

**Cumberland County Historical Society Tour of Ireland
October 5-14, 2012**

Number of nights/days: 10 days / 8 nights	\$2900 per person for Members
Place of arrival: Belfast Airport	\$3100 per person for Non-Members
Place of Departure: Shannon Airport	Single Supplement \$368
	Travel Insurance \$130.00

PRICES INCLUDE

- Round trip airfare and coach transportation to and from airport
- 8 nights accommodation at a 3*/4* hotel, all rooms with private bath or shower
- Full Irish breakfast each day
- 8 Dinners
- **Visits:**

Titanic Belfast (opening 2012)	Mount Stewart House & Gardens	Guided tour of Belfast
Giants Causeway	Dunluce Castle	Glenveagh National Park
Slieve League	Magee Tweed	Ulster American Folk Park
Belleek Pottery	Carrowmore Cemetery	Museum of Country Life
Kylemore Abbey	Connemara Marble Factory	Cliffs of Moher
- Enjoy a cruise on Lough Gill

Not Included:
Lunch daily , tip for driver and guide, personal expenses

SUGGESTED HOTEL

Hotel	Location	No of nights	Category
Europa	Belfast	1 night	4 star
Radisson	Letterkenny	2 nights	4 star
Markree Castle	Sligo	1 night	4 star
Clew Bay	Westport	2 nights	3 star
Radisson	Galway	1 night	4 star
Temple Gate	Ennis	1 night	3 star

**** Hotels/Itinerary subject to change Rates above subject to air tax and fuel surcharge increases.**

SUGGESTED PROGRAMME

Day 1 – Friday, October 5 – Overnight flight to Belfast

Day 2 – Saturday, October 6 - Welcome to Ireland

Arrival at Belfast Airport, meet with your coach driver and guide and transfer for a **Belfast City Tour**. A guided city tour is an excellent way to discover Belfast City. The tour will take in the leaning Albert Memorial Clock tower (Ireland's answer to the Tower of Pisa) and the Opera House, which is one of Belfast's great landmarks. Your tour will pass by the City Hall, the Opera house, The Crown Bar (dates from 1885), Queens University and the Botanic Gardens. Visit the new **Titanic Belfast Exhibition** in the shipyards where the Titanic was built and launched in 1912. A visit to the Shankill and Falls road will be of interest as it will give the visitor an indication of how life was in Belfast during the troubles.

Visit the Mount Stewart House and Gardens

The magnificent 18th century Mount Stewart House and gardens were the home of the marquesses of Londonderry; the house is in wonderful condition and has retained most of its original plasterwork, marble nudes, and valuable paintings.

Expect to be enthralled by the 35 hectares of gardens, which were landscaped in the early 1900s by Lady Edith, wife of the 7th marquess for the benefit of her children. It has an unrivalled collection of rare and unusual plants. In the late spring the Sunken Garden is a blaze of vivid orange and yellow when the Azaleas reach their peak and the scarlet blooms of the Red Hand of Ulster in the Shamrock Garden are equally splendid. In high summer the Italian garden comes into its own with its magnificent array of roses and herbaceous plants in symmetrical beds. Other attractions include the amazing Dodo Terrace with its extraordinary concoction of concrete animal statues, the beautiful lake and the Temple of the Winds designed by James 'Athenian' Stuart in 1785.

Overnight dinner, bed and full Irish breakfast at Europa Hotel, Belfast.

Day 3 – Sunday, October 7 - Antrim Coast

Travel along the coast of county Antrim to the Giants Causeway.

Visit the Giants Causeway

The Causeway was formed more than 60 million years ago when red-hot lava erupted onto the surface of the earth. It was quickly cooled by the sea, which crystallised it and formed it into the 40,000 basalt polygonal columns, which today form the Giants Causeway. A must on any visit to the North of Ireland, the Causeway is an UNESCO World Heritage site, and is often referred to as the 'Eighth Wonder of the World'. There is a bus service from the heritage centre to the Causeway (a charge applies).

Visit Dunluce Castle

The ruins of Dunluce Castle are located on the North Antrim coast and stand proudly on a 30m high column of basalt rock. The ruins portray the air of strength this site commanded. Before the advent of gunpowder it would have been almost impossible to conquer. The castle dates largely from the 16th and 17th centuries, however the outer walls with round towers are attributed to being built in the 14th century by the MacQuillans. The Castle can only be reached over a bridge, which now replaces an original rocky connection. The bridge leads to the "New" Scottish style gatehouse built after cannon destroyed the original in 1584. In the two openings of the old gatehouse wall are found cannon salvaged from the wrecked Spanish Armada Galleon ship the Girona, which sank nearby in 1588. On the "Mainland" area of the Castle complex, can be found the remains of the earl's garden laid out in three terraces. This area also included the lodgings for the many visitors who graced the Castle in the 17th century. The visitor to Dunluce is invited to view an excellent audio-visual presentation on the history and legends of Dunluce Castle.

