

O'Malley  
JOURNAL 9



Young dancers from Redmond School of Irish Dancing including Cathy (at front, daughter of Chieftain Maurice) at 1999 Rally, Castlebar.



"Anything they can do we can do better!" (From left): Chieftains Middle O'Malley, Eoin O'Malley Harlow, Ellen O'Malley Dunlop, Cormac O'Malley, Don O'Malley, Rally 1999, Castlebar

#### FRONT COVER

Croagh Patrick from Owenwee (Photo: Liam Lyons)  
All other photographs are by Michael O'Malley unless otherwise stated

## O'Malley Journal 2000

This is our sixth O'Malley Journal, and we hope it will prove to be our best yet. It is our annual store of history, folklore, family memoirs, poetry and records of past Clan rallies, all enhanced by a selection of photographs that will recall many happy memories for all those who participated in our annual gatherings. This is a Millennium edition and marks a very special date in the Christian world. Here in the shadow of Croagh Patrick we are especially mindful of the coming of St. Patrick and the conversion of our ancestors. We are deeply grateful to all our contributors without whom there would be no journal. A personal word of thanks to the assistant editor, Ann O'Malley Kelly, whose enthusiasm and energy are unbounded. We now invite our readers to sample the treasures we have prepared for you.

Sheila O'Malley Mulloy, Hon. Editor,  
Carrowbaun, Westport, Co. Mayo.  
June 2000

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# MIDDLETON E. O'MALLEY-KEYES

*Clan Chieftain 1999-2000*

Kidnapped from Ireland on 26 April 1946; born 30 April 1946 in New York City, New York. Leaving Ireland that close to delivery and against doctor's orders, I believe my mother wanted to nip the emigration issue in the bud.

My father, Nial O'Malley-Keyes, was born in London, and reared in Newport, Co. Mayo, and the South of France. Educated in England, he had great talent as an artist and writer, and served as a navigator aboard Swedish freighters during W.W.II.

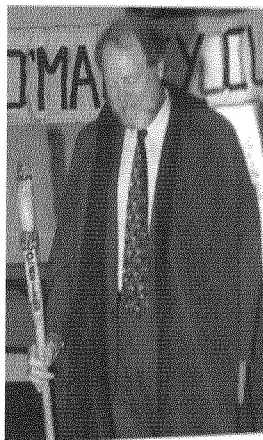
My mother was Julia Holland, born in New Jersey, USA. A woman of great cultural and intellectual interests, mother of eight, a reasonably good cook, and the reason the family stayed sane (ish) . . .

I gleefully admit to having had the bare bones minimum of formal education. Graduating from High School was a complete miracle and most likely a gift from enraged teachers who never wanted to see me again. Various elective courses and occupationally- specialized schools followed that horrifying experience.

My career has been varied. Air Traffic Control greatly entertained me for many years until President Regan had the lot of us fired for going on strike. A stint as a radio announcer was cut short by the opportunity to go into sales. I lasted four years with an employer who took it upon himself to lie, cheat, and steal his way into my heart. Merrily chucking him out, I started my own sales and marketing company in 1986. Fourteen years later, I appear to have achieved modest success, and continue to enjoy running my own business.

My interests have the range of a person with a severe case of ADS, but in general they include the following: Skiing, theatre, and museums, in winter. Biking, motorcycling, rowing, travelling, a bit of gardening, and walking, in spring and summer. Shooting, and more cultural activities in the fall. I've recently begun hosting a weekly Blues program on a local radio station. Languages have always interested me. Socializing with good friends over good food and drink has always pleased me immensely. They are all so interesting.

A brief marriage in 1970, produced a wonderful daughter, Kirsten. She's a language specialist, and musician, and has worked in both North and South America, and Asia. From 1975 until she died in 1996, I was married to Dorinda O'Malley-Keyes. I married Lesley O'Malley-Keyes, of Southampton, England, in 1998.



Middleton E. ('Middie') O'Malley-Keyes  
in full regalia at O'Malley Rally, 1999.

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## Guardian Chieftains of the Clan

1954-1959	John J. O'Malley, Westport.
1959-1982	Professor C. Conor O'Malley, Galway.
1984-1988	Martin O'Malley, Dublin.
1988-1991	Dr. Patrick Pearse O'Malley, Delgany, Co. Wicklow.
1991-1994	Gerry O'Malley, Bray, Co. Wicklow.
1994-1997	Sara O'Malley McInerney, Dublin.
1997-2000	Sheila O'Malley Mulloy, Westport

## Chieftains of the Clan

1953	John J. O'Malley, Westport.	1977	Martin O'Malley, Tourmakeady, Co. Mayo.
1954	Prof. C. Conor O'Malley, Galway.	1978	Thomas J. O'Malley, Navan, Co. Meath.
1955	Patrick E. O'Malley, Limerick.	1979	Dr. Thomas O'Malley, Florida, U.S.A.
1956	Dr. P. Pearse O'Malley, Belfast.	1980	John E. O'Malley, Ardee, Co. Louth.
1957	Charles O'Malley, B.D.S., Limerick.	1981	Grace O'Malley Purcell, Dublin.
1958	An tOllamh Tomás Ó Máille, Galway.	1982	Declan O'Malley, Dublin.
1959	Charles O'Malley, Westport.	1983	Michael O'Malley, London.
1960	Prof. Michael G. O'Malley, Galway.	1984	Judge Peter O'Malley, Dublin.
1961	Bartley O'Malley, Dunmore, Co. Galway.	1985	Brian O'Malley, Boston, U.S.A.
1962	George O'Malley, Manchester.	1986	Anthony O'Malley, Louisburgh, Co. Mayo.
1963	Matthew O'Malley, Cleggan, Clifden, Co. Galway.	1987	Joseph O'Malley Blackwell, Newport, Co. Mayo.
1964	Patrick O'Malley, V.S., Castlebar.	1988	Alice O'Malley, Chicago, U.S.A.
1965	Thomas O'Malley, Chicago and Dublin.	1989	Michael O'Malley, Ballynew, Castlebar.
1966	Prof. Eoin O'Malley, Dublin.	1990	Sara O'Malley McInerney, Dublin.
1967	George O'Malley, Casteltroy, Co. Limerick.	1991	Peter O'Malley McGee, Newport, Co. Mayo.
1968	Stiofán Ó Máille, Galway.	1992	Sheila O'Malley Mulloy, Westport.
1969	John O'Malley, Manchester.	1993	Ellen O'Malley Dunlop, Dublin.
1970	Martin O'Malley, Dublin.	1994	Cormac O'Malley, New York, U.S.A.
1971	Tim O'Malley, Limerick.	1995	Kitty O'Malley Harlow, Westport.
1972	Gerry O'Malley, Ballycastle, Co. Mayo.	1996	Ann O'Malley Kelly, Galway.
1973	Ward O'Malley, Golden, Co. Tipperary.	1997	Don O'Malley, Limerick.
1974	Richard Kilroy O'Malley, Clonbur, Co. Galway.	1998	Maurice O'Malley, Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
1975	Prof. Ethna O'Malley Gaffney, Dublin.	1999	Middleton O'Malley, Newport, Co. Mayo.
1976	Michael O'Malley, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.		

## GALWAY CITY THIRTY YEARS AGO

*Dell Allen*

When I took a stroll through Galway recently my mind leaped back some thirty years to 1920 or thereabouts. A student once more, with a pile of books under my arm, I was proceeding leisurely homewards from a lecture, leaving the stately pile of the University building behind me, finding my way past the boathouses and the Students' Club to the salmon weir bridge.

On this bridge in the old days I often met my English Professor, the late W. A. Byrne, the author of a little book of poems entitled *The Light on the Broom*. 'W.A.B.' might be gazing up along the lovely stretch of the Corrib; if you spoke to him he would slowly come back to earth, look at you for a moment, then drop into step beside you, talking away in a disjointed undertone, oblivious of all around him. I still recollect much of the countryside lore of his native midlands.

### Home-Spun Yarns

Around by the Town Hall and along by the Convent of Mercy I went, and as I passed the Franciscan Monastery I could almost see Father Fitzgerald rushing out, ready to buttonhole any acquaintance. It didn't matter who it might be as long as he or she had ears to hear and a mind to appreciate one of his home-spun yarns!

For Father Tom always tried them out on his friends before he compiled them in book form. *Home Spun Yarns* and *Fits and Starts* were pleasant reading matters in those days. Later, 'Father Fitz' returned to his beloved Australia and we were never to see him again.

In Francis Street I saw few changes, but near the Garda Barracks in Eglinton Street I passed a cinema that had not been there in the past. Along by the Post Office to Moon's Corner every step of the way was familiar.

### Pádraic Ó Conaire

With a bit of luck in those days I might have got a glimpse of Pádraic Ó Conaire, his hat on the back of his head, having an animated conversation with some country man – and the rich flow in Irish between the two would leave me dumbfounded!

I would stand and stare, for the book Irish I had learned at school wouldn't be worth a *traneen* (tráithnín, straw) on such an occasion. If Pádraic saw a friend he might wave his blackthorn, as much as to say: 'I'll be with you in a minute,' but you might wait until Doomsday before he thought of you again.

That brought to my mind another great Irishman of those days, the late Professor Tomás Ó Máille, Dean of the Celtic Faculty, a quiet man, ever helpful and one of the most lovable of professors. So unassuming was he that his students rarely realised his immense scholarship.

What we did realise was his wonderful patience, his amazingly clear lucidity of expression in the language, for which he claimed a place amid the aristocratic languages of the world. He was the editor of several publications including *Am Stoc* but we were more familiar with his *Poems of Carolan*, which was studied under his direction.

### The Merchant Prince

Along by Merchants' Road in those days the outstanding figure of Martin McDonagh, Galway's merchant prince, could often be seen.

Máirtín Mór, as he was called, might be stepping out of his office, a tall, imposing and eagle-eyed man. He would screw in that frightening monocle of his, and you immediately got the impression that he was eyeing you disapprovingly.

But your fears would be unfounded, for Martin was a quiet man, kindly and generous-hearted, whose name was a household word throughout the length and breadth of County Galway. His factories produced fertilisers for practically the whole of the West, and the sounds of his huge timber mills echoed along the docks.

### Teeming Markets

I walked by the famous old church of St. Nicholas, past the markets teeming with life and cheerful with the chirping of chickens, the tinkle of glass and delft, the slow, but determined, bargaining in Irish. Little donkey carts, laden with potatoes, cabbage, and all sorts of farm produce were drawn up, while shoppers from the city did the rounds, exchanging lively badinage with the vendors.

I crossed O'Brien's bridge and saw a new chemical factory beside the river. On all sides Galway seemed to have progressed almost beyond recognition. Leaving Nun's Island on my right I turned into Dominick Street. Here I used to stay in the old days, and foremost among the people associated in my mind with

students' 'digs' was the late Archdeacon Hynes, then our Dean of Residence as well as Secretary to the University and Professor of Archaeology. I could almost see him again racing along with his coat tails flying.

With an abundance of energy and a volcanic personality he worked like ten men, lecturing in the morning, conducting an educational tour in the afternoon, inspecting students' quarters after tea, as well as attending many different functions. But he was never too tired to listen to deputations or too stern to grant requests; neither was he too tender-hearted to issue legitimate vetos and prohibitions.

### A New Salthill

In Salthill I was confronted with a battery of new houses and thriving hotels. A splendid new church stood facing the bay. The corners had been drastically removed from the old promenade and the wide stretch of seafront rebuilt. The cheery bustle of holiday-makers and the long lines of parked cars gave me an inkling of this new Salthill, and I remembered the handful of people long ago who came up from the country to enjoy the beneficial effects of the salt water, and sat along the wall all day drinking in the Atlantic breeze.

I turned back towards the city by the Grattan Road and almost lost my bearings through strange new streets. I came back to the city by the Claddagh, where the old thatched cottages have disappeared, giving place to trim rows of little modern houses. Passing up by the docks I saw to my right the familiar outline of the Spanish Arch. I walked along the sidewalk through Williamsgate Street and realised that here the buildings were practically the same with the same familiar names looking down at me from over the doorways.

### Link With The Dead

But there walked with me through the old town a host of Galwegians. Faces thronged around me – professors, students, kindly townfolk, and crowded incidents of student days came rushing back. From the dead my thoughts turned to the living men and women of today scattered throughout the world – the only link between them and this grand old City of the Tribes. In far-off lands did they, like me, pay tribute in their hearts to Galway? Theirs was not the privilege, as mine had been, of re-visiting the scenes of the past, but I could stake my life that a great number of them often strolled in memory down from College and across the Salmon Weir bridge, chatting away gaily – as of yore plotting and planning in the happy united family manner that was the essence of Galway!

In Eyre Square I stopped to gaze for a space on the Ó Conaire memorial – and as I stood there the lively tunes from the Carnival echoed across the Square

as they often did of old. But when I turned around I saw the new Galway, bigger, brighter, more opulent and more crowded. Strange faces passed me by that stirred no chord within me, so I hurried onwards towards the railway station, closing my book of memories.

*Looking back on Galway of a previous generation – fifty years ago. This article was published around 1950 and penned by Dell Allen, originally Joyce from the Maam Valley, who was recalling her student years at University College Galway. Dell Allen wrote a number of poetry books, contributed to periodicals and newspapers and wrote radio scripts. (Connacht Sentinel, 28 March 2000, published by kind permission of the Connacht Tribune Ltd., Galway.)*

## WELCOME HOME

*In the evening hush – through the open doorway  
I saw the bay like a pool of gold  
While the trees leaned there in friendly welcome,  
To tell me their tale as they did of old.*

*'Twas the murmur of Gaelic that I heard passing  
The fuschia's bloom by the old stone wall:  
'Twas a curragh riding the crested water –  
A sheep-dog's bark and a shepherd's call . . .  
'Twas the oil lamp, burning low in its bracket,  
The open hearth and the red turf fire,  
The scent of hay from the scythe of the mower,  
The lowing of cows from a neighbour's byre.  
'Twas the little church with its wooded grotto  
That nestled close to the dreaming sea,  
And after Mass – 'twas the smiling faces,  
The outstretched hands – that welcomed me!*

*Swiftly as thought the years slipped backwards,  
Blotting out memories of laughter and pain –  
'Twas a child once more who heard the greeting:  
"God bless you Alanna, you're home again!"*

**Dell Allen** (1898-1985), daughter of Thomas Francis Joyce of the Maam Valley and Sabina Conroy, of Ros Muc, Co. Galway, was a first cousin of Pádraic Ó Conaire, the well-known Irish language author. She had many articles and poems published in newspapers and magazines, and in 1973 published a book of her collected poems entitled *Before The Rain Began*.

## TOMMY

*Meike Blackwell*

Tommy is an island man. Born on the island of Inishfesh in Clew Bay he spent his whole life in and around this very bay.

Like his father before him he worked for the O'Malleys of Ross, and became a trusted and much sought-after friend of the extended family. He introduced two or three generations of O'Malley and later Blackwell boys to the lore of the sea, how to row a boat and to use an engine. He showed them where to find oysters, mussels, winkles and the beloved cluaisíns. They walked the shores with him and learned to catch lobsters. He took them out in the boat to fish for mackerel which he cooked for all of us right there on the shore, while telling the boys tales of island ghosts and survival tricks.

So it was with amusement we saw our two boys and their friends march off one fine summer's day trailing behind them a sack with potatoes, a gin bottle of water, an old pot and some matches. We asked why these things were necessary for a Clare island regatta, and were told 'Tommy told us so'. We had a nineteen foot sailing dinghy with which they planned to partake in the regatta. It was one of those rare windless summer days, so it took them a long time to reach Clare Island, and when they did, the races were all finished. After a refreshing drink and some lunch we sent them straight back. It must be said, that none of the boys really knew Clew Bay very well; they were all fifteen years old and three of them were visitors. I can't quite remember why we trusted them so.

My husband was suddenly taken ill on our own return trip and so it was not till later in the evening that I became uneasy at the thought of the boys still out at sea. This was in the days before we had a telephone so I drove the ten miles to Rosturk where two of the boys were staying. Neither were they there nor could we see a boat out at sea. Upon telephoning Clare Island we were told by voices which were clearly celebrating the end of the regatta, that they had not seen a boat sailing to America this day. I then went with Tommy's son in our small speedboat scouring the bay for any sign of the



*Meike Blackwell at Ross House*

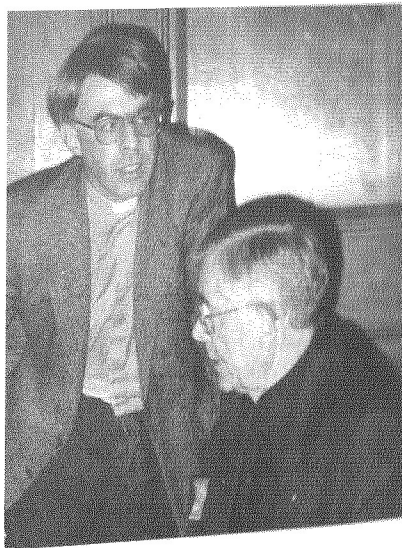
boys. Time and again we returned to Ross hoping to find them at home. Finally we even siphoned the petrol from the cars to keep our boat engine going. We kept at it all night, getting ever more desperate. Finally, at seven o'clock the next morning we returned once more only to find our sailing boat safely anchored at the pier and all four boys in high spirits drinking a cup of tea in the kitchen.

This is what had happened:

Sailing back from Clare Island with little wind they were still far from home when it got dark. Not being familiar with the multitude of islands they mistook the entrance to our part of the bay and ended up in waters strange to them. They had been fishing all along and by now had a number of mackerel in the boat. Remembering old Tommy's advice they landed on an island, crept into a deserted cottage, roasted the fish, boiled the potatoes, and drank the water out of the old gin bottle and then lay down to sleep. At sunrise they set sail again and found their way home oblivious of the fact that we had worried all night long. The answer to all our questions was, 'But Tommy had told us what to do.'

God bless Tommy.

**Meike Blackwell** was born in Wilhelmshaven, Germany, where her father was a naval officer. He went down with the *Bismarck* in the Second World War. She studied physiotherapy at Heidelberg University, and worked as a physiotherapist in the United States, where she lived from 1955-70. She also worked as a volunteer there with the Archaeological Department at the University of Chicago. Meike has been living in Ross House, Newport, since 1970 with her late husband Major Joseph O'Malley Blackwell, and has two children Kirsten and Alex. She is a member of the O'Malley Clan Committee, and her husband was elected Clan Chieftain in 1987.



*Revd Ken Lindsey (Methodist Chaplain) and Fr. Tom O'Malley C.S.Sp., in TCD at 1991 Rally.*

## GRANUAILE: A STUDY IN SURVIVAL

*Anne Chambers*

The feline durability and dare-devil indestructibility of many of our modern-day, usually male, politicians serve to mesmerise and entertain us. Almost every year, further chapters in their political death-defying antics unfold. Where, we wonder, did they learn such skills in the art of survival? What Houdini-like coach schooled them to bob and weave, to duck and dive, to ensure their political lives? What manual of instruction, illustrated with case studies of notable historic survivors of the past, did they study to balance with such agility on the precarious ledge?

Until recently, it is certain that one of the most remarkable survivors of the past times was not on their list of case studies. This versatile exponent in the art of survival, overcame not merely the political pitfalls that confront all politicians but, in addition, had to contend with invidious and physically threatening obstacles of nature and society. The exploits of today's exponents in the art of political survival are liable to be well chronicled, debated and preserved for posterity. Yet this ingenious survivor, who out-manoeuvred and outlasted protagonist and ally alike throughout her life, in death fell foul to the conspiracy of neglect and bias that was perpetrated against her, as generally it was perpetrated against the contribution and role of women in our history.

But in the case of Granuaile (Grace O'Malley) more than mere male chauvinism ensured her dismissal from the pages of history. Granuaile committed an additional transgression by not fitting the mould determined and demanded by later generations of Irish historians. Until recently, Irish heroes and heroines were required to be suitably adorned in the green cloak of patriotism, their personal lives untainted, their religious beliefs fervently Catholic, with an occasional allowance made for rebel Protestants. Granuaile, as one of her detractors wrote of her, was the 'woman who overstepped the part of womanhood'. She superseded her husband in his sacred role as chieftain; assumed command of her father's fleet of galleys and hard-bitten crews; traded and pirated successfully for the space of fifty years from Scotland to Spain; led rebellions against the English Governor of Connacht when he tried to curb her power; allied with his Queen [Elizabeth I] and her deputy in Ireland, when it was to her political advantage; attacked her own son when he sided with her enemy; trained another son so well in the art of survival that he fought with

the English at the Battle of Kinsale. Granuaile, who allowed neither political nor social convention to deter her ambition, took a lover, divorced a husband, gave birth to her child on board her ship at sea, plundered Irish as well as Spanish and English, hardly fitted the rosy-hued picture of Gaelic womanhood painted by later-day generations of male and often clerical historians. It is ironic that the *Annals of the Four Masters*, that seminal source of Irish history written in a time and in a place where the memory of Granuaile must still have been verdant, does not mention her name. Such bias erased from the pages of official history one of the most remarkable survivors of the past. Indeed without the English State Papers of the period and the folk memory of the people, all trace of Granuaile might well have been buried with her.

Yet the policy of survival which Granuaile pursued with such determination and success merely mirrored her contemporary political background. Granuaile was a product of her time (c. 1530-1603). For the greater part of the sixteenth century, Ireland was devoid of any unifying ideological stimulus, political or religious. Ireland had become detached from mainstream European development. It did not share a common history with the Continent and had been by-passed by the sweeping changes that had altered the social, political and religious fabric of Europe. Gaelic Ireland had in many respects remained virtually unchanged from its Celtic origins. It had not produced a centralised stable government or monarchy but had continued to nurture its fragmented tribal kingdoms. In sixteenth-century Ireland, tribal warfare, cattle-raiding and blood-money were as much part of daily life as they had been in the time of Queen Maeve and Cuchulainn.

Having no central authority to mould the allegiance of the fiercely independent leaders of Gaelic Ireland, as had been done in England under the Tudors in the previous century, survival, not nationalism, was the spur of every Gaelic leader as it was for Granuaile. Their sole concern was to hold fast to their power and position: to protect themselves from either the encroachment of a neighbour or a competitor within the clan as much as from an English administrator, if they were strong enough. If they were not, then to ally with Irish, English or Spanish, whosoever was most likely to ensure their survival. Confederation against a common enemy, when it did emerge towards the very end of the century, under O'Neill and O'Donnell, proved too little too late. Until recently our history books preferred to ignore the earlier decades and to concentrate on the tentative nationalistic tendencies of the Ulster chieftains for the last nine years of the century. They shied away from exploring the more unpalatable but understandable survival motivations of the vast majority of their contemporaries, the myriad of minor chieftains who occupied the middle-ground between the fixed battle-lines of two fundamentally incompatible protagonists, the disintegrating old Gaelic order and the new English system.

As a female leader by sea as well as by land, physical rather than political survival was undoubtedly Granuaile's first challenge. Although born into a clan whose seafaring tradition was long established, it was no mean accomplishment on her part to master and excel in the skills necessary for survival on the wild Atlantic. Her ability to captain her ships to Scotland, England, and further afield to Spain and Portugal, rank Granuaile among the best seafarers of her time. The threat from English and Spanish warships out to capture her, or from competitors in the piracy trade seeking to relieve her of her life, as well as her cargo, augmented the physical hazards which confronted her. Her capacity to endure great personal hardship and danger was remarkable. Sixteenth-century seafaring was not for the faint-hearted. Conditions on board were primitive, privacy non-existent. To endure the barrage of wind and sea, the roughness of hawser, canvas and swaying boards, sodden clothing, little shelter and indigestible rations, to give birth on board a bucking galley as she did, on the high seas, seem to us in our cushioned lifestyle, unimaginable. To compete in such a hazardous occupation in such an inhospitable environment and to live to remember it in old age was in itself a remarkable feat of survival.

If Granuaile's political stance is examined in isolation from the era to which she belonged, then she emerges as at best an enigma and at worst a traitor. Born into an ancient Gaelic family who had ruled their territory by right of ancient Brehon law and custom, her chieftain father, Dubhdara O'Malley, unlike his contemporaries, had not submitted to the English. Yet his daughter sought and gained the pardon of the English Queen whose policy was to destroy the very civilisation into which Granuaile had been born. At the height of her power Granuaile 'offered her services' to the Queen's deputy in Ireland, Sir Henry Sidney, 'unto me wheresoever I would command her'. She promised the Queen at their historic meeting in 1593, as she recorded, to 'continue a dutiful subject' and to 'fight with our quarrel with all the world'. Later, in a written petition to the Queen's secretary Lord Burghley, she vows that she and 'her sons and the rest will not only put their lives at all times in danger to the advancement of her highness' service but also pray for your honourable lordship's success long to live in happiness.' Even allowing for the embellishments of the language of the day, hardly the words or actions of one whom we have been conditioned to accept as patriotic.

To these protestations of loyalty to the English must be added the seemingly contradictory observations of individual English administrators and military men on the ground during the period in Ireland, men who bore the brunt of the decidedly disloyal actions of their Queen's 'dutiful' subject, for a full picture of this exponent in the art of survival. 'A great spoiler and chief commander and director of thieves and murderers at sea', the crusty President of Munster, Sir William Drury

wrote after he had lodged her behind bars in Dublin Castle 1578. 'A notable traitoress and nurse to all rebellions in Connaught for forty years', one with a 'naughty disposition towards the state', her arch enemy the English Governor of Connacht, Sir Richard Bingham, complained to Court.

Bingham wrote with first-hand experience of Granuaile's duplicity. On three separate occasions she was actively involved in rebellion against his severe rule. She threatened and attacked officials and sheriffs whom he sent to collect Crown rents from her and her husband, the MacWilliam Bourke, and when Bingham eventually captured her and 'caused a new pair of gallows to be made for her last funeral', she again slipped through his fingers, leaving Bingham in possession of her substantial cattle herds rather than her head. Despite the damning evidence he forwarded to the English Court of her 'anti-loyal actions', Bingham failed to prevent her presenting her case in person to the Queen. He was simply out of his depth, outwitted by one who was more adept at playing the game of survival. While opposing the English administration in Ireland, whenever it impinged directly on her power and position, at the same time Granuaile ensured that she had friends in high places in critical times. Dogged, duty blind, Bingham stood little chance against her powerful sympathisers, the Earl of Ormond, Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth. How he must have shaken his head in disbelief at the naïvety of the Queen who, after meeting with the bane of his rule in Connacht, ordered him to show 'pity for this aged woman'. Despite her age, she had cunningly elicited from the Queen her approval to continue her trade, which she had euphemistically described as 'maintenance by land and sea'. Too well Bingham knew such 'maintenance' as no more than piracy and plundering at which the lady excelled and on which he had expended so much to defeat.

Although to later generations of historians these political manipulations might lack the requisite patriotic or nationalistic motivation, the fact that Granuaile's status as accepted leader among her native peers was not diminished but rather augmented by her association with individual English administrators, was proof of the success and appropriateness of her tactics. The native chieftains of Mayo, contrary to native Brehon law which excluded women from the chieftaincy, accepted Granuaile as chieftain and submitted hostages to save her from Bingham's gallows. Without any apparent opposition from the male hierarchy of the clan structure, Granuaile petitioned and negotiated with the English Crown on behalf of the extended clan family of the O'Malleys and on behalf of her Bourke and O'Flaherty relations. In 1579, when her second husband, Richard Bourke, the warlike and headstrong tánaiste of the MacWilliams in Mayo, became embroiled in the rebellion of the Earl of Desmond, Granuaile remained aloof. There was nothing to be gained from her husband's rash involvement in a rebellion that had little to do with Mayo. She owed little allegiance to the Earl of Desmond

whose lands she had previously plundered and who was the cause of her imprisonment in Dublin Castle in 1577. Richard was subsequently defeated by Governor Malby who harassed him clean across Connacht to an island in Clew Bay.

It was Granuaile who negotiated her husband's reinstatement with Malby and with good reason. As tánaiste to the MacWilliam, Richard had been elected by Brehon law to succeed to the title. However, the previous MacWilliam had agreed to rule by English law, adopting the English custom of primogeniture which meant that his eldest son, and not his elected tánaiste, would succeed to his title and estates. By playing the loyal card on this occasion, Granuaile was instrumental in 1580, on the death of the MacWilliam, and despite opposition from his son, in having the title conferred on her husband, uniquely by right of Brehon as well as English law. The letters patent from Queen Elizabeth (originals preserved in Westport House) creating Granuaile's husband the new MacWilliam, must be one of the most revealing documents of the age, legitimising by royal patent a title which in fact was outlawed by English law.

To become an accepted leader in the sixteenth century, Granuaile had to battle and survive the obstacles placed in her path in the decidedly male-dominated society which surrounded her. Brehon law explicitly excluded women from the office of chieftaincy. Succession was not by primogeniture but by the selection of the fittest male from among the members of the ruling sept. Young men aspiring to power were required by custom to prove their ability by cattle-raiding and plundering. The role of women was domestically orientated. That Granuaile defied both Gaelic law and convention to become an accepted leader of men is a tribute to her physical daring and psychological ability. There is no parallel in the sixteenth century for Granuaile as an active warrior chieftain. While a few formidable women, notably, Eleanor Countess of Desmond, Máire Rua O'Brien and Ineen Dubh O'Donnell, made their mark politically, they did so as wives of their chieftain husbands, not as Granuaile, a chieftain in her own right. Thumbing her nose at the legal and social obstacles in her path, Granuaile emerged as *de facto* chieftain of her husbands' clans, O'Flahertys and Bourkes and as matriarch of the O'Malleys. Her impact as a powerful player on the political scene is encapsulated by the inclusion of her name on the Boazio map of Ireland published in 1599, the only woman so named. While her contemporaries might well have been astounded that a woman should usurp male power and prerogative, the Gaelic bards, keepers of clan genealogies, legends and folk history, could testify that Granuaile merely followed in the tradition of the women warrior rulers of Ireland's Celtic past, like Queen Maeve of Connacht, who dominated society before the advent of Christianity and, with it, the introduction of Salic law.

In order to survive politically or otherwise, a chieftain had to be physically strong. To command respect and loyalty, he had to be able to protect his followers, to risk the same dangers and in the sixteenth century particularly, to contend with the momentous political upheavals that were threatening his very existence, as the English administration with its sheriffs, lawyers and military men sought to undermine his power and position. As a woman striving for power in a male preserve the problems were compounded. To command the respect and retain control over her wild clansmen and crews, to enforce her will, to keep her two hundred male followers in thrall over fifty years required some special characteristics.

That she was successful at her trade of 'maintenance by land and sea' undoubtedly helped maintain her control. And her success was substantial. Although not entitled by law, she took possession of Rockfleet (*Carraig an Chabhlaigh*) and Clare Island for lengthy periods of her life, while her name is associated with Kildawnet, Doona, Bosco's Fort on Inishbofin, Hen's Castle in Lough Corrib, Bunowen and Ballinahinch and Renvyle castles in Connemara. Her recorded plundering expeditions were frequent, farflung and profitable. In 1577 she plundered the rich lands of the Earl of Desmond in Munster. In 1589 it was the turn of the Aran Islands and Ballinahinch in Connemara, while in 1591 she led a reprisal attack on some Scottish mercenaries who had raided her territory. The Dean of Limerick advised the English Council in Dublin of another of her plundering raids in 1596, when at the advanced age of sixty-six, she sailed to Scotland in another reprisal attack, this time on the MacNeill of Barra. As late as 1601 one of her galleys was intercepted by an English warship allegedly 'to do some spoils upon the countries and the islands of MacSweeney Fanad and MacSweeney ne Doe about Lough Swilly and Sheephaven' in Donegal. By the end of her life she had amassed a herd of cattle and horses numbering by her own admission 'one thousand head'.

Her piracy career also brought rich rewards. The merchant ships plying their way along the west coast from England, Spain and France laden with cargoes of wine, Toledo steel, salt, damask, silk and alum, made rich pickings. In vain the merchant princes of Galway reported her activities to the English crown, accusing her and her crews of 'taking sundry ships and barks bound for this poor town which they have not only rifled to the utter overthrow of the owners and merchants, but also have most wickedly murdered divers of young men to the great terror of such as would willingly traffic'. For years the English had neither suitable ships to apprehend her versatile galleys, nor the geographical knowledge of the remote and indented coastline over which she held sway, to capture her. Eventually when in 1579, a force out of Galway, commanded by a Captain Martin, entrapped her in Rockfleet, she succeeded in repulsing the attack and sent the

besieging force scurrying for safety back to Galway. By the end of her life her combined trade by land and sea paid handsome dividends for herself and her followers.

As well as being successful, Granuaile had to be as daring and bold as the men she commanded and 'to take arms and by force maintain herself and her people by land and sea the space of forty years past'. Militarily she was at least as expert as her male contemporaries. It was she who won back Hen's Castle in Lough Corrib when her first husband had lost it, dislodging the Joyces with admirable military skill. Withstanding a three-week siege of Rockfleet Castle and turning defence into attack required both daring and ability, as did her victory at sea over Algerian pirates who attacked her ship. Being, as Bingham accused her, 'nurse to all rebellions in Connaught for forty years' denoted a proficiency in warfare. To command crews and navigate her flotilla of galleys on voyages of trade and piracy required unique talents and much bravery.

But notwithstanding her success and physical daring, she undoubtedly possessed some additional spark, some charisma that forged such an enduring bond between herself and her men to make them willing to be led by a woman, contrary to social mores and male pride. Her followers comprised members of different clans, each bearing tribal grudges which she had to subdue to mould them into a fighting force whose loyalty was to her. That she could offer the English Lord Deputy, Sir Henry Sidney, an army of 'two thousand fighting men' willing to fight wherever she ordained, is testimony to her absolute control. Sidney could not fail to be doubly impressed when his own army numbered hardly more. She is reputed to have been proud of her men and to have said 'go mbfhearr léi lín loinge de Chlann Chonróí agus Chlann Mhic an Alaidh ná lán loinge d'ór'. (That she would rather have a shipful of Conroys and MacNallys than a shipful of gold).

