THE RUSKIN PROJECT

DIGITISING JOHN RUSKIN'S TEACHING COLLECTION AT THE ASHMOLEAN MUSEUM

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Abstract

John Ruskin (1819-1900) assembled his teaching collection as a series of exemplary works to aid his teaching of drawing whilst Slade Professor of Fine Art at the University of Oxford in 1870-8 and 1883-5. Eventually incorporating some 1,470 objects, to be used in conjunction with written catalogues which ran to 12 different versions, the collection was a sophisticated teaching and learning machine, ordered, catalogued and annotated by Ruskin.

This paper introduces the collection and the ways it was intended to work, before explaining how it is being digitised, and the benefits this will bring to a collection uniquely suited to such treatment.

Keywords : Cultural Heritage, Museum Collections, Digitisation, XML, John Ruskin, Victorian Art, Victorian Literature, Digital Images, Websites.

Ruskin, Oxford and the Drawing School

John Ruskin's involvement with Oxford dates back to his youth when, aged 18, he went up to Christ Church as a Gentleman Commoner in January 1837, graduating five years later with an Honorary 4th in Classics and Mathematics. (For what follows, see Hewison, 1984: 9-35 and Hewison, 1990: 1-46.) Clearly, his Oxford education meant something to him: the first volume of Modern Painters, the work that was to make his name, was published the following year, its author identified only as 'A Graduate of Oxford'. Ruskin continued to be involved with the University, participating in the campaign for the new University Museum of Natural History and its subsequent construction, and, in 1861, presenting 48 Turner drawings and 12 pages from a Turner sketch-book, with an estimated value of £2,000, to the University Galleries.

However, it was the death of Felix Slade in 1868 that opened the way for Ruskin to come to Oxford in a formal role. Slade left his extensive collections to the nation, together with £35,000 to found chairs of fine art at Oxford, Cambridge and University College London. The Oxford appointment committee included Ruskin's friends from his Christ Church days, Henry Acland and Henry Liddell, and so, in 1869, he was elected the first Slade

Professor of Fine Art at Oxford, giving his inaugural lecture on 8 February 1870. Although his lectures were a great success – often having to be repeated for the general public – Ruskin spent much of his Professorship distracted by his personal life, his commitments to other organisations, and his increasingly frequent and severe illnesses. Eventually, following a major breakdown in 1878, and the unsuccessful outcome of the Whistler libel case, he resigned. Ruskin took up the Professorship again in October 1883. However, his relations with the University were increasingly strained and, following a series of disagreements, he resigned for the second and final time in March 1885.

From early on in his first term as Slade Professor, Ruskin taught drawing as well as lecturing on art. He began with informal classes in the Michaelmas Term of 1870, but was thinking of formalising his teaching by 14 March 1871, when he wrote to Acland that he wished to establish a drawing school. Ruskin, always generous, offered to fund the new school himself. Under a formal agreement with the Curators of the University Galleries dated 18 May 1871, Ruskin gave £5,000 to fund a Drawing Mastership. The new School took over the space occupied by an existing art school (run according to the 'South Kensington' system), together with two rooms above. The Town and University (or Professor's) Classes were scheduled to open in October 1871.

Ruskin's aims in teaching drawing were somewhat unusual. He was adamant that he did not intend to train 'artists'. This was evident even when he was teaching at the Working Men's College, in 1854-8 and 1860, when, according to one pupil,

His wish was to teach men drawing in order that they might see greater beauties than they had hitherto seen in nature and in art, and thereby gain more pleasure in life ... (Hewison, 1996: 7-8).

Ruskin himself put this more succinctly in a memorandum to his colleague at the College, Lowes Dickinson, in 1859: 'They are taught drawing, primarily in order to direct their attention accurately to the beauty of God's work in the material universe' (Ruskin, 1903-12: 16:471). Or, more briefly still: 'I am only trying to teach you to see' (Hewison, 1996: 33). For Ruskin, seeing properly brought true understanding – particularly of nature. And, believing that the teaching of art 'is the teaching of all things' (Ruskin, 1903-12: 29:86),

Ruskin intended that his students, in following his course in drawing, would also receive an education in the history of art, in natural history, and so on.

