

TRAVEL TOGETHER
with fellow MINIATURISTS to...

LONDON & IRELAND

May 09 – 21, 2012

London ~ Dublin ~ Waterford ~ Killarney

KENSINGTON DOLLHOUSE FESTIVAL, London

See John Hodgson's Model Houses Exhibition
at **HEVER CASTLE**

Special visit to **TARA'S PALACE** in miniature, Dublin

Meet **JIM IRISH** in Waterford and

take the Viking Triangle Tour

Waterford House of Crystal Showrooms

Visits to Blarney and Bunratty Castles

Tour the Ring of Kerry, and more!



Your Tour Itinerary:

May 09-Wed, 2012

For those of you living in North America, *you will need to arrange your flight to depart today, in order to arrive in London England, on Thursday morning, May 10th.*

In order to plan your free time wisely and learn more about specific places along the tour that interest you, we recommend that you purchase one of the following travel guides: Frommer's, Foder's, Rick Steves', or DK Eyewitness.

May 10-Thu

We are working on a **SPECIAL TOUR** with miniature-related visits for this afternoon, so you will want to arrange your flight to arrive London early this morning. More information will be posted as soon as all of the details are finalized and prior to letting you know that it is time to do your air. Our hotel in **LONDON** will be the **KENSINGTON CLOSE HOTEL AND SPA**. The hotel will have just completed a £40m renovation and is located within walking distance of the Kensington Town Hall, home to the Kensington Dollhouse Festival. You can easily transfer to the hotel via the Gatwick Airport Express or Heathrow Airport Express. The cost for either train to London is approximately £18 and will bring you within a few miles of our hotel, at which point you can get a cab directly to the front door of the hotel. Contact Traveling Together if you would like to arrive in London a day early and stay at the Kensington Close Hotel. Because our stay in London is limited, you may want to have additional time to tour London and explore some of the many sights that this historic city has to offer. If you would like assistance in arranging your air travel please call Northwood Travel at 800-780-0571 or email them at info@NorthwoodTravel.com

Our **WELCOME DINNER** will be this evening at our hotel.

May 11-Fri

Today you will be on your own to see some of the sights of London! Whether you decide to take the Hop On, Hop Off touring bus, visit Harrod's, ride the London Eye, take in one of the many famous museums, or attend the first day of the Kensington Dollhouse Festival, you are sure to enjoy this wonderful city! Show hours today are 12-6pm and a 2-day pass is included in the price of your tour.

May 12-Sat

Established in 1985 by Caroline Hamilton & Sue Atkinson, **THE KENSINGTON DOLLHOUSE FESTIVAL** (formerly the London Dollhouse Festival), has become one of the top international shows for quality dolls' houses, miniatures & models. There are 175+ craftsmen exhibiting, many of which come from abroad and all of whom make the items they sell themselves. In fact 95% of all the items for sale are hand made. In 2005, Charlotte Stokoe took over the organization of the Festival, and has introduced other events alongside the main show, including workshops with some of the most established names in miniatures. <http://www.dollhousefestival.com> You'll have from 10am until 5pm to attend today's show!

May 13-Sun

HEVER CASTLE dates back to 1270 when the massive gatehouse, the outer wall and the moat were constructed. In the early 1500s the Bullen family bought the castle and added a Tudor dwelling within the walls and so it became the childhood home of its most famous inhabitant, Anne Boleyn. It later passed into the ownership of Henry's fourth wife, Anne of Cleves. From 1557 onwards the Castle was owned by a number of families including the Waldegraves, the Humfreys and the Meade Waldos. Finally, in 1903, William Waldorf Astor invested time, money and imagination in restoring the Castle, building the 'Tudor Village' and creating the gardens and lake. Although there will be time to visit the castle and gardens, our main focus will be the **MINIATURE MODEL HOUSES EXHIBIT**. This is a display of miniature houses created by internationally recognized artisan John Hodgson and a collection of such significance that a separate

building was constructed to house it. You will want to have your main meal of the day at one of the eateries on the castle grounds before we board our motorcoach for the trip to London Gatwick Airport.

