Oral History

Good-practice guidance

May 2014

If you require a copy of this guidance in an alternative format (large print, Braille or audio version), or if your first language is not English, we can provide it in the appropriate format or language if you ask us. It is also available in Welsh.

Contents

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1. Introduction

This good practice guidance is designed to help you think about an application for a project that involves recording, archiving or interpreting people's memories. It is drawn from the experience of previous HLF funded projects and key organisations like the Oral History Society.

Before you apply please use our website www.hlf.org.uk to:

- read the guidance for the grant programme you are interested in;
- decide broadly what you want to achieve and how much money you are likely to request;
- fill in a project enquiry form online or in hard copy;
- send it through our website or to your country or regional HLF team who will then contact you to offer further advice.

2. What is oral history?

Oral history is the recording and archiving of people's memories, feelings and attitudes. It allows people whose voices might not otherwise be heard to share their experiences. Everyone, irrespective of their background, has a unique story to tell.

> "We were little boys at fourteen…… small children more or less, coming out with black faces, coming home to no showers, no baths, and that's how it went on until I were eighteen."
>
> John Fawcus (steelworker), Songs of Steel, Rotherham Arts and Archives and Local Studies
> www.songsofsteel.com

> "We would go nutting in late August and September, shake the trees and the nuts would come down like snowflakes. Beautiful, brown hazelnuts, Lovely."
>
> Ted Bowness, Audiotrail, High Fell: The Cumbrian Landscape Story, Cumbrian Wildlife Trust
> www.highfell.org.uk

> "Pride marches were really getting established in the '80s, so we thought why not have the Jewish Gay Group, 'Bagel and cream cheese' stall? We would always sell out ... and some people actually joined the group on the strength of that."
>
> Russell Vandyck, Rainbow Jews
> www.rainbowjews.com

Oral history is first-hand evidence of the past. It not only captures people's experiences but memories and opinions that shape the way people make sense of their lives. Sometimes people's testimonies can contradict each other. Memories are selective and people can merge similar events into one. Interviews are influenced by factors such as age, gender, social status, cultural background, and the interaction between the interviewer and interviewee. Oral histories are therefore open to debate, analysis and interpretation. It is this that makes oral history challenging and exciting and just as valuable as documented facts.

Oral history can be about traditions and stories passed down from generation to generation. It can also help capture both the changing and enduring cultural practices of a place or a community, including different languages and dialects.

It is not just the collecting of oral histories that is important. This rich resource needs to be documented and archived to professional standards including through the use of digital technology. Only then can we be sure that the recordings will be preserved and made accessible for interpretation, enjoyment and learning by current and future generations.

Some people use alternative terms such as 'reminiscence' and 'life stories' to describe the activity of sharing life experiences. Although the primary purpose of such projects may be the benefit for participants, such as for people experiencing dementia, the reminiscences collected may be archived, used in exhibitions or theatre productions. In this case applicants should take account of this guidance, irrespective of which terms are used.

If the focus of your project is on the collection of short 'vox pop' or journalistic-style interviews for an exhibition, for example, rather than the collection of recordings for archiving purposes much of this guidance will not apply; some aspects e.g. on technical equipment or interviewing might be useful.

3. Why do we fund oral history?

At their most powerful oral histories can explain, enrich understanding and encourage empathy with others. Spoken accounts fill gaps in historical evidence and can secure history at risk. Memories are lost when people die unless we collect and preserve them.

The act of retelling life events can help people understand their lives and often contribute to a sense of well-being and identity both for individuals and communities:

> "The project gave me a sense of belonging. I forgot I was a refugee. I was an active citizen and telling my story helped me overcome the sadness inside me. I thought I could help others to move on."
>
> Marie Lyse Numuhoza from Rwanda, World in the East End, V&A Museum of Childhood

Oral history can document changes in local industry or agriculture, highlight the importance of a local cinema or the significance of cultural festivals such as carnival and well dressing. It can contribute to the preservation of rural customs or dialects and chart changes in everyday practices such as shopping or gardening. Oral history can help challenge stereotypes and allow people to explore sensitive topics such as prejudice against people with disabilities:

> "My mother-in-law was absolutely furious because I had a disability. She thought it was genetic and a fortnight before the baby was born she said, 'Well you know I personally think disabled women should be sterilised'."
>
> Antonia Lister-Kaye, Speaking for Ourselves, an oral history project for people with cerebral palsy, Scope
> www.youtube.com/watch?v=MBo2EpL9nbc&feature=player_embedded

Oral history archives are a lasting resource in their own right but they can also enliven other heritage activity. Recordings can add context to museum galleries, exhibitions, websites and other media. They can bring alive the histories of buildings, inspire learning materials, generate theatre performances and encourage interaction between different generations and communities.

An oral history project does not necessarily entail the collection of new oral histories. At HLF we welcome applications that enable access to, engage with and reinterpret oral history material that is already available in archives across the UK.

4. Planning and managing your oral history project

If you have little previous experience of running oral history projects you may wish to start with a smaller project and progress to a more ambitious one later. It is important, however, that your plans are achievable and offer value for money regardless of scale. Thinking through the questions set out below will help you plan a good project.

4.1 What is the theme of your project?

Decide on a theme: whether it is about a particular community, place, event, activity, issue or other subject. You may want to break this down into topics. For example, the history of a neighbourhood could cover people's homes, where they work, shop and spend their leisure time, but do not be too prescriptive as subjects may emerge that you do not expect.

