

*History... in the making*



# Collections Care in the Community with Lorna Elms & Noel Campbell National Museum of Ireland – Country Life

## Today we will cover...

- ✓ **Cataloguing your Collection**
- ✓ **Labelling of objects**
- ✓ **Photography of objects**
- ✓ **Care/storage of objects & photographs**

# Cataloguing your Collection

## ○ Why Catalogue?

- To keep record items in your collection
- To have in one place all information pertaining to an item
- To be able to easily locate:
  - Individual items (physical/digital)
  - Information on copyright and access

## ○ Why use Excel?

- Easy data entry
- Fully Searchable
- Catalogue can be easily exported to a catalogue of a professional institution or online software
- Can be uploaded to your Com Archive website

# Cataloguing Guidelines & Standards

- Template has been developed in accordance with the Community Archives & Heritage Group (CAHG) **Cataloguing Guidelines**
- The guidelines developed in conjunction with the **Archives Records Association UK & Ireland (ARA)**
- Guidelines are short and simple and represent a **minimal standard** for cataloguing that aims to be **realistic and user-friendly**.
- If you follow these guidelines, the records will be compliant with existing widely-used **professional catalogue standards**:
  - **ISAD(G)** – The International Standard for cataloguing archives
  - **Dublin Core** – Widely-used International Standard

# iCAN Catalogue Template

- Excel template approved by Jack Latimer, Community Sites and CAHG Board
- Data entry can be at a **basic** or **advanced level**
- Template can be easily **edited/tailored** to your groups collection/needs
- **Recommended** by iCAN as best practice

# Recording Your Collection

The guidelines and catalogue template cover the information you should record about:

1. Your overall collection
2. Groups of items in your collection
3. Individual items in your collection

Cataloguing individual items in groups

**Overall Collection**

*The Anytown  
Community Archive*

**Groups of items in  
your collection**

*Photos of John Smith  
Ref no. ANY/1*

**Groups of items in  
your collection**

*Photos of Joe Bloggs  
Ref no. ANY/2*

**Individual items  
in your collection**

*1<sup>st</sup> photo from  
John Smith  
Ref no. ANY/1/1*

**Individual items  
in your collection**

*2<sup>nd</sup> photo from  
John Smith  
Ref no. ANY/1/2*

**Individual items in  
your collection**

*1<sup>st</sup> photo from Joe  
Bloggs  
Ref no. ANY/2/1*

## The overall collection

- Record an overview of your collection.
- You may need to update this information as your collection grows.

# Groups of items in your collection

- Archivists usually organise their collections into groups which reflect the way the items were originally arranged or received, rather than trying to impose new groupings on it.
  - *e.g. if you are given 300 photos by three different people, you would simply put the photos into three groups: one for each person who gave them to you, instead of grouping all 300 photos into new headings such as 'buildings' and 'people'*
- One advantage of grouping items is that, if time is short, you might only create a catalogue entry for the group, rather creating an entry for each item within the group.
  - *e.g. you could just create one group entry for a bundle of letters, then as time allows record each letter as an individual item*

# Individual items in your collection

- By an item, we mean an object, photo, an oral history interview, or a document such as a letter or a map.
- Some groups have collections of physical items (for example, an original photo) and some have digital collections (for example, a scan of a photo).
- The guidelines and template are designed to fit both purposes.

## What Suits Us?

- Realistically, many heritage projects have limited time to catalogue their collections, so the guidelines divide up the information you can record about each item into three categories:
  - Mandatory (Red)
  - Recommended (Blue)
  - Optional (Orange)
- If you're short of time, just record the mandatory information. You'll see that there are relatively few pieces of information that are mandatory.

# Reference numbers

- A reference number is a unique identifier for your:
  - Overall Collection
  - Groups of Items
  - Individual items
- Archives often use a three-letter code as an acronym for their overall collection and numeric references for groups and items.
- If you are organising your collection into groups & items, your system of reference numbers should reflect this.

# Reference Numbers example

**ANY** is the acronym for the Anytown Archive

**ANY/1** is a group of items received from John Edward Smith

- **ANY/1/1** the first item received from John Edward Smith
- **ANY/1/2** the second item received from John Edward Smith

**ANY/2** is a group of items received from Mary Jane Winter

- **ANY/2/1** the first item received from Mary Jane Winter
- **ANY/2/2** the second item received from Mary Jane Winter

and so on....

## Digital filenames

- The filenames you use for digital files, such as scans or digital images, can reflect these reference numbers.
- For filenames use the 'underscore' key  
e.g.
  - **ANY\_1\_1.tif**
  - **ANY\_1\_2.tif**
- If more than one image is associated with a particular item, reflect this in the filename.  
e.g.
  - **ANY\_1\_1\_image1.tif**
  - **ANY\_1\_1\_image2.tif**

# Keywords

- Keywords provide easily referenced and searchable information about the subject-matter
- Create a master list of keywords = a '**controlled vocabulary**'
- This will ensure that any one particular concept is described using only one *authorized* keyword e.g. agriculture
- Computers and search engines like Google can search blocks of text, so make sure that all relevant terms are included in the description of the item.

# Copyright: Donor Form

- It is good practice for all contributors to sign a donor consent form
- The consent form grants a license to reproduce and use the item
- This form is the ultimate source of information about what rights have been granted in the item
- *Remember:* Volunteers retain copyright in material they create, unless you ask them to sign a release form.  
e.g. a volunteer who records an oral history interview will hold an element of copyright in the recording.

# Copyright: Catalogue

Include a reference to the Donor Form in the 'Rights' field of the catalogue.

If the copyright in an item has been retained by the contributor, but your archive has been **granted rights to reproduce** it by signing a consent form, the rights field in your catalogue could contain the statement:

*Copyright Ann Jones.  
Reproduction rights acquired through  
Anytown Archive consent form AA1.*

## Access to Items

- The access field provides information about any restrictions on access to the items in your collection.

e.g:

- Some material may have been donated to your collection on condition that it is not made publicly available for a certain number of years. In this case, you might record in the access field '**Closed until 2040**'.
- The donor may ask to be consulted each time there is a request to view the material. In this case, you might write in the access field, '**Closed without the written permission of the contributor**'.
- These situations are likely to be exceptions. Normally, the items in your collection will be open to the public to view, and you can simply enter the word '**open**' in this field.

# Donation or Deposit?

Many archives offer contributors a choice about the terms under which they can offer material to the archive. The following options are common:

**1. Donation:** If the contributor donates material, ownership of the collection goes to the archive and the contributor no longer has any say about closure or access to the collection. NB: They may still retain copyright.

**2. Deposit:** If the material is deposited 'on loan' contributors retain rights and ownership. Contributors have a say about closure periods and access to the material and can withdraw their material at any time.

- If you wish to offer your contributors these choices, they should be clearly defined on your release forms.

# Next Steps

## Things to Consider:

- How might you 'group' your items?
- What keywords might you use?
- Do you need a Donor Form?
- Do you need all the fields on the Excel?
- Who from your group will be assigned to data entry?
- Where will you store digital files?
  - Do you have a back-up e.g. external drive?

# The Catalogue Template

Now we will look at:

- The different catalogue fields
- Basic functions of Excel

Visit [www.ouririshheritage.org](http://www.ouririshheritage.org) to download:

- The Training Presentations
- Cataloguing Guidelines
- Cataloguing Excel template
- Excel Help sheet