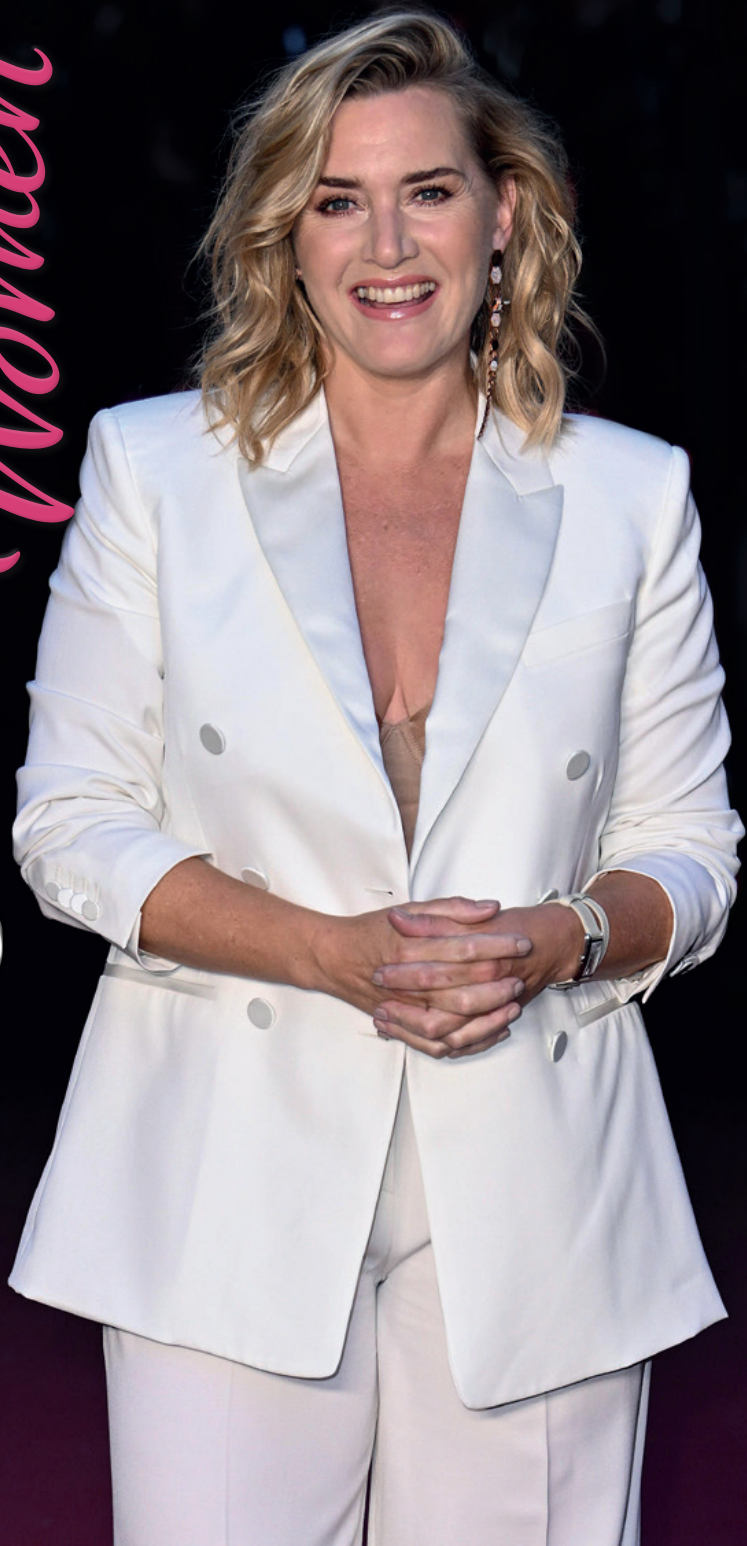


ISSUE NINE

BePhenomenal *Women*



ACADEMY AWARD® WINNER
KATE WINSLET

sky exclusive

THE REGIME

A HUMBLE SERVANT
OF THE PEOPLE



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Be Phenomenal Women

I love to sit down first thing in the morning with a cup of coffee and take half an hour to listen to or watch the news. Or sometimes I'll tune into talk radio and listen to people debate whatever new headline has hit the airwaves that day. So that's just what I did this morning.

The headlines were much the same this morning as they were yesterday: war between Israel and Hamas, war between Russia and Ukraine, countless senseless deaths of innocents: an economy in freefall and ever-growing waiting lists to see a doctor or have a life-improving operation. In fact, the headlines have been much the same for some months now and every day there's another sad episode added.

But today I turned it off. For some reason, I couldn't take one more comment or see one more scene of devastation. What made the difference between yesterday and today? I really don't know but all I knew was that I couldn't take it and rather than sit and allow the negativity to wash over me, I chose to step away.

Sometimes the world feels painful and lacking in hope: bereft of compassion and positivity and it's difficult to find a fine line between being informed and being sucked into a black hole. I'm glad I turned the news off today because it was actively harming my mind and making sure that I stay mentally healthy is a must.

I have suffered from mental health issues for most of my life and recognising the triggers that could possibly bring me down is a

lesson I have learned the hard way which is why I'm sharing it with you now.

A friend shared a post with me a couple of days ago and it really struck a chord. If you're reading this on a digital device you can find it at the link but if not, please check out thebengsons on Instagram. They have posted several performances but the one to look for is about hope. To paraphrase, they're saying that hope comes from where the hurt is and that really resonated with me because even when things are very bleak and seem hopeless - it is possible to find something to be thankful for, even if that something is very small.

It's a cliché but it's true - it's OK not to be OK. So if you find the world getting you down and you can't switch off or find something to be positive about then reach out and ask for someone to help you find the hope where the hurt comes from.

If you would like to contribute to this magazine or have any queries please feel free to contact us at hello@bephenomenalwomen.com



Gill ✨

The views and opinions expressed in

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Any content provided by our contributors are of their opinion and are not intended to malign any religion, ethnic group, club, organisation, company, individual or anyone or anything.

All information contained in the magazine is correct at the time of publication.





Everybody hurts sometimes

Lifeline

**If you or someone you know is in distress or despair
call Lifeline free on 0808 808 8000.**

(Textphone: 18001 0808 808 8000)

Calls to Lifeline are answered by trained crisis counsellors who can provide help and support. Counsellors are experienced in dealing with suicide, self-harm, abuse, trauma, depression and many other issues. Lines are open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Calls are free from all landlines and mobiles. For more information visit www.lifelinehelpline.info.

The Lifeline service is provided by Contact under license from the Public Health Agency

A full-page photograph of actress Kate Winslet standing on a red carpet. She is wearing a white double-breasted blazer over a white top and white wide-leg trousers. Her hands are clasped in front of her. She has blonde, wavy hair and is smiling. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and red flowers.

Kate Winslet

Icon of Empowerment



Kate Winslet is a versatile and acclaimed British actress known for her captivating performances across film and television.

She grew up in a family of actors, which perhaps laid the foundation for her future career. She discovered her passion for acting at a young age and began pursuing it fervently. Despite facing challenges, including bullying at school, Kate remained determined to follow her dreams. Her resilience and dedication eventually paid off, propelling her to international stardom.

In her personal life, Winslet has been known for her down-to-earth nature and outspoken personality. She has been open about her struggles with body image issues and has been a vocal advocate for positive body acceptance in the media. She's also not afraid to speak her mind on gender equality and environmental issues.

Winslet's warmth and genuineness have endeared her to fans worldwide, earning her respect both on and off the screen.

Her breakthrough role came in 1994 when she starred in Peter Jackson's "Heavenly Creatures," a critically acclaimed drama based on a true story.





However, it was her role as Rose DeWitt Bukater in James Cameron's epic romance "Titanic" (1997) that catapulted her to international fame. Her performance earned her widespread recognition and her first Academy Award nomination for Best Actress.

In 2003 Kate showed us her range in "The Life of David Gale," where she delved into the morally complex world of a woman fighting against the death penalty. Her portrayal of a determined journalist navigating through layers of deception and ethical dilemmas was nothing short of spellbinding and it's the kind of performance that sticks with you long after the credits roll.

Throughout her career, Winslet has consistently delivered powerful and memorable performances in a variety of roles. She has showcased her versatility in films such as "Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" (2004), "Finding Neverland" (2004), and "Little Children" (2006), earning critical acclaim and numerous award nominations along the way.

In 2008, she won the Academy Award for Best Actress for her role as Hanna Schmitz in "The Reader," further solidifying her reputation as one of the finest actresses of her generation. She continued to impress audiences and critics alike with her performances in films like "Revolutionary Road" (2008), "Steve Jobs" (2015), and "The Mountain Between Us" (2017).

Kate Winslet's impact on the film industry extends far beyond her impressive list of credits. Her ability to inhabit complex characters with depth and authenticity has earned her the admiration of audiences and fellow actors alike. She has inspired countless aspiring performers with her dedication to her craft and her unwavering commitment to storytelling.

But she has also found success in television, starring in the acclaimed miniseries "Mildred Pierce" (2011), for which she won a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Lead Actress in a Miniseries or Movie.





More recently she garnered widespread acclaim, for her role in the HBO limited series "Mare of Easttown" (2021) where she takes on the role of Mare Sheehan, a small-town Pennsylvania detective haunted by the unsolved disappearance of a teenage girl.

As Mare navigates the complexities of her personal life and the pressures of her job, she becomes embroiled in a murder investigation that rocks her tight-knit community.

Winslet's performance in "Mare of Easttown" was hailed by critics and audiences alike, earning her widespread praise for her portrayal of Mare's grit, vulnerability, and resilience. Her nuanced portrayal brought depth and humanity to the character, anchoring the series, and elevating it to critical acclaim. Her work on "Mare of Easttown" further solidified her status as one of the most compelling actresses working in television today.





Beyond her on-screen work, Winslet has also ventured into producing, demonstrating her commitment to telling compelling stories both in front of and behind the camera.

Recently she has starred in, and executive produced, the Apple TV+ series "The Regime" (2023), which will air on Sky this Spring. It's a dystopian drama set in a future where women's rights have been stripped away. In the series, Winslet plays a woman who becomes a key figure in the resistance against the oppressive regime. Her involvement in both the creative and acting aspects of the series highlights her versatility and commitment to storytelling across different mediums.

Future projects include "Lee", the story of photographer Elizabeth 'Lee' Miller, a fashion model who became an



acclaimed war correspondent for Vogue magazine during World War II. "Lee" will be in cinemas in September 2024.

But perhaps her most challenging role has been being herself.

In a world where societal pressures often dictate unrealistic standards of beauty, Kate Winslet stands as a beacon of authenticity and empowerment. The acclaimed actress has long been an advocate for embracing one's natural body, fostering a positive attitude towards body image that resonates deeply with audiences worldwide.

Her journey towards self-acceptance hasn't been without its challenges. Throughout her career, she has faced scrutiny and criticism from media outlets and industry insiders alike.



However, rather than succumbing narrow beauty ideals, Winslet has remained steadfast in her commitment to authenticity.

One of the most striking aspects of her attitude towards body image is her refusal to conform to conventional norms. She has repeatedly spoken out against the airbrushing and Photoshopping of images, advocating for raw and unretouched portrayals of women in the media. By embracing her imperfections and celebrating her natural beauty, Kate sends a powerful message to women everywhere: true beauty lies in authenticity.

Moreover, Winslet has been vocal about the importance of self-love and self-acceptance. She encourages individuals to cultivate a positive relationship with their bodies, emphasising the value of inner strength and confidence over external validation. Her words serve as a source of inspiration for countless individuals struggling with body image issues, reminding them that they are worthy of love and respect just as they are.

In addition to her advocacy work, she leads by example through her diverse and ground-breaking roles on screen. Whether portraying a strong-willed pioneer woman in "The Mountain Between Us" or a complex detective in "Mare of Easttown," Winslet brings depth and truthfulness to her characters, challenging stereo types and redefining beauty standards in the process.



Winslet's impact extends far beyond the realm of entertainment. She has used her platform to support initiatives aimed at promoting body positivity and empowering women of all ages. Through her involvement with organisations such as the Dove Self-Esteem Project, Kate continues to champion causes that align with her values, effecting meaningful change in communities around the globe.

In a culture obsessed with perfection, Kate Winslet serves as a refreshing reminder that beauty comes in all shapes, sizes, and forms. Her unwavering commitment to authenticity and self-acceptance has earned her the admiration and respect of fans worldwide, solidifying her status as a true icon of empowerment in the 21st century.



Spanish Style Sophistication...

COSTA DEL SOL

With over 160 kilometres of beaches and coves along the warm, inviting Mediterranean Sea, the Costa del Sol is the ideal location to get away from it all.

Basking in 300 days of glorious sunshine each year, Spain's most popular tourist region attracts sun-seekers from every walk of life. Movie stars, Arabian kings, European aristocrats and multitudes of tourists like you and I levitate to its golden shores every year.

The province of Malaga, although the smallest in Andalusia, provides a perfect playground for pleasure-lovers. With its snow-peaked mountains, crystal clear ocean, white sugar-cube villages and sophisticated tourist resorts rubbing shoulders along its stunning coastline,

the Malaga province is sure to seduce you with its addictive blend of sunshine and Spanish sophistication...

Historic Treasures

With its strategic location at the gateway to Africa, the Costa del Sol has proved to be a powerful acquisition for many different civilisations over the centuries. Numerous civilisations have left their marks on the landscape, bestowing upon the region a rich and diverse archaeological and architectural legacy.