Our early evening flight will take us to **DUBLIN, IRELAND**. Located on Drury Street and within a few minutes walk of Dublin's famed Grafton Street, Dublin Castle and Trinity College, is the **BROOKS HOTEL DUBLIN CITY**. The hotel has recently undergone a full makeover and is a member of Small Luxury Hotels of the World. The oak-paneled drawing room is a restful oasis for a cup of tea or a glass of sherry while you peruse the *Irish Times*.

May 14-Mon

DUBLIN is the Capital of Ireland. Nestled between Dublin Bay and the surrounding hills, the city is as sophisticated as a metropolis, but still remains as intimate as a village. Medieval, Georgian and modern architecture provide a back-drop to a friendly, bustling port. Our **PANORAMIC CITY TOUR** will acquaint you with the highlights of the city, including Trinity College (home of the Book of Kells) and Dublin Castle, just to name a few! You will have the remainder of the day to explore on your own.



The Ha'penny Bridge, Dublin's oldest pedestrian bridge crossing the River Liffy.

May 15-Tue

Powerscourt House in County Wicklow is the new home to **TARA'S PALACE, MUSEUM OF CHILDHOOD**. Tara's Palace is a small registered charity dedicated to helping the children of Ireland. The centre piece of the Museum is Tara's Palace, one of the greatest dolls palaces in the world which is displayed together with a collection of historic dolls houses, toys and childhood by-gones. Tara's 22 room Palace has been meticulously constructed by some of Ireland's finest craftsmen and has taken over two decades to complete. Designed and built to one-twelfth scale it encapsulates the grandeur and elegance of Ireland's three great 18th Century Mansions, Castletown House, Leinster House and Carton House.

The structure was built by Tommy Clancy, Paul Geoghegan, Con Lee and Michael Walton. Paintings by leading Irish Artists, including Tom Ryan R.H.A. and miniature furnishing masterpieces by Fred Early, Paul Geoghegan, Michael Walton, John Hodgson, Alan McKirdy and others adorn the State Rooms and private apartments. The magnificent marble Cantilever staircase is by Christopher O'Neill & Sons, while rare examples of glass, porcelain, silver and ivory in miniature have been collected from around the world. The Palace is the centre piece and is augmented and supported by a collection of historic dolls houses including "*Portabello*", circa 1700, possibly the earliest surviving dolls house in Ireland or the UK acquired from the collection of the international authority on such houses, Vivien Greene, together with a Dolls House from the family of Lady Wilde (Oscar's Mother), a very rare and small 18th century dolls house for use in a carriage to amuse children when travelling, and others in various styles and periods.

Mr. Matt McNulty, chairman of Tara's Palace Trust, has been instrumental in helping us plan this visit. He and the trustees will make every effort to have some of the local artisans present during our visit.

One Irish artisan that will be joining us is **JIM IRISH**, from Waterford. A retired Waterford Crystal glasscutter, Jim is the only artisan in the world using the same old-world techniques to make miniature cut crystal and holds the record in the *Guinness Book of World Records* for the smallest piece of glass with the most number of cuts. Read about Jim in the December 2010 issue of *Miniature Collector*.

Upon our return to Dublin, you'll have the rest of the afternoon free, prior to our **GROUP DINNER** this evening at our hotel.

May 16-Wed

This morning we head south to **WATERFORD**, famous for Waterford Crystal. The **TOWER HOTEL** is located on The Mall, central to the historical city center and within walking distance of the places we will be visiting today. Our tour begins with a visit to **REGINALD'S TOWER**, one of the most remarkable Viking buildings still in existence in Ireland. It has been restored and now houses an exhibition that tells the story of Waterford's Viking heritage. Our next stop is the **MUSEUM OF TREASURES**, located in a converted 19th Century granary. The museum houses a unique exhibition that tells the story of Waterford City from its Viking origins to modern day. Our last stop on the tour is the new **WATERFORD CRYSTAL FACTORY AND SHOWROOMS**. Although most pieces of crystal are being produced in Waterford's other factories throughout the world, we will have a tour of this new and smaller facility. You'll have the opportunity to observe the glass cutters, before entering the showroom for some serious shopping!

