



# **Diverse Waterford Oral History Project**

## **Manual for Collectors**

*To assist in the recording of oral history and folklore in Waterford*

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## INTRODUCTION

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This manual is designed to support the development of the Diverse Waterford Oral History Project Waterford Oral History Project (hereafter *DWOHP Waterford*), in the collection, archiving and sharing of Waterford's oral heritage. *DWOHP Waterford* will enable and support local groups across Waterford to collect oral heritage and deposit same within the archives of Waterford City and County Council. There, they will function as a resource, both to the primary collection group and the broader community and for scholarship.

### **Project Background**

In 2018, Waterford City and County Council (WCCC), began the development of a comprehensive, dedicated and sustainable oral history project, to ensure that, as far as possible, the unique memories, experiences, customs, legends and folklore relating to Waterford, are preserved. The development of the DWOHP Waterford Oral History Project, as well as primarily focusing on rescuing the oral heritage record, has unlimited potential to impact significantly on the intellectual and cultural quality of life of Waterford.

The proposed model will be based on activating and supporting existing and new heritage groups and bodies, to document oral heritage according to internationally recognised best practice standards. By centralising collected material and ensuring digital preservation, the approach will not only secure the work done by the particular local group, but will amplify that affect across Waterford and across future generations. *DWOHP Waterford* will ensure that all collected material, as well as being generated according to sound ethical principles, is processed and used according to same.

This manual foregrounds and explains the key elements involved in building and running such an endeavour. It provides information (1) to the DWOHP Waterford Leadership Team, with regard to the broader administrative and managerial expectations and responsibilities and (2) to the groups/individuals who will collect oral heritage under the umbrella of DWOHP Waterford in the years ahead.

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## Equipment – The approach to digital (audio) recording

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Before considering the types of equipment to use, it is important for all collectors on *DWOHP Waterford* to accept that the sound quality of your recording, will impact on the numbers of people who engage with the material. Whether on video or audio (which is the focus of this project), the sound quality is of huge importance.

For maximum effect, each volunteer should be furnished with a digital recorder and collection pack – Where this is not possible, it is workable for Volunteers to request the use of a recorder, when they have an interview arranged. The following is required for *DWOHP Waterford*, to effectively monitor the use of project equipment.

1. Equipment Register – To detail the status and age of equipment owned by DWOHP Waterford
2. Equipment Log – To record who has taken a recorder out and when it has been returned as well as identifying any technical issue which may need to be resolved

### Choosing your recorder

Increasing digital capacity has made it easier to record large amounts of high quality material. Olympus, Zoom, Marantz and Roland all manufacture good quality solid state digital recorders. It is important to remember that audio formats and professional advice are in constant flux so it is vital to seek up-to-the-minute advice.



There is a greater compatibility with the Zoom and Marantz for microphones with XLR connections, than with Olympus. However, Olympus recorders are easy to use and very reliable in the long-term. Some recorders use ‘proprietary’ or compressed digital formats, which are not internationally-recognised and may not be future-proof: these should be avoided, especially as some will record poor quality audio. Compressed files (such as MP3) can also audibly degrade when they are converted to another format. Irrespective of the digital recorder chosen, the quality of audio

Please note!

continues to be primarily dictated by the way in which the user (collector) manages both the equipment used and the surrounding environment.

### **Internal and external microphones:**

An external/standalone microphone, when placed correctly, can generate a higher quality of sound. Using a condenser (external) microphone will deliver a wider sonic response and will reduce the noise that can be transmitted on cables etc. When using a microphone, ensure that it is on a stand, where possible (as opposed to holding it) and place it close to the interviewee and in the direction of his/her voice. Be aware that the use of external microphones can introduce a tension into an interview which may not be necessary and can be avoided by the use of an internal microphone. It is important to also be aware that when using lavalier microphones which attach to the lapel, movement and rustling clothes can impact on sound quality

**However**, for organisations intent on collecting oral history at an intense level like *DWOHP Waterford*, the recorder's internal microphone will generate broadcast quality material, if handled correctly. It is important to remember that when using an internal microphone, the recorder should always be mounted on a tripod to help eliminate handling noise and should be placed on an independent space between you and the interviewee, if possible. The recorder should be close enough to the interviewee to record at high level and close enough to you to monitor recording.

For recording outdoors, a uni-directional (or cardioid) hand-held microphone is optimal for reducing unwanted noise pick up.

### **Orientation of device**

Place the recorder close to the interviewee and on a stable place. This should typically be approx. 9 - 12 inches from interviewee(s). Ideally the device should be equidistant between you and interviewee. However, be aware that the interviewee's voice may be weaker than yours, requiring the device to be closer to them.

### **Microphone sensitivity**

The microphone sensitivity setting should be set on **low** for oral history recordings. Recording levels should be set according to the strength of the interviewee's voice as well as the surrounding environment. Throughout the interview, a number of factors

can change which may require an adjustment. As a general rule, the wavelengths on the device should not reach further than 3/4 of its full length, when activated. Aim to record .wav files (uncompressed) at a minimum quality of 44.1kHz 16 bit (CD quality). As a guide, three hours of stereo audio at 44kHz/16bit roughly equates to 2GB of storage space on a memory card (different recorders use different types of card). In most digital recorders, either the built in memory or an SD (Memory) Card can be used. It is vital to ensure that you are aware of how much memory you have at all times.

