

Schools' Collection material from Co. Cavan and Co. Longford now available on www.duchas.ie

Folklore and local history from Counties Cavan and Longford is now available 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.

Material from the Schools' Collection has been published on an ongoing basis on duchas.ie since the end of 2013 and all volumes from the Collection, covering all 26 counties, will be available by the end of 2016. Folklore material from Dublin, Mayo, Donegal, Waterford, Galway, Leitrim, Kildare, Kerry, Sligo, Limerick, Monaghan, Laois, Kilkenny, Louth, Tipperary and Clare 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 this year.

Over 200 schools in Co. Cavan took part in the scheme and 64 volumes of material were compiled. In Co. Longford, over 70 schools took part and 21 volumes of material were compiled.

The Minister of State for Gaeltacht Affairs, Seán Kyne, 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 duchas.ie project 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 relating to standards and interoperability in digital archiving.

ENDS

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Notes for the editor:**Stories from Co. Cavan and Co. Longford**

Cavan is often referred to as the Lake County and indeed there is said to be 365 lakes within the county – one for every day of the year. Therefore, it is no surprise that the lakes of the county are central to the county's folklore. Lough Sheelin is the county's biggest lake even though it is shared with County Meath and County Westmeath. This [story](#) tells that it was initially a fairy well. It was necessary to cover the well tightly after drawing water. A chieftain from Munster arrived to Sheelin and killed the locals so the lake's secrets were never known by him. One day the chieftain's daughter forgot to cover the well; the well overflowed and flooded the surrounding areas. It is believed that this is the very reason that the lake came to be known as Sheelin, from the Irish *Sí-Linn* (fairy-pool).

On Templeport Lake, Port Island or Saint Mogue's Island is well renowned. Saint Mogue, the patron saint of the parish had a church on the island and this [story](#) tells of the mode of transport employed to get to the island from the mainland – a flagstone. The story tells that a child who was to be baptised was placed on the slab and sent out to the island. Mogue baptised the child and sent him back safe and sound. This [story](#) tells of how the flagstone split with two people sitting on it in the middle of the lake because one of them started swearing. Part of the stone sank along with the guilty party while the other part safely transported the innocent party to shore.

Cavan garnered fame in the sporting world due to their success in football in the 1930s – in 1933 they were the first county in Ulster to win an All-Ireland. Kerry were strong in those years and they were looking forward to a fifth consecutive win before Cavan put a stop to them in the semi-final in 1933. This [song](#) was composed following that great win. According to this [story](#), Fionn himself used to play sport around Slieve Glah. This [story](#) recalls that he carried five huge rocks from Cuilcagh to Shantemon, rocks that can still be seen to this day.

There is a great deal to be learned about the traditions of the people of **Longford** from the wide range of stories that were collected in the 1930s. Longford has a strong connection with the 1798 Rebellion. In September of that year, General Humbert decided he would go and fight the British Forces in Ballinamuck in the north of the county, close to County Leitrim. According to this [account](#), the campaign started badly when canon chains were stolen from the French camp in Cloone, Leitrim and thrown into Keeldra Lough. The treacherous act is referred to in this [song](#) that was collected in Ballinamuck:

*But dark despair struck hard at freedom's sons,
As roused they from their bivouac at Cloone,
To find the iron harness of the guns,
Had vanished from beneath the moon.*

Speaking of songs about 1798, a version of the famous song *The Rising of the Moon* can be found [here](#). There is an abundance of information in the following [account](#) that was collected from someone whose grandfather fought in the Battle of Ballinamuck and who helped in the burial of General Blake who was sentenced to death and buried in Tober Patrick Graveyard in Cornacullev. There are many stories concerning the slaughter of the Irish and how the battle left its mark on the local area. The area is dotted with Croppies' graves and there is a pass in Kiltycreevagh known as 'Croppies' Gap' according to this [story](#).

The above is merely a taste of the stories and folklore that is to be found within the Cavan and Longford collections. The stories referred to above along with thousands more can be read now at www.dúchas.ie.