In addition to a little shopping and time for lunch, we'll also make a stop at **IRISH HANDMADE GLASS** to see former Waterford artisans making colored pieces of glass, before returning to the Tower Hotel in time for our **GROUP DINNER**.



JIM IRISH will be our guest for dinner this evening and he has graciously agreed to bring along some of his work for a private sale! Be sure to stop by and say hello to Jim when attending Philadelphia Miniatura in November 2011 and Tom Bishop's Chicago International Show in 2012. See Jim's work at <http://SwanMiniatures.com>

May 17-Thu

Ireland is famous for its Blarney, and today we will visit the castle of the same name. Where else could you climb up several stories of stone steps, bend backwards over a ledge and kiss a stone with the promise that it will confer upon you, the gift of eloquence? After visiting **BLARNEY CASTLE** we will have plenty of time to visit the on-site flagship store of **BLARNEY WOOLLEN MILLS**. This 30,000 square foot retail store is housed in one of Ireland's oldest and most authentic Irish woollen mills, offering everything from small souvenirs to Belleek China and Waterford Crystal. This afternoon we will continue west to **KILLARNEY**, an area of Ireland that is renowned for its beautiful scenery. The charming Four-Star **RANDES COURT HOTEL** will be our home for three nights. It is ideally located just a five minutes' walk from the noise and the bustle of Killarney Town Centre. Having recently undergone a €4.5 million face lift marking the 100th birthday of the original building, the hotel has the look and feel of a country manor house. **DINNER THIS EVENING** will be at our hotel.

May 18-Fri

Today we will experience County Kerry's most outstanding scenery as we drive the **RING OF KERRY**. In addition to spectacular ocean views, we will be making stops along the way to visit a bog farm, sheep dog demonstration, and spots worthy of photo breaks, such as the Ladies View above the Upper Lake of Killarney National Park.

May 19-Sat

You will have the entire day to **EXPLORE THE TOWN OF KILLARNEY**. You may want to arrange a visit to Ross Castle or Muckross house, or hop on a jaunting car (horse and buggy) for a ride through the Killarney National Park and along the lakeside, being entertained by a story-telling jarvey who will reinforce the tales you've heard of the Irish and their blarney! Whether you would like to search for that perfect piece of Celtic jewelry or just shop for souvenirs to take home, you will enjoy browsing the many shops. It's Saturday night and there is sure to be a place or two...or four, that will be offering traditional Irish music!

May 20-Sun

This morning we depart Killarney for a visit to **BUNRATTY CASTLE**, the most complete and authentically restored and furnished castle in Ireland. Bunratty's strategic position on the river Shannon made it the center of many battles and it has been destroyed and re-built on four occasions. In addition to visiting the castle we will explore the adjacent Folk Park, a living reconstruction of the homes and environment of Ireland of over a century ago. Rural farmhouses, village shops and streets are recreated and furnished as they would have appeared at that time. Just across the road is Bunratty Village, a cluster of shops in a 19th century village setting, ranging from specialty shops for Waterford and Tipperary Crystal, to multiple outlets such as Blarney Woolen Mills and Meadows & Byrne.

Our last stop on the tour is the Park Inn at Shannon Airport, located just steps away from the Arrivals and Departure Terminal of Shannon International Airport. Our **FAREWELL DINNER** will be tonight at the hotel

May 21-Mon

No matter what time you make arrangements to depart from **SHANNON AIRPORT**, it's just a short walk over to the terminal to check-in for your flight home.

(see below)

Included in your tour:

All hotels

All breakfasts and 5 dinners, as noted in the itinerary

All group visits and activities

All ground transportation when traveling as a group

Luggage handling at hotels when available and when traveling as a group

Two-day admission to the Good Sam Show

Mini shopping and more!

\$3,463 per person, based on double occupancy

\$ 783 single supplement

(No airfare included)

Once you have booked your tour, you will be notified when it is time to book your airfare

If at that time you would like assistance with your air travel, please call Northwood Travel at 800-780-0571 or email them at info@NorthwoodTravel.com

Go to "**Sign Up Forms**" for Tour *Terms & Conditions* and *Registration Form*

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