Manual for Digitally Recording and Publishing Stories in Local Community Heritage V.2.0 | INCULTUM

Historicgraves

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#whoweare #createtogether

INCULTUM

Introduction

Create together

Tell our own stories

Communities no longer need permission to publish their own stories. By following simple guidelines for good quality research and clear communication we can publish multiple micro-histories, of family and locality, which accumulate into a meaningful dataset.

This manual combines a series of processes for research, recording, and digitally publishing our own histories.

The current project aims to train individuals and groups involved in graveyard surveys to record their own stories using the smartphones in their pockets and to publish them online as tourism heritage resources ie. benefitting the local community and the broader diaspora.

Too long: Didn't Read?

If you only read one page of this manual let it be this one.

1 In a community project register all participants and their stories with a Google Form (forms.google.com)

2 Research your story & check your facts.

3 Cite your sources. If your aunt told you the story give us her name. If the issue is sensitive and you do not want to name sources then say so.

4 Write your stories based on who did what, where and when. Finish with what it means.

5 Hook your readers in your first sentence and focus on facts not opinions. eg."This story is about the year my grandfather was shot"

6 Aim to take three photographs of key places and people to accompany your story.

7 Sign and post your consent form.

8 Record your story to audio or video. Multiple methods are available.

9 If you have a good broadband connection you can record the story as an interview using the Zoom video conferencing app.

10 If you have a telephone landline but no broadband we can record a speakerphone interview.

11 Stories will be kept short - single topic.

12 Chose the digital platform you wish to publish to - we use www.historicgraves.com. All stories are be archived.

1.1
Simple Systems for Historical Research

Many universities offer excellent outreach courses in genealogy, history and archaeology. Some of the people we encounter on our community training projects are graduates and postgraduates of these and other university courses and they are always a positive addition to the projects.

At the same time, many of our community participants are trained in other occupations and their input has been beneficial in many ways. Many of our survey trainees bring a lifetime of experience and common sense to the project and we have learned to listen to everybody. Primarily because the community participants are experts in the deep knowledge of the heritage of their own communities and places. One man I remember had very little formal education but he had dug most of the graves in his local graveyard since the late 1960s. Talk about deep knowledge.

Since 2010 we have developed a robust system for survey and digital publication of historic grave monuments in association with our participating communities.

From the beginning we have been inundated with stories about graveyards, headstones, people, families and parishes and it

has been our goal to work out robust systems for gathering these stories to complement the gravestone surveys in the recognition that these stories will accumulate into a meaningful dataset with which we can investigate the social history of our communities.

Key story themes that come to mind are burial practices relating to children, power struggles within communities as represented by headstones (eg. War of Independence micro histories), and always the history of health within a community (most communities have generational knowledge of illnesses such as TB, Influenza, and of disease caused during the Great Famine of the late 1840s).

This manual outlines the simple systems we use for research and publication of these stories with previously untrained participants. We acknowledge that many participants are proficient storytellers but we also encourage that facts & details are checked before recording.

1.1.1 Research Fundamentals & Five Ws

1. Recording headstones is easier than recording headstone stories. The physical memorial sits before us and in pairs we record the biographical inscription. This is then double checked before being published online at historicgraves.com.

2. We aim to have a similar system for recording historical stories ie. using the fundamentals of documenting our sources, establishing facts of key people, places and events and teamwork.

3. **Establishing Facts of Key People, Places & Events**

A lot of oral history is factual and informed by personal experience, often passed down through generations. One man we interviewed in West Cork had a family member who saw the Titanic sailing by off Sheep's Head in 1912. Another interviewee had a great great grandfather who fought in the 1798 uprising in Wexford and he had stories about that man handed down four generations.

When passing on stories we have to provide evidence to support them. We need to name names, and double check those names and dates, and places, ourselves before we publish them. This is one of the pleasures of doing historical research. Sometimes we discover unknown details, other times we change the story too and always we get out and about.

meeting people, going places and building networks to do good quality work.

We use the **Five W's** to structure our historical research. Using the sources outlined in the previous section we research

    1. **W**ho

Identify the main people or players in the story. If the story is based on family history and lore and happened in very recent generations then we will often know the people involved. If we did not know the people personally then we have to verify the stories by naming our sources, eg. Uncle Bobby told me that.

    2. did **W**hat

    3. **W**here

    4. and **W**hen

Ideally, when we have finished our research, we will have a written document or notes outlining the Four W's and supported by at least one source for each W.

5. The **W**hat does this mean, the **So What** of history and storytelling.

4. **Documenting our Sources**

In many cases our sources will be stories told at home, experienced events, or items such as family letters, photographs or official documents. In working out the details of a story it is necessary to keep track of the exact source. Using a notebook or digital writing apps we record the sources used

#whoweare

in research. We will use these sources when we publish the story so that other researchers can assess how to use our stories and associated conclusions.

The main sources we use in Ireland tend to be;

1. Census - http://census.nationalarchives.ie/

2. Registers - https://www.irishgenealogy.ie/en/

3. Placenames - https://www.logainm.ie/ga/

4. Townland names - https://www.townlands.ie/

5. Surnames - https://johngrenham.com/ & https://www.swilson.info/sdist.php

6. Mapping

   1. Ordnance Survey Ireland http://map.geohive.ie/mapviewer.html This is useful as selecting the Share button creates a link to the location on the map.

      Provides access to a number of mid and late 19th century maps as well as late 20th century aerial images.

2. Recorded archaeology sites - https://webgis.archaeology.ie/historicenvironment/ All registered archaeological sites in Ireland.

3. maps.google.ie

   We usually right click on the map location , select >Whats here< and save the coordinates

   provided or select the Share button

4. Griffiths Valuation maps mid-late 19th century http://www.askaboutireland.ie/griffith-valuation/index.xml

5. UCD Map collection http://digital.ucd.ie/view/ucdlib:40377 including the 5 foot maps for many towns.

1.1.2 Referencing

Save the web address for any online resources you use for your story and include them in the email/document which contains your story script.

If you used printed material such as a book or journal article then make a note of author, title, year of publication and publisher and include that in your story post.

1.1.3 Teamwork

In this time of Covid-19 our usual systems for fieldwork and research are outdated. Therefore we need to come up with new systems for doing our community heritage projects.

