



Celtic Connections – A walking break to The Giants Causeway & The Antrim Glens.

Date: Friday 19th to Tuesday 23rd September 2014 (By Air)

OR

Thursday 18th to Wednesday 24th September (**Minibus & Ferry**)



The Emerald Isle beckons. Join our 2014 Walkfree Breakfree Gathering which will be about enjoying fantastic walks, feeling the wind ruffling our hair as we walk along the heritage coast of the Giants Causeway, discovering those great Irish pubs, the music and food, even a little Blarney and raising a glass or two with friends.

There's never been a better time to give Ireland a whirl so do join us and be part of a great Celtic Connections Gathering 2014 – it's going to be fun!

Northern Ireland measures just 130km by 150km, but the region packs an impressive variety of scenery into this compact area. We have Lough Neagh, the largest lake in Ireland at 383 square metres around which we have lovely rolling hills. In the south east we have the Mourne Mountains, which include Slieve Donard, the highest summit in Ulster at 850m and to the north the Antrim Hills and Glens and on the north coast, the world famous and now The World Heritage Site of the Giant's Causeway and its equally wonderful neighbouring cliffs and beaches.

It is unfortunate that Northern Ireland's political troubles have deterred many people from visiting the region over the last fifty years as it has so much beautiful countryside and coastline to explore.

During this long weekend we are going to change that combining great walks with visits to places of interest and getting to know the area.

An active walking weekend - you bet - now's the time – now's the hour – to a Gathering we must go!

Do read on and join us if you can.

THE PLAN

You arrive at Belfast Airport by 10am on Friday 19th September booted, appropriately dressed with a packed lunch and ready for a walk. Currently return flights are available for less than £80 from most London airports.



Please note flights must be booked independently and you must arrive at Belfast International Airport by 10am on Friday 19th September – we will return you to the airport at 5:00pm on Tuesday 23rd September. (If it assists by arrangement luggage may travel with the minibus but please note differing travel dates)

Minibus:

If you prefer to travel by minibus and ferry we depart Thursday 18th September & Return Wednesday 24th September. Supplement £95 (Overnight Ferries - B&B in 4 person shared cabins £95 per person – twins £125 per person

At the airport we will set off northwards along the beautiful coast road which is reckoned to be one of the world's greatest road journeys. We will enjoy the journey, taking in a few viewpoint stops before we arrive at our hostel at Bushmills on the Causeway Coast Way.

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/giantscauseway/>

Our walks will include sections of the Causeway Coast Way; Port Path, Glens of Antrim and tours/visits to places of interest. Our actual walks and visits will be dependent on the weather conditions and a general description is offered below. Optional: Should group members wish on our final day we could opt for a short visit to Belfast.

Port Path: We will then take an opportunity to enjoy a coast walk further northwards on the Port Path. This is a pleasant walk between Portstewart and Portrush, then past Curran Strand to Dunlace castle. Distance will depend on time available but up to a maximum of 10/11 miles or less if you wish as we can arrange a number of different pickup points.

Along the way we will see offshore the Skerries (reef islands) and the caves, stacks and arches of The White Rocks where Jurassic Limestones cliffs have been weathered into fantastic shapes with names such as Giants Head, the Wishing Arch and Cathedral cave. Further on beyond the site of an extinct volcano and its bed of Jurassic



limestone formed over 300 million years ago overlaid by the basalt lava flow we reach Dunluce Castle (dun Lis, fort of the fort) <http://www.northerntrim.com/dunlucecastle.htm>



This has been an impressive defensive site for over 1,500 years, the round towers of the present castle date from Norman times. From the 16th century the castle was seat of the McDonnells, Earls of Antrim and Lord of the Isles. This walk can easily be shortened or indeed lengthened should you wish as we can easily agree a number of different pick up points.

Causeway Coast Way. <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/giantscauseway/> is a varied and highly enjoyable 52km way marked coastal route that explores Irelands only World Heritage Area and runs from Portsteward to Ballycastle The most famous feature is the Giants Causeway, where 40,000 hexagonal stones jut into the Atlantic coming ashore again on Staffa, just off the island of Mull.



