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“Pat Troy’s book launch tour of Ireland March 21st to 28th 2012”

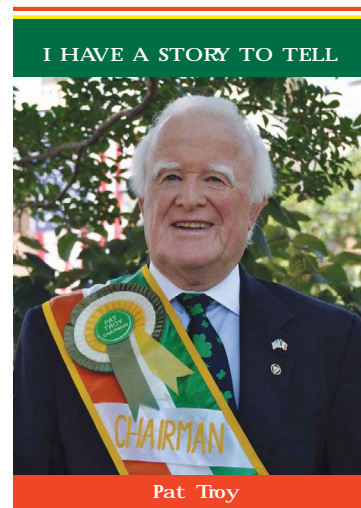
ITINERARY

3/21 – Depart Pat Troy’s Irish Pub & Restaurant at 3pm for the transfer to Philadelphia Airport. Depart Philadelphia at 9pm on the US Air non - stop flight to Dublin.

3/22 – Cead Mile Failte!! Arrive 8am, pass through immigration and collect your luggage and meet or driver/guide in the arrivals hall to begin our journey. We’ll visit Malahide Castle nearby to have some tea and scones, tour the castle and grounds and stretch our legs. Transfer to Birr for our 6 night stay at the County Arms Hotel. Arrive mid-afternoon and relax for the remainder of the day on your own.

3/23 – After breakfast begin our day with a visit to the Rock of Cashel via Moneygall, the ancestral home of President Obama who visited here in May. The Rock of Cashel is where Brian Boru was crowned King of Munster in 977. See the 12th century highly-decorated Cormac’s Chapel, the large cruciform cathedral and round tower. After lunch at the Bru Boru visitor centre, we visit Kilkenny Castle, Earls and Dukes of Ormonde, who held power over the region for centuries. The Castle was first built in 1192 and you’ll learn about the region as you see wonderful paintings and furniture. Return to the hotel and reunite with the group to have dinner in the hotel. (B,D)

3/24 – After breakfast we travel a short distance to Clonmacnoise founded as a monastery by St. Ciaran in 545, was a great center of learning for nearly 1,000 years. During the Dark Ages, the rest of Europe was enlightened by scholars trained here such as Alcuin, who tutored Charlemagne. In its heyday, Clonmacnoise was a virtual city until reduced to ruin in 1552. Declared a national monument in 1955, it contains more than 200 points of interest including 10th century high crosses, a 62-foot round tower, and the gravesite of Rory O’Conor, last high king of Ireland. See round towers, elaborately Celtic crosses and the ruins of many churches. Next we visit the Tullamore Dew Heritage Centre to learn how Irish whiskey is made and enjoy a tasting. We drive 12 miles to Kilcormac to visit the hometown of our host Pat Troy where we’ll visit the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary to visit the famous Pieta - a statue of Our Lady holding the body of Jesus after he had been taken from the Cross. The scene was a very popular subject for sculptors in the middle Ages in Europe and the most famous one that exists to this day is by Michelangelo in St. Peter’s. But the Kilcormac “Pieta” is different, being carved from a block of solid oak and measuring five feet by three. We’ll have tea, sandwiches and refreshments. Return to our hotel in Birr. (B) Dinner maybe at the Thatch Pub in nearby Crinkle.



3/25 –After breakfast Mass is available at St Brendan’s Church at 8:30am or 10:30am across from the hotel. We’ll visit Birr Castle, a 17th century private family estate, but the 100 acres of gardens are open to the public. It is a horticultural wonderland, with more than 1,000 species of trees and shrubs, including box hedges featured in the “Guinness Book of Records” as the tallest in the world. Other facilities open to the public include a giant 6-foot reflecting telescope, built in 1845 and the largest in the world for over 70 years. In addition, there is the Historic Science Centre, an attraction in itself, housed in the 19th century coach house. This unique museum spotlights Ireland’s great contributions to science, from astronomy and photography to the invention of the steam turbine engine. Browse through original artifacts, photographs, drawings, letters, and learn from interactive models, audiovisuals, and interpretative displays. The galleries here show a much-underrated side of Ireland. At 5pm is the official book launch with notable guests such as the former Taoiseach Brian Cowen, the Earl and Countess of Ross and many of Pat’s family and friends in attendance. A great night lies ahead. A selection of Hors d’oeuvres and refreshments including wine will be served. Entertainment will also be provided by a group of local musicians. (B)



3/26 – After an early breakfast we leave for Dublin and visit Trinity College with an impressive 300-foot-wide Palladian façade, the university is comprised of many historic buildings surrounding a wide cobbled quadrangle. The single most visited place on campus, however, is the Colonnades Gallery, home of The Book of Kells, a one-of-a-kind handwritten and illuminated manuscript of the Four Gospels, dating back to the 9th century, then onto Dublin Castle Built between 1208 and 1220, it contains some of the oldest surviving architecture of the city. Highlights include two original towers – a circular keep known as the Record Tower (1214) and the Birmingham Tower (14th century), as well as the State

Apartments, a setting for government ceremonial functions such as the inauguration of Ireland’s Presidents and meetings with heads of state and finally onto the Guinness Storehouse, a 30 million euro visitor centre, and the gateway for visiting the Guinness Brewery. Step inside and enter a giant pint-shaped glass atrium, and then follow a walk-through “Guinness Experience” tour, explaining how the famous black brew is made. The tour culminates in a sampling of the drink in the “Gravity Bar,” a rooftop pub with 360-degree views of Dublin. Return to the hotel and reunite with the group to have dinner in the hotel. (B,D)



3/27 -After breakfast we depart west for Galway and our route takes you through the heart of Connemara and Clifden along the Inagh Valley to see the granite hills of the Twelve Pins and Kylemore Abbey – it has a glorious setting on Kylemore Lake, which undoubtedly has made it the most-photographed of all of Connemara’s many attractions. Happily for visitors, the setting presents many things to do and see — both indoors and outdoors. Walk around this idyllic estate, wandering off on lakeside and mountain trails or exploring the walled Victorian gardens. Continue on to Cong and join a local guide on a walk to see the places featured in the movie “The Quiet Man” made in 1952 and finally onto Ashford Castle where we’ll have afternoon teas and biscuits. Dating back to 1228, this fairytale palace is Ireland’s most impressive 5-star castle hotel, nestled in a bucolic setting beside Lough Corrib amid a nine-hole golf course and 450 forested and flowering acres. It sits on an isthmus of land that provided the backdrop for the 1952 film classic, The Quiet Man. With its turrets and towers, drawbridge and battlements, Ashford was originally a private home, evolving into a hotel in 1939. Return to Birr for our farewell dinner at the Thatch pub in Crinkle.



3/28 – Early Breakfast depart @ 7am for Dublin airport (B) Flight departs 11:15am and arrives Philadelphia 2pm local time same day. Return transfer to Pat Troy’s Pub departs approx 3pm.