

Malignant Fairies, Hidden Treasure and Cures for Warts: The Folklore of a Westmeath Parish in 1937

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Folklore is the collection of traditional beliefs, customs, and stories of a community, passed through the generations by word of mouth. In the early nineteenth century scholars began to study such beliefs and customs as European agricultural societies, which had changed little since the Middle Ages, were superseded by urban industrialised communities.¹ The first university departments of folklore were established in Sweden and Finland toward the end of the nineteenth century. The Irish Folklore Commission, founded in 1935, was modelled on the Scandinavian institutions and adopted their methods of folklore collection.²

In 1937 the Commission organised the collection of folklore by sixth class students in primary schools throughout Ireland. The Department of Education circulated a small handbook to teachers entitled *Scheme for Collection and Preservation of Folklore and Oral Traditions* indicating the type of material the schoolchildren should record.³ The children were instructed to seek material from their parents, grandparents and any other people in their area who would assist them. Among the most important topics on which the children were asked to seek information were; supernatural lore, hidden treasures, traditional cures for diseases, local crafts and customs, famous local people, holy wells, fairy forts, fairy lore, memories of the Famine, local fairs, and games played by children. The 750,000 pages of local history and oral tradition collected by the children is one of the greatest collections of folklore in the world.

The material collected by the children was first written into their homework copybooks and then re-written into the larger official notebooks that had been distributed for the scheme. The completed official notebooks were bound, paginated and numbered, according to parish, barony, county and province. The original copybooks were stored firstly in the offices of the Irish Folklore Commission and later in the Department of Folklore in UCD. The copybooks were not catalogued or indexed until, beginning in 2012, Dúchas, the Irish government's agency responsible for heritage management, began to digitise the collection. Between 2012 and 2018, Dúchas created a digital archive and a data management and editorial interface

for the Schools Collection, making it easily available to the public online. An innovative feature of Dúchas's work was the creation of Meitheal Dúchais, a team of voluntary transcribers, who transcribed the children's handwritten text into typescript in order to create a searchable database? (Meitheal is the Irish language term for team of workers who co-operate in a joint task as was common in farming when neighbouring farmers helped each other with hay making and harvesting).

The author transcribed the material collected in the four schools in the parish of Milltown, in the north west of Westmeath, where he grew up. In 1937 the four schools in the parish were the two teacher schools in Milltown and Emper and the one teacher schools in Irishtown and New Bristy. The schools present an interesting example of how teachers interpreted the task of collecting folklore. In Emper and Irishtown the children collected material on the topics suggested in the handbook. In Irishtown, the smallest school in the parish, the children collected a remarkable 178 handwritten pages of folklore. In Milltown and New Bristy the teachers ignored the guidelines and wrote their own accounts of episodes in local history and mythology.

This article surveys the material collected in the four schools. The material collected in Emper and Irishtown schools is surveyed under some of the main categories suggested by the Folklore Commission: ghost stories and the supernatural, fairy forts, traditional cures, local crafts, local fairs, place names, weather and bird lore, hidden treasure and memories of the Great Famine.

Ghost stories and the supernatural

In rural Ireland in 1937 few people had any formal education beyond primary level and some of the older people were illiterate. Most people believed in ghosts and fairies and supernatural occurrences. Matt Nugent told his son, Patrick, a pupil in Emper School a tale of a man who coming home from "rambling" (visiting a neighbour) saw a sheep walk before him as he passes an old man. A few minutes later a child comes screaming through the air and lands in the man's arms. The man said, "God bless the child" and took him home but on reaching home discovers the child is dead. He calls a priest who tells him to heat a shovel over the fire. When the shovel is heated the priest places the dead child on it with four pence, holds the shovel under the chimney whereupon the dead child flies up the chimney and disappears. A similar story was told to the author in the 1960s, by a woman born in the 1880s, about a baby who does not thrive and is believed to be a changeling. A wise woman is consulted, and she tells the parents to heat a shovel over the fire in the baby's sight. The baby will ask why they are heating the shovel and he is to be told that it is to roast him. The parents do as instructed, and on hearing why his parents are heating the shovel, the changeling flies up the chimney and is replaced by their baby. The woman who told the author this story, also told him of a disturbing voodoo-like ritual practiced by people who wished to harm others. A sheaf of oats would be placed in a bed and waked in the way a corpse would be waked. It would then be buried and as it rotted in the earth, it was believed that the intended victim would sicken and die. This practice was also recorded in the folklore collected for the school's collection in Ballydorrigh, Co. Cavan.⁴

