



# CENTRAL OTAGO ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

## ORAL HISTORY TRAINING



**JULY 2024**

[www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz/oral-history/](http://www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz/oral-history/)

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# CENTRAL OTAGO ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Central Otago Heritage Trust's Oral History Project collects memories and personal commentaries that preserve and celebrate Central Otago's rich heritage. Our stories define who we are as a people and what it means to be part of this unique place we call 'Central.' These stories, once captured, become taonga for future generations.

Our volunteer-based project has been collecting interviews since 2019. More than 30 volunteers have completed the training workshops using the NOHANZ recognized standards and best practice to undertake the recording and abstraction of oral histories.

The success of the project relies heavily on the work of our volunteers who are either interviewers, abstractors or editors, or sometimes all three!

Many hours are spent on research, abstract summaries and editing. Our volunteers continue to demonstrate significant enthusiasm for their work and have grown in their commitment to the project as a rewarding and engaging occupation.

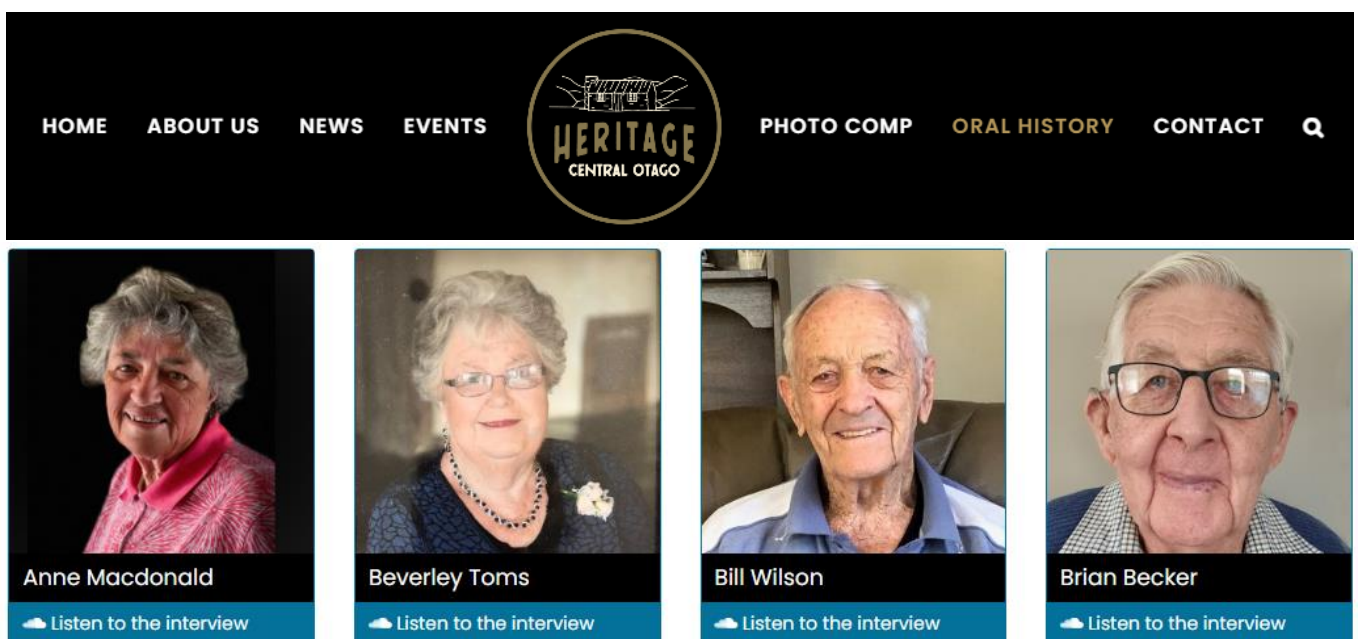
## What happens to the interviews?

All recordings are archived and held at the Central Stories Museum and Art Gallery archive. If access is not restricted, these recordings are available for listening at the museum by appointment.

A key goal of this project is to share oral histories with the wider public. With the Interviewees' permission, oral history recordings are published on the Central Otago Oral History website: [www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz/oral-history-catalogue/](http://www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz/oral-history-catalogue/)

We take care to edit these interviews so that any personal identification and other sensitive information that the Interviewee does not want to share is removed before publishing.

Copyright is held by the Central Otago Heritage Trust, and online listeners are informed that copies of the recording may not be made.



A screenshot from the Central Otago Oral History Project Online Catalogue

# SUPPORTING OUR VOLUNTEERS

The role of the Central Otago Oral History Project Manager is to ensure that the project meets the recognized standards for oral history and to provide support for volunteers.

The project is managed by Joanna Leigh who is based at the Central Stories Museum and Art Gallery for weekly drop-in sessions. Joanna is your first point of contact to discuss any questions you may have in relation to the collection, potential oral history interviews, using the recorders, interviewing techniques and any other questions that you may have.

## Introductory Training Workshops

Our interviewers undergo training to ensure that our interviews are conducted in a professional and ethical way. There is no enrolment fee for the Oral History Training Workshops. **However, there is an expectation that you will contribute to the Central Otago Oral History Project as a volunteer interviewer by conducting two or more interviews each year.** No previous experience is required but an interest in people and an ability to listen are essential.

You can find and download all the interview documents and forms from the Resources Section on our website:

[www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz/oral-history/](http://www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz/oral-history/)

Volunteer Resources	
+	INTERVIEWING
+	BOOK A RECORDER
+	USING THE ZOOM H5
+	CANDIDATE LISTS
+	ABSTRACTING
+	TRAINING RESOURCES

## Drop-in Sessions

Weekly drop-in sessions are held at Central Stories Museum. This works well for volunteers from Alexandra, the Teviot Valley and Clyde. For volunteers from the Cromwell area, meetings are held at Cromwell Museum.

## Group meetings

Group meetings are held approximately every six weeks at either the Central Stories Meeting Room or at the Cromwell Museum. This gives volunteers an opportunity to catch up on the work others are doing, develop their skills further, and plan further interviews collaboratively.

## Ongoing training and networking

Our volunteers continue to develop their skills to a high standard. They obtain inspiration from networking with other oral history groups and make use of training opportunities. As our volunteer network grows, volunteers naturally find others locally to link up with and support their work. There is plenty of opportunity for feedback and upskilling!

