

Organisation: Museum of British Colonialism

Name: Hannah McLean

Job title: Engagement and Social Media Manager

Country travelled to: Kenya

Specific region or cities travelled to: Nairobi, Nyeri

Organisations visited: National Museums of Kenya, Museum of British Colonialism, Karatina University

Dates of visit: 23/04/19 - 01/05/19

1. Original purpose of the visit: (max. 200 words)

- This visit intended to build upon an initial field research trip to Nyeri undertaken by the Museum of British Colonialism (MBC) in September 2018. We planned to revisit some previously known sites, such as Aguthi and Mweru Works Camps, as well as explore some new locations. We had been in touch with Antony Maina, a curator from National Museums of Kenya (NMK), who guided our team around Nyeri previously, and he agreed to take us to some new sites. I also planned to meet with members of the MBC team based in Kenya. Not only did I intend to come back with more footage, photographs, and information about Mau Mau sites in Nyeri to share online through our website and our short documentary videos, but I also thought it prudent to gain experience in Nairobi and meet with our Kenyan team to further understand the context of Kenya and its history, grow stronger working relationships with our team in Nairobi, enhance engagement, diversify our audience, and develop a stronger shared history.

2. People, organisations, projects of relevance to your organisation/ project that you encountered during your visit: (max. 200 words)

- While in Nyeri, we worked closely with Antony Maina from National Museums of Kenya to explore and further understand sites from the Mau Mau Emergency. He also took us to Karatina University, which our team had visited briefly in September, and we explored their recreation of an emergency colonial village and the remains of a trench on their campus. Furthermore, during my stay at the British Institute in Eastern Africa's guesthouse, I met many researchers working on diverse projects, some of which intersected with the work that myself and the Museum are undertaking, for example the 'Migrated Archives'.

3. Summary of the visit, including what went well and what was challenging: (max. 250 words)

- During my visit, Antony took us to various sites around Nyeri from the Mau Mau Emergency, including former detention camps repurposed as schools, locations of mass graves, sites of emergency colonial villages, and caves where Mau Mau fighters would hide. Antony also took me to Karatina University, where I met with Professor John Mwaruvie, and we spoke about potential future partnerships and explored the Mau Mau heritage on the university's campus. I also got the opportunity to meet with a member of our Kenyan team, our co-founder Tayiana Chao, and we planned the best ways to digitally map our fieldwork and the sites of the Emergency, which we aim to integrate with photographs, videos, and oral history interviews.
- The trip was certainly challenging, both mentally and physically. We spent two full days undertaking field research in Nyeri, often times in fairly remote places, and dealing with intense subject matter. The experience of being in places such as former torture rooms and confinement cells is incredibly important in further understanding the conflict, and the impact it had on individuals, though processing this information was quite hard at times.

4. Experience and knowledge gained, with particular focus on how this experience and knowledge will benefit your organisation: (max. 200 words)

- Part of my role in the MBC is to produce and edit the short documentary videos published on our YouTube page. As such, I felt very familiar with sites such as Aguthi and Mweru, having had to watch clips from the September fieldwork trip multiple times over to produce a video. However, visiting the sites personally was an incredible experience, and I learned a great deal more than the facts and data we have about the site. As the manager of the MBC's engagement and social media output, it is essential that I understand the wider context of the work we are doing, and the contemporary legacy of British colonialism and the Mau Mau Emergency. Visiting these sites has definitely enabled a greater understanding of this, for example when visiting a mass grave site in Nyeri town, I met with local residents, and Antony explained their conflict with the NMK over the use of the land.

5. Top tips for other heritage professionals working internationally, based on the learning gained during your visit: (max. 200 words)

- I think heritage professionals, when working internationally, should definitely seek to stay in accommodation with, or at least connect with, other researchers or professionals undertaking international work. My stay at the BIEA's accommodation in Nairobi was key in making my trip a success; I was not only surrounded by more senior heritage researchers but also those from other professions, many of whom

had been in Nairobi for months before I arrived, and were thus incredibly helpful in helping me to settle in and find my way around a city and country I had no experience in.

6. What are the next steps you are going to take following the visit, and what resources/ support might you need in order to successfully realise your ideas?: (max. 250 words)

- Following from my field research, I will be creating more content for our social media output as well as for our website, such as short documentary videos and blogs. I will also be working on developing an integrated map with photographs, video footage, and oral history interviews with our co-founder Chao, who I met with in Nairobi to learn more about the software and how to use it. As a fully volunteer-led organisation, a lot of the software and equipment we use is free (for example ArcGIS' Story Maps, and Davinci Resolve for video editing), however we hope that through fundraising and applying for grants, we will be able to use more advanced mapping software to create a fully integrated map of the sites of the Mau Mau Emergency, for viewing on our website and in future exhibitions.

7. In one sentence, please summarise the impact the visit has had on your organisation and the organisation(s) you visited:

- Field research is key to keeping our Museum running, relevant, and educational, and the building and maintenance of our network is essential in not only helping to undertake field research, but disseminate and share this knowledge.

8. In one sentence, please summarise the impact the visit has had on you personally:

- My visit to Nairobi and Nyeri has helped me to further understand the work that I do for the Museum, as well as its subject matter, and has certainly helped me gain experience in field research, and working internationally as a heritage researcher.

9. Quote from your Director / Trustee / senior staff member on the benefit and impact of your international visit on your organisation:

- "This visit has been hugely helpful in terms of depth of research, knowledge sharing, network building, and skills development, both for individuals and our team as a whole. We hope that the resulting work we produce - such as our digital mapping project, and oral history archive - will help to build our networks and community further, and help in ultimately sharing this important history more widely." - Olivia Windham-Stewart, co-founder of Museum of British Colonialism

10. Following this international experience, how likely is it that your organisation will fund another international visit in the next 12 months from 1 to 5 (1 = very unlikely, 5 = very likely)?

- 5, very likely.

11. Will there be any follow up to this visit (e.g. jointly paper writing, online community building, future project applications, formal partnership formed, etc.)? (max. 150 words)

- We hope that the resulting work from this visit (online content, progress in digital mapping, etc) will aid in the building of our online community, strengthening connections made prior to and during the visit to Kenya, and hopefully resulting eventually in further project and funding applications which will help us to further share this important knowledge.