

Collecting and Preserving Folklore and Oral History

Basic Techniques



Galway County Council & Galway County Heritage Forum

An Action of Galway County Heritage Plan 2004-2008

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By

Galway County Council & Galway County Heritage Forum
An Action of Galway County Heritage Plan 2004-2008

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This publication was produced by the Folklore Steering Group which comprises the following members:

Mr Christy Cunniffe, Galway County Heritage Forum
Mr Paul Gosling, Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology
Ms Marie Mannion, Heritage Officer, Galway County Council
Mr Seán Mc Lochlainn, Galway County VEC
Ms Patria McWalter, Archivist, Galway County Council
Mr Séamas O'Concheanainn, National University of Ireland, Galway
Mr Páid O'Neachtain, Oifigeach Forbartha an Gaeilge, Galway County Council
Ms Louise Ryan, Galway County Heritage Forum

Published by: Galway County Council & Galway County Heritage Forum

Text: Patria McWalter

Project Managers: Marie Mannion & Páid O'Neachtain

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Preface

Collecting and preserving oral history and folklore is an important, and enjoyable, task. Everyone has a story to tell and it is important that this information is collected as it can provide a valuable insight into the past. By collecting and preserving such material we can, ensure that the stories of the ordinary person in our communities are captured and, in time, written into our history. Such material is unique in that it gives us the perspectives from people of different backgrounds, cultures and religions. Eye-witness accounts of local and national events can give a human insight into the moods and atmosphere often overlooked in history books and faded into memory. For instance, a grandmother's tale of her life fifty years ago, remembering switching on an electric light for the first time, or watching a man walking on the moon, on television can make the imagery in her grandchild's story and history books come alive and give greater meaning and resonance to the child.

The actual act of remembering and telling one's tale can be very therapeutic, especially for the older generation. It empowers people to be involved in the process of documenting their life experiences and the events that have affected them. For some, it can be part of a healing process, to remember events they had previously been unable to talk about, such as fighting against family and friends during the Civil War, or a boating accident, for instance.

To collect these memories is a noble endeavour. It can also be quite a challenge.

Oral history, folklore, and the verbal arts and traditions are important to Irish people, and are a tangible part of local studies and our culture.

Private enthusiasts or indeed larger organisations engaged in collecting should recognise that their efforts will only be valued and appreciated if they firstly publish their findings, and, secondly if the original material (or copies) collected is deposited with a recognised archive where it will be preserved for posterity. So much valuable collecting work is marred by a lack of preparation, poor equipment, and lack of long-term planning.

The challenges faced in properly collecting and preserving oral histories can be easily overcome with good preparation. It is also important to bear in mind that such reminiscences are not a contemporaneous record but reminiscences captured, in most cases, long after the events they describe. It is essential therefore to be attentive when interpreting the content, to possible inaccuracies, the benefit of hindsight, and indeed, personal prejudices. Copyright and Data Protection legislation must also be considered. In addition, there is a moral obligation on the collector to protect and respect the memories of the storytellers, and the privacy and dignity of people mentioned in their stories, and to safeguard the integrity of the material collected.

In our ever changing times, when the stories and tales of the past are fading fast and being lost, so too is the equipment and technology in current use. As equipment dates very quickly, equipment obsolescence can be an obstacle in preserving and archiving what is collected. So there is a need to ensure that no matter what media is used in the collection process, that it can be preserved and accessed by the generations to come.

For the results to be truly worthwhile, and to make a lasting contribution to our sources of information on the past, it is important that the process of collecting and preserving is undertaken in a systematic way, and according to a simple set of standards and guidelines.

These guidelines are intended to help those interested in undertaking the collection and preservation of oral history and folklore on an amateur basis. It should help collectors to consider the various steps required, to focus their minds on the need for preparation, and to guide them through the recording process. It is not intended to be definitive, but rather a simple check-list and summary of the pointers to bear in mind.

The study of folklore and oral history is becoming increasingly popular, and in some instances is conducted on a full-time professional basis, particularly by sociologists. In some countries, such as Canada, conducting oral tradition interviews is considered scientific research, and under its *Scientists Act of the Northwest Territories*, a license is required prior to conducting interviews in the Territories.

Whether folklore and oral history is collected by professional or amateurs all collectors should have some insight or knowledge of the time period that is being discussed and should ideally have questions ready prior to undertaking interviews.

Collecting is complicated by copyright, privacy and other laws, and researchers should have an in-depth understanding of what is involved prior to venturing into any serious or academic recording of oral history.

These guidelines do not go into detail on the full implications of such issues, but does look in a cursory way at what may be involved. There are many sources and courses available on the topics, with much information also available on World Wide Web. A brief list of selected sources is supplied at the end of the booklet.

The publication is produced by Galway County Heritage Forum, and funded by Galway County Council and the Heritage Council, under the auspices of *Galway County Heritage Plan 2004-2008*. In Autumn 2005 a series of lectures, *Introduction to Folklore*, was organised in recognition of the growing interest in collecting and preserving folklore and oral history in the county of Galway. The aim of the County Heritage Forum is to assist the collector, in particular those working on sound recordings, to develop a methodology that will help ensure their collections have lasting value, and that they will be properly preserved and accessible by future generations.

Galway County Heritage Forum
2006

Foreword



Under *The Heritage Act, 1995*, The Heritage Council, was invested with a huge remit addressing a diversity of heritage types and issues including archaeology, architecture, wildlife, landscape, and waterways. Some aspects of our common heritage were not addressed, most notably, literature and music. But even in these areas Council has a remit through its promotion of conservation best practice and the welfare of collections. Inevitably Council has been active in encouraging the care of the primary objects associated with these well-known art forms. Over the years, especially through its Annual Grants Scheme, the Council has supported the restoration or re-mastering of early recordings, the storage and restoration of literary manuscripts. Placed broadly within the Council's aspirations for Irish archive collections such projects emphasise the need to provide due care to the primary data, the grist to the mill of the historical process. And yet the emphasis on the tangible can be misleading, denying as it does the experience of many, and in non-literary traditions, the Maori in New Zealand, the Inuit in Canada, denying the validity of whole cultures. This neglect is only now being rectified supported by the recognition of agencies such as UNESCO on the significance of Intangible Heritage. Council has a role to play in this increased awareness too.

While the end product may be tangible enough Oral History can however be elusive. There is no primary object, nothing tangible. As the good nuns sang of Maria in *The Sound of Music* how do you hold a moonbeam in your hand? And yet it is the very moonbeams of wisdom and insight that oral history presents that illuminates whole experiences in a manner that the documentation norm, beloved by historians, precludes. While the Heritage Council is not in a position to conduct such projects it is well placed to promote best practice in the gathering of data and the care of recordings made and the information compiled. This is the achievement of a publication such as this, one of many at local level that have wider application and usefulness.

Given the success and implications of a Policy Day on the future of Irish Archives (September 2005) Council is set to increase its commitment to supporting the welfare and promotion of Irish archive collections. The new Council, announced recently by Mr Dick Roche, Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, will be pro-active in this regard. Projects such as this one provide encouraging signs for what may be achieved.

Dr. Hugh Maguire,
Museums & Archives Officer,
The Heritage Council.

Message from the Mayor

Our large and varied county has a rich in heritage and it is our duty to create an awareness of this valuable asset. We also must work together to protect and preserve this important resource. Oral history and folklore is an important element of this heritage.



In recognition of the difficulty in obtaining information, training and knowledge on how to collect oral history and folklore, Galway County Heritage Forum decided to develop courses on the introduction to Folklore, which were held in the county in 2005 and delivered through the medium of Irish and English. Over one hundred people attended the courses in total and it was then decided to work on this folklore and oral history publication to assist people in undertaking folklore and oral history projects.

It is encouraging and wonderful to see that there exists a healthy, and ever growing, interest in the county in collecting our oral history and traditions. There is great enthusiasm for learning how to collect and preserve such material appropriately, and it is hoped that this publication will act as a constant reference guide to those who decide to collect and collate folklore and oral history. It is further hoped that it will be followed as a template on how best to approach the task, so that the end results will be of a high standard, and a worthwhile contribution to our oral archives.

This *'how to'* publication outlines the need for thorough preparation prior to undertaking a collecting project, it also gives guidance on how to conduct interviews, highlights the need for awareness of legislation, such as copyright, and very importantly, stresses the need to properly archive and preserve the recorded information for the knowledge and enjoyment of future generations. As its title suggests it is intended to be a simple, yet inclusive, introduction to the *Basic Techniques* involved, and hopefully it will act as a catalyst for further reading and investigation.

Several people have been involved in this initiative, in particular the Folklore Steering Group of the Galway County Heritage Forum. I am delighted that this book has been published now that there is an ever growing interest and need to protect our heritage.

I would like to pay tribute to my predecessor Cllr. Pat Hynes, who was County Mayor in 2005–2006, under whose auspices this project commenced.

I wish all of you who are embarking on the collection and preservation of our oral history and folklore great success, and hope they find it an enjoyable and enriching experience.

Cllr. Michael Mullins
Mayor of the County of Galway
2006

SUMMARY OF THE COLLECTING PROCESS

- Compile a list of the aims and objectives of your project
- Plan the project - consider aspects such as end products, budget, publicity, evaluation, personnel, equipment and time frames
- Conduct background research
- Compile a contact list of interviewees / informants
- Produce a questionnaire
- Produce a copyright / consent agreement
- Acquire equipment and practice using it
- Arrange and hold interviews (at a time and location convenient to the interviewees)
- Obtain signed consent forms from interviewees
- Record the interviewee's name, address and age and other biographical and genealogical details of note and ensure that a record is retained of supplementary information
- Evaluate research and interviews, considering initial aims and objects
- Transfer recordings to suitable storage medium (e.g. CD, DAT or DLT)¹
- Transcribe interviews
- Organise and present results - produce end product
- Archive recordings and supplementary documentation. On a continually basis monitor, refresh and migrate recordings to new formats as required.

¹ See Terminology in the appendix

SOME DEFINITIONS

Chapter

1

“Folklore, like any other discipline, has no justification except it enables us to better understand ourselves and others.”²

What is Folklore?

Folklore, much like the terms ‘heritage’ and ‘culture’ can be difficult to define. Like our heritage and culture it is all around us, it is often sub-consciously absorbed by us from the cradle. In its most rudimentary form it relates to traditional tales and stories of fairies, leprechauns and banshees, and old folk-beliefs in supernatural creatures, and things that never were. However, it also includes our own family lore, folk songs and music, and folk art such as drawings, pottery and carvings, to cite just some examples. It is the traditions and customs found in our families, communities and the wider society.

In some countries the term folklore and folklife are used interchangeable.

In 1976, as the United States of America celebrated its Bicentennial, the U.S. Congress passed the American Folklife Preservation Act (P.L. 94-201), which defines folklife as follows:

"American folklife means the traditional expressive culture shared within the various groups in the United States: familial, ethnic, occupational, religious, regional; expressive culture includes a wide range of creative and symbolic forms such as custom, belief, technical skill, language, literature, art, architecture, music, play, dance, drama, ritual pageantry, handicraft; these expressions are mainly learned orally, by imitation, or in performance, and are generally maintained without benefit of formal instruction or institutional direction."

² Abrahams, Roger D., *Journal of American Folklore* 81: 157 (1968).

Folklore can be divided into several sections, such as oral literature, social customs, occupational folklore, and material culture. Oral literature includes legends, tales, proverbs, sayings, dialect speech and folksongs. Social customs include marriage customs involving hen and stag nights, and funeral customs such as wakes. Occupational folklore can deal with blacksmithing, boat building, farming and other work-related lore, together with house building, thatching, and folk architecture such as gargoyles, grotesques and other designs on buildings, gravestones and other media to which folk art is applied. Finally, material culture includes quilting, pottery, jewellery, woodwork, wood and stone sculpting and general crafts.

Much folklore is passed on orally and also by means of informal teaching and demonstration, such as in the home and community.

To an extent, collecting and preserving folklore can be done in the same way as collecting and preserving oral history, that is, by interview and recording. But it also involves learning arts and techniques, such as thatching and stone wall building, first hand, through demonstration by its traditional practitioners. Such demonstrations can of course also be recorded onto film.



What is Oral History?

