

Ultimate Ulster - 2024

When we return from any Meet or Rally it's easy to overlook the inordinate amount of work coordinators put into making the experience a success. The Ultimate Ulster Team: Anne, Brian, Maggie and Trevor assisted by Sandy and Jo made this event 'one of the best', so let's open with a big THANK YOU.

We made our way to the Curran Campsite via Dublin, Belfast or Larne for a first night meal at Anne and Brian's house overlooking the sea. After Irish Stew and a few glasses of red and white 'lemonade' the *craic* started to flow. (More about the *craic* later).



Over the next few days a short journey into Belfast enabled visits to the Titanic Museum and "Hop on Bus Tours" or Black cab visits around the City.

Besides our visit to the capital Anne and Maggie organised visits to Gobbins Coastal path (not for those with vertigo) and the Whitehead lighthouse. Lunch at the local bistro included a local traditional band, (I am sure they knew we were coming)



Days, and evenings were never dull, one night a meal at an excellent steakhouse, another a quiz night supporting local charities. Everyone really enjoyed themselves, the *craic* continued to flow!

Our journey to the second site took the motorhomes along the beautiful Antrim Coast though caravans were recommended to take a detour to avoid a few tight junctions.



Ballyness campsite in Bushmills is Northern Ireland's premier site. Immaculately manicured and just a stone throw from the Bushmills Distillery! A short drive along the coast we visited the Giants Causeway and the Carrick-a-rede rope bridge (again not for those with vertigo).

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Trevor and Maggie organised cycle rides along the coast to Portstewart stopping off in Portrush for definitely the best Guinness in the north. At the Harbour Bar. Cycling back through a strong headwind we passed preparations for the 2025 Open Golf Tournament.

Evenings were not forgotten and we braved a BBQ between the vans and took the organisers for a 'thank you' meal.



We all come away from Rallies and Meets with memories and to help this Trevor presented each couple with a hand turned model of the Whitehead Lighthouse made in his own workshop.



In spite of our packed diary, it was time to move again to Benone Leisure Park, situated on one of Northern Ireland's best beaches. At four miles long it gave everyone a chance to stretch their legs walking to the NT Mussenden Monument.

That evening the organisers were initiated into the game Mexican Trains, held in two vans with winners and those that lost changing vans. Another great night.

Continued:

Anne and Brian arranged a guided tour of Derry. Arriving to the north of the City we entered over the beautiful 2011 Peace Bridge before meeting our guide Terry at the Guild Hall. He recalled the time Bill Clinton visited the City and then explained how the City's name Derry / Londonderry came about. His walk around the City walls gave us views of 'times past' through to the present.

We all stopped to take photos at the Derry Girls mural and finished off the walk with lunch at a lovely thatched cottage right in the centre of town.



With a warm evening to spare we sat outside to plan our journey to Enniskillen just before the midges swarmed in.

The journey to Enniskillen gave time to visit at least one NT property. Florence Court or Castle Coole. Riverside Farm and Marina was just outside the town, so what's the best way to travel but by water taxi arranged again by our hosts; is that a first? Once in the City we transferred to a solar powered electric boat tour to see the sights of this island city.



That evening John organised one of his quizzes, outdoors under the awnings.

Great *craic* was had by all as he tussled with his question sheets in the blustery wind.

The Enniskillen region is rich in history and besides the NT houses the group had the chance to visit Marble Arch Caves, Crom and Tully Castle.

Sadly all good things must come to an end and the final meal was held at the Horseshoe and Saddlers Restaurant renowned for its excellent food. Friday came too soon and it was time to say our goodbyes and travel on.

A special mention must go to Beryl (Anne's dog) who is the most obedient and popular canine you will ever meet. We all enjoyed her company

Finally, what was all this mention of *craic*, (pronounced KRAK) well it is an Irish word used to describe a good time, a fun experience or friendly conversation. Ultimate Ulster was all three in spade loads!

Clive and Susan Danks