

Ireland

We had previously visited Northern Ireland in September 1999, mainly to track down some details of Michael's Irish family history. He is descended from a "Dissenting" Presbyterian Minister, the Reverend James Porter, a famous man who was hanged in 1798 within sight of his meeting house for his association with the United Irishmen, his support for Catholic emancipation, and for his authorship of several satirical publications lampooning the British aristocracy. His daughter Sophia married William Dickey Henderson, from a Scottish Plantation family that had finally settled in Belfast. Their youngest son, John, sailed to Australia in 1863 in the square-rigged *Orient*, and was Michael's great-grandfather. He was one of the adventurous Ulster Protestant emigrants to the Australian colonies with the means to support themselves and anxious to tackle the opportunities they foresaw there.

During that first visit we toured Ulster quite extensively in a rental car, taking in Belfast and the famously spectacular coastal Antrim road. So, on this trip, after revisiting Porter's church, Grey Abbey in the eponymous village, our plan was to skip across Northern Ireland to Donegal, the northernmost province of the Republic of Ireland, and spend the rest of the time touring round the republic, mainly along the coast in a generally anticlockwise and tortuous route.



From the ferry terminal we battled some complicated intersections bypassing Belfast to the east, and we got a look up towards the temple-like façade of the imposing Stormont parliament building. It was then out to the east through Newtownards and on to the Mount Stewart mansion, now a National Trust property. The trust re-opened it only a year ago, after a record-breaking £7.5 million restoration project. It now represents the era when the 7th Marquess of Londonderry and his wife Edith lived there. It holds the family's substantial collection of art, furniture and exotica. Edith's enthusiasm for gardens is on full and expansive display. Before entering the house we



enjoyed a ramble through the most formal gardens, including statues of lots of weird and extinct animals of and other sections of the estate.



The formal rooms of the house have been beautifully restored and reconstructed as they were in the time of the 7th Marquess. The setting for the formal dining table features the seating cards of some of the prominent people who dined there, including Winston Churchill, Neville Chamberlain and Ramsay Macdonald.

In the breakfast room hangs a rather dark and gloomy painting that was of special interest to us. The house as it now stands is an amalgam of the previous one and the later additions. The previous house was built on the site of the original, a smaller but still impressive two-story, whitewashed dwelling. This is where the 2nd Lord Londonderry lived. Our interest in this original building is that it was where





Anna, the wife of the Reverend James Porter, came to plead for her husband's life after his conviction and sentencing for the crime of sedition, almost certainly a frame-up. It is recorded: "With her seven children Anna walked to Mount Stewart, waited upon Lady Londonderry, represented to her in wretched condition and implored her interference". She seemed hopeful after a sympathetic hearing from Londonderry's wife, but the Marquess then intervened and said there was nothing he could or would do. Porter's penalty was nevertheless commuted from hanging, drawing and quartering – that is, agonising torture before death – to hanging alone.

From there, of course, we drove a little way south along the shores of Strangford Lough to the village of Grey Abbey and the ruins of the abbey itself.

James Porter is buried in the abbey graveyard, as we have known since seeing my father's little photo of the grave taken during his visit there in the 1930s, and our previous visit in 1999. After some vandalism of the grave a few years ago, a new plaque has been engraved with the original words:

*Sacred to the memory of
the Reverend James Porter
Dissenting Minister of Greyabbey
who Departed this life July
2 1798 aged 45 years.*

*Also his wife Annie Porter
alias Knox
who died 1823 aged 70 Years*

Also Eliza Porter a child



(Some of the words appear to have been changed from the original – his wife's name was *Anna* Knox, sometimes also recorded as Anne.)

Round at the abbey itself we were welcomed by two members of the Friends of the Abbey group, who were interested in our story of Michael's family history. The Friends have done a great job with a small explanatory museum, describing the abbey and its history. Grey Abbey was a Cistercian monastery, founded in 1193 by Affreca, wife of the Anglo-Norman invader John de Courcy. Affreca was the daughter of Godfred, king of the Isle of Man – it was traditional for Ulster kings to marry into the Isle of Man royal family. Affreca founded the monastery in thanks for her survival following a particularly stormy sea crossing.

The abbey was built in the Gothic style, very unusual for the time. The monks came from Cumbria. By the 13th and 14th centuries the abbey was one of the richest in the earldom of Ulster. Like many others, it was destroyed in Elizabethan times. The ruins show the outlines of the precinct well, and the remaining parts of the walls and tower are very picturesque now.



