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*Celine Henderson, Theresa Henderson, Aggie Carty and Jenny Carty from Kinsale pictured at a special Kinsale Nollaig na mBan event at the Spaniard Bar and Restaurant in aid of Marymount Hospice.
Picture: John Allen*

Courtmacsherry to welcome new RNLI lifeboat

The community of Courtmacsherry will welcome the latest RNLI lifeboat to serve the south west coast of Ireland on Sunday, January 15.

The Shannon lifeboat is the latest in a long line of search and rescue boats provided by the RNLI to Courtmacsherry over the past 198 years and marks the start of a new chapter in the story of search and rescue in the south coast.

Designed by an Irish engineer, the Shannon class lifeboat is the most modern all-weather lifeboat to be propelled by water jets instead of traditional propellers, making it the most agile and manoeuvrable all-weather lifeboat in the RNLI's fleet.

The Lifeboat named 'Val Adnams' is due to arrive in Court-

macsherry, led by a flotilla of local boats, at exactly 13.45, which is also the operational number of the lifeboat.

Founded in 1825, Courtmacsherry along with Arklow, are the oldest lifeboat stations in Ireland.

A significant proportion of the funding for the new Courtmacsherry Lifeboat has been provided through the very generous donation of Val Adnams who grew up in the UK and now resides in the US. A very proud lifelong supporter of the RNLI, Val Adnams and some of her family, intend on travelling to Courtmacsherry in September for the naming ceremony of the lifeboat.

Courtmacsherry voluntary lifeboat operations manager Brian

O'Dwyer said, "We want the people of Courtmacsherry and the surrounding areas to come on Sunday to welcome the new lifeboat home. The station has been looking forward to this day for a long time and there is huge excitement for it. The past few weeks and months have been spent in preparation and training by all the crew, in order to receive this incredible piece of kit from the RNLI..."

"We are incredibly honoured to receive it and we are grateful to our donor Val Adnams and to all those involved at our Station down through the years, who have made this day possible. We hope to bring many loved ones safely home in this new lifeboat."



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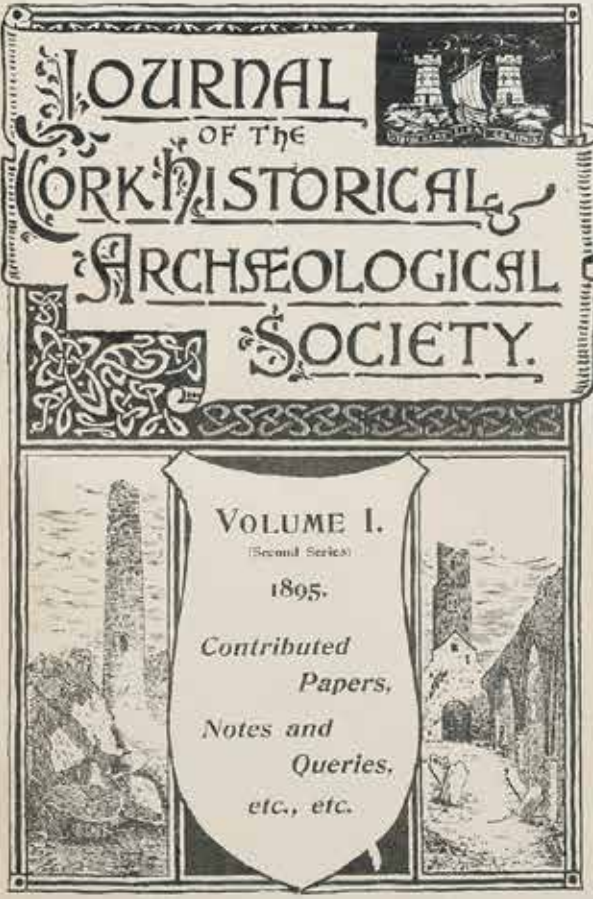
Putting food on the table for struggling West Cork families



Volunteers at the The Feed West Cork foodbank in Drimoleague, which operates every Tuesday.



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Cutting down on food intake to lose weight is something that many people will choose to do as part of their new year's resolutions. However for many others this year it will be a choice between putting food on the table and fuel in their car or heating their homes. With inflation remaining stubbornly high and cost of living pressures persisting in 2023, people are having to make difficult choices, with more and more families in West Cork turning to food banks to help make ends meet, as **Mary O'Brien** finds out when she visits The Feed West Cork foodbank in Drimoleague.

Volunteers at The Feed West Cork foodbank in Drimoleague – which first opened in May 2021 – has since seen firsthand the difference such a service can make in the lives of individuals and families who are struggling.

"We've seen people put on weight after using the foodbank for a while," shares Sandra, a volunteer who has used a similar service herself in the past. "When one man came here first he was skin and bone. He often says to us now that eating well has helped him feel so much better."

"There is no judgement here, which makes it easier for people to ask for help."

"It touches your heart when you see how much getting this help means to people," says Mark, another volunteer. If your belly is full, it definitely makes a difference, can make life that bit easier."

"When we first started, I don't think we had any idea just how tough people would be finding things now," says Esther Kingston, the coordinator of the foodbank in Drimoleague.

Esther is one of a small committee of five people from all walks of life based at Drimoleague Methodist Church, working hard behind the scenes to make sure there is enough food for the people who access the foodbank every Tuesday morning between 10:30 and noon and in the eve-

ning between 6pm and 7pm.

There are currently 20 clients and upwards collecting food every week with people mainly travelling from the areas of Drimoleague, Dunmanway, Bantry and Skibbereen. "There are people coming from all over West Cork but we have seen how people can't afford to travel as far recently," says Esther.

"I didn't have a light on in my house all summer...I saved every cent to make sure I could cover my electricity bills. I'm fed every week because of the foodbank."

One man who travels every week from Dunmanway shares how he used to have a good job working as a meteorologist. That was before he suffered a brain injury. He now relies on his disability allowance. "I didn't have a light on in my house all summer...I saved every cent to make sure I could cover my electricity bills. I'm fed every week because of the foodbank."

For many others, the foodbank is not a longterm solution. One woman who accessed the service in Drimoleague when she was under financial pressure because her

sister came to live with her for a period, recently donated a bag of food to the bank.

"People come for as long as they need help," says Sandra. "There is no shame in accepting help when you need it. Any one of us could find ourselves in the same position."

In recent months they have seen an increase in the number of working families seeking food assistance.

A woman who runs a small farm with her husband in Skibbereen says the food she collects every week means her six children, age three to 13, are not going to school hungry. The family live in an old farmhouse, which is hard to heat, so they use hot water bottles to keep warm at night.

A widow with three children, who works part-time as a home help, says the foodbank is huge help. She grows her own veg, chops her own firewood and admits to being paranoid about using too much electricity. "Money is tight and although it's bit of a journey to the food bank every week for me, it's worth the trip," she shares. "I don't know what I'd do without it."

A young couple, both on disability allowance, says their landlord won't accept HAP, so the foodbank helps them supplement their weekly shop.

"We lived off the food you guys gave us" and "We'd be lost without you" are just a few of the comments made to

volunteers each week.

A home help calls in to pick up a food hamper for one of her clients, an older man, who recently had an operation and can't get out himself. "He'd starve without it," she says.

"We have had people in tears, as they have bravely made the courageous move to step forward and receive the help that's available to them, so touched by the basket of food," shares Esther.

The Drimoleague foodbank works with organisations like FoodCloud, which gets surplus food from shops and businesses, but also relies on donations from individuals and businesses.

"We are grateful for the support of the local community," shares Esther. "People often drop off a bag of groceries to us. One man who donates food to us every few weeks repeatedly says, 'I just can't bear the thought of a child going hungry when I have food on my table.'"

Donations are always appreciated and the foodbank accepts non-perishable food in tins, jars and packets, as well as toiletries, laundry detergent and toilet rolls. Volunteers are also welcome.

There are no requirements for anyone who needs to avail of the service. Just contact the foodbank on 087 2879118 to book in for that week.



Jack Ward is awarded Bantry Credit Union Scholarship for 2022



Winner of the 2022 Bantry Credit Union Scholarship Jack Ward being presented with his certificate by Eddie Mullins, Chairperson of Bantry Credit Union. Also included are Jack's family – parents John and Catharina and brothers Shane, Michael and Jamie.

Jack Ward from Dromourneen, Bantry, has been awarded the Bantry Credit Union Third-Level Education Scholarship for 2022. Son of John and Catharina Ward, Jack is the 20th annual winner of the scholarship, which is worth €6,000 over four years.

At an informal ceremony at the credit union office before Christmas, the Chairperson of Bantry Credit Union, Eddie Mullins, presented Jack with his award.

Jack sat his Leaving Cert last June at Coláiste Pobail Bheanntraí (CPB). He is now studying Veterinary Medicine at Wrocław University of Environmental and Life Sciences in Poland. He is the first scholarship winner to study outside Ireland or the UK.

The Chairperson referred to this in his presentation, pointing out that it shows Jack's commitment to pursuing his dream to be a vet. Eddie also referred to Jack's many talents and achievements. He is an accomplished rugby player and was on the Munster underage squad for the

past few years. In 2021, Jack played the full Interprovincials against Ulster, Connacht and Leinster. No wonder he won the School Sports Person of the Year award at the CPB 2022 awards.

Not surprising given his preferred career, Jack also loves farming. He breeds Charolais cattle and has won prizes at many shows around the country. And then there is Jack's photography, including winning a sizeable prize in the Irish Farmers Journal calendar competition a few years back. And finally, he is also active in his community, helping out at kids' sports camps and volunteering at the Bantry Agricultural Show.

Little wonder, the Chairperson said, that Jack made such an impression on the adjudicators.

Turning to the credit union's annual scholarship scheme, Mr Mullins explained that this is the 20th consecutive year of the scheme. The scholarship is awarded following a rigorous process, involving a detailed application form, a written submission and an interview.

Eddie said, "Whoever wins the scholarship will have earned it!"

The assessment and decision-making process is conducted entirely by a panel of independent adjudicators, whose decision is binding on the credit union. Eddie thanked these adjudicators, each of whom has given almost unbroken service to the scholarship scheme since the beginning in 2003: James Kilduff (Munster Technological University), Olive McCarthy (University College Cork) and Denis O'Sullivan (retired Deputy Principal of Maria Immaculata Community College, Dunmanway).

The Principal of Coláiste Pobail Bheanntraí, Marian Carey, also attended and paid tribute to Jack, saying: "Jack is first and foremost a gent." She spoke about his personal qualities, his values, his achievements and his academic abilities. The Principal congratulated Jack on winning this prestigious scholarship and wished him well in his studies and future career.

Bantry Credit Union installs ATM

Bantry town has a new on-street ATM. Just before Christmas Bantry Credit Union's new ATM went into operation. It's in the same place as the old Bank of Ireland ATM that was removed when the bank closed the Bantry branch in October 2021.

When the credit union bought the Bank of Ireland premises last summer, it committed to re-installing the ATM. It's great for the town and hinterland that this much-needed facility has been returned to the town so quickly.

The Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr Danny Collins, visited the credit union to mark the

occasion. He said "It's great to see the ATM back in its original place and I want to thank Bantry Credit Union for buying the building and seeing the potential for future development there. ATMs are still very important to people. And in a busy tourist town like Bantry it is critical that locals and tourists alike can get access to cash when they need it. Well done Bantry Credit Union yet again."

Mayor of the County of Cork,
Cllr Danny Collins officially
open Bantry CU's ATM.



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Welcome to the future



A WEST CORK LIFE

Tina Pisco

Like the rest of the country, I began 2023 feeling like death warmed over. Our first proper Christmas since lockdown 2020 and many of us were too sick to party. It was a pick and mix lottery of diseases, but most of us got a winning ticket of sniffles, coughs, fever, and fatigue. Apparently, not one household in the parish was spared. I did not have Covid, but it's not clear which version of the flu, strep, or other respiratory illness I managed to acquire between Christmas and New Year. Nor is it clear if this was the same version of COVIDNOT-23 (ie not covid that takes 2.3 weeks to clear) that every member of our household came down with. It was bad enough to require antibiotics, but mild enough to manage symptoms with paracetamol, decongestants,

and cough medicine (though it took two pharmacies to get some).

Whatever sickness it was has had me shuffling around for the first week of the year in a bit of a brain fog. Which is not the best sort of brain to have when you must write a New Year's column. The problem was not what to write about. I had an idea. I had the angle. The problem was writing it. The lurgy had made my ideas jumbled. The words were slow to form sentences. What to do?

And then I remembered that we are living in the future.

A few weeks ago, Chat-gpt was launched on the internet. My brain is too foggy to explain what it is. Look it up. It will blow your mind. Suffice it to say that it is an Artificial Intelligence (AI) that has all the information of the internet at its disposal, along with the ability to communicate in fully formed sentences. It will answer any question. It can write poetry. I asked it what the best time was to run a dehumidifier and in seconds it wrote a detailed summary of when was the best time, why and what conditions might affect the answer.

Why not ask it to write my column? I fired up my computer, logged into Chat gpt, and asked it to write a newspaper column about New Year's resolutions incorporating the idea that instead of making resolutions to change oneself,

the resolution is that you are enough and don't need to change (my half-formed idea for a column).

Welcome to the future! This is what an artificial intelligence wrote in a matter of seconds: 'New year's resolutions are a time-honoured tradition, a chance for us to reflect on the past year and set goals for the year ahead. But too often, our resolutions are focused on self-improvement, on changing ourselves in some way. We resolve to lose weight, to exercise more, to be more organised, to be kinder to others.

'While there is nothing wrong with striving to better ourselves, it's important to remember that we are already enough, just as we are. We don't need to change ourselves to be worthy of love, respect, or success. This New Year let's make a resolution to embrace our imperfections, to love ourselves as we are, to stop striving for perfection. Instead of resolving to change ourselves, let's resolve to be kinder to ourselves, to give ourselves the grace and understanding that we so readily extend to others.

'One way to do this is to practice self-compassion. This means treating ourselves with the same kindness, concern and understanding that we would offer to a good friend. It means acknowledging that everyone makes mistakes. And that it's OK to be human.

'Another way to embrace our imperfections is to focus on gratitude. When we start to see good things in our lives, it's easier to be kind to ourselves and to recognise our own strengths and accomplishments. We can start a gratitude journal or practice daily gratitude exercises help cultivate this mindset. It's also important to set realistic goals for ourselves. If we set the bar too high, we are setting ourselves up for disappointment and failure. Instead let's aim for progress, not perfection.

'Finally, let's remember to be patient with ourselves. Change takes time, and it's OK to take small steps towards our goals. Let's celebrate the progress we make, no matter how small it may seem. In conclusion, this New Year, let's make a resolution to embrace our imperfections and to love ourselves just as we are. Let's practice self-compassion, gratitude and patience and remember that we are enough, just as we are.'

Happy New Year!

Letter from the Editor

Welcome to the January edition of West Cork People,

As usual our focus in January is on lifestyle changes and resolutions that can only make you feel good about yourself and the world. This year I feel it's important to make gratitude and kindness a priority also. The last few years have been difficult and, for many, loneliness and poverty will follow them into 2023. It was a humbling experience to visit the Feed West Cork foodbank in Drimoleague before Christmas where I met some of the amazing volunteers and got to experience their generosity of spirit, something the people who access the service are very appreciative of. Inside this issue you can read more about what a service like this means to individuals and families in West Cork, many of whom say they'd be lost without the weekly food hampers...a sobering thought in 2023. Please do get in touch with the food bank if you need help.

At the other side of West Cork another inspirational organisation manned solely by volunteers has been successfully treating all sorts of health conditions using oxygen therapy. Bandon Hyperbaric Oxygen Chamber is an amazing charity that has helped so many people over the past 25 years. Oxygen therapy is a powerful tool for lots of health conditions and inside this issue we hear from just a few of the people who hail the life-changing effects it has had on them. I hope you'll enjoy this and all the other health-related articles inside this issue.

In other topics, Kieran looks at the entrenched religious and ethnic differences that has doomed the Lebanon to never-ending conflict and the role of our Irish peacekeepers there. Eugene delves into Irish sayings that actually describe or predict the weather. Tommy wonders what the changes ahead will mean for West Cork farmers and Lauren shares some green habits we could adopt to help the planet.

I think I may have forgotten to wish you a Happy Christmas in my December editor's letter but at least I still get the chance to wish you a very Happy New Year and good health while I'm at it. West Cork People celebrates 20 years in business this year. My daughters started secondary school last September and at the information night for parents the principal advised us that science now says our children won't reach full brain maturity until the age of 25, the same age as I was when we started this paper. I remember feeling very mature at the time!

I hope you enjoy the read,
Until next month (Spring)
Mary

€1.8 million fund announced for the Community and Voluntary Sector in Cork County

Cork County Council has announced support to the value of over €1.8million to support local communities in 2023. The Council's Community Fund Scheme provides financial support to a range of groups and organisations right across the county annually and opens for applications on Wednesday 11th January this year.

The scheme is administered locally by the eight Municipal Districts and each year provides financial assistance to a range of community, sporting, and voluntary organisations under three distinctive fund types: The Capital Fund, Community Contract, and Amenities Fund. These funding schemes support a range of projects and initiatives, including supporting the work of Tidy Towns groups and community associations, infrastructural works, and sports and leisure facilities.

Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr Danny Collins, welcomed the announcement of the 2023 fund,

"I am continually impressed by the works carried out by community groups under this scheme year on year. The Community Fund has become a vital means of support

for so many worthwhile projects and initiatives right across Cork County. I encourage any groups who may have a community project in the pipeline to consider making an application to this year's fund."

Chief Executive of Cork County Council, Tim Lucey added,

"This is the ninth year of our Community Fund Scheme which demonstrates the Council's ongoing commitment to supporting the relentless work and commitment of our community and voluntary sector. This year, Cork County Council is making over €1.8million available through our General Municipal Allocation. These funds will bring numerous community projects to life and in doing so, encourage growth and development in towns and villages right across Cork County."

Guidelines for the scheme and details for online applications are available at www.corkcoco.ie and will close at 4pm on Tuesday, 14 February 2023.

Further information, including contact details for your local Municipal District Office are also available on the Council's website.



Mary O'Brien
Editor



Sheila Mullins
Creative Director



Natalie Webb
Sales Consultant

Contributors

Kate Arbon
Karen Austin
Hannah Dare
Tina Pisco
Louise O'Dwyer
John Hosford
Sean Creedon
Tania Presutti
Noah Chase
Shane Daly
Pauline Murphy
Kieran Doyle
Sherna Malone
Tommy Moyles
Fiona Hayes
Grace O'Sullivan MEP
Dr Rosari Kingston
Matthew Hurley
Eugene Daly
James Waller
Liz O'Mahony
Mark Grace
Lauren Guillery
Melissa Murphy
Sarah Murray

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Healing power of oxygen still flowing strongly in Bandon after 25 years



Most of us have heard of Dutch athlete Wim Hof who has demonstrated through his own amazing feats how increasing oxygen levels in the body can benefit health and wellbeing. Wim Hof has developed special breathing exertions that keep his body in optimal condition and in complete control in the most extreme conditions. More recently in the US, human biologist and biohacker Gary Brecka has been making waves with the assertion that, "The presence of oxygen is the absence of disease." A supporter of the Wim Hof breathing exercise, Brecka believes that there is not one disease or condition that does not begin in an oxygen-deprived environment and therefore oxygenation of cells is one of the best things we can do for our wellbeing. Closer to home, **Mary O'Brien** finds a service that has been, without fanfare, successfully treating all types of health conditions using oxygen therapy over the past 25 years.

repair and healing.

For many years hyperbaric oxygen therapy has been used to treat conditions such as divers' decompression sickness, skin wounds and bone infections. More recently it has been shown to be a powerful anti-inflammatory tool, helpful for autoimmune and inflammatory diseases such as rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis, MS and other chronic health conditions.

Even more recently, it has been hailed as a cure for Long Covid, with new research out of Israel seeming to back up this claim. According to the Israeli study, patients with long-term COVID-19 symptoms that were treated with hyperbaric oxygen therapy showed significant improvement in cognitive, neurological, and psychiatric functions.

A West Cork man, 48, who visited the Bandon Hyperbaric Oxygen Chamber to treat his own Long Covid condition, would agree with the above findings. The man, who does not want to be named, shares how in early 2021 he began suffering from dizzy spells and weakness. A fit and active person, who would have easily run 5 km every day, he

suddenly found that he was able to run only a short distance before extreme tiredness hit. A series of symptoms including extremely high blood pressure, cardiac events, breathing problems and fatigue led his doctors to a diagnosis of Long Covid.

"It's an amazing place, especially as it's non-profit, and I would recommend it to anyone suffering with Long Covid. It really is a cure!"

"After leaving hospital I was so weak that I couldn't make it up and down my driveway without help," he shares. "My battery would suddenly drain from 100 to 10 per cent." After about two months of this extreme fatigue, on the recommendation of his wife, a nurse who had heard of the benefits of Oxygen Therapy through her colleagues at work, he attended the Bandon Hyperbaric Oxygen Chamber, completing 25 sessions in quick succession over a three to four

week period. "After about 10 sessions, the fatigue lifted and I started feeling more energised," he says.

When the Chamber closed for a few weeks in the middle of his treatment, he says he felt himself regress, which reaffirmed for him that the treatment was working. "I had no doubt at that stage that the Chamber was helping me." He is now back to full health, back in work full-time and running

Continued on next page...

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As unassuming as it is sophisticated, the Bandon Hyperbaric Oxygen Chamber (BHOC) is made even more impressive for its being entirely manned by volunteers, mostly retirees, housed in the local town hall, and its affordability at just €20 a session. It is a fitting legacy to experienced diver and current BHOC committee secretary Paddy O'Sullivan, and the late Liam Deasy, a Multiple Sclerosis sufferer – who were both instrumental in its establishment 25 years ago – that this service is still as accessible to all today as when it was first set up.

Hyperbaric oxygen therapy elevates oxygen delivery to the tissue. In a hyperbaric oxygen chamber, patients breathe in 100 per cent oxygen at elevated pressure, which causes a 10 to 15 fold increase in the oxygenation of the blood, which in turn results in increased oxygen delivery to the tissues and cells of the body and promotes tissue



Bernie Fitzgerald, Declan Casey and Pearse O'Donnell, volunteers at the Bandon Hyperbaric Oxygen Chamber.

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"I found John and his team very professional from day one. Had some ancillary work done to the roof by the team before installation, extremely neat and tidy. The installation itself was done in a day and the team did a great job. Really happy with the performance of the panels."

"I am delighted with my recent Solar PV installation - and particularly with the streamlined service, which I received from JM Energy Savings Ltd. I found John and his team to be highly efficient, honest, and easy to deal with. I am happy to recommend them for their thorough standard of workmanship and their excellent customer service."

"From start to finish John and his team were very helpful and carried out the solar installation promptly and professionally. Above all, everyone from office to installers were a joy to work with. I am delighted to have chosen JM Energy Savings Ltd for my installation and would highly recommend them for solar installations."

BHOC .. cont'd from previous page

his usual 5 km every day again. "It's an amazing place, especially as it's non-profit, and I would recommend it to anyone suffering with Long Covid. It really is a cure!" he says. "But do bring a book with you...an hour can feel a lot longer!"



Christine Skeath

Christina Skeath, 45, from Bandon has Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and uses the Oxygen Chamber regularly. The mother-of-one is employed full-time with a charity working with adults with intellectual disabilities. It's a busy role but one that she loves. Multiple sclerosis (MS) is an autoimmune condition that can affect the brain and spinal cord, causing a wide range of potential symptoms, including problems with vision, arm or leg movement, sensation or balance. While the disease has compromised her mobility,

Christine can walk unaided and doesn't take any medication for her condition. She also suffers from bad bouts of fatigue.

After being diagnosed with MS in 2011, Christine started attending the Bandon Hyperbaric Oxygen Chamber, completing 20 successive sessions at the beginning of her treatment. She has been attending once and sometimes twice a week ever since. In the past 11 years, her disease has not progressed. "If I miss one of my weekly sessions, I really notice an increase in my fatigue," she shares. "It's a fantastic service to have on my doorstep and the volunteers are amazing."

Neil Crean has diabetes and after a bad case of cellulitis resulted in a foot ulcer, he started attending the Chamber on leaving hospital. This is not the first time Neil has used the service so he wasn't surprised that after a series of 20 sessions, his ulcer has almost healed. He is currently attending the Chamber a couple of times a week and finds it very energising.

Chairman of the Bandon Hyperbaric Oxygen Chamber committee, Robert Wilmot shares how people are travelling from all over Ireland and even from as far afield as France and the Netherlands to use the Chamber in Bandon. "When we first started, we had five to ten people

using it in a week. Today, we can have anything from 20-30 people in one day accessing the service," he explains.

Between March and August last year, BHOC put on extra sessions to facilitate people suffering from Long Covid. "On top of our usual numbers, we were treating 40 people a week with Long Covid," says Robert.

A registered charity that depends solely on local fundraising efforts and local volunteers, BHOC is a credit to the local community. "It was Liam Deasy's vision to help people so we have kept it affordable," says Robert. "Liam suffered from MS and found his health improved after using a chamber on his holidays in Wales, so when he came home he rounded a few of us up into a committee and we started fundraising. Paddy O'Sullivan, with his expertise as a diver and engineer, has been an invaluable asset to the project. That's how it started 25 years ago."

The Bandon Hyperbaric Oxygen Chamber now has two chambers and a unit to make its own oxygen.

With two sessions or 'dives' as Robert refers to them, running on a Monday, four every day from Monday to Friday with an extra 'dive' on a Wednesday and one every Saturday morning, this service



Committee chairman Robert Wilmot demonstrating using the controls on one of the chambers. Each session requires two trained volunteers on site.



is only possible because of the dedication of its volunteers. Each 'dive' or session requires two trained volunteers on-site.

"Anyone around town and retired is roped in to becoming a volunteer," quips Robert. "While it's relaxed, there is a very serious side to the operation too. Our volunteers, ranging in age from 45 to 84, are an amazing group of people."

Can anyone use this service? "You need a doctor's cert," explains Robert. The application form can be downloaded from the website (bhoc.ie) and must be completed by the applicant and a GP. An appointment can then be made with the BHOC.

As this is a non profit making service and a low cost treatment with high running

costs, all fundraising efforts are very much appreciated by the committee.

For more information or to make a donation please contact Margaret or Christy at Bandon Hyperbaric Oxygen Centre on 023-8843677 or email info@bhoc.ie. www.bhoc.ie.

MEP calls on Greek authorities to drop the charges against Irish humanitarian Seán Binder

Speaking from Greece last Monday, Grace O'Sullivan says that over 80 MEPs have signed up in support of the search and rescue workers who face up to 25 years in prison for their work with a local NGO.

Seán Binder, who was born in Germany and raised in Castlegregory Co. Kerry, went on trial this week, on January 10, on the island of Lesbos, once again facing multiple charges which have been described by leading human rights organisations as 'trumped-up' and 'baseless'.

On August 21, 2018, Greek Police arrested humanitarian workers Seán Binder, Sarah Mardini, Nassos Karakitsos and others working with the non-profit organisation Emergency Response Centre International (ECRI) and charged them with a number of serious crimes including espionage (linked to their use of the common encrypted messaging app Whatsapp), forgery and membership of an illegal organisation. At the time, ECRI was running a search and rescue programme on Lesbos, as well as a medical clinic offering primary care in the Moria refugee camp, in cooperation with Greek authorities.

Sarah Mardini was recently the subject of Netflix hit film 'The Swimmers' which traced

her gruelling journey from Syria to Europe before she returned to Lesbos to help fellow refugees, where she was arrested and imprisoned.

Speaking from Greece on Monday, where she is travelling to attend the humanitarian trial, Green MEP Grace O'Sullivan said: "It is rare for MEPs and politicians to weigh in on individual cases before the courts in the EU, but this trial has been politically motivated from the beginning. The EU needs a new asylum policy that encourages and defends humanitarian workers who save

lives on the EU's borders. The Greek authorities must drop these charges now and free the humanitarians from this nightmare of an ordeal."

A campaign led by MEP O'Sullivan in support of the defendants has collected the signatures of 89 MEPs from all political backgrounds ahead of the trial. A number of events are being held across Europe today in support of Seán and his co-accused, including fundraising swims across Ireland which aim to raise funds for the defendants 'Free Humanitarians' campaign.



Grace O'Sullivan MEP with Seán Binder in the European Parliament, Strasbourg



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Why does the Lebanon need our peacekeepers?



HISTORY & POLITICS

Kieran Doyle

The Republic of Ireland, unlike so much of the globe, tends not to fancifully display our nation's army. We don't indulge in demonstrations of military strength or use the army to bulwark government achievements or occasions. They are often seen in ceremonial roles, small numbers, in remembrance of an anniversary or tragic occasion. Most of us will remember that up to recently, you might see a few armoured military vehicles accompanying security vans who ran money to and from banks. At times of natural disasters, they are a welcome sight on our television screens, saving stranded families in floods,

building sand banks and assuring the civilian population that the military in this country, goes about its business, somewhat under the radar. It is spoken about with respect but not sung like a soaring opera. Maybe our perception of the Irish military is somewhat muted due to our neutrality, pacifism, or even dark history of violence with British armed forces; and you have to admit that militarism is not a visual force in Ireland. But then, there are those men and women that stand out if you catch them on occasion. Whether it's their rare appearance on our streets, or that instantly recognisable sky-blue beret, we all know when we see an Irish UN peacekeeper.

The tragic death of private Sean Rooney and the critical condition of his comrade in arms, Sean Kearney, has once again turned the spotlight at Irish peacekeeping forces abroad. Whatever our attitudes to war and conflict, there is always a pride when our soldiers form part of UN peacekeeping forces in troubled hotspots around the world, from the Congo in the 1960s where we lost 26 men on active duty, up to the Lebanon today, where private Rooney was killed. What

I want to do is look at what has gone wrong in the Lebanon and examine why that country has become so engrossed in violence? I can never remember a time, even as a child, where that poor country was not in the news for killing, maiming and violence. The sad truth is that its tragic history stretches far back, to when its ancestors created the first alphabet. Even then, they were recording violence and upheaval. A land that flourished with some of the first civilisations has become less civil a place to occupy over the centuries. Why is this?

We are all prisoners of geography. Our own physical proximity to Britain, made us ripe victims to be colonised and planted by generations of British military forces. The Lebanon, sitting between modern day Israel and Syria, was central to the most active trade route for millennia on what was the most important sea for expansion, commerce and learning – the Mediterranean. Its prime position meant that since humans began to roam, it has been occupied by Greeks, Romans, Persians, Muslim Caliphates, Christian Crusaders, the Ottoman Empire, France for a brief spell, and in more recent



Irish army troops during an inspection while serving in Lebanon. Source: Wikipedia

times, invaded by Israel, Syria and briefly scores of American troops. Pretty traumatic right? Statehood as we know it, is really only a twentieth century construct, so we can be lulled into thinking that each country has definable characteristics unique to that country. Lebanon, by virtue of its multiple ancestry, should be a place of tolerance and acceptance. But Lebanon's rainbow-coloured cloak of identity, has been stained with blood rather than enriched by it. Instead of a land that should have a well of cosmopolitan brother and sisterhood flowing in its veins, its mixed past has had the opposite effect. It has entrenched religious and ethnic differences and pitted them against each other for supremacy. Their governmental system is set up so that the president must always be a Maronite Christian, the prime minister a Sunni and the speaker of parliament a Shia: It is a system infected by the empires and colonisers of Asia, the Middle East and Europe.

The Middle East sphere is strongly associated with Islam, but the Lebanon was one of the earliest examples of a fortified Christian enclave. According to the Bible, Jesus spent time in this area, and we can trace the later rise of Christianity within the region of Lebanon. Muslim invasions from the seventh century brought Islam to the country, until it became the dominant, but far from only, religion there. Christianity still flourished in large pockets but like elsewhere in our world, religion became reason to kill rather than hate. In the 1860s under Ottoman rules, tens of thousands of Christians were killed by the Druze Islam sect, without any sanction or censor from the Ottomans. The more modern problems stem also from internal fighting between Muslim sects. In the same way Christians in the guise of Protestants and Catholics, have murdered each other in the name of God, the Islamic

world has this disease too. The Sunni Muslims [who claim their theology directly from Mohammad] and the Shia Muslims, have also wreaked havoc in the region in the name of Allah. After the Great War, the French took it over as a protectorate and there was an attempt to normalise trade and civic spirit. Let's not fool ourselves into thinking it was simply the French colonialist attempt to be benevolent here. We know colonialism doesn't work like that. Oil was the new gold and the new motorised world of the twentieth century was thirsty. After the withdrawal of the French in 1946 there was a period of harmony where Lebanon and Beirut grew its tourism and economy, promoting some observers to nickname it the 'Paris' of the Middle East. Yet the start of one of the bloodiest chapters was on the horizon with the outbreak of fresh hostilities and the civil war in 1975.

To bring it on to more modern influences, a more aggressive and expanding Israel, forced many Palestinians to flee its Palestinian territory into exile into Lebanon. The close proximity to each other meant the rebel Arab grouping called the PLO, were able to launch attacks from within the Lebanon, prompting an Israeli invasion into it in 1982. The toxicity of antisemitism and anti-Muslim became yet another incendiary device in this complicated theatre of terror, as Islam and Zionism clashed. The Syrians, wishing to 'restore' order, invaded the north of Lebanon, promoting another kind of conflict. But the greatest threat to peace was beginning to fester on the religious tensions. Yet another rebel/terrorist/freedom fighter – take your pick according to your perspective – emerged. Hezbollah. Israel then and now, are deemed a threatening force to the middle eastern Islamic block and Shia Iran funded Hezbollah to fight against Israel. Meanwhile, the powerful Saudis backed Sunni organisations in Lebanon. This

Muslim v Muslim tension is a result of Shia-dominated Iran and Sunni-dominated Saudi Arabia, fighting proxy wars against each other in places like Yemen and Syria for dominance and control of the region. Lebanon, is caught in this trap too.

