



## **Research Room Guide**

[work in progress]

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## 1. Introduction

The Research Room is a place for the research community of Seaton Delaval Hall to come and exchange their knowledge. It is a library / archive / study room, which grants the public access to all past, present and future research. It is a space for staff, volunteers, visitors, students, and anyone else curious about the hall's fantastic and complicated history.

This document is the Research Room's accompanying guide. It will help you negotiate all sorts of matters from data protection to orphan works, making the process of acquiring, indexing, and accessing research and other material easier and more secure. The processes outlined here are to help make the fantastic research accessible and help everyone protect the rights of researchers.

## 2. The Space

The Research Room currently consist of a room in the West Wing (aka the cream room) and a library on SharePoint in the Seaton Delaval Hall drive.

### 2.1 The (Cream) Room

This room is not exclusively for the Research Room it is also part of the conservation team's offices and a place where collection items can be looked at. [How the room's space and usage will be divided between the room being the Research Room and the collection staff office space will likely happen naturally]

There are shelves which are to hold the physical items of the Research Room.

[The room currently holds no research room items so how these will be placed in the space will change.]

Possible storage options are:

- Photo albums and scrapbooks
- Larger folders or cardboard tubes for large paper items such as maps
- Ring binders with poly-pockets of text documents

With each of the storage options numbered so that the location of items can be easily logged in the index. E.g., Photo album 01]

## 2.2 SharePoint

The Research Room has a separate library on the Seaton Delaval SharePoint (figure 1). Visitors are then only able to access to this library instead of the entire Seaton Delaval Hall SharePoint. The Research Room library also holds the Excel spreadsheet which is the index for the entire Research Room.

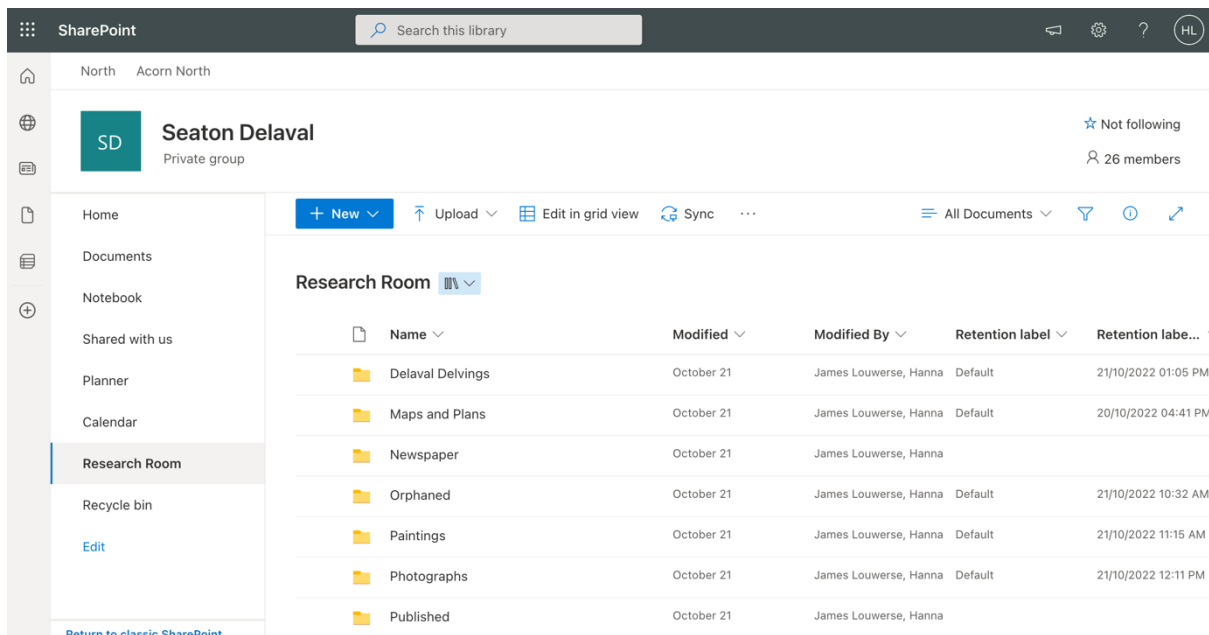


Figure 1: The Reading Room Library on SharePoint

## 2.3 External Devices

[Hopefully in the future we will have devices physically in the room that makes accessing digital files easier, but depends on the National Trust's IT]

## 3. Research Room Acquisition

This is **not** an official National Trust process. For now, it is a necessary DIY process to help make items in the Research Room accessible to the public in a manner which protects the National Trust and the donors of the items. This section is about handling items donated by people who are not National Trust staff or members of the Volunteer Research Group. The guide will discuss the handling of items from these groups in later sections and what to do with the items already in the National Trust's possession.

