



# **Implementing resource discovery techniques in Special Collections & Archives, Queen's University Belfast**

## **Using Flickr to promote Special Collections**

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Case Study  
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In partnership with **Jisc**



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## Background

The Special Collections service at Queen's provides access to the Library's rare and early printed book, [map](#), and [manuscript](#) collections, as well as a critical mass of more [modern material](#) relating to Ireland and Ulster in particular.

The books, pamphlets, manuscripts, correspondence, photographs, and maps held in Special Collections are considered to be of lasting research value and include examples of the earliest printed works (incunabula), and books and pamphlets published between the 16th and early 19th centuries (STC and Wing items).

Collections of particular note include the Sir Robert Hart Collection relating to 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century China, and associated collections of papers relating to Theophile Piry, and Stanley Fowler Wright; the Somerville and Ross Collection, which also includes a substantial series of correspondence with Dame Ethel Smyth, the British composer and suffragette; substantial collections and publications relating to politics, literature and music in Ireland with particular strengths in 18<sup>th</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Access to Specials Collections is navigated through the Library catalogue QCAT ([www.qub.ac.uk/lib](http://www.qub.ac.uk/lib)) for print materials, listings for manuscripts are available to browse here <http://libguides.qub.ac.uk/c.php?g=282353&p=1881107> and digitised collections here: <http://digital-library.qub.ac.uk/>

The University [Archive](#) comprises records pertaining to the history and development of Queen's from its foundation as a Queen's College in 1845 through to its establishment as an independent university in 1908 to the present day. Access to records relating to Queen's College Belfast, the Queen's University of Ireland and the Royal University of Ireland are available <http://www.calmview.eu/QUB/> Cataloguing of the Queen's University Archive collection is ongoing and further descriptions of records in the collection will become available on a regular basis.

Collection level descriptions for many of the resources at Queen's Special Collections & Archives are available on RASCAL [www.rascal.ac.uk](http://www.rascal.ac.uk)

## What is the problem/issues(s) your organisation is trying to solve?

Special Collections & Archives in the Library of Queen's University, Belfast want to increase awareness of the digitised manuscript and archival resources that we have in our collections both to academics and students within the University and to external researchers so that we can widen their use for research, teaching and learning purposes. We would like to facilitate researchers so that they may use the resources exclusively online or to promote our resources and encourage them to visit Queen's Library in order to do more research on parts of the collection that are not digitised.

We commit a significant amount of resources both in terms of the expenditure needed to have the items digitised to an archival standard by an external company and the staff resources needed to quality assess, reference and upload the images to ContentDM (the digital asset management system used by Special Collections & Archives at Queen's), and in the development and application of metadata. We are keen to gain a greater return on this



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investment through the increased exploitation of the resources by anyone who is interested in accessing and using them.

Special Collections & Archives at Queen's University, Belfast has a social media presence, we have our own webpages (this is in the form of a Libguide and through the University's CMS, <http://libguides.qub.ac.uk/specialcollections>) as well as a Twitter account (<https://twitter.com/qubsc>) and blog (<http://blogs.qub.ac.uk/specialcollections/>), both of which are regularly monitored and kept up-to-date. We also feature on the Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/QueensUniversityBelfastLibrary>) and blog page of Queen's Library (<http://blogs.qub.ac.uk/library/>), all of which has helped us gain added recognition for our resources. However, we recognise that we also need to have a presence on general online sources such as Flickr and Wikipedia which rank highly on search engine returns.

Wikipedia is used by many researchers, ranging from first year undergraduates to professors, as well as members of the public who are interested in sourcing information on a particular topic, so having a presence on it would be a powerful way to promote our digitised resources. Flickr is the most popular photograph sharing website on the Internet, many cultural institutions are now using it to display photographs from their collections. Having a presence on these sites would increase our potential to engage with expert and non-expert audiences. In addition, the use of a resource like Flickr to showcase some of our photograph collections could lead to opportunities for collaboration with new partners.

Another opportunity that we would be interested in exploring would be making a YouTube video about our digitised resources and embedding this in our website. This would be a collaborative project with academics from the University, it would have the potential to reach many people because of the popularity of YouTube.

When considering any new method of displaying our digitised resources online we always have to take into account the issue of rights management in our archive and manuscript collections. These collections are important research assets to the University and as such the University's rights in them have to be protected. This means that when we consider a presence on third party websites we must take into account the licencing options that are offered and decide whether we can accept the terms and conditions presented.

