



Life Bio in Words & Pictures



*An Anthology of Memoirs and Pictures by Residents
Over 55 in the Fingal Are*

Comhairle Contae
Fhine Gall
Fingal County
Council





A Dedication to Memories Shared

To those who weave their stories,
Threads of life both bright and weary,
With every tale, a heart laid bare,
A bridge to worlds we may not share.

Your laughter echoes through the years,
Your sorrows draw our tender tears.
Each memory offered, a gift divine,
Connecting us through space and time.

For every moment etched in mind,
The joys, the losses intertwined,
You shape the canvas of our days,
In vibrant hues, in tender grays.

So here's to you, brave hearts who dare,
To share the truths for others' care.
May your stories light the way,
For those who follow, come what may

C.H.Joyce





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Foreword

The Lifebio in Words and Pictures Project, facilitated by the Age-Friendly University Unit at Dublin City University (DCU), is an exciting initiative to capture and preserve individuals' rich life stories innovatively. By blending personal narratives with photographs, Lifebio in Words and Pictures empowers people to share their unique journeys, experiences, and memories, ensuring their voices are heard and remembered across generations.

Through this project, DCU is fostering a deeper understanding of personal histories, human resilience, and the power of storytelling to build connections across time and communities. The Lifebio project celebrates the diverse tapestry of human life while contributing to the university's commitment to fostering well-being, inclusion, and lifelong learning. By making these life stories accessible to future generations, the Life in Words and Pictures Project is not just an archive of the past but a living bridge to the future.





I want to express my heartfelt thanks to the project participants for their time and generous contributions, as well as to life writing tutor Sean Farrelly, whose guidance and inspiration brought these memories to life. I would also like to thank Isobel Kerr, Janet Egan, Ann O’Kelly and Jackie Meany for their creative contributions to the project.

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Dr Christine O’Kelly
Age-Friendly University Coordinator





Privileged Travels - Teresa Woodward

A snapshot of travels and unconditional love

Do you remember when you were young,
and you thought your parents were always
on your case?

*“Go to bed / Get out of bed / Go to Mass /
Say your Prayers / Eat all your dinner / Tidy
your room / Dry those dishes / You can only
have one / Stop that / Don’t be late / It’s all
for your own good”*

*And finally...” wait ‘till your father gets
home!”*

Sitting here now on my comfy cushioned
bench, reflecting on all those young years, I
now know why they said all those things.
They were life lessons. So many, many years
later, it was my turn to be on their case. You
see, my mam, dad, and I did some travelling
together.

*“Do you have the tickets / Are the passports
in date?” / Baggage allowance / E1 11 form
/ Your medications / Currency / Credit Cards
/ Hat and Gloves / Ear Warmers / Luggage
Tags / Leave Contact details at home.*

We always travelled in November. Why? It
began when my dad turned 65. He was
supposed to be retired but it was not for





him, and he continued until just before the Covid pandemic.

We chose a different city every year. Some we travelled to on our own and some with travel guides. We would explore all the historical and cultural sites of each city. Mind you, it could be quite an adventure because my Mam could walk off ahead of us, and Dad and I would be left standing, saying, “Where is she gone?” (just like a two-year-old would run off!).

I remember a particular time in Berlin when I took the underground. While my dad and I were trying to figure out how to use the ticket machine, she just jumped on the next train without us. What a panic!? Thank God for mobile phones. From that day on, we ensured there was always a hotel card in her pocket, and the phone was charged just in case.

Berlin was our first experience of Christmas Markets. But when I ask them today what their favourite destination is, they say “Vienna.”

My Dad just loved the Christmas Markets there, from experiencing the Schonbrunn Palace and the impact of the Habsburg Empire to wanting to buy the next fridge magnet. My Mam would be rolling her eyes





up to heaven. She was more interested in looking for clothes, which she called “The Style.” I was always on my dad’s side. I always bought a pencil, too.