As we were wandering round the ruins Michael came across an elderly lady lying on the grass, attended by her granddaughter. She had just fallen from a low section of wall, hitting her knee as she went down. Michael cleaned up her leg and dressed her wound, which was a deep laceration of her left knee. As this would almost certainly need stitching, and she could not drive in her condition anyway, Steve (one of the Friends) arranged for her son to come and pick her up and take her to hospital.



A lovely lady, she was extremely grateful and Michael benefited from several blessings from God.

All this meant that we had to change what passes for plans in our touring, and we stayed in the region to drive to the coast at Donaghadee. Here, our previous research had established was

a dedicated motorhome parking place, with toilets and other facilities, overlooking the sea. This turned out to be an excellent place to stop, much better than we had expected, similar in principal to the “aires” so common on the continent of Europe. (The French word “*aire*”, meaning resting place, has become a generic word in Europe for low-cost or free parking places specifically for campers and motorhomes, with sufficient facilities but without the features of a camp site which few of us need most of the time. There are few aires in Britain, because they are bitterly opposed by camp-site companies such as the influential Caravan Club.)

Sunny late afternoon, and we even sat out for a few minutes!

Sunday 28 August

Very peaceful night after a busy couple of days. Overcast first thing, but cleared, and many local motorhomers sat out sunbathing – not us, though, with a still-cool breeze off the sea. We overlooked a very rocky shoreline, with a vast expanse exposed at low tide, and it was not the kind of beach to be walked on. We did walk into the town to get the paper and a couple of stores items.

In the afternoon we listened to a commentary on the Belgian Grand Prix, won by Nico Rosberg with Ricciardo second, and Norma went blackberrying in the bushes behind us. Clear blue sky by 5:00 pm.



Monday 29 August

Good night, and woke to a clear blue morning. This was the start of a lovely day by northern European standards. This was a Bank Holiday in the UK, and the site, with its associated extensive dog-walking facilities



and exercise machines for the more vigorous, became very busy with locals. Many complained that this had been the best day of a terrible “summer”, just as the kids were going back to school tomorrow.

We stayed all day, simply moving up to the end of the row of motorhomes for a better view and sun. Everybody very chatty, especially the dog people and neighbouring campers.

Most campers left for home in the late afternoon.

Tuesday 30 August

Another peaceful night, much milder than the one before, and a mainly clear sky first thing. We had found out from a couple of locals that our Calor gas bottles might not be possible to change in Northern Ireland, and certainly not in the Republic. We established that the main Calor office in NI was near the Belfast City Airport, not far from us, and so we set off there. A very good idea, as it turned out, because we were able to get our two empty bottles filled at the official Calor filling station, the only opportunity in the whole island.

Our only Ireland guide book was very old, and we had been looking to find a new one. But bookshops hardly exist these days. At the airport there was a W H Smith, so we went there with high hopes. The shop was prominent in the terminal, and there were shelves of Eyewitness guides (which we like) for many countries – but not a single book on Ireland! Explained the boy on the desk, “We stock guidebooks for people going overseas”. And for arrivals, I asked? “People use the internet these days”. A very Irish situation, I thought.



Decided not to go too far in the afternoon, so bypassed Belfast to the east and went up the northern coast of Belfast Lough to Carrickfergus, where an aire appeared on our database. This turned out to be just a large and busy car park with a waste disposal point, but we could park right by the little harbour and be overlooked by the impressive bulk of Carrickfergus Castle.

We visited the castle, the keep for which was begun by John de Courcy (Affreca’s husband) around 1177. It stands on a rocky outcrop that forms the eastern wall of the original harbour. The castle, a classic Anglo-Norman fort and the best preserved in Ireland, was gradually extended

over the centuries, with its defences built up by a series of curtain walls. It changed hands several times over the years and successfully defended attacks by Scots, Irish, English and French forces; it was even an air raid shelter in WW2.

In the little town there was a Tourist info Centre, but no books on Ireland as a whole, only Northern Ireland. But we picked up some potentially useful booklets on highlights for tourists, which will serve quite well.

Overcast by late afternoon, with a very cool sea breeze.