Normally we have discussed our research methodologies in groups in the field or in classroom situations. Now, instead, we must operate within the various Covid-19 social distancing strictures. To do this we will work in pairs to research, tell and publish our stories.

Some people like **writing**, others are better sharing their knowledge by **talking** - we will use the same process either way. Remember this is not a process of correction. It is a process of discovery and improving accuracy. Just as we want our headstone readings to be accurate we also aspire for our stories to be accurate.

The table opposite presents the five step approach we will use to tell our histories of family and place.

Written History	**Oral** History
Step 1 - Draft	Step 1 - Draft
Write a draft of the story based on the Five W's - who did what where and when (and what does it mean).	Think through the story as you remember it. Write down notes if that helps.
Step 2 - Edit	Step 2 -Edit
Share the story with your editor/colleague by email. Consider are the facts well sourced.	Talk through the story with your editor/colleague. Take notes on any questions for clarification.
Step 3 - Illustrate	Step 3 - Illustrate
As we will publish the story online we need photographs for each story. To avoid copyright issues the best approach is to take the photographs ourselves or use only family photos which we own ourselves. The photographs should be of the key people, places or documents relevant to the story.	
Step 4 - Write the Story +	Step 5 - Record the Story
Most stories will be quite short in the writing. Very often we can tells stories in between 250-500 words. Each story should be standalone ie. on a single topic. Each story can be told in parts if it is complex.	We aim to record oral history stories in two ways. Interview - using Zoom or telephone calls we can record the story being told. Self recorded - either in audio or video the researcher will record themselves

1.2 Telling Stories - Bridget Stapleton & John Maher (Example 1)

My great grandmother on my fathers side was named Bridget Stapleton. From North Tipperary, near Templemore, Bridget married John Maher, who worked as a labourer & mason, in 1904.

In our family chats the story we'd been told about Bridget was that her husband John had joined up the British Army along with her brother Robert Stapleton during World War 1. We heard that John died in the trenches in 1916, and Robert, upon hearing of John's death, stood up in the trenches with the shock of the news and was killed too. Although never stated it was then vaguely presumed that Bridget was left widowed with five children. As we worked through the Five W's of Bridget's life we realised we did not have reliable knowledge of a number of elements including when Bridget died.

This is an interesting and important story for our family. Led by my father we made two visits to the Somme and Ypres where John and Robert are commemorated. We commissioned a military historian to trace the movements of John's army unit while he was based in France and my brother traced John's footsteps in the village of Bazentin-le-Petit where John died in hand to hand combat on the 14th of July 1916. Until recently

the story of the two men's death in World War 1 was the strongest strand to the tale. But in the recent weeks of Covid-19 we have finally rounded out the story. All the recent talk of epidemics caused us to wonder if Bridget had died from the 1918/19 Flu epidemic; it might explain the vague knowledge we had of Bridget after John died. It seemed a valid hunch which caused us to focus on Bridget and the truth we uncovered as a result was both interesting and sad.

To address the issue we went back to basics. Using irishgenealogy.com and the 1901/1911 census we tried to find her birth date, marriage date, track where she was living in 1901 and 1911 and then also find her death certificate. Each digitised document we found we saved as a pdf into a computer folder organised by Surname.

We searched irishgenealogy.com for civil and church records and found a new record. We found Bridget's death certificate which showed that she had died in Roscrea Workhouse of TB. The key point was that she had died on June 21st 1916, three weeks before John Maher died in the Battle of the Somme.
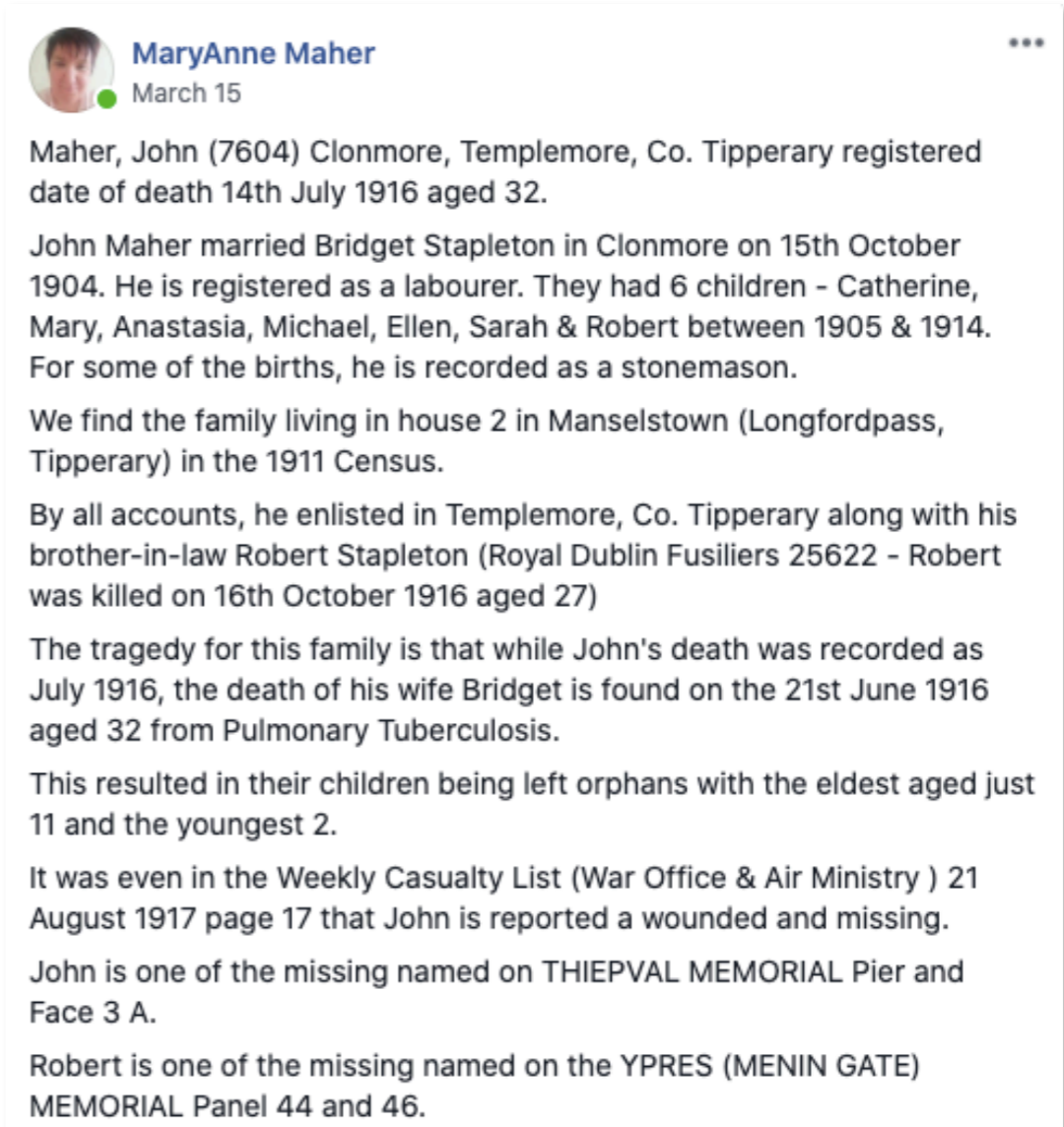
Now remember the **Fifth W** in historical research? Working out the meaning of an event. The **So What** of what happened.