In Vienna, Mozart’s café is a must for a slice of Sacher torte - a chocolate cake with layers of apricot jam and a chocolate glazing - and a glass of Trockenbeerauslese. There was no queueing on one particular day, so we got a table straight away. A very distinguished gentleman sat on the table next to us, having coffee and cake, reading the daily newspaper, and watching the time. After a while, he took a comb and tidied his hair. I remember nudging my Mam and my dad, saying to both of us: “Stop being nosy.” Suddenly... there she was – a very tall, elegant woman at his table. He stood up and welcomed her with a kiss on the cheek, just like an old black-and white-movie.

Now, we all know the famous singer Joe Dolan. Well, on a November trip to Riva del Garda (one of our favourite places in the world), after dinner in the fabulously decorated, crystal chandelier-ed dining room, we decided to have a digestive (Limoncello and Grand Marnier) with some of our travelling companions. As we entered the very stylish marble Italian-styled bar, there was music – *very* familiar music. The





musicians were playing and singing a Joe Dolan song. Who would have believed? Italians, singing Joe Dolan's "You're Such a Good-Looking Woman". All the different nationalities got up to dance. I remember being so happy seeing my Mam and Dad jiving to the music they would have danced to when they first met.

We especially loved trying all the different cuisines and always tasted, drank, and enjoyed what the locals had. Any place we enjoyed a drink and food, I would take a bill, napkin, and restaurant card as a memento for my memory box, which I keep safely in my attic.

"Why are you keeping that stuff?" my Mam always asks me, "because I want, in my very, very late years, to open it and reminisce about some of those privileged times and travels I spent with you and Dad."







Assassination - Patricia Dunne

“Can I go, Mum? Can I go, Mum? Please, can I go please, please?”

That was all my mother had heard from me for weeks. I was in a show in Dublin, and we had just heard that a promoter wanted to bring the show to Broadway. I was 19 at the time and had never been outside Ireland. To say I was excited was an understatement. It was a review called “Double Dublin”, and two Dublin comedians headed it, John Molloy and Noel Sheridan. There were two girls as well: me, a dancer, and Deirdre O’Callaghan, a singer and harpist. I begged John to speak to my mother, and he called my house to assure her that he would not let anything happen to me. So, after two more weeks of pleading, I was finally given permission to go.

We were going to Rhode Island first because that is what they did then—open off-Broadway to test how the show would do on Broadway. I don’t remember much about Rhode Island except that it was very pretty and very cold, and I was exhausted as we seemed to rehearse all the time.





We were there for less than a week when one day, on our way home, the bus suddenly stopped in the middle of the street, as were all the cars, and people started to pile onto the road. They were shouting and crying, and I suddenly remembered all my mother's warnings about America. Deirdre and I were very scared and clung to each other. A woman shouted at me "Is he dead?" I didn't know what she was talking about, so we just grabbed each other's hands and ran to our hotel. When we got there, we were met by all the staff crying. It was then that we heard the dreadful news that President Kennedy had been shot.

There was pandemonium everywhere. People screaming and running out into the street. We were so scared. The rest of the cast arrived quickly followed by our promoter. He told us the country was in turmoil. Planes were grounded (*Oh God, I thought, so no going home now*). The stock market had collapsed, and everything in the country had just stopped in an orgy of grief.

The theatre on Broadway was called The Little Theatre, and it was between Broadway and 1st Street. As it was booked, our promoters suggested we should head there. We were like a little wandering band of



travelling players from the past. John was the producer, “the boss” Noel Sheridan was a young artist who was hoping to have his paintings hung in the National Gallery. His father was a famous comedian, Cecil Sheridan, and it was a great opportunity for him to be on stage. Deirdre O’Callaghan was already a very famous folk singer and harpist in Ireland.

We left Rhode Island two days later in a big people carrier, terrified of what was waiting for us in New York, but then I started to get very excited at the prospect of playing on Broadway. I daydreamed as I looked out the window at the falling snow. Turning the trees and the ugly motorway into a silent fairy wonderland. I remember thinking that when the snow covered all the different shapes of houses and cars, there really was no difference between America and Ireland apart from the horror we were running from. It dropped a shroud of quiet on the world, and it felt like we were cocooned in a heavenly silence.

