

Clan Eagen *Association*

Autumn 1999

Jane Eagen, Editor



Program of Events

Thursday June 29, 2000

Time	Activity	Location
6:00 pm	Assembly at Redwood Castle	Redwood Castle, Lorrha, Co. Tipperary

Friday June 30, 2000

9:00 am	Registration	Redwood Castle
	Tea/Coffee/ Refreshments	
	Formal Proceedings & Elections	
11:00 am	*Visit to Ballymacegan	near Redwood Castle
12:00 noon	*Visit to Poll na gCapall	near Redwood Castle
1:30 pm	Lunch (optional)	
3:00 pm	*Visit to Kinakahagh Castle (Sopwell Hall)	Ballingary
4:30 pm	*Visit to Drumnahane Castle	near Ballingary
5:00 pm	Return to your accomodation	
7:00 pm	Dinner at Birr	Co. Offaly
	Evening free for discussion and socializing	Redwood Castle

Transport - own cars

*Wear comfortable walking shoes or boots. Poll nagCapell is a tromp through a pasture and at the river's edge. The pasture was in use when your editor was last there. **Tread Carefully.**

Fees are in Irish Punts. The prices are approximations.

Check your newspaper for the exchange rate

Registration - 15 (Children free) Lunch - 6 Each Dinner - 12 Blackwater Bog - 3

Clonmacnoise - 2 Concert - Voluntary Donation

Saturday, July 1, 2000

Time	Activity	Location
9:00 am	Trip to Blackwater Bog This is a trip to a peat bog. You will ride on a small railroad and see how peat is dug, its role in the economy, and history of the area.	Shannonbridge, Co, Offaly
12:30 pm	Lunch at Killeens (optional) This is a good lunch in a pub right out of a travel brochure.	Shannonbridge, Co. Offaly
2:00 pm	Visit to Clonmacnoise. Don't miss it! (see notes elsewhere in this edition)	Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly
4:00 pm	Visit to Clonony Castle	Cloghan, Co. Offaly
4:15 pm	Return to accomodation	
7:00 pm	Dinner at Shannon Oaks	Portumna, Co. Offaly
9:00 pm	Irish Concert	Redwood Castle

Sunday, July 2, 2000

10:00 am	Chapter Meetings, USA, Canada, etc.	Redwood Castle
12:00 noon	Worship at Lorrha, Mass or Church of Ireland	Lorrha
1:30 pm	Lunch (optional)	
2:30 pm	Lecture in MacEgan Genealogy`	Redwood Castle
	Visit to Portland Chapel and Derrymacegan	Near Portumna
5:00 pm	Tea and Sandwiches	Redwood Castle
	Fond Farewells and Dispersal	

Notes on Places You'll Probably Visit

Birr This charming town is sometimes known as the center of Ireland. Two main roads, N52 and N62, meet there. It has many Georgian style houses, some of which are available for lodging. Friday dinner is planned for Birr. While you are in the area be sure to visit Birr Castle gardens and their famous telescope. At the time of its construction, 1840, it was the largest telescope in the world. The Autumn 1998 issue (Vol 4 No.2) of The World of Hibernia has an article on the telescope and castle. This article contains many pictures and states that the restoration of the telescope will be completed in 1999. (Let's hope it is finished by June 2000.) The castle is still owned by the Earl of Rosse

Clonfert "Cathedral" This site of an ancient monastic settlement contains masterpieces of Irish-Romanesque sculpture and tower. Human heads, both bearded and clean-shaven, are featured motifs in the decorated arches. It has a highly decorated interior and outstanding windows.

Dominican Priory at Lorrha These ruins are of special interest to Clan Egan members. It was founded in 1269 by Walter de Burgo, Earl of Ulster, for the Dominicans. You need only to enter it to be aware of the beauty it once had, The remnants of its past glory are impressive. It houses tombs of the MacEgan family sculpted by Patric Kerin. (Do you remember the plaques for sale in Annapolis? They were cast from this ruin.) Worship is scheduled here for noon, July 2.

Church of Ireland at Lorrha This church probably stands on the site of an ancient monastery founded by St. Ruadhan, who was a

disciple of St. Finian of Clonard and who died in 584. It is best known for the 13th century doorway into which a 15th century doorway was fitted. The later doorway features floral designs and a pelican cutting its breast to let the blood flow and feed its young, a symbol of the Church nurturing its flock. Worship is scheduled here for noon, July 2.

