



O'Malley Clan Association Monthly Newsletter

This month's highlights....

- Time to start planning that trip to the O'Malley Clan Gathering in Westport in 2025
- Get in touch and share your O'Malley Heritage!
- Julia O'Malley fishing for Alaskan salmon in Anchorage
- An O'Flaherty (& O'Malley), Stronghold in Connemara
- Destination Westport!
- Duolingo—get back to the Irish language
- O'Malleys — Test your brain with a crossword!
- About The O'Malley Clan Association
- The O'Malley Clan Association Needs You! Join Today!!

Holiday time is over, Time to plan that trip for 2025!

The evenings are getting longer already, schools are back, colleges are back, vacations are all done and dusted, (in the Northern hemisphere anyway). Its time to start planning your trip to Ireland next summer. The 2025 O'Malley Clan Gathering will take place on the weekend of 27th to the 29th June next year. So start thinking about your trip. It's never too early to plan! We'll have details of the events up on the website during the autumn as they're confirmed, but start planning your flights, (Shannon is best!), and organise your time off from work, and someone to mind the cat. Westport will be the place to be next June! Get it in the diary!!!



The O'Malley Clan Gathering 2025

27th to 29th June
Westport, Co Mayo

www.omalleyclan.ie



Get in touch, and share your O'Malley Heritage!

Have you got an article or old photographs that you'd like to submit for future editions of "O Maille" The O'Malley Clan Association Newsletter.

We'd love to hear from you wherever you're based around the world. Old photographs and stories to go with them, old letters, family trees or just an article that you'd like to share with the rest of the clan. Drop us a line and We'll get right to it!



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Fishing for Alaskan Salmon in Anchorage with Julia O'Malley

Setting nets for 70 years in Anchorage's shadow, a family witnessed major shifts in Cook Inlet salmon

Fred Thoerner's grandparents David and Jean Ring started fishing before statehood. He hopes his daughters will continue the business. It all depends on the fish.

UPPER COOK INLET — On a recent morning high tide, Fred Thoerner and his daughter Melina eased a sturdy skiff called Warthog down Anchorage's Ship Creek boat ramp and motored across Knik Arm to a beach near Point MacKenzie. As the windows in downtown buildings reflected the sunrise, they set anchor in the muddy beach and unfurled their net.

Thoerner is one of just a handful of commercial fishermen still setting nets in the northernmost part of Cook

Inlet. His grandparents David and Jean Ring started fishing there more than 70 years ago. He's 42 and was raised by his grandparents. Hearing their stories and fishing his whole life made him a witness to major changes in the fishery and the city's relationship to salmon. He hopes Melina, who is 17, will take over from him, the fourth generation of his family to fish commercially in the shadow of the city.

"That's if there's still fish," he said as he trained his eyes on the line of white corks in the water, waiting for a splash. "This is the worst year I've ever had."

It's hard not to feel uneasy about where things are headed if you've been fishing as long as he has. The fishery is having a near-average year, according to the Department of Fish and Game, with an above-average sockeye run and a below-average coho run. But where Thoerner is fishing, the reds have been paltry and the silvers, which are usually hitting right now, have barely shown up. Hopefully, he said, they're just late. Of course, it's been years since he's caught many king salmon. Chinook have been on the decline statewide since 2008. And all the species of salmon are smaller than they used to be by his eye. Scientists have documented this too, finding kings, reds, silvers and chum began coming back smaller around 1990, with the rate of shrinking accelerating in the early 2000s.

Thoerner also works in real estate, which isn't the easiest business at the moment either. He uses fishing earnings to supplement tuition at Grace Christian School, where Melina and her sister Naomi attend. "Fishing better pick up or she can't go to school," he said, half joking.



Above: Fred Thoerner leaves the small boat launch in Anchorage on his way to catch salmon. Thoerner has one of the northernmost commercial set gillnet sites in northern Cook Inlet.

Fishing for Alaskan Salmon in Anchorage with Julia O'Malley

Soon there came one splash along the curve of the net, then another. Thoerner pulled the boat along the line to pick the fish. Melina scooped each one over the side of the boat and untangled it, popped the gills to bleed it and slipped it in the tote. A small silver and a chum.

Northern District setnetters have been allowed to fish from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Mondays and Thursdays since the beginning of July, and unless there's a closure of the fishery, he expects to fish until mid-August. Thoerner sells his fish whole, under a special permit. He's never advertised, relying instead on relationships with customers that also go back generations. He communicates with a host of regulars via phone. They meet his boat when he comes in. The reds and silvers go for \$15 each. The chums mainly go to one client who makes dog treats. The sun climbed higher and the morning turned bluebird. Fish kept hitting the net. Thoerner's mood eased up. "My phone's already buzzing," he said.

It's hard to square fishing these days with the way it was growing up, and the way Thoerner's grandfather talked about it, he said. But then, his grandparents started their fishing business before fish farming, the modern system of science-based fisheries management and climate change-related water temperature fluctuations in the ocean and rivers. When they first began, many of the runs in Cook Inlet were recovering after being severely depleted by overfishing, spurred in part by the demand to feed soldiers and the use of massive fish traps, which were outlawed. Anchorage had a much more robust fishing scene with canneries near Ship Creek.

