

Courtauld Connects: Digitisation Project

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Volunteering from home:

using Wikipedia to share the collection,
help volunteers develop new digital skills,
and keep our community together.

The Courtauld

**COURTAULD
CONNECTS**



The project

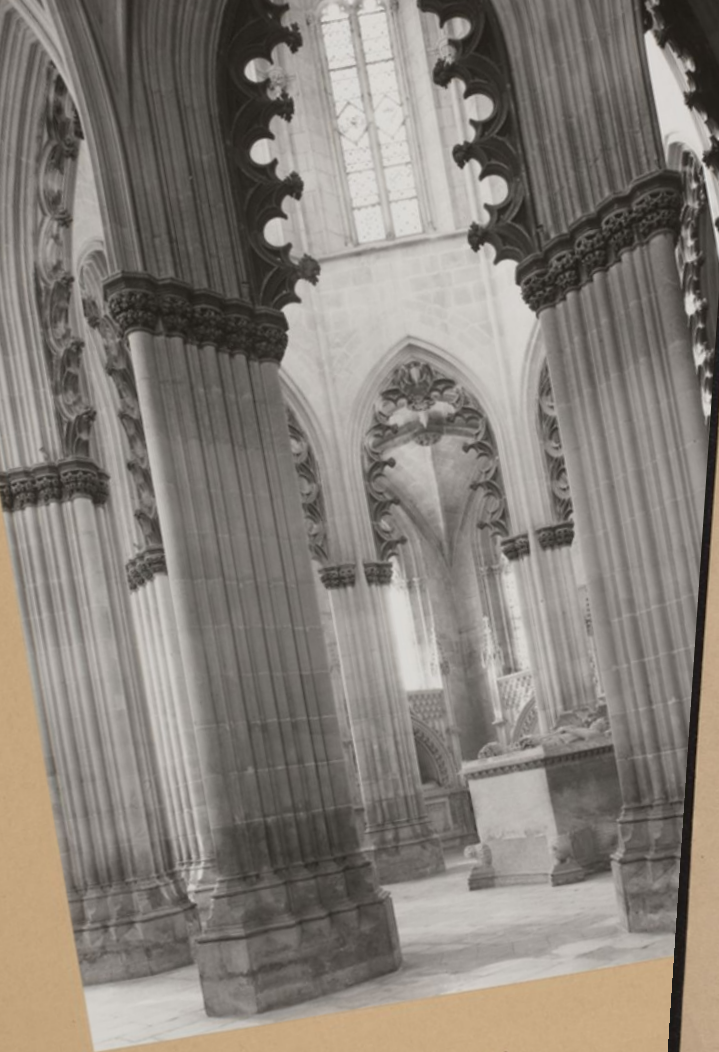
- We are part of a larger project called Courtauld Connects
- Started in 2017
- Due to complete in 2021
- Part funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund
- 1.5 million images
- Over 800 volunteers





The
team!

