

Féasachán Nuachta

News Bulletin!

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Summer 2025



Ó Domhnaill Abú!

Cumann Clann Dálaigh Uí Dhomhnaill - O'Donnell Clan Association

Founded at Easter 1954 and registered with Clans of Ireland

Do Cum Glóire Dé Agus Onóra na hÉireann



*Inscription on entrance of
the Irish College in Leuven*

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*Red Hugh O'Donnell 1st
Founder of Donegal Castle & Abbey*

Tar éis céadta bliain de shuaimhneas agus deoraíocht, athbheoigh Clann Uí Dhónaill ag Cáisc 1954 i nDún na nGall. Chun pobal domhanda na gClann a chothú, cruthaíodh "Cumann Clann Uí Dhónaill" in Éirinn trí huairé as a chéile: 1954, 1989, agus 1997 agus athnuadh arís é ag Cruinniú na gClann i nDún na nGall i mí an Mheithimh 2024. Ba é uimhir 36 de Shamhradh 2009 Nuachtlitir dheireannach Chlann Uí Dhónaill, mar sin athbheoimid é anois mar nuachtlitir i bhformáid nua le sreath nua.

After centuries of dormancy and exile, the O'Donnell Clan revived at Easter 1954 in Donegal. To sustain the now-global Clan community, an "O'Donnell Clan Association" was created in Ireland three successive times: 1954, 1989, and 1997 and renewed again at the Clan Gathering in Donegal in June 2024. The last O'Donnell Clan Newsletter was no. 36 of Summer 2009, so now we revive it as a bulletin in new format with a new series

Introduction

With the revival of the O'Donnell Clan Association (ODCA) now well underway collectively, and other initiatives, especially capitalising on 2024, which marked the 550th anniversary of the erection of Donegal Castle and the foundation of Donegal Abbey, many opportunities lie ahead, both at home and abroad. It was also the 70th anniversary of the O'Donnell Clan Association. A new Constitution for the ODCA was adopted by a general assembly of members meeting in Lough Eske Castle, Donegal on 9 June 2024, and a new Council was elected to govern its future activities. Details of these can be found under the tabs "Clan Revival" and "Clan Association", of this temporary website where you can also find the membership application or renewal form for 2025-2026:

<https://odomhnaill.com/clan-association>



PROGRESS SO FAR

It is a year now since our very successful revival of the Clan Association, on 8-9 June 2024, replete with a Rally of the Clans in Donegal Town, ecumenical prayers at Donegal Abbey, a guided tour of Donegal Castle, particularly evocative Mass on St. ColmCille/Columba's Day with military honours and religious and lay orders, and an Extraordinary General Meeting in Lough Eske Castle hotel where we subsequently enjoyed a Gala Dinner and a fine harp recital, with a little sing-along too. We also adopted a new Constitution. We elected a new Council, which has subsequently brought in some new officers following the departure of some who moved on, having made their singular contributions to our community revival.

Progress on the home front has been incremental, as we moved to set up a new banking arrangement, opening a collectively-governed bank account with AIB. It took some time due to stringent Irish banking regulations, tighter controls, and measures to prevent money-laundering. But now, the account is up and running, and we are engaging in a renewed effort at outreach, and at restoring the ODCA to a position of solvency. This of course requires an income, primarily from annual membership fees. Membership fees, but only such fees, can also be paid via Stripe, following similar stringent controls and guarantees.

During this period, the ODCA Council has met online no less than four times: 4 October 2024, 28 February 2025, 11 March 2025, and 27 May 2025. Much of that time focused on the requirements for securing our bank account. During these meetings, we also reviewed memberships and provisionally identified some members according to their volunteer interests to either join the Council, help with funding, or a newsletter, or the website, or events, articles, music, etc.

Moving forward

We are following up to welcome members' **volunteer spirit** and engage them in the areas where they believe they can make a valuable contribution to our community, wherever they are in the world. We have also worked on a draft **Code of Conduct** for members. We identified **some priorities for the ODCA over the coming year**, including outreach, educational activities, a warranty programme for sponsorships, and participation in Clans of Ireland. The following are important for our attention through the end of this year, 2025:

2025

- (a) Registration of ODCA and participation in the **Clans of Ireland AGM & Cultural Summit in April 2025**, the theme of which was "*Association between People and Place in Medieval Irish Society*". [Done!]
- (b) Establishing a date, venue and thematic outline programme for the next ODCA annual general meeting; this could coincide with our joint launch date of **5 September 2025** - see (f) below- if sufficient interest arises
- (c) Outreach to membership to make use of offers of volunteering;
- (d) Expanding membership to wider constituencies who share O'Donnell ancestry encouraging admissions, of young people, with attractive projects celebrating shared heritage, within Donegal, all Ireland and beyond;
- (e) Preparing to contribute to **National Heritage Week 16-24 August 2025**; a joint initiative of the Council of Europe and the EU to promote cultural heritage; e.g. a brochure listing O'Donnell heritage sites in Ireland and abroad;
- (f) Launch on **5 September 2025** of the book "*Memorialising Emigré Dignity*" by the Irish College Leuven, the former Franciscan College of St. Anthony, with co-sponsorship by *Clans of Ireland*, *Eneclann Ltd.*, and the *Genealogical Society of Ireland*, and ODCA, to be promoted in the **Royal Irish Academy** Dublin, Leuven, and Rome;
- (g) An outreach communications strategy, to include a new ODCA website, with downloadable resources for schools on the ODCA website; and calling on young people to be champions in families and communities in documenting family histories, like the *National Schools Folklore Collection* of the 1930s, now a UNESCO heritage;
- (h) Planning some musical/theatrical/artistic events for **Culture Night on Friday 19 September 2025**.