By the 1980s, when Thoerner started fishing with his family, it was gangbusters.

"When I was a kid we'd have two totes of fish and fish on the deck," he said. "We'd have a boat that was just constantly running back and forth, delivering fish. Now I'm lucky to have one tote full of fish."

The market for fish was also different. In the early days, refrigeration technology hadn't advanced enough to make fresh fish affordable or regularly available to home cooks. If you didn't catch it yourself, salmon came mostly in cans, though fresh fish did appear on restaurant menus. David Ring saw that if he could deliver fresh fish directly to consumers for a decent price, people would buy it.

"My grandfather saw an opportunity to rub some coins together," Thoerner said. "That's what he used to say."



Above: Thoerner and his daughter Melina, whom he describes as a "fourth generation commercial fisherwoman," at their set net site near Point MacKenzie. A Boeing 747 in the distance is landing at Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport.

Below: Thoerner prepares to anchor his setnet to fish an incoming tide



Fishing for Alaskan Salmon in Anchorage with Julia O'Malley

So he began fishing from the beach near his homestead property at Point MacKenzie and selling it from his house in the Sand Lake neighborhood. Fresh salmon made its way into grocery stores but it was still expensive. “Housewives,” as the Anchorage Times reported in the 1970s, preferred cheaper fish, like bottom fish made into fish sticks. It wasn’t until the late 1970s and early 1980s that recipes for grilled fresh salmon began to appear in the Anchorage newspaper food sections. By then, there’d also been a boom in sportfishing, stoked in part by the influx of people who came to work on the pipeline.

Setting a net in Cook Inlet isn’t what it once was. There have been conflicts with other fishing interests, tighter management and increasing disruptions in the fish runs themselves over the last 30 years. Though red salmon runs have been strong the last few years, a serious long-term drop-off in king salmon populations caused managers to shut down the largest part of the fishery — from roughly Ninilchik to Kenai — for the first time. That started last summer and continues this year. There are roughly 730 setnet permits in all of Cook Inlet, but the number of individual people fishing was falling even before the recent closure, according to data from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game.

The amount fishermen make varies year to year — sometimes by a lot — but overall that average has fallen as well. In 1989, a record earnings year, 668 people fished using setnets in all of Cook Inlet and the average earnings were \$219,617, according to Fish and Game. In 2022, the number of people fishing in the Inlet had dropped to 364. That year, the average earnings were among the lowest recorded, at \$7,981 per person. The real value of a permit, adjusted for inflation, has decreased by more than 90% from its highest point in 1990, when one cost more than \$200,000.

As in Cook Inlet as a whole, in the Northern District, from just north of Nikiski into Knik Arm, where Thoerner fishes on the northernmost edge, the average age of permit



Above: Fred and Melina pick salmon from a setnet

in

Below: Fred takes a break with Melina near Point McKenzie



Fishing for Alaskan Salmon in Anchorage with Julia O'Malley

holders has climbed and the number of permits being fished has fallen. About 75 permits are being fished in the Northern District now — a fisherman can fish up to two — so the number of fishermen may be lower. Only a dozen or so fish where Thoerner does, nearest to Anchorage, he said. “We all know each other,” he said. “We communicate, look out for each other.”

Sitting in a boat, watching a net like Thoerner does, you think about what might be happening to the fish. Thoerner wonders if they're being caught by driftnetters down the Inlet, “corking them off,” as his grandfather used to say. Or maybe something's happening to them in the ocean, where the temperatures have fluctuated higher with marine heatwaves, as scientists have speculated.

He hates most the idea that any are being caught as bycatch by trawlers and wasted, beautiful fish thrown over the side for the crabs. Bycatch of king salmon by Bering Sea trawlers, which was about 120,000 fish a year at a high point in 2007, has fallen along with the population of kings overall, to fewer than 20,000 fish, most of them from coastal Western Alaska, according to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council. Thoerner remembers when the kings were huge — twice what they are now — and plentiful. “We used to sell our kings for \$3 a pound,” he said.

He opened the cooler and offered Melina some cheese and crackers. She yawned. Down at the end of the net, a fish splashed. She's hoping to go to college out of state, she said, but wants to come back to make her home in Anchorage and keep up the fishing. She expected her dad wouldn't quit until he's too frail to get into a boat, she said. “I can't really imagine doing it without him,” she said.

Late morning, the wind changed, turning the smooth gray water choppy. Thoerner expected that. And the tide fell to where he could see the tip of a particular rock, which, he'd learned from his grandfather, meant it was time to head into deeper water. The tote was half full, a good day by the standards of this summer, more than 100 fish, some of them still flipping around in the bloody slush. A customer had taken orders from all his coworkers and was waiting to buy 90 with a stack of empty coolers. Melina helped haul in the anchor. He turned the boat back toward the city. “It helps my day to day life, being outside, having a purpose,” he said. “Even if I'm not catching fish like I used to, I just enjoy being out here and passing on that feeling to my daughter.”

