

# The Budgen Collection at the James Joyce Cultural Centre<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

This article examines the Capstone project of seven MLIS students to build a digital exhibition of the Budgen Collection for the James Joyce Cultural Centre. The project aims to highlight Joyce's European influences, improve access for a wider audience and to digitally preserve the collection to ensure continued accessibility of the donated items.

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## Budgen and Joyce

The three main project objectives were: (a) to digitise and create an online exhibition of the Budgen collection, highlighting Joyce's European influences; (b) make the Budgen collection accessible to a wider audience, including tourists, students, and scholars overseas, as well as generate further interest in the work of Budgen; and (c) to create a catalogue of the Budgen collection, and digitally preserve items in the collection so to ensure long-term accessibility of the donated items.



Frank Budgen (1882 – 1971) was an English writer and painter who lived in Switzerland during World War I. He was introduced to James Joyce, who also lived in Zurich for a number of years during the war (Budgen, 1972, p. 9). Frank Budgen met James Joyce in Zurich in 1918, after their mutual friend, Horace Taylor, insisted that they meet. In his memoir, *James Joyce and the making of 'Ulysses'*, and other writings, Budgen describes the first time he met Joyce.

**"I saw a tall slender man come into the garden through the restaurant. Swinging a thin cane he walked deliberately down the steps to the gravelled garden path. He was a dark mass against the orange light of the restaurant glass door, but he carried his head with the chin uptilted so that his face collected cool light from the sky. His walk as he came slowly across to us suggested that of a wading heron."**

The two developed a strong bond and friendship, one in which Joyce was quite comfortable and trusted Budgen so much as to use him as a sounding board while writing many of



his great works, most notably *Ulysses*. Joycean scholar Clive Hart details a conversation he once had with Budgen who stated, "Joyce's first question when I had read a completed episode or when he had read out a passage of an uncompleted one was always: 'How does Bloom strike you?'" (Budgen, 1972, p. xi). This demonstrates the bond the two had and the value Joyce placed on the opinion of his friend, Frank Budgen.

Over the years, Budgen amassed a large library of works written by and about Joyce, and went on to write his own account of their friendship. He detailed their friendship in his memoirs and continued to collect books and other materials relating to Joyce. Many of the items he received contain handwritten notes from the authors, including Joyce himself. In 2012, his daughter, Joan Budgen, donated a portion of his library to the James Joyce Cultural Centre (hereafter "JJCC"). The collection includes 23 books and related ephemera, 3 original sketches, and 1 audio tape cassette.



## Background of James Joyce Cultural Centre

The James Joyce Cultural Centre opened its doors on 35 North Great George's Street in 1996 with the help of Senator David Norris, a Joycean scholar. The building was on a once thriving and prestigious street and housed a dance academy run by Professor Denis J. Maginni, an eccentric local personality to whom Joyce referred several times in *Ulysses*.

However, by the 1980s, the area had fallen out of fashion and many neighbouring buildings were demolished. Senator Norris was able to save this particular building from destruction and, with outside funding and the aid of Joyce's relatives, opened the JJCC to the public. The JJCC is run as a cultural centre rather than a museum and visitors range from Joycean scholars to visiting tourists. It houses permanent exhibitions, such as documentary films that detail various aspects of Joyce's life and work as well as a copy of Joyce's death mask; it is also host to various temporary exhibitions throughout the year. The JJCC owns a library of works by and about Joyce, his life and career, which they would like to eventually make available to researchers.

The JJCC organises the Bloomsday Festival every year in Dublin, drawing huge crowds from across Ireland and the world. The festival takes place every June 16th, and follows the day of Leopold Bloom, the main character in *Ulysses*. The Centre is also home to the original door from No. 7 Eccles Street. In *Ulysses* this is Leopold Bloom's address, but the house itself was demolished to make way for an extension to the



nearby Mater Hospital. Thankfully, the door was saved and is on loan to the Centre.

## Methodology

To achieve the project objectives, digitisation best practices were established after thorough research, including a literature review. Five areas were investigated: digitisation, preservation, special collections, online exhibitions, and special collections' case studies. Interviews were carried out with five Special Collections specialists from three libraries; John Paul II Library at Maynooth University, James Joyce library in UCD, and the National Library of Ireland. Participants shared valuable information about scanning, setting up an online exhibition, the technicalities of digitisation and associated challenges. A needs analysis of the prospective user group of the exhibition was carried out using an online survey distributed to the mailing list of the JJCC. A SWOT analysis of the JJCC was conducted to gain a better understanding of the organisation and its needs. After the research stage, the digitisation process commenced in the JJCC. Digitised resources were

optimised and accurate metadata was created. Finally, the team worked on the content, presentation, and features of the online Omeka site. Plug-ins were installed and additional pages were added, including a map highlighting Joyce's European influences.

