

Herrings for Breakfast

In the summer of 1947 we went off in the caravan to Achill Island. We were just getting over whooping cough and father thought the fresh sea air would do us good. It was very hot and dry that summer. The causeway which connected with the mainland was hard and slippery. The wheels of the car kept spinning around. Everyone came out to help: they had never seen a caravan before. Father hired a donkey and cart to take us round the island. On Sundays we went up to Major Frears for afternoon tea and sword dancing. Every one had to do a party piece. My young sister, who was six, recited a poem about a rabbit. There were lots of Americans and of artists and writers. Graham Greene, the author, was there. Before the Major started the entertainment he would ask the Americans to refrain from sticking their chewing gum under the table.

There was just one hotel on the island, the Amethyst, where my parents stayed with our brother who was only two and still recovering from the whooping cough. We slept in the caravan with Mary, the maid.

In 1948 we came up North to Ardglass. It was the last holiday we spent in the caravan before we came to live here. We parked in a field below the Tower. In the next field there was a scout pack. We got to know the boys and went swimming and to the Pictures with them. The Pictures had just come to Ardglass and they showed all the old films, like Laurel and Hardy, in a hay barn. We would get up early and head down to the harbour to buy herrings, for breakfast.

Delicious.