



CICERONI
T R A V E L

BALLYMALOE HOUSES & GARDENS OF CORK

SUNDAY 23 – FRIDAY 28 JUNE 2019 (6 DAYS)

LECTURER: TOM DUNCAN

£2235

- **Marvellous week spent exploring Cos. Cork & Waterford**
- **Ballymaloe will be our ‘home from home’ for six days with its remarkable food & country house comforts**
- **Wonderful selection of houses, some not open to the public**
- **Fine selection of gardens including Harold Peto’s Garnish Island**
- **Unhurried itinerary allowing time to enjoy the magical scenery**
- **All dinners at Ballymaloe**



Ballymaloe

OVERVIEW

The poet Edmund Spenser and his more politically engaged contemporary, Sir Walter Raleigh, came to Ireland in the late Elizabethan period determined, as were all their English contemporaries, “*to plante*” Ireland with the English language, newly reformed religion and above all, English manners and customs. Both men came to settle in the ancient Irish province of Munster, more locally in what today we know as Co. Cork, the main focus of our six-day visit.

Spenser commented on many aspects of Irish life during his unhappy sojourn, not least the manner in which the cultures of both communities might one day merge. Did this happen? Over the succeeding centuries many native traditions did indeed combine with those brought in from abroad and it is this fusion of cultures - architectural, historical, horticultural, political and literary (for this is “Somerville and Ross” country) that we shall explore during what will be a marvellous visit.

The visit will concern itself not just with food for the eye, mind and soul but with food for the body! We shall stay at the renowned **Ballymaloe House Hotel**. Myrtle Allen’s family have owned Ballymaloe for a long time and since opening the house as a comfortable country-house hotel over fifty years ago, it has gained an international reputation, both for its warm welcome and its superb food. Mrs Allen’s daughter-in-law, Darina, is known throughout the world for her work as cook, writer, teacher and gardener – aspects of her achievement we shall encounter at the nearby Ballymaloe Cookery School. All our evening group meals will be taken at the hotel, allowing us the opportunity to sample the best daily produce, imaginatively presented in a manner unique in Ireland. Sadly Myrtle Allen passed away in June of 2018, but her descendants continue to run Ballymaloe and the associated Allen family businesses with the same focus on being a byword for high quality country-house cuisine using the best local and seasonal ingredients (as described in Mrs Allen’s obituary in the Telegraph, June 2018).

ITINERARY OUTLINE

Day 1: Sunday 23 June – We fly from Heathrow in the early afternoon to Cork. We transfer the short distance by coach to **Ballymaloe** and later that evening we have our first group dinner at the hotel.

Day 2: Monday 24 June – **Cork** is Ireland’s second city and we spend the morning looking at some of its treasures. The international bustle that has come to change Dublin has happily left Cork relatively unscathed. Consequently, the city has retained the appearance of a jolly market town (as HM The Queen discovered) and yet it is a very busy commercial centre and contains some fine public buildings. There are a number of fine churches, particularly **St Finbarre’s Cathedral** by William Burgess, an essay in erudite Gothic Revival. The **Crawford Art Gallery** has an excellent collection that naturally features many of Cork’s best painters such as James Barry. After some free time for lunch (not included) we drive out of the city to the nearby countryside for two visits.

Riverstown House was built by an early eighteenth century Protestant Bishop of Cork, who employed the famous Lafranchini brothers, recently arrived in Ireland, to decorate part of his house with wonderful Italian-inspired Baroque stucco. The house is not open to the public and the Dooley family, who saved it from destruction some years ago, will be our hosts. Between Riverstown and Ballymaloe, in Glounthaune on the north shore of Cork Harbour, is a marvellous plantsman's garden, **Coosheen**, created in recent years by Hester Forde, who will be our host for this private visit. We return to Ballymaloe where we have dinner later that evening.

Day 3: Tuesday 25 June – For sheer beauty of setting nothing quite equals **Bantry House**, the seat of the White family, former Earls of Bantry, overlooking one of the finest bays on the Irish coast. The house contains interesting contents while the surrounding gardens are now almost fully restored and are a great attraction. We shall have a simple group lunch at Bantry. By happy chance, also nearby is one of Ireland's hidden horticultural gems, **Garnish**, on the island of **Inacullin** which is laid out to Harold Peto's inspired designs, now in the care of the Irish government agency, the Office of Public Works. We have dinner at Ballymaloe.

Day 4: Wednesday 26 June – To the east of Cork sits the verdant county of Waterford, where we shall visit **Curraghmore**, the home of the Marquess of Waterford. This is an amazing 'secret' house, which contains great State Rooms by James Wyatt and remarkable contents. The surrounding ornamental grounds are stunning and we shall see the famous Shell Cottage made in the eighteenth century by the then Countess of Tyrone, the ancestress of the present Lord Waterford. We continue to **Waterford** city where we have a group lunch. Waterford has in recent years been transformed into one of Ireland's premier cultural attractions, centred on the city's historic core. Viking, Medieval and Georgian Waterford all come together in a triangle of remarkable buildings and our afternoon will be devoted to a walking tour of the historic centre including the recently restored eighteenth century **Bishop's Palace**, and the city's new **Museum**, both the creation of the Museum's dynamic Director, Eamon McEneaney, who has generously agreed to be our guide for the afternoon. We have dinner at Ballymaloe.

Day 5: Thursday 27 June – The **Ballymaloe Cookery School Gardens**, a few miles from the hotel, have been laid out by Darina Allen. These are a mixture of areas devoted to fruit, vegetables and herbs, all grown to support the Cookery School, and the more formal herbaceous areas surrounding the family's house. After some time for coffee, we continue to **Fota**, the estate of the Smith-Barrys, Earls of Barrymore, an ancient local landowning family who created a landscape park of rare beauty, now home to a major collection of fine trees, shrubs and other horticultural rarities. We have a tour of the house's principal reception rooms. After our group lunch we then spend a gentle afternoon being guided round Fota's renowned **Arboretum**. We return to Ballymaloe where you will have some free time to explore the hotel's surroundings. Dinner will be at the hotel.

Day 6: Friday 28 June – For connoisseurs of eighteenth century houses this morning's private visit to **Kilshannig** should be a highlight. It was built for Abraham Devonsher, the local MP and a very wealthy landowner of Huguenot origin, by the Sardinian architect, Davis Ducart. It too contains very fine plasterwork by the Lafranchini brothers, this time in a more refined Rococo manner, in contrast to the more 'sculptural' Baroque work they did at Riverstown. The house has been meticulously restored by Hugo Merry, who will host this final lunch of the visit. We travel on to Cork Airport for the return flight to Heathrow arriving in the early evening.

PRACTICALITIES

Price £2235 **Without Flights** £2090 **Deposit** £300

Single Supplement £150 (Double for Sole Use)

Hotel 5 nights with breakfast & dinner at Ballymaloe House Hotel

Flights Aer Lingus

Outward: **EI715** Depart London Heathrow (Terminal 2) **1405**, arrive Cork **1520**

Return: **EI722** Depart Cork **1600**, arrive London Heathrow (Terminal 2) **1720**

Price includes All dinners & 4 lunches with wine, water & coffee, all local transfers, entry fees, gratuities & services of Tom Duncan

Not included Travel to/from Heathrow, 1 lunch



CICERONI TRAVEL
2 The Square, Aynho, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX17 3BL
Telephone +44 (0) 1869 811167 Fax +44 (0) 1869 811188
Email info@ciceroni.co.uk Website www.ciceroni.co.uk