Wednesday 31 August

Reasonably peaceful night for a town car park, except for a couple of talkative passing groups. Sainsbury's was just across the way, and we did a limited shop there before getting on the road for a drive across Northern Ireland to Londonderry. Londonderry – Derry to the Republic – is close to the border, and apart from the fact that it is a big town and all roads lead there, we were still looking for a decent book shop to get a good guide to Ireland. Derry turned out to be very motorhome-unfriendly, with car parks closed to us by height barriers and low roofs. We finally found a spot in a street not too far from a major shopping centre which we had established with the aid of the internet did have a good bookshop with a decent travel section.

We did enjoy the walk through the centre of this major Plantation project town (hence the “London”), seeing the impressive and complete city walls – among the best preserved in Europe - and the decorative neo-Gothic Guildhall. This was built in 1890 but burnt in 1908 and bombed in 1972, so has been substantially reconstructed over time. There was an interesting little historical display, concentrating on the Plantation, in the tourist office within.

For a possible rest area for the night we went a short way up the west side of the Inishowen peninsula, to Buncrana. There was indeed an aire there, but it was tucked away behind the tourist office with services but no outlook. We did call in to the TIC, and were given lots of advice and literature by the friendly girl there. Everyone is so friendly here!



We went a bit further up, on the way visiting a fort that is now a military museum. We did not go in, but enjoyed the magnificent view up and down Lough Swilly. Here, we learnt, Lord Jellicoe



took the Royal Navy's fleet from Scapa Flow before engagement in the Battle of Jutland. (Doesn't make a lot of sense geographically, but there you are.)

The Inishowen peninsula, which extends right up to the northern tip of the island as a whole and above “Northern” Ireland, is probably the most remote and least-visited part of the Republic. The roads are one-track narrow, and as we approached a range of hills the landscape was moor bleak, with sheep wandering over the road. There is a pass called the Gap of Mamore, which is approached from the south side by a straight, steep road,



Feast of the Assumption.

We cut down across the middle of Inishowen and to the neck that connects it to the “mainland”. There in the little town of Cardonagh are mounted three Celtic crosses dating to about the 7th century. A little further on we climbed a steep hill in a wild-looking place to a site with much older provenance. Right on the tip of the pyramidal hill sits a reconstructed (in 1870) circular dry-stone stone fort, the *Grianan Ailligh*. The original was probably built over 2,000 years ago, and was probably previously the site of a burial place during the Neolithic period dating back some 3,000 years BC.

The feature of this place is its magnificent location and view, which encompasses both the Foyle and Swilly loughs, each side of Inishowen. We did face a full gale, which made it hard even to stand, especially when up on the interior terraced wall of the stone ring. Showers, generally light, were blown across by the very cool wind.



and on the way up there appeared a pull-in which looked good enough for the late afternoon’s study of all this new literature and then the night.

Pretty miserable later, with recurrent mist and rain, but we were sheltered from the wind where we were.

Thursday 1 September

A peaceful night, then up to the top and over the Gap in the Urris Hills. The downhill run was tortuous and very steep in parts, but with some good scenery. Near the top were three shrines by the roadside, marking Saint Columcille’s well. Saint Columba, as she was also known, was a 6th century Donegal monk; a pilgrimage to the site is made each year on the date of the



From there we drove north again, to Fanad Head, the peak of the next peninsula to the west. By this time we were basically following the Wild Atlantic Way. This is simply a bit of tourist branding, but it does represent a linkup of all the coastal roads, some major, most very minor, that wind their way round the country’s tortuous western shoreline. Peninsula after peninsula, separated by bay after bay, probe deeply into the Atlantic which – as we once experienced ourselves the hard way – can often be very wild indeed. It is quite well signposted, using a distinctive logo, which helps when you don’t know which way you’re facing after several twists and turns.



In 1798 a sea battle between the British and French off the Fanad coast resulted in the capture of Wolfe Tone, a leader of the United Irishmen and influential in the foundation of Irish independence. The remote region suffered greatly during the times of famine, and in 1878 the 3rd Earl of Leitrim, William Clements, was killed by some of his tenants, 80 of whom he was threatening with eviction. Old photographs show masses of small rough cottages and byres, and the ruins of a few stone walls still remain scattered in the grassy slopes.

