



Beannachtaí an tSéasúir / Seasons Greetings

DECEMBER
2024

CASSIDY CLAN NEWSLETTER



CASSIDYS STUDIED, PRAYED, CARED FOR
THE SICK, AND TAUGHT ON DEVENISH
ISLAND FOR CENTURIES.

CHIEFTAIN'S MESSAGE

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the Cassidy Clan I wish all Cassidys and your families a holiday season filled with joy and the comfort of family and friends, and peace, good health and prosperity in 2025.

Recently my wife Amy, daughter Maeve and I flew to Dublin, Ireland, to see our daughter Fiona who is a student at the University College Dublin. This was my 15th trip to Ireland!

I first visited Ireland in 1993. I returned two years later to attend my first Cassidy Clan Rally. I joined the Executive Committee in 1998 taking on the responsibility of creating and operating our website. We are now on the 3rd generation of the website, and active on social media. Through the rallies and membership in the clan, I developed friendships with Cassidys worldwide including our immediate past Chieftain Nuala Cassidy.

From County Armagh, Nuala was the driving force behind our clan since its founding in 1991. A generous person with a keen intellect and passion for genealogy, Nuala organized our rallies, served as our Chief Executive Officer and ultimately Clan Chieftain.

It was my honor to assist Nuala over a 30 year period. She gave my wife and me a thoughtful wedding gift and took great interest in our girls. One of the highlights of a previous visit to Ireland was taking my girls to the 2011 Cassidy Clan Rally and introducing them to Nuala. With her passing in 2023, I became Chieftain.

Nuala and the other leaders of the Cassidy Clan conveyed their pride in the Ó Caiside surname and its deep roots in Irish history and culture to members of the clan. Cassidys were not political rulers or military leaders. Instead, Cassidys achieved prominence for their intellect and artistic skills. We served as physicians, scholars, priests and poets from the Middle Ages to the present. And we, like all Irish, were resilient. In the face of famine, dispossession of land, and other extreme obstacles, Cassidys established new homesteads across Ireland and the globe.

I hope you can join us in Ireland for our [2025 Clan Rally](#). Beir bua/Best wishes,

Stephen Cassidy



JOIN US IN IRELAND

The next Cassidy Clan Rally will take place from Friday 4 July through Sunday 6 July, 2025 at the Killyhevlin Hotel in Enniskillen, County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland, close to the ancestral lands of the Cassidys.

The rally celebrates Irish culture and history, including local history and the Cassidy role within it, through stories, musical performances, and genealogy and cultural presentations.

We presently have reservations from Cassidys residing in the U.S., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, continental Europe and, of course, Ireland.



RALLY FAQ

1) What is the schedule?

The rally will commence with our general meeting on the afternoon of Friday 4 July followed by a "Meet the Cousins" reception with music in the evening. On both Saturday and Sunday mornings we will have group discussions and lectures on genealogy, history and culture. On Saturday afternoon, there will be a guided tour of the area where Cassidys originated including a visit to the Cassidy ancestral r ath. On Sunday afternoon, we will have our boat trip to Devenish Island. On Sunday evening, the rally concludes with our Gala Dinner with good company, food, drink and entertainment.

2) What will the rally cost?

The cost for attending the rally is  175 (or \$235 US) for a single and  300 (or \$400 US) for a couple. All rally attendees are automatically granted membership in the Cassidy Clan until 2028. We require a deposit of  95 (or \$125 US) per person to secure a registration for the rally. The remaining balance must be paid by Friday 6 June 2025. We also have the option of attending only the Gala Dinner.

3) Do I have to stay at the Killyhevlin Hotel?

No. Many other accommodation options are available nearby.

4) How do I register for the rally?

Visit www.cassidyclan.org/clan-rally

FROM COUNTY FERMANAGH TO AUSTRALIA

As part of the clan's goal of promoting kinship among all Cassidys and their descendants, we would like to create an internet library of family histories and stories, including emigrant tales. We also welcome your articles. Please send them to stephen@cassidyclan.org

Here we highlight the work of **Veronica Williams**. From Australia, Veronica serves on the Cassidy Clan Executive Committee and is our expert on DNA research.