It is obvious that certain digitised resources that have been put online by different cultural institutions on sites such as Wikipedia and Flickr Commons are available on open licences such as CC 0 licences due to the fact that either the copyright has expired or that the institution is willing to forgo their rights to the digital resources. While we are keen to have greater exposure for our digital resources we would not be willing to have open licences attached to them, we would use more restrictive licences.

### **How did the training components help?**

The 'Spotlight on the Digital' training components provided useful advice on how we can increase awareness of our digital resources with researchers and reach a more general audience.



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## Google Search

One of the most important points emphasised during the training is that the vast majority of researchers, both seasoned academics and first year undergraduates, begin any research by doing an Internet search and more likely, a Google search. This means that for any online sources to be accessed on the Internet it is important that they display on the first page of the search results generated. General online sources such as Wikipedia and Flickr, which are popular with all researchers, are usually within the top 3 or 4 search returns, so inclusion of our digitised resources in these websites would be an effective way to increase awareness of them.

## Collaboration with Researchers

Another important point taken from the training programme is that collaboration with academics on digitisation projects means the project is more likely to have a greater long-term impact on the research community. The case studies discussed in the webinars, particularly the *Centre for the Study of Christianity and Culture* at the University of York (<http://www.christianityandculture.org.uk/>) and the *Board of Longitude Papers* in the University of Cambridge Digital Library (<http://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/longitude>), were useful as they highlighted the different ways they worked with academics and also how projects can develop and change over time.

There were several points raised during these case studies that made an impact on our thinking about how we should approach the design and development of digitisation projects.

It is important to realise that collaboration between the Library and the academics provides advantages to both. Having academics involved with the design of a new project involving digitised records from the archive and manuscript collections means that there is automatic buy-in from them from the beginning. They act as collection champions by spreading the word through their academic networks and the effect of this can be significant because recommendations made by experts in a field does influence what sources other researchers will view, it acts as a kind of peer review.

Regarding the *Board of Longitude Papers*, it was stated that the academic output generated from the site, in terms of articles and conference papers, had been significant and it is expected to continue over time. This could not have been achieved by the Library working on the project in isolation.

University libraries are often in a position to provide long term and stable storage solutions for digital resources which allows for the sustainability of the digitisation projects and resources overtime. It also provides an essential service for researchers who must comply with mandates of research funders which state that a recognised and viable storage facility for any resources digitised using grant money is in place before the money can be issued.

## Citation Chaining

It was highlighted during the training that digitising records makes them more open for research which in turn increases their impact. An increase in the use of digitised resources means that researchers will be citing them in their research outputs and this in turn encourages others to view them, and cite them in their own research outputs.



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For the impact of the digitised resources to be maintained it is crucial that the digital references can be cited in research literature. To date researchers have been less inclined to cite digital resources in their references for a variety of reasons, digital references aren't as well established for citation purposes and in some cases the links to the digital resources have been broken or are unreliable which means the URL is no longer valid, so instead they have cited the reference of the original record. This has a detrimental effect on the impact and sustainability of the digitised resources. Researchers need to be able to rely on the persistence of URLs and for digital references to remain stable in the long term, this ensures that the digital content is aligned with the scholarly record.

### **Google Analytics and Search Engine Optimisation**

The predominance of the Google search means that it is important to know about Google Analytics and Search Engine Optimisation.

It was very useful to learn about the basics of Google Analytics and to see how it works in practice. The use of this tool gives quantitative data on how websites are being used, both at a headline view and at a granular level, so it is very good at showing where improvements are needed.

The need for Search Engine Optimisation was also highlighted. Google works by searching the content of websites so it doesn't work so well on structured data like that found in catalogue descriptions. One method recommended for addressing this shortcoming in catalogue descriptions was to have blog postings which highlight parts of a collection, these would then be returned in a Google search.

The structure of the URL used for digitised resources is important. It can have a dual role, it can be used to reflect the nature of the page and also be a way of navigating the site. Google advises having structured URLs to help its software understand what the page is about and because the URLs are displayed in the search results, so URLs which are human readable may encourage researchers to click on them.

### **What did you implement to address the issue(s)**

The Case Study was formulated based on the advice given in the training programme. We decided to collaborate with academics from the School of History & Anthropology so their subject expertise would add much value to the project content; we assessed different popular websites such as Wikipedia and Flickr to see what would be the best to display our resources most effectively; and we considered the licences that would be most appropriate for making our digital resources available on the chosen website.

The case study involved the creation of a site on Flickr of photographs from the Sir Robert Hart Manuscript Collection (QUB MS 15).

