



English version below

Cnuasach Béaloidis Sheáin Mhic Mhathúna ar fáil anois ar líne

Tá cnuasach béaloidis **Sheáin Mhic Mhathúna (John McMahon) (1876-1949)**, bailitheoir béaloidis le Coimisiún Béaloideasa Éireann as an **Luach Thuaidh, Dúlainn, Co. an Chláir**, ar fáil anois ar dúchas.ie tar éis don Dr Michelle Dunne a taighde dochtúireachta a a chur i gcrích le déanaí. Baineann an t-ábhar leis na 1930idí agus 1940idí.

Líon Mac Mathúna cóipleabhair éagsúla le béaloideas na háite agus lena scríbhinní féin idir na blianta 1929 agus 1947. Tá fáil ar na bun-lámhscríbhinní i gcartlann Chnuasach Bhéaloideas Éireann i gColáiste na hOllscoile, Baile Átha Cliath, ach rinneadh innéacsú ar na híomhánna digitithe, agus tá na dialanna, na litreacha agus an cnuasach béaloidis ar fáil don phobal ar shuíomh dúchas.ie. **Is i nGaeilge atá an chuid is mó den ábhar**, taifead tábhachtach ar chanúint atá nach mór imithe uainn anois.

Scríobh Mac Mathúna an chuid is mó den ábhair óna chuimhne féin agus é ag breacadh síos liostaí d'fhocail Ghaeilge ón gceantar agus ag lorg freagraí ar cheisteanna ó threoirleabhar an Choimisiúin, *A Handbook of Irish Folklore* (Ó Súilleabháin, 1942). Baineann an t-ábhar seo le gnéithe éagsúla den **seanchas áitiúil** go príomha: cur síos ar thithe dúchais nó [leigheasanna](#) nó [nósanna pósta](#), mar shampla. D'fhreagair Mac Mathúna ceistneoirí éagsúla i rith a ghairme chomh maith, ar thopaicí chomh hilchineálach le bataí 'scóir', [bás agus tinneas](#), [éide thraidisiúnta](#) agus [Lá Fhéile Mártain](#). Tá bailiúchán breá ann de na seanscéalta fada a bhailigh sé ó scéalaithe ar nós a ghaolta **Seán Carún (Johnny Carey)** as an Luach Theas agus **Stiofán Ó hEalaoire (Stephen Hillary)** a bhí ina chónaí i mBaile Uí Bháire agus i nDún na gCorr. Chuir Mac Mathúna go mór mór go pearsanta le caomhnú bhéaloideas agus thraidisiún scéalaíochta an Chláir; choinnigh sé taifead ar thraidisiún na Gaeltachta agus ar luachanna a phobail féin i dtuaisceart an Chláir, pobal ar tháinig cáil air mar gheall ar thaighdeoirí ar nós na n-antraipeolaithe Arensberg agus Kimble.

Is údar spéise agus sásaimh é gur bhailigh Mac Mathúna, fear nár phós riamh, stór sunstasach **béaloidis ó mhná agus faoi mhná** ina cheantar dúchais féin le linn a ghairme. San áireamh, tá idir [amhráin](#), [scéalta](#) agus eolas maidir le nósanna breithe ([mná cabhracha](#), nós an '[choisreacain](#)'), [éadaí na mban](#) agus [obair na mban](#). Tugann bailiúcháin bhéaloidis ar nós bhailiúchán Mhic Mhathúna eolas tábhachtach dúinn faoi thaithe saoil na mban thart faoi lár an fichiú haois; is beag taifead amhail litreacha nó dialanna ar léargas na mban atá ar marthain ón tréimhse sin.

