

Irish Surnames Index and Schools' Collection material from Co. Leitrim now available on www.duchas.ie

Versions of almost 3,000 surnames from Ireland can now be searched on www.duchas.ie.

This compilation of surnames emerged from almost 80 years of collecting work by the Irish Folklore Commission. As the folklore and folklife material was being accumulated, the Registrar, Seán Ó Súilleabháin, and the Commission staff created index cards for the content and informants.

The surnames were registered as they were given to the collectors – mainly local, non-standardized versions. The variation from area to area, or even from household to household, is significant. The surname Cafferky is a good example. The following varying forms are attributed to this same surname: O'Cafferky, McCafferky, McCafferty, Mac Eachmharcaigh, Ceafarcaigh, Ó Ceamharcaigh, Ó Ceafarcaigh, Cafferkey and Mac Ceamharcaigh.

The surname collection grew significantly over the years and it became necessary to create an organisational structure. A 'surname headcard' was created for the surnames with variant forms, and one surname was specified as the advised version in order to facilitate the registration process. No amendments were made to spelling or other aspects of the versions collected. The surname headcards were used as a cross-referencing tool and to compile related versions under one surname.

The site will be of interest to a great many Irish people and to the Irish diaspora. For specialist researchers in the fields of genealogy, linguistics, and a range of other disciplines, this surname index offers considerable research potential.

As part of the Dúchas project, the surname headcards were transcribed and entered into a database developed by Fiontar, DCU. The database is fully searchable on this website and is also available for download in XML format. This list of 2,810 Irish surnames, in both English and Irish, will be expanded – and it is hoped that it will be a useful research and administrative tool in the future.

Schools' Collection material from Co. Leitrim

Folklore and local history from Co. Leitrim is now available to read on www.duchas.ie. Almost 150 schools in Leitrim took part in the scheme and 40 large volumes of material were compiled. Although the material is mainly in English, there are some examples of Leitrim Irish in the collection.

The site dúchas.ie is developed by Fiontar, the Irish-medium teaching and research unit in DCU, and the National Folklore Collection in UCD, one of the largest folklore collections in the world. The project is jointly financed by UCD and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht with support from the National Lottery.

The Digital Repository of Ireland acts in an advisory role in the work of dúchas.ie and on standards and interoperability in digital archiving.

Note: From January 2015, the public will have the opportunity to participate in this project. Further information is available at duchas.ie/en/info/crowd or from eolas@duchas.ie.



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