

Saturday, May 9, 2009.

It was indeed fortunate that the Reens had advised us that driving the 214 km around the Ring of Kerry and the 214 km from Dingle to Tramore in Waterford County was too much for one day; they knew the difficult terrain and winding roads. They were able to give us an alternate route that saw some of the best of the Ring of Kerry and similar landscapes on the Dingle Peninsula.

The map to the right shows the route we took early on Saturday May 9. The vistas across Dingle Bay at the Inveragh Peninsula were very similar to those from the Ring of Kerry. At



Killorglin we went south, stopping in Killarney for a coffee break and stroll. We then turned south-west into the Killarney National Park. We travelled through overhanging trees up the winding road to Ladies View, so named by Queen Victoria's ladies-in-waiting. Wise members of our band shopped at the store which sold authentic Irish-made goods. From a gap in the mountains we went down to Kenmare before heading west.



Ladies View, Killarney National Park, the Ring of Kerry

At or near Macroom we stopped for lunch. We then travelled by spectacular sea vistas and lush golf courses along the southern coast of Ireland, not stopping to kiss the Blarney Stone as we motored by Cork or to look for whoopers at Dungarvan. We took some interesting back roads as we approached Tramore and the lovely old Grand Hotel overlooking the beachside tourist town. *See map on page 1 chapter 1.*



Chris and Darrel charting a course with Elsbeth



The ferris wheel and beach of Tramore behind Lola, Barb and George.

To the left is the final picture on our digital camera. Lola, bless her heart, bought disposable cameras on a two-for-one sale, giving us each a camera for Dublin.

Tramore had a carnival atmosphere with all kinds of arcades and rides, none of which were operating yet. While we were there it was

very cold and tending to rain. Despite that, many of us went for walks both before and after eating a fine meal at the Grand Hotel.

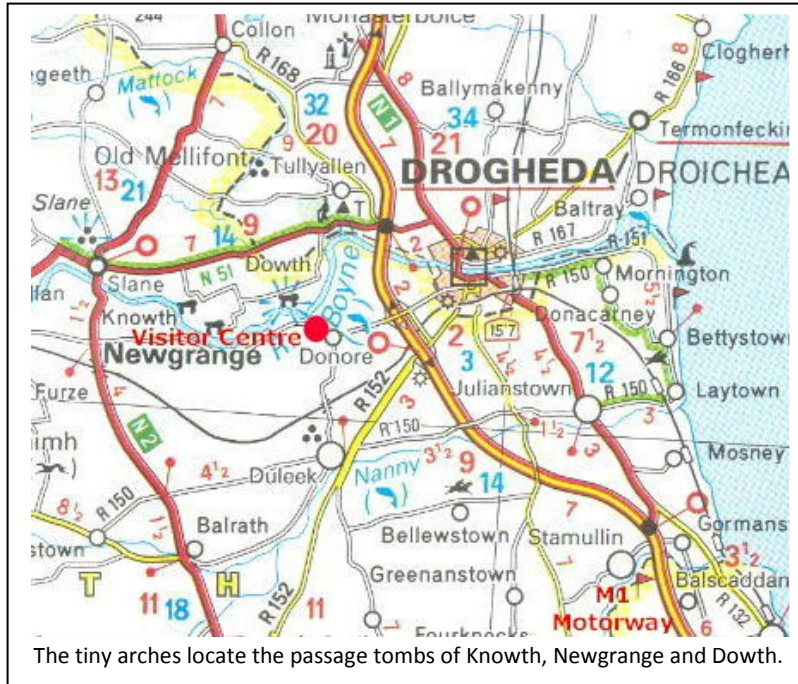
Sunday, May 10, 2009. Mother's Day. After breakfast at the hotel Chris left Owen the marshy area seen beyond the hats in the above picture. It was one of the prime bird watching areas in Ireland, and while he saw some things he would have gladly spent the whole day there. Too soon we picked him up and were on the road to Dublin, stopping in Kilkenny from where one of Maynard's ancestors emigrated. He had time to stroll through a grave yard to locate some Shores and found a local source for more information should he wish to undertake a genealogical search. Some of us enjoyed an ice cream concoction at a kiosk while others walked to a castle.

We finally reached Dublin and found Cassidy's Hotel despite the troublesome one way streets.

Late that afternoon we went for a walk, crossing the River Liffey and drinking in the sites of the old town, with lots of musicians performing in the street, a Castle which was locked and Trinity College nearby. We all split up and agreed to meet for supper at Gallagher's Boxy House. The boxy we had for supper was a kind of a crepe stuffed with all sorts of good choices. Lola flirted with a couple of men at the next table and they took part in the light hearted exchange giving her a sample of their food. The excellent waiter Bobby had lived in Toronto. We were a raucous bunch.



