

Portstewart woman publishes collection of poems and stories

Writer dedicates legacy of love to grandson Jamie

by Julie Magee

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A PROUD Portstewart grandmother has dedicated her recently published collection of poems and short stories to her precious first grandchild.

Mary Farrell, 68, penned 'It's like walking a tightrope' during the past four years, compiling her "legacy of love" last summer.

She recalled: "I wanted my grandson Jamie Boyle, who is nearly two now, to know who I was and what I was doing during the first years of his life.

"These last few years have shown us that we cannot guarantee the future, so I tried to ensure that he had a unique legacy, given from me with

love."

Mary feels honoured to be called a 'Glenswoman,' having been born in Carnlough.

When she was one, Mary and her parents left the coastal town to live near Finvoy, outside Ballymoney, where her father was Headmaster at the Craigs Primary School.

At the age of 12, Mary and her family moved to Portrush where she lived for the next 45 years.

Her father accepted a teaching post at Our Lady of Lourdes High School in Ballymoney, and, following four years of studies at Queen's University, Belfast, Mary followed in his footsteps, teaching there for 26 years.

After serving for two



Her grandson Jamie is Mary's inspiration

years as an Educational Advisor with the North-East Education and Library Board, she retired from the world of

education, and ran a small shop in Portrush for three years before moving to France with her partner, Keith Lound.

When Keith passed from cancer after only a few years there, she returned in 2017 to the north coast, setting up home in Portstewart.

As part of her desire to start a new chapter in her life, Mary joined her first ever Creative Writing Group run by local writer Bernie McGill at Flowerfield Arts Centre in Portstewart.

When Bernie left to take up a position at Queen's University, Mary, along with fellow writer Robin Holmes, set up a new Creative Writing Group as part of the Causeway U3A in January 2019.

This group proved so popular that a second was formed, with fellow writer Geraldine Fleming. The two groups are now jointly called North Coast Writers.

Mary said: 'I can't thank Causeway U3A enough for their encouragement,

support and advice in setting up these groups.

"It is such an amazing organisation, contributing so much in so many ways to the retired community living along the north coast, from Limavady to Ballycastle. A lifeline for many, it has been particularly invaluable over the past two years."

While the undoubted highlight of her return to her native land was the birth of her first grandchild, Mary has also remained busy in the

world of creative writing. She has been a facilitator of both North Coast Writers Creative Groups and, more recently, on Zoom, using links set up by Causeway U3A.

During this time, she began an initiative to encourage interaction between all the Writing Groups along the north coast and regularly acts as an auditor at creative writing workshops at the Ulster University Campus in Coleraine.

However, Mary's time spent with her grandson and her three step grandsons Alexander, Taylor and Charlie is the part of her new world which she considers 'beyond price.'

The launch of 'It's like walking a tightrope,' which is available from Amazon, took place last month at the Royal Court Hotel, Portrush and was hosted by the U3A.

Mary paid tribute to all those who have helped her on her unforgettable journey over the past four years including members of the North Coast Writers Group, Bernie McGill as well as the members and Committee of Causeway U3A and Steve Cawte, Editor of Impsired Press.

She said: "Pride of place must, of course, go to the greatest inspiration in bringing this collection together - my grandson Jamie."



Mary Farrell with author Bernie McGill at the book launch. Photo: Brendan Mullan.



Members of North Coast Writers' Group pictured at the launch of Mary's book. Photo: Brendan Mullan.

Success for Dalriada pupils



Mr Tom Skelton, principal Dalriada School, pictured with pupils who received gold and silver badges for taking part in an Ulster University Outreach Academy. Included are, from left: Twisha Girishankar, Lydia Kempton and Caitlin Caldwell. WK49-02TMBM



Mr Tom Skelton, principal Dalriada School, and Mrs Emerson present Caitlin Caldwell with her Gold Crest Awards and Sentinus certificate for successfully completing a four week research project in biochemistry, validated by Queens University. WK49-01TMBM



City of Derry Airport is consulting on the introduction of Performance Based Navigation Approaches for aircraft arriving at the airport. The consultation will run to 21 January 2022, and we are asking for your feedback on our proposals.

These proposals aim to replicate the existing arrival routes for aircraft and does not increase the number of aircraft arriving or departing from the airport. The majority of aircraft will continue to fly as they do today.

To find out more information about this consultation, how you can respond and/or to book a place at one of our on-line events, please visit our consultation website here: <https://consultations.airspacechange.co.uk/city-of-derry-airport/introduction-of-pbn-approaches>.

If you require paper copies of the consultation material and details of how to respond in writing, please call 028 7181 0784 or write to us at: FAO: ATS Manager, City of Derry Airport, Airport Road, Eglinton Co. Derry, BT47 3GY.