

SECTION 1: PROJECT SUMMARY AND APPLICANT DETAILS

Proposed Project Title:	Data, Race and Empire: African Health, Scottish Missions and the Information Strategies of Dr Archibald Hewan (1832-1883)		
Project Summary: (Maximum 100 words)	<i>Data, Race and Empire</i> offers an innovative methodology for knowledge-exchange and collaboration between Durham University and the National Museum of Scotland (NMS) on the extraordinary biomedical career of Dr Archibald Hewan (1832-1883), the first black missionary physician in West Africa. Focusing on recently discovered Hewan sources, and combining methods from Science and Technology Studies with training in the NMS collections, the student will explore Hewan's career as a black physician who adapted imperial communication networks to proactively collect, interpret and disseminate biomedical information in ways that disrupted several of the European stereotypes about the people and culture of Africa.		
Host University:	Durham University		
Name of Non-HE Partner Organisation:			
National Museum of Scotland			
Contact(s) at Non-HE Partner Organisation(s): (Add more lines if needed)			
Name:	Dr Zachary Kingdon	Email:	
Primary AHRC Subject Area: <i>Select one subject area from the list here. Please do <u>not</u> add or amend subjects, as there will not be a corresponding Subject Area Review Panel to assess your nomination.</i>	History		
Does the project include a Creative Practice component?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Do you consider the project to be interdisciplinary?	YES <input type="checkbox"/>	NO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
If you consider the project to be interdisciplinary, please state why:			
Not applicable.			

SECTION 2: PROJECT PROPOSAL AND CASE FOR SUPPORT

Research Question
Historians have traditionally ignored the contributions of black physicians and intellectuals who lived during the long nineteenth century in the transatlantic world. Joining the expertise and resources of Durham University and the National Museums of Scotland (NMS), this CDA project seeks to address this lacuna by focusing on the biomedical career of Dr Archibald Hewan (1832-1883), the first black physician to serve in British West Africa as a Free Church of Scotland missionary doctor. Hewan was born in Jamaica, studied medicine at Edinburgh University, worked in Old Calabar (modern Nigeria) and then settled in London as a medical

practitioner and expert on the diseases and natural history of Africa. Using newly discovered Hewan manuscripts, specimens and artefacts, the project seeks to answer the following research question: *How did Hewan use African health and natural history data within church and medical communication networks to become a scientific expert?*

Research Context

During the early 19th century dozens of black scholars from the Atlantic world studied medicine in Scottish hospitals and universities (July 1967: Fyfe 1972: Patton 1996: Stauffer 2002: Eddy 2021). Aside from one chapter in Mia Bay's ground-breaking *The White Image in the Black Mind* (2000), most studies that mention 19th century black physicians are largely biographical and give little attention to the roles they played as knowledge-brokers, as collectors and disseminators of data, within transatlantic information networks. Likewise, though historians of global health have written about the medical activities of 19th-century missionaries (Tilley 2011), a Hewan biography, surprisingly, has not been written. Only a handful of studies have briefly outlined his medical career (Obi 2023: Head 2022: Carlson 1982), or have glossed his missionary activities (Dickie 1896: Cassidy 1972: Johnston 1988). Similar professional and intellectual gaps exist in the literature for other black physicians as well (Adeloye 1984: Njoh 2000).

Additionally, though black physicians working in the Atlantic world collected and disseminated important information from local populations relating to health and human rights (Carpenter 2021: Eddy 2024), research on their place within the media ecology of empire is thin. In Hewan's case, he operated within the Free Church's global information and communication networks. While media historians have explored how other imperial institutions operated as global information machines (McClellan and Regourd 2012) and though church historians have investigated the role played by communications technologies within ecclesiastical networks (O'Brien 2009: Mattele 2019: Jenz and Acke 2013), the Free Church's status as an organisation that collected and managed medical data and the role played by its members as information gatherers and strategists, particularly those of African descent, remains virtually unmapped. This project seeks to shed new light on the subject by using Hewan as a case study.

