

Controlled Departures from Orthodoxy: Opening up History of Science Records

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Two Wellcome Trust funded projects are using the Encoded Archival Description (EAD) standard to create finding aids that respond to the specialist characteristics of history of science records and meet the challenges that have acted as barriers to their cataloguing in the past.

The *Towards Dolly* project is cataloguing records related to the history of animal genetics in Edinburgh. LHSA is creating a detailed catalogue to the case notes of Norman Dott (1897-1973), who developed neurosurgery as a medical specialism in Scotland.



Towards Dolly:

Edinburgh, Roslin and the Birth of Modern Genetics



Cataloguing the records of animal genetics in Edinburgh:
papers of zoologist James Cossar Ewart (1851-1933);
papers of the Institute of Animal Genetics (early to mid C20th);
papers of embryologist and geneticist Conrad Hal Waddington (1905-1975);
archival and printed collections of the Roslin Institute and predecessor bodies (mid to late C20th);
collection of c. 4,000 glass positive slides showing a variety of subjects.

EAD enables:

provision of contextual and biographical information, including linkage with Encoded Archival Context (EAC) records creation;
operability with a variety of media: printed material (<oxygen/>), archival papers (<oxygen/>), glass slides (Access database, for later conversion to EAD);
subject indexing: simple but informed;
'linkability' with UK-wide partner organisations in the Wellcome Trust Foundations of Modern Genetics Programme;
creation of a virtual map of related collections worldwide to fill out 'absences' in collections.



Cataloguing Norman Dott's Neurosurgical Case Notes (1920-1960)

The project (without known precedent in UK medical archives) is producing an online, item-level finding aid to over 26,000 folder-based case notes created by Norman Dott. It will feature:

an individual catalogue entry for each patient folder;
search functions and descriptions designed in response to user need and characteristics of personal health records;

measures that keep patient personal data confidential whilst allowing a 'gateway' into 'open' information.

EAD enables the creation of a tailored finding aid that respects the characteristics of the case notes and the needs of researchers in:

concealing identifying information from the public catalogue in compliance with national data legislation and NHS guidelines;

balancing 'archival' and thesaurus terminologies;

highlighting 'custom' search terms in response to needs of different groups of researchers;

linking through consistent subject indexing;

offering potential to export methodologies to similar projects both within LHSA and to other archives with medical collections.

Towards Dolly

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Dott Project

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LHSA

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