

2011 - IRELAND

26 May 2011

LEG 7
7 DAYS IN IRELAND
(INSTEAD OF ICELAND)
B&B AND HIRE CAR



Antrim Ireland's North East Corner

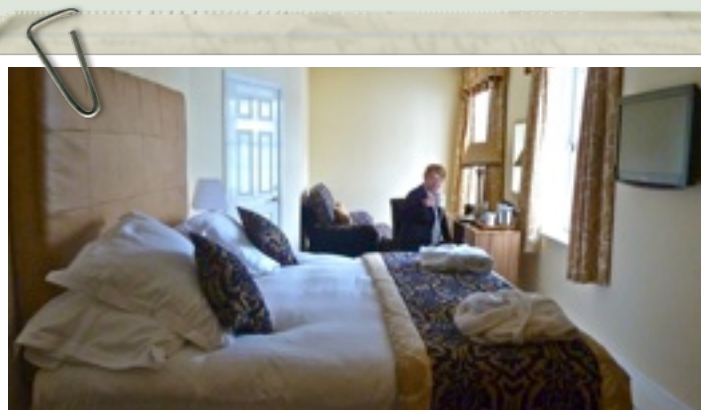
Dramatic landscapes,
mystic splendor,
panoramic seascapes
- Carrickfergus to
Giants Causeway has
all this and more.

HOW'S THE WEATHER?

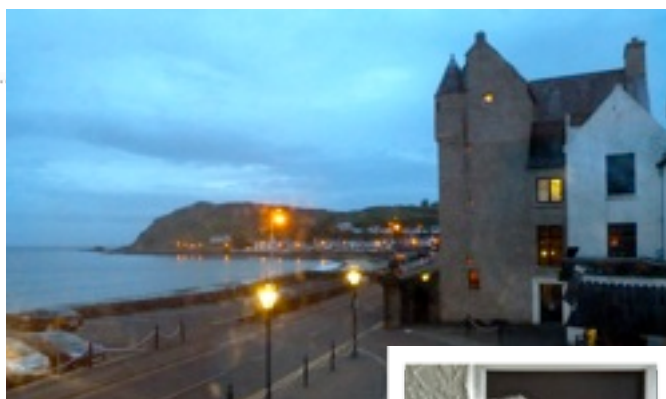
The only extreme weather we didn't experience today was snow and sleet. The sun peeked out only momentarily. The wind, which at times was so strong (especially on the hills overlooking the sea), that it caused us to literally claw or climb our way forward.

BALLYGALLY CASTLE

Our bed and breakfast for the night was a castle built in 1625. Our room, in the modern section, was sumptuous. It had the biggest bed we have ever seen. We would have liked to go for a bike ride or even a stroll through town but the bad weather kept us inside. Instead I decided to bend my elbow and taste the local Guinness - not really to my liking (too salty). Breakfast next morning was wholesome with local foods available. Obviously the Irish like to start their drinking early - there was an invitation to sample the local whisky with our porridge!! We could not understand how whisky could improve the taste of porridge so we declined the offer.



Sumptuous Ballygally Castle hotel room



The view from our room

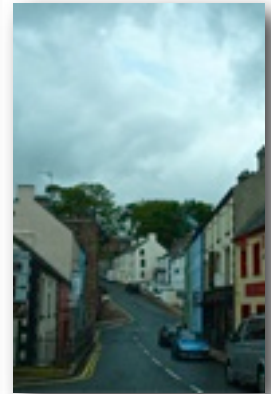


Guinness taster

"There is no such thing as bad weather, it's just inappropriate clothing."



The expansive views from the road to Torr Head



Irish narrow streets are just like Scotland's

TORR HEAD

The road to Torr Head ascended steeply and there were some spectacular coastal views over the North Channel to Kintyre in Scotland. The road was narrower than anything we have seen in Scotland - certainly not for motorhomes. We did come across a number of ruins and noticed that the rock fences appear to be generally in better condition than the ones we saw in Scotland.



A typical ruined Irish round castle

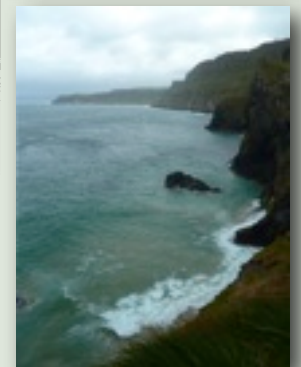
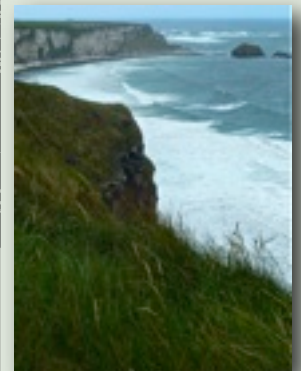
CARRICK-A-REDE ROPE BRIDGE

The famous rope bridge spans a 20m chasm (23m deep). The one mile walk led to a spectacular site. It was used by fishermen to get to their fishing grounds. The wind was blowing so hard

it bent the rope bridge so it took some courage to cross over to the other side. Heather suffers from vertigo so she just watched and wondered why I wanted to test himself. It was a very scary crossing indeed - in both directions, but the view from both the island and the bridge were breathtaking.

GIANT'S CAUSEWAY

We arrived at this famous Irish attraction around 4pm and decided to find a bed and breakfast before we checked it out. The guide books recommend that the best time to visit is early, before the crowds arrive, or late, after they leave, so we booked into our accommodation and then had dinner before we drove out and parked in the attraction's empty car park and set out. The track to the causeway was over 1 mile long and the wind was blowing a gale. With the time at 7.30pm, and the sky looking really foreboding, we arrived and, with not a soul to be seen, we took many snaps. We returned to The Smuggler's Inn cold and ready for a cuppa. We might go back to see more of the causeway tomorrow.





Just look at that scary curve in the bridge caused by the wind



The Giant's Causeway was not as impressive we had imagined.