

# CROWLEY CLAN NEWSLETTER

November 2013

compiled by Marian Crowley Chamberlain



## Crowleys Return to Ahakeera

On Sunday, September 15th, the Crowley Clan returned to its ancestral home in County Cork! As the piper began playing, Taoiseach Jerry Crowley and Tanaiste Michael Patrick Crowley lead about 80 Crowleys down the lane and through the pasture to the site of the ruins of O'Crowley's Castle. Crowleys had traveled from Canada, Europe, and the United States.

As the group began the walk down to the castle, the skies were overcast and the wind was blowing. There were umbrellas and raincoats, but the weather didn't dampen the spirit of the Crowleys, some of whom were seeing the castle for the first time. During the next hour, patches of blue sky did appear, but during the Mass, the wind picked up and the rain fell.

Father Liam Crowley from County Cork and Father Joseph Crowley from Connecticut co-celebrated the Mass. Most appropriately, the gospel was the parable of the prodigal son.



The group was lead in song by Larry Crowley (Father Liam's brother) who played his banjo and sang. Songs included Amazing Grace and Mary We Crown Thee with Flowers Today. Phillip Crowley from the United States and Timothy Crowley from Ireland gave the readings.

The transfer of the Crowley Clan chain of office happened directly after the Mass. Taoiseach Jerry Crowley took off the chain and put it around the neck of Michael Patrick Crowley who will lead the clan for the next three years.

After the Mass group photos were taken, and during the entire time at the castle, a video tape was made. A video was made of the entire weekend and is available for sale.

When everyone came back up the hill to the buses, driven by Martin and Liam Crowley, the group continued on to Jerry Crowleys pub at Crossmahon. There hot soup and brown bread were served, and the Irish Road Bowling competition began.

After a demonstration of the sport, three teams were formed, Canadian, American and European. No one proved to be a true championship bowler, but the European team did advance the ball the farthest and won the competition.

The evening concluded with a steak barbeque and singing lead by Larry Crowley.

# Letter from Our New Taoiseach

Dear Clan Members,

I hope you had safe travels back to your homes taking with you fond memories of a wonderful clan gathering, a nice journey in Ireland, and great meetings with other Crowleys. In terms of program, atmosphere and interaction, we had one of our best gatherings. I personally wish we could do it all over again next weekend. I hope this feeling is shared.

Congratulations to Jerry, the Clan Council, all supporters and contributors for this wonderful achievement! It is the result of a process of learning from experience, and sustaining the efforts and drive to promote the Clan. We are grateful to all former Taoiseachs and Clan Council members, supporters, some of whom are no longer with us. Let us keep their memory alive for they are a part of the green thread of our continued history.

Our guests, representatives from Bandon City Council, Cork City Council, the MacCarthy Mor, and the O'Briens conveyed back to their organisations the quality of the reunion, the attendance, and the great atmosphere. You should all be proud to have participated in promoting this image of the Crowley Clan. It is true; we are a great bunch of people!

Thanks to your donations, we have reimbursed the loans made by Clan Council members into the Castle Fund Restoration. Without these loans the O'Crowley Castle would have entirely disappeared by now. This is another great achievement. It is under the impulse of Tom from Ohio and Liam from Bandon that the Clan Council restored and secured this unique mark in our history, a project which started in 2001. Yes, things take time.

It is a great honour to be the newly elected Taoiseach. I will endeavour to be up to the trust put in me. We have a lot to do. We have started working on the celebration of the Battle of Clontarf. A communication will be posted next month describing the proposed program and how to participate.

Before the end of the year, we will disclose the dates and a tentative program for the next gathering so as to allow for optimising travel arrangements and obtaining venues best prices.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or any member of the Clan Council. My email is [michael.crowley@internationalsos.com](mailto:michael.crowley@internationalsos.com).

The sun never sets on Crowleys around the world.

*Michael-Patrick Crowley*  
*An Taoiseach*

## 2013 Gathering Photo Gallery





## Mass at the Crowley Castle



# Crowley Clan Meeting September 7, 2013

Taoiseach Jerry Crowley of Crossmahon opened the meeting by thanking the Crowley Clan Council for all of their hard work. He turned the meeting over to Cisteoir James Crowley of Bandon.

James reported that the Crowley Clan has a total of €12,835 in the treasury. There is still an outstanding debt of €9,000 for restoration of the Crowley Castle in Ahakeera, however the lenders of these funds are Crowley Council members, and they are not pressing for payment.

Recent donations include one from Sharon Crowley of proceeds from the Crowley Clan On-Line Store, from John Rogers, and a very generous donation of \$1,000 from Richard Crowley of Boston.

Catherine Crowley Budd of Florida, who is our DNA Project Coordinator, gave a PowerPoint presentation about the project. It began in 2005 with five participants. Today there are 101 Crowley men who have done the testing. There has been a surprising number of connections made among participants, for example Liam Crowley of Bandon and Richard Crowley of Boston found out that they are second cousins. She encouraged all Crowley males to join the project.

