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Ó Máille



O'Malley Clan Association Monthly Newsletter

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A Happy St Patrick's Day to you all from The O'Malley Clan!

Happy St Patrick's Day to all of you O'Malley leprechauns out there! We hope you all have a great time at the parades, and the parties!

It'd be great to see you all having fun all around the globe! So don't forget to tag The O'Malley Clan Association in your pictures during the festivities!!



Limerick 2024. Get Planning Your Trip! (Click image)

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Witness to History—Owen St Clair O'Malley & Katyn

A witness to history- Owen St Clair O'Malley

British Ambassador to Poland during WW2

(Please note this article may contain details that could upset some readers, discretion is advised)

The Katyn massacre was a series of mass executions of nearly 22,000 Polish military officers and intelligentsia prisoners of war carried out by the Soviet Union, specifically the NKVD ("People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs", the Soviet secret police) in April and May 1940. Though the killings also occurred in the Kalinin and Kharkiv prisons and elsewhere, the massacre is named after the Katyn forest, where some of the mass graves were first discovered by German Nazi forces.

The order to execute captive members of the Polish officer corps was secretly issued by the Soviet Politburo led by Joseph Stalin. Of the total killed, about 8,000 were officers imprisoned during the 1939 Soviet invasion of Poland, another 6,000 were police officers, and the remaining 8,000 were Polish intelligentsia the

Soviets deemed to be "intelligence agents and gendarmes, spies and saboteurs, former landowners, factory owners and officials". The Polish Army officer class was representative of the multi-ethnic Polish state; the murdered included ethnic Poles, Ukrainians, Belarusians, and 700–900 Polish Jews.

The government of Nazi Germany announced the discovery of mass graves in the Katyn Forest in April 1943. Stalin severed diplomatic relations with the London-based Polish government-in-exile when it asked for an investigation by the International Committee of the Red Cross. After the Vistula–Oder offensive where the mass graves fell into Soviet control, the Soviet Union claimed the Nazis had killed the victims, and it continued to deny responsibility for the massacres until 1990, when it officially acknowledged and condemned the killings by the NKVD, as well as the subsequent cover-up by the Soviet government.

An investigation conducted by the office of the prosecutors general of the Soviet Union (1990–1991) and the Russian Federation (1991–2004) confirmed Soviet responsibility for the massacres, but refused to classify this action as a war crime or as an act of mass murder. The investigation was closed on the grounds that the perpetrators were dead, and since the Russian government would not classify the dead as victims of the Great Purge, formal posthumous rehabilitation was deemed inapplicable. In November 2010, hoping to improve relations with Poland, the Russian State Duma approved a declaration



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condemning Stalin and other Soviet officials for ordering the massacre. However, with the Russo-Ukrainian War, the relations became strained. In 2021, the Russian Ministry of Culture downgraded the memorial complex at Katyn on its Register of Sites of Cultural Heritage from a place of federal to one of only regional importance.

Following the discovery of the mass graves at Katyn, Owen St Clair O'Malley, then British Ambassador to the Polish Government in Exile in London, sent the following detailed report to his boss, the Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden.

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POLAND.

May 31, 1943.

SECTION 1.

Mr. O'Malley to Mr. Eden,--(Received 31st May)

British Embassy to Poland

(No. 51.) 45, Lowndes Square, S.W.1.

Sir,

24th May. 1943.

1. MY despatch No. 43 of the 30th April dwelt on the probability that no confederation in Eastern Europe could play an effective part in European politics unless it were affiliated to the Soviet Government, and suggested that so long as the policy of this Government was as enigmatic as it now is it would be inconsistent with British interests that Russia should enjoy a sphere of influence extending from Danzig to the Aegean and Adriatic Seas. The suppression of the Comintern on the 20th May may be considered to have brought to an end what was in the past the most objectionable phase of Soviet foreign policy and to entitle the Soviet Government to be regarded less distrustfully than formerly. It is not, then, without hesitation that I address this further despatch to you, which also gives grounds for misgivings about the character and policy of the present rulers in Russia.

2. We do not know for certain who murdered a lot of Polish officers in the forest of Katyn in April and May 1940, but this at least, is already clear, that it was the scene of terrible events which will live long in the memory of the Polish nation. Accordingly, I shall try to describe how this affair looks to my Polish friends and acquaintances, of whom many had brothers and sons and lovers among those known to have been taken off just three years ago from the prison camps at Kozielsk. Starobielsk and Ostashkov to an uncertain destination: how it looks, for instance, to General Sikorski, who there lost Captain Fuhrman, his former A.D.C. and close personal friend; to M. Morawski. who lost a brother-in-law called Ooltowski and a nephew; or to M. Oaleski, who lost a brother and two cousins.

3. The number of Polish prisoners taken by the Russian armies when they invaded Poland, in September 1939, was about 180,000, including police and gendarmerie and a certain number of civilian officials. The



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total number of army officers was round about 15,000. At the beginning of 1940 there were in the three camps named above round about 9,000 or 10,000 officers and 6,000 other yanks, policemen and civil officials. Less public reference has been made to these 6,000 than to the 10,000 officers, not because the Polish Government are less indignant about the disappearance of other ranks than about the disappearance of officers, or were less insistent in enquiries for them, but because the need of officers to command the Polish troops recruited in Russia was more urgent than the need to increase the total ration strength of the Polish army. There is no reason to suppose that these 6,000 other ranks and the police and the civilians were treated by the Soviet Government differently to the officers, and mystery covers the fate of all. For the sake of simplicity, however, I shall write in this despatch only of the missing officers, without specific reference to other ranks, to police prisoners or to civilians. Of the 10,000 officers, only some 3,000 or 4,000 were regular officers. The remainder were reserve officers who in peace time earned their living, many with distinction, in the professions, in business and so on.



4. In March of 1940 word went round the camp at Kozielk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov that, under orders from Moscow, the prisoners were to be moved to camps where conditions would be more agreeable, and that they might look forward to eventual release. All were cheered by the prospect of a change from the rigours which prisoners must endure to the hazards and vicissitudes of relative freedom in Soviet or German territory. Even their captors seemed to wish the prisoners well, who were now daily entrained in parties of 50 to 350 for the place at which, so they hoped, the formalities of their discharge would be completed. As each prisoner was listed for transfer, all the usual particulars about him were rechecked and reregistered. Fresh finger-prints were taken. The prisoners were inoculated afresh and certificates of inoculation furnished to them. Sometimes the prisoners' Polish documents were taken away, but in many such cases these were returned before departure. All were furnished with rations for the journey, and, as a mark of special regard, the sandwiches furnished to senior officers were wrapped in clean white paper—a commodity seldom seen anywhere in Russia. Anticipations of a better future were clouded only by the fact that 400 or 500 Poles had been listed for further detention, first at Pavlishchev Bor and eventually at Gрязovetz. These were, as it turned out later, to be the only known survivors of the lost legion, and some of them are in England now; but at the time, although no principle could be discovered on which they had

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been selected, they supposed that they had been condemned to a further period of captivity; and some even feared that they had been chosen out for execution.

