KENYA MUSEUM SOCIETY

TRACKER

July/August 2020

The way we have been: The Know Kenya Course at the Karen Blixen Museum 2010 – and see p. 3.

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Contents

➢Indicates a project to which KMS has financially contributed – examples of where your money goes!

KMS Upcoming Events
Feb – Dec 2020
By participating in KMS events (except the AGM!), you are helping support projects of the National Museums of Kenya.

AGM August 12	Virtually: by Zoom 6 pm 6 pm– see p. 2.
Evening Talk – Wed 19 August	The Demand for Kenya's Ivory in Asia: Past & Present By Lucy Vigne Tamambo Karen Blixen Coffee Garden, 7pm
Evening Talk – Sat 22 August	~~The Demand for Kenya's Ivory in Asia: Past & Present~~ ~~By Lucy Vigne~~ Muthaiga Country Club, 7 pm
Evening Talk – Sat 19th Sept @ MCC	**TO BE FILLED**
Evening Talk – Sat 10th or 17th Oct @ MCC	**TO BE FILLED**
Art Show 30th Oct – 1st Nov @ NMK	**Annual Affordable Art Show** **See p 3**
Evening Talk – Sat 14th or 21st Nov @MCC	**TO BE FILLED**

Postponed

KMS and NMK and the Coronavirus

The KMS office and the shop are physically closed for the duration, in other words until further notice, all depending on the virus and the government's guidance and/or directions. But office staff are still working. Email: info@kenyamuseumsociety.org. And goods can be purchased from the shop – see p. 5. Stay connected with KMS through Facebook (@MuseumK) Twitter (@MuseumSociety) and Instagram (museumsociety)

KMS Council and Staff wish you all well – stay safe, stay well.

Staff of the Museum have continued to work during the pandemic. Some have been working on refurbishment of some aspects of the Nairobi Museum itself, or other projects, including of Hyrax Hill (see p. 19).

Research and administrative staff have been largely working remotely but are now in the office. They are hopeful the Museum itself will re-open soon – with suitable precautions.

KMS 2020 AGM

You will have received a notice that this is taking place on Wednesday, 12 Aug, at 6:00pm via Zoom conferencing (before you get this *Tracker*).

A soft copy of the audited KMS accounts was attached.

You were asked to confirm your attendance on or before Monday, 10 Aug by email to (info@kenyamuseumsociety.org) or phone (0724 255299, 0780 755 231, wireless 020 2339158). A Zoom meeting code and password would then be sent to you by email or text message. Use the same contacts if you need assistance in downloading Zoom on your phone or computer, but ask for assistance at least two days before the meeting. You will need sufficient airtime or bundles for an hour of connection.

If your membership has lapsed or will soon lapse please renew prior to the beginning of the meeting. Though all categories of members are encouraged to attend, only paid-up members, exclusive of student members, visitor members, NMK special category members, and KMS staff, will be able to vote on any issues.

Agenda

1. Opening of Meeting
2. Approval of Minutes of 2019 AGM
3. Chairperson's Report
4. Treasurer's Report
5. New Business
   a. Election of officers and other Council members
   b. Appointment of auditor
   c. Additional new business
6. Adjournment

Philip Horobin, 1920 – 2019

by Kari Mutu

Philip Horobin was the perfect gentleman to all those who had the pleasure of his company. He was born in England on 6th June, 1920 and departed this life in Kenya in December 2019.
He was a self- educated man, having left school at the age of 15 years, and occupied himself with odd jobs before joining the British army to participate in the Second Word War WW2. Sent to Egypt as a humble private, he kept his head down and survived the war.
Demobilized, he joined an insurance company in the North of England and studied insurance degrees by correspondence, becoming a top life insurance consultant. His knowledge propelled him to Australia, South Africa, Nigeria and finally Kenya where he settled. Here he met and a local girl by the name of Maria Nyaga, who was also of the insurance world.

Philip was a trustee of the Kenya Museum Society, and volunteered on the Know Kenya Course, an educational workshop organised by the KMS in the past. He was a long-time member of Kwanza Kenya Toastmasters, a public speaking and communication organisation.

He was sprightly for his age and played golf at the Vet Lab Sports Club, enjoying the rough even more than the fairways. The pause before the second nine was most welcome, and with his frequent golf partner, Ralph, would enjoy his review of the play so far.

Philip leaves behind 2 English sons in Europe and 1 son and 2 grand-daughters in Australia from his English marriage. 2 step-children from Maria and a step grand-daughter are in Kenya. He made sure all his 5 children were highly educated, the driving force being his own experience in life.
In the picture on the cover, Philip is third from the right behind Pat Jentz and Onesmus Irungu. Lucy Waithera writes: “Philip used to check entry tickets during Know Kenya Course very diligently and he didn't let anyone in without a ticket or badge.”

Rest in peace.

Looking further ahead (hopefully!)

The Affordable Art Show 30th Oct – 1st Nov

KMS currently plans to go ahead with the show. This is inevitably contingent on COVID-19 developments.

If it does happen it will not be quite like past years. The first night event will be spread out over several hours, and people will have to book to come during a particular one-hour slot. No alcohol, and no live music. The courtyard walkway will be marked out in social distancing spaces. And aspects of the arrangements that create a risk of people being too close together for too long will have to be reorganised: like queues of artists bringing or fetching their art, and small groups consulting and hanging the art, not to mention the queue to pay for art purchased.

But if it goes ahead we are confident it will have the usual artistic buzz, with lots of art worth looking at – and buying!

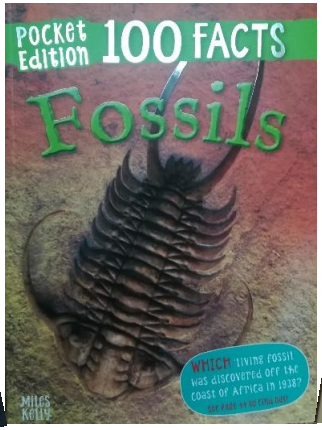
We shall keep you informed. Tentatively block the date!

Social distancing: If you come together, stay together.

If you come alone, stay alone.

Masks –artistic or otherwise – mandatory.

Available at Kenya Museum Society Shop



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Discover what life is like ferocious feline world through 100 facts, from teeth and claws to cubs and kittens. Find out how snow leopards keep copy, why leopards have a larder, and how we can help big cats to survive.

