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AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN Vol. 3 Issue 5: Dec '13-Jan '14



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"Change is the flow of life, and those who look only to the past and present are certain to miss the future" - J.F.K. Christmas time always brings it home when we see the faces of the returnees in the pews and pubs and wonder what the locale would be like, if we even had a third of them back to help foster

The air of local despondency is palpable but as we face the sixth austerity soaked Christmas, the

impending changes have to bring tidings of some good cheer. In 12 months time we will no longer have our own Town Council beholden to Galway County Council, nor a Mayor, or indeed have political family dynasties hoovering up votes from Galway East, we will be fully Balkanised as a new Constituency. Many worry what will become of us.

Reflecting on the past 25 years of "progress" under the previous infrastructure of supplication, the fruits of its uneven labours can be seen. In short we as a community, were perfectly tooled for the results we have achieved. Soon we will no longer have the bogeymen of TDs or a local Council to play the blame game. We can either shoulder the responsibility of working better and smarter to build a more sustainable community or continue to live in the faded glory days.

In this edition are some seeds of hope, we are a desirable location to live and raise a family in. Current firms are re-investing, new start-ups are advancing. Hard to believe that we have in our community €66million in savings deposited in our Credit Union (probably more in the pillar banks) getting less than 1% interest and apparently no local investment projects that we could get a return with European, Municipal or State engagement?

Would this happen in modern developed countries where so many of our brightest and best are now? No, the Civic, Commercial and Community leadership would have rallied with ideas, creativity, resources and energy. We are not yet in Ground Zero like many less fortunate in the Phillipines. We need to hear less of "this town is gone" and more of "Is Feidir Linn".

Colm Croffy, Ballinasloe Life Editor



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all our readers. It is an ill wind that does not favour someone and with the wind down of the Urban District Council many organisations will have received good news in the past few days of funding to upgrade their facilities with grants from the local Town Council. Local retailers are looking forward to the next

few weeks in anticipation of your support for our Think Local, Shop Local campaign as you spend your hard earned money in the run in to Christmas.

I speak with many people who read Ballinasloe Life cover to cover and was pleasantly surprised by the number who read the adverts from our subscribers. This is very encouraging as these contain key information about what is available to meet your needs in the catchment area and you are supporting key contributors to the success of this publication.

The community that is self sufficient is the community that will come out in the best health after this recession is over therefore I ask you to continue to support local business and enterprise. Wishing you and your families health and happiness though the forthcoming festive season.

Seamus Duffy, Chairman, **Ballinasloe Area Community Development**

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Editor: Colm Croffy Reporters: Pamela Ryan, Ken Kelly, Pat Johnston, Valeria Bonazzi, Vanessa Clements and various other contributors.

Graphic Design: David Cunniffe (KPW Print).

Print: KPW Print, Ballinasloe. Photos: Robert Riddell - robertriddell.com, J&S Photos - jsphotos.ie, Jordans - liamjordanphoto.com, Stronges - stronges.ie, Alex Zardov - www.alexzardov.com, Mike Riddell and Evelyn Donnellan.



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Christmas Greetings











MAYOR MICHAEL KELLY

As Mayor of Ballinasloe, I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a peaceful and joyous Christmas. Christmas is a time for family, friends and community; a time to enjoy the simple things in life. I would like to give a very special Christmas greeting and warm welcome in this year of The Gathering, to all who visit Ballinasloe over the festive season to spend time with family and their loved ones. Christmas is also a time of goodwill and I would like to encourage people to give of their time to visit the elderly and those who live alone and be a considerate friend to those less fortunate than ourselves.

In the hectic weeks in the run up to Christmas I would like to encourage people to support local businesses in the Think Local, Shop Local campaign by shopping locally.

Ballinasloe, like all towns, is going through challenging times and it is vital that we support one another. As we look to 2014 I would encourage the community to have a positive and optimistic outlook, we all have a part to play in promoting our town in a positive way as we face the challenges ahead. It is also important that we support our local clubs, groups and organisations. With this in mind can I take this opportunity to ask people to give their support to Ballinasloe Panto in their Christmas production of Snow White & the Vertically Challenged Excavators and also Ballinasloe Musical Society in their production of Me & My

Girl both taking place in the Town Hall Theatre and also to support the many groups, organisations and clubs in their endeavours, as they play such a vital role in our town and community.

With the impending abolishment of Town Councils in 2014 I will possibly be the last Mayor of Ballinasloe to extend Christmas greetings to the people of our town and its hinterland. As Mayor, and on behalf of my fellow Ballinasloe Town Council members, I wish you and your families a peaceful and joyous Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

CAITRIONA MORGAN Town Clerk

As we approach Christmas I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on what has been another busy year in what is still a difficult economic situation. While available resources are once again much less than in recent years a lot was still achieved. I would like to acknowledge the staff of the Town Council who have responded positively to the challenge of scarce resources and have displayed flexibility in the continued delivery of services to the town and surrounding area. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the elected members for their work and assistance in 2013 and I look forward to working with the members, the staff and the wider community to achieve the best for Ballinasloe in 2014. On behalf of the Town Manager, Mr Kevin Kelly, myself and all the staff, may I wish you and your families a Happy and Peaceful Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

REV GEORGE FLYNN

Christmas greetings from the Church of Ireland extended parishes that encompass churches of Aughrim Union: the four churches of Holy Trinity Aughrim, St Matthew's Clontuskert, Woodlawn and Ardrahan, and Creagh Union of two churches St John's Ballinasloe, and St Catherine's Ahascragh. Our website is aughrim.clonfert@anglican.org and can be viewed each month to see the schedule of services at which all visitors are welcome to attend.

Let us at this festive time remember those among us, our family or neighbourhood, who have had bereavements this past year. May their loved ones rest in peace.

I take this opportunity to thank the community for all their support this past year and wish all readers a very happy and peaceful Christmas and best wishes, health and happiness for the coming vear. God Bless!

FR JOHN GARVEY

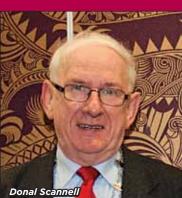
As we approach Christmas 2013 the images from the Philippines of people seeking to rebuild their homes and their lives after the super Typhoon are still vivid. Of course there are other people in our world for whom similar suffering and poverty are the permanent experience.

In the western world loneliness, despair and lack of meaning can be the challenges to overcome. Christmas, which we celebrate in the midst of Winter, reminds us that whatever the









cave, or stable, or cattle shed looked like from the outside, inside was to be found the most wonderful sight; the baby Jesus born into the love of Mary and Joseph.

Indeed our world faces its struggles but the understanding, the determination and the strength to respond in an appropriate way is found within, in the deep recesses of the heart. If we do not discover God within, we may not discover God anywhere. Even though the darkness may appear overwhelming, may Christmas remind us that Christ is our light, seeking to shine through us. Happy Christmas.

BRIAN DERRANE President Lions Club, Ballinasloe

On behalf of the Lions Club I extend seasonal greetings to the people of Ballinasloe and its hinterland and wish them a happy and holy Christmas. I would also like to sincerely thank the local community for its continued generosity in these recessionary times and urge their continued support into the future.

CLLR CARMEL GREALY Chairperson Tidy Towns

Season's greetings to you and yours. May you have a peaceful, happy and holy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

MARGARET MILLANE Ballinasloe & District Soroptomists

On behalf of Ballinasloe and District Soroptimist's Club I would like to wish all readers, a very happy Christmas and prosperous New Year. The club has had a busy year. In May we were involved with the Ada English Summer School and were delighted to welcome Ada's relatives to the town. One of the highlights of the year was our trip to a garden party at Áras an Úachtaráin where we were warmly welcomed by President Michael D. Higgins and his wife Sabina. Recently we held our public speaking competition and it was a great success with two girls going forward to the regional finals in Ennis in February. We look forward to next year supporting many projects at local, national and international level.

DONAL SCANNELL President Chamber of Commerce

On behalf of the Ballinasloe Chamber of Commerce and its members, I would like to wish all citizens of Ballinasloe and the surrounding area a very Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

When shopping this Christmas I would urge you to think how you can help your community and your country. Spend your money in Ballinasloe when possible and buy Irish when you can. Many businesses need your support to stay open and if smaller shops close, they will not easily be replaced. There's great value to be had in Ballinasloe and I would ask you to come into town, have a look and help to keep our shops and jobs local. Keep your business in your community and your community in business.

With the town enhancement plan starting in 2014 retailers will need your support more than ever. The council contractors will be trying to keep the disruption to a minimum but we will all need patience.

Nollaig na mBan Back a for Second Year

The second annual Nollaig na mBan will take place this year on Sunday, January 5th. Following last year's enjoyable affair they are planning even more entertainment for all. Once again all funds will go to education of girls in Dar es Salaam. Patrons are advised to hold onto the date and venue and times will be revealed closer to the time. January 6th is the feast of the Epihany when The Three Wise Kings visited the Christ Child in the Crib. Remarkably, Ireland is

the only country where January 6th is also celebrated as Women's Little Christmas. It was the day on which women – supposedly worn out by doing the Christmas cooking – were allowed to take a break and let the men do the housework. In his book The Year in Ireland: A Calendar, Kevin Danaher wrote that while Christmas Day "was marked by beef and whiskey, men's fare", on Women's Christmas "the dainties preferred by women: cake, tea, wine were more in evidence".



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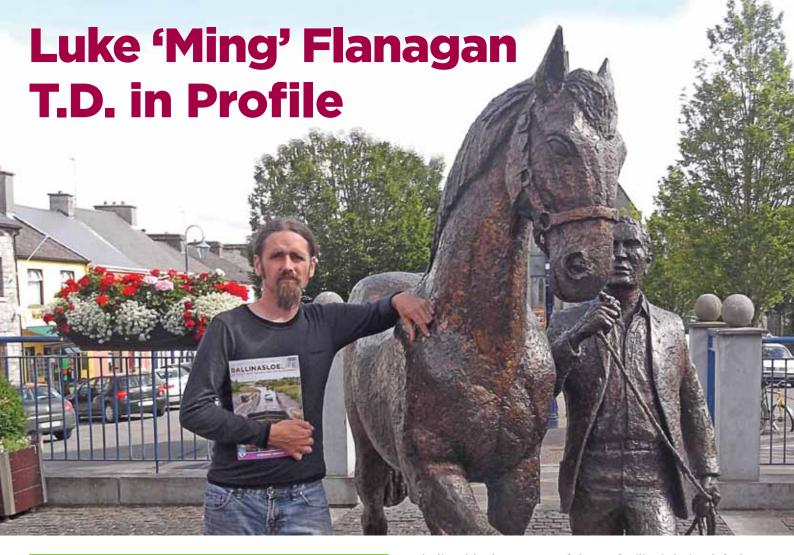
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NEW TYRES FROM €35





By Owen Dunne

Widely known political figure, Luke 'Ming' Flanagan has had many ties with the town down through the years. Only a stone's throw away in Castlerea, the Roscommon man is very eager to help the area when it becomes part of his own new Roscommon-Galway constituency in 2014 and for future years, he hopes.

When he is not debating on the more controversial topics in the Dáil or making the headlines with his unique views and style, he can be found in his hometown alongside his wife Judith (nee Kelly) who is a social care worker and their two daughters Isabelle (10) and Kate (8).

First elected to the council in 2004 and subsequently to the Dáil in 2011, his political career started when he first went to vote as he recalls. "My political career began when I went out to vote in the 1991 local elections. I looked at the ballot paper and thought to myself: 'You know what, I don't have anyone to vote for here.' So it left me with two choices: I either complain about those on the ballot paper or I get off me arse and I go and run for election myself. The first time I got the opportunity to run came about in the 1997 General Election, but I was active before that in Galway City putting up posters etc."

The Castlerea man has had many reasons to call into the town down through the years, whether it was a visit to Portiuncula or to Duggan Park. "I suppose my earliest memories of Ballinasloe would be my father bringing me to see matches there and the odd time we would've been in Portiuncula visiting new born babies."

