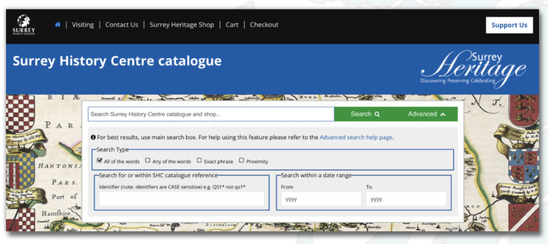
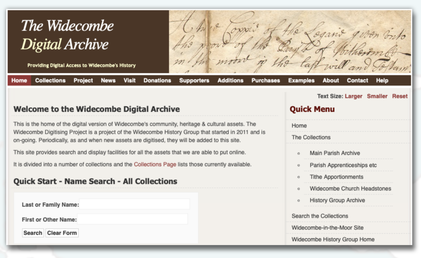
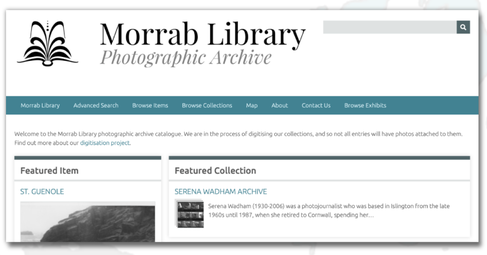
Our Heritage, Our Stories

Linking and searching Community-Generated Digital Content

Our Heritage, Our Stories (OHOS) is a collaboration between digital humanists, historians, linguists, computer scientists, and digital archivists from three UK partner institutions - the University of Glasgow, University of Manchester, and The National Archives (TNA). We aim to produce a fundamental shift in how digital archival content from communities across the UK is connected and searched. This poster outlines the project's goals, methods, progress, and how it will enable new humanities research and stories. OHOS is funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council, as part of the Towards a National Collection research programme (project AH/W00321X/1), and runs until 2024.







CGDC

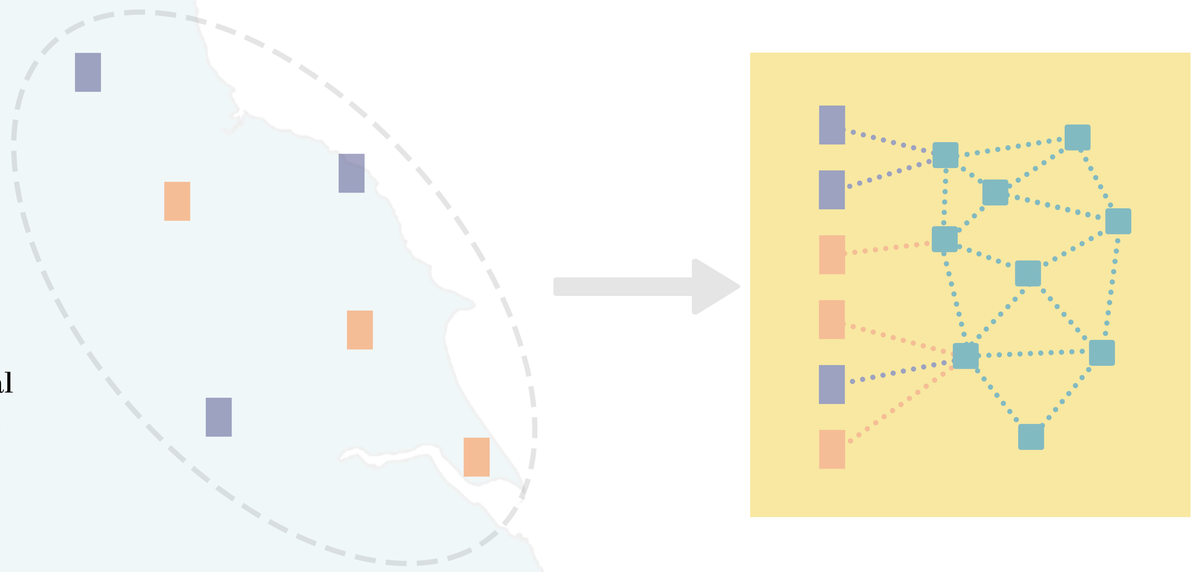
In the past two decades, communities have adopted digital technologies to collect and record 'citizen history', creating a vast and democratic reservoir of new knowledge about the past from multiple perspectives. This Community-Generated Digital Content (CGDC) can immeasurably enrich our national and global understanding, but remains largely untapped, hard to find, and at risk of disappearing altogether. It has been categorised as 'critically endangered' digital material by the Digital Preservation Coalition.