The case study is supporting an ongoing research project, the *Sir Robert Hart Research Project* which is a collaboration between Special Collections & Archives in Queen's Library, the School of Modern History & Anthropology, Queen's University, Belfast and the Institute



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of Modern History at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (CASS) in Beijing. More information on the life and career of Sir Robert Hart, and the work that is being done on the Hart manuscript collection held in Queen's, can be found on the project blog, <http://blogs.qub.ac.uk/sirroberthart/>

As part of this project a photobook is being created whereby approximately 100 photographs, along with an accompanying narrative, are being selected to represent Hart's life in China. The academics in Queen's who are leading the project believe that the photographs to be included in the Flickr site should be the same as those in the photobook as this would help to increase the impact of both resources.

This cooperation with the researchers meant that we would be able to use parts of the narrative and the descriptions of the photographs on the Flickr site. We anticipate that this input from researchers means they will feel a sense of ownership of the Flickr site.

The Flickr platform was selected for our Spotlight project as it is currently the most popular photo sharing site on the Internet which means it achieves high Google ranking, and other cultural institutions are using it too.

### Licences

One of the major reasons why we chose to create a Flickr site was that we are able to licence images in a way that suits our needs and it permits the upload of watermarked images.

We reviewed the licence options available on Flickr, keeping in mind that we had to protect the University's rights in the Hart photograph collection. After consultation with the Head of Special Collections & Archives and the academics leading on the *Sir Robert Hart Research Project*, it was agreed that the Flickr 'All Rights Reserved Licence' would be used. This licence states, '*You, the copyright holder, reserve all rights provided by copyright law, such as the right to make copies, distribute your work, perform your work, license, or otherwise exploit your work; no rights are waived under this license*'. The 'All Rights Reserved Licence' was chosen because it protects the digital resources under copyright law and none of the University's rights in the resources are waived, see Appendix 1 below.

It was also agreed that the photographs should be watermarked with the logo of Queen's University, Belfast. The logo is provided by the Marketing & Creative Services team in the University because there are strict University regulations relating to the use of University branding with which we were obliged to comply. The same logo is used by all the academic schools and administrative departments within the University on publications and on the University's website so it is a strong and recognisable brand. Having the University branding on the Hart photographs reinforces this association.

All of the images selected for the Flickr site were watermarked with the Queen's logo in a bulk exercise carried out by colleagues in the Computing Services division who provide us with occasional technical support, see Appendix 2 below.



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## Flickr

We first familiarised ourselves with the Flickr platform which requires you to set up a Yahoo ID in order to create a page/ site. Details such as birthday, male/ female, first name/ last name are compulsory. This was a little awkward as we were setting up a departmental and not a personal account. From the instructions to join it wasn't at first clear what name would appear most prominently in the page banner. We wished to have Special Collections & Archives in the most prominent position but it was important that our governing institution Queen's University Belfast was also clearly visible. The ability to create a professional profile page allowing us to describe Special Collections & Archives at Queen's and provide links to our website and Twitter was particularly beneficial. It was decided to remove the email link on our Profile page as it displayed incorrectly. The option to create a specific Album for the *Sir Robert Hart Photograph Collection* and include a relatively detailed biographical description, which adds context to the resource and emphasises the significance of our photographs was also beneficial. Other distinct collections in our holdings could easily be added to our Flickr site in the future should this particular exercise prove successful.

A number of reputable and successful Flickr accounts were explored and shared amongst the team in order to get inspiration for the tone and layout of our site. Two particular examples examined were The *Cadbury Research Library* (University of Birmingham) (<https://www.flickr.com/people/cadburyresearchlibrary/>) and that of the British Library (<https://www.flickr.com/people/britishlibrary/>). The Flickr site for the *Cadbury Research Library*, which was highlighted during training, was seen as a particularly good reference point as it too is a Special Collections department of an overarching institution. We noted it had a similar approach to copyright as ourselves.

