

# **MEMORANDUM MAUREEN DOWNEY WEBSITE THOUGHTS AND IDEAS**

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## **WELCOME TO MY WEBSITE .... I'M HAPPY TO MEET YOU**

If you've read my book WHO IS MY MOTHER then maybe you want to know more about me

If you haven't read WHO IS MY MOTHER, then maybe you want to know just who I am, what it's about, and why I wrote it.

### **MAYBE YOU'VE ASKED YOURSELF, WHY DOES ANYONE WRITE, WHAT MOTIVATES THEM, AND HOW DO THEY DECIDE WHAT TO WRITE**

There are a lot of different genres - science fiction, adventure, crime, ancient worlds, the list is a long one.

## **PART 1**

I was born in Ireland and I've been writing since I was about 7 years old. I broke my leg and was in a heavy cast for 6 weeks. At the time my parents were away on a long trip and my grandma couldn't carry me up the stairs. You have to understand, this was in the 1940's – post World War 2. No television, no internet, no cell phones (we had one phone on the wall in the front hall). There was radio which was mostly news. How do you spend 6 weeks in a chair in the family room with nothing to do? For me it was easy, I got a few new exercise books and I wrote stories – complete with illustrations. I had a ball!

My mother's family were farmers where the Mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea and I spent all my summers on the farm where my uncle Willie great great potatoes and had a dairy heard. Nearby I had a bunch of cousins and we had great times fishing and helping in the harvest. My granny became blind before I was born so she never saw me but she was amazing – she milked cows and baked bread, and was my best friend. We did so many interesting things all summer that I am planning to write a set of children's books telling all about life in those old days when you had to milk cows by hand and do the harvest with your neighbours helping.

After my leg recovered, we moved to the countryside and also had a farm! We had pigs, chickens (eggs), one cow, one goat and turkeys! This provided plenty of new material for stories ---- delivering piglets in the barn in winter; milking a bad tempered goat; avoiding a fierce looking turkey cock named Horace, and going to school in a bus.

You might call all of that PART 1 of my life.

**(CAN ALL OF THIS BE FRAMED IN A SHAMROCK OUTLINE?)**

**PART 2  
(MAYBE A WORLD MAP OR A PICTURE OF A SHIP?)**

Part 2 was to provide even more fascinating story material.

My mom, dad, myself and baby brother aged 2 immigrated to New Zealand. From Ireland, New Zealand is at the far end of the world! That was BEFORE AIR TRAVEL. We went on an old converted battleship (from WW2) and it took 6 weeks to travel from Dulwich (on the south coast of England) to Sydney, Australia. And after that we flew on a flying boat (they have them in museums now) to Wellington (the capital of New Zealand where my aunty – my dad’s sister met us).

Our journey took us down the coast of Portugal, through the very rough Bay of Biscay (I got terribly seasick) and then past Gibraltar into the Mediterranean. We sailed all the way to Malta which is near the entry to the Suez Canal, then into Port Said, Egypt and then down the Suez Canal with Saudi Arabia on the left (just masses of sand and a road running alongside the canal) and Egypt (the river Nile with the sailboats and the pyramids in the distance). At the end of the Suez Canal, you turn to the east and arrive at Aden which is a port in the Yemen. They hadn’t had rain there for 16 years .... It was very dry!!!! After that in about 4 days we reached Sri Lanka where we arrived during monsoon. This meant that every day at about 1:30 SHARP, it rained for about an hour. Everyone brought along an umbrella and just got on with their day! At Colombo, the capital city, we took a bus ride and stopped to see a snakecharmer charm a cobra; we also saw many lepers among many things we had never before imagined!

After Sri Lanka, it is 9 days by sea to Perth, Western Australia, then we also called at Adelaide, Melbourne and finally Sydney.

**YES, I WAS STILL WRITING!** I kept a journal and may soon turn it into a small book.

I lived in New Zealand, where I attended high school, for 2 years. When began school there, I didn’t know anyone at all, but New Zealanders are very friendly and I soon made friends. However, my home life changed a lot because we needed to start out lives all over again and, to do that, both of my parents got jobs. Once again, I got a lot of material for stories, because my mother, who had been a nurse, got a job as matron of an orphanage. There was a small apartment in the orphanage for the matron and her family but it had only one bedroom ---- so I had a bedroom next to the boys’ dormitory. So I lived in an orphanage for 2 years! How many people do that while at high school?