Julia O'Malley



Above: Fred and Melina head back to Anchorage with their catch of salmon July 25, 2024



Above: Landing the catch!

An O'Flaherty (& O'Malley) Stronghold in Connemara

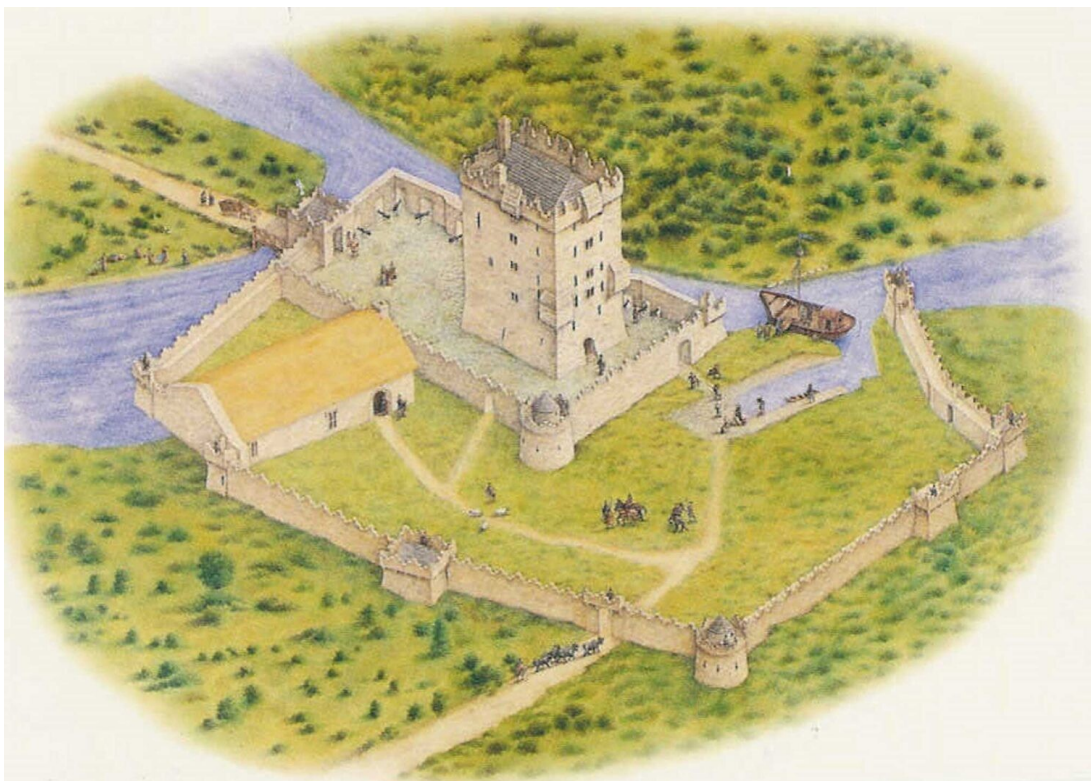
THE O'FLAHERTY CASTLE OF BUNOWEN

Michael Gibbons

(From the O'Malley Journal No 10)

The glacially-scoured landscape of southwest Connemara is dominated by the dramatically-sited Hill of Doon, the remains of a volcanic plug over sixty million years old. The hill is reputed to have been one of the Fairy Seats of Connemara and was once crowned with an ancient Dun according to Roderic O'Flaherty, the seventeenth-century Connemara historian. The fort or Dun is long gone for no trace of it survives on the ground. The area and vicinity of Doon Hill have been at the centre of political, military and economic power for the best part of 1,500 years in this part of Connemara. The area around the hill is known as Bunabhainn (Bottom of the river) from a small stream that drains the surrounding lakes and bogs and forms the eastern boundary to the present townland of Bunowen More. It was here on the west bank of this stream at the point where it enters a sheltered inlet of the sea that the O' Flahertys built their most important castle in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century.

The most obvious man-made feature which is visible today is the ruin of the eighteenth-nineteenth century Bunowen Castle which is sited atop a drumlin ridge which lies sheltered in the lee of the hill of Doon. This castellated mansion was originally built by the Geoghegans in the mid-seventeenth century. They were a wealthy Catholic family transplanted from Castletown, Co. Westmeath in 1656. It was built with stone robbed from its medieval predecessor. The medieval castle and its context are the primary focus of this article.



Above: An artist's impression of how the similar O'Flaherty Castle at Aughnanure near Oughterard would have looked in its day

An O'Flaherty (& O'Malley) Stronghold in Connemara

The rulers of Bunowen down through the ages saw the strategic importance of the area in terms of its maritime value. To own Bunowen meant having the ability to control and to exploit coastal maritime trade and fishing from the Aran Islands in the south-east to Ceann Leirne (Slyne Head) in the west. The strategic requirement to dominate these valuable waters was one of the reasons why the O'Flahertys originally chose to build one of their castles here.

Bunowen was the major castle of the western branch of the O'Flahertys. They had other castles at Doon, at Streamstown Bay and on an island in Ballynahinch Lake. In both these cases they seem to have reused the pre-existing sites. Their control castle at Renvyle Point dominated the northern waters of Connemara in opposition to their sometimes enemies, the O'Malleys of south Mayo.

