

## living and working in Cavan, Ireland



a report by Beatrice Schöllner

### Introduction

During my work experience I lived and worked in Cavan, Ireland.

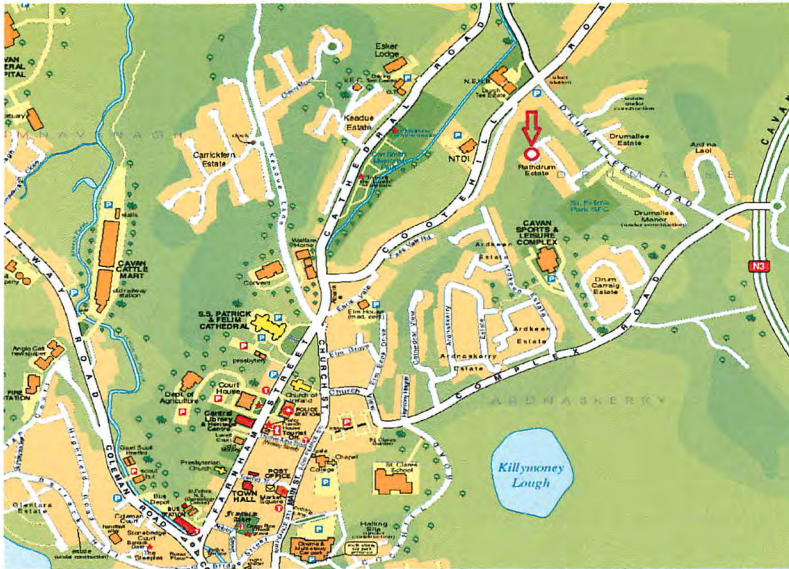
This city is the capital of County Cavan which is situated in the northern central part of the Republic of Ireland, near the border with Northern Ireland.



In the town live approximately 3,500 people. In the area around the town live approximately 30,000 people.

### At home

I lived in Rathdrum, an estate in Cavan, in a house with two family members; my host mother Patricia and my host father Leo.



I enjoyed my stay there a lot. My host parents showed me a lot of things and places in Ireland in my and their free time.

We had dinner together every evening and we talked a lot.

I really felt like home with them.

### At work

I worked for Obelisk Network in Cavan. The company was established in 1996. It's a privately owned company. The main activity is in providing solutions and resources to industry across



telecommunications, power transmission and distribution and renewable energy. The head office is in Cavan, but they also have an office in Northern Ireland (Lisburn) and one in South Africa. They also have a logistics and warehouse office in Ireland, in Portlaoise. In Cavan there are working around 20 till 30 people. They work for the main providers as like O2, Vodafone and Meteor.

I was working with the Health and Safety department, the IT department and the Accounting department.

Health and Safety is the core value in Obelisk, and they try to get no incidents. I logged in risk assessment sheets for them and also updated their system about the equipment the engineers got from the company. I also did some filing and helped to register the subcontractor and employees trainings in an Excel sheet with checking their certificates.

I helped the IT department to create new maintenance sheets with HTML.

I assisted the Accounting department with their filing, posted sales invoices, looked after phone bills and sent them per email to the employees so that they can say what's their private usage and what's not.

I started work at 9.00 AM and finished work at 5.30 PM. I had a lunch break from 1.00 PM until 2.00 PM. They also made a few tea breaks in the working time. The colleagues were all very nice and helped me if I had a question or didn't understand anything. A special thing was that everybody called their colleagues with their first names not with their surnames like in Germany, also when they were phoning with people from other companies.

Because of that all sounded much more friendlier and not that strict.

### intercultural experiences

Ireland is a very religious country. They have many churches and cathedrals. Also there is a bell ringing at 12 o'clock and at 6 o'clock in the evening on television and in the radio so that you can't miss the time for your prayer.

The Irish people aren't that strict and organized as the Germans. They are not that ungenerous with the time and they see most things very easy. They are much more friendlier and very outgoing. They come to you to speak even if you don't know them. If you see somebody on the street, you know you stop and talk to them, how they are and how things going on.

