

HEALTH » BREATH RIGHT AND THE REST IS EASIER



Patricia Swann: "I'm sticking my neck out getting these people to come to Letterkenny because I am so impressed with the results."

A course in how to tackle our worst enemies

BY KATE HEANEY

A Creeslough based Holistic health practitioner is offering people in Donegal the opportunity to overcome their constant feelings of tiredness. Patricia Swann's life has been so invigorated by learning to breathe properly through Buteyko, she now wants to share it with as many people as possible.

On Tuesday, August 31 the New Zealand native is hosting an information evening at the Radisson Blu Hotel in Letterkenny where members of the public can come along and here from Christopher Drake, one of the few western practitioners of Buteyko.

Speaking to the Donegal News this week Patricia explained that she has been involved in Holistic health in the north west for the past 25 years.

She holds clinics in Letterkenny Community Centre, does house calls and works for the health executives on both sides of the border.

"All of the time we are trying to keep people well without drugs and within the person's own capacity. I have had asthma all of my life and some really bad allergies. Up until I discovered Buteyko I would have

had to use inhalers. Since I learned to do it I have had no asthma, no inhalers and no hay fever.

"Buteyko has been around a long time - and you can follow the research on the internet. Of course it isn't well known here! It teaches us to be healthy and drug free. Nobody stands to benefit when we are well - except us. I'm sticking my neck out getting these people to come to Letterkenny because I am so impressed with the results," Patricia said.

She first saw Christopher Drake on television working with people with asthma and tracked him down to London last autumn where she got to meet him.

RUSSIAN ORIGINS

The Buteyko method was developed by the renowned Russian medical scientist Professor Konstantin Buteyko during the later half of the last century. Originally studying the breathing patterns of dying patients, Professor Buteyko discovered the vital link between breathing, illness, and health.

In doing so, he found that hyper-ventilation is the source of many of the chronic illnesses that people suffer from, especially in modern societies. The Buteyko method is an acknowledged and reputable approach

to health in Russia, but is relatively new to the west, having only gained exposure outside of Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

PROPER BREATHING

Being constantly tired is not the natural state of a human being - waking up tired despite eight hours sleep.

"It is common, but it is not normal. Normal is waking up energised, enthused and ready for a new day's challenges. Don't laugh - that probably used to be you.

"Most of us are our own worst enemy. We know that more exercise, less processed food, more fruit and veg, less alcohol, caffeine and sugar will lead us to better health. But we're so exhausted that we need the wet treats to keep us going. And look where we end up - in the queue at weight watchers or the Doctors surgery or waiting for tests at the hospital," she said.

Christopher Drake will be giving instruction on a big screen via a video link while Martha Row, a senior Buteyko trainer will be present at the Letterkenny meeting.

"This is about training you to breathe properly. I have watched thousands of people in my years in health care, breathing incorrectly. I

used to as well. We are lazy. Especially at night. And because of that, asthma, allergies, digestive conditions, chronic fatigue and low fertility rates are on the increase.

"Cancer cells love stress. They hate oxygen. This method of breathing (practised three times a day), raises valuable oxygen levels and lowers stress and anxiety levels," Patricia added.

She herself has seen her sense of well-being improved with no desire for alcohol, tea or coffee.

"Practising the breathing has given her a sense of calmness and even taken away her sweet tooth, she says.

"It is hard work and will not suit everyone. The five day course will cost €375 but anyone who does it will feel really well and will not have to pay it again. Oxygen is free and we have the best air in the world here, but few are getting the full benefit of it," Patricia said.

The talk on August 31 is free. A workshop will follow in September, also in the Radisson - early evenings for five consecutive days for those people who are tired of being tired. All inquiries to Patricia Swann on 074 91 38457. For more information on Buteyko go to www.learnbuteyko.co.uk

HISTORY

Tea-time with a difference in Letterkenny Jane Austin-style

An insight into the genteel world of eighteenth century marriage traditions will take place at Donegal County Museum next week.

Accompanied by High Tea, the evening is a must for anyone who has ever read Jane Austen and has imagined themselves in the role of Emma, falling for Mr Knightley, or would be couples who fancy themselves as Elizabeth Bennet and Mr Darcy.

The Regency wedding was a simple but elegant affair and now Ms Valerie Moffat will give a detailed insight into the traditions associated with 18th Century marriages.

The event will take place on Wednesday, August 25. Curator of Donegal County Museum, Ms Caroline Carr said: "The museum will host a lecture by Valerie Moffat, NCAD, entitled An Eighteenth-Century Gentlewoman's Guide to Marriage. This talk will look at issues such as courtship, legal requirements for marriage, the 'companionate' marriage, marriage customs, the duties of a wife and of course, the all important wedding dress.

"High Tea will be taken beforehand at 7pm and lecture begins at 8pm. Traditionally gentlewomen having High Tea in the 18th Century would have had scones with cream and jam, crustless sandwiches and small cakes. We will be providing this free of charge at the Museum next week."

Ms Carr stressed, however, that places are limited so anyone wishing to attend is advised to contact the Museum beforehand to book their place.

The 'Talk and Tea' is just one of the many events taking place at the Museum as part of Heritage Week which runs from the 21st-29th.

On Monday 23 and Tuesday 24th of August the Museum will also be celebrating 100 years of the Irish Country Women's Association - Donegal Federation. The Museum will host a series of free craft workshops including basic sewing as well as an exhibition of the work undertaken by Guild members.

The series of free 'Living History' tours will also be continuing with the next one taking place on Thursday 26th beginning at 11am.

For the first time the Donegal County Museum is bringing the Museum's Workhouse history to life. The museum building is formerly the Warden's House of the Letterkenny Workhouse. Visitors are invited to come along to meet the Workhouse Master, the Matron, inmates and hear tales of sorrow and joy inside the Workhouse.

The tours are at 11am 1pm and 3pm. They are free of charge and open to all.

This project has been supported by the Department of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

Also on Thursday 26th a lunchtime lecture will take place at 1pm, hosted by Birdwatch Ireland entitled 'An Introduction to the Birds of Donegal'.

All events are free. Contact Donegal County Museum, High Rd, Letterkenny by e-mail at museum@donegalcoco.ie or phone 074 9124613.