We plan to walk the best one-day section of the path, starting at the thrilling Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/carrick-a-rede/>

which juts out to Carrig-a-Rede or “the rock on the road” (small fee payable). The route of 10.5 miles traces the shoreline past sandy beaches, secluded harbours and sheer cliff tops to finish at the Giants Causeway. Here you will have an opportunity to visit the recently completed Heritage Centre (admission fees payable

approx £9).

Atrim Glens: Here we will enjoy a shorter walk at the Glenarriff Forest Park along riverbanks, forest trails and cascading waterfalls, with the option of a more challenging off track section for the adventurous walker.

http://www.google.co.uk/search?q=Glenarriff+Forest+Park&hl=en&tbo=u&rlz=1C1GGGE_en_gbGB411GB411&tbm=isch&source=univ&sa=X&ei=hKe3UML0EtSZ0QWmr4G4Aw&ved=0CFIQsAQ&biw=986&bih=602

ACCOMMODATION

We will be staying in the excellent Mill Rest Youth Hostel located in Bushmills. Bushmill is a large village with a population of 1400 people but it has not changed much in the past 100 years and is famed for the location of Old Bushmills Distillery <http://www.bushmillsps.org.uk/distillery.htm> and its proximity to the Giants Causeway. The distillery is reputed to be the oldest licensed one in the world.



The hostel is modern with all rooms ensuite, with smart and up to date facilities and services. It offers a relaxed and entertaining environment for groups with guests of all ages from around the world. We have available a limited number of twin rooms (book early) and four person rooms allocated by gender.

If single private facilities are required this is locally in a B&B or Guest house at additional cost **(If that option is of interest please comment on the booking form and we will come back to you to confirm costs).**

As this weekend is hostel based utilising shared accommodation it allows us to deliver an inclusive walking weekend offering value for money and an informal, community orientated venue. The cost includes accommodation, evening meals either in the hostel cooked by Iain or bar meals, breakfasts and packed lunch on Saturday, Sunday and Monday (not on Friday or Tuesday whilst travelling).

Full details of the accommodation are available on this link <http://www.hini.org.uk/hostels/Bushmills-Hostel> and we would ask you to review this prior to booking.

Our walks are dedicated to get you to places new for discovery and exploration, places that touch the senses with a great bunch of companions – do join us if you can.

Iain ML (Summer) MTA

Any questions or queries please do not hesitate to contact me by email iain@walkfreebreakfree.co.uk or mobile 07889 165278.

As organiser my promise to you is that on each and every event we will honestly strive at all times to deliver a great community focused experience, to inspire and motivate and be here for you.

THE DEAL

COST:

£310 Shared hostel accommodation

£340 Twin Room

Supplements Available: £95 (Overnight Ferries - B&B in 4 person shared cabins £95 per person – twins £125 per person

No single Rooms available in the hostel but available in a local B&B – if you wish as to enquire please note on booking form and we will notify you of cost

Includes:

Accommodation in shared or twin bed hostel accommodation

Travel to and from Belfast Airport & walks

Guided Walks

Continental breakfast

Packed lunches on Saturday, Sunday and Monday

Evening meals as mentioned below

Tea & Coffee for flasks

Does not include:

Personal Insurance

Flights to Belfast (these must be booked direct)

Ferries or Entrance fees

Alcoholic or soft drinks

Booking Arrangements:

To reserve or confirm your place on this escape a £50 deposit (non returnable - unless someone else takes your place) is required on booking. The balance is due on the 1st August 2014.

Payment method: Internet Banking: Account Number 10111075 Sort Code 162129 or via card

Secure payment site <http://www.walkfreebreakfree.co.uk/payments>

For all payment methods please use as your **Transaction reference: IRELAND14 plus your initials.**

Your deposit and payments are protected to comply with the requirements of the Travel Package Regulations.

Booking form below plus further Information is available on our Accommodation, Menus & Dining, Walks, your safety responsibilities and what to bring.