5. Our information about these events is derived for the most part from those routed to Giazovetz, all of whom were released in 1941, and some of whom—notably M. Komarnicki, the Polish Minister for Justice are now in England.



6. Entrainment of the 10,000 officers from the three camps went on all through April and the first half of May, and the lorries lined with cheerful faces, which took them from camp to station, were, in fact, the last that was ever seen of them alive by any witness to whom we have access. Until the revelations made by the German broadcast of the 12th April, 1943, and apart from a few words let drop at the time by the prison guards, only the testimony of scribbles on the railway wagons in which they were transported affords any indication of their destination. The same wagons, seem to have done a shuttle service between Kozielsk and the detraining station; and on these some of the first parties to be transported had scratched the words: "Don't believe that we are going home," and the news that their destination had turned out to be a small station near Smolensk. These messages were noticed when the vans returned to Smolensk station, and have been reported to us by prisoners at Kozielsk, who were later sent to Giazovetz.

7. But though of positive indications as to what subsequently happened to the 10,000 officers there was none until the grave at Katyn was opened, there is now available a good deal of negative evidence, the cumulative effect of which is to throw serious doubt on Russian disclaimers of responsibility for the massacre.

8. In the first place there is the evidence to be derived from the prisoners' correspondence, in respect to which information has been furnished by officers' families in Poland, by officers now with the Polish army in the Middle East, and by the Polish Red Cross Society. Up till the end of March 1940 large numbers of letters had been despatched, which were later received by their relatives, from the officers confined at Kozielsk,

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Starobielsk and Ostashkov; whereas no letters from any of them (excepting from the 400 moved to Griazovtez) have been received by anybody which had been despatched subsequent to that date. The Germans overran Smolensk in July 1941, and there is no easy answer to the question why, if any of the 10,000 had been alive between the end of May 1940 and July 1941, none of them ever succeeded in getting any word through to their families.

9. In the second place there is the evidence of the correspondence between the Soviet Government and the Polish Government. The first request for information about the 10,000 was made by M. Kot of M. Wyshinsky, on the 6th October, 1941. On the 3rd December, 1941, General Sikorski backed up his enquiry with a list of 3,845 names of officers included among them. General Anders furnished the Soviet Government with a further list of 800 names on the 18th March, 1942. Enquiries about the fate of the 10,000 were made again and again to the Russian Government verbally and in writing by General Sikorski, M. Kot, M. Romer, Count Raczfiski and General Anders between October 1941 and April 1943. The Polish Red Cross between August and October 1940 sent no less than 500 questionnaires about individual officers to the Russian Government.

To none of all these enquiries extending over a period of two and a half years was a single positive answer of any kind ever returned. The enquirers were told either that the officers had been released, or that "perhaps they are already in Germany," or that "no information" of their whereabouts was available, or (Molotov to M. Kot, October 1941) that complete lists of the prisoners were available and that they would all be delivered to the Polish authorities "dead or alive." But it is incredible that if any of the 10,000 were released, not one of them has ever appeared again anywhere, and it is almost equally incredible, if they were not released, that not one of them should have escaped subsequent to May 1940 and reported himself to the Polish authorities in Russia or Persia. That the Russian authorities should have said of any Polish officer in Soviet jurisdiction that they had "no information" also provokes incredulity; for it is notorious that the N.K.V.D. collect and record the movements of individuals with the most meticulous care.

10. In the third place there is the evidence of those who have visited the grave: first, a Polish commission including, among others, doctors, journalists and members of the Polish Assistance Committee, a former president of the Polish Academy of Literature and a representative of the Mayor of Warsaw; secondly, another Polish commission which included priests, doctors, and representatives of the Polish Red Cross Society; thirdly, an international commission of criminologists and pathologists, of which the personnel is given in Annex I. The report of this commission forms Annex II to this despatch, and the reports of the two Polish commissions add little to it. It is deposed by all that several hundred identifications have been established. All this evidence would normally be highly suspect since the inspections took place under German auspices and the results reached us through German broadcasts. There are fair grounds for presuming that the German broadcasts accurately represented the findings of the commissions, that the commissions' findings were at any rate in some respects well founded, and that the grounds were sound on which at any rate some of the identifications were made.

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11. In the fourth place there is the fact that a mass execution of officer prisoners would be inconsistent with what we know of the German army. The German army has committed innumerable brutalities, but the murder by them of prisoners of war, even of Poles, is rare. Had the German authorities ever had these 10,000 Polish officers in their hands we can be sure that they would have placed some or all of them in the camps in Germany already allotted to Polish prisoners, while the 6,000 other ranks, policemen and civil officials would have been put to forced labour. In such case the Polish authorities would in the course of two years certainly have got into touch with some of the prisoners; but, in fact, none of the men from Kozielsk, Starobielsk or Ostashkov have ever been heard of from Germany.

12. Finally there is the evidence to be derived from the confusion which characterises explanations elicited from or volunteered by the Soviet Government. Between August 1941 and the 12th April, 194, when the Germans announced the discovery of the grave at Katyn, the Russian Government had, among other excuses, maintained that all Polish officers taken prisoner in 1939 had been released. On the other hand, in conversation with the Polish Ambassador, a Russian official who had drunk more than was good for him, once referred to the disposal of these officers as "a tragic error." On the 16th April, immediately after the German announcement, the Soviet Information Bureau in Moscow suggested that the Germans were misrepresenting as victims of Russian barbarity skeletons dug up by archaeologists at Gniezdowo, which lies next door to Katyn. On the 26th April M. Molotov, in a note to the Polish Ambassador in Moscow, said that the bodies at Katyn were those of Poles who had at one time been prisoners of the Russians but had subsequently been captured by the Germans in their advance at Smolensk in July 1941 and had been murdered then by them. On a later occasion, and when the German broadcasts gave reason to think that some bodies were sufficiently well preserved to be identifiable, the Russian Government put forward a statement that the

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Polish officers had been captured by the Germans in July 1941, had been employed upon construction work, and had only been murdered shortly before the German “discovery” was announced. This confusion cannot easily be understood except on the assumption that the Russian Government had something to hide.

