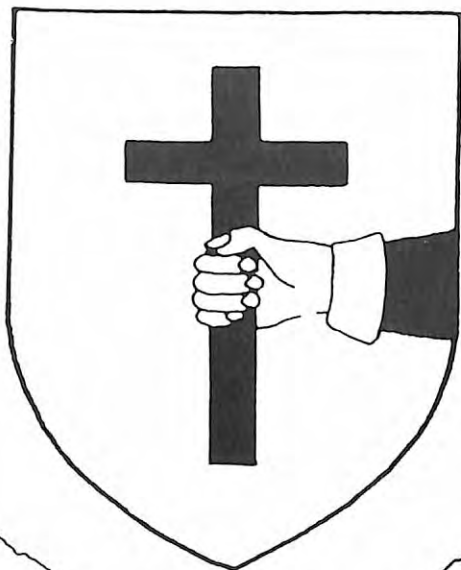


# Ó Domhnaill Abú



*O'Donnell Clan  
Newsletter No. 15  
Spring 1991*



Bishop Edward O'Donnell of St. Louis, Missouri and Tom O'Neill, son of Tip O'Neill, former Lieut. Governor of Massachusetts cutting the tape at the official opening of the 'Flight of the Earls' Centre.

# Flight of the Earls Centre is opened

AN old Battery built in 1810 which overlooks Lough Swilly at Rathmullan was opened as a Heritage Centre on Sunday last to commemorate the Flight of the Earls from Rathmullan in 1607.

**The Flight of the Earls was not a disaster but a blessing for so many other parts of the world, an Irish American Bishop has claimed.**

Bishop Edward O'Donnell, of St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A., was speaking at the official opening of the Rathmullan Heritage Centre last Sunday. Accompanied by Mr. Tom O'Neill, son of famous American politician Tip O'Neill, and former Lieut. Governor of Massachusetts, His Lordship officially opened the new facility which is located at the fort-like building which dominates the beachfront of the town.

Bishop O'Donnell said he viewed the Flight of the Earls from a different perspective to the way very many Irish probably viewed the event.

The new Heritage Centre is open between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. on weekdays and between 12.30 p.m. and 6 p.m. on Sundays. Admission is £1 per adult and 50p per child.

## TRIUMPH

"I see them from the other context. The arrival of the Earls and the thousands and thousands whom they typify and who left this land for many different reasons have come to enrich so many parts of the world. Perhaps Ireland still suffers in some ways from the Flight of the Earls but at the same time it was a triumph."

Bishop O'Donnell said they dreamt of bettering themselves, of triumphing over adversity.

"Other Irish chose to stay and fight the same battle here. The Flight of the Earls has not been a disaster but a blessing for so many other parts of the world. We see O'Donnell and O'Neills leadership and the leadership of others like them in every country in the world not just in politics, not just in armies, but in priests and religious women, in scholars and artists, enriching the world wherever they've gone."

"It's good for you who have remained here, you who are still Irish, to hear that from a recipient. I think it's ironic that perhaps Irish-Americans might be more proud of our heritage than a lot of Irish-Irish because we see what it has meant; it's so blessed our country and the other nations of the world," he said.



## NEWS

The Flight of the Earls Heritage Centre at Rathmullan was officially opened on Sunday 21st. Oct. 1990. The work was done by a local committee, grant aided by several organisations and the actual exhibits were designed by the Office of Public Works. We congratulate all concerned in doing something to promote tourism and at the same time place before the public details of that historic event which had such an effect on Ireland and particularly, on those involved in the actual 'Flight'.

Yet, there are a few minor criticisms I would like to make.

1. The life-size wax model in the above photo depicts Red Hugh O'Donnell, I am told. I find this misleading as Red Hugh did not sail from Rathmullan in 1607, (he died in Spain 1602), but his brother, Rory, did.

2. In the exhibition the date for Red Hugh's successful escape from Dublin Castle is given as Christmas 1591 when it should read 5th. Jan. 1592.

3. In the explanatory leaflet the date for the Battle of Kinsale is given as 24th. Sept. 1601, it should read 3rd. Jan. 1602. The English give the date as Christmas Day 1601 as they had not yet accepted the Gregorian calendar, it having been reformed by a pope.

Brian Friel's recently composed play, 'Making History' has also received some criticism from both O'Donnells and historians. Apart from the fact that Red Hugh is portrayed as an "ignorant country bumpkin", as someone remarked, he is called 'Earl of Tyrconnell' (which he never was) and in Act 2, Scene 1 we find him wandering about in the Sperrin Mountains after the defeat of Kinsale.

Another recent publication that deals quite a lot with O'Donnell history is a beautiful book by Betty Mac Dermot, 'O Ruairc of Breifne'. Published by Drumlin Publications Ltd., Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim and costing £16, it is a well-documented history of the O'Rourke Clan of Breifne, Co. Leitrim. However, these two neighbouring clans seem to have had so many inter-relations that I would go so far as to say that a good quarter of the book recounts the history of our clan. Again, I would like to point out two minor observations.

1. On the genealogical chart on page 221 Red Hugh is shown as being married to Lady Rose, daughter of Hugh O'Neill. Although there was some mention of a betrothal, there is no evidence of marriage having taken place. See Donegal Annual, 1986.

2. Elsewhere in the book there is mention of Red Hugh having been poisoned. Again, this was a rumour that has been continued down the years and for which there is no substantial evidence. See ODA No. 4.

According to the Donegal Democrat, Her Excellency, Mrs. Mary Robinson, the new President of Ireland has O'Donnell blood. Her mother was the late Tessie O'Donnell from Carndonagh, Co. Donegal, who married Dr. Aubry Bourke, Ballina, Co. Mayo. It was there that the President along with four others was reared.



Eamonn de Burca with an Taoiseach Charles Haughey at the launching of the Annals of the Four Masters.



Vincent O'Donnell (Ed.) with Anna Marie Fantasia.

Seventeen-year-old Anna Marie Fantasia, from Sacramento, California, paid a visit to Donegal last summer doing research into the O'Donnell Clan for a book she is writing on Red Hugh.

Anna Marie, who has no Irish ancestors, first heard of Red Hugh when, as a fifteen-year-old, she was brought by her mother to see the movie "The Fighting Prince of Donegal". She was so intrigued by the exploits of the young hero, and knowing that the film was based on fact decided to learn more about the O'Donnells, and Red Hugh in particular.

Unfortunately, the amount of literature available on the subject was very limited - "and sadly much of what is written in the books I have been able to get in America is not very accurate". She made up her mind to travel to Donegal, the homeland of Red Hugh, and carry out an in-depth study of the history of the O'Donnells, and write a book "to set the record straight" - and, of course, make available in America "the real story of Red Hugh".

This has led her to Donegal where she met journalist Joe McGarrigle who introduced her to Vincent O'Donnell, Inver, and John O'Donnell, St. Johnston. They were very helpful to her and since then she has been corresponding with them. She was accompanied by her mother and grandmother. Anna is now looking forward to her next visit to Donegal and also hopes to be present at the proposed 1992 Clan Gathering to promote her book.

(From a report by Joe McGarrigle in the Donegal Times, Sept. '90.)

## The Annals of the Four Masters.

On the 10th Oct. 1990 I had the great pleasure of being present in the Royal Irish Academy, Dublin for the launching of the Annals of the Four Masters. To me it was an historic moment and I was proud to be, in a little way, associated with it. I could not but think of the mammoth task involved in collecting and compiling this historical record. That it was done inside four years (1632-36) and at a time when communications and travel were difficult, our country overrun by the Sasanach who despised everything Gaelic, and by four people, is almost unbelievable. To quote Fr. Paul Walsh, "Nothing of equal magnitude has been attempted since." Not alone was it an immense task but furthermore those historical records were so accurate that they form the basis of our Irish history till this day and it is rare to find any work of history dealing with pre16th cent. Ireland without the letters 'A.F.M.' appearing among the list of sources.

But what were the 'Annals' and who were the 'Four Masters'?

### The Annals.

The Four Masters collected from all over Ireland all the manuscripts then available that dealt with Irish history. For hundreds of years chroniclers had recorded the history of their Clan or district, e.g. 'The Annals of Ulster' by Mac Maghnusa, 'The Book of the Dun Cow', 'Annals of Lough Ce' and 'The Annals of Connacht'. One of their prime sources was 'Beatha Aoidh Ruaidh Ui Dhoahnaill' (Life of Red Hugh O'Donnell) written by Lughaidh O Cleirigh in 1616. This Lughaidh seems to have been an uncle of Michael, chief of the Four Masters. The historical contents of the above mentioned works along with many others have been embodied in the 'Annals' as have been the bardic poems and many genealogies of the great Gaelic families. Therefore the 'Annals' contain as much Irish history as was available then, all laid out in chronological order beginning forty days before the 'Flood' and ending in 1616.

### The Four Masters.

Brother Michael O'Clery was born about 1590 and was a descendent of the illustrious O'Clery family who for 300 years were scholars and professors of history to the O'Donnells of Tyrconnell Chonail. The O'Clery home was Kilbarron Castle a few miles N.W. of Ballyshannon. Br. Michael, or 'Tadhg an tSleibhe' as he was known, joined the Franciscan Order in Louvain in 1623. His superiors recognising his talents as an historian, sent him back to Ireland to collect what he could on the lives of Irish Saints and the history of his native land. To help him in this enormous task he chose three assistants; his own cousin Cucogry or Peregrine O'Clery, Fergus O'Mulconry and Peregrine O'Duigeanan. Conor O'Clery (Michael's brother) and Maurice O'Mulconry also assisted for a short while. They were first called 'The Four Masters' by Fr. John Colgan, another franciscan, writing about them in 1645.

### For the Glory of God and the Honour of Ireland.

The 'Four Masters' fully realised the danger that threatened our old traditions, history, and in particular, our ancient manuscripts - "For as you well know, my friends, evil days have come upon us and upon our country; and if this work is not done now these old books of ours that contain the history of our country of its kings and its warriors, its saints and its scholars - may be lost to posterity, or at least may never be brought together again; and thus a great and irreparable evil

would befall our native land." Their fears proved well founded for the destruction of books and records became widespread shortly after.

### The Patron of the Annals.

The four historians needed patronage to finance their endeavour and enable them to support their families while engaged in their work. Br. Michael says:

"The good brothers of this convent, poor as they are themselves, have still undertaken to provide us with food and attendance. There is, alas! no O'Donnell now in Donegal to be our patron and protector; but, as you know, the noble Fergal O'Gara has promised to give you, my friends, a recompense for your labours that will help to maintain your families at home." The 'Annals' are dedicated to Fergal O'Gara, Chief of Coolavin, Co. Sligo who also received one of the two autographed copies made, the other naturally, went to the Franciscans in Louvain.

### First Translation and Publishing.

John O'Donovan, a great Gaelic scholar and a man steeped in Ireland's history (having spent years helping with the Ordnance Survey of the country), took particular interest in these manuscripts and in what they contained. From 1847 till 1851 he devoted his time to their translation and in 1851 there appeared the first published edition with Irish and English translation on facing pages. But the crowning achievement of O'Donovan's work was the copious historical, topographical and genealogical material in the footnotes which are a mine of information.

### Third and Latest Edition.

This edition is unique as it incorporates material which was not included by O'Donovan. Kenneth Nicholls includes notes for the years 1334-1416 from Roderick O'Flaherty's transcript from the lost Annals of Lecan.

### Where Written?

The following declaration appears in the original manuscript; "On the 22nd. January, 1632, this work was undertaken in the Convent of Donegal, and was finished in the same convent on the 10th. of August, 1636.

I am thine most affectionately,  
Brother Michael O'Clery."

But what does Br. Michael mean by the 'Convent of Donegal'? As we know, the monastery or abbey of Donegal had been destroyed in 1601 and so was uninhabitable at the time and so the term would seem to imply 'The Franciscan community of Donegal' regardless of place of residence. Tradition has it that the same community spent some time on their keep about the hills and hinterland of Donegal Town. It is also a well-known fact that the Franciscans had a House at the Drowes river and indeed Br. Michael gives the Drowes as his address on several occasions in his manuscripts. The Drowes flows from Lough Melvin to the sea at Bundoran and forms the boundary between Cos. Leitrim and Donegal. Indeed, he puts it quite plainly when he says;

"Acc Drobhas i conveint brathar Duin na nGall" (at Drowes, in the convent of the friars of Donegal).

### Conclusion.

This, the third edition, dedicated to An Cairdineal Tomas O

Fiaich, has been published by Eamonn de Burca of 27 Priory Drive, Blackrock, Co. Dublin. They sell at the very reasonable price of £350. Already half of the 1,000 sets printed are sold and no wonder when you consider the value for money. The present edition consists of 7 volumes, 6 of text and one of indices (people and places). Each volume contains approx. 600 pages beautifully printed and bound. Apart from the history of wars, kings, chieftains etc. they often mention such things as plagues, weather conditions, comets and other strange phenomena. In my opinion, no library is complete without a set. I congratulate Eamonn on this great task and wish him every success in his future endeavours.

Four seek men around the cresset,  
With the scrolls of other days;  
Four unwearied scribes who treasure  
Every word and every line.  
Not for fame or not for fortune,  
Do these eager penmen dream.

Oh! that we who now inherit  
All their trust, with half their toil,  
Were but fit to trace their footsteps  
Through the Annals of the Isle;  
Oh! that the bright Angel, Duty,  
Guardian of our tasks might be,  
Teach us as she taught our Masters,  
In that Abbey by the sea,  
Faithful, grateful, just to be!  
-(T.D. McGee).

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### Red Hugh's first Escape.

From the Annal of the Four masters, winter 1590. 400 years ago.

"Hugh Roe O'Donnell had now been in captivity in Dublin for the space of three years and three months. It was a cause for great distress of mind to him to be thus imprisoned; yet it was not for his own sake that he grieved, but for the sake of his country, his land, his friends, and kinsmen, who were in bondage throughout Ireland. He was constantly revolving in his mind the manner in which he might make his escape. This was not an easy matter for him, for he was confined in a closely-secured apartment every night in the castle until sunrise next day. This castle was surrounded by a wide and very deep ditch, full of water, across which was a wooden bridge, directly opposite the door of the fortress; and within and without the door were stationed a stern party of Englishmen, closely guarding it, so that none might pass in or out without examination. There is, however, no guard whose vigilance may not some time or other be baffled. At the very end of winter, as Hugh and a party of his companions were together, in the beginning of the night, they took with them a very long rope to a window which was near them, and by means of the rope they let themselves down, and alighted upon the bridge that was outside the door of the fortress. There was a thick iron chain fastened to this door, by which one

closed it when required; through this chain they drove a strong handful of a piece of timber, and thus fastened the door on the outside, so that they could not be immediately pursued from the fortress. There was a youth of Hugh's faithful people outside awaiting their escape, and he met them on coming out, with two well-tempered swords concealed under his garments; these he gave into the hands of Hugh, who presented one of them to a certain renowned warrior of Leinster, Art Kavanagh by name, who was a champion in battle, and a commander in conflict.

As for the guards, they did not perceive the escape for some time; but when they took notice of it they advanced immediately to the door of the castle, for they thought that they should instantly catch them. Upon coming to the gate, they could not open it; whereupon they called over to them those who happened to be in the houses on the other side of the street, opposite the door of the castle. When these came at the call, and took the piece of timber out of the chain, and threw open the door for the people in the castle, who then set out, with a great number of the citizens, in pursuit of the youths who had escaped from them; but this was fruitless, for the fugitives had passed beyond the walls of the city before they were missed, for the gates of the regal city had been wide open at the time; and they pursued their way across the face of the mountain which lay before them, namely, Sliabh Ruadh, being afraid to venture at all upon the public road, and never halted in their course until after a fatiguing journey and travelling, until they had crossed the Red mountain aforesaid. When, weary and fatigued, they entered a thick wood which lay in their way, where they remained until morning. They then attempted to depart, for they did not deem it safe to remain in the wood, for fear of being pursued; but Hugh was not able to keep pace with his companions, for his white-skinned thin feet had been pierced by the furze of the mountain, for his shoes had fallen off, their seams having been loosened by the wet, which they did not till then receive. It was great grief to his companions that they could not bring him any further; and so they bade him farewell, and left him their blessing.

He sent his servant to a certain gentleman of the noble tribes of the province of Leinster, who lived in a castle in the neighbourhood, to know whether he could afford them shelter or protection. His name was Felia O'Toole, and he was previously a friend to Hugh, as he thought, for he had gone to visit him on one occasion in his prison in Dublin, when they formed a mutual friendship with each other. The messenger proceeded to the place where Felia was, and stated to him the embassy on which he came. Felia was glad at his arrival, and promised that he would do all the good he could for Hugh; but his friends and kindred did not allow him to conceal him, for fear of the English government. These learned that he was in the wood, as we have said, and they went in search of him, and dispersed with their troops to track him. When it was clear to Felia that Hugh would be discovered, he and his kinsmen resolved to seize upon him themselves, and bring him back to the Council in the city. This was accordingly done. When Hugh arrived in Dublin, the Council were rejoiced at his return to them; for they made nothing or light of all the other prisoners and hostages that had escaped from them. He was again put into the same prison, and iron fetters were put upon him as tightly as possible; and they watched and guarded him as well as they could. His escape, thus attempted, and his recapture, became known throughout the land of Ireland, at which tidings a great gloom came over the Irish people."

Hugh O'Donnell of Larkfield.

The Plantation of Ulster and the Cromwellian Settlement marked the dispersal of the surviving O'Donnells of Tyrconnell. Rory of Lifford, grandson of Niall Garbh O'Donnell who was committed to the Tower of London in 1609, for "complicity in O'Dogherty's rebellion" of the previous year, and who died in 1621, removed to Mayo with a large train of followers sometime prior to 1664. A kinsman of his, Connell O'Donnell who was married to Rory's daughter was more tenacious and succeeded in retaining a foothold in the home territory after the exodus to Connaught. The family were still reasonably affluent. Connell is recorded as Titulado of the district of Bellkeegan, Altepast, Aghevay, Letterbricke, Ballibonibany and Bellibonitem, all in the civil parish of Stranorlane (Stranorlar) in the 1659 Census. His son, Hugh, married Flora Hamilton, daughter of John Hammilton of Killanure, Convoy, Co. Donegal, by whom he had three children. Following her death in 1716 he married Margaret, daughter of Hugh Montgomery, of Derrygonnelly, Co. Fermanagh, who presented him with a second family.

John O'Donovan tells us that Hugh left Donegal for Mullaghbane near the head of Lough Macnean, Co. Fermanagh, after the collapse of the Jacobite cause, and shortly afterwards settled at Larkfield, Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim. The dates of the second marriage and the taking up of his residence at both Mullaghbane and Larkfield are unknown. It should be remembered that the O'Donnells were no longer freeholders. Non-renewal of leases could have precipitated his move to Fermanagh. The fact that his second wife was from there suggests that he was already living at Mullaghbane much longer than recorded by O'Donovan. All would appear to have been going well until a Protestant 'discoverer', one Rowland Kane of Desertmartin, Co. Derry, availing of the penal enactment of 1709, filed a Bill of Discovery against him in the Court of Exchequer. The allegation was that Hugh, being a Catholic, had contravened the Law of obtaining a lease in excess of 31 years. The lease had been taken from John Cole of Florencecourt, Co. Fermanagh. It only needed the proving of the Bill for the property to pass to the 'discoverer.' Kane was so sure of his ground that

before the result of the case was known he disposed of his interest in the claim to Hugh Montgomery of Derrygonnelly (Margaret's father) with the stipulation that the prosecution he initiated should be pursued. The Court's verdict has not been traced. Undoubtedly it was in the plaintiff's favour. The Kane/Montgomery deed is dated 27th April, 1742. From this it will be seen that Hugh O'Donnell's interest in the Fermanagh lands continued for more than 50 years after the Williamite victory of 1690.

There were only two Catholic families in the townland of Mullaghbane in 1957. Neither had any knowledge or tradition of the O'Donnell sojourn in the place.

Upon coming to Larkfield the O'Donnells became tenants on the Lane/Fox estate.

Hugh O'Donnell had a just pride in his name and race. He was a friend and patron of Seamus Maguidhir, an t-Athair Pdraig O Coirnin and Fergal (or Pdraig) Og Mac a Bhaird. The last two addressed eulogistic poems to him. He engaged Maguidhir, a noted scribe, to salvage the surviving family poems. Seamus applied himself diligently to the task, searching through old Irish manuscripts and creating an anthology now known as "Duanaire Ui Dhonnaill" or "The Poem Book of the O'Donnells." The bulk of the work was completed towards the end of May 1727 - a few additions being made at a later date.

There are 113 poems in all. Of these 97 are addressed to various members of the O'Donnell family. One laments the death of Flora Hamilton in 1716. Another mourns the passing of Rory of Lifford's son, Col. Manus O'Donnell, of Newport, Co. Mayo, that occurred in 1736.

The manuscript is written in a clear hand on ruled paper. The scribe provides a preface and has set out Hugh's pedigree going back through seven generations to Manus O Domhmaill, 21st Chieftain (1537-63). The whole comprises an octavo volume, roughly bound in calf. Maguidhir has left it on record that he was handsomely rewarded for his labours.

It is not known when, or how, this priceless work passed out of the O'Donnell family. It was in the possession of Rev. Dr. Paul O'Brien, Professor of Irish at St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, who loaned it to Edward O'Reilly, another noted scholar. Eugene O Curry had access to it in 1857

and appended some notes to the text. It figured as item No. 1438 in the Todd Sale Catalogue of 1869 and found its way into the collection of Sir Thomas Phillipps, Bart. The National Library of Ireland had the good fortune to acquire it by purchase from the Phillipps Library, Cheltenham, in 1930/1.

Hugh, now resident in Larkfield, was looked upon as a person of status and learning. He was known locally as "Earl O'Donnell," an appellation that pleased him and which he strove jealously to maintain. The term had been applied by poets to his father's older brother and himself. Hugh was obsessed with being a lineal descendant of the Earl of Tyrconnell. Why he persisted in this absurdity, when it was clear from Maguidhir's pedigree in an "Duanaire" that his ancestor was An Calbhach (Chief 1563-6), the Earl's uncle and not the Earl himself, is difficult to understand.

Toirdealbhach O Cearbhallain, the famous harper, was a frequent visitor at Larkfield. Hugh was offended when he learned that "The Hawk of Ballyshannon," composed by Toirdealbhach, referred to a member of the Newport Branch and not to himself "as lineal descendant of the Earl of Tyrconnell." In consequence "the accustomed hospitalities of Larkfield were interdicted to the bard" until an apology was made.

This egoism could have stemmed from the family possessing the actual Patent of 1603/4 creating Rory O'Donnell Earl of Tyrconnell. While the Earldom had been forfeited by attainder the Patent relating to it most likely survived among the Larkfield O'Donnells. It is still in existence.

Richard Pococke, Protestant Archbishop of Dublin, was much impressed by Hugh O'Donnell, whom he met at dinner at Col. Foliot's house in Ballyshannon on 26 July, 1752. The cleric records in his Journal: "they say (he) is the head of that (O'Donnell) family descended from the Earl of Tyrconnell and that he has only leases, yet he is the head of the Roman Catholics in this country, and has a great interest, is a sensible man and well vested in the Irish history, both written and traditional."

The Larkfield man's wide knowledge was appreciated by Charles O'Connor of Belangare when he sought his attestation of the genealogy of Count John O'Rourke that he had compiled. Hugh was pleased to oblige, dating his reply from

Larkfield on 18th November, 1754, and signing it "O'DONNELL".

Ten days later he was dead.

The Franciscans were brought to Donegal by Nuala O'Brien, wife of Hugh Roe O'Donnell (Chief 1461-1505). Her sister, Margaret, invited the monks from there to Creevelea Abbey, Dromahair, Co. Leitrim. Maire, sister of Red Hugh (Chief 1592-1602), and wife of Sir Teige O'Rourke, presented a beautiful chalice to the new foundation for the good of her husband's soul. It is now in the Catholic Church, Butlerstown, Co. Cavan.

With this long and close association with the Franciscan Order it was natural that the O'Donnells should seek Creevelea, rather than Cloonlougher cemetery, in the parish of Kilargue, right beside Larkfield, as their place of interment. Indeed, their position would have entitled them to the greatest place of honour within the hallowed walls, but, as it was many years before the occasion arose, and as all the internal allocations had been taken up, they had to be content with an outside plot in the angle between the west side of the south transept and the nave. It was here that Hugh was laid to rest. A large elevated, horizontal slab, bearing the O'Donnell Arms, Supporters, Coronet and Motto "In Hoc Signo Vincas," with the inscription:

Prey for the soul of  
O'Donnell Hugh Who De  
parted this life Novr. ye 28th  
1754 aged 63 yrs.

marks his grave. It is known locally as "the Earl's Tombstone."

Hugh's first wife, Flora Hamilton, died 12 November 1716. His second lady, Margaret Montgomery, lived to be 110 years, dying in 1795.

Flora's children were: Connell (Karl), John and Susanna. Her brother, General Count Hamilton, of the Imperial Service, invited his two nephews to Vienna and placed them in the army of Austria, where distinguished careers awaited them. Susanna married Col. Edward Purcell who was serving in Austria.

Karl became Colonel Proprietor of his own regiment, to which he gave his name, in 1756. He rose to the rank of General, became Inspector-General of Cavalry, a Privy Councillor and Governor of Transylvania. He was conferred with the Grand Cross of the Military Order of Marie Therese for his bravery at the



Connal or Karl (122).

Battle of Torgau, 1761. He fought in eighteen battles, was wounded a number of times and died, unmarried, in Vienna on 26th March, 1771, at the early age of 56 years.

John commenced his service in 1736, to finally become a Lieutenant-General. He too saw much active service and won the small Cross of the Military Order of Marie Therese at the Battle of Maxen in 1759. He later became Governor of the Elizabeth Theresian Institute, Vienna, dying in that city on 12th March, 1784, aged 72 years. His only son, Hugh, a Major, was killed in action at the Battle of Neerwinden in 1793. He was unmarried.

Karl and John were subsequently joined by their step-brother, also John, and relatives from both Newport and Castlebar, until eventually nine Irish-born O'Donnells held commissions in the Austrian Service.

One was required to prove one's sixteen quarterings before being admitted to the Austrian Court. This presented a problem to the O'Donnells owing to the absence of native records. The difficulty was overcome by producing Rory O'Donnell, Earl of Tyrconnell's Patent of 1603/4. It was accepted as proof of nobility and they were given the courtesy title of

"Count." Several years were to pass before they were elevated to the Imperial Peerage. It came as a reward to Col. Maximilian Count O'Donell who, as aide-de-camp to the Emperor, saved His Majesty from assassination in 1853.

Hugh and Margaret Montgomery's children were: Con of Larkfield (from whom Fr. Hugh O'Donel, O.F.M., the present Chief of the Name is descended); John who joined his step-brothers in Vienna and died there young and unmarried; and two daughters, Grace and Kate that married in Co. Fermanagh.

I visited Creevelea Abbey in April 1968 and was both shocked and grieved to find that masonry supporting the "Earl's Tombstone" had crumbled, leaving the slab lop-sided. Furthermore, the adjoining upright marble monument commemorating later O'Donnells had fallen from its limestone base and lies prone. Its inscription cannot now be read. A small cross that adorned the top is broken off and missing.

A headstone to Moneyduff O'Donnells is next to the Larkfield plot. The families are not related.

Rupert S. O Cochlain (R.I.P.).

.....  
 Editor's note - the above article with a complete list of sources was first published in the Donegal Annual of 1985.

As most of the persons mentioned above have also been mentioned in past issues of this Newsletter I give here their reference numbers:

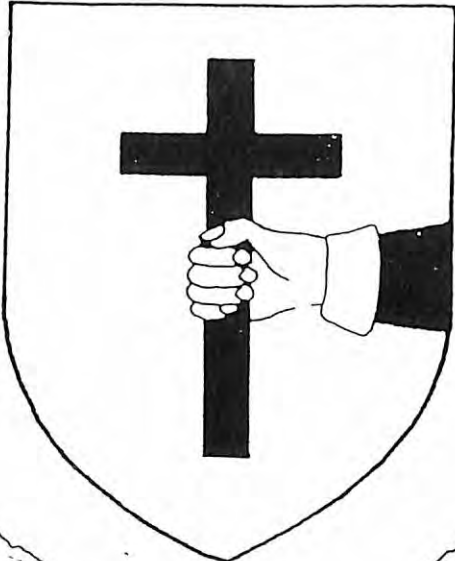
Rory of Lifford (22); Nial Garbh (16); Connell (24) = Grace (26a); Hugh of Larkfield (27); Hugh's first family, Connal (122), John (122a) and Susanna (122b); their step-brother was John (30a); John (122a) had a son Hugh (123); Col. Maxmilian (59); Hugh's (27) second family, Conn (30), John (30a), Grace (30b) and Kate (30c).

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# Ó Domhnaill Abú



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Newsletter No. 16*

*Summer 1991*



Daniel and Margo O'Donnell.

'O'DONNELL ABU', R.T.E.'s Interval Signal.

From a programme presented by Paddy Clarke on RTE Radio 1.

In 1936 Radio Eireann, the Irish broadcasting service, then ten years old, realised the need for an 'interval signal'. "A cheerful tune without being too boisterous," was what they had in mind. It would be used during breaks in studio output, planned or otherwise as well as before and after regular broadcasting hours. This would help people to tune in their sets before broadcast; allow radio retailers to demonstrate their ware; facilitate service engineers in tuning and repair work; and prevent others from using that frequency.

In January a competition was held to select a tune. For a number of days, specially arranged tunes were played on harp over the 'air'. Listeners were asked to select the tune they preferred and to indicate their choice by letter. A total of 967 letters were received and the march, 'O'Donnell Abu', with 260 votes, was an easy winner. Others were - Dawning of the Day - 151, The Blackbird - 88, My Lagan Love - 58, Brian Boru's March - 52 etc. etc.

The problem of playing a continuous tune, with minimal attention to the playing device, had been solved in advance. Long playing records or tape recordings were not available at that time and use of 78 rpm. records was ruled out. The only means of providing this continuously available signal was to commission an electrically driven musical box with the tune programmed on its cylinder. The contract to manufacture and supply this machine went to the George Neuman firm in Berlin and the musical score of 'O'Donnell Abu' was written out and sent to the manufacturer. In the summer of 1936 the completed 'O'Donnell Abu' interval signal musical box arrived in the Henry St. Studios in Dublin. It was connected up and made ready for its inaugural playing before a group of very senior officials of the broadcasting service. To everyone's consternation the last two notes of the 23 notes did not play. A hurried inspection revealed that these two notes had not been inserted in the machine. The whole bulky mechanism was recreated and returned to the firm in Berlin. The German firm claimed that the final two notes had not been indicated on the score sent to them. The two notes, however, were added by Neuman's -

they can still be seen clearly as being of slightly different material and mounting to the other 21 notes. Later in 1936 the machine arrived back in Dublin and was immediately put into service.

During its twenty years of service the 'O'Donnell Abu' signal machine was in continuous use and it must hold the record for having logged the greatest number of hours of broadcasting for any such machine. In 1956 it was replaced by a tape recording of the tune, played on harp and celeste and arranged by Kevin Roche, Radio Eireann Music Dept.

The tape machine used to play this recording was itself a very special item. The entire quarter inch tape was wrapped around a drum in a slightly spiral fashion. In operation, the drum and tape rotated past the playing head of the machine - the head moved vertically in synchronism with the tape and dropped back to its starting position on completion of one playing. The process was continuous and 'O'Donnell Abu' was, as with the earlier machine, always available for scheduled or emergency use. This huge tape machine was also made in Germany, by the Telefunken Co. It was more than ten times larger and heavier than the earlier machine. It operated continuously in the Radio Eireann Studios in Henry St., Dublin until the new Radio Centre opened in Donnybrook in 1973.

The 1956 recording of 'O'Donnell Abu' is now played on a cartridge tape every morning at 6.28.05 am. on RTE Radio 1 prior to the commencement of programmes.

.....  
Note: The Neuman machine was operated by a mains synchronous motor which drove the cylinder drum of the musical box. The electric motor was not self-starting and it was necessary to turn, clockwise, a saucer-size wheel to the approximate running speed, before switching on the electric supply. The motor would then 'pick up' and operate the machine. However, it was possible to, accidentally (or otherwise) rotate the starting wheel anti-clockwise - which would cause the tune to play backwards, and this is believed to have happened on a few occasions.

The 1936 Neuman and 1956 Telefunken 'O'Donnell Abu' interval signal machines are preserved in RTE thanks to Paddy Clarke, Public Affairs Dept. RTE, whose material I have used here with his kind permission. Indeed, he tells me he rescued the 1936 machine from a skip where it was destined for the rubbish dump and had it restored to playing condition. I am also grateful to Paddy for the photo and permission to publish it.

V. O'Donnell.



LEFT. Radio Eireann 'interval signal' musical box manufactured by Georg Neuman and Co. Berlin in 1936 and continued in use until 1956. The wheel on front was used to achieve synchronous speed at switch-on.

RIGHT. Second generation 'interval signal' tape machine used in Radio Eireann from 1956 - 1973, made by Telefunken. The drum on which the tape was wound rotated, and the playing head rose vertically and dropped back continuously.

#### NEWS

At the Annual General Meeting of the O'Donnell Clan Association held in Jackson's Hotel, Ballybofey on the 11th March the following officers were elected: Vincent O'Donnell, Inver - chairman; Danny O'Donnell, Annagry - vice chairman; Ben O'Donnell, Lifford - secretary; Kathleen O'Donnell, Termon - treasurer; Chairman and secretary to act as P.R.O.'s.

It was quite a lively meeting with two major topics being discussed. First - the setting up of a Clan Centre. Second - the 1992 Clan Gathering. Indeed most of the night was taken up with the latter as the committee felt it was important to have dates and other details available as early as possible. This would enable us to have brochures made and circulated in good time giving everyone interested an opportunity to plan their trips.

The plans, at the moment, are as follows: official opening and enrollment will take place on Friday 12th June 1992 (probably in Donegal Town), followed by a talk on some aspect of O'Donnell history with photographic and genealogical displays etc. Saturday will consist of a bus tour to O'Donnell historic places in the County (possibly not the same as in '89) with a night's Irish entertainment to end the day. Sunday will be spent at Doon Rock (same as in '89). And the weekend will end with a farewell banquet. It is also hoped to have other O'Donnell related

activities throughout the County before and after the official weekend but they will be organised and run by local committees in consultation with the central committee.

This O'Donnell Clan Gathering aims at commemorating the 400th anniversary of Red Hugh's escape and subsequent inauguration. As this is the first time that these events could properly and freely be remembered (on the other anniversaries this part of our country was under foreign power) I think everyone with O'Donnell blood should make an effort to be present.

The Rally of the Clans of Ireland originally planned to take place on the Hill of Tara now seems to be replaced by four provincial rallies. This, I believe, is the Tourist Board's idea of spreading business around. Furthermore, I hear they will take place earlier than ours, April or May. The Ulster event is planned for Eamhain Mhacha (outside Armagh) seat of the Kings of Ulster in the old days.

Work has begun on the O'Donnell Castle, Donegal Town. The Board of Public Works intend to re-roof the main tower, the portion built by the O'Donnells. This is to protect the interior and make it more suitable as a guide centre. Therefore, it will be closed to the public for the next year but, hopefully, re-opened for June '92.

The Last Will of Red Hugh O'Donnell.

When, almost a century ago, Fr. Denis Murphy, S.J., was preparing his edition of O Cleirigh's 'Life of Aodh Rua', he discovered a copy of part of Red Hugh's will in the archives of Simancas. We are indebted to Fr. John J. Silke for locating the entire will in the Archive of Valladolid University. This document was drawn up, shortly before Red Hugh's death, by the notary Domingo de Albiz, Fr. Florence Conry, O.F.M. (1560 - 1629) acting as translator and interpreter.

Here is an English translation prepared by Fr. Silke and first published by him in *Studia Hibernica*, no. 24 (1984-8)

Testamento del Conde Adonel yrlandes

Septiembre 1602

Yn Dei nomine, amen. Sepan quantos esta carta de testamento ultima y por esta mera voluntad vieren, como yo el Conde Adonell de Yrlanda.....

In the name of God, Amen. Let these who shall see this last will and testament know that I, Lord O'Donnell of Ireland, being in bed, infirm in body of that illness which the Lord God has visited upon me, but sound in mind, with what judgment He was pleased to endow me, fearful of death, as is natural to my creaturely condition, and believing as a faithful and Catholic Christian in all that the holy mother Church of Rome holds and believes, do testify - and I know that I make and ordain this my testament to the praise and honour of God our Lord and of the glorious Virgin Mary His mother, whom I take and hold for my lady and advocate in all my acts and whom I beg and supplicate to pray for my soul, which I commend to her - and I make my said testament in the following manner:

Firstly, I offer my soul to my God and Lord Jesus Christ, Who bought and redeemed it with His precious and blessed blood, that He too be pleased to pardon me and raise me to His holy glory at His good pleasure, Amen.

Next, I commend my body to the clay of which it was formed, and I wish and order that it be interred in the church of the monastery of the Lord Saint Francis in Valladolid (erased: 'particular spot which the King our Lord shall appoint. And may his will be done in everyting').

Item, I now on the point of death, without hope of returning to the world, say and declare that I take God for witness that I do not say anything here contrary to the truth. I appoint and name my brother Don Rury O'Donnell as my heir to all my estates, lands, lordships, and vassals, whichsoever may be, to inherit, hold and enjoy them, now and in perpetuity, in manner and form according to law: such is my will.

Item, I entrust the said Don Rury my brother and Don Cathbharr my youngest brother jointly, with all my inheritance, to His Majesty's protection and grace.

Item, I declare that I take God for witness that the king our lord did not, and as I think will not, have in Ireland so loyal and faithful a servant as I, or one who would so often adventure his person in His Majesty's service. Next, I declare that the province of Connacht, which lies within my borders, was at the beginning of this war subject to the queen. I then laid it waste and conquered it, without help from anyone in the said province, except for some persons expelled from their territories in the said province, whom I took into my pay. It is unnecessary to detail here the other services which I rendered His Majesty in every part of Ireland.

Item, I declare that, as His Majesty knows, peace treaties were agreed between the Irish and the queen of England. But I undid them all, in order to serve God and His Majesty and to make me and my heirs his vassals.

Item, I declare that in case Lord O'Neill - as I think and consider he will not do - should wish to violate the treaties and agreements determined and made between Lord O'Neill and me and my heirs, I charge His Majesty to maintain my brother in the king's service and in my brother's rights.

Item, I say and declare that among the heads of treaties there is one which is that all the help, aid, or grace that His Majesty may give or send to Lord O'Neill and me, should be divided in two equal parts, and that the same should hold among our heirs. The stipulation was that one had no pre-eminence over the other and that in walking or travelling together whichever was the elder should be on the right

hand. I humbly beseech His Majesty to support my brother in conformity with the said treaty and (so as to keep him the more beholden) to give him some commission and if it seems good to His Majesty to pay him some salary.

Item, I declare and say that Don Redmond de Burgo, baron of Leitrim, who came here in my company, is a gentleman of note and has performed eminent services. Knowing his bravery and his ability to render important services to the king, I commend him to His Majesty, who may take it that he is very worthy of his patronage and is utterly reliable.

Also I commend my confessor, Father Florence Conry, to the king, begging him to provide him with some Irish bishopric, even should the Father be unwilling to undertake this burden. This will redound to the service of God and of His Majesty and will be for the common good of Ireland, since he is so holy a man and so very greatly experienced in Irish affairs. I humbly charge His Majesty to give order to consult him on Irish matters. And I say that His Majesty will be very well served to send the said Father as soon as possible to Ireland. He is highly regarded by all those lords [i.e. of the Confederacy], who value his counsel very much and who will pluck up courage at his arrival there.

I also recommend Matthew Tully, my secretary, to His Majesty's bounty. He has been a very loyal servant to me, hard-working and diligent. Knowing that my prayers must carry great weight with His Majesty, I am confident that his case for recompense will be considered. However handsome the award, he has earned it in full. I vouch for the loyalty of his service to His Majesty, his correct behaviour, and his knowledge of and expert skill in Irish affairs. I therefore beg His Majesty to provide that he be consulted in Irish business, and I assure His Majesty that he will not be deceived. Meanwhile I beg His Majesty to send money and some troops to Ireland to Lord O'Neill and to my brother before the notice of my death arrives.

Otherwise they will be lost, for as soon as that news arrives there they will all hasten to make peace with the English. For they had pinned all their hopes on the aid I was to bring them, and they would be reanimated if letters from the king, together with the money, were to anticipate word of my death. I also declare that there is with me a boy called Don Gelasio, my nephew; and I beg His Majesty to support him and - until they find embarkation to take them to my brother - my gentlemen and servants at Corunna. I also make bold to charge His Majesty to pay what little debt I owe in Spain: a hundred ducats to General Pedro de Zubiaur, another hundred to an Irish merchant named Nicholas Lynch, who is in the city of Corunna, and eighty ducats to Edward Eustace, an Irish gentleman also in Corunna.

Again I beg and implore His Majesty for alms (seeing I have not a real), so that some masses may be said for my soul. And I beg His Majesty that, after God our Lord has taken me from this world to the next, he give order to bury me in the said monastery of the Lord Saint Francis in the city of Valladolid with interment in keeping with the quality of my person, and with the masses ordered by His Majesty. I beg him, as so Christian and good a king and lord, to do so; and in his royal hands I leave whatever has to be done in this. And I revoke and cancel and give for nothing whatever will or wills I have before this made in writing or orally, and I desire that they be not valid or have faith in legal decision or out of it, except this which at present I do and ordain. I wish that it be carried out and be valid in legal decision and outside of it, and if it is not valid for my testament that it be valid for my codicil, and if it is not valid for my codicil that it be valid for my last will and by this mere will or in that way and form which may have legal standing. In testimony of which I make this said testament before Diego de Albiz, notary of the king, and the witnesses subscribing below, in the town of Simancas, on the seventh day of the month of September, in the year one thousand six hundred and two, there being present as witnesses Doctor John Ninan, Irishman, physician, and Matthew Tully and Maurice Ultach and Father Maurice Ultach and Francisco de Aguilar, all Irishmen, who know the language of Ireland and who declare themselves to be natives of Ireland, being present in the said town, and who swore in legal form in the hands of me, the present notary, in accordance with law, that they know Lord O'Donnell and that he is the same who is present and is of the same name written here. And the same lord signed his name in this register. And since I, the said notary, neither know nor understand the Irish language, which is that which the said testator speaks, for the making of this said testament Father Florence Conry translated the said language into Castilian. Father Conry explained to the said testator everything contained in the said testament and also wrote and composed the

translation. And the said witnesses who also know the said language, obliged by the same oath, declared that the said interpreter translated and repeated all that the said testator uttered, which is the same which is contained in this said testament. As witnesses also there were Juan de Albiz, Bachelor, and Juan Fernandez de Camara, servants of His Majesty, and Pedro de Monsalvo, present in the said town, who saw the said testator sign; and also the said interpreter signed; and the said testator, although he began to sign, did not, because of the gravity of his illness, sign, because he could not. (stet: the particular spot which the king our lord shall appoint. And may his will be done in everything.)

