



53.6450° N, 1.7798° W

Exploring Data Shadows in the generation of written and visual narrative

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the manifestations of **data shadows** and **visual residues** contained within artefacts and archives and their potential role in the generation of written and visual narratives in creative practice.

The term **data shadow** refers to written and visual narratives, which in the first instance may not be overtly recognizable in the object or image.

Visual residues can be defined as fragments of information, written and/or visual, which still retain some of the physical information from the original. These visual residues are often found contained in physical objects and artefacts that may have become separated from a collection or have degraded over time, requiring the viewer to re-construct the narrative.

Data shadows and **visual residues** are interpreted through my own **autoethnographic** and **semiotic** investigations transcribed through graphic design processes. After my first progression point, based on the feedback I received, it became apparent that the project contained too many case studies and that the discovery of the archive of Edward C. Rigg was a significant moment in the research. Edward's archive would provide a more in-depth focus for the PhD research.

The Rigg archives

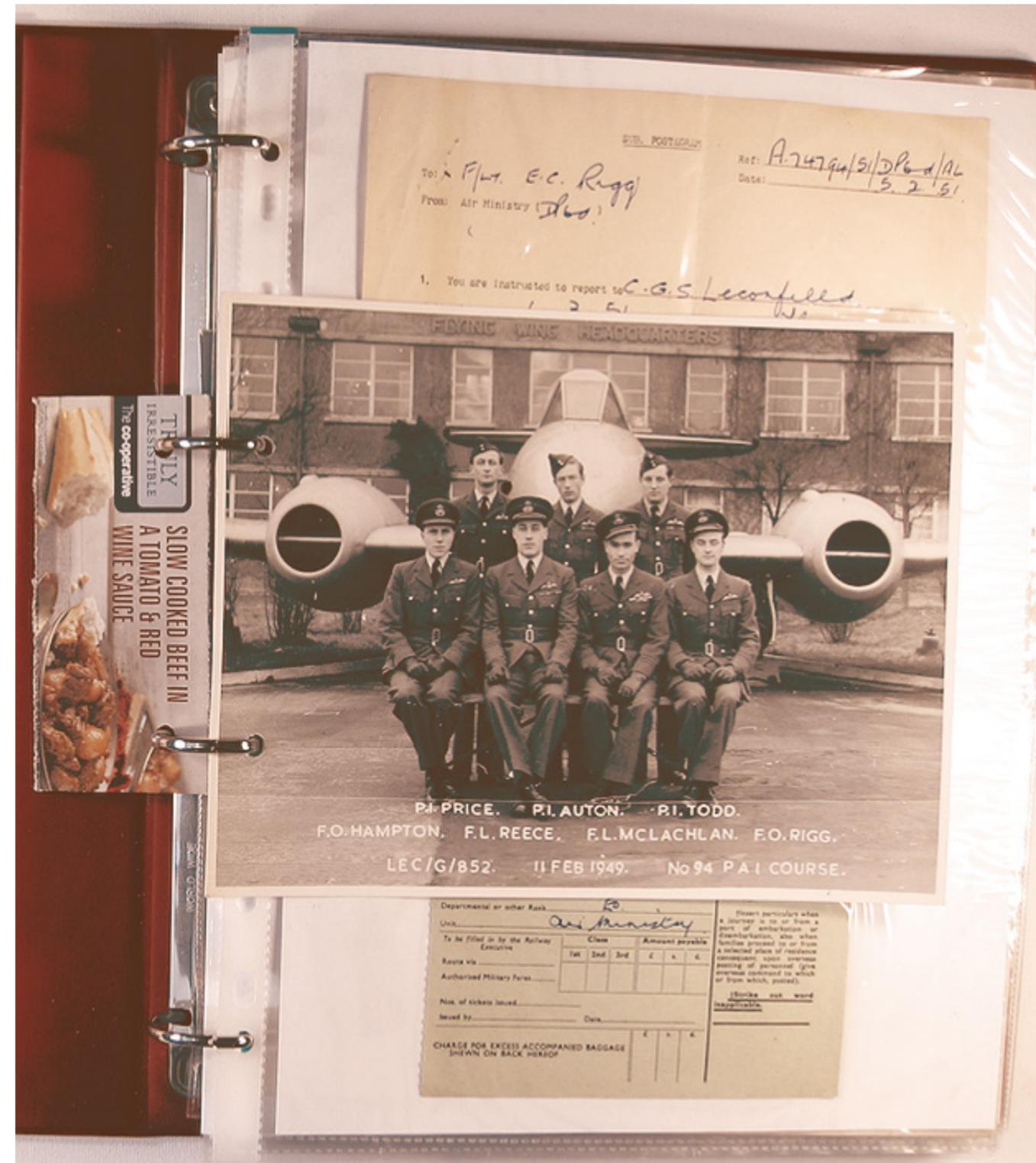
As a graphic designer I am currently transcribing the archives of Edward C. Rigg. This is a story of an ordinary man who led an extraordinary life. It is a rich resource of detailed historical content, focusing on Edward's time in the RAF just after the Second World War and documenting his profession as a jet test pilot and military transport pilot during the 1950s and 1960s.

The archives contain three main sections:

A collection of 24 Ring bind folders. The folders are the main section of the archive and play an important role in Edward's daily life and his links to the past and present.

5 boxes of slides: A visual record of personal and professional experiences covering the late 1940's - 60's.