From the beginning, consider ways of providing public access to the oral histories, for example, through an exhibition, art installation, theatrical or musical performance, educational materials, website or walking tour app.

4.2 Is there a need or demand for your project?

Gather evidence of interest in your chosen topic through consultation with key organisations, communities and individuals.

Check with the Oral History Society regional networkers, the British Library Oral History department or your local archive whether your chosen topic may duplicate other projects and, if so, how it may differ and enhance existing collections (see Section 7 for contact details).

4.3 What difference will your project make?

There are many ways that you could achieve one or more of the outcomes that will make a lasting difference to heritage, people or communities. These are set out in our strategic framework for the years 2013-2018, *A lasting difference for heritage and people* (see www.hlf.org.uk).

New voices, such as those of young people who grew up in care, may be 'better identified or recorded' through high quality interviews made accessible to the public. Existing oral histories, say of Italians living in Wales, may be 'better interpreted and explained' through the creation of a new online exhibition and community workshops. By the end of a project a number of new trainees or volunteers may have 'developed skills' and perhaps a qualification as a result of a structured training programme. In a project documenting the history of a housing estate or village, people from different generations or backgrounds working together may tell you that they have 'changed their attitudes or behaviour' to one another or the place where they live. Recruiting a diverse range of volunteers to your project or organising public events may result in new and different people exploring heritage for the first time.

The number of outcomes you need to achieve depends on the ambition of your project team and on how much grant you are requesting.

4.4   Are your targets, staff resources and timescales realistic?

Set realistic targets to show how you will meet your objectives. Be specific about the number of interviews you will record, how long they will be, how many will be summarised and/or transcribed and archived into a collection. What specific outputs will you deliver - events, exhibitions, performances, publications and/or digital resources; and what are the timescales in which you will complete the different activities? How many and which people will benefit from these activities?

You need to indicate the level of staff resources required, both paid and volunteer. If you intend to draw on volunteers how many will you recruit, with what skills and from what background?

Recognise that it takes time to build relationships with potential participants particularly if you are interviewing people not familiar with your organisation or when dealing with a sensitive topic. Think how you can best engage your interviewees, perhaps through partner organisations, networks or specific media and through the staff or volunteers you employ.

It is common for applicants to underestimate the time it takes to collect, document and archive oral histories. There is no simple formula but you should consider that an *experienced* full-time interviewer can be expected to complete interviews with between 30 to 50 people in a year (150 – 250 hours). Longer whole life story interviews might take more hours over several days or weeks. As well as the actual interview itself you should also allow time for:

- training, preparation and research;
- networking, outreach and identifying interviewees;
- building and maintaining relationships with interviewees and/or volunteers;
- travelling to interviews;
- cancellations and postponements;
- making good quality backup copies of the recorded interviews;
- documenting each interview (that is, providing a written summary);
- transcribing interviews if required;
- getting an interviewee Recording Agreement (see 5 below);
- translating interviews if necessary;
- choosing and editing extracts from the interviews for exhibitions, learning resources, performances, online use etc.

On average it takes two hours to summarise a one-hour interview (2:1 ratio). Full word-for-word transcriptions take longer (6:1 ratio) and you might need to employ a qualified transcriber.

Budget also for staff time - in your organisation and in your partner organisation, if appropriate - to document and archive recordings before they pass into a permanent collection. The partner organisation where the material will be deposited should give you guidance about what form this should take. It is not always essential to have full interview transcriptions but you may need time to create partial transcriptions for specific outputs such as for the web, an exhibition etc.

4.5   Is your budget realistic?

The budget needs to cover staff, specialist equipment such as digital audio recorders, training and mentoring for staff and volunteers, travel, publicity and, depending on project outputs, resources for an exhibition, events, publications, performances, learning resources or a website. If you are working with a partner, for example, the archive that will take your material, you may want to build in the costs that they will incur as well as any in-kind contributions they can make. The value of volunteer time can be counted as part of your non-cash contribution to the total costs of the project.

Although every project is different the sample costs given in Appendix D may be useful. You need to get competitive tenders for any goods, works or services over £10,000.

4.6 Will you have the right people and expertise in place?

Oral history projects demand a range of skills including all or some of the following: project management; outreach and networking; interviewing; interpreting; translating; audio or film recording; documentation; cataloguing; archiving; web or exhibition design; public engagement and training. You need to make sure you have enough of the right people's time costed into your project. If you have a track record of running successful oral history projects you should show evidence of this.

The quality of the interview is largely dependent on the skills of the interviewer but in some cases you may need to consider the gender, cultural and linguistic background of those being interviewed. It is not always the case that people from a certain community are more open and relaxed with an interviewer who is a member of the same community but in some cases a shared background and understanding can help. On sensitive issues, for example health-related topics, you may need to match the gender of interviewer and interviewee.

You may also need to consider the use of interpreters or translators particularly when working with older members of some migrant communities or new arrivals. There are arguments for and against using family and community members or professionals to interpret or translate. Consult with experienced professionals, community representatives or the interviewees themselves if you are unsure what to do and budget accordingly.

Many projects rely on volunteers. Think carefully what roles volunteers will play, what skills, training and on-going support they might need and be realistic about the amount of time, including preparation and travelling time, volunteers can commit. It might be advantageous to recruit volunteer staff with knowledge of a particular language, a local community or a specific issue.