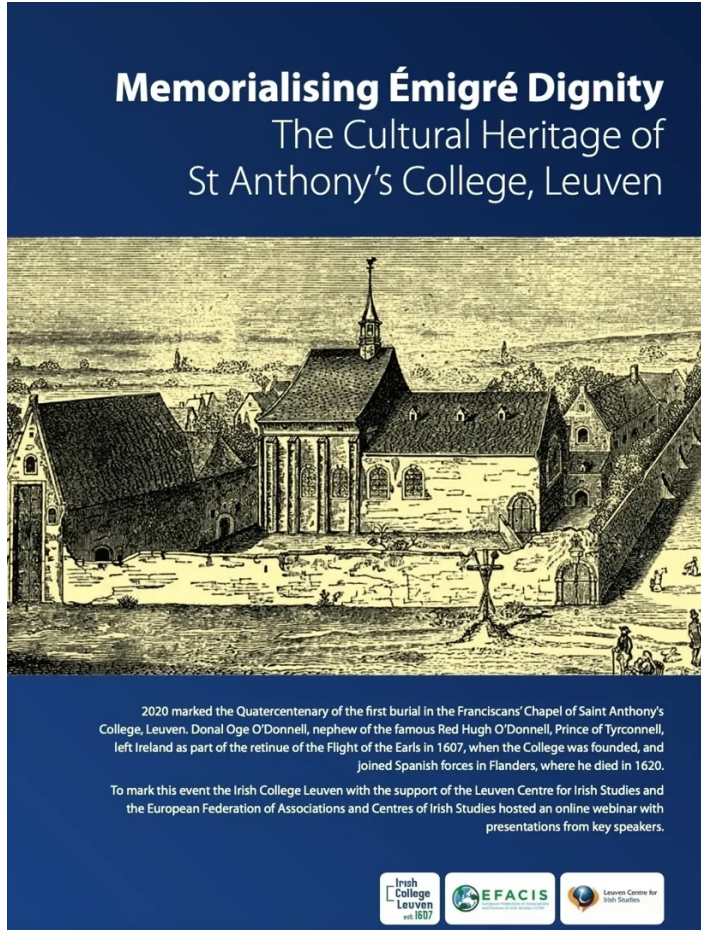
And for 2026, provisional ambitions include:

- (i) Establishment of social media accounts to promote the ODCA on a variety of international platforms: *Youtube*; *Facebook*, *Whatsapp*; *Instagram*, *X/twitter*; *Snapchat*; *WeChat*; *Telegram*; *etc*;
- (j) Establishing a conservation strategy, including for objects/art of historical interest, and to protect and extend archival material, with digitalisation of O'Donnell Clan records, genealogies and archives, in collaboration with the Lifford Heritage Centre, the Chief Herald, and the National Archives, and others;

- (k) Commemorating **11 July 2026**, date of death in 1505 of King *Aodh Ruaidh Ua Domhnaill*, founder, builder of Donegal Castle and Abbey, where he is buried apparently in crypt under former high altar;
- (l) Campaign for completing renovation of Donegal Castle, including the Jacobean wing, to serve as the principal archive for O'Donnell records and also as a *Tyrconnell Heritage Centre*, in cooperation with OPW/Heritage Ireland, Country Donegal Library, County Donegal Historical Society, Ballyshannon Museum, et al;
- (m) A non-intrusive ground-penetrating radar scan to identify existence of any underground crypt in Donegal Abbey; mobilisation of resources to support any further derivative archaeological work; and similarly in the Calle Constitución in Valladolid, the Irish College in Leuven, and possibly other sites of note;
- (n) Placement of memorial plaques in collaboration with Clans of Ireland, for historic O'Donnell sites in Dublin Castle, Ardfert Cathedral, Raphoe Cathedral, ChristChurch Cathedral, San Pietro in Montorio, the Irish College in Leuven, on the Mölkerbastei in Vienna, at Petrovaradin in Vojvodina; and with the Fondation Napoléon at the tomb of the O'Donnell Counts in the cemetery of Père La Chaise in Paris;
- (o) Awareness raising and advocating for elements of our Clan heritage to be submitted for recognition and preservation under the UNESCO *Convention on Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2003);
- (p) Launching sponsorship programmes designed to attract institutional and corporate partnerships, including from “digital giants”, supporting research, materials, and events, and including prizes for young researchers and a possible scholarship programme with academic institutions worldwide;

