

<b>Institution:</b> THE UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 34B Design
<b>Title of case study:</b> The Enrichment of Public Awareness and Understanding of Textile Heritages
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>Textile-heritage research at the University of Leeds has informed and improved public awareness and understanding of textile heritages among target audiences, especially school children, community groups, volunteers, interns and teachers. Through hands-on workshops, conventional publications, talks and lectures, a strong website presence and public exhibitions, the research has engaged and inspired audiences, and has underpinned a 'best practice' resource for other museums and archives. Impact is demonstrated through direct feedback from workshop participants, evidence of community engagement, commentary in the visitors' book, website hits, and also from accreditations, awards and endorsements from key national arts organisations in recognition of initiatives enhancing public appreciation of textile heritages.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>The long-standing tradition of textile research at the University of Leeds (including early associations with notable scholars such as Lewis Foreman Day and Flinders Petrie) has been sustained by Professor M A <b>Hann</b>, Chair of Design Theory at Leeds since 2002. Research interests in the various world textile traditions or heritages has led to the establishment of the University of Leeds International Textiles Archive (or ULITA - an Archive of International Textiles, as it is commonly known), a resource developed from collections held at Leeds since the late-nineteenth century. The archive opened in dedicated premises in 2004 and, since then, the constituent collections have provided the basis for the bulk of textile heritage research, led by <b>Hann</b> as the Director of ULITA.</p> <p>Research underpins all cataloguing, exhibitions and publications as well as associated workshops. The following nine-point framework, developed by <b>Hann</b>, acts as a guide to the documentation of constituent collections: nature of object; provenance; period or date of manufacture; physical measurements; visual features and subject matter; raw materials and technology; associated ideas, beliefs, attitudes and customs; structural and visual analysis (proportion, symmetry and other underlying geometry); identification and concise review of associated literature [1].</p> <p>Research projects build on data from this framework and much of the research at the University of Leeds has focused on the geometrical analysis of patterns in different cultural contexts, often involving a detailed appraisal of one of ULITA's constituent collections and comparisons with notable collections held elsewhere. A key research finding by <b>Hann</b> and Thomas (Lecturer in Design Theory, 2004 – present, University of Leeds) is that different cultures have different geometrical (or symmetry) preferences, expressed through their visual arts; such a perspective requires a detailed knowledge of the underlying processing technology as well as (in this case) an understanding of systems of geometric classification and comparison [2 and 3]. A few examples of research projects (from January 2008 onwards) are identified below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 2008 project entitled <i>The Textiles of Bali and East Nusa Tenggara</i>, was concerned with patterning on traditional textiles (ikats, songkets and some batiks) produced in remote parts of eastern Indonesia. This project involved conducting a detailed structural analysis and classification of cloth construction and surface decoration. The resultant exhibition and accompanying research monograph were sponsored by the Indonesian embassy [4].</li> <li>• <b>Hann</b> was given privileged access to the Pazyryk textiles (c. 400BCE) held at the State Hermitage Museum (St Petersburg) and spent time there as a short-term visiting research fellow. Using skills and knowledge gained from working with the constituent collections of ULITA, a comprehensive structural analysis was conducted on the renowned Pazyryk carpet in 2008 [5]. On return to Leeds, several public presentations were delivered.</li> </ul>

- The 2009 AHRC-funded [NO: MG10126] project *The Life and Times of Tibor Reich* involved the structural analysis and documentation of one of ULITA's constituent collections (185 items in total). Reich, a past student at the University of Leeds, was an eminent textile and ceramics designer, working in Britain mainly in the 1950s and 1960s [6].

Around 150 workshops were presented from 2008, based on the research led by **Hann**. Many of these workshops were associated with two Heritage Lottery Fund projects '*World Textiles and Yorkshire: Past and Future*' [YH-06-00884], and '*My Mill. My Heritage*', in partnership with Education Leeds. The underpinning research associated with each project focused on products produced historically in Yorkshire and participants were also introduced to ULITA's international collections. Weekly workshops were run with schools and community groups, leading to a series of exhibitions. Many of the constituent collections as well as relevant catalogue entries and other documentation (resulting from related research) were introduced to participants along with key research findings.

### 3. References to the research

[1] **Hann**, M. A. (2013). *Symbol, Pattern and Symmetry. The Cultural Significance of Structure*, Bloomsbury, London and New York. ISBN 978-1-4725-0312-9. Bloomsbury book publications are triple peer reviewed at proposal and post-manuscript submission stages.

[2] **Hann**, M. A. and Thomas, B. G. (2010). 'Recognition, Differentiation and Classification of Regular Repeating Patterns' in Chen, X. (Ed) *Modelling and Predicting Textile Behaviour*. Woodhead Publications, Cambridge, Chp. 11. ISBN978-1-84569-416-6.

[3] **Hann**, M. A. (2012). *Structure and Form in Design. Critical Ideas for Creative Practice*, Berg, London and New York. ISBN 978-1-84788-743-6. Berg book publications are triple peer reviewed at both proposal and post-submission stages.

