



Waterways Ireland
Uiscebhealaí Éireann Watterweys Airlann

ORAL HISTORY MANUAL

A Guide to gathering the oral histories and
memories of the waterways



Table of Contents

Introduction	3
About the author	3
Training Programme Overview	4
Key Terms	5
Oral History and the study of history	7
Ethical issues and considerations for collectors	9
Research and Preparation	12
Interview Resources	15
Barrow Navigation	16
The Royal Canal	19
The Grand Canal	22
Shannon Navigation	24
Shannon-Erne	27
Lower Bann	29
The Erne Navigation	32
Memory Triggers	36
Technical Skills: Using the equipment	38
The Interview	39
Associative collection	45
Presentation options	46
Review of Process	47
Appendices	50

Introduction

This document is designed to reinforce the key learning outcomes and guidelines as set out in an Oral History Training Programme undertaken with Waterways Ireland staff and volunteers. The programme was aimed at developing a baseline set of skills to enable Waterways Ireland personnel to document in a systematic and co-ordinated way oral history associated with Irish waterways, as part of the Waterways Ireland Oral History Project (hereafter WIOHP). The project evolved out the identification in the Waterways Ireland Heritage Plan, of how a 'deep emotional connections between the boating community, multi generational lock keeper families and settlements adjacent the waterways all provide a unique aspect and perspective of what waterways have meant to people and their families.' It also recognised that 'this form of intangible cultural heritage is at a high risk of being lost and efforts are underway to collect, preserve and disseminate this heritage resource for current and future generations'. The programme and project was overseen by Nuala Reilly, Archivist with Waterways Ireland.

About the author

The trainer and document author Dr. Tomás Mac Conmara, is an oral historian from Tuamgraney in east Clare. In 2016, he was commended by President of Ireland Michael D. Higgins, as one of seven recipients who have made outstanding contributions to culture over the last 100 years for a *Comhaltas Forógra na Cásca* Centenary Award. Since 2004, he has been documenting tradition and social memory associated with the Irish revolutionary period as well as broader folklore and memory. He has published articles on various aspects of folklore and oral tradition and lectured both nationally and internationally on aspects of Irish history, culture and folklore. Between 2008 and 2014 he led the foundation and development of the award winning Cuimhneamh an Chláir (Memories of Clare), a countywide oral heritage group. He has trained and helped develop oral history groups in many parts of Ireland and advises national bodies like the Military Archives and Irish Defence Forces. He was contracted in 2015 to lead the first phase of the WIOHP. He is also a former county heritage officer and has led several heritage groups and initiatives over the last ten years. In 2015 he was awarded a Doctorate by the University of Limerick for his study into the social memory of the Irish War of Independence. He operates as a heritage consultant and in 2016 was appointed Manager of the Cork Folklore Project.

Overview of Training Programme

The purpose of the training programme was to foreground and address the key issues associated with the collection of oral history related broadly to Irish Waterways. Sessions included the history and context of oral history collection in Ireland and internationally, ethics and informed consent, research and preparation, practicalities, technical and interview skills and post interview work. As a short course, the possibilities to address the fundamentals of oral history collection were limited. However, with the assistance of this document, collectors for Waterways Ireland should be aware of the crucial aspects associated with the work of collecting oral history.

The training programme followed the creation of a baseline archive of twenty-one interviews undertaken by the author in the winter of 2015/16 across the seven waterways below:

- Barrow Navigation
- Erne System
- Grand Canal
- Lower Bann Navigation
- Royal Canal
- Shannon Navigation
- Shannon-Erne Waterway

The initial phase of the WIOHP, resulted in twenty-one interviews with twenty-four people, deeply connected to waterways across the island of Ireland. The project which was undertaken by the author has resulted in **twenty-four hours, five minutes and fifty-seven seconds** of audio material related to a broad range of themes and forms a solid basis from which Waterways Ireland can now continue to build an increasing oral history archive. The programme will both actively collect and will also accept donations of waterways related oral recordings.

Key Terms

Given the proliferation of terms associated with the study of memory and history, it was important to foreground and explain terminology pertinent to this area of research. Recent scholarship illuminates a wide lexicon relating to memory studies. It is important, therefore, to note the possibility for several strands of memory to exist and intersect, both relating to and within this broader categorisation. The following are key terms relevant to the WIOHP.

Oral History

Oral History relates to the collecting and recording of the memories and experiences of an individual or group. The passing of knowledge from one generation to the next, it enables us to see the human side of historical events, rather than relying solely on books and records. It also allows us to challenge assumptions about our recent past by asking direct questions to people who lived through those times.

Folklore

Folklore relates to traditional tales and stories, fairies, banshees, old folk beliefs in supernatural creatures. It is also family lore, folk songs and music, folk art, pottery and carving. In addition, folklore is the traditions and customs of our families and our communities.

From the Archives

'Oh, yeah of course. Behind where we lived was quite a boggy area called 'The Moss'. I can remember on a wild winter's night when it was raining. I can still literally hear the rain bashing against the window. I can recall my father getting up in the middle of the night and saying he had heard the Banshee. He was quite frightened ... He confirmed that he had heard the Banshee call. We heard the following evening, we heard a man had tried to cross the boggy area and had gone into one of the drains and was lost'.

- Waterways Ireland Oral History Archive, Interview with Brian Cassells, Lurgan, County Armagh, 29 October 2015.

Social Memory

Social memory is understood according to Guy Beiner's definition as a 'discursive reconstruction of the past performed and promulgated by multiple agents and relating to numerous participants'.¹ Cultural memory which has also been used as a substitute for social memory is defined here according to Kansteiner's categorisation as 'ceremonies, images, built heritage, monuments and text'.²

Oral tradition

Oral tradition as a more passive form of memory is important for the WIOHP. It is vital for WIOHP collectors to document tradition from previous generations when the opportunity arises. Oral tradition is understood according to Kansteiner who used the term 'communicative memory' to describe the 'daily modes of communication in which the past is discussed, debated and given meaning'.³ Distinguished from personal testimony, oral tradition was regarded mainly as the domain of folklorists and as such was incorporated in the academic discipline of Folklore Studies from the nineteenth century onwards.⁴ The discipline, both nationally and internationally, gained in credibility over the latter part of the twentieth century.⁵

Post Memory

Eviatar Zerubavel described as 'sociobiographical memory' the mechanism through which we feel pride, pain, or shame with regard to events that happened to our groups before we joined them.⁶ Hirsch and Beiner both characterised 'the experiences of those who grew up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth' as 'postmemory'.⁷ Hirsch developed the thesis that images and stories experienced by a previous generation can be so affectively transmitted that they can appear almost like direct memory to the next.⁸

¹ Beiner's full definition is as follows; 'Social memory is collective in so far as it is neither the exclusive property nor the faculty of one individual, but commonly shared by a community. It is the discursive reconstruction of the past performed and promulgated by multiple agents and relating to numerous participants', See Beiner, *The Year of the French*, p.28.

² Wulf Kansteiner, 'Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory Studies', in *History and Theory*, Vol. 41 (May, 2002), p. 182.

³Ibid.

⁴ Larry Danielson 'The folklorist, the oral historian and local history' in David K Dunaway and Willa K. Baum (eds.), *Oral History, An interdisciplinary Anthology* (Plymouth, 1996), p. 188.

⁵Burke offers an insightful reflection on the coming together of folklore and history since the nineteenth century, see Peter Burke, 'History and Folklore: A Historiographical Survey' in *Folklore* 115 (2004), p. 134-136

⁶Eviatar Zerubavel, 'Social Memories: Steps to a Sociology of the past', in *Qualitative Sociology*, Vol 19, No 3, (1996); Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, 'Social Memory Studies: From the "Collective Memory" to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices' in *Annual Review, Sociology*, (1998), 24, pp. 123.

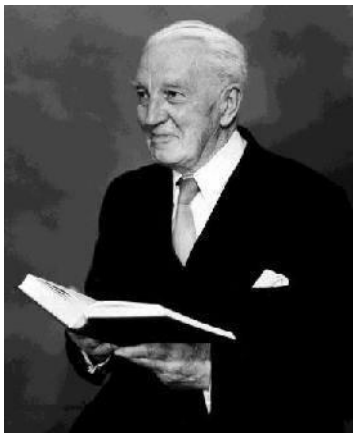
⁷Beiner, *Remembering the Year of the French*, p. 26, Marianne Hirsche, *Family frames, photography and Postmemory* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 27.

⁸Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of postmemory: writing and visual culture after the Holocaust*, (New York, 2012), pp. 4-6.

Mnemonics

A mnemonic device in the context of oral history relates to physical or cognitive triggers which stimulate or sustain memory. In a public sense, monuments, statues, plaques, gravestones and commemorations help to sustain aspects of our past in community memory. Privately, mnemonic devices can range from household items, marks on a wall or known locations which may not have a physical reminder but are known within local memory.