Continue to your hotel.

Overnight, dinner and full Irish breakfast at your hotel, Radisson Blu Hotel Letterkenny, Co Donegal.

Day 4 – Monday, October 8 - Donegal

Continue touring **County Donegal**.

Its location in the North west of Ireland has kept Donegal secret and wild. The Irish consider it to be the most beautiful county in Ireland because of the great diversity of scenery. Donegal is formed by coastal scenery, mountains, lakes and bogs covered in heather ~ all of which combine to give it a unique charm. Its roads are narrow and will lead you to tranquil and deep bays, long deserted beaches inhabited only by the sea birds and high cliffs and a coastline dotted with small islands. The narrow winding roads force you to take your time and allow you to enjoy the wild and unspoiled nature.

Visit **Glenveagh National Park**

Situated in northwest Donegal, the core area of Glenveagh National Park was formerly an enormous private estate of over 9,500 hectares in extent. The present day National Park now includes elements of another large estate and has a total area of over 16,500 hectares, making it Ireland's largest. It boasts, like Killarney, beautiful lakes set in impressive mountain scenery (the Park includes the two highest peaks in Donegal - Errigal and Slieve Snacht). The underlying granite gives to the landscape a quite different character to the sandstone and limestone strata of Killarney however. At the south-west end of the Park are the ice-carved cliffs of the Poisoned Glen and Bingorm, while the north-east end has a gentler array of hills, deep peat bogs and the swampy valley of the Owencarrow river.

Continue with stop at **Slieve League**, Ireland's highest sea cliffs followed by a stop at **Magee Tweed** in Donegal for a weaving demonstration.

Return to your hotel.

Overnight, dinner and full Irish breakfast at your hotel Radisson Blu Hotel Letterkenny, Co Donegal.

Day 5 – Tuesday, October 9 - County Sligo

This morning visit the **Ulster American Folk Park**.

The Ulster American Folk Park is located on the outskirts of Omagh town. The Folk Park grew up around the restored boyhood home of Judge Thomas Mellon (founder of the Pittsburgh banking dynasty). It has a permanent exhibition, called "Emigrants", which explains why two million people left Ulster for America during the 18th and 19th centuries. The exhibition also tells the vivid story of the grim lives of 15,000 Irish vagrants and convicts who were transported to North America during the mid-18th century. The Ship and Dockside Gallery features a full-size reconstruction of an early 19th century sailing ship ~ similar to those which carried the convicts across the Atlantic. The park has more than 30 historic buildings ~ some of which are original, some are replicas. There are settler homesteads, including that of John Joseph Hughes (the first Catholic Archbishop of New York), churches, a schoolhouse and a forge. Costumed guides and craftspeople are on hand to chat and explain the art of spinning, weaving, and candle making.

Continue and visit **Belleek Pottery**.

Belleek Pottery has been producing high quality Parian China at their factory in Belleek since its establishment in 1857. Visitors are invited to visit the factory and to see first hand, how this world-renowned pottery is created. The visit commences with a short audio-visual followed by a 20-minute tour of the factory during which the visitor will see the pottery being removed from its moulds, being fired and decorated by the Belleek artists. There is an excellent retail shop and café / restaurant which serves its wares on Belleek china.

Travel southwards through **County Sligo**.

County Sligo's beautiful scenery was an inspiration for Yeats, who is buried at Drumcliff Churchyard, under loaf-shaped Benbulbin Mountain. The lakes of Sligo, with their still waters and wooded islands, are truly spectacular, and form a striking contrast to the county's rugged uplands. The imposing Neolithic cairn on the summit of Knocknarea, known locally as Queen Maeve's grave, is a striking landmark. At Carrowmore, you'll find the largest megalithic cemetery in Ireland. Sligo's scenic coast has some excellent surfing beaches, including Strandhill, Rosses Point and Enniscrone, also popular for their golf courses. Lissadell House, once home to Countess Markievicz, is a good family attraction, with a lovely beach nearby.

Continue to Sligo Town.

Overnight, dinner and full Irish breakfast at your hotel, Markree Castle Hotel in Sligo .

Day 6 – Wednesday, October 10 - Sligo to Mayo

This morning visit **Carrowmore Cemetery**

Carrowmore Cemetery has over 60 stone circle and passage tombs making it one of the largest Stone Age cemeteries in Europe. It is the oldest Megalithic cemetery in Ireland as is said to have had over 100 tombs of which 60 still exist today. Each tomb is numbered to facilitate the visitor and the central tomb has been restored and enables visitors to visit the interior of a court tomb and see how it was when it was built over 5000 years ago. The local guides are excellent and give a very interesting and detailed tour of this very ancient and interesting site. A must for visitors interested in Archeology.