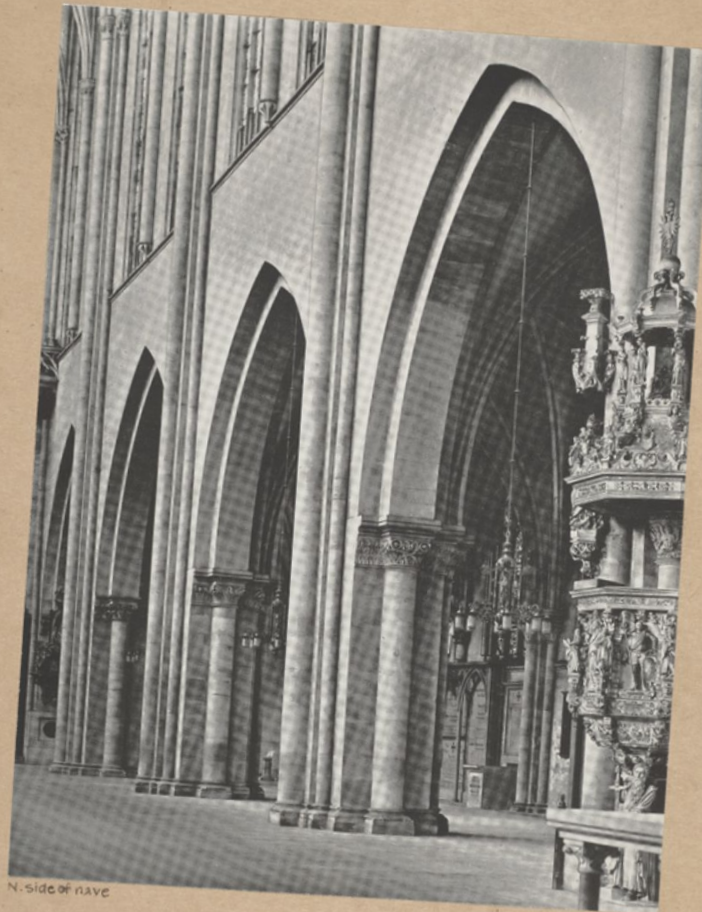




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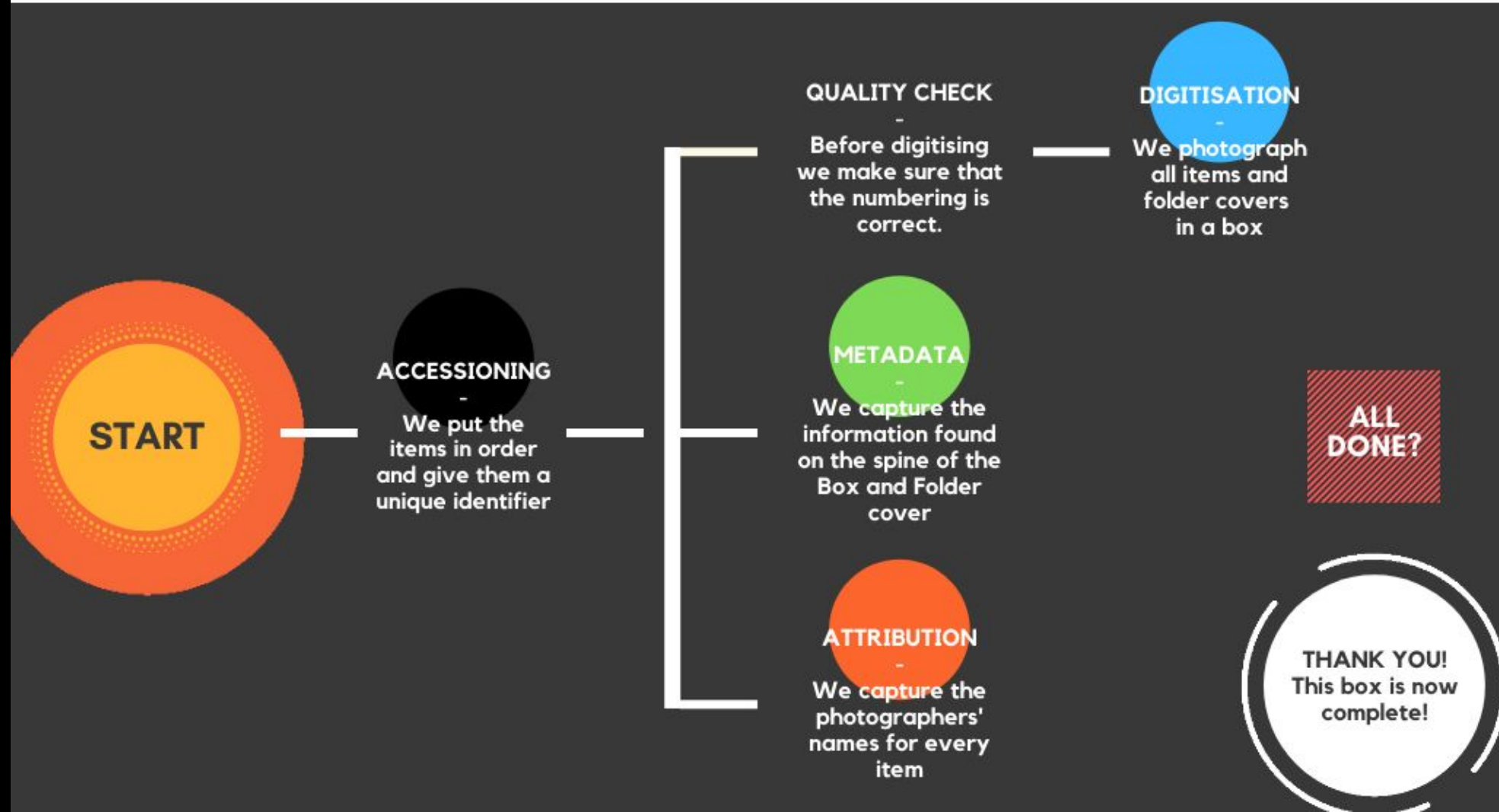


