

The Stoddard-Templeton Collection

By Clare Paterson

History of the Collection

At the beginning of 2009, a group of Glasgow's leading cultural and educational institutions were very pleased to complete the acquisition of the Stoddard-Templeton Collection. The Collection, which encompasses the design archives, design library and heritage carpets of the world famous carpet manufacturers James Templeton & Co Ltd and Stoddard International Ltd, is one of the most significant industrial design collections in the world. Templeton's was at the forefront of developments in applied design and technical innovation in the carpet industry throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. They enjoyed lucrative commissions, their carpets being in demand for coronations, including that of Queen Elizabeth II, for state buildings, including the White House and the House of Lords, and for luxury hotels and cruise liners, including the *Titanic*.

The acquisition marked the end of a four year fundraising programme. Stoddard International plc, which brought together some of the most famous names in textile design and carpet manufacture, including James Templeton & Co, A.F. Stoddard, Henry Widnell & Stewart and the Sekers Group, went into liquidation in 2005. Their design archive, design library and heritage carpets, which had been maintained by the company as an inspirational resource, were put up for sale. Recognising the importance of the Collection as a whole, the University of Glasgow, Glasgow School of Art and Glasgow Museums quickly came together to form a consortium to secure the acquisition. By forming a consortium, the partners were confident of ensuring the most appropriate curatorial expertise in the management of each section of the Collection, whilst also ensuring that the important links between each part of the Collection were maintained.

It is the comprehensiveness of the Stoddard-Templeton Collection which makes it such an importance resource. Bringing together the design and corporate archive, design library and heritage carpet collection, the Collection is the most complete and influential collection of original and bought in carpet designs and carpets owned by a business in the world. Together, the three components provide a comprehensive record of the carpet-making process, from design inspiration and initial drafting, to final agreement of pattern and colour, through to the production and marketing of the finished products.

The Archives and the Library

With its 2,000 design sketches and 3,800 design drawings and patterns, the design archive reflects the commercial application of stylistic developments from the mid-nineteenth century onwards. Turkish, Persian, Chinese, Art Nouveau, Art Deco, Classical, Jacobean, 1930s modern and 1960s contemporary influences are clearly evident in both the sketches and the resultant patterns. In addition to employing its own talented in-house design team, Templeton's commissioned and bought in designs from the leading designers of the day. Artists represented in the collection include Owen Jones, Christopher Dresser, Walter Crane, Charles Francis Annesley Voysey, Charles Rennie Mackintosh, the Festival Pattern Group and Mary Quant.

The heritage carpet collection encapsulates the history of Scottish carpet manufacture. There are samples of early experimental tapestry velvet by Richard Whytock dating circa 1836, several nineteenth century examples of the chenille process, the first piece of Axminster from a gripper loom dating 1928, two 1950s samples of the first range of experimental pictorial carpeting, a sample of carpet made from 'Tactesse' nylon and a very small rug from an innovative collection made for the Japanese marketing the late 20th century.

Of the 25 large, complete carpets, there are three which were manufactured for exhibition; an adaptation of the Ardebil carpet made as the centrepiece for Templeton's Pavilion at the Glasgow International Exhibition, 1901; a Persian style carpet made for the Exhibition of Persian Art, London 1931; and the magnificent 'Twelve Apostles' carpet made for the Exposition Universelle, Paris 1867. Templeton's most significant commissions are also represented, with pieces of coronation carpets such as that made for the coronation of King George V and Queen Mary in 1912, samples for Cunard liners and a sample of carpet produced for the Festival of Britain. These are complemented by a range of mass market samples from the late 19th and early 20th centuries, giving the collection a rarely found breadth.

The design library is a rich resource in the areas of carpet design, textile design (ornament and flat pattern) and interior design. The library was brought together from the mid-nineteenth century up to the point when Stoddard International plc went into receivership, and so reflects the development of design trends and manufacturing techniques. The library is not restricted to English language titles, encompassing French and German publications particularly from the 1880s to the 1930s.

Carpet Industry

The desire of the University, Glasgow Museums and Glasgow School of Art to secure the acquisition of the collection was due to the great significance of Stoddard International plc and James Templeton & Co on both a local and international level.

The carpet industry was of major significance in the Scottish economy from the mid-nineteenth century into the twentieth century. At the peak of the Industrial Revolution, Scotland was responsible for one third of British carpet production, with James Templeton & Co being the largest quality carpet manufacturer in the British Empire. On a local level, the companies had a significant impact on the communities in which they were based. In the 1950s, around 7,000 workers were based at Templeton's architecturally flamboyant, William Leiper designed factory on Glasgow Green, making it the largest employer of industrial labour within the city boundary. In Glasgow, evidence of the community's carpet manufacturing remains in the continued occupancy of Templeton factory. However, in other communities, little evidence of the former industry exists.

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The Collection is an excellent resource for building links between these communities and their heritage.

Internationally, the Collection retains its significance. Both Templeton's and Stoddard's had significant export markets, with Templeton's establishing agencies and warehouses on every continent. The carpets which came out of the Scottish carpet manufacturers' warehouses reflected international design trends and influences. The Collection, both as a whole and as three separate entities, provides documentation of the period when decorative arts in Glasgow went from strength to strength, assuming international significance at the beginning of the twentieth century through the work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh.

The value of the Collection as a whole is much greater than the sum of its parts. The design archive, design library and heritage carpet collection are each, in their own right, rich resources for the history of design and its application in the carpet industry. Taken together, the three elements provide a fantastic resource for the study of the process of applied design in the textile industry, from initial inspiration through to production and sale. There are a wealth of opportunities to promote access to the Collection, supporting learning, teaching and research at a wide range of levels.

The Partners and the Initiatives

To date, funding has been secured to allow the acquisition of the Collection and the conservation of two of the most badly damaged carpets. Generous awards were made by the Friends of the National Libraries, Friends of Glasgow Museums and the National Fund for Acquisitions, with the bulk of the funding coming from a National Heritage Memorial Fund. The partners are actively seeking funding to support the aims of The Templeton Initiative, which looks to promote the widest possible access to the Collection.

The first objective for each partner is to catalogue the Collection. Only once the designs, publications and carpets are catalogued will access activities be possible. With its highlights in design, industrial, manufacturing, technological and social history, the Collection has widespread general appeal and is a rich resource for a wide range of users at all levels. It can support local and family history research in the communities where the carpet industry was based, and the Collection could be used as a stimulus for the reminiscences of those who worked in the industry. It can support learning, teaching and research in primary, secondary and tertiary education, and for lifelong learners. The Collection is a resource for, amongst others, the study of the development of design and its commercial application, of technical manufacturing developments, of domestic and international retail, of interior design fashions, and of management techniques. The partners also envisage the Collection being used as a stimulus for new creative works by today's artists and designers.

In order to support access to the Collection by as wide an audience as possible, the partners have set out a range of access activities that they hope to pursue. The Templeton Initiative encompasses activities such as the development of a single online resource providing access to a Collection catalogue, digitised images of the Collection and interpretative resources; the development of educational resources for use in schools; exhibitions and touring displays; and an oral history programme. This ambitious access programme is dependent on the partners securing external funding to support each activity. The partners are investigating options for funding these activities. Fortunately there is a great deal of interest in the Collection among researchers and former carpet industry workers, so the partners are sure of support for the initiatives and activities that will be undertaken in the coming years.

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