(Signatures:) Aodh O

I, F. Florencio Conrio

Tax: 4 reals

Before me,  
Domingo de Albiz (Rubrica)

Margo and Daniel

Annette O'Donnell.

Margo and Daniel O'Donnell, the famous sister and brother singers, from Kincaslugh, Co. Donegal have carved their names in the world of show-business not just in Ireland but also in England and the U.S.A.

Margo, who in 1989 celebrated 25 years in the business, began her singing career while still at school. Her style of Country and Irish singing soon led her on the road to success. Over the years she has received many gold and silver disks for the sales of her records and has won many awards as the Queen of Country and Irish music. Now, based in Galway, she loves to return to her native county to perform for her many fans and friends and always takes time to talk to everyone.

Daniel began his career in Margo's band but soon left to form his own group. He still tells about the struggle he had to save the £600 required to make his first record - 'My Donegal Shore'. The popularity of this record brought him much success. Soon Ritz Records signed

him on for a recording contract and Daniel was on his way to fame. Very soon Daniel's record sales topped the magical one million mark, and 'sold out' signs became common at his concerts. Like Margo, he has received many awards including 'Entertainer of the Year' in 1989 and the prestigious 'Donegal Person of the Year' in 1990.

If you are fortunate enough to get to one of their shows you are sure of a wonderful night's entertainment. And do say 'Hello' and tell them you are an 'O'Donnell'. They are two wonderful people who have not been affected by success or the world of show-business, they have not forgotten their 'roots', family, friends or fans and they are never too busy to stay around to sign autographs and talk to young and old alike.

Daniel, at present, is on a publicity tour of the U.S. where he will perform in Carnegie Hall, N.Y. on May 26th. I wish them continued success and long may they both continue to entertain us.

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- D140 Rory O'Donnell, Meenaneary, Carrick, Co. Donegal.

Many subscribers appear to be deeply engaged in tracing their 'roots' but most come up against a stone wall somewhere around the 1830's because few records were kept in Ireland up till then. One family, however, has been luckier than most in that their ancestor joined the East India Company where excellent records were kept.

Frank H. O'Donel (D72) of Essex, England, can, without any doubt, trace his pedigree from a Hugh O'Donel (note spelling) whose military record in the 'Officers of the Bengal Army 1758-1837' by Major V.C.P. Hodson reads as follows

"O'Donel, Hugh (1785-1837). Lieut. Colonel, 13th N.I. b. Newport, co. Mayo, 2 July 1785. Cadet 1803. Arrived in India 29 Apr. 1805. Ensign 7 Apr. 1805. Lieut. 14 Apr. 1805. Capt. 15 Aug. 1820. Major 1 Apr. 1830. Lt. Col. 13 Aug. 1835. d. Nasirabad, Rajputana, 27 Sept. 1837.

bapt. 8 July 1785. Son of Francis O'Donel, of Fahey Lodge, Kilcommon, co. Mayo, and Catherine his wife. m. Dinajpur, Bengal, 1 Dec. 1826, Miss Jane Finch. (She died 8 Feb. 1892, aged 85.)

Services: Posted Lieut. to 7th N.I. in 1806. With Rangarh Bn. 1811-13; comdd. the unsuccessful attack on Nowagarh 27 Feb. 1812, when his conduct was reported as having been "highly creditable." Adj. 2/7th N.I. 25 June 1813 till 27 Sept. 1820. Third Mahratta War 1817-19. Transfd. to 13th N.I. (late 1/7th) May 1824. Actg. Bde. Major to Assam force 8 Aug. 1826. d.d. 49th N.I. 14 Aug 1832 till Oct. 1833. Posted Lt. Col. to 13th N.I. 30 Jan. 1836."

Who was this Hugh? His parents are given as Francis and Catherine O'Donel of Fahey Lodge, Kilcommon, Co. Mayo, and the year of his arrival in India as 1805.

Could it be that he was Hugh (105) in the Newport genealogical chart that appeared in 'O Domhnaill Abu' No. 3? While writing about the Newport Branch in that newsletter I did not comment on this Hugh as little is known of him except that he joined the East India Company, and this information comes from O'Donovan's Appendix to the Annals of the Four Masters, p. 2396.

Other factors supporting this theory: 1. Spelling of surname - on page 2392 AFM, O'Donovan comments on the unusual form used by the Newport Branch i.e. 'O'Donel', this has been the form used

by Frank Hugh's ancestors down to the present generation.

2. In both cases the father's name is Francis. Indeed it is interesting to note the names of Hugh of Bengal's sons, i.e. James Hugh, Francis Hugh, Neil, Connel, and to compare them to those of Hugh of Newport's uncles, i.e. Hugh, Neil, John and Connel.

3. Although, I have seen no date given for Hugh of Newport's departure, it is quite likely to have been in the early years of the 19th. century.

Frank Hugh of Essex would be grateful if anyone could help establish the connection. Does anyone know the name of Francis (32b)'s wife? Does anyone know about Fahey Lodge, Kilcommon, Co. Mayo? Does anyone know the exact date of Hugh of Newport's departure, or any other information that might help?

Inscription on the Tomb of Lieut. Col. Hugh O'Donel in Nasirabad, Rajasthan, India.

Sacred to the memory of Lieut. Col. Hugh O'Donel

Comg. 13th Regt N.I.

Died 27th. Sept. 1837 aged 49 years. This monument is erected by his bereaved and disconsolate widow and a few of his most intimate friends as a tribute of affection and regard founded upon a knowledge of his excellent qualities as a husband and a friend.



## Domhnall Mor O'Donnell

The first mention of Domhnall in the Annals of the Four Masters is in the year 1208 when we find him as Lord of Tyrconnell defending Inishowen from an O'Neill attack. After much fighting in which 'countless numbers on both sides' were slain, the Tyrconnell men 'were at length routed by dint of fighting.'

Shortly, after Domhnall retaliated and 'seized upon the spoils of the country.' A peace was then 'concluded between O'Neill and O'Donnell who entered into an alliance to assist each other against such of the English or Irish as should oppose them.'

And opposed they were in 1210 when the English 'came to Cael-uisce' (on the Erne). The combined forces of O'Neill and O'Donnell 'marched thither and slew the English' and distributed their 'goods and property among their troops.'

In 1213 Domhnall's steward went to Connaught to collect O'Donnell's tribute. 'He first went to Carbury of Drumcliff, where, with his attendants, he visited the house of the poet Murray O'Daly of Lissadil; and, being a plebian representative of a hero, he began to wrangle with the poet very much (although his lord had given him no instruction to do so). The poet being enraged at his conduct, seized a very sharp axe, and dealt him a blow which killed him on the spot, and then, to avoid O'Donnell he fled to Clanrickard.'

O'Donnell, on learning the fate of his steward, gathered his troops and went in pursuit, and 'he proceeded to plunder and burn the country, until at last MacWilliam submitted to him, having previously sent Murray to seek for refuge in Thomond.'

But O'Donnell continued his pursuit and 'proceeded to plunder and ravage that country also.' By now the poet had fled to Limerick. 'O'Donnell followed him to the gate of Limerick, and, pitching his camp there laid seige to the town; upon which the people of Limerick, at O'Donnell's command, expelled Murray, who found no asylum anywhere, but was sent from hand to hand, until he arrived in Dublin.'

Domhnall Mor now returned home where he mustered another army and marched to Dublin where he 'compelled the people of Dublin to banish Murray into Scotland; and here he remained until he composed three poems in praise of O'Donnell,

imploring peace and forgiveness from him.' Murray's panegyrics had their effect. Domhnall Mor pardoned him and 'gave him lands and possessions, as was pleasing to him.' Such was the power of poets in those days.

In 1219 Domhnall led an army into north east Connaught where he 'obtained hostages and submission from O'Rourke and O'Reilly and from all the race of Aedh Finn. He afterwards passed through Fermanagh and destroyed everyplace through which he passed, both lay and ecclesiastical property, wherein there was any opposition to him.'

In 1223 Domhnall again raided Connaught and 'plundered and burned every territory which he entered, until he had received their hostages and submissions.'

He tried to repeat the performance in 1230 and although he destroyed a great part of the province he didn't receive hostages.

1231 saw Domhnall, assisted by Aengus Mac Gilla-Finnen, raiding on Lough Erne where he used boats to get to Eo-inis and take all the wealth, treasures and jewels of the island including the wife of the chieftain - Cathal O'Reilly.

Three years later, in 1234 the same Aengus Mac Gilla-Finnen, Lord of Lough Erne, turned against O'Donnell and went into Tyrconnell upon a predatory incursion but O'Donnell overtook him and killed him.

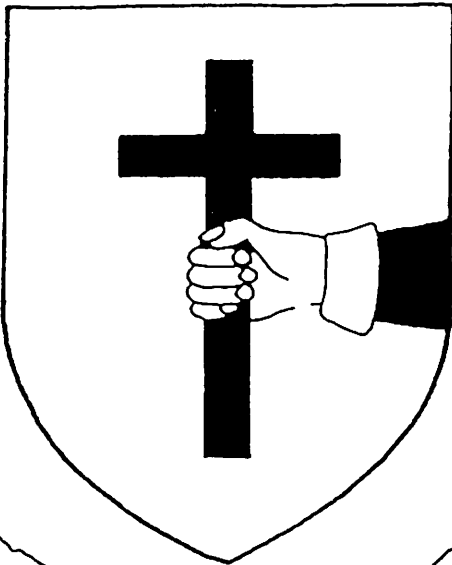
In 1239 Lasarina (an O'Connor), wife of Domhnall Mor, gave a half townland of her marriage dowry, viz., Rosbirn (Co. Sligo) to Clarus Mac Mailin, and the Canons of Trinity Island, in Lough Key, in honour of the Trinity and the Virgin Mary.

1241. 'Domhnall Mor, the son of Ennaghan O'Donnell Lord of Tirconnell, Fermanagh, and Lower Connaught as far as the Curlew Mountains, and of Oriel from the plain northwards, died in the monastic habit, victorious over the world and the devil, and was interred with honour and respect in the Monastery of Assaroe (Ballyshannon), in the harvest time.'

Lasarina, his wife, 'head of the women of Leth-Chuinn, died in 1282.' [Leth-Chuinn was the northern half of Ireland, but elsewhere Lasarina is called 'the greatest woman in Ireland.'] From the A.F.M. V.O'Donnell.

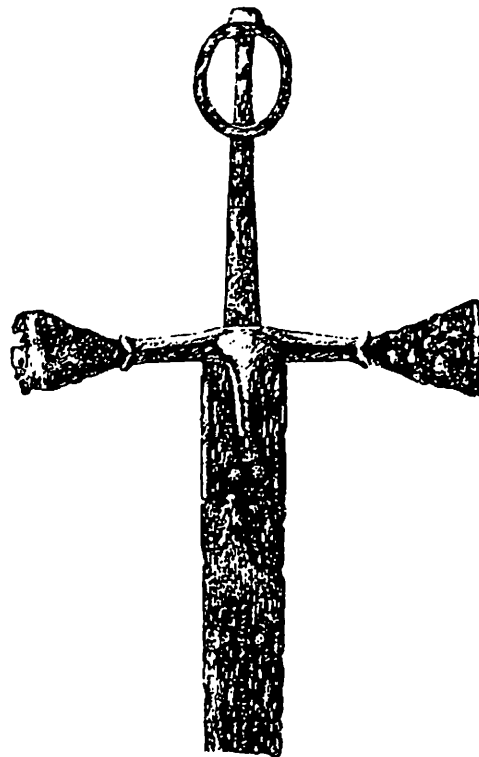


# Ó Domhnaill Abú



*O'Donnell Clan  
Newsletter No. 17*

*Winter 1991*



Sixteenth Century Irish sword, showing open Pommel.

"On the evening of the 16th of August, 1617, two Irish Franciscans were seated in the library of the house which they occupied at Louvain as a temporary domicile for themselves and community, pending the erection of the convent of St. Anthony, the first stone of which had been laid a few months before by Albert and Isabella, joint sovereigns of the Netherlands". They were Fr. Donagh Mooney who had spent years compiling the history of the Irish Franciscans, and Fr. Purcell who had done the latin translation. Their eyes pored "over the pages which Fr. Purcell had just then completed; and no sooner did Mooney's clear grey eye light on the word 'Donegal,' than the tears streamed hot and fast down his channelled cheeks, and then, after a moment's pause, he turned to his companion, and said:- "Dear brother, read for me the history of that monastery I loved so well - aye, and that I love still, though it is now a lonely, rifted ruin.""

Fr. Purcell began:-

"It was the year 1474, when the Franciscans were holding a provincial chapter in the monastery of Ross Rial, that Nuala O'Connor, daughter of O'Connor Faily, one of the most powerful of the Leinster princes, and wife of Hugh Roe O'Donnell, came, accompanied by a brilliant following of noble ladies, and a goodly escort of kerne and galloglass, to present an humble memorial to the assembled fathers. When the latter had duly considered the prayer of the Lady Nuala's memorial, they deputed the provincial to inform her that they could not comply with her request at that moment, but that at some future time they would cheerfully send a colony of Franciscans to the principality of Tirconnell. "What!" replied the princess, sorely pained by the refusal. "I have journeyed a hundred miles to attain the object that has long been dearest to my heart, and will you now venture to deny my prayer? If you do, beware of God's wrath; for I will appeal to his throne, and charge you with the loss of all souls which your reluctance may cause to perish in the territory of Tirconnell!" Earnest and energetic was the lady's pleading; so much so, that she ultimately overcame the hesitation of the friars, some of whom professed themselves ready to

accompany her to Tirconnell. Proud of her success, the Lady Nuala then set out on her journey homewards, followed by a goodly number of Franciscans, who, when they arrived in the barony of Tir-Hugh, immediately commenced building the far-famed monastery at the head of the lovely bay of Donegal."

Thus began the glorious Franciscan association with Tyrconnell and the O'Donnells. There is a difference of opinion regarding the Lady Nuala who extended the invitation to the Friars, indeed two Lady Nualas are mentioned in connection with the coming of the Franciscans to Donegal, Nuala O'Connor and Nuala O'Brien, but whether they were successive wives of one O'Donnell or wives of two successive O'Donnells is not clear. It is known that the first Red Hugh married twice and the Friary was established during his time.

"The wonderful generosity of the O'Donnells assured that the Friary lacked nothing that was necessary at the liturgical functions and for the household needs. In 1497 a band of sixteen friars took over Carrickfergus Friary from the Conventuals "by the authority of the Pope and at the request of Niall O'Neill." Early in the sixteenth century the Friary of Dromahaire was founded by friars from Donegal. These new foundations prove that the Donegal Friary was in flourishing condition. During the chieftaincy of Red Hugh there was great peace and prosperity and the friars lived prayerfully and unmolested".

"When the Pope excommunicated Queen Elizabeth I for her actions against the Catholic Church, the Franciscans in Ireland openly opposed her devilish scheme to stamp out the True Faith in Ireland. Donegal Friary, hitherto at peace, became the object of British suspicion. In 1588 an English army pillaged the Friary, killing the Guardian, Fr. Tadhg O'Boyle and desecrated the holy place. Soon afterwards a band of English soldiers garrisoned the Friary and destroyed the statues and holy pictures".

With the return of Red Hugh (the second Red Hugh) in 1592, the friars once again lived in peace and security but not for long. In 1601, while Red Hugh was campaigning in Connaght, his own cousin and brother-in-law, Niall Garbh,

encouraged by the English, occupied the Friary intending to bombard the castle from there. Niall Garbh was disappointed to find that the friars had already fled taking their valuables with them. On Saturday morning, Sept. 20th 1601 Niall's gunpowder exploded killing many of the soldiers and causing a fire which destroyed most of the building.

The friars, while 'on their keep' among the neighbouring hills, ministered as best they could to the needs of the people. After Rory signed the treaty in 1604 he set about repairing the Friary but the 'Flight of the Earls' in 1607 vanquished all hopes of re-establishing a Franciscan friary at Donegal. The Friary was then allotted as the temporary residence of the Protestant Bishop of Raphoe.

For the next two centuries the Franciscans suffered great persecution in defence of the Faith. Eventually it became impossible for them to live as a community. Some became Parish Priests while two, Bonaventure Daniel Gallagher and Anthony O'Donnell, became Bishops of Raphoe. Finally in 1873 the Donegal Friary, canonically at least, was dissolved.

But in the summer of 1946 the Franciscan Friars returned when they acquired a temporary dwelling in Rossnowlagh. In 1952 the present Friary was opened where the community has thrived since.

The O'Donnell Franciscan associations are many. We are told that the Donegal community was richly endowed by the first Red Hugh who gave them chalices, vestments, furniture and other requirements. (Of all the altar plate belonging to the Friary only one piece, the 'Maguire Chalice', now in Canada is known to have survived to the present.) They had a fishing weir near the Friary which supplied them with fish especially during Lent. The Friary was used for important political and ecclesiastical meetings of the time. It was from here that the friars went to establish Crevelea Abbey where Hugh of Larkfield is buried (see ODA No. 15).

For a century and a quarter the friars lived happily as Tyrconnell, being quite powerful, enjoyed peace and prosperity. Foreign ships called at Killybegs and Donegal to exchange salt, iron, guns, gunpowder, silks, wine etc. for fish, rugs, hides, etc. (O'Donnell was known on the Continent as the 'King of Fishes').

O'Donnell chieftains dressed, according to one report, 'in fine costumes of silk and satin and crimson velvet with aiguillettes of gold'. According to the 'Four Masters' the "doors of Tyrconnell needed to be closed only against the wind", they feared no other enemy.

The Friary was also the burial place for the O'Donnell chieftains and their families. Indeed, as already mentioned in the case of Hugh of Larkfield, O'Donnells of the mainline were buried in Franciscan houses in other countries as well, e.g. Red Hugh in Valladolid, Spain; Rory and Caffir in San Pietro de Montorio, Rome; and Hugh son of Caffir in St. Anthony's, Louvain. The following are buried in Donegal - the first Red Hugh d. 1505; Art O'Donnell, his nephew who died suddenly within the grounds of the Friary 1512; Aodh Dubh, son of Red Hugh, who died in the Friary 1537; Rory, grandson of Red Hugh, Franciscan Bishop of Derry, died 1550; Manus O'Donnell, chieftain and grandson of Red Hugh, d. 1563 in his castle at Lifford (see ODA No.6); Maeve O'Donnell, dau. of Red Hugh, died 1577; Caffir, son of Manus, died Scariffhollis 1580; Manus, brother of the second Red Hugh, mortally wounded in battle near Lifford and died a week later in 1600; Aodh Dubh, chieftain and father of the second Red Hugh, d. 1600.

"On Donegal's sea-rifted headlands,  
High over the desolate sands,  
The pile built by princely O'Donnells  
In shattered magnificence stands.  
Fire, tempest, the stout walls have blackened;  
The wind through its aisles chants a tune;  
And in, through the tall chancel window,  
At midnight, comes gleams of the moon.

Ah! father, I fondly remember  
The days when the chancel was thronged  
With the kernes and the wives of Tyrconnell-  
Ere yet the Franciscans were wronged.  
When torches blazed red round the altar,  
The roofs echoed back the loud strain  
Of voices grown shrill on the highlands,  
Or deep, on the thunderous main".

Sources:

- The Franciscans at Rossnowlagh by Fr. Simon O'Byrne, O.F.M. (1960)
- The Franciscan Monasteries and The Irish Hierarchy in the 17th. Century. by Rev. C.P.Meehan. (1877).
- Franciscan Donegal by Fr. Terence O'Donnell, O.F.M. (1952).
- The Irish Franciscan's Poetry by J.F.

Pat O'Donnell was born in the Gweedore area of Co. Donegal in 1838 but as a young man emigrated to the U.S.A. in search of employment like so many of his countrymen. He worked for a while as a butler in Brooklyn and Philadelphia, but later as a miner in Ohio, Toronto, Montana and Nevada.

On the 19th of May 1883 he departed from New York to visit his home in Ireland with the intention of going from there to South Africa to seek his fortune in the silver mines; the gold and silver mines of California and Nevada having by now declined.

In May 1882 an incident occurred in the Phoenix Park, Dublin which was to have far-reaching effects and bring about the death on the gallows of Patrick O'Donnell. Two government officials, Lord Frederick Cavendish, Chief Secretary and Mr. Burke, the Under Secretary while walking in the Park were attacked by four men and mortally wounded.

In Jan. 1883 twelve men belonging to a secret organisation known as the 'Invincibles' were arrested for conspiring to kill members of the Government but lack of evidence was making it difficult to have convictions made. Then, one of them, James Carey gave King's evidence against his comrades resulting in five of them being hanged in May of that year. The other prisoners received terms of penal servitude and imprisonment.

After this incident Carey chose to emigrate to Natal in Africa where he felt life would be safer. Disguised and using a false name, he was conveyed to England under heavy guard and on the 6th July the entire family, using the surname 'Power', boarded a ship at Dartmouth bound for Natal.

And so it happened that O'Donnell and Carey ended up on board the same ship bound for South Africa. As there were very few Irish on board it was natural that they became acquainted and spent quite a lot of time chatting and having the odd drink together. During a stop at Capetown, 27th July, Carey's true identity was revealed to O'Donnell. Patrick had already, during this stop, extended his passage to Natal.

By Sunday 29th it was common knowledge aboard the 'Melrose' that Mr. Power was really James Carey the Irish arch-traitor. He was being avoided by



the other passengers including O'Donnell. Carey appeared quite nervous and was drinking a lot. Late that evening both met in the 'Saloon' where a heated argument developed. What happened next has been the cause of much speculation but it seems both produced pistols. (Patrick, it is said, often carried a gun, a habit he acquired west of the Rockies). O'Donnell was first to shoot, hitting Carey in the neck; Carey's pistol fell to the floor. As Carey made a dive for it two more bullets from O'Donnell's gun stopped him. James Carey was dead. Patrick was, immediately, placed under arrest, and after a preliminary investigation at Port Elizabeth, was removed to London for trial.

On the 31st Nov. 1883 Patrick O'Donnell took his place in the dock at the Old Bailey, London where he was ably defended by Messrs. Charles Russell, Q.C. and A.M. Sullivan, Q.C. assisted by General Pryor, an eminent American lawyer sent by the Irish in the U.S. But, of course, the result was a foregone conclusion. After a trial that lasted two days, O'Donnell was found guilty of murder. As he was being removed from the court he shouted, "Three cheers for Ireland! Good-bye the United States! It is a plot by perjurers to destroy me!"

He had been accused of being a special agent sent from America to assassinate Carey and, indeed, some circumstantial evidence supported this claim. Patrick;

however, swore to the end that he acted in self-defence but he lacked witnesses.

On the 17th Dec. at 8 a.m. he was led to his execution at Newgate Prison, fortified by the rites of the Catholic Church. Eyewitnesses record that the prisoner mounted the scaffold with a firm step, smiled and passed into eternity without showing the least sign of fear.

"In Newgate's dreary prison

They dug a narrow grave

And in it sleeps O'Donnell

The bravest of the brave".

Yes, Pat O'Donnell is well remembered in song and story. A celtic cross perpetuating his memory stands in Derrybeg (Gweedore) while a magnificent marble monument in Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin bears the following inscription:-

Sources:

Donegal Annual 1960, Dalach Ghaioth Dobhair le Niall O Donaill.  
History of Landlordism in Donegal by Proinnsias O Gallchobhair.  
Scathlann, uimh. 2(Iris Chumann Staire agus Seanchais Ghaioth Dobhair).

Don O'Donnell to Cycle in Ireland.

"Don O'Donnell, the tireless Wootton Bassett campaigner for needy children, is to have a wing named after him in a new children's shelter in India.

Last year, Don, of Station Road, raised over £8,000 in a sponsored cycle ride towards the Madras project. He is one of the Wiltshire Friends of the International Boys Town Trust, soon to be renamed the International Children's Trust.

The Trust helps children in Mexico, the Philippines and Sri Lanka, as well as in Madras.

Don's contribution, and the proceeds of numerous fund-raising events by the Wiltshire Friends, resulted in the recent presentation of £17,475 to trust director Richard Gardener, who said there will be a Wiltshire Room in the O'Donnell Wing."

The above is from a clipping from the Wiltshire Gazette & Herald, 22nd August 1991, sent to me by Don himself. Now, Don has his eyes set on Ireland as the venue of his next long-distance cycle. In Sept. '92 he plans to pedal from Mizen(in Cork) to Malin(in Donegal) to raise more funds for charity.

IN MEMORY

of

PATRICK O'DONNELL

who heroically gave up his life  
for IRELAND

In London, England on  
17th December 1883.

Not tears but prayers for the dead  
who died for Ireland.

This monument was erected  
by the grateful admirers  
of his heroism

In the United States of America  
Through the 'Irish World'  
and forwarded

By a ladies committee of New York.  
Mrs. Maggie Halvey, Mrs. F. Byrne,  
Ellen Forde.

Afterwards, he says, he hopes to ride to Burtonport(N.W. Donegal) to visit his former home. His schedule will be 100 miles a day - not bad going at 60 years of age. We wish him all the best and I look forward to seeing you Don when you get to Donegal. V. O'D.

The World Book of O'Donnells.

By now, many of you, I am sure have received a letter from a certain Margaret O'Donnell in Ohio telling you all about the 'O'Donnell 1991 International Registry' she is promoting through Halbert's of Dublin. It appears to me to be a list of names and addresses taken from some computer listing such as telephone directories, along with some history, but I haven't seen it yet. I have ordered a copy and will give my comments in the next issue.

It is strange that my friend John Gallagher showed me an identical letter he received today from a certain Gallagher person also living in Ohio and promoting the exact same(only for Gallaghers) through Halbert's of Dublin. Both his and my letter were mailed in the Dominican Republic. V.O'D.

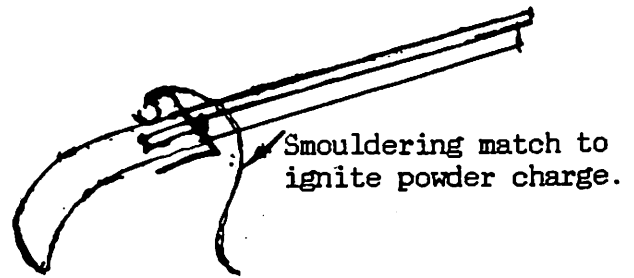
The traditional arms of the Irish forces at the time of the Nine years War were in the main the weapons of two classes of soldier, i.e., the lightly armed kerne and the heavily armed Gallowglass. Many contemporary accounts describe the Irish soldier of that time as being extremely tough and of great endurance, able to cover great distances quickly and with an infinite capacity for living off the land. His food varied according to the locality or the circumstances in which he found himself, corn meal, butter, parsnips, beef, mutton, venison and horse-flesh are mentioned from time to time; uisce beatha, according to O'Clery, always took a prominent place in the feasting.

The defensive equipment of the kerne was a small round shield or targe of yew wood, covered with bull's hide, and a helmet covering the head and part of the face. Their offensive weapons were two or three javelins and for close quarter work the scian(dirk) or sword. Judging by contemporary illustrations and from a sword in the arms collection of the National Museum this was a type apparently peculiar to Ireland at this time. The blade was approximately 33" long with a simple crossguard or quillions terminating in flattened fan-shaped projections (see cover). These swords had not reached the advanced stage of development of their English or Spanish counterparts.

The Irish used the javelin both on foot and 'in the saddle and many accounts testify to their skill and expertness in their use.

This was practically a transition period in Irish armies of the time. The Gallowlasses were becoming pikemen, and the kerne were being trained as musketeers. References to the use of pikemen on the Irish side are common in accounts of the Nine Years War. Whether the Gallowglass used a pike or an axe their traditional defensive armour was a three quarter length tunic of chain mail, with helmet and sometimes a hauberk and metal gauntlets. The firearms on both sides were matchlock muskets, known as the caliver and the arquebus.

The caliver was the heavier weapon with a greater range than the arquebus and fired a lead ball of 20 mm. diameter. Part of the equipment for the caliver was a forked stand which the musketeer



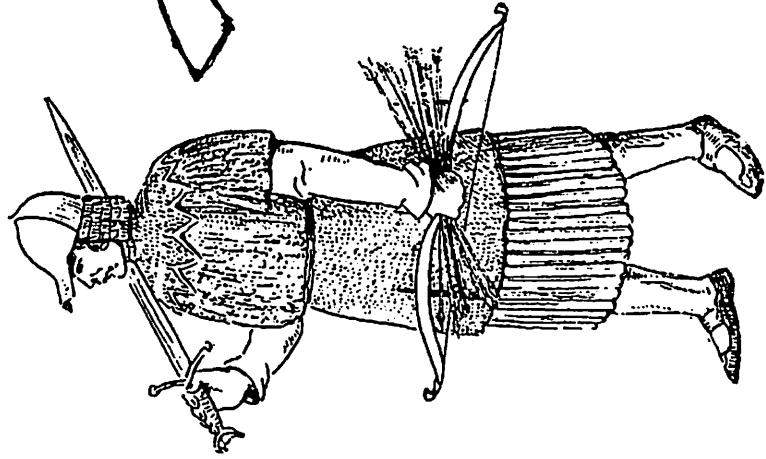
Arquebus with drooped stock for firing from chest.

fixed in the ground to rest the barrel and steady his aim. The arquebus was a shorter weapon with a stock similar in shape to the curved end of a hurley or hockey stick. The arquebus had a shorter range than the caliver and was fired from the chest and discharged a ball of 15 mm. dia. Both were matchlocks, which required a piece of burning tow to be applied to a touch hole to set off the powder charge.

The chief source of supply of firearms was from Scotland and a steady trade was maintained throughout the Nine Years War. While O'Donnell had as the backbone of his army the Gallowlasses of Clann Suibhne (McSweeney), he also had many trained in the use of the caliver, as evidenced by Lughaidh O'Clery's description of the defence of Ballyshannon Castle, and the Battle of the Curlews. As in such conflicts, arms were obtained wherever available. Some were captured and some were bought. The records state that the crew of the Girona at Killybegs traded calivers for a sheep. In 1598 a Spanish vessel called into Killybegs with a supply of firearms, money and very long spears. O'Clery records both O'Neill and O'Donnell as being very disappointed that Philip II had not sent Tercios as well.

.....  
The word 'Galloglass' is derived from the gaelic 'gall oglaigh' meaning foreign volunteers and was the term used for Scottish mercenaries employed by the Irish between 1250 and 1602. Many settled in Ireland and their surnames are commonplace today, e.g. Sweeney, McDonald, McLean, etc.

Tercios were highly-trained Spanish regiments, feared all over Europe at the time.



*An Irish Galloglass: 16th Century. A shirt of mail, and other armour as shown, was worn over a heavy pleated garment and, at times, over a short tunic of lighter material.*

**O'Donnell Clan Gathering '92.**

The present plans for next year's Gathering are much the same as published in the last issue -

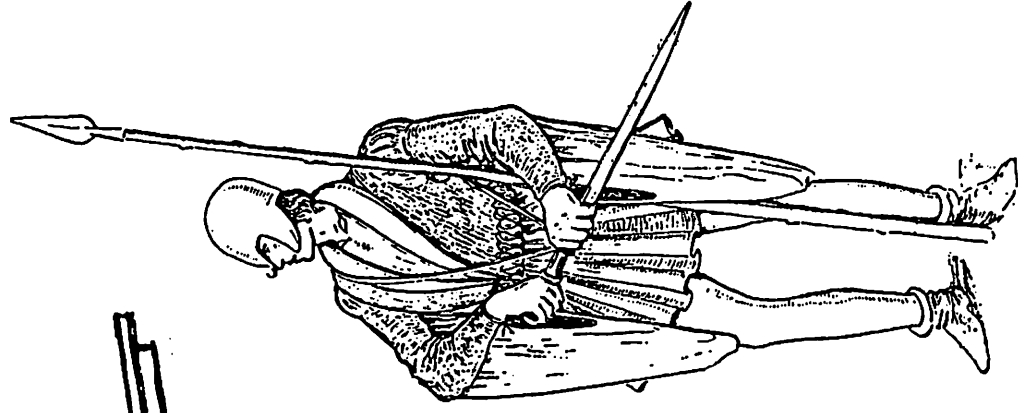
12th June : Assemblé and Official Opening in Donegal Town (Castle grounds hopefully) followed by talks, music, exhibitions etc. in Central Hotel.

13th June: Bus Tour to historic sites with night's entertainment to round off the day(venue to be decided).

14th June: A visit to Doon Rock, inauguration site of the O'Donnell Chieftains, with talks and pageantry, followed by Farewell Dinner(venue to be decided).

Her Excellency, Mrs. Mary Robinson (whose mother was an O'Donnell), President of Ireland, has been invited. She replied that it is too early yet to give a definite answer. If, however, she does agree to attend, then it is likely that Friday night's functions will be replaced by a Banquet.

For further information contact Secretary Ben O'Donnell, Lifford, Co. Donegal (office 074-41066, home 074-41419) or Vincent O'Donnell, Inver, Co. Donegal (073-36059).



**Caliver with forked stand.**

*The Kern, or Irish Light Infantry, of the 16th century*

\* \* \* \* \*

Donegal Castle is to be the setting for the official signing ceremony in connection with the Twinning of Donegal/Ballyshannon Sene. In view of the historical occasion of the twinning it is very appropriate that the ancient seat of the O'Donnells should be the chosen venue.

\* \* \* \* \*

and  
it  
was.

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## Red Hugh's Death Remembered.

Below is an exact copy of the commemorative card published on the occasion of the unveiling of a plaque in Simancas Castle commemorating the death of Red Hugh. The bronze plaque, made in Ireland, was mounted inside the main entrance to the Castle. On Tuesday morning of the Irish Week the actual unveiling took place while Irish musicians played Barry Carrol's newly-composed 'Caoine Aoidh Ruaidh' (Red Hugh's Lament) and, of course, 'O'Donnell Abu'. The national radio had someone there to record the event and afterwards interviewed Micheline Kearney Walsh. All was organised and funded by the Irish Dept. of External Affairs. V.O'D.

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*Castillo-Archivo de Simancas*

On the occasion of the Irish Week at Valladolid in Spain, 20th-24th May 1991, a plaque commemorating the death of Aodh Rua Ó Domhnaill, Prince of Tír Chonaill, which occurred on 10th September 1602 at the Royal Castle of Simancas, was unveiled by his descendant Excmo. Sr. D. Leopoldo O'Donnell, Duque de Tetuán, accompanied by his son, D. Hugo O'Donnell, Conde de Lucena, and Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, the Irish descendant of Aodh Rua.

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Ar an 10ú lá de Mheán Fómhair 1602 fuair Aodh Rua ÓDomhnaill, Prionsa Thír Chonaill, bás sa Chalsleán seo i Simancas agus é ar a bhealach go Valladolid le cabhair mhíleata bhreise a lorg ar Rí Pilib III taréis briseadh chath Chlonn tSáile in Éirinn ar fhórsaí na Spáinne agus na hÉireann ag arm Shasana.

El 10 de Septiembre de 1602 el noble Irlandés, Hugo O'Donnell, Príncipe de Tír Chonaill, murió en este Castillo de Simancas cuando se dirigía a Valladolid para pedir más ayuda militar al Rey Felipe III después de la derrota de las fuerzas españolas e Irlandesas por un ejército inglés en la batalla de Kinsale en Irlanda.

### *Wording of the commemorative plaque erected at the Castle of Simancas.*

---

"When he came to the town called Simancas, two leagues from Valladolid, the King's Palace, God permitted, and the ill-luck and misfortune, the wretchedness and the curse attending the Island of Eremon and the Irish of fair Fodla too, would have it that O'Donnell should catch his death-sickness and his mortal illness. He was for sixteen days on his bed of sickness. At last he died at the end of that time, the tenth day of September exactly".

*(The Life of Hugh Roe O'Donnell, by Lughaidh Ó Cléirigh)*

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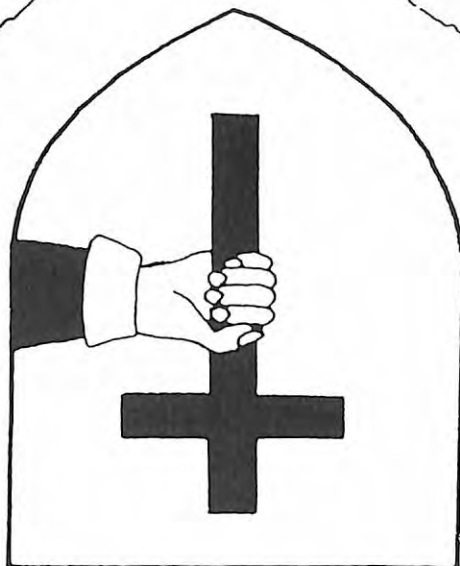
Micheline Kemey Walsh, historical adviser, and Brídín Gilroy and Pilar Salamanca, organizers of the Irish Week at Valladolid, wish to thank the Taoiseach, Charles J. Haughey, TD, and his Department for their assistance in the production of the O'Donnell commemorative plaque: made of bronze. It was designed by Claran O'Connor and Gerard O'Sullivan, Architects of the Office of Public Works, and cast by Palmer Brothers of Dublin. They also thank Da. Ascensión de la Plaza, Director of the Castillo-Archivo de Simancas, for her kind co-operation.



Crossing Ballyshannon Bridge, 1954 Rally.



IN HOC SIGNO VINCES



*Spring 1992*  
*Newsletter No. 18*  
*O'Donnell Clan*

**O'Donnell**

## Escape Commemorated

I am indebted to Tadhg Mac Cionnaithe of the Irish Ramblers' Club for sending me the following account of this year's 'Art O'Neill Walk' and giving me permission to publish it here. V. O'Donnell.

The dramatic escape of Red Hugh O'Donnell and Art O'Neill from Dublin Castle on 6th January 1592 and their subsequent flight was re-enacted by the Irish Ramblers' Club, 36 members of which set off at midnight on 3rd/4th January from the castle's main gate and walked the 40 miles to Glenmalure in County Wicklow.

Red Hugh had been kidnapped in Rathmullan over four years previously and the year before had managed to break out only to be recaptured in Wicklow. At the time of the second escape he was 19 years old. Art O'Neill seems to have been either a hostage for the good behavior of his family or perhaps a prisoner like Red Hugh. Although older than Red Hugh, he was not as fit and was injured in dropping from the castle wall to the street below; an injury which was to greatly hinder the escape. A brother of Art's, Henry, also escaped but he lost his companions in the city and found his own way back to Ulster.

History records that the weather was appalling - cold, heavy sleet, snow and poor visibility; their clothing and footwear were inadequate and several years in prison in conditions best left to the imagination left them totally unfit for the ordeal to come.

They did however have a guide to take them to their destination. They were heading for Glenmalure in Co. Wicklow, that isolated impregnable valley deep in the mountains and the home of Fiach MacHugh O'Beirne; the same Fiach who in August 1580 had lured an English army to its slaughter deep in this glen and who was well known throughout the land as Elizabeth's number one enemy in Leinster.

Unlike our heroes, the latter day Ramblers were blessed with near perfect walking conditions - a beautiful mild night and excellent visibility and no hostile soldiers to pursue them. Their route out of the city was Clanbrassil Street, Kimmage, Firhouse and Kilbride which is as plausible a reconstruction of the route Red Hugh and Art took as can be made today. A few miles after crossing the Liffey and after about 20 miles on the roads, the walkers took to

the hills for the remaining 20 miles, up the slopes of Black Hill and into Glenbride through Billy Byrne's Gap where dawn broke. After crossing the Wicklow Gap road they proceeded into Glenreemore. It was almost certainly here where the escapees, in the dense fog, missed the easier route - so obvious in clear weather - out of this valley and into Glenmalure; they seem to have gone on too far to the end of the glen where at the foot of the rocky heights, Art lay down with exhaustion. Red Hugh stayed with him whilst the guide went on the last few miles to Glenmalure. There must have been frantic excitement there when the word came through that the two fugitives were in difficulties in the mountains and the Wicklow men immediately rushed to their aid. When they arrived at Glenreemore, Art had died of exposure and Red Hugh was close to death. A marble plaque and a small stone cross mark the spot where he died and where according to Lughaidh O'Cleirigh, he is buried. At the top of the heights which he failed to climb, a big wooden cross, 'Art's Cross', is erected to his memory. The inscription on the plaque reads as follows -

"In san ait seo de reir bhealeideas  
na ndaoine do cailleadh ART O NEILL  
le linn do fein agus  
AODH RUADH O Domhnaill bheith ar an  
slighe o Chaislean Atha Cliath go  
Gleann Maolughra sa bhliadhain 1592  
Pro Fide et Patria".

After pausing to pay their respects to Art, the Ramblers climbed out of the glen to the cross and thence to Glenmalure where the walk officially ended. The 40 miles took some 15 hours to complete and special commemorative certificates were issued.

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This walk is an annual event which takes place on the weekend nearest to the Epiphany and starts at midnight at the gates of Dublin Castle.

THE BOOK OF O'DONNELL'S DAUGHTER

The manuscript bearing the title LEABHAR INGHINE I DHOMHNAILL is presently preserved in the Bibliotheque Royale, Brussels (number 6131 x 6133). Bound in original covers, its leaves measure ten and a quarter inches by eight inches but only a little over half its 153 folios are written upon. It contains a collection of poems and other matter of particular interest to the owner or owner's family. It is difficult to say if any of the writing was done in Ireland - more likely in Flanders.

The first entry is a long poem lamenting the death of Red Hugh. Most of those not dealing with Red Hugh are addressed to his brothers, father or kinsmen.

Of the dozen or so poets who have contributed to this volume (many in their own hand) the following are probably the best known - Fearghal og Mac an Bhaird, Eoghan Rua Mac an Bhaird, Eochaidh O hEodhasa (a Fermanagh bard) and Tadhg Dall O hUiginn.

