ISSUE 34
OCTOBER 2026

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EDITORIAL

Hard to believe that we are now in Autumn, that lovely time of year where we see the leaves change from green to red to orange and gold. The children are just back at school and are already planning their Halloween outfits. We have 2 Halloween articles here for you to read. One is about ''How Halloween used to be a fairly low budget affair''.

Finally, we have a very entertaining piece for you ''The Mystery Drawer' 'Every home has one of these drawers. We don't set out intentionally to have one, but somehow we all end up with one. Whenever we pick up a nut, screw, piece of plastic, instruction manual, and don't know where to put them, we usually end up not throwing them away but putting them into the ''Mystery Drawer'' just in case!!!!!!!!!!

So until next time……and a little gentle reminder that on Sunday 25th October our clocks go back an hour and we return to winter time.

The Little Village Team

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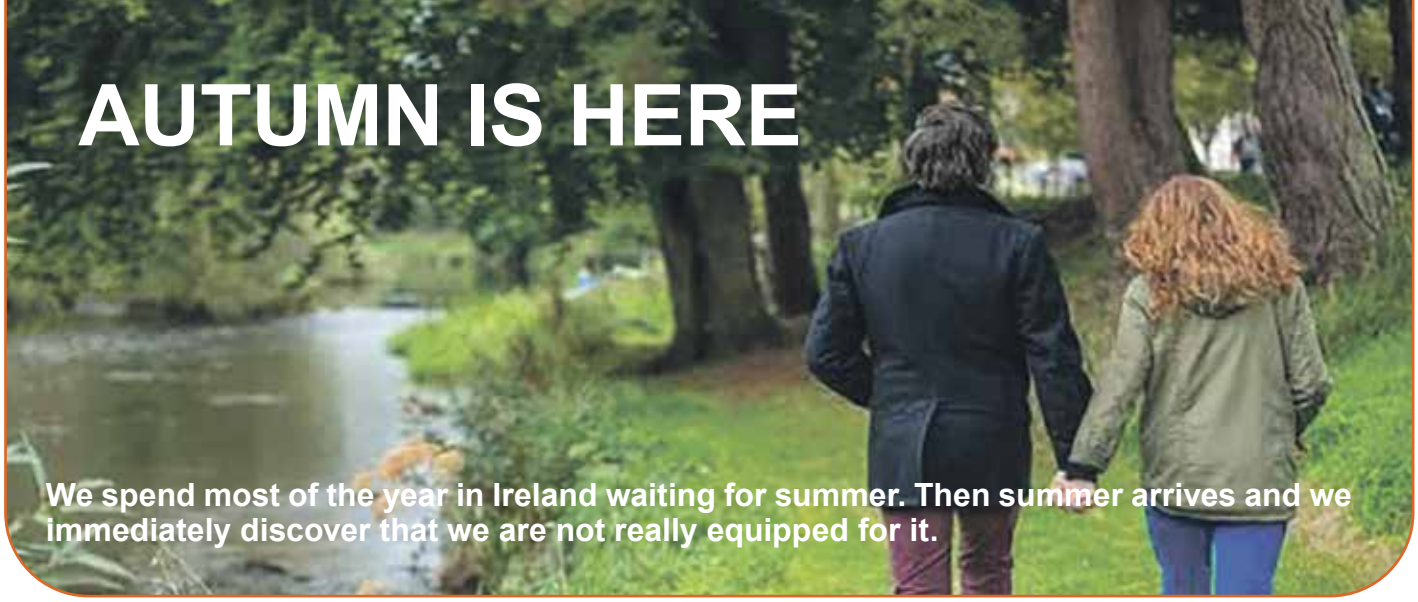
AUTUMN IS HERE



We spend most of the year in Ireland waiting for summer. Then summer arrives and we immediately discover that we are not really equipped for it.

If the temperature reaches 24 degrees, bedrooms become unbearable, gardens turn into emergency watering projects, and half the country starts complaining that it's "too close." We buy garden furniture in May, barbecue equipment in June, and spend July moving both in and out of the shed depending on the clouds.

Perhaps we have been backing the wrong season all along. Maybe autumn is actually the best time of year in Lucan.

October, in particular, has a lot going for it. It is cool enough to go for a decent walk without arriving home looking as though you have completed a marathon, but not yet cold enough to require thermal underwear and negotiations over the central heating. You can wear a proper coat again – this is important in Ireland, because we are much better at dressing for 12 degrees than 25.

Autumn also improves the scenery. Trees that have spent all summer being merely green suddenly start making an effort. Reds, yellows, browns, and golds appear everywhere.

Lucan is particularly well suited to the season. There are walks around St Catherine's Park, along the Liffey, and through the older parts of the village, where autumn seems to suit the place better than high summer. There is something about walking beside the river on a crisp October afternoon that feels very healthy. At least until you stop for coffee and cake.

Of course, an autumn walk now requires more equipment than it once did. Years ago you put on your shoes and went out. Today you need a smartwatch. You must count your steps. Apparently a walk that is not recorded electronically may not have happened. You can stroll for an hour, enjoy the fresh air, meet people, and return home feeling wonderful. Then you look at your watch: "Only 7,846 steps." Suddenly the entire outing feels inadequate.

Some people will then pace around the kitchen that evening to reach 10,000. Our parents would have found this difficult to understand. "What are you doing?" "I need another 600 steps." "Go and bring in the bins." Problem solved.

Autumn also provides the perfect Irish weather compromise: there is no expectation of sunshine. This

Continues P.6

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Continued from P.4

removes enormous pressure. In July, rain feels like a personal betrayal. You look outside indignantly: “It’s supposed to be summer.” In October, rain is simply October. You put on a coat and get on with it. If the sun appears, it is regarded as a bonus rather than a constitutional right.

There is also something very pleasant about coming home from an autumn walk. A summer walk ends with looking for a cold drink and wondering whether someone has remembered to water the plants. An October walk ends with the kettle. Possibly soup. Maybe toast. By November, this can develop into stew.

Irish people are naturally gifted at autumn food. We understand potatoes, gravy, and things cooked slowly in large pots. Nobody has ever returned shivering from a walk along the Liffey and said: “What I really fancy now is a light quinoa salad.”

Autumn evenings have their attractions too. The curtains close earlier. Television suddenly seems more legitimate. In summer there is a slight sense of guilt about sitting indoors at seven o’clock: “Lovely evening outside” – usually said by somebody who is also sitting indoors. By October, no explanation is necessary. You can sit on the sofa at half seven with a cup of tea and feel that you are behaving entirely appropriately.

Then there are the leaves. Beautiful on the trees. Less beautiful once they have all landed on your driveway. This is autumn’s little joke. You sweep them into a neat pile. You put them into a bag. You admire your work. Then the wind blows. Twenty minutes later, the driveway looks exactly as it did before you started. Somewhere in Lucan, a leaf blower is being started at this very moment.

Still, even that is part of the season. Autumn does not make the extravagant promises of summer. It doesn’t tempt us into buying paddling pools, patio heaters, or outdoor kitchens that require weather conditions last seen in southern Spain. It simply turns up with cooler days, colourful trees, and an excuse to slow down a little.

So perhaps instead of mourning the end of summer this October, we should enjoy what Lucan has right outside the door. Take a walk. Kick through a few leaves. Ignore the step counter. Then go home, put the kettle on, and have something entirely unsuitable for a fitness regime.

Autumn may not be the season we spend all year waiting for. But perhaps it should be.

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UPDATES ON MY WORK IN 2026:

Campaigning against rezoning.
I, alongside the community, campaigned to save the **Coldcut lands** from rezoning. These lands are hugely important for community amenities and facilities. I also voted against rezoning in **Finnstown, St Edmundsbury, Foxhunter** and more. This is developer led planning - not planning for the community!

Fighting against council rent increases
South Dublin County Council are increasing **rents for council, AHB and HAP/RAS tenants.** The increase is from **10% to 12.5% of income.** They will also now include the **Working Family Payment** as income to be assessed. Any income above the social housing threshold will be charged at an additional 10%. **I have voted against this and will continue to oppose this unfair increase but we need a people power movement building up to the Budget in November.**

Supporting workers
I have raised motions in the council in solidarity with workers including **school secretaries and caretakers and paramedics**. I stood with Castolin Eutectic workers.on strike. I will stand in solidarity with **public sector workers** fighting for better pay.

