

Threading Place

The Murrough Thread

#1 Rita

Q1 Why have you chosen this place?

It's so peaceful and quiet, at times, it's just the beauty of it and it's quite unique in some ways there is a little church beside the river and it gets quite busy now but I used to come here first there were very few people and we were swimming here mainly by ourselves which was lovely and I think it's nice that it's shared by a lot of people now too even if it gets busy. I have chosen this place here in Claravale, beside the Avonmore river, because it is very special to me. When you were asking about a place to be photographed this is one of the places that came to mind very quickly because it means so much to me. I've been swimming here for the last, probably, 39 years. When I moved down to Wicklow it was very important to me to find somewhere to swim and I was introduced to this little spot, as you can see it's quite beautiful. It has beautiful trees, beautiful wildlife and the old bridge is just amazing so that when you are swimming in the river, you can swim right up to the bridge.

Q2. Tell us how you know Finn (the person who introduced us to you)?

I met Finn, when we were working on our pure mile project, that's a group of people who have come together to clear up litter in the area. Finn was out walking in a beautiful area close by, where he is living now, and we just met when he stopped to chat to the group to ask us what we were doing. And we explained what we were doing and Finn was very interested in it and sort of expressed interest in joining our pure mile group. And I guess, having met Finn, and how we connected that way shows how people have different connections throughout their lives.

Q3. Tell us about Margot (the person who you are introducing us to).

I first met Margot about 35 years ago when we were setting up a women's basketball team in Rathdrum. We set up the team, we played in Mockra league and we just felt that everybody enjoyed it so much we wanted to start up a team and we were actually the first team in county Wicklow, the first women's team.

So one of the girls on the team knew a few people in Avoca and Margot was one of them. She was living in Avoca at the time so Margot brought a few other people as well other people as well to the team so that goes back to 1987. I think I've known Margot since then. Margot is probably one of the fastest players on the team. She had a fantastic fast break and she is also just lovely person. And, I've kept in touch with her since we've both retired off the basketball team.

#2 Margot

Q1 Why have you chosen this place?

So this is where I grew up, I grew up at the White Bridge and em, we would have come for walks here regularly and still do and from the Holier Cross or the Miners Cross as it's called, you can see my home place and you can see all the white bridge area and all the mine area. And, so yeah, that's why I chose this place.

Q2. How do you know Rita (the person who introduced us to you)?

Rita was setting up a basketball club in Rathdrum, so some girls that had been at school with me in Arklow said that I played basketball and that's how we got in touch with each other. And, the team formed in that year and I played with that team for over 20 years.

Q3. Tell us about Jimmy (person who you are introducing us to)

When my daughters were small I wanted them to be part of a club, part of a team sport, so they joined Arklow Geraldines Ballymoney. And as they grew older, and became more independent, I got more involved as a volunteer myself and that's em, how I met Jimmy.

He just has that spirit, I suppose that I would admire, that I would hope through my girls involvement with the club that they'll give back, if they even give back a quarter of what he has given, em I just think that would be something that's really worthwhile.

#3 Jimmy

Q1. How do you know Margot (the person who introduced us to you)?

Margot, actually has been chairperson of the ladies section of the club for 5 years and done a wonderful job and brought ladies football to a new standard within the club. Very successful so, that's really where I, how I came to know Margot.

Q2. Why have you chosen this place?

Well this is the club, Arklow Geraldine's really is the club I grew up with, it's Arklow Geraldines Ballymoney too and I am still very much associated with it. Well the club has had an awful lot of connection with it, because since a very young age I joined the club, and I was very, very poor at playing, I wasn't a very good player, I loved the administration so it wasn't long until I went onto the committee of the Arklow Geraldine's club in the 50's. You make great friends, you build great community relationships. Arklow Geraldines Ballymoney is part of my life and I greatly appreciate it and acknowledge the contribution that it has given me personally in enjoyment.

Q3. Tell us about Jackie (the person who you are introducing us to).

We met through the GAA and through our involvement with both our clubs. Jack played for many years, as a young man with Bray emits, and we would have played against them at the time. So from that we built a relationship. We had a great relationship and that's happened over the last 50 years and our friendship has lasted an awful long time and so it means an awful lot to us, but.

#4 Jackie

Q1. How do you know Jimmy (the person who introduced us to you)?