As far as can be deduced, the 'daughter' must have been either Nuala or Margaret (both sisters of Red Hugh) but as Nuala's name appears many times and Margaret's only once, it is quite likely that the book belonged to the former.

The cover bears many scribblings. Here are some -

Leabhar inghine i Dhomhnaill  
Liber poematum O Donelli  
Lr Poematum o donellij  
Cionnus ticc eire gan aodh (1)  
Deus  
Mo bheannacht chugat (2)  
Dfhios an fo an pend no an dercc (3)  
Madamoyeselle  
Madama  
Mada  
deus meus

Nuala who went with her brothers, Rory and Caffir, to Rome returned to Flanders after their sudden deaths in 1608, bringing with her Rory's young son, Hugh, later known as Hugh Albert (see ODA Nos. 8 & 14). The following lines relate to Nuala's stay in Italy -

"San Eadail na neas dtana-  
ionand is eg Nualadh-  
ata geis chnomhoighe Cuinn  
croloighe dha heis oruinn.

Nualaidh dhuaislionmhar doigh caich  
mairfidh go laithe an luanbhraith  
tosach garma chru gCrimhthain  
clu a hanma adir Eiriondchaibh."

(In Italy of the narrow waterfalls-  
'tis equivalent to Nuala's death-  
is the swan of Conn's nut-plain,  
grief lies on us after her.

Nuala the bountiful, hope of all;  
until the Judgment Day shall live  
among Irishmen the fame of her,  
foremost choice of the race of Crimhthan.)

And the following describes Nuala's arrival in Louvain with the young O'Donnell -

"Ionmhain sgribhionn sgaoilter sonn  
mor mbeadhgadh do bhean asom  
saor a Dhe ar aithleonadh inn  
aithbheodhadh e dom inntinn.

Da mairdis a ffaca fein  
duaislibh Gaoidheal guirt righNeill  
do bheith fath faoilte don dreim  
a tteath sgaoilte don sgribheinn.

An naoidhe tainic tar tuinn  
biodh nach beith na Ua Domhnaill  
diol e gach muirne da mhet  
go mbe ar cCoimdhe ag a choimhet.

Aodh O Domhnuill ga ttam do  
gan daois sunn acht seacht mbliadhno  
damhna mo riogh robhaidh linn  
sgolair rod sgruibh in sgribhinn."

(I like well the letter I now open  
excitement it has stirred in me-  
save us O Lord from harm again-  
the news is revival to my soul.

Those I have seen, nobles of the Gael,  
of Niall's land - if they did live-  
would have cause for joy  
upon the opening of this letter.

For the child that has come from overseas  
although not yet O'Donnell  
is worthy of attachment  
in God's keeping may he be.

Hugh O'Donnell - in one word- seven years aged here has come: the makings of my King, I salute him- a scholar wrote thee, writing.)

Folio 148 contains a list of first lines of poems along with, in most cases, the composer's name and date. From these dates and dates of some of the events mentioned in the book it would seem that the collection was begun in the early seventeenth century and continued beyond 1650.

All in all, though somewhat of a young girl's scrap book, it is a very interesting source and adds alot to our knowledge of that era of O'Donnell history, an era full of change and grief. When one considers the untimely death of Red Hugh in Spain, and of his two brothers, Rory and Caffir, in Rome, the rest of the family in exile with no hope of every recovering their lands in Ireland, it is little wonder that this book is so full of poems lamenting the plight of those left to mourn, e.g. Clarence Mangan's translation of Mac an Bhaird's "An Bhean a fuair feall ar an bhFeart" -

"O woman of the piercing wail,  
Who mournest o'er yon mound of clay  
With sigh and groan,  
Would God thou wert among the Gael!  
Thou wouldst not then from day to day  
Weep thus alone."

(more in ODA No. 8).

- (1) How fares Ireland without Hugh?
- (2) My blessing to you.
- (3) To try if the pen is good or the ink.

Irish Echo 11-17 Dec. 1991.

# Chicago Native O'Donnell Has Day in the Sun

By Jim Fallon

FT. LAUDERDALE — Born during one of America's worst depressions, the grandson of an Irish farmer from Ballymacarberry, Co. Waterford, has nonetheless taken his rightful place in the sun.

As the publisher of Ft. Lauderdale's *Sun-Sentinel*, 59-year-old Thomas Patrick O'Donnell, a Chicago native, oversees one of South Florida's largest metropolitan daily newspaper enterprises — 1,500 employees and six news bureaus stretching from Washington, D.C., to Miami.

"Our main focus is South Florida. But we also gather vital information from the international level on down," said O'Donnell, who also is the firm's president and chief executive officer.

Despite a sagging economy and strong competition from other news-gathering sources, electronic and print, the *Sun-Sentinel* has managed steady growth under O'Donnell's stewardship. "And we'll continue to grow," he said.

But the ascent into the solar system didn't happen in a flash. It started in 1955 when O'Donnell was named an advertising representative with the *Chicago Tribune*, the flagship of the Chicago-based Tribune Co., which also owns and operates the *Sun-Sentinel* and which until March owned New York's troubled *Daily News*.

Simultaneously, the new employee attended night classes at nearby Northwestern University, eventually earning a master's degree in marketing.

"When the right door opened I wanted to be prepared to pass through, swiftly," O'Donnell said.

His first major opportunity came in 1970. Appointed vice president and marketing director of the *Chicago Tribune*, a position held until 1981 when the Tribune Co. named him executive vice president and general manager. In 1983, he was named to his present post, 28 years after joining the organization.

Meanwhile, the ex-caddy and former U.S. Army corporal served one term as president of Chicago's Fellowship Club, an Irish group devoted to Celtic causes and culture. Later, involved in the Irish Children's



Thomas P. O'Donnell of the Fort Lauderdale Sun Sentinel.

Fund, O'Donnell helped bring Irish youngsters from both Northern Ireland and the Republic to the U.S. for eight weeks in the summer months.

"Giving those kids a chance to gain a better understanding of each other and perhaps develop lifelong, meaningful relationships, was a most satisfying experience," O'Donnell said.

## Chicago Roots

But as a young man growing up on Chicago's Irish Southside,

O'Donnell, a die-hard White Sox fan, nevertheless dreamed of becoming another Ted Williams, the Boston Red Sox Hall of Famer. But he knew there would never be another Splendid Splinter. So fantasy yielded to reality. Friends, he said, encouraged him to make something of himself. "They expected me to succeed and passed on these constructive attitudes to me," O'Donnell said.

Being Irish in South Florida is a personal and spiritual matter to O'Donnell.

"The strength of the Irish spirit and the warmth of the Irish character will prevail and spread . . . grow and prosper here as it has across the world," he said.

**'The strength of the Irish spirit and the warmth of the Irish character will prevail and spread.'**  
— Thomas O'Donnell

## O'Donnell Clan Gathering 1954.

As another Clan Gathering looms on the horizon I consider it appropriate to cast an eye back onto the first (that I know of) in 1954. According to a report in the Donegal Annual of that year the programme, which was organised by a local committee as part of An Tostal celebrations, began at Ballyshannon on Easter Sunday when at 10 a.m. the Minister for External Affairs, Mr. Frank Aiken, hoisted the Tostal flag over Allingham Bridge, Ballyshannon. This heralded the formal reception of 'The O'Donnell' (Mr. John O'Donnell, Monkstown, Co. Dublin), to the territory of his ancestors. Present were many important figures from Church, State and Local Government, as were many O'Donnells including Count Gabriel of Austria. Present, also, was a Guard of Honour from the F.C.A. under the command of Lieut. L. J. Emerson, led by Ballyshannon Brass and Reed Band.

To the strains of 'O'Donnell Abu', 'The O'Donnell' crossed the bridge into Tir Chonaill accompanied by Count Gabriel, Rev. Fr. Terence O'Donnell, O.F.M., Rupert Coughlan and Mr. F. P. Britton, Chairman of the Ballyshannon Tostal Council. Local schoolboys lined the bridge each holding a replica of 'An tSlat Bhan', the old Gaelic symbol of chieftainship.

On arrival at the Market Place, 'The O'Donnell' was greeted by Mr. J. Gillespie P.C. who presented him with 'An tSlat Bhan'. The official party then mounted the platform where Senator Micheal Og McFadden presided. Among the dignitaries on the platform was the late Pa O'Donnell T.D.

After the Minister delivered an address of welcome in Irish the O'Donnell Standard was presented to 'The O'Donnell' by Mr. T.C. MacDonagh, then the great gathering stood to attention as the band played 'Faith of our Fathers' and the National Anthem.

Later, a crowded congregation was present in St. Patrick's Church for the Solemn High Mass celebrated by Rev. Desmond O'Donnell, O.M.I., a native of Ballyshannon, assisted by five other priests including Fr. Terence O'Donnell who preached the sermon and blessed the O'Donnell Standard. During the Consecration, the F.C.A. Guard of Honour presented arms and sounded the salute.

The following day, Easter Monday, the scene shifted to Donegal Town where, "in

the shadows of the ruins of the ancient castle of the O'Donnells, the O'Donnell Clan Association was formed and a big number of O'Donnells were invested as members of the Association, of which 'The O'Donnell' is the leader. Mr. P. O'Donnell T.D., was elected Tanaiste for the Clan in Donegal and it was agreed that the organising committee of the Rally of the Clans, in conjunction with the Donegal Historical Society, should continue to look after the Association's affairs for a further year when it is hoped the Association will be able to take over its own administration." [To the best of my knowledge, nothing more happened regarding the Association, but someone somewhere must have the register in which members were enrolled, and the present Association, formed in 1989, would be delighted to learn of its present location. Ed.]

Monday's events, then, continued with a lecture by Rupert S. O'Cochlain who traced the history of the main branches of the Clan. Later, a large crowd including many dignitaries watched the colourful pageant. 20 units personifying the successive generations of the O'Donnell dead filed past a guard of honour of the present day army to the accompaniment of appropriate Irish tunes played by St. Joseph's Brass and Reed band, Strabane.

The parade then moved to O'Donnell's Castle where, to the sound of the General Salute, the O'Donnell Standard was hoisted on a flagpole high over the tower. The ceremony concluded with the playing of 'O'Donnell Abu' and the National Anthem.

.....  
As a part of Easter Sunday's celebrations, the first county museum, under the care of the Donegal Historical Society, was opened at the Franciscan Friary, Rossnowlagh where it has remained since.

Front cover: Entering Tir Chonaill 1954.  
L. to R. Rupert O'Cochlain, Fr. Terence O'Donnell, John O'Donell (The O'Donnell), Count Gabriel O'Donell of Austria, Fergus Britton, Hugh O'Donell (son of John, today Fr. Hugh, O.F.M.), Roisin Coughlan (nee O'Donnell), and a boy with a 'Slat Bhan'.

HUGH ROE O'DONNELL'S ADDRESS TO HIS SOLDIERS BEFORE  
THE BATTLE OF THE CURLEW MOUNTAINS.

Brother chiefs, and clansmen loyal, tried in many a bloody fray;  
God be thanked these robber Saxons come to meet us here to-day.  
Boasting Clifford, Essex minion, swears he'll make the rebels flee-  
We will give him hearty greeting, like to that at Ashanee. (1)  
What though traitor Celts oppose us - be their number three to one?  
Greater glory to Clan Connell, when this tough day's work is done.  
Shrived at Holy Mass this morning, danger we may fearless dare;  
For we draw the sword of justice, shielded all in faith and prayer.  
Not for conquest, or for vengeance, on this blessed Lady Day,  
Not in strength or numbers trusting, do we face their proud array;  
But for Holy Mary's honour, by their tainted lips defiled,  
For the sacred rights of freemen, for the mother, maid, and child.  
Prone and bleeding lies our country, sorrow clouds her crownless brow,  
All the lines of peerless beauty limed in ghastly colours now.  
In the light of glories olden beaming through our dark disgrace,  
See the madd'ning wrongs and insults heaped upon our fallen race!  
Roofless homestead, broken altar, slaughtered priest, dishonoured maid-  
Children of an outraged mother! whet ye well the thirsty blade.  
Scorning rock and brushwood cover, rush like swooping eagles forth,  
Hard and home push every pike-head, sinewy spearsmen of the North!  
Cleave in twain the lustful Saxon, tame Dunkellin's soaring pride,  
Smite the double-souled O'Connors - traitors false to every side. (2)  
Down upon them, Banagh's chieftain! sweep their ranks your spears before,  
As the North wind sweeps the stubble through the gap of Barnes-More.  
Forward! forward! brave McDermott, strike for fair Moylurg's domain,  
For yon lake in beauty sleeping, for the holy island's fane. (3)  
Strike! and drive the swinish Saxon, herding in their sacred shade,  
Far from Boyle's old abbey cloisters, where your father's bones are laid.  
Holy Virgin! we implore thee, by that abbey's rifled shrine, (4)  
Columcille of Doire Calgach, patron of O'Donnell's line, (5)  
Good St. Francis! for the glory of thy name in Donegal,  
Speed ye now Tirconnell's onset, till we rout them one and all.  
Should O'Donnell fall in combat - if the foe be forced to yield,  
Better death I never pray for, than to fall upon the field,  
Where the cause of Erin triumphed, and the Saxon was laid low,  
With that green flag floating o'er me, and my face against the foe.  
Never chieftain of Clan Dalaigh to th' invader bowed the knee;  
By the black years of my bondage, it shall ne'er be done to me.  
I would rather angry ocean rolled o'er castle, cot, and hall,  
Than see any Saxon bodach rule in royal Donegal.  
Deathless fame in song and story will enshroud the men who died,  
Fighting God's and freedom's battle bravely by O'Donnell's side.  
Great will be his meed of glory, honoured long the victor's name,  
Pointing proudly to her kinsman, many a maid will tell his fame;  
"Lo! he fought at Doonaveragh," aged men will whispering say,  
And make way before the altar for the heroes of to-day.  
Gleaming bright through dark'ning ages will this great day's memory glide,  
Like the Saimer's bright-wav'd waters glancing onward to the tide.

This battle was fought on the 15th August, 1599. The Irish were commanded by Red Hugh and other chieftains; the English by Sir Conyers Clifford, Governor of Connaught. Before the battle, according to the Four Masters, O'Donnell, who had the day before fasted in honour of the Blessed Virgin, "as he was wont to do," "caused Mass to be celebrated for himself and the forces in general, and after making his confession and rigidly repenting of his sins, he received the Eucharist, and commanded his forces to pray to God fervently for the salvation of their souls in the first place, and to deliver them from the great danger which awaited them from the English." He then addressed a stirring harangue to his soldiers in the Irish language (given at length in O'Sullivan Beare), the substance which is expressed in the following verses. O'Donnell was completely victorious; Sir Conyers Clifford, many of his officers, and nearly 1,500 of his men were killed on the field or in the flight. The Four Masters add, "That the army offered up thanks to God and the Blessed Virgin Mary for the victory, and the unanimous voice of the men was, that it was not by the force of arms the English were defeated, but by the supplication of O'Donnell and his forces, after he had received the Body and Blood of Christ in the beginning of that day after his fast the previous day in honour of the Blessed Virgin."

- 1 Ashanee - Ballyshannon, where O'Donnell routed Clifford and his forces on Lady Day, two years earlier.
- 2 O'Connor Don and O'Connor Roe on this occasion, not for the first time, joined the English.
- 3 Lough Ce, at the foot of the Curlews, in which was a monastery dedicated to the Holy Trinity.
- 4 The Cistercian Abbey of Boyle was dedicated to the Blessed Virgin.
- 5 Doire Calgach- the oak grove of Calgach- the ancient name of Derry.

All of the above is copied from a book entitled 'PAPERS AND ADDRESSES' published in 1909 by Most Rev. John Healy. The poem was often requested by subscribers who had heard it or remembered parts of it. I am thankful to Eamonn de Burca, De Burca Rare Books, 27 Priory Dr., Blackrock, Co. Dublin for furnishing it. An article on this famous battle will appear in a later issue. V. O'D.

#### NEWS

Plans for the Gathering are much the same as reported in the last two issues with many minor details being worked out, some of which cannot be finalised until closer to the time.

At present, an attractive scroll (suitable for framing) is being designed for members of the Clan Association, this will replace the present membership card. It is also planned to do a re-run of the book published at the last Gathering. Only 500 copies were printed then and all sold within a few months. It is quite likely that Saturday's bus tour will spend the evening in Annagry, heartland of today's O'Donnell territory, also a gaelic-speaking area. Here we hope to enjoy a social evening with a meal followed by the best of gaelic entertainment. The pageant being organised by a FAS TEAMWORK scheme we hope to see performed at the Rock of Doon on the Sunday. There are many other such ideas in the pipeline but the main ingredient to make it a successful event is your presence. An O'Donnell Clan Gathering can't exist without a gathering of O'Donnells. So, do your best to join us and don't forget to tell others.

If you know of any Irish publications circulating in your area, perhaps you could place an add for us or give us the name and address so that we can do it. We are very thankful to those who have done such work so far. Bookings and inquiries are coming in daily.

We are delighted to help with accommodation. B&B in houses costs about £15 per night per person, while the same in hotels costs about double that. Time of commencement on Friday evening has not been finalised but it will probably be 7-8 o'clock.

If there are enough people about on Monday morning a fashion show will be put on by Magees, manufacturers of the world-famous Donegal Tweed. And we would like to have a get-to-gether of Clan members in the afternoon to discuss Clan matters and history. So, don't be in a hurry to leave. V. O'Donnell.

#### TREMENDOUS WORK

Have you ever pondered on the derivation or exact meaning of English words in common use, such as aegis, affidavit, alibi, amnesty, extempore, and so on. If

finding out occasioned you trouble, there's no longer any reason for remaining "in ignorance". The answers to all your queries are contained in a publication which has just gone into circulation, issued by the Institute of Public Administration in association with the Irish Permanent Building Society. Its main title is Word Gloss, and it is described as a compilation of words and concepts you need to know, where they come from, and what they mean. It is the work of Mr. Jim O'Donnell, assistant director general I.P.A., and noted writer, who over 290 pages presents his study of the subject in masterly fashion. It's more than a glossary; it's history as well, and better still, it's completely free of any hi 'falutin exercises in mannerisms. If it must be referred to as a glossary, it can be described as a glossary with a difference and well worth the cost - £9.95. It has a special place on my bookshelves. If you can't purchase a copy at your local bookshop contact Institute of Public Administration, 56-7 Lansdowne Road, Dublin, 'phone (01) 697011.

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WORD GLOSS number is  
ISBN 1-872002-45-5 and Jim's  
FAX No. is 01-698644.

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## The World Book Of O'Donnells

By now many people will have received a circular from a company called Halberts Family Heritage offering the "World Book Of O'Donnells". This offer is not unique to O'Donnells as reported in the last issue of 'O Domhnaill Abu'. I ordered one because, anything about O'Donnells, I want to know about it. Well, a few days ago I received it, so now I know about it, and here are a few of my comments.

The first section deals with early Irish history and is very general. I have not studied it in any detail as I am only concerned with the sections pertaining to the O'Donnells.

Section II (11 pages) deals with, or purports to deal with, the origin of the surname, yet only four lines deal with the actual subject and I quote, "The surname O'Donnell appears to be patronymical in origin. Our research indicates that it can be associated with the Irish, meaning, "grandson of Domnall(world mighty)". Although this interpretation is the result of onomastic research, you may find other meanings for the O'Donnell family name." No mention is made of Domhnaill Mor or Dalach.

Section III (10 pages) deals with Coats of Arms and the only mention of O'Donnells is on page 49 where the O'Donnell Arms (according to them) is illustrated, 3 stars, 2 lions and a right hand - a far cry from the familiar hand-held cross. No motto is given.

Section IV is entitled 'How to Discover your Ancestors' and may be of use if your ancestors were American.

Those four sections take up 90 pages, almost half the book, the rest is devoted to the "O'Donnell International Registry" which, according to the introduction, was compiled from the following - 'electoral rolls, telephone directories, automobile registrations and cross street directories from eleven countries'.

"The following registry," it claims, "is the result of searching through large data-bases in many nations. As many Odonnell householders as possible have been recorded and included in the Odonnell International Registry. Thousands of dollars and months of effort were required in order to provide you with this valuable information."

It also states - "After searching through 150 million international

records, you will find provided the most complete International Registry of households sharing your name around the world. You'll discover specific statistical information about the Odonnell population in Australia, Canada, England, Ireland, New Zealand, Northern Ireland, Scotland, the United States of America and Wales. If you find there are no Odonnell households listed for a particular country, this valuable knowledge will save enormous time when you conduct your family research."

That last line, to my mind, is very important as it will save people much time and expense by not researching in the following places - Northern Ireland which has only two households, one in Antrim and one in Londonderry; Dublin, with only one household in Bray; Co. Mayo, to where over 2,000 O'Donnells were sent during Cromwell's Plantation, today has only 9 households, 8 of which are in Ballaghaderreen; Co. Donegal is not even mentioned, neither are the following Counties - Cavan, Galway, Cork, Wicklow, Sligo, Leitrim, Meath, West Meath, Louth, Monaghan, Kildare and Longford; Germany, one household; Austria, none; and Spain, like Donegal, doesn't get a mention.

So, where have all those O'Donnells gone?  
V.O'Donnell.

## Teamwork scheme for Red Hugh O'Donnell

Four hundred years ago this year, Red Hugh O'Donnell was inaugurated 'The O'Donnell' at Doon Rock, near Kilmacrennan. Accordingly, as part of the Year of the O'Donnell celebrations, the Donegal Genealogical Centre, in partnership with FÁS and Donegal County Council's Arts Committee, will set up an ongoing project over the coming months to construct a large scale street pageant which will re-enact and celebrate this auspicious inauguration.

FÁS have provided funding towards the recruitment of twelve project workers under a new TEAMWORK scheme which will commence next month and be based in Letterkenny. The TEAMWORK scheme will include ten project workers (who must be aged between 17 and 25 years) and two project supervisors. Interviews will be held at the FÁS Training Centre, Ballyraine, Letterkenny, between 10 a.m. and 12 p.m. on Monday next, February 24th.

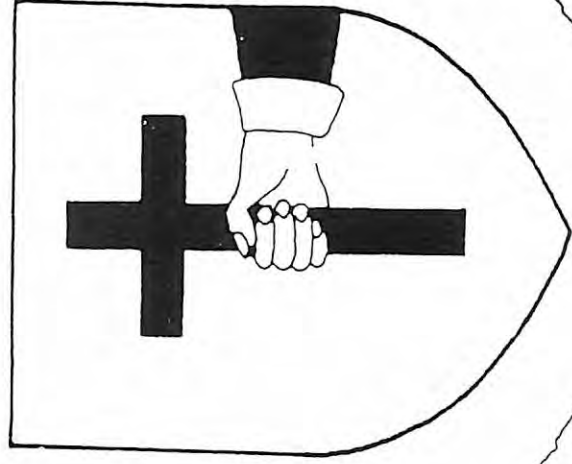
The project will run for 39 weeks and the first phase will entail the construction of the pageant for enactment at various centres around the county over the summer months. The first public performance is scheduled for July.

The project will involve much radical costume making and design, set design and construction of a large model of Doon Rock, prop-making, which may include everything from swords, shields and armour to animals, banners, masks, etc. If you are currently unemployed (and aged between 17 and 25; supervisors may be over 25) and have previous theatre, visual arts, set construction or allied skills, please contact Una Willis at FÁS, Letterkenny, on (074) 22200, or Donegal County Library (074) 21968 for further information.

Donegal Democrat 20th Feb. '92.



# Ó Dombhnaill Abú



*O Donnell Clan  
Newsletter No. 19  
Summer 1992*



Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill at the opening ceremony of the '92 Clan Gathering, Donegal Castle.

## AUSTRIAN VISITORS.

Countess Gabrielle Palffe of Austria visited Ireland in June this year. Her mother, Countess Marianne O'Donnell, of the Austrian branch did likewise in 1965. This was Countess Gabrielle's first visit and she spent a week here in Co. Donegal; a few days as a guest of Vincent(Editor) and Annette O'Donnell in Inver, and the rest, as a guest of Agnes Wilson, Greencastle, all of whom enjoyed the Countess's hospitality at one time or other at her home in Sigherstein Castle.

Her mother was married to Count Wolfgang Uberacker while Count Douglas O'Donnell(Marianne's brother) was married to Countess Elizabeth Uberacker; a double marriage. Thus, the Countess and Count Gabriel are first cousins. The Uberackers were of Austrian aristocracy while the Countess's late husband, Count Joseph Palffe, was of Hungarian stock but lost his large estate there as a result of the war. He and his wife, Countess Gabrielle, lived in her parental home, Schloss Sigherstein, which she inherited. Alas! Schloss Sigherstein was sold in May of this year as the family found its continued upkeep a financial burden.

The Countess was enthralled with the beauty of the Donegal scenery, fascinated by the variety of birds, wild flowers, the everchanging weather and light, and was overcome by the charm of the people, their friendliness and their generosity. She enjoyed witnessing sheepshearing on the farm of Cathal and Christina Campbell(nee O'Donnell). Christina, also, had met the Countess in Austria. The Countess visited Glencolmcille, St. John's Point and, of course, the castle and abbey in Donegal Town.

After leaving Co. Donegal she spent a few days with Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill(sister of our blood-line chief) in Dublin before returning to her home outside Salzburg.

Towards the end of July Count Douglas(Count Gabriel's son) and Count Rory(Count Johann's son) from Austria arrived in Ireland for three weeks. They, taking a break after studying for and setting university examinations, enjoyed O'Donnell hospitality in the land of their forefathers. During their



Countess Gabrielle Palffe admiring a cross-slab in Glencolmcille during her recent visit. Photo. V. O'Donnell.

stay with Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill in Dublin they toured the south and west of the Ireland. They, then, moved to Donegal where they were entertained by Vincent and Annette O'Donnell of Inver. Here, they enjoyed fishing for pollack and mackrel in Donegal Bay, wild brown trout in mountain lakes and salmon on the River Eany. Count Douglas landed three salmon(his first ever) while Count Rory netted a two-pound sea trout on the morning of Aug. 1st.

This being Count Rory's first time in Ireland, they were taken on a tour of the County visiting all places of O'Donnell importance including Daniel O'Donnell's home in Kincaslugh.

For two days, during the Mary From Dungloe festival, they were guests of Frankie Pa O'Donnell at his home in Burtonport where they enjoyed more fishing in the wild Atlantic along with some late-night sessions in Dungloe.

## O'DONNELL CLAN GATHERING '92

Friday the 12th June dawned a cloudless, sunny day with temperatures in the afternoon reaching the 80's. Since early the day before, O'Donnells and friends had been converging on Donegal Town for the 1992 O'Donnell Clan Gathering.

By 7.00 p.m. people were assembling in the grounds of the castle; admission to the actual building was not granted due to the restoration works being carried out by the Office of Public Works. It was 7.15 when the Chairman, (yours truly), addressed the assembly. Having welcomed everyone in gaelic and in english he, then, called on the colour party (from nearby Finner Army Barracks) to parade the colours. This was followed by a drum-roll during which Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill, representing her family, raised the O'Donnell Standard. 'O'Donnell Abu' was then played on the warpipes and immediately after that, the National Anthem was played on a trumpet by one of the soldiers. This completed the opening ceremony.

All, then, retired to the Hyland Central Hotel, where Ben O'Donnell, secretary of the Clan Association, introduced the special guests - Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill, sister of Fr. Hugh O.F.M., our blood-line chief; Micheline K. Walsh who was later to give a talk on Red Hugh's escape; Joe McGarrigle, Mayor of Donegal, and Mrs. McGarrigle; Lucius Emerson, curator of the Co. Donegal Historical Society's Museum and quite an authority on O'Donnell History, along with his wife, Kathleen, the Society's secretary; Mrs. Mary Crossan who organised the '80 and '82 Clan Gatherings; Fr. Philip Dean O.F.M. representing the Franciscan community in Tirconaill and, finally, Mrs. Hannah O'Hara, at the age of 87, the oldest O'Donnell present.

After some speeches in which many complimentary remarks were made, we all enjoyed the sit-down buffet. Then, it was time for the high-light of the evening, Micheline Kerney Walsh's lecture. It is always a joy to listen to Micheline and this night was no exception. She outlined in great detail, giving the political background of the time, Aodh Rua's capture and escape (see DDA No. 10) 400 years ago. Her talk was very much appreciated and a vote of thanks was returned by Lucius Emerson.



Editor with the oldest and youngest guests, Mrs. Hannah O'Hara and Manus O'Donel (Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill's son).

After a break, to allow everyone to digest Micheline's words and get to the bar, we were entertained to 20 minutes of Irish harp-playing and singing by the McDevitt sisters from Kilarney. This was followed by our Grand Draw; the coveted prize, a set of the Annals of the Four Masters, was won by Conan Bonner, a young boy from near-by Ballydevitt.

All evening, during breaks, people registered in the Clan Association. Background music was provided by our local, talented pianist, Conor Sinclair. Conor was also our official photographer for the week-end.

Friday evening ended sometime Saturday morning with the whole assembly singing 'O'Donnell Abu' and our National Anthem.

On Saturday morning a bank of clouds blocked out the sun but not our spirits as we journeyed off through Barnes Mor Gap in Feda O'Donnell's coach. Vincent O'Donnell, acting as guide, gave an account of the 'Gearran Ban People' who inhabited the Gap over 400 years ago. They were a notorious tribe who indulged in gruesome pagan rituals and terrorised those passing that way until Red Hugh became chieftain of Tirconaill and severely punished them.

This road through Barnesmore was the only highway in the days of Red Hugh and linked Donegal Town with Lifford. Lifford was our next stop and in the refurbished Courthouse we were entertained to a wine reception by two gentlemen from Northern Ireland who intend building a castle there. It was at Port na dTri Namhad near Lifford that Manus O'Donnell(21st Chieftain) built a magnificent castle in 1527 and these entrepreneurs propose building a holiday/leisure complex housed in a castle-like building.

In the Courthouse, also, we were given a talk on the history of Lifford by Belinda Mahaffey, a local historian followed by a tour of the prison cells. Manus a' Phice O'Donnell(see ODA No 7) served a term in one of those same cells.

The tour, then, moved on to Mongavlin Castle which was once owned by the O'Donnells and where Red Hugh's mother, Ineen Dubh, lived out her days after the Flight of the Earls in 1607. Our guide here was Pearl Miller.

Our next stop was the Pintavern in Letterkenny where we were treated to lunch by the proprietor, Alex O'Donnell.



At Mongavlin Castle during the '92 Gathering.

It was then on to Conwal Graveyard to hear Patsy O'Donnell talk of the exploits of Godfrey O'Donnell, one of our greatest chieftains(see ODA No. 13).

From there we journeyed to Gartan, birthplace of St. Colmcille, and beside it, Gartan Graveyard where lie the remains of Manus a' Phice. Manus's heroic escapade was described by Willie O'Donnell. Then, we moved on to nearby Rock of Doon where Vincent O'Donnell gave an account of the inauguration ceremony performed on this rock. 25 chieftains altogether were installed here beginning with Eighneachan in 1200 to Nial Garbh in 1603.

By now the weather had become quite inclement and the tourists were glad that our next stop was Teach Killindarragh where a marvellous meal was served by our hosts Danny(our vice-chairman) and Terry O'Donnell. The meal was followed by an Irish cabaret. The evening ended with the customary singing of 'O'Donnell Abu' and our National Anthem though strains of 'Walzing Matilda' could be heard as the tour guide did his best to get everyone back on board the coach. By the time the coach reached Donegal Town an hour and a half later(12.30 a.m.) the passengers hadn't quite got through singing all the songs in Sodlum's books 1,2 & 3.

Sunday, was a cool, slightly dull day. At 2.00 p.m., as planned, all assembled at the Hyland Central Hotel and followed the leader(again, Vincent O'Donnell) down to the ruins of the Abbey where Monsignor Carrabin outlined the history of this renowned Franciscan friary(see ODA No.17) and its association with the O'Donnells. We, then, moved to the Castle where both the Monsignor and Vincent described its building and history(see ODA No.1).

Immediately after, all gathered into the Hyland Central Hotel for an 'open forum' meeting. Here, at last, the visitors had a chance to talk, ask questions, make comments etc. A very lively and worthwhile meeting it was. The Clan Association, its activities, this Gathering and the future was discussed at length and all criticisms and proposals recorded by our secretary, Ben O'Donnell. The meeting was brought to a close at 6.00 p.m.



struggling  
through the  
'Seige of  
Ennis'

By 8.00 p.m. people began to arrive for the last event, the Farewell Dinner, which got under way by 8.20. After dinner there were the usual farewell and thank-you speeches. Specially inscribed Donegal Parian China harps with clocks were presented to both Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill and Micheline K. Walsh our very special guests for the weekend. Then, to the music of the Shamrock Ceili Band we danced our way into Monday morning. Some of those from afar were coming to grips with our ceili dances by

the end of the night, it is hoped they will perfect those skills for the next Gathering. The committee was very thankful to Hannah O'Hara(our oldest O'Donnell present) for donating some hand-crafted linen which realised over £60 in a raffle. Finally, the evening, and the 1992 O'Donnell Clan Gathering, ended with all forming a ring and singing 'O'Donnell Abu' and our National Anthem. Farewells were said, addresses swopped and slowly people drifted away.  
V. O'Donnell.



Counts Douxi and Rory during their summer visit to Ireland.

New members enrolled since the last list published in No. 16.

- D141 Katriash O'Donnell, 14 Swilly Park, Letterkenny.
- D142 Anne McDiarmid, Dunleway, Letterkenny.
- D143 James F. Conley, 7A Meadowbrook, Mill Rd., Corbally, Limerick
- D144 Ene Sheehan, Salvadore, Bishop's Town Rd., Cork.
- D145 Patrick B. O'Donnell, 833 Summerset Dr., Hockessin, Delaware 19707, U.S.A.
- D146 Thomas Peter O'Donnell, American Embassy/ INB, PSC 59 BOX 60, APD AE WF324, U.S.A.
- D147 Brendan O'Donnell, 10592 John Ayres DR., Fairfax, VA. 22032, U.S.A.
- D148 Sgt. Adrian O'Donnell, Custume Barracks, Athlone.
- D149 Br. Michael, Daniel O.M., St. John of God Hospital, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin.
- D150 Hugh O'Donnell, St. Francis's Tce., Pennyburn, Derry.
- D151 Lucius Emeragh, Civan Barron, Ballyshannon.
- D152 J. Vincent O'Donnell, 26 De Bretagne, Saint Lambert, Quebec, Canada J4B 1A1.
- D153 Hannah O'Hara, Morevduff, Dromahair, Co. Leitrim.
- D154 Francis O'Donnell, Hillcrest Drive, Kesh Rd., Irvinstown, Co. Fermanagh.
- D155 Charles O'Donnell, Dickson Street Bookshop, 325 West Dickson St., Fayetteville, Ark. 72701, U.S.A.
- D156 Mrs. S. M. Gartlett, 62 Argyll Rd., Kinross, Tayside KY13 7BL, Scotland.

JOE O'DONNELL, WARTIME PHOTOGRAPHER.  
(Copy of an article in The Tennessean, 30th July 1990.)

**FRANK RITTER**

*Staff Writer*

**W**HEN atomic bombs brought an horrendous end to World War II in August of 1945, U.S. Marine Sgt. Joseph R. O'Donnell was there to record the bitter aftermath.

But negatives of pictures the 23-year-old combat photographer took of the devastation lay untouched for decades in musty old attic trunks — until last year.

Now, a handful of those dramatic photos have been assembled in an exhibit to be displayed at Cheekwood Fine Arts Center, starting Saturday with an opening from 1 to 5 p.m., and extending through Aug. 26.

"My pictures — seen here for the first time — and my comments about nuclear war are long overdue," says O'Donnell, now 68 and retired to Nashville after having served under five different U.S. presidents as a White House photographer.

"I regret that I kept quiet for the last 45 years. I needed to make a statement on the nuclear issue. I feel that dropping the bombs was morally wrong, just as much as the Holocaust was.

"I hope to remind people of how it was in Japan 45 years ago, and how it could be again, but worse. The threat of nuclear war is still with us today. Peace is our only hope."

How it was in Japan in 1945 has long been the subject of debate. The question: Was the U.S. justified in dropping the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

The first bomb, dropped Aug. 6 on Hiroshima, killed 92,000 outright; others died later from radiation. The second bomb, on Aug. 9, killed 40,000 in Nagasaki. Japan surrendered Aug. 14, 1945.

O'Donnell, a native of Johnstown, Pa., joined the Marines at the age of 19, just days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

During the next four years, he learned to be a combat photographer, and was dispatched to the Japanese island of Kyushu in early September of 1945 to photograph the landing of American occupation forces after the

war's end.

For the next six months, O'Donnell spent most of his time in nearby Hiroshima and Nagasaki, traveling about the countryside and taking pictures of the devastation — both to people and to what formerly had been their homes and communities.

What O'Donnell witnessed was not to be believed. "It was hard to believe I was still standing on the planet Earth," he says. "This was man-made disaster of the cruelest kind — an act against humanity that killed women, children, the elderly, the innocent."

O'Donnell usually used a jeep to get around. "But once," he says, "I traded cigarettes for a horse; it took me to areas where the jeep wouldn't go.

"I slept on the ground, and often would wake up with 25 little Japanese boys standing around me. I was armed with a 45 and a bowie knife, and they seemed to be afraid of me. They wouldn't pose at first. I had to devise something to warm them up.

"So, I started taking Hershey bars and cigarettes with me to hand out. Of course, times change: Today, I wouldn't be giving away cigarettes, because of the health hazards."

There were hazards then to his own health that O'Donnell didn't realize until years later. Radiation from the atomic blasts had long-range effects — both on the bombs' survivors, and on those who visited the area.

O'Donnell left the Marines in March of 1946 and then became a White House photographer. He served under Presidents Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon, and photographed many of the world's leaders. He retired from that position in 1968, and moved from Clinton, Mich., to Nashville 10 years ago.

"None of us back then in 1945 knew the dangers of radiation," O'Donnell says. "Little did I know how that would change my life."

O'Donnell characterizes himself as "lucky," despite having undergone more than 40 surgeries during the past two decades, the most recent a spinal implant.



If was after one such operation last year, when he was in much pain and depressed, that he went on a religious retreat at the Sisters of Loretto Motherhouse in Kentucky. He had been asking God, "Why have I been spared all these years?" At Loretto one day, he saw a sculpture done by a resident nun, Sister Jeanne Deuber. Suddenly he had the answer to his question.

The life-sized figure of a flame-scarred man on a cross was titled "Once." It was created in honor of the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

"It triggered in me memories of my own experience," O'Donnell recalls. "And it inspired me to think about my own possible contribution to the effort to prevent nuclear war. I had been spared all those years so I could make my own statement."

He went home and started going through the musty trunks, filled with negatives, all carefully packaged and labeled. From them, O'Donnell chose about two dozen for display at the Cheekwood exhibit marking the 45th anniversary of the dropping of the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

"If you expect to see lots of horrible pictures and piles of burned victims waiting to be cremated, you will not," he explains. "I will not exploit the victims again. I will never live long enough to forget how I intimidated them once by taking pictures of

## MONGAVLIN CASTLE

(Talk given at Mongavlin Castle by Pearl Millar during the '92 Clan Gathering and published here with her kind permission.)

As you know the O'Donnells are descendents of one Domhnall, died 901, a descendent of Conall Gulban one of the three sons of Niall of the Nine Hostages and for four centuries one of the most powerful families in Ireland. Originally they were based around Kilmacrennan but from the 13th century they became the leading sept in Tirconaill. There are over 300 references to individual O'Donnells in the Annals of the Four Masters. The name O'Donnell is first mentioned in the Annals in 1010 e.g. Maolruaraidh O'Donnell Lord of Cineal Lughdeach.

In 1263 Donnell O'Breslen, chief of Fanad, was slain in the Bishop's Court at Raphoe by Donall Og O'Donnell, Lord of Tirconaill (1258-1281). So presumably O'Donnells were living in, and defending, the area at that time. There are many references to the Lough Foyle area and while this often means Derry or even Lifford the land between must surely have been inhabited by O'Donnells.

First the Danes, then the Normans who ruled until 1333, the English, and the O'Donnells, O'Neills and O'Dohertys fought for this land. In the struggle for territorial supremacy between O'Neill and O'Donnell the ownership of this stretch of land would have swung between the two. If O'Neill was supreme the boundary would have been the Swilly, if O'Donnell, the Foyle. The rivalry between Cineal Conaill and Cineal Eoghain was the abiding feature of the history of the 'Lagan' i.e. this area of Donegal, until the end of the 16th century. In 1557 Calvagh O'Donnell encamped on top of Binion Hill, visible from the castle, and routed, with the help of gallowglasses, Shane O'Neill and his army. Scottish raiding parties would covet the area also. In 1586 Alsander MacDonnell of the Isles, a relative of Inion Dubh, led a particularly severe raid. They were only defeated when Sean Og O'Doherty and Hugh Dubh O'Donnell informed the English garrison in Lifford that MacDonnell was intending to attack them. This was not necessarily true but Alsander was defeated by the English at Bun an Abair near Mongavlin, and Hugh Dubh did not have to fight his wife's relatives! Cineal Conaill often worked through the O'Dohertys to establish dominance of the area [they had the

growing stone at Ardnadition (Ard na dTaoisigh - Chieftain's Hill) near Manorcunningham].

The best documented connection of the O'Donnells to Mongavlin Castle is in the latter part of the 16th century. Mongavlin was originally Maghgaibhlin meaning 'the plain of the little river fork'. Hugh Dubh O'Donnell had married an Irishwoman by whom he had two sons, Rory and Domhnall, and a daughter, Siobhan, who married Hugh O'Neill. His second wife was Finola MacDonnell (Inion Dubh) daughter of James MacDonnell of the Isles. This castle of Mongavlin was her chief house, another of her houses was at Carrigans. The State Paper recording her possessions reads 'From Cul-Mac-Tryan runs a bogg 3 miles in length to the side of Lough Foyle - in the midst of the bogg is a standing houghe called Bunaber - here at Bunaber dwells O'Donnells mother (Ineed Dubh MacDonnell). Three miles above Cargan stands a fort called Mc Gevvelin upon the river of Lough Foyle - O'Donnells mothers chief house.' The site of the Carrigans house is said to have been where the old flax mill was situated and was used around 1599 as a site for a small defensive castle (one of six built by Dowcra, the English commander at Lifford.)

