

Institution: The University of Edinburgh
Unit of Assessment: 30 History
Title of case study: Colouring the Nation: Scottish Turkey Red Textile History
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Research on Scotland's Turkey Red printed-cotton industry 1840-1960, based on a museum collection of pattern books, has been conducted at the University of Edinburgh 2006-2013 by Nenadic and Tuckett, with cultural, commercial and practice-based impacts. Specifically, it has: (i) generated innovations in collections practices in the National Museums of Scotland, resulting in public and scholarly online access to a collection hitherto unavailable and little understood, and inspiring related digital initiatives in other organizations in the UK; (ii) enhanced cultural confidence in disadvantaged communities with Turkey Red connections through workshops, leading to a MSPs 'Parliamentary Motion' and MSP-sponsored exhibition at the Scottish Parliament; (iii) educated and inspired contemporary designers and textile entrepreneurs.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>Professor Stana Nenadic joined the UoE in 1986 (as Senior Lecturer since 1994; with Personal Chair in Cultural and Social History awarded in 2013). Dr Sally Tuckett has conducted postgraduate and then postdoctoral research at Edinburgh since 2006. Research by Nenadic on Scottish textiles led to an AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award (held by Tuckett, 2006-9), which explored the relationship between textiles, clothing and social experience. During the course of that work Nenadic, Tuckett and National Museums Scotland (NMS) collaborator, Dr David Caldwell (Keeper of Scotland and Europe until retirement in January 2012), identified an important but largely undocumented textiles collection of Turkey Red cottons held by NMS for the project described in this case study.</p> <p>The Turkey Red collection comprises 200 pattern books containing c.40,000 textile samples and designs from c.1840-1955, which were created by a number of Glasgow and Vale of Leven companies who merged to form a single firm, the United Turkey Red in 1891. The collection was acquired by NMS in the early 1960s when United Turkey Red ceased trading, but was neglected thereafter because of poor conservation, difficulties of handling and the absence of any documentary record to explain the collection (only a few volumes are dated or named).</p> <p>The project, funded by the Royal Society of Edinburgh/Scottish Government from April 2011 has comprised detailed research on the contents of each volume - cataloguing, photographing and describing the volumes and patterns, and linking this with records held in business archives, the National Archives Kew (copyright registers) and elsewhere. This has generated, for the first time, an accurate dating and business attribution for the majority of the pattern books along with a clear classification of developments in printing techniques over the life of the industry. The evolving character of international markets and domestic designs/sales have been researched and can now be illustrated with the precise visual references within the pattern books and with links to surviving objects made from Turkey Red cottons. One volume, the 'Bombay Pattern Book' (now identified as belonging to the firm of William Stirling and Sons for the years 1854-1868), has allowed detailed analysis of design exchange with India and the role of Scottish commission agents in supplying market information in the form of samples made by local manufacturers and by British rivals. The research has highlighted the role of public exhibition in the dynamics of the industry (patterns made for display in Britain and Europe have now been linked to newspaper descriptions and surviving artefacts). The textile design process has been explained from drawing office to print shop floor, with links made to the gendering of skill in the production process, local design education, international exhibitions, imported designs, copyright practices and design espionage. Research outputs include an illustrated book (2013) and journal article (2012b) on the Turkey Red industry as well as book chapters that discuss broader contexts (2010 and 2012a).</p>

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The project generated a free online resource hosted by NMS (launched April 2012) comprising an exhibition, an annotated catalogue of c.800 representative designs and associated research-based essays, making the collection available for the first time as a public and scholarly resource. Additionally the project's own blog profiled the work as it progressed and included a 'pattern of the week', which for each entry included a short research-based essay.

3. References to the research

Publications

S. Nenadic and S. Tuckett, *Colouring the Nation. The Turkey Red Printed Cotton Textile Industry in Scotland c. 1840-1960* (Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland, 2013); to be supplied on request.

S. Tuckett and S. Nenadic, "Colouring the nation". A new in-depth study of the Turkey Red pattern books in the National Museums of Scotland'. *Textile History* 43.2 (2012a), 161-182.

DOI: [10.1179/0040496912Z.00000000016](https://doi.org/10.1179/0040496912Z.00000000016)

S. Nenadic, 'Industrialisation and the Scottish People', in T. M. Devine and J. Wormald eds, *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Scottish History 1500-2000* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2012b), 405-22; to be supplied on request.

