

O'Malley Clan Association Monthly Newsletter

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The 45 year wait for the Limerick O'Malleys is over!

Limericks long wait, (since 1973), for a win in the All-Ireland Senior Hurling Championship finally came to an end on the 19th August in front of a full house of 82,500 people in Croke Park in Dublin. In what was one of the most thrilling, nerve shredding, and entertaining finals of recent memory, Limerick came out on top over a gallant Galway side by a single point on a scoreline of 3-16 to 2-18, (25 points to 24). Commiserations to all those Galway O'Malleys this year, but without doubt Galway will be back and ready for battle again next year!



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!



Donogh O'Malley & Free Education 50 years on

It is 50 years since Fianna Fáil minister for education Donogh O'Malley announced plans for free second-level education.

It was not a radical policy in itself – many of our European neighbours had done it long before – but it had radical consequences for economic development, social mobility and cultural change.



Minister for Education, Donogh O'Malley in 1967

The announcement also caused consternation within government circles: there had been no sanction from the Department of Finance, nor were senior Cabinet ministers briefed in advance. But there was no going back. Once word was out, expectations were raised and the public response was hugely supportive.

At the time, about a third – or 17,000 children – who finished primary school were dropping out of education; at 15 years of age fewer than 50 per cent were still in full-time education. By 16, only 36 per cent were still at school.

Within a decade of the policy change, participation rates in second-level had doubled.

Today, Ireland has one of the highest rates of second-level completion in the EU, with more than 90 per cent of the population completing the Leaving Cert.

If schooling is free and available to everyone, surely this means that educational success is simply down to your innate ability and how hard you work?

If only it were so simple. Major challenges remain: stark inequality of access to education is a stain on the national conscience; our early years childhood care and education services are poorly developed; a neglected training and apprenticeship system is failing to attract school-leavers; and our higher education sector is on the cusp of crisis.

And the biggest irony of all? Our “free” primary and secondary education isn't really free at all. It survives only with the crutch of “voluntary contributions” from parents.

So, what big, bold idea do we need to start a new educational revolution in 2017?

Donogh O'Malley & Free Education 50 years on (contd)

We asked some of the most experienced and influential figures in the world of education for their take on the impact of free second-level education, and what they feel needs to come next.

Mary O ' Rourke

Former teacher and minister for education

1967: "I was studying for my higher diploma in education at Maynooth when the announcement came. It was a marvellous leap of faith.

" Suddenly, there was a huge demand for teachers. The school where I did my teaching hours wanted me to join full-time. I told them I had a three year old at the time, and wanted to add to my family. ' We ' ll get a woman for your child! ' they told me.

" Everyone responded with great heart and determination: teachers, school management bodies, everyone. The numbers at second-level grew overnight. Within a few years, there was a blossoming of the regional technical colleges. "

2017: " We need a radical injection of investment for universities and institutes of technology: they have been hacked and hacked and are now operating at the cliff-edge.

" I don ' t know how they are keeping up standards. We also need to build up our apprenticeship system. It is still the poor relation. We need more in areas like hospitality, tourism and finance. They really need a huge push."

Joe Duffy

Broadcaster and author

1967: "I was in my final year of primary school. The secondary school we aspired to go to was St John ' s College De La Salle in Ballyfermot.

" There was a big wall around it. The only way in without paying fees was to do the scholarship exam. Then, out of the blue, came Donogh O ' Malley ' s announcement. Fees were abolished. Suddenly, the wall came down. It was utterly transformative.

" I was the first in my family to do the Inter Cert, not to mind the Leaving Cert. It had a huge psychological effect on communities like Ballyfermot.

2017: "It ' s time to abolish third-level fees. The psychological barrier is still there for many working-class people.

" Third level isn ' t beyond their reach intellectually, but they presume it is financially. Just like Donogh O ' Malley ' s announcement, it would have a transformative impact. "

Donogh O'Malley & Free Education 50 years on (contd)

John Coolahan

Professor emeritus of education at Maynooth University

1967: “The timing was right. Parents were in readiness . The media caught the public mood .

“ It had a remarkable impact: an increase from 148,000 pupils in post-primary schools in 1967 to 239,000 by 1974 , an increase of over 60 per cent .

