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June 2016

# Ó Máille



## O'Malley Clan Association Monthly Newsletter

### This month's highlights

- Time to gather for The Annual O'Malley Clan Rally!
- Get in touch and share your stories!
- Clew Bay boating disaster, June 1894. Part 2
- About the O'Malley Clan Association
- The O'Malley Clan Rally 2016

### Time to gather for The Annual O'Malley Clan Rally!

After all the waiting the time to gather together for The Annual O'Malley Clan Rally has arrived. Everybody will be heading to Murroe and Cappamore for the weekend of the 24th to 26th June. If you need any help with accommodation or logistics while you're visiting drop us a line on [omalleyclanireland@gmail.com](mailto:omalleyclanireland@gmail.com) and We'll see what We can do.

Hope you all enjoy what's sure to be a fabulous weekend in County Limerick!!



**Welcome to the new O'Malley Clan Association Newsletter**

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**The New US Ambassador to Ireland Mr Kevin F O'Malley**

The O'Malley Clan Association has been pleased to welcome the new US Ambassador to Ireland, Mr Kevin F O'Malley, to the US Embassy in Dublin. Mr O'Malley has a long and distinguished career in the US government and is a member of the O'Malley Clan.

### 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!



## **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 was last month, Part two this month. Here is the story of what happened...

.....In the immediate aftermath of the tragedy news reached Westport of the incident. The first rumour was that a hooker had been overturned by the cable of a steamer at anchor in Westport Bay. Crowds rushed to Westport Quay to find out what might have happened, only to find, when they reached the quay, boat after boat, at intervals, bringing up the bodies that had been recovered. "Language fails utterly to picture the almost indescribable horror of the scene. Tenderly and carefully the bodies were removed from the boats to the slip near the Demesne"

By noon, about an hour and a half after the occurrence 18 bodies were recovered, a considerable number of them being women, some young, and a few advanced in years. The bodies were moved to one of the stores adjacent to the police barracks, but as others arrived it was found that it did not afford adequate accommodation for all and the store adjoining had to be forced open where one half of the bodies were placed.

The hundreds of Achill people that had arrived in the other boats awaited the arrival of the corpses. "As fond relatives were recognised the wailing rent the air and the scene was heartrending"

Those islanders who had survived remained walking the quay, watching intently the incoming boats, weeping and wringing their hands disconsolately.

Stories and rumours of heroism passed from group to group. One such story was of a young man who had been pulled into a rescuing boat, but on seeing his sister in danger, plunged into the water and seized his sisters shawl with his teeth

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**Achill Railway Station(Above),  
and Westport Quay, (Below)**



## **Clew Bay Boating Disaster 14th June 1894**

And sank with her, only for both of them to be subsequently rescued by another boat.

By evening twelve more bodies had been added to the eighteen previously found, making a total of thirty corpses now lying in the improvised mortuary in at Westport Quay. One of these had been found early in the evening by the constabulary boat, six were found by the Rosminna coastguards, and four by Clew Bay islanders who had hauled the scene of the wrecks with grappling hooks. Of the twelve now recovered, eight were female, “none of whom appears to have been more than eighteen years old, amongst them a child of not more than eight years, who was on a visit from Scotland with some friends....Among the males is a poor old man whom dire necessity alone could have pulled from his home in Achill to the harvest fields of Scotland.”

A relief committee had been quickly formed under the chairmanship of Mr PJ Kelly, Chairman of the board of guardians. He enlisted the help of A.M. O'Malley J.P., Mr Horne the resident magistrate, PJ Doris, assistant clerk of the union, local clergy, and many other prominent Westport people including Myles Staunton who became Hon Secretary of the committee. PJ Doris was given responsibility for getting the survivors in need of medical assistance to Westport Hospital.

A.M. O'Malley wired Mr Tatlow, manager of the midlands great western railway to see if it would be possible to have the bodies conveyed on the new, and as yet unopened railway line from Westport to Achill Sound. Mr Tatlow in his reply offered to put on a special train, but only as far as Newport, as the remainder of the line had not yet been handed over to his company. This problem was overcome when Mr Horne dispatched a mounted policeman to Newport to persuade the engineers there to allow the train to travel on to Achill.