Hugh Dubh, with his wife Finola, Inion Dubh, and their offspring Red Hugh, Rory and Nuala in particular are the most interesting part of the O'Donnell connection with this castle. If Inion Dubh came here as a bride, it must have been inhabited by O'Donnells from at least 1570 but probably from much earlier. Inion Dubh herself was a remarkable woman for her time, in many ways a contradiction. She was beautiful - described as "the fair Inion Dubh, the Dark Daughter". She was also ruthless, described in Elizabeth's Irish Wars as a "capable Scots virago" whose ambition was to secure for her son, Red Hugh, the chieftaincy of the country and would stop at nothing to do so. Fear of this ambition may have led to the kidnap of Red Hugh in 1587. An illegitimate brother of Red Hugh who had also aspired to the chieftaincy had been "put out of the way" by Inion Dubh. Some historians say she dominated her husband Hugh Dubh - they describe her as "an enterprising

Scots wife dominating a sluggish Irish husband". She was certainly the channel by which great numbers of Scottish mercenaries (galloglaigh) came to Ireland. On her marriage she brought with her 100 Scottish mercenaries, 80 of them reputedly the "tallest men in Scotland" and all Crawford. Descendants of these Crawfords live in the area to this day and some can recall stories of their ancestors being gardeners at Mongavlin Castle. In Red Hugh's upbringing and the hatred of the English which she inspired in a family recently loyal she exercised a great influence on the fate of Ireland. In Sean O Faolain's "The Great O'Neill" Inion Dubh is described as being 'imbued with a relentless hatred of the English'.

Interestingly enough her mother, Lady Agnes MacDonnell, widow of James MacDonnell of the Isles married Hugh O'Neill at about the same time as Finola married Hugh Dubh. On the subject of mercenaries, one historian records that the Northern chiefs at one time used the galleys of Grainne O'Malley to ferry the Galloglaigh from Scotland, which surely would have been an exciting sight on the Foyle.

The story of Red Hugh is legend, and many glowing descriptions of him are to be found. It was said of him that he never suffered wrong, reverse or insult without taking immediate vengeance and that he was a warlike, predatory, aggressive plunderer of other's 'territories'. On the other hand he was a dove in meekness and gentleness to all who did not oppose him, not a common standard for a Celtic prince. His morals were pure, an even rarer virtue. He was a man of middle height, with ruddy hair and skin, hence "Rua" and wonderfully handsome. His speech was eloquent and his voice musical. He was altogether a remarkable young man. Some say that if Red Hugh had lived he might have come to be recognised as a greater man than Hugh O'Neill.

Of Inion Dubh's other family, Rory became the first Earl of Tirconaill in 1603 and in 1607 fled with the Earls from Rathmullan. He was married to Bridget Fitzgerald of Kildare. Their young son Hugh fled with him but Bridget was at home with her family in Maynooth and pregnant with their second child at the time. She had to make the best of being the wife of a so-called 'traitor' but she continued defiantly to sign herself 'Bridget O'Donnell' until her death. Her daughter, Mary, known as Mary

Stuart O'Donnell was notorious for her rebellious associations and as a teenager helped her kinsmen in England. Nuala, Red Hugh's sister, formerly married to the infamous Niall Garbh O'Donnell, who changed sides as most do socks, left him and fled also. She tutored the young Hugh, Rory's son, in Louvain. He was drowned in a sea-battle in 1642. The same infamous Niall Garbh slew his brother-in-law Manus at Lifford. He, also, on one occasion threw Inion Dubh out of Mongavlin and installed himself to keep a watch for loot in Derry when Sir Cahir O'Doherty was trying to recapture it. David Crafford, probably one of Finola's Crawfords, also fled as Rory's butler, but later returned.

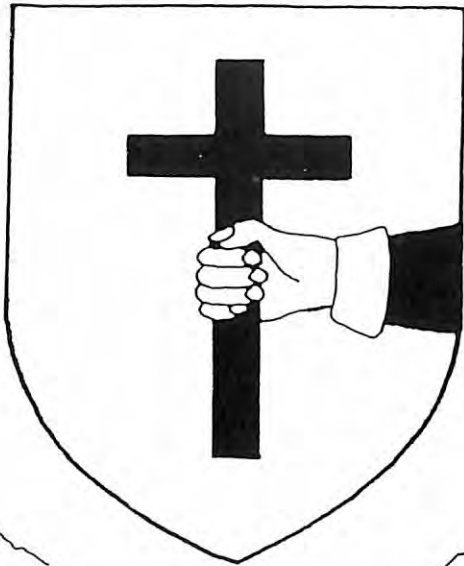
The association of the O'Donnells with the ownership of this site came to an end with the Plantation of Ulster when the area was granted to the Duke of Lennox. On the 23rd July 1610 Ludovic Kennedy, Duke of Lennox, was given 1,000 acres at Mongavlin and a house was started here before 1619. The castle was 50 ft. in length by 23ft. wide, three and a half stories high with four flankers, three of which are still visible and an iron door portcullis-wise to raise in front of the castle facing the Foyle. The castle, later, came into the hands of the Abercorn family and by the 1800's had fallen into disrepair. At the time of the Siege of Derry in 1689 King James is said to have made his headquarters at Mongavlin. Local legends say he later moved to a small house in St. Johnston, inhabited by a family called Cowan. Ironically, a son of this household was inside Derry's walls helping to defend the city. James, also, is said to have viewed the rich land from Binion Hill and remarked, "a land well worth a fight, my Lord". The Lennoxes and Abercorns are all gone from the district. Only the O'Donnells and the Crawfords, once so humbly connected with the Castle, now remain.

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# Ó Domhnaill Abú



*O Donnell Clan  
Newsletter No. 20*

*Spring 1993*



Preparing the roof timbers for Donegal Castle.

## Four O'Donnells from 'Beautiful Mayo'

In May of 1816 John and Richard O'Donnell from Co. Mayo joined the British Army. They were, then, in their early twenties. Two years later their regiment set sail for Canada. By summer of 1819 they found themselves in Upper Canada(now Ontario) where they spent the next ten years quelling any resurgence which followed the war of 1812.

Richard's wife, Mary Regan, came to Canada with the regiment and lived with her husband wherever he was posted. This was not common at the time. Two of their children are known to have been born in such camps. Wives and children, if they did accompany their husbands, had to share a one-roomed wooden building with other soldiers and exist on half rations. However, it was possible for women to earn money by doing laundry and sewing for the officers and at some camps it was even possible to grow their own crops.

John returned to Ireland in 1830 and was discharged due to a leg injury. The following year he married Margaret Joyce in Castlebar and, shortly after, both emigrated to Canada, arriving there on the 12th July 1831. By 1832 they were living in Niagara while Richard and his family resided in Ottawa.

At this time it was British policy to settle Upper Canada with the 'right sort of people' by giving discharged soldiers a hundred acres of land to farm. Both Richard and John availed of the offer and in 1832 received their hundred acre plots in the township of Gwillimbury, Simcoe County, some 60 miles north of Toronto.

However, much of the land was swamp and not very suitable for farming. In addition, this land had recently been taken from its inhabitants, the Ojibway Indians, from whom the new settlers often had to defend themselves. Where the land wasn't swampy it was virgin forest which required alot of hard work before planting could commence. Added to this was the task of building a suitable shelter before the onset of winter.

Soon, they encountered the difficulties caused by the long harsh winter; crops planted too early could be destroyed by late spring frosts while crops planted too late could be destroyed by late summer frosts. Yet, John prospered. Soon he invited his younger brother, Anthony, then living in Ireland, to join him. Anthony did and soon he and his wife, Mary Rowan of Castlebar, settled on the south-east half of John's farm. In 1846

Anthony bought that 50 acres from John and both families lived side by side.

Richard's progress was much similar to John's. In the mid 1800's he had a Roger O'Donnell from Castlebar and his wife Bridget Tunny along with four children arrive with him. Exactly where they lived is not clear, perhaps they had some arrangement similar to John and Anthony's.

So by the mid 1800's we find four O'Donnell families living in West Gwillimbury, all from the Castlebar area of Co. Mayo. Records show they served as witnesses to each other's marriages, and sponsors at the baptism of each other's children but they didn't intermarry which may indicate the possibility of all being closely related.

Later on, other Castlebar families settled in the area - Thomas and Nancy(Hollaran) Gibbons with two sons, McNallys and Dillions, all of whom intermarried with the O'Donnells until a small Mayo community developed there, a community which carried on the music, songs and traditions of their former home. Finally, many of those pioneers found their last earthly home in the Holy Martyrs Cemetery outside Bradford, Ontario. On John's tombstone is the following inscription -

"Farewell friends and children dear,  
I am not dead but sleeping here.  
Short was my stay; long my rest,  
God called me home; He thought it best."

Today their descendants are to be found in many parts of Canada and in all walks of life, but wherever they are, come St. Patrick's Day, they are all as Irish as their ancestors who left their homeland, 'Beautiful Mayo', almost two centuries ago.

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Condensed from an article sent to me by Nancy the wife of John, great-grandson of Anthony and Mary. V.O'Donnell.



Matthew O'Donnell,  
John's great-grandson.  
Last O'Donnell to live  
in W. Gwillimbury.

Fr. William O'Donnell - 'The Waterloo Priest'

In Clonmany Graveyard is the grave of the Gaelic poet Donnchadh O'Donnell (1700-'78). Donnchadh's brother, Dean Conn O'Donnell P.P. had Carn Church built in 1787. He was buried in Fahan in 1795. In the same grave was buried another brother, Patrick O'Donnell (1704-'71). The latter's family included two more distinguished sons - Bishop Charles O'Donnell and his brother Owen. Owen with his wife, Margaret McDavitt, are buried in the family plot in Cockhill Old Graveyard, Buncrana. Their family included three priests - Fr. Charles (1778-1817), Fr. William, 'The Waterloo Priest' (1779-1856), and Fr. Denis (1783-1817). All three are buried with their parents. One flat stone is inscribed to the memory of Fr. Charles and Fr. Denis both of whom died the same fateful year of the typhus epidemic - 1817. A tall tombstone by itself bares the long epitaph to the third priest-brother, 'The Waterloo Priest', who outlived the other two by almost forty years.

William O'Donnell was born in 1779 and grew up in Inishowen. He received his early schooling from Tom McColgan a well-known classical teacher and in 1802 entered Maynooth Seminary. Although he finished his course in philosophy and theology, he did not take Holy Orders but instead took a commission in the British Army in 1811.

He served throughout the Peninsular War against Napoleon, was Aide-de-Camp to General Ross before the Battle of Pamplona in 1815 and personal adviser to Wellington himself. A war medal presented to Lieutenant William O'Donnell commemorates the two great victories of Vittoria and Pyrenees by which the French were driven out of the Iberian Peninsula. Indeed, the same campaign was a very bloody affair and William was one of the very few surviving officers. According to French reports of the time, his regiment, the 20th Foot, was almost totally annihilated.

Another report tells us that after the Battle of Pamplona he was complimented by his commander and congratulated by his fellow officers, "upon having so narrowly escaped the death-dealing French bullets

which carried off a portion of his garments....."

Lieut. O'Donnell served in many other actions as well culminating in the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo, 18th June 1815 where an estimated 45,000 lost their lives.

Three years later, after the death of his two priest-brothers, Fathers Charles and Denis, this veteran of the battle-fields of Europe was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Derry. He administered his pastoral duties in Inishowen where he fought another campaign to defeat the unjust tithe system which overburdened the people. For his own refusal to pay this unfair tax he was imprisoned in Lifford Gaol in 1838. His release and return to Inishowen turned out to be a triumphant march with crowds of people turning out to cheer and accompany him along the way. Now, he was a hero of the Tithe War!

Nor did he neglect his duties as Parish Priest. He did much improvement to church buildings, was a strong advocate of temperance and had five schools built in his parish for the education of the catholic youth.

According to tradition, he rode a white horse all his priestly life, was a fine, erect figure, a master of every situation, his courage was manifested in difficult times, especially during the Famine years of 1845 - '48. Here's the last verse of a song - 'The Three O'Donnells' - popular in Inishowen.

"Here's a health to Father William boys,  
Who fought at Waterloo,  
He fought the French and Spaniards  
Till he made the two subdue,  
He fought them with his army  
Till he could no longer stand:  
He was once a bold lieutenant  
But he's now our clergyman."

Father William O'Donnell, popularly known as 'The Waterloo Priest', died on the 10th Oct. 1856, aged 77.

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Sources: "The Waterloo Priest" by J. Fitzgerald, Donegal Annual 1977. Derry Journal - 'The Waterloo Priest' by Wayfarer 4/4/'92.

It is now 1993. Let's look back 400 years to 1593. It was now a year since Aodh Rua's escape. According to his biographer, Lughaidh O Clerigh, 'When he had settled in his princely seat and his chieftain's residence in Lifford (24th January, 1593), confronting his enemy, Turloch Luineach O Neill, he proceeded to wreak his vengeance and his enmity on him by driving him from his principality and weakening him, in the hope that Aodh O Neill might be inaugurated in his place. The foresight which he used proved of advantage to him, for the chieftaincy fell in the end to Aodh O Neill, and Turloch Luineach gave his consent and yielded to him as to the title that he should be styled O Neill. He was proclaimed after that and Turloch sent away the English who were with him, since he entered into agreement and friendship with O Domhnaill. In the month of May exactly, in the year of our Lord 1593, he did this.'

Already, we see no time being wasted by this nineteen-year old Chieftain of Clan Dalaigh in not alone putting his own house in order but also those of his neighbours in preparation for the coming struggle. All too often Aodh Rua has been described as being hot-headed, erratic, impulsive and imprudent, requiring the advice and guidance of the older, shrewder Hugh O'Neill. Lucius Emerson in the 1960 Donegal Annual argues, 'It is hard to understand why such qualities could be ascribed to one who could organise a system of defence and attack covering Sligo, Ballymote, Collooney, and Dunaveeragh, a system that eventually gave him the well-planned victory of the Curlews. His lightning raids into Connacht, Leinster, and Thomond had the speed and brilliance of an expert cavalry commander. His 'treating' with the Lord Deputy, his meeting with the commissioners at Agnoskye, the letters and envoys he and O'Neill sent to the King of Spain, his 'setting on the fence' when O'Neill and Bagenal defeated Maguire at Atha Cuil Uain (but three miles from where O'Donnell then was, at Ballyshannon), his present of fifty beeves to the victorious Bagenal on this occasion, his arrangements meantime to hire gallowglasses from Scotland. All these actions certainly indicate a man clever and mature beyond his years (about

nineteen), a man who could see, as clearly as O'Neill, that a conflict was inevitable, but who knew he needed time, desperately. To allow the conflict to develop now (1593) would be to invite disaster.'

Morwenna Donnelly, writing in her article, 'Red Hugh at Dundalk,' Donegal Annual 1957, has this to say -

'Men of genius are never simple and any statement of Red Hugh which seeks to imply that a dynamic temperament was not under control of a keen and realistic mind, is a superficial one. Within eighteen months, young and totally inexperienced, he had radically changed the situation in West Ulster; what he effected could only have been accomplished by a highly disciplined man with balanced judgment. An unstable, hot-head, even under the influence of a much older and more experienced man, could hardly have survived a month in the Tirconnell quicksand.'

From the many letters and documents in the Spanish archives we learn that Aodh Rua spent quite a lot of time during '93 petitioning for Spanish aid and encouraging the Gaelic Chieftains to unite against the English.

Sean O'Donnell(\*) states that Aodh Rua 'was the central figure in Ireland around which plans for a war with Spanish aid were to be launched. The plan of that war was not confined to Tir Chonaill or Ulster, it embraced the four provinces.' O'Neill, at this time, made every effort to have it believed by everyone, with a few exceptions, that he was loyal to the Crown. By April, the English in Dublin were worried as they had neither the man-power nor the money to withstand, as they said, 'The fury of the Spaniards.' Reports arrived almost daily of fleets being prepared in Spanish and Portuguese ports to take troops to Ireland, while spies reported of Ulster Chieftains swearing loyalty to the confederate cause and hiring gallowglasses from Scotland. Most of the same Chieftains had at some time during the previous few years offered their submission to Dublin and had been pardoned and promised protection. But no one was being fooled. The Irish were buying time to make their preparations while the Dublin officials, fearing Spanish intervention, thought it prudent not to incite hostilities.

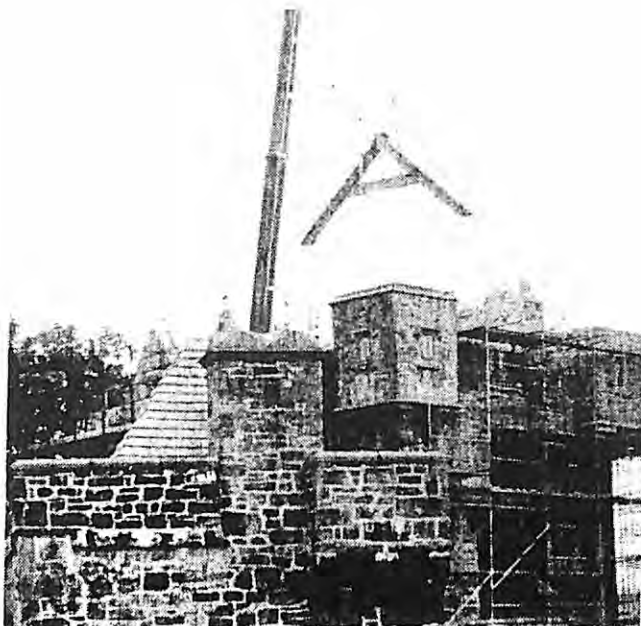
Maguire of Fermanagh was the only exception. Though he had joined the confederates and given his oath of allegiance, and had also submitted and was pardoned by the Lord Deputy, yet he continued to cause much trouble to the English. Finally, on the 10th October, an English force under the command of Marshall Sir Henry Bagenal moved against him. They met at Ath Cul Uain on the Erne near Beleek. Maguire's forces were put to flight and in the pursuit 340 of them were killed. Maguire himself escaped, with a handful of men, to his castle at Enniskillen. O'Neill fought with the English that day and received a leg wound which we are told (by O Clerigh) delighted him as it should cause the English not to have any suspicion of him. O'Neill had no intention, nor O'Donnell either, of taking part in a general war until the arrival of the Spaniards and until they were satisfied the time was ripe, but 1593 was drawing to a close with no sign of Spaniards. Eventually, when they did take the field it was not because the time was ripe but being forced to do so by circumstances.

\* Sean O'Donnell of Creeslough, Co. Donegal produced a very detailed history (unpublished) of the O'Donnell Clan as his thesis for a Ph.D. degree.

#### Castle Repairs.

The restoration work continues on the O'Donnell castle, Donegal Town. The top of the walls had to be rebuilt to take the timber trusses that will support the roof. The timber began to arrive last summer, four hundred tons of Irish oak, having already been prepared in the Board of Public Works' depot in Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim. I watched one day as two men with sledge hammers and crowbars inched the mortice & tenon joints together on the ground.

A few days later the trusses were hoisted into place by crane - I wondered how it was done in 1474 when first roofed. Indeed, this is the third roof. Before Red Hugh departed Tirconnel in 1601 he had the roof removed to render the castle useless to the English. But



after his death in 1602 it was re-roofed by either his brother, Rory, or Sir Basil Brook, Lord Brookborough, who got possession of it under the Plantation of Ulster 1609. It is ironic that the oak being used now was grown on the present Brookborough estate, Co. Fermanagh.

When all the roofing-timber is in place, (and it will be timber only, no metal nails, bolts or brackets will be used), slabs of Meenaneery stone will be used to cover it, I am told.

Last year the right-hand turret was rebuilt to match the existing one on the left but then it was noticed that the latter (see front cover ODA No. 10) was not 100% safe so it was removed stone by stone and rebuilt.

While I applaud the great work being done to this, our greatest O'Donnell relic, yet I feel it a pity that it is being restored to its former English style rather than its original Irish style.

V. O'Donnell.

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## Archbishop Patrick Mary O'Donnell.

Patrick M. O'Donnell was the son of a farmer, Thomas O'Donnell of Fethard, Co. Tipperary and was the youngest of a family of sixteen. He was born in 1897 and received his early education, firstly, from the Presentation Sisters, secondly, from the Patrician Brothers. He, then, moved to Limerick where he was taught by the Jesuit Fathers and afterwards spent a short while in All Hallows College, Dublin. From this stay in Dublin Patrick had vivid memories of the Easter Rising of 1916 and met several of the leaders, John Redmond, Thomas Ashe, Sean T. O'Kelly, to mention but a few.

Patrick then continued his studies in Rome where he was ordained by Cardinal Pompili, Vicar General to the Pope, on 15th April 1922. At the end of June the now Dr. O'Donnell returned to Ireland before taking up his post in Australia. His departure from Ireland was complicated by the Irish Civil War of 1922, as internal communications were greatly disrupted. Dr. O'Donnell approached the commander of the Republican troops in his home area, Eamonn de Valera, who soon secured his ticket for him. From this incident a strong, lasting friendship developed.

Upon his arrival in Australia in late October 1922, Dr. O'Donnell took up duty in the Diocese of Sale, where he served under Bishop Phelan, a family friend. He fulfilled the duties of curate at the Sale Cathedral 1922-30, Administrator of the Cathedral 1930-37, and became Parish Priest of Leongatha, South Gippsland in 1937. In 1941 he was appointed Vicar General of the Diocese and in 1944 Pope Pius XII created him a Domestic Prelate. In 1946 he was promoted to Monsignor and appointed as Parish Priest of Warragul, Victoria. Three years later on St. Patrick's Day 1949 he was consecrated Coadjutor Archbishop of Brisbane by His Eminence, Cardinal Gilroy of Sydney. After the death of Archbishop Duhig in April 1965, Patrick Mary O'Donnell assumed his right of accession as the third Archbishop of Brisbane. His 16 years as Coadjutor gave him an intimate knowledge of the complexities of running the Archdiocese.

It is significant that his appointment was made at a time when the Church in Australia was emerging from its strong



identification with Irish issues and was intent on developing its own identity. The fact that the appointment came some 20 years after the Vatican began promoting the policy of Australian-born clergy, emphasises the exceptional nature of Dr. O'Donnell's selection. It was also a significant tribute to his talents, popularity and acceptability. He was the last Irish-born bishop appointed in Australia.

Archbishop O'Donnell always involved himself busily with the affairs of the Archdiocese. His energies were used in modernising and extending educational facilities and religious institutions. He was to the forefront in promoting ecumenism and was instrumental in breaking down many barriers between Catholics and other Christians. He wholeheartedly implemented the changes introduced by the Second Vatican Council in the mid-sixties.

In 1954 he led a pilgrimage to Rome, Lourdes and Ireland visiting many Marian shrines. They were warmly welcomed by the Bishops and people of Cork and Kerry during their visit there. The Archbishop, of course, also visited his native home. He, again, visited Ireland in 1961 when he represented the Australian Bishops at the commemoration of the 1500th anniversary of the death of St. Patrick.

At his Golden Jubilee Mass in 1972 the following message from Pope Paul VI was read, "For you it has been a long journey full of hard work. By your zeal, dedication and prudent wisdom, you have ensured that the house of God is solidly built in Brisbane. Now you can pause for a moment as one who has come into harbour and look back on the course of your life."

On March of the following year he retired from his position. By this time he had been a member of the Catholic hierarchy for almost 25 years and was one of the most senior and

highly-regarded churchmen in Australia. He had the reputation of a great churchman, historian, litterateur and, in the best of Irish traditions, a great story-teller. He was honoured in the Catholic newspaper, The Catholic Leader, in 1979 where he was described as a distinguished Irishman, with outstanding personal qualities and a churchman of high scholarship, spirituality and apostolic zeal, another example of the many Irish, both lay and religious, who had made such an enormous contribution to the Church in Australia.

Archbishop O'Donnell died on 2nd November 1980 and was interred at St. Stephen's Cathedral, Brisbane. A few hours after he was laid to rest on the 6th November, Requiem Mass was concelebrated in his native Fethard.

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The above is a synopsis of an article submitted by John Dale, Queensland, a long-time subscriber to this Newsletter. V. O'Donnell.

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## THE O'DONNELLS AND THEIR HERALDRY

A Talk given by Patrick O'Kelly de Conejera at the 1980  
O'Donnell Clan Gathering in Donegal Town.

### Introduction

Tradition has it that St. Patrick himself inscribed the Cross on the shield of the O'Donnell's ancestral Chief with the words, 'In this sign conquer', and considering the background involved this can not easily be dismissed as a romantic fable.

Succeeding his father as commander in Roman Britain in 306, and proclaimed Emperor by his troops, St. Constantine had a vision of the Cross with the words, 'In this sign conquer' on the eve of his greatest battle in Italy. The vision may be questioned but his use of the Cross and these words is established, and his victory led him to the Holy Throne of Constantinople, from where he raised the persecuted Church to become the official religion of the Empire.

If St. Patrick was born in Roman Britain around 385, the son of a Deacon and grandson of a priest, he would surely have known of St. Constantine and revered him for the greatest service to the Christian faith since the time of the Apostles. Brought up within this tradition, it is logical that St. Patrick would have used it in his conversion of an Irish warrior Chief.

The use of tribal symbols whereby a cross might be borne on a shield or banner was common to most early peoples, including the Celts and Anglo-Saxons, but the Irish Clans retained the continuity of their organisation and their symbols free from the Roman occupation which broke that of the Anglo-Saxons.

The evolution of these Clan symbols into heraldic form is evident throughout our ancient manuscripts, such as the Book of Leinster, which records the Golden Lion on the Green Banner of Congal in 634. Thus, by the 12th and 13th centuries, when the Clans remained in full force, the development of heraldry in Europe as a whole influenced the style of their Arms, but did not represent an innovation as in other countries.

This continuity of heraldic tradition is possibly unique to Ireland, arising from our isolation, and the retention of our native social structures until a comparatively late date. It is all the more unfortunate therefore, that so many who profess to support our own traditions should fail to do so in the field of heraldry.

The problem may lie in misunderstanding, since our Clans had a different social structure to that which arose from the lands of the old Roman Empire, and used heraldry for a different purpose. To foster the Irish heraldic tradition as we should, therefore, we must first understand its different roots and the manner in which they have merged into the heraldry of today.

#### The Nature of Clan Society

The Clan was essentially a collective body of five primary classes; the first three of which were Kings, Nobles and Freeborn with substantial property. They were all styled as Aires or privileged people, and had some part in the Clan administration.

The fourth class were the Freeborn with little or no property, forming the bulk of the Clan; but all the Freeborn were styled as Urrad, related to the German Uradel meaning original Nobleese, with specific rights and responsibilities in accordance with the Brehon Law.

The fifth class were the Unfree, including some of the Clan name, adopted strangers and slaves. They had few, if any, rights, hence the Clan name does not necessarily convey all the Clan rights.

Relationships between the Clans followed similar principles, each Clan being autonomous, with the Chiefs of the lesser owing allegiance to those of the greater, often with a basis of common descent and hereditary rights; and in turn the greater Chiefs owed allegiance to those still higher.

The ancient designation of all these Chiefs as Kings has obscured the fact that the highest represented, and still represent Royal Lines comparable with any in Europe, while the lowest might be compared with the Ruling Counts of the Continent since they all had a degree of autonomy beyond that of the European Lordships.

Never-the-less, all the Irish Chiefs were essentially the leading member of their Clan, as an extended family group in which all the Freeborn had at least a theoretical relationship, and specific rights and responsibilities within the Brehon Law by which they were governed.

Against this background the whole purpose of Clan Arms was to identify the Clan and represent its collective

power and authority to outsiders: normally with a banner comparable to a National Flag. Authority within the Clan did not need any heraldic identification, as this was obvious in the golden ornaments of the Nobles and the colours of dress, and it would only have lost the collective protection of the Clan Arms.

#### The Continental Background

Where the Irish Kings belonged to their Clan as their leading member, the early Kings and Princes of the Continent were, in effect, the personal owners of their lands and their people, and a class if not a race apart; with their Nobility as subordinate rulers in the same pattern.

The purpose of their arms, arising in the 12th century, was to represent their personal authority, to be passed to their eldest son with that authority on their death. Younger sons had to difference their arms to show their membership of the Royal or Noble House concerned, with an authority subject to that of its head.

#### The Laws of Heraldry

It is from this basis of arms as a personal right, to which only one person could be entitled at any one time, that the laws of heraldry developed over subsequent centuries. Among many other factors these laws dealt with the colours and charges on a shield or banner for artistic effect and ease of identification, and the marshalling of different arms on one shield to show inheritance of different rights; and since ownership of property could rest on the validity of an armorial Seal they were of considerable practical importance.

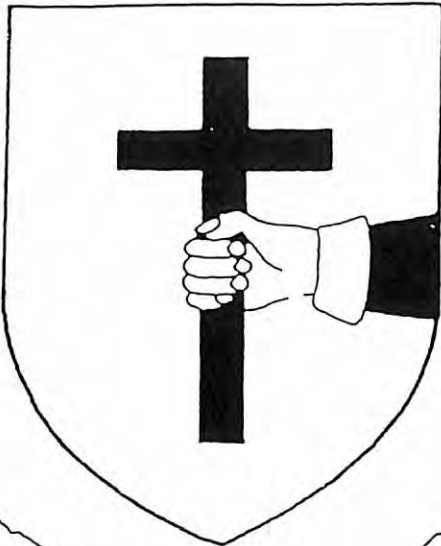
The development of these laws over the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries had little relation to Clan Arms, which had evolved from primitive symbolism with a continuity lacking in countries subjected to Roman occupation, and which served the purpose of the Clan for as long as it retained its collective nature and power. It may be that Clan Arms evolved in the style and colours of continental heraldry over this period, however, and the brown Banners referred to in our ancient manuscripts were replaced by the more effective heraldic red.

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To be continued in next issue.



# Ó Domhnaill Abú



*O'Donnell Clan  
Newsletter No.21*

*Winter 1993*



Re-roofing of Donegal Castle still in progress.

## Obituaries

It is with the greatest regrets I report the demise during the summer of two very prominent members of the O'Donnell Clan Association, i.e. Eddie O'Donnell, former Chairman and Danny 'Minnie' O'Donnell, serving vice-chairman.

Those present at the '89 Clan Gathering will remember 'Big Eddie' presiding at all functions. During that same year he was Chairperson of the Donegal County Council and wore his chain of office with pride at all official functions, including the Clan Rally.



Eddie O'Donnell

It was Eddie who initiated that same Clan Rally and was the driving force behind it all the way, securing sponsorship and funding, providing facilities such as toilets at the Rock of Doon etc. He did everything within his power as Chairman of the County Council to ensure a successful Gathering and was not disappointed. To add to his difficulties a General Election was taking place at the same time and Eddie being a committed politician had to do his share in that field as well. Eddie, though no longer Chairperson of the Clan Association, again gave his fullest support to the '92 Gathering.

It was on the 2nd June while travelling to a wake that he met his sudden death in a road accident outside the Sligo village of Grange. Eddie, who was 46, was a native of Killmacrennan and was married with six of a family - three boys and three girls. His wife, Anne, has since taken his place in the Donegal County Council. We sympathise with her and the family and wish her all the best in her new career.



Danny 'Minnie' O'Donnell

Those who attended the '92 Clan Gathering will remember the beautiful meal served by Danny 'Minnie' O'Donnell and his wife, Terry, in Killindarragh House, Annagry on the day of the bus tour. Indeed, it was talked about for days afterwards. Danny was very much involved in both the '89 and '92 Gatherings. A man of great ideas, he was always striving to make every event a prestigious and impressive occasion.

During the last Gathering he put on a brave face even though he was only out of hospital after an operation and every movement of his body was painful not to mention the journey to and from Donegal Town.

Danny, married with five of a family, lived in Annagry where he, as well as being on the managerial staff of Udras na Gaeltachta in Gweedore, ran a family restaurant. Killindarragh House has for long been known far and wide as offering cuisine of the highest quality, nothing less would be accepted by Danny.

Having fought with the dreaded cancer for some time he died on the 23rd August and was buried in the local graveyard. Our sympathies go out to Terry and their family.

Both funerals were attended by members of the O'Donnell Clan Association and as a mark of respect and honour on both occasions the coffin was draped in the O'Donnell Standard and a floral wreath in the design and colours of the Clan arms placed on the grave. Both Eddie and Danny will be very much missed by the O'Donnell Clan Association, we have so few of their calibre. Ar dheis De go raibh a n-anamacha!

# Ben O'Donnell selected as Coach of the Year



Mr. Ben O'Donnell, Lifford A.C. coach, right, receiving the Irish Coach of the Year award at the National B.L.E. Coaching Conference in Limerick recently from Jim Kilty, Irish Director of Coaching. Ben received this prestigious award because of his success with Sharon Foley who broke the Irish high jump record on two occasions this year and qualified to compete in the World Athletic Championship in Stuttgart in August and also qualified for the European Championships in Helsinki next year with a leap of 1.88m (6 ft. 2 ins.)

## Clinton's lost empire

JOINING the ranks of world leaders who have benefited from a Catholic education (Fidel Castro, General Pinochet, Ferdinand Marcos . . .) Bill Clinton confidently takes the world stage this week. An intriguing story about Clinton's school days reaches me. One former teacher, Mgr John O'Donnell, remembers eight-year-old Willy (as he was then known) after a class on the fall of the Roman Empire. "He said if he had been emperor, Rome wouldn't have fallen."



President Clinton: confident pupil

### Died at 114

THE death has occurred of Mr Bryan O'Donnell, farmer, Thowar, Inver, Co Donegal, at the great age of 114. Deceased, whose faculties remained unimpaired to the last, could speak only the Irish language.

These clippings were taken from the following:-

Top left: Donegal Democrat 21/10/1993 and features Ben, Secretary of the Clan Association; Bottom left: Donegal Democrat 17/8/1984; Top right: The Universe 17/1/1993; Bottom right: The Irish News 15/3/1913. V. O'D.

### TALL CLAIM

The genealogists and history writers have had a big doubt cast on their conclusions, which cannot any longer be relied upon if a man called

O'Donnell, a native-born Australian, gets his way. The O'Donnell clan genealogy is all wrong, and those who claim to be living links, especially those in Austria and Spain, had better look to their laurels if they are not to be ousted by this man. He is J. B. A. O'Donnell, who claims that he is the rightful chieftan of Tirconaill, and he is fully bent on putting his claim to a big test towards the end of the year. Writing to me from 75 Sydney Street, New Farm, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia, he starts with greetings in Irish, and goes on:

"I am the direct descendant of John, elder brother of Red Hugh. I am the rightful owner of the Donegal Castle and lands appertaining to same. I am also the owner of the most priceless pearls in the world, "The O'Donnell Pearls", now resting in the vault of a London Bank which refuses to hand them over. I am returning to Donegal to take possession of my ancestral home, Donegal Castle, in December 1984. I have informed the Eire Government of my intention and they have not opposed it. After my return to Donegal then it will be up to the people of all

Ireland and Scotland and the Gaels and Celts of the other islands to declare by referendum whether they enthusiastically want me as their Ard Riogh. This is the only way that lasting peace and prosperity will come to Ireland and the whole of Europe. I am an expert economist and have a full and detailed plan for a new economic system for Ireland and Europe. Will you be pleased to put my case to the people in your estimable newspaper and then let the people voice their assent or dissent. Let there be peace and unity on our sacred soil. Will you please inform me as to whether there may be any local inconvenience to anyone by my coming to reside in the Castle, my ancestral home. The story about the O'Donnell pearls — in full detail — I will send you if and when you tell me to do so.

Yours for a united Ireland,  
John O'Donnell,  
Chieftain of Tirconaill.

That's as far as the story goes, so I leave it to readers to draw their own conclusions on the O'Donnell succession, and on this resurrecting of an ages-old issue concerning the real ownership of the Castle, its ground, and the "O'Donnell pearls". There could be trouble brewing, and the pages of history may have to be rewritten. Who knows?

THE O'DONNELLS AND THEIR HERALDRY  
by Patrick O'Kelly de Conejera.  
Continued from ODA No. 20.

Irish Personal Arms

With the breakdown of the Clan structure, which would have evolved in due course had it not been imposed, the collective protection of the Clan Arms was lost and its leading families needed personal arms to represent their personal authority as they went their different ways. In fact as the Clan lost its collective nature so their situation approached that of the continental Nobility, and their new heraldic requirements were met by continental heraldic law.

The Anglo-Norman influence in the development of these personal arms is over-emphasised from the availability of their records, whereas little positive evidence remains of the probably greater influence of the Irish Officers in Continental Service and the many Irish priests trained in Spain. As is clear in Archbishop Bruno Heim's book, 'Heraldry in the Catholic Church' they would have regarded heraldry as a fundamental aspect of education in their day, inseparable from birth, marriage, death and inheritance.

In any event the continuity of Irish heraldic tradition was, and is still maintained by the use of personal arms relating to those of the Clan, with differences as for a younger son on the general basis that the more obscure the relationship the greater the difference.

The O'Donnell Representation

The use of arms in the Irish tradition by the O'Donnells needs consideration of the manner in which the Clan can be represented in modern life: and there is little point in forming an Association on the same basis as, say, stamp collectors or sportsmen.

The loss of territorial power may give the impression that the O'Donnells ceased to exist as a Clan, but in fact the bulk of its members remain and the loss is really one of cohesion. To the extent that they have restored this cohesion the Clan Gatherings of recent years have the same rights and responsibilities as those of earlier centuries, but it remains to restore the Clan structure.

Thus there must be a recognised Chief of Noble descent, with both the ability and enthusiasm to be effective as such; and foreign rules of primogeniture should never take precedence over our own traditions in this respect. The inauguration of a Chief arose from selection by the Nobility and acclamation of all the Freeborn of the Clan, and this tradition could well be followed today. Equally the O'Donnells have an inherent right to proclaim their Chief as Prince of Tirconnell, and it is surely inconceivable that any Irish law should suppress this heritage.

The term Nobility may have acquired connotations to arouse suspicion, but it is an essential part of Clan tradition, and it would be absurd to allow sentiments arising from historical confusions to detract from our own traditions. Thus in accordance with the ancient Brehon Laws the O'Donnell Nobility of today is represented both by the heirs of the great families of the past and those who have achieved prominence and demonstrated their nobility of character. For example a priest was regarded in Continental heraldic law as noble by office, and this category can be extended to others who serve the community in an outstanding manner.

Titles of nobility did not exist in the Clans, although those conferred by other Kings were always respected, but this status was indicated by a territorial suffix to the name, and the Clan could well grant this honour to those it thought fit.

The third category of the Aires or Privileged People, the Freeborn with substantial property, present no problems in modern terms since they can be envisaged as those whose circumstances permit them to take a more active part in the Clan administration than the bulk of its members.

The fourth class of Freeborn O'Donnells can equally be represented by Association Members whose support for the Clan is both effective and acceptable, which follows the principles of the old Brehon Laws; leaving those lacking interest or acceptability as the Unfree in this context.

This structure, whereby the Clan was governed by its Chief and the Aires class, into which any of the Freeborn who were worthy might be admitted,

served its purpose for over a thousand years and is equally applicable to such purposes as may be decided for the future. These might include the fostering of Clan tradition and fellowship; Gatherings and perhaps charitable activities in Donegal, and the rebuilding of the Castle as a Clan Centre.

### Heraldic Principles

It is within the Clan structure that Irish heraldry can be developed in accordance with its most ancient traditions, but since arms have become an honour comparable with a University degree it follows that they must be granted by an appropriate authority.

Our Authority is the Chief Herald of Ireland, a Government Official in Dublin responsible for certifying arms and pedigrees for those of Irish descent, and while he lacks the power of his Scottish counterpart to punish those guilty of unlawful heraldic display we have a clear moral responsibility to conform to his authority.

Throughout history, however, Heralds have had an international diplomatic character, concerned with common heraldic laws and the recognition of arms regardless of any political divisions. Thus each accepts the authority of other duly appointed Heralds, and the validity of arms used in Ireland may be derived from Grants from such as the Lord Lyon King of Arms of Scotland; Norroy and Ulster King of Arms, or other Heralds under the Earl Marshal of England; or the Cronista Rey de Armas of Spain.

There is no tradition whereby the Chief of the O'Donnells might grant arms, apart from the practical requirement to avoid duplication which can only be ensured by the Chief Herald, but it would be an asset to have an O'Donnell Pursuivant, a subordinate Officer of Arms, to record Arms properly used by O'Donnells and co-ordinate the Clan interests in this sphere.

### The O'Donnell Arms

To deal with the actual usage of O'Donnell Arms, the red hand-held Cross on a golden shield or banner represents the Clan as a whole, for display at any Gathering, or to be flown over the Castle if restored to their possession. The Chief alone has a personal right to

these arms, as The O'Donnell and the Clan Representative, although he may have additional arms with inherited differences or quarters to be passed on to his heirs.

Thus no other O'Donnells have any right to use these arms as their own, although their display, as the personal arms of the Pope are sometimes displayed in affection, is a different matter; but this display should avoid the personal style of arms which in effect would proclaim, 'I am The O'Donnell' rather than, 'I am an O'Donnell'.

The style of personal arms may vary considerably according to their national background and status, but in general terms the shield is surmounted by a helmet, with a wreath or coronet and a Crest above; a term which is often misapplied to the arms as a whole. Decorative mantling emerges from below the wreath or coronet, and there may be human or animal figures, known as supporters, either side, representing a greater honour.

It is unfortunate that most 'Clan Arms' sold commercially should be embellished in this style, which completely misrepresents their meaning in an attempt to make them look more impressive. In fact arms displayed in token of loyalty to the Clan or its Chief should be on a shield free of any exterior ornamentation, or a circular plaque in the old Irish tradition recorded by the Poet Spencer; 'The Irish with their round shields in rude colours', rude meaning vigorous and bright rather than rough!

It is among the Nobility of the Clan that personal arms are of the greatest importance, and the greater the status of the Clan the more personal arms should be displayed at its Gatherings; indicating the extent to which its members have merited this honour over the centuries. Hence diffidence in using inherited arms, or among those who lead the Clan in obtaining a grant, is a denial of the honour of the Clan rather than a modest virtue.

With regard to the third category of the arms of Privileged People there is general agreement among all heraldic traditions that the Nobility must bear arms as an essential attribute, but there are different opinions on the degree to which those who bear arms should be regarded as Nobles, and this

(continued on page 5)

O'DONNELL CONNECTIONS.  
by Conor Sinclair.



The above photo shows Willie O'Donnell and his mother, Hannah, outside their home in Mobarnan, near Moyglass, Co. Tipperary.

The house they live in is the former Royal Irish Constabulary Police Station of Mobarnan.