The career and lifestyle pursued by Granuaile hardly augured well for her commemoration by clerical analysts and historians. It is difficult to gild her actions with any semblance of a Christian, let alone Catholic ethos. Both legendary and factual sources suggest that in terms of religious leaning she was a produce more of Ireland's distant Celtic pagan past than of her more recent Christian conversion. The blatant acts of piracy and plunder pursued by Granuaile, hardly found favour within the Church and Granuaile was no Robin Hood. Her personal life did not accord any better with church teaching. Her unfeminine pursuits sat uneasily on the parchment page beside the more commonplace entries in praise of women known for their charitable good works and for being devoted wives and mothers. That Granuaile ruled both her husbands and her sons is too well recorded to be ignored. 'She brought with her her husband for he was, as well by

sea as by land, well more that Mrs. Mate with him.' Sidney felt compelled to write of her in 1577. 'His mother Granny (Gráinne) being out of charity with her son . . . manned out her navy of galleys and landed in Ballinahinch where he dwelleth, burned his town and spoiled his people of their cattle and goods and murdered 3 or 4 of his men', Bingham recorded in 1593 after her attack on her second son, Murrough O'Flaherty, after she discovered he had sided with Bingham against her. The arrangement she chose for her second marriage to Richard-in-Iron Bourke, flew in the face of Catholic regulations regarding matrimony. Disregarding church and clergy, Granuaile opted for the Brehon secular form of matrimony which allowed for trial marriages and divorce. Tradition states that she married Richard for a period of one year, and after the year invoked the divorce clause of their marriage contract and dismissed him from her bed and from his own castle. Even allowing for the decline in standards and the disarray of the church in Ireland during the course of the sixteenth century, the public and private life of Granuaile could not easily be accommodated or made to conform to the Catholic ethos.

If Granuaile's political, social and religious leanings debarred her from the pages of official history, her fictionalised life more than compensated. While analysts and historians neglected her, Irish poets on the other hand immortalised her memory throughout the decades by depicting her as a symbolic figure of fiery patriotism. While Granuaile might indeed be amazed at her elevation to such a pedestal, it is partly through this strange literary anomaly that her memory at least survived the passage of time. Similarly many fanciful novels were written about her which romanticised her memory further until her life appeared too fantastic to be credible. While literature in the past is to be commended for preserving her memory from complete oblivion, it must also be faulted for tending to preserve an image of her that bore little resemblance to her actual life. The English State Papers alone have preserved for posterity some of the historical evidence about her character and her career and her contribution to the traumatic age in which she lived. These tantalising cameos confirm her turbulent life and allow us a glimpse at one of the greatest survivors of them all.

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**Anne Chambers** is a novelist, scriptwriter and bestselling biographer. Her books include *Granuaile, the Life and Times of Grace O'Malley, Eleanor, Countess of Desmond* (shortlisted for the 1987 GPA Book Award), *Adorable Diva*, the biography of the prima donna, Margaret Burke Sheridan and *The Geraldine Conspiracy*, an historical novel.

## A WARNING TO THE CURIOUS

A. M. O'Malley-Dunlop

Beware of seeking your roots. They say go deeper than you expect, and one day when you look up you will find yourself standing in the shadow of a vast tree. In an idle holiday moment I thought that digging up my husband's O'Malley ancestors would be amusing; and so it was, at first.

We found the old home almost at once; derelict, ruinous and unwanted. Soon after, we discovered long-lost relatives and a wealth of family letters and documents. Through these we were drawn into a comic, tragic and sometimes violent world that existed long before we were born. If this were really a ghost story by M. R. James (from whom I take the title of this piece), I would say that the dead reached out of the faded pages and called us back to save the house they had loved so much and to revive their forgotten stories.



Anna O'Malley Dunlop.  
1997 Rally

At any rate their cry was irresistible. For seven years we've lived in their house; our daily work is to restore it. Sometimes we even think of it as ours, but really, it is an O'Malley house and we know that we are only stewards.

People always ask 'Is it a haunted house?' Well, yes . . . if a house is a monument to the past and is full of things which belonged to earlier generations who were born and died there or were closely associated with it, then perhaps one might well feel haunted. At any rate, I occasionally feel oppressed by a sense of responsibility to these O'Malleys: I'm not of their blood, but my children are. George of Snugboro, Margery Bermingham, Charles and Jane look out at me, from their portraits: how am I measuring up?

Of course what people really mean is 'Are there ghosts, and have you seen them?' If I think they want a ghost, then I have a story to tell of a strange little experience I had one Christmas a few years after we had moved in: not at all frightening, but it can only be told in the place where it happened, so anyone who wants to hear it had better call at Hawthorn Lodge. The door is always open.

I have never felt what sensitive people call an 'atmosphere', yet I know the house has seen bad times. It was sacked by the French in the Rising of 1798, but since they slaughtered most of the cattle and drank up all the wine, these could only be merry ghosts if they decided to revisit the scene of their brief triumphs. There were consolations, too, since Jane St. Clair O'Malley's first child was born that year and the house seems to have got off lightly. Her brother writes to Charles, her husband:

15th September 1798

I was happy to hear . . . that Jane was doing well and the mother of a fine boy - but the accounts she gives of Lodge are truly melancholy . . . I trust you will not find things as bad as she represents them.

They weren't, and Charles managed to get compensation for the damage, though not as much as he asked for.

Charles and Jane were at home on the Night of the Big Wind of 1839. I can easily imagine their terror. Soon after we moved in, a great storm struck when I was alone in the house. An ancient beech fell across the south front, and in the midst of a total blackout, two upstairs windows were blown into the back garden. How many gales has this old house weathered? How many more?

Charles O'Malley, in January 1839, was philosophical:

Last Sunday night was one of the most awful that has ever been reckoned by the oldest man living. The damage done everywhere is tremendous. Thanks be to almighty God, I and my family are all safe, my house not at all injured, about 200 trees levelled to the ground, but I care not since my family and house is safe.

If there was a sad ghost revisiting Lodge, I think it would have to be another Charles, the boy whose birth brought such joy to the year of the Rising: 'Charles O'Malley: The Irish Dragoon'. Celebrated as the greatest horseman in the county, and for his daredevil exploits at Trinity College, he never fulfilled his early promise and his life ended in breakdown. He was at odds with members of his wife's family. Dennys and Morrises, over money, and it seems there was a lawsuit hanging over him, the threat of bankruptcy and the loss of Lodge. His surviving letters, to Peter Frederick, his younger brother in England, are disjointed and pitiful: he felt that everyone had let him down. And yet he was defiant:

I should prefer an ignominious death on the Scaffold to submission now. The major's letter shows that the whole party want the sense of Common Justice - a claim like Sir George's taken into consideration while a claim like mine is repudiated without even being considered. Am I to be put upon a footing with that



Hawthorn Lodge, Castlebar.

DEGRADED SCOUNDREL? Major Denny had no right to say that was part of G. Denny's assets. What can I expect from the bounty or generosity of a man who can be induced to make such an affidavit against his uncle, without communicating with him at a moment when he professed to be on terms of intimacy and friendship with him?

And later:

The crisis has come and no man in my situation of life ever owed so little money . . . about £100 pounds would have saved me from ruin and disgrace. God bless you all, it is not likely we shall meet again.

All this with the Great Famine of 1847 raging round him, when living ghosts of the starving came to the door and there was not a loaf of bread in the house to share with them. Two years later, aged fifty, Charles was dead. This time Lodge was saved when Peter Frederick bought it for his nephew, but in 1905 it was sold away and eighty-eight years would have to pass before it was an O'Malley house again.

What exactly was the crisis that destroyed poor Charles? I don't suppose I shall ever know, since after his death, the Morris family destroyed 'an immense number of papers' that might have told the story. Re-reading those few letters I have, I think of his fight for the survival of his home and how he suffered, and wonder which room he died in.

No, there are no ghostly echoes, at least not for me. My younger daughter might tell you of restless nights and some disturbing dreams last Christmas in a room she had not slept in before . . . but that's her story.

If the family tree has thrown a shadow over our own lives since we came home, it takes the shape of our present struggle to save the last remnants of the demesne – the landscaped eighteenth-century prospect – from the claws of the Celtic Tiger®. The last of the Belclare O'Malleys to be born with the name died this year – Requiescant in Pace. They loved the house as much as anyone, so I suppose I could say our battle is being fought here on their behalf.

And if one or two ancestral spirits should be gliding through the room behind me as I write this, it's their struggle too, so what can I do but welcome them? I raised them myself, through idle curiosity, and I must do the best I can to carry out the task they set me.

### And the future?

Until Philip and Anna read Sheila Mulloy's book *O'Malley People and Places*, they had no idea that Hawthorn Lodge was more than a family memory. In 1993 they acquired the house and about two and a half acres of the original demesne. Since then they have worked to restore the house and create a setting appropriate to this historic O'Malley site. The house was built in the mid-eighteenth century and 'parked' in the style of the time, to include a prospect an Iron Age earthwork (or Fairy Fort) backed by the Partry Hills with Croagh Patrick on the right. All eleven front windows look out on this scene, which was carefully framed by two lime trees, now fully mature, and oak trees were placed to make a 'picture' recalling those of Capability Brown. The 200 trees planted since Philip and Anna moved in have been carefully set to enhance this very special piece of landscape gardening which is recorded in an Estate map of 1837, now in the National Library, Dublin.

Since March 1998, all this has been under threat from developers whose aim is to cover it with large modern mansions, thus reducing the house and its remaining lands to an orange-lit, tar-macadamed cul-de-sac in a suburb of Castlebar.

An appeal, backed by the Irish Georgian Society, has been made against these developments. The Local Council has until 28 May 2000 to reach a decision, so by the time that you read this, the 'shadow' over Lodge may well have lifted.

**Anna Dunlop** (née Brazil) was born in London of Irish parents. She graduated from Oxford and London Universities, and married Philip James Dunlop in 1962. Philip and Anna are at present involved in restoring Hawthorn Lodge, near Castlebar, where Philip's great-great-grandfather Peter Frederick O'Malley was born.

## AN APPRECIATION

### Mary O'Malley-Dunlop 1911-1999

#### Anna Dunlop

Mary Geraldine O'Malley was the elder daughter of Charles Arthur Gerald O'Malley, grandson of Peter Frederick O'Malley, who had emigrated to England from Hawthorn Lodge, Castlebar, in the early 1830s.

Her mother, Lisa Carroll (descendant of Carrolls and Gallaghers, who after emigrating from near Shrulce, Co. Mayo, in the mid-nineteenth century, had developed business interests in Peru), died shortly after giving birth to Mary's sister Honor, and Mary hardly knew her. She and her sister were subsequently brought up by her father's unmarried sister Ida Beatrice in London.

Ida was actively involved with the Women's Suffrage Movement, and her decision, at this date, to bring up two little girls singlehandedly was a clear demonstration of her belief in equality for women. Mary was likewise given the best education possible, at St. Paul's Girls' School and Oxford University. By the time she went to Oxford, to read Classics, she had already met her future husband, a young Church of England clergyman, Colin Dunlop, and, in 1935, a year after she left the University, they were married.

Then followed a career in the demanding role of an Anglican clergyman's wife, first taking parish Sunday school, organising the village dramatic society, singing in church with her beautiful soprano voice, living in large draughty vicarages etc. – later, during and after World War II, as Colin rose up the Anglican hierarchy, entertaining the great and the good, addressing the Mothers' Union, opening bazaars, and living in even larger and colder houses that went with the job. Music and fun took second place as church politics and her husband's excessive workload came to dominate her life. She still found time, however, to take up lay membership of the Church Assembly and to write occasional articles and poems.

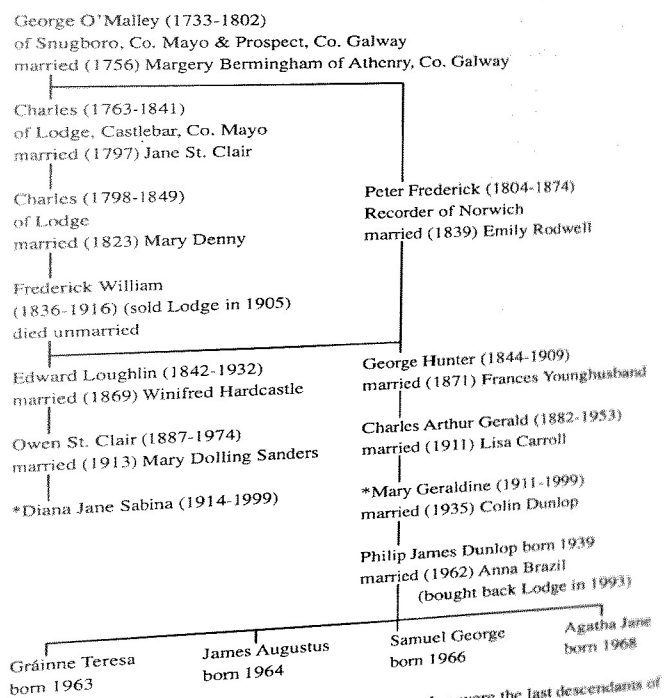


Mary O'Malley Dunlop planting a tree at Hawthorn Lodge.

Colin died in 1968 after several years of worsening Alzheimer's disease, leaving her a widow at a comparatively young age, drained of energy and with no home-base of her own. Eventually she settled in Oxford near her youngest son and enjoyed something of an Indian Summer, singing once again with a choral society, doing voluntary work, and providing a second home for her grown-up children and young grandchildren.

After 1993, when her second son Philip and his wife Anna returned to Ireland and began to restore the old O'Malley home of Hawthorn Lodge (or simply 'Lodge' as it was always known), Mary became a regular visitor, and developed a strong feeling for its unspoilt charms. She was able to take part in the 1996 Clan Rally at Delphi, where some remember her frail but gallant figure sitting on the lawn at Delphi Lodge enjoying her strawberries and champagne. This was not her last visit to Ireland, but her health and mobility began seriously to decline. Eventually she had to move to a nursing-home in Oxford, where she died peacefully on her eighty-eighth birthday, 13 December 1999.

#### BELCLARE O'MALLEYS: TRUNCATED FAMILY TREE



\* Jane O'Malley and Mary Geraldine O'Malley Dunlop were the last descendants of the Lodge O'Malleys to be born with the name.  
REQUIESCANT IN PACE

## HOME: A PLACE APART

### John-Sarah's Grand-daughters

*Ellen O'Malley-Dunlop*

As a teenager I travelled the long journey from Rathdowney to Clare Island with my Aunt Lill to spend a week's holiday. I really didn't know what lay ahead except that I didn't want to go. It was my summer holidays from boarding school, and the last place I wanted to be was with my aunt on an island. The Corner House held much more possibilities of excitement for a fifteen year old. There was always a chance that some musician would wander into my father's pub and the evenings would be filled with music and song. The days brought their own joy whether it was fishing, golfing or talking to boys. Clare Island – and with my aunt – no thanks!!

I will never forget that first boat trip. It was as if I was being transported to another planet. The feelings were so unfamiliar but wonderful. I was frightened of the sea and at the same time I loved it. The swish of the waves by the side of the boat were both terrifying and exhilarating. We landed on the island and went into McCabe's pub, grocery and post office. It was very busy as someone had returned on holiday from the States and everything was 'on' him: drinks, chocolate, week's groceries, pints of Guinness, small ones, etc., etc. Where had I landed? I spent that week with my aunt on Clare Island and it made an indelible mark on my soul that I was not to forget.

Many years went by before I returned to the island but my next visit some twenty years later was the beginning of my real return to my own place. My cousin Molly had gone to the island in the interim and she was to be my guide back home. We had planned to go to the O'Malley Rally but she felt we should visit Clare Island first. So we headed from Dublin to Roonagh Quay on a quiet Friday morning to catch the 10 o'clock boat and we booked into the Bay View Hotel which was owned by Chris and Kay O'Grady. Chris was also the boatman. At Roonagh we were warmly greeted by Chris and I was welcomed as another of John-Sarah's grand-daughters. I had been referred to as John-Sarah's grand-daughter on my previous visit but I hadn't heard the term mentioned since then. The feelings it stirred inside me were enormous. Feelings that were reminiscent of my earlier visit but ones that had not been stirred since that first trip.

The boat moved away from the pier and Clare Island was in view, majestic and sphinx-like as it sat serenely out in the bay. A small rainbow played on the water beside the boat and tears of wonder, joy and confusion rolled down both

Molly's and my cheeks. There was no need for words. We both knew that at that moment we were certainly in the right place and heading in the direction of our hearts. I am reminded of the poem that Séamas Heaney chose to read when he was accepting the Nobel Prize for Literature:

*The annals say: when the monks of Clonmacnoise  
Were all at prayer inside the oratory  
A ship appeared above them in the air.*

*The anchor dragged along behind so deep  
It hooked itself into the altar rails  
And then, as the big hull rocked to a standstill,*

*A crewman shinned and grappled down the rope  
And struggled to release it. But in vain.  
'This man can't bear our life here and will drown.'*

*The abbot said, unless we help him. 'So  
They did, the freed ship sailed, and the man climbed back  
Out of the marvellous as he had known it.*

And so it was for us, we were 'climbing back out of the marvellous as he [we] had known it'.

Our grandfather had left Clare Island nearly 100 years earlier to seek his fortune in America. The family lore had it that he was too young to go on the Gold Rush so he decided to return home but not before he shook the hand of Jesse James's brother Frank. He and his brother Pat travelled Ireland on their return, as Singer Sewing Machine agents and when they reached the midlands, they both fell in love, got married and settled down. My grandfather married Ellen Whelan from Rathdowney, Co. Laois and his brother Pat married Margaret Ryan, a Tipperary woman, and they lived in Callan, Co. Kilkenny. Each year the brothers made the long journey back to Clare Island taking with them one or two of their children each time. My father told me that on his return from Clare Island, his father's Clare Island accent was so strong that it took them a while to understand him again. And so began the reconnection, the climbing back, the journey home.

As children both Molly and I would have heard stories about Clare Island. Molly from her mother Mary, John and Ellen's eldest child and one of five girls, and me from my father Donal, their sixth son of eight boys. Clare Island had a mythical ring to its name for us. There were stories of pirates and of course the best stories were always about Grace O'Malley that 'most feminine sea captain' (*Granuaile* by Anne Chambers). What intrigue! What adventure! What excitement! Our family were known on the island as the Big O'Malleys because our family's bones were laid to rest in the Abbey with those of Grace O'Malley



*Ellen O'Malley Dunlop accepts a piece of sculpture 'The Spirit of Granuaile' on behalf of the O'Malley Clan Association from Waterford Crystal. This work is on view at the Bayview Hotel, Clare Island. Chris O'Grady, proprietor of the hotel is shown here accepting the sculpture with Chieftain Ellen (1994 Rally). Photo Michael O'Malley*

and her family from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which of course could only mean that we were the direct descendants of Grace O'Malley herself. Grandiosity indeed but what an escape from the mundane life of the 50s and 60s of a small midland town, where the priest's word was law and young girls who wore trousers were brought before him for a 'dressing down'!

When Molly and I arrived that day many years ago the abiding desire was to take our shoes off and feel the sacred soil of dear Clare Island beneath our feet. There was no doubt in either of our minds but that we were home. We talked all night, sang songs and danced the Clare Island Set and walked home at daybreak as contented as a body could be.

From that day till now Clare island remains the most important place in the world to us. Having travelled from Europe to Asia, to North and South America and on to Australia, home will always be Clare Island where Molly and I are John-Sarah's grand-daughters.

**Ellen O'Malley Dunlop** was born in Rathdowney, Co. Laois to Donal O'Malley and Grace Comerford, the elder of two children. Her brother John continues in the family business, which was established by their grandfather John of Clare island in 1911 on his return from the United States. Ellen was educated in Colaiste Bhríde, in Callan, Co. Kilkenny, and UCD, and subsequently qualified as a Primary Teacher from Mary Immaculate College of Education, in Limerick in 1975. Later she retired from teaching, and trained as a Psychotherapist and Group Analyst. She now lives and works in Dublin and is married to Sandy Dunlop. They have four sons, John-Paul, Donal, Alexander and Stuart. She was elected Clan Chieftain in 1993.

# THE O'MALLEY DIASPORA

*(Diaspora, from the Greek meaning a scattering, the dispersing of peoples outside their native land)*

Wayne Harlow



The beginning of the O'Malley diaspora, hitherto thought to have begun around the time of the great famine of 1845, is not only incorrect but is far out by several thousand years. The true story of the diaspora of the O'Malleys is as follows.

A few years ago I found myself stranded in Sandusky, Ohio, due to a fractured fuel pump in my car. As I was waiting for the car to be repaired (which was to take several hours), I spent some time browsing around some bookshops and then wandered into the local library. Pouring through some ancient books I came across one that simply blew me away. The title was *Where Have All The O'Malleys Gone?* It was written by a Professor Theodopolis O'Malley, who was, at the time of the writing of the book, chief lecturer at the small but respected college in Bowilow, Ohio. In the preface of the book it was stated that the Professor had taken sixteen years to write the book, thousands of miles of travel to Iraq, Sudan, Palestine and Yuma, Arizona with the spending of his own fortune and the final breaking down of his health. The book, printed on the best paper available, bound in calfskin and illustrated by the famous artist Reginald K. Connald, sold the amazing amount of 291 copies, all of which, eventually, became collectors' items.

So it begins: Professor O'Malley during one of his trips to Iraq in the early 1920s came across an English translation from the ancient Akkadian concerning the discovery, two thousand years before, in the ruins of an ancient library in 'The Land of Shin' ar' (Shinar was the biblical name for Shumer) a cuneiform text. This in itself was not a great discovery as there were thousands of clay tablets that said nothing more than who hadn't paid their rent that month in Nineveh, or what was the current price of flax that year.

What intrigued Professor O'Malley as he poured through the script (having taught himself how to read Cuneiform writing) was a name that kept cropping up. That name was Ali Abu Suida. The Professor translated the name through Akkadian, Babylonian, Assyrian, Greek, Roman and early neoclassical eastern seaboard American and to his wonderment and great delight the name translated to 'O'Malley'.



Wayne Harlow (on left) with Philip O'Malley Dunlop, *Clan Raffle Supremo*.

So here was the proof that the O'Malley clans had dispersed and began scattering around the world. They left their native land for many reasons, natural disorders, undersea earthquakes that produced living conditions that were not very hospitable and giant tsunamis that washed everything on the coasts into the sea. There were famines, drought, civil disturbances and roaming bands of barbarians who would, from time to time, raid the island of Ireland causing all manner of grief and uncertainty. So began the dispersing of the native peoples of Ireland that is still going on today. They went by sea, and land. They sailed, trekked, swam, hitched lifts from passing Phoenicians ships, joined the Crusades, went with Columbus to the new world and joined the travelling Japanese circuses that were so popular at the turn of the century.

Dispersed they did, and in great numbers so that by the eighteenth century there weren't many Irish people left on the island, compared with the amount of people who were now in the Diaspora. A number that Professor O'Malley came up with at the beginning of the twentieth century was in the neighbourhood of forty-six million, give or take a few thousand.

Over the centuries a few did return to Ireland only to find that they were strangers in a strange land. Not only did they not understand the language and the many changes that had occurred over three thousand years, but some of the returned even came to the conclusion that maybe their ancestors didn't come from Ireland in the first place. Those who did return and seemed to fit in well

with the natives who never left, found a warm welcome because they brought back to Ireland many good things like tea and potatoes, pasta and curry and a new and exciting sense of identity.

Professor O'Malley's dream was that eventually all the Irish of the Diaspora would return to the native soil and build a great and prosperous nation. He proposed this idea along with a ninety-nine page document of how it could be accomplished to Dáil Éireann in 1947. It was voted down by a large majority. The reason it was voted down was outlined in a long statement to the *Irish Times* stating that the return of fifty-eight million Irish would put a great strain on the social welfare budget, housing and infrastructure and would lead to much civil unrest and resentment.

Professor O'Malley's dream died with him. In his last years he became a disillusioned and bitter man and thought his life work was all in vain. He would be happy to know that in a beautifully kept cemetery on the outskirts of Walf Rum there is a small headstone made from the pink rock of Petra. The inscription translated from the Cuneiform reads: Here lies Professor Theodopolis O'Malley, scattered to the four winds.

Since this article was published in the *Woongurra Gazette* in Perth, Australia, I have had a flood of mail, not only from Australia but from places as remote as Moose Furrow, Alaska; Chung Fou, Southwestern China and Apache Stand, Wyoming. Most of the letters state that Professor O'Malley was not only wrong in his research concerning the O'Malley Diaspora but had taken liberties with the truth. It's too complicated and detailed to relate here as I would need to build up a large portfolio to prove Professor O'Malley's history of the Clan.

One letter from a Mr. Linus O'Malley of Calcutta states, in no uncertain terms, that his branch of the clan actually left Ireland in the seventh century, and he claims that the first O'Malley Clan Rally was held in India in the tenth century and that his ancestors documented the history of the Diaspora long before Ali Abu Suida ever came on the scene.

Such is the stuff of history. We may never know the full and true story of the history of the O'Malley Diaspora unless more relevant information comes to light. The only thing we can know for sure is that there are a lot of O'Malleys out there. And good luck to all of them wherever they may be and whenever they left the native shores of our island.

Wayne Harlow has been living in Westport with his wife Kitty O'Malley for twenty-two years. He is a native of the USA, and has distinguished himself in many spheres, notably in writing, painting and sculpture.

## SOME TOMBSTONES, SOME OLD PHOTOGRAPHS

*Ann O'Malley Kelly*

In 1940 Mr. J. F. Quinn, newspaper correspondent and historian, visited Murrisk Abbey or, more correctly, Friary, in the heartland of O'Malley Country, to record the O'Malley tombstones of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Quinn was about fifty years ahead of his time, when there were no heritage centres, no Irish Genealogical Project Centres, which in the past ten years have become a part of Irish life and a source for family genealogical research. These latter I.G.P. centres are found in most counties of the country, have computerised parish records, register of births, marriages and deaths, and census data. In addition they have recorded through means of FÁS programmes, the legible inscriptions on gravestones in many of the graveyards throughout the country. These records are available and are a valuable assistance to people commencing a genealogical family record, a hobby of increasing popularity.

But back to Quinn who writes 'In their commodious burial place at Murrisk there are wall and recumbent slabs.' He writes first of the monuments in a walled enclosure adjoining the friary at the south-eastern corner.

1. In the east wall is one that must have been very ornate in its pristine days. It carries an elaborate representation of the family arms, now much faded, and apparently there was an inscription at the base [not recorded by Quinn].

Inset into the same wall is one inscribed:

2. 'Sacred to the memory of George Patrick O'Malley Esq., son of Middleton O'Malley, Esq., late Captain in the 88<sup>th</sup> regiment, or Connaught Rangers, military secretary at Nova Scotia, who departed this life at Cheltenham, the 26<sup>th</sup> November 1841, aged 30 years'.

In the opposite wall is one inscribed:

3. 'To the memory of Middleton O'Malley, Esq., who departed this life on the 17<sup>th</sup> March, 1815, his fortieth year'.

And on another, more elaborate:

4. 'To the memory of James O'Malley, Esq., Surgeon of His Majesty's 11<sup>th</sup> Regiment of Lt. Dragoons, youngest son of the late George O'Malley Esq., of Castlebar, who died at Gawnpore, in the East Indies, on the 28<sup>th</sup> July, 1820. He possessed the affectionate regard, esteem and respect of his brother officers, and was by them, and all who knew him, most sincerely regretted. This tablet has

been placed here by his brother, Lieutenant-Colonel George O'Malley, as a small though sincere token of brotherly love and affection'.

By this wall a modern tombstone of Aberdeen granite has the inscription:

5. 'In memory of my dearly loved husband, Owen O'Malley, who departed this life on the 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 1886, aged 58 years,'

and the text on it was the only reference to God I saw in the whole place, viz., 'Blessed are the pure of heart for they shall see God.'

Opposite the entrance there is a heavy wall slab, ten feet high, with border in keeping, inscribed:

6. 'Sacred to the memory of George O'Malley, Esq., late of Castlebar, who departed this life on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of April 1798, aged 68 years', etc.

It is covered in lettering to the base but the sun was beating dead against it, and I could not delay to decipher it.<sup>1</sup>

Next this wall is a recumbent slab of equal size, heavily inscribed and much worn. I could only decipher.

7. 'Sacred to the memory of Colonel George O'Malley', with the date 'May, 1843'.<sup>2</sup>

A similar slab lies side by side, very much worn, and I could read none of the inscription.<sup>3</sup>

Next is a grave with a simple mound, and the balance of the enclosure is level ground. These are placed in a heavily-walled enclosure, inset in the south-eastern corner of the ancient cemetery and almost adjoining the Abbey. Local people pretend to know that it was once roofed, but the architectural design belies them. There are two entrances, one by a small doorway of cut stone covered with a V-shaped single stone arch and the wall continued over, and this was closed by a heavy iron gate now almost corroded away. The second entrance was by stone steps to the top of the wall, with a stone stairway leading down . . .

### Within the Abbey

On the gospel side, in the sidewall, and near the Garvey tablet, is a marble slab marked:

8. 'In loving memory of Mary O'Malley daughter of St. Clair and Marcell O'Malley born 11<sup>th</sup> October 1831, died 14<sup>th</sup> May 1850, also of William Boyd O'Malley, their eldest son, born 10<sup>th</sup> December 1832, who died in London on the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1881, and is interred in Brompton Cemetery. This tablet was erected by his sorrowing mother "Father not my will but thine be done."'

Beneath this is a recumbent slab, broken and recently repaired with cement. The inscription is much defaced but I read on it

9. 'Charles O'Malley.'

In front of the altar there are two recumbent slabs, one broken and similarly repaired. All I could read was 'O'Malley'. The inscription on the other was greatly worn.

### In Aughvale Cemetery

Aughvale is located to the south of the Westport-Murrisk Road, and serves the town of Westport and a large rural area . . .

There are many O'Malley tombs and with much difficulty I found the one I sought. Though there is another one similar, its style is worth noting. While not as expensive as adjoining constructions, it is yet more impressive and time-resisting. Built to accommodate six grave spaces fenced in cut stone (and to which there is now no one to lay claim), it is a semi-circular sweep of cut stone, with a heavy ornamental barge, the apex being about ten feet high, two slabs in the front being inscribed:

'In loving memory of Mary Frances O'Malley who died at Westport Quay on the 12<sup>th</sup> August 1881 aged 56 years. May her soul rest in peace. Of your charity pray for the soul of Arthur O'Malley who died 17<sup>th</sup> January 1885 aged 95 years'.

'In dearest memory of Mary, beloved wife of the late Arthur O'Malley, who died at the Quay, Westport on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 1887 aged 88 years, also of their daughters Anne O'Malley who died on the 13<sup>th</sup> July 1895 aged 60 years, and Ellen Kate O'Malley who died on the 4<sup>th</sup> June 1908 aged 75 years and of their son Arthur M. O'Malley who died on the 11<sup>th</sup> December 1911 aged 75 years. May they rest in peace.'

This latter Arthur M. O'Malley, whom I have already referred to, was of the main line and greatly respected by all who knew him. He was for many years a shipping agent resident at the Quay. He had a complete record of the family and perhaps it still exists. Like his sisters he died unmarried and was the last of that family.<sup>4</sup>

### Clan Rally

Murrisk Abbey, with its strong O'Malley associations, is one of the sites favoured by the clan for the celebration of Mass, an integral part of the annual clan rally, and what an awesome venue it is, sited on the shores of Clew Bay beneath the shadow of the majestic holy mountain Croagh Patrick. Perfect in structure but roofless, open to the heavens. 1982 was one such rally, the last attended by Conor Guardian Chief in his ninety-second year. The thirtieth rally of the clan.

'It was with much joy that the Chief Grace O'Malley Purcell welcomed Conor to the outing, where he was well-escorted by his two grandsons, Simon

Peter and Conor Kelly. Mass was concelebrated by two O'Malley priests in the roofless but beautiful Augustinian Abbey to commemorate the conversion of the Clan to Christianity in 453 AD.

Michael of London who was the incoming Tánaiste led the Clan parade in the Mass at the Abbey with his bagpipe music of the Clan Anthem 'Ó Ró sé do bheatha abhaile.'<sup>5</sup>

Family historian Sheila O'Malley Mulloy gave a short informative talk to the gathering on the life and times of those O'Malleys whose tombs Quinn has described above.

### The Old Photographs – The Brewsters

Many years ago my father Conor arrived at my house with two old black and white photographs which came with the covering note

Gortnagreine

Sandyford

Co. Dublin

16/4/60

I am worried about a picture on porcelain of Owen O'Malley Brewster<sup>6</sup> of Newcastle or Balla, Co. Mayo (the late Mrs Grace Browne's Uncle Owen). I was told to destroy it along with others and I do not like doing this if I could possibly find a home for it, outside measurements 1ft 3" x 1ft 6", black and gold ebony frame. would you be interested? If so I would be delighted and would get it sent



Sheila O'Malley Mulloy lectures at Murrisk Friary, 1982 Rally.  
(Photo: Courtesy Ann Kelly)

to you. I have lived so long (26 years) with all the pictures that I feel sad if they cannot be placed somewhere.

Sincerely

May (Miss) Myles

I leave here on the 26th April.