When the Phoenicians arrived on the sunshine coast during the 8th century BC, they founded 'Malaka'. They left the remains of their ancient Malaka beneath the foundations of the building where the Museo Picasso Malaga now stands.

The Romans showered magnificent archaeological jewels across the province: the 1st century Roman Theatre in Malaga, the Roman Villa in Rio Verde, the 1st century city of Acinipo, and the Roman Baths of Santa Maria, to name but a few.

The Moorish civilisation bequeathed a magical legacy upon the province of Malaga. Intricate Moorish gems include the Alcazaba in Malaga city, the 12th and 13th century gateway to the Atarazanas market,

the Moorish baths at Ronda, the magnificent Alcazabar at Antequera, and Fuengirola's beautiful Sohail Castle.

Star Treatment

The Costa del Sol has also long been a Mecca for the 'beautiful people' of all walks of life: the film actors, the rock stars and the cream of the European aristocracy.

Okay, so you can spend years in the place and never see a famous face, as in Hollywood, but they are there, living in dream beach-side residences on the coastal strip from Marbella to Puerto Banus, known as the 'Golden Mile'. The glamour of this area is such that the King of Saudi Arabia even has a palace overlooking the prestigious strip.



The presence of the beautiful people owes much to the founding of the Marbella Club in the 50s by Prince Alfonso de Hohenlohe, the godson of King Alfonso XIII and Queen Victoria Eugenia. Alfonso and his friends attracted the cream of the European aristocracy to Marbella - and it's an attraction that remains irresistible today.

Other attractions include.....

Pablo's Town

As the birthplace of one of the world's most renowned artists, Malaga is home to the prestigious Museo Picasso Malaga, which is housed in the city's 16th century Palacio de Buenavista.



The museum's permanent collection boasts some 285 works by Pablo Picasso that were donated by Christine and Bernard Ruiz-Picasso. The collection encompasses Picasso's works from the end of the 19th century until 1972, allowing you to contemplate the artistic evolution of the creator of Les Femmes d'Alger (O.J. No. 119).

A Different Angle

For the more active holidaymaker, there are a host of sporting activities both in and out of the water.

There's golf, of course, with more than 40 excellent golf courses to choose from. The quality of the region's golf courses is reflected in the standard of the international championships that take place on them: the Ryder Cup, the World Championship, the Spanish Open, and the Volvo Masters.

Alternatively, you can explore the region's incredibly diverse landscape on mountain bike, on horseback, on foot, in a 4-wheel jeep, or even on a paraglider! Or for those who prefer to be in the water, the Costa del Sol is the perfect place for windsurfing, water-skiing, jet skiing, and scuba diving.



And don't forget about the incredible Sierra Nevada mountain range, where, just over an hour and a half away from the beach, you can ski!

A Veritable Feast

If your taste in activity is more of a 'palatal' nature then the Costa del Sol will be a gastronomical delight for you. The Costa del Sol has the highest number of restaurants in the whole of Andalusia, and from barbecued sardines served beside the beach to traditional hotpots, tapas and the freshest seafood - there is something to tempt every tastebud.



Preparing and cooking food is one of the art forms that the people of Malaga are most proud of, and each of the 11 municipalities of the province has its own local specialities that have been handed

down from generation to generation. The best-known dishes are gazpacho, Malaga salads, fresh fish, soups and stews.



Hit the Road

Only a two-hour drive from Malaga will bring you to some of the region's World Heritage Sites: Cordoba with its Mosque (or Mezquita) and Jewish Quarter; Seville with its cathedral, Giralda and Santa Cruz district; Granada with its Alhambra, Generalife and Albaycin district; Cadiz, which is the birthplace of Flamenco; and Jerez, which is famous for its fortified wines and Andalusian dressage.

Wherever you may wonder, Spanish-style sophistication is the name of the game on the Costa del Sol.



HEALTHY

Houseplants

Anyone who's ever shopped around for houseplants would probably admit to prioritising the way they look and what their maintenance requirements are before deciding on one to bring home. Those are obvious things to keep in mind, but there's one more important aspect we sometimes tend to forget about when looking for an ideal houseplant: its health benefits.

Good health depends on more than just diet and exercise. Without a doubt, your environment affects your health too, and the right houseplant can actually make a big difference in your mood, your stress level, your sleep quality and even your breathing.

A nice-looking plant is great, but a nice-looking plant that quietly works its magic in the background on your health as you go about your regular routine is even better. Here are eight houseplants that can help solve a few common health-related problems.



1. Spider Plant

Spider plants are great for removing formaldehyde from the air in your home. This is the stuff that comes

from all sorts of things you bring into your home including paper bags, waxed papers, facial tissues, paper towels, napkins, particle board, plywood panelling and synthetic fabrics. In addition to formaldehyde, snake plants target carbon monoxide and other toxic air impurities as well.



If you have poor indoor air quality and not much of a green thumb, a spider plant may be exactly what you need. It's one of the easiest plants to care for and can be kept in less sunny places in your home since it typically doesn't like to be placed under direct sunlight.

A spider plant can grow in any type of soil and only needs to be watered occasionally. If you can remember to water it often enough that its soil stays moist, then that's all you really need to keep this plant alive and thriving.



2. Aloe Vera

Chances are you've probably heard of or used commercially sold medicinal creams or ointments that say they contain aloe vera on their

labels. Despite a lack of scientific evidence that aloe vera has substantial healing properties, it's been used for thousands of years as a common natural remedy to soothe irritated skin.

The clear, gel-like substance found in the inner part of the leaf can be applied directly to the skin.



According to WebMD, people typically use it to help treat burns, sunburn, frostbite, psoriasis and cold sores. Make sure you speak to your doctor first in case you have any allergies.

Aloe vera plants need to be deeply watered and their soil left to dry just slightly (about 1 to 2 inches deep) between watering. They do very well with lots of sun but can turn brown if they get too much of it, so keeping your aloe vera plant under indirect sunlight is best.



3. Lavender

Lavender is a flowering plant that has a very gentle and pleasant aroma. Best known for its stress-relieving mental benefits, the scent of lavender is often used in spa products like bath salts, skincare creams, soaps, and candles.

You can place a lavender plant anywhere in your home but putting it in your bedroom is especially helpful since it may help you sleep better. Catching a whiff of lavender may help soothe restlessness, nervousness, anxiety, depression, and insomnia.

Lavender plants prefer well-drained soil and lots of sunlight. They also need deep watering but be careful not to water them very often. Aim to water your lavender plant when the soil is nearly dry.



4. English Ivy

Nobody ever wants to think about the possibility of mould thriving in their home.

If you're worried about

it, bringing an English ivy plant into your home can help you rest easy since it's well-known to purify up to 94 percent of airborne mould particles that can trigger allergies.

Like the lavender plant, English ivy is another great plant to put in your bedroom. If you have asthma or difficulty breathing at night, it can help you breathe easier and get a restful night's sleep.

Be aware that English ivy is poisonous, so it should be kept well out of reach from children and pets. The plant thrives under fluorescent light but not direct sun, so it's the perfect houseplant for darker than normal bedrooms with artificial light. Soil should be kept moist at all times, but not soggy.

5. Snake Plant

Another great houseplant for the bedroom, the snake plant (also known as the 'Mother-in-Law's Tongue') is among one of the most popular choices for improving



indoor air quality. It actually gets most of its job done at night, converting carbon dioxide into oxygen as you sleep.

Snake plants also remove all sorts of toxins from the air including trichloroethylene, formaldehyde, toluene, benzene, and xylene. To optimise its air-purifying power throughout your entire home, you'll likely need more than one plant.

Considered to be one of the easiest plants to care for, snake plants do great when placed under indirect sunlight. You don't have to water them much at all, and they'll grow better if you let them dry out quite a bit between watering.



6. Rosemary

Rosemary is an herb that's been used in folk medicine for centuries to help improve concentration and memory. It turns out that there may be some merit to this claim since a study conducted by Northumbria University found that people who were exposed to the scent of rosemary essential oil performed better on questionnaires compared to people who were exposed to no scent at all.





The memory-boosting component of rosemary is thought to be caused by a compound called 1,8-cineole, which may cause increases in a neurotransmitter called acetylcholine. Although you may be able to take advantage of a more potent scent by using rosemary essential oil with a diffuser in your home, it doesn't hurt to keep a rosemary plant nearby in places like your home office or any other room where you could use a mental boost.

Rosemary can be planted in a pot and put in any spot where it has access to bright sunlight. It should be watered evenly throughout the growing season but will need less water in the winter. Avoid over-watering and remember to trim your rosemary plant after it flowers.

7. Peace Lily

Peace lilies will really compliment your home decor in the summer when their beautiful white flowers are in full bloom, but that's not all that they can do. This pretty and powerful houseplant is a master of air pollutant removal - working hard to absorb ammonia, benzene, xylene, formaldehyde and trichloroethylene throughout your home.



Since this is a flowering houseplant, it will produce some pollen and a floral scent, which isn't always suitable for people with plant and pollen-related allergies. With that in mind, peace lilies can make a gorgeous addition to any dining table, side table or entryway table.

Peace lilies should be planted in a pot with all-purpose soil and kept slightly moist throughout the entire year (without over-watering). They can thrive in both low and bright light but do best in shaded areas.

Never discount the power of what a simple and innocent looking houseplant can do for your health. It's worth doing some further research on the type of plant you choose and how to care for it if it means it will make a difference in how you feel.

Elise Moreau



Elise is a writer who is most passionate about helping desk workers improve their health and productivity.

Grab her free 10 Awesome Workspace Hacks on her website at www.HealthyDeskDweller.com.

SOSANDAR

- 1 Indigo Blue Panelled Detail Button Front Denim Dress £79
Taupe Suede Stiletto Heel Knee High Boots £155
- 2 Dark Indigo Slim Leg Button Front Denim Jumpsuit £89
- 3 Taupe Corduroy Relaxed Fit Shirt £55
- 4 Chocolate Brown Metallic Chevron High Neck Jumper £55
- 5 Taupe Corduroy Belted Midi Shirt Dress with Pocket Detail £85
- 6 Blue Paisley Print Mesh Wrap Front Fit & Flare Dress £79 and Blue Paisley Print Mesh Ruffle Detail Wrap Top £45

WESTERN TALES

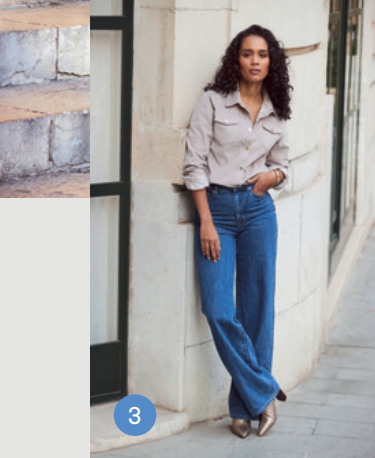




2



5



3

Introducing Western Tales, a luxe collection of elevated denim and prairie-inspired styles. Fusing our signature feel-good denim with Western influences, this easy-to-wear edit oozes enduring day-to-night appeal.

From flattering kick flares to on-trend wide-legs, jeans form the cornerstone of every modern wardrobe, but our denim offering doesn't end there. For the ultimate outfit-in-one, look no further than cool jumpsuits and figure-flattering dresses.

A denim midi skirt has must-have status, while classic denim shirts are the epitome of effortless cool. Finished in the perfect mid-blue wash, prepare to wear on repeat.

Peppered with pops of paisley and finished in a timeless palette of blues and chic neutrals, these wardrobe icons will elevate every outfit.

Check www.sosandar.com for availability.



4



6

7 Khaki Green Paisley
Floral Print Tiered Hem
Midi Dress £79

8 Light Wash Blue
Blouson Sleeve Denim
Midi Dress £79

7







10

9 Ecru Faux Leather
Straight Leg Trousers
£59

10 Taupe Asymmetric
Fluted Sleeve Fine
Knit Top £25 and Dark
Indigo Denim Cargo
Midi Skirt £55

SOSANDAR

*Choosing A Probiotic
That Works*

FOR YOU



FIVE THINGS TO CONSIDER



A hundred years ago every mouthful of food had 1000x more bacteria in it compared to today, so we were constantly re-inoculating our guts



Amanda Williams,
Nutritional Therapist & CEO of Cytoplan

Probiotics have been long-known to play an important part in improving and maintaining gut health, but what might be the most important thing to consider is which type of probiotic will suit you best depending on your gender, age, lifestyle and presenting health concerns.

Here are five things to think about when choosing the right probiotic for you from expert Nutritional Therapist and CEO of market-leading supplement brand Cytoplan; Amanda Williams (PG Dip Nutritional Therapy. AFMCP, mBANT. rCNHC. Dip AIT Dip NLP. RANA):

“The gut health space can be overwhelming to someone who is looking to improve or maintain their digestive system. Firstly, there are a wide range of well-known and lesser-known symptoms from chronic abdominal pain, indigestion and food intolerances to skin irritation, anxiety and sugar cravings - all linked to poor gut health. What we do know is that it is often said that the gut is the seat of all health; a damaged or stressed gut can trigger inflammation and the gut is also the site of 70% of the immune system and is therefore fundamental for protection against infection.

