



THE Ó DOCHARTAIGH CLANN ASSOCIATION

Ár nDútčas

Newsletter July 2026

ÁR NDÚTČAS (OUR HERITAGE)

During our recent monthly executive meeting, the Ó Dochartaigh Clann Association planned the upcoming events for 2027, which includes our monthly virtual Zoom gatherings that we have been holding for the last few years.

We have noticed that our schedule often has interfered with family holidays. We are putting a survey out to our members to discover what they think about moving our monthly virtual meeting to the first Saturday of each month and hold our in person gathering in Ireland next year over a 4-day period near to the end of July 2027, instead of the middle of August.

Our annual international gathering held in Ireland offers informative heritage bus tours, genealogy workshops, concerts, traditional music, ceili dances and historical exhibition. Our active Ó Dochartaigh Clann Association community maintains connectivity through our gatherings, both virtual and in-person, as well as our newsletter which we publish six times a year.

Our association is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization. Our committees are:

- Reunion Committee: Organizes global clann gatherings and events.
- Genealogy Committee: Collects family trees and traces lineages.
- Doherty Y-DNA Study: Analyzes genetics to connect distant clann members.
- Communication: Manages the website, social media, and newsletters.
- Member Services: Welcomes new members and gathers community feedback.

Please reach out if you want to be more involved in any of our committees. We would love to have you. General enquiries can be sent to info@odochartaighassociation.org.

Eva Doherty Gremmert, President



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12-15 August 2026
County Donegal, Ireland

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THE IRISH TABLE

FOODS, RECIPES & HERITAGE

SATURDAY, JULY 11, 2026 - ON ZOOM
12 PM PACIFIC, 3 PM EASTERN, 8 PM DUBLIN

WE WILL COVER

- HOW FOOD AND HERITAGE ARE INTERCONNECTED
- FOODS OF OUR ANCESTORS
- HERITAGE & MODERN RECIPES



HOSTED BY:
THE Ó DOCHARTAIGH
CLANN ASSOCIATION

REGISTRATION REQUIRED:

bit.ly/july2026irishfood

EMAIL QUESTIONS TO:
[INFO@ODOCHARTAIGHASSOCIATION.ORG](mailto:info@odochartaighassociation.org)



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Ó Dochartaigh Clann Association gathering



There are still some tickets left for our Clann Gathering in Culdaff, County Donegal, in August.

We have nine separate events, including the premiere of an exclusive concert with world renowned musicians, a full day bus tour with lunch, an evening Clann family tree workshop followed by a Pub Quiz,.

There will also be a day of various heritage lectures with lunch, cultural crafts workshops, a traditional ceili with tea & coffee and scrumptious finger food, a visit to the Doagh Famine Village with tea & scone, local heritage exhibition and banquet dinner with traditional music and dancers.

The per-person ticket price is €295 EUR for the four-day Gathering from 12-15 August.

Find out more and book your tickets at www.odochartaighassociation.org/gathering or email info@odochartaighassociation.org for more details.

Culture Corner

The Irish Table - More Than a Meal

When we think about our Irish ancestors, we often begin with names, dates, and places. Yet one of the most revealing windows into their daily lives may be found at the kitchen table.

For generations, the Irish table was much more than a place to eat. It was where family news was shared, stories were told, songs were sung, visitors were welcomed, and traditions were passed from one generation to the next. Whether in a cottage in Donegal, or an immigrant home, the table stood at the heart of family life.

The foods themselves tell important stories. Potatoes, oats, breads, dairy products, fish, and seasonal vegetables reflected both the opportunities and hardships of rural Ireland.

During difficult times, families relied on ingenuity, local knowledge, and community support to make the most of limited resources. During celebrations, special dishes marked weddings, holidays, harvests, and other milestones.

When Irish families emigrated, they carried more than possessions. They brought memories, recipes, cooking methods, and traditions that helped preserve a sense of identity in a new land. Many of us can still trace connections to our Irish heritage through family recipes, holiday meals, or stories shared around the table.

What foods or food traditions have been passed down in your family? They may tell a story worth preserving.

This month, our online workshop, *The Irish Table: The Foods, Recipes, and Heritage That Shaped Irish Families*, will explore the foods our ancestors prepared, the traditions they maintained, and the cultural meanings behind everyday meals. We invite you to join us online as we discover how the Irish table nourished not only the body, but also family, community, and heritage.



