



A Cornfield in Mayo, Standing Out!



*I took a walk to view this crop
It was a sight to see
This fine field of oats with golden seeds
Would fill your heart with glee...
When I found O'Malley's field of oats
On a hillside in Mayo
Anthony McTigue, O'Malley's Field of Oats*

A field overlooking the R312 Castlebar to Belmullet road has almost become a road hazard. The field, which looks down on the road and Lough Beltra below, has caused plenty of drivers to avert their eyes from the road.

For, surrounded by rugged, mountainy land that only the most adroit of sheep could survive on stands what could be the most unusual cornfield you will ever see.

And just above it is a lush, green field, also reclaimed from the mountain.

Neither field look like they have any earthly business there, hence the amount of drivers who avert their gaze from the road to the western facing shoulder of Croaghmoyle mountain in Glenisland.

More than 700 feet above sea level is a field of oats, just harvested last week with a lush green field just above it and the land around it gives them a ring of the Bull McCabe's field to them.

And if the fields themselves caused plenty of sideward glances, then the sight of a combine harvester snaking its way up the steep track late last month to harvest the corn had locals out of their houses looking on in amazement.

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Combine harvesters don't tend to travel west of Castlebar too often and most certainly not for a field on the side of a rugged mountain.

So in what was one of the most unusual jobs Mayo Abbey agricultural contractor Bernie Fallon ever had to do, his Class Combine harvester travelled west on Saturday, September 26 to the field high above Lough Beltra, looking out on the stunning vista of the lake, Clew Bay and Clare Island. The cornfield yielded a remarkable crop of oats, almost four feet tall, weed free and still standing. For those who know about these things, it yielded circa 2.5 tonnes to the acre at 16 percent moisture.

The land is owned by local man George O'Malley, the crop of oats was sown by Michael Dyra, an agricultural contractor from Newport with Bernie Fallon harvesting them.

The cornfield was first cultivated seven years ago. Previously it was home for generations to Mayo's famous heather.

Whereas seaweed and hard work worked the oracle for McCabe's famous field in the John B Keane classic, Michael Dyra testifies that farmyard manure and lime changed the fields on the side of Croaghmoyle. And, of course, plenty of hard work too.

Mr Dyra also tilled and sowed the field just above the cornfield, with a total of in the region of 25 acres of poor quality land reclaimed from the mountain.

It was, said Mr Dyra, a 'project' George O'Malley took on.

He said he hadn't set oats in 25 years. There is no call for it in the area for two reasons – weather and the quality of land. It would not necessarily be the most productive work to take on but was a 'unique challenge', he concedes.

"There was an awful lot of hard work for what you would get out of it. The good weather in September helped in a big way," he said.

But it's an escapade that will stand the test of time.

The field has even had its own song written about it. Anthony McTigue from Beltra just down the road from the cornfield penned the nostalgic 'O'Malley's Field of Oats', reflecting on an old way of life.

*These hardy men who worked these fields long ago
Have mowed their way to the great beyond
And are now in heaven's glow
These men are in our memories
Like the stories of yesteryear
And when I seen O'Malley's oats*

*Sure in my eye there was a tear
Anthony McTigue, O'Malley's Field of Oats*

Edwin McGreal

The Mayo News

A Young Cork O'Malley fighting a non-covid battle



(Left to right: Mum Genevieve, Tadhg, Fergus, Dad Ruairi, Oisín, Seamus)

LIKE thousands of children across the land, Tadhg O'Malley was eagerly looking forward to going back to school at the end of August, to meet all his friends again after missing out during the pandemic.

"He was so excited at the thought of being back in the classroom and back playing in the school playground. And Tadhg was really looking forward to meeting his new teacher," says mum, Genevieve.

The fun-loving, lively nine-year-old was never sick. Not even when Genevieve found a lump on his neck and he was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma Stage 3.

"I'm not sick!" he insisted, when it was confirmed in Crumlin Children's Hospital that Tadhg had the illness which affects the immune system.

"Rory and I were knocked for six," admits Genevieve. I found it hard to bring myself to tell Tadhg what was wrong with him. He's such a trooper."

"Tadhg had no symptoms whatsoever," adds Genevieve. "There were no warning signs. He had no temperature. He was never sick; he's always full of beans."

A cancer diagnosis at any age can be devastating. "It is really hard to process," says Genevieve of her experience.