Patrick Farrell aged 90 told Sean McGuire a pupil of Emper school, a version of the archetypal "three wishes" tale. A man out late at night meets a group of fairies who tell him they have lost a precious purse and they know he has found it. They offer to grant him three wishes if he returns it. They meet the man's wife who is coming to look for him and she wishes for a wooden cup. On hearing of this absurdly modest wish, the man in anger wishes the cup down his wife's throat. The cup materialises in the wife's throat and on seeing her choking, the man wishes the cup out of her throat. The three wishes are used, but the man is no better off.

Peter McCormack aged 78 told his grandson, also Peter McCormack, a pupil in Emper school the tale of a

castle haunted every night by four men bearing a coffin. The man offers one hundred pounds to anybody who will stay overnight with him in the castle. Several people take up the offer but flee when the ghosts arrive. A soldier who takes up the offer does not flee when the ghosts arrive and when they lay down the coffin, he looks at the corpse and sees that its face is dirty. He takes a cloth and washes the face. The ghosts tell him that they could not go to Heaven until the corpse's face was washed. They take the coffin with its corpse and never return, and the soldier gains his reward.

Peter McCormack also told his grandson a story which shows the link between traditional beliefs and Catholic religious practice. A man rather than going to Mass went fishing one Sunday morning during Mass time. As he was fishing a horse came swimming down the river and jumped out and chased the man attempting to bite him. The man took refuge in a house and the horse returned to the river and disappeared. Thereafter the man always attended Mass.

Religion as an antidote to the power of the fairies is illustrated by another of Peter McCormack's tales. A man coming home late at night encounters a group of fairies who abduct him. One of the fairies goes to the man's house and tells the man's wife to go to a certain gap in a ditch the next night with holy water. Her husband will pass on a fairy horse, and if she succeeds in sprinkling him three times with the holy water, he will be restored to her. The woman does as instructed but, in throwing the holy water, misses her husband. A fairy alights from his horse and kills the man and his wife. The fairies take possession of their house. Thereafter the fairies were heard singing and dancing in the dead couple's house.

Fairy Forts

In almost every parish in rural Ireland there are the remains of ring forts, stone circles, hillforts, or other prehistoric dwellings. Dating from the Iron Age to early Christian times, these forts became associated in folklore with fairies and other supernatural phenomena and the sites of both good and bad fortune. In Irishtown school the children collected eight tales relating to fairy forts. This number of tales recorded in such a small school is probably explained by the fact that, within two miles of the school, there are five earthworks.

James Kelly of Irishtown told Phyllis Reilly of two forts built in sight of each other and surrounded by stones. In the middle of each fort are large boulders and under these are holes which are believed to hold treasure. Red lights could sometimes be seen in the forts but only by men. Another fort was believed to be the site of a battle between the Danes and the Irish. A cave blocked by rocks was believed to contain weapons.

A small fort close to Irishtown school was called "Sceaghán" (a place of bushes). One time a man was going home from rambling (visiting neighbours) when he heard the fairies dancing. The fairies brought him into the fort. When he awoke the next morning, he was lying in the middle of a rock. He died soon afterwards,

In the townland of Baile Pháidín there is a little fort called "coillín" (a little wood). James Kelly told of a woman who, when passing it, saw a tin can full of gold which she took away. On her way home she heard a voice saying, "Leave down that can". She took a handful of the gold and left the can down. After a few days she noticed her hand and arm withering and she died soon afterwards.