There are many issues that Mr. Flanagan feels strongly about and many that involve this town, one of course being the closure of St Brigid's. He has for a long time been in favour of keeping the doors of the local unit open and finds it unbelievable that a state of the art facility is being left there to rot. This closure he feels is having an add-on affect on the Roscommon Mental Hospital. "I think it's just ridiculous [closure of St Brigid's]. It would be one thing if they found something to replace it but they haven't and as a result you have a situation in Roscommon Mental Hospital whereby unsuitable patients are unfortunately brought there. There are talks of a new secure unit for the region but I can't see why that building is being left there. It's a fantastic building and if nothing from the state goes in there you would have to fear that over time it will just fall down in front of people's eyes," said Mr. Flanagan.

With St. Brigid's already facing total extinction, Mr. Flanagan is dumbfounded as to why the town's other great asset, Portiuncula, is being cut short of services. "With the shrinking of services and the retreat into large urban areas one would have to be worried about its future. Why didn't they close Galway A&E? For the people who live seven or eight miles outside Galway it's actually easier to get to this town than to Galway City Centre. They should be looking at developing Portiuncula further. Take people from the traffic hell that is Galway City and if they are sick they can get to a hospital on time in Ballinasloe. It doesn't make sense," exclaimed the TD.

Mr. Flanagan really fears the worst for the area in a state where many of the smaller towns are being forgotten about. He sees serious issues in many aspects of the local society. "Businesses here are really struggling. One of the things that are hindering local businesses is the unnecessarily high rates. One of the reasons we have such high rates is because councils do not get good value for money. If we had a proper democracy we would have lower rates. Businesses would find it a lot easier to survive, money would stay in town as businesses could buy local products whereas at the moment businesses get one or maybe two goes at that Euro and then it leaves the area," he said. "Even if we just increased to 50%

local produce, business in town would thrive; they might even be able to charge the premium the local producer charges as there would be more money in the area. At the moment though 95% of what you get in the local shops is not produced here. This really needs to change."

One other issue that Mr. Flanagan has been heavily involved in and that certainly affects the hinterland, is the ongoing termination of turf cutting. "It simply doesn't make sense to reduce the amount of turf cutters. If one turf-cutter gets €2,000 for his work, that's €2,000 that isn't going abroad and isn't leaving the locality. On the other hand if we go and buy coal, that money is going abroad! I think it's vital that we keep fighting on this issue, if we don't win this battle every single bog in Ireland is under threat from a ban on turf cutting," he pointed out. "This town needs a local economy, proper tourism development and a real local democracy. Unfortunately the government are going in the opposite direction and are now centralising and when you centralise power you miss the point because you're too far away to see what the point is! This system is benefitting the bigger towns and cities in Ireland and places like here are being left behind," noted the TD.

Putting all of the problems aside however, the Independent TD does see areas of opportunity for the Suck Side town. "Where I see development possibilities for this town is in the area of tourism. Galway City might thrive on tourism but unfortunately I believe that's way too localised. I think people need to get together and develop tourism from the point of view of using up the massive amount of local waterways or country walks." This in his opinion however, will be much more difficult to achieve now that the local council will soon cease to exist. "Your local Town Council - far from being abolished - should be developed and done in such a way that you have a similar system as to what you have all over Europe and in particular in places like Switzerland where the people that you elect actually have real power to spend money and that they're not just 'lackies' of the executive and afraid to say anything about wasting money for fear that they won't get a few crumbs from the top table. If you had a system like that, you would have a Town Council that worked well and you would see the area develop rapidly."

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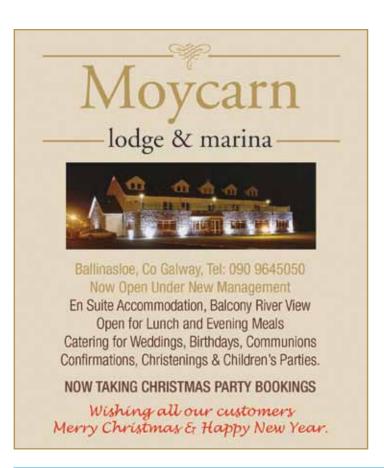


With so many issues regarding the safe future of this town it is difficult to see where improvements can come from. Mr. Flanagan however, noted that if adjustments are made in the right areas the locality will have plenty to offer especially in the area of tourism: "I will be developing a project on tourism which really suits this town that will include the whole Suck Valley region. Over the next twelve months we're hoping to develop a co-operative system to make that happen. The basic idea behind it is that we recognise that this area has the ingredients to thrive. It's a beautiful area and there are many things for people to do from a leisure point of view, especially when it comes to water based leisure." And although the rivers have been a source of much hardship for local folks, Flanagan believes that we must start viewing our waterways as a gateway to survival. "The floods were indeed a bad thing but we must start looking at our rivers as positives. We need to use these assets to develop tourism. Unfortunately foreign investment is focused on larger areas so rather than waiting for help we must help ourselves. If the region got one third of the tourists that Galway does we would create thousands of jobs."

"My plan is simply to take every call that I get from people in this area and to include them in my strategy to create a situation where new jobs can come into the area. It does make sense for East Galway to trade under the one umbrella. I'm excited about this new boundary and look forward to working with the local people because I believe I have an awful lot in common with them," he concluded.

Although Mr. Flanagan is not officially a T.D. for the area yet, he is more than happy to take calls from locals. He can be contacted in his Constituency Office in Castlerea on Mobile: 086 368 5680. You can also follow him on Facebook at: facebook.com/lukemingflanagan.









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Town Flood Alleviation Project

Efforts are currently being made to realise the proposed flood relief project for Station Road in Ballinasloe to proceed. Progress is slow but it is hoped there will be major developments in the near future. The benefits of the project will be a reduction of flood risk to residences along Station Road and prevention of flooding to the main access road to Derrymullen and the Trunk Sewer passing through Cleaghmore. This Summer, maintenance works were carried out by the River Suck Drainage Board; trees have been removed and the river has been cleaned. Meetings are being held on an ongoing basis in order to proceed with the flood relief works, which were identified in the study carried out by Hydro Environment Ltd in Conjunction with Bronra Surveyors Ltd and the Department of Engineering and Hydrology of NUIG.









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SuperValu's Super New Revamp



By Pamela Ryan

A Local SuperValu store in Brackernagh, owned by Dunnes, has under gone a complete revamp inside the premises in the past few months, giving shoppers a different experience.

Fergal and Bridget (BiBi) Dunne have been in business in town for eight years now. Fergal drops his own piece of wisdom into the retail world by stating that a business should refresh itself every five to seven years in order to sustain itself, so in light of that "I felt the business needed makeover," he said.

The Brackernagh store has under gone a complete make-over and reconstruction. The size of the store itself has grown and expanded, even to include a brand new bakery. "The idea of the revamp was to focus on fresh areas," said Fergal who expanded to say the store now focuses very much on fresh produce and the areas they are held in, in the store such

as fruit and vegetables, fresh meat and baked goods. "We've also expanded into hot dinners," he said about the deli counter located towards the back of the store.

The reconstruction may have cost a substantial amount but owner Fergal said it is necessary when investing in the security and future of a business. "No matter what new business comes into town you're going to take a hit so it's necessary to refresh the business." Thankfully retail outlets and businesses continue to pop up in Ballinasloe to keep each other on their feet.

The store's make-over has received a "hugely positive reaction" from all our customers since its completion. "We've given them an element of space and there is now much more natural light," Fergal said, about one of the town's main supermarkets, which the store didn't have to offer customers before.

Fergal and his wife are now the third owners of the store, and also the longest serving workers there right now. Dunnes' SuperValu currently employees 33 people from the area and "I'd say we're among the highest employment rate, in retail, in town."

Fergal is originally from Rhode, Co Offaly and has previously worked for many years with the Buckley group of SuperValu there. The couple then purchased the Ballinasloe store from Buckley's sister in 2007 and have been in business here ever since.

This Christmas, Dunnes' SuperValu will be running their half price turkey special offer for the Christmas season. The offer has been so popular in the past it is now back for its sixth year in a row. Christmas opening hours will be 8am until 10pm every day except St. Stephen's Day which will open 10am to 6pm and the store will be closed on Christmas Day.



Tough Coming Year for Savers!

By Mark Scannell, Scannell Financial Services

DIRT Tax = Deposit Interest Retention Tax; a tax on a money made, or interest, from deposit and savings accounts. From January 1, 2014, DIRT Tax will be increased from 33% to 41%. You may also be liable for 4% PRSI on any profit from deposit accounts. This would mean that 45% of your interest would go to the Government. Only people over 65 earning less that €18,000 or €36,000 for a couple will be exempt. With interest rates so low, the money you would get back would barely be keeping ahead of inflation. The best current deposit rate for less than two years available would net you less than 1.25% per annum.

What to do before the end of 2013?

- 1 Open up an Interest First Account with the likes of Permanent TSB where they pay the interest upfront at the start of the term instead of the end. This would mean that you would be paying 33% instead of 41%, or maybe even 45%. These accounts are generally for 12 or 24 months.
- 2 If you have a savings plan or investment policy with a bank or life assurance company and it has made some profit for you,

then I would suggest that you cash it in immediately. Again you would only be paying 33% exit tax on this, potentially saving you 8% tax on your profit. You can re-invest the money the same day you get it back into the same funds or indeed shop around for other alternatives.

What can you do after January 1, 2014? To get a decent return on your money you really need to take some level of risk;

- 1 Life assurance companies offer a vast number of funds to chose from, some with guarantees, some without. However, if you are willing to tie your money up for four years plus, then you should explore this option. You should comfortably make better returns than deposit accounts.
- 2 Exchange Traded Funds are for the more experienced investor, but again the returns are better than deposits and whilst not guaranteed, they would be considered fairly safe. Returns from these have a very attractive tax-free threshold of €1,270 and profits are only liable to CGT 33% tax after that. As always I would obviously recommend that you talk to a financial adviser. They can offer a broad range of options. The first meeting is usually free and without commitment and if you do not like their advice you can simply walk away.

Carlton Shearwater Hotel News



By Michelle Ryan

2013 has been a year for promoting the town as a destination venue for conferences. We have been delighted over the last month to have welcomed and hosted the events for Trinity College Dublin Class Rep Training, the History Teachers Association of Ireland, along with the Irish Midwives Organisation and the return of the Association of Irish Festival Events Conference. With the positivity of the surroundings - the offering of the hotel and town - we will endeavour to attract much more for the coming year 2014.

We are delighted to announce that we have re-launched and re-named our Marengo's restaurant to the Village Kitchen with an ethos 'Farm to Fork'. We pride ourselves in using locally sourced produce and suppliers and continue to support Irish. Come along and enjoy lunch and check out the local suppliers' produce on sale.

Our newly launched wedding experiences feature American-inspired additions for 2014, enhanced and created by Rita Talty, former Rose of Tralee and wife of Dáithí O'Shea. A touch of elegance, class and luxury, a new wedding dessert buffet, candy cart and extra special touches to make your day magical.

Last, but by no means least, we are delighted to be welcoming back a former manager of the Carlton Shearwater Hotel who had taken up a role at the Carlton Atlantic Coast Hotel in Westport for the past four and a half years as General Manager. He is returning to his home county and we are delighted to welcome Mr Garrett McGuinness back to the town of Ballinasloe and the role as General Manager of the Carlton Shearwater Hotel.

"I worked with Garrett in the Carlton Atlantic Coast for a year and a half before I commenced my post here at the Shearwater and truly look forward to working with Garrett again and driving this very successful hotel forward for many years to come," said Michelle Ryan, Sales and Marketing Manager.