History and Context of Oral History in Ireland



Seamus Ó Duilearga (1899 - 1980) a native of County Antrim, is recognised as the founding father of modern Irish folklore. Ó Duilearga was an Irish Folklorist, Professor of Folklore at University College Dublin and Director of the Irish Folklore Commission.

Oral History and Historiography

Oral history in its broadest sense has a long and contested genealogy.⁹ Recent advances in technology have had a significant impact on the ability of oral historians and collectors to document and interpret information at greater speed and efficiency than previously.¹⁰ Greater technological capacity as well as the emergence of oral history as a credible academic discipline has led to its application across a range of subject areas and in particular a greater attention to the notion of a 'history from below'.¹¹ Oral history was adopted in the 1970's by the feminist movement as an ideal methodology for revealing the voices of women 'who had previously been silenced'¹²

⁹ Mark Riley and David Harvey, 'Oral histories, farm practice and uncovering meaning in the countryside' in *Social & Cultural Geography*, Volume 8 (Issue 3, 2007), p. 392.

¹⁰ Donald A. Ritchie, (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History* (Oxford, 2011) pp 287-288

¹¹ Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (Eds.) *The Oral History Reader* (London, 1998), p. 1

¹² Diane Elam (ed.) *Feminism Beside Itself* (London, 1995), p. 21

Additionally as Hamilton and Shopes record, the discipline has been central to enabling ethnic minorities to convey their experience, when conventional methods often failed to do so.¹³ It also has been noted as a methodology which can help better explain the experience of the colonized across the globe.¹⁴ Although practiced since the time of the ancient Greeks, the collection of eye-witness testimonies to major historical events in the context of modern Irish history has been in existence for many centuries. For example, signed statements of testimony were collected from Protestants who lived through the 1641 rebellion as a way of documenting and communicating that experience.¹⁵ In addition, in Musgrave's *Memoires of the Irish Rebellion of 1798*, first published in 1801, the author accumulated a vast collection, albeit with a strong loyalist bias, of oral as well as documentary evidence from eye witnesses to the rebellion of 1798.¹⁶ Much of the early work was archival in nature and it was not until the 1970's that its potential to reveal hidden histories led to an expansion in interest and output. Beiner notes that since the 1980's, oral history has been undergoing a major shift, 'as researchers transcend the archival imperative of collecting oral testimonies to explore possibilities of interpretation.'¹⁷

'Slippery medium' - Criticisms of Oral History

Criticism of oral history has traditionally pointed to the unreliability of memory and the vagaries and lack of objectivity in personal testimony, summed up in Hobsbawm's disparaging comment that 'oral history is personal memory which is a remarkably slippery medium for preserving facts'¹⁸ The recent Boston College controversy, where a lack of clarity on the legal status of oral history interviews raised further criticisms about the evidential basis of oral history.¹⁹ The 'assumed greater reliability of contemporary documentary evidence' comes into sharp focus when one considers the factors which may influence social memory in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.²⁰ Mnemonics, subjectivity, bias and memory forming are undoubtedly a part of what has shaped the

¹³ Paula Hamilton, Linda Shopes (eds.) *Oral History and Public Memories* (Philadelphia, 2008), p. 138

¹⁴ George Jerry Sefa and Dei Arlo Kempf, (Eds.), *Anti-Colonialism and Education* (Holland, 2006), p. 186

¹⁵ Eamon Darcy, *The Irish Rebellion of 1641 and the Wars of the Three Kingdoms* (Suffolk, 2013), p. 213

¹⁶ Thomas Bartlett, Kevin Dawson, Daire Keogh, *The 1798 Rebellion, an illustrated history* (Dublin, 1998), p. 6.

¹⁷ Beiner, *Remembering the Year of the French*, p. 19

¹⁸ Cited in Penny Summerfield, 'Culture and Composure: Creating Narratives of the Gendered Self in Oral History Interviews' in *Cultural and Social History* 1 (2004), p. 65.

¹⁹ 'BC reflects on missteps in Northern Ireland project, Boston Globe, 18 May, 2014',

<http://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2014/05/17/controversial-project-stumbles-end-reflects-where-things-went-wrong/Pp7b9cT3CDZ0Ltb3uuUPPI/story.html> (accessed 21 May, 2014) Oral history interviews were conducted with

former Provisional IRA, Official IRA, INLA members as well as a variety of activists from various loyalist groupings.

²⁰ Lummis, *Listening to History*, p. 11.

contemporary narrative and epistemology on modern Irish history. A response to the traditional criticism of oral history is invariably framed in the identification that as Portelli claimed, 'very often, written documents are only the uncontrolled transmission of unidentified oral sources'.²¹ Reminiscent of Samuel Johnson's assertion that, 'all history is oral',²² Portelli's claim is supported by others including Lummis and Beiner.²³ At the end of the twentieth century, Klein acknowledged the scholarly literature brimming with such titles as 'Sites of Memory', 'Cultural Memory' or 'The Politics of Memory'.²⁴

The importance of memory, when understood through sociological, anthropological, psychological and other lenses can, therefore, add significant dimensions to the study of history and is firmly established both inside and outside the academy.²⁵

Ethical issues and considerations for collectors

Prior to the collection of oral history for Waterways Ireland, there are a number of important considerations both at a collective group level as well as for the individual collector.

Listening to silence

Within the generation of social memory and oral history, it was also imperative to register and document possible silences and gaps in the narrative. The importance of silence as a key analytical component in memory studies is acknowledged. As Michael Rolph Trouillot holds, research into memory needs to develop a framework with the capacity to register possible silences that are not detectable on the accepted narrative.²⁶ For collectors of the WIOHP, it is vital to identify and address gaps in accounts where known historical areas or themes are not revealed within the data generated.

²¹ Portelli, 'What makes oral history different', p.37.

²² Beiner, 'Bodhaire Uí Laoire', <http://www.ucd.ie/pages/99/articles/beiner.html>, (accessed, 17 June, 2010).

²³ Lummis, *Listening to History*, p. 12; Beiner, *Remembering the Year of the French*, p. 17;

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Guy Beiner, 'Bodhaire Uí Laoire', <http://www.ucd.ie/pages/99/articles/beiner.html>, (accessed, 17 June, 2010).

²⁶ Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing The Past: Power and The Production of History* (Boston, 1995), p. 103.

Legal and Ethical Issues

For all oral history groups, the issue of ethics is vital. A clearly defined and understood

ethical position is critical to developing a trusted and sustainable collection effort. Each oral history collection group should ensure that all interviews occur according to best practice and informed consent. Each participant will be aware that all material will be preserved as a permanent public reference resource for appropriate use in research, publication, education, lectures, broadcasting and the internet. A consent form has been designed for the WIOHP (See Appendix I) and all participants are expected to comply with its use and retention. The laws in this area are complex and each project is different. However, it is the responsibility of each project to ensure that an informed consent process is in place and that each collector undertakes to follow this process for each interview. Interviewees have rights to privacy and to the ownership of their own words, which is enshrined in the copyright laws. This ensures both the integrity and continuity of an oral history project and safeguards each narrator's rights.

Informed Consent

Key aspects of the informed consent process include the need to obtain permission to archive and publish the interview in certain formats. It should also be clear to the interviewee who the interview is for, where it will be stored and how the interview may be used. It is critical to obtain a written consent from each interviewee. **This should also be supplemented by an oral consent (to the interview) at the beginning of each interview.**

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

Points to remember

- Interviewees are sharing private, often precious and perhaps difficult memories - The collector must be sensitive to this within and after interview.
- Make sure you have done adequate research before interview. The more you have researched and prepared the less likely an ethical issue will arise.
- Once copyright has been assigned to you, you are free to publish the interview in any form, subject to limitations the interviewee may stipulate.

Neuenschwander's Rules:

1. Anticipate potential legal problems and take appropriate preventative measures.
2. Avoid oral promises and understandings. Get it in writing.
3. Make sure that your legal-release forms fit your program.
4. Alert your staff to all potential areas of liability. If you work alone, educate yourself.
5. Do not let financial considerations alone deter you from consulting a lawyer. Preventative law is always less expensive and time-consuming than litigation.²⁷

²⁷ John A. Neuenschwander's *Oral History and the Law* (Albuquerque: Oral History Association, 1993).

Research and Preparation

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

– Seán Ó Súilleabháin – *Handbook of Irish Folklore*

The approach to research and preparation will have a clear impact on the nature of the interview and depth of information and memory elicited. The more research and preparation undertaken, the more comfortable and productive the interview will be. This will minimise discomfort for the interviewee and will create optimal conditions for a free flowing and rich exploration of memory.

