

# Appendix 3: RAMM's Informal Open Access Roundtable Event and Wikimedia Commons Trial and Results

## The GLAM-E Lab Project

GLAM-E Lab establishes an interdisciplinary cross-border digitisation clinic at the University of Exeter Law School and NYU Law School Engelberg Center on Innovation Law & Policy with institutional and community partners. First, GLAM-E Lab provides pro bono legal and digitisation support directly to UK and US lab participants working to implement open access programs and release digital collections online. Second, the Lab will use the lessons learned from that clinical support to co-develop a best practice tool-kit for the wider heritage community. Third, in 2023, the Lab publicly opens and invites new participants to test and expand the GLAM-E Lab methods and resources.

GLAM-E Lab brings together UK and US practitioners, academics, and students from Law, Digital Humanities, and Museum Studies to overcome the legal and cultural obstacles to digitisation and open access programs. Through this work, the Lab will explore key questions related to the legal status of cultural materials, ethical approaches to digitisation, and open access and new business models. GLAM-E Lab will improve global conditions for the sustainability of digitization projects and digitally-enabled participation, leading to the generation of new knowledge in heritage management, humanities, and law. The Project will disseminate the research via GLAM-E's Lab's clinics, website, workshops, and publications. (See Appendix 2 for the benefits of Open Access in GLAM Institutions.)

## Informal Open Access Roundtable

Using the networks from GLAM-E Lab researchers, RAMM held an informal online roundtable in November 2022 with contacts from Aberdeen Archives, Gallery and Museum, Brighton's The Royal Pavilion and Museums Trust, Newcastle Libraries and York Museums Trust. Each of these institutions has undergone the process of releasing digitised images of public domain collections open access. Each participant was asked why they had released images open access, how this decision was made and which collections they had initially released. The answers ranged from the fact that they had received funding to do this and that the institutions no longer generated any profit from licensing images. While the approaches taken differed depending on the governance structure of the institutions, each institution essentially focused on the cost of running the service as the perceived value of digital assets is reducing.

The roundtable participants suggested a number of recommendations for RAMM if it is to release images of public domain works open access:

- If opening up the collection, RAMM should focus on 2D artworks that are out of copyright.
- Start a Wikimedia commons trial as soon as possible to get an idea of the uses of an image.
- Automate the process of releasing out-of-copyright images where possible.

- Pick a collection based on the ease of processing making sure it is simple and is easy to release.

As a result of these recommendations, RAMM released 63 images onto Wikimedia Commons to understand how it worked, the usage the images would get, and analyse the images views and other associated data.

## What is Wikimedia Commons

Wikimedia Commons is part of the Wikimedia Foundation and is a media file repository making available public domain and freely licensed educational media content (images, sound and video clips) to everyone, in their own language. It acts as a common repository for the various projects of the Wikimedia Foundation. The repository is created and maintained not by paid archivists, but by volunteers.

Wikimedia Commons is free. Everyone is allowed to copy, use and modify any files freely as long as they follow the terms specified by the author; this often means crediting the source and author(s) appropriately and releasing copies/improvements under the same freedom to others. The licence conditions of each individual media file can be found on their description page. The Wikimedia Commons database itself and the texts in it are licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution/Share-Alike Licence.