Stephen Cassidy or 'Captain Rock'? My 3rd Great Grandfather.

The Australian Context

My fascination for the Cassidy's probably stems from the fact I was always told told by my grandmother Mona Murphy Roberts that I was like her mother Rebecca. She used to say I was the only one of her grandchildren that could sing the Irish songs, even though my mother used to protest that I was the least Irish of all her grandchildren. When I started doing family history in earnest in 2006 I was very surprised to find that I was actually a fourth generation Australian on my mothers side!

My grandmother and all her relations used to proudly say that they were Irish. Well they were, but their ancestors had been in Australia since the early 1800's! My great grandmother Rebecca Cassidy was born in Australia in 1852, she reputedly rode sidesaddle and was considered the finest horsewoman in the New England district. That wasn't a skill I inherited but it could explain my canny luck with the horses.



Rebecca Cassidy

It was always said in Mum's family that the Cassidy's were holier than the Pope. The Murphy side, were supposedly the black sheep and scallywags! Not surprising as Rebeccas first cousin Phillip Cassidy (1848-1922) was recognised as the first 'Australian Born' ordained priest (aka Brother Melitus).

Phillip reached the status of Venerable Archdeacon (from what I've read, that is only two levels away from being made a saint!). His work with the Australian Indigenous population in the small town of Moyura in Southern New South Wales was particularly of note. There were many others who took up religious professions on the Cassidy side of the family, including Phillips sister Catherine – the first 'Australia Born' postulant of the Good Samaritans, who designed the ceiling of the Rosebank Chapel at Five Dock.



Phillip Cassidy

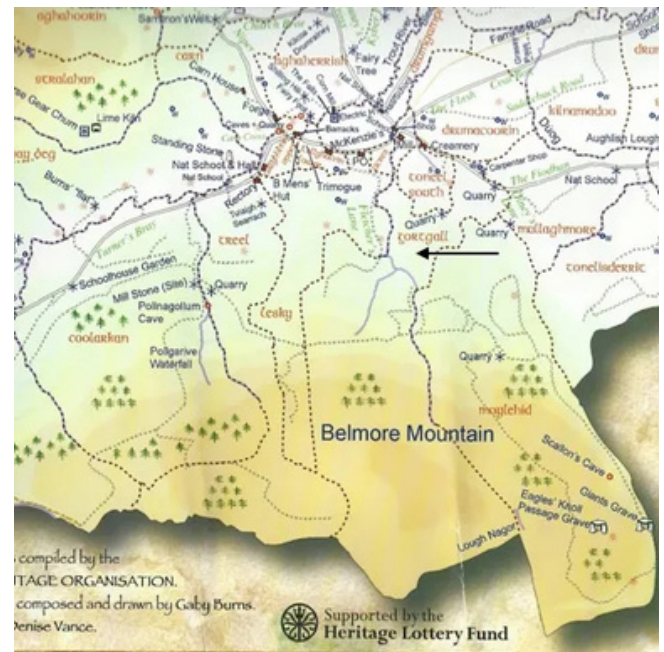
Who would have thought they were of convict stock! It was through the association of Rebecca and Phillip that we were first able to trace the family connection, their fathers Thomas and Phillip being brothers.

My third cousin Marnie, a Cassidy descendant, later sourced a book written by Father Peter Klein about the ecclesiastical life of Father Phillip Cassidy.

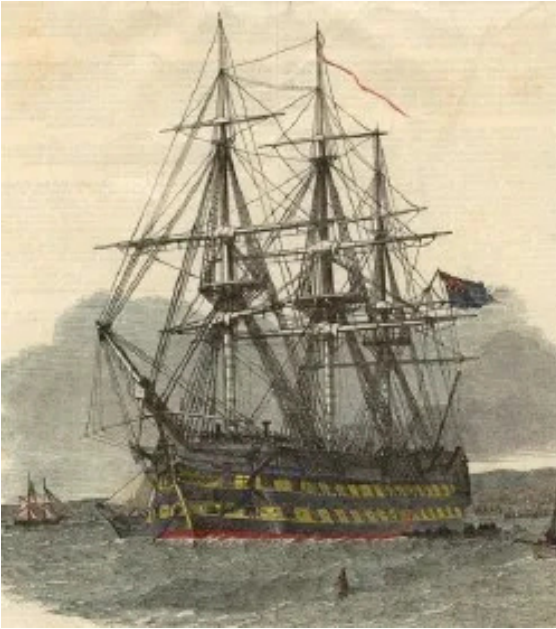
In the first chapter he talks about the Cassidy's roots in Ireland and suggests they came to Australia as early farming pioneers. In reality they were convicts, now proudly referred to in Australia as 'Australia Royalty'.

