The Pilates we practice today to some extent originates from the works of Joseph Pilates. He was born in Germany in 1880 and it was believed that as a young child he suffered from asthma, rickets and rheumatic fever. In view of all of these he worked with his body to overcome these ailments and became a gymnast, skier and diver.

Before the outbreak of the First World War Joseph was living in England working as a circus performer and boxer. Due to his nationality he was interned with other German nationals and hence this gave rise to his development of exercises in confined spaces. It was in the latter part of the war when he served as an orderly in a hospital on the Isle of Man where is passion really came to light helping rehabilitate injured patients. He adapted hospital beds and springs in order to help support patients limbs whilst working with them. Equipment used to this day derives its origins from that source (however it is Pilate’s principles that is used in our mat exercises).

After the war he returned to Germany and then with his wife he emigrated to the USA and opened a fitness studio in the 1920s. The studio was furnished with equipment designed to aid his rehabilitation work and his works became much loved by dancers and athletes alike who found his techniques aided their performance and recovery from injuries.

A series of movements which are hopefully flowing and continuous with as much grace as we can muster. The aim of Pilates is to improve posture, strengthen our core (trunk area also referred to as our power house) and carried out correctly and over time can produce long lean muscles and a much improved physique.

PRINCIPLES OF PILATES – Don’t worry I shall remind you!

BREATHING – Wide and full into the ribcage (lateral thoracic breathing) Practice makes perfect.

CONCENTRATION – Concentration is required to find the correct posture, movements and breathing technique.

CONTROL – Pilates is performed slowly and gracefully and with time can be a very flowing form of exercise. Over time, performed correctly, it can iron little niggles and postural inbalances.

FLOWING MOVEMENT – Once perfected the art of Pilates is graceful with flow of breath – nothing jerky nor forced.

RELAXATION – Pilates is a gradual re-education of the body and it is necessary to try and to create unnecessary tension when carrying out the moves i.e. tension in jaw, feet. If you struggle with a move don’t worry they can be adapted to suit the individual’s needs.

ROUTINE – Once all the above is put into practice over time the movement will become familiar and everything with flow with the desired grace and precision.

**Wear comfortable clothing to a class –not too baggy and not too tight!! – no shoes please.**

**If possible (and it is more hygienic) please bring your own non slip yoga mats – and a water/or your choice of refreshment.**