[4] **Hann**, M. A., editor and author of Chapter 3, in Coleman, H. (2008) *Patterns of Culture. The Textiles of Bali and Nusa Tenggara*. Monograph no.38 in the *Ars Textrina* series, University of Leeds International Textiles Archive in association with the Indonesian Embassy, London. ISBN 978-0-9549640-4-7. [http://ulita.leeds.ac.uk/docs/Ars\\_Textrina/Monographs/Indonesian.pdf](http://ulita.leeds.ac.uk/docs/Ars_Textrina/Monographs/Indonesian.pdf)  
Accompanying exhibition: Bali and the Islands of the Southeast: Indonesian Textiles from Bali and Nusa Tenggara. Publications in the *Ars Textrina* series are reviewed by an international editorial panel.

[5] **Hann**, M. A. (2011). 'The Pazyryk Carpet – A Stylistic Appraisal of the Deep-frozen Treasure from Kurgan Number Five in the High Altai', in Farnham TJ, Shaffer D. (Eds) *Oriental Carpet and Textile Studies, Selected Papers From The International Conference on Oriental Carpets (ICOC), Washington and Istanbul*, Editors: ICOC, London. 85-94. ISBN 978 1 898113 43 0.

[6] **Hann**, M. A. and Powers K. (2009). 'Tibor Reich – A Textile Designer Working in Stratford'. *Textile History*, vol.40, pp.212-228. Powers, K. and Hann, M. A. (2009). *Tibor Reich. A Life of Colour and Weave*. Monograph no 39 in the *Ars Textrina Series*, in association with the University of Leeds International Textiles Archive (ULITA). ISBN 987-09549640-5-4. Published to accompany an exhibition of the work of Tibor Reich. This and other exhibitions are detailed at: [http://ulita.leeds.ac.uk/wiki/mediawiki-1.10.1/index.php/Previous\\_Exhibitions](http://ulita.leeds.ac.uk/wiki/mediawiki-1.10.1/index.php/Previous_Exhibitions). Powers was an AHRC sponsored research assistant at University of Leeds.

### 4. Details of the impact

Research based upon the constituent collections of ULITA has led to enhanced public awareness and understanding of textile heritages among target audiences, both local and international.

**Engaging and inspiring community involvement:** Since January 2008, a particular highlight of ULITA's activities is its heritage engagement programme for schools, colleges and community

groups. Around twenty volunteers (many senior citizens) are recruited each year to assist with the delivery of this programme and with other activities relating to conservation and documentation, all underpinned by research involving the constituent collections. Impact has been facilitated through workshops, a strong website presence, public talks and exhibitions, and through media interest in the collection. A Qing dynasty robe (held at ULITA) was a regional selection for the project 'History of the World in 100 Objects' organised by the BBC in association with the British Museum [A], and an associated radio interview and other press coverage led to substantial further contact with schools and the general public. Analysis of ULITA's website in the five years to August 2013 shows 113,797 visitors, with the events page attracting over 33,000 views alone [B]. A selection of comments from the visitors' book (2010-2012) highlights the perceived value and usefulness among school teachers: "Amazing resource. Has been of immense help in teaching preparation"; "Inspiring exhibition, of great value to our curriculum"; "So useful for my teaching, an inspiration to my school group" [C].

A questionnaire, which set out to identify the impact of the various ULITA-based projects, was sent to the ULITA mailing list and members of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society. Key comments/results by users included: "through website access the resource can be enjoyed by house-bound individuals"; "the resource appeals to both specialists (textiles) and non-specialists"; ULITA's exhibitions encouraged visitors to "think outside their usual interests"; the resource is a "big surprise to the uninitiated". Content of ten past exhibitions was judged at an average of 4.6 (out of a maximum of 5); quality of display panels at 4.6; quality and quantity of supplementary information at 4.2; and the overall impression of exhibitions and the resource in general at 4.6 [D].

**Informing and influencing educational awareness of textile heritages:** The main long-term output of these projects is the quantities of educational material suited for use by school teachers available currently through ULITA's website. The Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund Yorkshire describes ULITA as a "key player in the region's textile heritage" and credits the research in raising awareness of heritage and in the creation of valuable teaching resources [E]. A Learning Resource Coordinator from Leeds City Council confirms over seventy participants were involved from Leeds and Bradford in *My Mill: My Heritage* and that it had been "a fantastic project and the participants still talk about it to this day, particularly the school children, who keep asking to take part in more HLF projects.... ULITA has played a significant part in expanding information about local heritage, particularly in textiles, to a wide range of people, young and old..." [F].

