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traveled through the decades, masters of the oral tradition were found. In most cases, these tradition bearers were not and would not have been recorded were it not for their encounter with committed folklorists. Below are three individuals, one, a collector and the other two bearers of tradition. All three represent the importance of recording and most importantly retaining our traditional heritage and identity.

To find out more about Cuimhneamh an Chláir and *Faces of Folklore*, visit www.clarememories.ie

As part of our own ongoing collection scheme please feel free to contact us if you or someone you know would like to be recorded.

Alternatively if you feel you could aid in the work of Cuimhneamh an Chláir or wish to donate please contact us at:

clarememories@eircom.net
087-9160373 (Tomás)

Urraithe ag Oifig Gaeilge an Chláir

The collection of folklore and oral history in County Clare over the last centuries is characterised predominantly by individuals, who, in recognition of the importance and fragility of our folkloric resource, expended considerable energy in its collection and preservation. In the years prior to the establishment of the Folklore of Ireland Society (1927) and then the Irish Folklore Commission (1935), Eugene O'Curry, Isabelle Augusta Gregory and Thomas Johnson Westropp did much to document the very rich folklore and tales of County Clare. The latter brought attention the antiquity of Clare lore in his publication of his findings in the county, in the English journal *Folk-Lore* from 1910. Westropp opined in relation to Clare's folklore, that the county, *'isolated by the Sea, the River and the enmity of Connaught'*, might, he says, be expected to preserve until modern times an unbroken tradition from the prehistoric past'.

In addition to Seamus Ó Duilearga, who is featured in this pamphlet, Seán Mac Mathúna, Seán Mac Graith, Máire Mac Neill, Máiréad Uí Mhartáin, Seamus Ennis, Seán Ó Flannagáin and Tom Munnely are just a selection of others to bequeath valuable Clare memories, without whose effort they would be irretrievably lost. Significantly, the 'Scheme for the Collection and Preservation of Folklore and Oral Tradition', known as the School Schemes, undertaken by the Folklore Commission in 1937-8 contributed 500,000 pages for the folkloric record. As noted by Michael McMahon, in Clare the scheme operated in nearly 200 National Schools and affords an important insight into life in Clare from the mid 19th century to the 1930's. The above was based on an urgency born out of concern that valuable facets of our culture were being lost. **More important still than the collector is the collected.** In every part of Clare, where folklorists



Cuimhneamh an Chláir

The Clare Oral History and Folklore Group

Faces of Folklore County Clare

Cuimhneamh an Chláir, the Clare Oral History and Folklore Group, recognize that in attempting to record the oral heritage of our county, we inherit and practice a tradition of folklore recording that has been in existence in Clare for centuries. Faces of Folklore, aim to highlight the magnificent effort of folklorists in documenting the oral heritage of Clare, much of which was documented in our native language

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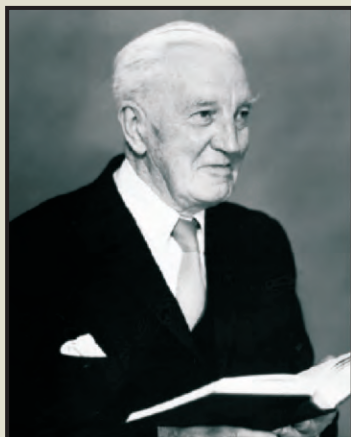
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Séamus Ó Duilearga

(1899-1980)

Founding father of Irish Folklore scholarship



B'é Séamus Ó Duilearga a spreag, a mhuscail is a stiúir bailiúchán an bhéaloidis faoi choimirce *An Cumann le Béaloideas Éireann*. *Iidir na bliana 1929-1943 thug sé faoi bhun bailiúchán fairsing béaloideas i gCo an Chláir, áit a bhí dearmadtha ó thaobh bailiúchán de go dtí sin. Mhair gean faoi leith ina chroí ag an Duileargach do mhuintir an Chláir as sin amach go lá a bháis. Thuig sé go maith gur ag sciobadh ó bhéal na huaige a bhí sé – lena sár-obair agus dúthracht, tá an oidhreacht saibhir sin fós ann do mhuintir an Chláir inniú.*

Séamus Ó Duilearga inspired, motivated and directed the collection of Irish oral tradition by the Irish Folklore Commission. From 1929-1943 he gathered folklore extensively in Clare. Until then, the county had been largely omitted from Irish folklorists' study of language and lore. Ó Duilearga's affinity with the people and folklore of Clare developed into a deep affection during his years in the county. Without the work, dedication and vision of Ó Duilearga the stories and native language of Co Clare, as he put it, would have "lingered and died on the lips of my old friends".