The **So What** of the story changed and became Bridget left her five children behind her when she died while her husband was fighting on the Western Front. Her own mother, Mary Stapleton of Graffin, Tipperary, had care of the children at that stage and she became their guardian as they grew up. The So What became that the children were orphaned in July 1916 as both their parents died weeks apart.

The story evolved as we took the family stories and researched them. We got the primary records such as marriage and death certs. We used census records and military pension cards to nail down the facts of the matter. We travelled to see where John died and to where his name is carved in stone. We don't know if he was buried in the graveyard near Bazentin-le-Petit but then neither do we know for sure where Bridget is buried. Bridget could be buried in the Roscrea Workhouse Hospital cemetery on the Templemore Road into Roscrea but one piece of family lore says she was brought home to be buried.

As part of our research we posted a query on a Facebook page for the Royal Irish Regiment and were rewarded with the following piece of high quality research and objective writing by military historian Mary Anne Maher. Mary Anne's practiced style is information dense, easy to check and if required fit into one's own researches with names, dates and places quoted aplenty.

MaryAnne Maher
March 15

Maher, John (7604) Clonmore, Templemore, Co. Tipperary registered date of death 14th July 1916 aged 32.

John Maher married Bridget Stapleton in Clonmore on 15th October 1904. He is registered as a labourer. They had 6 children - Catherine, Mary, Anastasia, Michael, Ellen, Sarah & Robert between 1905 & 1914. For some of the births, he is recorded as a stonemason.

We find the family living in house 2 in Manselstown (Longfordpass, Tipperary) in the 1911 Census.

By all accounts, he enlisted in Templemore, Co. Tipperary along with his brother-in-law Robert Stapleton (Royal Dublin Fusiliers 25622 - Robert was killed on 16th October 1916 aged 27)

The tragedy for this family is that while John's death was recorded as July 1916, the death of his wife Bridget is found on the 21st June 1916 aged 32 from Pulmonary Tuberculosis.

This resulted in their children being left orphans with the eldest aged just 11 and the youngest 2.

It was even in the Weekly Casualty List (War Office & Air Ministry) 21 August 1917 page 17 that John is reported a wounded and missing.

John is one of the missing named on THIEPVAL MEMORIAL Pier and Face 3 A.

Robert is one of the missing named on the YPRES (MENIN GATE) MEMORIAL Panel 44 and 46.

Mary Anne Maher shows how to write a detailed, objective account.

1.3 Telling Stories – Shooting Gala (Example 2)

The following script (column 2) is to be used when recording video or audio stories. A series of prompts are given and the stories should try to provide the information requested. The purpose of the prompts is to encourage the inclusion of as much objective detail as possible aiming for a story rich in detail rather than opinion.

Step	Script Prompts	Example
1	**Background to the story** • Tell us who you are, • Where you are from • How do you know what you know? • When did you learn this? • If possible tell us who told you the story.	Hello this is John Tierney. I'm a field archaeologist living in Co. Waterford, originally from Cork city. The story I am passing on was told to me by my mother Breda Tierney (née Carey) who was told the story as a child by her father and grandfather. This is one of two stories I have to tell about their families experiences during the War of Independence.
2	**What are the key elements of the story?** • Who did what where and when. • Hook the listener/reader in the first half of the first sentence.	The story relates to the shooting of my great-grandfather in 1921 by the British Army. My great-grandfathers name was Andrew Carey and he was a farmer in Kilmurry townland, Co. Limerick. He was called Gala within the family. One night in 1921 Gala was at a card game in Reilly's Post Office across from the Bog School and Church in Martinstown when a shot was fired by a passing Military patrol into the Post Office which struck Gala. We were always told it was the Black & Tans who shot Gala as they were active in Limerick at the time. We did find a Freeman's Journal newspaper record of the shooting three days after it happened.. Despite being shot Gala lived another 48 years with the bullet still inside him. We were also told that my grandfather, Jack Carey heard from neighbours that his father was shot. "Well, we still have our mother", was his response, trying to make the best of the bad news.

Shooting Gala

3	What does the story mean to you?	Gala surviving being shot was a big part of the stories told in my mother's house. The Carey's were not directly involved with the local IRA Company which was based up on Cush to the north of their farm but they did hide guns for the IRA Company on their farm and were raided by army patrols a few times.

Andrew Carey (Gala) and his wife Mary (née Hennessy) around 1910. Ten years before he was shot In Reilly's Post Office, Martinstown, Co. Limerick

Shooting Gala. An Irish War of Independence shooting in south Limerick.

I RECORDED A SHORT VIDEO TELLING THE STORY OF THE SHOOTING WHICH CAN BE VIEWED HERE HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/A6WSEUKTQUI

1.4 Scripting Prompts - geography & biography

Step	Script Prompts	Notes
1	**Background to the story** • Tell us who you are, • Where you are from • How do you know what you know? • When did you learn this? • If possible tell us who told you the story.	
2	**What are the key elements of the story?** • Who did what where and when. • Hook the listener/reader in the first half of the first sentence.	
3	**What does the story mean to you?** • How did the events recounted affect your family? • Was the story significant in a local/regional context?	