Oral history is the collecting and recording of the memories and experiences of an individual or group. An oral tradition is the passing of knowledge from one generation to the next orally (by speaking). Singing, telling stories, and enacting plays are also ways of passing on knowledge through the oral tradition. The primary form of the oral history record is the recorded human voice. The recording may then be applied as informational source material directly in sound or transcribed form. It can be used for historical purposes to create an important sound archive that complements conventional documentary records.

Oral history uses interviewing techniques to research and record the lives, experiences, knowledge and activities of ordinary people. The recording and preserving of oral histories can ensure that the stories and life experiences of everyone - the ordinary man, woman and child, the forgotten, the marginalised, such as ethnic minorities, the unemployed, disabled and even children - and those normally without a public voice, can be heard. The memories of people and communities can be recorded and preserved for the appreciation, education, enjoyment and knowledge of everyone.



It must be borne in mind that oral history may be defined as another person's experiences or reminiscences. How they experienced and viewed life can be very different to that of someone else who may have shared many of the same experiences and much of their life, be it a brother, sister, husband or wife, or work colleague. People's interpretation of shared events and moments in time can be very different.

Though traditionally, the 'ordinary' person's life is not recorded or written into our histories, there is now a growing trend to develop oral history projects and collect and preserve them. Many of the national universities and colleges include courses or modules on folklore and oral history (see *Useful Contacts* in appendix).

Some major oral history projects have taken place in Ireland in the recent past. These include an Urban Folklore Project (1980-81) undertaken by the Department of Irish Folklore, at the National University of Ireland, Dublin. The subject area was Dublin City and its environs. The Ballymun Oral History Project, in north Dublin, was funded by Ballymun Regeneration Ltd. and undertaken by *Eneclann* Ltd. The project aimed to record and document an oral history of the Ballymun community and to make the research available to the wider community. The Northside Folklore Project, in Cork was instigated in 1996 as an initiative of several groups including, *Béaloides*, Folklore & Ethnology at the National University of Ireland, Cork, Northside Community Enterprises Ltd., and Cork City Partnership. The project studies urban folklore, and now has an extensive archive of sound recordings, photographs and other material resulting from the project.

Cuimhneamh is the name given to the living history project undertaken in 2003 and 2004 in south Armagh, north Louth and south Monaghan. It aims to provide an extensive and ongoing archive of people's memories and experiences during the recent past from the early 20th century to the present day.

Many local authority archive services are now actively involved in the collection of oral histories. In addition to being an excellent source of information for the local and social historian, and other researchers, sound recordings are also an important socio-linguistic source. As Dietrich Schüller has stated they also '*give future generations of researchers an excellent insight into how we speak, pronounce, and phrase in our daily use of the language*'.³



³ Schüller, Dietrich Minidisk for field recording *Applying archiving principles to data gathering*, IASA Journal 14, December 1999

Oral history is a primary source of evidence. Oral histories can help us to understand how people felt about circumstances at a particular time in their lives. Among those who create and use oral history are historians, family and local historians, journalists, broadcasters, archivists, educators, archaeologists, folklorists and sociologists. Oral history interviews have ‘especially enriched the work of a generation of social historians, providing information about everyday life and insights into the mentalities of what are sometimes termed “ordinary people”.⁴

Oral history can be used in schools and hospitals, in private homes and communities. It can help to develop a fuller understanding of the places, people and events in our locality and county. It can also act as a form of reminiscence therapy, particularly for the aged.

This guide examines the techniques involved in collecting oral traditions and histories by means of recording the stories and experiences of others. Other valuable means of collecting can involve the use of digital video and stills photography. However, this guide does not discuss the skills required to use such equipment.

While the use of audio equipment will be discussed briefly, the guide cannot examine all the required skills and techniques in detail. It is recommended that advice and training be sought in the appropriate use and care of the specific makes and models of equipment chosen, whether audio or visual.



⁴ Shopes, Linda *Making Sense of Oral History*, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu>

PREPARATION

Chapter

2

A good collector should “be an opportunist, ready to take advantage of every chance to reap his harvest of lore. No occasion should be lost of making helpful contacts, or of asking apt questions”.⁵

Collecting oral history and folklore, like any other project, involves careful preparation, and the gathering of background information prior to the commencement of the actual recordings. It is recommended that you seek advice and guidance from those who may have already conducted such research, and learn from their experience and expertise. Consult guide books and the internet to learn more about the processes involved. Do not be afraid to ask questions prior to undertaking your research.

Careful preparatory work can save you much time, money and frustration.

Choose your Project

It is important to know first what it is that you intend to do, what your aims and objectives are. You should consider the following:

- What is your project subject, aim or theme?
- What do you want to learn from the people you interview?
- What do you want to have completed when the project is over? Is it a report, a publication or a school programme?

Summary CheckList

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Choose the topic | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Develop a work plan | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Develop a budget | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Gather background information | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Prepare a questionnaire | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Prepare a list of interviewees | <input type="checkbox"/> |

⁵ O Súilleabháin, Seán, (1963) *A Handbook of Irish Folklore*, Folklore of Ireland Society, reprint London 1963, p xii

The range of topics is almost endless, and can include everything from the most public of historical events of international, national or local importance, to the most intimate details of an individual's life. Topics could include fishing techniques on the Aran Islands, markets and fairs in county Galway, life in the Shannon Callows, or the horse races in Milltown, or indeed about life in a children's home or life in rural Ireland. Your objective might be to produce an exhibition, a local history publication, or an academic article on some aspect of society, and then to deposit the material in the local archive for the information and enjoyment of future generations.

The Delargy Centre for Irish Folklore (formerly the Department of Irish Folklore) at University College Dublin collects, classifies, and studies all aspects of Irish folk tradition has fourteen main topics under which it gathers information. These are as follows:

- 🎧 Settling and dwelling
- 🎧 Livelihood and household support
- 🎧 Communications and trade
- 🎧 The community
- 🎧 Human life
- 🎧 Nature
- 🎧 Folk medicine
- 🎧 Time
- 🎧 Principles and rules of popular belief and practice
- 🎧 Mythological tradition
- 🎧 Historical tradition
- 🎧 Religious tradition
- 🎧 Popular 'oral literature'
- 🎧 Sports and pastimes



Develop a Work Plan and Budget

It may be helpful, depending, on the size and extent of your project, to develop a work plan. This should outline the work you have to undertake, the steps involved and the amount of time allocated to each.

The work plan may also be useful in trying to work out how much money is required to complete the project. There are a range of possible expenses, much of which may depend on how much of the work you anticipate undertaking yourself. For instance, will you require the services of translators and transcribers? It is important to remember that there is more than likely a charge associated with such services.

It is important to keep a record of how much you spend, particularly if your project is being funded or grant aided by an agency, such as the Heritage Council or Galway County Council.



Expenses to consider include:**✓ Check List**

- | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------|
| PROFESSIONAL FEES | Will you hire other interviewers? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Will you be paying interviewees? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Will you need an interpreter / translator? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Will you hire someone to type the transcripts? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Will you need to hire a photographer? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Who will copy the interview tapes for you? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Will you require additional technical expertise? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| TRANSPORTATION | Will you need to rent a boat or car? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Will you need money for petrol, oil, spare parts? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Will you need money to travel to different communities, societies or organisations for interview or to present your results? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| EQUIPMENT and
OTHER RESOURCES | Recording equipment; such as a tape recorder or mini disc | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | CD-Recorder (and /or DLT Recorder); to produce preservation & access copies | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | External microphones | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | External speaker | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Earphones | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Batteries for all equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Battery tester | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Extension cords and cables | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Cassette tapes or discs | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Camera, Flash and Film | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Pens, pencils, erasers, notebooks | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Maps | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | Photocopying (original and copies for interviewees) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| REPORTING | Will you need someone to type the report, article, or publication for you? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| | How much will it cost to get your reports, article, or publication printed or copied? | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Gather Background Information

It is essential to have done some background research on your chosen topic. Look at old newspapers or maps about the areas and period under examination, and find out about important local or national events that may have occurred at that time or location. It may be useful, if collecting information about traditional crafts such as boat building or weaving to have some knowledge and understanding of the terminology, materials and methods used in the craft.

Consult Seán Ó Súilleabháin's *A Handbook of Irish Folklore*, which suggests a range of topics and questions that could be raised when researching various aspects of folklore. Ó Súilleabháin states that *'Detailed questioning will elicit information which will help to build up a composite picture of the social life and traditions of the district in the past and present'*.⁶

When examining human life and marriage, for instance, Ó Súilleabháin (*ibid*) lists various sub-headings, for example, 'Choice of Spouse', 'Courtship' and 'Eloping', and proceeds to suggest questions that should be asked. For example, under Courtship he suggests the following:

'Courtship. *Make a list of terms used in connection with courtship.....At what age did young people generally start courting? What customs or beliefs were connected with the practice? Long courtship. Bundling or night courtship. Unwelcome suitors. Popular attitude towards courting couples: parental discipline in this regard. Tricks played on courting couples by jokers.....Lovers promises. Were marriages generally arranged by the couples concerned or by professional matchmakers?* ⁷

⁶ Ó Súilleabháin, Seán, (1963) *A Handbook of Irish Folklore*, Folklore of Ireland Society, reprint London 1963, pp xi-xii *ibid*, p199

⁷ *ibid*, p199

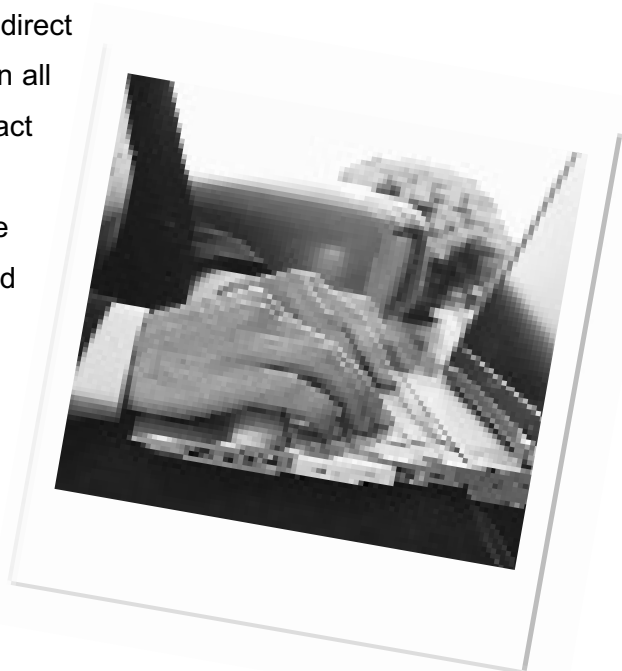
Develop A Questionnaire

Based on your project theme and background research, the next step is to compile a questionnaire. This helps to ensure there is consistency between all the interviews conducted for a specific project. It should act only as a prop to ensure all the issues under investigation are covered, and help work out how to ask the essential questions. A life story approach can be followed through an interview asking, for instance, questions relating to when and where born, family background, childhood, schooldays, leisure, work, retirement, up to the present day. This is an approach which has structure but is flexible enough to record the variety of experiences remembered. Having a questionnaire does not mean these are the only questions asked. Of course, further questions must be asked to develop and investigate a point or issue further, to tease out more detail, assist with the flow of conversation and to clarify something already said.

No two interviews are going to be the same. It is important to show an interest in your interviewee's and have some background knowledge about them and the important events in their lives. This helps to develop a meaningful line of questioning which is relevant to them and their experiences.

The type of questions and the way, in which they are asked will determine your end results. Direct or indirect questions and closed or open-ended questions can all help to vary the flow of the interview, but also extract information and make your interviewee feel comfortable. Generally you should ask 'essay' type questions that will prompt long answers, and to find out not only what your interviewee did, but also how they thought and felt.

It is recommended that you start with easy, less probing questions to help relax your interviewee, such as their full name, place of birth, occupation and so on. You can ask more probing questions as the interview progresses.



Ask questions that include the words, what, why, when, where, and how. Use plain language and short but respectful questions.

Avoid suggestive questions, such as those that make an assumption. For example

“I suppose...” or “I assume...”

Questions that extract precise answers can be useful, such as

“Were you ever a member of the GAA?”

However, open ended questions can be the most useful, such as

“Tell me about how you spent your day...?”

“Can you tell me about when you were...?”

“What type of childhood did you have...?”

Compile an Interviewee List

The next step is to define your population sample or target group for interviewing. Again, depending on the size of your project, you may wish to use local radio stations and newspapers, alerting the local community to your project, and advising on how you may be contacted.

