Sites of (Un)Remembrance: The State, Testimony, and Archival Memory





NUI Galway
OÉ Gaillimh

Dr. Barry Houlihan

Fahy, Declan
The Irish Times (1921-Current File); Oct 27, 2001;
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Irish Times and The Weekly Irish Times
pg. 5

Clinical waste from four hospitals in illegal dump

By Declan Fahy

CLINICAL waste from a public and a private hospital in Dublin is understood to be among material found at an illegal dump in Co Wicklow, *The Irish Times* understands.

There are suspicions as to where the waste originated, although the investigation is still in its early stages. Investigators are examining the possibility that the waste was collected from hospitals by an unlicensed operator.

The unauthorised site, on agricultural land in the Glen of Imaal, contained used body fluid bags

statement the authority "has also asked all publicly funded acute hospitals in the eastern region to confirm that the arrangements they have in place for the management and disposal of waste are in compliance with the guidelines of the Department of Health and Children".

The ERHA has also sought an assurance that waste material from the hospitals was not included in material found at the site. Wicklow County Council said on Thursday it was urgently preparing legal action against those they believe are responsible.

However, the council did not

informed if and when it felt it was appropriate, and could then examine the material and meet the council.

Waste from hospitals is divided into two types, household and clinical, based on Government guidelines. Clinical waste, such as material used in operating theatres, must be disposed of by a specialist contractor, under licence of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The two types of waste have been found at the site, and investigators are examining why the types have been mixed.

Department of Health

Private AIB files found in Cork landfill
Harvey, Adam
The Irish Times (1921-Current File); Jul 4, 2008;
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Irish Times and The Weekly Irish Times
pg. 6

Private AIB files found in Cork landfill

ADAM HARVEY

CONFIDENTIAL BANK documents have been discovered dumped in the same Co Cork land-

Query on hepatitis C data in dumped files
O'Halloran, Marie
The Irish Times (1921-Current File); May 2, 2008;
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Irish Times and The Weekly Irish Times
pg. 10

Query on hepatitis C data in dumped files

MARIE O'HALLORAN

A CALL has been made for the HSE to confirm that medical records found dumped in Co Cork included files on women who suffered from hepatitis C.

Kathleen Lynch (Lab, Cork North-Central) told the Dáil those files should now be made available.

She said that "women who could not prove that the anti-D, the immunoglobulin they got was contaminated, were the women whose files were destroyed or in this case had gone missing".

The files were found at a site on Glounthaune being cleared for the development of the east Cork railway line. They contained the medical records of hundreds of

it's about it's about reassurance and confidence in our health service".

Minister of State Michael Kitt said the HSE was undertaking a "full investigation to establish the facts and determine how the files came to be disposed of in this inappropriate manner". The initial inspection indicated that the records date back to before 1983

Ms Lynch asked that a serio look be taken to see if some of t files are those "originally soug by women in relation to hepatitis and, if they are, will they now made available".

Outlining HSE file storag guidelines, Mr Kitt said that "t HSE South has advised that sin the mid-1980s hospital records stored indefinitely and that pri

20-year-old hospital waste found in Dublin
The Irish Times (1921-Current File); Dec 6, 2001;
ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Irish Times and The Weekly Irish Times
pg. 3