The Ruskin Teaching Collection

Ruskin seems to have been considering the idea of an exemplary collection of works of art since at least as early as 1854, when he wrote to Pauline Trevelyan:
And I mean to lend out Liber Studiorum & Albert Durers to everybody who wants them; and to make copies of all fine 13th century manuscripts, and lend them out – all for nothing, of course, – and have a room where anybody can go in all day and always see nothing in it but what is good (Hilton, 1985-90: 1:202-3).

So, one of his earliest proposals as Slade Professor – made almost a year before he proposed formally establishing his drawing classes – was that additional pictures be housed in the room where his earlier gift of Turners was held, as examples for his students. He proposed two other sets of drawings to be deposited in the division of the Gallery called the Raffaele Gallery, consisting (a) of Standards, which are never to be removed from the room in which they are placed: all 30' by 21' in cases – to be 100 of architecture; 100 of painting and sculpture – numbered and catalogued – (b) copies for practice – about 50 in number – also numbered and catalogued – in flat oak frames 20_ by 14_ – These also are never to leave the rooms. These are especially for the use of the Professor's class (Hewison, 1996: 19).

Ruskin began assembling the works that were to become his Teaching Collection around Easter 1870. He divided them between general examples, and works intended specifically for teaching drawing. The former developed into the 'Standard Series', later extended to include an additional 'Reference Series'; the latter were divided between the 'Educational Series', which Ruskin used for his 'Professor's Class', and the Rudimentary Series, intended for his Drawing Master's 'Town Class'.

Whilst the collection was never stable, it has been possible to identify about 1,470 items as belonging, or having once belonged, to the collections. They break down as follows:

Drawings and watercolours	902
Prints	363
Photographs	159
Illuminations or MSS	23
Sculptures (casts)	4
Books	3
Painting	1
unidentified	15
Total	1470

The vast majority of works were drawings or watercolours. Over a third of these – about 335 – were by Ruskin himself, either studies after nature, depictions of buildings or copies of or details from other works of art.

Fig. 1: John Ruskin, Window at Siena, 1870. Watercolour, bodycolour and graphite on blue-grey paper; 180 x 171 mm. Educational Series, No. 88. © The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

Many were by Ruskin's assistants or his proteges, of similar subjects. Unsurprisingly, there are also a significant number of Turner drawings – 28 – and one or two by old masters.

Fig. 2: J.M.W. Turner, The Junction of the Greta and Tees at Rokeby, 1816-18.

Watercolour over pencil, with scratching out and use of the brush-handle, on paper; 141 x 190 mm.

No. 2 in the Standard Series. © The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

The next most significant category is prints, including a decent collection of 24 Dürer engravings and woodcuts, and over 50 plates from Turner's Liber studiorum (several in multiple impressions).

Fig. 3: Albrecht Dürer, Melencolia I, 1514. Engraving on paper; 241 x 188 mm.

No. 4 in the Standard Series. © The Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

However, the majority of the prints in the collection were removed from illustrated books, such as Le Vaillant's Histoire Naturelle des Oiseaux de Paradis ... (Paris, 1806) or

Lenormant and de Witte's Élite des monuments céramographiques ... (Paris, 1844-1861). The photographs are nearly all either reproductions of works of art, or views of buildings; the vast majority are albumen prints, of a variety of sizes. Manuscript illuminations include, most strikingly, the thirteenth-century Psalter and Hours of Isabelle of France, which Ruskin carefully dismembered and his heirs equally carefully reassembled before selling it to Henry Yates Thompson, from whom it passed to the Fitzwilliam Museum (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, MS 300). There were a few casts from the Scaliger tombs in Verona and some electrotypes of Greek coins; the one painting was a study by Tintoretto for his picture of Doge Alvise Mocenigo praying, and is now at Ruskin's house at Brantwood in the Lake District.

The works were largely arranged in wooden cabinets, based upon those which Ruskin had designed to hold the Turner drawings he gave to the University Galleries in 1861. The objects were mounted in window mounts (usually held in place with sealing wax or stamp edges), then placed in a glazed frame, and each frame then slid into its own slot in the cabinet. This kept the collection in order (each frame was carefully labelled with its allotted number), as well as protecting the objects from the depredations of light and atmospheric pollution.