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Digitisation Process

COURTAULD DIGITISATION VOLUNTEERING



Remote activities

Fulfilling digitisation targets

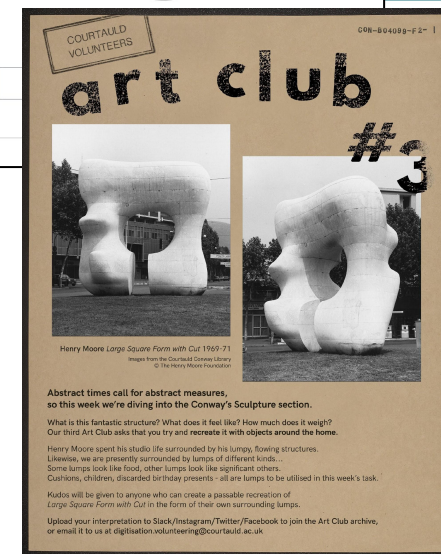
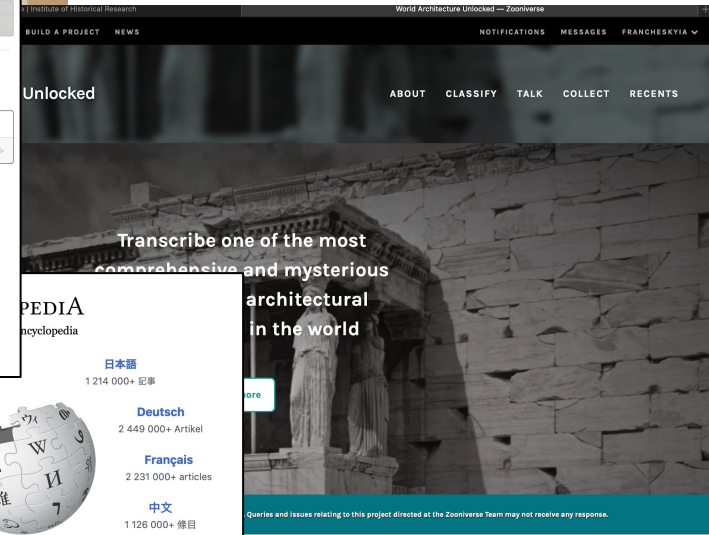
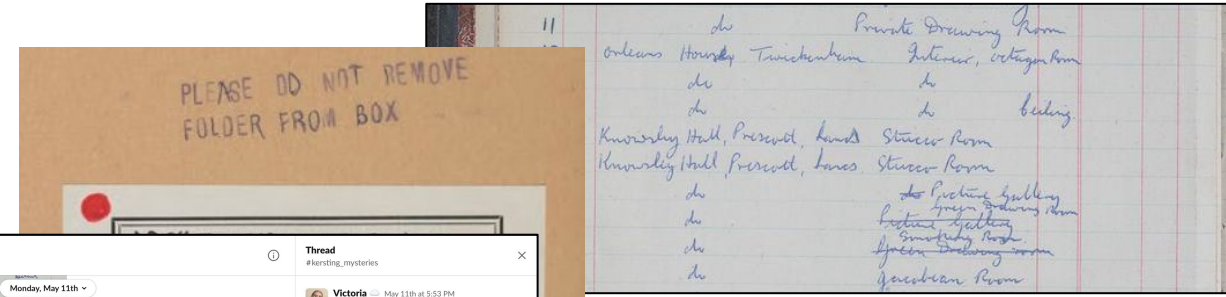
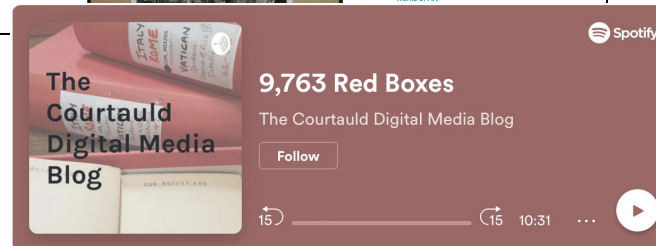
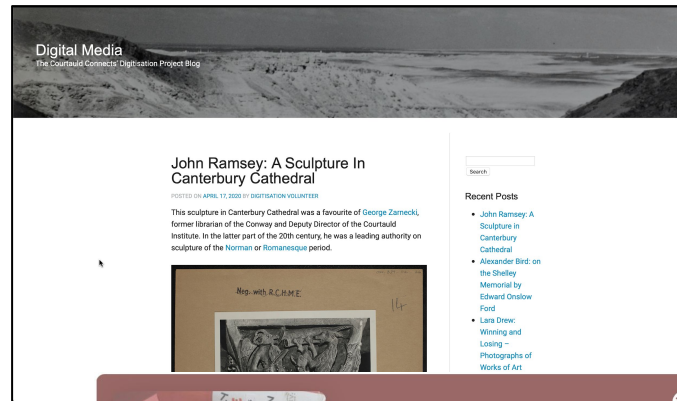
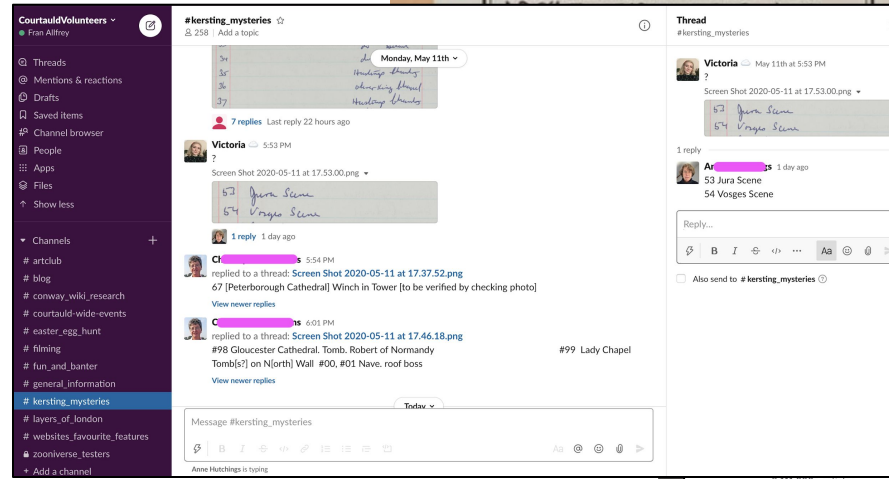
- Metadata from home – sharing photographs of text from ledgers, boxes, or folders for volunteers to transcribe into spreadsheets
- Zooniverse – huge crowdsource transcription project for individual item-level metadata.
- Researching photographers

