

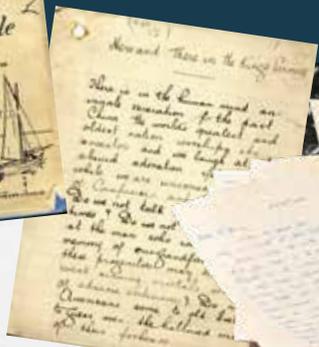
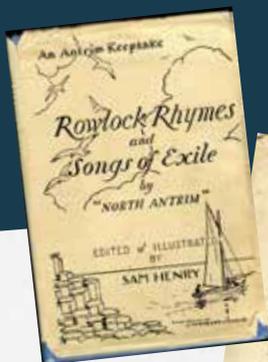
Sam Henry:

Connecting with the Past, Collecting for the Future

Revealing History Through Objects Toolkit



Causeway
Coast & Glens
Borough Council



Sam Henry: (1878-1952)

This toolkit explores the collection of Coleraine man, Sam Henry (1878-1952), revealing people, places and culture in the Causeway Coast and Glens area in the early twentieth century.

Sam Henry, born in Coleraine, is best known as a Folklorist and widely recognised for his 'Songs of the People' series that ran in the Northern Constitution between 1923 and 1939. His 'love of people' motivated much of his work.

Sam worked as a Pensions and Excise Officer. "In my contact with the old, who have all now passed away, I had the rare privilege of sharing their folk lore and their old songs."

'Songs of the People' is the biggest collection of folk songs in the inter-war period in Ulster. As well as printing the series, Sam shared his collection through radio broadcasts on BBC and Radío Éireann. His first broadcast was in May 1925, within the first year of broadcasting activity in Ireland.

In 1906 Sam purchased his first camera. Over the next fifty years he photographed people and places across Ulster – leaving behind an intriguing view of his world.

Sam lectured on various topics across Ulster using his lantern slides to illustrate his talks. He was a keen writer and published articles, poems and several books. He played the violin and the tin whistle.

The collection provides a fascinating snapshot of the Causeway area and its people during the early twentieth century.



Sam Henry playing the tin whistle on Rathlin Island.

Sam Henry Collection

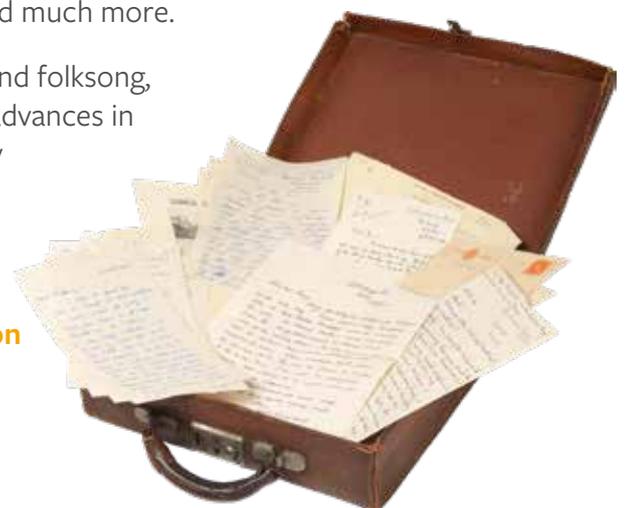
There are over 11,000 items within Sam's collection. These include his personal artefacts such as cameras, his typewriter and field glasses as well as diaries, correspondence, historical research and family history research, photographs, his song collection and much more.

The collection can be explored by topics, such as, folklore and folksong, World War I and II, language and dialect, photography and advances in technology and the natural world. It can also be explored by people and places.

To find objects and documents relevant to your area, search the online collection by following this link:

https://niarchive.org/explore-the-archive/?fwp_collection=sam-henry-collection.

Or visit: www.niarchive.org click on the 'Archive' option at the top of the screen and then select the 'Sam Henry Collection' on the right hand side of the screen.



Documents and letters from Sam's collection, photographed in his briefcase.

‘Songs of the People’: “He put an old song in our mouth, Our land to magnify.”

Sam Henry is probably best known for his ‘Songs of the People’ collection.

“

“My hobby of song collection was only possible by reason of my contacts with the old in my capacity as an old age pension officer. Most of the singers, whose memories were my storehouse would now be centenarians, and are all gone.”

Typed letter to Miss Eason of the BBC, 7th May 1941.

”

‘Songs of the People’ is considered the biggest collection of folk songs in the inter-war period in Ulster. It was a weekly series that ran in a local newspaper, the Northern Constitution, which published songs known, played and sung by people in Northern Ireland.

Sam Henry was the instigator of the series, the collector of a vast majority of the songs and lyrics, and the editor of the column between 1923-1928 and 1932-1939. He was careful to record where the songs came from as well as referencing the many ways in which he collected his songs.