Stiofán Ó hEalaoire

(1858-1944)

Storyteller - Seanchaí

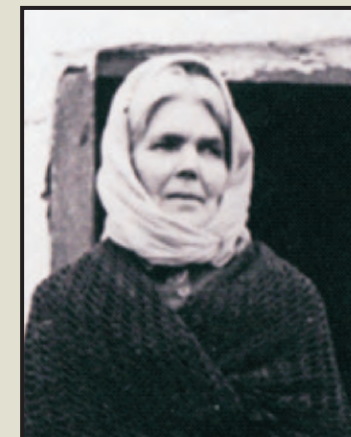


Rugadh Stiofán Ó hEalaoire i mBaile Í Choileáin, Co an Chláir. Tobar rathúil béaloideas é agus Gaeilge an Chláir go flúirseach aige, le saibhreas iontach ráiteachas agus focal. Chas Ó Duilearga leis don chéad uair i mí na Nollag 1929 i dtigh Anthony Malone faoi lasair tinteán oscailte. Duirt S. Ó Duilearga ina thaobh *"I gcursaí seanchais is scéalta b'é ab fhearr dár bhuail liom riabh"* Stiofán Ó hEalaoire of Ballycullaun near Doolin in North Clare, was already in his seventies when he was discovered as a storyteller by folklorist and Irish language enthusiast Séamus Ó Duilearga. Ó Duilearga met him first in the house of Anthony Malone in December, 1929 by open hearth firelight. He was a well-spring of rich lore, tales and a repository of the Irish language dialect of County Clare. Ó hEalaoire was described by Séamus Ó Duilearga as *"one of the finest Irish speakers I have ever known"*