### **A note on video recording**

This manual focuses on the use of audio recording to capture oral history across Waterford. There are occasions and interviewees which merit the use of video. However, any project with an expansive collection programme like *DWOHP Waterford* will benefit more from the use of audio. The use of video can create a tension which does not lend itself to the same comfort as can be achieved in an audio recording, which can affect the results of the interview. The production of quality video material also requires a significant amount of knowledge and experience in relation to light, aperture settings etc. In addition, video files also carry significantly more space implications than audio files, which can have an archival significance. However, it should be noted that some contexts require video recording and benefit greatly from that medium.

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## 'The good collector' - Research and Preparation

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'The good collector then should be an opportunist, ready to take advantage of every chance to reap his or her harvest of lore'.

– Seán Ó Súilleabháin – *Handbook of Irish Folklore*, 1942

The approach to research and preparation will have a clear impact on the nature of the interview and depth of information and memory elicited. The more research and preparation undertaken by collectors on the *DWOHP Waterford* project, the more comfortable and productive the interview will be. This will minimise discomfort for the interviewee and will create optimal conditions for a free flowing and rich exploration of memory. All collectors for the *DWOHP Waterford* must commit to preparing for each interview with a level of detail that ensures the best possible outcome. The below text provides guidance and suggestions on how to maximise your interview experience. Given that the majority of material collected as part of *DWOHP Waterford*, will be done so by local collectors, this approach should have a very positive effect.

Predominant approaches to oral history collecting include:

- ✓ Life Story or series
- ✓ Subject Specific
- ✓ Memory trigger
- ✓ Group interview

### **What is YOUR interest?**

While it is not always possible for a collector to concentrate on his or her principle interests, the collector should always use his/her interests to maximum advantage. It is natural for a collector to gravitate to the subject that he/she enjoys. This can be a positive when not over indulged. Remember, the interviewee may not share your interest. Your primary role is to respond and react to the knowledge and interests of the interviewee and to explore the moments of memory which unfold before you, while maintaining a focus on the overall line of enquiry decided prior to the interview.

### **Being a Collector**

- ✓ Relax – This will be an enjoyable process.
- ✓ Know *DWOHP Waterford* – You are now an ambassador for the project
- ✓ Preparation is vital to the successful interview
- ✓ Become comfortable with equipment. Try it out at home.
- ✓ Have a clear idea as to what you are collecting and be able to explain the need to document this and the role that oral history as a method can play in this process.
- ✓ It is useful to start off the interview with the caveat that it does not have to be the ONLY interview. Without this, undue pressure can be placed on both the interviewer and interviewee. By stating that you will ‘make a start’, you ease the pressure on both you and the interviewee. However, remember that you should try to collect as much information as possible within the interview. Do not RELY on a second interview.



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## Interview preparation

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A **DWOHP Waterford Collectors Memory Pack** will be made available for volunteers as required, which will contain the following:

1. Digital Recorder
2. Back up batteries
3. *DWOHP Waterford* Consent Form
4. Interview Report Sheet (one pager)
5. Project literature (as available)
6. A4 Hardback Field journal (to be retained by the collector)

### What to do before your interview

You will create two main documents for your interview:

1. **Biographical and Research Notes:** This will be used to note whatever information you can establish about the interviewee. It should also be used for research notes on aspects of their life you may wish to explore. For example, if your interviewee was a fisherman from a certain part of Waterford, notes should be made on the type of fishing, boats, regulations, history etc. as known.

After familiarising yourself with the interviewee's background, make keyword notes regarding their biography. Keep keywords on one page if possible or on a maximum of two pages. This will avoid leafing through notes during the interview. Irrespective of your approach (questionnaire or interview guide), write out keywords relating to areas you wish to explore or your **Line of Enquiry**.

2. **Line of Enquiry:** Your Line of Enquiry is the general thread which you wish to explore. It may be the experience of a fisherman or an immigrant's experience of living in Waterford. Whatever the focus, a series of bullet points mapping where you wish to go with the interview will help keep the recording on track. In preparation for your interview, you should remember the following:

- ✓ You should have a clear knowledge of your line of enquiry. However, you should keep your bio notes to hand close by in the event that you draw a blank!
- ✓ Orientate yourself to the interviewee's knowledge – Know what they know!
- ✓ Over time, you should be prepared to explore the various blocks of memory you want to explore and should not need to list every prompt/question
- ✓ Note final pre interview comments ('You were saying there Mary before the interview started....') - Often the interview can start before you press record!
- ✓ A lack of knowledge can be turned to your advantage when used well. Your role is to be curious so if an unfamiliar subject, expression or dimension is introduced by the interviewee, ask him/her to explain.
- ✓ Keep your hardback A4 copybook as your fieldwork journal. This will enable reflection on interviews and provide easy to locate information for follow up interviews which may relate to previously conducted ones.