## Uploading RAMM's Images to Wikimedia Commons

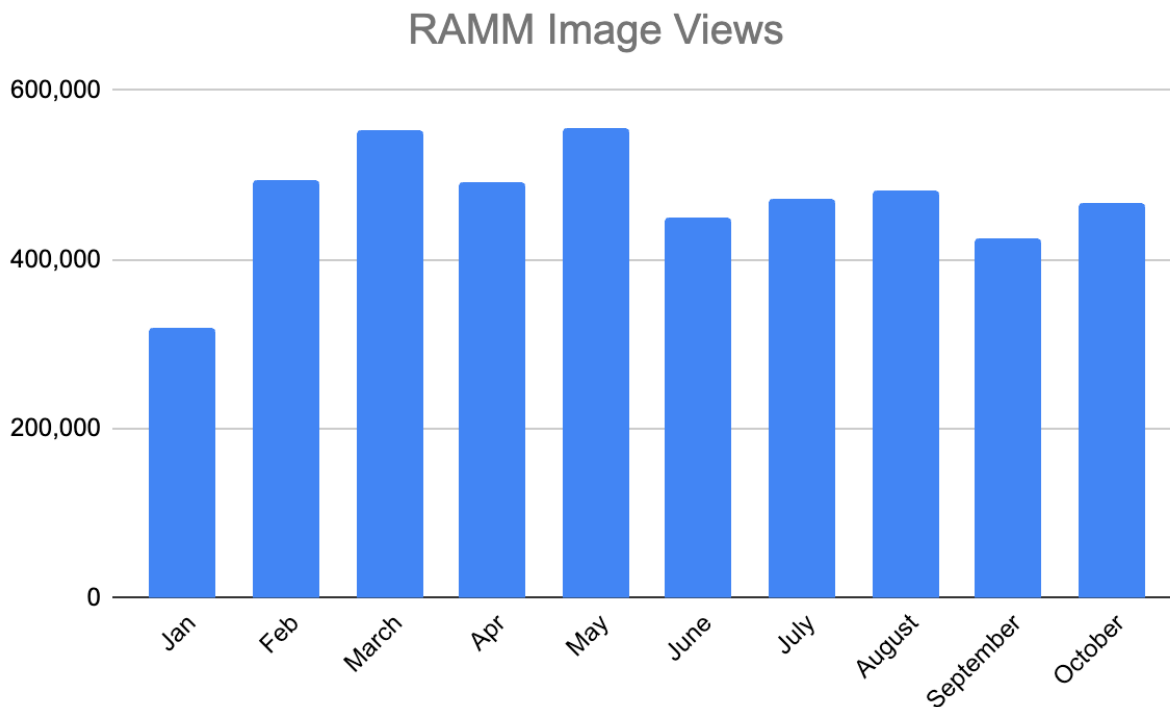
As detailed earlier, RAMM uploaded 63 medium resolution images to Wikimedia Commons following on from the recommendations of the roundtable event. The Museum Director granted RAMM's Collections Team to do this work. The images selected are all paintings, the majority are watercolours, of places in and around Exeter. A large number of these paintings are of buildings that no longer exist as they were either destroyed by the Blitz or were demolished. The images were selected as they no longer had any intellectual property rights associated with them and had entered into the public domain. These images were also not likely to be licensed as they are predominantly unknown and painted by local artists.

The GLAM-E Lab research fellow undertook the work to prepare the image and metadata before uploading to Wikimedia Commons. This involved ensuring the metadata followed Wikimedia Commons conventions. With the help of staff from Wikimedia UK, RAMM bulk uploaded these images in early January onto Wikimedia Commons and set up the tracking tools to monitor how the images were being used and how many views each of them had. Since uploading the images, the GLAM-E Lab research fellow alongside Wikipedia editors from across the world have been placing them onto relevant Wikipedia pages. The GLAM-E Lab fellow has also been tracking the images using a number of tools including:

- The BaGLAMa Tool created by Wikimedia labs that aggregates page view numbers of articles containing Wikimedia Commons files sourced via the Category pages;
- Reverse Image Search Engines (e.g., Google, TinEye) to track where and how images appear online following upload to Wikimedia Commons;
- Google Analytics to identify the number of referrals to institutional websites from Wikimedia platforms to track increases in website activity and audience reach;
- Image licensing numbers and operational costs to determine whether engagement with Wikimedia Commons improves efficiency or reach of the image licensing service and revenue generation; and
- Information on new or unexpected engagements, indirect revenue generation, and other data to support open access business model development.

## Results

So far, the 63 images uploaded by RAMM have been viewed a total of 4,706,911 times. May was the month with the most views before the image views stabilised.



As of October 2023, the 41 of the 63 images uploaded have been placed on 60 different wikipedia pages including Richard III's page, the page on the English Civil War and the page on the Baedeker Blitz. The pages are featured on 6 different language wikis and 1 Wikidata page. The different language wikis that have been used are English, French, Spanish, Welsh, Swedish and Russian.