S. Nenadic, 'Necessities: clothing and food', in C. Whatley and E. Foyster eds, *The History of Everyday Life in Scotland 1600-1800* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 137-73; to be supplied on request.

Grants

AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Award Project Grant, 2006-9 (PI: S. Nenadic in collaboration with D. Caldwell, NMS), c. £48,000. Clothing and Textile Cultures in Eighteenth Century Scotland. Tuckett held the studentship: PhD awarded 2010.

Royal Society of Edinburgh/Scottish Government Major Awards in the Arts and Humanities, 2011-13 (PI: S. Nenadic in collaboration with D. Caldwell, NMS), £170,000. Colouring the Nation: Turkey Red and Other Decorative Textiles in Scotland's Culture and Global Impact, 1800 to Present; Ref No: RA1560. Tuckett was named post-doctoral researcher. A follow-on grant of £2,550 was awarded in February 2013 for an invited exhibition on the project at the Scottish Parliament, Holyrood, sponsored by Jackie Baillie MSP for Vale of Leven.

Winterthur Museum and Library Research Fellowship, Delaware USA, 2012 (PI: Tuckett), c. £2000, Heritage and Design. Scottish influences on textiles and clothing in nineteenth-century America.

4. Details of the impact

(i) *Innovations in Museum Collection Practices*

The research has involved collaboration with staff in the NMS collections management, photographic and website divisions in the development of the digital catalogue/exhibition (see 5.1 and 5.2). The NMS Director has stated: 'The Turkey Red Project was an important initiative from the perspective of National Museums Scotland.... It has established a fruitful approach through which a national museum can successfully collaborate with a major academic institution to both extend the corpus of knowledge and create real benefits to the public' (correspondence with Nenadic, 24/7/2013; 5.5). In the opinion of the NMS Director of Collections the project 'provided tangible output on the web through presentation of the project which is available to the public and supports the NMS's current strategy of increasing engagement with past and present design and its social context'. Moreover, she has stated that the project has 'opened up possibilities for physical exhibition of material previously regarded as too difficult to display' because 'examples can now be selected with confidence' for 'major permanent displays on Art and Design' that are

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currently being planned for 2016 (5.6).

The research has influenced technical collections practices within the NMS, illustrated by the online blog of the project's NMS photographer (5.3), which details the challenges of working with the Turkey Red collection/research on accurate colour representation and digital cleaning; each sample was photographed with a colour chart, and a strict colour management work flow was set up to insure the digital processing of the images would maintain the colour integrity of the original sample. Indeed, the photographic process itself has revealed detail not apparent to the naked eye; thus the project has harnessed and developed photographic technology as an analytical tool as well as sharing these innovative results with a wide online constituency (see also ii below).

Research on the project was undertaken in collaboration with The National Archives (TNA), London, in order to match up sets of records in each institution and provide online catalogue 'tags' linking samples in the NMS Turkey Red collection with Board of Trade Design Register records in TNA. The Curatorial Research Fellow at TNA has stated: 'I am delighted to celebrate this new web resource by highlighting three significant features of the research and its dissemination: collaboration in data collection, identifying tagging as a new way to link museums and archives, and the benefits of research networks' (5.7).

New initiatives elsewhere further illustrate the impact on collection practices, including the Society of Dyers and Colourists (SDC), Bradford, an industry charity dedicated to advancing the science of colour that holds a collection of nineteenth-century pattern books. Inspired by the Turkey Red project, the SDC Colour Experience Manager invited Tuckett in 2011 to assess the contents of one of these patterns books, which was then digitised to create an online presence to complement the NMS exhibition/catalogue (5.8). The project's innovative approach to textile collections and their display has also garnered international attention. The Senior Curator of Textiles at the Winterthur Museum of Decorative Arts, Delaware, USA, has stated that 'the combination of traditional research and oral history that you have used for this project ... provides a model for research on other collections, including Winterthur's' (letter to Nenadic, 6/8/2013; 5.9). The relationship with the Winterthur was developed through a fellowship held by Tuckett in 2012.