The process is similar to the two pre-existing processes for the collection, and furnishing, handling or props: a person makes an enquiry, an acquisition proposal is made and if it is approved the item is acquired with a copyright agreement if necessary (see figure 2). The reason a separate process has been made is firstly, because the Research Room items are not rare enough to go into the collection and the National Trust is not able to dedicate the same level of resources to the conservation of Research Room items as collection items. And secondly because the items contribute to the wider knowledge of the hall, unlike props. We therefore needed to create a process which champions the research value of the items yet communicates to the donor how the National Trust cannot fully protect the items and they may be disposed of if necessary.

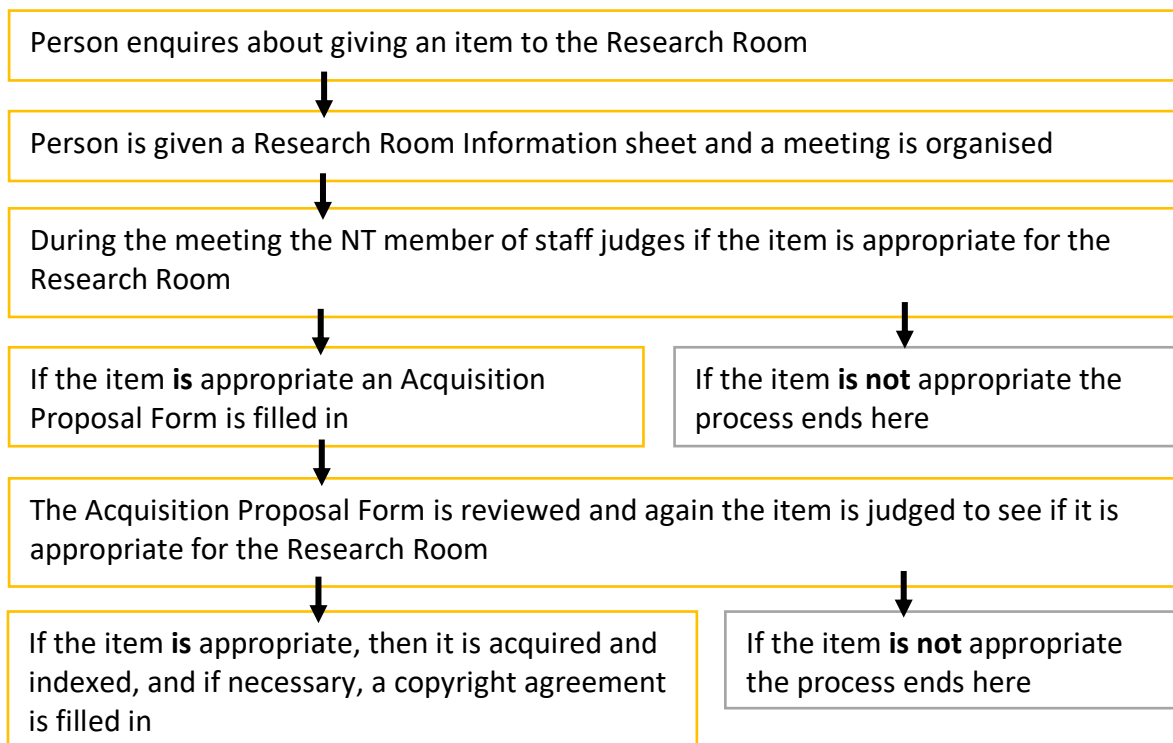


Figure 2: Research Room Acquisition Flowchart

### 3.1 Research Room Criterion

The Research Room is a public facing part of the hall so the items it holds have to be appropriate for the space. The acquisition process allows us to only collect items for the Research Room that meet a certain criterion:

- The item cannot be a difficult medium to handle. e.g., photographic film or obscure digital files

- (If applicable) the copyright holder needs to be comfortable granting certain copyright permissions
- The item cannot be ethically dubious or inappropriate to show to the public

In some cases, the creator of the item might not be contactable in which case it is possible to accept the item as an orphan work. For further information on orphaned works see section 5.3 Orphan Works.

