



O'Malley Clan Association Monthly Newsletter

This month's highlights

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Another Great Clan Gathering in June 2022!

Hi Everyone, Summer Holiday season is coming to a close, and most of us weren't able to travel too far this year. Great to get a break though, if you could, wherever you are around the world.

Next year, when things should be much more "back to normal" why not make the O'Malley Clan Gathering, in Newport, County Mayo, from 24th to the 26th June 2022, part of your holiday.

We'll be organizing a fabulous weekend in County Mayo, so start planning for next years trip. There'll be details of the events across the weekend up on the website in the months to come. It'll be great to welcome you all back!



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 passing of an O'Malley Statesman-Des O'Malley

My father Des O'Malley, the statesman

Eoin O'Malley, Sunday Independent 25th July 2021



Des O'Malley, Pictured speaking at an O'Malley Clan Gathering in recent years

Des O'Malley was at the heart of Irish politics for two decades, at great personal cost. He wasn't a natural leader, or driven by power, but he was a pragmatist who served us well

My father's life was longer and more turbulent than he expected. Born before the war — a pre-war baby, he liked to say — his description of his childhood, possibly exaggerated for effect, sounded more like a 19th century one rather than anything his children could relate to.

Born into a large house in Limerick city, he was from a middle-class family that had gone from a small farm in rural east Limerick, via a pub in Limerick city, to being among the professional classes and city fathers in just a few generations. He was raised by a nanny, whose cooking he would refer to frequently. He travelled to school, the Crescent, by pony and trap, where he excelled academically, and there was an expectation that Des would go to university, like all the men in his family.

At UCD in the late 1950s and early 1960s he studied law, with the expectation he would join his father's practice in Limerick. At university he was a young radical — somewhere to the left of where he eventually found himself. He recounted stories of protests against the college authorities, usually as they attempted to shut down debates. The university was very authoritarian, and because of that he developed a lingering

The passing of an O'Malley Statesman-Des O'Malley

disrespect for some of the senior people in the university, such as Garret FitzGerald. One thing he had was an ability to hold grudges — not always a good quality for a politician. In UCD he met my mum, Patricia McAleer from Omagh, Co Tyrone. He went on to study in the Law Society, coming first in his class, and she went first to England to teach, and then to Strabane. Des returned to Limerick to work in his father's small practice, and they corresponded until he “rescued her from a life taking the Strabane bus”.

They settled into a comfortable married life in 1965, my mother producing children with regularity. But he was unusual in thinking a lot about politics, including in domestic decisions; their first foreign holiday as a married couple was to non-aligned socialist Yugoslavia, because he couldn't countenance giving support to Franco's Spain.

Des's father died soon after, forcing him to take over the law firm earlier than he would have expected. When his uncle Donogh also died too young in 1968, and his widow Hilda declined the offer to stand for Fianna Fáil in the by-election, Des was drafted in. It



was earlier than he expected, but politics was always something on the agenda. In that by-election he was exposed to Neil Blaney's legendary campaigning. He was shocked at Blaney's use of civil war rhetoric, and questioned whether it was helpful in Limerick city in the late 1960s. After the subsequent election Des was promoted to chief whip, bringing him close to the taoiseach, Jack Lynch, and giving him a front row seat as the emerging crisis in Northern Ireland was addressed by the Fianna Fáil cabinet. He didn't know it at the time, but the divisions he saw in the cabinet would catapult him to the centre of Irish politics, where he would remain for over two decades. When the arms crisis emerged in May 1970 he was summoned by Lynch to become minister for justice, aged just 31. His reforming, anti-authoritarian zeal was extinguished by circumstances. What might have been his opportunity to liberalise laws and reform the court system gave way to more authoritarian laws because of the IRA threat.

He didn't escape from the Troubles personally. There was a direct threat on his life, which forced him to have to carry a gun during this time. He wasn't allowed to stay in the same place or establish a routine that might expose him to an assassination attempt. Our family home in Limerick had armed gardaí protecting it and my older sisters were accompanied to school by the guards. My grandfather's pub in Omagh was destroyed by the IRA because they didn't like his son-in-law's position. As children we laughed at the incongruous gun-toting hero, but the pressure on him was immense, and he was courageous in not caving in to it.