The silence was shattered as the driver had the radio on. Suddenly, the driver let out a big roar and stopped his car in the middle of the motorway. The driver turned up his radio, as did all the other drivers, and the





motorway came to a standstill. The journalist on the radio was hysterically screaming into his microphone. Then we heard a big bang, and the journalist started to shout, “he shot him -he shot him.” “Who? Who?” We were all now shouting at the radio. “Lee Harvey Oswald”, said our driver. “The guy who shot the President”. We were stunned in silence. Is this the country I couldn’t wait to get to? My fellow compatriots and I just wanted to get home. The inside of our car remained silent. The snow continued falling outside and in no time at all the motorway was covered. It was so pretty, but I saw no beauty, only horror. Nothing but horror. We left the car and the driver and entered our room in silence. When Deirdre and I reached our room, we didn’t speak; we just went to bed.

The next morning, we went to the theatre to rehearse. It was surreal. It continued snowing, and New York looked so beautiful, but there was sadness all around. But as John said, “the show must go on”, and it did. We opened on Christmas Eve and closed on New Year's Eve. Nobody wanted to go to the theatre and the stock market had collapsed. Our backer panicked, and the show closed. A week later, the cast and crew started





returning to Ireland in dribs and drabs.
Deirdre and I stayed for a year, and the
horror started to leave us after a while.

Looking back, I can't believe I had a ringside
seat at two of the most infamous
assassinations in American history.







My Homes in Historic Cobh –

Kay Burke

I had three different homes in historic Cobh—well, four if you count where I spent my first few days of life! Cobh is built on various levels ascending from the waterside to what is known as the Top of the Hill. I started at the top and worked my way down to the waterside level, but this does not mean I came down in the world! Like many towns in Ireland, Cobh has an interesting history, and each of my homes had a historic link.

On Monday, August 20th, 1945, I arrived in this world and spent my first days in Cobh General Hospital run by the Bon Secours nuns since the early years of the 20th century. Six days after my birth I was taken for my first trip downhill to 11 John O’Connell Street. My parents were in rented lodgings from a Mrs Dennehy who was very nice to them as newcomers to the town. The street was named after a local who was shot in reprisal for the killing of British soldiers in 1921. The locals honoured him by naming the street and the local GAA pitch after him.





Before I was two, we picked up sticks and moved down to 5 Pearse Square, a generous-sized house on the square's western side. There were business premises on the ground floor and an arched passage beside those premises, which went under our kitchen on the first floor and led to the cinema and the ESB office where my father worked. The ESB was in its infancy in those days, and my dad had previously been involved with the company in Tuam when they first set up there. I have many memories of that house. One was of a birthday party with about six happy kids sitting around a table filled with baked goodies and myself presiding with all my five-year-old importance.

The name of one of my pals sticks in my mind: Frances Tutty; she was from somewhere abroad, and her parents were based in Cobh for a few years. Another memory from there was of seeing the wallpaper design in 3D on a night when I was sick and had a fever. I later enjoyed books with the same effect, such as Magic Eye, which I think they are called. Pearse Square was originally called King's Square when Cobh was an important British Naval base. There, my mother began to run a B and B, which catered to passengers heading for the USA. She also kept longer-stay lodgers including Bank Clerks, Bookies'



Clerks, and teachers. I distinctly remember at the time and later that being a clerk was considered a very desirable position. The picture with this story is of me in Pearse Square. I feel I can remember that armchair, which my mother had probably purchased at an auction.

The next move was to 52 Harbour Row, not quite at sea level but had legs at sea level you could say. It was a townhouse of the late 1800s with 4 storeys. Underneath was a cavernous basement which lifted the house to be at the level of the next street up. My father had various ideas of how to use the basement none of which ever came to fruition!