## **3.2 Research Room Sheets and Forms**

The important thing to note here is that any paperwork or forms that contain any personal data are handled with care, stored in a safe and secure place until no longer useful and then destroyed. If you are unsure what to do with the personal data, contact the National Trust Data Protection Office.

### **3.2.1 Information Sheet**

The Research Room Information Sheet is the first thing to be handed to any prospective donor as an act of transparency. This information sheet explains where items donated to the Research Room fall within the wider National Trust collection and how the copyright of the item will be negotiated. It also explains the data protection procedures surrounding the acquisition process and gives the prospective donor an opportunity to ask any other questions.

### **3.2.2 Acquisition Proposal Form**

The Research Room Acquisition Proposal form is based off the acquisition proposal form for props and handling. It aims to find out what the item(s), where the item(s) came from and if there is need for a copyright agreement. The form allows us to judge whether the item is appropriate for the Research Room and fit the Research Room criteria (see 3.1 Research Room Criterion).

### **3.2.3 Copyright Agreement**

[the copyright for collections page on Acorn is currently under construction so this might all change. If you want more information on copyrighting heritage items, then visit the website of Naomi Korn Associates for more information. They also have excellent free resources]

If the copyright holder is known, then the copyright holder and a National Trust staff member are required to sign a copyright agreement before the item is handed over. Only after the agreement has been signed can the item be made accessible to the public. Within the copyright agreement the copyright holder or 'licensor', as they are referred to in the form, has two options. The first option is for the licensor to grant the National Trust permission to use their item in various contexts. The licensor can pick and choose from the various contexts based on what they are comfortable with. In the second option the licensor assigns all their copyright to the National Trust and is no longer allowed to use their item for any commercial gain.

The copyright agreement will contain personal data and therefore needs to be stored securely and in accordance with data protection regulation. The copyright agreement needs to be kept for as long as the item is in the possession of the National Trust. This is because the copyright holder needs to be contacted if there is anyone who wishes to use their item. There also might be instances where the National Trust might need further licenses depending on the original agreement.

## **4. Indexing**

Once all the correct paperwork is in place and the item has been moved to either on the Research Room SharePoint or the physical Research Room, its location and other information needs to be indexed. The indexes are the bridge between those who seek information and the information. It is therefore of utmost importance the indexes are up to date.

There are two indexes available for people to use in the Research Room. One is an Excel spreadsheet which is an index of every item in the Research Room SharePoint and all the items physically in the Research Room. The second index system is the index cards in the Research Room.

### **4.1 The Digital Index**

The digital index can be found in the Research Room SharePoint. It is an Excel spreadsheet, which can easily be updated and searched by making use of the built-in word search feature.



## 4.1.1 Index Sheets

The SDH index consists of several sheets e.g., Photographs, Reports and Surveys, Delaval Delvings etc. The Research Room SharePoint has folders the correspond to the sheets in the index (see figure 3).

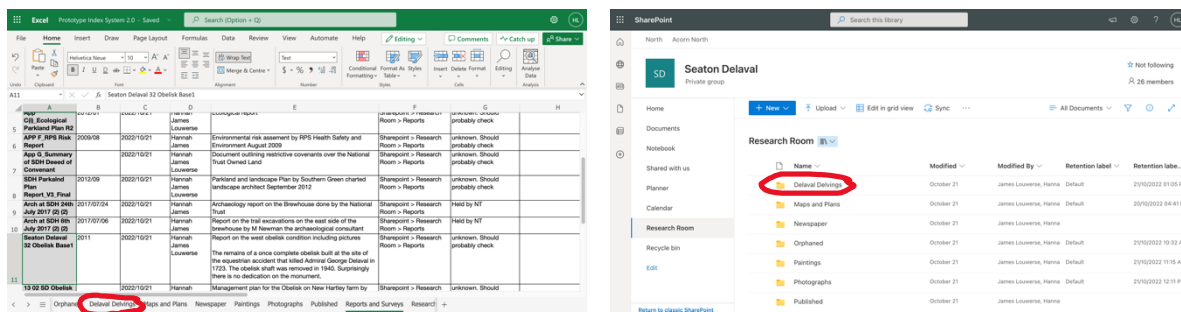


Figure 3: The red circled sheet corresponds to red circled folder in the SharePoint

[With items physically present in the Research Room there are currently no specific areas for certain mediums.] New sheets can be added at any point as more items are added to the Research Room.