“The gut flora is involved in the production of neurotransmitters and short chain fatty acids which communicate with the brain via the vagus nerve, hence gut issues can have a significant effect on cognition. Also, the gut flora is heavily involved in hormone metabolism particularly of thyroid, adrenal (stress) and reproductive hormones, so with any hormone dysregulation condition, gut function should be considered. There is also strong evidence that gut dysfunction can contribute to obesity and metabolic syndrome.





“Therefore, in almost any health condition, the gut can potentially be playing a role.”

“Any gut health programme should involve health and lifestyle choices such as eating an anti-inflammatory diet rich in whole foods and fibre, getting plenty of water, mindful eating, and a focus on prebiotic and probiotic foods.

“However the balance of bacteria within the gut can be easily disrupted by stress, poor diet, excess alcohol, illness, medication and antibiotic use and this is where a Probiotic supplement can help us to maintain a balance of beneficial bacteria. I believe the power in probiotics is choosing a probiotic supplement that is specifically created with age, gender and lifestyle in mind.

and absorb nutrients, these factors have an influence on the bacteria further down the digestive tract. Different strains are more suitable depending on our age too, so look for a probiotic that is specifically formulated for your age. For example after the age of 40 our levels of bifidobacterium tend to deplete, therefore it can be useful at this age to select a probiotic that provides higher levels of bifidobacterium strains. There are also probiotics which have been designed to support children and babies microbiome. For young children (under 3) it is important to consider strains that have been specifically researched and selected for this age group, these include *Bifidobacterium animalis*, *Bifidobacterium infantis* and *Lactobacillus rhamnosus GG*.

When choosing a probiotic supplement it's important to consider the following to ensure the best chance of optimal results:

1 Age - Our guts age as we do and we see changes to the balance of bacteria in the gut. We also see changes in our ability to produce stomach acid, digestive enzymes



2 Gender - It's important to consider the difference gender plays too, for example a probiotic formulated for women might include *lactobacillus helveticus* a specific strain which has been shown to provide support to the female ecosystem.

3 Preference - When choosing the right probiotic supplement, it's important to make sure that the strains collectively have

activity throughout the whole GI tract, and are acid, bile and anti-biotic resistant. A multi-strain is always a good idea as this will support a more diverse microbiome, and in order to effortlessly include a probiotic into your daily regime consider using either a capsule if that's how you usually take nutritional supplements or if you have a morning smoothie for example; a probiotic powder would be an easy addition here.

4 Lifestyle - It is useful to support the health of the gut before and during travelling. Changes to the environment, food, water and other bacteria can lead to disturbed digestion or gut-derived infections. The probiotic yeast *saccharomyces boulardii* is often used by travellers to protect against infections. It competes with pathogenic microorganisms for space and resources as well as supporting gut immunity. A good multi-strain probiotic can also be useful for travelling. A healthy balance of gut flora supports normal nutrient absorption, waste product detoxification as well as immune function, therefore a multi-strain probiotic including *Lactobacillus* and *Bifidobacterium* genera can be supportive for those with more active lifestyles too

5 Use - A broad multi-strain probiotic can be appropriate for long-term use. A hundred years ago every mouthful of food had 1000x more bacteria in it compared to today, so we were constantly re-inoculating our guts. In today's society we exist in a more sterile environment and therefore have less exposure to these health-supporting bugs. A probiotic supplement can help to provide beneficial bacteria that we no longer obtain from the diet. If using a high potency or specific strain probiotic it would be more beneficial to utilise these in the short term and then switch to a broad spectrum multi-strain probiotic. Pets can also benefit from obtaining more live bacteria, however, always ensure that



products are specifically designed for your furry-friends.

"Overall try to look for a probiotic with several different species of live bacteria and effective strains which can withstand stomach and bile acids. A multi-strain is always a good idea as this will support a more diverse microbiome."

Cytoplan recently introduced a new technology to protect a number of probiotic supplements to withstand stomach and bile acids. GUARD (Gut Acid Resistant Delivery) technology has been introduced on top-selling probiotics such as Women's Biotic and Acidophilus Plus which now include NutraJIT® technology; an innovative and natural ingredient that protects the bacterial strains from stomach acid and enables the timed release of probiotics within the intestines, maximising the probiotic efficacy at the ideal site of action in the body.

To find the right probiotic to suit you depending on your age, gender and lifestyle, it might be helpful to explore Cytoplan's extensive range of probiotics from baby to senior here: www.cytoplan.co.uk/shop-by-health/digestive-health-support



DUNELM

Heart & Soul





"Building on the success of our uplifting pride & joy collection, heart & soul blends vintage-style aesthetics with contemporary charm.

Bobbin techniques, mid-century-inspired lighting and curved silhouettes are interspersed with fun slogan motifs and Mix-and-match fabrics and prints. The mood-boosting collection breathes new life into interiors while elevating existing pieces."

Debbie Drake, Design Director

- 1 Natural history museum lift top draftsman desk **£429** • navy 3 tier cantilever wooden sewing box **£62** • 120 spools holder beech **£30** • lottie jute oval pastel rug **£125** • scalloped edge shade air **£5** • frilled check cushion 43x43 pinecone **£16**
- 2 Hattie Corner Sofa Faux Linen Ochre **£1599** • Chiara Beige Marble Side Table **£249** • Bonnie Scallop Wool Rug **£235** • Kaeli Marble Glass Floor Lamp Natural **£149** • Elsie Tall Table Lamp Rhubarb **£20** • I Can Boogie Cross Stitch Cushion **£25** • Still Life Floral Cushion **£35** • Applique Birds Cushion **£25** • Woven Check Cushion **£6** • Clara Cotton Velvet Cushion **£14** • Mohair Throw **£18** • Bobbin Mirror Yew Green **£60** • Eliza Wooden Armchair **£149**
- 3 Emmie Seat Pads Yew Green **£10**
- 4 Floral Kitchen Canisters with Spoon **£10**
- 5 Elements Cruz Mushroom Small Table Lamp Blue **£35**





- 6 Kaeli Marble Glass Table Lamp **£59** • Zakaria Wood Candlestick Small **£6** • Zakaria Wood Candlestick Large **£8** • Zakaria Turned Wood Planter **£20**
- 7 Knock Knock Door Mat **£6**
- 8 Glass Candle Holder 3 Ball Amber **£7** • Glass Small Candle Holder Yew **£5** • Glass Fluted Candle Holder Tall Brown **£10** • Glass Small Candle Holder Apricot **£5** • Glass Small Candle Holder Blue **£5** • Glass Fluted Candle Holder Tall Blue **£10** • Glass Candle Holder Tall Emerald Green **£10**
- 9 Apple Bowl Framed Print A3 Oak **£42**
- 10 Floral Kitchen Canisters with Spoon **£10**
- 11 Natural History Museum Hallway Unit **£499** • Floral Vase Embroidered Cushion **£25** • Scalloped Edge 35cm Shade Air **£15**
- 12 Botanica Orange Curtains **£200** • Toft Vase Sand **£30** • Elements Levi Fit Pendant Clay **£40** • Amber Glass Carafe **£12** • Florence Wine Goblet 2pk **£15** • Florence Flute 2pk **£15** • Florence Coupe 2pk **£15** • Amalfi Reactive Glaze Stoneware Dip Bowl White **£4.50** • Amalfi 12pc Dinner Set Sea **£60** • Large Scallop Wooden Border **£12**
- 13 Kaeli Marble Glass Floor Lamp **£149** • Kaeli Marble Glass Table Lamp **£59**
- 14 Theodore Dark Mango Wood Sideboard **£599** • Bobbin Mirror Black **£60** • Bonnie Scallop Wool Rug **£235** • Ribbed Glass Serve Bowl **£20** • Scalloped Edge Shade Air



9



GOSSIPING



In the Workplace

Gossiping in the workplace can have serious negative impacts on your career, according to new research by Durham University Business School and NEOMA Business School.

Not only are gossipers frowned upon by other work colleagues, but they also become socially excluded in the company, and can experience negative career-related impacts as a consequence of their storytelling. Interestingly, the study also found that gender had an impact on how gossipers were perceived, with women having a much more negative view of workplace gossipers than men.

The research was conducted by Dr Maria Kakarika, Associate Professor of Organisational Behaviour and Leadership at Durham University Business School, alongside Dr Shiva Taghavi and Dr Helena González-Gómez, Associate Professors of Organisational Behaviour at NEOMA Business School.

The researchers wanted to examine colleagues' responses to workplace gossip, and how they judged the gossiper afterwards, understanding whether or not gossiping had implications for the gossiper's career or social standing.





In order to do so, the researchers conducted three separate studies. In the first experiment, almost 200 participants were presented with a workplace scenario in which a colleague was either gossiping or not. Afterwards, participants completed a survey based on the scenario, which explored their views on the gossiper in terms of their morality.

In the second study, the researchers manipulated the gender of the gossiper and conducted the same experiment with 500 participants - again with a survey at the end. This was to identify if gender had an impact on colleagues' views of gossipers. They also measured the behavioural reactions of participants towards the gossiper.

In the final study, the researchers surveyed over 200 participants from various organizations on past gossiping incidents that had happened in their own workplaces. Participants were asked to describe the incident and share their thoughts on the gossiper. They also indicated their behaviour towards the gossiper, allowing the researchers to identify any consequences as a result of the gossip.

The studies revealed that workers typically held negative views of gossipers in the workplace, with many respondents socially excluding the

gossipers from groups due to their actions - through methods such as removing them from social media groups, sharing less information with them and even refraining from speaking to them at all.

Most concerningly, the studies revealed that gossiping had damaging implications for career progression. Participants were much more likely to give low ratings about their gossiping peers' performance, recommend bonus reductions or even impede their potential promotions.

"Gossiping is pretty commonplace in all workplaces. Whether it's a small comment about someone's work, or something more personal and less work-related, we've all engaged in it either through gossiping ourselves or hearing someone gossip." says Dr Kakarika. *"But it is highly likely that gossiping can be reduced in the workplace if people were aware that it says much about the gossiper too rather than only about the person they are gossiping about. This workplace gossiping can have real negative impacts on their career progression".*

Though difficult to police employee gossip, the researchers say that organisations should actively inform employees of the potential negative effects of doing so in the workplace. If employees become more aware of the potential negative implications to their career, it is likely workplace gossiping will be reduced in organisations.



Is there anything that
Stacey
SOLOMON
Can't do?





Not only is she trying to get us all to reorganise our lives but she's also a musician, actor, contributor, social media influencer and mother to 5 children.

This multifaceted woman known for her bubbly charm, infectious positivity, and down-to-earth nature first rose to fame as a finalist on the sixth series of the reality television show 'The X Factor' in 2009 where she was awarded third place in the competition, behind Joe McElderry and Olly Murs.

Stacey became a TV presenter after her success on 'The X Factor'. She hosted various shows including panel shows, talk shows,

and reality TV programs, and her friendly and down-to-earth personality made her popular with audiences.

In 2010 she took part in the tenth series of the reality show 'I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!' where she beat Shaun Ryder in the final and was crowned 'Queen of the Jungle'.

'Celebrity' helped raise her profile and she starred in various TV shows such as 'A League of Their Own', 'Celebrity Juice' and '8 Out of 10 Cats' but it was 'Loose Women' that brought her fully back to our screens.

Throughout the Summer of 2016, Stacey appeared several times as a guest panellist on the ITV daytime show and after the departure of Vicki Pattison and Jamelia, she was announced as a regular panellist alongside Lisa Riley.

In September 2016, it was announced she would take over from Laura Whitmore and become co-host of the newly named I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here! spin-off I'm a Celebrity... Get Me Out of Here!





Extra Camp alongside Vicky Pattison, Joe Swash and Chris Ramsey.

It was while on this show that she began dating television personality Joe Swash and they were married in July 2022.

Off-screen, Stacey is celebrated for her candid and humorous presence on social media platforms such as Instagram and Twitter. Through her posts, she shares glimpses of her everyday life, offers insights into motherhood, and champions body positivity and self-love.

Stacey Solomon is not only admired for her talent but also for her authenticity and

relatability. She serves as a role model, inspiring others to embrace their uniqueness, pursue their passions, and find joy in life's simple pleasures. With her infectious enthusiasm and genuine warmth, she continues to leave a lasting impression in the hearts of audiences, across various mediums.

One of Stacey's most notable projects is her book "Sort Out Your Life: The Stacey Solomon Way," where she shares her tips and tricks for organisation, crafting, and DIY projects. In the book, Stacey's trademark humour and practical advice make tackling household chores feel less daunting and more enjoyable.

Her television show of the same name can be viewed on BBC 1 and BBC iPlayer.

Stacey Solomon's appeal lies in her ability to connect with people from all walks of life. Whether she's discussing the latest trends in home decor or sharing anecdotes from her own experiences, Stacey's genuine warmth and infectious enthusiasm never fail to brighten the day of those around her. As she continues to inspire and uplift others, Stacey remains a true icon of positivity and authenticity in the entertainment industry.



Do you have symptoms
of pancreatic cancer?

