Using the Community
(Real & Virtual) to Enrich The First World War Poetry Digital Archive

www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit

Alun Edwards (Sept 2010), University of Oxford

http://runcoco.oucs.ox.ac.uk/
Welcome

The First World War Poetry Digital Archive is an online repository of over 7000 items of text, images, audio, and video for teaching, learning, and research.

The heart of the archive consists of collections of highly valued primary material from major poets of the period, including Wilfred Owen, Isaac Rosenberg, Robert Graves, Vera Brittain, and Edward Thomas. This is supplemented by a comprehensive range of multimedia artefacts from the Imperial War Museum, a separate archive of over 6,500 items contributed by the general public, and a set of specially developed educational resources. These educational resources include an exciting new exhibition in the three-dimensional virtual world Second Life.

Freely available to the public as well as the educational community, the First World War Poetry Digital Archive is a significant resource for studying the First World War and the literature it inspired.

News and Events

Launch of the Siegfried Sassoon Collection
Isaac Rosenberg and Bristol: a 120th Anniversary Celebration.

Twitter Updates

www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit

The Great War Archive

A searchable collection of First World War items submitted by the general public

Follow us on Twitter
Go and explore The First World War Digital Poetry Archive and The Great War Archive…
Go even if you don’t care about the First World War, just to revel in the high quality of the thought that has gone into creating such a wonderful resource.
Go to have a look at the more than 6,500 artefacts submitted by members of the public which are all now freely accessible and searchable…

Displaying Third-party Endorsements:
e.g. Dan Todman, Historian

Videos on YouTube, incl. show-reel
www.youtube.com/user/ww1lit
Wilfred Owen, “Dulce et Decorum Est”

- Draft Versions of the text

gargling  gurgling  goggling  “guttering”
The Wilfred Owen Collection

‘My subject is War, and the pity of War. The Poetry is in the pity.’

Preface

Biography

Wilfred Owen (1893–1918)

Wilfred Edward Salter Owen was born to Thomas and Susan Owen on the 18th of March 1893 near Oswestry, Shropshire. Upon the death of Owens’s grandfather in 1897, the Owen family were forced to move from the house he had owned in Oswestry to lodgings in Birkenhead (1898), Merseyside, and it was in the Birkenhead Institution that Owen’s education began. In 1907, when Thomas Owen was appointed Assistant Superintendant for the Western Region of the railways, the family moved to Shrewsbury where Owen’s education continued at the Shrewsbury Borough Technical Institute. At age 15, he was sent as a day boy to the prestigious Rugby School at 18 Owen Street. In the autumn he passed the matriculation examination for the University of London but without the first class honours needed to gain a scholarship. Unable to afford to study, he worked as lay assistant to the Vicar of Dunsden near Reading. In his spare time he also attended University College, Reading, and is known to have studied...
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thumbnail</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author/Subject</th>
<th>Item Date</th>
<th>Content</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Dulce et Decorum Est</td>
<td>Owen, Wilfred (1893-1918)</td>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Poem</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Letter To Susan Owen</td>
<td>Owen, Wilfred (1893-1918)</td>
<td>16th October 1917</td>
<td>Letter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dulce et Decorum est.

(To Jessie Pope etc.)

Bent, hunched, like old rag-bone men under sac,

Knock-kneed, coughing like hogs, we cursed

Till on the glimmering

Starlight, scarlet flares we turned our

And toward our distant rest began to to

Halting each mile, for some had lost their

And limped on, blood-shot. All went la

Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the h

Disappointed shells that dropped of

Somewhere near in front: Whoosh, Whoosh,!
Compare versions of texts on screen, side-by-side

• Imagine that in the context of a reading room!

To Jessie Pope etc. “To a certain Poetess”
Isaac Rosenberg, “Daughter's of War”

- Trench poems, written on whatever scraps of paper he could find
- The torn and mud-stained manuscript reveals the conditions of the soldier’s service
Simple online submissions process

- Contributors asked to agree to basic terms & conditions of the license
- Contributors enter basic metadata
- Offered a large open ‘notes’ field for further information, anecdotes, etc.
- An admin system allowed reviewers to:
  - check items for their validity.
  - correct or add to the metadata
  - flag items of particular interest/value

The Great War Archive Submission form
The project collaborated with organisations to run 'roadshows' / submission days

- Offer on the spot digitisation and advice
- Also provided a 'Submission Day Pack' which guided libraries etc. to run their own day
Although the submission process ended in June 2008 the project has used Flickr to allow further items to be contributed.

zac191418 says:

William Henry Kirkpatrick is a 'Leading Stoker' (right sleeve propellor with a star above, within his 'branch') and a Leading Seaman for rank/responsibility (anchor) with a good conduct stripe (left sleeve). ...and smoking a pipe.

Photograph taken at Royal Naval Ordnance Depot, Bull Point, St Budeaux on the Plymouth side of the Tamar River immediately opposite Saltash. I can only assume he and his fellow Stokers have been attending a course within the building behind that carries the Vocat(ional) Train(ing) sign.

