

XAVIER TRICOT

JAMES JOYCE IN OSTEND

Second revised and expanded edition

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Seafront Promenade, Hôtel Littoral Palace (white building, center of the photo), Ostend, c. 1910.



Scafront Promenade, Hôtel de l'Océan, Ostend, c. 1910.

Photographs taken in Ostend in August-September 1926

(James Joyce Collection, the State University of New York, Buffalo)

The James Joyce Collection of the State University of New York in Buffalo owns a series of photographs showing the members of the Joyce family in Ostend in 1926. They were taken during two distinct periods during the months of August and September.

In his letter dated 2 September 1926 to Sylvia Beach, Joyce asks if she has received the 'snapshots' sent by Lucia. Joyce's letter enables us to pinpoint, with relative accuracy, the dates of the photographs. As the letter is dated 2 September and we know that James, Nora and Lucia Joyce arrived in Ostend on 5 or 6 August, the pictures must have been taken between 6 and 31 August. Taking into account the time needed to develop the negatives, we can narrow the period down further to 6 and 26 August. Since Lucia sent the photographs personally to Sylvia Beach, it is fair to assume that she was the main photographer. Joyce, who had bad eyesight, is pictured wearing an eye patch in the photographs. It seems unlikely, therefore, that he would have used the camera. The photographs showing Lucia, therefore, were probably taken by Nora. On Monday 16 August, a heavy thunderstorm passed over Ostend. Given that the Joyce family are unlikely to have walked around the city in such bad weather, we can assume that the photographs were taken between 6 and 15 August or 17 and 26 August. A number of photographs also include Giorgio Joyce. In his letter written in Italian on 1 September 1926, Joyce invites his son to join the family in Ostend. Allowing for the fact that the letter would have taken at least two days to reach Paris and that Giorgio needed to leave work and travel to the Belgian coast, we may assume that he arrived, at the earliest, around 4 September. As the Joyce family left Ostend for Ghent on 13 September, these particular photographs were probably taken between 5 and 12 September.



inv. no. 4.2

Nora Joyce (?): *Lucia Joyce standing on a breakwater at Ostend*, dated between 6 and 26 August 1926 [On the back of the photograph the stamp of the library Shakespeare & Co., Paris].



inv. no. 4.12

Lucia Joyce (?): *Nora Joyce in the park at Ostend*, between 5 and 12 September 1926.



inv. no 4.20

Lucia Joyce (?): *Giorgio Joyce on the Promenade at Ostend*, dated between 5 and 12 September 1926 [probably taken the same day as 4.16 and 4.17].