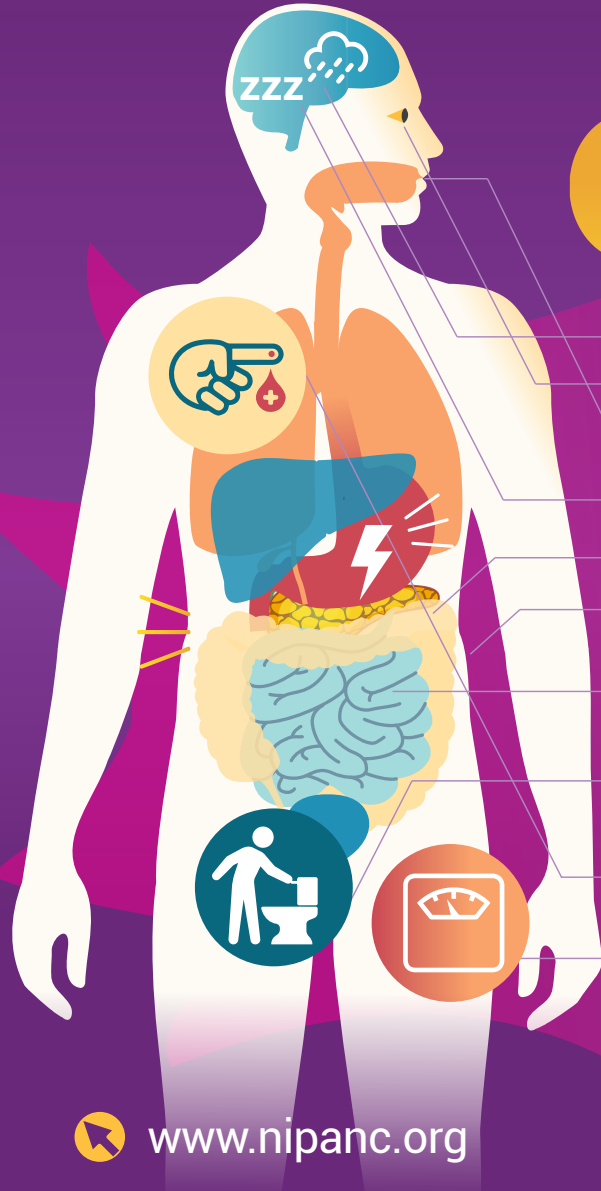


TIME MATTERS

Talk to your GP today.



**Early diagnosis
saves lives!!**



- Low mood** or depression
- Yellowing** of the skin or eyes
- Pain on eating** / fullness
- Fatigue**
- Upper abdominal pain**
- Mid-back pain** - can radiate to stomach
- Indigestion** not responding to prescribed medicine
- Pale and smelly stools** that don't flush easily
- Diabetes** - new onset not associated with weight gain
- Unexplained weight loss** and loss of appetite

#PedalThePeriphery 2024

WHEEL MAGNOLIAS

Two sisters, Cathy Booth (48) from Hillsborough and Andrea Harrower (50) from Dromara last year completed #PedalThePeriphery; an epic endurance event which saw them cycling 480 miles in 48 hours. It was to fulfil the wish of a dying man, Andrea's husband, Paddy Harrower, that 'something good' would come out of his terminal pancreatic cancer diagnosis.

Something phenomenal came out of it. They raised awareness of the symptoms of the disease and the need for early diagnosis and treatment in over 80 countries and over £100,000 for local pancreatic cancer charity, NIPANC.



Wanting to keep Paddy's memory alive, as well as honour Natalie Wilson, a school friend of Cathy's of over 30-years who also died of the disease,





the siblings are calling on members of the public to enter this year's **#PedalThePeriphery** event in teams of two, four, six, eight and ten people. There are 30 team places filling up fast.

On the weekend of June 7th to 9th, they are asking people in NI to join the challenge to help them continue to take a stand against pancreatic cancer, a devastating illness which claims the lives of over 280 people in NI each year.

Although Cathy and Andrea won't be cycling this year, they are very much behind its organisation supported by specialist event management and GPS tracking company, Primal Challenges and will support participants around the route.

This is their story.

Paddy Harrower, a PE teacher at Wallace High School was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer on Easter Sunday, April 17th 2022, and had just 14-weeks to live from diagnosis to his death on July 24th. Presenting late, his symptoms included indigestion and pain in the upper abdomen.

Shortly before he passed away, he came up with the idea to challenge his wife Andrea and sister-in-law Cathy Booth to take on an epic **#PedalThePeriphery** endurance event.

Paddy, a sports fanatic, and keen cyclist wanted 'something good' to come out of his terminal diagnosis. Little did he, Andrea, Cathy or NIPANC

know at the time, the chain reaction of events to follow that turned a personal challenge into something much greater.

This is the story of the ripple effect of a dying man's decision to turn something horrific into something positive; an endurance test of real and lasting value that is hoped will spare other families what Cathy and Andrea have been through.

It's remarkable what the sisters have accomplished and continue to achieve in the face of profound loss and deep personal grief. Their story is one of cause and effect. How good can and does come out of the worst possible circumstances.

Still shattered by the death of her husband Paddy, shortly before Christmas 2022, Andrea Harrower phoned her sister Cathy and told her she was ready to talk about taking on **#PedalThePeriphery** and made contact with Ivan McMinn MBE, the Chairperson of NIPANC.

A meeting over coffee was arranged on January 19th 2023 at Lock Keepers Inn on the River Lagan in Belfast where Ivan pledged the sisters the charity's support saying, 'it was a pity they didn't have a purple support car.'

Andrea replied, she did have one, but it was unroadworthy and in her garage with flat tyres.

She was referring to her 1974 lilac Volkswagen Beetle. It's the same age she is - a gift from her parents Barry and Elaine Thompson for surviving



a near death illness when a teenager. It is her beloved 50-year-old car Paddy refused to let Andrea sell when the couple faced financial pressures telling her “one day Andrea, you will drive it again.”

Little did he know then, the VW would be brought back to life and accompany the sisters on their epic endurance event; his own bike mounted on the rooftop to take the metaphorical journey around NI with them. That idea was Fraser’s, one of Paddy and Andrea’s two sons who at the time was about to sell the bike but didn’t.

The Beetle has now become the mascot of #PedalThePeriphery and for NIPANC. It has been dressed in the common symptoms of pancreatic cancer by Mid-Antrim Signs for the next stage of this adventure and will play a key role in raising awareness.

To get the Beetle back on the road again, NIPANC Trustee, Lisa Strutt suggested the charity speak to her brother-in-law Mark Strutt who works for the RAC and is a Master Technician accredited through Volkswagen. His brother John, Lisa’s husband had died of pancreatic cancer three years before age 47.

Mark Strutt, assisted by his friend Pat Scott were the best men for the job, putting call outs and using their contacts and friends in the

trade to help out. A part was even sent from as far away as China.

Something very special happened. One family deeply impacted by pancreatic cancer and bereavement stepping up to support another. A growing community of people who didn’t know each other previously all playing their determined part to get the #IBLAMEPADDY Wagon back in action and they did it.

As part of the #PedalThePeriphery awareness campaign, the sisters used St Patrick’s Day on March 17th to call on the public to play their part in supporting the endurance event by getting involved in a whole range of activities under a #IBlamePaddy to raise money for pancreatic cancer research.

Keen for something good to come out of the tragic circumstances, the sisters asked the public to back them by running their own #IBlamePaddy events.

Andrea explained: “#IBlamePaddy came about when people found out he was terminally ill. Friends and family felt they had no excuse but to join him in some of the things he was doing just a few weeks before he passed away. Activities such as cold-water swimming, cycling and kayaking.

“Paddy would be secretly pleased the hashtag can be used by anyone fundraising to blame him

on literally anything they do, to raise money and awareness for this important cause. This year we will also be encouraging people to fundraise by blaming Paddy for the life-affirming activities they will get up to.”

“Paddy was a sports fanatic himself. He was always quietly in the background and would support my own physical challenges, whether sorting out the logistics or with mindset and words. But his quiet presence spoke volumes.

“He wouldn’t have relished all the attention on himself for #IBlamePaddy but he would relish people getting out there and challenging themselves, whatever challenge means to them, in his name. He lived for and died for the benefit of everyone but himself.”

Momentum, excitement, and anticipation began building up to weekend of June 7th to 9th 2023. The start line was outside the Ulster Bank on the Ormeau Road on the same day George Ezra was playing in the nearby Ormeau Park.

The weather was notable for being fantastic. The sun shone throughout the event apart from the “utterly brutal, horrid, hellish few hours due to strong headwinds since leaving Garrison in Fermanagh.”

There was not a dry in the house, on the day mechanic, Mark Strutt met Andrea and handed over the keys to the now branded road worthy VW purple Beetle. This was in Paddy’s own words, the ‘one day, Andrea when you will drive it again.’

Paddy Harrower, quietly in the background, never really feels too far away from this unfolding story.

The Beetle broke down once or twice but thanks again to Mark Strutt and his network of friends, it too made it across the finish line.

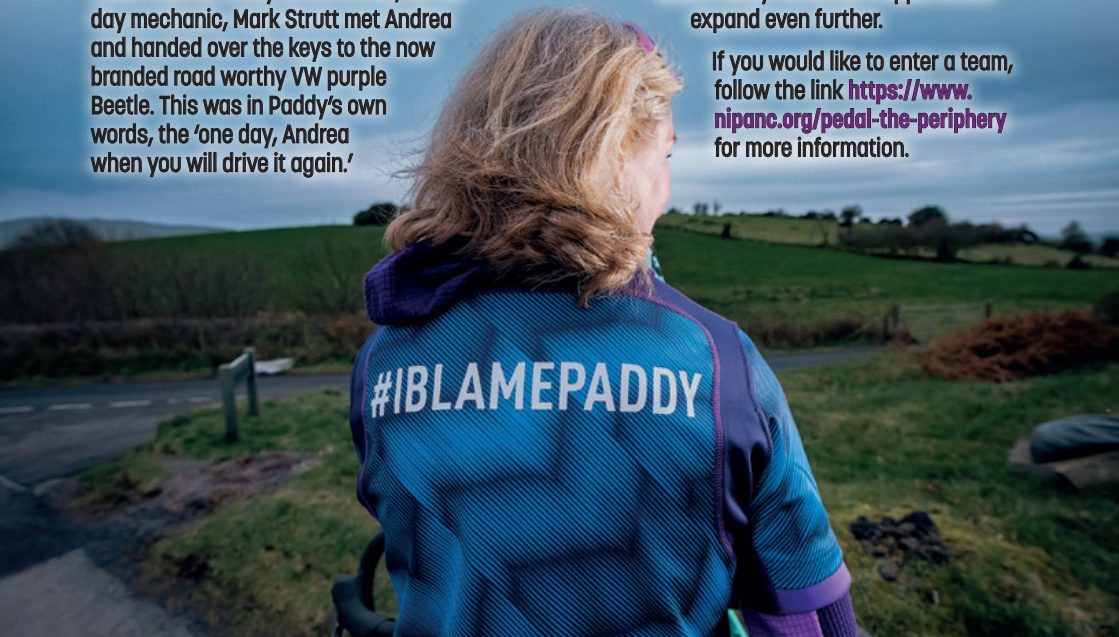
Words cannot describe the two days, June 7th to 9th. In a powerful interview, just before the start of the epic endurance event, Andrea said: “There has been a long run up to this, ten or eleven months. This has come together into something massive, something that’s going to make a huge difference to so many other people, so many other families.”

Cathy added: “We are up for this. We are ready for this. This is for everyone who has lost their lives to pancreatic cancer and the wider pancreatic cancer family and actually, the wider cancer family as well.”

This year’s team and legacy event will start at Titanic Belfast and finish at Wallace High School in Lisburn where Paddy Harrower taught sport. Full circle, 480 miles, clockwise in 48 hours.

Cathy and Andrea are determined to make this new annual, NIPANC legacy endurance event a brilliant experience for all who take part and make Paddy Harrower’s ripple effect expand even further.

If you would like to enter a team, follow the link <https://www.nipanc.org/pedal-the-periphery> for more information.



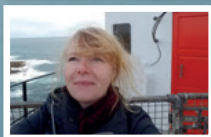
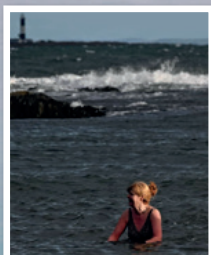
The Lure of the Lighthouse

by Helen McCourt

Lighthouses have always had a romance about them, the foghorn sounding through the night guiding sailors to safety. Lighthouses represent strength, safety, mystery and resilience.

There are around 120 lighthouses on the island of Ireland, each one standing tall in all weathers - alerting sailors to the dangers and coaxing them to safety in bad weather. These navigational aids serve a vital service along the coast of Ireland - a coast of rugged cliffs, roaring waters, and submerged rocks. All of them are now automated, changing from oil lamps and rotating lenses to powerful electric lamps and advanced optics - the last one upgraded was Bailey in Howth Co Dublin in 1997.

In the past families lived and worked on the lighthouses and some worked over several generations, with children born and growing up to become the next generation of keepers. Now caretakers are looking after the lighthouses and no families live in the keepers' cottages. Those family stories are now confined to the archives. The Association of Lighthouse Keepers (ALK) was set up to protect the memories and heritage.



Rosie Drysdale from Bangor grew up with a love and interest in lighthouses and while not from a seafaring family, she made it her mission to visit each lighthouse in Ireland. She is now the Regional Representative for Ireland.







What got you interested in Lighthouses?

You know I'm not quite sure. I did grow up on the coast, firstly in Derry on Lough Foyle and then Donaghadee - hanging around the end of the pier under Donaghadee lighthouse while my bro fished and going deep sea fishing at night with the light guiding us in, Mew light our backdrop - I guess they were part of my environment, in my psyche as it were.

