



LÁMHLEABHAR TÉIPE
[Ag gabháil leis an FHOCLÓIR PÓCA a d'fhoilsigh AN GÚM, 1986.]

TAPE HANDBOOK
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INTRODUCTION

On this tape we show how to pronounce Irish according to the sound system used to transcribe words in the pocket dictionary. The system contains all the essential sound contrasts found in the language without corresponding in every detail to any one of the three main dialects of Irish. We hope that this core dialect will assist the teaching and learning of spoken Irish at a basic and intermediate level. We also hope that the system will serve as a guide to Irish pronunciation for those involved in lecturing, broadcasting and in the media generally. For those already fluent in Irish, this core dialect is not meant to displace their existing dialect but is intended as an alternative medium for use in more formal contexts.

The first three chapters contain examples of all the basic sounds of Irish, while chapter four shows how Irish words are stressed.

The Irish examples throughout the tape are illustrated by three native speakers, one from each of the three main dialects. Each speaker shows how the core dialect can be accommodated while using his or her own dialect as a basic reference.

Within the range of the core dialect, there may be different ways of pronouncing a particular vowel, diphthong or consonant correctly. We have tried to illustrate as much as possible of this variation on the tape. Where such variation exists, the same words or phrases will be pronounced in a slightly different way by two different speakers. Where little or no variation exists, only one speaker will be heard.

Each chapter and section throughout the tape is accompanied by a brief spoken commentary in English. This commentary is meant as a summary of the written introductions found throughout this tape handbook.

Each chapter and section will be preceded on the tape by a brief musical phrase.

For an explanation of the symbols used in the transcripts, please refer to the introduction of the pocket dictionary.

Wherever two speakers are used to illustrate a permissible variation, the notation (× 2) is shown to the left/right of the relevant text.

CHAPTER 1

THE VOWELS AND DIPHTHONGS OF IRISH

Irish has one neutral vowel, five short vowels and five corresponding long vowels. In writing, long vowels are marked by placing ^ː above the vowel as in *ˈBÍ*. Spellings such as *ˈAE(I)*, *ˈAO(I)*, *ˈEO(I)* and *ˈ-UMHA-* may also indicate long vowels. A vowel may also be lengthened before *ˈRR*, *ˈRD*, *ˈRL* and *ˈRN* although not marked in writing. It is important to distinguish between long and short vowels. In the transcription used below and in the pocket dictionary long vowels are shown by putting */ː/* after the vowel.

SECTION 1.A. THE LONG VOWELS

The long vowels are: */iː/*, */eː/*, */aː/*, */oː/* and */uː/*.

I.A.1. the long vowel */iː/* as in:

Bí Buí Síos

I.A.2. The long vowel */eː/* as in:

Mé Béal Gaeilge (× 2)

I.A.3. The long vowel */aː/* as in:

Tá Bán Sláinte (× 2)

I.A.4 The long vowel */oː/* as in:

Bó Ceol Mór (× 2)

I.A.5. The long vowel */uː/* as in:

Tú Ag siúl Cúige Mumhan

SECTION 1.B. THE SHORT VOWELS.

The short vowels may be represented in writing by the single letters 'A', 'E', 'I', 'O', and 'U', or by the diagraphs 'AI', 'EA', 'EI', 'EO', 'IO', 'IU' and 'UI'.

The short vowels of Irish are: /i/, /e/, /a/, /o/ and /u/.

- 1.B.1. The short vowel /i/ as in:
Ith Duine Fios (×2)
- 1.B.2. The short vowel /e/ as in:
Ceist Te Seic (×2)
- 1.B.3. The short vowel /a/ as in:
Ainm Bean Mac (×2)
- 1.B.4. The short vowel /o/ as in:
Obair Scoil Seo (×2)
- 1.B.5. The short vowel /u/ as in:
Dubh Thug Fliuch

SECTION 1.C. THE NEUTRAL VOWEL

The pronunciation of the neutral vowel is conditioned by the quality of adjacent consonants. Before or after broad consonants it sounds like the first vowel in 'about' and before or after slender consonants it sounds more like the vowel in the word 'it'. This minor variation (is not significant and) does not change the meaning of the word. In 1.C.1., the adjacent consonant(s) is/are broad and in 1.C.2., they are slender.

