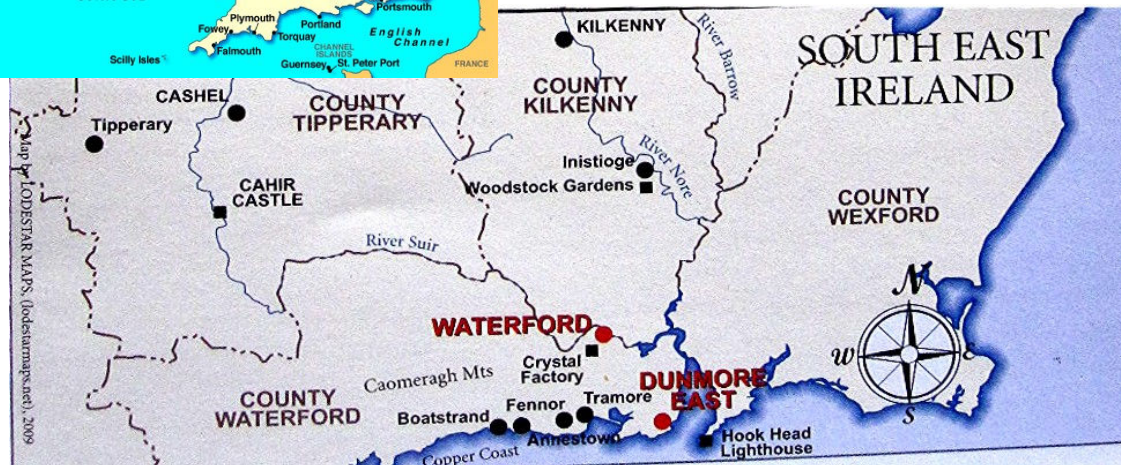


Day 20 Aug. 13 –Dunmore East, Ireland – Pub - Coast Drive - Birthday

The Maasdam arrived and anchored at Dunmore East, Republic of Ireland, in the entrance to the Waterford Harbor about 7am.

We have to keep reminding ourselves that this island of Ireland is divided into two parts. The largest part is the Republic of Ireland which is an independent nation that is part of the European Union. A smaller part, in the north, is North Ireland which is part of the United Kingdom (UK). The map on the left shows the location of Dunmore East in the British Islands and below is a map showing some detail of the southeast coast.



As we anchored the sun was shining brightly with hardly any breeze so it promised to be a great day of touring this southeast coastal area of Ireland. The village of Dunmore East

occupies the west side of the harbor and looked picturesque with white buildings, green fields and harbor filled with small fishing boats.



Although the cruise itinerary lists this stop as Dunmore East, this small fishing town is overshadowed by the nearby city of Waterford. Most of the information we have received has been about the city of Waterford which is located 11 miles northwest of Dunmore East. The connection of this area with our Voyage of the Vikings itinerary is that Vikings invaded this countryside in 852 AD and in 914 AD the Vikings established a trading settlement on the banks of the River Suir which connects with Waterford Harbor. The shallow draft Viking boats easily negotiated the 11 miles of shallow river which stopped the Maasdam (with 6.4m draft) this morning. The Vikings really knew their stuff when it came to establishing trading sites because that early settlement has survived and today Waterford is the oldest city in Ireland.

The travel guide information we got on board the Maasdam indicated that transportation between Dunmore East and Waterford could be hard to find at times so we decided to take a pass on Waterford and spend the morning in the charming village of Dunmore East. In the afternoon we had booked a bus tour of the coastline with a stop at a traditional Irish pub for refreshments.

We took a Maasdam tender boat into the passenger dock about 9am and started our visit to the town of Dunmore East. The passenger dock was located in the heart of a working fishing pier. The sign on this nearby building makes it clear that boats coming and going shouldn't get in the way of unloading fish.



This sign on the road out of the dock area made the point again and also provided a nice way to document the visit of Barbara's library card.



Dunmore East has one main street that follows along a cliff overlooking the harbor. We walked along that street enjoying the cool refreshing air and new sights as they unfolded. We had been told about the thatched roof houses that we would see and they were in abundance. Thatched roofs are expensive but last for about 30 years and add greatly to the charm of this town which attracts many vacationing folks from Ireland as well as those from foreign shores. Here, on the right, is how the eave of a thatched roof house looks close-up. For those not hung-up on detail here are some photos showing the charm of thatched roof houses that we saw along the way.



This picturesque pine tree was one of many that caught our eye as we walked along.



In walking through a public park we struck up a conversation with a very friendly Irish lady who was on vacation in Dunmore East with about 25 other members of her family from all over Europe. In a few minutes she had told us about Dunmore East and how her grandfather used to be the minister at a church just a short distance down the street from where we were. She said her name was Jameson and her ancestors were buried along the front row in the cemetery at the church. Here is a picture of this nice Irish lady with her daughter. They rejoined their family group and we proceeded on our tour.



