

# Working Lives - Memoirs of Rural Ireland

**Working Lives 2 - From Dawn to Dusk**

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**Working Lives is a collection of memoirs from people of West Limerick, each candid and emotive narrative focusing on the way life was for them in the past up to the present day. It represents the various themes in our society and culture, both spiritual and temporal, including the early life and school, the working life and politics, the supernatural and folklore, religious matters and love. It not only gives one a sense of place but also a sense of the self-worth and diversity in County Limerick. The various life stories in this publication will enchant and fascinate the reader, helping to embody the county and demonstrate the value of collecting information on the more transient heritage that all too often fades quickly over generations.**

Folklore, the study of the folk-mind and the investigation of the world and ways of ordinary people, continues to fascinate, with the culture of the ordinary citizen and the traditions of the past remaining very significant.

Taking this into consideration, **As Dúchas Dóchas** staff set out in the fall of 2000 and began the process of interviewing people in the West County Limerick on their working lives. The selection was, approximately, the people living in the county west of a line from *Askeaton* to *Dromcolliher*, an area teeming with local history and folklore ranging from the most unassuming ring fort or standing stone to the commanding structure of a castle in the countryside.

In the past year, researchers from the company have met people from all walks of life in the area, from blacksmiths, shoemakers and stonemasons to former soldiers, farmers and dancehall owners. Their stories have been frank and intimate, detailing all aspects of their lives from the earliest memory to the present day and all in between that has made them who they are. Each one of their accounts represents Ireland, past and present.

The book marks the initiation of the publication programme for **As Dúchas Dóchas**, and signals another success for the partnership between its patron bodies, **FÁS** and **Limerick County Council**, both who should be commended in making this project a reality. The company has already produced valuable work to strengthen its position as a research project and this publication represents a further step in showing the importance of local history and is an indication of the positive role that projects like this one can achieve in their community areas.

*David O'Grady*, Project Manager at **As Dúchas Dóchas**, was given editorial control of the compilation of the material and the direction and dedication that both he and *Catherine Hartigan*, Assistant Project Manager, have shown has been exceptional. The many **FÁS** trainees also involved in the publication and those who have left to take up employment or to return to further education can be proud of the contribution they have made to this book.

***Working Lives 2 – From Dawn till Dusk*** published by As Dúchas Dóchas  
by Anonymous

*"Working Lives 2 – From Dawn till Dusk", is the second publication for the Newcastle West based company and again marks the successful partnership of Limerick County Council with FÁS in the sponsorship of the project. Having already published valuable research in the form of "Working Lives - Memoirs of Rural Ireland", this publication represents a further step in showing the importance of local history and is an indication of the positive role that projects like this one can achieve in their areas.*

*"Working Lives 2 - From Dawn till Dusk" includes personal accounts and contributions from twenty six people with West Limerick connections. The stories are candid and emotive and tell of experiences during the latter years of the colony and the early years of the State, including the War of Independence, the Civil War, The Economic War and the Second World War. There are stories of emigration and immigration, of travel near and far, of how the coming of electricity intrigued the countryside and how it brought the dancehalls and milking parlours to life. Also included is a photo section and profiles of the towns and villages in the project area.*

*Folklore and heritage are words we are often suspicious of, but at their basic level mean the customs, traditions and histories a body of people holds in common, and in this instance, the people of West Limerick. This volume will help to open the eyes of the wider community to the culture recorded in this book, ranging from farming practices to family life, from storytelling to traditional crafts and from holy days to holy wells, fairs, festivals and superstitions. Along with this, storytelling has forever formed part of our folklore and oral traditions and these indigenous traditions are deeply embedded in the Irish psyche, constituting a major part of who we are as a people. This volume of work continues that great tradition, a tradition which is continuously explored and reflected in the work of many of our greatest writers.*

*Folklore is that part of our culture which is transmitted orally, without the use of writing or reading, and it covers a wide range of people's traditions from past times to the present day. It is a dynamic thing, in constant change, passed from one generation to the next, or as the Irish language says, "ó ghlúin go glúin", literally, from knee to knee. Oral folklore is a significant facet of our heritage because it often provides the only source of information for many traditions that have not been recorded or written down. It studies life itself, examining cultures which are still alive, relating elements of them to the past and forgotten practices, and enabling us to document how culture has changed throughout the years.*

*Our interest in our "roots" and in life histories represents an intuitive response to a deeply felt need for a sense of personal, family and community continuity. We live in a hectic, rapidly changing, highly mobile world, where family have become physically and emotionally disconnected. People yearn to reconnect in some way with the continuity of their family's or antecedents' experience. This feeling of continuity was once taken for granted when three or four generations of a family lived close together, interacted, and passed on their traditions, values, stories, beliefs, and historical experiences to each successive generation. Now, much of it has been lost.*

*The interviewing and information collection such as was done for this volume serves as a tool to help all generations talk to one another, an excuse to begin talking about some important things with older relatives, and perhaps to get to know them better. Maybe one person in ten thousand will ever actually write an autobiography, but virtually everyone can talk one in their own words, to an interested listener.*

This article courtesy of: <http://www.imoviedvd.com>

**As Dúchas Dóchas** is a limited company set up by **Limerick County Council** and **FÁS**. Since work commenced on the *Local Training Initiative (LTI)* in November 1999, **As Dúchas Dóchas** has concentrated on establishing itself as a project dedicated to the study and research of history and folklore in the West County Limerick area and to the training and instruction of **FÁS** trainees in computer proficiency and everyday life skills.

The board of **As Dúchas Dóchas** consists of *Damien Brady, Aileen Dillane, Síle de Cléir* and *Helen Walsh* of *Limerick County Library Service*, *Oliver Killeen, Gerry Behan* and *Helen Hartnett* from *Limerick County Council*.

**As Dúchas Dóchas** acknowledges the assistance of **FÁS** personnel in both the Raheen Training Centre and the Newcastle West office, Limerick County Library Service and Limerick County Council.

### **Our Logo**

The physical characteristics of the Oak lend themselves to symbolic interpretation; the acorn, from which the oak grows, is a tiny seed which slowly and over many years produces one of the largest trees in the forest, which is a metaphor for the growth of wisdom; the wood of the Oak is among the strongest and most enduring of all woods, resisting corruption for centuries; and the leaves, bark, acorns and ground sawdust of the oak may be used medicinally to cure various ailments, reinforcing the idea of protection and wisdom.

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