



O'Malley Clan Association Monthly Newsletter

This month's highlights

- A Happy Christmas from The O'Malley Clan
- Get in touch and share your stories!
- Dr Conor O'Malley, A Profile
- About the O'Malley Clan Association
- The O'Malley Clan Rally 2016

A Very Happy Christmas from The O'Malley Clan Association!



Chieftain Denis O'Malley and all of us here at The O'Malley Clan Association would like to wish all O'Malleys everywhere a very Happy Christmas, and a safe and prosperous New Year for 2016.

We hope to see you all at The Annual Clan Rally in Murroe & Capamore, County Limerick in June 2016. Get booking your flights now!

We'll be here to welcome you for a fabulous weekend with O'Malleys from all corners of the globe.



Get in touch and share your O'Malley Heritage!

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

We'd love to hear from you wherever you're based around the world. Old photographs and stories to go with them, old letters, family trees or just an arti-

cle that you'd like to share with the rest of the clan. Drop us a line and We'll get right to it!



CONOR O' MALLEY Bsc, MB, DOMS, KM.

(1889-1982)

As a daughter of C. Conor O'Malley, a past Clan Chieftain and past O'Malley Clan Guardian Chieftain, I was delighted to be asked to contribute to the Roll Call of The O'Malley Clan. It has been a reason to trawl my many happy memories of my father who was a true polymath.

Conor was the youngest of the fourteen children of Mary O'Malley, Ballyburke, and Peter James O'Malley, he grew up in Kilmilkin in Connemara. His people were sheep and cattle farmers at the foot of the mountains between Maam Bridge and Leenane where the family also ran a small shop. It must have been a tough proposition to rear a large family in such a remote place, but in what must have been a unique achievement for a small-holder family in this poor district, Conor became one of five siblings who pursued successful medical careers.

Conor's father, Peter James, was a successful sheep and cattle farmer in a remote part of the Maam Valley in the wilds of Connemara. Conor was known at home as The Baby. He lived an ideal and untamed life as a young boy whilst roaming the west of Ireland's hills and lakes, relatively well-off, comfortable and free. He enjoyed a happy childhood in Kilmilkin through the efforts of his father and siblings who raised him after his mother Mary died when he was only two months' old.

In his telling, he lived an easy and carefree early life, shooting mountainside snipe or fishing the Beal-an-na-Breac river with his rod. As the youngest son, he seemed destined to take over the family farm, or at least take up farming in the locality. To teach him the basics of husbandry, his father gifted Conor a pig to rear for market when he was a young boy, although it's likely that his sisters actually fed the pig as young Conor was more guided by whim than steadfastness. When the pig was fattened, Conor breezily took him to fair at Balla, Co Mayo, where he was sold for a bicycle and tobacco pipe. Returning home without replacement livestock, the realisation probably dawned on his father that Conor was not likely to spend his life at Kilmilkin rearing animals. (A treasured bicycle later lived in the living room in our house, Eagle Lodge in Barna, where it and daddy's shotgun were dutifully oiled by his children.)

Conor's basic education was gleaned from a tutor who was attached to the O'Malleys and possibly tutored neighbouring families too. This was a rarity

for a hill farming family in the west of Ireland. He studied in Dublin at a crammer school to get his entrance to University. Maths and Latin were the toughest hurdles, but by 1911 he entered University College Galway to become an Engineer. This was his father's choice of career path for young Conor. Being a country boy, raised by his sisters, he found himself thoroughly enjoying the social side of life in a University full of young fellows his own age. Engineering however was not for him so a transfer to medical studies followed. Conor quickly joined several clubs in college, and played Gaelic football on Galway's first Sigerson Cup-winning side.

Nineteen seventeen was a momentous year for Conor. His father died, he qualified as a Doctor, and he joined the Royal Navy as a junior officer. Like so many Irish men of his generation, we may only speculate on why young Conor decided to join the British colours at a time when Ireland was convulsed with its struggle for independence. Britain's Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, had pledged Home Rule for Ireland in March in 1917, and German U-boats had sunk several ships off the Irish coast, resulting in thousands of deaths at sea during that fateful year. Prominent leaders of Nationalist Ireland, such as John Redmond, called for Irishmen to enlist to prove their country's valour, and Ireland's Unionists called for sacrifice for the British Empire. It is likely that Conor may simply have signed up because his commission included a guaranteed two-year contract as a medic. Regardless, there was a long tradition of Connemara men joining either the Connaught Rangers or the Navy, and luckily Conor is one who has left us an account of his time during the Great War.