The main door was at Harbour Row level, this floor had a large living room, a small dining room and a bedroom. My parents' bedroom was on the first floor. In winter, I also had a bedroom on the first floor to enjoy some warmth, and in summer, I climbed to the second floor where there was a wonderful view of the harbour and where I could forecast the weather of the day. Below the street level, there was another "basement", which had our kitchen, living room and another room, pompously called the breakfast room. At the back of that was a yard with a clothesline and a conservatory.





My parents saved hard for the deposit on the house and had borrowed also from the bank. I remember taking repayments on the loan to the bank when I was a little older. Our house was owned by the Forde family since 1920. Robert Forde took part in Scott's second expedition to Antarctica. My parents purchased the house in about 1951 and Bob Forde as he was known died in Cobh Hospital in 1959. I still have some dishes which we were owned by them. The Bob Forde story was one I loved and left me with a big wish to visit Antarctica. There is now a plaque to Forde on "our" house. Interestingly, his sister is listed in Guy's Cork Directory 1920 as running Lodgings (Boarding houses) at 52 Harbour Row. I did not know that until recently and that my mother was continuing a tradition. My parents sold that house in 1967 when I had moved away from home.

Earlier, I said my first home was in John O'Connell Street. Well, there is a rather sad link between the first and last street where I lived in Cobh. Sadly, John O'Connell was shot in Harbour Row in 1921. With so many historical links to my Cobh homes, it is hardly surprising to know that one of my interests is history. I am truly grateful for the interesting homes, for the place that was Cobh, and for the love and support of my parents growing up there.







My Holiday in Blackpool in 1956 - Marlene McCormick

Every year when we were children, we went on summer holidays with our parents—always to the seaside, travelling on a coach and staying in boarding houses (now called bed and breakfasts or B&Bs). We went to places like Skegness, Margate, Yarmouth, Torquay, etc., and of course the iconic place—Blackpool, which was our first holiday after the war.

We lived in the countryside, and all the kids played together and went dancing together. When we left school at 15 years of age, we all colluded to go on holiday together—our first sojourn without our parents, but with their blessing. Of course, we chose Blackpool, famous for its Tower and the Big Dipper (nowadays called a roller-coaster), and the Big Wheel and for the Illuminations in the Autumn.

However, we were going on our summer holidays, and we booked a Boarding House by letter correspondence from lists of advertisements in the national newspapers. Not many people had telephones then. Letters went back and forth, and we paid





the deposit by postal order from the Post Office.

We travelled on the train; we were used to trains for going on school outings to London and other places. At the boarding house, all the girls shared a room, and the boys shared another room. It was full board, so we never went hungry!

Looking back at the photographs, I remembered that I had made the sundress I was wearing myself. We had to learn to sew at school and my mother had a Singer treadle sewing machine, so I did a lot of sewing. Another thing I remember from looking at the photos is that I always took my glasses off. I was very vain. I wore glasses from the age of eight when the teacher at school realised I couldn't see the blackboard properly. I was short-sighted.!

The weather was glorious, and we spent a lot of time sunbathing and swimming on the lovely long expanse of beaches. My best friend Barbara got very sunburned, and a big water blister came up all over her face. She was vain too, and before we went out dancing in the evening, she burst the blisters and covered her face in make-up - Max-Factor Pan-stick was thick and gooey. Then





she would wash it off at night and smooth Calamine Lotion all over her face. Eventually, they all cleared up. Thinking back now, it's a wonder they didn't go septic. I can't remember ever having sunscreen. Barbara and I are still friends to this day. She still lives near where we were brought up and has visited me in Ireland a few times.

On that holiday, we went several times to the big Amusement Fairground and frightened ourselves to death on The Big Dipper, the Ghost Train, and other exciting scary rides. There was also a tram along the promenade from one end to the other, which became famous for viewing the Blackpool Illuminations during winter.

Another afternoon, we took a bus ride to the next town, Fleetwood, which had a quaint fishing harbour. In the evenings, we went to some shows in the Theatres on the famous Blackpool Piers. But most of all, I think we loved going to dance in the famous Blackpool Tower Ballroom, renowned for the massive, big organ that rose up from beneath the floor. We jived and waltzed until midnight every night! It was magical.