## Our supporters:

The Central Otago Oral History Project receives financial support from a range of funders. This allows us to employ a part-time project manager and purchase the equipment we need for growing the repository.



# WHAT IS ORAL HISTORY?

Oral history is a field of study and a method of gathering, preserving and interpreting the voices and memories of people, communities, and participants in past events. Oral history is both the oldest type of historical inquiry, predating the written word, and one of the most modern, initiated with tape recorders in the 1940s and now using 21st-century digital technologies.

Oral histories not only add new perspectives to already documented events, they also allow for the creation of a record where none previously existed. Capturing everyday life and traditions is just as important as recollections of significant events.

One of the values of oral history is that it adds the view of eyewitnesses to existing records, providing new or additional information and insights. It is not about repeating what has already been written and recorded about the past. Instead, it gives us the *personal perceptions* of individuals who were there, so we can learn not only what happened to people in the past but also the thoughts and feelings they recall having at that time.

Oral history can also give a voice to people who are often left out of historical records, the ordinary men and women who have taken part in significant events and whose reflections may throw new light on the past.

## Types of Interviews

There are two main types of oral history interviews:

- **Topic interviews** - those recording information about a specific subject, such as an interview with someone about the history of a workplace, occupation or any other topic.
- **Life history interviews** - for example, an interview that focuses on the life and the changes experienced by a long-term resident in your area.

For example, an oral history about the history of viticulture in Central Otago is a topic interview, but it is likely to include some questions about the interviewee's personal or family experiences to provide context.

The Central Otago Oral History Project focuses more on topic-based interviews rather than life stories - but that's not a hard and fast rule. You will find a list of potential themes and topics in the Appendix and on our website: <https://www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz/oral-history/>. A list of suggested questions for a life history interview is also appended.

# NOHANZ CODE OF ETHICAL AND TECHNICAL PRACTICE

The recording and use of oral history may give rise to ethical considerations. The National Oral History Association of New Zealand (NOHANZ) has published a Code of Ethical and Technical Practice that sets out the responsibilities of interviewers and collectors of oral history.

The Code of Ethical and Technical Practice exists to promote ethical, professional and technical standards in the collection, preservation and use of sound and video oral history material.

## **Archives, sponsors and organisers of oral history projects have the following responsibilities:**

- To inform interviewers and people interviewed of the importance of this Code for the successful creation and use of oral history material
- To select interviewers on the basis of professional competence and interviewing skill, endeavouring to assign appropriate interviewers to people interviewed
- To see that records of the creation and processing of each interview are kept
- To ensure that each interview is properly indexed and catalogued
- To ensure that preservation conditions for recordings and accompanying material are of the highest possible standard
- To ensure that placement of and access to recordings and accompanying material comply with a signed or recorded agreement with the person interviewed
- To ensure that people interviewed are informed of issues such as copyright, ownership, privacy legislation, and how the interview and accompanying material may be used
- To make the existence of available interviews known through public information channels
- To guard against possible social injury to, or exploitation of people interviewed

## **Interviewers have the following responsibilities:**

- To inform the person interviewed of the purposes and procedures of oral history in general and of the particular project in which they are involved
- To inform the person interviewed of issues such as copyright, ownership, privacy legislation, and how the material and accompanying material may be used
- To develop sufficient skills and knowledge in interviewing and equipment operation, e.g. through reading and training, to ensure a result of the highest possible standard
- To use equipment that will produce recordings of the highest possible standard
- To encourage informative dialogue based on thorough research
- To conduct interviews with integrity
- To conduct interviews with an awareness of cultural or individual sensibilities
- To treat every interview as a confidential conversation, the contents of which are available only as determined by written or recorded agreement with the person interviewed
- To place each recording and all accompanying material in an archive to be available for research, subject to any conditions placed on it by the person interviewed
- To inform the person interviewed of where the material will be held
- To respect all agreements made with the person interviewed

# THE THREE STANDARDS OF INTERVIEWING

## **Ethical Standard**

All dealings with people being interviewed should be according to ethical standards which protect their rights and expectations. This means that from the first approach to an individual, throughout the interview, and in the use and handling of the resulting recording and accompanying material, those rights and expectations must be honored. Ethical standards in oral history recordings require confidentiality on the part of the interviewer and all people handling recorded and accompanying material.

## **Technical Standard**

Interviews should be recorded to the highest possible standard achievable with the equipment available. A poorly recorded interview will result in a sound document that may be unreliable because what is said on the recording may be hard to understand. Such a recording is unlikely to be regarded by future researchers as valid material worthy of serious use.

## **Interview Standard**

Interviews should be based on thorough research. They should be conducted in a structured way according to a clearly pre-defined plan so that future researchers have a framework and context to guide them in the use of the material.

## **Abstracts and Transcripts**

An abstract is a summary of the topics covered in the interview. Its purpose is to give the user (i.e., readers, listeners, researchers) of the oral history an idea of what the interview contains without providing detail of what the interviewee says.

It is also possible to do a word for word transcription of the interview, but this is much more time-consuming – approximately six or seven hours for each hour of interview. You will find examples of abstracts on our Oral History Catalogue. An abstract sample is also included in the appendix.

The Central Otago Oral History Project prefers to use abstracts rather than transcripts. We have a team of abstractors among the volunteer group. If you are interested in learning how to do abstracts, please talk to the Project Manager; we would welcome more assistance in this area.

# THE RECORDING AGREEMENT

**NO INTERVIEW CAN BE ACCEPTED INTO THE CENTRAL OTAGO ORAL HISTORY PROJECT REPOSITORY WITHOUT A FULLY COMPLETED RECORDING AGREEMENT THAT IS SIGNED BY THE INTERVIEWEE, INTERVIEWER AND COMMISSIONER.**

Our Recording Agreement (see Appendix) is based on the NOHANZ agreement. If you have any issues with understanding and/or explaining the Recording Agreement form, then please contact the Project Manager.