When working out how to tell a heritage story we find it helps to focus on the either the **biography** or the **geography** of the event, person or place. A biography approach would involve showing the sequence of buildings on a site in the order they were built & used). The biography of a person or place is the timeline of the story.

The geography of an event or place is its spatial nature (eg. most burials are south of the medieval church; churches are often in the centre of the site and W-E oriented: while the N side of the church is often less densely occupied.

1.5 Sharing Stories

W e are now asking for people to research and share their stories. Establish the Five Ws for each story and share it.

The most common themes we encounter in community heritage projects are as follows.

1. Burial practices

2. Health in the Past (TB, Cholera, Cures)

3. The Great Famine

4. Emigration & the Irish Diaspora

5. Different Occupations of the Parish

6. The Revolutionary Generation

7. World War 1 and Word War 2

8. 19th Century Land Agitation

9. Sport in the Community

10. Religion & Faith

11. Cromwellian Era stories

• Online Form

If you have a story to share then either email john@historicgraves.com or register your details with this online form. If you are doing your own project use a similar Form to keep track of stories.

https://forms.gle/TTsbWREUCP8G6PJu6

Using the fundamental principles outlined earlier we aim to research, write, recount and publish these stories for the good of our local communities and also for our posterity. Some of the best guidance we have found for writing such stories comes from the field of journalism - read through this Reuters handbook and see how to improve your local history writing.

http://handbook.reuters.com/index.php?title=Reporting_and_Writing_Basics

Section 2.1
Recording Stories & Covid-19 - using smartphones

Until recently we have recorded stories in small groups, either in graveyards, churchyards or venues like old school houses. A number of participants prepared their own stories and then recounted them directly to the camera or in an interview situation. However, due to Covid-19 our old system no longer works. We are now proposing a new approach to gathering, recording and publishing our heritage stories.

The new approach is largely dependent on landline telephones and smartphones to record and publish our stories digitally. All smartphones have a video and audio recorder which we can use for heritage projects.

This manual is written to demonstrate the new skills needed to capture good quality recordings. As with most heritage projects we aim to archive our stories for the future therefore we have **standards** which we aim to achieve. Most digital products degrade over time but there are archive friendly steps to follow.

Ideally our audio recordings will originate as lossless .wav files and recorded at 44,000 kHz. While our video recordings will be archived as .mov or jpeg2000 formats and recorded at 24 fps whenever possible.

Always keep in mind that we are recording these stories to share today but we fully expect them to be watched and listened to in 50-100 years time also.

There are many ways of recording stories to video or audio and this manual will focus on a handful of methods we have been using over the last few years and some others we have been testing since Covid-19 restrictions kicked in.

Audio recordings will be done as individual recordings using landline telephones and smartphone apps such as Voice Record 7. Videos will be recorded using the built-in camera or using an app called Filmic Pro. If these new apps are too daunting then feel free to use the Voice memo and camera app that came with your phone.

Transcripts from both video and audio recordings will be imported into Otter.ai and then edited before being published online.

KEY POINT - ALL OF THE APPS WE RECOMMEND BELOW ARE FREE TO USE. THERE IS NO NEED TO SETUP PAID ACCOUNTS FOR ANY OF THEM.

2.2
Audio recording the stories

We use two different methods of recording stories as audio files. The first method involves using an audio memo app on your smartphone to record your story on your own. The second method involves being interviewed and capturing the audio from that interview. We intend to publish all audio stories on the www.historicgraves.com website and also as playlists on youtube.com.

Fair warning, recording audio to a good quality can be difficult. All of the audio we hear on radio news reports and documentaries invariably involve trained professionals at both the recording and broadcasting stages of work. As community historians we aspire to good standards although we're long enough in the tooth to know that done is better than perfect. Be warned that it may be necessary for you to repeat some recordings because you aren't happy with the quality of the original recording. This has happened to us a number of times and it requires patience to get it right - just like in a graveyard survey.

Setting Up

The first thing to do when recording an audio story is to find a quiet part of your home. Ideally somewhere you can lie your phone on top of a solid stack of books. So that when you press the record button you do not have to touch it again until ending the recording. The more you touch your device during recording the greater chance there is of causing quality issues.

Make sure the radio/television are turned off in your room and also listen for the washing machine or some other background noise. If you can hear it we will too and it may distract attention.

Audio recording on a smartphone for these projects should only be done indoors, unless you have an appropriate microphone to use outside. Radio reporters often record themselves sitting under a blanket to improve sound quality for broadcast.

In all cases we prefer to record the audio files at 44100 kHz. This can usually be set in the app settings. If this seems too technical then don't worry about it.

2.2.1 Personal Audio Recording

The microphone on a smartphone is usually at the bottom of the device and should be pointed towards your face when you are recording. Your head should be about a hands length away from the microphone.

You can prepare your recording by making notes or by writing a full script. We have used both methods and each has its merits. Some people are excellent at **telling** their stories while some of us prefer to write it. Each to their own.

Use of a lavalier microphone or the earphones with microphone which came with your smartphone will improve sound quality too.

1 Prepare your notes/script using the prompts presented earlier.

2 Prepare your 'recording studio'. Choose a quiet chair, place a stack of books on a surface/table which will bring the books close to a hands length from your chin.

