

# USA/Canada Clan Egan

Issue 2

2002

## Clan Egan 2002 Rally Australia

**Byron F. Egan**

Dallas, Texas

Fellow Eagan/Eagen/Egan/Keegan Clan Members

This year the Clan Egan Rally was held July 3-7, in Australia. Egans from all over the world gathered in Melbourne and took charter bus trips to a variety of areas in the State of Victoria that gave us a sense of its flora, fauna and terrain. During these adventures and at social gatherings and chapter meetings, we got to know each other and exchange genealogical and other information, while consuming excellent food and spirits. We were also able to discuss planning for our next Rally to be held in Ireland in July 2004.

Australia Chapter President Greg Egan and his wife Sue were our principal hosts. Clan Chief Michael J.S. Egan led us in genealogical lore, the singing of traditional Irish songs and other things Egan. ❖

## Egan Coat of Arms

*Fortitude and Prudence*



## Victoria Parliament Receives Clan Egan

**Byron F. Egan**

Dallas, Texas

The Rally got off to a powerful start with an inaugural reception at the Victoria Parliament House in Melbourne on Wednesday, July 3, 2002, at which the delegates greeted each other and were greeted by some fine Australian beers and wines. After greetings from Greg Egan and Michael J.S. Egan, Kerry Egan Edwards of Hobart, Tasmania, whose academic degree listing appears to use as much of the alphabet as that of our Chief Michael J.S., presented a paper on Attitudes Towards Irish Immigration in Australia. We then adjourned to the Lower Chamber and Upper Chamber of Parliament where a representative of Parliament discussed the governance of Australia and its states and the history thereof. ❖

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

1	Clan Egan 2002 Rally Australia
1	Victoria Parliament Receives Clan Egan
2	Egans in the Goldfields
2	Fauna, Flora and Vineyards
3	Final Conclave
4	Clan Egan 2002 Rally - A Personal View
7	Clan Egan DNA Project
8	Officers of USA/Canada Clan Egan Association

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## Egans in the Goldfields

**Byron F. Egan**

Dallas, Texas

Thursday morning, July 4, we boarded our bus and headed for Bendigo and other points of interest associated with the goldfields in Victoria. The finding of gold in Australia in the mid-1850s brought many Egans and other Irish to Victoria. English settlement of Australia commenced in 1788 with the arrival of the “First Fleet” with convicts (for whom England was running out of room) and their guards, and continued with various English government sponsored initiatives to encourage settlers to come to Australia, but population growth was slow until word of the gold finds spread. The gold rush brought many Irish to Australia, including ancestors of Greg Egan who came looking for gold and found it not as miners but as merchants and farmers selling to the miners. We tend to identify gold prospectors and miners with a gold rush, but those digging for gold were likely outnumbered by those taking their gold in exchange for goods and services.

At Porcupine Village near Maldon, we saw the harsh conditions under which the earlier miners lived, including making tea in a “billy” [*tin can*] and eating “damper” [*bread made with flour, water and salt*] over a campfire. Irish and other European miners dug rectangular pits as they dug for gold, while the Chinese dug circular holes. The minerals were owned by Queen Victoria who charged \$3 for a prospecting license, which was a lot of money at the time (a week’s wages for many people) and seems a lot like a lottery ticket today – you pay the state to play whether or not you win.

In Bendigo (originally named Sandhurst) we stayed in the ornate Shamrock Hotel originally built in 1850 and nicely updated. We found fellowship in Bendigo’s Irish pubs and at the Shamrock Hotel’s many gaming machines.

On Friday, July 5, we visited the Central Deborah Goldmine, which shut down in 1953 after 103 years of continuous operation and whose shafts go deeper than the Empire State Building is tall. Our guide took us down into mineshaft 20 stories deep and let some of us drill for gold. We made noise and dust, but the gold eluded us.

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*“Puffing Billy”*

## Fauna, Flora and Vineyards

**Byron F. Egan**

Dallas, Texas

Saturday, July 6, began with “Puffing Billy,” a quaint little steam train, which exposed us to the hills, fern gullies and lush vegetation of the Dandenong Ranges to the East of Melbourne. After lunch in the Healesville Sanctuary, we got up close and personal with eagles, kangaroos, wallabies, koalas, dingos, wombats, Tasmanian devils and other critters native to Australia. Where else can you pet a kangaroo and have an eagle fly within inches of your head? We returned to Melbourne through the Yarra Valley, with a stop for a wine tasting at the Yering Station Yarra Valley Winery.

Our Rally Banquet on Saturday was at the Victorian Club on the 41<sup>st</sup> floor of a 70-story building in downtown Melbourne. We partook in fine Australian bottled wines and beers along with excellent foods, while enjoying the camaraderie that had developed during the week.