I know Jimmy for half a century, we both represented Wicklow on the Leinster council and we were both very young when we were involved in the GAA. He was south district secretary, I was north district secretary at the time and we progressed to officerships of the county board and the hurling board.

Q2. Why have you chosen this place?

We are here now on the banks of the Dargan and 80 years ago I was born there in the house across the road there. That we have just seen. It is a very special place to me in so far as everybody loves where they originally come from. I grew up in the Bray Emmets club, I was in it at a very early age and I have been a member of the club for too many years than I care to remember, probably the best part of 65 years. The members honoured me by making me the president of the club. I do something everyday for the club. Hopefully we will produce good young people and keep them out of harm's way by playing our games.

Q3. Tell us about Mick (the person who you are introducing us to).

Mick Hagan has been a colleague of mine for a long number of years, he is 10 years younger than I am, but we have soldered together for the cause of Wicklow over the years.

5 Mick

Q1. How do you know Jimmy (the person who introduced us to you)?

A lifetime. Jackie has been a friend of mine for a lifetime. We may have had battles on the field of play but when a match w'd be over it'd be over.

Q2. Why have you chosen this place?

We are now in Kilmacurragh Gardens, it is certainly a landmark in the country. People come here from all sides of the world to visit and a lot of locals use it as a friendly place as well. I would em, come up here about twice a week depending on the weather. I go inside and have a tea or a coffee and maybe a bite to eat. And if the weather is good, I go for a bit of a stroll. It's really heaven up here.

Threading Place

Black Castle Thread

#1 Dan

Q1. Tell us about Donal (the person who you are introducing us to).

Yeah so, my mate Donal, I'd say I've known him probably since my mid twenties, I think. Probably, met through just mutual friends, booze buddies, went to my first yoga class with him, he's just a really good dude. He's a da, now he's married. Just a very open hearted kinda guy, very easy to be around, see's the best in people. He's an all round good guy.

Q2. Why have you chosen this place?

Right so this is the walk out to Bride's Head, out to the Glen turn. This is where I used to visit a lot, kinda weekly, probably with my family, with my mum and my dad and my younger brother. I remember once we were walking back the way and my mum whispered to my dad, she was wearing this fleece, 'oh there's room for one more under here' kinda like indicating I want another kid and then my other brother came along. So, that's a kinda cool memory i'd associate with here. It's just very pretty and calm and nice.

#2 Donal

Q1. How do you know Dan (the person who introduced us to you)?

Suppose I met Dan, hmm 15 years ago now maybe at a friend's house, just having a few drinks. I guess our social lives were pretty wild at the time and we'd all go out and have a great time together and stuff. We also started doing yoga together, we showed up to the class and were about to walk out and actually were walking out and then the yoga teacher came along and whooshed us back into the class and ever since then its been something that we've practised together or separately but it's something that ya know we've always done and reconnected with at different times I suppose. He's probably, he'd be one of my best friends. I had him as a groomsman at my wedding and I guess our connection is pretty strong. We don't probably see each other as much as we used to anymore but that doesn't change the connection, it's always strong and it's always there as it has been pretty much since the start of our friendship I suppose.

Q2. Why have you chosen this place?

So we are here in Devil's Glen. We always came here as a kid and it's always a place I enjoyed coming to as a kid. Em, later it was a while before I came back to Devil's Glen, I would say. I started training with a friend to do a race. We would cycle up to Devil's Glen from Wicklow so we would leave Wicklow, cycle up here, cycle up, if you know Devil's Glen, the big hill up to Devil's Glen which was very very tough and we'd run around, myself and my friend, Ciaran, would go, we'd go every Saturday morning. It was something that we were able to do together and it y'know it brought us really close as friends but it also like, improved our fitness. I guess eh, I suppose it's somewhere where I feel at one with nature. It's a beautiful, beautiful place, you can see waterfalls, a river, you're in a forest. There's lots of different walks that you can do but it reminds me of friendship most of all and being out here with a friend doing something together that we both enjoyed and becoming closer as friends I guess.

Q3. Tell us about Maria (the person who you are introducing us to).