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PLACE AN ORDER TODAY

COVID – 19 NMK and KMS activities online

The National Museums of Kenya and the Kenya Museum Society (separately or in collaboration) have been innovating in terms of reaching out online.

Museumscapes

This of it as a "scape" in the sense of a suffix "used to form nouns referring to a wide view of a place, often one represented in a picture as in landscape, seascape and

cityscape", OR as an escape from the confines of life under COVID – 19. Either way, they may broaden your horizons.

An account of the second Museumscape follows.

Museumscape #2 July 4 2020 Dr Bernard Agwanda, Curator of Mammals Department and Head of the National Taxidermy and Taphonomy* Centre

➢KMS has recently funded taxidermy for various refurbishment and equipment, including for a freezer large enough to hold a lion (not acquired yet)!

By 5.15 (the event started at 5) 32 people were logged on for this event. People identified themselves as being in the US, Halifax and Nova Scotia, the Netherlands and Italy, as well as in Kenya.

Dr Agwanda began by saying that the Centre (a centre of excellence within NMK) prepares exhibits, and also supports other government agencies.

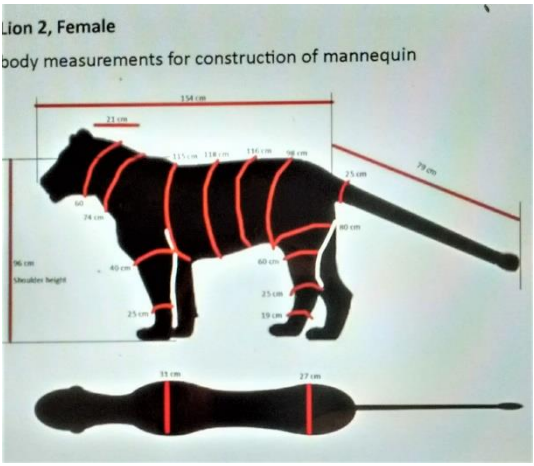
* Taxidermy is a familiar word ("the art of preparing, stuffing, and mounting the skins of animals with lifelike effect"). But taphonomy? Google to the rescue (on the day when Google's daily doodle was of Mekatalili – the Giriama leader against the British). The briefest and most relevant definition is "involves every process involved in the final condition of a specimen that is put on display in museum or found in a collection." From https://serc.carleton.edu/research_education/paleontology/taphonomy.html. But see also a related usage by Dr Agwanda in the article.

The work involves preparing skin and bone – and art and a science. And a bit of engineering, such as to make animal stable. Think of a giraffe!

Its taphonomy work includes the study and interpretation of bone remains, and is sought by KWS, the police and the judiciary, for example.

They also study hair, skin and faecal remains.

Taxidermy brings wildlife closer to the people, hopefully inspiring interest in science and conservation. It enables people to see details that cannot be seen in the wild. A natural history museum without taxidermy is like a car without an engine or a bird without feathers.



They produce models for teaching biology. And help universities to understand the biological backgrounds of the animals they study. They have produced chickens for biology and veterinary students, and camels for technical colleges in Wajir and Marsabit.

They had studied the remains of lions: showing how one, from Maasai Mara, that had been "speared because it had eaten a goat" had actually been shot, and how another – which had been euthanised - had wasted away because it had a broken molar and could not chew, since it must have been in great pain.

They have prepared a reconstruction of a dodo – for an exhibition of creatures now extinct.

These skills/arts are not formally taught in Kenya, Dr Agwanda explained.

Now, of course, they do not get, for preservation, animals that have been shot, at least not legally. They are dependent on roadkill or remains of animals that have died naturally, supplied by KWS.

Now they were planning an exhibit on pangolins [rather timely!].

Dr Agwanda showed us various objects. He explained that there are various stages to taxidermy, beginning with skinning the animal and taking measurements. The skin would be preserved – and he showed as the skin of the elephant, Tim, that died in Amboseli recently. Then the semblance of the body of the animal – a mannequin – had to be created. This might be out of wire mesh, concrete or fibre-glass.

He also gave some information about what had been going on during the COVID-19 restriction. They had been using the opportunity to reload and re-shine. The museum had not closed – other than to visitors – but workers had been refurbishing the museum. The Centre was central to this. Some exhibits need repairing. Some heads have been on display in the mammal gallery since 2007. An ear might have been eroded and need repairing. Some specimens in the museum are 70 years old or more.

They were also currently preparing the forthcoming exhibition of bees. [➢funded by KMS – ed.]

There was an enthusiastic reaction to the talk, with many expression of appreciation. The Society, too, is very grateful for this new way of reaching our members.

NMK Virtual Learning Sessions.

The National Museums of Kenya announced in May: "through our Education Section, is proud to introduce the first Virtual Museum learning session this Saturday 16th May 2020, from 10am on zoom. Targeting children between 5-12 years, this session aims to introduce the young ones to our vast resources on insects.

Kindly register your children by sending an email to nmkeduc@museums.or.ke and we'll share the link for the activities."

KMS @ 50 looking back – an occasional series

Down Memory Lane with Saryoo Shah, former KMS Chairperson

Saryoo Shah is a 3rd generation Kenyan Indian born in 1947. She joined the Kenya Museum Society (KMS) in the 1980s, making her one of the longest members, and has served on the KMS Council since 2001.

Starting in 1991, Saryoo was a certified guide at the Nairobi National Museum with a strong knowledge of the Asian African Heritage gallery. An art lover, Saryoo has for many years helped organise the annual Affordable Art Show, one of the largest visual arts exhibitions in Kenya.

Saryoo loves to tell stories about life in the old days, the participation of the Asian community in Kenya's independence struggle and how Kenyan Indians contributed to launching some of the galleries at the Nairobi Museum, "even though Asians were not allowed into the Museum." A mother and grandmother, Saryoo is an excellent cook and an avid book reader. She was interviews by KMS Council member Kari Mutu.

***

What do you enjoy about being a KMS member?

Being part of the Museum you get to learn so much about natural history through the different departments in the Museum. For example, palaeontology, birds, mammals and insects. Now I love bird watching and I have been teaching my young grandchildren. When he was 3 years old, my grandson could name almost 50 different birds.

Tell us about your time as chairperson of KMS in 2006?

