

SOMETHING DIFFERENT

SPEAKING IN TONGUES

Many people misunderstand acupuncture as a tool for well-being. **Neil Ward** accepted an invitation by Dan-Tien's expert Dave Shipsey to give it a try.



PINPOINTING THE PROBLEM

On arriving at Dave Shipsey's complimentary health studio in Christchurch, Dublin, I was filled with curiosity and a little apprehension. I needn't have worried. By the time we actually got around to any treatment I was completely at ease, having spent nearly half an hour discussing my digestive and sleeping habits, and general well-being, in the kind of detail that my GP has never had the time to go into. There was even something of a therapeutic value in having someone listen to my medical history and take a keen interest in my dietary and resting habits, as well as my emotional states and anxieties. To help Dave pinpoint any problems he used 'Tongue Diagnosis' – an age old technique that involved looking at my tongue four or five times.

THE TONGUE TELLS ALL

Dave says, "Tongues vary – in colour, moisture content and texture – some may even quiver. It takes experience to read a tongue but it is an accurate indicator of the body's state. This diagnosis is often augmented by taking the pulse. There are six pulses on each wrist which correspond to each of the organs e.g. right hand pulse indicates the condition of the Lung/ Large intestine, Stomach/ Spleen/ Kidney / Urinary Bladder.

"The pulse will confirm your diagnosis from the other methods such as asking observing palpating tongue etc."

AT THE SHARP END

It was not at all painful – for me the very notion of acupuncture had always conjured images of the old 'Hellraiser' posters. How wrong I was. The sensation is not unpleasant, almost unnoticeable if coinciding with an intake of breath. The Chinese-made needles are very fine, sterile and used only once. Treatment typically involves 8-10 needles, "Less is more," says Dave. I slept very well, without a single ache or pain.

Each needle provoked a different reaction. Some seemed electric; others more anaesthetic – some radiated outwards and some just concentrated energy. For fifteen minutes or so I was left in a state of grace – not daring to move – or perhaps incapable of movement. But the brain was left with a child-like clear view of the world. I could possibly have drifted into sleep; but stayed awake to enjoy the feeling.

Dave explained, "Different treatments suit different people. The same treatment may treat different conditions in different people; the same ailment may be treated in a variety of different ways depending on the person."

GETTING THE POINT

It was several hours later that I was still feeling the benefits – almost like a mild hypnosis – but it raised as many questions as it answered. Yes, I probably do drink too much coffee; life would be better without that

rushed lunch...

This session would have cost the same price as a visit to a GP – yet the therapist spent significantly more time in diagnosis through an extensive consultation – and also provided a therapy. Dave diagnoses were accurate and several days later – and the treatment on my right knee is still effective; the lasting effects were that I have taken a longer look at myself regarding the common habits that I know should change – and I felt I had more energy for the few days after the treatment. I simply would not have visited the doctor without something very specific for him to treat. Like most people I suspect, I would go to my GP when I need antibiotics, strong pain killers or a referral to the hospital.

Acupuncture has now been widely accepted and recognised by the medical profession in Ireland. The Garda Medical Aid Society (and other health insurances) will pay towards treatment by registered acupuncture professionals. The Garda Medical Aid Society will cover up to €30 per visit for a maximum of ten visits in a 12-month period, subject to a letter of referral from a GP. **GR**

Dan-Tien is based at 29 Bride Street, Christchurch, Dublin 8. For more information, call 01-473 8845 or email info@dan-tien.com. Their web site is www.dan-tien.com. The Acupuncture Foundation of Ireland can be contacted on 01-857 4040.



Ball goes to ground. Ruck forms.

GARDA RUGBY TEAMS BATTLE WITH DEFENCE FORCES

Neil Ward reports on the rugby clash between the Garda and Defence Forces – including the first match for the women’s team.

On 4 February 2004 a Garda rugby team defeated their Defence Force counterparts 14-8, in the annual battle for the Gordon Wood Trophy at Westmanstown Sports Centre. The game was preceded by a match between a Ladies team from both the Garda and Defence Forces, the first time either organization has fielded a Ladies team. This match finished with the honours even at a try a piece, 5-5, a worthy

result for both teams on their first competitive outing. Conditions were poor for an expansive game; the ground was heavy and wet and a cross wind brought intermittent heavy showers, but the passion and competitiveness of both teams in both matches was evident.

