

Head of Cecil Rhodes gouged off Cape Town monument



A statue of Cecil Rhodes, the controversial Victorian imperialist who supported apartheid-style measures in southern Africa stands mounted on the facade of Oriel College in Oxford, England.

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Cape Town: The head of Cecil Rhodes has been chopped away from a bust of the 19th century colonialist at a monument on the slopes of Table Mountain in Cape Town, park rangers said on Tuesday.

The bust housed at the top of a flight of steps at the Rhodes Memorial shows Rhodes with his arms folded. His right hand now cups what would have been his cheek - only with most of his face and head missing.

The head of Cecil Rhodes has been chopped away from a bust of the 19th century colonialist at a monument on the slopes of Table Mountain in Cape Town.

Lauren Clayton, a spokeswoman for South African National Parks in the Western Cape, said rangers patrolling Table Mountain came across the disfigured bust during regular patrols on Monday.

The incident likely occurred on Sunday night or Monday morning, she added. She said no one had claimed responsibility.

Thousands of protesters have marched across the United States and Europe calling for the removal of monuments seen as glorifying the imperialist nature of countries such as Britain.

Rhodes, who made his fortune in South African diamond mining, has become a lightning rod for anti-colonial anger since students forced the University of Cape Town in 2015 to remove his statue from its campus.

Completed in 1912, Rhodes Memorial consists of massive granite steps, flanked by bronze lions, and a rider astride a bronze horse at the beginning of the steps which leads to the top where the bust is situated, with an inscription beneath.

"It has been vandalised before, multiple times ... At this stage we are still unclear about the reasoning behind the vandalism," Clayton said.

Last month students at Britain's Oxford University called for a Rhodes statue to be removed, triggered in part by protesters in the port city of Bristol tearing down a statue of 17th century slave trader Edward Colston and throwing it into the harbour.



Protesters gather outside Oxford University's Oriel College, demanding the removal of a Cecil Rhodes statue from its facade.

The prestigious Rhodes Scholarship continues to attract applications from top students in Australia and around the world for the opportunity to study at Oxford.

Meanwhile, at least some of the United States Confederate monuments that have been recently removed from places of prominence in Richmond, Virginia, are being stored on the grounds of a waste water treatment plant, photographs show.

Photos taken this week by The Associated Press and *Richmond Times-Dispatch* show a collection of statues and other large objects under tarps at the facility just outside the city's downtown.

On July 1, Mayor Levar Stoney ordered the immediate removal of all Confederate statues on city property in Richmond, a onetime capital of the Confederacy. Stoney invoked his emergency powers, citing ongoing civil unrest and concerns that protesters would get hurt if they tried to pull down the enormous statues themselves.

His spokesman, Jim Nolan, did not immediately respond to an inquiry about the storage site Tuesday.

The only Confederate statue that remains on Richmond's prominent Monument Avenue is a memorial to Gen. Robert E. Lee located on state property. Virginia Governor Ralph Northam has ordered that statue's removal, but it has been at least temporarily blocked by a lawsuit.



The statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee is the only Confederate monument left on Monument Avenue in Richmond, Virginia.

The monument removal decisions were made after the death of George Floyd in police custody in Minneapolis. Floyd's death sparked global protests against racism

and police brutality and led to a re-examination of statues and monuments of historical figures around the world.

The statues' fate is not currently clear. A new state law that took effect July 1 allows local governments to remove statues on public property. It contains a provision that says the local governing body must offer the monument "for relocation and placement to any museum, historical society, government, or military battlefield" but also says the local government "shall have sole authority to determine the final disposition".

The city council has scheduled a public hearing on the future of the monuments August 3, according to the *Times-Dispatch*.

Reuters, AP