<b>Joe Bloggs (Bio Notes)</b>	<b>Joe Bloggs (Interview Line of Enquiry)</b>
Born in Dungarven 1930	<b>Family Background:</b>
Farming Background	Parents/G parents - Older people
Father: Michael Bloggs (Farmer and fisherman)	Childhood/Games/Interests
Moter: Eileen Doe. Her father was a blacksmith from Ardmore	Describe house-townlands-street
Joe left school at 12 to work with his father on the farm	Thatch - Common or sow? Thatchers?
Emigrated to Scotland in c. 1950	Open hearth fire? Storytellers
Returned to Dungarven in c. 1958 (married)	Ghost Stories - Beliefs - rejections?
Interested in placenames	<b>Schooldays:</b>
Rembemers men who fought in War of Independence	Parents education - Emphasis?
Recalls a plane crash in Waterford in 1941	Teachers/Subjects - Likes/dislikes
Has some funny stories about installation of electricity	Walking to school - clothes/shoes/food
Sings two local Dungarven songs	Fair days during school
	Farming responsibilities and school
	Expectations/ambitions as teenager
	Landmarks - Communion/confirmation
	<b>Farming</b>
	Cattle breeds/Cow doctors
	Equipment and machinery
	Thrashing/meitheals
	Going to the fair/deals/hawkers/first time selling at fair/change to mark
	Memories of compulsory tillage in 1940s
	Sing local songs and explain background

### Sample Fieldwork Notes and Line of Enquiry for Interview



The **Interview Line of Enquiry** should only be used as an aid and should not be relied upon. For example, in the above printed line of enquiry, the keywords, (1) Family Background, (2) Schooldays and (3) Farming should be enough to orientate the interviewer. As you become more experienced as a collector, you will be able to navigate your way around the depths of these areas of memory, without resorting to the associated notes. However, in the early stages of recording, it is important to list the areas you hope to explore, so as not to find yourself with nothing to ask.

### **Potential sources for information for your *DWOHP Waterford* interview**

- ✓ Research interviewees and his/her area/Townland/Parish
- ✓ Internet Parish sites/Local parish publications
- ✓ Speak to family members about memory prompts if possible
- ✓ Make a note of even the most trivial information
- ✓ Previously conducted interviews within DWOHP. These can be hugely valuable sources which can be used to prompt other interviewees to discuss previously document stories/events etc.
- ✓ Focus on the area most relevant to your interviewee and utilise relevant sources to deepen your knowledge of that area.
- ✓ Focus on the known interests of your interviewee.
- ✓ Fellow collectors – Ask about areas explored in other interviews to assist yours.

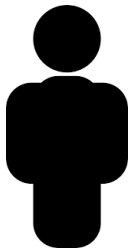
**Waterford City & County Archives** hosts an incredible amount of information, relating to history and culture in Waterford. Groups hoping to undertake oral history collections relating to a particular subject should approach the archives to investigate relevant sources. For more information, contact Joanne Rothwell (Archivist) on 0761 102144 or [archivist@waterfordcouncil.ie](mailto:archivist@waterfordcouncil.ie) Find out more about Waterford City & County Archives at <http://www.waterfordcouncil.ie/departments/culture-heritage/archives/index.htm>

**Local Waterford Newspapers** including, *Dungarvan Leader*, *Dungarvan Observer*, *Waterford Chronicle*, *Waterford Mail* and *Waterford News* can be accessed through <http://www.waterfordcouncil.ie/departments/library/local-newspapers.htm>

**Waterford Local Studies** provides free digital access to full-text files, images and other related information from its local studies collection at <http://waterfordlibraries.ie/local-studies/>

## Three Dimensions

In preparing for your interview you should exhaust all potential sources of information. However, it can often be a challenge to obtain information specific to an interviewee. In the case of someone who you have gathered significant background information, or with an interviewee who you know little about, consider the three principle dimensions as follows.



**Person** - Who they are, their background, any significant points of interest, their interests, passions, known stories, characteristics or connections etc.



**Place** - Where they are from, what happened there, any significant characters, historical events, folklore, traditions, customs, cultural phenomena, places of interest etc.



**Life** - What is the approx. age of the person and what did they live through during that life. Try to remember what was happening in Ireland when they are at a certain age i.e. if they were born in 1920, then at the age of 13 the Economic War started. At the age of 19, World War II started and they were probably married before electricity arrived in the 1950s etc. If born in 1940, they were in their early twenties when John F. Kennedy was shot dead in 1963.

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## Approaches to exploring memory

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### Conversational narratives

Oral history collection is made richer when the collector accepts that they are not simply undertaking a series of questions, but instead are engaging in a deep exploration of memory. While each interview must be professionally prepared and carried out, working towards an established Line of Enquiry and according to appropriate ethics and informed consent, it will be most successful if, in effect, it manifests as a comfortable conversation. In a semi-structured interview setting, as encouraged in the *DWOHP Waterford*, the dynamics of the interview will be critical. *DWOHP Waterford* collectors should remember the following:

- ✓ Try not to lead the interviewee – Keep questions open ended
- ✓ Keep tone similar to that before beginning - Some collectors begin interviews in an 'official' voice which can be off-putting.
- ✓ Nonverbal indication of interest (nod instead of saying ya or yes)
- ✓ Ya Ya is a No No! Try not to keep saying 'ya', 'ya', 'really'!
- ✓ Display knowledge through questions (Informed Curiosity)
- ✓ There to be educated, not to educate (keep your opinions to yourself)
- ✓ Be responsive to interviewee – Attend to their interests and use to mine for further memories BUT ensure you remain on track with your Line of Enquiry
- ✓ Aim for first hand or ‘eye-witness testimony’, where possible
- ✓ Clarify factual points like a names, places or dates, where possible
- ✓ Annunciate new files - After an interruption - begin the next file by announcing you are 'Returning to the interview with John McCarthy for *DWOHP Waterford* on 15 December 2019 - File number 2'.
- ✓ It is suggested in the case of an interruption to press 'stop' as opposed to 'pause'. This will create a new file, hence the need to annunciate same.
- ✓ Silence is golden – A pause can be a prelude to something significant. Do not panic if there is a silence – You are not on live radio!!!