From the beginning, Ruskin seems to have conceived of the collection as a combination of images (the objects themselves) and words, in the form of printed catalogues. The Standard Series and first part of the Educational Series were catalogued in 1870, before the formal drawing classes began (Ruskin, 1870). Although Ruskin's first major illness over the summer of 1871, and the illness and subsequent death of his mother the following autumn and winter, slowed work on the Collection, the catalogue of the Educational Series was revised in 1871 (Ruskin, 1871), and the Rudimentary Series was first catalogued in April 1872 (Ruskin, 1872b), but revised throughout the year (Ruskin, 1872c; 1872d; 1873). These catalogues listed the collection, as well as providing notes explaining its use for the teaching of drawing. The net result was a sophisticated teaching and learning machine, consisting of a series of resources to support students, which Ruskin had ordered, catalogued and annotated.

Ruskin intended that his students should use the material to practice skills and progressively build up their drawing techniques, at the same time as acquiring a greater

knowledge of the world around them, its organization and meaning. To take just one examples, Turner's watercolour of The Junction of the Greta and the Tees at Rokeby, no. 2 in the Standard Series (Fig. 2): Ruskin noted that the white house visible through the trees belonged a Mr Merritt, a friend of Sir Walter Scott's. He considered the drawing 'A faultless example of Turner's work at the time when it is most exemplary' (Ruskin, 1870: 5), and noted that it had cost him 500 guineas (Ruskin, 1872c: 2; Ruskin, 1872d: 1-2). He drew particular attention to the painting of the fall of light on the surface of the Tees and through the thicket above the Greta, and to the drawing of the rocks and stones, describing how the light on the rapids was obtained by subtly varying the weight of the wash as it was laid, one of the techniques of which a good painter was capable (Ruskin, 1870: 5 & 39). In his professorial lectures, he described how the drawing embodied the sincerity of Turner's reverence for the landscape, which rendered his art (which would have manifested itself as a degree of coldness) invisible (Ruskin, 1903-12: 22:514). The drawing also represented the ideal English landscape that had been lost, and would have to be recreated for the nation to survive (Ruskin, 1903-12: 20:37-8). It also exemplified temperance and modesty in subject and execution, which Ruskin compared to the popular taste for highly-coloured and dramatic chromolithographs: a 'strong man' would like the Turner, a 'weak' one the sensational chromolithographs. It embodied aid«s, Ruskin's preferred term for 'admiration', 'the various feelings of wonder, reverence, awe, and humility, which are needful for all lovely work, and which constitute the habitual temper of all noble and clear-sighted persons' (Ruskin, 1903-12: 22:172-3; cf. 27:156-7). Thus, by examining Ruskin's texts together with the images he wrote about, it is possible to analyze his pedagogic methods, his attitudes to the art of his own and earlier times, and his views of the natural world.

If we also take account of the changes Ruskin made to the collection over time, then we can see how Ruskin's attitudes developed over a period of major upheavals in his personal and professional life. Whilst he began cataloguing the collection in 1870, its status was only properly established when Ruskin signed a Deed of Gift on 31 May 1875, which gave the Ruskin Art Collection to the University, and formalised his 1861 Turner gift and £5,000 endowment for the Drawing Mastership. At this point, the scope of the Collection was defined by the existing published catalogues of the four series (Ruskin, 1872a; 1873; 1874). However, a few years later Ruskin began a major reorganisation of the collection,

dictating revised catalogue entries to the Principal of St Mary Hall, Dr D.P. Chase, in 1878 – although these were never published during his lifetime (Ruskin, 1878a; 1878b). Ruskin also tended to circulate objects between the Oxford collection, and those he had assembled for the Guild of St George in Sheffield and Whitelands College in Chelsea, as well as adding his own material to the central body of works defined in the 1875 Deed of Gift. Thus, following his final resignation from the Slade Professorship in 1885, the collection was badly disorganised. By that stage, twelve different catalogues of individual parts of the collection had been issued (for lists, see Ruskin, 1903-12: 21:5-6, 55, 145, 161-2 & 265); the first unified catalogue of the whole collection was only compiled by E.T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn as volume 21 of the Library Edition of Ruskin's works, published in 1906 (Ruskin, 1903-12: 21). Although it reflects the state of the collection in 1906 – and notes many of the pieces which could not be found even then – it is a difficult catalogue to use, as it is basically an annotated version of Ruskin's published catalogues, with the addition of some manuscript material and some rather cursory notes on material within the collection which had never found its way into Ruskin's catalogues.

