ASGCLA Literary North/Western Ireland May 2019

May 11, 2019 - May 18, 2019

Tour Overview

This seven night themed tour of North & Western Ireland focuses on some of the greatest writers to come from the region. These writers include W.B Yeats, Seamus Heaney, C. S Lewis and hundreds of others that are part of the collective culture of the Irish literary world. This fascinating tour will take you to the writer’s birthplaces, schools, writing rooms and final homes. History and epic scenery will be taken in each day to delight and wonder the visitor to this ancient and wildly beautiful country.

Tour Inclusions
• 2 Nights in a 4 star hotel in Belfast City
• 2 Nights in a 3/4 star hotel in Sligo County
• 2 Nights in a 3/4 star hotel in Galway City
• 1 Night in a 3/4 star hotel in Ennis, Co. Clare
• Evening Meals at Hotel on four nights
• Gourmet lunch on three days
• Private Storytelling Experience
• Private Guided Walking Tour of Belfast City
• Entrance to the Museum of Country Life
• Tour of Seamus Heaney's HomePlace
• Entrance to The Quiet Man Museum
• Return Ferry to/from The Aran Islands
• Entrance to The Cliffs of Moher Experience

Price: $2,350 USD Per Person Sharing (Single supplement $500 USD per person & Pre night $200 per person)
Trip Summary

May 11 - The Narnia Trail
Arrive into Dublin Airport
Scenic Private Touring - Downpatrick, Mourne & Coastal Drive
The Narnia Trail
Check in to 4 star hotel in Belfast City - Belfast
Group Dinner in the Hotel

May 12 - The Best of Belfast
Belfast City Group Walking Tour
Group lunch
Suggested at Leisure: Game of Thrones - The Touring Exhibition
Suggested at Leisure: The Titanic Experience & Museum
Overnight in 4 star hotel in Belfast City

May 13 - Poets & Palaces
Check out of 4 star hotel in Belfast City
Seamus Heaney HomePlace
Scenic Private Touring - Fermanagh Lakelands & Enniskillen
Castle Coole
Check in at Sligo Hotel - Sligo
Group dinner at Sligo Hotel

May 14 - The Yeats Drive
Scenic Private Touring - The Yeats Drive
Group lunch
Yeats Memorial Building
Overnight in Sligo Hotel

May 15 - The Magic of Mayo
Check out of Sligo Hotel
Scenic Private Touring - Westport & Cong
Museum of Country Life, Turlough
Check in at Galway Hotel - Galway, Ireland
Group Dinner in Galway Hotel
May 16 - The Aran Islands
Self Guided Tour - Aran Islands Day Tour
Group lunch
Overnight in Galway Hotel

May 17 - The Wild Atlantic Way
Check out of Galway Hotel
The Lady Gregory & Yeats Trail at Coole Park, Gort
Scenic Private Touring - West Clare, Cliffs of Moher & Doolin
Check in to Ennis Hotel - Ennis
Farewell group dinner
Storytelling with Eddie Linehan

May 18 - Departure Day
Check out at Ennis Hotel - Ennis
Depart from Shannon Airport, Co. Clare - Shannon Airport Motor Works
May 11 - The Narnia Trail

**Arrive into Dublin Airport**

**Scenic Private Touring - Downpatrick, Mourne & Coastal Drive**
County Down is perhaps the North's most scenic mountainous region that has been immortalized in the songs of Percy French and in ancient folklore. Downpatrick is an ancient town with The Fort of Patrick, a Hill on which Down Cathedral is placed and reputed to be the final resting place of St Patrick, Ireland's Patron Saint. A large granite boulder marks his tomb and this is a place of pilgrimage on Ireland's national holiday, 17th March each year. Newcastle is famous for sweeping long beaches and a golf course. Nearby the famed Tollymore Forest Park is an enchanting emerald oasis. The picturesque village of Rostrevor has a history of ancient kings and buried giants and is a beautiful point in which to explore more of Carlingford Lough.