Research Methods

During the mid 19th century, intelligencers with competing information-gathering strategies circulated data in the British Empire via diverse media (Bayly 1996). The student will explore Hewan's role in this context with historically-orientated Science and Technology Studies (STS) methods that reconstruct how cultural values shaped biomedical data (Aronova 2017: Porter 2020). In particular, the socio-historical methods developed by Benjamin (2019, 2022) and Broussard (2023) will be used to reconstruct *how* data related to black actors was collected, *who* collected it, *why* it was collected and *where* it was circulated. The student will also learn to employ STS methods developed by Eddy (2023), Kingdon (2019), Andersson (2025), all members of the project, that treat the material culture of manuscripts, specimens and artifacts as important historical forms of biomedical data. Additionally, the NMS is the non-HEI partner of this CDA project and will be offering hands-on methodological training to the student in their collections.

The student will apply the foregoing methods to the following cache of hitherto overlooked or newly discovered Hewan archival and museum sources related to medicine and natural history in the National Museums of Scotland, the British Library, the National Archives, the National Archives of Scotland and the universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow.

- Hewans' African natural history specimens and ethnographic artefacts.
- Hewan documents in church mission archives.
- Hewan's correspondence with eminent scientists, physicians and clerical naturalists.
- Hewan's publications about human development, natural history and tropical health.

Special attention will be given to how these exciting sources offer insight into Hewan's agency as a black data-broker who adapted ecclesiastical and medical communication networks of empire to proactively collect, interpret and disseminate information in ways that disrupted several European stereotypes about the people and culture of Africa.

Provide details of any resources and facilities, including equipment, fieldwork, training, etc., that will be required to complete the project successfully. NBC has limited Research Training Support Grant funding, which may affect the feasibility of high-cost projects. Please note where you might also secure additional funding, (e.g. partner organisations; department or school). Include estimated costs:

Research Accommodation

2 months of crucial thesis-related summer archival research spread across Years 1, 2, and 3 in Edinburgh museums, libraries and archives. Cost: £80 (June-July rate) per night (Edinburgh University Student Accommodation) x 60 nights = £4,800.

Year 1 Summer Training Accommodation

7 Days of one-to-one meetings and training sessions with the Nature, People, Empire Research Group directed by Prof Linda Andersson-Burnett (the project's external advisor), Uppsala University, Sweden. Cost £100 per night x 7 = £700. Uppsala has agreed to fund transportation costs.

Year 2 Summer Training Accommodation

30 nights accommodation for a Year 2 (summer 2027) training project (student placement format) in the NMS Edinburgh collections. Cost: £80 (June-July rate) per night in Edinburgh University Student Accommodation x 30 nights = £2,400.

Research Camera

1 camera for taking 1000s of high-quality manuscript, specimen, book, artefact and ephemera photographs that are essential to the project. Canon EOS 4000D DSLR Camera, £330.

Transportable Research Computer

1 Apple Macbook Pro with memory for storing, consulting, comparing and manipulating the foregoing photographs in Durham and on research trips. Cost: 14 inch, 8-core CPU, 10-core GPU, 16GB Unified Memory, 1TB SSD Storage = £1,990.

Outline the arrangements for communication between the non-HE partner organisation and the academic host institution in regard to project management and monitoring academic progress:

The lead supervisor, Eddy, will coordinate meetings, paperwork and communication required for the management of the project and the monitoring of academic progress, training and well-being. The supervisory team (Eddy, Brown and Willis), and the non-HE advisor Kingdon, will meet with the student on a monthly basis, either online or in person as appropriate. The external advisor, Andersson-Burnett, will see the student via bi-monthly online seminars. She and Kingdon will join the supervisory team for the project start-off meetings with the student and for the annual learning agreement meetings at the beginning of each academic year. Regular reports from her and Kingdon on the progress of the student will feed into the standard Durham procedures for management of doctoral programmes. The shared longstanding interest of Eddy and Kingdon in Scottish-trained black physicians travelling in Africa is notable here. Eddy frequently conducts research in Edinburgh and will meet with Kingdon regularly on site to discuss the progress of the student. The student will be part of the research communities in Durham's philosophy, history and anthropology departments and the departments of the National Museum of Scotland. Regular communication between Eddy, Kingdon, Willis, Brown and Andersson-Burnett will ensure that these are integrated experiences.