Crime and Punishment

The Cassidy brothers, Thomas, Phillip and Edward were convicted and transported for life, for reputedly throwing a horse over the precipice at Cullaigh, Belmore Mountain, Fermanagh.



The brothers were sent to Australia on board the *Hercules II* in 1830. Whilst their father Stephen was also charged, he obtained a reprieve on account of his age and newspaper reports suggest he was to be imprisoned for 2 years, whilst his 3 sons were transported for life. It seems odd that he was not transported along with his sons, as many persons of advanced years were. What became of him remains a mystery.



Hercules II

In about 1874 Peter Magennis wrote a story that included information about Stephen that was published in the Lisbellaw Gazette 1879-89 called 'The Treasurer, A Story of the Great Irish Famine'.

This series was kindly given to me by local historian Seamus MacAnnaidh. Whilst the work is a mix of fact and fiction Magennis indicates Stephen was probably over 70 years of age in 1835, so he may have been born as early as 1765. Magennis also says Stephen had a large family.

Stephen is described as a senarchy (sennachie) which is understood to mean 'one occupied in the study of traditional history, genealogy and legend'. Magennis suggests he was the best senarchy and historian in the country.

Secret Societies?

We don't know much about Stephen Cassidy. In Father Klein's book it says he was based with the military at the garrison in Fermanagh in the North of Ireland and was referred to as 'an outstanding young catholic captain'.

We now know that Stephen was from Boho, near Enniskillen and lived in the townland of Gortgall, where there is a nearby village called Garrison. As a Catholic, it seems unlikely that Stephen would have been a captain in the British Army and it is more likely that the term 'captain' may have been a nickname.

The 1820's were a turbulent time in Ireland with many disputes between landlords and tenants. Protestants and Catholics. The Cassidys had been evicted from their land in 1826. Catholic Emancipation being finally gained by 1829.

12 **LANDS.**
To be Sold,

THE following Lands, all situate in the County of Fermanagh, within six miles of the Town of Enniskillen, viz. :—

UPPER and LOWER GARTGALL, MULLAGHMORE, DRUMIRK, DRUMARAN, WHITEPARK, DRUMACKAWIRAN, KILTEFELAN, CARRICKMACSPARROWS, DRUMBOY, MULLINAWINA, GARTAHIRK, CARRICKNASEER, and CARRICKABEEHAN.

The above Lands produce a clear profit rent of 875*l.* per annum, and will be Sold separately or all together, as may be agreed upon.

For particulars apply to JOHN LAMINGTON, Esq., Enniskillen.

February 22d, 1826.

A number of newspaper references suggest that Stephens landlord Reverend Andrew Clarke wanted the Cassidy's 'out of the country' (the inference being transportation) and that there had been previous litigation between the Cassidys and Clarke. It was also implied that the local prosecutor Henry Fausett may have been offered money to prosecute the Cassidys.

An 1828 newspaper article states that Stephen and his son Thomas (my second great grandfather) were charged with making threats and menacing James McCourt of Upper Gortgall, near Garrison on 7th April 1828. McCourt was the new tenant now residing on their old land, having lived there for about a year.

The evidence suggests that McCourt believed the intruders to be the Cassidys, also stating there were references to the murder of Dominic Noone and that the intruder making the threats referred to himself as 'Captain Rock', known to be the leader of the local group of Ribbonmen. The Ribbonmen were an agrarian secret society, their objective to prevent landlords from changing or evicting their tenants.