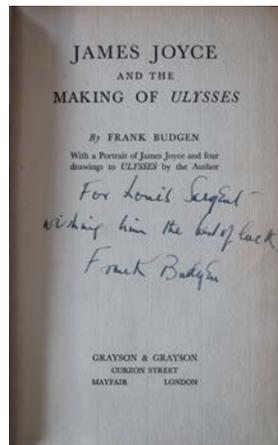
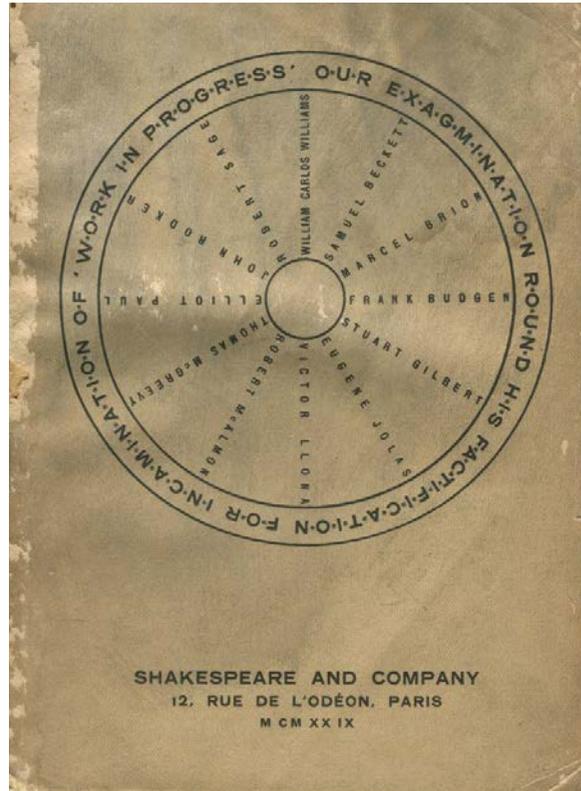
## Print Digitisation

Before digitisation of the collection's print resources could begin, it was first necessary to establish an appropriate workflow process. The literature and interviews were used to deduce the best strategies for print digitisation. The group incorporated these strategies and decided on how to best go about the process before the physical work commenced. Specific advice received included:

- A scanning log should be established.

- Digitisation equipment will depend on the nature of the resource being digitised.
- Books and ephemera should be carefully handled during digitisation in a dedicated workspace.
- Digital images captured should be scanned at 600DPI, saved in an uncompressed TIFF/RAW format, and archived immediately.
- Optimisation: Digital images may need to be optimised.
- JPEG Surrogates for the site should be created from the Master
- Optimised archive.

The significance of planning ahead and being prepared to ensure consistency when digitising print materials was emphasised in both the literature and interviews. Further advice given was to be careful of the scanner's glass; one should remove watches and jewellery when scanning and to be aware that staples in documents have the potential to scratch the glass when copying. Interviewees also advised to check work when scanning to ensure usability. These best practice strategies were followed to achieve the best digitisation of the collection's print sources. The digitisation equipment consisted of a Doxie flip scanner, a flatbed Epson scanner, a Canon scanner (Canon Canoscan LiDE 210), and professional quality digital camera. The Doxie scanner proved useful for the small items in the Budgen Collection and was ideal for scanning the ephemera due to its small size and design. The Epson flatbed scanner and Canon scanner proved adequate for the books, as did the



digital camera. The collection's items were scanned at 600dpi as suggested by interviewees, the optical resolution advised for online exhibition purposes.

As part of the workflow process, each item was titled with a letter of the alphabet, allowing for clear indication of scanning done. Images were optimised and arranged into the appropriate folders, from "optimisedfba001" to "surrogatefba001" images. The optimised scans were converted from TIFF to JPEG format following the optimisation process. Optimisation of the images involved cropping, highlighting, etc., to create the best quality for exhibition users. The optimised JPEG images were then uploaded to Omeka.net, the platform hosting the digital exhibition. Due to copyright reasons and also space constraints on Omeka, it was decided that the online exhibition would be a collection of the highlights of "The Budgen Collection." These highlights included selecting digitised items like the front cover, title page, title verso, table of contents, back page, and any ephemeral items of interest in the collection, such as signatures or inscriptions from Frank Budgen and others. These highlights are a curated collection which will be of most interest to Joycean scholars, visitors to the centre's website, and could potentially spark the interest of the general public.