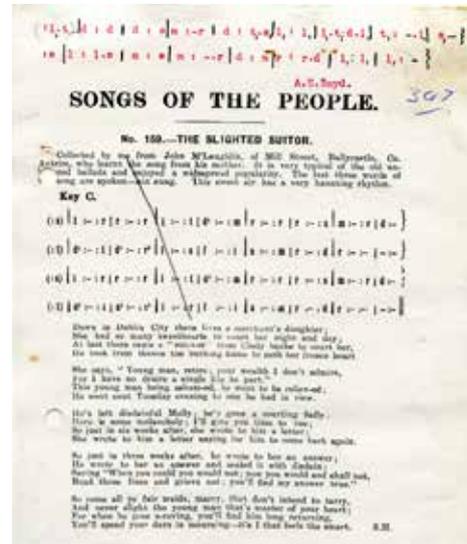
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“I have joted songs in every conceivable circumstances. A man left his horses in the plough to sing to me; one song I noted to the rhythm of the fishermen’s oars on Lough Neagh; one in an old Ford laundry van as we rattled along; one from an old granny as she lay in bed next the wall with an intervening grandson tossing in high temperature from measles. Some I have recorded from deaf men using ? as a conversational medium; several from blind men, whose faces lit up with joy of their song.”

Typed letter to Miss Eason of the BBC 7th May 1941.

”

Sam didn’t publish political songs in his series. He collected songs from all kinds of people, regardless of their background, religion or political beliefs. He was concerned only with collecting, publishing and printing the best versions of the old songs. In this way, the song collection connects with us all and represents, as Sam intended, all the people and their culture.



No. 159 ‘The Slighted Suitor’, collected from John McLaughlin of Mill Street, Ballycastle.



Sam Henry with Mrs Brownlow, a traditional singer, taking down a song in his notebook.

“The lens (the eye that never forgets)”

In 1906 Sam purchased his first camera – a collapsible quarter plate. From then on he was rarely seen without it.

The subjects of Sam’s photographs vary greatly from birds captured in Mountsandel woods or on Rathlin Island, to the elderly people he encountered through his job as an Excise and Pensions Officer. From landscapes that have altered and changed over the years to houses that no longer exist. He photographed friends and family and many Field Club excursions.



Sam’s collapsible quarter plate camera.

Sam used his photographs in newspaper articles and books, as well as to illustrate his very popular lectures. His photographs were used in the Derry and Antrim Yearbooks.

——— “ ” ———

“6 photos of mine illustrating Lough Neagh Fisheries in the Irish Independent.”

Sam’s diary, Wednesday 26th February 1906.

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——— “ ” ———

“With my camera I stalked some nesting kittiwakes until I got to within ten feet of them. There I set up my tripod, affixed my camera and secured a perfect photograph of them.”

Sam Henry, ‘The Kittiwake Gull’ article.

——— ” ” ———

Sam’s extraordinary photographic collection captures both people and places across the Causeway Coast and Glens area and beyond. His ability to connect with people, enabled them to feel at ease with Sam and allowed him to record them visually for perpetuity.

He has left behind a photographic representation of life as he saw it, through his particular lens, and provided us with the opportunity not to forget.



Mussenden Temple.



Tom Black photographed outside his home in Croaghan, Macosquin. Many of the people and homes that Sam photographed may not have been captured, if not for him.

‘Wit on the Wireless’

Sam Henry gave his first radio broadcast on the British Broadcasting Company (BBC) in May 1925, within the first year of broadcasting activity in Ireland. For more than twenty years Sam presented radio broadcasts on various subjects giving his last known broadcast in 1946.

One of Sam’s first broadcasts in 1925 was titled ‘Wit on the Wireless’ a humorous talk about stories and folklore in Ulster.

Through the broadcasts, Sam was able to share his collection of songs. Examples of these broadcasts were titled ‘Ulster’s Heritage of Song’ series in 1935 and 1937, and ‘Adventures of a Song Hunter’ in 1940. He often, during these broadcasts, was accompanied by singers, including James McCafferty of Londonderry, Harriet Brownlow of Ballylaggan, Cloyfin, Coleraine, William Stevenson of Ballymoney, and Nan Shaw of Belfast. The broadcasts also featured musicians such as fiddlers James Kealey of Ballymoney and Pat Kealey of Dungiven.

Lawyer, political activist, playwright, and friend, Louis Walsh wrote to Sam on hearing the B.B.C. broadcast ‘Undiscovered Ulster’ in October 1938,

“

“Few men have been privileged to do so much as you have done to arouse in our people a love for our native land, with all its great traditions and special culture.”