13. The cumulative effect of this evidence is, as I said earlier, to throw serious doubt on Russian disclaimers of responsibility for a massacre. Such doubts are not diminished by rumours which have been current during the last two and a half years that some of the inmates of Kozielsk, Starobielsk and Ostashkov had been transported towards Kolyma, Franz Joseph Land or Novaya Oemlya, some or all of these being killed en route. It may be that this was so, and it may be that some less number than ten thousand odd were destroyed and buried at Katyn; but whether the massacre occurred (if it did occur) in one place or two places or three places naturally makes no difference to Polish sentiments. These will accordingly be described without reference to the uncertainty which exists as to the exact number of victims buried near Smolensk.

14. With all that precedes in mind it is comprehensible that the relatives and fellow officers of the men who disappeared should have concluded that these had in fact been murdered by their Russian captors and should picture their last hours—somewhat as follows—with bitter distress. The picture is a composite one to which knowledge of the district, the German broadcasts, experience of Russian methods and the reports of visitors to the grave have all contributed, but it is not so much an evidentially established description of events as a reconstruction in the light of the evidence—sometimes partial and obviously defective—of what may have happened. But it—or something like it—is what most Poles believe to have happened, and what I myself, in the light of all the evidence, such as it is, incline to think happened. Many months or years may elapse before the truth is known, but because in the meantime curiosity is unsatisfied and judgment in suspense, we cannot, even if we would—and much less can Poles—make our thoughts, and feelings unresponsive to the dreadful probabilities of the case.

15. Smolensk lies some 20 kilom. from the spot where the common graves were discovered, it has two stations and in or near the town the main lines from Moscow to Warsaw and from Riga to Orel cross and recross each other. Some 15 kilom, to the west of Smolensk stands the unimportant station of Gniezdowo, and it is but a short mile from Gniezdowo to a place known locally as Kozlinaya Gore or “The Hill of Goats.” The district of Katyn, in which this little hill stands, is covered with primeval forest which has been allowed to go to rack and ruin. The forest is mostly coniferous, but the pine trees are interspersed here and there with hardwoods and scrub. The month of April normally brings spring to this part of the country, and by early May the trees are green; but the winter of 1939-40 had been the hardest on record, and when the first parties from Kozielsk arrived on the 8th April there would still have been occasional patches of snow in deep shade and, of course, much mud on the rough road from the station to the Hill of Goats. At Gniezdowo the prison vans from Kozielsk, Starobieisk and Ostashkov discharged their passengers into a barbed-wire cage surrounded by a strong force of Russian soldiers, and the preparations made here for their reception must have filled most of the Polish officers with disquiet, and some indeed with dismay

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who remembered that the forest of Katyn had been used by the Bolsheviks in 1919 as a convenient place for the killing of many Czarist officers. For such was the case, and a Pole now in London, Janusz Laskowski, tells me that when he was eleven years old he had to listen every evening to an account of his day's work from one of the executioners, Afanaziev, who was billeted in his mother's house. From the cage the prisoners were taken in lorries along a country road to the Hill of Goats, and it must have been when they were unloaded from the lorries that their hands were bound and that dismay gave way to despair. If a man struggled, it seems that the executioner threw his coat over his head, tying it round his neck and leading him hooded to the pit's edge, for in many cases a body was found to be thus hooded and the coat to have been pierced by a bullet where it covered the base of the skull. But those who went quietly to their death must have seen monstrous sight, in the broad deep pit their comrades lay, packed closely round the edge, head to feet, like sardines in a tin, but in the middle of the grave disposed less Orderly. Up and down on the bodies the executioners tramped, hauling the dead bodies about and treading in the blood like butchers in a stockyard. When it was all over and the last shot had been fired and the last Polish head been punctured, the butchers—perhaps trained in youth to husbandry—seem to have turned their hands to one of the most innocent of occupations: smoothing the clods and planting little conifers all over what had been a shambles. It was, of course, rather late in the year for transplanting young trees, but not too late; for the sap was beginning to run in the young Scots pines when, three years later, the Polish representatives visited the site.

16. The climate and the conifers are not without significance. The climate of Smolensk accounts for the feet that, though the Germans first got wind of the existence of the mass graves in the autumn of 1942, it was only in April of 1943 that they published to the world an account of what had been unearthed. The explanation is surely this: not that the German propagandists had chosen a politically opportune moment for their revelations, but that during the winter the ground at Smolensk is frozen so hard that it would have been impossible to uncover corpses without dynamite or such other violent means as would have destroyed the possibility of identifying dead bodies. The winter of 1942-43 was exceptionally mild and the German authorities probably got to work as soon as the soil was sufficiently soft. The little conifers also deserve more attention than they have received. In the first place they are presumptive evidence of Russian guilt; for, considering the conditions under which the German army advanced through Smolensk in July 1941 in full expectation of early and complete victory, it is most unlikely, if the Polish officers had been murdered by Germans and not Russians, that the Germans would have bothered to cover up their victims' graves with young trees. In the second place, one of these young trees under examination by a competent botanist would reveal beyond any possibility of doubt whether it had last been transplanted in May 1940 or some time subsequent to July 1941. Perhaps this test of Russian veracity will presently be made.



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17. The political background against which the events described in paragraph 15 are viewed by Poles is by contrast a matter of undisputed history, including as it does all the long story of partitions, rebellions and repressions, the Russo-Polish war of 1919-20, the mutual suspicions which this left behind it, the unannounced invasion of Poland by Russia in September 1939, the subsequent occupation of half Poland by Russia and the carrying into captivity of some million and a half of its inhabitants. More recently comes the virtual annexation of the occupied eastern parts of Poland, the refusal of the Russian Government to recognise as Polish citizens the inhabitants of the occupied districts, the suppression of relief organisations for Poles in Russia and the persecution of Poles refusing to change their own for Russian nationality.

