

Saint Patrick in the School's Collection

Known as the Schools' Collection, between 1937 and 1939, pupils from more than 5,000 primary schools across Ireland compiled around 740,000 pages of folklore and local traditions for the Irish Folklore Commission (see www.duchas.ie). Here is a small selection of material relating to St Patrick gathered by Galway schoolchildren. Why not find your school or a nearby school in the Schools' Collection and research stories and traditions associated with St Patrick from your locality: (<https://www.duchas.ie/en/cbes/GA>)

“St Patrick's day is a holiday of obligation and the Irish people in America and other foreign countries keep it a holiday. All true Irish men and women wear the Shamrock on that day, for it was St Patrick who founded the Shamrock. Every Irish person in foreign countries love to get the Shamrock from Ireland to wear on St Patrick's Day. It was St. Patrick who brought the true faith into Ireland. St Patrick banished the reptiles out of Ireland, he crushed the snakes with his feet and ever since a snake would not live in Ireland. It is no wonder the Irish love St Patrick and honour him so much. There are bands playing in the big towns in Ireland on St. Patrick's day”. (Coolagh, Co. Galway)

“When St. Patrick was explaining to the Irish people the blessed Trinity he picked up a shamrock and said to the people as there are three leaves on one stem as there are three persons in God. Since that time nearly all the people wear shamrock on St. Patrick's Day”. (Garraun, Co. Galway)

“My grandfather said they he heard that St. Patrick visited Killbannon [Tuam, Co. Galway]. He heard the older people say that St. Patrick was passing Lavally lake about nightfall and he saw a light out in the lake. He went to a house which was situated near the lake and inquired about the light. The people told him that they had seen the light appear and disappear often and they were afraid to go out at night. St. Patrick said prayers on the shore of the lake and the light was never seen after that”. (Levally, Co. Galway)

“St. Patrick's well is situated about three and a half miles from Kinvara. The story of how it got its name is one day a woman was walking up Corker hill and she was fainting for the want of a drink of water. She searched for a long time to see if she could find a well to get a drink. At last she gave up the search in despair. She sat down on a rock and started to cry. Suddenly she

heard someone walking towards her, looking up she saw St. Patrick and he asked her why she was crying. The woman told him that she was fainting for want of water and that she could not find any. St. Patrick told her to follow him and he took her into a field where there was a rock. Kneeling down beside the rock he prayed to God that a well would spring up and it did. St. Patrick then blessed the well and that is how the well got its name”. (Lettera, Co. Galway)

“When St. Patrick was in Ireland long ago. One day he was travelling through Monivea and he had a goat with him. He went into the church to pray, and whilst he was inside somebody in Monivea milked the Goat. St. Patrick was vexed, and when he was leaving Monivea he looked back and said that he hoped Monivea would be neither better or worse. So Monivea stands the very same way ever since and it is not better or worse”. (Kiltullagh, Co. Galway)

“There is a holy well in Kiltormer, a few miles outside Ballinasloe. It is called "St. Patrick's Well". It is said that when St. Patrick was preaching in Ireland the water sprang up here under his feet to baptize the people. Ever since it is called "St. Patrick's Well". The people go there every year in June. They go round the well three times and pass in and out between three ash trees which are round the well and they leave something at each tree”. (Ballinasloe, Co. Galway)

“When St. Patrick was in Ireland there were snakes in it. They knew St. Patrick was going to banish them out of Ireland. There was one big snake and he said he would be gone before St. Patrick would come. So he made his way out to the sea. The water began to run along the line that the snake left after him. That is the cause it is called the Shannon. So it was the snake that made the Shannon”. (Killeeneen More, Co. Galway)