So the connection I'm gonna to introduce you to is Maria Smullen, she's my yoga teacher. I go eh, practice yoga with her, she helps me, I connect with her once a week and she helps me connect with myself I guess through the practice of yoga. I, eh, started doing yoga with her, I can't remember, maybe 5 years ago, em, Dan introduced me to her. He's like, "I'm doing this class, this yoga class. It's really really good you should come along". So I came along, did it, loved it. Eh, I actually hadn't been doing it till the start of this year I took about 6 months off last year, my wife was like 'You should go back and do yoga' and the minute I finished, I went and did a class and came back and was like thank you so much for telling me to go back and do that because it made me feel like I was on top of the world after it and em yeah I have been going every week ever since. Em like I said, she is somebody I connect with once a week. She helps me with connecting with myself and eh she's a pretty cool and lovely person.

#3 Maria

Q1. Why have you chosen this place?

We are on the Murrough in Wicklow, just up from the beach and it's mainly I was reared on the beach, my Mam reared us here. We were reared on the beach. All our summers were there. My children were reared there and my Mam's ashes are there, so that's where we go, that's our home, that's our special place and we have a bench down there and she has her name on it. Feels like home when I'm down there.

Q2. How do you know Donal (the person who introduced us to you)?

I know Donal for a few years now, probably 4 years, maybe more. He came to my yoga class and he brought his friend along and obviously he liked the way I taught. So yeah that's how I know Donal, beautiful, love him, very sound, very gentle, very genuine, yeah that's how I know him.

Q3. Tell us about Becky (the person who you are introducing us to).

So I know Becky, she's my goddaughter. She's beautiful, she's confident, she's strong and you just warm to her so she's just a beautiful beautiful soul. And she yeah, teaches kids, does art, beautiful singer, great musician. Yeah, Becky's beautiful.

#4 Becky

Q1. How do you know Maria (the person who introduced us to you)?

I know Maria because she is my godmother. Or I'll have to call her my fairy godmother. She would be my Mam's best friend and I've known her all my life. She's an amazing woman in my life that I just really look up to and when I grow up I wanna be just like her.

Q2. Tell us about Dan (the person who you are introducing us to).

He is a really cool guy with amazing ideas when it comes to the arts. I know Dan because I've worked with him on multiple occasions in a couple of different productions and around different drama projects around Wicklow, Wicklow town. Em, I think he manages productions really really well and I really look up to him from a drama point of view

Q3. Why have you chosen this place?

Here we are in the 'shpot', what we like to call the 'shpot'. Em, I've heard of other people calling it the 'fairy brook' but I like to call it the secret garden. It's really closed in bubble in Wicklow and I just, I like to spend time in and kinda be really mindful in it. And it's nice because the whole world gets closed off when I'm here and I can just be myself and enjoy nature.

#5 Dan

Q1. How do you know Becky (the person who introduced us to you)?

I met Becky about 12 years ago, I was casting a play 'The Death of Humpty Dumpty', very powerful Northern Ireland play and Becky came to audition for the part, for one of the parts, and I liked what I saw and I cast her in the part and golly am I delighted. She is one of the finest actresses I've ever had the pleasure to direct, she is what I would regard as a director's dream.

Q2. Why have you chosen this place?

Ennereilly beach is where I'm standing today making this recording, it's a small beach between Brittas Bay and Arklow. It's a place where I like to walk and let the world take over my mind, let my mind rush out to see as I think about characters I've played in the past or perhaps a character that I have just been cast in a play. If I'm directing a play I like to bring the script down, sit on the rocks at the end of the beach, read the script from start to finish and imagine what these different characters are going to be portrayed as when they hit the stage. It gives me great ideas. I'm here on my own, and I can, when I'm doing lines when I'm in a part, I can shout, I can roar, because it's a beautiful quiet beach. It is very, very beautiful. The sea comes straight up to the sand, you can sit and watch the waves coming in and you can let your mind run absolutely riot. But I think about my life as well, my days gone by, the mistakes I've made, the good times I've had. It's all about life isn't it and this beach brings life into me and hopefully I bring life into this beach.

Threading Place

Barrow Green Thread

#1 Ian

Q1. Tell us about Geraldine (the person who you are introducing us to).

Well I'm introducing you to Geraldine Kavanagh, who is a very good friend of mine for a number of years. I actually can't remember how long it is. We have known each other for many years. We have very similar interests in music in nature and art and our work is somewhat similar as well.

Q2. Why have you chosen this place?