The two photographs (Plates 1 and 2) have hung on the wall in my house ever since. I published them in the O'Malley newsletter '97, hoping to find some information but there wasn't any response. There was no mention in the note of the lady in Plate 1, which has nicely tinted detail (added) on the collar, etc. Plate 2 is a photograph (not porcelain) and bears the inscription 'enlarged by Chancellor Dublin'. The name Owen O'Malley Brewster appears on the back in handwriting

The third photograph (Plate 3) I found amongst old O'Malley family photographs. The back carries the note (Mrs) Lizzie O'Malley Tardy of Balla Lodge, Castlebar, née Brewster

### Who were the Brewsters

To the memory of the members of this family there are monuments in Christ Church Cemetery, Castlebar, adjacent to which is the imposing cenotaph to the most distinguished member of the line General George O'Malley.<sup>7</sup>

1. Henry Brewster died 28<sup>th</sup> June 1883, 35 years Co. Surveyor for Mayo and his wife Eliza, daughter of Captain O'Malley Newcastle. She was born in 1825 and died in 1888.

2. Another to Elizabeth his eldest daughter (Mrs. Tardy) born 18<sup>th</sup> August 1855 died 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1893 and her only brother Edward, Civil Engineer born September 1860 died May 1897.



Plate 1: Elizabeth Brewster?



Plate 2: Henry Brewster?

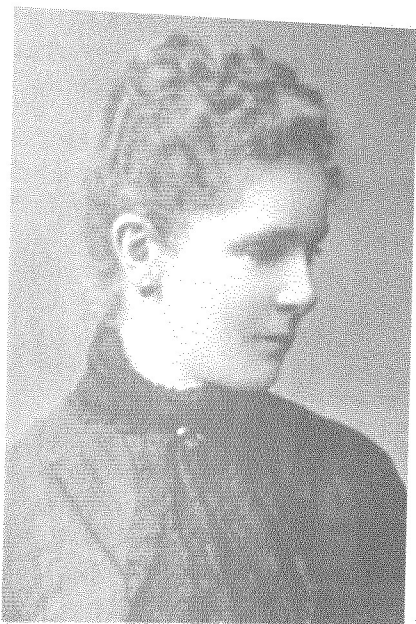


Plate 3: Mrs Lizzie O'Malley Tardy

A third being to Sarah M. (Pelkie) 3. 'daughter of Henry Brewster and wife of Edward Glover born 21<sup>st</sup> November 1857 died 29<sup>th</sup> September 1880'.

'From the Grand Jury records 1882 Henry Brewster and Edward Glover were surveyors for Co. Mayo. Brewster had two beautiful daughters Elizabeth (Photo 3) the elder, married Tardy, land agent for Robert Lynch Blossie of Balla. Those who knew him describe him as an exact replica of Sir Benjamin Whitnet, for over fifty years Clerk of the Crown and peace for Mayo, and who was almost as old-looking when he started as when he died in harness at a great age. It was hardly a love affair, for his wife drank herself into an early grave.

The younger daughter Sarah married Mr. Edward Glover, Co. Surveyor, who transferred to Co. Kildare after the death of Mr. Brewster. Glover's daughter Grace (referred to in the note 16/4/60) was reared by the Brewsters at Castlebar; she married Dr. Donel Browne, Naas, second son of the late Judge Dodwell F. Browne, Rehins, Castlebar. Edward presumably was unmarried as he was co-interred with his sister.

The O'Malley property at Newcastle (now demolished) became part of the Brewster estate. In 1894 E. Brewster C.E. was domiciled at Newcastle. The Brewster residence Castle Street, Castlebar, later became the home of Dr. Moran.<sup>4</sup>

Henry Brewster's death notice in the *Mayo Examiner* states that he was survived by his wife (daughter of the late Captain Andrew O'Malley, Newcastle, of one of the oldest and most respected Mayo families), two daughters Lizzie and Grace and one son Edward. Edward Glover and Owen O'Malley J.P. (brother-in-law) and the Rev. E. Brewster, Rector of Clayton, London, were the chief mourners.

For thirty-four years county surveyor in Mayo he was well-known and respected throughout the County. His father was an eminent Dublin solicitor, and he was a nephew of the Right Hon. Abraham Brewster for many years Lord Chancellor of Ireland. He was one of six sons, two of which survived him.

### The O'Malleys and the Tombstone Connection

Captain Andrew Clarke O'Malley, Newcastle, near Meelick in Swinford parish, father-in-law of Henry Brewster was the second son of George O'Malley, Spencer Park, Castlebar (Tomb 6) and Eliza Clarke.

This was a family with a strong military orientation. George, the father, a magistrate and major in the volunteers, purchased a commission for Andrew Clarke, who held the rank of Captain.

Andrew was brother to Major General George O'Malley (Tomb 7), to Captain Middleton O'Malley (Tomb 3), and James O'Malley Gawnpore 1820 (Tomb 4), his younger brothers. He was uncle to George Patrick late Captain of the Connaught Rangers (Tomb 2 Murrisk).

10 August 1826 Andrew Clarke married Maria daughter of John Gardiner, Farmhill, Killala, Maria died 1857 having had five children of whom Elizabeth the eldest girl married Henry Brewster.<sup>9</sup>

### The Old Photographs

The porcelain portrait was probably that of Owen O'Malley Newcastle, uncle of Grace Browne née Glover as referred to by Miss Myles. So what are the names of the two people in photos 1 and 2? Possibly Elizabeth and Henry Brewster.

Is it too late, to identify by name the two people in the photographs which hang on the wall in my kitchen and whom I consider to be my friends?

### NOTES

1. The remainder of this slab reads: 'Also of Elizabeth O'Malley alias Clarke His Widow who died at Cheltenham 7<sup>th</sup> Jan<sup>y</sup> 1815 aged 65 years, and Lieut Patrick O'Malley RM their fourth son who died at sea off Brest on board the *Doris* frigate, 24th Jan 1805 aged 26 years.'
2. This inscription reads: 'Sacred to the memory of Major General George O'Malley C.B.' He was the most distinguished member of this family.
3. Inscription reads: 'Sacred to the memory of Owen O'Malley Esq. of Spencer Park in this county, Late Major of the South Mayo Militia, who departed this life on the 21<sup>st</sup> of January 1845 aged 77 years.'
4. J. F. Quinn, 'The Kingdom of Umhall, Record of the O'Malleys' (unpublished typescript), pp 183-190.
5. *Connacht Tribune*, 16 July 1982.
6. This would appear to be Owen Bingham Manners O'Malley who may possibly have added Brewster to his name at some stage.
7. See Sheila Mulloy *O'Malley People and Places* (Ballinakella Press 1991), p 36, for profile of the General.
8. Quinn, pp 148-54.
9. Quinn, p 148; Another Quinn manuscript has been published in 3 volumes: J. F. Quinn *History of Mayo*, Brendan Quinn, Ballina, 1993).

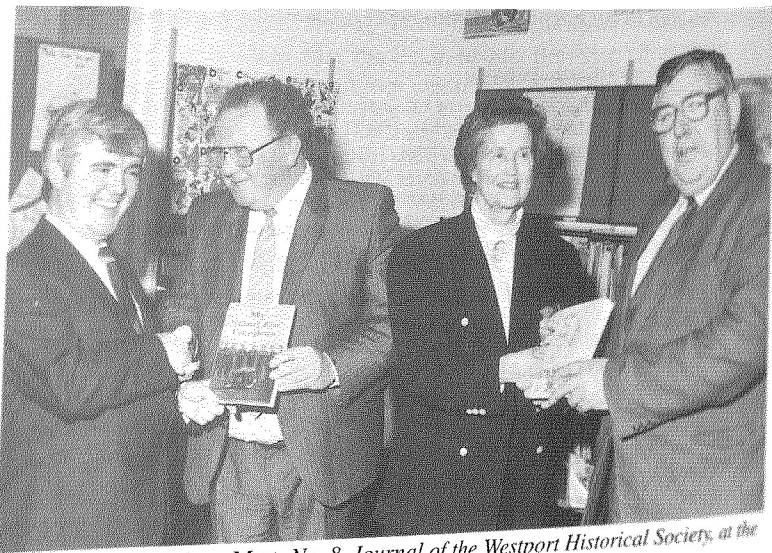
Ann O'Malley Kelly, Barna, Galway, Chieftain '96-'97, is keenly interested in the continued publication of the *Clan Journal* and would like to see wider participation by many more O'Malley families world-wide - 'Share your Clan history with us'. Ann is involved in Local History Studies and Family Research Projects.

## DONOGH O'MALLEY

From Jim Kemmy, *The Limerick Anthology* (Dublin, 1996)

Donogh O'Malley, was born into a well-off Limerick middle-class family in January 1921. He received a typical conservative middle-class education at two Jesuit schools, at Limerick and at Clongowes Wood in Co. Kildare, and later at University College Galway. His family keenly supported Cumann na nGaedheal but turned against that party in the early thirties. When he died in March 1968 he was the most popular Fianna Fáil Minister . . . Contrary to many appearances he had used his time and energy to advantage and his 47 years were far from wasted.

Donogh O'Malley came to Dáil Éireann for the first time in May 1954 with the reputation of being a 'holy terror'. His capacity for alcohol was staggering and his desire for it more than equalled the capacity. Stories of some of his more colourful exploits preceded him to Leinster House so that the staff, if not the members, had some idea of what was in store for them. The stories were far from being exaggerated; the reality was quiet as terrifying as any Limerick-based tale of his past activities. Some of his activities within weeks of the election would put Brendan Behan in the boys' place: O'Malley when involved in serious drinking



Launching of *Cathair na Mart*, No. 8, *Journal of the Westport Historical Society*, at the Clew Bay Heritage Centre, Westport Quay, in December 1988.  
(Left to right) Jarlath Duffy (Chairman), Mark Killilea, M.E.P., Sheila Mulloy (Editor) and Jim Kemmy, T.D.  
(Photo: Frank Dolan)

never looked as if he were a boy on a man's errand. As with so many of his other activities, when he was truly drinking he gave his mind and heart to it and was highly impatient of any interruption . . .

But whatever was being said and seen in Dublin, Limerick loved him and he developed a real hold on people's affections as well as on the city's Fianna Fáil machine. In June 1961 he became Mayor of Limerick – amazingly the third O'Malley brother to hold the office. The late Desmond O'Malley was Mayor from 1941 to 1943 and Michael O'Malley held the office in 1948-49.

Seán Lemass succeeded Éamon de Valera as head of the twenty-six counties government in June 1959 and two years later Fianna Fáil, under his very forceful leadership, won a General Election: no viable alternative was on offer. To the expressed surprise of a great many people he placed Donogh O'Malley in charge of the Office of Public Works as Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for Finance. It was a gamble, perhaps a typical Lemass gamble and it ultimately paid off.

His appointment led to a change in Donogh O'Malley's life that ultimately had the most fortunate consequences for thousands of young people and will have great good consequences for hundreds of thousands of young people yet to be born. O'Malley achieved the near-impossible and in so doing showed what tremendous willpower he possessed and what amazing strength of character he had. He gave up the drink. It is practically impossible to overestimate the change this wrought upon his life. Much of his time for many years had been spent with a bottle, now the bottle was finally set aside and a new life started to be built . . .

He knew there was no point in opening up long-drawn-out discussions about the feasibility of free secondary education for all capable of availing of it. He used the *fait accompli* method of getting his way and he succeeded. His threat to leave the Government if his scheme was not in operation for the following school year startled people. But he meant it. It is a credit to O'Malley and to Fianna Fáil and to hard-working civil servants and to thousands of teachers, that there was no necessity for him to carry out his threat. If many thousands of Irish children are now getting more extensive education than they would otherwise have received they can thank Donogh O'Malley for it, and also spare a kind thought for the far-seeing Seán Lemass who saw O'Malley had vision and ability and took a chance on him. His schools transport system is another monument to him which has changed the whole Irish countryside and, by and large, changed it for the better.

Jim Kemmy (1936-97), stonemason and committed socialist, was a native of Limerick. Educated at Sexton Street CBS, the Municipal Technical Institute and UCC, he represented Limerick East for many years in Dáil Éireann. He had an abiding interest in local and labour history, and edited the quarterly *Old Limerick Journal* and *The Limerick Anthology* (1996) and its sequel, *The Limerick Compendium* (1997).

# SIR SAMUEL O'MALLEY: A CAMEO OF MAYO LANDOWNERSHIP

*Pádraig G. Lane*

An almanac of 1842 refers briefly to 'Sir Samuel O'Malley, Bart., Kilboyne House' in its list of the official authorities of County Mayo, noting that he was both a magistrate and deputy lieutenant of the county as befitted, indeed, a landowner of substance and tradition.<sup>1</sup> His property, which in 1838 amounted to 9,300 acres,<sup>2</sup> incorporated estates in both the baronies of Murrisk and Carra, most notably the Rosehill estate, situated about four miles from Westport, the Carrowmore estate, also near Westport; and the Caher estate, near Louisburgh, ten miles west of Westport.<sup>3</sup> An 1852 rental,<sup>4</sup> furthermore, more fully breaks up the O'Malley properties into the Clare Island, Castlelaffey, Burren, Rosehill, Kilboyne and Caher divisions. In fact, besides his residence at Kilboyne House, Castlebar, Sir Samuel also resided at Carrowmore Castle and at Rosehill.

The Carrowmore estate, the creation of letters patent of James I in 1618 to Edmund O'Malley (O'Maly), creating the manor of Carrowmore Castle near Westport, was an instance, indeed, of the family's ability to survive the vicissitudes of history.<sup>5</sup> As the O'Malleys clung on to a footing in Mayo thereafter,<sup>6</sup> such random documents<sup>7</sup> as the lease by Sir Henry Bingham to Owen O'Malley of four quarters of Burrishoole for twenty years at a rent of £50 in October 1706, and an abstract of title, covering the years 1719 to 1816 to the O'Malley lands of Castlelaffey in Burrishoole and Murrisk, underline that tenacity in later years.

It was a tradition of tenacity, opportunism and Mayo ancestry that Sir Samuel O'Malley inherited from his father, who died in 1804, and Samuel O'Malley earned his baronetcy, or arms, for his service to the crown during the 1798 rebellion. Sir Samuel's interest in the family's genealogy is attested to, indeed, by his own notes on it.<sup>8</sup>

This study is not genealogical, already well served, but looks at estate management and the circumstances that led to the property ending up in the Encumbered Estates Court.<sup>10</sup> In fact, this paper looks at reasons for a Poor Law Union rate collector having to report in 1847 that Sir Samuel O'Malley was 'in difficulties', as the question of unpaid poor rates in the Westport and Castlebar Unions was on the point of being brought to a higher court.<sup>11</sup> Varying sums of

£90, £256, £79 and £33 were recorded against the estates, a situation that tallies with poor rate indebtedness recorded by O'Malley's principal creditor, the Law Life Assurance Company.<sup>12</sup>

Lord Sligo raised the matter of the pauper tenantry on O'Malley's estates with George Moore<sup>13</sup> for, on a property in Chancery, Sir Samuel faced arrears of five to six years rent but encouraged the pauper tenantry to remain, by allowing them to remain as caretakers entitled to Poor Law relief after formally evicting<sup>14</sup> them. This, according to Sligo, simply prolonged their misery and meant more draconian clearances in time, as the Insurance Company records confirm, as well as O'Malley's impoverishment. Some ambiguity about O'Malley's benign management existed earlier, of course, for while he averred never having had recourse to eviction for non-payment of rents, it has also been indicated that initial alarm in the early 1830s at peasant unrest was accompanied by an opinion that tenants were there simply to pay rents rather than be the cared-for populace of a patriarchal landowner.<sup>15</sup>

However, consideration of two primary rental sources already alluded to gives a greater insight into O'Malley's management and the nature of the terrain and tenantry over which he held sway.<sup>16</sup> It has to be acknowledged that Lord Sligo's chastisement of Sir Samuel in 1852 came after Famine circumstances created new terms of reference in respect of rent receipts, the state of the tenants and the severity of evictions, and that control of the property by the Court of Chancery militated against good management.

The 1845 survey and valuation of the estates sets rents and leasing practices in context, as well as the condition of both the tenantry and the terrain. Burren, for instance, five miles from Castlebar, is spoken of as having 'bad access' and being 'slovenly cultivated', while Cappagh is referred to as 'poor land', wet and rocky. Kilboyne itself is noted as being good land but 'much sub-divided', while Ballanierin and Ballanarane were described as 'poor land', on which tenants at will lived, and were not worth more than 3/6d. per acre. Rents reflected, needless to say, the quality of the land and the nature of the tenantry. So, as Caher was regarded as inferior to Carrowmore, the latter was valued at 12s. per acre and Caher only valued at 5s. per acre. Similarly, while the greater part of the land on the Rosehill estate was worth from 12s. to 15s. per acre, Burren set on a life lease was considered 'worth 3/6d. per acre', but only bringing in £80 3s. 11d. and the poor land of Cappagh was estimated by the valuer to be worth 5s. an acre rather than its then rent. Indeed, while it was acknowledged in 1845 that rents were being paid punctually, it was clear that many of the leases dated back to the period of the early 1800s and that with their expiry a possible £2,800 could be found in extra rents.

Some picture of the lettings and rents can be established from the following cross-section:

Division	Tenant	Plot	Rent		
Conrea	P. Staunton Sr.	38a/3r/20p	£7/2/2 at will		
	P. Staunton Jr	40a/3r/2p	£12/2/8 at will		
	T. Powell	—	£15/2/0 at will		
	Rosehill	P. Kerrigan	39a/1r/37p	£8/9/7 1817 lease	
		J. Malley		£8/9/7 for one life	
		Ed. Malley		£8/9/7 in common	
	East	Tom Caine	83a/1r/11p	£8/13/8 1813 lease	
		Thady Caine Sr		£17/7/2 for one life	
		Mt Caine		£8/13/8 in common	
		Owen Regan		£4/6/11	
Mrs Ed. Gibbons		£8/13/8			
J. Joyce		£8/13/8			
Rosehill		Ed. Staunton		38a/0r/1p	£4/13/8 1817 lease
		Pat Browne			£7/0/8 for one life
	Jas Sullivan	£8/4/0 in common			
	Peter Joyce	£3/10/8			

or in the similar pattern found in East Mucklagh, 1801, lease in common; Carrowmore and Caher, tenants at will; Cappagh, seven tenants at will; Burren, lease 1807; and Mountgregor, lease of 1810. The leases in common represented the rundale tenure so prevalent in the pre-famine Mayo economy.

In comparison, the Encumbered Estates Court rental of 1852 shows a large number of divisions of the property to be in hand, in other words without the encumbrance of official tenants. Caher, Castlelaffey and Knocknahilla belonged to this group, although there still remained units like Burren, with its lease dated 10 December 1807, to A. McGloin and others, twenty-four in all; and Inniscottle Island, having six tenants, J. Malley and others, on a lease dated 8 October 1801, for the life of Pat Malley, sixty years old in 1852.

Arrears<sup>17</sup> in relation to rents were reported by the receiver on 30 November 1849, to be £3,482 to £1,035 in one sector; £2,719 to £886 on another; and £704 to £192 on a third. The following table of rents on the estate in 1852 in proportion to Griffith's Valuation and that of an independent valuer, suggests not alone the nominal value of O'Malley's income at that time from the several sectors, but also from the degree to which the rents were a burden or not to the tenantry at the best of times, not to mind the Famine years.

Division	Rent	G/V.	Colles Val.
Bunnahowan	£94 1s. 2d.	£74 5s. 7d.	£42 0s. 0d.
Stroke	£49 17s. 11d.	£37 2s. 8d.	£29 12s. 0d.
Caher	£111 16s. 7d.	£103 5s. 7d.	£86 0s. 0d.
Drumgarraive	£112 8s. 7d.	£85 1s. 4d.	£81 10s. 0d.
Rosmindle	£59 17s. 11d.	£33 4s. 3d.	£30 2s. 0d.
Knockasproha	£88 14s. 2d.	£75 13s. 10d.	£65 0s. 0d.

A somewhat similar picture can be established by looking at the same data at the level of individual estates:

	Annual Profit Rent	G/V.	Colles Val.
Kilboync	£2,406 12s. 7d.	£2,016 9s. 0d.	£1,797 5s. 0d.
Castlelaffey	£879 2s. 3½d.	£679 17s. 7d.	£612 11s. 6d.
Burren and Cappagh	£256 1s. 3d.	£318 2s. 5d.	£311 5s. 0d.
Clare Island	£634 3s. 7½d.	£499 17s. 8d.	£428 17s. 2d.
Carrowmore and Caher	£335 19s. 2¼d.	£289 17s. 11d.	£246 11s. 1d.
Rosehill and Mucklagh	£301 5s. 9¼d.	£228 13s. 9d.	£198 12s. 0d.

There is an indication, of course, in the rent of Caher, 417a/3r/10p, that the desired 5s. per acre of the 1845 valuation had been achieved by 1852. The property was now in hand, its tenants at will victims of the famine and clearances, and such a rise on the 1845 level reflected the entire O'Malley properties, where lettings permitted. The increases were made irrelevant, however, by the Famine years and by 31 March 1848 the inability of O'Malley to get rent from his tenants was noted by his creditors, the Law Life Insurance Company, as it proposed the sale of his estates to 'liquidate debts'. Arrears of rent stood at a ratio of 3:1 in relation to rents due and by January 1852 there was a reserve price of £42,000 placed on the estates, some five years purchase of the total rental, to be got, privately if possible, but certainly by auction in one lot.

As the estate was bought in by the Law Life Company, the disposal of parts of the estate began, as instanced in the fee-farm lease of Burren and Cappagh to the Earl of Lucan in December 1852; the similar lease of Ballanierin in November to William Kearney; and the sale of part of Laghtarrey, on the Kilnacarra estate, in December 1854, to Mathew Gibbons of Castlebar, for £1,200. Laghtarrey, in Gallen, was, interestingly enough, let at £16 0s. 0d. in 1845 but set in 1854 for £45 8s. 7d.<sup>18</sup>

Some 10,033 acres, nevertheless, remained unsold in 1855, even as land prices had considerably risen in County Mayo and as the three year leases given in 1852 by the Law Life Company expired and afforded a further opportunity for rent increases. By June 1860, a further proposed sale of Castlelaffey, Roseshill and Conrea was mooted, but it is clear that Clare Island and Kilmeena remained on the company books for poor relief throughout the 1860s. The property finally, of course, fell to Richard Berridge, who also took over the Martin estate at Ballinahinch from the Law Life Insurance Company.

While one might be tempted, therefore, to tritely observe of the fate of the Samuel O'Malley estates, *sic transit gloria mundi*, it is, in fact, only proper to give an objective résumé of the management of the properties in his lifetime. It is fairly clear, both from O'Malley's own rentals, and from the records of other contemporary Mayo estates,<sup>19</sup> that the Napoleonic wars and estate practices at that time favoured the lettings and rents then set, granted that the peripheral regions of the county remained at a remove from the buoyancy of the economy. It is clear also that O'Malley himself, in the 1830s,<sup>20</sup> comprehended the situation, thereafter, when he claimed, as much in respect of his own estate as of those of others, that the poverty of the people was not due to high rents but rather due to both the over-sub-division of the land and the dependence upon the potato. The descriptions given in the 1845 valuation and survey of his estates would appear to support this, and O'Malley's awareness in 1836 that landowners in the county seemed unable to hold back the tide of subdivision further bears out the situation. He was adamant also that the poor infrastructure of the county and the nature of the potato crop added to the poor cash economy.

That Mayo suffered severely from the Famine, and that Poor Law Unions like Castlebar and Westport were unable to function, is incontrovertible, and



Ruins of Rosehill, Rosmindle, Westport, Co. Mayo, built by Sir Samuel O'Malley.  
(Photo: Ronna Bloxton)

O'Malley was but one of many landowners in arrears with poor rates, as well as being unable to get in rents. Hamstrung by the estate's position under the Court of Chancery, moreover, like so many other properties, it was well nigh impossible to exercise control over management of the properties, so that Sir Samuel's apparent leniency towards the tenants was exceptional. That he had lost his estates was the lot of many.

Sir Samuel O'Malley, himself, was secured the lease of Kilboyne for his remaining days in April 1855 by his son Charles, a barrister, and, indeed, his baronetcy passed to his eldest son upon Sir Samuel's death, as was the norm.

#### NOTES

1. *The Dublin Almanac and General Register of Ireland* and see also *Thoms Directory* 1863.
2. D. McCabe, 'Social Order and the Ghost of Moral Economy in Pre-Famine Ireland' in R. Gillespie and G. Moran (eds.), *A Various Country: Essays in Mayo History 1500-1900* (Westport, 1987), pp 91-112.
3. Particulars and Valuation of the Samuel O'Malley Estate, 1845, M. 1457, National Archives.
4. Incumbered Estates Court Rental, 1854, M. 3442, National Archives.
5. Catalogue of O'Malley papers, *Analecta Hibernica*, 25, 1967 and see the Ainsworth Catalogue of O'Malley Papers, Mss Division, National Library of Ireland.
6. See S. Mulloy 'The O'Malleys and the Sea, from the Documents', in *O'Malley Journal*, 1997, pp 17-22.
7. See O'Malley Catalogues of papers above.
8. *Ibid.*
9. See for instance S. Mulloy, loc. cit., and B. Stoney, 'The Last O'Malley Chieftain and his descendants', *Cathair na Mart*, 10 (1999), pp 148-66; also R. Hayes, *Manuscripts Sources of Irish History*, Persons, Vol. 3 (Boston, 1965).
10. P. G. Lane, 'The Management of Estates by Financial Corporations of Ireland after the Famine' in *Studia Hibernica*, No. 14 (1974), pp 67-89; P. G. Lane, 'The General Impact of the Encumbered Estates Act 1849 on Counties Galway and Mayo', *J.G.A.H.S.*, 33 (1972).
11. Parliamentary Papers, Famine Series, Reports on Poor Law Unions, 1846-7 (I.U.P. Shannon).
12. See P. G. Lane, loc. cit., *Studia Hibernica*.
13. D. Jordan, *Land and Popular Politics in Ireland: County Mayo from the Plantation to the Land War*, (Cambridge 1994), pp 112, 116.
14. *Ibid.*
15. D. McCabe, loc. cit., pp 105-7; D. E. Jordan, loc. cit., pp 67-70.
16. The rentals of 1845 and 1852, in M. 1457 and M. 3442 provide the source for the analysis of O'Malley's land management.
17. The author's *Studia Hibernica* article, 1974, provides the source, together with data taken from the Law Life Company's Minute Books.
18. *Ibid.*
19. P. G. Lane, 'The Gonne-Bell Estate at Streamstown, Co. Mayo: A Record of Property Vicissitudes', *Cathair na Mart*, No. 13 (1993), pp 82-9; P. G. Lane, 'The Lambert Brookhill Estate: A Record of Mayo Property, 1694-1946', *Cathair na Mart*, 16, 1996, pp 45-53.
20. D. E. Jordan, op. cit., pp 47-9, 55, 67-71, 105-112.

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## FAMILY MEMORIES

### *Sal O'Malley McInerney in conversation with Joan O'Malley-Ringrose*

My father, Éamonn, was a member of the Muintir Eoin O'Malleys. His father Michael belonged to the Kilmilkin branch. His mother was Sara Joyce of Ashmount. The family later used the Irish version of the name – Ó Máille.

My grandparents had a very positive attitude towards education, and unusually for that time provided equal opportunities for both sons and daughters. This included sharing a tutor with their Kilmilkin cousins. There were eight in the family, five boys and three girls, of whom Mary died young. All the sons as adults were members of the Old IRA. I recollect father talking about the famous people who visited Muintir Eoin, among them Roger Casement, Bulmer Hobson and Michael Collins. During the War of Independence Muintir Eoin House was the Headquarters of the Connemara Flying Column and the men were billeted there. As a consequence we were raided a number of times.

I say 'we' because I was born at Muintir Eoin and during this period lived there. My mother and brother Niall were also living there. My mother was Ellen Garrett of Eyre Square, Galway. She was a Carysfort College-trained teacher. Before her marriage she taught at the Presentation Convent, George's Hill, Dublin.

The Black and Tan raids made an indelible impression on my young mind, and I clearly remember them. On one occasion we were corralled in the kitchen while the house was searched. The next time was simply unforgettable. My mother, Niall and I were brought outside. We children were placed in front of a rockery and the Tans fired over our heads! They then warned mother that the next time they would aim lower if they did not get the information they wanted.

On 23 April 1921 a patrol of policemen came to search the house. They came under fire from the IRA in the house and while they were taking cover, the members of the Flying Column who were there ran up the hills behind Muintir Eoin House and took up prepared positions. The patrol was later augmented by military and Black and Tans. The battle raged for hours. The outcome was that the house was searched, looted and burnt. It was destroyed. Much of the livestock was shot.

While these events were taking place Niall and I were first put amongst the bales of wool in an outhouse. Later we were moved to the house of 'Remy' the



*The O'Malleys of Muintirowen c.1895*

*Standing: Pádraic, Máire, Tomás, Peadar, Éamonn.*

*Sitting: Sinéad, Micheál, Sorcha (Mother), Sorcha, Micheál (Father).*

(Photo courtesy Aoife Joyce, daughter of Pádraic Ó Máille)

herd and placed on pallets in front of a turf fire. That house was also burnt.

We took refuge in McKeons of Leenane and later with Michael Bernard King. I was thrilled to get my first motor car ride! While in Leenane an extraordinary incident happened. A contingent of the British Army arrived with bloodhounds. A doctor accompanied them. The idea was to have the dogs sniff us, get our scent and thus trace the men who were now on the run. While they were there I was very surprised to be asked by my mother to shake the hand of a particular Army Officer. I refused as I thought he was a Black and Tan. She was not too happy with me and said that when I was older she would explain why she had made the request, which she did. Apparently, he had let her know that a local informant had revealed where the men were hiding. They were on Garde mountain which ran alongside the Killary and thus they would be vulnerable to gunboat fire. She gave Remy a note to bring to Garde saying 'imperative you be off guard immediately'.

After the war we moved to Dublin where my father Éamon joined the Department of Local Government. His practice in Galway had melted away while he was on the run. He was an engineer having attained his degree in Queen's College, Galway. He had a thriving practice in Galway prior to the War of Independence. He was responsible for several churches including those at Recess

and Finney. He designed a millrace and generating station for Clifden, the first town in the west of Ireland to have an independent electricity supply.

With his new career in Dublin he now had responsibility for the area west of the Shannon, with many improvement schemes in his remit, upgrading water supplies, sewerage etc. He rose to the position of Deputy Chief Engineering Advisor.

Éamonn was a keen sportsman, in fact, a champion cyclist. They were an athletic family; his brothers Pádraig and Peadar were noted weight throwers. He taught his own children, myself and three brothers, Niall, Conn and Ciarán how to run and jump. Ciarán attained international status in hockey and cricket. Interestingly, that ability at hockey at international level passed down to my daughter and granddaughters! To this day I still have the autographs of such notable sportsmen as Dr. Pat O'Callaghan and Bob Tisdall.

In common with his brothers Father never talked about his War of Independence experiences. He took no part in the Civil War. He felt he had done what needed to be done at the time. Enough people had died for Ireland. Now it was the time to build for the future of the new State. The children were to be given every opportunity to continue this work. He would not tolerate guns in the house and never handled them himself. In fact, he confiscated an air rifle given to Niall!

Though I lived in Dublin, it did not mean I lost touch with the west. On school holidays I became 'an itinerant child' visiting various families. I was put on the train to Galway. If there was a delay in getting my connection I would stroll up to my Uncle Tomás's house in College Road. I went by train to Clifden to stay with the Lydens, the Coneys family of Streamstown House, the Conroys in Garafin (when I was picked up at the station at Maam Cross), and the Sweeneys and Joyces in Oughterard. I also visited the Foleys in Athenry!

Now to give a brief history of my O'Malley aunts and uncles.

**PÁDRAIG** – known widely as Pádraig Mór. His history is well-documented because of his association with the foundation of our State.

He remained on the family farm while his brothers attended university in Galway. At an early age he became organizer for the Gaelic League. He joined Sinn Féin and was a member of both the IRA and the IRB. He fought in 1916 under Liam Mellows, was arrested and interned in Frongoch. He was also interned in Wandsworth prison. While interned with Michael Collins, Denny McCullough

and others, there were many discussions and plans made for the future of Ireland. He later became Chairman of the Irish National Insurance Company.

In the 1918 elections he stood as Sinn Féin candidate against the sitting MP for West Galway, William O'Malley of Ballyconneely, and won the seat. In the War of Independence he was a member of the Connemara Flying Column whose headquarters was based in Muintir Eoin House. He became a TD in the first and second Dáils.

During the Civil War one day, he and General Seán Hales, Speaker of the Dáil, were leaving the Ormond Hotel when they were the victims of a gun attack. Seán Hales died and Pádraig was severely wounded. Despite his terrible wounds he managed to get to Jervis Street hospital, where because of his great strength, he recovered. The Government feared that there might be a campaign of attacks against Dáil deputies and ordered the execution of some imprisoned Republican leaders. This act was seen to have helped bring about the end of the Civil War.

Pádraig married Eileen Acton of Claddaghduff and they had five children.

**CATHERINE** – She was a teacher, in which profession she had a first class reputation. She taught in Kilmilkin National School and I know that her young cousins who attended that school were loud in their praises of her teaching ability. She joined the Presentation Order and was in their Convent in Headford. She became Headmistress there. She was well-known as the member of the Order who was sent out to get new schools up and running.

**TOMÁS** – He was my godfather and was special! I remember him as a lovely gentle man, but the typical absentminded professor! When he visited Dublin he stayed with us in Sandymount. He invariably left his suitcase on the tram. I used to have to chase down to the tram stop to intercept the tram on its return from the terminus at the Martello Tower. The drivers got to know the routine.

