

Coco and The Glider

Jamesy, Muffles, Coco and me (Mousey) were on the school bus home on a Friday afternoon and the topic of conversation was about what we would do on Saturday. The general opinion was that we were going to spend the day on a trek to the upper-lands of Donegal which started at the end of our housing estate. We lived just next to the border.

We all met up on the Saturday morning which was a beautiful day with excellent sunshine. I was excited; this was going to be a good day. Coco was the last to arrive at the bottom of my street. When we were just about to go to, Coco's wee sister Annie came over to us and she wanted to stay with Coco. He had to take her back to her garden, and then he ran towards us screaming.

'Run, run now!'

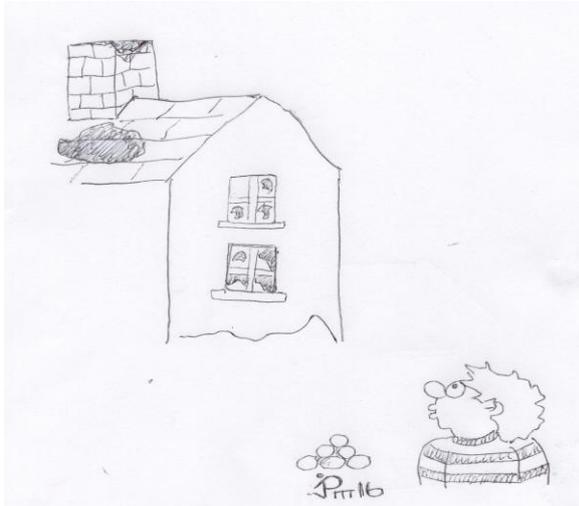
We all started to run towards the top of the estate. Coco felt bad about leaving his little sister and tricking her but the journey was for big boys, not for a little toddler. She would have held us back and she couldn't climb or run fast.

We walked up to Huston's farm. Then a while later we crossed the fields and followed the wee river up to Glenn's pasture where there was a lot of big trees. At the trees Jamesy began by climbing the first tree we had come to. On our journey, the way was to follow the leader, so whatever he did, we all had to do the same. Muffles went next and followed Jamesy up the tree. Jamesy went out on the first limb of the branch which was about 15 feet from the ground. He began hanging like a monkey, making monkey sounds and then he let go and fell and landed safely on the soft ground. Muffles went out on the same branch made monkey noises and let go of the branch. He landed on his ass, got up rubbing his ass but was glad that the heat was off him. He had completed his task. Coco went next and for a short while hung on with just one arm. He made the necessary monkey noises and then let go and fell to the ground. It was my turn and I felt the pressure. I completed the task and landed on my feet.

'What's next?' I said.

We meandered further into the countryside and eventually came to Boom Hall. This was a derelict building and all the floors inside had collapsed. Jamesy noticed a one foot section of glass which was left in a window at the top of the building. We all began throwing stones to break the only remaining piece of glass. Jamesy and I were close a few times, while Coco got nowhere and began to throw stones at the small trickle of a river that ran beside the property.

Muffles finally hit the glass and with a crash the pieces fell out of its socket and shattered on the rubble lying on the ground. He was the hero and he was jumping around like an eejit. He was very happy because he knew he would be remembered as the one who broke the final piece of glass in Boom Hall.



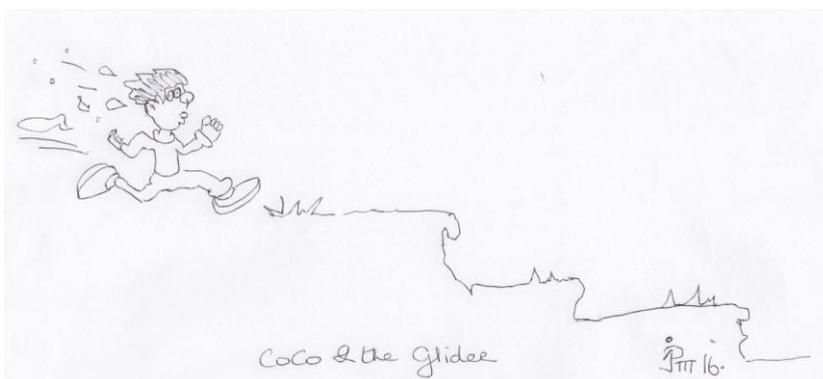
We went inside the house and where the floor used to be there was a small one foot wide ledge. We put our backs against the wall and shimmied along and got to the front window on the first floor. We all completed that task and we all jumped from the first floor window onto the soft ground outside the house.

We spent just over an hour looking around the ruins. We found nothing and decided to move on further into the

countryside. We began talking about the ‘glider jump’ which was about one mile away from Boom Hall. We decided to make our way towards the Glider. We were all game and agreed it was the best place to go to next. We set off and followed the river towards our destination.

The glider was the task of all tasks. It was about 15 feet wide and it was about 10 feet deep with 3 steps that graduated towards a 5 foot section of soft ground which was beside a river. To complete the glider you had to run, jump the three steps to land on the soft landing area. This jump was a mighty feat. Jamesy decided to go first but he landed on the third step, tumbled over and didn’t complete the jump. Muffles went next and he clipped the third step

also.