Donal Fox, a pupil in Irishtown school collected a tale from Tom Keary, aged 72 about a fort in a place called "mulla harnian", probably the now forgotten townland near Churchtown of Mullach Áirne (Mound of the Sloes). Lights were sometimes seen at night and wailing heard from this fort. The fort also contained a "stray sod" which if one stepped on it, one would go astray. The sod was said to have been put there by a witch. Another fort at Rathbhán (white fort) was reputed to have been used as hiding place by robbers and it was believed that treasure was buried there but nobody had tried to find it as it was guarded by a mad dog. A fort called Lios na Muice (fort of the pigs) in the townland of Kilmacnevin had a lone bush at its centre and every night at midnight a black pig emerged from under this bush and ran around the parish. The old people believed that if the black pig were to be seen by daylight it would portend the end of the world. A black pig, as a harbinger of misfortune, appears in many Irish folk tales.

Hidden Treasure

The children in Irishtown school collected numerous stories of hidden treasure, several of them connected to forts. Maureen Kelly collected a tale of hidden treasure from John Mullaly, aged 76 of Milltown. A crock of

gold was believed to be buried under a lone bush in the fort of Rathlaughlin. Once a man tried to get the gold. He set out on Monday morning and began to dig. He dug a little trench around the bush for about two feet. As he dug deeper, he heard strange mewings over his head. He looked up and saw a large flock of white crows (seagulls, who make a mewing sound, were often called white crows in inland areas). He continued digging. Two of the birds swooped down and pecked him on both arms but he kept on digging. Then, the whole flock of birds came down and pecked and beat him with their wings until he was unable to dig. He stretched his hand for the spade with which he was digging but he could not reach it. He saw it slip into the hole he had dug, whereupon a little red woman came out from under the bush and put back all the clay which he had disturbed. When the clay was all reinstated the woman disappeared.

Donal Fox heard a tale of hidden treasure relating to the Danes from Andy Murphy, aged 75 of Newtown. Andy related that in Newtown there was a ditch in which a golden pig was hidden. It was guarded by three wild cats.

It was said that the Danes were defeated at a battle and buried the golden pig with three wild cats to guard it. The old people said that it was prophesied that six men will dig for it, and five of them would be killed and the sixth will get the gold.

Folkloric cures

Traditional cures fall into three categories, herbal treatments, curing by a favoured person such as a seventh son and sympathetic magic. Sympathetic magic was described by the great anthropologist, Sir James Frazer, in his book, *The Golden Bough*, as "first, that like produces like, or that an effect resembles its cause; and second, that things which have once been in contact with each other continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed." The best-known example of this type of cure is the "hair of the dog" which suggests that if a person is bitten by a rabid dog, the rabies will be cured by putting a hair of the dog on the bite wound.

The children of Milltown school collected a great many traditional cures in each of these categories from the old people in the area. An herbal cure for warts required that the sap be squeezed from chickweed and applied to the warts while a sympathetic magic cure

required the sufferer to get three stones and rub them onto the warts and put them in a bag and throw them on the road. The person who picked up the stones would get the warts. At the time the folklore was collected, many farming people suffered from the fungal disease ringworm which was contracted from cattle. A sympathetic magic cure collected by Eileen Dalton of Irishtown school required that cow dung be rubbed on the ringworm for four days in succession. People whose birth order was the magic number seven were believed to have a cure for certain diseases. Eileen Dalton was told by Thomas Mullally that when a seventh son or eighth daughter was born, a red worm would be placed in the baby's hand. If the worm turned white the child would have the cure for ringworm, while if it died the child did not have the cure.