Israel, while occupying southern Lebanon, stood by, and allowed Christian Lebanese militiamen to massacre thousands of refugee Palestinian Muslims, in refugee camps. Yet the Christian enclaves began to shrink and further recede in that period. USA stepped into the fray. In the 1980s, the USA followed a particularly aggressive military agenda from central America to the middle east. President Reagan sent them there as a peacekeeping group, but many felt it was just another cold war military strategy. Yet they retreated from Beirut in a hurry when 241 American marines were killed in their base. The cause? A deadly new weapon – 'the poor man's atomic bomb'. The term we use today is suicide bombers. This was developed in Khomeini's revolutionary Shia Iran and now exported to Lebanon with devastating consequences. But in this case, the bombers were the initiative of the Syrians [allies of Iran] under Hafez-Al-Assad, father to the current dictator of Syria, Bashar-Al-Assad. Hezbollah was at the centre of it. The same group that has its fingerprints over the death of Sean Rooney.

Ireland's history is a sad and tragic one. We often think of ourselves as one of the most pressed upon. Yet Lebanon's history is so much more devastating and prolonged. Indeed, it seems to have no end. Peacekeeping has not stopped the fighting nor will it, but it has helped stem some of the awful sectarian, genocidal massacres of past decades. Lebanon is doomed because it is the stomping ground for too many powerful forces, Iran, Syria, Israel, Saudi Arabia and the various terrorist groups that have germinated there, [as well as external meddling from superpowers who look to control the middle east for their oil]. Unity is their best way out, but history has divided them, and into this divide, human nature retreats. For me it highlights the danger of borders, nationalism and religion. It's our commonality that will save us, not what makes us different. Putin, Trump, Zi Jinping, Johnson are other versions of a nationalism that 'excludes' instead of 'includes' people. True peace can only be achieved, not by simply embracing diversity, but by embracing the only thing we all have in common – our humanity. Our oneness.

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Weather predictions in Irish folklore

N hé lá na báistí lá na bpáistí' (the day of rain is not the day for children). Anyone who has ever tried to entertain young children when it is too wet to go outside – especially on holidays – will appreciate the accuracy of this proverb. There is hardly anything like relentless Irish rain to achieve the twin feats of dampening people's spirits and increasing their irritability. Talking about the weather is a constant theme when Irish people meet. In a metaphorical sense, people speak of being 'under the weather' when they feel unwell or of 'making heavy weather' of a task when it proves to be unexpectedly difficult. The misery of working in inclement weather has long been recognised in Irish folk wisdom. For example an old saying warns us of 'the four worst things – ploughing in frost, harrowing in rain, making a ditch

in summer and building a wall in winter'.

Nevertheless, climatic adversity has inspired many Irish writers. The damp tapestry of Frank McCourt's early life is evoked in his book, 'Angela's Ashes', in a vivid account of how 'great sheets of rain gathered to drift slowly up the River Shannon and settle forever in Limerick', thereby creating 'a cacophony of hacking coughs, bronchial rattles, asthmatic wheezes, consumptive croaks'.

It is notable that certain Irish weather phrases are very poetic and rich in imagery. For example, a cold morning has been described as one which causes people 'to kiss their knee-caps' (*ag pógadh na gcopán*) or to curl up in bed with their knees underneath their chins. We are preoccupied with the subject because Irish weather is quite capricious and unpredictable.

Supporting this view, an Irish phrase describes the many different weather conditions that one can encounter on any given day, 'Lá na seacht sion – gaoth mhór, báisteach, sioc agus sneachta, tintreach, tóirmeach agus lonnú gréine' (On the day of seven weathers, there is high wind, rain, frost and snow, thunder, lightning and sunshine).

Some people are never happy with the weather even when it is pleasant. Consider the old Irish saying: 'Dá mbeach soineann go Samhain, bheadh breall ar dhuine éigin' (If fine weather lasted until November, somebody would be complaining).

In the interests of economic survival, people, especially fishermen, sailors, farmers and shepherds have tried to anticipate impending weather conditions through careful observation of a variety of natural phenomena. Long before the advent of scientific weather forecasting, changes in the appearance of the sun, moon, stars, clouds and waves were studied to forecast weather. These observations were passed down from generation to generation, often termed in rhymes and easily remembered sayings. A common weather saying,

'Red sky at night, a shepherd's delight, red sky in the morning, shepherd's warning' dates back to biblical times. The significance of red skies is echoed in several Irish phrases: *Dearg anuas, fearthainn is fuacht*, / *Dearg anoir, fearthainn is sioc*, / *Dearg aníos, fearthainn is gaoth*, / *Dearg an-iar, soineann is grian*. (Red high up, rain and cold; Red in the east, rain and frost; Red low down, rain and wind; Red in the west, fine weather and sunshine).

The sun and the moon were significant omens for the ancient Irish. In the pre-Christian era, the sun was portrayed as a god of the heavens which lay down in the evening. Perceived in this way, the sun's long rays were interpreted as its legs. Certain weather signs could be detected from the position of these 'legs'. For example, we hear 'Togha na haimsire chughainn – cosa na gréine suas ar maidin agus síos



FACT & FOLKLORE

Eugene Daly

A retired primary teacher, West Cork native Eugene Daly has a lifelong interest in the Irish language and the islands (both his parents were islanders). He has published a number of local history books and is a regular contributor on folklore to Ireland's Own magazine. Eugene's fields of interest span local history, folklore, Irish mythology, traditions and placenames.

trathnóna' (the best of weather is coming – the sun's legs are up in the morning and down in the evening).

The appearance of the moon was a good indicator of the weather. For example, bad weather was likely if the moon appeared to be lying on its back. The harvest moon in September (nearest to the autumn equinox) is the brightest of the year. 'Gealach na gcoinleach is gile sa bhliain' (the moon of the stubble field is the brightest of the year). A similar phenomenon occurs around mid-October and is known as the 'hunter's moon'.

Other weather signs that feature in Irish folk sayings come from the wind, mist, the sea – the appearance of the sea and the sound it makes. The following saying distinguishes the different types of wind. 'Trí bríos gála, trí gála feothan, trí feothan stoirm, trí stoirm airic' (Three breezes make a gale, three gales make a winnowing wind, three winnowing winds make a storm, three storms make a hurricane). These winds were sometimes described in graphic terms. For example a harsh east wind was regarded as one that would 'skin a dog-fish' – 'Gaoth a bhainfeadh an craiceann difhiógach'.

Strong winds were often attributed to the movement of the 'sí' (shee) or fairies. A whirlwind in summer was called a 'sí gaoithe' – a fairy wind, which was also known as 'deamhain aeir' (demons of the air). Another cause of the wind was a mythical being called 'Beartlaí na Gaoithe'.

Many old Irish weather sayings have a solid foundation in scientific fact. In Cape Clear

they used to call a moon with a halo around it, 'súil circe ré' (the moon of the hen's eye). Another phrase to indicate this is, 'Garraí na gealaí-báisteach' (a garden around the moon means rain soon). A ring or halo around the moon indicates the presence of cirrus clouds which precede low pressure weather systems containing moisture. Also quite accurate is the old observation that low flying swallows herald the arrival of rain (*Fógraíonn fainleoga ísle doineann*) – low flying swallows portend bad weather.

When distant objects appear nearer than usual, or when distant sounds can be heard more clearly, are certain signs of wet weather approaching. This is evident in phrases like 'Glór an easa i bhfad uait – dea aimsir; drochaimsir más gar duit' – good weather is due when the sound of the waterfall is far away; a bad spell is due when the waterfall is audible. If, for example, you are looking at Cape Clear from the mainland and it appears closer than usual, this indicates the approach of bad weather. This is confirmed in a similar saying: 'Droch-chomhartha ar mhuir an léargas a bheith go maith' – if there is good visibility at sea, bad weather is coming.

Mist was also considered a weather sign. A particular worry was the 'ceo sí' or 'ceo draiochta' (fairy mist or magical mist), which could descend without warning, disorientating a person and perhaps signalling his or her death. Like the wind or clouds, the pattern of mist was held to foretell the weather. Thus, 'Ceo soinneann ar abhainn, ceo doinneann ar chnoc' – mist of good weather on a river, mist of bad weather on a hill.

The appearance of and sound of the sea were used to foretell weather. For example, bad weather is thought to be due when 'white roads' are visible in the ocean (*Doineann má bhíonn cúir ar bhóithrí bána tríd an bhfarraige*). When the sea is foamy at high tide, this is a sign of bad weather – 'Garbhadas amárach má bhíonn go leor cúir in aice an chósta, lán mara' – rough weather tomorrow if there is a lot of foam near the coast at high tide. The moaning or other sounds made by the sea is an accurate indicator of weather. However, one would have to live near the sea and listen to its varied noises to be able to use it to forecast weather.

Birds and animals feature in a number of Irish weather signs. An example is the following: 'Aimsir chrua thirim nuair a bhíonn an corr éisc suas in aghaidh srutha chun na sléibhte; fearthainn nuair a thagann sí an abhainn anuas' (When the heron flies upstream to the mountains the weather will be dry but rough; when she goes downstream, it will rain). It is



held that curlews call before rain, something I have observed myself. Wet and windy days are also regarded as imminent when oystercatchers call: 'Flíuch gaofar is na roilligh ag éagoin' (wet and windy when the oystercatchers cry).

In the case of robins, however, location was important in signalling weather changes. For example, 'Má bhíonn an spideog faoi thor ar maidin beidh sé ina lá flíuch' (if a robin hides beneath a bush in the morning, rain is on the way). The significance of a robin sitting high up on a tree is conveyed in the expression: 'Dea-shíon an spideog ar bharr na gcrann' (good weather when the robin is high on the branches).

A change in the weather can also be expected if bees are busy after sunset. 'Beach ar saothar agus an ghrian faoi – athrú aimsire' (the bee working after sunset, a change in the weather). When seals travel up the strand away from the water is an indication of bad weather: 'Drochaimsir má thagann an rón isteach i mbéal an trá'. When a herd of cows lie down in the middle of a field indicates coming rain: 'Báisteach chugainn: tréad buaibh in aice le chéile i lár páirce nach mbeach fonn orthu éirí' (Rain coming if a herd of cows lie close together in the middle of a field).

Some weather proverbs are not meant to be indicators of weather change but are meant to have a message. The expression, 'Tíoc-faidh lá fós go mbeidh gnó ag an mbó dá heireaball' – a day will come when the cow will have a need to use her tail. The reference to the cow's tail comes from the fact that in warm weather, a cow will swat flies with her tail. So this proverb is intended as a riposte to people who complain too much about bad weather as it suggests that good weather may be on the way. Similar sentiments are expressed by the proverb: 'Níl aon gaoth ná séideann maith do duine éigin' – There's no wind that doesn't blow in the right direction for somebody – which has its English equivalent in, 'It's an ill wind that blows nobody good', indicating that circumstances that are unfortunate for one person may be of benefit to another.

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Families call for fresh inquests into Whiddy disaster

On behalf of families who lost loved ones in the Whiddy Island Disaster 44 years ago, International maritime expert Michael Kingston, has corresponded with An Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, demanding new inquests into the 50 deaths. Michael lost his own father, Tim Kingston, in the 1979 Disaster.

The Whiddy Island Disaster claimed the lives of 50 people on January 8, 1979, when the 'Betelgeuse' oil tanker exploded at the offshore jetty for the oil terminal at Whiddy Island in Bantry Bay.

Speaking on RTE Radio 1, 'Sunday with Miriam' with his mother, Mary Kingston, Michael explains why the deaths are 'unlawful' due to "monumental regulatory failures" by the Irish State in the lead up to the Disaster that allowed Gulf Oil to do as they pleased, with no regard for safety of life. This was echoed by former President of Ireland, Mary McAleese.

In the interview, Michael, and his mother, Mary, explain the circumstances of family life, with Tim Kingston, in the lead up to the Disaster, and the immense emotional consequences for their family, and the other victims' families, of the Disaster, and its aftermath, also echoed by Mary McAleese.

In the correspondence with Leo Varadkar, copied to Minister Ryan and Donohoe, as successive Ministers for Transport, the families demand that An Taoiseach direct Ireland's Attorney General to order new Inquests under Section 24 of

the Coroner's Act 1962 due to the unreliability of the Inquests on July 12, 1979 and February 15, 1980. In recent revelations, having located the Inquest file at the Co Cork Coroner's Office, two witnesses, Mr John Connolly and Mr Bruce Tessyman, who provided Statements to the Inquest to establish the circumstances and timelines for the Disaster in the lead up to the deaths, were subsequently proven to have fabricated the truth in the 1980 Whiddy Island Tribunal Report. Accordingly the Inquests are utterly unreliable, and the letter explains that the Attorney General is 'obliged' to order new Inquests.

In the letter, Mr Kingston also states that the Government had ordered the Co Cork Coroner to destroy the file, which he refused to do. Mr Kingston also explains that further evidence of malpractice by some Gulf Oil employees on the Island had emerged in 2022.

In addressing An Taoiseach, Minister Ryan and Minister

Donohoe collectively, Mr Kingston has demanded that they publish two reports that the Department of Transport have 'buried', one by barrister Roisin Lacey of August 2010 and one by Captain Steve Clinch of July 2021 that conclusively show that Ireland has been in deliberate breach of international regulation, and European regulation, meaning that no maritime investigations in Ireland have been carried out correctly, resulting in a CJEU Judgement against Ireland in July 2020.

Repeating what he said on Sunday with Miriam, Mr Kingston has said that as a consequence, this has resulted in further death.

He says; "this is a doubling down on grief, by utterly disrespecting the lives that were lost in 1979 for similar Department of Transport failures, when we should never again make such errors, and what of the other poor families who have suffered and lost beloved family members across this nation in recent times because of this." He asks the three Ministers to "own up to the failure and publish the reports".

The families have demanded a public enquiry into these on-going regulatory failures in the public interest and safety, following what they state has been "the most gross display of deliberate failure, causing death, that the Irish State has ever seen".

Local Enterprise Office offers free networking event for West Cork business community

Mayor of the County of Cork, Cllr Danny Collins is encouraging the business community of West Cork to attend a free networking event on Tuesday January 24 at Inchydoney Hotel, Clonakilty. Cork County Council's West Cork Local Enterprise office will host this event to help customer facing businesses in West Cork develop resilience going into 2023.

This two-hour event will see speakers such as James Burke of James Burke & Associate, who has many years of experience in owner operated businesses, helping businesses implement

sales and marketing initiatives. Tom Flavin, former head chef, will discuss how to manage the rising costs of commodities in today's market and outline the different techniques businesses can use to increase overall profitability. Catherine Monaghan, Business Advisor at the Council's Local Enterprise Office Cork North & West will highlight the importance of using social media as a marketing channel for your business.

Mayor Collins highlighted how "It is Cork County Council's intention to continue and support all business the best way we can. If research indicates that specific initiatives will help us to help business grow, then we will provide them. We will also continue to run a full range of training programmes for both men and women so we believe that we are providing a

range of supports that will suit everyone's requirements."

Keynote speaker James Burke stated "while 2023 will definitely bring challenges, many businesses are re-examining their plans to build more resilient models and staying ahead of market. This short networking session will allow consumer facing West Cork businesses a unique opportunity to pick up simple cost-efficient ideas, which they can implement the very next day. The event will be a super opportunity to top up with winning ideas, and a great start of year energy boost".

If you wish to book a place for this event, log on to book your place at www.localenterprise.ie/CorkNorthandWest/Training-Events/Online-Bookings/

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Trading has become increasingly challenging since 2022 for most businesses. This energised and short seminar will allow business owners and managers time to reflect on a long list of ideas ranging from marketing initiatives to profit improvement strategies. Our panel of experts will provide you with insights on how to utilise these going forward into 2023. If you are interested in growing sales and improving profitability, this short in person event is for you.

Speakers
James Burke, James Burke & Associates. James initially spent over 20 years in the retail sector, now works with cross sector businesses from all consumer facing sectors. He is renowned for his easy to implement sales and marketing initiatives and has a strong understanding of owner operated businesses.

Tom Flavin, former Executive Chef of The Strand Hotel in Limerick. Tom thrives in a challenging environment. His areas of focus for this event will include how to manage the rising cost of commodities & energy and how to increase your overall profitability with techniques such as menu engineering.

Catherine Monaghan, Business Advisor, Local Enterprise Office Cork North & West. The aim of Catherine's presentation is to explain and encourage the use of Social Media to enhance business through the marketing channels of building up customer relationships.

To book your place
<https://www.localenterprise.ie/CorkNorthandWest/Training-Events/Online-Bookings/>
Or follow the QR code



THE HISTORY CORNER

Shane Daly

Shane Daly is a History Graduate from University College Cork, with a BAM in History and an MA in Irish History.

Hunger strikes are synonymous with Irish history. Some of our most famous men and women have taken part or died during a hunger strike. A hunger strike is used when all other avenues of communication have broken down. It is generally a last resort undertaken in order to bring attention to a person or party's wishes that have, up until that point, been ignored or dismissed.

There are two different types of hunger strike, wet and dry. Humans can generally last months without food; the longest hunger strike in history is recorded at 94 days by Irishman

Hunger strike: A powerful but precarious weapon

John Francis Crowley. However, the human body can only survive roughly a week without water. The effects of a hunger strike on the physical body of the participant are catastrophic and often irreversible.

Committing to a hunger strike is an astonishing show of belief in one's cause, considering the consequences of even a successful strike when your demands are met, as the aftermath of the strike can be incredibly debilitating.

While a precarious weapon, used strategically, a hunger strike cannot only draw attention to a situation of injustice or violated rights, but also elevate the cause and credibility of those who have chosen to take such a strong and personally risky action, giving hunger strikers more leverage at the negotiating table. Famously in 1981, during a prolonged hunger strike for better conditions and political recognition, 10 imprisoned members of the Irish Republican Army died, including strike leader Bobby Sands (after 66 days) who was elected MP from prison during the strike. The strike radicalised Irish nationalist politics, elevating Sinn Féin into a mainstream political party. Publicity is critical to a strike, especially to escalate pressure as the stakes rise and public attention grows. In the 1981 IRA hunger strikes,

Bobby Sands began first, but other strikers joined one at a time, at staggered intervals to generate maximum pressure and public support.

But how does a strike such as this affect the body? Long-term refusal of food affects most organs and systems in the human body. Such behaviour causes muscle weakness, vulnerability to infections, psychological problems, and, eventually, organ failure. It is estimated that if a protester is healthy before going on a hunger strike, and continues to receive fluids, he or she is at risk of dying from malnutrition after six to eight weeks. However, a protester can die much sooner, after three weeks if they are seriously ill. If refusing fluids too, death can come after one week. While the loss of muscle mass may be significant, a person usually dies because of an infection or organ failure.

While people can survive up to several weeks without food under certain conditions, physical and mental impairment can begin within two to three days. Due to a lack of carbohydrates, the body switches to its fat and protein reserves and starts using them as its main source of energy. This leads to fat and muscle loss as well as changes in the body's processes. Levels of electrolytes also drop significantly, which can

Egyptian-British activist Alaa Abdel Fattah, who has spent most of the last nine years arbitrarily detained, is in critical condition after more than seven months of hunger strike. He announced escalating his prolonged hunger strike by stopping any calorie intake on 1 November, 2022 and water consumption on 6 November. After days in agony waiting for a letter from him at the gates of Wadi al-Natrun prison, on 10 November, a security officer told his mother that he is undergoing a "medical intervention". Source: Amnesty International



lead to impairment of various bodily functions. After two weeks, a person can experience dizziness, weakness, loss of coordination, and a low heart rate. Within the next week, he or she may suffer from vision loss or other neurological problems. After one month or after losing more than 18 per cent body weight, there may be permanent damage to the body. The person may experience difficulty swallowing, vertigo, hearing and vision loss, as well as possible organ failure. After 45 days, there is a high risk of death, mostly due to infection or

cardiovascular collapse.

Even after a protester decides to end a hunger strike, there is the potential risk of 'refeeding syndrome', which occurs as a result of shifts in fluids and electrolytes, meaning that giving too much food or fluids too quickly may be dangerous and potentially fatal. It may include liver dysfunction, heart arrhythmia, and pulmonary, neurological, or other symptoms. Therefore, when a person is coming off of a hunger strike, trained health-care professionals make sure that nutrients are cautiously and gradually introduced

to anyone who has refused food for five days or more.

Next month's column will cover the most famous male Irish republican who took part and ultimately died on hunger strike, Bobby Sands, and also the most famous Irish female republican who took part in a hunger strike but lived, Dolours Price. It will also outline the life changing implications the hunger strike had on Dolours and her sister.

Beloved Baltimore RNLI Coxswain marks well-earned retirement

The retirement of Kieran Cotter, the former Coxswain at Baltimore RNLI, was marked recently with a party held in Jacobs Bar, in the village. While Kieran officially retired at the end of 2020, the station was not able to properly mark the occasion during the pandemic and decided to wait until the entire station and Kieran's family, two of who travelled from Canada, could all meet and celebrate his 45 years of service on the lifeboat crew in Baltimore.

Also marked on the night was the retirement of Baltimore RNLI volunteer crewmember Ronnie Carthy, who stood down after nearly 30 years of service. Ronnie received a book on lighthouses in Ireland, which was signed by the lifeboat crew.

MC for the event was the station's Fundraising Chairperson, Declan Tiernan. Lifeboat crew, station management and fundraisers were joined by family and friends to celebrate Kieran's retirement. Union Hall Lifeboat Operations Manager John Kelleher represented their neighbouring lifeboat station

and made a presentation on behalf of the station, while members of Crosshaven RNLI were also present.

As one of the longest serving Coxswains in the country, Kieran has a remarkable record of service and community commitment.

Speaking at the event, Baltimore RNLI Lifeboat Operations Manager Tom Bushe, paid tribute to Kieran's forty-five years of service on the Baltimore Lifeboat, remembering some of the incredible rescues

he had been involved in over that time and the dedication of the man. "When you think that in 2019, we celebrated the centenary of the first lifeboat arriving in Baltimore, it really puts Kieran's length service into perspective. On occasions, customers would arrive to Cotter's shop to find the store closed and a sign he put on the door saying, 'Gone on lifeboat – Back later'.

"In October 1991, Kieran was awarded a Bronze Medal for a rescue of a Spanish fishing

boat 'Japonica' and its 15 crew, in storm force winds, 20 miles west of the Fastnet. While the lifeboat was returning to Baltimore it had to put into Castletownbere to land an injured crewman and almost immediately the lifeboat received another call to a yacht in difficulty south of the Fastnet. In total the lifeboat had been at sea for 26 hours. Kieran also received the Maud Smith Award for the bravest act of lifesaving for this service.

"In 2008, Kieran and his

crew received recognition from the Swiss embassy for the outstanding bravery and commitment shown during the rescue of Swiss nationals in hazardous conditions and from the United States Congress for the rescue of Rambler during the 2011 Fastnet Race. Kieran was also involved in the callout for the Fastnet Disaster in 1979 when Baltimore lifeboat was at sea for over 24 hours. In total Kieran launched on calls nearly 700 times."

Kieran's successor as station Coxswain, Aidan Bushe, paid his own tribute to him. "Kieran guided us through a lot of tough and challenging callouts and the crew had full confidence in him. We knew that he was able to make those important decisions out at sea, quickly and decisively. He always kept an even keel and was passionate about crew training."

During his speech to the packed room, Kieran wanted to single out his family for all their support. He thanked his wife Brigid and his children Cillian, Dearbhail and Ciaran, for their constant support of his

volunteering for the lifeboat. "I thoroughly enjoyed my time on the lifeboat. It suited me perfectly. When I look back on it, it's down to the people that worked with me onboard the lifeboat. I've had a brilliant crew. They taught me about the sea too, despite my years fishing and in the merchant navy. Down through the years there has been some really sad occasions but some really joyous ones too."

"When you look back, you think about the organisation itself and the crew. They are brilliant and we never wanted for anything. People ask if I ever felt unsafe on the lifeboat and I have to say, I never have in all the times I've been out, and in all the weather conditions."

Kieran was presented with a three-dimensional chart showing the waters around the local area, where the Coxswain would have carried out many calls. He is now a Deputy Launching Authority for Baltimore RNLI.



Kieran Cotter with his wife Brigid and their children (l-r) Cillian, Dearbhail and Ciaran. Pic: Deirdre Bushe

people Farming

Changes in farming

FARMING
IN WEST CORK

Tommy Moyles

In his farming diary, West Cork suckler farmer and columnist with the Irish Farmers Journal, Tommy Moyles covers the lay of the land across all agri and farming enterprises – news, views and people in farming across West Cork and further afield.

In association
with



Dealing with two CAPs

Nothing to do with head gear but farmers find themselves trying to come to terms with two new CAPs this year. The latest version of the Common Agricultural Policy or La PAC as the French would call it, which came into being on January 1, will run from 2023 to 2027. The Climate Action Plan is the other big CAP and further details of that were made known just before Christmas.

Taking the European CAP first; after years in the making and delayed by two years due to Covid-19, farmers began their preliminary dealings with that late last year. This was in the form of deciding whether or not to apply for the environmental scheme ACRES. The Department of Agriculture were budgeting for 30,000 participants between the co-operation and the general versions of the scheme and, by the time the deadline passed at midnight on December 7, 46,000 farmers had submitted their plans. When it was first announced there was some talk in farming circles that the scheme wasn't financially attractive enough to farmers and they wouldn't apply. That was certainly dispelled and farm advisers have to be commended for the work they put in compiling plans for their clients and all eyes now are on the Department of Agriculture to see how they deal with the extra numbers.

Given the increased importance put on the environment, I can't see the Minister for Agriculture turning away farm-

ers who are interested in doing their bit to improve things. If all who applied had targeted the highest payments of €10,000 for the common or €7,300 for the general that will leave less wiggle room but, if more of the submitted plans are at the lower end, then room could be made. There is talk that the powers that be are looking for solutions to what could be seen as a positive problem. It's going to be an interesting one to watch for sure.

After their busy end to the year, farm advisers are unlikely to get much respite until June, as they now move to dealing with the new system of farm payments that will be open for application in mid-February. Given the amount of changes coming, it's worth farmers checking in with their advisers earlier than usual for their own farms.

I attended a pair of the Irish Farmers Journal CAP roadshows late last year. The events had senior Department of Agriculture officials present at each event and following the presentation of a number of case studies they answered a myriad of questions and queries. Each night threw up a different array of questions from farmers trying to get a handle on the new changes.

Fran Morrin, Principal officer for the departments CAP Entitlements and Financial Controls reminded those present that work began on this incarnation of CAP back in 2017 when the European Commission began the consultation process with European tax payers. The end result was a CAP with higher environmental ambitions than any predecessor. I can recall in the early days of those consultations that calls were made by some among the Irish farm organisations that EU defence spending wasn't justified and more money should be directed towards CAP and spent on agriculture and rural issues instead. The Russian invasion of Ukraine last February means any such cut is unlikely next tie out. The turmoil created in the breadbasket of Europe food security is likely to come back into the mix. In that regard, Morrin suggested that work will commence on the next developing the next CAP in the next few years and food and energy security are likely to play a big part in that.

Since it was announced in December, the main talking points from the Climate Action Plan seem to be towards cutting cow numbers. Certainly, that's what it seems like within farming circles and media

outlets. It's an option for both bovine entities but it's only one measure out of 21. Of greater concern to me from the Food Vision Beef and Sheep report.

"The proportion of farmers under 45 has shifted to 20.8 per cent in 2020 from 33.1 per cent in 1991."

It highlighted the changes in rural demographics that have been factors when it comes to succession and also in relation to reducing labour availability on farms. If that rate of decline holds at a similar percentage over the next 30 years it will mean the number of farmers under 45 becomes closer to 10 per cent. In terms of food production, that is a scary figure. Then factor in that in terms of generating an income similar to non-farming peers, that outside of dairy that is much harder to achieve.

It then becomes a question of who will be farming and what type of farms will they be in 2050?

The remit of Food Vision goes to 2030 but that statistic should focus minds on what path is there for Irish live-stock farming in 2050. Those involved need to be mindful that they are not just focusing policy on how things are now and not how things might be in future.

While the focus was on reducing emissions within the livestock sector, the influence of labour availability and succession will impact on the adoption of some of the 21 measures mentioned in the report.

Measures eight and nine pertaining to voluntary reductions in suckler cow numbers have grabbed the headlines and created most reaction. I don't know if those measures deserved as much attention as they received. Suckler numbers were always likely to decrease with the advent of dairy quota but they will always have a significant presence given their ability to convert marginal land into a form of edible protein.

Nitrates action plan changes

This year will see further implementation of the 5th Nitrates Action Plan. Devised to provide a set of measures to protect waters against pollution caused by nitrogen and phosphorous from agricultural sources the primary emphasis is on the management of livestock manures and other fertilisers.

To this end the country is split into four zones, each of which have prohibited periods for spreading fertilisers, slurry, organic manure and soiled water. Cork is in zone A, which means farmers are required to have 16 weeks' worth of slurry storage



Conor Kingston, Drimoleague with his heifer at Skibbereen marts annual fatstock show and sale.

and, from January 1, 2023, the prohibited period for slurry spreading will be from October 1 to January 12. This is a shortening of a fortnight compared to 2021. The prohibited date for spreading chemical nitrogen and phosphorous will run from September 15 to January 26 and the closed period for spreading farmyard manure will be from November 1 to January 12.

Dairy cow changes

Chief among the changes that are likely to impact West Cork dairy farmers are changes to the livestock excretion rates. Up until the end of 2022 nitrogen excretion rates were taken as 89kg/cow and phosphorous was 13kg/cow. Farmers will have to adapt their farm system in order to remain under the existing stocking rate limit in derogation of 250kg N/ha. It is estimated there are about 15 per cent of West Cork herds in each of bands one and three. Those with lower yielding cows will be in a more comfortable position while higher yielding herds will have to look at reducing numbers or finding more land. The bands are based on average milk yield per cow in the previous three years. Each dairy herd will be assigned to one of the bands in the following table.

Three-year rolling average herd milk yield (kg) / N excretion rate (kg/cow) / P excretion rate (kg/cow)		
<4,500kg	80	12
4,501-6,500kg	92	13.6
>6,501kg	106	15.8

Soil sampling

Soil sampling has been compulsory for all derogation farmers since 2022 and this year they will also be mandatory for all tillage farmers as well as



John O'Connor, Kilbrin and Joshua Busteed, Bandon chat over a prize winner at Skibbereen marts annual fat stock show and sale.

livestock farmers stocked over 130kg N/ha. Until soil samples are taken it will be assumed that the phosphorous index is level 4 and they will not be in a position to import slurry from another farm.

Other changes that came into play from January 1, 2023 include a 10 per cent reduction on the amount of chemical nitrogen that can be spread, the maximum rates vary in accordance with the organic nitrogen stocking rates of each particular farm.

Low Emission Slurry Spreading (LESS) has been mandatory for farmers in derogation for a few years and this will now be introduced on a phased basis to all farmers stocked over 100kg N/ha between now and 2025. This year all pig farmers, as well as livestock farmers stocked above 150kg N/ha must spread slurry using LESS, in 2024 farmers stocked

over 130kg N/ha must use this method.

Future plans

An interim review of the Nitrates Action Plan takes place this year and among the conditions set down by the European Commission's extension of the Nitrates Derogation requires a water quality review to take place in 2023. Depending on the outcome there is a chance that the maximum stocking rate will be lowered to 220kg N/ha compared to the current limit of 250kg N/ha. If this occurs it is likely to apply on a river catchment basis. The two catchments of note to West Cork farmers are the Bandon River catchment and the Ilen River catchment. It is worth noting that this is a geographical area and not just the named rivers and their tributaries.

The Northern Ireland Troubles (Legacy and Reconciliation) Bill

While the Clonakilty branch of Amnesty has ceased to be after 38 years, going forward the group will continue to keep readers of West Cork People up-to-date with Amnesty's work.

On December 15, Amnesty International welcomed calls from the United Nations to the UK Government to withdraw its widely opposed Northern Ireland Troubles Bill, which breaches the Good Friday Agreement; and rewrite it in com-

pliance with human rights obligations and in effective consultation with victims and civic society.

The Bill, which was introduced in Parliament in May 2022, passed its second reading in the House of Lords in late November, following insufficient consultations with victims. It will be reviewed at the House of Lords Committee stage, which is expected to take place in January of this year.

The UN experts, Mr Fabian Salvioli, Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence; and Mr Morris

Tidball-Binz, Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial summary or arbitrary executions, had as of December last, been in contact with the UK government and received no response to their concerns. They believe that this Bill would breach the Good Friday Agreement (Belfast Agreement) and "significantly undermine the Troubles-related peace process and set a damaging and concerning example for other countries coming out of conflict".

They said, if approved, the Bill would thwart victims right to truth and justice, undermine the country's rule of law, and place the United Kingdom in flagrant contravention of its international human right obligations.

The Bill also includes a conditional immunity scheme that, as envisaged, has a low threshold required for granting immunity, so that it would be tantamount to a de-facto amnesty scheme.

According to the experts "The Bill will substantially hamper victims access to remedy before criminal and civil courts for the serious human rights violations and abuses suffered. It would further preclude information recovery and reparations for those victims who have struggled for decades to get justice and redress the harm endured".

Grainne Teggart, Deputy Director for Northern Ireland Amnesty said, "This is another significant intervention. It is unconscionable that the UK government would proceed with this damaging legislation given the scale of the opposition facing it. We need legislation that upholds rights, prioritises victims, and ensures the rule of law applies to all. This Bill must be dropped now".

Go to amnesty.ie for more information on current campaigns.

"Pilot program offers potential path for Bantry Hospital" – O'Sullivan

Expanding a pilot patient transfer program currently underway in Limerick and Clare could point the way for stronger services at Bantry Hospital according to Cork South West Deputy Christopher O'Sullivan.