Supporting the Lucan community
I am very happy to continue to support the Lucan Festival, Lucan Harriers and other groups and events. Community is so important and the impact of a strong community could be seen at the recent protest to save St Edmundsbury. I was delighted to attend the protest which made a big impact on the successful vote against rezoning of the lands.

The Local Community Safety Partnership
I am very happy to be the councillor rep for Palmerstown-Fonthill on the new Local Community Safety Partnership. I also sit on the Local Policing Forum. Feel free to contact me about any issues you want me to raise.

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Lucan Festival Weekend Delivers Family Fun, Music and Community Spirit

The Lucan Festival weekend once again brought thousands of people into Lucan Village and Lucan House, with families enjoying two packed days of entertainment, community activities and good fortune with the weather.

Led by Chairperson Joe Byrne and the Lucan Festival Committee, the festival has come a long way since beginning as a weekend event in 2009. It now runs across an entire week, but for many residents the Saturday and Sunday remain highlights.

Saturday's annual Open Day at Lucan House and Demesne is the festival's main fundraiser and, for many families, has become a tradition. For a €5 admission fee, visitors gained access to the historic grounds, a full day of entertainment, the evening rock concert and the fireworks display.

There was plenty to keep children occupied from the moment the gates opened. The wild birds display was as popular as ever, with queues forming to meet the owls and birds of prey. One of the biggest attractions this year was the archaeology dig, where children had the chance to unearth replica finds and learn about archaeology through hands-on activities.

The Irish Dragons historical re-enactment group drew large crowds throughout the day, particularly when muskets and the live-firing cannon were brought into action. Walking dinosaurs wandered through the grounds, Chinese Lions entertained visitors, and local organisations showcased their work alongside an international food fair offering free samples from a wide range of cuisines.

Lucan House proved once again to be the perfect venue. Families relaxed on the lawns throughout the afternoon, listening to live music, enjoying food and making the most of the dry weather. After a week of uncertain forecasts, the rain stayed away and the sun even made an appearance later in the day.

As evening approached, attention turned to the rock stage. Local bands The Remains, Madra and Strutter provided the soundtrack before the festival's most anticipated event. With Lucan House illuminated in the background, the annual fireworks display lit up the night sky and brought another successful Open Day to a close.

Sunday's Family Fun Day shifted the focus back into Lucan Village, where children once again had no shortage of attractions to choose from.

The Garda Open Day proved particularly popular. Young visitors had the opportunity to try fingerprinting, meet members of specialist Garda units, see Garda vehicles up close and explore areas of the station that are not normally open to the public. Liffey Sound FM broadcast live from the station throughout the afternoon.

On the Griffeen Bridge, Dublin Fire Brigade displayed its fire engine and water rescue unit while speaking to families about community fire safety programmes and the work firefighters carry out across Dublin.

Elsewhere, the village was filled with music, craft stalls, food vendors, community groups and entertainers. Bouncy castles, the monster slide and the Punch and Judy show kept younger children busy, while live performances on the main stage outside Carroll's ensured there was always something happening.

One welcome sight was Lucan Weir promenade, now open. Throughout the day, families could be seen sitting beside the River Liffey enjoying food, conversation and the atmosphere. It provided a quiet place to pause amid the bustle of the festival.

By Sunday evening, what stood out most was not any single attraction but the sense of community on display throughout the village. From Lucan House to Main Street, neighbours met neighbours, children explored new experiences and families spent time together. That community spirit has been at the heart of Lucan Festival since it began, and judging by the crowds over the weekend, it remains as strong as ever.

Congratulations to the Lucan Festival Committee, their volunteers, and Sponsors for delivering another great week long festival in Lucan

Photographs by Paul Butler >>

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THE ROOM NOBODY USED

Every Irish house once had a room that nobody was allowed to use.

It was usually called the good room. Why it was good was never entirely clear. The main distinguishing feature was that nobody ever sat in it.

The good room contained the best furniture, the best carpet, the best ornaments, and, in many homes, a three-piece suite protected by some form of plastic covering that made sitting down sound like opening a packet of crisps.

Children entered at their peril. You could pass through, perhaps, but lingering was dangerous. If you were caught sitting on the good chair, the reaction suggested you had been discovered driving the family car without permission.

"That room is for visitors."

The visitors, of course, rarely came. And when they did, many of them ended up sitting in the kitchen anyway.

The good room was less a living space and more a museum of family ambition. It contained things that were "too good" for everyday use. The good glasses were there. The good china. The good tablecloth. There might also be a cabinet displaying ornaments collected over decades: crystal bowls, commemorative plates, china dogs, and mysterious objects brought home from holidays. Nobody quite knew what some of these things were for, but they were dusted regularly.

Our parents' generation had a remarkable ability to buy things and then refuse to use them. A good dinner service might be kept for Christmas. The good towels were for guests. The good bed linen was for some future occasion of such importance that it never actually arrived.

Even clothing could fall into this category. "That's too good to wear every day." The result was that perfectly decent clothes spent years hanging in wardrobes waiting for an event important enough to justify them. By the time the event came, they no longer fitted.

There was logic behind all this, of course. People who had grown up with very little valued possessions differently. Things were expected to last. Furniture was bought for decades, not until the next interior trend appeared online. You looked after it. You covered it. You protected it from children, sunlight, and, where possible, human contact.

Today our homes are very different. We use the rooms. We sit on the furniture. We put our feet up. Children build Lego on expensive rugs and dogs are allowed onto sofas that cost more than our parents' first cars. The idea of keeping an entire room untouched for visitors now seems slightly mad.

Although some habits survive.

Many houses still have the good glasses. You know the ones. They are hidden at the back of a cupboard and come out when someone important visits. For everyday purposes, we use the slightly cloudy ones from the dishwasher.

The same applies to mugs. Most homes have about thirty mugs but only four are ever used. The others include one from a charity event in 2007, one saying

"World's Best Dad," three Christmas mugs, several advertising mugs, and one nobody likes because the handle feels wrong. Yet we cannot throw them out. We have inherited the instinct.

Walk into houses around Lucan or Leixlip and you may not find a formal good room anymore, but somewhere there will be a cupboard, drawer, or press containing things considered too good for ordinary life. Perhaps a set of wine glasses. A fancy serving bowl. A tablecloth that must be ironed and therefore has never been used.

We have modernised, but not completely. There is something comforting about it. The good room may have disappeared, but the idea survives: certain things should be kept for special occasions.

The problem is deciding what counts as special. Maybe our parents had it slightly wrong. Maybe the good china should be used on a Tuesday. Maybe the expensive glasses should come out even if the wine came from the supermarket. And maybe furniture was designed to be sat on.

Still, I suspect that somewhere in Lucan or Leixlip there is a pristine armchair, untouched since 1978, waiting patiently for an important visitor.

And if you are ever invited to sit on it, be careful. Someone's mother may still be watching.

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When the Clocks go back

There is something particularly depressing about the clocks going back.

On Sunday, 25 October 2026, we get the great annual bargain: one extra hour in bed in exchange for several months of darkness. Ireland returns to winter time on the last Sunday in October, when the clocks go back by one hour.

It sounds good at first.
An extra hour in bed. Lovely.

Unfortunately, by Monday afternoon you discover the small print: it's dark at teatime. Not pleasantly dusky—dark. Properly dark. You look out the window at half past five and your body immediately assumes the day is over. Pyjamas begin to seem reasonable. There is a strong temptation to close the curtains, put on the television, and remain indoors until March.

The first dark evening always comes as a surprise, even though it happens every year. You finish work, leave the shops, or come out of Lucan Centre, and suddenly it feels like 10pm. You check your watch: 5.47. This cannot be right. There are still several hours of the day left, but psychologically they have been cancelled.

Summer evenings encourage activity: you might cut the grass, go for a walk, sit outside, or visit somebody. Once the clocks go back, enthusiasm disappears. Someone suggests an evening walk and the response changes from "Good idea" to "Now?"

The dog suffers particularly badly. All summer, the evening walk is a pleasant affair in daylight. By November, you are standing at the front door wearing a coat, hat, and reflective clothing while the dog looks delighted. The dog does not understand darkness. The dog does not understand rain. The dog simply understands walk. This is irritatingly positive.

