

'MY EYE PATCH'

'When I was born I had two lovely blue eyes, however when I was two years old my mammy took me to an optician, and to her surprise he told her that I had a squint in my right eye. I had to wear a patch on my left eye for an hour every day to correct my squint. At first I didn't like wearing the patch because it was sticky and it made my eye itchy, however I soon got used to it. The patch made my eye stronger and after wearing it for approximately 3 years I was told I didn't have to wear it anymore. I no longer have a squint so I'm glad I wore my patch.'

Story written by Anna Atcheson from Carnlough and member of Carnlough Youth Club

'SPRINGTIME - MY GRANDA'S GREYHOUND'

'My Granda's greyhound was the only greyhound bitch to win the Irish Derby and the English Oaks ever in the history of greyhound racing. Springtime, my Granda's greyhound ran the fastest time ever in the final of the Derby; he finished the race in 30.00 seconds. My Granda was so proud of his achievement, as this was the biggest greyhound race to win. Granda has raced greyhounds for around 30 years and this was his proudest moment.'

Story written by Courtney Austin from Carnlough and member of Carnlough Youth Club

'MY GREAT GRANDFATHER'S WAR HELMET'

'This helmet belonged to my great grandfather, Daniel Thompson. He joined the army in February 1912, when he was a 17 year old fishmongers assistant in Belfast. He first enlisted in the 4th Battalion, Royal Irish Rifles, and then he transferred to the 5th Dragoon Guards on the 5th October 1912. He was wounded at the battle of Frezenberg Ridge (the first time gas was used in WWI) at Ypres on the 13th May 1915 and was discharged on the 16th January 1916. He had the 1914 Star, Victory Medal and Silver War Badge.

His four brothers, James, Charles, Joseph and Patrick, all served in the Army during WWI. James was killed in France on the 24th October 1914, the others all survived'.

Story by Niamh Thompson from Carnlough and member of Carnlough Youth Club

'A SPECIAL GIFT: MY BABY BRACELET'

'I was born on 9 November 2002 and was given this baby bracelet by my godfather, John, for my christening. John bought the bracelet in Holland where he lives. He travelled over to Ireland for the christening and stayed with us for two weeks during his visit. John is my father's school friend and we don't see him very often, although we sometimes speak on the phone. The last time we saw John was two years ago. I treasure this baby bracelet because it reminds me of him.'

Story written by Nisha Mellon from Carnlough and member of Carnlough Youth Club





MY TREASURE

'BEER GLASS FROM GERMANY'

'I studied in Augsburg, Germany when I was 20 years old as part of an Erasmus University foreign exchange programme. There were many Erasmus students from all over such as Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, France, Finland, and US studying there that year too. We all became good friends very quickly and spent a great year together partying, visiting different places and learning about other cultures, traditions and languages. On one of our nights out, at a beer festival, I picked up this beer glass and have kept it as a reminder of that exciting year which I will always fondly remember.'

Story written by Triona White Hamilton from County Donegal and facilitator on the My Treasure project

'BELL FROM THE SHIP (PUB), GREEN STREET GREEN, KENT'

'I grew up living above a country pub called 'The Ship' in a hamlet called Green Street Green in Kent. My grandparents, and then my parents, owned the pub. Five minutes before closing time Grandad would ring this bell and call out in his loudest voice "Last orders gentlemen please! Last orders"! At the actual closing time, he would ring the bell again and call out "Time gentlemen please! Time!" which was the sign for my Mum and Dad to put a cloth over the beer pumps. He did this right up until he died at the age of 86.'

Story written by Mick Turner, originally from Kent, now living in Articlave and member of Causeway Yarnspinners

'MY DAD'S PIGEON TIN'

'This is my treasure, look at the workmanship, think of the value. This belonged to my Dad. His passion was his racing pigeons. Every day they would be let out to fly around and when it came to call them back in, he would put some pigeon food in this tin and rattle it, calling out "Come on, come on, come on!". It was particularly important on race days, when getting the pigeon into the loft quickly could mean the difference between winning and losing. So this tin is something he had in his hand virtually every single day, which is why I choose this as 'My Treasure' and not the prestigious "Hall of Fame" award that one of his pigeons won.'