CGDC is digitised or digital archival material which is community generated and held, across a variety of formats and forms. It is currently dispersed across communities and localities but by making CGDC more discoverable and linking it to other digital material, OHOS will unearth new stories and insights into UK cultural heritage.

Approaches

OHOS is drawing on expertise from a wide range of academic disciplines, to open previously undiscoverable materials held by community archives to wider audiences.

- The work of our **Archives Lab** centres around fostering links with community archives, understanding their archival materials, and developing post-custodial approaches to support communities in creating and curating their own stories.
- Our **AI Lab** are building a knowledge graph of CGDC using NLP methods, including NER and relation extraction. This will interpret and link CGDC to other Linked Open Data and collections data from TNA.
- Through integrating specialised linguistic resources in our AI methods, the **Linguistics Lab** is supporting intepretation of multilingual and multidialectal CGDC and promoting its role within institutional collections.
- Our **History Lab** is working with communities to explore the new stories that can be told with this freshly connected material, developing research stories that reveal the powerful potential of community-generated content.



15973

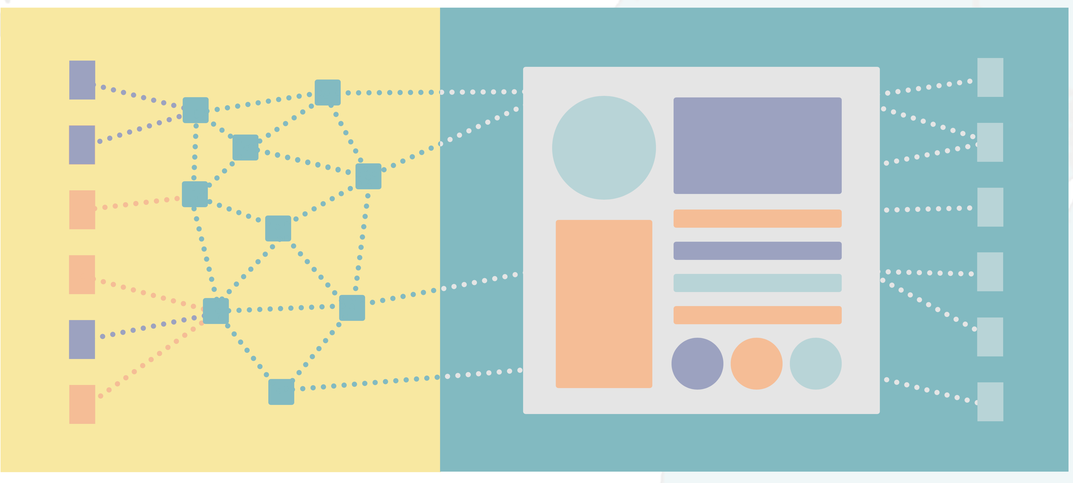
This Parish Church LOC Parish_church is dedicated to St Creden LOC Credan

The churchyard and church have within the late 19th and first part of the 20thcentury made a strong appeal to

painters of the Newlyn School of Art ORG Newlyn_School some of whom worshipped regularly at the

church and are buried in the churchyard including Stanhope Forbes RA PER Stanhope_Forbes

Outputs



Our work across the project is enabling diverse CGDC to be made connected and accessible through a major new public-facing resource, the OHOS Observatory, developed by the OHOS team at TNA.

- The **Observatory** will connect isolated CGDC with TNA's Discovery platform, allowing users to explore new collections and connections between them.
- The Observatory's Remixer Suite will enable users to reuse and 'remix' newly integrated CGDC, creating new avenues of research and exploration.
- Multidisciplinary case studies will showcase the value of this content to research across academic and public spheres.

Through understanding how communities gather, generate, and store materials, OHOS is also developing a post-custodial model for CGDC that empowers communities to maximise their collections' accessibility, utility, and sustainability, while promoting the diversity and complexity that makes these materials so valuable to the UK national collection.

www.ohos.ac.uk | contact@ohos.ac.uk | @OHOS_NatColl