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## Moments of Memory

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In each moment of memory, a world of knowledge is waiting. Remember to think creatively and gently dig deeper within the memory. Consider the below picture and list the various questions which could be asked based on this 'moment of memory'.



If the above scene of thatching in the west of Ireland (1930s) was discussed within an interview, consider the many avenues you could use to explore that one moment of memory. For example:

***Image Courtesy of the Department of Folklore, UCD***

- ✓ What type of thatching was used, common or sown?
- ✓ Where were the reeds gotten?
- ✓ Did your family do your own thatching or was there a particular person?
- ✓ What types of tools did the thatcher use?
- ✓ Pride in having the thatch at a certain standard?
- ✓ Change from thatch to another roof?
- ✓ What was the difference within the home after the change?
- ✓ Whitewash on the walls
- ✓ Structure of cottage
- ✓ Open Hearth fire, keeping hole, who sat where etc.
- ✓ Ghosts
- ✓ Storytellers
- ✓ Dynamic of old and young
- ✓ Living in such close proximity to neighbours

## **Diversity of experience and knowledge**

Between November 2018 and March 2019, ten recordings were undertaken as the initial cohort for the *DWOHP Waterford* project, amounting to seven hours, nineteen minutes and forty-six seconds of audio. This included six women and five men, which focused on a range of subjects including Waterford Childcare Committee, Thompson's Funeral Home, music and art in Waterford, local history in Villierstown as well as a life story interview with a Waterford city woman, born in 1922.

It is important to remember, while the commonality of experience across Waterford City and County will ensure a common thread throughout the archive, with each interview, the knowledge and experience will be based on that interviewee. Each interviewee will have had their own individual experience of events/actions or periods experienced by many. This should be attended to in the way that each collector prepares for their respective interviews but also how they enable the interviewee to tell their own individual and unique story.

## **The Landscape of Memory**

The mnemonic landscape is used to describe the various different tools and devices which are used both at a public and private level to sustain and trigger memories. Collectors should make themselves aware of some of the many ways in which memory can be stimulated. Collectors should also reflect carefully on what may trigger memories relevant to the interviewee. Also be careful about triggers which can unearth emotional or traumatic experiences.



e.g. Fox River Hotel in downtown Waterford may stimulate memories for some people, who were aware of the building or its associated history.



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## Managing the Interview space

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**Prior meeting if possible:** It is helpful if you are not acquainted with the interviewee to have a meeting prior to the interview. If doing so, make sure to take notes of the inevitable stories which will unfold over the informal meeting and use them as prompts in the actual interview. Tell the interviewee that you will be doing this.

**Entering the Interview Space:** When entering the home of an interviewee or the relevant interview space, the collector should be immediately assessing the space for possible sound issues. This will enable you to take remedial measures well in advance of pressing record. It is vital that you sensitively take control of the interview space. Do NOT allow something to go unaddressed because you think it would be rude to mention it. It is important to be subtle in setting up your equipment. Remember to explain process of interview simply before starting and remember to informalise the interview and keep it comfortable.

### **Watch and Listen**

- ✓ People - The most consistent cause of noise disruption are people - Know who is in the house!
- ✓ Radio/Television must be turned off including the next room
- ✓ Be aware of open doors and the potential for noise outside
- ✓ Loud fridges or dishwashers can be a significant problem, even in the next room
- ✓ Large Windows - If possible sit the interviewee with his/her back to the window
- ✓ Loose paper on a table will cause noise disruption if moved during interview
- ✓ Rattly chairs or tables can cause noise disruption
- ✓ Mobile phone - Even when on silent can cause serious noise disruption

## **Communication**

- ✓ Before the interview, explain clearly how you intend to approach it as well as outlining the main areas that you hope to explore
- ✓ Mention that you will need to look at the recorder and your notes from time to time as he/she is speaking – It can appear disrespectful to be looking away from the interviewee, if you have not explained that you will be doing this.
- ✓ Be clear and concise - Try not to ask long questions. Use terms like 'Can you describe' or 'Tell me'

## **After pressing record**

- ✓ At the start of each interview, once you've started the recorder, clearly state:
- ✓ The date and location of the interview
- ✓ DO NOT state the interviewee's exact address on the recording – parish/town and is sufficient.
- ✓ The name of the interviewee and their year of birth/age (if known)
- ✓ Do not ask for an date of birth on the recording
- ✓ Your own name and your role as a collector (name others in the room, if any, and their relationship to the interviewee, if any)
- ✓ That the interview is being recorded for DWOHP

EXAMPLE: 'This is Joe Bloggs interviewing John McCarthy on behalf of the DWOHP Waterford Oral History Project. The date is February 16th 2019.'



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### The fifty-year rule

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Many collections of oral history recorded in the past did not attend to the fundamentals of recording details, which can cause significant issues for their later use and interpretation. A useful thought process is to imagine your interview being found in fifty years' time, disconnected from the collection at *DWOHP Waterford*. If you have followed the outlined process, then whoever listened to the interview should be aware of the following

- ✓ Who is the interviewee?
- ✓ Who is the interviewer?
- ✓ What project was it recorded for?
- ✓ Where recorded?
- ✓ Date recorded?
- ✓ Anyone else in the room at the time of the recording?
- ✓ That the interviewee consented to being recorded?