Story written by John Hamilton, Portstewart

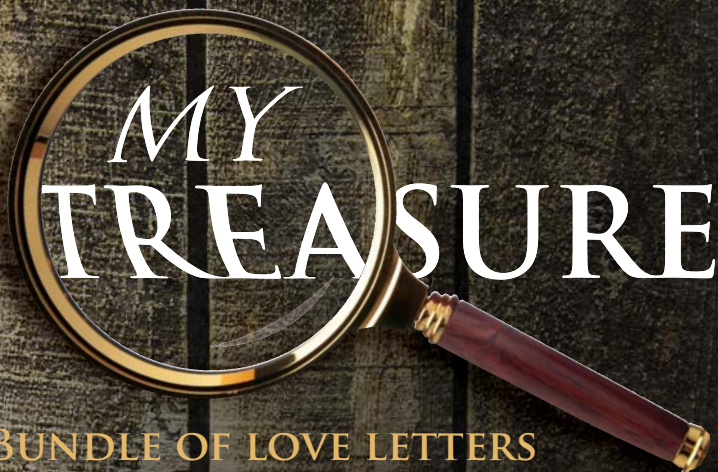


'GUEST HAND TOWEL'

'This guest hand towel was embroidered by my Granny Bruce for her son (Daddy) when he married Mammy in June 1948. The embroidered letter 'B' represents our family name 'Bruce'. Granny did piece work embroidery, mainly on handkerchiefs for a company in Newtownards. Every Friday she used to go into Newtownards to deliver what she had embroidered and to pick up a new batch. She did not have electricity and always sat on the sofa by the window to sew. She mostly did plain white very fine embroidery.'

Story written by Christine Turner (née Bruce) from Bready and member of Causeway Yarnspinners





'BUNDLE OF LOVE LETTERS FROM MY FIRST HUSBAND'

'Charlie was my first husband. When we were young I used to admire him at the chéiles. However, when I was 16, he went to work in Beauley, in the County of Inverness-shire, Scotland. While there he wrote to me several times and it was only through his letters that I realised he liked me too. I've kept his letters tied up in ribbons ever since.'

He didn't stay in Scotland too long as he missed me and came home. We got married when I was 23 and we were married for 17 and a half years. Charlie died 28 years ago. I am remarried now 16 years and my current husband comes to Charlie's grave with me every year on Cemetery Sunday.'

Story written by Roisín Marron from Cargan and member of Glenravel Young at Heart

'HAND-TINTED FRAMED PHOTO OF MY MOTHER ON THE FARM'

'This photograph of my mother was probably taken in the 1940s. My mother was called Lena McKeown and she met my father when they both worked and lodged in McCullough's in Craigywarren. She was from the Braid and my father was from Gortnageeragh. When they married they ran a farm together. You can see a horse and cart in the background of the photo of my mother. I have many memories of work on the farm such as my father out sowing seeds and the donkey pulling the harrow while potatoes were dropped in the drills. This photograph sits on the windowsill in my bedroom at home and reminds me of those days.'

Story written by Mary O'Neill from Martinstown and member of Glenravel Young at Heart

'MY FATHER'S CHRISTENING GOWN'

'On Sunday 21st February 1915, at 1.00am, my father was born. A few hours later, his aunt Ann-Jane dressed him in his ready and waiting christening robe. She then wrapped him tightly in her plaid shawl, battled through a snow-blowing from Cargan Rock to St Mary's Church in Glenravel to have him christened at the 8.00am Mass, John Gerard Mc Mullan.'

My granny brought the christening robe from Glasgow where she had lived and worked for several years. It's not known if it was new or second-hand, as granny loved a bargain and a "good thing". This beautiful treasure is the ornate, handy-work of dear knows whom, but to me it is a very personal link with my most precious father.'

