

Thursday, May 7, 2009

Heading south we paused in Galway long enough for Sheila to find an operating pay phone and talk to Dr. Dennis Reen of Tralee. Elsbeth struck out again on her search for embroidery thread.

The Cliffs of Moher are one of Ireland’s most spectacular sights. Standing 230 meters above the ground at their highest point and 8 km long, the Cliffs boast one of the most amazing views in Ireland. Even though the rain had returned, many of us walked up a wide set of concrete stairs to the highest point to look at O’Brien’s Tower which was built by a descendant of Brian Boru to impress female visitors. A visitors’ centre had been unobtrusively carved into a hill. The weather fooled Sheila again and she was fortunate to borrow Owen’s jacket for the hike to take the pictures seen below.



The Cliffs of Moher from near O'Brien’s Tower

We seemed to luck out finding pubs on the road, and the food was always good, however, generally priced much higher than in Canada. We wandered further south taking a ferry crossing at Killimer and passing through Tralee at about 6 pm. We glimpsed the windmill at Blennerville near where the barque, The Jeannie Johnston, was under construction from 1998 to 2002.



Barb, Lola, Maynard, Jessica, Elsbeth, Chris, Betty, Nancy



Jessica, Lola and Nancy at Dingle Courtyard Cottages

The sun came out when we reached Dingle. That was the good news. The bad was that, when we finally found the Dingle Courtyard Cottages, there was no one there to check us in or tell us which units were ours. However Units 1, 2 and 4 had keys in the door. Chris and six others took unit 1. We tried unit 2 only to find the only bedding was soiled and dumped in the shower, but it was the one unit with any toilet paper. Unit 4 seemed ok so Darrell and four others and a robin took up residence. The robin finally found its way back out. There were no clean bathroom towels. We borrowed three from

one of the neighbours. She also allowed us to phone the number of the caretaker who would come in with towels in the morning. Her excuse for not getting the place ready was that we never called her to confirm our arrival, even though we had paid for the two nights in advance. We tried to talk Chris into going out for dinner but he prepared another delicious meal. We did take advantage of the washers and driers to “come clean”.

Friday, May 8, 2009

The intent was to spend Friday driving around the ring of Kerry, but the majority preferred a quiet day on the Dingle Peninsula. We walked down the hill into the shopping district after another delicious breakfast cooked by Chris. We should point out that our two eldest members, Jessica and Lola who were a year or two either side of 90, left the rest of us in the dust yet again.



Strand House in Dingle, Co. Kerry

We liked Dingle. We liked the design and location of our “cottages”. Some of us discovered the Strand House department store with the flavour of the old MRA in Saint John, NB. Barbara and Sheila bought identical hats there. Owen and Sheila had a coffee break in their upstairs café and then went back for their puréed vegetable soup at lunch. During one of the occasional rain showers, some of us even took shelter in their doorway. The shops and boutiques in Dingle were rich with locally made products; we’d have been smart to buy all our “coming home” gifts there.

Chris made big enough batch of “magic chicken”, but Denis and Barbara Reen took Owen and Sheila out to a pub/restaurant which had just hired the best cook in Dingle. Sheila was delighted at long last to meet the chief executive of the Jeanie Johnston project. She had corresponded with him during the organizing of the visit of this 123 foot replica famine ship to St. Andrews in 2003, 150 years after the original vessel brought passengers to work on the St. Andrews and Quebec Railroad. The JJ project was foundering before Denis took charge. A dentist by profession and a low handicap golfer, he also headed the task force that established the Tralee Aqua Dome. They are a charming, fascinating couple.



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Owen (above), Chris, George, Jessica, Barb



An ancient Irish clochân, or circular hut made of unmortared stone , is in the farmyard, middle left.



Around the Dingle Peninsula.

Clockwise from top:

- Sweet stop (Maynard, Betty, Lola, Chris, Nancy, in front, see boat in window.)
- Lands end, Blasket Islands
- Celtic Cross in churchyard
- Roadside shrine
- Model boat in restaurant window
- Fishing boat hauled out



The top left picture was taken with a smart phone, the rest by a Canon S410 digital camera