Shearwater to Host Christmas Craft Fair

The Carlton Shearwater Hotel is once again hosting their much anticipated Christmas Craft Fair this season! The popularity of the craft fair has grown over the past few years and this time around 68 different stands will be held by businesses and crafters alike, who will be showcasing to their wares and talents to the community. Products available will range from a selection of homemade and artisan foods, pottery, jewellery, textiles, wood crafts,

knitted and crocheted items, pictures and photography prints, cards, fairies, personalised items while you wait and so much more. Santa will also be paying a visit for all the children who wish to tell him what they want this Christmas! As it is his busiest time of year he will only be around for a few hours, but everyone is sure to catch him between 2pm and 4.30pm. Santa Visits are €5 with a Gift for Children. Come Early to avoid disappointment!

Carlton Appoints New Manager

By Pamela Ryan

Popular one time Deputy Manager to the hotel under Dermot Birchill, Garrett McGuinness, is making a return from a stint in Mayo to take the General Managership of the four star Hotel and Business Convention Centre in town.

Garrett McGuinness may have been born in Dublin and raised in Cork but he could certainly be considered a Ballinasloe man. "I have been in the West of Ireland for the last 16 years. There is no doubt though that the West of Ireland has always been in my blood, with one of my grandmothers from the Ballinasloe area," said Garrett. His other grandmother hailed from nearby in Ballaghadereen, Co. Roscommon and he now lives in Moylough with his wife Edel, who is also a Galwegian.

Hotel management has always been an interest of Garrett's due to the "variety of challenges and activities on a day-



to-day basis making each working day a unique one." The first hotel Garrett worked at was the Carlton Shearwater Hotel and he was part of the opening team back in 2007. Garrett worked at the Shearwater for two and a half years before being offered the Manager's position at the Carlton Atlantic Coast Hotel in Westport, Co. Mayo.

Garrett has now returned to the Shearwater. "Having worked in the Carlton Shearwater Hotel for two and a half years undoubtedly left a lasting affinity with both the hotel and the Ballinasloe community," he said, adding that he is "Delighted to be back."

Garrett's plans as the General Manager of the Shearwater will be to "Provide the community of Ballinasloe and the wider Galway area with a premier hotel experience, driven by the personality and professionalism of the team and the hotel's unique offerings."

10 Business

Ballinasloe's New Year Big Dig

By Pamela Ryan

January of 2014 will gladly bring about the start of a total reconstruction of the town's water services.

The programme €2.5 million plus project will involve the main drainage system, water main rehabilitation and street enhancement works. The process will take place under two contracts; the first will cover the main drainage and water main rehabilitation works outside of Main Street, Society Street and Dunlo Street while the second will also include the same with the street enhancement of the three streets and smaller elements outside the town centre.

Contract one has advanced beyond the detailed design and tendering, according to Town Clerk, Caitriona Morgan. This project is expected to begin this coming January and will involve the upgrading of sewers, the separation of surface water from the sewer network and the treatment of the existing water mains. The works will mostly take place in the areas of Garbally to the Tesco roundabout, Jubilee Street, St. Michael's Square and St. Joseph's Place. The construction period is estimated at just eight months and initially works will begin closest to the town centre and proceed outwards from there.

The second contract is envisaged to begin in February of 2014 and will involve the upgrading of the existing drainage systems, the improvement of existing water main service connections, the undergrounding of existing surface services, future utility provisions and requirements and the enhancement of Dunlo, Main and Society Streets and St Michael's Square streetscaping. There will also be additional works involving road and footway developments along Bridge Street. Dublin Road, Sarsfield Road, St Michael's Place and Hymany will also be serviced for some improvements.

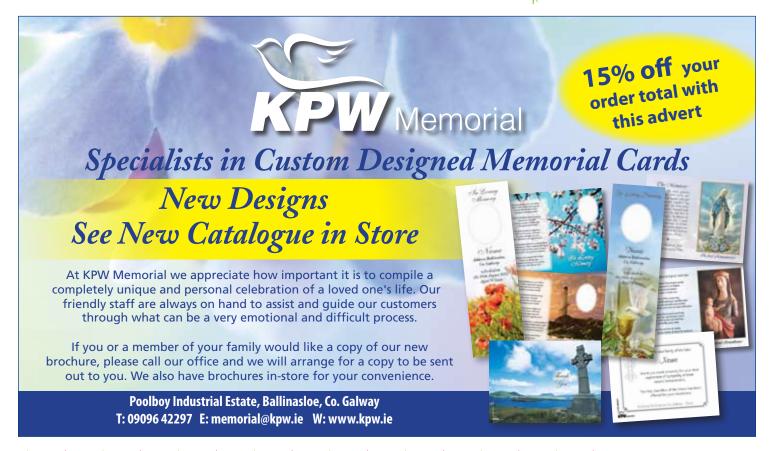
This construction programme will take place in phases across each street commencing in St. Michael's Square and Dunlo Street. "Sections of each street will be closed off to vehicular traffic while the works are in progress. Access for cars and



light vehicles will be maintained as much as possible using the existing side lanes and detour routes," said Caitriona.

Pedestrian access will continue at all times with no impediments and particular consideration will be given to deliveries being made to businesses in areas where works will be carried out. Working times and days are being considered also and it has been confirmed that no works will take place in the run up to or during the Christmas period, to facilitate shoppers and shop owner alike. The same considerations will be given to St. Patrick's Day 2014 and next year's October Horse Fair.

Having consulted with a number of representatives of each of the three streets, updates will be provided throughout the operation on the works, timeframe and phasing proposed. A specialist liaison engineer is being contracted as a Project Manager to the Big Dig and will be announced in the new year. The overall construction of both contracts is estimated to take 18 months and all further up to the minute details regarding the project and its temporary impacts can be found at www.ballinasloe.ie



Oil Distribution Start-up Firm

Bv Pamela Rvan

A brand new oil distribution firm has been started in the area. This new business start up is due to George Newton's investment in his own career and endeavour to start his own business. Before now the oil distributor had worked for a national distributor, Texoil, for 12 years, providing him with a wealth of experience for his new role as business owner.

George originates from Aughrim and chose Ballinasloe to begin this new chapter in his life because "it's where I started and it's where I've been all my life," he said. George has 22 years of experience in the oil distribution industry, almost forgetting what brought him to it in the first place and while having gained much of it working for national companies, he is now putting his skills to good use for the people of Ballinasloe and surrounding areas. "I have a good customer base here in Ballinasloe," he stated while adding that he wants to build on that.

Job creation is a term all love to hear and right now George's new company employs one part-time worker "but in the future I hope to be the position to employ more staff," he said.

It was back in May that George decided to begin his own business venture under the company logo, Newton Energy. This company now trades under the name Newton Fuel Oil. George is well known in town and the surrounding areas and takes immense pride in his work here. He endeavours to provide an efficient service to his many loyal customers and any and all potential future customers this coming winter season. Newton Fuel Oil supplies everything from kerosene and home heating oil to auto and agricultural diesel and is sure to make a splash on the Ballinasloe business scene.





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Diamonds Found in Ballinasloe

By Maureen Cahalan

The winds of change are very evident in Ballinasloe, especially since the introduction of the M6 motorway and the most challenging economic recession in the history of the state. The focus now is to harness the spirit of the town and protect local jobs, thus rebuilding the town to its potential.

One lady who has weathered many storms in her 40 year history is at the heart of one of Ballinasloe's premier businesses, Cahalan Jeweller's Maureen Cahalan. Her approach is very much community-based, which has inspired her to thrive in business. She has partnered with the world's diamond centre establishing 'Ballinasloe's Antwerp Diamonds'. Maureen is a unique business woman in that she encourages couples and bargain hunters to shop around for their chosen diamond ring. They ultimately find their way back from their shopping experience to purchase from Maureen

with confidence. Explaining that her customers want quality diamonds at a fair market price drove Maureen to Antwerp sourcing diamonds for her customers. Maureen is keen to emphasise that by listening to her customers came the inspiration she needed to become the most cost-effective diamond supplier on the island of Ireland. It's all about the quality and customer experience resulting in huge savings for couples and individuals, commented Maureen.

Maureen is regarded by many, as Ireland's retail bellwether entrepreneur. She has strength and confidence which has seen her thrive in the challenging 1980's right up to the present day. Appointed as first-ever lady president for the RJI in 1985, Maureen has successfully demonstrated that change is easy through endurance, focus and inspiration. Her best advice to people is "take the time to enhance somebody's life and you will be rewarded all the days of your own life; happiness comes from doing and giving."





Local Government Awards

Left: Pictured at the Local Government awards in the Burlington Hotel, Dublin, where the International Hurling Festival was honoured, were Seamus Duffy, Manager, AIB Ballinasloe; Minister Phil Hogan T.D., Christy Brown, International Hurling Festival Co. Committee; John Irwin, Head of Strategy and Propositions, AIB Bank and Willie Ward, Hurling Festival Host Town Co-Ordinator.

Right: Seamus Duffy, AIB Ballinasloe; Willie Ward, Ballinasloe Host Town Co-Ordinator; Mary Kennedy RTÉ and Compere for the night and Christy Brown Hurling Festival Co. Committee.





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Irish Language Short-Story Competition

Conradh na Gaeilge (Ballinasloe) is organising a shortstory competition for writers and potential writers in the Irish language, over 18 years of age. The subject matter is the writers' choice but stories should not be more than 2,500 words. The adjudicator is Micheál Ó Ruairc, who has much experience as both a writer and an adjudicator. The prize for the winning entry is €300 and there is no entry fee. The deadline for entries is February 1, 2014. The winning entry will be announced on or about 17 March 2014. Entries can be emailed to gearrsceal@eircom.net or posted to 'Gearrscéal', 2 Radharc na Coille, Beal Átha na Slua, Co. na Gaillimhe. Potential entrants should check for full details of the competition, which are available by email from gearrsceal@eircom.net. Full details are available on www.gearrsceal.com or on www.facebook.com/gearrsceal. Phone enquiries can also be made to Joe at 086 353 6085.



Ballinasloe Credit Union is Still Social and Economic Force

By Niall Clarke

Earlier this month the Central Bank announced that for the first time in our history, a bank would take over a Credit Union. It was a sad day for the Irish Credit Union movement that has delivered extraordinary service to its membership for more than 50 years.

It's an issue that will no doubt be discussed by our Members at the Credit Union's AGM, which takes place on Tuesday, December 10th at 8pm in the Carlton Shearwater Hotel.

The news of the court ordered takeover is ever the more disconcerting when one considers that in the last five years the Irish banks, which cost the state €64 billion continue to remain moribund. There has been no significant lending and their mortgage arrears problem continues to escalate. In this environment, Credit Unions, while not shielded from the general economic difficulties, remain a coherent social and economic force in society.

The financial crisis (now in its sixth year) has had a major impact on the local community. Notwithstanding the recent difficult climate, membership at Ballinasloe Credit Union continues to increase, especially over the period of entrenchment in the economy. The increase in membership may also be as a result of the unease people have with their banks. Ours is a very strong Credit Union having traded very successfully for the past 46 years. At year-end the Credit Union had savings in excess of €66 million with loans to Members in excess of €39 million.

It's worth noting that Credit Union Members savings are protected under the government deposit guarantee scheme of up to €100,000 per depositor. Remember, that even with the action taken in Newbridge not a cent of savers money has been lost.

Ballinasloe Credit Union gets most of its income from interest on Members' borrowings. Consequently the loan book needs to be as high as possible consistent with prudent lending policy and liquidity requirements. Loans issued by Ballinasloe Credit Union during the 2012/2013 financial year are 92% greater than loans issued during the 2011/2012 financial year.

The vast majority of Members of Ballinasloe Credit Union have always been committed to paying back their loans on time and in accordance with



their agreements. It can be extremely stressful for Members and their families who find themselves unable to meet those loan repayments now. Ballinasloe Credit Union is here to assist and help Members who are encountering difficulties.