## Interview Restrictions

If an interview is unrestricted then it will be available for use, once the paperwork has been processed. If the Interviewee has a concern about a part or the entire interview being available for use, then:

- Interviewees have the option of restricting the whole interview or parts of it for access, broadcast, published work, use in public performance, and electronic publication on the internet. They can place a restriction on one or more of these options.
- Any restricted material (unless permanently deleted – see below) will be removed from the listening copy but retained on the archival copy. The restricted material only becomes available on the listening copy once the restriction period has ended.
- Any restriction must be accompanied by a date that indicates when the restriction period can be reviewed or is released.
- In some cases, people may wish for material to be permanently removed – this needs to be noted on the Recording Agreement Form. In these situations, the material will be removed from the listening copy and the archival/raw copy.
- Interviewees are welcome to listen to their interviews before signing the Agreement form.
- Don't underestimate the importance of this form.

**Please note:** if the interviewer wants the entire interview restricted with no release/review date then the recording *cannot* be included in the Central Otago Oral History Project. If this situation arises then please discuss it with the Project Manager.

Please ensure the Interviewees understand that:

- Recordings of interviews and will be available to the public at Central Stories or via the Central Otago Heritage Trust's website unless there are restrictions specified on the Recording Agreement Form.
- Their interviews and accompanying documentation will be held at the Central Stories Museum Archive (and sometimes other approved repositories if permission is given).
- Interviewers do not receive a copy of the interview.
- Access to and use of their interview and accompanying documentation will be subject to the conditions agreed by interviewees on the Recording Agreement Form.
- Where possible the Central Otago Oral History Project will promote the oral history repository to the wider public.



The Recording Agreement is included in the Appendix.



# USING THE ZOOM H5 RECORDER

## ZOOM H5 Recorders

To record oral history requires the best-quality equipment. Poor sound recordings will be of little use to researchers in the future, or of interest to the public. The Central Otago Oral History Project has four Zoom H5 recorders for recording oral histories. These are shared among the team of Volunteer Interviewers. Each Zoom H5 comes in a bag. In addition to the equipment there will be a copy of the basic instructions for using the Zoom H5 (see blue notes) as well as a contents list of the equipment.

The Project Manager is available to give further training and advice. There is also an instruction video on how to use the Zoom H5 on our website: <https://www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz/oral-history/>

## Technical tips on using the Zoom H5

Place the recorder on the foam pad. The microphones should be about 'shirt pocket' height. Use a lanyard (from the recorder bag) to clip the microphone on to.

The recorder should be within arm's reach of the interviewer and the screen should be in view so you can make visual checks during the interview e.g. time remaining, still recording etc.

## Soundchecks

**Always** undertake a sound check to make sure the recording levels are the same for the Interviewer and the Interviewee. It is important to do a sound check before recording the interview to ensure the equipment is working. The sound check is also the opportunity to identify any background noises e.g. heat pump, fridge hum. Where possible eliminate these noises. Then include a 10 second period of silence on your recording which enables any background environmental noises to be identified and reduced when the recording is edited. Interviewing in a room with plenty of soft furnishings gives a much better quality recording than a room with hard floors and surfaces.

## SD Cards

Recordings are stored on SD cards installed in the Zoom H5. These need to be kept away from magnetic objects such as cell phones. The SD cards are typically 8GB or larger. A one-hour interview takes up about 1GB of space. The screen on the Zoom H5 will show you how much recording time you have left. Please leave these cards in the recorder. The Project Manager will remove the SD cards and back up the recording when you return the recording equipment and your paperwork.

## Care of Equipment.

Please take care of the Zoom H5 recorders and microphones. Please make sure that:

- There are no 'kinks' the cables and coil them loosely when finished.
- The Zoom H5 is turned off when putting in the SD card and removing it (however, the Project Manager usually does this).
- SD cards in the Zoom H5 are away from magnetic objects e.g. cell phones.
- Store the equipment in a cool place, i.e. don't not leave equipment in a car on a hot day.

If you notice any wear and tear with any equipment, please advise the Project Manager.

## Booking equipment

With an active group of Interviewers, recorders should not remain with Interviewers long term. This means that you will have to plan ahead to undertake interviews, ensuring that research and initial

meetings with the Interviewee are carried out, and a date is set for the interview, before recorders are collected. Interviewers arrange with the Project Manager to reserve and collect recorders. After the interview is conducted, recorders should be returned promptly to the Project Manager accompanied by all the completed forms.

Please email the Project Manager to book at time to pick up a recorder at the weekly drop-in sessions held at Central Stories or at an agreed alternative pick up point.

## SUMMARY OF THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

Here is a quick summary of the steps involved in conducting an interview. Each of these steps should be completed in order to ensure the interviews meet the three Oral History Standards – Ethical, Technical, and Interview.

1. An Interviewee is referred to the Interviewer (in some instances the interviewer may make the initial contact with an Interviewee, especially if the interviewee is known to them)
2. Interviewer contacts Interviewee to arrange preliminary meeting
3. Preliminary meeting:
  - Outline the project and explain the Recording Agreement Form.
  - Explain how the recording will be used.
  - Gather information as per the Interviewee Information Form.
  - Talk about what topics will be covered in the interview (but don't get into detail).
  - Talk about any additional material (photographs etc.) that can be included (or copied for inclusion) with the interview.
4. Research: contact the Project Manager for help or direction if needed.
5. Plan Interview: contact the Project Manager to organize booking and picking up a recorder.
6. Forms: organize all the forms you will need (i.e. File ID Form, Interviewee Information Form, Recording Agreement Form and Frequently Asked Questions, and Oral History Interviewer Checklist). Note these forms can be downloaded as one document from our website: [www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz/oral-history/](http://www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz/oral-history/)
7. Arrange interview time with Interviewee.
8. At the interview:
  - Take a test recording (e.g., ask “What did you have for breakfast?”)
  - Remind Interviewee that what they are saying is going on the record.
  - Record ID statement and verbal agreement at the start of the recording.
  - Take a photo of the interviewee or obtain a copy of existing photographs (check that these can be used online as part of the interview record).
  - Ask the Interviewee if they would like to hear their interview before signing the Agreement Form.
9. Complete the Oral History Interviewer Checklist. Deliver all completed documentation, photos and recorder to the Project Manager.
10. Advise the Project Manager of any problems or concerns with the interview. It is vital that any issue regarding the content of the interview or any concerns over use/access are cleared up as quickly as possible.

## The Interviewer Checklist

All Interviewers need to complete an 'Interviewer Checklist' for each interview. This form should be started at the beginning of the interview process and completed as the interview process proceeds. This checklist will act as a prompt to ensure that the interview process is conducted properly, and all the necessary information is obtained.

