

## Our trip to Carrick-on-Suir, Clancy Brothers Festival 2017

Our trip to Carrick-on-Suir was the highlight of our Irish vacation. When I first started planning this vacation, it was my wish to be able to spend time immersed in Irish culture and meeting ordinary Irish people (as opposed to Irish people who work in the tourist trade.) At no time did I expect to get the experience we had in Carrick-on-Suir. The people of your town were unbelievably welcoming. They did things for us that were so much more than we could ever have expected. They didn't just give us directions to a venue, they walked with us to make sure we got there. We were specifically mentioned at several events, like visiting royalty! They ensured that we never had to pay a big price for our mistakes. When Kerry and I were last to arrive at Dove Hill and everyone else was already gone, one of the organizers arranged for us to get a late ride back to Carrick-on-Suir. The proprietor of Figgerty's Pub Mary was unbelievably accommodating when we Canadians didn't know we needed to book a taxi to get home. We had stayed especially late because the music was so good and we were having so much fun with the local people. The taxi drivers were accommodating of my sister, Laurie's difficulty getting in and out of vehicles. They tried their best to come get us whenever we called, even though we never understood that we should have booked ahead of time.

We spent hours and hours listening to live Irish music. We knew the Clancy Brothers' music, but enjoyed learning new songs. The music culture in Ireland is second to none. We have read stories of Irish sing-a-longs but really thought they were exaggerated. They aren't. And the musicians even sang songs we asked for. You are so lucky to live in a place where music and culture are so much a part of everyday life. Look at how many venues it took to display the paintings and other art you amassed for the Festival! Most Canadian towns would have had trouble filling one.

I have never been to a place where a TOWN, not an individual or even a family, but a whole town was so welcoming and accommodating. The people of Carrick-on-Suir are so friendly and helpful and they made this trip into a dream come true. In fact, it was much better than we had dared to dream about. We enjoyed our time in other Irish towns; we enjoyed seeing the historical sites and learning about your history. We had a great time kissing the Blarney Stone and other touristy things, but nothing can compare to the opportunity we had in Carrick-on-Suir to be a part of real Irish culture.

Thank you to the Tudor Artisan Hub, for being such a big part of the experience. I kept your phone numbers with me at all times and knew that if all else failed, I had a backup person I could call for help. I really appreciated knowing from previous experience that you would do your best to help me or point me in the right direction. None of us will ever forget Carrick-on-Suir'

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