The Victorian Club offered a panoramic vista of Melbourne. The view of the massive pulsating gas jets across the Yarra River in front of the giant downtown Crown Casino, a massive and most impressive architectural wonder that enticed a number of delegates. Some of the delegates managed to eke out small wins at the casino to subsidize the purchase of Australian wines. ❖

## Final Conclave

### Byron F. Egan

Dallas, Texas

On Sunday morning there were chapter meetings of Australian and U.S.A./Canada delegates. Our Chief discussed alternatives for our Rally in Ireland in 2004, probably in July. There was discussion of extending the Rally to a full week, and visiting different Egan venues from those frequented in prior Rallies. We discussed the possibility of convening in Dublin and then traveling by bus to one or more staging towns in the West (perhaps Athlone, Birr, Galway or Portumna). A boat trip up the Shannon was favorably considered, along with a return to Redwood Castle. Those with ideas of where to stay and where or how to go should email Michael J.S. at [michael.egan@pmg.ie](mailto:michael.egan@pmg.ie).

For the U.S.A./Canada chapter, Tim Egan agreed to serve as Vice President and Judith Tafuto agreed to serve on the Technology Committee.

2002 Rally photos:

<http://members.optushome.com.au/gke/Clan/Rally2002/index.html> ❖



From left: Michael J.S. Egan and Tim Egan at the farewell dinner.

After lunch and looking about in Bendigo, we stopped at the Bendigo Pottery Works on our way back to Melbourne where we saw how porcelain had been made since the gold rush. Its founder wrote that “gold eluded me, but I found something as good as gold” – a business making clay (ceramic) pots and pipes for miners. In recent years, ceramic pipes have given way to tableware.

Our bus ride back to Melbourne passed quickly as our Tasmanian delegate David Edwards served us fine Australian boxed wines (David even showed us how economical Aussies can make a travel pillow out of an empty wine box bladder). His wife Kerry Edwards joined Chief Michael J.S. in leading us in singing traditional Irish songs.

On our own that night in Melbourne, some of us went to an Australian Rules football game (“footy”) at the Melbourne Cricket Grounds (“MCG”), which was originally built for the 1954 Olympics to seat 120,000. MCG was later reconfigured for “footy” and its seating capacity reduced to 95,000. We saw Carlton beat Richmond by a score of 86 to 85 in the “wooden spoon” game – a battle for last place. Played on an oval field, Australia’s “footy” is unique—it is more like Gaelic football than soccer or American football. The Carlton and Richmond teams were named after suburbs of Melbourne. The suburbs themselves presumably were named after English lords. The teams receive mixed sponsorship from companies, but not usually from a single company or interest. A significant part of their income comes from membership and takings at the gates. ❖



Clan Chieftain, Michael J.S. and fellow Egans pose for the camera at a stop along the Puffing Billy train route.

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## Clan Egan 2002 Rally - A Personal View

**Jackie Egan**

Northumberland, PA

First of all, let me thank Greg and Sue Egan for all their efforts on our behalf, to make the Clan Egan Rally in Australia such a wonderful experience. While the winter weather did not always cooperate, I believe our merry band of Egans had a grand 4 days.

Tim and I arrived in country 10 days prior to the rally, and had the opportunity to visit Sydney and Cairns, prior to our trip south. We arrived in Melbourne the day prior to the Rally.

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The morning of July 3rd, it was raining, but we didn't let that dampen our spirits. We took a stroll along Yarra River and located a water taxi, or should I say, they located us. We were beckoned down to the ferry by the captain and mate. We were the only tourists out and about in the rain, this early. Our very friendly captain, who, because we were his only passengers, gave us a personal guided tour down the river and across the bay to Williamstown. It is there that we did a cool and damp walk-about. We found a small cafe, with an open working fireplace, still serving breakfast that was a nice place to eat and get warm. Upon our return trip to the city, we did an extensive walk-about to see the sights, and visit some shops. Being Harley Davidson riders, we visited the local shop to purchase souvenirs.

Evening arrived early during winter in the South, as it got dark around 4:30 to 5 pm in July. We returned to our hotel not long after sunset to change and go out to a couple local nightspots. We were staying about one block away from the Duxton Hotel, which was where the majority of the Egans were staying.

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The Rally opening reception and get together was at the Parliament House in Melbourne, on the 3rd of July. It was well attended, and offered us our first chance to meet new, as well as, familiar faces of the Clan Egan. The setting could not have been better. The State Houses of Parliament Building was used as a National Parliament from 1900 to 1927. It now houses the Victorian Parliament. Our reception room, in the upper chambers, was quite elegant.



*From Left: Byron F. Egan, Father Joe Egan, Michael J. S. Egan, and Greg Egan*

After some liquid refreshments and hors d'oeuvres, we heard the opening remarks from Greg Egan, Dr. Michael J.S. Egan, Clan Chieftain and Kerry Edwards. These opening events were followed by general discussions amongst the attendees, along with an opportunity to look over Greg Egan's massive genealogy charts. After much picture taking, and animated discussions, tours of the Parliament Building were offered for those who wished to view the grandeur of the turn-of-the-century architecture.

