MEDIA RELEASE

Monday 29 October 2012

Hunt Museum and National Library join forces to collect World War One memorabilia in Limerick on Monday 5 November. Roadshow will be attended by Minister Jimmy Deenihan. Digitisation of photographs, letters, keepsakes and private memorabilia in preparation for the 100th anniversary of outbreak of the war in 1914

On Wednesday 21 March last, over 600 people attended the **World War One Family History Roadshow** at the National Library in Kildare Street, Dublin. They brought memorabilia belonging to family and friends who took part in World War One, and told their stories, such as that of James Burke, whose life was saved by a crucifix and the kindness of German solider (http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu/en/contributions/3626), of Limerick postman Michael Murphy (http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu/el/contributions/3433) and of Joseph Heapes, who found love as a prisoner of war (http://www.europeana1914-1918.eu/en/contributions/3497).

Everyone who attended the 21 March event was helping to build the first ever online European archive of private stories and documents from World War One, a project led by Oxford University and Europeana (Europe's digital library, museum and archive). All items brought to the National Library were digitally photographed on the spot, so that visitors could take their precious memorabilia home with them. The material can now be viewed by everyone on the Europeana 1914-1918 website, at:
http://www.europeana19141918.eu/en/explore/collection_day/DU18

Following the interest in the March Roadshow the National Library is now partnering with the Hunt Museum in Rutland Street, Limerick for the first of a number of roadshows around the country in the run-up to 2014. **On Monday, 5 November 2012, we are inviting people to bring their WWI memorabilia (anything from diaries to helmets and from medals to postcards) to the Hunt Museum, where it will be digitised and added to the online archive, along with the stories that bring these objects to life.** We are delighted that we will be joined on the day by Mr Jimmy Deenihan, TD, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, whose Department has made the Irish roadshow days possible. There will also be historians and experts on hand to talk to visitors about the significance of their finds.

Announcing details of the partnership, Dr Hugh Maguire, Director of the Hunt Museum, said:
"The Museum is delighted and honoured to be associated with the National Library on such a project. Although a small organisation, the Museum works closely with colleagues locally and nationally. Recently, we have worked very fruitfully with Limerick City Archives and we have ongoing projects with the University of Limerick and Limerick School of Art & Design along with Limerick's many cultural and educational institutions. Our remit is national too and along with museum and gallery colleagues elsewhere we wish to encourage greater awareness and preservation of Ireland's material culture."

National Library Director **Fiona Ross** said that digitisation is preserving memories that might otherwise be lost. "The Europeana1914-1918 archive captures personal history from families all over Europe, while allowing that information to be available to everyone and to bring history alive for people in contemporary ways", Ms Ross added.

Places for the Roadshow are limited. Anyone wishing to attend and share their stories and keepsakes, between 10am and 5pm on Monday 5 November at the Hunt Museum, should make an advance booking by calling the National Library at 01-603 0346, or by emailing: europeana1914-1918@nli.ie

More about the project

The Hunt Museum/National Library Roadshow is one of many being rolled out in the UK, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Denmark, Belgium and in other locations across Europe this year to create a unique pan-European virtual archive of World War One that is available to everyone. The project has already proved hugely successful in Germany and in the UK, where it was led by Oxford University. The University continues to lead the project in terms of digital training and cataloguing expertise for Europeana Roadshow events across Europe. The National Library will be organising other roadshows in a number of other cities around Ireland up to 1914.

In 2011, more than 25,000 digital images were recorded from nine family history roadshows held in major cities across Germany. Among the images scanned and digitised were unpublished diaries, hand-drawn maps, portraits, sketches and photographs recording life under fire and on the home front.

Europeana is Europe's digital library, archive and museum and is based in The Hague in the national library of the Netherlands. It launched its 1914-1918 family history project in Germany in 2011 to collect memorabilia and family stories from combat and the home front. The project is being rolled out across 10 countries in Europe to create a unique pan-European virtual archive of World War One. www.europeana1914-1918.eu

In the UK **Oxford University** began the initiative in 2006 when it asked people across Britain to bring family letters, photographs and keepsakes from the war to be digitised. The success of the initiative – which became the Great War Archive – encouraged Europeana 1914-1918 to roll out the scheme across Europe. Oxford University continues to lead the project in terms of digital training and cataloguing expertise during roadshow events across Europe.
http://www.thegreatwararchive.blogspot.com/

For further information, or to request images of National Library of Ireland World War One memorabilia, please contact: Dr Hugh Maguire on 087 968 3754 or
Brenda O'Hanlon on 087-258 3292