**Podcast script - Draft #1 17/02/2021**

**Notes:**

* Areas referenced: Lucan, Rathcoole, Newcastle, Tallaght, Saggart, Rathfarnham, Clondalkin and Palmerstown.
* Location of additional music/sound breaks to be finalised.
* Final length of podcast TBC depends on edits. Being mindful of attention span I’m aiming for approx. 20 mins.
* Where possible children (my own!) will voice the accounts.
* Dúchas records & royalty-free sounds & music will be attributed in podcast notes.
* Links to each account quoted can be included in podcast notes for further research for teachers etc.

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Introduction Music will start the podcast, continuing at a lower volume under voice track for the intro sentence’s duration below.

Hello, welcome to this podcast made especially for local children. I’m going to tell you about some stories and folklore from some of the towns and villages nearby. I hope you enjoy it.

Chime

Do you know what folklore is? If you look up the word in a dictionary, it says folklore is

*‘the traditional beliefs, customs, and stories of a community, passed through the generations by word of mouth’*.

So, that includes stories and memories people tell over time. You probably know some folklore, have you ever heard from older people in your family about tales they were told?

Folklore can vary from village and town, and country to country, but everywhere people exist so does folklore, because people love to tell stories!

Some local stories are about real events and people, and some are about imaginary events or legends. Many ancient tales have been told over and over throughout the years and are kept alive by being shared.

In this podcast, I will share some stories written down by children like you in the late 1930s – that’s over 80 years ago now. See if you recognise any of the places mentioned and afterwards, you could think about any folklore or local history that you know.

Chime

In the 1930s people interested in folklore decided it was essential to preserve local stories from all over Ireland so they would not be lost. They asked children in schools to become the collectors of this information and to capture the memories and tales where they lived. They started the project in 1937 and collected stories over the next couple of years. Some were written in English and others in Irish depending on the school and area. This collection is now known as the Dúchas Schools’ Collection, part of the National Folklore Collection.

Eventually, over 50,000 children and young teenagers across 5,000 schools in Ireland had joined in. The children were given suggested topics to write about, such as the town or village where they lived, local people and their work, the games children played, and local legends. They were asked to interview their parents, grandparents, and neighbours to learn about their lives, so many of the stories they wrote about are even more than 80 years old.

The children wrote the information in copy books, and by the end of the project, there were over half a million pages! Some of the things they wrote are real accounts of what life was like and things that happened day to day, and some are more like fairy stories. I’ve included a few different types. Do you think you’ll be able to tell the difference?

Chime

The organisers knew these records would be interesting to people in years to come, so all the pages were saved, and in recent years a website was made to show them all. Sometimes several children wrote different accounts of the same story, showing us how stories can change with each retelling.

It’s important to know that some stories in the collection use expressions and words we don’t use any longer as attitudes and understanding has changed over time.

Before we hear some of these stories, consider this, do you think these children’s lives in the 1930s were quite different from your life today? What kind of things do you think would have been different? And what do you think has changed in the place you live?

Chime

Many children recorded ‘cures’ or treatments for various conditions as people often used home remedies. Some of the cures we read about sound very unappealing, like this one suggested by a student in Saggart to help ease a bad cough called whooping cough.

**(Saggart)**

 ‘Whooping-Cough can be cured by giving bread to a Donkey. Then gather up the crumbs which fall from his mouth and boil them with milk and give it to the child with the whooping cough it will cure it’.

The students in Saggart also tell us about the big fairs that were previously held in the village. These were opportunities for people to buy and sell animals.

‘About fifty years ago, Corpus Christi Fair was one of the biggest Fairs in Ireland. The place where the fairs were held used to be called and is yet known as the fairgreen. At that time there were three gates into the fairgreen one for pigs, one for sheep, and one for cattle, and in front of the school there were tents in which one would get their dinner. The fair lasted for a week. From the village to about one hundred yards past the old school there was nothing but horses for sale’.

Chime

Nowadays, we mostly buy things we need, but people often made items they used around the house in the past. These descriptions from Rathfarnham tells us about some crafts in the area.

**(Rathfarnham)**

‘Candle-making was done in our district long ago, and it is still carried out at the present time in the castle at Rathfarnham. The tallow is moulded into shape, and a piece of twine is put through it, and then it left to cool. Basket-making was carried on in our district long ago but is not carried on now. The basket-maker turned and wove the material, and sometimes he painted it in different colours. Long ago, spinning was carried on and also weaving, in my district. My grandmother used to have a spinning wheel. Mr Caffrey used to have a forge in Taylor’s Lane. He made spades, wheels. gates and fire-cranes. There was a wheel works in Rathfarnham. The wheels were made by machinery. Mr Healy owned it’.

Most towns and villages had a forge like the one mentioned; the smiths made items like tools and horseshoes. These forges were hot and noisy places to work in.

Chime

Many children were keen to share tales of battles or hidden treasure from long ago; these are stories that were passed down over time. Do you think we can always rely on this kind of story that is told and re-told or can stories like that change or be exaggerated over the years? Here’s an example from the area around Rathcoole and Newcastle.

*Chime*

**(Rathcoole/Newcastle)**

‘There is an old legend told by the people of the localities of Rathcoole and Newcastle that during the rebellion of 1641, Maguire the leader of the Co Dublin rebels hearing of the approach of the English troops, buried all the treasure which he and his army possessed. The treasure is believed to be buried half-way between Rathcoole and Newcastle. It is also rumoured that on the night of October 23rd a body of ghosts came from the direction of Newcastle and start digging for the treasure. One night they were seen by a man who shouted loudly whereupon they all disappeared under the ground.’

