

IRELAND ODYSSEY

12 - 28th July 2024

With Gillian Schoemaker and Alan Potter

Do join us on our Odyssey Journey, tracing the threads of the spiritual history of Ireland - a rich and profound story dating back many thousands of years. We'll see ancient megalithic sites, castles, monastic settlements, vibrant Dublin, a variety of landscapes, charming towns and villages, traditional music and song and much, much more -

An unforgettable journey awaits, in the company of like-minded people with an interest in an anthroposophical perspective.

Most mornings, we will meet together to prepare for the events of the day.

In the evenings, we may gather to share impressions and experiences.

At many of the sites, we will explore the spirit of place through song and story, eurythmy, and informal talks with Gillian and Alan. We will endeavor to experience our Odyssey in the light of earth-healing and gratitude in these special places where the worlds of humanity and spirit were closer than today.

There will be time for ponderings and wanderings too!

Time to enjoy the landscape and soul-scape of Ireland - the beautiful interplay of light, sea, mountains and sky.

And sunshine - and maybe even some rain! And rainbows!

1. Friday July 12th - To DUBLIN - 3 nights

Arrive at Dublin Airport. Taxi to our hotel {20 minutes} Meet Gillian and Alan.

***Dinner** at a nearby restaurant, and overnight at Aberdeen Lodge in a quiet leafy suburb, a stroll away from the sea.



2. Saturday 13th - AM - we'll visit the National Museum and the magnificent Gold Collection, some items dating from before 2000BC, Bronze-age weapons and exquisite gold and silver work from the Celtic Christian period. Lunch break. PM National Gallery. Dinner on your own.



3. Sunday 14th -Visit the Book of Kells and Trinity College.

Lunch break.

3.30 Visit to Dublin Castle, seat of colonial power in Ireland and now the State Apartments. ***Dinner** and possible performance at the historic Abbey theater



4. Monday 15th -**To DROGHEDA** - 3 nights

9AM departure for Glendalough - 1 1/2 hours' drive. This is the site of St Kevin's monastery, one of the six primary monastic medieval colleges of the Celtic Christian period. It was a royal burial place and place of pilgrimage. We visit the excellent Visitors' Center, highlighting many aspects of monastic life. It's a beautiful deep glaciated valley where nature is strong. There is an opportunity to walk on part of the pilgrim's route to a lovely waterfall. Picnic lunch. Drive to Drogheda.

*** Dinner** and o/night Scholars' Townhouse Hotel

5. Tuesday 16th - Newgrange and Knowth complex - this impressive and evocative chambered tomb is one of the major tourist sites in Ireland, not to be missed.



Lunch at the cafeteria.

Dinner on your own in Drogheda.

6. Wednesday 17th - Drive to the little-visited Loughcrew Cairns. The 6000-year-old extensive cairns at Loughcrew hills date from the period of the Hibernian Mysteries, before the Kali Yuga or the Dark Age. With the 5000 year-old Newgrange complex they comprise 90% of the known megalithic art in Western Europe. Picnic lunch. In the afternoon we'll visit Kells monastic settlement, and St Colmcille's house where a later part of the Book of Kells, a medieval illustrated gospels masterpiece was written.

Dinner on your own



7. Thursday 18th - **To KILKENNY** - 2 nights

Up to now, we have been in Leinster province, now we move on - to the province of Munster and a new culture. Today is a gentle day - we'll visit Kildare and Solus Bhríde - a convent dedicated to Saint Bride, with a strong culture of meditation and of hospitality.

***Lunch** at Silken Thomas in Kildare.

In the afternoon we'll visit the High Cross at Moone.

* **Dinner**. Tonight we stay at the Pembroke Hotel in Kilkenny



8. Friday 19th - Free morning. Lunch on your own.

In the afternoon we'll visit the Crosses of Ahenny and be guided by our good friend John Clarke. En route we'll stop at Ballytobin, an erstwhile Camphill center.