”

Sam’s broadcasts on Radio Eireann included talks in 1939 titled, ‘Rathlin Folk Tale’, ‘Folk Songs of the North’, ‘Collecting Old Songs’, and in 1940 ‘The Faughan Valley’, and ‘Bird Song’. Singer, George Leonard of Clontarf, often accompanied Sam on these broadcasts. A letter written in support of Sam’s ‘Folk Songs of the North’ broadcast informed him,

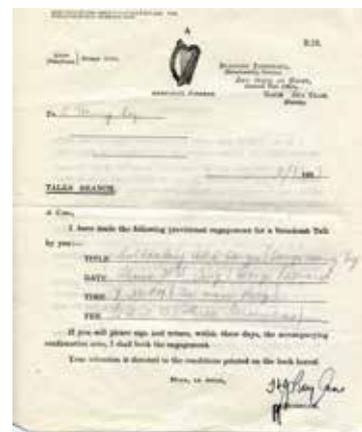
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“You are doing great work in preserving our folklore. I think workers along your lines can do far more to break down artificial barriers than any politician.”

”



B.B.C. contract.



Radio Eireann contract.



Singer, James McCafferty.



Fiddler, Pat Kealey.

“One of the best known literary men in Northern Ireland.”

Sam Henry was an active and accomplished writer. Some of his earliest works are handwritten essays and stories which were, at times, written as scripts for talks that he gave.

‘The Story of St Patrick’s Coleraine’, ‘Dunluce and the Giant’s Causeway’, ‘Tales of the Antrim Seaboard’, ‘Ulster Folk Tales: Poetry, Lore and Tradition of the North East’ and he edited and illustrated ‘Rowlock Rhymes’ by ‘North Antrim’ (Robert McMullan of Portballintrae). He contributed to various other books and pamphlets.

He published articles in local and regional newspapers and wrote poetry. As well as this, Sam wrote and edited several books – which included ‘A Hank of Yarns’,

As well as his published works Sam kept diaries. His early diaries are particularly insightful and often feature places he visited, people he met, books he read and other everyday observations.

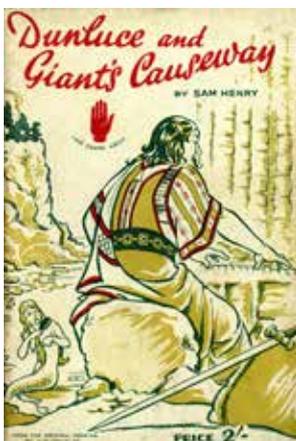
Sam corresponded with people all over the world as well as receiving letters from people across Northern Ireland.

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“His knowledge of County Derry and County Antrim, of the towns and villages, their inhabitants and their mode of life, was intense, and he wrote of these with a sympathetic pen and with the eye of an artist. He saw all that was beautiful in nature, all that was good and uplifting in humanity.”

Sam’s obituary.

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‘Dunluce and the Giant’s Causeway’ by Sam Henry.



Sam’s 1907 diary.



Sam’s typewriter.

“The children whose imaginations added lustre to the gems of humour.”

‘A Hank of Yarns’, by Sam Henry, is a collection of short stories and anecdotes that he picked up on his travels, mostly through his work as a Pensions and Excise Officer. The collection started as a column in the Coleraine Chronicle before being reprinted as a book. ‘A Hank of Yarns’ reflects his interest and ‘love’ of people as well as his sense of humour.

“

“I greatly appreciate your suggestion that some of my pupils should attempt to illustrate your delightful column... The reward is very liberal, but I must ask you not to accept any drawing unless it is thoroughly satisfactory and suitable for your particular purpose.”

Letter to Sam Henry from Mr Russell, 24th November 1939 .

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Sam had ample photographs that he could have used to illustrate his column but he instead asked Mr Russell, principal of Tullygrawley Public Elementary School in Cullybackey and his pupils to provide illustrations.



Mr Russell, Principal of Tullygrawley P.E.S. in Cullybackey.



Photograph of some of the artists: Back row, left to right: Barbara Wilson, Josiah Spence, Helen Alexander, Sadie Stirling, and Billy Russell. Front row: James Alexander, Leslie McCready, Betty Russell.



*“I sent a photograph of her (Ellen McLaughlin) to the Tullygrawley children and asked them to make a lino-cut, and it is here included to convey that sweet simplicity for which old Ellen stood.”
Sam Henry, A Hank of Yarns, p.85*



Picture block by Andy Cochrane (ex-pupil Tullygrawley P.E.S.).

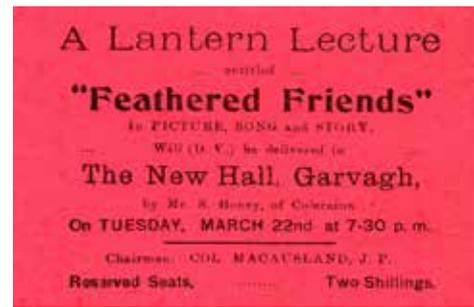
“...the lecture was a literary and musical treat ...”

