

Ar Nducas



Doherty

# ***Stories Of My Clan***

**Jack Doherty**



## 1. The Ancient Origins of the O’Dochartaigh (O’Doherty) Clan



### Introduction

My name is Jack Doherty, a Kiwi born in Aotearoa (New Zealand) but more importantly for this story, I am a member of the great O’Dochartaigh Clan from Inishowen, County Donegal, Ulster, Ireland. Since March 1993, I have visited Ireland several times and lived there for 18 months, searching for stories that would tell me the history of my clan.

Every journey to Ireland has been a search for the answer to two key questions asked of me by the indigenous Māori people of Aotearoa. *‘Jack, who are you?’* and *‘Jack, where are you from?’* I’ve always wanted a serious answer to these two serious Māori questions. Māori identify themselves within a cultural framework of Iwi (family clan), Hapū (family tribe) and Whānau (your extended family).

I did not want my serious answer to be ‘I think I am the grandson of someone who got off a ship sometime in the 1880s.’ So I have attempted to use the Māori framework to answer these two significant Māori questions.

In September 2018, my wife Joanne and my niece Sarah Doherty travelled with me to Ireland to capture our O’Doherty stories, filming them at their actual locations. I have now captured and share the stories discovered from this search of thirty years. I want them to be available firstly to my children, then my grandchildren, and finally my Doherty Clan cousins and all their friends around the world.



*Joanne, Jack and Sarah Doherty - Doherty Keep, Buncrana*

I have been deliberately selective in the history of this story. I only cover certain stories because to tell the fuller story would be too daunting a task, such is the complexity of Irish history. However, I encourage others to explore the internet for more information on the places and people I mention. This will add to their knowledge and to the stories. I have also chosen, where possible, to spell the names of people and places in one version as I have found there are many variations of spelling used in the different sources of information.

I have written eight stories and they follow the framework in the following layout.

<b>Iwi / Clan:</b>	Story 1	The Ancient Origins
	Story 2	The Realm of the High King Niall
	Story 3	The Tale of Two Brothers
	Story 4	A Fox becomes a Dove
<b>Hapū / Tribe</b>	Story 5	The O'Doherty Castles
	Story 6	The O'Doherty Rebellion 1608
<b>Whānau / Family</b>	Story 7	The Wrights and Dohertys (to be published)
	Story 8	My Grandad Bernard Doherty (to be published)

## In The Beginning

Once upon a time, about 12,000 years ago, the Finn Valley in County Donegal was covered by sheet of melting ice. About 6,000 years ago it had thawed sufficiently for its first human inhabitants to live there. They were hunter gatherers, some say from Europe, possibly Spain. I believe they may have carried the very early genes of the O'Dochartaigh Clan. Recently Donegal archaeologists have uncovered stone-age flint tools used by these early inhabitants. I have seen similar tools found on the bank of a nearby Ulster river.



**Donegal, Ireland**



**Flint Tools - River Bann**

Eventually a farming settlement was established in this valley straddling the Finn River. With this subsistence settlement came another development, an Irish culture, incorporating spirituality, music, language and values. The photo of the roadside grotto represents some of the spirituality of the past and present. The more recent memorial to Mickey Doherty, the fiddler, represents the very old music of the valley. Mickey, a highly respected musician, always acknowledged the influence the fairy folk had on his music.



**Roadside Grotto**



**Mickey Doherty Memorial**



The early ancestors slowly moved northwards along the fertile river flats before eventually settling on an island of land, Inishowen, between Lough Swilly and Lough Foyle.

### Travelling the O'Doherty Pathway



### River Finn

My travelling companions and I drove from the Blue Stack mountain range in southern Donegal and connected with a road following the Finn River. The Finn River starts its journey in Lough Finn and flows under the bridge in the twin towns of Ballybofey and Stranorlar. Next to the bridge is a sculpture called the Matrimony Tree. It is dedicated to the twin towns and represents two grafted trees growing as one. It reflects an old Donegal love story that says, *'lovers who pass through the arch holding hands will love each other for ever.'* Considering my unfolding ancestry holds considerable turmoil, I figured that to start my yarn with a local love story had some benefit.



**Matrimony Tree**

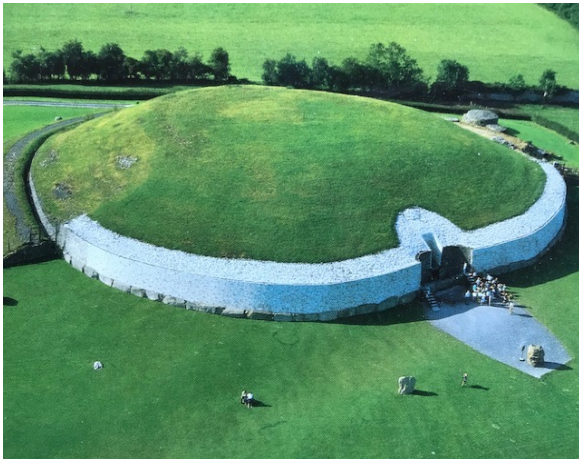


**Inishowen**

We continued the journey through the fertile Laggan Valley that includes the parish townlands of the diocese of Raphoe, often mentioned in Clan history. The Laggan takes us closer to the final destination of the O'Dohertys, our own 'promised land' - the Island of Owen, Inishowen.

