CORA Cork Open Research Archive
Cartlann Taighde Oscailte Chorcaí

Title	Song and revival in a County Waterford community
Authors	Ó Gealbháin, Ciarán
Publication date	2019
Original Citation	Ó Gealbháin, C. (2019) 'Song and revival in a County Waterford community', Béascna, 11, pp. 92-109.
Type of publication	Article (peer-reviewed)
Link to publisher's version	https://www.ucc.ie/en/anthropology/research/researchprojects/beascna/
Rights	© 2019, Ciarán Ó Gealbháin.
Download date	2026-11-06 11:41:05
Item downloaded from	https://hdl.handle.net/10468/13615

UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

Béascna 11 (2019): 92–109

Song and Revival in a County Waterford Community

Ciarán Ó Gealbháin

The founding of the Gaelic League, in a room at No. 9, Lower Sackville Street, Dublin, on 31 July 1893, was to have widespread and resounding implications for many parts of Ireland, not least for those parts of the country which were at the time largely Irish speaking. The League's policy of preserving and bolstering the language where it was strongest was to have long-term effect on those areas of county Waterford, for example, in which Irish was then the vernacular. This paper discusses how, under the influence of a small number of key figures within the early twentieth-century movement in Waterford, song came to be at the centre of Irish-language revival in one small coastal community, the results of which still reverberate there today.

Introduction

It might be said that the seeds of a serious interest in the Irish-language song tradition were sown with the published works of Brooke (1789) in the late eighteenth century, and those of Hardiman (1831) and O'Daly (1849; 1860), among others, in the first half of the nineteenth century, but it is in the latter part of the nineteenth and the early twentieth century that we really see Irish song becoming the focus of scholarly attention, especially with the founding of Connradh na Gaedhilge, or the Gaelic League, in 1893, and subsequent efforts towards the revival of Irish. Douglas Hyde's (1860–1949) hugely influential bilingual work, *Abhráin Grádh Chúige Connacht or Love Songs of Connaught*, published the same year in which he co-founded the League, presented songs that were current in the western repertoire at the time in their original Irish with the author's own highly idiomatic English-language translations. This work was to have great appeal and would wield great influence on the 'Irish revival' movement as a whole.

The League's focus on the preservation and fortification of Irish where it was strongest was to have a resounding effect on those parts of county Waterford in which Irish was then the vernacular. Fitzgerald (1984) has shown how the area of most interest to us here

features among those baronies in which the proportion of monoglots amongst Irish-speakers in the mid-nineteenth century was close to or above 50%. It is also striking to see the correlation between these areas and those presently identified as 'ceantair Ghaeltachta' or Irish-speaking districts. Within this context, the areas of An Rinn Ó gCuanach and An Sean-Phobal, in the barony of Decies within Drum, were among those to receive a high degree of attention at the turn of the twentieth century and, indeed, the influence and activities of the Gaelic League in the locality at that time can be strongly linked to its retaining Gaeltacht status today (Mac Craith 2005; Ó Domhnaill [1987]).

With the exponential growth of the League nationwide came a demand for an annual *exposé* of Irish culture, leading to the establishment, in 1897, of An tOireachtas, based to some degree on the successes of the Welsh Eisteddfod and Am Mòd Nàiseanta Ríoga in Scotland. While song then enjoyed by no means as prominent a role as it does presently in proceedings at An tOireachtas, it did have a certain part to play in events from the very outset. Indeed, Róisín Nic Dhonncha (2004) has highlighted how the establishment of An tOireachtas, under the auspices of the Gaelic League, offered for the first time a national platform to Irish-language song, bringing it to centre stage as it were. One of the effects of this development was a heightened awareness of the potential of song as a pedagogical tool: quite early on, song, with its economy of thought and expression, became popular with teachers of Irish as an important vehicle for the advancement of their goals.

'Scoil an Chalaidh', 1905

Those 'timirí' and travelling teachers of Irish made a significant impact on the areas in which they were active, not only from the point of view of promoting Irish as the vernacular, but also in raising a national consciousness. For those with whom they engaged, they were the face of the League, and the solitary Gaeilgeoir, travelling by bicycle would be fondly remembered for their service to the Irish language and their commitment to their nationalist ideals (Mac Aonghusa 1993). One of these was a certain Pádraig Ó Cadhla (1875–1948), of Buaile an Mhóintín, Béal na Molt, in the heart of ancient Sliabh gCua, an area itself steeped in tradition.[1]

Ó Cadhla paid his first official League visit on the present-day Gaeltacht area of An Rinn and An Sean-Phobal in 1903. The parish priest, being rather disinterested in the Irish language, though a native speaker himself, reluctantly allowed him to engage with the community and to teach Irish twice weekly in the schoolhouse at Baile Mhic Airt in An Sean-Phobal. Attendance and progress was good, prompting the clergyman to eventually withdraw his support for the initiative. Ó Cadhla would have to look elsewhere. In the summer of 1905, efforts were focused on the fishing village of Baile na nGall, An Rinn, where Ó Cadhla, with the support and encouragement of Rev Dr Michéal Ó Síothcháin (1870–1945), later Assistant Archbishop of Sydney, established a summer school for the teaching of Irish, somewhat reminiscent of the hedge schools of preceding centuries, accommodating both visitors and – crucially – locals alike. In his account of those pioneering days, Mícheál Ó Domhnaill tells us:

> Ní raibh teach ná tinteán acu ach páirc oscailte agus an spéir os a gcionn, ach níor chuir san aon droch-mhisneach orthu. Fuaireadar clár-dubh agus bhuaileadar suas i gcoinne Tighe an Bhacaéra é ag bun Bhaile na nGall le h-ais na farraige ... thóg Pádraig [Ó Cadhla] blúire cailce amach as a phóca agus luigh sé isteach ar obair na múinteoireachta. *Is mar sin a thosaigh Coláiste na Rinne*.
>
> [They had neither house nor hearth, but a field open to the sky above; they remained undeterred. They placed a chalkboard against the gable of the Bakehouse at the foot of the village of Baile na nGall down by the sea ... Pádraig [Ó Cadhla] took a piece of chalk from his pocket and commenced the work of teaching. *This is how Coláiste na Rinne* [the Irish college at An Rinn] *came into existence*] (Ó Domhnaill, [1987]: 17; emphasis in the original).[2]

Locals on the roll of this quayside school, 'Scoil an Chalaidh' as it was known, in those early days includes many notables for anyone with an interest in or studying the song tradition of the area. Among them were: Michéal Ó Cionnfhaolaidh (1887–1956), poet and writer, whose collaborations with local seanchaí, Maidhc Dháith Turraoin (1878–1963), have brought to us a deeper understanding of a number of important local songs (Ó Cionnfhaolaidh 1956). Ó

Cionnfhaolaidh's spouse was one of the areas better-known female singers, Bríd Ní Nuanáin, one with whom Seamus Ennis (1919–1982) frequently visited in the 1940s (Ó Cionnfhaolaidh 1998). Another attendee was Séamus Ó Ceallaigh (1891–1918), who later spent time in the British Navy during the Great War. He was a noted young singer before his untimely death in 1918, and an important recording of him survives in the collections of Austrian ethnologist, Rudolf Trebitsch, who visited An Rinn in 1907, on one of his collecting expeditions into the Celtic countries (Schuller 2003).

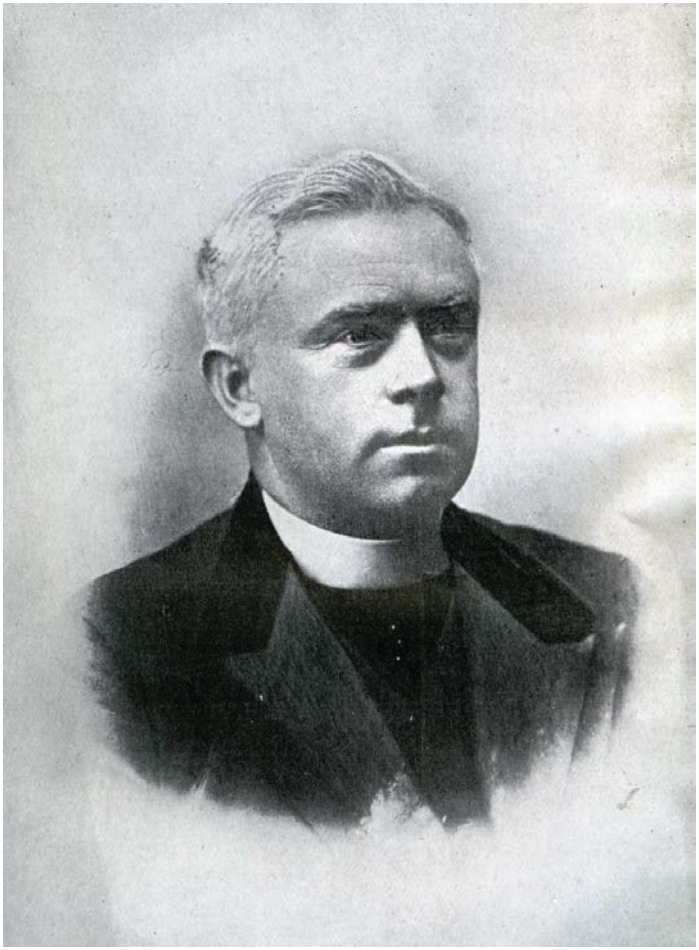
Also on the roll were Nioclás Tóibín (1890–1966), author, Irish teacher, singer and song collector, whose mentee, nephew and namesake would go on to become the area's most highly renowned tradition bearer (Tóibín 1978); and Sean Ó Cuirrín (1894–1980), Irish-language scholar whose 1933 translation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* must be regarded as something of a masterpiece. A great-grandnephew of Famine-time poet, Máire Ní Dhroma († *c.*1850) of Baile na nGall Beag, An Rinn Ó gCuanach, he shared some very important items with music collector, Liam de Noraidh, of the Irish Folklore Commission, while the latter was engaged in the collection of songs in the area in the early 1940s (Ó hÓgáin 1994, 78–82; 235–36).[3]

'Scoil an Chalaidh' proceeded thus for six weeks in the summer of 1905. Efforts were escalated the following summer when, in a newly constructed wooden building erected nearby, Ó Cadhla and Ó Síothcháin were joined by, among others, Rev Dr Risteard de Hindeberg or Richard Henebry (1863–1916). Priest, author, polemicist, Irish-language activist, musician, collector, educator – polymath – he was in many ways the catalyst for what was to follow in terms of the pre-eminent position that song would come to achieve over other forms of cultural expression in the geographic area here in question.