Driving also changes overnight. Suddenly every journey seems to involve darkness, glare, and headlights coming towards you. The windscreen develops a mysterious film that was invisible during daylight. You spend half the journey adjusting demisters and wondering whether everybody else's headlights have become brighter.

There is another October ritual: changing the clocks themselves. This used to take effort. There were clocks in the kitchen, sitting room, bedrooms, and perhaps one on the microwave that had been showing the wrong time since the last power cut. Now phones, tablets, and computers change automatically. This has removed one of the great **Sunday morning conversations:**

"Did you put the clock back?"

"I thought you did."

"What time is it actually?"

There will always be one clock that resists—usually the oven. Modern ovens can cook at precise temperatures, clean themselves, and communicate with apps, yet changing the clock apparently requires holding three buttons simultaneously while standing on one leg. Most people eventually give up. For six months, the oven is correct. For the other six months, you mentally add or subtract an hour.

Then there are the clocks in cars. Some change automatically. Others require navigation through a menu system clearly designed by someone who had never met a driver. You press Settings, then System, then General, then Time—and somehow you accidentally change the language to Swedish. By the time the clock is correct, you need another hour in bed.

Of course, there is one benefit: mornings become brighter for a while. This is especially welcome for anyone heading to work or school early, and it is one of the reasons we still change the clocks—the arrangement shifts more available daylight into the morning during winter.

But the darker evenings are what we notice most. By December, Dublin sunset is shortly after 4pm under the current system. Four o'clock. That is not evening. That is late afternoon. Yet nature has decided the shutters are coming down.

Perhaps this explains why Irish winter life becomes so heavily based around food. Once darkness arrives early, soup suddenly seems attractive. Stews return. Roast dinners become important. You begin buying biscuits "for visitors," even though nobody has announced they are coming. The house gets warmer. The lights come on. Candles appear. Throws mysteriously multiply on sofas. We effectively turn our homes into survival bunkers until spring.

There has been talk for years about ending the twice-yearly clock change, but Ireland continues with the current system, partly because of concerns about having different time arrangements on either side of the border.

So this October, we will do it all again. We will enjoy our extra hour. Then complain that it is dark. We will say: "God, the evenings have fairly closed in." This phrase will be repeated thousands of times across Kildare, usually while someone looks mournfully out a window.

By November we will have accepted it. By January we will barely notice. And then one evening in February, someone will suddenly say: "There's a great stretch in the evenings." At that point, hope returns.Until then, put the kettle on. It's practically night-time.

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Vegetables €12.95

Chilli Sweet Basil 1,14
with Onion, Asian Green, Peppers, Oyster Sauce, Light Soya & Mushroom
Choice of:
Mixed Meat €14.95 King Prawn €15.95 Roast Duck €16.95
Chicken / Pork €13.95
Vegetables €12.95

Seafood Combination 1,2,14 €15.95
King Prawn, Squid, Mussels with Garlic, Chilli, Onions, Peppers, Light Soya & Sweet Basil

Mekong Duck (half a duck) 1,14 €16.95
with Onion, Garlic, Chilli, Chinese Leaf, Beasprout & Sweet Basil

Bang Bang Chicken 14 Large €14.95
Crispy Shredded Chicken & Black Pepper with Onion, Garlic, Broccoli & Carrot

Fire Cracker
Stir fried with onion, carrot green pepper, dry chilli, scallion in hot spicy
Choice of:

Chicken / Tofu	€13.95	Beef	€14.95
Prawn	€15.95	Duck	€16.95

All main dishes (except fried rice & noodle dishes) served with boiled rice 50c extra, chips or fried rice 90c extra. Fried noodles or young chow fried rice €2.60 extra.

Appetisers

A1. House Combination for 2 *2,7,11,4,5,9* €15.55
(Honey Spare Ribs, Spring Roll, Sesame Prawn Toast & Chicken Skews Satay)

A2. Aromatic Duck *5* (1/4) €14.10 (1/2) €22.90
(Served with Pancake, Hoisin Sauce & Fresh Vegetables)

A3. Skewered Chicken Satay (3) (sauce on side) *1,2,4,5,6,9,11* €8.60

A4. Skewered King Prawn Satay (4) (sauce on side) *1,2,4,5,6,9,11* €8.90

A5. Sesame Prawn Toast (2) with Sweet & Sour Dip *1,2,7,11* €8.90

A6. Pork Spare Ribs (3) €7.85 (4) €9.95
(Choice of: BBQ, Sweet & Sour, Salt & Chilli or Honey Sauce)

A7. Chicken Wings Small *1,3,5,7* €7.50 Large €9.95
(Choice of: BBQ, Sweet & Sour, Salt & Chilli or Honey Sauce)

A8. Smoked Shredded Chilli Chicken (Dry) *3,5* Small €6.95 Lrg €11.95

A9. Crispy Spring Roll (3) (with Plum Sauce Dip) *5,9* €7.90

A10. Crispy Spring Roll (2) (with Plum Sauce Dip) *5,9* €4.85

A11. Vegetarian Spring Roll (3) V *5,9* €6.40
with Sweet & Chilli Sauce Dip

A12. Chicken Cheese Roll (3) with Sweet & Sour Sauce Dip *5,9* €7.60

A13. Salt & Chilli King Prawn *2,3* €9.70

A14. Yuk Sung (Chicken/Pork) (Contains Peanuts) for 1 €9.70
(Served with iceberg lettuce) *1,4,6,7,5,10* for 2 €14.10

A15. Crispy Won Tons (5) with Sweet & Sour Dip *2,5,11* €8.60

A16. Crispy Chicken Curry Puff *1,5,8,9,12* €8.15

A17. Lollipop Chicken *3* €8.40
(Skewered Crispy Chicken Pieces Glazed in Honey Sauce)

A18. Gyoza (Crispy Dumpling in chicken or veg with soya sauce) *1,5,7* €8.60

A18a. Salt & Chilli Crab Claws *2* €8.60

A18b. Tempura King Prawn (6) *2,3,5,7* €9.95

Spice Bag Selection

A19. Spicy Bag *3* Small €7.90 Large €10.90
Large with Free Bottle Water (Except online orders)

A20. Primary Spicy Bag *3* €11.90
(No Chilli Spicy Bag Suitable for any age)

A21. House Special Spicy Bag *3* €13.90
(2 Chicken Balls, Crispy Shredded Chicken & Chips)

A22. Tofu Spicy Bag V *1* €11.35
(Mixed of deep Fried Tofu & Chips in Salt & Chilli)

A23. Boneless Spicy Box *3* €15.95
(2 Chicken Balls, Crispy Shredded & Piece of Chicken, Chips and Small Curry Sauce, all Salt and Chilli)

A24. The Grand Vegan Spicy Box V *1,5,7,9* €15.85
(with Tofu, Chips, Mushroom, Broccoli, Onion, Carrot, Green Pepper 2 Pieces of Vegetable Gyoza & Small Curry Sauce Dip)

A25. Munchies Box Junior *3,5,9* €14.95
A personal size box (16cmx25cm), packed with crispy chicken pieces, shredded chicken, 2 chicken balls, chicken wings, ribs, chips & small tub of curry sauce

A26. Spicy Bag Chicken Nuggets *3,5,9* Small €7.95 Large €10.95
Chicken nuggets, chips, onion, carrots with salt & chilli seasoning

A27. The Grand Spice Bag *3* €13.95
The usual Spice bag in a box with small tub of curry sauce

A28. Crispy Chicken Honey Spice Bag *3* €13.95

A29. House Special Honey Spice Bag *3,5* €15.95

A30. Fried Chicken Wings Spice Bag *3* €11.95

A31. Spice Bag in King Prawn *2,3* Small (6) €12.99 Large (10) €15.95
Mix of king prawn, chips in salt & chilli, onion & carrots

A32. Spice Bag Sausage *5,10,12* €10.95
Mix of sausage, chips in salt & chilli, onion & carrots

A33. Chicken Ball Spicy Bag *1,3,5,8,9* €13.90

A34. Jumbo Bag *3,5,9* €14.95
Chicken ball, chicken wings, shredded chicken, chips, choice of sauce from: curry, satay, king do,BBQ, sweet sour sauce