Outdoor activities for all"

Booking Information & Form – to be completed by all participants

Please return to: Iain Thomson
 Walkfree Breakfree Ltd , 34 Sunnybank, Widmer End, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP15 6PA
 or email to iain@walkfreebreakfree.co.uk

Dates :	Friday 19 th to Tuesday 23 rd September 2014 (By Air) OR Thursday 18 th to Wednesday 24 th September (Minibus & Ferry)
Event/trip Reference	Ireland
Name of person booking (group leader)	
E Mail address (group leader)	
Address	
Home Tel No	
Mobile No	
Emergency contact information to be used in the event of an emergency arising during the trip:	
Name	
contact number	

Names of others in group (if booking more than one person)

Name	Mobile Number	Emergency contact number

Travel: I wish to travel to Ireland via Ferry YES/NO If yes I require shared/twin cabins (please indicate your choice of accommodation)

Independent travel	My travel arrangements are detailed opposite.	
--------------------	---	--

Trip/event costs: Inclusive Package			
£310 shared room per person		No @£	£
£340 twin/double room per person		No @£	
Minibus Travel Supplement £95 or £125			
Please note Travel Insurance is not included in the costs			
<i>Included Free – Your Walkfree Breakfree Club Experience membership – your gateway to great value outdoor walks and activities</i>			NO CHARGE
Total Payable			
DEPOSIT Required £50 per person with Booking Form		TOTAL	£
Balance payable by 1st August 2014			
Payments: Payments protected under the Package Travel Regulations		:	
For all transactions please use the reference. IRELAND14 plus- your initials.			

Internet banking: Account No:10111075 Sort Code:162129 CREDIT / Debit CARD PAYMENT- via the secure site http://www.walkfreebreakfree.co.uk/payments Or via Cheque made payable to Walkfree Breakfree Ltd			
---	--	--	--

Vegetarian Food required:	Yes	No
Please indicate number of people requiring vegetarian food in group:		
Other Dietary Issues you may wish to bring to our attention:		

Health & Fitness
 Note this is a walking holiday and we will at times be walking on a variety of footpaths with gradients. You therefore need to be walking fit but our walks will be suitable for those who walk regularly in the Chilterns – please consider fully prior to booking
 Bookings are accepted on the understanding that all persons participating are normally in good health and physically equally to the minimum demands of the chosen trip. If this is in doubt the Booking Form must be accompanied by a doctor’s certificate stating that it is entirely safe for you to go on the particular trip you have chosen. To assess your level of fitness in relation to the various walks we undertake, completing the quiz available on our website <http://www.walkfreebreakfree.co.uk/fitness-quiz> may be helpful and a useful reference point for your personal use.

Remember we are undertaking physical activity which at times may be in remote locations where assistance may not be readily available or in certain circumstances medical conditions may pose additional risk to activities being undertaken.

If you or a member of your party have medical conditions you wish to be brought to the attention of voluntary leaders please indicate here and include relevant details in confidence with the booking form.

Please sign booking form below confirming you agree to accept and on behalf of all members of your party accept to comply with conditions of membership and fully understand the meaning of “a participating adult” – (further information below) and understand that you participate on walks and activities at your own risk and Walkfree Breakfree Ltd accept no responsibility or liability. You accept our terms and conditions published on our website and below. <http://www.walkfreebreakfree.co.uk/booking-conditions> on behalf of all members of the group (a published copy can be made available on request).

Signature of person booking
 I fully understand and accept membership on the above conditions:

MEMBERSHIP is on the understanding you and everyone in your party agrees participation is on the basis of “a participating adult” which is clearly defined in the British Mountaineering Council Participation Statement and on your acceptance of our terms and conditions. The BMC Participation Statement say that: *The BMC recognises that climbing and mountaineering (which in our context includes walks, hill walking and other outdoor activities) are activities with a danger of personal injury or death. Participants in these activities should be aware of and accept these risks and be responsible for their own actions.*

To make your participation as simple and easy as possible you should fully understand your relationship with Walkfree Breakfree Ltd. During Club experience weekends and trips we are happy to offer information and opinions on walks and other activities and we will always endeavour to give accurate information and opinions, but we do not take any responsibility for them and if acted upon by you it is at your own risk.

You understand our walking and activity leaders may not be qualified mountain guides and you join them at your own risk and your own free will to participate in club experience activities with like minded people.

During Club Experience trips you may be asked to drive (or accept a lift from) someone who is not in your booking party, to and from an excursion and you accept that Walkfree Breakfree Ltd will not accept any liability in the event of a road accident and that you enter into such an arrangement with another driver/passenger by mutual consent.



