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CLAN ANNUAL
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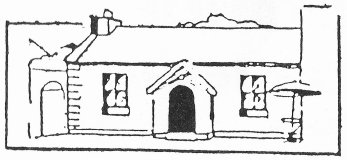
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THE O'MALLEY CLAN ANNUAL

We hope our readers will continue to enjoy the *Clan Annual.* The main events of this year's rally will take place in Castlebar, so we have included a number of items dealing with Castlebar and the surrounding area. We are grateful to the following contributors, and would welcome further contributions from our readers: Anne Chambers, Máire Cris Ní Chionna, Wayne Harlow, Bernie O'Malley, Bronwyn O'Malley, Paddy Joe O'Malley, Bairbre O'Malley and Colette Purcell. A very special word of thanks to our advertisers who made this production possible.

Westport, June 1990.

O'Malley Clan Committee

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Secretary:
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GERALDINE O'MALLEY, JOHN JOE O'MALLEY,
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Hon. Editor:
SHEILA MULLOY, Carrowbaun, Westport, Co. Mayo.

Back numbers 1986, 1987, 1988 and 1989, may be purchased at the Clan Rally for £3 each, or by post for £3.50 each. Please make the necessary adjustment if paying with dollars. The rate of exchange at going to press is one Irish Pound = One Dollar 60 cents.

38th O'Malley Clan Rally

Saturday 30 June and Sunday 1 July 1990

Our Chieftain, Michael O'Malley of Castlebar, invites all O'Malleys, together with their spouses, relatives and friends, to join him for two days of celebration at our annual rally. We hope you will be able to come.

Saturday 30 June

12 noon	Civic Reception by Castlebar Urban District Council at Marsh House, Newtown, Castlebar.
1–1.15 p.m.	Lunch at Welcome Inn Hotel, New Antrim Street, Castlebar.
2.30 p.m.	Coach tour to places of historic interest in the O'Malley Country.
8 p.m.	Annual General Meeting of the O'Malley Clan Association in the Pontoon Bridge Hotel (11 miles from Castlebar).
9.30 p.m.	Chieftain Michael O'Malley's Reception at Pontoon Bridge Hotel. Entertainment will be provided by local musicians.

Sunday 1 July

12.30 p.m.	Mass in Ballintubber Abbey (8 miles from Castlebar), by kind permission of Revd. Francis Fahey, C.C.
2.15 p.m.	Assemble at the Welcome Inn Hotel, New Antrim Street, Castlebar, for Annual Rally Luncheon. It is requested that each former Chieftain will preside over a table of ten at the luncheon, as there will be no formal top table. A draw for several valuable prizes will take place during the luncheon, and entertainment will be provided afterwards.

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	Dr. Patrick Pearse O'Malley, Delgany, Co. Wicklow.

CHIEFTAINS OF THE CLAN

1953	John J. O'Malley, Westport.
1954	Prof. C. Conor O'Malley, Galway.
1955	Patrick E. O'Malley, Limerick.
1956	Dr. P. Pearse O'Malley, Belfast.
1957	Charles O'Malley, B.D.S., Limerick.
1958	An tOllamh Tomás Ó Máille, Galway.
1959	Charles O'Malley, Westport.
1960	Prof. Michael G. O'Malley, Galway.
1961	Bartley O'Malley, Dunmore, Co. Galway.
1962	George O'Malley, Manchester.
1963	Matthew O'Malley, Cleggan, Clifden, Co. Galway.
1964	Patrick O'Malley, V.S., Castlebar.
1965	Thomas O'Malley, Chicago and Dublin.
1966	Prof. Eoin O'Malley, Dublin.
1967	George O'Malley, Castletroy, Co. Limerick.
1968	Stiofán Ó Máille, Galway.
1969	John O'Malley, Manchester.
1970	Martin O'Malley, Dublin.
1971	Tim O'Malley, Limerick.
1972	Gerry O'Malley, Ballycastle , Co. Mayo.
1973	Ward O'Malley, Golden, Co. Tipperary.
1974	Richard Kilroy O'Malley, Clonbur, Co. Galway.
1975	Prof. Ethna O'Malley Gaffney, Dublin.
1976	Michael O'Malley, Athlone, Co. Westmeath.
1977	Martin O'Malley, Tourmakeady, Co. Mayo.
1978	Thomas J. O'Malley, Navan, Co. Meath.
1979	Dr. Thomas O'Malley, Florida, U.S.A.
1980	John E. O'Malley, Ardee, Co. Louth.
1981	Grace O'Malley Purcell, Dublin.
1982	Declan O'Malley, Dublin.
1983	Michael O'Malley, London.
1984	Judge Peter O'Malley, Dublin.
1985	Brian O'Malley, Boston, U.S.A.
1986	Anthony O'Malley, Louisburgh, Co. Mayo.
1987	Joseph O'Malley Blackwell, Newport, Co. Mayo.
1988	Alice O'Malley, Chicago, United States of America.
1989	Michael O'Malley, Ballynew, Castlebar.



Michael O'Malley, Ballynew, Castlebar.

CHIEFTAIN 1989-1990

Michael Brendan O'Malley, son of John Joe O'Malley, Castlebar, and Bridie O'Malley, Balla, Claremorris, was born in Castlebar in 1942. He attended Belcarra National School and St. Gerald's College, Castlebar. Michael is engaged in civil engineering and is a widely-experienced road-making contractor, while for relaxation he enjoys golf and football. He and his wife Nora are the parents of five daughters, and have been popular figures at rallies for many years. Michael's unfailing courtesy and geniality have contributed greatly to the enjoyment of his fellow rallygoers.

O'MALLEY CLAN RALLY 1989

The 37th O'Malley Clan Rally took place from Friday 21 July to Sunday 23 July 1989. It was a most successful event, and this was largely due to the great interest and hard work of our Chieftain Alice of Chicago.

On Friday a civic reception was graciously extended to the clan by the Chairman and members of the Urban District Council. Mr. Seán Staunton, the Chairman, welcomed the attendance and gave a special welcome to the overseas visitors in his usual eloquent fashion. Alice thanked him for his hospitality on behalf of the overseas party and of all clan members present. George O'Malley, member of Castlebar U.D.C., and Martin Joe O'Toole, T.D., then spoke, and stressed the importance of the rally for the people of Mayo and the West in general. The Clan is indeed grateful to the Urban District Council for their hospitality and support over the years.

The barbecue on Saturday at Séamus Daly's premises in Mulrany was blessed with glorious weather. Fifty people attended and were loud in their praise of the tasty fare produced by Committee member Peter



O'Malley Clan Committee: (left to right) front row: Alice O'Malley, Dr. Pearse O'Malley (Guardian Chieftain), Brendan O'Malley, Anthony O'Malley, Peter McGee, Shiela Mulloy. Back row: Anthony O'Malley, John Joe O'Malley, Michael O'Malley, Maurice O'Malley, Joseph O'Malley Blackwell.

McGee. Entertainment was provided by two charming ladies Fionnuala O'Malley and Kathleen Ryder. Their beautiful interpretation of favourite Irish airs was greatly appreciated, especially by our visiting clan members.

The Annual General Meeting in Old House Hotel attracted an attendance of over sixty people. Reports were presented by the Recording Secretary, the Treasurer and the Chairperson. We also heard from the Granuaile Trust and from our Chieftain Alice of Chicago. Sal O'Malley McInerney was elected as the new Tánaiste. She has been prominent in her work for the Granuaile Trust since its inception, and it is felt that in her the Clan will have a dynamic and enterprising Chieftain.

The Chairperson in her address put before the meeting the problems of a small committee organising an annual event, and suggested that there might be some change in the rally formula. She suggested the following alternatives:

1) That the Rally would take place every second year, making it more attractive to the participants as there would be more novelty attached to it. The workload of the committee would be considerably lighter as they would concentrate on making it a really enjoyable event every second year. The Chieftain would be in office for two years, which



The Saturday Barbecue at Séamus Daly's premises at Mulrany. Chef Peter McGee serves Pipe-Major Michael O'Malley, watched by some hungry members of the clan.



Enjoying themselves on Saturday night at the Old Head Hotel are former Chieftain Dr. Thomas O'Malley of Florida, U.S.A., and his wife Marianne. Behind them are Pipe-Major Michael O'Malley and Grace O'Malley O'Hara, daughter of former Guardian Chieftain Prof. C. Conor O'Malley.

would give him or her ample time to learn the ropes and familiarise himself or herself with the Clan business.

2) The second suggestion was to have the rally in a different venue every second year, where a local committee would look after the organising of it.

There was considerable discussion on these points. One useful suggestion from the floor was to have long and short rallies alternating. The shorter one would be a one-day affair, while the longer one would be a two-day event and would be more attractive to those travelling a distance. It was decided to postpone a decision on the matter until next year and meanwhile to keep it under review.

Four volunteers then offered their services to the Committee, an offer which was gratefully accepted. They are – Declan O'Malley of Dublin, former chieftain; Geraldine O'Malley of Navan, daughter of former chieftain Tommy; Mary Jane O'Malley of Newport and Piper Owen O'Malley from Swinford. The evening concluded with dancing and conviviality.

Sunday began with Mass in the Assembly Hall of St. Patrick's Girls' School in Westport, kindly put at our disposal by the Sisters of Mercy. The celebrant was Revd Des O'Malley, O.F.M., The Abbey, Galway, brother of Eileen O'Malley, Station Road, Westport and Paddy Joe O'Malley of Chicago and cousin of Chieftain Alice. He spoke eloquently of the importance of personal prayer in the practice of our religion. Sr. Assumpta and her superb choir made it a memorable occasion. As usual, Pipe-Major Michael O'Malley of London added greatly to the ceremonial both then and later. This year he was accompanied by noted local piper, Owen O'Malley of Swinford.

175 guests attended the Clan Luncheon in Hotel Westport, where a copious and well-presented meal was served. Guardian Chieftain Pearse welcomed all who attended, and Chieftain Alice thanked all our sponsors – the advertisers in the *Clan Annual*, Renvyle House Hotel and Breaffy House Hotel who presented raffle prizes, and the proprietors of Hotel Westport who provided Irish coffee at the end of a lovely meal. The new Tánaiste was announced, and Alice then transferred the Staff of Office to our incoming Chieftain Michael O'Malley of Ballynew, Castlebar. Fine weather and good cheer had combined to make the 37th Rally a really enjoyable event.



Pipers Michael and Owen O'Malley lead out the congregation from the Sunday Mass in the Assembly Hall, St. Patrick's Girls' School, Westport. In the background are Revd. Des O'Malley, O.F.M., John Joe O'Malley and Jeff O"Malley.



Colonel Stan Kennedy, U.S.A., with his wife Mary, wheel Stan's mother Mrs. Catherine Kennedy from St. Patrick's School after the Sunday Mass.



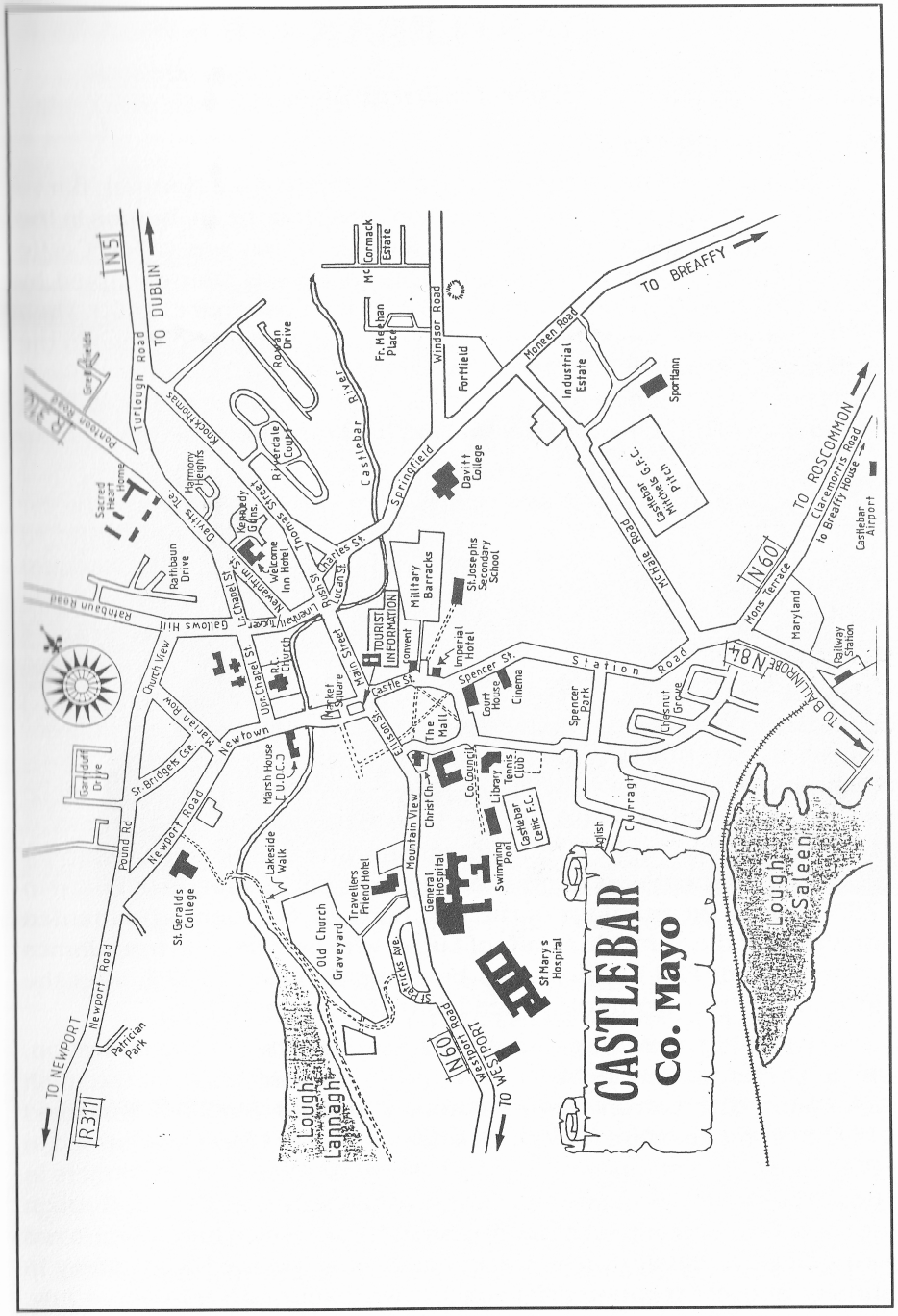
Installation of incoming chieftain Michael O'Malley by outgoing chieftain Alice O'Malley. Behind them is Paddy Joe O'Malley of Chicago.



