

# 2008 TRIP TO THE ISLE OF MAN, IRELAND AND LONDON TOWN:

## IRELAND - INTRODUCTION:

I had 'seen' Ireland from Snaefell in 2007 and during my week at the 2008 TT, so close yet so far, I had never been back since leaving Belfast's shores in 1954!! I suppose I really wanted to return by sea, a Ferry if you will, to the Belfast or Larne Docks area. The short plane flight had to do, it was uneventful, George Best Airport seemed well laid out, the Hire Car was very nice indeed, an Audi A4 Diesel Turbo, (black of course).

## DAY 11: Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> June:

To drive out into Belfast traffic was to say the least disturbing to me, thoughts immediately turned to my late father and mother, they would have known where to go, the places to visit etc. Three critical objectives were planned, to visit my father's Sister in Carrickfergus, look at our old family home in Dundonald and view the Stormont Castle and gardens where my mother and her relatives often visited.

All was achieved and time was available to view the massive Harland and Wolfe 'Samson and Goliath' Cranes, each capable of lifting up to 840 tonnes albeit now sadly silent, they are now protected as National Monuments. The Titanic construction precinct was very close, so a brief trip ensued there to.



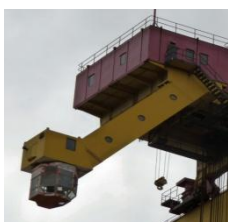
STORMONT CASTLE



CARRICKFERGUS CASTLE, VERY NEAR MY AUNTIES HOME



SAMSON & GOLIATH, NOW HISTORIC MONUMENTS



This insert depicts the Crane Driver's perilous Operator's Cab, reached by a very narrow staircase enclosed in the yellow housing, one very scary job site!!



I MUST TAKE A GUIDED TOUR HERE SOME DAY!!



## DD 12: Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> June:

The plan was to circumnavigate the entire Irish Coast, so from Larne an anti clockwise route found, a pit stop at Joey's Bar in Ballymoney to meet a very special lady, pay my respects at Joey's Remembrance Garden, pay my respects at the gravesite of Joey and Robert, a very very difficult moment and to lift the spirits again, the Giants Causeway and a beautiful B&B stop over at Donegal Inlet with the obligatory Ferry sight seeing trip.



LINDA DUNLOP WITH ME, IN JOEY'S BAR



'WORKS' HONDA RC45 V4 PRESENTED TO JOEY BY HONDA

The JOEY DUNLOP MEMORIAL GARDEN, located very close to Joey's Bar has been beautifully constructed and is very well cared for.

Joey, the most successful TT Rider of all time, a thorough gentleman, awarded the OBE for his Humanitarian Work and the MBE for services to Motorcycle Sport, I so wish I could have met him in person.

His racing achievements over such a long period of time are staggering, mainly achieved on the most dangerous 'Road Race' circuits of the world.



JOEY'S BAR WITH JOEY ON THE VTR1000 SP1, No.3!!



STAGGERING ACHIEVEMENTS



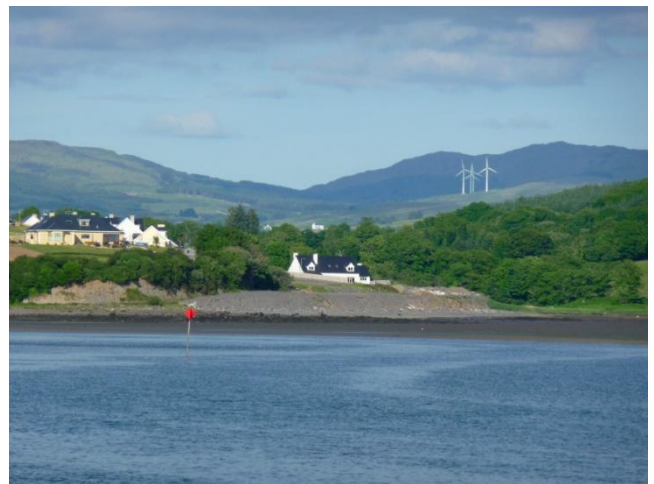
**THE GIANTS CAUSEWAY**, an amazing array of rock formations, definitely worth a visit, mind you the Rope Bridge looked slightly scary so that was given a miss!! Apparently the formations, some 40,000 of them were caused by volcanic eruptions with rapid cooling of the 'basalt' forming mainly hexagonal vertical forms, all very strange indeed.