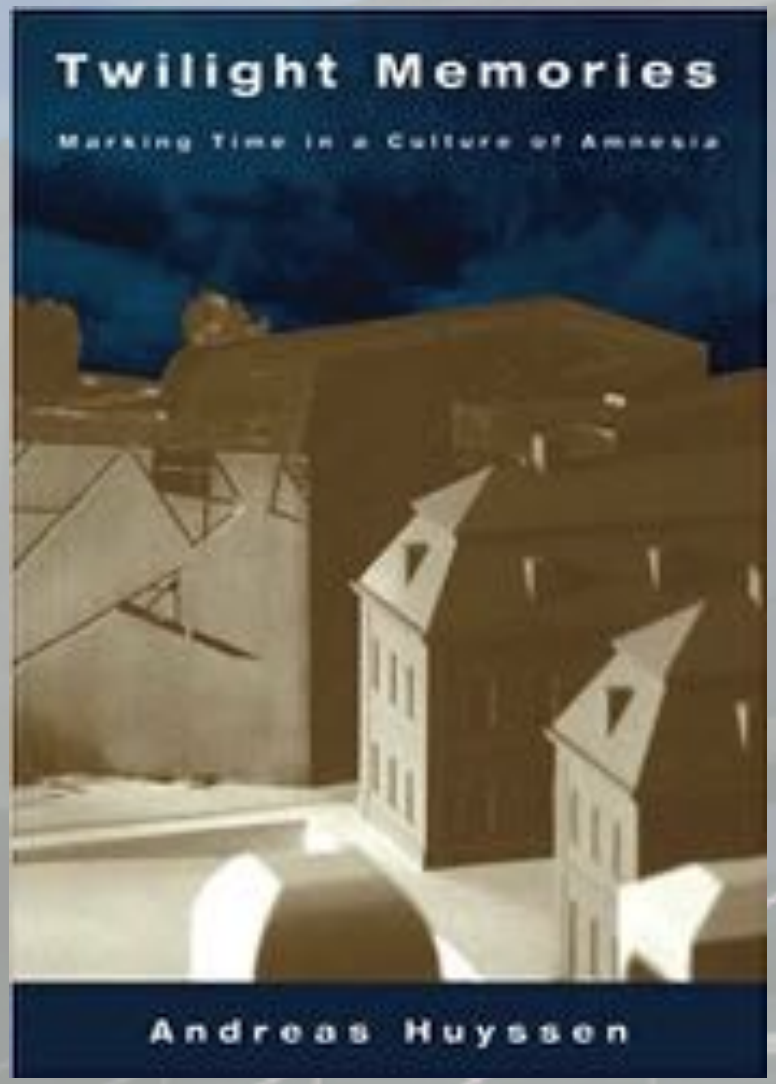
20-year-old hospital waste found in Dubli

The Archival Problem – Presence and Absence
Uncovering the Truth from Archival Memory.

- Whose records are preserved?
- Where are they preserved?
- Who has access?
- Role of the State (Power) over the vulnerable (Powerless)

- Archival Problems – State-led control of the narrative through official reports as well as (non)access to files by those most in need.
- Destruction – and recovery – of 550 testimony files – Feb 2021.

Archival Memory – A Sociological Perspective



- The past “is not simply given in memory, ‘but it must be articulated to become memory”.

- The articulation that Huyssen calls for comes in the form of archival reconstruction -. Articulated, vocalised, acknowledged and believed.

“The Report is the Record…..”



AN BILLE UM THAIFID A CHOIMEÁD, 2019
RETENTION OF RECORDS BILL 2019

Mar a tionscnaíodh
As initiated

CONTENTS

Section
1. Interpretation
2. Disposal of certain records
3. Transfer of records on dissolution of relevant body
4. Amendment of Act of 1986
5. Application of Act of 1986 to records
6. Regulations
7. Amendment of Act of 2000
8. Amendment of Act of 2002
9. Restriction of Freedom of Information Act 2014

- **Judge Sean Ryan**

Chair of the Commission to Enquire into Child Abuse in Ireland. (2019 – ‘The Ryan Report’)

Catherine Connolly T.D. – “The powerful against the powerless’.



“This assigns no blame for the source of the shame. Women didn’t shame themselves. They *were* shamed, they *experienced* shame, the shame was inflicted upon them. . . .Society did this, a society composed of the powerful against the powerless”

“The Report is the Record….”
Judge Sean Ryan, 2019, RTÉ Radio
The Commission Report, 3,000 pages – the print Copy weighs 9kg.





Where does the record begin?

