



BANTRY
HISTORICAL
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SOCIETY

Old Irish Sayings



Old Irish Sayings

An old lady age ninety nine enquires of a neighbour if his father was still alive. When told he was and that he was 102 years, she remarked *"He's knocking his own out of it"*.

Asked about the age of her neighbour a woman replied:
"I'd say six tens are 50 and she's that anyway".

Mikey and Tom meet in the graveyard at a funeral of a friend. Upon hearing from Tom that he is 90 years Mikey remarks:
"It's hardly worth while for you to go home"

It may well be true but it's not very likely.

I haven't said yesterday morning's prayers yet.

What would the son of a cat do but kill a mouse?

There is no wise man without fault and no story without a lie.

'Twas God who sent the food, but 'twas the devil who sent the cook."

It's easy to make money but only a wise man keeps it

We didn't get what we expected but then we expected we wouldn't
Spring water is a cheap medicine

"You're a very coarse Christian" – as the devil said to the hedgehog.

Great noise and little wool –as the devil said when shearing the pig.

What's to say about purgatory - nothing much, except that you might go farther and fare worse.

I'd know his shadow on a furze bush.

She has a tongue that would clip a hedge.

He'd curse the bladder out of a goat.

If that man went to a wedding he'd hang around for the christening.

That's a fine doorful of a woman.

I am man in myself like Oliver's bull.

Neither glad nor sorry like a dog at his father's wake.



Seanfhocail (old sayings)

Tá caint saor ach airgead ar thobac.
(Talk is cheap but tobacco costs money)

Mura bréag é, is mór an scéal é.
(If it isn't a lie, it's big news.)

Is mór an ní an neart --- arsa an dreoilín nuair a chaith sé an chiaróg leis an bhfhill.
(Strength is a great thing - as the wren said when he threw the beetle over the cliff.)

An cóngar chun an bhídh is an timpeall chun na hoibre.
(The near way to the food and the roundabout to work.)

Nil ann ach sceach i mbéal bearnan.
(He's only a bush in a gap.)

An té a bhíonn suas óltar deoch air, is an té a bhíonn síos luítear cos air.
(A glass is raised to the person who is up, and the boot is put into the person who is down)

Is fearr paiste ná poll ach níl ann ach san.
(A patch is better than a hole, but it's only just that.)

Dá olcas é Séamas bfhéarr é ná a bheith ina éagmais.
(As bad as Séamas is, we'd be worse without him.)

Troid na mbó maol.
(The fight of the bald cows)

Beagán agus a rá go maith.
(Say little and say it well)

Is binn béal ina thost.
(Silent mouth, sweet the sound)

Mórán cainte ar bheagán cúise
(Much talk for little reason)

Má tá bréag ann bíodh - ní mise a chum ná a cheap é.
(If it's a lie, so be it. It wasn't I who made it up.)

Go nithe an cat thú agus go n-ithe an diabhal an cat.
(May the cat eat you and may the devil eat the cat.)

Molann an obair an fear.
(His work praises the man.)

Chonac cheana thú – arsa an cat leis an mbainne te.
(“I saw you before” as the cat said to the hot milk.)

Ní breac go port é.
(There's no trout until it's on the bank.)

Báisteach ó Dhia chughainn ach gan é a bheith fliuch.
(May God send us rain but don't let it be wet.)

Mol an lá um thrathnóna.
(Praise the day in the evening.)

Is beag an mhaith caid ard lá gaoithe.
(The high ball is no use on a windy day.)

Sláinte na bfhéar is go maire na mná go deo.
(Here's health to the men and may the women live forever)

Tír gan teanga, tír gan anam.
(A country without its language is a country without a soul)

Ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na daoine.
(We live in the shelter of one another.)

Ní bhíonn saoi gan locht.
(even the wise have faults.)

Is lia gach othar tar éis a leighis.

(Every patient is a doctor when cured.)

Cuirfeadh sé tinneas cinn id thóin.

(He'd give you a headache in your ass.)

Is fearr rith maith ná drochsheasamh.

(A good run is better than a bad stand)

Ní haithne go haontíos.

(To get to know someone, live in the same house.)

Is maith an t-anlann an t-ocras.

(Hunger is a good sauce.)

An lá ná bíonn aon ní again, bíonn cabáiste again.

(The day we have nothing, we have cabbage.)

Níl aon tóin tinn mar do thóin tinn féin.

(There's no sore back-side like your own sore back-side.)

Níor bhris focal maith fiacal riamh.

(A good word never broke a tooth.)

Nách é an fear é - arsa Éamonn leis an reithe.

(“Isn't he the man” as Eamonn said to the ram)

Is ar mhaithe leis féin a dheineann an cat crónán.(It's for his own benefit that the cat purrs.)

Is fear déanach ná ródhéanach.

(It's better late than too late.)

Éist le fuaim na habhann is geobhair breac.

(Listen to the sound of the river and you'll catch a trout.)