Tomás was a true polymath. His first degree was in Mathematics from Queen's College, Galway, where later he became Professor of Irish Studies. He had an MA from Manchester University and a PhD from Freiburg University, Germany. He had a formidable talent for learning languages. He was once chosen by the Senate of the University to give a talk to a Congress which was being held in Denmark. He gave the talk in Danish! He had actually taught himself the language in order to deliver the address in their own language. I remember the newspaper articles he brought back from Denmark highlighting this amazing achievement. He and my father were enormously interested in astronomy. He was married to Evelyn Scanlon. They had seven children.



*Sal O'Malley McInerney takes over the Clan Chieftaincy from outgoing Chieftain Michael Castlebar, at the 1990 Rally in the Welcome Inn Hotel, Castlebar. On left is Father Michael O'Malley, Athenry, who was Chief Celebrant at the Clan Mass in Ballintubber Abbey.*

**SARA** – Sara was my godmother. She was also a teacher. She married Martin Farrell of Craughwell. They had a lovely small Georgian house and a good farm. Uncle Martin bred pedigree animals. He showed at the RDS in Dublin. He frequently won Red Ribbons, and as a small child attending the Spring Show I greatly appreciated these wins, as I always benefited by at least a silver coin. Riches indeed! The Farrells had no family.

**JANIE** – She was later known as Sinéad. She was a teacher but unfortunately lost her position because of her Gaelic leanings. I believe she was found to be teaching Irish. She went to housekeep for Tomás before his marriage. Thereafter she became the person who went to help out whichever member of her family most needed her services.

**PEADAR** – Attained an MA from Galway. He taught school, and became a School Inspector. He married Bridget Varley from Cornamona and they had two sons.

**MÍCHEÁL** – He also had an MA degree from Queen's College, Galway. In true family tradition he became a teacher. He married Nora Conroy from Claddaghduff. Mícheál died, I believe, from blood poisoning which resulted from a bicycle accident. He and Nora had no family. She remarried a John O'Malley from Cleggan. Father Tom C.S.Sp. is his son.

**Sara Mary O'Malley McInerney** graduated in Architecture at UCD. With her husband Frank McInerney of Scariff, Co. Clare, a building contractor, she founded Park Developments Group, of Dublin and London. There are three children. In 1990 she was elected Chieftain of the Clan, and was Guardian Chieftain from 1994-97.

## NOVEL BRINGS BACK MEMORIES

*Elizabeth McLoughlin*

*(Submitted by Patrick O'Malley, South Bend, Indiana)*

At age 91, my mother, Lucille O'Malley McLoughlin, volunteers at her local library. Her job is to cover new books in plastic to ready them for circulation. Her reward is to see them all and make first claim on the best of them.

In 1996, she covered a book by an Irishman, took it home and started to read. Familiar Irish phrases lifted off the pages. 'They're so like Dad's' she said to herself. She decided to tell the author how much she was enjoying his book. The book jacket said the author lived in New York City. In a slightly out-of-date New York telephone directory, she found the author's name, dialled the number and got an answering machine which promised that someone would return her call 'with alacrity'.

Answering machines, like VCRs and computers, don't work in any way she is comfortable with, and she doesn't fool with them. She hung up – but she finished the book, still delighted. Still wanting to thank the author directly, she refound the number and dialled it. This time he answered.

'Well, isn't that grand,' said Frank McCourt, and he agreed to sign her book. She wrapped her own copy of *Angela's Ashes* in brown paper, enclosed stamps for return mail, and brought it to her post office. Two weeks later it came back, signed by this friendly, but as yet unknown, author who had stirred some powerful memories.

Memories she had, including family stories told by her father, Charles O'Malley. He was born in Newport, Co. Mayo, in northwest Ireland in 1867, the youngest of sixteen children. In 1883, at the age of sixteen, he left. His parents had given him transit and tuition money to attend high school in Scotland. He instead boarded the *Adriatic* of the White Star Line, and came to the United States.

His parents had known other losses. With nine or ten children, and in the midst of the famine in Ireland in the late 1840s, his father had sought work in Glasgow, Scotland. Soldiers returning from the Crimean War brought an epidemic back with them in the mid 1850s. In the space of three weeks during a virulent outbreak, seven of those children died. Grief-stricken, the parents returned to Ireland to get on with their own lives and replace their lost children, even naming later children after their dead siblings.

Mother's grandmother, Bridget Grady O'Malley, was the realist. She bought heifers, grazed them on a rented field, and came out ahead at slaughter time. Her husband, Joseph O'Malley, was the romantic. The proprietor of a tiny shop on Georges Street, Newport, he was enamoured of Napoleon. He spent his days in the shop enthralled by tales told by Irish mercenaries who had fought in the Napoleonic wars.

Mother's father was their youngest. When he was born, his mother was fifty. His father was sixty-seven, having been born in the year 1800. Thus when Mother celebrated new Year's Day 2000, her life, her father's and her grandfather's have spanned two full centuries, the first in Ireland, the second in the United States.

In 1800, transportation was on foot or by beast or boat. My grandfather sailed back to Ireland only once to see his parents before they died. My mother's younger sister returned home from Europe to their mother's funeral on the *Hindenburg*, one round trip prior to its explosion in 1937. Now my mother's grandchildren jet in to visit her, crossing up to twelve time zones in twenty-four hours.

In 1800, communication was the spoken word, and handwritten letters which took months to cross continents or seas. The first transatlantic cable was laid in 1858 and was used by a queen and a president, not Irish immigrants. The telephone was invented in 1875, the 200,000th U.S. household was wired in 1887; now people speaking loudly on wireless cell phones annoy others in every public space. E-mail, which my mother eschews, connects her offspring with family members in Beijing, San Francisco, New Jersey, New York and London by simple key strokes and cyber-space. Electricity makes all this possible. The world's first electrical power station was built in New York in 1882; today, an electrical power outage lasting mere hours brings life as we know it to a standstill.

In 1800, medicine was characterized by bloodletting, barbers practiced surgery without anesthesia. Antibiotics, which could have cured the O'Malley children in the 1850s were not available until the 1930s. Currently available anticoagulants would have saved my mother's legs from amputation. Polio, which attacked both my sister and brother in the late 1940s and early 1950s became a non-factor in the United States when vaccines were developed in the late '50s.

*Angela's Ashes* chronicles an Irish life of grinding poverty and witty resilience. No two families are alike, and clearly the McCourts and O'Malleys differed in all kinds of ways, including affluence. But resiliency is surely a common thread. Strong genes, indomitable faith, insatiable curiosity and laughter conspire to help three O'Malley generations span 200 years. In an age of instant this and that, those 200 years seem positively geologic.

*Elizabeth McLoughlin lives and works in San Francisco, her mother, Lucille O'Malley-McLoughlin, walks her dachshund, Pushkin, daily in Cohasset, Massachusetts.*

## LIFE AFTER GRÁINNE: FROM CLAN TO CLAN

*Sheila Mulloy*

The beginning of the seventeenth century was a period of declining fortunes amid a morass of shifting patterns in Irish landownership. At this stage it paid well not to support Irish rebels, if not actively to oppose them, and we get the beginnings of a move towards the government side on the part of those Mayo O'Malleys who had survived in positions of power and status. The old Irish lordship was at an end, and English tenure, administration and justice were to take its place.

Seventeenth-century documents give an inkling of what was happening to the fortunes of the O'Malley family in the Barony of Murrisk. We note that in the inquisition of 1607 Owen O'Malley is described as chief of his name, but his heir Edmund appears to have inherited under English law, and was probably never inaugurated as chief of the clan. According to a grant made in 1617, Edmund was now the tenant under the Crown of two castles and 15,000 to 20,000 acres in the barony of Murrisk. This probably represented much more security for him personally, although lacking the prestige, of an Old Irish lordship of a much larger territorial area. We also note that other O'Malleys are mentioned as owning property in the area, so that there is a certain amount of levelling taking place. Here, in addition, we have our first encounter with an outsider in the person of Christopher Garvey, whose family was to become large landowners in the district.

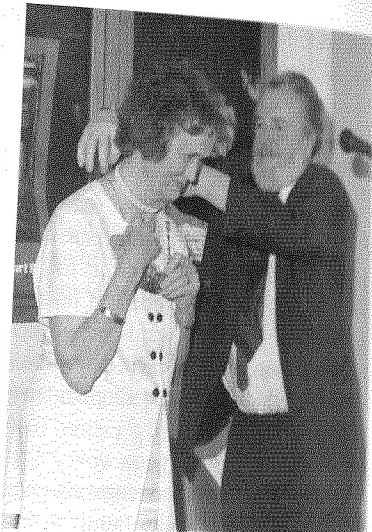
The next important document is *Strafford's Inquisition* of 1636. Again we find a diminution in Edmund's property, and a list of thirty-four other O'Malleys who now own land in the barony. This, incidentally, is probably the same Edmund as the one referred to in the grant of 1617. Another feature of *Strafford's Inquisition* is the number of outstanding mortgages which were a feature of the period, when the landowning families found the transfer from the Irish to the English system of landownership overstretched their resources. These financial difficulties gave the opportunity to the wealthy Galway merchants with the help of their skillful lawyers to acquire property throughout Galway and Mayo.

The *Book of Survey and Distribution* for Co. Mayo shows the changes that came about in landownership from 1636 to 1703. The name Edmund O'Malley appears as being a large property owner in 1641, but only three subsidiary O'Malleys are mentioned. However, worse was to come, for all have vanished in

the aftermath of the Commonwealth, Restoration and Jacobite War, as shown in the relevant column in the book. They have been replaced by Lord Mayo (Bourke), John Browne and others. This shows that there was some involvement on the part of the O'Malleys in both the rebellion of 1641 and the Jacobite War of 1689-91. We know that Lord Clanricarde complained in January 1641 that his islands of Clare and Bofin had been taken by the O'Malleys. Later, in 1648, it was reported that Edmund sent his son Captain Thomas O'Malley 'with his full company' to Owen Roe O'Neill 'with his letter of recommendation to his coosn Neyll assuring his Lordship hee was for him, both sea and land'. Captain Tadhg O'Malley was involved in the defence of Inishbofin, which was the last but one place in Ireland to surrender to the Cromwellians on 14 February 1653. He was given as a hostage on that occasion for the fulfilment of the agreement made between the two sides. Some O'Malleys were also involved in the Jacobite War, and significantly, Owen More O'Malley of Burrishoole, was to join the Williamite side shortly before the Treaty of Limerick in 1691. Captain Tadhg O'Malley of Belclare, however, remained faithful to King James and lost some land to the Protestant Archbishop of Tuam as a result.

In the eighteenth century the leading O'Malley families seem to have been the two families of Belclare and Cahernamart. The other O'Malley families for various reasons lost their importance, but the chief reason for the survival of the Belclare and Cahernamart lines seems to have been their conformity to the Established Church in the course of that century. This, of course, was happening all over Ireland, and explains the enormous change in landownership from Catholic to Protestant hands which took place at that time.

At the beginning of the century we find Tadhg O'Malley, head of the Belclare line, who has been mentioned above, still in possession of much of his inheritance, but holding it under the Protestant Archbishop of Tuam. At the same time Captain Owen O'Malley of the Cahernamart branch was tenant of another large portion



Sheila O'Malley Mulloy receives *Guardian* Chieftain's Gorget from former *Guardian* Chieftain Gerry O'Malley at 1997 Rally.

of the ancestral lands, under the Brownes of Westport. In this way the O'Malleys retained some status and property into the nineteenth century, when they were one of the very few Old Irish families to sit on the Grand Jury.

Both of these O'Malley families profited from matrimonial alliance. Captain Owen of the Cahernamart family married Martha Browne, daughter of George Browne of the Neale about 1675, and it is this alliance which is recorded on an armorial slab at Murrisk Friary, which has the three Browne lions impaled with the O'Malley arms. Captain Owen held twenty quarters under Colonel John Browne in the barony of Murrisk, while his son George who lived at Rosmindle, held Browne lands in the baronies of Burrishoole and Carra. Owen's grandson, Owen of Milcum, leased land from the Bourke, Bingham, O'Donel and Browne families. Owen's great-grandson was Sir Samuel O'Malley of Kilboyne and Roshill. The title was granted in 1804, as a reward for his help in suppressing the 1798 rebellion. His son Sir William died without issue in 1900.

Meanwhile, Sir Samuel's second cousin George of Spencer Park, Castlebar, joined the British army, fought at Castlebar in 1798, and at Waterloo in 1815, where he was twice wounded and had two horses shot under him. In 1830 he was appointed lieutenant-colonel of the 88th Connaught Rangers, and was finally made a major-general in 1841. He died in London in 1843 in his 63rd year, when 'the remains of this distinguished and lamented officer' were brought to Westport Bay in the *Brig Mary*, and interred in the family vault at Murrisk.

*Fraser's Magazine* in the course of an obituary notice reports that in 1814 only 200 out of 700 men of the 44th had survived the battle of Bergenop-Zoom, so that at Waterloo the regiment was largely composed of recruits. 'When the French fire opened, many of them took to ducking from the shot. The officer then in command, Colonel O'Malley – a man of mould, and not of fiction – cried out, "steady, men! When you see me duck, you may duck; but the first man that ducks before I do, I'll cut him down!" "By Japus", said an old grenadier, "that's pleasant! – if they wait till the Colonel ducks, they'll wait till the cows come home."'

It was a different story with the Catholic side of the family, where some close relatives of Sir Samuel and General George, namely, Colonel Austin O'Malley and his brother Joseph from Burrishoole, and Captain James O'Malley and his brother Alexander from Eden Park, near Knock, were prominent among those who joined the French in 1798. Captain James's father was Alexander O'Malley, a loyal Catholic magistrate. After the battle of Ballinamuck the two brothers were captured and sentenced to death. The younger Brother Alec was pardoned but asked to be allowed take the place of his older married brother. This request was refused and James, better known as Séamus Bán, was hanged and is the

subject of a well-known Irish song *An Caipín Máilleach* (Captain O'Malley). His name is on the 1798 monument at Knock.

Their cousin Colonel Austin was one of the most prominent of the Irish leaders. He was a noted duellist, and his friend Miles Byrne, who afterwards fought with him in France, writes 'he feared no danger and fighting seemed to him a pastime.' Both brothers survived the battle of Ballinamuck and its aftermath. Joseph died in Ireland in 1804, while Colonel Austin escaped to France after the battle in a fishing-boat. In France he received a commission of captain in the Irish Legion. There were frequent reports of his secret return to the Burrishoole neighbourhood, but he does appear to have been there in 1805.

He returned to France and resumed his military career, fighting in the Napoleonic campaigns in Germany, Spain and Portugal. In 1812 he married the daughter of the French commander of an island off the coast of Holland. Within a few years his sight began to fail and he had to retire from the army. He created a minor sensation in the neighbourhood of his birthplace when he was permitted to return from France in 1836 in a bid to regain his property at Burrishoole. He brought an order at the Mayo Assizes in 1836 against his sisters for the enforcement of the terms of his father's will. There was a further hearing at the Court of Chancery, Dublin, in 1842. Here he appears to have been successful but was apparently debarred under the Statute of Limitations. This rather pathetic figure from another era 'was treated with marked courtesy by court, jury and counsel', wrote Mr. & Mrs. Samuel Hall. According to tradition he is buried at Burrishoole Friary.

Colonel Austin's son Patrick had a distinguished career in the French army, becoming Brigadier-General for his conduct at Magenta under Marshal MacMahon. Later he became military commander of the district of Marseilles. Forced to retire in 1868 because of ill-health, he died the following year and is buried in Montparnasse.

Here we see foreshadowed a change which was coming in the fortunes of the Catholic Irish. The harsh measures of the government in suppressing the rebellion of 1798, followed by successive famines, brought about the downfall of the landlords, and a social revolution which was to give the Irish tenant farmer security of tenure and a fair rent.

As regards the Belclare O'Malley, Charles and his five brothers died in exile rather than serve under William and Mary of England. Tadhg, son of Charles, was a captain in the army of James II at the age of sixteen, and remained in Ireland after the Treaty of Limerick in 1691, when he made strenuous but mainly unsuccessful efforts to recover the family property which had been forfeited under

Cromwell and William. However, his son Loughlin conformed to the Established Church about the year 1718, and proceeded to lease land from the Brownes and Coffes, so that by the end of his life he was farming about 1,700 acres.

Loughlin's great-grandson was St. Clair, who died in 1847 and achieved some notoriety as agent to Lord Lucan. St. Clair's brother Charles (1798-1849), joined a dragoon regiment and became the model for Charles Lever's *Charles O'Malley, an Irish Dragoon*, and was considered the best horseman in Mayo. He eventually became a Q.C. (Queen's Counsel) and practised successfully at the Irish Bar until his later years, when he suffered from physical and financial troubles.

Peter Frederick, Q.C., younger brother of St. Clair and Charles, migrated to England where he was to become Recorder of Norwich. An accomplished mathematician, he wrote for both Fraser's and Blackwood's magazines. The mainstay of his impoverished relatives, he acted, according to his grandson Sir Owen 'as a sort of banker or Father Christmas to all the family'. His son Sir Edward Loughlin O'Malley (1842-1932) had an equally illustrious legal career. In turn Attorney-General for Jamaica and Hong Kong, Chief Justice of Straits Settlements and British Guiana, he was finally Chief Judge of H.M. Supreme Consular Court for the Ottoman Empire.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Owen St. Clair O'Malley, K.C.M.G. (Knight Commander of St. Michael and St. George), son of Sir Edward, came to live at Rossyvera, which is about four miles from Newport, in 1948. This distinguished diplomat had served in the British Foreign Office from 1911, and had been accredited in turn in Peking, Mexico, Spain and Hungary. He was Ambassador to the Polish Government in exile in London from 1943-5, and Ambassador to Portugal from 1945-7, when he retired. His wife Mary was a well-known novelist writing under the name of Ann Bridge, while his daughter Jane was to become secretary to the Royal Irish Academy.<sup>2</sup>

Having refurbished and enlarged the house at Rossyvera, which had formerly belonged to the Stoneys of Rosturk castle, Sir Owen next turned his attention to that other habitation on his property, the beautifully-situated tower house of Carraig an Chabhlaigh or Rockfleet, which stands at the north-western corner of Newport Bay. This typical residence of an Irish gentleman from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century, with its four storeys in a square tower, had witnessed many stirring scenes, especially during the tenure of the turbulent Gráinne Ní Mháille Uí Fhlatharta de Búrca, to give her her full title, for this fifteenth-century castle had been Gráinne's principal residence after her second marriage to its owner, Ríocard an Iarainn, about the year 1566. The redoubtable Gráinne had driven off a seaborne expedition sent from Galway in 1574 to punish her for her attacks on

shipping using that port. She retired there after Riocard's death with 'all her own followers and 1,000 head of cows and mares'.

This memory-haunted castle was in a sad state of disrepair when it came into Sir Owen's ownership. He had spent many years researching and writing his family history, and felt he owed it to his ancestors to restore a building which had such strong associations with the O'Malley clan. He soon discovered there were others who shared his dream, and foremost among them were John J. O'Malley of Westport and Conor O'Malley of Galway.

This dream became reality when at a meeting in the Railway Hotel, Westport, in March 1949, the O'Malley Clan association was formed for the purpose of collecting subscriptions for repairs to Carrigahowley Castle. The appeal to the loyalty and pride of the clan evoked a generous response from O'Malleys in all parts of the world, and fired the imagination of the general public. It was clear that the West was awake and more especially the O'Malleys. Probably the first post-war appeal for help with the restoration of a national monument, it was fitting that it should have originated among the members of a clan still living on their ancient territory. These were ordinary people making an extraordinary effort. After four years' hard work on the part of the local committee, the newly-restored castle was the scene of the first Annual Rally on Sunday, 13 September 1953. The O'Malleys are a race of survivors, and the annual rally still goes on, having taken place without a break for forty-eight years.



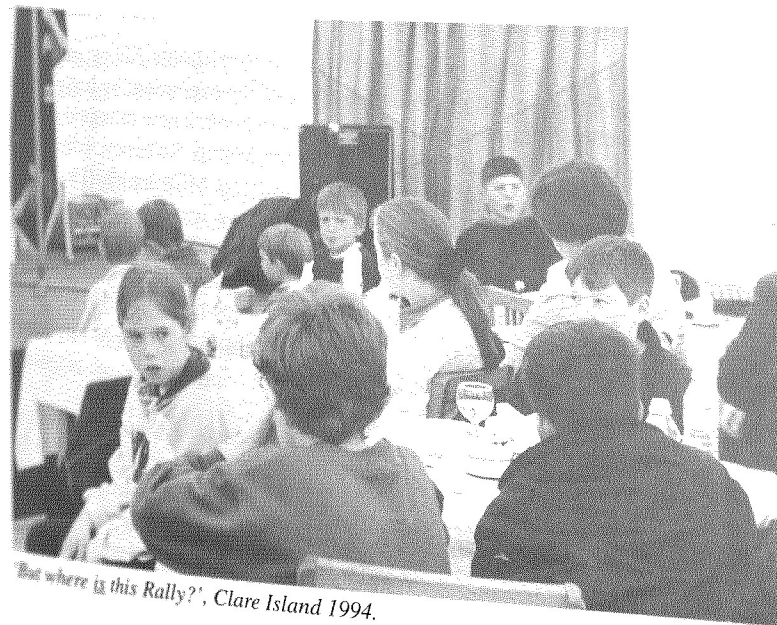
1953 Rally at Carrigahowley  
 Front Row: Ann O'Malley, Eibhlín O'Malley, Lil Ó Máille, Breege Ó Máille, Sal O'Malley  
 At Back: Conor O'Malley, (?) Thomas O'Malley, Brooklyn, Andrew O'Malley,  
 Stiofán O'Malley, Cissie O'Malley, Brian O'Malley, Prof. Tomás Ó Máille, Seán Ó Máille.  
 (Photo: Courtesy Ann Kelly)

And so the clan is back again to the spirit of the fourteenth century when it was described by Seán Ó Dubhagáin as 'a tribe of brotherly affection and of friendship'. This may not be a strictly true description of us in the past, but we now meet in the spirit of fellowship and goodwill at our annual rallies, at which we elect someone among our number to lead the clan – 'primus inter pares' (the first among equals). Strife and rivalry are forgotten and the future of the clan is secure.

#### NOTES

1. Much of the material in this article is taken from the works of Sir Owen O'Malley: 'Note on the O'Malley Lordship at the Close of the XVIIth Century', *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, Vol. XXIV, Nos. i & ii (1950), pp 27-57; 'O'Malleys between 1607 A.D. and 1651 A.D.' (Galway Archaeological and Historical Society, 1952); 'O'Malleys between 1651 and 1725' *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, Vol. XXV, Nos. i & ii (1952); also *O'Malleys in the XVIIIth Century* (typescript) and *O'Malleys 1820-1860* (typescript). See also S. Mulloy, *O'Malley People and Places* (1998), *passim*: 'From Cromwell to William: Land settlement in South Mayo, 1649-1702', *Cathair na Mart*, No. 16 (1996), pp 1-17.
2. See Appreciations of Jane O'Malley and Mary O'Malley Dunlop elsewhere in this journal.
3. See [S. Mulloy] 'How it all began – The story of the O'Malley Clan Association', *O'Malley Journal* No. 3 (1985); also loc. cit. 'Gathering of the O'Malley Clan' from the *Western People*, 19 September 1953.

Sheila Mulloy has written and lectured extensively on seventeenth and eighteenth-century history. She is the editor of *Cathair na Mart*, the journal of the Westport Historical Society and edited all nine issues of the *O'Malley Journal*.



'But where is this Rally?', Clare Island 1994.

## LAUNCHING OF BOOK ON FR. MANUS SWEENEY

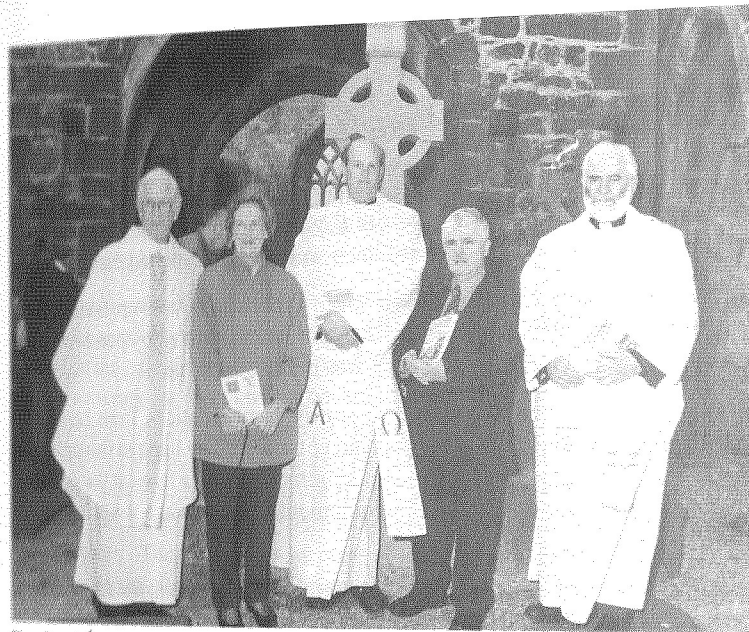


Pictured in Burrishoole Abbey following the launch of the book 'Fr. Manus Sweeney: a Mayo Priest in the Rebellion of 1798' were left to right: Dympna Moran and Teresa Moran, daughters of the late Pádraig Ó Móráin; Máire Uí Mháille (niece) and Síle Uí Mhaoluaídh (author).  
Photo: Frank Dolan.

At the conclusion of concelebrated Mass in Burrishoole Abbey on 8 June (1999) to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the execution, by hanging of Fr. Manus Sweeney (who is buried in the Abbey) a book, a new bilingual edition of Pádraig Ó Móráin's short account of Father Manus Sweeney, edited and translated by well-known Westport historian, Síle Ní Mhaoluaídh (Dr. Sheila Mulloy), and produced by Westport Historical Society, was launched.

Born at Callowbrack, Newport, in 1886, Pádraig Ó Móráin qualified as a National School teacher in 1913 and was a well-known linguist. He taught at schools in Co. Meath; Shramore, Newport and Knockloughra, Newport. He resided at Mulranny where he died in 1966.

Launching the book entitled 'Fr. Manus Sweeney - a Mayo priest in the Rebellion of 1798', Revd Micheál MacGréil, S.J., who complimented Síle Uí Mhaoluaídh on the book, said Fr. Manus made the supreme sacrifice and gave his life for his country. Fr. MacGréil appealed to young people to follow Fr. Sweeney's example to stay in Ireland and work for the country and not be tempted by green pastures far away.



Very Revd Éamon Concannon, PP, Newport; Sheila Mulloy, Westport Historical Society (author); Revd Gary Hastings, Rector, Westport; Jarlath Duffy, Westport Historical Society and Revd Micheál MacGréil, S.J., at the launch of the Fr Manus Sweeney book in Burrishoole Abbey.  
Photo: Frank Dolan.

Speaking in Irish and English, Síle Uí Mhaoluaídh traced the life of Pádraig Ó Móráin and of his great contribution to the collecting and recording of local history.

Mr. Jarlath Duffy, Chairman of Westport Historical Society, congratulated Westport Historical Society on their very successful and interesting pageant on the trial and execution of Fr. Manus Sweeney.

The first two copies of the Father Manus book were presented to the late Pádraig Ó Móráin's daughters Teresa and Dympna Moran, Mulranny, who were present at the concelebrated Mass in Burrishoole Abbey.

(Mayo News 16 June '99)

# A FISHING STORY

*Micheál Ó Beirn*

Our happiest holidays in those days were spent on our Uncle Tommie's farm in the heart of Connemara in the beautiful Maam Valley; home of the O'Malleys of Kilmilkin. My mother and Aunt Eileen were born and reared there.

Brendan was my first cousin 'over' from Clifden and I was 'up' from Galway. Our uncle was not married then and I suppose he left us to enjoy ourselves as we pleased and we did just that as fishing was our life at the time.

Our rods were home-grown; two sturdy bamboo sticks from behind the summer house, picked with great care and cut to size. The line ran through a few wire hoops fixed to the rod with a short length of gut and a hook at the end. That and a small jar for bait was our fishing equipment. Our bait was a worm, preferably a lively red worm.

Our greatest and most memorable day was, without doubt, the day we fished our Finney River. We set off early that morning with all our gear plus a ham sandwich and a jam sandwich each; our rods on our shoulders like a pair of Huckleberry Finns setting out on a day's adventure.

When we got to the river we had the usual argument as to whether we should fish above or below the bridge. There were several good pools well-known to my cousin. So that was that. He seemed to have an instinct which pool was worthwhile. The difference in our fishing technique became very obvious from time to time. His was the delayed tactic as if he knew where and when his bait was about to be swallowed. And when that happened like 'Fabius Cunctator' he waited further until the time was ripe to strike. By then, I would have cast and recast with nothing to show for my effort. Once I learned the art of delay I caught my first fish of the day, and from then on they arrived at regular intervals.

Brendan took one bank and I took the other and we worked away to our hearts content enticing beautiful brown trout out of the water and onto our bank. It struck me how unfair it all appeared taking advantage of these beautiful creatures. But then I dismissed such ideas when I thought how the Lord himself had been up to His neck with His apostles in the same business. In fact, they gave them no choice – they just hauled the fish aboard in a net without any line or bait. So I continued with what I was doing. We spent several hours longer moving down river adding to our stock.

We decided we had caught enough. Brendan had three sizeable trout and one large one plus a few small ones. I had three good size trout and a few small ones

as well. So we lay back on the soft green bank, looked up at the clear blue sky and ate our ham and jam sandwiches.

We got up when we had rested and set about threading a line through each fish in our catch with the larger ones in the centre. We tied each catch around our waists, wearing the bigger fish to the front and set off. When we reached the road we took off our sandals to enjoy walking barefoot on the powdery road. There were no tarmac roads in those days. We slung our sandals around our necks and headed off for Kilmilkin.

The first we saw of them was the white dust from a car somewhere near the old school house; cars were few and far between at the time. As it approached we stood up on the grassy verge to let it pass. To our amazement it stopped. It was a large open touring car. Two knickerbockered anglers got out. We could tell they were fishermen; their tweed hats were alive with fishing flies of all colours. Besides the back of the car was full of fishing gear. They congratulated us on our fishing harvest and walked right around to see the full extent of it. We guessed they were English by their accents. One of them asked us what baits we used and we both replied 'worms'. This seemed to surprise or amuse them. His friend then asked 'may we buy some of your catch?' Before we had time to say anything he produced two £1 notes and handed one to each of us. They selected my cousin's four biggest fish and my three biggest. He gave my cousin an extra half crown and explained that they had taken an extra trout from him and it was also the largest fish. This did not upset me in the slightest because I knew very well that only for Brendan I would not have as many fish as I did. He had spent his time restraining me from striking before the fish had time to examine my bait. They thanked us again, jumped back into the car with *their* day's catch and disappeared towards Leenane in a cloud of dust.

From there to Kilmilkin we whistled and sang, with one stop before Walsh's pub to put our sandals back on for fear someone from Kilmilkin might spot us. We nearly got stuck in the front stile in our rush to tell our news. Our Uncle Tommie was sitting on the front lawn sorting some papers. We showed him the money, told him what happened and showed him the balance of our catch. He looked at the pair of us, laughed, shook his head and said 'well upon my word'.

A few days later he met two visiting anglers from England who told him their 'fishing story'. They were on their way back to the hotel with nothing to show their wives after a day's fishing when they had the good luck to meet two young peasant lads who sold them the best of their catch. And so their reputation was restored.

We never heard what our uncle said to them on that occasion.

*Michael Ó Beirn* was born in Galway and lives in Dublin. He was educated at the 'Jesuits' (St. Ignace), U.C.G. and U.C.D. where he studied Law. He retired as Solicitor to the Irish Land Commission.

# SAIBHREAS NA MÁILLÍ

*Micheál Ó Flannabhra*

Bhí mé féin agus an sagart paráiste, Leon Ó Móracháin, le chéile ag na faoisdíneacha nuair a bhí na Stáisiún i tí Gerry Kelly sa Teach Dóite thart ar an mbliain 1978. Oíche airneáin a bhí ann taréis an Aifrinn agus cluas ar chuile dhuine ag éisteacht le Tom Barrett ag inseacht dúinn faoin mbealach a rinne an Máilleach as Úraid a shaibhreas. Ba seanachai é Tom Barrett, go ndéana Dia trócaire air, agus bail ó Dhia air, is é a bhí in ann craiceann a chur ar scéal. Seo thíos chomh fada agus is cuimhneach liom mar a h-innsíodh an scéal dúinn:

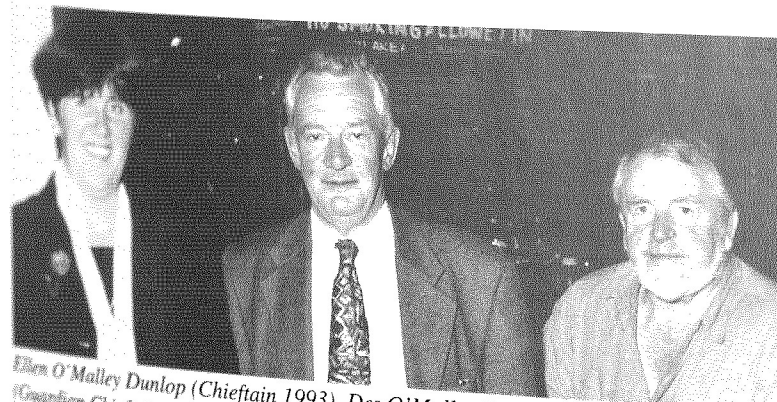
“Bhí brionglóid ag an Máilleach sa mbaile in Úraid agus dúradh leis dul ar maidin go droichead Luimní, áit a bhfeicfeadh sé strainséir a thiúrfadh teachtaireacht a leasa dhó ach ar a bhfaca sé riamh gan a inseacht do dhuine ar bith cá raibh sé ag dul. Bhí sé ina shuí roimh an lá agus taréis greim aithe bhí sé ar a chapall ar a thuras go droichead Luimní gan inseacht do dhuine ar bith óir a thurais. Ar ndóigh tá chuile dhuine de na Máillí sách fascúil. Tá sé de mhianach iontu gan a inseacht do dhuine ar bith fios a ngraithe. Ní dhearna sé moill ar bith ach coinneáil air gur bhain sé droichead Luimní amach tráthnóna an lae céanna. Ní dhearna sé ach an máillín coirce a thug sé leis a thabhairt don chapall chomh maith le buicéad mór uisce a mhúchfadh a thart.

