Digitising Galway's Graveyard Heritage

Project Background

- Galway County Council, working with various community groups and archaeological consultants, has been collecting graveyard memorial data for a number of years.
- Until recently this data has been collected through several methods, both paper-based and semi-digital making it difficult to integrate, access, and share.
- In 2020 the Council's Heritage and Geographical Information Systems (GIS) sections carried out a review with objectives of streamlining, standardising, and simplifying the survey process with the ultimate aim of generating a digital dataset that could be made freely available.
- In 2022 a project was initiated, supported by 'Heritage Council' and 'Open Data Engagement' funding, to build and implement a cloud based digital solution consisting of various innovative components.
- Solution is now successfully in place and to date over 25,000 memorials have been surveyed and validated and available through a publicly accessible web based application.
- Winner 2023 Best Community Engagement Award at recent Public Sector Digital Transformation Award.

Public Sector Digital Transformation Awards 2023

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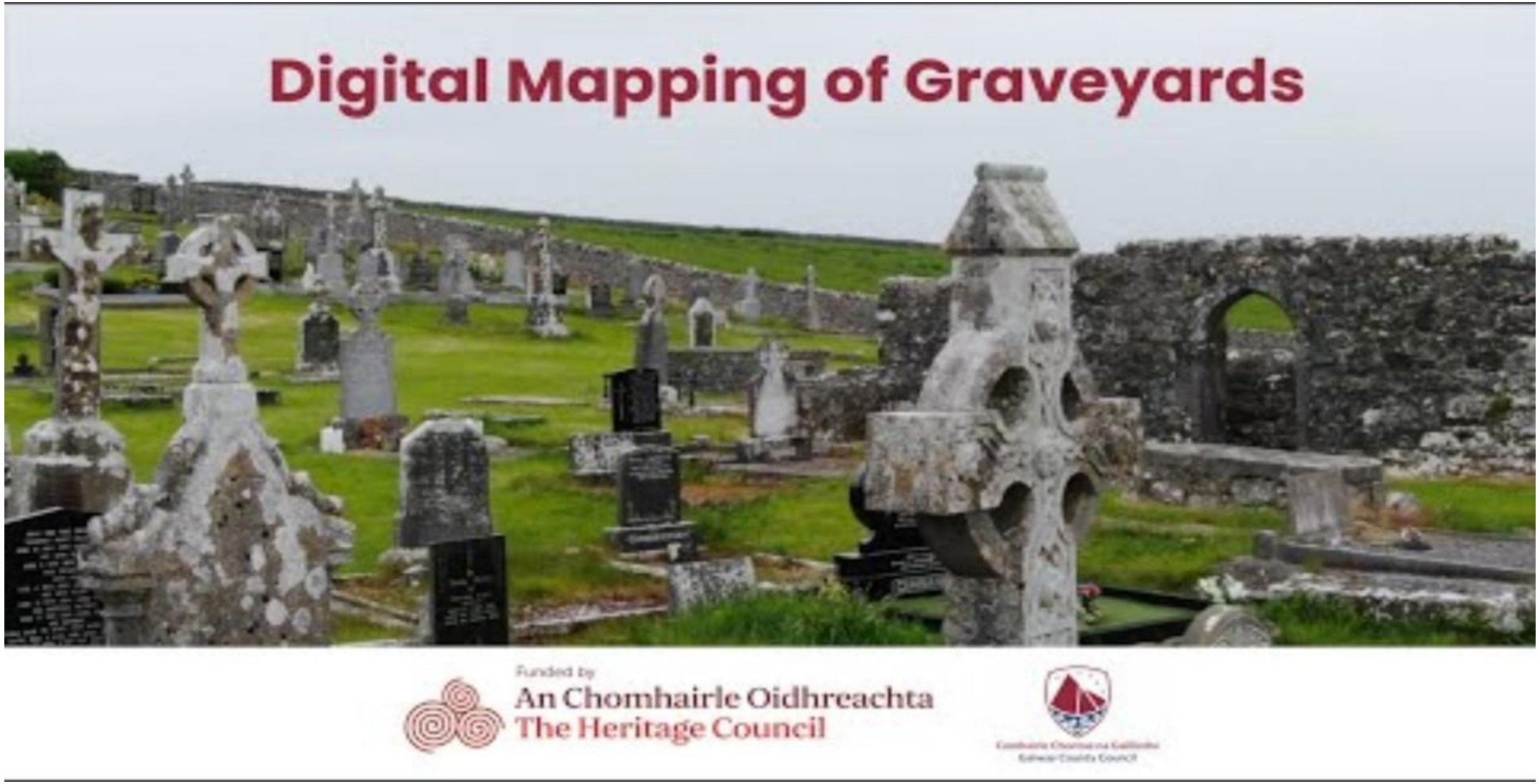

