

Man dies after 999 crew drive 80km to reach him

A CLARE man has died of a heart attack after paramedics travelled 80km to him as he fought to breathe.

Despite the desperate efforts of neighbours, first responders and the fire service, the man passed away after paramedics in a 'rapid response vehicle' took 36 minutes to reach the scene.

Another 999 team, just 2km away in Kilrush, had been dealing with another call in Kilmihil at the time.

National Ambulance Service controllers sent a lone paramedic in a rapid response vehicle from Limerick city while an advanced paramedic, specially trained in advanced

By **Pat Flynn**

life support skills, was also dispatched in another RRV.

However, these vehicles are not designed or equipped to carry patients.

Local councillor, RNLI lifeboat member and first responder Ian Lynch, who attended the call in Cappa, West Clare, on August 3, urged Health Minister Simon Harris to act.

'When the NAS control centre receives a call, they know very quickly whether they have an ambulance in the area to respond,' he said.

'If they don't, they need to send another service immediately, not five, ten or 20 minutes

later. The fire brigade in Clare is equipped and ready to respond and assist and so are other voluntary groups.

'With a cardiac arrest the chain of survival is so time-critical,' he said.

'The Minister for Health needs to address this issue immediately and explain immediate actions that are going to be taken to ensure more lives are not put at risk.'

The NAS said the situation was handled according to protocol and offered its sympathies to the deceased man's family.

In May, a man who suffered a cardiac arrest in Kilkee, Co. Clare, was left waiting for 90 minutes for an ambulance.

Dr Mark Dooley



MORAL MATTERS

Don't Pooh Pooh the bear. There's great wisdom in his simple words

THERE is one fictional character for whom the Dooleys have enduring affection, and that is Winnie the Pooh. From the very moment we welcomed our eldest into this world, that little bear has been with us in good times and bad. And, even now, whenever we hear his famous theme song, there isn't a dry eye in the house.

It isn't that our boys played with Winnie, but that they found in him a perpetual source of comfort and security.

The bear we possess is particularly soft and cuddly. Hence, it has accompanied our children to bed for as long as I can remember.

But Winnie comforts them in more ways than that. As I have previously written, he offers them a vision of life uncorrupted by the ills of this world. His gentleness and simplicity amid the rustic charms of the Hundred Acre Wood, reveal a way of life that is both touching and beautiful.

I have always believed that children can receive no finer moral education than by reading Winnie the Pooh. To journey with that little creature is to discover the homeland of the heart. It is to learn lessons in love that will last for life.

As it happens, our eldest has just rediscovered the deep bond he has with this lovely bear.

Our youngest goes to sleep each night whispering to Winnie, but his brother has been moved by the depths of Pooh's wisdom. It seems that even a teenage boy cannot withstand the power of this bear's poignant insights.

It all began when he went to see the new Disney movie Christopher Robin. The film features Ewan McGregor as an adult Christopher Robin, who has long since forgotten his childhood in the Hundred Acre Wood. Without giving anything away, I can say that it is a wonderful story of personal redemption and self-discovery.

Our son came home from the movie moved to his core.

'It is one of the most touching things I have ever seen', he said.

When, therefore, Mrs Dooley proposed that we all go to see it, we didn't require any persuasion.

Our eldest was correct: it is a

movie that perfectly captures the pure light of love that radiates from the heart of Winnie the Pooh. It is funny, moving and characteristically charming. We left the cinema eager to be a little more loving, friendly and caring.

For that is what Pooh bear does for both adults and children alike: he shows you how to live life at its best - how to live so that you never sink beneath your burdens.

'People say nothing is impossible, but I do nothing every day,' he remarks. In that simple aphorism is contained all that you need to live in poise and peace.

The world is obsessed with doing. Every minute of every day must be filled with something. But the secret of a truly happy life is to learn how, in the midst of all this activity, to do nothing.

Of course, doing nothing does not mean indolence or laziness.

It is learning how to stop so as to appreciate what you have.

It is learning how to sit and simply be. And when you learn how to do nothing like that, you begin to see why life is a thing of such beauty.

Indeed, you begin to realise that most things can wait until tomorrow. 'Rivers know this', counsels Winnie. They know that 'there is no hurry. We shall get there some day'.

We slow down, we take stock and we begin to see as if for the first time. We see the world in all its majesty, the sky in all its splendour, the heavens in all their wonder.

We see those who make us feel fulfilled, who make us want to be better people.

LIVING like this, you start to see what is really important in your life, what makes it all worthwhile. Pooh gazes at his friends, at Christopher Robin, and tenderly says: 'How lucky I am to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard.'

Doing nothing teaches us just how lucky we all are.

We rush here and there only to find that we are missing those things which matter most.

It was Pooh bear who taught me this. And if my boys know what it means to love, laugh and sing to the stars, it is because they, too, learned to wander in the Hundred Acre Wood.

The door is always open, provided you do nothing.

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