Under protocols being piloted at Clare's Ennis Hospital, ambulances are now able to bring stable patients straight to the medical assessment unit (MAU) at Ennis Hospital, instead of taking them directly to University Hospital Limerick.

The pilot protocol, if successful, could help recast Bantry hospital's role in West Cork's health care coverage, Deputy O'Sullivan said on Tuesday.

"It's being trialled at Ennis, diverting ambulances and bringing patients who aren't critically

ill to that hospital, to help ease the overcrowding at UHL," Deputy O'Sullivan said.

"It has gotten to the stage at Bantry where we need to be radical in our approach, and with that there's an opportunity to revisit how we utilise Bantry.

"For example, Bantry's medical assessment unit is very limited in terms of cases that can present there. If its capacity were increased, it could help divert less urgent care from CUH. We're currently underutilising Bantry for the area it's meant to cover."

Deputy O'Sullivan said any new approach to Bantry Hospital, which was forced to close its injury unit for a day on Monday, must focus on urgently recruiting highly skilled staff, more ambulances and bolstering

the hospital's anaesthesiologist cover.

Earlier this week, UL Hospitals Group Chief Clinical Director said opening Ennis General's MAU on a 24/7 basis is being 'actively considered' as a way of easing pressure in Limerick hospitals.

"Bantry Hospital, with expanded ambulance coverage and staff, would allow this already invaluable hospital service to play a stronger role in Cork's health care apparatus," Deputy O'Sullivan said.

"With the hunt on for a new CEO of the South/South West Hospital Group (S/SWHG), the opportunity is there to double down on Bantry and strengthen its role in the region."

Kinsale Community School principal elected as vice president of European educational group

The principal of Kinsale Community School, Mr Fergal McCarthy has been elected as vice president of the European Federation of Educational Employers (EFEE) at its recent general assembly meeting held in Brussels in December.

The European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE) is a European sectoral social partner established in 2009 to represent the interests of employers in the strategic and highly diverse European education sector.

The Federation represents over 50 education employers coming from 22 European countries and is active at all education levels from (pre)-primary, to secondary, vocational



education and training, and higher education and research. As an officially recognised European sectoral social partner, the objective of EFEE, which is based in Brussels, is to represent the interests of education employers at European level and to

contribute to the improvement of quality of teaching and school management through European cooperation and dialogue.

The EFEE mission is to improve the quality of teaching and school management through European cooperation and dialogue.

"This is a great opportunity to bring ideas from Ireland to Europe, to get an insight into best practice in other member states, and where suitable, to import these practices into the Irish educational system," says Fergal, who also serves the National Executive of the Irish Teaching Council and the National Executive of the Association of the Community and Comprehensive Schools.

Christopher O'Sullivan TD

I am delighted to announce that my new **BANDON CONSTITUENCY OFFICE** at Market Buildings, New Road is now open at least 3 days a week and I will host constituency clinics on the first Monday of each month from 10am to 12 noon.

My constituency office in Clonakilty remains open 5 days a week.

If you feel I can be of any assistance, please feel free to contact my team and I.

Constituency Offices:

40 Ashe St, Clonakilty, Co. Cork, P85V308.

Market Buildings, New Road, Bandon, Co. Cork, P72K738.

Email: christopher.osullivan@oireachtas.ie

Tel: 023 88 11011

people Environment : Making a difference



GROUNDLED

MEP Grace O'Sullivan

On January 1, 1973, Ireland finally joined the European Economic Community following a decade of back and forth negotiations.

At that time, our economy was almost entirely reliant on Britain, as was our application to join the European Community. Twice Britain's application

Fifty years of EU environmental action

to join was rejected and ours along with it.

Since then, access to the Single Market has allowed us to diversify our economy and make joint political decisions with our European partners.

At times the European Union, as it came to be named, forced our hand to make difficult decisions. For example, it could well be argued that had it not been for the European Union's enforcement, Ireland would have no environmental legislation at all until the Green Party entered government for the first time.

The EU has undeniably been a game changer when it comes to environmental protections,

since the 1979 Birds Directive, the Habitats Directive that came after and the Water Framework Directive which have guided local authorities and national governments into cleaning up and taking better care of the world around us.

With the advent of the European Green Deal, the EU's response to the climate and biodiversity crises, 2023 is gearing up to be another key moment in the EU's history of environmental protections. The EU has made a number of New Years' Resolutions, but unlike my promise to myself cut down on sugar or swim more regularly, these resolutions are legally binding.

The Biodiversity Strategy commits to protecting a massive 30 per cent of our seas and land by 2030. The government has signed on to this goal, and the legislation for establishing massive Marine Protected Areas in our vast sea area has begun to make its way through the Dáil under the tutelage of Minister Malcolm Noonan. It is so heartening to be able to work on this progress, as it forms the backbone of what I campaigned for throughout the 1980s and 1990s with Greenpeace.

A massive amount of work this year will go into changing how we manage and care for our oceans as an island nation. This year we will set up a new

government agency, MARA, with the task of licencing activities like Offshore Wind development in Irish seas and ensuring that the rules are adhered to.

2023 will also see the passing of a Restoration Law at EU level, which will require the restoration of damaged habitats and ecosystems such as peatlands and seagrass beds. This is intended to encourage governments to take a proactive approach to environmental protection, and to put real value on taking care of our most vulnerable ecosystems.

I go swimming at least once a week if I can at home on the beach in Tramore, County

Waterford and I know that along with many sea-swimmers (many of whom took up the habit during Covid) I will be much more at ease knowing that we are taking better care of our seas and oceans this year.

I have the pleasure of writing this from the new constituency office on Washington Street in Cork City, another great city of seafarers. The office will bring a concrete footing to the environmental movement in Cork, and while a lot of work remains to be done on the space itself, I encourage you to keep an eye out for events and initiatives on ocean protection and activism taking place there in the coming year.

people Environment : Making a difference

Slow fashion, sewing machines and Sally gardens

Once upon a time the words sustainability and slow fashion were not in use at all. It was just how clothes were made.

Sonia Caldwell reflects on what we lost even though this time was not so long ago and how we can reclaim some of these skills.

As someone who has not yet reached my 50s, I can recall that my mother would have made us clothes when we were young and the sewing machine was regularly out in the house. Sewing was also a part of the average school week and most primary school teachers had these skills to pass onto children.

Going further back, flax was grown extensively in West Cork and alongside this was a strong linen industry. At the time the flax industry was also subsidised by the English government. Several factors then started to change everything. Cheaper flax from abroad, which was made possible by better transport, cheap cotton made available by the slave trade, and then more recently the massive move to fast fashion outlets, which is made possible by transport powered by oil amongst other factors.

What we lost was huge – the skills to make one of the basic requirements of life – our clothes and we also lost the presence of local businesses that were part of

the fabric of every village, town and city.

The clothes themselves were more expensive but the quality was way above most of what we see in fast fashion outlets. And importantly you only made, or bought, a couple of items a year and they lasted as the fabric was high quality and well made.

Tamsin Blackburn makes clothes from quality linen and sells them at Skibbereen and Schull markets and also from her website www.tamsinblackburn.ie.

We are delighted to have her come to Kilcoe Studios in Ballydehob to pass on skills to those that wish to start or restart and old interest.

We will have a set of workshops starting in the Spring; these will cover basic techniques like machine skills, pattern cutting and hand sewing. Email events@kilcoestudios.com for more information.

Sally gardens (Coppiced willow) are not necessarily connected to clothes but willow

baskets would have carried the linen cloth to markets in the past. Willow basket makers are still dotted around the country and we are lucky in Cork to have a handful of skilled basketmakers. One of these is Rosemary Kavanagh (www.wildrosebasketry.ie) and she will come to Kilcoe Studios in Ballydehob to do a talk and presentation on growing willow. Those who wish to do basketmaking as a hobby or part of their creative work would find this a very important source of information but also many gardeners can use coppiced willow in various practical and creative ways will get all sorts of tips from this talk. You will also get a set of cuttings to take away with you and a handout with information.

Other Spring craft workshops taking place are listed below. If you are interested in joining the mailing list for a newsletter about upcoming workshops and events taking place in Kilcoe Studios in Ballydehob, email events@kilcoestudios.com or text 087

0667871 to receive updates or to book a workshop.

ST BRIGIDS'S CROSSES
Celebrate this day with the tradition of making a cross from local rushes. With Anna Crudge, Wednesday, February 1, 2.30-4pm, €15.

MAKING YOUR OWN CLOTHES

For complete beginners with no, or very little, previous experience who want to learn to make clothes for themselves or their family. The initial project is to sew a simple skirt – more details by request. With Tamsin Blackburn. Tuesday evenings 6.30-9pm. Four classes starting Tuesday, February 7, 2023. €130 for the course. Places limited.

GROWING YOUR OWN WILLOW AND BASKETRY – Illustrated talk
Including willow cuttings and a planting guide to take home. With Rosemary Kavanagh. Saturday, February 11, 2.30-4.30pm, €35.

RUSH WEAVING
Making a small basket using common river rushes with Sonia Caldwell. Saturday, March 4, 2.30-5pm, €35.



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Spring Craft Workshops coming up
[email events@kilcoestudios.com](mailto:events@kilcoestudios.com)
www.kilcoestudios.com

Home energy-saving workshop aims to save you money

The best things in life are free... Unfortunately, energy (the life blood of our economy) is not among them. As we all know, prices are going through the roof. It is increasingly expensive to get from A to B, pay our electricity bills, and heat our homes.

But did you know that you can shave 20 to 30 per cent off your home energy costs with simple practical measures?

A Sustainable Energy Community was started around a year ago in Skibbereen with the goal to create Ireland's first net zero town. Net Zero Skibbereen aims to reduce the local energy-related carbon emissions by 55 per cent by 2030 and to net zero by 2040, in a socially just manner. The Energy Master Plan to achieve these goals is being finalised at the moment and will be launched soon.

Following a successful transport energy workshop in the Library in Skibbereen facilitated by

Katie Mann (Cycle Sense), Net Zero Skibbereen is holding an interactive home-energy saving workshop in the same location in January.

It will look at how to reduce your energy consumption and costs, help you understand where most of your energy cost is spent and where to look for savings. It will cover heating systems, hot water, kitchen appliances, lighting, and other domestic energy uses. The focus will be on cost-saving measures that don't require spending money. A future workshop will look at ways to invest money to save energy.

Apart from reducing energy demand and household costs, a further benefit is a reduction of the carbon emissions that drive runaway climate change and biodiversity loss. An absolute necessity if we want to move toward a more stable and sustainable world and improve our local air quality and health.

The Sustainable Energy

Authority of Ireland (SEAI) was set up to further that transition, which is clearly increasingly relevant. 2022 was the hottest year on record in Ireland. SEAI is making more grants available (for homeowners, community groups, public bodies, businesses). A network of hundreds of Sustainable Energy Communities is starting to emerge all over Ireland to 'create a cleaner energy future', including West Cork, for instance in Kinsale, Bandon, Castletownbere, Dunmanway, Sherkin, and now also Skibbereen.

Please join us in improving our environment and reducing your energy costs.

The event is free. All are welcome.
Practical Tips to Reduce Your Energy Costs
Saturday, January 21, 3-4.30pm, Skibbereen Library
Speaker: Liam McLaughlin

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people Environment : Making a difference

West Cork's dawn to dusk bird race restarts

After a break of three years, the West Cork Branch of Birdwatch Ireland will once again hold its annual dawn to dusk bird race on Sunday, January 29. Teams of four will spend the day driving around an area of West Cork trying to record as many bird species as possible. This is always an exciting and enjoyable day, with the potential to record more than one hundred species of bird.

The race area stretches from Ring Pier in the east to Rosscarbery Pier in the west and all south of the R600 and the N71. It is open to everyone, from the very experienced birder to the very inexperienced, and all have an opportunity to win the coveted trophy! All-in-all this is a fun day out and a great opportunity to see lots of bird species and get familiar with one of the best birdwatching locations in the whole country.

If you are interested in taking part in the Bird Race, please register your team by email or text/WhatsApp to Nicholas Mitchell (details below) or on

the morning of the race before 8:15am at the starting point. Registering your team beforehand will help greatly with catering after the event. For those who do not have a team of four, but want to take part, register your name and the Branch will try to put you with a team.

Race entry is €10 per person. This includes finger food in O'Donovan's after the Race and any surplus will be donated directly to Cape Clear Bird Observatory.

A checklist of birds with a list of the rules and a race area map will be provided on the day.

Race start: 8:30am sharp at Scally's SuperValu car park,

Clonakilty

Race finish: 6pm sharp at O'Donovan's Hotel, Clonakilty

Contact details for registration and enquiries: Nicholas Mitchell. Email: treasurer@birdwatchirelandwestcork.ie. Mobile: 087 121 5256.



BirdWatchIreland
West Cork Branch
www.birdwatchirelandwestcork.ie



Female Stonechat. Pic: Nicholas Mitchell



GOING GREEN

Lauren Guillery

Lauren Guillery is a musician, horticulturist and crafter with a keen interest in sustainable living and the natural world. Here she shares tips on how to be more environmentally friendly.

January wouldn't be complete without new year resolutions. This year, mine are focused on continuing things I've already started: to improve my rather poor knitting skills by hopefully not stopping at the next hurdle, to keep up with my weekly swim in the sea, and to get back to drawing more regularly; I've set a target of drawing something (anything!) at least once a week. Whether I'll maintain these practices is anyone's guess, but by setting my intentions for change I at least have a chance at fulfilling them. If you've been considering changing your habits for the better, here is a list of 50 earth-friendly ways that you can implement right away in your daily life. I hope these inspire you to introduce some easy changes in your routine.

50 new habits for a greener planet

1. Save water by spending less time in the shower.
2. Switch to soap bars instead of using shower gel.
3. Ditch the disposable wipes. Use reusable cloth wipes instead.
4. Swap your plastic toothbrush for a bamboo one.
5. Invest in a good quality razor instead of using disposables.
6. If you use disposable sanity products, switch to reusable alternatives like cloth menstrual pads and panty liners, period underwear, or a menstrual cup.
7. Use handkerchiefs instead of buying individual packets of tissues.
8. 'If it's yellow let it mellow, if it's brown flush it down'
9. Switch to cleaning products that don't contain harmful chemicals. Eco-friendly washing-up liquid and laundry detergent can be purchased in health food shops and some supermarkets, some of which offer the option to refill your bottles.
10. Learn to make your own cleaning products from scratch using lemon or vinegar. I share some simple recipes in my blog post 'A Natural Spring Clean' on my website, which you can find at the bottom of this article.
11. Use a basin in the sink to reduce the amount of water you need to wash the dishes.
12. Use a cloth and a brush with a removable head to do the dishes, rather than disposable sponges.
13. Pledge to recycle properly. Some plastic items like cling film and the net bags
14. Ask your postman not to put advertisements into your letterbox or leave a note on it asking same.
15. Wash your clothes less often, and at lower temperatures. It will make them last longer.
16. Avoid using fabric softener and dryer sheets. They cover clothes in a waxy coating that makes them less easy to absorb water and detergent, and which locks odours and stains into them.
17. Air-dry your laundry as much as possible.
18. 'A stitch in time saves nine'. Repair a tear in a garment before it becomes a bigger problem.
19. Switch the lights off when they are not in use.
20. Bring your own bags when doing your shopping.
21. Pick products that come in glass or cardboard over those that come in plastic. Only 30 per cent of recyclable plastic gets recycled.
22. Bring your own containers to purchase fish, meat from the butcher, or cheese and olives from your local farmer's market.
23. Decline bags from shop assistants even if they insist on giving you one.
24. Nowadays, the easy option is to turn to Amazon to buy anything and everything. Support Irish businesses if the option is available.
25. Reduce the amount of clothes you buy by ideally
26. Choose natural fabrics such as cotton, wool, bamboo, and linen over synthetic materials such as polyester and nylon to limit microplastics entering our waterways.
27. Swap clothes with friends and borrow or rent special occasion wear.
28. Seek second hand items rather than buying new.
29. Bring your own reusable cup for your take-away coffee.
30. Use a reusable bottle to carry water instead of buying bottled water.
31. Keep cutlery in your bag or in the glove compartment of your car so you don't need to use plastic ones when buying a takeaway.
32. Cycle more, make use of public transport when possible, and carpool with friends and neighbours.
33. Fly less.
34. Get into the habit of turning the car engine off rather than keeping it idle when waiting for something or someone.
35. If you're going on holidays or a city break, pack your own toiletries and avoid those offered by hotels as they often get thrown out once you are gone.
36. Bring your own clear plastic bag to put toiletries into when going through airport security.
37. Avoid using hot air hand dryers.
38. Reduce your intake of meat and switch to a vegetarian diet a few days a week.
39. When possible choose seasonal, locally produced fruits and vegetables.
40. Start growing your own herbs and vegetables.
41. Learn to compost your food.
42. Mow your lawn less and keep an area of your garden unmown to provide a habitat and food for wildlife.
43. Herbicide endangers biodiversity. Employ organic methods to keep the weeds at bay in the garden.
44. Plant perennial and biennial plants rather than annuals.
45. Plant a native tree as a gift for a loved one or a new baby in the family.
46. Harvest rainwater to water your plants in the drier months.
47. Use biodegradable bags to pick up your dog's poo and dispose of it in the general waste bin.
48. Switch to cat litter made of wood pellets or tofu.
49. Avoid printing if you can. Use both sides of the sheet if you must and default all printing to black and white.
50. Unsubscribe from mailing lists that clog your inbox and delete emails and data that are no longer needed.

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people NEW YEAR, NEW YOU: Food, Health & Lifestyle

When the mind is right... the body will follow

Award-winning health coach, **Aisling Vaughan** of the 'Ayrie' holistic health and well-being program, gives her tips to help you be your healthiest and happiest self in 2023

Now that the holiday madness is over, I'm sure a lot of us are wanting to get back to feeling human again by re-establishing a good routine. The new year is a lovely, natural way to make way for change in our lives. Health and fitness and one's quality of life is always a big one, of course! When we're feeling a bit worse for wear, it's understandable that we want to feel better as soon as possible. It's easy to commit to a diet and exercising like a mad person in a bid to get 'back on track'. But as a coach, I'm all too familiar with seeing how this surge of motivation might be the very thing that sets you up for failure, especially in the long run. Or as a lot of the women I speak to would say, 'the all or nothing' approach!

Below I've shared some of the things that I teach inside our programme, 'Ayrie'. Hopefully it will set you up for success too and will help you achieve longterm, sustainable results this year.

1. Drop the guilt:

If you've enjoyed your food over Christmas or maybe went a bit OTT...that's ok! It means you're a normal human being just like everyone else! If you can't do it at Christmas, when can you do it? There's no point in dwelling about what you ate between Christmas and New Year. Let's switch our attention to what we could eat between New Year and next Christmas instead! So let's drop the guilt – it's just another thing that will drain our energy and headspace – and let's focus our energy on getting back to winning ways.

2. Have the correct expectations:

Expecting too much too soon in weight loss and health efforts is one way of setting yourself up for failure. If you implement the quick fix, you'll see the quick fail. Guaranteed. Instead of going balls to the wall for the next

six weeks and throwing in the towel when you want a social life again, focus on what you can achieve over six months instead. I'd recommend making improvements in a way that is sustainable and lifestyle-based, as opposed to weight loss efforts that are going to be short-lived and have you back to square one a few weeks later. Ask yourself "can I see myself doing this for the rest of my life?" If so, you're on to a winner. If not, you may need to rethink your approach.

3. Work on your mind:

This is the piece that is always overlooked when it comes to getting results. Your mindset has a huge part to play in your success so don't forget to pay attention to your self talk and emotional wellbeing. Take emotional eating for example. If you lean to food for comfort when you're stressed, overwhelmed, anxious, tired and so on, then no amount of personal training or diet plans will work longterm. You're still left with the same issue. Another example of this is not addressing limiting beliefs. If you always tell yourself you never stick to anything, guess what? You'll never stick

to anything! If you believe you'll never lose weight, you won't. It's called the Self-fulfilling Prophecy – when your actions align with the story you tell yourself. In 'Ayrie', we focus a lot on the person and their mindset because it is essential in moving forward. Don't ignore it!

4. Celebrate your wins:

This ties in with the above. Acknowledging your progress and wins, no matter how small, is an essential part of being in the right headspace. We are all too quick to put ourselves down and ruminate when we 'fall off the wagon'. Always focusing on your downfalls really is a crap way to be because ultimately, we end up feeling like failures and throw in the towel. Imagine if we spoke to our kids or best friend the way we speak to ourselves? Their confidence would be ruined and they'd probably hate us! Instead, I'd recommend 'stacking your wins' and reflecting on the things you DID DO that week – getting a walk or a workout in, making better food choices, getting to bed earlier and so on. Focus on your wins, acknowledge your progress and see how your attitude changes.


Be your own cheerleader. This stuff is supposed to improve your life, not make you feel like a failure.


Overall, the above advice is to help you be successful in your efforts over the next few months. Let this year be the last time you have to start over! Cut out the tips above and stick them on the fridge, or in your diary or somewhere where you'll see them regularly. If you've any questions, feel free to bounce them off me via ashvaughan@ayrie.ie or @coach_ashyv on instagram. I'm always happy to chat.

Ádh mór, best of luck!

Aisling Vaughan is an award winning coach and speaker to women who want to improve their health, lifestyle and mindset. Her program 'Ayrie' (eye-ree) which means 'to rise' in Irish, uses a whole life, holistic approach to health and wellbeing and has worked for hundreds of women around the world. Applications for the programme are now open. See www.ayrie.ie for more details.

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New journeys in the New Year

Something we all say and hear going into January is "I will start that in the New Year". Anam Cara is inviting all bereaved parents to start their journey with them this January. Operating fourteen face to face meetings across the country along with online support, their door is always open to new attendees. CEO Shane O'Dwyer reminds us "that those that come along for the first time can just be present...there is no obligation to speak. The first time joining a meeting can be the toughest part of the journey".

Another journey Anam Cara is launching in January is, 'Miles that Matter'. The challenge is to complete 280,000 steps in the month of February. People can do this any way they wish i.e. 10k steps a day, series of 10k

runs, marathon and so on. Participants register free of charge but are encouraged to fundraise. All participants receive a branded Anam Cara t-shirt and are fully supported on their fundraising journey. Contact Jamie on j.conway@anamcara.ie for further information.

On Tuesday, January 17, Anam Cara will hold their West Cork meeting in Mill Court, Mill Place, Bandon @ 7:15pm. They welcome any bereaved parent, regardless of the age of the child or circumstances of death to the meeting, free of charge.

Registration is not required to attend the meeting. Anam Cara would welcome any bereaved parent in West Cork and surrounds. Anam Cara can be contacted on 085 2888888 or by email info@anamcara.ie

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Aisling Vaughan
FOUNDER



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people NEW YEAR, NEW YOU: Food, Health & Lifestyle

Empowering healing through matwork Pilates

It is essential that we move, essential to our strength and wellbeing, both mentally

and physically. And often it is only when our capacity to move is somehow hampered, or we

are limited through injury or acquired weaknesses that we really appreciate just how much we love to move. Movement is life. And quality movement, learned through regular Pilates practice, whether matwork or equipment based, can significantly improve quality of life.

Pilates exercises are a foundation for all movement, whether it be functional daily activities or sporting endeavour. No matter your age or condition, you need a strong and stable core to help prevent injury and allow for efficiency of movement – “physical fitness is the first requisite of happiness” as Joseph Pilates was fond of saying. We want to be able to move through our days pain-free where possible, to feel strong and capable and well. So, what happens when things go wrong, when we get injured, when poor posture and sedentary occupations impact on our backs and joints and we still have a hundred-and-one things to do in our day and we are moving with pain and discomfort? It is human nature to move away from pain in whatever way we can and many of us may find ourselves popping painkillers to cope with our daily objectives. Many of

us simply don't know how to remedy the situation. Even just one hour of Pilates a week can make a massive difference to this picture. Learning how to work your core properly is a game changer for many.

Lorraine Dufficey has been teaching Pilates for nearly 20 years, starting in 2005 in Skibbereen and Clonakilty, at a time when few had heard of the method in West Cork. She teaches matwork classes in Clonakilty, Rossmore and Leap and provides individual sessions on reformer, cadillac and wunda chair in her home studio in Rossmore. She is a qualified neuromuscular therapist and fascial therapist.

“I started attending Lorraine's Pilates classes back in September of this year and it has made a massive difference. Prior to this, I had months of waking up every day with lower back/pelvic pain. Often I would need paracetamol before the day was over, such was the discomfort I was in. Literally after the very first class there was an improvement and I no longer wake up in pain and rarely have discomfort at all. I am delighted with the fact that I have recently been able to return to running without any ill-effect when only a couple of months previously I had resigned myself to the fact that I may never run again without significant discomfort.”

M. Hurley, Clonakilty

The joy of matwork Pilates particularly, lies in its simplicity and ease, it's just you and your mat. And once learned, you can practise at home without any need for equipment should you wish. Matwork classes are a wonderful introduction to Pilates, providing connection, camaraderie and deeper learning as the teacher responds to the varied needs of the class. Find joy in movement once more.

Lorraine Dufficey
www.westcorkpilates.ie
FB WestCorkPilates
IG lorraine_westcorkpilates



WEST CORK PILATES JANUARY SCHEDULE 2023

Monday: St Mary's Hall, Rossmore
7:30pm Foundation level, strengthen & stretch

Tuesday: The Studio, Spiller's Lane, Clonakilty
9:45am Fundamentals, strengthen
11:00am Pilates for Seniors

Wednesday: Leap Hall, Leap
7:30pm Core conditioning

Thursday: The Studio, Spiller's Lane, Clonakilty
6:15pm Fundamentals, strengthen & stretch
7:15pm Advancing Pilates

Friday: The Studio, Spiller's Lane, Clonakilty
9:45am Advancing Pilates

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Contact **Lorraine (086) 3670478**
lorrainedufficey@gmail.com
IG: lorraine_westcorkpilates

When is the right time to start a family?

This is a difficult question and the reality is that for many there is no perfect time.

Contraception has been an amazing invention for women giving us the opportunity to establish careers and live our lives fully before starting a family.

Many women are aware that if they want to have children that they should start before they are 40.

I feel this global advice is very misleading because many women are unaware that after stopping contraception it can take time for hormones to come back into balance, maybe even a couple of years and, at about 32 years female hormones will significantly drop, making age a significant factor with fertility continuing to decline as we age.

For these reasons it is important to give yourself time

and to be aware of the therapies that will help support fertility or treat infertility when the time is right for you.

Acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine have been used for centuries to support fertility, treat infertility and maintain a healthy pregnancy. It has become much more common to find acupuncture used in conjunction with western medicine with GPs often making couples

aware of the benefits.

Acupuncture, moxibustion and Chinese herbs have been shown to be so effective that they are an integral part of assisted reproduction and IVF therapies within the top fertility clinics around the world.

Acupuncture treats conditions like PCOS, endometriosis, pelvic inflammatory disease and menopause.

It relieves pain and stress, regulates body temperature and promotes hormone balance. It helps women to conceive naturally by restoring natural cycles, supporting follicle development, stimulating ovulation, building up the lining of the uterus, encouraging implantation and pregnancy.

Although acupuncture is immensely powerful, the truth is that it can take a number of menstrual cycles to help a woman regulate her periods, ensure that she is ovulating and that her body is ready to get pregnant and sustain a healthy pregnancy.

When you are proactive about seeking help there is much less pressure for a treatment to work immediately and, as stress is counterproductive, it is important to give yourself the



Amanda Roe
Trauma therapist
& Mind coach

Amanda Roe is a Clinical Hypnotherapist and Acupuncturist. She uses a range of holistic therapies including guidance around food to improve fertility, emotional and mental health and support natural recovery from trauma, eating disorders and other mind/body illness. For more information or to book a session visit www.roehealth.ie or call/text Amanda on: 087 633 1898.

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gift of time.

Painful periods, PMT, irregular cycles, anxiety and depression are all signs of hormonal imbalances that can be treated naturally with acupuncture without side-effects.

Therefore if you are a woman in your 20s or 30s who wishes to have a family someday or are ready to make your gynaecological health a priority, working with an acupuncturist will support better health and wellbeing and make fertility easier for you when the time is right.



people NEW YEAR, NEW YOU: Food, Health & Lifestyle

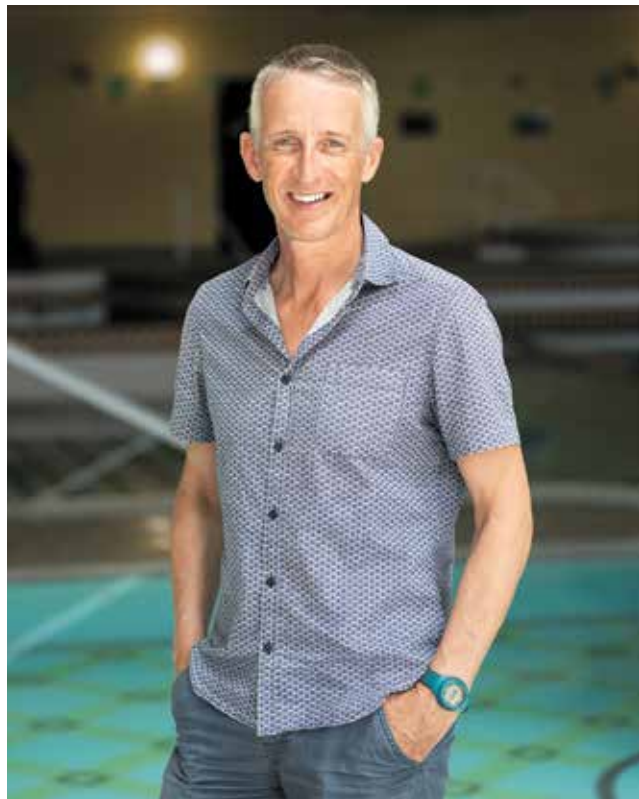
Small changes can effect big change

Most of you is great – it's what your friends and family love. However, for many people there is a small change that would make a big difference in their lives shares **Tom O'Herlihy**, Leisure Club Manager at the Clonakilty Park Hotel. And small changes have surprisingly big effects.

The three main things we hear in the Leisure Centre are: 'I'm heavier than I'd like to be'; 'I'm not fit enough'; 'I can't really swim or swim well enough.'

One stone overweight is cutting out two biscuits per day for a year. The theory is fine, but can you wait a year?

And are you sure it's just the biscuits? Being overweight is caused by lots of things; genes, lifestyle, comfort eating, shift-work, Christmas. However it is caused, it comes down to eating more than we need for



the work we do. Eating less though, is not easy. There are thousands of diets and most do work if you can stick to them.

Getting fit is very specific – fit for running, hillwalking, swimming or chasing toddlers?

You can be very fit at one thing and completely unfit at another. Decide what you want or even if you care.

Swimming is hard. There is a skill bit and a fitness bit and you have to work on both. A

lot of people tell us they can do a few strokes or a length but no more. Usually, these people need to work on both by making just one small change in their technique and practising 10 strokes or maybe a length extra each day.

So what could you do? Pick one option from the list below. Or one from each section if you want!

Weight:

- Have a big, protein breakfast, – stops you eating junk during the morning.
- Stay hungry for 30-60 minutes before you eat – helps you learn when you are really hungry and not eating for comfort or from boredom
- Stop eating for seven minutes in the middle of each meal – helps you learn how much you really need. Half way through is often enough – you don't need to clear the plate. The guy who made the plate had no idea how hungry you are!

Exercise:

- Walk 800 steps each day, same time, outside. This builds routine, pumps blood around your body, to your brain as well as the exercising muscles and is great for your core/posture – and you can progress it if you want.
- Press-ups every morning straight out of bed. Start with what you can do, increase by one every three days. (Or burpees? Once you get the blood flow going you will cheer up, think faster and feel stronger)
- If you are a runner, run 500 metres extra every day or the same distance in 30 seconds less every day.

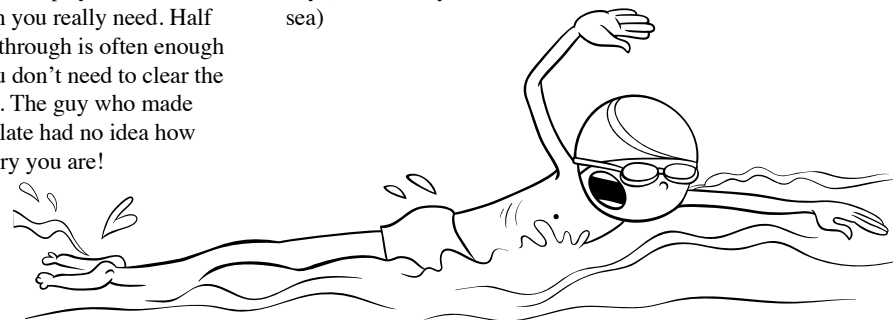
Swimming:

- Swim 10 strokes extra each day (20 extra if you're in the sea)

- Slow your stroke and try to cover more distance with each stroke, (longer strokes, pushing more water back)
- Swim as many strokes as you can in front crawl/freestyle, then recover in breast-stroke or back stroke, and keep alternating. If you're in the pool, you can recover by walking back down the deck then go again.

All of these are small changes. None should require you to make drastic lifestyle or timetable changes. But, if you do them every day for even a month, you will see and feel positive change. After the month, you can decide whether to keep it on or change it up.

Go on, give it a try! It's only a month.



