

Unlocking Access to Scottish Textile Collections

Documentation methodology options

1. Project statements.....	2
2 Precedent projects	2
3 Collection level description	3
4 Potential description methodologies	3
Appendix I: Data model	6
Appendix II: Data exchange compliance	7
Appendix III: Overview of data standards.....	8
a) ISAD(G)	8
b) mda Spectrum	8
c) RSLP Collection Description Schema	9
d) Authority records	9
e) Thesauri	10
f) XML DTDs and Schemas	12
Appendix IV: Collection level description in ISAD(G) and RSLP Collection Description Schema	13
a) Example of full ISAD(G) Collection level description with indexing	13
b) Example of RSLP Collection Level Schema record	14

Scottish Textile Heritage Online final report

Appendix B: Documentation Methodology -options appraisal

1. Project statements

The project has stated it will use some or all of the following documentation standards:

Museum	Archives	Thesauri
mda Spectrum	ISAD(G)	UNESCO
CIMI XML Schema	EAD XML DTD	LCSH
	ISAAR(CPF)	Art and architecture thesaurus
		Social history and industrial classification (SHIC) scheme

The project has stated that it will provide a “web-based database which will provide a one-stop guide to Scottish Textile collections”.¹ “This database will include approximately 4,000 records at collection/fonds, series and item/object level, together with authority records for manufacturers and designers.”²

An overview of each of these standards/thesauri is given in Appendix III.

2 Precedent projects

A number of projects have already undertaken subject surveys of materials held across libraries, museums and archives that are searchable via web databases. These include:

- *Cecilia* mapping sources for music
- *Backstage* RSLP project mapping sources for theatre and performing arts, including some item level description
- *Mapping Wales* mapping sources of Welsh history held within Wales
- *Crossroads* A Resource-funded project mapping sources for pottery industry in North Staffordshire

All of these projects have taken a collection level description approach employing the RLSP Collection Description Schema.

Unlocking Access to Scottish Textile Collections differs from these projects also offering:

- Lower level description
- Images
- Authority records

¹ Strategic Change Fund Stage 2 application form, p.2

² Ibid. p.4

3 Collection level description

Museums and libraries are relative newcomers to the field of collection level description. Traditionally, their cataloguing at object/item level has not necessitated the need for collection level description or description in terms of a hierarchy. Archives by contrast see collection level description using ISAD(G) as an integral part of their cataloguing procedure to which lower level description is then added.

With the development of cross-domain working, collection level description within libraries and museums is enabling the sharing of data and cross-searching of collections.

RSLP Collection Level Schema

The above-mentioned projects all used the RSLP Collection Description Schema.³ This schema maps to ISAD(G)⁴, but includes a number of extra fields relating to location of materials (specific repository, museum), slightly more structured information about collection contents and their strengths.

It was not intended for lower level descriptions to be added to this schema but it is possible, and it can certainly provide links to full catalogues held elsewhere.

Collection level description in the RSLP manner also facilitates the surveying of collections held elsewhere outside of the project partner institutions.

An example of a collection level description given using ISAD(G) and then the RSLP Collection Description Schema is available in Appendix IV.

4 Potential description methodologies

There are several options as to the documentation scheme that could be adopted for the database:

a) Flat level database

The database would contain two tables for description.

Table 1: ISAD(G) compliant collection level descriptions

Table 2: SPECTRUM item level descriptions of objects

Both tables would be searched and the results presented as a mixture of relevant collection level descriptions of archives and individual objects.

³ See <http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/metadata/rspl/>

⁴ Mapping for ISAD(G) to Schema available at <http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/cd-focus/tools/isadg2rspl.html>

Scottish Textile Heritage Online final report

Appendix B: Documentation Methodology -options appraisal

Advantages:

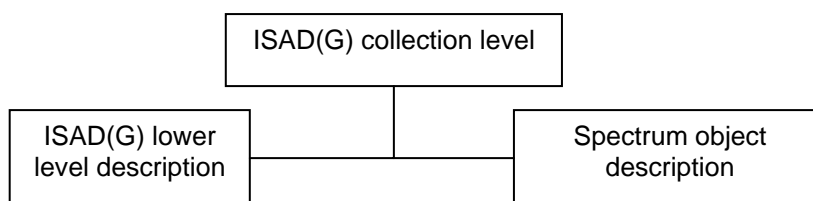
- Easy data structure and easy to develop IT software in-house
- Easy to export to partner institution systems

