Guidance notes for photo volunteers for the James Gray Collection New Website Project

Stage 1: Getting ready to take your pictures and complete your forms

You will have been given a list of James Gray images to work on by one of the project leadership team. These are from the original James Gray Collection website: www.regencysociety-jamesgray.com.

Please stick to this list. In the early days of the project some volunteers decided for themselves which images they would work on, but now the project has progressed and several images have been done, there is a high risk of duplication of someone else's work. If there is a problem with this, please contact whoever made the allocation to you before deciding to do more images.

In most cases, volunteers take a new photo and fill in a form for each of the images allocated to them. There are cases where it is impossible to take a new photo (for example interiors of buildings now demolished) but in most it should be possible. We need the form in every case. Make sure you take a copy of the form with you, and check what you need to look for in order to fill it in.

Start, as far as you can in advance, by trying to work out exactly where each JGC image is. This will save time when you set out to take your photos. Google Earth (https://earth.google.com) and the street view option in Google maps (https://www.google.com/maps/) can be very useful in pinpointing the likely site of your image. You may find it helpful even at this early stage to check if there is existing information about the area you are working on, either using google or the sources of information we shall be publishing shortly. In some areas it can be quite tricky working out exactly where your image is – especially if much has changed. A useful trick for identifying locations is to look at what is at the side of the original image; the main building photographed may have been demolished but the one next door may still be there. Unusual roofs, drainpipes, balconies and distinctive chimney stacks all help to make sure you are standing in the right place.

Decide, as far as you can in advance, the order in which you are going to take your photos. Experience has taught us that doing the easy ones first is a good idea – the process of doing these often makes the rest of the batch easier.

Think about when will be the best time to take your new image. Many roads in Brighton and Hove run either east-west or north-south. This means that you are likely to be confronted by the issue of too much or too little light if you go at the wrong time.

And finally – you will need a copy of the original jgc image and text with you. You may decide to take a print out of the relevant page from the original JGC site with you, or if you have a smartphone you can check on that.

Stage 2: Taking your photos

Safety first. We do not want any accidents. Roads have widened in the last 100 years and they have got much busier. Please do not take any risks in deciding where you need to stand we would very much prefer you to stand further back in order to be safe than try to duplicate the exact position from which the original photograph was taken if that is not safe. If you decide, for example, to do something unusual like standing on something to see over a fence or entering private property (please always seek permission if you do this) you do so at your own risk – so weigh up the pros and cons if you are thinking of doing anything unusual!

Try as much as you can (whilst keeping yourself safe) to take exactly the same image as James Gray did, but (obviously!) as it looks now. We do not need alternative views from different angles.

The intention is to show the two images (JGC and your photo) side by side so website viewers can see how each location has changed.

As for your camera settings – much depends, of course, on the equipment you are taking your photos with. We do not need high resolution images (they are slow to load on websites anyway so we have to edit high resolution images to make them suitable). Pictures taken on mobile phones are usually fine. The main thing is to make them as clear and crisp as you can – and also to avoid including a large amount of sky or tarmac! This is not always easy and we can (and will) edit your images to suit afterwards if necessary.

Whilst you are there – take notes on the spot for your later form filling – particularly about things which have changed. If the picture contains a prominent building – does it have a name? Can you work out what it is now used for? Are there any other clues about how the content of the image has changed (railings, walls, cleared/ more overgrown open spaces, change of use – there are many things which may occur to you) and any questions you might want to seek answers to – eg when was the original villa demolished?

Stage 3: Resizing and naming your images

For camera buffs only! You do not have to resize or rename your images – we will accept them in any form and get back to you if necessary if we have problems (this happens rarely). Please don't be put off by this bit – ignore it if it is baffling!

You will probably be uploading your images to a computer ready to submit them. This may be a stage at which you can reduce the image size if it is very large (more than 5Mb). We will accept any, but very large images can slow down the form submission if you are using the online form.

For the technically minded: we need images to be at least 1200 pixels wide and will eventually be reducing them to 100Kb or less.