The Ruskin Project – Benefits

Whilst Ruskin's reputation probably reached its nadir in the 1950s and 60s – at about the time that the wider public became aware of events surrounding his divorce from his wife Effie – it has since undergone a considerable revival, culminating in a series of events under the title Ruskin Today to mark the centenary of his death in 2000. In the same year, the Tate Gallery chose, as the inaugural exhibition to launch the re-branded and re-installed Tate Britain, Ruskin, Turner and the Pre-Raphaelites (Hewison, Warrell & Wildman, 2000). Partly as a result of this burgeoning interest, the Ruskin Teaching Collection was identified as a priority for digitisation in 1999 (Lee, 1999). Whilst the collection, as a discrete and finite body of works, largely housed in one location, was clearly a convenient candidate for such treatment, it was also clear that this would significantly enhance access to the collection. In addition, the peculiarities and complexities of Ruskin's approach to the collection render it particularly suitable for digitisation. The Ruskin Project therefore aims to provide a digital version of the

information held within the collection, and of the relevant metadata, and to make this available to the public.

As the original cabinets which housed the collection have now been disposed of, the objects are currently divided between the Ashmolean's main run of prints and drawings, arranged by artist, and a series of bound volumes which preserve something of the collection's sequence as established by Cook and Wedderburn in 1906. Digitisation provides an opportunity to return the collection – virtually – to its original arrangement. Or, to be more accurate, to its original arrangements: digitisation will enable us to present the collection as it was arranged at each moment when Ruskin crystallised the sequence in one of his published catalogues. This gives researchers the opportunity to compare different versions of the collection, and see how it developed over the years as Ruskin made his continuous alterations.

Those who consult the collection nowadays seldom view it as a whole – rather, they are interested in specific items, seen in isolation (usually Ruskin's own drawings). But Ruskin's catalogues make it clear that he conceived of each series as a whole, either as an encapsulation of the most exemplary works, categorised and arranged thematically; or as a definite sequence to be followed as one pursued his drawing courses. His conceptions of the collection were articulated in his catalogues, and it is only by reading these at the same time as looking at the individual works he is describing that one can gain a clear idea of the collection and its role in Ruskin's thought. By digitising the collection, we are making it possible to examine Ruskin's words and the pictures they illuminate as a unified whole for the first time since the collection was removed from its cabinets. Digitisation allows word and image to be reintegrated, as they were when students could work through the collection with Ruskin's catalogues in their hands.

Digitising the collection also brings an opportunity to make it function in a way which, I think, Ruskin would have appreciated. The ways in which Ruskin annotated and arranged the collection, with frequent cross-references to his own writings and to the different objects within the collection, can finally be done justice thanks to the development of hypertext technologies. To take just one example, the following text, just over a printed

page in length, describes a nineteenth-century lithograph of an Egyptian chair; I have marked the seven cross-references to works within the same catalogue in red:

And now, note that there are two distinct modes of excellence in laying water-colour. Its own speciality is to be mixed with much water, and laid almost as a drop or splash on the paper, so that it dries evenly and with a sharp edge. When so laid, the colour takes a kind of crystalline bloom and purity as it dries, and is as good in quality as a tint of the kind can be. The two little drawings of Turner's, 45 and 46, and nearly all his early work, are laid with transparent colour in this way. The difference between good painting and bad painting in this manner, is, that a real painter is as careful about the outline of the tint, laid liquid, as if it were laid thick or nearly dry, while a bad painter lets the splash outline itself as it will.

