In recent years there has been a significant increase in demand from researchers for long
duration, high quality, and homogeneous historical geomagnetic data. Such data are
used, for example, for study of solar-terrestrial interactions, including climate variability,
and for studying evolution of the Earth's core.

The historical UK observatories, together with their modern day equivalents, provide
some of the longest running continuous sets of magnetic observations in the world. As
custodians of these records, BGS began a project in 2009 to capture high quality digital
images of the magnetogram and observatory yearbook collection, taking advantage of
technological improvements that have enabled the streamlining of digital capture of
analogue records. The goals of this on-going project are: to provide a back-up to the
original paper records (some of which are in a poor condition); to provide immediate
worldwide access to the records for researchers (previously a personal visit was the only
way to gain access to the archived information); and to extract digital data from the
scanned and photographed images.

In this paper we describe the on-going activities and provide an update on the status. We
show examples of the images captured thus far, which are available to search online as
part of the BGS OpenGeoscience service. We also describe the work carried out to date
to acquire digital data from selected observatory yearbooks and the attempts made to
extract new digital data at a higher time resolution than has previously been possible, for
selected historical geomagnetic storms.