[Digitising Galway’s Graveyard Heritage - YouTube]

Key Objectives

1. Record memorial and burial details in a **standardised** way.
2. Reduce survey to publication **timeframe**.
3. **Collate and consolidate** all historical survey data with new survey data in a single system.
4. **Increase access** to memorial and burial data.
5. Share data under an **open licence** for 3rd party use.
6. Utilise a technical architecture that **supports the future expansion** of the solution as a shared service offering.
7. **Secure** valuable data for future reference purposes.

Who is Interested?

- Public - Provides primary and secondary sources for local history research.
- Community Heritage Groups – Free solution to local communities who want to record their graveyards.
- Genealogists- Both Commercial and Amateur: Supports research .
- Tourists – Irish based and international.
- Academics - Provides primary source material for academic research.
- Trades People – Source of information for businesses providing services relating to graves and graveyards
- Commercial Enterprises- Professional Historians, Conservation Architects, Archaeologists and allied professions.
- Galway county Council. Helps inform decision making within the Council and facilitates building of relationships with local communities.

Platform Architecture

Memorial Survey App

Drone Surveys

Private

Public

GCC Open Data Portal

Data Download

Management Information Dashboard and Reports

GIS Cloud Platform

Graveyard Memorial Search App

Data Download

Survey Data Validation and Management

Innovative Aspects

- **User-Centric:** ‘Service Design’ approach used ensuring user buy-in.
- **State of the Art:** Built on a cloud-based GIS platform.
- **Cost-Effective:** Surveyors simply need to install a free app on their mobile device.
- **Data Management:** Facilitates data validation and standardisation at point of entry.
- **Automation:** Facilitates efficient data integration and publication workflows.
- **Expandable:** Applied standards ensure surveys are seamlessly added to master dataset.
- **Open:** Facilitates open data compliance.
- **Compliance:** Satisfies key principles of Connecting Government 2030 and the Local Government ICT Strategy including ‘Cloud First’, ‘Build to Share’, Data as an Enabler, ‘Human- Driven Digital Experience’.
- **Built to Share:** Solution can be shared with other Local Authorities.