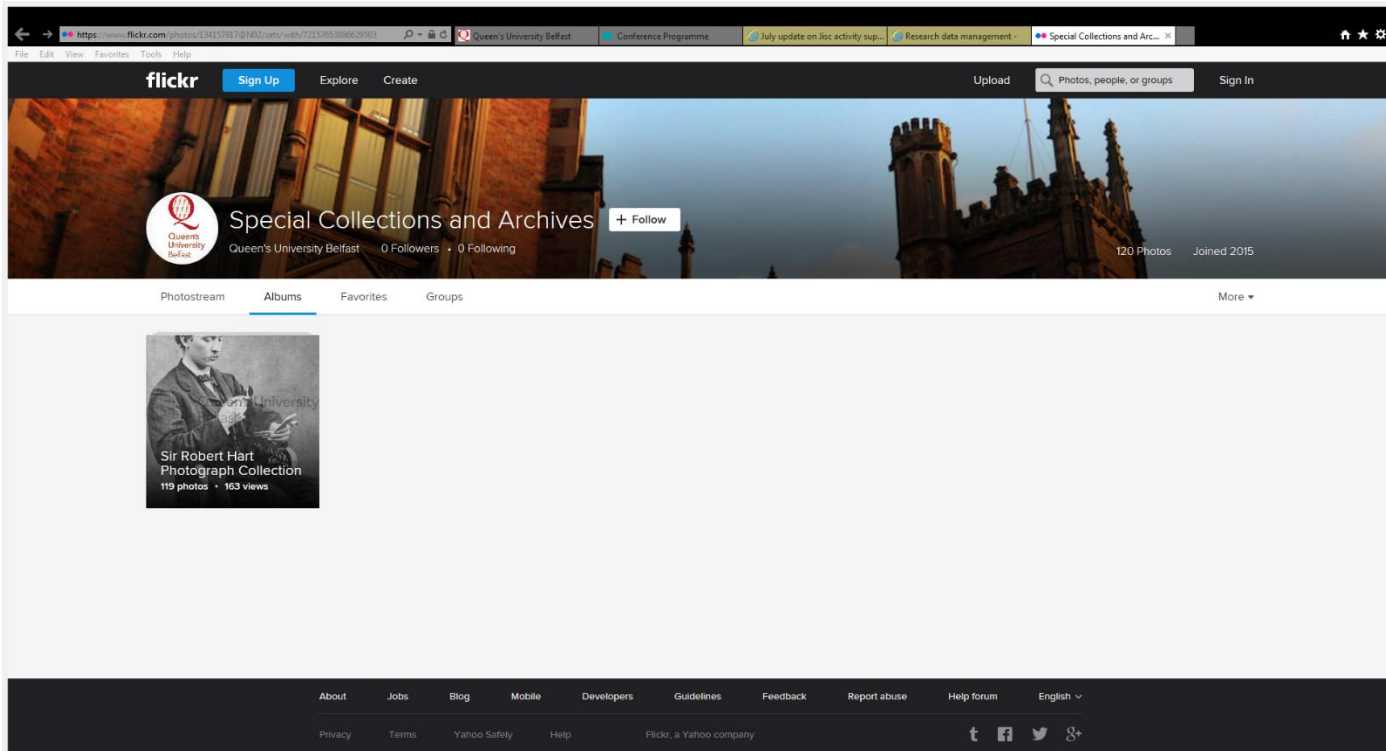
In consultation with the Head of Special Collections a photograph of the Lanyon Building was chosen as our banner and we were provided with an official logo by the Marketing & Creative Services Team. Both the iconic Lanyon Building façade and the official University logo will make us a more recognisable and trusted brand on Flickr. This is a link to our Flickr Profile page: <https://www.flickr.com/people/134157917@N02/>