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## Associative collection

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### **Photograph of interviewee**

Old associated photographs - It is great to obtain copies of photographs of the interviewee when they were younger, if this is agreed as a practice of *DWOHP Waterford*. Be aware that photographs and other original literary material may be protected by copyright (Usually the life of the author and seventy years). Clarification should be sought if you are unsure. You are the author of any photo taken within the interview context enabling you to use it as agreed with the interviewee. Any photographs taken by the interviewee can be used subject to interviewee's consent.<sup>1</sup>

- ✓ Photograph items associated with interview
- ✓ Photograph the context - Take a photo of the interviewee where he/she was sitting for the interview.
- ✓ Scan documents (smart phone use is possible)
- ✓ Items on the wall - For many older people, the items hung on their wall can have significant meaning. It is important to be sensitive when enquiring about this.

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<sup>1</sup> For more see Anna Bryson, *Oral History, A Training Manual for Beginners*, (2013), p. 26.

## **Curation at Source**

Curation at source relates to the integration into the normal work flow of the collector, of documenting and recording information which will be critical to the overall record in the future. It is similar to the notion of 'sheer curation' (an approach to digital curation). It is important for all participants in *DWOHP Waterford* to remain conscious of the need to record information at all times which will be useful in the future. Do NOT rely on your own memory!

## **Record the Interview context**

It is useful to make notes in your fieldwork journal on interview context. These are private notes that will assist your own development as a collector and should not be released to the public. Note how you felt about the interview, your performance, what factors effected the interview negatively or positively etc. It is also helpful to record appendices in audio if significant information revealed and use for future interviews with the interviewee. This is NOT for public use.

## **Second recording with the same interviewee**

If you find yourself conducting a second or further number of interviews with a single individual, note the following on each recording and on each abstract form

- ✓ Date
- ✓ Location
- ✓ Interviewee name
- ✓ Interview number

**EXAMPLE:** 'This is Joe Bloggs interviewing John McCarthy on behalf of the *DWOHP Waterford Oral History Project*. This is the second interview with John taking place on December 21th 2019.'

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## Ethics, Copyright and Informed Consent

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### Legal and Ethical Issues

For all oral history groups, the issue of ethics is vital, in relation to the approach to interviewees, the recording of interviews, processing and archiving, as well as the publication of material. A clearly defined and understood ethical position is critical for *DWOHP Waterford* to develop a trusted and sustainable collection effort. While the legalities and ethics of the project are interlinked, it is important to note that they are not always the same. In some cases, a project or collector may be working within the law, but not within an ethical boundary. Equally, an ethical approach can sometimes conflict with legal issues. However, a sound ethical approach as well as an understanding of the key legal considerations, will ensure that the project develops and expands without any ethical or legal concerns.<sup>2</sup>

### DWOHP Waterford Ethical Declaration

The DWOHP Waterford Oral History Project operates according to a strict ethical policy of ‘do no harm’. We ensure that all collectors, who are undertaking oral history collection on behalf of *DWOHP Waterford* have been trained and have also signed a Volunteer Agreement which confirms their commitment to conducting this work in an ethical and informed way. There are four principle ethical requirements which *DWOHP Waterford* adheres. This includes **(1)** *DWOHP Waterford Consent Form*, signed on the basis of ‘Informed Consent’ of the interviewee, **(2)** a review process which ensures that each recording is carefully listened to in order to identify any potentially sensitive issues, **(3)** an archival and preservation process which ensures that the material collected is preserved according to internationally recognised best practice and **(4)** that data is hosted with due deference to the GDPR regulations as well as general copyright and legal responsibilities.

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<sup>2</sup> The Oral History Society have a very detailed guidance document with regard to Legal and ethical considerations, which can be viewed on <http://www.ohs.org.uk>

## Practical Steps for *DWOHP Waterford*

It is important for *DWOHP Waterford* that future interviewees have confidence in the project and in the use of material collected. A key aim of *DWOHP Waterford* is to make available recorded material for research and general consumption within an ethical and legal framework.

Oral history collection must take place within the law. However, with no specific Irish law designed to regulate oral history work, an agreed and declared ethical position on behalf of DW is crucial. All collectors/groups working under the remit of *DWOHP Waterford* must agree to abide by this ethical principle and must commit to this when signing the *DWOHP Waterford* Community Agreement (see appendix I)

*DWOHP Waterford* should produce a concise **Information Sheet** about the project in question, which lays out clearly the scope and intent of the project

The commitment to researching and preparation (see pp xx-xx) is also a key ethical undertaking and will ensure the process works to best practice standards for all concerned. All collectors must commit to relevant training/instruction to be part of *DWOHP*

The following principles are identified by the UK Data Archive and are applicable in Ireland

1. A duty of confidentiality (though not necessarily anonymity) towards informants and participants<sup>3</sup>
2. A duty to protect participants from harm, by not disclosing sensitive information
3. A duty to treat participants as intelligent beings, able to make their own decisions on how the information they provide can be used, shared and made public (through informed consent)
4. A duty to inform participants how information and data obtained will be used, processed, shared, disposed of, prior to obtaining consent
5. A duty to wider society to make available resources produced by researchers with public funds (data sharing is required by some funders)

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<sup>3</sup> If an oral history interviewee states that information is confidential, then it must be treated as such by interviewers and custodians. A person or organisation who obtains confidential information has a duty not to disclose any of it unless authorised by the interviewee. Interviewees can sue interviewers for unauthorised disclosure and obtain restraining orders and damages, see <http://www.ohs.org.uk/ethics/confidentiality.html> (accessed 28 October, 2018).

