

Blog 10, April 30th – Exploring Cork



Awoke to brilliant sunshine which was fitting as it is Judi's 70th birthday. I woke up with an older woman beside me. Since it was a free day, we decided to have a leisurely breakfast before out to explore the city of Cork.

A photographic moment in the courtyard of Hayfield Manor was too good to miss. A 1,000-year-old tree (in the background) and a 70-year-old woman in the foreground. (You are really a smartass Kevin)

We decided against the "Hop on, Hop off" bus tour. However, it is very reasonable for those wanting to tour Cork. Because our guide Richard, from yesterday, gave us such a wonderful tour and commentary of Cork, we figured we would like to explore some of the areas he had already told us about.

It was about a 20-minute walk, all down hill and as mentioned above, many areas we were familiar with all ready because of Richard. This gave me lots of opportunities to take photos, and actually know what I was photographing.

The grounds of Hatfield Manor look so different in the sunlight. There is even a putting green



on the property just in front of the entrance by the old ash tree. Our room even cam equipped with a putter. We had everything.

I loved the bridge over to College Street. I had taken a photo of this when we arrived, however the sun allowed the willow trees to be reflected in the waters of the River

Lee. What a beautiful and peaceful spot. I bet the students love walking through this peaceful campus.

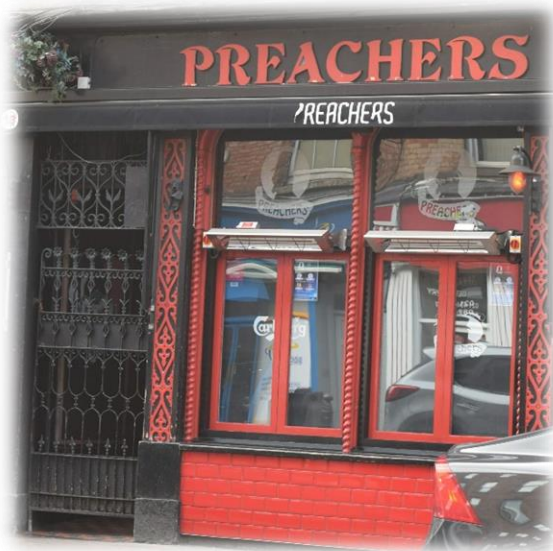
I enjoyed the entire walk to the city centre. Different types of accommodation all along the way. The next photo is a series of Bed and Breakfasts. By the looks of them they would be



very pricey. A few Mercedes parked in front of them was a definite clue.



Loved this next photo which shows you the old and the new history of Cork. The spires of St. Fin Barres Cathedral with the modern architecture that is beginning to appear in Cork. Replacing all those lost Georgian houses I spoke about in a previous Blog.



It actually started to get a little too warm for jackets – this was wonderful! Kevin stopped to dump his jacket while I took the next photo. I

can't believe that they actually have a pub for us. Darn, it was too early to be open.

The little alleys and glimpses of the old, cobbled-stoned streets really gave you insight into how Cork may have looked in those early days. There is something so beautiful about this until you see a car trying to come out of these streets as another one is trying to go onto the street. Holy cow- we are go glad that all our driving is being done by a local, Kevin and I have actually closed our eyes when we see these maneuvers.



Every corner we turned another beautiful building caught my attention. I love this building. I want a condo on the two floors.

After this very pleasant stroll we arrived in the 'core of Cork'. The first thing we saw was the "civil" court house. Quite impressive with the scales of justice on its roof peak, and the tall columns all along the front portico area.

We decided to top in and have a look at the inside of this building. There was a beautiful wooden central staircase where all the solicitors were going up and down with their powdered wigs and gowns.



A lot of people standing around talking with their solicitors. I was snapping pictures everywhere when the security guard came up to me. He advised me that photography was not allowed in the building due to the sensitive nature of the business that is being carried out there.

I did apologize, and I deleted all the shots that I had taken. Blast. I really wanted a photo of the domed roof. Why in the heck don't they post bloody signs that say "no photographs". They have signs for everything else. This was very embarrassing. They

can't stop me from taking photos of the outside. It is truly an impressive building.

We then proceeded into the Grand Parade where once again the buildings colors mesmerized me. I just loved the use of colour amongst a lot of greys. They brought the Grand Parade to life. Even a building with a bit of highlight colour works.

I managed to get a better photo of those street lights I had been talking about yesterday. On second look, they are rather ugly, even if modern.





I think I told you all about the statue in the centre of the Grand Parade that was erected in place of the one torn down of King George.

I did take a bit of an offense at the fact that it was “erected to honor the men who gave up so much for their country.” OK, but so did women. I didn’t like the wording – it should have said “erected in honor of the people who gave up

so much for their country”. Though Kevin was very interested in this I wasn’t so I left him to his pursuing of names on the stone.

Our next bit of adventure was to find the English Market. It was a great place. Reminded me of Lonsdale Quay in North Vancouver. We strolled around there for quite a while checking out the various “stalls” and also stopping for a



lovely scone and coffee. Flat whites made with soy milk are really tasty. I enjoyed mine.