Ar aghaidh leis ansin faoi dheifir ag an droichead. Cé bheadh ansin roimhe ach strainséir ag siúl soir siar ar nós duine a mbeadh imní mhór air. Bhuail an Máilleach bleid air agus chuir ceist air ansin faoi údar a chuid imní. “Táim ansin ar feadh an tráthnóna”, deir an strainséir, ag cur tuairisc faoin áit at a dtugtar Úraid. “Tuige an mbeadh tú ag cur tuairisc faoin léitheid d’áit?” “Dúradh liom,” deir an strainséir, “go mbeadh pota óir le fáil ó thuaidh den chrann os comhair dorais an tí in Úraid agus táim ag iarraidh bheith ar an duine is tuisce a dhéanfaidh tochairt sa spota céanna.” “Inseóidh mise duit,” deir an Máilleach. “Téigh ó dheas go Ciarraí agus cuir tuairisc na háite ansin agus beidh leat.” Ní raibh an focal ach as a bhéal nuair a bhuail an strainséir bóthar ó dheas go Ciarraí agus an Máilleach ar a thuras abhaile go h-Úraid. Gan fiú amháin bricfeasta a chaitheamh siar bhí an Máilleach amuigh ag tochairt ó thuaidh den chrann taobh amuigh dá theach féin in Úraid. Ní raibh sé ró-fhada ag tochairt gur bhuail sé iarann agus faoi cheann leath-uaire bhí an pota mór óir faighte ag an Máilleach. Thug sé isteach ag an teach é, d’fholamhaigh sé é agus choinnigh a raibh d’ór bui istigh ann in áit shábháilte sa seomra. Thug sé faoi deara go raibh rud éigin aisteach scríofa ar thaobh an phota ach ní raibh sé in ann meabhair ar bith a bhaint as an scríbhinn. “Is cuma liom,” deir an Máilleach.” Beidh an craiceann is a leath

agus, agus d’fhág sé an pota folamh mar soitheach móna ar leac an teallaigh. Tá sé de mhianach ag chuile Mháilleach bheith tíosach. D’imigh na blianta agus do sé a chéile caitheadh an t-ór – píosa i ndiaidh píosa go raibh sa deireadh an t-ór uilig ídithe. D’fháise an Máilleach a chrios air féin ag teacht an gheimhrídh ag rá leis féin – “Mair a chapall agus gheobhaidh tú féar.”

Bhí go maith agus ní raibh go h-olc – Tráthnóna éigin i rith an gheimhrídh agus an Máilleach á ghoradh fhéin os comhair na tine, buaileadh dorn ar an doras agus cé bheadh amuigh ach bráthair bocht agus é leath-bháite ón mbáisteach agus lag leis an ocra. Bhí sé de mhianach ins na Máillí bheith lách i gcónaí. Tugadh isteach an bráthair bocht – tugadh greim le n-ithe dó agus gaileog mhaith de bhainne na h-easóige lena cholainn a théadh. Tugadh áit istigh dó le h-aghaidh na h-oíche agus le linn an tseanchais thug an bráthair faoi deara go raibh abairt i nGéigis scríofa ar an bpota le h-ais na tine. “An bhfuil tú in ann meabhair ar bith a bhaint as an abairt atá scríofa ar an bpota?” deir sé. “Níl,” deir an Máilleach “agus tugaim dúshlán duit nach féidir leatsa ach oiread.” “Séard atá san abairt,” deir an bráthair “ná tá mo leath-chúpla ar an taobh ó dheas den chrann.” “Níl ciall ar bith leis an ráiteas sin” deir an Máilleach, ach chomh luath is a d’imigh an bráthair ar maidin bhí an Máilleach amuigh ag tochairt taobh ó dheas den chrann ar aghaidh an dorais. Bhuail sé iarann arís agus ba ghearr ina dhiaidh sin go raibh an Máilleach as Úraid ag ceiliúradh a shaibhris. Níor nocht an Máilleach foscúil scéal a rúin do dhuine ar bith ach thug na comharsana faoi deara go raibh glas i gcónaí ar dhoras an tseomra san teach, agus go mbíodh an Máilleach ag gaire i gcónaí ag baint fód móna as an dá phota iarainn chaon taobh den tine.

*Tá an tAthair Micheál Ó Flannabhra ina shagart paróiste in Indreabhán, Co. na Gaillimhe ó 1990 i leith. B' é Pádraic Ó Flannabhra, Baile an Mhuilinn, Co. na Gaillimhe, a athair, agus Thekla Ní Dhiarmada, Ostarán Mhic Dhiarmada, Cluain Cearbáin, Co. Mhaigh Eo, a mháthair. Máilleach b'eadh míthair Thekla.*



*Ellen O'Malley Dunlop (Chieftain 1993), Des O'Malley T.D., and Gerry O'Malley (Conservative Chieftain 1991-94), at Limerick 1998 Rally.*

## SOME POEMS

*Austin O'Malley*

### BLACK SALLY

*I saw your cousin, the willow, in America.  
Like you, she is fond of water –  
But she is a hundred feet tall  
Prosperous, voluptuous, eco-friendly.  
She watches traffic overhead  
To and from the busiest airport in the world.  
She sees road traffic in all its frenzy  
To and from the city of Chicago  
From mighty juggernaut to weather-beaten biker.  
Canadian geese and wild-duck find peace in her shade.*

*Black sally,  
Do you think you will ever see the day  
Or is it your lot forever  
To haunch over from the west wind  
With few for company –*

*Only the snipe and bittern.*

## END OF AN ERA

*Is it over?  
Is it really over?  
Are the sea rods gone forever?  
Are you the last, Johnny?  
Is the port redundant?  
Are the place and the placenames redundant?*

*Cloch Mhaol. Cladachóil.  
Cúinín Bhéal Trá. Múinín Béal a' Trá.  
Cúinín a' Bháid. Cúinín a' Dialaid.  
Cúinín Bán. Cúinín Gorm. Cúinín Carach.*

*Is their day and their time over?*

*The hard work  
Nights, mornings, days  
Nightfalls. O Lord  
Remember the veterans  
Of the kelp campaigns –  
The individuals  
The families  
The villages*

*Banking  
Spreading  
Burning  
Tempering  
Hauling*

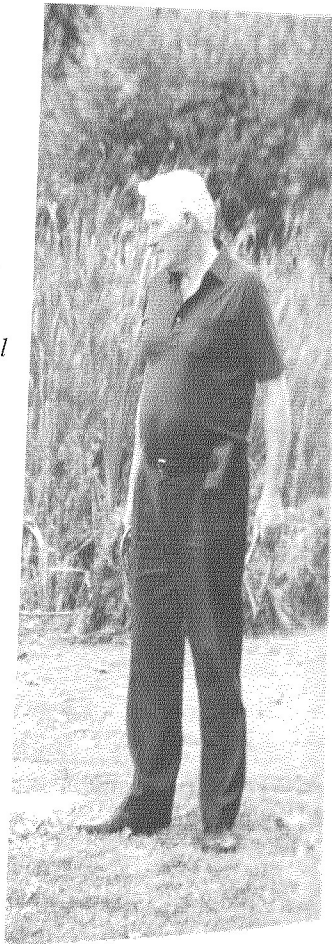
*For a price – a few precious pounds  
Mostly pre-spent.*

*Do these places, this sea  
Remember the old friends?  
Affie or John  
Thomas or Petie?  
Or that shadow companion  
Who worked through the night  
But at dawn was gone without a trace:  
Where will he find company?  
The Web?*

*These places, this sea  
Have new friends – gentle people  
From the Head of Howth  
To the point of Montreal.  
They rightly worry about the plastic*

*But this ocean has powers of renewal  
Anciently inlaid  
The cladachs, the cúiníns are safe*

*Men and shadows  
May come and go.*



*Austin O'Malley, farmer,  
Doughmakeon, Louisburgh.*

## **FLIGHT: departure**

*The gentle elephant takes flight and banks left  
The last quarter harvest moon hangs in gentle blessing  
Over a place, a people proud of endeavour, proud of dreams.  
Northward we spear the night,  
To the north again aurora borealis and eternal  
dipper shore our eastward journey,  
Copper dawn blends into brilliant sunlight,  
Enormous engines relax and prepare to cool  
The island bekons.*

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## **FLIGHT: arrival**

*The windy city showed its brightest and best,  
The northern lights and faithful plough inspired,  
The moon and unconcerned jet obliged,  
But you, ancient plain of the yew tree,  
With your lakes and holy mountain,  
Your bay of islands, megalithic settlements and silver strands,  
You, the familiar one, about whom I might have said something.  
  
You sulked under your cloud.*

*This I will remember!*

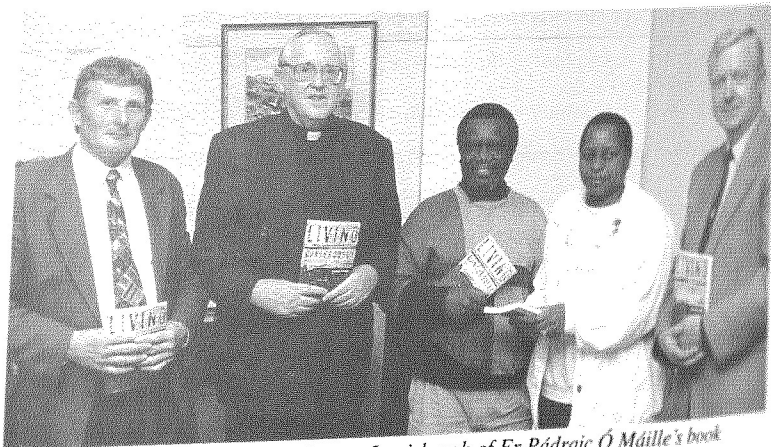
*Austin O'Malley, Doughmakeon, son of the late Anthony, former Clan Chieftain, has recently discovered his poetic talent. We are delighted to share his gifts with our readers.*

## Launch of 'Living Dangerously' by Fr. Pat O'Malley at Louisburgh 11 September 1998

Fr. Pat O'Malley, son of late Clan Chieftain Anthony O'Malley of Doughmakeon, Louisburgh, is the author of *Living Dangerously*, a book which gives an account of Fr. O'Malley's work on behalf of political prisoners and the democracy movement in Malawi. The book was launched by Malawian poet and scholar Dr. Jack Mapanje, who has described it as 'an important contribution to recent history in Malawi and a worthy memorial of Ireland's contribution to our freedom.'

Fr. O'Malley is an old friend of the O'Malley Clan Association, and has celebrated Mass on many occasions at the annual rallies. He is a member of St. Patrick's Missionary Society and has worked in Nigeria and Malawi from 1987 to 1992. He is the author of *Dúdhúchas* (1972) a prize-winning book in Irish on Nigeria, and is at present preparing an anthology of Irish language translations of African poetry. Fr. Pat is also a regular contributor on African culture and literature to *Africa*, the journal of St. Patrick's Missionary Society.

We congratulate this fine scholar on his championship of human rights and his devotion to the Irish language. Go gcumhdaí Dia é!



At the launch in the Granuaile Centre, Louisburgh of Fr Pádraic Ó Máille's book *Living Dangerously* were, Francis O'Malley, Chairman of Louisburgh Community Council, Fr Pádraic Ó Máille (Author), Dr Jack Mapanje, and his wife, Mercy, who travelled from Africa to launch the book, and John Lyons, Chairperson of the Pastoral Council of the Kilgeever Parish. Photo: Frank Dolan

## WILLIAM O'MALLEY – MAN ON A MISSION<sup>1</sup>

(Submitted by Charles O'Malley, Australia)

'If more priests were like Father O'Malley, I'd find Church really interesting.' 'How can you not believe in God after that talk.' These are just a couple of comments made by senior students following their induction into the world of Father William O'Malley S.J.

At the instigation of Aquinas College, the Christian Brothers invited Father O'Malley to visit Western Australia for three weeks. Aside from publishing some thirty books, as a teacher of boys for over thirty-eight years (the last eighteen in the Bronx) O'Malley is considered a world authority on the spiritual development of adolescent boys. He seems to possess the ability to pass on a practical wisdom to adolescents, in a passionately clear and meaningful manner.

Having addressed Aquinas staff members and teachers of Religion in mid-July, Father O'Malley proceeded to speak to all the Year 11 and 12 students over a period of three days. The two topics chosen were *Who Says There's a God?* and *Who Says What I Can Do With My Body?*

During his *Who Says There's a God?* presentation, Father O'Malley posed the question 'Is there life after death?' Do we continue to exist after death or not? It is his opinion that if we cease to exist postmortem, then fundamentally there can be no real difference between the fate of Mother Teresa and a pimp. If there is life after death, however, we are immortal; we are eternal. Life has meaning.

In discussing the existence of God, boys were encouraged to examine their evidence gathered from 'notional knowledge' (second-hand) and 'real knowledge' (first-hand observations). Then, using their intellect and intelligence to sift the information, they developed their own critique. O'Malley emphasised that real knowledge of God comes from prayer, meditation, sacred reading and reflection on our daily experiences. By doing this, a person gets to 'know' God first-hand.

Tackling evolution and the 'big bang' theorists, O'Malley believes the predictable laws of nature and the universe dictate that there must have been an 'intelligence' at work to plan such a creation. 'There is more chance of a tornado

<sup>1</sup> From Aquinas College Journal, submitted by Charles O'Malley, Australia.

passing through an aircraft junkyard and leaving behind a 707 airliner than the of the universe being created by chance'. Father O'Malley summarised poetically – 'The great dance of the universe is always drawing signs for us in the night sky and whispering in our ear, "God exists" '.

O'Malley teaches that genuine faith is a calculated risk, not a certitude - belief is only as good as the evidence. Human beings can live and grow with mystery and uncertainty. He pointed out that real scientists do not speak of certitude but hypothesis – the best any scientist can offer to support a theory is a high degree of probability – yet often we accept their expertise.

In closing, he raised the question, 'Why do some people readily accept so many things unquestioningly which are, in reality, preposterous – yet balk at accepting the existence of God?' Why do we take experts' words on one matter, and not on another?' Father O'Malley believes the answer to be simple – to believe in a God could change a person's whole way of living, and that is a personal risk.

Summing up, Father O'Malley stated that a sane person examines all the evidence for a reasonable amount of time, and then commits to a choice and lives to see if it's right. He believes there is more evidence to suggest there's a God than not.

Students and staff alike found O'Malley's presentations captivating, and the man himself mesmerising. As one student said, 'He talked our language.'



*Charles O'Malley of Mosman Park has just returned from his third O'Malley Clan Rally reunion in Ireland. He took along the POST to show all 300 O'Malleys who arrived from all over the world. They came from Ireland, The U.S., Canada and Australia and one even travelled from Hawaii. The O'Malleys have been gathering each year on the last weekend in June since 1953, the longest running clan reunion in Ireland. This year (1999) they choose to meet in Castlebar in County Mayo. Charles discovered there's even a pub bearing the family name in nearby Westport.*

## MEMORIES OF A CONNEMARA CHILDHOOD

*Conor O'Malley*

*Bhí an sonas romham thall 's abhus sa ghleann 'nár tógadh mé.  
(Dubhghlas de hÍde)*

My father Peter James O'Malley was, as I remember him, of medium height, about 5' 7", and overweight by our modern standards. As was the fashion of the time, he wore a single stud collar, black tie, a gold watch and chain, and was always most punctilious as to time. He had a short beard, a very fresh complexion and a fine head of hair. He wore suits of heavy brown material with semi-wallowtail coats and a soft black hat. The suits were always made by tailor Halloran, a lame tailor who walked on one leg with a crutch; the other leg was bent at right angles to the knee. He came periodically to Kilmilkin and made suits of frieze for us boys also, garments we disliked intensely.

Peter James O'Malley (1839-1916) of Kilmilkin (Coill Mhfolcon) in the Maam Valley was called Peadar Óg, to distinguish him from his father Peadar 1800-1887. He was called 'The Boss' by all of us. My mother was Mary O'Malley of Ballyburke, Ayle, Westport, Co. Mayo. They had fourteen children, of whom John Francis, a Harley Street ear, nose and throat surgeon was the eldest, and I was the youngest. My mother died aged forty when I was about two months old. My sisters reared me.

My father's people could trace the family at Kilmilkin in the male line back for six generations. So far as I know, they were all Catholics. Patrick O'Malley (An Sean-Mháilleach) 1771-1867, my great-grandfather, was a successful dealer in cattle and sheep in Mayo and Galway. He was also a smuggler who took some of the articles, such as brandy, tobacco and



*Conor the teenager.*

silks, which his cousin Captain Patrick O'Malley (father of the famous Captain George) ran through the gauntlet of the revenue cutters from Mr. Iremonger of the Channel Islands to Letterfrack, Connemara. Patrick of Kilmilkin carried his goods through the gap at Glanlosh (Gleann Ghlais) by horses and baskets and sold them in the hinterland of the plains of Mayo and west Galway. It was Patrick Seán Mháilleach, Gurteen (Goirtín), who built the house at Kilmilkin.

It was said of Patrick of Kilmilkin that everything he touched made money; he had golden fingers. He was a smallish man who rode all over the country on horseback. He was married to Sabina Conroy of Ballinrobe. He had one son and one daughter. He also had (a common fashion in that period for a well-to-do man) another woman, a 'spare wheel', for whom he built a house. He had one natural daughter; I think she was married to Thornton, who herded in Oroid (Úraid) for him.

His daughter being an heiress, he was always afraid the Joyces would steal her. If this happened, he would have to give her fortune to the Joyce kidnapper. Once I heard she had to be hidden in a bin of oats to escape the Joyces. My aunt Ann. was stolen at night, concealed by a great coat, by one Jennings from Clonbur, a rapparee.

Patrick married his legitimate daughter Máiréad to John King who was a stock manager for him. He disliked all Joyces, as did all O'Malleys. The feelings were reciprocated, I think. Although they were neighbours for 300 years, there were only two recorded marriages between O'Malleys and Joyces, namely my uncle Michael of Mounterown (Muintir Eoghain) to Sarah Joyce of Leenane, my famous aunt Sarah, and myself to Dr. Sal Joyce of Mounterown West and Leenane.

Peter O'Malley of Kilmilkin, 1800-1887 (my grandfather), was a very hospitable man, also learned in local lore. He lived on the main road through the valley and so had many callers, whom he treated very hospitably. A frequent passing visitor was Sir William Wilde, who lived at Lacafinna near Cong, and went fishing to Ros Rua Lodge on Lough Fee (Loch Fiadha). My father told me he met Oscar Wilde and his brother William who accompanied their father on his fishing expeditions. There was a number of letters from Sir William Wilde at Kilmilkin, but my brother Tommie burned them all, together with other interesting documents, in the days of the Black and Tans. This is an example of what happened in Ireland. No family documents were preserved lest they might incriminate the owner. Documents were dangerous.

My mother belonged to the Burrishoole group of O'Malleys, whose head was Owen O'Malley, married to Martha Browne of The Neale. Their tomb with

the O'Malley and Browne arms can be seen in Murrisk Abbey. Most of this group were Protestants and are referred to by Quinn of Castlebar (the O'Malley historian) as the Queen's O'Malleys. They included Sir Samuel O'Malley, Bart. of Kilboyne, Sir William O'Malley, his son, also Major-General George O'Malley, whose statue is in front of the Protestant Church in Castlebar. My grandfather, Big John O'Malley, Ballyburke, always known as the 'Gaffer', was an agent for Lord Sigo, and had the tolls at Aughagower; he was a well-to-do farmer. He married Catherine O'Connor, Ballinrobe, from whom I got the name Conor (I was always known in Kilmilkin as Charles).



*The Boss, early 1900s.*

#### The Boss

The Boss (my father) had many irons in the fire. He had the grazing of ten farms totalling about 10,000 acres on which he grazed up to three thousand sheep and a hundred head of dry cattle. He housed in winter ten milch cows with their calves and kept in stable four horses for transport. The horses were to take him to fairs, buying and selling cattle and sheep; to cart foodstuffs of all kinds: e.g. flour, oatmeal bran and pollard, from Maam Cross Railway Station,<sup>1</sup> and from the wharf or river at Maam. Goods were transported from Galway by sailing ships, later by steamer, to supply the two shops, one at Kilmilkin, the other at Maam. This was the time before the motor car or lorry. Tom Walsh and his son Pat transported shop goods of all kinds; they were sailing boat men. I recall regularly seeing a post card to the boss to say they hoped to be at Maam Wharf on such and such a day W.P. (weather permitting). Sailing time Maam/Galway about five hours. The first steamer I recall transporting cargo from Galway was the *St. Patrick*, Captain Pat Hession.

The Boss's ten farms were the home farm (1) Kilmilkin – 450 acres; (2) Breenaan (Na Braonáin) – 1,000 acres; (3) Murrify (Marrafiadh)<sup>2</sup> house and land which he bought from Tom King for £400; (4) Boocan (Búcán), Tommy Lydon, herd; (5) Tawnaleen, 700 acres, John Walsh, herd; (6) Arderry (Ard Doire), near Maam Cross, Tom Walshe, the herd, a winterage, carried seven to eight brood mares, from which he picked his transport, four to five car and cart horses always

in stable, well-fed on oats and hay; (7) Oorid (Úraid), my grandfather Peter of Kilmilkin had given this farm to J. Prendergast, Louisburgh, who was married to his daughter Margaret. Later it was in the hands of the Kings of Lecanase who sold it back to my father for £500; it eventually passed to my brother Patrick who sold it to the Land Commission (when he went to practise medicine in London) for £1,200. The Land Commission settled five families on it. Kerrigan, the best, 7,000 acres, mostly cold bog, but a good deal of it called *the gardens* along a lake with a limestone base, very good arable land; (8) The Boss's eighth farm was at Carnacon, 200 acres of arable land where he fattened black cattle. I think he got about £20 per head for the cattle. I recall his having 20 cattle, big cattle up to three years old, when I helped with him and Johnny Walshe, the herd at Tawnabreen one fine morning in June, at the fair at Balla. I hoped that every buyer that came along would buy the cattle so I could get away from the dust. The Boss, however, held out for his price until he got it. After the fair I bought a pipe and tobacco. I got sick smoking it and threw it away, and never smoked a pipe since; (9) This was a farm that he had near Tyrone, Kilcolgan; (10) He had a farm at Lahardane (Leathardán), Co. Mayo, which was run for a time by my eldest brother, John Francis – most of this land on lease from Lord Leitrim. Rustling of cattle was unknown when I was young but sheep-stealing was common. In general the big farmers knew that the herds played into one another's hands. 'Herds', they were never known as 'shepherds', could be quite well off. The farmer paid his herd a certain sum per annum, about £20; he had a free house, a cow, a calf and a flock of about forty sheep grazing on the land. The herd was usually married and lived near his flock. In addition, the Boss also employed a small gang of men engaged in land drainage, planting, saving of turf and hay, etc.

### The Shops

Other assets were two shops, one in Kilmilkin which had been set up by Mother, and one in Maam, where we stocked nearly everything from a needle to an anchor, i.e. groceries, human and cattle food, and medicines, drapery, shirts, suiting material, boots, tobacco, also mill stuff that required a heavy investment, flour, oatmeal, bran pollard, etc., guano for moulding potatoes. It was a credit system. The small farmers had to be carried on our books until they could sell something at a fair, or got money from the U.S.A. from a son or a daughter. I often think he lost money on the shops, as a lot of money remained unpaid on the books when the business was finally wound up. There was one advantage, namely, that for the big family at home we bought things at cost price.

The Boss himself set up the shop in Maam, with a blacksmith's forge and thatched cottage attached. The shop, a two-storey slated building he built anew. His first shopman was Richard O'Toole (who had served his time in Conroy's of Garafin, Rosmuc, and was later to have his own shops in South Connemara). The

Boss brought Tom Glynn from Annfield, Co. Mayo, as blacksmith. He was a wonderful worker but drank all he earned in porter. I learnt how to shoe a horse from watching him and it was a big day when we were putting on a red-hot tyre on a cart or a car. Both Micho<sup>3</sup> and I in turn ran the shop at Maam with O'Toole. I enjoyed Maam and got invited to a lot of *American wakes*, where the men drank púster and the ladies port wine and all danced the *half-set* to the music of a concertina. In those days they cried when an emigrant was going, probably never to see him again. Each emigrant sent home his or her *passage* to a younger brother or sister. The American cheque was the lifeline of those at home.

### Childhood and Teenage Years

When about seven or eight years old I enjoyed living with my sister Delia in Caberichole, the Neale, but having been brought up with brothers, I feared the nights alone there. I loved riding the horses to the blacksmith to be shod, and going with John Mellett to collect the rates at Hughes's bakery shop now the site of the Western Pride bakery in Ballinrobe. I was always fascinated watching the baker at work. He would make two round thick cakes, put one on top of the other, pull up the sleeve of his shirt and make a hole with his elbow in the top of the cake, and so shape the loaf. I often wondered why his elbow did not get sore. When he had a batch made he pushed them into the hot oven on a long shovel to bake. The smell of hot bread was lovely.

From the age of eleven onwards for some years I roamed the hills and valleys with a gun. I got a gun and a double barrel 12 bore gun licence a year earlier than law allowed through my brother Peter James who was a J.P. My first cartridges were Heavey 10/- a hundred. I was very proud when I shot my first snipe on the wing at a marshy place near the river, and grouse on Cnoc Éamoinn, which was covered in deep heather which was good for grouse.

Very frequently I had a companion Patrick O'Neill. He used a single barrel 16-bore shotgun which I had given him. Harking back, the gun was presented to me by my first cousin, Joe O'Malley of Ballyburke. Patrick and I had many adventures, sometimes together, sometimes alone, getting caught in a thunderstorm shooting one snowy day 2000ft. up in the Breckett Hills.<sup>4</sup> That was a stupid thing to do.

For a number of years I dabbled in buying and exporting hares and rabbits I bought from various people like Phil Coyne of Glanlosh, who trapped rabbits in a big way. Another person who sold rabbits to me was Michaelleen Laffey of Raigh (An Ráithe), who was the postman. The rabbit buyers were a Dublin firm called Carton Bros. and Petries of Liverpool. The prices were rabbits 6-7d. each, hares 2/- each, shipped by basket hampers.

My joy in life was fishing for brown trout with a worm, in the small stream that flowed by the school at the bridge. In spate, trout came up this and other small streams from the Bealanabrack (Béal Átha na mBreac) River, where I learned to swim in the pools.

I had a wooden-framed Rudge Whitworth seven pound weight racing bike, which I had bought with the money (£5-10-0) the Boss had given me for the fat pig that I reared. He must have been disappointed with me, as he had no doubt thought that I would buy a calf and so become a farmer. I cycled all over Connemara on this bike, long distances on rough bad roads such as the road over Maamtrasna, which when coming from Ballyburke was a distance of thirty-five miles. Another time I cycled from Kilmilkin to Spiddal, where my sister Marion kept house for Father Mark Conroy (a cousin). At this time the new church was being built at Spiddal – a gem of Hiberno Romanesque design. Fr. Mark Conroy had bought a revolver and ammunition for her protection, while she was alone, with only a maid in the house. I persuaded her that if she did not know how to use the gun, she had better give it to me. She did.

I rode in a novice bicycle race in Loughrea. I recall how many of us were engaged in a collision going round a bend in the course. I never rode in a race after that. Anyhow, my forte was the sprints. I could do the 100 yards in 11 seconds, stopwatch timing, and the 220 yards. I could do 19 feet in the long jump, but only 5ft. 6 ins. in the high jump. I won the 100 yards Championship of Connacht in the Galway City Sports. I got a splendid E.P.N.S. tea set for a prize. This, of course, was under the rules – no money. At *flapper* sports, not under the rules, I got cash prizes, usually one guinea. I had to run under a name like A. N. Other, otherwise I was severely handicapped at *flapper* sports, but managed to win, anyway. Very often the fields were so small as at Bealadangan, that you had to jump across a drain in the 100 yards race. I could not run longer than 220 or 440 yards only with great difficulty. At Bealadangan that day 440 was the shortest race. A boy called Keane whom I knew was a distance runner and I made up a plan. I would let him win the half-mile (880 yards) easily, if he would let me win the 440. I won the 440 but found it as much as I could do. I won the long jump and high jump that day – altogether a good cash day. It was a great life. The Boss never knew where I was. In those days I was as thin as a greyhound and the world was my oyster. From this time until I went away to the University, I shot in the winter and fished in summer, or competed at sports meetings. I always had a shotgun and a revolver, but gave them up in the early seventies when the troubles started.

Horseback was my other form of transport. I felt like Dick Turpin riding to York, when I saddled the young horse to go on messages to Maam Post Office.

three miles away, to send a registered letter to the Bank of Ireland, Galway (usually the rates collection monies) or the telegraph office at Leenane, five miles away, and of course to Creevagh (McCarthy's) or Drimadrian (O'Tooles), which were often overnight stopping places en route to the fairs at Balla.

### The Fairs<sup>6</sup>

Fairs were at fairgreens or on the streets of towns. Bargains were struck often by the intermediary known as a tangler who fixed the luck penny. Payments were made in the snugs of pubs. Fairs began at daylight, so the stock for sale would be on grass beside the fairgreen the night before. Someone would have to stay awake at night to call the Boss at 3 a.m. and help him to get away. The housemaid Bridget gave him a simple breakfast of milk and bread and butter. He was quite allergic to tea and coffee; he did like some alcohol, always whiskey, Furse's Special, and he did not approve of *potteen*. When travelling to the fairs by sidcar, the Boss wore a heavy Milton coat and had a warm rug, waterproof on the outside, with a ring on the inside, through which a belt fitted that went around his waist, to prevent it being blown away by the storms on the unsheltered roads of Connemara. He always carried a walking stick but never an umbrella.

The night before the fair, such as the Fair of the Forge on July 27th, about three miles west of the school house, the long meat tents were set up which were a feature of the fair, where customers could sit and drink; the food supplied was a pot of boiling mutton. The kids bought currant biscuits and sugar sticks from a donkey cart stand. The main fairs of the district were the two fairs at Maam, the one at Leenane, Ballinrobe, Westport, Balla and the Galway summer fair. The Boss travelled by train from Maam Cross to Galway and was collected by one of us on the return journey.

### Swine Fever

The Boss also had the job of Veterinary Inspector for the half-barony of Ross and Letterbreckaun (Leitir Breacáin); he had to see that sheep dipping against scab in sheep was carried out. About 1900 there was a massive outbreak of pig sickness in the West Riding of Galway from Oughterard to Clifden.<sup>6</sup> This was gastro-enteritis. The Boss got a message by wire or messenger when a pig was sick. He set out to see it, accompanied by his butcher Jimmy Coyne or J. Keller. He diagnosed the disease; Jimmy slew the sick pig. They took the intestines out, put them in a linenbag, labelled it and sent it by train to the Agricultural Department in Dublin. He gave the owner a chit for the value of the animal, which he could get cashed in any Post Office. He had to see the pig buried. He said he was quite sure the pigs were often dug up again, and boiled and eaten. This would not be

dangerous, as there was no infection in the pig's bacon. So the owner had the pig and its price as well (*an craiceann agus a luach*).

The Boss travelled all over the West Riding of Galway on sidecars and in traps and at the end of six months he had the pig disease under control. It nearly killed him. He got a bad dose of rheumatic fever, which affected his heart valves. He owed his life to his youngest sister, my Aunt Sabina O'Toole who nursed him night and day at Kilmilkin. Travelling on a sidecar over the mountain roads of Connemara exposed to fierce wind and rain was no picnic.

The Boss had four working horses in the stables at a time and they had to be alternated on the road. I often wondered why no one used a governess trap and covered it in overhead for protection. One danger on the roads then was loose stones, which might cause a horse to slip and fall on his knees. To protect them, the horses wore kneecaps. Another danger was that horses would shy at something like a pig rushing out, or a fluttering piece of paper, and run amok. For this reason the sidecar was deemed safest, as the passenger could jump off it if the horse went out of control.

He was also the rate collector for the half Barony of Ross and Letterbreckan. He held an office at Clonbur every Friday for the collection of rates. This was a thirteen-mile drive from Kilmilkin. The office where he collected rates was in a house he bought for Aunt Ellen O'Dea, where she had a shop and post office. About 1914, the Boss got a pension (£130) from the rate collections and veterinary inspections. These jobs passed on to Tommie.

The Boss was myopic. He wore a monocle in his right eye. If he disapproved of something you did, he fixed you with his monocle, but said nothing, usually. One morning I was digging in a garden near the house at school time. I heard him come up silently behind me. He said 'ye crowel of hell, what do you think you are doing?' I mumbled something like 'planting lettuce'. 'Off with you now to school, instead of wasting your time there hooking like a pig.' 'Crowel of Hell' was his favourite swear word. I do not know what a crowel was. We thought he could see behind him with the monocle. He always carried a telescope. The workmen at a distance away were always under observation. Later in life he wore myopic glasses, but he took them off when reading. He got his glasses from an optician called Cahill, Crampton Quay, Dublin, who said he supplied glasses to the Pope and had a testimonial to that effect - 'the Pope's optician'. I recall glasses coming to the Boss, who tested himself at home and sent the prescription to Cahill.

