

Gobsmacked by The Gobbins



A section on the spectacular Gobbins walk.
Picture by Nigel Duncan Media

It is describes as the most dramatic walk in Europe. Big claim but, in this case, there is justification.

Basically, it is a cliff walk which takes you within touching distance of the sea and with the possibility of seeing porpoise and dolphin.

The Gobbins Path was masterminded by the Irish railway engineer, Berkley Dean Wise.

It originally opened in 1902 and was later abandoned in the 1960's until an investment of over £7.5m brought about its rebirth in 2015.

It takes around 2.5 hours to do the fully-guided tour and you do need a good level of fitness as there is a one in five gradient climb at the end and the cliff path is tight with 50 flights of stairs to negotiate.

Safety is a premium but the effort is worthwhile. Yes, we saw it on a stunning day as the sun split the sky.

We tasted sea salt on your lips, felt the soft Irish Sea breeze, listened to our excellent guide Mandy to hear tales of local smugglers and saw a host native sea birds.

We didn't see any dophins swimming off the rugged coastline but the walk along a narrow path hugging the dramatic cliff face is an adventure.

Health and safety includes wearing a hard hat and sturdy walking boots which are provided.

No bags are allowed and lockers are provided at the well-appointed and busy café/shop where you start the memorable tour.

The Gobbins is an adventure which starts with interactive exhibition telling the history of The Gobbins Path, its flora and fauna, and the story of how the path was reborn.

There is free car parking at the visitor centre and the staff there are slick and provide hearty meals at reasonable cost. The pear and parsnip soup was stunning and the Irish stew with special bread was superb.

The cake selection attracted several members of our party.

We travelled over by P&O Ferries and returned with Stena Line and stayed at The Ballygally Castle Hotel.