Loved the colorful “shopping carts” that the women used as they did their daily shopping. I would have liked to take one home as I often go over to Riverside Mall and do T-Bones; Cobbs and Quality Greens. Might as



well do it fashionably. The photo is a little dark, but they really are beautiful and everyone has them. We should all have these

markets and dump the big grocery stores.

We both really enjoyed our time strolling through the English Market. We did go past O’Connell’s Fish Stall where the Queen had visited and had her photo taken. The photo shows them both laughing and when asked why they were laughing Mr. O’Connell said that he told the Queen he had not been this nervous since his wedding day.



The next year he received an invitation to attend the Queen's Annual Garden Party. What a lucky man.



We were then on the look-out for an ATM/Bank. We had no problem finding the Bank of Ireland and the ATM machines, however we could not get the machines to work. Grr----! PROBLEM: Kevin was using his Visa card

instead of his customer service card.

Inside there were no "tellers" but walls of ATM machines. If you have a problem then you have to go to a little office "booth" pick up the phone and a person comes to help you. Advice to those travelling find out your limit for cash withdrawals, and use the right card.



For the remainder of the afternoon we just walked all over cork. We finally found the Info Centre, however we really didn't need any information by this time. The Centre had relocated into the old St. Peter's church. The church is also a café. I guess lack of attendance is affecting all people, all communities everywhere.

While we were walking we could hear

the Shandon Bells of St. Anne's which ring, I think, every 30 mins. Not quite sure as you can have a personal experience of ringing the bells, so of course they could ring at any time of the day.





The Church of St. Anne is a Church of Ireland located in the Shandon district of Cork city in Ireland. Built between 1722 and 1726, it is situated on a hill overlooking the River Lee. The church tower is a noted landmark and symbol of the city, and the church bells were popularized in the 19th century.

Ringling the Bells

One of the major attractions of the Shandon Tower is that you can ring the church bells – all 8 of them! When you ring these bells they will be heard all over the city. The pattern of bell

ringing can at times be very random, but often you can hear a familiar tune.

The staff at the church have placed a booklet with tunes to play next to the bell strings, which tell you which order to pull the bell strings for the various tunes. I would have loved to go to the church, but the hill was way too much for Kevin.

I did write about the clock of the tower in one of my other blogs. It is known to Corkonians as “The Four Faced Liar” because, depending on the angle of the viewer, and the effects of wind on the hands, on a given face, they may not appear to correspond perfectly on each face. Due to maintenance issues, the clock was stopped in 2013, but plans to fund repair were not agreed on until May 2014 and the clock restarted in September 2014.

On our stroll we discovered lots of interesting facts and places, plus the intriguing building faces were on every corner.

I discovered a leather shop that smelled so nice. The owner was telling me that the designs were Italian, German and Irish. The leather used was all Irish leather, and the articles were all made in Ireland.

They were truly pieces of art. The smell of leather is something that I love.

The warmth of the sun was beckoning us so Kevin decided to sit on one of the benches in the square. I had to laugh when I saw the building behind him. He had no idea what was there. The Old Town Whiskey Bar – McCabe & McCord. Right across from this Bar was the site of the ‘Best Beer in



the World". "The Rising Sons" Brewery. For us it was too early to stop for a beer or whiskey, though we were tempted, it was great though to have seen the site.

Having said this there were several people who were enjoying their brews and the wonderful sunlight.

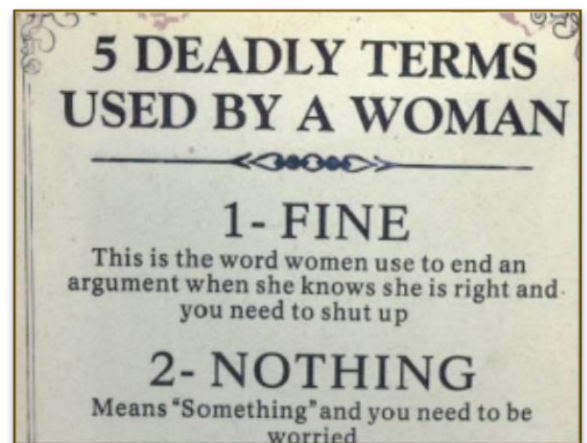


I love this photo as well, even if an ignorant SOB came up behind me, pushed in front of me and



hit my elbow so that my first photo was a mess. Kevin wouldn't let me trip him. I was ready to run after him and give him a good push but Kevin convinced me to take another photo instead.

FINE! Any of my friends who have read Louse Penny's novels know what FINE stands for, however I found another explanation while in the English Market. I think I might even like this explanation better. It says in the photos that there are 5 sayings, however it was only the first two that I liked.



Take heed my “male” friends. Still so much to see here in Cork but we are beginning to fade a little.

What else did we see? You know Cork is a wonderful city, and you could spend a lot of time there taking in the various attractions and never see everything. It is rather like Dublin, come to Ireland and stay in Dublin and you will never run out of things to do. Gosh, I love this country. Another photo that I just had to take.