Ordnance Survey Maps online:
http://map.geohive.ie/mapviewer.html

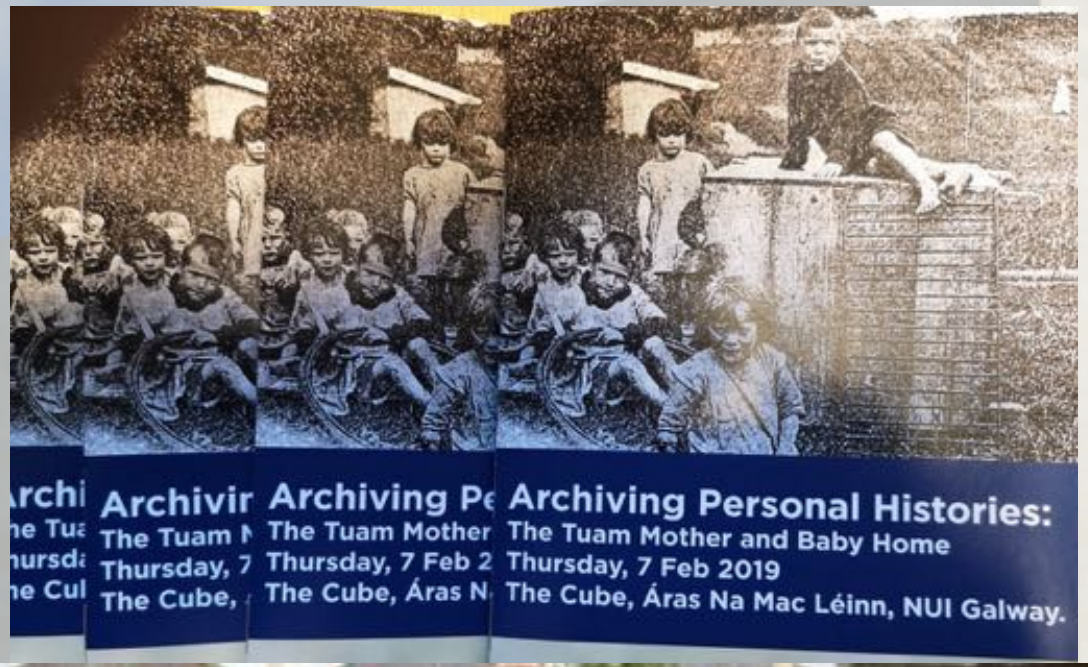
- The Tuam site is located between Dublin Road Estate & Tobar Jarlath Rd.



The ‘6 Inch Cassini Map’ shows ‘Children’s Home’ on the site. These maps were created in the 1940s.



Origins of the Tuam MBH Oral History Project





- Corless article in JOTS 2012
- Commission of Investigation began work in 2015.
- Investigative journalism by Conall O'Fatharta
- Interim annual reports published.
- Final Commission Report finished Oct 2020 / published Jan 2021.
- Tuam MBH Oral History launched in February 2019.

The New York Times

The Lost Children of Tuam

Two miles into this long-ago Irish morning, the young girl passes through a ... The more she dug, the more a distant time and place was revealed. ... Both would return to Tuam, where their shared story would come up now and ...

28 Oct 2017



Catherine Corless on conducting Archival Research



“If you don’t find something, you don’t leave it.

You ask why it’s not there. You use ‘why’ a lot.”

Truth Telling, Human Rights and Transitional Justice – The role of Archives in Empowering Change

- Various UN instruments enshrine rights and duties relative to:

1) The right to justice

2) The right to truth

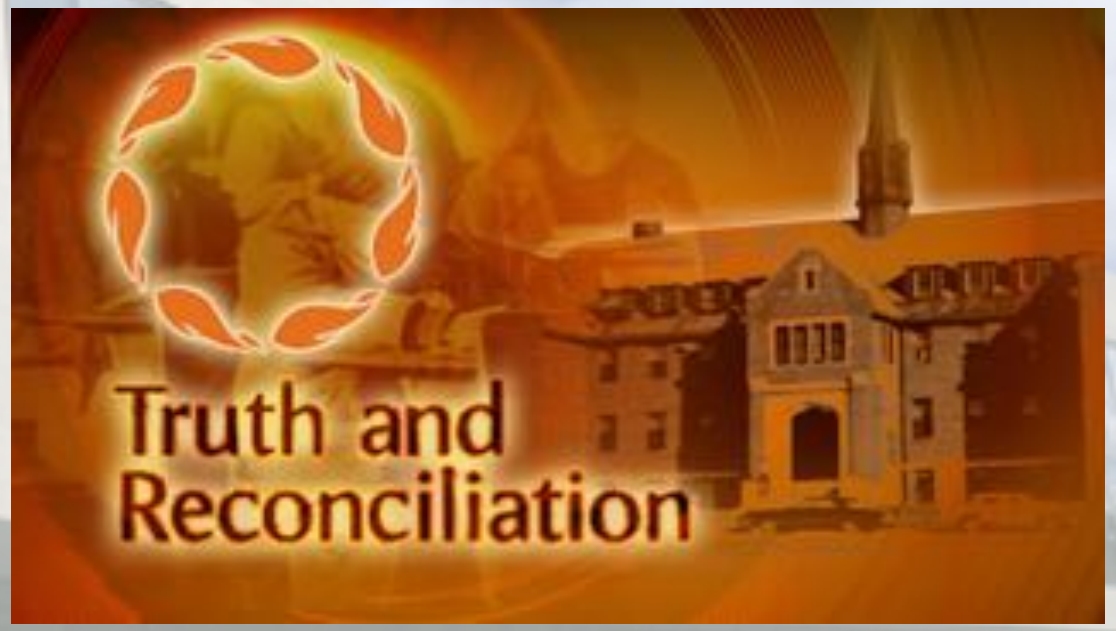
3) The right to reparations

4) The guarantees of non-recurrence of violations (duty of prevention).

- Archives, Records and their access by survivors/victims underpin these four pillars of Transitional Justice within international law.

Archives and Truth Telling
International Context and Examples: Oral Histories of 20th Child Welfare and the State.

- Child Welfare in 20th New Zealand – Oral History
- Ghent Orphanages Oral History Project, Belgium.
- Stolen Children Project – National Library of Australia.
- University of Manitoba, Canada – Truth and Reconciliation.
- Stasi Records Archive – The BStU



Project Team – Tuam Mother and Baby Home Oral History

The key aim of the Tuam Oral History Project is to enable the survivors of the Tuam institution and their families to tell their own life stories, in the way that they want them to be told. In that regard, members of the project team will record and archive the histories and life stories of survivors and their families, as well as the memories of others connected in any way with the institution or with those who spent time there.

- **Lead Researchers/Co-PIs:** Dr Sarah-Anne Buckley and Dr John Cunningham.
- **Interviewers:** Mary Cunningham, Dr Sarah-Anne Buckley and Dr John Cunningham.
- **Creative Writing and Community Output:** Elaine Feeney
- **Director/Producer of Tuam Oral History Theatre Production:** Dr Miriam Haughton
- **Archivist:** Dr Barry Houlihan
- **Marketing:** Lorna Farren





Tuam MBH Oral History - Scope of the Project

- Interview members of the Tuam Home Survivors Group.
- Work directly with survivors, family and advocates to record their testimony.
- Work with each person through their testimony.
- Digitise personal and family documents – contextualise the interviews.
- Share and make accessible all materials online.





P.J. Haverty

Conducting the Interviews – Building the Archive

- Interviews are conducted by Mary Cunningham
- Pre-covid: venue was usually the interviewee's home or a location they chose.
- (Zoom interviews not ideal)
- Transcriptions created by Mary Cunningham
- Personal documents are digitised / photographs at the time (ethics).





Mary Cronin

Archiving Tuam MBH Oral History - Processes

Twelve Interviews conducted.

Each interviewee file has audio of interview(s) / Transcript(s) / Personal documents.





All materials arrive unredacted.

(Default status – open)

Archivist task to decide on all access levels, identify all individuals mentioned, check status of each individual / their connection to the interviewee – legal clearance of any issues.