Soup

S1. Chicken & Sweetcorn Soup *3* 12oz €6.35 32oz €14.40

S2. Crab Meat & Sweetcorn Soup *2,3* 12oz €6.90 32oz €15.60

S3. Chicken Mushroom Soup 12oz €6.35 32oz €14.40

S4. Chicken Noodle Soup 12oz €5.90 32oz €11.80

S5. Hot & Sour Soup *3* 12oz €6.35 32oz €14.40

S6. Won Ton Soup *2,11* 12oz €7.50 32oz €16.95

S7. Mixed Vegetables Soup V 12oz €5.95 32oz €13.45

S8. Gyoza Soup (Chicken/Vegetable) *1,5,7* 12oz €6.35 32oz €14.40

S9. Seafood Ramen Soup 32oz *2, 11, 14, 5, 1.7* €14.95

Noodle Box

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Choice of Noodle

Thin Noodle
Thick Noodle
Udon Noodle *(extra €1.50)*
Flat Rice Noodle *(extra €1.50)*
Ramein *(extra €1.50)*
Vermicelli *(extra €1.50)*

Chicken / Pork	€12.95
Mixed Meat *2*	€13.95
King Prawn *7*	€14.95
Mixed Seafood *2,11*	€14.95
Mixed Vegetable	€11.95

Choice of Sauce

Oyster Sauce *5,14*
Sweet Chilli Sauce
Black Bean Sauce
Black Pepper Sauc
Satay Sauce *4,5,9*
Curry Sauce *5,9*
Szechuan Sauce *1,*
Sweet & Sour Sauc

SINGAPORE BOX *1,3,4,5,6,11,12* €14.95
Thin Rice Noodle Roast Pork, Chicken & Vegetable
(Contain egg, peanut sauce, soy sauce wheat flour shrimp paste)

HOT BOX *2,3,5,14* €15.95
Thick Egg Noodles, Chicken, Beef, Roast Pork, King Prawn and Green Vegetables, Wok Tossed in our Secret Chilli Sauce

TERIYAKI CHICKEN BOX *1,3,5,14* €15.95
Thick Egg Noodles, Chicken and Asian Green Vegetables, Wok Tossed in our Teriyaki Sauce

Chef's Recommended

C1. Shredded Crispy Chicken in King Do Sauce *1,5* €13.95

C2. Shredded Crispy Chicken with Sweet Chilli Sauce *1,3* €13.95

C3. Shredded Crispy Chicken in Szechuan Sauce *1,3* €13.95

C4. Crispy Shredded Chicken with Sweet & Sour Sauce €13.95

C5. Sesame Shredded Chicken with Honey Chilli Sauce *9* €13.95

C6. Crispy Shredded Chicken with Honey Chilli Sauce *3* €13.95

C7. Crispy Shredded Beef with Chilli Sauce *1,3* €14.95

C8. Salt & Chilli Chicken (Piece or Shredded) €13.95

C9. Spicy Samba
Chicken / Pork *1,5,11* €13.95
Beef / Spicy Sambal King Prawn / House Special *1,2,5,11* €15.95
(Samba) sauce contains soybean fish sauce shrimp paste)

Sweet & Sour Dishes *5*

1. Sweet & Sour Chicken (Hong Kong Style) *3* €13.95
2. Sweet & Sour Chicken Balls (8) (sauce on side) €14.95
3. Sweet & Sour Pork (Hong Kong Style) *3* €13.95
4. Sweet & Sour King Prawn (Hong Kong Style) *2,3* €15.95
5. Sweet & Sour King Prawn Balls (sauce on side) *2,3* €16.95
6. Sweet & Sour Duck (half of duck) €15.95
7. Sweet & Sour Mixed Vegetables V €11.95

Curry Dishes (Contains Flour) *5,9*

8. Chicken with Curry Sauce €12.95
9. Beef with Curry Sauce €13.95
10. Pork with Curry Sauce €12.95
11. King Prawn with Curry Sauce *2* €14.95
12. House Special with Curry Sauce *2* €13.95
13. Duck with Curry Sauce (half a duck) €15.95
14. Fillet Beef with Curry Sauce (steak) €19.85
15. Breast of Chicken with Curry Sauce (Diced) €13.95 (Whole) €14.95
16. Mixed Vegetables with Curry Sauce V €11.95

**Sauce Allergy Advice: (Curry 1, 5,9,8,12) (Hoi Sin 1,5,7) (Bbq 1,5,7) (Black (Oyster Sauce 14,5,9,1,7) (Sweet and Sour 5) (Black Pepper 1,5,7,9,14) (Swe (Samba 1,2,11,5,7,9,14,10) (Red Curry/Green Curry/Masama*

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MALAYSIA BOX 1,3,4,5,6,11 **€14.95**

Egg Noodle & Vegetable, Chicken stir fried in a fragrant hot Malaysia satay paste
(Contains egg, peanut sauce, soy sauce wheat flour shrimp paste)

YAKI SOBA 3,5,11,14

Choice of: Chicken €13.95 King Prawn 2 €15.95
Tofu & Vegetable 1 €12.95
(Soba Noodles with Beansprouts, Pepper, Onion, Spring Onion, Carrot and Soba Sauce, Garnished with Shallots, Ginger & Sesame Seeds)

House Special Dishes 2

(Chicken, Beef, Pork, King Prawn, Mixed Meat)

17.	House Special with Honey & Black Pepper Sauce 14	€13.95
18.	House Special with King Do Sauce 5	€13.95
19.	House Special with Black Bean Sauce	€13.95
20.	House Special with Satay Sauce 1,5,6	€13.9
21.	House Special with Ginger & Scallions	€13.95
22.	House Special with Szechuan Sauce	€13.95
23.	House Special Kung Po with Cashew Nuts 6	€14.45
24.	House Special with Hot Garlic Sauce	€13.95
25.	House Special Chop Suey in Oyster Sauce 5,6	€13.95
26.	House Special Cashew nuts in Oyster Sauce 5,6	€14.95
27.	House Special with Black Pepper Sauce	€13.95
28.	House Special with Macau Curry Sauce 5,9	€13.95

Chicken Dishes

100% Fresh Chicken Fillet

29.	Chicken with Satay Sauce 1,5,6	€12.95
30.	Chicken with Mushroom in Oyster Sauce 5,14	€12.95
31.	Chicken with Chop Suey in Oyster Sauce 5,14 Lrg	€13.95
32.	Chicken with Cashew Nuts in Oyster Sauce 5,14	€13.95
33.	Chicken with Lemon Sauce 10	€12.95
34.	Chicken with Orange Sauce 10	€12.95
35.	Chicken with King Do Sauce 5	€12.95
36.	Chicken with Szechuan Sauce 1	€12.95
37.	Chicken Kung Po Sauce with Cashew Nuts 6	€13.45
38.	Chicken with Ginger & Scallions 14	€12.95
39.	Chicken with Hot Garlic Sauce	€12.95
40.	Chicken with Black Pepper Sauce 14	€12.95
41.	Chicken with Broccoli in Oyster Sauce 5	€12.95
42.	Chicken with Honey & Black Pepper Sauce	€12.95
43.	Chicken Green Pepper Black Bean Sauce	€12.95
44.	Chicken Mushroom Black Bean Sauce	€12.95
45.	Chicken with Macau Curry Sauce 5	€12.95
46.	Mexico Chicken Contains Flour Soybean 1,5	€12.95
47.	Chicken Pineapple	€12.95

Bean 1,9,5,14,7) (Satay 4,5,9,1,2,11) (King Do 5,1,8,11) (Szechuan 1,5,7,9,)
eet Chili 1,5,8,11) (Kung Po 1,5,8,11,4) (Hot Garlic 1,5,7,9) (Plum Sauce 5)
n 2,11) (Ren Dang 1,9) (Garlic Mayo 3,12) (Chilli Oil 1,5,7)

Beef Dishes

(Fillet Beef with €5.90 Supplement)

48.	Beef with King Do Sauce 5	€13.95
49.	Beef with Mushroom in Oyster Sauce 5	€13.95
50.	Beef with Satay Sauce	€13.95
51.	Beef with Chop Suey in Oyster Sauce 5 Lrg	€13.95
52.	Beef with Cashew nuts in Oyster Sauce 5	€14.95
53.	Beef with Ginger & Scallions 5	€13.95
54.	Beef with Szechuan Sauce	€13.95
55.	Beef with Kung Po Sauce with Cashew Nuts 6	€14.95
56.	Beef with Hot Garlic Sauce 1,5	€13.95
57.	Beef with Black Pepper Sauce	€13.95
58.	Beef with Broccoli in Oyster Sauce 5	€13.95
59.	Beef with Honey & Black Pepper Sauce	€13.95
60.	Beef with Green Pepper Black Bean Sauce	€13.95
61.	Beef with Mushroom Black Bean Sauce	€13.95
62.	Beef Pineapple	€13.95

