



Press release

For immediate release

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Crowfoot Regalia to be handed over to Siksika Nation delegation during ceremony in Exeter

Chief Ouray Crowfoot and a delegation from the Siksika Nation in Canada will take possession of sacred regalia in a handover event in Exeter on 19 May 2022.

The regalia and other belongings which has been housed in the Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery in Exeter since 1878, include a buckskin shirt, pair of leggings, a knife with feather bundle, two beaded bags and a horsewhip. These objects once belonged to Chief Crowfoot, an important late nineteenth-century Blackfoot leader.

Following a blessing at the museum, the regalia will be packed and returned to Canada, where it will be redisplayed in the Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park, a museum focussing on Siksika cultural heritage and the preservation of their way of life. The geographic area is of great spiritual significance to the Siksika Nation and Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park is built on the site of the signing of the Blackfoot Treaty, also known as Treaty 7, in September 1877. It is also the place where Crowfoot died.

Exeter City Councillors voted unanimously to return the regalia in April 2020 but Covid travel restrictions have meant that it is only now possible to complete the repatriation.

Jon-Paul Hedge, Exeter City Council's Director with responsibilities including the museum, said, "After agreeing this momentous step more than two years ago, we are now pleased to return Crowfoot's regalia to the Siksika Nation. We hope it marks the start of an ongoing relationship between Exeter and the Siksika people."

Chief Crowfoot said, "Bringing these items back home to Siksika is a historic event. Many items left Siksika and other Nations and were scattered across the globe. Now the tides are turning and these items are finding their way back home. Crowfoot's entire essence is in and around Blackfoot territory and this is where his belongings should be housed.

“We are building strong relationships with curators at several museums as well as private collectors in an effort to bring items such as the ones coming home back to their rightful place. There are many more Blackfoot items still in need of being claimed and repatriated back to their rightful homeland. To me, it is not as important how these items left Siksika, but what is important is how we bring them back home.”

The Siksika Nation will lend Chief Crowfoot’s belongings to Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park for display and the education of all peoples around their significance as part of world history, together with their journey to the UK and their return to the Chief’s traditional homelands.

ENDS

Notes for editors

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Images available here: <https://we.tl/t-7J6iWLRM9j>

For more information, see FAQ document here: <https://rammuseum.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Crowfoot-Regalia-FAQs-13-May-2022.pdf>

About the regalia

The ‘Crowfoot regalia’ are thought to have been acquired from Chief Crowfoot by Cecil Denny about the time of the signing of the Blackfoot Treaty, also known as Treaty 7 in Alberta. Crowfoot played a key role in the treaty signing which he believed would help protect Blackfoot lands and traditional ways of life; but the terms of the treaty were broken by the Canadian administration and as a result Blackfoot people have suffered economically and socially. The regalia were loaned to RAMM by Cecil Denny’s sister in 1878 and were purchased by RAMM in 1904.

About Siksika Nation

Since time immemorial, the Children of the Plains, the Siksikai'tsitapi – Blackfoot People, have lived in and protected a territory that stretches from the North Saskatchewan River in present day Alberta and Saskatchewan to the Yellowstone River in the state of Montana, from the Continental Divide in the west to Regina in the province now known as Saskatchewan. siksikanation.com

Today, Siksika Nation population is approximately 7800+ and is part of the Siksikaitsitapi – Blackfoot Confederacy. The Siksikaitsitapi refers to four Indigenous Nations which make up the Blackfoot people: the Siksika (Blackfoot), the Kainai (Many Chiefs), the Apatohsiipikani (Northern Peigan) and Amsskapipiikani (Southern Peigan). Siksikai'powahsini (Blackfoot Language) is the language of the Siksikaitsitapi.

About the Blackfoot Crossing

The Blackfoot Crossing refers to a point along the Bow River which was not only significant within traditional patterns of bison hunting but also was an important meeting point for the Siksika people and their allies in the Blackfoot confederacy. The crossing was the place chosen for the signing of the Blackfoot Treaty. The Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park opened in 2007 and today the site's huge importance is recognised by its Designated Heritage Site status and it is recommended to become a UNESCO World Heritage site.

About the Royal Albert Memorial Museum & Art Gallery (RAMM)

RAMM is Exeter's world-class museum, a place of discovery which encourages everyone to be curious. Its stunning displays reveal Devon and Exeter's rich history and global connections. Visitors are delighted by exotic animals, birds and insects and a changing programme of exhibitions and events inspired by the museum's collections. These displays of extraordinary objects also inspire contemporary artists to create new work

Welcoming 250,000 visitors in a normal year, RAMM has a proven track record of making its collections accessible to visitors, both physically and online. In 2012 RAMM won the much coveted Art Fund 'Museum of the Year' award in recognition of the innovative and thoughtful way the collection was redisplayed. RAMM's World Cultures collection and part of its Natural Sciences collection are Designated, a mark of distinction which recognises their national and international significance.

A flagship Exeter City Council service, RAMM attracts funding from other sources and is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation. It aims to use its local and global collections to connect people to the world and inspire them to shape a better future.

rammuseum.org.uk

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