Irish Music and *A Handbook of Irish Music*

Henebry was, by all accounts an inspiring, if somewhat eccentric, teacher, who sometimes employed rather unorthodox pedagogical methodologies: travelling piper, Jem Byrne (†1931), was sometimes known to accompany him to class at UCC, for instance (in which institution Henebry was Professor of Irish Language and Literature

from 1909 until his passing in 1916), whereupon bottles of stout would be divided among the cohort to be quaffed to the stirring sounds of Byrne's equally intoxicating jigs and reels – all with a view to Gaelicising the malleable young minds of Munster![4] One former student would later recall him as an 'iconoclast with a fund of drollery that struggled with the desperate earnestness of a born missionary'.[5]



Rev Dr Risteard de Hindeberg (1863–1916)
Courtesy of Waterford County Museum

Echoes of Douglas Hyde's seminal, nation-building lecture of 1892, on *The Necessity for De-Anglicizing Ireland*, resound in Henebry's *Irish Music: Being an Examination of the Matter of Scales, Modes, and Keys, with Practical Instructions and Examples for Players*.[6] Published in 1903, this was his first major work on music and the only one he himself would live to see in print. Of traditional Irish music, he says:

> We find ourselves in possession of a unique body of melody which ... is of the most perfect type, and which has been transmitted to us orally and instrumentally from the remotest times … Singers still sing with absolute perfection, and there are fiddlers and pipers, though strangely despised by a sadly de-educated nation, are even still in the enjoyment of the full wealth of native musical tradition (Henebry 1903, 1).

Building on Hyde's conviction '[that] our music has become Anglicized to an alarming extent' (1894, 154), Henebry focuses on the unique qualities of native Irish culture, upon which certain elements of the modern age were, for him, having such a detrimental effect. He laments the prevalence of a widespread 'mistaken appreciation of Irish music':

> The piano is supreme, and children are so diligently taught the do, re, me, fa, that it is doubtful if one in ten thousand of them can sing a song like its parents or whistle a reel within the limits of bare decency. And all this virulent obscurantism is carried on in the names of civilisation, education and progress ... About five years ago I helped to judge the singing at the first Feis of Ardmore. Some neighbouring educational institutions had trained children to sing to the piano for the occasion. Of course beside traditional singers those were hopelessly outclassed, and judgement was passed against them accordingly. A controversy arose about the fairness of that judgement, and I endeavoured to show in the *Waterford Star* that the music which came within our purview was entirely distinct from piano music (Henebry 1903, 9–10).

Though published anonymously, the following extract, titled 'Impressions of the Feis at Ardmore', published in the *Waterford*

Star in the summer of 1899,[7] bears the unmistakable hallmarks of Henebry's witty prose:

> There were traditional singers there, as true to their intervals as a bird. Others there were who had been taught to sing to the accompaniment of piano. Here one detected a deplorable falling off. The music was no longer Irish, the subtle melody shrank from the blare of that vulgar strummer as affrighted as the fairies are said to be at the shriek of the locomotive. Somebody attempted to sing a *translation* from the English, 'The Harp that once through Tara's Hall', but was met by such a howl of disapprobation as made it evident that Ardmore at any rate knew enough to tell Irish from English. People usually concurred in giving sway to Ellie Murphy from Clashmore. Meek, modest and simple, a perfect *Irish* child, she faced the throng and warbled with surpassing, with thrilling sweetness her little Irish melody exactly as she had learned it from her mother. The quick Irish audience was struck by a lightening flash; they listened in a breathless spell until she had finished, and then proclaimed by their roar of applause that their instinct was ever sure for the right thing. Her superiority over the artificially trained children was glaring (Henebry, in Ó Conchubhair 2009, 92–93; emphasis in the original).

We can detect in the foregoing certain strands of thought that can be traced back to the counter-Enlightenment and the rise of Romanticism, where the artificial (like the polished) came to be viewed pejoratively (Burke 1978); the artless, wild, and natural were now to be admired. The virtues of 'meek', 'modest', 'simple' Ellie Murphy are here extoled, while the clangour and din of modernity are personified in the 'vulgar strummer'. For Henebry, singing of this kind cannot be taught or learned, as such, but must be acquired organically, naturally – 'lifted' as Ó Laoire (2007) might put it – to be deemed of any merit.