Bríd Bean Uí Choisteala,

Kilbaha

Tradition Bearer

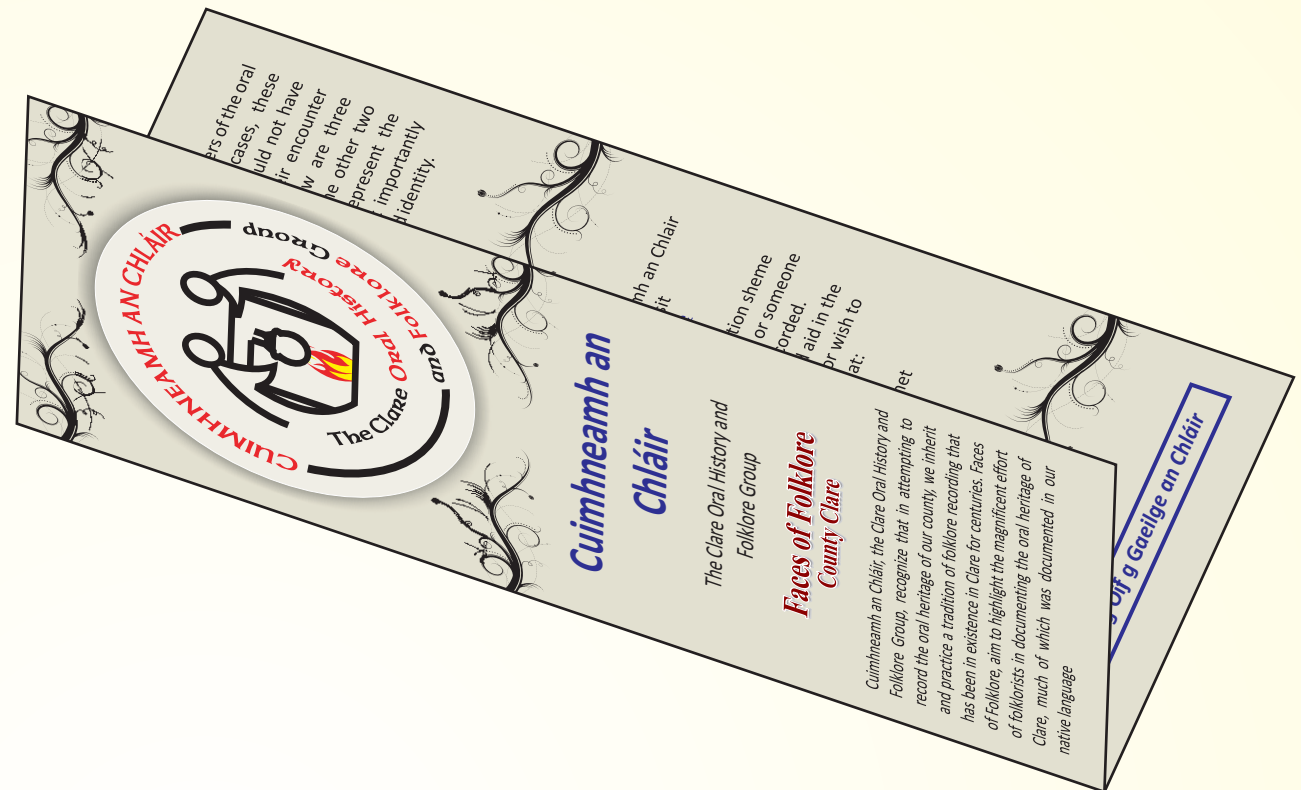


Déantar cur síos ar Bríd Bean Uí Choisteala mar "bean dall" John Costello i toghtha sna 1930's. Cuirtear in áirimh í sa tionscanamh seo chun an easnamh eolas ina thaobh a chur i gceart faoi dheireadh. Is dócha gur de bharr claonadh inscine nach cuimhnítear ar Bríd Uí Choisteala mar shealbhóir béaloideas. I rith na bliana 1942, 1943, is 1950 bhailigh Tadhg Ó Murchú béaloideas uaithi sa bhaile i Cill Bheathach, Ceann Léime agus mhol sé Bríd Bean Uí Choisteala mar cheann do na scéalaithe ab fhearr sa cheantar.

