

# 2011 - IRELAND

2 June 2011



## Wexford Irish National Heritage Park

Given the limited number of sunny days in Ireland we are surprised how many huge holiday parks there are on the Irish coast.

### LIVING LIKE A LOCAL

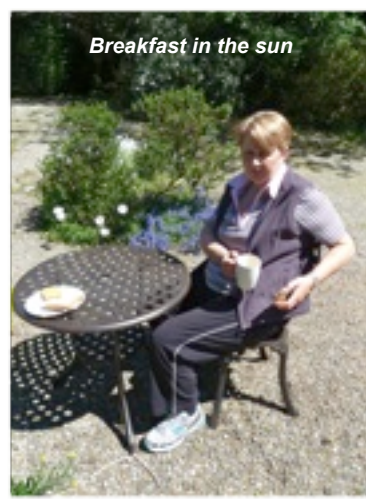
It's been over 2 months since Heather's hair has seen a hairdresser. At home this is not usually a problem but in a country far from home Heather gets a little edgy - "what if my hair gets cut poorly or worse still - what if the color comes out horrible!"

And so, while I waited in the car reading the newspaper and getting a little bored, Heather awaited her fate in at the local hairdresser. She need not have worried. The Irish only had red shades which suited her very well. I took home a bonnie lassie with freckles and mop of hair.

It's amazing what better weather does for one's spirit. One eventually gets sick of constant drizzle, biting cold wind and dull conditions day after day. Today, though, was a beautiful day and we loved it. In fact, at times it was a little too warm. We saw a tour bus off-load a group, where, not one of them wore or carried a jumper or jacket. We, on the other hand, carried our jackets over our arm, just in case.

### GERM WARFARE

We are reading about the large number of people affected by the e-coli sickness outbreak in Europe. No doubt it will soon reach our shores here in Ireland.





Rebuilding replica 1000 AD houses using traditional methods - wooden frame and thatch



Our little Irish tour leader

We were not concerned until Heather realised that many of the vegetables we buy actually come from Europe. We will now become more discerning about where our fruit and vegetable purchases are sourced from. The best way is to buy produce from local outlets - potatoes and carrots with dirt on them and fruit such as apples with slight blemishes. But we will definitely be keeping away from any cucumbers, or sprouts, that's for sure.

### IRISH HISTORY

We had lunch and, with the sun shining brighter than we have known it for some many weeks, we set off to visit the local Irish National Heritage Park. The park squashes 9000 years of Irish history (up to the Normans) into an entertaining and informative visit.

It was entertaining because our tour leader was dressed in appropriate costume and explained many things we would have missed if we had simply walked around the park on our own. The tour was also very informative because all the buildings were built according to specifications known from the most recent archeological digs. There was, among others, a recreated 9000 year ago Neolithic farmstead, stone circle, ring fort, monastery, a

settlement on an artificial island and a Viking shipyard. We were very interested in many aspects of the exhibits which moved through stone, bronze and iron ages and were shown how structures were erected and the reasons why things were done. There was an excellent example of a rock burial mound that was being built more than 500 years before the Egyptian pyramids and 1000 years before stonehenge. We even got to see first hand how houses are thatched - a number of new houses were under construction. One thing we were not aware of was the horizontal water wheel which proliferated in Ireland. Our guide was great - he explained everything in his lovely Irish accent.

We felt very young today. The group we were in was made up of lots of tottering people, many with walking sticks. Every few meters many would find a rock or seat to collapse on for a rest. The heat was certainly getting to them. One old guy kept on wacking weeds he found with his stick - obviously a farmer with a penchant for killing plants that only he was familiar with. We giggled and felt very smug about being so spritely. There by the grace of god go I.



We were told today about an ecologically aware fellow who wanted to build a traditional round house with straw roof but could not comply with planning rules - namely that he had to ensure that his house was built parallel with the road.





*A leprechaun?*

