



THE Ó DOCHARTAIGH CLANN ASSOCIATION

Ár nDútcas

Newsletter January 2026

ÁR NDÚTČAS (OUR HERITAGE)

We continue gathering the Ó Dochartaigh Clann. Our popular monthly zoom meetings continue to cover a variety of topics and interests.

Coming soon, on 10 January, we will welcome a guest presenter from Culdaff, County Donegal, Neil McGrory. Neil is a local historian and has recently published a series of podcast for the Lands of Eogain project.

These informative podcasts cover heritage and history of Inishowen. His presentation for us is titled "Inishowen before the Ó Dochartaigh."

Through our fundraising campaign we have funded several Y-DNA test kits for specific Ó Dochartaigh men living in Ireland. The data from these kits will continue our research into our clann history and connections.

We are working on the schedule for our next gathering in person with Ó Dochartaigh's in Inishowen on August 12-5, 2026, at McGrorys in Culdaff. Join us if you can.

Eva Doherty Gremmert, President



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Official Store
Buy Ó Dochartaigh merch!



HERITAGE OF INISHOWEN

INISHOWEN BEFORE THE Ó DOCHARTAIGH CLANN

SATURDAY, JANUARY 10, 2026 - ON ZOOM
12 PM PACIFIC, 3 PM EASTERN, 8 PM DUBLIN



Ár nDútcas

HOSTED BY:
THE Ó DOCHARTAIGH
CLANN ASSOCIATION

JOIN US TO LEARN ABOUT:

- SIGNIFICANT EARLY MEDIEVAL MONASTIC SETTLEMENTS
- EXPLORING THE RICH HERITAGE OF CROSSES AND RUINS LEFT BEHIND

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PRESENTED BY:
NEIL MCGRORY

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The Castle Beneath the Lake: Lough Lapáin and the Ó Dochartaigh Chiefs

The *Annals of the Four Masters* record that, in 1342, John Ó Dochartaigh succeeded his father as chief of Ardmire and Tir Enna. This territory lay between the Rivers Foyle and Swilly, extending south to the Barnesmore Gap. Although the Ó Dochartaigh expansion into Inishowen had begun less than a decade earlier, the family's principal seats and population were still concentrated farther south at this date.

John is styled in the O'Clery Book of Genealogies as "Seaain mór Cúile Meic an Tréin et chaisleáin Locha Lapáin," identifying him as "John the Great of Cúil Mhic an Tréin and Castle Lough Lapáin." While Ó Dochartaigh castles like Carrickabraghy, Burt, Inch, and Bunrana are well known, Castle Lough Lapáin has long been obscure. However, the evidence strongly identifies it with the crannog known as O'Lappain at Portlough, in the townland of Roosky a couple miles east of Newtown Cunningham, Co. Donegal.

G. H. Kinahan recorded a local tradition that a castle lay buried beneath the waters of the lake, a belief borne out when the site reappeared after the lake level was lowered in the early nineteenth century (Proceedings of the RIA, 16:475). In the 1951 Donegal Annual, J. C. T. MacDonagh identified this site as "Crannog O'Lappain" and noted its rediscovery in the 1830s. The Archaeological Survey of County Donegal describes it as an artificial island constructed on a timber platform of oak and willow, supporting a later octagonal stone-built structure, likely medieval in date. The combination of a prehistoric crannog foundation with later masonry is consistent with the reuse of ancient lake dwellings as royal residences in the medieval period.

Identifying Castle Lough Lapáin with the Portlough crannog situates John Ó Dochartaigh's lordly residence firmly within the earlier, southern portion of Ó Dochartaigh territory at a time when control of Inishowen was still developing. For more reading on crannogs, their construction and use in Ireland, see the overview at <https://irisharchaeology.org/crannog>

Culture Corner

Traditional Irish Breakfast (Fry-Up)

The Irish breakfast "fry-up" grew out of rural life in Ireland, where farm families needed a hearty, calorie-dense start before a long day's work.

Pork was common, so sausages and cured bacon (rashers) became staples, while black and white pudding helped use every part of the animal.

Over time, what began as practical sustenance became a cherished weekend and hospitality meal - especially associated with hotels, B&Bs, and Sunday mornings.

Serves: 1-2

Time: 20 minutes

You'll need

- Pork sausages (Irish-style bangers)
- Back bacon rashers
- Black pudding and/or white pudding (sliced)
- Eggs
- Optional but common: mushrooms, tomatoes
- Bread: soda bread or toast
- Butter or a little oil, salt & pepper

How to cook

1. Start with sausages: Fry gently in a wide pan until browned and cooked through. Keep warm.
 - a. Add rashers: In the same pan, cook bacon until just crisp at the edges.
 - b. Pudding: Fry slices of black/white pudding briefly—about 1-2 minutes per side—until crisp outside.
 - c. Extras: Sauté mushrooms and halved tomatoes in the pan drippings.
 - d. Eggs last: Fry eggs to your liking (traditionally sunny-side up).
 - e. Serve: Plate everything hot with buttered soda bread or toast. Season lightly.

Notes

- Keep the heat moderate; the goal is golden, not greasy.
- Tea is the classic accompaniment
- If you want a lighter or modern variation (grilled instead of fried, or vegetarian puddings), that's easy to adapt without losing the spirit of the dish.



Bridging the Gap: How Irish-Based Testing Can Provide Regional Clues for Diaspora Brick Walls

For many Doherty descendants living outside Ireland, the genealogical trail runs cold somewhere in the 1800s. An ancestor stepped onto a ship, and the records that might tell us where they came from simply do not exist. Parish registers were destroyed, civil registration had not yet begun, and locations were often recorded only vaguely ("County Donegal").

This is the brick wall that frustrates so many researchers. It is a structural limitation of Irish genealogy, not a failure of research effort. When the paper trail ends, Y-DNA offers another path forward, but only if the right comparative data exists.

The Missing Baseline

The [Doherty Y-DNA Project](#) has grown steadily, but most data still comes from the diaspora. Irish-based Doherty men are represented, but remain under-represented, limiting the Irish baseline.

To better understand where Doherty Y-DNA branches were historically rooted, we aim to expand representation from men whose patriline never left the island and whose ancestry is tied to particular regions as far back as surviving records and credible tradition allow.

How It Works

Y-DNA passes from father to son and changes slowly over time through mutations known as SNPs. These mutations form branching paternal lineages that can be compared across families and associated with broader regions of Ireland.

For example, if a tester in the diaspora were to share a recent SNP with a native-born Doherty man from Inishowen, that would not prove a specific townland of origin, but it could suggest a regional association where documents can no longer help.

Inishowen: A First Step

At the end of 2025, the Ó Dochartaigh Clann Association used donated funds to recruit three native-born Doherty men in Inishowen for Big Y-700 testing.

Each has verified, multi-generational roots in the peninsula, and these lineages were not previously represented within the project.

While these results will not solve every brick wall immediately, they represent a long-term investment in understanding Doherty origins. As more Ireland-based lineages are identified and tested, patterns may emerge linking Y-DNA branches to particular regions.

Administrative Note: This research is guided by accuracy and patience. If you know of Doherty men in Ireland with deep local roots who might participate, or would like to support future testing through the Clann Association's General Fund, please contact project administrator [Zack Daugherty](#).

Terms to Know

- SNP (Single Nucleotide Polymorphism): A small mutation on the Y-chromosome used to identify specific branches of the paternal family tree.
- Big Y-700: The most comprehensive Y-DNA test currently available, designed to identify recent Y-chromosome markers for fine-grained lineage comparison.
- The Diaspora: Doherty descendants living outside Ireland whose ancestors emigrated generations ago.