**The Narnia Trail**
C.S Lewis was born in Belfast in 1898. His Chronicles of Narnia that began with 'The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe' have sold over 100 million copies worldwide and his early years are known to have influenced his writing. As a young boy, Lewis often holidayed in the Mourne Mountains near the village of Rostrevor, Co. Down and is reported to have written a letter to his brother saying: “That part of Rostrevor which overlooks Carlingford Lough is my idea of Narnia.” This beautiful Narnia Trail in Kilbroney Park seeks to capture the imagination of children of all ages.

Kilbroney Park is situated in a stunning location, where mountain, sea and valley create a scenic wonderland. Overlooking Carlingford Lough, these ninety seven acres of beautiful parkland nestle within the shadow of Slieve Martin and the Mountains of Mourne.
Belfast City Group Walking Tour

Belfast is the capital of Northern Ireland. Its name originates from the Irish Béal Feirste, or the mouth of the Farset, the river on which the city was built and has now been superseded by the River Lagan. Belfast saw the worst of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, and since their start in 1969, news of violence and disruption marred the city’s image as a tourist destination.

Since the 1997 cease-fire and the Good Friday agreement, however, Belfast is making up for lost time. With the help of massive investment, the city has undergone a remarkable transformation, and now has a booming economy and high employment rates. The River Lagan has been cleaned up and inner city areas, such as the Cathedral Quarter, have been regenerated, attracting new restaurants, hotels, shopping areas and cafés.

Belfast was once home to C.S.Lewis, author of the Chronicles of Narnia. Maybe this is where he found his inspiration? The famous musician Van Morrison also grew up in Belfast and music is indeed an important part of this city’s social scene, with bands often performing at the Odyssey Arena or the Belfast Waterfront.

The numerous Victorian buildings of the city have been juxtaposed with impressive 20th-century architecture, so creating a sense of progress and change. With its sights set on the future, Belfast has become a vibrant, friendly and exciting city, waiting to be discovered in new way.
**Group lunch**

**Suggested at Leisure: Game of Thrones - The Touring Exhibition**

The dramatic exhibition combines costumes, authentic props and majestic settings from all seven seasons to create an interactive and immersive Game of Thrones experience and celebrate the show's legacy in the region.

It offers fans the opportunity to authentically immerse themselves in Westeros and Essos, as well as relive the trials and tribulations of those who struggle for survival in the shadow of the Iron Throne ahead of the highly anticipated season eight release.

Fans will get an up-close and personal look at the artistry and craftsmanship behind the Emmy award-winning series, as well as the opportunity to experience the wintry landscapes of the North, the tree-lined pathway of the Kingsroad, Castle Black and more.

Game of Thrones: The Touring Exhibition will be located at the TEC - a stone's throw away from Titanic Studios, where much of the series was filmed over a 10-year period.

**Suggested at Leisure: The Titanic Experience & Museum**

The Titanic Experience is a triumph of innovation located in Belfast where the doomed ship was originally built.
It is an eye opening experience with interactive exhibits that guide visitors through both the construction and its recovery. Exact replicas of the Titanic's cabins & other parts of the ship allow visitors to imagine life as a passenger. The museum presents a moving account of the tragedy itself, detailing the stories of those on board as well as the aftermath.

**Overnight in 4 star hotel in Belfast City**

**May 13 - Poets & Palaces**

**Check out of 4 star hotel in Belfast City**

**Seamus Heaney HomePlace**

Immerse yourself in the world of the most widely published poet in the English language. County Londonderry was a major inspiration to the late Seamus Heaney and now the Heaney HomePlace is a must-go for literary fans and the curious alike.

Over two floors, go on a journey through the Nobel Laureate's life, his experiences, and the people that inspired his poetry. There's also a recreation of the poet's attic study in Dublin, as well as dozens of family photographs, video recordings from friends, neighbors and cultural leaders, and the voice of the poet himself reading his own words.

