



Dear Friend,

Just a few lines to say thanks for coming to visit me today. I was delighted to have spent this time with you. It doesn't seem that long ago since my first birthday, when my large ice blanket melted and I was filled with water. The very start of my bog days. I also remember when the big Irish Red Deer came down for a drink, followed shortly afterwards by a bear. As my lake bed began to fill up and I became a raised bog, I was excited to see the first human face, dressed so differently than you - that was 8000 years ago.

How time flies as I was transformed by my moss and plant friends. I had a wonderful childhood where we all grew up, flourishing and relying on each other. I had grown to over six feet tall by this time, a process that took many years. Your ancestors also came to walk and play here, mostly with animals but they never caused me any harm.

We shared the time today in peace and quiet, but this wasn't always the case. The sounds of the birds and animals that once lived here was replaced by engines, which removed parts of me. They cut into my soft body where I started to bleed water, my life blood and I slowly started to die. I am lucky to have a friend like you and others. You saved my life with your dams that stopped the bleeding. My skin has also healed with mosses and plants growing again, giving homes to my other friends. I also learned of the help you give to the animals and insects that live here. Like me they were also in danger, but that is not the case now. I can feel your caring touch as you tread slowly and softly across me, can hear your kind words as you discuss me, and it means a lot. I cannot speak and don't have a voice to say thanks but I know you can read my mind.

Some of my family members who used to live in other parts of Ireland and overseas, were not so lucky - they have died. They were cremated in open fires, stoves, and power stations. Some have had their remains put in plastic bags and sold in garden centres, others were put on flower and vegetable beds, while others are kept in flower pots which is quite distressing for me. On a positive note, my cousins and I are lucky to have friends like you. You know some of my relatives, you visited them in other places around the midlands of Ireland. Like me they have friends who formed into groups to protect us, and they also come to visit me. Thanks for keeping a close eye on me, and for making sure I'm not harmed.

Being a living bog, I have lived through many things. I was alive when God walked the Earth. I didn't meet him, but I met some of the locals who went over to Slane to build Bru na Boinne before his time. That was 5000 years ago. As I said before time flies. Speaking of building I remember when I was much wetter, people made a togher across me, a far cry from the boardwalk here today, but they did their best. Your ancestors used it as a short cut from the monastery and round tower in Kells to Ethelstown. They came and took galls from the oak trees that grew here to make the purple and black inks to write the Gospel book in

the town. They also came here to hide from their enemies, they collected my moss to heal their own wounds and stop bleeding during the world wars (I could never see the point of these).

I am relishing my new found friends as more people come to visit me on daily walks. Again thanks for your help. New people are coming to visit. The virus outbreak in 2020 saw the biggest numbers. Put a 'H' before that year, and you get my favourite element - H<sub>2</sub>O. It was a year that brought people back to basics, to the sound of silence that can be discovered here with me. In the place where that big Red Deer stood all those years ago, where you were standing earlier, the wolf's den down by the newt pond. The ice blanket when I was born, hundreds of metres above your head. Remember the bog beneath your feet is thousands and thousands of years older than you, and remember too all that I have witnessed. You and your friends have saved my life. Today you have become a part of my history and I'm glad you passed my way.

Kind regards,

Girley Bog