It happened quite suddenly. The chairperson at the time, Rhodia Mann, had to step down quite abruptly after only a few months and handed the role to me. I was not prepared to be the chairperson but I did the best that I could. It was not an easy position. I was the only Asian on a committee of white people, and being a woman as well, it was tough.

1NMK staff with the coelocanth in 2001

During my time as chair, I managed to persuade the then director general, Dr Idle Farrah, to preserve a rare Coelacanth fish,* the only coelacanth ever to be caught on the coast of Kenya. It was lying in formalin for 3 to 4 years after having been caught in Malindi by fishermen in 2001. KMS and the National Museums of Kenya each funded 50% of the cost of preserving the fish.

What other experiences have you enjoyed as a KMS member?

I enjoyed being a museum guide because we learned a lot about the museum galleries. We had to go through guide training for six weeks, then pass a test before we were awarded certificates as qualified museum guides. Palaeontology was compulsory course and we had to train in one gallery of our choice and one gallery chosen by the examiner.

I was also actively involved with the Know Kenya Course in the 1990s. The workshop took place over 5 weeks and we were educated about different aspects of Kenya's prehistory, ethnography, geography and natural history.

You organise children's activities at the Nairobi Museum, tell us about them?

* See https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/report/27542/kenya-living-fossil-fish-captured-malindi

We have held Origami sessions which is the Japanese craft of folding paper into different shapes. Origami was quite popular with the children. We have worked with clay, done fossil-making with plaster of Paris and I have also taken children behind the scenes to a few departments in the Nairobi Museum.

The most memorable children's event was organizing an Indian culture morning with the help of another guide, Liz Lampard. The children dressed in Indian clothes, participated in folk dancing, applied henna dye on their hands, did forehead decorations like Indian brides and were served with bhajias and a slice of pizza. One mother celebrated his son's birthday by bringing his friends to the event.

Why should people visit the national museums and join KMS?

People should visit to increase their knowledge about Kenya and its wealth regarding birds, mammals, insects, ethnography and much more. By joining the KMS, members are privileged to access many departments and back-of-house sections that are not open to the general public.

What books are you reading at the moment?

I am reading *Horrible Geography* by Anita Ganeri and Mike Phillips. It's meant for kids but I ended up reading it as it was so informative and I could connect easily with my grandson.

Articles from NMK

There follow two detailed articles about sections of the National Museum to which KMS has recently given some funding.

Palynology and Paleobotany Section, Earth Sciences Department

Dr. Veronica Muiruri

Palynology comes from the Greek and means the "study of pollen (dust) ",or "particles that are spread". A classic palynologist analyses particulate samples collected from the air, from water, or from deposits including sediments of any age. The condition and identification of those particles, organic and inorganic, give the palynologist clues to the life, environment, and energetic conditions that produced them. It is also an interdisciplinary science and is a branch of earth science (geology or geological science) and biological science (biology), particularly plant science (botany). Stratigraphical

palynology is a branch of micropalaeontology and paleobotany, which studies fossil palynomorphs[*] from the Precambrian to the Holocene.

Objects of this section of the Museum

1) To do scientific research, publish, document and disseminate palynological & paleobotany research findings.

2) To collect, identify, preserve and manage both modern and fossilized micro-plants to enhance research on both prehistoric and present vegetation changes.

3) To identify changes in vegetation due to change in climatic conditions or anthropogenic influences.

Uses of palynology

It has been used for a diverse range of applications, related to many scientific disciplines including:

Biostratigraphy and geochronolog. Geologists use palynological studies in biostratigraphy to correlate strata and determine the relative age of a given bed, horizon, formation or stratigraphical sequence.

Palaeoecology and climate change Palynology has been used to reconstruct past vegetation (land plants) and marine and Freshwater phytoplankton communities, and so infer past environmental (palaeoenvironmental) and palaeoclimatic conditions.

Organic palynofacies studies examine the preservation of particulate organic matter and palynomorphs which provide information on the depositional environment of sediments and depositional palaeoenvironments of sedimentary rocks.

Geothermal alteration studies examine the colour of palynomorphs extracted from rocks to give the thermal alteration and maturation of sedimentary sequences, providing estimates of maximum palaeotemperatures.

Limnology studies Freshwater palynomorphs and animal and plant fragments, including the diatoms and sponge spicules, can be used to study past lake levels and long-term climate change.

Taxonomy and evolutionary studies Involve the use of pollen morphological characters as sources of taxonomic data to delimit plant species under same family or genus. Pollen apertural status is frequently used for differential sorting or finding similarities between species of the same taxa. This is also called Palynotaxonomy.

[*] "Plant and animal structures that are microscopic in size (from about 5 μm to about 500 μm), and are composed of compounds that are highly resistant to most forms of decay other than oxidation, being composed of sporopollenin, dinosporin, or related compounds".

Forensic palynology: the study of pollen and other palynomorphs for evidence at a crime scene.

Allergy studies Studies of the geographic distribution and seasonal production of pollen can help sufferers of allergies such as hay fever.

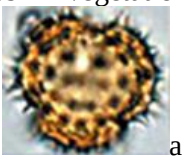
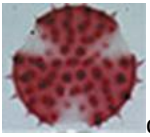
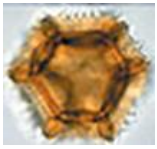
Melissopalynology: the study of pollen and spores found in honey.

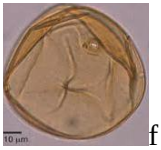
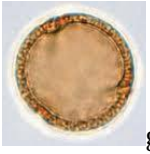
Archaeological palynology examines human uses of plants in the past. This can help determine seasonality of site occupation, presence or absence of agricultural practices or products, and 'plant-related activity areas' within an archaeological context. Bonfire Shelter is one such example of this application.

Why use pollen, fungal spores, diatoms, phytoliths and charcoal in paleobotanical and paleoenvironmental reconstruction?

These are well preserved in high numbers due to their resistance to decay and acidic conditions because of the outer cover called sporopollenin. Morphological features help in identification and can be at times identified to species level of the parent plant.

Pollen

Pollen helps in vegetation reconstruction, the study of climate change and human settlement.  a  b  c  d 

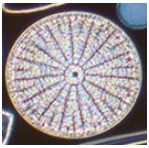
e  f  g

a,b,c,d,e =Asteraceae,* indicators of disturbed environment, f = Poaceae / Zea mays (maize) indicator of cultivation, g = Rumex,† indicator of wet environment.

