



# ***O'Malley Clan Association Monthly Newsletter***

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## Registration now live for this years Online Gathering!

Hi Everyone, We hope you're looking forward to this years Online Clan Association Gathering as much as We are! Registration is now live via the "Events" page on our website, [www.omalleyclan.ie](http://www.omalleyclan.ie)

Last year was a day of great fun, with music, songs, dancing, and lots more, so don't miss out. Get yourself registered, and spread the word.



**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 article

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



## The Round House, Limerick, an O'Malley Institution

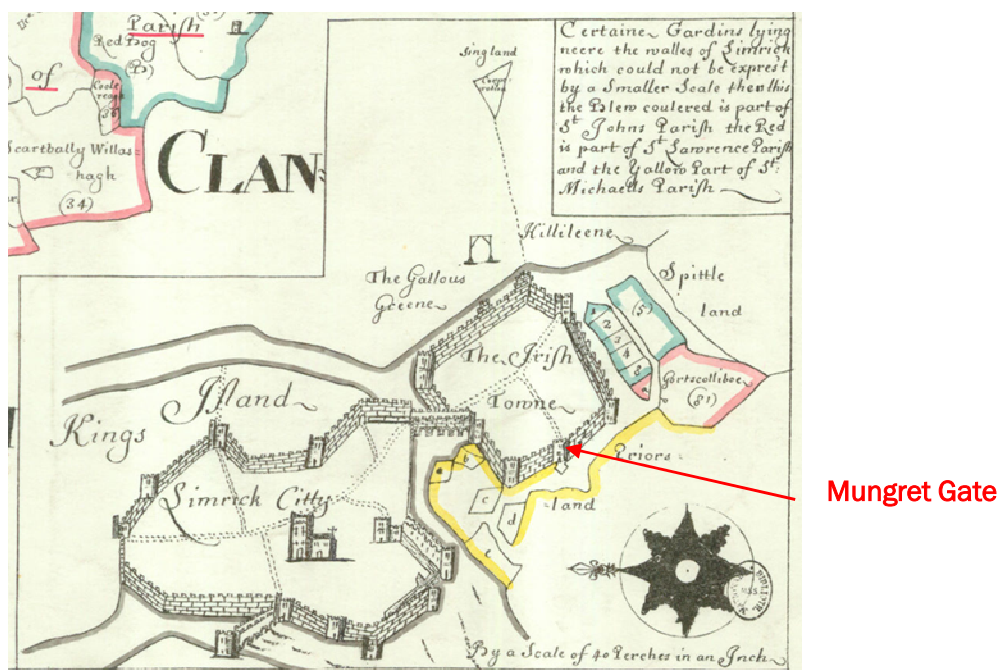
### The Round House, High Street, Limerick By Brendan O'Malley

*The Round House* is the former name of a public house in High Street, Limerick which played a major role in the fortunes of one branch of the O'Malley family in Limerick city over 3 generations. Grace Cantillon's book *The Round House O'Malleys* tells the story of this business family and how their descendants flourished and spread around the world. However, she was unable to determine the origins of the building itself.

Now known as *Mother Mac's* pub, the Round House is an unusual building, semi-circular in shape, with three stories over a basement. It is located at the junction of High Street and Back Lane, just off William Street in Limerick city. It is built on the south western end of a small plot of land that once stood in the centre of the bastion ramparts outside the Mungret Gate of Irishtown in Limerick City.

The townland outside the southern walls of Irishtown is known as *Prior's Land*. It was held by the Augustinian Priory of Saints Mary and Edward, known as Holy Cross, from some time in the early fourteenth century. When the priory was dissolved in 1538, the priory and its lands were awarded to Edmond Fitzmaurice Sexton, Mayor of Limerick, a Protestant and staunch supporter of the Crown.

Following Oliver Cromwell's military campaigns in Ireland, the Down Survey of 1657 was conducted to identify lands that could be seized from catholic and royalist owners for transfer to Cromwellian supporters. The survey records the proprietor of Prior's Land as Christopher Sexton (great-grandson of Edmond) of Limerick. Sexton maintained his ownership of the land because of his religion and English loyalties.