Poles learned that, in addition to all these misfortunes, round about 10,000 men of the best breeding stock in Poland had (according to Russian accounts) been either dispersed and “lost” somewhere in the Soviet Union or else abandoned to the advancing German armies, or had (according to German accounts) been found to have been murdered by the Russians, many of them naturally concluded (though I do not here give it as my own conclusion) that the Soviet Government’s intention had been to destroy the very foundations upon which their own Poland could be rebuilt. This sinister political intention imputed by Poles to Russia poisoned the wound and enhanced the sufferings of a nation already outraged and dismayed by the conduct of the Soviet Government. Some Poles, remembering Lenin’s attitude to the holocausts of 1917 and subsequent years, and probing the dark recesses of Stalin’s mind when he took (if take he did) the dreadful decision, compare disciple with master. Lenin would have broken apart, the heads of ten thousand Polish officers with the insouciance of a monkey cracking walnuts. Did corpses pitching into a common grave with the precision of machines coming off a production-belt similarly satisfy a nature habituated to manipulate blood and lives with uncompassionate detachment? Some at any rate so interpret Stalin’s mind. “These men are no use to us,” they imagine him as saying; “in fact they are a nuisance and a danger. Here is an elite of talent, here is valour and a hostile purpose. These stallions must not live to sire a whole herd of hostile Christian thoroughbreds. Many of the brood-mares have already been sold to Siberian peasants and the camel-pullers of Kazakstan. Their foals and yearlings can be broken to Communist harness. Rid me of this stud farm altogether and send all this turbulent bloodstock to the knackers.”

18. The men who were taken to Katyn are dead, and their death is a very serious loss to Poland. Nevertheless, unless the Russians are cleared of the presumption of guilt, the moral repercussions in Poland, in the other occupied countries and in England of the massacre of Polish officers may well have more enduring results than the massacre itself; and this aspect of things, therefore, deserves attention. As I have as yet seen no reliable reports on public feeling in Poland and German-occupied Europe, my comments will relate only to our own reaction to the uncovering of the graves.

19. This despatch is not primarily concerned with the reaction of the British public, press or Parliament, who are not in such a good position as His Majesty’s Government to form an opinion as to what actually happened. We ourselves, on the other hand, who have access to all the available information, though we can draw no final conclusions on vital matters of fact, have a considerable body of circumstantial evidence

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at our disposal, and I think most of us are more than half convinced that a large number of Polish officers were indeed murdered by the Russian authorities, and that it is indeed their bodies (as well, maybe, as other bodies) which have now been unearthed. This being so, I am impelled to examine the effect on myself of the facts and allegations, and to adjust my mind to the shocking probabilities of the case. Since the Polish Government is in London and since the affair has been handled directly by yourself and the Prime Minister with General Sikorski and Count Raczynski, it may seem redundant for me to comment on it, as I should naturally do were the Polish Government and I both abroad; but though all important conversations have been between Ministers and the leaders of the Polish Government, my contacts have doubtless been more numerous than yours during the last few weeks Poles of all kinds, and they have possibly spoken to me with less reserve than to yourself. I hope therefore I may, without impertinence, submit to you the reflections which follow.

20. In handling the publicity side of the Katyn affair we have been constrained by the urgent need for cordial relations with the Soviet Government to appear to appraise the evidence with more hesitation and lenience than we should do in forming a common-sense judgment on events occurring in normal times or in the ordinary course of our private lives; we have been obliged to appear to distort the normal and healthy operation of our intellectual and moral judgments; we have been obliged to give undue prominence to the tactlessness or impulsiveness of Poles, to restrain the Poles from putting their ease clearly before the public, to discourage any attempt by the public and the press to probe the ugly story to the bottom. In general we have been obliged to deflect attention from possibilities which in the ordinary affairs of life would cry to high heaven for elucidation, and to withhold the full measure of solicitude which, in other circumstances, would be shown to acquaintances situated as a large number of Poles now are. We have in fact perforce used the good name of England like the murderers used the little conifers to cover up a massacre; and in view of the immense importance of an appearance of allied unity and of the heroic resistance of Russia to Germany, few will think that any other course would have been wise or right.

21. This dislocation between our public attitude and our private feelings we may know to be deliberate and inevitable; but at the same time we may perhaps wonder whether, by representing to others something less than the whole truth so far as we know it, and something less than the probabilities so far as they seem to us probable, we are not incurring a risk of what—not to put a fine point on it might darken our vision and take the edge off our moral sensibility. If so, how is this risk to be avoided?

22. At first sight it seems that nothing less appropriate to a political despatch than a discourse upon morals can be imagined; but yet, as we look at the changing nature of the international world of to-day, it seems that morals and international politics are becoming more and more closely involved with each other. This proposition has important consequences; but since it is not universally accepted I hope the following remarks in support of it are not out of place.

23. Nobody doubts that morals now enter into the domestic politics of the United Kingdom, but it was not always so. There was a time when the acts of the Government in London were less often the fruit of

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consultation and compromise in the general interests of all than of the ascendancy of one class or group of citizens who had been temporarily successful in the domestic arena. It was realisation of the interdependence of all classes and groups of the population of England, Scotland and Wales which discouraged the play of intestine power-politics and set the welfare of all above the advantage of the strong. Similar causes are producing similar results in the relations of States to each other. "During the last four centuries of our modern era," writes Professor Pollard, "the last word in political organisation has been the nation; but now that the world is being unified by science and culture" the conception of the nation state as the largest group in which human beings are organically associated with each other is being superseded by the conception of a larger, it may be of a European, or indeed of a world-wide unity; and "the nation is taking its place as the bridge, the half-way house, between the individual and the human family.

Europe, and indeed the world, are in process of integrating themselves, and "the men and women of Britain," as you said at Maryland, "are alive to the fact that they live in one world with their neighbours". This being so, it would be strange if the same movement towards the coalescence of smaller into larger groups which brought about the infiltration of morals into domestic politics were not also now bringing about the infiltration of morals into international politics. This, in fact, it seems to many of us is exactly what is happening, and is why, as the late Mr. Headlam Morley said, "what in the international sphere is morally indefensible generally turns out in the long run to have been politically inept."

It is surely the ease that many of the political troubles of neighbouring countries and some of our own have in 'the past arisen because they and we were incapable of seeing this or unwilling to admit it.