There are a number of research approaches to interviews including;

- Life Story
- Subject Specific
- Memory trigger
- Group interview (**See Appendix II**)

What is YOUR interest?

While is not always possible for a collector to concentrate on his or her principal interests, the collector should always use his/her interests to maximum advantage. It is natural for a collector to gravitate to the subject that he/she enjoys. This can be a positive when not over indulged. **Remember**, the interviewee may not share your interest. Your primary role is to respond and react the knowledge orientation of the interviewee and to explore the moments of memory which unfold before you. **Remember**, you are all approaching this project due to your general connection to an interest in waterways heritage. However, within that area, there is a diverse range of subjects which you can place a focus on to both suit your own area of interest and capture vital information for Waterways Ireland.

Some points to consider

- Relax – This will be an enjoyable process.
- Know the WIOHP – You are now an ambassador
- Preparation is vital to the successful interview
- Become comfortable with equipment. Try it out at home.
- Be clear about why and what you are collecting
- Have a clear idea as to what you are collecting and be able to explain the need to document this and the role that oral history as a method can play in this process. You should have at least a basic knowledge of the **Waterways heritage as well as understanding of the nature and scope of the WIOHP**. The *Learning Zone* of the Waterways Ireland website offers useful resources on the heritage of waterways in Ireland <http://www.waterwaysireland.org/Pages/Learning.aspx>
- It is useful to start off the interview with the caveat that it does not have to be the ONLY interview. Without this, undue pressure can be placed on both the interviewer and interviewee. By stating that you will 'make a start', you ease the pressure on both you and the interviewee. However, remember that you should try to collect as much information as possible within the interview. Do not **RELY** on a second interview.

The following is suggested for interview preparation.

- Each Waterways collector should be furnished with or buy an A4 hard back copy book which you will write and retain all interview and research/field notes together - **This will be your fieldwork journal!**
- Write notes and memory prompts into your fieldwork journal
- Write short biographical notes page on interviewee based on what information you have or can find about him/her.

- You should have a clear knowledge of your line of enquiry. However, you should keep your bio notes to hand close by in the event that you draw a blank! General line of enquiry (More is better than less)
- Note final pre interview comments (‘You were saying there Mary before the interview started....’) Often the interview can start before you press record!
- Orientate yourself to the interviewee’s knowledge – Know what they know!
- A lack of knowledge can be turned to your advantage when used well. Your role is to be curious so if an unfamiliar subject, expression or dimension is introduced by the interviewee, ask him/her to explain.

Sources for information

- Research interviewees and his/her area/Townland/Parish
- Internet Parish sites/Local parish publications
- Speak to family members about memory prompts if possible
- Make a note of even the most trivial information
- Previously conducted interviews within WIOHP.
- Waterways Ireland website <http://www.waterwaysireland.org/Pages/Learning.aspx>
- Focus on the area most relevant to your interviewee and utilise relevant sources to deepen you knowledge of that area.
- Focus on the known interests of your interviewee.
- Fellow collectors – Ask about themes or areas explored in other interviews which will assist yours.

Interview Resources

Diversity of experience and knowledge

Remember, while the commonality of waterways heritage will ensure a common thread throughout the archive, in each area the knowledge and experience will be based on that locality. Each of the central navigations/canals/rivers have their own local specific culture, folklore and history. This should be attended to in the way that each collector prepares for their respective interviews.

Campaigners

Given the nature of waterways history, the attempts by many campaigners to preserve, restore and revive waterways routes across Ireland has become a central aspect of that history in its own right. Well known campaigners like Ruth Delaney and Ian Bath have already been interviewed for the WIOHP. However, less well known individuals, like Michael O'Connor from Kilcock (also interviewed for WIOHP) have made equally important contribution to the preservation of waterways heritage. This should be fore-grounded in interviews when the opportunity arises. The campaign to save the Grand Canal in the 1960s and the Royal Canal from the 1970s are two examples which draw in a wide range of participation which should be documented.

Seven resources for seven waterways

Below are seven brief resources, based on the seven associated waterways explored in the WIOHP, which will orientate collectors in their interviews for the project. They are not intended to function as interview guides, but will help with familiarising the collector with each waterway and suggest areas to explore. Each waterway has its own unique history and associated economic, social and cultural traditions. **All collectors for the WIOHP should research the person, place and life of each individual interviewee as encouraged in this publication.** However, the below will indicate some of the key areas that should be considered when preparing your interview.

Barrow Navigation

The Barrow Navigation stretches from Athy in County Kildare to St. Mullins in Co Carlow and is fully navigable for 68km with twenty-three locks. The Barrow Line above Athy connects the navigation to the Grand Canal.

Chronological Landmarks

Year	Event
1537	Act of Parliament passed making it illegal to build a weir across the river to raise water levels for fishing or milling without a 'King's Gap' or flash lock into the weir to allow boats to pass
1703	Committee of Irish House of Commons appointed to bring in a bill to make the River Barrow navigable but no action was taken
1709	Report by Colonel Smithwick and others that the River Barrow could be made navigable from Athy to the sea for £3,000
1759	Burgesses of Carlow and adjoining counties sought £2,000 from the Commissioners to remove obstructions in the River Barrow from Monasterevin to the sea
1761	The first progress report was submitted to Parliament by engineer Thomas Omer. They reported that a further £5,263 would be needed to reach Graiguenamanagh from St. Mullins. This 4 mile stretch was still not completed 5 years later.
1790	The Barrow Navigation Company was incorporated by charter taking over works on improving the navigation.
1830	Navigation reported to be very unsatisfactory (Total carried - 58,100 tons)
1845	Tonnage increased to 88,000 tons. Half of total shipments were corn, meal, salt and flour.
1894	Responsibility of Barrow transferred to Grand Canal Company
1922	Frequent delays reported on the navigation due to low levels of water in summer
1950	Navigation transferred to Córas Iompar Éireann (CIE)
1959	Commercial trade withdrawn by CIE
1986	Navigation transferred to the Office of Public Works (OPW)
1999	Waterways Ireland established as one of the six North/South Implementation Bodies under the British Irish Agreement with the responsibility for maintenance, management and development of inland navigable waterways

For more see Waterways Ireland '*Guide to the Barrow*' pp. 37-38

Points of information and suggested areas to explore in Barrow Related Interview

- The development of the Barrow Navigation from 1756
- Nature of the Barrow and impact on navigation - For example, below St. Mullins, the forest comes down on the bank meaning it can only be explored by boat
- In 1928, a change occurred from horse drawn barges to engine driven
- Explore tradition of horse drawn work where possible
- Change to engine driven and change to life of bargemen
- Characters on the Barrow e.g. Jack Pender from Graiguenamanagh, Tom 'Rock' Gill from Kilina, Lock Keeper Essie Conroy and Piery Bolger from Graiguenamanagh
- A lot of men from Graiguenamanagh, Robertstown and Allenwood worked on boats
- Graiguenamanagh men known as 'Barrowmen'
- In the 1950's the Barrow saw commercial barges carrying barley to the Guinness
- Brewery in Dublin and supplying beet to Ireland's first sugar factory at Carlow
- Explore the work involved in taking loads of cargo up and down the canal.
- Explore the work involved with the Grand Canal Company (GCC).
- The 'Hackmen' who operated private boats and the families who operated these (signalled by the 'B' on the barge).
- The strict nature of the work and the methods which GCC used to keep track on timings, condition of boats, cargo etc.
- The interactions of the boatmen along the canal.
- The Boatman's Song (and any other songs/poems related to the Barrow)
- The transition between Grand Canal Company (GCC) and Coras Iompar Éireann (CIE).
- Consider background of interviewee - For example, in WIOHP Interview with Jim Butler (05/02/2016), Jim spoke about the tradition of working on the canal within his family. His father was a store man and lock keeper.

- Consider local boats peculiar to Graiguenamanagh called Claracháns (sic).
- The devastation on the area when the canal closed in the early 1960s.
- The men who emigrated from Graiguenamanagh following closure (And other areas)
- Social aspect of boating and how activity on the Barrow kept communications alive across areas on the navigation
- Influx of English fishermen who came to Graiguenamanagh on holidays (1962/63)
- Emergence of the pleasure cruisers and the economic effect
- Declan Kearny claimed to have heard a ghost at Colgon's Bridge near Edenderry²⁸

See

Gardner, Raymond, *Land of Time Enough*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1977.
"Floating Heritage on the Barrow - Carlow through the waters of time"(2008)



113B on the River Barrow



²⁸ Joe O'Reilly and Catriona Killally, *Through the Locks*, pp. 18-20

The Royal Canal

The Royal Canal stretching from the River Liffey in Dublin to County Longford is 145 km long with forty-six locks. The Royal Canal was immortalised in the song 'The Auld Triangle', written by Brendan Behan.