## **Informed Consent**

Each oral history collection group should ensure that all interviews occur according to best practice and informed consent. Each participant will be aware that all material will be preserved as a permanent public reference resource for appropriate use in research, publication, education, lectures, broadcasting and the internet. This informed consent begins at the first point of contact and continues until the interviewee has given their written and recorded verbal consent to the interview.

A consent form has been designed for the DWOHP (See Appendix II) and all participants are expected to comply with its use and retention. The laws in this area are complex and each project is different. However, it is the responsibility of each project to ensure that an informed consent process is in place and that each collector undertakes to follow this process for each interview. Interviewees have rights to privacy and to the ownership of their own words, which is enshrined in the copyright laws. This ensures both the integrity and continuity of an oral history project and safeguards each narrator's rights.

Key aspects of the informed consent process include the need to obtain permission to archive and publish the interview in certain formats. It should also be clear to the interviewee who the interview is for, where it will be stored and how the interview may be used. It is critical to obtain a written consent from each interviewee. This should also be supplemented by an oral consent (to the interview) at the beginning of each interview. Each collector will be instructed to explain (in their own words) to an interviewee before any recording begins that the form will have to be signed. If this is neglected, it can be time consuming and challenging to return to get the form signed. There is also the possibility that the interview may die or move to another area and be more difficult to contact. It is imperative that consent forms for *DWOHP Waterford* are always signed after each recording.

While the issue of ethics and informed consent and the duty to respect the rights of the interviewee should be taken seriously, it is important for collectors to realise that most interviews do not contain sensitive personal information.



## **Confidentiality – During the Archival Process**

It is inevitable that *DWOHP Waterford*, in its processing of the collected material, will necessarily have to allow access to project staff and volunteers to the recorded material, prior to its publication in whatever format. It is important for each Volunteer/Project Staff to sign a ‘Confidentiality Agreement’. This is also included in the Volunteer Agreement, signed by each collector, associated with *DWOHP Waterford*.

## **Libel and Defamation**

*DWOHP Waterford* Project Staff and Volunteers are expected to take note of potentially defamatory statements made in interviews. As a general principle, where a statement is believed to be untrue and damaging to a third party, the part of the recording and/or transcript containing the statement should not be made available to researchers or published, until such time that the subject of the statement is dead. *DWOHP Waterford* will need to exercise its own judgement in cases where the truth or harmfulness of statements is unclear.

*DWOHP Waterford* will operate a ‘Take Down’ policy in its online dissemination, which will enable the project to remove offending items, after it has processed a complaint and made a judgement. This should only be resorted to in extreme cases.

## **Neuenschwander’s five rules**

Historian John A. Neuenschwander developed five rules, which reflect key areas to anticipate and address in order to ensure that your oral history project runs smoothly.

1. Anticipate potential legal problems and take appropriate preventative measures.
2. Avoid oral promises and understandings. Get it in writing.
3. Make sure that your legal-release forms fit your program.
4. Alert your staff to all potential areas of liability. If you work alone, educate yourself.
5. Do not let financial considerations alone deter you from consulting a lawyer. Preventative law is always less expensive and time-consuming than litigation.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> John A. Neuenschwander's *Oral History and the Law* (Albuquerque: Oral History Association, 1993).

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## Approaches to presenting collected material

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There are two dominant approaches to post interview presentation, **(1)** a transcription or **(2)** an Interview Report (sometimes called an abstract). The decision on whether to transcribe or create interview reports, should be based on the **(a)** time and resources available to *DWOHP Waterford* or its constituent collectors/groups and **(b)** what is the aim of the project(s) in relation to how you want users to engage with collector material. On average, a carefully presented transcription can take up to eight hours per hour of recorded interview. Alternatively, a detailed interview report would take approximately two hours per hour of recording.

**Transcription** enables a word for word verbatim account of what was said in a recorded interview (by both the interviewer and interviewee). As a research tool, a transcription is invaluable for researchers. However, there is a necessary departure from the potency of the original account and it cannot convey the intonations, changes in velocity etc. of that account. Words and expression unique to Waterford may not always be full appreciable in transcript form.

### Some Basic Guidelines for Transcription

The following biographical and administrative information must be included in any transcription:

- ✓ Interviewee's name
- ✓ Interviewer's name, affiliation, and contact information (for office use only)
- ✓ Date of interview
- ✓ Location of interview
- ✓ List of acronyms (e.g. JB = Joe Blogs (interviewer), MH = Michael Hogan (interviewee), etc.)
- ✓ Each change of speaker must be noted in the transcript using the above acronyms, applicable to the interview.
- ✓ The speaker must be identified by their initials followed by a colon – (e.g. MH: I left school when I was fourteen).
- ✓ A new topic should be represented by a separate paragraph

**Pauses and inflections:** These should be noted by punctuation – An ellipsis is used to denote the removal of text. Therefore, when indicating a pause, the transcriber should write [pause], but only in the case of a lengthy pause. Otherwise, use a comma to indicate a slight pause.

**Removals:** While transcription at a deeper level requires specific training and instruction, the following are crucial points for consideration - What are referred to as ‘Crutch Words’, including ‘you see’, ‘like’, ‘you know’ or ‘ok’ should be left in, unless where they are repeated to the point where they overwhelm the text. When an interviewees used ‘um’ and ‘ah’ frequently (referred to as ‘fillers’), these can be omitted as they, in the main, do not reflect a speech pattern.