Diatoms

From these one can **i**nfer water quality changes, pollution, nutrients and lake developmental histories i.e. reconstructing past changes in lake salinity and pH and habitats

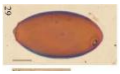
* Asteraceae – the daisy family.
† Docks and sorrels.

 a  b  c

a= Stephanondiscus, indicator of fresh water, circum neutral pH; b= Anomoeonesis, indicator of a very siline conditions; c= Cymbella tuminda, indicator of a mild salinity;

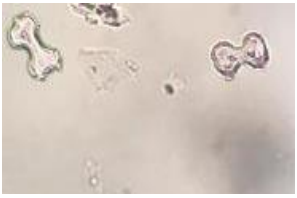
Non pollen palynomorphs (fungal spores)

These are in particular are very informative in tracing herbivore densities and their ecology and many are specific ecological indicators for burning, dead wood and animal dung.

Phytoliths

These are plants silica bodies-formed between or around cells when a plant deposits silica during transpiration. They are microscopic, Inorganic in nature and preserve well in all depositional regimes: terrestrial and lacustrine. They are especially very important because they are able to identify grasses beyond family levels - which is not possible with pollen. They are also useful in identifying domesticated plant species from their relatives in the wild; for example domesticated rice/wild rice, domesticated bananas/wild bananas and have strong correlation with climatic parameters: aridity index, tree density index etc.

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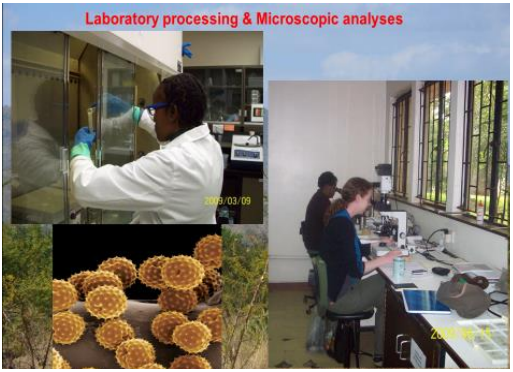
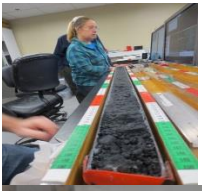
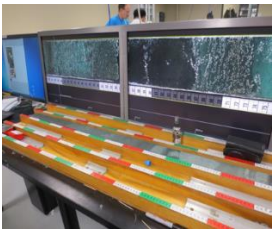
Activities in the field and in the lab



Core drilling: Magadi & Koora graben (core logging, imaging and sub-sampling for multiproxy analyses)





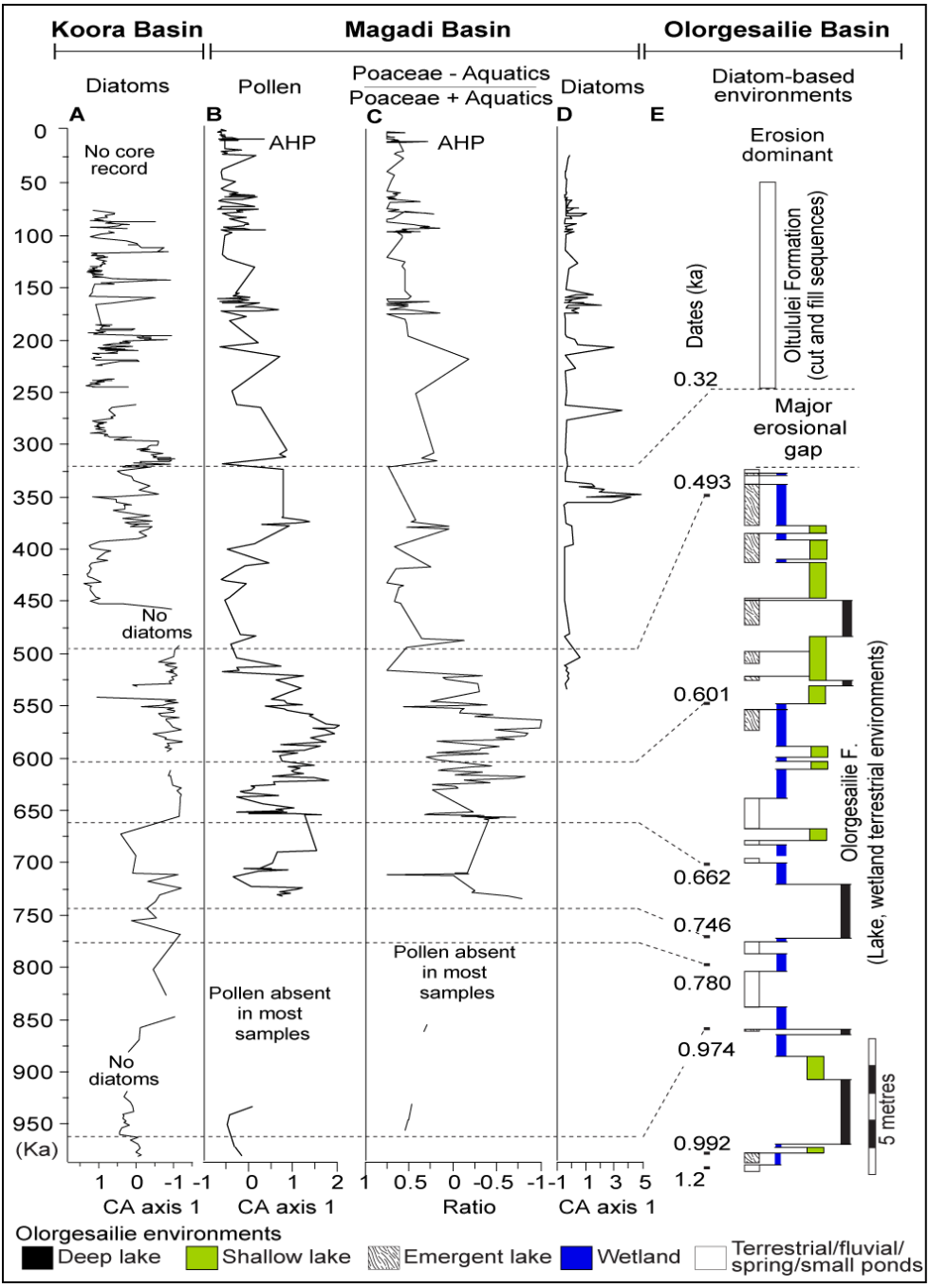
Recent findings from some of the research undertaken