These experiences left him with a visceral hatred of the IRA, and, unlike others, he refused to speak out of both sides of his mouth on its campaign of violence. It failed to allow him to recognise the practical politics of securing peace. Later in government, Albert Reynolds didn't divulge his tentative steps toward an accord with the IRA, partly because Reynolds divulged nothing to O'Malley, but also because he recognised that my father would have objected. In opposition in the 1970s he emerged as one of the more effective parliamentarians, becoming a senior member of Fianna Fáil despite still being in his 30s. In 1977 he was given the energy portfolio to deal with the oil crisis. He favoured nuclear energy as a way to reduce Ireland's

The passing of an O'Malley Statesman-Des O'Malley

dependence, which suggests his willingness to consider the unthinkable. But he never used this time to build a base in Fianna Fáil, and his irascible nature didn't endear him to those he would depend on later.

That time came when Charles Haughey became leader of Fianna Fáil and taoiseach. My father had regarded Haughey as pragmatic and sensible until the arms crisis. After that he shared the deep distrust most of the Fianna Fáil grandees had in Haughey.

He was pragmatic enough to try to work with Haughey, but the distrust never went away. After George Colley's death, opposition to Haughey within the party centred on my father. He never appeared terribly comfortable with that mantle, and he lacked the political skills to challenge Haughey. It was another time of crisis and stress. He suspected our home phone was being bugged, and there was a constant air of menace in Fianna Fáil politics.

So I wonder was his expulsion from Fianna Fáil a relief. He was in a serious car crash soon after, which meant a long recuperation at home, a place he had spent precious little time in the previous 15 years. The decision was then taken, in the main owing to pressure from Mary Harney, to set up a new political party.

The Progressive Democrats gave him a glimpse of political popularity that had eluded him before. There were monster meetings that attracted thousands of people depressed by the inertia of the Fine Gael/Labour government and troubled by Haughey's Fianna Fáil. As well as popular support, he briefly enjoyed the approval of the Dublin commentariat class.

In 1987 the PDs performed creditably, overtaking Labour, and the opposition to the Fianna Fáil minority government might have been his happiest period in politics. He was impressed by the focus of his TDs, but while they may have been doing good work in Leinster House his experience should have warned them of the need to mind their seats. His national prominence from so young possibly meant he didn't have to work at this as hard, but in the 1989 election many of the most effective TDs, such as Michael McDowell, lost their seats.

After that I was on holidays with my parents in the south of England when news reached us that Harney suggested a Fianna Fáil/Progressive Democrat coalition should be considered. He was apoplectic. As usual Harney had a better read of the politics, and the next few weeks, the first time I think I lived with him, he was under immense stress as he was left with the decision as to whether to go into government with someone he didn't trust. I remember the night he did so, as he had senior party members leave it up to him, and he eventually decided that all the alternatives were worse, including another election in which the PDs, already damaged, could be wiped out.

In that decision he showed his understanding of real politics. He lost support in that decision, but it was the sensible one. Too many of us idolise politicians for sticking to their convictions, but refusing to get involved yields nothing. Though Des was often charged with the lazy label of "neoliberal" he was no ideologue. He was sceptical of social partnership, but when he saw it helped the country, he supported it.

That decision to give Haughey a lifeline ironically spelled the end of Haughey's career, as many in Fianna Fáil objected to the coalition. It was a period in which Des was more powerful than ever before. It was also, surprisingly, a period of relative calm. He and Haughey worked well together. Haughey understood power and respected my father. They may not have been close, or even trusted each other, but they managed that government well. He was able to work on industrial and competition policy, for once without constant crisis.

Haughey's replacement by Albert Reynolds ended that, and when that government collapsed and an election ensued he felt the PDs were in a strong position. He was never that obsessed with power and so was happy to retire. He had been spoken about frequently as a taoiseach that Ireland could have had, but

The passing of an O'Malley Statesman-Des O'Malley

he never wanted it that much. Nor do I think he would have been that good at it. He was not a natural leader; he just found himself in a position where he was expected to be one.

That expectation took a great toll on his personal life. He was deeply fortunate that my mother, so loyal and supporting, could keep the family going. Politics is a horrific job for families. Even if you are not at the centre of as many political storms as my dad was, just the time it takes means time that you cannot give to your family. Though he missed many events, he parented in another way, by providing a good example of courage and dedication.

His diet of cigarettes and stress meant he was unlikely to live a long life. But the miracles of medicine allowed him to enjoy a relatively peaceful retirement, enjoying sport, especially rugby and horse racing, including regular, if modest, bets. Even though his body was ravaged in the last year, his mind remained as sharp as his tongue until the end.



