

# GLENCAIRN MUSEUM CASE STUDY

## TRANSITIONING TO A NEW COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM



Exterior of Glencairn Museum. Image courtesy of Glencairn Museum, Bryn Athyn, PA.

[Glencairn Museum](#) serves as a not-for-profit museum of religious art and history which stewards extensive collections of ancient Egyptian, ancient Greek, ancient Roman, medieval Christian, Islamic, Asian, and Native American arts. They recently decided to step up the management of their 10,000-object collection by upgrading from their previous collection management system to [TMS Collections](#). Motivated by the need to enhance their searching capabilities and streamline their cross-departmental workflows, the Glencairn Museum staff took the project in stride.

To learn more about Glencairn Museum's experience transitioning to TMS Collections, Gallery Systems spoke with Glenn Greer, Glencairn's Office Manager and Collections and Exhibitions Assistant. Glenn shared the museum's motivation for adopting TMS Collections, their migration objectives, and how they have been able to streamline internal workflows.

**"TMS Collections allows us to access information through multiple lenses all in one place. That has been incredible for our workflow purposes."**

GLENN GREER, OFFICE MANAGER AND  
COLLECTIONS AND EXHIBITIONS ASSISTANT

### OVERVIEW

- Over 10,000-object collection of religious art and history

### RETURN ON INVESTMENT

- Migrated successfully to a web-based collections management system
- Improved cross-departmental workflows by transitioning to a CMS with enhanced functionality
- Eliminated database inconsistency and enhanced core functionality including record keeping and record linking

### PRODUCTS

- TMS Collections (collections management system)



## OBJECTIVES

At Glencairn Museum, creating a cohesive collections management structure came with its fair share of challenges. The museum worked off card catalogues in their early years, but later transitioned their data into a CMS software in the nineties. This initial transition proved laborious as the data structure used in their card catalogues and their CMS software were incompatible. Due to the nature of card catalogue's brief entries, their collections data was limited in its digital format. Glenn explains that though they made the most of their CMS software for many years, "it had a significant number of limitations, not the least of which was that you couldn't copy and paste outside or inside the program, which is rough when you're trying to do data entry." He adds, "It was also a system that had challenges as far as searching. You had to enter a lot of keywords into different areas to be able to do segmented searching."

Around the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Glencairn Museum began looking into more favorable CMS options that would allow them to search through their database and enter data more effectively. Glenn did his research on what kind of CMS software other museums were using and came across TMS Collections — which sounded like just the right fit for Glencairn's needs.

## SOLUTION

To solve their collections management challenges, Glencairn Museum decided to work with Gallery Systems and transition to TMS Collections.

"I ended up doing demos with Gallery Systems and really liked what I saw there, especially that TMS Collections was an online platform which had a lot of potential for ease of use," Glenn explains.

"We could access it throughout the museum without having to be at a desktop station. And then the fact that it was a SQL Server database, with the amount of searching that SQL provides, was incredible."



*The Visitation.* Stone and polychrome, France, 15th century. Accession Number 09. SP.0083. Image courtesy of Glencairn Museum, Bryn Athyn, PA.

The transition to TMS Collections involved an in-depth data migration performed by Gallery Systems. This began with a data export from Glencairn Museum's previous CMS. "We actually had to contact our vendor directly to do a full export because they wouldn't allow us to export our own data," a fact that Glenn says, "seemed very telling."

Once the data was exported, the Glencairn team manually worked through their data with Gallery System's assistance. Because of the limitations of their previous CMS, the exported data needed significant cleaning up. "The way that our previous collections management system references data to itself just didn't make any sense in the format we received it in. That meant that we had to lose some of that data and work our way through manually. But working with Gallery Systems was great. They helped us in the entire process of determining what made sense to map things with. We came out with a good import into TMS Collections," Glenn explains.



Initial training with Gallery Systems was taken by a few key Glencairn Museum staff members, including Glenn. This provided the team with an understanding of the fundamentals of TMS Collections. After the introductory training, they continued with regular training to make sure they were up to date on the various capabilities and features within the software. Glenn has personally taken on the responsibility of providing one-on-one training to Glencairn staff from different departments that could benefit from the use of TMS Collections. Glenn explains that due to the museum staff's busy schedules, "there was some hesitation around having to learn a new software. At the same time," he adds, "everyone became extremely excited once they saw the capabilities of the software. Once you are trained, the TMS Collections end user experience is just wonderful."

