I read the information out to the group. The material given to those involved in the project can be found in Appendix II. Among the information given to participants I indicated my plan to write a research blog to communicate the research findings to participants. In speaking with participants, however, it became clear that this was not the most effective way to communicate with them. Instead, I wrote short updates for the *Heart of the Travellers* (HOTT) magazine (August 2018), the *Barrie News*, a print and online newspaper

²⁶⁸ The importance of trust-building to work with GRT communities in museums is discussed in Brekke, "Coffee and cigarettes," 116–122.

²⁶⁹ MECOPP runs two residential weekends for the Gypsy/Traveller carers it works with each year. These are provided for respite and carers can access a range of therapeutic and cultural activities while there.

²⁷⁰ <https://www.stir.ac.uk/research/research-ethics-and-integrity/general-university-ethics-panel/>

²⁷¹ Discussions around power relations in fieldwork and letting participants decide whether to be named or anonymised can be found in K. Browne, "Negotiations and fieldworkings: friendship and feminist research," *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 2, no. 2 (2003), 136–9. <https://acme-journal.org/index.php/acme/article/view/690>

²⁷² Unfortunately, not having the recording of the event in the Highland Folk Museum store has reduced the opportunity to quote directly from this wider group of participants. It is unclear, however, whether my transcription skills would have stretched to successfully identifying each of the eighteen participants in the recording in order to accurately attribute quotations. As a consequence, it would be more accurate to say that this thesis includes the perspectives, if not always the voices, of *Nacken* participants.

produced by MECOPP (in Autumn 2018 and January 2021) and, following the launch of the new interpretation at the Clan Macpherson, this was reported in the *Travellers Times* (September 2021). I also contributed content to the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller History Month, featured on the GRTHM.scot website (June 2020 and 2021).²⁷³ Although each of these platforms has a readership beyond Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, these are also a way of reaching *Nacken* readers. In terms of feedback to participants, *The Barrie News* was particularly helpful as this is a print and online newsletter distributed to those supported by MECOPP.

3.5 COVID-19 impact on research

I was in the fortunate position that all my planned fieldwork had been completed by the time restrictions were imposed in March 2020. The period of lockdown and associated rules and circumstances, however, impacted on two opportunities that arose. In one instance I was prevented from taking up the opportunity, while in the other, a short research project was made possible.

In late July 2020, as government guidelines were loosened, Kathy Townsley McGuigan suggested that she could invite me, along with some of her *Nacken* family and friends to an event at the Auchindrain museum's bowcamp. We could meet around the campfire and I would be able to ask questions about the collection and about *chaetrie* more generally. It was disappointing to have to turn down this chance to expand the number of *Nacken* whose voices and expertise would feature in this research, but University regulations at the time prevented any face-to-face meetings or fieldwork.

In the other case, the delay to my thesis write-up, caused by circumstances resulting from COVID-19, coupled with COVID-19 recovery funding received by the Clan Macpherson Museum, presented an unexpected opportunity. It was as part of the museum's redevelopment, which was funded through the Covid recover grant, that I was invited to reinterpret Jamie Macpherson's fiddle. While the pandemic prevented certain ways of working and extended the duration of the thesis production because I could not access a university workspace, for example, it also enabled others. In the case of the Clan

²⁷³ R. Ramsay, "Willie Riley, John Yates and museums," *Heart of the Travellers* 4, no. 3 (2018): 30–2. <https://www.heartofthetravellers.scot/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Vol-4-ed-3.pdf>; P. E. Ross, "Setting the record straight at the Highland Folk Museum," *The Barrie News* (Autumn 2018), 8. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c06d635506f62ec834460/t/5e1355ade7b77f19954205f0/1578325427541/Barrie+News+online+Aut+18.pdf>; P. E. Ross, "Sharing knowledge and experience," *The Barrie News* (January 2021), 3. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5c06d635506f62ec834460/t/6017e304da94a961a3e74021/1612178188228/Barrie+News+Winter+2020.pdf>; M. Doherty, "'My heart broke into a million pieces' – a Scottish Traveller mother's tale of an outlaw son," *Travellers Times* (Sep. 24, 2021), <https://www.travellerstimes.org.uk/news/2021/09/my-heart-broke-million-pieces-scottish-traveller-mothers-tale-outlaw-son>. The Gypsy, Roma and Traveller History Month (Scotland) website is available at: www.GRTHM.scot.

Macpherson project, a group of us from many miles apart were able to meet weekly online to progress the project.²⁷⁴

3.6 Scope of the research

Although I have kept as open a mind as possible as to what might be considered the material culture of *Nacken*, I decided at the outset not to include photographs of *Nacken* in Scottish museum collections.²⁷⁵ I also decided that items such as the ‘gypsy costumes’, which are of ‘an aesthetic identity labelled “gypsy”’,²⁷⁶ would not be among the items I would explore. Understandably both came up in more than one database search for Gypsy/Traveller material kindly forwarded to me by contacts in museums. The decision to omit photographs of *Nacken* found in museum collections was taken because although they featured *Nacken* they were not made by or owned by *Nacken*. *Nacken* have also expressed mixed feelings about their photographs being taken by those outside their own culture.²⁷⁷ Photographic collections were also discounted because they were from the photographer’s point-of-view, rather than a *Nacken*-viewpoint and in some cases problematic in their links with the oppression of *Nacken*.²⁷⁸ Similarly, artworks of *Nacken* or featuring *Nacken* by non-*Nacken* have been discounted. Although I have not counted photographs among the collections analysed as *chaetrie*, they have in some instances provided useful information about *chaetrie*. As it has become apparent across the course of this research, however, most *chaetrie* in museums has been collected from an outside

²⁷⁴ This model of online working was possible in the small group of us that met. This way of working is not available to all *Nacken*, due to issues of digital poverty, outlined (in the context of home-schooling but more widely relevant) in L. Tammi, “Across the digital divide: the impact of digital inequality on Scotland’s Gypsy/Traveller children and young people during the COVID-19 emergency,” *International Journal of Roma Studies* 2, no. 2 (2020): 52–65.

²⁷⁵ Many museum collections include collections of photographs, and several of these include individual examples, or collections of photographs that feature *Nacken* as subjects. Examples include The Shennan Collection within the Highland Photographic Archive, based at Inverness Museum and Art Gallery and the Andrew McCormick collection at Stranraer Museum.

²⁷⁶ Matthews, “Visibly Authentic,” 69.

²⁷⁷ Williamson, *The Horsieman*, 262–3. This description relates in particular to those who took photographs without permission. *Nacken* would sometimes, however, allow photographs when permission was sought, see *Ibid*, 128 and McCormick, *The Tinkler-Gypsies*, 255. Personal photographs could also be treasured, see unnumbered central pages of Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom*. In this research, participants were given the opportunity to agree or decline to be photographed.

²⁷⁸ In some cases, photographs in museum collections are connected to acts of genocide as defined by the UN, see United Nations, *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (1948), Article II. Available at: <http://un-documents.net/a3r260.htm>. A collection of photographs held by Inverness Museum and Art Gallery are the work of Gordon Shennan, an inspector for the Royal Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Inspectors, such as Shennan, were given powers to remove children from their families and are known by *Nacken* as ‘The Cruelty’. ‘The Cruelty’ loom large in many *Nacken* memoirs. As Duncan Williamson recalled, ‘If we had left school without the 250 attendances, we would have been arrested. It was the law [...] the Cruelty Inspector [...] phoned up a taxi. And you were gone! There were hundreds of children taken off [...] no one ever saw them again’, Williamson, *The Horsieman*, 13. This was a policy that had been implemented with the intent of ending nomadism and assimilating *Nacken* children by removing them from access to their culture. For background see R. Dawson, ed., *The 1895 Scottish Traveller Report* (Blackwell: Robert Dawson, 2005).

point-of-view and reflects how *Nacken* were seen by collectors, paralleling the viewpoint of the photographers (or other artists) featuring *Nacken* in their works. This will be reflected on in the thesis. As for the costumes, while these items can contribute to conversations around how these populations have been seen from the outside and the sorts of stereotypes that they have been subject to, they do not reveal anything about *Nacken* material culture.

At the outset, I did not consciously omit human remains from the scope of this research, as I had not expected to find *Nacken* remains in museum collection. During the course of my research into the death and folklore of James Macpherson, however, I discovered that although it is no longer in the collections, Banff Museum at one time held and displayed a skull they considered to have belonged to James Macpherson.²⁷⁹ Although I believe that the presence of this skull in a museum collection can offer useful insights into how *Nacken* were thought of, I do not consider *Nacken* remains to be *chaetrie* and so the skull is not discussed in this thesis.

In terms of the time and place that the objects of interest to this thesis come from, the scope is potentially broad. Among the theories presented in the previous chapter, some suggest that *Nacken* have been present in communities across Scotland for at least 1000 years. Practical considerations in terms of scope of material and lack of research into the origins of *Nacken* prior to the arrival of Gypsies around 1500, however, have led me to take this as a starting date. While some objects from the early historic period in Scotland are acknowledged to have been made in itinerant contexts, in the absence of the means to identify their makers, these objects (such as the Hunterston Brooch) have been discounted from the scope of *chaetrie* examined in this thesis. That is not to disregard the fact that other researchers might take a broader time period, nor the possibility that future research might extend the timescales in which there is evidence of *Nacken* presence in Scotland, which would broaden the range of museum material that is relevant to the history of *Nacken*.

The understanding of *chaetrie* that underpins this thesis was developed during the research process. My own early assumptions were that it would encompass items made and used by *Nacken*, following fairly closely those object types identified in the writing of I. F. Grant (see figures 9–11). However, the records, knowledge, experience and objects encountered along the way have widened my own understanding of what, in museum collections, might be termed the material culture of *Nacken*. The methodology also changed across the course of this research, taking in opportunities as they arose.

²⁷⁹ W. Cramond, ed. *Annals of Banff*, vol. 1 (Aberdeen: The New Spalding Club, 1891), 102.

Methods were also adapted in response to reflections and evaluation of early activities and interventions.

Chapter 4: A thematic history of *Nacken chaetrie* in Scottish museums

4.1 Chapter introduction

Research carried out towards this thesis has revealed a long history of the presence of *Nacken chaetrie* in Scottish collections.²⁸⁰ This chapter presents a thematic overview of the history of the collecting of *Nacken chaetrie* in Scottish museums. It analyses patterns of collecting noted in known examples, from 1700 to the present day, examining how and why *chaetrie* has been assembled in museum collections. This is presented in broadly chronological order, based around the following collecting themes, which have been identified: the collecting of the curious; incidental collecting; and folk collecting. A further theme found through the course of this research, that of *Nacken*-led collecting, takes place across the time-period covered here. Since this phenomenon reveals more about what *Nacken* value than how museums perceive and present *Nacken* (although there is some influence both ways), this theme is discussed in the chapters that present findings related to *Nacken* interactions with *chaetrie* in and beyond museums (Chapters 5 and 6). The findings presented in this chapter link the collecting of *chaetrie* by museums to the process of cultural hegemony that museums have historically played a role in, as settled institutions. This analysis is, in part, to reveal the sedentarisation (or settling) of *Nacken chaetrie* by museums.

This chapter borrows a model of analysis from an article by Taylor, similarly seeking to ‘surmount the difficulty of using written sources when investigating [an historically] non-literate group, and the patchy nature of documentation [related to Travellers]’.²⁸¹ Taylor’s model considers the fact that ‘anyone writing the history of Travellers [based on primary and secondary sources] must do so primarily through the eyes of the settled population’.²⁸² In this chapter then, it is not *Nacken* ‘internal history’ that is considered, but how museums as institutions have seen and collected objects linked to *Nacken*. Due to the issues of ‘patchy documentation’, ‘[r]ather than a continuous and chronological account’,²⁸³ this chapter presents three thematic periods—collecting the curious, incidental collecting and folk collecting—, which can offer insights into the attitude of museums to *chaetrie*. The findings here are largely grounded in desk-based and documentary research using works related to the history of collecting and collections, as well as works about *Nacken*. The Highland Folk Museum is a key case study in this chapter; analysis of this museum’s interaction with *chaetrie* is based on a close reading of archive sources at

²⁸⁰ Surrey Heritage Roma Routes Project.

²⁸¹ B. Taylor, “Travellers in Britain: a minority and the state,” in *Historical Research* 77, 198 (2004), 578.

²⁸² *Ibid.*

²⁸³ *Ibid.*, 578–9.

the Highland Folk Museum and University of Aberdeen. This chapter provides context for the following chapters, which go on to explore some of the ways in which *Nacken* attitudes to *chaetrie* differ to those found in settled museum practices.

4.2 Collecting the curious: ‘of peculiar form’

Evidence gathered as part of this research indicates that *Nacken chaetrie* has been collected for almost as long as there have been museums in Scotland.²⁸⁴ Scotland’s first public museum was established in 1697 at Old College, University of Edinburgh.²⁸⁵ It is unlikely that this museum—which displayed two formerly private collections of natural history specimens, gathered by Balfour and Sibbald—included *Nacken chaetrie*.²⁸⁶ If a nineteenth-century source is to be believed, James Macpherson’s fiddle was one of the earliest examples of *Nacken chaetrie* to enter a museums, around 1700. According to this source, within a handful of years of his death the fiddle of Jamie Macpherson (c.1675–1700)—the son of a Macpherson laird and a *Nacken* woman—entered the private collection at Cluny Castle, seat of the Macphersons.²⁸⁷ Items from the Cluny Castle

²⁸⁴ As this is not a comprehensive history, however, there may be examples that predate public museums. It could be argued that items such as the Brooch of Lorn and the Glenorchy charmstone are examples of *Nacken*-made items with histories in clan collections predating public museum collections. The former belonged to Clan MacDougall and is now cared for by the MacDougall of Dunollie Preservation Trust and the latter was previously owned by the Campbells of Glenorchy but was purchased for the collections of the National Museums Scotland in the late 1970s (H.NO 118). Both these brooches are thought to have been made by *Nacken*, see H. Cheape, “Touchstones of belief: the charms and amulets collection of the National Museums Scotland,” *ROSC*, no. 20 (2008), 112 and H. Cheape, “From natural to supernatural: the material culture of charms and amulets,” in L. Henderson, ed., *Fantastical Imaginations: The Supernatural in Scottish History and Culture* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2009), 78. These items were not collected, however, for their connection to *Nacken* individuals, but happened to have been made by *Nacken* silversmiths (*Ceards*) for the clan. See also, R. Ramsay, “Who made the turreted brooches of Argyll? *Nacken* [sic] and elite silver craftwork,” *Scottish Historical Review C*, no. 254 (2021): 455–68.

²⁸⁵ Henare, *Museums, Anthropology and Imperial Exchange*, 62.

²⁸⁶ It is, however, possible that some native or visiting bird specimens in natural history collections were caught by *Nacken*. Alec Stewart (1904–80) described the job he did catching birds—siskins, bullfinches, goldfinches, redpolls and waxwings—to sell, probably around the 1920s and 1930s, see MacColl and Seeger, *Till Doomsday in the Afternoon*, 12. There are also further references are made to *Nacken* catching wild birds or keeping them as pets, see Williamson, *The Horsie man*, 12; Smith, *Jessie’s Journey*, 50; Stewart, *Queen Among the Heather*, 12–3. Some museums certainly sourced samples of freshwater mussels and pearls for their natural history collections from *Nacken* pearl-fishers and it is possible that *Nacken* also sold birds to museums and other collectors.

²⁸⁷ James Macpherson had, along with James Gordon, been charged with ‘being knoune [by] habit and repute wagabonds, soroners, and Egyprians’ and they were hanged for being *Nacken* on November 16, 1700 at Banff, see Stuart, *The Miscellany of the Spalding Club*, 190. At least one account testifies that his broken fiddle was then taken to Cluny Castle soon after Macpherson’s execution, where it became a clan treasure, see B.G., “Anecdotes of J. Macpherson, the ancient freebooter and musician,” *New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal* 1 (1821), 142–3. This claim was repeated in the Clan Macpherson’s annual journal, see J. Macdonald, “The Clan Museum—Relics and Memorials,” *Creag Dhubb* 15 (1963), 12–5, and the neck of a violin associated with James Macpherson was recorded in an inventory of Cluny Castle in 1877. It should be noted that Cluny Castle had been burned down in 1746 and the Clan Chief at the time spent time on the run in the Highlands, later dying in exile in France. This sheds some doubt as to whether the fiddle in the Clan Macpherson Museum collection is the one referred to as being gathered up and taken to Cluny Castle around 1700. Whatever the status of the fiddle now present in the museum, does not preclude the

collection, including Macpherson's fiddle, later formed the basis of the Clan Macpherson Museum, founded in 1952.²⁸⁸

If the fiddle at the Clan Macpherson's did once belong to James Macpherson, it was preserved by the Macphersons for nearly 250 years, while the founding collections of Sibbald and Balfour at the University of Edinburgh had been dispersed within 50 years.²⁸⁹ R. B. K. Stevenson noted these early university collections in his history of the museum of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, contrasting their transience with the longevity of the Society's collection that, although established later, went on to be transferred to national ownership in 1851, becoming known as the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland (NMAS).²⁹⁰ Along with the collections of the Royal Scottish Museum, the NMAS forms the basis of what is now the National Museums Scotland.²⁹¹ The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland began to gather collections of antiquities from the time they were first established in 1780. It would be nearly 60 years, however, before they collected any acknowledged *chaetrie*, in 1839. In the meantime, in 1788, Billy Marshall (1672–1792) inscribed a horn mug he had made with his initials, age and the date, and gave or sold it to Dunbar Douglas, the 4th Earl of Selkirk.²⁹² The circumstances in which it was found in 1905, along with a horn spoon made by one of Marshall's sons and other 'relics', suggests that it had been part of a private collection.²⁹³

A further item was collected by another private individual during the prior to when known examples of *chaetrie* first entered public museums. In 1816, Joseph Train, a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries from 1829 and correspondent of Sir Walter Scott, collected a harp associated with a family believed to be Welsh Gypsies who were resident in Scotland 'for

possibility that Macpherson's fiddle was in the collections of the Clan Macpherson from the early eighteenth century.

²⁸⁸ Macpherson's fiddle will be discussed more fully in Chapter 7.

²⁸⁹ Other early university collections suffered a similar fate, including a collection at Kings College, Aberdeen, which was on display from 1729, but later dispersed.

²⁹⁰ R. B. K. Stevenson, "The Museum, its beginnings and development, Part I: to 1858: the Society's own museum," in *The Scottish Antiquarian Tradition*, ed. A. S. Bell (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1981), 31, 80–1, 142. Although the collections were signed over to the Government in 1851, the transition was not completed until 1858.

²⁹¹ In 1985 National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland and the Royal Scottish Museum amalgamated to become the National Museums Scotland. The latter had originally been the Industrial Museum of Scotland, founded in 1854, changing its name in 1866 to the Edinburgh Museum of Science and Art, and finally to the Royal Scottish Museum in 1904.

²⁹² Selkirk (1722-1799) was a member of the Royal Society of Edinburgh (from 1785), rather than of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. These two societies were formed around the same time, both being incorporated by Royal Charter in 1783. The Royal Society, however, did not gather an antiquarian collection, perhaps explaining why these items did not enter a public collection earlier.

²⁹³ McCormick, *The Tinkler-Gypsies*, 37. These two items may only have been actively part of this collection of relics for just over a decade, as Selkirk died in 1799. It is possible that after his death his collected relics were packed into the box, which was not reopened until 1905, as recounted in this reference.

many years prior to [their] death[s]' on Sunday April 21, 1816.²⁹⁴ One of the family (Train believed that it was Willie, others recount that it was his wife, Helen) was a harpist and a fiddler, and 'well known for [their] drollery and [...] skill on the harp and fiddle'.²⁹⁵ When the family died in a tragic accident,

the harp fell into the hands of Joseph Train, and remained with him till [his death on] the 7th December, 1852 [...] when his curiosities were sold and dispersed, it was allowed, being old and worm-eaten, to go to decay.²⁹⁶

These artefacts—the fiddle, the harp and the horn mug and spoon—reflect the collecting interests and biases of the time. At the time when these objects were first gathered, history was written and collected by men and so it is perhaps not surprising that the earliest examples of *chaetrie* to enter collections related to (or were believed to relate to) the lives of famous *Nacken* men.²⁹⁷ It was also a time of gathering relics and curiosities. Part of the motivation in the gathering of Macpherson's fiddle must have been to represent an aspect of clan history, but Macpherson's fame—and the alleged circumstances of its collection—makes it likely that the object was also valued for its novelty.²⁹⁸ A large body of folklore has also gathered around Macpherson, whose fame was cemented by Robert Burns' version of the song sung at the gallows, *Macpherson's Farewell*.²⁹⁹ Billy Marshall was also a famous figure, a Gypsy King, known for his unusually long life; in the year the mug was gathered he was already 115 years old. The fiddle, mug and horn spoon, it would seem, were collected at least in part as curiosities. The Welsh harpist, whose harp was with Joseph Train for many years, was not only famed locally during his own lifetime, but was later immortalised as the character of Wandering Willie, in Sir Walter Scott's *Redgauntlet*, published in 1824. In all these cases it seems that the fame or infamy of the owner or maker of the object played a significant part in their attraction to collectors of curiosities and relics.

²⁹⁴ J. Patterson, *Memoir of Joseph Train* (Glasgow: Thomas Murray and Son, 1857), 47. See also McCormick, *The Tinkler-Gypsies*, 219.

²⁹⁵ Patterson, *Joseph Train*, 47.

²⁹⁶ McCormick, *The Tinkler-Gypsies*, 221–2.

²⁹⁷ T. Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1995), 46. The Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, which formed what was to become a core part of the National Museums Scotland, is a case in point. Although established in 1780, the first female 'Fellows' were not admitted until 1901, although a small number of women were admitted as 'Lady Associates' from 1870–1 onwards.

²⁹⁸ Soon after Macpherson's death a broadside, "The Last Words of James Mackpherson Murderer", was published. Folklore states that these are the words to a tune performed by Macpherson as he awaited execution. The song and associated tune have remained in popular use and its fame, and the fame of Macpherson were guaranteed when Robert Burns published his own version, *MacPherson's Farewell*, in 1788. It should be noted that, contrary to the title of the broadside, Macpherson was never accused of or charged with murder. He was, in fact, hanged for being a Gypsy. A copy of the broadside is held in the National Library of Scotland, Ry.III.a.10(029).

²⁹⁹ J. Johnson, *The Scots Musical Museum*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: Johnson, 1788), 117.

In 1819, three years after the harp was collected by Train, a human skull entered a private collection. Although the identity of this skull has since been disputed, it was collected in the belief that it was the skull of James Macpherson, whose fiddle is said to have been in Cluny Castle at the time. The skull appears to have been collected by Dr Garden Milne, a medical doctor from Banff who was also a secretary of the Banff Institution of Literature, Arts and Science, which established the Museum of the Banff Institution in 1828. He had attended the exhumation of Macpherson's remains c. 1819.³⁰⁰ The skull probably entered the museum around the time of Milne's death in 1842. By 1876 the skull was on (open) display in the museum of the Banff Institution.³⁰¹ The context in which it was collected indicates objectification and 'Othering' of *Nacken*, however, as mentioned in Chapter 3, I do not consider human remains to be *chaetrie* and so the skull is not included in the wider analysis of this thesis.

The next piece of *chaetrie* that I have found to have been collected, then, was recorded in 1849, in the first catalogue of the collections held by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, the *Synopsis of the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*. This catalogue lists a single item as having a link with *Nacken*, a snuff-mull (mistakenly) recorded as being 'made by Charles Stewart, the old t_____ of Aberfeldy'.³⁰² It had been given to the Society in 1839 by John Menzies, who indicated that the maker was John Stewart. By the time the Society published its fourth catalogue in 1892, the *Catalogue of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland*, the museum had in its collection four items acknowledged as being linked to *Nacken*. In the intervening time, the name of the maker of the snuff-mull had disappeared from entries and so is not among them. During the nineteenth century, then, a total of five items acknowledged as linked to *Nacken* entered the collections of the Society of Antiquaries, later the NMAS. Following the pattern of earlier collections, the first two items—a snuff mull made by Col. John Stewart of Aberfeldy, whose death was noted in the *Morning Chronicle* on October 20, 1908, and a lancet and case, which had belonged to Gypsy King, William Faa—were linked to male

³⁰⁰ J. Imlach, *History of Banff and Familiar Account of its Inhabitants and Belongings* (Banff: R. Leask, 1868), 28; "The Life and Execution of James Macpherson, the Notorious Freebooter," in *Renfrewshire Independent*, October 23, 1880, 1.

³⁰¹ "Donald Dinnie's caber in Banff Museum," in *Banffshire Journal and General Advertiser* (June 13, 1876), 8.

³⁰² Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, *Synopsis of the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 1849), 112 [object number 13c]. This is likely to be either H.NQ 20 or H.NQ 21 in the current NMS catalogue. The catalogue lists the maker as Charles Stewart, but listed among the communications read to at meetings of the Society from 1831–51, is a "Sketch of the Life of Col. John Stewart, the Old T_____ of Aberfeldy, by Mr John Menzies", see "Appendix II," *Archaeologia Scotica* 4 (1857), 30. This paper was presented by the donor of the item, John Menzies, in the same year in which the donation was listed.

Nacken of at least local fame.³⁰³ It is likely that these were valued for their connection to famous figures, who were also part of a population seen as out of the ordinary.³⁰⁴ The catalogue also recorded three *Ceard*-made pieces of jewellery as specifically associated with *Nacken*, purchased from an un-named *Ceard* (or *Nacken*) in the Highlands in 1890.³⁰⁵ Two of these were described as being of ‘peculiar form’.³⁰⁶ This suggests that these were among the artefacts ‘picked up as curiosities by travelers [*sic*] in the Highlands and Islands’, as Alexander Fenton would later style the early collecting of folk material by the Society.³⁰⁷

³⁰³ Both Will Faa I and II would have been fairly widely known of, at least by name, as kings of the Gypsies and Will Faa II was referenced in a number of folk songs and poems, see “Will Faa, the last Gypsy King of the name,” *Berwickshire News and General Advertiser*, May 31, 1881, 6. One of them is associated with the lancet case, Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, *Catalogue of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland*, 346 [object number MP 123]. Col. John Stewart, maker of the snuff mull, was of at least local renown. He appeared in local newspaper reports, not only at the time of his death at the age of 111, in 1804, but also at the time of his marriage the previous year. Both his marriage and death were reported in the *Dundee, Perth and Cupar Advertiser*. A brief summary of his life appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*, a London newspaper, in 1808. According to the article in the *Morning Chronicle*, the ‘history of this man is not a little remarkable’, going on to state that he was ‘famous for making Highland dirks and snuff-mulls’, see “Extraordinary Longevity,” *Morning Chronicle*. The exact entry date of the lancet case into the collections of the NMAS is unknown, but it first appeared in the 1892 catalogue of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. In the catalogue its donor is listed as Sir Walter Simpson, Bart (1843–98). Simpson was the son of surgeon, Sir James Y. Simpson (1811–70), a former vice-president of the Society. Simpson Jnr, also a Fellow of the Society, was a barrister with an interest in golf. In the case of William Faa’s lancet and case I would propose Walter Simson (1781–1849), an excise worker, as a possible alternative donor of this object. Although Simson is not an obvious source, as he was never a member of the Society and was dead by the time of the publication of this catalogue, it is possible that it was given to the museum by him at an earlier date, or later in his name. This Walter Simson (with no ‘p’ in his surname) was, in the early 1800s, a correspondent of Sir Walter Scott and a researcher into Scottish *Nacken*. He was the author of a manuscript, which his son, James Simson, went on to edit and publish in 1865 as *A History of the Gypsies*. James Simson (b. 1826), wrote and published several books on *Nacken* and other Gypsies throughout the 1880s and 1890s. Although he had moved to New York in June 1851, he was writing about and publishing in Scotland at the time when the 1892 catalogue was published. I would contend that Walter Simson, via his son James or another family member, is a possible source of this object. Walter Simson knew both William Faa I and William Faa II, see Simson, *A History of the Gypsies*, 252, 255. He also wrote about how *Nacken* used lancets, *Ibid*, 170.

³⁰⁴ Although from 1882 the Society counted among its Fellows, David MacRitchie (1851–1925), who founded the Gypsy Lore Society in 1888, and in 1894 published *Scottish Gypsies Under the Stewarts*, most of the Fellows who wrote about *Nacken* considered them to be outlandish. Among the Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries who wrote about *Nacken* were Sir Walter Scott, who referred to *Nacken* as ‘strange, picturesque and sometimes terrific’, see W. Scott and T. Pringle, ‘Notices Concerning the Scottish Gypsies’, *Edinburgh Magazine* 1, no. 1 (1817), 43; Robert Chambers who, along with his brother, introduced *Nacken* as a ‘strange race of people’, see W. and R. Chambers, *Chambers’s Miscellany of Useful and Entertaining Tracts* (Edinburgh: William and Robert Chambers, 1847), 139; Arthur Mitchell who, in discussing the MacPhees of Caithness, designated them unskilled ‘savages’, see A. Mitchell, *The Past in the Present* (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1880), 78–79; William McDowell who wrote of ‘these strange people’, see W. McDowell, *History of Dumfries* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1867), 607; and James King Hewison who called them a ‘curious tribe’, see J.K. Hewison, “Gipsy [*sic*] Memories,” *Scotsman* (December 20, 1929).

³⁰⁵ These were objects numbered NG 146–147 and NJ 53, see Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, *Catalogue of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland*, 363, 366.

³⁰⁶ Items NG 146, 147, see Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, *Catalogue of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland*, 363.

³⁰⁷ A. Fenton, ‘Material culture as an aid to local history studies in Scotland’, *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 2, no. 3 (1965), 327.

Shedding light on the wider context of the NMAS's 1892 catalogue is a near-contemporary report on *Habitual Offenders, Vagrants, Beggars, Inebriates and Juvenile Delinquents*, published in 1895.³⁰⁸ The report and the NMAS are linked by Col. Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff, who was both a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, from 1893, and member of the Departmental Committee that produced the report in 1895.³⁰⁹ But beyond that, both the museum and the report were involved in similar projects—in the control and classification of their subjects and objects. In the report, *Nacken* (appearing as 't____s or gipsies [*sic*]') were classified as a sub-division of 'beggars and vagrants'.³¹⁰ The museum, in a similar position of power, used processes of categorising, classifying and ordering to shape the understanding of and representation of people (and things). In the catalogue of the NMAS, the acknowledged *chaetrie* marked out the associated populations as curious. The acknowledgement of a select group of (curious) examples of *chaetrie* in the NMAS catalogue also served to hide other items with *Nacken* connections. At least one further item, the Stewart snuff-mull, became disassociated with *Nacken* over time. Whether the obscuring of wider *chaetrie* was done consciously or not is of little importance, the effect—that the *Nacken* connections to these objects became unseen—is the same. According to Simon Evans 'the major problem [for GRT objects in museums] is categorisation [... relevant material is] all there. But it is not [...] categorised as being there'.³¹¹ This not only obscures a wider group of objects, but also determines how, and if, *Nacken* are seen. As Michael Ames puts it, 'public museum[s ...] express and authenticate the established or official values [...] of a society [...], directly, by promoting and affirming the dominant values, and indirectly, by subordinating or rejecting alternate values'.³¹²

4.3 Incidental collecting

While the material related to famous *Nacken* and examples of unusual *Nacken*-made jewellery were gathered—at least in part—for these connections and openly recorded as

³⁰⁸ Departmental Committee on Habitual Offenders, Vagrants, Beggars, Inebriates and Juvenile Delinquents, *Report from the Departmental Committee on Habitual Offenders, Vagrants, Beggars, Inebriates and Juvenile Delinquents* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1895). An extract copy compiled by Robert Dawson has been used here: Dawson, *The 1895 Scottish Traveller Report*.

³⁰⁹ Two other members of the Society contributed to the Report. Hugh Mitchell, Solicitor, Pitlochry (member of the Society from 1884), was part of a delegation from Perthshire, his contributions appear at 6620 and 6637, and Sir Stair Agnew, Registrar General (member of the Society from 1889), contributed a letter regarding the 'registration of births of gipsy [*sic*] children', which appears as Appendix LXXIX and is discussed in the Summary, Part II, D. It is perhaps not insignificant that the one question asked by Scott-Moncrieff during the proceedings was around categorisation and was to ascertain the distinction between show people and 'ordinary gipsies [*sic*]' (211).

³¹⁰ Dawson, *The 1895 Scottish Traveller Report*, 9.

³¹¹ J. Bowers, *Private Past, Public Future: encouraging greater access to the South East's museums, libraries and archives for Gypsies and Travellers* (Hastings: Gypsy Media Company, 2007), 23.

³¹² M. M. Ames, *Cannibalism Tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992), 22.

such, a wider group of objects with *Nacken* associations were also present in the collections gathered by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. These were collected and valued for other reasons and their association with *Nacken* went unrecorded in the catalogue. By far the vast majority of *Nacken chaetrie* in Scottish museums has been collected in this way; gathered for reasons other than their direct *Nacken* connections. *Chaetrie* frequently has a settled story as well as a *Nacken* one, as items were often made or traded by *Nacken* into the settled population. It is the settled part of the biography or history of these objects—or an aspect of that—which is usually valued and made visible by museums. Many objects like this exist in museum collections established in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. As Gaynor Kavanagh, an historian of museums has observed, these museums were founded on principles of social improvement and civic order.³¹³ In the early 1900s some of these museums were to take on an educational role, which at the time was considered a ‘means of creating dutiful social conformity in the young’.³¹⁴ Through education, but also collecting practices, displays and interpretation, museums were involved in the ‘exert[ion] of prestige [... of] the dominant socio-cultural group over the subordinate one’.³¹⁵ Here, again the work of museums reflected policies affecting *Nacken*. At the same time as museums took on an educational role, the Education (Scotland) Act 1908, directed control and drive for conformity at *Nacken*.³¹⁶ Explicitly designed to assimilate *Nacken*, Jess Smith believes that ‘the policy of compulsory education for their children was a pretext to monitor and control’.³¹⁷ Just as *Nacken* were expected to assimilate and conform, so these objects with a *Nacken* as well as settled story had to fit into the story of the dominant socio-cultural group, hence the privileging of the settled aspects of these objects in documentation and interpretation. The objects themselves are assimilated into the settled culture communicated by the museum. Both education and museums were part of the hegemonic project of the dominant culture. Items that were made or traded by *Nacken* into the settled population, were often incidentally collected. This material has an absent presence, as Jodie Matthews has noted of Romani (among them *Nacken*) in narratives of the past. Matthews observed that although Romanies have lived and worked alongside the majority population, their

³¹³ G. Kavanagh, *Museums and the First World War: A Social History* (London: Leicester University Press, 1994), 13-5.

³¹⁴ *Ibid*, 18.

³¹⁵ D. Forgacs and G. Nowell-Smith (eds.), *Antonio Gramsci: Selections from Cultural Writings*. Reprint. (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1985; Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2012), 164. Citations refer to the Haymarket edition. While in the context of this thesis the most relevant group that might have been considered ‘subordinate’ is *Nacken*, this refers more widely to those of lower socio-economic backgrounds.

³¹⁶ J. E. Graham, *The Education (Scotland) Act, 1908, the Children Act, 1908 (in part) and Other Acts and Circulars Relating to Education Subsequent to 1902* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1909), 112-4.

³¹⁷ Smith, *The Way of the Wanderers*, 221.

presence is not explicit in mainstream histories.³¹⁸ In the same way *chaetrie* has existed in collections alongside—sometimes as an aspect of what might be considered—mainstream objects. These are hybrid objects with more than one connection or association, some of which are highlighted while others are obscured. As has been pointed out elsewhere, museums have moved towards ‘new and critical models for the representation of [...] pluralism and difference’, however, there remain issues of ‘who is included, excluded, given a voice or silenced’.³¹⁹

In the following section, where examples of specific objects or groups of objects are presented from within museum catalogues, these are followed by the corresponding object number(s) in parenthesis. In the first part of this next section, all numbers are taken from the NMAS’s 1892 *Catalogue of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland*. Later in the section examples are also presented from Reid’s 1912 *Illustrated Catalogue of the Anthropological Museum, University of Aberdeen* and from I. F. Grant’s (unpublished) catalogue of the collection she gathered at the Highland Folk Museum. These numbers are given as they appear in each catalogue, and each is prefixed with initials indicating the holding museum as follows: Highland Folk Museum (HFM), University of Aberdeen (UoA) and National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland (NMAS).

Taking the 1892 NMAS catalogue as an example, beyond the curiosities, this research has identified a range of *chaetrie* present in the catalogue but not recorded as such. Items that those who were or would become curators or keepers of the national collection have elsewhere noted as being *Nacken*-made include: dirks (NMAS:LC 12-25; 33–43); powder-horns (NMAS:LK 1–37); targes (NMAS:LN 33–40); tin candle moulds (NMAS:MG 189–91); circular brass brooches (examples of which can be found catalogued in NG: Brooches of Silver and Brass, Chains etc.); silver brooches featuring designs applied in niello (e.g. NMAS:NG 65–71, 106, 135, 151); and small heart-shaped silver brooches (NMAS:NG 43–46 among others).³²⁰ The collection by this time also contained artefacts that, through a wider group of references, it is possible to connect to *Nacken*, including the

³¹⁸ Matthews, “Where are the Romanies?”: 80.

³¹⁹ A. Semedo, ‘(Im)material practices in museums’, in S. Dudley (ed.), *The Thing about Museums: Objects and Experience, Representation and Contestation* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), 340.

³²⁰ D. H. Caldwell, ‘Scottish powder-horns’, *The Sixth Park Lane Arms Fair Catalogue* (1989), 21–4; Cheape and Sprott, *Angus Country Life*, 36; Finlay, *Scottish Silver and Gold Work*, 42, 148, 151–2; J. Anderson, “Notice of a Highland brooch in silver, ornamented in niello, exhibited by Mr T. S. Omond, and of other Highland brooches in silver and brass,” *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 33 (1898), 67; letter dated October 08, 1958, NGA 261, which states that ‘Up to the end of the 18th century heart brooches were mostly made by travelling silversmiths, who were probably more or less t_____s’. It should be noted that Ian Finlay did not work with the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland but worked for the Royal Scottish Museum—which amalgamated with them in 1985 to form the National Museums Scotland—from 1932–71, as Keeper of the Department of Art and Ethnology (1955–61) and as Director (1961–71). Many of the curators quoted here post-date the 1892 *Catalogue*. In some cases, however, the connections between these object types and *Nacken* may have been common knowledge.

facsimile copy of the Ugadale Brooch (NMA:FC 159); domestic items that were likely traded by *Nacken* and/or of *Nacken* manufacture, such as hornware, staved vessels, trenchers, pewterware, earthenware and other pottery (catalogued among Kitchen and Table Utensils, NMA:ME); lanthorns or lanterns of tin (including NMA:MG 68, 98 and NMA:MJ 98), the iron sock of an old wooden plough (NMA:MP 120), heckles and a rippling comb for flax (NMA:MP 47, 49), fishing tackle and associated tools (NMA:MP 61–2, 196–201) and horn snuff-mulls (NMA:NC 77–8; NMA:NQ 15–26, 51–3), which were item-types that *Nacken* are recorded as making; the slave collar worn by Alexander Stewart (NMA:MR 3), who is thought to have been a *Nacken*; and items from the early medieval Norrie’s Law Hoard, which had been uncovered by a *Nacken* around 1817 (NMA:FC 26–126).³²¹

Although a small number of items in the catalogue have been openly connected to *Nacken*, other connections, as listed above, are unrecorded. This is perhaps because of a standard approach to the information in the catalogue, which prioritises donor details.³²² There are entries that defy this pattern, however, some even including unverified information, such as, ‘probably Italian’ (NMA:ME 132) and ‘probably used as a charmstone’ (NMA:NO 20).³²³ While the practice of listing the names of donors alongside objects was (and often is) common practice in museums, it is not something that should pass unquestioned. I. F. Grant noted that the donor information, which also featured in the NMA’s interpretation, was unhelpful and uninspiring to the visitor. Writing of her early experiences of museums in the early 1900s, Grant offered this critique of the NMA displays, ‘[o]ne saw large white labels partly masking the exhibits and when one eagerly hoped to gain from them some idea about the exhibits [...] all one found was the name of the donor’.³²⁴ As noted earlier by MacRitchie, museum visitors are more likely to be

³²¹ Inscription on the back of the Loch Buie Brooch; Grant, *Highland Folk Ways*, 180, 188; Scott and Pringle, “Notices Concerning the Scottish Gypsies,” 1, 49; L. I. Wood, *Scottish Pewter-ware and Pewterers* (Edinburgh: George A. Morton, 1907), 3–5, 44, 63, 70; W. Scott, *Guy Mannering*. Reprint. (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Co., 1815; Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 36. Citations refer to the Edinburgh University Press Edition; Simson, *A History of the Gypsies*, 146, 246, 254, 348, 403; Grant, *Highland Folk Ways*, 186; McCormick, *The Tinkler-Gypsies*, 504–5; Scottish Home Industries Association, *Scottish Home Industries* (Dingwall: Lewis Munro, 1895), 9; Chambers and Chambers, *Chambers’s Miscellany* 16, 28; N. Munro, *The Lost Pibroch* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1896), 70; MacRitchie, *Scottish Gypsies under the Stewarts*, 75; D. Wilson, *The Archaeology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Sutherland and Knox, 1851), 512. The identity of the individual who uncovered the Norrie’s Law Hoard is uncertain and they are variously described as a hawker, pedlar and labourer. While any of these descriptions could be applied to both *Nacken* and non-*Nacken* (hawker less-so), the possible interest of Norrie’s Law Hoard to my research was pointed out by Martin Goldberg, currently Principal Curator of Medieval Archaeology and History at the National Museums Scotland: Martin Goldberg, *pers. comm.*, February 08, 2017.

³²² Donor information is almost always present in object entries within the 1892 catalogue of the NMA.

³²³ Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, *Catalogue of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland*, 326, 372.

³²⁴ Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 12–3

interested in ‘the nature of the people who made and used’ the objects encountered.³²⁵

Matthews has pointed out of history writing that, ‘[e]very time we write about something, we fail to write about something else’.³²⁶ Relating this to the museum register or catalogue, Geoffrey Swinney has said that,

[t]he representation of each specimen in documentary form is itself the product of processes of selection and manipulation and is but one of a multiplicity of sets of data that could have been selected to describe and delineate that object. The register constructs the museum in a particular way.³²⁷

Here it is clear that our understanding of a museum collection is constructed through choices made between what information is included in (and excluded from) catalogue entries and from museum interpretation. Examples of *chaetrie* can be seen to be collected incidentally—or for reasons other than their *Nacken*-ness—by the way in which they have been catalogued. It is other information about these objects that has been selected for inclusion.

Looking at this catalogue alongside others that partially acknowledge *Nacken chaetrie*, the problem may, in part, be fastidious approaches to artefact provenance. An analysis of the entries within the *Catalogue of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland* (1892), the *Illustrated Catalogue of the Anthropological Museum, University of Aberdeen* (1912) and I. F. Grant’s unpublished catalogue of the Highland Folk Museum (c.1954), suggest patterns in the process of cataloguing.³²⁸ Across these catalogues it seems that care taken in ensuring only known facts were recorded resulted in general knowledge being left out. So, while it seems to have been common knowledge that the makers of horn spoons were *Nacken*, neither the spoon mould at Aberdeen, nor the horn spoons at the NMAS, Aberdeen or the Highland Folk Museum were catalogued as being connected to *Nacken*.³²⁹

Although the Highland Folk Museum was to develop a strong collection of consciously gathered *Nacken chaetrie* (which are discussed in section 4.4), early examples were almost certainly collected incidentally. An analysis of the writing of founder, I. F. Grant, published prior to establishing the museum, indicates that she had little awareness of

³²⁵ MacRitchie, *Ancient and Modern Britons*, 3.

³²⁶ Matthews, “Where are the Romanies?”: 83.

³²⁷ Swinney, “What do we know about what we know?,” 34.

³²⁸ Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, *Catalogue of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland*; R. W. Reid, *Illustrated Catalogue of the Anthropological Museum, University of Aberdeen* (Aberdeen: The University Press, 1912); I. F. Grant Catalogue, Highland Folk Museum Archive, Am Fasgadh, Newtonmore.

³²⁹ References that provide evidence of a consensus that *Nacken* were the makers of horn spoons include, W. Alexander, *Northern Rural Life in the Eighteenth Century*. Reprint. (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1877: Finzean: Robin Callander, 1981), 129; D. Campbell, *Reminiscences and Reflections of an Octogenarian Highlander* (Inverness: The Northern Counties Newspaper and Printing and Publishing Company, 1910), 22; S. S. Henderson, *Horn Spoons and Home Made Shoes* (Kirkintilloch: Deacon Brothers, 1979), 3; Scottish Home Industries Association, *Scottish Home Industries*, 9.

Nacken before she began collecting. The only direct reference I have found to *Nacken* and the items they made and traded, in a work published before she founded the museum, mentioned that at seventeenth-century fairs there ‘were huge bands of gipsies [*sic*], who sold spoons and other articles they had made of horn’.³³⁰ Grant was to go on to associate a far wider group of objects with *Nacken* during her time at the museum, but while this was reflected in her later published works, it seems to have had no impact on how she catalogued artefacts. This concern with provenance may have been the result of advice received by Grant from the NMAS and seems to have been applied across her catalogue.³³¹

Both Grant’s catalogue and her published writings about the museum were written retrospectively, at or after the end of her time at the museum. However, there is little overlap between those things that Grant identified as *Nacken*-made or -used in her catalogue, and those acknowledged as such in her published writing. A comparison of objects documented by Grant as *Nacken*-made in the catalogue and in books written about the collection indicate strict cataloguing criteria, based on provenance information provided by donors. For instance, two of the areas of *Nacken*-craft or -trade that she knew of as a result of information from others—trade in pottery and the making of staved vessels—were mentioned in her writing but no connection was indicated against examples of these object-types in her catalogue. Her knowledge of these connections came to her through interactions between visitors and items she displayed in the museum. Although she had access to this knowledge by the time she wrote her catalogue, it is not included there. Even in cases where she had her own prior knowledge, this information was not recorded in the catalogue. Horn spoons offer a clear example. As indicated above, in writing that she published prior to establishing the museum she understood ‘gipsies [*sic*]’ to have made and sold a variety of hornware.³³² In her published writing about the collection she also mentioned that ‘t____s’ were the makers of horn spoons, ladles and tumblers.³³³ In her catalogue, however, only two horn items out of 147 that she collected were identified as *Nacken*-made. Curiously both were horn scoops, an object-

³³⁰ I. F. Grant, *Everyday Life in Old Scotland* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1931), 166. This was the only reference I could find that consciously referred to *Nacken* and objects associated with them, published by Grant prior to the establishment of the Highland Folk Museum. Grant was clearly coming across other references to these populations, as she repeated the terminology that she encountered in historical documents in her writing of this period, e.g. merchant strangers, wanderers, vagabonds, vagrants, beggars. These inaccurate terms can obscure the presence of *Nacken* rather than highlight it, and Grant seems not to have connected these terms. As Walter Simson observed, ‘one of the principal reasons for everything connected with the Gipsies being hidden from the rest of mankind. They have always been looked upon as errant vagabonds’: Simson, *A History of the Gipsies*, 465.

³³¹ Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 191.

³³² Grant, *Everyday Life in Old Scotland*, 166.

³³³ Grant, *Highland Folk Ways*, 188; Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 116, 128.

type unmentioned in her published works.³³⁴ In stark contrast, none of the 63 horn spoons that she collected are catalogued as *Nacken*-made.

It seems that in her catalogue Grant only recorded items as being *Nacken*-made, -traded or -used if this information was specifically mentioned to her, or experienced by her, in direct relation to an object.³³⁵ Therefore, according to Grant's catalogue, *Nacken* traded second-hand pottery, but not new pottery; they made horn scoops, but not horn spoons, tumblers or ladles; they made heather pot scrubbers, but not baskets or bickers, all of which were acknowledged in her published writing related to the collection. Figures 9 to 10 show objects that Grant acknowledged as having a *Nacken* connection in her catalogue (figure 9), objects she acknowledged in her published writing about the collection (figure 10) and the objects that she acknowledged in both her catalogue and published writing (figure 11).

³³⁴ In her published writing horn spoons, ladles, tumblers and powder-horns were all mentioned in relation to *Nacken*. Examples of each of these object types were also collected by Grant, but on no occasion were they connected to *Nacken* in the catalogue text.