John W O'Malley's new biography



Jesuit John O'Malley's memoir tells his 'strange and wonderful story'

Memoirs can be a tricky literary genre, particularly for churchmen and scholars. It can mutate easily into score settling, justification of unsavory church and academic politics, or signaling a change of loyalty.

The just-published memoir of Jesuit Fr. John W. O'Malley, *The Education of a Historian: A Strange and Wonderful Story*, is exactly the opposite. It finally provides a narrative for one of the most influential Jesuits — in the United States and abroad — in the last hundred years and helps readers understand some enormous differences between Catholicism in the mid-20th century and today.

In the introduction, O'Malley already shows the connections between his life as a scholar and as a Jesuit priest. Talking about the post-Vatican II crisis of the Society of Jesus and General Congregation 32 (1974-75), he points out "how a crisis in the order intruded into my life and how it changed the direction of my scholarship."

But O'Malley's memoir is not inside baseball. It is full of wisdom and wit and poetry: "It tells how my first-time taste of gelato helped turn me into a resolute Italophile and prodded me to abandon German history in favor of Italian. The book thus reveals the crucial role of intuition in life and in scholarship. It illustrates how neither life nor scholarship is a tale of two plus two equals four." The first chapter, "Growing Up in Tiltonsville," paints the picture of the small town in Ohio where he was born: social and religious dynamics, the impact of the Great Depression, the distance between the big cities and the rest of the U.S.

John W O'Malley's new biography

Most of all, it depicts the uncomplicatedness of his vocation to the priesthood and the serendipity of his choice of the Jesuits.

Interestingly but not surprisingly, O'Malley seems to have arrived at Ignatius of Loyola starting from Augustine of Hippo. But the real intellectual and spiritual love of O'Malley's life remains Erasmus of Rotterdam: "My work on Erasmus provided me with important perspectives on two subjects that later became major projects for me — Vatican Council II and the history of the Jesuits."

"Many of the council's decisions echo themes in Erasmus, such as the need for vernacular liturgy, the evils of war, and openness to divine inspiration in other religions," O'Malley writes

Chapter 2, "Trained as a Jesuit: America and Austria," is full of details on his understanding of himself thanks and through a deeper understanding of the U.S. in the 1940s and 1950s: called to be a witness to interracial marriage in Chicago, the reading of the 1958 political novel *The Ugly American* as a passage toward a more cosmopolitan cultural sensibility.

Chapter 3, "Trained as a Historian: Harvard and Rome," has wonderful and moving pages on his choice to abandon German religious history in order to embrace Italy. (His pages on the discovery of Italy, from Venice to Florence to Rome, during a trip from Austria in July 1961, brought tears to my eyes: I read O'Malley's book in Italy, where I have returned for the summer after the longest absence ever from my own country due to the pandemic.)



The dome of the Church of the Gesu, the mother church of the society of Jesus in Rome

John W O'Malley's new biography

This key turn happened at a crucial time in the history of the Catholic Church as it was preparing for the Second Vatican Council. O'Malley was doing research in Rome and therefore in the "eternal city" for two of the four sessions of the 1962-65 council, and during one of these moments, his scholarship and life as a Jesuit priest were enriched mutually. The election of Pedro Arrupe as general of the Jesuits in 1965 was a turning point in the history of the Jesuits and also of global Catholicism.

Chapter 4, "Ever Deeper Into the Renaissance," describes the rise of O'Malley's scholarship in national and international recognition. It is the beginning of the story of a historian and of how his books had field-changing influence — especially four books, all of them translated in many languages: *Praise and Blame in Renaissance Rome* (1979), *The First Jesuits* (1998), *Trent and All That* (2002) and *What Happened at Vatican II?* (2008).

But this book introduces us to a scholar well aware of what was happening around him: the November 4, 1966, great flood of Florence (which took place when he was there), the 1967 riots in Detroit (where shortly after he took leadership roles in the university and in the society). An important chapter focuses on his participation as an elected delegate to the General Congregation 32 of the Society of Jesus, which opened at the beginning of December 1974.

In O'Malley's own words:

Somewhat to the surprise of the Jesuits worldwide, Father General Arrupe called for a general congregation of the Society to meet in Rome in early December, 1974. He wanted from the Society an assessment of how the Society was faring in the difficult scene of the late 1960s and early 1970s, years of turmoil in the church and in society at large — the student and race riots, the "sexual revolution," the wars and other troubles between colonies and mother countries, the Vietnam War first involving France and then the United States.

