

Seaton Delaval Hall Oral History Pilot Project: Participant Information

What is this project?

The National Trust property Seaton Delaval Hall is known for its grand architecture, stunning gardens, and cheeky Georgian residents. However, a fire in early 19th century moved the hall into a different era. From a fire-damaged shell; to a POW camp, to a restored familial home, to a National Trust property; the hall has been through many changes over the decades. To capture this evolution, the team at the hall wish to set up an oral history programme.

The aim of *this project* is to work out what this oral history programme might look like.

What is oral history?

Oral history refers to history that cannot be found in physical objects like tools, paintings, or written documents, but instead is found by talking to people. Oral historians record these conversations as a way to capture a history that would otherwise go missing.

Why is there a pilot project?

There are two main aims for this pilot project. The first aim is to discover the types of oral histories that exist within the hall's community and what the common themes are. The second aim is to use the oral histories as a source of inspiration in the designing of the oral history programme. The oral histories taken for this project will function as a metaphorical clay for the design process. This "clay" allows us to mould and test out ideas on what the Seaton Delaval Hall oral history programme might look like.

Who is running this project?

This project is being led by Hannah James Louwse as part of her Collaborative Doctoral Award (CDA). Together with the Oral History Collective at Newcastle University, and the Design School at Northumbria University, she wants to help the team at Seaton Delaval Hall design an oral history programme that allows the hall's community to keep telling its stories.

Originally from a fine art background Hannah approaches this project with a creative and open mindset. She is always looking for opportunities to collaborate and learn from others.



Your Role

Do you have to take part in this project?

Your participation is voluntary, and you can end your involvement at any time, without offering any reason.

What happens first?

To start with, you will participate in a recorded interview using a sound recorder. During the interview, you will be asked about your personal background, and your relationship and experiences with Seaton Delaval Hall and its surrounding community.

The interview will take place at a time that is convenient to you. The interviewer will discuss the recording format and technical requirements with you prior to each interview.

Why are you recorded?

We make a sound recording of the interview for two reasons. Firstly, because then the interviewer does not have to take notes during the interview and is able to concentrate fully on what you are saying. And secondly, because a sound recording is a more accurate version of your voice and story than notes made by someone listening to your story.

What happens after the interview?

Following the recording session the interviewer will listen back to your recording, possibly creating a transcript or an interview summary. They will then send you a copy of your interview alongside any transcripts, summaries, or notes. You may be asked to participate in another interview session if the interviewer has any follow up questions, or a feedback session, where you will be asked about your experience of being interviewed.

What happens to my oral history?

After you have received a copy of your oral history and any accompanying notes, you will be asked if you are happy to sign a Copyright Clearance and Re-Use Agreement. If you agree, your interview will be kept permanently to inform the research and knowledge of future generations. In addition, the recording will be used as inspiration in the development of a further oral history programme at Seaton Delaval Hall and possibly be used in design workshops, with your permission.

More Information

If you have any further questions about the pilot project or the wider oral history programme development, please email: h.james-louwerse2@newcastle.ac.uk