Image courtesy of ChatGPT.



Elagh Castle – historic seat of Ó Dochartaigh power

Elagh Castle was the historic seat of Ó Dochartaigh power in Inishowen, serving as our principal castle. It was likely the most impressive fortification in Inishowen. It stood on a rocky outcrop at the edge of a southern range of hills, guarding the peninsula's only land border. Bardic poetry claims Elagh's stone walls were whitewashed - a sentinel of strength visible from miles away. From the south, the natural barrier of nearly impassable bog forced those who approached to traverse a cobbled road which crossed the narrow-raised causeway into Inishowen.

Recent excavations show there was a large encircling ditch at least 13 feet wide, followed by an inner stone-lined embankment and then a paved area. Earlier excavations suggest there may have been additional defensive earthwork surrounding the site, which would not be surprising for a place of such royal status. The existing D-shaped tower which remains to this day, long thought to have been part of the castle's gatehouse, is about 20 feet wide and has eroded to about 26 feet tall (an NISMR report measured it at about 30 feet tall several decades earlier). The tower was once topped with crenellations—alternating stone projections and openings that allowed defenders to shelter while shooting arrows, hurling objects, or later, firing firearms through the gaps. Some archaeologists have suggested Elagh may also have had a portcullis (a latticed iron or timber gate) in addition to its primary entrance, though that remains uncertain.

While only part of one tower remains, the evidence is strong that Elagh originally had four such towers around its walls. This is based on both Ashby's map (an English source dated 1600) and the poet Tadhg Dall Ó hUiginn (an Irish source from the late 1500s). English officials, such as Sir Thomas Ridgeway, were impressed by the "extraordinary thickness of wall and bawn" which defended the castle and its courtyard. The visible remains show that the stone walls were six feet thick. Inside its massive walls lay the castle courtyard. Ó hUiginn describes it as a "labyrinthine four-towered court"—a description which has puzzled many.

Source: Cormac McSparron, *Excavations at Elagh Castle: CAF Data Structure Report No. 99* (Belfast: Queen's University Belfast, 2014), academia.edu/8607311/

Image by ChatGPT.

However, in his field report, archaeologist Cormac McSparron interprets this to suggest there were "a complex set of interconnected buildings" within the enclosure (an interpretation that Ashby's map appears to support). At the center of it all stood a thick-walled, two-story keep, which for several centuries served as the primary residence of the Ó Dochartaigh clan chieftain, who bore the title "Lord of Inishowen."

Elagh was easily large enough to hold at least 150 men, if not more, but in peacetime the complex was likely home to the chieftain's household, bodyguards, servants, and a small company of warriors. Around the table there might be trusted advisors and military officers from the McDevitt, McLaughlin, MacAllen, and O'Brollaghan families. Nobles from the six other leading Ó Dochartaigh branches in Inishowen may also have been received there, along with emissaries from neighboring clans, poets, ecclesiastical leaders, and other distinguished visitors.

However, Elagh was not merely a residence for noble families. Maps depict a tree-lined road leading northward from the castle. Contemporary English records refer to a "village" or "town" at Elagh. This was likely a clustered settlement inhabited by advisors, stewards, tutors, officers, soldiers, gatekeepers, messengers, craftsmen, servants, and others. The "town" probably consisted of houses and other dwellings, together with a smithy, workshops, barns, gardens, and livestock pens. In its time, the castle must have been an impressive sight and a visible symbol of Ó Dochartaigh power guarding the gateway to Inishowen.



By Will Dougherty III



From the Archive

Here is a summary of an article in Newsletter #57, Apr 2011.

This 1601 survey of Lough Foyle and the surrounding territory provides a valuable snapshot of Inishowen and the lands controlled by the Ó Dochartaigh (O'Doherty) clan at the end of the Gaelic era.

Compiled shortly before the collapse of the old Gaelic order, it identifies the principal castles, forts, churches, and notable residents throughout Inishowen. The report describes Elagh Castle as O'Doherty's chief residence (the article on Page 4 reveals more about this important Doherty site).

Taken from a Description of Lough Foyle and the Country Adjacent, dated the 12th day of April, 1601.