Gáire maith is codladh fada - an dá leigheas is fearr i leabhar an dochtúra

(A good laugh and a long sleep are the two best cures in the doctor's book)

Sláinte an bhradáin chughat - croí folláin agus gob fliuch

(May you be as healthy as the salmon with a strong heart and a wet gob)

Galar gan leigheas, foighne is fearr air

(For a disease without cure, patience is best)

Tosach loinge clár
Tosach átha clocha,
Tosach flaithe fáilte,
Tosach sláinte codladh,
Deireadh loinge í a bhá,
Deireadh átha loscadh,
Deireadh flaithe cáineadh
Is deireadh sláinte osna

The beginning of a ship is a plank,
The beginning of a ford is a stone,
The beginning of hospitality is a welcome,
The beginning of health is sleep.
The end of a ship is sinking,
The end of a ford is burning,
The end of hospitality is criticism
And the end of health is a sigh.

Nil luibh ná leigheas in aghaidh an bháis
(There is neither herb nor cure against death)

Caithfidh an fharraige a cuid féin a fháil
(The sea must have her own)

Imeoir-se is imeod- sa as an tír seo, is beidh aiteann ag fás in ár ndiaidh. Imeoidh a dtiocfaidh is a dtáinig riamh, ach ní imeoidh na grástaí go brách ó Dhia
(You and I will go from this place, and furze will grow after us. All who will come, or who have ever come will pass, but God's graces will never cease.)

Maireann ancraon ar an bhfál ach ní mhaireann an láimh do chuir
(The tree grows on the hedge but the hand that planted it is dead)

Beagán agus a rá go maith
(Say little and say it well)

Nár dheine an braon seo díth ná dochar dúinn.
(May this drop do us no harm)

Croch árd lá gaoithe chughat.
(May you hang high on a windy day)

Más maith é is mithid.
(If it's good it's about time)

Ghoidfeadh sé an cros den asal.

(He'd steal the cross off an ass)

An gaoth anoir agus an ghrian aniar agus mise ar an dtaobh thiar den chlaí.

(The wind from the east, the sun from the west and me on the west of the ditch)

Níl leigheas ar an gcathú ach é a mharú le foighne

(There's no cure for temptation but to kill it with patience)

Do bhainis soir díom is do bhainis siar díom,

Do bhainis romham is do bhainis im dhiaidh díom,

Do bhainis gealach is do bhainis grian díom,

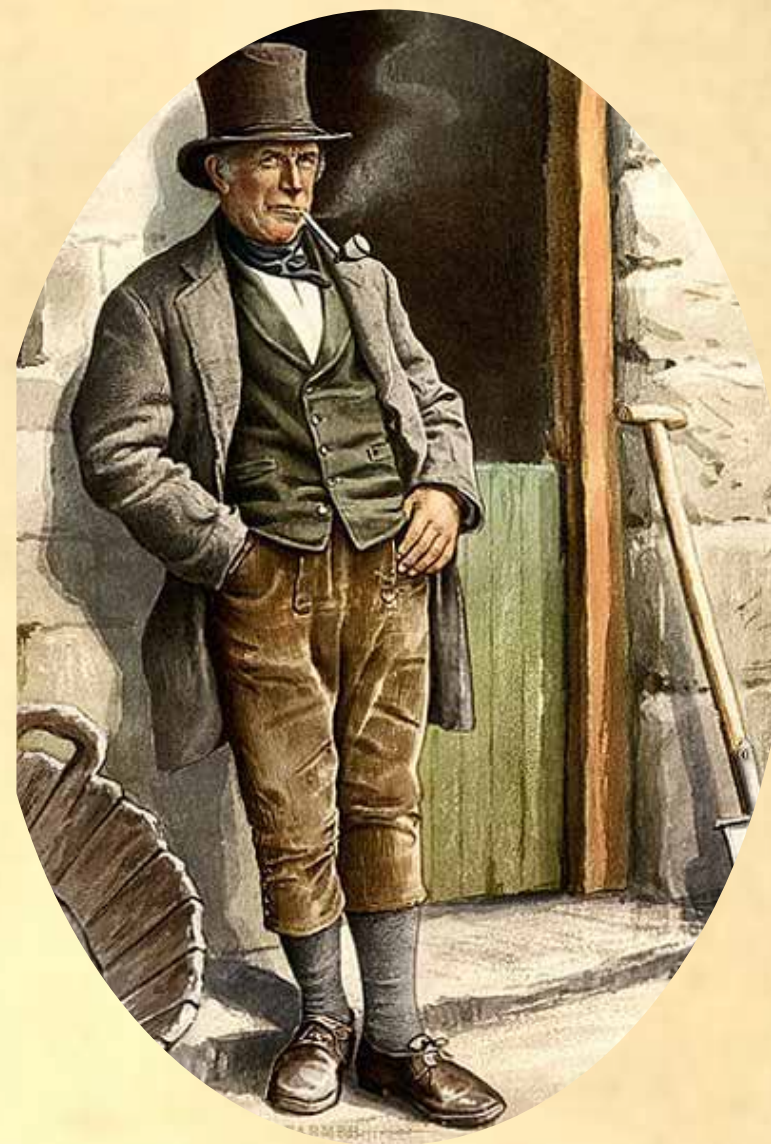
's is ró-mhór m'eagla gur bhainis Dia díom.