The provision of full electronic banking services to Members is becoming increasingly important to the Credit Union movement as people look for alternatives to the current pillar banks. These electronic services are currently available to Members' of Ballinasloe Credit Union. Nationally a Payments

Institution Licence has recently been granted by the Central Bank to the Credit Union Service Organisation for Payments (CUSOP). The vision driving this initiative is that all Credit Unions that wish to provide electronic payment services can now do so. The new service will allow Credit Union Members to have payments from a bank, employer or social welfare office paid directly into their Credit Union account by electronic transfer.

The recent announcements regarding the exit of international banks from the Irish financial services sector means that there is now more than ever, greater scope for Ireland's Credit Unions to offer a vital link between the Irish public and accessible, community based financial services. Therefore it is hugely important that the Government and by extension the Central Bank, do everything they can to ensure that the Credit Union movement is safe guarded and protected. The circumstances of the Newbridge Credit Union takeover will be revealed in the fullness of time. In the interim, it is vital that we recognise and respect the social and economic role that Credit Unions continue to play at a difficult juncture in our history. Newbridge Credit Union is an exception and not a rule. However, Credit Unions must move forward with confidence. It is important that we continue to be there for those in our society who need a helping hand, by offering small affordable loans to our credit worthy Members and a secure environment for our Member's savings.



6th Annual BEST Competition

By Lyn Donnelly

The Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre (BEC) and Ballinasloe Credit Union have recently launched the sixth annual BEST Competition: Ballinasloe Entrepreneurial Skills Tournament.

The aim of BEST is to promote an entrepreneurial spirit in the youth of Ballinasloe; the next generation of entrepreneurs. The competition is open to students from five local secondary schools: Ardscoil Mhuire and St. Joseph's College in Ballinasloe; St. Cuan's in Castleblakeney and Holy Rosary and Coláiste an Creggan in Mountbellew.

John Power and Gerry Kelly are returning as judges this year and they will be joined by Pat Ward, a local entrepreneur, who is managing director of Western Automation Research and Development Ltd, who currently employs 40 people in Ballinasloe.

The Judges and BEC Manager, Lyn Donnelly, visited each of the schools and did a presentation to the students and teachers outlining the competition and encouraging them to participate in this year's competition.

Lyn Donnelly said the launch was a huge success again this year with huge enthusiasm shown from the teachers and students alike and she was hopeful that the amount of applications this year will surpass last year's total of 102.

Michael Staunton, a previous chairperson of Ballinasloe Area Community Development Ltd, came up with the idea of the competition where the students are encouraged to focus on creativity for a new business idea and closing date for applications is the December 13, 2013.

Application forms are available from the BEST Coordinator in each school or can be downloaded from www.
ballinasloeenterprisecentre.ie. The judges will evaluate each
application and choose a number of finalists to pitch their
'BEST Idea' to them in a Dragons Den style presentation
during the final stage of the competition. All participants are
then invited to an awards ceremony in March, 2013 where the
winners will be announced and a prominent entrepreneur will
give a speech to the students and their parents.

The BEST Winner receives a Cash Prize of €1,000 and runners up prizes totaling €1,500. The competition is sponsored by the Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre and the Ballinasloe Credit Union.

For further information visit ballinasloeenterprisecentre.ie



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Brodericks 20 Years in Business

By Pamela Ryan

First owned by Jack Quinn and his wife Eileen, the pharmacy on Society Street was bought by Kevin and Anne Broderick back on December 1, 1993. The couple met at university while both studying for their pharmaceutical degrees across the sea in Liverpool. Twenty-two years ago Kevin and Anne returned from Liverpool to the county of Galway.

"Times were tough then but we persevered and gradually grew the business, making the most of the available space we had," said Kevin.

While Kevin was born in Derby, UK, and Anne in Tyrone, they settled in Galway after they were married, as Kevin's father was originally from Athenry and has relatives living there.

The couple now have four children and have lived in Ballinasloe since owning the business. The pharmacy has since developed into a family run, community business over the past 20 years; quite an accomplishment to celebrate this year. "We currently have three full-time and two part-time staff, and that's excluding Anne and myself," said Kevin.

Initially people only visited pharmacies with prescriptions. "They were more doctor focused," according to Kevin. Over the years however, it has become apparent to the Brodericks that people are acknowledging the vast medical knowledge a pharmaceutical degree



offers a person. "There's a lot of minor ailments we can deal with here in the pharmacy itself," he said. Customers used to only come in for antibiotics from doctors' prescriptions but now they can visit the pharmacy for immune system boosters and items that will clear head congestion among so many others.

As with all other businesses, Broderick's Pharmacy strive to keep themselves competitively priced for the sake of the community and their own business. "We're often cheaper than the likes of Tesco, Lidl, Aldi and other places like that. We make sure that we're competitively priced, even when it comes to prescriptions." Most of all the couple have tried to maintain a high standard of service from the pharmacy to its customers. "That has been our main focus, the customers," said Kevin.

The Broderick family have been involved in much more than just the business scene of the town. They have been involved in local sporting life including GAA, soccer and rugby clubs and support all the local teams. Anne's father, Brian McSorley, also played for Tyrone back in the fifties playing in one All-Ireland semi-final in Croke Park and winning two Ulster football titles in 1956 and 1957, so it is certainly a grá that runs in the family.

Professional advice is available on all ailments including coughs and colds, allergies, pain relief, first aid and Vitamin and mineral supplements. Brodericks believe in shopping local and supporting their neighbourhood businesses.

The pharmacy has engaged in a lot of promotional work recently, especially approaching the Christmas season. Even though the store has special offers and bargains all year round, this is sure to be a very festive season for customers. Anne said: "We will continue to do our best and give a pleasant, professional service to all our customers."



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Shop Local Campaign Success

By Lyn Donnelly & Pamela Ryan

Last year the *Think Local, Shop Local* campaign was launched. The aim of which was to encourage consumers to shop within the town. It was hoped this would result in a more striving local economy. Businesses took on this campaign wholeheartedly and encouraged their customers to buy local produce. The campaign's success can be heard from the retailers themselves:

Fahy's Organic Farm, Una & Padraig Fahy

"In the past 12 months Fahy's have begun supplying produce to: O'Connor's Food Hall; SuperValu; Concannons; Carlton Shearwater Hotel and Kariba's. They have also seen a huge growth in their farm gate sales over the summer months with their home deliveries also doing well. It is great to see both consumers and local businesses supporting the campaign."

Salmon's, Dermot Salmon

"Salmons have seen a definite increase in the number of customers doing their Christmas shopping in Salmon's with a huge uptake on Christmas deposits and Christmas Club, especially on toys" according to Dermot, Store Manager.

Fletchers Expert, Sean Fletcher

"The Shop Local campaign has been a great success for Fletchers Expert. With more people now shopping locally as a result of the awareness campaign, Fletchers are seeing increased foot fall and are very grateful for all the support received from our customers," stated Sean Fletcher.

Clarke Cycles, Niall Clarke

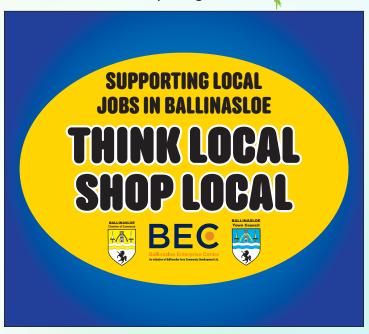
"The people of Ballinasloe have responded very positively to the Shop Local Campaign. It's very encouraging to hear from our customers about the conscious decision they have made to shop local. For those of you who have yet to give it a try, as we head into the Christmas season I would encourage you to pick a local business and give it a chance."

Michael Ward House of Fashion, Michael Ward

"With regards to the Shop Local drive for Ballinasloe, we found the focus on shopping local very successful last year.

Many of our customers did remember to support us and other local businesses and above all they repeatedly commented that they loved the personal touch we provide in the store, that you would not get in the city stores or multinationals. We strive to make your visit to our store stress free and enjoyable and our staff always provide a warm friendly atmosphere to make your experience a memorable one! With this in mind, we would like to thank all our loyal customers for their support and look forward to welcoming all new customers in the future."

For the convenience of all the local shopping that is to continue, Ballinasloe Town Council has again agreed to introduce free car parking for the festive season this year! This applies to all on-street parking and the two paid car parks after 11am each day, starting on December 1st and continuing until the year's end. Normal parking restrictions will apply, i.e. two-hour maximum on-street parking time limit.





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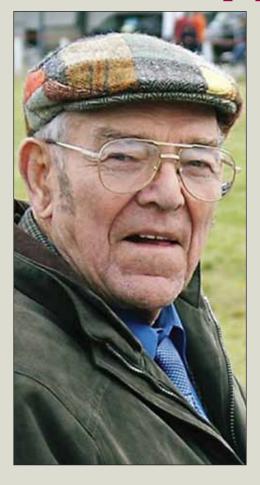
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Godfrey Gibbons Appreciation

By Pat O'Sullivan

The President, Chairman and all the members of Ballinasloe Show were truly saddened at the recent death of their father figure and good friend Mr. Godfrey Gibbons. Godfrey was one of the longest serving members of the show, having become a member almost fifty years ago. He became a Director of the Show and held the position until his death. He shared Vice-Presidency and Presidency with his friends Joe Brooks and Paddy McCormack.

I suppose it was no surprise that he would become and remain a loyal and active member of the Show Society as it was then known. Godfrey's interest in animals and all things agricultural was very eloquently spoken about by Cathal at the funeral mass. He had a very special interest and love of horses and was an excellent judge of a good animal. This interest has been passed on in the generations coming after him. Godfrey I think could be described as the original Horse Whisperer. His many escapades in calming sometimes recalcitrant animals were indeed legendry. Godfrey was an innovative man and always liked to see the town and organisations in the town



develop. This was very evident in the development of Ballinasloe Show and the Showgrounds. When he retired from his business in Society Street and moved with his good wife Evelyn to Dunlo Hill he, in a very special way, became guardian of the Grounds. He spent many hours overseeing the work, ensuring that all was ready each year for the Show. He was a leader in many of the innovative ideas that formulated change in the show and especially in the development of the grounds to become one of the finest showgrounds in the country. He did not confuse motion with action and believed in getting the work done.

It was great that a few weeks prior to his final illness he could come to the grounds and meet with some of his old friends and have a look over the fruits of his labour. He felt quite proud when visitors to the show paid high compliments to the grounds and its presentation on show day.

The Ballinasloe Show Committee and members have indeed lost a true friend and loyal colleague. He fought the good fight he has truly earned his rest. Ní bheídh a leithéid ann arís. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dhilís.

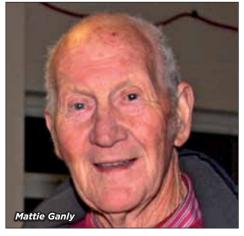
The Passing of Local Stalwarts



By Seán Tully

As 2013 nears its end and people reflect on a great year gone by, with the winning of the All-Ireland Junior Club Football, they will remember with affection three great GAA Club stalwarts a d'imigh ar Sli na Firinne í mbliann.

JOE KEOGH'S coffin was carried into St. Michael's Church on the first day of the New Year by Club Members. Joe was Secretary of St. Grellan's Football Club, A.T. Cross Social Club, Barber, Friend, Confidant to many and a huge loss to his beloved wife Nancy and family Members.



On the 2nd April, rumour circulated of the sudden death of MATTIE GANLY, Muinteoir Specialta, Storai Aitiuil, Town Council Member, Club Officer, Manager of many club teams but above all a great character and friend to many and former Uachtarán CLG Beal Átha Na Slua.

The news was met with great sadness and was a great loss to his family and many friends. Delight was expressed that he was able to attend the Final in Croke Park, despite failing health at the time, to see his beloved Ballinasloe capture the All-Ireland title.



Shortly after Fair week, TOM FAHY, Beechlawn died after a short illness. Tom was an outstanding Club person, Supporter and member of a family who contributed enormously to CLG in the town: fundraising, stewarding, etc. Tom was Club Uachtaran, something he was very proud of.

