

2024 Gathering Programme

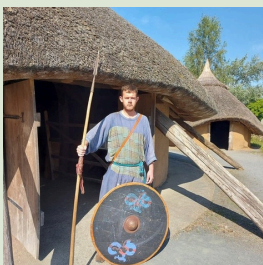
Walking in the footsteps of our ancestors



www.clanmcgrath.org
info@clanmcgrath.org

Welcome / Failte..... this year the Clan McGrath International Gathering returns to the beautiful seaside town of Dungarvan, a key ancestral home of the Clan McGrath. The theme of this year's Gathering: 'Walking with our McGrath ancestors through the evolution of Irish history'. Our programme has been thoughtfully planned and locations selected to help us discover how the McGraths lived through key periods of Irish history. From the early Celtic period to the Viking incursions and the Norman invasion our clan and its diaspora has had a major impact on the Ireland of today and the lands in which we settled. Through our gathering we look forward to building our connections and friendships and welcoming you all to Ireland, your ancestral home.

DAY 1 - Thursday 8th August



- 09:00 Registration Opens - Park Hotel, Dungarvan
- 10:00 Opening Ceremony - Raising the Banner - Park Hotel
- 10:30 Depart Park Hotel
- 12:00 Wexford Heritage Centre

Here we will travel through early Celtic Ireland to discover what life was like for these early inhabitants, how they lived, worked, fought and what they believed in. We'll explore early Irish Christianity and the invasion of the Vikings, followed by the Normans which faced the great Irish clans we know today. With our walk with the ancestors, we learn the foundations of the clans and how they formed Irish Society.

- 13:30 Lunch
- 14:30 Depart Wexford Heritage Centre
- 15:00 Arrive at New Ross
- 15:30 Dunbrody Famine Ship

The Irish Famine, the most fundamental historical event to impact our ancestors and the reason why many were driven from Ireland to explore new lives in distant lands. Here we will board an Irish famine ship (coffin ship). We will hear eyewitness testimony of life and conditions onboard, how people afforded their fare, their expectations of where they were going, their opinions of the Ireland they were leaving. This will be emotional for all visitors.

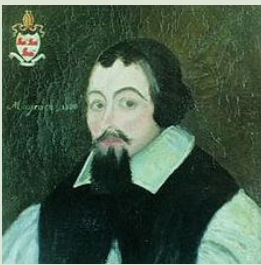
16:45 The John F Kennedy Homestead

The Kennedys, a family who took the opportunities presented to them and rose to the highest offices of state in their new homeland. Famous around the world for their Irish heritage, we will explore their humble beginnings, how they lived and what influenced their decision to emigrate that ultimately led to their descendant, John F Kennedy becoming President.

- 17:45 Leave New Ross and return to Dungarvan
- 18:45 Arrive in Dungarvan

Free Time - Explore Dungarvan - Live music at the Park Hotel

DAY 2 - Friday 9th August



- 09:15 Depart Dungarvan
- 10:30 Arrive at the Rock of Cashel

Also known as Cashel of the Kings, one of the most prominent seats of power in ancient Ireland. Set on a dramatic outcrop of limestone in the Golden Vale, the Rock of Cashel, iconic in its historic significance, possesses the most significant collection of medieval buildings in Ireland.

Here sat one of the most famous of all the McGraths, Miler. We will delve into Miler’s early years in Ulster, his transition from the son of a Chieftain to a Bishop of the Catholic Church and later an Archbishop of the Anglican Church, his influence of a Tudor Queen and move to Cashel with 200 armed kinsman from Ulster. We’ll explore his reputation as a great swordsman and as reputedly the most handsome man in Ireland. Miler’s story links us to the Butlers of Cahir who engaged with Miler, and the Desmond Rebellion in Munster (confederate wars) which, as we will learn, had a huge effect on the fortunes of the Clan McGrath.

- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:00 Depart the Rock of Cashel
- 14:30 Cahir Castle

Home of the Butler family of Cahir. The Butlers or Earls of Ormonde were a prominent Anglo-Irish family. Cahir castle had a change of ownership during the Irish Confederate wars, showing us the turmoil society faced in the time of the McGraths in Waterford. Here we will see how the elites of society lived in comparison to those outside their walls and learn of intrigues, plots the games of thrones the elite played in Irish society.
Walk to Swiss Cottage - The garden house of the Butlers of Cahir.

- 16:30 Depart Cahir Castle - Scenic Drive of the Nire Valley
- Here we will take the scenic route back to Dungarvan. We will travel the old road from Clonmel familiar to our the McGraths ancestors. It is also the road that after the siege at Sleadly Castle, Green and his bandits disposed of the bodies of the soldiers they slew into the river, the bodies were not found for 12 months. The Irish countryside has provided protection and cover for Irish rebels for centuries. The knowledge of the countryside of the Nire Valley allowed the rebels to stay one step ahead of the enemy.
- 18:00 Arrive back at Park Hotel, Dungarvan
 - 20:00 Social Evening at the Park Hotel - Traditional Irish Music

DAY 3 - Saturday
10th August



Bring extra warm clothing, waterproofs etc. We won't be returning to the hotel before enjoying an outdoor BBQ at Sleadly Castle this evening and returning late.