What benefits will there be for the candidate and the non-HE partner organisation as a result of your collaboration?

The candidate will learn transferable skills relevant to working in a large, public facing museum and the NMS will benefit from improved knowledge and documentation of its Calabar mission collections (relevant examples are appended to this application), which are an important early component of its West African collection. The candidate will gain object interpretation skills from a 1-month training project (student placement format) in the NMS Edinburgh collections, and management and collection accessibility skills through training sessions offered by the museum's Data and Systems teams that, firstly, overview the role played by databases in museums and secondly, explain the NMS's Axiell database system (Axiell Collections, Axiell Collections Query/Outputting, and Axiell Collection Cataloguing). The candidate's understanding of collections will be enhanced through writing several brief (1,000 word) reports on objects. The candidate will also benefit from working with NMS curatorial staff in developing a new approach to representing missionary collections in the renovated Scotland Galleries proposed for the NMS. The museum would benefit from the student's research, which will help it to fulfil its strategic aims of broadening access to its collections and of telling new stories in displays about Scotland's international encounters and its imperial and colonial histories and legacies.

State what financial (if any) or in-kind contribution the non-HE partner organisation will be making over the duration of the award:

The NMS will make an in-kind contribution over the duration of the award by providing the candidate with the professional training and experience relevant both to researching museum collections and to public dissemination of non-HE research. A summary of the contribution is as follows:

Year 1 (2025-2026)

- 6 1-day on-site advisory meetings (to facilitate brief reports on museum objects)
- 1 1-day training overview of Axiell Collections
- 1 1-day Axiell Collections Query and Outputting training
- 1 1-day Axiell Collection Cataloguing (inputting/editing) training

Year 2 (2026-2027)

5 1-day on-site advisory meetings (to facilitate brief reports on museum objects)
 1 1-day training visit to the Calabar Mission archive, Edinburgh University
 1 month (25 working days) summer 2027 on-site summer student placement format research period

Year 3 (2027-2028)

5 1-day on-site advisory meetings (to facilitate brief reports on museum objects)
 1 1-day training visit to the Chambers Street store and museum archives
 4 1-day meetings on introduction to NMS display proposal format and requirements and for content review

In addition to the foregoing contributions, Dr Kingdon will meet with the student throughout each year online as appropriate to field questions and discuss the training and reports.

Describe the nature of the collaborative arrangement and the activities the candidate will be undertaking with the non-HE partner organisation:

National Museums Scotland will provide the student with the database training and guidance to access and research NMS's Hewan collection from southeast Nigeria, both directly and in comparative and relational contexts, to help shed light on Hewan's interests and his likely relationships with Africans in the Calabar region. The student will have access to an NMS volunteer desk, which has a computer and is close to the collection files. In addition to Hewan, other missionaries sent to Calabar also made collections that are likewise held by NMS. The student will have the opportunity to research these additional collections from the same mission context, which would offer them an opportunity to compare Hewan's assemblage with those made by others to establish how they differed in focus and extent. Towards the end of the candidate's research period he or she would have the opportunity to work with NMS curatorial staff in developing a new potential approach to the public representation of missionary collections in renovated Scotland Galleries proposed for the National Museum of Scotland. This may directly involve the student in assisting with a new Display Proposal for the proposed renovation of the Scotland Galleries.