Two sets of cores were recovered (see above) from southern Kenya Rift (Koora and Magadi basins) through the hominid sites and Paleolakes Drilling Project (HSPDP) and

the Olorgesailie Drilling Project (ODP). These contain a detailed environmental Quaternary history with records of up to ~1 million years. This period correlates with much of the Olorgesailie Formation record of 1.2 Ma in the Olorgesailie Basin. The Magadi cores reached trachyte at ~ 194 and 133 m with this project focussed on the longer core, MAG14-2A, which includes limestone, zeolitic, laminated and massive clay and silt, massive mud, chert, trona, gravel and sand. The Koora Core (OLO12-1A) extended to depths of 166.14 m and contains laminated and massive diatomites, fine to coarse sands; lime and siliciclastic muds with pumice-rich gravels. The two cores are particularly important because they provide environmental records that help to fill erosional gaps in the history of the Olorgesailie Basin, which includes important evidence for changing hominin cultures and evolution.

The high-resolution lacustrine-terrestrial stratigraphies of the two basins have shown how landscapes were transformed because of complex interactions between tectonic and climatic processes. Volcanism also had a significant impact, partially damming lakes at Olorgesailie. Diatoms are present in much of the Koora Basin sequence and large parts of the Magadi sediments. These are dominated by a variety of planktonic *Aulacoseira*, *Cyclotella* and *Thalassiosira* taxa in both basins. Species comprising these genera and other planktonic, benthonic and epiphytic taxa preserve a detailed record of lakes that fluctuated in depth, extent and chemistry. The data document the presence of freshwater and saline lakes as well as wetlands. Diatom transfer functions from the Koora and Magadi basins indicate that these water bodies fluctuated widely in conductivity between ~200 to >20,000 μS cm^{-1}, with pH changing between about 7.5 and 11.5. The palaeolakes also periodically exceeded diatom tolerance limits and intermittently dried out. Pollen is generally lacking in the Koora basin sediments, but deposits in the Magadi core contain common pollen that document a wide range of habitats, including forests, woodlands and grasslands that could have supported the presence of hominins and their activities in the region. Fungal spore data support pollen inferences and indicate periods when large mammals might have been common.

The microfossil record shows that there was a broad trend towards more arid conditions in the southern Kenya Rift after about 550 Ka [thousand years], interrupted by periodic wetter conditions. A major episode of desiccation developed between about 500 to 450 Ka and 400 Ka and after 350 Ka that correlates with a period of mammal extinctions and a change from Acheulean to Middle Stone Age toolkits in the Olorgesailie Basin, suggesting that these changes might have been related to environmental conditions at that time. Our data suggest that increasing Middle- to Late-Pleistocene aridification and environmental variability may have been drivers in the physical and cultural evolution of Homo sapiens in East Africa (see diagram on following page)


Koora Basin
Magadi Basin
Olorgesailie Basin
Diatoms
Pollen
Poaceae - Aquatics
Poaceae + Aquatics
Diatoms
Diatom-based environments
A
B
C
D
E
No core record
AHP
AHP
Erosion dominant
Dates (ka)
Oltululei Formation (cut and fill sequences)
0.32
Major erosional gap
0.493
No diatoms
0.601
0.662
0.746
0.780
Pollen absent in most samples
Pollen absent in most samples
0.974
No diatoms
0.992
1.2
(Ka)
Olorgesailie F. (Lake, wetland terrestrial environments)
5 metres
CA axis 1
CA axis 1
Ratio
CA axis 1
Olorgesailie environments
Deep lake
Shallow lake
Emergent lake
Wetland
Terrestrial/fluvial/ spring/small ponds

Correlations between the Koora, Magadi and Olorgesailie basins. A. Diatom CA axis 1. Negative values correlate with deeper lakes. B. Pollen CA axis 1. High values reflect abundant montane taxa especially Podocarpus and aquatic pollen (mainly Cyperaceae). C. Aquatics relative to Poacea. Positive values indicate wetter conditions. D. Diatom CA Axis 1. High values reflect increased fresh benthonic taxa within sediments dominated by mixed freshwater planktonic and saline planktonic taxa. E. Environmental change in the Olorgesailie Basin based on diatoms and sediments. Sediments in the Magadi basin, but the intermittent presence of pollen dominated by Poaceae suggest relatively dry conditions. Aridity has also been inferred for the Olorgesailie Basin around this time interval with the basin there characterised by shallow saline waters, lake regressions and terrestrial settings.

- KMS contributed towards some refurbishment of the palynology lab. We are pleased to say that the work has been completed, and the section has sent us some photographs, including this one of the fume cupboard after repairs.

Hyrax Hill Pre-Historic Site & Museum at 100

Lilian Amwanda, Curator, Hyrax Hill Museum

Hyrax Hill is a narrow rock spur of lava, lying on the eastern edge of Nakuru town. Its summit reaches 1,900 meters above sea level, and 50m above the surrounding grassy plains. It owes its name to the many of these small animals (*proscenia capensis*) which used to inhabit the rocks, though few now remain.

The Hyrax Hill Prehistoric Site and Museum building was formerly a farm house constructed in the early 1920s and ceded to the National Museums of Kenya's in 1964 by the owner, the late Mrs. Selfe, a colonial British dairy farmer. The site covers 59 hectares. It includes several habitation hollows believed to have been inhabited by a pastoral group known as the Sirikwa who were later assimilated to the Kalenjin. It was declared a national monument in 1943 and opened to the public in 1965.

Photos of recent renovations (see below)

(Before) ***(After)*** ***(Before)***

(Before) ***(After)*** ***(After)***

The hill has been known as an archaeological research area and reference point for much of the succeeding investigation of the prehistory of Eastern Africa, especially on settlement subsistence, technology, pastoralism and cultivation agriculture. It has particular importance because it encompasses several phases of occupation,

The Hill provides an opportunity to pause and appreciate the lifestyle and achievement of our distant ancestors. Most of the archaeological materials found in the hill are on display inside the museum.