A Bradford school teacher also credits its educational role: "ULITA was one of the most inspirational projects of my teaching career. It supported Year 10 pupils to develop a passion for Fashion/Textile Design which for many has resulted in them accessing related degree courses... This was an amazing opportunity... many of our students would not have access to projects like this without the support for ULITA." [G]. A Huddersfield school teacher also references a ULITA workshop, which focused on identifying intricate pattern work, on the National Centre for Excellence in Teaching of Mathematics website; "to stand alongside children (some as young as 8 years old) and hear them discussing how the patterns on each particular tile were made using complex mathematical phrases – in such an enthusiastic way – was extremely impressive." [H]. Contributions have also helped develop other online learning resources, such as the textile section of 'My Learning – Learning with Museums', as well as various regional museum publications [I].

**Best practice resource and international and curatorial impact:** The Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Yorkshire affirms that ULITA serves as a model of good practice and the "Heritage Lottery Fund regularly recommends its applicants visit and contact ULITA for advice with their prospective projects" [E]. This is also testified by ULITA's Museum Accreditation status, gained in 2008 and subsequently in 2013. The Accreditation Scheme, managed by Arts Council England, sets out nationally agreed standards for UK museums, including ensuring they provide "effective and stimulating learning and discovery experiences" [J]. ULITA's commitment to providing effective and engaging learning experiences has also been recognised by the Textile Society, a UK education charity which aims to achieve greater public awareness and access to collections. ULITA received the Textile Society Museum, Archive and Conservation Award in 2012, largely in recognition of past underpinning research and conservation work [K]. By 2010 ULITA was regarded by the Heritage

Lottery authorities as both a successful and a sustainable project (having been awarded £589,746 by the Heritage Lottery Fund in 2003) and was requested to host an event for Heritage Lottery management trainees in 2010 focusing on explaining the nature of those activities with a community focus and highlighting ULITA's commitment to community involvement.

Research at ULITA also has substantial international impact, influencing curatorial practice worldwide, stimulated through *Ars Textrina*, a long-standing international textiles conference (co-organised bi-annually by ULITA staff), as well as the launch of the International Textiles and Costume Congress (ITCC) in Bandung in 2011 (hosted by institutions in Bangkok in 2013, Istanbul or Hong Kong 2015 and Cairo 2017). **Hann** is the (elected) founding president of the Congress that raises awareness of textile heritages internationally (through the ULITA website), and is concerned initially with the participation of countries in Asia. ULITA staff are approached on a regular basis by publishers worldwide seeking permission to view items or publish images featured on ULITA's website (recent examples include companies or institutions in India, Netherlands and Japan). **Hann** has also advised internationally on the development of various small museums (e.g. the University of Western Australia); a particular focus has been on advising on curatorial practices, including documentation, storage and conservation and in highlighting the importance of underpinning research to collections development, exhibition and management [L].

**Future impact goals:** A major contribution to impact nationally and internationally will be made by the future publication *The Heritage Textile Industries of the World* (at advanced proposal stage with Bloomsbury) which will feature fifty case studies of textile collections held in museums across the UK (including several of the ULITA collections) and will be targeted at school teachers as well as the museum-going public; the research underpinning this future work has been the focus for ULITA's Director during the latter half of 2013. Substantial national and international attention, as well as future collaboration and engagement with teachers, local schools and community groups, involving large numbers of volunteers and interns, will be stimulated through this research-led publication.

## 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

[A] Detail of ULITA object included on BBC website (12 March 2010) at:

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/0FwZLfbHQcS0prS15HZW\\_Q](http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/0FwZLfbHQcS0prS15HZW_Q) and  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/leeds/hi/people\\_and\\_places/history/newsid\\_8417000/8417036.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/leeds/hi/people_and_places/history/newsid_8417000/8417036.stm)

[B] ULITA's most popular webpages (five years up to August 7<sup>th</sup> 2013). .

[C] ULITA's visitors' book (2010-2012), available on request from ULITA.

[D] ULITA Visitor Survey – Impact Assessment.

[E] Testimonial from Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Yorkshire.

[F] Testimonial from Learning Resource Coordinator, Leeds City Council.

[G] Testimonial from KS 4 teacher, Hanson School, Bradford.

[H] Statement from an Advanced Skills Teacher at Kirkheaton Primary School, Huddersfield, accessed from the NCETM website: <https://www.ncetm.org.uk/resources/10069>.

[I] Several contributions were made to the publication *Yorkshire World Collections* (2012). Website examples are given at: <http://www.mylearning.org/worldcollectionsresources/> and <http://www.mylearning.org/museums/default.asp?offset=180>

[J] Guidance in Accreditation Scheme for museums, Arts Council England. Museum Accreditation status granted by MLAC in 2008 (ref: RD 2147) and by Arts Council (England) in 2013

[artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-museums/accreditation-scheme/guidance-documents/](http://artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/supporting-museums/accreditation-scheme/guidance-documents/)

Original certificate available on request.

[K] 2012 Textile Society Museum, Archive and Conservation Award, The Textile Society,

<http://www.textilesociety.org.uk/bursaries-awards/museum-award-winners.php>

Original certificate available on request.

[L] For example: emailed communications from the Director of the Culture Precinct, University of Western Australia, seeking advice for the development of several public museums and related resources (dated 30 March, 27 May and 18 June, 2009).