Fulfilling aims to share the collection

- Blog posts and Audio blogs (podcast!)
- Wikipedia editing
- Layers of London
- Online talks: Being Human Festival

Volunteer community and comms

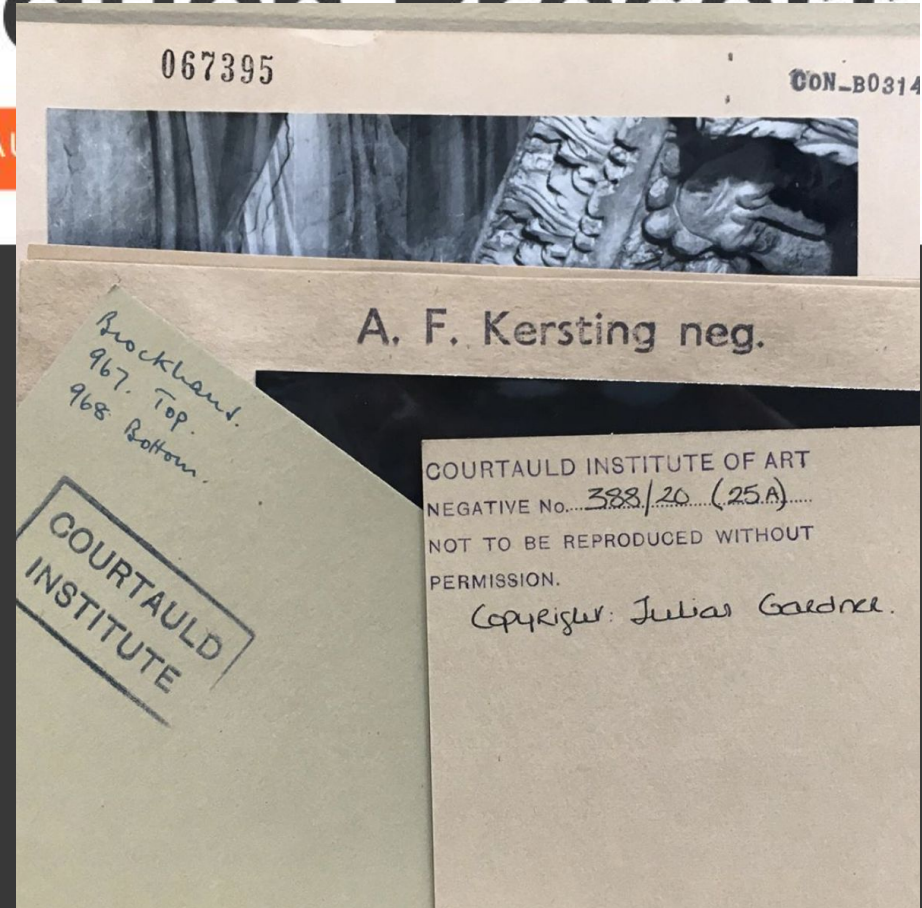
- Slack forum space – for fun and for tasks
- Weekly Mailchimp – for fun and for tasks
- Weekly Zoom chat – for fun and for tasks
- Art club – just for fun!





