



## REPORT ON THE AD HOC DERBFINE OF CLAN MULCAHY (CLANN UÍ MHAOLCHATHAIGH)

### INTRODUCTION

The name Mulcahy first came into existence as part of the ecclesiastical tradition of Gaelic Ireland. Originally Ó Maolchathaigh, the surname commemorated a connection with the great monastery of Scatterry Island, or Inis Cathaig. When Christianity first came to Ireland it was a strange and foreign religion. However within a few hundred years it would take hold and replace the earlier “pagan” religion which preceded it. The ruling elite quickly realised that the new religion offered more than just spiritual rewards. The many monasteries that sprang up all over Ireland became centers of trade and wealth. The Gaelic nobility would grant lands to the Church in return for the bounty they would bring to their realm. The wealth of the Church was often exploited by neighbouring Lords and raiders. Sometimes even the patrons of a church would raid it every now and then. Monasteries became a long term investment for all involved and the church quickly became an aid to political advantage by the Gaelic elite.

The leadership of the church in Ireland was becoming more and more secular by the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century. Kings and Lords would, in an effort to gain control over church assets send their sons to be educated at religious centres with the intention of granting them senior positions within the church later on. In some cases the Abbots of many Churches around Ireland were under the control of unordained lay men of noble birth.

Many Irish families owe their existence to ecclesiastical tradition. When hereditary surnames became the norm by the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> centuries many saw it advantageous to commemorate members of their Clans who had been involved with the Church. Names sprung up like Ó Maoleóin (Malone) meaning a follower of St. John, or Mac Giolla Mochuda (Mcgillacuddy), commemorating a member of the Uí Shúilleabháin Mór who sent one of their kin to the Church of Mochuda in Lismore, an act that would later spawn a new sept. Just like these names, Ó Maolchathaigh which means a follower of Cathach was designed to celebrate an important link with church, a link that many of the Mulcahy sept have continued even to this day, albeit with slightly more spiritual intentions than their medieval ancestors.

### Ad Hoc DERBFINE

The Mulcahy sept has been leaderless for centuries. No record exists of a Chiefly line surviving the turbulent times of the Tudor reconquest of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. The Mulcahy Clan having been originally situated around County Waterford probably would have seen their influence greatly diminish with the intrusion of the Normans in 1169. If the Mulcahy Clan held lands in that County they were quickly taken away forcing the sept north into South Tipperary and west into Cork. We know that the sept continued to be involved with the Church from as late as the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries holding influence in key monastic communities in County Kerry. Medieval records of the sept are sparse but the earliest reference of a Mulcahy chief that we are aware of is in the *Annals of Inisfallen*. In AD 1317 during a period of unrest between the Mac Carthys and the O’Sullivans, Gilla Moenaig Ó Maolchatha is listed as a “Keeper of the island”. Giolla Moenaig spawned an influential and ambitious line of Mulcahy Chiefs who held important positions within the churches of County Kerry for generations to come. There is also an interesting reference to a Chiefly line of Mulcahy contained in a short history on the family written by an Alphonso Mulcahy sometime in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to Alphonso, the Mulcahys were granted Chiefly status for their loyalty to King Henry VII against the pretenders Simnel and Warbeck. However those who are familiar with Gaelic titles would know that no English King would or could have legitimized or granted a Gaelic title. It is none the less an interesting reference.

All we can say with certainty is that the Chiefly line of the Mulcahy sept was lost long ago. In an attempt to restore a Chief to the Mulcahy sept an Ad Hoc Derbfine was convened on the 5<sup>th</sup> of November 2014. The Kingdom of Desmond Association <http://desmondasn.webs.com/> provided oversight with regard to the Mulcahy election. The Kingdom of Desmond Association is prepared to provide such a service for all Ad Hoc Derbfine elections of clans within the former Kingdom of Desmond, and would be glad to provide such a service for any clan outside of Desmond in the absence of any other adjudicator.