The summary you write of the interview will be used as the basis of the 'Brief Synopsis' that appears on our online catalogue to give people an idea what the interview is about. Please make this as informative as possible.



The Interviewer Checklist Form is included in the Appendix.

## PREPARING FOR THE INTERVIEW

### Identifying Potential Interviewees

The Central Otago Heritage Trust has a list of potential Interviewees that are relevant to the key **themes and topics** that resonate with Central Otago's rich heritage (see Appendix below). Interviewers may also have suggestions for potential interviewees. Interviewers are required to discuss potential Interviewees with the Project Manager before making any contact with the Interviewee. Once agreed, the Interviewer will contact the Interviewee to discuss the Project.



A list of potential interview Themes and Topics is included in the Appendix. Talk to the Project manager about identifying Interviewees that have some experiences and knowledge of these topics.

### Preliminary Meeting

Never record an oral history interview without a preliminary meeting with your Interviewee. The purpose of the preliminary meeting is to get to know your interviewee by gathering some information about them. This also helps the Interviewee understand what the Central Otago Oral History Project is all about and what will happen to the interview once completed. Please explain that a key goal of the project is to publish the recordings on the Central Otago Heritage Trust website, but we can only do this if we have permission from the Interviewee.



The Frequently Asked Questions document in the Appendix will help you explain the purpose of the project. You may wish to email or post this document to the potential Interviewee before your preliminary meeting.

Telephone your interviewee to make a time for the meeting and make sure you turn up on time! Be professional and confident so that the Interviewees has confidence in the process.

Take the time to explain your project again, including what you intend to do with the recordings. Go over the **Frequently Asked Questions**.

It is essential that you have given your Interviewee enough information to enable them to make an informed decision as to whether or not they wish to be interviewed. If they do not wish to be interviewed, thank them for their time and leave. Do not pester or attempt to persuade them if their mind is made up.

If the Interviewee is comfortable with going ahead with the interview, make an appointment to come back to do the interview, preferably within a week. A longer delay can make some people anxious about the process.

Keep the preliminary meeting brief, less than an hour. You do not want your interviewee telling all their stories at this meeting. Make an appointment to come back and record them.

### **Interviewee Information Form**

If the person agrees to an interview, now is the time to seek basic biographical information. This information will help you, and those who use your interviews, to place Interviewees in their social context, and it may provide information for genealogists in years to come. The Interviewee Information Form covers:

- the Interviewee's date and place of birth
- the names of the Interviewee's parents and their dates of birth, marriage and death
- the names of the Interviewee's siblings, partner(s) and children
- details of the Interviewee's schooling and occupations.

*Please note: this form is not shared with anyone listening to the recording in the future but is kept on restricted access in the archive. This is important if they have any concerns about privacy.*



The Interviewee Information Form is included in the Appendix.

Keep in mind that some people will not want, or will be unable, to give you all of this information. Do not be insistent about collecting it if the interviewee is obviously unwilling to tell you.

This is the stage at which to ask for relevant documents and photographs to copy to help with your research and to add to the interview file, if the interviewee agrees. It is also the stage when you should explain what will happen to the finished recording.

Outline the general areas you will be asking about in the interview. Do not give the interviewee specific questions at this stage. They will want to begin answering them and may also try to prepare answers before your next meeting.

Some people fear that they might inadvertently say something sensitive in a recording, so it is important to tell them that they can put conditions on the use of their interview if they wish. This is the time to talk about the agreement form.

### **Other things to do at the preliminary meeting**

- Identify any obstacles to recording – potential noise or interruptions.
- Identify the best place to set up the interview and equipment. Rooms with plenty of soft furnishings will give the best sound quality (e.g. the lounge).
- Identify where the power supply is and if an extension cord is going to be needed.
- Identify any conditions the Interviewee may have that might affect the interview e.g. deafness.
- Ask the Interviewee to jot down anything they may remember after you leave which they might like to include in the interview.
- Remind the Interviewee that if there is something they do not want to talk about just let you know.

- Explain the ideal interview environment – a room where there will be the least interruptions. A third person in the room changes the dynamics and privacy is compromised. Situations can arise when another person is present for health/support reasons – it is important to identify this person in the Interview ID. If they make a significant contribution to the interview, they will need to complete a Recording Agreement Form.

## PRELIMINARY RESEARCH

An unresearched interview can perform the same function as a vacuum cleaner i.e., it can collect anything and everything. A researched and planned interview will result in the collection of material relevant to the project focus. Spend time researching your topic so you can make a list of questions that you want answered. You need to have enough background information to cover the topic thoroughly.

- Our five Central Otago museums have great resources for doing background research. The John McGraw Research Room at Central Stories has a wealth of information on Central Otago history. The McArthur Room at the Alexandra Library is also a treasure trove. (You'll need to ask a librarian for the key to get into this room).
- Online resources are also plentiful but be sure to cross check this information with other sources.
- In your preliminary meeting ask your Interviewee if you may borrow and copy parts of any written records, letters, diaries, service records, logs or newspaper cuttings they may have kept. Copy them as soon as possible and return them at the interview. Add to your list any additional questions this material may inspire. If you do not end up interviewing the person, ensure that you return the material personally.

Write a list of questions or an outline of topics to guide you on what needs to be covered in each interview. **You do not need to stick rigidly to your list of questions.** If your Interviewee begins to talk about something relevant and interesting that's not covered in your questions, let them talk, and ask more questions about that topic.

## THE INTERVIEW

### Before you leave home

- It's a good idea to phone on the day of the interview to make sure that it is still convenient.
- Make sure you have all the equipment you need (e.g., do you need an extension cord for the recorder?).
- Check that everything is in good working order and you are confident in how to use it.
- Check to see that you have copies of the Recording Agreement Form, the Interviewee Information Form and your Interview questions.



All forms are included in the Appendix. You can also find these forms on our website: [www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz/oral-history/](http://www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz/oral-history/)

### At the Interview

- Choose a location with soft furnishing for the best sound quality.
- Do a sound check to ensure Interviewee and Interviewer levels are the same.