Henebry would further expound such ideas in his posthumously published, *Handbook of Irish Music* (1928). Although highly complimentary of the musicianship of such pipers as Patsy Tuohy and the aforementioned James Byrne, with Kilkenny fiddler Tomás Ó Huigín coming in for special mention, it was for the singers with their 'long-linked, slow singing airs with all their marvellous

encrustations of ornament and matchless technique' that he reserved his highest praise. For Henebry, their music went 'so far above and beyond all instrumentation that the sweetest finger that ever manipulated the vents of an Irish chanter or slid upon a finger-board would fail to get even the main tonality, let alone the embellishment' (ibid., 49). By way of example, he places particular emphasis on: '*Seaan Ó Dubuidir an Glenna* sung by *Niclas Ó Muiredaig*, of *Rath Cormaic*, by Carrick; *Sliab na mBan*, as sung in *Cúl na Smér*, *Cill Gobinett*; *Ar Eirinn ni indeosainn cia hi*, by *Frank Ó Cadla*; *Baile Lín* by Martin Draper, of *Baile na nGall*, Ring; some songs by *Pátric Ó Néill*, of Helvick, and, before all, *Na Connerys,* sung by *Michél Sigle Ó Cathán*, of *Maoil a Chórna*, Ring, besides many others' (ibid.).

A Time of Revival

In his reflections of the period under consideration here, the early decades of the twentieth century, the aforementioned scholar, Seán Ó Cuirrín, speaks of it as 'an uain gur thosaigh obair athbheochana na teanga sa Rinn' (in Tóibín 1978, 10), the time in which the work of reviving Irish in Ring really commenced. His fellow-pupil at Scoil an Chalaidh, Nioclás Tóibín, speaks of the tangible excitement felt at the time by the people of An Rinn and surrounding areas at these new developments – the celebration of their native culture. 'Mar a dúradar féin go mion minic, bhí an seana-shaol thar nais arís chucu. Bhí blianta óige curtha ina saol' (Tóibín, 1978: 15): it was as though they had journeyed back in time, their youth restored:

> Agus mise ag éirí suas sa sráidbhaile beag againn i mBaile na nGall sa Rinn, bhí an seancheol Gaelach ag an seandream ann, ba chuma cad eile a bhí acu ina theannta, agus ansin tháinig an Dochtúir ó Síocháin agus an Dochtúir de Hindeberg, beirt scoláire gan cháim, an tslí. Bhí an Dochtúir de Hindeberg lán dá chuid uirlisí ceoil, go speisialta an phíb agus an veidhlín. Agus ina dteannta bhí an tseanchóir aithrise, an fónagraf, aige agus bhíodh sé ag gabháil timpeall i measc an tseandreama ag déanamh buidéal ceoil léi agus go deimhin, ba róghreannmhar cuid de na buidéil cheoil chéanna.
>
> [When I was growing up in our little village of Baile na nGall, An Rinn, the old peole there had the old Gaelic music, though they had

> little else, and then Doctor ó Síocháin and Doctor de Hindeberg, flawless scholars both, came our way. Doctor de Hindeberg was highly absorbed in his musical instruments, especially the pipes and fiddle.[8] He also had an old recording device, the phonograph, and he would go around to the old people to make recordings of them and, indeed, many of those recordings were extremely humorous] (Tóibín 1978, 15).

Like Tóibín here, Seán Ó Cuirrín also speaks fondly of the presence and influence of those early twentieth-century visitors, coming as they did from outside and above and, again, of the great changes their interest in the culture of his native area brought about:

> Bhí ardán adhmaid ar sheastáin i gcoinne bráca a bhí sa mhacha agus is air sin a bhíodh an scoraíocht gach trathnóna bhreá. Is minic a sheas mé féin ar an ardán céanna chun amhrán a rá, agus b'ionadh leat a fhonnmhar a bhí na seandaoine chun dul ar an ardán ag amhránaíocht nó ag scéalaíocht.
>
> [A timber stage was erected next to a shed in the yard,[9] and this was where the people would gather every fine evening for the purposes of entertainment. I often stood on this stage myself to sing a song, and you would be amazed how enthusiastic the old people were to take to the stage to sing or tell stories] (Ó Cuirrín 2000, 133–34).

Ó Cuirrín goes on to recall in great detail a particular visit paid by Dr Henbry and his brother, piper Eoin de Hindeberg (†1937) on the locality of Ring in those early days of the revival. Although a somewhat lengthy extract, I think it will reward a few moments consideration:

> Ní raibh an Dochtúir i bhfad tar éis filleadh ó Merica an uair úd ... Agus bhí an uirlis ba nua aige, is é sin an chóir aithris nó an Edison Phonograph … D'imigh an cearr soir go dtí ti' Draper, nó ti' Mhuiris Léan mar a thugtaí air an uair úd, agus bhailigh na sluaite isteach … Dhein Eoin de Hindeberg céirníní ar an bpaiste ó chuid des na seanamhránaithe, agus cad é mar iontas a bhí ar gach aoinne nuair a tháinig an guth ceanann céanna amach as an gcóir aithrise. Is cuimhin liom amhrán a bheith a thógaint aige ó Shylvie Mhicil, 'Cath Chéim an Fhia' is dóigh liom, agus leis an bhfuta fata a bhí ar

