

# IRISH GARDENS, HOUSES AND HORSES: THE INSIDE TRACK

A UNIQUE 'MONEY CANNOT BUY' EXPERIENCE

12 – 16 MAY 2020



Hosted by: Patsy Floyd & Heather Osborne

  
**The Ultimate**  
TRAVEL COMPANY

# JOIN US ON THIS ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME TRIP TO THE EMERALD ISLE

Join us on a very special tour of Ireland to see, to feel and to enjoy the way the Irish really live. The country's landscapes are beautiful of course, but the real beauty comes from within, from the people who make the Emerald Isle their home.

Thanks to Patsy's exhaustive address book, we have secured rare invitations to some of Ireland's most glorious estates and gardens, each with their own distinctive charm but all sharing that unique and engaging 'Irishness'.

Horses have always played a huge part in daily life here, and so our tour will also include a glimpse into Ireland's love affair of thoroughbred breeding and racing with visits to some of the world's most renowned stables and studs.

At each of these properties, many of which would be impossible to visit without Patsy's contacts, we will be hosted by the owners and resident experts.

And we will travel in style, aboard Belmond's wonderful new Grand Hibernian train, whose elegant carriages each bear the name of an Irish county.

So please do join our house party on wheels. We can promise you good craic and a return home having made many Irish friends.

## TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Accommodation on Belmond's fabulous new Grand Hibernian train.
- Personal invitation to magnificent Coolmore, home to some of Europe's finest stallions.
- Private invitation to the Stack racing yard, home to the legendary Tommy of Red Rum fame, his wife Liz and son Fozzy, who together run one of the country's most successful stables.
- Exclusive visit to Fota House Arboretum and Gardens, Jameson Distillery and Muckross Estate on the shores of sparkling Lake Killarney.
- Personal invitation from Countess Dunraven to her enchanting home and gardens at Kilgobbin.
- An introduction to the world-famous plantsman, Carl Wright. A mine of information and fun, Carl will show us around his remarkable garden at Caher Bridge amidst the almost lunar landscapes of The Burren.
- Farewell drinks with the Donohue family at their working farm, Woodville House, in County Galway.



Killarney



Fota Gardens



Woodville Walled Garden

## 4 DAY ITINERARY, FROM 12 – 16 MAY 2020

### DAY 1: TUESDAY 12 MAY

Dublin / Thurles / Charleville

Train 'check in' at the Westbury Hotel Dublin. Transfer to Heuston Railway Station. Board Belmond Grand Hibernian train where lunch will be served. Train departs for Thurles Station. Disembark for short drive to Coolmore Stud.

Coolmore, near Fethard County Tipperary, is headquarters of the world's largest breeding operation of thoroughbred racehorses and is owned and managed by the Magnier family. Coolmore was also home to Patsy Floyd, who obviously has many fond memories. We will be shown some of the greatest stallions alive today and visit the stunning Coolmore Museum. It is usually not possible to visit Coolmore, so we do feel particularly privileged and grateful to be personally invited.

We return to the train for drinks and dinner onboard, followed by some local entertainment. Overnight: Charleville.

### DAY 2: WEDNESDAY 13 MAY

Charleville / Limerick Junction / Charleville

The train continues to Limerick Junction as breakfast is served. We disembark here and drive to Tipperary, where we have a private invitation from the Stack family to visit their renowned Racing Yard, situated at the heart of the county's beautiful countryside. Fozzy Stack will introduce us to his racing skills and we will be able to watch the



horses working on the gallops. This will be followed by a glass of wine in the home of Tommy and Liz Stack. As a jockey, Tommy is best known for leading Red Rum to victory for the third time in the Grand National. It will be a real treat to spend time with the family, as well as a fun and amusing occasion.

Return to the train for lunch and continue on to Cork. Afternoon visit to Fota Arboretum, previously owned by the Smith Barry family and recently restored by the Irish Heritage Society. For garden lovers, it's a must! Roy Lancaster, the renowned gardener, thought Fota was one of the best restored and maintained gardens. We are fortunate to have Bernard, the Head Gardener, to show us around. An ideal time to admire the

gardens, relax, go for a good walk or sit down in the house for a cup of tea.

We leave Fota for the short drive to the home of perhaps the most famous of Irish Whiskeys, Jameson. A private tour through the Old Middleton Distillery and on to the new state of the art training facility, the Academy, where we are honoured to be joined by a member of the Jameson family for a few tastings.

Return to the train in Cork for dinner and more entertainment. Overnight: Charleville.

### DAY 3: THURSDAY 14 MAY

Charleville / Cork / Killarney

After breakfast, disembark in Charleville for a short drive to Kilgobbin.