BIG LAUNCH EVENT

Our big event this year is the launch of this publication, in collaboration with the Irish College Leuven (Belgium) and Clans of Ireland, the Genealogical Society of Ireland, and Eneclann Ltd, Ireland's top genealogical research firm which hosts the Irish Family History Centre at the Irish Emigration Museum. The launch will take place in the evening of **Friday, 5 September 2023**, at the **Royal Irish Academy (RIA)** on Dawson Street, Dublin 2. This will include a very special **Irish Harp recital** and you can find more on our webpage for further details: <https://odomhnaill.com/history>



Memorialising Émigré Dignity – The Cultural Heritage of St Anthony's College, Leuven

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"Is there any other similar plot of ground inside Ireland or outside that can boast the mortal remains of such an illustrious company of Irish soldiers and scholars?"

Fr Canice Mooney, OFM
(1911-1963)

In May 2025, we received a letter from the office of the President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins stating that he

"looks forward to seeing the finished booklet and would be delighted if you could send a copy to Áras an Uachtaráin upon its completion".

He also extends his

"very best wishes for the success of the booklet".



MEMORIALISING EMIGRÉ DIGNITY-THE STORY

We have an exciting programme for September 2025, building on genealogical and historical research partnerships and the resulting forthcoming publication. The establishment of the Franciscan College of St. Anthony of Padua, in Louvain/Leuven, Spanish Flanders (Belgium now) in 1607 coincided with the *Flight of the Earls*, although the foundation stone was laid a decade later in 1617. At the time, it was the first Irish Franciscan College on the Continent, and became a principal repository of Gaelic history and culture, with indeed, the first Gaelic language printing press abroad.

Having visited this Irish College in Leuven/Louvain back in 2007, now secularised since 1984, one of our Clan members, Amb. Francis M. O'Donnell (Frank), noticed the absence of any permanent memorial to the many scholars, soldiers, and other emigrés buried there. With friends after a later visit in 2017, it was agreed something should be done, and a conference was to ensue, with a plaque, and it was thought to dovetail all of that with an O'Donnell Clan gathering in Donegal, which our late Vincent O'Donnell was considering in consultation, but however the Covid-19 Pandemic struck.

Instead, back in September/October 2020, a Zoom session was held, and as it turned out, it became the first webinar of the **Irish College in Leuven (ICL)**, with its CEO David Grant whose collaboration in this was crucial, and an array of distinguished speakers, including Rev. Professor Mícheál MacCraith, OFM; historian and scholar Dr. Katharine Simms, FRIA; Mag. Douglas Graf O'Donnell von Tyrconnell, Professor Johan Verberckmoes, KU Leuven; Baron Bernard Snoy et d'Oppuers whose family had historically sheltered the Franciscans, during the French Revolution and who visited it with Frank again in 2017; and with all of whom Frank presented his own research, as he had done for the Clan Gathering in Donegal in 2013.

The theme proposed was "*Memorialising Emigré Dignity*", and its primary purpose was to draw attention to the great history of our exiles in the establishment and development of the Franciscan College of St. Anthony of Padua, the Irish College as it is now, secularised. The continuing pandemic intervened with our plans for a publication of the proceedings, but this is now coming to fruition. The latest version of the **planned** booklet which has been prepared with David Grant in close cooperation with the authors and Frank. The **O'Donnell Clan Association's** Council have agreed at Frank's invitation, for ODCA to engage in partnership with the **Genealogical Society of Ireland**, the **Clans of Ireland**, and **Eneclann Ltd** whose logos appear on the book with those who sponsored the webinar at the time. This is a joint funding and promotion exercise and we are aiming for a suitable hard-copy launch at 6pm on Friday, **5 September 2025**, with selected scholars and an Irish Harp recital offered by our fellow Council member, Dr. Mary Louise O'Donnell (left).

There are no less than 65 Irish family names represented amongst the 86 Irish, out of a total of 117 persons known to have been buried in the Irish College. Of these, the largest cohort is of the O'Donnells, and attributable to their role since the *Flight of the Earls* in 1607. Seven O'Donnells are buried there, followed by Fleming, McCarthy, MacDonnell, Ward, with three each and Burke, Duffy, FitzGerald, Lynch, O'Clery, O'Doherty, O'Molloy, O'Neill, and O'Reilly, et al. Another 75 Irish family names feature amongst those associated, bringing the total to 130 different family/clan names represented among the 250 persons associated with this College. Some of these are amongst Ireland's most famous scholars, such as *Luke Wadding*, *Micheal O Cleirigh*, *Flaithri O Maolchonaire*, *John Colgan*, *Aodh Mac Aingil*, etc.