Disadvantages:

- Potential loss of context of the museum object within a larger collection
- Collection vs object conflict could confuse users
- Confusion when lower level archival description added
- Survey results for museum collections would be difficult to enter into database
- Cross-searching of the database and mapping of the cataloguing standards would be complicated and potentially confusing for the user

b) Hierarchical database based around ISAD(G)

A hierarchical database could be constructed/purchased. Collection level descriptions to be created for both archives and museum collection using ISAD(G) as the descriptive standard. Lower level descriptions can then be added for both, in ISAD(G) for archives and Spectrum for objects.



Search results can be returned at collection level only, or at a mixture of levels for both archives and objects.

Advantages:

- Collection level description of museum collections captures contextual information about the collection, rather than it being repeated for each individual item within a collection
- A single data model is more comprehensible to users
- Survey techniques are much more suited to collection level description
- Item level museum descriptions can be exported/imported to/from partner institutions in-house databases
- Proprietary archive software, such as CALM or Adlib, could handle this structure

Disadvantages:

- Imposes ISAD(G) upon museum materials and structuring

c) Hierarchical database based around RSLP Collection Level Schema

Scottish Textile Heritage Online final report

Appendix B: Documentation Methodology -options appraisal

As b) but using the RSLP Collection Level Schema instead of ISAD(G) at collection level.

The Schema, which maps to ISAD(G) and Dublin Core, has been used by the main cross-sector description projects. However, only the *Backstage*⁵ project has added item level descriptions of archive materials/objects to its database. None of these projects have included images as part of the database or authority records.

Advantages:

- A “neutral” collection level description suitable to surveying and both archive and museum collection that maps to both ISAD(G) and Spectrum
- Still agrees with “minimum” compliance for both ISAD(G) and Spectrum [See appendix II]
- Allows for reference/links to super- or sub- collections
- Successfully piloted by a number of other cross-domain projects
- Allows for a *Strengths* field in collection level description to highlight the particular strengths of a collection
- XML data creation template or MS Access tools already available online
- The Schema is standards compliant and has been developed inline with the Open Archives Initiative, Dublin Core and other metadata standards
- Proprietary archive software, such as CALM or Adlib, should be able to handle this structure

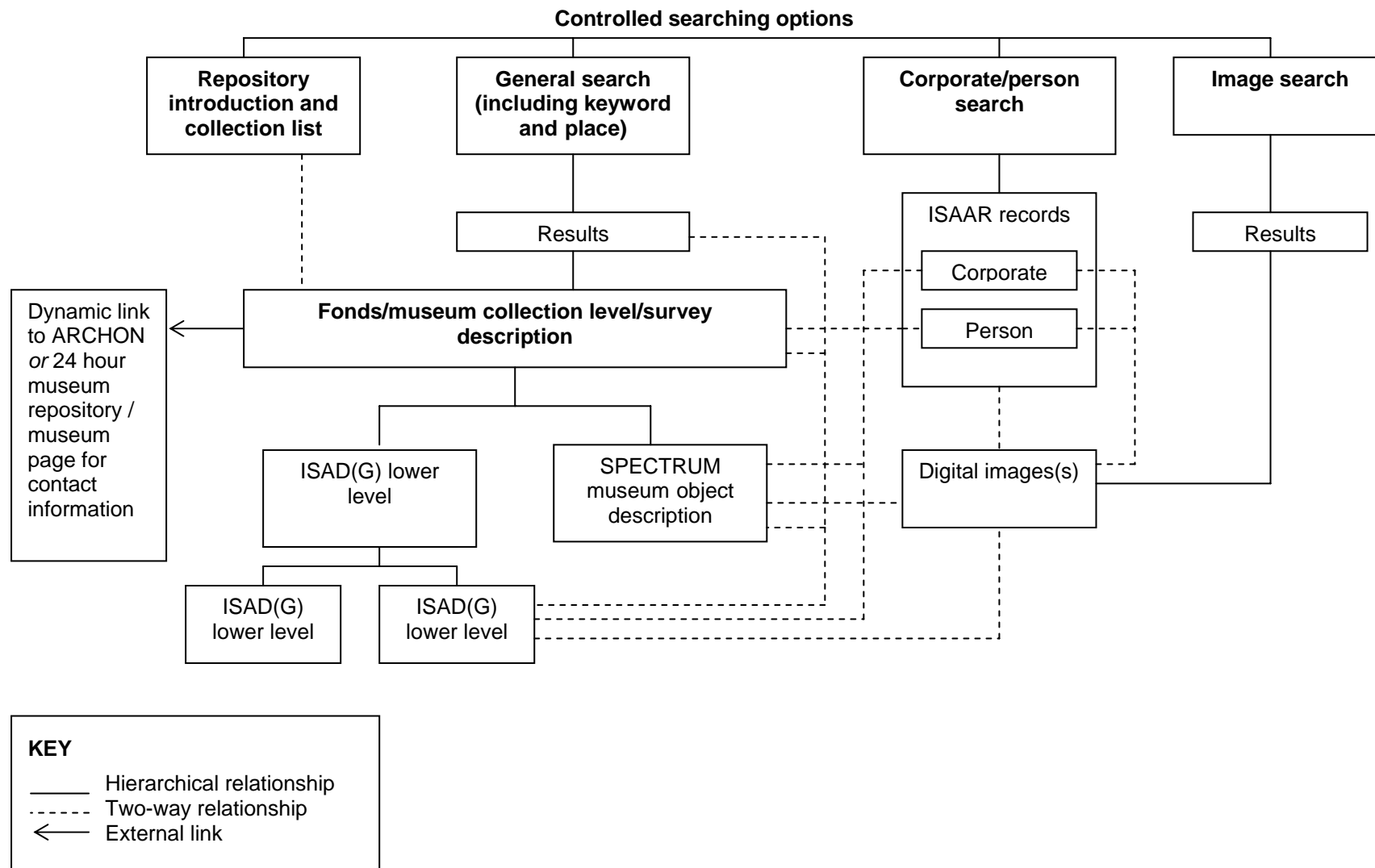
Disadvantages:

- RSLP Schema not designed for multilevel description but it does work
- The Schema does not allow for *System of Arrangement* and *Existence and location of copies/originals* elements available in ISAD(G)
- Could be seen to be compromising standards but in a fair trade-off

A Data model that allows for both options b) and c) is show in Appendix I.

⁵ See <http://www.backstage.ac.uk>

Appendix I: Data model



Scottish Textile Heritage Online final report
Appendix B: Documentation Methodology -options appraisal

Appendix II: Data exchange compliance

The following table shows the minimum elements required for data exchange in ISAD(G) and the Spectrum Cataloguing procedure and their RSLP Collection level Schema equivalent element

This shows the *minimum* amount of information needed in a collection level description to be compliant with the international standards.

ISAD(G)	RSLP Schema	Spectrum (Section 6)
*Reference codes	Identifier	*Object number
*Title	Title	*Object name <i>OR</i> Title (if formally given by creator)
*Date(s)	Contents date range	Object production dates
*Level of description	Type	Record type
*Extent and medium of the level of description	Format	*Number of objects/dimensions units [Physical description?] [Material]
*Name of creator(s)	Collector/Names	Object production organisation/people/persons
Scope & Content	Strength/Description	*Brief physical description
Immediate source of acquisition	Custodial history	*Accession reference number + relevant info in line with DPA/institutional guidelines (depositor, date etc. ⁶)
[Repository]	Location name	* Ref to physical location of object
[No equivalent field]	[No equivalent field]	* Reference to images

Key

- * Compulsory element of that standard
- [] No equivalent field

⁶ Spectrum requires just a reference here, such as the accession number. Spectrum fields that map to Immediate Source of Acquisition provide the content of an accessions register.

Scottish Textile Heritage Online final report
Appendix B: Documentation Methodology -options appraisal

Appendix III: Overview of data standards

The following tables give an overview of each standard stated above and their potential use within the project.

a) ISAD(G)⁷

Data type	Hierarchical description of archive collections
Structure	Each collection is described in hierarchically nested levels. This starts with a general collection level description (“fonds”) and further levels may be added at sub-fonds, series, file and item levels.
Project use	It is recommended that only collection level (fonds) descriptions are included as multilevel cataloguing is time consuming. However, some examples of multilevel cataloguing should be included for exemplar purposes.
No. of elements	26 elements that may be cherry-picked. The first 5 elements: Reference, Title, Dates, Extent and medium of unit of description, level of description are compulsory for data exchange purposes along with name of Creator(s).
Relation to other data components	See Appendix I: Data model for relationship to other data components
No of descriptions to include	c200 archive collections within partner institutions. Collection level descriptions for many already exist on the Archives Hub. Some images to be included?

