

## **TRIP REPORT:**

### **Tuesday 18 September 2009**

Karyn took us to the airport and stayed for a coffee. We checked in OK no problems with baggage. Purchased all the duty free such as smokes, alcohol and perfume to be picked up on our return flight to Singapore was short and the time passed quickly.

We arrived in Singapore early and met up with Peter who arrived on QF9 which was taking us to London. We had a couple of drinks at the Qantas Club and left when our flight was called. It was great to see him and catch up.

### **Wednesday 19 September 2009**

We arrived in London at 5:25 am in the morning after a long but OIK flight, when not sleeping; we both read a bit or watched individual movies or shows. At Heathrow we transferred from terminal 4 to Terminal 1 by bus and then seemed to walk endless corridors finally ending up at the gate for flight to Dublin which was short and swift.

In Dublin being the law abiding citizens we are we walked through the Red Channel to declare our food, but no one was interested in us so we walked out into the terminal. We picked up our Nissan automatic car and headed for Belfast using the GPS. WE missed a couple of directions but the clever machine without blinking and eye or getting upset redirected us. We arrived at &B hotel Malones about 3:30 and were put in an executive serviced apartment which was modern clean but had a few minor hiccups like leaking roof, no hand towels no coffee and milk (all which was fixed except the easily quite easily).

After checking in we drove down to the city centre for a quick look, had dinner at Robinsons, went back to our hotel and were asleep with the TV on as we were stuffed by 8:30 pm.

### **Thursday 20 September 2009**

This morning we had a lovely and filling breakfast before we went on the road following the GPS instructions down to Down Patrick cathedral where we saw the alleged grave of St Patrick before going onto a magnificent technical presentation at the St Patrick Centre which described St Patrick's Life his difficulties and how he overcame obstructions on his way to convert the heathens of Ireland.

We returned to Belfast and went on a bus tour of the city which took us to all the places we planned to go such as the Titanic Docks, Shankill area, City Hall, Stormont, Queen's University and the Belfast Eye (which we went on after the tour).

In the evening we at OAP (Old Pensioner Rates) had a quick dinner before we saw the Big Friendly Giant (Lynn slept through this) in the magnificently recently refurbished Belfast Opera House. It was worth paying the money to see the show just to see the inside of the Opera House. Straight after the show we returned to our hotel. Lynn is sleeping as I am typing this report.

Tomorrow we head North for more adventures.

### **Friday 21 August 2009**

We left Belfast this morning after a quick but futile search for the Ulster Historical foundation (the Ulster Museum was shut for renovations). We drove North along the coast, we went via Larne along some majestic Coastal scenery to our first stop at Carrick-a Rede where we walked for 15 minutes to

the rope sling bridge, which Lynn very bravely walked across (we have photos to prove it). It was a very pleasant walk although at times the wind was strong, fortunately no rain.

We then went onto the Giants Causeway, which was quite an impressive site. The clever big giants assembled all the rocks into stepping stones which seemed to be assembled in an organised manner, but really was freak of nature caused by volcanic rocks being cooled rapidly. From there we became lost because Sid programmed the wrong place to see the Sperrin Mountains and travelled longer than we planned. Having said that, it was a pleasant drive, through farmland, rolling hills and temperate rainforest areas.

We arrived in Londonderry at the Iona Inn B&B (2\*) comfortable but smelling of being progressively renovated. We had a Pub dinner in town; Lynn had Crumbed Plaice and Sid Irish Stew. We have been following the cricket and after a disastrous day it appears the Poms may win back the ashes. After a comfortable night we are raring to go on our next Adventure.

### **Saturday 22 August 2009**

We went on a double Deck Tour of Londonderry/Derry before we left to travel Enniskillen. We toured around the walled City, through the Bogside where there very poignant wall Murals, the Loyalist areas where the locals have decided to move on have removed all evidence of the war which rage for thirty years. We also saw the hands of peace memorial.

We then went north wets along the coast through the Derryleagh Mountains, through moors and back roads to Enniskillen on the lake but unfortunately arrived too late to see the castle and museum. So we went on to a Farm B&B called Hillcrest very neat and tidy the Host Noelene very friendly. We had a long day in the car saw lots of coast, mountains, country lanes and moors (even our GPS had a hiccup which followed to the letter and ended up in the middle of nowhere in the one of the moors, but it was a pleasant drive).

We went to 5\* restaurant for dinner in the middle of nowhere which had a first class service with a price to match. We went to bed early only to be wakened at 4:00 by a call from someone unknown in Australia. We also received the score Dockers vs Bombers and were pleasantly surprised by our big Win. The Cricket's not doing so well and we'll see how much we may lose by.