> Shylvie nár chuaigh na focail amú air i dtosach an dara véarsa. Thosnaigh sé mar seo: 'Níor dh'fhan fear bean ná páiste', agus ansan stad sé agus dúirt: 'An diabhal, thá sé caillte agam a Athair!' sara bhféadfaí an chóir do stad. Nuair a tháinig cuimhne na bhfocal chuige lean sé air arís leis an amhrán. Ar ball is ea bhí an spórt agus an gáire nuair a tháinig 'An diabhal, tá sé caillte agam a Athair!' amach san aithimirt. Agus ar feadh blianta ina dhiaidh san ag an scoraíocht tráthnóna sa seanCholáiste bhíodh an spórt céanna ann gach uair a sheinntí an céirnín sin, agus níorbh annamh é sin.
>
> [The Doctor was not long returned from America at that time ... And he had in his possession the latest equipment, a recording device, the Edison Phonograph[10] ... The car went west to Draper's public house, or Muiris Léan's as it was then known, and the crowd gathered in ... Eoin de Hindeberg made recordings on the spot from some of the older singers, and there was tremendous astonishment among the people at hearing their voices emanating again from the recorder … I recall one particular song being taken from Sylvie Mhicil,[11] 'Cath Chéim an Fhia' I think it was, and in all of his excitement he forgot the words at the beginning of the second verse. He commenced: 'Níor dh'fhan fear bean ná páiste', then stopped, uttering: 'To the devil with it, I have forgotten it, Father!' before the machine could be stopped. He continued singing once he remembered the words, but there was great fun and laughter later when 'To the devil with it, I have forgotten it, Father!' was heard again from the machine. And for many years afterwards, there was great fun had at gatherings … every time this recording was played, and that was by no means seldom] (Ó Cuirrín 2000, 131–32).

Here we are given a very rich account of how some of the earliest Irish-language ethnographic field recordings in existence were made, along with certain insight as to the potential purpose envisaged for such recordings. It was Henebry's strongly held conviction that there were only two ways in which traditional music could be acquired: 'either from the mouth or instrument of one who has it, or from the phonograph, and positively there is no other means' (1928, 66).[12] A contemporary and friend of Henebry's, first Director of Broadcasting at 2RN at its inception in 1926, Séamus de Chlanndiolúin, tells us in a 1911 contribution on Irish music to *An Claidheamh Soluis*, of how the phonograph can and should be used

to come to the aid of those aspiring to sing in Irish: 'Get the phonograph to work', he counsels:

> and let it collect the rich harvest to be gathered in Ring, in Ibh Rathach, in West Clare, in Tuam, in any Irish speaking district. Bring it to the League class, turn it on after your day's work. If possible, when learning a song from it keep the words before your eyes. The results will be as good as if you were in the heart of the Gaedhealtacht. *At Ring College, much is being done in this way* … The phonograph should be used to record the best songs of their best singers, and the records published. If the same were done in the various Irish speaking districts Irish music would be safe forever (de Chlanndiolúin 1911, 19; my emphasis).[13]

Also, in the healthy irreverance of Sylie Mhicil's interjection, 'An diabhal, thá sé caillte agam, Athair!', we are reminded of the words of Torna, in his preface to *A Handbook of Irish Music* (Henebry 1928) that 'though he had strong views, it is not as an antagonist that Dr. Henebry will live in the memories of those who loved him' but rather as one whose name would forever invoke an 'inexhaustible fund of humour and anecdote'.

We are in the very privileged position today of being able to listen in, a little over one hundred and fifteen years later, on this very moment, described so vividly by Ó Cuirrín – a moment from a decisive period in which the fortunes of the Irish language in this county Waterford community were being determined.[14] Ó Cuirrín's vivid description of this event casts some light on the influence these 'external discoverers of folklore' were beginning to have on An Rinn Ó gCuanach in the early part of the twentieth century. Finnish folklorist and ethnologist, Lauri Honko, talks of 'the first life of folklore' (1991, 34) as its natural, unreflexive, almost imperceptible existence in a community. The consciousness raising, the reflexivity caused when 'someone enters the traditional community from outside and points to some feature of its culture – perhaps an object, song or custom – and says this is valuable' (Honko 1991, 35) inevitably changes the way in which that community views itself and its culture. It is apparent from Ó Cuirrín's brief memoir that a certain awareness of the unique cultural capital of which they are in possession – 'the partial recognition of folklore from within' (ibid.)

– is beginning to develop in the community in question here at this time.

Likewise, the same can be seen in the writings of his fellow-pupil at 'Scoil an Chalaidh', Nioclás Tóibín, whose part in the promotion of the song tradition of his native area has not yet been given full consideration. He was among those who most influenced the singing of his nephew and namesake, the renowned sean-nós singer, Nioclás Tóibín (1928–1994), who would in turn greatly inspire succeeding generations of singers.[15] Born in the closing decade of the nineteenth century, the elder Tóibín often spoke of his delight at acquiring the ability to write in Irish and of how he put his newfound skill to work for the preservation of his native culture:

> Ba é ba gheal agus ba róthaitneamhach liom bualadh le seanóirí a raibh seanamhráin agus seanchainteanna deasa acu agus iad a thógáil síos uathu de réir mar b'acmhainn dom … B'aoibhneas liom a bheith inniúil ar a dhéanamh.
>
> [I greatly enjoyed meeting the older people who had songs and other nice expressions, and to record them from their dictation in as much as I could … It gave me great pleasure to be able to do it] (Tóibín 1978, 16).