## **My O'Doherty Legacy**

My early O'Doherty ancestors were a first nation people who developed a culture of wonderful myths and legends encompassing both the human and the divine. Their stories included mother earth, sea, air and sky, gods and goddesses, heroes and heroines, villains, giants, horrendous battles, many invasions, and always the inhabitants of the real world and the underworld. These myths and legends often included the magical, sometimes feared and very elusive fairy folk. As my clan people migrated towards Inishowen, other significant events were occurring in Ireland especially in the sacred Boyne Valley eastward in County Meath.



***Newgrange – Bru na Boinne***

Two of these events were the ancient construction of Dowth, Knowth and Newgrange, (Bru na Boinne), and the establishment of a Royal residence on the Hill of Tara with its Stone of Destiny. These two sites highlight the sophisticated cultures that made up ancient Ireland. The Hill of Tara plays a significant role in the continuing O'Dochartaigh story.



***Hill of Tara***



## **The South West Entrance**

After travelling 20,000 kilometres from Aotearoa (New Zealand) we eventually enter Inishowen through the south west entrance. The road is flanked by the medieval castle of Burt (c1560 AD) and the ancient ringfort, the Grianán of Aileach (c1700 BC).



***Burt Castle***



***Grianan of Aileach***

These two amazing and unique sentinels await and welcome home all returning O'Dohertys.



***One hundred thousand welcomes***

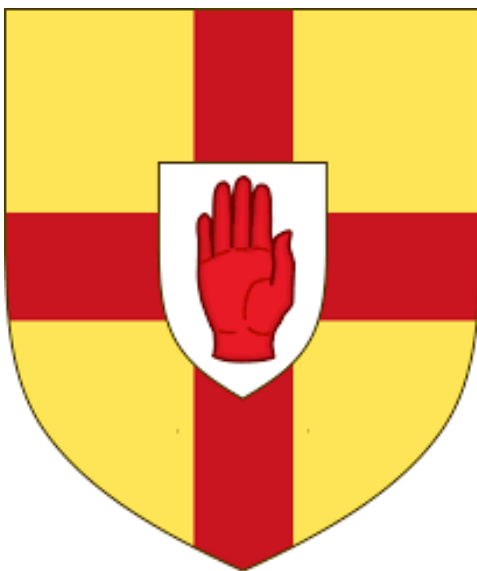


## 2. The Realm of the High King Niall



### Historical Background

Around 450 AD, some of the ancestors of the O'Dochartaighs were settled and living in Inishowen. Since about 200 BC they were influenced by the spread of everything Celtic. In becoming an Irish Clan the O'Dochartaighs had survived many changes brought by centuries of pre-Christian challenges. These changes included invasions, the rise and fall of empires, kingdoms, battles and alliances. Several of these ancient changes have remained permanent and one of them is the Province of Ulster. Ulster, symbolised by its blood stained red hand, is the northern province of Ireland and is surrounded by sea except for its southern border that connects it to the rest of Ireland.



*The Red Hand of Ulster*



*Province of Ulster (in green)*

This southern border, with its loughs and land, once formed an almost impenetrable man-made barrier called Black Pig's Dyke. Folklore says it was torn into the landscape by an angry black boar. However, I think it was built by an ancient human force, controlling the comings and goings into southern Ulster. This early 'border control' monitored raids on humans and animals, especially cattle.



***Black Pig's Dyke***

An ancient, epic Ulster saga is the Cattle Raid of Cooley. Raiding and hostage taking was to become synonymous with one of my early Irish ancestors, Niall.



***The Cattle Raid of Cooley***

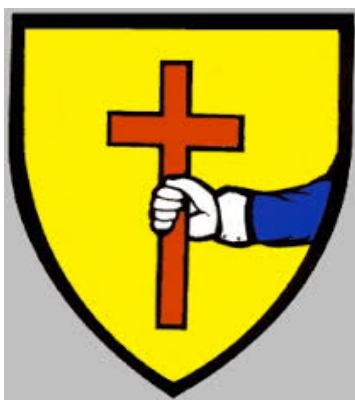
## **Niall of the Nine Hostages**

Niall of the Nine Hostages, as he is known, is the ancestor of the Northern and Southern Uí Néill dynasties that dominated much of Ireland from about 400 to 1000 AD.



***Niall the 114<sup>th</sup> King of Tara***

Descending from the Northern Uí Néill dynasties are the Clans of Ulster. The Western Ulster Clans include the O'Donnells, the O'Dohertys and the O'Neills.



***O'Donnell***



***O'Doherty***



***O'Neill***



## Hostage Taking

Around 400 AD the Roman army was leaving Britain, returning to Rome to save the collapsing empire. After four centuries of destruction of ancient Celtic ways, the Romans were leaving a cultural vacuum in Britannia. Ireland's High King Niall seized this opportunity to extend his kingdoms. His 'hostage kingdoms' already included Scotland and may have eventually included some of Europe. The term hostages referred to both kingdoms and individuals. Human hostages could become valued members or slaves of a Kingdom.

One such hostage brought back to Ireland at this time, was an educated teenager named Maewyn Succat. Maewyn, a Latin speaking Welsh boy, was captured by King Niall's Irish raiders. Young Maewyn became a shepherd boy hostage on the hill side of an Ulster mountain, Mt Slemish, in Co Antrim. He grew up to become Ireland's famous patron saint, Saint Patrick.



*Maewyn*



*Patrick*

## The Royal Palace

The realm of King Niall was centred on the ancient Royal Hill of Tara, the palace of the High Kings of Ireland. While living at Tara, King Niall fathered children from a number of royal wives and mistresses. Some of his male children became the Princes of Counties within the Provinces of Ireland.