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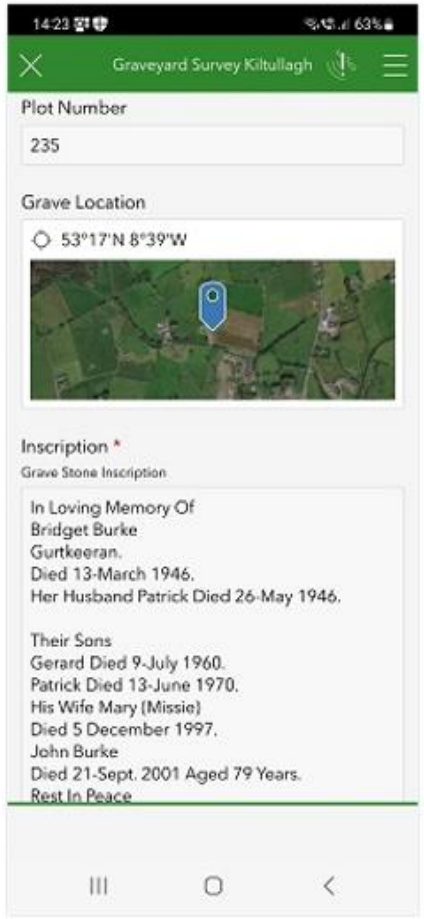
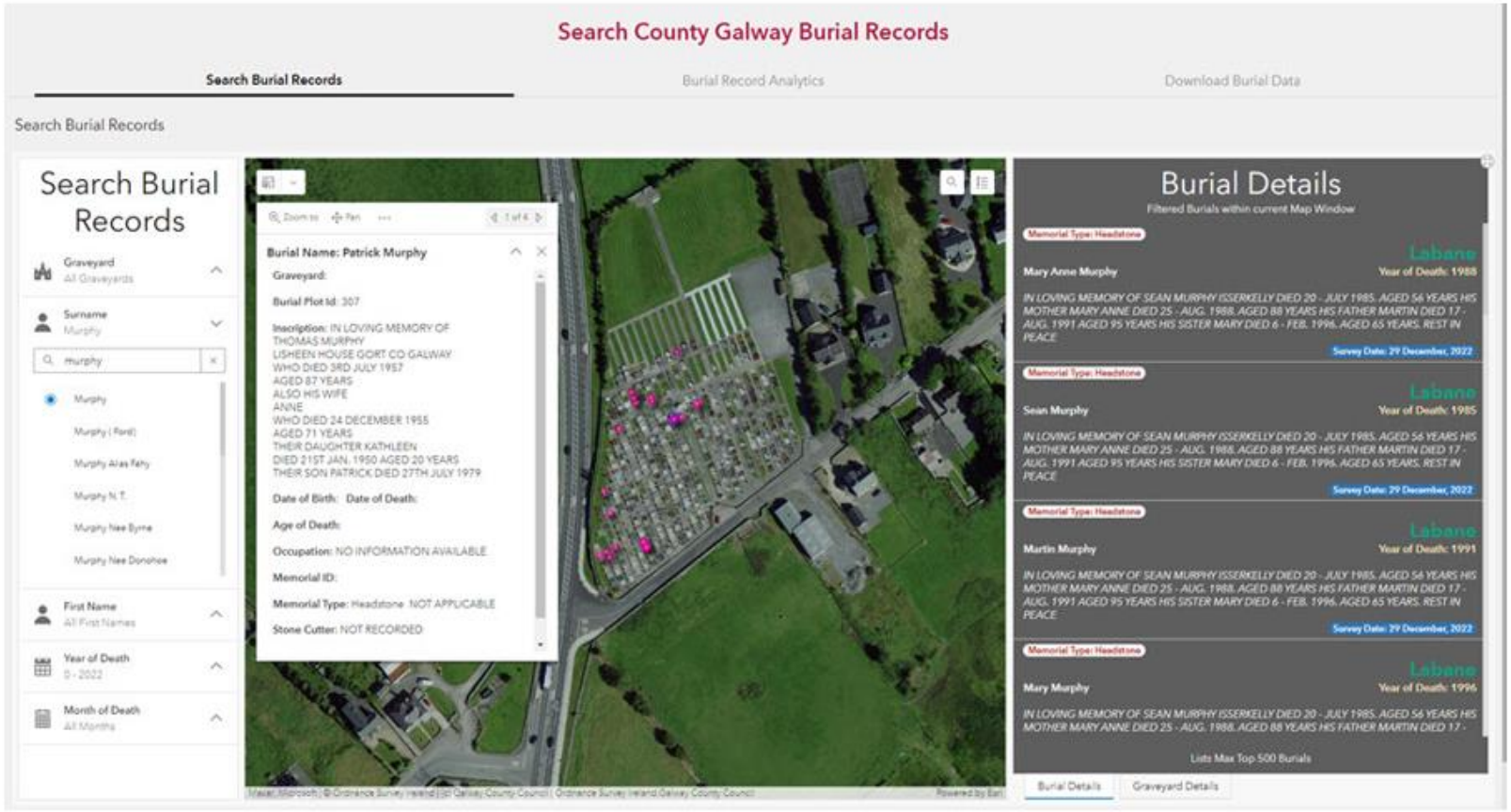