Eh, Tomnafinnoge is a very special place for me. I would come here walking regularly and every time I'm here I think about how fortunate we are that this woodland is still here because there was a time that this whole area was supposed to be felled and destroyed and knocked down and it took a huge amount of effort and people coming together to ensure that this woodland would stay here stay here for the future generations, and they succeeded in that and it always makes me quite happy to know that they did.

#2 Geraldine

Q1. How do you know Ian (the person who introduced us to you)?

So I've known Ian Davis for I'd say almost 30 years. There was a proposal to cut a big track on either side of the motorway there to get rid of an ancient oak forest, and so many many people tried to do something about that and tried to negotiate a different way of the road passing through the Glen of the Downs, and the first time I met Ian was actually there, and like many of us he was you know trying to think of what can we do; how can we protect this beautiful old oak forest and these beautiful trees. So, we have been friends ever since.

I see the effect of his work everywhere I go in Wicklow, I could be driving on any road and know that is a pure mile just by the way that people have tended to that piece of road; the way there is no litter; the way local maybe heritage or different aspects of that place have been highlighted; or I might be driving by a gate and there'll be a name of the field on gate, and so there's marks of Ian's work everywhere you go in Wicklow.

He is such a people person as well, he knows pretty much every person who has ever worked on the pure mile, remembers their name and he knows all the townlands. He absolutely loves the county and knows every part of it and his work is probably the most important thing that has happened to the county. I don't know how long he has been doing it now, for at least 10 years, but he has really left his mark everywhere. I know it's the communities that do the work but Ian is the person who started it all off and who encourages them and guides them.

Q2. Tell us about Denis (the person who you are introducing us to).

I can't exactly remember when I met Denis Healy but I've known him again for a long time. He's probably one of the pioneers of organic farming in Ireland. And eh, Denis has continued all those decades producing really beautiful food on his organic farm with no chemicals and em yeah one of the people who is responsible for the new movement all across the country and supplying the best restaurants and supplying all the farmers markets and then giving people like me the opportunity to work on his farm as well.

He's incredibly passionate about everything, he's so passionate about poetry and music and food and wine and people. He has a huge heart and loves life and yeah he's a really passionate person and again he has left his mark by encouraging many generations of organic farmers here and all over the world because people from the four corners of the world have come to work on his organic farms.

And yeah, he is one of the most amazing people I've met in my life.

Q3. Why have you chosen this place?

So the place that I chose for the project is Croaghanmoira. It's called Croaghanmoira on the map now. I didn't know it was called for a long time 'cos we just called it, at home, we called it 'brown hill' and other people would call it 'brown mountain' and 'brown hill'. It's one of my favourite places because it's like a beacon to me, em, wherever I am. If I travel somewhere to another county, when I'm coming home I see that mountain and then I know that I am near home.

You can see it changing throughout the year, so in the winter time it will be brown because the heather would dye back and turn brown and then in the springtime and early summer all the bracken comes up and it turns green. And then, the most amazing time is August because the heather changes the colour of the mountain and I always think it is amazing that all those tiny flowers change the colour of a mountain. They are tiny little purple flowers and then the whole mountain just changes colour. And that's my favourite time of year to go up here as well, is because the heather is out and it's nice to eat and it's nice to make drinks out of. And also the wild blueberries are available at that time of year. We call the blueberries 'frockens' and that means it's something that comes out of the heather or goes out of the heather, 'cos 'freachan' or 'freach' in Irish is 'heather'. So, we'd come up here to pick wild blueberries or 'frockens' and that's a real special time of year because it's past the middle of the summer and it's kinda peaceful up here and maybe your harder work is done and you're just kinda relaxing.

A lovely place to just lie down in the heather and have a sleep and I really like it at that time of year. I've been up here in all weathers I've been up here in the snow, been here in the wind, hail, rain, sun and it's always different. And, I love the first few times when I came up here when I was younger I felt that I could really understand where I live. When you live somewhere you can't really see it but I felt when I went up to the top of the mountain I could see the whole of County Wicklow laid out like a kind of patchwork. When you are driving around Wicklow you are up and down hills constantly but when you are on top of the mountain with the 360 degree view then you understand the shape of the place; the sea view and the mountains, how all the mountains fit together, how you get from one place to another.