Sam Henry wrote and gave lectures across Ulster on various subjects such as folk lore, birds, nature, folk songs and Ulster life. From Castlerock to Newcastle, Sam travelled widely to numerous locations, providing lectures in churches, town halls, schools and lecture halls.

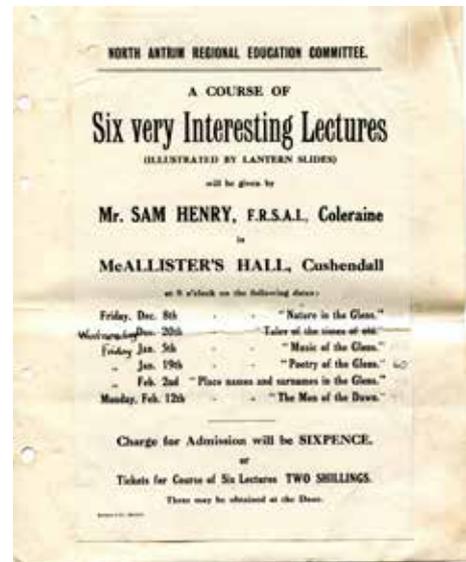
In many of these lectures he sang, and played his violin and tin whistle to bring the folk songs to life. Lantern slides were used to illustrate his lectures with many newspaper reviews noting that at times over 100 slides were shown to audiences.

Sam estimated that by 1942 he had lectured around 300 times, giving his last known lecture in 1948. A diary entry in 1907 indicated that he had been lecturing since the early 20th century, “Prepared for lecture – Lectured on *Through a Nature Lovers Lens* – great success. Over 200... Very tired. Talked 2 hours.”

It was agreed in 1940 that Sam would offer his services as lecturer to the troops stationed in Northern Ireland during World War II. The War years would see Sam providing 170 lectures to the troops as Extra-Mural Lecturer under the Queen’s University, Belfast, scheme.



Invitation to lecture ‘Feathered Friends. In Picture, Song and Story’ at Garvagh.



Leaflet for a series of lectures by Sam Henry in Cushendall.

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“Mr Henry was a favourite among British and American troops during the last war. They greatly appreciated his lectures and conducted tours.”

Sam’s obituary.

”

Sam educated troops with his extensive knowledge on Ulster. Lectures were titled, Aspects of Life in Ulster, Romantic Ulster, A Tour through Northern Ireland, Ulster and America, Ireland – The Land and its People, and Ulster. In 1946, Sam wrote of his experience with the troops during World War II,

“

“In the evenings at the American Red Cross HQ in Portrush, I gave the men lantern talks on what they had seen and on Ulster generally. I also met the troops in other localities – the climax of my lantern engagements was on board a splendid Hospital ship lying in Belfast lough.”

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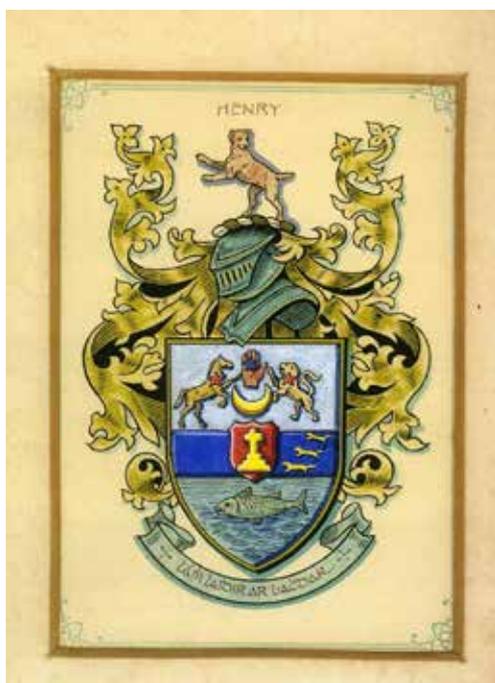


Northern Ireland Official Pass and Identity Card which authorised Sam to enter all Military Camps and Barracks in Northern Ireland for duties as lecturer to troops.

“The greatest living authority on the history and families of Northern Ireland.”

It was through Sam Henry’s work as an Investigation Officer under the Old Age Pensions Acts that he developed a knowledge of Irish families. In 1933, Sam described his genealogy research as a ‘hobby’. In the years after his retirement in 1938, Sam spent an increased amount of time undertaking genealogy research. At one point he described that he was ‘obsessed’ with the work. His letterheads and business card stated his profession as genealogist.

In the early 1940’s Sam had a genealogical request from renowned surgeon and friend, James Johnston Abraham of Coleraine, to assist him in his family research for his book, Surgeon’s Journey: The Autobiography of J. Johnston Abraham, which was later published in 1957.