³³⁵ In one instance Grant included a citation providing evidence of a *Nacken* connection in the catalogue. This was in the entry for the brooch by Alexander Stewart (HFM: K 60), recorded in the catalogue as 'Marked A. S. Mark of a Travelling T____ Craftsman, Inverness, circ. 1790. (Scottish Provincial Goldsmiths and their Marks)'. While the donor may have provided information about Stewart's origins, Grant has also included confirmation that Stewart was a *Nacken* silversmith from her own research. The citation appears to be inaccurate and likely refers to C. J. Jackson, *English Goldsmiths and Their Marks: A History of the Goldsmiths and Plate Workers of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1905), 504, which lists Alexander Stewart as one of 'a family of goldsmiths who worked in the North of Scotland for about two centuries [... living] to all intents and purposes the lives of gipsies [*sic*]'. It is possible that Grant similarly followed up information provided by visitors regarding *Nacken* being makers of the staved bickers, see Grant, *Highland Folk Ways*, 180. She recounted searching Old Statistical Accounts to discover who made churns and other staved vessels, and on finding no mentions of woodworkers among lists of local craftsmen, concluded that 'they were [...] probably made by wandering cairds—the ancestors of the t____s': Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 116. It is possible that it was the absence of a definite citation that prevented *Nacken* being recorded as the makers of bickers in the catalogue.



Figure 9. Items acknowledged to have a *Nacken* connection in I. F. Grant's catalogue but not in her published works about the collection.

From top to bottom and left to right: sickle (© High Life Highland), tin mugs, horn scoops, horn scraping tool, tin colander, *chitties* (tripod for over fire), objects from Wullie Riley, heather potscrubbers, sling or catapult, items of second-hand jewellery. All © Rhona Ramsay unless otherwise stated.



Figure 10. Items acknowledged as *Nacken* connected by I. F. Grant in her published works about the collection but not in her catalogue:

From top to bottom and left to right: pottery (© High Life Highland), basket (© High Life Highland), powder-horn, bicker (© V&A Dundee), horn spoons, horn ladles, handmade drone, horn tumblers. All © Rhona Ramsay unless otherwise stated.



Figure 4.C, Items acknowledged to have a *Nacken* connection in both I.F. Grant's catalogue and in her published works about the collection:

From top to bottom and from left to right: pearl fishing jug and pearl fishing wand, tin-smithing tools, horn spoon mould, tin lantern, heart-shaped brooch made from bowl of a spoon, betrothal brooch by Alexander Stewart (© High Life Highland), *skivver*, *snottum* (iron hook for over the fire).
 © Rhona Ramsay except where stated otherwise.

This is a wider phenomenon, also observable in the two other catalogues analysed.³³⁶ Only those things that could be connected to *Nacken* with particular types of evidence seem to have been designated as such in the catalogues. While it is not possible to ask the compilers of these catalogues what criteria was used to determine acknowledgement of a *Nacken* connection, it would seem that it had to be communicated by the donor at the object entered the museum. So, the donor who gave the perforated tin hand lantern (UoA:319) to the University of Aberdeen's Anthropological Museum seems to have indicated that this was 'Made and sold by t____s', but the donor of a similar lantern (UoA:318) seems to have made no such claim.³³⁷ This approach may also have led to the disassociation of the Stewart snuff-mull (c13 on page 112 of the *Synopsis of the Museum of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland*) from its (mis)named *Nacken* maker. Identified only as a 'Rude Scottish Snuff-Mull [...] Presented by Mr John Menzies, 1839', the appearance of a second snuff mull of 'rude make', also presented by Menzies, seems to have left the museum unable to determine with certainty which was made by Stewart and so, when the two were listed in the 1892 catalogue (NMA:NQ 20 and 21 on page 373), he was given no mention. The importance of provenance here is indicative of a materialist understanding of 'authenticity', which included a focus on an object's 'origins and essences'.³³⁸ As Siân Jones points out, this was the dominant understanding of authenticity within heritage (and, by implication, museums) until recently.³³⁹ Although carried out for accuracy, this approach unintentionally obscures certain objects, types of knowledge and research. For example, Grant allowed knowledge transmitted to her orally to enter her published works but, without back up from printed or archival sources, this same information was left out of the catalogue. These omissions were not done to deliberately exclude *Nacken*, but to ensure accuracy in the authoritative space of the catalogue.

In the cases cited above, the exclusion of *Nacken* connections from the records associated with these objects does not appear to have been done with the intent of leaving *Nacken* out of the museum record. The effect, however, has been to disassociate certain items and object types from *Nacken* in these catalogues. The authority museums give to their catalogues has meant that these inclusions and exclusions have had far-reaching consequences in terms of how these objects are understood, displayed and interpreted. As Sam Alberti has indicated, museum staff 'operate within the cultural space

³³⁶ Grant may, in fact, have adopted this approach on advice from the NMA, as Grant recounted that R. K. B. Stevenson, of the NMA, advised her regarding the creation of a catalogue, see Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 191.

³³⁷ Reid, *Illustrated Catalogue of the Anthropological Museum*, 25.

³³⁸ S. Jones, "Negotiating authentic objects and authentic selves: beyond the deconstruction of authenticity," *Journal of Material Culture* 15, no. 2 (2010), 181.

³³⁹ *Ibid*, 182.

carved out by their predecessors'.³⁴⁰ Swinney sees this space, or understanding of collections, as contained in the museum register.³⁴¹ The catalogue, therefore, determines what is and what is not associated with *Nacken*. In the Highland Folk Museum what happens in the 'textual spaces' of the catalogue has also had an impact on what happens in the physical space of the store.³⁴² When the collections were moved to the Am Fasgadh store in 2012 they were ordered within the space according to their catalogue numbers. Although these numbers have been updated since Grant's time (as discussed in Chapter 7, which has had a further impact on what is seen as *chaetrie*) decisions as to how to assign new numbers and categories to objects were made through the 'translation' of the previous catalogues and the information they contained.³⁴³

Incidentally collected *Nacken chaetrie* within museums, then, continues to be largely unseen. This material was not collected for its link to *Nacken* and in the hegemonic, non-*Nacken* context of the museum, these connections remain concealed. In the catalogues that form the understanding of these objects, *Nacken* connections are 'consign[ed ...] to the shadows'.³⁴⁴ As such, like *Nacken* lives in 'mainstream narratives of [the] past', *chaetrie* is 'only there if you know where to look [... its] presence is not [...] made explicit'.³⁴⁵ As most *chaetrie* present in museums has been collected incidentally, these issues are likely to be replicated elsewhere.

4.4 Folk collecting: 'the will to survive'

Most of the artefacts with links to *Nacken* that were in museums by the early twentieth century had been collected as curiosities or their *Nacken* connections were incidental to the reasons why they had been collected.³⁴⁶ A change took place during the inter-war years as a new type of collecting emerged. Following the First World War two trends noted by Kavanagh led to a drive towards the development of folk museums and later, more widely, to social history collecting. These were a 'retreat into the past' and a shrinking of Empire and associated 'rediscovery of a domestic past'.³⁴⁷ From the late 1920s an interest in folk collecting developed.³⁴⁸ Taking inspiration from Scandinavia, folk

³⁴⁰ Alberti quoted in Swinney, "What do we know about what we know?," 33.

³⁴¹ Swinney, "What do we know about what we know?," 33.

³⁴² Ibid, 37.

³⁴³ Ibid, 34.

³⁴⁴ Bowers, *Private Past, Public Future*, 21.

³⁴⁵ Matthews, "Where are the Romanians?": 84.

³⁴⁶ At least one exception was the tools associated with the Marshalls of Kilmaurs, but these will be discussed separately in the next chapter in the section on items given by *Nacken*.

³⁴⁷ Kavanagh, *Museums and the First World War*, 171–2.

³⁴⁸ In 1929 the Royal Commission on Museums and Galleries published a report, which expressed the goal that there should be a folk museum in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, although with the suggestion that immediate resource and priority should be given to one in England, preferably in London, see England, Royal Commission on Museum and Galleries, *Final Report*, Part I (London: HMSO, 1929), 60. I. F. Grant, who

museums aimed to 'preserv[e] those relics of the past and passing ways of life [... and] reconstruct those past ways of living for everyone to see'.³⁴⁹ That *chaetrie* would be part of these collections is no surprise, as 'traditional traveller [*sic*] crafts and occupations [...] were essentially geared to plug every available niche in the rural economy of the day'.³⁵⁰

There was no guarantee, however, that this material would be more visible in folk museums than it had been elsewhere. At the outset, in fact, examples of *chaetrie* entering folk museums seem to have been collected, like elsewhere, incidentally (see section 4.3). The development of folk museums, however, made a break with past approaches to collecting objects associated with rural life and people and, gradually, this widened to include changes to how *chaetrie* was collected and seen.

As much of this section is focused on the Highland Folk Museum, it opens with a brief history of this museum that has had several homes over the years. The museum's founder, I. F. Grant, was a pioneer in this area, opening Scotland's first folk museum (the Highland Folk Museum) in 1935. It was initially situated in Iona, in the Inner Hebrides, but later moved to the mainland, to various locations around Badenoch in the Highlands. The first move was made to Laggan in 1939, followed by a move to Kingussie in 1944. The building that Grant took on in Kingussie had grounds that allowed her to develop the first open air museum in Scotland. After Grant retired in 1954, the museum and its collections were taken on by the four universities in Scotland at that time. As the University of Aberdeen took the lead in this venture, they installed their Curator of Silver, Paintings, Etc., George 'Taffy' Davidson, as curator there from 1956 until 1975. The museum was taken over at this point by the Highland Regional Council in 1975 and in 1976 Ross Noble, who had previously been a roving curator for the NMAS's Country Life Section (established in 1959) was curator until 2003. Noble oversaw the expansion of the museum beyond its Kingussie location to a large open site in nearby Newtonmore. Both sites operated until 2007, when the parts of the museum at Kingussie closed to the public. In 2012 a purpose-built store, called Am Fasgadh after Grant's original name for the Highland Folk Museum, was completed and objects were relocated there from storage in Kingussie. The Highland Folk Museum is now situated entirely in Newtonmore and consists of a large open-air site and the Am Fasgadh open store building, which is open

was to go on to found the first folk museum in Scotland had visited open-air museums in Scandinavia during the 1920s and campaigned for one to be developed in the Highlands of Scotland. As part of that campaign she put on an exhibition of folk material at Inverness Town Hall in 1930, see Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 15, 19, 20–7.

³⁴⁹ Finlay, 'A Highland Folk Museum', 86.

³⁵⁰ Leitch, *The Book of Sandy Stewart*, xxiii. It should not be forgotten, however, that *Nacken* are not only present in rural parts of Scotland, but urban too. So, when the essentially rural folk museum movement later led to more urban-focused social history collecting, *Nacken chaetrie* is likely to be present in these collections too.

for tours once a week. The museum has been under the responsibility of High Life Highland, an arm's length charity, since 2011.

Returning to the beginning of the museum's history in 1935, Grant was not the first to collect folk material, and examples of many of the items she would go on to collect already existed in other collections.³⁵¹ The purpose with which Grant collected these artefacts, however, was new. To Grant these objects were representative of everyday Highland life, and 'had never been quaint and amusing oddities'.³⁵² Her approach to collecting, then, broke with what Gramsci criticised as the treatment of folklore as 'an eccentricity, an oddity or as a picturesque element'.³⁵³ Grant's folk museum marked a change from previous representations of the Highlands, in literature and in heritage displays, that was characterised by romanticism and nostalgia.³⁵⁴ Over time she was also to effect a similar shift in how *Nacken chaetrie* was collected and presented. Although, as already discussed, this understanding of *chaetrie* is not always reflected in the strict parameters of her catalogue system, they are more clearly stated in her published writing.³⁵⁵ Small but significant experiences, which took place in the first few years of the museum, laid the foundation for approaches that—taken forward by her successors—would eventually see *Nacken* centred in their own stories at the museum.

Key to these changes was Grant's willingness to listen to and learn from those she encountered while collecting, as well as those who engaged with the displays in her museum.³⁵⁶ The interpretation methods she used privileged the voices of Highlanders, past and present, avoiding telling the story of the people of the Highlands in 'the voice of the dominant culture', a criticism which has been levelled at other folk and open-air

³⁵¹ Among the earliest objects collected by Grant were punched tin lanterns and horn spoons, which can be seen displayed in photographs of the Highland Folk Museum at its first home in Iona. As we have seen, there were horn spoons and perforated tin lanterns in the Anthropological Museum at the University of Aberdeen, and horn spoons at NMAS by this time. The NMAS also had 'agricultural equipment and rural material' collected from the nineteenth-century, and a series of "'bygones" and good craftsmanship' donated from the mid-1920s: Fenton, "Material culture as an aid to local history studies in Scotland," 327; and R. K. B. Stevenson, "The Museum, its beginnings and development, Part II: the National Museum to 1954," in *The Scottish Antiquarian Tradition*, ed. A. S. Bell (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1981), 189. In the early years of the Highland Folk Museum, Grant also took on some pre-existing collections, which included a range of vernacular or folk material, including *Nacken chaetrie*. These are listed in Grant's List of Exhibits notebook, Highland Folk Museum Archive, Am Fasgadh, Newtonmore.

³⁵² Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 19.

³⁵³ D. Forgacs and G. Nowell-Smith, eds., *Antonio Gramsci: Selections from Cultural Writings*. Reprint. (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1985; Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2012), 191. Citations refer to the Haymarket edition

³⁵⁴ N. G. W. Curtis, "The Place of History, Literature and Politics in 1911," *Scottish Literary Review* 7, no. 1 (2015), 56–7, 60.

³⁵⁵ Particularly in Grant, *Highland Folk Ways* and Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*.

³⁵⁶ The marked contrast of tone and knowledge regarding Travellers and their objects, between the work of I. F. Grant and E. Estyn Evans—and the significance of listening and learning from visitors to this process—is discussed in note 43 in Chapter 2.

museums.³⁵⁷ The main written interpretation in the early years of the Highland Folk Museum took the form of 'working songs or stories or superstitions associated with' the objects.³⁵⁸ Beyond this, the interpretation of the displays mostly consisted of a conversation between Grant and her visitors in which she 'learnt more from them than they did from me'.³⁵⁹ There is some evidence, however, that Grant did not always accept what she was told and did to an extent rely on further research of written sources to confirm the information imparted by visitors. For example, Grant seems to have carried out research into who might have made staved vessels, possibly after being told that *Nacken* made the feathered bickers.³⁶⁰ She also seems to have done reading to back up the assertion that Alexander Stewart, an Inverness and Tain silversmith, was a *Nacken*.³⁶¹ Reading also seems to have caused her to revise what she knew of the identity of the *Nacken* she encountered at the museum. Grant stated that she had asked *Nacken* who visited the museum who they were and records being told they were Romani.³⁶² When Grant later wrote about her time at the museum, she contradicted this understanding, instead putting forward an explanation similar to that used by Hamish Henderson and the School of Scottish Studies, that *Nacken* were 'descendants of the cairdean (cairds), the old travelling craftsmen of the Highlands [and ...] preservers of the great Gaelic epics and poetry'.³⁶³

Reflecting on her time at the Highland Folk Museum, from 1935 to 1954, she considered it to be one of constant learning.³⁶⁴ Although she was referring to learning about the social conditions of the Highlands in general, her constant learning is also observable in relation to her understanding of *chaetrie*. At the outset of collecting, that 'gipsies [*sic*]' made and sold hornware appears to have been the extent of her knowledge of *Nacken*. Through the processes of collecting and display, particularly via information provided by those who

³⁵⁷ Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, 111.

³⁵⁸ Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 23; I.F. Grant, *Am Fasgadh: The Highland Folk Museum at Kingussie, Inverness-shire* (Kingussie: Highland Folk Museum, n.d.), 3. The latter reference here is to a guidebook that accompanied the museum at Kingussie, which provided some additional written interpretation, but does not seem to have replaced the conversations that allowed a two-way flow of information between Grant and the visitors to the museum.

³⁵⁹ Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 173, 176.

³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 116, 127.

³⁶¹ See catalogue entry for HFM:K 60, I.F. Grant Catalogue, Highland Folk Museum Archive, Am Fasgadh, Newtonmore. This entry contains a reference to Scottish Provincial Goldsmiths and their marks, which is most probably C. J. Jackson, *English Goldsmiths and their Marks: a History of the Goldsmiths and Plate Workers of England, Scotland and Ireland* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1905).

³⁶² Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 127.

³⁶³ The School of Scottish Studies was founded in 1951 and Grant would almost certainly have been aware of their work. The explanation that Hamish Henderson and others at the School of Scottish Studies gave for the origins of *Nacken* can be found, among other sources, in D. Daiches (ed.), *The New Companion to Scottish Culture* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1993), 326–7. See also, discussion of *Nacken* origin theories in Chapter 2 of this thesis.

³⁶⁴ Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 59.

donated to and visited the collection, Grant gained new perspectives and awareness of *Nacken*. Over the period of collecting, she came to acknowledge an increasing number of artefacts as connected to these populations. As the collection expanded and new display opportunities were presented by the moves the museum made—first to Laggan, with its ‘more spacious quarters’, then to Kingussie where the Highland Folk Museum became the first open-air museum on mainland Britain—Grant’s new knowledge was manifested in the displays at the museum.

Nacken chaetrie was an unseen or absent presence at the museum in Iona (1935–38). Photographs show horn spoons and tin lanterns among early display and descriptions of the displays indicate that pottery imported from beyond the Highlands featured.³⁶⁵ These items had been collected as the backdrop to settled Highland life, however, and were presented as such. The display themes in Iona reflect Grant’s settled perspective: textiles, domestic plenishings, agricultural tools and the reconstructed interior of a Highland cottage. One of Grant’s first encounters that initiated not only a new understanding of *Nacken*, but a new display opportunity, came about in 1936. After two visits to Haggart, a second-hand dealer in Aberfeldy from whom Grant had purchased some horn items, Grant seems to have been introduced by him to a *Nacken* woman—Mrs Macgregor—willing to sell her a horn-spoon mould.³⁶⁶ It is unclear whether this object was displayed immediately, but it was definitely exhibited from 1939 at Laggan, where Grant was able to

³⁶⁵ Descriptions of the display themes found in the museum at Iona can be found in M. Wood, “Am Fasgadh – The Highland Folk Museum,” *Chambers Journal* (1938), 616–7; and Anon., “Am Fasgadh: The Highland Folk Museum,” supplement to *Country Life* (July 16, 1938). A copy of the latter can be found in C13b.31, Highland Folk Museum Archive, Am Fasgadh, Newtonmore. Evidence that *Nacken* traded pottery into the Highlands can be found in David Donaldson, *interview*, October 17, 2018, in which he spoke about relatives from Dingwall who traded china; Walter Simson also wrote about *Nacken* bringing pottery into Scotland (although not specifically into the Highlands) from as far afield as Staffordshire, see Simson, *A History of the Gipsies*, 254.

³⁶⁶ It was unusual for I. F. Grant to be given the name of *Nacken* sources, but this meeting seems to have taken the form of an arranged introduction by Haggart in which names were likely exchanged. Grant recorded Mrs Macgregor’s name in her Accounts Journal, Highland Folk Museum Archive, Am Fasgadh, Newtonmore. MacGregor is a name found among *Nacken*, see Dawson, *Scottish Traditional Traveller Families*, 20. It is possible that Mrs MacGregor may have been a relative of Belle Stewart, whose maiden name was MacGregor, see Stewart, *Queen Among the Heather*, 1. That their family spent time at Aberfeldy is recounted by Belle’s daughter Sheila Stewart, see Stewart, *A Traveller’s Life*, 12. Intriguingly, on an educational visit to Portree Primary School with Jess Smith, Essie Stewart and me in 2007, Sheila Stewart, on encountering the spoon mould from the Highland Folk Museum, said that her family never had one and must have made the spoons without. As Stewart was born in 1935, if this had been their family’s mould, this would explain why she thought they did not have one. If it was a relative of Stewart who sold the mould to Grant, it may have been her own mother, Belle Stewart, nee MacGregor. Although she had married in 1925, she may have used her own name in certain circumstances, see MacColl and Seeger, *Till Doomsday in the Afternoon*, 3, 9. If Belle Stewart was the seller of the mould, it would seem likely that it had belonged to her husband Alec’s family, as it was his father who was recounted as working in horn, not any of Belle’s family, *Ibid*, 3. Another family of *Nacken* called McGregor also have links to Aberfeldy and shared a photograph of ancestor, James McGregor, there around 1938, see <https://www.facebook.com/aberfeldymuseum/photos/23456461051302401> (June 08, 2019).

add new display themes.³⁶⁷ Mrs Macgregor's horn-spoon mould (HFM:B111; new number: SKA00057) featured prominently among the exhibits in the new Craft section.³⁶⁸ Here *Nacken* were not only present in the products that they made for settled homes but represented as skilled makers. They have gone from being unseen manufacturers of objects to being acknowledged for their craft.

Other areas where Grant came to see the part played by *Nacken* in making and trading are outlined in Table 2. While this table functions primarily a comparison of Grant's catalogue and published writing, it also provides an indication of what Grant understood to be *chaetrie* by the end of her time at the museum. Where the acknowledgement of a *Nacken* connection is made in the catalogue, it can be assumed that Grant gained this information from the donor. In instances where an object type was acknowledged only in her published writing, it is likely that this information has come from visitors to the museum. In the few instances where objects are acknowledged in both her published writing and catalogue, information may have come in two possible ways: provided by the donor or provided by visitors and validated by published sources.

After the move to Kingussie in 1944, Grant continued to collect from *Nacken*. Of the items she collected in this way, the tinsmithing tools (from among HFM:B 95–109; HFM:D 183–4 and HFM:R 9–10) were added to the Craft display, which was used as a theme again at Kingussie. Although *Nacken* traded with the museum on their own terms and in most cases withheld their names, Grant recorded what information they were willing to share. She recorded how some of the tinsmithing tools were used (see catalogue entries for HFM:D 183 and HFM:D 184), the names that *Nacken* used for tents (recording these as *ghiellies*) and for the set of long pins used to secure a baby in a shawl on a mother's back (a *skivver*).³⁶⁹ While the vast majority of *Nacken* donors to the collection are named only as T____, two *Nacken* individuals are named in Grant's catalogue. They are Mrs Macgregor, who sold her a horn-spoon mould (HFM.B 111) and Riley (also listed as Riley, T____s, Moulin), who sold a range of items into the museum (discussed more fully in Chapter 5).

³⁶⁷ Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 165.

³⁶⁸ Finlay, "A Highland Folk Museum," 87.

³⁶⁹ Grant appears to have become confused by the name over time. Although appearing in her accounts book as 'skivvers', she recorded them as 'Skivvies' in her published work, see Grant, *Highland Folk Ways*, 248. A handwritten correction has been made to the I. F. Gant Catalogue—changing it from *skivvers* to *skivvies*—probably to bring it into line with the published version. In both versions Grant added an extra 's' as, although the *skivver* (SKĪ-VR) consists of two pins, it would seem to be referred to as a single item: Belle Stewart's account of the *skivver* in MacColl and Seeger, *Till Doomsday in the Afternoon*, 19–20.

Object type	Acknowledged in Grant's catalogue	Acknowledged in Grant's published writing
Smaller staved vessels	NO (at least 29 collected)	YES (Highland Folk Ways [HFW]/ The Making of Am Fasgadh [MoAF])
Horn spoons	NO (63 collected)	YES (HFW/ MoAF)
Horn tumblers	NO (21 collected)	YES (HFW)
Horn ladles	NO (6 collected)	YES (HFW)
Horn scoops	YES (two examples out of a total of seven catalogued as T____ - made)	NO SPECIFIC MENTION
Spoon moulds	YES	YES (HFW)
Other hornworking tools	YES	NO
Powder-horns of the seventeenth century	NO	YES (HFW)
Punched tin lanterns	YES	YES (HFW)
Tin brander	YES (two tin toasters catalogued as 'T____ - made')	YES (HFW)
Tin mugs	YES	NO
Tin colander	YES	NO
Tinworking tools	YES	YES (HFW)
The handles of dirks	NO (two collected, no mention)	YES (HFW/ MoAF)
Heart-shaped brooch made from the bowl of a spoon	YES	YES (HFW)
Heart shaped brooch – no hallmark	NO (Possibly K35, listed as having no hallmark)	YES (HFW)
Alexander Stewart brooch	YES	YES (HFW)
Skivver	YES	YES (HFW)
Other silver items	YES	NO SPECIFIC MENTION
Baskets	NO	YES (HFW)
Pearl jug	YES	YES (HFW/ MoAF)
Mussel wand	YES	YES (HFW)
Wooden drone	NO	YES (HFW)
Heather pot scrubbers	YES	NO
Heather besom	YES	NO
Pottery	NO	YES
Walking stick	YES	NO
Sickle	YES	NO
Sling	YES	NO
Tool for scraping resin	YES	NO
Hook for the fire	YES	YES (MoAF)
Tripod for the fire	YES	NO

Table 2. Comparing Grant's acknowledgement of *Nacken* connections to material in her catalogue and published writing about the collection. This is also presented visually in figures 9–11.

A significant new display opportunity was presented to Grant by the move of the museum to Kingussie. From the outset, Grant had aspired to include an open-air element in the

museum, and finally this could be fulfilled.³⁷⁰ Here Grant moved beyond the acknowledgement of *Nacken* as craftspeople, and on two occasions invited *Nacken* to represent themselves on the site.³⁷¹ Just as she commissioned those with experience of building cottages in local styles to put up examples in the museum grounds, so she ‘asked a party of t_____s to make me one of the larger tents in which they spent the winter and which they call “ghiellies”’.³⁷² By their nature these structures did not become permanent features of the museum, but they do appear to have been kept up, perhaps for a season at a time.³⁷³

Bough tents or bowcamps, the vernacular architecture of *Nacken*, have been a feature of the open-air section of the Highland Folk Museum at various times since 1944.³⁷⁴ During Grant’s time two examples seem to have been set up alongside the reconstructed cottages at the museum site in Kingussie. In the time of Grant’s immediate successor, Davidson, there does not appear to have been any camps built—perhaps because most of his *Nacken* contacts lived in flats or houses and may not have identified with this form of accommodation.³⁷⁵ Later, during Ross Noble’s time as curator, Duncan Williamson, *Nacken* storyteller, contributed craft demonstrations (basket-making and wooden flower-making) and storytelling to the museum’s Heritage in Action programme in August 1985, 1986 and 1987.³⁷⁶ These demonstrations took place across the period of around a week, and for the duration Duncan Williamson built a tent on the museum’s open-air site at

³⁷⁰ Grant very clearly puts forward Skansen, the Swedish open-air museum, as an inspiration for her own collection, see Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 15. In a letter dated March 27, 1995 from Hugh Cheape to Ross Noble, Cheape sent a copy of a letter written by Grant, dated August 03, 1935, outlining her attempt to purchase a site in Glencoe for an open-air museum, in Highland Folk Museum Archive, Am Fasgadh, Newtonmore.

³⁷¹ Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 128; Grant, *Highland Folk Ways*, 249.

³⁷² Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 128, 181.

³⁷³ *Ibid*, 128.

³⁷⁴ *Nacken* tents take a variety of forms depending on season and spellings and terms for these vary across different family groups and geographic areas. For example, the term used for a summer tent by Essie Stewart is bough tent, while the same structure is called a bowcamp by others, including Kathy Townsley McGuigan.

³⁷⁵ Prominent among Davidson’s *Nacken* contacts were the Yates family, who lived for a time in St John Street in Stirling and the Williamsons, who ran the dump in Kingussie and may have lived in a shed close by. Alfred Yates also later lived at Knockhall House, Stirling. No references to camps built at the museum during Davidson’s time have been identified. Davidson did mention, however, another aspect of *Nacken* vernacular architecture in his writing. At ‘Lin-a-berack over the Spey [...] a settlement of Stuarts [...] left some ancient building of a peculiar type of masonry. I saw it again when the local scrapman [Tom Williamson] and his son built a neat retaining wall beside the dump and the railway just between the road and their shed’, see G. Davidson, “A description of the things in Room I, Highland Folk Museum 1962,” 7, in George ‘Taffy’ Davidson Donor Files, Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen Museum Collection. Davidson does not appear to have attempted to collect or replicate this feature at the museum.

³⁷⁶ C 13b 10, C 13b 15, Highland Folk Museum Archive, Am Fasgadh, Newtonmore. The Williamsons were included in the Heritage in Action programme August 13–7, 1985 (as part of the museum’s jubilee celebrations), August 25–30, 1986 and August 24–9, 1987.

Newtonmore, which he and his family stayed in (figure 12).³⁷⁷ This annual presence mirrored the seasonal shifting patterns of *Nacken* who would return annually to known sites, staying for a week or so to make a living, before moving on. Later, in 2005, a group of young Travellers built a tent on the museum's site, as part of an education project.³⁷⁸ Following this, Essie Stewart was invited to build a bough tent on the museum site at Newtonmore. The process was begun in 2007 when hazel sticks were sourced and—under Essie Stewart's direction—bent into a dyke to be set into shape over the winter. In Spring 2008, Essie Stewart returned and oversaw the building of a bough tent in her family's Sutherland-style. Since then, barring a period of around two years (when Essie Stewart's first tent had fallen into disrepair and again during the COVID-19 pandemic when the museum's activity was restricted), there has been a bough tent featured at the Highland Folk Museum. A new tent was built by Essie Stewart as part of this research project between winter 2017 and spring 2018.³⁷⁹ It now has an annual presence at the museum. This bough tent, as well as Kathy Townsley McGuigan's bowcamp at Auchindrain, is discussed in Chapter 6.

³⁷⁷ I am grateful to Jean 'Neenie' Reid who first alerted me to the fact that her uncle, Duncan Williamson, built bowcamps on the museum site: Jean Reid, *pers. comm.*, January 28, 2017.

³⁷⁸ Between 2004 and 2008 a series of projects with young Travellers took place at the Highland Folk Museum, primarily through a partnership developed between the museum's Education Outreach Officer, Rhona Hamilton (now Ramsay) and The Highland Council's Gypsy/Traveller Development Officer, Karen MacMaster. The bow tent project was led by Ivor Soutar, Learning Development Officer for The Highland Council.

³⁷⁹ A film was made of Essie Stewart building her last tent, by researcher and film maker, Shona Main: *The Tent that Essie Built: The Tent Shall Stand When the Palace Shall Fall*, directed by Shona Main (Newtonmore: Highland Folk Museum, 2019), <https://grthm.scot/essie-stewart/>.



Figure 12. Duncan Williamson demonstrating wooden flower-making in a bow tent at the Highland Folk Museum, date unknown. © High Life Highland

During Grant's time at the Highland Folk Museum, *Nacken* went from being an unseen absent presence, through being presented as craftspeople, to finally being invited to represent themselves by building camps onsite. Her display themes remained largely settled in their perspective, but this also had a role in her learning. To have had visitors identify *Nacken* items across almost all areas of her collecting (mirrored in her display themes) seems to have had a significant impact on her understanding of the importance of *Nacken* to Highland life. When she later wrote about her collection, *Nacken* and *Nacken* crafts were integrated into the story of the Highlands.³⁸⁰

The work Grant did to set up the Highland Folk Museum had wider impact, encouraging others to assemble similar collections. According to Emma Inglis who has carried out research into the Angus Folk Museum collection,

The common connection between all the Scottish Folk Museums is Dr Isobel [*sic*] Grant, who influenced them all through her pioneering work at Am Fasgadh. Jean, Lady Maitland was acquainted with Dr Grant and openly aspired to create a copy of the Highland Folk Museum for Angus.³⁸¹

Grant's influence was also acknowledged by other folk collectors, including Greta Michie and Hope MacDougall. Michie collected from 1947, opening the Glen Esk Folk Museum

³⁸⁰ Grant, *Highland Folk Ways*, 175, 180, 186, 188, 195, 147–9.

³⁸¹ E. Inglis, 'Provenance', unpublished information on Jean, Lady Maitland and the Angus Folk Collection, National Trust for Scotland. Grant in turn acknowledged the encouragement she got from Jean, Lady Maitland, see Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 107.

and Retreat in 1955. She is said to have been 'well aware of the debt which [the museum] owed to [...] Isabel Grant'.³⁸² MacDougall, who began collecting in the 1950s, also acknowledged the 'generous help and encouragement' given by Grant.³⁸³ Developments made by Grant not only inspired other folk collectors but, in 'challenging versions of history written by and about social élites', it played a significant role in 'revolutionis[ing] perceptions of the past, and had a profound influence on museums and collecting'.³⁸⁴ Grant's pioneering role in folk collecting in Scotland and the impact this had on the development of social history collecting is currently vastly under-acknowledged.³⁸⁵

Grant's inspiration, however, extended beyond simply the collecting and display of folk material. Significant to this thesis was the way in which her acknowledgement of *Nacken* as craft makers and important sources of everyday items was reflected in these other collections. Like Grant, Michie acknowledged horn spoons, a punched-tin lantern, and baskets,³⁸⁶ and MacDougall included in her Travelling People display a basket, a tin lantern, horn spoons and bickers (figure 13). MacDougall was also able to collect a china bowl directly from *Nacken* (OBNMD:2003.1150).³⁸⁷ I have not accessed records associated with the Angus Folk Museum, but in guidebooks written for the museum 'early eating and drinking vessels [...] made [...] from [...] wood, horn and bone' were attributed to *Nacken*, as was the trade in pottery.³⁸⁸ As well as these, the Angus collection contains at least one horn-spoon mould.³⁸⁹ Whether the overlap in material identified as *Nacken* across these museums was merely the result of the availability of objects for collection, it is difficult to know. Some gaps in identification are certainly evident across these collections, for example carpet beaters, found in each of these collections, are unacknowledged across the catalogues, displays and writing that I have seen, although

³⁸² R. G. Cant, 'Margaret Fairweather Michie 1905-1985: A Memoir', *Review of Scottish Culture* 3 (1987), 2.

³⁸³ H. MacDougall, *Kerrera: Mirror of History*. Reprint. (Oban: MacDougall, 1979; Colonsay: House of Lochar, 2004), vii. Citations refer to the House of Lochar edition. MacDougall got to know Grant between 1935 and 1938, while the Highland Folk Museum was based on Iona. Grant would stop over to stay with Hope's mother at Dunollie, near Oban, on her way back and forward to Iona: Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 41.

³⁸⁴ Henare, *Museums, Anthropology and Imperial Exchange*, 244.

³⁸⁵ In a key text related to the history of ethnology in Scotland, Grant and her folk collecting is afforded four short lines and the Highland Folk Museum is presented as being developed in the second half of the twentieth century. As Grant retired in 1954, after more than two decades after campaigning for and then founding Scotland's first folk museum, this presentation of Grant's significance is entirely erroneous. See, A. Fenton and M. A. Mackay, "A history of ethnology in Scotland," in *An Introduction to Scottish Ethnology*, eds. A. Fenton and M. A. Mackay (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2013), 62.

³⁸⁶ Michie, *Glenesk*, 212–3.

³⁸⁷ It is not clear from MacDougall's records whether this was sold as a new or second-hand item, but while Grant acknowledged that *Nacken* were involved in the trade of pottery, she does not seem to have been able to provenance any examples of those traded as new pieces (examples of second-hand pottery purchased from *Nacken* is discussed in Chapter 5).

³⁸⁸ Cheape and Sprott, *Angus Country Life*, 30; McAlister and Compton, *Angus Folk Museum*, 13.

³⁸⁹ This can be seen on the left of the bottom shelf in the image, *A selection of treen or timmer ware*: McAlister and Compton, *Angus Folk Museum*, 13.

these were among the crafts that *Nacken* undertook.³⁹⁰ Even as Grant disrupted dominant narratives of the time—which ignored the links between *Nacken* and material culture in museum collections—she may have inadvertently created new ones. While it is welcome that Grant inspired other collectors to ‘see’ *Nacken* connections within their collections, it is possible that those items that she identified as made, used, or traded by *Nacken*, may have limited how others came to identify *chaetrie*.



Figure 13. Hope MacDougall’s Travelling People display at Ganavan House, 1990s.
© Catherine Gillies.

In a few instances, however, the collectors who followed Grant moved beyond what may have been her direct influence and extended the identification of *chaetrie*. Michie collected—and identified as *Nacken*-connected—a portable anvil. While Grant had collected tinworking tools, she had not been able to collect an anvil, although examples were to enter the collection after her time. More significantly, however, the anvil Michie collected was not for tinworking, but for blacksmithing and is acknowledged as such. This is an oft-ignored *Nacken* skill, and while no provenanced blacksmithed items worked by *Nacken* have been identified in museum collections, this anvil provides material evidence for blacksmithing by *Nacken*.³⁹¹ Tin candle moulds in the collection of the Angus Folk

³⁹⁰ Campbell and Williamson, *A Traveller in Two Worlds* 1, 33.

³⁹¹ There are several references to blacksmithing by *Nacken* in *Nacken* memoirs and other writing, see Chambers and Chambers, *Chambers’s Miscellany* 16, 28; McCormick, *The Tinkler Gypsies*, 504–5; D.

Museum have also been attributed to *Nacken*.³⁹² Michie, Maitland and MacDougall also all collected *Nacken*-made clothes pegs, examples of which did not enter the Highland Folk Museum until after Grant's time.

To some extent the new dominant narratives that Grant unintentionally created had greater impact in the broader but connected sphere of social history collecting. This discipline grew out of folk collecting but took on a more urban focus.³⁹³ As Grant was the first to publish work that touched on *chaetrie*, it seems to have become the standard. But because this writing had grown out of a rural setting, its understanding of *chaetrie* was necessarily limited. Grant would never have intended for her work to define *Nacken chaetrie*, but in the absence of other work in this area, *chaetrie* has come to be seen as folksy and rural, masking objects and interactions found in urban settings and museums.³⁹⁴

The collecting of *Nacken chaetrie* and developments in the display of this material continued at the Highland Folk Museum beyond Grant's time. When Grant retired in 1954 her successor, Davidson, as well as continuing to collect from some of those *Nacken* who Grant sourced objects from, also brought new *Nacken* collecting contacts.³⁹⁵ Davidson was really a collector rather than a curator, as reflected in some of his more unorthodox

McNaught, *Kilmaurs Parish and Burgh* (Paisley: Alexander Gardner, 1912), 271; Williamson, *The Horsie-man*, 6 (and also notes to illustration no. 6, unnumbered middle pages); Neat, *The Summer Walkers*, 165; Douglas, *The Last of the Tinsmiths*, 75; Robertson, *Reek Roon a Campfire*, ix. References to *Nacken* as heckle-makers, which would also have required blacksmithing skills, appear here, W. Scott and T. Pringle, "Notices concerning the Scottish Gypsies," *Edinburgh Magazine* 1, no. 2 (1817), 156; and W. C. Little, 'Observations on the Hammermen of Edinburgh', *Archaeologica Scotica* 1 (1792), 173. There is also a description of a temporary furnace used by *Nacken* to extract iron ore in Simson, *A History of the Gipsies*, 234-235. In Jo Clement's pamphlet of poems written as part of her doctoral research into the depiction and concealment of Traveller life in the work of Thomas Bewick, is a poem, 'Ironwork, V&A', expressing her frustration that English Gypsy blacksmithing is unrepresented in an exhibit on the craft in London's V&A, see Clement, *Moveable Type*, 16.

³⁹² Cheape and G. Sprott, *Angus Country Life*, 36.

³⁹³ C. Paine, "'There's a ghost at every feast'", *Social History in Museums*, vol. 34 (2010), 8.

³⁹⁴ Grant herself, to some extent, may have misunderstood *Nacken* to be a rural phenomenon. In *Highland Folk Ways*, she tells us 't ____-made spoons are very crude and there was also a skilled, urban horn-work industry'. Aside from the misapprehension that *Nacken* spoons were roughly made, perhaps based on the roughness often acquired by these items over time, the suggestion here is that the urban industry has no *Nacken* connections. While there was more than one urban hornworks in Scotland, at least one of those—run by the Marshalls of Kilmaurs—was both *Nacken* and urban.

³⁹⁵ Just as Grant had valued scrap-dealers—*Nacken* among them—in developing the collection in her time, Davidson valued *Nacken* dealers among his contacts. These included John Yates of Stirling and Tom Williamson, who ran the dump in Kingussie, both of whom Grant had collected from, although she may have been unaware that they were *Nacken*. Although some of the objects Davidson sourced from *Nacken* dealers were related to *Nacken* crafts, skills and occupations (e.g. John Young's spoon mould, HFM:SKA 59, the Macmillan bagpipes, HFM:LT 15 and 19, and the mussel shells from Alfred Yates, HFM:1955.8), many of the items collected related to settled life. Among these were the carts collected through Williamson, including the Newtonmore Manse Gig (HFM:VC 56), the small milk cart (HFM:VC 43) and another milk cart (number unknown). Like Grant, Davidson acknowledged *Nacken* connections in his catalogue and displays.

approaches, including the display of his own collections and those of the University of Aberdeen at the Highland Folk Museum and *vice versa*. There is also evidence that he took museum items home, swapped items from the museum for new material for the collection and often forgot to record objects as they entered the museum.³⁹⁶

Like Grant, as well as collecting from *Nacken*, Davidson also included *chaetrie* in his displays. The main trace of the display at the museum during Davidson's time is an unpublished guide that he drafted in 1962.³⁹⁷ The themes in this guide all relate to aspects of Highland history, and across these themes 20 items or item-types connected to *Nacken* were highlighted (see table 3).³⁹⁸ Davidson's display extended the representation of *Nacken* at the Highland Folk Museum. While the *chaetrie* identified by Davidson was broadly similar to that identified by Grant, one area where he expanded acknowledgement of object type was bronze ring brooches.³⁹⁹ This was in part because Davidson had access to wider collections to tell stories with—the ring brooches that he displayed at the Highland Folk Museum were from his own collection. Davidson was also able to name more *Nacken* individuals, both as contributors to the collection and those associated with specific objects.

³⁹⁶ Davidson's catalogue in the Highland Folk Museum Archive is incomplete. A fuller picture of what was collected and how can be gained from letters and other documents in the archive of the University of Aberdeen (in both the George 'Taffy' Davidson Donor Files, Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen Museum Collection and in MS3015, Special Collections, University of Aberdeen). A letter from Prof Lockhart to Davidson dated December 06, 1962 lists sixty-one items owned by Davidson but lent 'at times for exhibition in the Kingussie museum'. Davidson described swapping a spinning wheel for a milk cart in a letter to Prof. Lockhart, dated August 12, 1971. Correspondence regarding which objects belonged where were exchanged after Davidson's death in 1976, including one addressed to Mr Skinner in which a 'T____ - made' pan (ABDUA:14934) from the John Yates collection is described as having been on the 'mantlepiece in the sitting room', of Davidson's home, and also refers to John Brown's silver mailbox (ABDUA:17643), which at one time was also taken home from the museum by Davidson.

³⁹⁷ G. Davidson, "A description of the things in Room I, Highland Folk Museum 1962," in George 'Taffy' Davidson Donor Files, Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen Museum Collection.

³⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁹ In a letter to Professor Lockhart dated April 14, 1968 Davidson described the 'T____s' case' as containing '10 brass [sketch of a ring brooch here] brooches', George 'Taffy' Davidson Donor Files, Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen Museum Collection. He also refers to ring brooches among the products of *Nacken* in G. Davidson, "A description of the things in Room I, Highland Folk Museum 1962," 7, in George 'Taffy' Davidson Donor Files, Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen Museum Collection.

Object	Room 1 1962, page	Collection link (all numbers linked to HFM catalogues)
'Pig and ragers' cast sugar bowl	3	Possibly 1960.26, catalogued as 'Four Victorian cut glass jam dishes of the type hawkers trafficked in'
Pearls and shells	5	1955.8
Pearl jug and stick	5	R 3 and R 4 (collected by Grant)
Spoon mould (caams)	6	SKA00059
Horn spoon with silver thistle	6	1957.19
Powder-horn	7	Davidson displayed examples from his own collection at the museum*
Brass ring brooches	7	Davidson displayed examples from his own collection at the museum*
Tin lantern	7	1957.28
Pans	7	Referred to generally, but Davidson collected a <i>Nacken</i> -made berry pan for the Highland Folk Museum (number unknown; missing) and a pan made of silver coins was among the John Yates Collection, University of Aberdeen (missing)
Skillets	7	Referred to generally, but examples in the collection
Naggins [or bickers]	7	Referred to generally, but examples in the collection
<i>Gadgy</i> hammer	8	Unknown: possibly B 106
Macmillan bagpipes	8	L 15 and L 19
'T_____'s' cart	9	VC 4 or VC 55 (unclear from records)
Quaich by Alexander Stewart, 1797	9	Davidson's own collection (marked A.S., 1798) ⁴⁰⁰
Silver by Jamieson	10	Exhibit may have included K 20 (NGA00011), brooch by Jamieson
Pewterware	11	Referred to generally (some individual items mentioned, although not necessarily by <i>Nacken</i> makers)
Luckenbooth brooches	16	Referred to generally, but exhibit may have included K 60, betrothal brooch by Alexander Stewart
'Wee pets pail'	17	1958.41
Animal and figure ornaments, traded by 'Pig and ragger'	19	Three examples mentioned: white pony with girl in tartan scarf; kilted boy under archway of flowers, Highland woman with banjo and tartan skirt

Table 3. Objects and object-types acknowledged by Davidson in 'A description of the things in Room I, The Highland Folk Museum 1962' [Room 1 1962].

* *These items appear in the list of objects that belonged to Davidson, which he lent 'at times for exhibition in the Kingussie Museum', see letter from Prof Lockhart to Davidson, dated December 06, 1962, George 'Taffy' Davidson Donor Files, Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen Museum Collection.*

Davidson's approach to the display of *chaetrie* was similar to Grant's in that it was featured across a range of themes. Where Davidson's approach to collecting and display

differed to—and could be said to develop—Grant’s was in the more frequent naming of *Nacken*. While Davidson also collected from *Nacken* who gave objects but not a name, he was able to name more of those who contributed to the collections, some of whom were close friends. In a short chapter about Davidson’s life, Robert Smith writes that he ‘had a great affinity with t_____ folk. They scoured the countryside in search of material for him and his museum at Kingussie’.⁴⁰¹ As well as naming *Nacken* who gave objects into the collections, he also named those who were connected to objects. Tables 4 and 5 provide a list of named *Nacken* sources and objects associated with named *Nacken* that were collected in Davidson’s time.

<i>Nacken</i> source	Object(s)	Archival reference
The Macmillans, Elgin	Bagpipes	‘A description of the things in Room I’, George ‘Taffy’ Davidson Donor Files, Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen Museum Collection, 8 (not catalogued at the time, new number LT 15 and LT 19)
John Reid, Aberdeen	Marbles Puirman (Donside) Smith’s swage block (Deeside) Lochgelly tawse Scythe (Donside) Child’s creepie stool Horn carding comb (Aberdeenshire) Weaving frames Tin opener Fleerish (Banffshire) Carding comb Snuff box Metal brooch Wooden doll (Loch Eil) Silver brooch (Loch Eil) Butter hand Flint and steel	Davidson Catalogue, 1955.3 Davidson Catalogue, 1955.4 Davidson Catalogue, 1958.15 Davidson Catalogue, 1958.16 Davidson Catalogue, 1959.1 Davidson Catalogue, 1959.2 Davidson Catalogue, 1959.3 Davidson Catalogue, 1959.4 Davidson Catalogue, 1959.14 Davidson Catalogue, 1959.15 Davidson Catalogue, 1960.31 Davidson Catalogue, 1962.10 Davidson Catalogue, 1962.11 Davidson Catalogue, 1963.22 Davidson Catalogue, 1963.23 Davidson Catalogue, 1963.24 Davidson Catalogue, 1963.25
Unnamed ‘touring scrapman’	Large portable anvil and a visor for a biting horse or mule	Postcard from Davidson to Prof Lockhart postmarked September 16, 1968, George ‘Taffy’ Davidson Donor Files, Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen Museum Collection
Unnamed <i>Nacken</i>	Old pot found in an abandoned house	Letter from Davidson to Prof Lockhart, September 29, 1971, George ‘Taffy’ Davidson Donor Files, Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen Museum Collection

⁴⁰¹ R. Smith, *Aberdeen Curiosities* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1997), 139.