Genevieve, who works as a Doula, a new-born care specialist, supporting mothers bringing new life into the world, was terrified the life of her precious son could be compromised, or worse still, threatened.

"Tadhg was really looking forward to starting back to school again with his brother, Fergus, in third class," says Genevieve.

Fergus is Tadhg's wing-man.

A Young Cork O'Malley fighting a non-covid battle

"They are identical twins," says the mum. "My sister has to count the freckles on their faces to tell them apart!"

The O'Malleys and their four sons were living an idyllic life as they frolicked and played in the paddling pool in their back garden in Ovens on a blessed sun-drenched day, August 8 — when the whole country basked in the rays.

"It was one of those magical family summer days," recalls Genevieve.

While she was cuddling her son in a fluffy towel to warm him up after he got out of the paddling pool, she caught sight of something unusual on Tadgh's neck that she hadn't noticed before.

"It was such a beautiful day," says Genevieve. "It was the last spell of that really hot weather before the storms hit. The boys were having a whale of a time in the paddling pool in the garden.

Tadgh was always a real water baby."

He's a film star too.

"I filmed Tadgh in the paddling pool and put the video on Facebook!"

He was loving life.

"The boys were practising snorkelling in the paddling pool," recalls Genevieve. "Tadgh was talking through the snorkel, saying it was the best staycation of his life."

Then the mood changed.

"When I saw the lump on his neck I turned him round and round," says Genevieve "I thought maybe he got hit with a ball playing hurling. I didn't think there was any point worrying too much. Tadgh said the lump wasn't sore. I put the worry away to back of my mind."

But the lump didn't go away.

"In the shower that Sunday night I noticed it more and I decided to bring Tadgh to the doctor on Monday morning to get it checked out."

Genevieve, so tuned into mothers, infants and children, had a natural instinct all was not well with her son.

"Some deep instinct, probably my maternal instinct, told me this was not good," says Genevieve.

"We had moved house and changed doctors. The new doctor was on holidays and we got an appointment with Dr Pat Lee, and the hospital took some bloods from Tadgh."

Genevieve wasn't unduly worried. And she didn't think herself or Tadgh were going anywhere soon.

"We had our shorts and tee-shirts on," says Genevieve. "I had my bikini on underneath my shorts and tee-shirt, thinking we'd be back out enjoying the sun soon."

The doctor sent mother and son to the Mercy Hospital for further tests.

"The Mercy has the best paediatric oncology unit in the county," says Genevieve. "So in hindsight, the doctor must have had a hunch Tadgh's lump on his neck could be cancerous. I will always thank that man."

Things moved quickly after that.

"Tadgh had an ultra-sound and an X-ray in the Mercy Hospital," says Genevieve. "They were very thorough."

Did her honed maternal instincts think something was very wrong with her son?

"There were no alarm bells ringing at that stage," says Genevieve. "I was still holding on to the fact Tadgh had no symptoms of any illness whatsoever."

But Genevieve was called into the family room at the Mercy to be informed that Tadgh had another mass of lymph nodes on his chest that were malignant.

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"It was a nightmare, absolutely horrific," says Genevieve. "My husband was not there because of Covid. Because of wearing the bloody mask, I couldn't breathe properly."

It was like a horror movie unfolding.

"Everything happened so quickly," says Genevieve.

"To be 100% sure of diagnosis, biopsies had to be taken and Tadgh had to have a CT scan before we travelled to Crumlin Hospital in Dublin."

The fantastic medical team in Crumlin got their skates on.

"All the team had to converge at once to attend Tadgh. He had to have a lumbar puncture and a biopsy all in one go. I slept in the room with him."

Genevieve, terribly worried about her little boy, didn't get much sleep.

"I'd wake up in the morning after eventually going to sleep and find Tagdh gone," says Genevieve.

He had another agenda.

"He was at the nurse's station, entertaining them!" says Genevieve.

"He said to me; 'Oh, mum, I didn't want to wake you. You need your sleep! So I said I'd keep the nurses company!'"

Tadgh, a real trooper, is a real charmer.

"He could charm the birds from the trees!" says Genevieve.

His twin, Fergus, another charmer and another warrior, set off for the first day back to school alone.

"It broke my heart," says Genevieve.

And it broke her heart to tell Tadgh he was a sick little boy who would need to get further treatment in Cork and in Dublin for his condition.