It was in this area on the 4th Dec. 1840 that two pigs were stolen from Mr. James Cooney. John Kelly was arrested for this offence and held in Mobarnan Police Station - now the O'Donnell home.

Kelly was tried at Clonmel Assizes beginning 1st Jan. 1841, convicted and sentenced to 7 years transportation in Van Diemen's Land. He arrived there 2nd Jan. 1842.

In 1841 the Quinn family from Ballymena, Co. Antrim arrived at Port Philip Bay 600 miles south of Sydney. John Kelly on his release made his way to Victoria where he worked as a travelling labourer. Here he met and fell in love with the Quinn's eldest daughter, Nelly. Not getting her parents' approval the couple eloped and were married on 18th Nov. 1850.

In June 1855 a son was born at Beveridge, 24 miles north of Melbourne. He was called Edward after his uncle in far-off Tipperary but, in the Irish style, became known as Ned.

Cooney's two pigs were to cost the Colony of Victoria dear and Ned Kelly was to become the best known person born in Australia. When he died on the scaffold at Melbourn Jail on 11th Nov. 1880 it was only 40 years since the two pigs had been stolen on the slopes of Slievenaman in Tipperary at the other end of the world.

Willie O'Donnell of Mobarnan, Tipperary has another claim to fame. In the late 1980's he bought a horse at the Dublin Sales. Having kept it for three years he sold it to a trainer. That horse, 'Cnoc-na-Cuille' was, in 1988, ridden to victory by the Princess Royal at a Worcester National Hunt meeting. Towards the end of that season Princess Anne rode Cnoc-na-Cuille at Warrick when, just after the race, the horse collapsed and died.

(continued from page 4)

may depend on the nature of the original Grant. Never-the-less arms are a representation of Leadership, and the Freeborn with substantial property who took part in the Clan administration were among its leaders. Hence they should bear arms, and those who fall into this category today should be encouraged to petition for a Grant if they lack any inheritance.

The Freeborn with substantial property may appear comparable with the rich Merchants of the Continent, who developed Burgher Arms of lesser value than those of the Nobility, but there is no real basis in any such comparison. The Merchants had little if any relationship with the Nobles and were regarded as inferior, however rich.

The question of the fourth class of Freeborn forming the bulk of the Clan remains, and accepting their rights as Urrad to display some symbol of their honourable status within the Clan it is contrary to both Clan tradition and heraldic law that they should all bear personal arms.

(continued in next issue)

Aodh Mac Aodh Dubh of Ramelton  
by Seamus Mac Aidh.

Aodh Mac Aodh Dubh, or Aodh Og Dubh as he is sometimes called, was the greatest of the Ramelton O'Donnells. A brother of Manus the 21st Chieftain, he appears as No. 3 on the genealogical chart in ODA No. 2 and is mentioned briefly on p. 4 ODA No. 8. Described as "Glun deirneach gaiscidh Gael" or "The Achilles of the Irish Race" he was very partial to fast horses. His own horse and those of his cavalry, according to tradition, had to be: "...big, sound, young, noble, high-headed, load-carrying, lively-hearted, broad-breasted, haughty, easy-bearing, sleek..." Then to discover if the horse was "...perfectly sound, easy-ridden, obedient..." the animal, bearing the rider, was made to swim across the Lennon about opposite the castle (where the river is widest). The horse that dashed most daringly into the stream and swam across the quickest was chosen.

Aodh was junior, almost certainly, to his stepbrother, Manus, who was inaugurated Chieftain in 1537. It is highly unlikely that Aodh became Tanist then as historians estimate that he was only a child of one year of age at the time. When eventually he became Tanist and was in direct line for the title of Chief he was unfortunately forstalled by An Calbhach(4) who had Manus his father imprisoned and himself elevated to the position of Chief. When An Calbhach died suddenly in 1566 Aodh must surely have thought his opportunity had come to be declared An Dalach. But to his disappointment, Aodh Dubh(5) or Aodh Mac Manus succeeded as Taoiseach. Aodh was disappointed once more when Aodh Dubh resigned in favour of his son Red Hugh(12). When Red Hugh died in Spain nobody had the political clout to nominate the Ramelton hero. In the following year Niall Garbh(16) took advantage of the political vacuum and disarray that followed Kinsale and had himself unofficially inaugurated.

Three times the opportunity arose and three times was Aodh snubbed. Even the English by-passed his just claim when they created Rory(13) Earl of Tirconnell.

When Red Hugh was inaugurated Aodh refused to attend the ceremony at the

Rock of Doon, but later mollified and offered his fealty to the young Chieftain. It was important to Red Hugh to have the Ramelton man on his side for it was said of him:

"This Aodh mac Aodha Duibh was a distinguished noble. He was a handsome good-looking man, a well brought up knowledgeable person of fine physique; he was experienced in the best manners of that time, pleasant in peace and brave in battle. He was a generous host, amiable with his neighbours, ferocious in fight, harsh with the enemy yet humane with them in victory. His name was on everyone's lips throughout Ireland and his characteristics were compared with those of the great. It was said of him that he had the acumen of Lubhaidh Lamhfhada, was as skilled in the weapons of war as Cuchulainn, as deadly in battle as Conall Cearnach, as good a horse-rider as Troilus, son of Priam. During his lifetime he had never suffered defeat either in battle or single combat."

When Red Hugh began his campaign against the English he had the full support of the Ramelton man. Aodh of Ramelton had proven his worth in battle before when he assisted Red Hugh's father at Farcetmore(see ODA No. 13 \*) in 1567. However, in spite of Aodh's many attributes Sean Og O'Doherty was the one Red Hugh chose as second-in-command followed by Niall Garbh(16). The Maguire was put in charge of cavalry. Did Red Hugh consider him too old at 60 or did he not trust him?

Aodh Mac Aodh Dubh must have accompanied Red Hugh on his many raiding expeditions into Connaught. The story is told in the Ramelton neighbourhood that he was once captured by the enemy when he outrode his cavalry while pursuing the defeated and, in his haste, found himself trapped alone in Sligo Castle. Aodh's fame as a horseman had evidently preceeded him for the Captain of the Guard, himself a horseman of note, challenged him to a 'duel' in horsemanship. Aodh would accept the challenge on one condition only, that his son be contacted and told to bring to the castle his 'lean swift steed'. His wish was complied with and one

bright morning son and horse arrived. Aodh mounted and sped around the yard putting on such show of horsemanship as the company had never seen. Then while the English were still enjoying the dexterity and skill of horse and rider, Aodh pulled his son up behind him and made the horse clear the prison wall and sped to freedom. How much truth there is in that story I cannot say.

'With one great leap they cleared the wall,  
The jail left far behind,  
With mouth agape the sergeant stood -  
The feat had stunned his mind;  
Too late to chase the flying hooves,  
Too late the bugle call,  
For back once more to Lennon shore  
Sped Hugh of Donegal.'

Once while accompanying Red Hugh in Connacht, Sir Henry Docwra ensconced himself and his men in Culmore from whence he made many damaging forays on the surrounding territory of Inishowen. When Red Hugh returned he chose a large body of soldiers and a troop of horse (Aodh of Ramelton was among the latter). The English grazed their horses outside the city of Derry and Red Hugh resolved to capture the horses thus rendering the English incapacitated. "In the darkness of the night" Red Hugh prepared an ambush leaving the main body hiding in a gorge of a steep cliff on the mountain slope to the north of the city while he placed a few of his cavalry beside the city gates.

Early in the morning as the horses were being brought out to the fields O'Donnell's horsemen vigorously attacked the drovers and made off with the horses. Immediately the alarm was raised in the city Docwra and those of his men still with horses gave chase. As Red Hugh reached the gorge he ordered the horses to be taken to a secure place while he and the rest of his men gave battle to the pursurers.

The fighting was furious. According to the Four Masters Hugh of Ramelton "made a well-aimed cast of a javelin at the General, Sir Henry Docwra, and striking him directly in the forehead, wounded him very severely. When the General was thus pierced, he turned back; and the English, seeing their chief, their adviser, and their mighty man, wounded, returned home in sorrow and disgrace, and pursued their horses no further."

Aodh's castle at Ramelton was built by Neachtain O'Donnell, Chief of Tir Chonaill (1439-'52) for one of his sons, possibly Ruadhrai (1452-'54). Docwra, in writing of this castle says:

"It is the meetest and most commodious of any other upon the neck of the country and for the defence thereof."

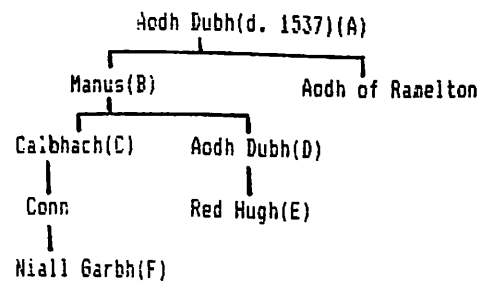
The castle fell to Docwra in 1601. Aodh's attempt to regain it failed. However, under the Plantation of Ulster, he received his castle back along with a grant of 1,000 acres of his own land for life. The rest of his land went to the planters as did the rent thereof.

When he died around 1618 Aodh Mac Aodha Duibh was an octogenarian and had witnessed many hapless scenes that blotted the North-Western landscape. The abrupt and uneasy transition from the old order to the new and the chill foreign wind that blew along the corridors of the Gaelic world brought nothing but dispondency and lost hope. When Aodh died, with him died the last remaining hope of the Gael.

\* While editing this article I became aware of an error in ODA No.13. On page 7, paragraph 5, "He had sent his horsemen under the command of his son Hugh" should be "He had sent his horsemen under the command of his uncle Hugh."

Taoiseach: Chief.

Taniste: Second-in-command, heir presumptive, deputy Chief.

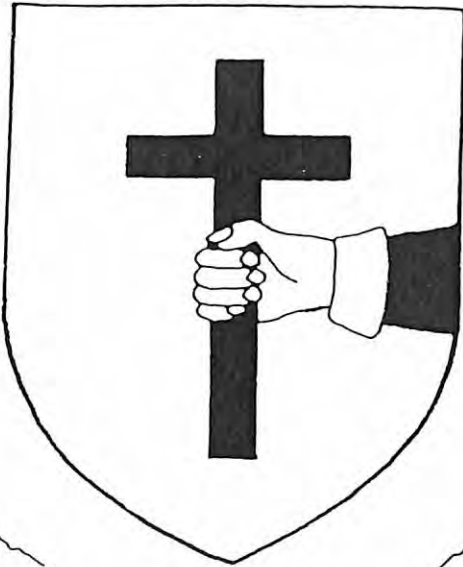


Letters show order of Chieftaincy

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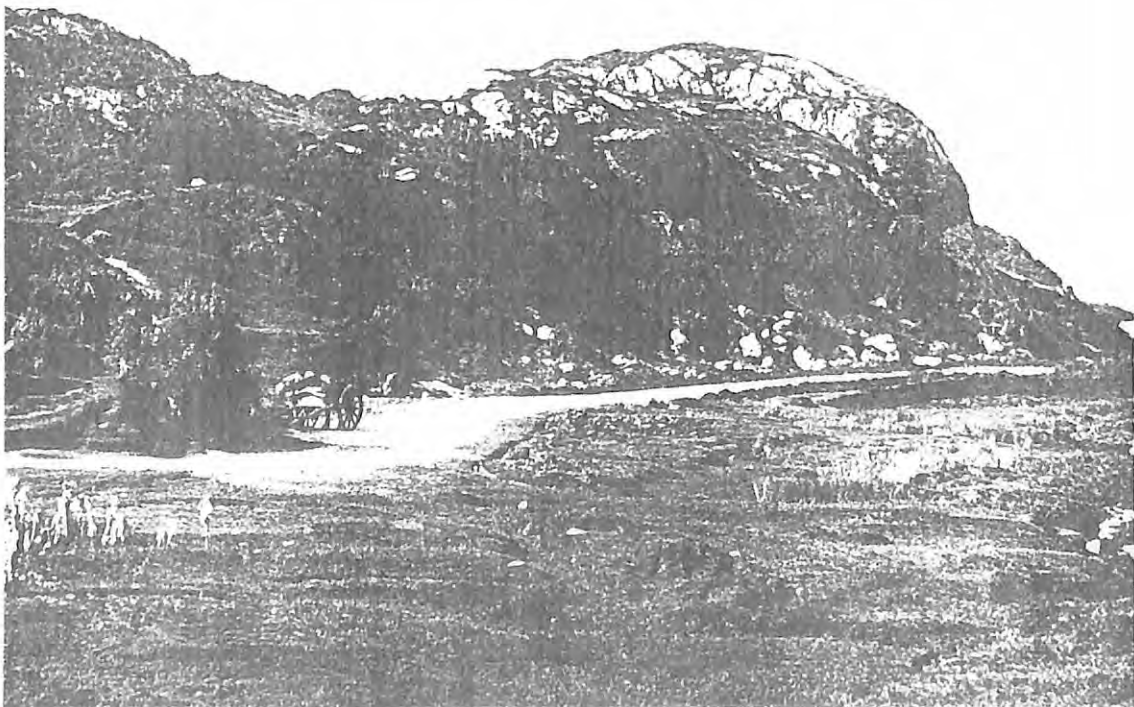
# Ó Domhnaill Abú



*O'Donnell Clan*

*Newsletter No. 23*

*Spring 1996*



DOON ROCK, INAUGURATION SITE OF THE O'DONNELL CHIEFTAINS.

## Niall Ó Dónaill R.I.P.:

Niall Ó Dónaill, formerly of Loughanure, passed away peacefully in his home in Vernon Avenue, Clontarf on Friday, 10th February at the ripe old age of 87.

He was predeceased by his wife Sorcha who died some months ago and her death had a very adverse effect on Niall's well being.

Like most families growing up in west Donegal at the turn of the century, life was difficult for Niall's parents and the possibility of providing Niall with the means to further his schooling after primary level was quite remote.

His mother, however, was instinctively aware of his great intellectual abilities and was anxious that he continue his education. Fortunately he won a scholarship to St. Eunan's College and afterwards attended University College, Dublin. His early days were spent teaching in Dublin but soon after he joined the Civil Service and worked in different departments but his main work centred around translating books into the Irish language for An Gúm, the Government Irish publications wing.

Niall had several publications to his name over the years but he gained national and international recognition for this work in compiling the first modern Irish-English dictionary, a project that occupied seventeen years of his life.

He is survived by his four sons, Jarlach, Padraig, Aodán and Niall and his daughter, Eilís Grae, wife of Michael Grae, formerly chief executive of Bord na Gaeilge. His two sisters are living in Donegal, Hannah Martin in Laghey and Cáit Ní Dhónaill in Dunfanaghy.

Requiem Mass was celebrated by Monsignor Ó hUallacháin P.P., Clontarf and the sermon was preached by Fr. Eoin MacGrianna, Annagry. Raidió na Gaeltachta interrupted it's normal schedule of morning programmes to broadcast the Requiem Mass live from St. John the Baptists Church in Clontarf.

On occasions such as this I'm always reminded of Peig Sayers phrase "Ní bheidh ár leithidí ann arís" which translates "People such as us will never exist again." The Rosses has produced many famous people over the years but seldom someone of Niall Ó Dónaill's stature. Tá súil go bhfuil sé ar a shuaimhneas inniu i measc na naomh. Tá sé féin agus Sorcha le chéile arís.

## Liam Ó Cunneagáin -

**The £900,000 Lifford Courthouse Centre, which provides a fascinating insight into the history of the area, was officially opened by An Tanaiste, Deputy Dick Spring, on Friday last.**

"I am very pleased to be associated with the public opening of what is clearly one of the finest centres of its kind in Ireland. I am particularly delighted to share the sense of pride of the people of Lifford at this very fine achievement.

"Ben O'Donnell and all his colleagues in the Lifford Association for Tourism, Commerce and Heritage deserve all our congratulations for the hard work and commitment which went into developing this outstanding community asset," Mr Spring said.

Mr Spring said that it was fitting, if not a little ironic, that some countries to which

many prisoners were banished from Lifford's old courthouse, had indirectly contributed to the development of the centre through the IFI.

"The circle of history has in effect returned to Lifford in the happiest possible way," Mr Spring concluded.

The Chairman of LATCH, Mr Ben O'Donnell told the gathering that the opening of the new Centre was a great occasion for the people of Lifford and especially the LATCH committee, who had worked tirelessly over the

past few years to bring the project to fruition.

# Patsy O'Donnell

**The late Patsy O'Donnell, who died yesterday (Wednesday) was one of Letterkenny and, indeed, Donegal's most well known citizens.**

From education to sport, tourism and religion, there were few spheres of life that Patsy was not in touch with. Always a very frank individual, he occasionally attracted controversy for his stance on certain issues but even his opponents had an admiration for his honest, forthright views and the time and effort that he frequently put into matters on behalf of others.

Born on the Port Road in 1913, he was the youngest of a family of six, his parents being Pat and Bridget O'Donnell.

He was educated at the Presentation Brothers' School and later St. Eunan's College. Upon leaving school, he became a "monitor" (junior assistant teacher) in the local national school for a short period.

He then worked in Charlie O'Donnell's bakery for a spell before being employed by the Board of Works as a "ganger". When he retired from the latter he set up his own undertaker's business.

## FOUNDER MEMBER

Back in the 1930s, Patsy was strongly involved with St. Eunan's GAA Club, being a founder member and in subsequent years chairman and then president.

His elevation onto the public platform stemmed from attempts by the Co. Manager to reintroduce rates on council houses. Patsy was chairman of the local tenants' association and he vowed to fight the imposition of the charges. The case went all the way to the High Court, but the tenants lost.

But Patsy had made his mark and in the urban council elections in 1941, he was elected, being second only to the late Hugh McKendrick. In 1945 he topped the poll and romped home at every election for Fianna Fail after that until he retired from politics in 1985.

In the years following, he was to the forefront of the campaign to get the town boundary extended and a new sewerage

and water scheme constructed.

He was also a leading light on the committee that was formed in 1961 to get the Swilly drained. This proved to be a tremendously successful venture and alleviated a lot of flooding problems when the river overflowed.

## VISION

Patsy's vision has certainly reaped rewards for Letterkenny. Back in 1948, he put pressure on the UDC to buy the section of land from the Port Road to the Oldtown (now known as the Pearse Road or Railway Road). The railway had shut and the track was lifted and Patsy felt a new road along the trackbed would help in the long term development of the town. The town is certainly indebted to him for promoting that project.

As chairman of the UDC, he helped to heighten the profile of the town and was instrumental in bringing the late President Sean T. Kelly to Letterkenny.

He also forged links with the Letterkenny Army Depot in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, USA, back in 1965.

In the field of education, Patsy became an articulate and highly respected member of the Vocational Education Committee at a time when there were many changes while he also played an influential role in the Regional Fisheries Board. Indeed, fishing was close to his heart and he actively fought a number of issues on behalf of the Swilly Loop Net Fishermen's Association.

Patsy always held a keen interest in tourism development and was one of the founder members of the Letterkenny Folk Festival. He was also on the old Donegal, Leitrim, Sligo Tourism Organisation.

He also had strong links with the Church and St. Eunan's Cathedral where he was chief marshal and bell ringer for many years.

Patsy O'Donnell will long be remembered, few people have made such an impact on their community as he has done. The town is mourning the loss of one of its greatest citizens.

Tributes have been flowing in since the news broke of his death with many politicians describing him as one of the best ever public representatives in Letterkenny.

Right: report from Donegal Democrat 2nd March '95.

Far Right: photo of a poster used in U.S.A to advertise Walt Disney's film about Red Hugh O'Donnell. It was this film that inspired the Australian author, see report on page 4.

While I consider the film to be only about 25% historically accurate, yet we should feel honoured that Walt Disney considered Red Hugh (and not some other Irish hero) worthy of being the subject of one of his films.

## OBITUARIES

It seems that every time I begin working on a new issue of this Newsletter my first task is to report on the deaths of members since the last issue. And again, some great O'Donnells have passed away since the publication of ODA No. 22.

Niall O Donaill (obituary from Donegal Democrat 23/2/95) was a friend and a member since day one. A great scholar of the Irish language and history, I often sought his advice. His replies were never brief but ran into pages - an indication of his vast knowledge. I very much regret his passing.

Patsy O'Donnell (obituary from Donegal Democrat 7/4/95) will be remembered by those who attended the '89 Clan Gathering. Not alone was he involved in organising that event but he gave a very eloquent talk at the grave of Godfrey O'Donnell, 13th cent. Chieftain at Conwal Graveyard (report in ODA No. 12 and talk published in ODA No. 13).

Peg O'Donnell N.T., 'The Rockeries', Dungloe, Co. Donegal died over a year ago. To me she was special for the following reason. At the Annual Dinner of the County Donegal Historical Society in Kee's Hotel, Stranorlar, 9th Nov. 1984 I mentioned to Rupert O'Coughlan who was sitting beside me that I intended starting an O'Donnell Newsletter but lacked the necessary funds. He, immediately, produced his cheque book and made a donation. Peg O'Donnell and her two friends, Kathleen O'Donnell Dungloe and Nancy Huston, Crohey, Dungloe, sitting beside Rupert couldn't help but hear the conversation. All three dipped into their handbags and made similar donations. That was the beginning and in March '95 'O Domhnaill Abu' was launched. Peg enjoyed receiving the Newsletter and, in spite of failing health, always attended Clan Gatherings and other such functions.

I already had this much written when I learned of the death of yet another member, my brother-in-law Neil O'Donnell. Having spent most of his life at sea, he settled in London about ten years ago. Shortly after, his health began to fail; first, diabetes and later, kidney failure. He enjoyed reading O'Domhnaill Abu and was proud to be an O'Donnell. He passed away peacefully in a London hospital on the 1st of Dec. last, aged 57, and was buried in Edinburgh where a piper played O'Donnell Abu at his graveside.

Go ndeanaidh Dia a mhaith orthu uilig.

V. O'D.

## Paddy is going for gold

*A retired Donegal carpenter is looking forward to the prospects of a golden summer!*

*Bachelor Paddy O'Donnell is preparing to set out gold hunting on the Scottish mountains, with ambitions to travel later to the Australian outback - to pan for gold.*

*Paddy's gold fever trail began in the 1980s when he flew to the southern hemisphere to search for the gold field where his great grand-uncle Owen Frank O'Donnell went prospecting and panning for gold in the 1860s, from his Donegal homeland. He died a wealthy man in Gympie City in the outback in 1927.*

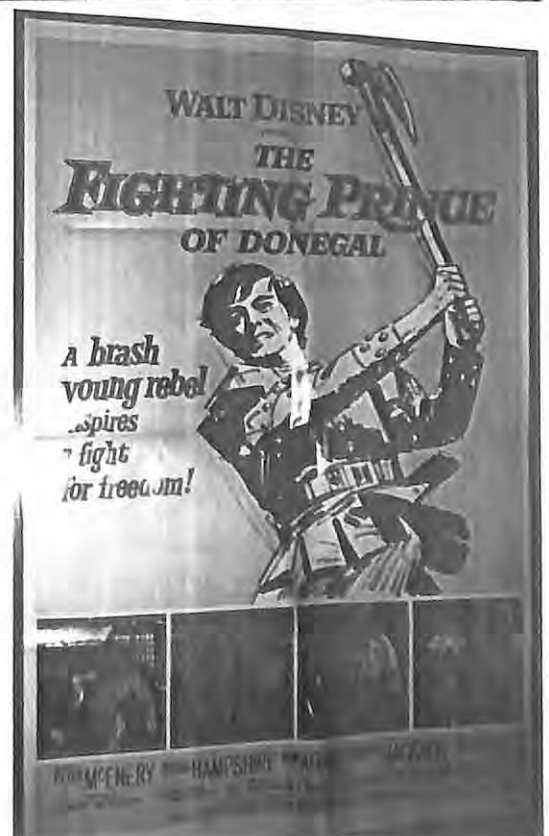
*Twelve years ago Paddy travelled to Australia where he met his cousin, schoolteacher John Dale, of Kin-Kin Railways Junction, and together they set*

*out for their uncle's gold trails.*

*Paddy O'Donnell received a prospecting licence from the Australian authorities - the Miner's Rights Certificate. With cousin John Dale they located the trail of their great grand-uncle and pursued a period of panning gold in the outback. They used the panning technique prescribed by the authorities, that which was in use in the last century in Australia, the Klondyke, and the Californian gold rush of the 1880s.*

*Paddy admitted that going for gold may not mean riches but it has a lot of excitement with a possibility of finding some of the precious metal.*

*He is a member of the Gold Panners Association in the U.K.*



During the winter of 1594 and early '95 many of the Connaught Clans petitioned Red Hugh to free them of the English who had garrisoned themselves in places like, Sligo, Ballymote, Newport, Roscommon etc. On the 3rd of March he assembled his army at Ballyshannon and moved south. Sir Richard Bingham, Governor of Connaught, on hearing of his approach ordered all the English soldiers in the Province to assemble at Boyle as he believed that O'Donnell would pass that way.

Red Hugh, however, had other plans. Being well informed of the English positions, he dispersed his men in small groups to various parts of the Province, where with lightening speed they took much booty and spoils. These they brought back to O'Donnell and then all made off across the Shannon. The English, realising what was happening gave chase, catching up with the marauders as they forded the river. A battle ensued in which many were killed and wounded on both sides but, eventually the Tirconnell men got away with their spoils.

On the 18th of April Red Hugh made another hosting into Connaught to plunder that part missed in March. This time his enemies expected him to return to his native territory but instead he made his way east to Longford and Cavan destroying everything belonging to the English or those friendly with them. In one day alone, they destroyed four castles in English hands and captured more booty than they could carry away. Finally, they turned northwards and arrived home without further incidence.

That summer the English became convinced that O'Neill was in alliance with O'Donnell. O'Neill, learning that an army was about to march against him, requested assistance from O'Donnell. Red Hugh complied immediately and joined O'Neill whereupon the English changed their minds and remained in Dublin.

While Red Hugh was thus absent, a ship load of English soldiers, under the command of George Bingham sailed from Sligo to Rathmullan where they plundered the abbey there bearing with them all valuables including the contents of the chapel. From there, he sailed to Tory Island where they plundered everything they found, before returning to Sligo.

O'Donnell, on receipt of this news hastened homewards to pursue the attackers. But on arrival, word reached him that the Lord Justice was on his way to Tyrone with an army. Red Hugh, again, went to O'Neill's assistance. He arrived there at the same time as the English. For fifteen days the combined armies of Tyrone and Tirconnell faced the English without a blow being struck. Finally, the English returned to Dublin.

A certain Ulick Burke who was friendly with O'Donnell had at some time been wronged and insulted by George Bingham, already mentioned. Ulick, now, awaited his opportunity. It eventually came. One day he cornered George in the latter's room. Ulick demanded an apology and when refused drew his sword and killed the Englishman. Burke, then, held Sligo Castle until O'Donnell's return from Tyrone whereupon he handed it over to him. This was in the month of June.

During his stay in Sligo Castle, Red Hugh was visited by many Connaught Chieftains who swore allegiance to him and accepted him as their overlord. By mid-August O'Donnell was joined at Sligo by MacLeod of Harris and six hundred Gallowglasses. Together, they marched into Connaught attacking and besieging some castles and fortifications still in English hands. Eventually, they returned to Sligo bearing with them as much booty as they could manage. Sir Richard Bingham, Governor of Connaught, furious at O'Donnell's audacity and having failed to intercept him during his raid through the province, followed him to Sligo. He, with his fifteen hundred soldiers camped a short distance away with the intention of recapturing Sligo Castle. O'Donnell, on hearing of this move planned an ambush. He, carefully chose a place about a mile from Sligo and there posted a band of sharpshooters. Picking some of his best horsemen, he sent them towards the English to lure them into the ambush. The enemy took the bait and set off in hot pursuit after O'Donnell's men. These were ordered not to fight but to keep a safe distance ahead of the pursuers. All went well until one of Red Hugh's horses, for some reason, slowed down and got left behind. His rider, Felim Riach MacDevitt, seeing the enemy approach, decided to go down fighting rather than

be taken prisoner. The leader of the English, Captain Martin, was the first to come within reach. MacDevitt hit him with a well aimed javelin, which made its way through his armour under the armpit and pierced his heart. The English, immediately, abandoned the chase and returned to camp with their wounded leader. Red Hugh was, 'filled with great wrath' at having lost such a wonderful opportunity but forgave MacDevitt on hearing his story. Captain Martin died that night.

Sir Richard Bingham, uncle of the dead man, decided to have revenge. He ordered his men to destroy the nearby monastery and use the timber to construct '...closely jointed, very firm sheds for war of these beams and elm planks.....' These were... 'covered with boards nailed straight-edged, fitted firmly for soldiers to fight from. Skins of cows and oxen were put outside. Straight moving wheels of strong oak were placed under them to move them close to the fortress.' Under cover of darkness they moved these 'sheds' up to the castle walls with the intention of breaching the walls. O'Donnell's men began removing the stones from the top of the wall and dropping them down. Many of the English were wounded and finally fled to safety. Sir Richard, finally, took his army back to Roscommon and Red Hugh and his men returned to Tirconnell.

Having reached home safely with all the spoils taken from Connaught, O'Donnell dismissed his Gallowglasses and returned to Sligo where he totally demolished the castle. Thirteen castles in all he

demolished for fear of their falling into English hands. As winter approached many Connaught people - nobles, chiefs, inhabitants, the poor and the sick - flocked to Red Hugh for his protection. They felt it unsafe them to remain at home. He ordered the people of Tirconnell to accommodate them and supply them with food and all their needs.

Red Hugh, between September and December, with his army much reinforced by Connaught men, made several more raids into that province until by the end of the year he was Lord over most of it. The Burke family (of Norman descent) had for many years ruled over that province but for a few years previous to this had little or no power and, indeed, hadn't even a chief. Red Hugh was now requested by the Connaught men to appoint one as they themselves found it difficult to make a choice. Eventually, after much consultation with the leading families of that province, O'Donnell selected and inaugurated Tibbot (Theobald), son of Walter Ciotach (see ODA No. 14) and it was with the newly inaugurated Chief that Red Hugh spent that Christmas. I've been told, though I have not yet seen any supporting documentary evidence, that the same Tibbot was eventually buried alongside Red Hugh in the Franciscan Abbey of Valladolid in Spain.

Thus, by the close of 1595, Red Hugh had the province of Connaught well under his control, quite an accomplishment for a lad of twenty three. V. O'D.

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## Australian author visits Lifford

Acclaimed Australian teenage author, Deborah Lisson, visited Lifford last week to conduct research on Donegal chieftan, Red Hugh O'Donnell.

The Province of Western Australia has provided Ms Lisson with grant aid to research a trilogy of stories on Donegal's most famous Lord.

Although the Australian author spent 12 days in the genealogical centre in Dublin, she was delighted to discover the late Rupert Coughlan's collection of historical

material at the Lifford Old Courthouse Visitors Centre.

Mr Coughlan spent 40 years researching the history of Red

Hugh O'Donnell and his family has donated the fruits of his labour to the recently-opened Visitors Centre.

Her books include "The Devils Own" and "The Warrigal" and Ms Lisson hopes to return to Ireland in two years time to continue her research, perhaps extending her visit to a longer period of six months.

This report appeared in the Donegal People's Press sometime during the summer of '95.

Indeed, I had the pleasure of meeting Ms. Lisson and was fascinated with her story. While growing up in England she saw Walt Disney's film, "The Fighting Prince of Donegal". She immediately fell in love with this character.

Later she moved to Australia where she wrote the two books already mentioned. Both were highly successful, but then she was faced with the dilemma - a subject for her next book. Red Hugh was always in her mind and so she decided to write a book, or books based on his biography and using information from other historical documents of the time. She has already done much research here in Ireland and intends doing more. I am delighted to say that the first book is half done and coming along nicely - I've seen the manuscript. We wish her all the best and look forward to the fruits of her labour. V.O'D.

## Looking For Relatives

I have been searching for my "roots" for about 4-1/2 years now. Unfortunately, I didn't develop an interest until I was 57 years of age. By that time both of my parents had passed on and with them, a wealth of genealogical information. I also had a great-aunt, my paternal grandmother's sister, who lived to be 99 years old. She had been born in County Fermanagh. Imagine the fountain of information she would have been.

My father was William O'Donnell born on the west side of New York City on 24 Jan., 1895. His father was also William O'Donnell who had emigrated from Ireland in 1887. The story about his coming to the U.S. deserves telling.

In the mid-1880s, William O'Donnell starting courting Margaret Maguire in County Fermanagh. Margaret's parents took strong exception to his attention to their daughter because they were Catholics and William was a Protestant. The undocumented story goes that the Maguires sent Margaret to some relatives in Dublin to get her away from him. But, he followed her there. Then they sent her to the States in 1887. He must have been seriously in love because somehow he made his way to the States, arriving later the same year.

He took religious instructions from the Paulist Fathers in the Church of St. Paul the Apostle on 60th Street in N.Y.C. and was converted. William O'Donnell married Margaret Maguire in the Church of St. Paul the Apostle on 26 November, 1890.

William and Margaret had 9 children. My father, another William O'Donnell was their third child. My father married my mother, Kathleen Donovan in 1919 on Staten Island, N.Y.. I am the fourth of their five children, born in 1932.

From the marriage register at the church where my grandparents were married, I learned that his father's name was William O'Donnell and his mother's maiden was Rebecca Porter. On the register, where the place of birth of each was asked for, in each case was the identical entry, "Hibernia".

I have done much research in the U.S. Census Records, civil records, church records and cemeteries. I have discovered some information

on the Maguires in the Town Hall of Enniskillen on a trip to Ireland in 1992 and from that have made contact with and visited some Maguire descendants in 1993. We had a delightful time and I plan to visit again next May. But information on the O'Donnells has been difficult to come by.

The information I had indicated my grandfather's birth as September, 1867. When in Dublin, in 1992 and again in 1993, I visited the General Register Office in Joyce House on Lombard St. and went through the indices trying to find a record of his birth with no success.

Recently, through the good services of Feargal O'Donnell (no relation) of the The Heritage Centre in Donaghmore, County Tyrone, I have finally made a breakthrough. He has found records of my grandfather's birth and of his siblings. They are as follows:

William -born 7 June, 1864 -Buoyogohan  
(my grandfather)

Catherine -born 29 August, 1866 - Liscreevan

Elizabeth -born 26 June, 1868 - Rossgweer

Henry -born 26 June, 1870 - Rossgweer

Margaret -born 27 May, 1872 -Rossgweer

Rebecca -born 28 June, 1874 - Rossgweer

Unnamed child -born 26 July, 1876 - Rossgweer

Isaac -born 4 Oct., 1878 - Ballindullah

The names after the birthdates are of townlands in the District of Irvinestown in County Fermanagh.

Having progressed so far, I am wondering if anyone out there might have some connection with any of these people.

If anyone has a connection with, or any information regarding these O'Donnells, I would be delighted to hear from you. Please write to me.

James R. (Jim) O'Donnell  
14 Cider Mill Circle  
Flemington, NJ 08822  
U.S.A.

# Msgr. Thomas O'Donnell



Msgr. Thomas O'Donnell, editor, 1918-1922.

BY MARIE DALY  
Special to The Catholic Register

With the death of Joseph Wall, as the editor of *The Catholic Register and Canadian Extension*, in September of 1918, the Board of Directors appointed the President of the Catholic Church Extension Society of Canada,

Monsignor (later Bishop of Victoria and Archbishop of Halifax) Thomas O'Donnell, as interim editor, until a permanent one could be found. He proved to be a most capable editor, in addition to his duties as president of the Society.

Thomas O'Donnell was born in Tralee, Co. Kerry, Ireland, in 1874, and moved to Toronto at the age of 8. He attended high school there, and then went to the Grand Seminary in Montreal. Ordained on Dec. 23, 1899, he worked in several Toronto parishes, including St. Paul's, St. Ann's and St. Cecilia's. In 1916, by papal appointment, he became the president of the Catholic Church Extension Society of Canada, and at the end of his 5-year term he was re-elected unanimously. In Cardinal McGuigan's words, he "built up (the Society) into a Dominion-wide, active, energetic agency, the handmaid of the missions of Western Canada."

Recognizing the fine work Joseph Wall had done, Msgr. O'Donnell directed the paper along the same lines as his predecessor. He continued to run many of the same columns as Wall, making changes only as needed.

The energy and zeal that he showed for his job as president of the Extension Society was evident in his editorials on topics ranging from the history of French Canada, Bolshevism, Toronto separate schools, or American politics. But his special subject was the Irish question, and page four often sizzled from the intensity of his editorials: "The government of England today regards Ireland as

English governments have regarded her from the days of the Norman invasion, a land to blame for her own sufferings and unworthy of good government because she has always failed in what the English have considered as the first duty of a conquered country: she failed to submit. As a result of this mentality the policy of the old Cromwellians is pursued and peace finds no place in Ireland."

When the Republic of Ireland finally achieved her centuries-long goal of independence, Msgr. O'Donnell wrote: "the day of 'might is right' has passed."

In 1922, the search for the seventh full-time editor of *The Catholic Register and Canadian Extension* was completed, and Patrick J. Coleman was named successor. With this, Msgr. O'Donnell was able to dedicate all his time and attentions to the Extension Society, until the following year when he was appointed Bishop of Victoria. From Victoria he was promoted to the See of Halifax in 1929, and he remained there until his death in 1936.

He had carried the burden of the editor's role for four years, while the search continued for another qualified editor. In the words of his successor, he was "a formidable fighter in the cause of the Catholic Church."

## Colmcille Commemoration

Next year, 1997, being the 1400th anniversary of Colmcille's death in 597, both Ireland and Scotland have already begun planning celebrations. I hear that Derry city, also, intends celebrating the event as it owes its foundation to that same saint. Derry derives from the gaelic word 'Doire' meaning oak grove and it was in an oak forest at the head of

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# Proudly The Note

*O'Donnell Abú* has been the signal tune for Irish broadcasting from its beginnings. Patrick Quilligan talked to John Kinsella, who has composed an overture incorporating the tune to celebrate 70 years of Irish broadcasting

**W**hen John Kinsella was commissioned last October to write an overture to celebrate 70 years of Irish radio, his first question was: when would the concert take place? The answer was: January, 1996. Scenes of panic ensued. Normally the lead time would be a lot longer.

The commission from RTE Music, a subsidiary of RTE Commercial Enterprises, specified that the signal tune for Irish broadcasting, *O'Donnell Abú*, be used. "The piece starts with the *O'Donnell Abú* orchestration by Kevin Roche for harp and celeste; then it leads into various variations on the theme. It starts slowly and speeds up to fast allegro. What I try to do is create an atmosphere of someone waking up."

*Festive Overture* is the result. "After two playings of the station signal the cellos and double basses enter quietly with a tremolando and the upper strings glissando to meet them. It is as if the orchestra has been aroused from its slumbers and yawns. *O'Donnell Abú* is heard again, and there is a more positive reaction from the orchestra with the cellos playing a slow theme which stretches right through the register. There follows a dreamy tune, a variant of a phrase from the station signal, on cor anglais," says John.

The Celebration Concert, live from the NCH with the National Symphony Orchestra conducted by Albert Rosen, features soloists soprano Mary Hegarty and tenor Patrick Power in music that has become popular on the airwaves since the birth of 2RN on New Year's Day 1926.

Colmcille Commemoration continued.

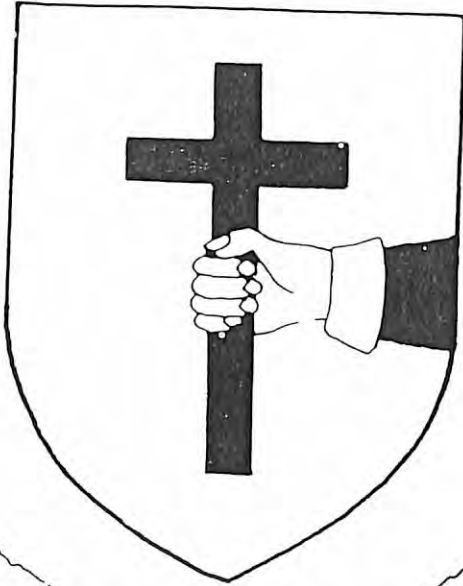
Lough Foyle that Saint Colmcille(Columba) founded his greatest monastery. Hence the name - Doire Cholmcille. Many events are being planned, most of which will probably take place around the 9th of June as that was the date of his death. As we consider this great holy man to have been of O'Donnell stock, we should be involved in some way, or even organise our own commemoration. However great the celebration, it will be difficult to surpass that of 1897 which is well recorded in a volume entitled, 'The Gartan Festival' published by M. H. Gill & Sons, Dublin, 1898.



The door of the Church of San Pietro de Montorio, Rome where Rory O'Donnell(Earl of Tirconnel) and his brother, Caffir, were buried in 1608(see ODA No. 2 & 11). I asked this lady friend to photograph their graves for me while she was there getting married a few years ago. After spending half a day walking and asking for directions she got there to find it closed to the public due to repairs being carried out. On returning to Ireland she handed me this photo and grumbled something about, "wasting precious honeymoon time seeking old graves behind closed doors." If anyone ever gets the opportunity to photograph that grave I would really appreciate a copy.

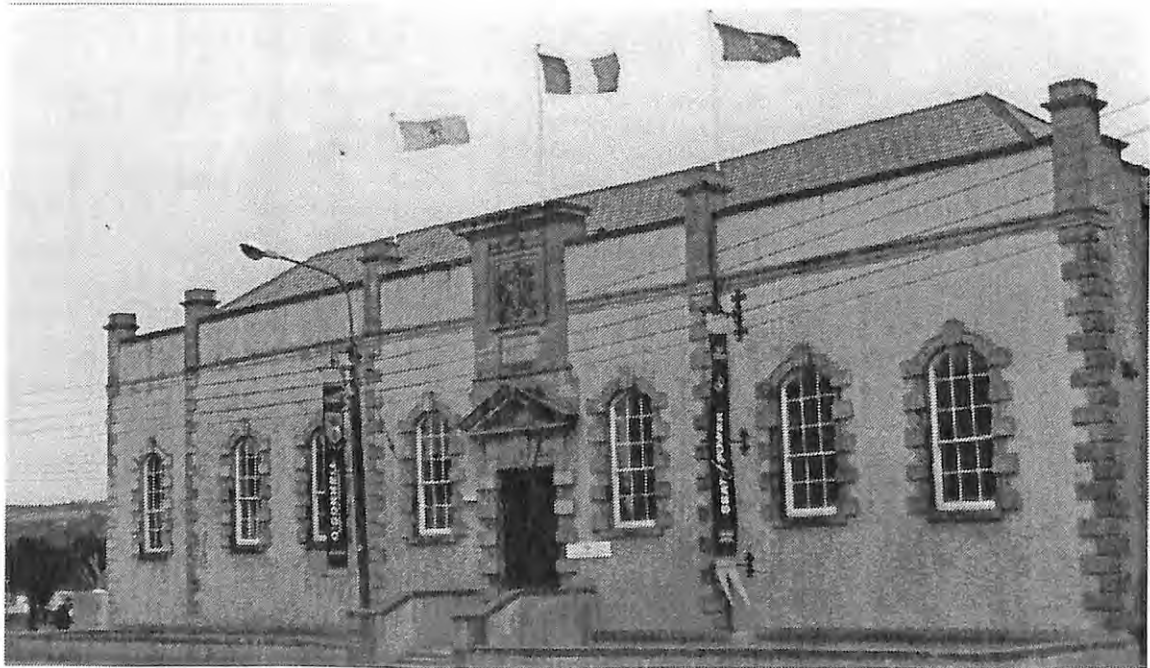


# Ó Domhnaill Abú



*O'Donnell Clan  
Newsletter No.22*

*Autumn 1994*



The Newly-opened Lifford Heritage Centre.