<i>Nacken</i> source	Object(s)	Archival reference
Tom Williamson, Kingussie	Manse Gig (Newtonmore) Milk Cart and 'milk carty' Seaforth Kilt, military issue, 1914 Military Royal Stewart, piper's plaid, 1914 Heavy instrument (Drumguish) Snuff mull Saddle harrows (Laggan) Bellows (Kingussie) Harness (Feshiebridge) Horse bit (Tocroy) Copper shot flask	A receipt for the payment of £3-10-0 for the cart on July 04, 1957 signed by Tom Williamson, in MS3015, Special Collections, University of Aberdeen. (Not catalogued by Davidson, new number VC00056) Letter from Davidson to Prof Lockhart, dated August 12, 1971, George 'Taffy' Davidson Donor Files, Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen Museum Collection (not catalogued by Davidson, new number VC00043) Davidson Catalogue, 1960.28 Davidson Catalogue, 1960.29 Davidson Catalogue, 1961.1 Davidson Catalogue, 1961.52 Davidson Catalogue, 1962.8 Davidson Catalogue, 1962.9 Davidson Catalogue, 1962.12 Davidson Catalogue, 1963.26 Davidson Catalogue, 1963.41
George Williamson, Grantown	Snuff mull	Davidson Catalogue, 1961.53
Alfred Yates	Mussel shells and rough pearls Mortar and pestle Metal container for percussion caps	Davidson Catalogue, 1955.8 Davidson Catalogue, 1958.10 Davidson Catalogue, 1958.11 (mistakenly catalogued twice)

Table 4. *Nacken* from whom Davidson collected and associated objects.

Notes on table 4:

Where the source is the Davidson Catalogue, this can be found in the Highland Folk Museum Archive, Am Fasgadh, Newtonmore

While there is good evidence that the others named here were Nacken, I have no conclusive evidence that John Reid was also a Nacken. His patterns of collecting and travel, however, suggest that he was scrap-dealing. His surname is also one found among Nacken families.⁴⁰² It is also possible that he was acquainted with Tom Williamson, as they appear to have brought objects to the museum concurrently in 1962: two items from Williamson were listed (1962.8 and 1962.9), followed by two items from Reid (1962.10 and 1962.11), after which another object from Williamson was listed (1962.12). Just as Williamson was able to say where many of the items he brought to the museum had been picked up, so was Reid, both showing patterns of travel over a considerable distance (although Reid mainly collected within a distance of around 40 miles from his home in Aberdeen, Kingussie is around 100 miles and Loch Eil 170 miles away). In a letter to Professor Lockhart, Davidson mentioned that Williamson, similarly, would bring in anything he found within 100 miles of the museum that he thought might be of interest.⁴⁰³

⁴⁰² Dawson, *Scottish Traditional Traveller Families*, 24.

⁴⁰³ Letter from Davidson to Lockhart, dated August 12, 1971, in George 'Taffy' Davidson Donor Files, Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen Museum Collection.

Alfred Yates was the son of John Yates of Stirling. I. F. Grant bought items from Yates and Sons, an antique business on Spittal Street, Stirling; the John Yates Collection can be found in the University of Aberdeen Museum Collection and is discussed in Chapter 6.

As well as naming *Nacken* sources, Davidson also, in some cases, named *Nacken* connected to objects that he collected. Where these have been identified in his writing, they are included in table 5.

Object	<i>Nacken</i> association	Notes
Bagpipes	Belonged to the Macmillans of Elgin	The Macmillans of Elgin were pearl-fishers and cone gatherers. More information about them can be found in T. Neat, <i>The Summer Walkers</i> (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1996), 117–119
Spoon Mould	Belonged to John Young, horner of Aberdeenshire	John Young (c. 1775–1801), son of Alexander or James ‘Caird’ Young and Ann Graham. The family were known for making horn spoons. John and his brother, Peter, were written about in W. and R. Chambers, <i>Chambers’s Miscellany of Useful and Entertaining Tracts</i> (Edinburgh: William and Robert Chambers, 1847), 27–9
Silver brooch	Made by Alexander Stewart	Alexander Stewart was listed as one of ‘a family of goldsmiths [... living] to all intents and purposes the lives of gipsies [<i>sic</i>]’ (see, C. J. Jackson, <i>English Goldsmiths and their Marks: a History of Goldsmiths and Plateworkers of England, Scotland and Ireland</i> (London: MacMillan & Co., 1905), 504
Silver brooch	Made by Charles Jameson	Davidson wrote that one ‘of the Jamesones (Inverness) is still in the scrap business (always metal and it’s to be shelties too,) The continental Wayland Smith adopted by Scott and Kipling trained in the right schools and had the tradition like these folk). Jamesone is knowledgeable about his silversmith ancestor and very proud of him’, see ‘A Description of the Things in Room I: The Highland Folk Museum 1962’, George ‘Taffy’ Davidson Donor File, Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen Museum Collection, 10
Pottery figures	Davidson named a ‘Pig and Ragger’ known to him, Charles Wight of Alford (he is not known to be directly associated with the trade of any examples in the museum or the display)	A photograph of Charles Wight of Alford dated 1909 is held in the Alford Heritage Centre and Museum, image no. 1200

Table 5. Named *Nacken* with connections to objects displayed by Davidson.

In 1975, George 'Taffy' Davidson retired from the Highland Folk Museum. In 1976, it was taken on by the then Highland Regional Council and Ross Noble took on the role of Curator. The difficulty of collecting the sort of material now considered—through the defining work of Grant—to be *Nacken chaetrie* was evident by this time. Although during Noble's time two living wagons as well as several sets of clothes pegs entered the collection—both object types not previously represented in the collection—reduced opportunities to collect *chaetrie* meant that there was a shift in focus. Noble's main developments were in display rather than collecting.

Noble has described the display he developed about *Nacken* at the Highland Folk Museum as the most important thing he did in his career.⁴⁰⁴ The display, entitled 'T_____ Encampment' drew upon the *Nacken chaetrie* gathered by his predecessors. It was opened in 1976 in the Farming Annexe of the Highland Folk Museum. Here, for the first time at the museum, *Nacken* were presented as central to themselves. Although the display signalled various ways in which *Nacken* interacted with the settled population—craftwares for sale were arranged on the open wagon and a scythe used in seasonal farm labouring was propped up within the campsite—this was presented as their home. A *snottum* holding a pot over the fire, a wagon, a clay pipe and tinsmithing tools all featured. *Nacken* were no longer presented within the story of the Highlands by the objects associated with them, but their own story was presented there, alongside the story of other Highlanders.

From 1939 at the Highland Folk Museum, as well as in other folk museums that modelled themselves on it, *chaetrie* had a visible and acknowledged presence. This was not the first acknowledged material to be displayed in Scottish museums, however, as Billy Marshall's horn cup and the horn spoon made by his son was displayed at the Stewartry Museum from 1905. In the folk museums, however, *Nacken chaetrie* of a broader range was displayed. To some extent, however, the range of material considered to be connected to *Nacken* became linked to the folk museums and to rural life, limiting the conception of what it might be. Some of these assumptions were disrupted by *Nacken* themselves when they gave objects directly to museums. The ways in which *Nacken* contributed to museum collections and the ways in which these contributions can unsettle assumptions about *Nacken* is discussed in the next chapter.

⁴⁰⁴ R. Ross Noble, *pers. comm.*, October 09, 2019.

Chapter 5: Widening the view of *Nacken chaetrie* at the Highland Folk Museum

5.1 Chapter introduction

The Highland Folk Museum has had the most acknowledged *Nacken chaetrie* on display for the longest time of any museum in Scotland. *Nacken* and *chaetrie* have been visible at the museum almost continuously from its beginnings in 1935—and acknowledged from 1939 with the introduction of the Crafts section—up to the present day.⁴⁰⁵ It also has the largest collection of *Nacken* material outside of National Museums Scotland. This chapter draws together findings from archival research, participant observation and object interviews that were carried out to better understand the *Nacken chaetrie* at the Highland Folk Museum and in museums more generally. This has led to an expanded understanding of what *Nacken chaetrie* might include and what this extended assemblage can reveal about *Nacken* culture and presence in museums. A series of themes have been drawn out through this research and these will be covered in turn in this chapter. These are hidden *Nacken* connections, fluidity, and *Nacken* and exchange. These are followed by a series of sections on the direct contribution of *Nacken* to museums. These have been identified in the areas of archaeology, second-hand dealing and preservation, natural history specimens, military material, as well as *Nacken* material. This latter area is split into sections on tools, musical instruments, camp life and crafted items. Two sections at the end are based on the interventions involving the discussion around or development of museum displays. The first is on *Nacken* in the Highland Folk Museum Store, May 20, 2018. The second is centred around objects of continuity in the display developed for Gypsy, Roma, Traveller History Month 2019 at Perth Museum and Art Gallery.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, I chose not to include museum-based photographs of *Nacken* in this research, in-part due to the photographs being from the point-of-view of the photographer and not of *Nacken*. As my research progressed, however, I came to realise that the same could be said of much of the *chaetrie* in museum collections; these have

⁴⁰⁵ Photographs and descriptions of Grant's displays at the museum provide evidence of the presence of *Nacken chaetrie* at all three museum sites that she oversaw. It would seem, however, that it was only from the introduction of the 'Crafts' section, initiated in Laggan, featuring the horn spoon mould where there was any acknowledged link made between displayed collections and *Nacken*. A film and (unpublished) guidebook made during the time of Davidson, the museum's second curator, clearly marked out objects that were displayed and the stories they told, while from 1976–2006 Noble's 'T____ Encampment' tableau and inclusion of *Nacken* and *Nacken* themes in the Heritage in Action programme expanded the ways in which the museum made *Nacken* and their culture visible. A brief period between 2006, when the Farming Museum in which the 'T____ Encampment' was housed was closed to the public, and 2008, when Essie Stewart built her bough tent at the Newtonmore site, was the first period when *Nacken* presence was unseen at the museum. Although the museum has, since its closure of the Kingussie site in 2006, had no display space freely open to the public, there has been an almost continuous presence of a *Nacken*-built bough tent on site at Newtonmore since 2008.

been collected from the curator's (non-*Nacken*) perspective (see Chapter 4). This chapter seeks to revisit museum collections by identifying *Nacken* perspectives through objects given to the museum in the past, as well as through contemporary interactions in the museum today.

This chapter builds on the previous one by looking beyond the understanding of *Nacken chaetrie* developed by curators and the information about *Nacken* material presented to the public through museum displays, interpretation and published works. It is based on discussions with *Nacken* in and around museum collections. Three in-depth interviews took place with *Nacken* representatives regarding museum collections. In addition, I developed two short-term ethnographic studies, the first with a group of 18 *Nacken* in the Highland Folk Museum store and, secondly, with three members of the Gypsy/Traveller Youth Assembly in Perth Museum and Art Gallery. Through interactions with people, archival material and knowledge from beyond the museum, the range of objects that falls within the scope of this research has widened. *Nacken* were invited to share their own knowledge, perspectives and responses to the collections in the museum. Although this chapter is mostly based on the Highland Folk Museum, other museums have been referred to where they provide relevant insights or artefacts. As in the previous chapter, where specific objects in a collection are referred to, its corresponding object number is included in parenthesis.

At the outset of the research towards this thesis, my awareness of *chaetrie* at the Highland Folk Museum was based on what was presented in the displays at, and books related to, the Highland Folk Museum, as examined in Chapter 4. The insights offered by *Nacken*—both contemporary, gained through interviews and observations, and past, who have left traces of their activities in archives—have been invaluable in informing a wider view of *chaetrie*.

5.2 Hidden *Nacken* connections

Although the idea of uncovering the hidden *Nacken* aspect of objects was part of my thinking from the beginning of this research, my own settled perspective restricted my perception of what this would entail. From the outset I was aware of the flow of material from *Nacken* to settled populations. As I had learned from the displays and writing at the Highland Folk Museum, *Nacken* produced crafts or sourced ready-made goods that were useful to the settled population and traded by them into Highland homes. I was also aware that in many museum contexts the *Nacken* aspect of these objects was often unseen. Presented as the backdrop to settled life, their makers—or other aspects of the biography of these objects prior to their time in a settled context—went unconsidered. During this research, however, *Nacken* accounts have highlighted additional flows of material. Many

objects moved the other way—from settled contexts to *Nacken* ones—and some made multiple trips back and forth between these populations. Kathy Townsley McGuigan, who leads on the Gypsy/Traveller collection at Auchindrain and who has contributed knowledge to this research during visits I have made there, has spoken of her mother asking settled folk for things that caught her eye or that looked useful.⁴⁰⁶ Examples of the sort of material that would have been requested by *Nacken* in this way, include milk churns to store water in, small aluminium teapots to make into lamps, pewter to melt down for solder, or old butter knives to cut down and sharpened for use in making bagpipe reeds or clothes pegs.⁴⁰⁷ Money or craft items were often exchanged for food or shelter, but might also have been offered for a piece of clothing with bright patterns, a piece of crystal or brightly painted pottery. Other things were collected from dumps once they had been thrown away by members of the settled population. A possible example in the museum is the pearl jug, which has been made from a discarded paint tin (HFM:R 4). Repurposing and recycling things that came from the dump is described in several *Nacken* sources.⁴⁰⁸ Just as the crafted items made by *Nacken* were often the backdrop to settled life, so things from the settled world were sought out, repurposed and became the backdrop to *Nacken* life. Often functional items were highly prized, and some have become part of what might be termed a *Nacken* aesthetic, particularly milk churns, which were much valued for the storage of water.⁴⁰⁹ Milk churns have been pointed out by *Nacken* visiting the museum store at the Highland Folk Museum as items with which they feel an affinity.⁴¹⁰ Another item that was often requested for reuse was prams. My mother recalls a *Nacken* woman in the 1980s asking her for the pram that was in our garage. These were sometimes used to transport babies but were also valued as useful wheeled transportation.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁶ Kathy Townsley McGuigan, *pers. comm.*, May 11, 2019. Referring to memories from the 1960s and 70s.

⁴⁰⁷ Kathy Townsley McGuigan, *pers. comm.*, September 19, 2016; Kathy Townsley McGuigan, *pers. comm.*, October 09, 2019; Gordon Stewart's account of the Williamsons in Neat, *The Summer Walkers*, 94–95; Leitch, *The Book of Sandy Stewart*, 99; B. Vesey-Fitzgerald, *Gypsies of Britain* (London: The Country Book Club, 1951), 195. Duncan Williamson mentioned a small cruise lamp his father made, which looked like a teapot, see Campbell and Williamson, *A Traveller in Two Worlds* 1, 18. The importance to *Nacken* of items that could be used to carry water is evident in the inventory of belongings of Alexander Stewart and family, February 09, 1893, see Leitch, *The Book of Sandy Stewart*, 98–9.

⁴⁰⁸ Campbell and Williamson, *A Traveller in Two Worlds* 1, 35–6, 44; Leitch, *The Book of Sandy Stewart*, 79; Smith, *Jessie's Journey*, 29–30; Stewart, *A Traveller's Life*, 123.

⁴⁰⁹ This adapts Damian Le Bas' identification of a 'Gypsy aesthetic', which includes churns, crystalware and 'flash' china, see Le Bas, *The Stopping Places*, 61–3.

⁴¹⁰ Kathy Townsley McGuigan, *pers. comm.*, September 19, 2016.

⁴¹¹ Leitch, *The Book of Sandy Stewart*, xv, xxi; Stewart, *A Traveller's Life*, 99, 207; Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom*, 134; Williamson, *The Horsieman*, 47, 62, 69, 73. Prams also appear in photographs of campsites.



Figure 14. Milk churns in the store at the Highland Folk Museum. © Rhona Ramsay.

From a museum point-of-view, these objects are often harder to see as *Nacken chaetrie*, partly because there is often no provenanced connection. Although *Nacken* did trade directly into museums, highly valued items that were difficult to replace would have been closely guarded; some of them inherited by children.⁴¹² As such these connections, which have been seen and noted by *Nacken* in their interactions with objects in museum displays and stores, go generally unseen. These are connections seen from inside *Nacken* life and culture but are all-but invisible from outside of it. These links are not only invisible in a museum world firmly situated in a settled context but are difficult to recognise in museum systems that record and value provenance. The value attached to items such as pans and milk churns by *Nacken* means that they are likely to be passed down within families. The examples of these items found in museums, then, will almost never come from a *Nacken* source. No *Nacken* connection would be recorded for such objects in the museum catalogue, then, as they have neither come from nor been made by *Nacken*. The *Nacken* connections to objects such as these are unseen within both museum records and displays. While museums are open to visitors making their own personal connections to objects that they display, the contexts in which they are presented are rooted in a settled framework that often excludes the consideration of *Nacken* associations. As those who have developed the museum displays come to objects with a settled perspective, it is a settled understanding of these objects that visitors are invited to experience. For example, in the Highland Folk Museum, milk churns are displayed in the dairy, seen only as items used for the settled purpose for which they were made. For *Nacken*, however, these were vital items for the storage of water and today are often kept and passed on as reminders of past use.

⁴¹² David Donaldson has spoken of young men inheriting cast iron pans from their fathers, these items accruing value with age and use, David Donaldson, *interview*, October 17, 2018.

5.3 Fluidity

This next section considers the trade of things between *Nacken* and non-*Nacken* and is based mainly on memories shared by those looking back to the 1950s through to the 1980s, while objects in the museum hold traces of similar interactions stretching further back. Items that were traded back and forth between *Nacken* and non-*Nacken* were, by their nature, not the vulnerable craft items made by *Nacken* but were sturdy objects often with no original link to *Nacken*. Two types of material in the Highland Folk Museum that can be said with some certainty to have made these multiple journeys are jewellery and pottery. An account of jewellery traded by *Nacken* from special drawers in their carts appears among the newspaper cuttings gathered in the Scottish Life Archive at NMS.⁴¹³ Grant appears to have bought jewellery in this way too, as nearly 30% of all the jewellery she collected was traded into the museum by *Nacken*, figures 15 and 16.⁴¹⁴ While some of these items were also *Nacken*-made, including a ring made from a coin (HFM:K 58) and one made from the handle of a spoon (HFM:K 66, now missing), the majority were items of non-*Nacken* manufacture. Some of these may have been bought from a settled context by *Nacken* who stocked up on *swag* in urban centres where this material was readily available and taken for sale to areas with limited access to it.⁴¹⁵ Other examples are clearly second-hand (for example HFM:K 4, HFM:K 62, HFM:K 65) and are likely to have been given to *Nacken* by members of the settled population in exchange for other goods or services, which then became available to *Nacken* to sell on.⁴¹⁶

⁴¹³ Travelling People, 119.1 and 119.2, Scottish Life Archive, Research Library, National Museums Scotland, e.g. E. Hunter, "Letter to the Editor," *Dundee Courier*, September 26, 1973.

⁴¹⁴ See Section K in the I. F. Grant Catalogue, Highland Folk Museum Archive, Am Fasgadh, Newtonmore.

⁴¹⁵ *Swag* appears in Robert Dawson's dictionary of Romani and Traveller vocabulary as 'bag', see Dawson, *Rokkering, Clecking and Cracking*, 58, 70. Kathy Townsley McGuigan, however, uses *swag* to refer to items bought in urban centres to sell on to rural populations, Kathy Townsley McGuigan, *pers. comm.*, August 05, 2017. See also: Ramsay, Thomas and Townsley McGuigan, "From intangible to tangible and back again," 16.

⁴¹⁶ Among the items that Duncan Williamson recounted finding in his Granny's pinnie were 'pieces of jewellery, there were rings, things that she collected from people when she was reading fortunes, beads, brooches': Campbell and Williamson, *A Traveller in Two Worlds* 1, 30. Pigger Hogg, the dealer mentioned in the letter to the newspaper referring to the cart with the drawer of jewellery in it, was collecting rags, bones and rabbit skins, presumably some of these things exchanged directly for items of jewellery, see Scottish Life Archive, National Museums Scotland, File 119.1.



Figures 15 and 16. The items of jewellery bought by I. F. Grant from *Nacken*, including both *Nacken*-made and also second-hand items. © Rhona Ramsay.

Pottery is another commodity among those traded by *Nacken* in the past.⁴¹⁷ Those with carts were able to bring pottery up from the Lowlands and elsewhere to sell in areas remote from access to these products.⁴¹⁸ Among the items that Riley, a *Nacken* dealer, sold to Grant for the Highland Folk Museum, were some pieces of pottery (HFM:S 1–5), which Riley had gathered through his house clearance business.⁴¹⁹ Keen to find examples of items that once furnished homes in the Highlands, Grant visited Riley’s sheds, from which he traded goods collected through house clearances, in August and October 1950.⁴²⁰ Some of the items that he cleared from houses around Highland Perthshire may have originally entered those homes through trade by *Nacken*. Once purchased by Grant these objects stopped their journeys back and forth between *Nacken* and non-*Nacken*, and in her time at the museum this aspect of their biographies became largely invisible.

⁴¹⁷ References to this trade include Scott, *Guy Mannering*. 39. Citations refer to the Edinburgh University Press; Simson, *A History of the Gipsies*, 246, 348; J. Baird, “Parish of Yetholm’, in Society for the Benefit of the Sons and Daughters of the Clergy,” *The New Statistical Account of Scotland*, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1845), 166; J. Mackinnon, “Island of Skye – Strath,” *The New Statistical Account of Scotland* (1845), vol. 14, 313; Stewart, *Up Yon Wide and Lonely Glen*, 6; J. A. Atkinson, “Ben Lawers: An Archaeological Landscape in Time,” *Scottish Archaeological Internet Reports* 62 (2016): 262. <https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/sair/contents.cfm?vol=62>.

⁴¹⁸ There is a long history of this trade. It is recounted by Walter Simson in Simson, *A History of the Gipsies*, 142, 145, 246–8, 285, 403, who was drawing upon his own research in the early 1800s, as well as upon an account by John Hoyland, published in 1816, and a manuscript by an A. W. (unknown). David Donaldson also recounted to me the trade in pottery by his own family: David Donaldson, *interview*, October 17, 2018.

⁴¹⁹ With thanks to Jess Smith for all her help towards an understanding of the items bought by I. F. Grant from Riley in Moulin. I had been unable to work out the connection between all these objects, which included a butter stamp, a warming pan, a brass candlestick, textiles and other homewares. Having contacted Jess Smith, who I knew had Rileys in her family, she was able to let me know about the scrap dealing and house clearance business he ran from Lettoch Beag in Moulin, Perthshire.

⁴²⁰ Grant’s conception of the Highlands followed the old Highland Line and encompassed Highland Perthshire, Argyll and the Islands and parts of Moray and Aberdeenshire. This sense of the Highlands is reflected in her collections and writing.

Beyond the mentions she made of being told that *Nacken* traded pottery for rabbit skins, this connection was not explored.⁴²¹ Grant purchased a pottery bowl (HFM:S 5), a punchbowl (HFM:S 1) and a teapot and sugar bowl (HFM:S 2–3) from Riley at what may have been the second time they were traded by *Nacken*—as second-hand items rather than new.⁴²² A selection of the items purchased by Grant from Riley can be seen in figure 17.



Figure 17. Items from the Riley Collection at the Highland Folk Museum. These are some of the items bought from Wullie Riley by I. F. Grant. Warming pan (HFM:O 17), weeding tool (HFM:A 236), pan (HFM:P 283), butter stamp (HFM:C 59), toy chair (HFM:T 1), cream jug (HFM:S 294), lidded sugar bowl (HFM:S 3), teapot (HFM:S 2), candle stick (HFM:O 21), punch bowl (HFM:S 1), Glass bowl with lid (HFM:S 133), coffee pot (HFM:M 41), small bowl (HFM:S 5) and shepherd's plaid (HFM:I 3).

It is likely that many other pieces of pottery in the collection of the Highland Folk Museum were originally traded into Highland homes via trade with *Nacken*. No provenanced examples of pottery brought into the Highlands by *Nacken* have been identified at the museum. There is no reason, however, when broken specimens from excavated pottery can be understood in this way, that the same thinking should not be applied to complete examples in museum collections.⁴²³ Examples of the sorts of ware traded by *Nacken* include the 'china dishes and ornaments' and 'Wally Dogs in bone china wi the real glass een,' sold by the Stewarts of Fetterangus; the colourful Lowland pottery bowls mentioned by Grant; the cast sugar bowl, cut glass jam dishes and the sentimental 'Highland'

⁴²¹ Grant, *Highland Folk Ways*, 175; Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 116.

⁴²² Bowl HFM:S 5 bears some resemblance to that which Hope MacDougall purchased from *Nacken* at Glencoe Village in 1971 and is now in the collections at Dunollie (OBNMD:2003.1150).

⁴²³ Atkinson, "Ben Lawers,": 262.

ornaments described and catalogued by Grant's successor, George 'Taffy' Davidson; 'pots, jars, pitchers, crockery, dishes and earthenware' listed by Cheape and Sprott as the stock of 'pig and ragger' traders; as well as 'china ornaments and things that other Travellers, on the road would sell to crofters all over Sutherland', described by Essie Stewart.⁴²⁴ Essie Stewart has also spoken of Wally Dugs being among the items sold and owned by her extended family.⁴²⁵

In the case of the Riley pottery, between being cleared from a local house and sold to Grant, some of these items may have had an intermediate life in Riley's home. Jess Smith recalls items—similar to those among the Riley objects at the Highland Folk Museum—in or around her Grandad's home, particularly the pan (HFM:P 283) and the punchbowl (HFM:S 1), both of which are visible in figure 17.⁴²⁶ She also noted, while in the museum store that 'Granny had the likes of these [HFM:S 2–3] on her windae sills. You know she loved these china things [...] with carved handles and lovely little feet'.⁴²⁷ During the visit from MECOPP to the Am Fasgadh Store in May 2018, one of the responses to the Riley material related to the punchbowl painted with fruit (HFM:S 1). Victoria Stewart stated that Gypsies like things painted with fruit, which is echoed by Le Bas who has listed 'plates finished with still-life paintings displaying the wealth of the harvest' among things that belong to the Gypsy and Traveller look.⁴²⁸ Pans like these have also been picked out by David Donaldson as being significant as objects of continuity (discussed later in this chapter). It is possible that, in the case of the punchbowl, it was made in a settled industry, bought up by *Nacken* on their way north, traded into a home in Highland Perthshire, later cleared by Riley to his scrapyard and sheds, selected as décor for the Riley home, then sold on to Grant when she visited there in 1950. Items such as these may have 'move[d] across cultural [...] borders, [...] becom[ing] recontextualised,

⁴²⁴ Stewart, *Up Yon Wide and Lonely Glen*, 6. Essie Stewart has also spoken of her family trading in Wally Dugs and of her family having a set that decorated the family home used over the winter (Essie Stewart, *interview*, October 15, 2018); Grant, *Highland Folk Ways*, 175; Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 116; Davidson, "A description of the things in room I: the Highland Folk Museum 1962," 3, 19, George 'Taffy' Davidson donor files, Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen Museum Collection; Cheape and Sprott, *Angus Country Life*, 30; Neat, *The Summer Walkers*, 4.

⁴²⁵ Essie Stewart, *interview*, October 15, 2018.

⁴²⁶ Jess Smith would have been around three years old at the time Grant visited Riley. Although it is not possible to be certain that the objects Jess Smith recalls were those that were bought by Grant, her recollections offer an insight into the types of things that her grandparents chose to have in their home. The suggestions that Grant purchased items not only from Riley's sheds but also from his home, follows a pattern of collecting that Grant used elsewhere. Grant recounted visiting a donor's home and collecting things from within it, see Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 60, 63-4, while her contacts book, in the Highland Folk Museum Archive, Am Fasgadh, Newtonmore, also offers insight into Grant's method of collecting, which was mainly through visiting the homes of those donating or selling items to the museum.

⁴²⁷ Jess Smith, *interview*, October 27, 2018.

⁴²⁸ Victoria Stewart, *pers. comm.*, May 20, 2018; Le Bas, *The Stopping Places*, 62. The teapot and sugar bowl from Riley also fit with another aspect of the Gypsy look in their 'generous gilding'.

acquiring innovated values and relations with people and other things'.⁴²⁹ In work to identify *chaetrie*, research into not only an object's biography but also its itinerary, might also be useful. Many of these objects, like the punchbowl and the pan, are traces of what Neat terms the 'symbiotic' relationship between *Nacken* and settled folk.⁴³⁰ While the trade of things found in the home might seem unusual from a settled perspective, the flow of material in a *Nacken* context is more customary.⁴³¹ As Jess Smith told me,

when you live in an environment like that and you're surrounded by things and they're getting recycled [...] they're there one day and they're gone the next day and there's something else in their place.⁴³²

Although the Riley collection is now sedentary in the museum, and no longer moving between various contexts, these objects have again become active and animated. Like the museum-held Blackshirts that Laura Peers has observed becoming animate through 'access, [...] exchange of knowledge [...] visiting and exchanging of [...] stories,' the Riley objects were brought alive through Jess Smith's visit to them. While visiting with these objects, Jess Smith told stories and shared memories. Through community contact, Peers observes that, such objects 'have powerful potential for strengthening relationships with heritage—and, through this, for strengthening identity in the present'. Writing in Facebook posts after her visit to the museum to see the Riley collection, Jess Smith has spoken of being 're-connected to Grandad'.⁴³³

5.4 *Nacken* and exchange beyond the museum

As well as highlighting trade of material into the museum, in some cases the material collected from *Nacken* illuminates relationships and trade beyond the museum. One example is the 'ancient connections' between *Nacken* and shepherds.⁴³⁴ Among the artefacts at the Highland Folk Museum that were collected from *Nacken* sources are a shepherd's plaid (HFM:I 3), collected from Riley—who had in turn presumably collected from a shepherd—and two sheep's bells, both collected from *Nacken*, one on the road at Aberfeldy (HFM:A 172) and the other at Blair Atholl (HFM:A 178). While it is possible that the bells were found rather than bought from shepherds, these are evidence of a shared

⁴²⁹ R. A. Joyce and S. D. Gillespie, "Making things out of objects that move," in *Things in Motion: Object Itineraries in Anthropological Practice*, eds. R. A. Joyce and S. D. Gillespie (Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research, 2015), 10.

⁴³⁰ Neat, *The Summer Walkers*, 223.

⁴³¹ Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom*, 13. Although Grant often collected from donors' homes, these were more usually items no longer in use and often considered obsolete by the donor, see Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 60–3. The items that Whyte described being swapped at partings were those things that were most highly treasured by the giver.

⁴³² Jess Smith, *interview*, October 27, 2018.

⁴³³ Jess Smith Facebook post, April 25, 2018, <https://www.facebook.com/618179760/posts/10156232931989761/?app=fbl>

⁴³⁴ Le Bas, *The Stopping Places*, 25.

landscape.⁴³⁵ Contact between *Nacken* and shepherds in this shared space is evident from the writing of James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd. In 1817 Hogg contributed information to Scott's *Notices on the Scottish Gypsies*.⁴³⁶ The tone of Hogg's account differs to Scott's, which forms the main body of this text.⁴³⁷ While Scott, a landowner and by this time Sheriff-Depute of Selkirk, listed the alleged crimes of Gypsies, Hogg wrote that 'the country people [of whom he was one] did not dislike them'.⁴³⁸ At times *Nacken* were closer still, taking on work with or as shepherds.⁴³⁹ Among the tunes played and stories told by *Nacken* there are some of, or featuring shepherds.⁴⁴⁰ Shepherds were also the sources of some of the stories told by *Nacken*.⁴⁴¹ In 2017 Bill Steele, a settled hornworker, suggested that *Nacken* would also have made at least some of the shepherds' crooks: their skill in producing the crook from one horn earning them the second horn, which would have been put to other uses.⁴⁴² That *Nacken* made shepherds' crooks is backed up by a photograph by Dugald Semple of an Argyll *Nacken* sat outside his tent in the process of finishing one.⁴⁴³

Just as shepherds provided the horns required to make a crook, so silver worked by *Nacken* silversmiths seems to have been supplied—in at least some instances—by the client, part of the silver being kept as payment. This was the case with the brooch made from the bowl of a spoon (Figure 18, HFM:K 36). Grant was told the story of how the

⁴³⁵ Further evidence of the shared landscape between shepherds and *Nacken* is in the gathering of brock wool, or pieces of fleece caught on fences, see Stewart, *A Traveller's Life*, 135.

⁴³⁶ Scott and Pringle, "Notices concerning the Scottish Gypsies," 52–3.

⁴³⁷ This divergence in tone can also be detected through a comparison of Hogg's poem 'The Gipsies [*sic*]', which he published in 1822 with an altered extract of the poem published by Scott at the opening of 'Notices Concerning the Scottish Gypsies'. Scott's amendments, although small, are telling, particularly the change from 'noisy' to 'vagrant' (vagrancy was a crime) and from 'grandam' (an archaic form of grandmother) to 'beldame' (a malicious or loathsome old woman). See Scott and Pringle, "Notices concerning the Scottish Gypsies," 1: 43; J. Hogg, *The Poetical Works of James Hogg*, vol. 4 (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable & Co., 1922), 281–3.

⁴³⁸ Hogg also made two references to a 'T____s whistle' in his work, *Highland Tours*, see H. B. de Groot, *James Hogg: Highland Journeys* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 37, 172. This seems to be something that Hogg reserved for emergency situations, but I have not been able to ascertain whether it was an object or a sound. *Nacken* were certainly known to have made horn spoons with whistles in the end and it may be that it is a reference to this, or to another physical whistle made by *Nacken*, see McCormick, *The Tinkler Gypsies*, 532. There is a horn spoon with a whistle in the end in the collections of the Highland Folk Museum (HFM:D 119), as well as other whistles made of horn.

⁴³⁹ Among a series of photographs shared with Aberfeldy Museum by a *Nacken* family, is one of *Nacken*, James McGregor, taken around 1938, when he worked as a shepherd close to Aberfeldy, see Aberfeldy Museum Facebook post, June 08, 2019, <https://www.facebook.com/aberfeldymuseum/photos/23456461051302401>; Duncan Williamson also recounted working for shepherds at the clipping, see Campbell and Williamson, *A Traveller in Two Worlds* 1, 123–30.

⁴⁴⁰ Stewart, *An Ancient Oral Culture*, 34–8; Stewart, *A Traveller's Life*, 47–51, 99–100; Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom*, 29, 80; D. Williamson, *Tell me a Story for Christmas* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1987), 55–61; D. Williamson, *Jack and the Devil's Purse: Scottish Traveller Tales* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2011), 36–40.

⁴⁴¹ Williamson, *Tell me a Story for Christmas*, xv.

⁴⁴² Bill Steele, *pers. comm.*, April 6, 2018.

⁴⁴³ Dugald Semple Archive, currently in the care of Dr Steven Sutcliffe, University of Edinburgh.

donor's grandmother had 'found a silver spoon [...] and she took it to the t____s, who kept the shank of the spoon in payment and hammered a heart-shaped brooch out of the bowl'.⁴⁴⁴ This is also said to be how *Nacken* Alexander Stewart operated his more settled silversmithing business.⁴⁴⁵ Material of this sort had several lives, often made and used in a settled context, brought to *Nacken* as raw materials and payment. The material would then be made into something for the person who provided the silver, while the rest might be used to make a personal item or saved to make into something for sale.



Figure 18. Silver heart brooch made from the bowl of a spoon, Highland Folk Museum. © High Life Highland.

The flow of material through *Nacken* trade seems to be more fluid than in regular, settled transactions, which usually involve the direct exchange of money for goods or services. Often goods from *Nacken* were not exchanged for cash, but for foodstuffs, accommodation, rags, rabbit skins, fleeces, second-hand clothing, china, pewter or other sought-after goods, such as milk churns. The stuff of the settled population, from their outbuildings (used as accommodation) to their cast-offs (kept and worn and/or traded), then, became the backdrop to *Nacken* life, just as the craft production or goods traded by *Nacken* featured as the backdrop to settled life. Across these exchanges a complex web was built up, as money earned through successful horse trading was used to buy-up china that was transported north and exchanged for rags and rabbit skins. The rags were

⁴⁴⁴ Grant, *Highland Folk Ways*, 247.

⁴⁴⁵ Jackson, *English Goldsmiths and their Marks*, 504. This system was also used elsewhere, as discussed in M. J. Rowlands, 'The archaeological interpretation of prehistoric metalworking', *World Archaeology* 3, no. 2 (1971): 211.

bundled up and sold on (in the case of woollens, these re-joined the wool-manufacturing process, becoming carpet underlay or other saleable material). Rabbit skins, the sale of which made Duncan Williamson's father enough money to buy a set of bagpipes, ended up on coats and accessories during the first half of the twentieth century.⁴⁴⁶ Examples of clothing items with rabbit fur trimmings, evidence of more distant elements of these interactions, can be found in museum collections. Rabbit snares and other related items are also present in museum collections.⁴⁴⁷ Across all these exchanges material shifted back-and-forth between *Nacken* and non-*Nacken*. It was only when some of these items ended up in museums that they came to standstill. They would also become fixed as either settled or *Nacken* objects, rather than representing the to-ing and fro-ing of material between the two populations. Not only, as Matthews pointed out, do/did *Nacken* talk to and trade with non-*Nacken* every day, goods that *Nacken* interacted with can/could be found everywhere.⁴⁴⁸ China traded by *Nacken* could be found in kitchens across rural areas that were far from centres of manufacture, while rabbit fur from animals caught and skinned by *Nacken* trimmed outerwear. Luggies used to gather berries, or discarded paint tins, were repurposed into pearl jugs and used to fish for pearls, which were sold to jewellers and set into jewellery or made into buttons.

Nacken are also known to have traded in all manner of goods, purchased by them in towns and cities or through mail order catalogues, which they then hawked around doors. These items were selected for being 'hard to get in the local village'.⁴⁴⁹ Among these would be items of haberdashery, leather laces, combs, razor blades and postage stamps, overalls and other items of clothing, brushes, writing pads, alarm clocks and linoleum.⁴⁵⁰ Many of these item types exist in museums, although which examples might be directly connected to *Nacken* it would be difficult to know for sure. *Nacken* did not only buy things to sell, but also to use, including the canvas for their camps and tin to use in tinsmithing.

⁴⁴⁶ Campbell and Williamson, *A Traveller in Two Worlds* 1, 47–8.

⁴⁴⁷ The Highland Folk Museum has rabbit snares among its collection, although none are specifically associated with *Nacken* and they were not the only people to participate in the trade of rabbit skins. The Highland Folk Museum also has a sling, or catapult that belonged to *Nacken* that may have been used for this purpose (HFM:R 1). The Stewartry Museum in Kirkcudbright contains an interesting selection of items given by Lord David Stuart of Old Mochrum Castle. Lord Stuart (1911-1970) was the third son to the fourth Marquis of Bute. His donations, as well as including examples of *Nacken* crafts, such as a tin lantern with a horn window (5016.c), articles in horn made by Billy Marshall (5016.e) and what are referred to as 'Caird candle stands' (5016.a), featured items related to both poaching and to the prevention of poaching. Of the former there was a 'bracket for carrying rabbits' (5016.d) and it is possible, considering the other items in the same donation, that this was once used by *Nacken*. Information from the Stewartry Museum Entry Book, Stewartry Museum, Kirkcudbright.

⁴⁴⁸ Matthews, "Where are the Romanies?": 80.

⁴⁴⁹ Campbell and Williamson, *A Traveller in Two Worlds* 1, 32.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid; Neat, *The Summer Walkers*, 6; Stranraer Museum, *Galloway Travellers: Andrew McCormick's Tinkler-Gypsy Photographs* (Dumfries: Stranraer Museum, 2006), 23.

Less regular forms of exchange into the museum, as well as other types of interaction with artefacts outwith the museum, are also embodied in items identified in the collection of the Highland Folk Museum. In a letter to Prof. Lockhart of the University of Aberdeen, Davidson recounted that Tom Williamson—a *Nacken* who ran the local dump in Kingussie—had sold some larger items into the museum. These were the cart from the Newtonmore manse (HFM:VC 56), a milk cart (unknown number), and what he referred to as a ‘milk carty’ (presumably the small hand cart for the delivery of milk churns, HFM:VC 43). Two of these were sold to the museum for a very reasonable price.⁴⁵¹ The third item, the milk carty, ‘cost me [...] a swap of a spinning wheel from the original owner’. It is unclear whether, by the ‘original owner’, Davidson means the founder of the museum, or that the spinning wheel came from Tom Williamson’s dump and is now being given back to its original donor.⁴⁵² In either case, it is possible that what is referred to here is one of four wheels from spinning wheels collected from the dump by I. F. Grant (HFM:E 157–60).⁴⁵³

Items that illuminate other networks of contact and exchange, include items mended by *Nacken*, such as the teapots (HFM:1959.40 and HFM:SEB 32). HFM:SEB 32 is of particular interest, as this teapot belonged to the Duchess of Sutherland, demonstrating the social strata across which *Nacken* traded. Sheila Douglas noted ‘the ability to articulate in [...] “the right register”’, was a skill often found among *Nacken*, learned from the need to communicate with a wide range of groups and individuals.⁴⁵⁴ There are many examples of *Nacken* trading not only with country and towns folk, but with those higher up the social strata.⁴⁵⁵ Another object in a museum collection that testifies to this is the silver mailbox that belonged to John Brown, servant to Queen Victoria at Balmoral. This box is in the collection of the University of Aberdeen (ABDUA:17643) and is thought to have been made by *Nacken* from silver coins. It is said that John Brown presented Queen

⁴⁵¹ The very reasonable price is recounted in his letter to Lockhart, dated August 12, 1971, George ‘Taffy’ Davidson donor files, Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen Museum Collection. Additionally, the receipt for the purchase of the Manse Cart is in MS 3015, George ‘Taffy’ Davidson, antiquarian: papers, Special Collections, University of Aberdeen. It indicates that three pounds and ten shillings was paid for the cart on July 04, 1957.

⁴⁵² Letter to Lockhart, dated August 12, 1971, George ‘Taffy’ Davidson donor files, Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen Museum Collection.

⁴⁵³ Grant mentioned sourcing a spinning wheel from a dump in her writing, see Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 61.

⁴⁵⁴ Douglas, *The Last of the Tinsmiths*, 12.

⁴⁵⁵ W. Bannerman, *Aberdeen Worthies* (Aberdeen: Lewis Smith and Samuel MacLean, 1840), 107–8; Henderson, *Horn Spoons and Home Made Shoes*, 3; MacColl and Seeger, *Till Doomsday in the Afternoon*, 2; Neat, *The Summer Walkers*, 119–20, 134–6; Stewart, *An Ancient Oral Culture*, 10; Williamson, *The Horsieman*, 3–4. A silver watch associated with John Ewen is in the collection at NMS (H.NL 122).

Victoria with her mail at Balmoral in this box and that, after the death of Prince Albert, a *Nacken* smith added a black band in niello around the top of the box.⁴⁵⁶

Nacken are also known to have mend umbrellas, baskets, tinware, as well as clocks and gramophones.⁴⁵⁷ On a visit to Perth Museum and Art Gallery, I was allowed to search among the umbrellas in their collection for mended examples. None were identified, but there may be others in collections elsewhere, testimony to *Nacken mush-feekers* (umbrella menders). No mended baskets have been identified, either, but a set of tattie skulls made by *Nacken* can be found in the collections of NMS (W.1990.249). An example of a piece of copper metalware, adapted rather than mended (likely by a *Nacken* for a settled client), was identified by Cáit O'Neill McCullagh at Inverness Museum and Art Gallery in 2015 and displayed in the 'Transitions' exhibition (IMAG:00/90). This exhibition set traditional craft work of Highland Travellers alongside contemporary creative responses. The interpretation accompanying the adapted cruise read:

Tinkered Cruise and Traditional Iron Cruise

This traditional style oil lamp has had at least two interesting lives. It was once two little copper saucepans. The bowl, the handles and the spout are very finely crafted. The bracket and the lid at the back have been made separately; roughly cut. Having been used in a kitchen, the pans were thrown out to be re-fashioned.⁴⁵⁸

As well as objects that testify to making, mending and dealing, others relate to the seasonal agricultural labour that *Nacken* provided on farms. Grant collected a sickle (HFM:R 8) that was catalogued among the T____s' Possessions, which fits with accounts of *Nacken* carrying their own.⁴⁵⁹ But *Nacken* have also used and felt connected to more static items of farm machinery through their use of them as they provided seasonal labour. *Nacken* worked with threshing mills, examples of which can be found at the Highland Folk Museum and elsewhere.⁴⁶⁰ A group of *Nacken*, who spoke with me at the outset of my research, also remembered what they called scatterer diggers (also known as spinner diggers) at the tattie lifting.⁴⁶¹ These contrast with testimonies of settled people who took part in tattie lifting, which suggest that of the two types of potato lifting machinery, the

⁴⁵⁶ Notes dated April 18, 1970, George 'Taffy' Davidson Donor File, Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen Museum Collection.

⁴⁵⁷ Campbell and Williamson, *A Traveller in Two Worlds* 1, 44–5; Williamson, *The Horsieman*, 20; Leitch, *The Book of Sandy Stewart*, 78; Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom*, 108, 111–3, 115; Grant, *Highland Folk Ways*, 249; Leitch, *The Book of Sandy Stewart*, 78.

⁴⁵⁸ With thanks to Cáit O'Neill McCullagh for sharing the interpretation that accompanied this exhibition in Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, July 02–August 22, 2015.

⁴⁵⁹ R. Leitch, "Farming in Glenisla," *Tocher*, no. 54/55 (1998): 311.

⁴⁶⁰ Neat, *The Summer Walkers*, 163; Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom*, 112-3.

⁴⁶¹ MECOPP, *open discussion*, Pitlochry, September 13, 2017.

elevator was preferred and that the spinner diggers were avoided.⁴⁶² It may be that *Nacken* were willing to do the work that others refused and that this is why it was the scatterer digger that was recalled in particular.

Unseen connections between *Nacken* and non-*Nacken* can be found all around, and objects that flowed through these interactions can be found in many museum collections, although the exchanges that happened throughout their pre-museum existence are largely unknown and/or unacknowledged. Some items demonstrate exchange with shepherds and others with the wider settled population, while a further host of objects—too many to document in this thesis—could be said to show evidence of broader interactions and networks of exchange (including pearls, clothing trimmed with rabbit fur, items of haberdashery and other small wares). In a few cases, some items have been identified as having been mended or altered by *Nacken*, including the copper cruise at Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, the silver mailbox used by Queen Victoria in the collection of the University of Aberdeen, and the teapots at the Highland Folk Museum, referenced above. These objects are there, in part, because *Nacken* ‘traded and talked with non-*[Nacken]* every day’.⁴⁶³ Just as with *Nacken* themselves, however, ‘[t]heir presence is not [...] made explicit’.⁴⁶⁴

5.5 Direct contribution to museum collections

One of the things revealed by the museum archives that surprised me most is the extent to which, and variety of ways in which, *Nacken* have made direct contributions to museum collecting. Although it has happened in a range of ways, it seems in part to be based on a shared interest between museums and *Nacken*, represented in figure 19.

⁴⁶² H. Holmes, “Potato harvesting in the Lothians,” *Tocher*, no. 54/55 (1998): 274-275.

⁴⁶³ Matthews, “Where are the Romanies?,” 80.

⁴⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

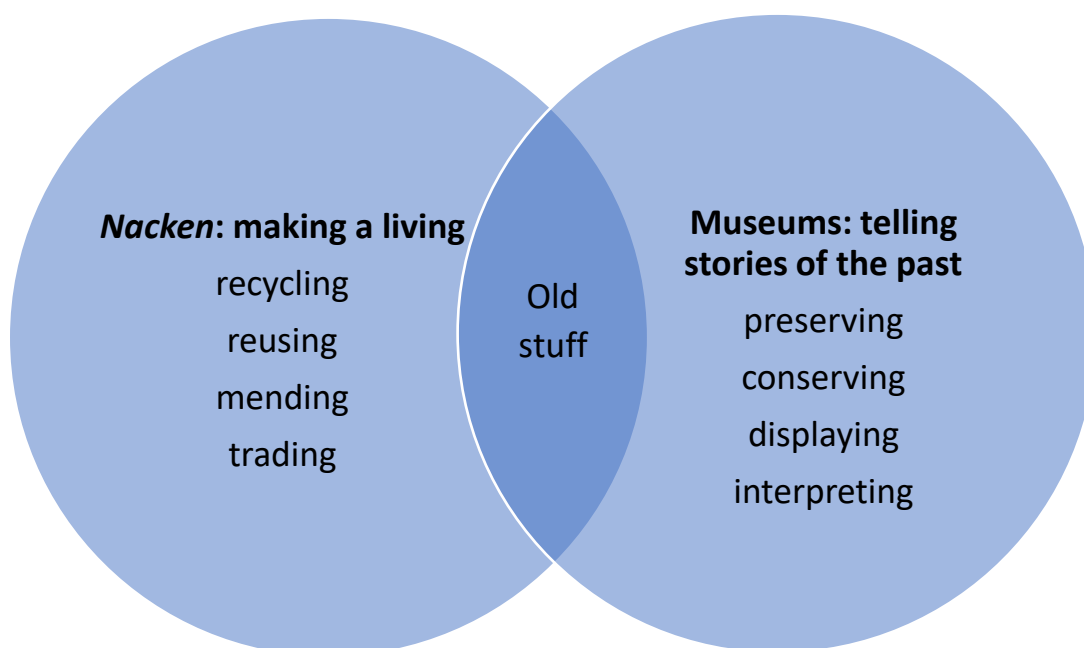


Figure 19. Venn diagram demonstrating a shared interest in old things between *Nacken* and museums.