Some herbal treatments have a scientific basis. John Drew of Lakinstown recorded one such treatment from his father. A raw potato bruised into a poultice should be applied to a wound to help it heal. The potato was used as a natural remedy in traditional medicine for centuries before it was eaten as a food. A substance in the potato prevents invading bacteria from latching onto vulnerable cells in the human body.⁵ John Drew also learned from his father that a cobweb applied to a wound stopped bleeding. Cobwebs contain vitamin K which has anticoagulant properties and they also may have some antimicrobial properties.⁶ A herbal remedy for wounds required that the herb crowfoot be boiled with linseed to form a thick mixture which when cool should be applied to a wound to draw out "bad blood". Crowfoot belongs to the large plant genus *Ranunculaceae* which are used in traditional medicine for treating cuts, abrasions and boils throughout the world. These plants contain a compound which is blister causing.⁷

Local Crafts

Most of the people of Milltown parish, like those in many parts of rural Ireland in 1937, lived by subsistence agriculture and much of what they consumed was produced locally by traditional methods. In Irishtown school Eileen Dalton recorded that her father made a simple scale for weighing butter, using weights made from baked yellow clay, calibrated against the brass weights used in local shops. Phyllis Reilly recorded the recollection of Larry Lyons of the work of his father, a tanner, who tanned the skins of cattle, sheep, goats and

deer thirty years earlier, at the beginning of the twentieth century. Maureen Kelly recorded the recollections of several people that shoemaking, spinning and saddle and harness making had also been done in the parish up to the time of the First World War. Donal Fox recorded the memory of Andy Murphy, aged 76 in 1937, who recalled as a young man making a flail for threshing oats and barley. The staff of the flail was made from ash or willow and the "buailtín" (striking part in Irish) from white thorn with the pieces joined by a piece of eel skin. Similar flails were used in Egypt as early as 3000 BCE and are depicted in the hands of all the statues and images of the Pharaohs, symbolising the fertility of the land.

One craft still practiced in the parish in 1937 was the making of willow baskets or "cleeves" (from cliabh the Irish for basket). Michael Mulvaney of Emper described how a cleeve was made by sticking dried sally (willow) twigs into a circle marked on the ground and interlacing those twigs with others until a roughly cone shaped basket was created. Several children recorded making their own toys. Donal Fox, aged 12, described making a "gun", or type of pea shooter, by using a piece of heated iron to hollow out an elder twig and shooting balls of paper through it. Marcella Keogh, a pupil in Irishtown school, aged 13, described making dolls from putty which she pretended were her pupils whom she taught "and the principal part of the teaching was slapping".

Weather and bird lore

Being able to forecast weather was important to a farming community and the children recorded several examples of how local people forecast the weather by interpreting cloud formations, wind direction and the behaviour of birds and animals. In Emper school, Eileen Glynn recorded that a sign of bad weather was "when you see a flock of crows on the road, and when the seagulls come into farmland, when a dog begins to eat grass, and when the cat sits with her back to the fire." Maureen Kelly, a pupil in Irishtown school recorded several pieces of weather prediction by the behaviour of birds. A thrush singing loudly and on a high perch denotes rain and wind and when rooks fly slowly and silently, fine weather may be expected or when they fly swiftly and silently, bad weather is imminent. Maureen also recorded the belief that when eels were seen

swimming downstream or disappearing into holes, thunder would follow but if the eels swam fast at night good weather would follow.

Memories of the Famine

The oldest people interviewed in 1937 were born in the decade after the Famine and would have heard about it from their parents. Patrick Farrell of Emper who was aged 90 in 1937, was born in 1847, the worst year of the Famine. He stated that the numerous ruins of houses in Emper showed that the area had once been more densely populated, and he also recalled hearing of evictions during and after the Famine. Robert Mulleady also of Emper, aged 84 in 1937, recalled that three roads in Emper has been built as Famine relief. These roads were the first paved roads extending into Emper, beyond Emper school, which had been built in 1833. Mulleady recalled that the men who built those roads were paid in Indian meal which was wetted when it was given to them, so that they had to cook it immediately and could not sell it.