If you are asking volunteers to play an interviewing role carefully consider the implications; it may not be appropriate for novice volunteers to interview certain groups, survivors of trauma or victims of abuse, for example. Whatever the project, you may wish to employ people with proven expertise in oral history to work alongside volunteers, to ensure that interviewees are approached sensitively and appropriately and that the recordings are of a high quality.

4.7 Have you developed the right partnerships?

Partnerships, for example with local community organisations, colleges or youth groups can help you engage people who have not been involved in heritage before and to collect stories not previously told. Partnerships with a local museum, library or archive can help ensure the oral histories are documented and archived to a professional standard and are available to the public on a long term basis.

Without partnerships, oral history projects may be less likely to succeed, the quality of work may be affected, the legacy might not be assured, and costs may not offer the best value for money.

Your application will be strengthened by some or all of the following:

- letters of support from the community and partner organisations;
- a clear understanding of everybody's role in the project;
- the potential for sharing of staff, accommodation, equipment and other resources;

- the use of outside expertise, reducing the risks of your project going wrong;
- written agreements, for example between you and your archive partner, where appropriate.

If you wish to involve students or young people as interviewers or interviewees you should involve the school, college or youth workers as early as possible and consider child protection issues. If you plan to produce learning resources for classroom use they should be developed with teachers to ensure they are fit for purpose. You might find it useful to read our guidance *Thinking about learning*.

4.8 Have you considered the need for training and ongoing mentoring support?

Oral history projects offer staff and volunteers enormous scope for personal development and professional training as supplied, for example, by the Oral History Society and others. A minimum of 3–5 days training/mentoring over the time of an average Our Heritage project is recommended, particularly if you do not have a track record of running oral history projects. Specialist training may also be required e.g. if the project involves children, vulnerable or multi-lingual adults.

Our country and regional teams can put you in touch with other oral history projects or people with expertise and the Oral History Society has representatives across the UK (See Section 7).

4.9 Have you got the right equipment?

First decide whether to record in audio or video format. Each has its merits, but videoing tends to be more expensive and complicated, and the resulting digital files are much more difficult to archive. Done properly video interviews require at least two people to conduct a single interview (one behind the camera) and not everyone is comfortable being filmed. Generally one-to-one audio interviews encourage the kind of confidential and relaxed atmosphere which encourages people to speak openly and remain in full control of the situation.

For both audio and video formats you will require computer equipment and software to access, rename, backup and document the recordings. Seek up-to-date advice on the most suitable equipment, be familiar with the technical options and get quotes for costs. Care needs to be taken to store recordings as electronic files before they are passed into public records. (See Appendix C for equipment advice at the time of writing).

4.10 Have you a plan in place to evaluate your project?

Evaluation of your project needs to be built in from the outset. Ongoing feedback from staff, volunteers, partners and participants can help you achieve your targets, outputs and outcomes and ensure quality throughout the delivery of the project. See our guidance *Evaluating your heritage project*.

5. Making your recordings available to the public

5.1 Do you have documenting, archiving and deposit arrangements in place?

Consider how the oral history recordings will be documented, archived and made accessible. Local archives, libraries, museums or heritage centres might be well-placed to do this or to provide professional support and training if you wish to take on all or part of this responsibility yourselves.

Before you make decisions on where the oral histories are to be archived you need to think about any potential barriers to accessing the interviews. For example:

- how easy is it to get to where you plan to deposit the recordings?
- are disabled people able to get into and around the building, and/or readily access the material via the web in accessible formats? (The World Wide Web Consortium's 'W3C Accessibility Guidelines' are online at www.w3.org/tr/wcag/ and RNIB's Web Access Centre is available at www.rnib.org.uk)
- are there multi-lingual user guides available, if appropriate?

Partnerships with local archives, libraries, museums or heritage centres should be in place from the beginning and related costs for archiving, training and mentoring included in your application (if you are running a project in partnership, for example, with an archive, it might be appropriate to build in some training for your partner's staff and volunteers who may not be familiar with handling digital oral history material.) You will need a written agreement (called a deposit agreement) with the organisation that has agreed to archive your recordings ideally before you make your application.

If the recordings are not to be placed in an archive, library or museum you need to show an alternative which safeguards them for the future and allows public access. Whatever arrangement you adopt it might be appropriate to employ a freelance oral historian to ensure your project meets professional standards.

5.2   Do you have interviewee consent and recording agreements in place?

You will need to familiarise yourself with such issues as consent and confidentiality. All interviewees should understand fully what is involved in the interview: that they can withdraw at any time, remain anonymous; retain or transfer copyright; and their agreement will be sought as to how the material will be used.

You will require an information sheet to explain your project to interviewees, partners and others. You will also need a form (sometimes called a 'clearance/copyright form' or 'recording agreement'), consenting to their recording and/or photographs being deposited in a public collection and potentially used to create publications, exhibitions, learning resources and made accessible online. This form should be shown to participants before the interview but signed after the interview has taken place. In some instances, due to the sensitivity of the material, people may want part of the interview to remain confidential or only to be released after a set period of time. These requests should be made clear on the form that the interviewee signs and archived alongside the recording for future reference.

It is important that the interviewee be reminded that he/she owns copyright of his or her recorded words spoken on the recording and that this can be retained or assigned (passed) to someone else. Future publication and reuse of their material is more straightforward if project managers or interviewers seek the transfer ('assignment') of copyright from the interviewee to the project or place of deposit. It is important that the nature of the consent given by the interviewee should be respected. In practice, where good relationships have been established and maintained, the majority of people are comfortable to assign copyright in the knowledge that their experiences will help build public understanding about the past.