There are 60 places available, so **BOOK NOW** here: <https://www.eventbrite.ie/e/book-launch-memorialising-emigre-dignity-historic-irish-diaspora-tickets-1492672546769>

The Great Scholars of, or associated with, the College of Saint Anthony, in Louvain/Leuven, Belgium

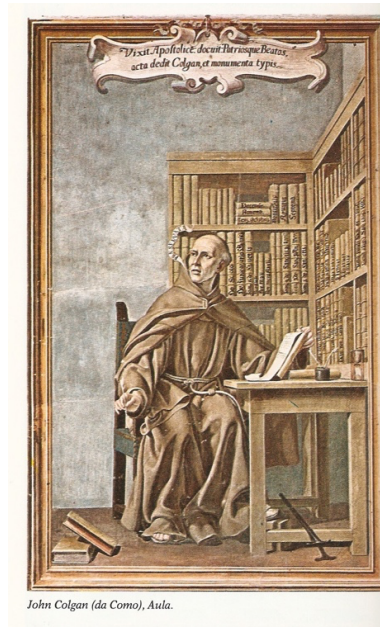


Mícheál Ó Cléirigh (c. 1590 – c. 1643), honoured in a postage stamp, Chief Author of the Four Masters. He was a member of the Ó Cléirigh bardic family and compiled with others the *Annála Ríoghachta Éireann* (Annals of the Kingdom of Ireland) at Bundrowse in County Leitrim on 10 August 1636. He also wrote the *Martyrology of Donegal* in the 17th century. He was baptised Tadhg Ó Cléirigh, and was known by the nickname *Tadhg an tSléibhe*, before taking the name Michael as a Franciscan lay brother (he never became a priest). He is buried under a tree in the Irish College Leuven.

Right: John Colgan, OFM, born in Carndonagh, County Donegal, and buried in St. Anthony's, the Irish College Leuven, in a fresco created by Emmanuel di Como in St. Isidore's College, Rome, c. 1670. He left Ireland for the Continent around 1612 and was ordained a priest in 1618. Colgan joined the [Franciscan Order](#) in 1620 and was sent to study in the Irish Franciscan [College of St. Anthony of Padua](#) in [Leuven](#), where one of his teachers was [Thomas Fleming](#). Colgan became a lecturer in philosophy, then in 1628 he taught scholastic theology at Mainz before returning to Leuven in 1634 as novice master. He undertook a great work, to be published in six volumes, dealing with the whole range of Irish ecclesiastical history and antiquities. In 1645 he published at Louvain the [Acta Sanctorum Hiberniae](#), containing the lives of the Irish saints whose feasts occur in the calendar for the months of January, February, and March. The second volume of the series, entitled [Acta Triadis Thaumaturgae](#) (*The Acts of a Wonder-Working Triad*), appeared at Louvain in 1647, on the three great national saints of Ireland, [Patrick](#), [Brigid](#), and [Columbcille](#).



Above left: Flaithrí Ó Maolchonaire (also known as *Florence Conry*; c. 1560 – 1629), belonged to a well-known family of historians and poets whose principal estate was at Cluain Plocáin, Roscommon. According to Mícheál Mac Craith OFM, Ó Maolchonaire pointedly referred to the Irish as *Éirinnach* rather than *Gaedheal*. **Above right: Aodh Mac Cathmhaoil** (Hugh MacCaghwell; 1571 – 1626), was an Irish Franciscan theologian, scholar and poet and Archbishop of Armagh. He was known by Irish speakers at Leuven as "*Aed Mac Aingil*" (Son of an Angel).



John Colgan (da Como), Aula.



Above right: Luke Wadding (1588-1657). "*The Waterford man who created St. Patrick's Day*". The history of Saint Isidore's College in Rome begins with Friar Luke Wadding, a key correspondent with Leuven. Born in Waterford in 1588, Luke Wadding was obliged to go abroad to get a proper Catholic education because of religious persecution in Ireland. He entered the Franciscan Order in Lisbon and was ordained a priest in 1613. He acquired such fame as a theologian that he was chosen by the King of Spain as theological adviser to a delegation sent to Rome to petition Pope Paul V for the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception BVM.

Fr. Maghnus Ó Domhnaill (fl. 1694–1706)

Unlike most other scribes who are famous for their works, An t-Athar **Maghnus Ó Domhnaill** is not famous for the number or volume of his copying work: but on the basis of the extraordinary original works contained in his manuscripts. Having said that, that prolific scribe, Muiris Ó Gormáin, left us copies of some of his translations. Moreover, much interest has been shown in his writings for about the past century; and it seems that it was that great scholar, T. F. O’Rahilly, who first aroused this interest in the works of this priest. A detailed account of these translations, and of the little information available about Father Maghnus himself, can be found in **Ken Ó Donnchú**, ‘*An Sagart Ó Domhnaill sa Spáinn: Cóipeáil agus Aistriúchán i dTús an Ochtú aois Déag*’, Léachtaí Cholm Cille, Vol. 51 (2021).

