



## 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 Scattery 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 centres 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 un-ordained 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 re-conquest 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 we can get a good glimpse of their activities in Kerry beginning with Gilla Moenaig Ó Maolchatha who was mentioned in the Annals of Inis Fallen as being a Keeper of the Island. We then hear of others of the same family holding influence in the surrounding churches of Aghadoe and Ardfert, all churches which were under Mac Carthy patronage. It is possible that this family of Mulcahy were the most influential line based on a lack of reference to any other line before the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Without any real documentary evidence we can only speculate. 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 Ad hoc Derbfine system by which “Principle” individuals of a Clan gather together to choose a new hereditary Chief for a Clan is commonly 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.

Oisín Ó Maolchatha of Dingle Co. Kerry, the Convener of the Derbfine 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 10 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, South 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. Sid Rose F.R.S.A., Member of Clan Mulcahy, Stockholm, Sweden.



8. Oisín Ó Maolchatha B.A., C.D., Founder of Mulcahy Clan Society, Convenor of ad hoc Derbfine, Dingle, Co. Kerry, Ireland. **ELECTED.**



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



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