* **Dinner**, followed by an introductory talk about the Celtic and Christian festivals.

9. Saturday 20th - **To KILLARNEY** - 4 nights

In the morning, we move on to the Rock of Cashel. This was the seat of the Kings of Munster and the center of its spiritual life in the Cathedral and in the beautiful Romanesque Cormac' chapel.

Here we take the official guided tour. On the way we'll visit Lough Gur. This is a magical landscape inhabited for 5000 years and created according to legend by the sun Goddess Aine. We'll see a large stone circle with orientation to the festivals of Imbolc and Samhain. Picnic lunch.

In the afternoon it's a 2 hours' drive to Killarney, a site of unparalleled beauty with the Magillicuddy Reeks, Ireland's highest mountain range as a backdrop. The Gap of Dunloe is a renowned beauty spot.



Tonight we stay at Gleann Fia Guesthouse beautifully situated on the outskirts of the (rather touristy) town. Dinner on your own in Killarney.

10. Sunday 21st - Depart 9 AM - Today we will travel the famous Dingle Peninsula, along with many other tourists - we'll try to outrun them! We will see some sites connected with St Brendan, the remains of Reasc monastery and some other megalithic sites. Legend has it one of the sons of Noah landed here, and perhaps that the Grail came to Dingle, which had ancient trade with the Mediterranean. Picnic lunch. * **Dinner** in Dingle.

11. Monday 22nd - Free day. You could visit Inisfallen monastery on Lough Leane, or the beautiful Gap of Dunloe, walk along the lake, or ramble through the town. Bicycle or Jarvey hire available in the town



12. Tuesday 23rd - - 8 Am departure - optional visit to Skellig Michael.

This is a remarkably evocative monastic site on a wave-torn rocky island, a one hour 8 miles boat trip, landing on a small pier and climbing the 600 steep and uneven steps up the cliff-side to the Monastery of St Michael, inhabited from the 6th to the 13th century. This is not a trip for the faint-hearted - the sea can be rough and choppy, sometimes so much so that the boats cannot go. The ascent is steep, with a handrail only on the landward side, so you need to have a reasonable head for heights. We have 2 hours to see the little settlement and imagine the austere devotional life of the monks. Picnic lunch
***Dinner** at Tom Crean's restaurant in Kenmare.



13. Wednesday 24th - **To BALLYVAUGHAN** - 3 nights
On the way north we will visit Bunratty Castle, a medieval castle on the Shannon estuary famous for its medieval atmosphere and music. Lunch at the café. ***Dinner** will be a four course 'Medieval Banquet' at the castle - no doubt rather hokey but good fun! Overnight at the Waters Country House Hotel.



13. Thursday 25th - Visit by boat to Holy Island - there's a monastery, complete with a round-tower, on Lough Derg on the River Shannon. Goethean observation exercise on the island. Picnic lunch. We will be hosted by our friends Shibhan and Johannes Moora for a talk and Afternoon Tea at the Christian Community in nearby Tuamgraney. Dinner on your own.



14. Friday 26th - Today it's over the sea to Inis Oirr, the eastern-most of the Aran Islands. It's a simple serene place full of traditional island life and is Gaelic speaking. Visit little St Kevin's church . 20 minute boat ride from the little port of Doolin. Return to Ballyvaughan for ***dinner**

15. Saturday 27th - **To DUBLIN** - 1 night

We'll visit Thoor Balilee, the WB Yeats Centre, a Norman castle where the poet lived and wrote during the civil war, not far from Coole Park.



Lunch break. On the way to Dublin, we'll go to Clonmacnois monastic site (if time allows). We'll meet to review our Ireland Odyssey before our *** Farewell dinner** at The Greedy Goose [couldn't resist that one!] O/night Carlton Hotel near the airport.