Cathy explained that the test is a simple cheek swipe and that all information is confidential. The current cost of the recommended 37 marker test is \$149. The kits do go on sale twice a year, and the Crowley Clan Newsletter does send out notices of the sale to everyone on the mailing list.

Two speakers gave presentations. Seamus Crowley spoke about his new book, *The O'Crowley Clan, Some Historical Notes*, which is available for €10. Seamus mentioned that the O'Crowleys were originally from County Roscommon and were a branch of the McDermott Clan. They came to West Cork as "fighting men" with the McCarthys and the O'Connors. After the Battle of Kinsale, they forfeited their lands and ended up as tenants. The earliest record of our name is 1283.

The second speaker was Tony McCarthy of Irish Roots Magazine and author of *Tracing Your Cork Ancestors*.

Tony listed the essential parts of compiling your family tree. First, what are your objectives? He encouraged researchers to not just concentrate on their paternal line, but rather to seek out information on all of their great-great grandparents. This broader objective gives them more chances for success.

Second, researchers need to gather their material. He suggested starting with interviews with the oldest living relatives before going on to documents in repositories and online.

Finally, Tony stressed that after the material is gathered it needs to be put into a document this is readable and can be shared with others.

The meeting was adjourned so that participants could have lunch before returning to tour Kinsale by boat in the harbor and by foot with Kinsale tour guide Dermott Ryan.

The evening concluded with an elegant banquet for which the clan sold 119 tickets.

# Boyhood Memories from West Cork, Part 1

*By Jim D. O'Meara of Goleen*

When I was a child, the old people used to say: "The old customs are nearly all gone. Funerals now aren't like what they were long ago. "When we were young," they used to say, "We'd be frightened by all the keening that went on at night in the wake house where the corpse was laid out."

My parents, when they were children together in Goleen, said they heard eerie wailing sounds one night, which they later found out was keening at the wake for Johanna Hurley in Ballydevlin near the village. None of that happened when I was a child in the forties, when I began to learn the funeral rituals of the Catholic Church in Goleen.

I remember my Grandmother, Kate McCarthy, as a plump old lady dressed in long black clothes with a great gradh for her first grandchildren. She became ill and died in 1943 soon after I got to know her and was the first dead person I had seen laid out. She was in her brown Third Order of St. Francis habit, crucifix on her breast with a rosary beads entwined round her clasped hands. I remember feelings of awe and mystery, but I felt no fear. People came, prayed and went in the wake room.

Many of the older women remained for a while seated round the white linen covered bed, which was hung with sheets at the back, talking quietly in the shadows almost beyond the flickering range of the five fragrant wax candles on the bedside table. Some neighbours would keep vigil all night.

Downstairs in the kitchen there was a different scene. The people of the locality, having paid their respects sat around the tables and talked. I suppose there was tea to be had, although tea was very scarce at that time - in the middle of what was to become known as World War Two - but what I remember most were the white table cloths, the plates of snuff and of cut plug tobacco, the new clay pipes beside them, the whiskey tumblers and the bottles of Paddy standing on the tables, and the powerful aroma that all these commodities gave off. Indeed, as I remember it, whiskey was almost like incense at funerals in those days. When the tumblers for the men who made the grave were filled and passed round in the churchyard, depending on the direction of the wind, the bouquet comforted a sector of the mourners as well.

Although I mentioned whiskey in each of the last two sentences-and will use the word again- I would like to dispel the idea that heavy drinking was a regular feature of traditional wakes and funerals. A trawl through the internet shows that this idea is very prevalent even today. It belongs to the category known as "paddywhackery" and is especially common in America and in Britain.

Death was a cottage industry in those days. Mrs. Annie Barry of Colleras was responsible for the washing, dressing and laying out of the corpse. The funereal brown habit was supplied by our uncle Jerry McCarthy, brother of Mai McCarthy, who later took over the business which is now Denny O'Meara's.

He also provided the plain deal coffin, made by a local carpenter, probably by either Willie or Jack Goggin, and the "cypresses", which were frilled, over the shoulder fine white cotton stoles worn by the officiating clergy, and also the metal breast plate. This would be inscribed with brief details of the deceased in meticulous copperplate by my grand uncle Tommy Wooll, a former teacher. He did this painstaking work using a large curved bag needle normally used for stitching jute sacks. His reward used to be a plug of tobacco. He himself, sadly, was the first person not to have this elegant script on his breastplate.

# Crowley Clan News

**Jerry Lenz, St. Cloud, MN, USA**

**(jlenz@cloudnet.com):**

I just read your one page article about Humphrey Crowley in the Spring 2010 Crowley Clan Newsletter. It is a very nice article. Thank you.

The probable date of death, 1795, reminds me that a Humphrey Crowley was killed in the Battle of Oulart Hill in 1798. So close, but unfortunately, not close enough. I am a very inexperienced and amateur genealogist with a gggrandfather named Humphrey Crowley. We think he is from County Cork, but cannot confirm that.

He was born in Ireland in about 1830, came to the US in about 1857 and in 1859 or 1860 my great grandmother was born to H. and Mary Crowley in Winona or Caledonia, MN. H. served in the US Civil War and lived in a Minneapolis Soldier's Home in the 1890's. He died in about 1905.