### **Sunday 23 August 2009**

After a restful sleep we had a nice breakfast and set forth for Knock. It rained a lot but did not spoil our pilgrimage. The Knock Pilgrimage complex consists of the Apparition Shrine Basilica Church, the Church of the Apparition (where the apparition of Our Lady, St Joseph and St John the Baptist, an altar with a lamb standing on it with a large cross behind while angels hovered above the lamb occurred in 1879), a reconciliation chapel, many statues, Stations of the Cross, and much more which also includes a caravan park and a hostel.

The complex is a tribute to Mgr Horan who as a visionary planned and built it to cater for the pilgrims coming to Knock but also to help the local population. Outside the complex are a number of shops selling many types Christian paraphernalia. We went to mass at 11 O'clock in the Church of the Apparition, the Apparition Shrine and Sid went to Confession in the reconciliation chapel (where there were many 50+ confessionals). We had a soup for lunch, did a bit of shopping and then travelled north west to our next stay at the Burton Street House just north of Ballina. A pleasant B&B run by an elderly couple.

### **Monday 24 August 2009**

After a comfortable nights sleep, we had a breakfast of cereals and a Full Irish Breakfast for Sid and porridge bacon and tomato for Lynn we hit the road heading West in County Mayo. Our first stop

was a Neolithic Site called Cede Fields where there is evidence of farming settlements about 5,000 years ago. The site had an information centre built like a Pyramid with a Glass Top.

From the top we could see the spectacular cliffs of the area with Downpatrick Head standing like a square block separated from the mainland. The farming stopped about 3,000 years ago because the land turned into Bog fields. Leaving the site we continued West where saw some high Cliff Coast line turning into undulating bog fields. We turned South on the Mayo Peninsula and then went West aging to Achill Island driving down a steep hill at the end of the island to the land side of Achill Head (we to old and weak to go up the hill to see the seaward side of the head. None the less the land side was high undulating bogfields with sheep taking over the roads was scenic and worth a visit.

We then headed East to Westport a scenic Coastal Town which was our next stop at "Them Helm Inn" where we have a 3 bedroom apartment with lounge and kitchen with a combined Washing Machine/Dryer. It is very clean and spacious. Lynn is currently doing the washing as I type up today's report. For Tea Lynn had a Sea Food Chow, Crab Claws and Benoffee (cream, banana toffee and biscuit base. Sid had Atlantic Salmon filled with shrimps and spinach. Now off to bed after the washing.

### **Tuesday 25 August 2009**

We managed to do our washing overnight. Every time Lynn woke up she turned the dryer on. Sod after another lovely breakfast at "The Helm" we pushed on about 9:30 am. It's amazing isn't, you have small room and your spread your stuff, you have a three bedroom apartment and you still spread your stuff around only in a much bigger area. After we left Westport we headed West again and our forts stop was Croagh Patrick which is a revered pilgrimage site for St Patrick. The climb is 715 M and takes about 3 hours.

There 3 sets of stations and a oratory Chapel on the top. The climb to the top is done by thousands of pilgrims every year. Lynn and Sid just climbed to the statue of St Patrick about 400 metre walk from the entrance. We also visited the statue of Our Lady of Medjegore (which was blessed by our lady during one of her apparition in 2006 and installed at the foot of the mountain.

We continued West and then turned south through the majestic Dfulough Pass with the Meweelrea Mts to the West of us and the Sheellry hills to the East of us, then throw in Dog Lough (lake) and it makes an impressive sight. We stopped and looked at Augah Falls. We turned South West and visited the Kylemore Abbey and Garden run by Benedictine Nuns. The building was impressive and their chapel interesting.

We also visited the Victorian Garden which is being restored and contains an organised flower garden and vegetable patch for the Abbey's own use and a little surplus for selling. WE then went South via Clifden and Roundstone along a very pretty coast consisting of bare high mountains and lots of flat water bays. We then travelled north to join the main Rd to Galway and visited a 15<sup>th</sup> Century Irish House fort called Aughanure Castle which is still in the process of being restored.

We then continued South-East until reached our Stay tonight at the Derryowen House B & B. After checking in we went for a drive through Galway and Sawmill foreshore before returning to Donnely's Pub for dinner. Sid had Seafood Chowder followed by Ravaleer Prawns. Lynn had Seafood Chowder and Smoked Salmon stuffed with crabmeat. Now after sending this report, it's off to bed before we go West again. Today it was fine most of the day, with only a couple drops of rain. Tomorrow we believe it's going to rain all day.