



CICERONI
T R A V E L

BALLYMALOE HOUSES & GARDENS OF CORK

WEDNESDAY 23 – SUNDAY 27 SEPTEMBER 2020 (5 DAYS)

LECTURER: TOM DUNCAN

£1985

- **Marvellous opportunity to explore Cos. Cork & Waterford and their county cities**
- **Ballymaloe will be our ‘home from home’ for five days with its remarkable food & country house comforts**
- **Lovely houses and gardens, some not open to the public**
- **Unhurried itinerary allowing time to enjoy the magical scenery**
- **Series of lectures on Irish history**
- **All dinners at Ballymaloe**



Ballymaloe House

OVERVIEW

Our annual visit to Ballymaloe has been our most popular tour year after year. So, it was with great regret that we were unable to operate this year’s tour, due to COVID-19 related restrictions. With the original restrictions on travel now beginning to lift, we have begun to re-think our schedule for the coming months and Ballymaloe is top of our list for inclusion in a revised schedule of tours due to begin in September.

Ireland is opening up again to visitors and Ballymaloe will reopen for guests to stay from Wednesday 22nd July for most of each week - Wednesdays to Sundays. We have decided to operate an amended version of our normal visit from 23rd to 27th September and we hope you will be tempted to join Tom and Stephen to enjoy the delights of this remarkable hotel and the surrounding countryside. The tour will be limited to 18 participants which will allow us to ensure that the prevailing ‘social distancing’ arrangements can be adhered to on the tour bus and during our visits and meals.

The Allen 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. Given it has no less than seven separate (and differently sized) dining rooms, we shall be able to enjoy our meals in comfort while observing social distancing regulations. Our days will begin with a leisurely breakfast, and dependent on the final schedule of visits, Tom will give a series of morning lectures on Irish history, illustrated with suitable buildings and works of art. After coffee we then set out on a series of gently paced visits to local houses and gardens. We also plan to explore the nearby cities of Cork and Waterford with their rich history and fine public buildings and museums.

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, 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 that we shall explore during what will be a marvellous visit.

ITINERARY OUTLINE

Day 1: Wednesday 23 September – We fly from Heathrow in the early afternoon to Cork. Flights from other UK airports can also be arranged, subject to availability. We transfer by coach to **Ballymaloe** and after afternoon tea and some time to settle in, Tom Duncan will give the first of his **Illustrated Lectures on Ireland**. This will introduce the complex pattern of invasion and conquest which marks its history from the first settlers up to the

'plantations' of the Tudor and Stuart periods. Later that evening we have our first group dinner at the hotel, using one of the dining rooms which will be exclusive to our group during our stay. It is also possible to travel independently to Ireland and join the tour at the hotel.

Day 2: Thursday 24 September – After a leisurely breakfast Tom will give the second of his **Lectures on Ireland**, this time focusing on the Georgian period when some of Ireland's finest classically inspired buildings were commissioned, and filled with wonderful works of art. After a break for coffee we travel to Cork, Ireland's second city. 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 and yet it is a very busy commercial centre. It has some fine public buildings and important 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. Our explorations will be broken up with some free time for lunch, not included today. It is hoped we may be able to visit a small **private garden** on our way back to the hotel. We return to Ballymaloe where we have dinner later that evening.

Day 3: Friday 25 September – We leave this morning directly after breakfast to visit **Waterford** city, in recent years 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 much of our day will be devoted to a walking tour of the historic centre. We also visit the city's new **Museum** and the recently restored eighteenth century **Bishop's Palace**, both the creation of the Museum's dynamic Director, Dr Eamon McEaney, who has generously agreed to be our guide. We have coffee on arrival, lunch in the **Granary Café** and dinner at Ballymaloe.

Day 4: Saturday 26 September – After breakfast Tom will give the last of his **Lectures on Ireland** which will look at the tumultuous events which shaped Ireland in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries from the Act of Union up to the emergence of an independent Ireland. After coffee we drive to **Riverstown House**, 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. Not far away, and some years later, the same family of stuccodores worked at **Kilshannig** and for connoisseurs of eighteenth century houses this private visit will 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. The very fine plasterwork by the Lafranchini brothers is 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 our lunch. We return to Ballymaloe where you will have some free time to explore the surrounding grounds before our final dinner.

Day 5: Sunday 27 September – This morning we have time to relax, then after an early 'Sunday Lunch' we travel to Cork Airport for the return flight to Heathrow arriving in the early evening.

PRACTICALITIES

Price £1985 **Without Flights** £1840 **Deposit** £300

Single Supplement £115 (Double for Sole Use)

Hotel 4 nights with breakfast & dinner at Ballymaloe House Hotel. Unfortunately there is no

Flights Aer Lingus

Outward: **EI715** Depart London Heathrow (Terminal 2) **1350**, arrive Cork **1510**

Return: **EI722** Depart Cork **1600**, arrive London Heathrow (Terminal 2) **1725**

Price includes All dinners & 3 lunches with wine, water & coffee, all local transfers, entry fees, gratuities & services of Tom Duncan as lecturer and Stephen Brook as tour manager

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