The exercises from Egyptian furniture and dress are intended to cure you at once of any carelessness of this kind. They are to be laid with perfectly wet colour, so that the whole space you have to fill, large or small, is to be filled before any of the colour dries; and yet you are never to go over the outlines. The leaf exercises (41 B, C, and D) are easier practice of the same kind. You had better do them first, though they are put, for other reasons, with the more advanced series. The white nautilus shell (47 C) is entirely painted with small touches of very wet colour of this kind, in order to get as much transparency into the structure of the tint as is possible. So also the shadows of the piece of sculpture (25). The exquisitely skilful drawing of Prout's interior (29, right hand), owes much of its effect of light to the perfect flatness of the wet tints; and the character of the crumbling stone in the gable of Amiens (24) is entirely got by using the colour very wet, and leaving its dried edge for an outline when it is needed.

The simplest mode of gradating tints laid in this manner, when they extend over large spaces, is by adding water; but a good painter can gradate even a very wet tint by lightness of hand, laying less or more of it, so that in some places it cannot be seen when it ends. The beautiful light on the rapid of the Tees (S. 2) is entirely produced by subtlety of gradation in wet colour of this kind.

Digitisation, therefore, brings significant benefits in the ways in which the collection can be investigated and interpreted. It also means that the collection can be disseminated in a way that would have been inconceivable in Ruskin's lifetime: rather than the student coming to the collection, the collection can be brought to the student.

Participants

Funding for the project was secured from the Resource Enhancement Scheme of the Arts and Humanities Research Board in December 2001; work finally began in October 2002. The project itself is a partnership between various institutions, largely based within the University of Oxford:

Ashmolean Museum	Collection, management, conservation
Learning Technologies Group (Oxford University Computing Service)	Databases and markup, search & delivery systems
Ruskin School of Drawing and Fine Art	Website design
Digital Lightforms Ltd.	Photography
Visual Arts Data Service	Recipient

Project objectives

The project's overall aims can be broken down into a series of more precise objectives:

Digitise the objects within the collection.

Digitise Ruskin's catalogues of the collection (both manuscript and printed).

Create and digitise metadata about the objects, in the form of up-to-date catalogue data.

Collate digital metadata about the digital images created from the collection.

Make the resulting data available as an archive of high-resolution digital images, marked-up text and databases, available to serious researchers through the Visual Arts

Data Service and conserved on the Oxford University Computing Centre's Hierarchical File Server.

Make the resulting data available as a website, allowing the collection to be searched and browsed in various ways – including sequences that match Ruskin's original arrangements.

An important distinction must be made between Ruskin's catalogues of the collection – which will be referred to as the 'texts' – and the newly-generated Ashmolean catalogue information, hereafter called the 'catalogues'.

Project methods

The core of the project will be a MySQL database, derived from the Ashmolean Museum's catalogue information, which will be used to link together the image files, Ruskin's texts, catalogue information and image metadata.

Images

The works within the collection are being photographed using a Sinar P3 monorail camera fitted with a Sinarback 43 and a Macroscan. The images are taken in four sections which are stitched together using Sinar's image capture software. Images are captured at 600 dpi and 24-bit colour, at the same physical dimensions as the originals. The image files are saved in TIFF format. They include colour patches and a scale, as well as containing an embedded ICC colour matching profile. The camera we are using cannot add EXIF metadata, but we intend to add this, and IPTC metadata, later, using a program called EXIFUtils. All the file and data formats being used are already well-established.

Given this format, the files produced are quite large - an average of 150 MB, with some files coming in at over 300 MB. The project will therefore create approximately 200 GB of image files, which will be archived to Oxford University's Hierarchical File Server for storage.

Texts

Printed copies of Ruskin's catalogue have been photocopied and scanned, whilst volunteers have been used to transcribe the two manuscript catalogues. The word-processor files produced by these two processes are then converted into XML files, and basic markup applied, using Perl scripts. The XML files use the data standard established by the Text Encoding Initiative (http://www.tei-c.org), which has the advantage of being comprehensive, flexible, and robust. Within the markup, particular attention is paid to establishing the precise hierarchy of objects' positions within Ruskin's arrangement; to marking up the myriad cross-references contained within the texts; and to providing standardised versions of the names of places, people, institutions, works of art, etc. All this can only be done by hand. All the catalogues will be held in a single XML file, creating a TEI Corpus of these works. This allows us to cross-link references within and between the individual catalogues in a more sophisticated manner than would be possible if they were held in separate files.