Statue on O'Connell Street, Dublin



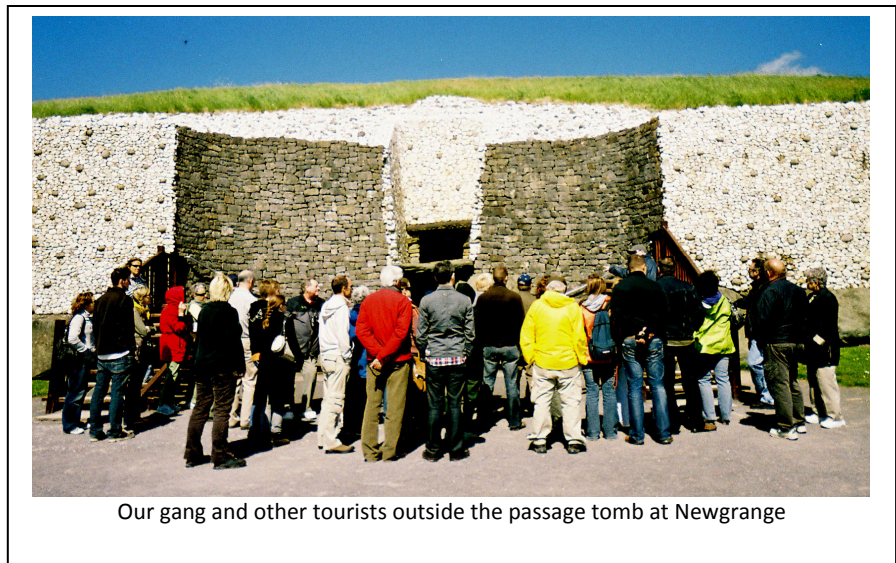
Monday, May 11, 2009

On our last full day in Ireland we went to see the passage tombs in County Meath, just north of Dublin on the River Boyne, a trip made quickly on the M1 Motorway via Drogheda.

The oldest Megalithic Passage Tomb was built at Newgrange in about 3200 BC. The kidney shaped mound covers an area of over one acre and is surrounded by 97 kerbstones, some of which are richly decorated with megalithic art. The 19 metre long inner passage leads to a cruciform

chamber with a corbelled roof. It is estimated that the construction of the Passage Tomb at Newgrange would have taken a work force of 300 at least 20 years.

The passage and chamber of Newgrange are illuminated by the winter solstice sunrise. A shaft of sunlight shines through the roof box over the entrance and penetrates the passage to light up the chamber. The dramatic event lasts for 17 minutes at dawn on the Winter Solstice and for a few mornings either side of the Winter Solstice.



Admission to the Newgrange chamber for the Winter Solstice sunrise is by lottery. In September each year, 50 names are drawn and two places are awarded to each name drawn. Good luck, Chris!

It was not Newgrange but Dowth that we visited first. To get there from the Visitor Centre we walked across a bridge over the Boyne River just upstream from the location of the famous or infamous Battle of the Boyne, depending upon your point of view.

The guide who gave the tour at Dowth was excellent and unlike at Newgrange, we had him mostly to ourselves. At the end when we stood on top of the tomb looking towards Newgrange and Knowth our tip was the best way to say thank you.

It was at Newgrange that George and Sheila distinguished ourselves by exhibiting claustrophobia

when we attempted to enter the passage tomb with the rest of our group. We wandered the grounds and admired the kerbstones and the nearby golden fields of rape in flower while the rest marvelled at



Our gang looking at the kerbstones surrounding the passage tomb at Knowth

the simulated winter solstice and the skill of the ancient Irish at a time that predates the pyramids of Egypt.

Our entry fee included bus trips between Dowth and Newgrange. Prior to returning to Dublin in our



George waiting outside Newgrange while school children start their tour.

own vans we had time to browse in the visitor centre and purchase books and DVDs on the archaeology, natural science and history of Ireland. Back in Dublin we formed small groups and further explored the vibrant and ancient city.



Carvings on kerbstones at Newgrange

That last evening in Ireland we ate at the restaurant in the Cassidy Hotel. It was nice for those of us worn out from last-minute sightseeing and shopping in Dublin to stay put for the evening. Furthermore we needed to repack and to get to bed early because we had to arrive at the airport before 5 a.m. A pretty groggy bunch gathered in the lobby in the middle of the night.



Tuesday, May 12, 2008

To the left is a collage of pictures taken with the disposable camera in two of the airports on the way home. Note Chris in the top right picture working on his computer in the background by the “Samsung” post.

Two new faces appear in the bottom two pictures taken in the Ottawa Airport. Maynard’s daughter is shown with him, Betty and Chris and dear friend Morris is having a snack with Barb and Nancy. Note the Clifden hats on the two gents and Barb again in her Dingle hat.

Travelling with the sun made Tuesday a 28 hour day. Waiting in airports was not as exciting as on the trip overseas. The speedy processing and fewer travellers a smaller airport like Ottawa’s was a pleasant change.

Our return flights on May 12 were:

- BD120 departed Dublin at 06:40 arrived in London, Heathrow (Terminal 1) at 8:05
- AC889 departed London (Terminal 3) at 13:00 and arrived in Ottawa at 15:35
- AC8798 departed Ottawa at 18:50 and arrived in Fredericton at 21:37

This tour was a successful compromise between a regimented bus tour and independent travel. We had the flexibility to do things we wanted to do by ourselves (eg: visit Greyabby and meet with the Reens) and as a group we could add items to or exclude items from the agenda (eg: Newgrange and The Ring of Kerry). The trip was a chance to further bond with old friends while enjoying a tantalizing taste of Ireland that left us longing to return. Thank you, Chris, Darrel and the good people of the Emerald Isle.