24. If, then, morals have become involved with international politics, if it be the case that a monstrous crime has been committed by a foreign Government—albeit a friendly one—and that we, for however valid reasons, have been obliged to behave as if the deed was not theirs, may it not be that we now stand in danger of bemusing not only others but ourselves: of falling, as Mr. Winant said recently at Birmingham, under St. Paul's curse on those who can see cruelty "and burn not ". If so, and since no remedy can be found in an early alteration of our public attitude towards the Katyn affair, we ought, maybe, to ask ourselves how consistently with the necessities of our relations with the Soviet Government, the voice of our political conscience is to be kept up to concert pitch. It may be that the answer lies, for the moment, only in something to be done inside our own hearts and minds where we are masters. Here at any rate we can make a compensatory contribution—a reaffirmation of our allegiance to truth and justice and compassion. If we do this we shall at least be predisposing ourselves to the exercise of a right judgment on all those half political, half moral, questions (such as the fate of Polish deportees now in Russia) which will confront us both elsewhere and more particularly in respect to Polish-Russian relations as the war pursues its course and draws to its end; and so, if the facts about the Katyn massacre turn out to be as most of us incline to think, shall we vindicate the spirit of these brave unlucky men and justify the living to the dead.

OWEN O'MALLEY.

Nominating our next Tánaiste!



O'Malley Clan Association

Nomination of Tánaiste (Chieftain elect) for 2024 -2025

I, _____ (name), _____ (Membership No.)
 _____ (address)
 _____ (e-mail)
 _____ (phone)

AND

I, _____ (name), _____ (Membership No.)
 _____ (address)
 _____ (e-mail)
 _____ (phone)

hereby nominate

_____ (name), _____ (Membership No.)
 _____ (address)
 _____ (e-mail)
 _____ (phone)

For the position of Tánaiste of the O'Malley Clan and confirm that my candidate has agreed to be nominated.

Signed _____ Date _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Please return completed forms (hard copy) to:

Ellen O'Malley Dunlop, Guardian Chieftain
 33 Springfield Road
 Templeogue
 Dublin 6W, Ireland

OR

Photo or scan of signed form by e-mail
 to: ellenomalleydunlop@gmail.com

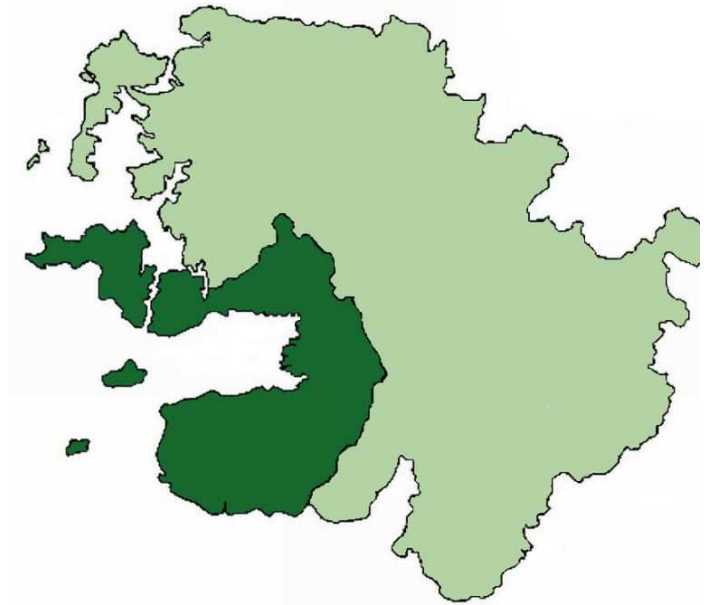
The O'Malleys & The Sea, from Sheila Mulloy, 1997

The O'Malleys and The Sea

(An article by Sheila Mulloy in the O'Malley Journal 1997)

The O'Malley Clan has lived in west Mayo from the earliest times. In fact the area around Clew Bay is known as Umhall Ui Mhaille or O'Malley Territory. This territory was divided into two divisions known as Umhall Uachtarach and Umhall lochtarach, that is, Upper and Lower Umhall. Upper Umhall became the Barony of Murrisk, an area which includes the islands of Clare and Turk, and formerly it also included Inishboffin.

Umhall lochtarach or Lower Umhall became the Barony of Burrishoole and included Achill Island. The O'Malleys were never a very numerous clan, and apart from Mayo, are only



found to a significant extent in certain areas of Counties Limerick, Roscommon and Armagh, as well as Dublin of course, which has attracted people from all parts of Ireland. They are a unique clan, however, in that they are still here in force on their ancestral lands.

We must ask ourselves how this situation came about. At the beginning there were family groups consisting of parents and children. At first these would have been known only by their given names. One man for example would have been known as Art, and his son would have been known as Conn Mac Airt, that is Conn son of Art. Later the grandchild would have been called Cormac Mac Cuion Mac Art that is Cormac son of Conn son of Art, or Cormac Ó hAirt, that is Cormac descendant or grandson of Art. Later still, as the population became more numerous, it became necessary to distinguish one family from another, and certain names became fixed or hereditary, so that the name Ó Cleirigh or O'Clery, for example, became a fixed surname from the beginning of the tenth century. This was a process that was to become the norm within the next two centuries, so that most Irish surnames date from the eleventh and twelfth centuries. It is noted by Father Woulfe that Ireland was the first country after the Fall of Rome to adopt hereditary surnames.

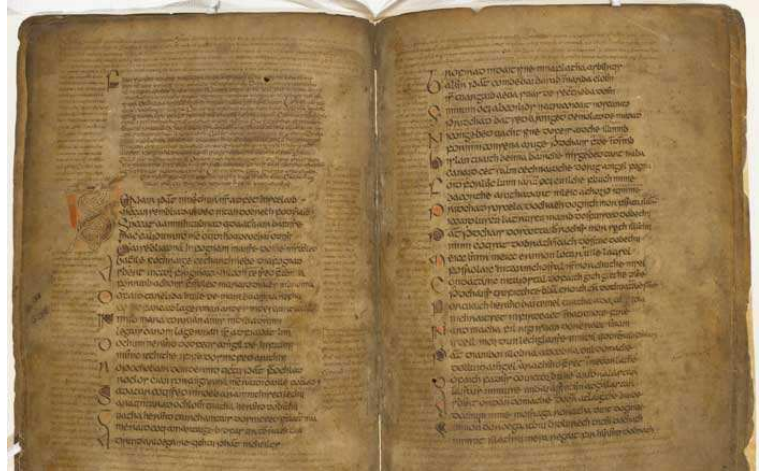
In the case of the O'Malleys the very first written references describe the inhabitants of this area as the 'men of Umhall'. As the clan system developed the people of an area took the name of an illustrious ancestor. In our case it is not possible to identify this ancestor or to say exactly what the name Maille means. Father Woulfe suggests that it comes from the Old Celtic 'Maglios' meaning a chief, while O'Hart states that it comes from 'mall' meaning slow. Naturally we prefer to think that we are descended from a chief!