The Boss was a silent man and strict; he didn't talk much to his family - a pity. But anybody who passed by Kilmilkin house, which was on the side of the road between Maam and Leenane, was made welcome. This was often

entertainment for us children. People, I recall, were mostly men on the tramp who carried a sack, such as Dan Crowe, who wore a lot of feathers in his hat, or Old Cassidy who used to frighten me when I was small by putting his lower teeth to touch his nose. When I got smarter I learned to set the terrier Ferneen on him. Then there was Paddy Hundred Dile with a donkey and cart and goods for sale such as 'penknives that had a Sheffield blade and Liverpool handle and socks of wool to keep life in the boy for the winter'.

Other visitors were Jimmy King, a lame man from Raigh (An Ráithe), who made all the súgáns for haycocks at Kilmilkin (the Boss had a lot of hay for winter-feed for dry cattle) and Johnny Mór Lydon, whom we always loved to see at Kilmilkin. He had a fund of adventure stories about his visits to England (mostly lies). He composed songs, bawdy and otherwise. One was about a wife:

*She had a hundred guineas, a cow and a heifer,  
A pig and a goat that was comely and clever,  
She rides into town in her new coat and beaver,  
She was so genteel, for you know she was tender,  
She was three score and ten on the first of November,  
On Patrick's Day in the morning.*

Another of Johnny Mór's songs was 'The Land Lague [League] Ass', a satire on Buckshot Foster. Johnny also taught me 'The Maiden in her Father's Garden' a song I have sung hundreds of times (and recorded somewhere). I have a great love of traditional music, songs that tell a story.

All callers were fed with boiled eggs and baker's bread and pots of sweet tea.

### Sheep Shearing

In mid-June the Boss read the weather and forecast a fine day for the herds to drive the sheep to Kilmilkin for shearing, counting and branding with the letters P.M. in tar. The shearers, all small farmers, and the herds came in, and gave their day's services free. They were regaled with lots of baker's bread, which they loved, lashings of butter and boiled eggs galore at the lunch or dinner break. Each shearer could eat one whole loaf of baker's white bread. They scooped out the boiled eggs with the point of a knife (no spoons) and often wiped the knife on the edge of the plain bare deal table (no cloth). They drank the tea off the saucer with much noise, possibly like Queen Anne, and called it *tay*. Conversation was in Irish (no English). Some were jolly talkers like Johnny Lydon, who kept up a running conversation; others were silent eaters.

When the sheep were shorn, counted and branded with tar they were released home to their mountains, jumping with glee at being rid of their heavy hot fleeces of wool. The half-barrel of Guinness was tapped. The drinkers stood round in a circle and each man was handed a mug full of Guinness. This went on, round after round, until the barrel was empty and the shearers walked home happy.

I loved shearing days as a small schoolboy. The sound of the bleating sheep and barking dogs in the morning woke me up – no school on that day! When older, my job was to tap the barrel of Guinness and distribute the porter to the circle with Peter Walsh, a boy who worked in our shop in Kilmilkin. A good shearer with a helper could shear 50-70 sheep a day. The price of wool skyrocketed during World War One.

### The Boss at Annaghvaan

Every year when the sheep and lambs were shorn, the hay and turf cut and saved, the Boss spent a month in autumn in Annaghvaan (Eanach Mheán), with his sister, my Aunt Sabina O'Toole. He had a large wooden tub, which had been a dipping box for sheep, transported to Annaghvaan, on the coast, a distance of twenty-five miles. Each night this vessel was filled with warm seawater, in which were lumps of jelly seaweed, and at bed-time he would get into this bath and someone would massage him with the seaweed. He would then dry up, put on a heavy flannelette nightshirt and a nightcap and get into bed. He snored vociferously. He had a man called Bartly Delap, to look after the dipping box for him and keep it watertight. (Bartly used to make his own curraghs.) During his annual month in Annaghvaan the Boss enjoyed walking round during the day, speaking to the neighbours. He was a fluent Irish speaker, but he never spoke it in Kilmilkin to us.

In my youth there was no such thing as taking a lunch with you on a long sidecar journey, such as going to Screebe (Scrib) or Annaghvaan. The Boss always had a small flask of whiskey and would have a swig on the way. When I was driving; he would send me down the river to fill the case of the flask with water to dilute the whiskey. Neither he nor I, a gossoon, ever brought a lunch. I used to get tea and biscuits from a woman at Screebe for tuppence; it was only years later that I realised it was a shebeen.

While the Boss was in Annaghvaan the house in Kilmilkin went on high jinks. Many young people looked forward to hearing if the Boss complained of getting a 'twinge' of rheumatism and when would he be off to Annaghvaan, so that all sorts of fun and dances could be carried on in Kilmilkin while he was away. I recall one particular time when he was away in Annaghvaan we held a

sports at Kilmilkin. A sports consisted of running, jumping and weight throwing.

It was a sunny day in August, I think a Sunday. Young people, friends of the family, gathered from far and near by horse and car and bicycle to Kilmilkin. It was a lovely day, and the sports went off without a hitch. I won the 100 yards and 220 sprint. We had a very good field of athletes. From the Irish College at Toormakeady came several good athletes, as well as singers and musicians.

Everything was wonderful until 3 p.m. when the heavens opened. I remember many really wet days in the Maam Valley, but nothing like this. In a few hours there was a deep lake covering the sports field. All living things sought shelter. None of the visitors could leave Kilmilkin for several days. Fortunately there was a good supply of food in the shop, bread, eggs, bacon, tea, milk, butter etc. All the visitors ate well, but had to sleep wherever they could. By the second day of rain there was a yellow flood seven or eight feet deep over the sports field with white cataracts of water tearing down the hills, carrying tons of clay from the hillsides. All had to be abandoned.

Every village and small town in the West had its annual sports at this time. Athletes of prowess were heroes; Ireland's young men and boys now play football and hurling in teams. I was always a lone track athlete and did not participate in team games, though at college, my sporting endeavours were quite celebrated. I played intersarsity rugby and Sigerson (GAA); the latter on the UCG first winning team 1911-1912. I did like tennis and later golf, at which I was a five handicap and played on the first winning Galway Golf Club Junior Cup team in 1934.

We got the first model 'T' motor car about 1914, which was driven by my brother Tommie. What a difference it would have made in life for the Boss if it had come earlier, instead of his hard life on the sidecars and traps, exposed to the elements. The model 'T' was not very good on climbing hills but had a speed up to 30 m.p.h. and offered some protection from wind and rain.

The Boss died October 1916. Having enrolled in U.C.G. in 1911, I qualified in medicine in 1917, and in January 1918 I joined the warship *HMS Furious* of the Royal Navy fleet, as a ship's surgeon.

### APPENDIX

#### Note on some earlier Generations

Patrick, An Sean-Mháilleach of the 'Golden Fingers', had revived the family fortunes. He had grazed as much land as the Boss did many years later. His father

before him was called Seán na Fírinne, John of the Truth, reputed never to have told a lie (in fact I think this was also true of the Boss). Seán na Fírinne had got poor, I don't know how or why. His father before him was called 'Éamonn na mBó', Éamonn of the Cows, who was a well-to-do man and could give a fortune of 21 cows and a bull to his daughter on her marriage. I don't know what land he had.

His father was 'Éamonn Saighdiúir', the 'Soldier'. We think he fought at the battle of Aughrim and at Limerick. (Cnoc Éamoinn at Kilmilkin is called after him or Éamonn na mBó). He had come to Kilmilkin on the run. We think he had helped with recruiting for Col. John Browne of Westport, and was an organiser of the Colonel's regiment for the Jacobite cause, but the names of the force were never published.<sup>7</sup>

(The house at Kilmilkin when first built had a lavatory called the 'sugarhouse'. It was a small building with a bench with a circular hole about a foot in diameter. Underneath was a stream of running water, conducted underground from the spout in the yard. As far as I know this was the only running water lavatory between Ashford Castle and Clifden).

### The Conroys of Ballinrobe

Sabina Conroy, Ballinrobe, was married to Patrick (An Sean-Mháilleach). Her father and brothers Thomas and James built coaches for the gentry of Mayo. I think their father was Laurence and in the same business. In 1798 they joined Blake of Garracloon and went off to join the French who landed an army at Killlala to fight for Ireland. After the great defeat at Ballinamuck, Thomas and James made their escape to the Maam Valley and were no doubt befriended by their sister Sabina Conroy O'Malley. James Conroy died on the run in Connemara. After seven years, Thomas was pardoned; he never returned to Ballinrobe but set up a coach-building business in Eyre Square, Galway (now the Odeon Hotel).

My Grandfather, Peter O'Malley of Kilmilkin, his nephew, lived with him for about ten years from 1814 and went to school in Galway. I think the school was run by Fr. O'Toole who later became vice-president of U.C.G.

This was told to me by my Aunt Catherine Glynn, Cong (she and my father, sister and brother were always at daggers-drawn). So you can imagine his anger when her beautiful daughter Delia ran away to the U.S.A. with my brother Patrick, his mainstay, and settled in Memphis, Tennessee. He worked in a railway yard. Delia did not get good health in the U.S.A.. Later the family made the Boss forgive the elopement and bring Patrick home. She was in bad luck when she

came home. The whole family got ptomaine poisoning; all recovered except Delia who died of it. (Patrick told me he should have stayed in the U.S.A. and become a millionaire).

My mother's grandmother was called Big Madame, the daughter of Bridget Fitzmaurice and the Rev. Joseph Huddy of Duagh, Co. Kerry. The Fitzmaurices were descended from the Knights of Kerry. Big Madame Anna Huddy rode on horseback from Duagh, to the wedding of her brother, who was a soldier in the barracks at Ballinrobe. Anna stayed in Ballinrobe and married David O'Connor. Big Madame used to tell that twenty of her male relations fell or were wounded at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815, ten fighting with the Duke of Wellington and ten fighting for Napoleon.

### NOTES

1. The Galway Clifden Railway opened in 1895.
2. About 1910 my sister Marion got the ground floor of Tom King's house converted into a factory for making tweed. She had four looms and four weavers. Later, as it had a medical dispensary attached, which had been idle for some years when I qualified in 1917, I did my first locum there.
3. Michael.
4. The Twelve Bens (na Beanna Beola).
5. 1895, average price for sale of black cattle, £8.10.0<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>, poor lamb prices this year.
6. 1897, black-faced lambs 13/= each, small black-faced lambs 6/6d. each, sheep £11/3= each.
7. 1918, cattle 70/= per cwt. or £20.15.0d. each, Ewes 46/= each, fat sheep 65/= each, wool 9/2d. lb.
8. 1898, 48 sheep missing.
9. 1907-'08, 313 died, 100 totally unaccounted for.
10. *Farm ledger of Thos. Francis Joyce, Mounterowen W.*
11. The pig population of Oughterard union was 3,803 (Ross and Letterbreckau about half this area), 1906 *Agricultural Statistics*.
12. They were probably never taken into service, but many of them were sent with Colonel Feilding to France in 1690. - Editor

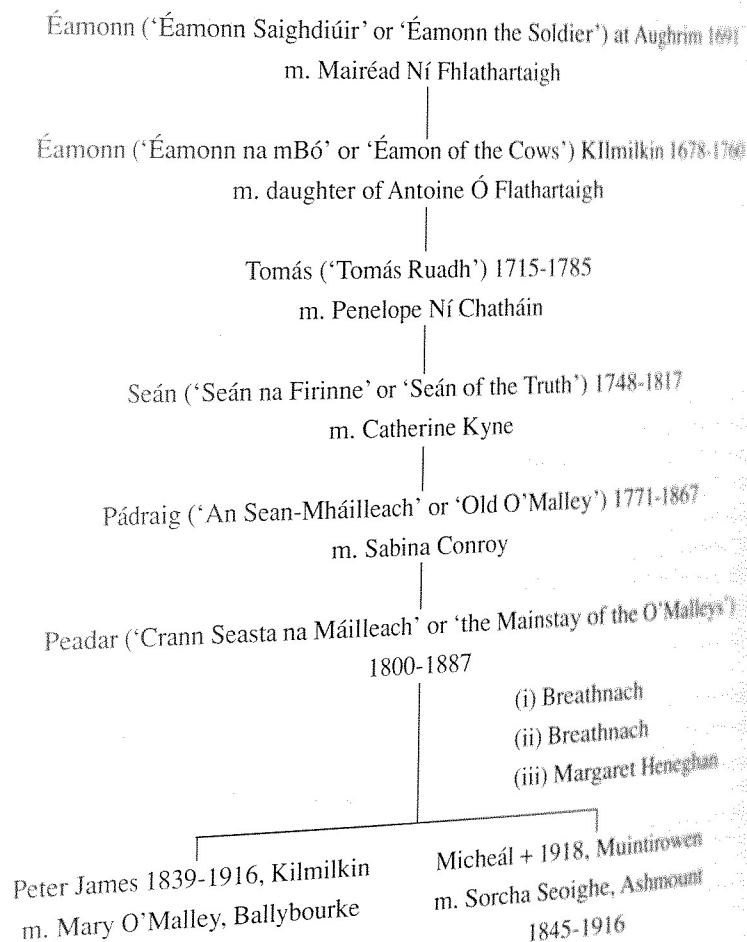
To my sister-in-law Mary O'Malley, San José, goes the credit for the notes and memoirs, from which this chapter is taken, for it was she who in the late 1970s encouraged Conor (my father) to write up memoirs of his Connemara childhood and his days in the British Navy as a ship's doctor in the dying days of World War 1. The notes were on scraps of paper, backs of envelopes and loose remembered pages etc., which were deciphered and typed by the late Miss Betts, Eyre Sq., Galway. Conor said that his father was a silent man; luckily for us, Conor was not. He shared with his children many stories of his childhood, which I enjoyed re-visiting. The Conroys' buried gold, the claddors (silver-shellers) at Peacocke's, the dose of jalap to the sheep shearers etc., etc.

Ann O'Malley-Kelly, Barna 1990

## The O'Malleys of Kilmilkin (Coill Mhíolcon) and Muintirowen (Muintir Eoin)

Maam Valley, Co. Galway

### Abbreviated Family Tree



## HELEN HOOKER O'MALLEY ROELOFS (1905-1993)

*Cormac K. H. O'Malley*

Helen Hooker was born and raised in the United States in Greenwich, Connecticut. At the age of six she modelled her first sculpture. Fascinated by movement she studied the habits of animals and people, and always sought the moment of action in her work. Throughout her school years she persuaded friends and family to pose for her. She had an eye for form and colour, and enjoyed the diversity of textures offered by very different media. In addition to drawing, painting, photography and sculpture, she explored beadwork, carving, pottery and weaving, and created skilful designs for clothes, costumes, gardens, interiors and stage sets.

In 1923, after graduating from Miss Chapin's School in New York City, she became US National Junior Tennis Champion, and, with her partner Helen Wills, National Doubles Tennis Champion. Her mother supported her strong desire to forego her family tradition of a formal college education and educate herself as an artist through travel and study with individual teachers who inspired her.



Helen Hooker O'Malley Roelofs.  
(Photo courtesy Cormac O'Malley)

She studied sculpture with Mahonri Young and William Zorach in New York in the mid-1920s, and with Émile Antoine Bourdelle in Paris. She travelled extensively in Europe, studying wood carving in Oberammergau in Germany, dance in Greece, theatre design in Moscow, and painting with Philinov in St Petersburg.

She eloped to marry freedom-fighter Ernie O'Malley in 1935, established a home in Dublin and shortly

thereafter in County Mayo. They started to collect works by modern Irish artists. When they travelled to England and France, she bought contemporary art there also. She sculpted the people she met in this new Irish world. From its inception in 1943, she was a regular contributor to the sculpture section of the *Irish Exhibition of Living Art*. From 1945 to 1954, as one of the founders of the Players Theatre, Dublin, she pursued her interest in stage and costume design in productions of Irish plays in Dublin, Cork and London. In between farming and her artistic pursuits, she bore three children – Cahal (Hooker), Étaín and Cormac.

In 1950 she separated from Ernie O'Malley, returned to the United States and settled in Colorado. She obtained a divorce in 1952. She collaborated on the design of a new studio, developed gardens, and continued to sculpt, photograph and collect art. In 1956 she married Richard Roelofs Jr and settled in Greenwich, Connecticut where she displayed her now large art collection. After 1960 she spent six months of the year either in Mayo or Dublin. After the death of her second husband in 1971, she returned to her artistic work with renewed energy.

In many ways, during her last twenty years she fulfilled her dreams. She completed over two hundred portraits and figures (some of which are not yet cast), exhibited work in Greenwich, Stamford (Connecticut) and in Birmingham (Alabama), and wrote more than eight thousand poems. With the collaborative sponsorship of the Irish American Cultural Institute, she established the annual O'Malley Art Award and O'Malley Art Collection. Part of this collection is on permanent loan to the Irish Museum of Modern Art, while the remainder is in the care of Mayo County Council. A fine photographer, she donated her 1935-83 Irish photographs to the National Library of Ireland.

Helen Hooker O'Malley Roelofs was a passionate and committed artist who dared to dream. Her works express both her energy and her many artistic gifts. These she has for us to enjoy.

New York, July 1993

**Cormac K. H. O'Malley**, son of Ernie O'Malley, Dublin, and Helen Hooker O'Malley Roelofs, USA, was educated in Ireland, England and the US. He has worked for several international law organisations, but has maintained an interest in a wide spectrum of Irish-related activities. He was elected Clan Chieftain in 1994.

## VALUABLE SCULPTURES ON DISPLAY AT WESTPORT HERITAGE CENTRE

Two valuable and impressive pieces of sculpture by the internationally renowned Helen Hooker O'Malley-Roelofs (1905-1993), wife of Ernie O'Malley, are now on display at the Clew Bay Heritage Centre, Westport Quay.

A fine bronze head of Castlebar native, Ernie O'Malley (1897-1957), the famous freedom fighter and author ("On Another Man's Wounds", etc.), sculpted by Helen Hooker O'Malley-Roelofs in 1933, (prior to her marriage to Ernie O'Malley), has been loaned to the Heritage Centre by her granddaughter, Bergin O'Malley, daughter of Cormac O'Malley, who, along with his brother, Cathal, recently visited the Centre to present the bronze sculpture. Another very artistic piece of sculpture by Helen Hooker O'Malley-Roelofs has also been generously presented to the Heritage Centre by her children. This is a plaster portrait in relief of the late Josie Gill of Islandmore, Clew Bay, a renowned pilot who navigated countless ships in and out the channel in Westport Bay during the era when



Pictured in the Clew Bay Heritage Centre, Westport Quay, for the presentation of the Helen Hooker O'Malley-Roelofs sculptures to the Centre were (l. to r.): Maurice O'Malley (O'Malley Clan Chieftain); Anna Hawkshaw (Gill) and at front, Anne's granddaughter, Alison McNulty; Cathal and Cormac O'Malley (sons of the late Ernie and Ernie O'Malley); Dr. Sheila Mulloy (O'Malley), Guardian Chieftain of the O'Malley Clan; Kitty O'Malley-Harlow; and Ellen Dunlop (former O'Malley Clan Chieftain) 1999 Rally.



*Cormac O'Malley (Chieftain 1994), and Guardian Chieftain Sheila O'Malley Malley with sculpture of Ernie O'Malley and Clan banner in the background. Clew Bay Heritage Centre, 1999 Rally.*

Westport Harbour enjoyed a high level of commercial shopping activity. *Joan Gill of Islandmore* was a lifelong friend of Ernie O'Malley and his family.

In attendance for the presentation ceremony were: Anna Hawkshaw and her son Denis Hawkshaw (accompanied by his wife, Sharon and their daughter, Hannah); Anna's daughter, Pauline McNulty (accompanied by her daughter, Alison); Anna's sister, Joan Driscoll (accompanied by her daughter, Gillian Bachelor); and the two sons of the late Una Gill-Boylan, John and Paul Boylan.

Mr Jarlath Duffy, of the Clew Bay Heritage Centre at Westport Quay, who accepted the two pieces of sculpture on behalf of the Centre, expressed sincere thanks to the O'Malley family for their very thoughtful and generous gesture. The two sculptures, he said, would be a wonderful addition to the many treasures on display in the Centre.

*Mayo News, 22 September 1998*

## ASPECTS OF IRISH HIGH CROSSES

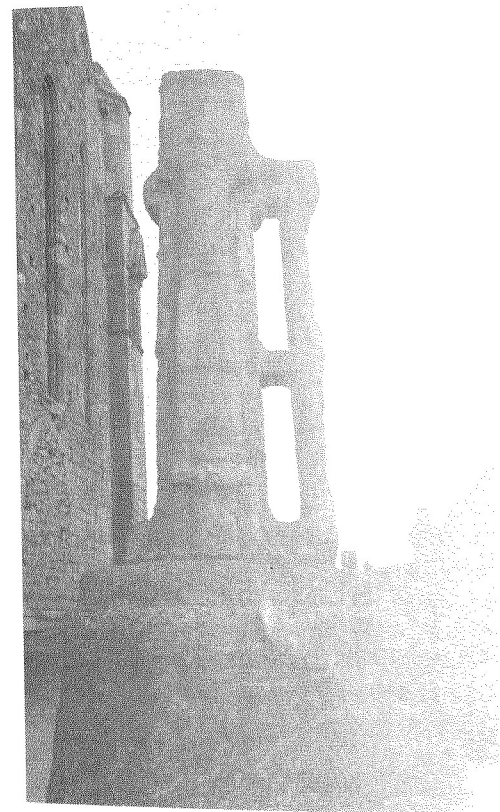
*Eileen O'Malley*

The Early Medieval period is one of the most artistically rich in Irish history. The Ardagh Chalice and the Book of Kells can justifiably be ranked among the greatest artistic achievements of the period, in both a domestic and international capacity. When one is considering these, and other masterpieces of metalwork and manuscript illumination, one must also include in the same breath the great stone crosses.

Often referred to as Stone Crosses, these freestanding monuments are among the most attractive and skillful pieces of sculpture to survive from this time. During the so-called 'Dark Ages' the art of stone carving does not appear to have been widely practised on the Continent of Europe. This brightens even further the importance of the Irish Crosses.

In fact the Irish High Crosses are hugely important for understanding the use of Christian themes in stone prior to the origin of Romanesque art, and as such, act as a bridge between the carved Christian sarcophagi of the late Roman period and the capitals and tympana of the Romanesque.

It is acknowledged that the Irish High Crosses were erected during two separate periods. The majority (the group that will be mainly referred to in this discussion) date mainly to the ninth century. However, it is worth noting that another period of cross building occurred in the twelfth century. This may well reflect an element of reviving past glories. However, this second phase shows a move away from the rich engravings of biblical themes. Instead, they now placed



*St. Patrick's Cross, 12th Century, Rock of Cashel.*

less emphasis on sculptural content. The main focus was on just two figures – firstly, that of Christ, now shown more triumphant rather than suffering. And on the opposite face one now finds the figure of an Abbott or Bishop. These characters are most likely representations of the monastery's founder.

The original High Crosses were products of the early Irish monasteries, which sprouted up all over Ireland during this period. These monasteries, especially the larger ones acted as cultural centres. From these came the illuminated manuscripts and intricate metalwork. They were also places of learning; here the monks studied the scriptures, which is evident in the decoration of later crosses known as the Scripture Group. Many of these illustrate quite clearly stories from both the Old and New Testaments. Indeed this is one of the main characteristics of the Irish crosses. Some English High Crosses may predate the Irish examples and may be considered the inspiration behind them. However the Irish, once they adopted the basic idea, retained the shape but added a greater wealth of biblical scenes.

It would appear, however, that the Irish had a tradition of making crosses. Though none of these survive one can assume that crosses must have once been made in wood. Even more likely is that they were made in metal as the early examples of stone crosses exhibit design elements very similar to those found in metalwork. This can be seen in the Ahenny group of crosses from Co. Tipperary. These are decorated with intricately carved geometrical and zoomorphic shapes which are extremely similar to bronze work of the period.

Although abstract designs are found on the early crosses there is also figurative representation. The use of abstract design was already long established in Irish art, dating back to Pagan Celtic times. As a result Celtic craftsmen and artists had developed stylised representations of the human figure. However, on the High Crosses there is a change towards a more naturalistic representation. The explanation scholars have put forward on this is that Rome was the ultimate source of inspiration, though it is recognised that it is unlikely that it came directly from Rome but probably filtered from Europe via Charlemagne and his sons. This theory is largely based on the fact that so many of the figurative compositions on the Irish crosses have many similarities to those depicted on frescoes found in Continental Europe.

While it may seem that the crosses acted fundamentally as reminders of the Crucifixion, they also had many other functions some even outside of a strictly religious context. It is largely accepted by archaeologists and historians that they also held the role of boundary markers, defining the perimeters of the ecclesiastical settlement. Also due to their very size (the cross at Moone, Co. Kildare is over 6 metres high), it is probably that they acted as beacons, alerting travellers to the presence of the monastery, though it is true to say their primary function was that of an educational tool. Just as the frescoes of Continental churches taught the illiterate laity the ways of the scriptures, it is probably quite true to say that the Irish crosses fulfilled much the same role. The panels of high relief sculpture

illustrating stories from the Bible are inter-linked and can be read in succession in much the same way as modern cartoon strips.

The central theme of most of the later scripture crosses is the Crucifixion, which is placed at the centre of the west face of the cross. On the opposite side, the east face, the Last Judgment is usually placed. This acted as a reminder to people of what could be enjoyed by the Christian who led a good life. Very often the remainder of the scenes on the crosses depict events which led towards either the Crucifixion or the Last Judgment. However, some of the very ornate crosses seem to centre on specific themes. Muiredach's cross at Monasterboice, one of the most famous examples, illustrates Christ's power, showing him as being Lord of both heaven and earth. The cross at Kells, although now broken, centred on the importance of baptism.

The High Crosses were probably the only visual aid for the masses. As the great illuminated manuscripts were more than likely the sole reserve of the monks, the very nature of the crosses must have helped greatly in educating the illiterate. It has often been put forward by scholars that the crosses may very well have been painted, thus heightening their attraction and effect. However, it must be noted that no evidence for this has survived in the archaeological record, though the concept would be very much in keeping with the frescoes of Continental Europe, which are so often considered a parallel for the great stone crosses.

The importance of the cross as the ultimate Christian symbol has clearly lasted the test of time. It has already been stated that a resurgence occurred in the twelfth century, though this was short-lived, as that century also marks the arrival of the Normans and with them the Cistercians and many other European Orders, thus ceasing the production of the true Irish Monastic High Crosses. However, the tradition did continue in the form of Market Crosses during the later Middle Ages. Even up to the nineteenth century with a growth in nationalism, a trend developed for funerary crosses in the ancient style, a practice continued to the present day. This is a remarkable survival for a style that was first mentioned in the ancient Annals in the year 957 A.D.

Eileen O'Malley is from Limerick and is the youngest daughter of past chieftain Don O'Malley. She graduated in 1998 with an honours degree in Archaeology and History of Art from University College Dublin. She is a past Auditor of the UCD Archaeological Society. Her postgraduate study was in Public Relations. She now lives in Dublin where she works in Public Relations.



Eileen O'Malley, daughter of former Chieftain, Don O'Malley.

# THE 'WHY?' OF THE ANNUAL CLAN GATHERING

By Gerry O'Malley

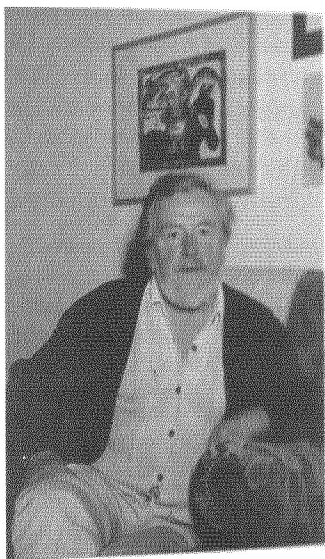
Life must be lived forward but can only be understood backwards. We explore the past in order to illuminate the future. The philosopher, Heinrich Heine, said 'Under every tombstone lies the history of the world.'

The Clan Rally celebrates the Clan system which died out in the seventeenth century, but which seems to have been particularly well suited to the Irish character and temperament, certainly more so than the Anglo-Norman feudal system.

## Ireland's Golden Age

The beginning of the Clan system was also the beginning of Ireland's Golden Age (the eighth century A.D.). A cultural unity existed here that was all the more remarkable because of the absence of a political unity. The Men of Art (Aosdána) constituted the most important element in early Irish society. They could travel freely throughout the country. They were originally druids.

With the coming of Christianity the druids as such disappeared. The poets gave up their pagan and magical functions, but otherwise they continued to enjoy the full privileges of their predecessors. The Bardic Schools, in which pupils had to learn prodigious amounts of poetry by heart, continued up to the seventeenth century. Ireland in the Middle Ages was in a unique position in that learning and literacy were not the sole preserve of the Christian clergy. The poets were the true bearers of the ancient Celtic tradition. It is no accident, then, that Ireland was the first nation north of the Alps to produce a whole body of literature in her own speech.



Gerry O'Malley

The Irish were the first people north of the Alps to use surnames (10th century). Family names are still important. The name over the door is likely to be 'J. J. Murphy & Son' than 'The Pig & Whistle'.

The Brehon Laws and the Clan system were the mainstays of Ireland's Golden Age. The Brehons (Judges) were men learned in the law which enshrined a very old Indo-European social system. The Brehon Law has its closest parallel in traditional Hindu law.

## Irish Society

Irish society at that time was rigidly stratified. There were three classes: workmen, freemen and nobles. Rank depended on wealth as well as on lineage. Wealth was also a qualification. Irish law had a maxim 'A man is better than his money.'

An elaborate interplay of patronage and loyalty, along with fosterage, created a mutual responsibility which, in small rural communities, ensured a measure of law and order in a society which had no police force. The state was not involved in lawsuits. It was a very personal way of life which seemed to suit the Celtic temperament.

## Life Under the Brehon Laws

Some aspects of Irish society at the time:

- Fosterage of children (usually returned to their parents at the marriage - 14 for girls and 17 for boys).
- Distrain of cattle to recover damages.
- Ritual fasting to assert one's rights (Cf. Gandhi).
- Divorce (legal in Ireland until the twelfth century).
- Hospitality (whoever comes to the door must be fed and cared for with no questions asked).

The pivotal unit of society was the joint family (*fine*) which was responsible for the misdeeds of its members. The worst kind of crime was the killing of one's own kin to gain the chieftainship. The election of the *Tánaiste* during the lifetime of the chief was a countermeasure.

## The English

Gaelic resistance to English domination was based on Chieftainship and Tanistry. The Irish dynasty was virtually unkillable. Once when Piers Bermingham fought with his neighbours, the O'Connors of Offaly, he had the chief, his two brothers and twenty-nine of his leading men killed at a banquet to which he had invited them. But because eligibility for the chieftainship went to four degrees of kinship, there were sufficient O'Connors left for the sept to survive. Incidentally, for his perfidy, Bermingham got £100 reward from the Dublin government and a stirring ballad, in English, praised his bravery as a 'hunter-out of the Irish'. In the eyes of the law, Irish Chieftains were felons and outlaws.

So, the English wanted desperately to smash the Brehon Laws and the rule of Tanistry. The Statutes of Kilkenny (1366) stated that 'all mere Irish living under Brehon Laws were in servile condition.' In the fourteenth century stringent laws were enacted by which the English were forbidden to 'practise fosterage, marriage with Irish, use Brehon Laws or entertain Irish minstrels, poets and storytellers'.

When Richard II came (in 1395) a number of chiefs made submission to him 'except O'Donnell and the barbarous chieftains of the Connaught seaboard'. Under Henry VIII (1491-1547) further efforts were made to suppress Brehon Law and the Bards. The Irish were 'enemies of the crown' and any land belonging to a person with an Irish name was forfeit.

## The Annals of 1584

'All Erin was occupied by the foreigners this year, so that they put back the honour and nobility of the men of Erin.'

## The Annals of Loch Cé

'It is impossible to count, or reckon, or relate all the injuries and oppression the foreigners committed upon the Clans of Connaught.'

The year 1584, incidentally, saw the arrival of the most-hated of the governors of Connacht, Sir Richard Bingham. He was the particular *bête noir* of one Granuaile and once he had his brother, John, walk that lady through the streets of Galway in chains, condemned to die on a gallows which he had erected for that purpose. She was saved by the intervention of her son, Theobald, and Bingham himself was later recalled in disgrace.

After Kinsale (1601) the Irish system of land tenure was replaced by landlordism and the Irish laws of Chieftainship and Tanistry were abolished.

## No Titles

A small example of life under the Clan system – no titles were used in ordinary conversation. The lowliest field worker addressed his chief by his first name. No Mister, no Sir, no Esquire, no bending of the knee, no forelock-tugging . . . that all came later when Ireland lost its Clan system, and its honour.

It would be foolish to ignore the benefits we have had from being a colonised country. We have, for instance, an architectural heritage from that time that is a continual joy. Many people would, however, hold that the price was too high and that in Ireland, as in every other part of the globe, the process of colonisation was bad for the soul of the colonised. But more's nothing can be done about that. The past cannot be changed. What can be done . . . and what *is* done at every Clan Rally . . . is that our pre-colonial past is celebrated.

## Irish Culture

The collapse of the Clan system is associated with the breakdown of traditional Irish culture. I won't give you chapters and verse for this; my feeling for it is more a gut feeling than anything emanating from scientific research (more hysterical than historical, you might say). It was a tragedy which reduced a once-great nation to bondage. But that, of course, was the whole idea.

In spite of the destruction of Ireland's politics and civilization and the ruination of her institutions, her scholars fought a tremendous rearguard action in seeking to preserve a priceless heritage from oblivion. It's only fair that we should do whatever we can to continue that endeavour.

## 'A Tribe of Brotherly Affection and of Friendship'

There is one quotation I particularly like and that is from the fourteenth century poet who described the O'Malleys as 'a tribe of brotherly affection and of friendship' more than a hundred years before Columbus set sail for America. And he wasn't even an O'Malley poet – Seán Ó Dubhagáin was bard to the O'Kellys.