## 4.1.2 Filling in the Columns

Each sheet contains a table which has eight columns, the following section takes you through the uses of each of these columns.

### 4.1.2.1 Column One: File name or Title

This should be short and clear. If the item being indexed is digital, then the exact file name should go into this column. This might mean changing the file name in SharePoint.

Good file name or title

- Information on Walled Garden
- Delaval\_Delvings\_005
- Research Group - Briefs

Bad file name or title

- DSN\_09789 ← Not easily searchable or distinct
- Seaton Delaval Hall & Delaval collections (nationally held NT research, photographs taken by AB July 2021) ← too long

#### **4.1.2.2 Column Two: Date**

The date should correspond to the date of the original item, for example, a transcript should be label to date of the original letter and not the date of the transcript. If you do not know the date leave it blank. The general format of the date should be, YYYY/MM/DD. The reason for using this format is because computers can read this and order it a lot better than DD/MM/YYYY or MM/DD/YYYY.

If you do not know the exact date, then aim to have the year first. Here are some examples:

- YYYY/MM/DD
- YYYY/MM
- YYYY – YYYY
- YYYY Spring

#### **4.1.2.3 Column Three and Four: Indexing date and Indexed by**

The third and fourth column indicate when it was indexed and by whom. The purpose of this column is to add a human element into the indexing system. It is a lot easier to ask the person who indexed the item the history of the item or how it ended up in the Research Room, than a computer.

#### **4.1.2.4 Column Five: Information**

The fifth column is for general information about the item. In this section it is important to think about what people might be searching for. The language needs to be clear and spelt correctly. It is likely that this will need regular updating as new things are discovered about the item or language changes. For example how we no longer use certain derogatory terms that in the past might have been used to describe certain items.

#### **4.1.2.5 Column Six: Location**

This is probably the most important column in the entire spreadsheet because this connects the researcher to the information they are looking for. Locations are likely to change over time as things as digitise, printed off or simply move around, so keeping this section updated is crucial.

If the item is on SharePoint in several layers of folders, you indicate this by using the “>” symbol between each layer of folder:

e.g., SharePoint > Research Room > Photographs.

If the item is physically in the Research Room you can be slightly more descriptive, and again the language must be clear.

#### **4.1.2.6 Column Seven: Copyright**

The reason it is important to communicate the copyright status of an item is so that the users know what they need to do if they would like to use the item in something. This way the Research Room is transparent, and people can manage expectations. There is no set way to fill this column as long as the language is clear.

#### **4.1.2.7 Column Eight: Notes**

A section for notes is always helpful and can be used to indicate whether an item has been used in, for example, an exhibition and an article.

## **4.2 Index Cards**

The index cards are for people who are not comfortable using computers. The index cards only indexed the items physically in the Research Room on the assumption anyone who wishes to search using index cards is unlikely to also want to click through a SharePoint drive. Similar to the sheets in the Excel spreadsheet, the index cards are separated into categories by section. The cards include title, date, location, copyright status, and the information (see figure 4).