The O'Flaherty Lordship's ability to operate was historically dependent on its ability to deploy its naval resources on lake or sea. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries the O'Flahertys were Lords of Lough Corrib and inner Galway Bay, operating from their base at Bun Gaillimhe at the mouth of the Corrib River located within the medieval core of old Galway. In the thirteenth century they were pushed westward and forced off the fertile lands east of Lough Corrib, and off the lake itself and inner Galway Bay by more powerful sources, namely the O'Connor Kings of Connacht and invading Norman barons, the Burkes. The O'Flahertys retreated westward into Iar-Chonnacht which they were to dominate for the next four centuries.



Above: The stump of the 15th Century O'Flaherty Castle at Bunowen.

It is not known precisely when the O'Flahertys first came to Bunowen. The ousting of the then traditional chiefs of Connemara, the O Cadhga (the Keeleys), would have been a bloody affair. Like other Gaelic lords elsewhere in the country the O'Flaherty seats of power are fairly elusive during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. They may have reused the pre-existing Dun on the summit of Doon Hill before moving downhill eastward to construct the fortified tower house at Bunowen. The O'Flahertys were divided into two main branches. The principal branch was based close to the Corrib at Aughnanure Castle, due east of the modern

An O'Flaherty (& O'Malley) Stronghold in Connemara

village of Oughterard. With their greater proximity to English power based in Galway city, they were the first of the O'Flahertys the government attempted to rein in as part of their feudalisation policy of surrender and re-grant. Buying their allegiance and granting them control of Iar-Chonnacht started an internal civil war between the various O'Flaherty branches. The western branch refused to participate in this policy. They continued to appoint the most capable and warlike to lead the family; the most famous of them was Donal an Chogaidh (of the war) who owned Ballynahinch, Bunowen and possibly Hen's Castle or Castlekirke on Lough Corrib. He married Grainne Ni Mhaille and they had three children, Owen, Murchadh na Maor (of the stewards) and Margaret.

The marriage of Donal and Grainne linked the two most powerful seafaring families of Connacht. Between them the O'Malleys and the O'Flahertys controlled much of the trading, raiding and wrecking along the Atlantic coast of Connacht. Donal, nicknamed an Coileach (Cock) was killed during fighting with the now gaelicised Joyces of Maam Valley over control of the strategically-placed Nonnan castle, Castlekirke, on upper Lough Corrib. Despite this, Grainne continued to successfully defend the castle. Little is heard from the Western O'Flahertys until 1584 when Murchadh na dTua (of the battle axes) O'Flaherty from Fuaidh Castle (which was on the bridge at Oughterard and is no longer extant), recently installed by the English, at Aughnanure, made an unsuccessful raid in Connemara in an attempt to seize Ballynahinch Castle. Despite his lack of success, he was knighted the following year when he signed up to the Composition of Connacht, which involved the surrender of tribal lands to the Crown to be re-granted as heritable land under Feudal law.

The failure of the Western O'Flahertys, Joyces and Burkes of Mayo to sign up to the Composition of Connacht led to direct confrontation with the English forces; rebellion and brutal suppression followed. A major raid into Connemara in 1586 was led by John Bingham, brother of the ruthless Lord President of Connacht Richard Bingham. The O'Flahertys withdrew with much of their wealth , thousands of cattle, sheep and horses, deep into Connemara and out onto the tidal island of Omey. This incurison led to the death of Owen O'Flaherty, first-born son of Donal and Grainne, and the elderly leader of the O'Tooles who kept a house of hospitality (Biatach) on the island.

The raid is described by his mother: (Grace O'Malley, The Pirate Queen),

"her first husband was called Donal Choggy O'Flaherty, who during his life was chieftam of the Barony of Ballenehensy containing, 24 quarters of land; that she had two sons by her said first husband; the eldest called Owen O'Flaherty who married Katherine Bourke, daughter of Edmond Bourke of Castle Barry (Castlebar) and had a son named Donel O'Flaherty now (1593) living; that the said Owen O'Flaherty all his lifetime remained a true subject of His Majesty until July, 1586, at which time the Bourkes of Mc William's Country (i.e. the Mayo Bourkes) and the sept of the Joyces began to rebel; that said Owen according to Sir Richard Bingham's special direction did withdraw himself and his followers with all their goods and cattle into a strong island [Omey Island] that 500 soldiers under the leading of Captain John Bingham came to the mainland right against the said island calling for victuals; whereupon the said Owen came forth with a number of boats and ferried all the soldiers into the island where they were entertained with the best cheer they had;' that that night the said Owen with eighteen of his chief men were apprehended and tied by the soldiers who drew out of the island 4,000 cows, 500 stud mares, and 1,000 sheep, leaving the remainder of the poor men all naked: that they came with the cattle and prisoners to Ballynehensy where

An O'Flaherty (& O'Malley) Stronghold in Connemara

Captain John Bingham awaited them: that the next night, a false alarm being raised in the camp, the said Owen being then fast bound in the cabin of Captain Grene O'Mulloy was cruelly murdered. having twelve deadly wounds, and in that miserable sort ended his unfortunat days"

Murchadh na Maor (of the Stewards) younger brother of Owen, now took over as leader of the Western Branch of the O'Flahertys and had to tread very carefully in the face of growing English power in the Provinces. Having seen his brother Owen killed so ruthlessly, he was determined not to give the English any excuses to depose him. In the Autumn of 1588 a number of Spanish Armada ships were wrecked on the coast of Mayo and Connemara. The O'Flaherty and O'Malley adopted a survival strategy which involved killing or handing over to the Crown all the Spaniards that came ashore from these wrecks; to assist the Spaniards was to put their own survival at risk, while keeping Bingham at bay was key to their ongoing survival.