Again and again in his posthumously published 1978 work, *Duanaire Déiseach*, a collection of 28 items, principally songs, collected mostly in the early decades of the twentieth century, Tóibín speaks of his sense of fulfilment at being able to rescue from oblivion this material so close to his heart. Historian and anthropologist, James Clifford's 'salvage paradigm' (1989) frequently echoes in Tóibín's writings; in his expressed desire 'to rescue something "authentic" out of destructive historical changes' (ibid., 74) to which he felt he bore witness. Here, authenticity is associated with the past; a time 'prior to the present (but not so distant or eroded as to make collection or salvage impossible)' (ibid.). A single example must serve to illustrate:

> Nuair a tháinig an lá go rabhas ag lorg agus ar thóir seanamhrán agus seanrann d'airíos go raibh amhrán áirithe ag Peaid the Lady [Ó Muirithe (1841–1923)], amhrán nach raibh ag duine beo eile ach

> aige féin. Chuir sin cíocras orm féin agus bhí sé ag teacht idir mé féin agus codladh na hoíche conas teacht ar 'An Corrán' … ó Pheaid.
>
> [When the day came that I was in pursuit of old songs and old verse, I heard that Peaid the Lady [Ó Muirithe (1841–1923)] had a certain song that was not known by any other living person. This bothered me greatly and kept me awake nights, thinking of how I might procure 'An Corrán'[16] from him] (Tóibín 1978, 43).

Of course he succeeded in committing this and many other pieces to paper over the succeeding years.

Honko has illustrated how '[o]ne characteristic sign of a feeling for folklore that wells up from within the traditional community may be partiality. It usually applies to parts or sub-areas of tradition … [I]t indicates the areas of central importance by which the community consciously seeks to achieve something' (1991, 35). In all of the foregoing, we see attention being strongly focused on the musical traditions of An Rinn Ó gCuanach and in particular on song, which was becoming increasingly viewed, from within, as the area's form of cultural expression *par excellence.*

In another telling excerpt, Seán Ó Cuirín expresses the opinion that the typical small rural community will experience little in the way of change, over time, if nothing substantial occurs to bring that change about (2000, 130). For him, his native area of Baile na nGall was altered considerably, and for the better, by events and efforts related to the revival of Irish in the locality in the late nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century:

> Sin stair iontach a chonaic daoine dem chomhaois-se á deanamh i bparóiste beag suarach mar an Rinn. Ní bréag 'paróiste suarach' do lua, mar ní raibh sa Rinn le linn m'óigese ach paróiste bocht suarach a raibh drochmheas ag cléir agus tuath ar a paróisteánaigh, chionn gur Ghaelainn ba theanga teallaigh ann. Mar adúirt fear ar Ché Eochaille leis an Dochtúir de Hindeberg nuair a cheistigh sé é i dtaobh iascairí ar chuala sé Gaelainn ar siúl acu: 'Them's what we does be calling the Turks'. Sin mar a thugaidís ar iascairí bochta na Rinne an uair úd.

> [That's a wonderful turn of events that people of my age here in this small, insignificant parish of An Rinn have witnessed. It is no innacuracy to describe it so, because An Rinn when I was young was but a poor insignificant parish in which the people were despised by both clergy and lay alike, as Irish was the language of the hearth. As one man on Youghal quay said to Doctor Henebry, in questioning him about fishermen he had heard conversing in Irish: 'Them's what we does be calling the Turks'. That's how they viewed the poor fisermen of An Rinn at that time] (Ó Cuirrín 2000, 135).

Conclusion

Among the revival's greatest achievements was that it elevated certain aspects of Irish culture, the song tradition for instance, to a 'respectable' position. As McCartney (1986, 124) rightly observes, if the man in the street, or in the field, did not always share the enthusiasm of the Gaelic Leaguer for the revival, a certain pride in the language and traditions of his ancestors had been restored to him. In the case of An Rinn Ó gCuanach and An Seanphobal in county Waterford, it happened, at the turn of the twentieth century, that the fast-approaching tsunami of the English-speaking world was held back somewhat by the pioneering efforts of a small number of committed activists, foremost among them Ó Cadhla, Ó Síothcháin and de Hindeberg. Their mantle, as we have seen, was readily and effectively taken up by their disciples; it was the turning of the tide and song was at the heart of it all.

Notes

[1] See http://www.ainm.ie/Bio.aspx?ID=181. Accessed 20 May 2019. This article is a revised version of a paper delivered on 26 August 2017 at a conference hosted by the Dept. of Modern Irish at UCC, titled 'Oran, Arran, Oran: A Conference on Gaelic Song'. My thanks to Dr Sorcha Nic Lochlainn for inviting me to contribute to the proceedings.

[2] All translations are by the author, unless otherwise stated.