Although differently motivated, museums and *Nacken* have a clear shared interest in old stuff. While museums are concerned with the preservation of objects and using these to tell stories of the past, *Nacken* traded in them to make a living and in some cases usefully repurposed them in the meantime. This trade in second-hand goods has taken place along a spectrum, from rag and scrap dealing to trade in second-hand clothing and antiques. Among the contributions that *Nacken* have made to museum collections are items now found in archaeological collections, *Nacken* material, and older items preserved through re-use or made available through dumps or second-hand trade. *Nacken* have also contributed items now in archaeological collections, natural history specimens and military objects. Examples of each of these types of contribution will be discussed below.

5.5.1 Archaeology

Nacken often found themselves in places where the general population did not venture. This was partly to regulate contact with settled populations and avoid unwanted attention from the authorities.⁴⁶⁵ It was also partly due to patterns of movement, choice of stopping places (or more recently reduced choice) and for occupational reasons. As Professor Lockhart noted, *Nacken* 'have a very remarkable knowledge of the countryside as well as

⁴⁶⁵ It is not hard to find accounts of encounters between *Nacken* and authorities, especially being moved on from stopping places, see Douglas, *Last of the Tinsmiths*, 97; Leitch, *The Book of Sandy Stewart*, xx, xxiv; Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom*, 94, 159–160; D. Williamson, *Fireside Tales of the Traveller Children* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2009), 5. Recent studies also indicate that Gypsy/Travellers, along with more visible ethnic minorities, are disproportionately targeted by the law, see BBC News, 'Police more likely to search non-whites, report says', July 04, 2017. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-40492818>

all the holes and corners unknown to the average person'.⁴⁶⁶ Pearl-fishing, which many *Nacken* participated in as one of several ways of making a living, often took them to out-of-the-way spots where others might not go, and casual labouring, which sometimes involved digging, also led to finds.⁴⁶⁷

Although not all finds made were traded into museums, *Nacken* saw museums as offering the opportunity for this sort of trade. The first example of trade of this sort that has been identified between *Nacken* and museums is a bronze spearhead, found by John Yates while pearl-fishing where the Forth meets the Teith.⁴⁶⁸ He sold this to the Stirling Smith Museum in 1908. Another find made by a member of the Yates family, while labouring at Castle Hill in Stirling, was a bronze bowl (ABDUA:18077). This did not immediately end up in a museum but was among the John Yates Collection, left to the University of Aberdeen Museum Collection in 1951. The early medieval Norrie's Law Hoard from Fife, now at NMS, also appears to have been exposed by a *Nacken* (X.FC 26–126 and 310; X.2015.288.1 and .3–.14; X.2015.289.1–.58).⁴⁶⁹

Further finds made by pearl-fishers can be found in Perth Museum and Art Gallery, where a Bronze-age sword and spearhead found by *Nacken* are displayed as part of the 'Story of Perth' exhibition. There are some examples of repurposed archaeological finds in museum collections too. There is at least one connected to *Nacken*, a prehistoric stone axe-head which was collected from a *Nacken* by Grant (HFM:D 182). It was said to have been used as a spoon mould by the grandfather of the object source. Other examples include axe heads turned into snuff mulls (e.g. ABDUA:19669, from the University of Aberdeen Museum Collection), although I have not found evidence of a *Nacken* connection in this case.

Among the items that were offered to a museum, but turned down, ending up instead with an antique dealer, were Sandy Stewart's Roman coin find. According to his account, he

⁴⁶⁶ Letter from Prof. Lockhart to George 'Taffy' Davidson dated August 18, 1972, George 'Taffy' Davidson Donor Files, Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen Museum Collection.

⁴⁶⁷ *Nacken* were sometimes charged with trespassing while carrying out pearl-fishing and other activities, see Anon., "Sheriff Johnstone Raises Important Questions," *Courier*, January 13, 1911. In an example similar to that in which ancient objects have been found, "Finding of ancient burial place a Stennes," in *Orcadian*, August 14, 1915, 4, reports that Isaac Newlands—father of three brothers killed while serving in the first world war—uncovered a Neolithic cist while working as a roadman in Orkney.

⁴⁶⁸ I am grateful to David Chappell, great-grandson of John Yates, who not only alerted me to the presence of the John Yates Collection at the University of Aberdeen Museum Collection but provided information regarding objects connected with Yates that are in other museum collections, including this spearhead.

⁴⁶⁹ The hoard was said to have been found by a hawker, see D. Wilson, *The Archaeology and Prehistoric Annals of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Sutherland and Know, 1851), 512. It is stated elsewhere that the man who found it was 'digging sand' at Norrie's Law, see J. M. Leighton, *History of the County of Fife*, vol. 3 (Glasgow: Joseph Swan, 1840), 134.

tried to sell them to the museum first and only when they told him they were unable to buy them did he sell them elsewhere.⁴⁷⁰ No date is given for this find.

5.5.2 Second-hand dealing and preservation

Nacken reuse of, valuing of, and trade in second-hand material has also led to the preservation of materials that would otherwise have been lost to museum collections. An early example of a set of items preserved in this way is the Commun Box and Touch Plates of the Edinburgh Pewterers, now in the collections of the National Museums Scotland (H.NT 15, H.MET 46 and H.MET 47). These items came to the museum in 1871, accompanied by a note, dated 1843, stating that the box and contents ‘were preserved in a gipsy [*sic*] family till within the last few years’ (figure 20).⁴⁷¹

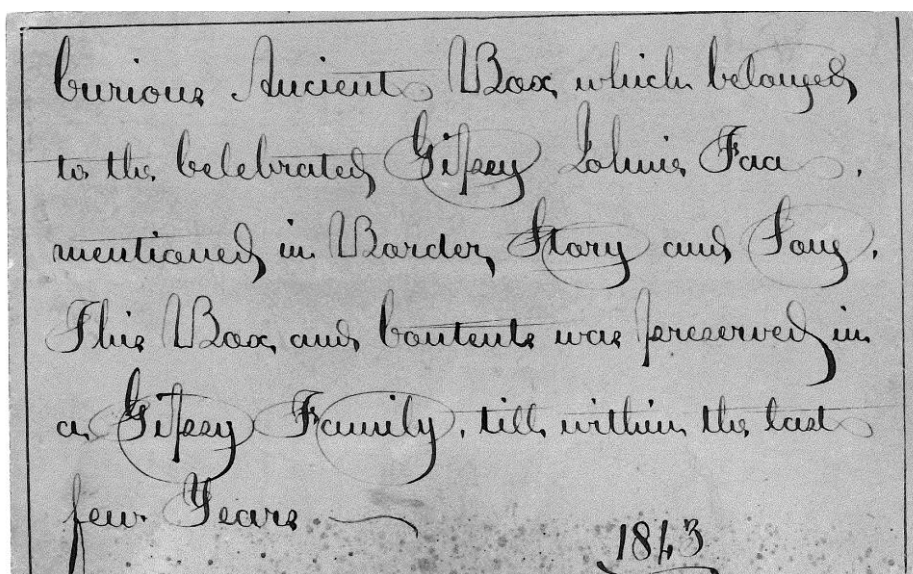


Figure 20. The note that accompanied the commun box and touch plates when they were given to the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland. © National Museums Scotland.

The text of Noble’s ‘T___ Encampment’ display referred to *Nacken* dealing in scrap and second-hand items. These occupations, however, were not visibly represented within the display. *Nacken* second-hand dealers have, however, provided a source of old objects, particularly to folk museums. As Grant recounted,

[b]y the riverside [at Perth] there were some dealers in discarded objects [...] I bought several things from them [...] I owe my acquaintance with the yard of the “scrappy” at Scone to Lady Maitland [...] She had an exhaustive knowledge of all the “scrappies” and shops of the rag and bone variety in the south east and she was most generous in passing on to me the names of likely dealers.⁴⁷²

⁴⁷⁰ Leitch, *The Book of Sandy Stewart*, 79–80.

⁴⁷¹ J. A. Smith, “Note on the ‘supposed charter chest of Johnny Faa’ and its contents—probably the official box and plates, with trade marks of the Incorporation of Pewterers of Edinburgh,” *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* 9 (1870–2), 264.

⁴⁷² Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 106–7.

Among those dealers were *Nacken*, including Riley, of Moulin, Yates, of Stirling (who Grant does not appear to have known was a *Nacken*), and Williamson, of Kingussie. Stewart, of Scone, may also have been a *Nacken* dealer.

Newspaper clippings in the Scottish Life Archive at National Museums Scotland, attest to the second-hand dealing carried out by *Nacken*. This, from the *Dundee Courier*, September 26, 1973, is a memory shared by a Mrs E. Hunter of Dollar, which relates to Laurencekirk in the early twentieth century:

Pigger Hogg came with a gaily painted blue cart drawn by a white, very fat sheltie [...] He collected rags, bones, bottles and rabbit skins. He gave in payment dishes from his well-stocked cart, or money if one wished [...] He had a key which opened a special drawer. This contained all sorts of necklaces, bangles and other glittering ornaments—dear to the hearts of young school lassies.⁴⁷³

George ‘Taffy’ Davidson mentioned buying from a travelling scrap man in the later 1960s, while Grant collected from Riley, Williamson and other scrap dealers who maintained dumps or yards.

Davidson also traded with a spectrum of *Nacken* second-hand dealers, from the *Nacken* who one day brought a cast iron pot and chains, rescued from an abandoned building (and for which he asked no payment), to Yates and Son, high-end antique dealers in Stirling.⁴⁷⁴ In a letter of 1971 Davidson documented the importance of the Williamsons, another *Nacken* family, to the museum, particularly providing a source of example of wheeled vehicles, including a manse cart (HFM:VC 56); milk cart (HFM:VC 43) and milk delivery cart.⁴⁷⁵

When taken alongside his catalogue, ‘The Description of Things in Room I’ and other correspondence in the Donor Files at the University of Aberdeen, this letter also evidences the importance of *Nacken* to Davidson’s collecting practice. Table 4 shows items collected by Davidson from *Nacken* dealers as recorded in his catalogue, correspondence and in a handwritten receipt. It is possible that other items collected by Davidson may also have come from *Nacken* sources.

Most of the items brought to the museum by Tom Williamson seem to have been gathered in his capacity as a scrap-dealer and come from across the local area: Drumguish, Laggan, Gynack smiddy, Feshie Bridge. Another regular contributor to the collection in Davidson’s time was John Reid of Aberdeen. He appears to have visited the museum

⁴⁷³ Scottish Life Archive, National Museums Scotland, File 119.1.

⁴⁷⁴ Davidson described his encounter with the (anonymous) *Nacken* who donated the cast iron pot and chains in a letter to Prof. Lockhart, dated September 29, 1971, in George ‘Taffy’ Davidson Donor Files, Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen Museum Collection.

⁴⁷⁵ Letter from Davidson to Lockhart, dated August 12 1971, in George ‘Taffy’ Davidson Donor Files, Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen Museum Collection.

almost annually between 1958 and 1963, sometimes visiting twice in the year. In 1962 he may have visited with Tom Williamson, as the catalogue runs: 1962.8–9 (donated by Williamson), 1962.10–1 (donated by Reid), and 1962.12 (donated by Williamson). The entries are undated beyond the year, but they appear in the order in which they came into the museum. It may be that Reid was also a *Nacken* trader.⁴⁷⁶ The contributions of Williamson and Reid to the Highland Folk Museum collections are in table 4, page 121.

5.5.3 Pearl-fishing and natural history specimens

Another aspect of museums that has benefited from direct *Nacken* contributions has been natural history collections. Although these interactions are not evidence of a shared interest in things from the past, they may have come about through contacts built up through the trading of second-hand goods with museums. Perth Museum, for instance, has a large collection of Tay mussel shells and freshwater pearls, some of which were sourced through *Nacken*, figures 21 and 22. Glasgow Museums' Natural History department also maintained a relationship with pearl-fishers, particularly Bill Abernethy and Neil McCormick, for the purpose of gathering mussel shells. This also allowed the museum to collect items related to the social history of pearl-fishing, including a jug, a gansey and set of waders, mussel collecting bag and pearl stick. Although these items were until recently prominently displayed in the Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum (Glasgow), the connection between *Nacken* and pearl-fishing was almost entirely absent from the accompanying interpretation. 'The Last Pearl Fishers in Scotland' was in the Cultural Survival Gallery of the Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery, from 2006 until a recent redisplay of the gallery. A single mention of the involvement of 'poor people and travellers [*sic*]' in pearl-fishing was made in the display, away from the main interpretation. Bill Abernethy is not, as far as I know, a *Nacken*, however, Neil McCormick has married into a *Nacken* family. His wife Mary was pictured within the display. The significance of *Nacken* to pearl-fishing and the significance of pearl-fishing to *Nacken* is clear from writing on the subject.⁴⁷⁷ National Museums Scotland also had a relationship with Abernethy and through him gathered a pearl jug, pearl stick and a ball of string used to anchor a pearl-fishing boat.

⁴⁷⁶ Both Williamson and Reid are names frequently found among *Nacken* and Duncan Williamson recounts friendships between his family and Reids, see Williamson, *The Horsieman*, 6, 92.

⁴⁷⁷ Neat, *The Summer Walkers*; MacLean, "The Pearl Fishers," 171–8; Goodwin, *The River and the Road*.



Figures 21 and 22. Mussel shells and pearls in the collection of Perth Museum and Art Gallery. © Rhona Ramsay

5.5.4 Military items

An aspect of *Nacken* history that is often unseen from the outside is the military and wartime contributions made by *Nacken*. *Nacken* have a long history of fighting for their country,⁴⁷⁸ while Jess Smith believes that *Nacken* played a significant role in the founding of the Black Watch.⁴⁷⁹ Many *Nacken* memoirs recount the service of family members or personal contributions of both *Nacken* men and women⁴⁸⁰ and an incomplete census of *Nacken* taken during the First World War, indicates that a similar proportion of *Nacken* signed up for military service as in the general population.⁴⁸¹ At least three generations of Stewarts in the north east of Scotland, gave military service to the Gordon Highlanders, also providing skill in piping.⁴⁸² Many others have also been champion pipers in military contexts, including John Stewart who was in the Atholl Highlanders.⁴⁸³

A small number of military items given to museums by *Nacken* have been identified, testifying to this otherwise unseen contribution. Elizabeth Stewart, in her memoir of the Fetterangus Stewarts, recounts that her Aunt Lucy gave the medals belonging to Lucy's

⁴⁷⁸ McCormick, *The Tinkler-Gypsies*, 10–11.

⁴⁷⁹ Smith, *Way of the Wanderers*, 118–26.

⁴⁸⁰ Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom*, unnumbered central pages; Leitch, *The Book of Sandy Stewart*, 1; Williamson, *The Hosieman*, 2; Porter and Gower, *Jeannie Robertson*, 5–8; Neat, *The Summer Walkers*, 6, 13, 29–30, 51–2, 116, 125, 149, 210; Stewart, *Queen Among the Heather*, 9–10; Campbell and Williamson, *A Traveller in Two Worlds* 1, 17; Stewart, *A Traveller's Life*, 17–8, 66–7; Smith, *Way of the Wanderers*, 127, 133–5; Stewart, *Up Yon Wide and Lonely Glen*, 13, 26; Lloyd and Ross, *Moving Minds*, 73; Carr and Schöne, *From the Horse's Mouth*, 142; McPhee, *Heroes...or Raj Hantle*, 6–11.

⁴⁸¹ *Report of the Departmental Committee on Tinkers in Scotland*, 1918: 9. See also Smith, *Way of the Wanderers*, 128.

⁴⁸² J. Grant and B.G. Seton, *The Pipes of War: a record of the achievements of pipers of Scottish and overseas regiments during the war, 1914-18* (Glasgow: Maclehose, Jackson and Co., 1920), 227; Stewart, *Up Yon Wide and Lonely Glen*, 13, 24–6.

⁴⁸³ Lloyd and Ross, *Moving Minds*, 118–9.

uncle, Robert (Robin) Stewart, to the Gordon Highlanders Museum (figure 23).⁴⁸⁴ Two other items possibly linked to *Nacken* military service were given to the Highland Folk Museum by Tom Williamson in 1960. These were a Seaforth Highlanders kilt (HFM:1960.28, missing) and a Military Royal Stewart piper's plaid kilt (HFM:1960.29, missing), both issued in 1914. The small number of items identified here do not fully reflect the involvement of *Nacken* men and women in military service. There may be more yet to discover, but there is also evidence that *Nacken* kept military uniforms and other war memorabilia within their families.⁴⁸⁵

The motivation that Elizabeth Stewart ascribes to her Aunt Lucy for depositing the medals in the museum was for safe keeping. It may also have been from a pride in the recognition of her Uncle Robin's 'piping [... and] gallantry'.⁴⁸⁶ A pride in military involvement and achievements was observed in Robin's father whose 'chest [was] covered with gold and silver medals [... and his] chest expand[ed ...] when he [told] you that he [had] no less than five sons, all pipers, either in his country's service or in the Reserve'.⁴⁸⁷ This pride may have formed part of the motivation behind the donations by Lucy Stewart and Tom Williamson. Whatever the motivation, however, these objects given to museums make visible an aspect of *Nacken* history that is largely unseen.

⁴⁸⁴ Stewart, *Up Yon Wide and Lonely Glen*, 13.

⁴⁸⁵ For example, Robert Stewart is pictured in his 'full military regalia,' see Neat, *Summer Walkers*, 179 and a dead man's penny is among the objects featured in MECOPP's 'Moving Minds' exhibition, Lloyd and Ross, *Moving Minds*, 32–3.

⁴⁸⁶ Stewart, *Up Yon Wide and Lonely Glen*, 13.

⁴⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 25.



Figure 23. The medals of R. Stewart in the collections of the Gordon Highlanders Museum (GG1469.1–6). © The Gordon Highlanders Museum.

5.5.5 *Nacken* material

Nacken also gave items directly related to their own lives and culture to the museum. Among them were tools, musical instruments, camp items and craft items. That they did so raises several questions. Were these sold to museums because they were another door to trade at? Was there a recognition that these things would be cared for in a museum and *Nacken* culture represented? Were the examples given representative, or were they things that were surplus to requirement, being broken or of poor design, and available for sale, or another reuse? What was the balance of power in deciding what was bought from *Nacken* by museums?

5.5.5.1 Tools

The earliest items that I have found to come into a museum collection in Scotland directly from *Nacken* were tools. Given to the Dick Institute in Kilmarnock in 1902, just a year after it opened, was a set of tools and hornware associated with the Kilmaurs horn-works Marshalls, who manufactured hornware in this village just outside Kilmarnock, East Ayrshire, (RI-DI-00 30510-30528).⁴⁸⁸ These were given at a time when *Nacken chaetrie*

⁴⁸⁸ This settled hornworks operated in a thatched building, which can be seen in a photograph in the collection of the Kilmaurs Library, of David Marshall, pictured standing at its door (RI-KM-0000442).

was either unseen or viewed as curiosities within museum collections (see Chapter 4). Over a third of a century prior to the shift that Grant initiated with a spoon mould, which took *Nacken* from being an invisible presence at the Highland Folk Museum—represented only through their craft products—to being presented as craftspeople, this statement had been made by a *Nacken* who gave the Kilmaurs hornworking tools to the Dick Institute.

The Kilmaurs hornworks, which had been run by Robert ‘Rab’ Marshall (1819-1887) and David ‘Davock’ Marshall (1823-1891), descendants of Billy Marshall. A fire at the museum around 1909 led to the loss of the more vulnerable artefacts in this donation, as well as the associated entry information. From the available evidence, however, it is likely that Malcolm Marshall (b.1834), a brother of the Kilmaurs Marshalls, was the source of these artefacts. He was an informant of local historian, Duncan McNaught, who published a history of Kilmaurs in 1912. In it was information about the Marshall’s factory, and further information given to McNaught by Malcolm Marshall was included in Andrew McCormick’s *The Tinkler-Gypsies*.⁴⁸⁹ Among the information that came from Malcolm Marshall was some that related to pieces in the museum collection: ‘Malcolm considers the soup-divider (now in the Dick Institute) made by Rab [...] to be unique and a splendid specimen of the spoon-maker’s art’.⁴⁹⁰

These items (figure 2) present a marked difference in type of object associated with *Nacken* in museum collections at the time. These neither present *Nacken* as curiosities, nor merely through their craft products made for the settled community. These objects show *Nacken* to have been craftspeople and business owners, who worked as part of a local community. They also contrast with later collections gathered by folk collectors, as they present an urban aspect of *Nacken* lives.

Tools and equipment associated with *Nacken* occupations and sourced from *Nacken* have featured in displays over a long period at the Highland Folk Museum, beginning with Grant’s Craft section first featured at Laggan in 1939 and repeated at Kingussie. Davidson asked for some mussel shells from *Nacken* contacts to enhance a display on pearl-fishing, which included the jug and stick collected by Grant. At least a third of Noble’s ‘T_____ Encampment’ display was made up of artefacts sourced directly from *Nacken*, mainly tools associated with horn and tinworking, pearl-fishing and animal hunting.

<http://www.futuremuseum.co.uk/collections/life-work/key-industries/horn-work/horn-work/david-marshall-manufacturer-of-horn-goods.aspx>.

⁴⁸⁹ McNaught, *Kilmaurs Parish and Burgh*, 270–2; McCormick, *The Tinkler-Gypsies*, 141–7 (the note acknowledging the source of information can be found on page 141).

⁴⁹⁰ McCormick, *The Tinkler-Gypsies*, 145. The divider referred to here is no longer extant, as it—along with the wooden parts of each set of spoon-moulds (which were unusually a combination of cast iron and wood), the ladle-mould, the shoe-horn mould, and examples of hornwork—was lost in the museum fire. A photo of the divider among a selection of the horn tools appears at *Ibid*, 146.

Grant suggested that one of the reasons that it was possible to collect these things was their obsolescence, as she noted of horn-spoon moulds, '[t]he t_____s were also the makers of horn spoons. Now that they have given up this craft, it is possible to acquire the spoon moulds that they used'.⁴⁹¹

The available evidence suggests, however, that this is a limited view of why *Nacken* might have given these items to museums. Information provided with the Kilmaurs tools suggests a pride in the work that was done.⁴⁹² Duncan Williamson recounted, that when his father found there was no longer a market for tinware, he 'buried all his tinsmithing tools [...] He wouldn't show us where he'd buried them, because he felt they were too precious to be lost or destroyed'.⁴⁹³ This suggests a similar value for these signifiers of an occupation, as does the response made by Alfred Yates to a request for mussel shells for a display at the Highland Folk Museum. Davidson recounted that,

I stipulated for "brock" or rough poor examples as I did not wish covetousness to enter into the exhibit but the fishers [the Yates] were disappointed as they'd got some fine ones and wanted to have a fine representation of their trade.⁴⁹⁴

It may have been a pride in these occupations that led *Nacken* to bring their children to see examples of the tools and associated craft products at the Highland Folk Museum, as recorded by Grant.⁴⁹⁵

Tools and equipment associated with *Nacken* may have been given to the museum in order that they would not be lost or destroyed, and to give 'a fine representation of their trade'.⁴⁹⁶ This may not always have been the case, however. For example, Essie Stewart thought that the pearl-fishing jug (HFM:R 4) was of poor design.⁴⁹⁷ According to Essie Stewart, without lead around its base it would have been too light to be of much use.⁴⁹⁸ It is also not tapered in a way that would help to block out the light, although this does not seem to be a prerequisite for all design types.⁴⁹⁹ Care must be taken in what we learn

⁴⁹¹ Grant, *Highland Folk Ways*, 248.

⁴⁹² McCormick, *The Tinkler-Gypsies*, 145.

⁴⁹³ Williamson, *The Horsieman*, 19.

⁴⁹⁴ George 'Taffy' Davidson, "A description of the things in Room I: Highland Folk Museum, 1962," 5, George 'Taffy' Davidson Donor Files, Marischal Museum.

⁴⁹⁵ Grant, *Highland Folk Ways*, 248; Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh*, 128, 172.

⁴⁹⁶ George 'Taffy' Davidson, "A description of the things in Room I: Highland Folk Museum, 1962," 5, George 'Taffy' Davidson Donor Files, Marischal Museum.

⁴⁹⁷ Essie Stewart has first-hand knowledge of pearl-fishing and associated equipment, having fished for pearls for many years with her husband, Eddie Davies.

⁴⁹⁸ Essie Stewart, *interview*, October 15, 2018.

⁴⁹⁹ *Nacken* use a variety of styles and materials in the making of pearl-fishing viewers, for example, Eddie Davies—who was married to Essie Stewart—used a shallow box with a glass base, which had entirely upright sides, for an image see Neat, *The Summer Walkers*, 28 and while some *Nacken* repurposed berry luggies (pails) and four pint enamel milk jugs that were naturally tapered, others used the "'National" baby milk tins... [and] really impoverished fishers use a pane of glass held on the surface', Goodwin, *The River and the Road*, 109. For an illustration of tapered pearl joogs made from luggies and tin jugs, see *Ibid*, 39.

from these objects. In the case of the pearl jug, while pearl-fishing was the main occupation of Eddie Davies and a few others, for many *Nacken* it was done to supplement income from other crafts and seasonal work. As such the quality of this jug may reflect the place of pearl-fishing in the life of its owner. This jug may have been only in occasional use and easily replaceable, so perhaps was an obvious choice to be sold to the museum. Other items, however, suggest a pride in the history associated with the object and hint at a desire for these objects to be cared for and the histories shared.

5.5.5.2 Musical Instruments

Music and song continue to be important aspects of *Nacken* culture. A range of instruments have been popular amongst *Nacken* over a long period, from harps to fiddles, practice chanters to bagpipes, accordions to melodeons, mouth organs to paper and comb, and from jaw harps to tin whistles and the spoons.⁵⁰⁰ Instruments, including bagpipes, practice chanters and melodeons, appear to have circulated among *Nacken* and between *Nacken* and the wider population, not unlike the songs and tunes played on them. In the case of these objects, museums may have been considered another link in these networks of exchange and flow. For example, the Macmillans do not appear to have understood the permanence of selling the pipes to the museum and Davidson recounted that they wanted to borrow them back.⁵⁰¹ Not catalogued by Davidson, the Macmillan bagpipes (figure 24) were later separated into two parts and catalogued as being unrelated to each other. The two different tartans (one on the bag and one tied to the drones), may have made them—from a settled point-of-view—appear to not belong with each other. As Davidson explained in his unpublished guide to the museum, however, the ‘drones were stayed by a remnant of [...] Stewart [tartan] and the bag is swathed in [...] Gordon tartan [...] so long as it was tartan and it was bright’.⁵⁰² Davidson also referred to these pipes as ‘cobbled and tinkered’, suggesting that they had been made from more than one set of pipes, further evidence of *Nacken* reuse and recycling.⁵⁰³ It may have

⁵⁰⁰ References to the playing of harps, mainly by Welsh Gypsies, but present sometimes in Scotland, see McCormick, *The Tinkler-Gypsies*, 222-7. Mentions of the fiddle and tinwhistle appear in Stewart, *Up Yon Wide and Lonely Glen*, 6, 229. Peter Brown, who was tried alongside James MacPherson for being an Egyptian, was a viol player, see Stuart, *Miscellany of the Spalding Club* 3, 183-4. Stanley Robertson lists chanter, fiddle, mouthorgan, Jew’s harp and paper and comb as instruments played by kenchin (young Travellers), see Robertson, *Reek Roon a Camp Fire*, 173. Mouth organs, Jew’s harps, bagpipes and practice chanters are also mentioned by Duncan Williamson, see Campbell and Williamson, *A Traveller in Two Worlds* 1, 38, 43–4, 47–8. Bagpipes are ubiquitous in the writings of and about *Nacken* and are too many to list here, but the mentions in Betsy Whyte’s memoir demonstrate the importance of the pipes among *Nacken*, see Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom*, 13, 176.

⁵⁰¹ George ‘Taffy’ Davidson, “A description of the things in Room I: Highland Folk Museum, 1962,” 8, George ‘Taffy’ Davidson Donor Files, Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen Museum Collection.

⁵⁰² Ibid.

⁵⁰³ George ‘Taffy’ Davidson, “A description of the things in Room I: Highland Folk Museum, 1962,” 8, George ‘Taffy’ Davidson Donor Files, Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen Museum Collection.

been this cobbled-together-ness, as much as the non-matching tartans, that led this set to being separated.⁵⁰⁴



Figure 24. Macmillan bagpipes, Highland Folk Museum. © Rhona Ramsay.

There is also evidence of *Nacken* making musical instruments in the collections of the Highland Folk Museum. One of the items collected by Grant was a handmade drone hollowed out by burning. Various *Nacken* accounts testify to the making of practice chanter, bagpipes or other parts of pipes. Willie McPhee recounted making practice chanter out of *benwood* (elder), Sandy Stewart recalled that a man, named Yocht, made drones for bagpipes, Leitch listed a shortened butter knife used to make reeds (for pipes) among Sandy Stewart's belongings and Sheila Stewart's son, Ian MacGregor, makes bagpipes.⁵⁰⁵

In the case of musical instruments, as with other object-types, there is a danger in looking at collections without a wider context and considering what is in collections as being representative. For example, the low numbers of instruments associated with *Nacken* in museum collections is likely to be indicative of their value, rather than of low numbers of these instruments in *Nacken* lives. Bagpipes are one of the objects that were saved from burning after the death of a family member and passed down within families.⁵⁰⁶ The instruments given by *Nacken* to museums identified as part of this research were all

⁵⁰⁴ With thanks to Hugh Cheape for insights confirming that this set of pipes is made up of 2 or 3 sets.

⁵⁰⁵ Douglas, *Last of the Tinsmiths*, 95; Leitch, *The Book of Sandy Stewart*, 37, 99; Stewart, *A Traveller's Life*, 171. *Benwood* is likely to be elder, also used by *Nacken* to make wooden flowers. The wood's properties, particularly their soft centre, make this wood suited to both chanter- and flower-making. Elder is also called *bullwood* in the Cant.

⁵⁰⁶ Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom*, 176.

chanters, bagpipes, or parts of these, and all were given to the Highland Folk Museum. This does not mean, however, that these were the only instruments played or valued, nor that the Highlands was the only place where these were present or valued.

5.5.5.3 Camp life

Nacken also gave items related to their camp—or home—life to museums. Some items of camp life seem to have been multifunctional. For example, the *snottum*, had uses beyond its primary purpose of holding a pot over the fire.⁵⁰⁷ Other uses included for the tethering of a horse, as a defensive weapon and for making tent holes in the ground. Like the tools (see 5.5.5.1), these were items that were treasured for their usefulness.⁵⁰⁸ The symbolic and practical value of these items make these, at first sight, unexpected items to find to have been given by *Nacken* into a museum. It would seem, however, that *Nacken* made their own pot hooks, which would have meant that although valued and useful they were replaceable.⁵⁰⁹ Here it is not the thing, but what it does that is useful. And if it is easily replaceable, and the usefulness replicated, the thing itself can be discarded. Michael Stewart noted similar attitudes among Hungarian Gypsies (Roma), who he observed that ‘in everyday life objects are passed on to others’.⁵¹⁰

The *chitties* (tripod for holding a pot over the fire) collected by Grant for the Highland Folk Museum were recorded as being bought at the door, likely from *Nacken* hawking wares around Kingussie. Again, their sale might at first sight be unexpected, but Essie Stewart has pointed out that the chain on the example at the museum is too short to be useful.⁵¹¹ Were these then set aside for mending or recycling? Did the offer to purchase them provide an opportune alternative way to reuse them? The expert eye brought to these and other objects by those within *Nacken* culture is invaluable. Without it, there is much that remains unseen.

Many of the items that would have been used alongside the camp hooks and tripods were items that would have been common to both settled and *Nacken* life. The association between these items and *Nacken* life tends to go unseen within museum collections. This is largely down to provenance. *Nacken* examples of these items, particularly pans—which David Donaldson describes as a key object of continuity—are still passed down within families.⁵¹² *Nacken* examples would, therefore—like other examples of valued material

⁵⁰⁷ Williamson, *The Horsieman*, figure 6.

⁵⁰⁸ Some *Nacken* have adopted the *snottum* as a *Nacken* symbol—as an object significant to their culture in Scotland—using it like the chakra added to the Roma flag in 1971, which symbolises both the Indian origin of Roma, as well as the wheels of the vardo.

⁵⁰⁹ Robertson, *Reek Roon a Campfire*, ix.

⁵¹⁰ Stewart, “Remembering without commemoration”: 566.

⁵¹¹ Essie Stewart, *interview*, October 15, 2018.

⁵¹² David Donaldson, *interview*, October 17, 2018.

discussed earlier—be unlikely to make their way into museums. Examples from settled contexts do appear in museum collections and connections are made and felt by *Nacken*. For example, the pan selected by members of the Gypsy/Traveller Youth Assembly for the display at Perth Museum and Art Gallery (discussed later in this chapter) was an item without *Nacken* connections according to the museum inventory. The Highland Folk Museum and many other museums have examples of items that—although associated by provenance and context with non-*Nacken*—would be considered *Nacken chaetrie* by *Nacken*. It is not the thing itself that is of importance, but what it does and the wider associations of the object’s biography. In the case of the pan the wider associations are of family, food and fireside, as well as connections with the past.

5.5.5.4 Crafted items

Many items crafted by *Nacken* are present in museums, mainly in folk collections. Although many have been sourced from the settled population, where many of these craft items were traded into, *Nacken* have also given examples of their craft production to museums. It is possible that Billy Marshall had an awareness that the mug he made for the Earl of Selkirk in 1788 was to be part of a collection, as it includes an unusual amount of information about him, the maker.⁵¹³ Marshall would have been aware of his fame as an important member of his own, as well as of the wider local community.⁵¹⁴

As mentioned earlier, examples of the hornwork produced by Marshalls of Kilmaurs were among the items deposited at the Dick Institute in 1902. Unfortunately, being made of horn, these were lost in the fire at the museum in 1909. From the information shared by Malcolm Marshall, who was the likely donor of these items (possibly via local historian and schoolteacher, Duncan McNaught), it would appear that pride in the quality of these items seems to have been part of his motivation in giving them to the museum. This pride in the work of *Nacken* was reflected in the comments that Malcolm made to McNaught, regarding the ram’s horn ladle given to the Dick Institute, which he described as ‘a splendid specimen of the spoon-maker’s art’.⁵¹⁵ Pride in examples of the craft output of hornworkers among the Marshalls can also be seen in the collecting of antique hornware by David Marshall. No information is known about the collection, other than that he sold

⁵¹³ There are many examples of hornware, such as powder-horns and quaichs, that are inscribed with dates and with the initials of owners, or of those whose betrothal is commemorated. Although it is not unknown for makers to have signed pieces—see Caldwell, “Scottish powder-horns”: 22—it is unusual for so much information about the maker to feature as in this case where Billy Marshall’s initials and age were included.

⁵¹⁴ Billy Marshall was not only a King of the Gypsies but also respected and famed in the wider community. He led the levellers in southern Scotland—a combined force of ‘farmers, crofters, cottars, and Gypsies’: McCormick, *The Tinkler-Gypsies*, 49–56, and when he died in 1792 he was buried by the Hammermen of Kirkcudbright, see Wood, *Scottish Pewter-ware and Pewterers*, 5.

⁵¹⁵ McCormick, *The Tinkler-Gypsies*, 145.

two items from it in 1888 to an artist, David Mackay.⁵¹⁶ These were a 17th century powder-horn and an 18th century horn bugle. Marshall had collected these from local sources (Robert Howie of Lochgoin and David Gemmell of Kilwinning) and had owned at least one of these since the 1840s. It would seem likely that these were collected as examples of a craft in which he took pride. Horn spoon making, and possibly other aspects of horncraft, was for a long time, exclusively carried out by *Nacken*.⁵¹⁷ It may then, be that he was not only interested in and proud of those sharing his trade, but proud of a specifically *Nacken* occupation.

Pride in other *Nacken* crafts would also appear to be evident in items given to museums by *Nacken*. Among John Yates collection donated to the University of Aberdeen there are several items linked to *Nacken* craft making and skills. Two items are specifically listed as *Nacken*-made and are examined here. One was a pan, made from silver coins (ABDUA:14934, missing) and the other a brass pipe case (ABDUA:15873, figure 25). These seem likely to have been collected by Yates as ‘a fine representation of their trade’, as was the case with the mussel shells given by Alfred Yates to the Highland Folk Museum. The pan may have been made for trade into the settled population and the pipe-case for personal use by a *Nacken*. This suggestion is based on the materials that these items are made from—silver and brass. It is possible that *Nacken* may have favoured different materials for use in personal objects, than they used in the making of items for the settled population. As Betsy Whyte tells us, ‘Travellers love gold rings, earrings and brooches’.⁵¹⁸ The pipe-case, being brass, has the appearance of gold and may have been for *Nacken* use as well as manufacture. It would have been used for the safe transportation of a clay pipe, which are known to have been popular among *Nacken*.⁵¹⁹ The pan, however, was silver, which tends to have been the colour of most metalware sold by *Nacken* into settled homes (not only silver jewellery but also tinware with a high silver shine). The silver pan is missing from the collection, as it was taken home by Davidson and displayed on his mantelpiece.⁵²⁰ Davidson also at one time took home John Brown’s silver mailbox (made by *Nacken*) and is said to have carried around with him a silver quaich made by a *Nacken*. Although two of these items—the pan and the quaich—are not in the museum collection, that Davidson personally valued and displayed or showed off them off suggests that they were attractive pieces.

⁵¹⁶ Anon., “Art, artists and antiquities at Kilmaurs,” *The Ardrossan and Saltcoats Herald*, July 06, 1888, 8.

⁵¹⁷ Simson, *A History of the Gipsies*, 350.

⁵¹⁸ Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom*, 152. Further references to gold items can be found in *Ibid*, 41, 51, 96 and 104, as well as in Lloyd and Ross, *Moving Minds*, 39 and 45.

⁵¹⁹ Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom*, 5.

⁵²⁰ Letter to Mr Skinner (unsigned) dated January 05, 1977, George ‘Taffy’ Davidson Donor Files, Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen Museum Collection.

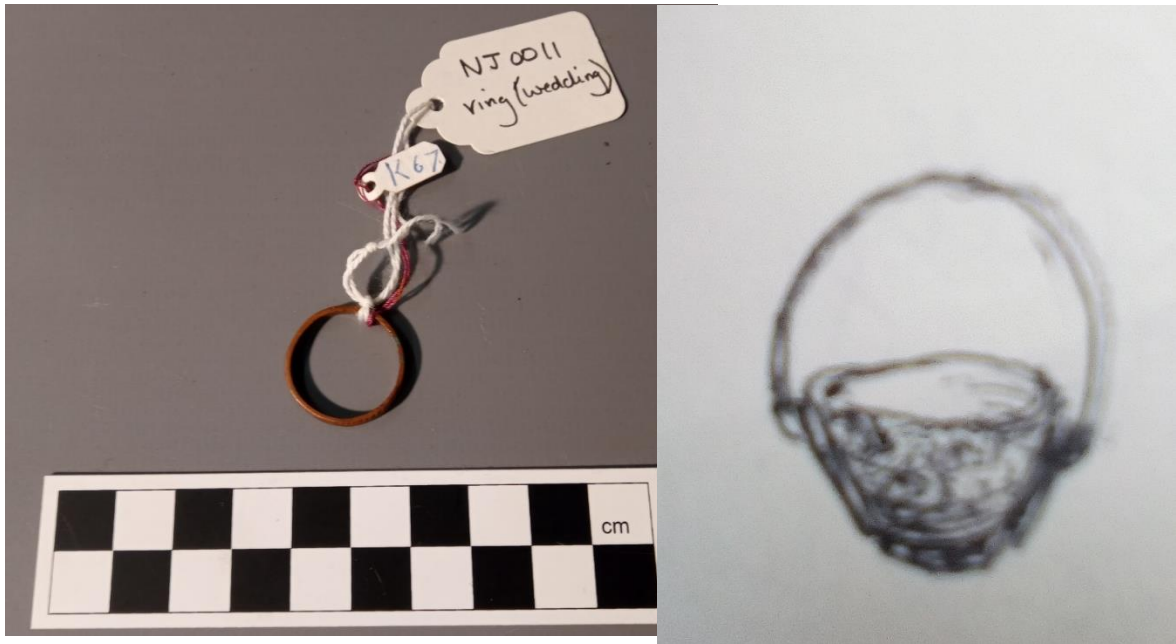


Figure 25. Brass pipe case, made by *Nacken*, Orkney in the John Yates collection, University of Aberdeen Museum Collection (ABDUA:15873). © Rhona Ramsay.

Two *Nacken*-made items at the Highland Folk Museum were also made of brass. These were a wedding ring (HFM:K 67, figure 26) and a berry pan (missing, no number but sketched by Davidson, figure 27), described as being ‘beautifully made’.⁵²¹ It is not clear whose use these were intended for, but being brass, may have been for *Nacken*. If nothing else, however, these items demonstrate that *Nacken* not only worked in silver, tin and iron, but also in brass. Shetland Museum also has two *Nacken*-made items in copper (a candlestick and a lamp). Due to the rusting of tinned steel items, these are thought to be atypical examples that have survived due to their material.⁵²²

⁵²¹ The berry pan was described in a letter from Davidson to Prof Lockhart dated June 20, 1964, George ‘Taffy’ Davidson Donor Files, Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen Museum Collection.

⁵²² Ian Tait, *pers. comm.*, January 14, 2019.



Figures 26 and 27. Left: *Nacken*-made brass wedding ring bought from *Nacken* by I. F. Grant, in the collections of the Highland Folk Museum. Right: *Nacken*-made brass berry pan collected by George 'Taffy' Davidson. Missing from the collections of the Highland Folk Museum. © Rhona Ramsay.

An item type definitely made for *Nacken* personal use but in silver was the *skivver*. As mentioned in Chapter 4, Grant seems to have been keen to collect a *skivver* to preserve material evidence of a practice that was passing out of use. What was valued in it by *Nacken* was, unsurprisingly different. Belle Stewart described their use to Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger. To Belle Stewart, these *skivver* were part of a living practice, which provided comfortable transportation for a child and very practically left the women's arms free for hawking. They needed to be strong but were also something which women took pride in.⁵²³

Although gold seems to have been generally favoured, the *skivver* (figure 28), which as well as a practical item was also used for personal adornment, seems to have been commonly made of white metal.⁵²⁴ The reason why white metal was used for *skivver* may have been for its strength, which would have been important in the context of its use. The *skivver* in the Highland Folk Museum has never been used, made instead as a commissioned example of this object type. It is also possible that there are three half *skivver* in the collections of NMS (H.RHL 12–14, figure 29). Here Belle Stewart describes the pride that *Nacken* women had in their *skivver*:

⁵²³ MacColl and Seeger, *Till Doomsday in the Afternoon*, 19–20.

⁵²⁴ Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom*, 152. Further references to gold items can be found in *Ibid*, 41, 51, 96 and 104, as well as in Lloyd and Ross, *Moving Minds*, 39 and 45.

Some o' them were gey braw. If ye were a weel-aff Travelling woman ye'd be prood o' your skiver and want tae show it aff. Mebbe your man would hae an auld siller watch, and auld silver lever, ye ken, and mebbe if it wasnae workin' right he'd smash it up and mak' ye a silver skiver oot o' the cover o't. Well, then, ye were somethin' tae look at, wi' your nice silver skiver!⁵²⁵



Figure 28. *Skivver*, Highland Folk Museum. © Rhona Ramsay.



Figure 29. T___s pins, National Museums Scotland (H.RHL 12–14), possibly half sets of *skivver*. © Rhona Ramsay.

The findings in this chapter expand the range of material that might be considered *Nacken chaetrie*. Moving beyond the craft items found in folk museums, which—where acknowledged and presented—have (unintentionally) become fixed as the material culture of *Nacken*, this chapter has looked at the networks between *Nacken* and others to identify

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

items connected to *Nacken* in other ways. These items are tangible traces of *Nacken* scrap and second-hand dealing. They also, in several cases, demonstrate the direct contribution that *Nacken* made to museum collections in Scotland.

Available evidence suggests a pride among *Nacken* for craft products and occupations associated with their culture. For example, John Yates collected at least two examples of *Nacken*-made items, and possibly many more, as part of his personal collection (see Chapter 6). A celebration of and pride in *Nacken* craftwork may also have been behind a collection once gathered by David 'Davock' Marshall of Kilmaurs. This pride in the work of *Nacken* was also reflected in the comments of made by Malcolm Marshall of Stewarton to McNaught, regarding the ram's horn ladle given to the Dick Institute. As well as the pride shown in the craft skills and products of *Nacken*, some of these might also have been personally owned and used items, which could offer insights into *Nacken* taste and aesthetic. These craft items offer insights not only into the skill and care put into *Nacken* craft but also extends the range of materials that *Nacken* are considered to work in, such as brass. As in other areas, however, care must be taken in drawing too many conclusions from a small number of examples.

5.6 *Nacken* in the Highland Folk Museum store, May 20, 2018

Much of this chapter has explored past *Nacken* interventions and agency in the Highland Folk Museum and in other Scottish museums. It has demonstrated both how the items given to museums by *Nacken* have the potential to disrupt certain assumptions about *Nacken*, but also that museums need to allow the *Nacken* involvement with these objects' biographies or itineraries to disrupt how the objects themselves are seen and interpreted. Although the chapter has included some reflections on the knowledge and values that contemporary *Nacken* have brought to aspects of the collection, this next section explores with more focus the contemporary engagement of *Nacken* with *Nacken chaetrie* in museum collections. To gain insights into this, I invited a group of *Nacken* to take part in a research activity with me in the Highland Folk Museum store. On May 20, 2018, eighteen *Nacken* participants met me at the museum. Two groups of objects from the museum's collections, as well as the possibility of developing a display together, formed the focus of our discussions. Although the interventional activity—the development of a display—did not take place, the discussions about the display, about the objects described above, about what was missing, as well as around other items selected by participants in a walk around the store have been analysed here.

The groups of objects that were used to initiate discussion were the Riley Collection (objects that I. F. Grant had bought from *Nacken* scrap-dealer, Wullie Riley of Moulin in Perthshire, discussed earlier in this chapter) and a series of *Nacken*-made items. This

latter selection included a tin brander, a tin lantern, a heather potscrubber, clothes pegs, a small frame basket, a soldering bolt, a pea strainer (colander), a horn spoon mould and a horn humbler, and were on the table that we met around (figure 3). Participants were invited to pick up any of the objects that they wanted to (gloves were provided) and parcel labels were provided on which comments, memories or other thoughts could be left with objects.

The group of crafted objects described above were on the table around which the main discussion took place. Although I had selected what I thought of as relevant objects from the collections, very little discussion took place in any specific way around these objects as the session unfolded. The relevance of these objects was not clear to the group, because they related to crafts that have in the main passed on, e.g. making of pegs, tinware and hornware. Where comments were made, these were mainly in instances where an object could be related to a family member. For example, comments written by the pegs included, 'My Granny Anne Baxter made [...] pegs and hocked [*sic*] them' and 'My Grandad Old Teddy Foy made pegs outside the campfire'. Additional information was added to the first, sharing that 'Men made [the pegs and] women sold them'.⁵²⁶ One of the participants also left two further comments related to two of the Riley objects, the pan and the punchbowl (both collected from Riley and both among the objects that Jess Smith thought may have spent time in her Grandparents' home): 'Old Gypsies and Travellers loved fruit ornament' and 'Granny Katie Stewart made scone [in the] pan'.⁵²⁷

The group was not interested in creating a display on the open Traveller wagon in the store, but some asked about the possibility of creating a glass-case display and utilising more recent or contemporary objects. Although this was not possible (see Chapter 3), it opened a new area of discussion that was led by the participants. Rather than being focused on the objects that were present, this discussion was about what was missing; aspects of their material culture that were absent from the museum. This discussion took place around two main time periods. One was referred to by one participant as a 'missing middle period' (c.1960s–1980s) and the other was of objects related to their lives today.⁵²⁸ The objects discussed as being part of the 'missing middle' period included stainless steel water cans, milk churns, enamel basins and pots and enamel milk cans. Wire baskets made for and used 'at the tatties' [potato lifting] were also mentioned and that these were mended for the farmers and dipped in silver paint. Some of the participants could remember family members making these and other types of baskets. In terms of the

⁵²⁶ Violet Stewart, *participant observation*, May 20, 2018; Michelle Foy, *participant observation*, May 20, 2018.