The most viewed images from RAMM are:

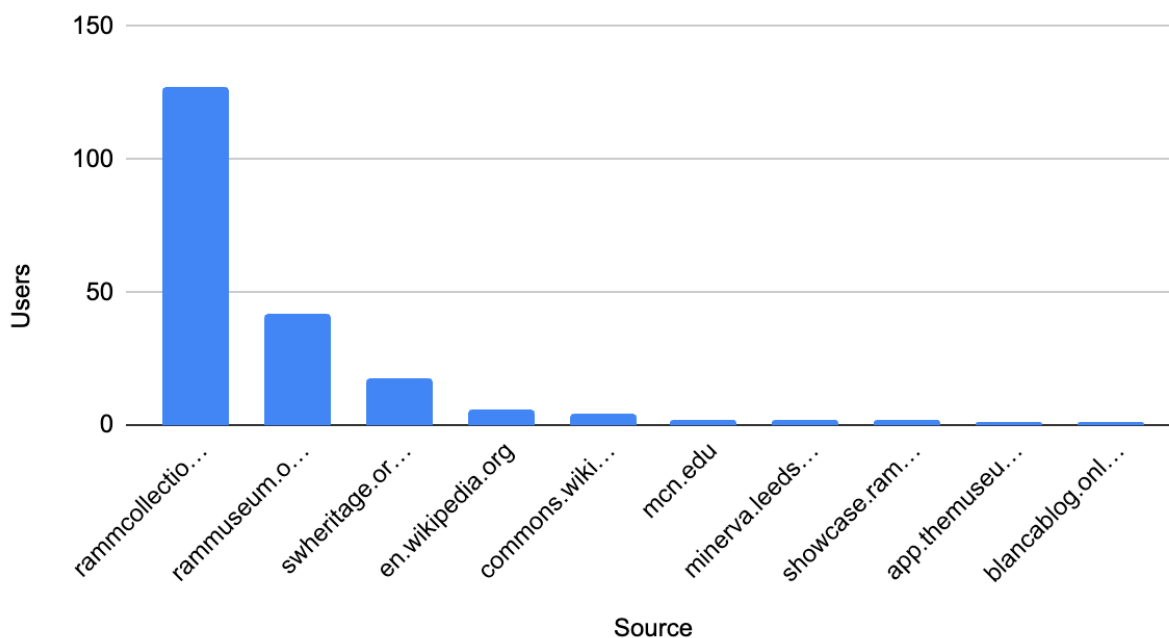
- The East Gate, Exeter and the Visit of King Richard III, 1483
- Cavalier Troops Mustering outside the Guildhall, Exeter
- The South Gate, Exeter - The Reception of King Edward IV, 1470
- The Guildhall, Exeter
- St. Sidwell's Church, Exeter, after the Blitz

The most used images from RAMM are:

- St. Sidwell's Church, Exeter, after the Blitz (used on 9 Wikipedia pages)
- Cowley Place, near Exeter (used on 6 Wikipedia pages)
- The Guildhall on Election Night, 1880 (Used on 5 Wikipedia pages)
- A Sermon in Exeter Cathedral (Used on 3 Wikipedia pages)

Please see [this link](#) for the list of images and each image's views and usage on Wikipedia websites.

## SW Collections Explorer Referrals



Prior to the Wikimedia Commons upload, no referrals had been made from Wikimedia websites to the South West Collections Explorer site. From January 2023 Wikimedia Commons and Wikipedia are the fourth and fifth most common referral sites with 5% of website referrals coming from Wikimedia Foundation websites to the South West Collections Explorer site.

In terms of whether uploading the images decreased RAMM's image licensing, RAMM staff have indicated that there has been no impact on demand.

## Future of the Trial

In terms of the future of RAMM's Wikimedia Commons trial:

- 1) RAMM has started a Wikipedia Volunteering Opportunity for remote based volunteers to learn and engage with Wikipedia. It is RAMM's hope that the volunteers will increase the wikipedia pages that the images are placed on. RAMM will also host Wikipedia-edit-a-thon events with local history links.
- 2) RAMM is also hosting a Wikimedian-in-residence to train volunteers but also to increase the visibility and usage of the images.
- 3) The GLAM-E Lab has provided funding for RAMM to digitise more of its public domain collections, this includes some work with the University of Exeter's Digital Humanities Lab. Due to the nature of UKRI funding, any digitised images that have been funded by the GLAM-E Lab will be released CC0 and will be placed on Wikimedia Commons or similar depending on the objects that have been digitised and the method of digitisation. So far the GLAM-E Lab has funded the digitisation of a number of Roman and Greek artefacts which can be found on RAMM's [SketchFab](#) and [RAMM Collections Explorer](#).
- 4) The GLAM-E Lab plans to extend RAMM's Wikimedia Commons trial by engaging with other South West based cultural heritage organisations to create a campaign to generate both local and media interest and educate users on the benefits of open access.

The findings from this trial have also led to a number of recommendations included in the proposed RAMM Open Access policy which can be found in Appendix 1.