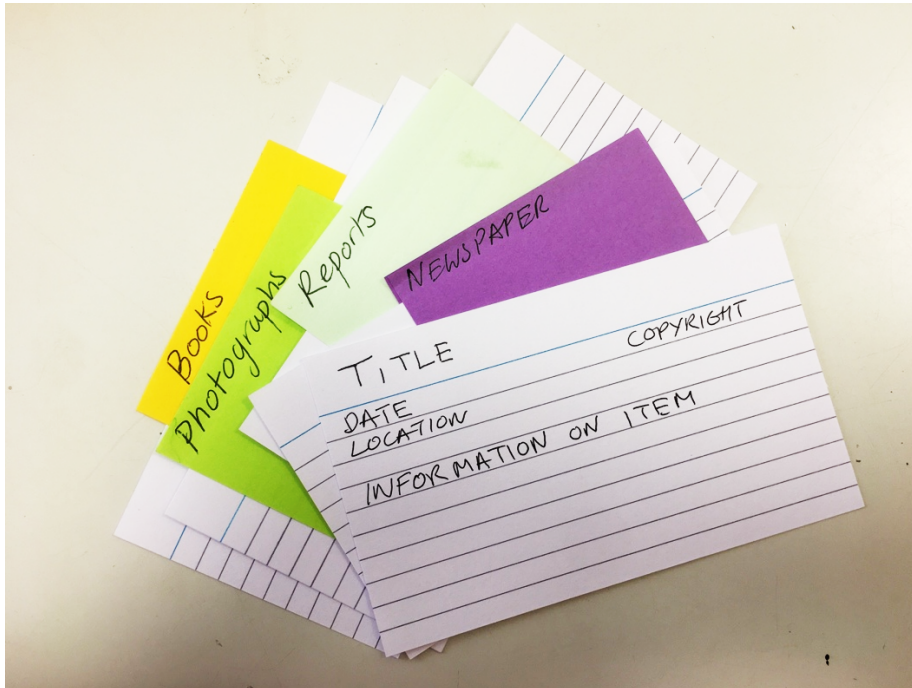


Figure 4: Indexing cards

### 4.3 Indexing individual items versus grouped items

Indexing every single individual item is not only extremely hard work but, in some cases, unnecessary. Sometimes a group of photos will be donated, or a bundle of transcripts and it is just more appropriate to have these group together in one folder (be that paper or digital). For example, in *figure 5* you can see how photographs of John Dobson's Plans are grouped into a single folder and in *figure 6* you can see the index entry for the folder of the plans.

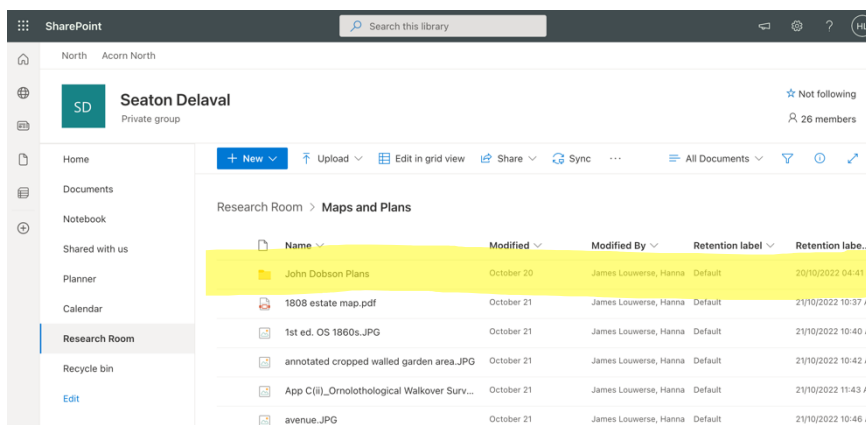
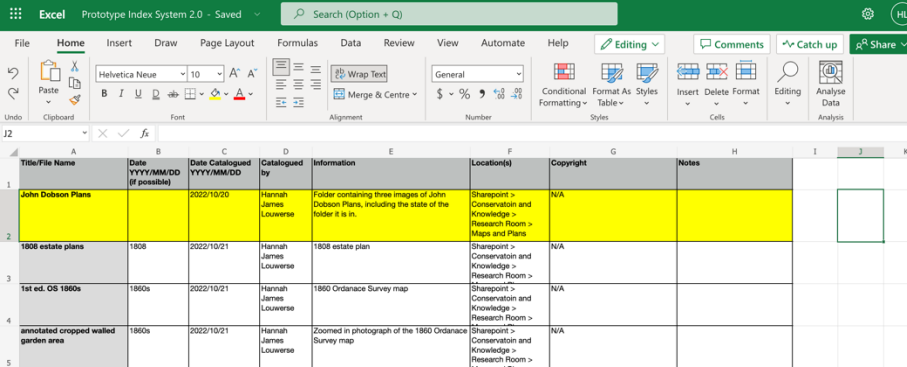