I went next. I took off like a scalded cat. I ran and flew through the air. I passed the first, the second and I clipped the third step but I successfully landed on the soft ground and I

nearly ended up in the river.

Coco was jumping up and down and said that it was his turn and if I could do it, then he believed that he could complete the jump also. He ran and took off, he seemed to fly

through the air but when he landed he hit his head off his knees and there was blood coming from his mouth.

We lifted him as he had passed out and when he came around he was crying as he realised that he hadn't completed the jump. When he opened his mouth there were puncture wounds caused by teeth marks all across his tongue. He had almost bit through his tongue. We never thought that anything like this could ever happen to us.

My victory was rather subdued due to Coco's injury so we decided to make our way home with Coco taking up the rear in our rag-bag gang of four. Coco walked along with his tongue hanging out. He was like a puppy dog following us home. We were all hungry and our little adventure had ended short with Coco getting injured. Coco was a rather unfortunate character who continually ended up getting hurt in unfortunate ways, but he was Coco, always game for an adventure. He was the spirit of our little gang and we were game for anything.

Jamesy, Muffles, Coco and me (Mousey) were hanging out near the youth club that was near to the local bar. We had pooled all our pocket money together and we had £6. I agreed to go and get some alcohol for the gang, I had previously collected alcohol for my parents and the barman knew me so I got 12 cans of larger, that was 3 each and should be enough to get us drunk.

I arrived back with the beer booty and shared the cans out. We all began to drink and really enjoyed the high we experienced. We were like adults and were loving life as it was through the eyes of 3 cans of beer.

We went around the back of the youth club and Jamsey started climbing onto the mid-high roof. We all followed and were confronted with a jump across to the other short roof. We were like lemmings at the cliff-edge, one followed another and the four of us had completed the jump. We climbed down and just stood around. We didn't know what to do with all our extra energy.

Muffles suggested that we walk the 2 mile journey down to the bar disco that was down the road, across the border from where we all lived. We set off on our journey which seemed to go on forever but we eventually arrived at the bar. There was a £2 charge to get into the disco. We had no money left so we would have to sneak in to the disco. We went to the back where the side-doors were and we began by knocking at the side-doors and after awhile the door opened. Jamsey, Muffles and me got into the disco, Coco was away going to the toilet. When he got back we had closed the door and could hear him battering frantically

at the door. The bouncers were standing nearby and began to open the double doors. They were confronted with an animated Coco who wanted to get into the disco. Both bouncers held their arms against Coco and refused him admission. Coco was furious at not getting in with the rest of us. They shut the door and stood guard. Coco didn't disappoint.

Jamsey, Muffles and me stood back and then heard the double doors getting kicked from the outside again. The doors opened to the sight of Coco shouting at the two bouncers.

'You, you,' he shouted and he repeatedly pointed at 2 other guys. 'You and you outside, right now.'

The boys all began to go outside to Coco where they proceeded to beat Coco to within an inch of his life. There were 5 of them, they finished him off very quickly and they left Coco in a heap outside.

Jamsey, Muffles and me decided to go out and see how Coco had managed in his battle. We arrived beside Coco and he had a big grin even though he was beaten. He was a winner in our eyes. This crazy dude had no fear of anybody, after all he was Coco our wee mate. Coco he was an original.

One Saturday morning Jamsey, Muffles, Coco and me met outside my house and we were trying to think of something to do for the morning until dinner time.

At the side of my house was a private field belonging to Farmer Monaghan. It ran down the hill towards the Buncrana Road and the British Army Checkpoint. We all climbed into the field and all of a sudden Jamsey wasn't on for 'it'. Muffles said no, and I said the same so it left Coco who was on for 'it' in our game of tig where there was a 'parley' if you were hugging a tree.

Coco came running and nearly caught Muffles. I meanwhile was hugging a tree. Muffles gets to the safety of a tree. Coco stood looking around at us all waiting for the next one of us to run the gauntlet of being chased and caught by Coco.

I ran out from the safety of my tree and Coco started to run in my direction. I had to scarp as Coco was close; he lost his balance and fell. All the other boys were laughing at Coco being stupid but when he fell he let out a shrill shriek like a girl. After a while I knew Coco wasn't getting up to continue the game. I called 'parley' and went over to Coco.

Coco pulled his jumper up and I saw a hole in his elbow. When he tried to move his arm, his tendon came out of the bloody gash. All along he was crying. One of the bigger boys came to the edge of the field and asked what was wrong with Coco. He thought someone was fighting with Coco. John, the big fellow climbed into the field and went over to where Coco

lay. He knew the injury was serious so he lifted Coco. John was wearing a black biker jacket and after John carried Coco home he came back to see us and said that Coco would have to go to hospital. John's black jacket was covered in Coco's blood.

Once again Coco was unfortunate in play but he was our friend. He would be back out with us in after a bit of healing time. We liked Coco and would wait until he was better.

I'd love to say, there is a moral to these stories, but no! There are great memories of who dares, wins with accidents along the way.

Word Count: 1,973