The history of the site

One day in 1926, when Mrs Selfe was going about her normal routines, she noticed evidence of ancient burials with stone bowls hidden under a rock of the side of the hill. She invited Louis Leakey, who was doing excavations in the adjacent Nakuru burial site, to visit. Leakey reported that they belonged to early pastoralist community which he called Neolithic.

In 1937, excavations were undertaken by Dr Mary Leakey. Her initial purpose was to investigate the visible stone enclosures and hut circles, which Louis Leakey had assumed were dwelling places of the 'Neolithic' population responsible for the Nakuru burial site.

She distinguished the remains of this Neolithic mound, consisting of broad rather low strong structures, from what she called an occupation layer below it. The latter was a distinct band of loam immediately overlaying the pebbles and sand of a former lake beach and continuing on to the spree of the hill fort. She was certain however, that the burials, being at the base of the mount or interred in the 'occupation' layer, belonged to the same period and population. What might be doubted now is her attempt to explain this apparent combination of occupation and burials as the result of the custom still prevalent among certain modern East African tribes of burying their dead beneath the floor, while the relatives continued to occupy the hut.

She discovered evidence of late Iron Age habitation consisting of series of rough stone enclosures and a number of burial mounds.

Some limited follow-up work was undertaken by Ron. J. Clerk for the Kenya museums, in 1965, and more extensive excavations were done by John Onyango Abuje in 1973-1974.

Site I

This was a Neolithic and Iron Age site, the Neolithic activities dating to about 5,000 years ago, when the occupants used tools made of obsidian, and manufactured pottery and stone bowls. The Iron Age occupation was about 200 years on this Neolithic site. Nineteen individual burials were found there by Mary Leakey within a stone mound each covered with a flat stone slab.

Excavations revealed skeletons, stone tools, pottery, flat stone bowls and pestles. The pestles and flat bowls may have been used for grinding grains or more likely ochre, giving a sense of traditional technology used by the Sirikwa people.

About 50m to the south of this mass burial, other Neolithic burials were excavated, and excavations in the hut circles yielded iron objects, glass, beads, stone ornaments and cowry shells, and smaller fragments of pottery and clay

smoking pipes, indicating that the people there were already engaged in barter trade.

The Iron Age occupation remains include two stonewalled enclosures and hut circles. excavations there yielded iron objects beads, stone ornaments and cowry shells, fragments of pottery and clay smoking pipes as well as animal bones which presented food remains; skeletons were also found in the burial on top of the Neolithic mound.

Burial Site 1

This lies some 50 meters south of the 'stone structure'. Part of it was excavated in 1965 specifically so that it could be left open for public viewing with an original burial displayed. A roofed shelter was built for this purpose. In time both the shelter and skeletal remains of a male buried in crouched position were washed away. Some other further work here in 1974, by Onyango – Abuje, immediately north east of the roofed shelter produced another male skeleton.

Burial Goods

According to Mary Leakey's excavations, each individual grave was carefully prepared, large stones being selected and arranged to form a rough chamber to contain a body which normally lay in a contracted position. A suitable stone was selected as headrest and a capstone was placed above the body.

Female bodies had a shallow stone bowl (platter) and occasionally a stone pestle fashioned from quartz, quartzite and gneiss which are foreign to the Nakuru area and must come from perhaps 100 km or more.

The other findings consist of good number of obsidian tools –crescents and backed blades predominant and pottery. Elegantly shaped and decorated pottery beakers may well have had a ceremonial not an actual funeral purpose.

Iron Age Enclosures –Site 1

This consists of two very rough enclosures of loosely piled stones, the larger being nearly 20 meters across, which on the upper sides set into the base of the

hill. Along their lower sides some smaller enclosures are attached, while below their broad entrances are two small and neat stone circles.

These presumably contained houses, the stones supporting a framework of poles covered with thatch. The main enclosures however, would almost certainly have been open-air, although the walls would have stood more erect than now and would have supported stout fencing. Further fencing would have completed the enclosure on the downhill side, where there would have been a gate.

The arrangement of these enclosures and associate houses is clearly a late adaptation of the Sirikwa stock-pen pattern –which is well known in this region and represented on the other side of Hyrax Hill (site 2)

Site 2

The Sirikwa people who occupied site two were believed to be pastoralists who kept cattle, with pens about 15 meters wide dug into the hillside, and a strong surrounding fence and gate with thatched guard house on the lower side. In some cases an extra house was attached at the back of the cattle pen for security purposes. The mound was strategically placed to insecure the view of the gate. The mound consisted of mud and dung scraped daily from the cattle pen as well as domestic rubbish, broken pots and bones.

Excavated hollows

These comprise a group of 13 sunken enclosures or pit dwellings. They vary in size and depth, but in all the entrance faces away from the hill. Each pit is accompanied by a large mound containing ash, potsherds and bones which represents the earth dug from the pit and the rubbish discarded by the inhabitants. The exact nature of the pits is still subject to debate and indeed the pits may have had several origins.

Mary Leakey in her original work argued that the pits were parts of dwellings similar to the traditional sunken houses of the Iraq people in the northern Tanzania and they probably served the same purpose of a combined dwelling and stock enclosures. Other researches on similar sunken enclosures at Lanet and in the western highlands suggest that the enclosures may have been solely cattle kraals.

In these cases, as at Hyrax Hill, the absence of holes in the floor for posts to support a roof suggests the pits may have not been used for dwellings. If this is the case at Hyrax Hill the houses were probably located adjacent to the enclosures and have yet to be found. As one proceeds along the path from the museum towards the north east village, at the point where the path bends southwards, the pits and mounds can be seen along the hillside below to both left and right.

Pits B and C, excavated in 1938, are immediately down the slope from this point. They have been partially refilled and are again covered with vegetation. Pit B was found to be most flat at the bottom with a maximum depth of 1.7 meters in the centre area. The plan was roughly circular with a diameter of about 10.7 meters. If postholes existed for roof support none was identified because of damages to the floor of the pit by rodents and roots. Some 600 sherds of pottery were recovered, estimated to represent about nine or ten vessels.

Three of the pits were reconstructed. One produced 213 obsidian artifacts and two beads. Pit C, although similar in overall size to pit B, was deeper measuring 2.3 metres at the centre. It contained fewer remains as animal bones, pottery, and a grinding stone were found outside the entrance. No post holes were identified.