At least two or possibly three Spanish Armada ships were wrecked in the autumn of 1588 on the shores of Connemara. Almost all the men were drowned while several hundred struggled ashore to an uncertain fate. At Mace Head, west of Cama, at a place since known as Duirling na Spaineach where the "Conception Delcano" was wrecked. Many are said to have been killed on the shore by Tadhg na Buile of Ard Castle. Others who survived the wreck of the "Falco Blanco Mediana" in Ballynakill Bay were initially protected by the O'Flahertys of Renvyle. The O'Flahertys however soon succumbed to English pressure and marched them to their deaths in Galway city. Only two were known to have survived from the "Falcon Blanco Mediana", the noblemen Don Luis de Cordoba and his nephew, who were later ransomed. A persistent tradition current from the Ballyconneely area is of another Armada ship wrecked on wild rocks one and a half miles west of Bunowen, known locally as Carraig na gCapall (from horses that came ashore). Despite the general butchery meted out it is clear that not all the Spaniards were betrayed. The O'Flahertys managed to rescue twenty Spanish troops which were used in raids by their eastern cousin, Sir Munough O'Flaherty, in south Mayo in support of the Burkes in 1589. Despite keeping a low profile throughout 1590 Murchadh na Maor refused to support Airt O' Malley, bis cousin, in ferrying troops in support of the English from Galway to Sligo in an attempt to crush the

O'Donnell rebellion in Ulster. He joined in the rebellion and is said to have sailed from Bunowen with 600 men to join with the forces of O'Neill and O'Donnell who were attempting to link up with Spanish forces in Kinsale. Following defeat at Kinsale he returned to Bunowen where he lived out his days until dying in 1626, he was buried in Galway City. We have a rare glimpse of the O'Flaherty maritime world from an Inquisition taken in Galway in the year 1607:

Below: Southwest corner of the 15th century bawn of Bunowen Castle, with the 18th century castle in the background.

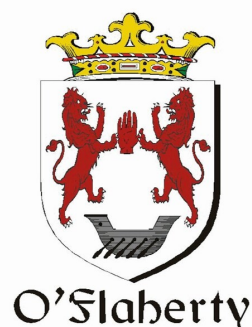


An O'Flaherty (& O'Malley) Stronghold in Connemara

“Morogh na Moyre O'Flaherty is seized of the castles of Bunowen, Ballinabinch, and Renvyle: that Donnell na Cogge (O'Flaherty) father of the said Morogh, and whose heir he is, was at the time he died seized of several chief rents in the Barony of Ballinahinch; that O'Flaherty held the fines and customs following, in and through the whole barony of Ballinabinch, namely -First, that whenever anyone was robbed of a cow, the thief shall pay to the said O'Flaherty seven cows for every cow so stolen; that whenever O'Flaherty went to the General Sessions the inhabitants used to present him with a butt of sack. Moreover that he was entitled to have yearly out of every quarter of land within the said Barony certain measures of meal called 'Sruans' in Irish, together with a sufficient quantity of butter. Further, that it was customary whenever anyone took any wreck out of the sea, or ambergreese [ie spermaceti -see Appendix A] without notice thereof given to O'Flaherty or his sergeants, the person so doing shall pay a fine of seven cows to O'Flaherty: And whenever O'Flaherty gave any of his daughters in marriage he was accustomed to receive one barren two-year-old cow out of every inhabited quarter within the aforesaid barony”

He was replaced by his son Murchadh na Mart (of the Beeves). In 1637 Thomas Wentworth, Lord Deputy of Ireland, is reported to have paid a visit to Bunowen Castle -a dual purpose visit, gathering information on the strength of the O'Flahertys and encouraging them in their loyalty to the Crown. Wentworth was received with all the rude profusions of Irish hospitality. Murchadh was subsequently knighted by him. This loyalty to the Crown was short-lived. During the Great Rebellion of 1641 Murchadh's galleys at Bunowen were used to transport hundreds of Kerne (Irish footsoldiers) in support of his younger brother Edmond who was besieging Galway city. Edmond later sailed to Aran probably into the medieval harbour of Killeany and from there to the coast of Clare where he sacked the castle of Trumra and killed its owner, Peter Ward, and an Englishman. With the failure of the rebellion, the O'Flaherty estates were confiscated. Bunowen castle was captured and burnt in 1653. Edmond fled to Connemara but was subsequently captured by the English, hiding out in a cave on the side of Tully Mountain. He was later executed for the killing of Peter Ward.