*Above the Hill of Tara*

Two of King Niall's sons, Conaill and Eoghain, became the Princes of Tír Conaill and Tír Eoghain in Western Ulster. Their descendants, Cenél Conaill (the tribe of Conaill) and Cenél Eoghain (the tribe of Eoghain) lived in what are now the counties of Donegal, Derry and Tyrone.



*Western Ulster (in yellow)*

### 3. The Tale of Two Brothers

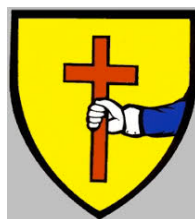


#### Tír Conaill and Tír Eoghain

Between 400 and 500 AD, the Province of Ulster was divided up amongst the sons of the High King Niall of the Nine Hostages. Two of these newly distributed territories, either by gift or conquest, became known in the west of Ulster as Tír Conaill and Tír Eoghain, the land of Conaill and the land of Eoghain. These counties are now known as Donegal, Derry and Tyrone. The inhabitants of these lands became identified as Cenél Conaill and Cenél Eoghain, the Clan of Conaill and the Clan of Eoghain. The descendants of Cenél Conaill eventually made up the Family Clans of the O'Donnells and the O'Dohertys, while the O'Neill Clan descended from Cenél Eoghain.



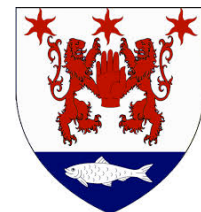
**Tír Conaill – Tír Eoghain**



**O'Donnell**



**O'Doherty**



**O'Neill**



## **The Reign of the Brothers**

The two brothers were said to be close friends. Prince Eoghain ruled his kingdom from his palace, the ancient ring fort known as the Grianán of Aileach. Prince Conaill inherited the name Gulban from a mountain in his kingdom named Ben Bulben.



***Grianán of Aileach – the palace of Eoghain***



***Ben Bulben – the mountain of Conaill***



One day, Maewyn Succat visited these two noble men at the Grianán. He was possibly known to them from their childhood, and was now known across Ireland as Saint Patrick. The brothers were baptised by St Patrick into the Christian faith at the well on the hill under the Grianán.



*St Patrick's Well at the Grianán*





As his descendant, the baptism of Conaill Gulban into Christianity is a significant event for my spiritual journey, for once the Prince was baptised so were all his subjects and their descendants.

The scene of this baptism is sculpted on the entrance wall to the architecturally award-winning St Aengus Catholic Church of Burt, on the flat below the Grianán of Aileach. The church's design cleverly reflects the grandeur of the ancient fort on top of the hill.

The artwork also incorporates the legend of the horse-riding warriors who will one day ride out of their earthen stable, buried beneath the Grianán, to liberate Ulster and Ireland.

St Patrick visited a number of sites on Inishowen and his ancient cross is on display today in the town of Carndonagh.



***Grianán of Aileach***



***The Baptism***



***The Buried Warriors***



***St Aengus Church, Burt***

## The Deaths of the Brothers

One Friday in 464 AD, so the story goes, Conaill Gulban was warned that an itinerant tribe, known as the Masraige, had trespassed into his kingdom. They were raiding his horses. He responded by confronting this unacceptable and unruly behaviour but unfortunately overlooked a basic health and safety issue of the times. Sadly, in the ensuing battle, a Masraige spear fatally pierced Conaill Gulban's body. Conaill, in a possible haste had failed to wear his protective fighting armour or carry his shield and was vulnerable to this fatal wounding. He died at Magh Slecht in modern Co Cavan and was buried by Saint Caillum at Fernagh in modern Co Leitrim. To add to this tragedy, Conaill's brother Eoghain died a year later, some say of a broken heart, such was the affection between the two brothers. Eoghain is buried at Iskaheen on the island named after him, Inishowen.



*Iskaheen Graveyard*



*Remembering Two Brothers*



## The Two Cenéls and their Kingdoms

Over the next few centuries, the descendants of the brothers lost their affection for one another. They often went to war for it was common tribal behavior for cousins to fight cousins. However, the Ulster Kingdoms of Tír Conaill and Tír Eoghain did survive the impact of the savage and damaging Viking raids of the 8<sup>th</sup> century. These Nordic invaders, after much warfare, were eventually assimilated into Irish life.



Later, unfortunately, in the early 1600s, the Ulster Kingdoms succumbed to colonisation. This destructive invasion by the English Crown was called the Plantation of Ulster, and included the confiscation of Irish-owned land. The Plantation of Ulster had a devastating impact on the O'Doherty clan and their land in Inishowen.

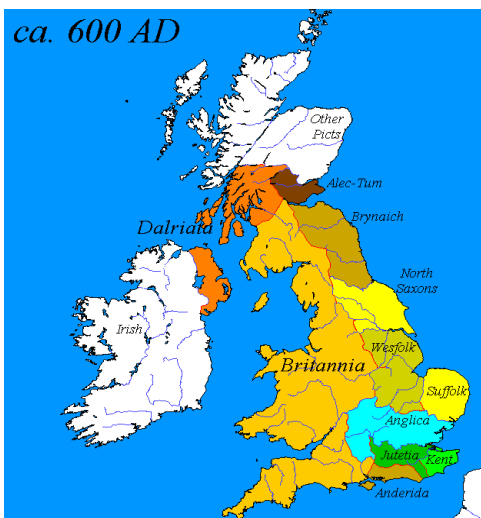


*The Tudor Crown*

#### 4. A Fox Becomes a Dove



The descendants of High King Niall ruled Ireland for about five centuries. They became known as the Northern and Southern Uí Néills. In their early Ulster reign, the Northern Uí Néill kingdoms included a kingdom that straddled part of Ulster and part of Scotland. This was called Dalriada and its palace was on the hill fort Dunadd in Argyll, Scotland.