For ethical guidelines published by the Oral History Society, a summary of copyright laws that relate to oral history, a sample information sheet and 'clearance/copyright form' or 'recording agreement' see: www.ohs.org.uk/ethics.php.

5.3   Do you have Creative Commons licences in place?

At HLF we think that publicly funded digital outputs, such as oral history recordings and related digital learning resources, should be available free to the public for non-commercial purposes. Creative Commons provides a set of standard licences that specify in simple terms what members of the public are allowed to do with such material.

It is important that your project meets these requirements and that interviewees both understand and agree to the different ways their testimony can be used under the Creative Commons licence agreements. It is useful to build reference to licencing into the 'clearance/copyright form' or 'recording agreement'.

For digital extracts that have been curated or selected by your project team in conjunction with interviewees e.g. a collection of extracts to be shared on the web, an app or sound trail, our Terms of Grant require you to use the Creative Commons licence, 'Attribution Non-Commercial' (referred to as CC BY-NC). This means:

- that all such work must be attributed to its original creator (you, as our grantee, and the interviewee should specify the way in which that credit is given); and
- the material cannot be used for commercial purposes.

To ensure your project meets these requirements, and that the interviewee understands and agrees to the use of the material, we recommend you insert a statement into the clearance/ copyright form or recording agreement. You might use this form of words (unless an interviewee wishes to remain anonymous, in which case see below):

> 'I understand and agree that the digital excerpts from my interview that have been selected for use [in learning resources/ an exhibition/ a website etc.] will be made available to the public through the Creative Commons licence 'Attribution Non-Commercial' (referred to as CC BY-NC), that the work will be attributed to me and that it cannot be used for commercial purposes.'

For whole interviews e.g. an archive of unabridged digital recordings, you can use a less permissive licence: 'Attribution Non-Commercial No Derivatives' (CC BY-NC-ND). This would help prevent inappropriate reuse, re-interpretation or manipulation of people's testimonies by others. We recommend the following to be inserted in any clearance/copyright form or recording agreement (unless the interviewee wishes to remain anonymous, in which case see below):

> 'I understand that, in order to help prevent any inappropriate reuse or manipulation, whole digital interviews will be made available through the Creative Commons licence, 'Attribution Non-Commercial No Derivatives' (referred to as CC BY-NC-ND), that the work will be attributed to me and that it cannot be used for commercial purposes.'

If the interviewee wishes to remain anonymous, you should adapt the CC licences to remove the 'Attribution' clause; they will therefore be CC NC and CC NC-ND.

Only the copyright holder can grant a Creative Commons licence. In those unusual cases where an interviewee chooses to retain the copyright you will need to reflect this in the wording of your form. You will need to make them aware of our Terms of Grant and ask them to grant the appropriate licences as above. Please make sure that any paid or volunteer staff collecting oral histories are aware of these requirements.

You should make it clear in your grant application that you understand our requirements linked to Creative Commons licence agreements and how you intend to comply. You will be responsible for ensuring that all the legal paperwork is in place so that recordings can be made publicly available, marked with the relevant Creative Commons licence/s.

5.4   How will you build and sustain a sense of ownership and community involvement?

The success of any community-focussed project often depends on developing and sustaining relationships and trust with participants. An effective way to do this, beyond the legal and ethical requirements, is by not only obtaining and respecting informed consent of interviewees, but engaging participants on a long-term basis. Letting people know when their testimonies are being used in different contexts can contribute to a sense of shared ownership and community involvement.

5.5   How will you back up your recordings?

You should ensure that you have the time and the right computer equipment to back up all your audio, video, image and text files to more than one external hard drive and/or a secure server system. If you have an archive partner, they should be able to advise.

5.6   How will you document the interviews?

Once you have downloaded, renamed, saved and copied your recording you should summarise its content. Use the file-naming system you have adopted and the date of interview, list each significant theme as it occurs, cross-referenced to the time-coded track-mark on the digital recording. Personal details of interviewee such as address, telephone, email and name should be kept separate from the recordings and summaries but should be clearly cross-referenced.

To produce a full verbatim transcription of the recording you either need to employ a professional transcriber (see Appendix D) or you will need special equipment or transcription software such as www.nch.com.au/scribe controllable via 'hot keys' or remote foot pedal or www.startstop.com/home.asp. Full transcriptions are not essential as long as there is a summary. You will probably need to transcribe extracts in order to produce certain outputs.

Selection and editing of interviews, for example for an exhibition, website or soundtracks takes time. For basic speech editing you can download free open-source software from www.audacity.sourceforge.net though there are several other low-budget editing software packages that might suit your needs better.

You need to be clear about the types of material you are gathering besides recordings, such as photographs, documents or artefacts, and how these will be archived and made available to the public (through the Creative Commons licence/s if they are digital outputs). You may not be able to pass on all the material to the same permanent home.

Check with the organisation(s) you are working with that they meet British Standard PD5454: 2012 'Guide for the storage and exhibition of archival materials'. (You can find out more about this standard here: www.bsi-global.com). There are also international standards for archiving audio-visual records which your archive partner should be aware of: 'Guidelines on the Production and Preservation of Digital Audio Objects' IASA-TC 04 (2009) available online at www.iasa-web.org/tc04/audio-preservation.