It is useful to speak to local people who live and work in an area, such as local librarians, historians, the clergy, and those who may have a good local knowledge. They will often know of people involved in various organisations, charities, and professions, and may have knowledge about people’s particular interests and past experiences. They may be able to help you build up a contact list, which you can expand as you proceed to meet and talk to more people.

When you have compiled your contact list, then make personal contact. The best way to make your initial approach is by personal contact, such as by telephone, or letter. You should introduce yourself and your project, and outline the key topics you would like to talk to them about, and details of the potential end product, such as a publication. Openness from the start can help avoid having an interviewee refuse to address certain issues during the interview session.

Some people can be uncertain and nervous about having a recorded conversation, or may feel that they do not have a story to tell or may not wish to share it. Sometimes a little gentle persuasion and encouragement can help change their minds. To alleviate any concerns or uncertainties they may have, it may be useful to outline again exactly what your aims and objectives are and what it is you will be doing with your recording and research. Obviously, it goes without saying that you must respect their wishes and not encroach on the privacy of anyone who may decline to meet with you or grant you an interview.

You should then discuss with them a suitable venue for the interview. If possible, hold it in the person's home, as this is likely to be where they are most comfortable and relaxed. It is important that the background is quiet and that there will be no interruptions. One-to-one interviews are best, where the interviewee feels uninhibited and free to 'chat' in a friendly relaxed atmosphere.



EQUIPMENT

Constant changes and advances in technology as well as media, and equipment obsolescence is a major challenge and these issues should be considered when choosing recording equipment, particularly if archiving is one of the primary aims of the project.

Chapter

3

A Summary Look at Technology

Technological changes in the recent past has seen a shift away from using analogue (such as open reel tape or cassette) to digital technology (optical disc media). Now, for mass data storage DAT (Digital Audio Tape)⁸ and DLT (Digital Linear Tape)⁹ are increasingly being utilised.

Digital recordings, such as on mini-disc, can produce a high quality but short lived digital master that needs constant recopying or migrating for archival uses. For instance, the hardware and software may not be available to read your recording on mini-disc in five years time. *There is no format that can be regarded as a permanent solution to the issue of digital audio preservation, and no technological development will ever provide the ultimate solution; rather they are a step in a process whereby institutions will be responsible for maintaining data through technological changes and developments, migrating data from the current system to the next for as long as the data remains valuable.*¹⁰

SUMMARY CHECKLIST

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Choose equipment carefully | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Consider the archival implications of your chosen format | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Practice using the equipment | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Compile an equipment list for interviews | <input type="checkbox"/> |

⁸DAT tapes have a capacity of around 20 GB naïve and 40 GB compressed. Remember, for archival purposes data should NOT be compressed.

⁹DLT records on half-inch tapes in compact cartridges. These magnetic tape cartridges have a high capacity, up to 80GB, with a 30 year archival life (subject to refreshing, and availability of required software and hardware). A Super DLT tape can have a capacity of up to 300 GB. The initial cost for DLT can be higher than DAT but the storage capacity is greater.

¹⁰The International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives, (ISAS) *Guidelines on the Production and Preservation of Digital Audio Object*, 2000

Most field researchers and oral history collectors are now using mini-disc recorders. The sound quality is very good, and they are compact and very portable. Up until recently many archives and libraries, such as the National Library of Australia (NLA), continued to copy digital media to analogue reel-to-reel tape for preservation. They also produced a CD-R (Compact Disc Recordable) as both a working copy and as the copy from which they make later digital transfers. A 1999 *Technical Update: Minidisc Versus Cassette* article discussing the pros and cons of the two technologies concluded that cassette was considered a much better medium for long-term retention than digital audio tape.¹¹

More recently, however, many national dedicated sound archives are now moving towards Digital Mass Storage Systems (DMSS). These systems have been enabled by the integration of audio into data systems. Such systems, with suitable software are, now considered, to be the most appropriate for the long term maintenance of audio data. They “permit automatic checking of data integrity, refreshment, and finally, migration with a minimum use of human resources”.¹²



As technology is changing at an alarming rate, it is advisable to read current literature on the topic of formats or carriers (analogue or digital e.g. tape or disc) and preservation, and seek up to the minute advice on required specifications before deciding which technology, and which mode of it, to use. Perhaps discuss the issue with the archive institution you propose depositing your material with prior to recording.

¹¹ Ward, Alan with Copeland, P., D Perks, R. *Technical Update Mini-disc versus cassette* Oral History Vol. 2 27 No. 2, 1999

¹² International Association of Sound and Audio Visual Archives (IASA) Technical Committee Papers, TC-03, Safeguarding of the Audio Heritage: Ethic, Principles and Preservation Strategy, Version, 2, September 2001

Much will depend on your long term aim and budget. While analogue still has many benefits in archival terms, there is growing confidence in digital media, subject to vigilance, and adherence to standards, and constant refreshing and migration¹³ of data. Therefore, recording directly to digital formats is now acceptable, so long as the data is not compressed, good quality carriers are used, and the proper environmental, handling and migration processes are employed.

The International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives, (ISAS) has produced *Guidelines on the Production and Preservation of Digital Audio Objects*¹⁴, which you should consult prior to undertaking your oral history and folklore collecting project. These Guidelines are aimed at archival institutions involved in the collection and preservation of audio and audiovisual material. They provide advice and information on various suitable approaches and technologies including DMSS and small scale manual approaches to digital storage systems, data tape, hard disks, optical discs including CD recordable and so on. The Sub-Committee on Technology of the Memory of the World Programme of UNESCO recommends these guidelines as best practice for audio-visual Archives. The *Guidelines* may, particularly for the amateur collector, seem very technical. Indeed, the recommended procedures and technologies are often out of the reach of even small archives services. Yet the recommendations should be followed as closely as resources will allow.

Storing on DAT or DLT is an option to consider. These are high capacity storage formats. DMSS, such as DAT recordings can be processed via a stand alone CD recorder with automatic index coding.

When digitising audio recordings it is vital to avoid data compression¹⁵. For archival preservation the ISAS Guidelines recommend,

*'linear PCM (pulse code modulation) (interleaved for stereo) in a .wav or preferably BWF .wav file (EBU Tech 3285) for all two track audio. The use of any perceptual coding (lossy compression) is strongly discouraged. It is recommended that all audio be digitised at 48 kHz or higher, and with a bit depth of at least 24 bit. Analogue to Digital (A/D) conversion is a precision process, and low cost converters integrated into computer sound cards cannot meet the demands of archival preservation programs'*¹⁶

¹³ Involves the copying of all stored material from an older platform to a new one, e.g. from cassette tape to CD. See Chapter 7 and *Terminology* in Appendix.

¹⁴ A copy of the *Guidelines* is available for reference at Galway County Libraries.

¹⁵ Dietrich, Schüller, *Minidisc for field recording? Applying archiving principles to data gathering*, ISAS Journal No. 14, 1999, states archival principles are violated by deliberately employing data reduction, when archiving is the aim of the recording project from the outset.

¹⁶ International Association of Sound and Audio Visual Archives (IASA) Technical Committee Papers, TC-03 *Safeguarding of the Audio Heritage: Ethic, Principles and Preservation Strategy*, Version, 2, September 2001

These guidelines do not discuss the technical details involved or the software required for digital migration.

Ultimately the choice of equipment is yours, and below you will find some brief information on the various formats, including a short account of DMSS (Digital mass storage systems). Currently, if starting afresh consider recording to mini-disc, and copying for preservation and access purposes to a CD-R (Compact Disc-Recordable) or CD-ROM (Compact Disc, Read Only Memory).

Recording Equipment

No matter what make or model of tape recorder or mini-disc recorder you choose it is worth bearing in mind that your intended aim should be to produce a high quality sound recording. Though most recorders have inbuilt microphones it is better to use an external microphone, as this will ultimately give you a better quality sound recording.

You will also want to make duplicate copies, so that you have a backup preservation copy, a working copy, for transcription for instance, and an access copy. The working copy can also, depending on frequency of use, also be used as the access copy. Ideally, you should duplicate the recordings onto at least two formats, so that if one format (and /or software) becomes obsolete before you have had an opportunity to migrate to a new format, you would at least have the other format to still work with. Therefore, if recording on mini-disc or cassette tape you should transfer to CD-R. So you will need the initial recording machine, a CD-Recorder, and digitising software, and the machinery to assist with transcription, together with ancillary equipment. You must ensure that it is all of good quality, sourced from reputable suppliers and is compatible.

Master is the original recording, be it on cassette tape or mini-disc. This is preserved and duplicated as soon as possible. This is rarely, if ever, used again.

Preservation copy is kept in optimum storage conditions, used for migration and refreshing only, and as a safety backup copy in the event that the master becomes lost, damaged or obsolete.

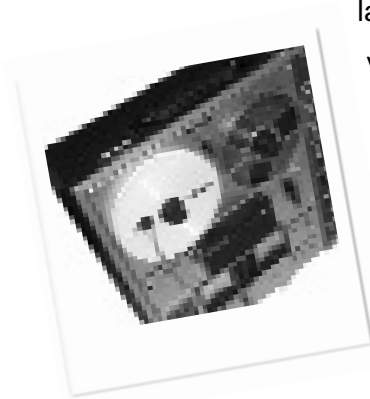
Working copy used for transcriptions, editing if required, and other publication work.

Access copy is used for access. Due to constant use it is likely to suffer from wear and tear, and thus need to be replaced by producing another copy from the preservation copy as required.

Having a good quality sound recording will greatly assist when transcribing, and will also promote use of the interviews by researchers. If the quality is poor, it is unlikely researchers, of whatever age, young or old, will be encouraged to listen through the whole recording. Also if the sound is poor it limits its potential uses, such as for broadcast or commercial use.

Reel-to-reel recorders can be robust, large and unwieldy, even though portable reel-to-reel equipment is available, and significantly more expensive than cassette recorders, though they do provide a good format for long-term archival storage, because the estimated shelf life is longer than that for a cassette. They also provide excellent broadcast quality.

Reel-to-reel recorders use magnetic tape, which is recorded on full track, $\frac{1}{2}$ track, or $\frac{1}{4}$ track. The latter is *not* recommended. Most recorders are capable of operating at various tape speeds, unlike cassette equipment which operates at a standard tape speed of $1\frac{7}{8}$ inches per second (i.p.s.). Speeds of $3\frac{3}{4}$ i.p.s. and $7\frac{1}{2}$ are considered essential for high quality recording. The higher the tape speed, the greater the performance capability, and also the greater the tape consumption. For reasons of tape economy $3\frac{3}{4}$ i.p.s. is considered adequate for recording speech and $7\frac{1}{2}$ i.p.s. for recording music.¹⁷



Cassette Recorder: Though they are still widely available, manufacturers are phasing out the production of cassette recorders. They are relatively inexpensive, and portable. If using such a recorder invest in one that has a jack for an external microphone, in addition to a built-in microphone.

¹⁷ Buckley, Anthony D., Ballard, Linda M., & Harkness, Clifford, "Collecting Oral History" A Guide for Teachers and Amateur Historians, The Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, n.d.

The jack can also be used to accommodate cables that connect equipment together while duplicating tapes, or transferring to CD-R or CD-ROM. Use a recorder that operates with both direct electric power and batteries. If conducting interviews without access to direct current, bear in mind that most batteries will only power a recorder for between 4 and 6 hours. Monitor the usage of batteries.

Ensure the recorder has a noise reduction system, such as Dolby or DBX.



Many tape recorders have an Automatic Record Level. To avoid distortion invest in one which allows you to control the proper level of signal going on to tape. Many recorders enable both automatic and manual control of recordings, but some may only have one or the other. It is better to get one that does allow for manual operation, which with proper operation can provide superior recordings. Recorders with only manual control of recording levels should have a large easy-to read meter to allow you to properly monitor the signal levels. Make sure that you have a good strong signal, take peaks on the edge of the red if your recorder has a VU meter. Too low a level of recording will give you lot of 'hiss' on the recording. Too high a level and you will have distortion.

Use a cassette cleaner on the recorder heads and tape drive mechanisms after every 20 hours of recording or playback time. This procedure helps maintain the recording quality of your recorder.

Mini-disc recorders (MD) are now used widely for the collection of oral histories. They are portable, have excellent sound quality and can be relatively inexpensive. They can also feed recorded material straight onto computers. The main disadvantage is that the technology is likely to be superseded in a relatively short time frame, perhaps in the next 5 - 10 years. So if your recording is on mini-disc it should be copied immediately onto a CD-R or CD-ROM, which is likely to be a more durable digital format. This can be done using a CD recorder.