With Europe already 3 years into this terrible war, Conor was assigned to the Baltic theatre, where he served mostly on *HMS Furious*. Conor was aboard when the *Furious*' biplanes bombed a German Zeppelin base during the famous Tondern Raid in Norway. This was the first attack in history made by aircraft flying from a carrier's flight deck. A keen marksman, one of his more exciting memories was sharpshooting floating mines with a rifle from the heaving deck of *Furious* which was one of the first naval vessels refitted to carry aircraft. After completing his two-year Naval contract, he transferred to the fledgling Royal Air Force, as a medical officer, where he was responsible for overseeing the return of injured airmen back to their homes in Britain.



Conor in Naval Uniform

Conor O'Malley Profile (continued)

He returned to Galway after WWI and later married Sal Joyce in 1924. Sal was a former neighbour from Connemara, and they set-up home in Galway City where they both practised medicine. Sal and Conor worked hard to secure positions in the new Galway Hospital situated in the old Workhouse. Sal administered anaesthetics in the early days of modern anaesthesia, while Conor performed tonsillectomies, ear, nose and throat (ENT) surgery, and organised the new X-ray department. He was appointed Professor of Ophthalmology at the University after studying cataract surgery with the renowned Dr Mathra Das Pahwa in India after the War. In 1956 Conor started up his own private eye practice in Galway City.

Conor loved his work, and equally loved his pastimes of sport shooting, fishing and golf which he spent many damp hours in the west of Ireland pursuing. Indeed in 1975 Conor wrote and published *With A Fishing Rod In Ireland*, still considered a classic by devotees of the fly. Alongside his memories of fishing, his book helped to highlight the work of fishing gillies on various navigations, and he added snippets of riverine history for good measure.

Perhaps sensing that Europe was again descending into conflict, in 1938 Conor was the prime mover behind the establishment of the Order of Malta in Galway. This was a voluntary Catholic ambulance corps which provided uniformed first-aid and nursing support to the community, and was ran on a quasi-military structure. He eventually became a Knight of Malta and chief medical officer to various Order units nationwide. At the outbreak of World War II Conor built an air-raid shelter in our suburban garden. Concerned about aerial bombing of Galway City, he later moved us outside the city limits to Barna where he had a wind-charged turbine built to generate electricity; the first in the west of Ireland. Driving to the city to work daily was not easy owing to the war's monthly eight gallon petrol ration, available to medics, and the car was not supposed to carry passengers, but many a lift was provided to people heading to and from the outskirts of the city. For his children – Grace, Joan, Cathal, Ann and Patrick, there was rarely a dull moment.

Conor was always interested in the history of the west of Ireland and its historical figures, especially the intrepid O'Malley pirate queen and leader of men, Gráinne Ní Mháille., Granuaile. In 1953 Conor addressed some 400 O'Malleys who attended the first Rally in Carraigahowley Castle. O'Malleys came from across the territories of the ancient Kingdom of Umhall which encompassed the baronies surrounding Clew Bay, and from all areas adjacent in the counties of Galway and Mayo. They came from Clare Island, Westport, Louisburgh and places further West. There were Kilmilkin O'Malleys, Knock O'Malleys and those from Ross and Ballyburke. Diaspora O'Malleys travelled from England – especially from Newcastle – and from afar as North America. There were men and women, young and old, from every walk of life, delighted

to meet up and make new acquaintances. As one of the founders of the Clan, Conor was passionate about his family name and hoped that the new connections made between these O'Malley families would persist down the generations. I later became involved in the clan as a tribute to my extraordinarily active father who was a true Renaissance man.

Conor lived with my husband, Simon J Kelly, and I, during some of his twilight years, and it was during this time that I realised what an extraordinary life he had led. Conor was elected Chieftan of the O'Malleys in 1954, and later became a Guardian Chief. My own time as Chieftan was a tribute to him. The last photograph I have of him was taken at Murrisk Abbey during an O'Malley Clan Rally where he is flanked by my two sons Simon and Conor. He died three weeks later. His memory and influence continues in our family.

Thanks to Ann O'Malley & Sarah Kelly





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

The Clan Association formed in 1953 has been connecting O'Malleys around the world in The US and Canada, Britain, Australia, South Africa, New Zealand, South America, and anywhere else you can think of for over 60 years now.

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

The O'Malley Clan Rally 24th to 26th June 2016

The Annual O'Malley Clan Rally takes place in Murroe and Cappamore in County Limerick on the weekend of the 24th to 26th June 2016. It'll be a fabulous weekend for O'Malleys from all over the globe.

Highlights will include a guided tour to The Rock of Cashel, including a trip along part of the route of The O'Sullivan Beara retreat from The Battle of Kinsale in 1601. Many O'Malleys were part of that long and terrible march.

Another highlight will be a talk given by Cormac O'Connor, son of Ernie O'Malley, and an exhibition of artworks linked to The O'Malleys at The University of Limerick.

The full programme of events will be up on the website shortly, and We hope to see you all there.

If you need any help with planning your trip, Or with further information on the Annual Rally, drop us a line by email to omalleyclanireland@gmail.com and We'll get back to you right away!