## The Round House, Limerick, an O'Malley Institution

Map 1 above shows a curious V-shaped indentation in the Prior's Land boundary just outside Mungret Gate, approximately where the Round House now stands. One possible reason for this emerges when looking at other maps that show the fortifications outside the gates. The 1692 Goubet map below (Map 2) shows the road from Mungret Gate leading to the south west towards Adare. The road runs through the fortifications outside the gate. These were earthworks erected during Limerick city's 16<sup>th</sup> century sieges, but there may have been some form of fortification structures outside the gate going back to earlier periods. Thus it is possible that the boundary of Prior's Land ran along the edge of the fortifications rather than the walls, meaning that the land under the fortifications was effectively common land.

Some sixty years later, the William Eyres map of 1752 (Map 3) shows the beginnings of development outside the walls as well as the remains of the earlier ramparts and earthworks. The road from Mungret Gate is recognisable as the modern-day High Street, with Back Lane on the other side of a clearly defined triangular plot of land, part of which was to become the site of the Round House. The map shows that the plot had a number of separate sites on it with buildings and gardens marked clearly.

By the second half of the eighteenth century, Limerick had become one of Ireland's major commercial ports. The increase in trade and wealth supported the expansion of the city boundaries beyond the city walls. Politician Edmond Sexton Pery, descended from Christopher Sexton, promoted what came to be known as Newtown Pery, largely built on Prior's Land, his inherited property.



Map 2 above . Limerick 1690 by Jean Goubet  
Eamon O'Flaherty, *Irish Historic Towns Atlas*, no. 21, *Limerick* (Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, 2010)



Map 3 Left . Map of Limerick, William Eyres 1752 (British Library)  
Eamon O'Flaherty, *Irish Historic Towns Atlas*, no. 21, *Limerick* (Royal Irish Academy, Dublin, 2010)

Future site of Round House



## The Round House, Limerick, an O'Malley Institution

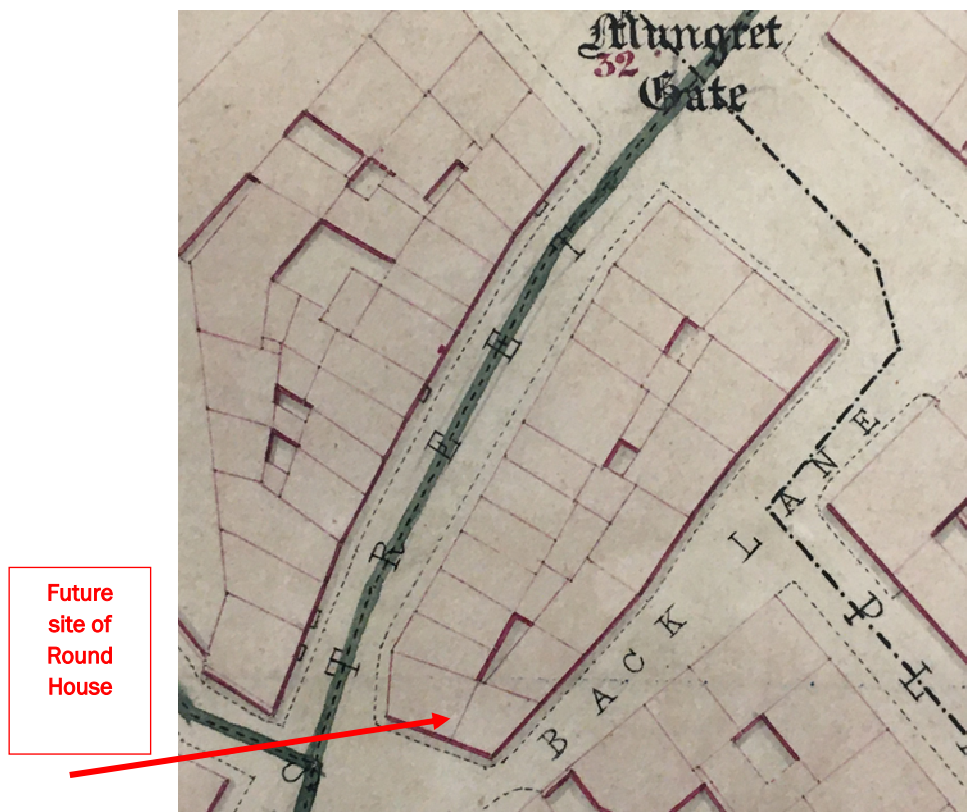
He commissioned a town plan on a rectangular street grid from engineer and architect Davis Ducart and leased several hundred plots of land to individual developers who built Georgian terraces of houses.