Ensure the MD has an input source for an external microphone, some newer models may not. In which case you will need an audio-buddy (*pre-amp*) into which the microphone links, that will then link to the MD recorder. Also ensure it has a digital output to connect digitally to a CD recorder.

Storage Media

Cassette Tapes: Use good quality tapes. Tapes come in different time lengths, such as 30, 60 or 120 minutes. The recommended cassette length is 60 minutes; that is 30 minutes on each side. Tapes shorter than this need to be changed too frequently during an interview, and longer tapes can be very thin and can break. Tape in a 120 minute cassette is thinner than in either the 30 or 60 minutes length. Thin tape is more prone to break or jam and sounds recorded on one side of the tape will often bleed through to the other side. Generally, the sound quality and time that recording remain audible on the cassette decreases with thinner tape. Micro cassette recorders also use thin tape and should be avoided.

It is better to invest in cassette tapes with the casing (plastic cover) screwed together, rather than glued. This enables the casing to be unscrewed and opened in the event that it becomes damaged and the tape needs to be transferred to another casing.

At the end of each interview session, break all cassette tabs and properly label the tapes. Put as much information as possible on the cassette tape *and* its box in case the interview tape is separated from the rest of its documentation. At the very least, include the name(s) of the interviewee and interviewer, the project title, and the date of the interview.

Mini and CD Discs: It is advisable to take time in choosing your disc. There is great diversity in practice and production of mini-discs and CD-Rs (Compact Disc - Recordable), and great care is needed in selecting high quality media from reputable suppliers for archival purposes.¹⁸ For data it is recommended that you use gold CD, such as for backups of your transcripts. Gold is regarded as a more viable long-term archival medium. It is not always possible to determine the formulation of a disc based purely on its colour. A gold reflective layer does not guarantee use of phthalocyanine dye (the acceptable dye). However, audio CDs do not come in gold, therefore use normal audio CDs of a known and trustworthy brand. Ensure you refresh and upgrade periodically, and migrate to a new format prior to the onset of obsolescence.



¹⁸ Digital Preservation Coalition, *Handbook: Media and Formats*, www.dpconline.org

DAT or DLT Tapes: These are only required if you are undertaking a large scale project, and have the appropriate hardware and software to deal with this technology. Again, it is important to purchase high quality tapes from reputable brands and suppliers. However, if storing data on DAT or DLT do regular restores to check everything is working, and clean the heads regularly.

Ancillary Equipment

Microphone: A good quality external microphone is essential. Some literature may recommend a small tie clip or lapel microphone.

However, the interviewee may be uncomfortable with this, or may use frequent hand or other movements while talking, which could result in a rustling sound. A cardioid or unidirectional microphone has maximum sensitivity in the direction in which the microphone is pointing. It is best used with a stand, as it is susceptible to

handling noise, such as when the hand using it moves. An omni-directional

microphone is preferable if it is to be held when recording, as they are less susceptible to handling noise. These microphones, though, do pick up sounds coming from all directions, not just in the direction at which it is pointed.¹⁹ Ensure all your equipment is compatible.



¹⁹ "Collecting Oral History" A Guide for Teachers and Amateur Historians, The Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, n.d.

Headphones are required to listen to the recording, and for transcribing it.

CD - Recorder is required to copy from cassette to CD, or indeed vice versa, and also from mini-disc. These are generally easy to operate. In instances where your master is on an analogue tape, the production of CD-R (CD-Recordable) copies is required to facilitate access and serve as a backup preservation copy. Ensure your recorder has digital output and inputs; transferring digitally gives good quality sound. Where the master is on mini-disc, it is vital to transfer the recording onto CD as soon as practicable. CDs are recognised as a more durable archive format than mini-disc. If using CD-R discs for preservation copies it is strongly recommended that you monitor the condition of the collection by checking sample recordings at regular intervals using a suitable CD tester.



DLT Tape Drive: This should be of good quality and well maintained. It is the recording and access device.



Remote jack and foot pedal will be required to aid with transcribing from cassette tape. Transcription is time consuming and no doubt will require the stopping, starting and re-winding of the recorder many times. This can be hard on the forward and reverse buttons on the cassette recorder. It is easier to do this by use of a foot pedal, which can move the tape backwards and forwards as required. Alternatively, you can invest in a transcription machine.

Software for transcribing from CD is available. It generally has the ability to record, play, pause, stop, fast forward, rewind and so on, and allows you to see all recordings and dictations that you are transcribing. In addition you will need a foot pedal and earphone.

Camera: It will be useful to have a photograph of your interviewee, for reference purposes, and to help personalise the sound recording. The photograph will accompany and compliment the recording.

Batteries: It is usefully to always carry spare batteries or rechargeable batteries, such as LIP12, and a battery re-charger.

It is important to read all your equipment instruction manuals carefully, and practice using the equipment before embarking on your first interviews. The equipment should also be tested before each interview. Play back test recordings to assess the sound quality and volume. If the voice sounds loud or distorted try moving the microphone a little further away from the speaker, and alternatively if the voice is too soft move it closer. Ensure all your equipment is compatible, and seek professional advice before purchase.



Be mindful of battery times, and tape and disc lengths.

Points to Consider:

- Longer-term storage is likely to be on Digital Linear Tape (DLT). This has a significantly longer expected lifetime than CDs.
- Regardless of the choice of medium, it must be borne in mind that the medium will become obsolete in the near to mid-term future. Within five years, migration to new storage media is likely to be a necessity.

Equipment Prices

Set out below is a summary, with an estimate of prices²⁰ of the equipment that you may require.

Cassette recorder with rechargeable battery, for broadcast standard recording	€700
Cassette Recorder, Professional Walkman (non-broadcast standard)	€150
Mini-disc Recorder	€300 - €400
M-Audio Audio buddy Pre-Amp (for microphone)	€140
CD-Recorder, (to enable copying from cassette to CD) (analogue-to-digital converter)	€450
DRA 503 Hosa 3 mtr digital SPDIF lead	€15
Digital Camera	€300 - 600
Microphone	€150
Headphones, and 3.5mm power Jack	€80
160 Ferric oxide cassette tapes (set of 5)	€12
Mini-disc, (set of 5)	€15
CD-R Maxima Digital Audio (set of 20)	€25
DAT Tape (10 pack)	€50
DAT Drive	€600
DLT Tape	€40
DLT Drive	€1,500
Batteries	€30
Software for transcription from CD with foot pedal	€150
Transcription machine, (for cassette tape)	€350
Mini-disc player (for listening post / research access)	€150

²⁰ Estimate prices as at 2006, excluding VAT

COPYRIGHT AND DATA PROTECTION

Chapter

4

Collecting oral history or conducting oral history research involves many skills, such as time management, use of equipment, and interviewing techniques. It also demands certain ethical forms of behaviour, so as to ensure that proper respect is accorded to the person being interviewed and to the information they impart. It is vital to inform the interviewee before an interview what is going to be done with the information, and to receive their consent for its future use, be it for deposit in a local archive, as an educational tool, or for publication.

Collectors of sound recordings and folklore are advised to familiarise themselves with the related legislation and ensure that they do not breach copyright or other legislation in any way. It is not possible in this publication to examine the issue in detail. This chapter is simply intended to draw your attention to the need for awareness, and in particular stress the need to obtain informed consent from your interviewees.

SUMMARY CHECKLIST

- Beware of related legislation
- Understand the required obligations
- Develop a Consent Form
- Develop a Copyright Assignment form

The issues to consider are,

- 🔊 Protection of interviewees. There is a need to ensure that the consent given by them to use the recording is as informed as possible.
- 🔊 Protection for third parties (i.e. individuals named and mentioned in the recordings). There is often no way to verify statements about third parties or to obtain their consent to use the material.
- 🔊 Fragility of the medium (e.g. tape or CD), where lengthy closure periods can be a problem.

There are several pieces of legislation that should be taken into consideration prior to undertaking the collection of oral history and folklore. These include,

- 🔊 Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000
- 🔊 Data Protection Act, 1998
- 🔊 Data Protection (Amendment) Act, 2003
- 🔊 Freedom of Information Act, 1997

The purpose of interviewing people and recording their reminiscence is generally to make the interview available for research and entertainment purposes. “It is unethical, and in many cases illegal, to use interviews without the *informed consent* of the interviewee, in which the nature of the use or uses is clear and explicit”.²¹

Extracts from Legislation

Irish *Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000* makes some reference to and provision for folklore does not include a definition of it.

The copyright Act of Kenya, 2001 includes a comprehensive definition of folklore:

“...a literary, musical or artistic work presumed to have been created within Kenya by an unidentified author which has passed from one generation to another and constitutes a basic element of the traditional cultural heritage of Kenya and includes (a) folktales, folk poetry and folk riddles (b) folk songs and instrumental folk music (c) folk dances and folk plays; and (d) the production of folk Art, in particular drawings, paintings, sculptures, pottery, woodwork, metal ware, jewellery, handicrafts, costumes and indigenous textiles.”

²¹ The Oral History Society and Alan Ward, *Copyright and Oral History, Is your oral history legal and ethical?*, 2003 www.ohs.org.uk

Folklore is mentioned in several sections of the Irish *Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000*, such as in Section 197 relating to works of folklore, which states:

- (1) *Where, in the case of an anonymous work which has not been lawfully made available to the public, there is evidence that the author (or, in the case of a work of joint authorship, any of the authors) complied in section 182 by having a connection with a country, territory, state or area other than the State, it shall be presumed until the contrary is provided that copyright subsists in the work.*
- (2) *Where, under the law of a country, territory, state or area, a body is appointed to protect and enforce copyright in a work referred to in subsection (1), the Minister may by order designate that body for the purposes of this section.*
- (3) *A body designated by order under subsection (2) shall be recognised in the State as having authority to protect and enforce copyright in a work referred to in subsection (1) in the place of the owner of the copyright, other than the authority to assign the copyright in the work and the body may bring proceedings relating to copyright in its own name.*
- (4) *This section shall not apply where there has been an assignment of the copyright in a work by a author of which notice has been given to the designated body, and nothing in this section affects the validity of an assignment of copyright made, or licence granted, by the author or a person lawfully claiming under him or her.*

Folklore is also referred to in Section 245, which relates to recordings of works of folklore, where it states:

- (1) *A recording of a performance of an anonymous work which has not been lawfully made available to the public may be made for the purpose of including it in an archive maintained by a designated body without infringing any right conferred by this Part were at the time of the recording it made*
 - (a) *the making of the recording does not infringe any copyright, and*
 - (b) *the making of the recording is not prohibited by any performer*
- (2) *A copy of a recording made under subsection (1) and included in an archive maintained by a designated body may, subject to compliance with the conditions referred to in subsection (3) be made and supplied by an archivist without infringing any right conferred by this Part...*

The interpretation of author is given in *Section 21* of the Act, which states:

In this Act, “author” means the person who creates a work and includes

- (a) in the case of a sound recording, the producers;*
- (b) in the case of film, the producer and the principal director*
- (c) in the case of a broadcast, the person making the broadcast or in the case of a broadcast which relays another broadcast by reception and immediate retransmission, without alternation, the person making the other broadcast;...*
- (d) in the case of a photograph, the photographer.*

Therefore, in the case of an oral history sound recording, the collector, be it an individual, organisation or institution, is the copyright owner.

The duration of copyright in a sound recording is covered in the Act under *Section 26*, which states:

- (1) The copyright in a sound recording shall expire*
 - (a) 50 years after the sound recording is made, or*
 - (b) where it is first lawfully made available to the public during the period specified in paragraph (a), 50 years after the date of such making available.*

Sound recordings are protected in the Act. *Section 184* states:

- (1) A literary, dramatic, musical or artistic work, sound recording, film, typographical arrangement of a published edition or an original database, shall qualify for copyright protection where it is first lawfully made available to the public*
 - (a) in the State; or*
 - (b) in an country, territory, state or area to which the relevant provision of this Part extends.*
- (2) For the purposes of this section, lawfully making available to the public a work in one county, territory, state or area shall be deemed to be the first lawful making available to the public of the work even where the work is simultaneously lawfully made available to the public elsewhere; and for this purpose, lawfully making available to the public of a work elsewhere within the previous 30 days shall be deemed to be simultaneous.*

Put rather plainly, material, like sound recordings that are ‘in copyright’ may NOT be copied, issued to the public, in publication, exhibition or website, performed or played in public, adapted or broadcast without the copyright owner’s permission. There are some exceptions, such as copying by libraries and archives for preservation purposes, or the copying of small extracts for private study or research.