- 1.C.1.
Abhus Amadán Solas Mála
- 1.C.2.
Inné Milis Baile An Fharruige

SECTION 1.D. THE UNWRITTEN VOWEL.

When pronouncing Irish, a neutral vowel must be inserted between certain consonants. The quality of this neutral vowel varies with the quality of the surrounding consonants as described in 1.C. above.

- 1.D.1.
Albain Bolg Colm
Dearg Gorm Dorcha
Leanbh Leanbái Donncha
- 1.D.2
Ainm Feirm Ainmhi Seirbhis

SECTION 1.E. VOWELS SPELT WITH 'AO(I)'

The dialects vary in their pronunciation of 'ao' and 'aoi'. In the system proposed here, 'ao' and 'aoi' are pronounced as /i:/.

1.E.1. Words spelt with 'ao'

Aon	Naofa	Saol	Saor
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1.E.2. Words spelt with 'aoi':

Aois	Daoine	Naoi	Saoire
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SECTION 1.F.

STRESSED VOWELS PRECEDING 'LL' 'NN' 'M' and 'NG'

The pronunciation of stressed vowels before 'LL', 'NN', 'M', or 'NG' varies from one dialect to another and sometimes within the same dialect. A vowel may be pronounced short, long or as a diphthong. The system proposed here, however, *has only short vowels* in this position.

1.F.1	Poll	Pollaim	Pollta
	Cam	Camaim	Camtha
	Caill	Caillim	Cailte
	Roinn	Roinnim	Roinnte

1.F.2.	Gleann	Gleannta
	Rang	Ranganna
	Coill	Coillte
	Tinn	Nios tinne
	Im	Punt ime

SECTION 1.G.

STRESSED VOWELS PRECEDING 'RR'

The vowel 'a' is usually lengthened before 'RR' in one-syllable words or before 'RR' followed by a consonant, in words of more than one syllable. Otherwise, vowels preceding 'RR' are generally short.

The system proposed here follows this pattern.

1.G.1.	Gearr	Gearraim	Gearrtha
	Tarrtháil	Tarrtháilim	Tarrtháilte
	Tarraing	Tarraingim	Tarraingthe

1.G.2.	Corr	Carraig	Urraim	Sirriam
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SECTION 1.H.

VOWELS PRECEDING 'RD', 'RL', AND 'RN'

The pronunciation of vowels before 'RD', 'RL', and 'RN' also varies from dialect to dialect and sometimes also within the same dialect. A vowel in this position may be pronounced short, long or as a diphthong. However, the system proposed here *has long vowels* everywhere.

1.H.1. Ardaigh Ardaím Ardaithe (×2)
Ordaigh Ordaím Ordaithe

1.H.2 Bord Orlach Murnán

1.H.3. Note that 'R' is broad in the following examples.
Aird Ceird
Coirnéal Cill Airne

SECTION 1.I. THE DIPHTHONGS OF IRISH

There are *four* diphthongs in Irish /ai/, /au/, /iə/ and /uə/. /iə/ and /uə/ are represented consistently in writing by 'IA(I)' and 'UA(I)' respectively. The diphthong /ai/ is represented in writing by 'a', 'ai' and 'ei' followed by 'DH' or 'GH' and /au/ by 'a', 'ea' and 'o' followed by 'BH', 'DH', 'GH' or 'MH'.

1.I.1. The diphthong /ai/ as in:

Aghaidh . . . Radharc . . . Saighdiúir . . . Veidhlín

1.I.2. The diphthong /au/ as in:

Bodhrán . . . Leabhar . . . Samhradh . . .
Togha Is Rogha

1.I.3. The diphthong /iə/ as in:

Bia . . . Fiacail . . . Siad . . . Siar (×2)

1.I.4. The diphthong /uə/ as in:

Buachail . . . Buail . . . Fuar . . . Suas (×2)

CHAPTER 2

THE CONSONANTS OF IRISH

Irish has a total of 36 consonants. Whereas English has only one type of 'b', 'c', 'd', etc., Irish has two types. These are referred to here and in Irish grammars as broad and slender *b*'s, *c*'s and *d*'s etc. More technically, the terms *velarised* and *palatalised* are used for *broad* and *slender*, respectively. In writing, broad consonants are preceded by or followed by the letters 'A', 'O', or 'U' and slender consonants by 'I' or 'E'.