Choinnigh Séamus Ó Duilearga, Stiúrthóir Oinigh Choimisiún Béaloideasa Éireann, gach litir a scríobh Mac Mathúna: chreid sé go mbeadh suim ag daoine iontu mar go léiríonn siad taifead domhain ar [chanúint na](#)



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[Gaeilge áitiúla](#), Gaeilge an Luaigh Thuaidh. Déanann Mac Mathúna cur síos ar a chuid taistil agus é ar thóir an bhéaloidis, sonraí ar a shaol pearsanta i dteannta tráchtairachta ar **ócáidí a linne**, mar shampla an Reifreann ar Bhunreacht na hÉireann i 1937. Cuirtear pictiúr de shaol na ndaoine le linn na hÉigeandála in iúl iontu freisin, agus déanann Mac Mathúna cur síos ar na [deacrachtaí](#) a a chuir an chiondáil air agus é ag bailiú ábhair. Oibrí feirme ab ea Mac Mathúna ar feadh a shaoil agus - ar nós Heaney - thug sé 'an rún (.i. rámhainn) a bhfuil an feac éadrom inti' ar a pheann. Chuaigh sé ag tochailt i ngort an bhéaloidis i gceantar an Luaigh Thuaidh agus tháinig sé ar sheoda.

Agus é ag labhairt ag an seoladh i MoLi ar 15 Meitheamh, dúirt Tom Barrett ó Fhondúireacht Mhuintir Bhairéad, “Tá muintir an Chláir bródúil, agus údar maith acu leis, as an méid a chuireann siad le haoibhneas an tsaol tríd an mBéaloideas, an Ceol, agus an Spórt. Cinntíonn digitiú agus cur ar fáil chnuasach iomlán Sheáin Mhic Mhathúna anois go mbeidh a shárchnuasach béaloidis, chomh maith le hábhar mórghailitheoirí eile, ar fáil go héasca ar shuíomh gréasáin Dúchas do dhaoine de gach aois, sa bhaile agus ar fud na cruinne”.

Is féidir an t-ábhar seo ar fad (c.10,000 leathanach san iomlán) a fhiosrú [anseo](#), agus teacht ar thráchtas an Dr Dunne, *Saintréithe de Thraidisiún Béil na mBan agus Léiriú na mBan i gCnuasach Sheáin Mhic Mhathúna (2023)* [anseo](#). Tá beathaisnéis iomlán ar Sheán Mac Mathúna (as Gaeilge) ar fáil [anseo](#), agus roinnt grianghraf [anseo](#). Stiúir an Dr Úna Bhreathnach (DCU) agus an Dr Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh, Stiúrthóir Chnuasach Bhéaloideas Éireann, UCD, an taighde i gcomhpháirt. Fondúireacht Mhuintir Bhairéid a rinne urraíocht fhlaithiúil ar an taighde.

Nóta an eagarthóra: Is toradh é dúchas.ie ar chomhpháirtíocht a cuireadh ar bun in 2012 idir Cnuasach Bhéaloideas Éireann in UCD, Leabharlann Dhigiteach UCD, agus Gaois, Fiontar & Scoil na Gaeilge, DCU. Tá sé mar aidhm ag an tionscadal bailiúcháin uile Chnuasach Bhéaloideas Éireann a dhigitiú agus a chur ar fáil don phobal ar líne. Tá an tionscadal á chómhaoiniú ag an Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir, Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán le tacaíocht ón gCrannchur Náisiúnta, agus ag an gColáiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath le cabhair airgeadais ó Fhondúireacht Bhéaloideas Éireann. Teagmháil: eolas@duchas.ie

The Seán Mac Mathúna Folklore Collection now available online

The folklore collection of **Seán Mac Mathúna (John McMahon) (1876-1949)**, a folklore collector for the Irish Folklore Commission from **Luogh North, Doolin, Co. Clare**, is now available on dúchas.ie following the recent completion of PhD research by Dr Michelle Dunne. The material relates to the 1930s and 1940s.

Seán Mac Mathúna filled copybooks with the area's folklore and his own writings between the years 1929 and 1947. The original manuscripts are stored in the archive of the National Folklore Collection, University College Dublin, but the digitised images have been indexed, and the diaries, letters and folklore collection are available to the public on the dúchas.ie site. **Most of the material is in Irish**, an important record of a dialect which is now all but gone.