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MON SPINNING 7.00am – 8.00am KETTLEBELLS 10.00am – 11.00am YOGA (Barbara 083 0733060)* 5.30pm – 6.30pm ZUMBA (Flavie 087 6548138)* 6.45pm – 7.45pm	TUE HIIT CIRCUITS 10.00am – 11.00am AQUACISE 11.00am – 11.45am CORK CITY BALLET (Alan 087 7851225)* 3.30pm – 7.30pm SPINNING 6.30pm – 7.30pm MEN'S CIRCUITS 6.30pm – 7.30pm	WED SPINNING 7.00am – 8.00am MINI CIRCUIT 10.00am – 11.00am YOGA (Barbara 083 0733060)* 5.30pm – 6.30pm ZUMBA (Flavie 087 6548138)* 6.45pm – 7.45pm	THUR AQUACISE 10.00am – 10.45am SPINNING 6.30pm – 7.30pm AERIAL YOGA (Barbara 083 0733060)* 7pm – 8pm AERIAL YOGA (Barbara 083 0733060)* 8.15pm – 9.15pm	FRI SPINNING 7.00am – 8.00am CIRCUITS 10.00am – 11.00am ZUMBA GOLD (Flavie 087 6548138)* 10.30am – 11.30am TEEN FITNESS 4.30pm – 5.30pm BELLY DANCING (Mila 086 4551257)* 7pm – 8.30pm
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PRICES

MEMBERS: €5 per class, 10 class pass €45 **NON-MEMBERS:** €8 per class, 10 class pass €72. Teen classes €5.
The jungle gym (normal opening hours) is available to members doing any class.
 Classes can be booked through the "Clonpool" app or by contacting 023 88 34387.

SAT

AERIAL YOGA (Barbara 083 0733060)*
9.15am – 10.15am

people NEW YEAR, NEW YOU: Food, Health & Lifestyle

Welcoming touch with the help of a shaman

Teertha Ordish wears many hats: The psychospiritual shamanic and tantric guide is also an empowerment and conscious sexuality educator; intimacy, relationship and pleasure coach; and personal growth catalyst, and bodyworker. All of these roles

involve working with individuals, couples and groups through personal sessions, journeys, trainings and workshops, where she empowers her clients and participants to create real lasting changes for themselves, their relationships and their lives. "From a shamanic under-

standing of the nature of reality, when you carry unresolved trauma and believe non-truths about yourself whilst identifying with limiting belief systems about your place in the world and what's possible for you, you are subconsciously restricting the natural flow of your life force/chi/kundalini/prana," she says. "When this happens you feel separated from yourself and the natural world around you, because basically you have disconnected from your essence; the most sacred, natural part of yourself."

"Limiting your life force causes energetic blocks in the electromagnetic/luminous field, which (when left unresolved) will begin to cause adverse symptoms in the physical body. Even more challenging is that when you feel detached from yourself and your naturalness, it's impossible to feel truly in touch with others," explains Teertha.

Thankfully however, according to Teertha, we can learn to rewire.

"We can train to become more conscious, to begin to identify with and create new belief systems that create powerful and productive results in our



Teertha Ordish

lives and our relationships. We can learn to heal and grow on multiple dimensions, including emotionally and spiritually, far beyond the reaches of what's possible in talk-therapy alone."

Teertha explains that, "When you let go of shame and stop believing there is something wrong with you, with your limits, or what you desire, it quiets the mental chatter and enhances your ability to fully embody your authentic self. True self acceptance reveals you are a gift, and so is your life. It is exciting and wonderful to discover all the possible ways you can express that gift, for yourself and for others."

Teertha is currently co-developing 'Somatic Consent UK and Ireland'. This is a training system and personal development journey that ripples into all aspects of life. Its foundation centres around an engagement system that teaches how to make empowered choices, to learn about consent and boundaries, to become aware of unconscious behaviours used as survival strategies. It teaches you how to stop bypassing yourself and giving your power away; to rewire and learn to feel more (including pleasure); to understand connection, safety and the nervous system; to learn new communication skills, and

to learn how conscious, consensual, desired touch can be a true gift for you and your body.

"As a baby, touch is the first language of communication. It links us to our body and our feeling centres. Desiring touch and physical contact is one of the most natural things for a human. Yet many people feel shame and are frightened of judgement for these natural feelings, and are therefore deprived of the touch they need to regulate and calm their nervous system," explains Teertha.

Teertha teaches this personal development work as both a personal journey and a group training. She will be running the next in-person group foundation training of the methods of Somatic Consent in Ireland in March. There will be a residential weekend option (location to be confirmed) and a six-week course, one evening per week over six weeks in Ballydehob, also starting in March. For more information, check out: www.teerthaordish.com/events/

To book in for the training or if you would like to arrange an appointment for a consultation to see how Teertha can support or guide you, you can contact her at: info@teerthaordish.com



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FOR INDIVIDUALS, COUPLES AND GROUPS

Baltimore pool jumps into 2023 with a splash



It was an eventful and challenging 2022 for the Wild Atlantic Pool and it ended not with a bang but with a chilly squeak. However, they are a determined and resourceful crew at the Centre and this vital local resource is back up and running again.

2022 brought financial worries and the prospect of the pool closing down entirely. However, with a successful pledge run and having caught the attention of various local politicians and grant providers there was a renewed sense of optimism and determination. Many of the pledges were fulfilled and those outstanding are being encouraged to honour their promise to keep the pool

operational. By December it looked as if they had weathered the worst of the storms but then it was the ice that caused new trials. The deep freeze at the end of December overwhelmed one of the heat pumps, an issue that affected a number of pools in the country. And so it was with great regret that the final lessons and the Christmas Party had to be cancelled. To make matters worse the necessary spare part was coming from the UK and few tradesmen were working over Christmas. Throughout the holiday season staff and volunteers tried to find ways to get the pool and building up to temperature; many of them with the flu. Finally and only a day later than promised, against all odds, they succeeded in reopening the pool for 2023.

The Pool is still waiting for the spare part and the juggling of energy sources means they have to retain the heat for the pool and building so there is

no jacuzzi but the sauna and the steam room are up and running. While the pool was closed, the opportunity was taken to redecorate the men's changing rooms, the reception area and part of the main hall ceiling. A new office area was also built and there are further plans for renewal and redecoration, including a fresh coat of paint outside when the weather allows.

School and public lessons have restarted together with the ever popular aqua aerobics and fit for life. There are toddler and adult swimming lessons or you can make use of the numerous private sessions. If you want to get on their waiting list for children or adult lessons email them on info@baltimorepool.ie

There are plans ahead for further gym sessions for both adults and children. Most exciting is the introduction of underwater hockey which will be launching shortly. Under-

water hockey is an energetic and exciting sport only just beginning to become popular in Ireland and the Wild Atlantic Pool is ideal for it due to its size and depth. Once the elusive part has arrived the jacuzzi will be back open and combined with the sauna this is a wonderful way for even those hardy outdoor swimmers to relax after a Loch Hyne swim.

The Baltimore Christmas Swim was a great success raising over €600 and the staff would like to thank everyone for taking part. Throughout the year there will be a number of fundraisers, some more energetic than others! The Wild Atlantic Pool continues to be an important and vibrant centre of the local community and we all hope it remains so for a long time. Please do honour your pledge if you made one and you can find schedules and membership process at www.baltimorepool.ie



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YOUR LOCAL POOL

people NEW YEAR, NEW YOU: Food, Health & Lifestyle

Take yourself on a Tuscan adventure



As the colourful Christmas lights are turned off and packed away for another year, instead of turning your thoughts to denial, think instead of a villa set amongst the undulating hills of Tuscany surrounded by olive groves and geometrically aligned vines...and picture yourself there.

People familiar with Caravino of West Cork Food Festival fame will have already travelled virtually through Tuscany in the company of Fionnuala Harkin and Maeve Bancroft whilst tasting wines and eating delicious regional food. More recently, Fionnuala, a qualified and passionate wine educator, has hosted groups around a large workbench in her husband's toolshed @wineshedwestcork. From there, they voyage imaginatively through various vineyards whilst sampling wines and nibbling cheese and charcuterie.

Fionnuala and Maeve have

paired up again and are delighted to host their first trip (for real!) to Italy, bringing 14 food and wine lovers along with them for the experience. The group will travel to Tuscany, as the rolling hills house some of Italy's best-known appellations, as well as lesser known but equally delicious and interesting vineyards with whom Fionnuala has a connection. Fionnuala and Maeve are planning an immersive experience into the region's fabric and history, a region that has inspired so many artists, writers, and winemakers.

"We will stay in a gorgeous villa with pool and views across the vines as we dine al fresco in the warm night air, drinking wine, socialising, and talking over the events of the day," share the women.

"The days will include a welcome dinner; day trips to small family-owned vineyards taking in the stunning countryside and honey-coloured stone buildings with tastings followed by lunch paired with the wines; a cookery class of Tuscan fare in the villa by a local woman who will also prepare other meals for us; a tour of the winery and olive operation

at the villa."

Other highlights include a celebratory meal paired with wines towards the end of the week when Fionnuala will again share her knowledge of the terroir, the growers, and makers and insight into what it takes to make great wine. "Tuscans work hard to produce such wonderful wines; they tend, prune, weed, harvest, make and age so that we can taste, enjoy, and share," explains Fionnuala.

It will be an inspirational setting with interesting characters, so is a wonderful opportunity to explore creativity. For those interested in exploring their inner writing muse, Maeve will be offering two creative writing workshops during the week. "There will be much to draw on to enrich our writing lives as we gather sensory details from our Tuscan surroundings. This will be a positive and nurturing step into writing with prompts to get us started," she says.

At the heart of the retreat is the benefit of time and space spent with likeminded people so there will also be opportunities for people to chill, swim, read by the pool, write, or take some

Why not join us?

Maeve & Fionnuala are back in **The Caravino** and we're going to **Tuscany**

June 10 - 17, 2023

Staying in a 16th Century luxury villa with vineyard visits, wine dinners, writing workshops, and chillin' by the pool.

@wineshedwestcork

Email for details:
thecaravino@gmail.com

time for a coffee and walk to Barberino Val d'Elsa, the local medieval village, only half a mile away.

Once the week is done, you'll have many pleasurable memories and new knowledge to see you through the winter.

Places are limited: To get details please email thecaravino@gmail.com. When you sign up you will be asked for a deposit to secure your spot. Fionnuala and Maeve will follow up with regards to the balance once your spot is confirmed.

Where: Villa in the heartland of Tuscany between Florence and Siena

When: June 10-17, 2023

Who: Fionnuala, Maeve and 14 other likeminded people who enjoy food, wine, conversation, conviviality and creativity.

Head to Toe Therapies for your wellbeing

Established over 10 years ago by Tracy McCarthy, Head To Toe Therapies offers a variety of services to

maintain you and your family's health and wellbeing. Head to Toe covers therapies from holistic, physical and even osteopathy at its premises in Gullane, Clonakilty. The treatment rooms are spacious and airy, with private parking available outside the building.

Booking an appointment is easy through the website, allowing you to choose your therapy and book available time slots. www.headtotoetherapies.ie

The treatments listing is a guideline and, after an initial consultation, the therapy will be tailored to meet the needs of the client.

Head to Toe Therapies is open seven days a week with late appointments. For queries or additional information email receptionheadtotoe@gmail.com or see the website.

The Team

Caroline Neville is a Holistic Therapist offering Swedish, deep tissue, holistic, hot stone, head and pregnancy massage, aromatherapy, holistic facials and ear candling. She is also a trainee reflexologist. Book online or contact 086 2709173.

Lorraine O'Hanlon is an Osteopath/Cranial Therapist offering sports injury massage, dry needling, sports cupping, os-

teopathy and cranial osteopathy. Book online or contact Lorraine directly on 087 227 5500.

Tracy McCarthy is a Holistic and Physical Therapist offering Swedish, deep tissue, sports, holistic, hot stone, head, pregnancy and baby massage, reflexology for adults and children, aromatherapy, holistic facials, ear candling, Gua Sha and oncology therapies. Book online.

And finally, the newest member is Matthew McCarthy, a Massage Therapist offering Swedish, deep tissue and sports massage. Book online at www.headtotoetherapies.ie



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people NEW YEAR, NEW YOU: Food, Health & Lifestyle

New year health habits that can benefit our eyes and ears

Eat your vitamins

Many use the New Year as a time to lose a few Christmas pounds and introduce healthy food habits. Specsavers is encouraging people to look for foods that are rich in eye-health boosting vitamins. For example, spinach and kale, are rich in lutein which is essential for eye health, and oily fish such as salmon, is packed full of omega-3, which is great for eyes. Kiwi gives a burst of A, B and C vitamins, which help maintain healthy cells and tissues, meanwhile peppers contain zeaxanthin which help to absorb potentially damaging light.

Exercise more

Whether it's hitting the gym, or trying that new Zumba class, exercise is the top of many people's resolution lists. Mr Hickey says: "Not only is exercise great for keeping fit and feeling great, research indicates that our lifestyle also has an impact on our vision. Good cardiovascu-

lar health could be associated with lower risk of eye disease, which means staying active and eating healthy could stave off eye conditions such as diabetic retinopathy.

"While there is still more research that needs to be done in this area, we would suggest that everyone tries to maintain a healthy lifestyle by getting enough exercise and the essential vitamins and minerals they need from a balanced diet, as it can do wonders for health – and if it can help prevent ocular diseases this is an added bonus."

Reduce alcohol consumption

As well as affecting our sleep and our mental health, alcohol can also affect our eyes and ears, which is why using the new year as a chance to cut down on alcohol consumption could be a good idea. Mr Hickey says: "When you lose more fluid than you take in, your body becomes dehydrated. Our eyes can become dry and

irritated, and we can even start to get slightly blurred vision because there are not enough tears to lubricate the eye. The best way to try and combat dry eyes is to rehydrate by drinking plenty of water. Your optician can recommend eye drops that can also help."

Specsavers Antibacterial Dry Eye Compress can be used hot or cold to alleviate symptoms of dry eye, meibomian gland dysfunction (MGD), and blepharitis. Priced at €9.99 the cloth will be available to purchase in Irish stores.

Stop smoking

As the new year comes around there is no better time to kick bad habits, such as smoking. Mr Hickey says: "Studies have shown that smoking can double your chances of developing cataracts, triple the chances of age-related macular degeneration (AMD), increase the risk of uveitis (inflammation of the middle layer of the eye) and dou-

ble the risk of diabetes, which in turn could lead to diabetic retinopathy."

While traditional tobacco smokers remain the most at risk of developing AMD, research also indicates that vapour from e-cigarettes can cause irritation and lead to dry eye syndrome.

Smoking can also damage your hearing, with smokers being as much as 70 per cent more likely to suffer with hearing loss than non-smokers.



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Take time for self-care and wellbeing

Life can be really busy which is why taking time for self-care and wellbeing is one of the best habits to take into the new year.

With partial working from home set to continue in 2023, it's important people remember to take a timeout from screens too. Mr Hickey says: "Our eyes are not designed to be fixated on a single object for a long period of time which is why they can often become strained when we sit at a computer all day. However, the '20-20-20 rule' where you look at something 20ft away, for 20 seconds, every 20 minutes, can help."

Get regular eye tests

Specsavers recently launched the 'State of Ireland's Eye Health Report' in partnership with Fighting Blindness, a patient-led charity with a vision to cure

blindness. The research took an in-depth look into the nation's eye health and the importance of regular eye tests. Specsavers recommends that people have an eye test at least every two years.

Thanks to PRSI benefits, eligible customers can see and hear for free at Specsavers. Customers can avail of one free pair of glasses from the €69 range and a pair of free hearing aids up to the value of €1,000. More recent updates to the PRSI Treatment Benefit Programme means that people aged 25-28 will now only need to work for nine months to avail of optical and hearing treatments which will benefit almost 80,000 young people within this age cohort. Specsavers are encouraging people to enquire about these PRSI benefits when making their appointments.

To find out more or book your next appointment simply head to your nearest Specsavers store or visit www.specsavers.ie.



DIY FITNESS

Tania Presutti

Danish freelance journalist and fitness professional Tania Presutti, delivers a series of efficient DIY fitness exercises you can do at home.

As I look forward to the year ahead, I reflect on the one just past. Not since I first stepped into a boxing ring with the intention to beat my opponent, have I had such a dedicated momentum of training as in 2022. This was the year where my three-year-old obsession with running culminated with completing both my first and second marathon. By sharing my story with you, I hope to inspire you to make your dream a reality, set goals and believe in yourself enough to fulfil those dreams in 2023.

Running a marathon wasn't my dream when I started running back in 2019. I started because

Chasing your goals

it was a convenient way for me to keep fit and get fresh air. After being in a hospital room with my son for almost a year, I needed to move both body and soul. Running was the answer. Minimum investment of time, not having to depend on a trainer or a class and I got the best 'pay-out' in return: Increased fitness, fat burn and mental happiness. About once a week, I would go to the local track and do 10 x 100 metre sprints, followed by a couple of push ups or burpees. It was a fantastic recipe of working at high intensity for a short time, with a big benefit.

I was very content with these short track sessions and it wasn't until Liam suggested doing a 'Miler-program' with him, that I started to even consider doing longer runs.

At first, my longest run was 3 km. It didn't seem to be necessary to run any longer when the goal of the program was to run a fast mile (1.6 km). I remember stating loud and proud that I was only going to run 3 km. That was enough in the summer of 2019. Then autumn arrived and a 5K race took place not far from us. I'm not sure if it was the lure of getting a medal or just to see how I would actually do on the distance that made me sign up, but I did. It was horrible! It was hard, lonely, and my ipod broke after the first five minutes, so I was without music. I remember

running the streets thinking, I had to be there soon, but instead the course just seemed to go on and on. My finish time was within the 30 minutes I had set for myself as a reasonable time, but I was destroyed.

Instead of walking away from running all together, I took part in a new race about two months later. It was a charity race hosted by some of the people who had supported us during our son's hospitalisation. It was another 5 km race and a possibility to get under 25 minutes: A new goal I had set for myself after completing and surviving the first 5K.

On accomplishing that goal, running became a part of my life and routine. Three or four days a week, I would lace up my shoes and go for a short run. I even talked a mom-friend into starting running with me and, in the winter of 2020, I found myself talking us both into joining a local half marathon.

As we trained, our longest distance was 18 km, a long way from the original 3 km I had told the world (or whoever wanted to listen), was the maximum distance I was willing to run. We ran our half marathon in a virtual race during the end of Covid lockdown in May 2021 (no limit of time or distance being spent outside).

This long prologue is to paint you an accurate picture of when and how I started my adventures



with running. I was far from a natural and didn't even enjoy running far (more than 100 metres) when I first sat out. But as I kept finding a new goal, running became a consistent part of my life. And I've taken both pride and joy in lacing up, two to five days a week, through the seasons. Through rain, snow, storm and blasting sun and all the days where the weather is just perfect.

Even as life threw curve balls: sickness, sick child, holidays, family obligations and injuries and forced unplanned off-days on to the schedule, I laced up afterwards. And I am – like most humans – inherently lazy. However the freedom and time outdoors that running provides spoke louder to me than the comfort of sitting down. So, af-

ter each planned or forced break, I got up and started again.

The first seed to run a marathon got planted when I interviewed Jette Schmidt, the woman who runs 100-mile races. During our talk, I mentioned the longest distance I had run was 27 km, which was peas compared to her 160 km. She noted that if I could run the 27 km race, I could run a marathon.

The seed was planted. Could I really run 42.2 km? Running 27 km had been hard, really hard. But so was the first 5 km race. As time passed, the seed took root and I decided to give it a try. And more than a try. I'd find a plan and stick to it to finish my first marathon. Late January 2022, I began following a generic marathon plan from Garmin.

Everything went smoothly until I was hit with Covid in the beginning of March. That took a week off my schedule, then my son got sick and another week was off. I could have thrown down the towel and called it quits, backed down from the marathon and not many people would have blamed me. After all, two weeks without running was going to set my preparation back. But at this point running had become a steady part of my daily life, that as soon as we were both good, I went back on the road. And why not continue with the plan? Longer story told very short: This was how

my marathon preparation went, small hick-ups on the way, but a steady, consistent effort got me to the starting line and four hours later with a big smile and a surprisingly well feeling, body over the finish line.

This is my story, from a 100 metres to 42.2 kilometres. Your dream doesn't have to be about running or even related to physical activity. The same recipe applies: Set a goal and find a plan to reach it. Follow the plan, be consistent. Don't be discouraged by changes, accept them and move on. Turn every setback into a comeback. And remember the most important thing: The journey is as much reward, as reaching the goal.

I hope you have found inspiration here to step by step set a goal, make a plan and make it happen. It is my biggest wish to share the feeling of overcoming and succeeding in the art of goals with you. And if you need someone to be accountable with, share your goal with friends and family you trust to support you. You're also welcome to send me a line, and maybe your story will be on these pages next!

I wish you a brave goal for 2023.

Stories, questions and comments are welcome at: taniaskitchenfitness@gmail.com or via Instagram: @trainwithadane

people NEW YEAR, NEW YOU: Food, Health & Lifestyle

Feel Good on your fitness journey

Feel Good Health and Fitness opened in Clonakilty 18 months ago, bringing a variety of fitness classes to suit different fitness levels and abilities, as well as nutrition coaching for those looking to change to healthier food habits. Lorna O'Regan, the energetic woman behind this successful health and fitness enterprise chats to West Cork People about her motivation and passion for helping people on their fitness journey.

“Exercise and food should make you ‘feel good’, which is why I chose it for the name of my business,” shares Lorna. With an honours degree in Nutritional Science, Lorna is well-equipped to educate people on making the right food choices for better health. The qualified personal trainer has also trained in nutrition and lifestyle coaching, strength and conditioning and yoga so she takes a very holistic and practical approach to wellness.

For people starting out on their fitness journey, it can be daunting, so I make my classes fun and inclusive,” she says. As well as offering one to one personal training, Lorna runs several classes including intervals, circuits, stoga (combining strength and yoga) and senior fitness in Ahamilla, Lisavaired and Courtmacsherry.

By combining her skills as



a strength and conditioning coach and yoga instructor, Lorna has created a stoga class that is slow and controlled yet challenging. A dedicated sea swimmer herself, Lorna has designed the class with the swimmer in mind, giving strong focus to core strength and shoulder mobility. “This class will strongly benefit swimmers as it will allow for greater reach, pull and rotation in the water and hence will help improve stroke efficiency,” she explains.

Lorna is passionate about inclusivity in her classes, so regardless of fitness ability, the classes are suitable for every-

one. “I work my classes on a timer, so everyone works with a pace that suits their body,” she says. “I also show modifications to exercises to help everyone get stronger. So if you’re new, I’ll show you simpler versions, and if you’re very fit, I’ll motivate you to more challenging versions.”

Her senior classes work at keeping people fit and independent in older age, in particular improving balance to reduce risk of falls. These fun and sociable classes also work on strength through bodyweight exercises, soft balls and resistance bands.

This time of year, Lorna’s experience with nutrition means she is busier than usual. She offers one to one nutrition coaching so if you are struggling with your weight or would simply like to eat healthier, then she can help you get on the right track in supporting healthier food habits. “I like to educate my clients on food, for example how understanding food labels and food portioning can help improve their nutrition for better health.”

Bookings can be made through the website www.feelgoodhealthandfitness.ie, through the link on instagram @feelgoodhealthandfitness1 or by simply calling/texting Lorna on 089 4058836.

Lorna’s top tips going into 2023

- Block off a minimum of 30 mins every day for exercise
- Add a new vegetable to your shopping basket
- Surround yourself with positive people
- Get out in the fresh air
- Set yourself a realistic goal for 2023

2023 CLASSES

AHAMILLA Bootcamp Tue 7am Thurs 7am or Tue 7.30pm Thurs 7.30pm	COURTMAC Bootcamp Tue 10am Seniors: Tue 11am	LISAVAIRD Bootcamp Mon 9.30am Wed 7.30pm Stoga Wed 6.30pm
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Call Lorna
089 4058836

OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK



Eileen Cullinane, Phil Price, Christina Mitchell and Barbara Alcock from Kinsale pictured at a special Kinsale Nollaig na mBan event in the aid of Marymount Hospice. Pic. John Allen

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Available in **Organico, Bantry, The Olive Branch, Clonakilty** or ask in your local health store.

Light a fire under your cold

Loaded with nature's top immune boosters and natural anti-inflammatories, Fire Tonic packs a real punch!

Founded by husband and wife Jerome and Jessica McCormick, the herbalist recipe has been made in Cobh since 2019 under the business 'Botanic Revival'.

Carefully chosen root botanicals including horseradish, turmeric, ginger, garlic and onion are added to raw apple cider vinegar for a minimum of one month before being cold pressed, and slightly sweetened with raw honey before bottling.

All the ingredients have their own individual benefits but also work together synergistically, for example piperine in the black pepper is known to increase the bioavailability of curcumin in the turmeric by 1000 per cent.

Turmeric and black pepper along with ginger and cayenne are excellent for supporting digestion as well as being anti-inflammatory. Horseradish is well known to help support sinus and lungs, raw garlic and onion contains allicin, nature's most potent anti-microbial.

This particular recipe has been used by herbalists for decades but the concept of using vinegar and honey dates back to the time of Hippocrates and Dioscorides when 'Oxymels' were formulated for various conditions some of which are still listed today in modern

Pharmacopoeia of Medicine.

"Our Fire fanbase has been steadily growing nationwide," says Jessica. "We have been getting excellent feedback from our customers for a variety of things. For example one repeat user who has been struggling with sinus issues for years has told us that this is the first product they have really felt benefit from. It was incredible to hear this but of course this could vary to the individual."

"We definitely see a boost in sales over the winter season due to the immune boosting properties but also now in summer, as those who suffer with hayfever are finding it beneficial."

Fire Tonic can be enjoyed in a variety of ways according to the makers. "Our favourite way is to have 15ml neat in a shot glass or tablespoon daily to experience the full intensity. If you prefer something a little lighter and sweeter, try having it with apple juice, which has actually been going down really well with our tasters! Simply diluting with water works too or if you would prefer having it with food, try adding it to your next salad dressing or Kimchi."

Should you wish to give Fire Tonic a try yourself, it can be found in a number of stockists in West Cork including Organico Bantry, The Olive Branch Clonakilty or online at www.botanicrevival.ie



HERBAL HEALING

Dr. Rosari Kingston

Dr. Rosari Kingston PhD, M.Sc (Herbal medicine) is a medical herbalist practising in Dr. O'Reilly's integrative clinical practice in Clonakilty as well as Church Cross, Skibbereen. Dr. Kingston's area of research are the healing modalities present in Irish vernacular medicine and she incorporates them, where possible, into her clinical practice. In her clinical practice she specialises in infertility and digestive issues. www.rosarikingstonphd.com

This is a good month to decide if you want to have herbs growing in your garden as the seed catalogues and gardening advertisements whet our interest. So many of the ones used therapeutically may be obtained from the wild but some, such as marshmallow, elecampane and lovage need to be planted to ensure supply.

Culinary herbs need to be planted near the kitchen, as they are best picked fresh. A large tub or a variety of pots will give a sufficient supply for most people. The main herbs here are rosemary, sage, parsley, thyme, garlic, oregano, marjoram, chives, and bay. I have discovered that it is advisable to keep bay in a pot unless you want a 30ft tree in a few years. On the other hand, plant it as a hedge and it will form a dense screen very quickly. However, I am aware that some people have a lot of trouble trying to get bay to grow so it probably depends on soil and shelter.

Planting herbs for health

er that it is advisable to keep bay in a pot unless you want a 30ft tree in a few years. On the other hand, plant it as a hedge and it will form a dense screen very quickly. However, I am aware that some people have a lot of trouble trying to get bay to grow so it probably depends on soil and shelter.

Rosemary needs dry, gravelly soil and most of the above herbs thrive in soil that drains freely. The edge of a driveway may often be the perfect place for these herbs that need free drainage. Also, parsley is ideal planted along borders as its bright green leaf contrasts beautifully with bedding plants. Parsley is a biennial and though it normally seeds itself, it may also die. If this happens on a regular basis for you, be prepared to plant parsley every year to ensure a continuous supply. Parsley is rich in vitamin K (good for blood clotting and bone health), vitamin A (good for vision and immune system) and C (necessary for the growth, development, and repair of all tissue). Parsley will overwinter in West Cork, but if your garden is rather windswept it may be better to bring a pot or two indoors for the winter. Parsley is such a beneficial herb; it should always be used in cooking, both fresh and cooked. Onions and garlic are also needed on a daily basis because they are so beneficial to our health, but time constraints may often prevent this during the busy working week. To offset a busy schedule, a good quantity of onions, parsley and garlic can be sautéed at the weekend and placed in a container in the fridge. A



portion from this container can then be added to potatoes, pasta or stir-fry during the week thus saving time.

Herbs like marshmallow, mullein, and elecampane need rich, deep soil but they are useful herbs for respiratory infections so deserve a place in the garden.

The one herb I am enthusiastic about planting is Calendula officinalis or the common marigold. Once it is planted it will self-seed and return year after year. Its bright orange flower is so uplifting, and it is especially useful as a home remedy. It is full of antioxidants and is anti-inflammatory. It is especially useful to soothe sun burn and is very good for healing wounds. Anybody who is prone to leg ulcers should use a calendula wash daily. It is anti-microbial and anti-fungal with one test

tube study showing it being effective against twenty-three strains of candida.

It is better to start with a few familiar herbs such as the ubiquitous parsley and thyme. Thyme is effective against e coli but more importantly, salmonella. Salmonella is the hidden danger in undercooked chicken so stuffing the cavity with thyme before cooking will prevent this particular danger.

The use of herbs in the home to maintain health is one way of ensuring a healthy lifestyle. In my 12-month class on plant studies you learn about 12 plants in detail and how they can be used safely at home for minor ailments and conditions. If interested in this 12-month online course, purchase it at www.drrosarikingston.com

Bantry Bay Lions update



Pictured (l-r) are Francis Greaves and Meg Wilson from Bantry Bay Lions and Michael Healy, Brenda Harrington, Rita McCarthy and Anne O'Regan from St Vincent De Paul.

The Bantry Bay Lions held their annual Christmas Food Appeal at SuperValu and Lidl in December. Food and money donations amounted to €2,824, a terrific response considering the tough times people are experiencing with the cost of living. Thanks to the generosity of the local community enough money was raised to enable the Lions to donate 55 'Food Only' vouchers, at €50 each, to St Vincent De Paul and two to Canon Paul Willoughby. Special thanks to SuperValu and Lidl for all their help and cooperation.

Club President Jerry Harrington and all members of the Bantry Bay Lions would like to thank people in the local community for their generous support throughout this very challenging year.

Provided by John Dervan, PRO – Bantry Bay Lions Club

people NEW YEAR, NEW YOU: Food, Health & Lifestyle

Find peace and joyful awareness on retreat in Ballydehob

Megan McCarthy and Michael Mattioli, recently relocated from the US to Ballydehob in West Cork, are creating custom immersive yoga and meditation retreats on their seven-acre beauty spot to nourish the soul. Aside from the stunning location and range of therapeutic practices on offer at 'Embody with MM', what makes these retreats really interesting is that participants have the opportunity to design each day of the retreat to suit their own individual needs and preferences. On the menu is a range of yoga practices, from somatic to yin, as well as sound healing, meditation, marma therapy, Ayurveda, energy healing, pranayama breathing and even hiking.

This is a physical and spiritual retreat that will bring you back to self. "We get stuck in the play of life and stuck in our daily roles and forget who we are at our deep core," says Megan. There will be still and quiet, as well as doing and socialising; building a relationship between nature, environment, the body and senses. Picture a meditative morning walk along the coast, followed by somatic movement, vinyasa yoga, embodied writing, and perhaps a sound healing to lull you to sleep.

A certified yoga therapist



Megan McCarthy

through the International Association of Yoga Therapy, Megan's focus is on somatic yoga and accessible movement for muscular imbalance, persistent pain, and trauma. She initially specialised in cancer and cardiac rehabilitation through yoga therapy. Her breath-centred teaching incorporates

traditional facets of yoga, subtle body awareness, and Ayurvedic principles with a lighthearted approach. She is also a Healing Touch certified energy practitioner and in addition to energy therapy, she offers Ayurvedic marma therapy and is a certified through the California College of Ayurveda.

"I'm good at meeting people where they are," shares Megan. "If I have somebody who has lower back pain, I can work with them, or if a person is very fit and wants to sweat during their yoga practice, I can accommodate that too in a vinyasa flow class."

A musician, filmmaker and composer, Michael is also an energy worker and sound healer. His formal training spans Reiki, Access Energy Transformation and Ho'oponopono healing.

Michael's intuition and sensitive awareness guide his innate healing and musical instincts toward what is appropriate in the moment.

Their skillsets complementing each other, the couple co-facilitate these retreats, with Michael playing live music for in studio meditations. He also records CDs and other projects, including Megan's online teacher training and weekly YouTube videos.

The full immersion retreat (up to seven nights) also includes accommodation and two delicious home-cooked meals and snacks each day.

There is also the option of a shorter mini retreat (2-3 nights) which includes bed and breakfast.

For more information and prices go to embodywithmm.com



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Master of Ceremonies at the annual Inchydoney Christmas Swim was Kevin O'Regan (centre) with stewards Niall Fitzpatrick (l) and Leo Deasy (r). The swim raised €5,000 for Mozambique. Also taking part were Ursula Deasy, Clonakilty, and her sons Ben, Adam and Ethan.



West Cork People columnist Shane Daly and his fiancée Emma Justice celebrating their recent engagement. Shane proposed to Emma at Al Qudra Lakes in Dubai. Both Cork natives now living in Dubai, Shane is a primary school teacher and Emma works as Cabin Crew for Emirates airlines

people NEW YEAR, NEW YOU: Food, Health & Lifestyle

When potty training doesn't go as planned



CHILD BEHAVIOR

Sarah Murray

Sarah Murray is a Paediatric Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA). Her practice is based in county Cork but she works online supporting many families. Sarah specialises in early intervention for infants and young children, with almost a decade of experience working alongside families of children with developmental delays, autism, and intellectual disability. A child behavioural consultant, Sarah helps families and schools to address challenging behaviour in a positive manner using evidence-based intervention strategies.