You took my east and you took my west

You took my future and you took my past

You took my sun and you took my moon

And I greatly fear that you took my God



Irish words in common use in Bantry's Four Valleys until recent times

Adhastar , a halter.	Bogán , egg without shell.
Ascail , armful of hay or straw.	Bothán , hut, hovel.
Aiteann Gaelach , Irish furze.	Brosna , broken sticks, kindling.
Ainniseoir , miserable person.	Brus , dust, fragments.
Amadán , fool.	Buachalán , ragwort.
Asal , donkey.	Buadán , tip or stump of horn.
	Buarach , spancel, halter.
Balbhán , mute person	
Barrfhód , top sod of bog.	Cabaire , yapper
Banbh , pig.	Cabhlach , old house, ruin
Bainbhín , a young pig.	Cábóg , country man.
Bacán , treadle of spade, hook.	Caisearbhán , dandelion.
Bacla , armful.	Cáibín , old hat.
Bastún , eejit.	Cailleach , old hag.
Beach ghabhair , bee, wasp.	Caillichín , stick for driving animals.
Beart , bundle carried on back.	Caorán , small bit of turf.

Ceartaigh , straighten up (to cow)	Duilleasc , edible seaweed.
Ceol , music, row.	Dúchas , nature, heritage.
Ciaróg , beetle or cockroach.	
Cipidearaíl , commotion.	Éist , listen.
Ciseán , basket.	Eist do bhéal , shut up.
Clais , drain, furrow, trench.	
Cleibhí , clevy	Fáilte , welcome.
Cliotar , clatter, rattling noise.	Faire go deo , alas, what a shame.
Cnáimhseáil , complaining	Feóchadán , thistle.
Coinncín , nose esp. upturned.	Fite fuaite , mixed up.
Ciotóg , lefthanded person.	Flaithiúil , generous.
Corramhíol , midge.	Flúirse , plenty.
Corrathónach , restless.	Fionnán , long, coarse, marshy grass.
Creathán , small potato.	Fraóchán , whortleberry, bilberry.
Crobhnasc , rope from leg to horn.	
Cuigeann , churn	Gabháil , armful (of hay).
Cuingeal , bond, yoke tying animals.	Gabhairín reo , jacksnipe.
Cupóg , dock plant.	Gaillseach , earwig, foreign woman.
Cúnsóg , nest of honey bees.	Gam , a foolish person.
	Garsún , a young boy.
Deoch an dorais , one for the road.	Gealas , braces, suspender.
Diabhal , devil.	Geárrcach , nestling, infant.
Dorn , fist or fistful.	Giobal , rag.
Dúirnín , scythe handle.	Glaise , stream, rivulet.
Drámhaíl , refuse, rubbish.	Glib , hair hanging over eyes.
Dríodar , dregs.	Gliogar , addled egg.

Grafán, grubber.
Grámhar, loving, affectionate.
Gríosach, burning ashes.

Ladhar, a handful (of meal).
Leadránach, slow, leisurely.
Liúdramán, lazy, good for nothing.

Maith go leor, drunk
Mar dhea, pretending.
Meascán mearaí, confusion..
Méisce, cracked skin on hand.
Meitheal, group of helpers.
Mí- ádh, misfortune.
Muing, marshy ground.

Pillimiliú, commotion.
Poc léim, leaping around.
Poitín, the white stuff.
Praiseach, porridge, mess.
Piseóg, superstition.

Raidhse, plenty.
Rí-rá, bedlam.
Ruaille buaille, commotion.

Sceabha, bent, crooked.
Sciollán, cut potato seed.
Sleán, turf spade.
Scealp, splinter, piece, blow.
Sceartán, bug, insect.
Scoraíocht, night visiting.
Sí gaoithe, whirlwind.
Síbín, unlicensed pub.
Slachtmhar, tidy.
Slog, gulp of liquid.
Smidiríni, fragments.
Stail, stallion.
Strácáil, struggle, trudge.
Staimpí, potato cake.
Straílle, untidy woman.

Taoibhín, side patch on shoe.
Táithfhéithleann, honeysuckle.
Taoscán, small quantity of drink.
Tathaire, a bold boy.
Tráithnín, blade of grass.
Tón, backside.
Tomhaisín, small measure.

Útamáil, fumble.





B A N T R Y
HISTORICAL
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
S O C I E T Y



**Cork
County Council**
Comhairle Contae Chorcaí

Clár Éire Ildánach
Creative Ireland
Programme
2017–2022