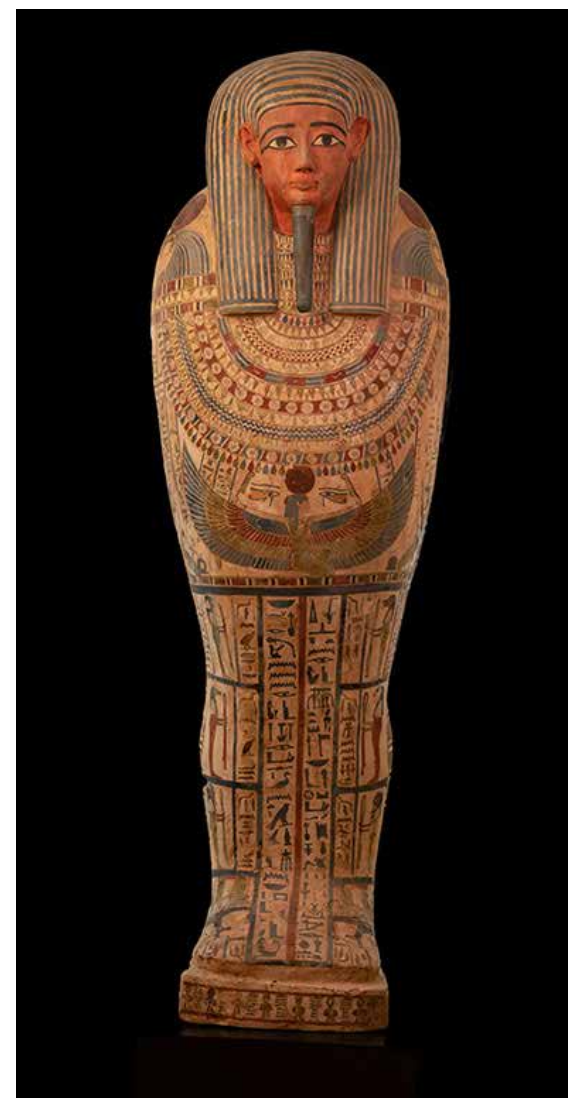


## OUTCOMES

At Glencairn, the transition to TMS Collections has been an undeniable success. One of the main benefits of TMS Collections for the museum has been more streamlined cross-departmental workflows which has helped them optimize time management.

Glencairn Museum's data management has equally benefitted from TMS Collections. "Our record keeping has vastly improved, because of the ability of the SQL Server and relational database," Glenn shares. "We can also now get information through multiple lenses all in one place. That has been incredible for our workflow purposes."

Pleased with the overall experience, Glenn explains how Gallery Systems helped throughout the transition. "It has been a fantastic experience working with Gallery Systems' staff. Even when we ran into problems, they were always very responsive and would get any issue resolved swiftly. We feel well supported in the software."



Cover of a Mummy Case. Wood and Polychrome, Egypt, Ptolemaic Period. Accession Number E1267. Image courtesy of Glencairn Museum, Bryn Athyn, PA.



## FUTURE

As its next step forward, Glencairn Museum plans to begin cataloging their event, exhibition, and curatorial records, as well as their rentals, creating a digital repository for a historical record of the museum operations that can be easily searchable for their various needs.

Glenn explains that Glencairn Museum would also like to utilize TMS Collection's bibliography module to digitally track the publications and research materials that their objects are in to increase searchability.



*Flight into Egypt. Stained glass, Saint-Denis, France, C. 1145 CE.*  
Accession Number 03.SG.0114. Image courtesy of Glencairn Museum, Bryn Athyn, PA.

Finally, Glencairn has [eMuseum](#) on their radar and hope to eventually implement it in their museum to host their collections online once they are ready.



View of The Great Hall, a room originally used by the family for entertaining guests and holding concerts. It is still used for concerts today, along for housing temporary exhibits and medieval pieces from the collection. Image courtesy of Glencairn Museum, Bryn Athyn, PA.