Maureen Kelly, a pupil in Irishtown school heard from John Mullally, aged 74 how, during the Famine, people were reduced to eating grass, sorrel and water cress. Mullally also recalled "meal mongers", merchants who bought grain imported for famine relief at low prices and sold it at higher prices to the starving. Mullally stated that during the cholera epidemic of 1847 twenty-six burials took place in Piercetown cemetery in one day and that many of the dead, whose families could not afford coffins, were buried in winding sheets.

Marriage Customs

Emper school pupil Cella Maguire recorded that marriages were usually held before Shrove Tuesday and that it was considered unlucky to marry on Friday or in the month of May. Many marriages were the result of matchmaking and dowries were sometimes given in cattle, as had been a custom in Ireland for centuries. The wedding reception was usually held in the bride's home and some local boys would dress in old clothes, like wren boys or mummers, and would "gate crash" the reception and each of the boys would dance with the new bride. In Irishtown School, Eileen Dalton recorded that the newly married husband carried his bride to his door and she stepped 3 times on the threshold. If the new bride visited her birth family during the first month of her marriage, some evil might befall her.

Faction fighting

Until the end of the nineteenth century, faction fights which were mass brawls, sometimes involving hundreds of men, and occasionally women, were common in Ireland at gatherings such as fairs, funerals and patterns (patron saint's days). The fights were usually between clans or groups of men from different parishes or counties and, being based on half forgotten, often trivial, disputes were essentially recreational. A common weapon was a cudgel made of willow, known as a sail éiliagh (willow with thongs), from which the word shillelagh is derived. Faction fighting was also known as party fighting and continued in some parts of Ireland up to WW1. In Emper school, Peter Nugent heard from his father of party fights taking place at Churchtown cross-roads. The fights were between two hundred and one men on each side and the weapons were "sticks and iron bars and anything they could leave their hands on". The leaders of the "parties" bought forty penny loaves and a stone of butter to feed their men and on one occasion a fighter, on hearing the Angelus bell, called out "Twelve o'clock in the day and no blood spilt yet". (In the 1960s the author heard an old man in the parish of Emper referred to as a "party man")

The Táin Bo Cualaing, the 1798 rebellion in Milltown parish and a local Fenian Hero

In Milltown school, the principal teacher, Sean O' Casey ignored the instructions given by the Folklore Commission and wrote the entire contribution from the school himself. O' Casey gives accounts of episodes from the history of the area beginning with the Norman invasion which he claimed, without quoting any source, resulted not only in the dispossession of the local Gaelic tribes, principally the MacGeoghans but the driving out of all the local population. O' Casey claimed that most of the families in the parish with Irish names, such as O' Sullivan, O' Donohoe O' Kelly and Maguire had come to the parish from Connaught or Munster in the nineteenth century. O' Casey has an accurate account of raids by the O Neills of Tyrone on the Norman lords of Westmeath, the Nugents, Delamares and Plunketts in the 15th and 16th centuries, raids in which they were aided by the Gaelic chieftains of the Midlands, including the McLoughlins, O' Molloys and McGeoghans.

O' Casey also gives an account of incidents during the 1798 Rebellion in Westmeath. A man who he identified only as 'W', because his descendants still lived

in the area, was a highwayman and informer who betrayed a local blacksmith, Edward Carroll and his sons who were making pikes for the insurgents. Carroll and his sons were shot by British soldiers and their bodies brought on a cart to Moyvore where 'W' identified three other United Irishmen. These men were tied to the cart carrying the bodies of the Carrolls and the cart was driven to the nearby village of Ballymore where a fair was being held. The men were "riddled with bullets" before their relatives and that night 40 houses in Moyvore were burned. O' Casey also gives the story of a local man, James Maloney, who assembled "a party of Croppies" who on 5 September 1798, marched to Wilson's Hospital, then a hostel for old soldiers, where they believed arms were stored. The garrison surrendered, but next day Maloney and his men were defeated by a contingent of British soldiers sent from Athlone. Some who escaped the battlefield sought refuge in local houses, but the houses were burned and the insurgents and those who gave them shelter were killed. The last battle of the 1798 Rebellion, in which 150 soldiers and 300 rebels were killed, occurred at Wilson's Hospital and is commemorated by a marble plaque on the building which opened in 1761 as a hostel for injured soldiers, and which is now part of Wilson's Hospital School.

