

Oral History Policy

1.1 Collection Development

Newcastle University Library supports the University's teaching, research and engagement activity by providing resources, high quality services, and professional expertise to enable the effective discovery and use of information and the development and communication of knowledge.

Newcastle University Oral History Unit conducts research, supports oral history work across the University, the region and beyond, and demonstrates new ways of collecting and re-using testimonies. Bringing together oral historians based in educational bodies and in the wider community, the Unit aims to build an inclusive and vibrant Oral History Collective that will develop both the theory and practice of oral history. This vision includes the creation of an oral history archive.

This policy concerns the development of an oral history archive at Newcastle University Special Collections which will consist of material drawn from two sources; collections which have been produced by the work of the Newcastle University Oral History Unit (OHU), and material from external sources.

Our collecting priorities are material which:

- Is unique and distinctive, in line with the principles set out in our Collection Development Policy (https://www.ncl.ac.uk/library/assets/documents/collection_development_policy.pdf);
- Is in audio or audio/visual format;
- Fulfils the commitments of Special Collections and the Oral History Unit to support teaching, research and engagement at Newcastle University;

However, we may decline material on the basis that;

- It is of poor listening/viewing quality;
- It is not submitted alongside the required metadata and documentation specified in section 1.2;
- It has closures that are excessively restrictive or which offer anonymity;
- Special Collections is unable to meet its resource implications/expectations with regard to storage, preservation, and curation.

1.2 Oral History Documentation

OHU: Deposits from the Oral History Unit must include;

- signed Oral History Agreements for every interview (see Appendix A);
- Interview content summaries;
- Cover sheets including technical metadata and details of closures for every interview (see Appendix B).

Desirable, but not essential documentation includes:

- A copy of relevant correspondence with the interviewee concerning content, sensitivities and closures.

- Transcripts.

External: Deposits from external sources must include a signed agreement with interviewees which grants intellectual property rights and authority to provide access to the interview for the purposes of education, research and preservation in perpetuity. Depositors must sign Special Collections' additional deposit agreement which transfers physical ownership of the material.

1.3 Depositor Relations

All potential deposits will be agreed in consultation with both Special Collections and the Oral History Unit with reference to section 1.1. Depositors will have direct liaison with Special Collections.

OHU: Depositors are encouraged to provide a legacy document regarding future use of material they deposit (they may, for instance, request that access restrictions apply for a specified period to enable them to complete a project and/or publication). Named researchers of original project teams may retain rights beyond the duration of the project to use the content of recordings they have been party to creating, subject to any restrictions agreed with the interviewee in the final Recording Agreement. These researchers may negotiate use of specific material from closed recordings directly with interviewees, in which case they will provide the Library with a record of what has been agreed, including any conditions (e.g. regarding confidentiality) attached.

External: Deposits from external sources will be preceded by a scoping visit and the production of a scoping report completed collaboratively by Special Collections and the Oral History Unit.

1.4 Formats

OHU: Audio files recorded for deposit should be in an archive-quality format. We currently require;

- Audio files in uncompressed PCM.wav files to a minimum of 44.1kHz/16bit and ideally 96kHz/24 bit.
- Digital video recorded in the least compressed format possible.

Deposits from the Oral History Unit should also include an access copy in MP3 in which closed material has been redacted.

These specifications will be regularly reviewed to conform to the Library's [digital preservation policy](#).

External: External deposits must be in a format that satisfies the collecting requirements as stated in section 1.1. Material will be migrated wherever possible to the archival format set out in the Library's [digital preservation policy](#).

1.5 Supplementary Material

Special Collections will accept supplementary material alongside a recording if;

- It adds substantial context to the recording;
- It is not deemed to be of excessive size or does not have significant preservation needs.

This material must be included in the scoping report and in the deposit agreement.

1.6 Accessioning

Special Collections will capture high level information about a new deposit in its accessions register and it will be added to its cataloguing backlog strategy.

1.7 Referencing

Interview tracks will be given a unique reference in the format:

- OH (Oral History Collection)
- provenance (e.g. OHU)
- project (e.g. SgPmp)
- interview number within project (e.g. 002)
- track number (e.g. 01)

e.g. OH/OHU/SgPmp/002/01

i.e. The first track of the second interview in the Sigmund Pumps project carried out by the Oral History Unit.

File names will follow the same format, but all '/' will be replaced by '-'.

1.8 Storage

Special Collections will store;

- Unedited preservation copies in WAV within a backed up, fault tolerant archival server;
- Where provided or where resourcing allows, access copies in MP3 format in which closed material has been redacted;
- Transcriptions and supplementary archival material in archival storage.