## Lifford Heritage Centre Open

I am delighted to report that the Lifford Heritage Centre mentioned elsewhere in this Newsletter is by now up and running. Ben O'Donnell, secretary of our Clan Association, was very much involved and responsible for almost everything pertaining to the Clan.

I visited the Centre last week and was delighted with all I saw. A life-size figure of Manus O'Donnell, 21st Chieftain (see ODA No. 6), dressed as described in contemporary accounts, relates the history of the Clan. His moving eyes and lips give a very realistic effect while the slides projected onto the nearby screen help to illustrate the story. The facial movement effect is achieved by projecting a film of a talking face onto the blank face of the figure. It works well in the dark but when the lights come on and the projectors are switched off Manus's face becomes featureless.

Outside on the roof-top three flags waved in the breeze, the National Flag, the EC Flag and the O'Donnell Standard. Two large banners hang outside the main door. One reminds us that Lifford, for four hundred years, has been the capital of Donegal, while the other tells that it was once the seat of the powerful O'Donnells.

Inside the main door is the Clans room with wall charts and banners representing some of the principal Tirconnell Clans. There, also, is a shop selling books, badges etc. Another feature of the Clans room is a computer into which it is planned to feed as much O'Donnell genealogy as possible. This work has already begun. Eventually, it is hoped to link up with other Genealogical Centres, especially the Ramelton one. If you have a family tree with O'Donnell 'branches', send a copy to Ben O'Donnell, Lifford Heritage Centre, Lifford, Co. Donegal and some day a 'twig' might sprout.

But, to me, the most important aspect of the entire Centre is the Rupert O Coughlan/ O'Donnell Room. This room will house the many documents and artefacts collected

by the late Rupert O'Coughlan (see ODA No. 5) in the forty odd years he spent researching our Clan history. There will be facilities there, eventually, for anyone wishing to do research etc. The room itself has been made as burglar-proof as possible and fitted with fire-proof cabinets. We are all grateful to the Coughlan family for donating Rupert's material, which I, having spent many nights perusing it, can guarantee is a treasure. And it is intended to keep adding to the collection any new material or artefacts which come our way.

Lifford Centre will close at the end of October and have its official opening next March. It is well worth a visit for anyone, but a 'must' for anyone of O'Donnell descent.  
V. O'Donnell.

Footnote: The Irish National Flag designed at the beginning of the century displays green, white and orange fields in equal size signifying peace between the 'Green' and the 'Orange'. Green representing the Catholic Nationalists and orange representing the Protestant Unionists. These sentiments are as significant and desirable today as they were then.  
V.O'D.

### Thanks

My wife, Annette, would like to thank the many subscribers who prayed and sent her get-well wishes during her recent illness. She has made excellent recovery. It was due to her illness that this issue is so delayed. I hope you will forgive me.  
V. O'D.

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## The Battle of the Ford of the Biscuits

(Continuation of the article entitled '1593' which appeared in ODA No.20)

After the defeat at Ath Cul Uain(near Beleek) on the 10th Oct. 1593 Maguire escaped to his castle at Enniskillen. Following a siege of nine days, a force of 300 English under the command of Captain Dowdall took Maguire's stronghold on the 2nd. Feb. 1594 and placed a garrison of thirty men there. Maguire and his people fled to Tirconnell. O'Donnell, already, had somewhat of a reputation as a 'receiver of traitors.' He was, by now, considered to be the 'very root of the rebellion.'

In the meantime O'Donnell was preparing for the inevitable. He had the castles of Beleek and Bundrowes razed to the ground to render them useless to the English. Having waited four months for the arrival of gallowglasses, O'Donnell, finally, made a move to assist Maguire. According to Lughaidh O Cleirigh, 'Aodh Ruadh O Domhnaill felt ashamed at being so long without going to the aid of Maguidhir, for it was he who urged on the war, and by his advice it was enkindled in the beginning.' Mustering the men of Tir Chonaill, he marched to Enniskillen in mid-June and, along with Maguire's forces, besieged the castle.

Early in August O'Donnell received word that the Scots gallowglasses had landed in Derry and were anxious to meet with him. Leaving his army to continue the siege, he immediately set out for Derry where he met Domhnall Gorm Mac Domhnaill, Lord of the Outer Isles(Red Hugh's uncle) and Mac Leod of Arran(some sources say Harris: 'na hara' in gaeilge text) each accompanied by 500 men. Red Hugh bade them welcome and according to Lughaidh O Cleirigh, 'They were attended and entertained afterwards for three days and three nights with

intoxicating ales and every sort of food that was best in the country.' Then he hired the lot.

Lughaidh O Cleirigh in "THE LIFE OF AODH RUA O DOMHNAILL" (translated by Fr. Paul Walsh) describes them thus, - 'They were recognised among the Irish soldiers by the distinction of their arms and clothing, their habits and language, for their exterior dress was mottled cloaks of many colours with a fringe to their shins and calves, their belts were over their loins outside their cloaks. Many of them had swords with hafts of horn, large and warlike, over their shoulders. It was necessary for the soldier to grip the very haft of his sword with both hands when he would strike a blow with it. Others of them had bows of carved wood strong for use, with well seasoned strings of hemp, and arrows sharp-pointed, whizzing in flight.'

As soon as the English in Dublin heard that O'Donnell was in Derry, a force of 600 foot and 46 horse was sent to re-victual Enniskillen castle. Maguire, on hearing of the approaching army, took most of those at his command and moved to a ford on the river Arney some five miles south of Enniskillen where he knew the English would cross. Here they ambushed the English, totally routing them with the loss of 56 killed and 69 wounded. O'Cleirigh says about the English, - 'The entertainment which they received from the party there was unfriendly.'

The Irish, as was the custom, collected the spoils of war, weapons, horses and a great quantity of food that was meant for the besieged garrison. So many biscuits were collected by the victors that the place became known as 'Beal Atha na mBrioscai'(The Ford of the Biscuits).

What happened next has two tellings. According to Irish sources(Annals of the Four Masters, The Life of Aodh Rua O Domhnaill, Ireland under Elizabeth by Don Philip O'Sullivan Beare, etc.) the garrison surrendered the castle to Maguire who gave them protection during their journey through his territory. The English, however(in the Calendar of State Papers for Ireland, and Tudors by Bagwell), report that the Lord Deputy, 'on hearing of the defeat of the force sent to relieve Enniskillen lost no time in going north-wards himself with an army.' On August the 30th the garrison of Enniskillen was relieved. The garrison had been living on horse flesh, dogs, cats, rats and salt hides and on the day that they were relieved they had only one horse left which they intended to slaughter the following day. The army, having re-victualled the garrison for six months, returned to Dublin without encountering any opposition.

Regardless of the aftermath, the Battle of the Ford of the Biscuits is considered as the beginning of the Nine Years War, the hostilities between the northern clans and Elizabeth's forces in Ireland. It was to be the last struggle by the Irish to retain their Gaelic way of life that had existed since the coming of the Celts some 2,300 years earlier.

\*\*\*\*\*

On Sunday 7th of August 1994, the four hundredth anniversary of the Battle of the Ford of the Biscuits, I visited the battle field. It was a glorious sunny peaceful day, the only sounds to be heard were those made by birds, grazing cattle and three boys fishing in the river. The river, though low that day, would still be a considerable obstacle to an advancing army. Two miles from the 'field' I met some British soldiers walking along the country road in single file. 'Four hundred years ago this day', I thought to myself, 'this wouldn't have been a very safe place for a British soldier.'

V. O'Donnell.

Hugh O'Donnell R.I.P.

It is with great regret we learn of the death of another O'Donnell. Hugh O'Donnell, originally from Meenaneery, Co. Donegal but living in Tralee, passed away last Spring. He had been a subscriber to this newsletter since its beginning and attended the last Clan Gathering. At the age of 80+ he drove on his own all the way from Kerry and did not miss a minute of the proceedings. He was always very proud of his name and the history that went with it. I wish we had more of his kind.

We extend our condolences to his wife, Kay and family. Ar dheis De go raibh a anam uasal!

Eileen O'Donel R.I.P.

Eileen O'Donel(nee Riedlinger from Plymouth), widow of the late John O'Donel, Chief of the Name, passed away on the 18th of April '94, aged ninety. She is survived by her son Fr. Hugh, O.F.M., Nuala and Siobhan, Fr. Hugh, who became "O Domhnaill" on his father's death is at present on the Zimbabwe mission but was at home at the time of his mother's death. Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill, lives in Blackrock, works in the R.T.E.(Irish television network) news department. She has always been involved in Clan activities and was present at both the '89 and '92 Clan Gatherings. Siobhan lives and teaches in Co. Wicklow. We extend our sincere sympathies to all three.



O'Donnell Clan Badge(3 times actual size) designed, with the Chief Herald's approval, in 1954 and available today from me for £3.

# THE O'DONNELLS AND THEIR HERALDRY

by Patrick O'Kelly de Conejera.

Continued from ODA No. 21.

The answer lies in a badge, a form of heraldic device used throughout the centuries to symbolise membership of affiliation rather than personal authority. Thus the Scots Clans have badges within a strap and buckle for the use of their members, as distinct from the arms of their Nobility, and the Chief Herald has granted a badge for the use of those who belong to Donegal, as distinct from the arms of the County as a whole.

Had the O'Donnells not been suppressed it is probable that they would have developed a Clan Badge long ago, but the requirement remains, and can be met by a petition to the Chief Herald from a properly formed Clan Association as a Corporate Body. The members of this Clan Association would then have the right to use this badge in any form; as a pin, a brooch, or as a blazer badge etc.

## An O'Donnell Diversion

The most interesting aspect of the Clan Arms throughout Tirconnell and Tirowen is the degree to which they reflect common descent and alliances, and one O'Donnell family still uses personal arms related to those of the O'Neills. It is probable that the Clan did use the Lion symbol relating to their O'Neill descent at one time, and there is evidence of the transition in an early record of a red lion on a silver shield with a 'Fess', or broad band across it bearing the hand-held Cross.

This probability does not, however, detract in any way from the tradition of St. Patrick's grant of the Cross, which may well have been retained as an inner or possibly secret symbol for the use of the Chief alone, to emerge as the Clan Arms with their rise to power in the 13th century. As all heraldry tells a story this would have represented their rejection of any allegiance to the O'Neills, and a proclamation of their independent rights based on the most historic of their traditions.

## Related Clans

As noted in discussing the nature of Clan society the minor Clans owing allegiance to those of greater power often had hereditary rights, and those relating to the O'Donnells should be

incorporated in any development of their traditions.

Thus the O'Friels had the hereditary right of inaugurating The O'Donnell as Lord of Tirconnell, as symbolised by the Calvary Cross on their Arms, and it is most important that an appropriate O'Friel be established for this purpose.

The O'Clerys were the O'Donnell historians and the MacDunlevy their physicians, and both have recorded Clan Arms. The MacWards as bards, the O'Breslins as brehons and the MacRoartys as hereditary custodians of the Cathach have no recorded Clan Arms, but these might emerge with further research, or be granted to a Clan Association by the Chief Herald.

There must surely be some who bear these names with sufficient pride in their hereditary rights to represent their Clan at O'Donnell Gatherings, and while it might be difficult to build up any Clan structure or determine who should be Chief, anyone of the name bearing personal arms would serve the purpose.

## Conclusion

Heraldry has been called the 'Shorthand of history' and symbols 'The language of the unconscious', reflecting the essence of that which is symbolised and having a positive inspirational effect. The Cross, the Crescent and the Hammer and Sickle are all symbols, and while their messages are entirely different they inspire millions, for good or evil. Heraldry is a refined form of symbolism, and that of the O'Donnells and their related Clans can inspire today as in centuries past. All that is needed to replace the tawdry bunting of our Festivals by the Banners of our rich heraldic heritage is effort.

## References:

- A Social History of Ancient Ireland by P.W. Joyce MA,LLT,TCD,MRIA.
- Lectures on the Manuscripts of Ancient Irish History, by Professor Eugene O'Curry MRIA.
- Gleanings from Ulster History, by Professor Seamus O'Ceallaigh.
- Lectures on the Early History of Institutions, by Sir Henry Summer Maine, KCSI,LLD,FRS.
- Irish Kings and High Kings, by Francis John Byrne.

## Press Clippings

### Arranmore, the king and the pearls

Arranmore islanders have renewed their search for a King's reward to boost their growing tourist business.

The islanders are endeavouring to trace the whereabouts of four valuable pearls given to their ancestors, by King Philip II of Spain, 400 years ago, as a reward for aiding survivors of the ill-fated armada.

Islands claim that the royal gift if exhibited on the island would boost their growing tourist business. The pearls are reckoned to be worth in the region of £2 million.

Until about eight years ago the pearls never left the island, being handed down from generation to generation of the O'Donnell family, who were the direct descendants of Red Hugh O'Donnell.

Arranmore businessman Phil Ban Boyle said that the people of the island would like to have the pearls brought back, not for money, but for sentimental reasons. He stated that their return would create a major tourist attraction.

The pearls were last known to be in the hands of a London man, who inherited them from his wife, a member of the Arranmore O'Donnells who went to London early in the century.

It is believed that the precious pearls now lie in the vaults of some bank, awaiting a claimant.

# Arranmore, the King and the Pearls

Dear sir,

It is the duty of an editor to distinguish fact from fiction. I refer to 'Arranmore, the King and the Pearls' in your paper of March 24th, 1994.

The claims made by your correspondent fail to have any historical accuracy.

1. King Philip II of Spain had no reason to reward the O'Donnells for 'aiding the Armada survivors'. Read 'Ireland - Graveyard of the Spanish Armada' by T.P. Kilfeather (Anvil Books, 1967, P111-2, 114, 116-120) on the treatment they received in Donegal. Forty survivors were put to death in Inishowen by the O'Donnells.

2. It is incorrect to say the O'Donnells who owned the pearls were direct descendants of Red Hugh O'Donnell. Red Hugh never married and therefore he had no direct descendants.

3. That the pearls never left Arranmore island 'until about eight years ago' is untrue. Mary O'Donnell had the pearls with her when she went to reside in London with Ernest Chapman. She separated from her husband Andy Aiken soon after he joined the British Army in 1916.

4. Chapman did not inherit the pearls from his wife as they never married. No record was found in Somerset House, London, when the records were checked.

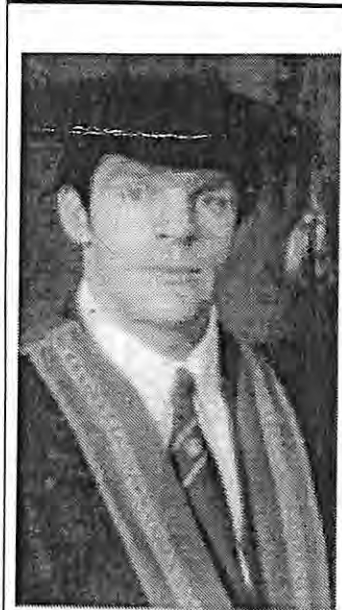
5. To consider the pearls 'worth about two million' is without foundation. When Chapman died in 1965 he left £1,914 and there was no mention of the pearls. They were of no commercial or antique value. They were the gift from a Spanish trawlerman as a token of gratitude when his ship went aground off Arranmore to the family who gave him hospitality.

Ernest Chapman published 'The Mystery Pearl Shells' in 1926 and a year later 'A Short History of a Notable Family'. All the claims were false as to the value and origin of the pearls. He failed to convince anyone of their worth except journalists who find it an entertaining story to keep in circulation.

Much has been written about the pearls over the years. The Irish Times of December 23rd, 1958 has an article 'The O'Donnell Pearls' by 'Errigal'. The Derry Journal has 'Spanish Gold and the O'Donnell Pearls' by Carrig na Spainneach in its issue of May 15th, 1958 and 'The O'Donnell Pearls are just nice Shells' by 'Paddy Simple' in the issue of January 31st, 1958. I refer also to the 'True Story of Pearls' by the late Edward MacIntyre written in the Irish Press in June 1981.

Yours,

Mary Monaghan,  
17, Sprackburn Drive,  
Letterkenny.



Mr. Henry O'Donnell, Tírchonáill House, Newbridge, Co. Kildare, who recently received a distinguished 'Fellowship' from the international Institute of Security Mr. O'Donnell who is from Carrickfinn, Annagry, is also a qualified member of the Security Institute of Ireland and is presently employed as a Lecturer and Instructor with the Department of Defence. He was also given a special award by The Irish Region of IPSA in Dublin where he formally received his outstanding academic results. He is a son of Mrs. Gertrude O'Donnell and the late Mr. Peter O'Donnell of Carrickfin, Annagry and a past pupil of Annagry primary - Ard Scoil Mhuire and Rosses Community Schools.

## "O'DONNELL ABU!"

We are the central location for the accumulation of genealogical data on Clann Daly, (O'Donnell). We now have a live-in resident with the name Brendan O'Donnell, Omagh, Co. Tyrone. He is a retired Male Nurse, and is renovating the south end of the basement area for an apartment. Many rotting timbers, headers and lentals are being replaced with concrete ones. Walls are having doorways cut out. New pipes for heating are being incor-

porated. Also new wiring for electricity. Fresh painting is a must as well as sink replacement and so on, all part of this underground strategy. He will reside in the apartment and will receive shares for the money he spends and for work carried out internally and on the grounds while residing at H.Q. Above ground, there have been several improvements also in this past few years.

Top left appeared in the Donegal Democrat 24/3/'94 and was answered so expertly in the 31/3/'94 issue thanks to Mary Monaghan.

Henry O'Donnell, a subscriber and an active Clan member, has added, yet, another feather to his cap. To date, he has made the army his career but has had many interests and achievements down the years and still goes on. We wish him luck in whatever he's up to next!

The snippet on the left comes from the most recent O'Doherty Clan Newspaper. They have done marvelous things down there in their Inishowen Clan Centre, but now it looks as if they're about to take care of our affairs too. We wish them luck.

# Valuable collection donated to Lifford Centre

A collection of valuable documents, research papers and geneological data collected by the late Rupert Coughlan on "The O'Donnells of Tyrconnell" over a period of 40 years will be housed in the Clans Archives in the new Visitor/Heritage Centre in Lifford Courthouse.

Work on the new centre, which is presently being undertaken by L.A.T.C.H. (Lifford Association for Tourism, Commerce & Heritage) with International Fund for Ireland funding, is due to be opened to the public in July this year.

The late Rupert Coughlan, who passed away a few years ago, was a native of Cork. He joined the Customs & Excise and was stationed in Lifford for a period. He married Roisin O'Donnell from Meenfanad in the Rosses and it was after marrying Roisin that he took such a keen interest in O'Donnell history. He spent the rest of his life researching this illustrious family. His research took him to places like Mayo, where some of the main line of the O'Donnell family settled after the Flight of the Earls, and he followed the fortunes of the family as they were dispersed in Austria and Spain and further afield. As a result he compiled the most comprehensive records imaginable and became an authority on O'Donnell history. He lectured to various societies as well as writing many articles on the clan. He was a member of the Irish Military Society and contributed on a regular basis to its production, "The Irish Sword". He was also author of the only known works on Napper Tandy.

Rupert would have liked to have his collection kept in Donegal where it would be available for research purposes but at the time of his death there was no suitable place available in the county. The collection was therefore destined for the archives in the Franciscan Abbey, Killiney, Dublin, which houses many important works, many on the

O'Donnells. However, with the development of the Courthouse Project in Lifford and the special facilities being provided there, the family felt that this would be the most appropriate place to house the collection.

The decision of Mrs. Coughlan and her family to donate them to Lifford is warmly welcomed by L.A.T.C.H. and indeed the O'Donnell Clan. It is fitting that Lifford has been chosen to house this valuable collection as it was in this area that the O'Donnells were most prominent prior to the Flight of the Earls. In fact, Chief Manus O'Donnell built a castle here in 1527 and it was in this castle that he compiled the now famous "Life of Colmcille", the manuscript of which is now in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. Indeed, Red Hugh himself spent a great deal of his time operating from Lifford Castle during the nine years war and entertained the Spanish Ambassador in the castle. Red Hugh's mother lived in Mongevlin Castle outside Lifford, and his brother Caffer, who accompanied him on the flight, lived in Ballindrait, then called Cafferscourt.

The Visitor Centre in the Courthouse will tell the story of the O'Donnells which is a story of warfare, victory, defeat, emigration and survival and one of the great epics of Irish history and also cover the period of Plantation using models, audio visual techniques and a wide range of artefacts and illustrations to bring the history of the town alive.

Many legal dramas took place in the Courthouse. Visitors can take part in the trials of United Irishman Napper Tandy, "Half-Hanged" McNaughton, who accidentally killed the woman he loved in an ambush, and the trial of the men accused of assassinating the infamous Lord Leitrim.

In the damp, dark basement cells the prisoner's experience of the law and punishment in Lifford will be vividly recreated.

The re-roofing of Donegal Castle which was much delayed during the winter and spring due to continuous bad weather is now progressing well and it seems the job will be completed before the onset of next winter. The slates, which are being fitted these days, are a quartz type flag quarried in nearby Mountcharles. Once the roof is complete it will be possible to carry on with the rest of the project regardless of the weather.

Leaded glass windows, similar to those in the recently restored Parke's Castle outside Sligo, will be fitted. This will be followed by lighting installation. The floor above the great hall will be fitted next. Already the oak beams are being prepared. The floor of the great hall itself was originally made of stone, being supported from the floor below by a continuous stone arch much the same as a bridge. But since portions of that arch have collapsed it is now planned to install a wooden floor resting on the remains of the old stone floor.

There seems to be no problem with money, much of it coming from E.C. funding and with so much done it is almost certain that the project will be completed. On asking when it is expected to be open to the public I was told that it would be within two years and quite possibly in '95.

## Clan News

The 5th annual general meeting of the O'Donnell Clan held in Jackson's Hotel, Ballybofey recently saw the outgoing officer Board re-election unopposed.

Mr. Vincent O'Donnell, Inver, is back again as chairman with Ben O'Donnell, Inver, is back again as chairman with Ben O'Donnell, Lifford renewing his position as secretary. Kathleen O'Donnell, Termon, who showed the financial situation in a healthy spate, continues as treasurer.

Two of the longest serving members, who attended the first ever clan gathering back in 1954. Namely John O'Donnell, St.

Johnston and Willie O'Donnell, Kilmacrennan were elected vice-chairman and president respectively.

Jim O'Donnell, Ranafast takes over as P.R.O.

Members were particularly pleased that the research documents of the late Rupert Coughlan on the O'Donnells will be kept in the county and will be housed in the new clan/archive centre in the Lifford Courthouse Visitor Centre opening in July.

The possibility of organising a Clan gathering in 1995 was discussed and a formal decision will be made shortly.

It was agreed that a Clan Magazine be published to keep members informed of happenings and items of interest.

## Maj. James D. O'Donnell

By DAVID KIBBE  
Staff Writer

MIDDLETOWN — In two years as commander of the busiest State Police troop in New York, Maj. James D. O'Donnell had a hand in catching a serial murderer and putting his parish priest in jail.

Now, O'Donnell, 43, of Goshen, is going to Albany to supervise the state's 2,500 uniformed troopers. O'Donnell was promoted Tuesday to lieutenant colonel. He will begin his duties in Albany today while continuing to wrap up business in Middletown.

He becomes assistant deputy superintendent for the uniformed force. He replaces Robert Leu, who now becomes deputy superintendent for field command.

Only six people have a higher rank than O'Donnell in the State Police. Five others share the rank of lieutenant colonel with O'Donnell.

"I'm looking forward to it," O'Donnell said. "I'll definitely miss this place. Troop F is my home and it always will be."

O'Donnell said he will be dealing with troop commanders in his new job, including his replacement in Middletown, William DeBlock. He said he will push the State Police to expand their programs to educate children in the schools.

O'Donnell will receive a raise from his annual salary of about \$68,000, but it could not be learned how much yesterday.

O'Donnell's promotion is part of a series of moves in the upper levels of the State Police since former Superintendent Thomas Constantine left to become director of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency. Deputy Superintendent James W. McMahon replaced Constantine.

O'Donnell said the arrest and conviction of Nathaniel White for the murder of five women and a girl was the most memorable case during his tenure in Troop F. Investigators summoned O'Donnell after finding the body of a victim in Goshen.



"I was on vacation in Rhode Island," O'Donnell said. "I jumped into my car and came back. It was a big case."

O'Donnell said the arrest and conviction of the Rev. Edward A. Pipala, who was charged with sexually abusing young boys, was one of the toughest cases. Pipala was pastor of St. John the Evangelist Church in Goshen, where O'Donnell serves on the parish council.

"That took a lot out of me, because of my association with the church and the parish council," O'Donnell said.

Trooper Robert Gillespie, a former Police Benevolent Association delegate, said O'Donnell will be remembered for beginning the first State Police DARE program in Troop F and launching an awards ceremony for troopers.

"He is well liked by the members of Troop F," Gillespie said.

Soon, O'Donnell will be cleaning out his office, and moving his New York Yankees cap, an Emerald Society cap and other memorabilia to Albany.

From his desk in Middletown, he can watch troopers and investigators bring handcuffed suspects into the station.

"There's phenomenal talent here," he said. "That's what I'll miss the most about it."

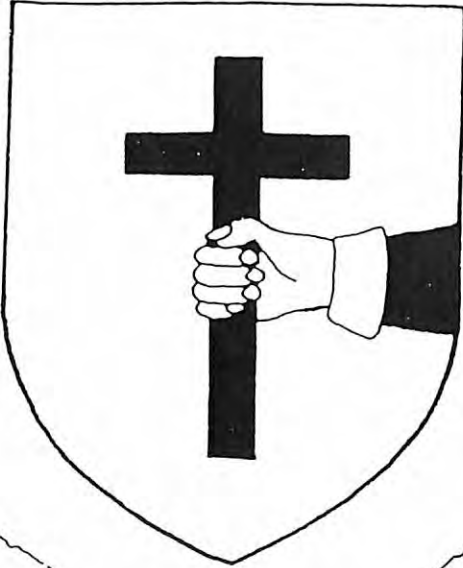
The above clipping from the 'Times Herald Record' (April 21 '94), a New York daily was sent me by Pat D. O'Donnell, a Dublin subscriber.

### New members since ODA No. 19

- |      |  |      |   |
|------|--|------|---|
| D159 | Henry O'Donnell, 125 Moorefield Park,<br>Newbridge, Co. Kildare.                   | D167 | Sean Mac Niallais, "Arus Cholmcille",<br>Doiri Beaga, Leitir Ceanainn.                              |
| D160 | Finula Remington, 99 Ballinteer Close,<br>Dublin 16.                               | D168 | The Hon. Mr. Justice O'Donnell Kinlen,<br>69 Merrion St., Ballsbridge, Dublin 4.                    |
| D161 | Mrs. & Mr. Edward W. Berg, 22 Ferndale Rd.,<br>Madison, N.J., 07940, U.S.A.        | D169 | Margaret & Allan O'Donnell, 154 Pages Rd.,<br>Timaru, New Zealand.                                  |
| D162 | Lt. Col. Patrick O'Kelly de Conjera,<br>The White House, Ballaugh, Isle of Man.    | D170 | Richar O'Donnell, 7982 Wellington Drive,<br>Warrenton 22186, Virginia, U.S.A.                       |
| D163 | Lorraine Williams, 10 Elfindale Crescent,<br>Willowdale, Ontario, M2J 1B5, Canada. | D171 | Frank A. O'Donnell, 14810 Rue de Bayonne 6B,<br>Clearwater, Fl. 34622, U.S.A.                       |
| D164 | Fr. John Silke, Portnablugh, Dunfanaghy.   | D172 | Joan O'Donnell Wildoner, 701 North St.,,<br>P.O. Box 4087, Jim Thorpe, Penna.,<br>U.S.A. 18229-0487 |
| D165 | Jim O'Donnell, 70 Burns Rd., Wahroonga,<br>N.S.W. 2076, Australia.                 | D173 | Hugh Laurence O'Donnell, 3520 West 93rd St.,<br>Leawood, Kansas, 66206, U.S.A.                      |
| D166 | James R. O'Donnell, 14 Cider Mill Circle,<br>Flemington, N.J. 08822, U.S.A.        |      |   |



# Ó Domhnaill Abú



*O'Donnell Clan*

*Newsletter No. 24*

*Winter 1996*



The refurbished and refurnished Great Hall of Donegal Castle.

## Countess Irene Montjoye

During the summer I had the pleasure of meeting Dr. Irene Montjoye, one of the Austrian O'Donnell's. She had been lecturing in Bantry at the beginning of July and though this was not her first visit to Ireland, it was, however, her first to Co. Donegal.

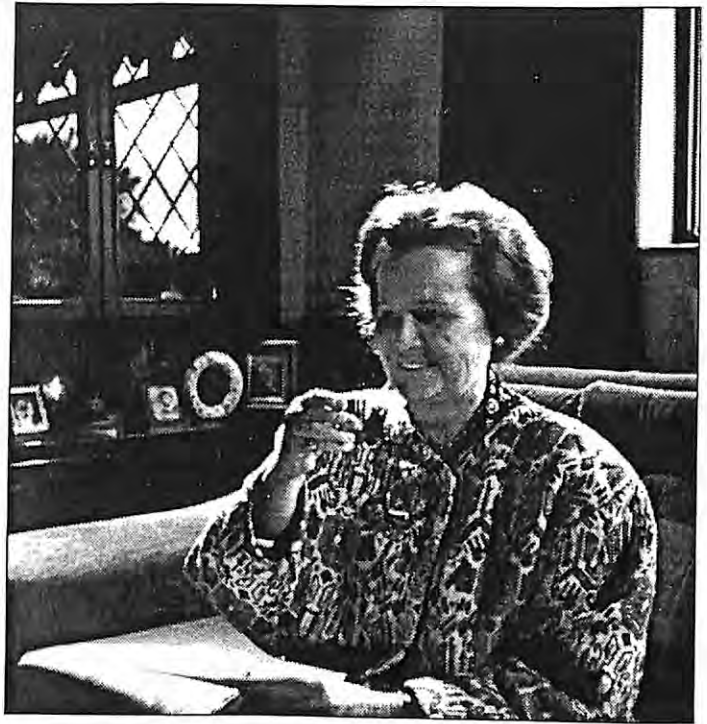
Her tour of the Castle she found quite enjoyable albeit she felt there was too much talk about the Brookes.

She spent three days in the County during which time she visited the Rosses, Doon Rock, Letterkenny Cathedral(built by Cardinal Patrick O'Donnell), Loch Eske and Rossnowlagh Museum where she was received by Lucius Emerson the curator.

As well as enjoying a visit to her ancestral homeland she also did some research for her forthcoming book on the Irish in Austria. After Christmas, the Countess intends moving to Ireland for about six months to complete her research.

The launch of the book is planned to coincide with Austria receiving the E.C. presidency in July '98 for the first time ever.

The Countess had a very warm welcome for my wife and me when we met at the wedding of Douglas O'Donnell in September(see page 5).



The Countess seen here enjoying her first ever taste of Poteen(illicit Irish whisky).

We wish her all the best with her endeavours and look forward to this publication which, undoubtedly, will include some her own ancestors.

## Frank O'Donnell

Frank O'Donnell or Frankie Pa(son of the late Pa O'Donnell of Burtonport, Co. Donegal) a long time subscriber to this Newsletter and one of the speakers at the 1989 Clan Gathering(after Mass at Doon Rock, see O'DA No. 10) had the honour this year of being, along with two others, the first ever solicitor in the history of the Republic of Ireland to be appointed as Judge of the Circuit Court. Previously, only Barristers could have this privilege. Frankie has had many distinctions down the years, among them being President of the Incorporate Law Society of Ireland as was his father some twenty years earlier. A profile of this illustrious man appears in this year's '*Donegal Yearbook*'. We wish him all the best in his new position.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Guillermo O'Donnell

Guillermo O'Donnell of Argentina(see O'DA No. 10) who has for the last number of years been lecturing in the University of Nortre Dame, Indiana, U.S.A. and who is a subscriber to this Newsletter, received some accolade at the beginning of this year. I hope I have this right (it was whispered to me by some American visitor during the summer), he was made a member of the Fellowship of Arts and Science Academy. Congratulations Guillermo.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Paddy O'Donnell.

Paddy O'Donnell of Mullaghduff, Co. Donegal is also to be congratulated on becoming Mayor of his native Mullaghduff during the summer. Paddy has always been an active member of the Clan Association. We wish him much success in this high office.

## Daniel O'Donnell Honoured

Daniel O'Donnell, that mega-star singer from Kincaslugh, Co. Donegal goes from strength to strength. Tickets for his shows are usually sold out hours after they go on the market anywhere and everywhere all over the world. It's not alone his singing that attracts such crowds but his clean-living image, personality and charisma. Earlier this year he was given a Civic Reception by the Donegal County Council who realise that he attracts more tourists to the area than the Irish Tourist Board. He was also honoured by the O'Donnell Clan Association at a special function held in his own Viking House Hotel. The following excerpts from the papers tell the story.

Donegal Democrat 25th April 1996.

*"The director of North West Tourism, Clr. Sean McEniff, informed the packed chamber that since he opened his Viking House Hotel in 1993 almost a quarter of a million people had passed through its doors.*

*"Of those, 20,000 stayed overnight and only 15% of the guests have been from the Republic of Ireland. The rest have been visitors from Northern Ireland, England, Scotland, Wales, Europe and beyond. It is a remarkable tribute to the man that over half of the English visitors to the Viking House are on their first visit to the country."*

*It was a theme echoed by Daniel who in reply said that he considered himself privileged to have assumed the task of bringing people to Donegal. "The hard part is getting them here - but once they've been here its easy; they always return."*

*They all heard Clr. McEniff tell Daniel that Donegal was proud of him. "He is now an international artist. All 12 of his albums have gone to No. 1 in the British Country Charts. He has collected countless silver and gold disks in Ireland and Britain and Australia and he has sold over 2 million records. But he never forgets his roots."*

Donegal Democrat 35th May 1996



Vincent O'Donnell, chairman Clan Association, Daniel O'Donnell, Ben O'Donnell, secretary Clan Association.

*"At a special function in Daniel's own Viking House on Thursday night he was made an honorary life member of the Clan Association.*

*A specially inscribed frame was presented to Daniel by clan chairman Vincent O'Donnell.*

*Mr. Ben O'Donnell clan secretary in his address spoke of the famous O'Donnell chieftains who had brought honour to the Clan in the past such as Red Hugh.*

*"It was fitting," he said, "that the name Daniel had been given to our honoured guest tonight because a number of the great chieftains bore this name."*

*"There was Donal Mór O Domhnaill chieftain from 1208 to 1241 who was succeeded by his son Donal Og 1258 - '81."*

*"It was also interesting," he said, "that it was Daniel O'Donnell who brought the 'Cathach', which contained sacred writings attributed to St. Colmcille, to the continent for safe keeping after the overthrow of the O'Donnells by the English in the early 1600's.*

*He continued, "Our present day O'Donnell has been a great leader also, being a great ambassador for Donegal*

*on the world stage."*

*In his reply Daniel thanked the Clan Association for the honour they had bestowed upon him.*

*"I feel a bit guilty," he said, "in accepting the award because unlike the chieftains in the past who did great deeds in battle I myself have never hit anyone in earnest in my life."*

*The O'Donnell Clan badge was presented to Daniel by Terry O'Donnell, wife of the late Danny Minnie former vice chairman of the Clan Association.*

*Bouquets of flowers were presented to Daniel's mother by Kathleen O'Donnell, association treasurer, and to Councilor Anne O'Donnell, wife of the late Eddie, former chairman of the association."*

*Editor's note - The inscription on the scroll presented to Daniel was*

*"This is to certify that Daniel O'Donnell  
Has been made an honorary life member of the O'Donnell Clan  
Association in appreciation of the honour and dignity he has  
brought to the O'Donnell name through his success as a singer on  
the national and international scene."*

## Henry O'Donnell, again and again.....

On page 5 of Newsletter No. 22 (Autumn '94) appears a clipping from some newspaper recounting yet another of Henry O'Donnell's achievements. Below it I wrote the following - *"Henry O'Donnell, a subscriber and an active Clan member, has added, yet, another feather to his cap. To date, he has made the army his career but has had many interests and achievements down the years and still goes on. We wish him luck in whatever he's up to next."* It seems this man can't stop or be stopped.

I quote from the Donegal Democrat 27/6/96,

*"To say that Henry O'Donnell is a remarkable athlete would be an understatement. Competing in a triathlon, a freak accident left him paralysed with a broken neck in 1992.*

*For any person to suffer such pain must be sheer hell. For a man that had built his life around the pursuit of physical excellence, it must have been torturous in the extreme.*

*But then, the experts had not dealt with the tenacity that had always been the hallmark of the Donegal man. Henry then began a process that not only had to see him learn how to walk again, but also to learn to speak again.*

*Recovering from such a horrendous injury. Henry needed inspiration and he got it from a dream that he had since a kid, that of swimming from the Donegal island of Tory over to the mainland of Magheraroarty.*

*A fit man would have found the prospect intimidating. A man lying in a hospital bed would be foolhardy. But fool he wasn't and hardy he most certainly was.*

*As the months progressed and his injuries healed, he, with tenacious willpower and intensive physiotherapy, set about his dream of completing the Tory Island channel swim.*

*A marathon in every sense of the word ensued. Nine months of meticulous advance preparation. Physically attuning the mind and body for the swim. Diet, precision swimming training, body circuit training, speed and endurance training along with weeks of research into the psychology of human discipline, which such a marathon event demands. In total, 620 hours of physical fitness training.*

*But the sight of the President of Ireland, Mary Robinson on a visit to Tory and who launched the swim gave him that all important boost and 6 hours, 11 minutes and 29 seconds later he entered the history books. A truly remarkable achievement for someone that two years earlier looked as he may never walk again.*

*Dungloe physician Dr. Patrick Sweeney said of his achievement afterwards, "To have achieved this record in a normal state of fitness would in itself be a remarkable feat. To have achieved it following such extensive damage to his cervical spine and still retain his qualities of humbleness and dignity makes Henry O'Donnell a legend in his own lifetime."*

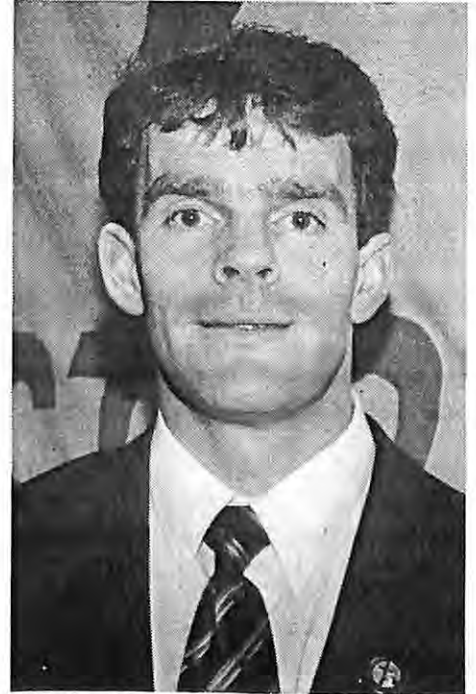
*His rehabilitation was fully completed earlier this year when he was selected to compete for Ireland in the World Masters Swimming championships in Sheffield, which begin this week.*

*Whatever the outcome of his achievements this week, he has already achieved a gold medal winning performance in getting there and is an inspiration to all to all of us in what can be achieved through sheer determination....."*

Editor's notes -

1. The distance from Tory to the mainland is 9 miles but it was estimated that Henry swam 13 miles due to currents and waves.
2. Henry arrived at the Opening of the 1992 Clan Gathering wearing his 'cage' i.e. a brace supporting his head, neck and arm.
3. Henry has since set up the **PROBE SECURITY NETWORK** offering the following services - Private, Commercial & Industrial Investigators/Security Consultants: Security Risk Management: Security Training Specialists.

The following is from the Donegal Democrat of the 31/10/96,



Henry O'Donnell of Carrickfin broke a remarkable 28-year-old record earlier this year when he swam from Tory Island to Magheraroarty in six hours, 11 minutes and 29 seconds. He also represented Ireland in the World Masters Distance Swimming Championships and out of a field of thousands finished 22nd, a sufficiently good position to earn his automatic entry to the next Masters' in 1998.

His achievements are all the more remarkable when one considers that two years ago he was virtually paralysed following a dreadful accident. However, he fought his way back to fitness and success.

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The following is a list of the main features that appeared in *O Dómhnaill Abú* since its beginning in the Spring of 1985. Back issues and copies of articles are always available.

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O'Donnell Arms.  
Chieftains and their lineage.  
Donegal Castle.  
"O'Donnell Abu" (song) Eng. & Ir.  
'O'Donnell's Gallon.'

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Skeleton Genealogical Chart.  
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Irish Oifigiul and badge.  
O'Donnells of Tyrconnell(history) part 1.  
"Hugh O'Neill & Hugh O'Donnell Roe"(song).  
Photo of Patent.

## No. 3.

O'Donnells of Tyrconnell(Newport Line).  
Peadar O'Donnell.

## No. 4.

O'Donnells of Tyrconnell(Larkfield Line).  
Death of Aodh Rua(Red Hugh).

## No. 5.

O'Donnells of Tyrconnell(Castlebar Line).  
Rupert O Coughlan R.I.P.  
Sources of O'Donnell Genealogy.  
Peadar O'Donnell R.I.P.

