

We have gathered here to remember a woman who has in her 97 years touched so many lives. A native of Lincolnshire, her father was chauffeur to the Bishop of Peterborough. He served with distinction in the First World War, eventually finishing his working life as curator of a museum in Northamptonshire.

Grace trained as a teacher and served in a number of schools, soon returning to her native Peterborough. She met and married Flight Engineer Terence Devine in 1940. After serving in the war, the family moved to London, eventually returning to Peterborough where Terence taught in the Technical College and Grace resumed her teaching career.

Carolyn has shared her memories of Grace. I came to meet Grace just after I arrived here in Howth some 8 years ago. I recall being struck by a bright, alert, engaging lady. You could tell that she was a born teacher as she recalled schools in which she had taught, pupils she had taught. She took a quite understated pride in the fact that several of those same pupils still kept in contact with her long after she retired in 1977, keeping up that contact as she came to live here in Howth

She came to Howth in 1999 to live with Francy and Aine and the family. 83 is a good age at which to pack up and make a new start in a new place. She was one to embrace new experiences, new challenges. She maintained her love of gardening, music, dance and crafts, finding new avenues to explore them in this village of Howth that she came to love.

There was a down to earth honesty in her view on life and death. She confessed to me one day that she wasn't sure about this religion business - but there was something in her that looked beyond herself, that found wonder in nature and the world around her, that took a real interest in people, a keen awareness of right and wrong, of justice.

Her last couple of years in the Nursing Home in Howth cannot have been easy for one who had had a real zest for life. But I was always struck by a gentle patience and peace, still enjoying visits from friends and family, still reading the paper, still an eye to what was going on.

In short I recall a lovely warm human being and like so many I thank God for the life of Grace Devine. I remarked to her at the weekend that though she may not be so sure about God, I was confident that God was quite keen on her.

So this day, with love and gratitude we commend Grace Winter Devine to the loving care of Almighty God and we extend our love and sympathy to those who will miss her most, her children Carolyn and Francy and the wider family circle.