"I didn't know how to break it to him," says Genevieve. "He was strong and brave."

Rory, made of strong stuff like his sons, held the fort at home.

"When we found out on the Thursday that the cancer was stage 3, I knew it wasn't a good thing," says Genevieve. Going to Dr Google wasn't a good thing either.

"I stayed away from that," says Genevieve. "It could scare me."

After a pet-scan, Tadgh's medical treatment programme was mapped out to zap the cancer.

"Four rounds of chemotherapy treatment meant five days in Dublin and two days in Cork," says Genevieve, a Doula who is now a yoga teacher and mum.

"Hopefully the treatment will be completed in January. If the pet-scans are clear, then Tadgh won't have to have radiotherapy."

The stress of travelling on the road every week between hospitals with Tadgh, and keeping the show on the road at home, takes its toll.

"Everybody in our community is very supportive and our friend Clare Collins, who has experience of Crumlin herself, set up a GoFundme page for Tadgh," says Genevieve.

"Clare's target was to raise €1,000. But it has exploded. I had to tell her to stop! Rory and I are overwhelmed."

They are massively grateful for the support for Tadgh in their hour of need.

"Travelling to Dublin so often and having to stay over is a bit of a strain financially and Clare's gesture is much appreciated," says Genevieve.

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“My work as a Doula is on hold due to Covid and my yoga studio is closed. Any funds left over from the GoFundme page will be donated to Crumlin Hospital; like the Mercy, it is second to none. We are very grateful to both hospitals.”

Genevieve adds: “Our family is very strong and we love each other. Our friends and our community are wonderful helping us out and being there for us. It is so lovely to know so many people care about you.”

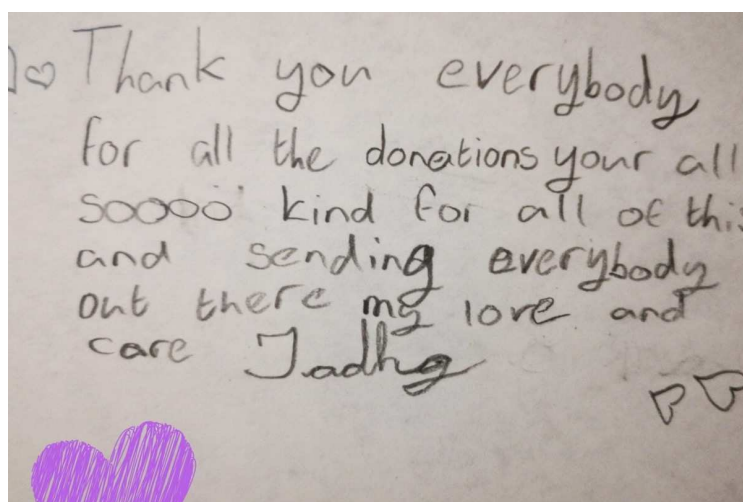
Tadgh’s twin, Fergus, is always there for him. “He is the best medicine for Tadgh,” says Genevieve, smiling. “The twins are very, very close. It is incredible to watch them together.”

Tadgh is one of a kind.

“The consultant told us it is very uncommon for children to get Hodgkins Lymphoma,” says Genevieve. “It is the same chance as winning the Lotto. That blew my mind.”

Hodgkins Lymphoma is a cancer of the lymphatic system, part of the immune system, and can be treated with chemotherapy treatment, radio-therapy treatment, steroids and targeted therapies as well as stem-cell treatment.

To donate see: <https://www.gofundme.com/f/support-for-genevieve-amp-family>





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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 DNA Project on Family Tree DNA

The most common queries we get at The O'Malley Clan Association are queries in relation to helping to trace peoples ancestors in Ireland. As we all know, written records can only take us so far, (if you're lucky you'll get back to the early 1800's or late 1700's).

Many of the Irish Census Records and other historic documents were destroyed during the early part of the 20th century and as a result it can be very hard to trace ancestors back beyond the 19th century. Church records are a help, but can be patchy at times.

One way of narrowing down the search is through DNA testing. The O'Malley Clan Association is involved in a project with Family Tree DNA to test as many O'Malleys as possible to try and expand our knowledge of our roots as much as we possibly can.

There's a specific page for the project on the Family Tree DNA website:

<https://www.familytreedna.com/groups/omalley/about>

Check it out, there's lots of info there, and administrators also for any questions.