Tips and strategies to bring success to any tricky situation

We all have a general gist of how to potty train a toddler. Whip off the nappy, plunk them on the potty for what seems like a billion times each day, until they 'get it'. They will learn over time to use the potty for their number one's and two's, and then it's good bye nappy expense! Well, what happens when they don't 'get it'? What do you do when accidents continue to happen, or worse, what if your toddler begins to refuse sitting on the potty, or starts asking for their nappy back? There are many ways in which toilet teaching can go astray. I'm confident that I've encountered the majority of them, from extreme fear of the

toilet or potty, reluctance to give up their nappy, selective about where they will go to the toilet, to removing nappy contents and creating something that looks like modern art on the sofa and walls.

Each family that I work with presents with their own unique and individual toileting troubles, but there are some common recommendations that I want to share with anyone who is experiencing the toileting woes.

Stop what you are doing!

If what you are doing with your child is not working, stop immediately. The longer things proceed on a bad foot, the worse this mess will get. It is completely fine to stop, go back to nappies and give yourself and your child breathing space. Take time to assess what went well, what didn't go so well, and what you can change in order to make things easier for you and your child.

Use powerful reinforcement

This really ought to be point number one, and if you take nothing else away from this article, please take this one key bit of advice! When you are expecting your child to stop doing something that they have always done since they the day they were born (go in their nappy) and instead do something completely new and alien to them (go in the potty or toilet), you NEED to use all the goodies you have available at your disposal! You need to be providing your child with amazing pay off for doing something that is really tricky for them. Praise and stickers just won't cut it. You need to create a situation where your child WANTS to release in the potty or toilet, because they WANT that pay off so badly. This way, your child is now extremely motivated to use the potty or toilet and it's set up as a great thing to be doing! When favourable outcomes happen after a given behaviour, it is increasingly likely that you will see more of this behaviour, so long as you ensure that that favourable outcome occurs straight after. Using the potty or toilet may be your goal that you want to reinforce, but some families may need to start off with reinforcing mere sitting on the potty when asked, building this up as a strong habit before attempting to urinate in the potty or toilet. It is also vital that the bathroom (or wherever you chose to have your potty) is rich in stimulation. Your child does

not need to be sitting idle and focusing on what is happening. This will lead to boredom and frustration at having time out from other fun activities. It is okay to watch a video, read a book, play with some toys, just be sure that these are highly motivating and only come out when sitting on the potty and don't come out at any other time.

Don't go bare bum!

Many families opt to take nappies off, but fail to replace this with underwear, with thoughts that their child will feel their underwear on their lower half and will begin to use their underwear as a nappy, or they might forget that they no longer have a nappy on, but underwear, and will begin to use the underwear as a nappy. This is not true. I would advise replacing a nappy with underwear that is loose and comfortable (so that it is not an aversive thing, is easily pulled down by themselves and feels very different to a nappy) and grey if possible (to spot any leaks). Involving your child in picking out their underwear can help, or else choosing underwear that have favoured cartoon characters on them can help.

Track progress

When families come to me saying that toileting went off track, I will typically ask how far did they get before calling it quits. How many times did their child use the potty, how many accidents did they have, how often were they sitting their child on the potty? This is very important information to know. Sometimes, we can be put off toilet teaching by a bad spell. For example, your child might have six accidents and one wee in the potty on day one, five accidents and two wees in the potty on day two, five accidents and two wees in the potty on day three and a day full of accidents on day four with no

wees in the potty. You may be inclined to give up at this point. So many accidents and barely any wees in the potty. However, in the space of four days, your child has gone from one wee to two wees in the potty, and their number of accidents dropped by one. This is progress! Little progress, but progress nonetheless. One day of no wees and all accidents doesn't mean that things aren't moving in the right direction. This is why tracking progress can help spur you on when you've both had a rough day of accidents. See what the next day's data will reveal to you. Progress is never linear, it's more like a jagged line going up and down, some good days and some bad days, much the same as losing weight. Tracking progress can not only tell you to keep going, it can also tell you when things are not working and can tell you that you need to change up whatever it is that you are doing. I usually recommend five straight days of data before making a decision on whether to change what you are doing.

Medical variables

I always conduct a medical screener before proceeding forward with a toileting assessment and subsequent toileting plan. If there are any medical variables at play, or something doesn't sound quite right, I will flag these and refer onto a GP. I cannot stress enough how important this is to consider. I had one family come to me and I noticed that things didn't sound quite right, so I referred them to their GP first to get an all clear. As it transpired, their child ended up undergoing treatment for a previously undetected

life-threatening illness related to their bowels. Many children that I work with suffer with some form of gastro-intestinal difficulties, particularly my autistic clients. This is a very important factor to consider, not only due to the medical nature of the condition, but you need to be mindful of the past aversive experiences that have been built up for that child with their stomach and bowel pain and problems. Careful planning needs to be put in place to accommodate such situations.

When in doubt, seek professional help

Many families do not anticipate how difficult toilet teaching can become and they do not ever consider that they might need professional assistance to help their child learn to toilet. It can also be an expense that was not planned for, so with the best intentions, families may stop and start toileting frequently, trying out various techniques, while unbeknownst to themselves, they are creating a pattern for their child of failure and negativity towards toileting. I would always recommend considering getting a professional's advice before starting if you are in a position to do so, and most definitely, if things have gone pear-shaped, reach out and seek assistance and a support plan for toilet teaching.

If you are having concerns about your child's toileting skills, please feel free to reach out at: sarah.murrayaba@gmail.com

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Paediatric Behaviour Analyst
B.A Psych, MSc ABA, BCBA, M.Ps.S.I

Sarah has worked with children with developmental delays, speech and language delays, developmental disabilities, autism, premature infants, and children with various medical needs and other learning needs.



Ashdale House, Blarney, Co Cork T23 YC03

085 7768924

sarah.murray.bcba@gmail.com

To view my services visit
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You need to be providing your child with amazing pay off for doing something that is really tricky for them. Praise and stickers just won't cut it.



people NEW YEAR, NEW YOU: Food, Health & Lifestyle

My 72-hour water fast



HEALTH

Hannah Dare
Organico Bantry

The new year is always a good time to take stock of your health and plan to improve and do better than last year. Veganuary, Dry January, Join the gym January – new diets and health regimes are everywhere you look! In the media, on our social channels and a hot topic for friends and family who have taken a bit of time over the new year break to reflect on how they are feeling.

Unusually for me, I'm in that boat this year. On a whim, I decided to join a friend on a three-day water fast starting on January 3, and I found it so beneficial that for the rest of the month I'm going to follow a fasting lifestyle to see how it suits me. It might surprise you, but in many ways, simply removing food for a longer period of time than usual has an incredible number of health benefits, plus it's free and feels great.

I've played around with intermittent fasting in the past, and twice I've completed a five-day fasting mimicking diet, which I found very helpful – I felt amazing both times, shed some pounds, and the benefits in terms of a more balanced relationship to eating lasted for a few months afterwards. However I hadn't previously tried a 72 hour water fast. But after having had Covid right before Christmas, and having been very sedentary and indulgent over the holidays, I felt that a challenge (and a change) was welcome, so when a friend mentioned she had bought a new book called 'Fast Like a Girl' and was going to join a group fast led by the author, Dr Mindy Peltz, it sounded like the perfect option.

Dr Peltz is an American author and a leading expert on the benefits of fasting for women. I've been aware of her, but to be honest I simply haven't had the mental space to dive in and work out what she was about till now – and boy is she passion-

ate about fasting, both from personal experience and from her experience as a doctor and an educator.

Some specific benefits of fasting (honestly, there are too many to list here, but I'll share some of my favourites) are:

Once you have fasted for at least 17 hours, your body starts to repair and regenerate your cells. This is called Autophagy. Dr Peltz says to think of this as your superpower – your body cleans out dead and decaying cells, breaking down and reusing old cell parts making everything more efficient. This has a huge potential impact on preventing and helping fight off diseases, making us live longer, healthier, and even happier.

At 24 hours without food, she tells us our gut starts to generate new stem cells. This helps to repair the gut lining, which we know is prone to becoming leaky. And a leaky gut causes us huge issues, as undigested food and bacteria escape into our bloodstream and can cause inflammation and all manner of diseases. So, anything that repairs and strengthens the gut wall is very welcome.

At 35 hours, our body starts to let go of excess weight, excess water, and excess hormones. This can be very helpful if we are struggling with hormone balance, as often we store excess hormones in our body fat, and getting rid of them can help balance everything out without the need for medications.

And at 48 hours without food, she tells us that we can experience a dopamine reset which she describes as a happiness reset. So this could be something to look into if you are struggling with low mood.

After 48 hours, she says your body starts to tell you - right, come on now, I need this body to be able to jump up and get me some food. I need to clean up the cells and be more efficient, I need to make sure there's a lot of joy going on, and I need this body to be able to run fast, think sharp and be very alert. So it puts all its attention on making all this happen.

At 72 hours, lots of other things happen – your body starts to reboot and clean up your white blood cells, which is fantastic for your immunity.

You might be thinking, at this point, how does this make sense? Surely food is needed to nourish and protect us at all times?

My understanding at this point (and I say that with the awareness that I have a lot to learn) is that firstly, we are not

actually designed to eat all the time. We are meant to have periods of time without food – lean times to balance out the feast times.

Secondly, fasting is part of our lives already (breakfast is breaking your overnight fast). But this time can get very short if we eat late while sitting on the couch! So what we are doing really is extending this period of time between meals. We know our body can actually go a really long time without food as long as it has plenty of fluids, so if we want to take a break from eating, all that's stopping us is habits and the belief that it's not a good thing.

Thirdly, we often fast when we have a bad viral illness – do you follow the old advice of 'feed a cold, starve a fever?' I often find I do that naturally, and so do my kids. This is because our body can fight off the virus better when it's not trying to process food.

A few things to be aware of if you are interested in doing a fast - firstly, fasting is not suitable for everyone, for example if you are pregnant or breastfeeding you should not fast, as your body needs an adequate intake of nutrients to support your growing child. Children and adolescents also may not be suitable candidates for fasting, and people who have certain medical conditions, such as diabetes should get professional advice first.

My fast started after dinner on Monday. I ate at 6pm so when I woke I had fasted for 13 hours. When I woke up I had some black tea, lots of water, and then some black coffee (mostly decaf). The tea and coffee were to avoid caffeine withdrawal headaches. If you don't drink caffeinated tea and coffee then sticking to water and maybe some herbal teas is the best idea.

I found the first day pretty easy. I went to pilates followed by yoga and then a long walk, and then made dinner for my family. Even that wasn't too bad – I found making food surprisingly enjoyable. Then I had a long bath and watched a motivational video by Dr Peltz to improve my knowledge of the objectives and what I was signing up for! The video was great and it gave me the resolve to carry on for the rest of the three days. I drank lots of herbal teas and water – any time I thought about food, I reached for a drink instead and the hunger went away.

Day 2: I woke up feeling great. I had the day off so rested for the morning, and then went

for a long ramble with a friend and the dogs after making the kids some lunch. We took water. I'd had the same drinks the day before and found I had plenty of energy. When I got back, I had some broth, and another long bath. I opted out of cooking that evening. Another motivational video and I was all set for the final day.

The third day I woke up feeling a bit weak and a bit shaky. My guess is that my blood sugar was a bit low, so I asked on the Facebook Group what I should do – I was going back to work for the first day after Christmas so I needed some energy. They suggested having some peanut butter and coconut oil, which I did – a tablespoon of each. I felt better almost immediately. My day at work wasn't too busy and I left early so I was home by 6pm. I broke my fast with some avocado and sauerkraut and tahini. I then had a big dinner – very enjoyable, but a big mistake! The food coma lasted for an hour or more.

I felt incredibly well the day after the fast. The sense of achievement was huge, and I was also very energised. Not having had much time to think about this, I didn't prepare all that well – had I done more research, I would have modified what I ate the day before to stabilise my blood sugars. I would have enjoyed the chicken and

veg but avoided the white rice.

Next time I'm also going to break my fast with bone broth and a smaller meal. My stomach certainly shrank so I need to remember to stop eating sooner! And in terms of better managing the final 12 hours, I'm going to make some 'fasting snacks' – you can eat certain things on a fast without 'breaking' your fast, including a snack made from coconut oil, cacao and nut butter, which satisfies cravings and balances blood sugar if it gets too low.

I'm so impressed with Dr Peltz and I've joined up for a 30 Day programme that she's running which involved trying

a few short fasts and lots of learning about hormones. If you want to know more, look her up on YouTube (Dr Mindy Peltz) or pop over to Organico next week and pick up a copy of Fast Like a Girl. I've ordered a few copies as I really like to hold a hardback but it's also out on Kindle.

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OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK



Teresa O'Neill of Fernhill House Hotel and Therese Hayes, hand over a cheque of €8,125.00 from the Pink Ribbon Walk to Nicola McMahon of the Irish Cancer Society. Over €100,000 has been raised to date.

people NEW YEAR, NEW YOU: Food, Health & Lifestyle

New year beauty



INSIDE OUT BEAUTY

Sherna Malone

Skincare and beauty expert Sherna Malone shares her knowledge and expertise of all things beauty – from skin care do's and don'ts to the latest products out there.

Avène Tolerance Hydra-10

Introducing ultra-gentle hydration that works in harmony with your skin's microbiome. Did you know, your skin's microbiome is made up of micro-organisms that live on your skin; working to preserve barrier function and protect overall skin health. Keeping the microbiome in balance is crucial for a clear and healthy complexion yet it can be affected by everything from skincare, age and lifestyle to the environment and winter presents an extra challenge – skin faces extra increased external aggressors, making it weaker, more sensitive, and more prone to breakouts. Avène Tolerance Hydra-10 is made from a unique biomimetic formulation which replicates the skin – combining natural ingredients found in skin with a simulation of its protective structure. Skin is hydrated without disrupting the microbiome – keeping it protected, calm and perfectly balanced. Suitable for adults, babies and children, Tolerance Hydra-10 Fluid €24 is suitable

for normal to combination skin and Tolerance Hydra-10 Cream €24 is suitable for dry/very dry skin. Available at Boots, online retailers, and pharmacies nationwide.

Vichy Multi Corrective Eye and Lip Care

During menopause, hormonal variations accelerate multiple signs of ageing, with skin around the eyes thinning and fine lines appearing more prominent around the eye and lip contours. With that in mind and over 20 years of expertise in skin at menopause, Vichy have created a dedicated product to improve the firmness of skin and minimise the appearance of those fine lines – Neovadiol Multi-Corrective Eye and Lip Care is specifically designed to minimise the impact of hormonal variations associated with perimenopause on skin. Combining a firming duo of three per cent Proxylane and Cassia extract with caffeine, Omegas 3-6-9 and Niacinamide, the formula works to reduce the impact of menopause on the fragile skin around eyes and lips. With an innovative hygienic applicator, it helps reduce fine lines and eye bag appearances; nourishes and soothes skins and helps skin feel firmer and bouncier, €30 available at Boots, online retailers, and pharmacies nationwide.

Citrine Healthcare Sorato Range

New from Irish brand Citrine Healthcare the Sorato range includes two topical products to help improve the skin's moisture levels and the skin barrier to help alleviate symptoms of dry, flaky, and scaly skin. These conditions are usually characterised by abnormal raised skin and vary in severity from localised patches on the skin to full body coverage. Sorato EU10, €19.95, is an intensive moisturising cream for dry and scaly skin which helps to support the skin's natural elasticity.

It contains Urea to help exfoliate dry and scaly skin and emu oil which restores the skin's natural moisture levels, while replenishing the lipid layer. It is also rich in natural emollients that lock in moisture and improve the appearance of dry skin. Also suitable for people who may be prone to dermatitis, psoriasis, and eczema. Sorato UR30, €16.96, is a topical cream for severe dry and flaky skin containing Urea and Mandelic acid both of which have an exfoliating action on the skin. This formulation is suitable for helping to remove dead skin cells, to soften and reduce the presence of thickened and flaking skin. The additional presence of allantoin and panthenol offer a highly moisturising activity, restoring the skin's hydrolipidic film and protecting the skin barrier. The SORATO UR30 formulation is also enriched by thuja, which helps strengthen the skin and renew the epidermis. Both SORATO EU10 and SORATO UR30 are available widely in Irish pharmacies nationwide.

JSHealth Vitamins

Australia's leading wellness and lifestyle brand, JSHealth Vitamins, in 2018 by Jessica Sepel, a clinical nutritionist, three times best-selling health author and one of Australia's most lauded wellness experts, JSHealth Vitamins was born from her passion to provide the highest-quality supplements, based on cutting edge research, in order to help people feel their best. Believing in the transformational power of nutrients, Jessica worked with leading health experts to create a unique collection product backed by science and exercising years of clinical research, to ensure that every supplement delivers trusted and extraordinary results. The range is nutritionally formulated and developed using carefully sourced premium ingredients to optimise the body's performance, whether for

general wellbeing or to address common concerns such as acne, bloating, sleep, immunity, hormone balance, digestion, or stress and anxiety. Choose from their extensive collection, which includes their best-selling Hair + Energy, Metabolism + Sugar Support, Detox + Debloat, Skin + Digestion, AM Stress + Energy, and PM Sleep + Calm, along with a Vitality X + Collagen Powder and everyday wellness vitamins. JSHealth Vitamins are available to purchase online at uk.jshealthvitamins.com

Pietro Simone Salt Mushroom Face Massager

New to the Pietro Simone Fierce Collection of skincare is Saltabilty – a 100 per cent Pure Himalayan Salt Mushroom Face Massager. The pure extraction of 100 per cent natural pink Himalayan salt provides a wealth of minerals that help to maintain a great electrolyte balance, promote microcirculation, enhance hydration levels, and absorb toxins, meanwhile acting as a natural antibacterial compound. Handcrafted from the Himalayan Mountains it contains up to 84 naturally occurring minerals and salts to nourish the body and epidermis. This mineralising, detoxifying, brightening and soothing skin tool can be used for a deep skin cleansing treatment with your cleanser of choice or for a remineralisation and regenerating action use with your favourite facial oil, €36 available online from shernamalone.ie.

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Back to life with Nourishing Therapies

Shiatsu massage therapist and ear acupuncturist, Emma Fitzpatrick runs Nourishing Therapies, Wellness and Employee Wellness Service where she delivers in clinic, onsite and online treatments.



Passionate about health and wellness, a series of events and life circumstances inspired Emma to become a therapist. While working in Brussels after college, she simultaneously trained in holistic massage and started to train in meditation and Buddhism. This led her, in her 20s, to spending several years in various Buddhist monasteries. At the same time she enjoyed working in the community, training and practicing meditation. After leaving the monastery, Emma undertook an MA in UCC, during which time she started to experience high anxiety and insomnia. "I discovered a local shiatsu massage practitioner and regular sessions helped me to process my emotions, calm my mind, come back into my body and sleep! I was hooked," she shares.

Emma undertook a three-year training in shiatsu massage in Edinburgh and went on to

assist at the school for a further three years. She also studied ear acupuncture over several years. "I began to practice part time while also working in community development, integrating my therapy into my work, by running wellness groups for clients. I worked with refugees, clients at risk of homelessness and those experiencing domestic abuse," shares Emma. "Despite putting in place safety measures for clients, a lot still experienced a large degree of fear from traumatic life experiences – their bodies were often still in shock, which affected their mental and physical wellbeing. I decided to move to self-employment full time to really offer nourishing body work to clients."

Emma trained in Polyvagal nervous system theory in order to understand and support clients experiencing trauma.

After moving back to Ireland

with her family, in 2019 she launched a collaborative employee wellness service with a friend and colleague, 'Work Well Therapies', in response to the growing number of office-related ailments they were treating. The business moved online during the pandemic.

Once restrictions lifted, Emma was able to get back in clinic and onsite, so she upskilled and trained in ergonomic assessments – being able to offer these online and onsite – as well as supporting employees to work more comfortably at their workstations.

"I offer wellness tips and tools. Being in my 40s, I discovered that I was peri-menopausal – due to a return of anxiety and insomnia," she shares. "I designed a 'Peri-Menopausal Self-Care Program' using my wellness session model and using Chinese medicine to educate and work on the main

peri-menopausal symptoms. If cortisol depletes our fluctuating estrogen levels, reducing stress is key – my program offered a deeply nourishing hour of self-care. During this time my friend relocated to her native Spain, so I decided to merge Work Well Therapies under Nourishing Therapies."

Emma's business had grown – now offering treatments in clinic, onsite and online. Her 'Mindful Movement and Self-Massage' Model was adaptable for in-house audiences. She delivered a collaboration with Susan O'Regan of Mindhaven in Myross Wood in 2022.

Emma's treatments include: Shiatsu massage, which is fantastic for treating stress, anxiety, low mood, peri-menopausal symptoms, neck, shoulder, back pain, digestive issues and so on.

Ear acupuncture – a microsystem of body acupuncture where she inserts small needles into strategic points in the ear, which work remotely to address emotional and physical ailments.

A 'Mindful Movement and Self-Massage' Wellness Program, which targets stress and anxiety and promotes health and wellbeing and is ideal for team building.

A 'Peri-Menopause Self-Care Program' – a six week wellness program with stretches, self-massage and guided

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relaxation to address ailments, reduce cortisol and support relaxation.

Emma also offers seated massage and ear acupuncture onsite to businesses in the Cork and West Cork area – delivering deeply relaxing yet energising sessions targeting neck, shoulder, back ache, anxiety, stress, lack of energy and so on.

Her ergonomic assessments

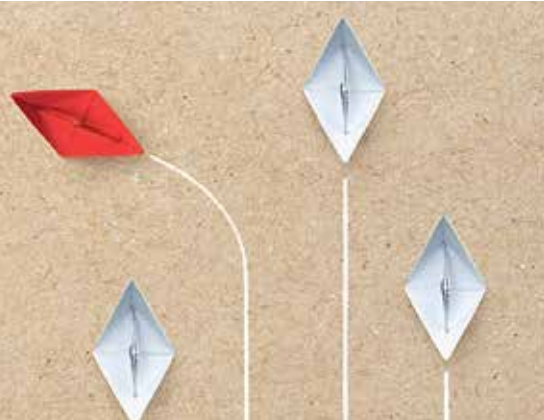
involve coaching employees on how to sit more comfortably at their work stations.

For more information or to contact Emma: email info@nourishingtherapies.ie or phone 086 1510046/023 88 38420.

www.nourishingtherapies.ie

Dealing with change

Noreen Coomey, a transition coach and psychotherapist at Caring Hands Therapies in Skibbereen writes about transition, the psychological and subjective element of change, and the process of transformation.



Have you recently made a transition in the workplace – change of role or change to management; started a new job and feel out of your depth; or think you don't get any recognition at work?

Lizzie suffered from three fears common to us all – fear of failure, fear of being judged and fear of criticism of her work. She wanted more control and direction over her life and work to adopt a better routine and plan for her new role in the

workplace. She didn't trust herself or her capacity to navigate change even though she had the inner expertise, resources and potential to find the way forward.

Lizzie found herself in the second phase of transition. Before she could change her thinking she had to pay some attention to it. Believing that her negative thoughts were correct caused two common emotions – guilt from the past and anxiety from worry about the future,

preventing her from taking steps towards growth.

The first phase of transition, (according to William Bridges who wrote the book) is an ending – the loss of her previous role, in Lizzie's case. Using reasoning and reality-testing she went to an uninhabited, neutral transition zone to dismantle, defuse, and make sense of her negative thoughts. This is a trip into no-mans-land – a place of uncertainty and fear, full of danger, barbed wire and unexplod-

ed landmines and to quote one client "you don't know where the bullets are coming from!"

Her biggest discovery was her perfectionist tendencies, which lead to procrastination and reluctance to delegate. Having made a decision to change her strategy here, her stress at work reduced and her performance improved immensely. She began the third phase of transition – beginning. To develop a new attitude towards the future, she had to let go of the old one. Lizzie admitted that if she hadn't gone for transition coaching, she would still be "bandaging up her stressful life".

"By listening, interacting, asking the right questions, Noreen is able to steer (restructure) one's own line of thought in such a way that you start seeing the light for yourself (self-help by guidance)". AB Cork.

All information and booking on noreencoomey.com

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people NEW YEAR, NEW YOU: Food, Health & Lifestyle

Dreaming of summer



A FLAVOUR OF WEST CORK RECIPE

Karen Austin

I wandered around the garden yesterday surveying what's left to eat. We're doing pretty well on the brassica front, plenty of kale, red cabbage and sprouts. The sprouting broccoli and cauliflowers are soldiering on and the spinach and chard recovered well from the pre-Christmas week long freeze but some of the leeks are looking a bit sad. They obviously didn't appreciate being frozen solid and some of the green tops have collapsed into slime. I decided to tidy up and dug up the dodgiest looking leeks, then collected the best, which were a real mix of big and small.

The small leeks brought a Catalan dish of calcots and romesco sauce to mind. Calcots

are a cross between a green onion and a small leek. Usually they are grilled over coals, charring the skins, which are then peeled back and dunked into romesco sauce which is made with roasted red peppers and toasted nuts. A gloriously messy but very tasty dish.

I tidied up my small leeks and, as I hadn't a barbeque going, I decided to roast them in the oven. So far so good, but when I tried to take a photo of them on a plate they didn't look attractive. Fortunately the Romesco sauce, which I had made whilst the leeks roasted, wears many hats and can be used spooned over roasted vegetables and beans, spread on slices of toast, as a pesto for pasta or served with grilled meats, chicken or fish so I changed tack and got a better pic!

There are of course many variations on this recipe and some call for roasted tomatoes but, as it's perfectly pointless to roast tomatoes in January, I substituted a little tomato puree.

The nuts can be blanched almonds, toasted hazelnuts or a combo of the two. I used toasted hazelnuts which give a great 'what am I eating?' moment and tastes delicious.

If you have leftover sauce, it will store in the fridge for five days and can be used to jazz up anything else you're eating.

It's great dolloped in soup but my favourite – if you discount spreading on warm toast – is as a pasta sauce. Just reserve a little of the pasta cooking water to mix through the romesco, then toss with the pasta. Serve with a little grated cheese and you have an instant dinner.

Romesco Sauce

Ingredients:

- 2 red peppers
- 2-3 cloves garlic, peeled and roughly chopped
- 100g hazelnuts or blanched almonds
- 1 slice white bread – about 50g toasted weight
- 2tbs tomato puree
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 3tbs sherry vinegar or red wine vinegar
- 100-150mls olive oil
- half tsp sea salt

Preheat the oven to 200°C

Method:

Put the peppers directly onto the oven shelf and rotate every 5-10 minutes until the skins are lightly charred. Take out of the oven then put into a bowl and cover with a t-towel for 5-10 minutes whilst they cool. The t-towel will make the pepper sweat, which makes the skin easy to remove. When the peppers have cooled peel off the skin and



remove the seeds.

At the same time as the peppers are roasting, toast the nuts and the slice of bread.

Put the nuts onto an oven tray then cook for approx. 5-8 minutes for the almonds or 10-15 for the hazelnuts. The almonds should be lightly golden and the skin of the hazelnuts should loosen and the nuts take on a little colour.

The bread should take about 10 minutes.

Allow the nuts to cool. If you are using hazelnuts rub them together then pick out the skins and discard.

Remove the crust from the bread and break into pieces.

Put the bread and garlic into the food processor the buzz until fairly fine then add the peeled peppers, vinegar, smoked paprika, tomato puree and salt. Buzz to a smooth paste then add the hazelnuts or almonds. Buzz again but stop as soon as the nuts are coarsely ground. Slowly pour in the olive oil with the processor moving so that it emulsifies.

Check the seasoning and if you're happy it's ready to go.

Now that the shop has closed the cooking classes have

resumed. The spring classes are nearly fully booked. There are a few places left on the vegan class and the gluten free baking class and there are also a few places free on the Greek cooking holiday. Check our website for details and give me a shout if you are interested. There will be more cooking classes scheduled for the summer so watch this space!

Until then Happy January!
Karen
Lettercollum, Timoleague
www.lettercollum.ie

Bringing your wardrobe into 2023



IMAGE

Louise O'Dwyer
Image Consultant

Here we are, it's 2023 and we have survived! It definitely feels like we are coming out of the trenches after a month of trading cute pyjamas for glitzy party wear...at least that's what I seemed to be doing. It was fun and wonderful and I had a

dinner party where I sent out invites titled 'Kiss or Kick the year goodbye'. Appropriately named I think: Some of us had a great year, while others faced one struggle after another, so we honoured both, as we looked forward to whatever 2023 might bring, knowing we'll be there to support each other.

Speaking of support, the winning and dining of the holidays might mean that our waistslines are a tad pinched in our clothes. I do believe it's a sign of a great relaxing holiday, so please don't start battering yourself. In our house, our favourite Disney character is Winnie the Pooh. So, if you are feeling that you are bringing a bit more of yourself into the New Year, then you have done a 'Winnie' on it! Just laugh, and then lay off the honey for a while!

The days are still quite short and the temperatures vary from cool to very cold so it's hard not to default to wearing sweatpants and comfy dark clothes. January dressing doesn't need to be

boring, so here's to a month of clever styling and feeling great as a result. How about making your coat the star of the show? With faux fur coats all the rage, if you haven't already snatched one up, then grab one in the Sales. They come in gloriously vivid shades of yellow, orange, green, blue and teddy bear caramel. Eye-catching, comfortable, chic and cosy, a coat like this teams up with just about anything, so you can happily wear it to the gym or supermarket over your runners and leggings and again later over your clingy WOW dress.

Undoubtedly there will be plenty more rain to come, so I just love the idea of wearing hiking boots Doc Marten boots with pretty (more formal) skirts. It's a bit of an unexpected pairing but it does look really good as long as you choose fabrics like wool, velvet or leather and even better if the skirt is pleated. Has everyone watched 'Wednesday' on Netflix? This series has pushed the 'soft

goth' look to the next level, as all black goth looks are most definitely trending one more. The added difference this time around is the addition of the odd pop of white and the fabric is more tailored, allowing more of us to ease into this look. The best way I can describe it is as a cross between the 'Lady Mary of Downton Abbey' and a very mild Wednesday Addams.

Just because party season is behind us, it doesn't mean that all our favourite fancy pieces have to be retired. You know me, I'm always harping on about re-inventing pieces, so why not continue to give your tulle or glitzy skirt a few more wearings? Ditch the skimpy top for a thin knit polo neck and throw on a blazer too – this completely tones down a party piece, especially a skirt!

Flat, flat pumps are back and they are very big. This time around they are to be worn with tailored trousers that show off a little bit of the ankle or Mom jeans with a long blazer rather



than with skinny jeans. It is a sophisticated look if you have the confidence to wear it. Winter time is synonymous with cosy scarf wearing so you might be a bit surprised to see silk scarves taking over but they are and they are ever so beautiful. Choose a large colourful one and wrap it several times around your neck – this actually does

help to keep you warm. Add jeans, a white top, a blazer and your most eye-catching bag and hey, instant cool glam. This is a gorgeous relaxed but confident look for any age.

Sparkles equal 'happy' so how about incorporating sparkly pieces into your everyday

Continued on next page...

people NEW YEAR, NEW YOU: Food, Health & Lifestyle

Fitness on the go with West Cork's Road Gym

Since 2021 Road Gym has bringing fitness classes to village halls across West Cork to service rural residents without ready access to larger gyms. Owner David O'Shea also provides at home personal training for people of all ages and backgrounds; athletes, people recovering from injury, older adults and those with special needs. Heading into 2023, David's personal resolution is to help more people realise their fitness goals and improve their lives.

Road Gym covers as much of West Cork as is physically possible, from Crossbarry to Bantry. "Living in Glandore, this is a lot of driving but I make it worthwhile by organising PT sessions and classes along routes," David explains. "Currently I am running classes in Darrara and Leap and I will be adding more throughout the year."

David has been interested in fitness from childhood, winning Munster and All-Ireland kumite (sparring) medals for karate and achieved a black belt at the age of 12. He still trains in martial arts with Brazilian jiu jitsu and kickboxing.

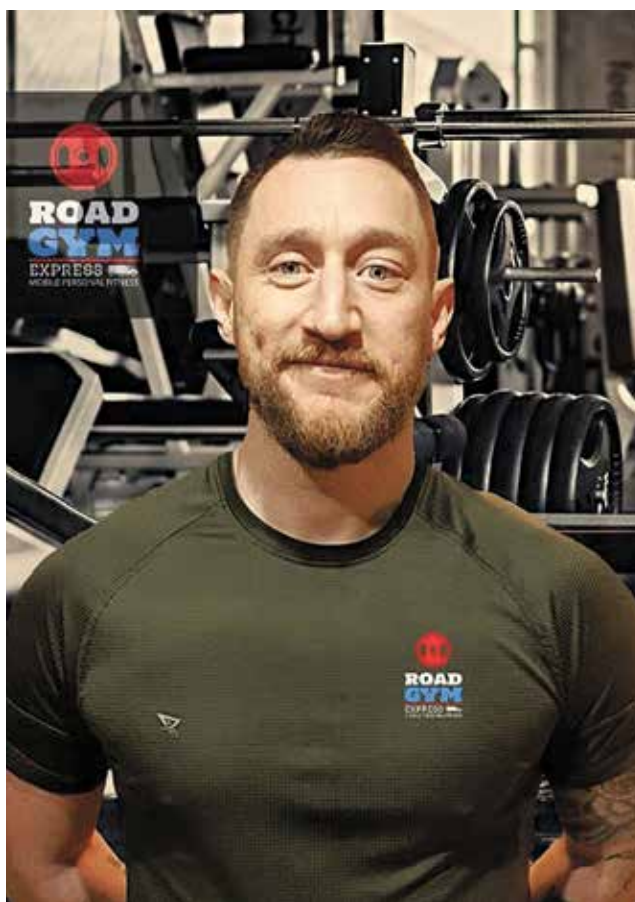
A career in amateur soccer in Germany followed, where David then studied physiology and nutrition at college. "I finished my studies back in Ireland and fitness is now, more than ever, a

massive part of my life."