Kilnalahagh Castle. (Sopwell Hall), Kilnalahagh Castle is situated in the townland of Sopwell. It belonged to Mrs. Constance Egan at the time of the Down Survey, but it was made over to Thomas Sadler. It is a modern castellated house, measures fifty one feet six inches by thirty one feet and was four stories high. It had thirty four windows with label moldings over them and a large square tower at the southwest corner. The name Killaleigh, resembles Killeigh (Irish Cillachaidh), the church of the field, or the field of the wood, Killahy.

Drumnahane Castle (1 1/2 miles from Kilnalahagh Castle) This castle belonged to Stephen MacEgan and was made over to Nicholas White at the Cromwellian settlement. It is a square castle forty seven feet by thirty five feet six inches.; its walls are seven feet thick and it belongs to the fourteenth century. The second floor rested on on a stone arch and the original building was five stories high. The staircase passed through the thickness of the south and east walls. The windows were rectangular and constructed of chiseled limestone. The name Drumnahane, may be derived from the Irish words: Drum-na-huamba- the ridge of the cave.

Notes...(continued from page 5)

Poll na cCapall O'Sullivan Beara arrived at Redwood in January, 1602. There was a skirmish in which Cairbre McEgan's son was killed by the O'Sulivans. The Shannon was in full flood and there were no boats available to transport O'Sullivan Beara and his kinsfolk across the river to Connaught. O'Sullivan ordered his horses to be killed so their hides could be used to cover timber frames made from the trees felled in the local woods. They used these improvised currachs to ferry them across the Shannon with all their goods and chattles, including a supply of horse flesh. The horse carcasses were buried at the eastern riverside and the place where this was done in Ballymacegan townland and is still known as Poll na gCapall.

Clonmacnoise, Co. Offaly This tranquil site, the monastery of Clonmacnois is one of the greatest artistic centers of Ireland. It was founded c.545 by St. Ciaran where a major east-west roadway crossed the Shannon. It includes the Cathedral, five churches, two round towers,(one built into a church), as well as two complete high crosses and fragments of a number of others. It has the finest collection of old Irish gravestones in the country. Several Egans are buried there. Its importance is underlined by the fact that Pope John Paul II visited during his stay in Ireland in 1979.

Ed. note: Don't miss this one, it is one of the most impressive places you will ever see.

There is no wonder it is included in every tour book of Ireland. There are many great opportunities for photographs here.

HAPPY Birthday

Clan Egan Web Page Celebrates First Birthday

The Clan Egan Association web page, <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/Bluffs/5500>, has been established for one year. It is an outstanding site and has many people participating in its hopeful queries.

We are fortunate to have Jacki Barber and Patrick J. Eagen, and Mary Taylor as active members. They have established web sites for this association that are fabulous. These three have contributed their time and talents to it and it serves us all. It contains lineages, archives, contacts, guestbook and rally information. They have had over 100 inquiries in this first year. Who knows, you might have a distant cousin asking about your parents or grandparents that will be the link you need.

You will find an article from the web site in this newsletter entitled *Where are the Keegan Diaries? Does Anyone Know?* that is printed from the web page. It is clearly understood that not everyone is or wants to be involved with the Internet, but it is an amazing source of information. We are very fortunate to have Jacki, Patrick, and Mary Taylor who manage the Egan sites so well. Kudos to all of you. You are appreciated.



Redwood Castle

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Owners and Residents

It is claimed that Redwood Castle is the oldest occupied castle in Ireland where the present owners are kinsfolk of the owners of more than 600 years ago. It was built by Normans about 1210 and occupied by them until 1350. At that time the chieftains of this territory, the O'Kennedys, took it over and installed the MacEgans. They were the leading Irish family of Brehons and Ollaves, lawyers and professors.

A celebrated school of learning, primarily law and history, was established there by the McEgans. Pupils came to it for about 300 years. At that time most transportation was by water and the castle's proximity to the Shannon made it easy to access. One of the well known persons who was educated here was Michael O'Clery from Donegal. He was the leader of the team of historians who compiled the Annals of History of Ireland, generally known as the Annals of the Four Masters. In 1636 when the Annals were completed, the owner of the castle, Flann MacAodhagain was one of the six scholars invited to write his approbation of the work.