Oral histories can be particularly tricky from a Data Protection Act and copyright perspective, as they are not a contemporaneous record but reminiscences captured, in some cases, quite some time after the events they describe. Some of the memories may not be accurate, and it is possible that the opinions of the narrator might cause offence to those described.

From a best practice point of view, Data Protection considerations, and other legal constraints are largely taken care of with an effective copyright clearance procedure. This can be verbal, such as recorded at the beginning of an interview, but it is preferable to receive copyright clearance in writing.

Nevertheless, legal issues and problems can still arise. For instance, third parties mentioned in a recording, can still raise an objection, under Data Protection legislation, to the recording being made public, particularly if the interview contained libellous or confidential information relating to them. All objections should be handled sensitively, and legal advice should be sought where necessary.

Copyright Clearance

Collectors should obtain an assignment of copyright (form of handing over of copyright), from the interviewees prior to commencing the recording. The purpose of assignment is:

- To enable routine consultation of the interviews to take place as agreed with the interviewees (subject to any restrictions they may wish to impose, for example stipulating a closure period for 10 years, or not permitting use on the internet), and
- to enable parts of recorded interviews or extracts from transcriptions to be used in publications, broadcasts, exhibitions or on the internet.²²

As a matter of courtesy, where possible, interviewees or their surviving relatives should be informed when their recordings or words are to be published or broadcast.

If the recordings are to be deposited with an archive, or other custodians, it is likely that they will request that the collector in turn assign copyright to them. Without this assignment the future usefulness and value of the recordings may not justify the time and effort needed to conserve and document the recordings.

Furthermore, from an administration point of view, transferring copyright to the designated institution means that researchers would not have to make contact with the collector if and when they wish to apply to copy the recordings for use, for example in an exhibition or an educational programme. Instead, they would simply apply to the archives, or custodians, for copyright clearance.

²² The Oral History Society and Alan Ward Copyright and Oral History, Is your oral history legal and ethical?, 2003, <http://www.ohs.org.uk>

Informed Consent

It is vital that the interviewee is informed of exactly what it is you propose doing with the recording. Is it to be used as an educational tool? Is it likely to be used for broadcast purposes? Is it likely to be deposited in an archive for preservation, and further research use?

It is your duty, as collector, to ensure that the interviewee is informed of each and every possible use, and to ensure you receive their consent for each. If the interviewee does not wish the recording to be used for broadcast purposes, for instance, you must not then use it for that purpose.

Consent is best negotiated by means of the copyright clearance form. A consent form, should be obtained from the interviewee at the time of the interview, or alternatively after a transcript of the interview has been sent to them for verification.

Many archives, or other custodians, will request a copy of consent forms prior to accepting any deposit of oral history recordings.

Relevant Forms

By requesting the interviewee to complete the relevant forms, namely copyright clearance and informed consent forms, you are making them aware of the purpose of the interview and its future use, and ensuring that the interviews are not subject to exploitative or other undesirable uses.

The clearance aspect generally follows a standard pattern. It can allow for the inclusion of various conditions, such as impose a closure period for a specified period or limit use to publications and educational programmes. It is important to comply with any reasonable specific wishes of the interviewee.

However, in the event of an interviewee wishing to impose a lengthy closure periods, such as for 70 years, it may be worth considering the value of collecting in the first instance, weighted against the preservation and other requirements of the material for such an extended period without the benefit of being able to facilitate access.

In some cases, the archives or custodian may itself have to impose a closure period, if the recordings contain personal, confidential or defamatory reference for example.

One form can be used to incorporate both copyright and consent issues. Sample forms are included in the appendices, which can be adapted to suit your own requirements.

In addition, it is recommended that any researchers granted access to the recordings or transcripts be asked themselves to sign a Data Protection Act form. Wherein they agree to make use of the personal data contained in the recordings or transcripts in compliance with legislation. The purpose being so as not to cause damage or distress to any person who is the subject of the data while he / she is alive, and to only make research findings available in a form that identifies any data subject with the appropriate consent.

Taking appropriate measures will help you make use of the recordings without infringing the rights of privacy of the interviewees and any third parties mentioned in their reminiscences.

INTERVIEWING

Chapter

5

Thorough preparation is the key to a successful interview. A poorly planned and executed approach could dissuade a potential interviewee. As outlined in Chapter 3 knowledge of important events in an interviewee's life is essential for developing a meaningful list of questions. In-depth research on the specific subjects of the interview is required for this phase.

Great sensitivity is required when interviewing a person about their private and most intimate memories. Care must always be taken to respect their memories and interpretation of events in their lives. When someone agrees to share with you their private and intimate life and memories it should be seen as an honour to hear and capture them. Any conditions attached to the granting of an interview and the releasing of the information must be respected. For instance, the person may request that the recording and information contained therein is not released to the public or made available in any way, until after their death, or a number of years later. However, guard against making promises that you may not be able to fulfill, such as guarantees of publication and control over the use of their interviews after they have been made public.

SUMMARY CHECKLIST

Be prepared and organised	<input type="checkbox"/>
Be respectful and courteous	<input type="checkbox"/>
Keep a journal of interviews	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inform the interviewee of the intended use(s) of recording	<input type="checkbox"/>
Inform the interviewee of copyright considerations & requirements	<input type="checkbox"/>
Obtain the required consent & clearance forms	<input type="checkbox"/>
Conduct the interviews	<input type="checkbox"/>
Label and number the tapes/ discs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Produce a duplicate(s) of the recordings	<input type="checkbox"/>

It is equally important to remember that the interviewee is giving an account of their own personal interpretation of events, which may or may not reflect their own biases, prejudices, views and opinions. Time and hindsight also can alter perspectives on past events. What one deems important in a recollection may not in actual fact be as significant as what may have been omitted. Indeed, the interviewer may have failed to pick up on something and failed to develop a question or topic further.

If you are likely to be conducting a number of interviews either during the course of one day, or over a period of time, be it a day, week or month, you may find it useful to keep a journal or diary of your appointments, and help keep track of your progress. You can thus record the date and times of each interview, the subjects covered, highlight anything new you have learned either about your project topic, or about interviewing skills, or simply record notes relating to your surroundings, location and so on. These notes might be useful to assist with memory recall when reporting on your project, or at publication stage.

Before the Interview

The following step by step approach is recommended:

- Select your interviewees.
- Complete your project background research.
- Know something about your interviewee and their lives.
- Make initial contact with them, and obtain their agreement to be interviewed.
- Arrange a mutually convenient time and place to conduct the interview.
- If possible, reserve a whole morning or afternoon for the session.



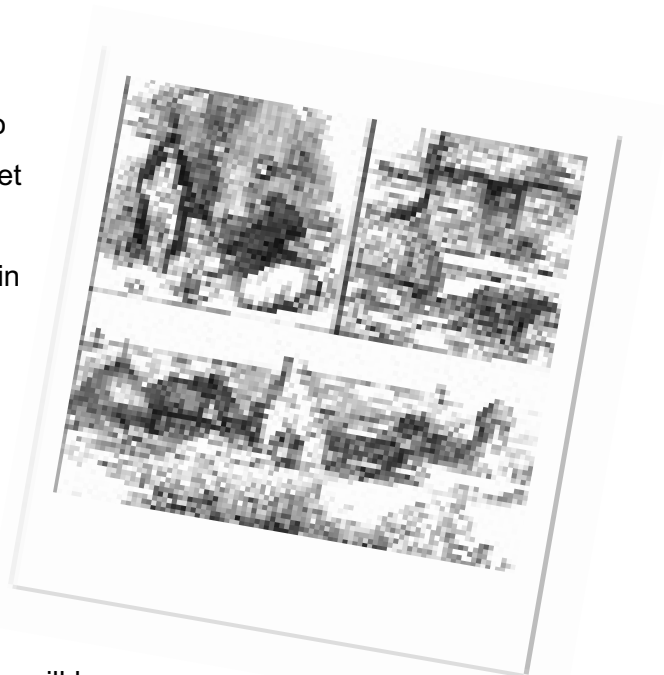
It is preferably to choose a location that is quiet, where there will be no interruptions, distractions or background noise, such as heavy vehicle traffic, barking dogs and so on. Generally, the most ideal location is the interviewee's home, as presumably that is where they are most relaxed and comfortable. Choose a room with soft furnishing, which absorbs sound and a room which has low background noise, such as passing traffic or ticking clocks. So in addition, to them agreeing to speak to and share their memories with you, your interviewees are inviting you into their home as a guest. This should be seen as an added privilege, and you must thus be respectful of their *mores* and routine.

If you hold the interview outdoors, be mindful of noise levels, and the effect the wind can have on sound levels and so forth. It would be better to have tested your equipment outdoors prior to conducting an actual interview there, so that you are confident of how it will perform and know what, if any, adjustments might be required to ensure optimum sound quality.

Ensure you are prepared for each interview, and that you arrive on time.

Take the time to have an informal chat with the interviewee, to put them at ease and for them to also get to know a little about you, before you set up your equipment and commence the job at hand. This can help to build up both their trust in you, show that you are genuinely interested in them and their stories, and thus boost their confidence and encourage them to open up to you.

Ask if they want to have someone, a friend or relative, present during the interview. This can help some people relax, though most people will be more open on a one-to-one basis. If others are present, agree before commencing the interview, if they are also to speak, perhaps even prompt your designated interviewee. If you decide that they may contribute make sure they understand that they are not the focus of the interview. You do not want someone else dominating the conversation, or changing its focus.



It is then important to explain the interview process to them, giving them a general feel for the areas and topics you would like to cover and the broad structure of the interview. Explain the recording process to them, and explain what you will be doing with the microphone and so on. Position the microphone at the appropriate place to give you the optimum sound recording. It should ideally be placed approximately two feet from the interviewee. Remind him/her that there is no need to hurry into a response simply because the recorder is running. Tell them about the planned final product, its disposition, and access policies.

Do also let them know how long you expect the interview to last. It is advisable not to hold interviews of more than one hour, as both your and their concentration levels are likely to wain after that time. It is important not to rush the interview, and if you feel you have not covered all possible areas of interest in sixty minutes, stagger the interviews with breaks. Agree on another day to have a further session or sessions.

Advise the interviewee if they are to be paid, and how much, for their time and memories. Payment is rarely expected or required, unless the end result is for the collector's own commercial gain. If this is the case this fact should be clearly explained from the outset. Where this is not the case, it is nevertheless polite, to give a small gift, as a token of appreciation for the time and hospitality extended to you.

It is also vital at this stage that you explain what is it that you intend to do with the recording, and receive the interviewees' *informed consent*, preferably in writing, together with receiving assignment of copyright. Once they are fully informed and amenable to proceed, you may ask them to sign the required form(s). If they are hesitant about doing so, but you feel they will ultimately grant the required consents, give them the option of signing after the interview, or even after they have received a copy of the interview transcript. Perhaps you need to clarify what is involved, and required from them, or maybe you should remind them that they have the option of imposing access or other restrictions and conditions. Nevertheless, do not be pushy or aggressive. If you feel, or they make it clear that they are not and will not shortly afterwards assign copyright or sign the consent form, it may be necessary to withdraw tactfully and gracefully before taking up any more of your and their time: yet, perhaps leaving open the possibility of trying again at a later date.



Always be honest and open about your aims and objections, and the processes involved. Also again be aware that what the interviewees tell you is their version of events, and presumably an honest version. However, if it is not, it will be up to you, and other users of the material, to substantiate statements or identify falsehoods.

Oral history and folklore collectors' target groups are generally the elderly. They may be wary of technology, and may be nervous or anxious of talking. However, on the other hand they may be very forthcoming and 'chatty'. It is essential to be patient with them, and gauge their level of comfort, sensitivities and tiredness.

Interviews should be conducted in accordance with any prior agreements made with the interviewee, and such agreements should be documented for the record.

The Interview

A good interviewer will be able to make their interviewee feel comfortable, encouraged to speak and chat about their lives. A good interviewer will be organised and punctual. He/she will be respectful and courteous, and mindful of the requirements of the interviewee. He/she will be perceptive of sensitive topics and know when to pursue a line of questioning further and when to subtly change the direction of questioning. He/she will be a good listener. He/she will be familiar with his equipment, have tested it prior to an interview and have adequate backup batteries and cassettes or discs. A good interviewer will limit sessions to about sixty minutes.