The steeple of the church she had mentioned was visible just a block away, and we were soon in front of the beautiful St. Andrews Church. Utilizing our cemetery searching skills we found the Jameson headstones in the front row, just as our recent acquaintance had claimed.



Below the high cliffs of the town there was an area known as the Lower Village that was a beach area highly recommended by the Irish lady we had just met. We wound our way down some narrow streets and found a few nice tourist type restaurants, nightspots and a small harbor where some people were swimming in the icy cold water. Some children were also playing in the sand on the small bit of beach area above the water. We wondered why this spot would be recommended as a beach. About six hours later our tour bus drove through the area and we got this photo showing a great beach and swimming lagoon during low tide.



As with most of the ports we have visited on this cruise, the flowers were magnificent. The cool weather and plenty of water play a big role but there must also be a lot of dedication and tender loving care by the residents. Today we found a form of red fuchsia that was growing in abundance along with other flowers. Here are some photos that we took.



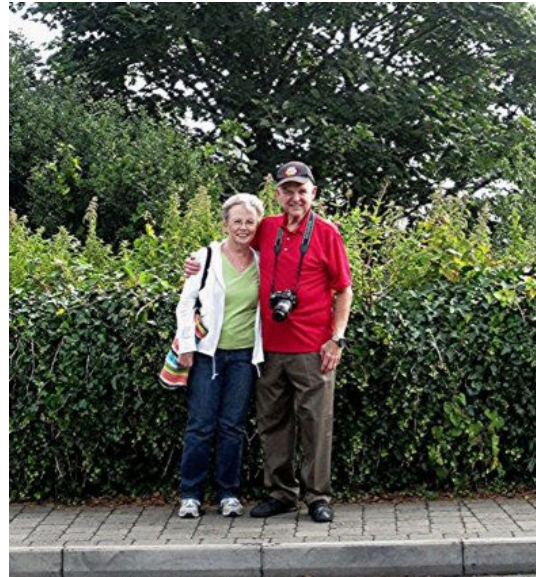


Along the way we also got a nice view of the Maasdam anchored at the mouth of the harbor with the moored sailing and fishing boats in the foreground.



A nice part of a cruise is that you can see a familiar face from time to time as you tour a foreign city. Today we happened across our table mates, Lee and Caroline taking in the town.

We also saw Liz, whom we met on Day 9 of the cruise, sketching one of the local sights with her wonderful artistic skill.



The headquarters for the Irish Coastguard in Dunmore East is located on the main street in this colorful little building shown below.



After a quick lunch in a local café it was time to catch our bus for the afternoon tour of an Irish pub and the rocky coastline. Our tour can be followed by referring to the detail map shown earlier. The bus took us north to the outskirts of Waterford while our guide, Emma, filled us in on local stories and landmarks.

One story was an interesting piece of trivia about the origin of the English language phrase “by hook or by crook” when we could say “by any way possible”. There are two local communities here with the names of “Hook” and “Crook” (Crook may be spelled some other way). In one of the many wars that have swept through this region a military general had said he was going to attack Waterford and he would approach the city either through the town of Hook or through Crook. It turns out he attacked through Crook. This one might need a little research to verify but it’s always interesting to learn something about how we got our language tools.

Another factoid was that the nearby county of Wexford is the home of the Kennedy name. After the assassination of President Kennedy, Jackie Kennedy came to Wexford for a time to help her recover from the trauma.

After a pleasant ride through the rolling green countryside we came to our first stop at an authentic Irish pub called Jack Mead’s Pub. Along the way we had seen this ad, on the right, which whetted our appetite for a drink. We were ready to get a taste of what is a cultural tradition that every tourist should experience.



This Irish Pub was a family friendly place with provisions for children, a restaurant and a traditional bar serving alcoholic drinks. We started our visit in the bar which was set up



for musical entertainment while customers enjoyed a drink.

The first order of business was to get our glass of Guinness Beer which was soon delivered.

The entertainment soon began with the introduction of a fellow who played guitar and sang a repertoire of traditional Irish songs. He was good at getting the audience to join in and we did our best. There wasn't room for any local Irish people in the pub, with all us Maasdam tourists, so we wondered how authentic it was. However, we sang along with gusto and enjoyed ourselves.



Outside of the bar were an outdoor eating area and a section with playground equipment for children, as shown below.



We left the pub and took a brief bus tour of the outskirts of Waterford where we saw some new home construction of the “Cookie Cutter” variety. However, these are not cheap houses. Emma, our guide, said they, used to sell for about 300,000 Euro (~\$450,000 USD) but with the recent downturn in the economy they could now be purchased for about 200,000 Euro (~\$350,000 USD).



We passed by a Maxol gas station with the price of gasoline posted. Regular was selling for 119.9 Euro cents per liter. At the exchange rate of \$1.53 USD per Euro and about 4 liters per gallon that works out to about \$7.33 USD per gallon. A couple days ago our tour guide in Rotterdam said gasoline there was selling for about \$10 USD per gallon so maybe these prices are not so bad.

Our bus rolled on through lovely pastoral scenes of the Irish countryside.