I then caught RTE's first programme on Irish Lighthouses and that was me hooked and then when life circumstances finally allowed, I took to visiting them around the 2500 miles of our coast, and haven't stopped.

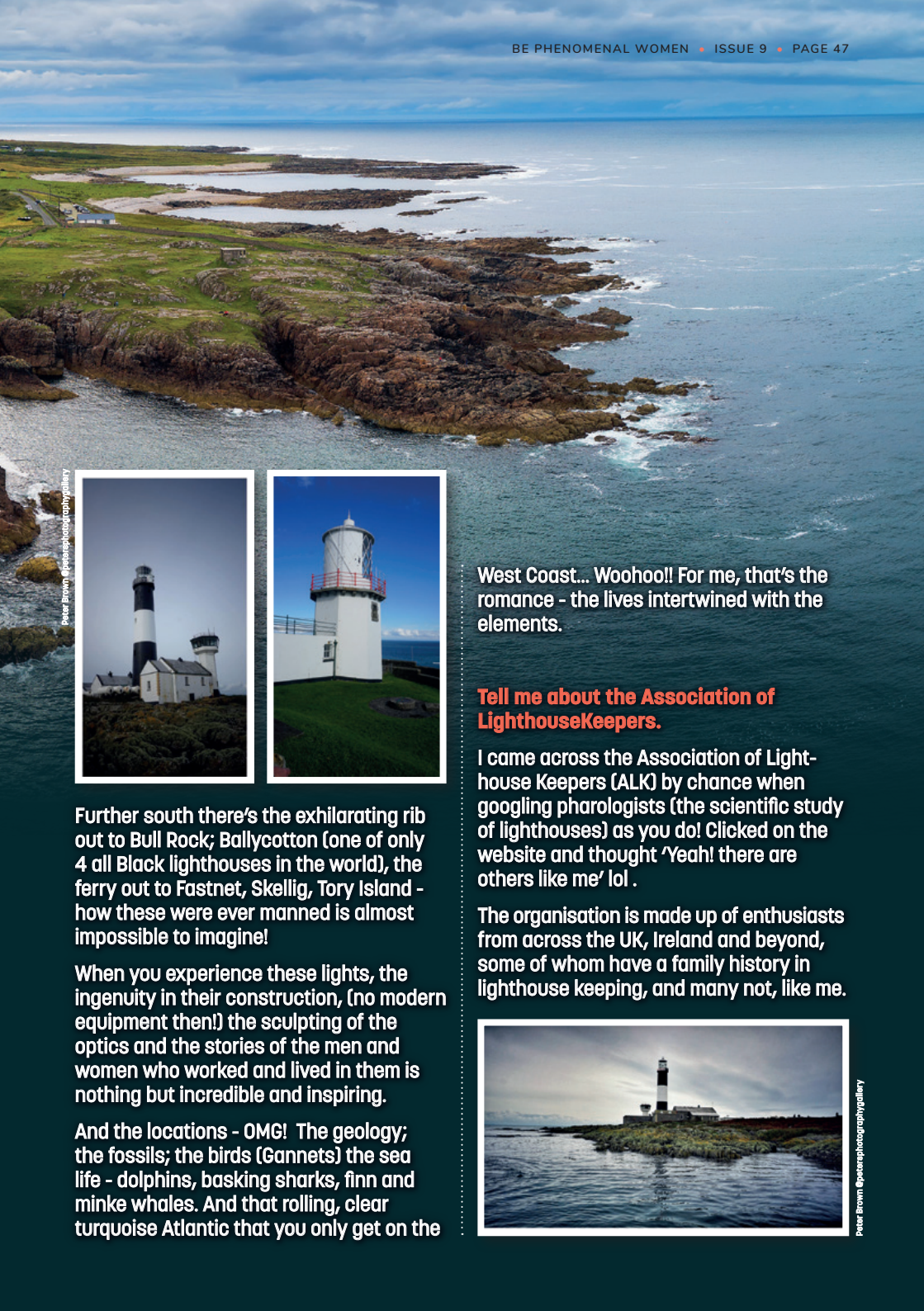
Tell me a bit about the history of lighthouses?

Most of the lighthouses you see were built back in the late 1800s to assist in safe seafaring trade. But before the majestic granite and sandstone structures, beacons were lit on the forelands. In fact, the oldest operational lighthouse in the world can be found at Hook Head in Co. Wexford with the first beacon lit there by monks in the 5th century. Imagine, the oldest operational lighthouse in the world and it's here on our island! (some say it's the 2nd oldest but even so). It looks like a typical rotund lighthouse from the outside and yet mediaeval inside. A must-see - as are they all.

Standing at the bottom of the tallest land-based lighthouse in Ireland at St John's Point Co. Down watching the beam sweep across the water at dusk with the Mourne mountains, or swimming off Cranfield beach with Haulbowline floating in the middle of Carlingford Lough.



Peter Brown @peterbrownphotography



Peter Brown @petersphotographygallery



Further south there's the exhilarating rib out to Bull Rock; Ballycotton (one of only 4 all Black lighthouses in the world), the ferry out to Fastnet, Skellig, Tory Island - how these were ever manned is almost impossible to imagine!

When you experience these lights, the ingenuity in their construction, (no modern equipment then!) the sculpting of the optics and the stories of the men and women who worked and lived in them is nothing but incredible and inspiring.

And the locations - OMG! The geology; the fossils; the birds (Gannets) the sea life - dolphins, basking sharks, finn and minke whales. And that rolling, clear turquoise Atlantic that you only get on the

West Coast... Woohoo!! For me, that's the romance - the lives intertwined with the elements.

Tell me about the Association of LighthouseKeepers.

I came across the Association of Lighthouse Keepers (ALK) by chance when googling pharologists (the scientific study of lighthouses) as you do! Clicked on the website and thought 'Yeah! there are others like me' lol .

The organisation is made up of enthusiasts from across the UK, Ireland and beyond, some of whom have a family history in lighthouse keeping, and many not, like me.



Peter Brown @petersphotographygallery



So, I signed up. The organisation focuses on maintaining the heritage of lighthouses, the buildings, people, and history. They do an amazing job archiving a wealth of information and literally shine a light on the importance of these maritime aids and the people who have and continue to dedicate their lives to maintaining them.

Some Irish heroes of mine include Alan Boyer (Kinsale Head) Eddie Fitzgerald (Ballycotton) and Gerald Butler (Galley Head) to name but a few. The stories these men share of lighthouse life are often hilarious (smoking goats) full of high jinx but also courage and a witness to man's survival/struggle against the sea. Take Gerald stationed at Fastnet witnessing the Fastnet yacht race disaster of 1979

or diving off Bull Rock into the Atlantic to catch pollock. Life inside those great towers; the discipline, the 365 day a year commitment, saving lives.

The ALK AGM was held in Belfast in 2022. Following the AGM, the regional membership rep post became vacant, and I was asked if I would like to volunteer. Thought why not! (middle-age recklessness) and I love it. There are over 50 members throughout Ireland - such an eclectic fun and epic bunch of people - so if any readers are interested in finding out a bit more about the ALK, fancy joining in the fun? just drop me a line at ALKirelandrep@gmail.org



You mentioned the women who became Lighthouse Keepers - tell me more?

Let's be honest, when you think of lighthouse keepers you think of men and you would be right - the majority of lighthouse keepers have been men, and brave dedicated ones at that.

But women have played a central role for as long as there have been lighthouses - from the nuns at St Ann's Convent in Youghal in the early 1200s tasked with lighting the beacon overlooking the port and continued to do so into the mid-1500s, to Pauline Butler, Galley Head. From a lighthouse family herself, she married Larry Butler a keeper stationed at Galley Head West Cork. The couple had fifteen children and not only did Pauline raise her brood, but actively helped her husband carry out his duties and when he passed was appointed female assistant keeper in 1969. Two of her children went on to become lighthouse keepers, with her son Gerald still attendant keeper there.

And jumping forward to the present day - Dr Sally Montgomery is one of several women Commissioners of Irish Lights (also ALK patron) and a truly inspirational woman. Science educator for over 40 years, she has been instrumental in establishing many scientific visitor attractions including the Great Light in Belfast, CEO of W5!! - what an inspiration for women, young and old!



To all the lighthouse women, the wives, daughters, sisters - thank you!

So what is the future of Lighthouses?

And as to the future of Lighthouses - excuse the pun but it's bright!

Yes, they are now automated and yes some of the beautiful lenses have been removed (a sore point with me) but the CIL (Commissioners of Irish Lights) continue to ensure the upkeep of these essential maritime aids and in partnership with several organisations/trusts such as the Great Lighthouses of Ireland and the Irish Landmark Trust not only are the lights maintained but many are fully accessible with great unusual holiday accommodation to boot. Location, location, location! So what are you waiting for? I guarantee whether it's Fanad, Hook or Skellig and Fastnet you will not be disappointed. And you will be contributing to the heritage of these majestic and vital sites!

For more information check out:

www.alk.org.uk
www.greatlighthouses.com
www.irishlights.ie
www.greatlighthouses.com
www.irishlandmark.com





MENOPAUSE

In the Workplace

Workplaces and employers are more interested than ever in understanding how the perimenopause and menopause affect work.

In Spring 2023, around three-and-a-half million women aged 45 to 54 were employed in the UK, working full or part-time while trying to cope with the menopause.

Women usually experience the menopause between ages 45 and 55, with 51 being the average age in Western Europe. One in every 100 women experiences premature ovarian insufficiency (the menopause before age 40). With around 80% of women experiencing menopausal symptoms, and 25% of them experiencing more severe symptoms, it's not surprising that the menopause can have a significant effect on working lives.

Symptom Trouble

There are more than 30 possible symptoms of the menopause. Those most likely to affect your working life are hot flushes and night sweats (leading to insomnia and daytime tiredness) and poor concentration, causing problems with making decisions. Other symptoms that could affect your work include headaches, joint aches and pains, palpitations, mood swings, brain fog, memory loss, irritability, anxiety, needing to go to the loo regularly, and period changes.

The menopause often comes at a time when other things are happening in your life, such as changing friendships and relationships. In addition, you may belong to the sandwich generation, having to juggle elderly relatives, children and even grandchildren. This may affect your menopausal symptoms and how you cope.

Stress Effects

Stress at work can make some menopausal symptoms worse, and you may need to take time off work to consult a doctor. Some women won't mention the menopause when giving a reason for their absence (unlike if they suffered from, for example, asthma or arthritis). Older women may feel they're in competition with younger colleagues, reducing self-esteem and causing low mood.



Menopause at Work

The workplace can affect your experience of the menopause in several ways. The situation in an office will differ from that in schools, hospitals, shops, the police, fire brigade etc. It will also vary if you're in an open-plan office, work in a fixed position or wear synthetic or tight uniforms that increase sweating. If buildings are old, it may be impossible or difficult to make certain adjustments. But you and your workplace may need to look at:

- putting your desk near a window that can be opened
- having adjustable temperature and humidity controls in the room
- being able to use fans
- ventilation and air conditioning
- flexible working hours and hybrid working
- needing regular loo breaks
- changing or adapting uniforms

Symptoms of the Menopause



RISK OF CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE



MOOD SWINGS



JOINT PAIN



WEIGHT GAIN



Helping Yourself



Don't be embarrassed to bring up the topic of the menopause at work. This will help to reduce the stigma of the menopause in your workplace and will make sure that your work colleagues know about menopausal symptoms and their impact on all aspects of day-to-day life.

Help at Work

Your workplace needs to proactively help you cope with troublesome menopausal symptoms by providing well-researched, impartial, and practical information from reputable sources. Information about an occupational health department or an employment assisted programme (EAP), if your workplace has one, should be available. My April 2023 article 'Menopause at work: How HR teams can offer support' is on the People Management website and on People Management Daily, both of which are aimed at HR professionals.

Managers, health and safety officers and anyone else responsible for the wellbeing of employees need

to know about the health implications of the menopause. They need to have access to formal training, so they can take the menopause seriously and make changes to the work environment. One solution won't fit everyone and every workplace. Line managers need to be taught good communication skills to avoid feeling uncomfortable discussing the menopause, and they should be able to hold meetings in a quiet and confidential place.

You may find it difficult to speak to your line manager (especially if they're male or younger than you), so you may need to find someone else. Many companies and organisations have appointed a dedicated menopause champion or ambassador. This may be an employee, an occupational health nurse, a learning and development manager, a diversity and inclusion manager or someone in HR.

A workplace should implement a menopause policy or guidance. Employers should put in place risk assessments and procedures for menopause-related sickness



absences and need to make sure working conditions don't worsen your symptoms. Making changes may lead to fewer days off work, maximise productivity, reduce stigma and embarrassment when you're with colleagues, managers and clients, improve job satisfaction and wellbeing, and make the workplace environment as comfortable as possible for you.



Get Help

It's important to organise workplace sessions on 'Understanding the menopause' for those experiencing the perimenopause and menopause. Norma Goldman (BPharm. MRPharmS. MSc.), founder and director of The Menopause Exchange, gives these presentations to menopause cafes, support/working/action groups and workplaces in general. Her other presentations include 'The Menopause for Managers, Human Resources and Employers' and 'The Menopause for Menopause Champions'.

