



Clan McGrath Society

Cumann Chlann Mhic Craith

23 April 2024

The Society and the 2024 Clan McGrath Gathering

The Clan McGrath of Ulster and the Clan McGrath of Thomond are distinct historic septs of the Clan McGrath and are recognised as such by Clans of Ireland – Finte na hÉireann.

In 2024 the Clan McGrath Society was formed to bring together Irish clan organisations and international Clan McGrath groups together to plan and delivery gatherings and most importantly, promote and preserve McGrath heritage and culture.

In the past, the Clan McGrath of Thomond, under the leadership of the late Dan McGrath, hosted several Clan Gatherings. As successful as these gatherings were, the 2024 gathering and future gatherings will be different. There are a number of reasons for this. Since the last gathering in 2019, we tragically lost Dan and the world has changed greatly in terms of the continuing impact of Covid, travel and hospitality costs, insurance costs etc. and the unavailability of local government funding to support gatherings.

Therefore, to deliver future gatherings requires a more collective and focused way forward.

The Clan McGrath Society, which will be officially launched at this summer's Clan McGrath Gathering, will bring together the recognised septs of the Clan McGrath in Ireland and with our extended global diaspora, better organise and host Clan Gatherings with a focus on history, heritage, and culture. You will note from the programme for this year that we are spending time at key locations associated with the clan and delving into specific historical time periods that the Clan McGrath has influenced. Thus, blending cultural and social time across the gathering timetable.

A key focus for this year is the hosting and launch of Sleady 400. The castle is the only 17th century castle, built by a McGrath and still in existence in Thomond. It absolutely links the Clan McGrath to its ancestral territory and its place in the history of Thomond and Waterford is something that we will be celebrating this year. To have such a magnificent historic building associated with the Clan McGrath and to have access to it through the kindness of its owners, is unique amongst many Irish clans. The Clan McGrath Society will aim to ensure its conservation and through the good graces of its owners, make it available to visit and host events for generations to come.

On Saturday 10th August, the Clan McGrath Society will host a major event at Sleady Castle as part of the gathering. This event will include a marquee, seating, food, drinks, and entertainment. During this event, Sleady Castle will be marked as a key historical site linked to Irish Clans by the unveiling of a Clans of Ireland historical site plaque and we will also be honouring the late Dan McGrath at this event.

Sleady 400 will look towards the conservation of Sleady Castle and the Clan McGrath Society will lead on engagement with public bodies in Ireland to source grants and funding to ensure the stability and conservation of this national monument.

Further, the Clan McGrath Society will be fully constituted and at the gathering, we will be electing a society Taoiseach (Chief / Leader). The Taoiseach will be inaugurated at the gathering and their role will include being An Cathaoirleach / Chair of the board of the society. Anyone attending the 2024 Clan Gathering and as member of the Clan McGrath, can put themselves forward for the role of Taoiseach. Notification on how to nominate will be circulated to attendees in June 2024. Nominated individuals will then go forward for election. Ballots will be issued on registration at the gathering and the election results of the Taoiseach will be announced at the Sleady Castle event and the inauguration of the Taoiseach will follow.

Although the Clan sept organisations will remain registered as unique septs with Clans of Ireland, the Clan McGrath Society will act as a umbrella organisation to preserve all the rich history and heritage of the Clan throughout the island and across the globe, including taking over the now strong social media presence and established website. The society will further develop these outlets and optimise the opportunities available through them.

Under the umbrella of the clan society we want to maintain and build lasting relationships with all forms and variations of Clan McGrath name throughout the world, with the intention that this approach will create a lasting platform for cooperation and will recognise the contributions to the Clan McGrath from our worldwide membership. We look forward to everyone's participation in moving our Clan's story forward.

The 2024 Clan McGrath Gathering is therefore, a 'back to the drawing board' moment in the development of the clan organisation. For this year's gathering, concern has been expressed in relation to the cost of attending all the events in this packed programme. However, there are significant rising costs that have impacted such events. It has been 5 years since the last gathering, the cost of booking events, transport, insurance, entertainment have all risen significantly. The absence of local government funding, made available for previous gatherings, is no longer available.

The 2024 Clan McGrath Gathering is a non-profit making event. The price has been set after careful consideration and pricing. Any surplus funds will be reinvested into Clan McGrath Society projects. However, Sleady 400 will not be a beneficiary of any funds from the gathering in relation to renovations or ground works at Sleady Castle. However, individuals are welcome to make donations if they so wish to the Go Fund Me page for Sleady 400.

We understand the price of the gathering may be considered high, and this will be a factor in people's decision on whether or not to attend. However, for those that do attend, we as volunteers, promise to do our utmost to make this event memorable and to set a new direction for the Clan McGrath in Ireland and internationally.

We are clear with those attending, what the cost of the gathering is and what they can expect. At this early stage in the reintroduction of Clan McGrath gatherings and the establishment of the new Clan McGrath Society, we do not anticipate the numbers to attend that attended the 2019 gathering, nor are we planning for such numbers. At this early stage in getting the society established, we are planning for a smaller group of attendees while we seek to revive.

We will of course continue to keep pricing under review in the future and always hope to offer the best value for those attending this and future gatherings. We can assure you that the 2024 Clan Gathering has been put together to make it a memorable experience at the best possible cost. We hope that we can continue to build with the support and input of the membership of the society under the leadership of the elected Taoiseach.

The Clan McGrath Society
2024 Gathering Committee

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