WALKS

Walks are around 10/11 miles or less (7/8 miles) and should pose no problem for those who walk in the Chilterns. Do join us if you can on what promises to be a lovely walking weekend in a unique destination.

Itinerary

Thursday 18th September (if travelling by minibus)

12noon Depart High Wycombe for Liverpool
Overnight Ferry (Shared cabin/Bed & Breakfast)

Friday 19th September

10:00am Pick up from Belfast International Airport (Flights must be booked to arrive by 10am)

Depart Bushmills (Tour & strolls)

6:00/7:00pm Arrive & Bar Meal

Saturday 20th September

8:00am Continental Breakfast

9:30am Depart for walks with packed lunch

4/5:00pm Return to hostel (Tea & Cakes)

8:00pm Dinner in hostel or bar meal

Sunday 21st September

8:00am Continental Breakfast

9:30am Depart hostel for walks with packed lunch

4/5:00pm Return to hostel (Tea & Cakes)

8:00pm Dinner in hostel or bar meal

Monday 22nd September

8:00am Continental Breakfast
9:30am Depart hostel for walks with packed lunch
4/5:00pm Return to hostel (Tea & Cakes)
8:00pm Dinner in hostel or bar meal

Tuesday 23rd September

8:00am Continental Breakfast
9:30am Check out & depart hostel for tour walks
5:00pm Drop off Airport
8:00pm Overnight Ferry (Shared cabin/Bed & Breakfast)

Tuesday 23rd September

6:00am Arrive Liverpool
2:00pm Approximate arrival High Wycombe

MENUS

Breakfast

Porridge, muesli and a selection of cereals
Orange/Apple Juice & Boiled eggs
Toast with jam/marmalade/butter
Tea/Coffee

Packed Lunch (Saturday & Sunday)

Sandwiches
Cake or Chocolate Biscuit
Bag of crisps
Piece of fruit
Tea & coffee available for your flasks

Evening Meals: Either cooked in hostel by Iain or Bar Meals

Note (all meals in Hostel) : Please feel free to bring along wine, beer or soft drinks to accompany the meals Menu may be subject to change and vegetarians including vegans can be catered for but do let me know any special dietary requirements in advance.

Service Style (please note): To make the weekend more affordable, the service offered is based on the Walkfree Breakfree Club Experience service style. Participants on the weekend assist with chores such as washing up, setting tables and assisting the chef. However I can assure you the chores are well organised, shared between us and become part of the fun!

It also allows us to bring our own wine and beer for the communal table making this weekend really sociable and great value for money

Your Safety Responsibilities: Walks with a leader will be available but I would ask you to carefully note that participation is on the basis of the BMC statement below and that you are personally responsible for your own safety and have a duty of care to all others in the group as you participate on the basis of a "responsible adult". Neither voluntary leaders nor Walkfree Breakfree Ltd (supporting this event) have liability in the event of an incident or accident. A general, informal description of the walk will be given, and if possible this will be related to the Ramblers Association descriptors but it is

your own personal responsibility to make the decision to join a particular group taking in account your own physical fitness, medical conditions and general well being. No liability can be accepted.

For those of you who have not yet been on one of our Escape weekends and perhaps are a little wary I can assure you we encourage and welcome new members to achieve that little bit more in respect of walking (pace will be adjusted to suit). So please, take this opportunity to join us, and remember if you have any concerns or general questions please do not hesitate to contact me. I am available on 07889165278 or email me

iain@walkfreebreakfree.co.uk

Walks: Our walks can be enjoyed by anyone who is walking fit or reasonably active. Our aim is to encourage participation and to be active surrounded by amazing scenery.

Weather: We are blessed in the UK with four seasons - wonderful but it is a shame at least two of them can be on the same day! Do check the weather forecast and come prepared with clothing suitable for the day - if you need any advice do not hesitate to contact me.

What to Bring:

Walks: Boots suitable for walking on country & mountain paths (remember they might get wet and muddy); Waterproof jacket/trousers & warm clothing; Small rucksack for drinks/snacks; camera; A little money for refreshments; As always your lovely sense of fun, humour and companionship.