⁵²⁷ Violet Stewart, *participant observation*, May 20, 2018.

⁵²⁸ Margaret McKenzie, *participant observation*, May 20, 2018.

material that could represent *Nacken* today, the group suggested dishes (for example Crown Derby), jewellery and catapults. They also suggested that the museum could feature a timeline of *Nacken* lives. This was to tackle public misunderstandings of *Nacken* as being a people of the past (perpetuated through the use of black and white photographs of *Nacken* in tents).⁵²⁹ Although they were happy for the past to be included, they also felt that it should show *Nacken* in the present (in caravans and chalets) and in the future (in houses).⁵³⁰ The group very much emphasised that *Nacken* move with the times although their heritage is important and they remember the past. There is also a keenness to keep the stories going.

The main points made by the group highlight the importance of the work that MECOPP has done in developing the 'Moving Minds' exhibition. In this exhibit, discussed more fully in Chapter 6, *Nacken* were asked to select an object of significance to them and explain their choice. This aspect of the 'Moving Minds' exhibits exists as a series of boards featuring an image of the object (usually in the hand of the person who selected it) along with text explaining why it was chosen. Although some chose objects related to personal or family pasts, others chose very definitely contemporary material, which engages with modern *Nacken* materiality. One of the aspects of the 'Moving Minds' exhibit that was also discussed was about whether museums could collect photographs of objects in cases where people did not want to give up specific objects. This led to individuals sharing stories about baskets and scrap dealing.

Several group members spoke enthusiastically about baskets, a craft still undertaken by some of their family members. When we went on the walk around the store, one of the objects we passed was a basket for a bike (KIGHF 2008.0667). More than one individual pointed out that the lip of this basket was in a *Nacken* style.⁵³¹ Shannon MacDonald was also interested in seeing the pearl-fishing equipment, as she was photographing related items among her own family's collection (discussed in Chapter 6).

It was very useful to gain insights into what the group members thought were significant objects. They were very clear that the museum lacked some of the key objects that they

⁵²⁹ Several museum collections have access to photographs of *Nacken* taken between around the 1930s to 1960s. These tend to show *Nacken* as tent-dwelling, as well as engaging in traditional crafts of the time, such as tinsmithing. Examples include the Shennan Collection at Inverness Museum and Art Gallery, the McCormick Collection at the Stranraer Museum, as well as images in the photographic collections at Perth Museum and Art Gallery and in folders 119.1 and 119.2 in the Scottish Life Archive, National Museums Scotland.

⁵³⁰ The group provided a list of the makes of caravans that were typically used by their families in the past: Thompson Trailers, Blue Birds, Eccles, Astrals and Pembertons. This aspect of the discussion resonated with David Donaldson's comments regarding the need for objects of continuity and ensuring that tents alone are not used to signify *Nacken* presence.

⁵³¹ This seems to have been in reference to the plaited lip around the top. This is described as being a popular style for *Nacken* to make in MacColl and Seeger, *Till Doomsday in the Afternoon*, 14.

might identify with their own lives now and within living memory. Another clear message from the activity in the store was the lack of interest, in general, that group members had in the objects that are considered to be *Nacken chaetrie* in the museum. In his work on Traveller stories and storytelling practices, Donald Braid made an observation that has some relevance to the reaction that the group had to the older objects selected for the discussion.⁵³² In *Scottish Travellers' Tales*, Braid described the distinction between what *Nacken* refer to as *crack*—the tale rooted in lived experience—and the iconic legacy folk tale handed down through generations.⁵³³ This distinction seems to be paralleled in material culture. Here, the distinction is between items related to the craft production of *Nacken* in the past and everyday objects, familiar within contemporary *Nacken* lives. To expand, the items I—as an outsider—considered to be the iconic products of *Nacken*-makers and important markers of *Nacken* presence (the hornware, tin lanterns and tools) are the material equivalent of the ancient stories. Although these items were recognised by *Nacken* who visited the store with me, they held little interest for them. These items are no longer part of their lived experience—no longer part of the transmission of skills, or regular exchange with settled populations—and therefore not of the same import for contemporary identity. The story-objects are more important to an outside view of *Nacken*—craft items that *Nacken* are known for among those on the outside. Conversely, the object-equivalent of *crack*, the everyday retellings of lived experience, are those things with contemporary or recent relevance; things that are part of lived experience today. These things are familiar, have contemporary meaning or are part of present-day identity-making. These *crack*-items include things still made or used such as baskets, but also items where ‘meanings [...] may not be apparent to the disinterested observer’.⁵³⁴ The sorts of items that the group expressed interest in either had never been collected by the museum (for example the water cans and caravans) or exist in the collection but are not understood as having relevance to *Nacken* (for example baskets with plaited lips, milk churns, pans and items of decorative pottery).⁵³⁵

5.7 Objects of continuity – the display at Perth Museum and Art Gallery

After the experience in the store at the Highland Folk Museum, I wanted to try again to use an interventional method to explore how contemporary *Nacken* respond to some of the existing *chaetrie* in museums. Two barriers to participation in the development of a display at the Highland Folk Museum had been identified. Those were the preference for a

⁵³² Braid, *Scottish Traveller Tales*.

⁵³³ *Ibid*, 51–2.

⁵³⁴ S. Jones and S. Leech, *Valuing the Historic Environment: A Critical Review of Existing Approaches to Social Value*. AHRC: Cultural Value Project Report (Manchester: University of Manchester, 2015), 26. <https://www.escholar.manchester.ac.uk/uk-ac-man-scw:281849>.

⁵³⁵ An association is sometimes made between *Nacken* and frame baskets, see for example, S. Bunn, “Who designs Scottish vernacular baskets?,” *Journal of Design History* 29, no. 1 (2015), 31 (figure 6).

glass-case display and the lack of engagement with objects that I had selected. The project at Perth was, then, designed with this in mind and participants were sent images of a range of objects from which to choose. Although many of these items were of a similar age to those that the group encountered at the Highland Folk Museum, there was greater freedom in selecting objects around which the group could develop their display and message. In contrast to the Highland Folk Museum activity, for which I had selected the items, the free choice given to the Gypsy/Traveller Youth Assembly allowed them to make selections from these objects from their own perspective.

Although an aspect of *chaetrie*, discussed earlier in this chapter, is the flow and unsettledness of *Nacken chaetrie*, there are objects that defy this. These have been referred to by David Donaldson as ‘objects of continuity’.⁵³⁶ For example, while noting the importance of bowcamps as a way of making *Nacken* visible in the presentation of the past on museum sites, David Donaldson also emphasised the need for museums to include trailers (caravans) alongside these, to ensure that museums ‘represent our culture today’.⁵³⁷ The pan—referenced above as part of the Riley objects—has also been described by David Donaldson as an object important both today as well as in the past.

In the display developed by members of the Gypsy/Traveller Youth Assembly for Gypsy, Roma, Traveller History Month in Perth, a range of objects from the past were selected for their contemporary resonance. These older items of *Nacken* craft, trade or campfire use (clothes pegs, dishes, horn spoons, a basket, kettle and pan) were used to tell stories of *Nacken* lives today. In the interpretation, the young women emphasised their roles today in keeping the home and the attraction that *Nacken* today have to items of decorative pottery:

Gypsy/Traveller women and girls take on much of the care and home responsibilities within the family. They wash clothes, keep the home [...] Within the Gypsy/Traveller home china and crystal items are highly valued decorations.

David Donaldson, who was also involved, interpreted the pan as follows:

Within the community pans are valued as much today as they were in the past. Many Gypsy/Travellers take great pride in a well looked after pan. Its importance lies in its use as a means to feed a family. Family are central to Gypsy/Traveller life and the pan is central to the camp. The pan is used over the campfire, a place for cooking, warmth and the sharing of story and song.

Although the responses to older items of *Nacken chaetrie* found in museums do not resonate with all *Nacken* today, it may depend in part on how much choice is built into the selection of objects engaged with. It should also be noted that not all of the objects chosen for display in Perth had been connected to *Nacken* in their lives before entering

⁵³⁶ David Donaldson, *interview*, October 17, 2018.

⁵³⁷ *Ibid.*

the museum. Like the milk churns discussed above, these were selected for their associations and were connected to *Nacken* lives through interpretation. Where museums do not have the sorts of material that *Nacken* respond to, *Nacken* are often willing to lend objects to museum through which they can communicate their culture and heritage. MECOPP has supported a number of these exhibits in museums.⁵³⁸

The items identified in this chapter—through discussion with *Nacken*, as well as through archival research—extend the range of objects that could be used to present *Nacken* in museums. These objects evidence a number of ways in which *Nacken* have interacted with material culture and with museums. Although it is not possible to know for sure what motivated *Nacken* in the past to give into museums, the identification of these objects—and the interactions they embody—can unsettle our view of these things in a positive way. Further groups of items can be identified by *Nacken* as having a contemporary resonance even if the objects themselves have had an entirely settled biography. These associations indicate the ways in which settled items can become *Nacken chaetrie* through their selection for use or aesthetic. In some cases, the usefulness of an object (such as the milk churns) to *Nacken* lives in the past, becomes translated into a contemporary aesthetic appreciation of these objects.

As will be discussed more fully in Chapter 7, at moments where new knowledge of objects enters into what has been called the Heritage Cycle (see figure 38), this can bring with it new values and engagements. So, while these objects themselves can disrupt the way in which we see collections, so the contemporary perspectives that *Nacken* can bring to collections can bring with them new knowledge, values and engagement. This can help museums to understand the wider significance of these objects.

⁵³⁸ As well as the 'Moving Minds' exhibition, MECOPP have also been involved working with Gypsy/Travellers to communicate their culture in exhibits within museums that feature items of their own belongings. These exhibits have been put on at the Museum of Edinburgh, alongside the 'Moving Minds' exhibition and featuring objects from among those included in the display boards (February 03 to May 06, 2017), at Dunollie (June 03–13, 2019) and at Perth Museum and Art Gallery (June 15 to July 29, 2019). These displays have not included any collections belonging to museums and have featured only objects borrowed from those involved.

Chapter 6: Absent objects to (re)present(ative) collections

6.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter has grown out of a case study of Auchindrain Township Museum, near Inveraray in Argyll. This museum was initially selected as—in its response to the Roma Routes Survey—the Auchindrain Trust had indicated that it had no objects connected to *Nacken*. This museum, then, presented an opportunity to explore what the absence of *Nacken chaetrie* looked like in a museum. During the period over which I was researching, however, Auchindrain began to address the apparent absence of *Nacken chaetrie* on the site, ultimately resulting in the formation of a new Gypsy/Traveller collection. As such, the opportunity expanded to being able to study the mitigations developed by the museum to tackle the absence of *chaetrie* and move towards the representation of *Nacken*.

Additionally, having already been invited to carry out research around Jess Smith's personal collection of *chaetrie*, there was now the potential to carry out an analysis of more than one *Nacken* collection, both Jess Smith's and the new collection at Auchindrain. With this in mind I also sought out further *Nacken* collections that I could analyse alongside these to develop a sense of what *Nacken* value and collect. In addition to Jess Smith's collection and the new collection at Auchindrain, I also analysed the John Yates Collection in the University of Aberdeen Museum Collection, the objects and memories featured in Shannon MacDonald's artwork, 'The MacDonald Collection' and the objects selected by community members to be part of MECOPP's 'Moving Minds' exhibition. In addition to these, Essie Stewart's bough tent at the Highland Folk Museum and Kathy Townsley McGuigan's bowcamp at Auchindrain have also been analysed, as examples of culturally significant objects used by *Nacken* to represent themselves in museums.

Before going on to discuss the absence of *chaetrie* at Auchindrain, the reversal of that absence and *Nacken* collecting and collections, it is important to remember that absence is sometimes an important story to tell. The published *Nacken* memoirs of Betsy Whyte and of Sheila Stewart contrast sharply in terms of the presence of objects in each. While Whyte's writing is full of references to the material culture that populated the lives and camps of her family, Sheila Stewart's is almost completely devoid of tangible things.⁵³⁹ This is partly explained by the poverty in which she grew up.⁵⁴⁰ That the family had things, however, is attested to in films of their interiors made in the 1980s and by the presence of objects that belonged to Belle Stewart found in Jess Smith's collection (see later in this

⁵³⁹ Stewart, *A Traveller's Life*; B. Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom*.

⁵⁴⁰ Stewart, *A Traveller's Life*, 202.

chapter).⁵⁴¹ Sheila Stewart's writing, however, reveals the relative importance of material possessions and of intangible things in her life. In Stewart's work the possessive noun and other terms often used for physical objects—such as collecting, giving, gifting, swapping, inheritance and legacy—are almost entirely reserved for stories, ballads, song, beliefs, memories, language, culture and also for the extended family who populate the book and pass these things on. It may be that, amid poverty these were the family's main possessions, they were certainly highly valued and treasured. The CATERAN ECOMUSEUM (in Highland Perthshire and Angus), a museum without a building or a collection, offers a potential approach to making this intangible presence visible. When they launched with the exhibition, 'A Story of the CATERAN TRAIL IN 100 OBJECTS,' at Alyth Museum in 2017, Sheila's family, the Stewarts of Blair, and their ballads were among the first 'objects' within the display and its accompanying booklet.⁵⁴² The CATERAN ECOMUSEUM presents an opportunity to celebrate the intangible legacies of *Nacken* more permanently.

For some museums, absence of *Nacken chaetrie* may also be part of their story. Although *Nacken* are present in communities across Scotland they are an invisible minority ethnic population. Lack of collections may reflect the hidden nature of this community or reveal power imbalances between museums and *Nacken*, as collectors in the past decided what and of whom to collect and, perhaps more pertinently, not collect. They may also highlight gaps or ignorance in a museum's past that could be effectively drawn out by acknowledging the absence of material. Auchindrain also offers a range of other models for addressing a recognised absence, discussed at the opening to this chapter. The next section will address in more detail the ways in which Auchindrain has recently begun to move from an absence of *chaetrie* to the representation of *Nacken*.

6.2 Absent *chaetrie* at Auchindrain

According to its website, Auchindrain is 'the most complete and well-preserved example of a Scottish Highland farm township'.⁵⁴³ It operated as a township, or rural farm settlement. At one time it supported up to six tenants. Although the township still supported a community into the 1930s, its economic viability reduced dramatically during its final decades until a single farmer was left to make a living from the land from 1937. The last tenant operated it as a working farm until 1963 and lived on the site until 1967. In 1964 a body of trustees took responsibility for the preservation of the township and in 1968 it was opened to the public as a museum. It is now not unlike the open-air museums of Scandinavia, which inspired I. F. Grant, but no buildings have been moved onto the site—

⁵⁴¹ *Stewarts of Blair*. Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger dir. (Ratray: 1980), film.

⁵⁴² *CATERAN'S COMMON WEALTH, A Story of the CATERAN TRAIL IN 100 OBJECTS* (Alyth: CATERAN'S COMMON WEALTH, 2017), 5–6. The 100 'objects' were selected through a crowdsourcing project in 2016.

⁵⁴³ Auchindrain Museum website, <https://www.auchindrain.org.uk/>.

they were there already, evidence of a township community that over the centuries lived and worked there.

When I was first interested in museum collections that contain examples of *Nacken chaetrie*, I was very hopeful of what might be found at Auchindrain. For communities like those in this township, *Nacken* were an invaluable source of useful items, of labour and of news, stories and songs.⁵⁴⁴ I was interested in what their stores might hold, expecting examples of goods bought from those who hawked their wares around the township over the last couple of hundred years. The way in which this museum was formed, however, means that almost no material culture directly associated with the people who lived there, beyond the buildings themselves, has survived on the site. As the township became depopulated earlier in the century the people who left took their belongings with them and so any objects that might have been bought by the residents of the township from *Nacken* are now absent and have gone unrecorded.⁵⁴⁵

6.2.1 Identifying absence

The seeming absence of *Nacken chaetrie* has not meant the absence of *Nacken* at the museum. The museum has for some time now ensured that *Nacken* interactions with the township have been highlighted and have worked creatively to maintain the involvement and representation of *Nacken* at Auchindrain. A key step in this process, however, was an acknowledgement of the absence of this material and at the same time a recognition that *Nacken* were part of Auchindrain's past. When the Auchindrain Trust was asked in 2010, as part of the Roma Routes Survey, what Roma, Gypsy and Traveller artefacts it had in its collection, the Trust answered,

No Roma items as such, but three well-provenanced factual accounts of Roma involvement. The “t____s”, as the people of the township called them, were much-valued and very welcome. They left memories which we're happy to share, but no objects.⁵⁴⁶

This recognition of both absence of *Nacken chaetrie* and presence and involvement of *Nacken* required background knowledge. When asked about the acknowledgement of *Nacken* presence in the museum's interpretation Curator, Bob Clark, talked of the importance of experiences he had in the 1970s. As a young professional at Beamish he had been exposed to Traveller collections and spaces within the site. Clark recalled that at Beamish 'it was presented to me that [Travellers] were just there, they had been there, they were still there and they had actually had quite an important role'.⁵⁴⁷ When museum

⁵⁴⁴ Direct reference and evidence of hawking into this township can be found in Williamson, *The Horsieman*, 18.

⁵⁴⁵ A single item—a pot lid—from among the small collection directly linked to the township has recently been identified as possibly *Nacken* made (ACHDN.67.A.73.12).

⁵⁴⁶ Surrey Heritage Roma Routes Project.

⁵⁴⁷ Bob Clark, *interview*, August 07, 2018.

staff carried out an oral history project with surviving residents from the township in 2011/2012, as part of a major research project into the township's history, mentions of *Nacken* interactions at the site were noted. The Curator's background knowledge and experience were important in the identification of the significance of repeated mentions of *Nacken* in the oral testimonies. It was also this prior knowledge and understanding that took the museum from awareness of *Nacken* presence actions that addressed the (apparent) absence of material.

6.2.2 Addressing absence

Recognising absence was a significant step in a process that has led Auchindrain to make *Nacken* visible in ways that are unique in the museum sector in Scotland. This next section examines how the absence of *Nacken chaetrie* was addressed at Auchindrain and analyses ways in which it has been successful and what allowed it to work.



Figure 30. Map of Auchindrain museum site. Buildings are numbered A to W.

The museum noted the absence of *Nacken chaetrie* because of the marked contrast it had with the regular (historic) presence of *Nacken* at the township, made clear in the recordings gathered as part of the oral history project in 2011. The museum has gone on to use a range of approaches, in the absence of objects, to make visible the connections that *Nacken* had to Auchindrain township.

6.3.2.1 Interpretation

New interpretation developed for the site was created, which included material gathered through the oral history project. This included mentions of two of the three 'well-

provenanced [...] accounts' referred to in the Roma Routes Report.⁵⁴⁸ Interpretation developed for the site at this time focused on the history of the township buildings and the people who lived and worked in them. The accounts of *Nacken* presence featured in the interpretation were selected from the oral testimonies for their connection to the stories of the buildings and the people of the township. One recounted what happened to Stoner's House (Building H, see figure 30) after the family moved away in 1937. The interpretation stated that, 'The Kitchen, with its two box beds, was kept habitable and available for use by passing "t____s" (Romany gypsies [sic]) who were always welcome at Auchindrain'.⁵⁴⁹

The other story was of a *Nacken* woman who saved the life of the youngest brother of the last tenant of the township by administering a cure after he chewed on a poisonous plant. This interpretation appeared in Eddie's House (Building A). In 2016 the museum replaced the text panels in the buildings with an interactive guide, available on handheld devices, as well as on the website. In the guide these two histories are combined and extended. It is made clear that the availability of the kitchen was the result of gratitude for the healing of the brother and additional information was added about who *Nacken* are.⁵⁵⁰

What it took me some time to understand is that the collection at Auchindrain was full of (unseen) connections to *Nacken*, just as I have argued exist in other museums. The collection at Auchindrain just happens to be buildings, rather than objects, but these buildings—as the museum began to point out in new interpretation in 2012—although fixed in place, were an example of the things of settled life that also became part of the backdrop to *Nacken* life (discussed in the section Hidden *Nacken* Connections in Chapter 5). These buildings would have been elements within networks of trade between *Nacken* and non-*Nacken*, offered as a place to stay in exchange for seasonal labour, the provision of newly crafted tinware or baskets, or for the mending of the same. Like many aspects of *Nacken chaetrie*, these connections were hidden, not obvious from a settled perspective. Research has brought new perspectives and new understanding to the collections (buildings and wider site) at Auchindrain.

By identifying the connections between these settled (or seemingly settled) collections and *Nacken*, Auchindrain has been able to make *Nacken* stories visible on the museum site. Through their new interpretation they have been able to reverse the absent presence of *Nacken* in their collections. As unlikely as it might seem, Auchindrain had—in the form

⁵⁴⁸ Surrey Heritage Roma Routes Project.

⁵⁴⁹ Auchindrain (2012), *interpretation panel: Stoner's House* (note, interpretation on the site is no longer in the form of interpretation panels in the buildings but is available on portable devices).

⁵⁵⁰ This was at one time part of Auchindrain's Interactive Guide available through their website but it no longer seems to be present

of buildings on their site—examples of what might be considered *Nacken chaetrie*.⁵⁵¹ Although fixed in place, these buildings, like caves elsewhere, would have provided accommodation along the way for some families on the move. Although the *Nacken* who might have used these buildings were mobile, no one is constantly in motion and so there are places where *Nacken* families would have stopped as they travelled.⁵⁵² *Nacken* memoirs often include accounts of regular stopping points and traditional camp sites as well as the use of outbuildings.⁵⁵³

6.3.2.2 Employment of *Nacken* at the museum

It was after the museum employed *Nacken* staff from 2014, however, that more significant changes began. These built on the established recognition of the presence of *Nacken* in the township's past. *Nacken* staff were initially taken on through an employability scheme, which led to contact with other members of the community. Later, in 2014, Kathy Townsley McGuigan became employed for her knowledge and skills in the seasonal agricultural practices that were required at the township. Kathy Townsley McGuigan had developed this knowledge and expertise carrying out these seasonal tasks while travelling with her family. Since then, she has brought other expert knowledge and skills to other aspects of the museum, which have allowed Auchindrain to expand the ways in which *Nacken* are visible there. Although her role at the museum, as Farm Manager, is not a curatorial one, her presence and actions have led to a greater visibility of *Nacken* culture on site; she made 'it possible to do things'.⁵⁵⁴ Prior to the development of the Gypsy/Traveller Collection, which will be discussed in the second section of this chapter, there were four innovative ways in which *Nacken* presence was highlighted. Among these was the creation of replica objects, the making and selling of traditional *Nacken* crafts and the annual building of a bow tent at the museum. The museum also hosted MECOPP's 'Moving Minds' exhibition in 2014, as well as other events with Gypsy/Travellers.

6.3.2.3 A replica object

In 2015 Kathy Townsley McGuigan and two of her sisters, Neenie Reid and Edith Townsley, made a sketch of their mother's Gypsy pinny from which the museum had a replica made. This culturally distinct piece of clothing, sometimes called a pocket, is

⁵⁵¹ For a discussion of the use of outbuildings as accommodation by *Nacken*, see W. Simson, *A History of the Gypsies* (London: Sampson, Low, Son and Marston, 1865), 187, 194, 198, 221, 263; D. Campbell, *Reminiscences and Recollections of an Octogenarian Highlander* (Inverness: Inverness Northern Counties Newspaper and Printing and Pub. Co, 1910), 23; Campbell and Williamson, *A Traveller in Two Worlds* 1, 14.

⁵⁵² A useful discussion of the spectrum of itinerancy can be found in S. P. Ashby, "'With staff in hand and dog at heel'? What did it mean to be an itinerant artisan?", in *Everyday products in the Middle Ages: Crafts, Consumption and the Individual in Northern Europe c. A.D. 1000–1600*, eds. G. Hansen, S.P. Ashby and I. Baug (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2015), 11–27.

⁵⁵³ For example, Williamson, *The Horsieman*, 14–6. Many traditional stopping places have now been closed off to *Nacken*.

⁵⁵⁴ Bob Clark, *interview*, August 07, 2018.

mentioned in *Nacken* memoirs.⁵⁵⁵ It should be noted that this is a piece of clothing used by *Nacken* and not an example of ‘gypsy costume’ that is present in some museum collections. The latter would be something worn by non-*Nacken* to dress-up as though a *Nacken* or Gypsy character. No examples of Gypsy pinnies have been found in the other case study museum collections (and none are known of in other museums in Scotland), likely due to the very personal nature of these objects.⁵⁵⁶ Auchindrain’s replica is sometimes worn by Kathy Townsley McGuigan on site (figure 31), but since then an original pinny has also been donated to the new Gypsy/Traveller Collection (ACHDN.2019.0248).



Figure 31. Kathy Townsley McGuigan wearing the replica pinnie made for Auchindrain.
© Auchindrain Township Museum.

6.3.2.4 Camps, crafts and storytelling

The first bowcamp at the museum was also built in 2015. One of Kathy McGuigan Townsley’s brothers, Jimmy Townsley, came to the museum and set up the first of what was to become an annual part of the museum programme. It is not seen by the museum as a replica, but as a ‘reintroduction, the reawakening of a tradition’ and as a vernacular building among other vernacular buildings in the township.⁵⁵⁷ The camp built in 2017 can be seen in figure 32.

⁵⁵⁵ Campbell and Williamson, *A Traveller in Two Worlds* 1, 30–1; Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom*, 41; Williamson, *The Horsieman*, 7–8.

⁵⁵⁶ Duncan Williamson referred to having kept his Granny’s pocket: Campbell and Williamson, *A Traveller in Two Worlds* 1, 31. Irish Traveller women wear a similar item called a beady pocket. There are two examples in the National Museum of Ireland.

⁵⁵⁷ Bob Clark, *interview*, August 07, 2018.



Figure 32. Auchindrain's bowcamp, August 2017. © Rhona Ramsay.

Early versions of the bowcamp were used as the backdrop for making traditional *Nacken* crafts, such as paper flowers and clothes pegs. The paper flowers were featured in some of the houses, in recognition of the trade of these into the township that is likely to have gone on in the past (figure 33). Handmade paper flowers and clothes pegs were also sold in the shop, alongside *Nacken* memoirs and other relevant publications. Over time the bowcamp has become an important part of the museum. While Kathy Townsley McGuigan has talked of the bowcamp as an act of remembrance of her brother Jimmy Williamson who died in December 2015, it is also a place that is increasingly filled with life.⁵⁵⁸ In August 2019 it was used to host the summer party for staff and student interns and was brought to life with storytelling. The site where the bowcamp is erected each year has been selected by Kathy Townsley McGuigan. It may be that the grass at the chosen site is will eventually stop growing, as Duncan Williamson described happening on the site of his family's winter tent.⁵⁵⁹ Bowcamps and bough tents are discussed as elements of *Nacken* collections later in this chapter.

⁵⁵⁸ Ramsay, "Unsettling Naken chaetrie in Scottish museums": 73.

⁵⁵⁹ Williamson, *The Horsieman*, 4.



Figure 33. Paper and wooden flowers decorating a windowsill at Auchindrain.

6.3.2.5 New knowledge and connections: Moving Minds

Kathy Townsley McGuigan not only brought her own knowledge and that of her family but extended the museum's access to a network of *Nacken* and organisations that support Gypsy/Travellers. It was through Kathy Townsley McGuigan that Auchindrain encountered MECOPP. Although this organisation has no official heritage remit it has long recognised the benefit of heritage projects in instilling pride and supporting a sense of identity within the community, while also communicating positive messages about the community to tackle the prejudices of those outside it.⁵⁶⁰ New links with this organisation led Auchindrain to be the first museum in Scotland to host part of MECOPP's 'Moving Minds' exhibition in 2015. This portable display, part of which will be discussed further in the section on *Nacken* collections, includes 'narratives from individual Gypsy/Travellers' as well as photographs of a special objects that each contributor had chosen alongside information about its significance. This display was ideal for Auchindrain, which aspires to be able to exhibit smaller items from its collections, but currently does not have the facilities to do so. It also let a museum that had no *Nacken* collections at the time presence *Nacken* through objects and their stories.

6.3.2.6 Archaeology at Auchindrain

Excavations take place regularly at Auchindrain. Kathy Townsley McGuigan has brought her expert eye to the finds. She has been able to identify examples from among the

⁵⁶⁰ Lloyd and Ross, *Moving Minds*, iii, v.

shards of pottery, likely examples of chinaware traded into the township by *Nacken*. A piece of one of these decorated plates found during an excavation at the site was featured as a star find in a Facebook post by the museum (figure 34).



Figure 34. Piece of pottery identified as possibly from a piece traded into the township by *Nacken*. © Auchindrain Township.

The accompanying text reads,

Pieces like this are not unknown in our excavations, because most households would have had at least some "good" china. What's interesting is the story that goes with them. They were often made in Stoke-on-Trent and transported by canal and sea to be sold in places like Glasgow. The Traveller men would go to a "swag shop" in town, load up their carts and head out into the country to sell their "swag" to people who would rarely get any other chance to buy items of such quality.⁵⁶¹

A recognition of absence, as well as that they 'could not properly tell the story of Auchindrain without including the Travellers', was a very important step towards ensuring the presence of a group not obviously represented in the collections.⁵⁶² But what really allowed the museum to progress from absence to presence was the inclusion of *Nacken*

⁵⁶¹ Auchindrain, *Facebook post*, May 20, 2018.

⁵⁶² Bob Clark, *interview*, August 07, 2018.

at the museum. Not only was Kathy Townsley McGuigan employed at the museum, but her skills, expertise, contacts and knowledge led to a series of innovative approaches to making *Nacken* seen at Auchindrain. In 2018 Kathy Townsley McGuigan, in partnership with the museum, began to work with her contacts within the *Nacken* community to gather a new Gypsy/Traveller Collection for Auchindrain.

6.3.2.7 The Gypsy/Traveller Collection at Auchindrain: contemporary collecting

The Gypsy/Traveller Collection at Auchindrain is unique in the context of Scottish museums.⁵⁶³ While many museums contain examples of *Nacken chaetrie* that provide evidence of the historic presence of *Nacken* in Scotland, most of those collections will have been gathered from outside *Nacken* culture. Often material in museums that is connected to *Nacken* through making or trading were not collected with these links in mind (see Chapter 4). There are examples where museums have sought out or been able to collect certain things, such as occupational tools, but it could be argued that these often tell us more about how the populations were perceived, than how they were or are in reality. On other occasions, as we have seen, *Nacken* have given items into museums, although in many cases it is difficult to know whether it was the donor or curator who ultimately selected these artefacts. Of course, some of this applies to the new material at Auchindrain. Although each of the objects that Kathy Townsley McGuigan has solicited from members of her community has been given freely and selected by the donor for donation to the museum, the factors influencing this choice cannot always be fully known. Accounts by Lonnie Bunch III into the gathering of a collection related to the history of African Americans resonates here.⁵⁶⁴ People will almost always be restricted to giving something that they can spare, rather than something in regular use, although in many of the cases the objects selected relate to a relative who has died, allowing more freedom in this regard. The most treasured items in *Nacken* families, as in other populations, are also often not available as they are too important to lose or are set aside to pass on to family members. The photographic projects of MECOPP and Shannon MacDonald, which are discussed later in this chapter, go some way to bypassing such concerns, as the items are

⁵⁶³ In the final section of this chapter, I will propose that The John Yates Collection at the University of Aberdeen Museum Collection might also be a *Nacken* collection, although I have found no documentary evidence to fully support this. It can be argued, however, that the uniqueness of Auchindrain's Gypsy/Traveller Collection also lies in the period to which it relates. The John Yates collection was gathered prior to 1951, aligning it with the window of collecting that took place as part of folk collecting through the National Museum's Country Life section, at the Highland Folk Museum and elsewhere from the 1930s to around the 1970s. By contrast Auchindrain's new collection is being gathered in the second decade of the twenty-first century and includes material related to the everyday lives of *Nacken* during a different window of time.

⁵⁶⁴ L. G. Bunch III, *Call the Lost Dream Back: Essays on History, Race and Museums* (Washington DC: The AAM Press, 2010), 117, 124.

not removed from owners, but recorded alongside text describing why they are important or recounting related memories.

Despite this, it can be argued that the distinctiveness of the Auchindrain collection still stands alongside other museum collections in Scotland. Firstly, the collection is unambiguously representative of a living culture. This is less clear in the collections of Grant and other folk collectors who were ostensibly engaged in salvage ethnography and often collecting material related to occupations and practices, which they believed were dying out. Some of the material is also very different to that in other collections containing *Nacken chaetrie*. There is less in the way of traditional craft items, but when they appear—in the case of Duncan Williamson’s basket (ACHDN.2019.0088) and Willie McGuigan’s horn spoon (ACHDN.2019.0081)—they are unique in the context of museums, as having been used within the community rather than traded out. The driving licence (ACHDN.2019.0078.1) demonstrates that *Nacken* have continued beyond life in the tent and on a cart, while others, such as Neenie’s Gypsy pinny (ACHDN.2019.0248), reveal aspects of continuity within *Nacken chaetrie*. Some of the objects also disrupt, rather than support, assumptions or dominant narratives about *Nacken*. While access to education is undoubtedly an issue faced by many *Nacken*, this is not true for all and there are also those who have gone on to higher education.⁵⁶⁵ The idea that all *Nacken* are illiterate is disrupted by the presence of a book (ACHDN. 2019.0075) and writing materials (ACHDN. 2019.0083) that were important to the person who owned them. But there is a discomfort in many Gypsies and Travellers around education. Damian Le Bas, an English Gypsy with a degree from Oxford, has described feeling torn and displaced by education.⁵⁶⁶

This group of objects is also ripe for comparison with other collections. Comparisons can be made with settled collections of the same period to highlight similarities and differences across the cultures, and with older *Nacken* collections to show aspects of continuity and change. David Donaldson, a *Nacken* activist interviewed as part of this research has emphasised the importance of objects demonstrating continuity, such as the pan and the caravan, in presenting *Nacken* culture as a living one.⁵⁶⁷ The collection at Auchindrain also fills some of the gaps that were described by those who visited the Highland Folk Museum store with me (see Chapter 5).⁵⁶⁸ Participants had described a ‘missing middle period’, or the absence of material that related to their own lives in the recent past. Items of craft production, unless connected to their own lives—through having been made by

⁵⁶⁵ Kathy Townsley McGuigan’s mother, for instance, studied at the University of Edinburgh. Kathy Townsley McGuigan, *pers. comm.*, May 11, 2019

⁵⁶⁶ Le Bas, *The Stopping Places*, 20.

⁵⁶⁷ David Donaldson, *interview*, October 17, 2018.

⁵⁶⁸ MECOPP participants, *participant observation*, May 20, 2018.

family members—were of little interest. Auchindrain’s new collection both represents more recent time periods and has been collected directly by and from *Nacken*.

Auchindrain does, however, have objects similar to those at the Highland Folk Museum, not from its core collection, but from a separate group of objects that have been purchased to recreate the interior of the buildings. Although not original to the site, these are sourced as locally as possible, so as to represent the stuff of homes in Argyll. Among these are the sorts of items that would have been made and traded by *Nacken*, such as horn spoons and tinware. Like the items at the Highland Folk Museum, these have the potential to also make the historic presence of *Nacken* more visible, although it is not currently a feature of the site’s interpretation.

Objects allow museums to tell new stories. Having documented the significance of these objects and why they were chosen by donors, the new Gypsy/Traveller collection will make it possible for the museum to include *Nacken* voices in the interpretation of these objects. The objects also offer an opportunity to reveal how *Nacken* value material culture. Later in this chapter, in a section on *Nacken* collections, five collections have been identified and analysed to demonstrate what is valued by *Nacken* in the objects that they collect or select as significant. This has the potential to inform museums with or without collections how they might collect, document, display and interpret *Nacken chaetrie* in a way that represents *Nacken* and their lives and living culture. They may also offer approaches to telling *Nacken* stories in the absence of *Nacken* collections. Unfortunately, Auchindrain has not yet got the space to display this new collection. It is an open-air museum and currently has no display space for objects such as these. The potential, however, is there.

Importantly Auchindrain has made small changes to their Collecting Policy (Appendix III) and Object Entry Forms, which support a significant change to practice. The museum has made small but significant changes to the systems it uses in order to include *Nacken* more fully in the development of collections and to ensure that *Nacken* are represented in their collections. Before analysing *Nacken* collections, however, the next section provides a reflection on the ways in which settled perspectives (my own as well as those in museums more widely) can impede a full understanding and appreciation of *Nacken chaetrie*.

6.2.3 Travellerfied

The first time I remember Kathy Townsley McGuigan using the term ‘Travellerfied’ was on a visit we took together to the National Museum of Scotland on May 11, 2019. We were visiting, in part, to exchange thoughts around the identification of *Nacken chaetrie* in the museum displays there. Kathy Townsley McGuigan had been warned by her line-manager, Bob Clark, that there would be no items of *Nacken chaetrie* on display in the

National Museum. I was keen, however, to show Kathy Townsley McGuigan examples of *Nacken chaetrie* that I had identified through book-based research, such as the turreted brooches of Argyll and William Faa's lancet. What I was struck by almost immediately was that my companion could see so much more than I could—she had an inside expert-eye for *Nacken chaetrie*, particularly a subset of *chaetrie*, the 'Travellerfied'.

At the National Museum, Kathy Townsley McGuigan used the term for a wide range of items. Among the objects that she picked out for special mention were the homemade knives, combs, horn spoons, pots, china, silverware, rugs and tapestries. Some of these things she associated with hawking, but also with collecting, as indications of taste and, in the case of the tapestries, she mentioned that sometimes items such as these were selected for an inner layer of the camp fabric, so that they provided a pictorial backdrop inside the tent. Other items of interest included bagpipes, fiddles, Jews' harps, a Paisley shawl and a display of clay pipes, as well as things that were of the sort that a brother or uncle could make, things with the look of being home-made and also 'blingier' items of furniture. This resonates strongly both with the findings in Chapter 5 that many settled things provide the backdrop to *Nacken* life, but also that *Nacken* do not necessarily value the objects in museums with an obvious connection to *Nacken*, such as examples of *Nacken* craft production. What are of interest are the things that hold a visual appeal or have a familiarity, things that feel like they could be part of *Nacken* life.

Just as the MECOPP group were largely disinterested in the items I had selected for discussion at the Highland Folk Museum (see Chapter 5), so for Kathy Townsley McGuigan the grand examples of ancient *Nacken* craft production that I pointed out held little interest. She was interested in the things that related to her own life. To things that brought to mind items her mum would have picked up in second-hand shops, or that she would have requested in exchange for the *swag* she carried for hawking. Among the items she pointed out as having this meaning were those that featured Paisley pattern.⁵⁶⁹ Here again, the *crack* of everyday items have a personal meaning that the legacy stories, or ancient crafts, do not. It was many of these more everyday, personally connected items that she would refer to as 'Travellerfied'.

Again, what is clear is that there is no clear division between *Nacken chaetrie* and settled stuff. But this can be difficult to process from a museum point-of-view. For museums, aware that they cannot collect everything, need to have criteria to base collecting on. When I visited Auchindrain in August 2018, I had been shown a selection of artefacts that Kathy Townsley McGuigan had personally offered for addition to the Gypsy/Traveller

⁵⁶⁹ Jo Clement has written a poem that refers to the significance of Paisley pattern in Gypsy culture. See D. Le Bas and J. Clement, *Outlandish* (Newcastle: New Writing North, 2019), 20.

Collection. While most had been accepted, some items of clothing had not been considered significant enough to add to the collection. That is, in an attempt to determine whether these belonged in the Gypsy/Traveller collection, Kathy Townsley McGuigan had been asked if she had worn these while hawking or doing some other (stereo-)typical *Nacken* activity. Instead, these were items that Kathy Townsley McGuigan just happened to like—that had caught her eye and which she might wear at events when representing her culture. But because they had not been used in a way that would allow the museum to document a connection, it was decided that these items would not be accessioned. On the surface these are, after all, items of recent mass-produced manufacture—fast-fashion. Kathy Townsley McGuigan is not just a *Nacken* when she is hawking or staying in a camp, however, she is, of course, also a *Nacken* when she shops and chooses what to wear. In offering these clothes to the museum, she was identifying the part these objects play in representing the aesthetics of her culture. Although these pieces of clothing had not originated within *Nacken* culture, they had been drawn into it through being chosen for their look.

At the time when the museum's decision not to accession these items was described to me, it felt not quite right. However, I was unable to express why it felt wrong. The way in which my own settled mindset came in the way of immediately identifying why the items of clothing offered by Kathy Townsley McGuigan should be considered as *Nacken chaetrie* is linked to my own biases towards published sources. Although Kathy Townsley McGuigan had clearly demonstrated to me on our visit to NMS the concept of 'Travellerfied' objects, it was a published source that gave me the confidence to appeal to the museum to accession these items. As I have come to understand it, 'Travellerfied' refers to what Damian Le Bas has described as the Gypsy Aesthetic and in a Scottish context could be described as items with a '*Nacken Aesthetic*'.⁵⁷⁰ It is also described in Welsh Romani, Ryalla Duffy's book *Pinnies and Pegs*. She used it specifically in connection with clothing, telling us,

Nearly every Saturday, women who had not managed to clothe their families by means of *monging* [begging] at the door, would board a Midland Red bus and congregate outside some village hall [...] Once the doors were opened a beeline would be made for "Travellerfied" apparel. Particular favourites included paisley and plaids, polka dots and stripes – the more garish and mismatched the better.⁵⁷¹

It was seeing Kathy Townsley McGuigan's terminology reflected in this quotation from Duffy that helped me to articulate why the Paisley patterned tops and long, layered skirt that she had offered to the museum are as authentically *Nacken chaetrie* as any other

⁵⁷⁰ Le Bas, *The Stopping Places*, 61–2.

⁵⁷¹ R. Duffy, *Pinnies and Pegs: A Gypsy Childhood* (Blackwell: Robert Dawson, 2009), 18. A reference to being Travellerfied through the use of clothing can also be found in Lloyd and Ross, *Moving Minds*, 74.

item in Auchindrain's Gypsy/Traveller collection. Reading Duffy's account, in particular, helped me to find a way to ask the museum to reconsider their decision about these items.⁵⁷²

But I should have been able to make the connection between what Kathy Townsley McGuigan had shown me and the clothing that she had offered to the museum. The main lesson I have taken from this experience is the importance of listening deeply to those with perspectives that are different to mine. Without doing so in museum contexts too, those who have different perspectives will remain underrepresented.

6.3 (Re)present(ative) collections

This is the second main section of this chapter and analyses Auchindrain's Gypsy/Traveller collection alongside four other *Nacken* collections. As well as collections, it also looks at bowcamps and bough tents in museum contexts, to explore how *Nacken* value *Nacken chaetrie*. It opens with an outline of what has been said about the relationship between *Nacken* and *chaetrie* by *Nacken* themselves in published work and in interviews carried out as part of this research and in the work of others. Following that, it introduces the collections that have been identified for analysis. The analysis of the collections and the bough tents and bowcamps then follow.

It has often been stated that *Nacken* have a different relationship to things than the majority population (see Chapter 2). Sheila Stewart's writing and the prominence that is given to intangible cultural heritage over material culture in her writing has already been highlighted in the section on Absence as a *Nacken* story, at the opening of this chapter. Although the work of Betsy Whyte includes a rich insight of the material backdrop to her family's life, it also evocatively reflects *Nacken* attitudes to material culture, presented as at a variance with those of non-*Nacken*. In the work of Whyte, *Nacken* are presented as non-materialistic, sharing is seen to be valued over hoarding and jealousy marked out as a curse.⁵⁷³ While it is made clear that certain items are valued, such as gold earrings and other jewellery, bagpipes and carts, these valued items were often given away as a mark of friendship and love. Whyte tells us that '[t]o give away something that you really liked yourself was considered to be the only way to give'.⁵⁷⁴ Jess Smith also writes of 'exchanging trinkety keepsakes [...] sealing our friendships'.⁵⁷⁵ These were also the sorts of objects that might be kept as a token of remembrance after the owner has died, the rest

⁵⁷² On March 18, 2021, in a telephone conversation with and follow up email sent to Rachael Taylor, Assistant Curator at Auchindrain, I made the recommendation that the items of clothing offered by Kathy Townsley McGuigan be accessioned into the collection. The quotation from Duffy was included in this communication.

⁵⁷³ Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom*, 13, 31, 32, 131, 132, 152; Whyte *Red Rowans and Wild Honey*, 56, 129.

⁵⁷⁴ Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom*, 13, 152. Direct quotation is on page 51.

⁵⁷⁵ Smith, *Jessie's Journey*, 40.

of the deceased possessions being burned.⁵⁷⁶ A non-materialistic life-philosophy of Sandy Stewart and Duncan Williamson was also noted by Roger Leitch and David Campbell respectively, as well as by Williamson in his own words.⁵⁷⁷

David Donaldson similarly outlined that while certain types of things are valued and collected by *Nacken*, they are not a materialistic group:

Travellers tend to keep two things: Crown Derby and Waterford Crystal. Crown Derby is more associated with a Romani Gypsy, whereas Waterford Crystal was maybe more an Irish Traveller thing, but [...] Scottish Travellers [...] are definitely collecting it [...] Travellers are perceived as quite materialistic, but we're not – just perceived that way because we like to collect really expensive dishes [...] We have quite flashy trailers, but we're actually not a very materialistic people at all [...] you'd probably struggle to find a [...] Traveller who wouldn't give you their last [penny]. We don't really place huge importance on items like that, but it's a way of banking [...] whereas a country person might have maybe thousands of pounds in the bank, if they're wealthy, a Traveller if they have the same wealth would rather go and buy a brand-new trailer to live in [...] or] nice dishes to look at.⁵⁷⁸

As has already been mentioned, Damian Le Bas, an English Romani Gypsy, in a recent work about Gypsy Britain, outlined some of the material things that Gypsies and Travellers value, describing these as forming a Gypsy Aesthetic.⁵⁷⁹ Some of the types of material he mentions appear among the *Nacken* collections featured in this section, including the 'stainless-steel water jacks [...] "flash" china [...] lace'.⁵⁸⁰

It was Daniel Baker's more comprehensive *Gypsy Visuality*, however, that I selected for the analysis of these collections. Baker, a Romani Gypsy artist and academic developed his *Gypsy Visuality* framework to analyse Gypsy artworks in his thesis at the Royal College of Art.⁵⁸¹ The collections and tents were initially analysed using a matrix adapted from Daniel Baker's Gypsy Visuality framework (see Appendix IV, table 1 and discussion in Chapter 3).

When I first used Daniel Baker's framework of Gypsy Visuality to analyse *Nacken* values related to their collections, the clearest result, across each of these collections, was that community and family is given most often as the reason why an object was selected as significant. As explained in Chapter 3, I was concerned that this result might not be any different from how significance is ascribed in the majority population. As a result, thematic analysis was applied across these collections to identify what *Nacken* collectors or owners felt to be important about these objects. The results of the thematic analysis closely mapped to Baker's framework and so I returned to his framework and used slightly

⁵⁷⁶ Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom*, 132, 176.

⁵⁷⁷ Leitch, *The Book of Sandy Stewart*, xvii; Campbell and Williamson, *A Traveller in Two Worlds* 1, 9, 55.

⁵⁷⁸ David Donaldson, *interview*, October 17, 2018.

⁵⁷⁹ Le Bas, *The Stopping Places*, 61 – 2.

⁵⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 62.