6. Additional legal and ethical issues

6.1 Employment

It is good practice to have an equal opportunities policy in place in relation to both staff and volunteers. All posts funded by HLF will need to be advertised except in specific circumstances: where there is a suitably qualified member of staff on the payroll that you are moving into the project (you will need to provide us with a job description); or, in the case of a voluntary organisation, where a proportion of a staff member's cost is included in the Full Cost Recovery calculation. Ask your HLF development office if you need further clarification.

6.2 Practical risks and safeguarding

In line with your statutory responsibility you will need to identify and assess any potential risks in relation to the personal security of interviewers and interviewees, especially if they are vulnerable. Please consult with participating organisations and specialist advisors. You might find the following helpful: www.ohs.org.uk/ethics.php#c-and-va.

If you wish to involve students or young people as interviewers or interviewees you should seek advice on security and staff training. You will find useful guidelines on the 'Legal and Ethical Issues in Interviewing Children' here: www.esds.ac.uk/aandp/create/guidelineschildren.asp.

Consult with local disability organisations or Access Groups (see www.navca.org.uk/links/equality/disability) and with specialist advisors if you plan to involve people with disabilities as interviewers or interviewees. You may also need to budget for specialist equipment and training. See guidelines on interviewing people with learning difficulties at www.data-archive.ac.uk/create-manage/consent-ethics/consent?index=6.

6.3 Data protection

The Data Protection Act requires every organisation that is processing personal information which relates to a living individual, to register with the Information Commissioner's Office, unless they are exempt. You can find details online at www.ico.org.uk.

7. Sources of advice and information

7.1 Key publications

Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, London: Routledge, 2010.

Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (eds), *The Oral History Reader*, London: Routledge, second edition 2006.

Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide*, New York: second edition, Oxford University Press, 2003.

Graham Smith, Historical Insights: Focus on Research – Oral History, Coventry: History at the HEA in conjunction with the Institute of Historical Research, 2011. Available online at www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/cross_fac/heahistory/resources/rg_smith_oralhistory_20111015.pdf.

Panos Institute, *Giving voice: practical guidelines for implementing oral testimony projects* (Panos Institute, London, 2003) Downloadable for free from panos.org.uk/resources/giving-voice/

Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, third edition, 2000.

Valerie Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*, Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 2005.

7.2   Organisations and online resources

Oral History Society

Dedicated to the collection and preservation of oral history, with a UK network of around 50 local representatives. Its web site provides start-up advice, information on copyright and ethics, reading lists and back articles from the journal *Oral History*. The society runs several training courses in conjunction with the British Library: www.oralhistory.org.uk

The British Library Oral History Department

Thousands of oral history recordings are described on www.bl.uk/oralhistory/collections, thousands are online at http://sounds.bl.uk/Oral-history or can be listened to at the British Library. Training courses are also available: www.bl.uk/oralhistory or email: oralhistory@bl.uk

Creative Commons

A non-profit organisation that enables the sharing and use of creativity and knowledge through a range of standardised copyright licenses: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/

Museums Association

The argest association representing museums and galleries in the UK. Publishes *Museum Practice* (there is an edition on oral history) and *Museums Journal*. Also provides nationally agreed pay rates for some professional posts and occasional training days on oral history: www.museumsassociation.org/

UK Web Archive

This consortium, led by the British Library, collects and archives UK web content. A special collection of oral history sites show different ways oral history is used by community groups; some provide access to audio extracts, archive material and information on the project background, participants and funding: www.webarchive.org.uk/ukwa/collection/65208410/page/1/source/collection

Oral History in the Digital Age

A growing and comprehensive resource about all aspects of the oral history process with leading-edge articles by an array of specialists and practitioners: https://ohda.matrix.msu.edu/

British Universities Film and Video Council

Offers advice on audio-visual material and runs regular training courses: www.bufvc.ac.uk

Scottish Oral History Group

Based in Edinburgh the Group offers advice and training. For details of meetings and local groups see: www.thesohg.org

Scottish Life Archive

Includes oral evidence of the rural, maritime, urban and industrial history of Scotland. Carries out, and acts as a repository for, oral history interviews:
www.nms.ac.uk/our_collections/scottish_life_archive.aspx

National Museum of Wales

St Fagan's National History Museum can provide Welsh-speaking advice and contacts with local groups. It also has an extensive sound archive: www.museumwales.ac.uk/195

Archives and Records Association (ARA) Film, Sound and Photography Section

Encourages good practice on acquisition, preservation and arrangement of film, sound and photographic archives. Publishes nationally agreed minimum pay rates for professional posts:
www.archives.org.uk/si-fspg/section-for-film-sound-and-photography.html

Your local record office, archive, museum or library

These organisations might already be involved in oral history and be able to offer support and advice. Useful web sites include: www.local-history.co.uk to find local historical organisations; www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/archon/ to find local record offices.

Age Exchange

Aims to improve quality of life for older people by valuing their memories through pioneering artistic, educational, and welfare activities: www.age-exchange.org.uk

Mapping memories: reminiscence with ethnic minority elders: www.age-exchange.org.uk/projects/past/mappingmemories/reminiscence.html

Appendix A

Oral history project checklist

Planning your project

Do you have a well-considered theme for your project?	
Is there a need or demand for your project?	
Have you carried out research to ensure you do not repeat previous or current work? If there is overlap have you clarified how your project differs?	
Does your project achieve a suitable number of the outcomes set out in our application guidance?	
Have you considered all the benefits your project will bring?	
Have you talked to your local HLF team about your project if you are a first time applicant or new to oral history?	
Do you have written support from the group or community you wish to involve and/or from your potential audience?	
Have you talked to oral history experts and a deposit partner?	
Are staff resources and timescales realistic?	
Is your budget realistic?	
Have you set realistic targets?	
Do you know what kind of equipment you will need?	
Will you have the right people involved (staff, volunteers, external expertise)?	
Have you considered the need for translators or interpreters and do you know how to source them?	
Have you considered training and mentoring needs of staff and/or volunteers?	
Do you have a plan how to monitor and evaluate your project?	
Have you a strategy in place to recruit and engage interviewees?	
Have you drafted an information sheet about your project to share with participants?	