In the transcription used here and in the pocket dictionary, broad consonants are left unmarked and slender consonants are followed by a tick (').

SECTION 2.A. THE STOP CONSONANTS

The stop consonants are *B, C, D, G, P* and *T*.

	<i>Broad</i>	<i>Slender</i>				
2.A.1.	/b/ and /b'/	Buí	Bí	Bó	beo	(×2)
2.A.2.	/k/ and /k'/	Cú	Ciú	Cad	Cead	
2.A.3.	/d/ and /d'/	Dó	Deo	Dúil	Diúl	(×2)
2.A.4.	/g/ and /g'/	Óga	Óige	Gall	Geall	
2.A.5.	/p/ and /p'/	Paca	Peaca			
2.A.6.	/t/ and /t'/	Tuí	Tí	Stát	Stáit	(×2)

SECTION 2.B. THE NASAL CONSONANTS

The nasal consonants are *M, N*, and *NG*.

	<i>Broad</i>	<i>Slender</i>	
2.B.1.	/m/ and /m'/	Maoin	Mín
		Trom	Nios troime
2.B.2.	/n/ and /n'/	Anam	Ainm (×2)
		Naoi	Ní
2.B.3.	/ŋ/ and /ŋ'/	Na longa	(Ar bord)
			loinge
		(Dún na) nGall	I ngeall

SECTION 2.C. THE FRICATIVE CONSONANTS

The fricative consonants are written *BH, CH, DH, F, GH, MH, S, V* and *Z*. /v/ or /v'/ may be represented in writing by 'BH', 'MH' or 'V', /ʃ/ or /ʃ'/ by 'DH' or 'GH' and /f/ or /f'/ by 'F' or 'PH'.

	<i>Broad</i>	<i>Slender</i>	
2.C.1.	/v/ and /v'/	An-Bhuí	Bhí (×2)
		Vóta	Veidhlín
		A Mháire	A Mhéabh
2.C.2.	/x/ and /x'/	Mo Chárta	Sa Cheárta (×2)
		An Chathair	Faoi Cheathair

2.C.3. /ɣ/ and /ɣ'/ Mo Ghaolta Dhíol (×2)
 Ghlan Sa Ghleann
 A Dhónaill A Dhiarmaid

2.C.4. /f/ and /f'/ Fo fóill Feoil (×2)
 Faoin Fion
 A Phádraig A Pheadair

2.C.5. /s/ and /s'/ Cás Cáis Súil Siúl

2.C.6. /z/ and /z'/ Puzal Xileafón

SECTION 2.D. OTHER CONSONANTS

Broad slender

2.D.1. /l/ and /l'/ Lón Leon Gael Gaeil
 Balla Baile (×2)

2.D.2. /r/ and /r'/ Fuar Fuair Méara Péire
 Cior Tir

2.D.3. /d'z'/ Jab Jíp Júdó

2.D.4. /h/ Hata Thit A Shéamais

SECTION 2.E. TWO-CONSONANT CLUSTERS

Consonants in a cluster can occur initially, medially or finally, and are either all broad or all slender, with a few exceptions (See 2.E.8.) See also under Sections 3A and 3B for further examples of two-consonant clusters created by the processes of Séimhiú and Urú.

CLUSTERS WITH

2.E.1. Broad /b/ Bláth Bróg
 Slender /b'/ Bliain Bréag

2.E.2. Broad /k/ Cloch Cnoc Croí
 Cearc Iasc Oic
 Slender /k'/ Cliste Cniotáil Criost
 Cailec Páirc Uisce

2.E.3. Broad /d/ Dlúth Droim
 Ard Londain
 slender /d'/ Dí Dréimire
 Aird Cairde

2.E.4. Broad	/f/	Na Flaithis	Francach	
		Ofráil	Ráfla	
Slender	/f'/	Fliuch	Freagra	
		Aifreann	Ifreann	
2.E.5. Broad	/g/	Glas	Gnás	Grá
		Eagla	Eagna	
Slender	/g'/	Gleann	Gné	Grian
		Aigne	Uaigneas	
2.E.6. Broad	/p/	Plúr	Pram	
		Alp	Corp	
Slender	/p'/	Pleisiúr	Priosún	
		Ceilp	Coirp	
2.E.7. Broad	/s/	Scoil	Slán	
		Smacht	Snámh	
		An Spáinn	Sráid	Stad
		Iasc	Masla	
		Asma	Trasna	
		Cuspóir	Lasracha	Post
Slender	/s'/	Scéal	Sliabh	
		Sneachta	Stiúir	
		Uisce	Aisling	
		Faisnéis	Ceist	

2.E.8. EXCEPTIONS.

