

The Beginning of the Clan Egan in Australia

A chance meeting on a flight between Sydney and London in 1982, was how it all began.

Michael J.S. Egan who was then The Registrar of the Irish Clan Egan Association, was seated on this flight next to Ann Crowley a cousin of my late husband Peter. During the flight, Ann told Michael of a book I had published the previous year on our Egan family.

After returning to Australia, Ann sent Michael J.S. a copy of the book and Michael then contacted me. This was done via general post. Neither of us had computer access back then.

Michael J.S. asked if I would be willing to be a contact here in Australia for the then eight members of the Irish Clan Egan Assoc. In exchange he would do more research in Ireland on our line of Egan.

The answer was of course “yes” and so it all began. At first it was just photocopying any information that came out from the Clan in Ire. and sending it out to the eight families. I also contacted most Australian Historical and Genealogy Societies and told them of the Clan. And advertised in the various Genealogical magazines etc.

The letters started arriving and all wanted more information on their families. I started to research all the families and collect more Egan information.

I had already accumulated a lot of Egan information during the research of our

own family. As we all know it becomes quite addictive to solve the mysteries.

In 1983 Michael J. Egan (Redwood Castle) Who was founding Chief of the Clan wrote to me and said that I had been appointed the President of the Australian Branch of The Clan.

More families joined and more puzzles had to be solved. Letters between Michael J.S. and myself were on a two-week exchange. My postman delivered between twenty and forty letters a week and I answered them all. Still no computer.

Because Australia is a branch of the Irish Clan, it is not registered as an Australian Association, we “fly” under the Irish Registration. Joining fees were originally paid direct by the member to Ireland, or paid to me, I then purchased an international Money Order to send to Ireland.

Around 1987 Michael told me to keep all subscription money here in Australia to cover the cost of postage etc.

The information on Australian Egan and related names grew, my postman was kept in a job, and we met some wonderful people in person and through hundreds of letters.

Kevin Egan Qld. Launched the Australian Clan onto the Internet through a Forum for Surnames. The enquiries grew and Kevin would post me the details. I would find the answers and post them back to Kevin to post on the web site.

The Post office loved me too. I was always buying stamps.

Yes! I got a computer and research became a little easier.

Over the years I had handwritten all the Australian BDM for Egan and Keegan from Microfiche and now here they were at the press of a few keys.

In 1991 we had the first Australian Gathering at Wyong NSW. It was a great weekend. Clan member Chris Burns had typed up my handwritten lists of BDM for NSW and Victoria, and these helped many members at the gathering to find missing links. So much easier than working through Microfiche.

Several members helped me extract information on Egan Convicts and these in turn helped other families find information. My Archives grew

By 1998 there were 120 members in the Australian Branch, and I had research on at least two hundred other Egan families. It was at this time I knew that to keep the Clan heading forward it needed more technical skills than I had. DNA had become a new trend for Genealogists, and I knew nothing of this.

I could now find my way around a computer, but it needed someone to input all the data into a technical form for the future I could not do this.

After a few conversations with Michael J.S who was now Chief of the Clan. I approached Greg and Sue and thankfully they agreed to continue the Australian Branch into the computer age.

A little bit of trivia:

Although Peter and I were the beginning of the Clan here in Australia we will not be listed amongst the earliest official members.

It was several years after I had been appointed President of the Australian branch that Michael J.S wrote and said that it would be a good idea if Peter and I joined the Clan. It had never crossed our minds that we were not members. So, we had a good laugh and sent off our joining fee and a few months later received our scroll of membership. So, in the distant future when someone checks who early members of the Clan were here in Australia Peter and I will be way down the list, so records can sometimes be wrong.

To Greg and Sue thanks for keeping the Clan going. Your Technical and Archival skills are appreciated.

Elaine Egan

15 July 2022