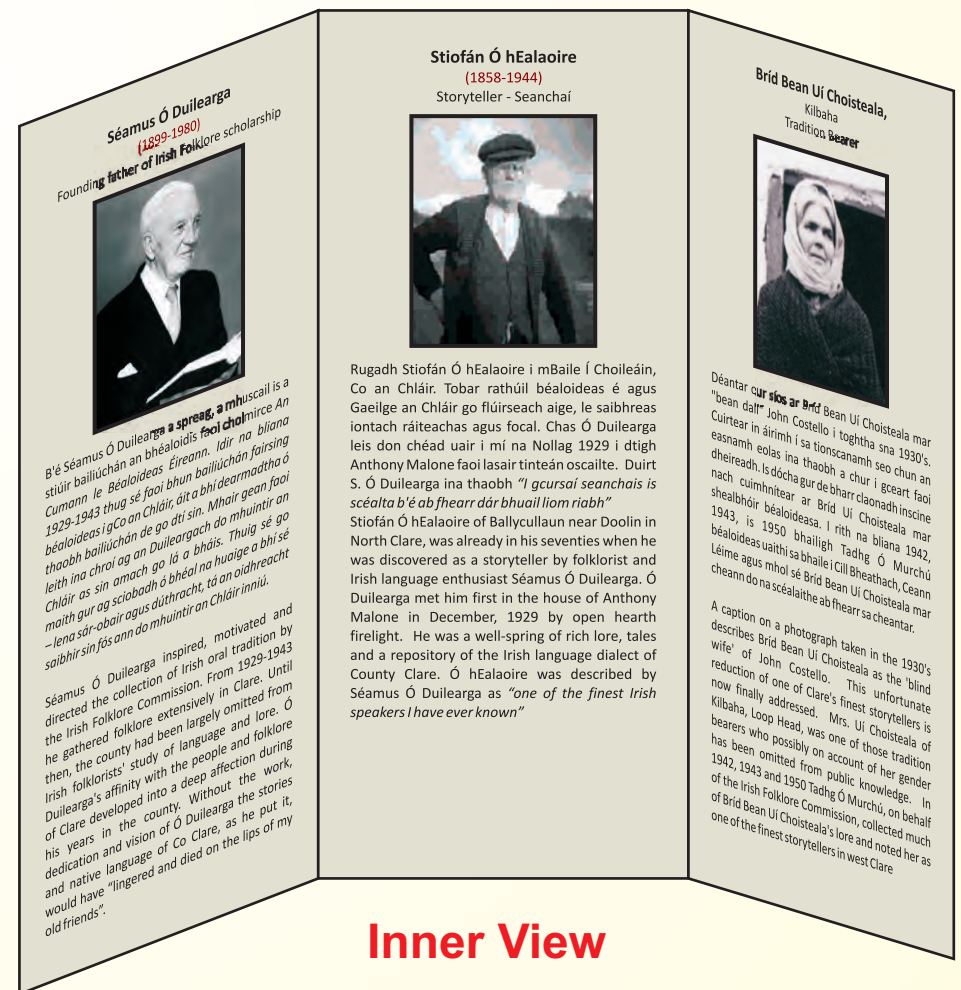
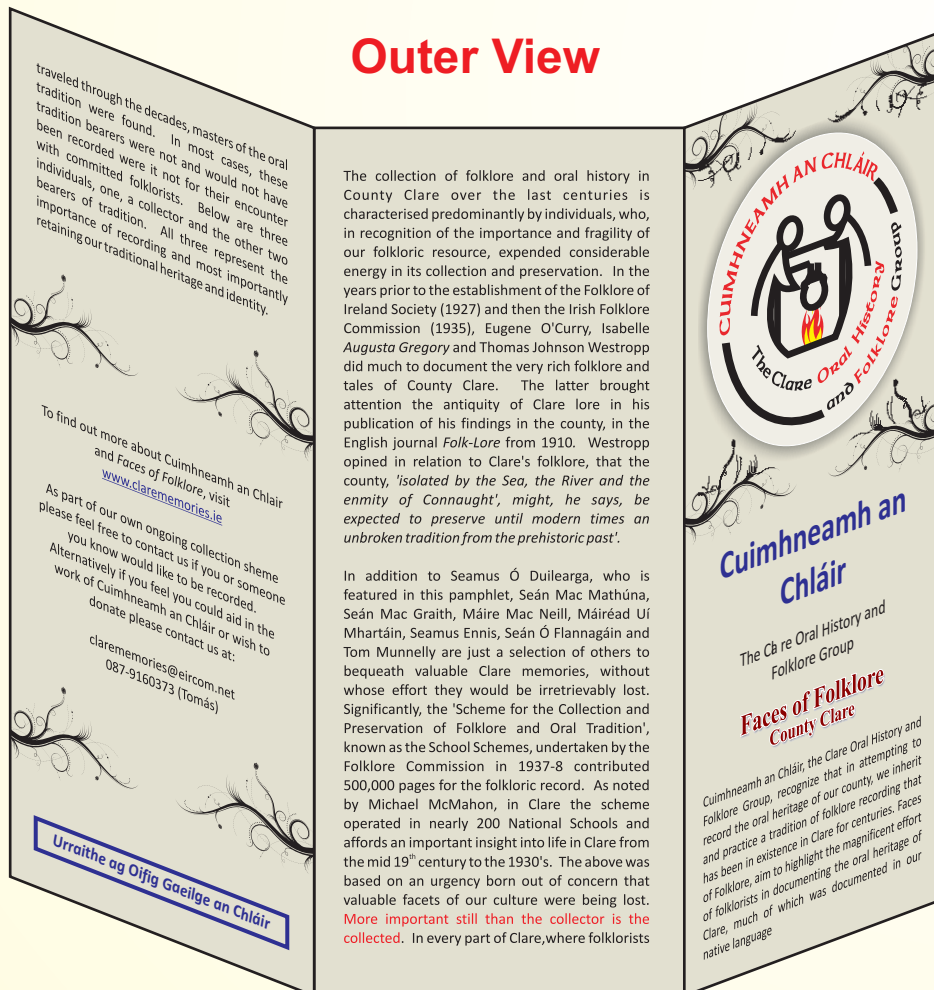
A caption on a photograph taken in the 1930's describes Bríd Bean Uí Choisteala as the 'blind wife' of John Costello. This unfortunate reduction of one of Clare's finest storytellers is now finally addressed. Mrs. Uí Choisteala of Kilbaha, Loop Head, was one of those tradition bearers who possibly on account of her gender has been omitted from public knowledge. In 1942, 1943 and 1950 Tadhg Ó Murchú, on behalf of the Irish Folklore Commission, collected much of Bríd Bean Uí Choisteala's lore and noted her as one of the finest storytellers in west Clare

8.5"

3D View



Outer View



Inner View