We finally came to the coastline of southeast Ireland in the vicinity of Annestown and Tramore as shown in the detail map above. We were presented with picturesque scenes on this bright sunny day but we could imagine the violence of waves crashing on these rocks in the midst of a violent winter storm.



This area came to be known as the “Copper Coast” because in the 1800s copper ore was

taken from mines in the region. We passed by an ancient copper smelter that had recently been partially restored. It had been used to extract copper before the mines were abandoned.



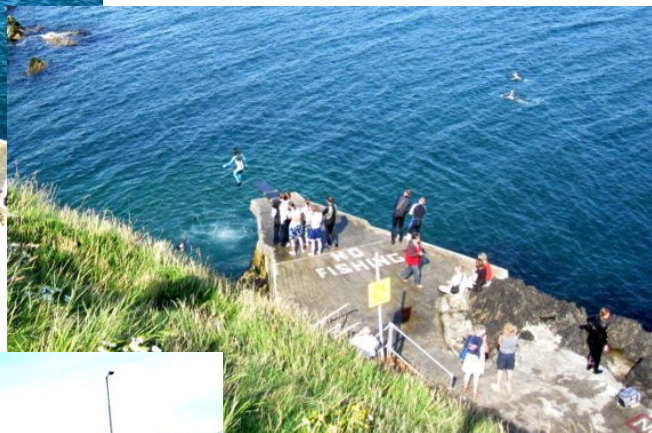
We stopped for photos at a fun place called Guillamene Swimming Cove. It used to be a “Men Only” facility but under severe political pressure the rules were changed and women are now allowed. The old sign was stolen so they put up this modern sign “as a relic of times past”.



There actually were some people swimming in the ice cold Atlantic water. In fact brave divers in wet suits were jumping off a platform high above the water as shown in these photos below.



This lady below in a blue wet suit quickly followed the guy in black on the left. A couple swimmers watch from the water on the upper right.

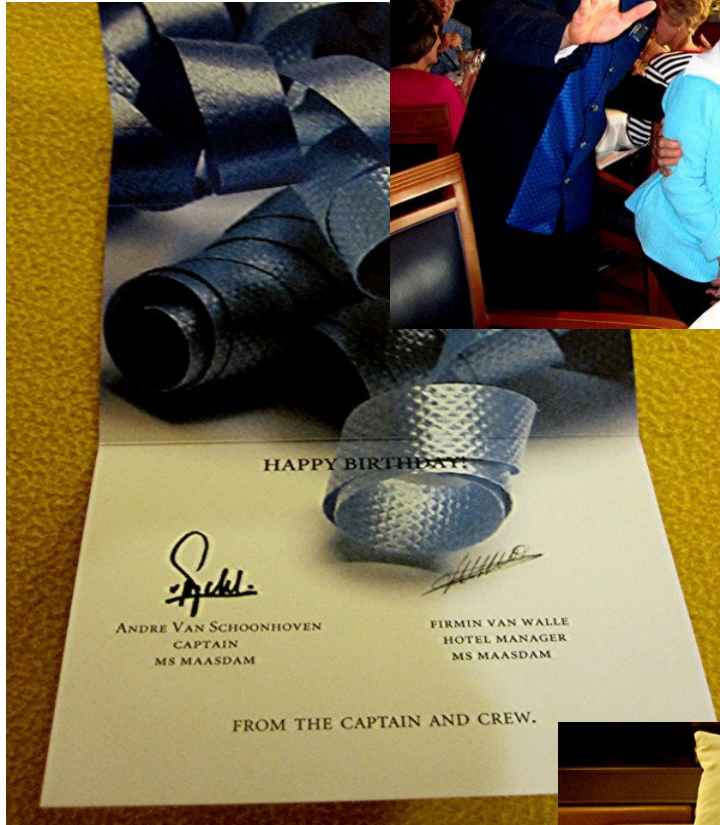


From the swimming hole the bus took us back to Dunmore East where



we were met by a long line of passengers waiting for the tender boats to take us back to the Maasdam. However, we were soon back on board and in time for dinner.

Our travel agent, Wanda at AAA, had notified Holland America that today was Orlin's birthday. At the end of the meal our waiters brought a birthday cake with lighted candle and they gathered around to sing the traditional Indonesian Birthday song that we hear often in the Rotterdam Dining Room.



In addition to the birthday cake and song a birthday greeting from the Maasdam Captain and crew was waiting for us in our stateroom.

Our stewards, Yadi and Kamal had also constructed this elaborate towel sculpture of two swans to present the birthday card.



The only thing better than this was the email birthday wishes Orlin got from family and friends back home.

This birthday celebration closed out a wonderful day on our Voyage of the Vikings and we were ready to move on.

We got underway from Dunmore East, Ireland, about 6pm. We will travel overnight to Liverpool, England where we will dock tomorrow about 8am. We have a walking tour planned that will be based on suggestions made by a helpful Liverpool resident (towncar T) on the Cruise Critic Message Board.