Tom Warde

Archiving Tuam MBH Oral History - Processes

- Redaction has to occur in some places

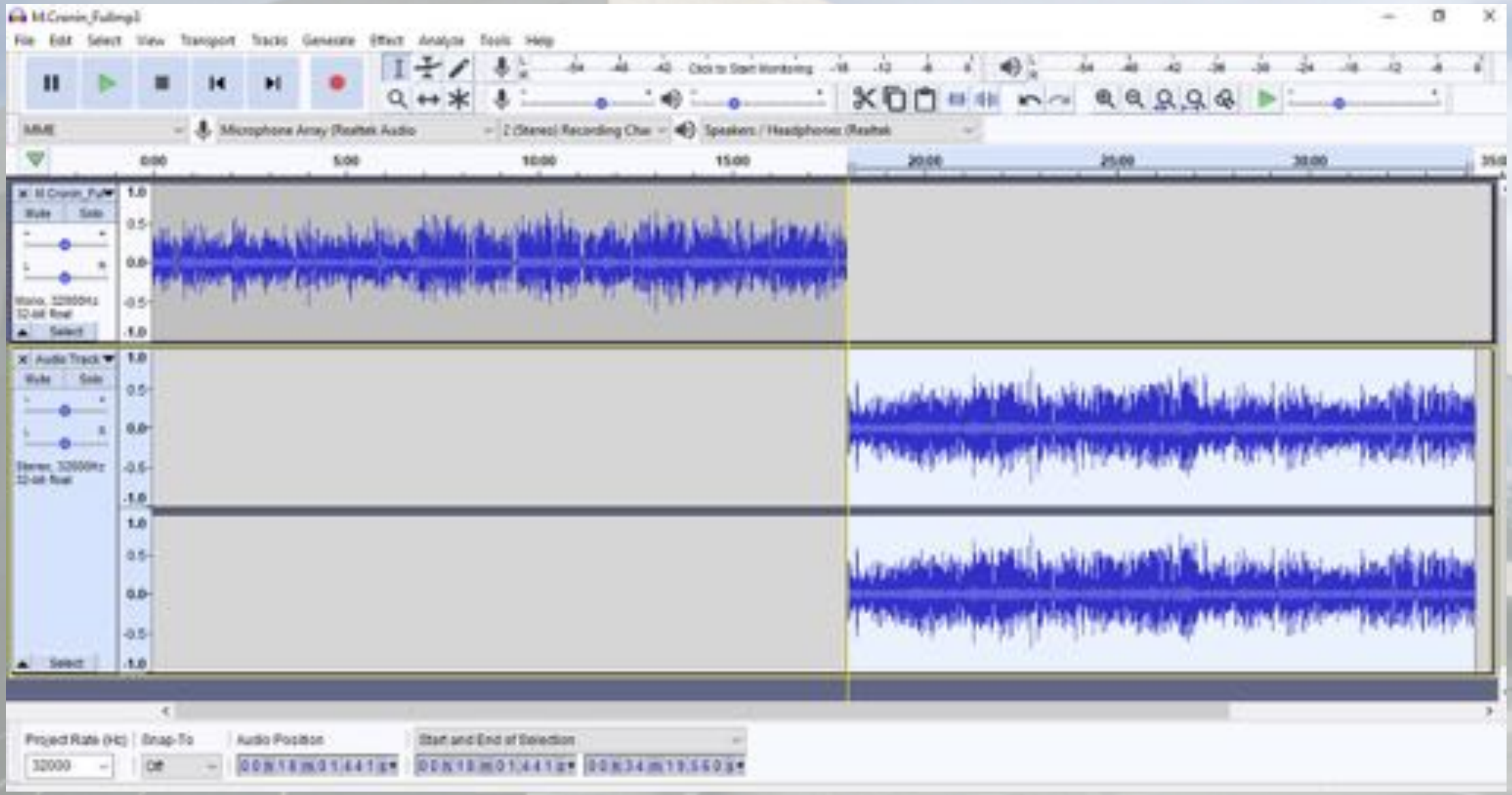




- We (NUIG) are the data controller
- Permissions secured from data subjects on all access levels.
- Audio – All audio will be available – redacted as needs be.
- Creating new access standards for open oral histories