Figure 5: Photographs of plan grouped in a folder on SharePoint



Title/File Name	Date YYYY/MM/DD (if possible)	Date Catalogued YYYY/MM/DD	Catalogued by	Information	Location(s)	Copyright	Notes
John Dobson Plans		2022/10/20	Hannah James Louwse	Folder containing three images of John Dobson Plans, including the state of the folder it is in.	Sharepoint > Conservation and Knowledge > Research Room > Maps and Plans	N/A	
1808 estate plans	1808	2022/10/21	Hannah James Louwse	1808 estate plan	Sharepoint > Conservation and Knowledge > Research Room >	N/A	
1st ed. OS 1860s	1860s	2022/10/21	Hannah James Louwse	1860 Ordnance Survey map	Sharepoint > Conservation and Knowledge > Research Room >	N/A	
annotated cropped walled garden area	1860s	2022/10/21	Hannah James Louwse	Zoomed in photograph of the 1860 Ordnance Survey map	Sharepoint > Conservation and Knowledge > Research Room >	N/A	

Figure 6: Entry in index for the folder of John Dobson Plans

The index system does divide items along the line of medium and format, photographs go with photographs etc. So, if someone donates a collection of materials of different mediums but with a similar theme you can either, split them across their corresponding mediums and use the notes column to indicate a connection, or make a new sheet for “collections”.

## 5. Handling backlog items

This section addresses the handling of the backlog of items already in the possession of the hall which would be appropriate for the Research Room. But just like any new items these items also need to fit the Research Room criterion (see 3.1 Research Room Criterion) and might require obtaining a copyright agreement.

### 5.1 NT staff items

The copyright of all items created by National Trust staff is held by the National Trust so these can easily be moved to the Research Room SharePoint or to the shelves in the Research Room. Once they items have been moved it needs to be indexed in the digital index on SharePoint and if it is physically in the Research Room an index card entry needs to be made for the item.

### 5.2 Donated Creative Works

These are items are original creative works donated by the public or the research group. This includes such things as reports, dissertations, and transcripts. In order for these items to be moved into the Research Room or the Research Room SharePoint a copyright agreement needs to be obtained, in the same way as any newly donated items (see section 3.2.3 Copyright Agreement.)

## 5.3 Orphan works

The term “orphan works” refers to items where the original creator is not contactable or not known. This does not mean the item cannot be made accessible to the public but there is a certain level of risk attached. Making orphan works public should always be carefully considered against any likely risks and costs. Things to consider when determining the level of risk:

- Is the item published and over 120 years old and therefore likely to be out of copyright?
- Was the item produced for commercial purposes? If it is, what is the likelihood of the copyright owner finding out and are they likely to object? If they do object, how much is it likely to cost?
- How will your organisation respond to such objections e.g., published “take down” policies and effective responses?

[many institutions have a “take down” policy in place should the original creator be found. They often start with the immediate removal of the item from public access. There is an Orphan Works Licensing Scheme, but it is so bad that it is not worth the cost]

### 5.3.1 Copyright holder untraceable

When trying to find the original creator of an item it is important to record the process to prove the attempts to gain copyright. It then comes down to judgement on whether the person in charge believes it is worth the risk to move it to the Research Room to be accessed by the public.

### 5.3.2 Copyright holder unknown

There are also some items that might have been donated and no one has any idea where they came from or even what they are. Again, it comes down to the risk management of making the item public.

If the item has been made public, it can be indexed in the “orphaned” sheet in the digital index and placed in the folder “orphaned” if it is a digital file. By making these orphaned items accessible it allows people to research them and hopefully uncover valuable knowledge and maybe the original creator.

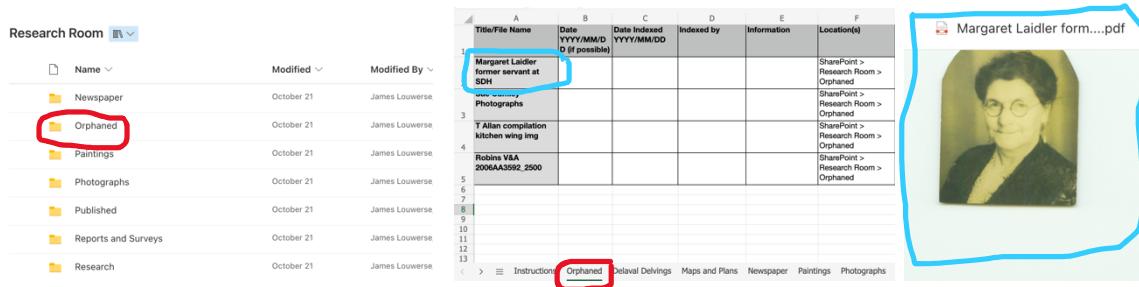


Figure 7: The red ring shows the Orphaned items folder and index sheet. And the blue rings are an example of an orphaned work

