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## Press Statement

Minister O’Sullivan officially launches folklore material from Co. Limerick on [www.duchas.ie](http://www.duchas.ie)

Limerick, 30 October 2015

Jan O’Sullivan, TD, Minister for Education and Skills, today officially launched the folklore material from Co. Limerick on [www.duchas.ie](http://www.duchas.ie). The launch took place at an event organised in the Council Chamber in Limerick this morning. dúchas.ie is a joint project between the National Folklore Collection (UCD), Fiontar (DCU), and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

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 half a million pages recorded by around 50,000 primary school pupils in the 26 counties.

A significant portion of the Schools’ Collection will be available online in a new repository of Irish folklore, dúchas.ie, before the end of 2016. Folklore material from nine other counties – Dublin, Mayo, Donegal, Waterford, Galway, Leitrim, Kildare, Kerry and Sligo – has already been made available on the site.

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, dúchas.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.

Over 160 schools in Limerick took part in the scheme and 50 large volumes of material were compiled.

The Minister for Education and Skills, Jan O’Sullivan, TD, said, ‘I am very pleased to officially launch the Limerick material of the Schools’ Collection. Collected almost 80 years ago, the collection gives a fascinating insight into many facets of life at the time and will prove an invaluable resource to researchers, historians, teachers and to the general public alike.’

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 relating to standards and interoperability in digital archiving.

ENDS

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Notes for the editor:

**dúchas.ie**

dúchas.ie is the culmination of a joint project which began in 2012 between the National Folklore Collection in UCD; Fiontar, a teaching and research unit in Dublin City University which runs its academic programmes through Irish; and the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht. The Digital Repository of Ireland also has a role in the project, as an advisor to dúchas.ie regarding standards and operability in digital archiving. The current project, which will run until the end of 2016, is being funded by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht with support from the National Lottery.

This partnership has three objectives: 1) to digitise the content of the Irish Folklore Collection, starting with the Schools' Collection (folklore and local tradition compiled by primary school pupils in the Irish Free State between 1937 and 1939) 2) to give the public access to that content and 3) to create a content management system for the Collection which could be added to in the future.

dúchas.ie is an invaluable resource for those who have an interest in local history, archaeology, genealogy, linguistics and other research areas. Subjects covered include professions, riddles and proverbs, prayers, games and pastimes, and local history, amongst others. You can search the collection by place or by person; a new search by topic will be launched soon. There is also a collection of Irish surnames on the site. A new section was added to the site at the beginning of 2015, [Meitheal Dúchas](#), a crowdsourcing initiative that asks users to transcribe Irish-language material from the Schools' Collection.

**Material from County Limerick**

**Saint Íde** is the patron saint of Limerick and her name crops up in many stories. Her life is described in depth [here](#).

**Patrick Sarsfield** was a great hero in Limerick. Find out where the wagon full of gold he divided amongst his supporters is hidden by clicking [here](#).

The **Fenian Rising** failed in 1867 and there is a description of that unstable period in the following [story](#).

One particularly interesting aspect of the folklore material collected during the School's Scheme is the insight it gives into **folk beliefs**, as can be seen [here](#).

There was clearly an abundance of **ghost stories** to be found in Co. Limerick in the late 1930s. *Sprid na Bearna* is one story that appears quite regularly, it tells of a female ghost who attacked people at night. In one [story](#), there are examples of the various tricks she played. One parish priest had his own method of overcoming her as is recounted in [this version](#). Another popular ghost story is the tale of the '[Dead Hunt](#)'.

While Limerick was not a Gaeltacht area at the time, some **Irish-language material** was collected there, especially in the southwest of the county. The following story is a nice example, [Éan an Cheoil Bhinn](#). Some Irish-language poetry can be found [here](#).

As we all know there is a strong **hurling heritage** in the county and [this poem](#) praises their victories over Kilkenny. There is further admiration in the [following story](#).