O'Malley describes his participation in that assembly not just as one of the three or four most consequential general congregations in the history of the Jesuits, but also as one of the most important experiences (and not just because another delegate was Jorge Mario Bergoglio, future Pope Francis).

It was much longer than anticipated, and a physically and emotionally challenging time: "Then, finally, on March 15 [1975], the congregation declared its business concluded. I sometimes describe the congregation as the worst — and the best — three and half months of my Jesuit life. It was the worst for reasons I just described. It was the best for many reasons."

Chapters 5, "From the Renaissance to the Jesuits," and 6, "Cultures, Councils, and Early Modern Catholicism," tell how a scholar who acquired international recognition for his studies on the Italian Renaissance became a key player in the research on the Society of Jesus (especially on its very early history), on a new way to interpret Catholicism at the time of the Protestant Reformation, and on Vatican II — in all of these cases initiating a new phase in the international scholarship in these fields. Intellectual curiosity goes hand in hand with ecclesial concerns.

By looking at O'Malley's story, we can understand the human element of doing history:

The book is therefore about how I worked as a historian and developed methods that resulted in such understandings. It shows how events impacted on my life and on what I chose to write about. It shows how and why I began to puzzle over certain issues and then shows where the puzzlement led me. Most broadly, it shows how a naïve young man from Tiltonsville made his way in the world. It thus shows that historians are creatures of flesh and blood, fears and hopes, living in time and space.

John W O'Malley's new biography

In six decades of scholarly work, O'Malley educated us to a deeper understanding of style and literary genres. He would not mind me saying that this book has pages that seem lifted from a Frank Capra movie (Chapter 1 about growing up in Tiltonsville) or from Federico Fellini's "La Dolce Vita" (Chapter 3 on Rome in the '60s).

Like the masterpieces of cinema, this memoir has different kinds of audiences.

For Americans, it's the life of a fellow American who changed the way we look at the church, also thanks to the effort of looking at America from afar, both geographically and chronologically.

For Catholics, it's the example of a member of the church born, raised and educated in a pre-cultural war Catholicism, where confessional boundaries with Protestant were clear, but probably more passable than today's intra-Catholic trenches.

For church historians and theologians, for academics young and old, it's the story of when church history was still struggling to be accepted as an integral part of the theological canon — and what Catholic scholars had to do and still can do about it.

For Jesuits, it's like a painting describing life of a scholar in the Society of Jesus at a particular time, from one kind of religious order to another kind after Vatican II, and the "Jesuit crisis" of 1981-83 after the dramatic change of leadership from Arrupe to Peter Hans Kolvenbach. (O'Malley's account of his testimony for the [canonization process of Arrupe](#) in 2019 is very interesting.)

This memoir has also the courage to be like a love letter for the Society of Jesus and for the Catholic Church: to echo the title of O' Malley's favorite book, a letter with much more praise than blame.

National Catholic Reporter



Niamh O'Malley, Representing Ireland at Venice 2022



Niamh O'Malley in her Studio at Temple Bar Gallery + Studios, 2020.

The Ireland at Venice 2022 Curatorial Team, Temple Bar Gallery + Studios, will present Niamh O'Malley's "*Gather*" at the Irish Pavilion, La Biennale di Venezia 2022.

Gather begins in Niamh O'Malley's workspace in Temple Bar Gallery + Studios (TBG+S), Dublin, where stone, steel, wood, and glass are shaped, composed, and assembled. To do so, to make solid and visible is a particular compulsion of O'Malley's, a silent but physical response to a precarious time. She is interested in negotiating between the surfaces of the world, how objects and spaces can speak, and how an exhibition can somehow anchor, contain and describe distance. There is comfort in touch, in knowing the edges of things and, during a period of time when we are so much in our heads, O'Malley reminds us that we are also, acutely and collectively, in the world.