*'And the auld triangle went jingle jangle,
All along the banks of the Royal Canal.'*

Chronological Landmarks

Year	Event
1755	Survey by Thomas Williams and John Cooley undertaken
1789	Charter of Royal Canal Company enrolled
1796	Canal opened to Kilcock
1813	Royal Canal Company dissolved and affairs handed to Inland Navigation with instructions to complete canal at public expense
1830's	Average tonnage is 80,000 tons
1873	Spencer Dock completed
1938	Ownership transferred to Great Southern Railway
1939-45	Brief revival during Emergency Years (World War II)
1944	Ownership transferred to CIE
1946	Tom Rolt navigates canal and records his trip in the publication 'Green and Silver'
1951	James Leech of Killucan, ceased to operate as last trader
1955	Douglas Heard's Hark passes through the canal (On board is Ruth Delany)
1961	Canal closed to navigation
1974	IWAI 'Save the Royal Canal' Campaign begins
1986	Ownership transferred to OPW
1999	Canal boats passing through Mullingar
2000	Ownership transferred to Waterways Ireland
2010	Royal Canal reopens

For more see Waterways Ireland *'Guide to the Royal Canal'* pp. 28-29

Points of information and suggested areas to explore in Royal Canal Related Interview

- Folklore suggests that the 13th lock at Deey Bridge between Liexlip and Maynooth was haunted. The suggestion was popularised by a poem written by the founder of Sinn Féin, Arthur Griffith, entitled 'The Spooks of the Thirteenth Lock'.
- Explore the journey of Tom Rolt, which led to the writing of the iconic book *Green and Silver*

Note: In her foreword to the 1993 edition of the book, Ruth Delany wrote: '... Green and Silver became a classic and was an important element in the campaign launched by the small group who founded the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland in 1954 to save the Shannon navigation from strangulation by low bridges... It captures for all time the waterways as they were then, at their very lowest ebb, and his enchantment at what he experienced shines through strongly'.

- Ruth Delany/Douglas Heard - *The Hark Journey* in 1955 - Last recorded boat journey on the Royal Canal before its closure.
- Explore the role of the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland (IWAI)

Note: Harry Rice and Vincent Delaney (Husband of Ruth) set up IWAI in 1950s Ruth was a founder member of the Inland Waterways Association of Ireland. The IWAI was formed in 1954 to promote the development, use and maintenance of Ireland's navigable rivers and canals. When the River Shannon was almost totally undeveloped for pleasure boating, the IWAI fought the building of low bridges, thus ensuring the development of the river as a national asset. Later the IWAI successfully fought the threatened closure of the Grand Canal in Dublin and has done much to instigate the improvement of the Barrow and to focus interest and activity on the restoration of the Royal Canal and other closed navigations. It is now supporting efforts to restore the Ulster Canal.

See IWAI Chronology compiled by Ruth Delany (<http://www.iwai.ie/org>)

- Explore the response from people along the route of the Royal Canal and the development of groups in Abbeyshrule and Kilcock etc.

- The challenges and frustrations including the proposal to build a motorway from Spencer Dock over the route of the Royal Canal.
- Closure of Royal Canal in 1961 - The revival of the Royal Canal
- The 'decline was rapid' in the canal after the canal boats ceased.
- Surprise among the locals with regard to how rapid the decline of the canal and harbour was.
- Decay of the canal led to a negative effect on the local communities who had depended on it
- Attempts to develop new ways of ensuring survival of Irish Waterways like the
- Shannon Boat Rally started in 1961 - Leisure boats etc.

Royal Canal Amenity Group

- The forming of the Royal Canal Amenity Group (RCAG) and its associated local branches.
- Explore the role of key people like Ian Bath and Ruth Delany.
- Memories of campaigning
- Key challenges
- Key moments along the journey
- Achievements
- Identity and culture along the canal?



Noel Spaine - A key activist in the Royal Canal Amenity Group (WIOHP, Interview with Noel Spain, 10 October 2015)



Ballynacargy Harbour on the Royal Canal before restoration

The Grand Canal

The Grand Canal is the southernmost of a pair of canals that connect Dublin with the River Shannon. Its main line from Dublin to River Shannon is 132 km and has forty-four locks. In Offaly, it services Edenderry, Daingean, Tullamore, Rahan, Belmont, Ferbane and Shannon Harbour on its original trading route from the city to the Shannon.

Chronological Landmarks

Year	Event
1756	Works commence on Grand Canal Scheme
1779	Canal opens traffic to Sallins
1785	Barrow Line completed to Monasterevin
1791	Barrow Line completed to Athy
1803	Canal completed to the Shannon
1852	Last of passenger boats withdrawn
1950	Grand Canal Company - merged with CIE
1960	CIE withdrew trade boats = End of the line for boatmen
1961	Ballinasloe, Mountmellick, Kilbeggan and Naas Branches officially close to navigation
1974	James Street Harbour closes to navigation
1960s	Campaign to save the Grand Canal begins
1974	James Street Harbour closed to navigation
1986	Grand Canal system transferred to OPW

For more see Waterways Ireland *'Guide to the Grand Canal'* pp. 30-31

Points of information and suggested areas to explore in Grand Canal Related Interview

- ☒ Memories of Cargo boats
- ☒ Guinness and the Grand Canal
- ☒ CIE routed traffic to the struggling railways and drove by traders off the canal by increasing tolls
- ☒ Gradual reopening under OPW and Waterways Ireland
- ☒ Canals Act - 1986 - OPW - New Campaign to revive Grand Canal

- Grand Canal Dockyard opened in 1989
- Men working on the Docks
- Mostly men from Ringsend or Pearse Street who got work on the Docks.
- The practice of working men being given buttons which picked them out to be workers on the docks.
- The nature of employment on the docks.
- Various jobs like boatmen (who tied up the ships)
- The hobbler who would row out to guide in the ships.
- The changes to industry on the docks as well as the nature of the dock master's role.
- Importance of Shannon Harbour on Grand Canal
- Stone at the 36th Lock Chamber at Shannon Harbour which is inscribed to reflect the completion of the Grand Canal on 25 October 1803.

Note: The Shannon Harbour area lies between Griffith Bridge, a sharp hump-back twist over the Grand Canal and the Railway Bridge, a loop - around bridge over a hidden, derelict, railway. The village is known as the place where the Shannon, Brosna and Grand Canal meet; a great fishing destination for salmon, perch and pike. This village developed after 1800 as the terminus of the Grand Canal through the Irish midlands.

See

Gardner, Raymond, *Land of Time Enough*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1977.

An English journalist tours the Shannon, the Grand Canal and the Barrow and finds good company everywhere he goes.



George Brierley who worked on the Grand Canal docks for many years, first as boatman and later as dock master (WIOHP, Interview with George Brierley, 15 October 2015)

Shannon Navigation

The longest river in Ireland, the Shannon has been the ancient motorway of Ireland since the arrival of the first humans into the country.

Chronological Landmarks

Year	Event
1755	First serious attempt to improve the navigation
1799	Shannon Navigation officially opened - Slates and turf transported on the navigation
1831	Record figures for trade on the Shannon Navigation with 36,000 tons annually
1849	Railway opens between Dublin and Limerick reducing trade on navigation dramatically
1929	Ardnacrusha Power Station in County Clare opens
1959	Trade has fallen dramatically on Shannon Navigation
1974	CIE withdraws trade
1993	Responsibility for Shannon Navigation transferred to Department of Arts, Culture and Gaeltacht from OPW
1999	Shannon Navigation transferred to Waterways Ireland

Points of information and suggested areas to explore in Shannon Navigation Interview

The **Shannon-One-Design** sailing dinghy is a small sailing boat raced on the River Shannon and Loughs Ree and Derg in Ireland. The creation of the Shannon-One-Design sailing dinghy came about after a meeting of representatives of Lough Ree Yacht Club, Lough Derg Yacht Club and North Shannon Yacht Club (Lough Boderg) held in the Prince of Wales Hotel, Athlone, on 29 January 1920. The "SOD" or "Shannon" as the class is often called requires three people to race and this produces a very sociable form of sailing.

45M Tragedy: On Sunday morning December 1st, 1946, the 45M travelled down the lake from Portumna heading for Killaloe. Opposite Parkers Point, the 45M (Donnacha states in the interview that it was located elsewhere) was struck by a gale that passed over the lake. The high winds caused the cargo to shift. The tow rope snapped as large waves swept across the deck and the barge heeled over and sank. When she went down 'Red' Ned Boland, Jack Boland and Jimmy McGrath (who was Webbing) all died. Tony Brien swam to safety and was the only survivor. 45M lay at rest for the next 29 years at the bottom of Lough Derg. In 1975, Donnacha Kennedy managed to lift the 45M from the bed of Lough Derg (WIOHP, Interview with Donnacha Kennedy, Carrick on Shannon, County Leitrim, November 2015).