Making your interviews available

Have you decided on the number of recordings you will make?	
Have you decided how to document the interviews?	
Do you have a deposit agreement with an archive, library, museum or other centre? If not, have you a plan as to how to preserve the recordings permanently and make them available?	
Does this permanent place of deposit have the right storage conditions, back-up and preservation plan and provide the widest possible public access?	
Have you decided how else the public will have access to your recordings e.g. publication, exhibition, online, app?	
Do you understand HLF's requirements in relation to the Creative Commons licence/s (referred to as CC BY-NC and CC BY-NC-ND) for digital outputs? Have you specific plans as to how to comply with our Terms of Grant?	
Have you allowed enough time, resources and budget to produce your proposed outputs?	
Have you allowed time, resources and budget to ensure your learning materials are appropriate to the audience, whether schools or adult learners?	

Community involvement and partnerships

Are you working with community and partner organisations before, during and after your project and have you defined their different roles?	
Are you sharing resources and making full use of outside expertise?	
Have you involved teachers, youth leaders or young people in project planning if relevant?	

Legal and ethical issues

Have you read the ethical guidelines published by the Oral History Society?	
Have you drafted an interviewee recording agreement form?	
Have you identified and assessed any practical risks in your project?	
Are you aware of legal and ethical issues of working with children and young people or vulnerable adults, if relevant? Have you sought specialist advice?	
Do you have an equal opportunities employment policy?	
Are you aware of the Data Protection Act and how it affects your project?	

Appendix B

Practical interview advice

Preparing for interviews

Have a clear idea about what you want to find out and group the topics you want to cover in a logical way. Often a chronological (life story) structure works best but if there has been trauma early on in someone's life it might be advisable to start at a point in their lives which they find most comfortable talking about. However, be flexible and do not stick rigidly to the order of questions. Give people space and time to say what matters to them. If the interview drifts too far from the theme, use your questions to get back on track. Allow unprompted responses, particularly if something difficult comes up. The best advice is to allow people to be themselves.

Before interviewing it is useful to do some background research e.g. on a country of origin, the nature of the industry in which they worked, but make sure you do not lead the interview with your knowledge. It is important to get people to talk about their direct personal experiences though sometimes this might include their retelling of other people's memories that have been told to them. Covering the same ground in all interviews, allows you to compare and contrast what different people have said at a later date.

Conducting interviews

Put your interviewees at ease by introducing yourself and the project and explaining what will happen to the recordings. Offer them a copy of their recording and content summary, and explain that at the end of their interview they will be asked to sign a recording agreement. It is good practice to give them both the information sheet and recording agreement beforehand.

Interview tips

- Interview people one-to-one in their own homes or somewhere else they feel comfortable. If possible, chat to your interviewee in person or by phone beforehand. This will also allow you to identify any special requirements e.g. for people with disabilities, interpretation or translation.
- Take issues of personal safety seriously.
- Choose a quiet place to make the recording and get the microphone close to the speaker. Use lapel microphones if your interviewees are happy to use them.
- Check people are comfortable, sit at the same level, side by side not facing, and maintain good eye contact.
- Make it clear that people have the right to not respond to any questions or withdraw from the interview at any point.
- Nod and smile: positive body language is very effective. Lots of 'yes' and 'ums' on the recording can be off-putting for the listener.
- Use open-ended questions that allow people to tell the story in their own way and select what they share. These can be followed by semi-structured questions, if needed, to fill in the details, but do not press for this information if the interviewee struggles to recall it.
- Ask questions that encourage description and reflection. Questions like 'Why?', 'How did you feel?' 'What sort of person was she?' will help people explore motives and feelings.
- Avoid insensitive terminology and leading questions that suggest answers (for example 'I suppose you must have had a poor and unhappy childhood?').
- Listen carefully, allow silences and accept emotions without agreeing or disagreeing, permit unanticipated responses and reflect back on what people have said.
- If the interviewee becomes distressed turn off the recording equipment and see if s/he wishes to continue or not and/or resume at another time.

- Liaise with agencies that could offer post-interview emotional support if you are interviewing people around a sensitive topic or who might be vulnerable.
- Be aware that interviewing can be an emotional and tiring process. In some cases the interviewer might also need support.
- Photographs and personal objects can be a stimulus for oral history. A written record or copy/photograph of their existence can be filed alongside the interview.
- Specific locations or walking tours can also stimulate rich material.
- Interactive activities such as art, photography, new technology or music can be particularly useful with younger participants.
- You may also wish to collect a portrait photograph of each interviewee but this should be optional and only after the person's permission.
- Whilst most interviews are with individuals, group sessions can be beneficial e.g. with vulnerable people who already meet as a group, in order to build relationships and identify individuals to be interviewed at a later date.
- Leave a contact number and thank people for their time.
- Keep a diary of what works and does not work.

