

Schools' Collection material from Counties Wicklow, Carlow and Wexford now available on
www.duchas.ie

Folklore and local history from Counties Wicklow, Carlow and Wexford 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, Clare, Cavan, Longford, Meath, Roscommon and Westmeath 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, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

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 70 schools in Co. Wicklow took part in the scheme and 17 volumes of material were compiled. In Co. Carlow, almost 40 schools took part and 9 volumes of material were compiled. Co. Wexford saw over 120 schools take part in the scheme and 33 volumes of material 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, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs 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.

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Notes for the editor:**Stories from Co. Wicklow, Co. Carlow and Co. Wexford**

Amongst the folklore material collected in these counties is oral history, topographical information, folktales and legends, riddles and proverbs, games and pastimes, trades and crafts. There are tales that relate specifically to the folklore and history of each county respectively but also tales that demonstrate their shared history. One of the most important years in the history of this country was 1798 and the events of that year certainly left their mark on the folklore of the southeast. Both skirmishes, battles, heroes and villains, much insight is provided on the events and participants from these counties.

With the mention of 1798 and Wexford, one immediately thinks of Boolavogue where Fr John Murphy was attending to the people of Kilcormick. The events of '98 were started in Wexford, according to this [story](#), when the yeomen burned the Chapel at Boolavogue. Fr John gathered an army and marched on The Harrow. They defeated the Camolin Cavalry and its leaders Bookey and O'Donovan were killed. There is said to be a stream near that village that is called 'Bookey's Stream' to this day. Accounts of the life, arrest and death of Fr Murphy can be read [here](#) and [here](#). He is said to have been hung and burned and his charred remains were buried in the graveyard at Ferns. The exploits of this renowned priest are also recalled in this [song](#). Several tales are also recounted of his namesake, Fr Michael Murphy who was killed at the Battle of Arklow. This [story](#) tells how his mother recovered his body from a ditch when her horse stopped at a particular point in the road and refused to continue. In 1898 centenary celebrations were held in Wexford and accounts and pictures of the event can be found [here](#).

Arklow has been previously mentioned and indeed the events of '98 have played no small part in the folklore of Wicklow as well. There are several stories of Michael Dwyer, the local leader of the United Irishmen. Some of these tales recount the many times he evaded capture, mostly down to pure luck than anything else. This [story](#) describes how he survived being shot at when he slipped on a sheet of ice – the bullet flew past over his head. The same story tells how the yeomen raided a house where he was staying. He is said to have hid behind a temperamental sow in the sty and when the officer drew closer he prodded it with his bayonet. The sow reared up on its hind legs and the officer took to his heels! In Derrynamuck, where Dwyer McAllister Cottage still stands to this day, the house was surrounded one night. This [tale](#) recalls how he got safe passage for the women and children of the house before slipping off himself. In terms of his military exploits, these accounts, [here](#) and [here](#), recall how Dwyer and 8 of his men stood their ground against 400 of the enemy on Keadeen Hill. This time the weather came to his aid and they escaped under a blanket of fog. He eventually yielded in return for a pardon, but according to this [story](#) the authorities broke their word and he was banished to Australia. There are at least 2 different songs among the Wicklow material dedicated to Dwyer – one [here](#) and another [here](#).

In terms of '98 events in Co. Carlow, the Battle of Kilcumney is remembered in this [song](#) that was collected in Borris. There are also several stories [here](#) that an old man received from an old woman who witnessed the events of that battle. The smiths, of course, played no small part in '98 forging pikes in the smithy. There is said to have been a forge at Ballyellin crossroads and the smith was arrested on suspicion of aiding the United Irishmen. He was sentenced to death but escaped unharmed after winning a game of cards against Lieutenant Hemenstall, or the 'Walking Gallows' as he was called according to this [story](#). The events of that year also left their mark on the minor place names of the county. There is a story [here](#) regarding the 'Camp Field' in Tomduff, Kiltennell, and another story [here](#) regarding the 'Parade Field' in Lomcloon, Fennagh. To the west of Clonegall there is said to be the 'Spy Bush'. The rebels used to meet here beside the holly bush but a spy hiding in the bush was also listening in. He was finally found out and he was hung on the bush, this [story](#) tells how his hanging skeleton can be seen on the bush each night since.