## No. 6.

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Manus O'Donnell - 21st Chieftain.

## No. 7.

"Fuadach Aodh Rua"(poem).  
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## No. 8.

Red Hugh's March to Kinsale.  
O'Donnells of Tyrconnell(Ramelton Line).  
O'Donnell participants in the "Flight of the Earls".

## No. 9.

"Pilleadh Aodh Rua"(poem).  
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Castle repairs.  
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## No. 21.

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## No. 22.

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## No. 23.

1995  
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# DOUGLAS O'DONELL WEDS

At six o'clock on Saturday morning, 7th Sept. I was awakened from my sleep by what sounded like an explosion downstairs. 'I'm sure it's nothing to be alarmed at,' I thought and went back to sleep. After all I was staying in a strange house on top of a mountain(over 3000 feet above sea level) in Upper Austria with over twenty other people, not to mention over a hundred different species of animals and birds in enclosures and cages in the surrounding fields. Someone once described the house as being like Noah's Ark on top of Mount Ararat with the animals and birds having just been released.

The house, if house it could be called, for it contains two flats, an inn, a museum, numerous rooms, offices and many stairs and corridors. The original building was a hunting lodge belonging to the aristocratic, Uberacker family - one of the fireplaces was a present from the Tsar of Russia. At the turn of the century two O'Donells(a brother and sister) married two members of the same Uberacker family. And today Hochkraut Hunting Lodge is the home of Count Gabriel O'Donell, his wife Ulricke, son Douglas and daughter Elizabeth.

Who are these O'Donells(notice spelling of the surname, it was an error made by the Emperor when granting the title and they held on to it ever since)? Gabriel is the son of Douglas, son of Hugo, son of Maurice, son of Maurice, son of Joseph, son of Henry(who emigrated from Co. Mayo to Austria in 1742), son of Calbhach Dubh(Co. Mayo), son of Hugh(Co. Mayo), son of Calbhach Rua(1st of the family to move to Co. Mayo, thanks to Oliver Cromwell), son of Manus, son of Conn Og, son of Conn, son of Calbhach of Donegal Castle(22nd Chieftain of the O'Donnells from 1563 to '66), brother of Aodh Dubh, Donegal Castle(23rd Chieftain from 1566 to 1592), father of the famous Aodh Rua, last official Chieftain from 1592 till his death in Spain 1602.

This family, regularly visit Donegal and feel it is their ancestral home. Their proudest possession and heirloom is the Patent received by Rory O'Donnell from King James I in 1604. This 4'X3' parchment is kept in a specially designed case and is proudly displayed to all Irish visitors. Another object of interest is the blood-stained glove of

Maxmilian O'Donell who saved the Emperor, Franz Joseph I from assassination in 1853. It was for this action that the Austrian O'Donells received the title 'Count'.

An hour later having got up and dressed I was sitting down to breakfast when there were several more loud bangs. I noticed people looking out from an upstairs window at the street below. I did likewise. To my surprise the countryside was white - the first snow of winter had fallen during the night. Then I saw four men firing small cannons. Later I learned that it is traditional in that part of Europe to herald special events in this manner. The special event of this day and the reason myself and my wife were there was the marriage of Count Douglas O'Donell to Countess Aimee Csaky- The Csaky family are Hungarian aristocrats and until earlier this century were the fifth largest land owners in that country. The bride, her family and friends, along with friends of the O'Donells had all stayed at Hochkraut that night, thus accounting for the large number of people about.

The firing went on all morning with startled animals - bison, deer, steinbock, wild boar, yak etc. etc. -looking on as the snow around their feet grew deeper. Annette and I had left a warm 22°C. Ireland the day before. The scene was truly set for a 'White Wedding'.

Mass was at 1 o'clock in the local church with 450 guests present, among them Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill(sister of our Chief) along with her son, Manus and daughter, Aoife. The ceremony was quire similar to that in Ireland. A piper played the couple out of the church after Mass. As the weather was inclement all retired to a nearby castle that was hired for the day. Five large rooms were prepared for the guests with tables of drink - champagne, wine and beer, and all sorts of finger food. People milled about and chatted.

After about three hours the crowd began to disperse. All those staying at Hochkraut made their way back up the hill and within minutes had changed into their working clothes. Everyone including the newly married couple joined in the work. Many of the animals and birds had to be fed. Tables and chairs had to be put in place for the evening meal - 250 were invited.



Tables and exhibits were removed from the museum and it turned in to a dining room.

About 9 o'clock the guests began to arrive, all dressed this time in national costumes. The young were dining upstairs in the museum while the rest were being accommodated down stairs in the restaurant.

The first course was cauliflower soup followed by the main course which was roast bison and boar. This delicious meat was accompanied by sauerkraut, shredded beets and 'Servietten Knodel'. All, of course being washed down with either wine or beer. A table in the bar offered a large variety of desserts along with tea or coffee. All the food served both in the

afternoon and in the evening was produced and prepared by the two families. After midnight those who considered themselves energetic enough moved upstairs to the Disco while others said 'Guten Abend' and made their way home.

This really was the third reception. Three days before the wedding a reception was held at Hochkraut for the many staff of the park and all the neighbours. It was a traditional Austrian evening of food, dance and song, and, of course, everyone in national costume.

Next morning all who stayed in the house were up early feeding animals and birds and returning the house to its normal state. On average, 1,400 people visit the park daily to see the many different species of animals and birds, walk the nature trails which include a wonderful display of mushrooms and toadstools, frogs and toads etc. and also the museum.

The O'Donnells also have a farm down in the valley along the Danube where they produce most of the feed for the animals and where many of the stock are wintered. Some of the food, such as grain, is packaged in small quantities for sale at the entrance gate. Most visitors entering the park purchase a bag and enjoy feeding the animals, which means that the O'Donnells have some of their animals fed freely. So all in all it is a very busy place but apparently a profitable one.

Late on Sunday evening the newly-wedded couple, having promised to visit Donegal next June for the Columban Commemoration, departed for Rome where they intend to spend their Honeymoon. Early the following morning, Annette and I made our way back to 'Sunny Donegal'.

## Obituaries

As I've said before, it is always sad to hear of the death of a subscriber and in particular of an O'Donnell who was proud of his name and ancestry.

Tom O'Donnell of Epping, N.S.W., Australia had been a subscriber since the beginning. He wrote me countless letters and with his wife, Dorothea visited Ireland and attended Clan Gatherings.

He died last June at the age of eighty three having had a long and healthy life. He is survived by his wife, Dorothea, and four of a family with whom we sympathise.

Others who died since the last issue were -

Fr. Paddy Gallagher, retired parish priest of Derrygonnelly, Co Fermanagh, a great historian and a subscriber to this newsletter since its beginning.

Arthur Lewis O'Donnell of Lewisham, London

Hannah O'Hara from Sligo who was hale and hearty at the 1992 Clan Gathering.

William O'Donnell, Ards, Creeslough, Co. Donegal.

*Go ndeanaidh Dia trocaire ar a n-anamnacha.*

# DONEGAL CASTLE

*"It is, of course, the dream of every O'Donnell that some day it will be fully or partially restored to its former glory."* So read the last line of the article entitled, **DONEGAL CASTLE** which appeared in the very first issue of *'Ó Domhnaill Abú'* Spring 1985.

Well it has finally come to pass. The O'Donnell section of Donegal Castle, after years of restoration, was opened to the public early this summer and on the 29th of July was officially opened by Joan Burton T.D., Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs. The following excerpts are from the Donegal Democrat of 1st Aug. '96.

One hundred and fifty people, representatives of local clergy, business, community organisations and various sections of Office of Public Works, gathered on the first floor great banqueting hall of the restored Tower House section of the Castle to hear M.C. Commissioner Dermot Burke, Director National Monuments and Historical Properties, say that Donegal Castle has a special place in the minds and memories of the people of Donegal Town and County and on a national basis it is also a major asset.

He said that the castle provided a splendid focal point for the town and will generally assist tourism in the area.

Minister Burton said, "We celebrate a fascinating building which is so significant to Donegal Town, county and nation. From even a cursory examination of the Castle it is very easy to be highly impressed with its original builders."

The Minister added: "Having restored the Castle the next task that required attention was to ensure that the experience of visitors to the Castle would be as meaningful which is part of the interpretive programme for which the Castle was commissioned, and designed to highlight the very major aspects of Irish Life and historic monuments. The great tradition of O'Donnell Chieftainship is celebrated in an authentic yet accessible manner."

The Brooke family resided in Donegal Castle until the early 18th century, when eventually it fell into decay and became roofless. Later owner, the Earl of Arran, placed it into the guardianship of the Office of Public Works in 1898. Early restoration work commenced for a brief period in the mid 1930's and then lay dormant for a number of years until the 1980's when work commenced on restoring the Gate House section at a cost of £150,000.

In 1989 work commenced proper on the Tri-partite re-roofing and restoration of the Tower House section which is now estimated to have cost in excess of half a million pounds.

Criticism has recently been levelled against the O.P.W. for their preservation work in "Pebbledashing" the North West outside wall. This was necessary as the original stonework, some of which has stood since 1474 was crumbling into a powder-like substance, eroding areas of the foundation of the Castle. It is believed that over the years the pebbledash work will "weather" and blend into the existing structure. The O.P.W. state that there are no plans at present to re-roof the Manor House.

There are presently five specially trained guides and a caretaker employed in the Castle and it is estimated that since the unofficial opening in mid-June this year over 12,000 people have visited the Castle and exhibition.



One of those guides, Eunan O'Donnell from Ardara, is pursuing an Honours Degree in History and is at present in his fourth and final year. He has, of course, a deep interest in the history of our Clan and was more than helpful to all O'Donnells who visited the Castle during the summer.

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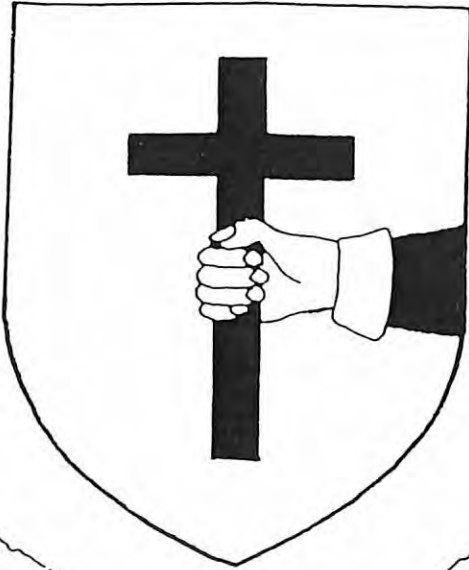
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# Ó Domhnaill Abú



*O'Donnell Clan*

*Newsletter No. 25*

*Winter 1997*



Visiting Donegal Abbey during the '92 Clan Gathering.

## The Earldom Of Tyrconnell and Related Matters

1. The first outsider to claim lordship over Tyrconnell was Maurice Fitzgerald, Lord Justice of Ireland, A.D. 1241, as appears from a little volume, dating from 1590, in the Genealogical Office, Dublin (G.O. Ms. 34, p. 26). According to John W. Papworth and Alfred W. Morant, "An Alphabetical Dictionary of Coats of Arms belonging to Families in Great Britain and Ireland, forming an Extensive Ordinary of British Armorial" (London - 1877), Fitzgerald was given the title "Earl of Tyrconnell." I have ascertained from the Chief Herald that there is no record in his office of the conferring of this title. Nothing is reflected in the Fitzgerald Arms (Argent a Saltire Gules) to suggest a Tyrconnell connection. Maurice was defeated by Gofreidh O'Donnell, (Chief 1248-58) whom he met in personal combat at the battle of Credran Cille in Roscede(Drumcliffe, Co. Sligo) in 1256. Both subsequently died of their wounds. I have found no further mention of any Fitzgerald claim to O'Donnell's country.
2. On 28th August 1541 the Lord Deputy and Council recommended that Manus O'Donnell(Chief 1537-63) should be created Earl of Tyrconnell or Sligo, but nothing more was done (State Papers, Henry VIII, vol. 11, pp. 316/7).
3. On 22 May 1561 Queen Elizabeth wrote to the Lord Deputy that it was proposed to create Calvagh (Chief 1563-6) Earl of Tyrconnell, and went so far as to say that the necessary patent had been made out. The Lord Deputy in acknowledging receipt on 17 July following stated that no "patent was passed by the Irish Executive or enrolled." After his father's death (No. 2 above) Calvagh was "granted the style and dignity of O'Donnell and appointed Captain of Tyrconnell." He received no other title (Geoffrey H. White, "The Complete Peerage," vol. XII, part II, pp. 110/1).
4. Red Hugh (Chief 1592-1602) never made peace with the English and consequently the question of a foreign title did not arise.
5. Rory O'Donnell (brother of Red Hugh) made his submission, following the defeat at Kinsale, in 1602. He was knighted and created Earl of Tyrconnell, 29 September 1603. Following his flight of 1607 a Bill of Attainder was brought in in 1614 that, inter alia, stripped him of all his honours. (White, op. cit., pp. 112/3).
6. After Rory's death his son, Hugh, less than one year old when brought on the flight of 1607, was known as the Titular Earl of Tyrconnell on the Continent. (Fr. Brendan Jennings, O.F.M., "Wild Geese in Spanish Flanders, 1582-1700," passim). He died without issue in 1642.
7. Neill Garbh O'Donnell (who died in the Tower of London in 1626) received a grant from Elizabeth, 18 March 1601, "of the custody of the country or territory of Tyrconnell" to hold during pleasure (Patent and Close Rolls of Chancery, Elizabeth, vol. II, p. 587). There is no mention of a title nor is there any record of Neill Garbh having taken out any Patent.
8. Following Earl Rory's attainder the title "Earl of Tyrconnell" was given to Lord Fitzwilliam of Merrion, but it expired in 4 years (Sir Bernard Burke, "The Vicissitudes of Families," vol. 11, pp. 36/7).
9. It was next conferred on the Talbots of Malahide, but again fell by attainder (Burke, Loc. cit.).
10. After Talbot it was given to an English Baronet named Brownlow, and again became extinct (Burke, loc. cit.).
11. The last to receive it was another English family called Carpenter (Burke, loc. cit.).

12. Richard Talbot, King James's Lord Lieutenant of Ireland had the title "Duke of Tyrconnell" (O'Hart, "Irish Pedigrees," p. 265).
13. The Chichesters became Earls of Donegal (O'Hart, loc. cit.).
14. Hugh O'Donnell of Larkfield (d. 1754) was known locally as "Earl of Tyrconnell" (John O'Donovan, Appendix to the Annals of the Four Masters (1848 edition) vol. III, p. 2358). He is buried in Creevelea Abbey, Dromahair, Co. Leitrim, where his tombstone, bearing the family arms, is called "The Earl's Tombstone" (Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland, vol. XLVI, part II, 1926, pp. 178/80).
15. The Rev. Constantine O'Donel (d. 1890), senior of the Larkfield Branch of the Family, contemplated petitioning Queen Victoria to revive the Newport Baronetcy (that became extinct with the death of Sir George Glendinning O'Donel on 22 January 1889) in his person. He went so far as to draft the Petition. After making his case for the revival of the Baronetcy he continued: "Your Memorialist is also heir-at-law to Roderick, son of Hugh, Prince of Tyrconel, who was created Earl of Tyrconel and Baron O'Donel of Donegal, 4th September 1603, but which title was attained. That if the attainder was removed and the Earldom restored Memorialist would be the one to inherit as Head of the O'Donel of Tyrconel family." He proceeded no further with the matter (Uiberacker-O'Donell Archives, Austria).
16. The Chief Herald of Ireland recognised John O'Donel (1894-1971) of the Larkfield Branch as "O Domhnaill Clann Dálaigh - Chief of the Name" and gave official notice of such in IRIS OIFIGIUL, 11 September 1945.
17. Upon John's death on 12 September 1971 he was succeeded by his son, Hugh (b. 1940), a Franciscan Father on the Zimbabwe mission, who is now the Head of the Clan. Fr. Hugh is the last male member of the Main Line in Ireland, and, upon his demise, the Headship of the O'Donnells will pass to the Spanish Branch of the Family.
18. Col. Maximilian Karl Lamoral O'Donell, aide-de-camp to Emperor Frans Josef of Austria saved His Majesty from assassination in Vienna in February 1853, and, as a reward, was admitted to that country's Peerage, with the title of "Count" by Patent published in "Oesterreichischer Soldate Freund" of 26 October 1853. He died without issue 14 July 1895.
19. The Austrian title of "Count" is personal to the holder and his descendants. It cannot be inherited by a relative. Consequently, by special Imperial favour, Maximilian's brother, Maurice O'Donell (1815-1890), was granted another Patent, dated 25 September 1866, conferring a similar title on him and his descendants. They are known as "Count O'Donell von Tyrconnell". The present holder of the title is Count Gabriel O'Donell (b. 1922). Their Arms are those of O'Donnell impaling Habsburg (the latter an honour conferred on Maximilian and continued for Maurice).
20. The Spanish Branch of the Family, represented by the Dukes of Tetuan, does not lay any claim to the ancient territory of Tyrconnell among their many titles. Their Arms are similar to those of their Austrian cousins (but without Habsburg).
21. Hugh O'Donnell (b. 1948), Count of Lucena, son of the Duke of Tetuan, has taken the Arms of Red Hugh (No. 4 above) that appears on the seal of an autograph letter, dated 16 May 1596, in the Spanish National Archives, Simancas.

Rupert S. O Cochlain,  
5 May, 1983.

(Here continues the career of the great Red Hugh O'Donnell after 1595 i.e. where I left off in ODA No. 23)

In May 1596 a Spanish nobleman, Don Alonzo Cobos, was sent by the King of Spain to evaluate the Irish situation. He landed at Killybegs and was escorted by local nobles through Bearnas Mór to Lifford where Red Hugh resided at the time. Here he spent three days and three nights with O'Donnell during which time he was well briefed on the campaign so far and given a letter for King Philip petitioning immediate assistance.

Red Hugh with some soldiers accompanied Cobos on his return to Killybegs as Bearnas Mór was *"an intricate mountain, difficult to pass over, and it was a place of refuge for robbers and rogues, robbing and plundering until Aodh Rua banished them,...."*

We read that before his departure, *"O Domhnaill's people gave him plenty of the flesh meat of fat hinds and whitefleeced sheep."* He sailed, *"with the first breeze of wind from the north-east, keeping the shore of Ireland on the port hand.....until he reached Spain."*

In June, Red Hugh received word that the Queen's General of War in Ireland, Sir John Norris, with an army of approx. 20,000 men was approaching Connacht with the intention of subjecting the province *"wholly and entirely, to the English Sovereign."* According to some records, this army, composed of both English soldiers and native clansmen, was the largest ever seen in that part of the country. Meeting with no opposition, they marched until they pitched camp on the River Robe.

O'Donnell moved immediately, having already sent messengers summoning the Connacht Clans to join him at a certain point not far from Norris's camp. Soon, Red Hugh with his Tyrconnell men and Connacht men faced Norris from the opposite bank of the river.

*"There was much parleying to and fro for peace and amity between them, but it was not so in truth, they were spying and circumventing and deceiving each other if they could."* Finally, with their supplies running low, the English withdrew, having *"effected nothing against the Irish."*

O'Donnell and his men returned to their homes.

The English Council in Dublin realising O'Neill and O'Donnell's strength and fearing Spanish involvement (Cobos's visit hadn't gone un-noticed) decided that the best course of action for the time being was to *"offer peace and friendship to them."* Two ambassadors were selected and sent to Dundalk. A messenger was sent from there to O'Neill inviting him and O'Donnell to come to talk. Eventually, the two Chiefs with a company of cavalry arrived at Dundalk and the talks began. The two English ambassadors outlined all the terms being offered by the Lord Deputy and his Council but O'Donnell refused to accept anything, reminding those along with him of the falsehood of previous English promises.

The ambassadors returned to Dublin and reported to their superiors, who in turn, passed this information to Queen Elizabeth. The Queen, enraged, took some measures to deal with the situation. She had another army, numbering over 20,000 mustered. Sir Richard Bingham, then Governor of Connacht, was replaced by Sir Conyers Clifford. The latter, seemingly, was held in high regard by everyone including the Irish and upon his arrival in Connacht, several Clans *went over to him.* O'Connor Sligo returned from England *"having been appointed by the Queen to the command of many hundred troops and soldiers full ready to bring under her power those who were near him of the men of Ulster and Connacht. He came to Connacht immediately to fight in alliance with the English against Cenél Conaill."* Some of his neighbouring Clans, now, switched their loyalty to him.

O'Donnell, on hearing of these developments, didn't wait to assemble all his forces but went immediately with what he had to Connacht, plundering *"O'Conor's subjects and friends, of whom we have spoken, in every place they were.....so that he did not leave a single beast with them; and he disturbed no one in the country but them."*

O'Donnell, then, pitched his camp in Bréifne (Co. Leitrim) waiting for Christmas to pass and the rest of his forces to join him. And so ended 1596.

By the end of January, with his forces assembled, Red Hugh made another incursion into Connacht all the way to Galway City. Having collected much plunder including a large number of cattle and sheep he made his back to Tír Chonaill leaving the Connacht people in little doubt as to who controlled that province.

O'Connor, Sligo with a large army of Irish and English pursued O'Donnell to avenge this action. Red Hugh happened to be camped not far away, just east of Sligo waiting for him. O'Connor was badly beaten and forced to retreat. O'Donnell, then, took most of his army back to Tyrconnell to rest but left some in Connacht under the command of his cousin, Niall Garbh, so as to be prepared to deal with any more trouble from the West. These soldiers continually harassed the Irish who had turned away from O'Donnell until most of them changed their minds and came back.

In April a ship from Spain landed in Killybegs on a fact-finding mission. Having met with Red Hugh in Donegal, they departed with *"gifts of hounds and horses"* and a full account of the campaign against the English.

In June, O'Donnell went once again on a tour of Connacht where he met with no resistance, Leaving his brother, Rory, in charge he returned to Donegal. About this time a new Lord Deputy, Lord Borough, was appointed to Ireland. He arrived bringing with him many soldiers and war equipment. Shortly after his arrival, he commanded the Governor of Connacht *"to go with his forces in full muster against Cénel Conaill."* The Governor assembled *"all the English and Irish in the province that were obedient to him."* When assembled, they numbered twenty two companies of infantry and ten squadrons of cavalry, *"with their strong coats of mail and their stout, long, broad-shouldered rivetted spears, and their loud-voiced sharp-sighted guns, and their slender, sharp, hard-tempered swords, with beautiful firmly-secured hafts, and their curve-crested hollow helmets, so that they were full sure there was not in the province of Ulster a power to cope with them on account of the outlandishness and strangeness of their arms, armour, and weapons, for the Irish had but few firearms then and did not wear armour like them."*

They marched through Sligo and on until they reached the south bank of the Erne near Ballyshannon. Next morning, finding all the fords well guarded, they moved upstream and crossed at Athcúluain. But this ford was also guarded and fierce fighting took place. However the Irish defence was outnumbered and at last the English crossed loosing some of their men including Murchu O'Brian, Baron of Inchiquin who was *"struck by a bullet in the armpit, exactly at the opening of his plate-armour, so that he was pierced through from one armpit to the other, and though there were four or five thousand men about him they could not protect or assist him, for he fell from his horse in the deep part of the ford, so that the nobleman died in this wise. The army did not wait to pick up his body nor to bury it as was fitting, but they marched on in battle order..."*

Having crossed to the north of the river they now took up positions around Ballyshannon Castle and waited for the supply ships. These arrived the following day, Sunday, with artillery and necessary supplies. On Monday morning, having trained their guns at the castle the bombardment began. *"However, the attack which the foreigners made was of no avail, and it was better for them that they had not come on that expedition, for there were poured from the castle on them showers of bright fiery balls from the well planted straight-firing guns and from the costly muskets. Also stone showers of rough-pointed rocks, and heavy, massive stones, with beams and stakes, which happened to be on the battlements of the castle, so that their well made curved shields and their shining helmets were neither shelter nor protection for them, they were crushed and killed within their iron armour by the stout fusillade directed against them. When the soldiers were greatly massacred in this way, they could not endure to stay any further to be slaughtered."* And so the attackers turned and left.

It is important to understand that Ballyshannon Castle was the home of the O'Donnell chieftains for many years until they built Donegal Castle in 1474 but even after moving residence to Donegal they still continued to use Ballyshannon. It was to Ballyshannon that Red Hugh returned after his escape from Dublin Castle in 1592. On this

particular occasion Ballyshannon Castle was being defended by Hugh Crawford( a Scotch gallowglass) with eighty soldiers, six of whom were Spanish Armada survivors.

On the Saturday when the English arrived O'Donnell had only a small force which were gradually being added to as time went on. He was joined by Maguire, O'Rourke and others. Red Hugh at first avoided a full scale battle with the English but adopted the plan of constantly harassing them both day and night, making life very difficult for them and preventing them from getting any sleep. Eventually, the English totally exhausted for want of sleep and noticing the ever-increasing numbers of the Irish, decided to withdraw. Leaving many dead behind them along with their artillery and supplies, the English early on Thursday morning, 15th August, in desperation tried to negotiate a dangerous ford below Ballyshannon, known as 'Cosan na gCuradh'(Ford of the Champions). But, many men, women and horses were drowned and swept out to sea. Of those that crossed many were wounded including O'Connor Sligo.

O'Donnell's men, realising what was happening, grabbed their arms, crossed by one of the other fords and pursued them as far as Drumcliff harassing them all the way. Luckily for the English, an unusually heavy shower of rain fell making fighting difficult especially for the Irish. They, in their haste, had left without their cloaks or footwear and furthermore the tapers with which they ignited their muskets wouldn't stay lit. They, now, abandoned the chase and returned to camp while, *"the English escaped to their homes with sorrow and disgrace."*

Shortly after, O'Neill requested O'Donnell's assistance as he was aware of the Lord Deputy and the Earl of Kildare marching against him with a large army. Assembling his forces, Red Hugh wasted no time in joining O'Neill. Lughaidh Ó Clérigh in *The Life of Red Hugh O'Donnell*, says (but Sean Ó Faolain in *The Great O'Neill*, differs greatly) that the two armies faced each other from opposite banks of the Ulster Blackwater where continuous skirmishes ensued but no major engagement. Then *"one day while they were thus engaged"* the Lord Deputy along with some other nobles decided to go to the

summit of a nearby hill to survey the situation. While there, they were fiercely attacked by some Irish soldiers. Some of the nobles and English soldiers were killed; the Lord Deputy and Earl of Kildare received wounds from which both died within a week (O Faolain suggests the Lord Deputy was poisoned by the Irish). After this *"the English army returned home with grief and shame in this way."* The Irish army returned to their homes *"cheerful and gladly after that victory."*

Between then and the end of the year, O'Donnell made one more incursion into Connacht where he took much plunder from those not loyal to him. This was done so swiftly and stealthily that he was out of the Province before anyone had a chance to oppose him. *"No less was the chagrin and confusion of the Governor, Sir Conyers Clifford, for the plundering of the country which was under his yoke without putting up a fight even though his death should be the outcome..."* Between then and the end of the year *"no important fact was heard of."*

(All quotes from *The Life of Aodh Rua O Domhnaill*)

With regard to Baron Inciquin, his body was recovered days later by one of the monks of Abbey Assaroe and was buried with dignity in the Abbey. This later became a matter of dispute between the Franciscans of Donegal Town and the Cistercians in Abbey Assaroe and was finally resolved in the Franciscans favour by Bishop Redmond O'Gallagher of Derry, Bishop Niall O'Boyle of Raphoe and O'Donnell himself. Baron Inciquin's body was removed from Abbey Assaroe to its final resting place in Donegal Abbey, because the ancestors of the O'Briens, like the O'Donnells, were interred in Franciscan soil. (Donegal Annual No. 48)

Sources used:

*Annals of the Four Masters.*

*The Life of Aodh Ruadh O Domhnaill* by Lughaidh Ó Clérigh, translated by Rev. Paul Walsh,

*The Broken Sword of Ulster* by Richard Cuninghame,

*Ireland Under Elizabeth* by Philip O'Sullivan Bear, translated by Matthew J. Byrne,

*The Great O'Neill* by Sean O Faolain

*The 400th Anniversary of the Battle of Ballyshannon* by Billy Finn in Donegal Annual No. 48.

## New Members since No. 22

- 175 Kathleen Houston, Letterbrick, Cloghan, Lifford, C. Donegal.  
176 Maureen Doohan, Killult, Falcaragh, Co. Donegal.  
177 Adrian W. O'Donnell, 'Jesmond', 102 Campbell Drive, Wahroonga NSW, Australia 2076.  
178 Patrick O'Donnell, RR3 Box 3971, Belton, Texas 79513, U.S.A.  
179 Patrick O'Donnell, Box 76, Valley Lee, Maryland 20692, U.S.A.  
180 Peggy O'Donnell, 8, Place Tomberg, Bte. 12, 1200 Brussels, Belgium.  
181 John Colliton, 930 Murray Hill, Highland, MI. 48357, U.S.A.  
182 Dr. Irene Montjoye, A-1030 Wien, Landstrasse 148/3/12, Austria.  
183 Philomena O'Donnell, 39 Admiran Park, Stranorlar, Ballybofey, Co. Donegal.  
184 Paddy O'Donnell, 40 Ballymongan, Castlederg, BT81 7HD, Co. Tyrone.  
185 Anne O'Donnell, Ballyherrin, Kilmacrennan, Co. Donegal.  
186 Gerard B. O'Donnell, 3335 White Hall Drive, Willow Grove, PA. 19090, U.S.A.  
187 John Robert O'Donnell, Rockcliff, 6Switzerland Terrace, Off Queen's Promenade, Douglas, I.O.M.  
188 Sean O'Donnell, Tullyvinney, Raphoe, Co. Donegal.  
189 Robert Dale O'Donnell, 1248 Glacier Dr., Milpitas, Ca. 95035, U.S.A.
- 

## News

### Colmcille Remembered.

Many events took place in Ireland, Scotland and indeed in other countries this year to commemorate the death of Colmcille (St. Columba) 1400 years ago. A great grandson of Conall Gulban, he belongs to Cénel Chonaill, or the descendants of Conall, as do O'Boyles, O'Gallaghers, O'Dohertys, O'Cannons and of course O'Donnells.

Of these celebrations, the two most memorable were the voyage to Iona and the Interdenominational service at Gartan. Colmcille, who was of royal stock and could have lived the life of a prince, opted for the church and became a priest. Having founded several religious houses in Ireland he moved to Iona, a Scottish island. From here, he and his monks christianised Scotland and part of England. Why he left Ireland is another story and one which I hope to write about in a later issue.

It was to Iona that 250 pilgrims, including many clergy, travelled on the 24th May. The first stop was Oban where we attended concelebrated Mass in the Cathedral. Afterwards we were treated to a concert of traditional Scottish dance, music and singing - all organised by Lady Frances Shand Kydd (mother of the late Princess Diana). The following morning we travelled to and across the Isle of Mull and from there to Iona where we attended Mass in the Abbey. After a quick look around it was back to the ferry and back to Derry.

Gartan, outside Letterkenny, being the place where Colmcille was born, was the scene of an inter-church service on the 9th of June, the anniversary of the Saint's death. It was important that an impressive commemoration should take place if it were to, even attempt, to match the one held one hundred years ago. The commemoration of 1897 is well recorded in a book entitled "The Gartan Festival". And taking into consideration the absence of motor transport and other facilities, one must agree that it was a great celebration. Congratulatory messages from many exiles including the O'Donnells of Spain and Austria were read out. This year's celebration, though very different in essence, was nevertheless, very enjoyable and impressive. Let's hope that the 2097 event will equal it's predecessors.

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### Micheline Kerney Walsh R.I.P.

It was with great shock and sorrow that I read of the death of Micheline K. Walsh on the 8th of May this year. She featured in ODA Nos. 6, 10, 12, 14 & 19. She had made a deep study of Irish documents in the Spanish archives especially those of O'Neill and O'Donnell. She had in her possession a match box full of sand which she had collected from those letters; sand was used in those days, instead of blotting paper, to absorb surplus ink. She had a deep feeling and understanding of those people and their times. I saw her weep while talking about the

disillusioned Hugh O'Neill in Rome after the death of Rory and Caffir O'Donnell.

She lectured at all of our Gatherings. For a person of such small stature she had great command of an audience. She always joked that microphones couldn't be lowered enough for her. Yet when she spoke, and especially when she paused between sentences, there wasn't a sound, her talks were so interesting. How rich we were when we had her; how poor we are without her?

Trócaire Dé d'a h-anam!

### Henry O'Donnell strikes again.



Daniel makes presentation to Henry  
photo by Conor Sinclair

Will we ever hear the end of this man? Once again he hit the headlines when in August of this year he swam from Tory Island to Arann More Island, a distance of over 24 miles in approx. ten and a half hours. This swim was longer than any of the other recognised long distance swims around these Islands and is now considered a great challenge. As well as a great achievement in itself this swim was also a fund-raising event, raising thousands of pounds for The Childrens' Hospital, Temple Street MRI Scanner Appeal.

Henry was honoured by the O'Donnell Clan Association at their Annual Dinner in Daniel O'Donnell's Viking House Hotel on the 20th Sept. A Donegal Crystal Torch, suitably inscribed, was presented to him on behalf of the Association by Daniel himself.

At the time of writing this article I hear that Henry received a Donegal Sportsman of the Year award last week(24th Oct.) and is to be the recipient of the Donegal People of the Year, Sports Category

award in Letterkenny on the 14th of Nov. He deserves it all and more. I also hear he is busy training for World Masters Distance Swimming Championships 1998. We wish him all the best in all his future ventures.

### New Book Launched



Vincent O'Donnell presents first copy of O'Donnells of Tír Chonaill to Roisin Coughlan

photo by Conor Sinclair.

At the afore-mentioned function in the Viking House Hotel a book entitled, **O'Donnells of Tír Chonaill** was launched. This publication is really a second edition of the one published at the 1989 Clan Gathering - **Clann Dálaigh**. The present edition is a 100 page, A5 volume containing most of the articles in the previous one along with the best from the **O Domhnaill Abú** Newsletters Nos. 10 to 24.

As the new edition is dedicated to Rupert S. O Cochláin who did so much research into the history of the O'Donnell Clan, the first copy was presented to his widow, Roisín(nee O'Donnell) by the editor, Vincent O'Donnell.

**O'Donnells of Tír Chonaill** sells at £5.50 which is a good buy for anyone wishing to have the best material from all Clan Newsletters to date. Published by the O'Donnell Clan Association, it is available at many shops in the County, from Ben O'Donnell, Lifford, Co. Donegal(secretary) and

O'Domhnaill Abu' is published by V. O'Donnell, Inver, Co. Donegal, Eire. Tel.: 073-36059

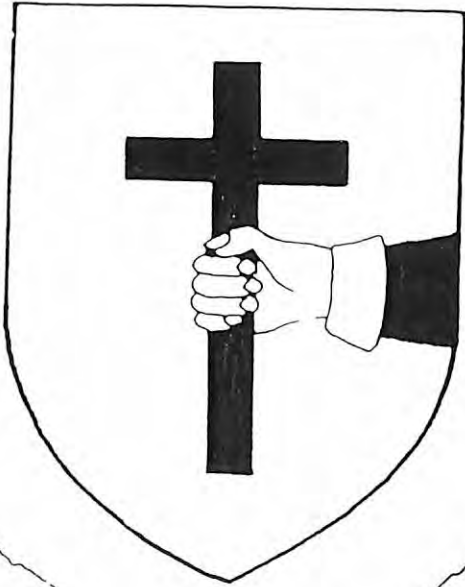
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# Ó Domhnaill Abú



*O'Donnell Clan*

*Newsletter No. 27*

*Winter 1998*



*President of Ireland, Mary McAleese in Donegal Castle.*

# News

## New Book on Red Hugh

A new book on the life of Aodh Rua has recently been published in Australia. The author, Deborah Lisson, mentioned under the heading, '*Australian Author visits Lifford*' in newsletter No. 23, was back in Ireland last September to discuss its Irish publication with the Irish publishers, O'Brian Press. The 200 page paperback historical novel is planned to be launched at the O'Donnell Clan Gathering next August, possibly on the opening night at the castle. The book, simply entitled *Red Hugh*, is aimed at the teenage market but as Ms. Lisson has stuck closely to fact, it makes great reading to anyone interested in the events of that era. We wish her luck with her endeavour and look forward to the Irish publication next year.

## Another Book on Red Hugh

On page 2 of the last issue of Ó Domhnaill Abú appeared an article about the movement in the United States to have Red Hugh beatified. "To educate other Roman Catholics" in this matter, it said, Shirley Starke had written a short biography entitled, "Red Hugh – the story of Hugh Roe O'Donnell". During the summer I acquired a copy of this 40 page booklet and was delighted with its production. It is well researched and presented and, as would be expected, tends to highlight O'Donnell's religious practices. For a short factual biography of this great Irish hero I think it is well worth buying. It is available for \$3.99 + postage from the author – Route 2, Box 230, Valley City, ND 58072, U.S.A.

## President visits Castle

On the 18<sup>th</sup> April 1998, Mary McAleese, President of Ireland visited Donegal Castle. As far as I know, it was the first ever official visit by an Irish President. A large crowd had gathered to give her a warm Donegal welcome. Having been played into the Castle grounds by a piper, she was shown around by the Mayor, Paddy Meehan and myself. Later she made a speech in which she praised the great contribution made by the O'Donnells at home and abroad. She also complimented those responsible for the restoration work done to the Castle.

## Henry O'Donnell.....Again!

I always ask, "Is there any getting away from this man?" Once again he made the news when in June last he came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 5,000 meters event of the World Masters Swimming Championship in Morocco. This was the only event held in the open seas, all others took place in swimming pools. With over 2000 competitors it was a marvellous achievement to feature in the top three. His time was 57 minutes. (We will have another little bit of news about him at the Clan Gathering!!!).

## Valladolid 2002

At the last few meetings of the Clan Association discussions have developed as to how we could or should commemorate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Red Hugh, 10<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1602. Many ideas have been thrown about e.g. visiting Simancas Castle where he died and unveiling a memorial in Valladolid where his remains lie, bringing his remains (if they could be located) back to Donegal. If you have any ideas or would like to be involved, let us know – time's passing.

## Internet

Communication is becoming simple and fast through the medium of the Internet. Since going on-line about a year ago my volume of incoming mail has increased about ten fold. It is noticeable that more than 90% comes from the U.S. Last June I developed a simple web site which I updated in October. Many people stumble across it, I don't know how, as it is quite insignificant, but it is a great asset in publishing forthcoming events etc. My URL is <http://homepage.tinet.ie/~vod> and all updates are posted there. Be sure to add this address to your Favourites.

The up-to-date programme for the 1999 Clan Gathering is available there along with a list of places to stay. After Christmas I hope to add other information e.g. transportation from sea and air ports to Donegal. So do keep in touch.

## JUST WHO WAS THIS RATHER ROMANTIC O'DONNELL?

Where there is smoke there is fire, and so we never discount family traditions, but we allow that in the course of time they may have lost or gained a bit here and there.

It has been told that a certain James Lewis O'Donnell was employed as an agent or manager by James Hamilton of Fintra whose wife was Elizabeth Johnston. It appears that young James O'Donnell caught the eye of his employer's youngest daughter, Sarah (Gantlet Amelia). Her father would never have allowed such a marriage so the two young people ran away together. We do not know where they got married (we presume they did) and we do not know where they raised their children but we do know that two of the sons turned up in Co. Tyrone, and both were school masters.

Hamilton Lewis O'Donnell was my husband's great grand father, born about 1800, whose name appears in various places in the vicinity of Omagh from 1826, teaching at Augaleague; 1835, living at Omagh and Corlea; 1846, at Gortmore. At the time of the Griffith Valuation he had a small property at Gortmore and it was here in 1855 that his mother Sarah died, in her 85<sup>th</sup> year. Ten years later he died at the same place aged 65. Very soon afterwards most of his family and his widow left for Victoria in Australia. One son, Irwin, came to New Zealand, but I have not found out what became of the oldest son William, who was living at Gortlea when he married Matilda Brown in 1861.

I have had contact with the descendents of Johnston Spence O'Donnell, another son of Sarah (nee Hamilton). He was a teacher in the vicinity of Strabane. His family seem to have gone mostly to the U.S.A., and a big part of my story came from them. They name Sarah's mother as Elizabeth Johnston.

The dashing young James Lewis O'Donnell remains a shadowy and romantic figure. He must have had a lot going for him to have been able to tempt away the daughter of a well to do house even if she was the youngest. He was said to have had a university education. Sarah seems to have been getting on for thirty when she decided to defy Papa.

The odd thing is that when Sarah's death notice was put in the Omagh newspaper, it named her father but not her husband. For the life of me I cannot think of any reason that his name would be omitted. A memorial which was written some years after her death spoke of a happy marriage, a long widowhood and a loving care by her son's wife in her old age,

We, all these generations down the line would like to be able to know more about Sarah's husband. We know so little but there is enough to stir the imagination.

If anyone has any comment on this story or further information, it would be of great interest to -

Allan & Margaret O'Donnell,  
154 Pages Road,  
Timaru 8601,  
New Zealand.

# 1599

(Continuing with Red Hugh's career from where we left off in No. 26.)

As we read in ODA No. 26, Red Hugh had made Ballymote Castle his chief residence and headquarters in 1598. With Tír Chonaill and most of Connacht under his control, Ballymote was more central than Donegal and it was from here that all future campaigns would be carried out.

The most significant event of 1599 was the Battle of the Curlew Mountains (Cath an Chorr Shliabh) in mid-August but first we look at a few earlier events.

One of those portions of Connacht loyal to the English was the territory known as Thomond just north of Limerick. This was the land of the O'Brians and O'Donnell couldn't accept their chief, Donncha O Briain being submissive to the enemy.

Early in 1599 O'Donnell assembled his forces at Ballymote and marched south. On arrival there he sent parties of men to all corners of the territory to take, by force if necessary, as many cattle and other booty as they could. Meeting with little opposition, all returned within a few days with herds of animals and other loot. Placing his best soldiers at the rear all proceeded north over the Burren. *"Their march was calm and slow without haste or hurry in driving their steeds and prey, for they could not ride their horses through the crooked, narrow, perilous, sickle-sharp rocks of stony Burren"*.

From then (February) till June we are told that *"Ó Domhmaill was in Ballymote at ease, without exploit or hosting."*

In June a Spanish ship with arms for two thousand men landed (we are not told where) and the weapons, pikes and matchlock guns, were divided equally between O'Neill and O'Donnell.