COMMITMENT

Both of the games played were representative games; with all players being either members

of the Garda or Defence Forces – with players being drawn from all over the country. The men’s team included the Carlow Captain Rory Sheriff and Clontarf’s Cillian Duffy. This Garda ladies team has only recently been formed; it was tried last year but there was not sufficient interest from the members – but with the growth across the country in the women’s game – this year they were comfortable able to field a full side including an inter-



THIN BLUE LINE: Garda win the line out



S/Garda Kate Moran (with headgear) leads the Garda Team.



Inspector Eamon O'Grady



Garda Ladies XV 2004



CHARGE DOWN: Defence Forces' Centre tries to chip ahead while Garda close in.



CLAPPED OUT: The Defence Forces applaud the Garda.

national and several regular club players. While lacking some of the power and impact of the men's game; there was no lack in the commitment.

COMPETITIVE

Garda Fiona Devaney from Kells Garda station holds seven caps for Ireland – having played in the World Cup in May 1998 - was scrum-half for the Garda Ladies Team. She

said, "Prior to today I hadn't played a competitive match since the Holland match in the World Cup, because of an injured shoulder. I came out of retirement for this game.

"The women's game is really taking off in Ireland now – there are now some 30 clubs. When I started playing it was completely different – I had to start off playing mini-rugby with the boys in Creggs, Co Roscommon,

which was unusual at the time. I took my younger brother along, and really wanted to play myself. That's how I started, but it's much easier to get started now."

SOCIAL

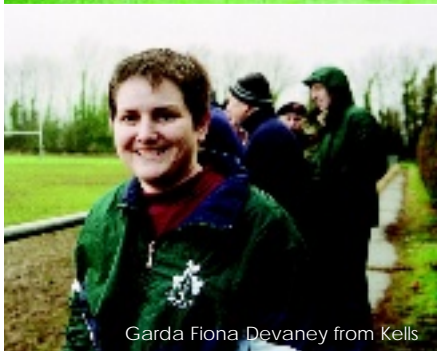
S/Garda Kate McCarthy plays competitive rugby for the Clonakilty Club and is the main co-ordinator of the team in the Garda College. She captained the Garda Team; and played an



Scrum Down



ON THE RUN: Garda attack again



Garda Fiona Devaney from Kells



CUT ABOVE: Garda win vital possession



THINK TANK: Garda Forwards plan the next assault.



BLACK & BLUE: The front rows confront each other. Garda (Black) and Defence Forde's (Blue).

influential role and provided the inspiration for her team mates. She said, "It was a good result for us today. I thought the team put in tremendous effort and you can't ask for more than that. This match should, hopefully, 'kick-start' a Garda ladies team - and add a modern dimension to Garda Rugby. The result really sets it up for next year. It was a good standard for teams on their first time out.

"Rugby is notorious for its social element – and it is no different for us. We are very open to new players – who can get started straight away. The only specialised kit you need it a gumshield. The game is played the same way as the men – it is a contact sport – but safety is addressed and players are not thrown in at the deep end; there is training to show how to play the game safely."

Garda Fiona Moran from Rathfarnham Garda Station and Garda Emma Ryan from Store

Street Station are the contacts for anyone wishing to play the sport.

PEDIGREE

The Garda Rugby Football Club (RFC) has both a first and second XV – with the first team playing in Leinster League Division 1. Garda members comprise about 80% of the teams – largely drawn from the DMR. Inspector Eamon O'Grady is attached to Tallaght Garda Station – though on temporary secondment to Harcourt Square – and he is the PRO and contact for the team. He says, "We are always on the lookout for new members. The demands on Garda resources make it increasingly difficult to find new members to commit to training and matches."

"Garda Rugby has a good pedigree – and only last October – an Ireland Combined Police Team won an international 10s tournament in Cyprus. Representatives from both the Garda

Síochána and the PSNI – captained by Ronnie Cary (a former Irish International) beat an RAF team in the final – after a sudden-death playoff – following a 12-12 at the end of normal time. The winning try was scored by the athletic Brendan Burke." GR

Garda RFC Training is twice per week – on Tuesday and Thursday at 7pm – in Westmanstown. Contact Eamon O'Grady on 086-8282046

GORDON WOOD TROPHY

Gordon Wood was the first coach to the Garda Rugby Club – and was himself a British & Irish Lion in the 1950s. His son, Keith Wood, is the former Ireland Captain and Hooker.