Pit D, excavated in 1965, is the only one left open on display for visitors. The central baulks show the sections and the depth of filling that has occurred since the pit was abandoned. The break up and slumping of the original vertical edge of the pit can be clearly seen.

To the west is a well-defined trampled entrance; again no post holes were identified possibly because of the many rodent burrows. The purpose of the many small stones spread over the floor of the pit is not certain. Potsherds were found here, some of which have been brought together to reconstruct a handled jar which is on display in the museum. The sherds of this jar were found at intervals in the filling from the top soil to the floor of the pit, thus demonstrating the great disturbance to the deposit caused by the rodents. Other finds had been cut and ground, perhaps for use as an ornament. No earth was found, but a concentration of charcoal was located on the floor of the pit.

The age of the North East village structures was reckoned to be about 400years, based on their similarity to a dated structure at the nearby Lanet pre-historic site (also a national monument).The animal bone remains include sheep, goats and cattle. These, combined with the presence of large grindstones and relative permanency of the structures, suggest the inhabitants had a mixed agricultural and herding economy

Who they were remains unknown. Although pit dwellings and sunken cattle kraals are not known to have been used in Kenya within recorded history, similar pits are found commonly throughout the western highlands. This area has been home of Kalenjin language speakers for a long time. Research in the western highlands sites strongly suggests that Kalenjin speakers were probably responsible for those pits.

It is thought likely that the appearance of the Maasai in central Kenya, with their systematic cattle raiding into adjacent areas, made the semi-permanent Kalenjin settlements with sunken cattle kraals too vulnerable. Hence these were abandoned in favour of less permanent settlements and a mobile grazing system.

Hill Fort

On the rocky ridge of the hill, a little north of the highest point, overlooking the west side, is a small area measuring 30 by 15 meters partially levelled and cleaned of rocks. The rough stone wall around it might have been higher originally or surrounded with a fence. It served as a lookout from which to watch herds grazing the plain and observe anyone approaching. It was also used for security (military purposes)

The Bau Game

On some of the exposed rocks around Hyrax Hill on the north east a hundred meters south of the museum can be seen double rows of small holes. The Bau game is a competitive game which can be played by various set of rules involving the dropping of small stones into the holes.[*]

[*]For more see MwanziaKyule, "The *bao*: a board game in Africa's antiquity" in Anne-Marie Deisser&MugwimaNjuguna,eds., *Conservation of Natural and Cultural Heritage in Kenya: A*

The Gallery

The building was formerly Mrs. Selfe's farmhouse. It is rectangular with a veranda along the south façade, and is entered via a wide stairway from the veranda.

It is divided into three sections.

- Material culture section.(the west side)
- Archaeology section (the centre part)
- Natural history section (the east side)

The archaeology section displays mainly archaeological features that are mostly found on Hyrax Hill, including artifacts collected on sites one site two, a model showing a Sirikwa settlement (including an excavated house plan), early man stone tools (from early stone age to later stone age) and the map of Kenya showing prehistoric sites in Kenya. There are also skulls belonging to *Australopithecus boisei* and *homo erectus*.

There is also a house plan that is illustrated on a picture showing the ground portions of the hollow and houses and how they were partitioned.

Celebrating 100 Years

By protecting the sites and the building, Hyrax Hill Museum plays a big part in conservation and preservation of Kenyan history. The celebration of it centenary will also create publicity which in return will lead to increased revenue by the station.

Being a learning institution, the celebration will be a good opportunity for learning institutions to learn more about the culture and history of Nakuru County in terms of agriculture and religion among others. During the celebration, we will be showcasing different economic, agricultural activities that are significant in the last 100 years.

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cross-disciplinary approach beginning at https://ucldigitalpress.co.uk/Book/Article/19/44/1367/ - ed.

Hyrax Hill Museum has undertaken a number of preparatory projects which include:

1. Renovation of the Hyrax Hill Museum monument which was funded by Kenya Museum Society (KMS).
2. Setting up of the interpretation panels around the site which was funded by the Royal African Foundation.

Renovations of the House Funded by KMS

A proposal was sent to KMS in 2019 requesting some funds to do partial renovations of the house. The proposal was approved and Hyrax Hill museum was awarded Kshs 898,000 which included the centennial exhibition celebrations.

The building (a gazetted monument) had various structural damage including cracked walls, damaged floors, damaged facia boards and leaking roofs. The house had never had any major renovations.

Installation & Implementation of the Interpretation Panels

This project was funded by the Royal African Institute in collaboration with the British Institute of East Africa (BIEA). The total donation was Ksh 600,000. This project took about two months from start to completion. Hyrax







Hill had a committee led by the author, Curator Lilian Amwanda, who worked tirelessly to come up the wordings for the panels in consultation with experts from BIEA led by Dr. Sam Derbyshire as the lead consultant.

These panels will enhance the of experience visitors' who don't want to be guided around the museum, and they provide information additional to what the Museum guide give.

Hyrax &Nakuru @100 Years Photographic Exhibition

The photographic exhibition will include:

- Arts and culture- This will include the Odeon Cinema and Lanet Country Club.
- Education- this will include showcasing photos and history of the oldest schools in Nakuru.
- Sports- we will be showcasing old sports such as the LangaLanga, horse riding.
- Buildings- some of the oldest buildings will be showcased such as St. Christopher's church, Nuru palace
- Agriculture- this will include information about the Delamere family, Lord Egerton and their agricultural activities in Nakuru County.

- Political persons of interest- This will showcase Achieng Oneko, one of the Kapenguria Six, and the first Nakuru Member of Parliament, the late President Moi, and Kihika Kimani among others.

Activities of the Museum.

Hyrax Hill Museum activities involving community engagement include:

Birdwatching.

Birdwatching was initiated in 2018 after realizing that the museum compound was a bird sanctuary area considering, being close to Lake Nakuru National Park. The activity has been very important for bird watchers and also to the Hyrax Museum, developing relationships with ornithologists from different places.

We have participated in approximately 15 bird watching exercise including Soy Sambu conservancy and Lake Elementaita. We have also constituted a junior ornithologists club which has had several bird watching sessions with children, helping them to understand the importance of birds including their contributions to the ecosystem.








Children Creativity Club.