Although little is known about the life of Fr Maghnus Ó Domhnaill, it can be assumed that he spent time in one of the seminaries on the Continent; and with the literature of that language—that he was trained for the priesthood in Spain. In total, we have five handwritten volumes from the pen of Father Maghnus, which are actually parts of three independent manuscripts. The oldest of these manuscripts, now held in the **Belfast Public Library** collection, contains his own copy of the Irish version he had prepared of the *Lunario Nuevo* written by Geronimo Cortés. The text of this incomplete translation was edited in O’Connell (eds.) & Henry, *An Irish Corpus Astronomiae: Being Manus O'Donnell's Seventeenth Century Version of the Lunario of Geronimo Cortes* (London, 1915). As the authors, and Ó Donnchú, have pointed out, this is a fairly faithful translation of part of the original Spanish work, although Father Maghnus allowed himself to rewrite and shorten material in some places, presumably to make the text more suitable for the Irish reader. Of interest, from the point of view of the history of Irish translation, are certainly the amendments and adjustments he made to deal with technical words and plant names that were not available in Ireland at that time. A mysterious note in the manuscript itself suggests that he did not intend, when he stopped writing, to complete the translation: ‘*If that is not enough, you have only to add from Carn Muigh[m]onaigh to Bearnas Mór, between the glascharn and other places*’ (LPBF 41). It is assumed, on the basis of the linguistic forms that slip from him as he translates, that Father Maghnus was from County Donegal.

The 'second' manuscript we have of his, which is held in three separate volumes in the **Royal Irish Academy**, is a collection of historical poems and translations prepared by Father Maghnus himself of three stories (actually three novellas) by Juan Perez de Montalbán. They are called 'events' in the Irish versions: ‘*Eachtra Ristard agus Lisarda*’; ‘*Eachtra an Páláis Draoidheachtamhail*’; and ‘*Eachtra an Cheithearnaigh Coilleadh Compáisigh*’. As Ó Cuív has shown, Father Maghnus did not hesitate to rework the texts slightly. In another manuscript held by the Royal Irish Academy, there is a 16-page list of additions and corrections to Keating’s historical work, ‘*Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*’, which appears to bear the handwriting of Father Maghnus. Although it cannot be confirmed that Father Maghnus compiled this small collection of revisions, it would not be surprising if he had been the one who first set his hand to this work. This short text was edited in Ó Cuív, ‘*A Seventeenth Century Criticism of Keating’s Foras Feasa ar Éirinn*’, Éigse, Vol. 9(2) (1965). We know nothing of the activities of this extraordinary scholar after 1706, but **Ken Ó Donnchú**, a lecturer in the modern Irish in University College Cork, is bringing out a book about him. Ken has edited the Irish translations from manuscript copies, with detailed linguistic notes (comparing the Spanish and the Irish, and especially his dialectal features), and has written a comprehensive introduction. Originally Ken planned to publish the book as *Gaeilge*. However, he notes there is a much larger audience than for the Irish-speaking public alone. Fr. Maghnus’ contribution to Irish letters is very important - along with Flaithrí Ó Maolchonaire, he is the only other translator of Spanish language original texts pre-1900. Intriguingly, Ó Domhnaill opted solely for secular material, unlike Ó Maolchonaire and the many other Irish clerics labouring so valiantly in that era.

See this Maynooth website for more historic such cases:
<https://atlasnagaeilge.maynoothuniversity.ie/CaseStudies>

Scríobhaithe an Tuaiscirt 1650–1900

Scholar Search/Cuardach

Case Studies/Cás-staidéir

Map/Léarscáil

Muiris Ó Gormáin (fl. 1734–1788)

View Profile

Saillí Ní Anluain (c. 1834–1896)

View Profile

Maghnus Ó Domhnaill (fl. 1694–1706)

View Profile

Tomás Ó Doirnín (fl. 1765–1802 ???)

View Profile

Brian Ó Tomaltaigh (c. 1799–1871)

View Profile

End of an Era?

Clans of Ireland – and the Standing Council of Irish Chiefs & Chieftains

The ODCA membership in **Clans of Ireland** was renewed again this year, and ODCA was represented by Francis M. O'Donnell at its **Cultural Summit and Annual General Meeting** in Dublin on 5 April 2025, where a formal handover occurred between **The Standing Council of Irish Chiefs and Chieftains** (*Buanchomhairle Thaoisigh Éireann*) (hereditary), witnessed by the Clans of Ireland's outgoing Cathaoirleach, Gearóid Ó Ceallaigh, whereby the outgoing Chair of SCICC, Donough The McGillicuddy of the Reeks, Chieftain, passed the baton to Amb. Francis M. O'Donnell, President of the O'Donnell Clan Association and President of the Genealogical Society of Ireland. As per the Memorandum of Understanding they co-signed on 5 April at Clans of Ireland, O'Donnell will hold the SCICC documentation, for their "safe eventual archiving in a suitable place or institution, and in consultation with the relevant stakeholders including any other surviving authenticated and willing Chiefs of the Name and without prejudice to any eventual decision by the latter Chiefs of the Name concerned to revive the Standing Council with a new chair, or to consider it obsolete and discontinued, which decision is anticipated will likely be taken in the course of the year 2025".