3 Practice your story/script.
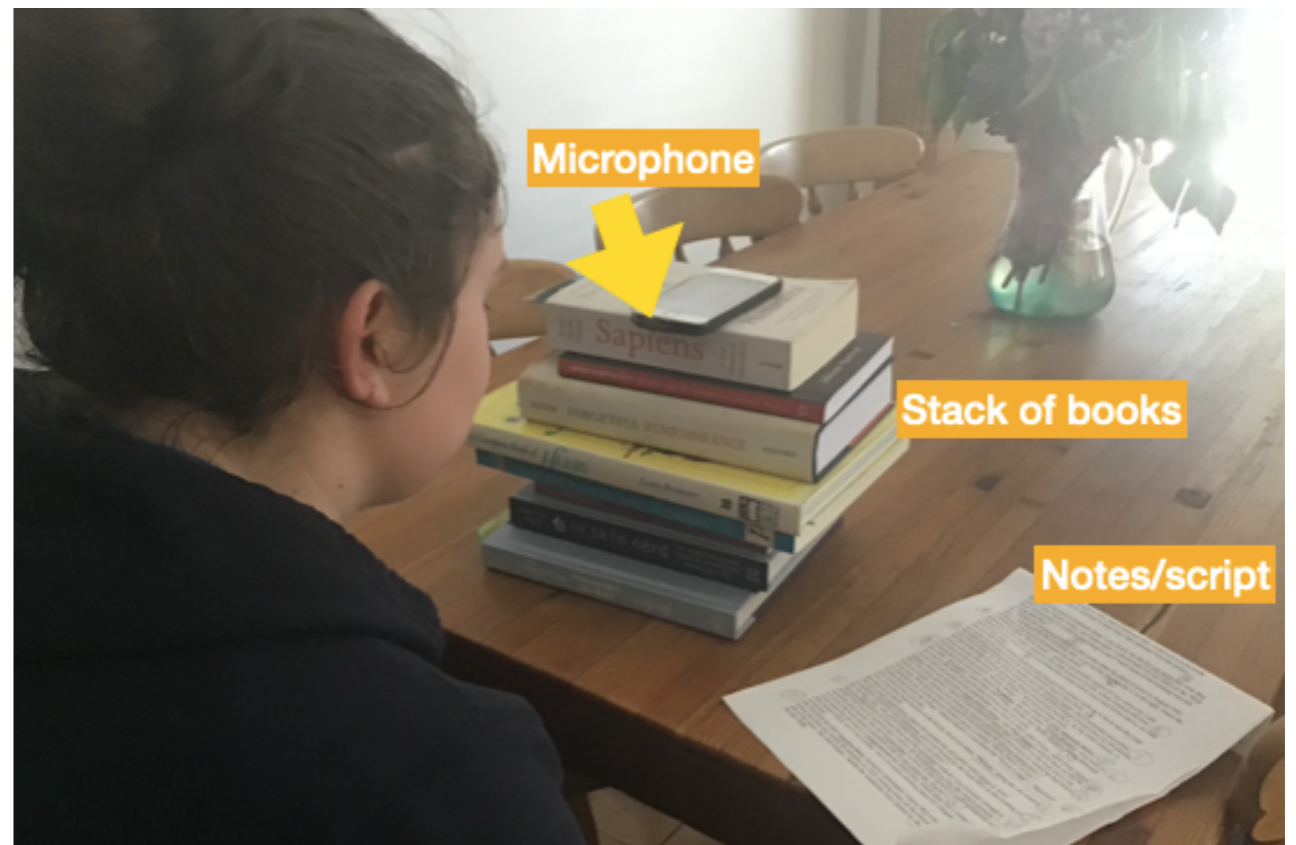
Setup for recording your story using a Voice memo app.
Key points are;
A. Quiet seat in a quiet room.
B. Stack of books to hold smartphone.
C. No fiddling with the phone
D. Phone at chin height and situated no more than 10cm from you.

4 Select record on the Voice memo app and begin your story. Making sure to cover the prompts discussed in section 1.4 and also to mention any other stories you are going to tell.

5 Turn off the recording and listen back to assess quality issues. Listen with earphones if you can as most of our website viewers visit on mobile phones and will often use earphones themselves.

Improving Audio

6 Record again if you are not happy for **any** reason. Small delays or stumbles are acceptable. However if the whole story is faltering, or you got your breathing wrong and sound over excited then 'go again'. If there are jarring external sounds which distract from the story then delete and 'go again'.

7 Once happy with the quality of the recording click on the Share button in your recording app and email the story to john@historicgraves.com or upload to your own online system. Alternatively you can save the file to your computer and share with Dropbox or Wetransfer.

8 Sometimes we will record **double-enders**. We may talk on the landline telephone and use our smartphone Voice memo apps to record our own side of the conversation. This results in higher quality recordings.

Smartphone headphones with microphone - these can be used indoors & outdoors to record good quality audio.

Close-up of a lavalier microphone used to record higher quality audio. The three black rings on the 3.5mm jack indicate this only works with smartphones.

2.2.2 Recording an interview - Overview

1 First we must email/post and sign all **consent forms** relating to the interview (See Appendix 1)

2 Then we decide will we use a telephone or a broadband connection?

3 If we decide to chat and record the interview on a telephone we need to establish whether will we use a landline or a mobile phone connection?

4 If we use a landline we will use a speakerphone to record the conversation. We may need to test the system first. This will involve a brief phone call and a practice recording of sound levels and quality of the phone line.

5 If we use two mobile phones to record the interview we will also be faced with the potential problem of poor call quality. Again we will have to test the 'line' before doing this.

6 If we decide to use broadband then we will either need two good broadband connections or one good broadband connection at one end and a good quality mobile phone reception at the other end.

7 If all of this sounds too complicated or too daunting don't worry, we will work these issues out together. There's no harm learning new skills and rising to new challenges. You have the deep knowledge which we want to share.

8 If the recording technology does defeat us then the process we use to prepare for the interview will still result in a scripted story. This scripted story can be published as a typescript rather than an audio/video file.

The key aim is to record the stories in some format, be it typescript, audio or video.
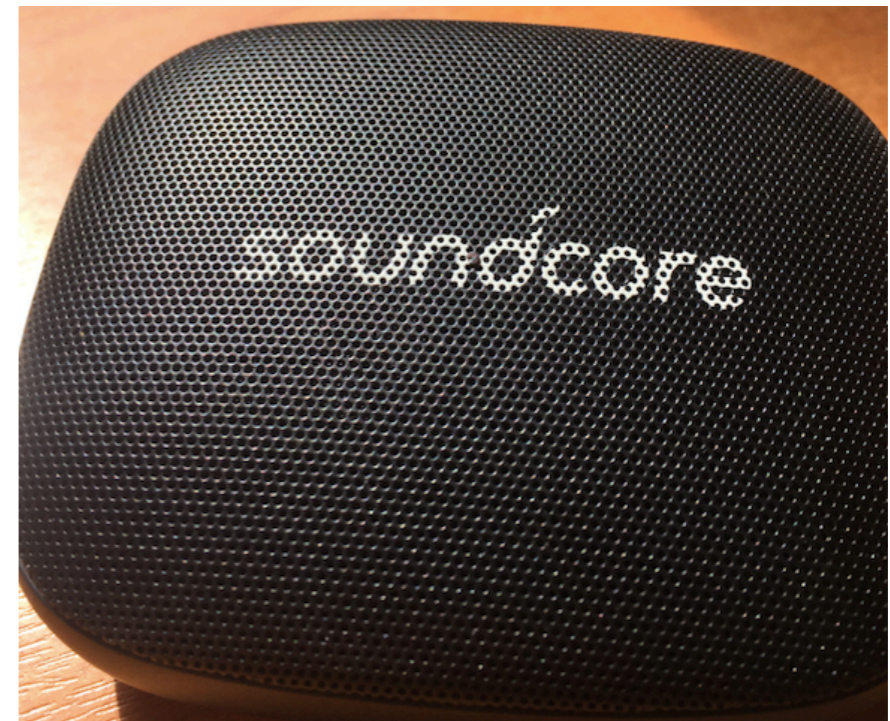
Sometimes we will use a speaker phone to record the audio interview