b) mda Spectrum

Data type	Museum management standard. Encompasses all museum process from entry, accession, cataloguing through to de-accessioning and exhibitions
Structure	Divided into 20 museum procedures
Project use	Recommended that only use procedure 6: Cataloguing. While Spectrum allows objects to be grouped by classification (eg Costume & Textiles) there is no explicit hierarchical structure. It is proposed that ISAD(G) or the RSLP Collection Description Schema be used to create collection level descriptions and that individual museum items be catalogued as part of these artificial collections.
No. of elements	Multiple fields can be completed but minimum compliance with Spectrum guidelines requires: Object number, Object name, Number of objects, Brief physical description, Accession reference number, Reference to location, Reference to images
Relation to other data	ISAD(G) has been mapped to Spectrum by mda ⁸ and Elizabeth Shepherd in the Journal of the Society of Archivists. ⁹

⁷ See http://www.ica.org/biblio/cds/isad_g_2e.pdf

Scottish Textile Heritage Online final report
Appendix B: Documentation Methodology -options appraisal

components	See Appendix I: Data model for relationship to other data components
No of descriptions to include	TBC c3,000, with c200 images to e selected

c) RSLP Collection Description Schema

Elizabeth Shepherd and Rachael Pringle, University College London: Mapping Descriptive Standards Across Domains: a comparison of ISAD(G) and Spectrum; Journal of the Society of Archivists, Vol. 23, No. 1, 2002.

Data type	Schema for the description of heritage/information collections
Structure	Non-hierarchical description template, although in theory lower levels could be added using appropriate standards
Project use	Potential to be used for collection level description of both archives and museums (and even library?) collections
No. of elements	53 elements, separates some information that would be included in one ISAD(G) element. Other projects have cherry-picked the elements most appropriate to them.
Relation to other data components	Maps to ISAD(G), Spectrum. Includes facility for keywords and index points
No of descriptions to include	tbc

d) Authority records

International Standard Archival Authority Records (Corporate, Personal and Family) (ISAAR(CPF))¹⁰

Data type	Archives standard for authority files for corporate and personal names to provide separate contextual information about the creators and manufacturers of textiles related archive and museum pieces/collections.
Structure	Structured in accordance with the International Standard Archival Authority Record (Corporate, Personal and Family) standard.
Project use	Use for creating index points for personal, corporate and place names and to act as access points to collections. Contextual information on important companies and individuals to be

⁸ Peter Eliot (ed.) *Standards in Action Book 4: Managing archive collections in museums* (mda: Cambridge, 2002)

⁹ Elizabeth Shepherd and Rachael Pringle, University College London: Mapping Descriptive Standards Across Domains: a comparison of ISAD(G) and Spectrum; Journal of the Society of Archivists, Vol. 23, No. 1, 2002.

¹⁰ See [http://www.hmc.gov.uk/icacds/eng/ISAAR\(CPF\).pdf](http://www.hmc.gov.uk/icacds/eng/ISAAR(CPF).pdf)

Scottish Textile Heritage Online final report
Appendix B: Documentation Methodology -options appraisal

	captured where necessary.
No. of elements	Each authority is broken into three areas: authority control area, information area and note area.
Relation to other data components	The structuring of the name/corporate authority entry, that also acts as an index point, to be created in line with the National Council on Archives <i>Rules for the construction of personal, place and corporate names</i> (1997) See Appendix I: Data model for relationship to other data components
No of descriptions to include	To be created as necessary. Full ISAAR records to be created for the most important companies and individuals.

e) Thesauri

i) UNESCO thesaurus¹¹

Data type	For controlled use of keywords for indexing and description
Structure	Hierarchically arranged thesaurus (BT, NT, RT, SN, UF) including preferred and non-preferred terms.
Project use	Minimal as a very broad non-specialist thesaurus. Possibly of use for archive collections and machinery?
No. of elements	N/A
Relation to other data components	Used for indexing ISAD(G) and Spectrum records at all levels of description See Appendix I: Data model for relationship to other data components
No of descriptions to include	As needed

ii) Library of congress subject headings (LCSH)¹²

Data type	For controlled use of keywords for indexing and description
Structure	Alphabetically constructed word list. Strings together terms in a quasi-hierarchical manner to create index points eg. Textile designers - Scotland
Project use	Possibly to be used although more geared to library. Certainly had mixed success in archive projects
No. of elements	N/A
Relation to other data components	Used for indexing ISAD(G) and Spectrum records at all levels of description See Appendix I: Data model for relationship to other data components