We crossed a new bridge to the next peninsula along, aiming for a camp site to catch up with water, washing and other facilities. But all the three sites we scanned were simply trailer parks, serried ranks of mobile homes with permanent owner-residents. One did have an area for touring campers, but the office was closed and so we moved on. We filled up with water at a friendly garage and settled in at an excellent public park right down by the water (and out of the wind!) by the little town of Carrigart. This lies on a narrow neck of land between the bays of Sheep Haven and Mulroy Bay.



Light drizzle only by drinkies time, but more moist weather approaching.

Friday 2 September

Sure enough, some heavy rain in the early hours, and showers throughout the day.

Walked up into the village, and had chats with friendly locals with houses adjoining the park. One had been in Australia several times, because his daughter – a well-known Tasmanian GP and pianist – and her family were there. The other had farming property, and bemoaned the impossibility, for the second year running, of getting in a good dry hay harvest. “We’ve had no summer for two years now”.

They had no option but to bag it in black plastic and convert it into silage. All quite a battle.

We drove off past the southern end of Sheephaven Bay, getting a view over to Doe Castle, with its tower “restoration” erected within its 15th century battlements. From there it was into the Glenveague National Park, with marshy valleys between bleak, glowering hills and peaks. We called in at the Visitors’ Centre, but did not take the shuttle bus run to Glenveague Castle itself.

The castle was erected in 1870 by the land owner John Adair, and a good display at the centre described by way of contemporary newspaper reports how he, like the Earl of Leitrim and many others, had forced the eviction of no fewer than 241 men, women and children who had been in abject poverty following the famine years – “*Wholesale Depopulation*” was the headline of a newspaper on display:



Our reporter has just returned from the scene of desolation and he states, that anything approaching to the state of heart-rending misery produced by the barbarous procedure in question he never witnessed, and could hardly have imagined its occurrence in a Christian country. In some instances old creatures said to be between 80 and 90 years of age have been left without a home to shelter them, while the hapless crowd of sufferers were scattered promiscuously along the mountain sides, with no shelter from the bitter winds now prevailing!

Adair's explanation, subsequently contested – demonstrating “fatal inaccuracies” – was that a few of the tenants had harmed or threatened to harm him or his agents, and that all had to suffer for the sins of the few. Many of the evicted ended up in Australia, where both males and females found work and healthy living.

Evictions during those terrible times started when police or troops turned up and tore down the roofs of the homes. Belongings were thrown out. If anyone took the evictees in, the same was



done by them. Many built earth shelters in their roofless homes or in ditches, called “scalps”, but these in turn were broken down. The people were in no shape to withstand such conditions. In Coogan's 2012 book *The Famine Plot*, he comments that the evictions in the later stage of the Famine “could at least have been described as premeditated manslaughter and, at worst, as culpable homicide”.



We carried on across the national park, which featured rather bleak grass and heather-covered brown and green slopes, some steep and cliff-faced in the Derryveague mountains, others gently curving into

U-shaped valleys. There were several small loughs in the valleys, and a few ruined churches nestled by the lough sides. Peat was being cut in the bogs, and it is clear that peat is still the main way of keeping warm in the winter countryside.

We came to the Atlantic coast again at Killybegs, one of the biggest fishing ports in Ireland. The harbour was expansive, and the trawlers as big as any we have seen in Europe, all looking in very good condition.

We re-joined the WAW and went east to Donegal, where we were going to take a stop and have a look at the castle. However, as is so often the case, the centre of the city – where the castle lies – was a nightmare of twisting one-way streets, so we could find nowhere to stop and soon gave up.

For the night, a possible stop in the Campercontact database was shown to be on the southern side of Lough Melvin. This turned out to be the site of an angling club, with a small clubhouse, car park and



launching ramp. There was lots of activity, with fishing dinghies being loaded on to trailers, and a friendly man who seemed to be in charge of it all explained that tomorrow they would be launched at the other end of the loch, on the other side, at a place called Garrison which is actually in Northern Ireland – Donegal is very narrow at this point. He invited us to pull in and stay the night once they had all gone. It was later explained that they were all involved in a big deal inter-provincial fishing competition.

The dinghies, which we were told were typical Irish lake boats, were lovely little craft, graceful and slender clinker-built timber, or clinker-look fibreglass. They looked good to row, given a strong crew, but most had 10-15 hp outboards.



We settled in later, under gloomy skies and intermittent drizzle.

