



O'Malley Clan Association Monthly Newsletter

This month's highlights

- Only a month to go to the Clan Rally!
- Get in touch and share your stories!
- Clew Bay boating disaster, June 1894. Part 1
- About the O'Malley Clan Association
- The O'Malley Clan Rally 2016

Only a month to go to the Clan Rally!

Only a month to go to The Annual O'Malley Clan Rally 2016 on the weekend of 24th to 26th June. We're literally counting down the days here. We have O'Malleys travelling to Murroe and Cappamore in County Limerick from all over the globe, including the US, the UK, New Zealand, Australia, and many more besides! Check out details on page 4 and come along!! You probably have all your flights booked, hotel sorted at this stage. If you haven't, drop us a line by email.



Welcome to the new O'Maille
 for our members...
 The new O'Maille...
 Welcome to our new newsletter from Clan Chief Brigid O'Malley...
 I hope you will find this...
 I hope all of our members...
 The O'Malley Clan Association...
 I hope you will find this...
 The O'Malley Clan Association...
 I hope you will find this...
 The O'Malley Clan Association...
 I hope you will find this...

The New US Ambassador to Ireland Mr Kevin F O'Malley
 The O'Malley Clan Association...
 I hope you will find this...
 The O'Malley Clan Association...
 I hope you will find this...
 The O'Malley Clan Association...
 I hope you will find this...

Get in touch and share your O'Malley Heritage!

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

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



Clew Bay Boating Disaster 14th June 1894

This is an extract from an article in the journal of The Westport Historical Society, (our thanks to Kieran Clarke and his brother Aiden for permission to publish), on a terrible tragedy that took place just over 100 years ago. Edward O'Malley, who was one of the founding fathers of the O'Malley Clan Association, was involved in the rescue operation during this terrible tragedy, and was later awarded a gold medal from The Royal Humane Society for his actions on the day. 3 members of The O'Malley Clan died in the tragedy, Mary, Margaret, and Anne O'Malley, from Achill Island were among those who lost their lives on that terrible day. Part one this month, Part two next month. Here is the story of what happened...

.....Darby's Point, Achill Island, June 14 1894. Early morning as nearly 400 people gathered along the shore waiting their turn to board the currachs that would ferry them from the pier to the 4 hookers anchored in the channel, which would then in turn bring them to Westport to allow them continue their journey on the steamer S.S. Elm to Glasgow to work in the fields of Scotland and England.

To understand the reasons for this annual exodus of young islanders, one must appreciate the extreme poverty which existed in Achill in the last half of the 19th century. In 1894 the Westport correspondent of The Irish Daily Independent described the island as.....

.....a stretching patch of bog and barren soil, yielding only stones and stunted weeds, and hemmed in by tall hills, presenting here and there rocky fronts to the Atlantic and making sunless valleys dark and rugged, with scarcely a vestige of grass— all hard rock—refusing to yield to labour even the smallest return in fruit.....The starved cattle prowl along the roadside in search of food, and get more in all probability than their owners. There are 6,000 people living in the most miserable hovels that ever sheltered man or woman, worse than many a man builds for his dog or fowl, getting not a single penny, one might say with considerable truth, from the land for which they nevertheless pay rent.....The villages of Achill swarm with people living under such conditions. The few fowl, the pig, the horses, the cow, are only a wretched mimicry filling up the scene. They bring in next to nothing, but the Irish peasant will try ever means of making a penny.

(continued on page 4)



**A chart showing Darbys Point
top with Clare Island
underneath (Above), and
Achill's rocky coastline,
(Below)**



Clew Bay Boating Disaster 14th June 1894

This year the “need to turn a penny” was greater than ever before. Two years earlier the islanders had been in a “state of starvation so destitute that they ate all the potatoes that they had for seed and were unable to crop their lands”

In 1892, Mr Balfour, then Chief Secretary, and accompanied by his sister, had visited the island to “see the extent of the poverty at first hand” As a result, The Seeds Act was framed, under which a government loan was made available to the local Poor Law Guardians for the purchase of seed for the unfortunate islanders. Repayment of the loan was to be made in 2 years, or at some other future time as the Lord Lieutenant might decide. Upwards of £4,000 worth of seed was given in this way but large quantities of seed failed resulting in many local people being unable to meet the repayments. The government consistently refused to have the time for the repayments extended and as the money became due “the unfortunate people were being harassed by seizure of crops, milch cows, and other belongings” Consequently in 1894 they were compelled to seek work in Scotland and England in even larger numbers than usual.