Enjoy a cruise on Lough Gill.

This Wild Tour Boat operates on one of Ireland's most beautiful lakes ~ Lough Gill. This areas great diversity of geology, archaeology, history and scenery leaves a permanent impression on all visitors. The 36km circumference of the lake provides a landscape laden with myth and legend, alive with history and saturated with literary association. It is very easy to see why this area so influenced the poet William Butler Yeats. The fifty minutes cruise takes you peacefully up the Garavogue River past Hazelwood onto the majestic waters of Lough Gill. It will also pass the historic Parkes Castle and the famous "Isle of Innisfree".

Overnight dinner, bed and full Irish breakfast at Clew Bay Hotel, Westport.

Day 7 – Thursday, October 11- Achill & Deserted Village

This morning after breakfast depart for **Achill Island**

Achill Island is one of the few Gaeltacht (Gaelic speaking) areas left in Ireland. Along with beautiful views over the sea, the Island itself is full of heather bogland and mountains. Achill is the largest island off the West Coast of Ireland, linked by a bridge, and the island measures 22km wide and 18km long. The word Achill comes from the Latin word Aquila meaning eagle. There is a landscape of mountains, bogs, lakes, beaches and bays. A haven for those who like outdoor sports. Its activities include bathing (for the courageous) on its ten sandy beaches, wind surfing, canoeing, boating, sea and fresh water fishing, tennis, golf, hand gliding, sub-aqua diving and mountaineering. Places to visit on the Island are Kildownet Castle, the Deserted Village, the Megalithic Tombs, the Seal Caves, the Atlantic Drive, Keem Bay, Minaun Heights and of course the local pubs for a real flavour of the Island.

Visit the Deserted Village at Slievemore which consists of some 80 - 100 stone cottages located along a mile long stretch of road on the southern slopes of Slievemore mountain. While some of these dwellings were occupied as summer 'booley' homes within living memory, the area itself is rich in archaeological artefacts including megalithic tombs dating from the Neolithic period some 5,000 years ago. Local field systems and site remnants indicate that settlement in this area dates from at least early Mediaval times.

Last stop today is a visit to the **Museum of Country Life, Turlough Park**

This museum houses the national folklore collection. Visitors are invited to experience the story of Irish country life between 1850 and 1950 through the innovative combination of artefacts and displays, archival video footage and interactive screens. The National Museum of Country Life is located in the spectacular grounds of Turlough Park amid magnificent gardens and an artificial lake, alongside the restored Turlough Park House and its adjoining courtyards.

Overnight dinner, bed and full Irish breakfast at Clew Bay Hotel, Westport.

Day 8 - Friday, October 12 - Mayo – Galway

Today enjoy a tour of **Connemara Region**, whose inhabitants still speak Gaelic, is without a doubt the wildest and the most romantic part of Ireland. It is a vast peninsula bordered by the arid and rocky coastline of Galway Bay in the south, a bumpy land characteristic for its stone walls and thatched cottages. In the northern half, harsher and more secret, you will see the Ocean and the beautiful fjord of Killary Harbour as well as the steep mountains overlooking numerous lakes and large bog areas. You will find peace and tranquillity, which have now disappeared from our overpopulated regions. Connemara is a real paradise for Nature lovers and those in search of strong emotions.

Visit Kylemore Abbey

Kylemore Abbey is located in the Kylemore Pass in Connemara. A Mitchell Henry built the House in 1868, after having spent his honeymoon in the area. The architecture is best described as neo-gothic and the house

still displays all the characteristics of that period. One of Kylemore Abbey's most famous features is its miniature cathedral, built in 1870 and known locally as the Gothic church. Today, the abbey is home to the Irish order of Benedictine nuns. They bought the house in 1920, having fled their convent in war-torn Belgium in 1914. They established a private school for young girls, which today is the renowned Kylemore Abbey International School for young girls. Facilities at Kylemore include a visitor centre, an exhibition housed in the main reception rooms of the house and a video which takes the visitor through the history of the house and its occupants.

Last stop today is a visit **Connemara Marble Factory**

Located in the village of Moycullen, the Connemara Marble Factory is owned and managed by the Joyce family. Their factory produces many fine products from the green Connemara marble, unique to this area of Ireland. The marble is brought here for cutting, processing and polishing and is used mostly for decorative items, like jewellery and memento's. Visitors are given a behind the scenes tour of the factory and a history of the uses of marble in the area. There is a retail store attached to the factory.

Overnight dinner, bed and full Irish breakfast at Radisson Blu Hotel Galway.