Saturday 3 September

We enjoyed an exceptionally peaceful night, but the morning skies were overcast again. We decided to cut off a bit of the WAW again and went south through wooded countryside to Parke's Castle. This was built as a fortified manor house by Captain Parkes, an English settler who became an MP for Leitrim. It has been nicely restored using traditional stonemasonry and carpentry using Irish oak.

The next monument was the Sligo Abbey, in Sligo port. Again, we had great difficulty finding somewhere to stop within walking distance of the centre-town abbey, but finally managed it. Sligo Abbey was founded in 1252 by Maurice Fitzgerald, who also founded the town. It was in fact a Dominican friary; "friar preachers" reside in a friary, whereas "monks" live in an abbey. Friars invited people to worship in their church and went on preaching pilgrimages. Monks generally confined their vocation through prayer and meditation.

The ruins mostly date from the 15th century and have suffered from depredations including Cromwellian attacks and being used as a quarry to build townhouses. There are still some impressive features, including a beautifully carved altar that has unusually survived, and cloisters looking moody under gloomy skies. Impressive carvings commemorate Sir Donagh O'Connor, Lord of Sligo, and his wife, who are shown facing each other, kneeling in devout pose. O'Connor influenced Queen Elizabeth in saving the friary from dissolution.



Leaving the abbey, we asked for directions to a nearby supermarket at the desk, but were not able to follow his directions or the tourist map he gave us. We then took a wrong turn in the town, and in the end were pleased to get out of it, albeit still unprovisioned! Outside the city, found a quiet spot to hear the Monza GP qualifying commentary.

A longish drive the across pleasant countryside, both green and wooded in places, to the National Museum of Ireland's Country Life exhibition. This modern building is set in the expansive grounds and gardens of Turlough Park, and the aim is to show how ordinary people lived their daily lives through the objects they left behind, generally covering the mid-19th to the mid 20th centuries. There are lots of interesting objects, clothes and tools, and some good but very short explanations of historical periods such as the famine years and the civil war. But we found the lack of a coherent narrative for the whole, and often some lack of context, rather confusing – as was the layout as a whole. Too “modern”?



Finally, at the end of a busy day, through Castlebar (still no supermarket) and on to Westport, where we knew of a possible stopping place alongside the old wharf at Westport Quay. That turned out to be fine, after a second go to find a good place. We were next to a tidal channel with an old wharf. Behind us, over a grassy strand, was a stone-walled block of what were once warehouses, now residential flats and shops.

The rain became torrential later, with thunder and lightning, but in good Irish style there were blue skies and strong winds (what the BBC forecast calls “bright and breezy”) by 6:30 pm.

Sunday 4 September

Needed earplugs overnight, because as the parking spots became full up late last evening it became clear that some kind of event was imminent. It turned out to be a popular music festival, with loud thumping bands. Usual white overcast early, then a fairly relaxed start, having given a couple of locals in a small self-built van a tour of ours – much admired.



Then off to the south-west towards the Connemara National Park, passing the line-up of pointed hills that are the Partry Mountains, then the Maumturk Mountains and Twelve Pins of the national park proper. All scenic in a bleak kind of way, with streams carrying the inevitable rainwater down to the many loughs, big and small, in the valleys. (It would be “prettier” in the sun!).

First stop was at Kylemore Abbey. This is actually a battlemented neo-Gothic castle, a folly built by Manchester tycoon and Galway MP Mitchell Henry as a gift for his wife in about 1900. It has a huge area of gardens, orchards and trees, and is now a

very

popular destinations for local and overseas tourists, a necessary stop on the bus tours by the look of it. The “abbey” description arises from its occupation by Benedictine nuns after WW1, and their running of the building as a school for many years. We didn’t go in because of the substantial crowds and the lack of real historical interest in the edifice.

Next stop was at the park’s Visitor Centre. As usual, the displays were well presented and everything was very spick and span – crowded again, this time in part because the sun came out for a few hours and made walking a more attractive occupation. This is the heart of bog country in Ireland, and there was an interesting description of the morphology and geology of bogs and peat. The hills and valleys here are bare not because of massive tree felling, but because trees now can’t survive on the moist soil. Part of the trunk of a pine tree thousands of years old was on display, having been excavated from metres below the surface, showing that trees did exist as forests here before the bogs took over. Another point of interest was that in ancient times, when prehistoric men felled trees to make charcoal, the charcoal layer stopped the ground from soaking deep into the ground, and thus helped the moist earth and organic debris become peat.

