

A selection of work by Dublin photographer Tomás Ó Muircheartaigh launched on dúchas.ie

Cathal Goan, Chairperson of the National Folklore Foundation, launched a selection of photographs from the Photographic Collection of the National Folklore Collection at Oireachtas na Samhna in Citywest yesterday afternoon (Thursday, 31 October).

The National Folklore Collection's photographic collection consists of some 80,000 photographs, the majority of which were taken by members of the Irish Folklore Commission (1935–70) and its successors. Aspects captured in the photographs include vernacular dwellings and other man-made features, livelihoods, crafts, commerce, transport, the sea, education, the practice of religion, food, dress, festivals and rites of passage, storytellers, musicians, pastimes and sport. Already there are over 11,000 photographs digitized, catalogued and available on dúchas.ie.

Over **600 newly digitized photographs** taken by [Tomás Ó Muircheartaigh](#) (1907–1967) between 1930 and 1960 have since been added to dúchas.ie. The photographs he took in **the Gaeltacht areas**, especially in **Corca Dhuibhne, Co. Kerry**, have a special significance. He also took many pictures in Dublin and Co. Wicklow, as well as many others on the Continent, in Austria in particular.

Cathal Goan said that the photographs taken by Ó Muircheartaigh have a particular importance as they capture aspects of the life and labours of the people of the Gaeltacht in the early part of the twentieth century in a vibrant and artistic way.

Amongst the other material already available on dúchas.ie are c.12,000 pieces of folklore from the **Main Manuscripts Collection**, material collected by Irish Folklore Commission collectors from 1935 onwards. New material from this collection is added on a quarterly basis. In addition to this, there is the **Schools' Collection**, material from each of the 26 counties that took part in the Schools' Scheme in 1937-39. **Meitheal Dúchas.ie**, a transcription project, began in Spring 2015 and is one of the most successful crowdsourced projects of its kind in the world. To date, over 220,000 pages have been transcribed voluntarily by members of the Meitheal.

The dúchas.ie website is popular with both people living in Ireland and the Irish diaspora. Users are found in Britain, the USA, Australia and Canada, as well as in many other countries. 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, by person and by topic, and it has material from almost every parish in Ireland.

The Dúchas project is the result of a partnership, beginning in 2012, between the National Folklore Collection in UCD, UCD Digital Library and Fiontar & Scoil na Gaeilge, the Irish-medium teaching and research unit in DCU. The objective of the project is to digitise the National Folklore Collection and make it available to the public online. The project is co-funded by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, with support from the National Lottery and by University College Dublin. The project has also benefited from the financial support of the National Folklore Foundation.

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