At Darby’s point on that Thursday morning, the first hooker to be loaded was the Victory. Owned by Patrick Sweeney and John Healy and crewed by John Healy and his brother Patrick, the Victory appears to have been the largest of the 4 hookers bound for Westport on that day.



Indeed next to the “Monks Boat” the Victory at “16 tons burden” was probably the largest hooker in Achill at the time.

A similar “hooker” type sailing vessel (Above)

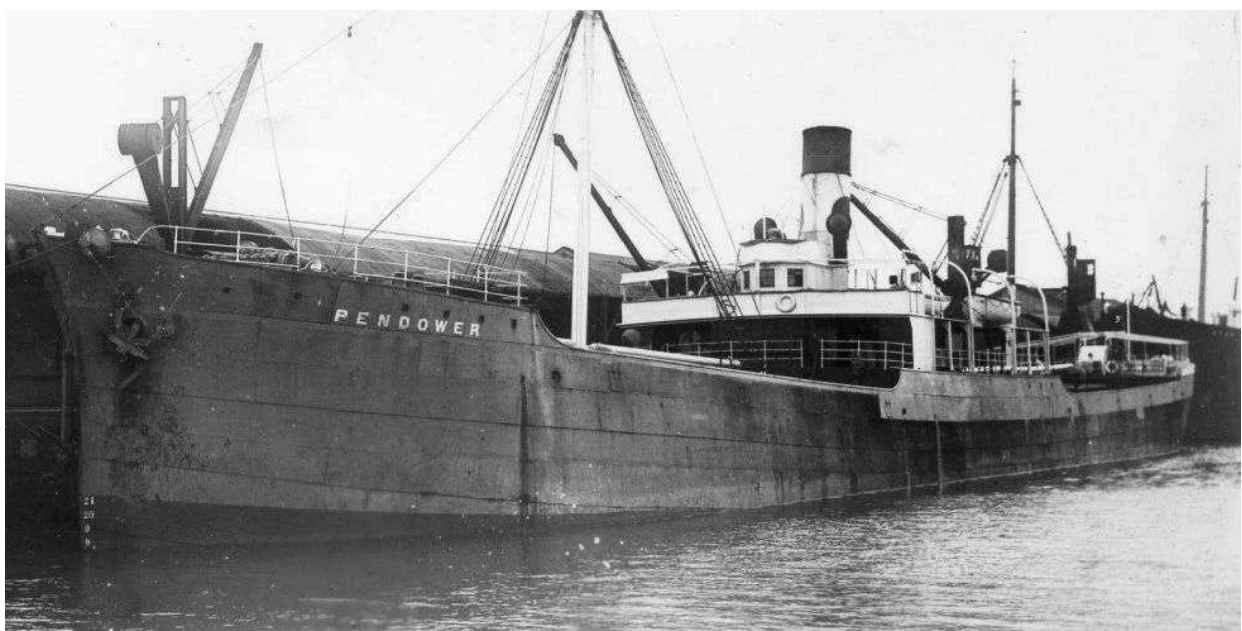
Patrick Lavelle who along with John Patten crewed “Patten’s Hooker” watched as the Healy Brothers helped the excited young islanders aboard from the currachs that had ferried them from the shore. Lavelle was later to testify that “He did not know how they got room in her” He himself “took a boat load after that” I said I would take no more, but I didn’t refuse any”.

The third boat to leave was owned and skippered by James Fadden and He “left Achill the previous morning with about 70 passengers” Last to leave was “Kilbane’s Hooker” and as it was weighing anchor at 9am, the Victory was off Cur-rane and moving towards Mulrany where it would turn South East for Westport Bay.

There had been several days of rain and strong winds but the morning of the 14th was “fairly fine with a nice gale blowing” By midday Healy had rounded the bar at Dorinish, where one witness described the sea as being “dead calm”. It was certainly calm enough for Jack Healy and Edward Scanlon to squeeze through between the passengers to demand the 6d fare. Healy later claimed that he had collected £1-15-0, and thought that about 5 people had avoided paying him. This was his method of estimating that the Victory was carrying only 75 people, but the police were later to prove that there had been 126 passengers on board.