The Menopause Exchange quarterly newsletter can be emailed for free to women, men,



healthcare professionals, complementary therapists and journalists. It provides impartial and practical information on the perimenopause and the menopause and symptoms and advice on self-help and lifestyle, HRT and prescribed alternatives, complementary therapies and medicines, nutrition and coping at work. The articles are written by experts.



Norma qualified as a pharmacist and is a qualified health promotion specialist. For more details about her presentations, you can also visit www.menopause-exchange.co.uk.

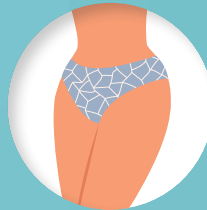
Symptoms of the Menopause



DRY SKIN



HEADACHES



VAGINAL DRYNESS



IRREGULAR PERIODS



INSOMNIA



CONCENTRATING PROBLEMS



SORE OR TENDER BREASTS



MEMORY PROBLEMS

I'm Still Standing, **DONNA MAKHSOUS SURVIVOR STORY**

Life has its ups and downs but for some, it can be a rollercoaster.



Donna Makhsous (49) from Strabane, now living in Portstewart has had more than her fair share of trials and tribulations. It's now become her life purpose to put her lived experience of mental ill health to good use in helping others recover.

Donna is part of a team of experts at the Hummingbird Project based in her hometown on the North Coast. They are all mental health experts who have experienced mental ill health themselves. They combine their lived experience with professional skills to transform people's lives for the better.

Donna, mum to Molly 27 and Aryan 20 began her first counselling qualification when she was just 20.

The eldest of eight children, she wanted to support her family because although she and her siblings were surrounded by love from her parents,





her upbringing was problematic. Her dad, Cathal Boyle struggled with addiction and died when she was just 22.

Her mother Brieghe struggled with severe mental health issues having had a newborn daughter taken away by a social worker who told her 'She wasn't fit to be a mother' because she had given birth outside of marriage.

"The choice mum was given was to either give me and my brother Stephen up or the baby. She was 22 and pregnant for the third time so the social worker decided she wasn't up to the job. The reality was we were loved and although we didn't have very much, we always got the best toys at Christmas. We had everything we needed.

"She was a fantastic mother and always went over and above what she had to do probably because she had feelings of failure around my sister being taken away. She tried to take her life many times. I remember a time when she had overdosed on every tablet she could find.

"All because she couldn't face another Mother's Day. I remember being in the back of an ambulance feeling really angry with her thinking why was she not happy with the children she already had."

Donna said her first degree was in Theatre and Arts, but she quickly realised, following the birth of her daughter Molly, it was not going to 'put food on the table.'

Putting their life savings together, Donna and her husband Hossein Makhsous, originally from Iran, bought a restaurant in Coleraine but it didn't make enough money. They lost it and their home too.

"I felt really depressed, suicidal. One day my house was full of friends. When everyone left, one stayed behind and asked me if I was, OK. She knew something was wrong. Just by asking that question, I broke down. I had planned to take my life that night and was so certain I had perfectly disguised what I was really feeling. The doctor gave me anti-depressants."

The episode made Donna curious to find out more to be able to help herself. She began a degree by taking night classes in Limavady between 2011 and 2014.

Donna said: "When I graduated at 38, I was thrilled to get a job at Nexus NI; an organisation supporting people impacted by sexual abuse. I had been abused as a child so I really knew by this stage it was my purpose to help people."

Donna had no idea just around the corner another major lifechanging event was about to happen.

"I felt something wasn't right and told my cousin, I thought I had ovarian cancer. At the time, I had a routine smear test booked so I made an additional appointment with my GP straight after. I was sent to hospital and told I had Stage 3 cervical cancer and would be booked in for a radical hysterectomy at 39 putting me into early menopause.





"After the surgery, I started feeling unwell like I had terrible wind. My bowel was twisted and about to explode so was sent for emergency surgery. I had to have an ileostomy (stoma). I was in so much pain even morphine wouldn't work. The hospital put me into a coma, and I had tubes running down my throat and neck.

"When I had visitors, they would bring me around and afterwards knock me out again. I could still hear what was going on and it felt like I had locked-in syndrome. It was very distressing. I had a sensation of going back in time. I had come to terms with cancer and menopause, but the ileostomy bag was a step too far. The surgery also affected my bladder. I stayed in the hospital for quite a few weeks."

The rollercoaster did not stop there. With the trauma Donna endured, she developed Fibromyalgia. This is a long-term condition causing pain all over the body.

It took Donna a full year to recover when she finally started working with Nexus in a job she loved. This led her to the Hummingbird Project where she had hired a room to do some local counselling.

Her lived experience of mental ill health, professional skills and personal resilience made her an ideal candidate to join the team in 2020.

"At the Hummingbird Project we believe our lived experience is valuable in helping others. It really accelerates trust between us and our clients because they know we have walked a mile in their shoes.

"Clients can feel embarrassed about something like childhood abuse but if they know I've been through something similar it helps them leave their mask at the door and within one or two sessions they are completely at ease. We help people take personal responsibility for their mental wellbeing. The work we do is very person-centred."

Three things Donna does to practice self-care include beach and forest walks, and painting during the winter and she has just signed up to do another diploma in naturopathic medicine.

"I'm interested in learning more about food and how herbs can act as an alternative to traditional medicine. I've been on so many tablets, I want to find natural solutions to alleviate the symptoms say for anxiety, or depression or pain."

Donna's latest goal is to bring both physical and emotional wellbeing under one roof using a more holistic approach.



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Easy CARROT CAKE

Prep: 35 mins
Cook: 30 mins
Plus cooling

Ingredients

230ml vegetable oil,
plus extra for the tin
100g natural yogurt
4 large eggs
1½ tsp vanilla extract
½ orange, zested
265g self-raising flour
335g light muscovado
sugar
2½ tsp ground cinnamon
¼ fresh nutmeg, finely
grated
265g carrots (about 3),
grated
100g sultanas or raisins
50g walnuts or pecans,
roughly chopped
(optional)

For the icing

100g slightly salted
butter, softened
300g icing sugar
100g soft cheese

Method

Step 1

Heat the oven to 180C/160C fan/gas 4. Oil and line the base and sides of two 20cm cake tins with baking parchment. Whisk the oil, yoghurt, eggs, vanilla and zest in a jug. Mix the flour, sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg with a good pinch of salt in a bowl. Squeeze any lumps of sugar through your fingers, shaking the bowl a few times to bring the lumps to the surface.

Step 2

Add the wet ingredients to the dry, along with the carrots, raisins and the nuts, if using. Mix well to combine, then divide between the tins.

Step 3

Bake for 25-30 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the centre of the cake comes out clean. If any wet mixture clings to the skewer, return to the oven for 5 minutes, then check again. Leave to cool in the tins.

Step 4

To make the icing, beat the butter and sugar together until smooth. Add half the soft cheese and beat again, then add the rest (adding it bit by bit prevents the icing from splitting). Remove the cakes from the tins and sandwich together with half the icing. Top with the remaining icing and decorate to your preference. The cake will keep in the fridge for up to five days. Best eaten at room temperature.



Easy CHEESECAKE STRAWBERRY

Prep: 30 mins
Plus cooling

Ingredients

Filling

2 regular tubs of cream cheese
50g icing sugar
1 packet of Dream Topping
1 strawberry jelly (or flavour of your choice)
½ cup water

Base

150 digestive biscuits
75g butter or margarine

Topping

Strawberries or fruit of your choice

Method

Step 1

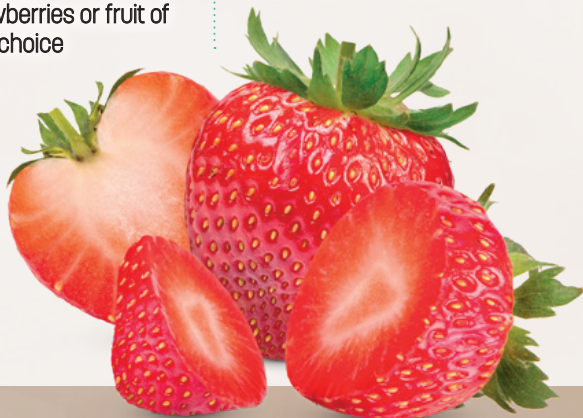
Finely crumble the biscuits and add melted butter to the mixture before placing in a springform tray (for ease when complete) and push the mixture down firmly. Refrigerate for 30 minutes.

Step 2

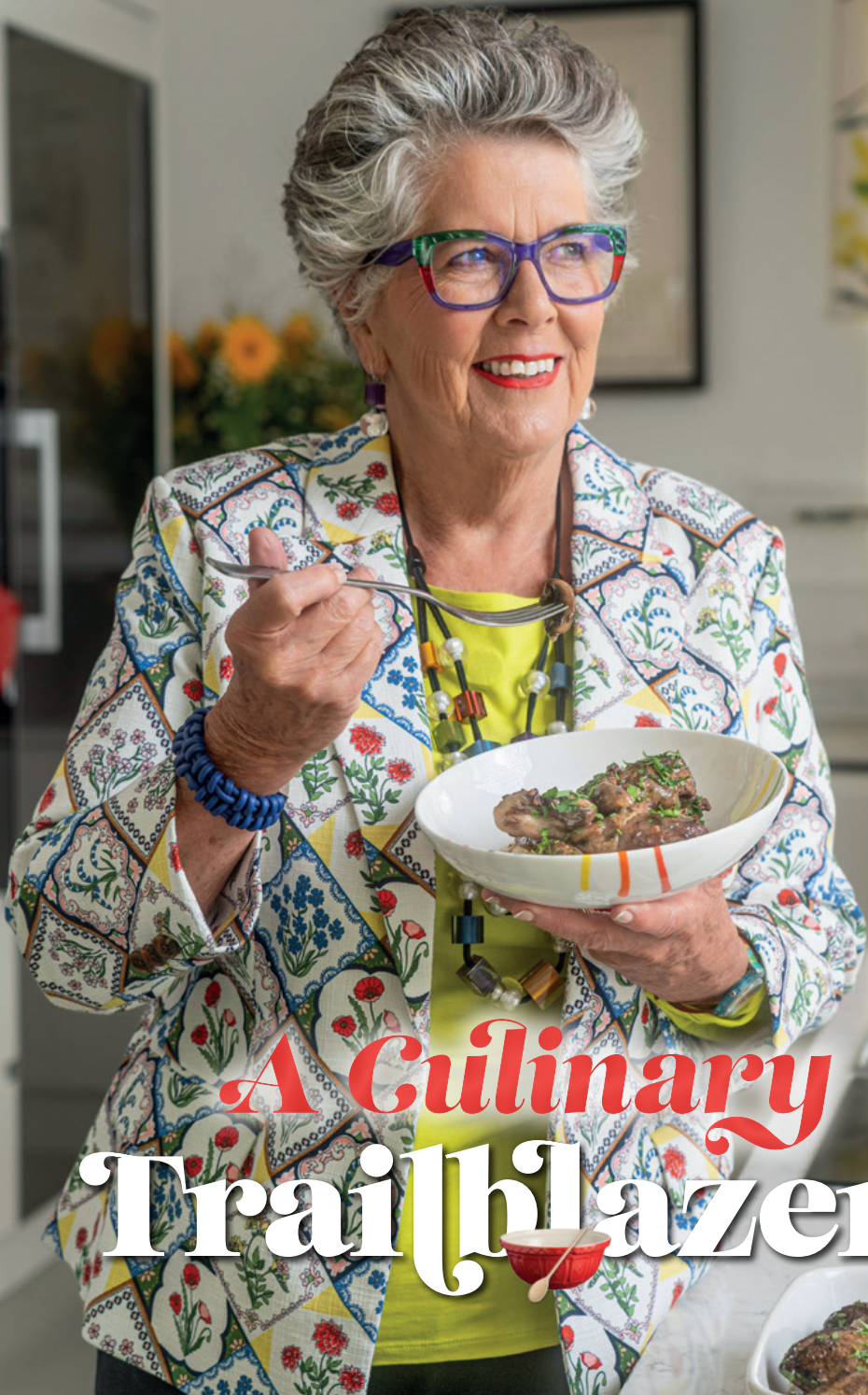
Make jelly in ½ cup of water and leave to cool. Make the Dream Topping as per packet instructions. Whisk together the icing sugar and cream cheese.

Step 3

Fold all of the above ingredients into one mixture and add in some chopped strawberries (optional). Spread the final mixture evenly over the biscuit base, decorate to your preference and refrigerate until ready to consume.







A Culinary **Trailblazer**





In the realm of culinary excellence, Prue Leith stands as a beacon of innovation, expertise, and unbridled passion. Renowned as a chef, restaurateur, author, and television personality, her illustrious career spans decades, marked by a relentless pursuit of culinary perfection and a dedication to revolutionising the gastronomic landscape. With her distinctive flair and unwavering commitment to quality, she has carved a niche for herself as one of the most influential figures in the culinary world.

Born in South Africa, Prue Leith's journey to culinary stardom began with a deep-seated love for food and an innate curiosity for exploring diverse flavours and cuisines.

Her culinary prowess was honed through years of rigorous training, both in prestigious cooking schools and through hands-on experience in professional kitchens across the globe. This extensive background laid the foundation for her future endeavours and imbued her cooking with a rare depth of knowledge and creativity.

Leith's culinary philosophy is characterised by a harmonious blend of tradition and innovation. Drawing inspiration from her travels, she infuses classic dishes with modern twists, breathing new life into age-old recipes while staying true to their essence.







