

# Out of Your Tree

*Introduction by Maeve Binchy*

**You never get to know people properly until you know what they do off-duty.**

That is why this selection of portraits by Dominic Lee is so special.

Another picture of these subjects in a familiar setting would have just that, another picture.

These open a door to a different side of a personality. Who would have known what half these people might have chosen as a pastime?

It lets us see a softer side, a more energetic side, a quirkier aspect and often an unexpected area of peoples lives.

But let me tell you that choosing a pose for such a picture is not always as easy as it might seem.

In my own case I have played chess happily every day for over 35 years with Gordon Snell.

Amazingly we have invested all this time without either of us getting even remotely better at the game. Fortunately we are evenly matched, regarding it as an exciting game of chance where the cry "Oops there goes my Queen" is often heard.

But the big problem for this particular photo shoot was not what to wear or how to smile, it was how to set out the chess board so that any REAL chess player looking at it would not be horrified and affronted and wondering how we had got ourselves into that particular position.

I am very interested turning the pages and seeing yet more different sides to the lives of others.

Dominic has captured the enthusiasms and eagerness of those he has photographed. There is a spirit of men and women able to see another side of living than the one where we had placed them.

It reminds me so much of a wonderful day in the convent school well over fifty years ago when we were allowed to ask the nuns one question each about their private lives before they entered Religion. Of course it had to be circumscribed a bit because boisterous teenage girls might have asked about sex and love and other unsuitable matters. We were allowed to ask them about their hobbies. I remember since the 1950's one elderly roly poly nun who said that hers was roller skating and we always checked out her shoes afterwards in case she had gone back to it.

Another thin faced angry looking nun said she loved making pastry and would create dishes that she might give to Lord Byron, if he ever came back to life, in order to comfort him and reassure him and take away his angst. We had no trouble in learning our English poetry after that.

If Dominic had been around in earlier times he might have photographed Henry the Eighth playing tennis, or James Joyce singing, Samuel Beckett teeing off for a game of golf

Undoubtedly he would have put them all at their ease and made the session seem painless and worthwhile.

In addition to this he is raising money to help The Irish Cancer Society. So what better reason to buy this book and to browse through the faces of people doing what you would never expect them to be doing.

*Maeve Binchy*