I'm sure that Mattie and Tom will be explaining to Joe in their heavenly sitting room, how Ballinasloe defeated Kenmare in the Club All-Ireland Football Final in Croke Park. Go ndeanfaidh dia Trócaire ar a anamhacha uasal.



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Road Safety Road Show

A joint initiative between the Road Safety Authority and the Community Policing Unit, based in Ballinasloe, saw over 400 primary school children(from Mullagh, Kiltormer, Laurencetown, Clontuskert, Creagh, Aughrim, The Glebe, Gael Scoil Ballinasloe and Scoil Croí Naofa) attend the Streetwise Road Show. The interactive roadshow highlighted the importance of road safety. On completion of the roadshow, pupils received high visibility vests and a Safety Licence, with their picture and name. The event took place in the Complex in Kiltormer and the Emerald Ballroom in Ballinasloe, both of whom Gardaí would like to thank.





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Adding A Balance to Your Life

By Pamela Ryan

Originally from Ballinasloe, Stephanie Lyons, is a qualified kinesiologist who has lived here steadily for the past three years. "Kinesiology works with the body's innate healing intelligence. It aids the body in its natural drive to restoring balance and thus health. When everything is functioning well in our system, we feel well," said Stephanie.

Stephanie began training in Kinesiology 10 years ago, as she had suffered from allergies growing up. At college she studied Food Science and Technology. "I worked in the food industry for about eight years and as I had health problems I went to a Kinesiologist and it radically changed my health," she said.

Stephanie was always interested in nutrition, Kinesiology and the study of the body, so while working as a full-time Quality Manager in a bakery, she started her Diploma in Kinesiology back in 2003.



"After an intense 18 months training, a lot of study and case studies, I qualified in 2004." Stephanie then continued her studies and became qualified in Dorn Breuss Massage and Reiki and she is now currently studying Healing Touch, "an energy therapy", which compliments Kinesiology well according to Stephanie.

Stephanie uses Kinesiology to treat all manner of ailments including, acne, asthma, food allergies, fatigue, stress, insomnia, eczema, skin conditions, back and knee pain, sports injuries, headaches and migraines. "When the energy flow is impaired, it can overwhelm the body and result in physical pains, mental discomfort and a myriad of other symptoms. These symptoms are the body's way of telling us that something is wrong," said Stephanie before adding that her therapies rely on the muscle feedback system which connects us physically to our subconscious mind.

Kinesiology is a completely non-invasive therapy and Stephanie is a member of the Kinesiology Association of Ireland and the Association of Registered **Complimentary Health Therapists** of Ireland. Find her on Facebook at 'Stephanie Lyons Kinesiology' or call her on 087 224 2606. Gift vouchers are now available for Christmas.

New Home Renovation Scheme



By Pamela Ryan

Fine Gael Senator Michael Mullins has welcomed a measure in the recent budget which he believes will act as a major boost for local tradespeople and for families wishing to improve their homes.

The Home Renovation Initiative Scheme allows for those who undertake work on their principal private residence, to the value of between €5,000 and €30,000, to claim the VAT of 13.5% back over a two year period. The scheme provides an incentive to those with savings to spend them, while at the same time providing a significant boost to tradespeople and small building contractors.

In a bid to eliminate the black economy, the scheme will only be open to tax compliant builders. This should act as a boost to legitimate contractors and sole traders who have been so badly affected by the crash in the construction sector. This intervention in the sector is a positive move by Government to help address the huge challenges which have faced the industry in recent years.

Before this Government came into power, 70,000 jobs a year were lost, many of them in the construction sector. It is hoped that an additional benefit of this scheme will be that small businesses will increase the numbers they employ, due to an increased level of activity. If every small business in the country took on one extra person, that would have a massive impact on the Live Register.

Senator Mullins said that the new scheme is also a boost to families as it will enable them to make significant savings on improvements to their family home. It will make it much more affordable to build an extension or carry out a range of works, such as fitting new windows, or putting in a new bathroom or kitchen. The stipulation that the work must be carried out by legitimate contractors, is designed to ensure a high standard of workmanship for the customer.

Since coming to Office, this Government has been focusing on our biggest challenge which is getting people off the Live Register and back into the workforce. Those efforts are starting to bear fruit with the unemployment rate falling for the past 15 consecutive months and 3,000 additional jobs now being created every month. But there is still much work to be done and I want to see the Government's Action Plan for Jobs delivering much more employment opportunities in 2014 for the people of Ballinasloe and surrounding areas.

Small Towns Are a Breath of Fresh Air



By Colm Croffy

Two independent reports published recently tell us what the market place is indicating it requires in a good place to live, naturally our town made neither finals or short lists but if we look closely at the short listing criterion it's apparent a good deal of what the selectors were looking for, Ballinasloe as an area has it in abundance!

In the 20 years since Census 1991 the urban centre only grew officially by 13% which does not take into account the loss of institutional population and secondly the methodology of counting

which leaves everybody living to beyond Dubarry's factory on the East and Garbally Gates on the West and a short arc North and South of that out of the Towns Population. As an Urban area with a linear development pattern some 35% of our town's natural catchment area is officially trapped in the statistics of Ballinasloe Rural and Roscommon South Flectoral divisions

Speaking with Noel Madden of the Credit Union the number of members served in the common bond area is in the order of some 18,000. The rich rural hinterland between that the wider 15 mile radius has a further population of some 14,000 - so it is worth repeating - if the CSO and the Municipalities counted appropriately we would be showing our true urban size of some 8,000, similar to a New Ross or Trim.

So what might the experts be looking for in ranking locations? In sourcing the best places to live in America the Autumn Edition of the *Money* Magazine ranked small towns on (a) How well they were doing economically (b) unemployment rates and job growth (c) housing appreciation and affordability d) a place to raise a family (e) green space (f) good schools (g)healthcare (h) Safety (i) arts and leisure (k) diversity (l) ease of living and (m) a strong sense of community.

Reading the shortlisted towns it was obvious that the bulk of the Economics and job growth statistics were being provided by the larger urban manufacturing and service cities within a 40 minute commute time.

Absorbing the clips and quotes from the families that moved into to these top locations it was apparent that what mattered most was green space, facilities, leisure activities (outdoor more than indoor) and a lively vibrant post work scene, in the evenings and weekends.

The Sunday Times produced a special supplement of the 10 Top Irish Places to live in late October and interestingly placed Midelton in Co. Cork in the top position for Munster as "Unlike many mid-sized towns it has a growing population catering to a community of about 25,000 from both the town and surrounding countryside."



Again in elevating Thomastown in Co. Kilkenny as one of it's top 10, it noted that "it's a traditional and largely unspoilt market town that saw a much more modest increase in size over the past decade." It also mentioned its direct rail link to Dublin and 40 minute access to Carlow for further employment, well regarded third level institute and plenty of leisure amenities.

Does any of this sound a tad familiar? Might it be that these towns both service a rich and growing prosperous agricultural hinterland gearing up for further growth in the quota dismantling vears ahead.

Happily Galway City featured 9th in the top 10 and also 4th for Third level opportunities, 2nd for Arts and Cultural activities and third for schools whilst our neighbouring Roscommon was ranked as the 4th most safest and crime free area to reside in!

Whilst there is probably some work to be obviously done in the area of local employment the Live Register did see a 9% reduction from the high of 2600 in January 2011 to summer months this year. Commercially there are plenty of opportunities for start ups with vacant premises in key locations on the principal streets and serviced shovel ready sites still available for service, manufacturing and retail activity.

Facilities in Healthcare, Education, Sports, Recreational, Leisure, huge open natural park spaces in Garbally, and Poolboy for walking, jogging, four hotels (three re-developed or built in the past eight years) the River, the Motorway,

Bus and Rail links, the list of advantages does add up.

Perhaps we just need to get our heads around the idea that the concept of a dormitory or commuter town is not a defeatist moniker. Walk into any shop at the weekend and easily 65% of the pay packets will have been earned in Athlone, Tullamore, Roscommon, Galway, Limerick and indeed Dublin in the previous five days. It's the new norm!

Daft.ie place our residential houses for sale as the highest among towns like Gort 97, Loughrea 164, Roscommon 144, Tullamore 195, Oranmore 47, Portumna 25 and Clifden 77 for November, with 202 homes for sale (but this does include the wider postal district area).

Local Auctioneers are noticing the twitching of a return to some market activity owing in their collective view of the unbelievable value of the housing stock on offer. With no real urban blight, decay or ghost estates with unfinished semi derelict houses; the worst excesses of the Tiger seemed to pass us by.

John Dolan who has sales offices in Galway and town states "the city is experiencing yearly growth of 20% for the 3-4 bed Semi-D. (Average 3-4 bed Semi-D, €270,000 Sunday Times 20-10-13). As buyers get priced out of these large urban centres it is encouraging more buyers to purchase here where they can afford their mortage repayments comfortably."

John has about thirty quality dwellings for sale from €35,000 to €222,000 and believes there is a shortage of good quality rural homes within a 10 mile radius of the town.

Michael Staunton of Rothwell & Staunton Auctioneers have seen good levels of residential sales in the past three months, with a much stronger level of interest.

"We have seen strong demand in the rental sector for both houses and apartments, young couples in particular see the huge value currently in the local market here." They have also seen renewed interest and confidence in the commercial market with sale agreed on Dunlo St. and considerable enquiries for both retail sale and lettings.

Paddy Keane of Keane Auctioneers Main St. has seen more interest in those retired trying to trade down to smaller more manageable house and see the value in the properties on offer.

"I am seeing a lot of cash buyers seeking properties of less than €100k and also more in the past few months of first time buyers who have been advised by Engineers that it's cheaper to buy than construct."

Since falls of up to 70% on peak prices achieved in the Tiger Years of 2005 - 2007 the market appears to have bottomed out and all in the trade see quarter one of 2014 being busy with lending glacially moving from banks and the cost of servicing a €100,000 mortage the equivalent of renting a decent house in the locality.

Maybe it's the times we are in but an influx of new families, retirees, workers would enjoy the breath of fresh air in this small town!



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If you require any further information please contact the Nurse in Charge on **Phone: 090 9642622 Fax: 090 9644278** or **Email: garballyview@gmail.com**

Strictly Comes to Ballinasloe

Boston Scientific this year chose to raise funds for East Galway Cancer Care. Recently they held their second annual Strictly Come Dancing event in the Clayton Hotel to raise funds and awareness for the organisation. The local participants were: Ann Bruen and Séamus Daly; Teresa Nee Reynolds; Siobhan Loughry and Pat Vaughan; Jim and Geraldine Curley. The people of East Galway Cancer Care trained for 10 weeks in preparation for the event raising over €12,500, with over €2,000 of that being raised by the town locals. The judging panel was made up of professional dancers, employees of Boston Scientific and Connacht Rugby team players. While the winners received vases from Galway Crystal, each and every couple also received wine goblets from the crystal company.



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Country Market Christmas Fare

By Margaret O'Gorman

Christmas is coming and Ballinasloe Country Market is busy preparing for the celebrations. Holly berries and ribbons are being gathered to create decorations, wreaths and novelties. Ingredients for the pudding, Christmas cakes and mince pies are being set aside. The Country Market is held at the Town Hall Theatre each Friday from 9.30am to 1.30pm.

The atmosphere is building up for the festive season and our second anniversary Christmas Party will be a day we hope to celebrate with all of our customers and friends, which will be held on Friday, December 13th. With the huge success that was last year's Christmas Party, it is an event not to be missed! There will be lots of tasters, music, song and dance. Come along and celebrate with us.

This year, do not be without those necessities. We are happy to take orders now for your Christmas cakes, puddings, mince pies and trifles.

We have some great gift ideas at our Country Market - all locally produced - like our beautiful wood-craft lamps, bowls, vases and candle holders, delicate handmade jewellery, fragrant handmade soaps, candle centre pieces, flower arrangements, beautiful knitwear, framed photographs, fresh flower displays and centrepieces and Christmas cards with scenes of local interest to mention a few.