1.9 Digital preservation

Preservation of deposits will conform to Special Collections' [digital preservation policy](#).

1.10 Cataloguing

Cataloguing will be subject to resourcing and expectations. Where possible, collections will be catalogued to track level and made discoverable using Special Collections' cataloguing standards and discovery systems.

Collections will not be accessible for wider research until they have been catalogued.

1.11 Access

Users will request and use material through Special Collections' established [procedures](#). Access copies will be made available via a dedicated terminal in the Reading Room.

All oral history recordings fall under General Data Protection Regulations, and researchers will be subject to these restrictions as administered by Special Collections.

1.12 Publicity/Advocacy

The Oral History Unit and associated researchers will promote and advocate for the oral history collections in the long term through their engagement activities and publications.

Special Collections will promote oral history collections through its established channels for publicity and advocacy eg. blog posts, tweets, exhibitions, teaching and Education Outreach programmes.



ORAL HISTORY RECORDING AGREEMENT



Newcastle University

Oral History Recording Agreement

Purpose

The interview this agreement relates to attempts to widen researcher's understanding of the subject's life and activities, along with their personal reflections.

The purpose of the agreement is to ensure this contribution can be used in perpetuity for future researchers in different mediums with reference to the above purpose. It is made between yourself (the interviewee) and Newcastle University. It relates to your recorded contribution for those purposes and in no way interferes with your ownership of your words, ideas, or other matters performed or recorded elsewhere.

Agreement

Newcastle University agrees:

- To share the final version of the recording with the interviewee to ensure it is accurate and a fair representation, including making further changes where this is not the case;
- Whenever their contribution is made public, and wherever practically possible, the interviewee will be credited and identified as the performer;
- To liaise with the interviewee around personal sensitive information which may cause harm or distress to the interviewee or third parties and remove from any publically accessible version;
- All other personal information about the interviewee outside the content of the interviewees contribution will be processed and kept by Newcastle University as Data Controller in line with the General Data Protection Regulations;

I, the Interviewee, confirm that:

- I consented to take part in the recording and hereby assign to Newcastle University the copyright in my recording for use in all and any media. I understand that this will not affect my moral right to be identified as the 'performer' in accordance with the Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988.
- In assigning my copyright I understand that, in addition to normal exemptions under fair dealing including use for research, education, and for preservation purposes, I am giving Newcastle University the right to use and make available the content of the recordings, including but not limited to websites, exhibitions, public performances, and on radio and television.
- I grant Newcastle University the right to archive my contribution permanently either within its own institution or with an external repository with the rights and obligations outlined in this agreement for ongoing research purposes.

Interviewee name and contact details

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Signed (Interviewee)

Date

I confirm acceptance and receipt on behalf of Newcastle University Library

Signed (State job title)

Date

Appendix B Coversheet

Newcastle University Oral History Unit and Collective			
Interview Cover Sheet (Example)			
Interview reference	OH/OHU/Sig/036		
Collection title	Sigmund Pumps		
Interviewee's surname	Hartley	Title	Dr
Interviewee's forename/s	Agnes		
Occupation	Precision instrument engineer	Date and place of birth	1957, Glasgow
Dates of recording	17.08.16 (Tracks 1-5); 31.08.16 (Tracks 6-12); 30.09.16 (Tracks 13-21); 26.10.16 (Tracks 22-32); 16.11.16 (Tracks 33-42); 29.12.16 (Tracks 43-50).		
Location of interview	Interviewee's home in Gateshead		
Name of interviewer	Vlad Waterston		
Type of recorder	Marantz PMD660 on compact flash		
Recording format	WAV 16 bit 48 kHz		
Total number of tracks	50	Mono or stereo	Stereo
Total duration	22 hrs 15 mins	Size of audio files	WAV c. 18GB MP3 copies: [???
Documentation	Interview summary Transcript Photocopy of Interviewee's diary 1965-67 (see note below re rights) Copyright clearance agreement Gift Agreement for copy of diary Correspondence regarding copy of interview supplied to the interviewee (see Additional Notes below)		
Copyright clearance	Copyright has been assigned to Newcastle University on condition that Tracks 22-32 remain closed to public access until 30 December 2026.		
Additional notes A personal copy of the interview (MP3 and interview summary) has been supplied to the interviewee, together with a letter outlining the interviewee's responsibilities regarding the tracks that are closed (Tracks 22-23).			