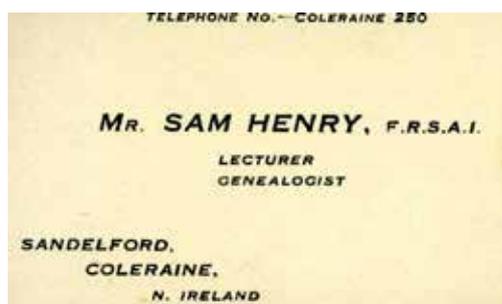


Henry Family Crest.

Sam’s genealogy research consisted of local enquiries, but also from around the world such as India, Germany, Australia, and Canada. The majority of Sam’s genealogy research was requested from individuals in North America with Irish family connections. By 1944, Sam wrote that he was ‘actively engaged in genealogical research for Americans.’

To help him with his American genealogy research, Sam developed his own ‘Genealogical Questionnaire’, which consisted of forty questions, to gather as much family history information as possible.

To conduct his research, Sam travelled by bus to churches that were further afield to record information from headstones. He checked birth, death and marriage registers, searched Hearth Rolls and Poll Lists, placed requests in local newspapers for family history information and referred to numerous books. Sam wrote,



Business card.

“

“I am not a professional genealogist but I believe I have had access to rare books and sources...that the professional genealogist could not get.”

”

“Nothing appealed more to him than a journey through a part of his Irish countryside.”

Sam had a keen interest in nature, history, archaeology and geology. He exercised his curiosity in these subjects as a member of local Field Clubs.

In 1906 to 1907, Sam was a member of Omagh Naturalists' Field Club. He went on to become a member of Belfast Naturalists' Field Club in 1907 to 1912. Elected in 1907, the annual meeting, held in the Patterson Museum, People's Palace, Belfast, was attended by renowned photographers Mr W. A. Green, Mr R. Welch and Mr A. R. Hogg, who showed their slides via lantern projector.

Sam Henry was one of the first committee members in the Route Naturalists' Field Club, founded by Helen MacNaghten of Runkerry, Bushmills, in 1923. He went on to become Hon. Secretary and President of the Club.

Members would meet regularly and participate in Field Club excursions such as climbing Benbraddagh Mountain, a shell ramble to Magilligan Strand, bird watching in Portstewart and a day trip to Rathlin Island.

On these excursions, Sam liked to bring his violin and tin whistle, in which he would play folksongs from the area they were visiting.



Certificate of election to Belfast Naturalists' Field Club, 1907.



Route Naturalists' Field Club excursion to Gartan, Donegal.



Sam's collection of bird eggs. After Sam's death in 1952, legislation came into force in 1954 which made bird egg collecting illegal.

As a member of the Route Field Club, Sam was able to exercise his hobby as an ornithologist. On excursions, armed with his camera, Sam would take photographs of birds and provide the other members with his knowledge of birdlife. Through this hobby Sam also collected bird eggs, wrote and gave lectures on birds, and contributed articles titled 'Letters to Bird Friends' aimed at children, in which he wrote through the viewpoints of birds.



Sam used his field glasses on Field Club outings. He also sent them off to the First World War in response to Lady Roberts' Field Glasses Fund. They were returned to him intact after the War.

“Folk lore is the coloured thread of history.”

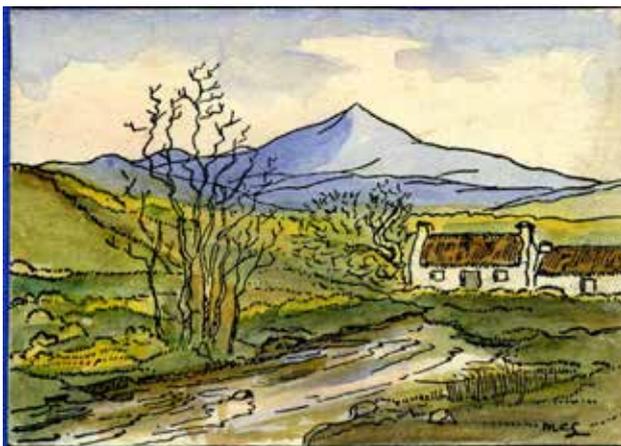
Folklore is defined in the Oxford English dictionary as,

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“The traditional beliefs, customs, and stories of a community, passed through the generations by word of mouth.”

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Sam Henry is often described as a Folklorist. This refers not only to his collection of folk songs – ‘Songs of the People’ but his other work in gathering the stories, the customs and traditions of Ulster and sharing these through articles, books and radio broadcasts.



Up the airy mountain,
Down the rushy glen,
We daren't go a' hunting
For fear of little men;
Wee folk, good folk,
Trooping all together;
Green jacket, red cap,
And white owl's feather!
Allingham

An illustrated poem, a verse by William Allingham, affixed to the front cover of 'The Science of Fairy Tales' by Edwin Sidney Hartland.