In 1789, the land that bordered the opposite side of High Street to our triangular plot (to the right in the Eyres map above) was leased by Pery to William Osborne, described in the lease as a clothier.

The earliest record relating to the Round House property itself is a lease by William Osborne to his son, also William, in 1802. So sometime in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Osborne the elder had gained effective control of the plot which had been common land under the fortifications, across the street from the property he had leased from Pery.

The description of the property, quoted in later documents from the 1802 lease is: "That part of the houses and premises known and described by the name and description of the 'Horn works' outside Mungret Gate in the suburbs of the City of Limerick." A hornwork was an element of fortifications outside city walls, much used for gates. This fits with the Goubet (Map 2) and Eyres (Map 3) maps depicting our plot in the middle of the defensive earthworks outside the Mungret gate.

The Irish Ordnance Survey's earliest available map dates to 1840 and gives a clear picture of our plot.



Map 4. Limerick. Ordnance Survey manuscript 1840  
Courtesy of the National Archives, Dublin

## The Round House, Limerick, an O'Malley Institution

Map 4 clearly shows that the end of the block is straight rather than rounded, indicating that the Round House had not been built when the map was made in 1840. So who built the Round House and when?

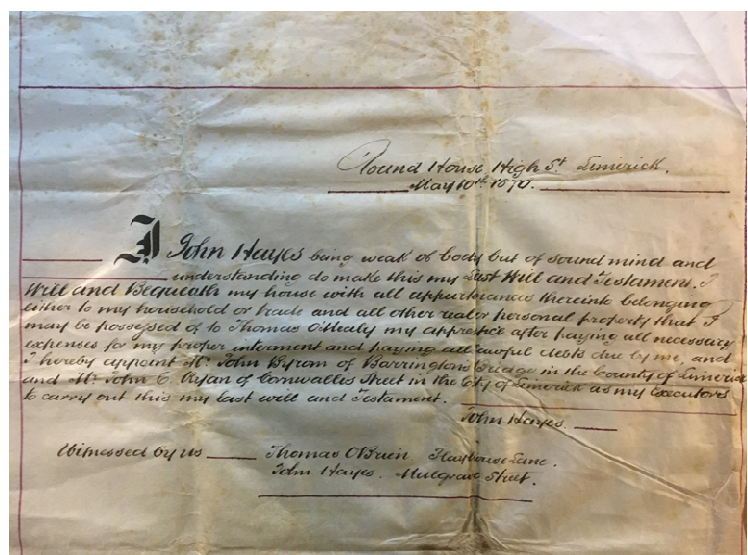
In 1847, the successor of the younger William Osborne was his son-in-law, John Fogerty. He is listed in the Dictionary of Irish Architects as a civil engineer and elsewhere as an "Irish millwright, architect, builder [and] civil engineer." In 1852, John Fogerty passed the property to his son Joseph Fogerty, then aged 21. From the language of the lease, it appears that this property was intended as his inheritance. Joseph studied with his father until his departure for University College London in 1856.

Griffith's valuation surveyed High Street in the mid-1840s. A property made up of two houses (the two at the end of the plot in the Ordnance Survey manuscript map above) is listed as being occupied by Margaret Kirby, leased from John Fogerty. This would confirm the evidence of the 1840 map that the Round House had not been built by then. Limerick Trade Directories in 1856 and 1867 record Mrs Kirby as continuing to run her business as a "grocer and spirit dealer".

In 1865, the then London-based Joseph Fogerty married Hannah Cochrane, a Limerick woman, and the property was set up as a trust to be managed for the benefit of their heirs. This event appears to have been the trigger for a redevelopment of the property.

