

Trinity House, Edinburgh

The collection within this building is wonderfully diverse and is made up of objects collected by those associated with Edinburgh's maritime past. The collection is made up of oil paintings, water colours, ivory, bone, wood, silver, lead, brass, tapestries, flags, furniture, glass, ship models, badges, books, drawings, maps, photographs, clocks and leather.

It is all held in an important building that has its own conservation considerations.



An external view of the building.

The mixed collection is either on open display or housed in beautifully made but non-airtight glass and wood display cases. This inability to isolate the collection from the normal conditions within the building means that the internal conditions of the building must be regulated.

The heating in the house was installed in the 1950's or 1960's and consisted of electrical night storage heaters being sited in each room. The fact that these would store heat during the night and slowly release it during the day presented difficulties as well as opportunities.



A diverse collection of objects on open display in the Convening Room

A data logger in each room revealed that the relative humidity over a year was not being kept at optimum levels for the collection with the air being too damp in the late summer and much too dry in the winter.

This analysis allowed for a two stage solution to be applied. The first stage was to devise a regime for adjusting the settings on the night storage heaters. This prevented the heaters from warming the air excessively in the winter and allowed them to drive off some moisture in the late summer and autumn.

The second stage of the plan is to replace the night storage heaters with oil filled electric radiators that will automatically switch on at any time of the day or night. These will each be controlled by their own humidistat that will switch them on when the relative humidity rises to above 65%. Once installed these heaters may have to be supplemented with local humidifiers for use in the winter although it is hoped that this will not be needed. Further monitoring will decide this point.

This project is being undertaken for