¹¹ <http://www.archiveshub.ac.uk/unesco>

¹² <http://www.archiveshub.ac.uk/lcsh>

Scottish Textile Heritage Online final report
Appendix B: Documentation Methodology -options appraisal

No of descriptions to include	As needed
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iii) Getty Art & Architecture thesaurus¹³

Data type	For controlled use of keywords for indexing and description
Structure	Hierarchical thesaurus
Project use	Potential good source as specific to art subjects but a very international thesaurus. May be limited?
No. of elements	N/A
Relation to other data components	Used for indexing ISAD(G) and Spectrum records at all levels of description See Appendix I: Data model for relationship to other data components
No of descriptions to include	As needed

iv) Social history and industrial classification (SHIC) scheme¹⁴

Data type	For controlled use of keywords for indexing and description
Structure	
Project use	
No. of elements	
Relation to other data components	Used for indexing ISAD(G) and Spectrum records at all levels of description See Appendix I: Data model for relationship to other data components
No of descriptions to include	As needed

v) British Museums Materials Thesaurus¹⁵

Data type	For controlled use of keywords for indexing and description
Structure	Hierarchical thesaurus
Project use	Of potential use for controlling keywords for materials used to create objects. Could be used as a basis for creating a project specific thesaurus.
No. of elements	N/A

¹³ <http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabulary/aat/>

¹⁴ Social History and Industrial Classification (SHIC): a subject classification for museum collections (SHIC Working Party. Second edition. Cambridge: mda, 1994)

¹⁵ <http://www.mda.org.uk/bmmat/matintro.htm>

Scottish Textile Heritage Online final report
Appendix B: Documentation Methodology -options appraisal

Relation to other data components	Used for indexing ISAD(G) and Spectrum records at all levels of description See Appendix I: Data model for relationship to other data components
No of descriptions to include	As needed

f) XML DTDs and Schemas

i) Encoded Archival Description DTD¹⁶

Data type	Non-proprietary XML DTD
Structure	Hierarchical, designed for cataloguing of archives
Project use	A potential data capture tool, may be imported into proprietary software. Maps to ISAD(G) well and mappings exist to Spectrum. Only recommended if decide to go for an XML solution to the database.
No. of elements	N/A
Relation to other data components	Used to encode ISAD(G) data.
No of descriptions to include	N/A

ii) CIMI XML Schema for Spectrum¹⁷

Data type	Non-proprietary XML Schema
Structure	Designed for documenting Spectrum processes
Project use	Not recommended unless as the required cataloguing elements are dispersed through out the structure
No. of elements	N/A
Relation to other data components	Used to encode Spectrum data.
No of descriptions to include	N/A

¹⁶ See <http://www.loc.gov/ead/>

¹⁷ See http://www.cimi.org/wg/xml_spectrum/index.html

Appendix IV: Collection level description in ISAD(G) and RSLP
Collection Description Schema

a) Example of full ISAD(G) Collection level description with indexing

IDENTITY STATEMENT AREA

Reference Code:

GB 1694 EWTC

Title:

Embroidered and Woven Textile Collection, Glasgow School of Art, Glasgow, Scotland

Dates of creation of material

17th century-1961

Level of description:

Collection

Extent of the unit of description:

27 textile items

CONTEXT AREA

Name of creator:

Department of Embroidery and Woven Textiles, Glasgow School of Art

Administrative / Biographical History:

This artificial collection was created by the School of Embroidered and Woven Textiles at the Glasgow School of Art. The collection consisted of work by students and staff that was retained to be used as a teaching aid within the department.

Custodial History:

The material was held in the School of Embroidered and Woven Textiles, Glasgow School of Art

Immediate source of acquisition:

Transferred to the Glasgow School of Art Archives in 1999

CONTENT & STRUCTURE AREA

Scope and content / Abstract:

27 textile items, chiefly lace work, created or acquired by staff and students of the School of Embroidered and Woven Textiles at the Glasgow School of Art, 17th century-1961
Items include lace mats, samples, dress sections, stoles and collars, shawls, borders and baby bonnets.