So long as adequate preparation have been undertaken, equipment is tested and you have the appropriate level of knowledge about both the topic and interviewee, you should then be in position to focus your abilities on the interview session. Primary responsibility for initiating and directing the course of an oral history falls to the interviewer, so be relaxed and confident, and maintain control of the interview. Try to pace the interview so that you have sufficient time to cover all the areas you want and ask all your questions. Listen to the interviewee, and maintain the required direction of the interview.

- 🎧 Position the recording equipment so that the microphone can register the voice. You should still be able to see the recorder and monitor it periodically, so that you will know, for instance, when a tape needs changing, and are sure that the recording levels are appropriate. Make a brief test recording to see if the microphone is registering the voices and adjust the recording volume. When everything is working the interview can begin.

- 🎧 The interview should commence with a brief introduction that, at a minimum, identifies the interviewer, the interviewee, the date, and the place of the session. It could also include details such as the interviewees date and place of birth, occupation, and also some genealogical information.

- 🎧 Maintain eye contact with the interviewee, this reassures him/her that you are listening and interested. However, you must also monitor your equipment, so as, for instance, to ensure the tape / disc is running smoothly.

- 🎧 Commence with 'easy' straight forward questions, this should help to relax the interviewee. Gradually you may progress to asking more probing, and specific questions. Ask short, simple yet direct questions to avoid ambiguity. Use a specific frame of reference, such as "during the War of Independence", that gives the interviewee a starting point around which to organise his/her response.

- 🎧 Ask questions with the word, what, where, when and how in them. This should help elicit a direct answer. Try to get facts, feelings, stories and descriptions.

- 🎧 One of the most important rules for those collecting oral history is to avoid asking leading questions, for many people will tend to say what they think you want them to say.

- 👂 Ask follow-up questions. Such well timed queries may help an interviewee to recall specific incidents otherwise overlooked and also to clarify any possible contradictions with earlier statements or written sources. A frequently successful approach is to acknowledge some confusion on your part before asking additional questions.

- 👂 Be sure to explain in detail any objects or scenery you may be looking at. If the interviewee indicates an object, site, or size for instance, with hand movements, such as saying ‘...the butter churn was this high... You should then clarify that statement, by adding “*So the churn was about three foot high and one foot in diameter*”.

- 👂 Use props if necessary, or available. Perhaps if your topic is traditional boat building having a photograph of someone or even the interviewee building or working on a boat might open the conversation, or trigger a memory of an interesting design, commission or even boating accident. If your topic is relating to folklore and placenames reference to a map may prove useful to encourage further dialogue, or spark off a memory of stories about fairy forts or a bronze-age cooking site. Yet be sure to explain, on the recording, what it is that you are looking at; for instance, ‘*We are looking at a black and white photograph of John [interviewee] sailing into Cilfden Harbour in about 1958...*’

- 👂 Take notes. Interview notes are useful for indicating when follow-up questions are needed, for organising your thoughts, and for preparing a preliminary word list of items requiring verification. Writing key words and topics as they are mentioned during the interview is also helpful for preparing a subject index of the tape/disc. Do not become so immersed in taking notes that it distracts the interviewee or interferes with the conduct of the interview.

- 👂 Have the interviewee explain the meaning of acronyms and jargon, as well as provide additional information on any unfamiliar subjects or individuals mentioned during the interview. Ask for proper spellings, if necessary.
- 👂 Do not interrupt the interviewee in the middle of an answer. Be respectful, courteous, and attentive.
- 👂 Avoid expressions, such as "uh-huh" or "um-hum", instead use good eye contact and body language, such as nodding, facial expressions including smiles, surprise, concern and so on to help convey interest.
- 👂 Do not be afraid of silence. Some people like to pause between sentences. Short silences do not necessarily have to be filled. Pushing and rushing for responses can unsettle an interviewee. A pause can also give the interviewee time to think of additional information. That information could be lost if you are too quick with your next question.
- 👂 If the discussion strays from the subject of the interview, return to the interview plan by tactfully asking a question from your questionnaire.
- 👂 Use your questions only as a guide, not as a strict questionnaire. Do not sit there slavishly looking at the questions - it can distract you from the eye contact you need to maintain.
- 👂 As you do more and more research you will gain more knowledge. There may be a temptation to demonstrate this to your interviewee. They may then wonder just why you have bothered to come and ask for their memories, or they will pepper their replies with lots of 'you knows', with the consequent loss of detail, so it is good practice to 'hide your knowledge'.
- 👂 In your research you might well have found out information that you would like your interviewee to comment on. Rather than boast about this research 'I read that?' - retain a degree of innocence by framing your questions with a 'Somebody told me that...., and then invite them for their comments.

- 🎧 Both the interviewee and you will become tired, so it is advisable to limit sessions to no more than one hour, with perhaps taking breaks between sessions if necessary (perhaps when changing tapes).
- 🎧 Before you end the interview, ask the interviewee if there is anything they would like to say. They may think of something they feel is important to impart, that you did not ask them about.
- 🎧 Don't forget again that this is an interview, not a conversation. You are there to gather the interviewee's story, not for them to hear yours. The time to start the conversation is at the end of the interview, when the recorder is turned off!
- 🎧 Thank the interviewee for their time and stories.

It is also worthwhile to take a photograph of the interviewee, so ask if you may do so.

**Do not forget to get copyright clearance,
if you have not done so before the interview!**

After the Interview

Take the time to thank your interviewee and chat informally if they wish to do so. Before you leave give him / her your contact details, in case they have any future questions for you. Also let him / her know if you are likely to want to return for further sessions. If you are recording for broadcasting purposes give them an indication as to when you expect their recording to be transmitted, and advise them that you will confirm with them in due course the exact date and time of the transmission.

It is important to clearly label the cassette or disc and its box. Recording the following minimum information:

Tape / Disc number, such as 1 of 3

- 🔊 Side of the tape (A or B), if relevant

- 🔊 Press in the two tabs at the top of each cassette in order to prevent accidental erasure of the interview through re-recording.

- 🔊 Date of interview

- 🔊 Interviewer's name

- 🔊 Interviewee's name

- 🔊 Place where it was held

- 🔊 Project name

- 🔊 Master or copy

Finally, after you have departed you should follow-up the interview with a letter thanking the interviewee for participating in the session.

Make your preservation copy of the recording onto CD-R or DLT, and also make an access copy. Refrain from using the master copy henceforth. (See Chapter 7 for further details).

TRANSCRIBING & PUBLISHING

Chapter

6

After the interview the collector's next task is that of product management, transcribing, editing, publishing, and storing. The storing and archiving aspect is discussed in brief in Chapter 7. At all stages good faith efforts should be made to ensure that the uses of recordings and transcripts comply with both the letter and spirit of the interviewee's agreement.

Transcribing

After you finish your interview, and you have produced your preservation and access copies, the next step is to transcribe it. You should not use the master tape / disc for this stage, but a working copy, which you should have made as soon as possible after the interview.

Transcribing is the most time consuming aspect of an oral history collecting project.

SUMMARY CHECKLIST

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Develop a transcription format | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Transcribe | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ensure all transcribing, editing, and other uses are done from a duplicate, not the original recording | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Verify the transcript with the interviewee | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Publish, if required | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Transcripts are important because,

- 🔊 They are easier to get information from than audio recordings.
- 🔊 They are useful for checking facts with the interviewee.
- 🔊 They can be used by people in the future.

Transcription is an extremely slow and time consuming exercise. It is estimated that a rough transcription, without every utterance included or for precise transcription where no proof reading is required, takes 4 - 6 hours for 60 minutes of recorded audio. An in-depth transcription of every utterance of a recording, including side comments, and recordings which include technical jargon unfamiliar to the transcriber or multiple participants can take between 6 - 10 hours.

You should therefore consider firstly, if each interview is worth transcribing; was it a worthwhile interview? Did you learn something unique? Perhaps consider,

- 🎧 What resources (both financial and personnel) are required?
- 🎧 What resources are available?
- 🎧 What is the significance of the interview?
- 🎧 What is the final product to be derived from this interview?
- 🎧 What is the interview's potential audience? To reach that audience, is it necessary to transcribe the interview?
- 🎧 Is the material to be deposited in an archive, which can only accept the material if it is accompanied with full transcripts.

If resources do not allow for the full transcription of an interview at the very least you must provide a summary description or memorandum of its contents. By reference to your interview notes you should be able to give a brief but accurate synopsis of the important detail of the interview, and details of the main themes, topics and stories discussed. It is advisable to have the interviewee read the text, especially when covering detailed or controversial subjects, to verify its contents.

There are international standards for transcribing and cataloguing sound and film recordings, these include:

- 🎧 International Standard Recording Code (ISRC), standardised as ISO 3901:1986.
- 🎧 International Association of Sound and Audio-visual Archives (IASA) Cataloguing rules.
- 🎧 International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF) Cataloguing Rules for Film Archives.

However, if you cannot adhere to any these standards it is nevertheless important to develop a standard format for interview transcripts and pass the appropriate instructions to your transcriber. Transcribers should provide a verbatim transcript. The format listed ²³ provides an easily read transcript:

²³ Extracted from Hart, Elisa, *Getting Started in Oral Traditions Research*, Canada, 1995, <http://pwnhc.learnnet.nt.ca>.

- 🎧 It is better to type your transcript than handwrite it, if possible. It is easier to read and correct, if necessary.

- 🎧 At the top of your paper type
 - > the project name
 - > the tape / disc number (and side of tape A or B) / (Disc 1 or 2)
 - > name of the interviewee,
 - > date of interview,
 - > where it was conducted, and
 - > name of transcriber

- 🎧 Use one inch margins on each side of the page, with double-spaced text.

- 🎧 Number each page and use a header "For Historical Reference Purposes" or "For Reference Only" above the interviewee's name.

- 🎧 Identify each speaker at the start of his/her comments, by typing the participant's name in bold capital letters, followed by a colon.

- 🎧 Record **every** word that is spoken. Even if the interviewee repeats himself.

- 🎧 Omit such filler expressions as "um" or "ah."

- 🎧 If someone laughs, put that in brackets (laugh). Similarly, if the interviewee stops talking for a minute, than put the word 'pause' in brackets (pause). Writing this down helps people understand what the interviewee was saying, and indicate that what was said was suppose to be funny or a joke. Remember the reader of a transcript will not have all the information that the interviewer had originally; inflections of voice and body language cannot be conveyed on paper.

- 🎧 Record such expressions as "uh-huh" or "um-hum" to a specific question. Be mindful of the use of the expressions as they could mean yes, no or as a means to avoid directly answering the question. False starts usually represent a change in thinking and should appear in the transcript separated from the rest of the text by two dashes (--).

- 🎧 Unusual or regional speech patterns and characteristics (that is, accents/ dialects and use of phrases like "you know," etc.) should be transcribed, whenever possible. These phrases may reveal much about the interviewee's personal character. The interviewee, however, should have an opportunity to delete these expressions during his review of the transcript, or the interviewer and/or editor may omit them during the editing phase after imparting some of the flavor by including a few examples.
- 🎧 If you do not understand a word on the recording, or the recording is garbled or simply inaudible, put "___", and for multiple words insert " ___+." If a significant passage is inaudible, estimate the elapsed time using the indicator "___ (___seconds)."
- 🎧 If you want to make a comment on the transcript put it in square brackets []. Sometimes comments are added to transcripts to help those reading them understand what the interviewee has said.
- 🎧 If you go over the transcript with the interviewee, write / type your comments in a different coloured pen/type script.
- 🎧 Insert brackets to explain, if required, why the interview was interrupted or why the recorder was turned off (for example, [Interview interrupted by a telephone call]).
- 🎧 Indicate the end of a side, if transcribing from a tape cassette, in capital letters, (for example, END OF SIDE).
- 🎧 If part of a number of tapes or disc, use for example PART 1 OF 3.

Editing

Develop an editorial policy. For instance, as recordings are conversational, sentences may be disjointed or run on for many lines, you may decide as a matter of policy to leave them as they are or form several sentences out of the separate or incomplete phrases.

Check spelling and the use of acronyms. Ensure placenames are spelt correctly, and check with the interviewee, if in doubt.