The O'Malley family Westport with their cousin Alice from Chicago. Hugh and Grace (Purcell) are in front. Behind them are Brendan and Jeff.



A group of former chieftains outside Hotel Westport. Front row, left to right: Martin O'Malley, Dublin; Ethna O'Malley Gaffney, Dublin, Alice O'Malley, Chicago, Anthony O'Malley, Louisburgh, Pearse O'Malley, Wicklow, Grace O'Malley Purcell, Dublin, Joseph O'Malley Blackwell, Newport, Back row, left to right: Eoin O'Malley, Dublin, Gerry O'Malley, Wicklow, Michael O'Malley, Ennis, Michael O'Malley, Castlebar, Thomas O'Malley, Navan, Peter O'Malley, Dublin, Michael O'Malley, London, Ward O'Malley, Cashel, Thomas O'Malley, Florida.



CASTLEBAR

Colette Purcell

Origins of the town

Castlebar town came into existence in 1238 when a Norman, Baron de Barry from Buttevant, Co. Cork, having assisted the De Burgos in the conquest of Connacht in 1235, built a castle which was called Castle Barry, hence *Caisleán an Bharraigh*. This castle was later occupied by another Norman, De Cogan, after the Barrys left Castlebar c. 1400. Then the De Burgos (Burkes), the most powerful of the Anglo-Normans in the west, took over and divided their Connacht estate into two units, Galway and Mayo. They ruled as Irish chieftains under the name of Mac William Íochtar (Lower) in Mayo, and Mac William Uachtar (Upper) in Galway from c. 1300-c.1600.

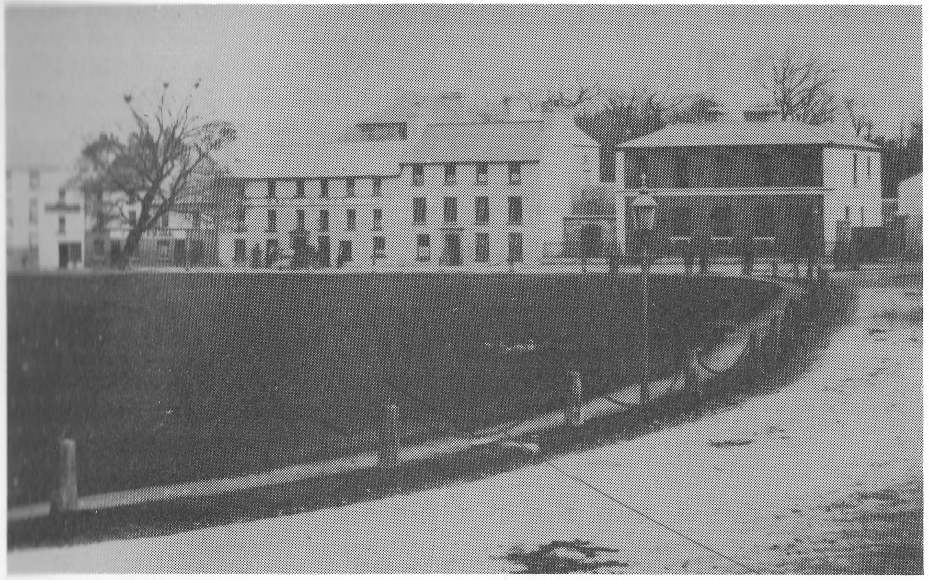
The De Burgo/Burkes/MacWilliams were driven from Mayo by Sir Richard Bingham Governor of Connacht in 1591. The only chief to survive in Mayo was Tiobóid na Long who was given the title Viscount Mayo. He was the son of the famous Gráinne Ní Mháille or Gráinne Uáile and Risteárd an Iarainn Bourke and his tomb is in the sacristy of Ballintubber Abbey.

The castle and estate of the Bourkes, 1,200 acres of land, was leased out to Bryan Fitzwilliam who sold it in 1591 to John Bingham, nephew of Richard, for '100 cows and the unpaid rent of £5 for three years'. John Bingham was Sheriff of Mayo. He repaired and strengthened the castle and was knighted in 1605. He died in 1632 without issue, and was succeeded by his nephew Henry Bingham, who was created a baronet of Nova Scotia two years later. The Binghams became Earls of Lucan in 1795 through the marriage of the fifth Baronet, Sir John, who married Ann Vesey of the Sarsfield family of Lucan who held the title from James II. The present Earl of Lucan has been missing since 1973, after the family nanny had been found dead in their London home.

In 1611 King James I granted the town a charter of incorporation, which conferred the right of returning two members to the Irish Parliament. The patron of the borough Richard Bingham was paid £15,000 compensation for its loss when the Act of Union was passed in 1800. The borough was replaced by a Board of Town Commissioners in 1854. The Urban District Council was established in April 1900, through the Local Government Act of 1898, and is the governing body of the town with offices at Marsh House. Castlebar is now 'twinned' with Auray in Brittany, and an exchange visit to each town takes place annually in July.

A Historical Walk around the town

1. **Imperial Hotel.** Originally called Daly's Hotel, it was owned by James Daly who was the editor and owner of the *Connaught Telegraph* a weekly newspaper. From the second floor window of the Drawing Room, on the evening of 16 August 1879, Michael Davitt addressed a huge crowd assembled on the Mall, and after this historic meeting he founded the National Land League of Mayo with the assistance of James Daly 'a champion of the small farmers of Mayo'. This was the forerunner and basis of Parnell's National Land League and the Home Rule movement.



Mall, hotel and Bank of Ireland c.1870 (Wynne Collection).

A plaque to Michael Davitt on the hotel reads

> In this house the National Land League was founded on August 16, 1879 by Michael Davitt without whose life and work we would not own our land today. To his memory and of all those who helped in the Land War which our people under his leadership fought and won, the Land Project of 1949 is dedicated on behalf of the Irish people by the Government of Ireland, August 16, 1949.

The hotel, now owned by the Jennings family, has been maintained in excellent order and is a historic link with the past.

2. **The Mall.** This beautiful Green, once a marsh, was formerly Lord Lucan's cricket pitch and was presented to the people of the town by the

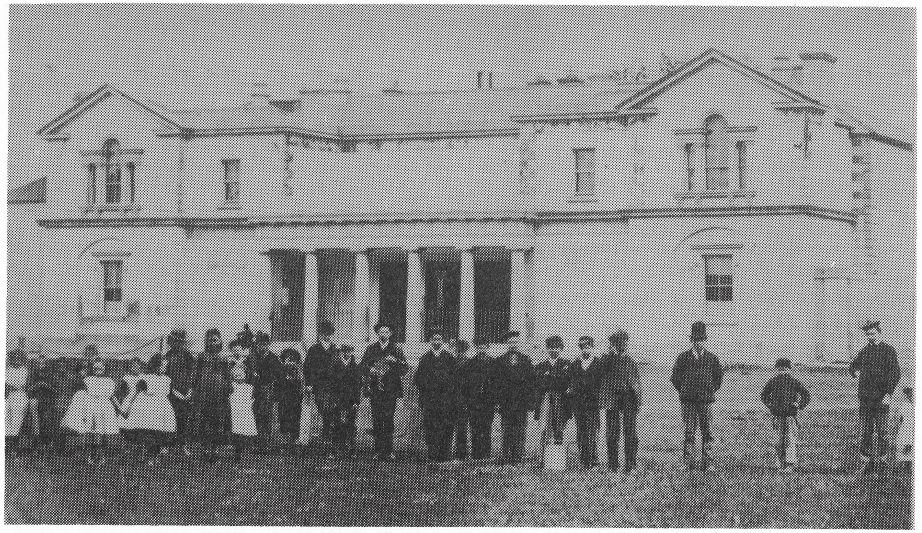
fourth earl in 1888. It was also an assembly place for the gentry of the town, who strolled around it under the shade of the magnificent chestnut trees planted in 1891. These were only cut down in 1988 when they were found to have Dutch Elm disease and are presently being replaced.

Many imposing buildings surround the mall.

3. **Áras an Chontae.** Opposite the hotel is the new County Council headquarters, Áras an Chontae, officially opened in May 1989. This building and the machinery yard behind it, are on the site of the old infirmary built in 1834 and demolished in 1932. It is now the administrative centre of the county. Prior to this the offices were in the courthouse.

4. **The Library.** The new O'Malley Library has just been opened on 29 May, 1990. It has an area of over 900 square metres, is beautifully landscaped overlooking the Mall, and cost one million pounds to build and equip. As well as books, the library has a reference collection of audio and video cassettes, an exhibition area and a local studies department on the heritage and history of Co. Mayo, which in itself is a 'library within a library'. The system is computerised using the MacDonnell Douglas Automated Library System. At present the opening hours are 12-1 p.m. and 2 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. and it is well worth a visit.

5. **Cavalry Barracks.** The present site of the Gárda Station was formerly the cavalry barracks built in 1834, and behind this is Spencer Park, seat of the Spencer family, and later of Major Owen O'Malley, D.L.,

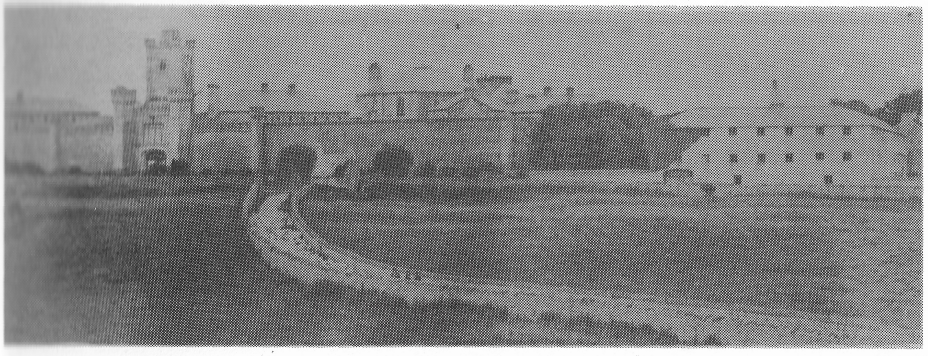


Courthouse Castlebar c.1870. (Wynne Collection).

brother of Major-General George O'Malley. This house is now demolished.

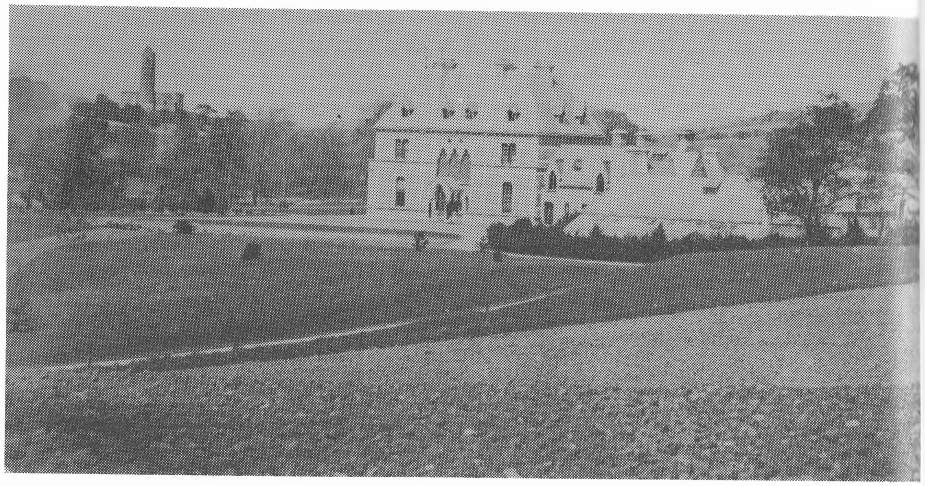
6. **Margaret Burke Sheridan House.** The first of a group of three georgian houses overlooking the Mall is the house where the famous opera singer and prima donna Margaret Burke Sheridan was born in 1889. Her centenary was celebrated in Castlebar in 1989. The house, now owned by Dr. Dermod Ryan, has a plaque to her memory .

7. **Courthouse.** The courthouse designed by a Mr. Papworth with Grecian Doric columns, was built in the early 1800s. The assizes for the county were held there, also quarter sessions in January and October, and petty sessions every Saturday. The local authority up to the passing of the Local Government Act of 1898 was made up of a Grand Jury. This body was selected by the Sheriff of the county, and they voted monies necessary for the upkeep of roads and maintenance of hospitals, etc., with offices in the courthouse. At present the District Circuit and High Court Sessions are held there.



The Gaol, Castlebar c.1870. (Wynne Collection).