Kilgobbin is one of Patsy's favourite homes in Ireland and is owned by the Dunraven family. A delightful house of Georgian design full of interesting family pictures and portraits. Countess Dunraven (Geraldine) will personally guide us around her garden before coffee in her special home. This is a very private visit and we are very thankful to the Countess for her kind invitation.

Board the train at Charleville and enjoy lunch on the way to Killarney, arriving around mid-afternoon. It is then only a short drive to the Muckross Estate. This stunning property is set on the side of the Killarney Lake amid many rhododendrons and shrubs. Good retail therapy is also available at the Muckross Shop, where you will be able to watch



Muckross Estate



Coolmore Farm



Caher Bridge Garden

the local Weavers at work. Wine and canapés will be served while we learn the history of the local area. Return to the train for dinner.  
Overnight: Killarney Station.

**DAY 4: FRIDAY 15 MAY**

Killarney / Ennis / Athlone

The train departs Killarney Station fairly early while we enjoy a relaxing morning and breakfast, arriving at Ennis at 11.30am. Transfer by coach to The Burren with its extraordinary limestone pavements at Doolin, which contain a wealth of flora and fauna of Arctic, Alpine and Mediterranean diversity. It is as if you have just landed on the moon. Little wonder then that it's been designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

You will be joined on the way by famous Plantsman Carl Wright, who is a mine of information and huge fun. He will instruct us on the flora in and around the rocks, before taking us to his own remarkable garden, Caher Bridge. By first clearing all the black thorn scrub and hazel, then importing tons of top soil, Carl has exposed all the rocks and created his own piece of magic.

Late lunch on the train before departing for Woodville House and Gardens near Kilchreest Loughrea. These gardens are a huge contrast to The Burren, but are still set in the wild west of Ireland. This small walled garden with its two storey Dovecote is at the centre of a working Irish

farm, which the Donohue family acquired through the Land Commission one hundred years ago. We will be celebrating our last visit with the owners by learning about Irish farming and gardening in County Galway with a glass in hand.

Dinner on board the train before final local entertainment.  
Overnight: Athlone Station.

**DAY 5: SATURDAY 16 MAY**

Athlone / Dublin

Enjoy breakfast. Arrive at Heuston Station, Dublin at approximately 08:50 where arrangements end.



Tommy Stack



Doolin

# BELMOND GRAND HIBERNIAN



Be enchanted by the magic of the Emerald Isle on board Ireland's first luxury sleeper train. Settle into one of 20 spacious cabins, all en-suites with picture windows, full-length wardrobes, dressing tables and duck down bedding – a tranquil haven on a journey you will remember for years to come. Inspired by Dublin's Georgian architecture, the décor of Belmond Grand Hibernian is one of refined, modern luxury with touches of Irish flair in the tweed and tartan furnishings.

The train glides through picturesque landscapes of patchwork fields and rocky coasts. Marvel at the passing scenery from the comfort of your private cabin, or from the Observation Car, Kildare, which oozes the elegance of a classic saloon. The two sleek restaurant cars serve exquisite regional cuisine, whilst the crew provide warm hospitality and five-star service throughout.

## TOUR PRICES

Tour Price	£5,980 per person
Single Supplement	£2,590 per person

## EXPEDITION COST INCLUDES

- Accommodation on Belmond Grand Hibernian
- All meals and drinks as per itinerary / onboard the train
- All visits and excursions as per the itinerary
- All transportation as detailed in the itinerary
- All entrance fees

## NOT INCLUDED

- Travel to and from Dublin
- Travel insurance
- Items of personal expenditure (e.g. telephone calls / laundry etc.)
- Gratuities to guide/s and Belmond Grand Hibernian onboard staff
- Government levies or taxes introduced after costing and publication of this programme May 2018

Please note that certain elements of this itinerary, and/or the order of the events, may well be subject to alteration due to circumstances beyond our control.





Muckross House

## THE TOUR TEAM



### PATSY FLOYD

Floyd by marriage, but known to all as Pats Vigors in Ireland, where she lived and worked for the first 28 years of her life. At the same time, her father Tim was boosting the fortunes of Coolmore, which he had inherited in 1968, by standing 1973 Arc winner Rheingold, and two American bred horses, Thatch and Home Guard, both trained by Vincent O'Brien. In addition to a highly successful career as a photographer, 'Pats' has led many garden tours for Belmond's Royal Scotsman and gives talks all over the world. When time allows, she also enjoys her own wonderful garden back home in Wiltshire at Chalfield Manor, which she shares with her husband Robert.



### HEATHER OSBORNE

Also on board will be Patsy's great friend Heather. Having lived most of her life in Ireland, no one knows their way round or the people better. As well as being an enthusiastic gardener, she has ridden out for various trainers and has even won a race in Leopardstown. She is also great fun and will make for the ideal travelling companion.



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