“

“Its (Ulster) hills recall giants; its streams, the music of the fairies; its seas roar with the might of Mananan; the Neptune of the Celtic race; its lonely places are filled with the wailing of the banshee, or family guardian of the ancient families; its mermaids and half-human creatures are even perpetuated in the surnames of people.”

Script for the broadcast ‘Old Customs and Legends of Ulster’ by Sam Henry, sent out across USA and Canada.

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In 1937, a radio broadcast, “Old Customs and Legends of Ulster” written by Sam Henry was aired to 200 radio stations in North America. Sam recorded that he received 116 letters of appreciation from listeners.

In other broadcast scripts, Sam writes of fairies,

“

“Do you believe in fairies? If not, don't you wish you did?... I have never seen a fairy but I know many people worthy of trust who say they saw them dressed in bright array, in vivid green and scarlet and standing not the height of two peats.”

Typed script for broadcast or talk. Titled, 'The Music of Fairyland'.

”

An article, written by Sam, recounts some of the stories that he discovered when he spent three weeks in the Glens of Antrim 'fairy hunting'.

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“One weird night in Glendun, they told me, the glen was filled with the yells as of cats fighting. Thousands of them. It was found that it was a battle royal between the Scotch fairies and the Irish fairies and with humiliation the glensfolk confessed that the Scotch fairies had won and the glen was never as lucky since.”

Typed article by Sam Henry, titled, 'Fairy Hunting in the Antrim Glens'.

”



Lino print by Sadie Stirling, aged 12 of Tullygrawley School for 'A Hank of Yarns'.



Lino print of a banshee by Josiah Spence, aged 12 of Tullygrawley School for 'A Hank of Yarns'. Sam Henry describes a banshee as "a fairy woman who follows the fortunes of the old families." The banshee was thought to wail when someone in the family died.



John McGrath, Moneygran, Kilrea, with a cow's horn which was blown ritually during St John's Eve bonfire celebration on 23rd June at Moneygran. St John's Eve (or Oiche Fheile Eoin) is celebrated with the lighting of bonfires. At the festival, people would pray to God, asking him to bless their crops. They would take ashes from the fire and spread them over their land as this was thought to protect their harvest. People often jumped through the flames of the bonfire to bring themselves good luck.

In his book, 'Ulster Folk Tales: Poetry, Lore and Tradition of the North East' Sam shares some traditional stories associated with this area. Tales such as 'Children of Lir', 'The Queen of Mountsandel' and 'Taisie Taibhgeal'. Throughout 'A Hank of Yarns' he recalls stories of fairies, banshees, ghosts and mermaids.

“

“Yes, sheep have an uncanny sense of things, perhaps by intuition. Katie Glass of Rathlin told me of a boy who was spirited away by the fairies – a wee cub of five or six he was. Nearly a week passed and the lad’s parents were in distress until one day a big sheep left the boy at the door, without a bleat out of her. A remarkable instance of an animal medium linking this world to fairyland.”

Sam Henry, A Hank of Yarns, p.22.

”



Illustration by Kirah Gamble.

Sam’s ability to connect with people enabled him to document these customs, traditions, folk stories and tales.

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“I do not know if I have convinced you of a happy concurrent world that is closed to the eye but open to the soul. I am half in doubt myself but at least I shall put my spoon through the bottom of my matutinal egg lest the fairies use it as a boat to sail away with my luck.”

Typed script for broadcast or talk. Titled, 'The Music of Fairyland' . .

”

‘Motivated by his love of people’

John Moulden

Sam captured people through prose, poetry, language, song and photography. Below are just a few of the people that he encountered.

Mary McCann

Dunlade, near Faughanvale (c.1860-1939).

Sam Henry wrote of Mary McCann in a tribute to Louis Walsh - “Louis Walsh looked for true worth and where he found it, he bestowed his praise. An old lady at Dunlade near Faughanvale Co. Derry, Mary McCann the bookworm, who from her humble dwelling on the face of the mountain, radiated culture which embraced such eminent litterateurs as Compton MacKenzie ... I also was a disciple of Mary McCann and will never forget her summary of life’s ambitions; “My uncle Robert,” she said “had all that this life can give; he had a fiddle, a telescope; an armchair and £200 under his pillow.”



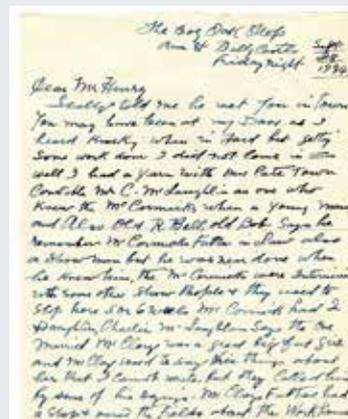
This photograph of Mary McCann, taken by Sam Henry, featured in the Derry and Antrim Yearbooks of 1939 and 1940, and described her as a local folklorist from Greysteel, and a known resident of Faughanvale, who died in October 1939. She was referred to as a bookworm because she had 30-40 books, which were all that remained of a collection of 700 that she had been forced to sell.

