

Department of Education and Skills
Government Offices
New Quay
Clonmel
County Tipperary

8 December 2010

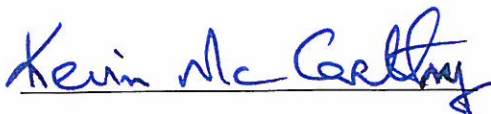
Dear Branch Secretary,

I have had a number of communications with Nick Maxwell of *History Ireland* and with Maureen Cooney, President of HTAI, in the past few weeks. Like them, I am very enthusiastic about the plans of *History Ireland* to organise a nationwide 'Personal Histories' project, aimed at Transition Year students in the main. This idea has a scope which can allow for a wide range of project topics or types and can help both teachers and students looking for interesting challenges in TY History. It should be possible to adapt the remit of the project to suit whatever the time provision is for History, or local studies, within a school's TY programme.

This project is ideally pitched in TY, where it can promote self-directed learning and help to build on what students have done in Junior Certificate, including perhaps delving further into some issues they may have studied in the Social Change area. It could, naturally, be a stimulus to more in-depth research, and to honing the sort of skills that students could use in Leaving Certificate History if they choose to continue with the subject after TY. The plans of *History Ireland* to effectively publish resultant projects on its website can, in time, create an invaluable archive of social history, possibly a modern version of the schools' folklore initiative carried out in the 1930s.

In conclusion, to any teacher or school interested in entering this project competition, may I wish you the very best of luck, and restate my opinion of the huge potential value of this initiative to students, and indeed to the nation should the ultimate goal of creating an archive of hundreds or even thousands of personal histories be achieved. I wish to assure *History Ireland*, HTAI members and the students who participate, of my support and the support of my colleagues in any way possible.

Yours sincerely,



Kevin McCarthy (History Inspectorate)