**Dalriada – (orange area)**



**Hill Fort - Dunadd**



## A Prince is Born

On the 7<sup>th</sup> December 521 AD, a prophesised royal baby boy was born in Gartán, Tír Conaill. He was the great grandson of Conaill Gulban. His mother Eithne was possibly a southern Uí Néill and his father Fedelmid a northern Uí Néill, so this baby prince was destined to be a High King.



*Birthplace of Colmcille*



*Graveyard and Old Monastery in Gartán*

Eithne named her son Crimthorn, old Irish for fox, as it was thought he would need the cunning virtues of a fox on his life's journey.

Crimtharn (Fox) was fostered and tutored by a local holy man Cruithnechan and later further educated at a number of monasteries around Ireland. He was the student and teacher of many learned Abbots.



***Crimtharn learning from the Cruithnechan***

It became obvious that with his royal heritage and his devotion to prayer and spiritual life, he was destined to become an Abbot rather than a King. He was then re-named Colm, Irish for dove. Eventually his full name would be Colmcille, ‘the Dove of the Church’. He is one of Ireland’s, and the world’s, most influential and famous Christian saints.



***Colmcille – the Dove of the Church***



## Saint Colmcille

Stories of Colmcille or Columba (the Latin version) are prolific. They are based on truth, legend, wars, prophecies, visions, miracles, water monsters (including the Loch Ness monster), great sadness and great joy. As a person he suffered the highs and lows of his 'fox cunning' and his 'dove holiness'.

Two of my favourite stories recorded below highlight the influence of his great life.

### The Ecclesiastical Kingdoms

As an Abbot, Colmcille built an ecclesiastical kingdom establishing monasteries in Ulster, all across Ireland, and eventually on the Island of Iona in Dalriada. One of his favourite early Irish monasteries was built on an oak covered island in the river Foyle. This island monastery became the City of Derry, home to many O'Dohertys. St Colmcille is the patron saint of Derry.



*Iona*



*Derry*

## Copyright

Once Colmcille copied another monk's manuscript and for this act he was placed on trial before the court of the High King. The High King declared *"to every cow its calf and to every book its copy"*. As far as I know this famous verdict is the first high court decision related to an act of copyright.



Unfortunately, the loss of this court case led to a battle in Tír Conaill that resulted in the death of 3000 soldiers of the High King's army. A distraught Colmcille sought guidance from his Abbots. He decided to leave Ireland, and in exile set sail for the island of Iona. With permission from his cousin Aedan, the King of Dalriada, he built his most famous monastery on Iona.



*Exile*



*Iona*



As his boat of exile made its way down Lough Foyle, Colmcille is said to have composed the following words:

*“Sad across Lough Foyle to me,  
Comes the sound of crying.  
Clan of Conal, Clan of Eoghan  
Both bemoaned by flying,  
Since I leave the Gaelic folk  
Those whom I love ever,  
I care not when I sleep tonight,  
If I waken ever.”*

Colmcille’s self-inflicted penance was to live his life out of sight of his beloved Ulster. Eventually, the monks of Iona influenced the revival of many great monasteries in Europe.

### **Eithne’s Apparition**

On the eve of Colmcille’s birth, his mother Eithne was shown an apparition by an angel. It was of a beautiful woven shawl laced with colourful flowers from across the Kingdoms of Ireland. It represented the area of influence her son’s monasteries would have. The angel only gave Eithne a glimpse, and then the shawl disappeared.



I will now add two more ‘flowers’ to that shawl. Eithne, your son has many parish churches and schools named after him in Australia and New Zealand. The two parishes I have chosen use his Irish name Colmcille. The ‘Waratah’ for the Parish of Colmcille in Corrimal, New South Wales, Australia and the ‘Silver Fern’ for the Parish of Colmcille in Woodville, North Island, Aotearoa (New Zealand).



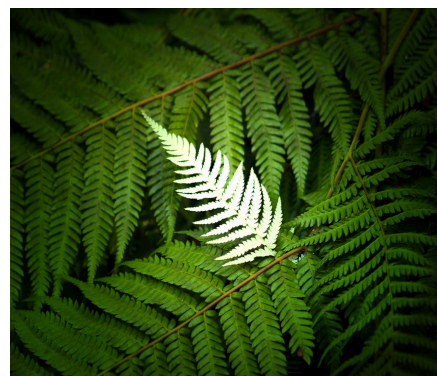
***Parish of Colmcille, Corrimal, New South Wales, Australia***



***Parish of Colmcille, Woodville, North Island, Aotearoa (New Zealand)***



***Waratah – New South Wales, Australia***



***Silverfern- Aotearoa (New Zealand)***



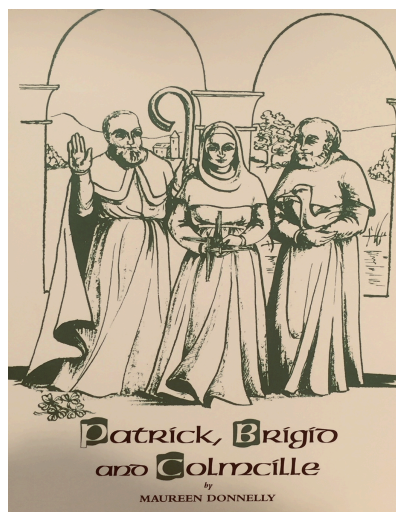
## Colmcille's Death and Burial

Colmcille died at Iona on the 9<sup>th</sup> June 597 AD aged 76 years. Initially buried on the island, his remains were later brought back to Ireland. This happened before the Vikings raided and ransacked many of his monasteries including Iona in about 800 AD. It is said Colmcille now lies in a shared churchyard grave with St Patrick and St Brigid in Downpatrick, Co Down, Ulster.