Teresa O' Sullivan

Audio Archives – Editing / Redacting



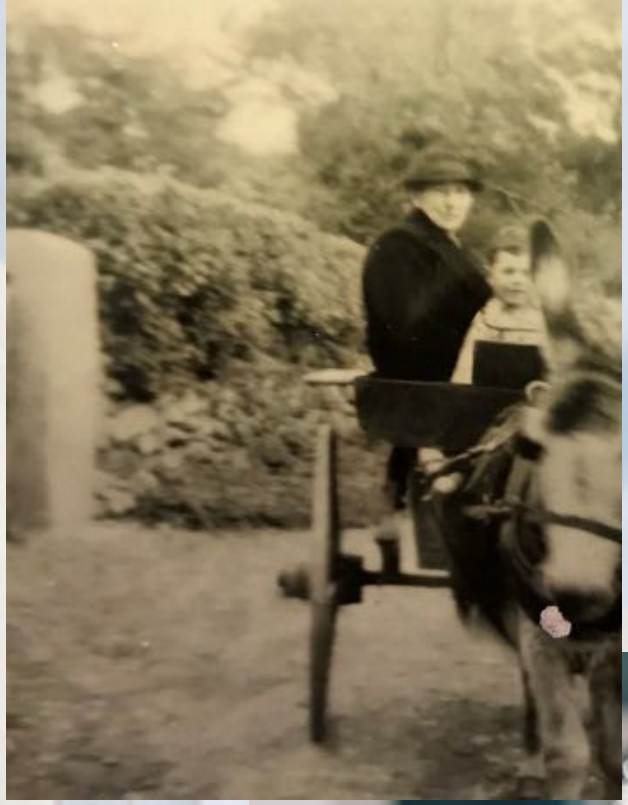
Final Stage - Digital Storage and Access.

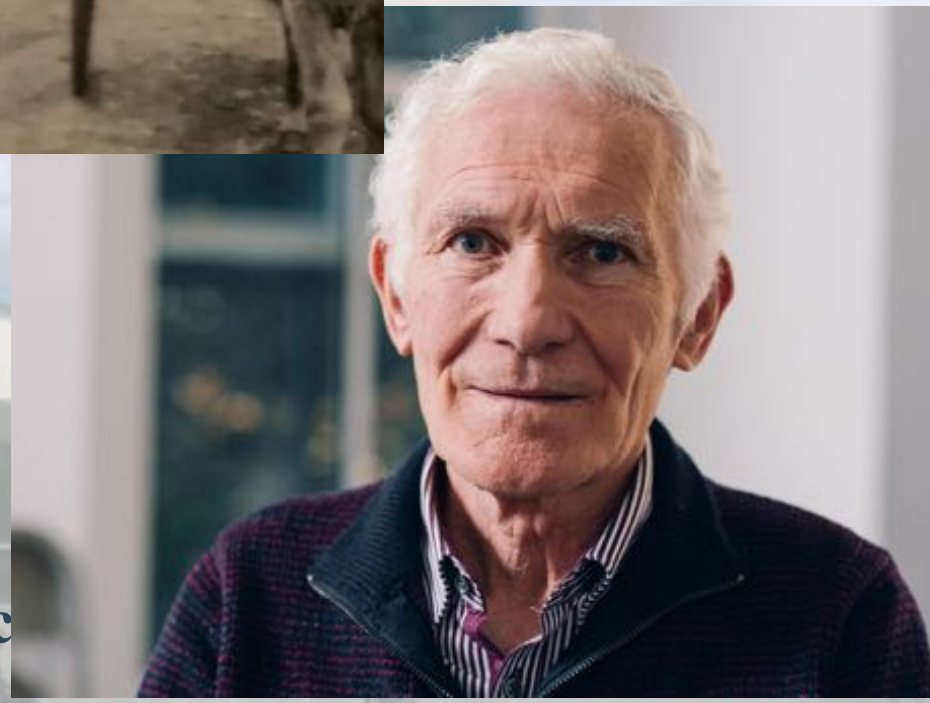
Creation of all metadata for each interview/transcript/digitised object.

Specific metadata schema developed reflecting individuals' experiences, and also Tuam Home as a single unit within a wider network.

Aware of metadata reflecting the redaction – can't tag specific files with redacted terms as would skew search results.