Mobile Survey App



Search Application

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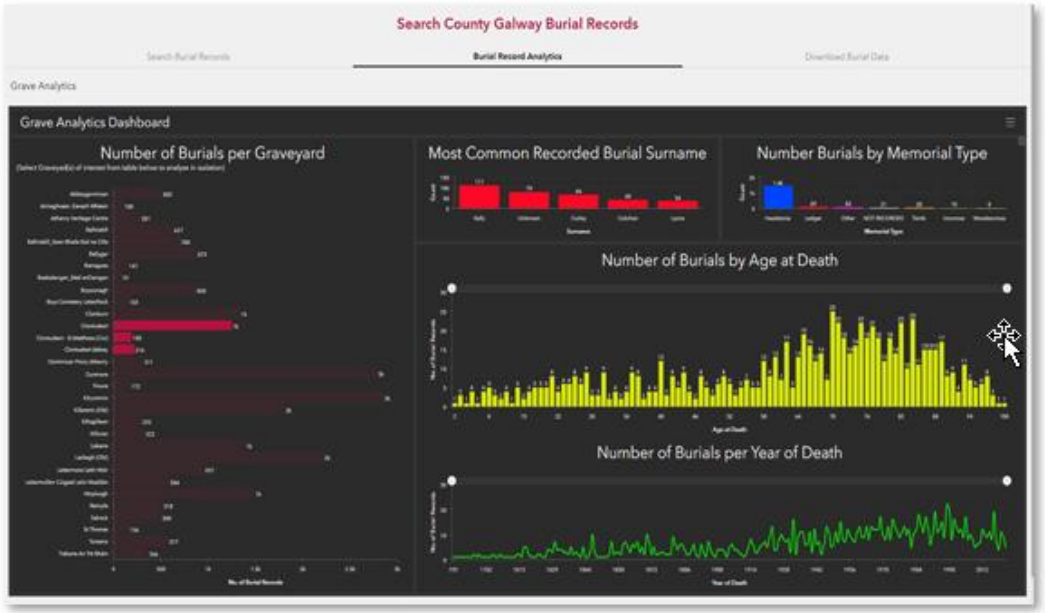
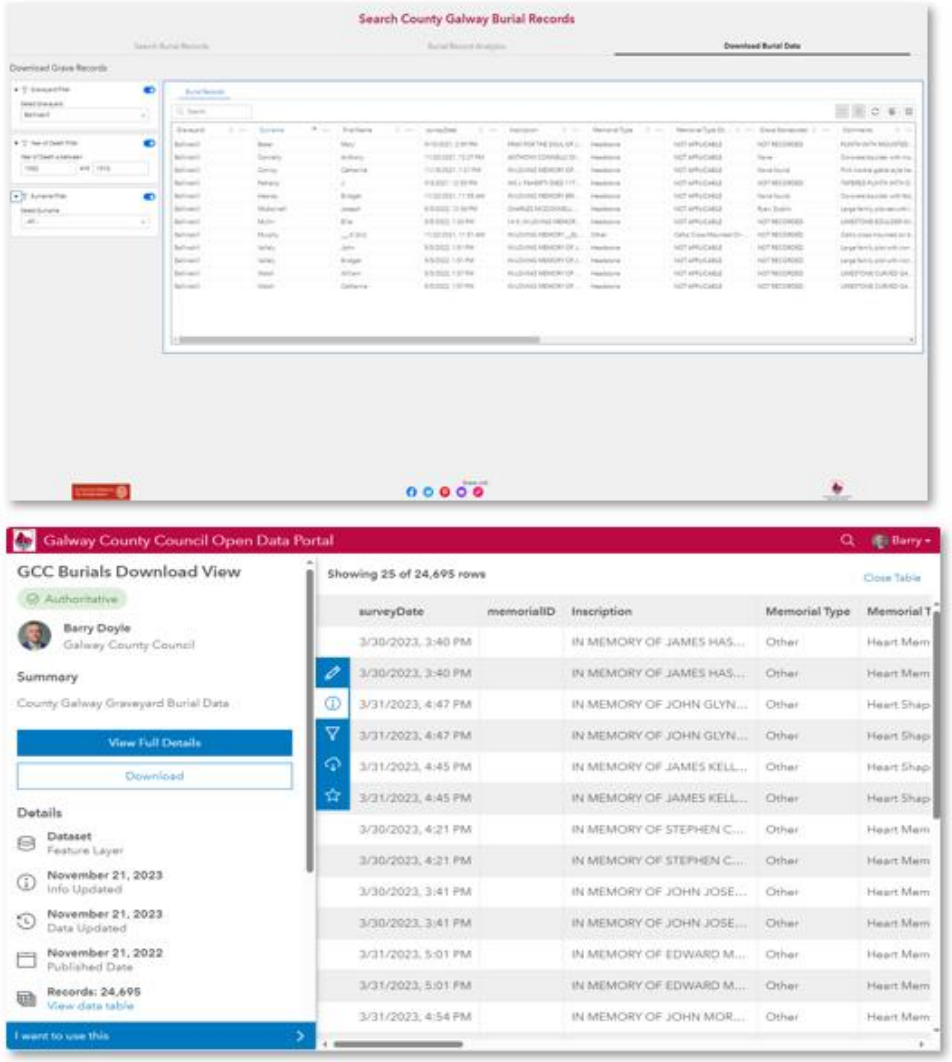


Data Analytics



Data Download

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