2.3.3 Using Zoom for Audio or Video Interviews

To do a Zoom interview you need to have a **broadband** connection at home, a computer with a webcam or a smartphone with working camera. You also need to install the Zoom app on your computer or smartphone.

Zoom is excellent software to use in times of Covid-19 and we expect to use it a lot in coming months.

Here is a short video showing how to accept a Zoom meeting invite.

https://youtu.be/1FJkAyL966k

Zoom permits the recording of just audio **or** video with audio.

It **records** both parts of a conversation as separate sound files which is important for our long term archiving aims. The person who initiates the call is the host and they have access to the audio and video files after the interview.

It is possible to connect with Zoom and record an audio-only interview by turning off the video camera. Here we see red
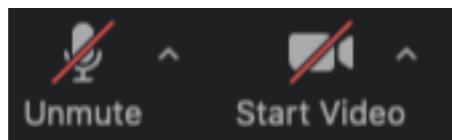
lines across the microphone and video to show that they are both set to off.

1. Doing an Interview with Zoom

   1. Step 1 download the Zoom app on your laptop or smartphone

      1. Go to this web address https://zoom.us/download and select the appropriate app button


   2. Once you have the app downloaded create an account with a username and email address attached. Keep track of both the username and password in a notebook.

   3. We will discuss the interview beforehand and review the prepared story script. We will then arrange a date and time to conduct the interview. For people who have never used Zoom before we will do a trial run.

   4. Immediately before the scheduled interview you will receive a text message or email to your smartphone/computer inviting you to a Zoom meeting. Select the link in your email message which will launch the Zoom app, enter your name and then you will join the conversation.

   5. Alternatively we will have prescheduled the meeting and you will have received a booking email.

Using Zoom

6. The interview will be based on the prepared story script. If a series of stories are recounted they may be edited into shorter single story videos.

7. The benefit of using this Zoom-based approach is that only the interviewer has to worry about recording the interview. Sometimes broadband speed or wifi connections can adversely affect this method and we will have to try something different.

8. We have tested other video conference software but Zoom is the one with the best setup for audio and video recording.

9. As a backup to Zoom we also use an app called Screenflow to record any online interviews. Screenflow can record any digital elements on a computer screen at the same time. It can record a smartphone screen, multiple desktop screen as well as associated audio. This will allow us to prepare maps and other images which may complement the storytelling. Screenflow is only needed for the interview host so need to worry about it for now.

Screenflow in action recording an interview as well as two separate computer screens.
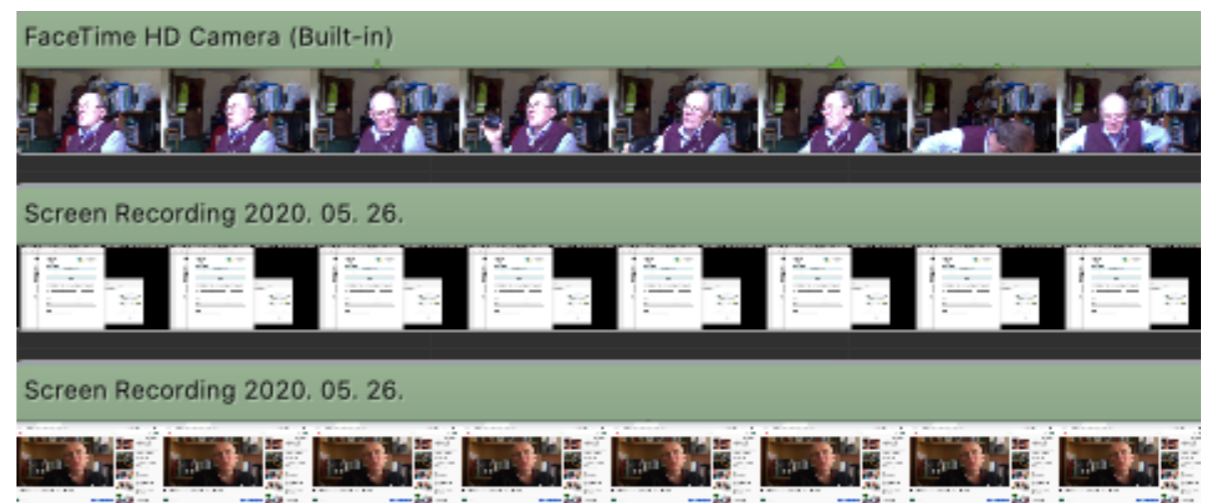
2.3.4
Recording Telephone Calls

Recording conversations over broadband is attractive because we can have a video and audio version of the conversation. However, if broadband or 4G reception isn't good enough we will also record stories over landline.

This will perhaps be the simplest method we use. We will call you, put our phone on speakerphone and record the conversation using a digital recorder. This approach is attractive because landlines are more commonly available than broadband. Anybody over 40 will be familiar with using a landline and the resulting audio quality can be good enough for our purposes. We will transcribe and edit any of the conversations and so can publish both the audio and associated text. Ideally the interviewee will have a number of photographs/maps to accompany their story and we can publish these as a Story or a blog post on www.historcgraves.com. You can also publish the story to the web platform of your own project.

2.3.5 Audio recording a story with WhatsApp

1. Some people are wizards with WhatsApp. They may already be familiar with it due to family or local WhatsApp groups.

2. WhatsApp can be used to record directly to **audio** resulting in a sound file easily shared.

3. To record with WhatsApp open the App, start a chat, select the microphone icon , drag upwards on the screen and it will record your full story.

