

# High Country Sweet Ads Visits Ireland



**High Country, Java Chorus** and the **Champagne Cork Chorus** all singing, "That's What Friends Are For!"

Closing the night out Wednesday with the **Java** and the **Champagne Cork Chorus**



Singing at St. Mary's Cathedral in Killarney, Ireland on Tuesday, June 23rd; wonderful acoustics!



The ladies of **High Country Chorus**



**High Country Chorus**, singing in St. Patrick's Cathedral Friday morning in Dublin, Ireland.



Taken by **Pam Costa**, the **High Country** chorus singing at a scenic view for a bunch of French tourists. We stop and sing for any available audience. We spent Tuesday, June 18th, touring and singing. What an awesome ancient sight! Tomorrow, we have to see the city of Cork. We're staying at the Killarney Towers hotel.



**High Country** sings "I Believe In Music" to our barbershop friends in Sligo, Ireland last night; great fun!



**Champagne Cork Chorus**

## High County Goes Irish

While I'd like to take credit for the following "first person account" of our recent trip to Ireland, I must give all the credit to **Georgia Wiley** who has shared her talent as the word smith and keen observer (and participant) for the following account of our Irish adventure. Thank you Georgia for putting yourself in my shoes and capturing what it was like to accompany 22 members of **High Country Chorus** on this incredible tour of Ireland!

**Al Klinger**

So what could be a more wonderful fantasy for a "Barbershop Guy" than a nine day tour of one of the world's most beautiful countries in a bus filled with 24 women?

And even though one of the ladies is your wife (sorry, Bunny), add singing, new friends, more singing, castle – hopping, scone-eating, more singing and pub-crawling! What more could a guy ask for?

Of all the many "perks" of sharing barbershop singing with one's spouse, the best is getting to tag along on the "trip of a lifetime." To compensate for my male presence, I made myself indispensable as videographer, baggage helper, gadget repairman and Guinness go-fer.

The journey to the Land of Leprechauns began at the crack of dawn at DIA. On a five hour lay-over at the Newark airport, the **High Country Chorus** put on a world-class show in the terminal singing several melodies from their repertoire.

**Photos found on Facebook  
Taken by Bunny Klinger  
and Georgia Wiley**

Weary travelers, gate agents and family vacationers gathered in to listen and take videos and photographs. The appreciative audience, smiling and applauding, gave **High Country** its first taste of finding fame on their "concert tour."

After a long journey "across the pond," we awakened as the beautiful, red sun greeted us with a stunning Irish dawn. As the musical motley crew boarded the comfortable tour bus (or "chariot" as our driver called it), I was relieved to see a few other male faces (seven of us), other brave lads who came along and of course, the warm smile of our incredible tour guide/driver, Dennis. His friendliness, patience and knowledge put us all at ease as he faced down the busload of females with the charm of a lilting Irish Brogue. A few of the women compared his handsome good looks to Daniel Craig of James Bond fame. I didn't notice.



Singing at St. Marys



Still singing at St. Marys



Singing at St. Patricks



Singing in Cork



Singing in the gift shop



Still singing in Cork

As the group set off, they immediately broke into song. It became clear that the real star of the show was the beauty of Ireland. Each turn of the road brought into view a more spectacular sight than the one before. The tour began with a ride through the coast of Clare where colors of the gentle hills gave new meaning to the word "green." The Emerald Isle, it is!

The first stop was the Cliffs of Moher, stark cliffs that rise straight up out of the Atlantic and take your breath away. Just as you are debating "is this real?" a castle appears overlooking the sea, standing like a ruined sentry. After coming back down to Earth, a ferry ride glided us and our Chariot across the River Shannon to Killarney where we ended an incredible day with an authentic dinner of Irish fare. Most of the ladies passed on the "blood pudding" and politely refused anything "congealed." Bailey's and a good night's sleep had all up and eager for more.

Singing "Amazing Grace" and "It Is Well" in the cavernous beauty of St. Mary's Cathedral seemed the thrill of a lifetime and **High Country Chorus** rose to the occasion. Directed by **Sherry Feller**, the lovely voices rose up through the acoustic perfection. There was no more beautiful way to begin the day's travels. Of course, I was imagining the **Denver MountainAires** singing there, but it wasn't our turn.

The Ring of Kerry was the next destination. Eyes grew wide at the sights along this hundred mile route: the neon

of the green grass dotted by hundreds of peacefully grazing sheep in rolling pastures, the dusty grays of crumbled stone fortresses and the vivid blue of the Irish sky. We got lucky on this trip; perfect, sun-drenched days with no need for all the requisite raingear we had stowed in our luggage.

Along the route, we stopped to tour the popular Blarney Castle where those brave enough to kiss the stone were assured a lifetime gift of "eloquence." Because many didn't know exactly what "eloquence" meant, no one noticed whether anyone had acquired it. A Guinness seemed just as effective.

Another perfect day concluded with a long-anticipated joint performance and get-together with the local IABS singers from Cork. The Irish groups were talented and friendly and put on a show that delighted their American guests. **High Country** performed a variety of music that brought down the house (actually the local Cricket Club), ending with "We'll Meet Again," which, even though meant "goodbye" to their singing sisters, made everyone hope it was more than just a wish.

I can't fail to mention that all along the days of discovery, there were numerous stops at shopping venues. Dennis (our driver and guide) would refer to these forays into woolen mills and crafts stores as "plunder and pillage" stops. Bunny can shop with the best of them, but witnessing women with no knowledge of the true

value of a Euro scrambling in and out of the bus exit doors led Dennis to compare the ladies to the early Viking attacks.