A collection of video interviews. Autoethnographic conversations around the archive.



Research question & aims

This research will investigate and evaluate the manifestations of data shadows and visual residues contained within artefacts and archives and their potential role in the generation of graphic design outcomes.

Methodologies within current graphic practice will be discussed and analysed in relation to challenging traditional modes of graphic production and definition.

The influence of autoethnographic and semiotic enquiry will be investigated in relation to graphic design practice.

The content of the work produced investigates representation, identity of the self, the legacies of Empire and multiple written and visual narratives contained within archives.



There are 4 key objectives for this PhD project:

Explore the role of data shadows and visual residues to construct graphic narratives (visual and written) as evidenced through, individual and collaborative projects, study packages and autoethnographic reflections.

Examine the role of autoethnographic enquiry in the development of archival transcriptions through the graphic design process.

Investigate the use of semiotic enquiry in the construct and evaluation of graphic design transcriptions.

Explore the evolving nature of the graphic designer as publisher and author, established through projects, artworks, website and write up.



Democracy of the archive or subjective curation?

Traditional descriptions of the archive generally address the cataloguing and storing of public records and historical materials.

It could be argued that the personal computer and internet has broadened the term 'archive' and has made archives more accessible and immediate, extending access to a broader audience and as such making the archive more democratic.

Traditional archives can be held by governments and establishments as icons of power and their content stored to maintain a political constructed or prevailing prejudice on history or society.

For example, Wolfgang Ernst in his article, 'Archival action: the archive as ROM and its political instrumentalization under National Socialism' (1999).

‘ Archival evidence became a matter of life and death during the ‘Final Solution’ of the ‘Jewish question’, for the identification of Jewish subjects depended on the identification in archival evidence of a precise genealogical line of descent. ’

(Ernst 1999: 22)

Expanded access to archival material has been given credit for the democratization of the archive as belonging to society rather than governments and institutions.

Democracy is seen in terms of the archivist selecting and highlighting the documents of everyday culture. For example, the Community Archives and Heritage Group, supports and promotes community archives.

The archivist is part of the storytelling process, although impartiality and objectivity in the selection process is problematic.

To fully understand the archive, you need to investigate the social and political background and influences that made the selection possible.

Archive can be read as a series of semiotic signs to be interpreted rather than the traditional view of storing historical documentary evidence.



Archival impulse.

Creative practitioners have used the archive as source material not only to preserve the record but also to explore new avenues of investigation. Hal Foster calls it the 'archival impulse', echoing the philosophy of Jacques Derrida and Carolyn Steedman.

Foster talks of the artist's desire to connect and re-imagine the archive, not just as an historical record but also to find new meanings and assess their implications.

Tacita Dean. Dean's work develops an autoethnographic approach to narrative storytelling around coincidence and imagination, from archives and found items.

Foster describes the narrative as a, 'romantic vision of failed intentions'. (Foster 2004).



The work of Thomas Hirschhorn is a reflection and comment on capitalism, culture and society. Hirschhorn favours the display format creating assemblages from everyday discarded items.

Hirschhorn achieves his intentions by displaying many of his works in public non gallery spaces.

Hirschhorn confronts the hierarchy of the archive and society by moving away from the privilege museum and gallery setting.

Hirschhorn's Bataille Monument installation, (2002) was constructed for the Documenta 11 exhibition in Germany. Hirschhorn choose to produce a collaborative project outside the main venues, choosing instead a working class Turkish suburb of Kessel.

Hirschhorn intentions are to engage and include the public directly in debate and reflection of the issues that surround culture, society and global capitalism.



Bataille Monument Bataille Monument

Deep Storage a book and exhibition, which toured in Munich and New York, highlighted artists who make works from archival material.

The curator and author Ingrid Schaffner in her article, 'Digging back into Deep Storage' describes the content of the exhibition, 'All of the works in this exhibition involve materials or processes associate with keeping art over time'. (Schaffner 1998: 1).

Schaffner in the article describes three sites of production, the storeroom/museum, the archive/library and the artist studio.

Amongst artists exhibiting were Jason Rhoades, whose installation entitled; 'Cherry Makita,' was the inspiration for Schaffner to invite him to be part of the Deep Storage project. Rhoades created the entire contents of a suburban family, in what Schaffner describes as 'entombed family garage'. His work is a reflection of American life and society portrayed from everyday objects.



The Deep Storage project highlighted the breadth of artistic response to the archive, exhibiting, installation, sculpture, digital and timeline works.

Joseph Cornell was both an archivist of everyday culture and artist. Cornell would collect found objects and artefacts, which represent his fantasies, places, events and people he would meet, creating his personal boxes and collages.

Cornell's collages and boxes are time capsules of captured moments and intense feelings, trying to preserve the constantly decaying memory.

Therese Lichtenstein in the essay, 'Andromeda Hotel: The Art of Joseph Cornell' (Lichtenstein 2006: 2), talks of the, 'powerful emotions' at work in the boxes of Cornell and his desire to return to certain experiences and moments.

Lichtenstein talks of Cornell trying to suspend time and capture the memory of events, but also the impossibility of the retrieval process, heightening the feeling of loss, indeed mourning for the past, and highlighting the temporal moment of memory and nostalgia.