Seamus Heaney himself was born and raised within the area and choose Bellaghy as his final resting place.
Scenic Private Touring - Fermanagh Lakelands & Enniskillen

En route to Sligo, we will travel through Co. Fermanagh's Lakeland region which is dominated by Lough Erne to the North & South with the pretty island city of Enniskillen in the center.

There are many beautiful sights to take in: Fermanagh County Museum, the Watergate tower, the majestic Florence Court, enchanting Marble Arch caves & Beleek Pottery craft factory.

Portora Royal School founded in 1618, counts among its past students, the playwrights Oscar Wilde & Samuel Beckett.

Castle Coole

Just outside Enniskillen, set in a stunning landscape park overlooking a lake is Castle Coole, one of the finest Neo-Classical homes in Ireland. This majestic 18th century home of the Earls of Belmore, designed by James Wyatt, was created to impress and it still has all of the original furniture that was especially commissioned for the house.

Family portraits from the 18th century line the walls of the dining room. In the lavish State bedroom there is a bed made for King George IV on the occasion of his visit to Ireland in 1821, all though in the end he never even came here to sleep in it!

In more recent years, the house was the setting of 2014 film Miss Julie, starring Colin Farrell and Jessica Chastain.

*Insert tour details <here>*
Check in at Sligo Hotel

Group dinner at Sligo Hotel

May 14 - The Yeats Drive

Scenic Private Touring - The Yeats Drive

Sligo was Yeats's 'Land of Heart's Desire'. He spent much of his childhood here - including summer holidays at Rosse's Point. This is the landscape in which he grew up, which inspired much of his poetry, and in which he was laid to rest.

It is an area of extreme beauty and varied landscapes with ancient sights dotted along its coastline and mountains.

Of major importance is Carrowkeel, a five thousand year old megalithic cemetery which is hidden among the clambering hills. Drumcliffe, Co. Sligo is set against the striking backdrop of the Benbulben Mountains. It is here in Drumcliffe Church where Ireland's greatest poet W.B Yeats is laid to rest. His gravestone with its enigmatic epitaph can be visited along with many other interesting relics of times past.

Also in the North West coastal region are beautiful lakes, mystical Islands and pure waterfalls that inspired Yeats with romantic visions (The Lake Isle of Innisfree, Glencar Waterfall, Hazelwood Demesne, Dooney Rock). This region has unspoilt coastline which is considered among the most beautiful in Ireland.
Group lunch

Yeats Memorial Building
On Hyde Bridge is the Yeats Building a beautiful 19th century red brick building, the home of the Yeats Society Sligo, The Yeats Memorial Building houses a permanent exhibition on the life and work of William Butler Yeats along with an exhibition of Jack B. Yeats prints. Audio visual presentations are also exhibited and guided tours are available.

This building is now the Headquarters of the international Yeats Society, from which the Society keeps in contact with members all over the world, and from where the Yeats International Summer School and Winter School are administered, as well as the day-to-day running of the Society.

Lily and Lolly's cafe onsite offers refreshments, snacks and light meals, while on the first floor, the Yeats Art Gallery presents changing exhibitions of art, sculpture and crafts.

Overnight in Sligo Hotel

May 15 - The Magic of Mayo

Check out of Sligo Hotel
Scenic Private Touring - Westport & Cong

**Westport** is one of Ireland's most beautiful, vibrant and beloved coastal towns. The design of the town is symmetrical, designed by the eminent British architect James Wyatt. The flow off the town is wonderful for strolling through the streets enjoying the ambiance, the music and the culture of this popular destination.

The village of **Cong** straddles the border of Galway and Mayo and is perhaps most famous as the location of the film, **The Quiet Man**. Cong now hosts a museum dedicated to the movie & visitors can take guided tours to the locations where the famous fight scene was shot, where Sean Thornton and Mary Kate Danaher courted, and to see the Dying Man's house, Pat Cohan's Bar and the Reverend Playfair’s House.