Catalogues

Whilst the Ashmolean Museum has maintained basic documentation for many of the objects in the collection, this is not comprehensive, and constitutes a checklist rather than a full catalogue. Consequently, although the existing data is being used, much of the data required for the project has had to be assembled from scratch. (This is also helping to iron out inconsistencies in formatting, phrasing etc., which accumulated because the Ashmolean's checklists were assembled by a variety of people.) Records are being assembled using the Getty Research Institute's data standard for the Computerised Description of Works of Art (http://www.getty.edu/research/institute/standards/cdwa/), which are comprehensive without being over-restrictive, and are one of the few established data standards to include elements which cover the greater part of the information which must be recorded in a catalogue of works of art or museum objects.

The initial catalogue information was checked against the objects and collated with catalogue numbers in the various printed catalogues using an Excel spreadsheet, before

being imported into an Access database which will hold the data whilst the main cataloguing work is done. (Access was already in use at the Ashmolean, and allows for the easy development of fairly self-explanatory forms for data entry.) The number of works to be catalogued, and the limited time available for this, means that some of the work will be done by volunteers, drawn from the postgraduate art history students at the University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University.

Once the catalogue data has been finalised in Access, it will be translated into XML to provide easier integration with the website and the other data being assembled by the project.

Image metadata

As mentioned above, the image files themselves will contain EXIF and IPTC metadata. However, this does not provide a great deal of scope for indexing the subjects of the images, and so an additional set of image metadata will be assembled by combining data from the image files and the catalogue database. This will also be encoded as XML, using a document type definition based upon version 3 of the Visual Resources Association's core data standard (VRA3; http://vraweb.org/vracore3.htm).

Web presentation

Visitors to the final project website will be able to browse and search the information in a number of ways:

Search the catalogue for specific objects, using established indexes and free-text searches. This will return catalogue entries, with links to texts and larger images.

Search the texts for references to specific words and index entries, using established indexes and free-text searches. This will return sections of text, with links to the catalogue and larger images.

Browse the catalogue object-by-object, arranged according to the sequences in the different editions of the texts. This will contain links to the texts and larger images.

Browse the full texts, arranged according to the individual editions. This will contain links to the other editions of the texts, the catalogue and larger images.

Both catalogue entries and texts, whether returned from searches or browsed through, will contain thumbnail images, which will link to higher resolution images.

The main tools used to deliver this information over the web will be XSLT stylesheets and an XSLT processor on the web server, combined with PHP scripts to pass the search information to the processor. The processor will convert the large XML files generated by the project into smaller HTML pages according to the ways in which the user wishes to access the information.

Whilst the high-resolution images generated by the project provide excellent quality material for researchers, they are clearly far too large to be delivered over the internet or easily manipulated by an image processor. Instead, working master files will be generated from the original masters by cropping them to remove the colour patches and rulers, and reducing their size significantly. We are currently looking at working from 10 MB working master image files from which to provide all the derivative files which will be displayed on the web.

These web master files are still, however, rather too large to be conveniently circulated via the internet, particularly as we must assume that many users will be accessing the project's website via a dial-up connection. We are currently investigating the use of pyramid image files to enable relatively detailed images to be served whilst still economising on bandwidth. Whilst there are various competing solutions, available at different prices, and with different requirements as to operating system and browser plugins, they share the advantage of serving comparatively small files, and ensuring that a high resolution image is never made available as a whole, thus making piracy of the Museum's images for publication elsewhere less likely.

Certain sections of the site will also use the ImageMagick suite of tools to provide on-demand scaling of the images.

Path Creation

The project will use a system similar to the Path Creation Scheme used in the Wilfred Owen Multimedia Digital Archive (http://www.hcu.ox.ac.uk/jtap/pcs/) to present visitors with various 'pathways' through the site, based on the catalogues and on other likely areas of interest.