David's teaching philosophy is down-to-earth, giving clients just enough, but not too much, push and encouragement. "I have a friendly, welcoming approach and try to give my clients the tools to be able to continue their fitness journey alone."

"My typical clients are people who have no interest in gym environments or have restricted free time due to work and other responsibilities. Also elderly people and those with additional needs, who prefer to exercise in their own safe personal space. Not all my sessions cover muscle gain or weight loss. I can also help with weakness, post injury recovery or injury prevention, for an athlete for example."

"Beginners are more than able and very welcome. The

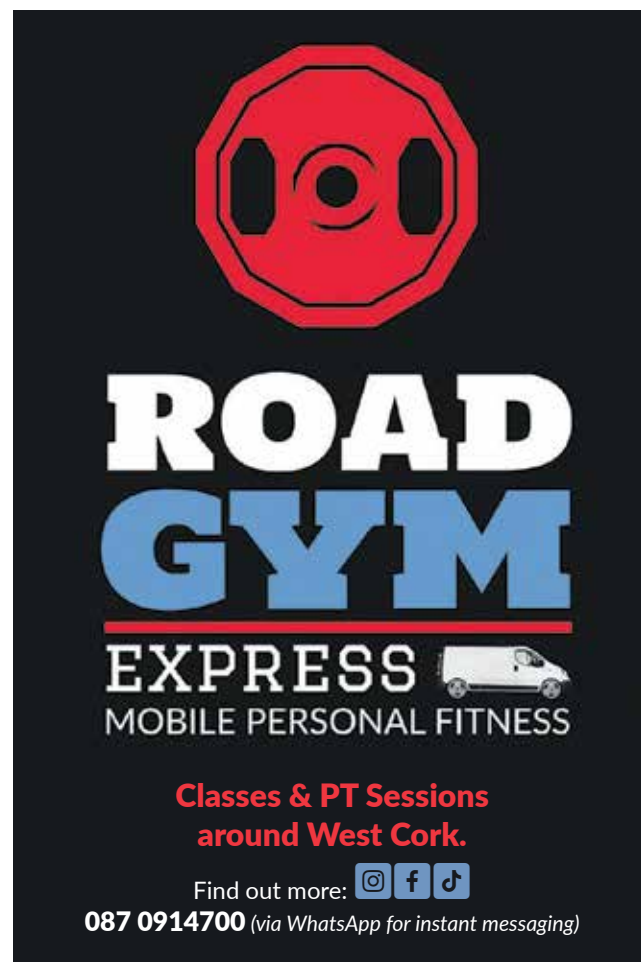


only thing I would ask is that you get a doctor's clearance if you have just had an operation or have a serious condition."

Road Gym clients report feeling generally happier and lighter on their feet throughout the day. "Clients who only train

one hour a week, especially older adults, have seen great improvement in their mobility and strength," David says. "Anyone who is consistently turning up is enjoying happy returns from their hard work."

Meeting new people and



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087 0914700 (via WhatsApp for instant messaging)

seeing their smiles when they finish a class or PT session is what keep David motivated as a trainer. "I'm a big believer in just focussing on winning the

daily battle with your inner critic. Finishing a workout leaves you with great sense of personal achievement and this helps strengthen mental health."

2023 Wardrobe ... cont'd from previous page

wardrobe; it doesn't need to be a special evening to wear glitter or sequins. Pick a glitzy pair of trousers and add an oversized jumper or a sparkly jumper with mom jeans and flats. It's a fun look that will get you some attention and lots of compliments.

There is a difference between a stunning minimalist look and a boring basic ensemble and it will always boil down to the fabric and fit. Cashmere or wool will always look so much better than acrylic blends and the time is upon us when you should be able to snap up some reduced quality pieces. Put in the effort and you will be rewarded with a more flattering and professional look. If you shy away from winter white, then this is the year to face your fears because it can look sensational. An entire outfit in winter white can be breathtaking but add a little make-up or a teeny tiny bit of fake tan so that you don't end up looking washed out. It's a lovely contrast to rows of dark clothes filling our streets at the moment. Yes, it might not be the most practical but that never



stopped us from wearing ridiculously 'not-practical' heels, now did it?

Different shades of the same colour will always look sensational together and that rule works doubly well for beige. Often considered a boring and forgettable colour, mixing and matching different shades of beige leads to a very elegant look – without trying too hard – and don't forget that gold is on the beige spectrum also, so be sure to add glamour with a gold belt or bag.

Stylish sweater vests can be a struggle for many so my best advice is to stick to black, white or black-and-white pieces only. It gives the 'nerdy knitwear' a

posher and grown-up girl look. Wearing a long shirt that comes down underneath the sweater is also a must.

I've given you a few looks to ponder over so maybe you could use some of your Christmas vouchers to pick up some of these pieces. On the other hand, if you had enough shopping before the holidays, take this time to do some DIY pamper treats at home. Don't get too caught up in New Year's resolutions, but do get caught up in being grateful for what you have and who you have around you and have a very merry new year.

Free meditation event in Skibbereen

An hour of calm to start the week will take place at 49 North Street in Skibbereen, from 11am to 12pm on Monday, January 23. Join Paola Vais for one hour of guided meditation. This is a drop-in event, it is free and everybody is welcome, no experience needed. To keep updated on what is happening check out the facebook page: 49 North Street.

OUT & ABOUT



The Balmy Barrel Sauna was on Broadstrand for the day on December 27 with all funds raised from sauna sessions going to the Courtmacsherry RNLI. €1175 was raised on the day. Pictured are Mary Deasy on behalf of Courtmacsherry RNLI and Donie Mc Auliffe, The Balmy Barrel Sauna (Instagram: West Cork Sauna).

people NEW YEAR, NEW YOU: Food, Health & Lifestyle

Resting with intention

Since I began a daily practice of mindfulness meditation, I know that we can begin over again at any moment in time, during the year, the week, the day, or the hour by pausing and taking a new breath. But I've always loved new beginnings and, perhaps because of all the media messaging that accompanies the new year, or my own

habitual patterns, I notice a subtle pressure to launch myself into 2023. I acknowledge this urge but meet it with a gentle resistance and remind myself to go gently and to rest deeply this month, like nature does. So, if we find ourselves forging ahead, we might check in and ask ourselves 'what's the rush?' or 'How are my energy levels?' Can we approach the new year

and indeed our lives, more like a marathon than a sprint? It is so important to go at your own pace, without comparing yourself to anyone else.

Even after the holidays, my overriding feeling is that I need more rest and replenishment, and I find it interesting to observe how my mind sometimes labels resting as somehow being 'lazy'. There can be a little bit of guilt too. You may find yourself feeling rested after the holidays or, like me, in need of some more rest, or maybe you noticed that you found it hard to relax over the holidays. Whatever the case, perhaps we can all pause for just a moment and set a soft, light intention for ourselves to include regular rest and relaxation in our daily plans this year, not just during holidays. No need to proclaim this intention to anyone, or make any song or dance about it, we can just make a little vow or commitment to ourselves, in our own hearts and minds, to slow down and rest more.

And instead of always



MENTAL HEALTH & MINDFULNESS

Susan O'Regan

Susan O'Regan teaches mindfulness and self-compassion courses and workshops throughout West Cork.

For more information contact: susanoreganmindfulness@gmail.com Mob: 087 2700572.

looking to the future, we can take a pause at any time to sense our way into any moment, it doesn't have to be major or momentous, just being present now and orienting ourselves towards all there is to see, smell, touch, taste and hear. For example, in this moment,

I can hear the wind rumbling gently in the stove flue and my little dog breathing beside me. I feel the warmth of her resting against my leg and the touch of a soft blanket against my bare feet. I can taste the coffee in my mouth and there's a faint scent of a candle from last night. I look around and take in the loveliness of the room, looking a bit cluttered after Christmas but still comfy and cosy. I notice how my body is rising and falling with my breath. I feel glad to be alive. These purposeful moments of presence are often enough to ground and settle us.

"And now let us believe in a long year that is given to us, new, untouched, full of things that have never been". I feel this sense of excitement in my physical body every time I read this quote by Rilke, it really moves me. The words "let us believe in a long year", for me, inspire hope in the not knowing what this lovely long year will have in store for us, as well as faith in our intentions for ourselves. Another year of life that we have been gifted, that has been 'given to us', not to be taken for granted. A year that is 'new'

and 'untouched'. A year 'full of things that have never been'. How are you feeling as you read this quote? Notice your own response to these words. Whether you have a feeling of excitement, dread, a range of emotions or no feeling at all, there's a message in it for us.

Please get in touch for a chat with me if you are at all curious about how to begin a mindfulness meditation practice to slow down, settle your mind and rest. Drop-in compassion-based mindfulness sessions at Myross Wood House, Leap (CECAS.ie) on Tuesday mornings from 10am-11am. €10. All welcome.

There are still spaces on the free Re-connect and Re-engage mindfulness-based wellbeing programme for family carers at CECAS beginning on January 18, 2023. A series of three workshops offering the chance to slow down and deepen our connection to ourselves, nature, and community. Please get in touch for more details. www.mindhaven.ie Phone: 087 2700572 email: susanoreganmindfulness@gmail.com or facebook page (Mindhaven)

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Reflections from the year gone by as an end of life doula



END OF LIFE MATTERS

Melissa Murphy

End of life Doula Melissa Murphy, a companion, guide and resource supporting our community in end of life matters.

2022 was a year of being more deeply immersed in a service I can now say I truly love, after being called to it for many years. I certainly have West Cork People to thank for their part in this, as the opportunity to write about my work and related topics has helped inform our community. There are many insights that come to mind while thinking

about the months gone by but here are the first eight that came to mind.

1. Never knowing who might be touched by or wish to link in about this work. When you decide to dedicate a big part of life to being a guide for end of life matters and breaking taboos talking about death, people reach out. For years I've been deeply moved by messages, emails, and conversations with family, friends, colleagues and strangers. More recently, university students and researchers have expressed interest in how end of life conversations are crafted. "Is being an end of life doula like a coach?" was the enquiry of one. While another has been pursuing studies on the value and unique role of an end of life doula (a non-judgmental person offering time, presence, education, advocacy to name a few things). It seems the coming year will bring more collaborations with creative people; pairing topics of death and grief with music, movement, community and play. Watch this space!

2. On caregivers and 'unconventional' clients. Carers need support too. I found this to be true even in my early days as a hospice social worker. Their grief is immense while navigating personal life transition with

the anticipatory loss of another. So these days, I accompany adult children, partners and siblings to name a few. I may not even meet the person with a life-limiting illness. I want to highlight this as a gentle reminder that end of life doula support is not just for the dying. Thinking further outside of the box, sometimes people will contact me seeking consultation and in doing so express "I'm not dying, do I qualify to work with you?" One example being Long Covid or post Covid conditions. A real issue for our times and like any significant life change, holistic care can make a real difference.

3. I'm moved that people seem to be reaching out early. It's remarkable and courageous yet I've had a vision to build relationships and trust with those I work with in advance – contrary to past experiences in healthcare settings where I often received referrals weeks or days before a death. The value of early end of life dialogue offers time for consideration of options with clarity and at a pace that suits. For many, this has been a real gift. And at times, I begin to work with someone and they feel free to say, "I'm good for now, but I know how to reach you again if/when needed."

4. Grief circles. I have

organised and participated in a few this past year; ever reminded that they're truly transformative and vital. I wrote a previous column about these experiences, but I'll just say that spaces where we can feel seen, witnessed and heard in our universal grief is a way forward.

5. As you can imagine, being an end of life doula requires consistent introspection; regularly holding up a mirror of self reflection. The learning never ends and to be sure I need to take exquisite care of myself making sure my own glass is full before supporting others. However I'm reminded of the need for unscheduled time composed of slowing down, breathing and simply taking time to 'be'. They've been tapping me on the shoulder like three wise angels. This is the space I aim to be in when accompanying someone else after all. Self compassion is also still a work in progress. After all, I feel sorrow too, big time. While I have the capacity to hold a lot, I still feel hurt, broken-hearted and need space for my own grief too.

6. Important related subjects have come to my attention this year including suicide which has been on the rise particularly among younger people globally. I don't know what the answer

is, but being a part of a global 'Suicide-Aware-Care' group feels like a web of safety. I'm learning much while developing the language to increase my comfort level around this more-taboo-than-death-itself topic. Trauma is another. Feeling it was reserved for those impacted by abuse/neglect, now I better understand it from a wider perspective. I'm grateful for the trauma-informed death worker workshops and trauma for death doulas courses that I could avail of to increase awareness, hopefully making a difference in the way I serve others. Another offering I came across was one I'd been seeking for some time: 'Grief and the Irish Diaspora'. This is a global online resource that helped to name the palpable feelings I've experienced over the years while visiting and now living here. It also lives in me; having a maternal grandparent that left Ireland long ago. The program was insightful and I hope to expand my understanding with more connections like this.

7. Society seems to be talking more about death, grief, end of life, et al! I see it in my news feeds but also sense it to be true when I meet new folks both close to home and in other parts of the world (six countries just this year). Those who ask what

I do, already know what an end of life doula is. Even a year ago it was necessary to elaborate extensively.

8. To close, the last and certainly not least thing that's been eye-opening, is that writing a monthly column is a lot harder than I thought. While the end of life is a vast space, it can still feel daunting to come up with a topic each month. My own interests know no bounds, but the hope is to offer insights that benefit others. So as always, please share what you'd like to know more about (and what you'd like less of!) If I don't know about the subject, I'll find the answer (end of life doulas are especially good at this). Whether you're just discovering this column or you have read a few, I sincerely thank you for these moments of your time. It's been a pleasure to be stretched by contributing here over these months.

To learn more or to connect with Melissa, email her at starsbeyondourskin@gmail.com or visit www.starsbeyondourskin.com.

She also welcomes your questions or ideas for future columns.



Eoin Roe
Chiropractic

Over the Christmas period I have been reading a great book called 'The Tao of Pooh', which attempts to explain the principles of Taoism through the characters of The Winnie the Pooh books. This may seem like a strange start to an article about health, but one line, a quote from Chinese medicine, caught my attention and I have been thinking about it since – 'One disease, long life; no disease, short life'.

On the face of it this does not seem to make much sense but on closer inspection it becomes obvious that what this quote is saying is that when you know what is wrong with you or which ailment you are suffering with, you can take action to get

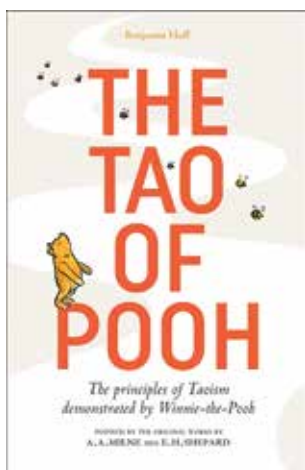
'The Tao Of Pooh' and disease

well or prevent it from getting worse. In short you are looking after yourself. The opposite of that is if we crash through life (a bit like Tigger), thinking we are invincible and ignoring health symptoms this ultimately lead to further deterioration in our health and wellbeing.

So, what does that have to do with functional medicine? Well, the main tenet of functional medicine is to accurately understand why you are experiencing each of your symptoms in order to put in place the right interventions for your particular situation.

For example, one of the issues that I consistently see in patients who present with chronic problems is a long history of IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome). IBS is a term used to describe the following symptoms: Abdominal (Stomach) Pain and Cramping; Diarrhoea and or Constipation; Excessive wind; Urgent need to use the bathroom.

People suffering with these symptoms for a period of time may end up with a diagnosis of IBS but this diagnosis tells us nothing about why that person is suffering with these symp-



toms nor how to resolve it.

There are multiple reasons for IBS to develop, from a pathogenic bacterial infection leading to dysbiosis, excessive use of antibacterial medication, emotional and physical stress (impacting the immune system), inflammatory diets, poor nutritionally deficient diet, intestinal permeability and even a concussion or head injury can cause IBS symptoms which can persist long after the head injury.

Knowing which mechanism is at play is key to helping somebody recover or manage IBS or any other chronic health

issue. Without understanding the underlying physiology at play any intervention is less likely to be effective.

Further reflection on the initial part of the quote 'One disease, long life' has got me thinking about some of the people who I help with chronic health problems. Often these people have been suffering for years with underlying symptoms and issues which are problematic for them. But with no

identifiable disease diagnosis, they largely go untreated within conventional medicine. I wonder if a more accurate functional understanding of the reason why they are suffering, made much earlier and explained to them, would help these people learn how to help themselves before one set of symptoms morphs into multiple issues which invariably becomes much harder to untangle.

I wish all West Cork People readers a happy new year, and if you are looking for a good read I thoroughly recommend 'The Tao of Pooh' by Benjamin Hoff.

Eoin Roe is a Chiropractor and Certified Functional Medicine Practitioner based in Skibbereen. If you would like to get in touch please make contact through the website www.roehealth.ie or call 028 62081.

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Dr. Eoin Roe DC CFMP

Supporting your immune system to fight off illness

A new year is a time for optimism and new beginnings. A difficult couple of years may have left some feeling a little weary and vulnerable to illness. Cranial and Structural Osteopath **Christopher Minhall** reminds us of the power of our own immune system and healing ability. He also shares a few simple ways to help optimise it.



Clean food and water is a good place to start. Minimising toxicity and receiving good nutrition are key. After that, exercise. Don't be scared! While exercise that gets you out of breath is great for your heart and managing stress, it is not for everyone. Gentle exercise and movement is probably even more important for our health. Walking, in particular, helps pump venous blood and also the lymphatic fluid around our body. Without the muscle contraction involved in movement, a much greater burden is placed on the heart.

A well circulating lymphatic system greatly improves our immune response and helps rid our body of toxicity. We are designed to move and a sedentary lifestyle impacts our health. We are so lucky that we live in an area of such natural beauty. The mental and spiritual benefits of walking in nature should not be underestimated. Again, if you're out of the habit, start small and regular and be encouraged that even this is having a positive impact on your health. If pain or stiffness is preventing you moving, I can probably help.

Osteopathy itself is a holistic system of drug free medicine built around optimising the bodies' own health and healing. An Osteopath uses their sensitively trained hands to find and correct structural imbalances and dysfunction. This restores normal movement, structure and physiology. I look beyond the symptoms to see the bigger picture and dig deeper to find and remove the root of the problem.

Treatments are gentle but effective and tailored to the individual person and not just the symptoms. I strive for long term results and empowering patients. As well as physical problems, anxiety, emotional and hormonal issues can often be aided. It is also great preventative medicine.

Cranial Osteopathy forms a central part of my approach. Despite the name it is not just for the head, though it is great for migraines and headaches. It uses the subtle but deeply potent rhythm and tide of the spinal fluid to restore health. Used within an osteopathic framework, it can provide profound results. Being gentle, it can be applied to babies, children, fragile elderly, sensitive patients

and those with chronic fatigue. (I am also trained in the Perrin technique which successfully treats CF). Patients suffering stress would also benefit from Cranial Osteopathy as well as those with more complex physical injury patterns.

Osteopathy looks at the body in a different and more holistic way than conventional medicine. We strive to understand and address the whole body, nurturing the health while removing the underlying cause of symptoms. Your body wants to function and move well and often with just a little balancing and help it is able to thrive. Your body's own power of healing is amazing if only the occasional spanner is removed from the works.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy new year.

Christopher has practices in Bantry and Skibbereen and does a fortnightly clinic in Clonakilty. For appointments please call 086 886 1007. website www.westcorkosteopathy.com

Christopher Minhall
BSc Hons Osteopathic Medicine, BSc Hons Biology

CRANIAL OSTEOPATH

P: 086 886 1007 Bantry and Skibbereen
www.westcorkosteopathy.com

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Emer Sweeney 086 8395058
emersweeney@empwc.org

Margaret Donovan Daly 086 6031335
margaretdonovandaly@empwc.org

people NEW YEAR, NEW YOU: Food, Health & Lifestyle

2023: The year ahead



ASTROLOGY

Kate Arbon

Kate Arbon is an astrologer, writer and spiritual teacher. Living in West Cork for over 20 years she gives personal consultations locally and internationally using traditional natal and Horary astrology.

email: astro@katearbon.com
www.katearbon.com

2023 is a year of beginnings and new directions. A lot is happening in the Astro-sphere and it's certainly not destined to be a dull or monotonous year ahead.

We have finally put the challenging and frustrating Saturn, Uranus transits of the last few years behind us. We have endured the passage of Saturn through both its home signs since 2018 and we have navigated the Neptune Jupiter confusion. This year is about being flexible and focusing on the future.

We shift our emphasis away from the big world corporations, financial institutes and global systems to a more personal relationship and community-based focus. We will continue to experience the aftermath of the last decade in which our institutions, governments and leaderships failed and proved unsustainable as corruption and cronyism revealed their truth. But now there is a sense of fresh outlook and positive possibilities as we begin to turn our attention to what matters.

January starts at a pace and shifts the energy of the last few months back into full speed ahead with several of the planets turning after being retrograde at the end of 2022. This gives us a long run with all the planets in forwards motion through to late April and action-orientated Mars moving forwards all year.

The transformation in energy is emphasised by several major sign changes this year. Saturn

moves into the water sign Pisces. Pluto shifts into the air sign Aquarius and the eclipses fall into an Aries Libra pattern.

Full steam ahead in January!

Mars has been in the air sign Gemini for an exceptionally long time. Since last August. On January 12, it finally comes out of its retrograde phase and the physical drive energy that has been suppressed and introverted can at last start to get things done and progress can be made in real terms. This may be a chance to address conflict situations where two sides have opposing agendas and also get delayed plans underway. Mars speeds through half the Zodiac for the rest of the year giving a surge of energy to all the slower planets on the way.

The next planet to turn after its recent retrograde is Mercury the speedy planet of communications. It has been retrograde since just before the New year and this extra time in Capricorn gave us time to consider our ambitions for the longer term but it will only be after January 18 that we can start to give life to them.

The final of the trio to move forwards is Uranus, the planet of revolution, innovation and freedom. Since late August this wild card planet has had its progress through earth sign Taurus slowed down. Now in 2023, we may see a fast-tracked path towards new technologies that involve our Venus-ruled life scenarios. This is about money and transactions, it concerns what we value and what sustains us in physical terms. It affects food, resources and the ability to maintain stability for our everyday needs. We are likely to see a move towards more AI technologies taking over some of the more mundane tasks. Digital-only exchanges are promoted to replace cash currency. The availability of synthetic food is also likely to be rapidly introduced this year to replace traditional sources of nourishment. The forward motion of Uranus will push the advances in technologies right into the 'cyber age' now that it is moving free from the restriction of the recent Saturn square. There may be insight and sudden awakening when it comes to the environment and the whole issue of climate. We may see a lot of new thinking around our relationship to shared resources and who has access to them. These themes will be uppermost during the following years while Uranus moves through Taurus until 2026



Mercury Retrograde

30 December 2022 to 18

January 2023 in Capricorn / 22

April to 15 May in Taurus / 24

August to 15 September in Virgo / 14

December in Capricorn to 24

December then to 2 January

2024 in Sagittarius

As usual, Mercury will spend about a quarter of the year 'going backwards'. In 2023 this planet of the mind, speech and connections will retrograde in earth signs for all but a few days at the end of the year.

This earthy element puts extra focus on the practical side of life and provides us time to reconsider what we want to express before we put things into action. It is wise to consider what we are saying or planning for ourselves. The areas of your chart with earth signs are where you can give more attention to your life during these retrograde phases.

Big themes and a new era

The two tough guy planets of our system are Saturn and Pluto. These are the taskmasters of the bunch and the ones that insist on our growth and development. With both these heavy-duty planets we are often challenged to work at removing obstacles and we have to let go of outmoded habits or lifestyles to gain new experiences. They are both also timekeepers as they move through the Zodiac heralding shifts in social trends and our collective evolution.

Saturn in Pisces

Saturn is moving into Pisces on March 7 and will be in this Jupiter-ruled water sign now until May 2025. It takes around 28 years to come back to a sign and its last cycle in Pisces started in May 1993 through to April 1996. This comes after being in its home signs

of Capricorn and Aquarius since December 2017. This is a big shift in energy as Pisces is so unlike Saturn's quality of solidity and endurance. Pisces is the sign most associated with a lack of boundaries and merging with mystical and imaginative dimensions. This year will give you a chance to put your dreams into reality and also have your fantasy given some realism. A lot of progress can be made in your spiritual life. There may be themes involving spiritual practice or disciplines. Creative arts and imaginative projects can be manifest using Saturnian diligence and focus. Another potential for this combination on a mundane level could be the introduction of invisible boundaries. This could be through limitations on areas of travel using tracking or digital ID. There may be restrictions placed on what personal beliefs or opinions can be expressed openly. Communication systems may become more organised and regulated over the next couple of years. Saturn will be retrograde in Pisces between June 18 and November 4. This will bring some review time to consider the direction this placement is taking us. To use the Saturn in Pisces energies constructively, take the time to manifest your dreams and imagine your future in a very real way.

Pluto in Aquarius

The biggest shift we have this year is the small Planet Pluto moving into Aquarius on March 23.

This planet has not been in this sign since 1777-1798 and it will only finally leave this sign again in 2044. It has been in Capricorn since 2008, which heralded the financial and bank collapses ending the 'Celtic Tiger' phase. Despite the chorus

that, "This is the dawning of the age of Aquarius" we are put on notice that Pluto brings the destruction of whatever is in its path as it clears the way for the new and improved version. It is often difficult to accept the insistence of a Pluto transit. We have to let go of ways of being, lifestyles and sometimes possessions or people that we want to hold on to as the evolution that is taking place makes no allowances for our personal preferences. Pluto has the job of purging out the 'toxins' that cause disease, greed, corruption and falsity. It can be an uncomfortable process as the "detox" occurs, but the sense of relief and the potential for self-mastery are gifts to be valued.

Aquarius is the sign of the water bearer, symbolising the flow of new knowledge and ideas to mankind. It is a fixed-air sign that holds humanitarian ideology and advanced social systems as its Utopian model. Aquarius represents the evolved human with equality and fairness at its core. The changes and modifications that this era will bring are going to happen slowly over the next couple of decades. There will be some seismic shifts and departures from what we have known but they will be unfolding over time for most of the changes. The primary meaning of Pluto is power. Who or what holds the power? Is it your unconscious beliefs or fears? Does something or someone have power over you? Aquarius in simple terms is the 'common man' and it represents the collective as a human race. This is a time when the term 'people power' can take on huge significance. What we get is down to us. We can use our ability to imagine and create our world. The experiences we have depend on how we respond and react. It is up to

us as individuals to take responsibility and dream our preferred future into reality.

Pluto will be retrograde and return to Capricorn from June 11 through 2024. This is time to review what we have felt during the ingress into Aquarius so we can better prepare for the future. It's the opportunity to refine and complete our current work and goals before we move more fully into the Pluto in Aquarius era.

Jupiter brings the benevolence

Jupiter moved into Aries by the end of 2022 and will be in this fire sign until May 16 when it moves into earth sign Taurus for the remainder of the year. Jupiter turns retrograde on September 4 and will be in Taurus until late May 2024.

Whilst in Aries, Jupiter favours new starts, growth initiatives and a direct approach to achieving your purpose. Jupiter is about expansion, aspirations and finding a better path in life. Aries will confront and push forwards despite obstacles or resistance. There could be further aggressive expansion, especially in areas of high competition or conflict industries. There may be a hint of the righteous crusader during these months as people feel they need to take a stand and fight for what is right, in their opinion. In Aries, there is only one opinion so this combination does not foster tolerance or negotiation. But this energy is not just about a confrontation between people. It can bring a lot of constructive renewal. There is the courage to take the lead and activate new initiatives. It brings a generally optimistic drive that pushes forwards with enthusiasm to build a better life and become a better person too. This is about being our best selves and reaching fearlessly towards that as a goal. At worst there is risk-taking, overconfidence and a 'might is right' attitude. Use this energy to drive forwards and motivate yourself to act in a way that represents your higher values. Start a new training program, develop your assertion skills and try new challenges.

As this planet of opportunity and expansion moves through Taurus it is a much softer planet and will bring focus to our resources, food and money systems. It now shares this sign with innovative Uranus and can expand and increase the Uranian spark of invention and inspiration. There may be improved supply chains or a food revolution as a more 'hands-

Continued on next page...

people NEW YEAR, NEW YOU: Food, Health & Lifestyle

Programme to help women live their best lives

Counsellor and life coach **Emer O'Sullivan** explains why being a woman in today's world can be quite challenging. Her one-to-one programme, which looks at stress and self-care, can help women forge a new life path.

As women, embracing the different opportunities open to us may mean that we put pressure on ourselves to juggle all the different roles such as family obligations, caregiving for children and/or elderly parents and work responsibilities. Add to this, social media platforms, internet, mobile phones, emails, texts and so on, which make us accessible 24/7. We are being bombarded by incessant interruptions that will get our attention.

Many women feel unappreciated both at their jobs and at home. Many feel emotionally, psychologically and physically drained. Many are stressed.

With man existing in a heightened state of stress most of the time, this can lead to serious health problems such as an increased risk of heart attack and stroke, immune system suppression, digestive and reproductive systems upset, and the ageing process gets speeded up, it can rewire the brain leaving women vulnerable to anxiety and depression and other mental health problems.



Stress can easily creep up on you. You get used to it. It starts to feel familiar, even normal, you don't notice how much it's affecting you but it takes a heavy toll. That is why it is so important to be aware of the warning signs and symptoms

of stress. Women can manage stress by practicing healthy self-care strategies for coping with stress.

Stress-care is more than spa days, bubble baths, massages, pedicures, flowers, chocolates, a holiday. It is about taking responsibility for your well-being in every aspect of self.

Many women just view self-care as a luxury rather than a priority and are left feeling overwhelmed and tired and find it difficult to manage life challenges. Some women can get consumed by work and responsibilities and have no time to connect with family and friends and pursue their dreams. They may be unhappy and unfulfilled. Some women feel powerless in their lives.

Self-care is important for building resilience towards your stressors in life. When you take care of your body, mind, spirit, emotions, and do activities that increase your happiness and are aware of your values and living your life purpose, then you are living your best life.

This one-to-one programmes will help you determine your sources of stress and the frequency that you experience

some of the symptoms of stress. It will look at what stress is and how you interpret your stressors. This programme offers you the space to examine your life, to play an active role in determining the direction your life is heading to feel energised, motivated and empowered. To have self compassion as your motivator and not your self critic.

It is never too late to forge a new life path. Self-care is not

always fun and relaxing, it may involve setting boundaries in relationships or walking away from a very stressful job.

Self-care is holistic; it is about balancing all aspects of the self and encouraging personal awareness and growth. It involves making changes that will give your life more balance, meaning and purpose.

As stress impacts on us all differently and we each live unique lives with unique

demands, this programme is run on a one-to-one basis over six sessions.

For more information please contact Emer O'Sullivan on 083 3855570.

Emer is an accredited counsellor with the Irish Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy, and a member of the Association for Coaching.

Emer O'Sullivan

MA, MSocSc, MSW, MIACP, MAC, HDip Relationship Studies

Counsellor Emer will help you to come to terms with any concerns and help you set about making positive changes in your life.

Life Coach Emer will help you to examine your life, evaluate what you want, and check the direction in which you are heading.

Emer is an accredited counsellor with the Irish Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy, and a member of the Association for Coaching. She has worked for many years as a Family Support Social Worker in the community.

Clonakilty 083 3855570

emerosullivancounselling@gmail.com
www.emerosullivancounselling.com

The year ahead ...Con'd from previous page

on' approach to food becomes desirable. Jupiter can bring some balance and benevolence to Uranus in Taurus themes. It may not be to everyone's taste to consume high-tech synthetic 'food'. The sensory sign of Taurus loves the real earthy experience and is prepared to put in the work to provide for its needs. This time may bring a more home-based or rustic approach to providing basic commodities.

Venus dancing with Mars in Leo

Venus plays a larger-than-usual role in this year's dynamic. There is a strong emphasis on personal relationships and how we share or connect on a personal level. Venus joins with Jupiter on March 2 and this is the combination of the two brightest 'stars' in our troop. Venus passes by Jupiter every year but in 2023 they occupy almost the same place as viewed from earth. It is worth trying to get a glimpse of this magnificent sight in the early evening sky after sunset in late February as the two benefits draw closer together.

This is also the year of a Venus retrograde which only happens once every second year. It is part of an eight-year

Venus retrograde cycle but in 2023 the entire retrograde is in fire sign Leo. Also significant this year the planet of love shares the fire sign Leo with the planet of passion, Mars from June 5 to July 10.

This is destined to be a dramatic and active time for love and relationships. A Venus retrograde often brings up past issues or a return to a previous love scenario. There is a need to complete or finalise something and this is the opportunity to find closure or put old patterns to rest. In Leo, it is not just about romantic love or relationships. The retrograde allows us to re-evaluate and choose what we want and love in life. Venus rules over all the things we value and want to enjoy more. It is the Muse, and in creative and expressive Leo we can find all the arts, drama and self-expression become bigger, bolder and more attractive. Audacious gestures of generosity and warmth may be the theme for our summer months. The passion that Mars stirs up can create a desire to go beyond our usual limits and not take anything less than the best. It can be a selfish kind of love that expects a dramatic response or it can be a feisty fearless demonstration of heartfelt desire. Either way,

we can expect some heat and passion to erupt.

Venus gets very close to a conjunction with Mars just before he rushes on into Virgo on July 10. Venus retreats backwards on July 23 until September 4, as she returns to become the Morningstar once more.

Eclipses bring in the changes
Annular Total Solar Eclipse April 20 in Aries / Penumbra Lunar Eclipse May 5 in Scorpio / Annular Solar Eclipse October 14 in Libra / Partial Lunar Eclipse October 28 in Taurus

Another feature of 2023 that adds to this being a significant year for changes are the eclipses. We have the usual four events that come in two pairs but there are some out-of-the-ordinary features this year.