Appraisal, destruction and scheduling information:

This material has been appraised in line with standard GB 1694 procedures

Accruals:

None expected

System of Arrangement:

This material is arranged in the order in which it was received

CONDITIONS OF ACCESS & USE AREA

Access:

Access to this collection is open by appointment with the GSA archivist

Copyright / Conditions governing reproduction:

Applications for permission to quote should be sent to the GSA Archivist
Reproduction subject to usual conditions: educational use & condition of items

Language of material:

Not applicable

Physical Characteristics:

Scottish Textile Heritage Online final report

Appendix B: Documentation Methodology -options appraisal

Many of the items are fragile and in a delicate condition

Finding aids:

Information concerning each item can also be found in the Textiles Conservation Survey undertaken in 1999 and available in the searchroom

ALLIED MATERIALS AREA

Location of originals:

This material is original

Existence of copies:

No known copies

Related units of description:

No known related collections

Publication note:

No known publications using this material

NOTE AREA

Fonds-level description compilation details:

Compiled by David Powell, Hub Project Archivist, 12 November 2001

Fonds-level description alterations:

Revised by David Powell, Unlocking Access to Scottish Textile Project, 16 June 2003

Archivist's notes

Description compiled in line with the following international standards: International Council on Archives Ad Hoc Commission on Descriptive Standards, *ISAD(G) General International Standard Archival Description Notes* and National Council on Archives, *Rules for the construction of personal, place and corporate names*

SUBJECT ENTRIES

[enter thesauri keywords]

PLACE NAME ENTRIES

[enter place name keywords]

CORPORATE NAME ENTRIES

Glasgow School of Art | 1845-

Glasgow School of Art | Department of Embroidered and Woven Textiles | ?-1999

PERSONAL NAME ENTRIES

[enter personal names]

b) Example of RSLP Collection Level Schema record

Title

Embroidered and Woven Textile Collection, Glasgow School of Art, Glasgow, Scotland

Description

27 textile items, chiefly lace work, created or acquired by staff and students of the School of Embroidered and Woven Textiles at the Glasgow School of Art, 17th century-1961
Items include lace mats, samples, dress sections, stoles and collars, shawls, borders and baby bonnets.

Concepts

[enter keywords from thesauri]

Scottish Textile Heritage Online final report

Appendix B: Documentation Methodology -options appraisal

Objects

Mats, samples, clothing, borders, bonnets

Names

Glasgow School of Art | 1845-

Glasgow School of Art | Department of Embroidered and Woven Textiles | ?-1999

Places

[enter place name keywords]

Strength

These examples of lace work demonstrate a number of production methods over a number of centuries relating to household goods and clothing.

Language

Not applicable

Identifier

GB 1694 EWTC

Physical characteristics

Many of the items of lace work are fragile and in a delicate condition

Type

Collection.Archive.PhysicalObject

Accumulation date range

Pre-1999

Contents date range

17th century-1961

Sub-collections

There are no sub-collections attached to this collection

Super-collections

There are no super-collections attached to this collection

Description or catalogue

Information concerning each item can also be found in the Textiles Conservation Survey undertaken in 1999 and available in the searchroom.

Described collection

Not applicable

Associated collection

No known related collections

Associated publication

No known publications using this collection

Accrual status

No more accruals expected

Scottish Textile Heritage Online final report
Appendix B: Documentation Methodology -options appraisal

Legal status
Owned by the Glasgow School of Art

Custodial history

The material was held in the School of Embroidered and Woven Textiles, Glasgow School of Art. Transferred to the Glasgow School of Art Archives in 1999.

Access control

Access to this collection is open by appointment with the GSA archivist

Note

N/A

Location name

Glasgow School of Art Archives

Postal address

167 Renfrew Street, Glasgow

Postcode

G3 6RQ

Country

Scotland

Access conditions

Glasgow School of Art Archives are open for research Monday to Friday, 9.30 am-12.00 and 2.00-5.00 pm, by appointment only.

Biography/history

This artificial collection was created by the School of Embroidered and Woven Textiles at the Glasgow School of Art. The collection consisted of work by students and staff that was retained to be used as a teaching aid within the department.