Your camera or phone will automatically allocate a name for the image file. If you know how to rename your image files we would be very grateful if you would do so as follows:

vol no-image no photographer surname year the photo was taken

eg:

 20-122 Smith 2018

Please note no 'JGC' and only one hyphen (not an underscore).

If you do this it saves time, but if you cannot, don't worry – we'll change it when it arrives.

Stage 4: Completing your forms and submitting your images

Each of your images should be accompanied by a **data input form**, either completed online or via the downloadable Word version (both available at https://regencysociety.org/jgc-project-input-form/).

When completing the **data input form**, please don't forget to add your name and the JGC image reference number – ie volume-image number.

 Your **updated description** (no more than 6 sentences please) should include information about changes in the view since the James Gray original. This might be

anything from the disappearance or addition of buildings/roads/street furniture/cars etc to new uses for buildings (eg a pub now a private dwelling) or maybe even just reporting that very little has changed. If there have been substantial changes since the James Gray original, naming the streets/buildings etc in your photo is helpful – eg 'Lees House, the office block on the corner of Upper North Street and Dyke Road' is more helpful than 'the office block on the corner'. This is especially useful when the James Gray description is rather vague (we are not using the labels beneath the James Gray images which are sometimes misleading).

Bear in mind your images and words will be shown on the website for many years to come, so keep any descriptions simple and not too judgmental – but they can include social, environmental and other comments as James Gray did, to make them interesting for anyone researching the history of Brighton and Hove in the years or decades ahead.

Double check your facts – perhaps this is a time to recheck google street map and other sources, and refer to any notes you made when you took the image,
Is that building you thought was a block of flats actually an office block, that office block actually a college, that former church now a medical centre or art gallery? And do they have names – eg did you know that the former Brighton Technical College building in Richmond Terrace is now called the Old College House? This will save you time later when you come to write your descriptions.

There is a space on the form to add **further information**. Although the online version states that this is not for publication, we *will* include it if it adds something interesting to the description. For example, historical facts not included in the James Gray description such as a building's architect, the year it went up/came down, the different uses made of a building in its history, famous people associated with the building, etc. If you had problems reproducing the view, tell us why and how you've overcome them.

Remember to add the **postcode or GPS coordinates** to your form. This will help locate your image on the relevant maps on the new website.

When you are ready to **submit** your forms and images **online**, you just need to upload your image(s) before pressing 'Submit' (but see the warning earlier about very large images).

If you are **submitting** your forms and images **via email**, you should send them as email attachments (only one form and its matching image per email please) to jamesgray@regencysociety.org. Please ensure that they are clearly labelled.

What if something goes wrong with the online form?

Occasionally there are glitches with the online form. These generally fall into 2 categories:

  (a) The image is not uploaded to the form. This sometimes happens either when the image is large or you move on too quickly to do the next image before it

has had time to upload or because several people are submitting forms at the same time which makes the process slow. Wait for the message to say your form has been submitted successfully before moving on – and check the confirmation email to make sure the image is attached to it.

(b) A message appears saying 'database error' This is often because the text in the updated description box is long – you can either edit it or remove your text from the box and send it to us at jamesgray@regencysociety.org, making clear, of course, which form we should add it to.

Stage 5: What happens next

Once the image pairs (yours plus the James Gray originals) have been placed on the appropriate street page of the **new website**, your texts will be added. If your comments are ready to be cut and pasted onto the website, so much the better but the text inputters may tweak them to conform with our style guidelines, to avoid too much duplication on the page, and sometimes to correct obvious typing errors.

The texts and images are then given a final check. Do the texts and images match? Do the texts conform to our style guidelines? Is the layout OK? Is the text factually accurate or could it be improved? Has something important been missed? At this point, the fact-checker is probably looking at several descriptions of images from the same street and will try, on the one hand, to avoid too much repetition on the page and, on the other hand, to ensure that all the key historical and contemporary information is included.

Very occasionally (and usually after much email correspondence) we may decide that the image and/or text needs to be redone but generally, JGC volunteers are doing a great job both with text and with images!