I often visit this grave, for me it is one of the most sacred burial sites on mother earth.

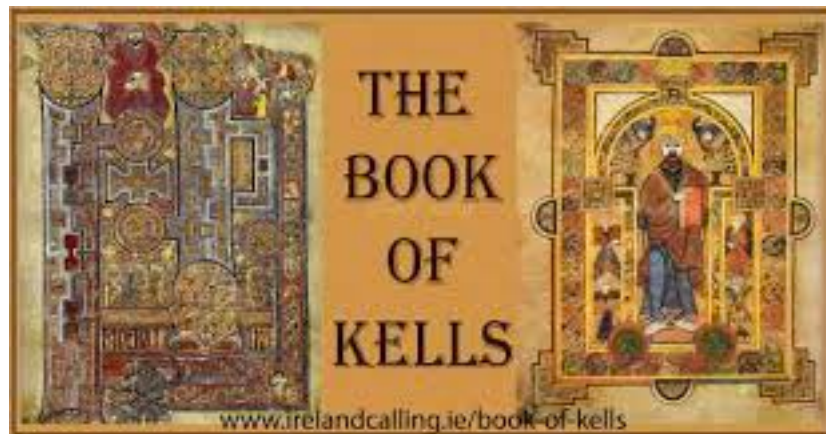


***Grave of Saints Patrick, Brigid and Colmcille – Downpatrick***



## The Book of Kells

Colmcille and his monks were master illustrators and are famous for their fine early Christian manuscripts. The most famous of these is the Book of Kells. This manuscript is held in the library of Trinity College, Dublin and is one of the most visited tourist sites in Ireland.



St Colmcille started a religious order of monks known by their Roman name, the Columbans. For many centuries these monks were led by Abbots who were descendants from the Clan of Conaill Gulban.

## A Special Thanks

I acknowledge and thank the staff and pupils of Termon School in the Gartán Parish, Co Donegal for their wonderful book 'St Colmcille – Gartán to Iona'. Thanks also to the women of the surrounding parishes for their beautiful flower covered shawl and to Maureen Donnelly for the illustrated cover of her book, 'Patrick, Brigid and Colmcille.'

## 5. The O'Doherty Castles

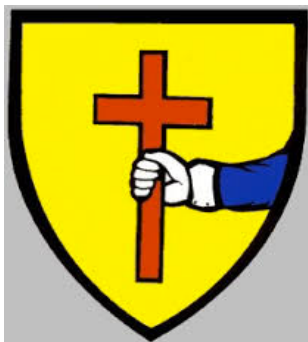


### Over Centuries

The tribes of Cenél Conaill and Cenél Eoghain developed and grew over the centuries. They increased their populations, farmed their animals, harvested their crops, fished their waters and built their family-based communities. They also defended their territories against 'outsiders' as well as their fighting Clan cousins. They formed alliances and used inter-marriage as a powerful form of tribal unity. Their everyday living with wars and alliances seems consistent with other tribal behaviour around the world.

### Clan Surnames

At about 1000 AD the concept of Clan surnames and coats of arms began to identify clans. The people of Tír Conaill and Tír Eoghain aligned themselves with three significant Clan surnames - the O'Donnells, the O'Neills, and on Inishowen the O'Dohertys.



*O'Donnell*



*O'Doherty*



*O'Neill*



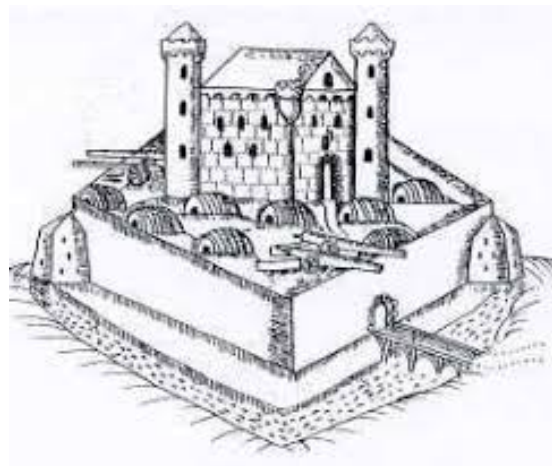
The O'Dohertys are named after an ancestor Dochartaigh. The meaning of the name O'Dochartaigh is 'hurtful' and the motto of the family name is *Ár nDutcas* meaning Our Heritage. Our crest, or coat of arms, is a leaping red stag on a white background with three white stars on a green background.



These Ulster surnames became the heritage of significant Clan families with powerful chiefs. The chiefs of the O'Doherty Clan became known as the Lords of Inishowen.

### **The Castles**

The Inishowen Lords needed to display their power through building defensive strongholds. Building had evolved from timber henges to stonewalled castles, and some of the early castles were built by the Norman invaders. Through the 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries the building of stone castles was an important development on Inishowen. Today they still echo the medieval history of the O'Doherty Clan. When Inishowen castles were being built the 'Island of Owen' was still an island and waterways were the main highways of transport. Therefore most of the castles were built on the shores of Lough Swilly and Lough Foyle.



