

# YourLife

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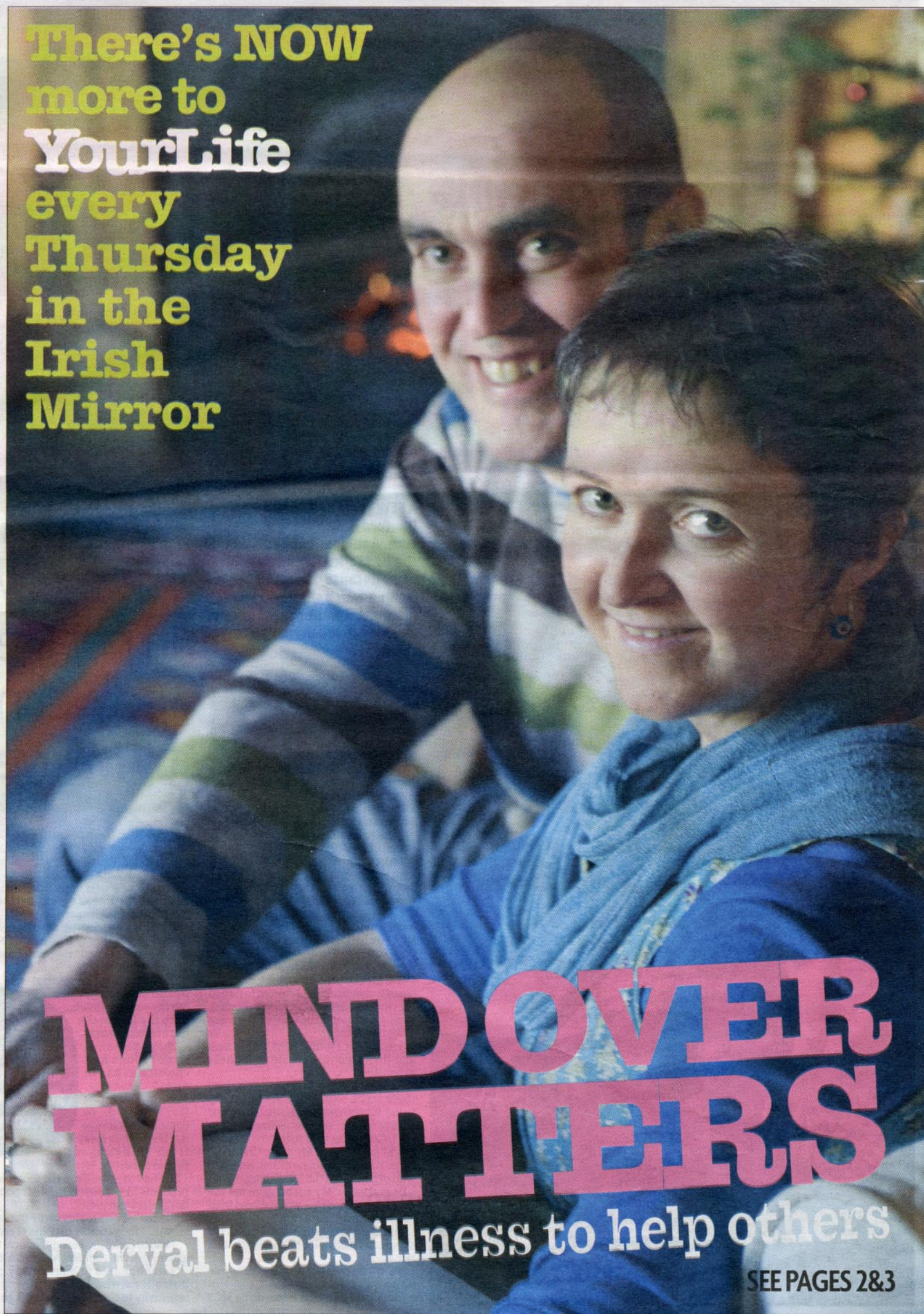
●● **P4&5**  
**NEW YEAR STUNNERS**  
**START 2009 OFF IN FINE STLE**



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**DR MIRIAM**  
**21 WAYS TO BEAT THE COLD SNAP**

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**4 PAGES OF TODAY'S TV IN OUR SUPER PULLOUT**



# MIND OVER MATTERS

Derval beats illness to help others

SEE PAGES 2&3



# Meditation is Derval's perfect formula to beat chemical illness



**INNER CALM:** Derval is now a great believer in medication

**A FEW years ago Derval Dunford didn't know where to turn. A successful beautician, she had fallen ill and couldn't work because of chronic fatigue which she had discovered was brought about by a severe sensitivity to chemicals.**

But Westport woman Derval managed to battle back from illness and has used her experiences to bring something positive to others.

She explained: "When I look back, I can see that I was gradually becoming more sensitive over the years.

"But the first time I noticed something was really wrong was when I had an episode in November 2003.

"I got a severe migraine which led to nausea and serious fatigue.

"I was just so exhausted that I couldn't get out of bed.

"I recovered from that eventually but then it happened again and again and there came a point where I just thought I was sick all the time.

"I started trying to find out what was causing it and I realised I was getting ill after I coming into contact with chemical fragrances.

### Sensitive

"We all use products every day that contain chemicals but I started to find in my work as a beautician I was becoming more sensitive to some things I was using - like nail varnish.

"I would get a muzzy head, I'd feel sick and then I would become absolutely exhausted."

Derval, 42, said at first she had no idea there was a connection but when she found out, she was amazed that there was a name for how she was feeling.

A friend of Derval's suggested that she might suffer from Multiple Chemical Sensitivity as she knew of someone else who experienced the same thing.

Derval said: "My friend gave me the number of a Sligo man who suffered from MCS and I gave him a ring.

"But that really frightened me as his symptoms were a lot more severe than mine.

"He would collapse when he came into contact with chemicals.

"But then I did some research on MCS

## Westport woman has a new balance in her life after recovering from MCS by Maeve Quigley

and it all started to make sense.

"I had never heard of it but I began to connect me feeling sick with certain things I was doing.

"The colour would drain from my face and I was as white as a ghost and then I would become exhausted."

Derval went to see a nurse who specialised in allergy treatments to try and help her find out what was causing her problems.

She said: "The specialist carried out tests and told me my energy levels were the lowest she had ever come across.

"She gave me a long list of foods and chemicals I had to avoid."

From then on, Derval had to completely change her life, staying away from things most people use every day.

She had to avoid even the most basic products like deodorant, shampoo, firelighters and petrol.

She said: "I had to stay away from any chemical fragrance from petrol to soaps.

"I had to make my house chemical free and my diet was completely chemical free.

"I was almost a prisoner in my own home for a while as because of my sensitivity to chemicals I couldn't go to a

pub, a restaurant or anything like that. "And for quite a period of time I was too tired to work."

So while she was at home Derval decided to detox her mind as well by using some techniques she had learned in the past to improve her health.

She said: "I used my own meditation and relaxation techniques to try and balance my mind as well.

"I had done some courses on meditation in the past, I had also studied aromatherapy, stress management and hypnotherapy but I hadn't really done anything with them.

"Before I got ill, I was a very busy person physically and mentally so I found it hard to keep still.

"But to help me while sick, I developed a meditation practice for myself and I knew there was something in it.

"Because it was such a difficult time and it was hard for me to understand what was happening I needed something to keep me going and get some balance.

"And I realised the meditation benefited me hugely and when I got better I thought of doing something like this to help people - not just those who are sick, but on a general basis to get a bit

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