8. **The Gaol.** The present red brick building, now a nursing home and formerly the Bank of Ireland, was the site of the old gaol built in 1786, from which an underground tunnel led to the courthouse for the transfer of prisoners for trial. The original gaol stood on the corner of Castle Street and Ellison Street (now Egan's Jewellers). From this gaol, George Robert Fitzgerald of Turlough House, known as 'Fighting Fitzgerald', guilty of procuring the murder of Randal McDonnell one of his father's tenants, was led to the scaffold on the Mall on 12 June 1786. Famous for his duelling prowess and horsemanship, he was the most notorious



Turlough House c.1870. (Wynne Collection).

and striking character in Connacht. The hangman's rope broke *twice* and Fitzgerald with a broken leg in the fall, shouted 'My life is my own', but Denis Browne the Sheriff sent for a new rope and on the third attempt he died. His body was interred in Turlough graveyard at the foot of the round tower. The gaol was once more transferred in 1885 to a site on the Westport Road, now the site of the present County General Hospital built in the 1930s and much enlarged since then.

9. **The Hanging Tree.** Just opposite Hanly's shop on the Mall was the hanging tree from which many public executions took place. In the eighteenth century private feuds were settled at night by hanging. Here, after the rebellion of 1798, many of the rebels were publicly hanged including Father John Conroy, Parish Priest of Lahardane, who advised General Humbert to take the Windy Gap route to Castlebar, thus taking the English troops by surprise. For this he was charged with inciting the natives to rebellion and treason. The last public hanging was of a highwayman Gallagher of Lough Conn in 1818.

10. **John Wesley's Chapel and Meetinghouse.** The foundation stone was laid by John Wesley in 1785, and he preached here in May 1787 and 1789, and visited Robert Fitzgerald in prison in 1785. In 1846 the attendance was 100-200. Mayo County Council are the present owners.

11. **Convent Gate and Lord Lucan Estate.** This was the entrance to Lord Lucan's estate, the Lawn, and his town house the Lodge. This is now a girls' Secondary School run by the Sisters of Mercy, who purchased the

Lawn and the house from Lord Lucan in 1924.

The estate, covering an area of 5,000 acres with a large herd of cows, dry stock and sheep, was the only place providing employment during the Famine. The farm buildings covered three acres. Cheese and butter were made in the farmyard dairy, and Lady Lucan also established a tweed factory there which was in operation at the beginning of this century. Extensive tillage was done and wages averaged sixpence (old) per day. Among those employed were young boys known as 'crow boys' to keep the crows away. The butter was made in large churns operated by horses moving around in circles, and almost all the produce was exported.

The most notorious of the Lucans was the third earl, George Charles, who was a ferocious landlord evicting hundreds of poor tenants, who could not pay rent and who had nowhere to go except to the workhouse which, as Chairman of the Board of Guardians he closed in 1847 at the height of the Famine, declaring the board bankrupt. He is perhaps most famous for delivering the fatal message from Lord Raglan to Lord Cardigan (his brother-in-law), resulting in the disastrous charge of the Light Brigade at Balaclava in 1854. 'Into the mouth of Hell rode the six hundred . . .'

The fourth earl, however, was very popular with the people. He reduced rents, provided sites for the Catholic church and school, and gave the Mall to the town.

12. **The Barracks** built in 1834. Castlebar became a garrison town after the Rebellion of 1641, and was the headquarters of various British regiments. A regiment left Castlebar barracks for the Battle of Waterloo in 1815. During the eighteenth century the Welsh and Scottish Fencibles were posted here and engaged in the Battle of 1798. In the first half of the nineteenth century Castlebar was the headquarters of the 69th Regiment, and in the second half a group of the famous Connaught Rangers was stationed here. During the First World War of 1914-18 various regiments were stationed here, and many Mayo men joined and fought at Mons, Ypres, Marne, Somme and Verdun. Mons Terrace on Breaffy Road was built to house the wounded soldiers who returned from the war.

In 1922, during the Civil War, the Barracks was burned and subsequently only every second block was rebuilt. At present it is the headquarters of the 5th Motor Squadron F.C.A.

13. **Convent of Mercy.** The present house at Rock Square was provided for the Sisters by four prominent townsmen in 1853. Here five Sisters arrived from Galway on 31 May, feast of St. Angela, and set up

a Primary School. The Sisters of Mercy first came to Castlebar in 1845 and set up a temporary residence and school at Grove House in Charles Street. The Sisters also administer in the Sacred Heart Home for old and retired people built on the site of the old County Home and Workhouse.



Holy Trinity Church, Castlebar c.1870. (Wynne Collection).

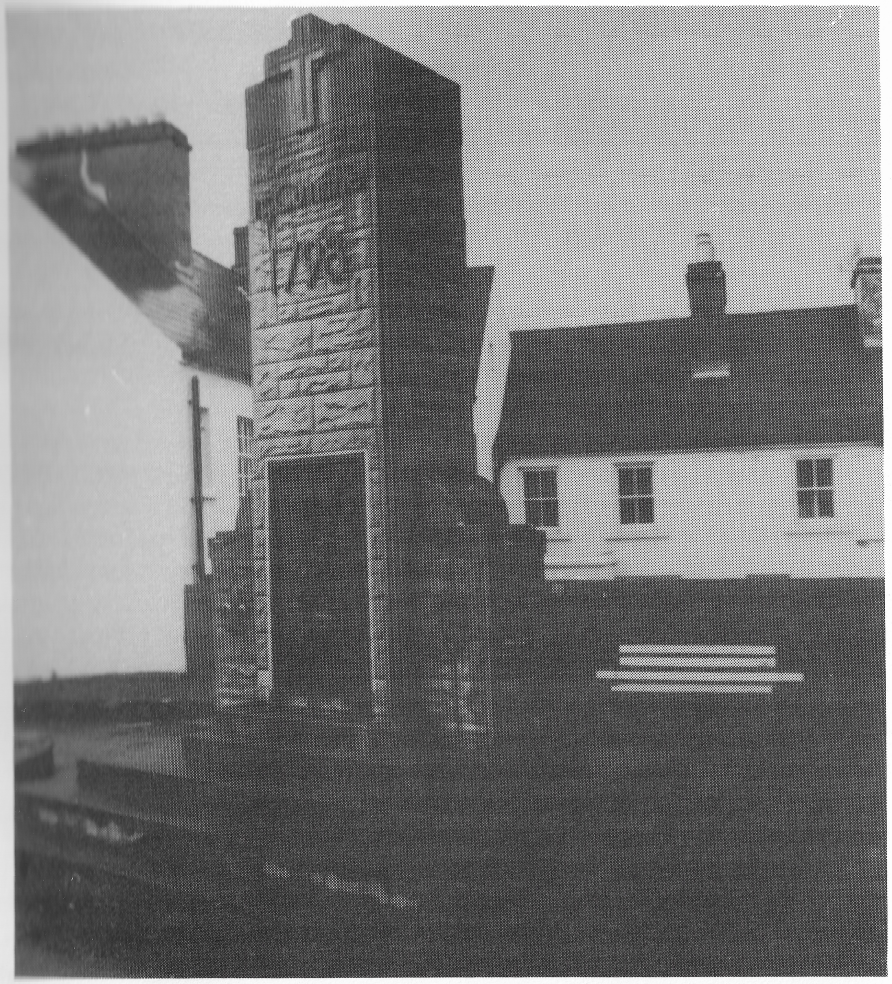
14. **Holy Trinity Church.** Across the Mall by a pleasant tree-lined walk is the Church of Ireland Holy Trinity church, completed in 1739 by the earl of Lucan, and renovated in 1828 and again in 1963.

Inside the main gate is a plaque to the memory of six members of the Scottish regiment the Fraser Invincibles killed here in the battle against the French in 1798. The monument to General O'Malley was erected in 1845 and subscribed to by the townspeople.

15. **1798 Monuments.** Directly across from Holy Trinity Church is the monument to the men who were killed in 1798, and the tomb of John Moore of Moorehall, appointed 'president of the government of the province of Connaught' by General Humbert in Castlebar August 1798.

John Moore died at the Royal Oak Tavern, Waterford, while awaiting transportation to Australia for his part in the 1798 Rebellion in Mayo. He was buried in Ballygunner cemetery outside Waterford city, and his remains were transferred to the Mall in Castlebar in 1943.

16. **The Connaught Telegraph.** Across the street through Cavendish Lane (by Bourke's Supermarket) are the offices of the *Connaught*



1798 Monument. (Photo Michael O'Malley).

Telegraph, Ireland's oldest provincial weekly newspaper. It was founded by Mr. Frederick Cavendish in 1828, who sold it to James Daly. It was always pro-nationalist and backed O'Connell's Repeal Campaign, the Tenant Right League of the 1850s, and the Land League and Home Rule movements. James Daly sold it to the Gillespie family and it continues publication today under its present editor Mr. S. Courell.

There were also two rival newspapers – one the *Mayo Constitution* owned by the Higgins family, one of whom was an M.P. of the Whig party at Westminster, and the *Mayo Examiner* which existed until 1882.

At the end of Cavendish Lane are the ruins of a brewery and tannery

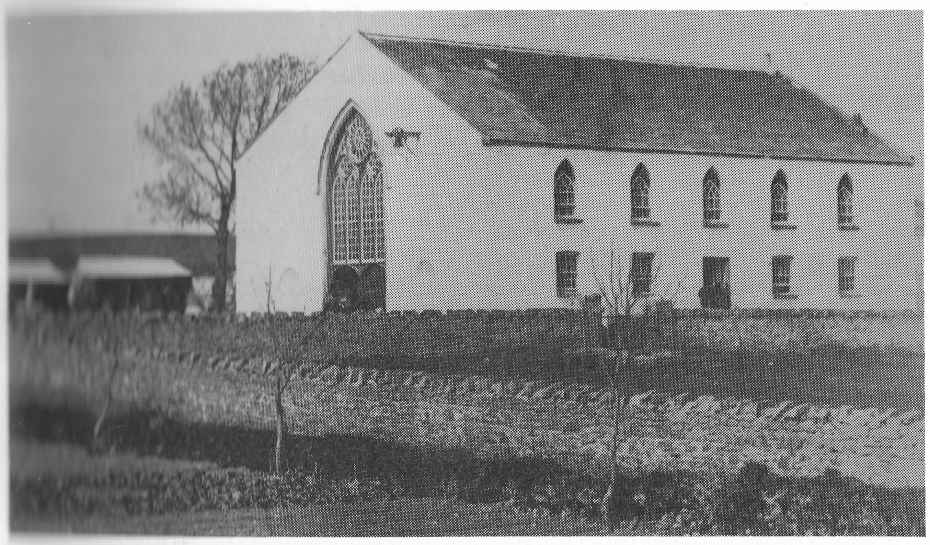
which survived until after the Famine.

17. **Marsh House.** Across the square formerly known as Shambles Square, where butchers had stalls and the market was held, and over the bridge stands Marsh House now the offices of the Urban District Council. It was owned by the Feeney family, well-off merchants, whose last survivor Miss Madge Feeney died in 1975, The only surviving relative, Mrs. Lauretta Feeney Beguin now living in the U.S.A., sold the house to the Urban Council who moved in in 1979, the Chairman then being Mr. Frank Durcan.

18. **Catholic Church.** In Chapel Street is the Catholic Church of Our Lady of the Rosary dedicated in October 1901. An excellent example of Gothic architecture, the high altar is of Carrara marble with delicate tracery. Above the altar is a stained glass window representing the Mysteries of the Rosary. The church has been recently renovated by the present parish priest Father Seán Blake.



Modern Catholic Church, Castlebar. (Photo Michael O'Malley).



Catholic Church, Castlebar c. 1870. (Wynne Collection).

19. **Monastery and Schools.** Beyond the church is the Monastery of the De La Salle Brothers who came to Castlebar in 1888, and set up a Boys' Primary School in the limestone building opposite the church. The monastery was built in 1895, and St. Gerald's College secondary school opposite was opened in 1910. This was replaced in 1971 by a modern college on the Newport Road, and the old college is now St. Gerald's Social Club.

The Vocational School at Newtown opened in 1933, and this has also been replaced by a modern college, Davitt College, in the Lawn, which was opened in 1981. There are also two schools for mentally handicapped children, St. Anthony's in the Lawn and St. Bríd's in Pavilion Road beside the Swimming Pool.

20. **The Linen Hall.** Presently the Town Hall, the Linenhall gives its name to the street. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the chief industry in the town was linen made from flax, which was then grown intensively in the county. The linen industry was greatly assisted by the input of Catholic refugee families from the north of Ireland fleeing from persecution in 1796. They were housed by Lord Lucan at Shrufaun, so called from the stream that once ran openly on the west side of the street and now runs underground, and afterwards called New Antrim Street. In 1798 the value of the linen sold in the clearing house or linen hall was £500 per week. There was a bleaching mill at Springfield.

Today the Linenhall/Town Hall, houses the Registry Office of Births Marriages and Deaths dating back in 1864. Baptismal and church marriage registers go back to 1847. It is also an Arts Centre for exhibitions while another section is a concert hall.

21. **Other Industries.** Also in Linenhall Street were soap, tallow and candle plants, and a snuff and tobacco factory. There was a pottery in Rathbawn and a brick and tile factory at Antigua on the Golf Links Road. None of these survived after the Famine.

22. **The Famine.** The Famine years 1845-9, which were caused by the blighting and consequent rotting of the potato crop, on which most of the population existed, were disastrous for Mayo. Between 1841 and 1851, the county of Mayo lost around 30,000 families and over a quarter of its population, as a result of starvation, disease and emigration. The closing of the Workhouse by the third earl, Lord Lucan, and the wholesale evictions, added to the tragedy as hundreds of bodies piled up outside the closed workhouse on the site of the present Sacred Heart Home, Pontoon Road, and people died on the doorsteps of houses in the town begging for food. Cecil Woodham Smith's book *The Great Hunger* is a poignant and emotionally moving account of the plight of the victims in Mayo.