On 13<sup>th</sup> February 1868, Joseph Fogerty and his trustees leased the premises to John Hayes at a rent of £45 a year – considerably higher than the £30 valuation in the mid-1840s. The lease describes the property as "the dwelling house and premises as now and for some time past in the occupation of Mrs Margaret Kirby". So sometime between the records being compiled for the trade directory published in 1867 and the new lease to John Hayes, Margaret Kirby ceased trading. She had been in business for at least twenty years and possibly much longer, so perhaps she died or became too old to continue. In either case, this could have provided Joseph Fogerty's trustees with the opportunity to upgrade the property by erecting a striking new building on the site and issuing a new lease at a higher rent. John Hayes is listed in a trade directory of 1870 as a "grocer and spirit dealer", indicating that he continued Mrs Kirby's business in the new building. He died some three years after taking up his lease, on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1871. His will (see below) records his address as "Round House, High Street Limerick" providing further support for the proposition that it had been built by the Fogertys prior to Hayes' 1868 lease

Certified copy of John Hayes' Will, May 1870



## The Round House, Limerick, an O'Malley Institution

There is little other information about Hayes, other than a death record indicating that he was in his 40s when he died of tuberculosis.

He left all his property to his apprentice, Thomas O'Mealy. Thomas was a young man from Madaboy, near Murroe, in County Limerick. Grace O'Malley's account is that his mother Kate was instrumental in finding the position with Hayes for him. It was a good move for a younger son with no prospects of inheriting the family farm. But Hayes' decision may not have been without controversy, as Thomas "thought it advisable to make a compromise with [John Hayes'] next of kin by giving them £100". £100 was not a trivial sum at the time, being more than twice the annual rent being paid to the Fogerty trust for the property. Given that Hayes had only been in business in the Round House for 3 years, one wonders why he should single out young Thomas as his sole heir. It could perhaps be the case that he agreed to do so in return for Kate's promise of the £100 payment to his family. This is, of course, only speculation.

Just 16 months later, Thomas himself died unexpectedly. He was still only in his early twenties and had just married. Grace Cantillon's book describes a dispute over the ownership of the business between Thomas' young widow Annie (née O'Meara of Tipperary town) and Thomas' parents Michael and Kate. Family folklore has it that a stand-off took place in the Round House, with the O'Mealeys occupying the upper floor where Thomas' corpse was laid out, while the O'Mearas occupied the ground floor, denying entry or exit. There must have been quite some drama over those few days, before the O'Mearas departed and the funeral could take place. The dispute was settled by an agreement that Michael would pay three hundred and fifty pounds to Annie's father Timothy O'Meara in return for the O'Mearas renouncing their claim to the property. This amount was equivalent to the cost of over seven years rent on the Round House under the lease at the time, so it appears that the O'Mearas drove a hard bargain!

The settlement agreement is dated 4<sup>th</sup> March 1873 - just two days after Thomas's death.

Kate decided that her next son Patrick, then aged only 21, would take over the running of the business, where he had been working for some time previously. In 1875, Patrick O'Mealy makes his first appearance in the trade directory database and continues to be listed up to 1920. Later listings are for P. O'Malley & Co. and/or P. O'Mealy & Co. The spelling varies.

Patrick married Helena Ryan a few years later in 1883. The business prospered and was the main source of funds to educate Patrick's 5 siblings and to support his own growing family. He had 8 children. It is unlikely that a small grocery and spirit dealership, in effect a public house, could have generated such wealth. By the 1930s, it had become a wholesale tea, wine and spirit business, selling to hotels and pubs in the west of Ireland from Kerry to Mayo. The most important part of the business was ageing, blending and bottling Irish whiskey. It





## The Round House, Limerick, an O'Malley Institution

would seem likely that the only way Patrick could have moved so firmly into Limerick's wealthy merchant class towards the end of the nineteenth century was by starting this expansion soon after taking it over.