An Eclipse can literally be about a moment when the light is obscured this can translate to a time when we can't see clearly and changes can be made whilst we are not looking. This creates a good time for inner reflection or to make significant intentions to let go of something – to make it disappear. It is not a good time to make major decisions or undertakings as the truth of a situation is not apparent.

The shift out of the Taurus

Scorpio eclipse axis allows us to move on to the new focus. This year there is a final cleansing and letting go of many entrenched habits. We have a Hybrid Solar eclipse in April in the last degree of Aries. This is the second New Moon to fall in Aries this year. It is the first Solar eclipse in Aries since 2005 and forms part of a 19-year Moon cycle. The Aries Libra nodal axis is highlighted this year and through 2025. Finding the balance between autonomy and sharing is part of our collective destiny now.

The Aries Solar eclipse on 20 April empowers the individual and may bring a strong leadership role to the front within the year. There is a martial element to this Solar eclipse as well as the theme of taking one's autonomy seriously. The energy to be worked out may be the choice between being led by a powerful leader or being self-governing as an autonomous individual.

The Scorpio Lunar Eclipse on May 5 is combined with Mercury and Uranus so we can expect some hidden information to come to light to produce a plot twist we couldn't have expected and this can affect our collective destiny.

The Libra Solar eclipse on

October 14 is influenced by Pluto's retrograde in the last few degrees of Capricorn. This is the time to let go of any habits or compulsions that mean you are allowing others' attitudes or opinions to dampen your autonomy.

The Taurus Lunar eclipse on October 28 is combined with Jupiter, Mars and Mercury and this can bring conflicts to the surface to be resolved. This is a time when new systems of money and business transactions are implemented.

A Comet or not

The year starts with the potential for a comet to appear in the northern skies during late January and early February. If it becomes visible to the naked eye it has an astrological significance that is another herald of big change. Comet C/2022 E3 (ZTF) is not a pretty name but it could be quite the bright star for a short while. It is due to become brightest around February 2.

If it does become visible then it will be in the sign of Gemini and approaching Mars. It is hard to predict a comet before its appearance as they are very unpredictable and it may not even show up. But the Mars Gemini dynamic could bring more talk

of conflict but also this could be a time of putting two sides to a story and laying cards on the table. We will have to wait and see how this event shapes up.

The power of Pluto and personal integrity

Overall 2023 is a very different year from the ones we have endured recently. There is a new paradigm emerging as Pluto moves slowly into Aquarius and like any beginning phase there is much to smooth out as it unfolds. We can expect this year to be 'interesting' as the pace of change is accelerated and it may be hard to remember what things were like only a year or two ago. This is a year of laying down the next stage and as individuals we have a lot more power than we recognise. We do not have to confront the 'powers that be' in global scenarios. Unless that is your personal calling. But we do have responsibility for our inner landscape and the quality of our thoughts and emotions. This is where we can take absolute power and if we wield this in the right way we really can create a world to our liking.

people NEW YEAR, NEW YOU: Food, Health & Lifestyle



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Cork information evening on supporting congenital heart disease in children

Hearth Children, the national organisation that supports people born with congenital heart disease (CHD), in conjunction with Dr Daragh Finn, Consultant Paediatrician, Cork University Hospital (CUH), will hold an information evening in the Clayton Hotel, Lapps Quay on Tuesday, January 17, at 7.30pm. The event will be of interest to parents of children with CHD in the city and county of Cork and its surrounds who could benefit from the charity's services and in hearing about current and future developments in the medical care of children with

CHD in Cork.

Every year, approx. 5-600 babies are born in Ireland with congenital heart disease (CHD), a condition that arises when a baby's heart does not develop correctly during pregnancy. It is the most common birth defect, affecting one in every 100 children worldwide, yet many people will know little of the disease or the often life-long effects of the condition.

The term congenital heart disease covers a range of over 40 different issues that are present in the structure of the heart at birth. The cause of these abnormalities is still not fully

known. No two children will have the exact same presentation, and some will be diagnosed with multiple forms of the disease. There is no cure and life-long medical management is required to maintain the child's health and well-being.

Speaking about the forthcoming information evening, Sheila Campbell, CEO, Heart Children says, "Heart Children offers a range of services to help people nationwide with CHD – and their families – to live confidently, stay well and enjoy life to its fullest. Are there services we provide that you could be accessing for your child? Events

you could be attending to meet with other families in your area? Webinars you could be joining to find out more about parenting issues and new opportunities to meet up with others in the same situation? I invite you to come along and find out more".

Consultant Paediatrician, Dr Daragh Finn and Jane Russell, CNS CUH will present on medical care for children with CHD in Cork University Hospital in recent years. This will be followed by a Q & A session.

To register to attend the evening please email info@heartchildren.ie or call 085 723 7797 for more information.

January Sun Signs by Kate Arbon

January's Full Moon was at 17 degrees Cancer on January 6 at 11.07pm.
Its New Moon is at two degrees Aquarius on January 21 at 8.53pm



Aries: If you get involved in charity events or social action groups that spark your interest over the New Moon phase you will make headway in many different areas of your life through the people you meet and the information you discover. You may be asked to take responsibility or even a leadership role or to contribute and participate more fully than you have in the past. You will enjoy being part of a team or group effort now. Being part of a community or circle of friends and building your social network is important to you at this time.



Taurus: Over the New Moon don't mix business with pleasure if you want to avoid trouble. Not everyone will be on your side over the next few weeks so you may want to choose your friends carefully and keep your personal thoughts and opinions to yourself. With your career and reputation very important to you at this time, you can make significant gains regarding your ambitions. Recognition for your efforts and receiving credit for your accomplishments are likely now, but only if you've 'done your homework'. This is an excellent time to ask for a promotion, or to engage the support of those in positions of higher authority.



Gemini: This is a time to lift yourself out of your usual mundane concerns in order to get a larger perspective on your life. Although it may all seem overwhelming for a while remember that as long as you keep plugging away you will make gains. You really can get things up and running if you try. A chance to do things a little differently will make all the difference in the world. Don't slow down because someone can't keep up with you. You have to maintain the momentum. A teacher or mentor who appears this New Moon may be particularly important to you later.



Cancer: Don't push your luck now. Joint financial affairs and investments are likely to be an issue at this time, and it is a good time to clarify each person's expectations and to take care of any legal business. On a personal level, there is a desire to intensify the level of intimacy and honesty in your closest relationships and to clear away anything in yourself which is impeding that deeper union you seek. Any temptation to make abrupt decisions and changes could lead to additional problems that you can do without. Stick to what's clear and avoid taking on other people's responsibilities.



Leo: Partnerships, marriage, and one-to-one relationships take your attention now and you are called upon to cooperate and perhaps to relinquish some of your own personal interests for the sake of harmony and mutual benefit. You may end up questioning yourself as well as the motives of the people around you. Get to the bottom of things while you can. Once you have all the facts you will be in a much better position to make a decision. Don't let anyone pull you in a direction you don't want to go and do what's best for you but the emphasis is on 'we' rather than 'me'.



Virgo: Doing your best work and taking pride in it are a focus for you now. You should be able to make some worthwhile career moves or at least secure your current position so that you don't have to worry about your financial future. This is a good time to examine how you use your time and energy, with an eye to improving your efficiency and productivity. Watch out for health matters as you are concerned with your body now, and you may be inspired to begin a self-improvement program, create better habits, or begin a new diet or fitness plan.



Libra: You are energised and inspired creatively and emotionally coming up to this New Moon, and you want to bring forth all that's deep within you. You express yourself more freely, playfully, and spontaneously and are more willing to take chances. You will have Lady Luck in your corner so be sure to look for good deals. Social activities, travel and attending different cultural events will all lead to meeting people who can help further your goals. The dramatic and performing arts, sports and games, or other forms of self-expression and entertainment appeal strongly to you now. You can accomplish much if you set your mind to it.



Scorpio: From the beginning of this month you will have been enjoying the success that you worked hard to achieve. Don't be too quick to put your energy into new projects as you approach the New Moon, wait until the end of the month. All kinds of creative work are favoured and you might find yourself more closely involved with children at this time. Don't be surprised if there is some conflict between your personal enjoyment and what others think you should be doing for fun. Those things that need to be discussed and settled with the family can be dealt with in the next few weeks.



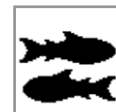
Sagittarius: Take a trip back into your past and you will find the answers you are looking for. Now it's time to make changes instead of doing a repeat performance. Taking time to talk with neighbours and folks you cross paths with daily may result in more positive and smoother-running relationships generally. You'll want to fritter away your time on fun and social events over the New Moon, but this may not be at all bad, things have been serious enough for you to want to take a break now. This is a good time to participate in or contribute to any community events in your area.



Capricorn: Money, possessions, financial security, and practical matters are a focus for you now. You can make some very interesting professional or financial moves this month. Be ready to put your money on the table in order to get ahead. If you have tended to be generous or extravagant with your resources, you may begin to see the light at the end of the tunnel. At the least, it should become clear to you what your next steps should be regarding your finances. Your astute vision will enable you to correctly assess the right investment, job or any other money matter that arise after the New Moon phase.



Aquarius: During this time you can make an impression on others by making a strong statement to the world about who you are. People recognise you and are likely to follow your lead, or at the least they stay out of your way. You are likely to feel more confident and vital now. However, you may be so preoccupied with yourself and your own desires that you unintentionally ignore other people and their needs. Include the ones you love in your plans and things will get progressively better. You should be able to strengthen the bond with someone who has been an influence in your life.



Pisces: You'll be torn between what you want to do and what you have to do. Retreating from the world for a while and spending some quiet time alone to relax and rejuvenate appeals strongly to you now. You may feel like you are at low ebb and as if nothing is happening or you may simply not want to be 'where the action is'. Don't overreact, overdo or over-indulge to compensate for things not going according to your plans. Sometimes it's best to do what you must, get it out of the way now. You'll get your turn to please yourself soon. Competitive ambitions and ego drives are on hold now.

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How to care for your skin during and after cancer treatment



Nuala Carey (pharmacist and owner of glenpharmacy.ie) and popular blogger **Helen Murphy** (@daily_divadiary) are holding a virtual coffee morning via Helen's Instagram page on Tuesday January 24 at 10am to discuss skincare throughout cancer and chemotherapy.

An in-person coffee morning will also be held in Glengarriff Pharmacy on the day with all proceeds going towards ARC House which supports cancer patients and their families across Cork and Kerry.

When patients are undergoing treatment for cancer, their skin might not be the first thing they think of in terms of side-effects.

Yet, nearly all cancer treatments – including chemotherapy, immunotherapy, and radiotherapy – have the potential to cause skin reactions. While these reactions can vary widely depending on the type and length of treatment, as well as individual factors, they can be physically painful and have a real impact on self-esteem and wellbeing during the whole treatment process.

No two patients will have the same experience of going through cancer and the treat-

ments that follow diagnosis, but there are some common skin symptoms people present to us at Glengarriff Pharmacy.

Cancer patients often experience rashes that can be itchy or painful, and swollen hands or feet can cause real discomfort too. Sometimes, the mucous lining in a patient's mouth and genital areas will be damaged by treatment, resulting in painful sores. Treatment can also make it difficult for people to eat or drink, and poor nutrition can have a knock-on effect on their skin.

As we know, the skin is the biggest organ in the body, and it also acts as the body's first line of defence. Patients going

through cancer treatment already have a weakened immune system, and, if their skin barrier becomes compromised, there is even greater potential for infection.

Sometimes people experience severe blistering rashes and nail changes, which can easily become infected and lead to more serious widespread infections, and so it is important to maintain the integrity of the skin barrier and to optimise skin health as far as possible, before, during, and after treatment.

Rather than waiting to deal with symptoms, you can get ahead by beginning a safe skin regime at least a week before cancer treatment starts. To manage the dryness treatments can cause and prevent and manage skin changes, we recommend that you:

- Avoid long, hot showers or baths.
- Use gentle, fragrance-free, dermatologist-approved skincare suitable for patients undergoing treatment.
- Use creams, ointments, or balms rather than thinner lotions, as their consistency is better at preventing skin dehydration.
- Choose gentle, enriching, and nurturing products suitable for sensitive skin.
- Apply your chosen moisturiser within 15 minutes of showering to maximise absorption.
- Use a sunscreen with at least an SPF30 that protects against UVA and UVB rays if you are undergoing chemotherapy, which can make skin more sensitive to sunlight and prone to sunburn.

We are regularly asked, in the pharmacy and online, about skincare that is safe for cancer patients to use, and we recommend products from La Roche Posay. The skincare company is leading the charge in this area and has already invested

enterprise that encourages teenage girls to pursue careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM), and to date over 50,000 girls have participated in its programmes. Caroline is a partner with De-loitte Ireland.

The second speaker is Anne Marie Graham, bestselling author, as well as an experienced

in over 10 years of extensive research, working closely with dermatologists and oncologists worldwide.

La Roche Posay's Lipikar and Cicaplast ranges, together with their thermal waters, are safe, clinically tested and dermatologist-approved to help manage the skin changes cancer, and cancer treatments, can bring.

At glenpharmacy.ie, we have 20 per cent off these ranges throughout January. Why not shop now at www.glenpharmacy.ie/brand/la-roche-posay to start your skincare journey or support a loved one with skincare they can trust.

Please visit Facebook or Instagram @glenpharmacy for details of the coffee morning.

Network event aims to help you put your best foot forward

Network Ireland West Cork is kicking off 2023 with an event that will inspire you to step out of your comfort zone and provide tools and tips to face new challenges. Taking place on Thursday, January 19 at

7.30pm at the Ludgate Hub in Skibbereen, the event features two key speakers who will talk us through how they have overcome their own challenges.

Caroline O'Driscoll is best known as one of the co-founders of IWish, the social

speaker and trainer. She is CEO of Mindset Success Strategies, helping individuals, groups and companies reach their potential and achieve their personal and professional goals.

Speaking ahead of the event, Network Ireland West Cork branch President Anne Marie Kingston stated "I am very excited to start my term as Pres-

ident of the West Cork branch with such a high calibre event. Our speakers have years of experience that they will share on the night which will support our members in stepping out of their comfort zones and achieving their goals. I am delighted that we are returning to in-person events and my theme for this year is to get people 'back in the

room'. We have lost so many opportunities over the past two years and I want to support our members this year by hosting a series of monthly in-person events that will help fill that gap."

The event is open to both members and non-members of Network Ireland and tickets can be booked on Eventbrite.

people NEW YEAR, NEW YOU: Food, Health & Lifestyle

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Help with prescription charges

There are some schemes available which assist with the cost of prescribed medications and appliances and the qualifying conditions for each scheme is different.



Do I have to pay for prescriptions if I have a Medical Card? If you have a medical card, there is a charge for prescribed medicines and other items that you get on prescription from pharmacies. The prescription charge is €1.50 for each item that is dispensed to you under the medical card scheme, up to a maximum of €15 per month per person or family. For people aged over

70, the prescription charge is €1 per item, up to a maximum of €10 per month per person or family.

If I have a GP Visit Card does it cover prescription charges? No. Prescribed drugs are not free but may be covered by the Drugs Payment Scheme.

What is the Drug Payment Scheme? Under the Drugs Payment Scheme, you and your family only have to pay a maximum of €80 each month for approved prescribed drugs and medicines, and certain appliances. After you register for the scheme, you will get a plastic swipe card for each person named on the registration form. You should show this card whenever you collect your medication or appliances from the pharmacy. The HSE Primary Care Reimbursement Service provides a list of medicines or

aids provided under the Drugs Payment Scheme. You should use the same pharmacy in a month to avoid paying more than the maximum €80. You do not have to register with a pharmacy for the scheme.

You can apply for the Drugs Payment Scheme online at mydps.ie or by completing an application form which you can get from your local Citizens Information Centre or Local Health Office.

What is the Long-Term Illness Scheme?

If you have a medical condition covered by the Long-Term Illness Scheme, you can get free drugs, medicines and medical and surgical appliances for the treatment of that condition. The qualifying conditions include Diabetes, Epilepsy, Parkinsonism and Multiple Sclerosis. You can get a full list of the conditions covered under this

scheme from your local Citizens Information Service.

You must be ordinarily resident in Ireland to qualify. This means that you are living here and intend to live here for at least one year. Students from outside the EU do not qualify for the Long-Term Illness Scheme.

The Long-Term Illness Scheme does not depend on your income or other circumstances. You may also be eligible for a Medical card or GP visit card, depending on your circumstances.

Contact your local Citizens Information Centre for an application form or download it from https://assets.hse.ie/media/documents/long-term-illness-scheme-application-form_M8wJkd.pdf

Can you tell me about the Discretionary Hardship Scheme? The HSE Primary Care Re-

imbursement Service (PSRS) provides a list of medicines or aids provided under the medical card or Drugs Payment Scheme. These products are approved for the schemes by the HSE. Some items that can be bought over the counter are not included in the free or subsidised schemes.

If you have a medical card and are prescribed an item that is not on PCRS list, your pharmacist or Local Health Office can apply for it to be paid for by the Discretionary Hardship Scheme. If the hardship scheme does not cover the cost of the medicine and you have to pay for it, you may want to check with your doctor to see if there is an alternative medicine. You can get more information about the scheme from your pharmacist or Local Health Office.

Is there any tax relief for medical expenses? If you pay medical expenses

that are not covered by the State or by private health insurance, you can claim tax back on some of those expenses, which includes tax relief on medical expenses for prescribed drugs and medicines. You can claim tax relief online using Revenue's myAccount service.

If you need further information about any of the issues raised here or you have other questions, you can call a member of the local Citizens Information Service in Bantry. They will be happy to assist you and if necessary arrange an appointment for you.

WEST CORK HELPLINE 0818 07 8390

The offices are staffed from 10am -5pm from Monday to Thursday and on Friday from 10am -4pm. Alternatively you can email on bantry@citinfo.ie or log on to www.citizensinformation.ie



THE DNA OF WEST CORK PEOPLE

Mark Grace

Mark Grace is a genetic genealogist and family historian at Ballynoe House, Ardfield, Co. Cork

Swedish geneticist Svante Pääbo was awarded the 2022 Nobel Prize for medicine. He pioneered the use of ancient DNA to unlock secrets about human evolution, especially from Neanderthal bones. We can now compare Neanderthal genomes with the records of humans living today; the new scientific discipline of paleogenomics.

It is now accepted that most present-day humans share one to four per cent of their DNA with Neanderthals, meaning interbreeding took place before Neanderthals went extinct around 40,000 years ago.

It used to be an insult to be called a Neanderthal, however they are getting the last laugh at their DNA, as it continues to influence modern humans. It makes sense, since coronavirus-

Noble ancestry and the Nobel Prize

es have been around for longer than humanity in various forms, so some immunity would be an outcome for surviving species.

A July 2020 study found a gene variant on chromosome 3, inherited from the Neanderthals, increased the risk of becoming critically ill upon infection with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19. A later study also found a gene variant on chromosome 12 reduced the risk that an individual will require intensive care after infection by about 22 per cent; one almost identical to those found in three Neanderthals — a 50,000-year-old from Croatia, and two from southern Siberia, one dating back 70,000 years and the other, 120,000 years.

To put this into perspective, chromosome 12 spans almost 134 million DNA base pairs and represents between 4 and 4.5 per cent of your total DNA. The gene variant sequence mentioned is only about 75,000 base pairs.

As a pioneer in recovering ancient DNA, Pääbo also extracted DNA from fossil fragments found in a cave in Siberia; from an entirely new kind of extinct human, called Denisovans after the name of the cave. By comparing Denisovan DNA with modern humans, he also showed that some populations in Asia and Melanesia inherited up to six per cent of their DNA from this group. As with the Neanderthals, some

modern humans are gaining advantage from this ancient DNA as a gene variant has been shown to provide adaptation to living at high altitude, for e.g., found in Tibetans.

Sadly, when you do a DNA test, the testing companies do not show where these markers are and how much ancient DNA you might have. They are only just getting around to crudely indicating your DNA origins (so-called 'ethnicity').

For those who have tested with a company that provide a chromosome browser, such as MyHeritage, they do not provide data for the start of chromosomes 13, 14, 15, 21 and 22. This is because these areas have large sections that relate to you being a human being rather than parental ancestry; part of your basic coding, if you like. It is appreciated that any DNA relating, for example, to your immune system and beneficial to your survival would get preferentially passed on. This also says that nature has determined ways of ensuring certain DNA is almost always passed on and therefore random inheritance from your parents is not entirely random. If you have collected enough data from your own matches you will start seeing these patterns in other areas. As most readers will be Europeans, this will include fragments of Neanderthal DNA wherever they may be.

'Build up' is an expression

for matches where you share DNA with lots of people. Often, this has nothing to do with shared ancestry within a reasonable genealogical timeframe but will be much more ancient ancestry (Anglo-Saxon, Viking or even Neanderthal) or other areas that relate to your biology as a human being.

I have found areas that are my own personal build-ups. Some are partially related to a family surname, which suggests that nature has found some of these ancient segments to be useful and worth passing on almost unchanged to seventh or eighth cousins and beyond. Others are not clear at all.

There is a small region of my chromosome 18 that appears in matches to perhaps one in 100 people I match. I can tell this has nothing to do with genealogy. This shared area is probably twice the size of segments being discussed in various Facebook groups as po-

tentially genealogical.

There are Facebook DNA groups for most counties and regions of Ireland and Britain, but unfortunately most discussions seem to be around sharing fragments of DNA as small as 3cM. At this level over 90 per cent will relate to you being human rather than genealogy and none would have the type of database that could demonstrate meaningful connections at this level. The groups are useful but most need to engage at a wider level, with segments greater than 5-7cM which at least have a 50% per cent chance of being genealogical.

Half of my chromosome 16 (segments in the 20-30cM range) is a personal build up area, partially relating to one usual family name (both related and unrelated pre C17th). It is also clearly related to geography and an area once occupied by one tribe of ancient Britons.



Results from paleogenomics and genetic genealogy are frequently updated. There are some sites providing this service, matching to archaeological remains, but it is unclear at this early stage how accurate it is. It is an exciting time to have your genome on various databases to see what it might tell you about your most ancient and more recent origins. Once you have your DNA file, many of these of are free.

A new year with new discoveries to be made. I hope you have had the opportunity to access the pre-holiday season discounted test kit offers and will enjoy exploring your distant past.

Questions and issues that can be answered as part of future articles can be emailed to DNA-matchingprojects@gmail.com or follow the West Cork DNA projects on Facebook 'My Irish Genealogy & DNA'.

A July 2020 study found a gene variant on chromosome 3, inherited from the Neanderthals, increased the risk of becoming critically ill upon infection with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19.

people NEW YEAR, NEW YOU: Food, Health & Lifestyle

Care for your whole body by improving your digestive health

Michelle Ryan first qualified as a Nutritionist with the College of Naturopathic Medicine (CNM) in 2011, and recently returned to study, achieving a diploma in Coaching Mental Health and Wellbeing. Michelle explains the difference between a food allergy and a food intolerance and how both can have a serious effect on the gateway to our bodies – our digestive tract.

A self-described 'health nerd, foodie and wellness advocate', Michelle is mum to two boys whose health issues changed her direction in life. "My eldest son was born with a milk intolerance so family health became front and centre," she says. "I'm now passionate about making a difference in the lives of the people around me and see 'real' food and nutrition as the key to good health and wellbeing."

Prior to studying nutrition Michelle found she was reacting to many foods with all sorts of symptoms: bloating, constipation, fatigue. "It was very on and off, depending on what I ate and combined with stress factors in my life," she recalls. "My immunity was definitely affected, I was getting lots of chest infections and feeling low, with no energy or motivation most days."

"I had an intolerance to dairy, gluten and MSG (which makes my skin itch), but until I studied

nutrition I didn't fully understand that while an intolerance is different to an allergy, it still seriously affects gut health and nutrient absorption."

The main difference between an allergy and an intolerance are:

- Allergies develop in infancy whilst an intolerance can come on at any age
- Only 2 per cent of adults and 6-8 percent of children have a food allergy whilst 45 per cent of the population suffer food intolerances
- An allergy causes a reaction immediately or within 24 hours whilst an intolerance reaction can take up to 72 hours.
- Symptoms of an allergy reaction include wheezing, itching, vomiting, diarrhoea, dizziness, breathing, swelling, rapid pulse, fainting, loss of consciousness. Symptoms of an intolerance reaction include migraines, arthritis, anxiety, depression, rhinitis, psoriasis, tiredness, digestive symptoms



such as bloating, pain, weight gain and feeling low in mood. To help her clients, Michelle

works with York Test Laboratories, who have 40 years of experience in diagnostic testing and are a leading provider of IgG antibody testing. "The test uses a finger prick method to take a blood sample that is sent off to the York Laboratory who analyse your reactivity to over 200 food and drink ingredients. The tests have a 98 per cent reproducibility rate, making it very accurate and reliable."

Once her client receives their results Michelle sits down in a consultation process to provide a food plan that contains foods that suit the individual's body, with a focus on addressing the underlying causes of imbalance, alleviating symptoms, repairing

the gut and getting back on track to achieving overall optimum health.

Taking on any food elimination diet can be challenging says Michelle, and worse when it's unclear, with no guidance on what to eat and where to buy it. "I support my clients with an easy-to-follow plan and workaround foods to achieve long-term success."

A recent client wrote to say 'I am very happy as it's manageable for me going forward – rather than 100 per cent compliance all the time. I am feeling so much better than I was before I made these changes, particularly with my skin, and overall feelings of stomach discomfort and I have lost weight also. Without taking the initial step of meeting you, I simply wouldn't have changed anything.'

Michelle promises that everybody can achieve better gut health: "Make the right food choices for your body, the results can be life changing."

Call Michelle on 087 6704930 to enquire about a taking a test, and if it's the right option for you. You can also email your query via email wellness@bwellhive.ie

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Seeing through a fresh lens



Describing herself as a nomadic spirit and sensitive soul, perhaps it is these attributes that make photographer Aoise Tutty Jackson more in tune with her subjects and surrounding environment, her informal and fresh style lending openhearted beauty to her photographs.

Referring to shoot in a natural, intimate way so her pictures tell the story of the people in them, Aoise's shoots are set up to be a supportive journey. A very spiritual



person, she sees photography as a healing tool.

"So many people have a fear around being seen and the camera," says Aoise. "I see my role as a photographer to support people to feel comfortable to drop into their truest selves."

"I love taking pictures in nature, out in the woods, by the sea, or in places that are important to people, where they

feel at home or at peace in that environment.

Also an award-winning filmmaker, with subjects of mental health, wellbeing and spirituality featuring strongly in her work, Aoise has enjoyed working with initiatives such as the 49 North Street Wellbeing Network in Skibbereen. Her 15-minute documentary film 'An Open Door' premiered in Cork Film Festival

2018 as part of the 'Best in Cork' category, won the Community Award at The Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival, a Silver Remi at WorldFest Houston and was selected as a finalist at The Fastnet Film Festival. Her films have also been selected for London Short Film Festival and Indie Cork Film Festival.

"As an artist, my aim is to capture and interpret the poetry

of everyday life," she says.

"Aoise has brilliant perception and utilises light and tones wonderfully. She encourages your personality and authenticity, I felt relaxed and confident due to her level of professionalism and skills." Kate Finn, October 2022.

"Aoise was so wonderful to work with. We felt totally at ease in her presence and it was a connecting and affirming experience for our family. She effortlessly bridged the divide between personal and professional. We really felt seen and celebrated as a family and as individuals." Hannah, December 2022

"I was looking for a photographer to get some shots done for my coaching website, and I really wanted to work with someone who really 'got' me and where I was coming from and what I was looking for. I was delighted to find Aoise and her 'Sacred Soul Photography'. I knew that what she offered was what I was

looking for. I'm really grateful that I opted to do the additional video recording before the shoot, as this really set the tone for the day ahead and really helped me 'drop into myself' and relax. Aoise was really helpful in assisting me to feel really relaxed throughout the photoshoot which made everything flow and feel easy... I'm really happy with the high-quality professional photos I now have..."

Des Richmond, Conscious Evolution Coach, December 2022.

Aoise specialises in family and couple photography and is available for all types of occasions, including weddings. If you would like more information or to book a photoshoot go to www.aoisetuttyjackson.com email aoise@92circles.com or call 086 3465373.

Aoise is offering 25 per cent off all photoshoots booked in January.





CANINE CORNER

Liz Mahony

Liz Mahony is an experienced Dog Trainer and Holistic Therapist for all animals. In her monthly column, Liz aims to promote mutual respect between carer and dog. Contact Liz at corkdogtrainingclasses.com.

Having lost my beloved Juno a short time ago, I was so sad and lonely until a dear friend persuaded me to see a puppy. This baby Boxer licked my face, nibbled my nose in greeting, and my aching heart expanded to her love.

Puppy training notes

It had been a while since Juno was a puppy so these last few weeks have been a learning curve for training.

Below are a few of my thoughts if, like me, you have welcomed a new puppy into your life. Don't ever be forced into getting another puppy if it doesn't feel right. Only you know the truth on this one. By the same token, don't feel guilty if you do welcome a puppy. Your previous dog would only want what's best for you.

- If at all possible, sleep downstairs with your puppy or have her in a crate on your bed so that when she stirs you can immediately take her out to eliminate. That way, for a few interrupted nights, you get your puppy toilet trained with very little hassle. Always reward when she performs outside.

- Don't compare your new puppy with your last dog. Our memory tends to forget the real details and we look back with rose-coloured spectacles.

- This puppy will never be

the same as your last dog. You don't want her to be but do allow her to ease the pain of your loss.

- If you're getting the same breed again, embrace the breed characteristics but also appreciate your puppy's individuality.

- Start small bits of training immediately. It's never too early. It's so much easier to set up a routine from the very beginning rather than allowing bad habits to take hold. Everything you teach is new to your puppy, and praise and rewards go a long way at that age.

- Learn all about your puppy from day one – just by watching her interactions in different situations and her basic characteristics. For example, my little Saffron can be quite brash but underneath she's not at all brave.

- Introduce your puppy to new situations, people, other dogs, etc., but very gently. It's so easy to overwhelm her at that age. Watch her reactions. If she's happy with a situation, stay in

it for a short while. If she's uncomfortable, back away and let her process it from a distance. Try not to reassure her; just stay calm, silent, but supportive.

And never insist on her meeting/greeting/getting close and personal if she doesn't want to.

- Start as you mean to go on. For example, if you have a house rule of no dogs allowed on the couch, then don't make an exception while she's young. As far as she's concerned the couch is a comfort zone for her the very first time you allow her up on it! Having said that, I taught two of my dogs that they could only get up on a part of the couch when their rug was in place. It worked really well.

- It's much easier to train a puppy in a one-dog household. You need to train your puppy on

her own until she's able to focus on you, despite distractions.

- It's obviously much easier to control situations in the home if you don't have young children as well. However, if you do have youngsters then ensure that you teach all of them (including your puppy) how to treat each other with respect. It's also a very good idea to allow your puppy to have plenty of rest and sleep in between fun and play.

If you don't manage this from the very start, you will have a frazzled, over-tired puppy who will throw tantrums and bite.

- Puppies tend to look on young children as their siblings which is why playtime can escalate fairly quickly into something more. Listen to the



tone of your children's vocal interaction and that of your puppy. As soon as the tone rises an octave, separate them before it ends in tears.

- Always have a quiet corner for your puppy to go to. A crate is a really useful addition. That can become her safe space when she needs a break and/or to sleep. And as it's her 'safe space', no-one goes near her when she's there. It's a House Rule!

- Puppies need cuddles just as much as children! Some puppies are more in need of them than others. I had one Boxer who was fairly aloof so that when she did come close it was very special. And she was one of my most faithful dogs in that she trusted in me to deal with everything. Saffron adores cuddles and will snuggle up on my lap at every opportunity. How we'll manage when she gets her full growth time will tell!

people Arts & Entertainment

Paint, print, draw exhibition

Gallery Asna, Clonakilty and Clonakilty School of Painting presents a showcase of paintings, prints, artist books and drawings from the school's junior/senior cycle and adult programs.

Work is drawn from both adult and junior classes and reveals the breadth of media studied at the school, from oil painting, drawing and bookbinding to drypoint etching, lino-cut and mono-print. For most students this is their first ever exhibition and is an important validation for their continued learning and growth.

The opening will be held on Saturday 14 January, at 5:30pm. There will be light refresh-



ments, wonderful work on the walls, and an opening speech by artist and teacher, James Waller.

Exhibition continues until January 28. Pictured: *Blue Peacock*, lino print by Sylvi

We are not the only ones talking

New York-based, multi-disciplinary artist George Bolster combines science, science fiction and art history to explore the challenges we face as a sustainable society and as a sustainable species with a future on this planet. In 'Communication: We Are Not The Only Ones Talking...', on now at Uillinn: West Cork Arts Centre, he examines language and the possibilities of understanding both other life forms on earth and signals from earth-like planets. His discussions



with NASA scientists; astronomers from the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI)

Institute; and biologists from the Alaska Whale Foundation have informed the works throughout this exhibition.

Following on from research conducted while artist in residence at the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence Institute (SETI), Bolster is fascinated by the discovery of over 5,000 planets by the NASA Kepler mission and other projects, and our potential ability to understand non-human languages on this planet, which may help in deciphering signals from other planets in the Milky Way. "The SETI Institute proposes that if we manage to communicate with other forms of terrestrial life, we may be able to communicate with life on other planets. This has a multitude of meanings for the future of our species."

Exhibition continues until February 11.

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people Arts & Entertainment

First Cut! of young Ukranian's film to be shown in March

Creative Bandon is always keen to grow opportunities for all young people and was searching for an inspiring project to support a group of local young Ukrainians, which they found by connecting with Cork Film Centre's Young Filmmakers.

The Young Filmmakers programme provided professional and experienced filmmakers and equipment for a 2-day workshop in Clonakilty's Shack Youth Space, made possible by funding from Cork County Council through its Arts Funding Scheme and organised

by West Cork Development Partnership.

