

Dan Hurst R.I.P.

1938-2021

'Fear no more the heat o' the sun
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou, thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone and ta'en thy wages'

In 2019 DLR Age Friendly Alliance produced a book 'A Window to my World' in which ten long time residents in the county looked back on their lives. One of those invited to contribute was Dan Hurst. He concluded his essay with this reflection:

'When the time comes and I meet my God, I'll thank him for my good life on earth, for my beautiful family, my friends, the decisions I have made, and for the lovely places I have spent my time. Then I will ask him two questions: 'Did I do good'? followed by 'Can I come in?'

It may be audacious and conceited to presume to know what God's response has been to those questions but we have justifiable reasons to think that the answers were 'Yes! You did very well Dan' and 'Of course you may come in; we have a special place reserved for you.'

Dan was born in Lancashire of Irish parents. His father, who had served for some years in the army of the Irish Free State, emigrated there in the 1930s. He married a Lancashire girl with the family name of McCurtin whose parents had emigrated from Cork some decades earlier. They lived in a terraced house built for mill workers in an industrial area. Dan's only brother Dermot, who spoke so eloquently at Dan's funeral Mass, likened the area to the scenes of life in the industrial areas of North West England depicted by the artist L.S. Lowry. Poverty engendered thrift but it also created a great sense of family, of community and of Christian fellowship; they were the values that Dan carried with him all through his life. The family had a strong faith and both parents were determined to seek out educational and training opportunities for their sons.

At the age of fifteen Dan finished his full- time education and began an apprenticeship in Trafford Park at Metropolitan-Vickers, an electrical engineering company that employed 27,000 workers. The hours were long and the regime was strict. His weekly wage of less than two pounds sterling was dutifully handed over to his mother. After five tough years of work and study he completed his apprenticeship. When he was offered a job with the ESB in 1962 he grasped at the opportunity to work and live in Dublin. The area, and in particular Dún Laoghaire, held happy memories for him as he had spent a few holidays there with his parents in the years immediately following world war two. He recalled staying in a guest house on Northumberland Avenue where they were served an abundance of fresh

wholesome food; he remembered the coloured lights strung along the elm trees on Queen's Road, the contrast of the intact streetscape with the bomb scarred towns of Lancashire, the magic of the evening walks on the pier as a band entertained the strollers, and the joy of being invited to play with local children in the Peoples' Park.

Shortly after Dan took up employment with the ESB the Theatre Royal on Hawkins Street announced that it would close. We can imagine Dan interrupting us at this stage to explain 'that was purely coincidental; I had no hand, act or part in that decision.' With his new found friend, Mick Carew, he attended the show in the Theatre Royal on 29th June 1962, the evening before the final curtain fell. As was the custom the programme included live variety and a film show. During the film Dan and his friend whispered and giggled. An irate young lady in the row in front turned around and called for silence. Dan accepted the rebuke and in his gentlemanly fashion approached the young lady after the show and invited her and her friend to join him for tea. She accepted the invitation and told him that her name was Bríd but she was more often known as Breda. Two years later Dan and Breda got married in St Patrick's Church, Monkstown. In that year too he left the ESB and went to work for Guinness where he spent the rest of his career, retiring as area engineer for export production.

Retirement held no fears for Dan; he viewed it as the next exciting chapter in a very interesting and enjoyable book of life. He became more involved with the work of Dún Laoghaire Lions Club and Dalkey Island Probus and he was a founding member of The Industrial Heritage Association of Ireland. His concern for the welfare of older people was evident in his contribution to the Bealtaine festival, to the Garda Older Persons Association and to the DLR bodies established to support the older person.

Farewell Dan! You had a generous, kind and unselfish spirit which we witnessed in your contribution to the success of DLR Older Persons Council and to DLR Age Friendly Alliance. You carried out your work with concern for others and with a gentle good humour. You were, above all else, a devoted family man and your love for Breda, Ciara. Máire and your grandchildren was evident to us all. May you rest in peace and rise in glory.