Dear Diary - Deirdre Kennedy

Between 1991 and 1992, I spent a year teaching English in a Muslim school in Al Ain, UAE. The town is located right on the border with Oman and is known as the Garden Emirate. Back then, it had a predominantly Muslim population of about 178, 000 including about 300 expatriates. Here are some diary extracts from that exciting time I spent in Arabia.

September 5th, 1991.

Dear Diary,

This is my first weekend in Al Ain, and after a busy week in school, I decided to go downtown to buy some provisions and household needs. As I finished buying groceries in the Co-Op my attention was drawn to the slabs of Kerry gold butter in the fridge. This familiarity contrasted sharply with the exotic products of the store, and I could feel the swell of homesickness as I wandered through the town. The streets were full of oddly named coffee houses: Saffron Brew, Cardamon Café, Espresso Yourself, Honey, and Halva to name but a few. One stood out from all the rest: “The Blue Eyes Café”. In I wandered, oblivious to





what lay before me. To my horror, the place was full of men sitting cross-legged, smoking shisha pipes, and drinking copious amounts of strong black Arabic coffee. They all looked up in amazement to see a female dare invade their male-only territory. I froze. All I wanted to do was turn and flee. But I couldn't. So, I ended up sitting on a cushion, drinking coffee amid the stares and leers of these Arab men, who clearly had never experienced a woman in their male-dominated midst. The culture shock was overwhelming. I concentrated on drinking the strong, bitter coffee as quickly as I could and scarpered. It was a rude awakening. Welcome to Arabia.

December 8th, 1991

Dear Diary

I woke up late this morning and felt there was something wrong. The usual sunlight that wafted into the bedroom was absent, and it felt dark and heavy. The sky was covered in ominous black clouds, which is rare in this region. Soon afterwards, the rain was coming down in torrents, and I must admit I was glad for a reprieve from the sun.





What's seldom is wonderful. At work, I questioned one of the teachers as to when it had last rained in Al Ain. "About two years ago", he replied nonchalantly and rushed off. It rained all day, and when I was getting a lift home with Hannah and her husband, she warned me about the dangers of going out in a car when it rains. The locals are completely unused to wet conditions, and they maintain their high speeds and reckless driving habits, blissfully unaware of the dangers of surface water which cannot escape as the Emirati roads have no drains to take away the falling rains. Just as she spoke, a car went by us at about 150 km an hour, aquaplanned, and went into a somersault across the Cone Roundabout, causing a pileup on the other side. Everyone in the car screamed as we witnessed this terrifying spectacle, which, for all the world, could have been a scene from a James Bond movie. I was relieved to get home safely and spent the afternoon writing my Christmas cards. By evening I was sick and tired of the novelty of the rain. But wait.... a crack in the clouds..."Here comes the sun, doo-doo-doo-doo..here comes the sun, and I say, it's



alright, doo doo doo doo doo doo doo doo
doo doo doo.

March 20th, 1992

Dear Diary,

Today, Simon, his Palestinian friend Mutassem, and I went climbing UAE's second-highest mountain Jebel Hafeet from the back side. In 1980 UAE's revered ruler Sheik Zhayad built a road up this mountain and a palace on top to escape the oppressive summer heat. But today, we were taking the route that was less travelled. The trail itself is not a marked trail; you just find your way and walk in your comfort zone, keeping a close eye on the landmarks. There are no markers or directions. So, we parked the car at the Green Mubazzara Park at the foot of Jebel Hafeet with the intention of reaching the summit by the Phone tower. The terrain was a bit rough, full of fossil-like brittle rocks. Off we set, not a cloud in sight, happily picking our way as we kept the phone tower in view. However, this is a tricky mountain with two rocky summits, and after an hour, we lost sight of the tower, and the road had completely disappeared. We were lost. Panic set in when Mutassem announced he was feeling dehydrated and totally refused to drink as he was observing the Ramadan fast. This majestic mountain is