The Country Market Team would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our friends and customers for their continued support over the past two years and we look forward to the year ahead as we hope to continue to grow.

We wish all of our customers a happy and peaceful Christmas and our best wishes for 2014. Nollaig Shona daoibh go léir!









Local clinics in Ballinasloe area on Tuesday mornings by appointment

Please Contact: 090 6627557 Email: dnaughten@oir.ie www.puttingpeoplefirst.ie

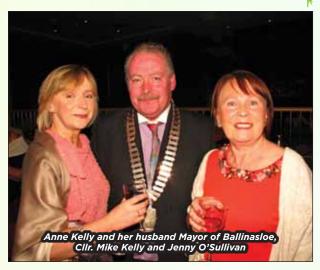


Social Services Mock Wedding

By Pamela Ryan

The much anticipated Celebrity Mock Wedding finally took place recently at the Carlton Shearwater Hotel. The collection of local actors pulled together a fantastic event and after weeks of secrecy the bride's identity was finally revealed as she stepped down from her horse drawn carriage: Penelope Pitstop (Maria Griffin) with the father of the bride Castrol Pitstop (Mike O'Reilly).

Over 400 wedding guests purchased tickets and got into their glad rags for the Wedding of the Year, which saw MC John Boland welcome all the dramatis personae to the festivities. The fun event gathered approximately €9,000 for the Ballinasloe Social Services who were the beneficiaries of the night. The organising committee would like to thank the talented group of actors, MC, technical staff, committee members and the Transition Year students of Ardscoil Mhuire for their flash mob of *Thriller*.





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Giving Locally This Christmas



By Pamela Ryan

Christmas is a time for giving; among family, friends, significant others and colleagues. But the festive season also has a basis in charitable giving. Even in these tough economic times there will always be people much less well off; people who need a helping hand.

St. Michael's Conference of St. Vincent de Paul has launched an extensive Christmas campaign this year. All year round they provide to those in need whether it be emergency food, shopping and clothing vouchers, fuel supplies, personal security, light and power, travel assistance for hospital visits, educational assistance, breakfast clubs, poverty alleviation projects, emergency accommodation or grants for organisations with a similar ethos.

St. Michael's Conference covers an area of 15 miles in radius. The numbers of families needing help is increasing week by week, especially at this time of year. SVP are asking for an extended hand of help this Christmas with donations, both financial and clothing, furniture and brica-brac to the charity shop on Jubilee St. There will also be a church collection outside St. Michael's and Creagh Church on the second Saturday and Sunday of December. Volunteers are always welcome and needed more now than ever. To get involved call 086 230 7373. St. Michael's Church Folk Choir is busy again this year preparing their singing voices. Carol singing has become an annual ritual for the choir, according to Committee member Anne Jordan. This Christmas Eve, Main Street will once again be awash with the joyful singing of all the traditional Christmas carols. Santa and his friends will also be paying a visit to entertain the passers by."

The townspeople and visitors look forward to this event from year to year and the choir and their friends enjoy the atmosphere and goodwill it creates immensely," said Anne. The choir raises large amounts of money for charity every year and this time they have chosen The Samaritans and East Galway Cancer Support Group as their beneficiaries. Anyone who wishes to join on the day is more than welcome.

Choir practice takes place every Wednesday from 7:45-8:30pm in St Michael's Church and to get involved contact Anne at 087 744 3646. The folk choir sings at the Vigil mass every Saturday at St Michael's at 7pm.

The Lions Club is also doing its bit for charity this year. The club will be organising the Annual Christmas Food Appeal, "helping to bring a little light to those less fortunate at Christmas," said President, Brian Derrane. This includes a Food Appeal Church-gate Collection.

22 Years French Town Twinning

By Pamela Ryan

Ballinasloe has been officially twinned with the French town of Chalonnes-sur-Loire for 22 years now and the town was awash with celebrations when a group of French visitors and French Town Twinning Committee members came for a visit to Ballinasloe.

According to Carol Kavanagh, an integral part of the twinning committee here in Ballinasloe, Chalonne's deputy Mayor's wife was also a teacher back then, as Carol was and from there sprouted the idea of school exchanges, which continued every year "for many, many years." From her experiences Carol has found that the French have a great interest in other cultures and in particular what it means to be Irish. Ballinasloe has benefitted in many ways from the twinning. Now if citizens visit the French town and call into the Civic Offices there and say they are from Ballinasloe, it is a well known town and people are looked after and supported during their stay. As an island Ireland can feel quite sheltered and cut off from European life, but in having this link, visiting Chalonne means having easy access to every other French town or European country simply by train.

As the schools have visited Chalonne it did go "out of fashion" for a number of years as students did prefer to try and find work for the summer holidays. However, Carol says: "It is a lovely way to go, as a group, where you're supported by the



town and a committee that knows the town." She also notes it as a much safer way for our young people to travel.

Town Mayor Mike Kelly said: "The twinning has provided an opportunity over the years for clubs and groups to make exchange visits and learn about each other's cultures, traditions and heritage." His own French guest even received a crash course on hurling during his stay!

The welcome visitors travelled with their host families to Aughrim where they began the guided heritage tour visiting Clontuskert Abbey and the workhouse in Portumna.

The Mayor noted how important town twinning is for the promotion of tourism and among its other advantages "Perhaps the most important I suppose is the new friendships we make as the exchanges go on."