Story written by Mary McCarthy from Newtowncrommelin and member of Glenravel Young at Heart

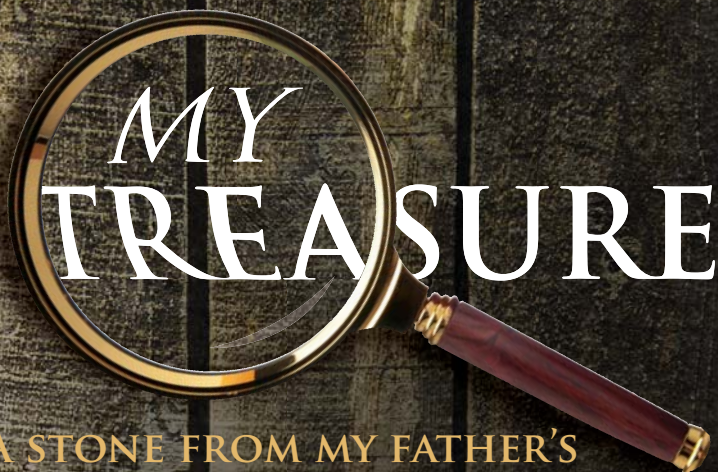


'A PRIZE WINNING ESSAY ON MY SUMMER HOLIDAYS'

'I recently found this old book tucked away in a cupboard. The book is covered in paper to protect it from damage. I won it in an Irish Weekly newspaper essay competition when I was about 15 years old. The essay I wrote was about my summer holidays and I was delighted at the time to receive this book as a competition prize. The book is called *Three Daughters of the United Kingdom* and is about a group of girls in a boarding school. I recently read the story again and still found it to be quite interesting.'

Story written by Mary Catherine McNeilly from Cargan and member of Glenravel Young at Heart





'A STONE FROM MY FATHER'S CHILDHOOD HOME IN LISNASKEA, CO. FERMANAGH'

'My father Tom died on 26th May 2008. When he was ill, he told us stories about his youth and how hard life was back then. We investigated our family tree and tried to find his mother's grave in Donagh, Co. Fermanagh, however we have still not found the plot, even to this day. My father told us his mother died when he was only 18. He remembered carrying her coffin up to the house with his twin brother Phil and dressing her for her funeral. We still have a photo of her in the house standing at the half door. The walls of the house he grew up in still remain today and I have kept one of the stones as a reminder of my family's past.'

Story written by Marian Maguire from Cargan and member of Glenravel Young at Heart

'MY TEDDY'

'Teddy is almost 60 years old. He came from Germany, a gift from my eldest brother, Billy Martin. I was "the wee late yin" in the family so I was very spoilt! Billy was in the RAF and while I was at Guy's Primary School in Ballymena I received presents from far flung places.

Other gifts have gone now but the battered old Teddy with one ear is still here. He is a link to family members now no longer with me. I can even see the stitches my late mother put into his feet to stop sawdust escaping.

When I look at Teddy I am taken back in time, connected to happy childhood days when I myself felt treasured.'

Story written by Liz Weir, storyteller from Cushendall, Ballymena

'ARCHIE'S F.A.P. HAT'

'This is my treasure – a "tin hat" from the 1940s. Both my brothers, Archie and Paddy were involved in the Civic Defence in Belfast during World War II. Archie was in the FIRST AID PARTY or F.A.P as it was then know. Archie loved his tin hat; he spent hours polishing it until it shone. Unfortunately it would also shine brightly during an air raid so he was ordered to paint it blackboard black! During an air raid, the Antrim Road in Belfast was devastated. Doctor McSorley's home, who was a Specialist in the Mater Hospital, was severely damaged. The house fell down around his wife who hid under a stout kitchen table. Archie's party dug her out alive.'

