

Corey Taratuta - Writing Samples

Knockahopple Cottage Welcome

Website Content

Your Host

Greetings. My name is Liam Hughes and I welcome you to Knockahopple Cottage.

In 1989 while visiting family in County Tipperary, I asked a cousin if he knew of any homes for sale in the area. He took me down the road to an abandoned cottage that was in desperate need of repair.

Although it had been empty for several years and required a lot of work, I knew I had found home. My great grandfather came from Knockahopple in the mid-1800's, and I was returning. From that point on, this place was my Cottage.

Since then I have lovingly restored Knockahopple Cottage. I have tried to be mindful of the feel of a traditional Irish cottage, but with all the modern comforts.

My First Guests

I never thought of having guests other than family and close friends at Knockahopple Cottage until I received a call from Gaeney Ryan, a seventy-five-year-old woman from Indiana. She heard of my place from a friend of my mother and was interested in staying there while she visited Ireland in June of 1999.

We made the arrangements over the phone, but she was disheartened to learn that her age restricted her from renting a car in Ireland. That was when she asked if I would be interested in driving her and her friend to their destinations. I agreed, and we made arrangements for the three of us to get together stateside to work out their 14-day itinerary and determine the costs involved in such a tour.

On the day of their arrival in Ireland, I had their car ready for them when they landed, and we were enjoying tea and scones at Knockahopple Cottage within an hour. The next morning I served a full Irish breakfast. It even included fresh-baked Irish soda bread that I cooked over the open fire in the kitchen (a secret I learned from my Irish cousin, Anna Mae).

Both women expressed how special it was to sit by the fire late into the evening. It was at this time we would talk about the events of the day and go over our upcoming itinerary. We covered much of Ireland and Northern Ireland in those two weeks, including a number of days relaxing around Knockahopple. Because we were not tied to a tour group, Gaeney was able to adjust her plans based on her mood and the activities going on in the areas we visited.

Discovering the Real Ireland

On her last day at Knockahopple Cottage, Gaeney and I sat by the fire where she told me how special it was to see the side of Ireland most tourists miss. She insisted I begin putting my passion for, what she called the "real Ireland," to work. And on that day, Knockahopple Cottage and Tours began. In just a few short years, my business has grown, but remains small and personalized, which is exactly the way I intend to keep it.

Coming Home

For Irish-Americans like myself, there is a strong bond with Ireland that calls us back to the place of our ancestors. There is something about the Irish countryside and turf burning in an open fire that makes one think of how difficult it must have been for our forefathers to leave a place as beautiful as this.

I welcome you to Ireland and Knockahopple Cottage as my guest and friend.