Roast Pork Dishes (100% Irish Pork)

63.	Roast Pork with Mushroom in Oyster Sauce 5	€12.95
64.	Roast Pork with Satay Sauce 6	€12.95
65.	Roast Pork with Chop Suey in Oyster Sauce 5	€12.95
66.	Roast Pork with Cashew Nuts in Oyster Sauce 5	€13.50
67.	Roast Pork with Ginger & Scallions 5	€12.95
68.	Roast Pork with Szechuan Sauce 1,5	€12.95
69.	Roast Pork Kung Po Sauce with Cashew Nuts 6	€13.95
70.	Roast Pork with Hot Garlic Sauce 1,5	€12.95
71.	Roast Pork with Black Pepper Sauce 5	€12.95
72.	Roast Pork with Broccoli in Oyster Sauce 5	€12.95
73.	Roast Pork Green Pepper Black Bean Sauce 5	€12.95
74.	Roast Pork Mushroom Black Bean Sauce 5	€12.95

Roast Duck Dishes (Half of Duck)

75.	Roast Duck Cantonese Style Soya Sauce on side	€15.95
76.	Roast Duck with Satay Sauce 1,5,6	€15.95
77.	Roast Duck with Chop Suey in Oyster Sauce 5	€15.95
78.	Roast Duck with Cashew Nuts in Oyster Sauce 5	€16.95
79.	Roast Duck with Ginger & Scallions 5	€15.95
80.	Roast Duck with Szechuan Sauce 1,5	€15.95
81.	Roast Duck Kung Po Sauce with Cashew Nuts 6	€16.45
82.	Roast Duck with Plum Sauce	€15.95
83.	Roast Duck with Lemon Sauce	€15.95
84.	Roast Duck with Orange Sauce	€15.95
85.	Roast Duck Green Pepper Black Bean Sauce 5	€15.95
86.	Roast Duck Mushroom Black Bean Sauce 5	€15.95
87.	Glazed Duck Roast Duck with Green Veg and Honey Cashewnuts	€16.45

Seafood Dishes 2,5

88.	Mixed Seafood with Ginger & Spring Onions (King Prawn, Squid, Mussels) 2,5,	€14.95
89.	King Prawn with Satay Sauce 1,5,6	€14.95
90.	King Prawn Chop Suey in Oyster Sauce 5	€14.95
91.	King Prawn Cashew Nuts in Oyster Sauce 5,6	€15.45
92.	King Prawn with Ginger & Scallions 5	€14.95
93.	King Prawn with Szechuan Sauce 1,5	€14.95
94.	King Prawn Kung Po Sauce with Cashew Nuts 6	€15.45
95.	King Prawn with Hot Garlic Sauce 1,5	€14.95
96.	King Prawn with Black Pepper Sauce 5	€14.95
97.	King Prawn Green Pepper Black Bean Sauce 5	€14.95
98.	King Prawn Mushroom Black Bean Sauce 5	€14.95
99.	Squid with Salt & Chilli	€14.95
100.	Squid with Ginger & Scallions 5	€14.95
101.	King Prawn with Salt & Chilli	€14.95
101a.	Salt & Chilli Crab Claws	€14.95

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Vegetarian Dishes

102.	Hot & Spicy ToFu V *1,5* 🌶🌶	€11.95
103.	Szechuan Style ToFu V *1,5* 🌶🌶	€11.95
104.	Salt & Chilli ToFu (Long Tray) V 🌶🌶	€11.95
105.	Mixed Vegetables with Choice of Sauce V (Curry, Black Bean, Black Pepper, Cashew Nuts, Satay, King Do, Szechuan etc)	€11.95

Fried Rice Dishes *3*

106.	House Special Fried Rice *2*	€13.95
107.	King Prawn Fried Rice *2*	€14.95
108.	Chicken Fried Rice	€12.95
109.	Pork Fried Rice	€12.95
110.	Beef Fried Rice	€13.95
111.	Vegetables Fried Rice V	€11.95
112.	Yung Chow Fried Rice	€13.95
113.	Singapore Fried Rice *1,3,4,5* 🌶	€14.95
114.	Nasi Goring Chicken Fried Rice *1,3,4,5* 🌶🌶	€14.95
115.	Samba! Chicken Fried Rice *1,3,4,5* 🌶🌶	€14.95
115A.	Roast Duck Fried Rice *1,3,4,5*	€15.95

(113-115 Contains peanut sauce, soy sauce wheat flour shrimp paste)

European Dishes

116.	Roast Breast of Chicken with Onion & Mushroom	€14.95
117.	Special Omelette or Foo Young *2,3*	€14.95
118.	King Prawn Omelette or Foo Young *2,3*	€15.95
119.	Chicken Omelette or Foo Young *3*	€13.95
120.	Mushroom Omelette or Foo Young V *3*	€12.95
121.	Fish & Chips Box *2*	€12.95

Extra Dishes (Change sauce €1.50 extra)

Salt & Chilli Chicken Balls *1,3,5,8,9*	(6) €9.95	(8) €12.95
Salt & Chilli Chips in Long Tray		€6.85
Chicken Balls (3)+Chips & Curry Sauce (in Long Tray) *1,3,5,8,9*		€9.85
Sausages (3), Chips & Curry Sauce (in Long Tray) *5,10,12*		€8.85
Shredded Crispy Chicken+Chips & Curry Sauce *1,3,5,7,9*		€8.85
5 in 1 (Shredded Chicken, Chicken Ball (2), Curry Sauce, Fried Rice & Chips) *1,3,5,7,8,9*		€10.85
4 in 1 (Chicken Balls (2)+Chips+Fried Rice & Curry Sauce) *1,3,5,7,8,9*		€8.85
3 in 1 (Fried Rice+Chips+Curry Sauce) *3,5,9*	Small €5.85	Large €6.85
Chicken/Beef Curry with Fried Rice *1,3,5,7,9*	Small €7.85	Large €9.95
2 in 1 (Chips with Curry Sauce) *5,9*	Small €4.85	Large €6.85
French Fried Onion Rings *1,3,5,7*	Small (4) €4.85	Large (8) €7.95
Fried Plain Onion *1,5,7,14*		€7.95
Fried Soft Noodles *1,5,7*	Small €6.90	Large €8.95
Egg Fried Rice *1,3,7*	Small €4.95	Large €6.25
Boiled Rice	Small €3.80	Large €4.95
Chips	Small €4.85	Large €6.35
Sauce Options	8oz €3.65	12oz €5.25

Curry/Sweet And Sour/Bbq/Satay/Szechuan/Black Bean/ Black Pepper/King Do/Sweet Chilli/Kung Po/ Hot Garlic/ Plum Sauce/Macau Curry/Oyster Sauce/Samba Sauce/ Red Curry/ Green Curry/Masaman/Ren Dang

Sauce Options	4oz €3.00	8oz €5.70

Garlic Mayo/Honey Sauce/Chilli Oil/Soy Sauce/Hai Sin Sauce

Chicken Balls (8) *1,3,5,8,9*	€11.55
Chicken Balls (6) *1,3,5,8,9*	€8.65
Chicken Balls (4) *1,3,5,8,9*	€6.90
Chicken Balls (3) *1,3,5,8,9*	€5.40
Chicken Nuggets (12) with Curry Sauce *5,9*	€7.95
Chicken Tenders (6) with Curry Sauce *5,9*	€8.95
Sausage (each) *5,10,12*	Plain €1.65 in Batter €2.95
Beansprouts	€7.95
Mixed Vegetables	€9.95
Mushrooms	€8.95
Cashew Nuts (8oz)	€5.50
Prawn Crackers	€3.50
Sushi Ginger (4oz)	€2.50
Soft Drinks (Coke, Coke Zero, 7up, Diet Coke, Orange) Can	€2.00
Large Bottle	€5.50
Water (500ml)	€1.85

Set Meal Deals

For 2 People €41.00

House Combination for 2
🌶 Beef with Black Bean Sauce
🌶🌶 Chicken Curry
Egg Fried Rice
2 Cans of Coke