The next thing that happened, was that my family came to Canada when I was 15. At first we lived in Edmonton, Alberta which was at that time (the 1950s) having the ‘oil boom’ Would you believe, gas was 15 cents a gallon and a soft icecream was 10 cents! I finished high school when I was 16 and I got a job so that I could help our family get established. When you are starting from the beginning, this takes a lot of time and money. At high school, I took typing because I had always admired

typewriters and wanted to learn!!! Considering what was to happen next, it was one of the best things I could have done!

For your information, the North Island of New Zealand where we lived has a temperate climate. There are some beautiful birds and plants that are unknown elsewhere. So you can imagine how difficult it was for us to adapt to Edmonton's freezing winters. In fact, we never quite succeeded and we moved to Vancouver, BC in 1956. By that time, I had a great desire to see more of the world, so I began saving and traveling. If you saved your money, back then it was easy to do because there was no 'terror' to fear. I was able to return to visit family in Ireland, England and Scotland, and I manage to see most of Europe. Finally, I embarked on a world trip with a girlfriend in 1961 and this trip was to prove to be a treasure trove of material for story-writing.

### PART 3

Our world trip was: Vancouver BC to New Zealand; New Zealand to England (via Panama Canal) - 2 years working in London, England – back to Vancouver where I got married. This covered a period of over 3 years during which I had numerous careers - Shorthand reporter; government vocational guidance assistant, farm worker, waitress, housemaid, and Parliamentary Hansard reporter in the New Zealand House of Commons. I learned to play the ukelele, pack apples, live in a house with no doorknobs, and make feather beds!

I remained in London, England for 2 years, working as personal assistant to the C.E.O. of a group of building companies based in London but with branch offices in the south. Because of having to travel to them, my boss insisted on a car. The company paid for my driving lessons at British School of Motoring and provided me with a new car (Triumph Herald) upon passing and receiving my drivers' license March 17, 1964. What a time to be living in London when the Beatles landed with a bang on the stage. I had blue hair and wore a miniskirt! I even went to a Beatles concert...

### PART 4

Eventually, I returned to Canada and began work as a legal secretary. I also married and had two lovely children. During that time I became involved with teaching children in a church setting. I also taught youth leaders at night school, my specialty being 'art as a medium of communication' and I wrote non-fiction articles for several church magazines. I also took a writing course (at night when my young children were asleep) with Famous Writers. I have also written short plays for the children to produce. I think it is fair to say that children and how they get along in life have become a very important interest of mine. I also returned part time to my career as a paralegal (with a specialization in immigration law) which involved traveling to assist clients. From this work, I derived a huge amount of material for future writing

I began thinking that the time was fast approaching when I should write book. There was no shortage of possible ideas with no two exactly alike. So – which idea – and where to begin.

**THEN CAME SPINAL SURGERY AND THEN CAME COVID.**

### **WHY WRITE**

I have given a lot of thought to the answer to this question:

I have loved words from a very early age. For example one dinner time when I was three years old, my grandma served new potatoes --- you know, those tasty little new potatoes that are so good. It was the first time I had set eyes on this kind of potato - so I commented “Oh grandma, what extraordinary potatoes”. She was astounded!

Words, when used well, convey feelings, descriptions, opinions and ideas. Words are powerful and can be used for good or for ill. I prefer to concentrate on the former.

I like reading words that convey what I think of as “the real stuff of life”. If you consider the writings of the great authors of our time, they earn the title ‘great’ because they do just that. It is one thing to write an entertaining story; but it displays real talent to be able to write a story that is both entertaining and makes the reader think after closing the book. I humbly aspire to be able to achieve the latter. Despite the state of the world around us, I still believe that the ‘pen is mightier than the sword’. A writer of words is a creator of a window into what is, a mirror of what a civilization reflects, and a glimpse of what is possible in the future.

### **WHAT KIND OF BOOKS CAN YOU EXPECT?**

Well, it’s going to be a mixed bag! Some children’s books, a saga about my old uncle’s estate in Ireland (after he died), and a number of books based on legal cases involving separated families, illegal immigrants, war heroes etc. etc. So please **STAY TUNED** for my next book – expected in the spring of 2026 – a love story involving an illegal immigrant and a war hero.

**DON’T BE AFRAID TO SEND ME YOUR QUESTIONS?  
I WILL BE HAPPY TO REPLY.**