Story written by John Charles Duffin from Cargan and member of Glenravel Young at Heart

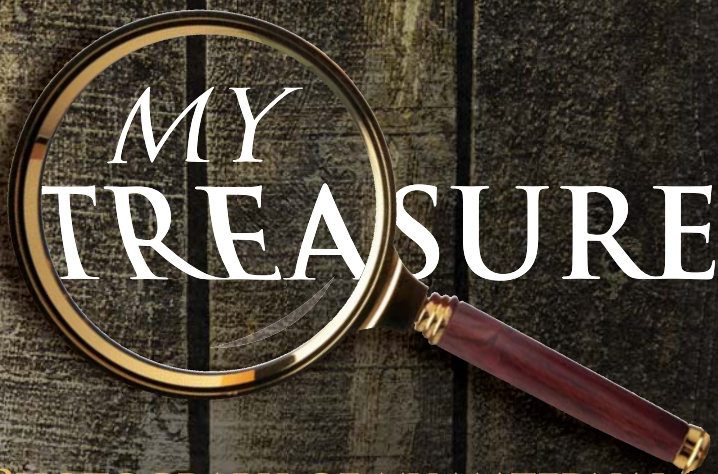


'LEATHER HANDBAG MADE BY MY UNCLE JAMES'

'There is a great tradition of trades and craftsmen in my family. Uncle James was a cobbler but he was also very talented at leather work. The Crawford Brothers in Coleraine supplied him with his leather. James made my first pair of sandals but he also made a beautiful handbag for his first cousin Maureen for her wedding day. Her initials are inscribed into the back of the bag. As the bag was made during the War, leather was scarce so James used an old worn belt to finish it and to create the strap. I like this object because it shows the creative streak in our family, we're wile handy.'

Story written by Anna McIlhatton from Cargan and member of Glenravel Young at Heart





'PHOTOGRAPH OF MY MATERNAL GRANDMOTHER, LOUISE DUBUC, IN ORIGINAL FRAME, 1920s'

'This photograph was given to me by my mother, in France, about ten years ago. It is the only photo of my grandmother Louise Dubuc existing today and I believe she was a very special woman because of her strength, values, and creativity. I like to think I take a wee bit after her. Louise was one of 18 children. She left school at 14, trained as a cook, but left service in 1922 when she got married. She brought up five children having to cope with a difficult husband. Just before the War she decided that enough was enough and kicked him out. She was a woman ahead of her time and I admire her for it.'

Story written by Dominique Vanden Broeck, originally from France, now living in Ballymena and member of Ballymena Friendship Club

'PHOTOGRAPHS OF MY DAUGHTER EVA'

'The first photo was taken two months after Eva was born. She was a very calm and quiet child. The second photo shows my husband Dusan, my daughter and I at my cousin's wedding in a small village in Slovakia called Krásno. At this wedding, Eva lost her first milk tooth. In the last photo she is two and a half years old and we are dancing at my father's 50th birthday party. She likes singing and dancing and music in general therefore she enjoyed the party. Now she is 17 years old and studying Travel and Tourism at the Farm Lodge, Northern Regional College in Ballymena.'

Story written by Eva Mydlova from Slovakia, now living in Ballymena and member of Ballymena Friendship Club

'MY CHILDHOOD PHOTOGRAPH'

'This photograph, taken in 1965, shows my father, brother and I, the smaller of the two boys, sitting on the hood of a famous Tatra car in the Dukla Pass in Eastern Slovakia. The Dukla Pass was the scene of a bitter battle between Nazi Germany and the Red Army of the Soviet Union during World War II. On the day this photo was taken, we were celebrating 20 years since the end of the War. The car in the photograph is interesting as it was used as a Presidential car after the War. When I look at this photo, I think about all the bad things caused by the War but yet I treasure this snap shot from my childhood.'