Her approach to cooking is rooted in simplicity and seasonality, emphasising the use of fresh, locally sourced ingredients to create dishes that are as visually stunning as they are delicious.

Beyond her culinary skills, Prue Leith's influence extends into the realms of education and advocacy. As the founder of Leith's School of Food and Wine, she has played a pivotal role in shaping the next generation of chefs, imparting her wisdom and expertise to aspiring culinary professionals. Additionally, her unwavering commitment to sustainable practices and food ethics has earned her accolades as a champion of environmental stewardship and responsible dining.

Perhaps best known to audiences worldwide as a judge on the immensely popular television series 'The Great British Bake Off,' Prue Leith has captivated viewers with her sharp wit,

discerning palate, and boundless enthusiasm for all things food-related. Her role on the show has not only elevated her status as a household name but has also inspired countless aspiring bakers to push the boundaries of their creativity in the kitchen.

And now she is taking on the coveted Saturday morning ITV1 slot with Prue Leith's Cotswold Kitchen.

Set in her own idyllic Cotswolds home kitchen, the national treasure celebrates and cooks some of her all-time favourite dishes. More than a cookery show, Prue, alongside her right-hand man and husband, John, share their top kitchen hacks and culinary short-cuts to help simplify cooking.

The ten-part series sees Prue treat viewers to an array of dishes, from easy-to-make mid-week meals to dinner party-inspired dishes or even a simple dessert, that's always worth the calories.

In Prue's own words, it is a "simply delicious romp" through a recipe folder she's been building up over 60 years in the culinary world,





with a few tantalising stories served up in Prue's unique style.

Along the way, John shares a few of his own gems of wisdom garnered from their years of country living - everything from showing viewers how best to grow and harvest their own fruit and veg to how to whip up the perfect 'wow factor' gin martini.

In each episode, Prue invites a special guest into her home kitchen to cook and share one of their own favourite recipes. As they sit down to enjoy the dish around the family table, they will 'chew the fat' on everyday issues that may be especially pertinent to them.

In addition to her television appearances, Prue's literary contributions have further solidified her status as a culinary luminary. With a string of bestselling cookbooks to her name, she has shared her wealth of knowledge and expertise with readers eager to replicate her signature dishes in their own homes.

As Prue Leith continues to push the boundaries of culinary innovation and excellence, her impact on the food industry shows no signs of waning. Through her culinary creations, educational initiatives, and advocacy work, she continues to inspire and empower food enthusiasts around the globe, leaving an indelible mark on the world of gastronomy for generations to come.





Surely a Shining Light

BEVERLEY McGEOWN

By Lindsay Bagwell

Beverley Mc Geown exudes passion as her bright eyes engage you in tales of a life steeped in the Arts.



Music is Bev.

First learning vocal parts in 'Jesus Loves Me' as a tiny child in awe at her mum; that ability to influence the sound and shape of music is the very backbone of her profession.

She is driven by the aim for the Arts to be fully accessible. If only the government championed the Arts with funding to match. Music and the Arts do minimise some health burdens.

Bev is one of few teachers of the exotic Indonesian ensemble of percussion instruments known as - 'The Gamelan'.

Bhinneka Tunggal Ika (Unity in Diversity) is the apt name of The Javanese Gamelan made for Open Arts NI. The instruments are sacred in some religious settings in Indonesia.

A series of gongs, bowls, and panels (looking a bit like xylophones) are just a few of the assemblies of The Gamelan. Each has a number or colour allowing the music to be very accessible to learners with all kinds of needs. The tones are ethereal; quite hypnotic at height, moving between soothing percussive tones. This pendulation gives agency to players and the stimulation and calming in turn help different aspects of sensory and emotional health needs.

Bev had a reunion with the Gamelan at Queens University (with the instrument she first met in her teens) whilst studying 'Ethnomusicology'.



She was the ideal candidate when OA launched a Gamelan Tutor Post in 1997.

In Java, Bev enhanced her Gamelan skills intensively. She vividly recalls a 40-mile jaunt on the back of a motorbike in Yogyakarta, Java. Crutches flew and were retrieved comically. The 'rules of the road' and peoples' perceptions of what normality can look like for someone born with Spina Bifida being rightly thrown out of the window.

According to Bev, "The Gamelan works together like a living organism, like a machine, all the parts have to work together to make it sound beautiful."

Bev is also the Director of Open Arts Community Choir (OACC) since 2000. It has a focus on excellence to competition standards.

For those that pass the audition, it is the most accessible choir around. Braille, guiding and some care support are available.

OACC has gone on to win many awards including the prestigious Bangor International Choral Festival 4 times in the last decade. OACC has performed at prestigious venues such as The Waterfront Hall, Stormont Great Hall, The Grand Opera House Belfast, The Helix, Dublin to name a very few.

Competing in National TV Competitions like Last Choir Standing (BBC National TV in 2008) - the precursor to a surge in community choirs in recent years. Also Ireland's Got Talent 2019 and this past autumn Ireland's TG4 Curfa Gaelic Choral Competition - with Judges including Clannad's Maire Brennan.



© PAUL MARSHAL

OACC has performed with Artists such as Brian Kennedy, Glen Hansard, Eddi Reader, and Cara Dillon amongst many others.

Bev was also accepted for Art College and still enjoys Visual arts through Open Arts and in her time. It seems to me however that she has continued as a visual artist in her directing of musicians. She creates artists who paint a refreshed portrait and landscape in music and social culture alongside Open Arts NI.

She and her colleagues provide the right canvas and support tools. Perceived barriers of physical or psychological conditions have the volume turned down, in a safe place that sees the person first. Mind and body learn to flow, 'painting' musical colour; ultimately experiencing synergy, soulful visual and aural art. A He'art' work.

People grow, change, perhaps heal a little and achieve moments, sounds and memories that take them away from a life of labels for a time. The effects rub off on each member and this can break down prejudice and stereotyping.

More importantly, they meet with friends from a diversity of backgrounds and cultures, laugh and enjoy special time together albeit in an atmosphere of excellence.



The late year lies down the north.
All is healed, all is health.
High summer holds the earth.
Hearts all whole.
Sure on this shining night

Morten Lauridsen





Bev feels her musical career decision was affirmed spiritually, recalling a particular moment with OACC in 2017; A golden light shone through a window in Riga (Latvia) onto the Open Arts Community Choir as they performed at the highest level possible in Europe.

The title of the song 'Sure on this Shining Night' and the streaming light echoing the gold medal they were about to achieve. She feels everyone felt it and to her, that was God, music was the right choice and life for her.

Bev explains that In Java 'Every music note of The Gamelan contains an invisible golden thread. The final note sends the music up to heaven.'

It is clear that this woman of faith heard the call to music early. Her journey in musical education, teaching and performing has been as diverse as the people that she encounters and enthusiastically champions. A shining light for many.

For more information check <https://openartsni.org/>

**Open Arts Community Choir perform 'Sure on this Shining Night' by Morten Lauridsen winning a gold medal at The European Choir games, elite level of competition.*

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IDYdPHr-cF4>*



Remote Working



Remote work has established itself throughout the past three to four years. The change to labour suddenly taking place in the private sphere of our own homes has led to drastic changes and raised a debate about what exactly can be called 'real' work.





During 2020 around 40% of workers in the European Union switched to working from home. This marked a rise of 35% compared to 2019 where only 5.4% of EU employees worked remotely - the majority of them being women.

But even before facing the challenges of a global pandemic, working from home has been the only practicable way to combine both paid and unpaid work. Unpaid work includes tasks like childcare and household duties which, even in 2024, are still predominantly carried out by women.

In 2020 12.3% of EU employees started to work remotely on a regular basis with 41% of EU women working from home - and this is not a coincidence.

A report by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Working and Living Conditions issued in late 2020 found that the work-life balance of women has been affected to a much greater extent by the overall effects of the pandemic than those of men.

Women, for example, were found to carry a much heavier burden of care responsibilities. Simultaneously, young women were more likely to lose their jobs compared to their male co-workers. This depicts an utterly different picture of the way employees adapted to the changes work life has undergone within the past few years.



Care Work is Work

The divide between working in the private and the public sphere has manifested itself for centuries. Even though work itself has undergone some drastic changes with ongoing digitalisation and globalisation, the changes remain limited.

The perception of work in the private sphere, often referred to as care work, versus work taking place in the public sector, has differed enormously.

Care work is rarely considered real work in our society.

Care work such as childcare, cleaning and cooking duties have historically been unequally distributed in households. The majority of the work is still taken care of by women.

This is clearly linked to gender stereotypes and gender-based discrimination in social (and public) institutions. Even after centuries of fighting for women's rights and emancipation, men are perceived as the main breadwinners in most families.

The Challenges of Teleworkers

With the surge of remote work during the crisis, many challenges of working from home have been highlighted. Overall, it can be stated that remote workers are less protected in their own homes. This is especially noteworthy when talking about women who live with abusive partners and/or under poor living conditions.



"In addition to being less protected in the 'private' space, home-based teleworkers are at risk of being side-lined at their workplace, with reduced professional visibility and career prospects and less access to information and personal and professional support." Kalina Arabajieva and Paula Franklin, Researchers at the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI).

Additionally, most of them experience reduced professional visibility, which stems from them not being physically present at meetings etc. This then leads to their isolation from the in-office team.

The lack of physical presence also leads to reduced interpersonal exchange with the team. This can result in a lack of information and support - both personally and professionally - such as unionising. That alone can lead to severe work-life conflicts disproportionately affecting women.

Protecting The Health of Remote Workers

Telework is filled with psychosocial risks affecting the health of workers. Therefore, preventive measures must be undertaken to ensure the safety of those working from home. An overall review of the working conditions is required to ensure that the shift from office to home based or hybrid work can be adapted without workers losing the rights that the working class has fought for over the past centuries. Such changes have to be established within both the legal and the social landscape. Therefore, the binary divide between paid and unpaid work has to be questioned.



Establishing The Home Office as a Protected Working Sphere

Even with all the challenges workers face when carrying out telework, many of them still want to work from home or at least have the opportunity to do so. However, the divide between work carried out from home versus such carried out in the public sphere leads to remote work from home being perceived as less valuable or not real work.

To support workers in their ability to divide their private from professional/work life, it is imperative to end the societal perception of remote work and unpaid domestic labour. Only in this way can a better work-life balance for those with caring responsibilities be established. Both the rights and working conditions of teleworkers need to be protected - particularly of those with caring responsibilities.

Working remotely can offer great flexibility and opportunities for women, but it also comes with its own set of challenges. Here are some tips to navigate remote work successfully:

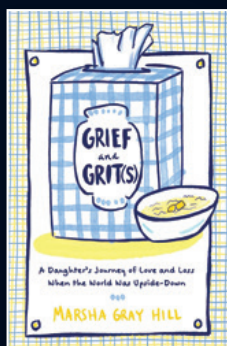
1. **Set Up a Dedicated Workspace:** Create a designated area in your home where you can work without distractions. This helps to establish boundaries between your work and personal life.
2. **Establish a Routine:** Stick to a regular schedule to maintain productivity and balance. Set specific work hours and take breaks to avoid burnout.



3. **Communicate Effectively:** Keep in touch with your colleagues and managers through email, chat, or video calls. Clear communication is key to staying connected and aligned with your team.
4. **Dress for Success:** While you might not need to wear business attire at home, getting dressed for work can help you feel more focused and professional.
5. **Take Advantage of Technology:** Use tools and apps that streamline your work processes and collaboration, such as project management software, video conferencing tools, and time-tracking apps.
6. **Stay Organized:** Keep track of deadlines, tasks, and projects using calendars, to-do lists, or productivity apps. Prioritize your workload to ensure you're focusing on the most important tasks.
7. **Set Boundaries:** Communicate your availability to family members or roommates to minimise interruptions during work hours. Learn to say no to additional responsibilities that could overwhelm you.
8. **Prioritise Self-Care:** Make time for activities that help you recharge, whether it's exercise, meditation, hobbies, or spending time with loved ones. Taking care of your well-being is essential for long-term productivity and happiness.
9. **Seek Support:** Don't hesitate to reach out to your support network, whether it's for advice, encouragement, or simply to vent. Connecting with other women in similar situations can be especially helpful.
10. **Continuous Learning:** Invest in your professional development by seeking out online courses, webinars, or networking opportunities relevant to your field. Keeping your skills up-to-date will benefit your career in the long run.



Book Reviews



Grief and Grit(s) *Marsha Gray Hill*

Marsha Gray Hill's *Grief and Grit(s)* is an emotional odyssey that illuminates the complexities of grief, while offering a beacon of hope and inspiration for those navigating their own journeys

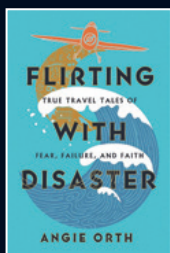
of loss. This extraordinary memoir serves as a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the power of love to transcend even the darkest of times.

In times of unprecedented panic, we see what we're really made of.

Though the worldwide pandemic affected each of us differently, this time of turmoil brought one thing into stark clarity: the value of human life. When tragedy begets triaging and certain demographics are seen as more disposable than others, what does that say about our society? And what does it say about us?

In this stunning debut, author Marsha Hill invites you into a personal look at an uncomfortable truth: how we treat our elderly today defines our own future. Full of tragedy and triumph, laughter and tears, grief and—yes, some good, old-fashioned grits—*Grief and Grit(s)* is not only a reflection of the life and tragic death of Adaline Gray, but the power of our generation to fight for human dignity at every stage of life.