DECEMBER Events Guide

1st DECEMBER		
Santa arrives to the 'Christmas Craft Fair'	Carlton Shearwater Hotel	12.00 am
Outback Slider	Downey's Bar Joe's Bar	8.50pm 9.30pm
Jimmy Buckley Country Night Music	Carlton Shearwater Hotel	9.30pm
Christmas Craft Fair	Carlton Shearwater Hotel	2.00pm
Pillar House Trad Session	Gibbons' Pillar House	6.00pm
Loose Rooster	Maud Millars	8.00pm
Night Owls	Hayden's Hotel	9.00pm
2nd DECEMBER	Massacon Lados	10.70
Mother and Toddler Group Panto rehearsals	Moycarn Lodge Town Hall Theatre	10.30 am 2.00pm
Galway East Life Support Group	Gullane's Hotel	7.00pm
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	7.30pm
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	8.00pm
Bridge Lessons	Bridge Club	8.00pm
3rd DECEMBER		
Unislim	Gullane's Hotel	5.30pm
Tea Dance 4th DECEMBER	Gullane's Hotel	9.00pm
Trad session	An Táin	10.00pm
Active Retirement Christmas Party	Gullane's Hotel	
5th DECEMBER		
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11.00 am
Kevin Rohan & Friends	Hayden's Hotel	9.00pm
Ceili The Thursday Cossions	Gullane's Hotel	9.00pm
The Thursday Sessions 6th DECEMBER	Maud Millars	10.00pm
Country Market	Town Hall Theatre	8.30 am
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans	An Táin	6.00pm
Carlton Starry Christmas Party Night	Carlton Shearwater Hotel	7.30pm
Christmas Carols Concert	St. Catherines, Aughrim	8.00pm
Ballinasloe Master Swim Club	Kingfisher Club	8.30pm
Galway Table Quiz	Joe's Bar	9.00pm
Mike Denver Country Night Music	Carlton Shearwater Hotel	10. 00pm
Good ole' trusty Paul Watchorn	Maud Millars Dunlo Tavern	10.00pm 10.30pm
DJ Frankie Lennon	Gibbons' Pillar House	10.30pm
7th DECEMBER		
Christmas Festival	St Michael's Church	4.00pm
Country Comfort	Hayden's Hotel	9.00pm
Buggy	An Táin / Downstairsbar	9.30pm
Live Dj	An Táin / Upstairsbar	9.30pm
Live Dj Chequers	An Táin / Upstairsbar Carlton Shearwater Hotel	9.30pm 10. 00pm
Live Dj Chequers Tir na nÓg	An Táin / Upstairsbar	9.30pm 10. 00pm 10.00pm
Live Dj Chequers	An Táin / Upstairsbar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Blakes/ The Auld Sod	9.30pm 10. 00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.30pm
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Trad and Folk music with The Beahans	An Táin	6.00pm
Ballinasloe Panto	Town Hall Theatre	6.00pm
Charity Christmas Trad Concert	Gibbons' Pillar House	8.00pm
Last Man Standing Ken & Steve	Hayden's Hotel	9.00pm 10. 00pm
Strange Brew	Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars	10.00pm
The High Reel	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
14th DECEMBER		
Ballinasloe Panto	Town Hall Theatre	6.00pm
One to One	Hayden's Hotel	9.00pm
Eamon O'Neill	Joe's Bar	9.30pm 9.30pm
The Big Lad Live Di	An Táin, Downstairs Bar An Táin, Upstairs Bar	9.30pm
Michael Regan	Carlton Shearwater Hotel	10. 00pm
Blaggards	Blakes/ The Auld Sod	10.00pm
The Cozy Gartel	Maud Millars	10.00pm
DJ set	Downey's Bar	10.30pm
Live music Christmas Party Night: DJ Frankie Lennon	Dunlo Tavern Gibbons' Pillar House	10.30pm
15th DECEMBER	Gibbolis Pillar House	10.30pm
United Carol Service	Clontuskert	11.00 am
Pillar House Trad Session	Gibbons' Pillar House	6.00pm
Ballinasloe Panto	Town Hall Theatre	6.00pm
Live music	Maud Millars	8.00pm
Buzz the Agent	Joe's Bar	9.30pm
Nathan Carter: Christmas Party Special 16th DECEMBER	Carlton Shearwater Hotel	9.30pm
Mother and Toddler Group	Moycarn Lodge	10.30 am
Mothers & Toddlers	Gullane's Hotel	11.00 am
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	7.30pm
Bridge Lessons	Bridge Club	8.00pm
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	8.00pm
Ballinasloe Ladies Football Awards Night 17th DECEMBER	Gibbons' Pillar House	
Unislim	Gullane's Hotel	5.30pm
Tea Dance Christmas Party	Gullane's Hotel	8.30pm
Chris Nash	Blakes/ The Auld Sod	10.00pm
See Saw Swing	Gibbons' Pillar House	10.30pm
18th DECEMBER Pillar House Trad Session	Gibbons' Pillar House	- Comm
Ballinasloe Master Swim Club	Kingfisher Club	6pm 8.30pm
Smokes	Gibbons' Pillar House	9.30pm
Paddy Jordan	Blakes, The Auld Sod	10.00pm
Trad session	An Táin	10.00pm
19th DECEMBER		11.00
Ciorcal Comhra Travel the World Themed Night	Gullane's Hotel Carlton Shearwater Hotel	11.00 am 6.30pm
Bruno Groening	Gullane's Hotel	7.00pm
Kevin Rohan & friends	Hayden's Hotel	9.00pm
Kevin Rohan & friends Geagan Pagans	Gibbons' Pillar House	
Geagan Pagans Chris Nash	Gibbons' Pillar House Blakes/ The Auld Sod	9.00pm 10.30pm 10.00pm
Geagan Pagans Chris Nash The Thursday Sessions	Gibbons' Pillar House	9.00pm 10.30pm
Geagan Pagans Chris Nash The Thursday Sessions 20th DECEMBER	Gibbons' Pillar House Blakes/ The Auld Sod Maud Millars	9.00pm 10.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm
Geagan Pagans Chris Nash The Thursday Sessions 20th DECEMBER Country Market	Gibbons' Pillar House Blakes/ The Auld Sod Maud Millars Town Hall Theatre	9.00pm 10.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 8.30 am
Geagan Pagans Chris Nash The Thursday Sessions 20th DECEMBER Country Market Pillar House Trad Session with John Wynne & Frank Kelly	Gibbons' Pillar House Blakes/ The Auld Sod Maud Millars Town Hall Theatre Gibbons' Pillar House Bar & Restaurant	9.00pm 10.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm
Geagan Pagans Chris Nash The Thursday Sessions 20th DECEMBER Country Market Pillar House Trad Session with John Wynne & Frank Kelly Trad and Folk music with The Beahans	Gibbons' Pillar House Blakes/ The Auld Sod Maud Millars Town Hall Theatre Gibbons' Pillar House Bar & Restaurant An Táin	9.00pm 10.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 8.30 am 6.00pm
Geagan Pagans Chris Nash The Thursday Sessions 20th DECEMBER Country Market Pillar House Trad Session with John Wynne & Frank Kelly Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Ginger Bisquits	Gibbons' Pillar House Blakes/ The Auld Sod Maud Millars Town Hall Theatre Gibbons' Pillar House Bar & Restaurant An Táin Gibbons' Pillar House	9.00pm 10.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 8.30 am 6.00pm 6.00pm
Geagan Pagans Chris Nash The Thursday Sessions 20th DECEMBER Country Market Pillar House Trad Session with John Wynne & Frank Kelly Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Ginger Bisquits Michael Regan	Gibbons' Pillar House Blakes/ The Auld Sod Maud Millars Town Hall Theatre Gibbons' Pillar House Bar & Restaurant An Táin Gibbons' Pillar House Carlton Shearwater Hotel	9.00pm 10.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 8.30 am 6.00pm 6.00pm 9.00pm
Geagan Pagans Chris Nash The Thursday Sessions 20th DECEMBER Country Market Pillar House Trad Session with John Wynne & Frank Kelly Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Ginger Bisquits Michael Regan The Gaegan Pagans	Gibbons' Pillar House Blakes/ The Auld Sod Maud Millars Town Hall Theatre Gibbons' Pillar House Bar & Restaurant An Táin Gibbons' Pillar House Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars	9.00pm 10.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 8.30 am 6.00pm 6.00pm 9.00pm 10.00pm
Geagan Pagans Chris Nash The Thursday Sessions 20th DECEMBER Country Market Pillar House Trad Session with John Wynne & Frank Kelly Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Ginger Bisquits Michael Regan	Gibbons' Pillar House Blakes/ The Auld Sod Maud Millars Town Hall Theatre Gibbons' Pillar House Bar & Restaurant An Táin Gibbons' Pillar House Carlton Shearwater Hotel	9.00pm 10.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 8.30 am 6.00pm 6.00pm 9.00pm
Geagan Pagans Chris Nash The Thursday Sessions 20th DECEMBER Country Market Pillar House Trad Session with John Wynne & Frank Kelly Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Ginger Bisquits Michael Regan The Gaegan Pagans Haywire	Gibbons' Pillar House Blakes/ The Auld Sod Maud Millars Town Hall Theatre Gibbons' Pillar House Bar & Restaurant An Táin Gibbons' Pillar House Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars Blakes, The Auld Sod	9.00pm 10.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 8.30 am 6.00pm 6.00pm 9.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm
Geagan Pagans Chris Nash The Thursday Sessions 20th DECEMBER Country Market Pillar House Trad Session with John Wynne & Frank Kelly Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Ginger Bisquits Michael Regan The Gaegan Pagans Haywire Buzz the Agent Dj Rob 21st DECEMBER	Gibbons' Pillar House Blakes/ The Auld Sod Maud Millars Town Hall Theatre Gibbons' Pillar House Bar & Restaurant An Táin Gibbons' Pillar House Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars Blakes, The Auld Sod Dunlo Tavern Small Venue (Nightclub)	9.00pm 10.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 8.30 am 6.00pm 9.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm
Geagan Pagans Chris Nash The Thursday Sessions 20th DECEMBER Country Market Pillar House Trad Session with John Wynne & Frank Kelly Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Ginger Bisquits Michael Regan The Gaegan Pagans Haywire Buzz the Agent Dj Rob 21st DECEMBER Carlton Starry Christmas Party Night	Gibbons' Pillar House Blakes/ The Auld Sod Maud Millars Town Hall Theatre Gibbons' Pillar House Bar & Restaurant An Táin Gibbons' Pillar House Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars Blakes, The Auld Sod Dunlo Tavern Small Venue (Nightclub) Carlton Shearwater Hotel	9.00pm 10.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 8.30 am 6.00pm 9.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.30pm 11.00pm
Geagan Pagans Chris Nash The Thursday Sessions 20th DECEMBER Country Market Pillar House Trad Session with John Wynne & Frank Kelly Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Ginger Bisquits Michael Regan The Gaegan Pagans Haywire Buzz the Agent Dj Rob 21st DECEMBER Carlton Starry Christmas Party Night BoJangle	Gibbons' Pillar House Blakes/ The Auld Sod Maud Millars Town Hall Theatre Gibbons' Pillar House Bar & Restaurant An Táin Gibbons' Pillar House Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars Blakes, The Auld Sod Dunlo Tavern Small Venue (Nightclub) Carlton Shearwater Hotel Hayden's Hotel	9.00pm 10.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 8.30 am 6.00pm 9.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.30pm 11.00pm 7.30pm 9.00pm
Geagan Pagans Chris Nash The Thursday Sessions 20th DECEMBER Country Market Pillar House Trad Session with John Wynne & Frank Kelly Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Ginger Bisquits Michael Regan The Gaegan Pagans Haywire Buzz the Agent Dj Rob 21st DECEMBER Carlton Starry Christmas Party Night	Gibbons' Pillar House Blakes/ The Auld Sod Maud Millars Town Hall Theatre Gibbons' Pillar House Bar & Restaurant An Táin Gibbons' Pillar House Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars Blakes, The Auld Sod Dunlo Tavern Small Venue (Nightclub) Carlton Shearwater Hotel	9.00pm 10.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 8.30 am 6.00pm 9.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.30pm 11.00pm
Geagan Pagans Chris Nash The Thursday Sessions 20th DECEMBER Country Market Pillar House Trad Session with John Wynne & Frank Kelly Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Ginger Bisquits Michael Regan The Gaegan Pagans Haywire Buzz the Agent Dj Rob 21st DECEMBER Carlton Starry Christmas Party Night BoJangle Slider	Gibbons' Pillar House Blakes/ The Auld Sod Maud Millars Town Hall Theatre Gibbons' Pillar House Bar & Restaurant An Táin Gibbons' Pillar House Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars Blakes, The Auld Sod Dunlo Tavern Small Venue (Nightclub) Carlton Shearwater Hotel Hayden's Hotel Joe's Bar	9.00pm 10.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 8.30 am 6.00pm 6.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.30pm 11.00pm 7.30pm 9.00pm 9.00pm
Geagan Pagans Chris Nash The Thursday Sessions 20th DECEMBER Country Market Pillar House Trad Session with John Wynne & Frank Kelly Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Ginger Bisquits Michael Regan The Gaegan Pagans Haywire Buzz the Agent Dj Rob 21st DECEMBER Carlton Starry Christmas Party Night BoJangle Slider Live Music Live Dj DJ Ian Duffy	Gibbons' Pillar House Blakes/ The Auld Sod Maud Millars Town Hall Theatre Gibbons' Pillar House Bar & Restaurant An Táin Gibbons' Pillar House Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars Blakes, The Auld Sod Dunlo Tavern Small Venue (Nightclub) Carlton Shearwater Hotel Hayden's Hotel Joe's Bar An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar Gibbons' Pillar House	9.00pm 10.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 8.30 am 6.00pm 9.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.30pm 11.00pm 7.30pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 9.30pm
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DECEMBER-JANUARY Events Guide