⁵⁸¹ Baker, "Gypsy Visuality", 92–3.

expanded versions of his terminology (table 1, page 80) in the final analysis below. Further reading and reflection, however, indicates that the high instance of connections to community/family in the placement of value has a cultural specificity for *Nacken*. Although settled individuals also value these connections, they do not seem to have as high a priority in object collecting.⁵⁸² Additionally, *Nacken* have a broader understanding of family connections. As Euan MacColl and Peggy Seeger noted, ‘most Travellers that we have met [...] have an extraordinary knowledge of family relationships, many of which are [...] complicated [...] Their knowledge of family history is less impressive and rarely encompasses more than two generations’.⁵⁸³ Stanley Robertson, likewise, tells us that ‘love was shown to all relatives, and the travelling people were a very close community’.⁵⁸⁴ In general, family is more central in *Nacken* lives than in the majority population in Scotland, which seems to be for two reasons. It is, in part, because *Nacken* conception of family is distinct from that found among most of the settled population—as described above—cousins and wider relations often being considered as immediate family. Secondly, *Nacken* are often socially isolated and, as Nan Joyce claimed, ‘As a traveller you don’t have friends; you might have them for a little while but then you leave them all behind’.⁵⁸⁵ Reliance on family is often, therefore, greater.⁵⁸⁶ As such, the version of Baker’s framework, adapted through thematic analysis, has been used to analyse the ways in which *Nacken* value the *Nacken chaetrie* that they collect.

The collections examined here exist in a variety of contexts. Two are in museum collections Auchindrain’s Gypsy/Traveller collection and the John Yates Collection, which is held in the University of Aberdeen Museum Collection (the latter is not included in the full analysis as explained later). The bowcamp and bough tent examined here are also in museum contexts. Two other collections are physical assemblages held by *Nacken* individuals or families. One has been gathered by storyteller and author, Jess Smith, the other is a small collection of family heirlooms documented in the artwork, ‘The MacDonald

⁵⁸² Susan Pearce has made extensive studies of the sorts of collections made by individuals and institutions in modern Europe and the ‘European-influenced world’. In *Museums, Objects and Collections*, she lists three main modes of collecting that she has identified. These are “souvenirs”, ... “fetish objects” and ... “systematics”. Of these, only the first grouping would include objects assembled for their association with family, although this in itself is a much broader grouping, as conceived by Pearce. S. Pearce, *Museums, Objects and Collections* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 1, 69.

⁵⁸³ E. MacColl and P. Seeger, *Till Doomsday in the Afternoon: The Folklore of a Family of Scots Travellers, the Stewarts of Blairgowrie* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), 1.

⁵⁸⁴ S. Robertson, ‘Scottish Travelling People’, in J. Beech, O. Hand, M. Mulhern and J. Weston, eds, *Scottish Life and Society: The Individual and Community Life*, vol. 9 (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2005), 321.

⁵⁸⁵ N. Joyce, *Traveller* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1985), 23.

⁵⁸⁶ Many *Nacken* memoirs reflect this very clearly, for example E. Stewart, *Up Yon Wide and Lonely Road ...* (Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2012), S. Stewart, *A Traveller’s Life* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2011) and B. Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom* (Edinburgh: Chambers, 1979). In these works, the main characters throughout are family members, with only small appearances of those outwith the extended (as they might be considered in settled terms) family group.

Collection'. In this artwork artist, Shannon MacDonald, has combined photographs of these objects with family memories. The fifth collection is made up of the objects selected for MECOPP's 'Moving Minds' exhibition. These objects do not exist physically as a collection anywhere but are gathered and presented in the exhibition, the accompanying publication and postcards.⁵⁸⁷ A photograph of each object is featured on a board accompanied by text in which the person who has selected the item explains why it is important to them. The exhibition has expanded since it was first developed in 2014 and the collection analysed here includes both items in the publication as well as those added later, which appear on supplementary postcards.

In four out of the five object collections, information has been provided by the *Nacken* owners or donors of objects, which have allowed an analysis of not only the object but the significance of it to its owner or donor. Following the analysis of the *Nacken* collections, which are presented according to Baker's analysis, there is a study of the bowcamp and bough tent in museum settings. Information about the bough tent (at the Highland Folk Museum) has been gathered via Shona Main and Essie Stewart's film, which documented the building of Essie Stewart's tent at the Highland Folk Museum from November 2017 to May 2018. The bowcamp (at Auchindrain) has been studied through the observation of Kathy Townsley McGuigan and family members building and using the camp at Auchindrain in August 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Among the object-based collections, less information has been found related to the John Yates Collection and so this is examined separately here. John Yates was a *Nacken* antique dealer. His father was a basketmaker and the family maintained their skills in pearl-fishing alongside the antique business, Yates and Son, which operated from Spittal Street in Stirling. I. F. Grant bought items from Yates in 1938.⁵⁸⁸ Two of these items were likely *Nacken*-made, the Menzie powder horn (HFM:FF 50) and the wax flower bouquet (HFM:O 22, missing), a third—recorded variously as a hunting knife or oyster knife (HFM:EE 42)—was may in fact have been used to open mussel shells while pearl-fishing. Grant seems to have been unaware that the Yates family were *Nacken*.⁵⁸⁹ Grant's successor, Davidson, however, was a personal friend of the Yates family and knew of their *Nacken* heritage.⁵⁹⁰ As well as buying antiques from the family, Davidson was also

⁵⁸⁷ Lloyd and Ross, *Moving Minds*.

⁵⁸⁸ I. F. Grant Account Book, Highland Folk Museum Archive, Am Fasgadh Store, Newtonmore.

⁵⁸⁹ Grant did not note that Yates was a *Nacken* in her accounts book, in contrast to the entry made for another *Nacken* dealer, Riley, who is listed as 'Riley T____s, Moulin'. Where other items have been sourced from unnamed *Nacken* they are listed as 'T____'. It may be that what Rebecca Solnit noted in relation to Irish Travellers is also true of *Nacken*, that 'a few Travelling families have become wealthy antique dealers (and because of their wealth, are seldom counted as Travellers)': R. Solnit, *A Book of Migrations*, 222.

⁵⁹⁰ Descendants of the Yates family have family photographs featuring George 'Taffy' Davidson and the 'Taffy' Davidson Donor Files at the Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen Museum Collection, include

given some mussel shells by them, which he wanted in order to represent pearl-fishing as a traditional *Nacken* occupation (HFM:1955.8). The John Yates Collection pre-dates Davidson's time at the Highland Folk Museum and is in the collections of the University of Aberdeen where Davidson was Honorary Curator of Silver, Paintings etc. when it was given to the museum in 1951. Available information implies that it was John Yates' personal collection, perhaps of items selected from those that came through his hands as an antique dealer, or from personal contacts among other *Nacken*.⁵⁹¹

The reasons that I would argue that this was his own collection is that it came to the University via Davidson, a personal friend, the year after Yates' death, as a distinct group of objects against which no payment is indicated in the entry book at the University of Aberdeen. It is also John Yates whose name is listed against these objects and not Alfred Yates, his son, who inherited the business from his father. It is also listed as John Yates' Collection in the museum accession book. Information is included about most of the objects, including provenance and date of making, suggesting that this was either provided with the objects, or Davidson had been introduced to the objects by Yates while he was alive. Two of the thirty-one objects are specifically listed as 'T____-made', a pan made from silver coins (ABDUA:14934, missing) and a brass pipe case (ABDUA:15873), both discussed in Chapter 5. Almost all the others, however, are made of materials that *Nacken* are known to have worked in or had a connection to, including horn, linen, pewter and silver; or are of an object type that *Nacken* have produced, including a targe, snuff mulls, knives and staved wooden vessels. Others may have been objects that were found by *Nacken*, such as the bronze bowl (ABDUA:18077), possibly found in a similar way to the spearhead that the Yates found and donated to the Stirling Smith Museum, or may be examples of *Nacken* reuse in the case of the ewer said to have been used as a safe (ABDUA:18078). It is possible that these were valued for the skills and occupations that they represent, or for their reuse by *Nacken*. This collection, although it cannot be fully analysed without access to more information, offers an opportunity for further research.

The other collections, however, are all accompanied by information enabling an understanding of the perceived significance of the objects and analysis has been carried out on these. In the case of the camps, information was available about their significance

a personal letter to Davidson from Fairley Yates, grandson of John Yates, as well as a letter in which Davidson described the funeral of Alfred Yates, which he attended in July 1971.

⁵⁹¹ Information from descendants of Yates suggest that Gypsies and Travellers from across the country visited Yates in Stirling and were always made welcome. In Davidson's letter following Alfred Yates' funeral, he recounted that it was attended by 'hundreds of people of the road from Newcastle to Wick were there', Letter to Prof Lockhart, August 12, 1971, George 'Taffy' Davidson Donor Files, Marischal Museum, University of Aberdeen.

through a film and through observations and fieldnotes.⁵⁹² Thematic analysis was used to determine the significance of the objects to the individuals who have collected them. The main themes emerging from this analysis are objects connected to people (through being linked to family/community by being gifted, shared, passed down, or connected by making), active and present objects (which have supported someone to make a living, are objects by which someone is remembered, that relate to temporal or spatial movement, or whose meaning is in their use), or which relate to *Nacken* culture and history (whether these look back to the old ways, relate to language, or more actively engage with culture by signifying a change or pushing against norms, or by presenting more difficult histories). The various themes that have emerged in this analysis are covered in turn below.

6.3.1 Links to family and community

One of the most important things about objects is their connection with people—usually family members. Objects passed down by close relatives can often be of importance to *Nacken* because of the way in which the belongings of the dead are treated in *Nacken* culture. Although *Nacken* often destroy the belongings of relatives after death, those close to the deceased sometimes keep a small memento or are given something shortly before the person dies.⁵⁹³ Where items are passed down, they remain active. They might be kept as a reminder of the person they came from, remain in use, or be repurposed and become active in new ways in the present. One donor to Auchindrain's Gypsy/Traveller collection who has no children, has expressed the importance of this item being passed on—and living on—in the museum.⁵⁹⁴ Gifts and shared items are also active in connecting people, as Corrina described it, gifts are the 'cement' between them.⁵⁹⁵ 'They're things from people to remember them by'.⁵⁹⁶

6.3.2 Culture and history – connection and dissonance

Among the items found across the four collections are those that are connected to *Nacken* culture and history, including items related to traditional crafts and occupations. These included horn spoons, clothes pegs, baskets, lace, tin mugs, wooden flowers, pot scrubbers and items related to pearl-fishing and tinsmithing Others relate to day-to-day

⁵⁹² *The Tent that Essie Built: The Tent Shall Stand When the Palace Shall Fall*, directed by Shona Main (Newtonmore: Highland Folk Museum, 2019), <https://grthm.scot/essie-stewart/>.

The analysis of Stewart's bough tent is based on a transcription of the film and on my observations and fieldnotes related to the cutting of the boughs on November 03, 2017, the bending of the boughs on November 06, 2017 and the building of the bough tent on May 19, 2018. The analysis of Kathy Townsley McGuigan's bowcamp at Auchindrain is based on my own field notes from visiting the bowcamp on August 05, 2017 and May 20, 2019 and of observing and participating in building the camp on August 06, 2018.

⁵⁹³ David Donaldson, *interview*, October 18, 2018. See also, Le Bas, *The Stopping Places*, 16; Stewart, "Remembering without commemoration": 566; Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom*, 132, 176.

⁵⁹⁴ Townsley McGuigan, Thomas and Ramsay, "From intangible to tangible and back again," 13.

⁵⁹⁵ Lloyd and Ross, *Moving Minds*, 55.

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

camp life, such as blankets, *chitties* and pans. The pan is significant for having fed and continuing to feed the family.⁵⁹⁷ As mentioned in the previous chapter, David Donaldson spoke about the pan as an item 'that represent(s) continuity [...] a pan's really important, because [...] your whole family's fed out of it [...] we still use them. And we've always used them'.⁵⁹⁸ This sense of cultural continuity can also be found in Neenie's pinny. Like many Gypsy women, Neenie wore a Gypsy pinny (figure 35). This connected her with other *Nacken* women and was used to store valuables such as money, tobacco and jewellery.⁵⁹⁹

Among the items that relate to the culture and history of *Nacken* are some dissonant objects, too, testifying to trauma experienced by *Nacken* or wider Gypsy and Roma populations. For example the Pedlar's Certificate, chosen because it 'shows how certain groups are targeted for removal', the ink well that Jess Smith has from the separate school for *Nacken* in Pitlochry, as well as her art print *O Chavo Soveno*, by Ferdinand Koci, which relates to the Roma Sinti Holocaust.⁶⁰⁰ Some items also push against elements of the culture, such as the bank card, which brought independence to the woman who selected it, against the norm of economic dependence of Gypsy women.⁶⁰¹

These collections as a whole also disrupt some of the gender bias found in older collections of material linked to *Nacken*. Much of the items collected within folk museums related to the tools and craftwork often undertaken (or seen to have been undertaken) by men, such as tinsmithing and hornworking. While there should be some rethinking of assumptions related to the division of labour in older *Nacken* occupations and crafts,⁶⁰² one of the strengths of the *Nacken* collections examined here is that they are not only

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid, 26–7.

⁵⁹⁸ David Donaldson, *interview*, October 17, 2018.

⁵⁹⁹ The way in which *Nacken* women are connected by the wearing of the pocket or pinny is made clear in Betty Irvine's account of her Granny being identified as *Nacken* because she wore one, see Lloyd and Ross, *Moving Minds*, 88–91. Accounts of Gypsy pinnies or pockets can also be found in *Nacken* memoirs: Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom*, 41; Williamson, *The Horsieman*, 7–8; Campbell and Williamson, *A Traveller in Two Worlds* 1, 30–1; Neat, *The Summer Walkers*, 189 – 90. A pinnie is also featured in Lloyd and Ross, *Moving Minds*, 88–91. Duncan Williamson's accounts of his Granny's pocket also includes a list of what she kept inside. Following this, Rachael Thomas and Kathy Townsley McGuigan recorded what Neenie had kept in hers. These could be seen as small collections in themselves.

⁶⁰⁰ Pedlar's Certificate, see Lloyd and Ross, *Moving Minds*, 18–9; for information about the Aldour T____s' School, see Smith, *Way of the Wanderers*, 245–55; Jess Smith discussed the meaning of Ferdinand Koci's work in Jess Smith, *interview*, October 18, 2017.

⁶⁰¹ Lloyd and Ross, *Moving Minds*, 120–1.

⁶⁰² Due to the family-based nature of traditional *Nacken* occupations, women often played an equal (if sometimes different) role to men. For example, women polished and sold the horn spoons (McCormick, *The Tinkler-Gypsies*, 152) and worked the bellows for the furnace (Simson, *A History of the Gypsies*, 234). While Sheila Douglas described basketmaking as one of 'the skills of the older travelling man,' she also tells us that 'Willie mentioned that his mother was a great basket-maker' (Douglas, *Last of the Tinsmiths*, 66, 74).

collected from a *Nacken* perspective but in many cases also from a women's point-of-view.⁶⁰³



Figure 35. Neenie's pinnie from the Gypsy/Traveller collection at Auchindrain. © Auchindrain Township.

6.3.4 Active objects – functionality, freedom and movement

Another strong theme across these collections was active objects, whose meaning reside in their use.⁶⁰⁴ Some relate to ways of making a living. Several relate to physical movement. Some of these, we are told, are taken everywhere,⁶⁰⁵ some are models of wagons and other vehicles used by *Nacken*, while other items support freedom and mobility, such as driving licences, bank cards and the National Gypsy Council membership card.⁶⁰⁶ Some are reminders of 'a [...] freer time'.⁶⁰⁷ But some of these also demonstrate a movement forward in time—the driving licence shows that mobility for work is crucial beyond the horse-drawn wagon, the bank card and mobile phone offer freedoms in the world today.⁶⁰⁸ Some of the objects are active in other ways, such as their relevance

⁶⁰³ Ramsay, Thomas and Townsley McGuigan, "From intangible to tangible and back again," 12.

⁶⁰⁴ This finding is similar to that found in relation to the giving of camp-related material to museums. Although the *snottum* is of symbolic and practical importance, that importance lies in the use of the object, not in the object itself, making it valued but replaceable.

⁶⁰⁵ See *Moving Minds* postcards of David's Key Ring, Bella's Guardian Angel and Edith's Crosses.

⁶⁰⁶ Lloyd and Ross, *Moving Minds*, 120–1, 126–7, ACHDN.2019.0078.1 in Auchindrain's Gypsy/Traveller Collection, and the *Moving Minds* postcard of Margaret's Membership Card.

⁶⁰⁷ *Moving Minds* postcard of Fiona's pearl-fishing jug.

⁶⁰⁸ In a talk presented at *BING ANEE* (Come on in!) at Pitlochry on July 17, 2019, Richard O'Neill, an English Romany Gypsy, gave a talk entitled 'From Nomad to iPad', in which he commented that Travellers are often early adopters of new technologies, such as mobile devices. This concurs with the memories shared by John Mulholland in the film, *A Sense of Identity*. Directed by Jess Smith. (Crieff: Jess Smith, 2017) DVD. In the film Mulholland mentioned that *Nacken* were among the earliest to own cars, vans and lorries. Colin Clark also discussed the early adoption by and economic significance of motorised transportation and, later, mobile phones, to Gypsy populations, see Clark, "Not Just Lucky White Heather and Clothes Pegs," 186.

and function in the present. For example, a hat that keeps the sun off, the guardian angel pendant that provides comfort and the Gypsy pinny, which was used to keep personal items close.⁶⁰⁹ Objects already mentioned for their importance in being connected to people or to the culture are also active in connecting the owner to the past or to a person who has gone. The value of these objects is in their being present and active objects. They each have a use or function and that is where their value lies.

6.3.5 Nature and animals

Something that came up across the collections was an affinity with and working with nature. Objects that embraced this theme included the bridle (ACHDN.2019.0089) at Auchindrain and the clippers for horse hair in Jess Smith's collection, used when working with horses; the cotton grass and brock wool among Jess Smith's collection—things she gathered as a child; the rabbit snare (although Jess Smith expressed a dislike for killing animals, in talking about she also recalled minimising the suffering of the rabbits caught in it). In both the 'MacDonald Collection' and the MECOPP 'Moving Minds' exhibition, pearls are featured and a message about respecting the water. An affinity with and respect of nature are themes that also frequently occur in *Nacken* literature. Duncan Williamson wrote about the lessons he learned from his parents, a transmission of *Nacken* ways of knowing and knowledge systems, at odds with conventional schooling:

If I had been in school all my life from the age of six till fourteen, I should never have known about the Curse of the Standing Stones [the need to respect the standing stones, believed to have been erected by ancestors], the love of walking, and the stories. And this travelling education was the most important thing: you knew the names of all the wild flowers, the name of every insect. You [...] were warned not to touch this, not to touch that and leave things alone. Not to take too much fish from the river, don't eat and take too much shellfish, leave some for another day. It was schooling in a way.⁶¹⁰

Similarly, Jess Smith recounts words her mother said to her, 'When travelling folks camp in the countryside they just leave it as they found it, nothing taken, or abused. You see, this would offend Mother Nature'.⁶¹¹

6.3.5 Kathy's bowcamp and Essie's bough tent

Those who built bowcamps and bough tents in museum settings have also expressed similar values to those identified in relation to *Nacken* collections. The following is based on observations of the building of these structures at Auchindrain and the Highland Folk Museum, conversations that took place during the processes and through Essie Stewart

⁶⁰⁹ See *Moving Minds* postcards of Stuart's Hat, Bella's Guardian Angel and Neenie's Gypsy pinny in Auchindrain's Gypsy/Traveller Collection (ACHDN.2019.0248).

⁶¹⁰ Williamson, *The Horsieman*, 16.

⁶¹¹ Smith, *Jessie's Journey*, 51.

and Shona Main's film of the latter.⁶¹² The things that Kathy Townsley McGuigan and Essie Stewart talked about during the process of building these camps were family and community, *Nacken* culture and history, *Nacken* traditional skills, nature and home.

Kathy Townsley McGuigan talked about constructing the bowcamps in memory of her brother, who built the first camp at Auchindrain in 2015, and later for Ninnie too, her sister who was involved in the first camp at the museum. Kathy Townsley McGuigan pointed out that the rags that she had selected to tie the hazel rods together in 2017 were from material with black or black patterns on them, as a personal gesture in memory of her brother.⁶¹³ Similarly, Essie Stewart spoke of her cousins, mother and grandfather during the cutting of the boughs and also the building of the tent.⁶¹⁴ Stewart also brought her grandfather's tinsmith's anvil to the museum on the day when her bough tent was built. This was partly for practical reasons, as it was used to make the holes in the ground for the hazel sticks but she also spoke of it being 'very precious to me'.⁶¹⁵

At Auchindrain the camp has been used as a setting for the demonstration of traditional skills, such as paper flower-making. The camp is also clearly considered home. As Essie Stewart said, 'This was my home for six months of the year'.⁶¹⁶ Kathy Townsley McGuigan also shared memories of her own early married life in a bowcamp and the ways in which it was furnished with bedstead and with carpets on the floor. Sharing these memories in the bowcamp at the museum, she has evoked the home in which she brought up her children.

The tents themselves represent freedom, movement and functionality. The tents also connect *Nacken* with nature. The process of collecting the hazel rods take place in wooded areas and is an interaction with nature. During this process Essie Stewart expressed the respect that *Nacken* have for nature, in never taking too much. 'What we were doing was coppicing'.⁶¹⁷ Kathy Townsley McGuigan also recalled the soothing sound of rain on the canvas, an experience demonstrating how connected to natural forces camp life is.

Essie Stewart expressed great pressure to get the building of the tent right. As she said, uppermost in her mind was to 'get it built', that it should reflect these tents properly, this tradition, her family.⁶¹⁸ The pressure was made all the greater as she took us through the

⁶¹² *The Tent that Essie Built: The Tent Shall Stand when the Palace Shall Fall*. Shona Main dir. (Newtonmore: Highland Folk Museum, 2019).

⁶¹³ Kathy Townsley McGuigan, *pers. comm.*, August 05, 2017.

⁶¹⁴ *The Tent that Essie Built: The Tent Shall Stand when the Palace Shall Fall*. Shona Main dir. (Newtonmore: Highland Folk Museum, 2019).

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶¹⁸ *The Tent that Essie Built: The Tent Shall Stand When the Palace Shall Fall*, directed by Shona Main (Newtonmore: Highland Folk Museum, 2019), <https://grthm.scot/essie-stewart/>.

whole process. While she was growing up, however, the collecting, shaping, walking of the rods were never her responsibility, these were the jobs of her grandfather's nephews. So, although to her, she felt the pressure of upholding the tradition and of 'imparting [...] knowledge', some of this was not her responsibility and—although she expected it of herself, as there is no one else to call upon—she cannot have been expected to know.⁶¹⁹ On reflection, I have wondered if, in part, building it in a museum context added pressure—to get it right, to create an “authentic” artefact. Essie Stewart expressed both sadness and joy at the sight of the tent—it was once home but is no longer home.⁶²⁰ Like many of the other objects, the tent is valued for its connection to family and community. It is linked to home, to movement, freedom, nature and to remembrance.

Kathy Townsley McGuigan has also expressed the strong links that building the camp and the camp itself has to family. Not only has Kathy Townsley McGuigan built camps on the museum site with family in the past, but she grew up in camps with her own parents and raised a family in one until they had to go to school. The camp is greater than the sum of its parts—so, while the boughs and the canvas need to be replaced now and then—the object itself is a constant. Although it is increasingly difficult to use camps in Scotland, some members of Kathy Townsley McGuigan's family still build and live in these structures when they can. Kathy Townsley McGuigan has also, like Essie Stewart, built tents as an act of remembrance of family members.

Tents and camps, however, do not necessarily represent the culture for younger members of the community, who have grown up in caravans or houses. Although David Donaldson has expressed how positive it felt to see Essie Stewart's first bough tent at the Highland Folk Museum, he has mixed feelings. He described to me how he and his family, not intending a visit to the museum, stumbled across Essie Stewart's tent around 2008:

there was a wee camp, and it looked like someone was living there, initially, I saw a kettle was there and all the bits and pieces, then we realised it was a Travellers camp.

And my Dad went into overdrive, showing us all the bits, and telling us what kind of bowcamp, how it was built and how it was done, so it was really cool for us.

And being able to see it at a museum as well, was, it felt really good, I felt really, really proud, because up till that point I'd never seen any Traveller artefacts or Traveller anything in any museum. So seeing a bowcamp there and given this almost pride of place in how it was displayed was really good for me and made me think that the culture was valued you know. It did, it felt really good.⁶²¹

⁶¹⁹ Ibid.

⁶²⁰ Ibid.

⁶²¹ David Donaldson, interview, October 17, 2018.

David Donaldson went on, however, to raise the concern that, for him and other young people, the camp,

doesn't represent our culture today. And so the point that I raised at the museum was the fact that I love the camp, and I loved the bowcamp and thought that was really good, but that [...] our folk [have] lived on trailers for a very long time as well, we still do. And certainly for young Travellers that represents culture a lot more than the bowcamp.⁶²²

This comes back to the concerns raised by the participants in the Highland Folk Museum store who wanted to emphasise that *Nacken* move with the times. That, while their past is represented by the tent, the present is more associated with the caravan.

It is clear from the Auchindrain case study that without the background knowledge and experience that the Curator brought to the role and to the research related to the site, that the absence of *Nacken* from the collections would unlikely have been identified. As acknowledgement of this absence has been seen to have been a key first step in moving from the absence to presence of *Nacken* at Auchindrain, it is important that curators are equipped with information about *Nacken* culture and heritage. As *Nacken* live and work in communities across Scotland, background information related to these populations and awareness of the presence of *Nacken* would be valuable to curators working with most collections in Scotland. Inclusion of *Nacken* in the core work of the museum—the collecting, recording, interpretation and display of material—was what took the museum beyond recognition of absence and the acknowledgement of presence in interpretative text, to being presented as a living culture. Both are important but also involve different sorts of work and research on the part of the museum. The historic presence of *Nacken* became obvious to the museum through research it carried out about the site. This was added to the museum's interpretation, which helped to make that past presence visible. The work of presenting *Nacken* culture as a living one, however, has only been possible through being open to change in partnership with and led by *Nacken*. In this Auchindrain offers an important model for museums who would like to move from absence (or perceived absence) of any marginalised groups to active presence.

The objects discussed in this analysis have been collected by *Nacken* in museum, personal, family, or collective contexts. The bowcamp and bough tent have been built on museum sites as a way of keeping alive an object of importance to *Nacken* heritage. Analysis has shown that their importance lies in one or more of the following themes: in being connected to people, often to family or the wider *Nacken* community, in connecting to *Nacken* culture and history, and being active, functional objects in people's lives. In contrast to the *Nacken chaetrie* identified in Chapter 5 for its fluidity, these objects are

⁶²² Ibid.

constant – they defy the temporary nature of much *chaetrie*, noted in the previous chapter. Amid the flow of things, these are the things that have resisted and stayed put. Several people selected as important things that they stated that they would never part with—which in one case was referred to as a ‘keeper’—and some of the selections made were of things that could not be given away.⁶²³ In his introduction to the *Moving Minds* publication, Colin Clark groups these objects as the ‘wee trinkets [you] could [...] never imagine throwing out’.⁶²⁴ Those objects that people feel most connected to are the ones that remain valued by individuals and are therefore kept within the community.⁶²⁵ How then can museums collect items that are representative in this way? These sorts of ethical considerations demonstrate the importance of working with communities and collecting with them.

⁶²³ Lloyd and Ross, *Moving Minds*, 26–7, 38–9, and the *Moving Minds* postcards of Patsy’s Bunnet, David’s Key Ring and Betty’s Jewellery. For selections that could not be given away, see *Moving Minds* postcard of Katrina’s Grandchild.

⁶²⁴ Lloyd and Ross, *Moving Minds*, iii.

⁶²⁵ The importance of objects handed down to individuals, in a private capacity has been noted by Stefan Applegren in his review of Roma attitudes to heritage: Applegren, “Heritage, territory and nomadism,” 251.

Chapter 7: Museum processes: how *chaetrie* becomes hidden

Jamie Macpherson is key, because he was [...] hung for being a Gypsy. And that's huge. And [...] for that to be overlooked [...] when it comes to museums, I suppose their mechanisms of creating a narrative [...] and reproducing that narrative—and if there's certain communities that tend to be marginalised in society, such as Nawken people [...] they are going to be marginalised within that narrative as well.

David Donaldson, interview, October 17, 2018.

7.1 Chapter introduction

This chapter presents the last of my research findings and relates to the case study carried out of the Clan Macpherson Museum. This museum was chosen for the exploration of how *chaetrie* becomes hidden in museums. Its opening focus is on Jamie Macpherson's fiddle, a prominent piece of *Nacken chaetrie* that was displayed for nearly seventy years with no mention of its *Nacken* connections.⁶²⁶ A brief history of the Clan Museum and of Jamie Macpherson provides background to this aspect. Following this, the so-called heritage cycle is used in an analysis of the ways in which Macpherson became presented without mention that he was a *Nacken*. This has been carried out through an analysis of the collection documentation that has grown up around this object and which tracks the knowledge and values that have been associated with the fiddle.

The intervention that was carried out at the Clan Macpherson Museum as part of this research is then described in terms of how it unsettled the heritage cycle and brought new perspectives and values. Ibram X. Kendi's work on racist policies is then introduced, as this has been helpful to me in understanding the processes that lead to *Nacken chaetrie* being hidden in plain sight. These processes are in turn considered within examples from other museums. The chapter closes with a return to the heritage cycle and reflections on the potential that this has to absorb new perspectives and the interventions that can help that happen.

⁶²⁶ James Macpherson (or James McPherson as he was referred to in the transcript of his trial (Stuart, *Miscellany of the Spalding Club* 3, 175) was hanged for being a Gypsy on November 16, 1700 at Banff. In order to distinguish him from another James Macpherson (author of *The Works of Ossian*) whose story is also told in the Clan Macpherson Museum, he will be referred to here as Jamie Macpherson. In other works, Jamie Macpherson is sometimes referred to as Jamie of the Hills.



Figure 36. The Clan Macpherson Museum in Newtonmore. © Jo Clement.

The Clan Macpherson Museum, Newtonmore, in the Highlands, is a small, independent, accredited clan museum (figure 36).⁶²⁷ It is run by a charitable trust, the Clan Macpherson Museum Trust, and managed by the Clan's Museum Advisory Committee. Funding comes through visitor donations and clan membership. It employs a curator who oversees the day-to-day running of the museum, greets visitors and provides security for the collection. The museum is supported by a curatorial mentor, based at the Highland Folk Museum, while interpretation, documentation and collections management are the responsibility of the museum's trustees and advisory committee.

The museum opened in 1952, although its founding collecting had a much longer history. Until 1943 the Clan seat had been at Cluny Castle, Laggan (Highlands), and a private collection of clan treasures had been gathered there. When the Castle was sold in 1943 its contents were auctioned. Members of the Clan were given free bidding on items considered to be of importance to their history, with the intention that they would form the basis of a clan museum.⁶²⁸ These were the *Feadun Dubh* (black chanter), the Green Banner, Jamie Macpherson's fiddle, the large silver epergne given in 1882 to 'Old Cluny' and Sarah Macpherson on their golden wedding anniversary, and paintings associated with clan members. The object of interest to this thesis is Jamie Macpherson's fiddle.

⁶²⁷ Clan Macpherson Museum website: www.clanmacphersonmuseum.org.uk.

⁶²⁸ Ewen MacPherson, *interview*, October 10, 2017.

7.2 Jamie Macpherson's fiddle

There has been a great deal written about Jamie Macpherson, whose fiddle is displayed in the Clan Macpherson Museum.⁶²⁹ Some dispute that the fiddle really was Macpherson's and even if Macpherson ever played a fiddle.⁶³⁰ The fiddle is, however, documented and displayed as Jamie Macpherson's. Among the many texts that discuss his life there is only a single known document that was produced during his lifetime. This is the transcript of the trial in which he was tried and sentenced to hang for being an

⁶²⁹ The following have been read as part of this research. This list not only indicates the large volume written about Macpherson, but is also included to highlight any limitations in my reading: D. Herd, *The Ancient and Modern Scots Songs* (Edinburgh: Martin and Wotherspoon, 1769), 264–5; J. Johnson, *The Scots Musical Museum* vol. II (Edinburgh: Johnson, 1788), 117; R.H. Cromek, *Reliques of Robert Burns, consisting chiefly of original letters, poems and critical observations on Scottish Songs* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1808), 235–6; W. Scott, "Cromek, Reliques of Robert Burns, consisting chiefly of original letters, poems and critical observations on Scottish Songs," *Quarterly review* 1, no. 1 (1809), 16–31; Anon., "Macpherson's Lament," *The Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*, no. 126 (1821), 651; B.G., "Anecdotes of J. Macpherson, the ancient freebooter and musician," *The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal* 1 (1821), 142–3; J. Logan, *The Scottish Gael*, vol. 1 (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1831), 318–9; J. Hogg and W. Motherwell, eds., *The Works of Robert Burns*, vol. 2 (Glasgow: Archibald Fullarton and Co., 1834), 178–90; A. Whitelaw, *The Book of Scottish Song* (Edinburgh: Blackie, 1843), 346–7; Grant, "Parish of Banff", 22–6; Stuart, *The Miscellany of the Spalding Club* 3, xiv–xv and 175–91; W. Stenhouse, *Illustrations of the Lyric Poetry and Music of Scotland* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1853), 114; J. Maidment, ed., *Scottish [sic] Ballads and Songs* (Edinburgh: T.G. Stevenson, 1859), 29–34; R. Chambers, *Domestic Annals of Scotland* (Edinburgh: W. and R. Chambers, 1861), 233–7; J. Imlach, *History of Banff* (Banff: Robert Leask, 1868), 25–9; W. Baird, *Genealogical Memoirs of the Duffs* (Aberdeen: D. Wyllie and Son, 1869), 52–4; M. Carlyle Aitken, *Scottish Song* (London: Macmillan, 1874), 272–5; Anon., *Catalogue of Relics, Curiosities, etc. at Cluny Castle, Inverness-shire* (Edinburgh: Cluny Macpherson, 1877), 4; J.F.S. Gordon, *The Book of the Chronicles of Keith* (Glasgow: Robert Forrester, 1880), 37–43; R. Carruthers, *The Highland Notebook* (Inverness: The Courier Office, 1887), 152–3; W. Cramond, *The Annals of Banff*, vol. 1 (Aberdeen: New Spalding Club, 1891), 99–113; R. Ford, *Vagabond Songs and Ballads* (Paisley: Alexander Gardner, 1901), 223–6; J. Thomson, *Recollections of a Speyside Parish* (Elgin: Moray and Nairn Newspaper Co., 1902), 124–5; McCormick, *The Tinkler Gypsies*, 365; J. Ord, ed., *The Bothy Songs and Ballads of Aberdeen, Banff and Moray, Angus and the Mearns* (Paisley: Alexander Gardner, 1930), 443–5; *Catalogue of the Sale of Historical Relics, Valuable Pictures, Books, Weapons, Etc. Removed from Cluny Castle, Newtonmore* (Glasgow: Wylie and Lochhead, 1943), 13; "List of Clan relics and other articles in the Clan interest at May, 1949," *Creag Dhubh* 2 (1950), 34–5; C. I. Maclean, *The Highlands*. Reprint. (London: Batsford, 1959; Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 2006), 144. Citations refer to the Mainstream Publishing edition; J. Macdonald, "The Clan Museum—Relics and Memorials," *Creag Dhubh* 15 (1963), 12–5; H. Henderson, 'Macpherson and his rant', *Spin: The Folksong Magazine* 3, no. 7 (1964), 11–4; F. Collinson, *The Traditional and National Music of Scotland* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), 210–2; J. Macdonald, *The Clan Macpherson: Past and Present* (Newtonmore: The Clan Macpherson Museum, 1974), 6–9; P. Kennedy, *Folksongs of Britain and Ireland* (London: Cassell, 1975), 776, 796; E. MacColl and P. Seeger, *Travellers' Songs from England and Scotland* (London: Routledge, 1977), 276–8; M.A. Alburger, *Scottish Fiddlers and their Music* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1983), 71–3; I.F. Grant and H. Cheape, *Periods in Highland History* (London: Shephard-Walwyn, 1987), 159, 256; H. Henderson, *Alias MacAlias* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1992), 47–8, 224, 230; S. McHardy, *MacPherson's Rant and other tales of the Scottish fiddle* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2004), 17–24; S. Stewart, *A Traveller's Life* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2011), 78; E. Stewart, *Up Yon Wide and Lonely Glen: Travellers' Songs, Stories and Tunes of the Fetterangus Stewarts* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012), 160–1; J. Barton, *Exploring Badenoch: Clan Macpherson Country* (Newtonmore: Clan Macpherson Museum Trust, 2016), 47–8.

⁶³⁰ That the fiddle really was Macpherson's and even whether Macpherson ever played the fiddle is disputed, see Cramond, *Annals of Banff* 1, 111; Stenhouse, *Illustrations of the Lyric Poetry and Music of Scotland*, 114; Stuart, *Miscellany of the Spalding Club* 3, xv; Alburger, *Scottish Fiddlers and their Music*, 71–3.

Egyptian, or Gypsy; he was executed on this charge, alongside James Gordon, on November 16, 1700 at Banff.⁶³¹ As such, although the fiddle was not documented or interpreted as such, I have included this as an example of *chaetrie* in a Scottish museum.

At the trial, additional accusations were made, mostly of theft, but as the jurisdiction of the court did not extend to theft, Macpherson was only ever tried for being a *Nacken*.⁶³² None-the-less, in most of the accounts of his life published since then, he is described as not only a Gypsy but also an outlaw, or freebooter. In the interpretation that accompanies Macpherson's fiddle, however, there is no mention of his being a *Nacken*, only that he was a freebooter (figure 37).

JAMES MACPHERSON THE HIGHLAND FREEBOOTER

There are many legends about one 17th clansman, James Macpherson. To some he was known as a musician, to others as a freebooter, who, if he robbed the rich, also gave to the poor.

The tales concerning his death are even stranger. He was imprisoned on various charges by a local judiciary, and condemned "to be hanged by the neck betwixt the hours of two and three." On the day of his execution, he mounted the scaffold at Banff, and played on his fiddle a tune he had composed the night before in prison. When he had finished, he offered the fiddle to the crowd, which had gathered. No one dared to accept. He then smashed his fiddle and dropped it at his feet. A kinsman later brought the pieces to Badenoch.

Meanwhile, a pardon had been granted. But, when Macpherson's enemies learned of this, they persuaded the authorities in Banff to set the hands of the town clock a quarter of an hour fast. And so it was that James Macpherson died before the reprieve arrived.

The words to the music were 'improved' on by Robert Burns and renamed *Macpherson's Farewell*.

Figure 37. Interpretation accompanying Jamie Macpherson's fiddle in the Clan Macpherson Museum from 1987 to 2020.

As the only thing that can be confidently said about Jamie Macpherson is that he was hanged for being a Gypsy, how did this key fact become omitted from the museum's version of Macpherson's life? When I asked Ewen MacPherson, at the time responsible for the interpretation of the museum, he told me that they had not thought much about it.⁶³³ I was also told that the (late) clan historian, Alan G. Macpherson, did not believe that Macpherson was a Gypsy.⁶³⁴ While a small number of texts that discuss Macpherson omit mention that he was a Gypsy, only Hogg and Motherwell deny that he was. In *The Works*

⁶³¹ Few writings acknowledge that James Gordon was hanged alongside Macpherson on November 16, 1700 and many assume that he received a reprieve. William Cramond, however, cites the following entry from the Banff Town Records: 'Payed to the executioner for tow att execution of McPherson and Gordon __£1', Cramond, *Annals of Banff* 1, 101. The trial was published in full by the Spalding Club in 1846: Stuart, *The Miscellany of the Spalding Club* 3, 175–91.

⁶³² J. Stuart (ed.), "Process against the Egyptians, at Banff. 1700," in Stuart, *Miscellany of the Spalding Club* 3, 179.

⁶³³ Ewen Macpherson, *interview*, October 10, 2017.

⁶³⁴ *Ibid.*

of *Robert Burns*, they stated that, ‘Macpherson was not one of the gang with whom he was apprehended and tried. He was merely found in their company in pursuit of a *gipsy* [*sic*] *wench* of whom he was very fond’.⁶³⁵ Hogg and Motherwell did not elaborate upon this, but it may represent a misreading or misremembering of part of the trial that states ‘all the pannalls [... are] knoune to be Egiptians, except James Gordone, who was not with them till of late; that he married Peter Browne’s sister about two years ago’.⁶³⁶ Whatever the reasoning for this claim, it does not alter the fact that Jamie Macpherson was hanged for being a Gypsy.

7.3 Macpherson’s fiddle and a values-based cycle

In this section, the heritage cycle, as visualised in figure 38, is used to analyse how the *Nacken* aspect of the fiddle’s history became invisible in the museum. The heritage cycle will allow an analysis of the values and knowledge associated with this fiddle within the clan, as well as how these have been perpetuated. It will also consider what interventions can be used to bring new perspectives into these cycles.

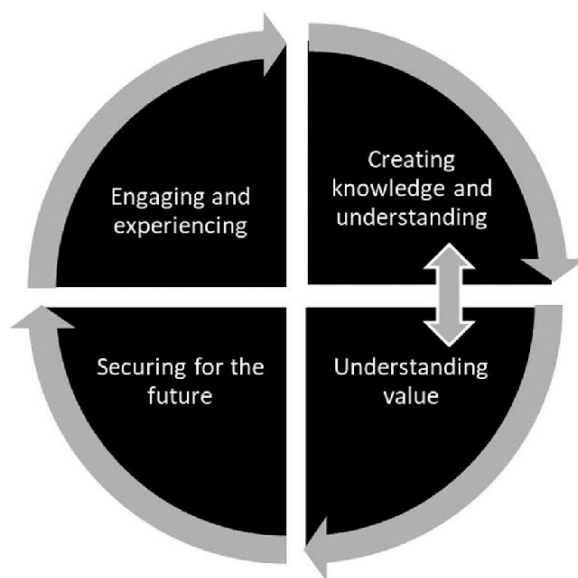


Figure 38. Summary of the heritage cycle. S. Foster and S. Jones, *My Life as a Replica* (Oxford: Wingather Press, 2020), Fig 94. Graphic by Sally Foster after Thurley 2005.

The heritage cycle, as visualised by Foster, describes how,

an understanding of value [of a thing] (iteratively fed and shaped by creating knowledge and understanding of something) is used to inform decisions about what is worth securing for the future, and how such resources can be engaged

⁶³⁵ Hogg and Motherwell, *The Works of Robert Burns* 2, 189.

⁶³⁶ Stuart, *Miscellany of the Spalding Club* 3, 182–3.

with and experienced for wider public benefit, generating a desire to know more about our heritage.⁶³⁷

This cycle is informed by a values-based approach to heritage derived from ideas put forward in the Burra Charter.⁶³⁸ The cycle is linked to practices in the assessment of cultural significance, which can be applied to museum collections and objects.⁶³⁹ It has been used here to help explain, at least in part, some of the processes that led to the invisibility of Jamie Macpherson's fiddle in the Clan Macpherson Museum and *Nacken chaetrie* in Scottish museums more widely.

The Clan Macpherson Museum understandably collects material related to the history of the clan and that can tell the stories of 'the famous men and women of the Clan'.⁶⁴⁰ What the museum values about objects that it collects is the connection that they have to the Clan Macpherson and individual (famous) members of the clan from today and throughout history. Although the museum is open to all, the stated purpose of the museum's virtual tour is 'to permit the Clan Macpherson members living in far flung places around the globe to learn more about their heritage'.⁶⁴¹ Elsewhere we are informed that the 'collections are significant to the Highlands of Scotland and to members of the Macpherson Clan in particular'.⁶⁴² Seen from the point of view of the heritage cycle, the value of objects in the museum is linked to how they support clan heritage and identity. An additional consideration is an object's link to famous clan members. The ways in which objects are valued plays a role in how they are understood and the knowledge that is gathered around them. The information gathered about the objects then becomes part of how they are experienced, understood and valued in a cyclical process.

⁶³⁷ S. M. Foster and S. Jones, "The untold heritage value and significance of replicas," *Conservation Management of Archaeological Sites*, vol. 21, no. 1 (2019), 4.

⁶³⁸ Australia ICOMOS, *The Burra Charter: The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance* (Burwood: Australia ICOMOS, 2013).

⁶³⁹ C. Reed, *Reviewing Significance 3.0: A Framework for Assessing Museum, Archive and Library Collections' Significance, Management and Use*. <https://collectionstrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/RevSig3-Introduction-1.pdf>.

⁶⁴⁰ "Welcome," Clan Macpherson Museum, accessed 18 October, 2021, www.clanmacphersonmuseum.org.uk

⁶⁴¹ "Clan Macpherson Museum," Clan Macpherson Association, www.clan-macpherson.org/museum, accessed 18 October, 2021.

⁶⁴² "The Clan Macpherson Museum, Clan Macpherson Museum," www.slanmacphersonmuseum.org.uk/museum.html, accessed 18 October, 2021.

Macpherson's heritage—has been emphasised over the other.⁶⁴⁴ Jamie Macpherson's Macpherson-ness (and fame) have both been valued and highlighted, while his *Nacken*-ness has been omitted.

The museum processes of categorisation and interpretation have supported the inscribing of this set narrative of Macpherson and his fiddle. While it is recognised that selection takes place in the formation of a collection, Swinney has noted that processes of inclusion and exclusion within the museum register or catalogue are often given less acknowledgment in the uncritical approach often taken to museum documentation.⁶⁴⁵ He goes on to note that '[j]ust as a collection is the product of processes of selection and discrimination, so too the archive of that archive is itself never "raw" data'.⁶⁴⁶ As Michel-Rolph Trouillot has put it, 'the making of archives [among them museums] involves a number of selective operations [...] which means [...] the exclusion of some [...] Power enters here both obviously and surreptitiously'.⁶⁴⁷ Various museum documents created around the fiddle—which support and absorb the knowledge and understanding of an object created in the heritage cycle—reflect the process by which Jamie Macpherson's fiddle became a clan object (as opposed to a *Nacken* one). Although these documents cannot tell us all the processes that have gone on around this object, they indicate something of how the fiddle has been understood over time and can help to map the new knowledge gathered around this object and the 'selective operations' involved in that process.

Across its time in the collections, aspects of Macpherson's fame have been included in how he has been written of both in (behind-the-scenes) documentation and in (public-facing) interpretation of the fiddle. The first surviving clan document related to the fiddle is the *Catalogue of Relics, Curiosities, &c. at Cluny Castle, Inverness-shire*, compiled during the time when the fiddle was in the care of the Clan Chief at Cluny Castle.⁶⁴⁸ The entry related to the fiddle is in figure 40.

⁶⁴⁴ Susan Pearce has discussed the ways in which notions of 'Inside : Outside' and 'Us' and 'Them' have been applied in museums to objects related to 'the Other' (those distant from contemporary Europe by space or time) or the 'Other Within' (which would include *Nacken*): S. Pearce, *On Collecting* (London: Routledge, 1995), 308–51. Pearce locates the representation of those who are *not us* within 'Western agendas which are written into the construction of material narratives [... which] support European notions of themselves': Ibid, 330. If presented as 'Other Within', this artefact would not support the 'notions of themselves' that the Clan Macpherson Museum was communicating in its displays.

⁶⁴⁵ Swinney, "What do we know about what we know?," 32.

⁶⁴⁶ Ibid, 34. Here Swinney is referencing the work of Michael Lynch.

⁶⁴⁷ M-R. Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon, 1995), 53.

⁶⁴⁸ Anon., *Catalogue of Relics, Curiosities, &c. at Cluny Castle*. Ewan Macpherson of Cluny (1804–85), sometimes known as 'Old Cluny', was clan chief at the time when the catalogue was compiled.

15. VIOLIN, the handle of which belonged to one of the clan who suffered the extreme penalty of the law for “lifting” a few cattle at Banff in 1701. Having played up to the last moment, he offered the violin to any one who would claim kindred with him; none being willing to do so, he broke it in half and threw the pieces among the crowd.

Figure 40. Macpherson fiddle entry in 1877 *Catalogue of Relics and Curiosities, etc. at Cluny Castle, Inverness-shire*. © Clan Macpherson Museum.