23. **The Bridge.** From Linenhall Street to the bridge over the river (now called the Castlebar River but formerly *An tSiúir*) where intense fighting took place in 1798: A thousand French soldiers under General Humbert landed at Kilcummin Strand near Killala in August 1798. They were joined by another 1,000 Irish recruits which included the brave Captain William Mangan of Rathbawn. After capturing Ballina, they approached Castlebar by a back road through the Windy Gap and Burren, as advised by Father Conroy who was subsequently hanged on the Mall for his part in the battle. They were met by a British force three times their number at Sion hill. A fierce four hour battle followed, after which time the British retreated towards Knockthomas Hill ('Staball') where more intensive pike and bayonet clashes took place, leading down to the bridge where many were killed and fell into the river which was running red with blood. The British army fled in such a hurry and disorder that their fight became known as the Races of Castlebar. The triumph was shortlived and ended at Ballinamuck, Co. Longford, where Humbert surrendered. The French officers and soldiers were pardoned but the Irish were put to the sword.

24. **Humbert Inn.** The Humbert Inn in Main Street was the headquarters of General Humbert in Castlebar and a plaque commemorates this event. There is a monument at Frenchill to four French Dragoons who

died in the battle fighting for Ireland's freedom.

General John Joseph Amable Humbert went on to fight again as a volunteer for General Andrew Jackson who defeated the British at the Battle of New Orleans 1814. After a career as Governor of Galveston Texas in 1818, and a spell in jail, he finally settled in New Orleans on an army pension from the French Royalist Government. He was a popular social character in the town and died there in January 1823.

Prominent Castlebar People

Matthew Archdeacon

Classical teacher and author of *Legends of Connaught* (see current Library exhibition) and other books. Taught school at Rush Street in what is now the Kingsbridge Inn.

Canon Ulick Bourke, 1829-1887

Priest, teacher and Irish language scholar, born in Castlebar 1829 in Linenhall Street. Educated at Errew Monastery and Maynooth College, he was a member of the commission set up to investigate the Apparition at Knock 1879, by John MacHale Archbishop of Tuam. (See exhibition of his works in New Library).

Louis Phillip Brennan, C.B.

Though few are aware of the fact, Castlebar produced an inventor *extraordinaire* and a mechanical genius. He was not given the recognition he deserved in his lifetime. Louis Phillip Brennan was born in Castlebar on 28 January 1852, the son of hardware merchant Thomas Brennan and Bridget née McDonnell. The shop was where Lavelle's is now on the Main Street. His brother Michael George was a journalist with the *Connaught Telegraph* and later attended the College of Art in Dublin. He achieved fame as a caricaturist and two of his paintings – oil on canvas – are in the National Gallery of Ireland. He died aged 32.

The Brennan family emigrated to Melbourne in 1861 when Louis was nine years old, and resided there for the next twenty years returning to England in 1880. By then Louis had invented a number of amazing pieces of engineering, including a monorail and a dirigible torpedo, forerunner of the helicopter, for which the British Government paid him £100,000. It was used for twenty years for harbour defence. He lived at Gillingham, Kent, and was associated with the Royal Engineers at Brompton Barracks.

His 'Gyroscopic Monorail' was the sensation of the Japan British Exhibition at White City London in 1910. It won the Exhibition's highest award and attracted the attention of Winston Churchill, Secretary of

State for War and Air, Prime Minister Asquith and Lloyd George. The British Government, however, did not develop the Monorail due to opposition from the railway companies, but America and Japan did. Louis Brennan was a brilliant inventor; his five character silent typewriter the 'Branagraph' has reappeared in this electronic age of computers as the Microwriter. The modern stair elevator for the disabled was his invention. His other ideas adopted commercially varied from chicken incubators to billiard scorers, mincing machines to soldering rods, wool-clippers to food packers. Recovering from an illness at Montreux, Switzerland he was knocked down by a car on 26 December 1931 and died there on 17 January 1932, just eleven days short of his eightieth birthday. He was buried in St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery, Harrow Road, London N.10, on 26 January 1932 in grave No. 2454 with his daughter Norah and wife Anna Mary and son Michael. The net value of his Personal Estate was £1,739 17s. 2d.

James Daly 1835-1910

Editor and owner of the *Connaught Telegraph* newspaper and prominent supporter of Michael Davitt and the Land League, 'a champion of the small farmers of Mayo'. Born at Boughadoon, Lahardane in 1835, where he retired to fulltime farming in 1888, having sold the paper to Thomas H. Gillespie, he died in 1910.

Stephen Garvey

Born and lived in Castle Street. One of the best known dance band leaders of the 30s and 40s. Organist in the Catholic Church and Director of the Musical Society. Died in Texas in 1954 where he is buried.

Richard King

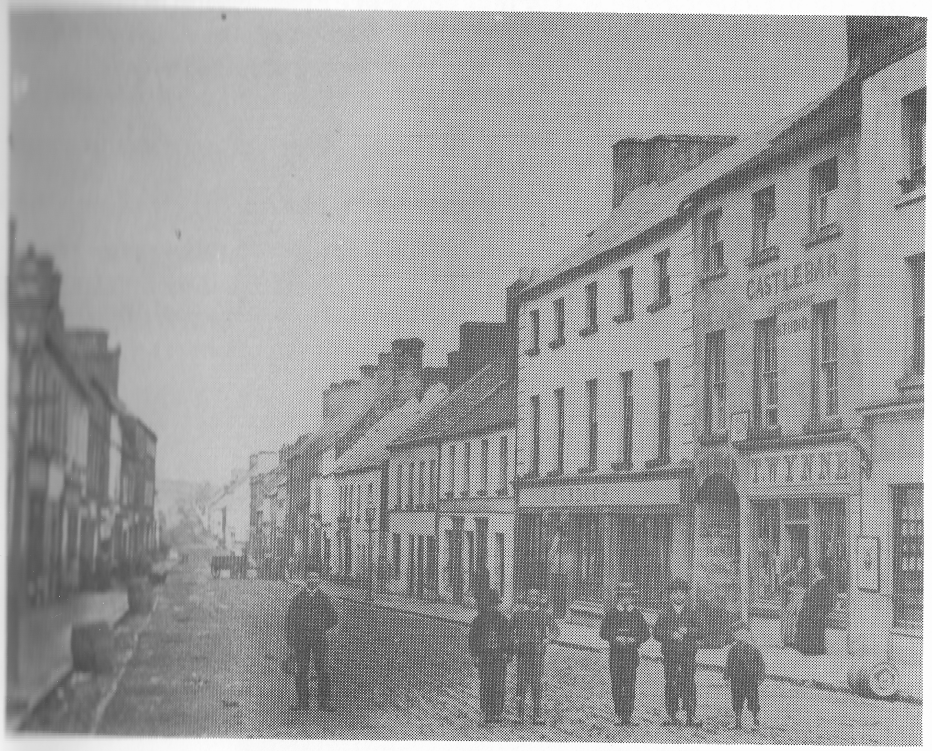
Born in Charles Street. Artist and subsequent manager of the famous Harry Clarke stained-glass studio Dublin. Examples of his work are in Swinford and Tuam.

Olivia Knight

Poet 'Thomasina' of the *The Nation* newspaper. Born at Rathbawn 1830. Emigrated to Queensland, Australia, where she was a teacher. Died in 1908.

William Larminie, 1849-1900

Poet and civil servant (India), folklorist and translator of one of the most difficult philosophical manuscripts of the Middle Ages, the *De Divisione Naturae* of Joannes Scotus Eriugena. The unpublished manuscript is in the National Library. He was one of the men who prepared the way for the Irish Literary Revival at the end of the last century and in this light his name should be remembered.



Main Street, Castlebar, c.1870. (Wynne Collection).

Patrick Anthony Ludden, Bishop of Syracuse, N.Y.

Born 4 February 1836 near Castlebar. Eldest of eight children. Educated at Breaffy National School, Castlebar Academy and St. Jarlath's College Tuam. Entered Montreal Grand Seminary and ordained there for the Diocese of Albany 21 May 1864. His first appointment was secretary to Bishop McClosky and Rector of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, Albany N.Y. He was Rector of St. Peter's Church. Troy, N.Y. for seven years. Consecrated first bishop of Syracuse, New York, 1 May 1887.

He donated an altar to the Church of Our Lady of the Rosary Castlebar. He considered the crowning work of his life to be the completion and consecration of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on 25 September 1910. It had cost over 250,000 dollars. He died 6 August 1912.

Ernie O'Malley (Earnán Ó Máille) 1898-1957

Born in Castlebar. Writer, antiquarian, art connoisseur and republi-

can. A staff officer in the War of Independence, and second in command of the Republican side in the Civil War. Author of *On Another Man's Wound* a vivid account of his struggle for Irish independence.

Margaret Burke Sheridan

World-famous soprano and prima donna. Born in Castlebar in 1889 and died in Dublin in 1958.

Thomas J. Wynne 1838-1893

Newsagent, photographer and entrepreneur, established in 1861, first in Castle Street and later in Main Street where his descendants are today. His photographic collection is a fascinating record of life in Mayo during the last half of the nineteenth century. This collection is in the possession of the Wynne family at present.

Sources:

Mayo Archaeological and Historical Society Project 1984. Research by Youth Employment Agency.

Sisters of Mercy Castlebar, 1853-1972, by Sister Consilio.

Paddy Jennings, *Castlebar and District.*

Mayo Men's Association of City of New York Diamond Jubilee 1879-1954.

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COUSIN AGAINST COUSIN

Sheila Mulloy



1798 Monument at Knock, Co. Mayo.

Captain James O'Malley

When the French general Jean-Jacques Amable Humbert arrived in Killala in August 1798, with an army of 1,000 men, he confidently expected to be joined by the local gentry. But Ireland was now in the grip of the Protestant ascendancy. Power and property were concentrated in the grasp of the minority, and only minor gentry or younger sons of loyal Catholic gentlemen were prepared to rock the boat.

Prominent among those Mayomen who joined the French were Colonel Austin O'Malley and his brother Joseph from Burrishoole, and their cousins Captain James O'Malley and Alexander O'Malley from Eden Park near Knock. 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

Alex 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 an Irish song *An Caiptín Máilleach* (Captain O'Malley). His name is on the 1798 monument at Knock, Co. Mayo.

Dr. Richard Hayes, in his fine book, *The Last Invasion of Ireland* (1937), publishes the song in praise of Séamus Bán, which had been given to him by Philip Waldron of Drumbaun, Ballyhaunis. The Irish version of the song is taken from Dr. Hayes's book. The English translation is a literal one.

An Caiptín Máilleach

1

Is mise Caiptín Máilleach,
Fear claidheamha, píc is láighe,
Fear cneasta, gnaodhamhail, grádhmhar
Ar aonach, damhs' nó spóirt.
Is mé a sheasfadh dána
I mbearnain bhaoighil le h-áthas
Ar ceart dom' bhuidhin 's mo cháirdibh,
Dá mba ndán dom an róp.

2

Ceal airm dín nó éideadh
I ngleanntaibh doimhne 's sléibhtibh,
Chleactuigh muid fian-réidhteach
Do thígheacht na bhFranncach gcródha;
I mBeárnain mhaol na Gaoithe
Sa gCaistilbeár na dhéigh sin
Ruaig muid na Breathnigh bhréagach'
Is ár bpíce le n-a dtóin!

3

Ach! anois tá mo chnaipe déanta,
Go bhfóiridh an Trionóid Naomhta 'rm,
An Mhaighdean gheal 's a hAon-Mhac
Go dtárraighidh mé go deo.
Mar is mise an Caiptín Máilleach
Fear ceart de chineál Gráinne,
Fear tíre nó fear sáile,
Fear troda, siams' nó spóirt.

4

Fá mhallacht ar an mBrúnach
Mark Grady is a chúmplacht,
Fá Diolúnaigh is na Diúcaigh,
Is na Dáibhisigh bréana fós;
Mhuidh ár sgrios 's ár sgiúirse
Ó Swinford go Cúl Luachra,
Ó Sgrig go Tullaigh Luachra
Fá *middlemen* 's na *Yeos.*

Translation

1

I am Captain O'Malley,
A man of pike and sword,
Of gallant mien and manner pleasing,
At dancing, sport or fair.
'Tis I would stand boldly
In the gap of danger daring,
Seeking justice for my friends and company,
Though the rope should be my fate.

2

Lacking arms, clothes and shelter,
Midst deep glens and mountains,
We engaged in preparation
For the coming of the French.
At bleak Barnageeha,
And at Castlebar later,
We overcame the lying Saxons,
And drove them out with bravery.

3

But now I am undone,
May the Holy Trinity help me,
Virgin bright and her only Son,
Lead me to heaven.
For I am Captain O'Malley
A true son of Gráinne's race,
A strong man on land or sea,
A man for fighting, sport and revelry.

4

My curses on Denis Browne,
Mark Grady and his gang,
The Dillons and the Dukes,
And the Davises our foes;
Our scourge and our destruction,
From Swinford to Coolloughra,
From Sgrig to Tullyloughra,
The middlemen and the Yeos.

Major-General George O'Malley (c1780-1843)

George O'Malley, the fifth son of George O'Malley, Castlebar and Elizabeth Clarke, a second cousin to the O'Malleys of Eden Park and Burrishoole, was the best known of the O'Malleys who fought with the British army. He is said to be the model for General John Regan in the play of that name written by George Birmingham, the Westport writer.