SECTION 3: SUPERVISION AND EXTERNAL ADVISORS

Primary Supervisor:	Prof Matthew Daniel Eddy Chair and Professor in the History and Philosophy of Science
School or Department:	Science and Medicine Studies Research Group Durham University Department of Philosophy 51/51 Old Elvet DH1 3HN
Email Address:	
Secondary Supervisor:	Prof Justin Willis Professor of Modern African History
School or Department:	History Department Durham University 43 North Bailey Durham DH1 3EX
Email Address:	
Secondary Supervisor:	Prof Hannah Brown Professor of Medical Anthropology
School or Department:	Anthropology Department Durham University Dawson Building South Road Durham DH1 3LE

Email Address:	
Non-HE Partner Organisation Advisor	Dr Zachary Kingdon African Collections Senior Curator
Organisation/Institution:	National Museum of Scotland Global Arts, Cultures and Design Department Chambers Street EH1 1JF Edinburgh
Email Address:	
External Advisor	Prof Linda Andersson-Burnett Assoc. Professor; Director, Nature, People and Empire Research Group
Organisation/Institution:	Department of History of Science and Ideas Uppsala University Engelska parken Thunbergsvägen 3P Box 629 751 26 Uppsala Sweden
Email Address:	

Explain how the expertise of the supervisory team and external advisor(s) will allow them to support the proposed project and the selected candidate:

All team members have expertise on the history of race and its connections to the biomedical and/or colonial context that shaped Hewan's career.

Matthew Daniel Eddy (lead supervisor) is Professor and Chair in the History and Philosophy of Science in Durham University's Department of Philosophy. He is a cultural historian of science and medicine in modern Britain and its former empire. His first book *The Language of Mineralogy: John Walker, Chemistry and the Edinburgh Medical School* (Routledge: 2008; 2016) focused on the different kinds of interdisciplinary data that Scottish middle-class professionals used to create the emerging field of environmental science during the Enlightenment. His recent book, *Media and the Mind: Art, Science and Notebooks as Paper Machines, 1700-1830* (Chicago: 2023), used hundreds of notebooks on scientific topics during the Scottish Enlightenment to argue that 'reason' was a contingent skill learned through the manipulation and re-manipulation of manuscript media technologies. He is currently writing a book titled *Information Against Empire: Race, Health and the Rise of Data Activism in the Atlantic World*, which extends his interest in the interdisciplinary history of data and argues that early 19th-century Scottish-educated black physicians exercised social and political agency by using different kinds of media – artifacts, specimens, manuscripts – to become scientific knowledge-brokers within transatlantic information networks.

Justin Willis (supervisor) is Professor Modern African History in Durham University's History Department. His work has been largely concerned with identity, authority and social change in Africa over the last two hundred years. He is author of *Mombasa, the Swahili and the Making of the Mijikenda* (Clarendon: 1993) and *Potent Brews. A Social History of Alcohol in East Africa 1850-1999* (Currey: 2002). He is presently researching debates over Uganda's future in 1979-80, in the months after Amin's fall, and the history of saving and lending in Africa since the 1940s.

Hannah Brown (supervisor) is Professor of Medical Anthropology in Durham University's Department of Anthropology. Focusing on West and East Africa, her publications focus on the delivery of biomedicine in developmental spaces. Previous work includes ethnographic fieldwork in hospitals and with health managers. Her current work is funded by an ERC starting grant, *AliveAFRICA: Animals, Livelihoods and Wellbeing in Africa*. This project explores changing animal-based economies in Kenya and Sierra Leone, and the implications of human-animal entanglements for health and well-being.

Zachary Kingdon (non-HE advisor) is Senior Curator of African Collections in the National Museums of Scotland. He is an expert on colonial collecting in Africa, the anthropology of creative practice, and museology and participatory practice. He is author of *A Host of Devils: The History and Context of the Making of Makonde Spirit Sculpture* (Routledge: 2002) and *Ethnographic Collecting and African Agency in Early Colonial West Africa: A Study of Trans-Imperial Cultural Flows* (Bloomsbury: 2019).

Linda Andersson Burnett (external advisor) is Associate Professor and Research Group Director in the Department of the History of Science and Ideas at Uppsala University, Sweden. She is co-author of *Race and the Scottish Enlightenment: A Colonial History, 1750-1820* (Yale: 2025).