By this time we were really starting to get tired so we began retracing our steps back toward the familiar area and find Washington Street which was where we started out this morning. Thought we would pick up a bottle of wine to take back to our room and celebrate my birthday, but we did want to make one more stop. St. Fin Barres Cathedral. This is a must visit if you come to Cork.

The walk over to the Cathedral wasn't too bad, but the last leg was all up hill and this was very hard on Kevin.

As we approached this last leg of the journey to the Cathedral, I had Kevin pose for another Kodak moment. You have to agree that it is a very appropriate shot.



Kevin did make that final hill though (it was quite bad actually) and the visit to the Cathedral, for me at least was a highlight of the day.

There is a small entrance fee, but it is only for the upkeep and maintenance of the building and believe me it is well worth paying.

What an amazing building. The site of the cathedral dates back to the seventh century when a monastery was founded here. A succession of church buildings ensured that Christian worship continued through the centuries. The various settlements around the monastery eventually grew into the city of Cork. In 1864 the existing small cathedral was demolished and the present

amazing structure was built in its place. Today the cathedral is a living community of liturgy and prayer enriched by the centuries old tradition. Saint Fin Barre is the patron saint of Cork. He is regarded as the first Bishop of Cork. His name Fionnbarr means “fair-headed” to the Irish.



As you approach the building itself you see the twelve apostle statues as well as the seven frivolous maidens. I took individual photos of the apostles so that I could set up PP slides of them. What a beautiful way for me to introduce my Scripture readings. Amazing shots. I will just crop them individually when I get home.



You are given a very informative map of the inside of the Cathedral and it was very helpful as the church is so big and beautiful and I was afraid that I might miss something.

The high altar was so indescribable. The mosaics floor in front of the high altar was made in Paris using marble from the Pyrenees.

Directly in front of the altar is the theme from St. Matthew “the kin’dom of heaven is like a net that was cast into the sea and gathered every kind.

It too is beautiful. Suspended from a chain is a 24-pound shot found in the steeple of the old cathedral when it was demolished in 1864. The ball had been fired from nearby Elizabeth Fort during the siege of Cork in 1690.



It took me forever to find it. For some reason I couldn't get my head around the map. I think I had it reversed. It was well worth the search to finally find the ball.



I had noticed on the way in that there was a Labyrinth somewhere on the property so I told Kevin to stay where he was while I went on a searching exposition to the labyrinth.

I had to go out to the back of the property and along a fairly lengthy pathway before I found it, but the gardens along the way were spectacular so it was an unpleasant hike.

I had only really planned on finding it and taking a few photos, but since there was no one there and the area was so quiet and peaceful I decided to do the labyrinth.

I haven't had much luck in the past doing them as my mind is one that is constantly firing on all cylinders so I can't always focus on a single thought which is what you should do on a labyrinth walk. But what happened to me was so-o-o weird. The walk turned into one of "those moments". All I could think of when I started the walk was the words to the first verse of the hymn "In the Bulb There is a Flower".

In the bulb there is a flower, in the seed an apple tree

In cocoons a hidden promise, butterflies will soon be free

In the cold and snow of winter, there's a spring that's meant to be

Unrevealed until its season, something god alone can see.

Over and over in my head these words kept repeating. Maybe it was because it was my 70th birthday and I was so thankful for these years! I honestly don't know but it is the first time that I have ever done a meaningful labyrinth walk and believe me I have done many of them.



As I mentioned, Kevin was resting in the church so I went back in to find him. He wasn't up to the walking back to the Manor even though we had done the walk the first night we were here in Cork. His breathing was quite shallow and he just knew he couldn't do it so we ordered a cab. We had a bit of a wait because as we have come to realize, the dispatcher instructions for cabs leave a lot to be desired. Our cab driver told us that the girl was in love and her head was in the clouds.

As we drove back, we went onto Connaught Avenue. It was funny to be driving on this street as in Halifax Connaught Ave. was “the place” to live. Not so here in Cork.



The weather was still holding out for us, so we decided to have a glass of wine in the garden before heading up to our room. While there I received a video from Neil of my 3 lovely grandchildren singing happy birthday to me. It made my day! What a lovely way to spend a sunny afternoon.

There were two statues in the garden which Kevin called the “missing ballerina” and the “missing woman”. Kevin told me to take a photo and send it to Kira.



The Missing Ballerina



The Missing Woman

After this lovely sojourn we headed up to our room to rest for awhile.

We had only been there a few minutes when there was a knock on our door. The hotel had done up a chocolate

board with Happy 70th on it for ma and they gave me a lovely card and some spa products. I actually started to cry, what a lovely, thoughtful gesture. My first and only birthday gift. Thank you so much to the staff at Hayfield Manor.



For dinner that evening we went down to the Perrott Dining Room where we enjoyed a lovely meal.

The room is a solarium and is lovely and bright. The ceiling fans are quite unique. Actual fans, on an articulating arm that swings back and forth to circulate the air. It was really cool – not cool cold, but cool neat.



We headed back to the room, too tired to do the hottub. Tomorrow is another day of morning travel and some “on your own time” in Killarney.

K and J