In the *Táin Bo Cualainge*, the army of Queen Medb on its way back to Connacht travels through the western fringe of Westmeath where the final battle of the *Táin*, the battle of Gaireach is fought between Medb's army and the Ulaid (Ulstermen) under King Conchobar. O' Casey argues that Medb's army passed through the townland of Rathconrath on its way back to Connacht because the Hill of Skeagh in the townland is mentioned in the *Táin* and the *Táin* describes the battle as ranging over an area between Slanemore Hill and the Hill of Clare, an area encompassing some of the parish of Milltown. Research by Gosling⁸ suggests that while O' Casey was right in identifying some locations in the *Táin*, the most like route of Medb's army on its journey to Connacht was south east of Milltown and the battle of Gaireach took place in the townland of Garhy, near Castletown Geoghan. O Casey seems to have thought that the *Táin Bó Cualainge* is recorded history rather than a mythological epic.

O' Casey concludes his narrative with an account of the life of John Keegan ('Leo') Casey, a Fenian poet and journalist who was born in Milltown parish and whose

father, Luke Casey, had taught in Milltown school and later in neighbouring New Bristy from 1836 to 1854. John Keegan Casey (1846-1870) was a poet and a major contributor to the Fenian newspaper, *The Nation* who spent two terms in Mountjoy prison for membership of the Fenians and participated in the Fenian Uprising of 1867. His poem "The Rising of the Moon" commemorating the 1798 Rebellion in Westmeath is still popular and has been recorded by the Clancy Brothers and Tommy Makem, Judy Collins, the Dubliners and Damien Dempsey.

Uisneach, Aill na Meeran and Killare

The teacher at New Bristy School, Brid Murphy, also ignored the directions of the Folklore Commission and wrote twelve pages on local history and mythology. Like Casey, she asserts that the Battle of Gaireach took place in the parish and gives a short, vivid account of the battle which Medb loses because her hero Fergus refuses to fight Cuchulainn, who is weakened by the wounds inflicted on him by Ferdia before he killed Ferdia on the Cooley peninsula. Brid Murphy also gives an account of the history of the Hill of Uisneach, the mythical centre of Ireland, about 10 kilometres from New Bristy. Each year on 1 May a great feast and market were held at Uisneach in honour of the sun god Baal which involved the lighting of two great fires, between which cattle were driven to protect them from disease. (The Irish word for May, *Bealtaine*, means Baal's fire). Murphy claimed that in the nineteenth century the accumulation of ash from the centuries of fires had been taken by local farmers to use as fertilisers and that the pre-historic pillar stones on Uisneach had been removed to use as scratching posts for cattle.

Murphy wrote that the village of Killare, which adjoins New Bristy, was once a significant settlement. The Daltons who were Norman lords of the area, built a castle around 1200 but it was destroyed in an attack by the Gaelic MacGeoghans. St Hugh had founded an abbey in Killare and a well associated with St Brigid was, in 1937, still a place of pilgrimage on Good Fridays.

The meaning of folklore for the people of Milltown parish

In 1937 when the children of the four schools in Milltown parish collected folklore, they were living in a community little affected by the technological advances

of the previous century. Agriculture was still the dominant economic activity in Ireland and most of the farmers in the area were subsistence farmers who produced food for their own consumption and sold any surplus in local markets. While radios were available in Ireland, it is likely that few households in Milltown parish had a radio and few people would have read newspapers. Electricity would not arrive for a further twenty years and the only telephones were in the village post office and the Garda Station. Though most people were literate, few had any formal education beyond primary school. The people therefore made sense of the world they inhabited and acted in it, according to oral traditions and beliefs passed down from their ancestors.