Flirting With Disaster True Travel Tales of Fear, Failure and Faith *Angie Orth*

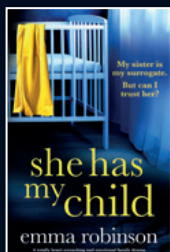
Angie Orth should have had at least 2.5 kids by now - everyone else back home did. Despite a successful PR career in New York, Angie was failing at the roles she was born to play - those of

submissive wife and grandchild incubator. Without a potential husband in sight or the hope of a photogenic brood to show off, she was beginning to wonder if God forgot about her.

With her thirtieth birthday looming, Angie was at a crossroads. Should she hightail it home to find a man like a "good girl" or continue running the rat race in New York City and hope for the best?

Orth chose Plan C: Escape! She quit her job, launched a travel blog, and booked a one-way ticket to the South Pacific while her Southern family gnashed their teeth in protest. But the timing couldn't have been worse for a solo trip!

Fasten your seatbelt for this sassy, relatable memoir about living life unscripted yet still on mission. By the time readers turn the last page of *Flirting with Disaster*, they'll feel empowered, knowing God's vision is better than anything we think we want - or are supposed to want - for our lives.



She Has My Child *Emma Robinson*

The first time she hears the miraculous thud of her baby's heartbeat, she's clutching her sister's hand. She was so happy when she offered to be their surrogate. But then she sees the look on her face and she's flooded with fear.

All she's ever wanted is to be a mother.

But after years of trying, her grandmother's lovingly restored crib still lies empty. Her dream is out of reach until her impulsive sister Sophia suddenly offers her the greatest gift of all...

Her surrogacy will give her the baby she's prayed for. And there are so many painful memories from their broken childhood: could it even bring them closer as sisters? But as Sophia blooms with their miracle baby, her husband's secretive behaviour has her questioning their marriage. And as she watches her sister's face when the baby kicks, she wonders... why did she really offer to carry her child?



The Clarks Factory Girls at War *May Ellis*

Can love blossom in times of trouble?

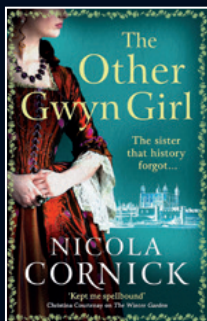
Life-long friends Louisa, Jeannie and Kate are following in the footsteps of their families, working at the Clarks shoe factory.

But when Britain declares war on Germany, the Somerset village of Street is shaken to its core. The Clarks factory is at the heart of life in the village, but the Clark family are Quakers and pacifists. Before long, there are fierce debates amongst the workers and tensions between those who oppose the war and those who believe the village men should go to fight.

Each of the girls must decide her own position but as brothers and sweethearts leave for France, Louisa is relieved that her beloved Mattie, a Quaker, won't be signing up. But she'll soon find that they face fierce opposition at home as well as across the Channel.

Will the girls' friendship be enough to keep them together, as everything around them falls apart?

A heartwarming and gripping new saga series perfect for fans of Elaine Everest and Rosie Clarke.



The Other Gwyn Girl
Nicola Cornick

1671 - London

The Civil War is over and Charles II, the 'Merry Monarch', is revelling in the throne of his murdered father and all the privileges and power that comes with

it. Sharing the spoils is his favourite companion, the celebrated beauty, actress Nell Gwyn. Beloved of the English people, Nell has come a long way from selling oranges and a childhood in a brothel, but as her fortunes have turned, her sister Rose has taken a different path.

Present Day

Librarian and history enthusiast Jess Yates has hit rock bottom. With her ex behind bars for fraud, Jess needs to lay low - easier said than done with a celebrity sister. But Tavy has her uses. Her latest TV project involves renovating Fortune Hall, and she needs a house sitter while she's jetting around the world. The opportunity is too good to miss, especially when Jess discovers that Fortune Hall has links to the infamous Nell Gwyn.

Slowly the house begins to reveal its mysteries, and secrets that have laid buried for centuries can no longer be ignored. Jess hears echoes from a tragic past and as she struggles to understand her sister, Jess feels ever closer to Rose Gwyn, the sister forgotten by history but who had the fate of her family in her hands.



Dig Two Graves
Helen H Durrant

A brand-new mystery from #1 bestselling author Helen H. Durrant that will have you gripped from start to explosive finish.

Day 1.

Chloe Todd believes her baby daughter is sleeping peacefully in her pram in the back garden. She lifts away the blanket to check on her - and gasps in shock.

Chloe's neighbour calls the police. But all is not as it seems . . .

Day 2.

Superintendent Hedley Sharpe is called to a murder scene in the city centre. A body is discovered in a cellar beneath an empty shop. A single shot to the head. The victim has been dead at least a year.

Day 3.

A second body is found in the cellar next door. Again a single bullet wound in the head. But this time the body is fresh.

Hedley Sharpe doesn't believe in coincidence. The two murders must be linked. Then he uncovers a connection to young mother Chloe Todd - and the case takes an extraordinary twist.





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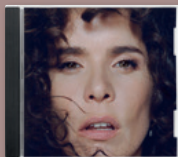
Dates To Be Confirmed



For further information,
please contact Heather on 028 9031 9888 or
email: heather@twnonline.com.

We look forward to helping you further your career!

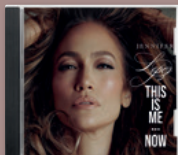
Music Rocks



Paloma Faith **The Glorification of Sadness**

'The Glorification of Sadness' is more than an album about relationships. The celebration of finding your way back after leaving a long term relationship, being empowered even

in your failures and taking responsibility for your own happiness. It is Palomas most personal album to date, drawing on her own experiences with Paloma acting as the anchor to direct a deeply personal narrative and album. This is the first new music from Paloma since the release of her fifth studio album 'Infinite Things' in November 2020 and is the first time in her career where she has executively produced a record.



Jennifer Lopez **This is me...Now**

You may think you know the story of Jennifer Lopez, one of the most written about women in the world, but This Is Me...Now shares

the real story, a piece of her soul, and she is doing it in her own inimitable style. Jennifer Lopez's long awaited musical experience THIS IS ME...NOW began with the release in February of This Is Me...Now: The Album and This Is Me...Now: The Film inspired by the music.

Her signature vocals, combined with intricately crafted lyrics delve into the highs and lows of life, love, and relationships with unflinching honesty and introspection, making this Jennifer Lopez's most honest and personal album yet.



Shae Universe **Love's Letter**

Nigerian-born British singer/songwriter Shaé Universe weds dreamy R&B melodies with subtle gospel flavours and elements of hip-hop to create a dynamic and engaging hybrid. Active since the mid-2010s, she notched collaborations with artists like Kojo Funds and

Ms. Banks before breaking out with the R&B-drill single "You Lose" in 2020.

Her latest album has a concept we can all identify with - 10 songs, representing 10 letters Shaé Universe would send to herself at varying points in her life. Her storytelling explores themes of love, self-discovery, and personal growth, and resonates with those seeking genuine and relatable music.





Gabby Barrett **Chapter & Verse**

Warner Music Nashville
MULTI-PLATINUM star
Gabby Barrett massively
anticipated sophomore

album *Chapter & Verse* was released in early February. Her most autobiographical work to date, *Chapter & Verse* will follow the 23-year-old hitmaker's PLATINUM debut *Goldmine* and delivers even more of the fullhearted songwriting that's made her one of Country's brightest young superstars. Along with fully leaning into her Country roots on *Chapter & Verse*, Barrett's deepened the emotional scope of her songwriting and created an up-close portrait of her experience as a wife and mother of two children, with her third baby due early this year. To that end, the album's title refers to the chapters and verses within each book of the Bible, as well as the still-unfolding chapters in her marriage, family, career, and overall journey through life.



Musow Danse **Les Amazones** **d'Afrique**

Les Amazones d'Afrique
is a creative force that
embraces international

voices; sweet, strong harmonies that summon the rights of women and girls; and a meltdown of heritage and new-gen talent. They were formed in Bamako, Mali, in 2014 by three renowned Malian music stars and social change activists, Mamani Keita, Oumou Sangaré and Mariam Doumbia, and the collective has since expanded to involve many female artists from across Africa and the diaspora. While their cause - campaigning for gender equality and eradicating ancestral violence - is worthy enough in itself, their musical creative expression is equally powerful. Richly melodic and far-ranging, it blends pan-African styles and collaborative harmonies with gritty, contemporary pop. Following two successful albums produced by Congotronic innovator Doctor L, the band have worked with renowned pop producer Jacknife Lee (U2, Taylor Swift, Modest Mouse) to present a totally fresh new sound on their third album *Musow Danse*, which draws inspiration from hip-hop, trap, and electronic music.

Watch Out For.....



Kacey Musgraves **Deeper Well**

The music on *Deeper Well*, the six-time Grammy winner's fifth album, is almost chimeric. Rolling acoustic guitars, puffy clouds of strings and synth, warm bass punctuations, layered harmonies, moments of Celtic melody and plenty of room on the tracks for Musgraves' silvery vocals. On the bright, almost folksy title track, the 30-something songstress surveys her life and priorities, recognizing what feeds her, drains her and even examines the childhood she's left behind on her way to now. Due for release 15th March 2024 it no doubt will sit perfectly with her other sell-out albums.



Tyla **Tyla**

One song is all you need and in 2023 Tyla, The South African singer, found hers. *Water* exudes confidence, and quickly became a seductive summer anthem. It hit the top five in dozens of countries, and ended 2023 as the most-streamed Afrobeats song on Spotify. Her new album will be 22nd March 2024.



Maggie Rogers **Don't Forget Me**

Grammy Award-nominated songwriter / producer / performer Maggie Rogers will release *Don't Forget Me*, her third studio album, on 12th April 2024. She's had a hand in writing all 10 of the songs featured on the album as a newly converted fan, I'm delighted with the result. There's a warmth to *Don't Forget Me* and as *Rough Trade* reflects "It's an album that sounds like a Sunday afternoon. Worn in denim. A drive in your favourite car. No make-up, but the right amount of lipstick. Something classic. The mohair throw and bottle of Whiskey in Joan Didion's motel room. An old corvette. Vintage, but not overly Americana." Says it perfectly.



Jess Glynne **Jess**

GRAMMY award-winning singer-songwriter Jess Glynne has announced her long-awaited third studio album *JESS* due for release 26th April 2024. With her most personal work to date, this new collection of music adds to Jess' repertoire of over ten billion global streams and gracefully follows her success of becoming the only British female solo artist to score seven number ones on the UK Singles Chart.



WRITER'S CORNER: by Christine Pearson

My Magical Landscape

My magical landscape is the county down coast
It's not cos I live here, the reason I boast
But the winding roads that lead down to the sea
Is the happiest place I would much rather be

Where the windmill stands still for grinding the corn
The Millisle sun in the winter morn
In Portavogie Harbour with the nets full of fry
And majestic sails that reach to the sky

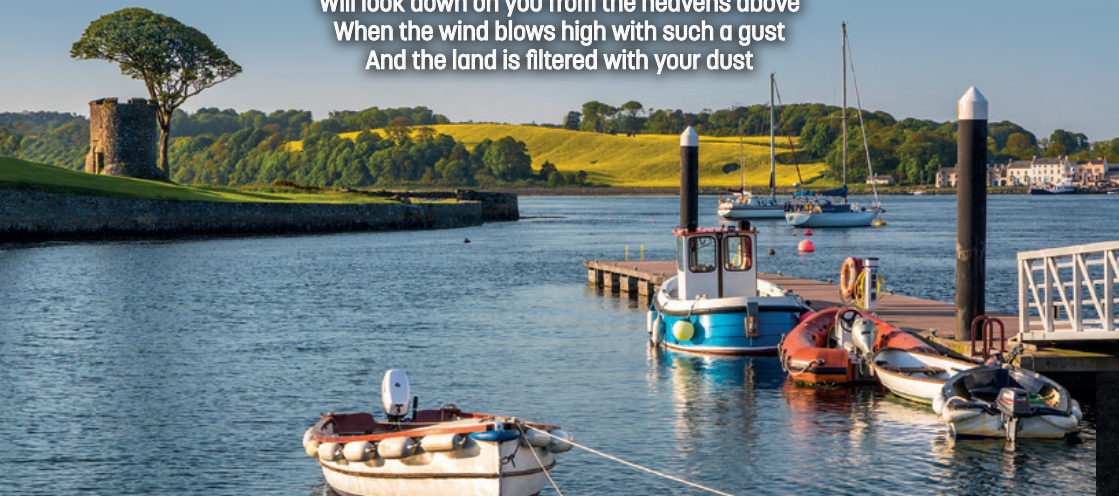
A little trip across Strangford
As we sail around the bay
A wee stop at the Lobster Pot
To Downpatrick on our way

And now to see St Patrick's grave
At the cathedral standing tall
Then up the road to the wee stone church
Where the gospel was preached at Saul

Oh the bygones days of memories made
where childhood dreams came to last
of caravan days and board games til dark
and the fun of the amusement park

Alas it has all changed now but it's beauty remains the same
Time waits for no-one and life is not a game
This beautiful land is part of your roots
Be sure to nourish and savour its fruits

And one day this place you love
Will look down on you from the heavens above
When the wind blows high with such a gust
And the land is filtered with your dust





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For more information,
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