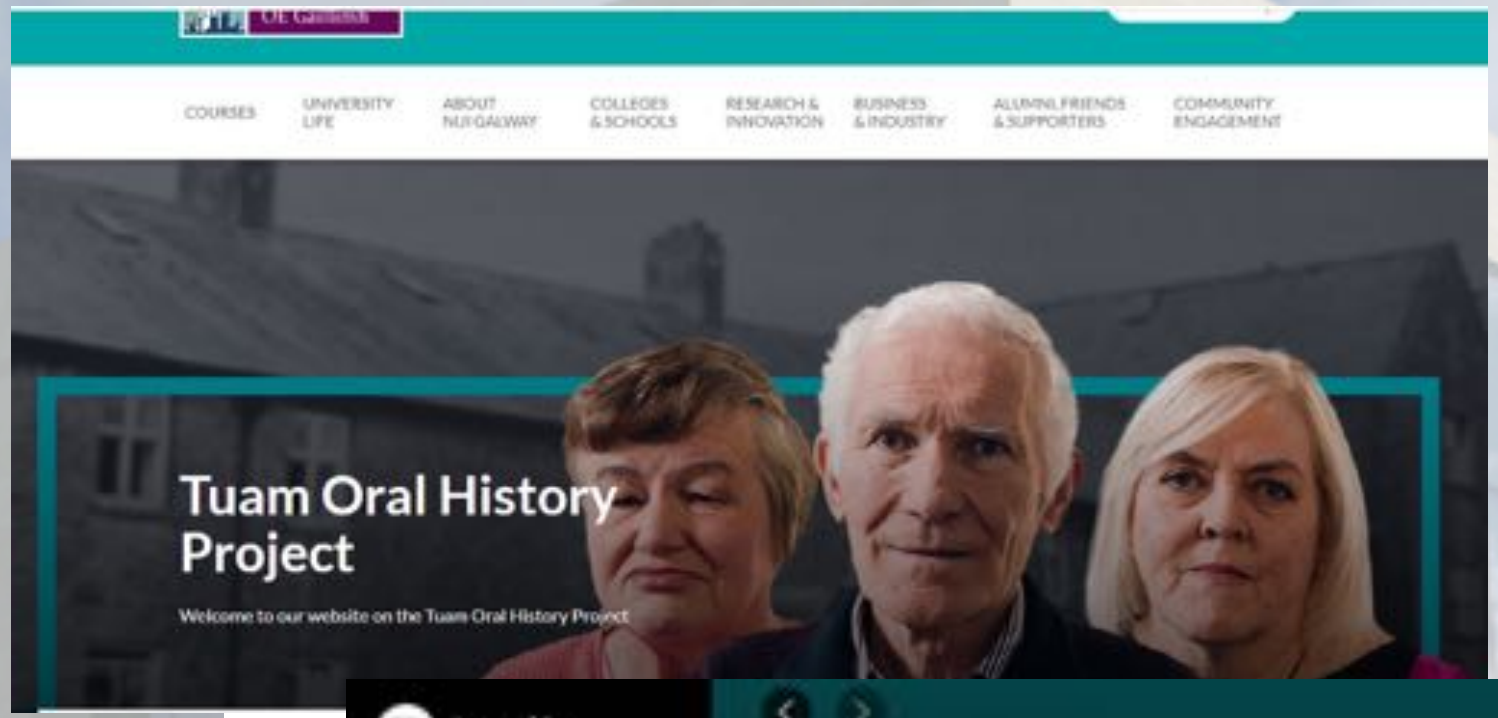
Survivor agreement and 'sign off' before final release.
Communication (via Mary Cunningham) of key importanc





Peter Mulryan

- **Other Project Outputs and Public Engagement: Podcast series narrated by actor, Cillian Murphy**







Creative Engagement – led by Dr. Miriam Haughton and Elaine Feeney.

“Nochtaithe” currently on Youtube until end of May.



Conclusion and some thoughts/questions to build on -

- Ethical practice in the management of such collections – practices? institutional supports? fears/worries?
- Archive legislation – Responding/advocating? (Retention of Records Bill as one example)
- Are we (in Ireland) actively working with/against difficult presents (as well as pasts) – to expand the archival memory?

