

## Deborah Wolney and Norman Silverman



Deborah and Norman Near Galway

Travel can be a potent elixir that ages into nostalgia, not wisdom if deprived of its circumstance. I hope the following makes this less cryptic. Deborah nee McCarthy has always wanted to visit the Old Sod. Norman nee Nissan has wanted to revisit Israel and thought that a celebration of the anniversary of her 40th birthday could include both given sites sacred to all Abrahamic faiths were present in Eretz Yisrael. I was quickly relieved of this delusion and with refocused alacrity arranged a personally tailored concierge guided tour of Ireland for early October. Our departure was delayed for several weeks to allow my surgically reconstructed right elbow and pelvic ligamentous strain from a bicycling accident to heal restoring bimanual function and ambulation without a cane. Moreover, departure now postdated the unspeakable horrors inflicted in Hamas' October 7th terrorist attack and Israel's retribution and reinforced the sagacity of not traveling to an active war zone.

Ireland was spectacular, its scenery, its history, its culture. Our anointed guide took us on a 10-day journey from Dublin to Cork to Galway and back through the waist of the island to Dublin over byways and one lane roads and cow paths with innumerable stops and walks.



**Our Tour Guide Colm**

It was what touring must have been like in the premodern era, only in a 7 series BMW. Weather was no deterrent, Colm just made alternative plans. Why visit ancient ruins in the rain when a roofed castle was nearby? His fund of knowledge was encyclopedic and he expounded with a wry humor, not pedantry. And always that wide Irish grin and courtesy. Having grown up on a farm, he very artfully demonstrated how the land dictated tillage, sheep/cattle/horse farming, peat harvesting or barren granite strewn wasteland. We visited museums, sheep dog training demonstrations, breweries, perfumeries and Celtic religious gathering sites. We were instructed in commercial transport, schooling, structure of

government, history, import/export balance of trade and education. Walked along seaside cliffs and manorial gardens. And then there was Dublin. The center of the arts, graduate education, shopping, cuisine, nightlife, architectural variation and American high tech tax haven centers. As cosmopolitan as anywhere and easily walkable. The source of endless pedestrian exploration.



**Deborah & Michael Collins – Irish Rebel & Peacemaker**

The most striking thing was whether urban or rural, the universal collegiality, humor, intelligence and respect for others manifested by the Irish people. We met happy people, proud of Ireland without jingoism or blood and soil nationalism. Astonishingly, days after our return home Central Dublin is devastated by violent rioting, worse since contagion from the Troubles in the 1990's. Ultralight wing racist xenophobes with their cowardly faces masked reacted to a nonfatal stabbing of an Irish citizen by an immigrant. The vibrancy and warmth had been charred out of the central city by a rampaging mob of haters.

Quite a bookend to our trip.

So, to all my classmates, I toast L'hayyim. That is why we travel, to learn about and celebrate life. Life is our most precious gift and joy. But life is not easy, or otherwise anyone could appreciate its rewards.