This soldier, whose statue by Thomas Kirk, R.H.A. (1781-1845), stands before the Church of Ireland church in Castlebar, commanded the Yeomanry Cavalry of that town when it was captured by the French and Irish troops in August 1798. He was again present in the town when it was attacked for the second time –unsuccessfully – on 12 September. Soon afterwards he joined the 13th Regiment of Foot and served in Egypt, Malta and Gibralter, returning home in 1803 to serve as a recruiting officer. He became a captain in the 89th regiment, then major in the 101st, serving with the latter regiment in Ireland, Jersey, North America and the West Indies. In 1809 he commanded the garrison of St. John's, New Brunswick, at a time when war was expected with the United States. Desertion to the States had previously been a problem among the Irish soldiers of the garrison, but he managed 'to conquer that spirit altogether'. In gratitude for the exemplary conduct of the troops under his command, and for the good arrangements he had made for the defence of the town, the freedom of the city was bestowed on him.

The next four years were spent in Jamaica where he was promoted Lieutenant-Colonel. Returning to England in 1813, he was unsuccessful in his application to serve against Napoleon, until he joined the 44th regiment in Brussels in 1815. He was in command of the second battalion of that regiment at the battle of Waterloo, The battalion suffered very severely being at one time reduced from 430 to between



Major-General George O'Malley.

one and two hundred men and officers. He was twice wounded and had two horses shot under him on 18 June, but remained on the field of battle. He returned to England in 1816, and was made a Companion of the Bath for his bravery at the battle. In 1830 he was appointed Lieutenant-Colonel of the 88th Connaught Rangers, and was finally made a Major-General in 1841.

Contemporary newspapers recount his death 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. The principal mourner was his brother, Major Owen O'Malley, who lived at Marino Lodge beside Murrisk Friary. 'The Rev. Mr. Eyre performed the funeral service, and delivered an excellent and eloquent discourse on the subject.'

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 Bergen-op-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'll wait till the Colonel ducks, they'll wait till the cows come home."

FAMOUS CASTLEBAR CONTEMPORARIES



Ernie O'Malley, Author and Freedom Fighter
(1897-1957)

Ernie O'Malley (Earnán Ó Máille), born in Castlebar, Co. Mayo, in 1897, the second son of Luke Malley and Marion Kearney, is sure of a lasting place both in Irish history and Irish literature. His father worked under Sir Malachy Kelly, the Sessional Crown Solicitor for Mayo, and was deeply conservative in outlook.

The first seven children grew up in Castlebar 'in an environment', as his biographer Pádraic O'Farrell says, 'most unconducive to nurturing nationalistic emotions', but this was a fairly typical environment at the time. In 1907 Luke Malley moved to Dublin. where four more children were born and Ernie attended O'Connell Schools. Although he did not do well at school, he won an open scholarship to University College, Dublin, where he became a medical student in 1915.

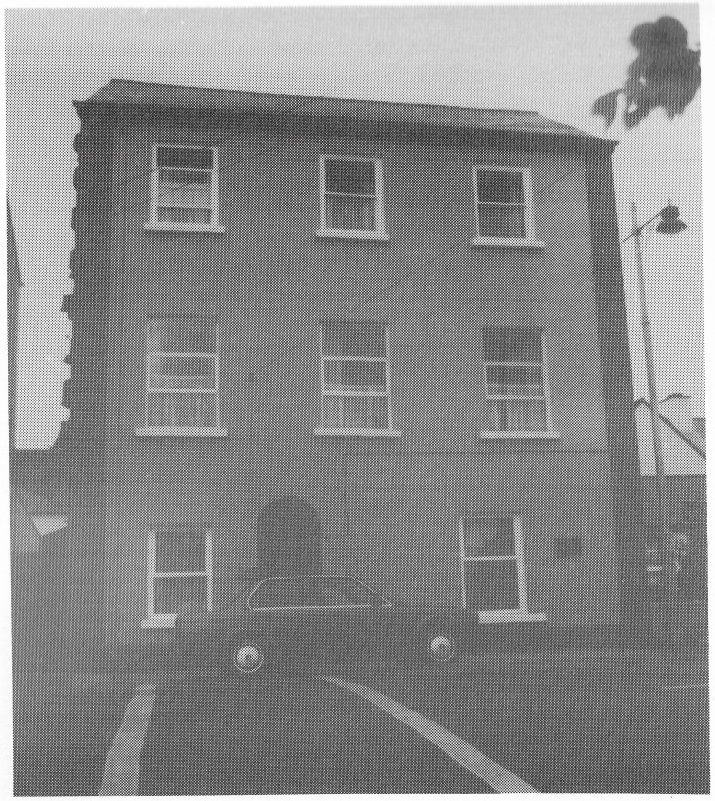
He first showed his sympathy for revolutionary Ireland during the rebellion of Easter 1916, joining the Volunteers soon afterwards. Gradually his medical studies gave way to his military activities, and in 1918 he left home to devote himself fulltime to the Irish Republican Army. As a general headquarters staff officer, his special task was to build up the military organization throughout the country. The War of Independence began in January 1919, and by late 1920 Ernie was appointed Commandant General of the Second Southern, the second largest division in the country. His account of those eventful years in *On Another Man's Wound* is the outpouring of a man devoted body and soul to the national struggle.

Captured, imprisoned and tortured, Ernie escaped from Kilmainham Jail in January 1921. The Truce of 11 July 1921 brought a lull in operations, culminating in the signing of the Treaty on 6 December. Ernie helped precipitate the tragic Civil War which followed, maintaining that the army should have been consulted about the Treaty. As Assistant Chief of Staff of the anti-Treaty forces, and officer commanding Leinster and Ulster, he was indominatable and uncompromising to the last. However, during his long imprisonment after his capture and severe wounding in 1922, and especially during the hunger strike which began in October 1923 and lasted forty-one days, he came to accept the inevitability of defeat.

Finally released in 1924, he travelled abroad to recuperate his health. He tried to resume his medical studies in 1926 but abandoned them in 1928, when De Valera asked him to raise funds in the United States for the *Irish Press.* After some years in the United States and Mexico, he returned to Ireland in 1935, and shortly afterwards married Helen Hooker, an American sculptor. He returned once more to his medical studies, but literary and artistic interests were to prove too strong, and he finally abandoned medicine after the publication of *On Another Man's Wound* in 1936, a book which received worldwide acclaim. The couple were to buy the beautiful Burrishoole Lodge near Westport, Co. Mayo, and to live part of the year there and part in Dublin. *The Singing Flame,* his account of the Civil War and *Raids and Rallies,* based on a series in the *Sunday Press,* were published posthumously in 1978 and 1985 respectively, for Ernie O'Malley, 'fighter, writer, character extraordinary' as Pádraic O'Farrell puts it, had died in March 1957.

Ernie's widow and two of his children now live in the United States. The youngest, Cormac, is an International Counsel with the multi-national Bristol Myers Company at their English branch.

(This is an extract from *O'Malley People and Places* by Sheila Mulloy).



Birthplace of Margaret Burke Sheridan, The Mall, Castlebar. (Photo Michael O'Malley).

Adorable Diva – Margaret Burke Sheridan – Prima Donna – 1889-1958

Anne Chambers

From the cloistered life of a convent to the dazzling worldly heights of operatic stardom at La Scala and Covent Garden, between 1918 and 1930, a beautiful Irish soprano became one of the outstanding prima donnas of her day and captured the ears and hearts of the British and Italian opera public.Such giants of the opera world as Puccini and Toscanini, kings, queens, princes, popes and politicians as well as the plain people of gallery opera queues, fell beneath the magnetic spell of the personality and the artistry of La Sheridan.

She was born in 1889 the youngest of a family of five, in Castlebar, Co. Mayo where her father was the town postmaster. Her mother died when she was four and her older brothers and sister emigrated to England and America. On the death of her father in 1901 she was sent to the Dominican School at Eccles St. in Dublin which was destined to become her 'home' until 1909. She had little or no contact with her brothers of sister and this lack of a family structure and the absence of a permanent home, which she was destined, throughout her career never to attain, resulted in the individuality and independence of spirit which she outwardly radiated while inwardly she silently endured the isolation and the loneliness.

At Eccles St. Margaret's remarkable singing voice was noticed and coached by a perceptive and talented nun, Mother Clement, and later by Dr. Vincent O'Brien, the teacher of John McCormack and James Joyce. In May 1908 she took the gold medal at the Feis Ceoil, the premier Irish music competition, significantly in the mezzo soprano category. A group of people in Dublin who recognised the exceptional talent of the young Mayo woman raised sufficient funds to enable her to enroll at the Royal Academy of Music in London where she spent two years.

Her ambition was to sing in grand opera but it was a difficult medium to enter. After her training at the RAM, lack of means and uncertainty dogged her footsteps until a fortuitous encounter with the wealthy philantrophic couple, Lord and Lady Howard De Walden. They became enraptured by the sheer natural beauty and the rich expressive timbre of the Irish singer. Through them she was introduced to the glittering world of the musical soirées in the Belgravia and Mayfair mansions of the wealthy, aristocratic London society, which regardless of the gathering war clouds was intent on entertainment and enjoyment. Royalty, cabinet ministers, artists, bankers and industrialists mingled at the soirées. Margaret was presented as the new musical prodigy. Her beautiful appearance, her lively personality, her intelligence and witty repartee found favour. She soon came to the attention of members of the Irish Parliamentary Party at Westminster, notably T. P. O'Connor, Nationalist M.P. for Liverpool, 'Father of the House of Commons', who became her father-figure and mentor. Through him she became acquainted with the notable political figures of the day, Asquith, Balfour, Churchill, Earl Grey of Falloden, Lloyd George and Lord Beaverbrook.

But despite the glamour and excitement of her life Margaret's dream of becoming an opera singer burned brighter than ever. As World War I descended to devastate Europe she thought that her dream would never be realised. But fate once more intervened in the person of the

famous Irish-Italian inventor, Guglielmo Marconi. 'Yours is the voice I have been waiting to hear all my life' he told her after her recital at Seaford House. Dodging U boats in the Channel, across a devastated Europe at the height of the war, Marconi brought her to Italy, the country and whose people she was to love and to which she was to remain faithful when more lucrative offers were made to tempt her elsewhere.

Marconi brought her to the eminent singing coach, Alfredo Martino, who agreed to accept her as his pupil. In 1918 she made a dramatic entrance into the world of opera when she was chosen to replace the indisposed soprano at four days notice as Mimi in Puccini's *La Bohème*. On 3 February she made her operatic debut at the Costanzi Opera House in Rome. The critical Roman audience rose 'to the young artist blessed with a wonderful voice who gave an unforgettable performance.' From Rome to the Dal Verme in Milan and on to the great San Carlo in Naples, her reputation grew in a country and at a time when it was extremely difficult for a foreigner to be successful in Italy. 'Miss Sheridan is Irish but either by luck or by instinct she sings as an Italian and as a singer and an actress she completely conquered the audience which accorded her rapturous applause' the prestigious *Corriere Della Sera* reported. In Naples she was dubbed 'Butterfly Insuperabile' by the critics, and the management of the San Carlo presented her with a magnificent bronze bust now in Dublin to commemorate her appearances there.

Drawn by the extravagant reviews, Puccini came to hear her Butterfly which he told her 'was full of charismatic intensity and childlike appeal' and resolved to coach her personally in *Manon Lescaut*. For the night of her debut as Manon at the prestigious Carneval season at Rimini in 1923, he presented her with a magnificent costume in gold and blue silk to wear in Act II. He later attended her performance in Cento and drove in triumph with her in an open carriage through the streets. On the death of Puccini in 1924 she was in great demand in the many commemorative performances of the composer's works held throughout Italy. 'She was an unparalleled interpreter of the music of Puccini' the Italian conductor Vincenzo Bellezza recalled, 'the humanity of his characters and the lyricism of his music found a mysterious echo in her and thereby lived.'

In 1922 La Scale beckoned. Then ruled by the dictatorial Toscanini with whom she had a tempestuous association (he called her 'The Empress of Ireland'; she referred to him as 'The Whip'), their arguments and rows were legion and legendary. He chose her for the role of Wally in the Scale revival of the opera of his dead friend Catalani. A world premiere as Candida in Respighi's *Belfagor* followed, then Maddalena with Marini in Giordano's *Andrea Chénier* and as Anna Maria in *I*

Compagnacci by Riccitelli, with Badini and Alabiso. Political and artistic differences of opinion with Toscanini led to her estrangement from the Scala in 1924, but were compensated with appearances in the other major Italian opera houses.

In 1923 she partnered the great Gigli in *Andrea Chénier* at Rimini; with her favourite tenor and recording colleague, Aureliano Pertile, she received rapturous applause at the Teatro Regio, Turin; with Lauri Volpi at the Comunale in Bologna, at the Politeama at Trieste and at Genoa; with Piccaluga at Brescia, with Lo Guidice at Naples. At Monte Carlo, Cremona, Modena, Piacenza, Cascina, she triumphed again and again. 'Her singing is the kind that rouses our public to the highest pitch of enthusiasm' *L'Avvenire D'Italia* reported. In February 1930 she was accorded a unique honour, when as the only foreigner she was chosen to sing at a gala performance of *Gianni Schicchi* at the Regio in Turin, to celebrate the marriage of Italy's Crown Prince Umberto.

In 1919 and from 1925 to 1930 she represented La Scala at the seasons of International opera at Covent Garden. In her debut in 1919 as Mimi in *Bohème* there, she replaced the legendary Nellie Melba who presented her with a fan in tribute which in turn Sheridan presented to Virginia Zeani in Dublin in 1956, who still retains it to this day at her home in Indiana. At Covent Garden she created the title role in the difficult Mascagni opera *Iris*, and sang *Bohème, Butterfly, Chénier, Otello, Manon Lescaut* there as well. She sang Liù in Turandot with the great dramatic soprano. Dame Eva Turner, who remembers her with affection for 'her lovely voice and warm and witty personality'.