**Burt Castle**

## **Elagh Castle**

Elagh castle was possibly the oldest and most historical of our clan sites although it is now reduced to a remnant stone wall. Elagh was closely connected to the ancient Grianán of Aileach and was once the seat of power of the O'Dochartaigh Clan.



***Elagh Castle***

## **Burt Castle**

The silhouette ruins of Burt Castle (1560) overlook Lough Swilly in the shadow of the Grianán of Aileach.



***Burt Castle***

## **Inch Castle**

The ruined stairwell and tower of Inch Castle (1430) sits above the southern shore of Inch Island in Lough Swilly.



*Inch Castle*

## **O'Doherty Keep**

The O'Doherty Keep (1600) is at the mouth of the Crana River flowing into Lough Swilly. It is part of a current restoration programme.



*O'Doherty Keep*



## **Carrickabraghy Castle**

The recently restored remnants of Carrickabraghy Castle (1600) stand on a rocky shore outcrop on Doagh Island.



***Carrickabraghy Castle***

## **Dunowen Castle**

The ruin of Dunowen Castle is situated on north Culduff Bay.



***Dunowen Castle***

## **Green Castle**

The ivy covered Norman ruins of Northburg or Green Castle (1305) are overlooking the head waters of Lough Foyle.



***Green Castle***

## **Culmore Fort**

Culmore Fort (1555) overlooks the entrance of the river Foyle protecting the waterway of the City of Derry.



***Culmore Fort***



## Doherty Tower

Doherty Tower (1990) was built as a museum and was part of the modern rebuilding of the walled City of Derry.



*Doherty Tower*

## Conclusion

Most of these castle sites can be visited today. Those on private land can be viewed from the road. All of these Inishowen castles are significant in the O'Doherty history, sometimes with a traumatic impact on the ancestors of my Clan. Some of the castles are built on the sites of much older history. Today they are a much loved and appreciated part of the O'Doherty Clan story. My family has spent many memorable hours exploring these ruins.





## 6. The O'Doherty Rebellion 1608



### King Henry VIII Reformation

In the 1530s, King Henry VIII of England colonised the Pale of Ireland and confiscated the land for the British Crown. Any land beyond the Pale, including Ulster, was still largely under the control of the Irish Lords. However this was short lived and by the 1540s almost every Irish Lord had accepted the King's supremacy. Henry's reformation destroyed Gaelic life including many monasteries. Following his reformation he declared himself the King of Ireland. Although he died in 1547 his colonising reign continued through his daughter Queen Elizabeth I.



*Henry VIII*



*Elizabeth I*

## The Nine Year War

From 1593 to 1603, a nine year war was fought the length and breadth of Ireland. This war, often referred to as Tyrone's Rebellion, was an alliance of Irish Lords led by the O'Donnells from Tir Connell and the O'Neills from Tir Eoghan. It was a very brutal war costing many lives on both sides and concluded with an Irish defeat at the battle of Kinsale, Co Cork.



## The Flight of the Earls

As a consequence of the Kinsale defeat, many Irish Lords left Ireland for the Continent possibly to rally further support from allies. On the 4<sup>th</sup> September 1607, the Earls of Ireland led by O'Neill and O'Donnell departed from Rathmullan on the shores of Lough Swilly Co. Donegal. This is known as '*The Flight of the Earls*'. They never returned.



*Flight of the Earls – Rathmullan*

## **Cahir O'Doherty, the new Lord of Inishowen**

While the Nine Year War raged, an ancestor, Cahir O'Doherty, was appointed the new Lord of Inishowen in 1601 upon the death of his father Sir John O'Doherty. Cahir was 14 years old at the time. As a young Lord he began his reign and was fostered by an older family member and advisor, Phelim MacDavitt. Cahir was sometimes referred to as the 'Queen's O'Doherty' because of his initial support for the English Crown.



***Cahir O'Dogherty***

Initially, Cahir had a positive relationship with Sir Henry Docwra, the English Governor of Derry, and was rewarded with a knighthood. Unfortunately, a newly appointed Governor to Derry, Sir George Paulet, publicly criticised and insulted Sir Cahir by slapping him across his face. The relationship deteriorated and diminished Cahir's trust of the English Crown. This act enraged him and his followers and led to the O'Doherty Rebellion.



***Sir Henry Docwra***



***Sir George Paulet***



## The O'Doherty Rebellion 1608

In the early hours of the 19<sup>th</sup> April 1608, Sir Cahir assembled 100 men for a siege on Culmore Fort. This was followed by a pre dawn surprise attack on the City of Derry. In this raid Sir George Paulet was killed and every building in the city was burnt to the ground. Sir Cahir then declared he was not there to shed blood and released most of the captured inhabitants, taking a few important prisoners as hostages. He jailed them in his castle of residence, Burt. Shortly after this incident the town of Strabane was burnt to the ground. O'Doherty and his followers had declared war and they used their Inishowen and Ulster castles as defensive strongholds and places to plan their on-going rebellion.



*Culmore Fort*



*Map of Derry c 1607*



*Sir Cahir leaving a burning Derry*

## The English Response

The English response to these attacks was for Viceroy Sir Arthur Chichester of Dublin to dispatch 700 troops to Inishowen, under the command of Sir Richard Wingfield. Wingfield's forces overran the town of Buncrana and captured Burt Castle. The Derry prisoners were released and at the same time O'Doherty's wife and his son were captured. Sir Cahir and a thousand men then marched to meet the crown's troops at Kilmacrennan just north of Letterkenny.



