

Love reading from cover to cover.

The Pleasures of Reading

22/01/09

Once upon a time there was a lonely writer from Copenhagen whose stories were full of tragedy.

The Danes hailed their storyteller Hans Christian Anderson as the genius creator of fairy tales and so did I and that's how my reading days started along with Grimm Fairy Tales also What Kathy did, Little Women Heidi, Black Beauty, Great Expectations Lorna Doone, Wuthering Heights. Finding time for reading is one of the great pleasures of life whether it was under the bedclothes with a flash lamp when I was young in the country before the coming of the electricity, or in the basket of my bicycle as I cycled to school, during my coffee break in my working years, and now in my later years when sheltering from the sun and the heat in the Summer or from the rain and the wind that we have had of late.

Finding a book that is both a pleasure to read but also stimulating is one of the minor challenges to my life, as the artfully constructed lists of reading in the featured pages of newspapers often seem to me to be far removed from the reality of choosing a pleasurable read.

So very often I take my reading from listening to book club members choices in the book clubs set up by the library or on radio and tv. Reading anything, let alone reading for pleasure sometimes is not easy Especially when people who do not read themselves will say to me "what is the point of reading books when one can access all the entertainment and information you want from the computer"

However I believe that books can change your life by engaging you in mind and body making one happier and contented the way tapping away at a computer never could long after computer games are past and gone it is my opinion that books will still around helping us to unwind because reading is such a relaxing way to unwind and can make us healthier and happier in every way.

My choice of reading can often be a random choice like something on display in the library that catches my eye or now and then it could a themed approach as I did last Summer with the embracing of old age as a major theme by various authors.

What I found particularly fascinating is that authors seem to have a better grasp of complexities and opportunities of later life than is ever portrayed in media.

Themes have been developed further to include elder abuse as exemplified in the witty and touching "A short history of tractors in the Ukraine" by Maria Lewinska.

A good read and beneath the humour it rings through for adult children, who are trying to deal with each other and the parent who doesn't wish for their input when things go wrong in later life. Another great read Amy Tan's "The Bonesetter's Daughter."

It suddenly dawns on me that my pleasure of reading is going full circle from fairytales to dealing with ageing.

Right now I have enjoyed reading "The Girl in the Red Coat" and The Story of Ann Frank dealing with the Jewish community.

Days we Remember by Deirdre Purcell; momentous events in Irish life in the 60s 70s and 80s.

Last Saturday in the height of a storm I lit the fire pulled the curtains and embarked on Dervla Murphys "The Island That Dared" Journeys in Cuba with her daughter and 3 granddaughters.

I am looking forward to travelling to Cuba from my armchair and also building a picture of a people struggling to retain their identity and island culture against a rich and powerful neighbour,

This book is both a pleasure and a stimulating read and covers my former theme on the embracing of old age as this lady is still travelling and writing approaching her eighties.

So I hope I qualify as a constant reader in this year of the constant reader.

To sum up lets finish with a quote from St Boneventure

Come let us give a little time to folly and even in a melancholy day let's find time for an hour of pleasure.

What greater pleasure is there than reading.