**False starts:** When an interviewee begins verbalising a memory but doesn’t finish, it should be left in unless it bears absolutely no relevance to what follows. An example of a false start, which should be left in is as follows:

JB: “*Myself and Michael would often go*—When I was a lot younger myself, Michael Blogs and a few of my friends took a fierce interest in the cinema. There weren’t many that would go but I had few friends who were into it and we’d go every Saturday.

However, false start can be deleted if a repetition or a stumble.

### **Reviewing and Editing Transcriptions**

All transcriptions should be reviewed before being signed off as an archival and publically accessible version. When the transcript is edited, the editor’s name and date of edit should be noted. Each project sets its own approach with regard to editing transcription. It is recommended that *DWOHP Waterford* have at least two phases of review/editing for transcripts.

## Creating a Resource

**Interview Resource forms** (sometimes called abstracts) create a summarised log which breaks the interview up according to themes and subjects explored. When compiling an Interview Resource Form, it is vital that all key words relevant to the account are mentioned. As a research tool, the abstract should lead the researcher back to the original verbalised account and so encourages an engagement with the voice. However, unless the Interview Resource Form is sufficiently detailed, aspects being sought out by researchers may be missed.

### Software for small scale editing/Editing and production

For audacity manuals with tutorials visit <https://www.audacityteam.org/> A manual on how to use audacity is available <https://manual.audacityteam.org/>

Oral History Metadata Synchroniser (OHMS) was created by the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History at the University of Kentucky Libraries and is “a web-based system to inexpensively and efficiently enhance access to oral history online.”

In order to develop a sustainable and manageable editing effort, within DWOHP, Audacity editing software is recommended. Audacity is a free and open-source digital audio editor and recording application software, available for Windows, macOS/OS X and Unix-like operating systems. It enables the easy editing of recorded material, as well as conversion from .wav to MP3 as maybe required.

Should *DWOHP Waterford* proceed with an Interview Report approach, then Audacity provides the software required to listen, note time and edit where necessary.

## APPENDIX I



### **TEMPLATE FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS: GUIDANCE ON GETTING STARTED**

Diverse Waterford Oral History Project (DWOHP) is a collection project for oral history recordings with Waterford City and County Council. The project works with Community For a better understanding of what you can expect from an oral history project and what is expected of you by our Project, we ask you to read and **sign** the following:

#### **As a Community Group the Project will provide for you:**

- An opportunity to be involved in one of the most ambitious and significant oral history project's in the history of Waterford generally.
- An opportunity to learn about the customs, traditions, folklore, oral heritage and cultural history of Waterford.
- Training and experience in the methodology of carrying out recorded interviews and working with the appropriate related technology.
- Insurance: guidance on insurance cover required for Community Groups whilst sending out volunteers to make oral history recordings
- Opportunities for professional development and social interaction with other Community Groups and volunteers
- An opportunity to learn about how public history projects operate behind the scenes.
- Acknowledgement of your work in the outputs of the Diverse Waterford Oral History Project.

#### **The Project asks that you:**

- Choose interviewees that are appropriate and accessible to you.
- Carry out an agreed number of interviews that is acceptable to both you and the Project.
- Complete all of the required paper work and procedures for every interview you carry out.
- Attend a scheduled orientation and training session.
- Notify the organisation beforehand if you will be unable to carry out a scheduled interview or meeting.
- Conduct yourself in an appropriate and ethical manner at all times when dealing with interviewees and staff.
- Maintain confidentiality where required.
- Maintain all GDPR expectations as set out by DWOHP

*By my signature I declare that I have read, understand, and agree with all parts of the Volunteer Agreement and will strive to fulfil all parts therein.*

This agreement is binding in honour only, is not intended to be a legally binding contract between us and may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. Neither of us intend any employment relationship to be created either now or at any time in the future.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Representative of Community Group

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed on behalf of DWOHP

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

APPENDIX II



REFERENCE NO. (OFFICE USE ONLY):

## Diverse Waterford Oral History Project

### COPYRIGHT ASSIGNMENT & CONSENT FORM FOR ORAL HISTORY RECORDINGS

The purpose of this assignment and consent is to enable Waterford City and County Council to permanently retain and use the recorded recollections of individuals. Under the 1963 Copyright Act (Ireland) your recorded interview or your written memories are protected by Copyright. Your recorded interview will become part of the collection cared for by Waterford City and County Council. It will be preserved as a permanent public reference resource as a sound recording made by and being deposited with the *Diverse Waterford Oral History Project (DWOHP)*, consisting of the recollections of a contributor and constituting a literary work as defined by the Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000.

I hereby assign such copyright to the *DWOHP* 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. In assigning my copyright, I understand that I am giving the *DWOHP* the right to use and make available, at the discretion of the Archivist/Librarian, the content of the recorded interview in the following ways:

- Public performance, lecture or talks.
- Use in publications, including print, audio, video and online.
- Public reference purposes including libraries, museums and archives.
- Use on radio or television.
- Use in schools, universities, colleges and other educational establishments, including use in a thesis, dissertation or similar research.
- Use on the internet including the Waterford City and County Council website, applications (apps) and social media pages.

#### On Behalf of the Interviewee:

Signed:.....Date:.....

Print Name:.....

PTO

Address:.....

Telephone:.....Email:.....

**On Behalf of the *DWOHP*:**

Signed:.....Date:.....

Print Name:.....

Any other required conditions: .....

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.....

(For interviewer) Information relating to associative collection (Documents, photos, etc).