(ii) Enhancing Cultural Confidence in Disadvantaged Communities

From its launch in February 2012 the project blog attracted c. 9,000 page views from 36 countries. The official 'Colouring the Nation' online exhibition, hosted by the NMS, attracted c. 12,000 page views in just 3 months from its launch on 23 April until 31 July 2013. 27% of all online visitors came from Edinburgh but there were also visitors from Sao Paolo, Spokane, Melbourne, New Delhi, Darwin, Perth (Australia), Bilbao and Alexandria. The research was also communicated to local public audiences via 6 workshops, which generated awareness of movements of textiles and design across space and time and, for some events, enhanced cultural confidence in disadvantaged communities. Participants at two events engaged with the project through 'showing and telling' textile-related objects and stories, which were incorporated into the project blog. A workshop aimed at former Turkey Red employees and descendants was held at Alexandria (Vale of Leven) Lomond Galleries Shopping Centre on 5 December 2012. There were c. 50 participants who had been invited, via the project website, to bring Turkey Red artefacts or stories that enhance understanding of the industry and its legacy. Artefacts photographed for the website included quilts, previously unknown pattern samples, unique hand tools and printing blocks, wage and pension books, and historic photographs. Stories were recorded for 5 former workers, the oldest aged 99.

Newspaper reporting of the project and this event generated a Parliamentary Motion on 29/10/2012 from local MSP Jackie Baillie, with support from a further 20 MSPs, to highlight the project's research and community engagement. It states 'Parliament applauds the Colouring the Nation Project, which aims to redress the perception of Scotland's industrial past by drawing attention to Scottish industrial heritage based on fashionable and colourful textiles' (Scottish Parliament, Business Bulletin, S4M-04525). Jackie Baillie and Gemma Doyle MP for West Dunbartonshire both attended the Alexandria workshop and Ms Baillie subsequently offered to 'sponsor' an exhibition in the MSPs' area at Holyrood to showcase the research and its impact on

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cultural confidence in a disadvantaged community. Ms Baillie has written: 'An exhibition in the Scottish Parliament reminds us all of the importance of the textile industry to Scotland's economy... It is exciting to think of the global impact that the Vale of Leven and Turkey Red had on textile design that still resonates today' (email correspondence with Nenadic 18/12/2012). The exhibition took place in September 2013.

(iii) Inspiration for Contemporary Design

The research has uncovered the complex design processes that generated Turkey Red's commercial success. The website/catalogue/exhibition have acted as sites for education and inspiration for artists, designers and textile entrepreneurs, including Charlotte Linton, US-based designer specialising in high quality scarves who spent summer 2012 in Scotland on a design fellowship. Having been told of the Turkey Red project by curators at Paisley Museum, she approached Nenadic for insights on nineteenth-century design and for access to the Turkey Red collection, which was facilitated online. She has written: 'As a designer who works from both written and image based research, the Colouring the Nation blog was a joy to discover... this research project is highlighting an area of Scottish Textile history that has been forgotten and it was fascinating for me as a textile professional to learn about it from such an accessible source' (email to Nenadic, 8/1/2013; 5.4).

5. Sources to corroborate the impactWeb sources:

5.1 NMS website:

http://www.nms.ac.uk/turkey_red/colouring_the_nation.aspx or
<http://tinyurl.com/orqdzws>

5.2 Project blog:

<http://colouringthenation.wordpress.com/> or
<http://tinyurl.com/nkl5vs8>

5.3 Online blog of the project's NMS photographer:

<http://feastbowl.wordpress.com/category/projects/turkey-red/>) or
<http://tinyurl.com/p7nab3p>

5.4 Designer Charlotte Linton's 2013 collection can be seen at:

<http://www.charlottelinton.com/> or
<http://tinyurl.com/purhxy4>

People

5.5 Director, National Museums Scotland: to corroborate collaboration with NMS.

5.6 Director of Collections, National Museums Scotland: to corroborate impact on the practice of exhibiting.

5.7 Curatorial Research Fellow, Collection Care Department, The National Archives, Kew, London: to corroborate collaboration with the National Archives, Kew.

5.8 Colour Experience Manager, Society of Dyers and Colourists, Bradford: to corroborate impact on collections practice of the SDC.

5.9 John L. & Marjorie P. McGraw Director of Collections and Senior Curator of Textiles, Winterthur Museum of Decorative Arts, Delaware, USA: to corroborate international interest in the project.