Chime

Many South Dublin areas had much more farmland in use than there is today, so people were interested in subjects linked to farming such as animal health and the weather. This description tells us about some very snowy weather in 1933.

‘There was a heavy snowstorm in the year 1933. In some places, the snow was on the ground for about four weeks. Some of the mountain people were snowed up and could not get out for food. Many calves and sheep were covered with the snow. The mountain people had to walk along the walls and hedges to get to the shops for food. Many farmers went out to dig for their sheep and cattle and got snowed up’.

When we see a story that mentions an event like this and a year, we can check other sources to confirm the information. I checked the newspapers from this time – these are available online for library members – and I can see several snow episodes that year. A newspaper in March 1933 had this headline *‘Fierce blizzard sweeps the country’* and tells us that Dublin received *‘one of the heaviest snowstorms that it has experienced for a great many years’*

# [*The British Newspaper Archive | findmypast.co.uk*](https://search.findmypast.co.uk/bna/viewarticle?id=bl%2f0001684%2f19330304%2f001&stringtohighlight=snow%20dublin)*- Weekly Irish Times*04 March 1933

**(Lucan)**

Children often had to help their parents with farm work. A couple of years after the Schools’ Collection project was finished in 1941; a newspaper told us that children in Lucan National School were given an extended summer holiday. They got an extra ten days off! This sounds great, but it was for a particular purpose, which was:

‘to allow the children to help their parents gather in the harvest, saving the crops in general, putting by wood fuel for the winter, and other essential activities’.

Do you think you would have liked that kind of work?

Can you imagine the sounds a person living in a town like Lucan in the 1930s would have heard? There would have been noise from the forge in the village, and the machinery running in the mills, you might have heard a church bell ringing and the water pumps in use and people doing their shopping and stopping to have a chat. Nearby you would have heard the farm animals and farm machinery. The sound of the River Liffey running by at the Weir is a one people can still hear today. What about the smells? A newspaper in January 1931, tells us of a discussion about a very smelly problem in Lucan! The town needed a proper sewerage system so all the toilet waste could be disposed of correctly. The report mentions an ‘appalling stench’ due to the open drains, and polluted water that ran straight into the River Griffeen– I’m glad they fixed that problem!

Chime

**(Clondalkin)**

A child in Clondalkin asked her mother about food ‘in the olden times’ and reported on it like this:

*‘In the olden times, our Ancestors though they ate plain food were very particular about it. They generally had three meals a day breakfast dinner and supper. As a rule they rose at six a.m. milked the cows and did some other odd jobs before breakfast which they took at about eight o’clock. Then they had dinner at twelve o’clock, and supper at nine p.m. after which they retired to bed.*

*At breakfast they had homemade griddle cake, potatoes and salt for dinner and oatmeal stirabout and milk. Our Great Grand-Mothers also made a lovely dish called Stampy. They made it by grating raw potatoes which they squeezed by putting them in a clean cloth. Then they mixed it with flour and spread it out very thinly baked it on a griddle and ate it nice and crispy with lovely fresh butter. They sometimes had trout or eel they caught themselves. They rarely had fresh meat except on very special occasions. They were very fond of baked goose which they cooked themselves in what they called a pot-oven with turf coals over and under’*.

Chime

**(Palmerstown)**

This child in Palmerstown gave a brief history of some of the houses in the village.

*‘The village of Palmerstown is situated about three miles to the west of Dublin City, and on the main road from Dublin to Galway. Most of it consists of houses which has been recently built. The village consisted mostly of small houses about thirty years (ago). Many new houses were built by the County Council about that time, and after the Great War houses were erected for ex-service men. These houses have added much to the size of the village.*

*The Mill Lane, where there are many dwelling houses, is also included in the village of Palmerstown. This place is so called on account of its mills, the ruins of which are to be seen there now’.*

The Great War mentioned in this description is also known as World War One. Many of the Dúchas accounts were written down only 20 years after this war ended and some, like this account, mention it briefly.

Chime

**(Tallaght)**

A report from Tallaght describes a local castle; this is a common theme in many of the stories as people have always been interested in old castle, houses and churches in their areas. Do you know of any old building where you live? The castle described here has since been knocked down.

*‘On turning to the right before entering the village, one can, by walking about a mile along the Greenhills Rd., arrive at Kilnamanagh Castle - once a monastery - and still bearing an old-world appearance. The door of the castle is the original door - studded all over and fastened inside with a huge, rude, wooden bolt. One can see where the moat has been and the drawbridge. The stone circular stairs is still in use. As a matter of fact the only thing missing from the old castle is the top storey which was blown off, not many years ago, by a tremendous storm, and wasn’t rebuilt - the roof being put on again, without the top storey’.*

*Chime*

This last record I’m going to share today contains a list of popular games children played at yard time in school, these were likely played in all areas, and some of them sound familiar even today – do you recognise any?

*‘Treasure Hunt, I Spy, Jack Jack Where are you, Hop-Scotch, Kick the Can, Paperchase, Chain Tig, Round Tower, Hunt the Hare, Post Office, Badminton, Donkey, Birds, Colours, Skipping, Rounders, Hide and Go Seek, The Shepard and the Sheep, Leap the Frog, Frog in the Middle, Red Indians and Cowboys, Simple game of Cricket, Thread Thread the Long Needle’.*

Chime

Those are all the stories for today. So, what do you think children in 80 years will think about your lives today? Do you think they will still play the same games? Will the music you like now and the clothes you wear seem old fashioned to them? Do you think you could write down some stories for children to read in 80 years? What would you tell them about what you experienced in 2020 and 2021?

Outro Music starts under voice track a low volume.

Even if you don’t write down your stories, when you are older, you will tell stories about your life now, and people will love to hear them!

Outro Music track higher volume end piece

Total time: TBA