4. When finished the story recording select the send icon .and send to (insert correct phone number for your project). Include your name, name of local graveyard/parish and story title in the same chat or send a separate chat message with that information.

5. Project host will then receive this audio story to our smartphone. We will check for quality and copy to the project audio folder. Ideally each story will have 2-3 photographs associated with it and we will combine the audio and photographs in a short slide show which will be made into a very short film.

   1. For example, if your story is about a relative who was a school teacher. The story might be accompanied by

   - a photograph of the school where she taught.

   - a photograph of the person

   - a photograph of an associated headstone

   - a photograph of the school.

   2. A short story with associated photographs will usually make a video about 2 minutes long.

6. We will upload these videos to a playlist in Youtube and these will be uploaded to a story or blog post in www.historicgraves.com.

7. Here's a short video showing how to use WhatsApp to record and share audio stories, title and also send photographs associated with the story. https://youtu.be/lTX6VsGnYYE

3.1 Making Your Own Heritage Videos

Filmmaking for community heritage is challenging but also rewarding. It is the way of the future and is 'doable' with the smartphone in our pocket by following a few principles.

1	Pick one camera and use that ie. either your iPhone, Samsung/Android or a GoPro.
2	Ideally get a tripod & tripod head to mount that camera (we use one of these https://www.shoulderpod.com/shoulderpod-s2 it is handheld or can be screwed onto a standard tripod plate). Similar devices can be bought in camera shops. The main purpose of the tripod is to have a fixed camera position at head height. Always have your camera at the head height of the person talking/being interviewed. When using a tripod **let the person do the movement**, not the camera ie. film yourself walking across the graveyard from a single tripod position. As a beginner avoid panning or 'fancy' moves. Keep it simple. If you don't have a tripod then hold the smartphone steady in your hands, bracing your elbows against your ribcage, standing still if at all possible. If you video while walking the resulting video file can appear unstable and distracting.
3	Get a microphone to connect to your chosen camera (see below). We recommend Rode Smartlav+ (for smartphones). We also use the Rode Wireless GO 2 system or the DJI Mic system as good quality, easy-to-learn, audio recording kit.
4	**Decide** are you going to do a. **historical information videos** with the narrator talking directly to the camera or b. **make short films** (with a story line) and multiple different shots.
a •	**Historical Information** videos - Keep it simple by using a single camera location. This involves most of the work happening **before** you film. Work out what you are going to do and say, write the script, practice and then try and do it in a single take. Use who did what, where and when to write your script - add objective detail of names, dates and sources to your script. (i) Have the camera set at your own **eye level**. (ii) If being interviewed the interviewer should sit beyond the camera so you are looking across the camera at them ie. your eye-line is across the camera space. (iii) If not being interviewed but you are recording a piece to the camera then look **directly at the camera lens**.

Five key shots when making videos

b	**Make a short film**. In this we follow the Mobile Journalist's system for filming a <2 minute news item. If you watch Philip Bromwell's news reports on RTE you will note the use of key shots. Mobile journalists, who use smartphones and GoPro-type cameras aim for **5 key shots** (Stashcen & Vellinga 2019) which are generally structured as follows;
i.	Who is doing something (show key person walking into the site)
ii.	Where is the event happening? long or medium shot of the graveyard site.
iii.	What is being done? closeup of a task in action (eg. show somebody reading a headstone with a torch).
iv.	An over the shoulder action shot showing for previous closeup
v.	An unusual shot - eg.closeup of a bee on a flower.
	To see an example of one of Philip Bromwell's news reports using the principles of 5 key shots in less than 2 minutes. >>https://www.rte.ie/news/2020/0521/1139901-biodiversity-audit-records-exciting-finds-at-the-aras/<<
	Try to record a separate **soundscape** of the site as well as the **interview audio**. We usually layer the soundscape or atmosphere audio under an interview/talking audio to better capture the sense of place. Only use soundscapes from that particular place.

6   Making the short film/news-type item is more difficult than doing an historical information video. We recommend that people start with the historical information video and build up to making a short film.

7   Getting good quality sound recordings is a major challenge in making our own heritage videos. A guitar instructor can do guitar classes straight to camera without a microphone because she is sitting in a quiet room. For outdoor work though we need an external microphone. **Key Point** The microphone will ideally record directly into the video so you do not have to spend time syncing the audio and video. To an untrained person this can take a lot of time to learn. Also make sure your microphone is shielded from wind noise.

Improved audio in your videos

8 In our experience the two best solutions to this problem are;

A Use a **Lavalier microphone** which connects directly to your smartphone (this is the one we use http://www.rode.com/microphones/smartlav-plus This will record the audio directly into the smartphone video.

B If using a **GoPro**, which are excellent for community heritage filming, then buy the **external mic adaptor** - this mic adaptor connects directly to the video and has saved us hours of time in editing videos. This is the one we bought https://www.barkerphotographic.ie/gopro-hero5-pro-3-5mm-mic-adapter/cameras/video/gopro. We connect a Sennheiser shotgun mic to the adaptor and that gives us good quality audio from approx 2m from the camera position.

9 **Editing** - keep it simple. Film the one scene, with high quality audio - Share the video as a file and send to us using dropbox.com or similar. Video files are usually very large and uploading to Youtube can be confusing. Dropbox is attractive because you simply copy the file into a Dropbox folder on your own computer and it will upload over broadband/wifi at it's own pace.

Conclusion The simplest approach to making your own heritage videos is to use your smartphone with a lavalier mic and use the built-in camera to film short historical information videos. If possible never go over 6 minutes per video and we find we can get most stories told in about 2 minutes thus keeping file size manageable. We have avoided talking about editing videos but If you want to do very basic edits and add titles then get an app like Cute Cut video ir iMovie on the iOS.

Aim to do 10 simple historical information videos before you start doing complex stories.

3.2 Consent

Public heritage projects such as ours have potential to gather new oral historical stories which have never been written down before. One part of the process of doing this is to brief our participants about how we will publish their stories and also how their words are likely to be used in the future.

In the Historic Graves Project we publish individual accounts as Stories (https://historicgraves.com/stories) which can be attached to individual graveyards or gravestones. We often combine multiple stories in blog posts. Sometimes the stories are repeated in newspaper articles in local and national press.