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completely devoid of shade, so he perched on a rock as Simon and I set off in different directions, desperately trying to find our landmarks. No luck. We came back to Mutassem and encouraged him to drink. No luck there either. He declared emphatically that he would die on the mountain rather than break his fast. At this stage, I was already imagining the scene of breaking the sad news of Mutassem's heroic passing to his heartbroken, aging mother. So, I earnestly prayed to Allah, Muhammad, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, beseeching all their help. Suddenly, a wolf whistle came out of nowhere, and soon we could make out two Bedouin men coming towards us herding a small group of goats. Alhamdulillah (thank God), they set us in the right direction and soon the phone tower came back into view again. An hour later we were enjoying the amazing panoramic views from the top of Jebel Hafeet as we looked with distaste at the opulent palace, built solely because the Sheikh decided he needed a mountaintop palace so that he could practice his falconry in the hot summer months. He had made Jebel Hafeet his heat-beating retreat.





Images of Japan - Pam Towers

To my dearest granddaughter,

When I look at this photograph of you, taken in our garden just four years ago, my smile lovingly touches my heart.

Since you were two years old, I have enjoyed seeing your curiosity and creativity come to the fore. There was that first time when, with delight, you explored with interest the contents of my jewellery box as you upended it onto the floor; then, selecting a long string of colourful beads, you draped them around your hair, neck, and arms. I chuckled to myself as with approval, you checked yourself out in the mirror. You were so cute and innocent. I just love your naturalness. My desire is for you to always be yourself as you journey through life and to remember that God is always by your side to guide you.

Then, on this specific imaging occasion, you were seven years old and having rummaged through my clothes and chest of drawers, you found a colourful scarf which you capably wrapped around your body. You then delved further afield and sourced an almost matching parasol and a beautiful Japanese fan. Then you disappeared. On





reappearing, you had magically enhanced your face with crayons. You looked amazing.

Images of our visit to Japan not so long ago sprung to my mind when Grandad and I went there on holiday. We flew to Tokyo, now rebuilt as a modern city. It had sadly been largely destroyed by Allied bombing in 1944/1945; so very little of its historic architecture remains.

A few days later, with great excitement, we boarded their amazing Shinkansen (Japanese Bullet Train) which travels at 320 kph. It was unbelievably smooth. The train manager, on entering our carriage, was impeccably dressed in a pressed linen uniform with a peaked cap and white gloves. He solemnly bowed, Japanese style, to all the passengers. Such bowing is a custom and is very much part of modern Japanese culture of being respectful, polite, and courteous to everyone. It was a lovely experience. Always remember that your positive way of behaving and your words and gestures of kindness can be life-giving to others.

On reaching our destination, the beautiful ancient city of Kyoto, we visited some incredibly old temples and pagodas as well as taking a tour of the beautiful Ninjo Castle and the Imperial Palace, once home to the





Emperors of Japan until Tokyo became the capital in 1868.

A number of these buildings and their exquisite gardens and lakes have continued to be cared for since Kyoto ceased to be the imperial capital. Japanese ladies dressed in kimonos with sun parasols and carrying fans, moved around the gardens gracefully and with poise as you were doing when I photographed you with summer flowers and trees around you in our little oasis of a garden which you have always enjoyed.

Like Japanese gardens (although ours is not especially Japanese), it does have a story and theme that you may not know. When we moved into our new home some years ago, we were not sure what to do with this small garden area that included a high bank of clay. Surprisingly, your grandad, who knew little about garden design, came up with a layout whose theme was “Our garden of life” which I loved. He took on the construction including creating rock features and pathways using stone obtained from a local quarry while I selected and planted the shrubs, flowers, etc. Let me tell you a little more about our garden story.

As you know, I just love being in our garden, getting my hands dirty in the soil. Seeing flowers grow from seeds or bulbs is so





enriching. My hope is that you will develop a love for plants and perhaps plan out a little corner of your garden and grow some herbs or flowers there. There is a beautiful sense of freedom from working in the garden.