Untitled (Soap Bubble set)

Legacies of Empire and analysis of Edward's archive

The physical archive contains a written record of both Edward's time as a test pilot and his time as Wing Commander at Khormakasar airport in Aden, Yemen. Khormakasar airport was a pivotal artery of the Empire servicing the Middle East, Far East and Africa. The archives are a record of the, 'everyday operational life', of an individual who was working at and maintaining the cross roads of Empire.

It is the backstory that keeps re appearing from the documentation that also requires a voice. In an extract from Edward's archive from Aden, Edward talks of the role of the Argosy as Britain withdraws from Aden to Bahrain after the Yemen uprising. This would be a major part of the dismantling of Empire:

Deeper investigation around this one document opens the multiple narratives and data shadows that are contained within the document but are not initially visible and require further investigation.



The archives. Edward C.Rigg

'The document is not objective, innocent raw material but expresses past [or present] society's power over memory and over the future: the document is what remains.'

(Le Goff 1992: 98).

Edward notes in the log, flying troops to Swaziland in 1963 to quell a rebellion. On further investigation troops were actually dispatched to break a strike over disproportionate land and mineral rights given to Swaziland's minority white population and the demand of the mineworkers for a living wage.

Emanuel Shinwell, Labour MP and Trade Unionist, tabled a question in the House of Commons as to the morality of using troops to break strikes.

However according to the, **Swaziland tourist board** archive, the arrival of the Gordon Highlanders and their reputation, may have been enough to dampen the strike, they arrived, took part in military displays and fathered a generation of children. Perhaps the reputation of the Gordon Highlanders and the treatment of the Mau Mau in Kenya, helped pacify the Swaziland workers on reputation alone. Although, this would further enforce the notion of Imperial dominion and fuel further Nationalism amongst not only the population of Swaziland, but Africa and the Middle East.

The Argosy has adopted many roles in Middle East Command, apart from its customary job of moving passengers and freight. They include Search and Rescue, Army support, VIP flights, evacuation of casualties and on one occasion, the flying out of a rare Arabian Oryx to safety in Mombasa. It was one of the few surviving animals of this species left in South Arabia, and it was later shipped with other animals to the United States to form a small breeding herd which it is hoped will save the species from extinction. During their stay in Aden, the Argosy aircraft of No.105 have carried 130,000 passengers, moved 28 million pounds of freight and flown about nine million miles - a distance equivalent to 400 times around the world.

(Folder 18. Aden. Rigg archive)

Correspondence sent to the Institute of **Current World Affairs**, tells the narrative of the strike from a western economic perspective. The correspondence describes the rich raw materials available to exploit but also highlights the inequity of both education and distribution of resources amongst the indigenous population. In this extensive economic and political document, we see the rise of **global capitalism** and the demise of **Imperial rule**. Although the document urges better wages, with a view to developing the economy, I would argue it would probably be more concerned with maintaining economic control for the benefit of western capitalist interests.

These examples from this one incident in Swaziland highlight the complex **multifaceted nature** and narrative of Empire and the need for **multiple voices** in the extraction and transcription of archival content.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

JCB-24
SwazilandJuly 29, 1963
3 Richmond Close
Highlands, Salisbury
Southern RhodesiaMr. Richard Nolte
Institute of Current World Affairs
366 Madison Avenue
New York 17, New York

Dear Mr. Nolte:

Swaziland presented an ugly picture to the world recently when troops from East Africa were called in to quell strikers in an outburst of labour unrest. From the headlines it would not appear that this little country, tucked between Mozambique and the northeastern corner of the Republic of South Africa, has perhaps the best opportunity



Methodology

Autoethnography, triangulation and the design process

Autoethnography is based upon my interaction with the archive and the interviews I have conducted with Edward to reveal his personal narrative alongside his archive.

This research method also helps locate my own personal perspectives and narratives. Autoethnography is a research method, which explores personal experiences as part of a wider understanding and reflection of cultural experience.

Edward's own autobiography contains descriptions of dates, official correspondence and employment undertaken within the RAF. However, it is through our relationship and the dialogue generated between myself and Edward that narratives start to emerge and unfold. Such an approach to the research process is examined through my own self-reflective narratives, where I re-tell the stories told to me by Edward, through the contents of his archive.



Edward C.Rigg

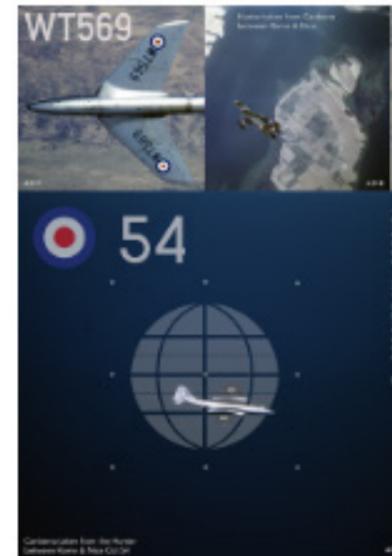
It also combines my personal story, journey and relationship with Edward.

I have undertaken this research process as a graphic designer with the view of exploring graphic design practice as author and designer, exploring multiple narratives from archival content, whilst encouraging wider participation with the graphic outcomes.

This broader exploration will provide multiple narratives and perspectives of Edward's time period and archive.

Autoethnographic enquiry combined with semiotics has been the main approach for expanding and understanding Edward's archives.

The research has evolved to include the transcription of Edward's archives, my own experiences of the time spent with Edward and other audiences who may have interacted or have a relationship with the time period.