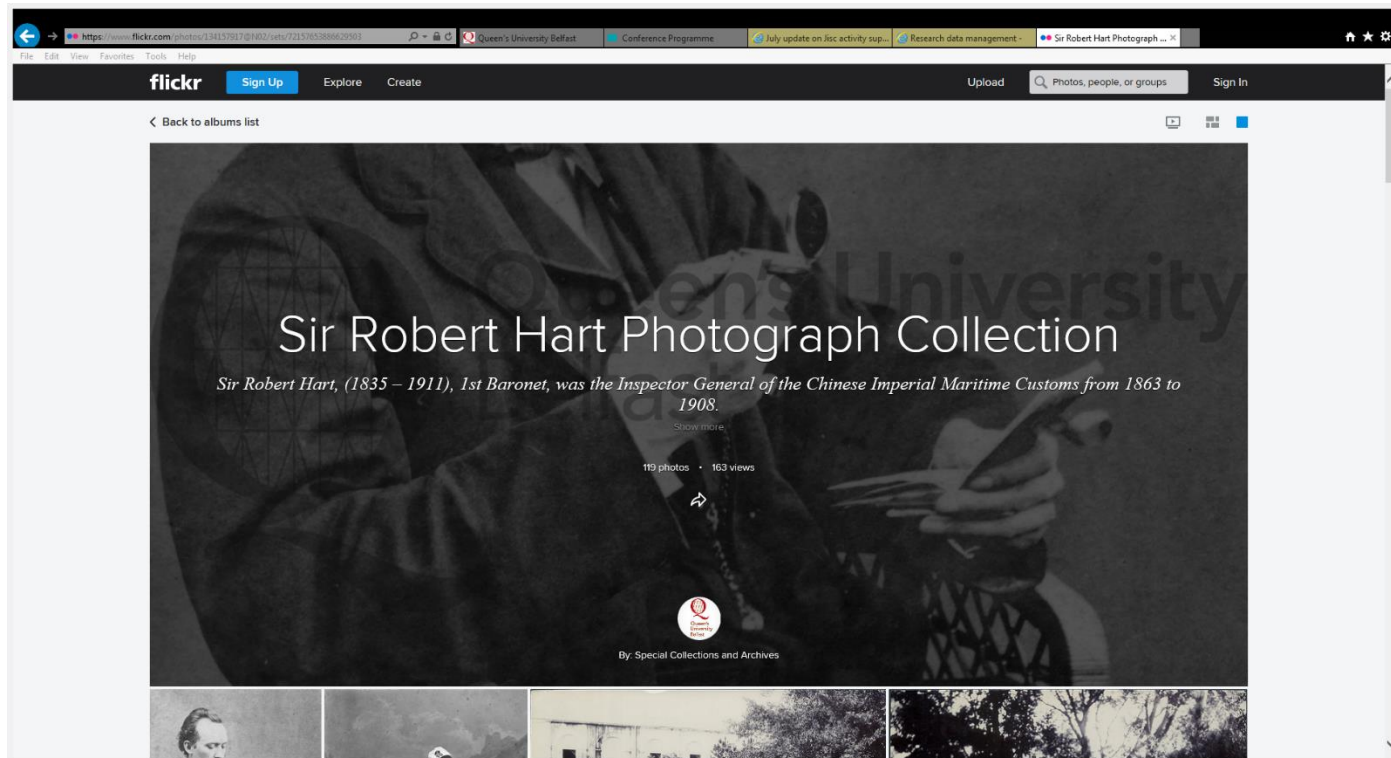
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This is a screen shot of the home page:



This is a screen shot of the album, the *Sir Robert Hart Photograph Collection* in our Flickr site:



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The drag & drop facility to upload photographs is a simple and efficient process and did not pose any problems, nor did the process of adding metadata. Text fonts and formats are automatically chosen for you which also makes adding information faster. One issue noticed when uploading images was the default option is to publish your photographs immediately. It can be changed easily however when uploading and you can also edit the privacy and permissions for an entire album/ batch through the Flickr Organizer.

Once the profile page and *Sir Robert Hart Photograph Collection* Album had been created and all photographs were uploaded, image references and metadata were reviewed, as was the page profile and album description. It was then possible to publish and begin promotion of the Flickr page. There are a number of promotional possibilities within Flickr: joining groups, following accounts, favouring photographs and making comments, tagging photographs, making use of the map feature. The Flickr Pro membership level was re-introduced this week (27/07/2015), this is something we could consider in the future. It allows for advanced statistics on your photographs and advertisement-free browsing and sharing. Another option considered was to join The Commons on Flickr but this was not deemed possible as it requires consent to “no known copyright restrictions” for your collections.

The popularity of the Flickr page will be monitored over the coming months. This will be achieved by taking regular note of the number of our Followers and the number of Album views. More detailed statistics can only be obtained through joining Flickr Pro. An increase in enquiries about the *Robert Hart Photograph Collection* would be a more indirect means of measuring success.

### **What was the outcome?**

As the Flickr site went live on 29 July 2015 it is still too early to measure and comment on impact associated with having the photographs available on that platform.

We intend to include details about the Flickr site in the News section of the Special Collections & Archives webpages; to tweet about the site; to include it on the Queen’s Library Facebook page and blog; and to include it in a University wide e-publication circulated weekly. It could also be promoted to organisations through JISC mailing lists. We will ask the academics who are working on the *Sir Robert Hart Research Project* to include details about the Flickr site in their School Newsletter and to spread the word about the site through their own networks.