On to Dublin! Many relished the quiet of the unspoiled country and were hesitant to visit the bustle and noise of a big, urban city. On the drive, we treasured the visions out each side of the bus, mountain peaks out one window and sandy beaches on the other. But quaint, preserved Dublin was no disappointment. Cobblestone streets lined with trees gave rise to blocks of tall brownstones, each splashed with a bright-colored door.

Again the ladies of **High Country** gave a glorious performance at the ancient St. Patrick's Cathedral. The strains of "Battle Hymn" filled the air and brought groups of tourists near, listening with reverence and joy. I am grateful that I could hear them sing in a true "place of angels."

Not on the tour schedule was a very special invitation for the chorus to sing live on the most popular radio show in Ireland. I was excited and proud as the group gave a rousing performance in the studio as "great stars" from America on a nation-wide "concert tour!"



From that day on, the group seemed to be “famous” and was often recognized and complimented. The group was cheered in pubs and invited to sing at just about every stop. I was always at the ready with the camera, so I became popular, too.

Leaving Dublin behind, we headed north through more pastoral splendor to board a cruise on the River Shannon. We feasted on an Irish breakfast of limitless scones, smeared with clotted cream and jam and hot mugs of Irish coffee. The chorus was treated to a live band who entertained them with Celtic tunes as they “oohed and aahed” at the beautiful homes near the shore.

That evening was the formal show where **High Country** performed with the Sligo area women’s and finally, MEN’S choruses and quartets. This was the most men I had seen in one place since the Guinness Beer Factory Tour and the night got even better when I was lucky enough to join them on the risers to sing an incredible version of *An Irish Blessing*. **High Country** did okay too.

After a fantastic Afterglow (until about 2:30 in the morning!) and a little rest, we boarded the “home away from home” bus and set out for the last full day of activities. Arriving in Galway Bay, the ladies made way to usual pub lunches, a last dash for “plundering and pillaging” in the shops and a few last impromptu sidewalk concerts. How the Irish love music!

We arrived to celebrate the last night together at Bunratty Castle, the perfect ending to the medieval adventure. After climbing several flights of twisting, stone staircases, we feasted like lords and ladies of old. The chorus was greeted by the castle “royalty” with pewter mugs of Mead (the drink of High Kings), followed by endless courses of beef, fish and fowl, which were eaten as heartedly as possible without the benefit of forks.



Walking back to the hotel through the lush castle gardens, everyone seemed to be holding on tight to the memories of the week. The magical, musical tour was ending. So moved by this country, you begin dreaming of returning before you have left.

Upon reaching the Shannon Airport, the ladies bid Dennis a fond farewell and bestowed honorary **High Country** “sainthood” upon him. He did tell them that having singers on the bus tour was a great experience for him and made his time all the more entertaining. He also commended the male travelers for their “above and beyond” bravery. The last moments were spent in nostalgia, trying to forever imprint all the beauty we had seen, the lakes, churches, castles, farms, mountains and wonderful people.

As the flight began to climb up through the clouds on the trip home, the **High Country** women broke out in their last song of the trip – *On the Road Again*. Then, thankfully, twenty-two women (and me) went to sleep and dreamed of Ireland.

The five photos pictured here are courtesy of Al Klinger. Al is seen here singing at the afterglow with the local chapter. It looks like everyone was having a good time!



Sat., June 22, at Quays Bar Galway enjoying Irish Stew with Al Klinger, and a tea. Lovely place. Now, back on the bus and headed to Bunratty Castle.



Enjoying the dulcet tones of the hard-working bagpipe player. Pictured here with Bunny Klinger



Believe it or not, the Irish have only been singing barbershop for the past 5-6 years. According to Al, they had never done any pick-up quarteting at their afterglows, a situation which Bunny and Al promptly corrected. One group would sing, then another foursome was formed and they took their turn. It was amazing to think this was their first time doing this!



## Soundtrack to my life movie

by Ellen Hall Saunders

There are moments when my life has a soundtrack...far more unexpected though, it was playing in a seemingly innocuous scene today: a long layover in Newark airport. As far as movie scenes go, it is one that is usually cut, the boring lead-up to a really juicy scene. I was on my way to meet up with my daughter, one of my very dearest friends and her teenaged daughter in Paris. Newark was a four hour pause before the fun could start. My friend and I live 3000 miles apart now, so any chance to see each other is something to look forward to.

A few months ago we decided to actually do something that is easily just daydreamed about: go to Paris together. My friend had never been before, though deep in her heart I suspect she has always wanted to. I had lived in Paris and can't imagine anything better than to share it with her. The time seemed right, our daughters, practically sisters, were ecstatic to be invited, and so, the next thing I knew I was in Newark airport.

I had walked off the plane into the huge bustling terminal, preparing myself for a four hour wait in limbo. Wandering towards the food court my ears twitched at an unfamiliar sound amongst the din of gate announcements, rolling suitcases and conversations: an angelic swell of music.

*"We'll meet again, don't know where, don't know when..."*

There down the hall, gathered together, hanging on each others' notes, was a lovely group of 16 women, their leader guiding their individual voices into perfect a capella harmony. I stopped, transfixed. How did they know I was on my way to meet an old friend? Busy travelers slowed their pace to listen. A little boy and his mom sat right down on the floor to take it all in. Next came Nat King Cole's "Unforgettable" and I thought, "Yep, that's what our trip will be."

I chatted with these ladies for a bit as they waited for their next flight. They were there on a layover between Denver and Ireland. The **High Country Chorus**, a chapter of the Sweet Adelines, were on their way to tour and perform in Ireland, a first trip for some of them, probably a dream come true just like ours. While I had planned to sit and block the world out during that long wait, they did everyone a favor and sang to us, their sweet notes lifting our spirits and providing the perfect soundtrack for my life movie. Thank you ladies and bon voyage!

If you want to know more about the singers, check out their website [www.highcountrychorus.org](http://www.highcountrychorus.org)