“ Predominant image for me was the sight of the yellow-topped school buses traversing the by-ways and boreens of rural Ireland. For the first time, the Irish State was seen to be reaching out to promote the educational well-being of its teenagers. ”

2017: “Major investment in the school-reform movement would make a great impact. From early childhood, through primary school and into junior cycle, there is currently a curricular, pedagogic and assessment reform in progress .

“ Linked to this, schools are changing their mode of operation with whole-school planning, school self-assessment and greater teacher collaboration . . .

“ Qualitative teacher leadership is central to the reform . This dramatic reform agenda urgently needs an investment surge to help realise its historic potential. ”

Anne Looney

Interim head of the Higher Education Authority and head of DCU 's new faculty of education

1967: “The policy decision to introduce free second-level education had direct consequences for me.

“ It meant that as a giddy participant in what was called ‘low babies ’, the path to secondary school for me and my classmates was now borderless. For my family, this was a huge relief. For Ireland, it was game-changing. ”

2017: “I am increasingly convinced the next game-changer needs to focus on the transition from school.

“ There is good work in progress in changes to grades and CAO points, for example. But what would happen if every student leaving school was guaranteed a place in a high-quality level six [certificate] course, free of charge, if they wanted to avail of it?

“ Less pressure at Leaving Cert? Time to prepare for college or for work? Less chance of choosing the wrong college course? A chance to progress to level seven [degree] and beyond? Variations of this idea have been floated before, but with thousands more young people about to pass through the school system, perhaps its time to take a closer look at this option. ”

Donogh O'Malley & Free Education 50 years on (contd)

Tom Boland *Former head of the Higher Education Authority*

1967: “Free second level education was, simply, transformational. I know this from personal experience, as one of a family of 11 from a west of Ireland small farming background. None of the first seven of my family went to second level . It was just impossible financially. All four of the younger family members completed the Leaving Cert (me included) and two went to third-level. It was our luck to benefit from the policy change. ”

2017: “It is time to get *really* serious about educational disadvantage. Morally, economically and socially it is unconscionable that in some poorer parts of our country less than 20 per cent of young people go on to college, while in richer areas effectively all do.

“ This is not to preach the ‘ snob value ’ of higher education. It is to acknowledge the fact that most of the jobs in a developed economy like ours need a high level of skills achieved through post second-level education, including apprenticeships.

“ It requires sustained effort, patience, a long-term view and loads of money. But chiefly it requires the kind of passion and patriotism that brought us free second-level education half a century ago.

Oh, and political balls!

Áine Hyland

Emeritus professor of education at UCC and one of the founders of the Dalkey School Project national school, now known as Educate Together

1967: “I was on a weekend break in Galway when I saw the headlines: ‘ Free second level education for all ’ – it was unbelievable! “My husband Bill Hyland had been a member of the Investment in Education team which, some months earlier, had highlighted the low rate of participation in second-level education in Ireland. “More than one-third of 14 year olds had already left school; at 15 years of age fewer than 50 per cent were still in full-time education. “It revolutionised the course of Irish education. Within a decade, participation rates in second level had doubled. Today, Ireland has the highest level of second-level completion in the EU, with more than 90 per cent of the population completing the Leaving Cert. ”

2017: “The Minister could re-introduce the policy which underpinned the national school system from 1831 to 1965 : the policy of ‘ uniting in one system children of different creeds ’ .

“ For over 130 years, all national schools in receipt of public funding were required to admit children of all religions and none, without distinction, and to organise the school day to ensure that all could benefit from the secular curriculum without having to attend religious instruction.

“ If this policy were to be re-adopted, it would simply require the Government to repeal article seven of the Equal Status Act (2000) and to implement, without fear or favour, the Education Act (1998), recognising the rights of each individual child.

Donogh O'Malley & Free Education 50 years on (contd)

John Walshe

Former special adviser to Ruairí Quinn and Irish Independent education editor

1967: “My father loved nothing more than pouring over the Sunday papers. Unusually for his generation, he had gone to university and knew the transformative power of education.