In the Civil Survey, published in 1654, it is stated "on the land of Keilterua stands an old ruined castle, the walls only standing and two thatched cottages". In the same survey dated 1640 Conly McEgan, an Irish Papist, is listed as the occupant of the property. The building was destroyed and the roof and wooden floors burned in the Cromwellian times. This meant that from the ground floor you could see up to the stone barrel vaulted arch which is now the ceiling over the third level. The topside of the arch was the floor of the main hall.

For 350 years the building was ruin considered to be beyond redemption, suitable only for a shelter for cattle and later for farm machinery. The ivy thrived on the outside until it covered the entire building and was about six feet thick, measuring out from the walls. The stonework was totally covered; all the window slits were choked with it and the spiral stairway was completely dark.

It was not until the ivy was removed that it was possible to identify the three different periods of construction, 1210, 1350,

and 1580. Stonework chiselling is the key to identifying the times of construction. Experts have identified that the doorway was replaced in 1580 as the chiselling was of that period. Since the 1580 doorway was the only visible part of the castle, it was erroneously dated as a 1580 building. This incorrect date is still in print in some material.

In 1350 the MacEgans acquired the castle from the O'Kennedys. 422 years later, in 1972, Michael Egan acquired the castle from Michael Kennedy of Redwood. Michael J. Egan, a Co. Mayo lawyer in the family tradition, restored it to be used as a private residence for the Egan family.

Additional taxes were levied and an exemption could be had if a building of historic interest would be open to the public for specified times. It is for this reason that visitors are now allowed to tour the castle.

The Physical Structure

After the Normans landed in Ireland they picked good land in various centers and built timber strongholds on high earth mounds known as mottes. They erected timber stockades to provide protection for their livestock.. In 1207 the record shows the Norman settlements in Lorrha, (i e. Redwood), Birr, and Kinnity were attached and burned by the O'Briens of Munster.

The Normans decided to stay at Redwood, called Coilte Ruadh at the time, and erected this substantial stone building. At ground level the walls were almost nine feet thick and there were no openings other than the single door. There were no windows or even slits to admit light or air because they were so vulnerable to attack. When the lights are off the ground floor is in total darkness. It would have been suitable for storage or livestock.. Over one hundred years ago an opening on the west side was made to enable the farmer to have his cattle and later farm machinery to enter. The folklore is that it took three men a fortnight to make this hole. Michael Egan converted it to a second doorway.

Just inside the front door, the original entrance, there is a rectangular hole above your head. This was a trapdoor in the small room known as the "Murder Hole" If there was an assault on the castle and the attackers had smashed down the



door, the occupants would rain down missiles through this hole on the heads of the attackers. As we ascend the spiral stairs you can see the murder hole and trapdoor.

Spiral stairs in medieval castles were constructed to give an advantage to a right handed swordsman defending the castle. He could better wield a sword as he was backing up the stairs than the attacker climbing the stairs whose movement would be more restricted. (Editor's note: Suppose the owner was left handed) As you climb the stairs you will see the rough construction of the lower level, note the underside of the stone steps. This portion was built in 1210.

Half way up the stairs you will note a change in the construction, the sharp corners of the stairs are chamfered, and the undersides are not as rough. This tells us the building was extended upwards in the 14th century, after the MacEgan family acquired it.

There were four floors in the castle, but it is only possible to gain access to three floors from the spiral stairs. As you turn downstairs you will enter the other floor. It is the large hall under the stone barrel vaulted arch. This floor was destroyed by fire in the 1650's.

The timber beams rested on an 18 inch ledge which extended for the full length on both sides and along the back gable wall. In 1798 an outlaw, James Meaney was on the run and in Redwood Castle. He was able to walk on the ledge and gain access to a room in the thickness of the wall. This room is now know as Meaney's Room. It was quite a precarious exercise to reach his hideout.

There are two other rooms on this floor, one a small room directly under Meaney's room and the other a garderobe or toilet. The latter facility consisted of a wooden seat with a hole directly above a chute or duct which went through the thickness of the wall to an opening about 5 feet above ground level on the eastern side of the building.

In this hall there are six wall hangings of figures dressed in armor as for a medieval tournament. The design on the shields is reproduced in the costumes or surcoats. The figures represent O'Kennedy, four different armigerous Egan families and Moran, the wife of Michael J. Egan. The main hall would have been the living quarters of the original owners. A minstrel gallery, where musicians would have performed on festive occasions was added in the restoration. In the reconstruction the gallery was made deeper than the room so that it could be used for sleeping accomodations in an emergency.

