

Dr. Douglas Hyde Interpretative Centre

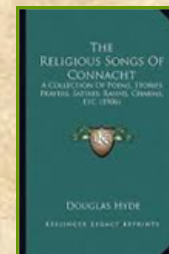
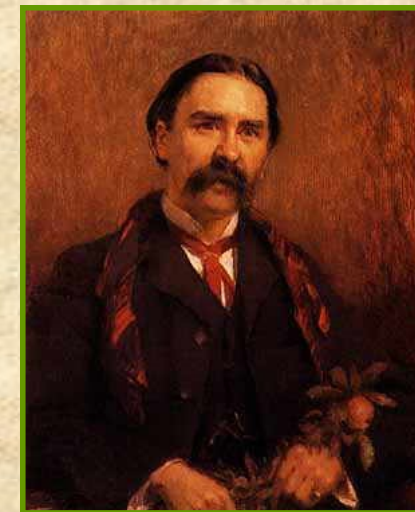
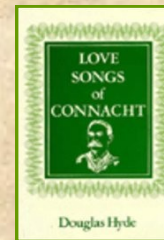
Roscommon County Council Library Services hold a substantial collection of the works and material relating to Douglas Hyde. The holdings can be viewed at the Local Studies Section, County Library, Abbey Street, Roscommon. Hyde collection material is also available at Castlereagh Library, Main Street, Castlereagh. Full details can also be accessed through Library link on

www.roscommoncoco.ie

The figure of Douglas Hyde occupies a cherished position in both the consciousness of the people of his native Roscommon and as a major influence in Irish history. The Douglas Hyde Conference held in his honour each year since 1988 reflects on his literary influence and achievements and provides a programme and forum for debate. Conference details are available on www.roscommonarts.com

Roscommon Literary Heritage Series

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Douglas Hyde

Roscommon Anthology and Literary Map

Illustrated by artists associated with the county, *The Roscommon Anthology* is a beautifully produced book comprising selected writings by thirty-one writers with close associations to the county. The anthology is accompanied by a unique literary map of the county. Co-edited by Roscommon-born brothers, Michael and John O'Dea, the anthology was launched in November 2013 to considerable local and national acclaim.

The Roscommon Anthology is also available online at www.theroscommonanthology.com

Also available in the Roscommon Literary Heritage Series:

Percy French: *a remarkable man, a unique talent. One of Ireland's greatest songwriters and a fine watercolourist whose charm and wit won over everyone with whom he came in contact.*

John McGahern: *one of Ireland's greatest writers. Often referred to as 'Ireland's Chekhov', McGahern lived the writer's life, quietly yet determinedly writing novels and short stories of great depth and beauty.*

More editions in the series will follow.

Text: Gerry Boland Design and Layout: Dympna Naughten

Roscommon has a proud history and a rich literary heritage. Its authors, writers and poets have made a significant contribution to the national literature of Ireland. Roscommon County Council welcomes the production of these literary guides in promoting its cultural tourism. This first edition of the Roscommon Literary Heritage Series features three major literary figures in the county.

Douglas Hyde, the Writer

Douglas Hyde was a remarkably gifted writer and scholar who published widely during his lifetime. He wrote with a true writer's instinct and with an obvious love for his themes and his characters. In finding and translating hundreds of old Irish folk tales, poems and songs, he gave to the nation one of the greatest gifts possible: its language; rediscovered and reinvigorated. He was and remains a hugely significant national figure.

He published his first volume of folktales, *Leabhar Sgealaigbeachta*, in 1889. The twenty stories in 'Leabhar' had been 'collected' by Hyde from country men and women in their sixties and seventies who had lived through the Famine years. In Hyde's notes that were included as an appendix, he explained that he had written the stories as told to him with spelling unchanged, correcting only errors of grammar and inflection. A year later, another collection, *Beside the Fire*, appeared. Hyde dedicated the book to 'those truly cultured and unselfish men, the poet-scribes and hedge-schoolmasters of the last century and the beginning of this'.

His much loved volume, *Love Songs of Connaught* was published in 1893, the same year that he married Lucy Kurtz and also the same year that he assumed presidency of the Gaelic League at its founding. In *Love Songs*, Hyde's natural instincts as a poet came through in his wonderful translations of Gaelic verse.