The 45M on its way to Carrick on Shannon - 1975 (Courtesy of Donnacha Kennedy)

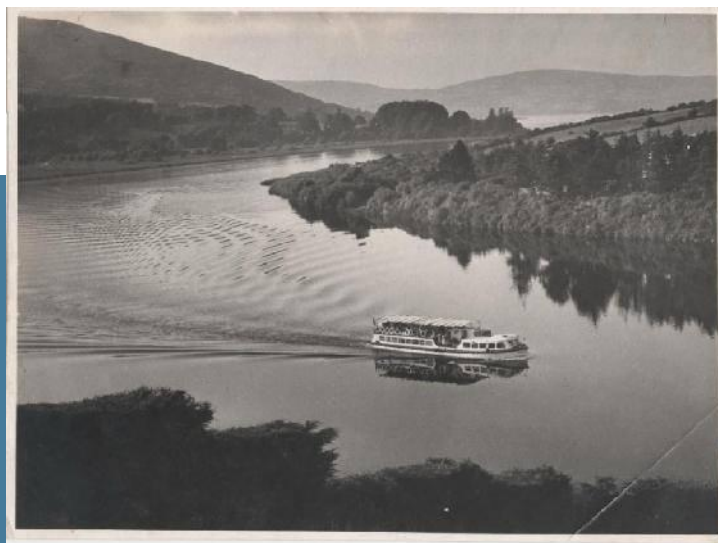
Read more on 45M:

<http://www.waterwaysireland.org/SiteAssets/Learning%20Resources/45M%20document.pdf>

- Explore all known tradition surrounding 45M tragedy
- Explore the history, folklore, commemorations, raising and use of 45M
- Pleasure boats on Shannon
- The practice of CIE running day trips on the river
- E.g. Hector Newenham set up the first serious hire firm at the Lakeside Hotel in Killaloe in 1959 with four berth Cabin Cruisers available²⁹

²⁹ Fine Lines - Clear Water, p. 18.

- The fluctuations of activity and trade on the Shannon during both the First World War and Second World War (WWI and WWII).
- Memories of the canal boats moored in Killaloe (and other areas) as well as the Grand
- Canal boats going up and down the Shannon to Limerick.
- Employment based on the water in Killaloe.
- Inter-marriage between people from areas along the Shannon (e.g., Killaloe and Kildare)
- The tradition of ghillies who worked as guides for visiting fishermen, particularly during the May Fly season.
- The Shannon Scheme in Ardnacrusha and its impact both positively and negatively on the area. Negative impact on salmon and eel fishing which was consequent on its development. Resulted in a stabilisation of the water levels on the lake. Prior to the scheme the water levels rose to very dangerous levels.
- The feelings of decline in the late 1950s and the disappointment of the local canal boat men when trade was finally shut down by the CIE.
- The reaction to this decline along the Shannon in places like Athlone and Carrick-on-Shannon.
- The increasing interaction between towns along the Shannon as a result of increased use of the water during the 1970s and 1980s.



The CIE Passenger Boat 'St Brendan' in 1955

The Shannon-Erne Waterway

The Shannon-Erne Waterway links the island's two great waterways, the River Shannon and the Erne System. It runs for 61km and has sixteen locks and thirty-one bridges.

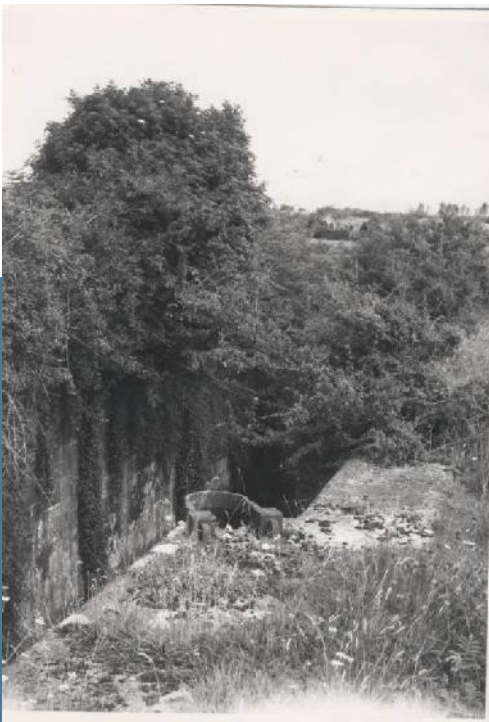
Chronological Landmarks

Year	Event
1840's	John McMahon, Engineer for the Board of Public Works draws up plans for connecting Lough Erne and the Ulster Canal with the Shannon at an estimated cost of £100,000.
1846	Works begin on the Ballinamore-Ballyconnell Canal (now known as the Shannon- Erne Waterway)
1858	First boat on canal
1860	Management of the canal passed to a Board of Trustees elected from the adjoining counties
1860's – 1873	Little use of the canal. Records show only eight boats used the canal between 1860 and 1869. By this time very little resources was spent on the maintenance of the waterway.
1948	Navigation trustees cease to function
1957	Cross border hydro-electric scheme introduced downstream from Enniskillen
1988	Feasibility of restoring canal considered
1989	Announcement by Taoiseach Charlie Haughey that North- South restoration project would commence
1994	Canal re-opened
1999	Waterways Ireland takes responsibility for the management of the canal

Points of information and suggested areas to explore in Shannon-Erne Interview

- The scheme to build the canal in the 1840's was designed to create employment but there were difficulties in finding sufficient labourers to carry out the work.
- Waterway was a commercial failure. Large absence of canal associated structures such as warehouses along the waterway.

- The waterway lay moribund until the 1960s, when the growth in pleasure boating on the Shannon led enthusiasts to consider whether it could be restored.
- Reopening of the Shannon-Erne in 1994 and the revival of towns and communities along the waterways
- Formally known as the Ballinamore-Ballyconnell Canal the waterway was renamed the Shannon-Erne Waterway on its reopening in 1994



Overgrown lock at Lough Scur prior to reconstruction



Reconstruction of the Ballinamore-Ballyconnell Canal now known as the Shannon-Erne Waterway

Lower Bann

The Lower Bann runs for 51km from Lough Neagh to the sea at Coleraine with five locks.

Chronological Landmarks

Year	Event
1842	Improvement of navigation, drainage and mill power begins in Lough Neagh Basin
1846-56	Locks constructed at Toome, Portna, Movinagher, Carnroe and the Cutts.
1929	Ministry of Finance (Britain) takes responsibility for navigation
1930s	Three sets of sluice gates were constructed in the early 1930's to regulate water on the river and control the water level of Lough Neagh
1939 - 45	The Lower Bann was used to transport munitions and supplies to and from training bases and repair bases around Lough Neagh during World War 2
1960s	Lower Bann threatened with closure but did not happen due to campaign by the River Bann and Lough Neagh Association
1999	Waterways Ireland takes over the responsibility for the Lower Bann Navigation from the Rivers Agency

Points of information and suggested areas to explore in Lower Bann Interview

- The Lower Bann was used to transport munitions and supplies to and from training bases and repair bases around Lough Neagh during WW 2
- 1960s - Lower Bann threatened with closure but did not happen due to campaign by the River Bann and Lough Neagh Association
- The 'McMahon Lowering' which took a foot and a half off the water in the 1950s. This scheme seems to have taken place in the mid 19th century and further schemes were undertaken in the 1930s.

Note: Although there had been earlier piecemeal attempts the first large scale drainage scheme was the McMahon Scheme carried out between 1846 and 1856 with a view to reducing the level of Lough Neagh and making the river navigable. This involved building 5 locks and weirs, the removal of a rocky shoal at Portna and limited dredging of the Lower Bann. Because of the

engineering compromise between drainage and navigation requirements the McMahon Scheme was considered less than successful. Another drainage scheme, the Shepherd Scheme carried out in the 1930s involved deepening, widening and straightening of the drainage channel and replacing the fixed weirs at Toome, Portna and the Cutts with sluice gates. In response to continuing pressure to alleviate flooding around Lough Neagh the water level was further lowered in the 1940s and 50s by adjusting the management regime of the sluice gates at Toome. The net effect of these drainage schemes was a lowering of the Lough Neagh water level by about 3 metres and a reduction in the natural range of high and low water levels'. See: www.loughneagh.com

The Honourable The Irish Society was first created by Royal Charter in 1613 to undertake the Plantation in the North West of Ulster that was then being driven by the English Crown. It was originally a sub-committee of the City of London Corporation, which had been identified by King James I as the most suitable organisation to pay for, build and run the most substantial element of the Plantation, rebuilding the City of Derry (renamed Londonderry), Coleraine, and further development throughout County Londonderry.