And, also the mountain kind of marked the boundary of what was familiar to me when I was growing up. So when I was quite small I saw that as the boundary to the world that I knew or the familiar world and I always remember as I got older I really wanted to go over there. I want to go to another place 'cos this is the boundary where I live. So it's a mountain that has been part of my life. I've walked up here hundreds of times with different people. I've walked up here with my children when they were small, carried them when they were babies. I've walked up here with my parents, you know some of my parents and some people I know who I would've walked with can no longer walk up here. So, that's, you know, I appreciate the times where I was able to walk up here with people and it also made me realise you know, you do things with people and then for one reason or another there'll be a time where you won't be able to do that again.

There's a lot to say about the mountain, I could talk about it for hours, and I've loads of memories of coming up here and probably something that I have seen almost everyday of my life from one angle or another. And, in some of the houses I've lived in I've been able to see it out the window so it's just it probably represents home for me more than any other place. It represents Wicklow for me I'd say.

#3 Denis

Q3. Why have you chosen this place?

I've been here for about 40 years. We were moving out, we wanted to move to the country and grow our own food and all that kind of stuff. So, we found this place and I remember saying to my young son you're going to end up living here because it struck me that it was a very beautiful place. and we were very lucky. And, we just gradually gradually just started to grow some vegetables and expand it a little bit and then we realised there was a market for the vegetables in Dublin. So, we went that way and we've been doing it ever since and we love doing it. I just love doing it. I love the place.

Q1. How do you know Geraldine (the person who introduced us to you)?

Geraldine came here years ago, she worked here on the farm growing vegetables for us and her sister as well. We've kept up contact with Geraldine 'cos she also did markets in Brook Lodge and different places and she's an amazing character and she doesn't live a million miles away from us. Eh, Geraldine is doing all this wild stuff, collecting all this wild stuff and I'm very interested in doing that as well. So we collect wild mushrooms and do all of that stuff as well, it's nice. So, nice connections.

Q2. Tell us about Pat (the person who you are introducing us to).

Pat is a good friend who lives near Baltinglass and he's a man who can do everything, can do electrical stuff, plumbing stuff, he's a genius and he's also very nice. And, so we know him for years doing watering systems in our tunnels, taking us out of holes basically. And, recently he's after getting jeep off my partner Eka, and doing it up and

bringing it to Ukraine which, is phenomenal when you think about it and, so it's now driving around Ukraine doing medical supplies and stuff like this. So, Pat is an amazing man, a really amazing man.

#4 Pat

Q1. How do you know Denis (the person who introduced us to you)?

Well I know Denis for quite a few years, I met him maybe 25 maybe 30 years ago. I probably would've fixed a water pump at his farm, at his organic farm, outside of Kiltegan. I suppose what struck me about Denis was his love of people and his love of the earth. That really stuck, y'know how he went about things, y'know growing vegetables without any weedkiller, natural what do you call that stuff, natural fertiliser, doing stuff organically, that really impressed me and it kind of stuck with me about him. So em, he's got quite a unique place, started out with a lovely old farmhouse, made it into a fantastic home and grew on from there, he's now got a good business, but bigger than all that as well he's Denis, he's just Denis, a real nice human being.

Q2. Why have you chosen this place?

Yea, so we are at my house just outside of Baltinglass, it's a small holding, couple of bedrooms, there's a couple of sheds around the yard, one of them is my workshop where I make some equipment for customers and make ice baths and hot tubs for injury recovery clinics, for recovery centres. We have, the Limerick team uses one of our machines and Kerry is using one of our machines but the thing I like the most about the place is that, we're em slowly but surely trying to get it off the grid. We've planted 600 eucalyptus trees there in, now 10 years and the first of them, now ready for harvesting. So, they'll get us through next Winter.

Yeah so we've 8 acres of land here at this small holding and when we slow down a bit more, we're working too much a bit now, but when we slow down a bit more, by the time we get to there, in 6 or 7 or 8 years time, we want to have the place virtually off the grid where electricity will be run off solar panels from the front of the house and the eucalyptus trees will be in better shape and we'll have another 600 put in and, they'll be ready by then. We are going to put in our own hot tub and ice bath, so looking forward to having that done in the next week or two and that's it. There's a lovely quiet area at the top of the garden and that's about the pleasantries of living in this part of Wicklow.