Day 9 – Saturday, October 13 - Galway City Tour

This morning enjoy some time in **Galway city**

Galway, the largest county in Connaught, is celebrated in song and story throughout the world and takes centre stage on Ireland's western seaboard. A spectacularly beautiful county, it is a medley of contrasts - the wildest and remotest of Connemara teamed with one of Europe's most vibrant and popular cities. Galway City at the mouth of Galway Bay is both a picturesque and lively city with a wonderful avant-garde culture. The city has many relics of its medieval past and is worth taking time to explore. It has changed considerably over the last number of years and features a fascinating juxtaposition of new and ancient architecture. The centre of the city is conveniently compact enough to ramble around comfortably.

In the afternoon, travel southwards via the **Burren region**.

The Burren, part of which forms the 100 square km Burren National Park, is a unique place. It is a Karst limestone region of approximately 300 sq. km, which lies in the north west corner of Co Clare. It is composed of limestone pavements, which have been eroded to a distinctive pattern. This pavement is criss-crossed by cracks known as grykes in which grow a myriad of wild flora and under which are huge caves and rivers which suddenly flood when it rains. The Burren contains dozens of megalithic tombs and Celtic crosses as well as a ruined Cistercian Abbey dating back to the 12th century. You will discover small villages abandoned during the famine period and green roads on which you can walk for miles without ever seeing a car. The flora on the Burren is a mixture Arctic and Mediterranean and rare flowers such as gentian, orchids and bloody cranesbill are the rule rather than the exception. The Burren is truly an exceptional part of Ireland.

Continue to the **Cliffs of Moher**.

Situated on the Atlantic Ocean and bordering the Burren Area, the Cliffs of Moher are one of Ireland's most spectacular sights. Standing 230 metres above the ground at their highest point and 8km long, the Cliffs boast one of the most amazing views in Ireland. On a clear day, the Aran Islands are visible in Galway Bay as well as the valleys and hills of Connemara. To the south of the cliffs is Hag's Head and was once the site of a castle. The cliffs reach their highest point just north of O' Brien's Tower. Cornelius O' Brien, a descendant of Brian Boru (he who defeated the Vikings in battle), built a Tower at the cliffs in order to enjoy some tea with his lady friends. The Tower is adjacent to the seastack, *Breanan Mór*, which stands over 70 metres above the foaming waves and is home to some of the Burren's wildlife.

Overnight dinner, bed and full Irish breakfast at Temple Gate Hotel, Ennis, Co. Clare.

Day 10 – Sunday, October 14 - Farewell

Enjoy a final full Irish breakfast at your hotel, meet with your coach driver and direct transfer to Shannon Airport for your return flight home.

Travel insurance gives travelers coverage for unforeseen problems, from a cancelled flight to a serious illness—or in rare cases, even an act of terrorism or the financial default of a travel supplier. If an illness, accident, or other covered unforeseen circumstance forces a traveler to cancel or interrupt their plans, they face two major financial losses—money invested in nonrefundable pre-payments, and medical expenses that in many instances may not be covered by health insurance. In addition to trip cancellation and interruption, the plan will also cover emergency medical expenses; emergency medical transportation, when ordered by a doctor, to the nearest adequate medical facility; reimbursement for accommodations and expenses incurred due to travel delays; reimbursement for the purchase of essential items if baggage is delayed; and coverage against lost, stolen or damaged baggage, including passports.

Tour Cancellation and Refund Policy:

Until December 31, 2011	Full refund less \$100.00 cancellation fee
Jan 1 thru April 30, 2012	Full refund less 50% of tour cost
May 1 thru July 31, 2012	Full refund less 75% of tour cost
August 1 thru October 5, 2012	No refund can be made

The purchase of the optional travel insurance will cover the costs above.

Responsibility statement/conditions:

***CCHS strongly advises that you secure trip insurance that covers cancellation and “what-ifs” of travel.

The Society is in absolute charge of day and/or overnight trips. Nonmembers should be charged more than members. To make reservations, one-half of the total amount must be paid at the time of reservation. The Society will not be legally liable for, nor in any way responsible for, any injuries or any illness of any member or guest taking a planned trip; nor shall said organization be responsible for any loss or damage to said member's or guest's personal property.

All passengers acknowledge that participation in the trip and its activities involves the risk of injury to their person and property and they voluntarily accept all risk of personal injury and property damage arising from their participation in the trip. As lawful consideration for being permitted to attend the trip and participate in these activities, the passengers hereby release and discharge Cumberland County Historical society and its respective officers, directors, employees, governing Board members, agents and related entities from all claims and demands whatsoever that the passengers may hereafter have for injuries or part by the negligence or other wrongdoing of such organization of its officers, directors, employees, governing Board members , agents or related entities.
