

HAVE PASS WILL TRAVEL PRESENTATION

HAVE PASS WILL TRAVEL - ACTIVE RETIREMENT GROUP came together 4 years ago (2010) at the suggestion of a few friends including Brendan Prendergast. We are all retired and have plenty of free time to do the things we couldn't do when we were working. It fell to my husband, Vincent McNally to be the Leader. Thanks to his experience, working for 40 years in Public Transport, he has a good knowledge of the country and bus/train timetables. It's also helpful that he has contacts in public transport around the country.

Those eligible for the group are retired people who have received one of our most treasured possessions – the Free Travel Pass. It is surprising how many people have these passes and don't use them. There are no rules and regulations, no membership, no constitution, no meetings, no catchment area and there are no exclusions. The only requirement is that you or your spouse/partner holds a valid Free Travel Pass. In fact if a friend of a group member, who does not yet qualify for a pass, wishes to travel with us they are more than welcome but they will have to pay for their travel.

We advertise our outings on the notice boards in St Mary's Priory, St Dominic's, St Aengus's and the Library and Fr Donal and Fr Robert kindly print it in the Priory Newsletter. Mostly, it is included in the Church notices at the Masses in the Priory. If we have email address for our members we will send them the details by email.

We usually travel on the first Wednesday of the month, eleven months of the year. We don't normally travel in January. Occasionally we will have to change the day if we have to book something and we are given a specific date for example, Kilmainham Jail and Áras an Uachtarán. Normally people don't have to book. They just turn up at the appointed time and place. If they are not there we assume they are not coming. Usually the outing costs nothing except whatever people want to spend but sometimes there will be a charge for entrance fees and the occasional bus hire. Sometimes we print off Dingbats from the Internet and we have great fun on a long train journey.

At this point we have visited approximately 40 different places all of them easily accessible by public transport. We have repeated some of the destinations but have visited different locations there. For example we visited Belfast twice. The first time we went on the City Bus Tour and the second time we visited the Titanic Exhibition. We have visited Cork on 3 occasions and we've gone to Blarney, Cobh and only last Wednesday we visited Shandon. Most of us climbed to the first floor and rang the famous bells. Some climbed to the top – a total of 120 steps. We had a 90 year old lady with us and she climbed to the top. From there we followed in Queen Elizabeth's footsteps and visited the English Market where we met Pat O Connell the Fishmonger who was a big hit with the Queen.

It is personally very rewarding for us organising trips for this group. Everyone is so appreciative of what we are doing. We have also made lots of new friends. One lady told us that it has "brought an interesting and happy phase to my life". Another lady who lost her husband last year continues to come with us and has said how much it means to her to come on our outings. People are going to places they would never have considered going to themselves. Vincent takes photos on each trip and prints some of the best ones and has a couple of albums full of photos.