It is good practice to send a copy of the edited transcript to the interviewee for their information and review. For reference purposes you can ask them at this stage to clarify any details or comments. Discourage them from requesting any deletions from the text, whenever possible.

At this time a second review, to check for any remaining spelling errors or other editorial oversights, is advisable before printing a clean transcript.

Publishing

Consider the question of accuracy and reliability of the recorded information before proceeding further. All those using the oral history recordings, as with any other source, such as historians or sociologists, need to exercise critical judgment when using interviews, just because someone says something is true, however colourfully or convincingly it may have been said, does not mean it is true. Nevertheless, at the very least all revised and edited transcripts should be bound in some way and placed in the appropriate archives.

As part of your project objective, you will have already decided what it is that you intend to do with the recordings. Assuming they are of good enough quality and have met your required standard, and are an honest account of one's memories, you may proceed to publish as you intended.

Ideally, to merit publication, an interview should contain information that is unique and important, appeal to a substantial audience, and be able to stand as a separate publication.

Another format is an anthology of related interviews. An anthology may contain selections from various interviews or entire transcripts.

Interviews can be published in book form or by CD, or over the web.



CARING FOR YOUR MEDIA AND ARCHIVING

Chapter

7

It is important to remember that no matter what format or media you use for recording migration will be the only viable preservation path. All media will become obsolete in time. Physical carriers, such as tape and CD, inevitably degrade as they age, some faster, some more slowly, and all are influenced by how they are managed.

Due to rapid technology evolution it is necessary to constantly keep abreast of current archival evaluations of systems, formats, hardware and software. This chapter will only discuss some of the issues involved and try to highlight the need for awareness and constant vigilance to ensure the long-term accessibility of your recordings.

An anticipated loss of support for analogue equipment and tape among suppliers and technicians means using digital technologies is currently the most viable option. CD-R is likely to be

SUMMARY CHECKLIST

Ensure immediate appropriate care & storage for the original recording	<input type="checkbox"/>
Store in optimum conditions, that is in a cool dry and clean environment	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure the original recordings are duplicated onto to CD-R, CD-ROM, DAT or DLT, & stored according to best practice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digitise the recordings, if required	<input type="checkbox"/>
Refresh periodically	<input type="checkbox"/>
Migrate to best preservation media before deterioration occurs	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensure every effort is made when duplicating tapes / discs to preserve a faithful facsimile of the interviewee's voice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Maintain metadata records	<input type="checkbox"/>

supported for a relatively long time. It is expected to have a reasonably long carrier life (likely to outlive the technology itself, which may be superseded in 20 years, if not sooner), and can be used flexibly either as a bridging strategy to a mass system, or as part of a mass system.

Nevertheless good care and handling of the carrier (tape or disc) can help ensure access to it so long as the hardware and software platforms²⁴ are still available. Details of the optimum storage conditions are given below, but in simple terms it means ensuring the material is stored at *constant* temperature and humidity levels, the cooler and drier the better.

When migrating recordings remember that digital representations can be copied without any errors whatsoever. Whereas re-recording (copying) analog representations invariably distorts and degrade them.²⁵

Summary of Environmental Conditions Recommended in British Standard, BS 4783 for Data Storage Media

DEVICE	OPERATING	NON-OPERATING	LONG TERM STORAGE
Magnetic tape cassettes 12.7m	18 go 24°C 45 go 55% RH	5 go 32°C 5- 80% RH	18 – 22°C 34-45%
Magnetic Tape Cartridges	10 go 45°C 20 – 80% RH	5 go 45°C 20 – 80% RH	18 – 22°C 34-45% RH
Magnetic tape 4 and 8mm helical scan	5 go 45°C 20 – 80% RH	5 – 45°C 20 – 80% RH	5 - 32°C 20 -60% RH
CD-ROM	10-50°C 10 – 80% RH	10 go 50°C 5 -90% RH	18 go 22°C 35-45% RH

²⁴ Hardware and/or software architecture. See Terminology in the appendix.

²⁵ Henry Martin Gladney Audio Archiving for 100 years and Longer: Once we Decide What so Save, How Should We Do It?, J.Audio Eng. Soc., Vol. 49, No. 7/8, 2001 July / August

Preservation Strategies

The most appropriate preservation strategies include emulation and migration.

- 🔊 *Emulation* involves creating an environment on new hardware and software platforms that behaves exactly as an older platform; it mimics the original environment. *Emulation is essentially a way of preserving the functionality of and access to digital information which might otherwise be lost due to technological obsolescence.*²⁶ The advantage of such an approach is that it lengthens the lifetime of existing storage media, file formats, and so on. The disadvantage is the cost of creation of the emulation environment.
- 🔊 *Migration* involves the copying of all stored material from an older platform to a more modern one. An example is the migration of cassette tape to CD. *Migration refers to the periodic transfer of digital material from one hardware/software configuration to another, or from one generation of computer technology to a subsequent generation.*²⁷ While this is a relatively simple procedure, the effort increases with the amount of data stored. If you are storing your data digitally this is achieved by ensuring the digital information is re-encoded in new formats before the old format becomes obsolete.
- 🔊 Regardless of long-term strategy, quality control of existing storage media should take place periodically. Check the data correctness regularly (such as annually), by sampling volumes.
- 🔊 All existing media should be regularly 'refreshed'. This involves the systematic transfer of stored material to newer and fresher media, for example from one CD to another, to protect the data from the decay of the carrier medium.
- 🔊 During the initial storage process and during the refreshing process, it should be verified that data has been successfully written. Faulty media are not unknown.

²⁶ National Library of Australia, PADI Preserving Access to Digital Information, National Library of Australia www.nla.gov.au/padi

²⁷ *ibid*

For guidelines on the criteria in selecting storage media consult the National Archives' (UK) guidelines, *Selecting Storage Media for Long-Term Preservation*.²⁸ These guidelines look at different media, and consider them in terms of longevity, capacity, viability, obsolescence and susceptibility. For instance, with regard to obsolescence, the guidelines state that *'The media and its supporting hardware and software should preferably be based on mature, rather than leading-edge technology, and should be well established in the market place and widely available. Media technologies which are based upon open standards for both media and drives should generally be preferred to those which are proprietary to a single manufacturer'*.²⁹

The guidelines include a media selection scorecard, based on the various criteria, to evaluate the media currently available. As a general rule, no medium which scores less than 12 should be considered.

An example scorecard, comparing some common media types, is shown below:³⁰

Media	CD-R	DVD-R	Zip Disk	3.5" Magnetic Disk	DLT	DAT
Longevity	3	3	1	1	2	1
Capacity	2	2	1	1	3	3
Viability	2	2	1	1	3	3
Obsolescence	3	2	2	3	2	2
Cost	3	2	1	1	3	3
Susceptibility	3	3	1	1	3	2
Total	16	14	7	8	16	14

²⁸Brown, Adrian, Digital Archives Analyst, National Archives (UK) *Selecting Storage Media for Long-Term Preservation*, UK, 2003

²⁹ *ibid*

³⁰ *ibid*

Metadata

Ensure you maintain metadata records. That is data about data, or put another way it is simply information about information; for instance a library catalogue is metadata as it describes publications. Its purpose is to assist in resource discovery by allocating precise descriptors to a document or resource. As such, it helps to identify, organise and assist in the location and retrieval of digital information by end-users. Metadata can be divided into three categories:

- 🔊 Descriptive, being creator, title and subject heading
- 🔊 Structural, such as file size, modification times, the dates and times you refresh and migrate your recordings, details of the formats you migrate to and so on.
- 🔊 Administrative, including how produced and ownership.

The Dublin Core Element Set of fields is the model that should be used. Central to the thinking behind the Dublin Core Set is an interdisciplinary, international consensus, and it is therefore being accepted as the leading scheme for achieving the goal of simple resource description, particularly for internet resources.

It is particularly important to ensure you keep full detailed records of all duplicating processes, whether from tape to tape or migration from tape to CD, or CD to DLT.

See for further information *Dublin Core Metadata Initiative* (DCMI) www.dublincore.org/



Caring and Handling of CD media

- 🎧 Handle the disc only by the outer edge, or the centre hole, to prevent finger prints and smears on the surface.
- 🎧 Never touch the recording surface or set it down on a hard surface.
- 🎧 Store the disc in its protective case.
- 🎧 Store in a cool, clean, dust free, dry, and dark environment, at a constant temperature of 18°C & 40% relative humidity.
- 🎧 Store upright (book style) in plastic cases.
- 🎧 Always return the discs to storage cases after use.
- 🎧 Open a recordable disc package only when you are ready to record data on the disc.
- 🎧 Use a **non-solvent** based felt-tip permanent marker to mark the label side of the disc. Never use a ball point pen or any other sharp object to label your discs. Use a felt tip pen. The absolute safest area to label your CD-R is in the clear centre near the centre hold.
- 🎧 Do not attempt to erase anything that has been written on the surface of the disc.
- 🎧 Use of adhesive labels should be avoided.
- 🎧 If you need to remove dirt or fingerprints from the read side of the disc,
 - > Use a CD-cleaner cloth, or clean cotton fabric, and wipe the disc from the inside to the outside, perpendicular to the tracks.
 - > Do not wipe in circular motion around the disc, as this may scratch the disc along the track if dirt is on the cloth.
 - > Commercially available CD cleaning liquid, ethyl or isopropyl alcohol, clear or soapy water can also be used.
 - > Do not use gasoline, kerosene, benzene, acetone, lacquer thinner, anti-static agents, or LP record cleaners as they may damage the recording surface.



Caring and Handling of Tapes

- 🎧 Use only new tapes. Purchase quality tapes made by reputable companies.
- 🎧 Ensure the tabs are pushed out in the cassette tape (this should be done immediately after the recording, to prevent re-recording in error)
- 🎧 Do not erase and reuse cassettes for your interviews.
- 🎧 Before starting to record or play, make sure that you take up any slack in the tape. Too much slack can create problems for the tape as it travels through the cassette. In addition, the sudden motion that is often created when the recorder takes up the slack can stress or stretch the tape.
- 🎧 Do not rewind tapes after each use. Rewinding can create uneven tension within a tape; therefore, store tapes (both cassette and reel to reel) after they have been played. Do not rewind the tape before storing.
- 🎧 Store cassettes in their plastic boxes at a constant temperature away from high heat, humidity, and magnetic fields. These fields can be created by personal computers and word processors, as well as by magnets.
- 🎧 Store in a cool, clean, dust free, dry, and dark environment, at a constant temperature of 18°C & 40% relative humidity.
- 🎧 Ensure regular cleaning of the recorder, as this can damage the tapes.
- 🎧 Duplicate the interviews onto a CD-R and/ or DLT as soon as possible. Use the CD duplicate for transcribing the interview, for editing, and for public listening. Also designate a CD-R or DLT version as the archival copy.

Summary

All interview tapes or discs, transcripts and/ or synopsis, and supporting materials (maps, photographs, documents, and access and copyright agreements) should be appropriately catalogued and stored in the appropriate environment. To prevent wear and tear on the original carrier, researchers should have access via a working copy (not the master) of the recording, whether on tape or CD.

It is advisable to have your recordings in at least two different formats, such as the original master on cassette tape or mini-disc, and the preservation, access and other copies on CD-R. The CD-R recordings can subsequently then be digitised and stored on DAT or preferably DLT.



APPENDICES

CONSENT FORM

Name of Interviewee: _____

Name of Interviewer: _____

Project Title: _____

Place: _____
(include townland and parish)

Date: _____

This interview's recordings, whether they are audio, video, or photographic, and the resulting translations, and/or transcriptions and/or images will be used for the following purposes:

The interviewer will not use the interview recordings, whether they are audio, video, or photographic and the resulting translations, and/or transcriptions, and/or images for any other purposes without the permission of the interviewee.

I agree to the use of the information I have provided according to the conditions stated above.

Signature of the Interviewee: _____ **Date:** _____

I agree to use the information according to the terms outlined above.

Signature of the Interviewer: _____ **Date:** _____

CLEARANCE NOTE

The purpose of this deposit agreement is to ensure that your contribution is added to the collection of

[name of organisation]

in strict accordance with your instructions. All material will be preserved as a permanent public reference resource for use in research, publication, education, lectures, broadcasting and the internet.

If you wish to limit public access to your contribution for a period of years (up to a maximum of 30 years) please state these conditions:

I hereby assign the copyright in my contribution to: _____
[name of organisation]

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

Signed: _____

[On Behalf of your organisation]

Date: _____

CLEARANCE FORM

NAME OF PROJECT:.....