2.E.8.1. At the beginning of a word 'S' is *broad* before slender /f'/, /m'/ and /p'/ but *slender* elsewhere.

With Broad /s/	Sfear	Sméar	Spéir
With Slender /s'/	Cloisfear	Taisme	Ispin

2.E.8.2. 'R' is always broad before slender /d'/, /n'/, /l'/, /t'/ and /s'/.

Dúirt	Aird	Cill Airne
Comhairle	Tuirse	

2.E.8.3. The dialects do not agree on the pronunciation of 'SR' in words such as 'SREANG', 'SRIAN' etc. In the system proposed here both 'S' and 'R' are to be pronounced as broad consonants.

Sreang	Srian
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2.E.9. Broad	/t/	An tSláinte	Tnúth	Tráth
		Alt	Ceart	Ocht
		Post	Punt	
Slender	/t'/	An tSli	Trí	
		Caint	Ceist	Fáilte

SECTION 2.F. THREE CONSONANT CLUSTERS

The clusters have either all broad or all slender consonants, with the exception of those containing 'SP', where the 'S' always remains broad.

2.F.1. THREE BROAD CONSONANTS INITIALLY:

Sclábhái Scrúdú Splanc Spraioi Stróic

THREE BROAD CONSONANTS MEDIALLY:

Músclaim	Conspóid	An Astráil
Amharclann	Sampla	Cartlann
Corera	Iompraim	Suantraí

2.F.2. THREE SLENDER CONSONANTS INITIALLY:

Scléip Scríobh Spleách Spré Stríoc

THREE SLENDER CONSONANTS MEDIALLY:

Finscéal	Ainspiorad	Inste Coincleach
Simplí	Ceirtlín	Inscribhinn
Imprisean	Máistreás	Baintreach

CHAPTER 3

SÉIMHIÚ AND URÚ

In Irish, initial consonants undergo certain sound changes in various contexts. These are called *SÉIMHIÚ* (or lenition) and *URÚ* (or eclipsis) in Irish grammars. *SÉIMHIÚ* and *URÚ* are important since applying either process to a word may change its meaning.

SECTION 3.A. SÉIMHIÚ (LENITION)

The consonants that can take séimhiú are *B, C, D, F, G, M, P, S* and *T*. To show that a consonant has séimhiú, one writes 'H' after it. In pronunciation, however, 'B' and 'BH' represent different sounds, as do 'C' and 'CH', 'D' and 'DH', etc.

In some of the following examples, certain consonants are grouped together where their lenited forms are pronounced the same. They are 'B' and 'M', 'D', and 'G' 'S' and 'T'.

3.A.1. Lenition of 'B' and 'M' (×2)

Broad	Bó	An Bhó	Máire	A Mháire
/b,m/ → /v/	Bróg		An Bhróg	

Slender	Bean	An Bhean
/b',m' → /v'/	Méar	Mo Mhéar
	Bliain	Dhá Bhliain

3.A.2. Lenition of 'C' (×2)

Broad	Caitlín	A Chaitlín
/k/ → /x/	An Clár	Contae an Chláir

Slender	Ceol	Cheol
/k/ → /x'/	Cliste	An-chliste

3.A.3. Lenition of 'D' and 'G' (×2)

Broad	Dún	Dhún
/d,g/ → /ɣ/	Gortaigh	Ghortaigh
	Droim	Mo Dhroim
	Glór	Mo Ghlór

Slender	Diol	Dhiol
/d',g' / → /ɣ' /	Gearr	Ghearr
	Grian	An Ghrian
	Gleann	Sa Ghleann

3.A.4. Lenition of 'F'