Lower Bann Fisheries

- The famine (1845-51) in the area and states that the area around Lough Neagh was not hit as bad due to the food being supplemented by fishing.
- The importance of local oral tradition and the practice of social visiting.
- The 'Felloori'(sic.) men (otherwise known as 'The Mummers'). They usually came around Halloween and performed in each house in the locality.
- 1962: 34,000 fish taken on the Bann
- Disease and decline followed, and fishery closed in 1995
- Government bought commercial netting rights in 2001
- Creation of Bann Navigation caused severe damage to spawning grounds and angling waters
- Baliffing was always an important matter, and a dangerous occupation
- The decline of the salmon population since the 1960s has been one of the principal issues of concern.
- Fish catch in 1995 was about 2,000 salmon which is contrasted with 34,000 in 1962.
- The different types of boats used on Lough Neagh including the traditional fishing boat and the flat bottomed cot.
- The use of boats for fishing for eels and Pollom (Specific to Lough Neagh).
- The process of eel fishing.



Edward Montgomery at The Cutts in Coleraine (WIOHP Interview with Edward Montgomery, 29 October 2015)



The Eel Weir at Toome

The Erne Navigation

Comprising Upper and Lower Lough Erne and connected by the River Erne through Enniskillen, the Erne Navigation runs for 64km of cruising water from Belturbet to Belleek with one lock at Enniskillen. The Erne Navigation connects to the Shannon Navigation via the Shannon-Erne Waterway (re-opened 1994). As a trade route for the Vikings, the Erne System has never been a modern commercial navigation.

Chronological Landmarks

Year	Event
1830s	According to the Ordnance Survey iron, lead, slates, timber and coal are imported through Ballyshannon, carried by cart to Belleek and onwards to Enniskillen by cots and boats
1840s - 1850s	The great steam boats were in operation on Lough Erne - 'The Countess of Milan', 'The Countess of Erne', the 'Belturbet' and 'Knockninny' all running passenger trips
1940s	Castle Archdale, Lower Lough Erne used as a base for the Catalinas (Flying boats) during World War 2. Water levels on Lower Lough Erne were controlled to keep the water high enough for the flying boats.
1950s	Sluice gates removed at Belleek. A new control structure – sluice gates - was established at Portora, Enniskillen to prevent the level of Upper Lough falling below 150ft to protect navigation and boating interests.
1970s	The Rivers Agency, acting on behalf of the Department of Agriculture & Rural Development, had responsibility for management of the Erne System.
1999	Waterways Ireland became responsible for navigation on the Erne System

Points of information and suggested areas to explore in Erne System Related Interview

- Explore the history associated with historical Boats like the SS Belturbet
- During the Second World War, RAF Castle Archdale was based on Lough Erne, providing an essential airbase for the Battle of the Atlantic and the battle against U- boats. A secret agreement with the Irish Government permitted flying boats based there to fly straight to the

Atlantic, avoiding the two-hour detour that would have been necessary for aeroplanes based in Northern Ireland.

- Boating on the Erne system increased in the 1970s and 1980s and in 1985 the Lough Erne Advisory Committee was set up to link with users
- Ulster Waterways Group set up in 1993 to pressurise for waterways restoration
- Traditions and Lore associated with Lough Erne (See below)
- Jack Tipping (Lifeboat hero, fast sailing boat designer and naval officer)
- WW2 - Lough Erne had two major flying boat bases operating in the Battle of the Atlantic
- *ML Endeavour* - used to service flying boats during WWII
- Boat builders - Sailor farmers
- Racing sailing boats
- Turf boats - Tradition - Memory
- The Banshee
- Fionn MacCumháil
- Liban The Merrow (See below)

Note: Liban, the merrow, or mermaid goddess, hails from Ireland. Some legends say she was originally a human who drowned and was transformed into a mermaid. She became a sanctioned mermaid (the only one I've ever read about) because she petitioned St. Comgall to help grant her a soul. Other legends tell of a sacred healing well and an arrogant woman who didn't give the well its due respect. In rage the well over flowed, drowning the entire village, which included Liban and her dog. And yet others say she is the daughter of the Irish god, Eochaid, who ran off with his stepmother. Liban and her lapdog were the only ones who survived the flood sent to his household by the angry gods in vengeance for Eochaid's disgrace.

Boats & Boat builders

- Examine the types of boats that some farmers and fishermen had called 'personal cots', which allowed them to easily cross a river or lake.
- Explore clinker built yawls were introduced to the North coast in late 1700s and spread around the coast of Donegal to Donegal Bay. Yawls similar to these were used on Lough Erne in the late 1800s and early 1900s and may have been introduced from Donegal Bay.

- Ballyshannon was the port for Fermanagh and through Belleek and Lower Lough Erne goods were often transported to Enniskillen.
- War cots which the authorities put on the water by the British authorities in order to subdue the Maguires (local Gaelic chieftains).
- Explore the development of early tourism on Lough Erne which mainly centred on fishing.

The Sailing Maguires

Ireland's sailing story begins very early with Brendan the Navigator, or the more clearly recorded voyages of Columba, from his oak woods on the Foyle to Iona. The Erne's sailing story begins with the Maguires. Five and six centuries ago, they ruled Fermanagh from Enniskillen Castle with a fleet that dominated their waterways. "A forest of boat masts is on the Erne" declared one fifteenth century poet.

The Enniskillen Era

On 19 May 1905, in contrast to the exclusive gentry membership of the Lough Erne Yacht Club, with its HQ at Crom on the Upper Lake, members of Enniskillen's professional and merchant classes founded the Enniskillen Yacht Club at a "general public meeting of those interested in promoting Aquatic Events on Lower Lough Erne."

Charles McCabe - Begob the Boat Builder

Charles McCabe is the most interesting of the Erne's yacht building craftsmen, perhaps because more records and personal memories exist about him. Well known in Enniskillen, his prolific output was also recorded in the yachting press, in Lough Erne Yacht Club records, and in Lloyds annual Register of Yachts, first issued 1878, listing yachts and details. McCabe was listed as the builder, in Enniskillen in 1873, of Tipping's famous Mischief.

Explore memory around the Rooney brothers who froze to death in 1961. See below:

'When Hugh Malet visited Lough Erne, he met a whistling postman, William Rooney, who lived on Inishturk. Rooney delivered post to the islanders on three days a week and to the mainland farms and houses on the other three. His father had had the job before him, and had used a sailing boat, but he himself had a little outboard motor on his pillar-box red skiff. Two years later,

staying in Gibraltar over Christmas, Malet read of William Rooney's death. He had finished his delivery round for Friday 29 December 1961 and was on his way home to his wife and family when his boat got caught in the ice. His sixty-year-old brother James went to his assistance, but he too got caught. The two brothers were found next day, frozen to death, only a short distance apart.

See: Malet, Hugh *In the Wake of the Gods: On the waterways of Ireland* Chatto & Windus 1970.

The Gublusk Era

In the winter of 1941, war brought two squadrons of Catalina flying boats from Scotland to set up RAF Killadeas at Gublusk Bay. When their Battle of the Atlantic ended in 1945, left around Gublusk were buildings for 2,800 RAF personnel, with surplus aircraft, boats, tools and equipment, and all the facilities of a wartime flying boat base.

Sail boat racing

Explore the tradition of Sail boat racing, which is particularly strong on this waterway



Aerial view of Upper Lough Erne, 2012



Wheel from SS Belturbet – Image taken at Belturbet during WIOHP interview with George Morrissey (October 2015)

Memory Triggers

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

- Songs associated with waterways heritage or localised incidents/people
- Monuments/plaques reflecting various dimensions of waterways heritage and associated places throughout Ireland

Example: A memorial stone to the boatmen of the River Barrow was unveiled at the Quay, Tinnahinch, Graiguenamanagh by Graiguenamanagh Historical Society to commemorate the work of the boatmen during the time of commercial activity on the Barrow Navigation.

Example: In an interview with Jim Gill for the WIOHP on 05 February 2016, the interviewee sang 'The Boatman's Song'.

Your own mnemonic devices

Hardback A4 Copybook

Keep a hardback A4 copybook as your fieldwork journal. This will enable reflection on interviews and provide easy to locate information for follow up interviews which may relate to previously conducted ones.

Biographical notes

After familiarising yourself with the interviewee's background, make keyword notes regarding their biography. Do NOT rely on your own memory.

Keep keywords on one page if possible. It is better to have your key words on a maximum of two pages. This will avoid leafing through notes during the interview. Irrespective of your approach (questionnaire or interview guide), write out keywords relating to areas you wish to explore.