Patrick died on 5<sup>th</sup> April 1910, leaving all his assets to his executors to use "for the benefit of my family wife and children as they think fit." The executors were his brother Joseph (Joe) O'Malley, engineer & architect, and Rev John Harty of Maynooth College, later Archbishop of Cashel and patron of the Gaelic Athletic Association. Rev Harty was born in Murroe, in the same parish as the Madaboy O'Malleys. Joe took over the running of the business, while grooming Patrick & Helena's son Patrick Eugene (Paddy), only 16 years old when his father died, to eventually take over. Paddy, aged 17, is listed in the 1911 census as a "tea and wine merchant" residing with the widowed Helena at 9 Glentworth Street, Limerick. She remained living there until her death in 1935.

Meanwhile, the ownership of the property remained with the Fogerty family. Joseph's daughter Elsie inherited the property from her father in 1899. Elsie taught elocution and voice production at Roedean school and also to clergymen, teachers and actors. Her decision to sell the property to Joe provided funds for her to found and expand what became the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama where she taught (among many others) Laurence Olivier.

On 14<sup>th</sup> May, 1921 a deed of conveyance transferred the Round House from Elsie Fogerty to Joseph O'Malley, as executor of his brother's estate. For the first time, the O'Malleys owned the Round House, rather than leasing it. Around the same time, Joe brought in another young O'Malley, Paddy's first cousin Tim, to help in running the business. Like Paddy, Tim spent all his working life in the Round House.

Joe transferred all the assets of Patrick's estate to his son Paddy in 1923 and he managed the business until his death in October 1955. His son George entered the business in 1950 and took over on his father's death, the third generation in which a young man had to take over the business after a premature death.

The 1960s and 1970s saw a change in whiskey distribution in Ireland, leading to the demise of many independent whiskey blenders and P. O'Malley & Co were no exception. In 1969, George sold the wholesale business and brought the Round House back to its roots as a public house. It passed through several hands before being acquired by its present owners who renamed it to Mother Macs.

*Thanks to Former Chieftain  
Brendan O'Malley for the article*

*Mother Macs in the  
21st Century*



## O'Malley leads the way with Dictionary of Irish Biography

Dr Kate O'Malley, managing editor of the Dictionary of Irish Biography, and Dr Patrick Geoghegan, chairman of the DIB advisory board, (pictured left)



### Read all about us: The Dictionary of Irish Biography is now open access

On March 17th, the most comprehensive and authoritative biographical dictionary yet published for Ireland, the Royal Irish Academy's Dictionary of Irish Biography (DIB), is moving to an open access model, making its entire corpus of nearly 11,000 biographies, spanning over 1,500 years of Irish history, freely available to all through a new website at [dib.ie](http://dib.ie).

So who gets into the DIB? First and foremost, subjects eligible for inclusion must be dead (usually for at least five years) and must either be born on the island of Ireland or have had a significant career there. Exiles (like James Joyce) are included as are blow-ins (like St Patrick), but not second- or more-generation emigrants of Irish extraction (like John F Kennedy), unless they resettle in the old country.

In terms of the sort of person who features, the "great and the good" get their due, but they keep strange company, jostling for the reader's attention alongside entertainers, eccentrics, martyrs (religious or otherwise), desperados and impoverished geniuses. DIB readers can navigate this sprawling canvas using the website's simple and accessible user interface, with options to browse by entry or contributor, or to search by keyword (such as the name of a town or village) or using a more granular faceted search.

Ranging in length from 200 to 15,000 words, DIB biographies are more than mere catalogues of events – in the dismissive words of Samuel Johnson, a "formal and studied narrative ... begun with his pedigree and ended with his funeral" – but attempt to give a sense of a subject's personality and to analyse and contextualise their life. Suitably illuminating anecdotes are also included. The main editorial criteria are that each entry be factually accurate, based on the most recently available sources and accessible to the general reader.

Upon its launch in 2009, the DIB dealt with subjects from the earliest times to those who died up to the end of 2002. It was published in nine hardcopy volumes and also online through a platform provided by its publishers Cambridge University Press, which was available to institutions to purchase. Subsequently the DIB published online updates to that platform every six months, as well as two further hardcopy volumes in 2018. Most of the online updates were comprised of batches of roughly 40 subjects who had died since 2002. Inevitably, some interesting and important figures were overlooked in the original DIB, so every two years the online update was a



## O'Malley leads the way with Dictionary of Irish Biography

“missing persons” batch comprising 60 to 80 new biographies.

