



Welcome to our world

A chance meeting with a young Italian couple visiting Thailand inspired this article. Simona and Luciano were eating at the next table of a lovely little restaurant, in a fishing village with an unpronounceable name, on the East Coast of Thailand. We got talking, as being Irish I do all the time, and it transpired that they planned a trip to Chiang Mai later in the year. We,



knowing Chiang Mai really well promised to send them some photos. During the few evenings we spent together, they showed a lot of interest in our lifestyle and on receiving our photos they invited us to write something about our life and travels. This is not a travel article, although travel will indeed feature a lot. It is instead, a visit to our life in picture

and prose and we hope that it will give you a full understanding of who we are and what we do. It may too, inspire you to shake off the shackles of a mundane existence and see a new and exciting life ahead of you.

Let me begin by introducing ourselves .

I am Sean and my Wife is Ann, we met twenty-five years ago on a small Greek Island and married a year later. Now I am seventy-two and Ann is ten years younger. When I was fifty five we downsized our home ,sold our business, retired and began to travel. Many of our friends thought we were insane to sell our nice home in Ireland's Capital City, Dublin and move to a small rural village, but we needed to finance ourselves for the ten years before our pensions came on stream.

Then a small incident, prompted a major change in our lifestyle. Shortly after our retirement in 1995 we revisited 'Our Greek Island' where we had met nearly ten years previously. Whilst there we spoke with a young Dutch Couple and commented on how cheap we felt the holiday was. Our friends were horrified and said it was their most expensive holiday ever. Intrigued, we enquired as to where they normally spent their holidays. They told us that they always went to The Far East and so began our love affair with Asia. It has lasted now for fifteen years and we really love our life.

Now that the scene is set, I would invite you to put some more logs on the fire, turn up the thermostat and keep warm whilst the Arctic wind blows a storm outside and temperatures plummet to sub zero. Hold on ! Stop ! Why do you need to waste all that money on heating your home ? when you could be living in a hot climate all Winter. The money we save on lighting and heating our home each year pays most of our travel expenses. Few people appreciate that the cost of living in many Far Eastern countries is, half of that in Europe. In some, even as low as one third. As a result, our modest pensions, which are barely enough to live on in Ireland provide a hugely higher standard if living here in The East. In the past

fifteen years we have met hundreds if people of all ages and nationalities living a similar lifestyle to us. We constantly support and learn from each other. When asked, most of these people will list the among their reasons for living abroad for a large part of the year :

- 1. Economic Benefits**
- 2. Healthcare**
- 3. Social Advantages**
- 4. Better weather**

We will deal with all of the above matters later, but first let's start with some questions :

- 1. Are you happy with your present lifestyle, or are you bored, or maybe lonely?**
- 2. Are you seeking a change or maybe a little adventure?**
- 3. Are you finding it difficult to manage on your present income in your country?**
- 4. Are you sick to death of the constant barrage of gloom and doom in the Media?**

If you can answer No to any or all of the above, then please stop reading. This article is not aimed at you. If however, you answer 'yes ' to any of the above, then this article may provide an impetus to grasp an opportunity which is there for the taking. Many people claim that they never get an opportunity to do this or do that. The truth is, many times in our lives opportunity presents itself. Many fail to see an opportunity when offered and others choose to ignore them. Only people of vision grasp an opportunity and they usually benefit greatly from doing so.

Young or old, single,married, widowed or divorced it matters not. You can travel so easily in South East Asia. We have travelled all over Asia from China to Borneo, Bali to India and Sri Lanka to Vietnam and Cambodia. Never have we felt threatened. Rich in culture and Art these countries welcome visitors with true hospitality. Older people are particularly well respected due to the 'respect ladder' which exists in many Asian countries. This is rather like the respect shown to elders in past generations in our homelands. Unfortunately this has somewhat died out in today's modern society. In Thailand for example, a Thai person on being introduced to you will ask your age. This horrifies most Westerners. However when you understand that it is necessary for them to know your age, in order to place you on the respect ladder, then all becomes clear. If you are older than them, then they will accord you due respect, if you are younger then you should respect them. Simple!

Each of the photos in my articles will be original and taken by us during our travels. If at any time I include a photo which is not mine, then I will tell you. Please respect the copyright of these photos and do not re publish without seeking permission. This time I have included photos from Thailand, where we spend a lot of time, and also from India.

In this my first article, I want to give you a small taste of what is to come in future weeks and months. Amongst the topics covered will be: Travel in general, including a special article



devoted to Women Traveling Alone. In addition subjects like health for travelers, general health, good food and nutrition and even some alternative health matters will be covered.

We hope you will read and enjoy the articles. This is us in Kerala, South India last year, enjoying the 'good life' It is such a 'hard life', but then someone has to do it.

It is, I feel, very important to point out that there is no mystery, or difficulty involved in changing your lifestyle. The only requirement is to want a change. Many people fear change! This is often the result of growing old far too soon.

Growing old is unavoidable,

***Growing up* is NOT! You must listen to**

your own body, *you are the age that you feel* and NOT your birth age. More and more people throughout the world today will live to be over 100 years old, whilst still enjoying good health. We should take full responsibility for our own body and at the very least treat it as well as most people treat their car, giving it regular maintenance and good fuel. Unfortunately most people believe that doctors are responsible for their health . This of course is far from the truth as we will learn from future episodes. My next piece will deal with the kind of people who share the freedom of our lifestyle, and you will most likely fit into that category.



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