

# Oral History

## Help Sheet 5: Keeping oral history recordings safe

Each recording you make is unique so it's important to ensure that they are protected. Space will fill up quickly on your voice recorder so you need to remove recordings as soon as possible

With any oral history project you should plan to purchase a hard drive, on which you can store security master copies of all recordings collected. Photographs of the interviewees and any scans made from documents in their possession can also be uploaded to it.

Your voice recorder, digital camera and scanner will give each file a largely meaningless title, and it is possible that files relating to one individual will be on each of the 3 types of equipment. You should therefore aim to bring together all material relating to one person into a single folder on your hard drive. The folder should be named in such a way that it is meaningful not only to you, but also to others who may later use or access the hard drive. For example, you could give the folder the name of the person(s) interviewed and the date of the interview.

Depending on the aims of your project, you may also need a working copy of the audio and other files that you have collected (for instance, to edit them). Working copies would be better stored on a device such as a PC.

Remember that technology will change over time and may become obsolete. Bear this in mind when storing your master files, as they will become useless if it becomes impossible to access them. You should obtain the permission of the interviewee(s) to change the format of the master copy as technology develops. A form of words you can use to do this is provided in the sample download document (Use of Recordings and Materials agreement). Plan to upgrade your storage device in good time if it seems advisable to do so.

If it is not already built into your project, please consider donating a copy of the master folder to Gloucestershire Archives, so that we can preserve it for future generations and share it with others. We can also provide advice and training about permanent preservation of digital material.