By now large numbers of Achill people were arriving in Westport on foot and by cart. Many remained walking about Westport all through Thursday night “crying pitifully”

The following morning saw a group of women “in scarlet homespun petticoats and kerchiefs crowded around the entrance to a yardway on the quay at Westport. Without tears, without vehement gesticulation, they sobbed a mournful wirrasthrue”

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Later that day the Elm set sail for Glasgow carrying 160 of the islanders, but beforehand Mr Kelly the Coroner opened the inquest on the bodies that had been recovered.

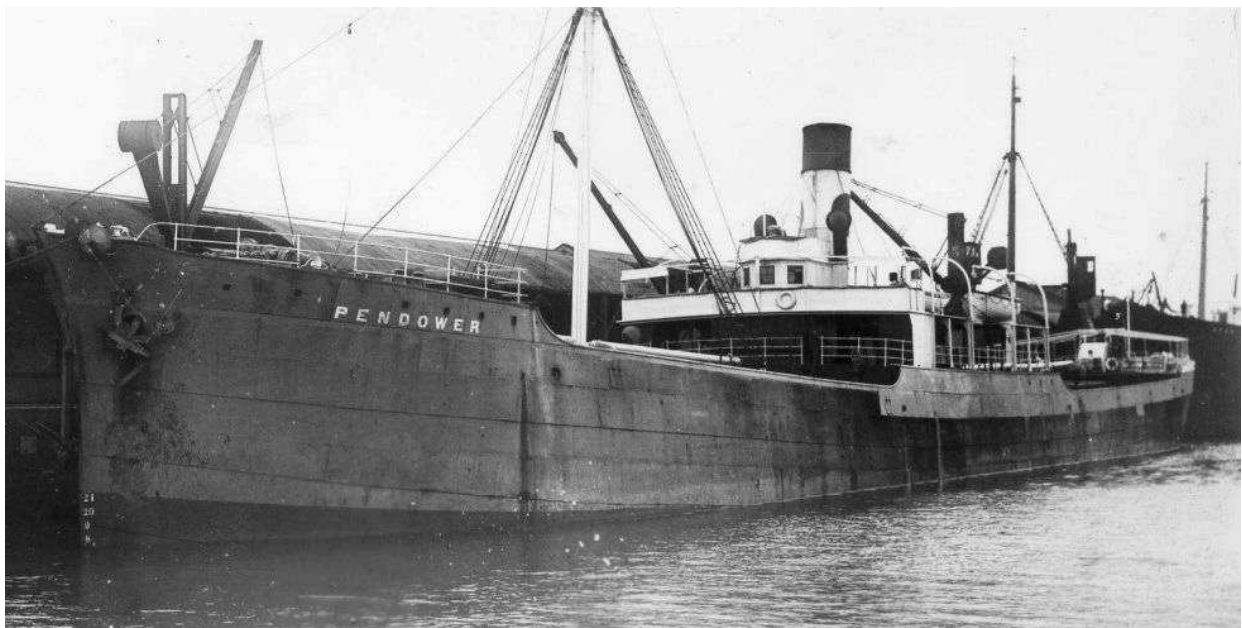
“In a large yard owned by Mr McBride and Mr Gill, 31 of the bodies lay in plain deal coffins, the lid in each case being labelled with the name of the person whose remains it contained. The relatives of the victims were gathered about, some of them in silent grief, others wailing pitifully at the loss of their loved ones. The spectacle conveyed a very sad impression”

The jury having been sworn, the Coroner went through the process of identification. Accompanied by the jury, He passed from coffin to coffin. As each lid was removed a relative or friend of the deceased were called forward to identify them. Next they proceeded to an adjoining outhouse where nine bodies still lay uncoffined, the coffins for them having not yet arrived. Here a similar process of identification was gone through, the process leading to renewed scenes of grief.