In 1911 Mary was aged 51 and a widow. She worked as a Publican and lived with her father, her sister, niece and nephew.

John Henry MacAuley

Glenshesk, Ballycastle (c.1880-1937).

John grew up on a farm in Glenshesk and, due to an accident when he was young, was disabled. He was taught to carve wood and opened a shop on Ann Street in Ballycastle which was known as the bog oak shop. He carved model jaunting cars, round towers, broaches and pendants decorated with views of Ballycastle out of ancient bog oak. He was a well-known fiddle player and song writer.



John contributed at least 21 songs to Sam Henry's 'Songs of the People' series, if not more. Sam has a list of songs dating from 26th September 1925 that belonged to John, which included the well-known song 'The Ould Lammas Fair'. The collection includes copies of these songs as well as letters from John Henry MacAuley or, as he signed himself off, 'The Carver'. There is a plaque dedicated to MacAuley above McLister's shop in Ballycastle.

Katie Glass

Ouig, Rathlin (c.1859–1954).

Katie Glass was a famous lilter – singing tunes without words – and enjoyed telling stories. She shared her songs and stories with Sam Henry.

“Katie Glass of Rathlin told me of a boy who was spirited away by the fairies – a wee cub of five or six he was. Nearly a week passed and the lads parents were in distress. Until one day a big sheep left the boy at the door, without a bleat out of her. A remarkable instance of an animal medium linking this world to fairyland.”

Sam Henry, *A Hank of Yarns*. The Coleraine Chronicle Company Limited, 1939, p. 22



Sam attributes the song, *The Boatman/ Fear a Bhata*, to the “Gaelic of Mrs James Glass (Rathlin Island).” This song is still sung on the island today.

Andrew Dooley

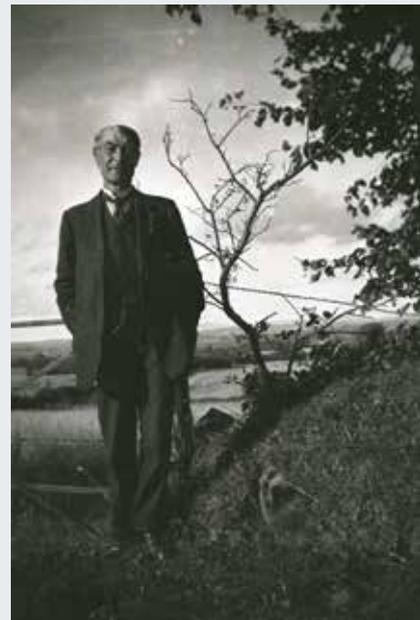
Dunloy (1870-1943).

“To know Andy Dooley was to love him and to be loved by him.”

Sam Henry, *Andy Dooley of Dunloy: Poems & Writings*, compiled by the Dooley Twins, Flix Graphics, 2001

Andy Dooley is possibly most associated with Dooley's Cairn, the ancient burial ground excavated on his land for the first time in 1935 after he reported the stone formation to Queen's University in Belfast.

He is also known for his love of Ireland and the Irish language, starting his own Irish language class. Sam Henry often asked Andy to translate Irish to English for him.



Andy served as a Councillor for the Ballymoney District Council and he was involved in the first Feis na Gleann in 1904 as a member of the Coiste na Feise.

Tom Black

Croaghan, Macosquin (c.1843- ?).

In 1911 Tom was aged 68, a thatcher and lived with his wife Eliza who was 45. They had only been married for 4 years. Twenty five years later, Sam wrote a newspaper article about Tom:

“It is pleasant to be remembered after thirty years by those who have no blood ties with you but whose only bond is genuine affection. A well to do farmer from a hilly district told me the other day that Tom Black, aged 93, wanted to see me again. I remembered him clearly in his one-bedroomed house a generation ago when I took him his pension book. He wore a rabbit skin cap and trousers glazed with age... Tom’s home is more a man’s nest than a house. On the ashes which he throws out the front door a precarious patch of potatoes grows... In his drab cottage with no aesthetic furnishings there is one article that is kept with loving care – his fiddle.”

On the occasion of this visit, Tom played Sam several songs which Sam printed in his newspaper article about Tom. Sam marvelled at Tom’s memory for the tune and the lyrics, aged 93.



Mrs John Roe McNeill

Glendun Top.

Mrs McNeill, known locally as Maggie Archie, lived at Erragh, Glendun Tops.

