

## Days Four and Five in Ireland



On Friday, we boarded the bus early after our fourth and final full Irish breakfast, and made our way to Ballygalley on the east coast of Northern Ireland. The Antrim coast is rather gorgeous, with the coastal road winding between the wild green hills and the sandy beaches. There, the brave amongst us went for a dip in the icy sea waters - a bracing experience if ever there was one. We enjoyed the cool sea air and the waves gently toing and froing, and felt with gratitude the warming rays of the morning sun.

Once dried off, we re-boarded our coach and headed north along the coastal road on what was an extraordinarily sunny February day. After an hour or so, we arrived at the Giant's Causeway. It more or less defies description, so I will attach photos for your own perusal.



We hiked along the coast to the Causeway and back again, and after our lunch and a brief dip into the shop in the visitor centre, we made our way to Derry, to have a quick tour of the historic walls and the Bogside. We were told more about the Troubles, and in particular the events of Bloody Sunday in 1972, where 14 unarmed protestors were shot dead by soldiers of the Parachute Regiment of the British Army. While the events described were sobering, we were given reason to admire the people of Derry for the way they have actively gone about building peace and reconciliation in the aftermath of these and other harrowing events. In particular, the fact that they had erected a memorial to

all of the victims of the Troubles, including personnel of the British Army, was a moving and inspiring gesture of fence-mending.

After being soaked by a deluge of rain, we boarded the coach and were returned to the hotel in Belfast. By this point, we were all weary after a long week, and after our meal, we settled down in advance of our early start the following morning for the return leg to Prague.