The country of Enishowen, being the inheritance of the O'Dougherdies, is herein described together with the castles, forts, churches, and principal inhabitants thereof. The chief seat of the lord of the country was at Elloghe (Elagh), with another strong castle at Birt, wherein was maintained a ward of forty men. Throughout the territory stood many lesser castles and holds, occupied by divers branches of the O'Dougherdie sept and their followers. Among the places named are Newcastle, Moyvill, Boncranagh, Clonmeny, Carrickbrahey, Culmore, Don-Yrishe Hold, and Don-owen. Various churches and ecclesiastical persons are likewise noted, including the Bishop O'Galchar and several priests resident within the country.

The survey portrays Enishowen as a land guarded by many strengths, its coast well furnished with castles and havens, whilst the inland parts are described as mountainous and thinly inhabited. The whole affords a clear view of the estate and power of the O'Dougherdies immediately before the great changes that afterward befell Ulster and the ancient Gaelic lordships.

Clann merchandise

We have an [official merchandise store](#)! You can purchase a range of products including t-shirts, caps and mugs. We set the prices to as close to the production costs as we could to make it affordable. The store ships worldwide.

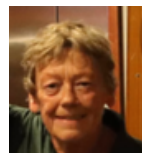
Our Executive Committee



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Carnation, Washington, USA



Joseph Pascal Doherty
Association Vice President
Carndonagh, County Donegal, Ireland



Kathleen Travers
Association Secretary
Scottish Borders, Scotland

Our Directors

Daniel Doherty, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada

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Zack Daugherty, Coral Gables, Florida, USA

Brian Dougherty, Goodrich, Michigan USA

Mary Doherty (Saddler), Carndonagh, County Donegal, Ireland

Event Calendar

Our forthcoming events include:

11 July, 2026 — Marie Doherty (Turner) & Rosie Doherty Gremmert: *The Irish Table: Foods, Recipes & Heritage*. On Zoom - [click here to register](#).

12-15 August, 2026 Ó Dochartaigh Clann Gathering (Event HQ: McGrory's Hotel in Culdaff, Co. Donegal, Ireland. [Email us](#) for the virtual attendee Zoom link.

12 September, 2026 — Will Dougherty III: Clann History 1: Formation of the Clann (c. 700-1333). On Zoom.

Find out about the rest of our events until July 2027 [on our website](#).



Follow-up: One Family's Migration Story

One of the most valuable lessons from my recent trip to the Maritimes to follow my Doherty migration story had little to do with archives, cemeteries, or databases. It was the realization that sometimes the best research strategy is simply to stay put.

Many family historians travel from site to site trying to see as much as possible in a limited time. This trip reminded me of the value of doing the opposite.

By staying in the Rexton area for five days, introducing myself, sharing my purpose, and allowing word of my visit to circulate, opportunities began to appear that no amount of online searching could have produced.

A key factor was staying at a local historic bed and breakfast. The owner became an informal contact point, connecting me with people who knew local history and family stories.

Equally important was attending Sunday service at the church where three generations of my ancestors worshipped. The retired pastor kindly introduced us to the congregation and explained why we were there.

What happened next felt almost magical, although it was really the result of community and generosity. Conversations after the service led to an invitation to tour the former Marine Hospital founded by my great-great-grandfather, Dr. Isaac Wilson Doherty.



*Neither rain nor wind will stifle my research
Tidnish Riverside Cemetery, Nova Scotia*



*Stories and artifacts at the site of William & Agnes
Doherty's mill in South Branch, New Brunswick*

I was introduced to a distant cousin, also descended from Isaac and Isabel. He took me to the house and mill site established by my great-great-great-grandparents, William and Agnes Doherty, among the first generation of my family to settle in Canada.

Perhaps the most moving discovery came from the current property owner, who directed me to a remote cemetery where William, his wife, mother and sister are commemorated. It was on a secluded point I would never have found on my own.

Allowing time also enabled me to connect with a heritage guide at the Elsipogtog Cultural Centre to begin a conversation about community memories of Dr. Isaac Doherty who was reported to have been a medical advisor to the local Mi'gmaq people.

The trip also reinforced the importance of leaving space for reflection. I found genealogy is not only about collecting facts; it is about absorbing stories, places and emotions.

Quiet evenings gave me time to organize notes, consider new connections, and simply be with the experience of standing where ancestors once lived and worked.

Sometimes the most important discoveries occur when we stop searching and allow the community itself to help us find what we came looking for.

By Dan Doherty