Story written by Igor Miskik from Slovakia, now living in Ballymena and member of Ballymena Friendship Club



'MY MEMORY BOOK'

'I received this memory book, or scrapbook, in the post for my 40th birthday. It was made by my cousin's wife, Katrina Black. When I look through it, I think of her sitting in her special craft shed in the garden in January, putting this book together for me. I treasure it because of the time and effort she put into collecting the photos and presenting them in such a lovely way and because the photos bring back memories of special family times. It is something that has become a treasure for me very quickly.'

Story written by Lynn Black, Ballymena





'MY SPECIAL GIFT – A SILK PAINTING'

'My friend Diana gave me this silk painting in the late 1970s. We met when I went to teach French in Drumfries, Scotland in 1976. She taught in the classroom next to mine. We became firm friends and when Diana visited friends from University in Hong Kong, she brought me back this painting, as she knew I liked birds. When I moved to West Africa in 1982 where I lived for 30 years, Diana wrote to me, sending birthday, Easter and Christmas cards every year. I retired back to the UK in 2012, and was able to visit Diana before she died in July of that year. What a faithful friend she proved to be.'

Story written by Margaret Bohoussou (nee Linton) from Frosses Road, Cloughmills and member of Ballymena Friendship Club

'MY TEDDY, ANGELINA'

'My treasured object is my teddy Angelina. My mum gave me Angelina a year and a half ago because I was a good girl. I love watching Angelina on the TV. She dances and she is kind. I like her because she is a mouse and has lovely clothes. Angelina goes everywhere with me, she comes to school and the shops with me, she even sleeps with me every night in my bed. If she didn't sleep with me I'd get nightmares. We will always be BFF (Best Friends Forever).'

Story written by Natalia Miscikova from Slovakia and member of Ballymena Friendship Club

'BLACK MOTHER AND CHILD STATUETTE'

'My mother, a USA resident, gave this to me seven years ago after meeting my third son. It is a visual reminder of a prophetic calling to motherhood for me. On some days I see it as a challenge and I want to cover it up so I don't have to see the standard I am missing. But I treasure it because it suggests how my mum sees me: a successful, loving, elegant mum who has well turned out children – with no food round the mouth, or sick down the clothes! That's encouraging.'

Story written by Raquel McKee from Jamaica



'MY COTTON KURTHA'

'When I left India to move to Europe, I wanted to bring a piece of India with me to remind me of my culture. The cotton Kurtha symbolizes peace and represents both historic and modern India. In 1921, Gandhi launched the movement for all Indians to spin their own cloth or purchase only hand-spun Indian cloth. This 'cottage' industry became a staple of the country's rural economy. There is still great diversity in the traditions and methods used to produce Indian cotton today. Weavers often work in close family structures where ancient skills are passed down from generation to generation. There is great pride in the rich history surrounding even the most simple cotton fabric.'

Story written by Steve Lazars from India currently living in Ahoghill





'ROOTED IN THE SAME VALUES'

'It's traditional when a child is born that you take along a gift. I'm a functional gift giver, so when our second daughter was born I took my wife, Doreen, a deep fat fryer. She never lets me forget it to this day. Many years later I found this branch when I was out trimming the hedge. I gifted it to her and I got that same look as when I gave her the deep fat fryer. But when I explained the symbolism of it, she really got the point. These are from the same tree, at the time I couldn't pull them apart. I thought of the two of us and how when you live your life rooted in the same values, against all troubles, a closeness happens between two branches. There is nothing natural which could break this bond.'

Story written by Bert Richie from Coleraine and member of Causeway Friendship Club

'MY GRANDFATHER AND HIS BELT BUCKLES'

'This is a belt buckle that grandfather wore. He always wore a belt buckle in every memory I have of him, I think he had four. I remember his joy of life and him singing on a pew. I remember the way his voice would reverberate through the wood into my back. It was almost like getting a massage from his beautiful baritone voice. He was a preacher, and my love of theology, religion and God comes from him. Whenever I look at the belt buckle and I see the ship sailing on the sea, I remember him.'