The outgoing Chair, The McGillicuddy of the Reeks, also nominated O'Donnell as the representative of SCICC to the ex-officio representative tenure provided for in the Memorandum of Association between Clans of Ireland and the SCICC. Its current assets enable it to continue to co-sponsor the annual history prize for some more years. Although most of its members have already passed away, it is hoped to identify any other heirs interested.

The Standing Council of Irish Chiefs and Chieftains (*Buanchomhairle Thaoisigh Éireann*) was founded in 1991 to unite hereditary claimants of Gaelic nobility titles, known as *Chiefs of the Name*, recognized by Ireland's *Chief Herald*. On October 5, 1991, sixteen of nineteen claimant chiefs were received by President Mary Robinson at *Áras an Uachtaráin*, marking a historic gathering to form the council, the first of its kind since the 1601 Battle of Kinsale. Maguire of Fermanagh was elected chairman, and Denis The O'Connor Don of Roscommon deputy chairman. The council aimed to promote Gaelic heritage, protect chiefly titles from misuse, and educate the public on their historical roles. It also established the annual history prize with Trinity College Dublin, later also involving Clans of Ireland. In 1999, the *Chief Herald of Ireland*, the constitutional legitimacy of all or some of whose practices was in doubt, notwithstanding the National Cultural Institutions Act of 1997, and prompted also by a scandal fraudulent claims (notably "MacCarthy Mór", whose title was later debunked as a hoax) was advised at his request, by the Attorney General, that "there is not, and never was, any statutory or legal basis for the practice of granting courtesy recognition as chief of the name", and in these circumstances, the Chief Herald then decided, that the practice of granting courtesy recognition as Chief of the Name should be discontinued, and accordingly ceased recognising any new Chiefs of the Name, and halted succession publications in *Iris Oifigiúil* (the official gazette of the State). Recognition was not intended to confer, confirm or imply any rights in law, or any special status or title of nobility or of honour. It was also held that it would be inappropriate if a decision made by the Genealogical Office/Chief Herald in the past in relation to courtesy recognition were henceforth to be relied on as the sole basis for use of any particular chiefly designation. The recognition of those previously gazetted was not however withdrawn. Notwithstanding these challenges, by 2006, Dr. Hugo Ricciardi O'Neill chaired the Standing Council, which continued limited activities, including the annual history prize. Subsequent chairs were Major-General David Nial Creagh, The O'Morchoe (1928–2019), succeeded by the late Conor Myles John, The O'Brien, 18th Baron Inchiquin (1943–2023), who served as chairman at two points, and was a founding member in 1991. Upon his demise, Donough The McGillicuddy of the Reeks took over, until this year.



The annual "Irish Chiefs' and Clans of Ireland Prize" continues conjointly funded by the Standing Council of Irish Chiefs and Chieftains, with Clans of Ireland, in association with the History Department of Trinity College, Dublin, and History Ireland magazine. The prize will continue, along with its established joint sponsorship. Amb. O'Donnell considers his SCICC role as merely custodial, given the putative conflict of laws between traditional Brehon-based tanistry and post-Brehon primogeniture, as well as modern electoral designation of leaders of some clans' cultural revivals.

More details here: <https://odomhnaill.com/clans-chieftancies>
See Youtube record of the Clans of Ireland Cultural Summit 2025:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uT982cRPUIA&t=11131s>

Other News

Virtual Treasury Project recovers early 19th century Irish census records

Excellent report in Irish Times of 30 June 2025, on very old Irish census returns, as far back as 1821. As Ronan McGreevy reports, “*The fire that destroyed the Public Records Office (PRO) during the Irish Civil War also destroyed 700 years’ worth of records. ... By common consent the worst loss of all was the pre-Famine 19th-century census records. ... The British saw the censuses as purely a numbers game, not a valuable archive for future research. That left the pre-Famine censuses of 1821, 1831 and 1841 still intact, but these were almost entirely destroyed in the fire. The Virtual Treasury project was set up to try to recover as many of the lost documents as possible. Hundreds of thousands of documents have been retrieved where copies have been found in archives elsewhere, but the census records were always the priority.*” Read the full story by Ronan McGreevy, here: <https://www.irishtimes.com/ireland/2025/06/30/worldwide-interest-expected-as-19th-century-irish-census-records-recovered-and-put-online/>

Earagail Arts Festival, Donegal, 12-26 July

The 38th festival of world class performances in music, circus, dance, theatre, visual arts and spoken word from Ireland and around the globe. Hosted in circus tents, castles and churches, on beaches and streets across County Donegal from Malin to Donegal Town, it brings an extensive 2 weeks of events for everyone at Donegal’s premier summer festival. Find out more: <https://eaf.ie/2025-events/> and here: <https://stayindonegal.com/tag/events-in-donegal/>

