

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

Folklore and local history from Co. Monaghan 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 half a million pages recorded by around 50,000 primary school pupils in the 26 counties.

All volumes from the Schools' Collection will be available online in a new repository of Irish folklore, dúchas.ie, by the end of 2016. Folklore material from Dublin, Mayo, Donegal, Waterford, Galway, Leitrim, Kildare, Kerry, Sligo, Limerick and Laois has already been made available on the site since the end of 2013. dúchas.ie is the result of a partnership, established 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, 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.

Approximately 140 schools in Co. Monaghan took part in the scheme and 32 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 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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**Department of
Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht**



Notes for the editor:**Stories from Co. Monaghan**

The Monaghan football team is currently enjoying something of a golden era and passion for the sport runs deep in the county, something that was clearly also the case in the 1930s. This [song](#) celebrates a famous victory for Blackhill over Doohamlet while this [song](#) in Irish commemorates a win for Monaghan footballers over neighbours Louth early in the last century.

County Monaghan is associated with several saints including Macartan, founder of the diocese of Clogher, after whom the cathedral in Monaghan town is named. This [story](#) from Killeevan explains how Patrick granted Macartan the diocese of Clogher. It also makes reference to a curse that Patrick himself put on the village of Killeevan when he received a less than satisfactory welcome from the locals! Another early Irish saint, Tiernach, is associated with the town of Clones where he established a monastery as related [here](#).

There are numerous stories in the Monaghan Schools' Collection material that relate to the county's built heritage, from pre-Christian relics to modern constructions. This [story](#) describes in detail (and with the aid of an illustration) the megalithic tomb at Carn, Aghabog, while this from Corcreeghagh tells a [story](#) about Mannan Castle, near Carrickmacross.

As a border county, Monaghan has long had a busy smuggling industry and the material from the School's Collection shows that this illicit trade had already become part of local folklore by the late 1930's, less than twenty years after the establishment of the border. This [song](#) collected in Laragh tells of the smuggling of some rather unorthodox contraband while this [song](#) collected in Clones tells of a quite remarkable bullock whose sudden appearance caused consternation among the northern customs officials.

The tradition of hunting on foot with hounds is very much alive in parts of Monaghan and this [song](#), collected in Three Mile House tells of the famous Leck Hare who managed to outwit his pursuers. Another tradition that persists to this day is that of local cures and a great many of these are listed and explained in the Schools' Collection material such as in these examples from [Tyholland](#), [Magherarny](#) and (in Irish) from [Lisdoonan](#).

No collection of folklore would be complete without some stories of the supernatural and the occult and the Monaghan collection is no exception. This [tale](#) from Newbliss tells of a premature burial while [this](#) from Killymarly tells of the fairies living in the local fort.

Interestingly, the Schools' Collection occurred at just the right time to preserve some of the last examples of Monaghan Irish. While Irish as a community language had died out several generations earlier, some older speakers were still alive when the Schools' Scheme was in progress, especially in the southern barony of Farney, near the border with Louth. Here a considerable amount of Irish-language material was collected in schools such as Taplagh in Donaghmoyne parish. The Irish-language material gathered tends to take the form of [poetry](#), [songs](#), [proverbs](#) and [cures](#) rather than descriptions of contemporary life which are found almost exclusively in English.

In other parts of the county, as in much of the rest of the country, many Irish words and phrases were still to be heard in local English as can be seen on these lists from [Aghabog](#), [Scotstown](#) and [Lisdoonan](#).