In the long run, many stories, audio recordings, or videos may be reworked and republished. As both the project and individual participants have different copyright's we need to agree permissions before recording stories. Such stories can even have a financial value and that should also be addressed in project permission forms. The Historic Graves Project does not sell any of the stories recorded or any of the survey data published. We publish them freely on the internet.

However, in the distant future it is possible that some stories or videos may be used in programmes which have production budgets. If that does occur then the project funders need to address that issue in their permissions.

While we admire the explicit methodologies espoused by mobile journalism there are differences between oral historians and television/radio programme makers. Oral historians focus on the **scholarly value** of the material gathered. While television and radio programme makers generally seek **release forms** which give the companies involved permission to publish audio, video and transcripts from interviews in a variety of formats as well as requiring release forms for recording in the actual **location** of the interview.

For our current projects we store all digital content (stories, audio and video recordings) on a pair of hard drives in our office and online. We intend to upload approx 70% of recorded stories to the Historic Graves Youtube Channel organised by project playlists to be embedded in the Historic Graves website.

At the end of each project we submit a copy of the complete digital archive to the client/funding body. In the longterm we expect Irish digital cultural heritage projects like ours will be supported by the state to be archived with bodies like the Digital Repository of Ireland.

Appendix 1 contains the **Consent form** we are using for current projects as well as a number of sample release forms which may be of interest to community groups planning to record and manage their own digital heritage projects. All participants recording stories for the current project must sign the Appendix 1 Consent Form.

We will post/email copies of the form to all participants for signing and return..

References

Björn Staschen & Wytse Vellinga 2019 Mobile Storytelling: A journalist´s guide to the smartphone galaxy. Kindle Edition.

Safi, Michael 2019 Kumbh Mela: Hindus converge for largest-ever human gathering

https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jan/15/kumbh-mela-hindus-converge-for-largest-ever-human-gathering-prayagraj-festival

The **Oral History Network** of Ireland has some good online resources including this reading list https://www.oralhistorynetworkireland.ie/advice/reading/

The **Oral History Society** in the UK produced this very good guidance document early in Covid-19. Their discussion of 'double enders' is very good.

https://www.ohs.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/Advice-on-remote-interviewing-during-the-Covid-19-Pandemic-v.6-15-05-20.pdf

Reuters are a high quality news and journalism business. Their handbook on writing factual news is relevant and useful for writing heritage stories http://handbook.reuters.com/index.php?title=Reporting_and_Writing_Basics

Dealing with sound problems https://training.npr.org/2017/01/31/the-ear-training-guide-for-audio-producers/#plosives

Appendix 1 - Consent Form

Historic Graves Stories Project Consent

COPYRIGHT ASSIGNMENT & CONSENT FORM FOR ORAL HISTORY RECORDINGS*

The purpose of this assignment and consent is to enable the Historic Graves Stories Project to permanently retain and use the recorded recollections of individuals.

In respect of the content of a sound and/or audio recording made by and/or, being deposited with the Historic Graves Stories Project, consisting of the recollections of a contributor and constituting a literary work as defined by the Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000.

As present owner of copyright in the contributor content (i.e. the words spoken by the interviewee), I hereby assign such copyright to the Historic Graves Stories Project 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 the Historic Graves Stories Project the right to use and make available the content of the recorded interview in the following ways:

- Public performance, lecture or talks.

- Use in publications, including print, audio or video cassettes or CD ROM.

- Public reference purposes in 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.

- Publication worldwide on the internet.

Signed

………………………………………………………

Print Name ……………………………………………

Address ……………………………………………

………………………………………………………

Telephone ……………………………………………

Email ……………………………………………..

Date ……………………………………………

Appendix 2 - Using Google Forms to manage community heritage stories

Using Google Forms

Google Forms is an online form-filling application which connects to a Google spreadsheet. They are simple to setup and can be used on either a desktop computer, laptop or smartphone. We will be using the following Google Form to keep track of our stories and it will serve as an example .

https://forms.gle/MTsvYypS6VURAVsD9

You will see we started with full name and email address to monitor who is sharing stories with us and after that the questions relate to the stories themselves. Only ask for email if your project is part of a group with a formal GDPR system.

Steps to setting up your own Google Form

1 You must have a google/gmail account to setup a Google Form document. Sign in to your own gmail account.

2 Go to forms.google.com. Select Start a New Form.
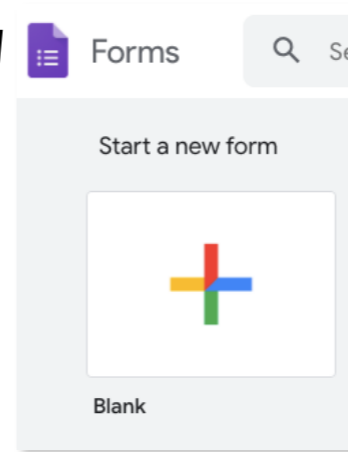
3 Enter a form title and description. Then select the first untitled question and type in Full Name and change answer type to short paragraph.

4 Select ⊕ to add next question and continue adding your required questions.

5 When the questions are finished click on Settings ⚙ and select the preferences you wish. I always prefer to allow editing after submission.

Example of a short form used to build a list of people willing to share their stories and the nature of

6 Select Preview and edit the form as required. When you are happy with the form then you are ready to send it out to solicit stories.

7 Select Send **Send** and this will ask do you want to email the form, email a link to the form or embed the form in a website. I usually clink on 🔗 link, select Shorten URL, copy and paste that into my email.

8 The extra value in using forms is that it automatically builds a database of project participants and stories in Google Sheets. This spreadsheet can be shared with participants and can also be used to add extra information such as links to associated photographs or documents.

A t a more advanced level you can also use a Google Forms document to publish the interview script prompts and to ask your community historians to type their stories into.

Historic Graves 2023 Graveyard Stories Project

This is a community training project intended to gather stories of the historic graveyards of Ireland. The project is being directed by John Tierney of Eachtra Heritage (contact john@historicgraves.com).

Name *

Short answer text

Name of graveyard your story relates to.

Short answer text

Do you already have local stories gathered or is this a new project for you?

Short answer text

What types of stories do you have in mind? (eg. burial practices, health in the past, emigration & the diaspora, sport in the past, religion in the parish, the War of Independence, the Irish Civil War, WW1 & WW2, the Great Famine?

Long answer text