King George VI rarely missed her performances, especially of his favourite opera *La Bohème* which she sang at the Royal Opera House on many occasions. In 1928 she and the otherwise all Italian cast were received by the King in the royal box. With difficulty the King tried to converse with the Italian singers who spoke little English. Turning to Margaret, the King asked how she had obtained such fluency in Italian and such success at La Scale, being an English girl. 'And I told him' Margaret recalled, 'that it was probably because I was Irish'!

Her Covent Garden appearances were eagerly awaited dates on the social as well as music calenders, and her many aristocratic and political friends filled the boxes at the Royal Opera House on the occasion of her appearances there. She was a firm favourite also with the ordinary opera going public (if one is to judge from her fan mail), who admired both her artistic ability and the warm personality that she exuded both on and off the stage. 'It might interest you to note' one English fan wrote to her, 'how much your smiles are appreciated by members of the gallery queue

at Covent Garden, especially by people such as myself who queue for up to eight hours at a time.' Gigli chose her as his partner for his Covent Garden debut in *Chénier* in 1930. Through her influence at Covent Garden she was instrumental in bringing many famous Italian singers, including Toti Dal Monte, to the attention of the British opera public.

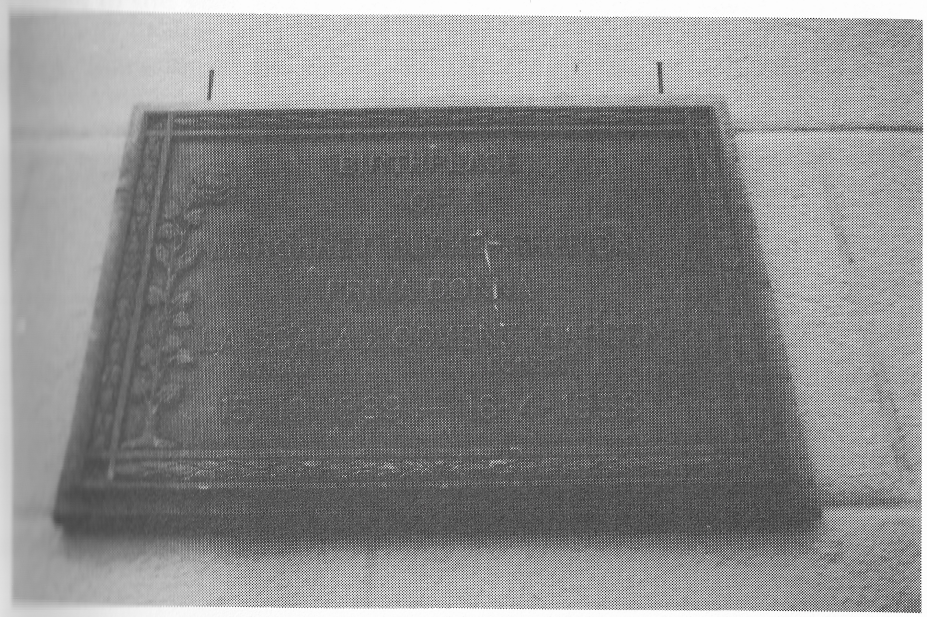
She never sang in opera in her native Ireland, but in 1922, in the middle of the Civil War, she gave two concerts in the Theatre Royal. Her love of Italy and the Italian people made her refuse many tempting offers to sing elsewhere, notably at the Metropolitan in New York and at the Chicago Opera.

Her retirement was as dramatic as her debut. A broken romance followed by medical problems led to a sudden and unexpected exit from grand opera. Despite being bombarded with offers to sing on the concert platform, she chose to remain faithful to the medium she passionately loved and in which, albeit a short career, she had left a legacy of artistic perfection and a warm and vibrant personality. 'Butterflies come and go here' her friend Maria Caniglia wrote to her from Italy years after her retirement, 'but people say we heard La Sheridan.'

To those not fortunate enough to have heard her live performances, her HMV (EMI) recordings give some idea why she was so appreciated in the land of the Bel Canto. A modern-day diva, Renata Tebaldi, acknowledged Sheridan's unique contribution to the Puccini tradition especially in her Butterfly and Manon Lescaut roles. 'I believe that her recording of Manon Lescaut is a memorable rendition of that role' Madame Tebaldi recorded for her biography. 'She is in it a superb actress combining great artistry with remarkable technique.'

Margaret returned to Ireland in 1939, where she became a well-known if flamboyant figure in artistic and political circles. In 1950 she was invited to become a member of the Advisory Committee of the American National Arts Foundation, a philanthropic organisation established to stimulate creation, interpretation and appreciation of the arts, and to foster interchange of art and artists between nations. Members of the Committee included the Earl of Harewood, Sir Lawrence Olivier, Katherine Cornell, Bruno Walter, Rudolf Bing, Ralph Vaughan Williams and her colleague from her La Scala days, the tenor Ezio Pinza. Margaret's special task was to advise the Foundation on the selection and training of promising young singers. From then until 1957 she divided her time between America and Ireland, staying regularly at the imposing residence of her friends and benefactors Emerson and Ruth Axe at Tarytown Castle, New York.

She was stricken with a painful cancer, and died on 16 April 1958 and is buried in Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin. 'She has passed on' her friend Micheál Mac Liammóir recorded in tribute, 'as I believe and as she believed herself, to another cycle of labours, of adventures in a sphere of fathomless mystery and we who are left behind for a little may well feel reassured that she will acquit herself with beauty and with honour. Her faith in God was great. God will be good to her. Arrivaderci, carissima Margherita.'



Commemorative plaque erected in 1958. (Photo Michael O'Malley).

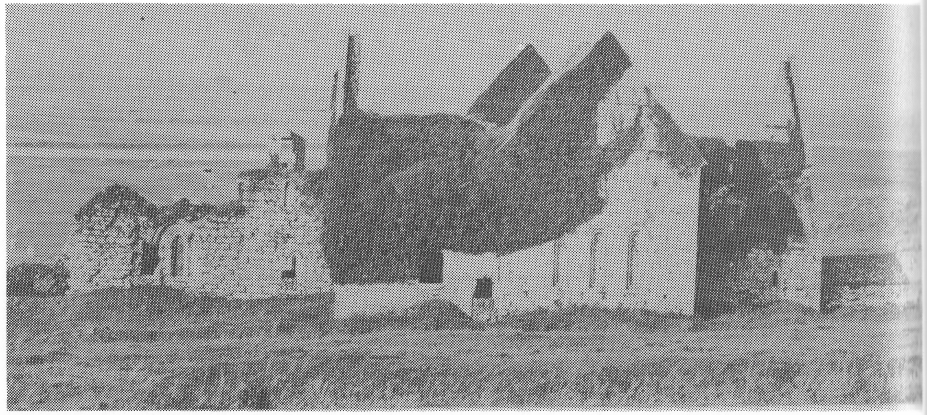
ANNE CHAMBERS is the author of the biography of Margaret Burke Sheridan entitled *LA SHERIDAN, ADORABLE DIVA,* published by Wolfhound Press, 68 Mountjoy Square, Dublin 1. Her other biographies include: *Granuaile, The Life and Times of Grace O'Malley 1530-1603, Chieftain To Knight, Theobald Bourke First Viscount Mayo, 1567-1629,* and *Eleanor Countess of Desmond 1545-1638* (Shortlisted for GPA 1987 Book Awards).

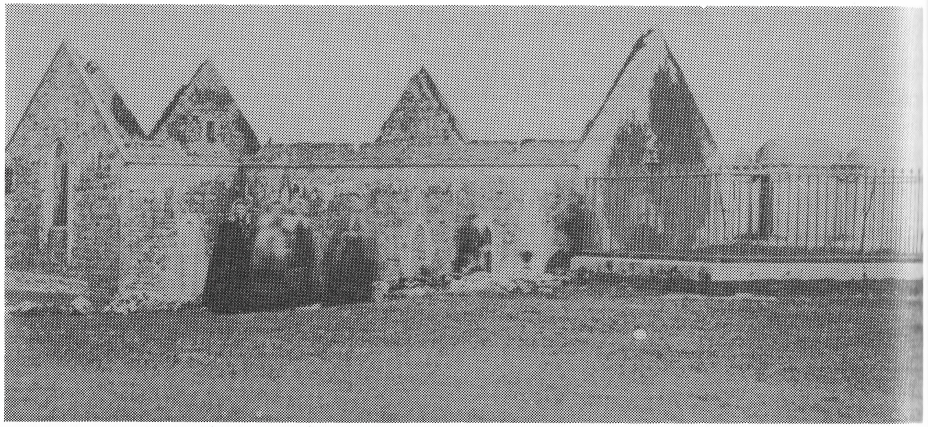
A TV documentary based on *La Sheridan, Adorable Diva* was filmed on location in Ireland, England, Italy and America by RTE in summer 1989, and was screened in Ireland the following autumn to coincide with the centenary celebrations for Margaret Sheridan. The Irish postal authorities issued a commemorative stamp in her honour in July. EMI issued a centenary record of a selection of her operatic recordings and Irish melodies, and a memorial concert was held at the National Concert Hall, Dublin on 15 October. Her operatic memorabilia (including her operatic costumes and personal papers) were exhibited in Castlebar and Dublin during the month of October.

(It was considered appropriate to include a tribute to Margaret Burke Sheridan in this Castlebar issue of our annual, although we have not been able to discover any O'Malley connection! – Editor.)

THE STORY OF BALLINTUBBER ABBEY

(This is a condensed version of the booklet produced by the late Revd. Thomas A. Egan, C.C., Ballintubber, in 1963. With untiring energy he devoted himself to the completion of the restoration of the abbey, a feat which he had practically accomplished in time for the celebration in 1966 of the 750th anniversary of its foundation).



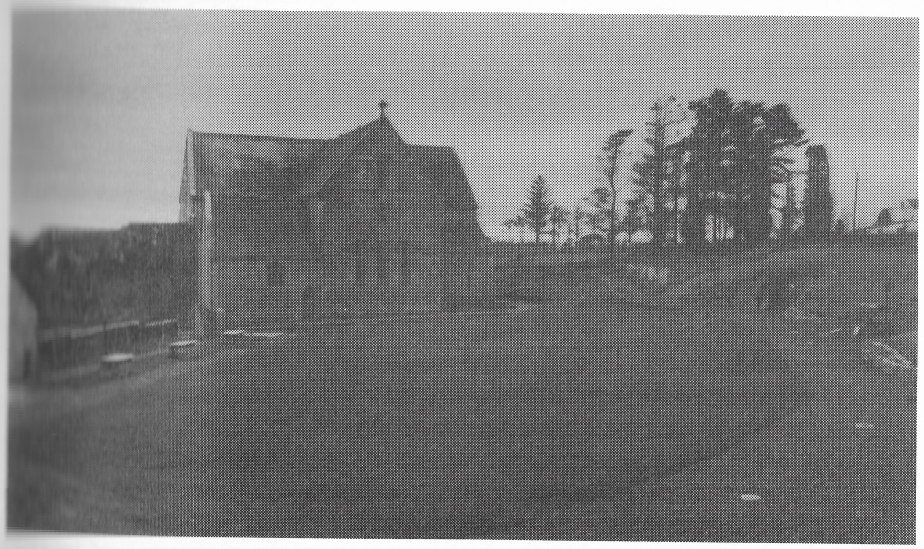


Two views Ballintubber Abbey c.1870. (Wynne Collection).

About seven miles south of Castlebar, the county town of Mayo, and one mile off the main Castlebar-Galway road stands the Abbey of St. Patrick, Ballintubber. Among the medieval religious foundations whose ruins dot the Irish countryside the abbey is unique. It is the only church in Ireland still in daily use that was founded by an Irish king; it is the one Irish church where for 750 years the Mass has been offered without a break. The *Annals* record the foundation of the Monastery of Tober Pátraic in the year 1216. The fourth Lateran Council had just closed; Innocent III was in the chair of Peter. The new religious orders, the Dominicans and the Franciscans, were just being founded, King John had made peace with his unruly barons in the signing of Magna Carta at Runnymede. When Columbus, three centuries later, discovered America, the abbey of Ballintubber was already venerable with age.

In Irish Ballintubber means the townland or homestead of the well of St. Patrick. Here beside the site of the present abbey St. Patrick founded one of his churches in Mayo in the year 441, on his return from his long vigil of forty days and nights on the holy mountain of Croagh Patrick. Hence we may say that not merely for 750 years, but for 1,500 years, a Christian church has occupied the site of the present abbey.

Ballintubber Abbey was founded by King Cathal Crovdearg O'Conor - Cathal Mór of the wine-red hand. He was of the royal race of the O'Conors, kings of Connacht and notable patrons of the arts. The Cross of Cong, one of our national treasures, was designed for his father,



Ballintubber Abbey today. (Photo Michael O'Malley).

Turloch O'Conor, and was made in 1123 to enshrine a relic of the true Cross. Cathal had been inaugurated as king at Carnfraich, near Tulsk, Co. Roscommon, and had made a grant of five marks per annum for ever to the church of Cîteaux in France, the birthplace of the Cistercian order. After his death the *Annals of Connacht* refer to him as 'the king who best established peace and tranquility of all the kings of Ireland; the king who built the most monasteries and houses for religious communities; the king who of all the kings of Ireland God made most perfect in every good quality.' Cathal built and endowed the Benedictine convent of Kilcreevanty near Tuam, and the Cistercian abbey of Knockmoy, Co. Galway, where he died in the habit of a Cistercian Monk in the year 1224.