In a BBC Radio programme about Sam Henry, recorded in 1978, Jack McBride talked about accompanying Sam on a visit around the Glendun area. On their travels, they called up to a house and were invited in by the owner – Mrs McNeill. Sam asked if she would tell them some of her stories and she agreed. She hummed the tune of a song as she made them a cup of tea. Jack said that Sam’s ears pricked up and he asked if she knew the words to the tune. She said, of course, that she learned it from her Granda. Mrs McNeill sang the song and Sam had his notebook out and scribbled it all down. She then said to them ‘imagine me giving you the tea out of an old black pot’ and explained how she had looked in Cushendall and Ballymena and couldn’t get a kettle. Sam told her not to worry, that he had a brother in law in Coleraine that would get her a kettle. He did just that and delivered it to her!

Mrs John Roe McNeill and Sam made a bargain – that in return for the much needed kettle she would send Sam 10 songs. The kettle cost 10/6 and if she had not 10 songs, Sam gave her the option to pay the balance in cash.



Things to do

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Make a pinhole camera

Creative writing

Story/song collecting

Create a podcast

Lino printing

Write a Wikipedia entry

”



Make a pinhole camera and photograph people and places today

To try and understand a little about how cameras worked in Sam's day, you could make your own pinhole camera.

(*You can buy pinhole camera kits online. Alternatively this activity will work with any camera.)

Through exploring Sam's photograph collection you will see that he captured many places and lots of different people. Using your camera, take photographs of your home or town today. You could even photograph your family, friends or someone that you find interesting.

Get your photographs developed/printed and record alongside the photograph any information that you have about it. Think about what you want other people to know about your photograph, or what would interest people about it.

Creative writing

Have a look at www.niarchive.org to find some objects in the Sam Henry collection that interest you.

Write a short story or poem about one or more of these.

Alternatively, imagine that you are Sam Henry for a day and write a diary entry. What would he do today? Who would he visit? Where would he go?

Story/song collecting

Sam recorded or wrote down people's songs and stories and then published many of these in newspaper articles and in books.

Ask your mum/dad/aunt/uncle/granny/granda or an older adult if they know any old songs. Or ask them to share some of the stories they heard growing up.

Write these down and share them with others. You could even create your own newspaper article with your collected song or story.

Create a podcast

In the collection there are a number of the scripts that Sam wrote and used for his radio broadcasts. Through looking at these for themes and ideas, develop your own script for a podcast. Record your podcast and then publish it online.

Create your own lino print

Below are some stories from the 'Hank of Yarns' book. Select one and design your own lino print or picture.

"Katie Glass of Rathlin told me of a boy who was spirited away by the fairies – a wee cub of five or six he was. Nearly a week passed and the lad's parents were in distress. Until one day a big sheep left the boy at the door, without a bleat out of her. A remarkable instance of an animal medium linking this world to fairyland."

"A lad, left in the house while his mother went to the well for a go of water, was tremendously excited and alarmed when he discovered a mouse in the cream crock. He rushed out and off to his mother, "ma, there's a mouse in the crame crock. His mother calmly asked "and did you not take it out?, and boy at once retorted: "naw but I threw in the cat.""

"A story is told of an American visitor who called at an Ulster farmhouse and asked for a drink. The woman of the house offered milk, which he gladly accepted, preferring buttermilk as the greater novelty. As he was seated drinking the milk from a bowl, a little pet pig kept nuzzling his legs, evoking the remark from the visitor: "I guess that little pig thinks he knows me." The farmer's wife explained: "It's not you it knows, but its own wee bowl."

Write a Wikipedia entry for one of the people featured within the collection

Sam Henry met many people through his work as an Excise and Old Age Pensions Officer as well as through the many Clubs and Societies that he was a member of. He recorded some of these people through his photography. Others he mentions in articles, broadcast scripts and books.

Find a named photograph in the collection and then search on:

https://niarchive.org/explore-the-archive/?fwp_collection=sam-henry-collection to see if you can find anything else out about this person. You could also try and check the 1911 census: <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/search/> for this person's name.

Another place where you might find information is in the local newspapers. Coleraine Library holds copies of The Coleraine Chronicle and the Northern Constitution.

Once you have gathered as much information as you can, write a Wikipedia entry for this person. Check out this link: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:Your_first_article for help in writing your first article.

Use objects to reveal information about where you live

Search for your area or town on the Northern Ireland Community Archive website: www.niarchive.org. What can the objects, documents and photographs you have found tell you about where you live? Have things changed much? Do you recognise places or names? What objects, photographs or resources could tell people something about where you live today?

For more information on the Sam Henry Collection please see:

www.niarchive.org

Or contact Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council's Museum Service:

Email: cms@causewaycoastandglens.gov.uk

Tel: 028 2766 0230

This toolkit is part of the Sam Henry: Connecting with the Past, Collecting for the Future project funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Association and administrated by the Museums Association.



**Causeway
Coast & Glens
Borough Council**