Use main headings and list other areas within that area to explore more deeply if the opportunity arises. For example, if your main area of exploration is canal boats (or barges depending on your geographical location), the following may be subheadings you would like to explore.

- ✓ Barges carrying porter
- ✓ Economic importance of Waterways
- ✓ Carrying sugar and general goods
- ✓ Tradition of horse drawn carriages
- ✓ Where were the horses maintained – Importance etc.

Technical Skills - Using the Equipment

Digital Recording (Audio)

Increasing digital capacity has made it easier to record large amounts of high quality material. Olympus, Zoom, Marantz and Roland all manufacture good quality solid state digital recorders. However, the quality of audio continues to be primarily dictated by the way in which the user manages both the equipment used and the surrounding environment.



Orientation of Device

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

Microphone Sensitivity

The mic sense should be set according to the strength of the interviewee's voice as well as the surrounding environment. Throughout the interview, a number of factors can change which may require an adjustment. The wavelengths on the device should not reach further than 3/4 of its full length.

- ☒ Aim to record .wav files (uncompressed) at a minimum quality of 44.1khz 16 bit (CD quality).
- ☒ In most digital recorders, either the built in memory or an SD (Memory) Card can be used.
 - It is vital to ensure that you are aware of how much memory you have at all times.
- ☒ Low Cut should be left on at all times.



The Interview

When entering the home of an interviewee or the relevant interview space, the collector should be immediately assessing the space for possible sound issues. This will enable you to take remedial measures well in advance of pressing record. It is vital that you sensitively take control of the interview space. Do NOT allow something to go unaddressed because you think it would be rude to mention it.

Watch and Listen

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

Prior meeting if possible

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

Communication

- Be clear and concise - Try not to ask long questions. Probe for details by using terms like '**Can you describe**' or '**Tell me**'.
- Avoid loaded and leading questions e.g.
Not: "Wasn't Daingean a poor, hard place to grow up?"
But: "Tell me how you felt about the place you grew up?"
- Do not be afraid to ask for clarification or definition "**Tell me more about that**"
- Ask one question at a time
- Be prepared to go off topic and then gently bring the interviewee back to the subject

Managing the interview space

- Subtly in set up – Don't make a fuss when you are setting up recorder
- Note information received
- Explain process of interview before starting
- Informalise the interview and keep comfortable

After pressing record

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

- The date and location of the interview
- DO NOT state the interviewee's exact address on the recording - parish/town is sufficient
- The name of the interviewee and their date of birth/age (if known)
- Some interviewees may be reluctant to give a definite date of birth on tape
- Your own name and your role as a collector (name others in the room, if any, and their relationship to the interviewee, if any)
- That the interview is being recorded for *WIOHP*
- **EXAMPLE:** 'This is Joe Bloggs interviewing John McCarthy on behalf of WIOHP. The date is February 16th 2017'

The Fifty Year Rule!



Many collections of oral history in the past did not attend to the fundamentals of recording details, which can cause significant issues for their later use and interpretation.

A useful thought process is to imagine your interview being found in fifty years time, disconnected from the collection at Waterways Ireland without any label of supporting

information. If you have followed the outlined process, then whoever listens to the interview should be aware of the following;

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

Conversational narratives

- Try not to lead the interviewee – Keep questions open ended
- Keep tone similar to that before beginning - Some collectors begin interviews in an 'official' voice which can be off-putting.
- Maintain a pattern of concentrated listening. Nonverbal indication of interest (nod instead of saying yeah or yes) will show you are listening.
- Yeah Yeah is a No No! Try not to keep saying 'yeah', or similar words like 'really'!
- Display knowledge through questions (Informed Curiosity)
- You are there to be educated, not to educate (keep your opinions to yourself)
- Be responsive to interviewee – Attend to their interests and use to mine for further memories
- Aim for first hand or 'eye-witness testimony'
- Clarify factual points like a names, places or dates
- Annunciate new files - After an interruption begin the next file by announcing you are 'Returning to the interview with John McCarthy on 15 December 2016 - File number two'. It is suggested in the case of an interruption to press 'stop' as opposed to 'pause'. This will create a new file, hence the need to annunciate same.
- Silence is golden – A pause can be a prelude to something significant. Do not panic if there is a silence – You are not on live radio!!!

Interview context

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

Second recording with the same interviewee

- If you find yourself conducting a second or further number of interviews with a single individual, note the following on each recording and on each abstract form
- Date
- Location
- Interviewee name
- Interview number
- EXAMPLE: 'This is Joe Bloggs interviewing John McCarthy on behalf of WIOHP. This is the second interview with John McCarthy and is taking place on February 16th 2017.'

Moments of Memory

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



Turf Boat 1914 Islandmore in Lough Derg (Courtesy of Tommy Holland)

Three Dimensions

In preparing for your interview it can be useful to consider three principal dimension as follows.

1. Person - Who they are, their background, interests etc.
2. Place - Where they are from, what happened there, any significant characters, places of interest etc.
3. Life - What is the approx. age of the person and what did they live through during that life, try to remember what is happening in Ireland when they are at a certain age i.e. if they are born in 1920, then at the age of 13 the Economic War starts. At the age of 19, World War II starts and they are probably married before electricity arrives etc. If born in 1940, then their adult introduction to waterways work life was likely to be approximately 1958-60. The latter would have placed the individual as a young adult during the period of canal closures in many parts of Ireland.



Memory Triggers: Jim Gill in Graiguenamanagh with items associated with his past work as a canal boat man (February 2016).

Associative collection



- Photograph of interviewee
- Old associated photographs - It is great to obtain copies of photographs of the interviewee when they were younger. Be aware that photographs and other original literary material may be protected by copyright (Usually the life of the author and seventy years). Clarification should be sought if you are unsure. You are the author of any photo taken within the interview context enabling you to use it as agreed with the interviewee. Any photographs taken by the interviewee can be used subject to interviewee's consent, See Anna Bryson, *Oral History, A Training Manual for Beginners*, (2013), p. 26.
- Photograph items associated with interview
- Photograph the context - Take a photo of the interviewee where he/she was sitting for the interview
- Scan documents (smart phone use is possible)
- Items on the wall - For many older people, the items hung on their wall can have significant meaning. It is important to be sensitive when enquiring about this.
- Important to name and itemise all above for future use

Curation at Source

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

Presentation Options

Traditionally, oral history groups have focused on the collection as the central aspect of their work. The time imperative associated with documenting the memories of older people often overrides the importance of ensuring the project results in a usable and accessible resource. It is therefore critical to consider the holistic nature of an oral history project before commencement. This includes the important decision regarding how the material will be presented to the public.

There are two dominant approaches to post interview presentation.

A transcription enables a word for word verbatim account of what was said in a recorded interview (by both the interviewer and interviewee). As a research tool, a transcription is invaluable for researchers. However, there is a necessary departure from the potency of the original account and it cannot convey the intonations, changes in velocity etc. of that account.

An abstract or interview report form creates a summarised log which breaks the interview up according to themes and subjects explored.

When writing an abstract, it is vital that all key words relevant to the account are mentioned. As a research tool, the abstract should lead the researcher back to the original verbalised account and so encourages an engagement with the voice. However, unless the abstract is sufficiently detailed, aspects being sought out by researchers may be missed.



Review of Process

INITIAL IDENTIFICATION OF AN INTERVIEWEE

- **IMPORTANT:** After identifying a potential interviewee email or notify your central contact within the WIOHP with *Name, Age, Location and Contact details*.
- It is essential that you first contact the central contact with your interviewee details as they may already have been interviewed!
- Make initial contact either through a third party that knows the interviewee or by yourself.
- Make the appointment date.
- Explain the Consent Form process in informal language as discussed in workshops.



