

All in a Day's Work

Terri Kearney – Skibbreen Heritage Centre

PROFILE

Terri Kearney works at Skibbreen Heritage Centre, in Skibbreen, Co. Cork. She has also written a number of books and provides a genealogy service. www.skibbheritage.com



Image courtesy of Terri Kearney

Where do you work?

I work at Skibbreen Heritage Centre mainly but I do lots of other work too! At the Heritage Centre, we have exhibitions on the Great Famine and Lough Hyne, (a local salt-water lake), and we also provide a genealogy service.

I've written some books about this area - two about Lough Hyne and one on the Great Famine. Writing books about your locality is a rewarding thing to do because you learn so much about your own place and its people.

We do lots of other things at the Heritage Centre too. We've carried out surveys of local graveyards and also produced an app and a TV documentary. We organise events for Heritage Week every year too. Doing all these different things keeps the job interesting and I have lots of plans for future projects.

What is a day in your life like?

There are no two days the same in my work and that's what makes it so interesting. We welcome visitors to the Heritage Centre from all over the world. It is really lovely to meet new people every day and there is always some fun to be had! Some of them come to research their family tree and we hear extraordinary stories about what their ancestors went through after emigrating from Ireland. I give guided tours for groups during the summer and usually learn something new on every tour.

In the wintertime, when it's quieter, we work on new projects. Last year we produced a book and an app called 'Skibbreen: The Famine Story'. While it was a sad subject, it's important to remember our ancestors and tell the story

of what they went through during that awful time.

Sometimes we have TV crews coming to the Centre too. This year I was interviewed for BBC3 and BBC4 talking about the Great Famine as well as PBS in the USA. There was also a programme on UTV Ireland all about Lough Hyne, which came about because of one of my books and the *Famine Story* app featured on RTE Radio One's *History Show*.

What would you do if you didn't do this job?

While writing about the history of marine research at Lough Hyne I made many friends among the scientists. Since then I've worked with some of them carrying out surveys etc at the Lough. I also love the 'Touch Tanks' at Lough Hyne that

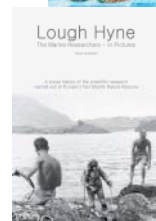
we organise as part of Heritage Week every year.

At that event, UCC scientists talk about and hand around species from the Lough and it is great fun and very interesting. So if I were not an historian, I think I'd like to be a marine scientist - actually I'd like to be both!

What is best piece of advice you have ever had?

I think the best advice I've ever had is to work at something that you would do for nothing. I would be happy to share the history of my locality with others as a hobby so I am lucky to be paid for it.

The next best piece of advice I've had is that the best work is done while you're having fun - I certainly agree with that!



Publications about Lough Hyne.



Terri at the touch tank at Lough Hyne, during Heritage Week.



Skibbreen Heritage Centre, Skibbreen, Co. Cork.



Lough Hyne, Skibbreen, Co. Cork.