THEFT OF ARTEFACTS FROM GATELY HOUSE MUSEUM, EAST LONDON, EASTERN CAPE PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA

Circumstances of the theft

On Sunday 18 January 2015 at approximately 15h30 the curator at Gately House (a late Victorian  townhouse under the care of the East London Museum) was held up at gunpoint by three Xhosa-speaking men. Just after 15h00 they had arrived at Gately House via the Zoo entrance and requested a tour of the house. Following the tour which took about half an hour, they forced the curator to the floor in one of the rooms, made him lie on his stomach and tied his hands behind his back and bound his mouth with tape. He was hit in the face with the barrel of a gun and kicked while lying on the floor. They threatened the curator with his life if he identified them in any way. They then removed items from the Parlour, Family Room, Margaret Gately’s Room and the Dining Room in the house and placed them in back packs they had been carrying.

The curator managed to drag himself outside the house and drew attention of the neighboring fruit shop staff, as well as managing to activate the panic button. When the alarm reaction company arrived they called the police, ambulance, the curator’s family and a museum staff member.

A case was opened at the East London Police Station – CAS 435/1/2015

A full audit was then carried out by staff members of the East London Museum.

The house has since been closed until improved security measures can be put in place.

Numbered list of stolen objects with descriptions and good quality color photographs where possible

1. Ceramic bowl with flowers on the lid (damaged). Bowl pale green flowers, blue with a white rose and red bow. 693 printed underneath. 70 mm.

Accession no. GHM 192-16

2. Cream ceramic bowl with cherry design on the outside (damaged). Austrian design. Carlton Ware. Made in England.

Accession no. GHM 200-24. 65mm.

3. Ivory ornament of a priest sitting. 65mm.

Accession no. GHM 202-26

4. A green and turquoise glass vase with orange flower design and a fluted rim and handle. 50 mm.

Accession no. GHM 205-29

5. Brass vase with design. 105mm.

Accession no. GHM 230

6. Blue and white ceramic ornament of a Dutch boy standing next to a broken gate

(damaged). 160 mm.

Accession no. GHM 237-39

7. A ceramic head of a Scotty dog. "Dog's head jar". 81 mm.

Accession no. GHM 238-50

8. White ceramic vase with a grape design (damaged). 70mm.

Accession no. GHM 239-51

9. A soapstone ornament of a Japanese man sitting. 230 mm.

Accession no. GHM 243-55

10. A soapstone ornament of a Japanese man, bat and roosters.

Accession no. GHM 244-56

11. Brass candlestick with a flower and leaf design. 215mm.

Accession no. GHM 307A

12. Brass candlestick with a flower and leaf design. 215 mm.

Accession no. GHM 307B

13. 32 ivory chess pieces (table/board not included)

Accession no. GHM 608-32

14. Pair of hand gloves. Leather with HG58 written on left glove.

Accession no. GH 53

15. A hexagonal ceramic bowl in an open pattern mostly blue and white, with turquoise and red design on the top. 65mm

Accession no. GHM 206­-30A