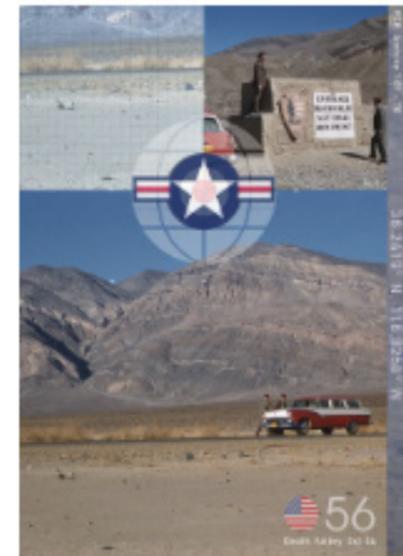
Hunter

Hunter flying over Rome and Nice October 1954.



Khartoum

Edward Rigg, Khartoum, Sudan, Oct 54



Death Valley

Edward takes time out from testing jets at Edwards Airforce base.



EAB



Country Sedan



Washington

Triangulation

This triangulation has been influential in the development of the multiple timelines which will accompany the Rigg archive offering alternative perspectives..

Louis Cohen and Lawrence Manion, in the book, *'Research Methods in Education'*. define triangulation as :

'An attempt to map out, or explain more fully, the richness and complexity of human behavior by studying it from more than one standpoint'.

Triangulation employs multiple sources of data, observers, methods, or theories, in the investigations of the same subjects.

Supports findings with the help of the others (validation).
Complements data with new results, to find new information, to get additional pieces to the overall picture. (completeness)

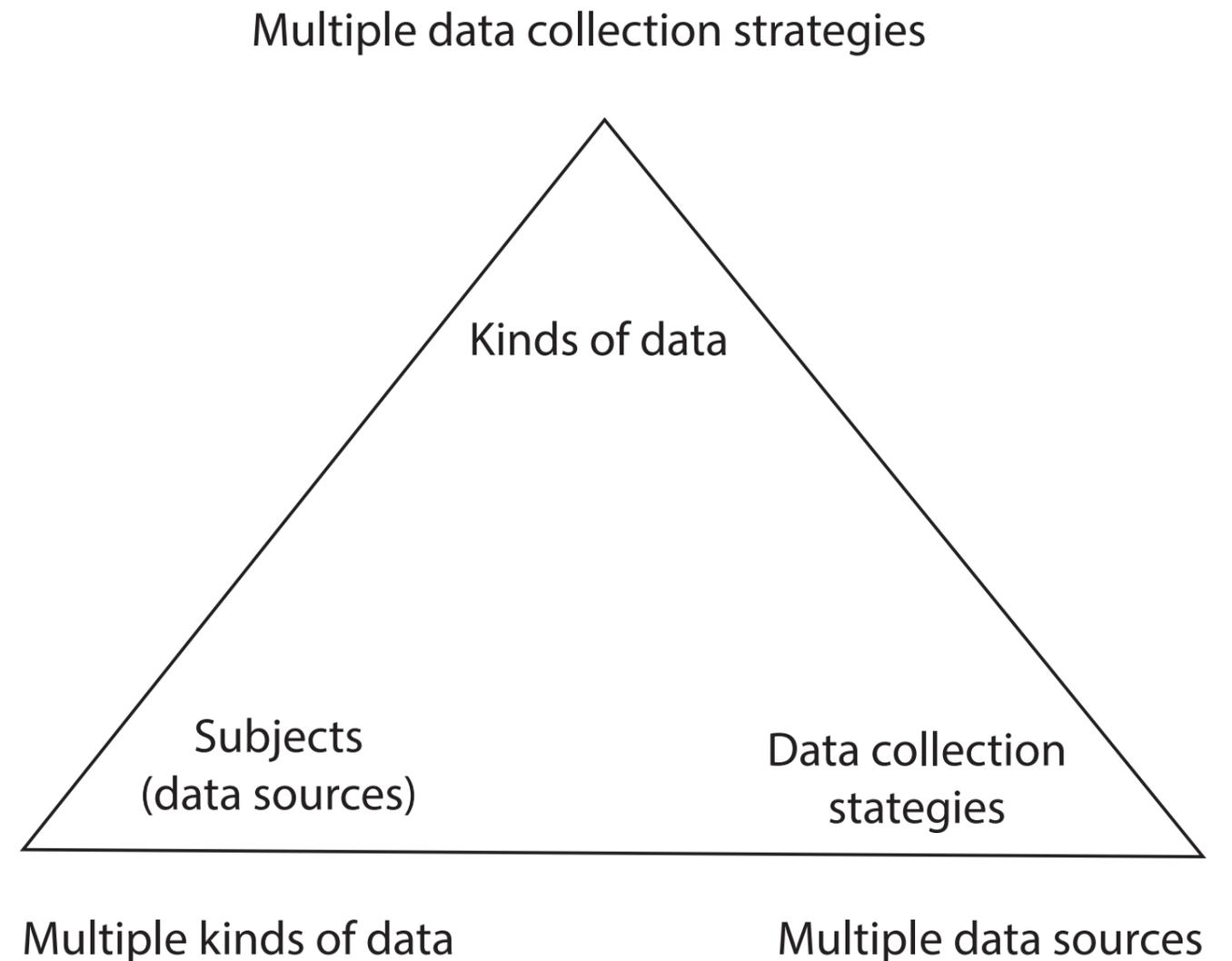


Image analysis and deconstruction

The Transcription process

The transcription process of creating distinctive curated visual compositions begins with documenting the archive, selecting elements for transcription and deciding how best to represent the content.

