

The day of the visit to the graveyard came on possibly the worst day of the year. It was a bleak winter morning with the heavens well and truly open. The rain was intense and I was not looking forward to stepping out of my car into the graveyard. As expected, when I did step out I got extremely wet. I started walking solemnly to the graveyard where both my Granddads lay, still and peaceful.

As I walked through the entrance gates I could see the mass of graves. I could see that the graveyard was getting fuller by the day. Death was lying all around me. At the entrance I could see graves dating from 1885. This automatically made me think of what life must have been like. It made me think how much technology has changed but how little the human view of death has changed. These old graves were no different to those of modern day. They still tried to fit the person's whole life into one small sentence.

I had visited this very graveyard several times. I knew the exact position of both grandfathers' graves and so the walk did not seem far even in the rain.

I was alone in the cemetery, which helped focus my thoughts towards the living and the dead. It made me think that this was a good comparison between the numbers living in the world and the number of people that have died in this small town.

I arrived at my first grandfathers grave aisle, thinking about respect for the dead. I found it amazing how we respect people more when they are dead than when they are alive. I cannot understand this because people who are alive will see your respect and appreciate it. At the point where I reached the aisle I automatically walked down the centre of the aisle being careful not to step on one of the graves. Confusion set in when I started to think about why I did this. I was taught from a relatively young age not to walk over graves. Only now when I was really thinking about it did I wonder why I was doing so. There was nobody around to judge me and my grandfather was not going to say a lot about it. But I soon came to the conclusion that it just was done and therefore I would do the same.

I stepped forward standing directly in the middle of the aisle staring at the solemn grave of my ancestor. It read:

'Beloved Husband

Father and Grandfather

Called to rest on

16th September 1984

Aged 61 Years

Peace Perfect Peace'

As I read through this small note of his life I thought to myself how much I would have loved to have met him. The stories I heard were great but I was unfortunately born one year too late.

As I was wandering through the graveyard I was thinking about how the graves represent life. A new grave is well presented, polished and colourful. An old grave is dull, dark left for dead and sometimes even broken. This brought me on to think that the only reason we have gravestones is so the living do not forget the dead. It

made me think that having a gravestone makes the living think about you in your past state and not your current one, which is decaying and broken. This is not the way a human being wants to remember their loved ones.

I then strolled over to the section of the graveyard for children. As I was doing this I asked myself that if as we show so much respect to the dead and their gravestones why do we so frequently refer to the place as a yard. This word to me seems a very informal word and a grave garden would seem to be a much better word.

I reached the childrens section feeling slightly more bereaved. I first came across the grave of a young girl called Christine Philipa Wall. Her gravestone read:

'She loved simple joys
She loved simple pleasures
Our hearts remember
And always treasure'

This reminded me to not forget about the simple joys of life. For example, the human body. I feel this is the most underestimated object in the world. People do not think of the human body as a great instrument. The human being sees that everybody has a body but they do not see how great it is. Even the greatest scientists today could not make a human body with all the great features such as the limbs, which are all unique. I think it is underestimated because the human body and mind can achieve almost anything if the person really puts his or hers mind to it.

I walked passed many graves but one in particular caught my eye. It was the grave of a young man named Christopher Michael Campbe ll. He died tragically aged 17. The word tragically caught my eye and immediately made me think how. I thought that the most likely reason for his death would have been a car accident. He may have been driving at the time. I will never know.

Another grave caught my attention as it had a photograph on the gravestone. It was a picture of Martin John O' Shea. In the photograph the young boy had no hair. This made me think that it was some kind of cancer that had killed him. His grave said:

A little voice is hushed
And

A little angel is born
All our love mummy, daddy and family

The words mummy and daddy brought a tear to my eye as these words are usually only heard by the voice of a young child.

Seeing graves like this made me think of how it must have been for the parents when he was taken into the arms of god. You cannot possibly think this unless it happens to you.

I looked towards a large grave, which contained three bodies inside. One died at the age of 93, another at 87 but the third was a mere 29 years old. This showed

me that death shows no pattern and the human being can die at any stage of life. There are no guarantees to life. It made me think that the human will never be infallible and it made me think that I too will join the long list of people that have died in the world. I too will have a gravestone. And I too will have my whole life squeezed onto a small piece of stone.