

Trip to Ireland 25 May to 9 June 1993

May 25/26. Left Edmonton 9:35 pm and arrived London 8_ hours later. Slept quite a bit, interrupted by dinner and breakfast. Then a 40-min flight to Dublin. Raining on arrival. Jack O'Keeffe was there to meet us. The airport is north of Dublin, and St. Martin's (Brendan and Eda Donnelly) is south, in Ballinteer, just beyond Dundrum. Rush hour travel through Dublin was slow. We bought some crackers and cheese and slept well.

27 May. Took the bus to Dublin. Christchurch Cathedral, National Art Gallery, Trinity College, St. Stephen's Green, National Museum. Dinner with Jack and Joan O'Keeffe and Miriam.

28 May. Booked a car from Argus Hire-a-Car. Attitude not impressive, especially after we signed the contract. Drove to Bray, Glendalough, Rathdrum, Gorey, Enniscorthy. Rainy, some sun. Had a huge lunch at Wicklow Restaurant, far too much food. Stayed at a B&B about 4 km out of Enniscorthy, ate at Tavern Bar Restaurant, with John and Broddy, Englishman and NZ-Chinese bride-lawyer. Left the lights on and the battery went dead, but we push-started it with Joe's help.

29 May. To New Ross, Waterford, Kilkenny, and via back roads to Cashel. Hill House (Eileen Noonan, surgeon's widow since 1971), six daughters, one son, huge house, large room, fine view of Cashel Rock, excellent place to stay. Dinner at Bishop's Buttery in Cashel Palace. Nice place but food only so-so.

30 May. Sunday, Pentecost. Drove to Cahir and, on the spur of the moment, went to RC church for 11:30 mass. Short but pointed sermon about the Holy Spirit, 'a higher power', some choir songs, communion, and all that in 45 minutes. More rain. Drove to Cork, wandered around on University College Cork campus (everything locked up). From a hotel lobby we phoned to Edmonton. Elaine was not home, so we talked to Mom W. for a while. Then via Bandon to Bantry. Tosca Kramer, Dutch immigrant, runs spotlessly kept B&B, 'The Mill'. Excellent seafood dinner at the Pine Lodge. Fairly expensive, though. Small, new place, run by English woman.

31 May. Saw Bantry House, built 1707. Huge, with lots of nice things in it. Nice gallery in Bantry. A much better one in Kenmare. Kenmare was very nice. Road from Bantry to Kenmare and from Kenmare to Killarney and from Killarney to Tralee was winding, slow, through rocky, forsaken-looking country. Stopped at a stained-glass place also. Met some Frenchmen horsing around in Killarney National Park. Came through Moll's Gap, stopped at one B&B in Tralee ('luxury' from the book) and rejected it. Found 'Carraig' (Gillian Slye) - looked excellent. Had the May special, 10 punts, at the Imperial Hotel. Food and service excellent.

June 1. Did most of the Dingle peninsula 'ring'. Crossed the mountain range on a single-lane back road to Inch, then to Dingle. Nice renovated church, with some beautiful painted panes (pix on Fujichrome 100 at 1/60, 5.6 Kako, some 8). Sun shone part of the time. Also rain and, on Connor's Pass, in the clouds. Very nice drive in total. Tralee to Lahinch via Tarbert-Kilrush ferry (7 punts). We missed the ferry by one car-length, so waited for an hour. Pretty bumpy road to Lahinch, B&B at 'Seafield' (Slattery's). Good, but not as nice as at Tralee. Weather forecast stays dismal. Saw most of 'Chinatown' on

TV.

June 2. Raining again this morning. Headed for Galway via the Burren and the display centre at Kilfenora. Lots of limestone rocks. Bought a Michelin Guide at Galway AA. By this time it had stopped raining. Part way to Clifden the sun began to shine and the rest of the day, to Westport, was beautiful. Saw bogs, turf, the visitors' centre at Connemara National Park. Went for a short nature walk. Lots of fuchsia-flowered shrubs. Also lots of light purple rhododendrons. Do they all grow wild? Linda's Spinning Studio had interesting cats but was closed. Reached Westport about 8 and found 'Woodside' (Nuala Hopkins), a nice place (2-3 years old) to stay. Dinner at John J. O'Malley's at 9:30. Times are changing. Stopped at Matt Molloy's Pub to check out the 'Traditional Music' sign but the place was jammed, without music.