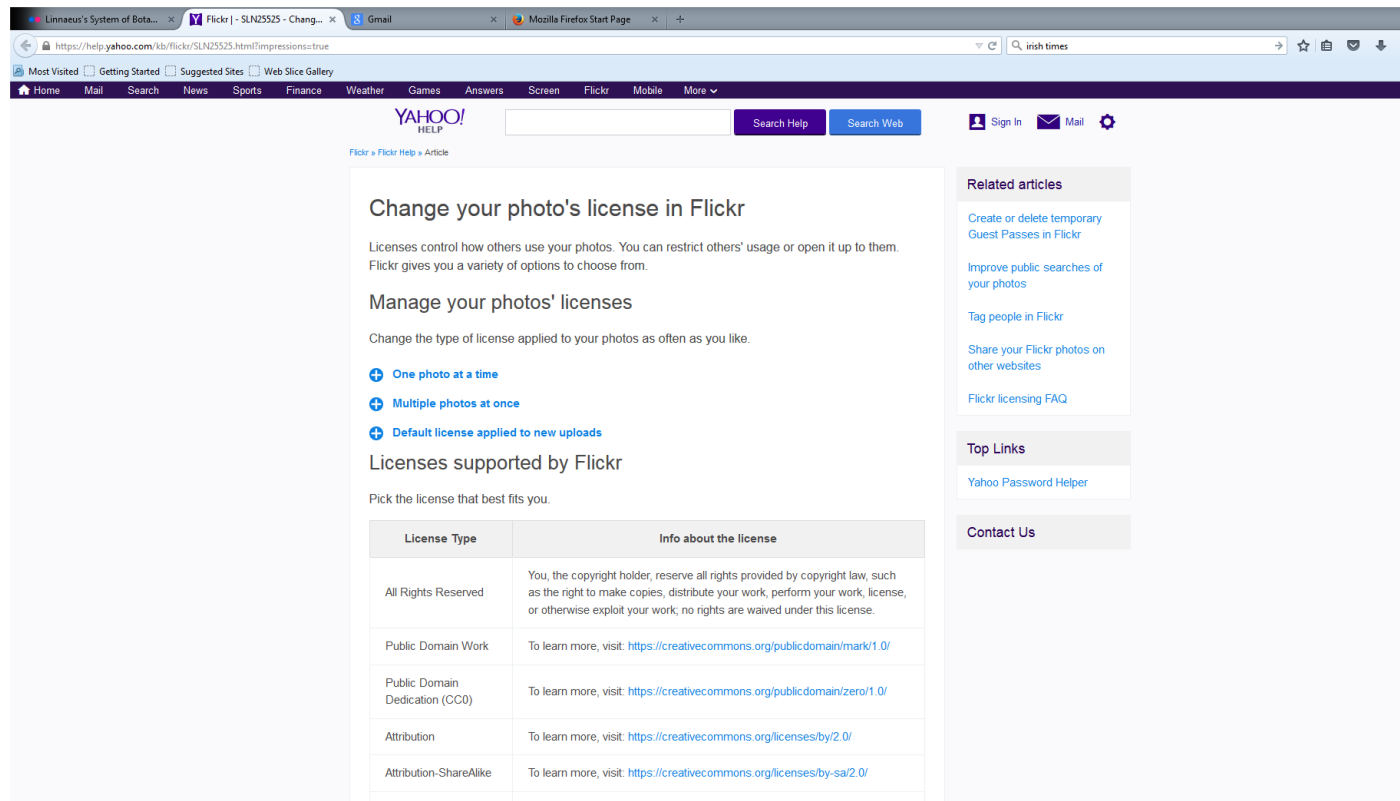


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## Appendix 1

### Flickr Licence

This is a screen shot of the licencing options available on Flickr (on 29/07/2015 when we made the site live). For the photographs of Sir Robert Hart that we have made available on Flickr, we chose the 'All rights reserved licence' as we believed it provided the best balance between providing access to the photographs on Flickr and protecting our rights in them, an enlarged version of the text of the licence is given below the screen shot.



### Change your photo's license in Flickr

Licenses control how others use your photos. You can restrict others' usage or open it up to them. Flickr gives you a variety of options to choose from.

### Manage your photos' licenses

Change the type of license applied to your photos as often as you like.

[One photo at a time](#)

[Multiple photos at once](#)

[Default license applied to new uploads](#)

### Licenses supported by Flickr

Pick the license that best fits you.