For the convenience of guests a lavatory and toilet were provided by excavating in the thickness of the wall just under the gallery. A kitchen with modern equipment has been made in part of the great hall and family bedrooms and bathroom are above the kitchen.

When returning to the ground floor you pass through the hall under the vaulted arch and get onto a new staircase which leads to the Oratory where Mass is celebrated. The Bishop of this Diocese of Killaloe has given permission for the celebration of the Mass in this oratory at any time.



Certificates Are Now Available

If you joined Clan Egan after June 1985 and haven't received your certificate please contact Jim Egan 4610 Brad Court, Rockville, MD 20853.



Accommodations Ideas

Ireland offers many choices of lodging to the traveler. The Egan Clan Association was unable to arrange accommodations at Gurteen Agricultural College and everyone must arrange for their own lodging. **They urge everyone to please book early.**

You will find two enclosures that are suggested places for lodging. You may find additional sites in Irish Tourist Board Publications or the Internet.

Redwood Castle is situated between Birr and Portumna.

The 11 hotels, inns, and B&B's listed in the Birr area brochure total about 100 rooms. They are all in Birr or within several miles of the town

center. (See the map elsewhere in this newsletter.) The Shannon Oaks Hotel and Country Club is in Portumna and can accommodate 400. The rates vary according to the package you choose.

The clan chieftain's note on the original program recommends that you make your arrangements through Mrs. Tracey Coughlan, however, when I called her to procure the brochures she explained that she does not make the lodging arrangements for us.

Friday's dinner is in Birr and Saturday's dinner is in Shannon Oaks. See the section with arrows in it on page 9, for a better understanding of the locations.

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Annual Dues

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Please don't forget to support the Clan Egan US/Canada organization. Annual dues are \$15 for an individual and \$25 for a family. We are also accepting contributions for the "Egan Pence", which goes for the support and assistance of the International Clan Egan. A sheet is included for updating your personal information and making dues and Pence allotments.

CLANN MAC DOUBHAISÍN

WHERE ARE KEEGAN'S DIARIES? DOES ANYONE KNOW?

This is a renewed appeal for help in tracing two manuscript volumes of the diaries of John Keegan (1813-1893) of Moate, Co Westmeath, Ireland. They were used as the basis for a book edited and published in 1928 by his grandson, the Rev Wallace Clare, principal founder of the Irish Genealogical Research Society (IGRS).

The period covered by Father Clare's selection are the years 1836-47, when John Keegan was working as a surveyor for the Ordnance Survey in many parts of Ireland and later in private practice in Yorkshire and other places in England.

Father Clare's will (drawn up in 1942, more than 21 years before his death) bequeathed the diaries to "my good cousin, John Sloane Keegan of Wall Street, New York City", one of three sons of John Keegan (b 1851) and Mary Sloan. The will indicates that John Sloane Keegan probably had three nephews, since Father Clare invites John to bequeath the diaries in turn to his "eldest nephew" in the Keegan family.

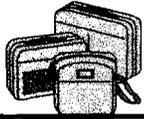
John Sloan(e) Keegan and his brothers, James and Ernest, were probably born in the 1870s. John Egan, a London member of the Irish Genealogical Research Society, has made attempts in person in London, Ireland, Ipswich, Salt Lake City and New York and elsewhere by letter to track down the diaries but with no success so far. Maybe now, however, the Internet will yield the vital clue.

Probate was granted on October 27, 1963, to Mrs Gladys Sherry, widowed sister of Father Clare, but it has not yet been possible to locate the addresses of the US beneficiaries or their heirs. They may have lived in Brooklyn. John P Keegan, a lawyer at 521 Fifth Avenue, Manhattan, has no connection with diarist.

Anyone reading Wallace Clare, *A Young Irishman's Diary* (printed for the editor, Sharman and Co, March, Cambs, England, 1928) is bound to agree that Keegan performed a valuable service when he preserved his spontaneous jottings about his travels in Ireland and England. He saw both countries through the eyes of a skilled and tolerant observer thoroughly accustomed to making an exact record of what he saw and how he felt.