Instead of grass, our garden has a level oval area laid with water-worn gravel. This area is in the shape of an egg that itself symbolises new life. Flagged stepping stones offer two diverting paved pathways across the gravel, symbolising that in life, there are choices that have different directions and outcomes. One of the pathways leads to a Celtic holy well. Beside the pool into which water falls from the rocks above is a human foot-shaped stone from a beach west of An Spidéal in Co Galway. It symbolises that a pilgrim should always be prepared to dip his or her foot in the healing waters of the well.

The second path leads to an antique sundial mounted on a pedestal. From the sundial, the first of two stone pathways ascends the bank surrounded by rocks from the quarry. Ascending the pathway, the climb gets tougher. At 'the summit', the pilgrim can pause and meditate as he or she is rewarded by a view of the Irish Sea stretching towards Irelands Eye, Lambay, and the North Fingal coast in the distance before descending by the second path that too is surrounded by





the natural healing beauty of many shrubs and flowers, to a restful seated area.

While our garden has a theme of a pilgrim journey through life, the authentic Japanese gardens in Kildare and Tramore also depict not dissimilar journeys of life.

The Lafcadio Hearn Japanese garden in Tramore, Co Waterford, through its design, tells a remarkable story of a 19th Century Irish writer who travelled to different countries around the world until reaching Japan, he met and married a Japanese lady and lived very happily and where (with his wife's help), he wrote down in Japanese legendary ghost stories for children from Japan's rich oral tradition that are to this day read by children in Japan. Someday, we would like to bring you on a visit to the Lafcadio Hearn Japanese Gardens in Tramore.

We have lovely memories of our visits to Tramore and Japan, especially our trip to the most famous Mount Fuji volcanic mountain, which was incredible.

Someday, I hope that it will be magical for you when you start travelling further afield as an adult. Take time to read up about these special places of interest, which may whet your appetite for knowledge,





sightseeing, and fun, meeting new people of different nationalities and cultures.

Remember, too, that whatever confronts you in life, be true to yourself and your underlying values, however challenging. Perhaps as a teenager, you may, on occasions - not wanting to be the odd one out - feel pressured to follow in the footsteps of your peers. Try instead to be true to your ideals and principles, which, in my experience, can bring you to a better place of fulfilment and contentment, often enriching your life and, in turn, enriching the lives of others, too.

I am delighted to have written this memoir for you to read in these coming years. It's a joyful beginning experience for me and it just happens that today is Grandparents' Day in Ireland; how appropriate.

I love you always - Nan







Let Your Dreams Be Your Memories - Siobhan Hammond

This is the story of the opportunities to challenge myself and experience an amazing feeling of pride. My amazing parents influenced me, they were ahead of their time, in so many ways.

My father and mother both learned to fly, back in the early 1930s. Both obtained licenses while in their teens. This was back in the early 1930s. My Dad went on to join Aer Lingus, I think in 1936. When he retired over 30 years later, was the longest-serving pilot in Aer Lingus at that time. My mom was one of the first 4 women to get a Pilot Licence, back then in Ireland.

I have so many memories of exciting times. I used to go with my dad to the airport, holding my Dad's hand. We would walk out to the apron and over to a plane and would climb the steps into the belly of the aircraft. I sat there while my Dad would chat with the engineer. Oh, my goodness you would think I would be bored. Not a chance. I was sitting there mind-boggled at the engine and the other parts of the structure. I might have





heard their chat which also intrigued me too. Amazing for a little girl.

The first time I travelled on my own, I was heading to London to see my sister. When the flight was called my parents walked me to the gate and I headed onto the plane. When the aircraft finished boarding, they started asking the passengers traveling to London, please to make themselves known. Now remember I am 10 yrs, and I am thinking why on earth are they saying that when we are all going to London? On the third try, I put up my hand. My father had put me on a flight to Italy.

I lived a busy life. I did gymnastics and sports at school and Irish dancing and ballet outside school. I was always looking for new things. In 1963 I found a new passion that I still have today - Doctor Who. I have been a fan for 61 years. Even my grandchild loved it too. We even went to London for the "Doctor Who experience". It was a mind-blowing time. He got to the pilot the Tardis and helped the Doctor get rid of the baddies too. An amazing day. He got 2 photos using greenscreen showing him hanging out of the TARDIS door while it was flying in space, and



a photo of him piloting the TARDIS. I got to stand there feeling like the cat that caught the cream.