SAVE €11.40

For 3 People €61.50

House Combination for 3
🌶 Beef with Black Bean Sauce
🌶🌶 Chicken Curry
Sweet & Sour Chicken (Hong Kong Style)
Egg Fried Rice
Bottle of Coke

SAVE €12.90

For 4 People €82.45

House Combination for 4
🌶 Beef with Black Bean Sauce
🌶🌶 Chicken Curry
Roast Duck Cantonese style
Sweet & Sour Chicken (Hong Kong Style)
Egg Fried Rice
Bottle of Coke

SAVE €16.37

Happy Kid €9.95

Popcorn Chicken
Sausages (2)
Chips
Honey Dip
Can of Fizz Drink
Tayto Crisps or Haribo

Snack Box €9.50

a. Prawn Toast (4 Pieces), Chicken Balls (2), Chicken Wings (2), Chips & Curry Sauce
b. Spring Rolls (2), Chicken Curry Triangle (2), Crispy Won Ton(2), Chips & Curry Sauce
c. Sausages (2), Chicken Balls (2), Chicken Nuggets (2),Chips & Curry Sauce

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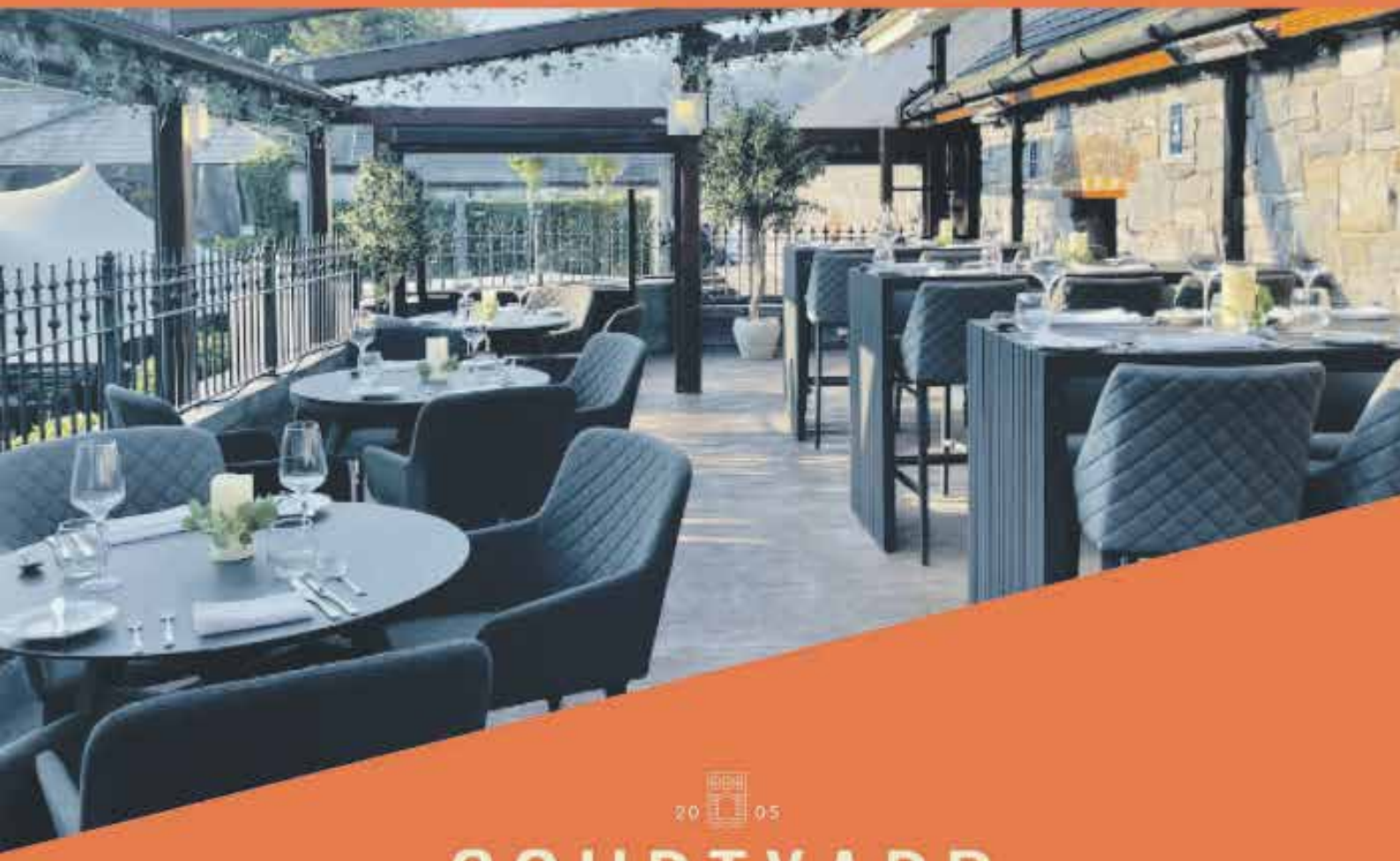

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IRELAND'S BRIGHTEST PAINT STORES

PAINT LIKE A PRO
Colour Drenching Explained

By Mick Gilbride | Dublin Area Manager, Pat McDonnell Paints

Colour drenching is more versatile than its dramatic name suggests. Put simply, it means carrying one colour across the surfaces of a room: the walls, ceiling, skirting boards and doors.

Why Does It Work?

Most schemes contrast coloured walls with white ceilings and woodwork. Colour drenching removes these contrasting lines. This can make a small space feel more expansive, while giving rooms a cohesive atmosphere.

Choosing Your Colour

Consider how you want the room to feel. Soft neutrals and pastels create a gentle, airy effect, while deep blues, greens and earthy shades can feel intimate and cocooning. Look at what will remain in the room: flooring, furniture, fabrics and materials. Your chosen colour should complement these elements or provide intentional contrast. Light also matters, as the same shade can appear different in a bright, north-facing or artificially lit space.

Test shortlisted shades on card or lining paper. View them throughout the day before deciding. Our tester pots are 25% off, making this an ideal opportunity to properly explore a few options.

One Colour, One Finish

For the most seamless interpretation, some people prefer the same colour and finish across every surface. Farrow & Ball Dead Flat makes this straightforward. This ultra-matt, multi-surface finish can be used on walls, ceilings, woodwork and metal, creating an uninterrupted wash of colour without changing products from surface to surface. Better still, all of our stores have their own Farrow & Ball tinting machines, so your chosen colour and finish can be mixed in store while you wait or order online and get it, or any of our products, delivered straight to your door for free.

One Colour, Different Finishes

Colour drenching can also mean maintaining one colour while varying the sheen. This adds subtle depth while suiting each surface.

Ralston offers an excellent route to this effect because the same colour can be mixed across complementary wall and trim paints. For a soft scheme, pair Ralston ExtraTex Matt on walls and ceilings with Ralston Aqua Matt/ Semi-matt/ Satin on woodwork. The difference in sheen allows doors and skirting boards to catch the light while the colour remains consistent.

Our team can explain the options and recommend the right preparation and primer for each area.

Start Small or Go Bold

If you are unsure about drenching a living room or bedroom, why not try a small bathroom or utility room. These spaces are ideal for experimenting with a stronger shade. Alternatively, try tonal colour drenching, using closely related shades from the same colour family across the walls, woodwork and ceiling.

Whichever approach you choose, preparation remains essential. Clean surfaces thoroughly, fill and sand imperfections, and prime where required.

If choosing one colour for an entire room feels daunting, bring photographs and samples into your Pat McDonnell Paints store or book a consultation with one of our colour experts. Bring your ideas to us, and we'll help you choose the right colour and finishes to transform your room with confidence.

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Rathfarnham
Old Nutgrove Retail Park
D14 Y3Y8
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COFFEE WAS SIMPLE

There was a time in Ireland when coffee was simple.

You had tea. And if you didn't want tea, there was coffee. By coffee, I mean instant coffee. A spoonful from a jar, hot water, milk if you wanted it, and that was the end of the matter. Nobody asked where the beans came from. Nobody discussed roast profiles. Nobody mentioned acidity unless they had indigestion. Coffee was coffee.

In many Irish homes, it wasn't even the first choice. Tea ruled. Coffee was what you offered someone when you wanted to appear slightly sophisticated. "Would you like tea or coffee?" If they said coffee, you reached for the jar of Gold Blend kept specially for visitors. That was about as exotic as things got.