Story written by Chai Green originally from the United States, living in Castlerock and member of Causeway Friendship Club

'THE FAMILY RING'

'My husband's grandmother and grandfather met at university. His grandfather had this car, a Model T Ford, that he really loved. He called it Aloysius. He fell in love with this lady. He was from Texas, she was from Tennessee. He sold the car and bought this ring. He went up to Tennessee and proposed to her and she accepted.'

Chai and I also met at the same university. He asked me to marry him and gave me this same ring. This time he was from Tennessee and I was from Texas.'

Story written by Shelby Green originally from the United States and member of Causeway Friendship Club

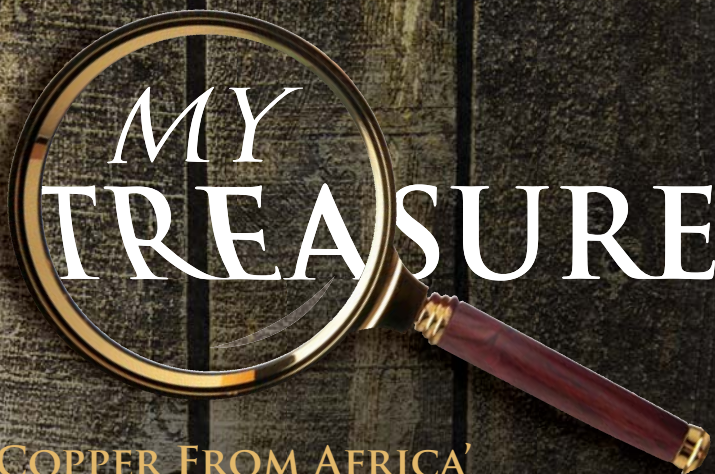


'IRISH SOCIETY BEAKER'

'I went to the Irish Society School in Coleraine. On the Queen's Coronation in 1953, The Honourable The Irish Society presented the pupils of the school with a Coronation beaker and a mug. I still have this beaker, though there is a chip out of it. Whenever I got it, I was very proud to have got one. We got a wee folder with it and inside it said "Schooldays are happy days". They were for me, I liked Primary School.'

Story written by Trevor Adams from Coleraine and member of Age Concern (Coleraine)





'COPPER FROM AFRICA'

'I was thirty years in Africa, I got married out there. First in Ndola in what was then Northern Rhodesia and then in Salisbury in Southern Rhodesia. It has all changed now. Salisbury is now Harare and these countries are now Zambia and Zimbabwe. Copper mining was very important. At one time copper was making so much money that all the workers got double pay. Copper pictures like this were made there from the local copper.'

I brought a lot home with me, but I gave a lot away. I loved it in Africa, but when Zimbabwe got its independence, we couldn't take Mugabe's Government and left in 1986.'

Story written by Doreen Chipperfield from Coleraine and member of Age Concern (Coleraine)



'A BOTTLE FROM MY WEDDING DAY'

'When I got married back in 1972 our honeymoon was in the Pig and Chicken in Templepatrick. This bottle was on the table when we sat down to our meal. I always felt that I wanted to keep it. I made it into a table lamp. It had a cream coloured shade. It is no longer a lamp, but forty years later I still have the bottle.'

Story written by Helen Somerville from Coleraine and member of Age Concern (Coleraine)

THEIR GRANDFATHER'S STORY'

'This book was created by my grandchildren about their grandfather, my husband. It tells the story of his adventures in the 8th Army. He was in the landings in Alexandria with Montgomery. The boat he was in was sinking and he was rescued by the Navy. I think it is great that the children know about their grandfather.'

Story written by Jean Williamson from Coleraine and member of Age Concern (Coleraine)



'A TORTOISE LIKE NO-ONE ELSE'S'

'I got this toy as a birthday present in 1950 when I was three years old. I was all excited because no-one else had one like it. It was given to me by a friend of my mother, who worked in a shop in Coleraine, but I think she must have got this in Belfast. Everyone else was envious, so I had to keep an eye out.'

Story written by Pamela Hutchinson from Coleraine and member of Age Concern (Coleraine)