SECTION 4: RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

Please provide details about the research environment the selected candidate will be joining and its suitability:

Durham's Philosophy Department will be the lead department responsible for coordinating academic training and support, and for advising the student on how to access Durham's robust history of science and medicine research community. The successful student will join the Science, Medicine and Society (SMS) cluster, a specialised research group within the Department with longstanding history in mentoring and training postgraduate researchers. Upon arrival, the student will be offered doctoral training by the Arts and Humanities Faculty and by the Department on practical topics ranging from keeping an organised work schedule to how to publish a research paper. Further practical workshops of this nature are offered on a regular basis to postgraduate students every term. In addition to the advice, training and support regularly offered or recommended by the supervisory team, the student will be part of Philosophy's large graduate cohort of MA, MRes and PhD candidates (around 100 students). All first-year PhD students attend Eidos, the weekly doctoral research forum, which helps them design, discuss and implement their research. They attend monthly departmental workshops that address practical topics such as understanding the job market, publishing articles, submitting conference abstracts, etc. Doctoral students present a summary of their research at the end of every year so that they can receive independent advice from the Director of Postgraduate Research (DPGR) and other senior members of staff who are not on the supervisory team. These reports help the DPGR monitor the quality of supervision and allow the student to confidently express praise or concern for the supervision being offered. The student will also be able to access the postgraduate training and mentoring opportunities offered by the History and Anthropology Departments, the two partner departments of the project.

Durham's Philosophy Department is one of the most prestigious in the UK, being regularly ranked in top of national league tables. It's SMS cluster is internationally recognised for its expertise. The Department regularly offers SMS research seminars and workshops relevant to the project's aims. It is home, for example, to the Centre for Humanities Engaging Science and Society, the Centre for the History of Medicine and Disease and Centre for Philosophy of Epidemiology, Medicine, and Public Health (which has links to the University of Johannesburg). It has strong links with several interdisciplinary research centres such as the Institute of Medical Humanities and the Wolfson Research Institute for Health and Wellbeing. Several of its staff have longstanding research expertise in the history of medicine and/or wellbeing (Eddy, Webster, Maehle, Dunham, Hamilton) as well as ethical issues relating to medical data (Broadbent, Puddifoot, Cartwright, Kurji, and Mallory). These staff will be resources who can help the student identify further training and support opportunities in the university and beyond.

Bibliography

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National Museum of Scotland Calabar Mission Objects (Representative Examples)

Global Arts, Cultures and Design Department, Object Numbers A.400.3-400.40. Over fifty artefacts and natural history specimens collected by Archibald Hewan in South Eastern Nigeria from the lands of the Igbo or Ibibio people, the Efik people and the Annang people. Some of the items are as follows:

- *Textiles* – Hand woven locally spun cotton cloth, dyed palm leaf fibres used for weaving and basketry work, raffia skirts, woven palm fibre cloth with broad warp and weft stripes, hats of plaited cane, bags of plaited palm leaf fibre, mats of plaited rushes, cap of twisted twine of palm or grass fibre with leather decoration, warrior's girdle of blue cloth and blue worsted.
- *Storage Technologies* – clay bottles, stand for a clay pot, powder flasks of gourd covered with animal skin, snuffbox made from a gourd, word sheath of animal skin, gun cover of animal skin
- *Eating Utensils* – Drinking cup of animal horn, large calabash decorated with coloured tufts, carved calabash drinking cup, fitted to a wooden handle, carved gourd drinking bowls, drinking ladles, carved gourd drinking ladles
- *Health Technologies* – Enema instrument or wash-belly made from a gourd, cupping gourd
- *Naturalia* – Bird's nests, kernels of oil-palm nuts, monkey's fur, ouch of animal skin, full of plant fibres
- *Tools* – Tails of a ray used as a whips, bone comb, rat trap of split bamboo, wooden fan with symbols, hand-made fishing nets of exogenous fibre, rope slings used in climbing oil palm trees, bundle of six lengths of copper trade wire, iron double-edged sword with carved wood handle

Natural Sciences Department, Object Numbers 1862.40.1-5, Z.1864.23 - Wet preserved specimens from Old Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria of bats, a snake, a fish, a teredo and *potamogale velox* (female giant otter shrew) articulated skeleton and mounted skin.