National Heritage Week – Exploring Our Foundations, 16 - 24 August

National Heritage Week celebrates Ireland’s cultural, built and natural heritage. It brings together volunteers, community groups and heritage enthusiasts to share their experience, knowledge culture and practices. The theme for National Heritage Week, *Exploring our Foundations*, and is also the theme for over 40 European countries. The theme invites us to delve into the building blocks of our heritage; not just the structures, but the landscapes and cultural activities that have shaped us. As National Heritage Week is part of the European Heritage Days network, Ireland along with other countries collectively decide the theme. Starting off small with a limited number of events, it has grown under the Heritage Council to be an island-wide event celebrating all aspects of our built, natural and cultural heritage. The nine day long event now includes Wild Child Day and Water Heritage Day as part of its event. Find out more here: <https://www.heritageweek.ie>

Dublin Festival of History - 26 September to 12 October 2025

Following on our launch of “Memorialising Emigré Dignity”, the Dublin Festival of History will run to the Big Weekend at the Round Room at the Mansion House, from Saturday 27 September to Sunday 28 September. The Dublin Festival of History is an annual free festival, brought to you by Dublin City Council, and organised by Dublin City Libraries, in partnership with the Dublin City Council Culture Company. Read more about it here: <https://dublinfestivalofhistory.ie/>

Other Irish Lives Remembered

See Issue no 63 of the *Irish Lives Remembered* series produced by the Irish Family History Centre in Dublin: <https://www.irishfamilyhistorycentre.com/product/irish-lives-remembered-issue-63/>

The Midnight Run, is an annual 60km event commemorating the escape of Red Hugh O'Donnell and others from captivity. It retraces their route through Kimmage, and into County Wicklow, typically at midnight. On January 6, 1592, Art O'Neill, Henry O'Neill, and Red Hugh O'Donnell broke out of Dublin Castle and made their way on foot, heading towards Glenmalur in the Wicklow Mountains. Unfortunately, Art O'Neill succumbed to hypothermia during the escape. It is organized by the Dublin and Wicklow Mountain Rescue Team, with rescue teams available if needed.

O'Donnells in other histories

James O'Donnell, merchant who banked on education for all: pioneering vision in 19th C Ireland and Newfoundland.

A biography article by Yann Blake, who tells “*James O'Donnell was born around Cahir in County Tipperary, Ireland, around 1829, into a time of great economic and social change. As a young man, he left Ireland, emigrating to Newfoundland between 1843 and 1849. His journey was one of altruism, intrepidity and enterprise, culminating in an influential career in the spirits global trade alongside local wholesale and retail of groceries and fish merchandise – leading to an enduring legacy in both Newfoundland and Ireland.*” From Tipperary County Council, see:

<https://tipperarystudies.ie/james-odonnell-from-tipperary-to-newfoundland-and-back-again/>

And across the world,

Here is an *AI-generated summary* of notable achievements by individuals with the surname O'Donnell, outside of the O'Donnell Clan Association (ODCA), during the period from July 2024 to June 2025, based on available information: *Daniel O'Donnell*, Irish singer, continued engaging fans through his website and a 2025 Irish May Tour, reinforcing his cultural influence. *Kieran O'Donnell*, Fine Gael TD, was re-elected in Ireland in November 2024 and appointed Minister of State for Older People and Housing in January 2025. Abroad, *Chris O'Donnell*, actor, focussed on *NCIS: Los Angeles*. *Lawrence O'Donnell*, MSNBC's *The Last Word* host, returned from illness in April 2025, and explored scripted TV projects while delivering sharp political commentary and *Norah O'Donnell*, CBS Evening News anchor, covered the 2025 State of the Union, attending a White House lunch with then-President Joe Biden.

Beyond AI, we know *John P. O'Donnell*, served as a close aide and attorney during US President Donald Trump's first term, representing him in business dealings and as a liaison with conservative groups. But the most famous historical connection to the White House was that of *Kenneth P. O'Donnell* aka Kenny the Cobra, who worked with President John F. Kennedy. He served as a key political aide until Kennedy's assassination in 1963. From a bi-partisan perch, *Evelyn Farkas*, descended from the O'Donnells of Austria and Hungary, is Executive Director of the McCain Institute. Her family have been active in the O'Donnell Clan Association for many years.

But to these, let us add some prominent O'Donnell women leaders closer to home: *Liz O'Donnell*, is a former Irish Minister of State and TD, active with Chernobyl Children International, and serves on its board along with founder Adi Roche and Ali Hewson, spouse of Paul David Hewson, aka U2's Bono. *Emily O'Donnell* is a fashion stylist and TV presenter on IrelandAM. *Orla O'Donnell* is a prominent RTE journalist, its Legal Affairs Correspondent. *Sinead O'Donnell* is a former UTV journalist turned PR and brand advisor, supporter of the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre. And of course, *Rosie O'Donnell*, American talk show host and comedian, relocated to Ireland in January 2025, pursuing citizenship via Donegal heritage, driven by a desire to return to the old sod from whence her ancestors hailed.

A future history project for Irish Colleges in Europe?

