Heritage Made Digital:
Bringing the British Library's digitised heritage collections to new audiences

Reference: **2022-HMD-DIG**

Supervisor(s)	Dr Sandra Tuppen (Portfolio Manager, Heritage Made Digital) Andrew Longworth (Digitisation Workflow Manager, Heritage Made Digital)
Team and department	Heritage Made Digital team, Collections & Curation department
Start date/timeframe	Earliest start: June 2022 Latest end date: March 2023
Duration	**3 months** (or part-time equivalent)
Part time/Full time	Full time or part time Minimum days/week if undertaken part time: 2
Location and working arrangements	Can be offered as fully remote placement Can be offered as hybrid placement (with visits to London, St Pancras)

Context and nature of placement project

The British Library's programme 'Heritage Made Digital' is transforming digital access to the Library's heritage collections by undertaking new digitisation, streamlining digitisation workflows and making existing digitised content openly available online. This placement provides an opportunity for a PhD student to contribute to the programme by working with and promoting the digitised images of some of the Library's internationally renowned collections. These include its world-famous collection of pre-1500 printed books, documents from World War I and 19th-century photographs from Canada.

The goal of the placement project is to make more of the Library's digitised content freely available online, and to increase public use of these collections. The student will prepare digitised images for online publication, and write about and promote specific collections to a wide audience. The Library makes its images available via the International Image Interoperability Framework (IIIF). This protocol allows content to be widely shared, for example in blogs and social media posts. The student will have the chance to learn about IIIF and image file formats and standards. Depending on their areas of interest, they could focus on one or two specific digitised collections, or work across a broader spectrum of material. (The selection of content will be made jointly by the student and their British Library supervisors, based on the student's interests and the programme's operational needs.)

During their placement the student will be a member of the Heritage Made Digital team, part of the Collections & Curation department. They will be supervised by the programme's overall manager and the Digitisation Workflow Manager. The student will have a formal induction on joining, and weekly discussions with their supervisors, and will be invited to participate in the team's weekly online meetings. The student will also be supported by the Digital Research Team, for example in using IIIF.

Tasks and outcomes

The primary focus of this placement will be preparing digitised content for online publication, undertaking research on specific items and promoting them to a wide audience.

Typical tasks will include:

- Undertaking research and writing short pieces about particular items, e.g. blog posts.
- Using the IIIF protocol to create online exhibits and features, for which training will be given.
- Undertaking image quality control on selected sets of digital image files, for which training will be provided.
- Preparing labels for images and ensuring that the images are all in the correct order.
- Checking that the content matches the descriptions of the material in the online catalogues.

Optional tasks, depending on the student's areas of interest, may include:

- Using data from the online catalogues to produce simple visualisations which give insights into the digitised collections, for example, to show on a map the city of publication of books that have been digitised.
- Producing Optical Character Recognition/Handwritten Text Recognition data for selected digital content.

The main outcomes envisaged for this placement are:

- An increased body of digitised content is available online.
- Increased use of specific digitised collections by the public.
- New perspectives provided on specific digitised items through the student's research.

Training and development opportunities

PhD placement students are welcome to access a wide range of workshops, talks and training available at the Library. Supervisors will offer advice on which opportunities may be of particular relevance. Depending on availability, these wider training opportunities may include, for example, the Digital Scholarship Training Programme, Cultural Property Training, Research Roundtables, Business & IP Centre workshops and staff talks.

In addition, this particular PhD placement will provide:

- Comprehensive training in quality control of digital images.
- Experience in preparing images for ingest to the Library's digital preservation system and for online publication.
- Training in use of tools for working with digital images and generating automated full-text transcriptions.
- Training in use of the IIIF standard.
- Experience in creating interpretative texts about digital collections, and in writing blog posts and undertaking social media activities.
- Training in digital cultural heritage research tools and techniques.

Required knowledge and skills
All applicants will be expected to demonstrate the following: • Ability to communicate effectively verbally and in writing, internally and externally. • Working knowledge of Microsoft Office applications and online meeting tools. • Ability to follow instructions and policies, in particular with regard to Health & Safety and the safe use of collections. • Ability to work effectively with others while also completing tasks independently. • Clear reasons for applying to a specific placement and good understanding of the project purpose. In addition, this specific placement project requires the following: • An interest in cultural heritage and in developing digital skills to promote heritage collections.

Application deadline: **Friday 25 February 2022 (5pm)**

Eligibility criteria, funding information and details of how to apply are available on the British Library website: https://www.bl.uk/research-collaboration/doctoral-research/british-library-phd-placement-scheme