Then, somewhere along the line, coffee changed. It became a culture. Then an industry. Then almost a personality type.

Today, walk into a café around Kildare and ordering a coffee can feel like sitting an oral exam.

"What can I get you?"

"A coffee, please."

That is no longer an acceptable answer.

"What kind?"

And so it begins. Americano. Latte. Cappuccino. Flat white. Macchiato. Mocha. Espresso. Double espresso. Long black. Cortado. You begin to wonder whether the person behind you has memorised the menu and is judging you.

Then come the milk options.

"Regular milk?"

"Yes."

"Full-fat, low-fat, oat, almond, soy or coconut?"

At this point, I generally want to say, "Whatever came out of the cow." But even that may require clarification.

Then there is the size. Small, medium or large would be straightforward. Some coffee chains prefer more elaborate terminology. You find yourself pointing at a cup. "That one."

Then they ask if you want an extra shot. An extra shot of what? Coffee, apparently. It seems that the coffee you have already ordered may not contain enough coffee.

Once you get used to the vocabulary, another layer appears: the beans. Coffee now comes with biographies. You may be told that your drink contains single-origin beans from a small farm at high altitude, hand-picked at dawn and roasted locally in small batches. Years ago, the most we knew about our coffee was that it came in a jar and was on special offer in Tesco.

Coffee has also become expensive enough that you expect a little ceremony. A takeaway coffee can now cost roughly what an entire lunch used to cost. Add an alternative milk, an extra shot, and some flavoured syrup, and you start to wonder whether finance is available. Yet we keep buying it.

Cafés are busy everywhere. Kildare is no exception. Coffee has become less about caffeine and more about social life.

"We should meet for coffee."

This does not necessarily mean coffee. It means a chat. A catch-up. A gossip. Possibly a muffin. Two people can order one drink each and occupy a table for ninety minutes discussing children, work, neighbours, holidays, and the price of everything. The coffee is merely admission.

And to be fair, modern coffee is usually very good. Once you get used to freshly ground coffee, going back to instant can feel like drinking something from an office meeting in 1987.

I have also learned enough to have preferences. This worries me. I now know that I prefer certain types of coffee. I can even tell when one is too weak. It is a slippery slope. Next I'll be discussing tasting notes.

The coffee machine at home has become another modern household appliance. Once we had a kettle. Now kitchens contain machines with buttons, flashing lights, milk frothers, and removable components that require regular cleaning. Some cost more than the first television our family owned. And after buying one, you then discover you need the correct coffee pods.

There are hundreds. Some are intense. Some are smooth. Some are described as having notes of chocolate, nuts, berries or caramel. I have yet to drink one and say: "Ah yes, definitely hazelnut with a hint of blackberry." Mostly I think: "That's nice coffee."

Perhaps that is enough.

Coffee may have become complicated, but it has also become one of the small pleasures of modern life. A good café, a decent cup, and half an hour with someone you like is hard to beat.

Still, every now and then I miss the simplicity of the old days. Someone called to the house. The kettle went on. And the only question was: "Tea or coffee?" No follow-up questions. No choice of milk. No extra shots. And absolutely nobody asked where the beans were grown.

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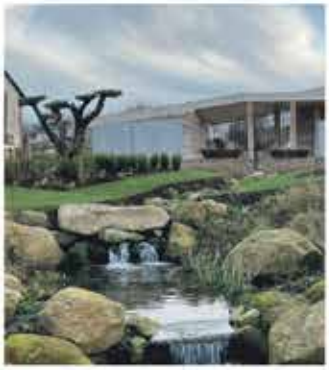

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Who Turned the Heating On?

Every Irish household has its own unofficial date for turning on the heating.

It is never written down. There is no family meeting. No calendar reminder. You just reach a point in October when someone says: “Is it cold in here?”

This is the opening shot. Someone else immediately replies: “It’s not that bad.”

It is always that person who delays the heating. Every house has one. They are usually wearing a jumper. Possibly two. Their argument is that once the heating goes on, that is it until spring – as though pressing the boiler button creates a legally binding six-month contract with Bord Gáis.

So the negotiations begin.
“Could you not put another layer on?”
“I have three layers on.”
“Maybe close the door.”
“The door is closed.”
“Have a cup of tea.”

At this point the cold person realises they are not going to win through logic. The tea is made. The argument continues.

October is awkward because we are not yet mentally ready for winter. September still feels vaguely summery. There may even have been a warm day last week. Turning on the heating feels like admitting defeat. The garden furniture may still be outside. There could be shorts hanging in the wardrobe. You are not prepared to accept that the boiler has returned to active duty.

So we improvise. Throws appear on sofas. Slippers return. Someone discovers a hot-water bottle at the back of a cupboard. A small fan heater is produced, supposedly “just for ten minutes,” and proceeds to consume enough electricity to power Lucan Centre.

Still, the central heating remains untouched. There is pride involved. If you can get to November without turning it on, you have achieved something. What exactly you have achieved is unclear, particularly if the family has spent October sitting under blankets.

The great turning-on moment is often secretive. Nobody announces it. Somebody simply disappears towards the boiler. A few minutes later there is a familiar click. Then the radiators begin making noises they have not made since March.

One gurgles. One stays stone cold. One becomes so hot you could fry an egg on it. Another has decided this is the year it will no longer participate.

This leads to the annual search for the radiator key. Every Irish house owns a radiator key. Nobody knows where it is.

You check the kitchen drawer. There are batteries, old keys, screws, several cables from obsolete phones, and an instruction manual for a kettle you threw out in 2019. No radiator key. Eventually someone finds it in the place where it was put “so we wouldn’t lose it.”

Then comes bleeding the radiators, which sounds far more dramatic than it is – although the person doing it generally adopts the expression of a qualified heating engineer. “Get me a cloth.” A few drops of black water appear and suddenly everyone is an expert.

Modern heating systems have made things both easier and more complicated. Once, you had a thermostat on the wall. You turned it up. The house got warmer. Now we have apps. Zones. Smart controls. Timers. Boost functions. You can turn the heating on from another country.

This is impressive. You can be sitting in Lanzarote and warm the kitchen in Leixlip. Why you would want to do this is another question.

The real danger of smart heating is that it provides data. You can now see exactly how much energy you are using. This means you can sit in a warm room feeling guilty. In the old days, ignorance was much more comfortable.

Energy prices have also turned heating into a financial decision. Years ago, if you were cold,

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you turned on the heating. Now you hesitate. You think about the bill. You wonder whether the price of gas has gone up. You lower the thermostat by one degree and feel financially responsible. Then somebody walks past and quietly turns it back up.

The thermostat itself can become the centre of domestic conflict. One person likes 19 degrees. Another wants 22. There can be only three degrees between these settings, yet emotionally it is the difference between the Arctic and a Turkish bath. The person paying the bill usually favours 19. The person sitting still watching television prefers 22. Children prefer something closer to tropical.

Teenagers can spend all day in a bedroom with the radiator fully on and the window open. This is enough to make a parent age visibly.

"Why is the window open?"
"It was too warm."
"Then turn the radiator down!"

Silence. Apparently that solution had never occurred to them.

Then there are older houses, newer houses, insulated houses, and houses that appear to lose heat through some portal to another dimension. You can heat some homes for half an hour and they stay comfortable. Others cool down the instant the boiler switches off. You sit there listening to the radiator ticking as it cools and realise the room temperature is dropping at roughly the same rate as your bank balance.

Despite all this, there is something comforting about the first proper heating evening of autumn. The curtains are closed. The lights are on. The house feels warm. Someone makes tea. You settle onto the sofa and, for the first time in months, accept that summer is over.

Across Kildare this October, the same small domestic drama will play out in thousands of homes. Someone will complain they are cold. Someone else will say it is far too early. Jumpers will be suggested. Blankets will appear. And eventually, somewhere in the house, there will be a quiet click.

Nobody will admit doing it. But everyone will move a little closer to the radiator.

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Budget Day

Every October we have the same national ritual.

The Minister for Finance stands up in the Dáil with a large folder and begins reading out numbers involving billions of euro. Economists appear on television. Accountants are wheeled into radio studios. Charts appear. And somewhere in Kildare, someone sitting at a kitchen table asks the only question that really matters: "Am I any better off?"