The original design production document for the slide archive can be viewed at; <http://www.lastargosy.com/assets/Resources/A3-design-doc-artwork-rigg.pdf>.

An understanding of image deconstruction and reconstruction has been essential for transcribing and developing the narrative around the archive.

Semiotics has been fundamental in the deconstruction of images and can be described as a process, to analyze images and words where meaning is encoded and decoded.



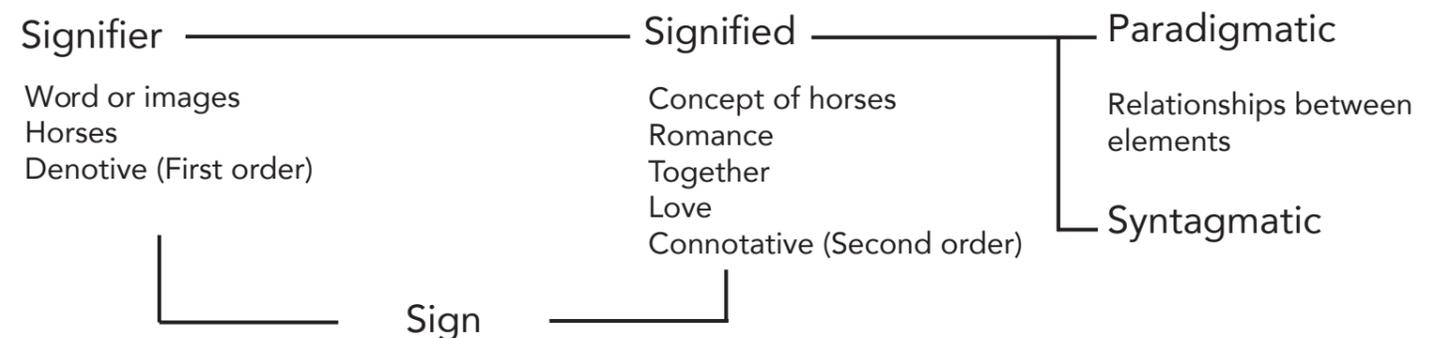


Anne Winifred Barton



A semiotic system of representation has been essential for investigating and developing the multiple data shadows contained in the archival material and the graphic design transcriptions.

This methodology can be evidenced in folder 11, from the physical (Rigg) archives, highlights Edward's time at the Central Gunnery School, RAF Leconfield 1951-1952. The folder contains assorted photographs of planes, pilots and official correspondence. However, there is one page that stands out from the rest; it has a photo of a young women, a name, (Anne Winifred Barton) and above it a Christmas card sent by Anne (Edward's girlfriend) to Edward, which pictures two horses.





Denotative (first order)

Connotative (second order) messaging systems

Evidenced in the graphic transcriptions of Edward's archive. For instance, the print, 'First landing at Ataq', on first viewing the print provides a more documentary experience of events.

The image tells the story of not only Edward's flying capabilities, but also the importance of air power in the terrain to maintain British supply lines. Edward would be the first pilot to land the Armstrong Whitworth Argosy transport plane in this theatre of operation. The RAF believed the Argosy to be too heavy to land and take off from hastily prepared temporary airfields.

Behind this factual and technical experience, is the connotative message of power and authority and the Empire's need to maintain control of Africa, Middle and Far East by force with overwhelming military superiority.



Denotative (first order)

Connotative (second order) messaging systems

The boy at the bar'. Depicts an Ethiopian boy and two women, serving at a bar in the Capital, Addis Ababa, April 1967. The boy waiter is wearing a starched white uniform in the British colonial tradition.