The Coroner and jury then moved to Mrs McBride’s establishment, where the inquest was continued. A few witnesses having been examined, the police requested an adjournment on the grounds that they expected to be in a position to produce further evidence on the following day. The Coroner adjourned the inquest for seven days.

Later that evening, all the bodies having been coffined, they were moved to the railway station at Westport Quay, loaded in wagons and sent to the town station.

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



## Clew Bay Boating Disaster 14th June 1894

Here it was announced that the train to Achill would leave at 10:18am the following morning., Saturday, and “long before the hour for starting, the poor Achill people assembled at the Westport railway station, most of them showing signs of the great mental strain which they had suffered in the past few days”

By ten o clock news arrived that 2 additional bodies had been found, the reconvened inquest on the following Monday would identify them as **Joseph Cooney 18** of Bleanaskill, and **Patrick Cafferkey 18** of Tonragee. On board the train now in Westport station were:

**Catherine Molloy 30** from Achill Sound, who left behind a husband and an aged mother and father, **Nancy and Martin Cooney, 20 & 15**, brother and sister of Joseph Cooney. Sisters **Mary 24, Margaret 18 and Annie 15 Malley**, the Valley, whose father Owen Malley was now childless.

**75 year old Patrick O'Donnell and 20 year old Margaret O'Donnell** of Dereens. Margaret was dumb, as was her sister who had remained at home. Brother and sister **John and Mary Patten aged 18 and 20** from Shraheens. Their crippled father was left to mourn them.

**Mary Patten 18** of Newillin, who was going to Scotland to provide for her mother and five other children. **10 year old Mary MacFarland** from Scotland. Mary had been living with relatives in Achill and was returning to her widowed mother in Glasgow. She was a cousin of Patrick Cafferkey of Tonragee.

**Mary Scanlon 28** of Shraheens, who left behind her stepmother, a very old and feeble woman. **14 year old Mary Ann Lavelle**, Shraheens, the oldest of a family of seven.

**Joseph and Bridget Weir, aged 18 and 15**, the Valley, who left an invalid father, their mother and 6 younger children. **Bridget Lynchehan 20** Shraheens, who left her father and 6 young children. **Thomas Caffrey 37** Belfarsad, His wife and 8 children had remained in Achill.

Both parents of **Brigid McLaughlin 24** of Derreens were still alive. **Catherine Gallagher Currane 17** left a widowed mother and several younger children. **Sibby Quinn 15** was from Achill Sound. **Honor Patten Sharaheens 20** was the daughter of a farmer. **Mary Doogan 40** Dereens, was the wife of a blind fiddler and had 2 children. **Catherine Walsh also 40** had been living in Bleanaskill with her married

Brother. **Winnie McAneely 16** also from Bleanaskill. Her mother had died only 2 weeks previously.

**Sibby McAneely 34.** Sibby had been the sole support of her bedridden mother.

**Bridget Joyce 18** Tonragee West was the eldest of 5 children. **Mary Cooney 19** also from Tonragee. Her 2 brothers had also been on the Victory and had been saved.

**Honor English 16** from Rosturk, was daughter of Martin English and was going to Scotland with her cousin Catherine English. Catherine was saved.

**Patrick Cafferkey 18** Belfarsad, was identified as a batchelor and labourer.

John Healy was at the station when the train moved out at 10:30am. The Irish Independent records that....

*The Police thought it prudent to prevent the Healys attending the funerals in Achill as it was feared, considering the excited state of the people, that they would not be safe in doing so. There was however little necessity for the precaution, as the relatives of the deceased who attended the inquest do not appear to attach any blame to John Healy or his brother. A rumour has been circulated that the former, who is half owner of the boat, the other owner being Patrick Sweeney Snr, lies in a very serious condition at the residence of Mr Myles Staunton, James Street, and it is stated that he has been attended by a priest and a doctor.*

### **Kildownet Cemetary, Achill (below)**



## Clew Bay Boating Disaster 14th June 1894

Healy's condition was not however as serious as reported. He "was seized with a fainting fit, was promptly attended by Father Macken, and after about three quarters of an hour had almost recovered"