The resulting film made by the group, titled 'Practice Session', will be shown on the big screen at the annual International youth film festival, FIRST CUT! Fest, in Youghal on March 11. FIRST CUT! Fest, funded by the Arts Council and Cork County Council, is dedicated to young filmmakers, screening their work and their stories. Creative Bandon, using HSE Lottery funding, will bring the young filmmakers and their families to attend the festival.



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Clon Film Club back for Spring term

Clonakilty Film Club returned for its Spring season on January 10 with 'Aftersun', an extraordinary debut feature from Scottish writer/director Charlotte Wells starring Ireland's own Paul Mescal. Five further films that span a wealth of cultures and genres – African sci-fi-punk-musical, Spanish satire, American dramedy, Somalian drama, Korean thriller – round out the lineup.

January 24: Neptune Frost
Multidisciplinary artists Saul Williams and Anisia Uzeyman bring their unique dynamism to the Afrofuturist vision of Neptune Frost, a sci-fi-punk-musical that's a visually wondrous amalgamation of themes, ideas, and songs. Set between states of being – past and present, dream and waking life, colonised and free, male and female, memory and prescience – Neptune Frost is an invigorating and empowering direct download to the cerebral cortex and a call to reclaim technology for progressive political ends.

February 7: Official Competition
Antonio Banderas' film star and Oscar Martínez's stage actor vie for the attention of Penélope

Cruz's wayward director in this filmmaking satire. Gastón Duprat and Mariano Cohn's film differs from other movies about movies by honing in on the rehearsal period. This focuses attention more on the actors and their director, without the presence of a crew and allows for more outlandish set-ups, all in the name of 'finding the character'. It's clear that the leads revel in the opportunity to send themselves up. Banderas and Martínez are perfect sparring partners, their rivalry often descending into pettiness. But it's Cruz who steals the show – by turns maniacal, intense and wholly hilarious.

February 21: Queen of Glory
Brilliant student Sarah has decided to quit her PhD program

so she can follow her boyfriend to Ohio. But Sarah's plans are upended when her Ghanaian mother dies unexpectedly, leaving behind a Christian bookshop in the Bronx called "King of Glory". Sarah must decide how to get rid of the shop, whilst also trying to organise a "traditional" funeral and deal with her useless father. Forced to confront both her grief and lack of connection to her own culture, Sarah starts to re-evaluate her life. Nana Mensah writes, directs and stars in her impressive award-winning debut about a woman trying to find her own path. Sparkling with real wit and emotion, Mensah has created a refreshingly honest and touching dramedy.

March 7: The Gravedigger's Wife
In The Gravedigger's Wife, Finnish Somali writer-director Khadar Ayderus Ahmed observes the long, arduous lengths love can reach to. His poetic debut is charming and wistful without ever feeling maudlin; a beautiful love letter to the power of family. 'A moving, sometimes quietly biting study of a medically and financially troubled family in crisis.' - Variety

March 21: Decision to Leave
When a man falls to his death from a mountain, detective Hae-joon is assigned to the case. The victim's beautiful and enigmatic wife Seo-rae shows no real distress at the loss of her husband, leading Hae-joon to suspect that this was not just an accident. As he investigates further his interest in Seo-rae becomes something more – an attraction that seems to be reciprocated. The latest from Korean director Park Chan-wook (The Handmaiden) has been compared to the work of Hitchcock, but Park brings a flair to this suspense

thriller that is all his own. This is elegant, stylish and intriguing filmmaking, which also feels modern and innovative. And the delicious plot twists will have you guessing to the very end.

All are welcome, no membership required. Films start at 8.30pm at Clonakilty Park Cinema, Screen 2. Doors open from 8.20pm. €10. Follow Clonakilty Film Club on Facebook for updates.

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STUDENT EXHIBITION!

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EXHIBITION OPENING! SAT 14 JAN: 5:30 PM!

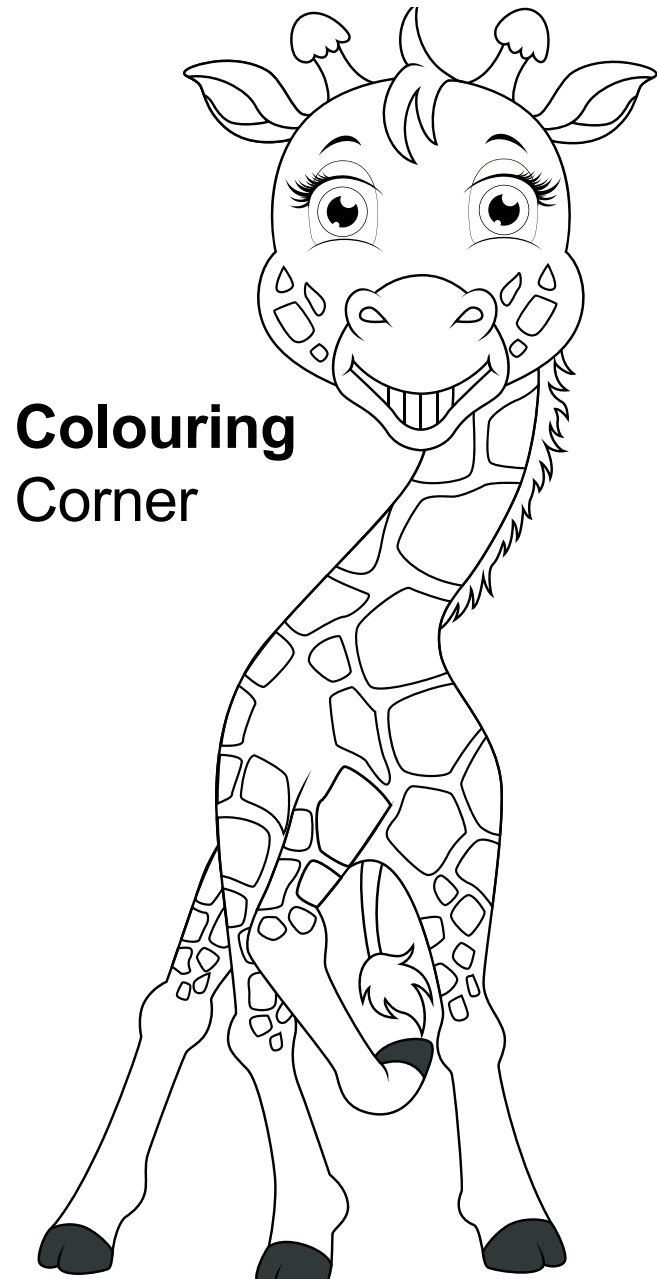
The Craft Corner

This month **Natalie Webb** is showing us how to make chocolate wrapper cards. *“Ever wondered what to do with old chocolate wrappers? They are very pretty after all! Here’s one idea for you but you can experiment with different ones. I would love to see what you come up with!”*

- Materials:
- Card • Scissors • Glue
 - Clear cellophane sweet wrappers
 - Foil sweet wrappers
 - Pencil • Felt • Pipe cleaner

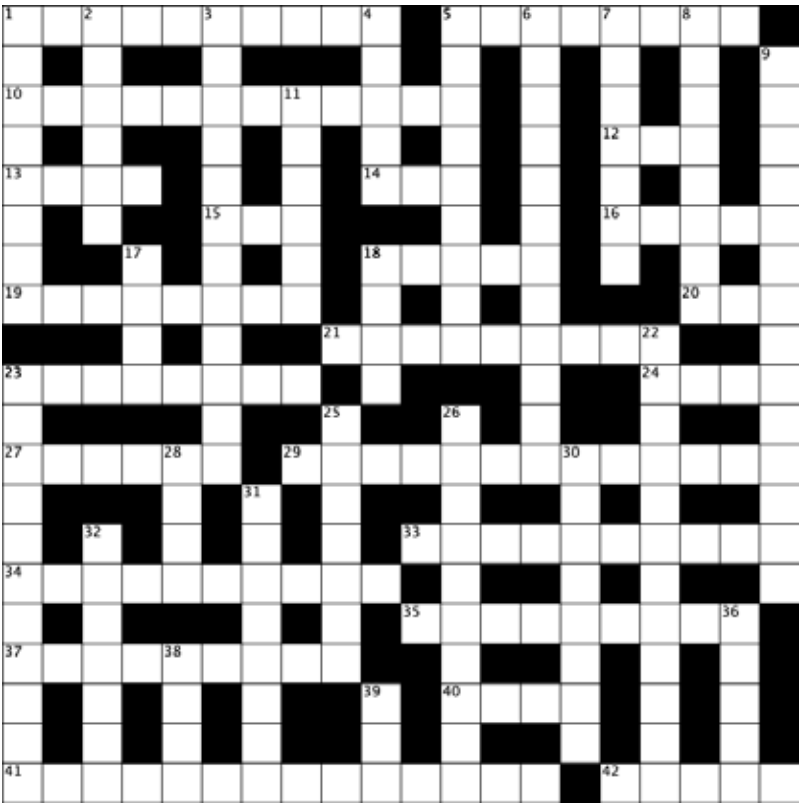
Cut and fold your card to the size that you would like.
On the inside left side draw some

cloud shapes then cut these out.
Stick the cellophane wrappers over the cut-out holes to give you pretty see-through clouds.
Draw flower shapes on the felt and cut them out, stick these onto the front of your card, anywhere you want.
Scrunch up the foil wrapping and stick this onto the centre of your flowers.
Use the pipe cleaners as the flower stems by cutting them to size and sticking them on to look like they are growing from the bottom of the card.
Just to finish off I drew an outline of a cloud shape around the cloud.
Give to your favourite person with a lovely message inside!



Colouring Corner

In the news Crossword



- ACROSS

 - 1 Heavenly keyholder (5,5)
 - 5 Patsy and Edina were Absolutely ----- (8)
 - 10 Health professional who has your back? (12)
 - 12 Pair (3)
 - 13 Minor shaving mishap (4)
 - 14 Travel downhill quickly (3)
 - 15 X-ray alternative; Abbr. (3)
 - 16 Counterparts (5)
 - 18 Come off (in layers) (5)
 - 19 Caledonian penalty? (4-4)
 - 20 Unbridled self-esteem (3)
 - 21 Weed used to make wine (9)
 - 23 St. Vincent’s, St James’ and The Coombe. (8)
 - 24 Traveller down a fallopian tube (4)
 - 27 Possessive types? (6)
 - 29 Husky-sounding old joke identifying tree (5,8)
 - 33 Riviera rally venue (5,5)
 - 34 Pursuit of truth and understanding (10)
 - 35 Talked in the library (9)
 - 37 and 9 down. Annual Irish makeover challenge (9,14)
 - 40 Surname of American Psycho actor (4)
 - 41 Bulletproof transport US sp. (7,7)
 - 42 Remark that is cutting. (5)
- DOWN

 - 1 Kisses can oddly spread illness (8)
 - 2 Brainless activity (6)
 - 3 Title of late ex- Holy See head (4, 8)
 - 4 Business taxes (5)
 - 5 Archduke, bull or pundit (9)
 - 6 Grammy-winning “Bad Guy” singer (6,6)
 - 7 Opponent of progress (7)
 - 8 Get the employees together (8)
 - 9 See 37 across
 - 11 Dynamic (6)
 - 17 ____:// (4)
 - 18 Cooking feta as a stunt (4)
 - 22 Originating from the Sahara region (5,7)
 - 23 Old term for rabies that can stop you from showering (11)
 - 25 Playful yet intelligent swimmer (7)
 - 26 Chip ox bone apart, hating foreign bodies? (10)
 - 28 Roman boss (4)
 - 30 Excused, let off (8)
 - 31 Contoured a person in print or paint (8)
 - 32 Sword or pistol (7)
 - 36 Noted giant slayer (5)
 - 38 Dessert gelatin (4)
 - 39 Pre metric unit of velocity. Abbr. (3)

Sudoku

The goal of Sudoku is to fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9

				2				
			3					5
		4		9		8		
						5		
7		2		8			9	6
					4		8	
	6					1		
			1				4	
5		9				6		3

#139201 Difficulty: hard

		1	2	3		6		
	3		5				1	
8								
			6					
						7		2
	4			9				8
		8				3		
6							9	7
			9	3	4			5

#160472 Difficulty: moderate

Across: 1. Saint Peter; 5. fabulous; 10. chiropractor; 12. duo; 13. nick; 14. ski; 15. MRI; 16. twins; 18. flake; 19. scot-free; 20. ego; 21. dandelion; 23. hospital; 24. ovum; 27. demons; 29. horse chestnut; 33. Monte Carlo; 34. philosophy; 35. whistpered; 37. operation; 40. Bale; 41. armored vehicle; 42. snide
Down: 1. sickness; 2. idiosyncrasy; 3. Pope Emeritus; 4. rates; 5. Ferdinand; 6. Billie Eilish; 7. luddle; 8. unionise; 9. transformation; 11. active; 17. hip; 18. feat; 22 North African; 23. hydropophobia; 25. dolphin; 26. xenophobic; 28. Nero; 30. exempted; 31. profiled; 32. sidewarm; 36. David; 38. agar; 39. mph

people Arts & Entertainment

Soul-stirring new release from Aine O’Gorman

‘These Empty Rooms’ is the latest release from Ballinadee singer-songwriter Aine O’Gorman, who writes songs from a deeply emotional perspective. ‘These Empty Rooms’ is a powerful tribute to Aine’s late mother Margaret O’Gorman who died tragically almost 20 years ago, and is a relatable song about grief and living with the empty spaces left behind.

The piece opens with the focused intimacy of Aine’s voice and piano with the song then gradually soaring to a hugely emotional and cathartic outpouring of love and loss. The moving string part is also

played by Aine and the pedal steel, drums, double-bass and harmony are by Martin Leahy who recorded the track bringing a sensitivity and power to the production of ‘These Empty Rooms’.

Aine’s last release ‘The Poor Ground’ was a collaboration with Victoria Keating and had a huge emotional reaction both in Ireland and Canada. A song about the grim discovery in the Mother And Baby Home in Tuam, Co. Galway in 2017, it made it on to the Irish RTE Radio One Recommends List for two weeks. World-renowned folk singer Christy Moore said of ‘The Poor Ground’:

“Beautiful...terrible...The beauty holds me there as the horror unfolds....A tour de force.”

Aine has been a musician for most of her life. Her mother was a piano player, who played in their local choir in Ballyhea. With two musical parents, Aine and her three sisters all learned how to play instruments from an early age. Aine went on to study music as a mature student in UCC and played in college bands in a supportive role on keyboards and violin. After having her son in 2010, as a single mother, music took a back seat for a while.

Aine met Victoria Keating in college and the friends later

formed a band together with Declan Sinnott on guitar, Martin Leahy on drums and Jamie Kelly on bass. She went on to develop her career as a solo artist; and supported Liam o Maonlai last summer.

On February 3, Aine is performing with Victoria Keating in UCC, as part of the Fuaim concert series. This coincides with her next release, a co-write with Victoria Keating, which will be released on February 1.

Aine is an active member in the Ballinadee community and is involved in her local choir.



Ortús Chamber Music Festival line-up announced

The eighth Ortús Chamber Music Festival will run from February 26 to March 5 in venues around Cork City and County, featuring eight of the world’s most celebrated classical musicians.

The festival, founded in 2016 by renowned Irish musicians Sinéad O’Halloran and Mairéad Hickey, was set up with the goal of providing performance platforms for some of Ireland’s

finest young musicians alongside their international peers. Committed to highlighting the achievements of Irish musicians and composers on the world stage, while bridging connections with musicians worldwide, Ortús has invited over 40 musicians to Cork and programmed more than 85 musical works.

This year’s festival will feature performances in St Brendan’s Church, Bantry,

Blackrock Castle Observatory, UCC Aula Maxima, MTU Cork School of Music, MYPlace Middleton, Sea Church Ballycotton and St. Peter’s on North Main Street. The line-up includes Irish musicians Sinéad O’Halloran (cello), Eoin Ducrot (violin), Fiachra de hÓra (viola) and Peggy Nolan (cello), alongside Swedish violinist Johannes Marmén, Welsh pianist Jäms Coleman, New Zealand violist

Bryony Gibson-Cornish and Swiss violinist Laia Braun. There will also be performances by the world-renowned Marmen Quartet, of which Sinéad is a member.

“It has been an incredible year for me since I joined the quartet, with performances all around the world, including at the Berlin Philharmonic, Lucerne Festival, Canada’s Banff Centre and the BBC Proms.

We have played for audiences worldwide, but for me there is nothing quite like coming home to where my musical journey began and bringing my favourite musicians with me! I can’t wait to introduce them to Irish audiences.”

Festival highlights include Mozart and Fauré’s beloved piano quartets, Beethoven’s epic late quartet op. 131, the Irish premiere of Salina Fisher’s ‘He-

al’, Brahms’ much loved String Sextet no. one and a special evening at the Blackrock Castle Observatory where the audience will be treated to music inspired by the night sky.

All details available on ortus-festival.ie

people Motoring



CAR REVIEWS

Sean Creedon

In recent reviews I may have been a bit dismissive about the rush to electric cars. A few months back our new Taoiseach Leo Varadkar said that nobody will be forced to buy an electric car come ‘EV Day’ on January 1, 2030, but will any of the large manufacturers still be making cars with petrol or diesel engines in seven years from now?

At a recent Nissan event their group CEO James McCarthy said that Nissan are not going to invest any more money in petrol or diesel cars.

VW pushes ahead with EV



James is one of the few people in the Irish motoring business who is consistently pushing the idea of electric cars. He pointed out that a few years back we were in much the same position as Norway, but now the Norwegians have raced way ahead of us when it comes to ownership of EV’s.

VW is also pushing ahead with the switch to EV with its ID.3, ID.4, which was the best-selling electric car in 2021 and now the ID.5 on sale.

I drove its GT Max version of the ID.5 last week and it was massive, but with a price of just over 80k, I think Irish customers may go for a more basic

from the VW ID stable.

VW’s ID.4 and ID.3 were the bestselling electric cars in Ireland in 2021, recording a 31 per cent combined market share. The ID.4 is the top selling EV again this year.

So far this year 15,591 new electric cars have been registered in comparison to 8,528 for the same period in 2021, an increase of 82.8 per cent. Still small figures overall, but unless we have another war in some part of the world, the switch to electric is going to happen.

My test car, which came in King’s Red colour with a black roof, was really impressive. I liked everything about it except

the ‘finicky’ infotainment screen. A lady kept asking me if she could help and all I wanted to do was find the button to change radio stations! The infotainment screen certainly does take a little, sorry a lot, of getting used to.

The ID.5 is billed as a coupe-SUV version of the ID.4, while the GTX badge marks it out as the sporty variant, in the same way that the GTI badge does for the VW Golf.

It’s a comfortable car to travel in and all my passengers loved the high driving position. The boot is huge, but when it comes to electric cars you can forget about spare wheels.

When I am driving an electric car, I tend to spend some time at Circle K garages where they have fast chargers. Last week a man in the forecourt of my local garage came over to ask me what type of car I was driving; he was fascinated by the front lights on the ID.5. When fully charged your range will be around 470km.

The starting price for the ID.4 starts at €51,390, while



the ID.5 starts at €61,295. My top of the range version GTX started at €78k. Road tax is €120. The ID range is very impressive, but new customers switching to electric should maybe start with an ID.4 or regular ID.5, as the GTX Max model might be just a little

bit too expensive for people switching to EV.

Correction: Photographs of the Polestar were incorrectly used with the December car review of the Peugeot 308.

people Home & Garden

Transitioning from Christmas to spring decór

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**INTERIORS****Maura Mackey**

Maura Mackey is a Cork-based interior and retail display designer. A professional with an eye for detail and interior styling, she thrives on giving any home the 'showhouse feel' when up for sale or rental from a home staging point of view. On the other hand, if you are looking to give your home a makeover or restyling, 'Maura Mackey Design' will help you achieve the home of your dreams. P: 087-7699714. maura@mauramackeydesign.ie



gloomy January days. Plants will also improve the air quality when it's too cold to fling open the windows. Place large plants in pots or baskets around the room or even just add some miniature plants to a vignette or tray on your table, sideboard or footstool. Display fresh flowers on the table in your hallway or dining room. Bump up a small bunch by mixing in greenery and berries from the garden.

Ramp up cosy mood lighting with an extra floor or table lamp and add some fairy lights, which are not just for Christmas! Choose the warm white ones for all year round usage and try draping them around some greenery on a table setting, around a mirror, picture or vase or inside a mason jar.

Perfume your space with

candles, incense or diffusers in your favourite scent to instantly improve your mood.

Dress your table. Sitting down to a table that is beautifully dressed doesn't need an occasion. Try adding colourful placemats, stylish tableware, greenery and candles to create a special but relaxed vibe while dining.

Add some new cushions or throws to your couch for a fresh look that won't break the bank – look in the sales for bargains. Not everything has to match on your sofa. Buy a selection of cushion patterns, sizes and fabric – patterned, floral, geometric, velvet – to blend with what you already have without matching exactly. Odd numbers and variety always look better.

Reflect cushions colours in your

throw but a throw should stand out and not fully cover the sofa. A good size throw is 50 x 60 inch.

Move your furniture around. Sometimes we get too used to seeing a room as it is; maybe we need to add or take away some furniture to give it a new look and make it more user friendly; two armchairs instead of a couch maybe or change the position of sideboards and occasional tables? Design your home around its users, not the other way around. Try moving the furniture you already have between rooms before deciding if you need something new.

There is no better time for fresh new beginnings than January. Refreshing your space will motivate you to stick to other New Year resolutions.

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New income eligibility limits for Social Housing

From January 1, 2023, social housing income eligibility thresholds in Local Authorities across the country have been increased by €5,000. The threshold for County Cork is now €35,000,

for Cork City it is €40,000.

Commenting Minister for Housing Darragh O'Brien said, "It's been over a decade since any changes have been made to the income eligibility thresholds and under Housing for All

a commitment was made to review the eligibility limits.

"The new income limits are now in place across the country and all Local Authorities will have updated their own application forms and systems.

"Work is ongoing in developing a revised income eligibility model and this will be completed in 2023."

Almost 6,000 people remaining in their homes due to Mortgage to Rent scheme

Mortgage to Rent (MTR) applications approved across the country have now passed the 2,000 mark milestone since the scheme's commencement. Minister for Housing Darragh O'Brien urged anybody who is at risk of losing their home to consider the scheme and also engage with the other Government supports and advice available.

The scheme offers households in acute, unsustainable mortgage arrears situations, with little or no prospect of a significant change in circumstances, the chance to surrender a property to a lender and in turn become a social housing tenant whilst staying in their

own home and community. As part of the scheme, the home will be brought up to private rental standards. In January 2022, the Government improved and expanded the MTR scheme so more people in long-term mortgage arrears could benefit from the scheme. These improvements were made as part of Housing for All, the Government's housing plan to 2030.

For further information on Mortgage to Rent and to see if you qualify visit: mortgagetorent.ie.

For free financial, legal, or insolvency advice around your mortgage arrears visit Abhaile at mabs.ie/abhaile/ or contact them on 0818 07 2000.

White Sage Decluttering

Feeling frustrated, stuck or not knowing how to start decluttering?

Contact West Cork's award-winning Professional Declutterer **Anne Marie Kingston** on 087 6529901



White Sage Decluttering

ANNE MARIE'S TIP OF THE MONTH:

Get your paperwork organised for the coming year.

Write '2023' on a lever-arch folder and when invoices/statements come in (by email or by post), you will have a home for them. This will help to clear the kitchen table/island and take control of paperwork. *If you need help to declutter your home contact Anne Marie on 087 6529901.*

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people Home & Garden

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January in the garden



GARDENING

John Hosford

The Weekend Garden
Centre

Welcome to a whole new year ahead in which to plan garden improvements and hopefully the weather needed to facilitate these projects and see them come to fruition.

Jobs for the month

Complete the planting of spring bulbs by the middle of January. It is better to have the bulbs in the ground than out of the ground. You might have bulbs lying around unplanted due to lack of time, inclement weather or unworkable ground due to heavy frost or rainfall, but do get the bulbs into the ground at the earliest possible opportunity, as you will be rewarded with a great variety of colour and fragrance. Choose a sunny, well-drained position and plant at two to three times the depth of the bulb. Add a good, slow-release organic fertiliser prior to planting.

Watch for vermin

Encourage owls to your garden to control vermin. Manage land for Barn Owls by providing a roosting and nesting place; avoid using

rat poison/rodenticide; offer extra food in bad weather; support Barn Owl Conservation Groups. Choose organic products.

Seeds

Flower, vegetable, herb and wildflower seeds will be arriving into garden centres and shops now. Secure your requirements as early as possible. Early sowings need to be made in heated propagators or greenhouses. Do check the reverse of the seed packets for valuable advice on optimum temperatures for germination, sowing times and when to plant out. If you sow in a cold, unheated area, this will result in no germination or very poor percentage of germination. Seed catalogues are also a good source of information and advice. Use fresh compost and clean seed trays when sowing. Label all seeds at sowing time with names and dates of sowing.

Fruit garden

Continue pruning of apples, pears, black, red and white currants

Clear out the greenhouse

Any tomatoes, courgettes and cucumbers that are finished cropping should be removed now. Clear all debris and dead leaves and debris, which should be disposed of off-site. Don't leave old leaves hanging around, especially those that have mouldy or fungal spores. Old used grow-bags can be used to dig into the soil or used as mulch.

Choosing the right plants

If you are new to gardening your choice of plants will be very much influenced by the following factors: Soil. Drainage. Coastal aspect. Urban or rural location. Alkalinity or

acidity of the soil and matching plants to suit PH. Privacy. Flowering time/s.

Choose hardy, disease-resistant plants or hedges for screening. If you are in a coastal location, it is best to choose coastal-tolerant plants that will withstand the ravages of the wind and salt-laden gales. Choose: Olearia traversii, Olearia macrodonta, Fuchsia ricartonii (West Cork Fuchsia), Euonymus japonicus, Elaeagnus, Rosa rugosa, Hazel, Berberis and Hebe.

Escallonia is no longer recommended due to its high susceptibility to a leaf spot disease which has become very prevalent.

Invasive plants

Some plants may appear muted and well-disciplined in the early stages of their development but you need to be aware of their thuggish behaviour. Japanese Anemone are an example - they can spread like wildfire through a herbaceous border choking neighbouring plants. If you really think you should have these, then plant within the confines and discipline of a bucket to confine their all-conquering habits.

Their virtues are being coastal, hardy, late-flowering and robust.



Other invasive plants to watch out for are the Rubus family and Gunnera (giant rhubarb).

Summer bulbs

Summer flowering bulbs such as Dahlias, Begonias, Gladioli, Nerines and other summer flowering bulbs shall start arriving in Retail Garden outlets during January. Store and start off in a cool, dry but frost-free situation.

Hardy plants for winter/early Spring colour

Polyanthus, winter heathers, Skimmias (evergreen with red or white berries on female plants, male plants have colourful red or green flower buds which last until late March/early April when they explode into a mass of fragrant white flowers). Early Narcissi, Snowdrops, Dwarf early Iris all provide delightful early colour.

Vegetable garden

Get your seed potatoes now and put them sprouting in a frost-free area. Early vegetables can be sown in a heated, frost-free area.

Bend over leaves on cauliflower to protect the curd especially during frosty weather.

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Force rhubarb for delicious, tender young stems in the spring. Cover with a large pot, dustbin or special forcing pot. Surround the forcing pot with fresh horse manure. The heat generated by the composting manure will accelerate the forcing process.

Fruit

Begin to force strawberries by bringing them indoors. Prune vines under glass asap.

Lawns

Keep off icy grass, improve drainage and repair hollows and humps.

Wishing you all a very happy and peaceful New Year and successful gardening for 2023.

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people Sport

Desmond knuckles down to balance boxing and Garda careers

A boxer from Cill na Martra, a Gaeltacht region in and around West Cork, is making strides. Christina Desmond, a Garda who currently is based in Dungarvan, Co. Waterford, won a silver medal at the European Championships in the light middleweight 70kg event in Montenegro back in October. Desmond was initially not supposed to be at these boxing championships though, as she tells **Matthew Hurley**.

“It was a long year with ups and downs,” says Desmond. “I was full-time with the team all last year and just a week before the championships they dropped me and brought in another girl. It knocked me back, I was training myself, but I wasn’t really with the Irish setup.”

Desmond got recalled five weeks before the beginning of the championships.

“I had a week-and-a-half to two weeks of training at home in September and then we flew out to Turkey for a two-week training camp. It was a fairly busy few weeks, but it worked out nicely in the end.”

A silver medal at the end of it was a great ending to the event, as she beat Hanna Ingrid Hede of Sweden and Melissa Gemini of Italy to advance to the final. Desmond was eventually beaten by Armenian Ani Hovsepyan on a split decision, but her accolades in 2022 will be remembered.

“I had nothing to prove. I wanted to do it for myself and that’s how it went so well. Once I performed well, I’d be happy enough with the amount of training I had. I far exceeded my level I think,” Desmond explains.

With athletes like Katie Taylor, Kellie Harrington and Amy Broadhurst excelling, Desmond

is another success story in Irish boxing.

“There are a lot of good boxers in Ireland at the moment. It’s good to be part of that era. It’s a first for Cork to have anyone at that level of boxing,” she admits.

“It’s good to set a standard for the young kids coming up, especially the young girls. I’ve been back in work since, and it’s been fairly hectic.”

Working long days as part of an Garda Síochána as well as training in her sport is difficult for Desmond but she takes on the challenge with a great attitude.

“I’m still at amateur level; the other Irish girls are all doing it full time. I decided it would be better to have a full-time job and career behind me,” she explains.

“I’m proud of myself that I can do both. I’ll have to make a decision soon but to be up in the senior ranks with other great boxers is brilliant.”

What everyone sees is Desmond’s undoubted quality in the ring but her commitment to her job with the Gardaí cannot go unnoticed.

“We do 12-hour shifts and that’s only if we get out on time. Then going into training before, after, or maybe both, it’s hard. Nobody really sees that side of things, they just see the

winning.

“It is quite hard to juggle it all. It’s draining trying to do both, even training full-time is hard enough but I wouldn’t change it. I’m glad I made the decision to get my career and I’ll see where the boxing takes me after this,” she adds.

Desmond’s family played a major part in getting her started in boxing. Her twin brother Michael, who is a key player for the Cill na Martra Gaelic footballers, showed her the way.

“Michael started boxing in Macroom and I had to copy whatever he did. Eventually I got up the ranks and I have been boxing for Ireland since I was 16. I started when I was 11 and my first fight was at 13.

“Ever since then, I’ve been away doing the boxing. I was lucky enough that when I joined there wasn’t many girls. I’ve seen a big change in it now, we all have. I’m just lucky that I can lead the way for a lot of young women and especially the young Cork girls.”

The twins are both fantastic sports people for the region but are supportive of each other too.

“Maybe there was competition when we were younger but not anymore. That’s probably why we’re so good at our sports, we drive each other on.

“In my eyes he’s the best and in Michael’s eyes I’m the best. He’s good enough to make any inter-county team. If he had more discipline, he’d be flying,” Desmond laughs.

She herself played with the Naomh Abán ladies footballers two years ago and now she plays ladies football in Waterford to add to her already hectic schedule.

The people in the Gaeltacht are beyond proud of Desmond and her great achievements.

“I’m blessed with my friends and family at home in Cill na Martra. The neighbours really put on a good show when I got back. It was nice to see everyone out, they know how much work I put in and they see the commitment I have given over



Christina Desmond (l), Kellie Harrington and Michaela Walsh during the EUBC Women’s European Boxing Championships 2022

the last few years.

“It was really nice to bring back a silver medal to them. It’s a small area, doesn’t get much publicity. It’s great to be from the area,” she said.

Model Irish boxers such as Taylor and Harrington have also built some relations with Desmond.

“I actually didn’t know of Katie Taylor until I joined. I didn’t hear anything about her, I just went for the craic. If my brother could do it, I could do it better. I got to be part of her team when she qualified for the Rio Olympics (2016).

“To share a team and room with her was something else as a 19-year-old. I’ve been on the team with Kellie Harrington; she was my first roommate at 16 when I started out and she still is my roommate ten years later. It’s great seeing how well they excelled at the sport.”

The 2024 Olympics in Paris may be on the mind of most athletes, especially considering qualifiers will be held in 2023. This Garda however is taking each day as it comes.

“I’m not thinking that far ahead yet,” says Desmond. “I’d like to see myself as part

of 2024, if I can keep going the way I am and take small steps at a time...I’d be happy enough with that.

“I’d like to focus a lot more on full-time training in 2023. I’ve got this far in my life in splitting work and training. I’d like to see where I can go with full time training.”

Whether she does qualify or not for the Olympics, 2022 was a momentous year for Desmond. It will be interesting to see what 2023 brings.

OUT & ABOUT IN WEST CORK



The annual Tom O’Donovan Memorial Puc Fada took place on St Stephen’s morning from Tots Bar Ballygurteen. Winners of the adult competition and Tom O’Donovan perpetual cup, presented by Ena O’Donovan, were Darragh Coakley and Seamus Crowley.

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the past I have asked for many
favours. This time I ask for this
special one(mention favour).
Take it Dear Heart Of Jesus and
place it within your own broken
heart where your Father sees it.
Then in his merciful eyes it will
be your favour not mine. Amen.
Say the above prayer for 3 days,
promise publication and favour
will be granted no matter how
impossible. Never known to fail.
K.C.

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ST. JUDE'S NOVENA
May the Sacred Heart of Jesus
be adored, glorified, loved and
revered throughout the whole
world now and forever. Sacred
Heart of Jesus pray for us. St.
Jude worker of miracles pray
for us. St. Jude, helper of the
hopeless pray for us. Say this
prayer nine times daily and by
the end of the 8th day, your
prayers will be answered. Say it
for nine days. It has never been
known to fail. Publication must
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Thanks St. Jude. B.O'L.

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