

It's not just bricks and mortar

How old is that wall I wonder to myself, over and over again. At least 4 times a day I pass it. It's still grey, moss growing on the top. I don't like that aul wall at all. I grew up behind it, me mother, me father, me and my older sister lived in a beautiful house behind it.

Long since gone, the house – only 4 walls now. Me sister got married, fine chap and lives in New York now. 4 children getting on fine they say – I don't know, don't care -wouldn't wish her on anyone.

Dead they are, me parents. I looked after them for years. That auld bitch sister fucked off to America – I had to stay at home. Better off dead, both in heaven I think.

I got the house, but for what – all run down – I'm glad to see the back of them and it. You might think I'm ungrateful. You'd be wrong. I got a lovely little shop around the corner. Newsagent they call them now – bit of hardware, gifts. You'd never know what I'd sell. In the back of the shop is a storeroom and at the end of that, me lovely kitchen, 2 beds upstairs and me living room, all to my taste.

Anyway, we never went hungry or anything. Never once talked about work but we always had a few bob and the bills where always paid. Something to do with driving he said.

Anyway I think we'll go on a world cruise, go away for at least 2 months.

Took a last look at me auld house – sure I suppose things were not as bad, or good, as things seem. Going to sell that auld house. Met up with a buyer this morning – would you believe he offered me nearly 300,000 euros for that thing. I took it, hand and all. He said money be here in 2 months.

What will I do with all that money. Never had that much at all, although my father worked hard; kind of seasonal work, be at home for 6 months and then wouldn't come home for a year or 2. Never could understand that.

I booked a small holiday while the sale is going – 'Spain again Mrs. – off with the family?' says the travel agent. My cousin.

'Can't wait,' I said.

'Now,' he says, 'things is different since the last time you were over there. Now things are more strict. You can't be bringing all those presents over to your relations as easy as it was.'

'Sure it's only a few fags and a special sugar,' I said. 'They can't get this sugar over there sure.'

'What's wrong with ya? - get 10 years if you're caught. Your me only relation left.'

'I won't. I'll blag them customs, no trouble at all to me.'

I'm off to the school now, collect the young fella. When we come back from Spain, we'll have the house money. Then the cruise.

We mightn't come back from the cruise. Might win big money, not that we need it. When me father died – he was killed- we found loads of money under the kitchen floor boards.

I wonder do I take after him? Not bad with machinery you understand. Sure what am talking to you about, you could be on my list.

By Tony Allen.