16. Sunday 28th - Departure.

LEADERS

Gillian Schoemaker - eurythmist, native of Scotland, she lives and works at the Camphill School PA. She organizes and leads Odyssey journeys in Greece, Egypt, Italy and Scotland, with eurythmy, story and song as essential components to help us live into the essence of place.

Alan Potter - born Dublin. grew up there and in Wexford. Graduated Trinity College (Philosophy, Psychology, Geography). Lived in Berlin and in San Francisco before joining Camphill in N Ireland in 1980. Married with 4 grown children. House parent, BD gardener, part-time Waldorf teacher; bookseller - Botton Bookshop, adult educator. Further studies in University of Aberdeen and Hamburg Priest Seminary. After 24 years in Botton Village, returned to Ireland to Camphill. Student and guide of Hibernian Mysteries and Celtic Christianity in Ireland.

COST

The cost of the tour is approximately **\$3900 for 12 participants.**

Should there not be maximum enrollment, the cost of the tour will be proportionately higher, or the tour will be canceled, and your deposit returned to you.

Some things may still be added.

The price may change depending on the currency exchange rate nearer the time

Included

Accommodation in twin rooms in hotels and guesthouses. There are also 2 double rooms reserved for couples.

All breakfasts, 1 lunch and 10 dinners - marked * and underlined in the itinerary.

Our own mini-bus

Entrance tickets to sites and museums mentioned in the itinerary.

Local guides where necessary

Honorarium for Alan Potter - our guide and driver.

Not included

Travel to and from Ireland

Taxi from and to the airport.

Most lunches and some dinners. We are not costing in many lunches as we'll often be stopping at supermarkets for picnics, or eating in cafeterias, and some dinners, especially where there is the possibility of local traditional music.

Entrance to attractions other than those mentioned in the itinerary, including the optional visit to Skellig Michael - 125 euros, or 45 for the boat ride only, those who don't want to do the climb.

Coffee breaks, drinks other than water, souvenirs and gratuities at meals and hotel housekeepers.

CONDITIONS

Please be aware that the Odyssey can be quite strenuous - some days we will be traveling for several hours in our mini-bus. We will be outdoors for extended periods of time, possibly in inclement weather, sometimes walking over steep, rough and uneven terrain - you should not have any mobility issues, as this does hold up the progress of the group. You should have good physical and mental health. Please ask me if you have questions.

The size of the group is strictly limited to 12 participants
If you are traveling alone, we will allocate a room-mate of the same sex.
There is already a lot of interest in this tour - please send your deposit by the end of November.

Reservations will be confirmed in the order in which each application is received with a deposit for \$1660 payable to Gillian Schoemaker, with IRELAND ODYSSEY on the memo line.

If you must cancel and we cannot find a replacement for you, we retain your deposit to cover your share of the communal costs of transport and organization.

The balance will be due at the end of March. The cost of the tour in dollars was made 10/3/2023 Should the exchange rate change significantly in these uncertain times, by the time the balance is due, we may have to adjust the price accordingly.

It is imperative you take out travel insurance, as no financial responsibility can be taken by Alan and Gillian. A copy of the cover page should be sent to Gillian.

All arrangements have been made privately - we are in fact 'a group of friends traveling together' and taking advantage of group rates in hotels.

If either tour leader is unable to come, every effort will be made to find a substitute, however, no responsibility is attached to the leaders.

Transatlantic travel; you are responsible for this - you should book a flight to Dublin International Airport, arriving 12th July and departing July 28th.

Please do not make any flight reservations until you receive confirmation that the Odyssey has enough participants to be viable.

You might like to arrive a day or so earlier, which is recommended in order to overcome jetlag and travel fatigue, - you are responsible for this. You can contact Gillian for advice about hotels in Dublin, should Aberdeen Lodge not be available. You should book well in advance.

Later, we will send suggestions for preparatory reading, and a list of what to bring. Alan and I are very much looking forward to hearing from you!

Contact Gillian Schoemaker - 610 455 2040 gillianschoemaker@gmail.com