Budget 2027 will be announced on 6 October and, as usual, there will be plenty of impressive figures. Millions for this. Billions for that. Tax packages. Spending packages. Credits, allowances, thresholds, and reliefs.

By the end of the evening, most of us will have given up trying to understand the overall package and will be waiting for somebody to produce the useful bit: Single person on €45,000 — gains €8.73 a week. Ah. Now we understand.

Budget Day has always fascinated me because the Government deals in billions while the public deals in tens. The Minister announces €500 million for something and we nod thoughtfully. Then somebody says petrol has gone up by three cent a litre and we become furious.

That is because household economics is very different from government economics. Nobody in Kildare sits down at the end of the month and discusses fiscal headroom. They discuss why the electricity bill is so high. Or how a bag of groceries that once seemed fairly ordinary has somehow become €120. Or whether two takeaway pizzas should really require a small loan.

The Government has already indicated that income tax will be one of the big issues in this budget. That will be welcome news to anyone who has received a pay rise only to discover that Revenue was equally pleased about it. There is something particularly disappointing about being told you are getting an extra €50 a week and then finding considerably less than €50 arriving in your bank account. You feel briefly richer. Then taxation introduces itself.

Childcare is also expected to feature heavily. For younger families, childcare costs can resemble a second mortgage – except eventually you finish paying a mortgage. Parents can spend years handing over astonishing amounts of money simply for the privilege of going to work.

Then, once the children reach school age, you assume the financial pressure will ease. This is adorable optimism. There are uniforms. Books. School trips. Sports. Phones. Trainers. Birthday parties. And eventually a teenager who can stand in front of a fully stocked fridge and announce: "There's nothing to eat."

Pensioners will be watching too. Every budget seems to produce lengthy debate about increases to pensions and social welfare payments. An extra €10 a week sounds reasonable until you remember that the same pensioner is also buying food, heating the house, paying insurance, and wondering why a modest visit to the supermarket now requires considerable financial planning.

Energy will inevitably be part of the discussion as well. October is perfect timing for this, because it is around then that Irish households begin the annual Heating War. One person says: "It's freezing." Another says: "It's not cold enough for the heating yet." The first person puts on another jumper. Eventually someone turns the heating on secretly and nobody admits doing it.

Modern heating systems are now so sophisticated that you can control them from your phone. This allows you to sit in a cold room staring at an app showing you exactly how much money you are saving by remaining cold. Progress.

Then there is the weekly shop. Politicians can tell us that inflation is easing, but supermarket economics has its own rules. You enter for a few essentials and emerge with three bags costing enough to make you check the receipt. You always check the receipt. Not because the supermarket has necessarily made a mistake – you simply want to identify which completely ordinary object now costs €7. Coffee? Butter? Washing powder? There is always a culprit.

Housing, of course, remains the enormous issue hanging over everything. For younger people, the question is whether they can afford to buy at all. For renters, it is whether they can afford to remain where they are. For older homeowners, the mortgage may finally be gone, but property tax, insurance, maintenance, and energy bills have taken its place. A house never really stops costing money. The roof simply waits until you begin feeling financially comfortable. Then it develops a leak.

What makes Budget Day interesting is that almost everyone will find something to complain about. Give tax relief to workers and somebody will ask why pensioners got nothing. Increase welfare payments and somebody will ask why workers are paying for it. Help homeowners and renters complain. Help renters and homeowners complain. The Minister for Finance cannot win. Perhaps that is why the Budget speech takes so long – he is delaying reading the comments online.

Still, budgets matter. Small changes can add up over a year, particularly for households already watching every euro. A tax reduction, childcare support, or increase in a weekly payment may not transform anyone's life, but it can make things a little easier.

The difficulty comes when the Government announces that you are €600 a year better off, but your insurance has risen by €300, groceries by another few hundred, and the boiler has chosen December to die.

This is why the real Budget analysis does not happen in Leinster House. It happens around kitchen tables. After all the speeches, graphs, and expert commentary, families across D15 will eventually do the same calculation. Money coming in. Money going out. And the final verdict will be beautifully simple:

"Grand. But are we actually any better off?"

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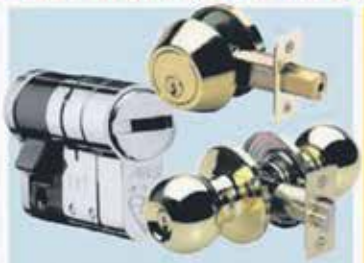

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Mystery Drawer

Every house has one.

A drawer that officially has a purpose but, over time, becomes home to things that no longer belong anywhere else.

In our house, it started as a kitchen drawer. Then came the batteries. Then old keys. Then instruction manuals. Then a takeaway menu from a Chinese restaurant that closed six years ago. Eventually, the drawer stopped being storage and became archaeology.

Open it today and you may find three AA batteries, none of which you trust, several loose screws, an Allen key from a piece of furniture long since gone, two elastic bands, a birthday candle, an old loyalty card, and a cable that fits absolutely nothing you currently own.

You cannot throw the cable away. That would be reckless. The moment you dump it, you will discover what it was for. So back into the drawer it goes.

Modern technology has made the mystery drawer even worse. Years ago, a cable was usually obvious – it went into the television, the radio, or the phone. Now we have charging leads accumulated from about twenty years of technological evolution: Mini USB, Micro USB, USB-C, Lightning cables, cables with strange round ends, and one that may have belonged to a Nokia phone in 2004.

We keep them all. There is always the possibility that civilisation may collapse and the only thing standing between us and disaster will be an obsolete charging lead for a digital camera.

Batteries are another problem. Nobody knows whether the batteries in the drawer are new or used. At some point, someone removed them from a device and thought: “I’ll keep those. They might still have a bit left.” This is how batteries enter permanent limbo. You can buy a battery tester, of course – but then you have to store the battery tester somewhere. Probably in the drawer.

Keys are even more mysterious. Every house contains keys that nobody is prepared to throw away because nobody knows what they open.

“This one might be for the shed.”

“No, the shed key is bigger.”

“Back door?”

“No.”

“Old suitcase?”

“Possibly.”

And so the key remains. There may be no lock anywhere in Ireland that matches it, but disposing of it feels dangerous. The minute it goes into the bin, someone will say: “Where’s the little silver key for the roof box?”

Then there are takeaway menus. This made sense years ago – you kept the menu because the next time you fancied a Chinese or Indian meal, you needed the phone number. Today, the entire menu is online. Yet some homes still have a folded leaflet from 2017 promising “free prawn crackers on orders over €25.”

There are also things we keep because we think they are important. Instruction manuals are a prime example. We buy a toaster and keep the manual for fifteen years. Not once in those fifteen years do we consult the section headed “Operating Your Toaster.” If the toaster stops working, we throw it out. The manual stays.

Receipts are another common resident. You find one for an electrical appliance bought four years ago. You no longer own the appliance. Still, throwing the receipt away feels like tempting fate.

Then there are the completely unexplained objects: a small plastic cap, a metal bracket, a rubber ring, a tiny spring. You pick it up. “What’s this off?” Nobody knows. But it looks important. Into the drawer.

There is usually a moment every few years when someone decides enough is enough. “We’re clearing this drawer out.” Everything is tipped onto the kitchen table. There are several minutes of ruthless decision-making. Old receipts: bin. Broken pencil: bin. Expired vouchers: bin.

Unknown cable... Pause. “Better keep that.”

Mystery key... “Keep.”

Bag of screws... “Might need those.”

Within twenty minutes, almost everything goes back into the drawer. We have achieved nothing.

The strange thing is that these drawers exist in neat houses too. You can visit a spotless home around D15, where every cushion is perfectly placed and the kitchen worktops are completely clear. But somewhere, hidden behind a beautifully fitted cabinet door, is a drawer containing two dead batteries, a radiator key, a loose button, and an instruction leaflet for a kettle nobody remembers owning.

Perhaps we need these drawers. They are little holding areas for things we are not yet emotionally ready to throw away – not valuable enough to store properly, not useless enough to dump. Just... potentially important.

And every so often, something wonderful happens. You need an unusual screw. You open the drawer. You rummage around. And there it is – the exact screw you need. At that moment, every useless object you have kept for twenty years is vindicated.

You close the drawer proudly. This is why we never clear it out. One day, we might need something.

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