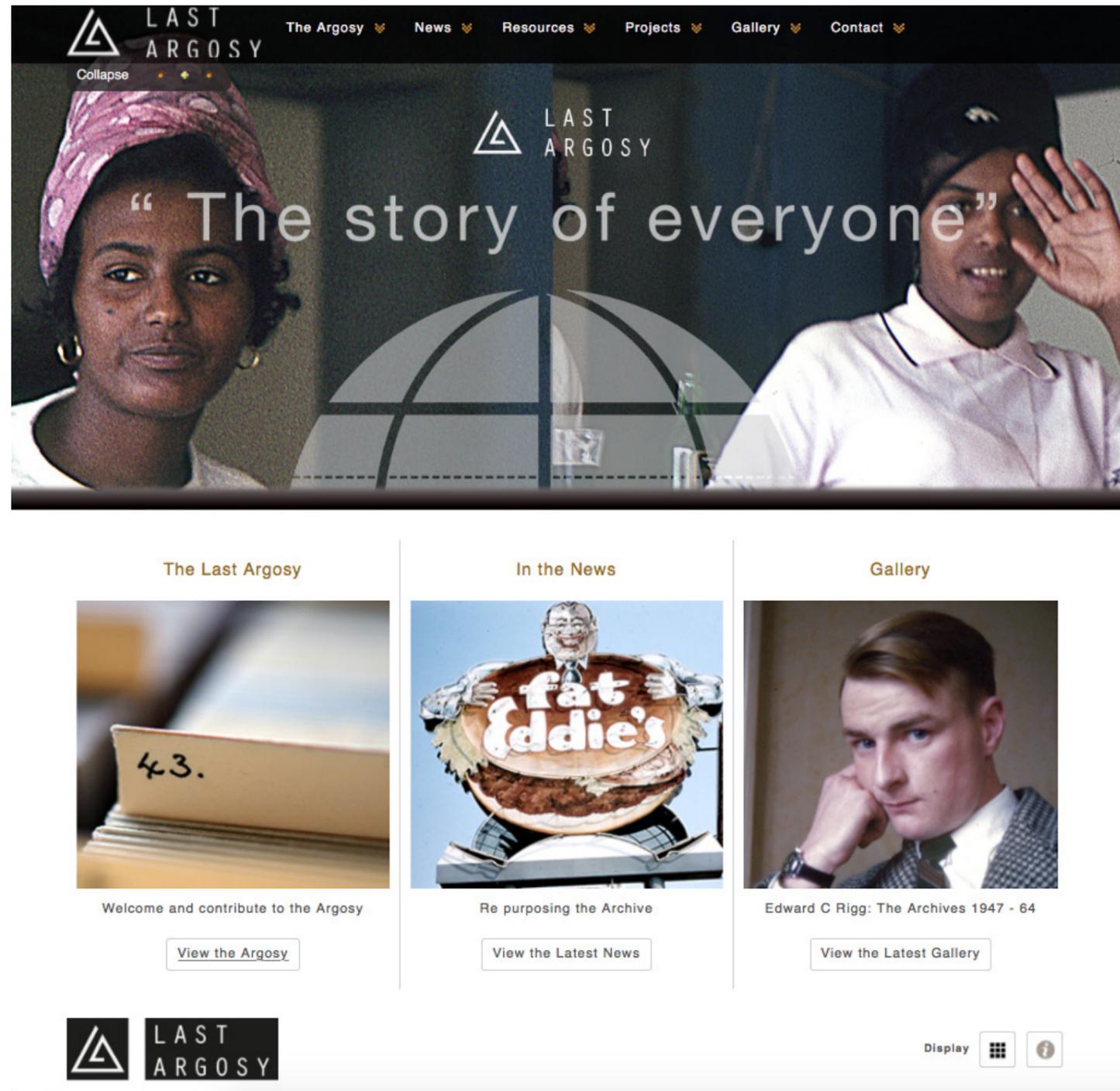
The image second order meaning represents British Imperialism and influence in the region. The bar has a colonial feel, designed to serve a Western clientele. Everything looks serene in the composition, representing the Empire notions of order and civility. However, this is the same time line as the Aden emergency, when British influence was directly challenged in the Yemen. Several months later would see the evacuation of Aden during the Yemen uprising against British rule. This would result in the largest transport operation since the Berlin airlift of 1948-49, with the British evacuating Aden after the death of 24 British soldiers in the Yemen rebellion of June, 1967. Later that year the British would withdraw completely, from Khormakasar to Bahrain, as Britain began the final dismantling the Empire.

Last Argosy website (www.lastargosy.com)

The website has been a key element in the research. The current site evolved from a word press template, www.graphicartifact.com

The change of domain name to www.lastargosy.com came whilst interviewing Edward. I came across a folder entitled, 'the last argosy'. This immediately fueled my imagination, as the title had a sense of mystery and melancholy.

The Argosy was a civil and military transport plane, which played an important role in Edward's life and still retains an emotional attachment for Edward. According to the Collins English dictionary the definition of Argosy is, 'a large abundantly laden merchant ship, or fleet of such ships'. The title seemed to reflect the research



project aims, as it reflects the main archive and other narratives that will be generated and stored on the site.

Slide archive transcription

The slide archive, is well ordered and documented with two logbooks. It documents Edward joining the RAF just after WW11 and begins with his first posting to Germany through to his civilian life in the 1970's.

As curator, I made the decision to concentrate on transcribing the two boxes that covered Edward's time in the RAF as a pilot, test pilot and military transport pilot.

The transcriptions end with Edward's time as Wing Commander and pilot flying the Argosy and Beverly military transport planes out of Khormakasar airport, Aden.

Khormaksar could be described as the gateway of Empire and was once the busiest airport in the world for both civilian and military aircraft and a major supply artery of the British Empire.