Hyrax Hill Creativity Club was launched in April 2018 and it has enhanced relations with nearby schools, churches and the surrounding community.

The club has participated in International Museum Day, International Girl Child Day, and International Environment Day, among others. Club members are taken through art mentorship sessions, including drawing, painting, beadwork, sports, dancing, and comedy. The children have produced several temporary exhibitions at various events in Nakuru County.

Stakeholders and Partnership

The principle of public participation holds that those who are affected by a decision have a right to be involved in the decision making process. Hyrax Hill Museum has a list of like-minded stakeholders who help the museum prosper.

Examples are: County Government of Nakuru, Members of the County Assembly, local artistic groups, tourist attractions like Lake Nakuru National Park, Bomas of Nakuru, and Menengai crater, and institutions like the Kenya Military Academy, and Kikuyu Council of Elders.

We recently had a stakeholders' workshop/meeting in which we sought their views on the Hyrax Hill museum site interpretational panels.

News from NMK

Vasco Da Gama pillar shielded from sea waves Philip Mwakio *Standard* July 3 2020

Malindi town's Vasco Da Gama pillar has received reinforcement following construction of a sea wall to protect it from coastal erosion. The sea wall will protect the historic bell shaped-monument that was erected by Portuguese explorers in 1498. National Museums of Kenya (NMK) Director General Mzalendo Kibunjia said the Vasco Da Gama pillar is the oldest remaining European monument in tropical Africa.

"Over time, strong tidal waves caused by a warming planet have put the iconic architectural treasure at great risk and is faced with the prospect of collapse," Kibunjia said.

The World of Museums

Slavery, Racism and Museums

A grassroots movement for cultural change in the Netherlands, which had been simmering for years before global protests against racism erupted in June, is now finding an institutional foothold. In March, a network of Dutch museums known as "Musea Bekennen Kleur " (Museums See Colour) was launched to advance diversity and inclusion. The 12 members included the Rijksmuseum, Rembrandt House, Stedelijk and Van Gogh museums in Amsterdam, the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven and the Centraal Museum in Utrecht, which first proposed the initiative. *The Art Newspaper*, July 6 2020. [*]

At the Rembrandt House they have an exhibition - **Black in Rembrandt's Time –** which has been extended to 6 September 2020. The intro says, "Black people were present in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century. Here, in society, in Rembrandt's neighbourhood and in art. It is an aspect that has long been overlooked. This exhibition brings you eye to eye with portraits of black people. How did artists depict them? *Black in Rembrandt's Time* is about overlooked works of art and representation, about recognition and acknowledgment." From the website you can click to a YouTube video that shows quite a lot of the art on display, though the commentary in is Dutch.[†]

The French government examined the first draft of a law on July 15, legislating that specific items known to have been looted must be returned permanently to their places of origin within one year. The objects include 26 objects taken from the royal palace of Abomey in 1892, currently held at the Musée du Quai Branly-Jacques Chirac. These would be returned to the Republic of Benin. A sword thought to have been owned by anti-colonial leader El Hadj Omar Tall would be transferred to Senegal. The piece was held at the French Army Museum but was loaned to Senegal last November to go on display at the new Museum of Black Civilisations.[‡]

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https://www.theartnewspaper.com/news/dutch-museums-begin-journey-to-decolonisation
[†] https://www.rembrandthuis.nl/exhibitions/now-on-view/?lang=en.
[‡] https://news.artnet.com/art-world/france-objects-benin-deaccession-1895202#:~:text=The%20French%20government%20has%20taken,colonies%20of%20Senegal%20and%20Benin.&text=A%20sword%20thought%20to%20have,would%20be%20transferred%20to%20Senegal.

Kenya Museum Society's Mission, Benefits and Annual Rates

Kenya Museum Society is a non-profit members' organization founded in 1970. Our mission is to support and promote the National Museums of Kenya, the custodian of Kenya's natural and cultural heritage that manages seven World Heritage sites, twenty museums and over a hundred sites and monuments across the country.

Membership

By supporting KMS with your membership, you are helping to preserve and promote Kenyan history, culture and artifacts. At the same time you'll have fun learning about Kenya in the company of people who enjoy the same interests as you.

Become a KMS member and enjoy:

- Free entry to all NMK managed museums, prehistoric sites and monuments
- Bird walk with Nature Kenya at Kshs200, reduced rates in tree walks with Friends of Nairobi Arboretum
- KMS day and weekend outings, evening lectures, films and other programmes
- Entry to the Oloolua Nature Trial at half price
- *Tracker* magazine (10 months a year) to keep you abreast of KMS and Museum news and activities
- Email updates on KMS and Museum activities
- Annual magazine *Kenya Past and Present*
- 5% discount on books on the KMS shop at the Nairobi National Museum
- Free borrowing of books from KMS library
- Free reading privileges at Nature Kenya/NMK library
- Reduced advertising rates in the *Tracker* and *Kenya Past and Present*

Single resident	KShs 1,750	One membership card
Resident family	KShs 2,500	Including children below 18
Students (Kenya resident_	KShs 300	One membership card
Up country	KShs 1,200	One membership card
Non resident	US$ 50	One membership card
Visitors (valid one month)	KShs 800	One membership card
Business membership (Kenya)	KShs 6,000	Eight membership cards

Contacts: info@kenyamuseumsociety.org OR 0724 255299

www.kenyamuseumsociety.org

To join: submit this form to the KMS office, the museum shop or at an event, or go online at https://www.kenyamuseumsociety.org/kms-membership/ and pay by Mpesa.

KMS Membership Registration Form

Please use BLOCK letters

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Dr/Prof (*please circle one*)

Type of membership: Single resident/ resident family/Kenya resident student/up-country/Non resident/visitor(one month)/Business (Kenya) (*please circle one*)

Family name……

First/given name ……

Name of spouse (for family membership) …….

Names of children (under 18) for family membership:

……

P O Box with Code …… Email address ……

Tel Home…… Mobile ……

NEW MEMBER/RENEWING MEMBER (please circle one)

Please send *Tracker* by EMAIL/POST (please circle one)

Below for office use only:

Receipt No. …… Date ……

Membership No. …….

Amount paid ……Cash/Mpesa/Visa/Cheque (circle one)

Cheque No. …… Bank……

Processed by ……Added to database by ……