Never miss an opportunity that comes your way, that you would love to do because you are scared of it ...well as long as it is legal. You may regret it years later. Fear is natural and it also helps you concentrate and feeds you adrenaline. Over the years I have been so lucky to be in the right place at the right time.

In 1981 I was asked to join a Dart team. I was over 30 years old and never had a dart in my hand in my whole life. Yes, you are nervous in competition and when you start taking part in competitions with folk from all over Ireland it is more nerves. But it is fun too. I wasn't a natural player. I had to practice a lot to get up to a decent standard. But ended up playing on the Dublin team for a few years and was invited to represent Ireland in London where the top players from all over the world, woo hoo.!

In 1997 went to visit my partner in Croatia who was serving with the International Police Keeping Forces there, after the





ceasefire. We travelled down the coast – a wonderful place and wonderful people. But the devastation was heartbreaking. One day while sitting having a cuppa and looking out across a lake, while chatting, I noticed a white crane as did Paul and we both thought we saw the same thing. We both thought we saw a bungee jumper. I said to Paul. “Quick get me around there, I want to do a bungee jump”.

60 M off a crane over water!!







Through the Arch - Adele Sleator

My Journey into Engineering at Trinity College Dublin

The photo presented shows the inside of the Museum Building at Trinity College Dublin. At the top of the stairs to the right, through the single arch, is the School of Engineering, where I spent four important years of my life. It was lovely to experience the beauty of the stairs, the domed ceiling, and the architecture of the building every day. I never grew tired of it.

On our orientation day in fresher's week, we went through that single arch and into a classroom on the left. The room was full - 120 first-year students, 9 girls and 111 guys. We were all seated on the same level, looking up at a big rostrum/desk at the front of the room. The student union representatives and some senior students shared their experiences and gave advice on how to approach our course successfully. It was a very labour-intensive course with about 29 hours of lectures and practicals each week. Time was also required for



writing up practicals, assignments, and study.

I nearly didn't get there. The expectation all my childhood was that I would go to college. My parents started saving for college fees when I was born. Both my parents and most of their siblings had a third-level education.

I didn't know what I wanted to do. My experience of job options was traditional ones. My career guidance teacher told me I had an aptitude for many options. This did not really help to direct me. So, at college application time, I applied to Trinity College Dublin for a science degree and to University College Dublin for pharmacy, which were familiar options. I got offers for both courses subject to my leaving cert results. As I thought more deeply about my college options, I thought of engineering. A girl the year ahead of me at school had done engineering. However, while I had the results changing courses meant relinquishing the science offer and going on a waiting list for engineering. I also had to make a decision about the pharmacy offer at UCD which I declined. As a result, I had a sweaty few weeks thinking I wouldn't get into





college that year. Much to my relief I got a place in engineering shortly before the academic year. Champagne was opened that night!

It was unusual for girls to do engineering at that time and there was a high number in our year. I think that because it was so unusual girls didn't enter it unless they were very committed or had family experience of it. I heeded the advice we got in freshers' week and worked hard. Just inside the arch leading into the School of Engineering is a noticeboard where the exam results were displayed. We used to crowd around this trying to see our names and how we had done.

With such a labour-intensive course, there was a lot of attrition over the four years. Of the 120 students who started, 80 got their degree. I am pleased to say all nine women got their qualifications.

I am glad that I changed my mind at college entry time and stuck with my decision to change to engineering. It is a great career. I made lifelong friends at college and met many lovely people in my engineering





journey. It opened up many opportunities in my career and life, including travel.







About DCU Age-Friendly

In 2012, DCU became the world's first Age-Friendly University. It developed the Ten Principles of an Age-Friendly University, adopted by over 150 universities globally to form the Age-Friendly University Global Network.

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