- 10:00 Depart Park Hotel, Dungarvan
 - 10:30 Dromana House and Gardens
- Dromana was once the seat of the Lord of the Decies the FitzGeralds, relations of the Earl of Desmond (Irish Confederate Wars). Katherine FitzGerald married Colonel Villers, thus the House came to the ownership of the English Villers-Stuart family. The Villers Stuarts are famously remembered for radical views, and a famous election in 1826 with Daniel O Connell, although Henry Villers, a protestant, stood in support for Catholic Emancipation. During the Irish Confederate wars the Lords of the Decies were allied with the McGraths, Lady McGraths sister married into the FitzGeralds of Dromana.
- 12:30 Depart Dromana House
 - 13:00 Arrive at Lismore - Lunch Provided
 - 14:00 Lismore Heritage Town Trail including Cathedral

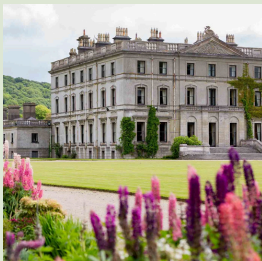
Lismore a quaint little town with bakeries and cafes, is the seat of the Duke of Devonshire in Ireland. Steeped in Irish history it is a good representation of the changes during the Tudor reign in Ireland. The McGrath Tomb located in Lismore Cathedral dated 1486, the tomb features some of the best late medieval carved stonework anywhere in Ireland.

- 15:30 Ballyduff Towers Walk - Self Guided
- The magical towers provide a fairy tale setting which does not reflect the sad period in Irish history where extravagance and starvation lived side by side. The Towers were built in 1850 by Arthur Kiely-Ussher for his wife. The extravagant gates were the only part of the castle to be built as money ran out soon after their completion. He held an estate of approximately 8000 acres, the majority of which was rented to tenant farmers, but he retained approximately 1000 acres for himself. It’s a place to take time out and appreciate.
- 16:30 Depart Lismore
 - 16:45 Visit the grave of Dan McGrath CIOM (former Chieftain)
 - 17:30 Arrive Sleadly Castle

Here is the pinnacle of our tour programme and you will experience something that has never been done before. Not only will you have the freedom to explore the ancestral home of the McGrath family, it’s the location of a key social event in our programme. Within the shadow of Sleadly Castle a BBQ will be hosted, live music will echo from the gables of the castle as we celebrate our 2024 Gathering. Here we will unveil a plaque to mark Sleadly Castle as a national Clans of Ireland Historical Site and we will pay a special tribute to our dearly departed but not forgotten Chieftain Dan McGrath.
We will be launching the Clan McGrath Society’s built heritage project Sleadly 400. Sleadly Castle will be 400 years old in 2028 and we aim to complete our conservation plans to mark this. |You will be updated on how the Sleadly Castle site is being restored. Many of you who attended previous gatherings will notice a few changes since your last visit.

- 23:00 Depart Sleadly Castle
- 23:30 Arrive Park Hotel, Dungarvan

DAY 4 - Sunday
11th August



- 09:00 Depart Park Hotel, Dungarvan
- 09:30 Mass at St. Augustine's Abbeyside
- 10:30 Visit the Abbey and McGrath Grave dated 1400 A.D.

The Clan McGrath were patrons of the medieval and we will visit it and the McGrath dated 1400 and learn about the major restoration work being undertaken by the parish. We will also view the site of the McGrath castle which was demolished in 1916.

- 11:00 Depart Abbeyside
- 10:00 Curraghmore Estate

Seat of de le Paor family, one of the most powerful families in county Waterford. Mary de le Paor famously told Philip McGrath before she married him "Her fathers stables would be more befitting a lady". We will see lady McGraths roots and explore the famous Curraghmore gardens and sample the tea and scones in their newly opened tearooms.

- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:30 The Viking Triangle

Waterford is Irelands oldest city its port was founded by the Vikings in the 914 AD. This brings our tour full circle, as we leant on day one in Wexford where the Normans (descendants of the Vikings) landed, they quickly marched to Waterford and their leader Richard de Clare (Strongbow) marries Aoife MacMurrough in Waterford cathedral. Hence a new alliance and hierarchy was established in Ireland. The invasion of the Normans subsequently leading to conquest of Ireland by England.

- 17:00 Depart The Viking Triangle
- 18:00 Arrive back at Park Hotel, Dungarvan
- 19:30 Meet for Pre-Dinner Drinks
- 20:00 Clan McGrath Banquet

On this our final event of the Clan McGrath Gathering we will join in celebration that will culminate in the inauguration of the Clan McGrath Society / Cumann Chlann Mhic Craith hosted by our newly inaugurated Taoiseach (Chief). The McGrath banner will also be passed to the Clan McGrath of Ulster who will host the next gathering in 2026.

The 2024 Clan McGrath International Gathering is organised by The Clan McGrath Society - Cumann Chlann Mhic Craith, operated entirely by volunteers.

The Society will seek to deliver all aspects of the programme but reserves the right to make changes at short notice where necessary.

Irish weather can be unpredictable so we like to talk about it, a lot. Bring a weather friendly wardrobe, you'll need to be adaptable. Bring a sweater, even in summer; waterproofs to accompany all outdoor activities; sunglasses; comfortable walking shoes (we will be exploring some sites that are of the beaten path), and an umbrella. When the sun shines in Ireland it's quite strong, so wear a high factor and bring a sunhat.



CLAN McGRATH

International Gathering 2024