This entry clearly marks out Macpherson as ‘one of the clan’. The rest of the information distilled here would appear to have been gleaned from among the many nineteenth-century accounts of Macpherson’s life, which were published due to, and further promoted, his fame. Not all the texts on Macpherson that predate this 1877 catalogue entry agree on the facts of Macpherson’s life, but in only one that I have seen is he explicitly connected with cattle lifting. In most, although not all, he is described as being lawless in one way or another, the writers using terms including freebooter, highwayman, robber, peace breaker, or, in one instance, kern. Only in Robert Chambers’ *Domestic Annals of Scotland* was he described as a ‘Highland cateran [...] stealing horses and cattle’.⁶⁴⁹ The Highland cateran was seen as ‘heroic [...] attractive and charismatic figures’.⁶⁵⁰ During the early nineteenth century, Sir Walter Scott had cemented this tradition in his description of Rob Roy as a ‘celebrated freebooter’.⁶⁵¹

If Chambers’ text was known to the Clan, however, they could not have escaped the mention of his ‘gipsy [*sic*] mother’.⁶⁵² In fact, a review of seventeen works that refer to Macpherson published prior to the 1877 catalogue reveals that there are only three include the combination of facts that appear in the story of Jamie Macpherson distilled in the 1877 catalogue.⁶⁵³ These are that he was an outlaw (rather than a Gypsy) and that he

⁶⁴⁹ Chambers, *Domestic Annals of Scotland*, 234.

⁶⁵⁰ D.U. Stiùbhart, ‘Highland rogues and the roots of Highland romanticism’, in C. MacLachlan, *Crossing the Highland Line* (Glasgow: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 2009), 164.

⁶⁵¹ W. Scott, *Rob Roy*, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable, 1817), 80, 93.

⁶⁵² Chambers, *Domestic Annals of Scotland*, 234.

⁶⁵³ These works were: Herd, *The Ancient and Modern Scots Songs*, 264–5; Johnson, *The Scots Musical Museum* 2, 117; Cromek, *Reliques of Robert Burns*, 235–6; Scott, “Cromek, Reliques of Robert Burns,” 27;

left a broken fiddle. A selection process has gone on, in which the *Nacken* aspects of Jamie Macpherson's story have been omitted. As Okley tells us, 'Gypsies are both inside and outside the dominant culture' or the 'Other Within'.⁶⁵⁴ As such, in order to be brought 'inside' the clan, this part of his history has been left out.

For a cycle of research for museum purposes and value-production founded on supporting clan identity, Macpherson is presented in this first record as being a clan member, while also alluding to his legendary death. What is known of the fiddle—that it is connected to a famed clan member—is enough to ensure that it is valued, thus securing it for the future in the clan collections. The cycle repeats itself with little change when the collection of which it has been a part is about to be dispersed. At this point, the information already known about the fiddle was enough for it to continue to be valued and secured. In the catalogue of the sale of Cluny House in 1943, the description from the 1877 catalogue is repeated almost word-for-word. At the sale, the fiddle was among a select group of items considered to be treasures of the Clan Macpherson and purchased for the planned clan museum.⁶⁵⁵

While being stored in Inverness during the war and then awaiting a new home, the fiddle was recorded in a list of clan relics, which again repeated the earlier wording.⁶⁵⁶ At the point of entry into the collection of the Clan Macpherson Museum in 1951/2, the information inscribed into the ledger indicates new knowledge entering the cycle. Firstly, the writer of the entry further condensed the information regarding Macpherson's life—provided by the previous sources—into a single line: 'Fiddle—in Case: Owned by James MacPherson (Invereshie) a Free-booter', figure 41.

Anon., "Macpherson's Lament," 651; B.G., "Anecdotes of J. Macpherson, the ancient freebooter and musician," 142–3; Logan, *The Scottish Gael* 1, 318–9; Hogg and Motherwell, *The Works of Robert Burns* 2, 178–90; Whitelaw, *The Book of Scottish Song*, 346–7; Grant, "Parish of Banff," *NSA* 13, 22–6; Stuart, *The Miscellany of the Spalding Club* 3, xiv–xv and 175–91; Stenhouse, *Illustrations of the Lyric Poetry and Music of Scotland*, 114; Maidment, *Scottish [sic] Ballads and Songs*, 29–34; Chambers, *Domestic Annals of Scotland*, 233–7; Imlach, *History of Banff*, 25–9; Baird, *Genealogical Memoirs of the Duffs*, 52–4; Carlyle Aitken, *Scottish Song*, 272–5. The three that mention he was a robber and that he broke his fiddle, while also omitting mention that his mother was a Gypsy are Sir Walter Scott, James Maidment and Mary Carlyle.

⁶⁵⁴ J. Okley, "Constructing difference: Gypsies as 'Other'," *Anthropological Journal on European Cultures*, vol. 3, no. 3 (1994): 71; Pearce, *On Collecting*, 315–6.

⁶⁵⁵ Ewen Macpherson, *interview*, October 10, 2017.

⁶⁵⁶ Anon., "List of Clan relics and other articles of Clan interest at May, 1949," *Creag Dhubh*, vol. 2 (1950), 35.

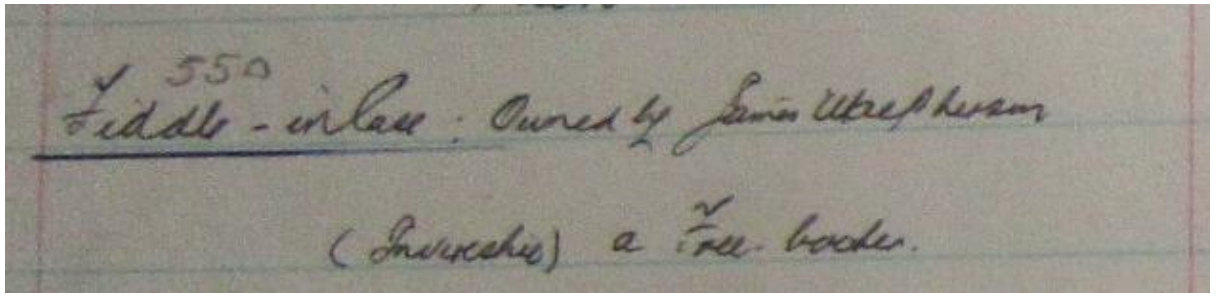


Figure 41. Fiddle as recorded in Clan Macpherson Association Entry Ledger. © Clan Macpherson Museum.

While much of the detail has been cropped, the addition in brackets suggests that Jamie Macpherson was the son of Invereshie Macpherson.⁶⁵⁷ This cements the connection that Jamie Macpherson had to the clan, by asserting paternity in a branch of the family. He is also noted as a freebooter. This term, meaning land pirate, was first used in relation to Macpherson by Sir Walter Scott in 1809, who was paraphrasing Burns' note on Macpherson, which described him as a 'daring robber'. The term was later used by Scott in his work *Rob Roy* and the two figures became linked together, as well as to the term.⁶⁵⁸

An additional note in the ledger includes information linking the fiddle to some of the legends around his death: 'Played immediately before his execution at Banff 1791. Afterwards broke violin and threw pieces amongst crowd. Official clock said to have been advanced to ensure that reprieve, if granted, would not reach Banff in time', figure 42.

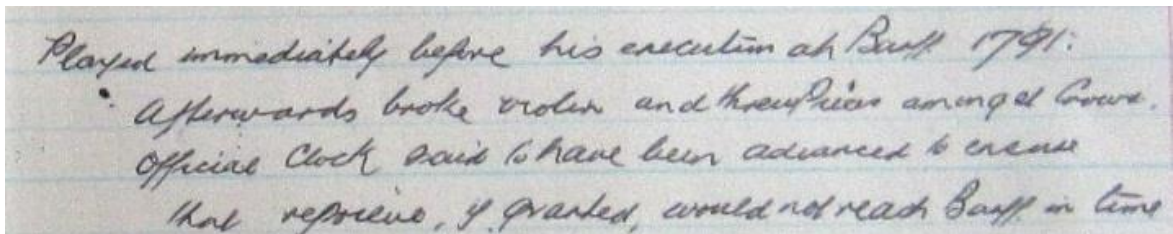


Figure 42. Note accompanying fiddle record in Clan Macpherson Association Entry Ledger. © Clan Macpherson Museum.

This additional note, which refers to legends that had grown up around the story of Macpherson's death, speaks to his fame. Taken together, the entry record and the

⁶⁵⁷ Clan Macpherson Museum Ledger, Archive of the Clan Macpherson Museum. The mention of Invereshie would appear to refer to the assertion that 'James Macpherson was [from] an illegitimate branch of the family of Invereshie in Inverness-shire. His mother was a gipsy [sic]', see Grant, 'Parish of Banff,' NSA 13, 22 and Imlach, *History of Banff*, 26. It is unclear where the information about his connection to the Invereshie Macphersons comes from, although both Imlach and the Rev. Grant sought out oral testimonies that had been passed down in the Banff area.

⁶⁵⁸ James Imlach not only referred to Jamie Macpherson as a freebooter but also as 'the Rob Roy of the North'. Imlach hoped that Scott would write an historical novel based on the life of Macpherson, Imlach, *History of Banff*, 25–28, 36.

accompanying note indicate that the fiddle continued to be valued for its connection to the clan and the fame of Macpherson. The new information that has been added (Macpherson's links to Invereshie and the legend of the town clock) support the existing value that was linked to his clan connections and legendary status. Returning to Proctor, what has been selected from a large volume of available information, is not the complete story, but 'the most treasured' information that can support clan identity.⁶⁵⁹

The next document in which the clan communicated knowledge related to the fiddle was in an article on the clan museum, published in 1963.⁶⁶⁰ This article, by the Curator of the museum, John MacDonald, included a section on James Macpherson's fiddle.⁶⁶¹

Quotations, references to specific accounts and a wealth of new information indicate wide background reading in the research for the article. For the first time, Jamie's 'gipsy [*sic*]' mother was mentioned as well as the accusation that he was tried against at Banff (that he was a vagabond and Egyptian). Folklorist, Hamish Henderson, had visited the fiddle in 1957 and was allowed to take it 'into [his] own hands and [sing] a version of Macpherson's Rant'.⁶⁶² It is possible that the Curator had been influenced by information and attitudes communicated by Henderson on his visit. As Reid has noted, '[n]o one has done more to uncover and bring social and academic respectability to [Gypsy/Travellers ...] than Henderson'.⁶⁶³ Although MacDonald's article was later republished in a pamphlet available to purchase in the museum, it did not have an impact on the way in which the fiddle was directly interpreted in the museum.⁶⁶⁴

The assertion made by the late Clan Historian, Alan G. Macpherson, that Jamie Macpherson was not a Gypsy may have been made as a result of his research into clan genealogy. In the 1960s he was researching the Invereshie Book, a handwritten ledger that had been deposited with the museum in 1962.⁶⁶⁵ Written by Aeneas Macpherson of Invereshie, this ledger contains lists of clan families and offspring, including illegitimate children, up until 1704.⁶⁶⁶ There is no mention of an illegitimate son by the name of James, born to Invereshie, or any other clan member.⁶⁶⁷ This, however, does more to prove that he was not a clan member than that he was not a Gypsy. Such a conclusion would clearly have had a negative impact on the value of the fiddle to the clan. As

⁶⁵⁹ Proctor, *The Whole Picture*, 9.

⁶⁶⁰ MacDonald, "The Clan Museum—relics and memorials," 11–25.

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 12–5.

⁶⁶² Henderson, "Macpherson and his rant," 14.

⁶⁶³ Reid, "Scottish Gypsy/Travellers and the folklorists," 34.

⁶⁶⁴ The Clan Macpherson, *The Clan Macpherson: Past and Present*, 6–9.

⁶⁶⁵ A. G. Macpherson, "An old Highland genealogy and the evolution of a Scottish Clan," *Scottish Studies*, vol. 10, 1–42.

⁶⁶⁶ As such, Jamie Macpherson, who was hanged in 1700, should have been listed.

⁶⁶⁷ A typed transcript of the Invereshie Book is available at:
www.clan.macpherson.org/museum/documents/InvereshieBook.pdf.

discussed above, one of the key aspects of its value to the clan resides in its connections to a clan member. As such, the way in which the fiddle was recorded in new (public-facing) interpretation within the museum in 1987 and in the most recent iteration of (behind-the-scenes) museum documentation recorded in 2002, is perhaps not surprising. As can be seen in figure 37, museum interpretation described Jamie Macpherson as a 'clansman', a 'musician', a 'freebooter' and also a legendary figure. All of these continue to support the value that the clan have for someone inside the clan. The digitized catalogue of the Clan Macpherson Museum similarly states that the fiddle is said to have belonged to 'James Macpherson the Highland Freebooter', figure 43.

Data		Photograph	
Description Fiddle: James Macpherson's			
Condition	Category	Quantity	Sub-qty
Poor	Culture	1	1
Origin year (approx)	Acquired by	Acquisition date (approx)	
1699	Purchase	31/12/1943	
Initial entry	Initial store	Method of receipt	
0	0		
Acquired from Cluny Castle Sale 1943			
Location	Value	Valued	
004	£	0.00	
Notes Said to have belonged to James Macpherson the Highland Freebooter. 75cm long by 290 cm wide at centre. See article in 'Past & Present' page 6-9. Article also in Creag Dhubh. Item 35 on page 35 of Creag Dhubh No. 2. Page 13 in the Ledger.			

Figure 43. Database entry for Jamie Macpherson's fiddle. © Clan Macpherson Museum.

Taken together, these various clan records associated with the fiddle cement the relevance of Jamie Macpherson to the clan and include information in support of this, to the exclusion of other aspects of Macpherson's history. This is an example of what Hannah Turner refers to as "legacy data", 'how [collection] documentation embeds certain narratives and occludes others'.⁶⁶⁸ In the case of the fiddle, the documentation (in its various forms) contains the knowledge that supports the understanding of value that the clan have for it. Although the wording has not been fixed and the information has at times been extended, the values that the information reveals have remained constant.

As noted, the impact of this 'legacy data' is not restricted to the behind-the-scenes documentation of the museum. It is reflected in the public-facing interpretation of the fiddle in the museum display, in which Macpherson was described as a freebooter. Its influence can also be observed beyond the museum, where a wider dissemination of the museum's

⁶⁶⁸ H. Turner, *Cataloguing Culture: Legacies of Colonialism in Museum Documentation* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2020), 7.

representation of Macpherson can be found. Calum Maclean, ethnologist, folklorist and co-founder of the School of Scottish Studies, recounted a visit to the Clan Macpherson Museum in his book on the Highlands.⁶⁶⁹ Immediately before the description of his visit to the museum, Maclean provides an account of Macpherson's life, which closely follows that presented in the museum. Despite Maclean's interest in the stories, songs and lives of *Nacken*, at no point does he mention that Macpherson was a *Nacken*, even when noting that recordings of the associated Macpherson's Lament were made with Davie Stewart and Jimmie Macbeath, themselves both *Nacken*.⁶⁷⁰ The authority of the museum account is such that Maclean did not see beyond it. The museum's omission apparently became his. The interpretation at the Clan Macpherson Museum may also explain I. F. Grant's description of Macpherson as a fiddler and cateran 'hanged for [...] his cattle reiving activities'.⁶⁷¹ Grant does not mention a visit to the Clan Macpherson Museum, but as it opened just three miles from her own museum, two years before she retired to Edinburgh, it would seem probable that she visited. Here, again, someone who wrote elsewhere acknowledging the place of *Nacken* in the history of the Highlands has left out a detail that, had it been known, would most likely have been included.

As has already been indicated, information connecting Macpherson to a *Nacken* mother or to his death for being a Gypsy could not have escaped those who held, valued and generated information about this fiddle. Some acknowledgement was made of this aspect of Macpherson's story in John MacDonald's article for the clan magazine, later republished in a museum pamphlet, discussed above. Another work associated with the clan also makes these connections. Hugh Cheape, who co-authored *Periods in Highland History* with Grant (mentioned above), wrote a redevelopment plan for the Clan Macpherson Museum in 1984. In it he stated that Macpherson's 'mother was described as a gypsy [*sic*] woman, possibly a woman of t_____ stock assuming that the descriptive epithet applied to her in Gaelic would be *ceard* or *bana-cheard*'.⁶⁷² Despite the acknowledgement of his *Nacken* roots in these clan publications, it has had no impact upon the documentation, nor—until 2021 with this research project—on the interpretation of the fiddle.⁶⁷³ As David Donaldson, a Scottish Traveller and one of the informants in this

⁶⁶⁹ Maclean, *The Highlands*, 144.

⁶⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 143; Stewart, *A Traveller's Life*, 78.

⁶⁷¹ I. F. Grant and H. Cheape, *Periods in Highland History* (London: Shephard-Walwyn, 1987), 159, 256.

⁶⁷² H. Cheape: *Touch not the Cat: A Development Plan for the Clan Macpherson Museum* (Edinburgh: National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, 1984), 19.

⁶⁷³ It should be noted that when I interviewed Ewen Macpherson about the fiddle, he was willing to alter the text used in its interpretation while I was there. My response was that reinterpretation should be carried out in consultation with Gypsy/Travellers. In May 2020 I was approached by Dr Jim Macpherson about being involved in the reinterpretation of the fiddle as part of a redesign of the museum and it was agreed that Gypsy/Travellers would be involved, J. Macpherson, *pers. comm.*, May 28, 2020 and J. Macpherson, *pers. comm.*, October 28, 2020.

research project, has pointed out, the omission of the fact that Jamie Macpherson was hanged for being a Gypsy or mention that he was a *Nacken* is doubly unfortunate.⁶⁷⁴ In the first instance because the story of Jamie Macpherson is ‘key, because he was ... hung for being a Gypsy’, and secondly because it further disregards *Nacken*, who already ‘tend to be marginalised in society’.⁶⁷⁵

The ways in which the Clan Macpherson have valued the fiddle have, to an extent, limited the knowledge and engagement generated around it. Valued for its connection to a famed clan member, other aspects of the fiddle’s (and Macpherson’s) background as a *Nacken* are apparently ignored since, if embraced, it would ‘[complicate ...] notions of [...] identity’, as presented in the clan museum.⁶⁷⁶ As Alima Bucciantini, who has researched museums and identity, writes, the ‘[museum] visitor [...] sees the narrative that the curators choose to present at any given time’.⁶⁷⁷ At the Clan Macpherson Museum, the narrative developed around the fiddle and of Macpherson’s life reflected their values, which included some aspects of Macpherson’s biography and excluded others.

In parallel to the account of Macpherson’s life developed in the museum, another telling of Macpherson’s life grew separately within oral traditions. Here *Nacken* and others circulated his song, which has changed over time and between groups and individuals. In this context, too, a parallel cycle has taken place, which has included knowledge generation, the understanding and development of value, engagement and the safeguarding of the story of Macpherson. While knowledge and value of the fiddle were generated and recorded in the documentation and interpretation in the museum, so a separate process went on among *Nacken* and others as reflected in the song tradition. In this process too, value, engagement and the creation of knowledge and understanding were an ongoing process. The story of Macpherson has been safeguarded through the passing on and development of it in song. In most of the iterations of the song, Macpherson is presented clearly as a *Nacken*. This, for *Nacken* tradition bearers, contributes to the value of the story (and song) of Macpherson. Elizabeth Stewart tells us that MacPherson’s Rant ‘wis a favourite o oor family as MacPherson was one o oor ain, so tae speak’.⁶⁷⁸ Sheila Stewart, too, in a chapter on the importance of *Nacken* identity to

⁶⁷⁴ Evidence that Jamie Macpherson was hanged for being a Gypsy can be found the transcript of the trial at which he was sentenced to death, Stuart, *The Miscellany of the Spalding Club* 3, 175–91.

⁶⁷⁵ David Donaldson, *interview*, October 17, 2018.

⁶⁷⁶ Matthews, “Where are the Romanies?”: 84.

⁶⁷⁷ A. Bucciantini, *Exhibiting Scotland: Objects, Identity and the National Museum* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2018), 112.

⁶⁷⁸ Stewart, *Up Yon Wide and Lonely Glen*, 160.

her and the ways in which she has communicated her culture, includes the story of Macpherson.⁶⁷⁹

One of the developments in the song, which seems to have taken place during the twentieth century, was the addition of a new verse about his fiddle:

Some come here to buy my fiddle
And others tae see me dee
Afore I ever gie my fiddle
I'll brak it oer my knee.⁶⁸⁰

This verse takes a variety of forms across versions, but key elements include a person(s) present at Macpherson's hanging who wished to buy his fiddle and his destruction of the fiddle to prevent this. All versions that include this verse that I have seen were collected in 1952 or later. This may be because the School of Scottish Studies, which was the primary driver for the collecting of this material in the second half of the twentieth century, was only established in 1951. It is possible, however, that this verse was first developed in response to the presence of his fiddle in the Clan Macpherson Museum from 1952 (or perhaps earlier in response to its being in the Clan collection held at Cluny Castle). Many of the recordings of Macpherson's Rant, including those with this additional verse, were made by Hamish Henderson, who was aware of the presence of the fiddle at the Clan Macpherson Museum.⁶⁸¹ This new verse may also reflect the *Nacken* tradition of destroying (usually by burning) the possessions of the dead.⁶⁸²

Both the museum documentation and the song have been open to including elements of the legend that have grown up around the story of Macpherson's death (such as the expected reprieve and the altered clock). The oral tradition, however, has been more permeable to new elements. As well as the reprieve and clock, song versions have apparently also responded to the fiddle's presence in the museum, as mentioned above. In terms of other perspectives, some versions reflect the words published by Burns, while in some renderings a wife and child, or his mother, are mentioned.

⁶⁷⁹ Stewart, *A Traveller's Life*, 223–4.

⁶⁸⁰ This version sung by Lucy Stewart and collected by Kenneth Goldstein in 1960, SA1960.141.

⁶⁸¹ Henderson, "Macpherson and his rant," 14. Here Henderson recounts visiting the Clan Macpherson Museum to see the fiddle and recalls that "[i]n August 1957 I took the fiddle in my own hands and sang a version of Macpherson's Rant, which has developed since 1700 into one of the finest outlaw sings in the world's folk tradition".

⁶⁸² Whyte, *The Yellow on the Broom*, 176. It should be pointed out, however, that a musical instrument (more commonly sets of pipes) would normally escape being burnt and would be among a small number of items passed on to family members.

7.4 New perspectives at the Clan Macpherson Museum

Below is an image of 2021 redisplay of Jamie Macpherson's fiddle at the Clan Macpherson Museum in Newtonmore (figure 44). The text included here is the first text accompanying the fiddle in the museum—across nearly seventy years of display—that acknowledges that Jamie Macpherson was a *Nacken*.



Figure 44 Jamie Macpherson's fiddle redisplayed and reinterpreted in the Clan Macpherson Museum, Newtonmore, 2021. © Jo Clement.

In November 2020, representatives of the Clan Macpherson Museum applied for a Covid Recovery Grant from Museums Galleries Scotland. Following the success of this application, the museum began a process of redesigning the museum's layout and revising its interpretative scheme. Led by Dr Jim MacPherson, a member of the Clan Macpherson's Museum Advisory Committee, and Dr Mairi MacPherson, a clan member, the reinterpretation included the drawing out of previously hidden stories of Empire, Clearance and protest.⁶⁸³ This was envisaged as a way for the collections of the Clan Macpherson Museum to be 'experienced for wider public benefit'.⁶⁸⁴ Jim MacPherson had

⁶⁸³ Jim MacPherson has written about how 'the Clan Macpherson Museum ... represents its longstanding and often problematic relationship with issues of race': S. MacPherson, 'Stephen Lawrence, Clan Macpherson ad "Officer XX"', *The Empire at Home*. <https://theempireathome.com/2020/04/22/stephen-lawrence-clan-macpherson-and-officer-xx/>.

⁶⁸⁴ Foster and Jones, "The untold heritage value and significance of replicas," 4.

admired the way in which 'Timespan museum in Helmsdale, Sutherland [...] has a long tradition of interpreting the region's past in global and often quite radical contexts'.⁶⁸⁵

The new perspectives brought to the collections admitted the potential to recognise and research new values and significances of objects, widening the sorts of stories that could be told with the museum. The two leads also saw it as an opportunity to make *Nacken* visible in the museum and I was invited to help the museum to bring some acknowledgement of the fiddle's *Nacken* connections into its interpretation.⁶⁸⁶ With agreement from the museum, I approached Article 12 in Scotland about involving *Nacken* in the project. Through Eilidh McLeod, of Article 12 in Scotland, Maggie McPhee became involved in the project. As someone who had always written, Maggie McPhee was beginning to devote more time to her writing.⁶⁸⁷ Eilidh McLeod believed that this was a project that would interest her and that she could bring her writing talents and *Nacken* perspective to the new interpretation. We also invited Dr Jo Clement, British Gypsy poet, researcher and tutor, to support Maggie McPhee in the project. The four of us met together online between March and May 2021.⁶⁸⁸

As I have found in all aspects of this research, the process and outcomes have unsettled my own perspectives and assumptions. At the outset, I sent the group a brief, outlining what the museum wanted us to produce, as well as a range of material that had been written about Jamie Macpherson (the brief can be found in Appendix V). I envisaged that we would use the various accounts of Macpherson's story to come up with a version that highlighted that he was a *Nacken*. It would bring out the fact of his execution and perhaps relate his experiences to contemporary *Nacken* lives. Before we had fully started the project Maggie McPhee had already asked me (via Eilidh McLeod) what was known about Macpherson's mother.⁶⁸⁹ By 26 March 2021, Maggie McPhee was very clear that she wanted to ensure that the text included something about Jamie Macpherson's origins or his mother, his fiddle, and some of the brave and good-hearted words he spoke from the gallows. She also told us that she wanted to write it in his mother's voice, that 'his mother needs a voice'.⁶⁹⁰ This was an approach that I had not anticipated. My only concern was

⁶⁸⁵ S. MacPherson, 'Walter Rodney in the Highlands', *The Empire at Home*.

<https://theempireathome.com/2019/04/24/the-journey-begins/>.

⁶⁸⁶ Jim MacPherson, *pers. comm.*, October 27, 2020. Dr Jim MacPherson teaches History at the University of the Highlands and Islands and one of his areas of research is the relationship between the Highlands and empire.

⁶⁸⁷ Maggie McPhee had recently published some works of poetry in L. Charlton and P.E. Ross, eds, *Through Travellers' Eyes*, 2, 18, 20. She was also being supported to develop her writing through an initiative at Glasgow Women's Library.

⁶⁸⁸ Meetings took place on Teams on March 05, March 26, April 1, April 8, April 19, April 29, May 7 and May 12, 2021.

⁶⁸⁹ Rhona Ramsay, *email* to Eilidh McLeod (in answer to a question over the telephone), February 26, 2021.

⁶⁹⁰ Maggie McPhee, *pers. comm.*, March 26, 2021.

that interpretative form might not make it clear that *Nacken* belong to a living culture. A difficulty with museum displays that tell the story of *Nacken* is that, because museums look to the past (including past events in this case), *Nacken* are then presented as being of the past. As Maggie McPhee agreed that she could be named as the writer and as a Scottish Traveller in introductory text, the contemporary presence of *Nacken* could be made clear in this accompanying interpretative text.

The storytelling form that Maggie McPhee had chosen for the interpretation brought a lot of freedom to how it could be written, although she expressed some pressure to get things 'right'. Jo Clement was very helpful at giving Maggie McPhee the confidence to tell a version of the story she was happy with (there being little in the way of evidence related to his life or death) and to use aspects of her own cultural knowledge in the work. Maggie McPhee's written piece, 'Heartbreak through her eyes' is one of three commissioned artworks that are now featured in the redisplayed museum. It was designed and operates as interpretative text for Jamie Macpherson's fiddle but is also a work in its own right. 'Heartbreak through her eyes' and the text that accompanies it in the museum is in Appendix VI.

Returning to the heritage cycle, the ways in which Maggie McPhee's work brings new values into the heritage cycle can be analysed. Firstly, these values will be situated in Daniel Baker's framework (see Chapters 3 and 6), followed by an examination of how they have unsettled the existing cycle and its outcomes. This new piece by Maggie McPhee contains almost all the elements in the adapted framework based on Baker's work (see table 1, page 80). Community and family is at the centre of Maggie's approach. Instead of taking a distanced view of the events of Jamie Macpherson's life and death, she tells it from the point of view of his mother. She also does it in a form that is culturally situated. It is not only written as story, but it has been written as though spoken. It is part of the 'oral tradition' of *Nacken*.⁶⁹¹ As a story written by a woman and told from a woman's point of view, it also reflects the gendered aspect of its creation and form. Although Calum Maclean claimed that '[w]omen are usually the bearers of the song tradition rather than the tales and legends',⁶⁹² this is a reductive view. Not only are many of the songs sung by women of ballad form and, therefore, stories in song, but among the *Nacken* stories that Sheila Stewart and others have published, many were collected from women.⁶⁹³ Even Calum Maclean tells us that Alexander Stewart, who he sought out for his great stories, got his tales from his grandmother, Clementina Stewart.⁶⁹⁴ Donald Braid, in his work on

⁶⁹¹ Stewart, *Queen Among the Heather*, 1.

⁶⁹² Maclean, *The Highlands*, 190.

⁶⁹³ For example, S. Stewart, *Pilgrims of the Mist* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2008), 62, 66, 74, 104, 148, 167, 192.

⁶⁹⁴ Maclean, *The Highlands*, 192.

Nacken tales, noted that as many women as men were known as great storytellers and also that the choice of protagonist was often dependent on the gender of the storyteller.⁶⁹⁵ In keeping with this tradition, Maggie's story is not only written by a woman but presents a women's point of view, to help make the story more 'relatable'.⁶⁹⁶ For Maggie, this is part of a wider commitment to give women their place in history.⁶⁹⁷

Additionally, elements in the story speak to traditional skills (playing the fiddle), home and to the countryside and animals (it is not insignificant that a horse features, not only for its sense within the plot but for the importance of horses in *Nacken* culture). It is also a story of discordance (heartbreak), contingency (the broken fiddle, as well as Macpherson's hybrid heritage) and mobility. It is in form a performance and includes elements of language, story and song, and as a whole it is an act of remembrance. The mother remembers her son and keeps his fiddle as a memento of his life, but it is also a reminder to museum visitors of who Macpherson was and why he was killed.

Maggie McPhee's work brings these new social values into the heritage cycle, unsettling the story of the fiddle and the knowledge that has gathered around it to this point. Macpherson is no longer only a laird's son but the son of a *Nacken* woman. Rather than being criminalised by being termed a 'freebooter', the injustice of his death is highlighted in the line, 'hung just for being a Traveller'. This form of unsettling has the potential to decolonise heritage cycles that uphold hegemonic values and knowledge. For museums seeking anti-racist approaches to collections, providing space for alternative perspectives can help museum objects to break free from dominant narratives in which marginal voices are made absent.

7.5 Racist policies and processes

A report by Sir William Macpherson, the late-Chief of the Clan Macpherson—the clan whose museum is the focus of this chapter—offers a useful lead in the analysis of the policies, procedures and practices that have led to the absent presence of *Nacken chaetrie* in Scottish museums. In 1999 Sir William Macpherson published *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry*.⁶⁹⁸ This report brought to mainstream awareness in the UK the term institutional racism. Although the theory of institutional racism predates the Macpherson Report by over thirty years—having been developed in the context of the civil rights movement in the United States—this report, and its prominence in the press at the time,

⁶⁹⁵ Braid, *Scottish Traveller Tales*, 61–2.

⁶⁹⁶ Maggie McPhee, *pers. comm.*, March 26, 2021.

⁶⁹⁷ Maggie MacPhee, *pers. comm.*, September 22, 2021.

⁶⁹⁸ W. Macpherson, *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry: Report of an Inquiry by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny* (Cm 4262-1, February 1999).

gave this concept wide exposure in the UK.⁶⁹⁹ In recent writing on antiracism, Ibram X. Kendi offers us new ways of talking about racism in institutions, encouraging the term ‘racist policies’ in helping to understand the structures that support and perpetuate racism in society and its institutions.⁷⁰⁰

Kendi’s work on antiracism has been used to develop the analysis of the values-based cycle and related museum processes examined in this chapter. Kendi identifies three forms of power, which (consciously or otherwise) construct and uphold racism. These are ‘the power to categorize and judge, elevate and downgrade, include and exclude’.⁷⁰¹ Each of these has the potential to enter museum work through ‘processes of assembling, categorizing, comparing, classifying, ordering, and reassembling’.⁷⁰² These have been identified by Rodney Harrison as ‘[c]entral to the museum [... and each] involve[s] judgements of value and putting “things” in place’.⁷⁰³ Processes of inclusion and exclusion can also impact on the efficacy of the values-based cycle. Whose values and knowledge are allowed into the cycle is key to what stories can be included in museum interpretation. In the next section examples of processes that can obscure *Nacken chaetrie* are drawn from the National Museums Scotland and the Highland Folk Museum. The ways in which the various processes described by Kendi can influence both museums and the heritage cycle are also examined.

7.6 Museum processes at the National Museums Scotland: excluded narratives

As mentioned at the opening of this chapter, the Clan Macpherson Museum is far from the only museum to document or display *Nacken chaetrie* without acknowledging *Nacken* connections. In many museums, the heritage cycle—played out according to individual museums’ perspectives and contexts—often sees *Nacken chaetrie* become an absent presence. While values-based processes, such as significance assessments and interpretation plans, hold the potential to take in alternative values and knowledge, interventions are often required to bring in the new perspectives required for this aspect of development within the cycle. Without these interventions, new knowledge and values might be generated but only within restricted parameters (usually reflective of existing perspectives).

The aim of the Society of Antiquaries in gathering a national collection was to create ‘the best record and collection of the ancient Archaeological and Historical Memorials of our

⁶⁹⁹ In the Report Macpherson used the term to examine failings within the Metropolitan Police Service in dealing with the investigation into the murder of Black British teenage, Stephen Lawrence.

⁷⁰⁰ Kendi, *How to be an Antiracist*, 222–3.

⁷⁰¹ *Ibid*, 38.

⁷⁰² Harrison, “Reassembling ethnographic museum collections,” 11.

⁷⁰³ *Ibid*.

Native Land'.⁷⁰⁴ In their national collection, then, the Society aimed to tell the story of Scotland. The heritage cycle can explain the ways in which the value, which this institution set on 'the Archaeological and Historical' objects collected, led to the generation of knowledge around these and the further construction of value based on that knowledge. It does not in itself explain the absence of *Nacken*, who remained seemingly absent from the story of Scotland as told using the national collection, both by the Society of Antiquaries and, later, by the National Museums Scotland. Since relevant collections were available to the Society (mainly in the form of incidentally collected items, see Chapter 4), something else must have been preventing a particular sort of knowledge or value being generated and/or applied around these objects.

Sir Walter Scott offers an insight that is of relevance here. In an article on Scottish Gypsies, published in 1817, he observed that

[m]en of letters, while eagerly investigating [foreign] customs, and losing their tempers [...] about Gothic and Celtic antiquities, have witnessed with apathy and contempt the striking spectacle of a *Gypsey* [*sic*] *camp*—pitched, perhaps, amidst the mouldering entrenchments of their favourite Picts and Romans.⁷⁰⁵

This 'apathy and contempt' seems to have kept *Nacken* and *Nacken* perspectives out of the museum. These perspectives are still absent. Across the National Museum of Scotland, there are only two mentions of *Nacken*. These are in connection with a lancet case that belonged to Will Faa (erroneously referred to in the associated object label as the 'last King of the Gypsies') and a photograph of a *Nacken* basketmaker.⁷⁰⁶ Elsewhere in the museum many items connected to *Nacken* (by making, use or other interactions) are displayed with no mention of *Nacken* perspectives or associations. The almost complete absence of *Nacken* from the national story as represented in museums is the legacy of an understanding of Scotland's story built without an understanding of *Nacken* presence. This has also meant that *Nacken* perspectives, values or knowledge have also not been considered. The heritage cycle has been backed up by (and fed into) museum records that have perpetuated a particular view of *Nacken*. These attitudes towards *Nacken* have meant that little research has been carried out related to what material might be of significance to them. The ways in which *Nacken* were judged by early antiquaries has become embedded in the museum's documentation. For example, it was noted in Chapter 4, entries in the 1892 *Catalogue of the National Museum of Antiquities of*

⁷⁰⁴ J. Y. Simpson, 'Address on Archaeology', *P.S.A.S.*, vol. 4 (1860-2), 30. This same passage is quoted at the opening of Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, *Catalogue of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, 1892), ii. The collections gathered by the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland have since become part of the collections of the National Museums Scotland.

⁷⁰⁵ Scott and Pringle, "Notices concerning the Scottish Gypsies," 1, 43.

⁷⁰⁶ Not only were there two Will Faas, Will Faa I (c. 1700–84) and Will Faa II (d. 1847), but they were succeeded by Charles Faa Blythe I (1774–1861), Esther Faa Blythe (1797–1883) and later her son Charles Faa Blythe (c. 1825–1902).

Scotland recorded *Nacken* craft production as being of ‘peculiar form’, or ‘of rude make’.⁷⁰⁷ These descriptions remain inscribed in the current catalogue. As Geoffrey Swinney has pointed out, the museum register ‘shapes our understanding of [...] collections’.⁷⁰⁸

The ways that values are understood and acted on in museum contexts are not neutral and can be either virtuous or vicious in the way that they include some perspectives and exclude others. It is not that *Nacken* have not been part of Scotland, nor that *Nacken chaetrie* has not been part of the national collections, but that knowledge and awareness of *Nacken* and *Nacken* perspectives have not been a part of cycles of understanding collections, their value and significance. Some current thinking at the National Museums Scotland, which involves a move towards telling the story of ‘many Scotlands’, offers the potential for alternative values and knowledge to enter the heritage cycle there.⁷⁰⁹

7.7 Museum processes at the Highland Folk Museum: categorisation

At the Highland Folk Museum, the ways in which museum records can obscure presence can also be seen. When Ross Noble joined the Highland Folk Museum in 1976, he inherited—along with the collections built up by Grant and Davidson—two incompatible catalogue systems. Grant’s, which ran from A to Z, was based around collecting and display themes, while Davidson’s incomplete catalogue ordered objects by the date when they were received into the museum. Noble had previously been a roving curator for the NMAS and implemented the reordering of the collections using their catalogue system. The NMAS catalogue system, however, privileges a settled perspective and so, while Noble’s display, the ‘T____ Encampment’, presented *Nacken* as central to their own lives (see Chapter 4), *Nacken chaetrie* in the collections became dispersed among categories designed without *Nacken* in mind and things became ‘lost in... translation’.⁷¹⁰ For example, potscrubbers went from being *D: Craftwork*, which centred the maker, to *SLA: The House: cleaning and ironing: washing, drying and other equipment*, which centred on their use in ‘the house’, and the *snottum* went from being among *R: T____s possessions* to *SDA: Furnishings and Plenishings: the fireside*, suggestive of indoor use. Elsewhere, artefacts that had been catalogued as *T____s Tinsmithing Tools* (a subset of *B: Tools*) were recorded under *QL: Metalcraft* while some of the *T____s Hornwork Tools* (another subset of *B: Tools*) were recategorised under *RX: Miscellaneous Trades*. In each of these cases connection between these objects and *Nacken* became lost. It is clear that Noble was still aware of these connections, as many of these objects appeared in the ‘T____

⁷⁰⁷ Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, *Catalogue of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland*, 363 (objects NG 146, 147), 373 (object NQ 20, 21).

⁷⁰⁸ Swinney, “What do we know about what we know?,” 43.

⁷⁰⁹ Anna Groundwater, *pers. comm.*, October 22, 2019.

⁷¹⁰ Swinney, “What do we know about what we know?,” 35.

Encampment' display, but they are obscured in the current system and harder for subsequent museum staff to see, find and understand as *Nacken chaetrie*.

These changes have had wider repercussions. When the digital Adlib catalogue was compiled, it was based on the NMAS object records. As a result, searches for 'Traveller' or 'T____' in the Adlib system brought up just three objects.⁷¹¹ These terms were not used as keywords or in the object descriptions. Some change has since been instigated, through communication of my research within the museum.⁷¹² The reordering of the catalogue and invisibility of *Nacken* in it also impacted on the physical ordering of the collection. When the collection was moved from Kingussie to the new Am Fasgadh store at Newtonmore in 2012, the collections were grouped according to the NMAS system. As a result, *Nacken chaetrie* became dispersed throughout the store. During the course of my research, I was given a row of shelves in a bay in which to gather examples of *Nacken chaetrie* as I have worked with it and some items have been rehomed here.

As Jenny Noble, writing of experiences in cataloguing the artefact collections of the Glasgow Women's Library, has stated 'the curator's role in selecting an appropriate classification [...] means that meaning or context from a single perspective will be (unconsciously or otherwise) imparted upon an object'.⁷¹³ The limitations of the single perspective can be alleviated by careful use of keywords, or, as Noble went on to suggest, the application of 'multiple, intersecting classifications to single objects'.⁷¹⁴ This is especially pertinent to *Nacken chaetrie*, which so often has multiple associations, among which the *Nacken* connections often go unrecorded. Keywords added to records—particularly those that have been digitised—would offer a helpful way of making *chaetrie* visible and findable for museum staff. The visibility of *Nacken* in the museum itself, however, requires this to be translated into displays and interpretation.

Of course, museum documentation processes alone are neither fully responsible nor can fully explain the complex ways in which particular narratives become obscured in or excluded from museums and heritage. In these examples, however, it is possible to observe that, as Colin Clark points out, as 'a pattern of deliberate [and, I would add, sometimes unintentional] exclusion, anti-Gypsyism [...] needs to be seen and understood in its "banal" form where everyday practices serve to exclude, isolate and render

⁷¹¹ Liz English, *pers. comm.*, July 21, 2021. These terms were present in Object Name and Object Title fields.

⁷¹² As a result of conversations with Helen Pickles and Rachael Thomas while researching at the Highland Folk Museum, Pickles and Thomas added the terms 'Traveller' and 'T____' to 171 records, mainly 'horn/bone spoons, baskets, jewellery, pins, pieces of a cart, cups, quaichs', *Ibid.*

⁷¹³ J. Noble, "True Representation? An Intersectional Approach to Curation," *Social History Curators Group Journal*, vol. 44 (2020), 27.

⁷¹⁴ *Ibid.*

“other”⁷¹⁵ Consciousness of the many small ways in which *Nacken* become excluded in museum narratives, can help museums to locate the small ways in which these omissions can be remedied.

7.8 Heritage cycle – problems and solutions?

The values-based heritage cycle has been useful in identifying the ways in which certain values and knowledge have become privileged in particular museum contexts. The iterative nature of the cycle also offers the potential to gather new knowledge and new values, but this is dependent on who is engaging with the objects and who is in a position to recognise and record any new knowledge and values. As Emma Dabiri tells us, ‘[h]istory is now. We are living it. If we can’t accept the past and how it affects [...] knowledge production and value systems, we remain doomed to repeat the same [...] over and over again’.⁷¹⁶ If no new perspectives are taken into the cycle, then the hegemonic understanding of objects and their values is perpetuated. In order to unsettle the understanding and value of objects beyond the dominant settled viewpoint, alternative perspectives must enter the cycle, particularly at the point at which there is the opportunity to act on understanding of values and significance, e.g. redisplay of collections, as well as in day-to-day recording of and research into collections that might prompt the need for such reinterpretations. Otherwise, Harrison’s observation that ‘museum collections have implicit within them particular sets of values, which are reproduced through particular systems of authority’ will continue to hold true.⁷¹⁷

To interrupt this, sharing authority with those who can ‘contribute to historical understanding through their lived experience’ can bring into museums the ‘creative friction, which is potentially generative of new forms of knowledge, but also has the potential to transform the values of [those who work with collections] towards the objects with which they work’.⁷¹⁸ Here Von Ware’s call to set aside handwringing for handholding provides a compelling image for a collaborative way forward.⁷¹⁹ If such cycles can be opened to embrace or hold new knowledge and values there is a shared way forward. It has also been pointed out that objects can potentially also disrupt the dominant narratives of museums through the ‘[t]races, marks, and memories resulting from [their ...] biographies [...] which lends itself to storytelling and the transmission of narratives’.⁷²⁰ For these objects to be activated, however, the traces, marks and memories must be seen

⁷¹⁵ Clark, “Sites, welfare and ‘barefoot begging,’” 176.

⁷¹⁶ E. Dabiri, *What White People Can Do Next: From Allyship to Coalition* (London: Penguin Books, 2021), 91.

⁷¹⁷ Harrison, “Reassembling the collection,” 11–2.

⁷¹⁸ M. Hutchison, “‘Shared authority’ collaboration, curatorial voice, and exhibition design in Canberra, Australia”, in *Museums and Communities: Curators, Collections and Collaboration*, eds. V. Golding and W. Modest (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 143; Harrison, “Reassembling the collection,” 14.

⁷¹⁹ Von Ware quoted in Dabiri, *What White People Can do Next*, 92.

⁷²⁰ Harrison, Appelgren and Bohlin, “Commentary: belonging and belongings,” 211.

and understood and this is best achieved through shared authority. As *Nacken* have values that are distinct from the dominant, settled norm, their perspectives risk being missed without direct *Nacken* involvement.

If museums are not to '[silence ...] mobile or nomadic [...] forms of living with and relating to the past', they must allow in alternative perspectives that can 'call [their] hegemony into question'.⁷²¹ The inclusion of new narratives at Auchindrain offer some useful models here. Visibility has been achieved through a varied approach, including the commissioning of replicas, cultural activities, museum shop stock (*Nacken* books and crafts), revised interpretation (including the development of layered interpretation within more recent digital devices), contemporary collecting and co-produced object records. Some of these things have been made easier through the employment of *Nacken* staff members and their expert cultural input. While this is certainly a proven model, it would be possible to develop similar initiatives and interventions through projects based on shared authority and multivocality. Museum learning teams often do the sort of work that opens museums and their collections to new audiences and of sharing authority but there needs to be ways for the new insights and knowledges gained here to influence how collections are recorded and interpreted.⁷²²

This does not need to be a singular *Nacken* effort. As Jodie Matthews has pointed out, 'Romani experiences are not the only ones excluded from [national] narratives'.⁷²³ As Dabiri has articulated in her vision for practical steps towards racial justice, one of the requirements of meaningful change is 'coalition-building and the identification of affinities and points of shared interest beyond categories that were invented to divide us'.⁷²⁴ Brooks, Clark and Rostas also see 'collaboration' as a way forward for the decolonisation of Romani studies and of 'younger and older minds, both inside and outside of the classroom'.⁷²⁵

The 'territorial rootedness' of museums—whether clan, local, regional or national—can perpetuate settled hegemony and lead to the 'silencing [of ...] mobile or nomadic' heritage.⁷²⁶ What is the cumulative effect of this omission? One of the main results is the lack of visibility of *Nacken* in museums in Scotland. But why does this matter? It matters at a global level—identified by Achiume on her visit to the UK, when the invisibility of

⁷²¹ Ibid, 215.

⁷²² As a case in point, the Learning and Access team at NMS carried out a project with young Travellers in partnership with Save the Children in 2006. This project, like many learning projects within museums, has not been translated into visible or lasting impacts on the wider work of the museum.

⁷²³ Matthews, "Where are the Romanies?": 81.

⁷²⁴ Dabiri, *What White People Can Do Next*, 13.

⁷²⁵ Brooks, Clark and Rostas, "Engaging with Decolonisation, Tackling Antigypsyism": 8, 10.

⁷²⁶ Harrison, Appelgren and Bohlin, "Commentary: belonging and belongings," 215.

Gypsies, Roma and Travellers (in public life and also in available data)—by negatively impacting the access that these populations have to accommodation, education, health and justice.⁷²⁷ As Colin Clark has pointed out—in celebrating the establishment of the European Roma Institute for Arts and Culture (ERAC)—‘[t]hese are affairs and concerns that are by definition as political and economic as they are cultural’.⁷²⁸ These issues are bound together so that cultural invisibility supports political and economic inequality.

It should also be pointed out that the omission of *Nacken* stories can also have an exclusionary effect on potential *Nacken* museum audiences. As David Donaldson pointed out, ‘there’s this feeling that [museums are] not a place for us [...] In that these are places that are [...] country folks’ [non-*Nacken*’s] history and you learn about country folk history when you go there’.⁷²⁹ The lack of representation of *Nacken* in the stories that are told in museums in Scotland is unnecessary given both the presence of *Nacken chaetrie* in many museums and the contemporary presence of *Nacken* across Scotland. *Nacken* have been part of Scotland’s national and local histories for hundreds of years. Taking just one small example, Sheila Stewart tells us ‘Travellers were [...] involved in the 1745 Rebellion, but are never mentioned, even though they played a big part in it’.⁷³⁰ If *Nacken* are consistently not included in museum narratives, this has implications for the heritage cycle. If *Nacken* perspectives are not reflected in museums, *Nacken* are less likely to engage with museums. This lack of engagement then prevents *Nacken* knowledge and values entering the cycle, making engagement less likely.