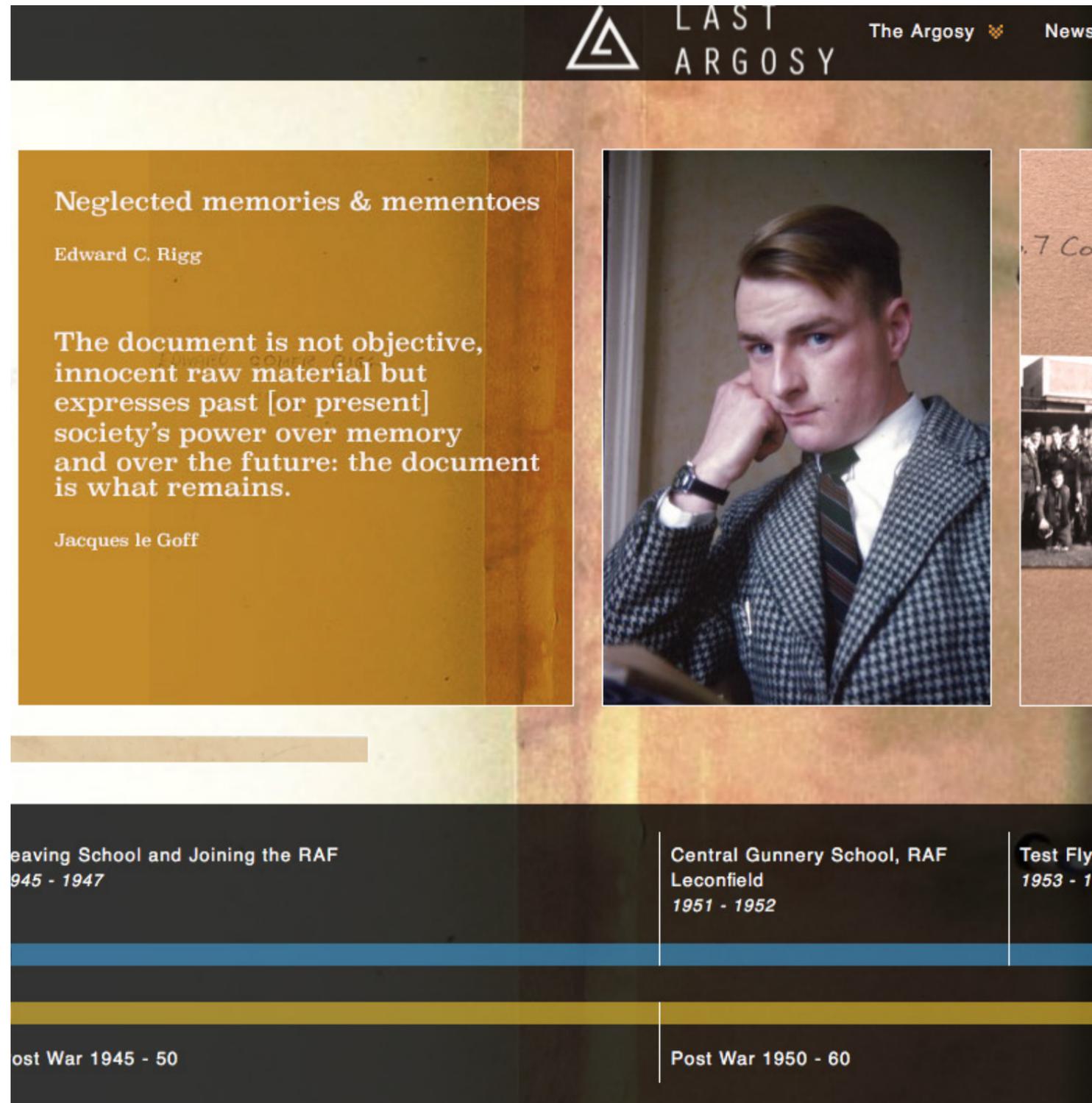
Physical Archive Timeline

The physical archive is the largest archive and the embodiment of Edward and his ordinary yet extraordinary life.

The files hold the thread of narrative, hidden in photographs, correspondences, postcards, etc. They are designed and ordered and have a scrapbook look and feel. After several months of conversations with Edward and the files, it became apparent they are an important link to his past and facilitate immediate access to his memory.

The timeline is a curation of the physical archive and the design influences are taken directly from the look and feel of the original files.

The graphic transcription of Edward's archive has evolved not only represent his personal lifetime of experiences, but also highlights social, political and economic factors which run in parallel to his timeline.



Alternative Timelines

The alternative timelines will reflect the mixing of narratives explored through the autoethnographic process, highlighting the alternative everyday narratives of Empire.

This is a way of opening these narratives out to the archive, exploring the legacy of Empire and post-colonial citizenship.

The timelines should be seen as work in progress and can be viewed at: www.lastargosy.com/timeline. The timeline development process document can be viewed at:

<http://www.lastargosy.com/assets/Resources/A3-interactive-6th-june-update.pdf>



Storybox

I often retell the stories told to me by Edward and add my own interpretation of events, occurrences and consequences.

Throughout the research I have been developing the 'story box' made from a re-purposed WW2 siren case. The storybox will be my personal homage to our shared experiences and will prompt my own failing memory to retrieve and retell the stories and times spent with Edward.

The role and content of the box has developed from my original intentions and now will contain the most personal, memorable and contentious stories, depicted as more abstract, less literal compositions printed onto glass slides. This was a response to not wishing to publish some of the more sensitive personal stories I have been entrusted with.



Storying the self

In March 2017, I had an abstract accepted and delivered a paper at the, 'Storying the Self' Symposium, Brighton University.

The paper was invited to be published later this year in a special edition of the, *Journal of Writing in Creative Practice*. The article discusses:

The role of the graphic designer as custodian of stories and how they are transcribed into visual formats.

The mixing of narratives from out of the archive.

Student engagement with storytelling.

The full article, 'Capturing the moment', can be viewed in the appendix of the report.



Edward.C Rigg: An ordinary yet extraordinary life.



This paper proposes to address verbal and visual storytelling contained within found items and archives.

As a graphic designer, I am currently researching the archive of Edward C. Rigg. This is the story of an ordinary yet extraordinary life. Rigg's personal archive is a rich resource of detailed historical content, focusing on his time in the RAF just after the Second World War and documenting his profession as a jet test pilot and transport pilot during the 1950s and 1960s.

Data shadows & visual narrative

Auto-ethnography, reflection and uncultural experience

Examined through

Positioning statement

The research has a deeper focus from the original proposal, resulting in more detailed levels of engagement and investigation.