It was the JJCC's wish to have the sketches digitised on a museum quality scanner, which was carried out by the Copper House Gallery, Dublin. The gallery is one of a small number of institutions worldwide that is in possession of the high-grade Cruse Synchron

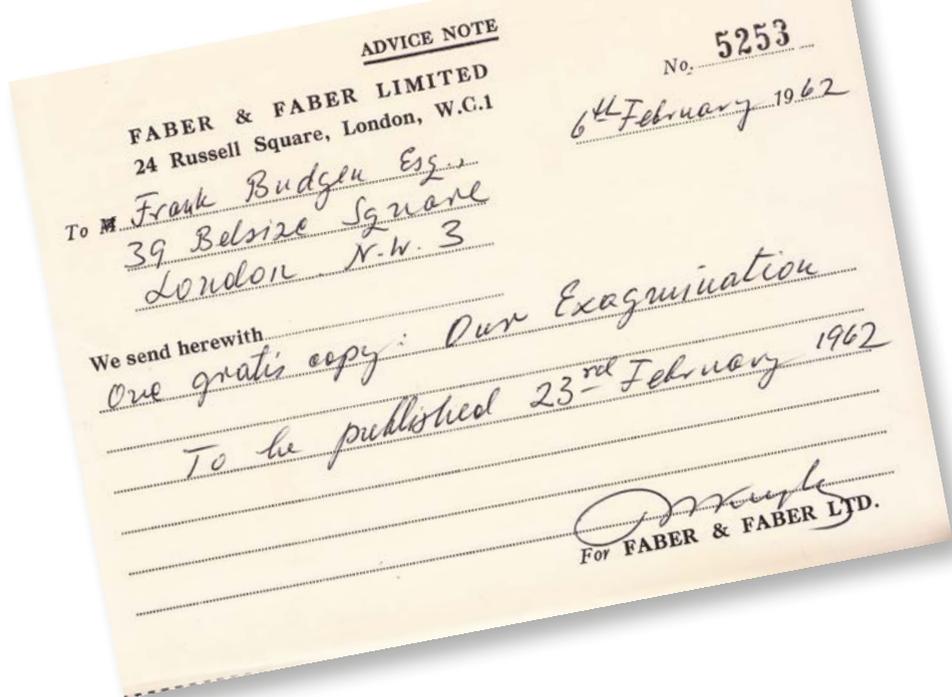


Table Scanner (Wolnik, n.d.). After testing many different scanners, the Cruse ST provided the best quality images for the Copper House Gallery based on the following seven requirements: lighting, image resolution, lens resolution and scan sharpness, light and table, focus, squareness of camera back and camera ordination, and its multiple capability (Wolnik, n.d.). The JJCC received the digitised images in an EPS file format. TIFF, PNG, PSD, and JPEG surrogates were later created and archived. At the request of the JJCC, a watermark of the JJCC logo was added using Adobe Photoshop to the JPEG public surrogates.

### Audio Digitisation

Audio digitisation “is the activity of converting an analogue sound signal to a digital signal” (Hooper & Force, 2014, p. 82; Leggett, 2014). To convert the collection’s analogue tape cassette, “Frank Budgen: My Friend, James Joyce, A Spoken Appreciation,” to digital format, best practices and guidelines relating to audio digitisation were gathered during the interview and literature review activities; the group then sought to ensure that the appropriate standard “sample rates, bit-depths, file formats, and equipment for analogue-to-digital-conversion” were applied (Carli, n.d.). A simple audio tape digitisation workflow based on the findings

was drafted to increase technical knowledge and to assist with the process.

To execute this workflow and because of the challenging nature of the, now obsolete, tape cassette format, external assistance with the correct equipment and expertise was required. The Irish Traditional Music Archive (ITMA) was initially contacted; subsequently, ITMA helpfully referred the students to UCD’s National Folklore Collection who agreed to assist with the conversion. The majority of the drafted audio workflow was professionally completed by Anna Bale while the post-digitisation process was the team’s main responsibility as was guaranteeing that audio best practice guidelines were implemented. Two audio files of different lengths were created from this digitisation process. Employing the software Audacity with the LAME encoder plugin, the group converted the two preservation WAV files (with a 96kHz (96000) sampling rate, and 24 bit depth) to the presentation MP3 format, following best practice advice, with the recommended sampling rate of 44.1kHz and bitrate of 192Kbps; they then trimmed any audio noise from the two MP3 recordings. However, only the second file will be available to the public, as the James Joyce Cultural Centre requested to make accessible just 5-10 minutes of the audio-recordings online.