Whilst McCourt stated he didn't see the intruders he said he had previously chased 'Captain Rock' and knew his voice. The court returned a verdict of not guilty for both Stephen and Thomas, but could this be the reason Stephen was known as the outstanding young 'Captain'?

In July 1829, around the time of Orangeman's Day, the Macken Fight, a well known incident in Irish sectarian history, occurred. The persons involved in the incident were tried on the same day as the Cassidy brothers and also transported to Australia on the Hercules II in 1830. Whilst our Cassidys were not named as being involved, there was a Hugh Cassidy named in some reports but he was not among those finally charged and I have yet to identify him.

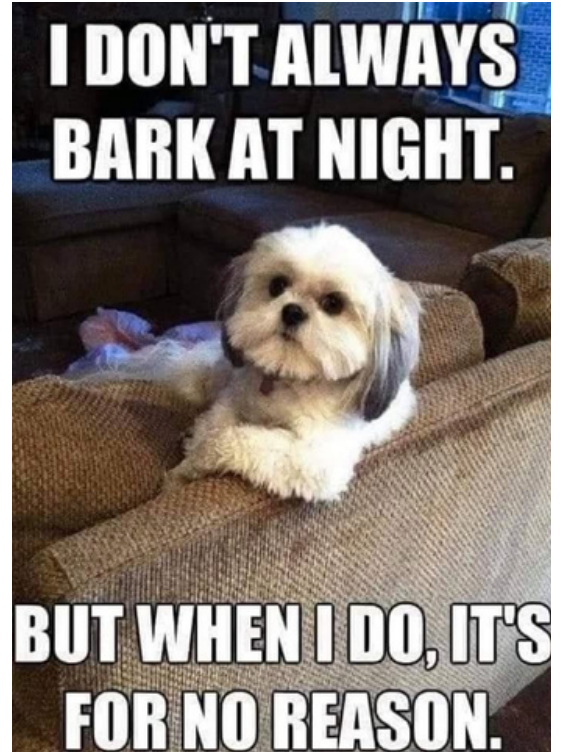
Between 9-12 September 1829 the horse owned by Andrew Whaley (a protestant tenant) was driven off the lands of Upper Gortgall, near Moyleat, Belmore Mountain into the precipice. References differ about the date but most suggest it was the night before the Enniskillen Fair, probably 10 September.

The Cassidys were charged, the Belfast News reporting on 22nd Sep 1829 the exact location of incident on Upper Gortgall lands and the effects on the horse. The report also suggested there had been many 'degradations' over the last few years since the Cassidys were ejected from their lands. Thomas may have been living at Tobradan by this time. At the trial, Stephen refers to Andy Flanagan, concerned about what had happened to him.

THIS IS AN EXCERPT FROM VERONICA'S ARTICLE. THE FULL ARTICLE CAN BE FOUND AT:

[HTTPS://GENEMONKEY.COM/2017/11/08/MY-3RD-GREAT-GRANDFATHER-STEPHEN-CASSIDY-52-ANCESTORS-2/](https://genemonkey.com/2017/11/08/my-3rd-great-grandfather-stephen-cassidy-52-ancestors-2/)

A BIT OF CRAIC



Managing your weight around the holidays just requires a little planning. For example, I took the batteries out of my scale on Monday.

MY WIFE SAID THAT IF I DON'T GET OFF MY COMPUTER AND HELP WITH THE DISHES, SHE'LL SLAM MY HEAD ON THE KEYBOARD, BUT I THINK SHE'S JOKINGSG67SGHI3DHGJRE7490DNDWHK3-2J4H37SHDUDKJI SD877HR8SKO20A3Y3H3J3UHU338JESU83J8R



Drunken Snowman

Rim glass with melted white chocolate and shaved dark or milk chocolate. Add 2 scoops vanilla ice cream, 1 cup hot chocolate, 2 oz Baileys Salted Caramel, whipped cream, garnish with shaved chocolate.

From the Facebook group [Enniskillen Banter](#) administered by Cassidy Clan member Benny Cassidy (in photo above).

CLAN LEADERSHIP

The Cassidy Clan is a non-profit organization based in Ireland, managed by an international Executive Committee of volunteers.