License Type	Info about the license
All Rights Reserved	You, the copyright holder, reserve all rights provided by copyright law,



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License Type	Info about the license
	such as the right to make copies, distribute your work, perform your work, license, or otherwise exploit your work; no rights are waived under this license.
Public Domain Work	To learn more, visit: <a href="https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/mark/1.0/">https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/mark/1.0/</a>
Public Domain Dedication (CC0)	To learn more, visit: <a href="https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/">https://creativecommons.org/publicdomain/zero/1.0/</a>
Attribution	To learn more, visit: <a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/">https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/</a>
Attribution-ShareAlike	To learn more, visit: <a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/">https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/</a>
Attribution-NoDerivs	To learn more, visit: <a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/2.0/">https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/2.0/</a>
Attribution-NonCommercial	To learn more, visit: <a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/2.0/">https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/2.0/</a>
Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike	To learn more, visit: <a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/">https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/</a>
Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs	To learn more, visit: <a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/">https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0/</a>
United States government work	To learn more, visit: <a href="http://www.usa.gov/copyright.shtml">http://www.usa.gov/copyright.shtml</a>
No known copyright restrictions	To learn more, visit: <a href="https://www.flickr.com/commons/usage/">https://www.flickr.com/commons/usage/</a>

Was this article helpful?

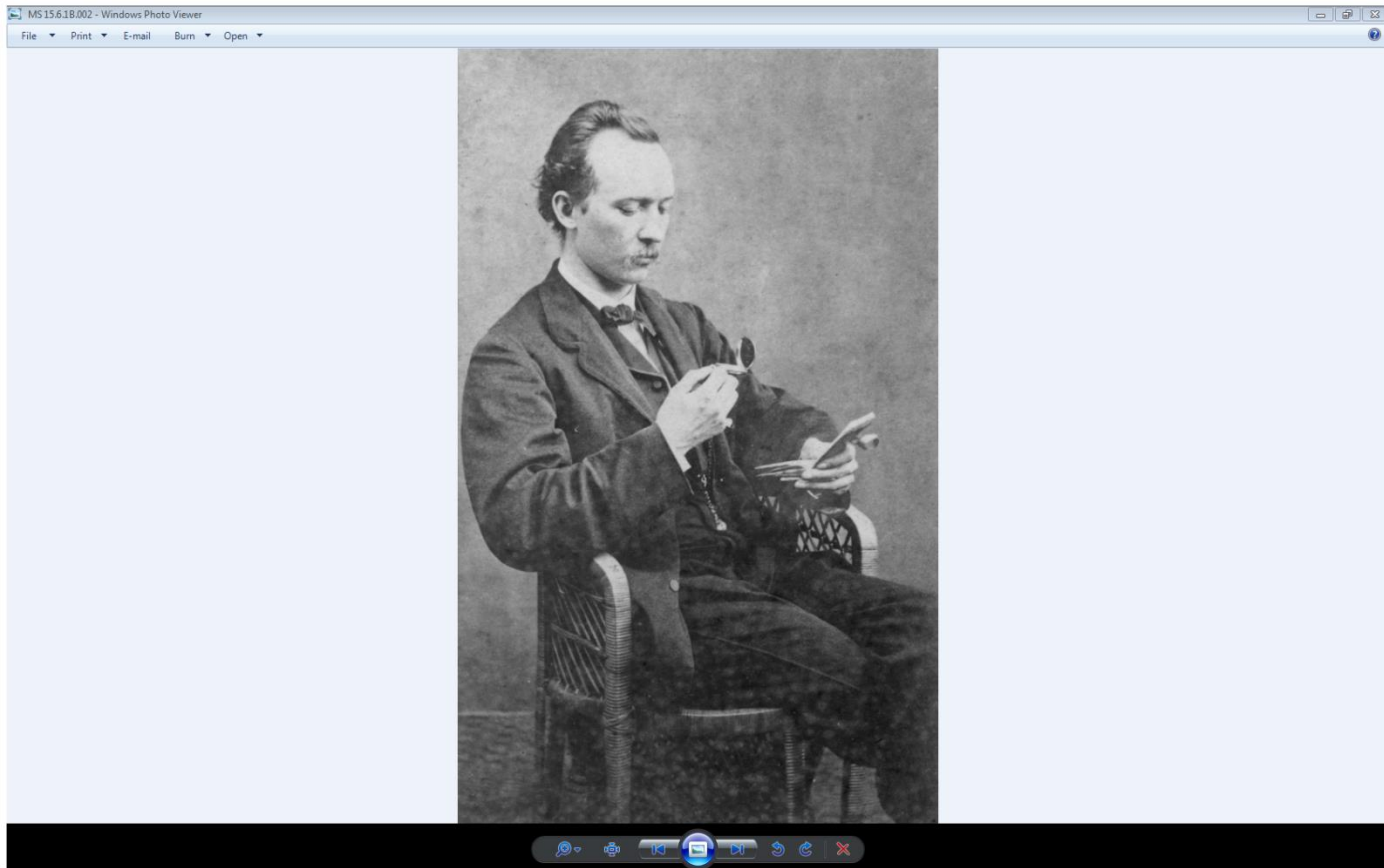


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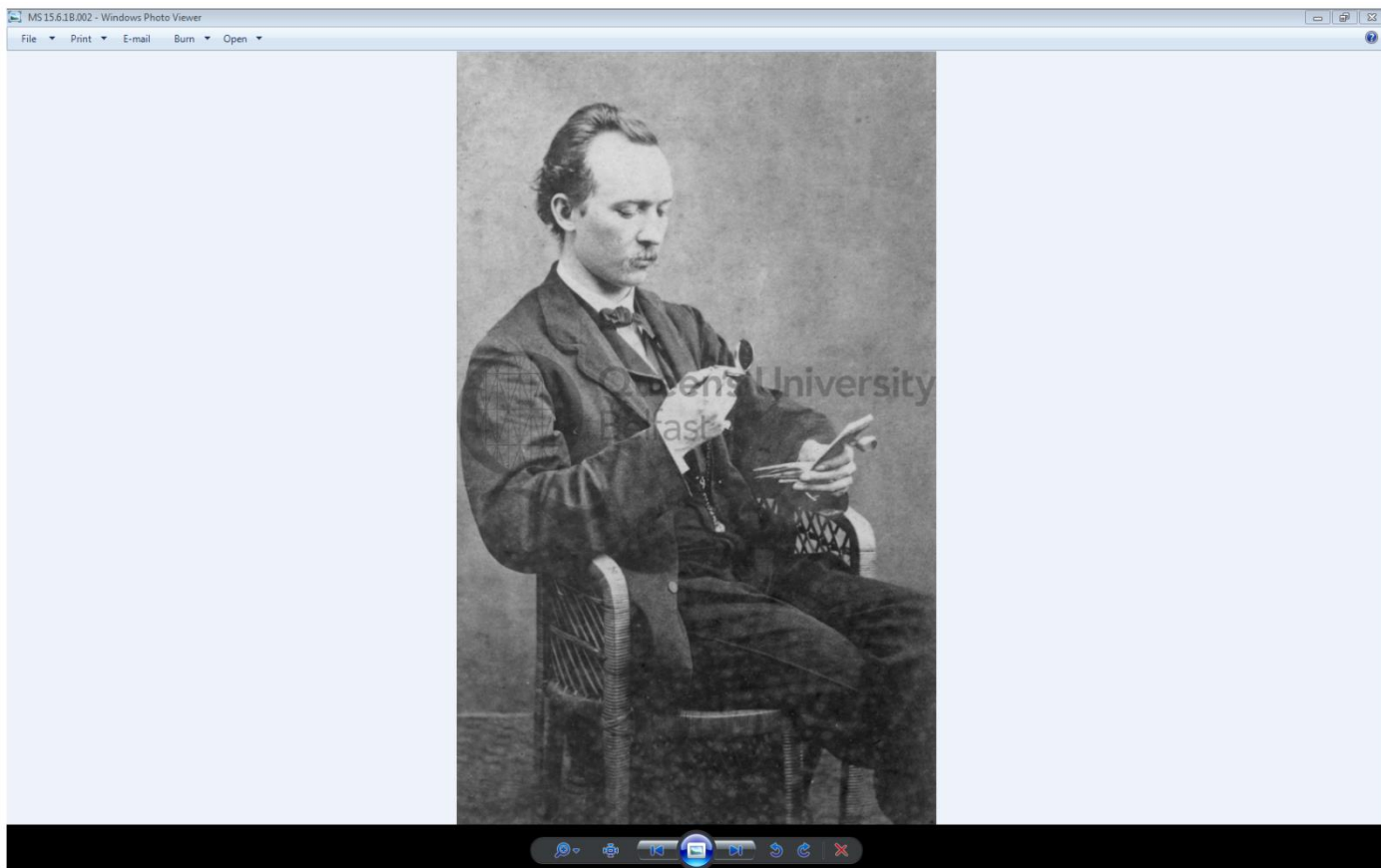
## Appendix 2

### Watermarked images

These are copies of one of the photographs from the Sir Robert Hart Manuscript Collection (QUB MS 15/6/1B/2) that is included in the Flickr site before and after the watermark was applied:



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