[3] Following Henebry's death, Ó Cuirrín would go on to edit some of his writings under the title *Scríbhne Risteird de Hindeberg* (1920). Along with his wife, musician and author Treasa Ní Ailpín, he was also instrumental in

bringing Henebry's *A Handbook of Irish Music* to publication in 1928. For more on poet Máire Ní Dhroma, see Ó Gealbháin, 2015.

[4] See https://www.ainm.ie/Bio.aspx?ID=136. Accessed 20 May 2019. For recordings of Byrne, visit https://www.itma.ie/features/playlists/itma-henebry-cylinder-recordings-1905. Accessed 20 May 2019.

[5] This taken from an anonymous piece (but quoting one 'Mr Con O'Leary') published in *The Waterford News*, 1 February 1935, titled 'The Drolleries of Dr Henebry: Scholar, Dreamer, Humourist', p.1. My thanks to Dr Stiofán Ó Cadhla for bringing the article to my attention.

[6] See Hyde 1894, 155ff.

[7] Republished later in *An Claidheamh Soluis* vol. 1, no. 25, 2 September 1899, 390–91.

[8] Henebry's contemporary and fellow countyman, Canon Patrick Power (1862–1951), comments: 'Dr. Henebry's favourite hobby was the National Music of Ireland. As an exponent of traditional Irish music, he probably had no living equal', while Irish-language activist, Seán Ó Cadhla (1860–1942), says that his music 'would stir the pulse of a corpse. The entire house would be moving and swaying, the furniture would have to take part in the dance as well as the people' ('go gcorróghadh sé an chuisle ag an marbhán. Go mbeadh an teach ar fad ag bogadh agus ag luascadh aige agus go gcaithfeadh an troscán bheith sa rinnce chomh maith leis na daoine') (in Ó Donnchadha 1924, 283).

[9] i.e., in the yard of the newly erected school building on Bóthar na Sop, An Rinn.

[10] Henebry's 'Ediphone Home Phonograph' is currently housed in the Irish Traditional Music Archive/Taisce Cheol Dúchais Éireann (ITMA/TCDÉ), 73 Merrion Square, Dublin 2. For images, see Ó Cuirrín 2000, 135.

[11] i.e., Sylvie Mhicil Ó Muirithe (b. 1846), recorded in the 1901 census as 'Silvester Murray', a fisherman, who knew both Irish and English. See http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai001246817/. Accessed 6 December 2016.

[12] In addition, see where he says elsewhere: 'The loss between a phonographic reproduction of one of these melodies and, say, a rendering by a modern violinist or flute-player from a skeleton score, such as is used in making our "collections" of printed music, is so great as to constitute a change in identity' (Henebry 1928, 49).

[13] See, further, the comments of a former UCC student, Con O'Leary, published in the aforementioned article from *The Waterford News*, 1 February 1935: 'I cannot convey a sense of our enchantment as the Doctor, by means of these ... records caught from the dying lips of Gaelic-speaking Ireland, made known to us a country of which we were conscious that we

had the echo in our own hearts but which was in some respects stranger to us than if it were situated in another continent'.

[14] For this, and other recordings made by the Henebrys, visit ITMA online: https://www.itma.ie/features/playlists/itma-henebry-cylinder-recordings-2. Accessed 23 May 2019.

[15] For more on this important figure, see Ó Gealbháin 2019.

[16] Attributed to one Stiabhna Ó Séaghdha (Stiabhna Siúsaic), a nineteenth-century spailpín or migratory worker and native of Tuosist, county Kerry, who eventually relocated to the Comeragh area of county Waterford. See Ó Súilleabháin 1937, 146; 149–50; 194. For other versions of this item in the Waterford song tradition, see National Folklore Collection (NFC) 85:281–83 ('An Crán'); 153:622–24 ('An Crán'); 275:145–47 ('An Corrán'). These sources cited by kind permission of the Director of the NFC, Dr Críostóir Mac Cárthaigh. See, also, Ó Cionnfhaolaidh 1956, 39–40

References

Anon. 1935. 'The Drolleries of Dr Henebry: Scholar, Dreamer, Humourist'. *The Waterford News*, 1 February: 1.

Brooke, Charlotte. 1816 [1789]. *Reliques of Irish Poetry, Consisting of Heroic Poems, Odes, Elegies, and Songs, Translated into English Verse, with Notes Explanatory and Historical, and the Originals in the Irish Character, to which is Subjoined an Irish Tale*. Dublin: J. Christie.

Burke, Peter. 1978. *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*. New York: Harper and Row.

Clifford, James. 1989. 'The Others: Beyond the "Salvage" Paradigm', *Third Text* 3 (6): 73–78.

de Chlanndiolúin, Séamus. 1911. 'Irish Traditional Music'. *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 29 July: 19.

Fitzgerald, Garrett. 1984. 'Estimates for Baronies of Minimum Level of Irish-Speaking Amongst Successive Decennial Cohorts: 1771–1781 to 1861–1871', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy. Section C: Archaeology, Celtic Studies, History, Linguistics, Literature* 84C: 117–55.

Hardiman, James. 1971 [1831]. *Irish Minstrelsy or Bardic Remains of Ireland*, vols 1 and 2. Dublin: Irish University Press.