⁷²⁷ United Nations, Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance on her visit to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland*, A/HRC/41/54/Add.2 (Geneva: United Nations Human Rights, 2019), 7, 9, 10.

⁷²⁸ Clark, “‘If you build it...’”.

⁷²⁹ David Donaldson, *interview*, October 17, 2018.

⁷³⁰ Stewart, *Pilgrims of the Mist*, 120.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This thesis set out to explore the presence, absence and absent presence of *Nacken chaetrie* in Scottish museums, as well as to analyse how *Nacken* value *chaetrie* within collections. This thesis has shown that there is a largely unseen presence of *Nacken chaetrie* in museums in Scotland. The research that informed this thesis also indicates that *Nacken chaetrie* can be found in local, national, folk, military, clan and university museums across Scotland. As well as describing a long history of *Nacken chaetrie* in museums (including, in some cases, in the collections that preceded public museums), this research has highlighted that the ways in which the methods of collecting, documenting and interpreting *chaetrie*, has led to it being an absent presence. This term was used by Jodie Matthews to describe the absence of Romanies in narratives of the British past (they are there but 'only if you know where to look' for them).⁷³¹ That is, relevant material is there in museums but seen from a settled perspective and therefore not understood as *Nacken chaetrie*.

As well as documenting historic presence of *Nacken*-made and -used items in museums (Chapter 4), this thesis has demonstrated that a wider range of museum collections than previously identified have connections to *Nacken* (Chapter 5). These include items traded in various second-hand contexts (such as items from dumps, pre-owned jewellery, antiques), natural history specimens (particularly freshwater mussels and pearls), military objects, artefacts now in archaeological collections, as well as items related to *Nacken* life and culture (tools, musical instruments, camp-related items and craft products). In these cases, it has been possible to observe ways in which *Nacken* have directly contributed to museum collections. A further group of artefacts has also been identified in museums by *Nacken*, which can demonstrate how settled items were absorbed into *Nacken* contexts. In museums, however, most objects are thought of in singular classifications so, for example, freshwater mussels are generally considered natural history specimens, rather than contributions made by *Nacken*, and milk churns and Crown Derby are put in categories related to the farm and decorative art, rather than the camp and caravan.

It is worth here drawing a distinction between two types of knowledge that it is possible to gather and two types of visibility of *Nacken* that can be enacted with museum collections. These offer different outcomes and require different approaches. The first instance does not necessarily require the direct input from *Nacken* and is about gaining awareness of and researching the *Nacken* connections to objects in museum collections. A list of useful published works for this approach to research can be found in Appendix VII. Where new knowledge gained through this process is included in museum interpretation, this can

⁷³¹ Matthews, "Where are the Romanies?": 80.

make the historic presence of *Nacken* more visible in museums. Where it is not possible to alter existing public-facing interpretation or where histories and connections are perhaps connected to local places rather than to museum objects, other ways of making the presence of *Nacken* more visible can take the form of alternative information in a leaflet or app. As part of a research project I carried out with the University of Aberdeen Museum Collection, a trail leaflet was designed to make past and present *Nacken* lives within the city visible (Appendix VIII).⁷³² Auchindrain's digital interpretation also offers possibilities, particularly around the layering of interpretation.⁷³³ The second approach to research and visibility involves the direct involvement of *Nacken* in the co-production of new knowledge and understandings of *Nacken chaetrie*. Having experienced the many unexpected connections between *Nacken* and museum collections, the possibilities for such projects are wide ranging. This approach offers the potential of finding new understandings of collections and can lead to new interpretation (sometimes in alternative interpretative forms), reassessment of museum policies and procedures, the loan of objects from or to communities, contemporary collecting or the creation of new objects. Some interesting possibilities that were used in Ireland can be found in the *Traveller Collection at the Hugh Lane Gallery*.⁷³⁴ It would also be worth following the work of the National Museum of Ireland's Traveller Culture Collections Development Officer, Oein DeBhairduin.

Ideally new understanding, knowledge and values generated and observed through either approach to research described above should be detailed within object records and documentation. This will allow otherwise unseen connections to be recorded for future reference and ease of finding. New perspectives and values can also feed into significance reports and interpretation and collecting plans. The ways in which, in a values-based approach to museum collections, research to uncover hidden histories and connections can bring new values and widen engagement with objects is discussed in Chapter 7. This type of work is likely to be possible and also relevant to many collections in Scotland, which contain currently unseen connections to *Nacken* stories and lives (often collected incidentally, see Chapter 4, with connections waiting to be discovered). While it cannot confidently be said that there is *chaetrie* in every museum, the absence of material—where it is found—also has the potential to tell stories relevant to the history of *Nacken* in Scotland (see Chapter 6).

⁷³² This was a Scottish Universities Research Collections Associate Studentship (SURCAS) project carried out with the University of Aberdeen Museum Collection and funded by the Scottish Graduate School of Arts and Humanities (SGSAH). It took place between July 2018 and February 2019. The leaflet was launched at the University's MayFest Festival on May 26, 2019.

⁷³³ Available at www.auchindrain.org.uk/explore-auchindrain/. Accessed: October 28, 2021.

⁷³⁴ S. Nolan, ed., *Traveller Collection at the Hugh Lane Gallery* (Dublin: Hugh Lane, 2020).

It is perhaps not insignificant that the museum that reported '[n]o Roma items as such, but three well-provenanced factual accounts of Roma involvement', is the museum that has done the most in recent years in Scotland to include the perspectives of *Nacken* and which has gathered a unique contemporary collection. Application of a values-based framework for considering the significance of objects and how that understanding of values is acted on (informed by the heritage cycle, see Chapter 7) reveals the ways in which new knowledge in the museum allows the development of new values, engagement and in turn new knowledge. In Auchindrain's case, new knowledge linking *Nacken* to the site initially entered their museum through an oral history project. This revealed regular *Nacken* presence at the township, related to the trade of goods and provision of seasonal labour. As a result of this new insight into the significant role played by *Nacken* in the township's past, the museum sought ways to involve *Nacken* in the museum's present. Employment of *Nacken* at the site, in particular Kathy Townsley McGuigan, has brought *Nacken* knowledge, values and perspectives into the museum. These have in turn impacted on the museum's Collecting Policy (Appendix III) and resulted in a collection, gathered by Kathy Townsley McGuigan from among members of her community. While one of the potential weaknesses in my research design was the prominence of rural museums (Auchindrain and the Highland Folk Museum), there are items in the new collection at Auchindrain that reflect the mobility of *Nacken* across and between rural and urban settings. The new collections gathered by Kathy Townsley McGuigan at Auchindrain unsettles a number of stereotypes and misunderstandings about *Nacken* that have become unintentionally embedded in other museum collections. These include the prominence within some museums of 'only the most visible economic activities—peg selling, [...] tinkering and casual agricultural work'.⁷³⁵ Objects in the new collection also tackle wider misconceptions and stereotypes, such as *Nacken* as 'illiterate' and that *Nacken* are 'dying out'.⁷³⁶

Other *Nacken* collections were also examined, including Jess Smith's collection, the MacDonald collection and the objects selected by *Nacken* for MECOPP's 'Moving Minds' exhibition. These were analysed using a modified version of Daniel Baker's Gypsy Visuality framework (see Chapter 3). This analysis sheds light on the values that *Nacken* bring to material culture. While I found this framework very useful in ensuring that I did not overlay my settled perspective on data gathered from *Nacken* participants, this does not preclude other approaches to the analysis of *Nacken* collections, perspectives and values

⁷³⁵ B. Taylor, *A Minority and the State: Travellers in Britain in the Twentieth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 19.

⁷³⁶ I. Hancock, *Danger! Educated Gypsy: Selected Essays*, D. Kranth, ed. (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2010), 275; B. Taylor, *A Minority and the State: Travellers in Britain in the Twentieth Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 110; Ramsay, Thomas and Townsley McGuigan, "From intangible to tangible and back again," 12.

being of use in future research. The greatest value of the objects in the *Nacken* collections analysed, and also of the camps, however, seems to be in testifying to the presence of *Nacken*—in saying we are here and central to our own lives. Yes, these things are special—often because they are a gift from or associated in some way to a member of our family or community who is important to us—but what is important is that we are here, visible and telling our own stories through objects. Additional insights into what *Nacken* value in material culture has been revealed through this analysis (see Chapter 6). What has been demonstrated is that the connections between objects and people is of high importance, closely followed by traditional skills and occupations, freedom and mobility, functionality, contingency and ornamentation. These collections are of high importance in understanding *Nacken chaetrie* for three main reasons. Firstly, they disrupt certain assumptions about *Nacken* that it would be possible to make looking at collections elsewhere (e.g., illiteracy, belonging in the past). Secondly, they make *Nacken* visible as a contemporary community and living culture and, thirdly, they allow *Nacken* to tell their own stories and offer their perspectives. This is of benefit to both *Nacken* themselves and for others.

The research carried out with *Nacken* and *Nacken* collections towards this thesis, indicates that *Nacken* bring attitudes and perspectives to material culture that can be distinct to settled attitudes (see Chapters 2, 5 and 6). *Nacken* perspectives are currently almost entirely absent from museums, where so few, if any, *Nacken* work in curatorial positions.⁷³⁷ An analysis of the values that *Nacken* bring to their own collections or collected material can be found in Chapter 6. This analysis indicates that as well as distinctive *Nacken* objects, *Nacken* collections also contain *Travellerfied* mainstream objects. The attitudes, use and associations that *Nacken* have for these objects, however, can be different to non-*Nacken* understandings of these same items. Pans, for instance, might signify pastness to settled populations but have a contemporary relevance and use for *Nacken* today, as objects of continuity. *Nacken* perspectives can not only unsettle dominant settled narratives in museums but can disrupt stereotypes and prejudices that these communities face.

⁷³⁷ *Nacken* are recognised as belonging to an invisible ethnic minority: M. Liinpää, *Invisible Difference and 'Race Equality' in Scotland: Problems, Challenges and the Way Ahead* (Glasgow: BEMIS, 2013), 7. As such, some *Nacken* might hide their ethnicity from employers in order to avoid possible discrimination or prejudice. It is possible that there are 'hidden' or 'invisible' *Nacken* in curatorial roles in Scotland, although issues with access to education is likely to be a barrier to this sort of employment. Discussing this within an Irish context, Rosaleen McDonagh tells us that, 'There are Traveller artists in lots of arenas, I know them and they are not out, they say they couldn't, that their career would be damaged. I know one Traveller who hangs paintings in one of the galleries and he has never identified [himself] as a Traveller, his employers don't know, his colleagues don't know': R. McDonagh, contribution in 'Selected transcript from round table discussion in Pavee Point Traveller and Roma Centre, 21 June 2018', in S. Nolan, ed., *Traveller Collection at the Hugh Lane Gallery* (Dublin: Hugh Lane, 2020), 37.

This thesis began by establishing that there is a problem regarding the lack of visibility of *Nacken* (widely within society as well as specifically in museums) and considered how damaging this invisibility is. The research presented here demonstrates that many museums have material present in their collections that relate to *Nacken* history as well as to contemporary *Nacken* populations. These can, and I would argue should, make *Nacken* presence in their collections visible. The acknowledgement and process of rendering visible should not only highlight the long history of *Nacken* in Scotland, but also their contemporary presence.

Museums can, of course, never say everything about any of their collections, in documentation or interpretation, and many museums also have particular aims and audiences to consider in the development of their interpretation. As Maggie McPhee has pointed out, however, in a poem 'Our history is all around', written for Gypsy, Roma, Traveller History Month (GRTHM) 2021,

Our history spreads out across the country
in every town you will find it
if you just know where to look
for we are still here.⁷³⁸

If museums are to include *Nacken*—who are part of our national, local, clan, military, university and other stories as presented in museums—ways must be found for *Nacken* knowledge and values to enter into the heritage cycle. Chapter 6 demonstrates the extent to which the involvement and employment of *Nacken* within museums can bring invaluable knowledge and perspectives to collections. As Foster and Jones found of another aspect of heritage, which 'authorised heritage discourses occlude consideration of', *Nacken* should be 'given a voice' and opportunities to unsettle the heritage cycle in order to 'propel it in new and unexpected directions'.⁷³⁹ As Foster and Jones have noted elsewhere, '[t]he challenge is to ensure that all relevant values are recognised [...] to find ways to also acknowledge, research, respect and juggle the social values of [...] relevant communities of interest'.⁷⁴⁰ Without involving *Nacken* and sharing authority with them, the heritage cycle remains closed. The values and knowledge gained through these interventions also need to enter into the documentation and interpretation of museum objects if they are to help tackle the invisibility of *Nacken* in museums. Opening the heritage cycle to *Nacken* perspectives can only enrich the experiences and engagement of, not only *Nacken*, but all of us.

⁷³⁸ M. McPhee, 'Our history is all around', Gypsy, Roma, Traveller History Month (Scotland). Available at: <https://grthm.scot/mecopp-poem-of-the-week-1/>.

⁷³⁹ Foster and Jones, "The untold heritage value and significance of replicas," 18.

⁷⁴⁰ S. M. Foster and S. Jones, *My Life as a Replica* (Oxford: Windgather Press, 2020), 171.

The research informing this thesis has demonstrated that the absent presence of *Nacken chaetrie* in collections has resulted in the invisibility of *Nacken* in museums in Scotland. This thesis and the project work undertaken during the research have begun the process of making visible the material and cultural heritage currently underrepresented and underacknowledged in Scottish museums. This is the first time that a co-ordinated assessment of *Nacken chaetrie* and its presence in Scottish museums has been undertaken. This thesis represents a significant and original contribution to how we understand the material culture of *Nacken* in museums.

This process can be built on by museums and researchers to improve knowledge and visibility. The Scottish Government's *Improving the Lives of Scotland's Gypsy/Travellers (2019–2021)* plan includes a commitment to recognising and valuing Gypsy/Traveller history and culture, recognising this as important work in tackling the racism and discrimination experienced by *Nacken*. Museums can play their part in this through research of their collections with *Nacken* and/or with *Nacken* in mind.

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Appendices

Appendix I

Excel database of Highland Folk Museum collections connected to *Nacken*

This is a separate excel database of the Highland Folk Museum collections with connections to *Nacken*.

Appendix II

Participant permissions

In this section there are the project information and permissions material given to participants:

- a) Project information sheet
- b) Information for experts by experience
- c) Information for Jess Smith
- d) Permissions form

Appendix II a)

Project information

The value of the presence of Naken (Gypsy Traveller) chaetrie (objects) and agency in Scottish museums

This study recognises that there is a gap in museum policy and practice as regards Naken chaetrie.

There are estimated to be upwards of 20,000 Nakens in Scotland today. Although a small population they have a long history in Scotland, which dates back to at least the twelfth century. Official documents of this time record an indigenous population of wandering crafts people. This group was joined in the sixteenth century by Gypsies as they made their way through Europe from India. Some mixing and intermarriage between the groups followed, although distinct individual and group self-ascribed identity are still evident within the Naken population. Throughout their time in Scotland Naken have made significant contributions to life in Scotland through the production and trade of artistic and domestic items and the bringing of news to remote communities, as well as the provision of valuable seasonal farm labour and the keeping alive of the stories and songs of our shared past.

The story of Naken is part of Scotland's story, but goes largely untold in Scotland's museums. Within museum collections there is a body of material that was made, used by, or in other ways associated with this culture. Most of this material is underused, or unacknowledged within museums. This research seeks to increase the knowledge that museums have access to about these objects, as well as to gain insights into how this material is valued. Three main groups will be involved in research into the value of Naken Chaetrie: representatives of the Naken community, representatives of the museums, and visitors to the museums. Through this it is hoped that it will be possible to gain an understanding of why and how the material is used at present, and how it might be used in the future.



Skivvers and mussel shell; bough/bow tent; tin, horn and basket ware. All images ©Highlife Highland

Researcher contact details:

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Email: rhona.ramsay@stir.ac.uk

Appendix II b)

Information sheet for experts by experience

Unsettling Naken chaetrie (objects related to Gypsy/Travellers) in Scottish museums

Introduction

My name is Rhona Ramsay, and I am a PhD student at the University of Stirling. I am conducting research into the presence of Naken chaetrie in Scottish museums, examining the value of this presence, and discussing possible models for ongoing Gypsy/Traveller agency and representation within museums.

Do you have to take part?

As an expert by experience, I hope that you will be able to help define what the material culture of Gypsy/Travellers is, and how you value it. During the project we will explore these questions as a group, as well as how you feel about Gypsy/Traveller objects in museums, and about museums in general. Each person's opinions, feelings and responses to the objects that we will look at, and discussions that we have are valid, unique and useful contributions to this research.

Your participation in this investigation is voluntary. It is your right to refuse to participate, or to withdraw participation, this will not affect any aspect of the way you are treated.

What will you do in the project?

You are invited to take part in one or more of the following:

An introductory workshop on Gypsy/Traveller objects in museums at the MECOPP Residential in Pitlochry (September 2017), and other updates

Object handling and information sharing sessions at the Highland Folk Museum, Newtonmore.

A visit to the Clan MacPherson Museum, Newtonmore

A visit to Auchindrain Township Museum during the display of the bowcamp in 2018 (dates to be confirmed – likely Autumn 2018). This visit will include a chance to discuss the interpretation onsite, the museum and the bowcamp.

Other visits to and activities at museums as decided as a group.

Discussions will be recorded, through notes, as well as audio recordings. Some sessions may also be filmed. You will have the opportunity to opt into or out of audio and film recording.

Why have you been invited to take part?

You have been invited to take part as an expert by experience in Gypsy/Traveller culture – someone with valuable insights, perspectives and knowledge gained through lived experience as a Gypsy/Traveller.

Continued over...

What are the potential risks to you in taking part?

No undue risk to participants in being involved in this study are foreseen. However, as it will examine power imbalances between museums and Gypsy/Travellers, and because museums connect people to the past, discussions that arise during this research may touch upon difficult histories, and/or strong feelings. It is helpful to this research if all responses are recorded towards a fuller picture, but the researcher will be sensitive to the wishes and needs of any individual(s) experiencing strong reactions during the investigation. As stated above, participants have the right to withdraw participation at any time without detriment.

What happens to the information in the project?

At the end of the research period all participants in this project will be invited to a presentation on the project and its findings. Presentations may also be given to other audiences, including to museums and museum policy-makers.

Recorded interviews will be transcribed, and digital files deleted once transcriptions have been transcribed. These transcriptions they will inform the research into the value of the presence of Gypsy/Traveller objects in Scottish museums. After the research has ended these transcriptions will be lodged with the University of Stirling's dataSTORRE where it will be kept for sharing and safekeeping.

It is a research convention to anonymise research participants (using pseudonyms and the removal of identifying information). As this research recognises a current lack of voice of Gypsy/Travellers in museums, participants will be involved in deciding whether to have their data anonymised, including a discussion of the consequences of this decision. Data will be anonymised or not according the wishes of individual participants (there is an opportunity to make your individual decision clear on the consent form).

The University of Stirling is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office who implements the Data Protection Act 1998. All personal data on participants will be processed in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Thank you for taking the time to read / be read, and discuss this information – please ask any questions if you are unsure about any of the information contained here.

Researcher contact details:

Rhona Ramsay, History and Politics, Pathfoot Building, University of Stirling, Stirling FK9 4LA

Email: rhona.ramsay@stir.ac.uk

Appendix II c)

Information sheet for Jess Smith

The value of the presence of Gypsy Traveller objects and agency in Scottish museums

Introduction

My name is Rhona Ramsay, and I am a PhD student at the University of Stirling. I am conducting research into the presence of Gypsy Traveller objects and agency in Scottish museums, examining the value of this presence, and discussing possible models for ongoing Gypsy Traveller agency and representation within museums.

Do you have to take part?

As an expert by experience, I hope that you will be able to help define what the material culture of Gypsy Travellers is, and how you value it. Your participation in this investigation is voluntary. It is your right to refuse to participate, or to withdraw participation, this will not affect any aspect of the way you are treated.

What will you do in the project?

Your own collection of Nacken chatterie is something that I hope will help bring insights to the definition of Nacken chatterie, but which may also highlight gaps both in museum collections (and what is or isn't collected) and museum practice (e.g. what information you keep about the objects, and how it is used and interpreted). As part of the study you will be invited to provide access to the objects for photographing, provide information about the objects, and be interviewed about the collection, what it means to you, and how it is used.

Objects will be photographed and information about them recorded. Discussions will be recorded, through notes, as well as audio recordings, and possibly film. You will have the opportunity to opt into or out of audio and film recording.

Why have you been invited to take part?

You have been invited to take part as an expert in Gypsy Traveller culture, and the keeper of a collection of Nacken chatterie.

What are the potential risks to you in taking part?

No undue risk to participants in being involved in this study are foreseen. However, as it will examine power imbalances between museums and Gypsy Travellers, and because museums connect people to the past, discussions that arise during this research may touch upon difficult histories, and/or strong feelings. It is helpful to this research if all responses are recorded towards a fuller picture, but the researcher will be sensitive to your wishes and needs should you experience strong reactions during the investigation. As stated above, you have the right to withdraw participation at any time without detriment.

What happens to the information in the project?

At the end of the research period all participants in this project will be invited to a presentation on the project and its findings. Presentations may also be given to other audiences, including to museums and museum policy-makers.

Recorded interviews will be transcribed, and interviewees who wish to will be invited to check for accuracy within the transcription, as well as if there is anything that they have said that they would like to withdraw. Once the transcriptions have been agreed they will inform the research into the value of the presence of Gypsy Traveller objects and agency in Scottish museums. After the research has ended recordings and transcriptions will be lodged with the University of Stirling's dataSTORRE where it will be kept for sharing and safekeeping.

It is a research convention to anonymise research participants (using pseudo-names and the removal of identifying information). As this research recognises a current lack of voice of Gypsy Travellers in museums, you will be involved in deciding whether to have your data anonymised, including a discussion of the consequences of this decision. Data will be anonymised or not according to your wishes (there is an opportunity to make your individual decision clear on the consent form).

The University of Stirling is registered with the Information Commissioner's Office who implements the Data Protection Act 1998. All personal data on participants will be processed in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Thank you for taking the time to read and discuss this information – please ask any questions if you are unsure about any of the information contained here.

Researcher contact details:

Rhona Ramsay, History and Politics, Pathfoot Building, University of Stirling, Stirling FK9 4LA

Email: rhona.ramsay@stir.ac.uk

Appendix II d)

Consent Form – experts by experience

Title of the study: The value of the presence of Gypsy Traveller objects and agency in Scottish museums

Researcher: Rhona Ramsay, Centre for Environment, Heritage and Policy, University of Stirling

Rhona Ramsay has explained to me the nature of the research and that I will contribute as a participant. I have a copy of the project information sheet, I have had the opportunity to consider this information and ask questions, and had these answered satisfactorily.

1

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, without having to give a reason.

2

I consent to being *audio and/or *video recorded, and/or *photographed as part of the project (please delete any you do not agree to). Any recordings may not be broadcast or electronically published without my explicit written consent.

3

I agree that any data collected may be used for research and education, and passed to other researchers

4

I agree to the use of *quotes/*anonymised quotes (please delete as appropriate)

5

I agree to the use of photographs of me for research and education, including publications and presentations

6

I agree to give the copyright of the recording/interview to the University of Stirling so that it can be archived and become a valuable resource for future students and researchers

7

I agree to take part in the above project

Name of participant

Date

Signature

Name of person taking consent

Date

Signature

Appendix III

Extracts from Auchindrain's Collecting Policy of relevance to the collection of *chaetrie*:

5.3 The Trust will actively seek to acquire any material of appropriate quality provenanced to the Argyll Gypsy-Traveller community: such items need not be from Argyll if there is a substantive connection to an Argyll Traveller family. This conscious addition to past policy acknowledges the ancient historical links between the townships and the Travellers.

5.4 The existing collections are divided into the following categories, and all new acquisitions will fall into one of these categories. It should be particularly noted that Category 6 material is not considered to be part of the accessioned collections.

	Description
Category 1 – Buildings	The original buildings still standing
Category 2 – Ruins and landscape features	Ruined houses, kailyards, dykes etc
Category 3 – Found in, or returned to, Auchindrain	Household items and agricultural implements left within the buildings when Auchindrain became a museum. Items donated back to Auchindrain by the descendants who those who lived here. Photos and archival material relating to Auchindrain before it became a museum. Materials taken off the buildings during maintenance.
Category 4 – Archaeological and site finds	Items found within the site of Auchindrain during site maintenance tasks and organised archaeological digs
Category 5a – Gypsy/Traveller	Objects, photographs and archival material which relate to the Gypsy/Traveller community of Argyll
Category 5b - Textiles	Vernacular textiles, representative of those found within townships across the West of Scotland
Category 5c - Furniture	Vernacular furniture, representative of that found within townships across the West of Scotland
Category 5d – Household	Household items, representative of those found within townships across the West of Scotland
Category 5e – Household chores	Household activities such as washing or grinding corn
Category 5f – Agricultural, hand	Hand powered agricultural machinery
Category 5g – Agriculture, drawn	Horse or tractor drawn agricultural machinery
Category 5h – Agricultural, other	Other agricultural machinery
Category 5i - Trades	Items and tools relating to trades, such as blacksmithing or fishing
Category 5j – Local Interest	Items relating to Mid-Argyll

Category 5k – Discreet groups	Small groups of items collected together
Category 5l – Architectural	Items removed from vernacular architectural structures
Category 5m – Books and Archive	Books and archival material
Category 5n – Personal effects	Personal accessories, such as walking sticks
Category 6 – Set Dressing	Mass produced items, with no provenance, used to dress the building and site. Not accessioned.

Appendix IV

Daniel Baker's Gypsy Visuality

Aspect	Description
Flashiness	shininess, flashiness, showiness, silky, shiny, sparkly, showy, flashy, glittering, glistening, flashing, a jewel, reverberative, radiating, sharp, bright tones,
Allure	alluring, spectacle, eye catching, intriguing, captivating, radiance, stimulation, celebratory, playfulness, sensuality, fascination, amusement, excitement, curiosity, desire, enchantment, scintillation, admiration, envy
Enchantment/Entrapment	entangle, ensnare, trap, sinister, entrapment, confusion, cunning, traps, alluring, seduction, containment, complexity, net, bound-ness
Ornament	decoration, decorative, ornamental, beauty, exotic, baroque
Diversion	obscuration, concealment, hidden, obfuscate, mask, veil, barrier, obstacle, mystery, camouflage, marginality, decoy, deferral, diversion, diversionary, interruption, trickery, trick, contradiction, deceptive, trompe l'oeil, illusion, artifice, imitation, artificial, fanciful, invention, exaggeration, falsity, deceitful, fictional, pretence, puzzle, resistance, trickiness, illusiveness
Discordance	threat, danger, conflict, anarchy, jarring, incompatible, discordant, conflicting, opposing, irritation, hardness, brashness, abrasive, juxtaposition, frictions, hazard, discordance, disturbance, guardedness, suspicion, mistrust, exclusion, strange, ugly, bad taste, gaudy, oddity, intrusion, roughness, wariness
Contingency	recycling, adaptation, invention, eclecticism, resourcefulness, versatility, multi-functionality, multi-sited, simultaneity, ambiguity, ambivalence contingency, hybrid, inventiveness, uncertainty, duality, dualistic, paradoxical, multi-valency
Functionality	functional, multi-functionality, resourcefulness, versatility, inventiveness
Performance	liveliness, energetic, complex, expansive, kinetic, playful, dynamic, induces performance, encourages action, transformative, inventive, activity, performative, exciting, joyfulness, musical, resonance, play, fun, tactility, toy, plaything, weapon
Community/Family	knitting, coming together, harmony, woven, cobweb, connective, mesh, community, comforting, network
Home	home, homemaking, comfort, family, protection, durability, homemade-ness, blanket, wedding dress, soft furnishing, welcome
Traditional skills	traditions of making, skill, handmade, Gypsy tradition, Showman/fairground tradition, archaic, myth
Wildlife	flowers, birds, flora and fauna, wildlife
Countryside	freedom, countryside, affinity with nature, breeding
Gender	femininity, sewn, female, hand craft, femininity, masculinity, sex, fecundity

What we have been invited to do

Those planning the redisplay are aware that the current interpretation about James Macpherson is inadequate and have invited a small group of us to help tell his story better. James Macpherson's story will be told in the room marked **2** on the floorplan – **Medieval/ Renaissance**. This room will contain objects related to histories and legends of the Clan. The main objects in the room will be the Green Banner (a banner under which the Clan is said to have fought), the Black Chanter that Fell from Heaven (said to have brought the Clan luck when it fought) and James Macpherson's fiddle (said to have been played by Macpherson before he was hanged at Banff, offered to the crowd and when not accepted, broken and the pieces thrown away). We are invited to interpret the fiddle and other objects associated with James Macpherson's story. These are:

James Macpherson's fiddle.

Pieces of the Banff town clock that were said to have been put back to ensure that Macpherson was hanged before his pardon arrived.

A replica of the sword that is said to have been Macpherson's.

We have been given a whole wall, which can be used for any writing relevant to Macpherson (the fiddle will likely take up some room on the wall in a case – we have also been invited to write a label for this).



Macpherson's fiddle

Suggestion of what text will be needed:

Something that introduces the story of James Macpherson to museum visitors.

A short object label for James Macpherson's fiddle, sword and the Banff Clock

There is also space for some text explaining terminology, e.g. explaining that he was hanged for being an 'Egipitian' and what that meant. Can explain here what that means and discuss how he would be referred to today.

Amount of text: the museum has now suggested around 30-50 words for a summary (introducing James Macpherson), plus 200 words for the body of the text (they have suggested that it is split into three paragraphs), plus short object labels (one each for the clock, the fiddle and the sword). The clock is on a solid base and so we can have two labels here (e.g. one with some lines from the Rant/ Farewell/ Lament that mention the clock and another one explaining).

The text could be printed up on a board and hung on the wall (the museum would do this for us once the text was agreed). It is also possible to feature some text using vinyl lettering (which is letters stuck directly to that wall – see example below)



An example of vinyl lettering on a wall

It might also be possible to use vinyl lettering to feature part of the tune for Macpherson's Farewell. The museum are keen to let visitors listen to a recording of the song or the tune played on the fiddle. They don't have the money to do this just now, but hope to add this feature in the future.

The Clan are keen that somewhere in the interpretation that we suggest that Macpherson's father was Macpherson of Invereshie. This claim is occasionally made and helps the museum link James Macpherson to their wider history. Other than that, we can interpret things with some freedom.

Appendix VI

Heartbreak Through Her Eyes

By Maggie McPhee

I want to tell you about my son, Jamie Macpherson. His father and I met at a wedding, he was a Highland laird and a very charming man. Back then I was a young Traveller girl. A few months later, in 1675, Jamie was born in Banff, Scotland. His father took my wean fae me to be brought up in Invereshie House. Those years without my Jamie were hard. I would travel far to his father's kain and watch him quietly from the shadows of the trees as he played gird and cleek with his nurse-maid in the garden.

Many times I wanted to cry out to him, to hold him but I couldn't and it broke my heart. When Jamie's father died a few years later he came looking for me and my people. We took Jamie into our clan and he fitted just right. As time went on Jamie grew to be a handsome young man. He was so tall and strong and could out-fence any man with a sword. Musically gifted, he would often sit around the campfire, playing the fiddle and we would listen as his beautiful melodies filled the air.

As Jamie got older he wandered the countryside with a puckle of nae yoosers, robbing from the bien hantle. But he was always good and kind to the poor. Everyone liked my boy, except for his enemy the sleekit Lord Braco, a rich landowner with a grudge. One day, Jamie and his friends were at the St Rufus Fair in Keith, Braco and his men attacked them viciously, killing one man. Jamie's armed crew fought back with all their might but they were overpowered and taken to Banff prison.

Soon, Judge Dunbar, a friend of Lord Braco, sentenced my Jamie to be hung just for being a Traveller. With fear and desperation, I made my way to Turriff where I begged and pleaded for my laddie's life. They took pity on me and showed mercy for my boy and gave him a reprieve. I fled from the courtroom. I rode back fast to Banff but I was too late - my boy was gone from this world. Lord Braco heard about the reprieve, he knew it was going to save my boy's life so he put the clock forward 15 minutes and Jamie was hanged. My heart broke into a million pieces and I fell to the grund sobbing.

It was later on that they told me how brave Jamie was - how he stood at the bottom of the gallows and played a soulful tune on his fiddle. When he finished, he offered up his fiddle to anyone who was standing there but nae haet would take it. So, he broke it on the gallows and flung it on the grund. After the hanging, one of Jamie's friends picked up the fiddle, wrapped it in a shawl and gave it to me. I locked it in the family kist as it was all I had left of my son.

Jamie Macpherson died on November 16th 1700.

*I've lived a life of sturt strife
I die by treachery
At once my heart, I must depart
And not avenged be.*

Additional interpretation accompanying Maggie McPhee's text at the Clan Macpherson Museum

Jamie Macpherson, c.1675-1700

In 1700, in the town of Banff, Aberdeenshire, Jamie Macpherson and James Gordone were hanged for being Gypsies. In all the many times Jamies Macphersons's story has been told since, his mother is hardly mentioned. Here Maggie McPhee, a Scottish Traveller and writer, has given James' mother a voice. In 'Heartbreak Through Her Eyes', she tells the story of Jamie Macpherson's life and death and the story of these special objects.

Maggie has included words from her own language, the Cant, which was known to be spoken by the women who travelled with Macpherson. Definitions of these words, and also of the Scots words used, are included in the glossary to the right.

bien hantle: the well-to-do or gentry
fae: from
grund: ground
kist: a chest for keeping important belongings in
nae haicht: not a one, no body
nae yoosers: no use, or up to no good
puckle: small number or group
sleekit: sly
wean: child

'Our [Traveller] history spreads out across the country in every town you will find it if you just know where to look, for we are still here.'

Maggie McPhee

Introductory panel for Maggie McPhee's text, Clan Macpherson Museum. © Mairi MacPherson.

Jamie Macpherson (c.1675-1700)

Jamie was born to a Gypsy or Traveller woman around 1675, and it is said that his father was an Invereshie Macpherson. After his father's death, he returned to the Travelling people of his mother. James and his mother may have been from the Browns of Kincardine, inventors of Strathspey fiddle music. On 7 and 8 November 1700 Jamie Macpherson stood on trial at Banff accused, alongside three other men, of being 'Egipcians and vagabonds'. He was hanged alongside James Gordon on 16 November 1700. Jamie is remembered for the *Lament*, which he sang and played on the fiddle below the gallows.

Over the last three hundred years Macpherson's Lament has been sung, shared, adapted and published. Robert Burns based his poem 'Macpherson's Farewell' on folk traditions that grew from the ballad Macpherson sang at the gallows. Versions of this song are still sung among Scotland's Travelling people today.

The charge of being an 'Egipcian' related to being a Gypsy or Traveller, the Travelling peoples of Scotland. Gypsies were first recorded in Scotland in 1505 and the first laws against 'the Egipcians' date to 1573. These laws not only affected Gypsies but also Travellers, who had been present in Scotland even longer.

Introductory text, story of Jamie Macpherson, Clan Macpherson Museum. © Mairi MacPherson.

Appendix VII

Nacken reading list

Nacken memoirs, life stories, histories	Notes
David Campbell and Duncan Williamson, <i>A Traveller in Two Worlds</i> , vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Luath, 2011)	Geography: mainly Argyll and Fife
David Campbell and Duncan Williamson, <i>A Traveller in Two Worlds</i> , vol. 2 (Edinburgh: Luath, 2012)	Geography: mainly Argyll and Fife
Sheila Douglas, <i>The Last of the Tinsmiths: the Life of Willie MacPhee</i> (Edinburgh: Birlinn,	Geography: mainly Perthshire
Cathy Laing, <i>Reminiscences of a Highland Traveller</i> (Lochmaddy: Comann Eachdraidh Uibhist a Tuath, 2011)	Geography: Muir of Ord, West Highlands and the Outer Hebrides
Roger Leitch (ed.), <i>The Book of Sandy Stewart</i> (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1988)	Geography: mainly Perthshire and Largo, Fife
Michelle Lloyd and Peter E. Ross, <i>Moving Minds: Gypsy/Travellers in Scotland</i> (Edinburgh: MECOPP,	Geography: Scotland-wide
Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger, <i>Till Doomsday in the Afternoon</i> (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986)	Geography: mainly Perthshire
Shamus MacPhee, <i>HEROES... OR RAJ HANTLE?</i> (Perth: Perth and Kinross Council, 2015)	
James Porter and Herschel Gower, <i>Jeannie Robertson: Emergent Singer, Transformative Voice</i> (Tuckwell Press, 1997)	Geography: mainly Aberdeen Most of this is an ethnomusicology, but the opening chapter provides a short biography
Timothy Neat, <i>The Summer Walkers</i> (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1996)	Geography: Highlands (mainly Highlands/ Sutherland)
Sandy Reid, <i>Never to Return</i> (Edinburgh: Black and White Publishing, 2008)	
Jess Smith, <i>Jessie's Journey</i> (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 2002)	Geography: mainly Perthshire
Jess Smith, <i>Tales from the Tent</i> (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 2003)	Geography: mainly Perthshire
Jess Smith, <i>Tears for a Tinker</i> (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 2005)	Geography: mainly Perthshire
Jess Smith, <i>Way of the Wanderers</i> (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2012)	Geography: Scotland-wide
Elizabeth Stewart, and Alison McMorland (ed.), <i>Up Yon Wide and Lonely Glen: Travellers' Songs, Stories and Tunes of the Fetterangus Stewarts</i> (Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2012)	Geography: mainly Fetterangus
Sheila Stewart, <i>Queen Among the Heather: the Life of Belle Stewart</i> (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2006)	Geography: mainly Perthshire
Sheila Stewart, <i>A Traveller's Life</i> (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2011)	Geography: mainly Perthshire
Betsy Whyte, <i>The Yellow on the Broom</i> (Edinburgh: Chambers, 1979)	Geography: mainly Angus
Betsy Whyte, <i>Red Rowans and Wild Honey</i> (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1990)	Geography: mainly Angus
Patsy Whyte, <i>No Easy Road</i> (Gloucester: Kailyard Publishing, 2009)	
Duncan Williamson, <i>The Horsie Man: Memories of a Traveller 1928-58</i> (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1994) (republished by Birlinn)	Geography: mainly Argyll and Fife

Nacken storytelling collections

Bob Knight, *Faerie Trails and Traveller Tales* (Turrif: Deveron Press, 2018)

Stanley Robertson, several titles

Jess Smith, *Sookin' Berries* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2008)

Sheila Stewart, *Pilgrims of the Mist* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2008)

Duncan Williamson, several titles

The introductions of many of these contain some background and/or biographical information.

A discussion of *Nacken* tales can be found in Donald Braid, *Scottish Traveller Tales* (Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2002)

Antiquarian texts – histories of *Nacken* in Scotland

Available on Archive.org:

David MacRitchie, *Scottish Gypsies under the Stewarts* (Edinburgh: John Douglas, 1895)

Andrew McCormick, *The Tinkler-Gypsies of Galloway* (Dumfries: John Maxwell and Son, 1906)

Walter Simson, *A History of the Gypsies with Specimens of the Gipsy Language* (London: Sampson Low, Son and Marston, 1865)

Available online:

[Walter Scott and Thomas Pringle], 'Notices concerning the Scottish Gypsies', *Edinburgh Magazine*, vol. 1 (April, May and September 1817)

<https://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/webbin/serial?id=blackwoods>

Archaeology and museums

Ben Lawers: An Archaeological Landscape in Time:

<http://journals.socantscot.org/index.php/sair/article/view/3180/3159> [PDF]

There is only one mention of "t____s", but it does acknowledge the role played by *Nacken* in bringing pottery from the lowland potteries into homes remote from access to these goods.

I.F. Grant, *Highland Folk Ways* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961)

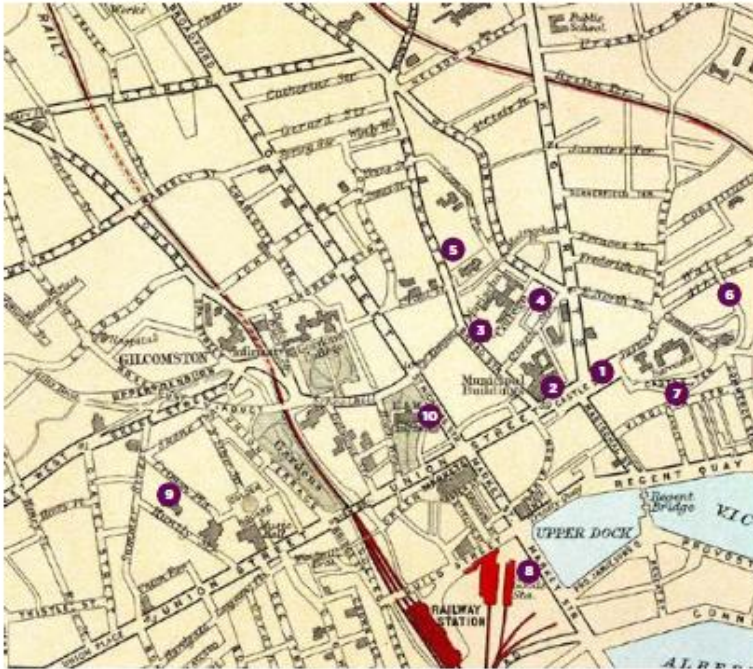
I.F. Grant, *The Making of Am Fasgadh* (Edinburgh: NMS Publications, 2007)

Ethnology

The Compendium of Scottish Ethnology does a good job of including discussions of and by *Nacken*, including (but not restricted to) *Scotland's Domestic Life* (vol. 6) and *The Individual and Community Life* (vol. 9).

Oral testimonies, stories and songs also feature in some editions of *Tocher*.

NAWKEN TRAIL ABERDEEN CITY CENTRE



Bartholomew map of Aberdeen

1 Castle Street

John Ewen (c. 1742-1822), took up settled business as a silversmith in Castle Street around 1770. As a Nawken he had likely learned the art of working with silver and other metals from his father. He was famed for his philanthropy. The image on the cover of this booklet is an engraving of a painting by Robert Souton of Castle Street, which features well known figures of the day, including John Ewen who can be seen in a top hat advising customers in the centre of the image. The original painting was raffled at 5 shillings a ticket and John Ewen sold the tickets at his shop in Castle Street. More recently, a market took place in a nearby lane where Nawken sold second-hand clothes and other wares. Jeannie Robertson sang there on market days.

2 Tolbooth

Nawken brothers, Peter and John Young, were imprisoned at the Tolbooth, Union Street, Aberdeen. They were sons of Ann Graham and her husband who was known as Caird (meaning Nawken craftsman) Young. The family were skilled in the making of horn spoons. Peter was known for his daring escapes from prisons across Scotland. James Macpherson, who was hanged for being a Gypsy in Barff in 1700, was once imprisoned in Aberdeen. Like Peter Young, he too escaped the jail, aided by his cousin Donald Macpherson and a Nawken associate, Peter Brown.



Tolbooth padlock
AUCDA 0525,
University of Aberdeen

Padlocks like this one from the Tolbooth were no match for Peter Young, who it is claimed escaped from every jail in Scotland. On 24 October 1787 he broke out of his cell at the Tolbooth and then released his wife, Jean Wilson, and her Aunt Agnes. Peter was eventually hanged in Edinburgh on 2 July 1788.

John Young Peter Young's brother, was held in the Tolbooth and hanged in 1801. A set of spoon moulds regularly owned by Young was collected by Aberdeen's George 'Taffy' Davidson, in his time as curator of the Highland Folk Museum. It is currently on display at the V&A Dundee.



John Young's spoon mould
SKA 59, Highland Folk
Museum, High Life Highland

3 Marischal College

According to Stanley Robertson, 'because the Travellin people moved from place to place people didn't notice that they went missing. Many a time by the lonely side of the country a camp has been found with all the people's belongings as the people were never seen again, presumably taken by the Burkers'. Jocky Higgins also spoke of his father 'warnin never to walk past Kings college at night - fir fear o' Burkers'.

Dr Andrew Muir (1804-44) was the first official lecturer in Anatomy at the University of Aberdeen and is said to have taken his students on body-stitching trips.



Portrait of Andrew Muir M.D., Anatomist, by James Currie, 1865
AUCDA 0306, University of Aberdeen Museum Collection

4 B Shoe Lane

This was the site of Robert Ogilvie's. This shop also ran a mail order business. Essie Stewart and Alec John Williamson, Nawken from Sutherland, both remember sending off for useful items that were then hawked around the homes of those far from cities and shops. Stewart recalls buying 'moccasins, trousers, shirts, socks, underwear, moccasins, pins, brushes, combs, frock-coats' from Ogilvie's. These items would have been sold to customers all over Sutherland. As Stewart says, 'we were travelling shops ahead of our time'. Williamson also recounted ordering combs, scrubbers, writing pads, brushes, alarm clocks, etc. from this Aberdeen shop.



Robert Ogilvie's shop
on Shoe Lane
Thanks to Royan for
permission to use

5 Gallowgate

Marla Stewart Robertson Higgins (1880-1952), mother of famous ballad singer, Jeannie Robertson (1908-1975), moved her family to the Gallowgate during the First World War. 'My mother shifted from St Andrew's Street to my big house in Gallowgate. It had four lovely big rooms and the big shop in the front forbyes. Ye see it was nothin' for my mother to fill it full o' stuff... it was a second-hand shop, a pawn shop. It had very new stuff and old stuff, anything, because she went near the town an' brackit an' also from their people comin' in... The Gallowgate was a thrievin' place... It was a real busy place at that time'.

When Jeannie married Donald Higgins in 1927 they also lived in the Gallowgate, at 170 or 'We lived quite happily... We didn't own nobody neither, and pay we rents an' gas 't' the pictures very right'.



Jeannie Robertson's
170a Road place
Photo: Pinguic (flickr) by-nc-nd

6 Hanover Street

Stanley Robertson (1940-2009) was a nephew of Jeannie Robertson. He was born in Aberdeen to a settled Nawken family and grew up there. Though most of Stanley's memories of life in Aberdeen as a child were miserably unhappy he did describe one very happy period when he was a boy. His parents moved to an old tenement in Hanover Street where his father's youngest sister, Auntie Bella, lived. All the neighbours were poor and kind to each other'. Robertson recalled 'great fun. Piping, singing and especially storytelling' at this time.

7 Castlehill

The Gordon Highlanders had barracks on this site from 1794 to 1935. Nawken men signed up to fight in regiments across Scotland and the Gordon Highlanders was no exception. Some brought their musical talents too. Elizabeth Stewart recounts that 'altogether, three generations o' Stewart pipers hiv served in the Gordon Highlanders includes some o' my mother's brothers. They an' served their country well an' left a legacy'. Among the many Nawken who served in the Gordon Highlanders was 'Aye Sergeant Deben Stewart' who was awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal and the Russian Order of St George.



Medals of St Stewart
Supplied courtesy of The
Gordon Highlanders Museum

8 Aberdeen fish-houses, Market Street

During the 1960s and 70s Stanley Robertson worked in the fish houses that were found along Market Street. As Stanley once said, 'Strange and eerie things dinnae only happen intae the country, for they tak place intae the city as well'. The story of one such spooky happening in the Market Street area can be found on the back of this booklet. In his later years Robertson worked with the Fisheries Institute, University of Aberdeen, to document and promote the rich heritage of Nawken stories and songs that he had inherited.

9 Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service, Huntly Street

In October 2008 a landmark ruling took place here in Aberdeen. At an employment tribunal Scottish Gypsy Travellers (Nawken) were recognised as a distinct ethnic group, giving them protection under the then Race Relations Act of 1976, now the Equality Act 2010. As Prof. Colin Clark testified at the hearing, 'It is clear that Scottish Gypsy Travellers have long had awareness of self-identity and of difference from the settled population in both Britain and within Scotland'. Shamus and Roseanne McPhee played a key role in seeing this legislation passed.



Unsettled (image of Mac arena
v GIEP tribunal, 2010), by
Shamus McPhee
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10 St Nicholas Kirk Yard

This is the site of another city-centre Nawken tale. Bob Knight's tale of the Devil is set in St Nicholas Kirk Yard and can be found in his book *Gawne Tails and Traveller Tales*, published in 2021.



Gawne Tails and Traveller Tales,
by Bob Knight