Posts about Royal Naval Ordnance Depot Budeaux on the Plymouth side of the Tamar opposite Saltash. I can only assume he and his fellow Stokers have been attending a course within the building behind that carries the Vocat(ional) Train(ing) sign.
Summary

Public contributions to The Great Archive

The project uploads digital objects from 5 submissions days

- 5,900 images in the Flickr Group since July 2008
- 2,500 public contributors upload digital objects to website in 3 months
- 600 images from 5 submissions days

Costs per item

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archive</th>
<th>Cost per Item</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First World War Poetry Digital Archive</td>
<td>£40 / item</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Great War Archive</td>
<td>£3.50 / item</td>
</tr>
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Overall, this is one of the most comprehensive (if not the most comprehensive) archival sites on the web. It is also one of the best attempts to navigate the museum/archive/website divide that I have seen.

Reviews in History Jan '09

I didn't expect to get so engaged with this tutorial but found it fascinating and learned a lot myself. This illustrates well how adding learning activities to content (however rich) can increase engagement at a deep level. I will try to spend more time with this tool at a later date as I intend to use this collection to introduce the war poets to my home educated son. That's how impressed I am with this work. Well done to the team – the amount of work and passion is very evident.

JISC Educational Resources Review

Andrea Peterson, Lecturer

I love the site and my students love using it - only today I had my Year 13 group using it to research particular forms of writing for our own war wiki on our VLE. A couple of my students became totally addicted to deciphering Vera Brittain's handwriting and finding out what was next in her letter to Leighton and downloaded the letter to take home!

Natalie Usher, Teacher

The students I demonstrated the Archive to were very interested in it. Most students seem to find online material far more appealing than printed material, but the content of websites is often less than academic. It's very good to be able to refer to students to a website of such quality from a sound academic source.
• After website launched JISC funded further enrichment (2009):
  • Teacher training workshops to create learning & teaching resources
  • Transfer of skills
• Google Group, a ready-made community
  • Long-term email discussion list
  • Newbies encouraged
“The archive in Second Life is much more than just a fun website”
Dr Stuart Lee, Oxford University
“...this is all done off-budget now carried on by enthusiasm alone.”
“Attempting to form the context of a particular piece of literature is a key critical approach in the discipline, which normally involves studying secondary material, or in rare cases, site visits”.

“By piloting the use of Second Life, the archive is approaching this in an innovative way & is showing how new technologies (virtual worlds) can be utilised to provide a more interesting access to key research & teaching resources.”
Further reading 1

- **The First World War Poetry Digital Archive, & The Great War Archive** & and links to Frideswide on Second Life, and the Flickr photo pool www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit

- **YouTube** WW1Lit channel www.youtube.com/user/ww1lit

- **If You Build It, They Will Scan: Oxford University’s Exploration of Community Collections**, Dr Stuart Lee and Kate Lindsay. EDUCAUSE Quarterly Vol 32 Number 2, 2009 www.educause.edu/EDUCAUSE+Quarterly/EQVolume322009/EDUCAUSEQuarterlyMagazineVolum/174539 The strategies and processes behind The Great War Archive are explained in detail. E.g.
  
  **comparison of the costs per item:**
  
  £40.00/item Poetry Digital Archive
  £ 3.50/item The Great War Archive

- **RunCoCo: How to run a community collection online**, project based at the University of Oxford. http://runcoco.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ Offering training, support, networking, fostering an online community of interest. Disseminating key software tools, methodologies, and work-flows developed under The Great War Archive and beyond. Developing an open source system (called CoCoCo) to collect digital objects. Running free training work-shops: Sustainability issues for community collections, University of Leeds 3 Nov 2010

- **Woruldhord**, an exemplar community collection (for RunCoCo) in a teaching and learning context to mobilize the public and academics to contribute material they hold relating to the Anglo-Saxon period of British history (450AD-1066AD) http://projects.oucs.ox.ac.uk/woruldhord/
Further reading 2

- **Digitisation, curation & two-way engagement**, Chris Batt Consulting
  [www.jisc.ac.uk/publications/reports/2009/digicurationfinalreport.aspx](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/publications/reports/2009/digicurationfinalreport.aspx) The Great War Archive showed how community collections can work and bring great benefits, most notably reduced costs... This is possibly a model we should be pursuing in the future alongside traditional high-quality digitisation... Moreover, that academia should try to engage the public in its research and recognise that the public not only may hold material, but also is willing to engage in these activities. On the subject of Two-way Engagement: “…knowledge co-creation and exchange rather than simple knowledge transfer; a dialogue which enriches knowledge for mutual benefit” and “…community engagement is more than citizen participation... it would be questionable to describe it as community engagement, unless there have been some fully open opportunities for... Collective involvement in the agenda under discussion.”

- **Capturing the power of the crowd and the challenges of community collections**, JISC 2010 [www.jisc.ac.uk/publications/programmerelated/2010/communitycollections.aspx](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/publications/programmerelated/2010/communitycollections.aspx) ‘Crowdsourcing’ is when a problem is broadcast to a wide audience or community that could solve the problem collectively. Mundane tasks could be outsourced to a motivated and enthusiastic community of experts. The community can assess the answers and provide the quality assurance. Refers to e.g. East London Lives 2012, GalaxyZoo and RunCoCo.

- **Developing Community Content**, JISC Projects 2010 [www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/digitisation/communitycontent.aspx](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/digitisation/communitycontent.aspx)
Free workshop:
Sustainability issues for community collections
University of Leeds
3 Nov 2010