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The next two days were spent on the tour bus. Our tour guide, Ann, and driver, Andy, arrived at the Duxton on the following morning. Ann tried valiantly to get us all on the bus to leave on time. We had a couple stragglers, and that set the tone for our other events. Getting the Egans to leave on time, was not an easy task. Once again, the weather



*Greg Egan's genealogy charts*

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*From the window of "Puffing Billy".*

only partially cooperated, and our tour of Maldon (a former gold mining town), Porcupine Village (a recreation of a gold mining camp), and Bendigo (home of the Deborah Gold Mine) were met with a mixture of sun, clouds and showers. However, we had a great time as the humor and camaraderie of the Egans was undaunted by mere inclemency.

It was gray and cloudy when we stopped in Maldon. We had a few free minutes, so Tim and I



*You will notice that the Egans aboard the Talking Tram in Bendigo, were all wearing their warm clothing.*

went into the McArthur's Bakery, Maldon's oldest, and picked up some warm buns, and cool drinks. Our group was waiting for a local guide who accompanied us on the tour bus and gave us the history of Maldon. When we got to go up to the top of Tarrengower Mountain, on the edge of town, the lovely view we were promised was only of fog, I'm afraid. We did however, have a great lunch at the Maldon Hotel, on our return to town, complete with an Australian specialty for dessert, Pavlova. And naturally, the sun came out once we were back in the valley.

We all chose different sights and walks to take around the town after our meal. Tim and I stopped in a few shops and then visited a local motorcycle museum, which while small, was filled with vintage bikes. The next stop was Bendigo. Our evening was spent at the Shamrock Hotel. It was here that we were able to meet with more of the Egan namesake from Bendigo and surrounding areas. We gathered in the pub for discussions and greetings, and then moved into the dining room for our meal and continued talks. The pub ran out of Guinness and had to send out for more!! The evening flew by very quickly, and then around 11 pm, it was handshakes, hugs and farewells to all our new acquaintances.

The Shamrock is an enormous old hotel, with a great verandah on the second floor that extends along an entire city block and gives a great view of the War Memorial and Museum across the way. It seemed to me like this verandah must be a wonderful place to sit on a warm summer evening.

The following morning we all met downstairs for breakfast before departing for the day's tours of the Deborah Gold Mine, followed by an historical tour about town on the Talking Tram, and a visit to the Golden Dragon Museum. All of which were interesting. Unfortunately I missed going down into the Mine, as I was trying to locate my missing camera, which I did find. The Talking Tram drove us along the tracks, through the town, including the area where the Irish miners had lived, and then to the Tram Museum. Part of the local history includes Chinese miners as well, and the Golden Dragon Museum was a gift to the town to display the local Chinese history. The entire second floor of the museum houses a fabulous Chinese Dragon, that requires 57 people to support its long body, when they have the annual dragon parade down the streets of Bendigo. We all had a few free hours

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to take walks, go shopping, as well as, get a meal after our tours. Tim and I chose to have our lunch at the Museum, where naturally, they served Oriental meals. A wedding reception was held at the museum that night as well. We then visited the Memorial Military Museum, which is filled with an amazing array of personal letters, photographs and military mementos.

Our bus left for the Bendigo Pottery around 2 pm, and we were off down the road, singing a few songs, and enjoying our guide's commentaries about the local area. We also kept on the lookout for the occasional kangaroo or wombat for those of us who had never seen them. All the wombats we found, had, unfortunately, met with a vehicle face to face prior to our seeing them. We return to Melbourne for a free evening for everyone. Tim and I went out to hear some jazz, while others attended a football match.

The next morning, we boarded the bus again, this time to go to Yarra Valley and the Dandenong Ranges, where we rode on a steam train, called "Puffing Billy". The train cars had windows that can be closed if necessary, which was good, because it was quite cold for our ride. However, many of us could be seen with our heads out the windows to view the engine of the train as it twists around the curves. We travel to Lakeside, where our bus met us. After the purchase of a few souvenirs, we headed off to the Healesville Sanctuary to see the animals. We were first given an excellent lamb dinner in restaurant on the Sanctuary grounds. We divided into two groups. Our guide took us on the tour to see a variety of animals, including kangaroo, koalas, snakes and platypus. The other groups attended the showing of the raptors.