The Clan Egan and the IGRS would like to know about the fate of the two manuscript volumes given to Wallace Clare when he was 12 years old. There were eight other volumes, too, but their fate is more obscure.

Any information gratefully received by John J Egan who is travelling from London to Birr to attend the 2000 Clan Egan Rally in Ireland in June. Home address: 15 Callcott Street, London, UK, W8 7SU, or e-mail john.j.egan@btinternet.com



Miscellaneous



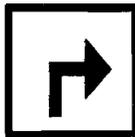
Get your tickets, arrange for the house sitter, and decide whether to put the pets in the kennel or let the house sitter do it all. **Everyone is going to Ireland for the Millennium Clan Rally 2000!**

Make one more stumbling block connect with a known as a friend. There is a lecture on MacEgan genealogy scheduled for Sunday afternoon. Bring your charts and questions and post them early on the notice boards that will be provided for exhibits and queries at Redwood Castle.

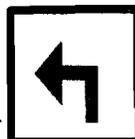


The most important thing to remember is that you will be responsible for making your own lodging arrangements. The last several times Gurteen Agricultural College was able to accommodate us, but that is not the case this time. Michael J. S. suggests you contact Mrs. Tracey Coughlan, Ely O'Carroll Tourism Ltd., Brendan St. Birr, Co. Offaly, Telephone 0609-20923. Fax 0609-20660, Email - elyocarroll@tinet.ie , <http://www.elyocarroll.com>. He also suggests in bold type to **book early**. You will find the brochures attached to this newsletter.

The part of Ireland in which most of the events will be held is called **Ely O'Carroll Country, located east of the Shannon**. Some of you may remember visiting sites related to Charles Carroll of Carrollton, Daniel Carroll, and John Carroll while in Annapolis. These men were all descendants of Ely O'Carroll.



The Shannon Oaks Hotel is listed as a recommended site for additional accommodation and can be seen on the Internet. It is also where the Saturday evening dinner will be held. It is located in Portumna, west of the Shannon from Ely O'Carroll Country. In the tourist brochure and on the internet Porumna is usually listed in the Shannon Region. The Ely O'Carroll country and the Shannon region are very close.



When you rent a car in Ireland select one that is just big

enough
The
to drive
Ireland's
roads to the



to carry what you need,
smaller the car the easier
and maneuver on
narrow roads. Most of the
historic sites are only one
lane. Irish drivers are very courteous and are eager to get out of the way of the rental car. A small car can barely pass a hay truck when it pulls to the side. A larger car has to follow for a longer distance. The hedgerows are high and you worry less about scratches with a small car.

Another piece of advice repeated to me is to bring an umbrella or light



that has been advise everyone to raincoat if you don't like getting damp. It is wise to carry a light jacket or sweater with you at all times. The weather changes quicker than you can blink an eye. At Poll nCapall it was warm and sunny when we left our cars. After walking to the river's edge it was quite chilly. You can stand on a sunny hillside and see a shower in the distance. In a few minutes you will be wet, but will have seen a beautiful rainbow.

You will probably take more pictures than you usually do because of the beautiful, interesting sights. You will also want pictures of the interesting characters you will meet, many of whom have the same last name, with a variety of odd spellings.



Don't forget to bring the kit of adapters for any electrical appliance you plan to use. Some shavers might not need them.

Remember to take some of those address stickers the charities are always sending you. They make it quick and easy to exchange addresses and label items.

These reminders are for those of us who have those "senior moments" or are newcomers.

MEMBERSHIP RECORD FORM

Clan Aodhagain—USA/Canada

Family Name: _____

Names of Adults At This Address: _____

Adult #2: _____

Adult #3: _____

Adult #4: _____

PERMANENT ADDRESS: _____

#2 Address Line: _____

#3 Address Line: _____

#4 Address Line: _____

Phone Number (Home): _____

Phone Number (Work): _____

Fax Number: _____

e-mail: _____

ALTERNATE ADDRESS: _____

#2 Alternate Address Line: _____

#3 Alternate Address Line: _____

#4 Alternate Address Line: _____

Alternate Address Phone Number: _____

Alternate Address Fax Number: _____

Alternate Address e-mail: _____

Member Since: _____

Relative who will help re-establish
Contact if mail is returned: _____

NOTES: _____

#2 Note Line : _____

Please return to:

Jim Egan . 4610 Brad Court . Rockville, Maryland . 20853