Mac Mathúna wrote the majority of the material from his own memory, jotting down lists of Irish-language words from the area and seeking answers to the questions in the Commission's guidebook, *A Handbook of Irish Folklore* (Ó Súilleabháin, 1942). This material deals with varying **aspects of local lore** primarily: descriptions of vernacular houses or [cures](#) or [marriage customs](#), for example. Mac Mathúna answered various questionnaires during his career as well on topics as varied as 'tally' sticks, [death and sickness](#), [traditional dress](#) and [St. Martin's Day](#). There is a fine collection of the long old tales that he collected from excellent storytellers such as his relatives **Seán Carún (Johnny Carey)** from Luogh South and **Stiofán Ó hEalaoire (Stephen Hillary)** who lived in Ballyvara and Doonagore. Mac Mathúna was one of those who made a huge, personal contribution to the preservation of the *béaloideas* and storytelling tradition in Clare; he documented the Gaeltacht tradition and the values of his North Clare community, a community made famous by researchers such as the anthropologists Arensberg and Kimball.

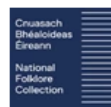
It is surprising and refreshing, perhaps, that Mac Mathúna, a man who never married, collected a substantial store of **folklore from women and about women** in his own native area during his career. It includes [songs](#), [stories](#) and information regarding birth customs ([midwives](#), the custom of 'churching'), [women's clothes](#) and [women's work](#). Folklore collections like Mac Mathúna's give important information about women's lived experiences around the middle of the twentieth century; there are not many records such as letters or diaries about women's perspectives in that period.

Séamus Ó Duilearga, Honorary Director of the National Folklore Commission, kept every letter that Mac Mathúna wrote: he believed that people would be interested in them since they represent a rich record of the [local Irish-language dialect](#), the Irish of Luogh North. Mac Mathúna describes his travels in search of folklore, details of his personal life as well as commentary on **contemporary events** such as the 1937 Referendum on the Constitution of Ireland. A picture of the life of the people during the Emergency is captured in them also, and Mac Mathúna details the [difficulties](#) that rationing created for him while he was collecting. Mac Mathúna was a farm labourer for the duration of his life and – like Heaney – he called his pen 'the spade with the light handle'. He dug in the field of folklore in the vicinity of Luogh North and he discovered treasures.

Speaking at the launch in MoLi on 15 June, Tom Barrett of the Barrett Family Foundation said, "Clare people are justifiably proud of the contribution they continue to make to the quality and enjoyment of life in general through Béaloideas, Music and Sport. The digitization of Seán Mac Mathúna's entire folklore collection now



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ensures that his first-rank collection, as well as other distinguished collections of Irish folklore, will be readily accessible through the Dúchas website to people of all ages, at home and internationally”.

All this material (c.10,000 pages in total) can now be explored [here](#), and Dr Dunne’s thesis, *Saintréithe de Thraidisiún Béil na mBan agus Léiriú na mBan i gCnuasach Sheáin Mhic Mhathúna* (2023) can be found [here](#). A full biography of Seán Mac Mathúna (in Irish) is available [here](#), and some photographs may be found [here](#). The research was jointly supervised by Dr Úna Bhreathnach (DCU) and Dr Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh, Director of the National Folklore Collection, UCD. The research was generously sponsored by the Barrett Family Foundation.

Editor’s note: Dúchas.ie is the result of a partnership established in 2012 between the National Folklore Collection in UCD, the UCD Digital Library, and Gaois, Fiontar & Scoil na Gaeilge, DCU. The aim of this project is to digitize and make available online to the public all the collections of the National Folklore Collection. The project is co-funded by the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media with support from the National Lottery, and by University College Dublin with financial assistance from the National Folklore Foundation. Contact: eolas@duchas.ie



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