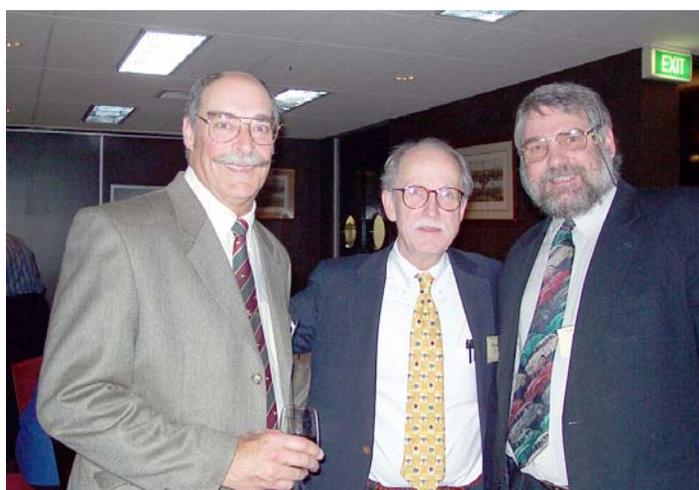
It is then time to head towards the de Bortoli winery. The winery had a special section set up for us, complete with a variety of nice cheeses, breads and crackers. Their wines were quite good and we enjoyed the tasting. A few more souvenirs were purchased in the gift shop before we headed back for the bus. Once again, the sun had just moved below the horizon and it was time to get back to Melbourne for our farewell dinner.

And what a great dinner it was. We were in the Victorian Room on the 41st floor of the Rialto Building, with a spectacular view of Melbourne. And it was a

clear, bright, night and you could see the sparkling lights of the city below. After cocktails, and dinner, there were a couple talks by Michael J.S. Egan and Greg Egan. Tim and I went around to all the tables after our dessert, and said goodbyes to everyone, as we had to leave our hotel early in the morning to fly home. It was difficult to say goodbye to the Egans and to Australia, and we had a great time. □ I cannot put in words how well we were treated by everyone we met, not only at the Rally, but also over the entire two weeks we were in Australia. I am sorry that there were many Egans who could not make it to this Rally. It was very special. ❖



*Mike and Mary Egan are shown here with their family and David Edwards (far right) and Father Joe Egan (standing between Mike and Mary)*



*Tim Egan, Byron Egan and David Edwards.*

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## Clan Egan DNA Project

### Byron F. Egan

Dallas, Texas

DNA testing attracted a great deal of interest at the Rally. Two DNA test procedures were suggested, both for males only.

One is through the Trinity College Dublin, <http://www.identigen.com/html2/MainGMOTesting.htm>, where they are undertaking a research study exploring the migration of important Irish families. Tests under this study are free and will in time provide us with much better information as to where the various Egan/Keegan and other families come from. Participants personally do not receive any information immediately, although it is expected the study will publish results eventually.

The second test is being offered through FamilyTreeDNA, <http://www.familytreedna.com>, in Texas. The 12 marker test costs US\$99. If these 12 markers are identical to some other person, there is a 50% probability you have a common ancestor 14.5 generations back (90% 48 generations back). You may request a 25-marker test, which reduces the number of generations to 7 (90% 24 generations back).

FamilyTreeDNA will place you in contact with other people with the same set of markers. Greg & Sue Egan will be monitoring the results to assist in the process of putting people in touch with each other. Money is payable only when you have taken the sample and send it off for processing – please do not send any money to Clan Egan or Greg & Sue.

Both tests involve scraping the inside of your cheek with a “toothbrush” like instrument – quite painless – sealing it in a container and returning it to Trinity or FamilyTreeDNA in Texas.

**IMPORTANT:** You only need to conduct the test on **one member of your immediate tree**. By immediate tree, we mean one that goes back say two or three generations. You should choose one of the youngest family members as the guinea pig. In our case one test is enough for a few tens of people, which makes it quite cheap. This test should be able to prove that an ancestor is in fact a son of a specific person where there is no documentary evidence to substantiate the



speculation!

If you are trying to ascertain whether others are part of your immediate tree a more comprehensive DNA test may be appropriate. Check the WWW site:

<http://members.optushome.com.au/gke/Clan/Research/DNATesting.html>

Both kits are available from Greg & Sue Egan. They carry release forms addresses etc. Please participate. Sue & Greg Egan may be contacted by email at [spe@optushome.com.au](mailto:spe@optushome.com.au) or by regular mail at 5 Richardson Road, Croydon 3136, AUSTRALIA. ❖



*Genealogy Charts*

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***More To Come.*** Further reports about the Australia Rally and the upcoming Ireland Rally in 2004 will follow.

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## Officers of USA/Canada Clan Egan Association

The current officers of USA/Canada Clan Egan Association, who were reelected at the Rally and agreed to continue, are:

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**Your Clan Chief and your USA/Canada President each have been elected by members of their respective groups for life. Your other officers were elected to serve until the next Rally and until their respective successors are elected and qualified. In the interim between Rallies, vacancies may be filled and new officers and committee members may be appointed by the Clan Chief or USA/Canada President, as the case may be.**

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