The Cassidy Clan is headed by the Chief of the Clan, who is referred to or addressed by the title "An O' Caisideach," and the officers of the Executive Committee. The "An O'Caisideach" is an honoree position and ex-officio member of the Executive Committee.

Stephen Cassidy is the Chief of the Clan. From California, he was the former Mayor of San Leandro, a city in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Noel Cassidy from County Leitrim in Ireland serves as the Chairperson of the Executive Committee. Noel Cassidy has been instrumental in organizing clan rallies, maintaining the Cassidy ráth (earthen ring fort) and preserving clan files and research.

Other members of the Executive Committee that are critical to the operation of the Clan are Veronica Williams (from Australia), Janet Cassidy (originally from New Jersey, now residing in Massachusetts), Kerry Cassidy (from Australia/Switzerland), Brent Cassidy (from Finland/Italy) and Oliver Cassidy (from County Armagh).



Veronica Williams on Devenish Island.



Oliver and Noel Cassidy.



Noel Cassidy (on right) with Kerry and Elisabeth Cassidy at the Cassidy ráth in County Fermanagh.



Stephen Cassidy and his daughter Fiona in Dublin, Ireland.

Janet Cassidy on Devenish Island in left photo. Brent Cassidy in right photo.



DEVENISH ISLAND



One century after St. Patrick's death and paralleling the growth of monasticism in Ireland in the sixth century, St. Molaise (whose death is recorded in the Annals of Ulster in both 563 and 570 A.D.), founded a monastery on Devenish Island.

Devenish (daimh-inis, or ox island) is an L-shaped island of 70 acres at the southern end of Lower Lough Erne, 1.5 miles downstream from Enniskillen. The townland of Ballycassidy is approximately 2 miles north of Devenish Island on the eastern shore of the lake. The ruins of a monastery, two churches, an oratory and one of the finest round towers in Ireland occupy a sloping hillside on the southeast tip of Devenish.

Cassidys served as "erenaghs," hereditary land managers for the Church's property in Devenish parish and undoubtedly studied and worshiped at Devenish Island.

"For, as the Roman Empire fell, as all through Europe matted, unwashed barbarians descended on the Roman cities, looting artifacts and burning books, the Irish, who were just learning to read and write, took up the great labor of copying all of Western literature — everything they could lay their hands on. . . . Without the Mission of the Irish Monks, who single-handedly refounded European civilization throughout the continent in the bay and valleys of their exile, the world that came after them would have been an entirely different one — a world without books."

Thomas Cahill, *How the Irish Saved Civilization*



The most famous early Irish Cassidy ancestor, the poet Giolla Mochuda Ó Caiside, composed *Banshenchas* (The Lore of Women), on Devenish Island in 1147. The poem tells the history of the women of the world starting with Eve. At the conclusion of the poem, Devenish is described as "of gracious words and pure holy song."

DUBLIN AT CHRISTMAS



An Irish Christmas Blessing

"This Christmas may you have...
Walls for the wind,
And a roof for the rain,
And drinks beside the fire,
Laughter to cheer you,
And those you love near you,
And all that your heart may desire."



THE CASSIDY CLAN

CÉAD MÍLE FÁILTE! A Hundred Thousand Welcomes!

The Cassidy Clan is a perpetual hereditary association comprised of persons that bear the Cassidy surname or are descended from an ancestor with the Cassidy surname or any of the variant spellings of Cassidy, including Cassity, Cassaday and Cassada.

We take great pride in our heritage as physicians, priests and scholars. We seek to build common bonds among all Cassidys and their descendants. Every three years we host a rally in County Fermanagh, Northern Ireland, where the Cassidys originated. Our next clan rally is from Friday 4 July through Sunday 6 July 2025.

Please visit us online at www.CassidyClan.org. We have both a Facebook page at www.facebook.com/cassidyclan and a Facebook group at www.facebook.com/groups/officialcassidyclan

Cassidy Clan member Kerry Cassidy has created an informative website with photos of our 2017 and 2022 rallies at www.cassidys.ch/cassidy.htm

