

A photograph of a cobblestone street in Dublin. In the foreground, a white horse with a black and red harness stands on the wet cobblestones. Behind it is a black horse-drawn carriage. To the right, a green pub named 'THE OLIVER ST. JOHN GOGARTY' is visible, with a sign that says 'The Oliver St. John Gogarty Trad Sessions & Late Night'. Above the pub, there are signs for 'TRADITIONAL IRISH MUSIC BAR' and 'ESTABLISHED 1901'. The street is lined with colorful buildings and flags, and people are walking in the background.

Mini Travel Journals:

Volume Four

Under the Runway Lights A Different Kind of Dublin Weekend

A PHOTOGRAPHIC MEMOIR BY MICHAEL GRAHAM

A DIFFERENT KIND OF BEGINNING

Introduction

We booked a weekend at Dublin Airport, coming up from outside the city for a short break, not to fly, not to go anywhere far, but simply to step away for a few days with Dublin still within reach. It's the kind of idea you question more than once before confirming, the sort of plan that doesn't immediately make sense on paper. An airport is usually somewhere you pass through, not somewhere you choose to stay. But that was exactly what made it interesting.

This journal is a personal account of that short family trip, based at the Clayton Hotel near Dublin Airport, and everything that unfolded from it. A stay that began as a simple decision — a good price, a convenient location — and gradually became something more.

What emerged over the course of the weekend was a different kind of travel experience, one not defined by distance or destination, but by attention. By noticing what is usually overlooked. By taking time in places that are often rushed through without a second thought.

There are moments here where movement and stillness sit side by side. Planes lifting into the sky while we remained grounded. Journeys into the city that took their time. Rain settling in over streets and runways alike. Evenings spent in a warm room with the steady rhythm of the airport just beyond the glass.

Like all journeys in this series, it is built from lived experience — the small details, the unexpected moments, the quiet humour, and the simple comforts that often stay with you longer than anything carefully planned.

It is, at its heart, a reminder that travel does not always have to mean going far. Sometimes, it is enough to be close to it.

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All photographs featured or referenced in this book were taken by the author during the journeys described. Any resemblance to actual persons met along the way is entirely intentional; they were part of the charm.

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Not every trip starts with a flight — sometimes it starts with a different way of seeing.

Clayton Hotel Dublin Airport, Stockhole Lane

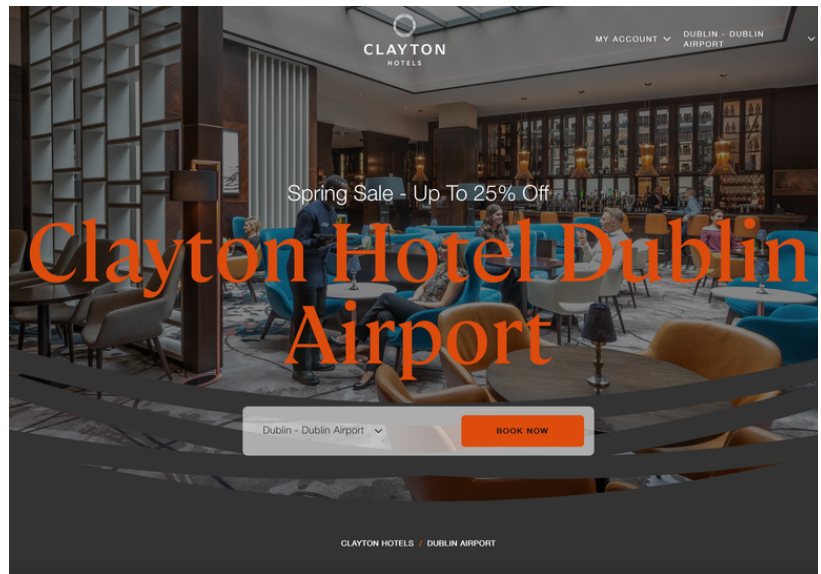
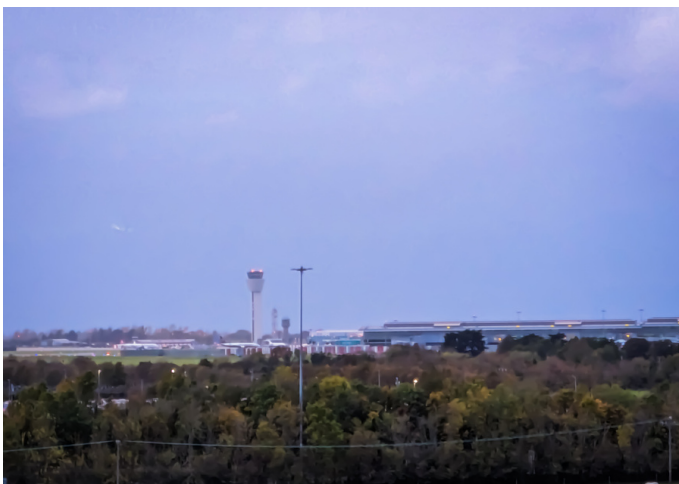
Clayton Hotel Dublin Airport (Stockhole Lane)

At the start of the year, when it comes to travel, we found ourselves a bit unsure what to book. There's always that phase of scrolling, checking dates, weighing options without quite committing to anything. But a birthday still calls for a weekend away, and even something closer to home can tick all the right boxes when the timing is right. Low season, the Clayton Hotel at Dublin Airport appeared with a price that was hard to ignore — €207 for two nights and €20 for parking. It felt straightforward, almost too easy, but sometimes those are the ones that work out best.

It does, of course, raise the usual questions. Is it worth staying at Dublin Airport? In our experience, yes — we've stayed here a number of times over the years and it's always been reliable. The more interesting question was whether it would work as a base if you actually wanted to spend time in Dublin city, and that was something we were about to test.

We arrived at 2pm for check-in, and the first practical thing to deal with was parking. It's worth saying straight away — prepay it in advance or include it when booking, otherwise you end up paying the flat daily rate. This time the system worked exactly as it should: the number plate was read automatically and the barrier lifted without any effort on our side. If that doesn't happen, it's simple enough — take a ticket, go to reception, show your booking, and they'll validate it. The same applies on the way out. Maybe. Maybe not. But the truth is, that wasn't the point.

We took a chance on parking on Level A and, unusually, got a space close to reception. Normally you're heading down to Level B, so it felt like a small win before we'd even checked in.



Check-in itself was smooth, with genuinely friendly staff. If there's one tip worth knowing, it's to ask for a room between floors five and seven facing north — that's where you'll get the best view over the airport. We were initially assigned Room 775, but it wasn't ready, so we were moved to 779. In reality, nothing changed