Broad	Fuinneog	An Fhuinneog
/f/ deleted	Fág	D'fhág
	Fraincis	An Fhraincis

Slender	Feoil	An Fheoil
/f' / deleted	Féach	D'fhéach
	Fliuch	Rófhliuch

3.A.5. Lenition of 'P'

Broad	Pádraig	A Phádraig
/p/ → /f/	Plúr	Sa Phlúr

Slender	Peadar	A Pheadair
/p' / → /f' /	Priosún	Sa Phriosún

3.A.6. Lenition of 'S' and 'T'

Broad	Tóg	Thóg
/s,t/ → /h/	Sábháil	Shábháil
	Trom	Róthrom
	Snámh	Shnámh

Slender	Teach	Mo Theach
/s',t' / → /h' /	Sean	Róshean
	Tri	Faoi Thri
	Sli	Ar Shlí

EXCEPTIONS: When words beginning with 'SEO, SEÓ, SIÚ' are lenited, 'SH' then represents the sound /x'/ (as if written 'CH'). 'SH' in the lenited form of the name 'SEÁN' is also pronounced as slender 'CH', /x'/.

Slender	Seoi.se	A Sheoirse
/s' / → /x' /	Seosamh	A Sheosaimh
	Siúil	Shiúil
	Seán	A Sheáin
	Seó	Aersheó

INITIAL 'SC', 'SM', 'SP', 'ST' NEVER HAVE SÉIMHIÚ.

SECTION 3.B. URÚ (ECLIPSIS).

The consonants that take *Urú* (Eclipsis) are 'B, C, D, F, G, P' and 'T'. 'B', 'D' and 'G' when eclipsed are written as 'MB', 'ND' and 'NG', and 'C', 'F', 'P' and 'T', when eclipsed are written as 'GC', 'BHF', 'BP' and 'DT'. Before vowels an 'N' is inserted.

3.B.1. Eclipsis of 'B'

Broad	Bád	I mbád
(B → MB) = /m/	Bróg	Siopa na mbróg

Slender	Bionn	An mbionn?
(B → MB) = /m'/	Bliain	Deich mbliana

3.B.2. Eclipsis of 'C'

Broad	Cónaí	I gcónaí
(C → GC) = /g/	Clann	A gclann

Slender	Cead	I gcead
(C → GC) = /g'/	Creideamh	A gcreideamh

3.B.3. Eclipsis of 'D' (×2)

Broad	Duine	Ina nduine is ina nduine
(D → ND) = /n/	Droim	Ar a ndroim

Slender	Déan	An ndéanfaidh tú é?
(D → ND) = /n'/	Dlíodóir	Club na ndlíodóirí

3.B.4. Eclipsis of 'F' (×2)

Broad	Fuair	Ní bhfuair
(F → BHF) = /v/	Francach	Bliain na bhFrancach

Slender	Fiacha	Ár bhfiacha
(F → BHF) = /v'/	Freagra	Leabhar na bhfreagraí

3.B.5. Eclipsis of 'G'

Broad	Gardaí	Carr na nGardaí
(G → NG) = /ŋ/	Glúine	Ar a nglúine

Slender	Gine	Seacht ngine
(G → NG) = /ŋ'/	Grian	Ar an ngrian

3.B.6. Eclipsis of 'P' (×2)

Broad	Punt	Ocht bpunt
(P → BP) = /b/	Pláta	Deich bpláta

Slender	Pingin	Deich bpingine
(P → BP) = /b'/	Priosún	I bpríosún

3.B.7. Eclipsis of 'T'

Broad	Tuigeann	An dtuigeann
(T → DT) = /d/	Trá Lí	I dTrá Lí

Slender	Tír	I dtír
(T → DT) = /d'/	Trioblóid	I dtrioblóid

3.B.8. Eclipsis of Vowels

Before 'A, O and U' = /n/	Athair	Ár nAthair
Before 'I and E' = /n'/	Éirigh	Go n-éirí leat

CHAPTER 4
STRESS IN IRISH WORDS

In two of the three main dialects of Irish, namely Connaught and Ulster, the stress falls almost invariably on the first syllable of a word. The third dialect, that of Munster, however, has a different stress system. While many words in Munster Irish have the stress on the first syllable, many more stress a second or subsequent syllable, especially where that syllable contains a long vowel or diphthong.