*Sir Arthur Chichester*



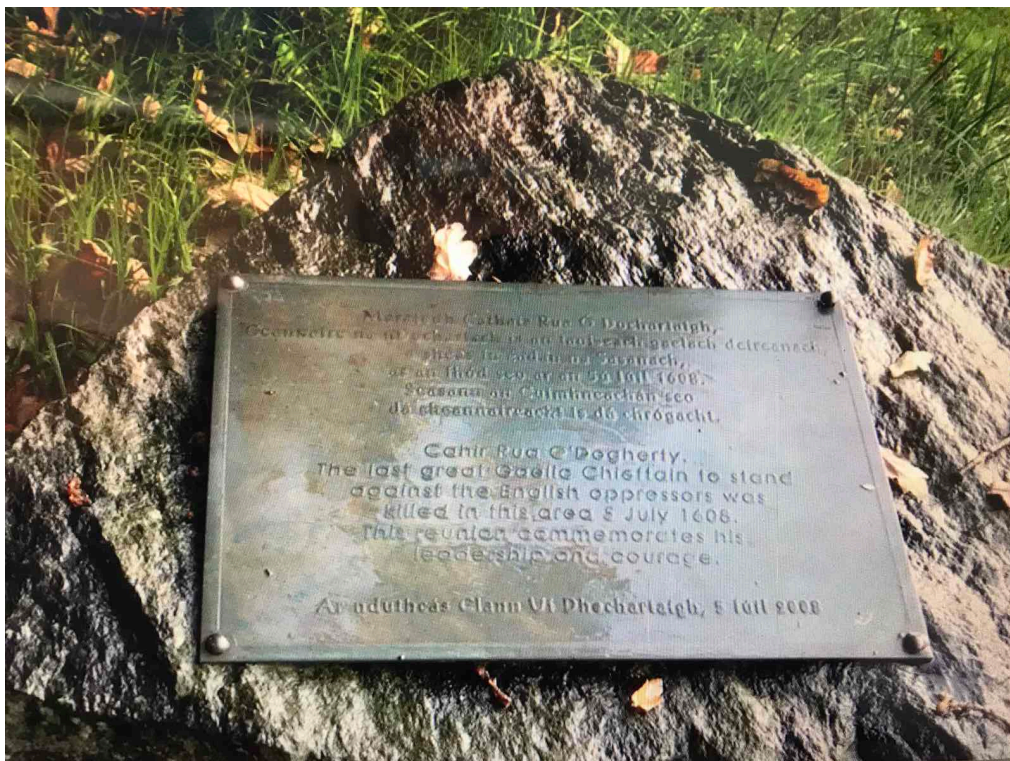
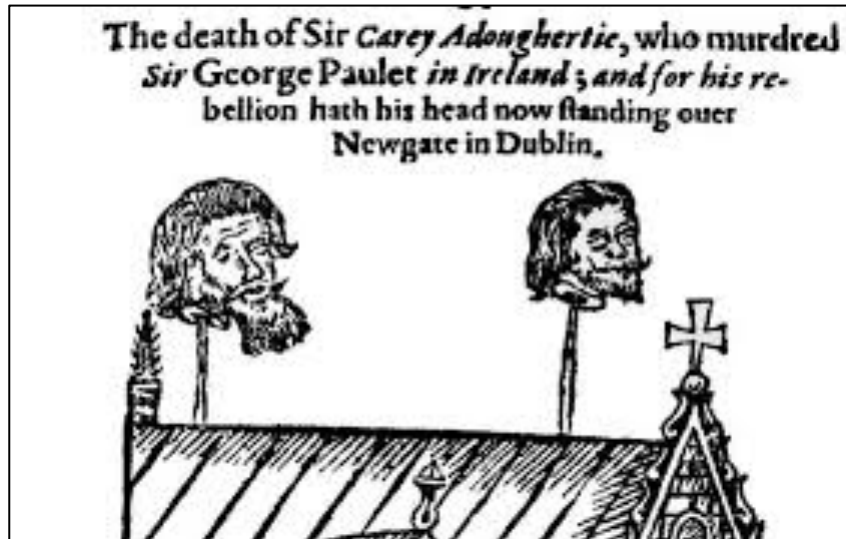
*Sir Richard Wingfield*

During the battle of Kilmacrennan Sir Cahir was shot in the head by a musket bullet. The hill top where he was shot was Doon Rock, the inauguration rock for the O'Donnell Clan Chiefs. The charismatic leader of the rebellion was dead and the battle was lost.





Sir Cahir was beheaded. His head and the head of his mentor, Phelim MacDavitt, were displayed on two pikes at the Newgate entrance to Dublin Castle. His body was taken to Derry to be drawn and quartered in the city centre. This was the last Gaelic uprising in Ireland and ended Gaelic life as it was known.



**Sir Cahir O'Doherty's Memorial Plaque – Doon Rock**



## Post Rebellion

The Crown and the new King James I could now proceed with the plantation of Ulster. Viceroy Sir Arthur Chichester was granted the land of Inishowen. The Counties of Tir Connell, Tir Eoghan, Derry, Armagh, Fermanagh and Cavan were now the property of the King. They were ready to be planted with English and Scottish landlords and settlers.



*King James I*



*English Rose and Scottish Thistle*

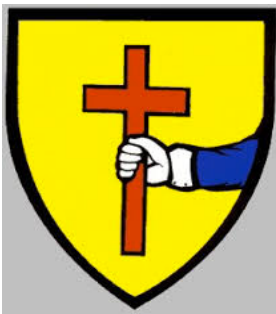
Many of Sir Cahir's followers were tried and executed in Lifford, Co. Donegal. Some followers continued small short-lived attacks ending in more deaths while others were conscripted into the King's army. It is said that some O'Dohertys were castrated. Fortunately this attempt at genocide failed.