The 6d fare was little compared to the 5s fare on the S.S. Elm from Westport to Glasgow. Most of the islanders had to borrow the sum from the agent who had recruited them for the Scottish farmers, but yet as the hooker sailed up Westport Bay the singing and laughter of the passengers rang across the water.

A similar “steamer” type vessel to the S.S. Elm (below)



Clew Bay Boating Disaster 14th June 1894

Soon John Healy could see the Laird Line Steamer Elm ahead, it had “run aground” on the flats off Annagh head. Registered in Glasgow and calling regularly at Westport, the Elm was unloading part of its cargo into a lighter. On board was captain Carswell, his crew, pilot Thomas Gibbons, and a number of men under stevedore Michael O’Malley. It was now nearly 1pm, and as the Victory approached from the West, a rowing boat carrying teenagers Edward O’Malley and Thomas Burke was approaching from the opposite direction with a message for Captain Carswell. In 1957, Edward O’Malley, then 80 years of age, recalled.....

“We had tied up our boat to the lighter, and had boarded the steamer where We were watching the transfer of part of the cargo to the lighter (which was owned by Anthony Gill), The sound of the singing attracted us and We casually watched the approach of the hooker. All of a sudden as it came nearer, it changed its course and We were struck almost lifeless as We saw it capsize”

Edward Cannon, one of the passengers on the Victory later described what had happened..... *(We) were coming along and had reached about a half mile from Westport Quay, where the Glasgow steamer was anchored. A lot of those on board were young things who had never seen a steamer before and they stood up. Healy ordered them to sit down several times but they all pushed to one side to see the steamer. There was a number of people down in the hold. He (John Healy) told them several times to sit down, they were all standing up, He told them to sit down as “the boat was going to jibe” the wind was coming ahead of her. The boom and the sail brought the boat over, and it went down in a sudden way so that He did not know what happened after. The boom did not carry any of the people over but it caused the boat to go on its side.*

On the Elm, Edward O’Malley saw what happened.....*at first glance We were able to see that when the mast struck the water, the mainsail and jib had imprisoned under them several of the poor islanders. The water was a struggling screaming mass of human beings. Some were grabbing their companions to try to save them selves, but the inevitable result was that they were dragging each other under.*

Tom Burke and I quickly recovered from our initial shock and within a minute or two We had jumped into our boat and pulled away from the steamer to help in the rescue operations. We kept hauling as many as We could out of the water

and into our boat, while several others clung to the gunwhales. In a few moments our boat was packed with water sodden people, men and women, We must have had over two dozen of them. In the excitement We did not realise that We were close to providing another tragedy for with our super-cargo, and those clinging on to the sides the water was pouring over the gunwhales and the boat was nearly awash. Fortunately a stevedore on the steamer was quick to realise our plight and jumping into a boat pulled over to us and took off some of those on our boat as well as those clinging to the sides.

The stevedore, Michael O'Malley, would have gone down too as in the space of a few minutes his "boat was in a very bad mess and she was filling" He in turn was saved by John Gibbons, Inishlyre, whose boat had been coming up the bay 1/4 mile behind the hooker and who arrived at the scene with the crew of the steamer in 4 of their boats, coming close behind him. Edward O'Malley continues.....

*I saw some of the sailors try to release some of the unfortunate victims who were imprisoned beneath the sails, and though they were successful in extricating a few who were caught near the sail edges, they were powerless, as everyone else was, to release the others owing to the weight of the sodden sails and the pressure of water. I remember looking in that direction while We were rescuing others and I could see the heads of the submerged ones being pressed up against the sails in their brief but vain struggle for survival. The bulge of each head in the sail reminded me then of a football. Edward and Tom Rowed their load of survivors to Westport Quay. Both were later awarded with The Gold Medal of The Royal Humane Society. **More on the tragedy and its aftermath in next months issue.***

The memorial at Westport Quay to those who were lost in the tragedy (below)





Address:
Mary Jane O'Malley Hon Sec.
The O'Malley Clan Association
2 Main Street
Newport
County Mayo, Ireland

Email: omalleyclanireland@gmail.com

Website: www.omalleyclan.ie



www.facebook.com/omalleyclan



@clanomalley

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'Malley, 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 is up on the website, 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!