Though there are many references in the ancient annals to 1216 as the year of its foundation, the circumstances are shrouded in legend. Cathal was the natural son of King Turloch. Before he ascended the throne of his fathers he was in flight from the vengeance of Turloch's queen. According to one legend the monasteries were the only place where he and his mother could get sanctuary during their exile. Local folklore tells us that during this period he had been working in Ballintubber for a man named Sheridan, who treated him with the greatest kindness. Leaving Ballintubber Cathal vowed that he would never forget the kindness shown him there. Years afterwards, when Cathal ascended the throne of his fathers, he paid a visit to his old friend. The king asked him if there were any favours he could do in return for the kindness shown him in the days of exile. Sheridan told him that he was now old, and that he wanted for little in this world, but if the king would restore their old church which was collapsing, he would be eternally grateful. Cathal promised that instead of repairing the old church he would build a new one.

The years went by, and on his next visit the king asked the old man how he liked his new church. Sheridan reproached Cathal for not keeping his royal word, but the king asserted that he had indeed given orders for such a church to be built. On investigation it was found that a church had been built, but in Baile tobair Bhríghde, Roscommon, instead of Baile tobair Phádraig, Mayo. And the story goes that the king vowed to build another church seven times more magnificent in Ballintubber, Mayo, and that is how Ballintubber got its abbey. The church in Ballintubber, Roscommon, is now a ruin, but the abbey at Ballintubber, Mayo, is still proudly erect and still in daily use 750 years afterwards.

The story appears to be a variant of the romantic theme of the king in disguise being treated kindly, but it may contain elements of truth.

Sheridan (Ó Sireadáin) was a family name of the Síol Muireadaigh, which in turn was the family group from which Cathal himself was sprung. The Sheridans were an ecclesiastical family and it is possible that here we have the name of the coarb of St. Patrick's church of Ballintubber who gave sanctuary to the future king.

The old church beside which the Abbey of Ballintubber was built was a Patrician church. In fact Ballintubber takes its name from St. Patrick – Baile tobair Phádraig – the townland of St. Patrick's well. The place is always so called to distinguish it from the other Ballintubber in Roscommon – Baile tobair Bhríghde – the townland of St. Brigid's Well. Close by is the well where Patrick baptized his converts in the district, with a stone alongside bearing the supposed imprint of the saint's knee; From Ballintubber too there runs a road all the way to Croagh Patrick. This road well known in Irish history was called Tóchar Phádraig, and the way it went may still be traced.

Tobar Pátraic, as the abbey is called in the *Annals of the Four Masters,* was founded for Canons Regular and dedicated to the Holy Trinity. In papal documents it appears as 'Monasterium Sanctae Trinitatis de villa fontis Patricii' – the monastery of the Holy Trinity of the town of St. Patrick's well. Strictly speaking the canons were not monks, but secular priests living in community following the rule attributed to St. Augustine. Their primary work was the care of souls. They had been introduced into Ireland by St. Malachy as part of the twelfth-century reform of the Irish Church, and their first appearance in the West was in the priory of St. John in Tuam about 1150. The date of their appearance at Ballintubber in 1216 and the death of their first abbot there is recorded in the *Annals of Loch Cé*: 'Anno 1225 Maelbhrighde O'Maicin abbot of Tobar Pátraic went to rest in the Lord . . . it was by him the church of Tobar Pátraic was begun and its sanctuary and crosses diligently finished in honour of Patrick and Mary and the Apostle St. John'. According to tradition only men of noble birth were admitted, a fact which may account for the immense estates which in later years the abbey possessed.

Like so many abbeys in the thirteenth century Ballintubber Abbey was built on the edge of a lake. Today as we look at the church in the hollow we find it difficult to understand why such a site should have been chosen. But then we must remember that in the thirteenth century much of the country was very densely wooded. The very name of Mayo, in the Irish, means the plain of the yew-trees. The poetic and musical names of so many of the villages in the parish remind us of the days when the hills and plains were thickly forested. There still is the mountain village in the parish – Derreendafderg – which means 'the little oak-grove of the

red ox'. If we except the Tóchar Phádraig there were few roads as we know them – only bridle paths. Water was one of the chief ways of transport, so like many an Irish monastery Ballintubber Abbey was built on the edge of Loch Carra. Such a site ensured a plentiful water supply and good fishing grounds.

Today as we look from the abbey we can see a narrow strip of water. In the early years of its foundation the waters of the lake lapped round its walls, but as year succeeded year and century piled on century these waters receded as men drained their lands. Some twenty years ago the hulk of one of the primitive boats in use was unearthed in the lands surrounding the abbey. It was across this mighty lake of Carra that the hammers of the stone-mason resounded as they bent to their task of raising this royal abbey.

There are several references in the annals of Irish history to the abbey of Tobar Pátraic. The *Annals of the Four Masters* tell of the burning of part of the abbey in 1265. This part of the church was rebuilt in 1270, and even today differences in the style of building may be noticed. The *Annals of Loch Cé* tell of the burial there of Devorgail, daughter of O'Flynn of Es (now Assylin near Boyle in the County Roscommon), in the year 1296.

(There are several other references to the abbey in the course of the centuries.)

In 1536 legislation was passed in Dublin dissolving the monasteries. But outside the Pale, especially in the West of Ireland, such legislation was very difficult to enforce. The last abbot of Ballintubber Walter Mac Evilly submitted to Henry VIII in 1542, but this surrender seems to have been merely nominal. Even in the reign of Elizabeth State Papers tell the story of how religious houses continued to flourish despite all such laws. The *Calendar of Carew MSS* tell how in 1574 'the following are possessed either by friars or rebels so as her majesty hath no commodity by the same'. Here follows a list of twenty-one abbeys and religious houses in Mayo among which number Ballintubber is mentioned.

Later a merchant of the town of Galway, Robert Blake, acquired an interest in the lands of Ballintubber Abbey. A summary of an Inquisition dated 1614 is preserved in Harris's *Collectanea de rebus Hibernicis*. This is the most detailed statement of the possessions of the abbey, and gives an idea of the immense territories of which it was possessed and of the power and influence it must have exercised. It mentions the lands, fisheries, mills and watercourses which the abbey owned in several baronies in Mayo, and notes that the abbot had the right to cut and carry

away trees and timber from the woods of Kiltarseyghtane for the building and rebuilding of the monastery. The abbey owned more than twenty-five quarters of land, and if we calculate 120 acres for each quarter we have an idea of the immense estates of which the abbey was possessed. These lands were scattered over twenty-five townlands in the modern parishes of Burriscarra, Ballintubber, Robeen, Drum, Killawalla. Even in the parish of Kilmeena beyond Westport, the abbey owned the island of Clynish, while in the distant barony of Erris it owned many fertile acres. The *Strafford Survey of Mayo* for 1636 mentions Sir Richard Blake as 'possessor of the abbey of Ballintobber with the appurtenances thereof'. The Blake family retained their portion of the abbey estates for many years. In 1795 George Moore of Moore Hall purchased the lands and the Moore family remained in possession of the estates until in1911 they were acquired by the Congested Districts Board.

The present sacristy of the abbey was originally the mortuary chapel of the de Burgos of Mayo, a branch of one of the most powerful Norman families. When William, the Brown Earl of Ulster, was murdered in 1333 his lands by feudal law, became the property of his only daughter Elizabeth. Elizabeth de Burgo later married Lionel Duke of Clarence bringing with her the feudal titles to the lands in Ulster and Connacht. Her collateral relatives, Ulick and Edmund Albanach de Burgh, the sons of William Liath, circumvented her claim to Connacht by adopting Irish law which did not recognise descent in the female line. Their descendants thus became 'the king's rebels in Conacht', until their submission to Henry VIII in the sixteenth century. Ulick was the ancestor of Mac William Uachtar (the Upper Mac William) or the Clanrickard Burkes, while from Edmund Albanach descended Mac William Íochtar (the Lower Mac William) or the Burkes of Mayo.

The first de Burgo interred in the abbey was Sir Theobald, called in Irish Tiobóid na Long because of his many ships. Theobald was the son of Gránia Uaile – Grace O'Malley – the famous sea-queen of the West. After the defeat of the Armada Tiobóid supported Mountjoy when the Spaniards landed at Kinsale and received a knighthood for his services. In 1627 Charles I created him 1st Viscount Mayo. Two years later Tiobóid was murdered outside the abbey by his brother-in-law Diarmeen O'Conor of Sligo, and was interred in the abbey. The inscription over his tomb may still be read – 'Tiobóid na Long, 1st Viscount Lord Mayo'.

As an example of seventeenth-century carving the tomb is worthy of note. The base of the tomb resembles an altar with the rudely-carved figures of the twelve apostles, and is surrounded by a massive stone canopy. The last Viscount Mayo interred there was another Theobald,

the 7th Viscount who died in 1741. In the destruction wrought by the Cromwellians in 1653 part of the stone carving was destroyed, but it is still possible to see the figures of seven of the apostles with their appropriate emblems including St. Peter with the keys and St. Andrew with the cross.

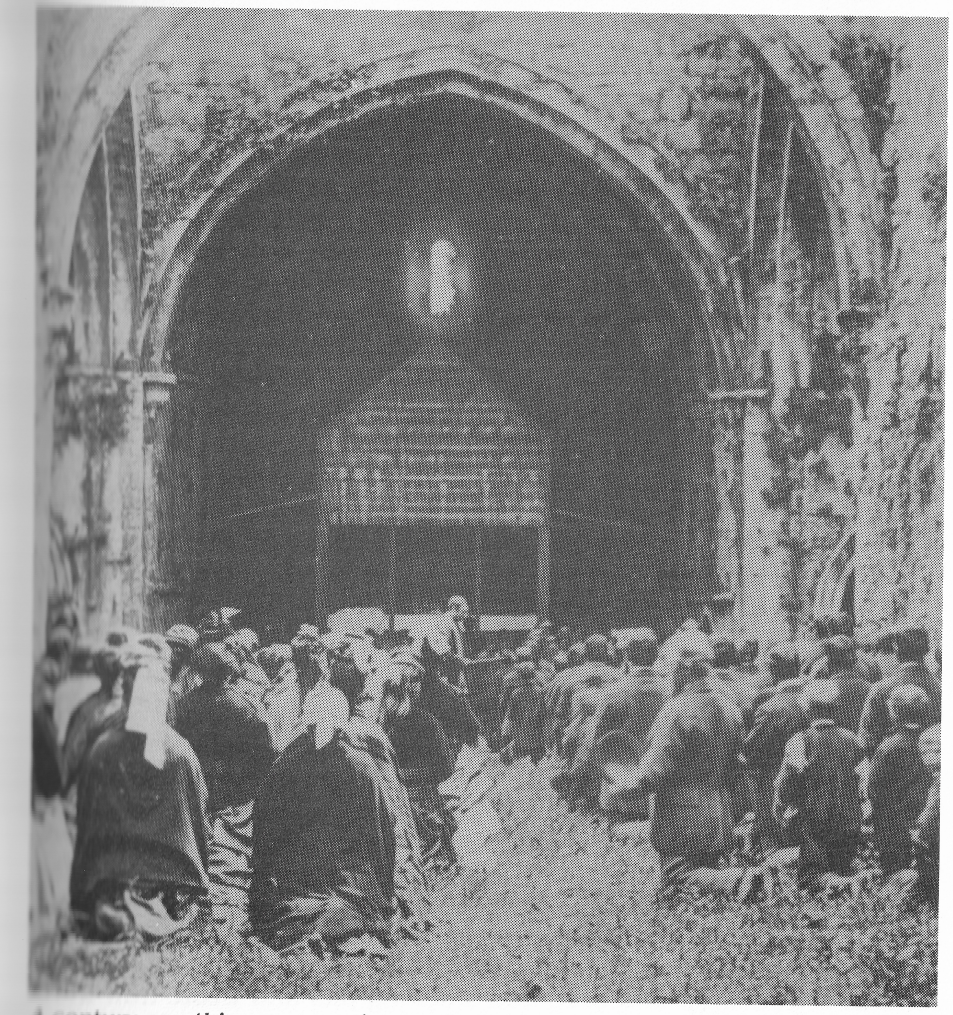
In 1635 the Augustinian friars petitioned Rome for permission to take over a number of houses of the Canons Regular, including Ballintubber. The burning of the abbey in 1653 by Cromwellian soldiery marks the second attempt to destroy Tobar Pátraic. The Cromwellian assault was only partially successful. The monastic buildings, the dormitories, the cloisters and domestic quarters seem to have been completely destroyed. The abbey church again escaped total destruction. All of the timber roof was consumed in the fire, but the internal stone-vaulted roofs of the chancel, the four side-chapels, and the old sacristy remained intact. The Cromwellian despoliation did not put an end to divine worship in the abbey. The Mass continued to be said there as it has been said for almost 750 years.

In 1704 a law decreed that every 'popish priest' then in the country should appear in court and there register his name, age and parish. Registered priests were thus given a legal status and were free to say Mass and to carry out their pastoral duties. As all the bishops of this period were exiled by law the Dublin parliament hoped that this generation of priests would soon die out, and with no bishop to ordain, the people would soon be left without clergy. (In 1715 the priest in Burriscarra which was once administered by the abbey was John Mally.) This John Mally was previously pastor of Kilcommon (Hollymount) and was ordained in 1675 at Cluanbarr (Clonbur), Co. Galway.

In the *Irish Catholic Directory* o 1847 John MacHale addressed an appeal to the clergy of Ireland for help in the restoration of the abbey. In this appeal reference is made to the strong tradition of continuity of worship in the abbey. The strongest tradition of the district is that the Mass has been said in the abbey without a break since the year of its foundation in 1216. The people of the district used the abbey not only as their church but also as their school. Before the present system of primary education was adopted it was mostly in the churches that school was held.