Digitisation Process

COURTAULD



ACCESSIONING

We put the items in order and give them a unique identifier



We capture the photographers' names for every item

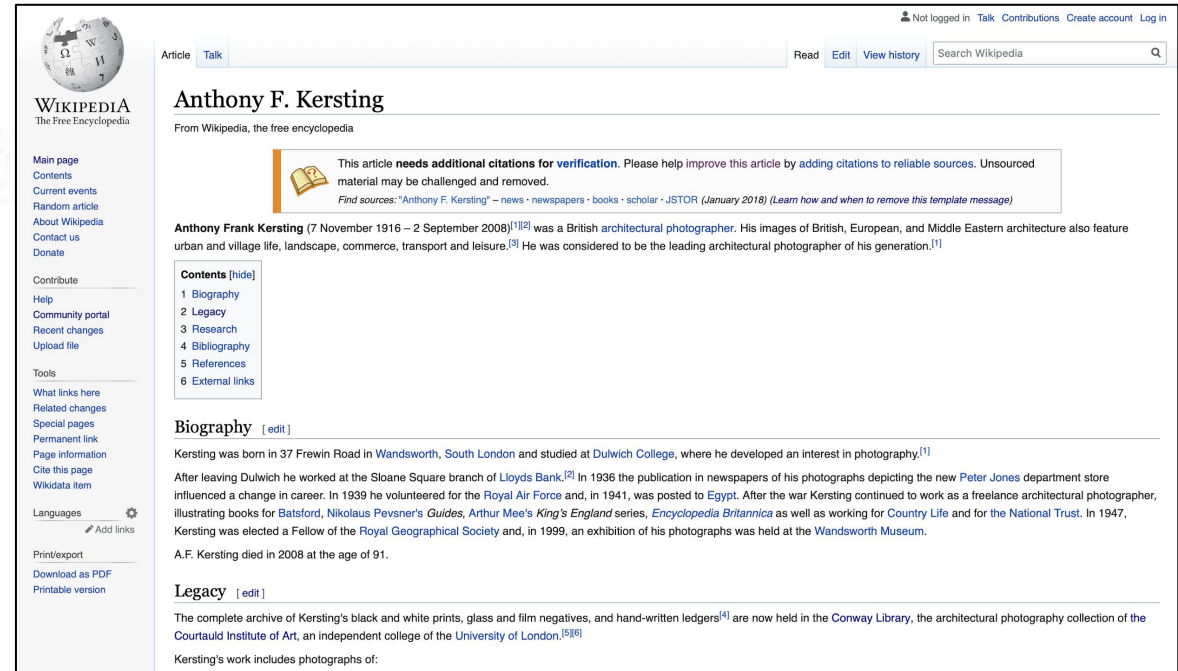
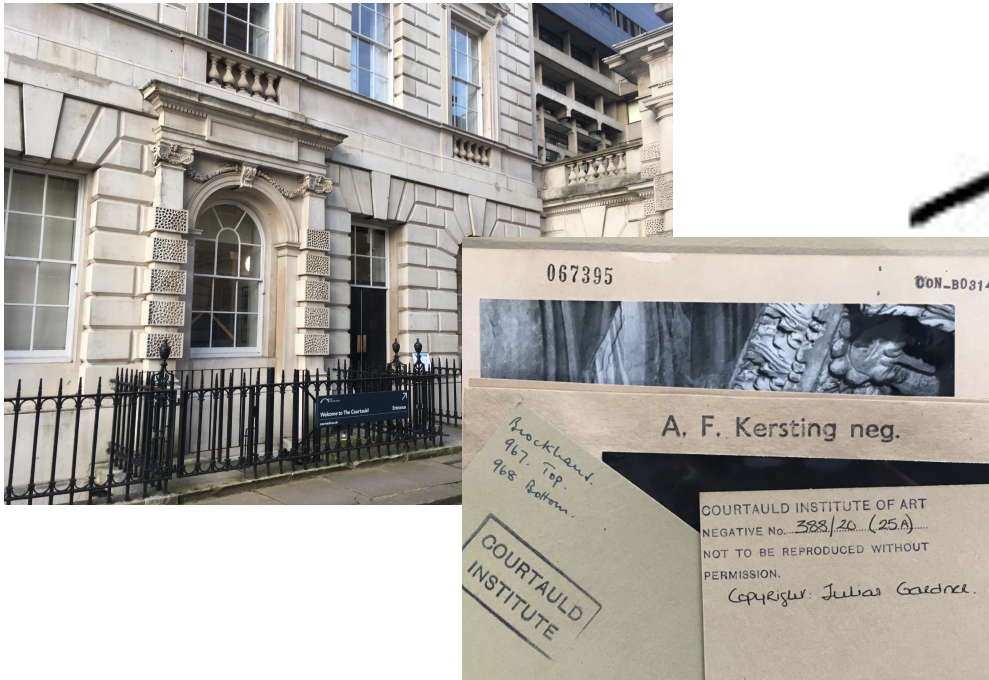


From library to (online) encyclopedia

In the library, volunteers collected the photographer names.