### Online Platform

An Omeka site using the free basic plan was created to host the exhibition. To enhance user display and features, an environmental scan was conducted of other Omeka sites and the plugins used. Based on these findings, we decided to use a number of plugins on the site, including a geolocation and a book reader application, which allows the user to flip through images of pages. However, only a limited number of plugins were available to the group with the free basic plan. The Simple Pages and Social Bookmarking plugins were installed. Simple Pages allows administrators to create simple web pages for their public site, while Social Bookmarking uses AddThis to insert a customizable list of social bookmarking sites on each item page (“Plugins,” n.d.). Utilising the Simple Pages plugin, a “Home” and “About” page was added, offering context for the collection and project, as well as featuring selected items. The team was also able to overcome the restriction around the lack of a geolocation plugin, which will be discussed in the following section. To create a map detailing Joyce’s

European influences on the site, it was decided to employ the free open source tool StoryMapJS due to its interactive features, “friendly authoring tool(s)” and sophisticated design. The team could simply login using a google account and create, share, a map as well as pinpoint various locations and events using the tools provided (“StoryMapJS,” n.d.). Locations marked and elaborated further by the group include: Dublin, London, Paris, Zurich, and Trieste.

## Cataloguing

For cataloguing of items in the exhibition, best practice dictates adherence to a standard (Gi Sung, 2013). One interviewee, from Maynooth University Library, suggested the use of Dublin Core for cataloguing the online exhibition. The standard followed was set out in the booklet, *Qualified Dublin Core and the Digital Repository of Ireland (Bustillo et al., 2015)*.

Once digitisation had been completed, metadata was created for each item in the collection using Dublin Core, which is the default standard on Omeka (Omeka, n.d.). A standard was created for the project to ensure consistency of all the records in the collection. To verify that the metadata information was consistent, two group members were assigned with checking for consistency in all of the Dublin Core fields across the collection’s items. Tagging was used for all items. As the geolocation plugin was unavailable, it was decided to develop a simple system of creating tags using the Omeka tagging available on the editing page (Geolocation, n.d.). The general tags used for all items were “James Joyce,” “Frank Budgen,” “The James Joyce Cultural Centre” and “The Budgen Collection.” Along with these, pertinent geographic information was added to the metadata. For example, tags such as Dublin, Paris, or Zurich.

The issue of copyright was discussed at length and researched. Copyright in Ireland expires 70 years after the death of the author (*Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000*).

Aside from the works written by Joyce, this time period had not elapsed for any other work in the collection. Library exhibitions are exempt from normal copyright restrictions but it is not yet clear in the law whether this extends to online exhibitions. Items in the collection are marked as “All Rights Reserved”.

Mark Traynor, the manager of the James Joyce Cultural Centre, expressed a wish that copyright of the sketches and audio recordings be given to the James Joyce Cultural Centre. In this respect, those items contain that caveat.

## Project Outcomes

The Budgen Collection project was very successful. The sketches, audio tape and highlights of the print collection were digitised thus providing a good basis for long-term preservation and increasing accessibility of the collection. An archive of the digitised resources was created with detailed metadata for each item in the collection. A digital exhibition was created using Omeka, which will be available to the public soon.

Collaboration was important in achieving the project objectives. A core tool used was a WhatsApp (instant messaging application) group with all team members. This allowed for rapid and easy communication; it was a very effective solution for the group.

The team recommends using social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to promote this and future exhibitions. One such strategy would be to share a weekly photo from the collection using the #throwbackthursday or #flashbackfriday hashtags. This approach has proved effective for organisations such as the RTE Archives and the National Library of Ireland who share items of ephemera with the tagline “On this day...”. The Capstone group also advises the JJCC to investigate the provenance of the collection’s three sketches, as if they are original or limited edition prints they could be of significant value and of even greater interest to the audience.

## Conclusion

In summary, the Budgen Collection Digital Exhibition will serve as a valuable research and educational tool for the JJCC and could potentially be used in universities and Joycean research centres. The entire process proved a steep learning curve for project participants; for example, in digitising the myriad materials of this special collection and learning of the technicalities of digitisation, online exhibitions and websites (Watson & Graham, 1998).

Nonetheless, by thoroughly conducting a range of research methods, including a literature review, interviews, SWOT and needs analyses, the group succeeded in establishing and adhering to best practice guidelines and producing a curated digital exhibition. Overall, the project shed important insights on digitisation, the primary aim of this assignment, including digital preservation and online accessibility. To build a functional, accessible, and pleasing online exhibition, which would adequately represent the physical Budgen collection and the needs of the clients, was a primary objective. This goal was successfully achieved despite financial restrictions of the project and the JJCC have expressed their contentment with the end result. Without thorough research behind this, however, the site would not have come to fruition. The exhibition will soon be available to the public. James Joyce's quote here may aptly describe the Budgen collection's transition from the physical to digital domain: "Better pass boldly into that other world, in the full glory of some passion, than fade and wither dismally with age" (Joyce, 1914).

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