

## General Biography

I am a qualified secondary school teacher, who has taught History at both second and third level for over thirty years. Born and raised in Dublin's north inner city, I studied for my degree by night at UCD, and subsequently took a career break from my job in the Civil Service to study for a H. Dip. in Education at Trinity College Dublin. I subsequently taught (History, English and Gaeilge) in my old secondary school, St. Joseph's Mountjoy Street, Dublin 7. I have lived in Galway city since 1993, and in 2011 completed a Ph.D. in History at NUI Galway, where I currently teach in the History Department. I have published widely, including in the area of the history of education. My book 'An Oral History of University College Galway: A University in Living Memory, 1930-1980' was published in 2019 by Four Courts Press. My book 'He Was Galway: Máirtín Mór McDonogh, 1860-1934 (Four Courts Press, 2016), was shortlisted for the NUI Historical Research Prize in 2019. In 2021 I was a recipient of a 'Teaching Heroes Award', organised by the National Forum for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning, in association with the Union of Students in Ireland, having been nominated by my students for my online teaching during the pandemic.

I wish to be a RiRS panel member because I recognise the enormous potential which attaches to the chance to work with students and teachers in schools in the area which particularly interests me, i.e. the social history of modern Ireland. Over my many years of teaching experience I have drawn on the Schools Collection Project, initiated in the 1930s, extensively. This project saw more than 50,000 schoolchildren from 5,000 schools in the 26 counties of the Irish Free State enlisted to collect folklore in their home districts. This included oral history, topographical information, folktales and legends, riddles and proverbs, games and pastimes, trades and crafts. The children recorded this material from their parents, grandparents and neighbours, and the result was the creation of over 740,000 pages (288,000 pages in the pupils' original exercise books; 451,000 pages in bound volumes) of original manuscripts. As a RiRS I would seek to re-imagine this ground-breaking project by initiating a similar inter-generational oral history project, but one designed for the digital age. Students would be asked to digitally record interviews with their older siblings, parents, grandparents and relatives with a specific focus on their experiences of their own childhood and youth in the decades during which they grew up. I would work with schools to design an interview template for students to enable them to prepare for the interviews and ask questions which will elicit informative and incisive responses. As an experienced oral historian, I would also provide training to participating schools to introduce students to the practical techniques needed to collect interviews and advise them on the ethical implications and protocols of collecting oral history. All of the material collected would then form a substantial digital archive of childhood and youth, compiled by young people themselves, which will significantly contribute to the database of material on the history of modern Ireland. I am confident that I have the necessary skillset, experience and training to deliver such a RiRS project, which I believe will equip students with essential research and communication skills and provide them with a unique opportunity to make a significant contribution to modern Irish society by recording how modern Ireland came to be, viewed through the eyes of its children and youth.