The Ad Hoc Derbfine system by which 'Principle' individuals of the Clan gather together to choose a new hereditary Chief for a Clan is **sometimes** used in Scotland to restore dormant or extinct Chiefships. The belief is that Clans without Chiefs are not authentic Clans and where no provable Chiefly lineage exists members of that Clan have the responsibility to amend the loss. The Clan Mulcahy has decided to adopt this system to restore a vital thread of Gaelic identity back into the Clan.

The first step in convening an ad hoc Derbfine is to choose the "Principle" members of the Clan. Usually these are Armigerous individuals who bear the surname. An Armiger is someone who holds a Coat of Arms from a Heraldic authority. However in the case of the Mulcahy Clan very few Armigerous members exist and therefore members of the Derbfine were chosen based on their personal and professional reputation as well as their enthusiasm to partake in the process of choosing the next Chieftain of the Clan.

A handful of enthusiastic Clansmen and women set about contacting a large number of Mulcahys who would have constituted "principle" members of the Clan. Below is a shorted list of some of the individuals who were contacted:

- Sir Geoffrey John Mulcahy, Chairman Javelin Group, U.K.
- Rev. Fr. Bernard Mulcahy, Associate Professor of Theology, Holy Apostles Seminary, USA
- Terry Mulcahy, Medical Research Manager, University of New Mexico, USA
- Jamie and Chris Mulcahy, Mulcahy & Company Ltd, Australia
- Danny Mulcahy, Executive, Alberta, Canada
- Michael Mulcahy, Former Lord Mayor of Dublin, County Dublin, Ireland
- Tony Mulcahy, Member of the Irish Senate, County Dublin, Ireland
- Richard Mulcahy, Company Director (Grandson of General Richard Mulcahy), Ireland
- John Mulcahy, Specialist Manager Fáilte Ireland, Dublin, Ireland
- Orna Mulcahy, Managing Editor, The Irish Times, Dublin, Ireland .... And many more....

Of all the individuals contacted a group of 9 emerged as the most enthusiastic and suitable members for the Derbfine. (see members list) Once the list was compiled the election process could begin.

All members were asked that if they wanted to present themselves as a candidate for Chieftain they would have to send confirmation of this to the Derbfine Secretary, Mike Mulcahy. Only one candidate presented themselves for election, Oisín Ó Maolchatha of Dingle, Co. Kerry. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of November 2014 all members cast their votes in favour or against Mr. Ó Maolchatha's candidacy. They were asked to do this via email to the Derbfine Secretary. 100% of the Derbfine endorsed the candidacy of Oisín Ó Maolchatha for the position of Ceann Cath for a period of 10 years, after which time if no counter claim is made or genuine Chiefly line discovered then Mr. Ó Maolchatha would then be declared hereditary Chief of the Name for the Mulcahy Clan.

LIST OF DERBFINE MEMBERS:



1. Mike Mulcahy, B.S., Secretary of Derbfine, Member of Clan Mulcahy, North Carolina, USA



2. Marc Mulcahy B.Comm., Member of Clan Mulcahy, Richards Bay, South Africa.



3. Mary Mulcahy M.A., B.A., H.D.E., F.L.C.M., L.T.C.L., L.L.C.M., A.L.A.M. Member of Clan Mulcahy, Cork, Ireland.



4. Marcia Mulcahy B.A., J.D., Member of Clan Mulcahy, Cape Girardeau, Missouri, USA.



5. Howard Mulcahy B.A., M.B.A., Member of Clan Mulcahy, Rochester, NY, USA.



6. Jerry Mulcahy BS, Member of Clan Mulcahy, Pembroke, New Hampshire, USA.



7. Oisín Ó Maolchatha B.A., C.D., Founder of Mulcahy Clan Society, Member of Clan Mulcahy, Dingle, Co. Kerry, Ireland.  
ELECTED.



8. William Mulkey A.S., Member of Clan Mulcahy, Shreveport, Louisiana, USA.



9. John Mulcahy B.A., Member of Clan Mulcahy, Baltimore, Maryland, USA.