In April 2020 volunteers began researching biographical information.

In June 2020 volunteers began editing Wikipedia to bring our photographers to a much wider audience!



My Drive > ... > 5_PHOTOGRAPHER BIOS > 0_VOLUNTEERS_WIKIPEDIA			
Name ↑	Owner	Last modified	
1. VOLUNTEERS_Attributions Background Information	me	2 Oct 20	
2. VOLUNTEERS_Photographer Biography Research Instructions	me	2 Oct 20	
3. TEMPLATE VOL NAME_PHOTOGRAPHER	me	2 Oct 20	
4. VOLUNTEERS_List of Known Photographers.pdf	Faye F.	2 Oct 20	

Step 1: Research

- All in Google Drive
- Written instructions
- An old, partial list of known names & last known address/workplace
- A template to help direct research
- We've now researched over 550 people!

1NEW TEMPLATE
File Edit View Insert Format Tools Add-ons Help
Last edit was seconds ago
100% Heading 2 Arial 18

←
TEMPLATE
Do they already have a Wikipe...
Only add information here whi...
Introduction
Biography
Bibliography
References
External links
Please list every link you used ...

TEMPLATE

**** Please log your hours as you go here (at the end of the day or week)****
<https://forms.gle/FyxhwUnCFqNLcZVYA>

Do they already have a Wikipedia page? If yes, please paste link:

Only add information here which is not already on Wikipedia and make sure you have read the instructions and FAQ before you begin:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/160Wo_BWY-9S_8uspXY4nqRUj9ni_ays5QyWj3nQAY14/edit#heading=h.nid2n1ct9jpr

Introduction

Full name of photographer:
Other names photographer is known by:
Date of birth:
Date of death:
Place of birth:
Nationality:

If the photographer is alive we will need their contact details later on, please do not contact photographers as part of your research

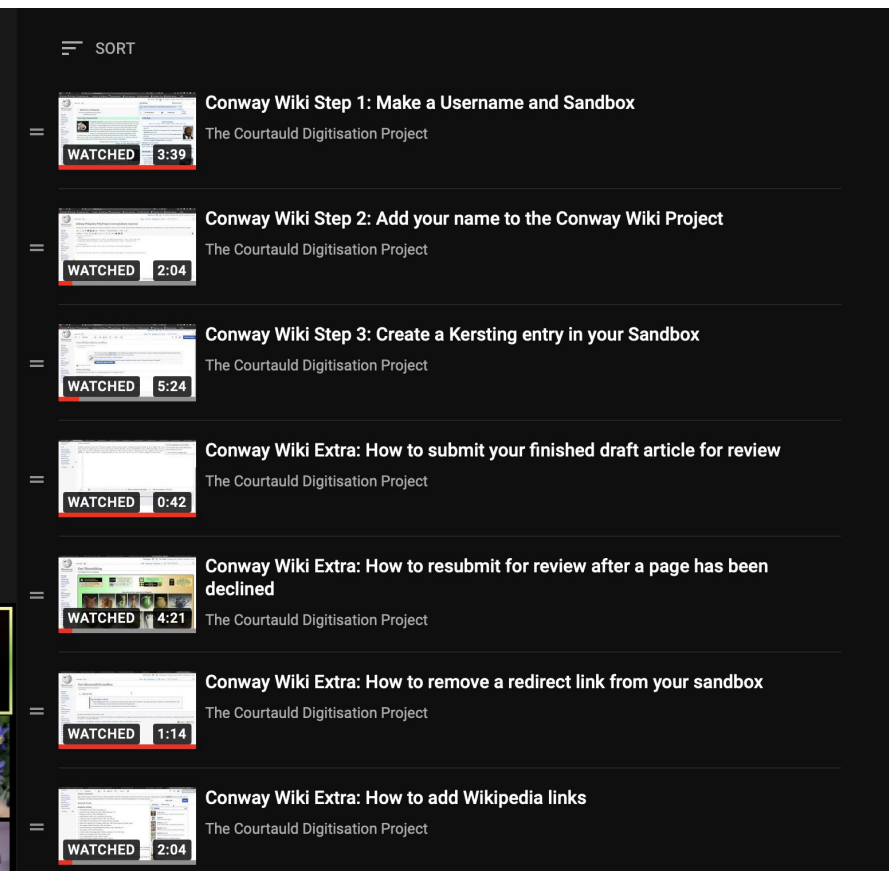
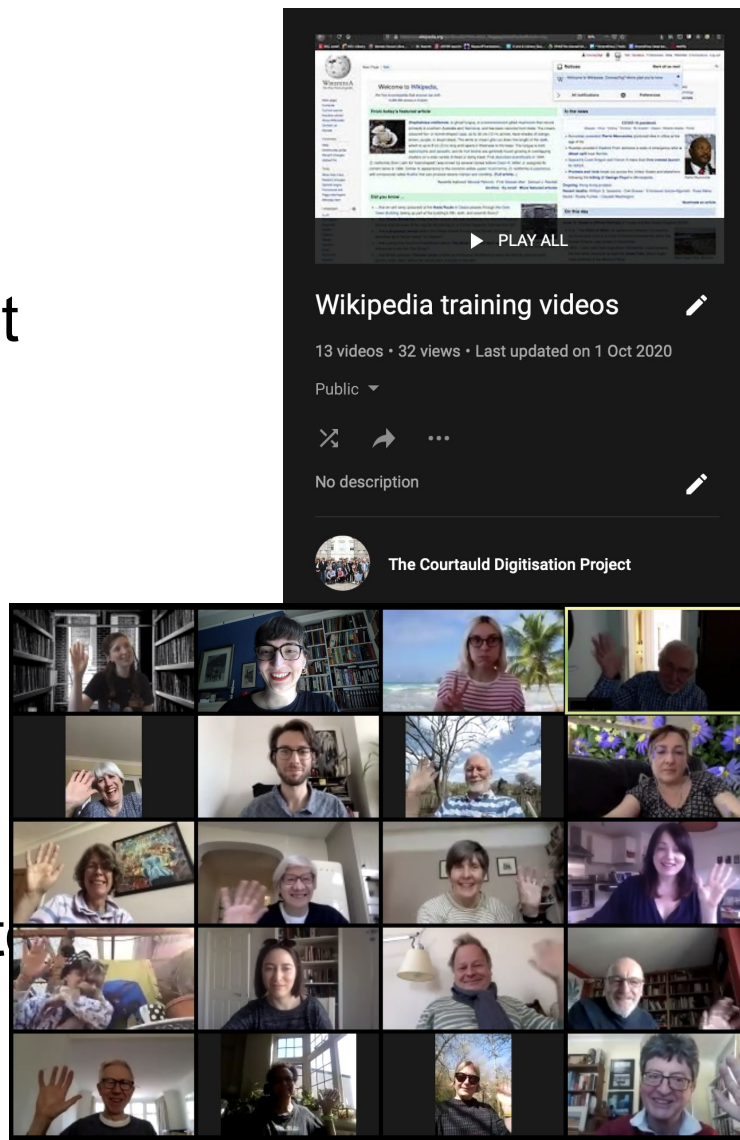
Phone:
Email:
Address:
Work address:
Other affiliations:

Biography

Childhood:
Parents:
Parent's occupation:
Schools / universities attended:
Attendance years from-to:

Step 2: Wiki editing

- Zoom training sessions (ask Wikimedia if you don't have in house knowledge)
- Training videos (13)
- Google Drive template sharing
- As well as a spreadsheet to keep track, we have a public Wiki Project page



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_ConwayLibrary

Project page

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Wikipedia:WikiProject ConwayLibrary

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

[Project Homepage](#)

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This page is a work in progress to support volunteers on the [Courtauld Institute of Art](#) Courtauld Connects Digitisation Project. However, all Wikipedians are of course welcome (this goes without saying, but for the benefit of newcomers!)! Please feel free to make changes and additions in format and content, and use the Talk page to leave questions and comments.

This project was established to support especially Courtauld Digitisation Project volunteers to create and edit Wikipedia pages related to the Conway Library. The Conway Library is a collection of over 1.6 million photographs. These photographs are of architecture, design, manuscripts, and fine art objects. These photographs have historically only been accessible in person, at the Courtauld Institute of Art (first at Portland Square, now in the North East Wing of Somerset House).

Photographs in the collection are usually pasted to a cardboard mount. The mounts frequently include a written name, or a stamp, that indicates who took the photograph.

Since 2017, volunteers have been transcribing the names written on mounts. So we now have a list of names. However: quite often the name is all we have. Since the start of COVID19 shutdown, volunteers have been researching these names to build profiles for them, so that we can create brand new, or edit existing, Wikipedia pages for people who contributed to the photographic collection. We will be adding photographs taken by the photographers to Wikimedia as appropriate.

Volunteers and Wikipedians are encouraged to use and add to the [resources](#) on this project page to help bring the Conway Library to Wikipedia.

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https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_ConwayLibrary



Architect's House (designed by [Ernst May](#)). Photograph by [Tim Benton](#). CON_B04373_F002_028. The Courtauld Institute of Art. CC-BY-4.0. This is typical of a Conway Library item: a photographic print is pasted onto a manilla cardboard mount, with some additional information written or stamped on the mount.