Traditional genealogy likes to tidy up all these things, and tells us that we are of the Ui Briuin race, that we are descended from Brian, king of Connacht in the fifth century. This king was said to have had twenty-

The O'Malleys & The Sea, from Sheila Mulloy, 1997

four sons, and one of these became Lord of Umhall. I think we'll leave it at that! The fact remains, however, that the first mention of the name Ó Maille occurs in the Annals of the Four Masters under the date 1123.

In the twelfth-century Leabhar na gCeart or Book of Rights it is stated that the tribute paid annually by the territory of Umhall to the King of Connacht was 100 milch cows, 100 hogs and 100 casks of beer. In return the King of Connacht was obliged to pay to the King of Umhall 'five horses, five ships, five swords and five corselets' for his 'services tributes and loyalty.' So that O'Malley paid his tribute and got something back, namely the support of the provincial king.



The mention of five ships is probably the

earliest indication of the long association between the O 'Malleys and the sea. They have been described as the Manannain or Sea Gods of the Western Ocean, and this is the god we see rising from the waves with his chariot as depicted in the fine monument on the Green in Castlebar, which was executed by Peter Grant, and donated by the family of the late Ernie O'Malley, a famous son of that town.

In another document it is said that the command of the King of Connacht's fleet went to 'O'Flaherti and O'Mali, whenever he goes on sea or on high sea'. Sean O Dubhagáin, who died in 1372, and was hereditary historian and poet to the O'Kellys, wrote

A good man yet there never was,
Of the O'Malleys, who was not a mariner
Of every weather they are prophets
A tribe of brotherly affection and of friendship.

As we have seen, the first mention of the name Ó Maille in the annals is for the year 1123, and from then on there are frequent references to the clan. Many of these references show their continued association with the sea, an association which reached its apogée in the person of Gráinne Ní Mhaille, or Gráinne Uaile (as she is commonly called), who was a contemporary of another famous woman Queen Elizabeth of England. Since the territory ruled by the Ó 'Malleys was a maritime one and included many islands, the clan looked to the sea for their living, and felt as much at home on it as on dry land.

The O'Malleys must, therefore, have been expert mariners and fishermen, but they also would have exercised certain rights in their sphere of influence. These included levying their tribute on foreign ships fishing or trading in their area. At times they would not have hesitated to act outside the law, raiding merchant ships, or plundering the territory of neighbouring chieftains when the occasion demanded. Gráinne herself led attacks by sea on the Aran Islands and on Desmond territory in the south of Ireland, as well as a sea chase after seven hundred Scots who presumed to land in Erris and kill some of her Bourke relatives.

We are told in the annals of other sea raids in the preceding centuries. In 1123 Tadhg Ó Maille, Lord of Umhall, was drowned with his ship at Aran, on returning from a predatory expedition. In the thirteenth

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century some of the Ó Conors settled in the O 'Malley territory, and the clans became enemies because of some misdeeds committed by the newcomers. In 1220 Cathal Crobhdearg O' Conor killed Dubhdara Ó Maille, while a son of Muircheartach Muimhneach O'Conor killed Domhnall and Muircheartach Ó Maille on Clare Island in 1235.

That same year there was a great sea battle between Maghnus son of Muirtheartach Muimhneach O'Conor and the Normans in Clew Bay, in which the O'Conors were defeated with great slaughter, and the annalist wrote that 'if Ó Maille's people had been esteemed, he (Ó Maille) would have sent his vessels against the foreigners and their boats.' The inference is that the battle would not have been lost if the O'Malleys had fought with the O'Conors against the foreigners.

In 1396, Conor son of Owen O'Malley went on an incursion to Iar Connacht, the O 'Flahertys' country, and loaded his ship with riches and spoils which he had taken. On the way home his ship with all the crew save one man was lost at Aran.' Towards the close of the century these two powerful clans came to terms and became friends and allies.

In 1413 Tuathal Ó Maille who had been employed on military service in Ulster for a year, was returning home with seven ships about the feast of St. Colmcille. A fierce storm arose, which drove them to the coast of Scotland where six ships with all their crews were lost. Tuathal O'Malley's two sons were among the victims of the disaster. Tuathal himself after much suffering and hardship succeeded in effecting a landing in Scotland. This Tuathal is evidently an outstanding figure in the history of the O 'Malleys. There is a long Irish laudatory poem addressed to him, which is attributed to Tadhg Ó hUiginn and refers to his exploits at sea.

It would be tedious to continue with a detailed recital of the O 'Malley adventures at sea. It will suffice to give a brief mention of the principal exploits. In 1427 Hugh O'Malley went on a predatory expedition to Tirconnell or the modern Donegal.¹ In 1450 the O'Malleys joined the O'Briens of Clare in a struggle against the MacMahons. The MacMahons got the better of them on this occasion and killed the leaders of the raiding party. In fact, one has to admit that these O'Malley expeditions were unsuccessful more often than not!

In 1513 Owen O'Malley sailed with three ships to Killybegs, plundered the town and took many prisoners. However, before the raiders could leave for home, they were attacked by the McSweeneys. Owen and many of his followers were killed, the prisoners were freed, and two of the ships were captured.

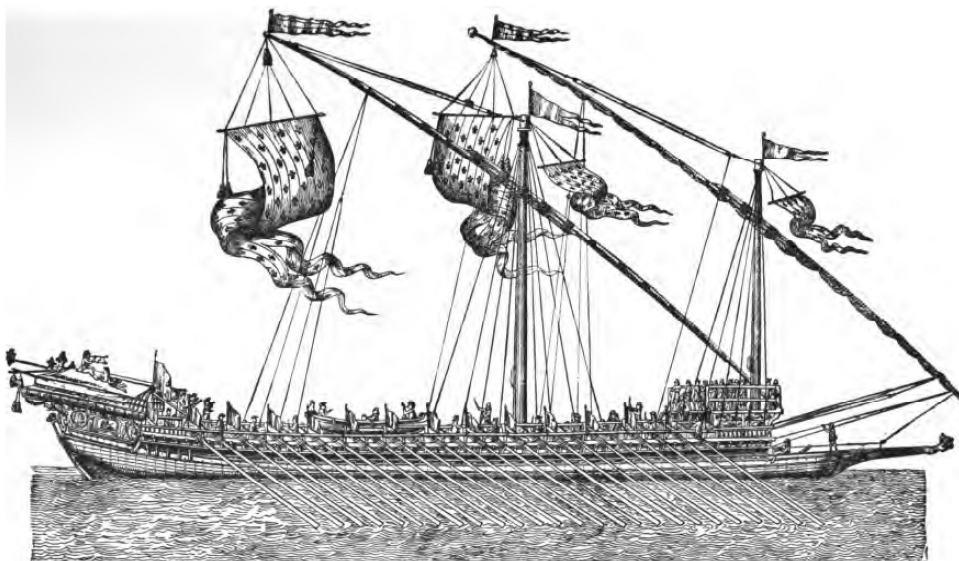


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Dermot, son of Cormac O'Malley was killed in Duhallow in 1524 where he had gone to help O'Connor Kerry in a raid. Another Tuathal O'Malley in 1560 joined O'Brien of Aran who went on a maritime expedition into Desmond. This expedition also ended in disaster when their ship was wrecked in a storm on the way home. Over 100 persons were drowned, among whom was Tuathal 'the best pilot of a fleet of long ships in his time'