June 3. Yogurt and fruit and toast for breakfast was nice for a change. Woodside was an excellent place to stay. Looked at some paintings in art Galleries at Westport (Tom Smith eccentric, and also a German woman's work), then left towards Sligo, Yeats country. Saw a photo display at an Art Centre, and listened to a story teller wood carver, Michael Quirke, for a while. Lots of old Irish history, mixed with a bit of mythology, for example, about Benbulbin (mountain). Before Sligo we saw a round tower and abbey ruins at Turlough, a thatched cottage (picture also in our book). Saw Yeats' grave at Drumcliffe, and made our way to Donegal. Sligo to Donegal was the best road we have had so far. Found a good place to stay without difficulty, just outside Donegal. Dinner at the Harbour was reasonable.

June 4. Rain again in the morning, not very promising. Talked with an English couple on a cycling tour. Backtracked to Ballyshannon, to a ceramic place. Nice stuff. Also a tour on how they make it. Met a U of Minnesota geology prof, John Donovan, born in St. John, NB. Then out to Killybegs. Halfway there the clouds began to clear and it was beautiful the rest of the day. Killybegs is a fishing town, and smells like it. Had some lunch in a hotel lobby, wrote some postcards, walked the wharf. The carpet place had been closed several years ago. Then to Ardara and across the highlands to Letterkenny. Fine scenery, including a bunch of turf-making places. At Ardara we phoned Elaine and talked 10-15 minutes. Good to hear her voice. First place we looked at in Letterkenny looked good but could only have us for one night. Long weekend. She phoned around and found a place. Not as nice but it will do. We had a pub dinner (OK, cheaper) and wrote some more cards. We walked the town a bit. Less attractive than Donegal or Westport. Time to wash some clothes also.

June 5. Yogurt and fruit for breakfast again. Nice. Left to go north to Glenveagh National Park. Visited Glebe Gallery and House - very nice tour for just us. The Colmille Heritage Centre was closed, unfortunately. Glenveagh Visitors Centre and Castle were nice. In the sun the scenery was beautiful. Went as far as Horn Head, the end of the road. Then back towards Letterkenny. Had dinner in the Lagoon Bar, very good. Back at the B&B by 9 pm. Our landlady, in the morning, had booked a place in Donegal for us for Sunday night.

June 6. Breakfast 'late', at 9. Via Church Hill (Heritage Centre closed) we went west towards the coast. Glencolumbkille was not impressive. Then towards Killybegs, and south to Teelin and the Cliffs of Bunglass. Impressive and spectacular. Wandered

around there for aa while. Then on to Donegal (The Arches, Noreen McGinty). By far the nicest and best place we have had. Friendly hostess and other guests (Scottish systems analyst and retired Williamsburg, VA sociology prof, Wayne and Ruth). Beautiful view from our room. House about 2 years old., Had a nice dinner at Hyland Hotel. Stayed up talking to the Scot until 12.

June 7. A bit of shopping in Donegal, then south to Sligo and Athlone. There we went through four places (two full, one not nice) before finding a place to stay (Bushfield). The most chasing around we have done. It was nice in the morning but rainy off and on later. Athlone seems to be a dirty and generally unattractive town. We ate at Coulon's Restaurant, not spectacular. Back at the B&B we made comparisons with the beautiful place we had yesterday. Not the best day of our trip. We saw a couple of churches and walked around the 1200's castle. Still overcast but no rain this time. Driving through small towns (even bigger ones) is a combination of dodge-car and low-speed chicken. Less so on the open road.

June 8. Went off on some side roads, via Edenderry, and Carbury (nice, some farm fields, cows at a river, old church ruins) and arrived at Dublin about 2 pm. After some wrong moves we found St. Martin's, checked in, stopped to see Jack O'Keeffe, found the car place, and spent a few hours downtown. Also drove partway up the mountain to see the view. Very nice. Had a whiskey with Eda Donnelly and daughter Mary (eldest), and talked for w while. A bit of family history. Last day already.

June 9. We had done a bit of reconnaissance, so had little trouble finding the Argus House (with a bit of help from Jack O'Keeffe's directions to avoid rush hour traffic), and at precisely 8:40 Jack met us there to take us to the airport. Our Ireland visit was done. It could have been longer. Despite the not-so-great weather it had been a good time.