Challenges

Overcoming + Opportunities

Lots of our volunteers are not digital natives.

Written and/ or video user guides, zoom training. A small tester group first. Completely new skills are being learned.

Collection items do not have much detail, eg. just initials or last names.

Volunteers develop research skills, and bring richness to the collection.

Ensuring that research is done consistently/ Wiki guidance adhered to.

Templates. Linking to familiar volunteer tasks. Help from wider Wikipedia community – you're never alone and you can't break it! Gaining confidence.

Volunteers have varying commitments/ decide they don't like it!

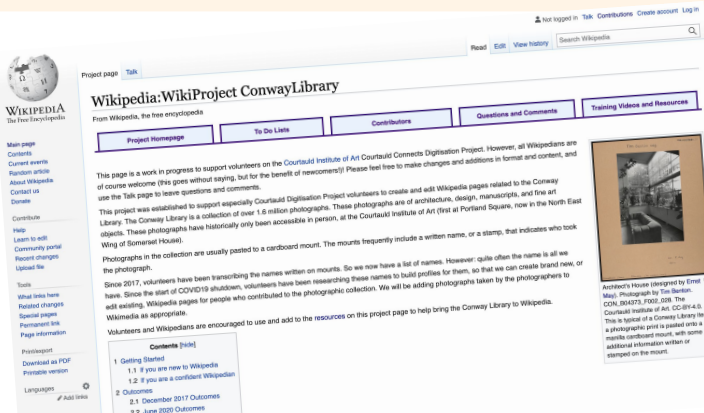
Working as a team we can flexibly reassign research or editing. Encourage resilience with reassurance. Train large numbers.

Technical hitches and ongoing general queries!

Support over email and Slack.

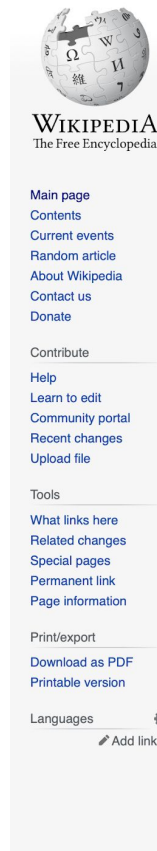
Some information behind paywalls.

Luckily, as attached to university we have elibrary access. If we can't access, we flag.



Some numbers!

- 84 individual volunteers involved in research
- Over 550 photographers researched
- 47 volunteers attended Zoom training how to edit Wikipedia
- 28/47 have gone on to do editing
- 74 brand new Wikipedia pages
- 40 existing pages improved
- Scope for the future: three items shared to **Wikimedia**, and added to four different articles (as a pilot, more to come when we have the images available and full copyright clearances)



Project page [Talk](#) Read [Edit](#) [View history](#)

Wikipedia:WikiProject ConwayLibrary

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

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Architect's House (designed by Ernst May). Photograph by Tim Benton. CON_B04373_F002_028. The Courtauld Institute of Art. CC-BY-4.0. This is typical of a Conway Library item: a photographic print is pasted onto a manilla cardboard mount, with some additional information written or stamped on the mount.

Volunteer feedback

On Research

I enjoyed the search for information on figures who were lesser well known, and for whom information was fairly scarce as it required **determination and good research skills**. Finding information about their early life and family was often the most difficult aspect. – Alistair

Being introduced to people I had not known about before and finding out about their contribution to art/history/architecture. Most of the subjects have books published and **it would be good to have access to the library** in order to get a better understanding of their work in their own words. – Hugh

I'm happy to feel I'm doing something **worthwhile** and **contributing to something special**. Also the chance to investigate all these **fascinating lives has been so rewarding**, especially some of the more obscure ones! – Jeanie

On editing Wikipedia

As a female editor, it is good to know I am part of a growing band of what, has in the past, been a predominantly male domain and, to have the ability to **redress balances/inequalities**, for example, if I am writing a page on a male subject and his partner is notable in her own right I always try and make reference to that. – Lynn

Sometimes knowing what and when something should have a **reference** is difficult. – Alistair

I've enjoyed being able to **use my foreign language/translation skills** between the different language versions on Wikipedia. I've also started to edit other pages of my own interest. – Gill

It felt quite **technically challenging** at first... Some 'editors' can also be tricky to deal with (subjectivity, sarcastic comments about 'notability', obstruction, etc). – Gill

The most challenging is the **Wikipedia website which has a mind of its own** at times. – Michael



Thank you!
Please be in touch if you have any
questions!

digitisation.volunteering@courtauld.ac.uk

Instagram @CourtauldDigitisation

Twitter @CourtauldDigi

The Courtauld

**COURTAULD
CONNECTS**