Video interviewing

There are training courses which teach all aspects of film-making using digital cameras, several of which are aimed at non-professionals. The following two websites offer online training packages about video interviewing: www.channel4.com/fourdocs/guides/index.html and www.bbctraining.com

Here are some tips specific to video recording:

- Always film interviews on a tripod; jerky interviews look dated and unprofessional.
- Find a good, light location for the interview. Usually the living room will work best. Get the interviewee to sit somewhere they feel comfortable and put them in the best setting. Ask permission to move things around but put everything back in the same place.
- Backdrops of fireplaces, paintings and cabinets with photographs often look good. So too does a framing with depth, so try not to sit interviewees against a wall.
- Don't use professional lights unless you've been trained to – they can be difficult and sometimes dangerous.
- Sit just to the right or left of the camera. Make sure the interviewee is looking at you and not at the camera - unless this is your chosen style.
- Get the shot size you want – head and shoulders is usually the best. Ask your interviewee not to move around too much or they might move out of the frame.

Appendix C

Advice on recording equipment and software

Seek advice about the most recent equipment and software from the British Library's oral history department (oralhistory@bl.uk) or another organisation as technology, formats and prices change regularly. As appropriate, consult with the museum, archive or heritage centre where your recordings will be stored on how the material should be saved, named, backed up and documented.

Audio recorders: There are many different makes of portable audio recorders. Choosing the right recorder depends on your budget and what you plan to do with the recordings subsequently. In recent years 'solid state' digital recorders have replaced analogue recorders (such as audio cassettes) and older digital formats (like minidisc) that many oral historians used. Called 'solid state' because they have no moving parts and record audio directly to a memory card or built-in hard-drive memory, there is a bewildering range of makes, models and formats available. Some recorders use 'proprietary' or compressed digital formats which are not internationally-recognised and may not be future-proofed: these should be avoided, especially as some will record poor quality audio. Compressed files (such as MP3) can audibly degrade when they are converted to another format. Recordings should be made using the .wav (WAV or wave) format. An additional copy as an MP3 should be made for playback and security purposes. You can download two programmes free from the internet which can convert .wavs to MP3: http://audacity.sourceforge.net/ or http://winlame.sourceforge.net/download.ph.

Further guides can be found at:
- Vermont Folklife Center, Digital Audio Recording Equipment Guide
  www.vermontfolklifecenter.org/archive/archive-fieldguides.html

  Oral History in the Digital Age
  ohda.matrix.msu.edu/gettingstarted/playlists/equipment/

Whichever model of digital recorder you choose it should have the following features:

- Be able to record in stereo using two external microphones (preferably with professional XLR sockets).
- Be able to record uncompressed PCM WAV (or .wav) files at 44.1kHz 16 bit and/or 48kHz 16bit. This is a good standard of recording quality using a widely-recognised format. 3 hours of stereo audio at 48kHz/16bit roughly equates to 2GB of storage space on a memory card (different recorders use different types of card).
- Have a USB2 connection to allow the recorded files to be uploaded easily to a computer for renaming, security copying and long-term storage.
- Be capable of being powered by both rechargeable batteries and mains supply.

As these recorders create digital files rather than physical objects that sit on shelves, it is vital that all your computer systems are capable of dealing with large audio files, and are secure and backed up. Careful thought needs to be given to naming the audio files with unique numbers so they can be easily located later. Expert advice about backing up digital files has changed in recent years and multiple computer external hard disc drives are now favoured over CD-Rs and DVD-Rs for long-term storage (see below).

Microphones: Whatever recorder you decide to use it is important to use an external microphone. Internal microphones built into the recorder often give poor results. For one-to-one interviews indoors, the best external microphone is a small tie clip or lapel microphone. If your

recorder is stereo and has two microphone sockets you can get two microphones - one for your interviewee and one for yourself. They can be attached discreetly to your clothing and give excellent results. For interviews outdoors a uni-directional (or cardioid) hand-held microphone is best as it will pick up less unwanted noise. There are also special microphones designed to record groups of people sitting around a table.

Video: Many oral historians favour audio for its ease-of-use, portability, and intimacy; but video equipment has fallen in price and size in recent years and is becoming a more affordable option. Video has its benefits (for example apart from the interview itself, photographs can also be filmed for later use), but it demands particular skills. Also oral historians have mixed views about the impact of a video camera on the intimacy of the interview relationship.

Many projects now use miniDV video format, which is a digital medium. Copying to other formats could result in a loss of data, so one option archivally would be to copy from miniDV to a second miniDV tape, simply for the security of having more than one copy. You can copy to a higher grade tape format, DigiBeta being a standard, but the costs then become very high. Ideally, you might want to have the recordings copied as uncompressed avi files onto a hard drive. Further migration to MPEG-4 or JPEG2000 (an emerging standard) would be considered best for preservation.