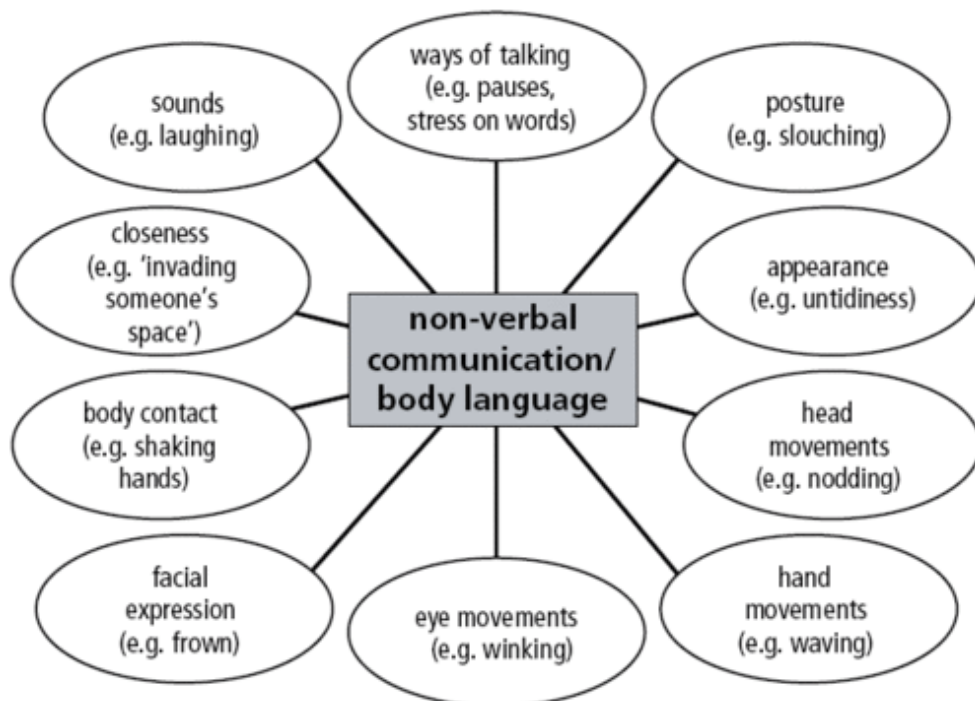
Check list for interview

- ✓ Recorder & Back up batteries and recorder if possible (Is there enough memory left?)
- ✓ Note paper & Pen
- ✓ Camera
- ✓ Consent Form, Fieldwork journal, Interview Report Form (If used by WIOHP).
- ✓ Research and bio notes (in fieldwork journal)
- ✓ If using external microphone consider lapel, etc.

Conducting the Interview

On the day of the interview:

- Arrive on time!
- Explain again the aims and objectives of the project
- Have they questions?
- Let them know you can stop at any point if they want a break etc.
- In your own words convey that the purpose of this deposit agreement is to ensure that your contribution is added to the collections of Waterways Ireland.
- (Informally explain to the interviewee) "WIOHP, in accordance with your wishes and may be used for use in research, publication, education, lectures, broadcasting and the internet'.
- ✓ Allow enough time. It is impossible to predict how long an interview (or interview process) may take so allow enough time.
- ✓ Non-Verbal Communication speaks loudly



Yeah Yeah is a No No!!

Note: See Appendix III for Do's and Don'ts of Oral History

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- ✓ Remember to get the Consent Form signed
- ✓ Transfer the unedited original recording from the memory card onto your computer as soon as possible. Each 1GB of space on a memory card holds 3 hours 13 minutes of uncompressed files so you need to have sufficient storage capacity on your hard drive.
- ✓ Ensure the recordings are backed up onto an external hard drive or consider online storage as alternative storage
- ✓ When saving your recordings create consistent file and folder names so they can be easily recognised and retrieved
- ✓ Once the media is secure in a number of locations reformat the memory card and reuse for the next interview
- ✓ Complete your Interview Report form as soon as possible after the interview.
- ✓ Send a copy of the interview to the interviewee. If a transcript is made of the interview make sure to send a copy of this as well.

Appendix I

REFERENCE NO. (OFFICE USE ONLY):



Waterways Ireland Oral History Project

COPYRIGHT ASSIGNMENT & CONSENT FORM FOR ORAL HISTORY RECORDINGS

Waterways Ireland is grateful for your contribution to its oral history programme. Your recorded interview or written memories are protected by Copyright and will become part of the archive collection cared for by *Waterways Ireland*. It will be preserved as a permanent public reference resource as a sound recording made by and being deposited with the *Waterways Ireland Oral History Project (WIOHP)*, consisting of the recollections of a contributor and constituting a literary work as defined by the Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000 (Ireland) and the Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988 (UK).

I hereby assign such copyright to the *WIOHP* on the understanding that the content will not be used in a derogatory manner and that the author of the contribution will be correctly identified in all uses of it. In assigning my copyright, I understand that I am giving *Waterways Ireland* the right to use and make available the content of the recorded interview in the following ways:

- Public performances, lectures or talks, exhibitions and displays
- Use in publications, including print, audio and video.
- Public reference purposes including libraries, museums and archives.
- Use on radio or television.
- Use in schools, universities, colleges and other educational establishments, including use in a thesis, dissertation or similar research.
- Use on the internet including the Waterways Ireland website, applications (apps) and social media pages.

Interviewee:

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

Print Name:.....

Address:.....

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

On Behalf of the *WIOHP*:

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

Print Name:.....

If you would like to make any special conditions about your oral history recording please state these conditions here:

.....

.....

Information relating to associative collection (Documents, photos, etc). Please note if documents have been scanned etc.

.....

.....

Appendix II

Group Oral History Interviews

- Different dynamic to a one-on-one/two oral history interview
- Important to ensure control of interview setting - If taking place in a nursing home or day care centre, staff need to be fully aware and involved in the process to ensure disruption is minimised.
- Photo of group in order essential - This will help with subsequent identification of contributors on audio record.
- Prepare for theme - Be clear about the subject(s) you are going to explore.
- Go from general to specific when exploring a subject - In group setting, people can be more reluctant to contribute if unsure about the subject.
- Consider possible sensitivities of the subject - i.e. consider the gender composition of the group in the context of the subject under exploration.
- Introduction as normal with names of all in attendance - Crucially, you should name those in attendance from left to right (in accordance with the picture).
- Annunciate names of speakers (Particularly in early part of the interview) - This will be crucial when you are later trying to identify speakers (On audio record).
- Consider group dynamic - In any group, some people will be more shy than others - It is important to try and include all but don't pressurise people.
- Assistance - It can be helpful to have a second volunteer with you to deal with administration etc.

Appendix III

Do's and Don'ts of Interviewing



- **DO** keep the recorder going and the interview flowing
- **DO** allow the interviewee to go at their own pace, but stop them drifting off the subject completely
- **DO** ask neutral questions rather than leading ones
- **DO** listen carefully to what the interviewee says and use what they say to guide your questions
- **DO** get the subject to talk about things they experienced firsthand or “eyewitness testimony”, rather than describing things they heard about. If they listened to a match on the radio, have them talk about what that felt like rather than the details of the match
- **DO** make it personal. If the interviewee is simply describing events, follow up by asking them “How did you feel about that?” or “Why do you think that happened?”
- **DO** ask personal and direct questions, but respect the interviewees right not to answer them
- **DO** be aware that an interviewee may need a break or breaks during the interview. Make sure the interviewee knows they can take a break at any time.
- Some interviews may need to take place on separate days.
- **DO** ask impromptu follow-up questions if the interviewee mentions something interesting but unexpected, or if you need to clarify a factual point like a name or date
- **Don't** interrupt the interviewee or offer your own opinions
- **Don't** limit the interviewee to talking solely about what you think they should talk about
- **Don't** be afraid of a little silence. Let the interviewee think about their answers and fill the silences themselves
- **Don't** ask questions that lead to simple yes or no answers. Ask open-ended ones instead
- **Don't** ask controversial or emotional questions too early in the interview. Leave them to near the end when you have built up a rapport

The most important interview tip of all is to **respect the interviewee**. They have granted you the privilege of sharing their memories and thoughts.

Appendix IV

Waterways Ireland Oral History Project

Interview Report Form

Name of Interviewer	Mary Smith	
Date of Interview	01/10/2016	<input type="checkbox"/> Photograph of Interviewee
Location	Terryglass	
Name of Interviewee (Maiden name / Nickname)	Sean Maguire	
Interviewee Contact Details	Address: Terryglass Telephone(s): Email:	
<u>Biographical Summary of Interviewee</u>		
Gender	Male	
Born	Year Born: Home County:	
Date of Report	03/10/2016	
Length of Interview	0:39:45	
Interview Abstract (LOG)	Interviewee reflected on his early introduction to the waterways, sailing on the Shannon and cruising the lakes and canals.	
Material Relevant to archive	A small collection of waterways related photographs	
Interview Notes	The interview was conducted in a conservatory overlooking Lough Derg. The conservatory had large windows on three sides which affected the sound quality slightly. An engaging interviewee but tired a little towards the	

	end of the interview.
Format (Office use only)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Audio <input type="checkbox"/> Audio-Visual
Duration (Office use only)	Length of Interview: 0:42:12 No. of Files: 1
Restricted Information (Office use only)	
Language	English
Time	
0.00.00 - 0.05.08	Introduction to Waterways Interviewee explains his background and association with the waterways.
0.05.09-0.07.32	Early love of Waterways Speaks again about early love of waterways. Explains how waterways began to dominate their lives.
0:07:33 - 0:10:37	
0:10:38 - 0:11:53	
0:11:53 - 0:13:06	