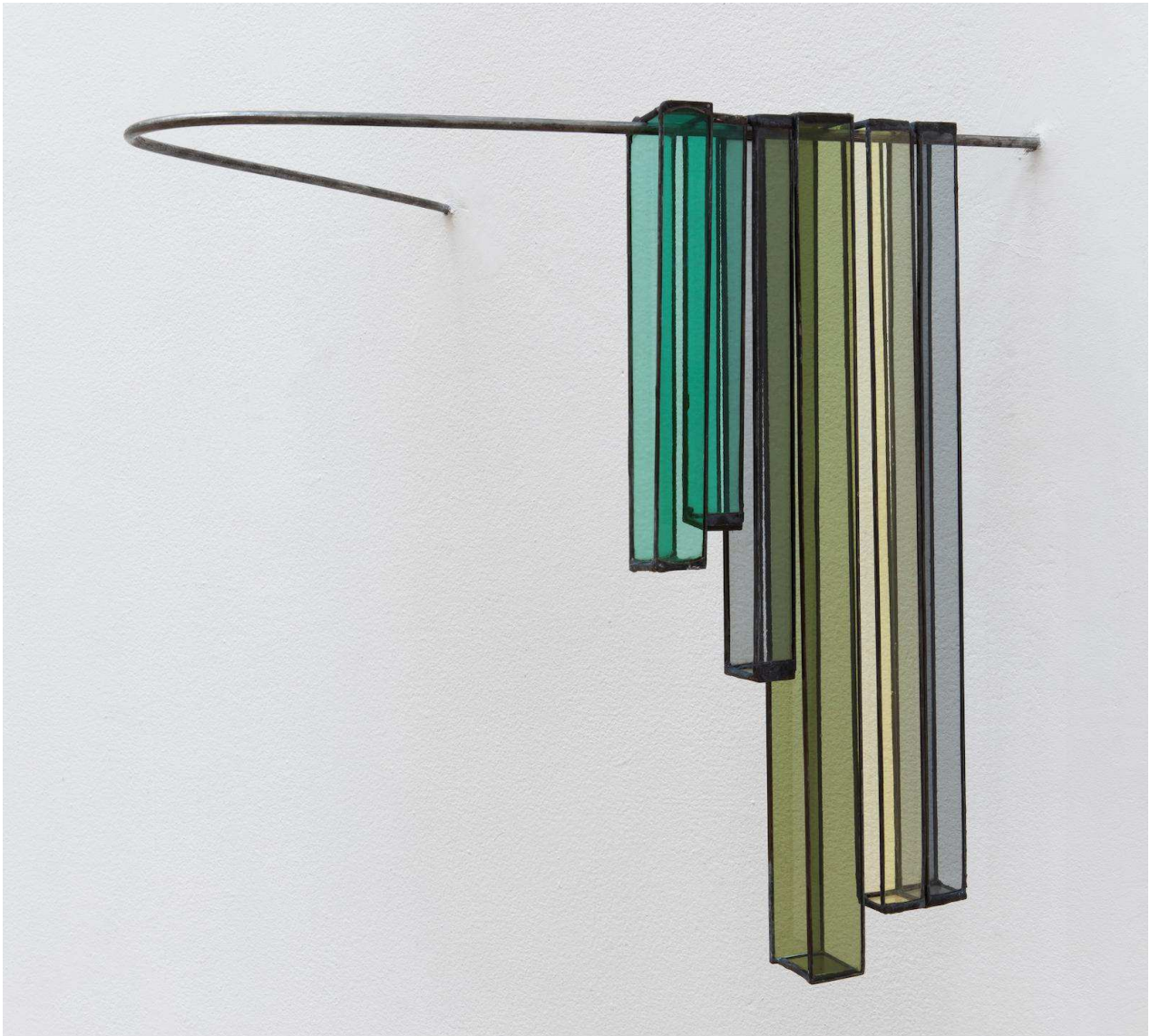
Ireland at Venice 2022 will continue as a National Tour curated as a multi-venue exhibition and public engagement programme during 2023. Niamh O'Malley's *Gather* will be presented at The Model, Sligo; Temple Bar Gallery + Studios, Dublin; and Golden Thread Gallery, Belfast. The National Tour will be accompanied by an online and in-person public engagement programme presented by Mayo Arts Service and Mayo County Council.

Niamh O'Malley was born in Co. Mayo, and lives in Dublin, Ireland. She has made numerous major exhibitions in recent years including The Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin; Bluecoat, Liverpool; RHA, Dublin; Lismore Castle Arts; Grazer Kunstverein. O'Malley will hold a solo exhibition at John

Niamh O'Malley, Representing Ireland at Venice 2022

Hansard Gallery, Southampton in November 2021.

Temple Bar Gallery + Studios, Dublin, supports the development of artists and creation of art. The TBG+S Curatorial Team comprises Clíodhna Shaffrey, Director, and Michael Hill, Programme Curator.



Niamh O'Malley, Gather. Foiled colored glass, steel. 435 x 430 x 400 mm.



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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.