His brother, Sir Murchadh, was to survive, retiring to Aran where he died in 1666. He was buried in the ancient and prestigious burial ground of Teaghlach Rinne. However a son of Edmond was able to lease some ancestral lands in Renvyle that were held by the Blakes who were absentee landlords. His son was known as Edmond Lairdir, who died in poverty in 1749. Edmond's descendants continued to live in Renvyle as middlemen to the Blakes until the early nineteenth century when they were dispossessed yet again and disappeared from history. Their demise finally ended the centuries-old domination of west Connemara by the O'Flahertys.



An O'Flaherty (& O'Malley) Stronghold in Connemara

Castle Description

The castle is built on what is now a remote spot on the west bank of a small stream at the point where it enters a long narrow inlet. Its location is typical of the many O'Flaherty towerhouses built by these sea lords, i.e., within striking distance of deep water but protected by a formidable barrier of dangerous reefs, rocks and islets. The channel is sheltered by a wall of surrounding rocks and there shallow draught galleys would have been able to ride safely at anchor except perhaps in a southerly gale.

Even today in its broken-down state, the location of the castle is very impressive, commanding huge views southeast to Aran and westwards to the Hill of Doon and a myriad of smaller offshore islands and rocks. It originally would have stood four storeys high and like Ard Castle, Leitir Meallain, and Rockfleet Castles in Mayo, the castle would have had its base in the actual tide.

It is succinctly described by Roderic O'Flaherty in his Description of Iar-Connaught, written A.D. 1684:

“Three miles [to the westward] of Irrosbeg is the castle and manor of Bunowen in Inosmore (Errismore). Westward of the castle is Knock-a-duin hill [Doon] the third land-mark described by such as sail from the main. On the east side of the hill sits a harbour for shipping, and the parish church just by, at the hill's foot. There is an old fortfess (Doon) on the top of the bill, which gives name to [the locality of] Ballindown (Ballindoon), Ballindoon haven, Ballindoon parish. St. Flannan, first Bishop of Killaloe AD.640, is patron of this parish; and therein his festival day is kept the 18th December. On the west side of the hill (Doon hill) is a well in memory of the seven daughters”

The castle today lies in ruins within a trapezoidal bawn measuring a maximum of 51m N/S by 37m E/W narrowing to 25.5m along its southern seaward end. The castle survives today as a 10m by 12m mound up to 3m in height in the south east corner of the bawn. Much of the bawn on the seaward side has been swept away by the tide with only foundation courses visible in places. The northern half of the bawn is relatively well preserved and stands up to 3m in height where it abuts the adjoining stream in the north-eastern sector. The majority of the Bawn stands less than 1.5m high and 1.4m in thickness. There are traces of at least one rectangular building abutting the northern wall of the bawn and an opening in the eastern wall does appear to represent the remains of an opening for a watergate which would have allowed access for people arriving by sea. The stream on which it stands has in part been canalized where it abuts the bawn in order to facilitate a possible mill. The mill foundation may lie beneath an adjoining mound on the eastern side of the stream. The edge of the stream has been further altered to create a number of small indentations, possibly moorings for row boats.

The castle was part of a broader late medieval landscape that was centred around the hill of Doon. To the west of the castle there survives the remains of a medieval field system rectilinear in plan, traces of an intertidal roadway, which runs westward towards Doon Hill, a Holy Well, Tobar na Seacht ninion on the western side of Doon Hill (which is still visited) and the site of the medieval parish church of Ballindoon, the church in which Donal and Grainne almost certainly were married.

Below: Watergate, with Doon Hill in the background



An O'Flaherty (& O'Malley) Stronghold in Connemara

The church lay at the north-eastern edge of Doon and is no longer extant. The last vestiges of it were described by John O'Dovovan in 1839. At that stage only the south side wall remained, about 7 feet high and 42 feet long. This was the Dun on the hill above, robbed out to provide stone for the later eighteenth-century Geoghegan mansion, walled garden and mortuary chapel of the Geoghegans. In the late eighteenth century the Geoghegans built a folly erected to commemorate the granting of free trade in 1780 and in the early nineteenth century a signal tower was built there, possibly by the Blakes, who took over the estate when the Geoghegans went bankrupt in the late 1830s. At the base of the hill the remains of a stone jetty can be seen at low tide collaborating O'Flaherty's account that there is a harbour for shipping on the east side of Doon Hill.

In 1656, Art Geoghegan of Castletown, Co Westmeath, moved into the burnt out ruins of Bunowen Castle. They occupied the castle for the next 100 years. He had been a major Catholic landowner, was transferred to Connemara as part of the Government's notorious policy of 'To Hell or to Connaught'. In return for their fertile acres in Leinster they received 900 acres of mainly bog and rock, except for the fertile nugget of land around Doon Hill at Bunowen and its surrounding townlands. The Geoghegans would appear to have lived at the castle until the middle of the eighteenth century when they moved westward on to the present magnificent setting when the present Bunowen castle was completed. It was built as a strong house in 1756 by Art Geoghegan's grandson Richard (1716-1800).