- Record your voice and that of your Interviewee to make sure that both of you can be heard. It does not matter what you record for the sound check. A useful question is 'What did you have for breakfast?'
- Make any necessary adjustments to the microphone.
- Record 10 seconds without speaking so that any constant background noises can be identified edited out at a later date.
- Record the File ID Statement at the beginning of your interview. You should have a copy of the File ID Statement with you. This statement includes a verbal agreement with the Interviewee regarding the Oral History interview. It is vital that this statement is used for every interview. It only needs to be read in full once with each Interviewee; if second or third interviews take place it does not need to be repeated in full each time (although do always note the date and time if interviews are done on different days).



The File ID Statement Form is included in the Appendix.

- Be sure to remind people that what they are saying is being recorded – especially if they say something like ‘just between you and me...’ which can happen if/when they start to feel comfortable with you. Tell them how this is handled after the interview.
- Use the headphones to identify background noise – sometimes the ear can block out background noise but the microphone will pick it up and you will hear it through the headphones.
- Interviewees may have concerns about ‘getting it right’. Remind them they were there so they are the expert. Don’t worry too much about dates, you could ask how old they were or if were they at school.
- Reassure them that if they make a mistake you can add it later in the paperwork (or a further interview).

## INTERVIEW TIPS & TRICKS

Just because you go to the interview with a plan, this doesn’t mean you cannot follow the direction of the interview and ask other questions. Nonetheless, here are some tips and tricks for interviewing techniques:

- The interview is not a conversation. You are there to find out information. Once you have asked a question, keep quiet. (You are not the star of the show!)
- Smile and nod to show encouragement and interest. Try not to say yes or make encouraging noises, and don't wriggle about or shuffle your papers as this distracts listeners of the recording.
- Begin the interview with straightforward questions that your Interviewee will have no difficulty answering. For example, ask for their full name and date of birth; ask about their mother and father and their names and occupations. Ask some questions to gain a little insight into their early life – where they went to school, what they did when they left school.
- Ask specific questions to get specific answers, and ask open-ended ones to get longer, more detailed answers.
- Ask open-ended questions if you want description or comment: 'What can you remember about life in Bannockburn as a child?'

- Avoid questions where your Interviewee only has to answer yes or no. Say, for example, 'What were your living conditions like?' rather than 'Did you have cramped living conditions?'
- Don't tell them the answer to a question: 'So you milked the cows by hand?' Allow them to explain how they did things.
- Don't ask more than one question at a time.
- Try to make your questions as clear as possible. If your interviewee does not understand your question, rephrase it.
- Do not fill every pause with sound. Pauses can be your friend! Interviewees need time to think and formulate answers.
- Make sure that your Interviewee has finished answering before you ask the next question.
- Don't worry if you seem to be straying from your prepared questions as long as the information you are hearing is relevant.
- Don't expect people to remember dates. Most won't. For example, ask 'How old were you then?' or 'Was that before you started university?' If you have done your background research well enough, the answer should allow you to pinpoint the year.
- Aim to get Interviewees to spell out measurements. 'It was about this wide' will mean nothing to a listener. Try to get the interviewee to give a verbal estimate of size: 'Oh, about a metre', or clarify yourself: 'Is that about a metre?'
- At the end of an interview, it is helpful to say thank you while still recording so that listeners know the interview has finished.
- At the end of the interview, ask your Interviewee to sign the Agreement Form. Note that some Interviewees may prefer to listen to their interview before signing the Agreement Form.

## Other Interview Tips

- Remember the project focus is on experiences of people living and working in Central Otago.
- If having more than one interview with a person, listen to the previous one to identify any points to clarify or obtain further information.
- Ask questions, even if you think you might know the answer – be knowledgeable and naïve at the same time.
- Clarify with Interviewees how they know about something: were they there, did someone tell them?
- If you are receiving an information overload from the Interviewee, take steps to direct the interview, ask the Interviewee to go back to something they had previously said and tell you more about it, steer the interview with your questions.
- Listen as you interview – look for new leads.
- Be sensitive to tiredness.
- Keep an eye on the recorder for time left and that it is recording, etc.
- Take short notes as you go so you don't forget things to ask about.
- Interview length will vary. Topic based interviews tend to be shorter whereas life histories may be longer. Aim for up to one hour for a topic-based interview.

## Types of Questions

- Ask open question – not yes/no (closed) questions.
- Be specific not vague.
- Use simple language, asking one question at a time.
- Don't ask 'loaded' questions, i.e., a complex question that contains an assumption.
- Use events rather than years to establish dates and times (they are often easier to remember).
- Ask about personal feelings and opinions as well as the facts.

## Follow up questions

- Follow up questions are used in interviewing to clarify points raised, focus the Interviewee on a specific subject and encourage elaboration.
- Example: 'I'm not sure what you mean by that comment. Could you explain it further?'
- It is your responsibility to ensure the Interviewee has meant what they said. This question will ensure that you have a clear understanding of what the Interviewee has related.
- Example: 'You mentioned that you were at home when the earthquake struck. Can you describe what happened?'

Questions like this encourage the Interviewee to speak more fully about the subject raised.

- Example: 'You've told me that you were involved in the early days of viticulture in the 1980s. What do you think were the main challenges for the industry at this time?'

Questions like this can encourage the Interviewee to think and reflect, to give their own views on why things happened the way they did.

## AFTER THE INTERVIEW:

- Drop the recorder, Interviewer Checklist, Recording Agreement and any other materials to the Project Manager. **PLEASE MAKE SURE ALL MATERIALS ARE DELIVERED AT SAME TIME.**
- If the Project Manager is not available at the time you come in, then for security of the equipment, recording and paperwork, please pass everything to the staff at Central Stories who will put it in a safe place.
- The Project Manager will check that everything is complete. Expect to hear from the Project Manager if there are any issues.
- If signing of the Recording Agreement is subject to the Interviewee listening to the recording, then obtain copy of the interview on USB flash drive from the Project Manager and pass it to the Interviewee. No further action will be taken until a signed Recording Agreement is provided and any restrictions are dealt with.
- Photos or documents provided by the Interviewee will be scanned and/or copied.
- The Project manager is responsible for backing-up the recording, applying an accession number and archiving.
- The interview is copied on to a USB flash drive by the Project Manager for the Interviewer to pass onto the Interviewee (if not already done so) along with any borrowed materials such as photos, and a thank you card.
- Interview signed off as complete – WELL DONE 😊
- Information about the recording is added to the online catalogue.

## REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL COPIES OF A RECORDING

There are situations where an Interviewee may request an additional copy of their interview, for instance when they have several children and would like to give each a copy. We are happy to do this, however there may be a charge of \$10 per additional USB flash drive. Alternatively, there is no charge if the family is happy to receive the oral history electronically as a MP3 file.

If someone approaches the Project and asks for a copy of an interview, we would ask the Interviewee to sign a form to record their agreement with a copy being made, including if the person is a friend or relative of the Interviewee.

Please contact the Project Manager to discuss queries about copying interviews.



## DEALING WITH ETHICAL AND OTHER ISSUES

When recording the interview please ensure:

- The verbal agreement as written on the File 01 Identification Form is included at the start of the Interview.
- If a topic of a sensitive nature is discussed by the Interviewee and the Interviewer is concerned, ask if the Interviewee is happy for this to be going on the record.

It is not the responsibility of the Interviewer to deal with concerns regarding the content of oral history interview recordings. If you have a concern regarding the recording please tell the Project Manager.

Issue may include:

- Interviewee seemed hesitant or unhappy to sign recording agreement form.
- A third party expresses concern about content of recording.
- The Interviewer hears 'through the grapevine' of a concern about the recording.

Once the concern has been forwarded to the Project Manager the following steps will be taken:

- Project Manager to contact the Interviewee to hear any concerns they may have.
- If appropriate, the Project Manager will contact the third party concerned.
- If an understanding cannot be reached, the Project Manager will then contact the National Oral History Association of NZ to seek direction on where to go next.
- The Project Manager will document this process.

## FURTHER READING

Hutching, M. (1993). *Talking history: a short guide to oral history*. Bridget Williams Books/Historical Branch, Dept of Internal Affairs, Wellington.

Perks, R. & Thomson, A. (Eds.) (1998). *The oral history reader*. Routledge. Second edition.

Robertson, B. M. (2006). *Oral history handbook*. OHAA, Australia. Fifth edition.

Ritchie, D. A. (1995). *Doing Oral History*. Oxford University Press.

Selby, R. & Laurie, A. (Eds.) (2005). *Māori and oral history: a collection*. NOHANZ, Wellington.

Thompson, P. (2000). *The voice of the past: Oral history*. Oxford University Press.

## USEFUL WEBSITES

NOHANZ: [www.oralhistory.org.nz/](http://www.oralhistory.org.nz/)

New Zealand History Online - Ministry for Culture and Heritage: <https://nzhistory.govt.nz/>

Online Oral History Guide: <https://www.nzhistory.net.nz/hands/a-guide-to-recording-oral-history>

Australian Sesquicentennial Gift Trust for Awards in Oral History:

<http://www.mch.govt.nz/awards/history/oral.html>

Jack Ilott Oral History Education Operating Fund: <https://natlib.govt.nz/about-us/scholarships-and-awards/jack-ilott-fund>

Professional Historians' Association of New Zealand/Aotearoa PHANZA: <https://phanza.org.nz/>

## APPENDIX: ORAL HISTORY DOCUMENTS & FORMS

1. Frequently Asked Questions (for Preliminary Interview)
2. File 01 Identification Form
3. Interviewee Information Form
4. Interviewer Checklist
5. Recording Agreement Form
6. Central Otago Oral History Project Themes and Topics
7. Interview Abstract Sample
8. Life History Interview - Question Suggestions



These forms are also available on our website:  
[www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz/oral-history/](http://www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz/oral-history/)

# The Central Otago Oral History Project

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



### What is the project about?

Our 'Central Otago way of life' is derived from our unique landscape and the experiences of people who have lived within its boundaries. This is most vividly captured in the stories of the people themselves, and the memories they share which describe our collective community identity and shared heritage.

The project aims to record, preserve, share and celebrate these stories for the benefit of all.

The project is managed by the Central Otago Heritage Trust who receive funding from Central Lakes Trust, Otago Community Trust and Lotteries to coordinate this project.

### Why do you want to interview me?

Interviews are guided around themes and topics that celebrate Central Otago's rich heritage. These themes and topics have been developed by the Central Otago Heritage Trust and the wider community.

### What will it involve?

Your memories will be recorded in a relaxed one-on-one interview by a volunteer oral historian at a time and place that suits you.

You can also provide photos and other relevant materials that can be copied and kept with your recording to provide additional context to your memories.

### What will happen to the recording?

All recordings are archived at held at Central Stories Museum and Art Gallery archive. The copyright holder will be the Central Otago Heritage Trust. A key goal of this project is to share oral histories with the wider public. With your permission, your oral history and other relevant materials will be published on the Central Otago Oral History website-based platform. [www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz/oral-history-catalogue/](http://www.heritagecentralotago.org.nz/oral-history-catalogue/) Copyright is held by the Central Otago Heritage Trust, and online listeners are informed that copies of the recording may not be made.

If, at the end of the interview, you are uncomfortable with any aspect of the recording being placed online, we can remove the relevant excerpts to ensure you are satisfied with the final outcome. This will be noted in the Recording Agreement signed at the completion of the interview.

With your permission, additional material may also be placed online including a short, written summary of the interview (an abstract), and any photos or scanned documents (such as newspaper clippings) that you are happy to share to support the interview.

Personal Information such as birth dates, location of birth, and any information you provide in the Interviewee Information Form **will not** be published on the internet. This may be made available to researchers or genealogists only upon request to the Oral History Manager.

We will also provide a copy of the recording for you to keep and share with your family.

