

Photography

Dublin, Ireland

March 19, 2019 | Charles T. Low, Photographer

Travel as Photographic Muse

Recently, I spent a short time in Dublin, Ireland.

I feel experienced at urban photography, living in a city, albeit a small one. I have said that I live in Brockville, and that I photograph in Brockville (but not limited to!). Check out my Brockville [portfolio](#). I enjoy it, finding things of beauty, interest and meaning, and yet ... I find, in Brockville, the perverse obstacle that perhaps I know it too well.



Going someplace new allows me to bring fresh eyes to things which perhaps the locals don't see. Travel photography feels easier.



Wandering through St. Stephen's Green, I came across a city worker strolling through, ringing a hand-bell, advising everyone that the park was about to close for the night; there are gates, and they lock them shut. I made this photograph later (hence the view through bars; I was outside the park), with only a remnant of daylight remaining.

I nestled snugly into a hotel a stone's-throw from the beautiful St. Stephen's Green, and only ventured as far as comfortable on foot, so I cannot claim to have seen the entire city, nor by any long stretch to *know* Dublin - that would surely take years, and might require having been raised there. So I can only show what I have - not in any way a systematic photo-review of the city.

And of course much of amazing Ireland lies outside of Dublin - amazing visually and simply amazing generally. Should the fates smile upon me, I will report about The Rest of Ireland at some future time. At the moment, I haven't seen it.

I can claim to have partly avoided the more blatant tourist traps. A taxi driver gave me some great advice about that. That said, I heard tourists with accents from all parts of the world ... in Dublin (stranded out in one corner of Europe) ... in the winter. By "winter" however I mean mid-March daytime highs of +10°C (while in Brockville they were having -10°C), with quite a bit of rain, but nothing sustained and usually not heavy enough to preclude walking about.

Ireland also belongs to the European Union, and I also often heard a Continental accent from *workers*, where I had expected an Irish one. Nothing stays the same (nor should it).

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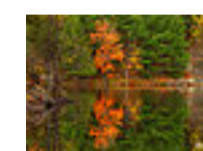
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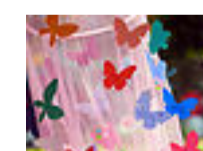
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This is off the touristy track, returning from a "local's lunch" at [Manning's](#) - on a personal recommendation from a Teeling Distillery worker (thank you!).

Teeling Distillery

I only had time to tour either the [Guinness Storehouse](#) or the Teeling Irish Whiskey distillery, and had seen beer made before, but never whiskey, so that took me to the new (2015) [Teeling](#).

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There, we had a wonderful tour by the charming Tracy, and learned the outline of the fascinating history of Irish whiskey - the amazing rise, the precipitous fall, the gradual recovery. We also learned how to make whiskey! Apparently you need to start with the right water, so we understood the implicit message to the rest of the world: so sad for you!



At the tour's conclusion, we had a tasting, but only after Tracy taught us the proper protocol for how actually to drink whiskey - different from that for wine.

Then ...my oh my - what an amazing taste experience. Liquid gold, they call it, and I perceived a syrupy consistency despite an actually essentially watery liquid - astoundingly pleasurable. And I saw people enjoy whiskey whose lips generally don't touch liquor at all, ever. After a finger of whiskey drunk neat, our tour group also each had a full tumbler of a whiskey cocktail, and man, did that ever go down easily. I have the recipe, and on that basis expect my personal popularity to experience an impending upswing.



The glass at the back was water - not really needed!



When Teeling soon releases its first whiskey - the whiskey we drank was from some related distillery, apparently, Teeling's not having yet had time enough to age - then if it's half as good as their marketing, it will be phenomenal. Someone for example has gone to this trouble to make something special of the divide between the foyer and the whiskey information area, from whence the tours begin. The Teeling logo is everywhere in Dublin.



The Book of Kells - Trinity College Library

All right, all of you university arts majors, I will simply say this out loud: I had never heard of the Book of Kells, world-famous for being a very old and immaculately-illustrated ("illuminated") manuscript of the Gospels, made by hand by monks, a longer time ago than I can imagine.

Seeing it required advance booking, due to its popularity (in Dublin, in the winter). Then, I surprised myself by experiencing emotion, seeing something that old and that beautiful, and crafted with such exquisite attention to detail.

One surprise was the throngs and masses of people ... in Dublin ... in the winter. It almost required a little jostling just to get near the thing.

I did not make any of my own photographs of the Book of Kells because of the house rules.



Photography is however permitted, within limits, in the adjacent [Trinity College Library](#), itself most impressive and worth the visit. Cameras were clicking all around, and I knew very well that I had no vantage which thousands and thousands of visitors hadn't recorded before me.

I didn't let that stop me.





In my wildest dreams, I will someday lead a photography excursion through that Library, with private access.

Random Dublin Scenery

I like Dublin. The Dublin that I saw surprised me. I can't say what I was expecting - leprechauns perhaps - but the city is old but not ancient, although there is evidence here and there of history going back 1,500 years and more, with some modern architecture, some of which blends in well, and some of which (of course, modern imperatives) does not.

Dublin is clean. This is partly because of a perpetual army of street-cleaners out there working. It's easy to miss because there's nothing to see - virtually no litter; very refreshing!



Someone has gone to the trouble to make things more attractive, in many ways. This walkway, one of many examples, could have been simply paved over. Thank goodness it wasn't.