Recalling also the RIA publication "*Writing Irish History: The Four Masters and their World*" (2007), we look at the Irish Colleges. In Lisbon, the Convent of **Bom Sucesso** (Irish Dominican Nuns) was founded in 1639 by Father Daniel Ó Dálaigh (Dominic à Rosario O'Daly, or *Frei Domingos do Rosario*) and Dona Iria de Brito, Countess of Atalaya. In 1627 he drew up the genealogy of Mary Stuart O'Donnell, daughter of Rory, 1st Earl of Tyrconnell. Our ODCA members Pedro Toscano Rico (O'Donnell) and Eibhlin Counihan have given some support to the restoration of its *azulejo* tiles. Pedro's O'Donnell ancestor came from Dublin and was Wellington's ADC in the Peninsular War. In Eibhlin's case, her donation was with reference to her ancestor Nuala O'Connor Faly, the first person to be buried under the High Altar in the Franciscan Abbey in Donegal town. She was the wife of Niall Garbh O'Donnell (1st), and she invited the Franciscans to set up a Friary in Donegal town. See *Convento de Nossa Senhora de Bom Sucesso*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zbg7_RurraU&t=17s

In memoriam – our late Clan leaders and scholastic mentor

You can find obituaries for our late leaders if you scroll down the webpage here: <https://odomhnaill.com/clan-association>

Rev. Fr. Hugh Ambrose O'Donnell OFM (1940-2023), was the last of the established line of the O'Donels of Larkfield reckoned by male primogeniture and as registered in the Genealogical Office of the Chief Herald of Ireland, and his father John O'Donel was recognised as Chief of the Name - "The O'Donnell of Tyrconnell" on 11 September 1945 in the official gazette of Ireland, *Iris Oifigiúil*, and almost nine years later inaugurated as Chief of the Clan Dálaigh *Ua Domhnaill* at Easter 1954 in Donegal. Fr. Hugh, succeeded his father, but having taken religious vows, was not formally inaugurated as Chief of the Clan, albeit was honoured by the Clan Association and others as Chief of the Name, *Ua Domhnaill*.

Vincent O'Donnell (1947-2021), or *Vincie Shile* as he was known, was Secretary and President Emeritus of the O'Donnell Clan Association, who devoted huge effort to Irish music and language, the genealogy of *Rann na Feirste* area and the O'Donnell Clan. In 2012, Vincent was decorated with the medal of Clans of Ireland, and in January 2020, he received a papal decoration from the Bishop of Raphoe. We remember him fondly and you can find the video recording of his funeral four years ago on Youtube: *Torramh Vincie Shile* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5M3FF82jtXU>

Rev. Fr. Ignatius Fennessy, OFM (on right, in 2020), died on 6th August 2024 in his 99th year, having lived 80 years as a professed Franciscan friar. He was a great help in the research for the book *The O'Donnells of Tyrconnell – A Hidden Legacy* (on table before him). *Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis*. <https://www.franciscans.ie/latest-news/ignatius-fennessy-ofm-rip/>



Stay tuned!

Many events have taken place in 2024-2025, and we hope to capture more of these in the future once we have co-opted a team of authors & editors. You can find out more on Facebook/Meta: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/412725392858883>



Left: A depiction of “**Red Hugh O’Donnell**”, in the Kevin Barry Memorial Window by Harry Clarke Studios. The window was designed by Richard J. King and erected in Earlsfort Terrace and unveiled on 1 November 1934. In 2010, the window was restored and relocated in the Charles Institute at Belfield, University College Dublin

Right: “**A Connemara Girl**” by the Augustus Nicholas Burke (1838–1891), National Gallery of Ireland

Membership application or renewal for 2025-2026

For new ordinary and associate membership or renewal, please use the new form and the payment options indicated. It can be downloaded on the Clan Association webpage (scroll down, after Constitution): <https://odomhnaill.com/clan-association>

NOTE: While this first issue of our new ODCA News Bulletin is being sent to all members who joined in 2024, *future issues will only be available to paid-up members*

The Cathach on Fridays, 5 & 19 September 2025

The Royal Irish Academy at 19 Dawson Street will display the Cathach for viewing up to 5pm on 5 September, and will once again, when open late for [Culture Night Dublin](#), on 19 September, 5-9pm. See first-hand our oldest extant Irish manuscript,

The Cathach of St Columba

And its history as the Battle Book of the O’Donnells of Tyrconnell. *Culture Night is sponsored by the Arts Council and Local Authorities across the island of Ireland.*

O’Donnell Clan Association – Council Members

President	<i>Francis Martin O’Donnell</i>
Vice-President	<i>Maria Angeles O’Donnell-Olson</i>
Secretary	<i>Eibhlin O’Connor Counihan</i>
Treasurer	<i>Frank Hannigan</i>
Funding/Outreach	<i>Mary Louise O’Donnell</i>
Genealogy/Septs	<i>John McCaffery</i>
Other Members	<i>Vacant/pending</i>

Editorial Team: *Still to be determined*