As the train arrived in Newport a large crowd gathered on the platform and expressed great sympathy with the affected relatives, "most of whom are in a weak and dejected state" "Old man English" who was examined at the inquest and whose young daughter was among the dead had a severe fainting fit and was in a very weakly condition. Mr Myles Staunton of the relief committee luckily had a flask of brandy of which the old man took a little. The train proceeded to Rossturk where the body of Honor English was removed from the train. Fathers Connolly and Fitzgerald got out of the train and gave the poor relatives all the consolation they could.

The Mayo News describes how, as the train got under way....

*Large numbers of people were on the banks, kneeling with joined hands, evidently in prayer. Crowds followed the train, which moved slowly, inquiring for relatives, and weeping bitterly. At Molranny a vast number of people had assembled and on the arrival of the train there was a loud cry of sympathy for the relatives. On reaching Tonragee, 6 miles from Rossturk, the coffin of Mary Cooney was removed from the train for internment in the cemetery of that neighbourhood. The sight from the train after the removal was most touching. The coffin was placed on a bier in the centre of the road. The immediate relatives lay prostrate upon it weeping frantically while others knelt round weeping and praying. The people are wretchedly poor. Through Pollranny townland where some of the victims resided crowds followed the train weeping piteously.*

*At Achill Sound, which we reached at 2pm, the whole country round was black with people. The cries which rent the air, and the scene generally was appalling. The train stopped in the midst of a large crowd which surrounded it. Relieving Officer Lavelle had a large number of carts ready to convey the bodies to the cemetery. Each survivor on leaving the train was embraced by relatives. The relatives of the victims were frantic with grief and rent the air with their sad cries.....*

*It would be quite impossible, even for the most disinterested bystander to witness the scene unmoved. As each coffin was removed, Mr Grey would announce*



*The name on the lid, and this was followed by a cry of woe from the respective knots of relatives that composed the crowd.*

Black flags marked the way across Davitt bridge and along the route to Kildownet Cemetary. All 28 coffins having arrived, they were laid in the graves and the prayers of the dead were read.

*A thick mist had begun to fall some time before. The brightness of the early part of the day had been succeeded by a gloomy foggy mistiness which tended to deepen the sadness of the scene. As the first shovelfuls of earth fell upon the coffins the wild lamentations of the people fell anew. Shortly afterwards the rain fell more heavily, and a fierce storm arose and the wind shrieking over the mountain sides and along the valleys of Achill seemed to wail in sympathy with the poor sorrow laden islanders.*

The bodies of Patrick Cafferkey and Joseph Cooney arrived by open carriage on the following Tuesday. Cafferkey to be buried at Tonragee and Cooney was laid to rest beside his brother and sister in Kildownet.

At Westport Quay, the Victory had by now been re-floated and was berthed close to the idle wall. Westport Quay has now resumed its normally quiet aspect and the only evidence of the late disaster is the many little torn shawls, baskets, and numerous odds and ends which are strewn along the pier.

The inquest, on all 32 victims, which resumed on Friday 22nd June. The verdict was that....

**.....We consider that the deceased were drowned abreast of Islandrue in the county of Mayo on the 14th June 1894, by the capsizing of the hooker Victory, and which said hooker was in the charge of John Healy and We consider that the capsizing took place by the passengers on board rushing the side of the hooker nearest to the steamship Elm. We consider that the hooker was not properly ballasted when she left Achill and We consider that the hooker was grossly overloaded.**

Of the 126passengers on board, 94 had been rescued. It was not long before the shocked inhabitants of Westport were again to assist in another sad inquest. On 1 November 1895, five children aged between 8 and 16, and the sons of Patrick Kelly and Joseph Kelly of Islandmore were drowned while fishing in Clew Bay



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@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](mailto:omalleyclanireland@gmail.com) and We'll get back to you right away!

When tweeting about the rally use #OMR and then We'll all see your tweet

