

Schools' Collection material from Co. Kerry now available on www.duchas.ie

Folklore and local history from Co. Kerry is now available to read on www.duchas.ie.

The Schools' Collection, an important component of the National Folklore Collection, UCD, contains the folklore material recorded by pupils between 1937 and 1939. It consists of over 500,000 pages of material recorded by around 50,000 pupils in more than 5,000 schools in the 26 counties.

A significant portion of the Schools' Collection will be available online in a new repository of Irish folklore, duchas.ie, before the end of 2016. Folklore material from Dublin, Mayo, Donegal, Waterford, Galway, Leitrim and Kildare has already been made available on the site since the end of 2013. duchas.ie is the result of a partnership, beginning in 2012, between the National Folklore Collection (UCD), Fiontar (DCU) and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

The site will be of interest to a great many Irish people and to the Irish diaspora. For specialist researchers in the fields of folkloristics, local history, archaeology, genealogy, linguistics, and a range of other disciplines, duchas.ie offers considerable research potential. The site can currently be searched by place or by person, and a search facility according to topic will be made available in the near future.

Almost 290 schools in Kerry took part in the scheme and 80 large volumes of material were compiled.

The Minister of State for Gaeltacht Affairs, Joe McHugh, TD, said, 'This is yet another important step in this innovative project as material relating to traditional life in Ireland in years past will be made available to the general public. This new material will enable researchers and many others to contrast life as it is today and life as it was over 80 years ago.'

The site duchas.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 duchas.ie and on standards and interoperability in digital archiving.

ENDS

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Notes for the editor:

There is a wealth of Irish Language material in the Kerry Schools' Collection, much of which was collected from the Gaeltacht areas of Corca Dhuibhne and Uíbh Ráthach (volumes 472-9). Many people will be interested in the large collection from The Great Blasket Island which contains many of the [songs](#) and [stories](#) which made the island famous.

Kerry is famed for its footballers, and it's no surprise that there are many football-related stories in the collection, such as [this](#) wonderful description of the build-up to a big match between local rivals Tarbert and Glin, or [this](#) description of the events of a match between Dunquin and Ventry. In the North of the County, they have a certain affinity towards the hurley and sliotar, as evidenced by this [song](#) about the [1891 All-Ireland Hurling final](#) in which Kerry, represented by the Ballyduff team, triumphed over Wexford.

From a literary point of view, it is clear that poets played a central role in the folklore and culture of the county. There are many stories from the Corca Dhuibhne region relating to Piaras Feiritéar: [this](#) story from the Great Blasket Island is one such example. There are also a number of stories relating to Aogán Ó Rathaille, including [this](#) quick-witted exchange with the local priest, and [this story](#) about a verse he composed after not being given enough to eat at a certain house while roaming the countryside. While Ó Rathaille was well known for his quick-wittedness, another Kerry poet, Eoghan Rua Ó Súilleabháin was renowned for his back answers, often given, once again, to priests, like [this](#) or [this](#) famous example given when he was carrying a priest across a river on his back.

Daniel O'Connell is one of the many Kerryman to achieve international renown, and there are a number of stories relating to him in the Schools' Collection, including this [one](#) about how he survived an attempt on his life when someone tried to put poison in his cup in England. Another example is [this](#) story about the 'The Day of the Straws' when O'Connell spread a warning to all of the people of Ireland in a single day at a time when modes of communication and transport were extremely limited.

There are many stories in the collection relating to mysterious places such as [Cahercrovdarrig](#) and the pilgrimage to the well in the month of May. The month of August boasts one of the largest events in the calendar in County Kerry when the Puck Fair is celebrated in Killorglin: [this](#) story claims that the fair originates from when a mountain goat warned the inhabitants of the town of the coming of Oliver Cromwell. Although Shrove Tuesday has passed, there are many stories about the '[Skelligs List](#)' as well as insulting songs directed at people who didn't manage to tie the knot during Shrovetide! No collection of stories is complete without tales of ghosts and monsters, and [this](#) is a great story about 'an Carabuncail', a serpent who lives in Loch Geal, close to Cloghane in Corca Dhuibhne.