(The following account of the Battle of the Curlews is closely based on that of Colonel Cyril M. Mattimoe, retired from the Irish Army.)

After the victory at the Yellow Ford in Aug. 1598, Red Hugh moved to Ballymote Castle which he had bought from the McDonagh for £400 and 300 cows. In May 1599 the most powerful and most expensive army yet seen in Ireland had begun to land in Dublin under the command of the man who bears the ultimate responsibility for the Battle of the Curlews – Robert Devereaux Earl of Essex – Lord Lieutenant, soldier, courtier and great favourite of the Queen.

Elizabeth's orders to Essex were brief and clear: he was to move against Ulster and destroy O'Neill and O'Donnell. Instead he turned south and in a useless campaign almost destroyed his fine army with nothing to show for it. While resting in Limerick he held discussions with Sir Conyers Clifford, Governor of Connacht, who had been summoned there to meet him. One decision made was to have very serious repercussions for all concerned. O'Connor Sligo who belonged to Essex's entourage was to return to his castle at Collooney and endeavour to rouse the people in that area against O'Donnell. The plan was most unwise. It had no hope whatever of succeeding but Essex in his burning desire for success did not see things in this light. Clifford returned to Athlone. O'Connor Sligo got safely back to Collooney Castle. The Lord Lieutenant Essex, having had his fill of misfortune in Munster, arrived back in Dublin just as disastrous news was coming in from Connacht. O'Connor Sligo had no sooner reached Collooney Castle than he was besieged by O'Donnell. Essex was in a dilemma. He was in no condition now to tackle O'Donnell; yet he could not remain idle in Dublin. He summoned Clifford and spent two days working out a new plan for Connacht. Clifford, with some reinforcements supplied by Essex, would return to Athlone and begin preparations for an advance to Collooney via Roscommon -

Tulsk – Boyle – Curlews. Having raised the siege of Collooney he would continue to Sligo and there erect a new fortification which would replace the one burned down by O'Donnell, and serve as a base for further operations against West Ulster. Building materials would be shipped from Galway to Sligo by Tiobóid na Long(Theobald of the Ships) who had inherited his mother's(Grace O'Malley) fleet.

It was now nearing the end of July. Clifford returned to Athlone and in three weeks was ready for the advance to Collooney. Before departure Essex warned him not to move unless he was fully satisfied he had everything he needed. But Clifford felt confident and wished to meet O'Donnell before O'Neill could come to his aid. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of August he set out from Athlone. Among Clifford's army were some Irish clans submissive to the Queen namely *'O'Connor Don with his assembly, MacSuibhne na dTuath who was in rebellion against O'Donnell and in league with the Governor.'*

O'Donnell, having organised the siege of Collooney Castle(mid-June), left his cousin Niall Garbh with 300 men to continue while he, with the rest, moved to Dunavaragh a secure location high in the hills above the Curlew Pass. His strength is given as 2000 but shortly before the battle he dispatched 600 to Sligo to prevent Theobald of the Ships unloading his cargo there. Some of O'Donnell's advisers felt it was unwise of him to split his army so, but Hugh was determined to keep these three elements apart.

Furthermore he reminded his army that *'it is not by the number of soldiers the battle is broken but by the power of God.'*

We are told that O'Donnell's men spent several weeks at Dunaveeragh waiting for the Governor to pass that way. During that time they were exercising themselves and preparing their weapons for the fight. *'They were cleaning, polishing and adjusting their guns, and warming and sunning their grain powder and filling their pouches and casting their leaden bullets and heavy round balls, socketing and riveting their stout round javelins and war-halberds, polishing their long broad-swords and their bright-shining axes, and preparing*

*their arms and armour and implements of war also.'*

In Beatha Aodha Ruaidh Uí Dhomhnaill (Life of Red Hugh) by Lughaidh Ó Cléirigh, almost a page is given to the religious preparations of O'Donnell and his men. It was customary for Red Hugh to fast for three days, confess his sins and receive Holy Communion before a battle or whenever there was danger. On this occasion he requested his army to fast on the day before the Feast of the Assumption(of Mary into Heaven). On the morning of the Feast day, Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> August, all attended Mass. Afterwards they went to their tents to take a meal before encountering the enemy. When finally assembled, Red Hugh addressed them and, even those who were not near him could hear, *'on account of the loudness of his voice and speech.'* A poetic version of that address was published in ODA No. 18.

Lughaidh Ó Cléirigh then gives an account of how O'Donnell positioned his men. *'He placed his swift energetic youths and his nimble athletic men and his marksmen, with their loud sounding sharp-aiming guns and their strong smooth-curved bows and their cruel, whetted javelins, and their throwing darts also.'* It goes on for a whole page in great detail about how the battle was planned by O'Donnell. Trees were cut to make barriers at intervals along the rout through which the English were expected, musketeers and archers placed in the woods along the pass while Red Hugh with most of his men waited out of sight over the ridge. The plan, of course, was for the snipers to harass the enemy all the way up the Pass so that exhausted they would come face to face with O'Donnell's well-rested men at the top.

Also present at the Curlews were Conor McDermot and Brian Óg O'Rourke. O'Rourke and O'Donnell were not on friendly terms. Apart from centuries-old rivalries O'Rourke resented many actions taken by O'Donnell recently and so on this day Brian Óg with his clansmen refused to place himself under Red Hugh's command but instead took up position east of the Curlews. From this spot his sentries could detect an enemy force moving out of the town of Boyle and he could have his men at the Pass within half an hour.

McDermot with his 300 men positioned themselves in the woods on both sides up along the Pass through which the English would march. As this was McDermot territory it was their privilege to strike the first blow.

Clifford, as we have seen, was in a hurry when leaving Athlone and so pressed his men very hard covering 30 miles the first day over rough roads with little food. Next day they covered 15 miles to Boyle arriving there exhausted and hungry. Here they had planned to eat and rest but Clifford receiving intelligence that the Pass was undefended and that his army was not yet expected, decided to resume the advance. His men and senior commanders complained but Sir Conyers would not change his mind. He promised food and rest when they were through the Pass and so the tired and weary soldiers struggled to their feet and took their place in the ranks for the long climb to the top of the Curlews.

Clifford's army amounted to 1496 Foot and 205 Horse: a small force considering the task in hand. Two thirds were armed with Arquebus; the rest used Pike. The Arquebus was a crude forerunner of the musket, only accurate at close range. Re-loading was slow and cumbersome. Clifford increased the strength of the Vanguard to enable it to force its way through the Pass if needs be.

In those days the way over the Curlews was a rough narrow track. It was known as the Red Earl's Road (Bóthar an Iarla Rua) after De Burgo, a Norman Lord, who passed that way in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Traces of this ancient track can still be seen. This same track left much to be desired, parts of it were so rough that they were impassable by wheeled vehicles while other stretches were bog.

The English had only gone a few hundred yards when they encountered the first barricade and came under fire from the woods on both sides. They instantly attacked but the Irish fled with little or no resistance. This pattern continued well up the Pass. After about an hour the vanguard were running out of powder and ball. New supplies should have been sent up from the rear but conditions were making this difficult and so the vanguard became very vulnerable. Worse was to follow. Sir Alex

Ratcliff, commander of the Vanguard, already suffering from two wounds was hit a third time and died.

The situation in the vanguard now called for urgent action by Clifford himself but none was taken. At this point Brian Óg O'Rourke with a company of men (some sources say 140; others 500 men) came rushing to the fray. To the vanguard, already leaderless, ammunitionless and with tactics that were achieving little, this new arrival did much to undermine their confidence. Confusion began to develop; followed shortly by panic. Men began throwing away their weapons and running back down the hill through the main body who hadn't yet encountered the enemy. The latter seeing the vanguard fleeing decided to follow suit. The rearguard did likewise.

Clifford and his officers did everything in their power to halt the flight, even killing a few to make an example, but all to no avail. Sir Conyers shouting, roaring and fuming at such cowardice, and declaring he would not '*outlive the dishonour of the day*', rushed to meet an on-coming party of Irish. He died from a pike-stroke.

Back at Boyle, the Horse having waited about an hour and a half were ready to move forward, thinking of course, that the Pass had been secured. Suddenly, noticing signs of confusion in the distance, they decided to move forward to investigate. As they drew closer to the Pass they realised that something unusual was happening and galloped up the hill by a different route. Seeing some of the Foot about half a mile away fighting for their lives they galloped to their rescue. Their sudden arrival seemed to surprise the Irish and caused them temporarily to check their pursuit. But soon many of the horses came to grief in the soft bog and O'Rourke, seizing the advantage, counter-attacked. The Horse withdrew but not before they managed to cover the retreat of many of the Foot. Sir Griffin Markham, commanding the Horse, had his right arm broken while Brian Óg O'Rourke was wounded in the hand and right thigh.

The Irish continued the pursuit to the foot of the mountain. Shattered remnants of Clifford's force continued its flight and found refuge inside the walls of Boyle Abbey.

The Battle of the Curlews was over. It had lasted about two hours.

Moving around the battlefield Brian Óg O'Rourke came upon the dead body of Sir Conyers Clifford and recognised it. O'Rourke ordered the body to be decapitated and the head sent back to Red Hugh who in turn dispatched it to Collooney Castle. On receiving this grisly proof of Irish victory, O'Connor Sligo surrendered. Tiobóid na Long, on hearing the news, returned with his cargo to Galway.

Clifford's body was sent for respectful burial to Trinity Island on Loch Key and word of this action was relayed to Boyle in a letter written in Latin by McDermot.

English losses were great while the Irish lost very few. The Irish afterwards collected the spoils of war, killed all the wounded enemy,

gave medical attention to their own wounded and buried the dead. The glory of this victory is claimed by three. Most would say O'Donnell was the hero. It was he who planned to meet the enemy there and orchestrated the battle; but there are those who say Red Hugh didn't even see the battle and that it was the McDermots who did most of the fighting; and of course the O'Rourkes maintain if it hadn't been for their intervention at the right time the English may not have been beaten so early. Let's not forget that several decisions and errors by the English contributed to their downfall.

The Battle of the Curlews, in my opinion, was the last great battle fought and won by Irish clans fighting against their archenemy, the Sassanach. V.O'Donnell.

Sources: Along with those mentioned in the article, *Annals of the Four Masters*.

## Dancing at Lughnasa.

Kathleen O'Donnell, Athens, has been a subscriber and a regular correspondent to this newsletter since 1986. Two years ago she sent me the programme for a production of 'Dancing at Lughnasa' in which she played Maggie. Here are two extracts from that programme.



Kathleen O'Donnell  
Maggie

Kathleen has worked tirelessly for The Greek Irish Society, almost from its inception.

A member of the Committee for twelve years, she

was elected President twice during that time. A very experienced actress, Kathleen has appeared in the BBC Drama series "Fortunes of War", Peter Hall's "Coriolanus" at the Herod Atticus, "Fantochini" at the Megaron and has toured Greece with that play. She has appeared with nearly every drama group in Athens and when she casts her mind back to that summer of 1993, while doing Irish Studies at the University of Galway certain memories offer themselves to her. In brief, she happened upon the script of "Dancing at Lughnasa" and felt it would make an ideal contribution to the Greek Irish Society's activities. The rest, as you will have realised by now, is history.

Lughnasa is one of the four Celtic Fire Festivals which are celebrated at points midway between the solstices and equinoxes. Samhain, on November 1st, begins the Celtic new year. This is followed by Imbolc (February 1st), Bealtaine (May 1st), and Lughnasa (August 1st). The name is derived from the Celtic deity Lugh, god of all arts and crafts. Over the centuries, Lugh's once mighty image diminished to the point where he became a fairy craftsman and trickster named Lugh-chromain, which means 'little stooping Lugh', and was anglicised as Leprechaun. It is an irony of history that London, the capital of Ireland's ancient and long-term enemy, derives from Lugd-unum, which means 'fortress of Lugh'. This was latinised to Londinium - London.

Contrary to the observation of the other fire festivals, which were essentially family affairs, Lughnasa was celebrated on a broad community scale. Major assemblies took place, often on the top of high-points in the landscape. Dancing and feasting were top of the agenda. Until the 12th century, the Tailtinn games were held on August 1st. These were the equivalent of the Olympic Games of classical Greece, and were named after Tailtu, Lugh's foster mother, in

whose honour the feast of Lughnasa was created by her foster son.

Lughnasa is the beginning of the harvest season. Traditionally, the first crop of potatoes (a major part of the staple diet in Ireland) was never lifted before this day. To have done so would have been to invite bad luck. In the past, it was not a simple matter to keep oneself in food from one harvest to the next. The beginning of the new harvest, of reaping the fruits of the previous months' hard labours, was therefore a cause for celebration. A period of scarcity gave way to a season of plenty. In some parts, it was a custom when eating the first mouthful of food from the new season's potato crop to say "Marbh-fhaisg ar an gCailligh Rua!", which translates as "Destruction to the Red-haired Hag!", a popular personification of hunger and famine.

During the feasting which traditionally marked the Festival of Lughnasa, large, low pits were dug, and these were filled with the brushwood cleared from the land. When the bonfires were well lit and the whole potatoes were being roasted, the custom was to drive the cattle through the fire, to ensure that the potatoes were turned in the fire and more practically to kill ticks, lice and other vermin in the cattles' hides.

## O'Donnell Clan Gathering 1999

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> Aug.:** 7p.m. Official Opening in or at Donegal Castle (depending on numbers). The rest of the evening will be held in the nearby Hyland Central Hotel where a talk will be given on some aspect of O'Donnell history, followed by a buffet and light entertainment. A display of O'Donnell genealogy and photographs will be on view. The evening will end with the singing of O'Donnell Abu and the Irish National Anthem (be sure and have them well practised) around 1.00 am.

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> Aug.:** Bus tour to places with O'Donnell historic connections. The route has not yet been decided. There will be afternoon tea and evening meal somewhere along the way.

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> Aug.:** We hope to have two or three coaches travelling from the county to where the Battle of the Curlew Mountains took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> Aug 1599. The battlefield is on the Roscommon side of the Roscommon/Sligo border not far from the town of Boyle. After visiting the site (suitable footwear, a must) and hearing the story we will travel to Boyle where a re-enactment of the battle is to take place. This event is being organised by the people of Boyle. On our return we might visit Creevlea Abbey near Dromahair (Co. Leitrim), resting place of the Larkfield O'Donells.

**Monday 16<sup>th</sup> Aug.:** An O'Donnell open golf tournament is planned for the afternoon with a bus-trip to Glenveagh National Park and Ionad Chois Locha for the non-golfers, all meeting later in the clubhouse. Nothing is yet planned for the evening but all are welcome to listen to the Bards (a popular Irish folk group) in the Central Hotel, Donegal Town.

**Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> Aug.:** So far the afternoon is free. If the tide is suitable we would recommend a trip on the waterbus to those staying around Donegal Town. The Farewell Banquet will begin about 8.00 pm. and continue until it ends, again with the rendering of O'Donnell Abu and the National Anthem.

We would like to see a large attendance at this Gathering, and as it will be the peak tourist season we advise early booking. The committee suggests B&B only as we will be having our evening meals at different venues. Here follows a list of B&B houses and hotels we recommend. They are all in Donegal Town. There are many more outside of town. The average price per person (two sharing) is £17 = \$25 approx.

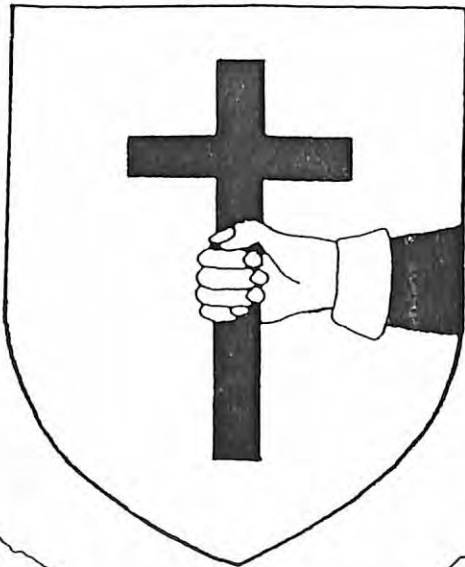
Name	Address	Telephone	Guide Price
Eske Villa	Marian Villas	073-22071	£17
Maranatha	Glebe	073-22671	£17.50
Riverside House	Waterloo Place	073-21083	£16
Rosearl	Glebe	073-21462	£17.50
Shanveen House		073-21127	£16
Waters Edge	Glebe	073-21523	£19
Atlantic	Main Street	073-21187	£17.50
Donegal Tourist Lodge	The Quay	073-23060	£18.50

Name	Address	Telephone	Guide Price
Hyland Central Hotel	The Diamond	073-21027	£34
Abbey Hotel	The Diamond	073-21014	£34

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# Ó Dómhnaill Abú



*O'Donnell Clan*

*Newsletter No. 26*

*Spring 1998*



John O'Donnell (District Justice), his wife, Finola and Nuala Ní Dhómhnaill out side Donegal Castle.

# NEWS

## Association News

The 1998 Annual General Meeting of the O'Donnell Clan Association was held in Letterkenny on the 17<sup>th</sup> Feb. '98. The following officers were elected, Anne O'Donnell County Councillor(widow of the late Eddie O'Donnell, chairperson from 1989 till 1990) as chairperson; Aodh Ó Dómhnaill, Inver as vice chairperson; Vincent O'Donnell(chairperson since 1990) as secretary, Kathleen O'Donnell, Termon continues as treasurer; Bart O'Donnell, Derry as P.R.O and Willie O'Donnell, Termon continues as our president.

The main business discussed was a proposed Clan Gathering in mid-August 1999 to coincide with the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of the Curlews fought and won by Red Hugh O'Donnell on the 15<sup>th</sup> Aug. 1599(more about that later). It was agreed to open the Gathering on the 13<sup>th</sup> in Donegal Town and close on the evening of the 16<sup>th</sup> in the same venue.

Clan MacDermot, who were very much part of that battle, have similar plans(see their web site at [www.macdermot.com/](http://www.macdermot.com/)).

At a subsequent committee meeting the following provisional programme was planned –

**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> Aug.: 7p.m.** Official Opening In Donegal Castle followed by talk, buffet and light entertainment in Hyland Central Hotel. Also, O'Donnell Genealogical/Photo display.

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> Aug.:** Bus tour to places with O'Donnell historic connections. Evening meal.

**Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> Aug.:** Visiting the site of the Battle of the Curlew Mountains 15<sup>th</sup> Aug 1599, Red Hugh's greatest victory.

**Monday 16<sup>th</sup> Aug.:** Morning and afternoon free. Evening: Farewell Banquet in Hyland Central Hotel.

We would like to see a large attendance at this Gathering and as it will be the peak tourist season we advise early booking. I hope to give guide prices of B&B, Full Board etc. in the next issue. In the meantime start planning

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## Internet Addresses

On St. Patrick's Day '98 a Web site for *Clans and Names of Ireland* was launched in Dublin. O'Donnell material was forwarded as requested. The address is – [www.clansandnames.org](http://www.clansandnames.org)

My own E-mail address is – [vodonnell@tinet.ie](mailto:vodonnell@tinet.ie)

I am, presently, developing an *Ó Dómhnaill Abú* Web site and, possibly, will have an electronic version of the Newsletter available shortly.

The Clan Association do not yet have a Web site but if you enjoy browsing, then visit [www.donegaltown.ie](http://www.donegaltown.ie)

I would very much appreciate if all members with access to the Net would send me their Web site and/or E-mail addresses. Also, advise me if I have permission to publish same in *Ó Dómhnaill Abú*.

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## Performance in Donegal Castle

*"Is líonta anocht atá Caisleán an Uisce,*

*Is lonnrach gach fuinneog ó thalamh go díon,"*

(Full tonight is Donegal Castle, Brightly lit is each window from the ground to the roof)

So begins an old Irish poem(see ODA no. 9) about Red Hugh's escape from Dublin Castle and return to Donegal.

And so it was on the evening of the 13<sup>th</sup> March '98 when a select audience were present to enjoy "**The O'Donnell Commemoration Performance**". This was a fifty-minute stage performance which, through the media of song, dance, music and drama, depicted the history of Red Hugh O'Donnell. It was all part of the **Donegal Town Heritage Festival** organised by some locals to promote Donegal Town. Among the special guests were - Nuala Ní Dhómhnaill, Dublin: newly-appointed District Justice John O'Donnell, Inver and his wife, Finola; Annette and Vincent O'Donnell, Inver. It is quite likely there will be further performances during the coming summer.

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## O'Donnell Judge for Donegal.

District Judge, John M. O'Donnell, already mentioned above, took up office in Co. Donegal last July. A native of Mullingar, he and his wife, Finola now reside at Inver in south Donegal.

Having been welcomed by members of the legal profession at his first court setting, Judge O'Donnell replied, "This welcome is entirely in accordance with all I ever remember of Donegal from the very first time I visited here many years ago when I was at the O'Donnell Clan Rally with my late parents in Donegal Town."

I am delighted to say that both he and his wife have joined the O'Donnell Clan Association.

# Red Hugh's Beatification

(The following was downloaded from the Internet in Dec. 1996)

## Movement in Irish-America to Beatify Red Hugh O'Donnell.

By J C Sullivan, Ohio, USA

In 1977 an unusual meeting took place in the rectory of St. Catherine's Church, Valley City, North Dakota. Seven individuals came together for a cause – the formation of a Guild to honour one of Ireland's 17<sup>th</sup> century patriots. "The purpose of the Guild is to promote Red Hugh O'Donnell's cause for beatification and to gather and share knowledge about his life and heroic sanctity," said Shirley Starke. "The 17<sup>th</sup> century Irish-Catholic patriot was truly exceptional in his utter devotion to God and the Church," she said. "His faith and hope in God, even when faced with great obstacles, and in his love, led him to show a degree of mercy toward even his enemies, something that was unheard of in his day."

Ms. Stark is the force behind this goal. She is a St. Catherine parishioner and, along with Father Gerald McCarthy, Sister Therese Celine and others in Irish-America, are leading the attempt to consolidate world-wide public support for the beatification. To help accomplish this goal she has written a short biography to educate other Roman Catholics: *Red Hugh: The Story of Hugh Roe O'Donnell*, which is available by writing her at Route 2, Box 230, Valley City, ND 58072.

Ms. Starke has been successful in gaining the attention of some powerful Irish-American supporters. In St. Paul, Minnesota late this summer, the oldest and largest Irish-Catholic fraternity in

the world, the Ancient Order of Hibernians in America, gathered for their 88<sup>th</sup> biennial National Convention. On behalf of the Aodh Ruadh O'Domhnaill Guild, a resolution was introduced calling for the support of their powerful and prestigious organization. Amongst encouraging result was the referral of the resolution to the Chaplain's Committee of the National Board, where the merits of the cause will be jointly researched and discussed. The outcome of their study will, in all probability, be presented at the next meeting of their National Board or at their 1998 biennial National Convention in Pittsburgh Pennsylvania. The current AOH National Chaplain is the Reverend John V. Ahern of Liverpool, NY. His Deputy National Chaplains are the Reverends James Champion, Blackstone, MA and Michael Healy, San Francisco, CA.

Formal support of the Guild's effort has also been asked of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernian in America, through their newly-elected National President, Mary Paglione, Bordentown, New Jersey. The LAOH National and Deputy National Chaplains are both Clevelanders, the Most Reverend James A. Quinn and the Reverend J. Brendan McNulty. Readers interested in supporting this cause are encouraged to write the Guild c/o Shirley Starke.

## O'DONNELLS IN LITERATURE

(Extract from 'INIS-OWEN AND TIRCONNELL' by William James Doherty, pub. 1895 and lent to me by Patrick William O'Donnell, Maryland, USA.)

The O'Donnells of Tirconnell, and their descendants during many centuries, have graven their name on the page of history, wherever the cause of Ireland was to be upheld by valour, there are to be found the names of the Cinell-Connell. Nor has the name been absent from the gentle paths of peace and literature. For one who claims a share in the glory and the sorrow attached to the name and race, it becomes a duty to give a record of writers who have written under or concerning this name. We will leave to others the task of assigning to each author the place of his birth and the particulars of his career.

MANUS O'DONNELL,

Chieftain and historian, wrote at the Castle of Lifford in the year 1532, his celebrated *Life of Saint Columkille*. The original manuscript was discovered in the Bodleian Library, Oxford, by Eugene O'Curry, in July, 1849.<sup>1</sup> This work is so important, and has been so frequently quoted by Colgan and others, that any further reference to it here is unnecessary.

About this time, 1532, flourished in Tirconnell a poet also named Manus O'Donnell, copies of five short poems of his composition are among the Irish MSS. in the Irish Academy.<sup>2</sup>

BONAVENTURE O'DONNELL.

Brother Bonaventure O'Donnell, Jubilate Lector, is one of the signatories to the "Testimonium" in 1636, attached to the *Annals of the Four Masters*. It was not until 1843 that Eugene O'Curry was able to decipher this signature correctly, all others, including Petrie, having rendered it "O'Donnell Prince of Donegal".<sup>3</sup>

AODH (HUGH) O'DONNELL,

one of the poets of Tirconnell, who took part in the *Contention of the Bards*, wrote about the year 1607; his poems on this occasion are to be found in the *Iomarbadh*, or *Contention*. O'Donnell wrote a poem of four hundred and thirty-six verses, against the attacks of Teige M'Daire, our author is addressed in one of the replies as "Oh! young Hugh of swift steeds".<sup>1</sup>

DOCTOR WILLIAM O'DONNELL (OR DANIEL),

one of the first fellows of Trinity College, Dublin, died 11th July, 1628, he was treasurer of the Cathedral of Saint Patrick in Dublin, from which he was raised to be Protestant Archbishop of Tuam in the year 1609. He is said to have been the translator into Irish of the *Book of Common Prayer*, and of the *New Testament*; some have denied that O'Donnell was the translator of the latter, ascribing it to one Mortogh O'Cionga, (or King).<sup>2</sup> However an edition published by the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1828 bears O'Donnell's name.

ROISIN DUBH.

With the flight of O'Neill and O'Donnell in 1607, the name of the O'Donnells in Irish literature became sadly silent. Till the reign of Elizabeth this name was the inspiring source for many a bardic song, *Roisin Dubh* (Little Black Rose), an allegorical ballad, though long since forgotten as a political song, was composed during Elizabeth's reign to celebrate the hero of Tirconnell, Hugh

Ruadh O'Donnell. Ireland is there addressed under the name of the "Little Black Rose".

A translation from the original Irish was made by Thomas Furlong, the Wexford poet. Here is the first stanza.—

"Oh! my sweet little rose, cease to pine for the past,  
For the friends that come eastward shall see thee at last,  
They bring blessings—they bring favours which the past never knew,  
To pour forth in gladness on my Roisin Dubh".

THE ROMAN VISION.

The original and translation have been published.<sup>1</sup> *The Roman Vision*, once the most popular of modern Irish historical poems, was written in 1650. The author supposes himself "on 'Cephas' golden hill", where the vision appears as he looks over the graves of Rory O'Donnell of Tirconnell, and Hugh O'Neill of Tyrone. The name of the author of the poem is unknown. The Irish verse has been published with a spirited translation in English by Henry Grattan Curran.<sup>2</sup>

Owen Roe Mac an Bhaird (or Ward), the bard who accompanied O'Donnell into exile, was author of the celebrated dirge or lament for the Tironian and Tirconnellian princes that begins with "*O Woman of the Piercing Wail*". The poem is addressed to Nuala O'Donnell, sister of the

Prince of Tirconnell, who was also one of the fugitives. James Clarence Mangan has given a beautiful translation of this much admired poem. We give the first two verses of the sixteen of which the poem consists:—

"O Woman of the Piercing Wail,  
Who mournest o'er yon mound of clay  
With sigh and groan,  
Would God thou wert among the Gael!  
Thou wouldst not then from day to day  
Weep thus alone:  
'T were long before around a grave  
In green Tirconnell one could find  
This loneliness;  
Near where Bean-Boirche's banners wave,  
Such grief as thine could ne'er have pined  
Companionless.

Beside the wave, in Donegall,  
In Antrim's glens, or fair Dromore,  
Or Killilee,  
Or where the sunny waters fall,  
At Assaroe, near Erna's shore,  
This could not be.  
On Derry's plains—in rich Drumclieff—  
Throughout Armagh the Great, renowned  
In olden years,  
No day could pass but woman's grief  
Would rain upon the burial-ground  
Fresh floods of tears!"<sup>1</sup>

AUBREY DE VERE.

*The Battle of Lough Swilly*, fought in 1258, has been sung by Aubrey de Vere. O'Donnell was suffering from the wounds he had received in his encounter with the English leader Maurice Fitzgerald, who fell mortally wounded at the battle of Credran. Having prevailed upon his Tirconnellians to place him in his coffin, he was carried in their midst into the battle; after the victory, the day following, he breathed his last on the field where the battle was fought.

The valour displayed on the side of Tirone—who claimed tribute from Tirconnell—was met with equal bravery by the O'Donnells. Though history recognizes the grandeur of a dying chieftain carried in his coffin into the field of battle with all solemnity surrounding a departing leader, it cannot but be lamented, that the absence of unity caused two princes of the same race to engage in mortal strife. And this at a time when their common foe was awaiting an opportunity to strike at either.

After describing the chief incidents of the battle, Aubrey de Vere depicts how—

"Proud and high Tirconnell shouts, but bending on the  
gale,  
Upon the ear ascendeth now a sad and sullen wail,  
For on that field as back they bore, from chasing of  
the foe,  
The spirit of O'Donnell fled! Oh, woe for Ulster, woe!"<sup>1</sup>

## O'Donnells Descended From Adam

As a teacher interested in history and genealogy, I often ask children to name their grandparents – most succeed. Then I ask them to name their great grandparents – few realise they ever had such. To them, their family began with their grandparents and they can't imagine anyone else being there before.

But, by the time most people cross the 40 threshold, for some reason all this changes and many begin to inquire about their great grandparents and beyond. By then, those who could have helped are often gone to their eternal rest and we are totally relying on records.

Records of this kind are relatively new – in Ireland most begin in the 1880's with the exception of important families. In recent years there has been an upsurge in family research. Genealogical Centres have sprung up all over Ireland and ancestral research has become big business. A few addresses are given at the end of this article.

But how far back on your family tree would you like to go or would you ever be happy until you reached Adam? Well, I can't help you but the main line of O'Donnells, can do just that. This research is from John O Hart's "Irish Pedigrees".

Here follows that pedigree as I found it in Rupert Coughlan's records. There appears to be 'gaps' here and there. I have added some dates to make it more meaningful. If you are a real O'Donnell it is almost certain that your branch sprung from this tree somewhere along its trunk.

Taking Fr. Hugh O' Donel O.F.M., presently on the Zimbabwe mission as our Blood-line Chief his lineal descent is as follows –

John O'Donel, (d. 1971), declared 'Ó Dómhnaill' Chief of the Name in 1945 by the Chief Herald.

John 1862-1932

John 1808-1874

Conn 1769-1844

Conn 1729-

Hugh of Larkfield, d. 1754

Connal

John d.1655

Aodh Buí d. 1649 (Larkfield line)

Conn, d.1589

Calbhach, d. 1566

Manus 21<sup>st</sup> Chieftain and grandfather of the famous Red Hugh(d.1563)

Aodh Dubh, d. 1537

Aodh Rua, d. 1505

Niall Garbh, d. 1439

Turlough an Fhíona, d. 1422

Niall Garbh, d. 1348

Aodh, d. 1333

Domhnall Óg, d. 1281

Domhnall Mór, d. 1241

Eighneachan, d. 1207

Donnchadh

Domhnall

Aodh

Tadhg

Conn

Cathbharr, d. 1106

Gillachrist, d. 1038

Cathbharr

Domhnall Mór, from whom we get our surname

Eighneachan, d. 901

Dálach, from whom we get Clann Dálaigh, d.868

Murchertagh

Cennfaeladh

Garbh

Rónan

Lughaidh

Sedna

Fergus Cennfada

Conall Gulban, from whom we get Tír Chonaill

Niall of the Nine Hostages, High King 379-405

Eochaidh Muighmheadhoin d.365, 124<sup>th</sup> monarch of Ireland

Mureadhach Tíreach, 122<sup>nd</sup> monarch

Fiacha Sraibhtine, d. 22, 120<sup>th</sup> monarch

Cairbre Liffeachair, d.284, 117<sup>th</sup> monarch

Cormac Mac Airt, d. 226, 115<sup>th</sup> monarch

Art Aonair, d. 195, 112<sup>th</sup> monarch

Conn Céad Catha, d.157

Feifhlimidh Reachtmhar, d.119, 108<sup>th</sup> monarch

Tuathal Teachtmhar, d. 106, 106<sup>th</sup> monarch

Fiacha Finnfolaidh, d. 56, 104<sup>th</sup> monarch

Fearadhach Finnfeachtnach, d. 36, 102<sup>nd</sup> monarch

Crimthann Niadhair, d. 9AD.

Lughaidh Sriabh-ndearg, died 8 BC., 98<sup>th</sup> monarch

Bress-Nor-Lothar

Eochaidh Feidhleach d. 130BC., 93<sup>rd</sup> Monarch

Fionn

Fionnlogh

Roighen Ruadh  
 Assaman Eamhra  
 Enna Aighneach, d.292BC., 84<sup>th</sup> monarch  
 Aengus Tuirmeach-Teamhrach, d. 324BC., 81<sup>st</sup>  
 monarch  
 Eochaidh Ailtleathan, d.395BC., 79<sup>th</sup> monarch  
 Oilioll Caisfhiacloch, d. 417BC., 77<sup>th</sup> monarch  
 Connla Caoimh, d. 442BC., 76<sup>th</sup> monarch  
 Irerego, d. 473BC., 74<sup>th</sup> monarch  
 Mélghe d. 505BC., 71<sup>st</sup> monarch  
 Cobthach Caol-breagh, d.541BC., 69<sup>th</sup> monarch  
 Ugaine Mór, 66<sup>th</sup> monarch  
 Eochaidh Buadhach  
 Duach Ladhgrach, d. 737BC., 59<sup>th</sup> monarch  
 Fiacha Tolgrach, d. 795BC., 55<sup>th</sup> monarch  
 Muireadhach Bolgrach, d. 892BC., 46<sup>th</sup> monarch  
 Simon Breac, d. 903BC., 44<sup>th</sup> monarch  
 Aidanus Glas  
 Nuaghat Finnfail, d. 961BC., 39<sup>th</sup> monarch  
 Giallachaidh, d. 1013BC., 37<sup>th</sup> monarch  
 Oilioll Ollchain  
 Sirna, d. 1030BC., 34<sup>th</sup> monarch  
 Dian  
 Roitheachtaigh, d. 1357BC., 22<sup>nd</sup> monarch  
 Main  
 Aengus Olmucadha, d. 1409BC., 20<sup>th</sup> monarch  
 Fiacha Labhrainne, d. 1448BC., 18<sup>th</sup> monarch  
 Smirngallus  
 Enbrothius  
 Tigearnmas, d. 1543BC.  
 Fallachus  
 Eithrial, d. 1650BC., 11<sup>th</sup> monarch  
 Irial Faidh  
 Eremon  
 Mileadh(Milesius of Spain)

Bile  
 Breoghan  
 Bratha  
 Deatha  
 Earhcadh  
 Aldod  
 Nuadhat  
 Ninual  
 Eimher Glas  
 Agnon Finn  
 Eimhir Gluinnfinn  
 Laimhfinn  
 Agnaman  
 Tait  
 Ogamain  
 Boemain  
 Hober Scatt  
 Sruth  
 Asruth  
 Goodhal  
 Niulus  
 Phenius Forsa  
 Baath  
 Magog  
 Japhet  
 Noah  
 Lamech  
 Methuselah  
 Enoch  
 Jared  
 Mahalaleel  
 Cainan  
 Enos  
 Seth  
 Adam.



The "Patmobile" Hugh O'Donnell(member 174) Leawood, Kansas' float in his local St. Patrick's Day Parade 1991. The truck and almost everything else is bright green.

Here continues the career of Red Hugh O'Donnell after 1597 (see ODA no. 25)

January of 1598 caused some discontent among the northern clans when Brian Óg O Ruairc made an alliance with the English. O'Donnell, in particular, was annoyed as Brian was closely related to him and had been of great assistance in the past. Red Hugh could not afford to lose any of his allies and though he didn't wish to attack O'Rourke, yet he would have to change the latter's mind in some way. At first he pleaded with him and when that seemed to fail, he used threats. Eventually, realising that O'Donnell was stronger than the English, O'Rourke returned to the Irish confederacy.

Nothing much else is recounted in the records for that year until mid-August when one of the greatest battles in Irish history took place – the Battle of the Yellow Ford, Cath Bhéal an Atha Bui.

The English, during a time of 'peace and amity' had built a strong fortress north of Armagh, on the Blackwater. The three hundred choice soldiers garrisoning it often preyed on the locals for food. Finally, Hugh O'Neill with the help of Red Hugh O'Donnell decided to attack it and raze it to the ground. But being unsuccessful they abandoned their attack and returned to their homes. Later, O'Neill lay siege to it. The English, on learning of the plight of the garrison, assembled five thousand, both infantry and cavalry, well-armed troops to relieve the fort. O'Neill, on learning of their plans, invited O'Donnell to his aid. Red Hugh with his assembled troops, about 6,000 along with the same number of Connacht men and some Scots joined O'Neill before the English got there. The English marched from Dublin to Drogheda, from there to Dundalk, then to Newry and finally to Armagh. The Irish camped on the route they would take from Armagh to the fortress.

Finally, on the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup> of August (some records give the 14<sup>th</sup>) the English got up at dawn and *proceeded to clothe themselves with strange tunics of iron, and high-crested, shining helmets, and foreign shields of well-tempered, refined iron. They seized their wide-edged axes, smooth and bright, and their straight two-edged swords, and their long, winged-edged blades, and their loud-voiced shot-*

*firing guns, so that it would be very hard for their leaders to recognise them if they were not known by*

*their speech, owing to the array of shields, helmets and armour on them outside, hiding and covering their faces and their features, and to the quantity of arms also concealing them."* Their captains under the supreme command of Henry Bagenal proceeded to arrange them in battle order and at last they marched to meet the Irish.

The Irish, according to Beatha Aodha Ruaidh Uí Dhómhnaill, marched to meet them. *"Their weapons and dress were different, for the Irish did not wear armour like them, except a few, and they were unarmed in comparison with the English, but yet they had sufficient wide-bladed spears and broad-grey lances with strong handles of good ash. They had straight two-edged swords and slender flashing axes for hewing down champions. There were neither rings nor plates on them, as there were on the axes of the English. The implements for shooting which they had were darts of carved wood and powerful bows, with sharp-pointed arrows, and the English generally had quick-firing guns."*

From these descriptions we see that the English were superior in arms. However, they were inferior in numbers. O'Neill had chosen the field well and had made some preparations. It was a narrow strip of ground with the River Callan to their (Irish) right and a bog and wood to the left. O'Neill had trenches dug and covered over with branches and heather in front of the Irish line. He and the Irish chiefs then proceeded to exhort and instruct their men in preparation. *"...be not feared or frightened by the English on account of their strange engines, their unusual armour and arms, and the thundering sound of their trumpets and tabours and war-cries, and of their own great numbers, for it is absolutely certain that they shall be routed in this day's fight."* One of O'Donnell's bards who had accompanied them, recounted a prophecy made by an Irish saint which promised victory to an O'Neill fighting at a place called 'Béal an Átha Bui.'

All this had its effect. By the time the English arrived the Irish were really roused and ready for battle. Their spirits were further raised on seeing the English cavalry charging towards them and suddenly

disappearing into the ground. Realising their greatest danger was from the English guns, the Irish, quickly closed in on the English leaving no room to use their muskets. The English right flank was attacked by O'Donnell and Maguire who had been hiding in the wood. Thus the English were pushed together so tightly that only those on the outside could fight. Furthermore, the English suffered two strokes of bad luck. Firstly, all their gunpowder exploded killing many and throwing the whole centre of the army into confusion. According to Lughaidh Ó Clérigh, "... *all round was one mass of dark, black fog for a while after, so that it was not easy for any one to recognise a man of his own people from one of his enemies.*" Secondly, several of the English leaders, including Henry Bagenal, were killed and this added to the confusion. Henry's sister, Mabel, had sometime previously been married to Hugh O'Neill much against Henry's wishes. Though the English fought gallantly, nothing seemed to be in their favour and finally they fled towards Armagh having sustained the greatest defeat that had befallen them since the first Norman set foot on Irish soil in 1169 AD

The Irish pursued them all the way to the city and then returned to the battlefield where they beheaded those severely wounded and collected the booty. The Irish then lay siege to Armagh. After three days the English asked to parley. Finally it was agreed that all English could go free provided those in the fortress departed leaving all their possessions behind. It is estimated that the English lost between 2,500 and 3,000 men including some of their best officers and nobles while the Irish losses are put at something around 500.

News of the battle infuriated Queen Elizabeth so much she complained that, "naught but news of fresh losses and calamities," from Ireland reached her ears. Morale was now at an all-time high among the Irish and many more joined the Irish confederacy while much of Munster rose in rebellion.

O'Donnell, after resting his men, turned his attention to Connacht once again. For thirteen years the English held Ballymote Castle. This was a strong fortress with an English garrison which had withstood many unsuccessful attacks from the Irish. Then, one day by some stroke of luck, the local

Clann Donncha of Corran took it and held it. It was a great embarrassment to Sir Conyers Clifford, Governor of Connacht, that this strong strategic fortress should slip away so easily from the English. He offered a handsome reward for its return. On hearing of these developments, Red Hugh, immediately, set off and on arrival there besieged the castle. He tried all means to gain possession of it, force, threats, begging, pleading, promises etc. He finally ended up buying it for four hundred pounds and three hundred cows. The three hundred cows he rounded up in the next few days from those in the neighbourhood not loyal to him. It is possible, though not stated in the records, that he acquired some of the money in like manner. The records do state that "*nine score pounds of that money*" came from Seán Óg O Doherty. "The town was given over to O Domhnaill then, and he remained there afterwards." Red Hugh seems to have established Ballymote Castle as his military base from then on.

This all happened in the month of September and from then till the end of the year O'Donnell kept his men busy attacking and taking cattle and booty from all those on the English side, "*and his army took the prey with them without strife or skirmish till they came by slow marches to Ballymote. Never before was the spoil of enemy's cattle collected the like or equal to it in that place since it was first built. Thereafter O Domhnaill's army go to their homes.*"

And thus ended 1598.

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Sources used:

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