No record of the history of Ballintubber would be complete without mention of the notorious priest-hunter Seán na Sagart – John of the Priests. His name was John Mullowney and his grave is still pointed out in the cemetery adjoining the abbey. The first effort at restoration of the abbey church was made in 1846. It was then the intention to re-roof the

nave as well as the transepts and the cut-stone masonry for windows which it was hoped to instal may still be seen. Came the disastrous famine year of 1847; the population of Ireland fell by millions and all work on the abbey had to cease. The people still continued to attend Mass in the unroofed abbey and it is of this period we have the unique photographs which show the congregation assisting at Mass kneeling on the grass-covered ground. Forty years later another generation resumed the task of restoration. Help and assistance came from many quarters, from people who had no connection whatever with the parish. Restoration



A century ago this congregation attended Mass in the roofless Abbey. (Wynne Collection).

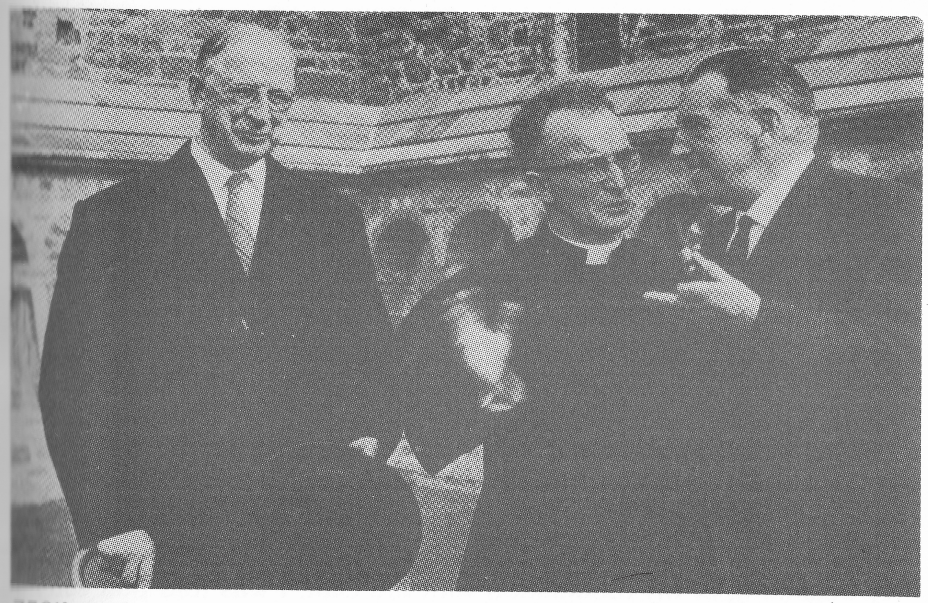
of an Irish abbey, then seven centuries old in which the praises of God had never ceased, even during the Penal days, captured the imagination of the public, and tugged at the heartstrings of exiles all over the world, proud of their Irish heritage. George Ashlin, the eminent Dublin architect, supervised the work, while James Talbot Power of Leopardstown Park, Dublin, was a munificent benefactor. Father James Browne was parish priest when the first effort at restoration was made in 1846, while the name of Father Thomas Reidy, then a curate in the parish, will always be remembered for his work in 1889.

The Architecture of Ballintubber Abbey

Percy Le Clerc and Marcus Ó hEochaidh

The buildings of an abbey must be likened to a living organism which during its life may change and grow in accordance with requirements and circumstances; the visitor doesn't have to look closely to see that Ballintober Abbey is alive and that it comes to us fashioned in the architectural styles of many centuries. Built during a time of change – the greater part of the structure is thirteenth century – the architecture of the abbey illustrates the transition from Irish Romanesque to Gothic and has features which are found only in the West of Ireland. In the 15th century the abbey of the *Well of Patrick* shared in the benefits of the period of growth and prosperity which the country enjoyed under the rule of an Irish and Norman-Irish aristocracy; the buildings of the South Range were redesigned and altered to meet new needs, two cloister arcades were provided and the fine west doorway and window were inserted in the church nave. It was at this time also that the Guesthouse was built by the lakeside west of the abbey to accommodate pilgrims on their way to Croagh Patrick.

The buildings as we see them today illustrate the whole course of the history of the abbey from its foundation in 1216 through its changing fortunes down to the present day. In 1963 extensive archaeological excavation was begun as a necessary prelude to the conservation and restoration works completed three years later. Significant discoveries were made of wall-foundations which clearly define the full extent of the 13th century buildings; we have learned that the abbey was built in two stages: first, the church and east range were erected and the cloister garth was enclosed by a wall at the south and west sides; next, the South Range of domestic buildings was added. During the first period of building the large, vaulted room at the south end of the east range was used as a workshop and here iron-smelting pits and waste iron were discovered. Later, this room became the parlour with a large doorway



750th anniversary celebrations, 8 September 1966. President of Ireland Éamonn de Valera, An Taoiseach Seán Lemass T.D. and Father Thomas A. Egan.

opening on to Lough Carra. The excavations also revealed structural evidence for the extensive reconstruction which the abbey underwent in the 15th century and it is on this evidence that restoration and display of the unroofed buildings and the cloister area has been based.

The abbey church still retains most of the original features of its architectural style, but what is most likely to impress the visitor is its atmosphere of quiet and sober austerity. Situated at the western extremity of the Gothic world this church bears evidence, not of Ireland's isolation or remoteness, but rather of being part of the great medieval community of Christian Europe and of being at one with the Medieval World in an age of building for the glory and service of God.

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THE O'MALLEY CLAN – AN EXTENDED FAMILY

Wayne Harlow

There is an old Cherokee Indian saying that goes 'He who bleeds for the tribe will have his reward.' Being a quarter Cherokee myself on my grandfather's side, I always had the feeling that someday I could call in my marker, get my just rewards. At the moment I'm still waiting. I took the bleeding as symbolic instead of actually spilling blood for the good old tribe. I had the youthful feeling that it was comforting to know that I had an extended family lurking somewhere out there in the black hills of the Dakotas. I always meant to look up some of the old tribe members, but somehow I got side-tracked over the years.

Nothing that I know of now can quite prepare one for becoming a clan member, even though it's only by marriage to a genuine O'Malley. In the very beginning of my association with the clan, I was told that Kitty's branch of the clan had left Belclare around fifteen centuries ago and eventually settled in Limerick. Not to be overshadowed by this revelation, I said that my ancestors had crossed the Bering Sea when it was still a land bridge around fifteen thousand years ago. I don't think she was impressed by my tribal pride.

I began to dabble in the history of the clan, beginning with a romanticised version of the life of the famous pirate queen, that wonderful, noble and indeed, courageous lady who proceeded to carve up and behead anyone who happened to cross her path, discarding husbands like worn out motor cars and generally causing civil disturbances wherever she went. The old O'Malley chieftains seemed equally as aggressive and seemed to be always scrapping with their nearest neighbours. Then there were accounts of clan rivalry, politics and the occasional defection to another clan. Through our recorded history, it seemed to me the clan had survived by sheer tenacity and dogged will, and had its work cut out for it. Survive it did and flourished. How much it flourished was to be a revelation for me, as I got to know certain O'Malleys and heard stories (told and retold with very little variation) about how the clan came into the twentieth century.

After a few years having some association with the O'Malleys at first hand, I wondered what I had gotten myself into. I learned the hard way that one never says anything derogatory or offhand about an O'Malley. Sure as hell, the minute you do, you will be told that she or he is a first

cousin or an uncle twice removed. I felt a subliminal closing of ranks. The dilemma was whether to join them wholeheartedly (which can't really be done unless your great granny fought at the battle of the Windy Boreen or wherever) or try and keep some semblance of one's own heritage and identify, however distant and murky that might be? I chose to keep a respectable but friendly distance from the onslaught of an O'Malley gathering. Not the easiest thing to do when you're married to one!

Time passed and the conditioning paid off to a degree. I ho-hummed my way through hearing of an O'Malley at the battle of Waterloo, at the Somme and at Omaha Beach; an O'Malley (actually) discovering anti-matter and winning the coveted Ogden, Utah Peace Prize; O'Malleys building the Union Pacific Railroad and opening up the first retail food store at Skagway during the Klondyke Gold Rush. My head began to spin. Where on earth had they not been? And where on earth will they turn up next? My extended family took on the patina of a venerable and ancient fortress of tenacious peoples ever perpetuating the notion that if an O'Malley wasn't there then it didn't really happen

It all came together one sunny and pleasant weekend a few years ago when I attended my first O'Malley Rally. This rally congregated on Clare Island. No better place, I thought, than the island where the aforementioned lady pirate held sway. As I walked around trying to psyche myself up to what might happen next, I kept bumping into O'Malleys. Behind every rock and gully and sand-strewn beach they popped up. It was slightly intimidating. The slap on the back and the hardy handshake and the inevitable 'Which O'Malley are you?'. I assumed they meant from what part of the far-flung world I came from. I threw out a few names as I went along, Cleveland O'Malley Branch, Chicago, etc. 'Then you must know Liam J. O'Malley from Sandusky Ohio?'. I politely excused my way out of a few awkward meetings, only to find out later that the best thing to do is to admit you know said Liam J. or Sarah T. from Spokane, because admitting you may not have heard of them is tantamount to clan treason.

After the official clan meetings, where only the chiefs, ex-chiefs and the inner circle are privileged to attend, the dinner dance is held. Amid speeches, awards, accolades for present and past achievements, the dinner progresses. You table hop and eye the name tags, Wow! there's an O'Malley from Hong Kong, one from Odessa, another from Cincinatti. Less and less during the festivity you admit to being only a peripheral O'Malley, through marriage that is. Well into the dancing and entertainment you suddenly feel that you have at last become an official clan member,

only, only, until the photographers begin to assemble the true O'Malleys for a clan photograph.

Another clan rally ends and it's back to the books. Somewhere, buried deep in some dusty archives, the splintering of the ancient O'Malley clan will reveal that part of the clan went to America and intermarried with the Indians of the Cherokee nation. That would surely make me an official O'Malley, wouldn't it?



THE CHICAGO CLAN

Paddy Joe O'Malley, a native of Westport and noted triathlete, has sent us news of the O'Malley Clan in Chicago. They are planning a Spring Dance for April 1991 in the newly constructed Banquet Hall in Gaelic Park.

The Mark Howard Trinity Irish Dancers from Chicago attended the World Irish Dancing Championships in Galway this year, and won the World Championship in Irish Dance Drama. They danced their original interpretation of 'Gráinne Uaile the Pirate Queen of Mayo'. This dance will be performed at the Irish Heritage Centre in Chicago. The Trinity dancers are invited to perform all over the world, and have been on U.S.A. network television on numerous occasions.

Former Chicago Chieftain Ellen Hodges and her husband Terry are again sponsoring a picnic in aid of Irish musicians. Terry, a gifted musician, is American born.

The clan marches annually in the St. Patrick's Day Parade. We publish some photographs of last year's participants.



O'Malley Clan members answering phones for 'Easter Seals telethon'. Front row, left to right: Adele Becker, Ellen Devitt Hodges, Walter O'Malley, Mary Ann Casey, Ruth O'Malley. Back row, left to right: Eileen O'Malley, Anna Marie O'Malley, Sue Schreier.



Eileen O'Malley, Ellen Devitt Hodges, Maryiln O'Malley. Note: Eileen's father Walter was a native of Innishcuttle.



Ed O'Malley)native of Louisburgh), Pat O'Malley (Westport), Ed O'Malley (Chicago).



Bob O'Malley (Chicago) holding O'Malley Clan Banner directly behind: Mary Ann Casey and Eileen O'Malley.



Ed O'Malley (Louisburgh) and Walter O'Malley (Newport) (being entertained by piper prior to parade).



Ed O'Malley and Mary Ann Casey beside O'Malley Clan Float.

We need your support – buy a certificate.

BROTHERS' FREEDOM TOUR IS ROLLING

Mike Mulligan

(This article is from the *Chicago Sun-Times'* of Friday 20 April 1990. The brothers' grandfather Mike O'Malley emigrated from Curraghreeva, Creggs, Co. Galway).

There may be no limit to what two freedom-loving Americans with bicycles can do to advance the cause of liberty.

Michael and Brian O'Malley will settle for £250,000.

That's the amount the brothers from the Beverly neighborhood on the South Side are hoping to raise for orphanages and children's hospitals in Eastern Europe.

The O'Malleys will embark in mid May on the Celebrate Freedom Tour, a 4,000-mile journey through six nations – East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria.

They are seeking 10 major sponsors at $25,000 each and have received a commitment from the American Chapter of the International Red Cross to distribute the funds to children's organisations within each country. Schwinn Bicycles is supplying the gear and the O'Malleys will pay their own expenses.

"As an American, I have taken so many things for granted – my education, the ability to make what I wanted of my life – things that aren't even in the realm of possibility for some people," said Michael O'Malley, a 32-year-old investment financier who got the idea for the journey while on a three week bicycle tour of New Zealand.

"I wanted to do something for someone else – and not just in a cameo appearance."

The brothers are working out twice a day, running, riding stationery bikes and bicycling in preparation for the tour. They are planning to cover 50 to 60 miles a day and hope to adhere to a schedule that takes into account some of the travel problems they probably will face.

"There aren't a lot of maps available," O'Malley said. "A major concern appears to be infrastructure. We're not sure about the condition of some of the roads. It slows down travel time if you're always fixing flats."

O'Malley hopes this trip is just the beginning. "This is not a one-shot