## 6. Using the Research Room

The following section discusses how the Research Room is used by different groups and the processes involved in this usage.

### 6.1 Booking

Because the space of the Research Room is shared by the collection team people are required to book in advance. [Currently there is no professional booking system in place, it is assumed people will just directly email Seaton Delaval Hall]

### 6.2 The Research Room Agreement

The Research Room Agreement is a document every visitor of the room, who is not staff or part of the volunteer research group, must sign. This is a way to keep track of the visitors and hold people accountable if they violate the terms of the Research Room. This is common practice in other research spaces such as libraries and archives. The Research Agreement is to be signed by every visitor. A copy is made of the agreement for the visitor and the original is retained by the National Trust for [some sort of amount of time and then destroyed.]

The Research Room Agreement is specifically for visitors who are not NT staff or volunteers, but everyone needs to follow the terms of the Research Room:

- Any personal data must be processed in compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018.
- Any personal data within your research should be anonymised

- Copyright law should be followed, copyright licenses should be acquired where necessary or copyright fees need to be paid
- The moral rights of all original creators should honour when referencing in research

## 6.2.1 Moral Rights

In all cases, unless the original creator specifies, users of the Research Room must honour the original creator's moral rights over their work. They must name the creator whenever they reference their work, and the creator maintains the right to object to someone being wrongly named the creator of their work and any derogatory treatment of the work.

## 6.3 Working in the Research Room

[How people will work in the physical Research Room again depends on IT. The use of external devices is technically not allowed but how else would certain people get access.]

[There is the possible usage of the learning laptops?]

## 6.4 NT staff induction

[The Research Room needs to become part of daily life at the hall. It has therefore been suggested that an induction to the Research Room should be developed and this should be given to all new. This is to ensure things are added to the room and index correctly, and new staff members can use the Research Room and its material to its fullest potential.]

## 7. Volunteers

Like most of the National Trust, volunteers will play an important role in the Research Room, be that maintaining the index, or adding material.

### 7.1 The Volunteer Research Group

The members of the Volunteer Research Group have collected, transcribed, and written a lot of material over the years and are expected to be avid users of the Research Room. A lot of their work is original creative works, and so it is important to ensure their rights are protected and they are fully aware of the potential consequences of making their work accessible via the Research Room.



## 7.1.1 Terms of reference

Included in the research group's terms of reference will be a copyright agreement similar to the copyright agreement used in the acquisition process (see 3.2.3 Copyright Agreement).

[The volunteers are given the option to either assign all copyright over to the trust or agree to license their work to the trust. The language of the copyright agreement in the terms of reference does need to be check by a copyright expert.] This agreement will allow the research group's work to be made available in the Research Room and in other contexts without having to sign a new agreement each time.

## 7.1.2 Publishing

[The Volunteer Research Group has contributed a lot to the Seaton Delaval Hall research community, however very little of this research has been published. There are the Delaval Delvings which do disseminate some of the research, but due to copyright issues with some of the images used in the issues, it cannot be spread widely. A concern therefore is that someone will visit the Research Room make use of all the research done by the group and do nothing more than reference them in a footnote. Hence it was suggested that the staff at the hall support the research group in publishing some of their work in a celebration of their efforts. There are a couple of reports and responses to briefs that might be a good starting point.]

## 7.2 The Research Room Volunteer

[Because of the potentially large amount of material moving about the Research Room it is probably clever to develop a volunteer role associated with keeping the Research Room in order. This volunteer role is likely to involve updating the indexes and ensuring material is in the correct place and in some cases supporting researchers in finding items.]

[This role could also potentially be a great opportunity for volunteers to develop archiving skills.]