*Lifford Court House*

## Rosa Doherty

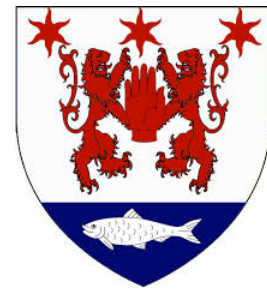
I will end this tragic tale with a Doherty love story. Sir Cahir's younger sister Rosa married Cathbarr O'Donnell, son of the Lord of Tir Connell. Both of them and the Lord sailed to continental Europe with the 'Flight of the Earls'. Sadly, a year later in Rome both the O'Donnell boys died of a fever leaving Rosa widowed with a young son named Hugh O'Donnell. A number of years later she married Owen Roe O'Neill who served as an officer in the Spanish Army. This is a fine example of the importance of marriages and alliances between the three powerful clans of Western Ulster, the O'Donnells, the O'Neills and the O'Dohertys.



O'Donnell



O'Doherty



O'Neill

## THE Over-throw of an

Irish rebel, in a late battaile :

Or

The death of Sir *Carey Adoughertie*, who murdered  
*Sir George Paulet in Ireland* ; and for his re-  
bellion hath his head now standing ouer  
Newgate in Dublin.



Printed at London for I. Wright, and are to be sold at  
his shop neere Christ Church gate. 1608.

## Sir Cahir Rua

Standing on O'Donnell's Rock of Doon  
I hear lead penetrate your red-headed skull.

I flinch.

I too look towards the Swilly  
Alas, our Earls had flown, Ulster defeated.

Alone you fought the last battle  
For the High Kings of Ireland.  
Royal crowns were changing  
England's crown to reign.

From your past to my future  
It will never be the same.

Your castles of Inch and Carrickabraghy taken  
Now for me, ruins.  
Culmore laid waste, Derry torched.  
Inishowen fallen.

Elizabeth knighted you once  
Now you turn to slay her successor  
They took it all, Chichester's gain  
You were left with only the struggle.

The redcoat's aim was true  
Your blood spilled on Doon  
Your O'Dogherty troops castrated and banished  
Your body drawn and quartered in Derry.

'Let no one do this again,' they decreed  
As they thrust your bearded head on a pole  
And displayed you at the gates of Dublin Castle  
The English Crown's warning.

Four centuries later I stand at these castle gates  
To remember you and enjoy your free city  
I salute you, my cousin,  
For your daring, for your stand.

Jack Doherty 2002



## **Acknowledgements:**

In telling my six clan (iwi) and tribal (hapu) stories I thank the ancient recorders of history, the medieval monks and include the four masters from the Donegal Franciscan monastery, now a ruin in Donegal town. Without these monks, many of these stories would no longer exist.



***Abbey of the Four Masters - Donegal Town***

I am also reminded how many O'Dohertys have contributed and enriched my yarns. In offering my thanks, I start with the Inishowen and Derry O'Dohertys, especially those who have generously organised the five yearly clan reunions since 1985. I think of the older ones who have passed away – may they rest in peace. I particularly think of Paddy 'Bogside' Doherty who met me on my very first visit to Ireland and welcomed me in Derry with the words, '*Welcome home, son.*' These three words still have a profound impact on me today.

I thank the current Irish and American O'Dochartaigh Clan Reunion Committee for all they do for the clan and acknowledge the disappointment for the many worldwide Dohertys who were looking forward to the clan reunion that was cancelled in 2020 because of international travel restrictions due to the coronavirus pandemic, COVID-19.

Sarah and I were hoping to bring these stories to the reunion to share with members of the clan. Instead, we are publishing them on the 'Walking to Donegal' website as a gift to all the O'Dohertys to know some of our history and celebrate our clan stories.

The O'Doherty Keep and its restoration was to be a highlight for the 2020 reunion. I thank the O'Doherty brothers, Ronan and Gearoid, for being the '*keepers of the Keep*'. In 2018, we spent a wonderful time hearing their stories of the Keep. Many clan members have appreciated their commitment to this important clan project. We, and many others, have enjoyed their generous hospitality as they meet us and walk us across the bridge over the Crana River to the Keep.



*Ronan O'Doherty telling the O'Doherty Keep story*





I also acknowledge our clan artist, musician and genealogist, Seirse O'Dochartaigh and the many creative ways he tells the stories of our clan history in Inishowen. A special Clan Reunion commemorative calendar is available to purchase on the O'Doherty Keep website [www.odohertyskeep.com](http://www.odohertyskeep.com). Donations to the restoration of the O'Doherty Keep can be made via the website too.



*Seirse O'Dochartaigh and Ronan O'Doherty*



Many close friendships have grown between Inishowen families and my family in Aotearoa (New Zealand). What began as a search to find the answer to 'who I was' and 'where I was from', has become the richest experience of my life.



In conclusion, this Māori whakatauki or proverb from Aotearoa (New Zealand) highlights a most important reminder that is relevant to my family (whanau), my tribe (hapu) and my clan (iwi).

***He aha te mea nui o te ao  
He tangata, he tangata, he tangata***

What is the most important thing in the world?  
It is the people, it is the people, it is the people.



***Mt. Taranaki – Aotearoa (New Zealand)***