'A tribe of brotherly affection and of friendship'. This means, among other things, that our meeting just cannot be self-serving, inward-looking or vainglorious. There is no shield of exclusion to people outside the Clan, but,

rather, a most warm and heartfelt welcome to all our friends.

And elitist? Well, hardly. A few years ago at a Rally I went around with a notebook and wrote down all the names people had on their respective family trees. Practically every name in the phonebook was there. To misquote Lenin slightly: 'everyone is connected to everyone else'. Celebrate one Clan and you celebrate all Clans.

### Irish Identity

As we move forever closer to our larger European inheritance Irish identity is more than ever at risk. It was said recently that foreign students attending Irish summer schools will ultimately know more of the island's history and culture than their Irish counterparts.

Whimsical? That's another charge often levelled at the Clan Rallies. From the first specific aim of the Clan Association formed in 1949, namely, to restore Carrigahowley Castle, to the foundation and operation of the Granuaile Trust, the on-the-ground activities of the Clan have been far from whimsical.

But by far the most important aspect of the annual jamboree is the inherent sense of an extended family getting together. This is enjoyable in itself and one needn't go any further. But there is another dimension, best described by Hubert Butler:

The extended family can be a blueprint for what life might one day be like. Perhaps, some generations or centuries from now, groups of people linked together as kinsmen and kinswomen may feel a special responsibility for each other based on a closer knowledge and affection than is possible in our faceless, centralised society.

In an increasingly complicated life, the simple things – meeting, talking informally – not only remain the same but increase in importance.

**Gerry O'Malley**, born in Rathdowney, Co. Laois, is one of the thirteen children of John O'Malley, Clare Island, and Ellen Whelan, Rathdowney. He graduated in engineering from UCD in 1953, and worked for some years in Ireland and Sweden. A period of world travel was succeeded by ten years spent writing in North Mayo. He has had plays and stories broadcast on RTÉ and BBC, and is a regular contributor to 'Sunday Miscellany', the popular RTÉ programme. Married to Betty Rock, he now lives near Bray, Co. Wicklow. He was elected Clan Chieftain in 1972 and *Guardian Chieftain* in 1991.

## EIGHTY YEARS YOUNG

*Ward O'Malley, who must be the oldest player in Ireland, tells Caroline Stern about his long polo career<sup>1</sup>*

There is an old saying that the only crime in Ireland is to be dull. The origins of this are unknown, but it has certainly never been applied to Ward O'Malley. As his eightieth birthday falls at the end of the polo season, the American expatriate must be one of the HPA's most active seniors.

Anyone at Whitfield Court Polo Club can vouch for his fearless play, which makes men fifty years his junior think twice about contesting the line. He served under General Patton, which may have influenced his umpiring, he dances exhaustively at polo balls, and recently appeared on Irish television, thundering past a nervous presenter sent to try out the game.

His polo career is long and chequered, and unprecedented in the O'Malley family. 'My mother grew up in Greenwich Village, New York, and passed on her love of riding to me. She began riding at finishing school. On the first day, she read that only one bath per girl per week was allowed, but if you took riding lessons, you were allowed an extra bath – which made sense.



*Ward O'Malley taking a Tipperary bank.*

<sup>1</sup> From *PO International*, Autumn 1998. Ward O'Malley was O'Malley Clan Chieftain 1973-4.

My father was a friend of Bill Cody, born before the Battle of Little Big Horn. If you didn't know how to ride in those days, you walked, but he wasn't interested in horses. I read about the famous players at Long Island, including the Prince of Wales, whom my mother thought the most handsome man ever. I had sailing, tennis and skiing, so it never entered my head to play polo.

My mother wanted me to be a member of the Establishment, so she sent me off to Princeton. On my first day, I cycled to the Armoury to join the ROTC, because you could ride their artillery horses if you joined up. Cars weren't allowed at Princeton then, to stop the rich guys cruising around in Cadillacs. The sergeant told me to sign the list. Next to it was another list: 'Anyone interested in playing polo, sign here.' Times were tough in the 1930s, and I asked how much. "It's free", he said, so I put my name on the polo list, which gave me two years' indoor polo.

I studied French literature because I spoke French, although I had little interest in Racine's poetry. I was quite able to read Racine, if I chose, but I didn't choose, so I was eventually asked to leave.

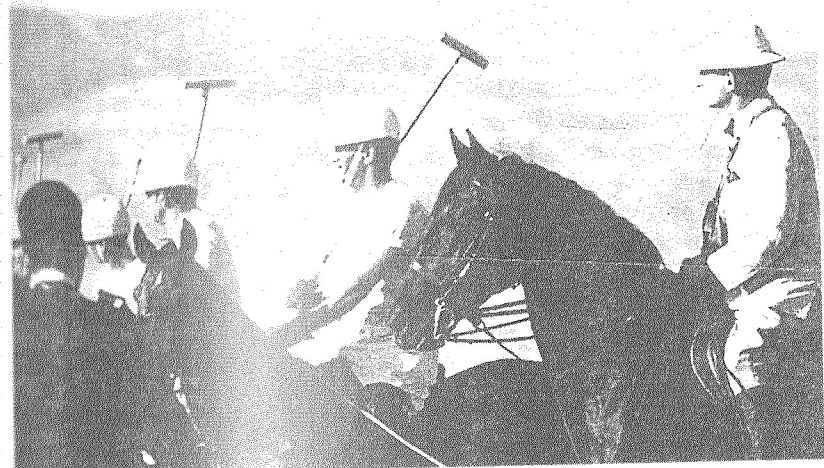
Then I went to Colorado School of Mines, dreaming of the Andes, Indians, gold mines, riding mules up mountains and cowboys, which seemed more interesting than going to Wall Street and making a million. People like my Boston fellow-students just didn't go to mining school, so no one there rode, let alone played polo.

Once there, I gave up drinking beer six nights a week and only drank beer one night a week, so I graduated. The day I left college I went into the army. Roosevelt had promised in three successive elections that America's sons would not have to go to war, but he turned out to be a liar.

Describing his army career as 'innocuous', Ward served under General Patton, another polo enthusiast. 'They say he turned up at his first posting with two carloads of polo ponies, saying his father would pay for their keep.

At induction camp in Indio, he used to stand us all on a boiling hot parade ground to lecture us every Saturday. We were in the Tank Corps, but he wore polished riding boots, silver spurs and ivory-handled six shooters. He had his sword made six inches longer than everyone else's, and a customised uniform. He had a tremendous chest and a bit of a belly, but he looked like Superman with the stars on his shoulders shining in the sun.

One speech I remember was: "Men! Look at the man on your left and the man on your right. One of you will not come back from war alive. That doesn't upset me. What will upset me is if the one who doesn't come back hasn't killed at least six of the enemy."



*O'Malley (right) on Suleyman, beneath the Elburz Mountains.*

Polo unexpectedly re-entered Ward's life in 1962. 'After the war, I still dreamed of the Andes, so I went gold-mining in Peru, before studying petrol geology.

When I was in Tehran, the British polo team ran short of players, and the captain asked me to play. You had to be on a team in order to play, and the Americans didn't have one. I restarted my polo the same year I got married, so I guess it was a good year.'

Iranian polo was apparently in a league of its own, as he recalls: 'The Iranian army ran the polo in Tehran. You had to buy a horse in order to play, so you went to the poorest part of town, where they used them as cart horses. You paid £30 for them and, if they were no good, you sold them to the next man for £20. They were Turkoman crosses, with a little Arab, and resembled small racehorses.

There was an officers' team, and an NCO's team, but it was neither a popular nor a fashionable sport, although a few landowners' sons played. Their fathers didn't - you didn't make points socially playing there, and I guess it didn't have enough status for them.

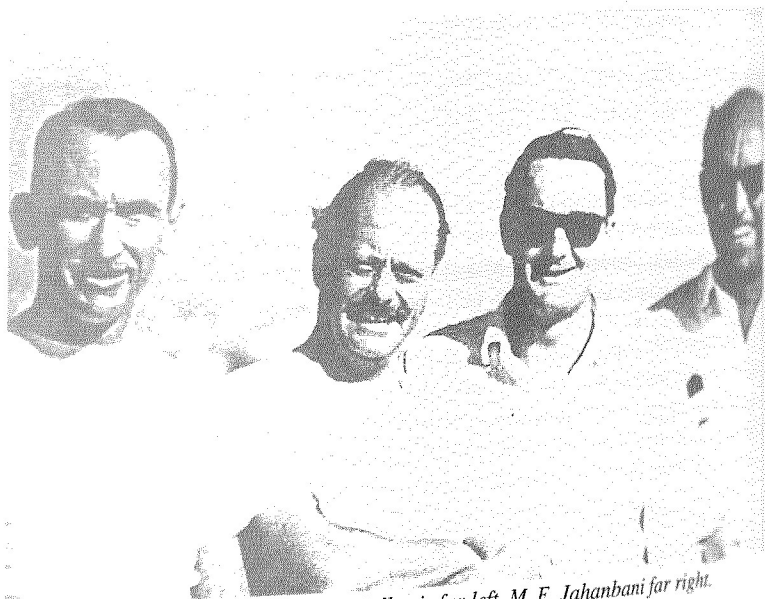
Nobody had a handicap, because all the Iranians were great ball chasers and not team players. It was considered impolite to ride off or hook, particularly if you were against a general's son. Everybody wanted a high handicap, but they

would all have had low ones. Thus nobody had a handicap, so as not to offend anyone's feelings. Polo made my ten years in the middle east much more interesting, because my wife and I met locals, not just expats.'

Before Ward left Iran in 1966 he saw a notice saying 'Come hunting in Ireland'. 'So I did just that, instead of retiring to Florida like all the other old Americans. I moved to Co. Tipperary in 1969 because, when I was a boy, I read Charles Lever's novel *Charles O'Malley, the Irish Dragoon*. It was about Co. Galway, not Tipp, but what the hell?'

Six years ago Ward was out hunting when a friend mentioned that he played polo at Whitfield Court, Major Hugh Dawnay's club near Waterford.

'I knew there was a polo school there but I didn't want lessons. It had never occurred to me that there was a club and polo fields as well.' Ward now plays twelve chukkas a week at Whitfield, and intends to continue. 'After the age of seventy-five, shortness of breath becomes a problem – but, God willing, I may be good for a couple of more years.'



British team in Iran, 1963. Ward O'Malley is far left, M. E. Jahanbani far right.

## SIR OWEN O'MALLEY AND ANN BRIDGE

*Benita Stoney*

Sir Owen O'Malley and his wife, the novelist Ann Bridge, were two extraordinary, vivid, original characters, whose richly-textured lives touched a great many events and people during one of the most interesting periods of the twentieth century. Owen was born in England in 1887. He was the second son of Sir Edward Loughlin O'Malley later Chief Judge of His Majesty's Supreme Consular Court for the Ottoman Empire, and Winifred, née Hardcastle, daughter of Joseph Hardcastle, MP for Colchester. Owen was severely damaged by the abuse he suffered as a child at the hands of his ferocious mother, treatment that sowed 'dragon's teeth' in him that all through his life sprang up like armed men to attack him, his family, and anyone who dealt with him. He grew up to be a man of subtle, arrogant intelligence, disturbing charm, and an unrecognised psychopathically disordered personality. A deadly mix.

Shortly after joining the Foreign Office Owen met and fell headlong for Mary Dolling Sanders. She was tall, athletic, headstrong, prone to gaffes, and quite unable to deal with the effect of her swift and vital beauty on the men who fell at her feet. She was the seventh child of Marie Louise Day, from New Orleans, with a New England background, and James Harris Sanders, a fabulously rich English businessman who had made his fortune in railways, who was 'the kind of father and husband whose awfulness it was not proper in those days to admit'. She had grown up in a rich, comfortable, stuffy world, as the spoilt, loved, highly-educated baby of the family. She excelled as a mountaineer during a period renowned in the history of climbing, had climbed extensively in the Alps, pioneered a new route up the Zermatt Weisshorn, and made lifelong friends with George Mallory, who shared her mystical, quasi-religious attitude to the mountains.

In 1922 the Sander family fortunes had crashed. James Sanders, a deeply religious man, was found to have been taking advice by sticking pins at random into the bible. She took a job with the Charity Organisation Society, a reactionary philanthropic body. Through her work there, she met William Beveridge, who proposed to her. Too late; she had already, through other C.O.S. friends, opened the door to calamity, and Owen O'Malley had walked in.

They were married in 1913, and were happy for three days. They remained

married for sixty searingly unhappy years. He was incapable of forming a lasting adult relationship, and her personality was combative and powerful, so they both suffered, but she always loved him, and she set her hand to her marriage as best she could, wanting to do her job well, to be a good wife and mother.

In 1919 they moved into Bridge End, in Ockham in Surrey, deeply rural and only twenty miles from London, where they kept chickens, pigs, and bees, on a scale that was regarded by their social peers as unconventional, and which made a real contribution to the family finances, while Owen commuted daily to the Foreign Office. They had three children, Jane (1914), Patrick (1918), and Kate (1921). All three children were badly affected in very different ways by their parents' difficult and scary temperaments, his inability in relationships, the blundering emotional ineptitude of her storm-force personality, and the hostile emptiness at the heart of the marriage. Marriage to Owen O'Malley had come to mean living in a burnt-out, pathless place, and in 1922 Mary Anne came to the end of her great strength and had a breakdown.

In 1924 George Mallory vanished into legend within sight of the summit of Everest, and his widow asked Mary Anne to write his biography. His friends objected, saying a man must do it, and proposed another old friend of Mallory's, David Pye, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and Lecturer in Engineering. He took it on reluctantly, having to be persuaded into it by Mary Anne, who could see that it was 'psychologically exciting'. *George Leigh Mallory: A Memoir* by David Pye was published by OUP in 1927. Mary Anne helped him extensively, and all the most admired sections turn out to be hers. There is a possibility at this point that she considered divorce, but turned down the idea, because it would have ruined Owen's career.

At the end of 1925 Owen was posted to China. It was a most unwelcome appointment. Owen had joined the Foreign Office in 1911, when it was still distinct from the Diplomatic Service, had expected to spend his working life in London, and now that the two services were amalgamated, did not in the least wish to go abroad. China was in convulsions. The last Emperor had recently fled the courts of the Forbidden City, and the vacuum was filled with warring warlords. Anti-foreigner feeling was running high. In the Legation Quarter of Peking the Diplomatic community continued on its sublime way, with receptions and memoranda, polo, racing, and love affairs. China was dangerous and beautiful, and Mary Anne responded deeply to its intoxicating stimulus. She and Owen were, however, novice diplomats, and a combination of her runaway tongue and his arrogant attitude resulted in the Opposition at home 'twisting the Prime Minister's tail' over China policy, and he was nearly recalled. Early in 1927 Owen became the focus of world attention when he was despatched to Hankow

after the seizure of the British Concession. His negotiated settlement of this affront to British prestige disgusted the China hands, but won him showers of praise in London; he was thanked by the House of Commons, and decorated. His career was made, could he but refrain from cutting his own throat. His fall from grace came in 1928, shortly after his return from China, in the 'Francs Case', when he was wrongly accused of inappropriate currency speculation, and was given 'permission to resign'.

For the second time in her life Mary Anne was faced with the loss of everything. With nothing to lose, she sailed into Whitehall, and turned Owen's executioner, the formidable and powerful civil servant Warren Fisher, completely upside-down. With just enough might on her side, a command of argument that would have made her a wonderful barrister, the ruthless employment of her dazzle on a notoriously unstable and susceptible member of the opposite sex, and a sheer enjoyment of the fight she won Fisher over. It was the first and fiercest battle of a Byzantine campaign that eventually led to Owen's reinstatement, though with severe penalties.

Mary Anne had been tempered in the furnace of a loveless marriage, enormously stimulated by China, and now her confidence was boosted by her success in the Francs Case. She began her first novel, *Peking Picnic*. Foreign Office wives who wrote were frowned on, so she had to take a pseudonym, Ann Bridges. *Peking Picnic* was an instant, spectacular, triumph. It beat 750 other novels to win the prestigious, and rich, Atlantic Monthly prize and rocketed Bridge to worldwide fame. From now on she was the main breadwinner of the family; in some years her earnings outstripped her husband's salary tenfold.

She won critical acclaim too, and *Peking Picnic* was compared with *Passage to India*. As her characters explore and experience the nature of love and sorrow, their inner journeys are charted and changed by the beautifully realised landscape of North China. She followed up her success with another winner, *The Ginger Griffin*, also set in China, amongst the racing ponies which had been such a feature of diplomatic life in Peking. Next came *Illyrian Spring* which deals perceptively and delicately with the love of an older woman for a very much younger man, for whom there was a model in Bridge's own life, and with the complex relationship between mothers and daughters – the wise, light touch of her heroine is at painful variance with Bridge's mishandling of her own children. The setting is the coast of Dalmatia, which was very little known at the time, and *Illyrian Spring* sparked off a tourist boom there.

In *Enchanter's Nightshade*, set in Italy, Bridge goes back thirty years to the time of her girlhood, when the permafrost of Victorian values and mores was

breaking up, but young English girls were still kept in a state of dangerous ignorance about themselves. Her evocation of a vanished way of life even impressed Italians. *Enchanter's Nightshade* is a sustained, mature, achievement, with a broad range of characters, but it lacks the spontaneity and freshness of the earlier books.

Owen's career resumed a year after the Francs Case, and though he never felt quite the same again about the Foreign Office (nor, arguably, about his wife), he has been called 'one of the most interesting officials of the Foreign Office of the inter-war period'. He became a thorn in the side of that Office, enjoying his maverick status, and resisting several attempts to post him abroad. In 1937 he went as Minister (nowadays this would be Ambassador) to Mexico. Bridge shouldered most of the expense, but did not go with him; relations between them were at a very low ebb, and he probably did not want the lady novelist on his first major posting hogging the scene, as she always did. Very soon he was at the centre of the storm over Mexican expropriation of British oil interests. As a result of his provocative stance (approved by London), Mexico broke off diplomatic relations, and he returned thankfully to England. He was chargé d'affaires in Spain from 1938 to 1939. The Civil War was raging, and he and Bridge witnessed appalling sights after the fall of Barcelona.

She was now writing *Four-Part Setting*, which came out in 1939. It looks back to the China of a decade earlier, and examines the plight of a young woman whose marriage has broken down, who is offered the possibility of happiness with another man, but who rejects it because a divorce would ruin her husband's career. The moral ending pleased no one, except perhaps the Mother's Union. *Four-Part Setting* is interesting from a biographical point of view because it is as close as Bridge ever comes in print to analysing her own marriage, and why it went so wrong. She is very hard on the young woman, and in the husband is a chilly portrait of Owen.

Had she never written another word, her literary reputation would have been assured. She spoke for the 1930s, but the 'accents of the breaking heart', which she reproduced with perfect pitch, were always carefully modulated within the bounds of convention, tradition, and the established order. From this point, Bridge's work begins increasingly to look backwards.

In the spring of 1939 Owen was appointed Minister to Budapest. Bridge joined him early in 1940, and together, with their bags half-packed, they watched the Nazi noose tighten around Hungary. Bridge's major achievement while in Budapest was the organisation of Red Cross food and clothing parcels for the 33,000 prisoners of war captured at Dunkirk in May 1940, and she mounted a

spirited campaign against the sins of omission of the British Red Cross 'as sanguinary as its name'. In the summer of 1940 she went to Turkey to buy supplies for the prisoners, and met and stayed with a group of people, men and women, who had been close to Kemal Atatürk when he was getting his huge social revolution under way. Listening to the accounts of the women, who had played a heroic part, Bridge 'realized that this was one of the great stories of the world, and decided that, come hell and high water', she would tell it. It was many years before she could.

As one country after another fell before the Nazis, Owen was rapidly becoming the last practising diplomat in Central Europe. He was kept in Budapest because he was a useful source of information, and because it was hoped he could persuade the Regent, Admiral Horthy, to form a government in exile. Britain finally severed diplomatic relations with Hungary in April 1941. To get home, the O'Malleys had to go all the way around the world, via the 'spiritual gas-chamber' of Soviet Russia, where communist bureaucratic malevolence met its match in O'Malley argumentativeness, and via the hedonism of a United States largely indifferent to the war in Europe, though Pearl Harbor soon changed that. Owen returned to England as soon as he could, but Bridge stayed on in America for a year and a day, writing and lecturing, and drinking in profound misgivings about the American way of life.

*Frontier Passage* came out in 1942. It was the first of her 'reportage' novels, in which she set a tale of suspense and romance against real-life events, this time, the fall of Barcelona. It is slight, by comparison with her previous books, and shows the strain of having been written under wartime, nomadic, conditions. She had to rewrite it twice, once to suit Owen and once to suit the Foreign Office, before it was deemed politically innocuous enough to be suitable for publication.

Bridge returned to Europe in 1942, and spent most of the rest of the war in Scotland, staying with friends in large country houses, plagued by illness (perhaps the strains of some of the burdens that she was carrying were beginning to tell on her), and writing *Singing Waters*. In this extraordinary book she attacks everything that she dislikes about the American way of life; being half American, she felt she had a licence to criticise. She holds up for virtuous contrast the life and traditional ways of the inhabitants of High Albania, which she had visited in 1936. Her American publisher, Alfred McIntyre of Little, Brown, refused to publish *Singing Waters* as it stood. Bridge refused to change a word, and went elsewhere. After an agonising wait, it was taken on by Macmillan Company of New York, became a 'Choice' of the Literary Guide of America, which meant a guaranteed edition of over half a million copies and £90,000 split fifty-fifty between author and publisher.

From 1943 to 1945 Owen, now Sir Owen, was in London as Ambassador to the Polish Government in exile. He became one of the few champions of the Poles in London, and he refused to condone Churchill's and Eden's appeasement of Stalin. Owen's 'brilliant, unorthodox and disquieting' despatch on the grisly finds at Katyn Wood confirmed Soviet responsibility for the massacre of over 10,000 of the most distinguished men in Poland. The Allies needed Stalin, so for reasons of political expediency the British Government chose not to recognise Soviet guilt and treated Owen's despatch on the mass graves and the cover-up as political dynamite; a second despatch was so 'devastatingly convincing' that Churchill instructed that it should be circulated 'to the War Cabinet Ministers only, in a box, from hand to hand'. It was shown to Roosevelt, but not apparently given to him, because the English feared American leaks to the press.

His final posting, 1945-7, was to Portugal, but his heart was not in it; he wanted to restore his family to its Irish roots, and he was dreaming of retirement in County Mayo. Before the war he had bought Rossyvera, on the shores of Clew Bay, and had set about rebuilding it on a princely scale, badgering Bridge for money. Eventually the house gobbled up most of the *Singing Waters* bonanza.

Her next book, *And Then You Came*, was a foray into the supernatural, a subject which always interested her, combined with her archaeological interests. It is set in Scotland, in which the atmosphere of 1930s houseparties is tragically shattered by the advent of the legendary Irish beauty, *Deirdre*, and the sons of *Usnagh*. It is a 'fun' book, but has links with *Singing Waters* in what it says about a traditional, feudal way of life. The uncanny is handled very well, and the archaic slips in and out of the modern like mountains in and out of mist. It may be that this calamitous intrusion of the Irish into her beloved Scottish world reflected Bridge's apprehension about the encroachment of Ireland into her own life. She did not look forward with much joy to the prospect of living in the West of Ireland.

Owen, on the other hand, was in the early years of his retirement perhaps at his happiest, living in the place that he had created 'at the end of the world', and where his family had a long and interesting past. The property of Rossyvera also included the stout little fifteenth-century tower of Carraig an Chabhlaigh, or Carrigahowley, in English, Rockfleet, which, more than Clare Island or any other O'Malley castle, was locally regarded as the home of Gráinne Ní Mháille, from whom Owen descended through a labyrinth of Bourkes, Brownes and Berminghams: his great-great-grandfather, George O'Malley of Snugborough, had married Granuaile's great-great-granddaughter, Margery Bermingham. He renamed Rossyvera Rockfleet, and instigated the restoration of the castle. It was completed in 1953, paid for by a grant from the Department of Public Works supplemented by generous subscriptions from the O'Malley Clan, whose

imagination had been fired by the idea. Owen did not attend the formal opening on 13 September: possibly he expected to be the first of the annually-elected chieftains, but the clan chose not to honour him, and elected John J. O'Malley. Possibly he had quarrelled with the church; obscure letters to Bridge suggest this. She was left to put a good face on his absence. She gave a stagey and condescending address of welcome, and it has never been forgotten that she charged for car parking.

There was no retirement for Bridge; they now depended more than ever on the money that her books brought in. *The Selective Traveller in Portugal* (1949) with Susan Lowndes Marques did not bring in much; *The House at Kilmartin* (1951), a novel for children based on her childhood holidays in Scotland was more trouble than it was worth. Finally, however, she got around to the Turkish novel, *The Dark Moment*, Kemal Ataturk's social revolution seen from the woman's point of view. This was a splendid achievement. Her research was meticulous. She talked to eyewitnesses, went to Turkey and travelled the 'Road of the Revolution'. Her imagination was fired by the long hard road that sheltered women had had to travel, bound by their loyalty to their husbands. Her portrait of Ataturk was so convincing, though she had never met him, that it was rumoured she had had an affair with him.

She followed it with a lighter 'modern-historical', *A Place to Stand* (1953), set in Budapest in the spring of 1941, and based on her daughter Kate's activities with the Polish Underground. Then came the autobiographical *Portrait of My Mother* (1955). Owen had published his memoirs as *The Phantom Caravan* the previous year.

A winter holiday in Morocco stimulated Bridge, at the age of sixty-six, into a new genre, a series of detective novels with a female sleuth, the 'Julia' books. Julia was a contemporary of James Bond, but 'a curious cross between Ian Fleming and Jane Austen': the atmosphere in these books is inescapably pre-war. The disdainful wit of *Peking Picnic* has ossified into superciliousness, and the nuances of class have become rampant snobbery: 'ducal décor, bland violence, utterly readable', said one critic. Bridge had her loyal fans, who were ageing with her, and for whom she was now a cosy read. Increasingly, she relied on Kate for help, particularly with plots, not one of Bridge's strengths.

The Mayo experiment failed. They sold Rockfleet and returned to England, and settled in North Oxford; aged, mismatched, living separate lives under one roof. Age had not dimmed Owen's cruelties, nor blunted Bridge's aggression. The pressure on her to keep writing was intense, not just from Owen, but from their son, too. Patrick and his problems, of alcohol and personality, hung over

Bridge and Owen 'like a thunderstorm at the bottom of the garden'. Bridge thrily turned every presentable aspect of their lives into print, from the literary recollections of *Facts and Fictions* describing the relation between the reality of her life and the use she made of it in her books, to *Moments of Knowing: Some Personal Experiences Beyond Normal Knowledge*, a little monument to her interest in the paranormal, and *Permission to Resign: Goings-on in the corridors of power*, her account of the Francs Case.

By the end, Bridge was very, very tired, and longing to stop, but she ploughed on with *Julia in Ireland*. It is thin and weak, and Chatto and Windus, her publishers of forty years, turned it down. It was a profound shock. Her American publishers were not so coldheartedly squeamish, and brought it out in 1973. After this, and Patrick's sudden death, Bridge became increasingly confused. On 9 March 1974, she lay dying. Her daughters were in the house, and so was Owen, but he refused to go in and see her. He was a physical coward, and afraid of death. Eventually Kate got him to come in. Bridge looked at him, (Jane could never tell the story without crying) and 'an enormous smile of total love and happiness came over her face. Absolutely extraordinary. And she dies. And that was that.' Without her there to hate and depend upon, Owen seemed totally to collapse, and he died on 16 April. That which he had contemplated and feared for so long, had finally wrapped him in its cold embrace.

Their double story has many strands besides Bridge's contribution to literature. It is the last chapter in the saga of an ancient Irish dynasty. It is a study in the nature of a man gone wrong, and how this trickles all over his family and warps them for generations to come. It is a study of cruelty and determination. It is the story of a man whose career spans the ebb of empire; every important episode in Owen's career, Hankow, Mexico, the Poles, is informed by the slipping away of power. It is the story of folie de grandeur, of public success and private failure. It is the story of a strong woman shouldering the burdens that confronted her in life, the unloved wife who made herself 'one of the best-loved of all women novelists in this century'.

Benita Stoney is currently writing the double biography of Sir Owen O'Malley and Ann Bridge. Her previous publications include three books about Queen Victoria. She has lived in Mayo on and off for most of her life and is very happy to have returned here.

## THE REMARKABLE JANE O'MALLEY<sup>1</sup>

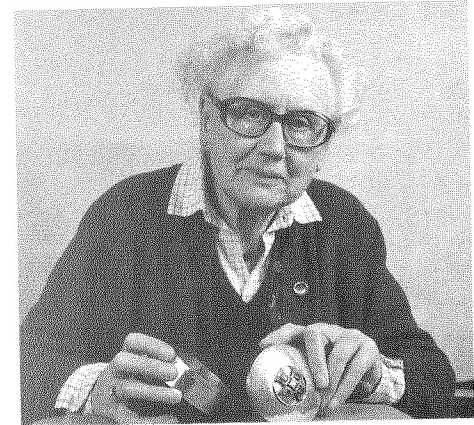
*An Appreciation – Benita Stoney*

Jane O'Malley of Kiltornet, Newport, died in the 'Pilgrim's Rest' Nursing Home, Barley Hill, Westport, on 4 February, 1999.

Jane was Irish by extraction and inclination, but English by birth and upbringing. She was born in London on 9 August, 1914, the eldest child of Owen St. Clair O'Malley of the British Foreign Office, whose grandfather had left Castlebar in the 1820s. She was christened Diana Sabina, but always known as Jane. She was educated mainly at home by her mother. In 1926, her father was appointed British Counsellor at Peking, in the turbulent period of the warlords.

Jane loved China, for the austere beauty of its landscape, the excitements of Legation life, and for the little Chinese horses that she raced across the dusty winter fields; but China sprang a nasty surprise and it was discovered in 1928 that she had a tubercular kidney. It was successfully removed and in later life she would proudly say: 'Really, I've no business to be here!' In 1932 her mother, writing as Ann Bridge, shot to fame with her novel *Peking Picnic*, which launched her on a long and successful career as a novelist.

In 1934 Jane went up to Oxford and read Politics, Philosophy and Economics at Lady Margaret Hall. She took her B.A. and her M.A. On her father's appointment as Minister to Mexico in 1937 she went with him, instead of her busy mother, as his official hostess. This gave her social confidence to match her intellectual ability. She flowered as she had been unable to do at home in the shadow of her brilliant, scene-stealing mother. Mexican affairs took an exciting



*Jane O'Malley with the pyx inset with tesserae from the basilica of the Creed at Nicxa, commissioned by her mother and presented to the church of St. Patrick at Lecanvey, Co. Mayo.* (Photo: Liam Lyons)

<sup>1</sup> Courtesy *The Mayo News*, 10 March 1999.



Jane O'Malley with her parents, Owen St. Clair O'Malley and Ann Bridge, shortly before he took up his appointment to Mexico.

working for the magazine *Time and Tide*.

Jane never married, but during the war she espoused the tragic cause of Poland. She added Polish to her French, German, Magyar and Spanish, and translated Wojciech Chelkowski's 'The Buried Standard' an account of the September 1939 campaign. After the war, in 1946, she was commissioned to write a series of articles for the *Sunday Times* on the Russian-occupied countries of Eastern Europe, and became one of a handful of journalists who were known as 'The Balkan Women'. She never fulfilled her promise as a journalist; her standards were high – some would say impossibly high – and for Jane there were 'too many lies' in journalism.

When her father retired, he came to live on Clew bay at 'Rosyvera', near Newport, the house which he largely rebuilt on a princely, unrealistic scale, and renamed 'Rockfleet' in deference to the tower house on his property, 'Craige an Chabhlaigh', which had at one time been the principal residence of Gráinne Ní Mháille, or Grania Uaile, and whose restoration by the O'Malley Clan he initiated. Jane was in her thirties before she ever saw County Mayo, but there she found

turn when Mexico nationalised its oil fields and broke off diplomatic relations with Great Britain. Jane heard the news in Dallas, where she had flown with a diplomatic bag as possibly the first woman to act as King's Messenger.

In 1939 she accompanied her father as his secretary and hostess when he was posted as Minister to Budapest. She ran a news bulletin out of the British Legation from the outbreak of the war until June 1940, when she dashed back to England through France, four days ahead of the Germans, to be 'where the action was' and saw out the London Blitz as an Air Raid Warden and

'something waiting' that she had not found anywhere else. Its mountains, sea, and islands gave her a substantial sense of consolation and among its people she felt a deep sense of belonging and delight. This was also a time of spiritual conflict, which was resolved when she was received into the Roman Catholic Church; Jane was not one to yield herself, and her submission was not sentimental but intellectual.

After five years at 'Rockfleet' she went back to London in 1951, cherishing her dream to return. She became the editor of the high quality journals produced by the pharmaceutical firm May and Baker. It was pleasant and rewarding work, but in 1964 she found the opportunity she had been looking for, and she moved to Dublin to become Executive Secretary at the Royal Irish Academy – the first woman in its history of almost two hundred years to hold the post.

Jane brought to bear on whatever she did a fierce, meticulous and uncompromising intelligence and a steely determination. She was a formidable and demanding colleague. She would make 'a nourishing snack' of anyone who did not do their job efficiently, but she commanded the confident affection and respect of her friends and neighbours. She kept people at arm's length, and yet felt passionately and strongly about them. When she gave her friendship she gave it fully and actively – friends were 'people you do things for'. She was a stimulating companion, with a lively, succinct tongue, and a memorable turn of phrase. She was independent, honest, canny, direct, a shrewd and perceptive judge of character. Anything, or anyone, sham or bogus was abhorrent to her. Her sense of injustice was very finely tuned. Her character and upbringing by strong, destructive parents had combined to make her life tempestuous with anger and anxiety, but the gleam of her absolute integrity shone through the gusts and invited liking.

