

Farewell to my Faugheen View

William Wordsworth famously wrote of daffodils flashing upon his inward eye on those days when a vacant or pensive mood struck him. At a moment of introspection, he directed himself towards a soothing and pleasant vision “fluttering and dancing the breeze” and in so doing his life became sunnier because of it. To draw inspiration or to quieten one’s mind through the healing powers of the natural world is something I’ve drawn increasing solace from in recent years. Now that’s not to infer some quasi-religious sentiment to a line of flowers, a row of bushes or an old oak tree you might be inclined to tie a yellow ribbon around.

But there’s a lot to be said for the simple, wonderful pleasure of standing still and taking in a view. And over the past five and a half years, particularly at dawn, gazing down the northerly flank of the Suir Valley, standing in Tipperary, looking towards the horizon where Kilkenny and Waterford meet, has infused me, intoxicated me even. But come Thursday morning, this view shall no longer be the one that I wake up to, such is the life of a tenant.



Waking up to this view over the past five and a half years has helped to sustain me through some difficult times.

And while I realised that moving into this house, a short walk from the village of Faugheen and three miles from Carrick-on-Suir, wouldn’t represent a permanent switch, it will be a wrench to leave here, not so much because of the house itself.

It’s the view I’ll miss most, gazing out onto a well-tended field, home to a brace of splendid native trees.

Since March 2013, filling the kettle for that early morning cuppa (frequently to assist in contributing to this here column), has, on more than one occasion, left me standing in front of the sink, gazing out the kitchen window, drinking in the view long before I’ve downed the brew.

The life of a newspapering type who spends so many Sundays in GAA grounds has meant many a late Sabbath perched in front of the laptop, and just as many early Mondays circulating at a time when milking parlours crank into action.

At this time of year, it’s hardly the most pleasant of chore, arising in the winter’s pitch blackness, but one does what one has

to do to keep the wheels moving. Embracing the early starts has been the only means of making them tolerable, and knowing I'm not alone on the basis of communication with other regional scribes in recent years suggests I'm part of some foolishly sleep-deprived group; the type that still view journalism as a vocation.

Granted, this slightly outdated approach isn't remunerating me any more than those who work in the same profession as I while maintaining a healthy sleep pattern, but, and this is only a hunch on my behalf, I suspect I find the work more fulfilling than they do.

Besides, if I wasn't up at such ungodly hours so frequently these past five years, considering all the sunrises I'd have otherwise missed would certainly have diminished my sense of well-being.

To see the sun rise is truly wonderful. It takes the Earth careering at 67,000 miles per hour around the sun to get us back to that glorious point each and every morning where it appears that the sun, rather than us, is the one doing the moving. My bedroom is east facing, so during my summers here, I've largely foregone the use of an alarm given the light which fills my bedroom, which summons me from my slumber and back to consciousness. Drawing the curtains, opening the windows, and feeling the first breath of a new day on my face has worked better for me than anything that's ever been prescribed for my consumption. That's not to suggest I am an advocate for homeopathy either: if and when a capsule or some pharmaceutical dosage can undo an ailment's knot, then take it I most certainly will.

But the greatest antibiotic I've ever taken has been provided by nature: those two wonderfully aged trees, barely a hundred yards from where I've slept for the past five years, when lit up by the dawn, have filled me with appreciation.

No-one else, for this brief window in history, has enjoyed this particular view, from this particular angle, other than me. A little like the house I've happily lived in these past five years, I realised upon first seeing this view, that it wouldn't be 'mine' forever. It's been my daily trip to the art gallery, a stunning landscape that even my late father, a son of Curraghmore, conceded was particularly special.

I've walked down that field and past those trees in various weathers: be it arid dryness, gloopy dampness and even through inches of snow, and savoured their proud, respective stances from various different angles. I've watched crows feasting on the nearby 'butts' of barley, neighbours' cats slinking one way and the other, a local hunt galloping in pursuit of a fox they really should just leave be and observed teams of tractor-men cleaving crops from the soil.

From the sitting room and kitchen of this place that is no longer my home, I've written hundreds of thousands of words for this newspaper, and a book too for which I've yet to secure a publisher. And while this place was never likely to be my long-term home, my inward eye shall always have that most wonderful of views tucked away, like an unopened present. And it'll be waiting there for me, whenever I need it.

Farewell, Faugheen. It's been special.