The social life of the community consisted mainly of visiting each other's houses and telling each other the tales they had heard from their ancestors. Though modern medicine was provided by the Dispensary Doctor in the nearby village of Ballynacargy, some people lacked an understanding of the causes of the illnesses that afflicted them and relied on traditional remedies. Surrounded by evidence of vanished civilisations in the form of earthworks, souterrains and standing stones they peopled those monuments with fairies. Tales of buried treasure guarded by fierce animals feature in many folklores but the stories of treasure buried by the Danes and guarded by ferocious pigs may have been based on the folk memories of findings of gold torcs and coins from the Viking era in Westmeath. The arms of County Westmeath feature a Norse helmet in memory of King Malachy who, according to legend, took a gold torc from the Norse chieftain, Turgesius, before drowning him in Lough Owel in 843 C.E.

Some of the tales were a way of giving meaning to the experiences of suffering and early death. The stories of changeling infants were based on the frequent occurrence of infants' deaths until after WWII. Seeing a baby sick or failing to thrive and not knowing why, a belief arose that the real baby had been taken by fairies and a changeling left in its place. Some of the tales are evidence of the fact that when Christianity came to Ireland, the Church sanctified pagan customs it could not eradicate by, for example, establishing the Feast of All Saints to coincide with Halloween. The pilgrimages to holy wells such as St Brigid's Well in Killare, described by the teacher in New Bristy, were a

continuation of pre-Christian traditions and St Brigid is a Christian manifestation of the pagan goddess Bríd, the name of the teacher in New Bristy, Bríd Murphy. Christianity sometimes provided an antidote to pagan terrors. When a person was abducted by the fairies the remedy was to wait until he or she passed on a fairy horse and to sprinkle the horse with Holy Water. A man who goes fishing on Sunday morning instead of going to Mass is chased by a fairy horse emerging from the river, and having escaped, thereafter goes to Mass.

It would be easy to dismiss the beliefs and practices of the people of rural Ireland in 1937 as superstitions resulting from a lack of formal education. But the fear of the first European folklorists of the nineteenth century that folklore, being the tales and traditions of agricultural societies, would disappear with industrialisation were not realised. When societies urbanised, an urban folklore developed as the Irish novelist and folklorist Eilís ní Dhuibhne found in her research in Dublin in 1979.⁹ A century from now, folklorists are likely to be examining Facebook pages to discover what tales educated and technologically sophisticated Irish people told themselves in the 2020s to make sense of the world around them.

ENDNOTES –

- 1 Bronner, Simon J, *Folklore: The Basics*, (2016)
- 2 Almqvist Bo., "The Irish Folklore Commission: Achievement and Legacy". *Béaloideas*. 45/47: 6–26.(1977)
- 3 An expanded version of the material in the handbook is contained in *A Handbook of Irish Folklore (Scríbhinní Béaloideas/ Folklore Studies 22)*, Dublin, Comhairle Bhéaloideas Éireann, 2014.
- 4 <https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/5070784/5063102>
- 5 <https://www.webmd.com/food-recipes/news/20000522/pound-infection-with-potato#1>
- 6 <https://www.botanical.com/botanical/mgmh/b/butcup97.html>
- 7 <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/6387285/#:~:text=A%20majority%20involved%20the%20use,%2C%20and%20general%2C%20unspecified%20illness.>
- 8 Gosling, Paul, *Heritage Guide No. 86: The route of Táin Bó Cúailnge in counties Westmeath and Meath*
- 9 Ní Dhuibhne, Eilís "They Made Me Tea and Gave Me a Lift Home": *Urban Folklore Collecting 1979–80*, *Béaloideas Iml*. 73 (2005)