My own understanding of the archive in relation to archivist, designer and curator has become clearer, but is still developing.

The first archive has produced a body of work, which has been presented at the, 'Storying the Self', Symposium, Brighton University and exhibited at the, "Place, Space and Action exhibition in Huddersfield.

The website has evolved to include an interactive timeline of Edward's archive and also a facility to encourage user generated timelines. I designed the timeline facility and was successful in receiving University funding for the programming of the timeline.

Contact has and is being made with alternative timeline participants, whom have links with the time period; this should offer alternative views and narratives from a 'subaltern' perspective of the period, which will highlight the everyday legacies of Empire and its effect on current communities. For example, I have made initial contact with the Yemeni community in South Shields, who have had a presence in the area since the 1860's with more families relocating here after the British withdrawal of the Yemen in 1967.

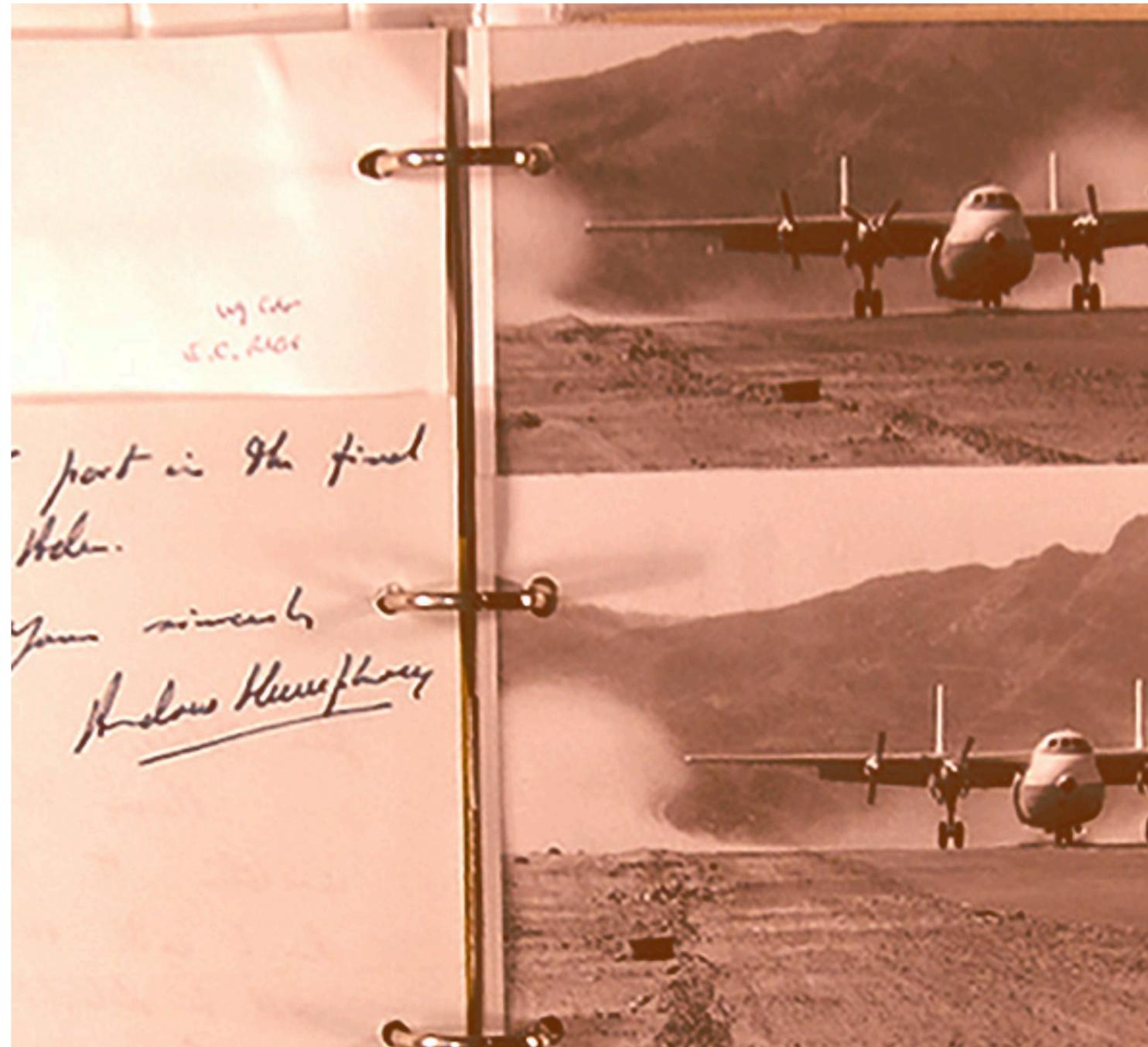
Contribution to knowledge

Contribute new insights into the relevance of Data Shadows and visual residues to construct narrative, visual and written in graphic design practice.

Provide insights into autoethnographic enquiry in the development of archival transcriptions through the graphic design process.

Provide new avenues of enquiry into archival research and transcription through graphic design methodology.

Generate insights into the legacies of Empire from the perspective of, 'peoples history' and subsequent generations that have settled in the UK.



Questions



AIRCRAFT OF MEDIUM RANGE TRANS
PARKED AT R.A.F-ADEN. KHORM

AIRCRAFT OF MEDIUM RANGE TRAN