The Path Creation Scheme is a method of displaying a sequence of web pages in a frame of a web browser. Each web page is accompanied by a commentary and a navigation bar to allow the viewer to progress forwards and backwards along the path. A pathway is typically a series of web pages and commentaries that explore a theme; each pathway is stored in a database as a sequence of URLs and text fields, which allows them to be manipulated and edited. Significantly, pathways can be created by visitors to the website allowing their pathway to be followed by subsequent visitors, who will thus be able to benefit from the insights of the path creator.
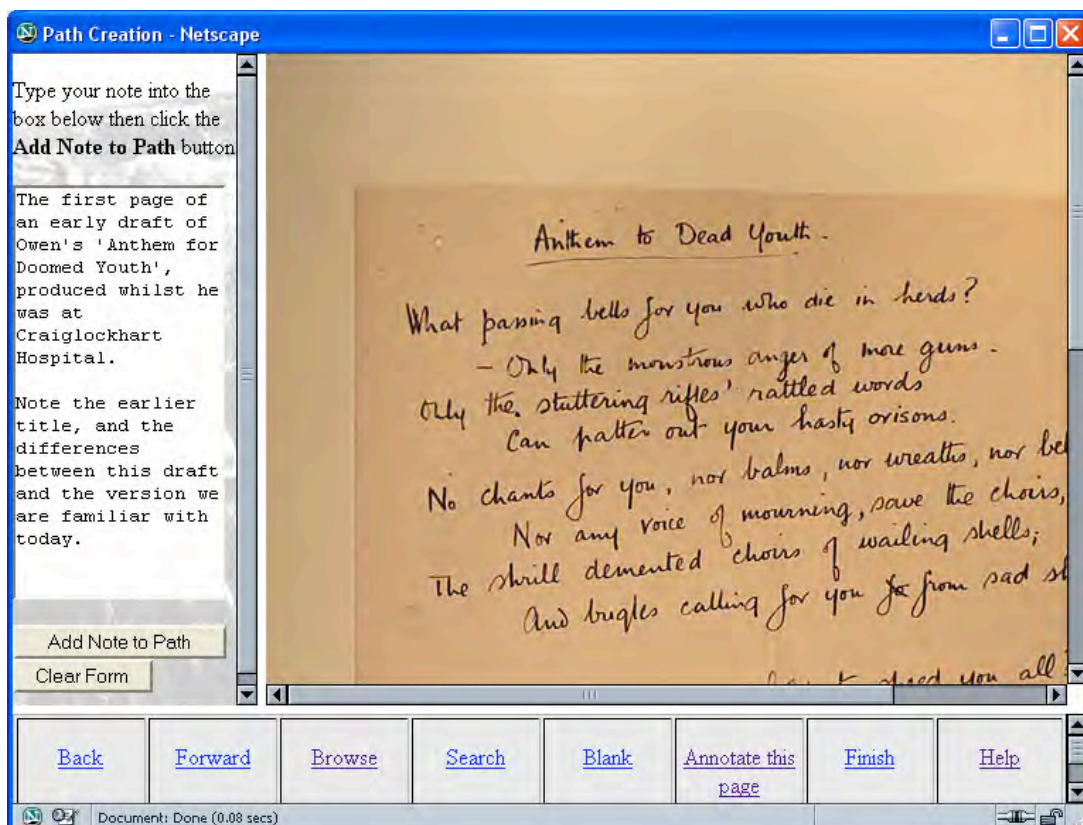

Fig. 4: Adding a web-page to a pathway using the Path Creation Scheme at the Wilfred Owen Multimedia Digital Archive http://www.hcu.ox.ac.uk/jtap/pcs/

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This has the potential to expand the site's usefulness as a teaching resource, enabling visitors to use the site in ways that we could not hope to predict. We will also use the Path Creation Scheme to provide pathways representing Ruskin's own catalogues of the collection, allowing us to assemble the collection as it stood at various points in time.

Conclusions / summary

The Ruskin Project has benefits beyond those usually associated with digitisation projects, of increasing access to the materials being digitised. It enables the reconstruction of long-lost arrangements, which can be made available simultaneously in ways which were never possible at the time of their creation. And it allows for the integration of a sophisticated textual and visual resource, allowing it to work, again, as its creator intended. Combined with the increased opportunities for dissemination presented by the world-wide web it will be, we think, a resource of which Ruskin would have been proud.

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