He was the first of the family to conform to the Protestant faith as did many others of the landed families in Connemara for social, political, and economic reasons at this time, most famously the Martins and the D'arcys.

Below: Line of bawn wall on west side with sheltered inlet in the background

Appendix A:

The reference to "Ambergris" is important as it was an incredibly valuable product of the sea derived from the gut of the sperm whale and was regularly washed up on the Atlantic shores of Europe. It is a black, semi-viscous and foul-smelling liquid while in the gut of the whale, but on exposure to sunlight, it hardens to an aromatic, marbled, greyish, waxy substance with the squid beaks still embedded and was worth its weight in gold. It was traded southwards to Seville and onwards to the spice markets of Seville, Cairo and Baghdad, and onwards to the Orient where it was used as a fixative in perfume and in medicine, and as an aphrodisiac and a spice for food and wine. It was still being collected on the coasts of Connemara, according to Roderic O' Flaherty in the late seventeenth century. It also gives us an insight into the far-flung trading contacts of the O'Flaherty world.



An O'Flaherty (& O'Malley) Stronghold in Connemara

Note:

It is not permitted to visit either the original or the later castle without advance permission from the Landowners (At the time of the original article the Mac Donagh family , Bunabhainn). It is possible however, to view the original castle from a point on the shore to the east of the castle that involves a short 50 metre walk along the shore from the end of a small road. There is space to park a number of cars here.



Above: Canalized stream and possible mill site

Below: View of castle mound from the north



Destination Westport—Check it out when you're planning your trip



When planning your trip to The O'Malley Clan Gathering 2025, (27th to 29th June), we've been through the details of how to get here, and even a potential roadtrip that you could include the O'Malley Clan Gathering in, but what about Westport itself!

There's a great website, "Destination Westport" with heaps of details on places to stay, from budget accommodation to luxury hotels and bed and breakfasts, things to do, guides to activities such as a climb of Croagh Patrick, (not for the faint hearted), so make sure to check it out.

Westport has lots of fabulous places to stay, but beds will fill up quickly, so don't delay in putting your plan together. You won't need to concentrate on the "things to do in Westport" section as we'll be sure to keep you busy all weekend, but if you're staying longer in the Westport area it might be no harm to have a look through it.

As always, if you've any questions at all when planning your trip, pop us over an email to omalleyclanireland@gmail.com and we'll come back to you. Click on the image below to check out "Destination Westport"



Duolingo—A great way to get back to the Irish Language!



An Bhfuil Gaeilge Agat?

What's Duolingo? I hear you ask. Well I'll be honest, I heard somebody else talking about it one day and decided to check it out. Duolingo is an app that you can download onto your phone and do daily language lessons in whatever language takes your fancy.

Over the past 12 months or so I've been brushing up on my French, (which comes in handy when trying to order food for myself on holiday), but of course there's over 40 languages available on the app, including Irish!

So if you've a busy life, as we all do these days, and haven't got time to actually enrol in an evening class for the autumn/winter to brush up on your Irish language skills, why not download the Duolingo app. It's free. It works, (I can testify to that, not having lost any weight on my holidays), and it will give you daily reminders to do your 4 or 5 minutes language lesson.

From my own experience, when learning a language, or just brushing up, it always helps to hear someone, (even if its an app), actually speaking the language to you on a daily basis. Immersion does actually work.

If you're looking for a skill to brush up on during those dark long winter evenings, maybe the native tongue is what you're looking for!

Download on the App Store, or Google Play, or wherever you get your Apps.

O'Malleys! Test your brain with an Irish Geography Crossword

Across

2. THE MOST NORTHERLY PROVINCE IN IRELAND
5. CAPITAL CITY OF IRELAND
7. COUNTY KNOWN AS "THE CATS"
8. THE COUNTY WHERE THE CLIFFS OF MOHER ARE
13. IRELANDS MOST SOUTHERLY POINT
15. GLENDALOUGH IS IN THIS COUNTY
16. COUNTY REFERRED TO AS THE "ORCHARD" COUNTY
17. THE ROCK OF
20. TARA AND NEWGRANGE ARE IN THIS COUNTY
21. THE COUNTY WITH THE MOST O MALLEYS IN IRELAND