COPYRIGHT ASSIGNMENT & CONSENT FORM FOR ORAL HISTORY RECORDINGS

The purpose of this assignment and consent is to enable the(project name) to permanently retain and use the recorded recollections of individuals.

In **respect** of the content of a sound recording made by and, or, being deposited with the (project name), consisting of the recollections of a contributor and constituting a literary work as defined by the Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000.

As present owner of the copyright in the contributor content (i.e. the words spoken by the interviewee), I hereby assign such copyright to the (project name). I hereby waive any moral rights which I presently own in relation to this work on the understanding that the content will not be used in a derogatory manner and that the author of the contribution will be correctly identified in all uses of it. I understand that no payment is due to me for this assignment and consent. In assigning my copyright, I understand that I am givingthe right to use and make available the content of the recorded interview in the following ways:

- use in schools, universities, colleges and other educational establishments, including use in a thesis, dissertation or similar research
- Public performance, lecture or talks.
- use in publications, including print, audio or video cassettes or CD ROM
- public reference purposes in libraries, museums & archives
- use on radio or television
- publication worldwide on the internet

Do you want your name to be disclosed? YES / NO

Brief details of deposited material (if previously recorded by other than [name of archive institution], indicate name of recordist):

.....

Signed: Date:

(Print Name):

Address:

.....

Post Code

Telephone:

Email:

[Archive Institute] use
Signed on behalf of [archive institution]
.....
(Print name):
Subject of deposit:
Accession number:
© in sound recording also assigned ? YES/NO or N/A

Galway County Council, Archives

DEPOSIT AGREEMENT - ORAL RECORDING

THIS AGREEMENT made the _____ day of _____ 20____
BETWEEN **Galway County Council, Archives** and _____
of _____

Hereinafter called the Interviewee.

Whereas the Interviewee consents to be interviewed as part of the project to accumulate oral recordings relating to an Oral History Project. The Interviewee acknowledges that the recording of the interview will form part of the oral history collection of Galway County Council, Archives. The recording will be stored in the archive. It is understood and agreed that all or part of the recording may be used by the archives,

1. For public reference and research purposes provided such research is carried out within the archives premises
2. For educational use
3. For broadcasting purposes,
4. As a source of information that may be published as a written work,
5. To use the recording for any other purpose at the discretion of the Archivist,
6. To make as many copies of the recording as are necessary for the above uses.

Subject to the following conditions (if any) *

Now this Agreement herewith in pursuance of said Agreement and in consideration of same the Interviewee hereby transfers to the Council all rights of copyright which exist or may exist in all or any of the recording(s) to the intent that the Council shall become the absolute owner of the said recording and absolutely entitled to the copyright in all such recordings. In addition the Interviewee waives all moral rights which he may have in the recording under the Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000 and the Performers Protection Act or any similar law of any county of the world.

Signature of Interviewee : _____
Signature of Interviewer : _____
Signed : _____

For and on behalf of Galway County Council

* The interview may be subject to anonymity, public closure, and selective use by 3rd parties, it might be potentially defamatory or it might contain information about undisclosed illegal activities. The Archives must be sensitive enough to deal with the numerous assorted access requirements and thus give the interviewee the option of having recordings closed for a specified period.

DISC / TAPE SUMMARY

Tape / Disc Number: _____

Project Title: _____

Name of Interviewee: _____

Date of Birth of the Interviewee: _____

Name of Interviewer: _____

Date of Interview: _____

Place of Interview: _____

(Indicate townland and parish)

SUMMARY OF TAPE

Side 1

Side 2 (if usng tape)

DISC / TAPE LIST

Disc / Tape Number	Name	Date	Constent Form Signed	Disc/ Tape Copied	Transcribed / Translated

TERMINOLOGY

- DAT** Digital Audio Tapes have a capacity of around 20 GB naive and 40 GB compressed.
- DLT** Digital Linear Tape records on half-inch tapes in compact cartridges. DLT tape media have a high capacity, up to 80GB, with a 30 year archival life (subject to refreshing, and availability of hardware). A Super DLT tape can have a capacity of up to 300 GB.
- DCMI** Dublin Core Metadata Initiative: This is an organisation dedicated to promoting the widespread adopting of interoperable metadata standards and developing specialised metadata vocabularies for describing resources that enable more intelligent information discovery systems.
- DMSS** Digital Mass Storage Systems.
- CD** Compact Disc: is an optical disc used to store digital data, originally developed for storing digital audio. A standard CD, often known as an audio CD to differentiate it from later variants, stores audio data, in a format compliant with the red book standard. ³¹
- CD-R** Compact Disc Recordable CD-R (Compact Disc-Recordable) is a thin (1.2 mm) disc made of polycarbonate. Polycarbonates are a particular group of thermoplastics. They are easily worked, molded, and thermoformed. A CD-R has a core dye, instead of metal. A standard CD-R has a storage capacity of 74 minutes of audio or 650 MB of data. Once a section of a CD-R is written, it cannot be erased or rewritten, unlike a CD-RW (Compact Disc Rewritable). ³²
- CD-ROM** Compact Disc, Read Only Memory: is a non-volatile optical data medium using the same physical format as audio CD, readable by a computer with a CD-ROM drive. A CD-ROM is a flat, metallised plastic disc with digital information encoded on it in a spiral from the center to the outside edge.

³¹ <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com>

³² *ibid*

Magnetic Media	Consist of a variety of magnetic media and containers including a range of magnetic tapes, (such as reels, cartridges and cassettes) and discs, (such as hard discs, floppy discs). They all utilise the magnetic properties of metallic material suspended in a non-magnetic mixture or a substrate or backing material. ³³
Metadata	This is the structured information that describes resources. While the resources are interesting to the end user, the metadata is helpful to the people or programs that have to manage the information. Usually the metadata describes the content, physical description, location, type and form of the information, and information necessary for management including migration history, expiry dates, security, authentication, file formats and relationships with other versions. ³⁴
Migration	Involves the copying of all stored material from an older platform to a new one, e.g. from cassette tape to CD. <i>It refers to the periodic transfer of digital material from one hard/software configuration to another, or from one generation of computer technology to a subsequent generation.</i> ³⁵
Optical Media	Such as CD-ROM, CD-R and DVD-ROM (Digital Versatile Disc - Read Only Memory) use laser light to read from a data layer. Data is written to and read back using laser light.
Platform	A hardware and/or software architecture. The term originally dealt with only hardware, but quite often, refers to an operating system, in which case both the operating system and the hardware are implied. For example, when an application is said to “run on the Windows platform,” it means that the program has been compiled into the Intel x86 machine language and runs under Windows. It implies the x86 because there are hundreds of millions of x86 PCs. The term also refers to software-only environments. The terms “platform” and “environment” are often used interchangeably. ³⁶

³⁴ National Library of Australia PADI Preserving Access to Digital Information, Metadata, www.nla.gov.au/padi

³⁵ *ibid*

³⁶ <http://computing-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/platform>

USEFUL CONTACTS

This is simply intended to be an information list, and should not be regarded as definitive. Galway County Council and Galway County Heritage Forum do not endorse any association or organisation in particular.

LOCAL COUNTY GALWAY CONTACTS:

Áras Shorcha Ní Ghuairim, Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge, Carna, Co. na Gaillimhe

Séamas Ó Concheanainn, Riarthóir Email: seamas.oconcheanainn@oegaillimh.ie

Dónal Ó Droighneáin Email: donal.odroighneain@oegaillimh.ie

Telephone: 095 32834

Galway County Council, Áras an Chontae, Prospect Hill, Galway

Marie Mannion, Heritage Officer Telephone: 091 509198

Email: mmannion@galwaycoco.ie

Patria McWalter, Archivist Telephone: 091 562471

Email: pmcwalter:@galwaycoco.ie

Páid Ó Neachtain, Fón: 091 509325

Oifigeach Forbartha na Gaeilge Email: poneachtain@galwaycoco.ie

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS:

Clare College of Traditional Studies / Oidhreacht an Chláir, Kildimo, Milltown Malby, Co. Clare. www.oac.ie

This is a new institute for higher education catering for students of all aspects of Irish traditions, history and literature. It offers weekend courses which chart the development of traditional music, dance and song.

Co-ordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations (CCAAA) www.ccaaa.org.

The CCAAA represents the interests of worldwide professional archive organisations with interests in audiovisual materials including films, broadcast television and radio, and audio recordings of all kinds. Although predominantly working in the public sector, it reflects a broad range of interests across the broadcast media, arts, heritage, education and information sectors.

The Folklore Society, c/o The Warburg Institute, Woburn Square, London EC1H 0AB

www.folklore-society.com. Founded in 1878, it is devoted to the study of traditional culture. Its interest and expertise covers topics such as traditional music, song, dance, and drama, narrative, arts and crafts, customs and beliefs.

The Folklore Society of Ireland c/o Roinn Bhéaloideas Éireann, An Coláiste Ollscoile, Belfield, Dublin 4. Its objective is to collect, preserve and publish folklore in Ireland. www.bealoideas.ie

The International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA) was established in 1969 in Amsterdam to function as a medium for international co-operation between archives that preserve recorded sound and audiovisual documents. It supports the exchange of information and fosters international co-operation between audiovisual archives in all fields.

www.iasa-web.org/index.htm

International Council on Archives 60 rue des Francs-Bourgeois 75003 Paris, France

www.ica.org/. Its mission is to promote the preservation and use of archives around the world. In pursuing this mission, ICA works for the protection and enhancement of the memory of the world and to improve communication while respecting cultural diversity.

The International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF), 1 Rue Defacqz , B-1000 Brussels, Belgium. www.fiafnet.org/uk. It currently brings together more than 120 institutions in over 65 countries which collect, restore, exhibit, and document films over the entirety of motion picture history.

International Oral History Association, www.ioha.fgv.br was formally constituted in June 1996 at the IXth International Oral History Conference in Göteborg, Sweden. The Association provides a forum for oral historians around the world, in order to foster international communication, collaboration, and a better understanding of the nature and value of oral history.

Irish Traditional Music Archive, 63 Merrion Square, Dublin 2. Established in 1987, this is a multi-media reference archive and resource centre for the traditional song, instrumental music and dance of Ireland. It is a public not-for-profit facility which promotes public education in Irish traditional music through its own activities and its support for the activities of others. www.itma.ie

National University of Ireland, Cork, Béaloideas / Folklore & Ethnology, 3 Elderwood, College Road, Cork. www.ucc.ie/folklore/ The Department attempts to analyse and interpret material of Irish Folklore recorded from both rural and urban contexts and is particularly concerned with field work, that is the study through collection, transcription, classification and analysis of the oral tradition of contemporary communities.

National University of Ireland, Galway, Léann na hÉireann/Irish Studies, University Road, Galway, www.nuigalway.ie/centre_irish_studies. Irish Studies is an integrated, interdisciplinary programme of learning which seeks to explore key aspects of the Irish experience in its historical and contemporary settings. The Centre for Irish Studies at NUI, Galway was established in Autumn 2002 and is dedicated to research and advanced teaching on the cultural, social and political endeavours of Irish people, on the island of Ireland and beyond. In addition, the University also offers a Teastas í mBéaloideas na Éireann (Certificate in Irish Folklore), at its centre Acadamh na hOllscolaíochta Gaeilge,(Ollscoil na Éireann, Gaillimh), Carna, Co. na Gaillimhe. Contact Dónal Ó Droighneáin, Tel 095 32834 donal.odroighneain@oegailimh.ie www.acadamh.oegailimh.ie/aras_shorcha.html

Oral History Society, c/o Department of History, Essex University, Colchester C04 3SQ www.ohs.org.uk. It is a national and international organisation dedicated to the collection and preservation of oral history.

The Society of Archivists, Prioryfield House, 20 Canon Street, Taunton, Somerset TA1 1SW. The Society was founded in 1947. It is the principal professional body for archivists, archive conservators and records managers in the United Kingdom and Ireland. www.archives.org.uk/about.html

University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4, Delargy Centre for Irish Folklore (formerly Department of Irish Folklore) www.ucd.ie/folklore is the successor organisation to the Irish Folklore Commission (1935-1971), which was incorporated into UCD as the Department of Irish Folklore in 1971. In addition to its academic function, Irish Folklore also administers and maintains the *National Folklore Collection*, and undertakes the collecting, classifying, study and exposition of all aspects of Irish folk tradition.

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