We completed the ring road round the national park – a road with a dreadful surface – and headed down to Galway. This is a university city that flourished under the Anglo-Norman trading post and later prospered under English influence and the crown. In 1652 it was demolished by Cromwell’s forces and went into decline.



It has recovered, obviously, and as we groped our way through its busy centre we saw it to have some narrow and pretty little streets and a flowery, open main square. We finally found our target, a parking place on the quayside by the yacht marina, which is part of the dock complex and which we had learnt of through the blog of an Australian motorhomer.

In the late afternoon the drizzle returned, with grey overcast overall. It only ever stops for a short while.

Monday 5 September

Very heavy rain and strong winds overnight, but calmer by morning, with drizzle under grey skies. Round the end of Galway Bay and down to the southern tip of an inlet to visit a splendid little castle, Dunguaire. It was built in 1520 and went through the hands of various Galway notables. Its final configuration was by the English Lady Amptill, who bought it as a ruin in 1954 and restored it as a home to live in. which she did for 20 years. Although called a castle, the building is actually a typical example of a 16th century Tower House, fortified residences built as stylish homes for the prosperous. The towers or their ruins – an example of which was just down the road – are scattered over many parts of Ireland, and some over on the Continent of Europe.



South of Galway Bay is a region of hills and moors called The Burren (*boireann*, meaning “rocky land”). Many of the hills are covered by vast expanses of limestone pavement, plaques and stones, giving them a whitish overlay. We drove through the area, but at the level of cloud base in heavy mist, so it was not exactly scenic this day.

Further along the road, as it reached the coast, there is another geological phenomenon much hyped in the tourist literature, but which also we did not see, although for a different reason. This is a range of cliffs, the Cliffs of Moher, but by this time, about mid-day, the huge car park from which a walk to the top of the cliffs began was packed with coaches and cars to the extent we would have had to queue to even get in. So we pulled out and headed further along the coast on the WAW.



We were looking for a place for lunch, and came upon a little tidal harbour at the village of Liscannor. We seemed to have been doing a lot of driving, not all of it easy, in the last few days, so decided to settle in for the rest of the day and the night. The rain and mist had cleared by this time, although it remained overcast.

Tuesday 6 September

A very pleasant place for a stop, but overnight in came some torrential rain and in the morning it was heavily overcast and thickly misty. We thought it might be better inland, so we set off cross-country and indeed it gradually cleared. A few kilometres before Limerick we took our first tourist stop for the day, at Bunratty Castle and its adjacent folk park.

The castle is a formidable structure. The original building was a wooden fortress built in 1251 and replaced by a stone castle in 1277. The present building was originally constructed in 1425 as the home of the O'Briens, Earls of Thomond. It was abandoned in the 19th century, and was in a very poor state when it was bought in the 1950s by Lord Gort, who did a fabulous job restoring it as exactly as possible as it was in 1640. Outside, it has unusually high arches on both the north and south faces, with the main entrance one floor up. It has on its several floors the usual great hall, living quarters, guest apartments and soldiers' quarters, all beautifully done – although thronged with busloads of tourists, as to be expected.



The folk park by the castle is an assembly of typical old houses, varying from the one-room dwelling of a landless peasant to a prosperous farm house and outbuildings. There were some pygmy goats and young pigs to keep Norma happy.

We cut inside Limerick as we crossed the great River Shannon about where the estuary becomes the river, and watched a small freighter coming into a commercial wharf. Then west towards the coast again, as the weather continued to improve, and to the little town of Listowel. We had been looking out for a laundry of some kind, not having visited a single camp site so far on this trip, and were pleased to see one on the main street. It was a busy enterprise with substantial machines, and during the couple of hours it took for the washing to be done, we wandered round the few street and visited what remains of the castle. Its

remaining wall looked remarkably like that of Bunratty, featuring a high arch, but that's all there was of it. It was possible to be escorted up the other (once inner) side on a long steel staircase, but chose not to do that.



It was 6:00 pm before we got going again, and from the map identified what looked to be a quiet and sheltered bit of coast just west of Tralee at the head of Tralee Bay. After some complicated navigation along narrow roads we came to a little settlement between the tiny villages of Spa and Fenit, and saw a small and stony car park right down by the water, which was perfect for an overnight stop.

Still lots of cloud around, but we had a scenic view of the inner end of the Dingle peninsula across the bay as the sun went down.