**DONEGAL**, a 'so peaceful' coastal village, offered a beautiful Ferry Trip along the Inlet, the Potato Famine and perilous embarkation travels to the Americas were highlighted by the guide. Some derelict buildings and a small statue are clearly visible in remembrance of extremely sad times.



**DONEGAL INLET WITH THE TOWN IN THE BACKGROUND**



**DONEGAL INLET WITH WIND GENERATION**



**STATUE AT THE TOWN END OF THE DONEGAL INLET**



**DONEGAL TOWN, OLD AND NEW**



### **DAD 13: Monday 9<sup>th</sup> June:**

From Donegal the trip continued in poorer weather, very overcast, to Galway then to Limerick an incredibly busy City and finally on to Cork for the evening. Surprises included entering EIRE, 'Ireland' and finding oneself in a Metric speed posted environ, Euros for currency with refusal to accept UK Pounds anywhere, somewhat superior housing in many areas as compared to Northern Ireland and a mixture of surprisingly good four lane Highways and conversely, roads through many smaller towns were in very poor shape, very very bumpy. Oh, fuel costs in Euros noticeably dearer in 'Ireland' as compared to Northern Ireland. The weather conditions made photography somewhat questionable to say the least during this day!!

### **DAD 14: Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> June:**

**THE BLARNEY CASTLE** , a great day 'weather wise' so, 'kiss' that darn Blarney Stone!, very high and quite disturbing to lean 'way back' to make contact with the 'Stone'. The spiral steps up and down did nothing to inspire confidence, but the deed was done, woohoo.



**BLARNEY CASTLE**



**ME, A LONG LONG WAY OVER, OUCH!!**



**STAIRS, NOT MADE FOR MY BIG FEET!!**



**THE JAMESON 'IRISH WHISKY' WINERY**, was next on the trip offering beautiful grounds and displays. The Winery was established by Mr John Jameson in 1780 and now offers visitors of old and new facilities with beautiful wine tasting and a gift store.



**JAMESON WINERY MAIN ENTRANCE**



**A HUGE VAT!!**



**HUGE STOPPER, WHATEVER TURNED IT?**



**REPRESENTATION OF AN ORIGINAL BARREL**

**BRAY**, the final stop for the day, a lovely seaside town outside of Dublin.



**BRAY FORESHORE**



**THE LOCALS AFTER AN EVENING FEED!**



## DAY 15: Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> June:

**DUBLIN**, I so wanted to spend some time exploring Dublin, Wicklow etc., work commitments, time constraints, whatever, forced a quick look and a fast trip back to Northern Ireland. Some good and acceptable roads, the crazy part was paying to use a Toll Road that one assumed went further than a few kilometres only!! The rest of the Toll Road was still under construction, of course the Toll Booth Attendant failed to mention this as he gleefully took the toll money.



OLD AND NEW BLEND TOGETHER WELL



RIVER LIFFEY IN THE HEART OF DUBLIN CITY



PAVED PEDESTRIAN/DELIVERY TRUCK ACCESS WORKS VERY WELL



TYPICAL PUB WITH FLAGS EVERYWHERE



STATUES EVERYWHERE



INTERESTING SEAT!

## DAY 16: Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> June:

This day was spent exploring Larne and environs and particularly revisiting my Aunty in Carrickfergus for some hours to chat about family matters, marvellous moments very fondly remembered. Sadly my Aunty passed away many weeks after I returned to Australia. This Ireland report is in her memory, hopefully I can revisit the Emerald Isle some day with more time and better weather conditions.