There has been a tendency for DIB biographies to become more detailed and ambitious in scope. This is mainly in response to the widespread digitisation of primary source material over the past decade, which has heightened expectations of what the DIB can deliver. In particular, the ability to perform word searches on the digital archives of nearly all the national and many of the local newspapers has turned the Irish print media into an invaluable repository of research material. Journalism's role in providing the first draft of history has never been more apparent! We are, of course, conscious of the need to avoid writing history through a journalistic prism.

Occupational spheres already well represented within the DIB – such as politics, law, government administration, sport and academia – will continue to feature, but the project has begun covering less conventional ground too. The most recent “missing persons” batch includes the owner of Dublin's most loved fish and chip shop, a woman who almost assassinated Mussolini, a scalp-hunter and a famed pickpocket. Women comprised only 10 per cent of all subjects in the original DIB, which reflected the lack of opportunity for women in Irish society until very recently. This proportion has more than doubled among the DIB's post-2009 publications and will continue to rise, thanks also to the ongoing growth in scholarship on women's history.

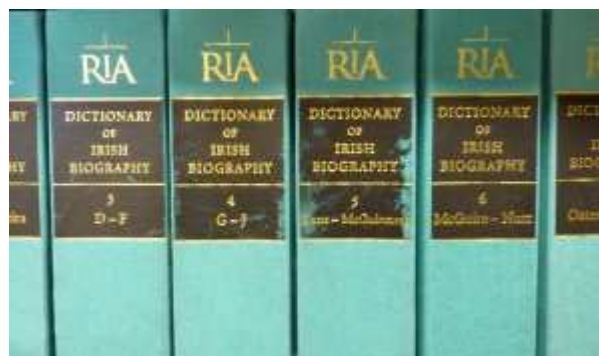
The move to open access was always a long-term goal and has now been made a reality thanks principally to the initiative and drive of DIB managing editor Kate O'Malley. It had to be pushed through on a tight budget after the Covid-19 crisis led to the loss of potential funding. As the outsourcing of the website's development was not financially possible, a heavy burden was capably shouldered by the Royal Irish Academy's small in-house IT department. The Covid-driven closure of the public libraries and archives forced a pause in the DIB's publishing schedule, which allowed staff to pivot from writing and editing entries to assisting with delivering the open access project.

In advance of the open access launch, the DIB team contacted as many of its 700-plus contributors as possible to invite updates to their entries. Furthermore, we anticipate that the feedback arising from the ready availability of the DIB will help us in identifying any factual inaccuracies or omissions of significant information. From 2021 onward, details of all significant revisions to the DIB corpus will be provided, with links available to previous iterations. There will also be a blog section featuring themed essays that bring together biographical entries from the DIB corpus.

The DIB is marking the launch of its new open access website by publishing four high-profile new entries online, including biographies of Garret FitzGerald and Ian Paisley by DIB scholar Dr Patrick Maume. In line with Creative Commons attribution (CC BY 4.0) licencing, these and all other DIB entries can now be copied or adapted and redistributed in any medium or format. The DIB simply asks that credit is given to the author of the entry and to the DIB itself, that a link is provided to the CC BY licence, and that any changes to the material are noted.

The DIB project is managed by the Royal Irish Academy (RIA) with funding from the Higher Education Authority. The new DIB open access website was built by the RIA with funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Dublin City Libraries (the latter are also contributing to the ongoing costs of running the website through a 'subscribe to open' sponsorship).

Visit the open access DIB at [dib.ie](http://dib.ie).





The O'Malley Clan Association  
Mary Jane O'Malley (Hon Sec)  
2 Main Street  
Newport  
Co. Mayo  
Ireland

Email: [omalleyclanireland@gmail.com](mailto:omalleyclanireland@gmail.com)

Website: [www.omalleyclan.ie](http://www.omalleyclan.ie)



[www.facebook.com/omalleyclan](http://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 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.