*My heart is as black as a sloe,
Or as a black coal that would be burnt in a forge,
As the sole of a shoe upon white halls,
And there is great melancholy over my laugh.*
[from *IF I WERE TO GO WEST*]

Thug an file, Austin Clarke, de mholadh ar *Love Songs of Connaught / Abbráin Ghrádha Chúige Chonnacht* gur léiríodh ann traidisiún iomlán samhlaíochta do scríbhneoirí óga. D'oibrigh de hÍde le W.B. Yeats i bPáirc an Chúil sa bhliain 1899 ar an gcéad dráma Gaeilge uaidh, *Casadh an tSúgáin*. Cuireadh an dráma ar an stáitse ina dhiaidh sin in Amharclann an Gaiety i mBaile Átha Cliath sa bhliain 1901. Ba é an chéad dráma riamh é a léiríodh in amharclann. I rith na mblianta ina dhiaidh sin scríobh sé agus léirigh sé roinnt drámaí aon ghníomh, ina measc, *An Cleambnas* (a raibh Lady Gregory i gcomhar leis á scríobh); *An Tinncear agus an tSídbeog*, agus *An Naomh ar Iarraidh*. Sa bhliain 1906, foilsíodh *The Religious Songs of Connaught / Abbráin Diadha Chúige Chonnacht*, ina bhfuil gar go maith do 250 dán, scéal, paidir, rann, ortha, beannacht agus mallacht a bhí sé a bhailiú le fiche bliain. Sa bhliain 1916, bliain Éirí Amach na Cásca, foilsíodh *Legends of Saints and Sinners*, ceathracha sé sliocht faoi leith a bhain le Críostaíocht na meánaoise in Éirinn.

Ar an iliomad foilseachán dá chuid, áirítear gurbh mhórshaothair liteartha lena linn *Love Songs of Connaught / Abbráin Ghrádha Chúige Chonnacht*, *The Story of Early Gaelic Literature* (1895) agus *Literary History of Ireland* (1899). Tharraing a chuid aistriúcháin in *Love Songs of Connaught / Abbráin Ghrádha Chúige Chonnacht*, meas na *literati* air agus aird an phobail.

Scríobh W.B. Yeats gurbh léiriú an leabhar sin ar 'the coming of a new power into literature'. Is dócha gurb é aistriúchán de hÍde ar sheanscéalta Éireannacha in *Beside the Fire* agus leagan Gaeilge den bhailiúchán céanna sa bhliain 1891 (*Cois na Teine*) an chéad sampla de Bhéarla na hÉireann in úsáid mar theanga litríochta.

*A Úna Bhán ir tú do mhearúigh mo chiall
A Úna ir tu chuaidh go dlúth idir mé 'gur Dia,
A Úna, a chraébh chúbhartha, a lúibín charta na g-ciabh,
Nár b'fearr damh-ra bheith gan rúilibh ná d'fheiceál ariamh.*
[sliocht as *Úna Bhán*]

Dubhghlas de hÍde, Scríbhneoir

Scríbhneoir agus scoláire sárchumasach a bhí i nDubhghlas de hÍde a d'fhoilsigh cuid mhór lena linn. Bhí éirim an scríbhneora go críochnúil ann agus ba léir a raibh de ghean aige ar na téamaí agus na carachtair. Trí na céadta seanscéalta, dán agus amhrán a aimsiú agus a aistriú, thug sé ceann de na bronntanais is fearr ab fhéidir don náisiún: teanga na tíre; le léargas agus beocht as an nua. Bhí suntas mar phearsa náisiúnta leis an tráth sin agus anuas go dtí an lá atá inniu ann.

Sa bhliain 1889 a d'fhoilsigh sé *Leabhar Sgealaigheachta*, an chéad imleabhar de na seanscéalta uaidh. Bhí fiche scéal sa leabhar sin a bhailigh de hÍde ó fhir agus ó mhná na tíre a raibh trí scór agus nó trí scór go leith slán acu agus a mhair i rith bhlianta an Drochshaoil. Sna nótaí a chuir de hÍde mar aguisín leis an leabhar, mhínigh sé gur bhreac sé síos na scéalta go díreach mar a d'aithris na scéalaithe iad, an litriú mar a bhí agus gan ceartú ar aon ní seachas meancóga sa ghramadach agus san infhillleadh ar fhocail. An bhliain ina dhiaidh sin, tháinig cnuasach eile, *Beside the Fire*. Thiomnaigh de hÍde an leabhar do na fir oilte chneasta sin, na scríobhaithe, filí agus scoláirí bochta ó dheireadh an naoú haois déag agus tús an fichiú haois.

Foilsíodh *Love Songs of Connaught / Abbráin Ghrádha Chúige Chonnacht*, a mbíonn oiread tóir air, sa bhliain 1893, an bhliain chéanna ar phós sé Lucy Kurtz agus an bhliain freisin ar ghlac sé uachtaránacht Chonradh na Gaeilge air féin nuair a bunaíodh an eagraíocht. Tá éirim filíochta de hÍde le sonrú go soiléir ar an aistriúchán a rinne sé ar ábhar véarsaíochta na Gaeilge sa leabhar sin.