Pretty well literally from the sacred to the profane - a real city

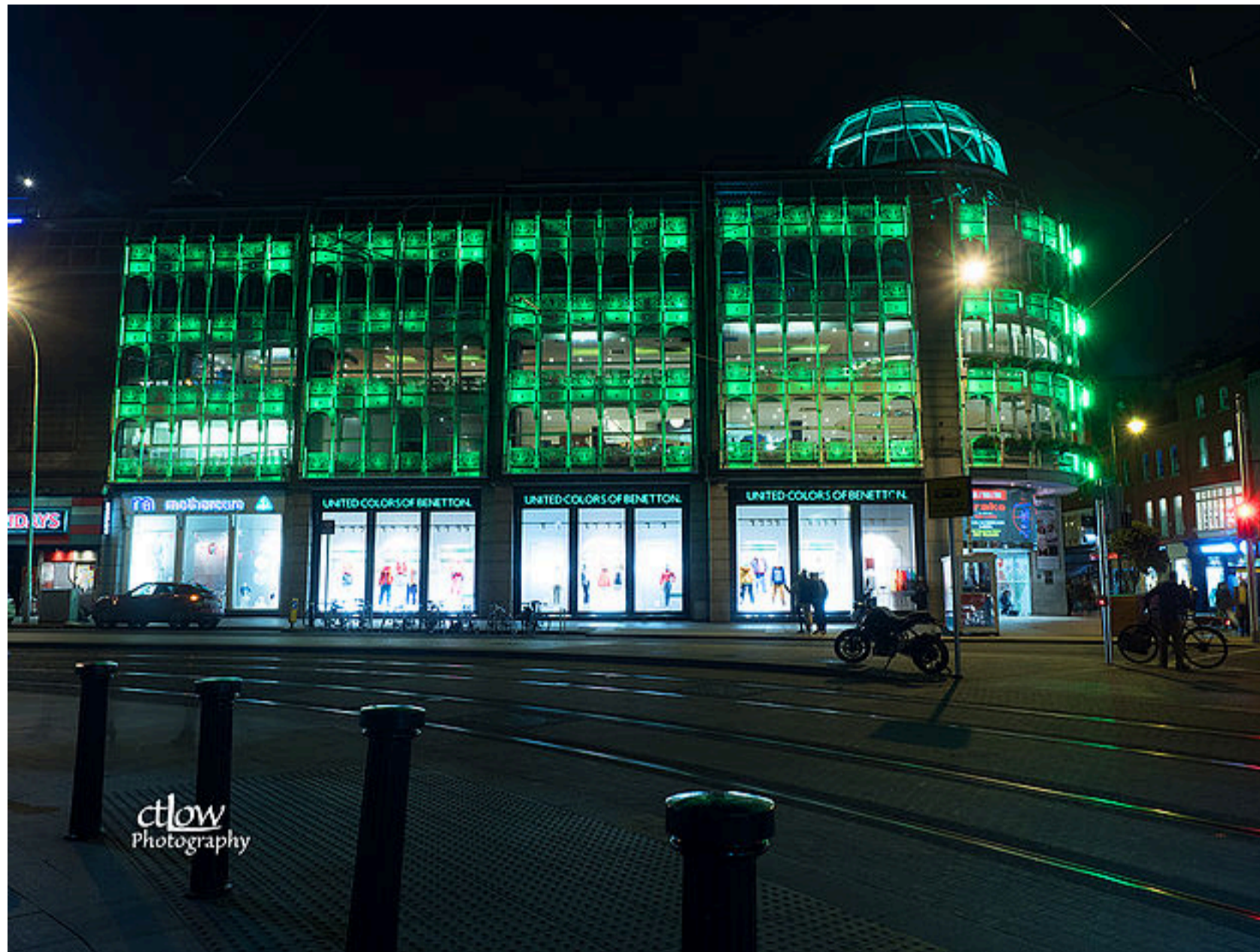


One of many churches: Church of Saints Augustine and John the Baptist



This impressive building, on Merrion Street, says "Department of Taoiseach" (and that's the English word! - there was also an Irish Gaelic translation: "Taoisigh")- it took a little digging, but that translates to "Prime Minister's offices".

One evening, with nothing booked, dinner safely surrounded, I felt somewhere between restless and creative, and headed off alone into the gloaming.



This retail building (green ... Irish) makes a statement, just at the corner of two broad pedestrian walkways (Grafton Street being one, for those familiar), and across from St. Stephen's Green.



And Dublin, as well as having a seemingly robust conventional public transit system, has a light rail service. While visually impressive at rest, I just prefer it in motion.



And finally, although nothing like this appeared to the eye, this effect recreates more accurately the feeling of seeing these impressive machines swoosh by, an arm's length away, at speed.
I would enjoy a technical discussion of how I got this image: for another time, perhaps, but: ask away!

So, that's Dublin, my first exposure, and although it wasn't strictly speaking a dedicated photography excursion, I did give the hardware a good workout. Obviously I hope to return (but it's a big World), and to venture further afield into other corners of Ireland. (If anyone wishes to pay my way, I'll carry your bags, and/or be your photographer!)

While You're Here ...

Remember that I make photographs and that I sell photographs.

Most of the photographs which you see on this web site are for sale. Prices at the time of writing, for example, for an 11x14" fine-art print with a generous white border would start at about \$50, and you can go up or down from there. Check the [rates](#) page. More importantly, check out my [gallery](#). I would love to provide you with a work of fine-art photography, or to discuss a commission.

Book a portrait-sitting - the right frequency with which to commission formal [portraits](#) is a bit more often.

Remember also to leave a comment, or to [contact](#) me. Note that on the main [blog](#) page you can sign up for new-blog notifications. I am very careful and respectful with your privacy.

Thank you so much for reading.

Charles T. Low
Photographer



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