In 1568 Eoin na Seolta O'Malley went to Lixnaw to visit MacMaurice Kerry. While there he helped MacMaurice to defeat James Fitzgerald. We note that this is one of the few instances in the annals where the event mentioned was not a defeat for the O'Malley raiding party. We must realise that the annalists did not record the day-to-day happenings in an area. Their purpose was to record the significant dates in Irish history, and among those dates were the deaths of local chieftains. For the annalist the petty raids were significant only in so far as they involved the deaths of important personages. This is proof, if such be needed, that the O'Malleys were important people on the west coast of Ireland. In this respect, we have the testimony of no less a person than Sir Henry Sidney, the Lord Deputy, who in 1576 described Owen O'Malley chief of Burrishoole as 'an original Irishman, strong in galleys and seamen'

A further raid was made on Ulster in 1583. In 1598 Donnell O'Malley agreed to help the English by opposing the Earl of Tyrone, on condition that the English would build two galleys for him, one of twenty-four oars in Wexford and one of thirty oars in Carrickfergus. He would require 150 men for this service, which would depend on the granting of



certain requests made by him, including a general pardon for himself, his brothers and his followers." We are not told

what became of this particular peace process!

In 1599 Baxter informs Sir Conyers Clifford, Governor of Connacht, that O'Malley's galleys are capable of carrying 300 men apiece, and that if these galleys were employed by the Queen they would be very useful for the campaign in the north, as 'the O'Malleys are much feared everywhere by sea.' He also adds that 'there are no galleys in Ireland but these.'

We are now in the period of Grainne Nf Mháille, whose life and exploits have been so well chronicled by Anne Chambers in her biography. There is no need therefore to go further into the exploits at sea of the O'Malley Clan during the lifetime of that redoubtable lady and her son Tiobóid na Long, who is also the subject of a biography by the same author.

The O'Malleys & The Sea, from Sheila Mulloy, 1997

The seventeenth century was to see the disappearance for the most part of the native Irish as owners of land, but the O'Malleys clung on in Murrisk and Burrishoole, some as landowners or middlemen, through conforming to the Established Church, and others as tenants on their former lands. This was a situation which was to endure throughout the eighteenth century, when the local people were reduced to a state of intolerable poverty which, together with religious persecution, forced them into a rebellion in 1798 which was savagely repressed. The nineteenth century was to bring further tragedy in the shape of Famine, disease and emigration, which was to halve the population of Mayo, a county which probably was the hardest hit in all Ireland.



The sea played very little part in the lives of the O'Malleys during those terrible times, except to bring them to what they hoped would be better lives in far-off America and Australia, but many were to be disappointed in those hopes. Meanwhile, smuggling was to become a way of life for many on the west coast in the late eighteenth century, until the establishment of a residential coast guard in 1819 helped to put an end to the illicit trade.

The O'Malleys were not backward in joining the ranks of the smuggling fraternity and prominent among them was Captain Patrick O'Malley who had been evicted from Inishturk, and settled near Letterfrack, where his even more famous son Captain George was born in 1785. Patrick's activities ensured that the family was comfortable. He brought regular cargoes of tobacco, brandy, wine and silks from the Channel Islands, and these goods were distributed all over Mayo and Galway.

Young George was initiated early into a life at sea, joining a revenue cutter of all things, an experience which was to prove invaluable in later life when he became the king of the Mayo smugglers. His numerous adventures were recorded in his lengthy autobiography. Here he has succumbed to the sailor's temptation

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to spin a good yam, and some of these are quite simply incredible or are exaggerated out of all proportion. He is credited with the authorship of two well-known songs, and is the subject of innumerable stories that are still recounted in the area around Clew Bay. We will leave the last word with Captain George, perhaps the most colourful seafarer in the history of our clan:

Good fortune and fame were ours in the end,
Our enemies were before us everywhere we ventured,
Waterguards on the watch and police on their heels,
There were cutters big and small, the bay was full of them,
King George's ships hunting hard for me,
I am Caíptín Ó Maille, a good man of Grainne's breed,
Who would put his loads ashore for ever in spite of them.

Sheila Mulloy (O'Malley Journal 1997)



Tell us your O'Malley Stories—What O'Malley would you love to have met?

We want to put together something very special for the O'Malley Clan Gathering coming up in June. There'll be various great events over the weekend, including Irish Dancing, and Irish Music, but something we want to include too, is the great Irish tradition of storytelling.

What we're looking for is your stories. We want you to tell us about an O'Malley that you would have loved to have met. on a single A4 sheet, with no more than 500 words, (please include an image too),

It could be artist and freedom fighter Ernie O'Malley, it could be Grace O'Malley, the Pirate Queen herself, or maybe Lord Sligo, one of the men that ended the slave trade. It could be someone from your own family history. A great grandad that sailed the seas of the world and would have lots of stories to share with you. It could be a grandad that dropped into Normandy by parachute in June 1944, or maybe a great great grandmother that sailed to the new world in the 1800's to find a new life for herself. It'll be your story, so you tell us who it is that you would have loved to meet and have a chat with. To hear all about their life, their adventures, their triumphs and tragedies.

What we plan to do with these single sheet stories is to create display boards with multiple sheets on each, and to have these on display at the Gathering in June. So, even if you can't wing your way over to Ireland to be at the Gathering in Limerick, you can still be present in this small way, and share a little bit of your O'Malley story with us all.

Who knows, if we were to get enough of these single sheet stories, we could put them together into a booklet too, and make that available.