*Tá mo chroidhe chomh dubh le áirne
Ná le gual dubh dhóighfidhe i g-ceartaidh,
Le bonn bróige air hállaidhibh bána,
'S tá líonncubh mór or cionn mo gháire
[sliocht as *Dá dTéidhinn-se siar*]*

The Irish poet, Austin Clarke, praised *Love Songs of Connaught* for having revealed to young writers 'an entire imaginative tradition'. 1899 saw Hyde working with W.B. Yeats in Coole Park on his first play in Irish, *Casadh an tSúgáin* (Twisting of the Rope). The play was subsequently performed in the Gaiety Theatre in Dublin in 1901. It was the first play in Irish produced in any theatre. Over the following years he wrote and had performed several one-act plays in the Irish language, among them, *The Marriage* (on which he collaborated with Lady Gregory); *The Tinker and the Fairy*, and *The Lost Saint*. In 1906, *The Religious Songs of Connaught* was published, containing close to 250 poems, stories, prayers, ranns, charms, blessings and curses that he had begun collecting twenty years earlier. In 1916, the year of the Easter Rising, *Legends of Saints and Sinners* was published, forty-six individual pieces with roots in medieval Christian Ireland.

Amongst his many publications, *The Love Songs of Connaught*, *The Story of Early Gaelic Literature* (1895), and his *Literary History of Ireland* (1899), are seen as major literary achievements of their time. His translations in *Love Songs* aroused the appreciation of the literati and the admiration of the public. W.B. Yeats wrote that the book revealed 'the coming of a new power into literature'. Hyde's translations of Irish folk tales in *Beside the Fire* and an Irish language translation of the same in 1891 (*Cois na Teine*) were probably the first examples of Anglo-Irish being used as a literary medium.

*O fair Una, it is you who have set astray my senses;
O Una, it is you who went close in between me and God,
O Una, fragrant branch, twisted little curl of the ringlets,
Was it not better for me to be without eyes than ever to
have seen you?
[from *OONA WAUN (FAIR UNA)*]*

Dr. Douglas Hyde Interpretative Centre

(Located on the road connecting Frenchpark to Ballaghaderreen).

The church of which Arthur Hyde (Douglas's father) was rector is now a museum dedicated to showing memorabilia about Douglas Hyde. In the adjoining gardens the visitor may also see the historical burial ground where the Hyde family is interred.

All tours by appointment only.

For information on opening times, please contact the curator,
Deirdre O'Gara on 087-7823751 or email
dogara@roscommoncoco.ie
www.visitroscommon.com

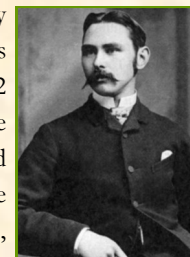


Douglas Hyde Interpretative Centre



A Brief Biography

Douglas Hyde was born at Longford House in Castlerea in County Roscommon on 17 January, 1860. His father, Arthur Hyde, was Church of Ireland rector of Kilmactranny, County Sligo from 1852 to 1867, and it was here that Hyde spent his first seven years. The family moved to Portahard, between Frenchpark and Ballaghaderreen, when his father was appointed rector of Tibohine Church in 1867. Partly as a result of a short childhood illness, Douglas was educated at home by his father and his aunt.



Growing up, he became fascinated with hearing the old people in the locality speak the Irish language. He was influenced in particular by the gamekeeper Seamus Hart and the wife of his friend, Mrs. Connolly. Hyde later credited Hart as being 'one of the best reciters [of stories] I ever met'.

Hyde entered Trinity College, Dublin, in 1880, where he became fluent in French, Latin, German, Greek, and Hebrew. An excellent student, he won many prizes, including the gold medal for modern literature. He married Lucy Cometina Kurtz, a German, in 1893. They had two daughters, Nuala and Úna.

He joined the Society for the Preservation of the Irish Language around 1880, and between 1879 and 1884 he published more than a hundred pieces of Irish verse under the pen name An Craoibhín Aoibhinn (The Pleasant Little Branch). He helped establish the Gaelic Journal in 1892, and in November of the same year wrote a manifesto called 'The necessity for de-anglicizing the Irish nation', arguing that Ireland should follow her own traditions in language, literature and even in dress. In 1893 he helped found the Gaelic League, to encourage the preservation of Irish culture, its music, dances, and language.

In 1909, Hyde was appointed to the chair of modern Irish in the newly-established National University of Ireland. He was elected to Seanad Éireann, the upper house of the Irish Free State's parliament, at a by-election in February 1925, however his tenure ended at the Irish Seanad election soon after. He returned to academia, as Professor of Modern Irish at University College Dublin, retiring in 1932 and moving back home to Frenchpark.

His calm and easy days of leisure at home came to an end when, on 26th June 1938, he was inaugurated as the first President of Ireland. Hyde, with his handlebar moustache and warm personality, was a popular president. He died on 12th July 1949, aged 89. As a former President of Ireland he was accorded a state funeral.

His remains are interred in the grounds of Douglas Hyde Centre, Portahard, Co. Roscommon.