Henebry, Richard (1928) *A Handbook of Irish Music*. Cork: Cork University Press.

——— (1903) *Irish Music: Being an Examination of the Matter of Scales, Modes, and Keys, with Practical Instructions and Examples for Players*. Dublin: An Cló-Chumann.

——— 1899. 'Impressions of the Feis at Ardmore', *An Claidheamh Soluis* 1 (25): 390–91.

Honko, Lauri. 1991. 'The Folklore Process', *The Folklore Fellows Summer School Programe*, Turku: 25–47.

Hyde, Douglas. 1909 [1893]. *Abhráin Grádh Chúige Connacht or Love Songs of Connaught*. Dublin: Gill and Son.

——— 1894. 'The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland'. In *The Revival of Irish Literature: Addresses by Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, K.C.M.G., Dr. George Sigerson and Dr. Douglas Hyde*, edited by Charles Gavan Duffy, 117–61. London: T. Fisher Unwin.

Mac Aonghusa, Proinsias. 1993. *Ar Son na Gaeilge: Conradh na Gaeilge 1893–1993*. Dublin: Conradh na Gaeilge.

Mac Craith, Nioclás (ed.). 2005. *Comóradh Céad Bliain Iolscoil na Mumhan .i. Coláiste na Rinne, 1905–2005*. An Rinn Ó gCuanach: Coláiste na Rinne.

McCartney, Donal. 1986. 'The Founding of the Gaelic League.' In *Milestones in Irish History*, edited by Liam de Paor, 117–27. Cork: Mercier Press.

Nic Dhonncha, Róisín. 2004. 'An tOireachtas agus an Amhránaíocht ar an Sean-Nós: Cruthú agus Sealbhú Traidisiúin.' *Bliainiris 2004*: 57–71.

Ó Cionnfhaolaidh, Seán. 1998. 'Bríd na Páirce an Bhéil Bhinn.' *An Linn Bhuí* 2: 86–88

Ó Cionnfhaolaidh, Micheul (ed.). 1956. *Beatha Mhichíl Turraoin*. Dublin: Oifig an tSoláthair.

Ó Conchubhair, Brian. 2009. *Fin de Siecle na Gaeilge*. Indreabhán: An Clóchomhar/Cló Iar-Chonnacht.

Ó Cuirrín, Seán. 2000. 'Stair na Rinne Lem Linnse', *An Linn Bhuí* 4: 130–35.

O'Daly, John (ed.). 1860. *The Poets and Poetry of Munster: a Selection of Irish Songs by the Poets of the Last Century with Metrical Translations by Erionnach, Second Series.* Dublin: John O'Daly.

——— (ed.). 1849. *The Poets and Poetry of Munster: a Selection of Irish Songs by the Poets of the Last Century with Poetical Translations by the Late James Clarence Mangan Now for the First Time Published, with the Original Music, and Biographical Sketches of the Authors by John O'Daly*, *Editor of 'Reliques of Irish Jacobite Poetry', 'The Kings of the Race of Eibhear;' Author of 'Self-Instruction in Irish' and Assistant Secretary to the Celtic Society*. Dublin: John O'Daly.

Ó Domhnaill, Michéal. [1987]. *Iolscoil na Mumhan ris a ráitear an tan so Coláiste na Rinne*. An Rinn Ó gCuanach: Coláiste na Rinne.

Ó Donnchadha, Éamonn. 1924. 'Dr. Henebry's Unpublished Manuscript.' *The Leadar* (25 October): 282–85.

Ó Gealbháin, Ciarán. 2019. *'"Like a Mountain Rising Out of a Cultural Landscape": Nioclás Tóibín (1928–1994) and the Déise Song Tradition' (Ó Riada Memorial Lecture 31)*. Cork: The Irish Traditional Music Society, UCC.

——— 2015 '"Na Prátaí Dubha" agus Deantúis Eile a Leagtar ar Mholly na Páirce.' *An Linn Bhuí* 19: 41–62.

Ó hÓgáin, Dáithí (ed.). 1994. *Binneas Thar Meon*, vol. 1. Dublin: Comhairle Bhéaloideas Éireann.

Ó Laoire, Lillis. 2007. *On a Rock in the Middle of the Ocean*. Indreabhán: Cló Iar-Chonnacht.

Schuller, Dietrich (ed.). 2003. *The Collections of Rudolf Trebitsch: Celtic Recordings – Ireland, Wales, Brittany, Isle of Man, and Scotland (1907–09)*, series 5(2): Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie de Wissenschaften.

Tóibín, Nioclás (ed.). 1978. *Duanaire Déiseach*. Dublin: Sáirséal agus Dill.

Ciarán Ó Gealbháin is a musician and singer, whose doctoral research at Roinn an Bhéaloidis/Department of Folklore and Ethnology, UCC, focused on various aspects of the song tradition of his native county of Waterford. He currently lectures on the Béaloideas and Folklore programmes at UCC, and has co-edited *BÉASCNA*, UCC Journal of Folklore and Ethnology, since 2007.

Copyright of Beascna is the property of University College Cork, Department of Folklore & Ethnology/Bealoideas and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.