

## Secrets In The Attic by Linda Dearson

I want to move house, I announce to my startled offspring, who look anxious on hearing me say that. In fact my home is full to the brim with clutter for want of a better description and the very idea of tackling a house such as mine is rather daunting to myself let alone my long suffering family who know that I will need to call upon them to assist their over active pensioner parent!

“Well”, I say in anticipation of their objections to my mad cap idea that I have to admit are happening more frequently since I retired from the gravy train of the working life.

“It’s not as bad as those programmes one sees on the television,” I say appealing to their obvious look of apprehension.

I’ve always been a hoarder you see but a life time of accumulating and adding on to material things such as book cases, shelves full of beautiful ornaments , cupboards of decorative china , drawers full of lacy linen table cloths, stationary, and a mantel piece scattered with object-d'art. The walls hung with pictures and the garage filled with garden implements a wood workers haven of rusty saw’s hammers, drills and nails and screw’s old bikes and furniture items.

“Lets start up in the Attic,” I suggest enthusiastically on the appointed day when my son and daughter turn up .

“I’ll go up first,” I say as I ascend the loft ladder I really don’t want them to see how much there is!

I’ll pass the things down to you both”, I direct as I put my head above the parapet of the hatch.

I can hear the wind whistle in and out of the creaking rafter’s and spot flakes of dust dancing in a shaft of light emanating from a gap in the dirty sky light window. I scan the dark space with the flickering ray of the not too bright torch and imagine it is like a prison camp search light with it’s long shadows that reveal the various forgotten boxes large and small.

I wish we had installed a proper electric light and had flooring done professionally I think to myself as I find the precariously placed boards my amateur husband had placed loosely rather wobbly to navigate safely, and I fear I may put a foot through the ceiling!

Years of cobwebs and spiders scuttle away into corners as I disturb their lodgings.

Objects are scattered around some with labels long since faded and illegible. With a struggle I lower several of the boxes down to the open arms of my son and daughter who place them gingerly on the hall floor.

I am aghast at the number accumulated below, as I reappear from that Aladdin’s cave of mysteries that I had fumbled about in the dim light of that dark space.

I climb down and find my siblings laughing as they unpack two WW2 Helmets, plus a gas mask and they start to clown around .

“Oh, I remember them ” I say . “They once belonged to your Grand father who was in the civil defence home guard during the war, Dads Army to you” I explain and relate to them the history of those times , but they are in a moment of merriment trying on the blast from the past, the notion of those serious days of war way past their of those serious war time austerity.

How the world has changed I muse.

I sit down and with a cup of tea and pick up a small old brown case and click open the clasp to peruse it's contents.

My old school exercise books my childhood revealed. Here is the essence of who I was over 65 years ago. The simple innocence of youth flooded my pounding old mind with a stinging lump in my heart as I recalled those days of wondering what the future might have install for me.

As I re-read the fruits of my efforts I was astonished how much detail I had put into the various subjects . I reflect with a little smile to my self whilst reading and finally opening a school report

It predicted what I have always known about myself . It said: 'Linda Is apt to Dream.'

“What are you smiling at Mum?” I hear my two darlings ask

“It's my Secret” I reply.

Linda Dearson