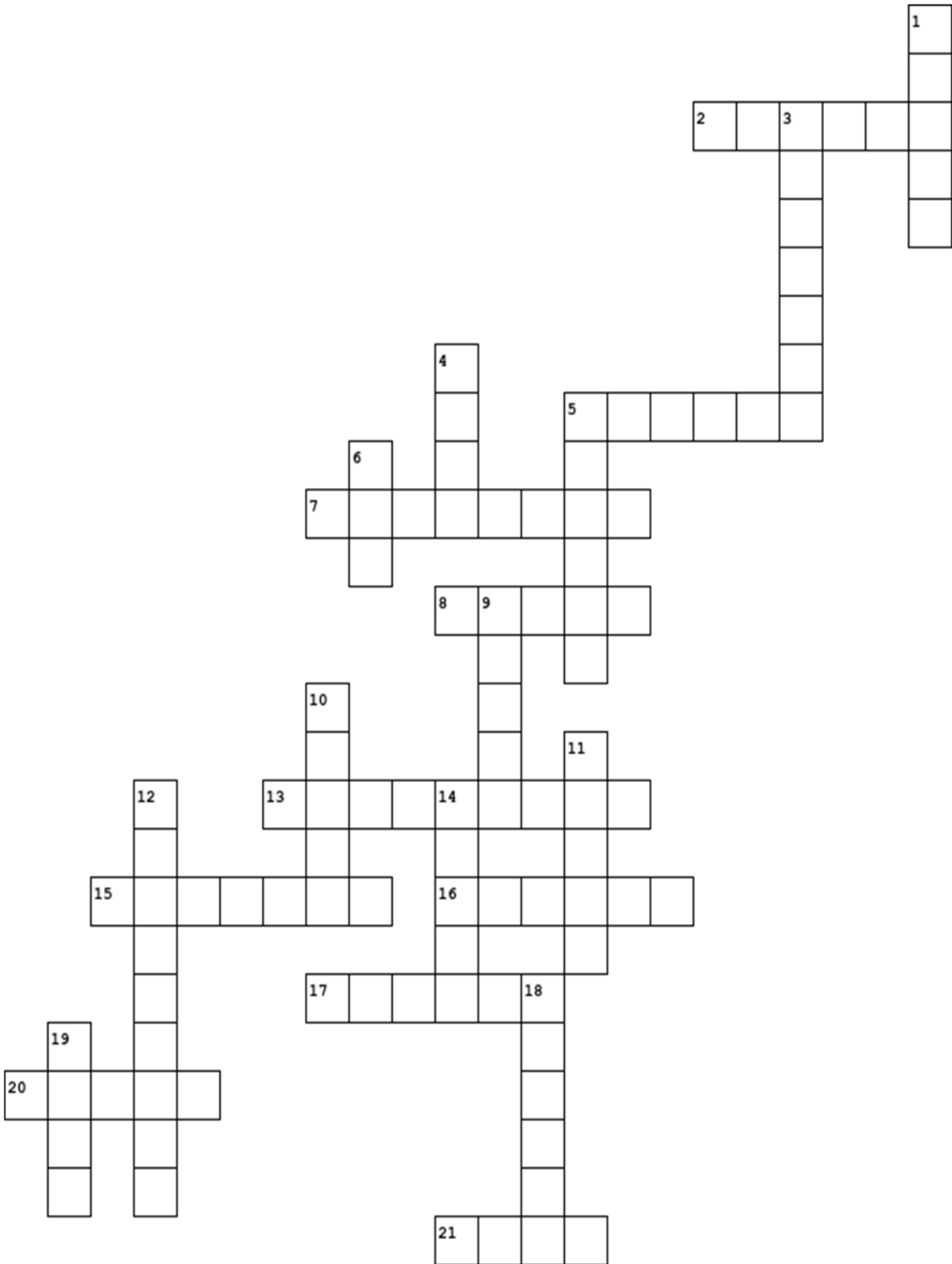
Down

1. COUNTY REFERRED TO AS "THE KINGDOM"
3. THE LONGEST RIVER IN IRELAND
4. THE "REAL CAPITAL" OF IRELAND
5. HIGHEST MOUNTAIN IN ULSTER
6. THE NUMBER OF COUNTIES IN MUNSTER
9. IRELANDS SMALLEST COUNTY
10. COUNTY IN IRELANDS NORTH WEST
11. RIVER THAT FLOWS THROUGH BELFAST
12. HOW MANY COUNTIES ARE THERE IN IRELAND
14. IRELANDS LARGEST LAKE
18. RIVER THAT FLOWS THROUGH DUBLIN
19. LAKE ON THE RIVER SHANNON

Answers from our August Edition: Across: 2 CLARE, 4 ROBBIE, 6 MAYO, 10 SEAMUS, 12 ATLANTIC, 14 DUBHDARA, 15 MARTIN, 16 CLAREGALWAY, 18 THEROUNDHOUSE 20 CLEW, 21 WESTPORT

Down: 1 SUGA, 3 ERNIE, 4 ROCKFLEET, 5 SEA, 6 MONTANA, 7 CHAMBERS, 8 USA, 9 BUNRATTY, 10 SHANNON, 11 WALTER, 13 KELLY, 17 GRACE, 19 DENISE

O'Malleys! Test your brain with an Irish Geography Crossword





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find us on
Facebook

www.facebook.com/omalleyclan



[o_malley_clan_association](https://www.instagram.com/o_malley_clan_association)

The O'Malley Clan Association aims to reach out to O'Malleys from all around the world and foster links between the O'Malleys around the globe and the clan at home here in Ireland.

The Clan Association formed in 1953 has been connecting O'Malleys around the world in The US and Canada, Britain, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, South America, and anywhere else you can think of for 70 years now.

We hope with our website, and newsletter, that We can go from strength to strength in our aim to connect all the O'Malleys around the world.

The O'Malley Clan Association NEEDS YOUR HELP, Join Today!



**Support
the Clan,
Be a part
of it**

**The O'Malley Clan
Association Needs You!**

Join Today.....www.omalleyclan.ie