Cong village also has a beautiful abbey worth visiting as well as The Quiet Man Cottage and Heritage Center.

Museum of Country Life, Turlough

Explore rural life in Ireland in this award-winning museum set in the grounds of Turlough Park. Immerse yourself in the unique stories, rich heritage and fascinating cultural traditions of our rural ancestors at the Museum of Country Life. Some of which include:

**Romance & Reality:** This exhibition explores the often romanticized image of Ireland's rural past with the reality of life in the 19th and 20th centuries. This section also introduces visitors to Folk life and Folklore.

**Cycling the Country:** By the 1930's, bicycles became the key mode of transport in every parish in Ireland, dramatically changing the social life of ordinary people. This display explores the history of the bicycle and developments in design.

**Life in the Community:** This exhibition explores a year in the lives of our rural ancestors and looks at celebrations, festivals and seasonal markers such as St Brigid’s Day, St. Patrick’s Day, Easter, May Day, Lúnasa, Samhain, Christmas, Christenings, First Communions, first day at school, weddings and wakes.

**Activities in the home:** This exhibition shows what life was like in the home. The family home had to be built, furnished and maintained. Here you can see how this was done.
May 16 - The Aran Islands

Self Guided Tour - Aran Islands Day Tour
The Aran Islands are one of Ireland's most spectacular attractions located off the west Clare Coast and the Cliffs of Moher. Each of the three Islands offers something unique. Inisheer is the most accessible to the mainland, Inismann is like revisiting the Stone Age and although Inishmore is the largest and most visited it has the wonderful Dun Aengusa to marvel over. The Islands are accessible by boat from both Doolin Pier in Co. Clare and high speed catamaran from Rossaveal in Co. Galway and are best explored on foot or bicycle which are easily rented on the island.

Your driver guide will confirm the drop off and pick up times from Rossaveal Pier.
May 17 - The Wild Atlantic Way

Check out of Galway Hotel

The Lady Gregory & Yeats Trail at Coole Park, Gort
In the early 20th century, Coole Park was at center of the Irish literary revival. Cool was once the home of Lady Gregory, dramatist, folklorist & co-founder of the Abbey Theatre with W.B Yeats and Edward Martyn.

Yeats, George Bernard Shaw, John Milington Synge and Sean O'Casey all came to experience its magic and their initials are carved on the world famous autograph tree in the walled garden.

There are two trails to choose from: The Family Trail is an easy 1.75 km walk, taking you past the deer pen, the site of the house & into the walled garden to see the Autograph Tree. The 4.5 km Seven Woods Trail connects the different woods made famous in poetry by W.B Yeats.

Scenic Private Touring - West Clare, Cliffs of Moher & Doolin
West Clare is among Ireland's most rugged and dramatic landscapes with shifting and sculpting stone creating unforgettable scenery such as the Cliffs of Moher, Burren Plateau and The Aran Islands. The Cliffs of Moher is the highlight of the region and can be experienced from the lofty heights looking down into the abyss of Atlantic rollers below. An alternative way to enjoy is with a cliff cruise from Doolin Pier which can be arranged depending on time of day and of course the unpredictable west coast weather.

Check in to Ennis Hotel

Ennis
Ennis, County Clare, IE

Farewell group dinner

Storytelling with Eddie Linehan

Enjoy a private experience with Ireland's most renowned seanchai, Eddie Linehan. He has been described as a 'national treasure' and one of the greatest Irish storytellers and will regale you with tales of fairies and folklore, myth, magic and mystery.

May 18 - Departure Day
Check out at Ennis Hotel

Ennis
Ennis, County Clare, IE

Depart from Shannon Airport, Co. Clare

Shannon Airport Motor Works
Bay 142 Industrial Estate, Shannon, CLARE, IE
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