These two websites offer online training packages about using video for interviews:
www.channel4.com/fourdocs/guides/index.html
www.bbctraining.com/

For advice on filming try:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/videonation/contribute/tips/

Archiving: It is vital to transfer the digital files you have recorded to computer and make back-up safety copies for permanent preservation. Digital files can be uploaded to computer via the USB port in the recorder or (better) via a card reader plugged into USB2 port on the PC. A good routine is to upload, rename, and back up to external computer hard-drive, then make an additional copy as an MP3 for playback, transcription and security purposes. It's also possible at this stage to make a further copy (say for an interviewee or transcriber) onto a DVD or CDR, though neither should be regarded as an archival version. Only then is it possible to 'reformat' (i.e. wipe) the memory card ready for the next recording. Here are some pointers on hard disc drives, now favoured for long-term preservation:

- Hard disc drives are manufactured to last only a few years. In practice, they might last longer, but the notion of a single individual drive as a reliable long-term store is a non-starter.
- However, drives can successfully be used for long-term storage by replicating data across more than one drive.
- The particular drive model is less important than the strategy of using different brands of drive in order to diminish the risk of simultaneous drive failures.
- The simplest system is to manually mirror (replicate) data across at least one other drive, and store the replica(s) in different locations.
- As well as establishing a regular (daily) back-up routine it is worth using a system that regularly checks each disc for integrity, sector errors etc., as well as verifying that data copying is accurate. RAID (redundant array of independent disks) systems are becoming cheaper and can be used to replicate and check data across several disc drives, and automate the process of restoring data automatically when a particular drive fails (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RAID).
- Some systems use RAIDs coupled with off-line backup on optical disc or on tape drives (LTO etc.) as extra security. The British Library uses this kind of mass storage system

(known in the BL as the 'Digital Library System') but multiple external hard-drives are likely to be a more viable and affordable option for most projects.

Keeping track: It is important all files are backed up in different formats and locations. A spreadsheet can log metadata on location of back-up copies.

Transcribing interviews: You will need special equipment or transcription software such as www.nch.com.au/scribe controllable via 'hot keys' or remote foot pedal or www.startstop.com/home.asp

Using interviews: Selection and editing of interviews, for example for exhibition soundtracks, takes time. For basic speech editing download free open software from www.audacity.sourceforge.net.

For further information see 'Guidelines for Digital Recording and Archiving', British Library (available on demand).

Appendix D

Example costs for the oral history elements of a project

The project budget will vary according to the number of paid and/or volunteer staff; how much training, mentoring and research is required; the number of recorded interviews; the travel involved; the number of interviews to be documented; the timeframe; and the type and number of outputs (e.g. exhibitions, publications, web sites). Note that staff costs might be graded and determined within existing pay structures, and also that there are some nationally-agreed minimum pay rates for some professional posts (such as archivists and museum staff: see the websites for the Archives and Records Association and the Museums Association).

Use the following list to help you think about your project budget. You may not need to budget for everything in the list. For example, you may already have equipment or you may be able to share or borrow it from a partner.

Each project will vary in the number, scale and type of outputs they plan to deliver. We have not, therefore, included proposed costs for exhibitions, learning resources, performances, websites, audio walking tours and aps etc. We urge you to consult those with relevant, up-to-date experience and expertise to provide realistic costs for such outputs.

Where costs are given they are exclusive of VAT and are estimates at May 2014.

Staff

Project Manager	£28k-£38k per annum plus on-costs
Interviewers/Fieldworkers	£24k-£30k per annum plus on-costs
Archivist	£23k-£30k per annum plus on-costs
Administrative/Clerical Support	£18k-£25k per annum plus on-costs
Technical Support	£18k-£28k per annum plus on-costs
Education officers, cataloguers, web authors	£20k-£33k per annum plus on-costs
Freelance oral historian (Day rate)	£175 + (depending on expertise) or equivalent half day/hourly rate (less for long-term contracts)
Outreach/educator/artist to run workshop sessions (Day rate)	£150 + (depending on expertise) or equivalent half day/hourly rate
Evaluator (Day rate)	£250 +
Translation services (assume minimum of 12:1 ratio)	c.£50 per hour
Transcription services	Commercial rates are around £15-£20 per hour. Calculate costs by multiplying recorded hours by six.
Documenting and archiving (consult with partner on number of days and cost if being archived by another organisation)	£300 a day
Value of volunteer labour (one of your non-cash contributions to the project)	£150 per day for skilled labour £50 per day for unskilled labour

Recruitment costs

Local, regional, national advertising	£200 - £300 through local/specialist networks. £1600 online e.g. national press
Expenses to attend interview	c. £250 per post if UK wide

Office overheads

Office space, rent, heating/lighting, security specifically linked to your project	See our guidance *Full cost recovery*

Equipment

Solid-state flashcard recorders	£250-£450 each
Video recorders (DV)	c. £1000+
Tripod	c. £100
Microphones (e.g. lapel microphones, two per recorder plus spares)	c.£115 each
Memory cards (SD) 4GB upwards	c.£10-£40
Multiple external hard-drives for back-up	External hard-drives with 2 Terabyte capacity c.£80 each
Personal computer with software to manage digital file upload and transfers	c.£750+
Printer	c.£100
Transcription equipment/software	c.£50-£100
Editing software	c.£100
Scanner	c.£100 +
Stills digital camera	c.£150 +
Storage furniture (lockable)	c.£150

Travel for staff and volunteers

Allow a minimum of two visits per planned interview and build in contingency for cancellations	£10 plus x no. of interviewees depending on location of interviews

Training of staff and volunteers

Oral History Society/British Library-accredited interviewing course (recommend one introductory day plus minimum two follow-up/feedback days)	£400 per day plus room hire, catering, travel
Specialist training as required	£400 per day plus room hire, catering, travel
Mentoring (Recommend 3 – 5 days) depending on expertise within the project	£250 - £400 per day

Other costs

Data Protection notification	£35
Professional memberships, e.g. Oral History Society, Museums Association	£50+