



Wednesday, October 1, 2003

## Emerald Isle shimmered for OUAA adventurers

"This was one of the best trips I've ever been on." says Gloria Cruice, CAS '75, one of 31 OUAA members and their friends who toured Ireland this past September with the Grizzly Getaways program.

Coastal terrains, castles and shamrocks: what could be more spectacular than Ireland in the fall? The group spent seven days exploring Ireland's history-soaked West Country. The ancient seaside town of Galway surrounded by rolling hills was the first stop on the tour, followed by three days in County Waterford.

"Traveling with OU alumni makes this trip very special," said Adrienne Bass, director of Alumni Relations. "You have that instant connection with people. There was much fun and conversation and by the end of the trip everyone felt like old friends. And on a Global Holidays trip you really get to experience the fabric of a country, including the local people and cuisine."

Ed Schmerling, SBA '01, declared this a "fantastic trip", citing the optional excursions, such as the Aran Islands, Dublin City and Blarney Castle, a definite plus.

The western port of Galway is situated on the northern shore of Galway Bay. It is one of the fastest growing cities in Europe. Conversely, its city center is home to narrow streets, carved stone windows, and low-arched doorways that represent a past of Anglo-Norman and Gaelic influences.

Waterford is located in the "sunny southeast," the region of Ireland that receives the most sunshine. Waterford also is Ireland's oldest city. The Vikings, Normans and Anglo-Irish all have left their mark on the countryside. One of the most striking features of Waterford is its mile long quayside lined with blue, yellow, pink and white houses.

The fabled Gaelic charm was evident in the greeting the visitors received. "I was touched by how friendly and inviting people were to Americans," said Cruice. Fabulous food, a knowledgeable guide, and the opportunity to make lasting friendships with fellow travelers made the trip unforgettable.

"This trip provided great value and variety," Bass said. "OU travelers saw mountains and lakes, rocky beaches and peninsulas, seascapes and harbors. And Ireland is one of the few countries where you can absorb a lot of different cultures. It was a trip that people looked forward to for many years, and the experience was even greater than what they expected."

### SUMMARY

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Created by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Wednesday, October 1, 2003  
Modified by CareTech Administrator (webservices@caretechsolutions.com) on Wednesday, October 1, 2003  
Article Start Date: Friday, March 5, 2004