The stress system proposed here can be outlined as follows:

- a) Most words are stressed on the first syllable.
- b) A number of recent loan-words and a limited number of native words are stressed on the second syllable.
- c) Compound words have different degrees of stress showing various combinations of primary and secondary stress.

SECTION 4.A. WORDS STRESSED ON THE FIRST SYLLABLE

When primary stress falls on the first syllable of a word and all other syllables are unstressed, such words are not marked for stress in the pocket dictionary or in the examples below.

4.A.1. Words with a short vowel in the second or following syllable

Aifreann	/aɪˈrʲən/	Capall	/kapəl/
Eolas	/oːlʲas/	Pádraig	/paːdrəɡʲ/

Words with a long vowel in the second or following syllable

Amadán	/amədaːn/
Cailín	/kalʲiːnʲ/
Gardaí	/gaːrdiː/

SECTION 4.B. WORDS STRESSED ON THE SECOND SYLLABLE

Words with primary stress on the second syllable

Amach	/əˈmax/	Anseo	/ənˈsʲo/
Inniu	/əˈnʲu/	Amárach	/əˈmaːrəx/
Aréir	/əˈreːrʲ/	Tráthnóna	/traːˈnoːnə/

SECTION 4.C. STRESS IN COMPOUND WORDS

Compound words in Irish show three different stress patterns. The most common stress pattern is primary stress followed by secondary stress as in *SEANFHOCAL*. One can also have a primary stress followed by another primary stress as in *DROCHLÁ*. The third pattern is secondary stress followed by primary stress, as in *DOFHEICTHE*.

4.C.1. PRIMARY stress followed by SECONDARY stress

Bunscoil /'bun,skol'/
Leithscéal /'l'e,s'k'e:l'/
Meánaosta /'m'a:n,i:stə/

4.C.2. PRIMARY stress followed by another PRIMARY stress

Drochobair /'drox'obər'/ Ró-ard /'ro:'a:rd/

4.C.3. SECONDARY stress followed by PRIMARY stress

Do-dhéanta /,do'ɣ'e:ntə/

SECTION 4.D. STRESS IN NON-COMPOUND LOAN-WORDS.

4.D.1. Non-compound words with initial primary stress and no subsequent stress

Aicsean /ak's'ən/ Aingine /aŋ'g'i:n'ə/
Feithicil /f'eħək'əl'/ Leictreonach /l'ek't'r'o:nəħ/

4.D.2. Non-compound words with primary stress on the second syllable.

Tobac /tə'bak/
Mileoidean /m'ə'l'o:d'ən/

4.D.3. Non-compound words with primary and secondary stress

With initial primary stress

Baghcat /'bai,kat/
Matamaitic /'matə,mat'ək'/
Búmaraing /'bu:mə,rəŋ'/

With non-initial primary stress

Atlantach /,at'lantəħ/
Coimisiún /,ko'm'is'u:n/
Pianó /,p'i'ano:/

SECTION 4.E. STRESS IN COMPOUND LOAN-WORDS

In the following examples, primary stress is on the first syllable, with secondary stress on another syllable.

- 4.E.1. Compound words containing an element which can occur as a full word on its own.

Ciliméadar /'k'íl'ə,m'e:dər/
Fótagraf /'fó:tə,gráf/
Teileafón /'t'el'ə,fó:n/

- 4.E.2. Compound loan-words with an identifiable prefix

Aeradróm /'e:rə,dro:m/
Héileacaptar /'he:l'ə,kaptər/
Plutacrat /'plutə,krat/

SECTION 4.F. STRESS IN NOUN PHRASES

- 4.F.1. In Irish the possessives *Mo, Do, A, Ár, Bhur*, are never stressed as in:

Mo mháthair /mə'va:hər'/
Do cheannsa /də 'x'ansə/
Ár nAthair /a:r 'nahər'/

- 4.F.2. In phrases of the following type, *the last word* in each phrase *has the primary stress*, with the *secondary stress* on a preceding word.

Baile mór /,bal'ə 'mó:r/
Bean Rua /,b'an'ruə/
Oifig an Phoist /,of'əg' ə 'fos't'/
Fear an Bhainne /,f'ar ə 'van'ə/
Baile Átha Cliath /,bal'ə a:hə 'k'l'iə/
Béal Feirste /,b'e:l 'f'ers't'ə/