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### APPENDIX III



### Diverse Waterford Oral History Project Resource/Abstract Form

<b>Name of Interviewee</b> (Maiden name / Nickname)	
<b>Date of Interview</b>	
<b>Location</b>	
<b>Name of Interviewer</b>  (Also, any other persons present and the reason for their presence)	
<b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b>	
<b>Report Completed by</b> (Include date of completion, and if edits are made and by who)	
<b>Archival Summary</b>	

(Synopsis of interview, should include how interview came to be and other contextual information)	
<b>Keywords/Tags</b>	
<b>Material Relevant to archive</b> (All supplementary documents relating to interview, Photographs, Pictures, Writings etc.)	
<b>Interview Notes</b> (Issues flagged by interviewee or interviewer)	
<b>Field Notes</b> (To be compiled by interviewer)	
<b>Format</b> (Include what what equipment used to record interview)	
<b>Duration</b> (Office use only)	Length of Interview:  No. of Files:

<b>Restricted Information</b> (Office use only)	
<b>Language</b>	
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**APPENDIX IV**



**Diverse Waterford Oral History Interview Report Sheet**

<p><b>Name of Interviewee</b></p> <p>(Including Maiden name / Nickname if applicable)</p>		
<p><b>Where from:</b></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Photograph of Interviewee	
<p><b>Address</b></p> <p>(Office Use Only)</p>		
<p><b>Others Present</b></p> <p>(Reason for attendance)</p>		
<p><b>Summary of Interviewee</b></p>		
<p><b><u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u></b></p>		
<p><b>Interview Abstract</b></p> <p>(Keywords to describe main subjects of interview)</p>		
<p><b>Interviewee Selection</b></p> <p>Select the moments in the interview that stood out for you personally. Please note the time of the relevant section(s).</p>		

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Length of Interview:</b>
<b>Notes</b> (Noise disruption, interruptions, sound issues etc.)	
<b>Suggested follow up theme</b>	
<b>Restricted Information</b> (Office use only)	

**Signed by Interviewer on behalf of the Diverse Waterford Oral History Project**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX V

# Diverse Waterford Oral History Project – Step by Step



### STEP 1: PROJECT STATEMENT

Create a clear project statement with the goal of the interviews listed for people to review. State the topics that the project will focus on and identify the interviewees that can speak on the topics identified. Check if your community would like to also provide copies of the Project to Waterford City and County Council to allow public access through the Library and Archives Services and to allow for preservation in Waterford City and County Archives.

### STEP 2: IDENTIFICATION OF AN INTERVIEWEE

Sometimes a person may have already been interviewed on as part of another Oral History Project and may have already spoken at length on the topic/s. Therefore, after identifying a potential interviewee(s) in your area email

[culture@waterfordcouncil.ie](mailto:culture@waterfordcouncil.ie) with *Name, short summary: (Farmer, businesswomen, musician, historian), Location, areas of interest and contact details* to check if the person has already been interviewed on the topic/s. The staff at Waterford City and County Council will be able to check if there is already an interview available to researchers through the Library or Archives Services.

- ✓ Clearly explain the Consent Form process from the first contact (See step 3)
- ✓ Be clear the recording will be made available to the Diverse Waterford Oral History Project and not just an interview and, as a result, will be made available through the Library and Archives Services to researchers and the interview will be preserved permanently as part of the City and County Archives collection.

### STEP 3: CHECKLIST FOR THE INTERVIEW

- ✓ Digital Recorder/ Back up batteries/Fieldwork Journal (Hardback A4) & Pen
- ✓ Collector Folder (Consent Form, Interview Report Sheet, Interview Notes in Hardback A4)
- ✓ Recording equipment can be booked with Waterford City and County Council contact [culture@waterfordcouncil.ie](mailto:culture@waterfordcouncil.ie)

### STEP 4: CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW (Key Considerations)

**Research and Preparation:** Think **Person - Place - Life** and note the following

1. What you know about the person, where from, background, interests etc.
2. What you know of the interviewee's background and interests

3. What events at local, national and international level his/her career paralleled
4. Contact the interviewee, if possible and ask about places of residence and general life story

**Ethics:** Follow consent process - Ensure they know what the project is about, where it will end up, introduce the project at start of recording and obtain written consent form at end.

**Noise:** Make sure the interview space is as controlled as possible, eliminate background noise, TV, Radio (even in next room), potential interruptions, turn off phone etc.

**Interview Skills:** Follow your planned 'Line of Enquiry' but allow for deviation on occasion. I.e. You are on the main road but can go down side roads as long as you get back.

**At the start of each interview, once you've started the recorder, clearly state:**

- ✓ The date and location (NOT ADDRESS) of the interview
- ✓ The name of the interviewee
- ✓ Your own name and relation, if any, to the interviewee (Name others in the room if any)
- ✓ That the interview is being recorded for Your Community Project and will be saved as part of the Diverse Waterford Oral History Project
- ✓ Follow above with further interviews with same person but note the 2nd or 3rd interview etc.
- ✓ Photograph the interviewee (if they agree) and items related to the interview

## STEP 5: AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- ✓ Immediately after the interview, complete your Interview Report Sheet (One-page hardcopy)
- ✓ Return the digital recorder (if borrowed) to Waterford City and County Libraries at the next opportunity
- ✓ Complete your softcopy Interview Abstract as soon as possible after the interview (Training will be provided on this for those who need it)
- ✓ Deposit your recording with associated signed consent form with Waterford City and County Council
- ✓ Return the completed abstract form and pictures to [culture@waterfordcouncil.ie](mailto:culture@waterfordcouncil.ie)