She spent the last twenty-five years of her life in Kiltarnet, Newport. She died with acceptance and dignity, sustained by her faith, and is buried close to where she lived, at Burrishoole, where she felt she belonged. In words from her own 'Fiodán Mór', published in the Mayo Anthology:

*Time runs away, but not the hills;  
And this beloved mountain  
Shall at the end a gravestone stand  
Over my life's stilled fountain.*

## POWERFUL BY LAND ...

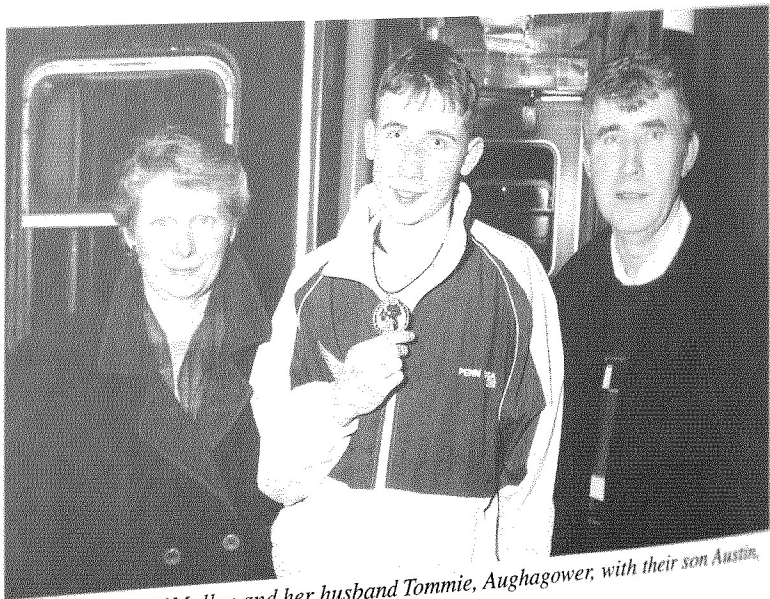
### Austin O'Malley – One of the Greats in Amateur Boxing

*Joe Hennigan, I.A.B.A.*

Austin O'Malley started his boxing career in 1994; in that year he had a total of eight contests winning all of them. He won his first Mayo and Connacht title and went on to capture the Boy 1.39 Kilo National Juvenile title. He also became the first Mayo boxer to receive the Best Boxer of the National Championships that season.

The following season saw him back again with a Mayo and Connacht title, once again he took his second successive National title.

The 1996/97 season saw him complete a hat trick by winning a Mayo, Connacht and his third National Juvenile title. The 1997/98 season saw him set out to make boxing history with another Mayo and Connacht title and yet again his fourth National Juvenile title.



*Mary Patricia O'Malley and her husband Tommie, Aughagower, with their son Austin, a Leaving Certificate student at Rice College, Westport.*

The 1998/99 season was a stepping stone for him; he moved from Juvenile to Youth level, and he also changed clubs, however this did not change things, as this was a man on a mission. He won another Mayo and Connacht title and went one step further by capturing the Youth 1.60 Kilos National title.

In 1999/2000 he had another terrific season, winning a Mayo title. At the National Youth Championships he captured his sixth National title by winning the Youth 2 63.5 Kilos title. He is the only Mayo boxer ever to achieve this type of success. He has represented Ireland at the Gaelic Youth Championships winning a silver medal, and at the schools Inter. Nations in Ipswich winning a gold medal. He has also represented Ireland in Sweden, winning yet again.

His record shows: 44 contests, winning 41 of them; 6 Mayo titles; 5 Connacht titles; 6 National titles; Represented Ireland on 3 occasions; won the Western People of the Week Award on 3 occasions; won the Western People of the Year Award on 2 occasions; won the *Connacht Telegraph* Star of the Month on 2 occasions.

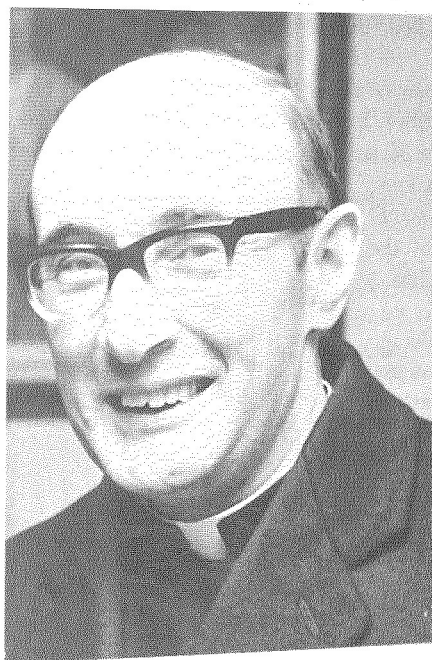
He will now go forward for the National Junior Championships next month in Dublin and all eyes will be watching this brilliant sportsman to see if he can capture his seventh national title in a row.

## AND BY SEA ...

*Left to right: Joan Mulloy and Eidin Ryan underway in their mirror dinghy to Inishraher, grand-daughters of Sheila O'Malley Mulloy. Pic. Shay Fennelly*



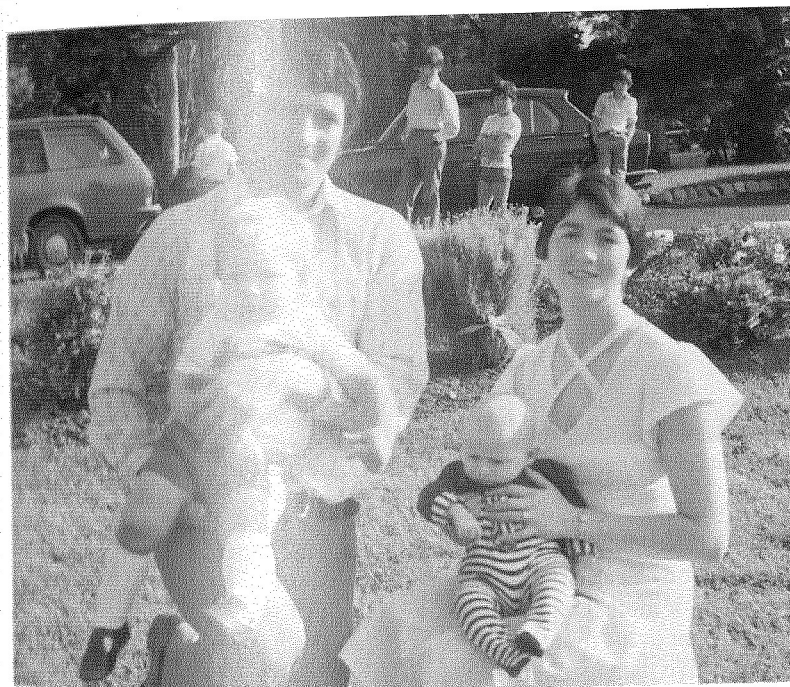
## Death of Very Revd Canon Éamon O'Malley on 16 August 1999



The clan lost a valued friend in the person of Canon Éamon O'Malley, a native of Louisburgh, Co. Mayo. Always ready to lend a hand, many will remember his frequent appearances at our annual rallies over the years. Ordained in 1945, he served for a year in Leeds, England, and thereafter in Castlebar, Inis Oirr and Cloonfad. Father Éamon ministered for longer periods in Achill Sound, Westport and Kilmeena before he retired in 1994. He will long be remembered for his dedicated service to his parishioners in many parts of Mayo. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam uasal.

## SOME FORMER CHIEFTAINS

### MARTIN O'MALLEY



*Martin, Margaret and their two eldest children – Darragh and Maolra, at Old Head Hotel 1978.*  
(Photo: Frank Dolan)

**Martin O'Malley** (Chieftain 1977-8), son of Thomas O'Malley and Julia Joyce of Srah, Tourmakeady, Co. Mayo, was born in Srah in 1942. After some years at the local National School, he continued his education at the C.B.S. Ballinrobe and St. Mary's Diocesan College, Galway. His wife is Margaret Lally of Derrindaffderg, Killawalla, near Westport, Co. Mayo. Martin and Margaret have four children: Darragh, who works in the computer field; Maolra, who is a landscape gardener; Doireann, a university student and Tomás, who is still at school. Martin emigrated to England in 1983, where he worked as a pub manager in London for some years, but is now in the construction business. A very keen sportsman, he played Gaelic football for his school and for his home club of Tourmakeady. He also represented Ballinrobe and Westport in rugby football. His other big interest is music, excelling in singing, and playing the banjo and guitar. Many of us remember the lovely day we spent at his Rally at the Old Head Hotel, near Louisburgh, on 9 July 1978, with that wonderful panorama of sea and mountains spread out before us.

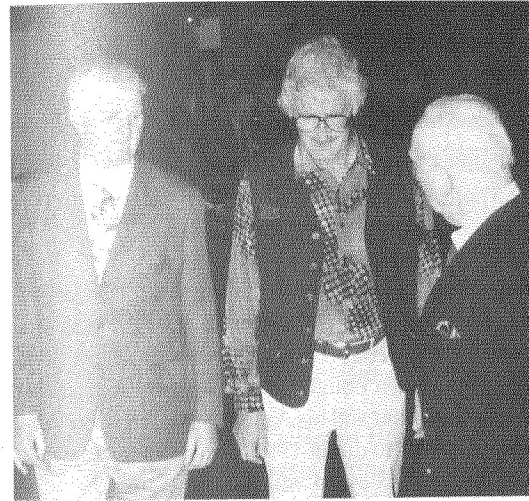
## DON O'MALLEY



*Don O'Malley and family, University of Limerick, 1998.*

**Don O'Malley** (Chieftain 1997-8) is the second of five children born to Patrick and Bridget O'Malley in Limerick in 1939. His father Patrick (Paddy) came from Madaboy near Murroe, where the O'Malleys have lived for fourteen generations or more. Paddy O'Malley was at the first Clan rally in 1953 and his son Don went to his first rally in Galway in 1954. Don is married to Elaine and they have five daughters. The eldest, Grace, like her father, studied Electrical Engineering at U.C.C. and now lives in Chicago, where she is a Research Engineer with Motorola. Edel graduated in Commerce at U.C.D., while Clodagh studied Hotel Management. Avril graduated in Biochemistry at U.C.C. while the youngest, Eileen, graduated in Archaeology and History of Art, but is currently working in the field of Public Relations. Don runs a very successful Consulting Engineering practice in Limerick City, which has been involved in many important developments in the Mid-West, particularly all the main building and residential facilities at the University of Limerick. Other projects include the Hunt Museum, St. Mary's Cathedral and King John's Castle. The main hobbies enjoyed by him include gardening, walking, fishing and particularly golf. He still manages to play off a 9 handicap, and is a member of Limerick Golf Club, where he served as Captain in 1977 and more recently as President 1994-5. He is very much involved in his native city where he takes an active part in Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, Limerick Civic Trust and the University Club.

## MAURICE O'MALLEY



*Dress inspection: Ward O'Malley (1973-4) inspects Maurice O'Malley (1998-9) and Peter O'Malley McGee (1991-2).*

**Maurice O'Malley** (Chieftain 1998-9) was born in 1953, the year the Clan Rally was founded. Son of the late Paddy (Pa) O'Malley, Rosbeg, Westport and Kay Fitzmaurice, Roscommon, he inherited his interest in the Clan from his grandfather and father, who was one of the co-founders of the O'Malley Clan Association. He has been involved for many years as treasurer of the local committee which co-ordinates the annual rallies. Educated at St. Colmcille's National School, Westport Quay, and St. Nathy's College, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon, Maurice joined Allied Irish Banks at Eyre Square, Galway, in 1972. Following a successful career in banking at various locations in Mayo and Galway, he now is the Investment and Savings Manager at Allied Irish Banks, Main Street, Castlebar. He and his wife Delia, a nurse, have two sons, Darren who is studying Public and Social Policy at NUI Galway, and Maurice James who attends St. Gerald's College, Castlebar. A daughter, Kathy, attends St. Angela's National School, Castlebar. A native of neighbouring Westport, Maurice is extremely proud of his adopted Castlebar, having spent many years living and working there. Eldest of four sons, his three brothers run a chartered accountancy practice at Chapel Street, Castlebar. He has been an active member of the community over the years, being involved in parent associations, scouts, church, sporting and business organisations. He has a great interest in Gaelic football and Soccer. Other interests include travel and he has visited many countries. Maurice enjoys nothing better than a game of bridge and has represented his club in competition.

## SOME PAST RALLIES

It has been decided to print abridged descriptions of some former rallies from the *O'Malley Clan Newsletter* in a more permanent form, accompanied by photographs that will give a real flavour of those events.

The **40th O'Malley Clan Rally**, 27-28 June 1992, **Chieftain Peter O'Malley McGee** from Newport, Co. Mayo, will best be remembered for the glorious weather which blessed the proceedings throughout.

The first event of the Rally took place at the Mall, Castlebar, where a bronze sculpture by Peter Grant of sea-god Manannan Mac Lir was unveiled by Eanya Egan, Chairperson of Castlebar Urban District Council. This graceful and imaginative creation had been bought in 1939 by Irish patriot and writer Ernie O'Malley, a native of Castlebar and his American wife Helen. Mrs. Helen Hooker O'Malley Roelofs, who was to die in 1993, had recently presented the sculpture to the town of Castlebar. This event was followed by a Civic Reception in the nearby Imperial Hotel (now Daly's Hotel).



*Peter O'Malley McGee passing on staff to Sheila O'Malley Mulloy, incoming Chieftain, Breaffy House Hotel 1992.*

The Annual General Meeting of the O'Malley Clan Association took place that evening in Newport Parochial Hall, at which Ellen O'Malley Dunlop was elected as Tánaiste. The meeting was followed by Chieftain Peter O'Malley McGee's reception at 7 p.m., when happy clan members were copiously feasted and later entertained by talented local musicians. The highlight of the evening was the guest appearance of Matt Molloy, a member of the suitably-named musical group, The Chieftains, who has business links with Westport.

Sunday morning began with Mass at 10 a.m. in Burrishoole Friary by kind permission of Revd Dermott Concannon, P.P. The celebrant was Revd James O'Malley, Kilsallagh, while the choir, music and readings were in the care of Mary O'Malley, N.T., and Mary Jane O'Malley, Newport, while piper Eoin O'Malley, Swinford, contributed effectively on this occasion as at all the Rally events. Sheila O'Malley Mulloy read an interesting short history of the Friary.

The annual Clan Luncheon in Breaffy House Hotel, Castlebar, was as always the highlight of the Rally, with 163 guests sitting down to an elegant meal in beautiful surroundings. The fortieth anniversary of the clan meetings was marked by a splendid iced cake bedecked with forty candles. Chieftain Peter installed the incoming Chieftain, Sheila O'Malley Mulloy, and the evergreen Tony Chambers and his orchestra rounded off the festivities.

The **41st O'Malley Clan Rally**, 26-27 June 1993, **Chieftain Sheila O'Malley Mulloy**, from Westport, Co. Mayo. The first event on Saturday 26 June was the opening of an exhibition in the Linenhall Art Centre Castlebar of part of the O'Malley Collection of Irish and international art. This important collection had been made by the late Ernie O'Malley and his wife Helen O'Malley Roelofs, and is now housed in the Museum of Modern Art at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, Dublin. The prime mover behind the event was Ernie's son Cormac, the incoming Tánaiste of the Clan.

Saturday evening began with the Annual General Meeting of the O'Malley Clan at 8 p.m. in the Grand Central Hotel, Westport, presided over by Gerry O'Malley, Guardian Chieftain. The Clan finances were reported to be in a healthy state, largely because of the profit from the 1991 Rally and the 1992 generous grant from Bord Fáilte. The meeting was followed by a reception hosted by Chieftain Sheila. Music was provided by gifted traditional musicians Laoise Kelly, harpist; Elizabeth Keane, fiddle; and Marina Murray, piano accordion. The delicious mussels and smoked salmon were sponsored by Blackshell farm and Killary Farm respectively, while cheese was provided by Carrowholly Cheese.

Sunday morning began with Mass at 11.30 in St. Patrick's Church, Lecanvey.

This was celebrated by Fr. Pat O'Malley, son of former Chieftain Anthony of Louisburgh. Concelebrating with him were Fr. Des O'Malley, O.F.M., Westport and Fr. Tom O'Malley, C.S.Sp., Cleggan. The Mass servers were Karol and Catherine O'Malley, children of Michael and Mary Jane O'Malley, Newport. Classical and traditional music was beautifully played by Patrick Earley and Edy Hennig, while Mary Connolly sang with feeling and artistry. Father Pat spoke from the heart of the great human hunger for peace in our day throughout the world. The congregation then gathered at nearby Murrisk Friary where Chieftain Sheila spoke of the history of the Friary and the Croagh Patrick pilgrimage.

The annual Clan luncheon was the last and most important event of the Rally. This was in Hotel Westport and was attended by some 150 people. All were cheered by the pipe music of Eoin O'Malley, Swinford, who played throughout the day, and added greatly to the enjoyment of the occasion. The new Chieftain Ellen O'Malley Dunlop was installed by the outgoing Chieftain. Guardian Chieftain Gerry wound up the proceedings in his usual eloquent and thought-provoking style. A raffle with valuable prizes sponsored by Renvyle House Hotel, Hotel Westport, and former Chieftains Michael of Castlebar and Peter of Newport, followed by music from the Tony Chambers Orchestra, Newport, concluded the festivities for 1993.

The **42nd O'Malley Clan Rally**, June 25-26 1994, **Chieftain Ellen O'Malley Dunlop** from Dublin. The events of Saturday 25 June began with a Golf Classic at Westport Golf Club, which was won by Ann Kelly, daughter of former Guardian



Ellen O'Malley Dunlop, musician, at her Clan Rally on Clare Island 1997.

Chieftain Conor of Galway. A second group of rallyers was received by Lord and Lady Altamont for a guided tour of Westport House. In the afternoon there was a big turnout for an exhibition at the Art Gallery, Louisburgh, which was opened by the Achill poet, John F. Deane, whose grandmother was an O'Malley. Works on view included some splendid oils by Tony O'Malley, son of a Clare Island man, and Wayne Harlow, husband of current Tánaiste Kitty O'Malley Harlow. After the exhibition, the Clan piper, Eoin O'Malley, Swinford, led the procession to the Granuaile Interpretative Centre, where members of the Clan Association were guests of the centre at a reception.

That evening's reception was held on Clare Island birthplace of Chieftain's Ellen's father John who subsequently settled in Rathdowney, Co. Laois. The setting was a magnificent marquee owned by Chris and Kay (now sadly deceased) of the Bay View Hotel. A superb buffet was followed by singing and dancing, but the highlight of the evening was undoubtedly the performance put on by the islanders themselves – a full hour of storytelling and musicianship, a delight to the eye, ear and funny-bone. A significant event during the evening was the presentation of a piece of Waterford Crystal, 'The Spirit of Granuaile', designed and executed by their top craftsman, and given *free gratis* and for nothing to the Clan Association. This work is on view at the Bay View Hotel.

The weather on Sunday 26 June left a lot to be desired and the members of Anuna, led by Michael McGlynn, arrived that morning at the Hotel looking like drowned rats. However, a half-hour later they emerged, composed and beautiful to sing the 'O'Malley Mass' in the marquee (because of the weather the venue for the Mass had been changed). The Mass was followed by the Annual Luncheon and concluded with speeches and live entertainment. The entire proceedings over the weekend were filmed by Deutsche Welle (German TV) and carried on CNN and also on RTE Newsround.

The **43rd O'Malley Clan Rally**, June 22-24, 1995, **Chieftain Cormac O'Malley**, New York. It is important to record that the sun shone throughout this rally, which started off with an informal registration gathering on Friday evening in Westport's Grand Central Hotel. Cormac greeted those who had come from near and far. Travellers from Australia, Connecticut, Florida, New York, and . . . not to mention Dublin, London, Paris appeared on the scene.

On Saturday morning under the sponsorship of former Chieftain Michael of Castlebar, a group teed off for the O'Malley Golf Classic at the Westport Golf Course. About twenty entrants, many of them new, tried their swing on the beautiful course. The winners of the Classic included Peter from Australia with former Chieftain Ellen taking first prize. Meanwhile on the North side of Clew

Bay, former Chieftain Peter McGee was waiting on Newport Quay with his band of ten stalwart fishermen, hoping that the tide would come in a little faster so that the day would not be too long and that not everyone would be burnt in the increasingly hot sun. In the event a great time was had by all. A tour of Westport House was organised strictly on Irish time 'when the doors open, they open.' It was nice to be able to come in out of the boiling sun and enjoy the beautiful house, the site of one of the former O'Malley castles. This tour



*Outgoing Chieftain Cormac O'Malley passes on the Clan Chieftancy to Kitty O'Malley Harlow. Rally 1995.*

always brings to light new points of interest about the involvement of the Browne family with their surrounding community. The house was begun in 1680 by the Jacobite Colonel John Browne who had married Maude, daughter of the third Viscount Mayo, who was a great-grandson of Gráinne Ní Mháille (Gráinne Uaile).

In the afternoon the Clan was given a reception at the Louisburgh Granuaile Interpretative Centre. Guardian Chieftain Sal McInerney opened a photographic exhibition of 'County Mayo Images' taken by Helen O'Malley Roelofs (1905-1993) during her forty years of life in the West. Dr. Richard English, a Professor of Irish Political Studies at Queen's University Belfast then gave a revealing lecture about Ernie O'Malley (1897-1957), stressing the period of his post Nationalist activities.

On Saturday evening we assembled at the Westport House pub, the Waggon Wheel, for the Clan AGM. This was followed by the Chieftain's Reception with a background of traditional music in the wonderful atmosphere of one of the splendid old farm buildings attached to the Estate.

Sunday morning Mass was celebrated in the beautifully-situated Burrishoole Friary. Chieftain Cormac then read some moving words written by his father, Ernie, about the Irish countryside as he found it, while he was on the run in 1918-21, and Sheila O'Malley Mulloy gave a brief lecture on the history of the Friary. The last but not least event was the Rally luncheon, held once again at Hotel Westport.



*Ann O'Malley Kelly with her extended family, 1997 Rally.*

The 45th O'Malley Clan Rally, 27-29 June, 1997, Chieftain Ann O'Malley Kelly, from Barna, Co. Galway. On Friday night Donal Taheny, a well-known lecturer and photographer presented a delightful slide show of Old Galway in the Ardilaun House Hotel, Galway. On Saturday morning there was a coach tour of Connemara led by Sheila O'Malley Mulloy and Mairéad O'Shaughnessy of Galway An Taisce, visiting Aughnanure Castle and the Connemara Heritage Centre. Galway Golf Club was the venue for the Granuaile Classic, which took place the same morning. Tony Ryan of Dublin was the winner, the runner-up being former Chieftain Michael O'Malley of Castlebar.



*Clan Chieftain Ann O'Malley with her husband Simon, 1997 Rally.*

The famous Ó Máille's Woollen Store, High Street, Galway, hosted a special showing on Saturday afternoon of superbly-designed garments of Irish manufacture in wonderful colours and fabrics of wool, silk and linen. The well-attended AGM and Chieftain Ann's Reception took place on Saturday evening at the Ardilaun House Hotel. The latter event attracted an attendance of 250 people and was voted one of the best Clan gatherings ever.

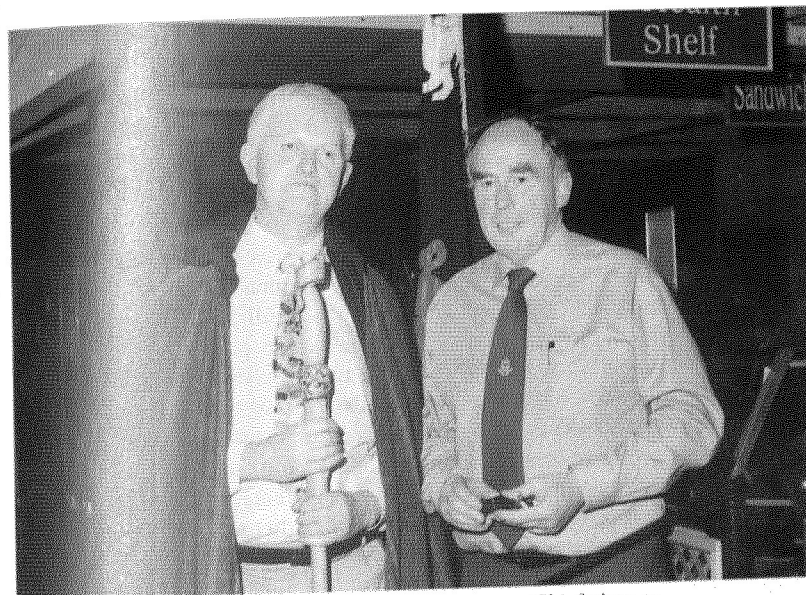
Sunday Mass was celebrated by Fr. Pat O'Malley of Louisburgh in the Chapel on the campus of University College. The organist was Eithne Phelan, and the soloists were Nonie Hickey and Máire Cris Ní Chionna. After Mass *O'Malley Journal 1997* was launched by Councillor John Mulholland, Mayor of Galway. He commended the endeavour and zeal of the Clan in publishing such works, noting that all was done in a voluntary capacity under the direction and editorship of Clan Historian Sheila O'Malley Mulloy. The Annual Clan Luncheon which was held in the student leisure complex of UCG attracted an attendance of 265, including seventy-eight overseas visitors. Some of Ann's extended family were among this number. In all, her party consisted of thirty-five adults and nine children – an indication of the esteem in which she is held by her siblings.

After the luncheon Sheila O'Malley Mulloy was installed as Guardian Chieftain of the Clan in succession to Sal O'Malley McInerney. Her new badge of office is a collar of gold designed by Derek McGowan, Aughagower, Westport. It is made of architectural bronze, with a brass monogram formed from the clan name 'Ó Máille' (O'Malley). The acute accent over the 'O' has a representation on it in brass of Clare Island, which was a stronghold of the Clan. The brass chain consists of linked spiral motifs, with the names of the Guardian Chieftains from the formation of the Clan Association appearing on separate plaques inserted between the motifs.

Ann's Rally was a particularly successful one and fully rewarded all the effort and enthusiasm she had expended in the preparations for it.

The **46th O'Malley Clan Rally**, 26-28 June 1998, **Chieftain Don O'Malley** of Limerick. This very successful rally was located on the campus of the University of Limerick. The large attendance proved once again that a change of venue can be a welcome one to our loyal rally-goers. Registration took place on Friday evening at Kilmurry Village Hall, followed by a talk from Tony McCarthy, author of 'The Irish Roots' who spoke about our heritage and more specifically about the faction fights which occurred late in the nineteenth century throughout rural Ireland. We then visited the collection of the O'Malley Heads in the new University Library building. This exhibition is part of the Collection by Helen O'Malley Roelofs, donated to the University for safekeeping. The evening was completed with a visit to the University Stables Bar.

On Saturday morning twenty players competed in the Granuaile Classic at the Limerick County Golf and Country Club. The party then proceeded to the



*Outing Clan Chieftain Don O'Malley (right) passes on Chieftaincy to Maurice O'Malley, 1998 Rally.*

Hunt Museum for lunch and a guided tour by Denis O'Malley, Madaboy, and Elaine O'Malley, Castleconnell. The coach then made its way back through the historical parts of Limerick city. The AGM took place that evening in the Stables Bar and was followed by Chieftain's Don's Reception, where there was some very lively entertainment by a local group Samhlaíocht (Imagination). A special plaque was presented by Chieftain Don to ninety-five year old Harold O'Malley from Perth, Australia. Incidentally, the youngest member at the Rally was a five-week old grandchild of Micheál O'Beirn, whose mother was a Kilmilkin O'Malley.

Sunday Mass was celebrated in the Jean Monat Theatre of the University by Fr. Donogh O'Malley, Limerick, and the homily was given by Fr. Pat O'Malley of Louisburgh. Music and singing were provided by Madeleine Meehan and Mairéad Shinnors, harpists, and Emma Culhane, guitarist. After Mass the gathering retired to the Stables Bar for further refreshments before joining in the procession led by Piper Eoin to the luncheon in the main University restaurant. The usual raffle took place afterwards, together with a special raffle for a Tony O'Malley painting which was won by Mr. Charles O'Malley of Limerick. All in all, this was a very successful rally brimming over with good will and good cheer, reflecting the meticulous preparations of Chieftain Don.

The **47th O'Malley Clan Rally**, 25-27 June 1999, **Chieftain Maurice O'Malley**, from Castlebar, Co. Mayo. Chieftain Maurice's Rally was centred in

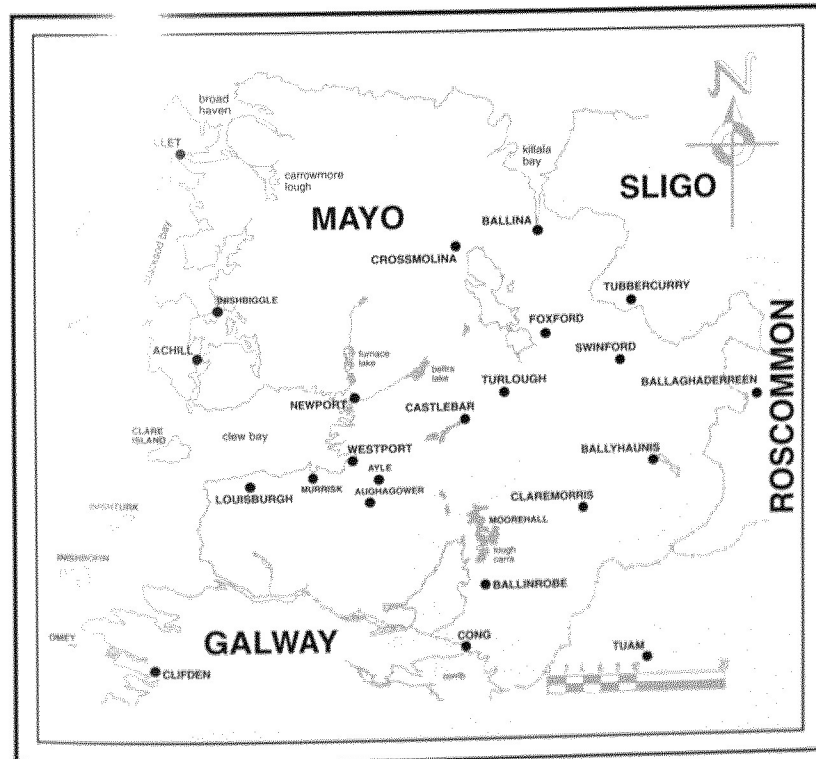
Castlebar. The first event on Friday was a Civic Reception by Castlebar Urban District Council in the historic Daly's Hotel on the Mall. Here the Clan was welcomed by the Chairman of the Council Mr. 'Blackie' Gavin. This was followed by three very interesting historical talks. The first was given by Judge John Garavan on 'The Land League and Daly's Hotel' and the second by Ernie Sweeney on Castlebar history. The third given by Anna and Philip O'Malley Dunlop was entitled 'Hawthorn Lodge and the O'Malleys of Castlebar'. This was enlivened by a witty and humorous sketch written and acted by the Dunlops which was greatly appreciated by the audience. The evening finished with refreshments in the Bar.

Saturday morning began with the by now traditional Golf Classic in Ballinrobe Golf Club, which was won by the invaluable Mary Collins, who was to be made an honorary member of the O'Malley Clan Association at the AGM that evening in appreciation of her efficiency in the organisation of Clan events for many years. That same morning there was a coach tour to Cong, visiting Cong Abbey, an Augustinian foundation of around 1200. Ashford Castle Hotel and the 'Quiet Man' cottage were also visited. A boat trip followed to Inchoigoill, an island in Lough Corrib where there are remains of an Early Christian and a Romanesque church. The weather all morning had been extremely wet, but brightened up in the afternoon, which helped to raise the spirits of our brave Rallyers. An associated event took place that afternoon in Clew Bay Heritage Centre, Westport, when former Clan Chieftain Cormac O'Malley (1994) presented a bronze bust of his father Ernie O'Malley on loan to Westport Historical Society for exhibition in the Centre. The Annual General Meeting of the Association took place that evening in the Welcome Inn Hotel, Castlebar. The election of Eoin O'Malley, Swinford, our piper, as Tánaiste was greeted with great acclaim. The Chieftain's Reception followed with music by the Ginnelly Sisters, and a colourful performance by the Redmond School of Irish Dancing with Maurice's small daughter Kathy stealing the show. We had other musical contributions during the evening by Clan members Philip Dunlop, Eoin O'Malley, Peter McGee, Ellen Dunlop and many others.

Sunday morning Mass was celebrated in Ballintubber Abbey by Father Pat O'Malley, Louisburgh. We were welcomed by Fr. Francis Fahy, and Frankie Forde sang the beautiful Ó Riada Mass. Father Pat spoke with his usual eloquence and sincerity. After Mass the Clan adjourned to Mary Moran's traditional Irish cottage for some very welcome tea, coffee and scones. Many of the party then visited the adjacent Celtic Furrow Museum, which provides an imaginary journey through the ages from Pagan to Christian times with the help of an accomplished guide. We went from Ballintubber to the Welcome Inn, Castlebar, for the annual Clan Luncheon. There we had the usual mix of raffle, entertainment and speeches, and all were in agreement that we had had a most enjoyable weekend.



Clan Pipers at Ballintubber Abbey, 1990  
(L to R): Clive Burt (RIP); Michael O'Malley (RIP), Chieftain 1983; and Eoin O'Malley.



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