

## **COVID-19 Diaries for Salisbury – A Contemporary Collecting Project**

**This is a difficult and strange time for us all. With our society and local communities under lockdown, many museums, are looking at how they can document what is happening for future generations. And we would like to invite you to help The Salisbury Museum to do this.**

We are looking for critical workers (NHS staff, carers, teachers etc.) who will keep an audio diary about their area of work during the coronavirus outbreak. This will capture your immediate thoughts and observations about what is happening around you.

We do not want this to be time consuming or too invasive to your work life. We realise that this is a very stressful and demanding time for critical workers. Ideally, a short recording would be made daily onto your mobile phone - but it is fine for it to be less frequent. Some days you may not feel like it or may not have time. Once a week you would send Salisbury Museum your audio files. Detailed instructions for this project follow.

Radio 4 have been doing a [similar project](#) called The Coronavirus Diaries – which is fascinating to listen to, and may give you some ideas of what type of material to include in your own audio diary.

### **About the project**

#### **Why should I take part?**

The Salisbury Museum would like to keep a historical record of this time and it is important to capture the real lived experiences of workers at the forefront. The museum documents life in the city past and present - it is the personal stories and unique perspectives that you can give us, that will best capture and document the impact that coronavirus is having on our community.

#### **What will happen to my audio diary?**

Your audio diary may become part of a local collection cared for by The Salisbury Museum. It may be catalogued and preserved as a permanent public reference resource for use in research, publication, education, lectures, broadcasting and internet access. Following the project, the museum may ask you to fill in a 'Oral History Recording Agreement' which will have the terms and conditions of your donation.

## **How do I participate?**

If you would like to take part, please complete the separate [Covid-19 Oral History Participation Agreement](#) and return this to Megan Berrisford, the Collections Manager at Salisbury Museum: [meganberrisford@salisburymuseum.org.uk](mailto:meganberrisford@salisburymuseum.org.uk).

Megan will then confirm with you that you are able to start your audio diary.

Following the project (once working life has returned to normal) The Salisbury Museum team would like to conduct a more in-depth face to face oral history interview with you. This will record and explore your reflections in more detail about the impact coronavirus has had on your working life.

## **What if I want to drop out after signing up to the project?**

We hope that, in some way, taking part in this project will be a positive activity for you - a chance to reflect in a way that helps to process your own experiences. However, if at any point this becomes a negative process for you, then you are welcome to either pause the project or leave the project completely.

## **What if I have any questions about taking part?**

Please get in touch with Megan Berrisford, the Collections Manager at The Salisbury Museum ([meganberrisford@salisburymuseum.org.uk](mailto:meganberrisford@salisburymuseum.org.uk)) and she will happily answer any questions that you might have.

## **Recording your audio diary entries**

### **What should the audio diary be about?**

The diary recordings are meant to document your experiences, thoughts and feelings about your work during the coronavirus outbreak. There is no set length, but we imagine these may be short recordings done before or after work each day. Some suggestions of what this could cover include:

- Changes happening to your daily work patterns as a result of coronavirus.
- Your feelings about changes to your work structure.
- How your team are planning for the virus.
- What impact this work is having on you and your team.

There are a few things to consider when recording your audio diary:

- Remember that these recordings may be held in a public archive at The Salisbury Museum and may be quoted/used in the future. So please only send the museum diary recordings that you are happy to share.
- Do not reveal personal information about yourself such as your address or date of birth.
- Think about confidentiality - don't reveal any identifying details or sensitive information about people you work with or those you come into contact with as part of your job.

## Where should you record your audio diary?

The audio diary can be recorded on your mobile phone:

- Try to point your phone's internal microphone towards you when you start recording. Most smartphone microphones are located on the back of the phone, near the bottom of the handset. If you're holding the smartphone, make sure your hand isn't covering the mic.
- If possible, record in a quiet, controlled and comfortable environment. Recording indoors is best, and smaller rooms (with furnishings) limit the unwanted echo effect of larger spaces.
- Avoid recording near areas that produce unwanted background sounds like the low-end rumbling of air-vents and running appliances such as refrigerators and air conditioners.
- If possible, your mobile phone should remain still during the recording (as moving or handling the recorder will cause noise on the recording). Your mobile phone could, for example, be placed on a surface near to where you are speaking – with the internal microphone pointed in your direction.
- However, you might also want to record sounds from your work situation or your journey to work to provide some context e.g. if talking about how the workplace is busier now, or roads are quieter.

## What app should I use to record my audio diary onto?

There are many free recording apps available for phones. Some suggested recording apps are:

- Voice Recorder
- Voice Recorder and Audio Editor
- Tape Machine
- Rode Record
- Smart Recorder

## How do I record my audio diary?

### Basic tips: what settings should be silenced on my mobile phone while I record?

While using your phone to record audio, don't forget it's a multifunction device. Phone calls, notifications, texts, instant messaging, updates and games can intrude upon the recording and ruin the audio.

Whilst recording your audio diary please:

- Turn off all notifications on your phone.
- Put the phone on airplane mode.
- Turn off wifi internet on your phone.

## **Technical tips: WAV files and recording levels**

The below are best practice guidelines that would be great if you can follow – however if you can't, don't worry too much, your audio diary will still be of use to us:

- All apps are different but most have the same functions and adjustable settings. It is important settings are changed so that the device records in WAV file format, with a sample rate of 44100 (or 44.1 kHz) and a bit rate of 16.
- Some apps will let you gauge levels before recording (but some will require you to begin the recording to gauge the levels). Adjust your input recording level so that the voice hits between -12 and -6 db if it's a numbered input bar, or is in the yellow range for colour bars.
- If the levels are in the red range or peaking turn down the input. You can sometimes gauge this better with headphones.
- Often, you'll use a slider to adjust levels that runs somewhere across the top or bottom of the app's screen. You can also adjust levels by moving the device closer to yourself.
- The record button should be pretty easy to find in most apps. Once you're ready press record.
- Some apps will give you the option of naming your files before recording. If you are able to, please rename your file following this pattern:  
Surname\_YYYYMMDD.wav

## **How do I send my audio files to the museum each week?**

If you are able to, please rename your file before or after the recording, following this pattern: Surname\_YYYYMMDD.wav.

Then send your audio files to The Salisbury Museum on a weekly basis to our Collections Manager, Megan at [meganberrisford@salisburymuseum.org.uk](mailto:meganberrisford@salisburymuseum.org.uk)

If your audio files are too large to send using email, you can use WeTransfer ([wetransfer.com](http://wetransfer.com)). It's free and you don't need to sign up for anything. Simply add your audio files, type in the email address and your own email and include your comment in the message box.

**Thank you for taking part in this project – your contribution is greatly appreciated**