Ireland is very rural and there are some cities. But most of the people live in the countryside and so they need their cars a lot because there are no trains or something like that, only buses but they are just connecting the cities and the villages.

Social life is a big point in Ireland. They often go out and meet each other either in pubs or on sports or music events. Partly this is connected with their work. Even work and family can be arranged better. Some people just leave work for picking up their children from school and come in after that to work on.

Family and friends are very important and everybody seems to know each other.

The big shops are also opened on Sunday; that's really nice if the weather is bad and you don't want to be at home or something like that.

The Irish day also starts later and ends very late. Usually you start work there at 9.00 AM and you don't stay at home after work. You meet friends after work or just go into a pub.

### what I learned

I got more confident with the English language in the four weeks I stayed in Ireland.

Also I learned something about accounting and about health and safety at work. I got to know how Irish office work works and I saw a lot of the Irish landscape and culture.

I appreciate now how important it is to be organized and structured because if you aren't nothing will work that way that it should be. Especially in the professional way.

### free time / trips

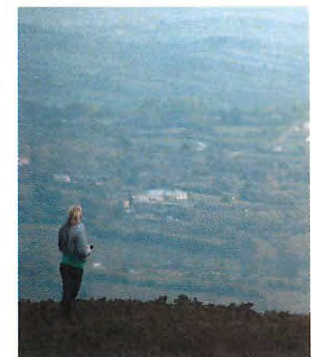


We went to the *Farnham Arms Hotel* for an Irish music session. There is an Irish music session every Wednesday. Two of our host mothers sang with the musicians a few songs for us.



The first Saturday we went to *Causey Farm* near Navan and we baked brown bread, did Irish dancing, learned how to play the Bodhrán, the Irish drum, held little lambs and baby ducks. Some of us also walked through a bog. Afterwards we had a lovely lunch with our self-made bread and went then back to Cavan.

On Sunday, the 20th of May, I went with my host family to the highest point of County Cavan, the *Breifne Mountains*.





Trinity College

One weekend we went to *Dublin* and stayed there overnight in the area around Temple Bar.

With the hop-on-hop-off bus tour we had a look at different places in Dublin. For example the Phoenix Park, the Guinness Storehouse, the Jameson Distillery, the Hard Rock Cafe, Christ Church Cathedral, Trinity College and O'Connell Street. We also did some shopping after our sightseeing tour.



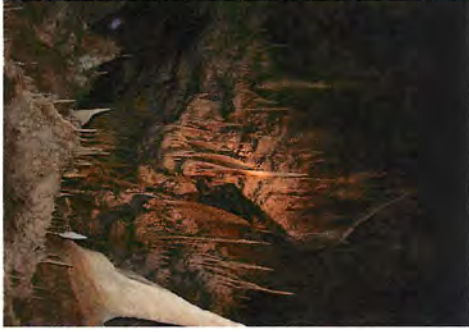
Hard Rock Cafe



Guinness Storehouse



Phoenix Park



Marble Arch Caves

Another day we went to the *marble arch caves*. It was very interesting to see them even from the landscape because it's a global geopark there. We also visited Florencecourt House and Gardens and we had a wonderful view from up there. We had our lunch in Enniskillen next to the castle at the Erne.



Florencecourt House and Gardens

On Monday was a bank holiday, so my host parents and I decided to go to *Bundoran beach*.

Some other exchange students also went with us. It was a long journey but it was worth it.



Bundoran Beach



On our last Tuesday evening in Cavan, we went to a talk about Cavan's 400 year old history. After that we met the mayor of Cavan who handed us our certificates from the Leonardo programme.



I also went with my host family and some other exchange students to the Gaelic football which was very funny. It's similar to the 'normal' soccer but they also play with their hands and they can score points and goals, even though, there are 15 players for each team. Unhappily Cavan lost against Donegal.

Another evening I went out with an other exchange student, her and my host mother to *Killykeen Forest Park*, which is situated in approximately five miles from Cavan town, to have a look around and at Lake Oughter.



Killykeen Forest Park