### What if I want to know more?

Please contact the Central Otago Oral History Project Manager at [joanna@heritagecentralotago.org.nz](mailto:joanna@heritagecentralotago.org.nz)

# Central Otago Oral History Project



## INTERVIEWEE INFORMATION FORM

*This information will not be placed online. It will only be accessible to members of the public on request to the Project Manager, for the purposes of genealogical or biographical research. Feel free to fill in the sections you are comfortable sharing with us. Shaded sections (contact information) will **not** be shared.*

**To be completed prior to the interview by the Interviewer or Interviewee**

Full Name			
Known as			
Address			
Postal Address (if different from above)			
E-mail Address			
Phone Number			
Alternative Contact Details (name, address, phone number, e-mail and relationship to interviewee)			
Date of Birth			
Place of Birth			
Ethnic Origin			
Iwi/Hapu/Marae		Village	
Father's Full Name			
Father's Date of Birth		Father's Date of Death	

Father's Occupation			
Mother's Full Name (and Maiden Name)			
Mother's Date of Birth		Mother's Date of Death	
Mother's Occupation			
Details of Siblings (names, dates of birth etc.)			
Details of Spouse/Partner (name, date of birth, date of marriage etc.)			
Details of Children (names, dates of birth, etc.)			
Education			
Employment			
Lived At			
Interests			

# Central Otago Oral History Project



## FILE 01 IDENTIFICATION FORM

***The following is to be read out and recorded at the start of each interview:***

This is an interview with ..... (full name)

for the Central Otago Oral History Project

recorded at ..... (place but not address)

On ..... (date)

The time is .....

The interviewer is ..... (your name).

I am using a Zoom H5 recorder and AKG C417PP clip on microphones

There is background noise from .....  
(or state if there is no background noise).

### **This is File number 1.**

Before we begin the oral history interview (*name of interviewee*) I just want you to confirm that you understand that this interview is being recorded as part of the Central Otago Oral History Project.

The recording and accompanying documentation will be held at Central Stories Museum, in Alexandra, and with your permission published on the Central Otago Oral History website.

Access to and use of the recording and accompanying documentation will be subject to the conditions and any restrictions stated in the Recording Agreement which we will sign at the end.

Are you happy about that and willing to continue? (*Interviewee answer*).

# Central Otago Oral History Project



## INTERVIEWER CHECKLIST

*To be completed by the Interviewer during the interview process and returned with other documents.*

Interviewee name		
Interviewer name		
Date of initial contact		
Date of preliminary meeting		
Interviewee Information Form completed	<input type="checkbox"/> (please ensure at minimum all contact details, date and place of birth are completed)	
Recording Agreement Form explained & signed	Yes / No *	Restrictions **
<p>* Note that recordings cannot be accepted into the Central Otago Oral History Project repository without a completed recording agreement.</p> <p>** Any restrictions will need to be agreed to with the Project Manager prior to acceptance of the recording.</p>		
Date(s) of Interview		
Location of Interview		
Photograph of interviewee (head & shoulders shot)	Yes / No *	If no, reason why?
<b>Accompanying material</b>	<b>Photographs</b>	<b>Documents</b>
Number provided		
To be returned?	Yes / No	Yes / No
Comments:		



<b>Focus of the Interview</b> (interview topics)	
<b>Summary of Interview content:</b>	<i>Please include <b>places lived, main family names, schools, occupations, topics of interest e.g. major events, interests or hobbies</b> and so on which are talked about in the interview. This information will also be helpful for writing a summary for the website.</i>

**For administrative use only**

Accession number		
Archives reference number (box no)		
Copies to be held by another repository?	Yes / No	Agreement in place? Yes / No
Interviewee copies delivered (date and to whom)		
Comments		

# ORAL HISTORY RECORDING AGREEMENT



Name of Project: **Central Otago Heritage Trust**

Person Interviewed: .....

Date of Interview .....

Commissioner: .....

Interviewer: .....

**1. Placement:** I, the person interviewed, agree that the recording of my interview and accompanying material, prepared for archival purposes, will be deposited in  
**Central Stories Museum and Art Gallery, Alexandra**

And copies may also be held by .....

**Notes:**

**2. Access:** I agree that the recording of my interview and accompanying material may be made freely available for research at the above location, or a location approved by the commissioner.

YES  OR NO

If **NO**: I require that there be **NO** access to the recording of my interview and accompanying material **without my prior written permission** until:

Release Date: .....OR Review Date: ..... (select one only)

**Notes:**

**3. Publication:** I agree that the recording of my interview and accompanying material may be quoted or shown in full or in part; this includes broadcast, published work, use in public performances, and electronic publication on the internet.

YES  OR NO

If **NO**: I require there be **NO** publication of the recording of my interview and accompanying material **without my prior written permission** until:

Release Date: .....OR Review Date: ..... (select one only)

**Notes:**

**Go to page 2 to complete the form and sign at end.**

---

#### 4. Copyright

Choose one:

~~4a) Any copyright I own in the interview is retained by me, the interviewee~~

**AND**

~~(Complete if required) Any copyright owned by me at my death is assigned to~~

**OR**

4b) Any copyright I own in the interview is assigned by me, the interviewee, to

**Central Otago Heritage Trust**

**Notes:**

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5. **Privacy Act:** As interviewee I acknowledge that this agreement does not modify my rights and responsibilities under the Privacy Act 1993

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6. **Additional Information:**

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7. **Signatures:**

Person Interviewed ..... Date: .....

Interviewer ..... Date: .....

Commissioner ..... Date: .....

8. **Alternative contact (Optional):**

If I am incapable of exercising any of my rights under the Agreement, please contact

[INSERT NAME] .....

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**Notes:**

1. All signatories to this *Oral History Recording Agreement* must comply with any restrictions on access/publication. This obligation applies to all copies of the recording and accompanying material, wherever they are held.
2. The terms agreed to in this *Oral History Recording Agreement* may be amended only with the authority of the person interviewed. Any change must be registered with all holders of the interview and accompanying material.
3. Commissioners, Interviewers and Repositories have responsibilities under the Privacy Act 1993.
4. The Interviewee should be credited as the speaker in any use of the recording.