“When my father read O'Malley's announcement in the Sunday papers, I remember his prediction that it would change Ireland forever. It was the lead story in the *Sunday Press* on September 11th, 1966, while the *Sunday Independent* covered it but gave more prominence to the successful Irish show jumping team in the World Championship at Burghley, Lincolnshire.

“O'Malley offered up to £25 per pupil and put Catholic secondary schools under enormous pressure to join the free scheme, setting a deadline of May, 1967 – a different arrangement was made for Protestant schools. The newspapers added to the pressure. When I became a rookie journalist, older hands on the *Evening Herald* recalled getting up-to-date lists every morning from O'Malley's people showing which schools had signed up and which were holding out for higher grants. A few dozen Catholic schools didn't join and continue to charge fees.”

2017: “Free secondary education made O'Malley a folk hero. Free higher education didn't do the same for Niamh Bhreathnach.

“Ruairí Quinn's lasting legacy could well be a comprehensive further education and training system that fulfils the promise of becoming truly world class.”

Bridget McManus

Chair of National Council for Curriculum & Assessment and former secretary general at the Department of Education

1967: “The newly-appointed minister in his first major speech in September 1966 announced free post-primary education from the next school year. The taoiseach rebuked him and the Department of Finance was vehemently opposed.

“Detailed proposals had to be developed, managed through government, negotiated with the Catholic and Protestant churches and religious school management authorities and delivered on the ground in less than a year.

“Those of us involved in delivering any major public-sector change can readily appreciate the challenge! A challenge the minister and his officials met with resounding success. Ninety two per cent of all day pupils were covered immediately. A new free school transport system was implemented rapidly by CIE. The numbers in post-primary education increased by more than a third in a two-year period, transforming access to education.”

Donogh O'Malley & Free Education 50 years on (contd)

2017: “With participation rates among the best in the world, we need to reimagine our young people ’ s experience of senior cycle.

“ Schools and teachers strive to deliver a holistic education, including exam success. Different agencies and institutions have worked in recent years to reduce transition pressures. There is much that is successful.

“ Nonetheless, for too many their last two school years are a set of hurdles to enter the next stage. Too many feel overwhelmed or left behind by the experience. Too many embark on a next stage that doesn ’ t work for them. We haven ’ t developed a parity of esteem for different pathways that exploit different talents. Meanwhile, our students face a multiplicity of social and emotional challenges as they become young adults.

“ NCCA has started work on a project to research international experience as well as innovative national practices so we can inform discussion about what society values and wants from our senior -cycle education and what this means for its structure and content. ”

Irish Times, Carl O ’ Brien, 14th February 2017.





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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.

Sharpe Star O'Malley takes Chair of Kerry Fianna Fail Cumman

KERRY-BASED actor Daragh O'Malley is a well known face within the world of acting, but he is now taking on a role with a difference, having been elected as Fianna Fáil's Tralee Patrick Sarsfield Cumann Chairman. Kerry Fianna Fáil TD John Brassil put Mr O'Malley forward for Chairmanship at the Cumann's meeting at the Meadowlands Hotel, Tralee, last week.

He was duly elected unanimously, helped in no small way by securing the endorsement of Councillors Norma Foley and Tom McEllistrim. The actor is already wellknown having starred in 'The Magnificent Seven' and 'Vendetta', and as Harper in ITV Napoleonic War series Sharpe. As son of former Minister of Education Donogh O'Malley, the actor brings a significant Fianna Fáil pedigree with him to his latest role. Aside from acting and politics, he also has strong Kerry connections. His mother is the late Dingle-born Dr Hilda Moriarty, and his grandfather was a wellknown west Kerry and Island doctor, Paddy Moriarty.

Mr O'Malley relocated from California to The Kingdom two years ago, and one of his main aims in moving over was to use regenerate industrial premises for industries such as film, TV, gaming, and other digital content.

"Well, I was totally overwhelmed but very honoured indeed to have been elected Chairman of The Patrick Sarsfield Cumann," Mr O'Malley said following last week's election.

"Stemming emigration and creating jobs that keep young people – sons and daughters – at home in Kerry remains a priority for Fianna Fail and is very much the main challenge."