We'll need you to get on board and put your stories together though. A single A4 sheet, so no need to go into forensic detail. There won't be space for that. If you do end up writing a book about your ancestors, we can promote that for you in the newsletter too, but for this we're looking for a short extract, a small window into their story, a snippet of the bigger story.

We have an example of what we might be looking for on the next page, but this is only a suggestion, lets get our thinking hats on, and see what we can come up with.

Please forward all submissions to story@omalleyclan.ie before 1st April, and we can go through all of them then and get those displays put together.

It'd be fantastic to have input for the Gathering from everyone around the world, including those that can't make it to Limerick, so here's your opportunity!

Thanks for your efforts, in advance.

Don O'Malley

O'Malley Clan Association

Tell us your O'Malley Stories—What O'Malley would you love to have met?

Dr. Austin O'Malley: Polymath, poisoning victim and O'Malley genealogist.

Austin O'Malley of Philadelphia was by any account a remarkable man. As a writer and lecturer in both the arts and the sciences, he was widely respected. He was a university professor, physician, author of books on a range of subjects, lecturer to learned societies all over the USA, a linguist of note and an authority on the poet Dante. He also researched his descent from the O'Malley Chieftains of Co Mayo, compiling an extensive family tree in the process.



O'Malley circa 1915

Born in 1858 in Pittston, Pennsylvania to an Irish immigrant from Westport, he entered Fordham University aged only 14 and graduated at the top of his class. He studied philosophy and languages in Rome and then undertook a medical career, studying at Georgetown University, the university of Berlin and medical schools in Paris and Vienna, specialising in bacteriology.

He returned to the US in 1893 and worked initially as a bacteriologist and pathologist in Georgetown. However, his writings led in a different direction and he was appointed Professor of English Literature at Notre Dame University in Indiana in 1895, a position he held until his health forced his resignation in 1902.

In March 1902, he married Ailene Ellis and shortly afterwards became seriously ill with food poisoning, initially attributed to accidental consumption of infected canned goods. His brother Joseph, also a doctor, brought him to Philadelphia for treatment. While there, Joseph became suspicious of Ailene's relationship with a former boyfriend and managed to tip off police who arrested the young couple attempting to catch a train west with several diamond rings stolen from Dr Joseph's wife. This led to speculation that Dr Austin's poisoning was not accidental after all! Austin made a slow recovery during which he divorced his errant wife and never married again.

He began to specialise in the study of the eye at the University of Pennsylvania and became an oculist in Philadelphia, which was his principal occupation for the next thirty years. Nonetheless, he continued writing and lecturing extensively on literary and medical subjects.

It is not clear when he first became interested in his O'Malley ancestry. The papers of Professor Conor O'Malley of Galway, Middleton Moore O'Malley of Ross House, Newport, Co Mayo and Sir Owen O'Malley all contain correspondence with and references to him, from the 1890s to his death in 1932. He visited Ireland on several occasions during his research. A slim volume entitled *The O'Malleys of the Owles* by him is available in the National Library in Dublin. An accompanying family tree has been the basis for many other O'Malley genealogical articles and correspondence, leading to several disputed claims relating to the Chieftains of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and their descendants.

I would be fascinated to discover the sources he used in his Irish researches, particularly his first hand interactions with various elderly O'Malleys and others. It would be even more amazing to get to know such an extraordinarily talented and intelligent man.

Brendan O'Malley

O'Malley Clan Gathering 2024—Programme of events

Friday 28th June



Cappamore Sports Centre Complex, Cappamore

2pm “The O’Malley Olympics” We’ll kick off a mighty weekend for all O’Malleys and our friends with lots of fun and games for kids of all ages in Cappamore, with treats for the kids, and a great time to be had by all. For O’Malleys **and all of our friends too!** A nice informal, fun start to the weekend in Limerick!



Hayes' Bar & Sliabh Feilim Room, Cappamore

5pm: Chieftain’s Reception, followed by a historical presentation on Ireland and the US, and our intertwined history over the hundred years since the Irish State was recognised by the USA, on the 28th June 1924. 100 years to the day. Professor Bernadette Whelan will examine the rituals of Irish emigration to the USA, from decision, to packing, to departure, and the intense impact on the social, psychological and emotional lives of those who left and those who stayed behind

O'Malley Clan Gathering 2024—Programme of events

St John's Church, Abington, Murroe

8pm Concert by The Sliabh Feilim Singers with special guests, in aid of Cappamore Day Care Centre and Milford Hospice, Limerick.

Hayes' Bar & Sliabh Feilim Room, Cappamore

10pm Drinks and nibbles back at Hayes' with Irish music and dancing, exhibits of family trees and family photographs. A great night in Cappamore!



Saturday 29th June

Bus Tour

11:00am Bus Tour will take us to a Guided tour of Ardnacrusha Hydroelectric Power Station, built in the late 1920's with O'Malley Engineers to the fore, then on to 1pm Lunch in Limerick.

2:30pm A combination of walking tours around Limerick City finishing at the Round House with a special cocktail for everyone, to round off the afternoon.



O'Malley Clan Gathering 2024—Programme of events

Saturday 29th June

Evening Events

7pm Pre-dinner drinks at the pub in Bunratty Castle Folk Park.

We'll meet up at the pub in Bunratty Folk Village for a little tippie before we head over to Bunratty Castle.



8:30pm till late, Medieval Banquet in Bunratty Castle.

What a night this will be! A medieval banquet in Bunratty Castle with the O'Malley Clan. This is an event that you won't want to miss.



O'Malley Clan Gathering 2024—Programme of events

Sunday 30th June

St Munchin's Catholic Church, Limerick

11:30am Annual Clan Mass

We'll pause and reflect on the year that has passed, and those we've lost in the past 12 months, with Canon Donough O'Malley celebrating mass.



Strand Hotel, Limerick

1pm O'Malley Clan Annual General Meeting. Time to look at the admin side of things, see how we're doing and see what can be done better. Time to have your say as a member of the O'Malley Clan.

2pm Annual Clan Luncheon

3:30pm Inauguration of New Clan Chieftain Grace O'Malley



We' have the booking link up on the O'Malley Clan Association website [here](#), where you can secure your spots at the various events.

If you've any queries at all, please drop us a line by email to omalleyclanireland@gmail.com Get your trip planned and we'll see you in Limerick, June 28th to 30th 2024!

Events are, at this early stage, subject to change



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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 70 years now.

We hope with our 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 Association NEEDS YOUR HELP, Join Today!



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the Clan,
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of it**

**The O'Malley Clan
Association Needs You!**

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