# Central Otago Oral History Project



## THEMES AND TOPICS

Themes	Topics Related to Theme
Pastoral Farming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inter-generational links to land</li> <li>- The merino story</li> <li>- Station and family life</li> <li>- Irrigation and water</li> <li>- Training sheep dogs</li> <li>- Rabbit control</li> <li>- Wool industry</li> </ul>
Viticulture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inter-generational links to vineyards or making wine</li> <li>- The pinot noir story</li> <li>- Challenges of climate</li> </ul>
Fruit Orchards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intergenerational links to orchards</li> <li>- Market gardens</li> <li>- Water/dams and irrigation</li> <li>- Recent History – Seasonal Workers from Vanuatu</li> <li>- Family life</li> </ul>
Arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Writing, artwork, music about the land and people's connection to Central Otago (photography, song, poetry, books)</li> <li>- Local drama, theatre</li> </ul>
Gold	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Modern day gold-diggers and connections to the past</li> </ul>
Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clyde Dam construction</li> <li>- Old Cromwell before the dam</li> <li>- Water, dams, races</li> <li>- Local government</li> </ul>
Social Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The A&amp; P shows</li> <li>- Blossom festival</li> <li>- Horse racing</li> <li>- Arts across the bridge – Bannockburn</li> <li>- Classic Car Rally - Cromwell</li> <li>- Brass Monkey</li> <li>- Other</li> </ul>
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Inter-generational links</li> <li>- Schools and libraries with significant history</li> </ul>
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dunstan/local hospitals</li> <li>- Rural health and local doctors/ nurses/ midwives</li> </ul>
Early Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Promotion of Central Otago</li> <li>- What was on offer?</li> <li>- Holidaymakers who became locals</li> </ul>
Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intergenerational Chinese &amp; Welsh history</li> <li>- Mana whenua</li> </ul>
Stone Masonry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keeping art alive today</li> <li>- Care of stone heritage buildings</li> </ul>
Railways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Before the trail</li> <li>- Building the trail</li> </ul>
Other Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Community-minded people</li> <li>- New histories e.g., covid lockdown experiences</li> <li>- Key Central Otago heritage sites</li> <li>- Key Central Otago businesses</li> </ul>

# ABSTRACT SAMPLE

## WANAKA WOMEN PROJECT

Recorded: Monday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020

Interviewer: Liz Holland

Abstracter: Liz Holland

CATHERINE GWENDOLINE LITTLE

### File 01

- 2.20 CATHERINE [GWENDOLINE] LITTLE, born [Date\*] at private nursing home in QUEENSTOWN [run by Mrs CHALMERS, who could care for 3 mothers at a time]
- 2.40 Sister, [CHRISTINA MARGARET LITTLE born [Date\*]  
Brother, [ROBERT ANDREW LITTLE born [Date\*], died [Date\*]  
from cancer.]
- 2.59 Father, [THOMAS ANDREW LITTLE, [Date\* of Birth and Death]  
Mother, [EVA CLARE nee MCDOUGALL, [Date\* of Birth and Death]  
Hard working, honest people. Father got down in the dumps –Irish  
ancestry. Mother helped him. Strong Christian faith.  
Memories of bedtime stories from Bible Story book.
- 4.15 Grandparents, [Mother's side]  
CHRISTINA MCDOUGALL [born [Date\*], GLASGOW, died [Date\*]+  
ROBERT MCDOUGALL [Date\* of Birth and Death]  
  
Post Master and Storekeeper, CARDRONA.  
Recalls her earliest memories of time with them. Very influential in  
her life.
- 6.15 Grandparents (Father's side) ALICIA + JOHN LITTLE.  
Recalls her earliest memories of them. Not as close to them. Alicia  
born in CARDRONA, her parents from IRELAND [Catherine's Great  
Grandparents] – JOHN O'CONNELL WALSH + wife CATHERINE  
BRODERICK.  
Catherine's Great Grandmother came to Cardrona Valley in 1875  
from GALWAY, IRELAND. Recalls the impact of her having 3  
children, lack of support and being a devout Roman Catholic had on  
her health. She was admitted to SEACLIFF [HOSPITAL] moved to,  
and died in PORIRUA HOSPITAL, WELLINGTON in [Date\*]. The

# LIFE HISTORY - SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

- Full name of person interviewed, place and date of birth.
- Father's name, place and date of birth, occupation.
- Mother's name, place and date of birth, occupation.
- Siblings: names, place/date of birth.

## **Grandparents:**

- Names and dates of birth – any memories of them?
- When did they come to NZ?
- What stories have you heard about them?
- Were you told stories about any other ancestors?

## **Childhood:**

- Earliest memory?
- Where did you grow up?
- Describe the house you lived in.
- Describe the sort of food you ate.
- Describe the types of clothes you wore.
- Describe the games you played as a child (e.g. sports, marbles, skipping, cards).
- Describe the chores you did when you were growing up. Did you get pocket money? What did you spend it on?
- Were there significant/influential people (e.g. family, friends, mentors) in your childhood? If so, how were they significant?

## **Family activities:**

- How would you describe family life - relationship with parents/siblings?
- What did your family celebrate (e.g. Christmas, birthdays etc.)
- Describe a typical family Christmas/birthday/family gathering.
- What was the discipline like at home?
- What were your parents strict about? How? Why?

## **Religion:**

- How was your time spent on Sundays?
- Did you wear different clothes/play different games?
- Did your family go to church/ Sunday school?
- Were you taught to say prayers at night?
- What did religion mean to you as a child (later as an adult).
- Did you retain your religious belief/practices throughout your life?

## **Education:** [Ask the same questions about high school and university, if appropriate]

- Where did you go to school?
- How did you get there?
- How many classes were there?
- How many children in a classroom?

- Did you have any favourite teachers? Why?
- Were there any teachers you disliked? Why?
- Favourite school subjects/activities.
- What was the discipline like at school?
- Describe the games you played at school.
- How old were you when you left school? Why did you leave?
- What did you want to do when you left school? What did you do next?

**Work:** [If person interviewed had more than one job, repeat for each]

- What was your first paid job?
- Where did you work?
- Describe what you did in your job. Hours of work?
- Wages? Did you give any to your parents?
- Did you need special clothes? equipment?
- How did you feel about your job?
- Were you involved in a union? Which? How?
- What were your relations like with your workmates? with your boss?
- Why did you leave?

**Leisure:**

- What did you do in your spare time? (clubs, dances, hobbies?)
- What was a good night out when you were young?

**Marriage/Partner:**

- How did you meet?
- Describe your wedding.
- Where did you live?
- How many children did you have?
- Who paid the bills and how?

**People and Events:**

- Did anyone ever do something or say something to you that had a big impact on how you lived your life?
- Who had the biggest influence on your life?
- If you had the chance to meet anyone in the world, who would it be? Why?
- Which world leader have you admired most?
- What has been the happiest time of your life?
- What has been the most traumatic time of your life?
- Is there anything else you would like to be put on the record?
- Reactions to/involvement in other public events relevant to the interviewee's life and work.
- Moving away from home how did you feel about that?
- Did you keep in touch with your family? How? Why?