Bojangle	Carlton Shearwater Hotel	10.00pm
Project 37	Blakes/ The Auld Sod	10.00pm
The Gaegan Pagans	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
Dj Frank	Small Venue (Nightclub)	11.00pm
21rd DECEMBER Bridge Lessons	Bridge Club	8.00pm
Sara O'Kane	Joe's Bar	9.30pm
Small Deal	Blakes/ The Auld Sod	10.00pm
Washout	Maud Millars	10.00pm
Mother and Toddler Group	Moycarn Lodge	10.30 am
Annmarie McLoughlin	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
Keith Geryth	Small Venue (Nightclub)	11.00pm
24th DECEMBER		
Children's Mass	St Michael's Church	6.00pm
Christmas Eve Mass Christmas Night	Woodlawn Creagh Church	9.00pm
Christmas Night	Aughrim	10.00pm 23.15pm
Midnight Mass	St Michael's Church	12.00pm
25th DECEMBER		
Christmas Day Service	St Cathrines, Aughrim	8.00 am
Christmas Day Mass	Ahascragh	8.15 am
Christmas Day Mass	St Michael's Church	9.00 am
Christmas Day Service	St Catherines Church	9.30 am
Christmas Day Mass	Creagh Church	10.00 am
Christmas Day Mass Christmas Day Mass	St Michael's Church Clontuskert	11.00 am 11.15 am
Christmas Day Mass Christmas Day Mass	St Michael's Church	12.15 am
26th DECEMBER	St Michael's Charen	12.13 um
One to One	Hayden's Hotel	9.00pm
Live Dj	An Táin	9.00pm
Shtick Her Down	An Táin	9.00pm
Live music	Joe's Bar	9.30pm
Robert Mizzell - St Stephens Celebrations	Carlton Shearwater Hotel	9.30pm
Michael Regan	Carlton Shearwater Hotel	10.00pm
Traditional irish music	Blakes/ The Auld Sod	10.00pm
Emma, Fiona, Dylan Di Bosco	Dunlo Tavern East Nightclub	10.30pm 11.00pm
Dj Quinn	Small Venue (Nightclub)	11.00pm
27th DECEMBER	Sman venae (riightelas)	поорт
My Brother Joe Show	Carlton Shearwater Hotel	7.30pm
My Brother Joe Show Live Music	An Táin	9.30pm
My Brother Joe Show Live Music Too Tall Paul	An Táin Blakes/ The Auld Sod	9.30pm 10.00pm
My Brother Joe Show Live Music Too Tall Paul Paschal Brennan	An Táin Blakes/ The Auld Sod Carlton Shearwater Hotel	9.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm
My Brother Joe Show Live Music Too Tall Paul Paschal Brennan Live Acoustic Session	An Táin Blakes/ The Auld Sod Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars	9.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm
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My Brother Joe Show Live Music Too Tall Paul Paschal Brennan Live Acoustic Session One to One Dj Keith 28th DECEMBER Carlton Wedding Showcase Live music Eamon O ' Neill No half measures Live Dj Haywire Paschal Brennan Live music DJ set Too tall paul Dj Bosco 29th DECEMBER Keep her lit Sway Mike Denver Country Night Music & dance Blaggards Loose rooster Live music Dj Bosco 30th DECEMBER Bridge Lessons Haywire Ken & Steve The cozy gartel	An Táin Blakes/ The Auld Sod Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars Dunlo Tavern Small Venue (Nightclub) Carlton Shearwater Hotel Hayden's Hotel Joe's Bar An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar Blakes/ The Auld Sod Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars Downey's Bar Dunlo Tavern East Nightclub Downey's Bar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Blakes/ The Auld Sod Maud Millars Downey's Bar Joe's Bar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Blakes/ The Auld Sod Maud Millars Dunlo Tavern East Nightclub Bridge Club Blakes/ The Auld Sod Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars	9.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.30pm 11.00pm 12.00 am 9.00pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.30pm 10.00pm 10.30pm 10.30pm 10.30pm 11.00pm 8.00pm 9.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm
My Brother Joe Show Live Music Too Tall Paul Paschal Brennan Live Acoustic Session One to One Dj Keith 28th DECEMBER Carlton Wedding Showcase Live music Eamon O ' Neill No half measures Live Dj Haywire Paschal Brennan Live music DJ set Too tall paul Dj Bosco 29th DECEMBER Keep her lit Sway Mike Denver Country Night Music & dance Blaggards Loose rooster Live music Dj Bosco 30th DECEMBER Bridge Lessons Haywire Ken & Steve The cozy gartel Mother and Toddler Group	An Táin Blakes/ The Auld Sod Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars Dunlo Tavern Small Venue (Nightclub) Carlton Shearwater Hotel Hayden's Hotel Joe's Bar An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar Blakes/ The Auld Sod Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars Downey's Bar Dunlo Tavern East Nightclub Downey's Bar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Blakes/ The Auld Sod Maud Millars Downey's Bar Joe's Bar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Blakes/ The Auld Sod Maud Millars Dunlo Tavern East Nightclub Bridge Club Blakes/ The Auld Sod Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars Moycarn Lodge	9.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 11.00pm 11.00pm 12.00 am 9.00pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.30pm 11.00pm 10.30pm 10.30pm 11.00pm 8.00pm 9.30pm 10.30pm 11.00pm 10.30pm 10.00pm
My Brother Joe Show Live Music Too Tall Paul Paschal Brennan Live Acoustic Session One to One Dj Keith 28th DECEMBER Carlton Wedding Showcase Live music Eamon O ' Neill No half measures Live Dj Haywire Paschal Brennan Live music DJ set Too tall paul Dj Bosco 29th DECEMBER Keep her lit Sway Mike Denver Country Night Music & dance Blaggards Loose rooster Live music Dj Bosco 30th DECEMBER Reide December Bridge Lessons Haywire Ken & Steve The cozy gartel Mother and Toddler Group Dj Quinn	An Táin Blakes/ The Auld Sod Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars Dunlo Tavern Small Venue (Nightclub) Carlton Shearwater Hotel Hayden's Hotel Joe's Bar An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar Blakes/ The Auld Sod Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars Downey's Bar Dunlo Tavern East Nightclub Downey's Bar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Blakes/ The Auld Sod Maud Millars Downey's Bar Joe's Bar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Blakes/ The Auld Sod Maud Millars Dunlo Tavern East Nightclub Bridge Club Blakes/ The Auld Sod Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars	9.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.30pm 11.00pm 12.00 am 9.00pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.30pm 10.00pm 10.30pm 10.30pm 10.30pm 11.00pm 8.00pm 9.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm
My Brother Joe Show Live Music Too Tall Paul Paschal Brennan Live Acoustic Session One to One Dj Keith 28th DECEMBER Carlton Wedding Showcase Live music Eamon O ' Neill No half measures Live Dj Haywire Paschal Brennan Live music DJ set Too tall paul Dj Bosco 29th DECEMBER Keep her lit Sway Mike Denver Country Night Music & dance Blaggards Loose rooster Live music Dj Bosco 30th DECEMBER Bridge Lessons Haywire Ken & Steve The cozy gartel Mother and Toddler Group Dj Quinn 31st DECEMBER	An Táin Blakes/ The Auld Sod Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars Dunlo Tavern Small Venue (Nightclub) Carlton Shearwater Hotel Hayden's Hotel Joe's Bar An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar Blakes/ The Auld Sod Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars Downey's Bar Dunlo Tavern East Nightclub Downey's Bar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Blakes/ The Auld Sod Maud Millars Downey's Bar Joe's Bar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Blakes/ The Auld Sod Maud Millars Dunlo Tavern East Nightclub Bridge Club Blakes/ The Auld Sod Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars Moycarn Lodge Small Venue (Nightclub)	9.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 11.00pm 11.00pm 11.00pm 11.00pm 11.00pm 10.30pm 10.00pm 10.30pm 10.30pm 10.30pm 10.30pm 10.30pm 10.30pm 10.30pm 10.00pm
My Brother Joe Show Live Music Too Tall Paul Paschal Brennan Live Acoustic Session One to One Dj Keith 28th DECEMBER Carlton Wedding Showcase Live music Eamon O ' Neill No half measures Live Dj Haywire Paschal Brennan Live music DJ set Too tall paul Dj Bosco 29th DECEMBER Keep her lit Sway Mike Denver Country Night Music & dance Blaggards Loose rooster Live music Dj Bosco 30th DECEMBER Bridge Lessons Haywire Ken & Steve The cozy gartel Mother and Toddler Group Dj Quinn 31st DECEMBER One to one	An Táin Blakes/ The Auld Sod Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars Dunlo Tavern Small Venue (Nightclub) Carlton Shearwater Hotel Hayden's Hotel Joe's Bar An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar Blakes/ The Auld Sod Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars Downey's Bar Dunlo Tavern East Nightclub Downey's Bar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Blakes/ The Auld Sod Maud Millars Downey's Bar Joe's Bar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Blakes/ The Auld Sod Maud Millars Dunlo Tavern East Nightclub Bridge Club Blakes/ The Auld Sod Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars Moycarn Lodge	9.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.30pm 11.00pm 12.00 am 9.00pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.30pm 10.30pm 11.00pm 10.30pm 11.00pm 10.30pm 10.00pm
My Brother Joe Show Live Music Too Tall Paul Paschal Brennan Live Acoustic Session One to One Dj Keith 28th DECEMBER Carlton Wedding Showcase Live music Eamon O ' Neill No half measures Live Dj Haywire Paschal Brennan Live music DJ set Too tall paul Dj Bosco 29th DECEMBER Keep her lit Sway Mike Denver Country Night Music & dance Blaggards Loose rooster Live music Dj Bosco 30th DECEMBER Bridge Lessons Haywire Ken & Steve The cozy gartel Mother and Toddler Group Dj Quinn 31st DECEMBER	An Táin Blakes/ The Auld Sod Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars Dunlo Tavern Small Venue (Nightclub) Carlton Shearwater Hotel Hayden's Hotel Joe's Bar An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar Blakes/ The Auld Sod Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars Downey's Bar Dunlo Tavern East Nightclub Downey's Bar Joe's Bar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Blakes/ The Auld Sod Maud Millars Dounlo Tavern East Nightclub Bridge Club Blakes/ The Auld Sod Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars Dunlo Tavern East Nightclub Bridge Club Blakes/ The Auld Sod Carlton Shearwater Hotel Maud Millars Moycarn Lodge Small Venue (Nightclub)	9.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 11.00pm 11.00pm 11.00pm 11.00pm 11.00pm 10.30pm 10.00pm 10.30pm 10.30pm 10.30pm 10.30pm 10.30pm 10.30pm 10.30pm 10.00pm

Live Dj	An Táin/ Upstairsbar	9.30pm
Michael Regan	Carlton Shearwater Hotel	10.00pm
The Gaegan Pagans	Maud Millars	10.00pm
New Years Eve Party	Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
DJ Bosco	East Nightclub	11.00pm
1st JANUARY Trad Session	An Táin	10.00nm
3rd JANUARY	All Idili	10.00pm
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans	An Táin	6.00pm
Brendan Grace Concert	Carlton Shearwater Hotel	7.00pm
Michael regan	Carlton Shearwater Hotel	10.00pm
4th JANUARY		
Buggy	An Táin/ Downstairsbar	9.30pm
Live DJ	An Táin/ Upstairsbar	9.30pm
Backstage	Carlton Shearwater Hotel	10.00pm
5th JANUARY	Caulton Chaamuraton Hatal	0.70
Michael English Country Night 6th JANUARY	Carlton Shearwater Hotel	9.30pm
Mother and Toddler Group	Moycarn Lodge	10.30am
7th JANUARY	rioyeani Louge	10.504111
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9.00pm
8th JANUARY		
Trad Session	An Táin	10.00pm
10th JANUARY		
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans	An Táin	9.30pm
Suite Sensation	Carlton Shearwater Hotel	10.00pm
11th JANUARY No half measures	An Táin/ Downstairsbar	9.30pm
Live DJ	An Táin/ Upstairsbar	9.30pm
Kiwi Paddy	Carlton Shearwater Hotel	10.00pm
12th JANUARY		. с. с с р
Jim Devine Country Night Music & dance	Carlton Shearwater Hotel	9.30pm
13th JANUARY		
Mother and Toddler Group	Moycarn Lodge	10.30am
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	8.00pm
14th JANUARY		
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9.00pm
15th JANUARY Trad Session	An Táin	10.00pm
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17th JANUARY		
17th JANUARY Trad and Folk music with The Beahans	An Táin	6.00pm
	An Táin Carlton Shearwater Hotel	6.00pm 10.00pm
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans		
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Checkers 18th JANUARY Al O'Connor	Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin/ Downstairsbar	
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Checkers 18th JANUARY Al O'Connor Live DJ	Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar	9.30pm 9.30pm
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Checkers 18th JANUARY Al O'Connor Live DJ Peter Boyle	Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin/ Downstairsbar	10.00pm 9.30pm
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Checkers 18th JANUARY Al O'Connor Live DJ Peter Boyle 19th JANUARY	Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar Carlton Shearwater Hotel	9.30pm 9.30pm 10.00pm
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Checkers 18th JANUARY AI O'Connor Live DJ Peter Boyle 19th JANUARY John McHicholl Country Night	Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar	9.30pm 9.30pm 10.00pm
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Checkers 18th JANUARY Al O'Connor Live DJ Peter Boyle 19th JANUARY John McHicholl Country Night 20th JANUARY	Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Carlton Shearwater Hotel	9.30pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 10.00pm
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Checkers 18th JANUARY AI O'Connor Live DJ Peter Boyle 19th JANUARY John McHicholl Country Night 20th JANUARY Mother and Toddler group	Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Carlton Shearwater Hotel Moycarn Lodge	9.30pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 10.00pm 9.30pm
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Checkers 18th JANUARY Al O'Connor Live DJ Peter Boyle 19th JANUARY John McHicholl Country Night 20th JANUARY	Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Carlton Shearwater Hotel	9.30pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 10.00pm
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Checkers 18th JANUARY AI O'Connor Live DJ Peter Boyle 19th JANUARY John McHicholl Country Night 20th JANUARY Mother and Toddler group Line Dancing	Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Carlton Shearwater Hotel Moycarn Lodge	9.30pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 10.00pm 9.30pm
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Checkers 18th JANUARY AI O'Connor Live DJ Peter Boyle 19th JANUARY John McHicholl Country Night 20th JANUARY Mother and Toddler group Line Dancing 21st JANUARY Tea Dance 22nd JANUARY	Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Carlton Shearwater Hotel Moycarn Lodge Gullane's Hotel Gullane's Hotel	10.00pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 10.00pm 9.30pm 10.30am 8.00pm 9.00pm
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Checkers 18th JANUARY Al O'Connor Live DJ Peter Boyle 19th JANUARY John McHicholl Country Night 20th JANUARY Mother and Toddler group Line Dancing 21st JANUARY Tea Dance 22nd JANUARY Trad session	Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Carlton Shearwater Hotel Moycarn Lodge Gullane's Hotel	10.00pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 10.00pm 9.30pm 10.30am 8.00pm
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Checkers 18th JANUARY AI O'Connor Live DJ Peter Boyle 19th JANUARY John McHicholl Country Night 20th JANUARY Mother and Toddler group Line Dancing 21st JANUARY Tea Dance 22nd JANUARY Trad session 24th JANUARY	Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Carlton Shearwater Hotel Moycarn Lodge Gullane's Hotel Gullane's Hotel An Táin	10.00pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 10.00pm 9.30pm 10.30am 8.00pm 9.00pm
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Checkers 18th JANUARY Al O'Connor Live DJ Peter Boyle 19th JANUARY John McHicholl Country Night 20th JANUARY Mother and Toddler group Line Dancing 21st JANUARY Tea Dance 22nd JANUARY Trad session 24th JANUARY Trad and Folk music with The Beahans	Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Carlton Shearwater Hotel Moycarn Lodge Gullane's Hotel Gullane's Hotel An Táin An Táin	10.00pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 10.00pm 9.30pm 10.30am 8.00pm 10.00pm 6.00pm
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Checkers 18th JANUARY AI O'Connor Live DJ Peter Boyle 19th JANUARY John McHicholl Country Night 20th JANUARY Mother and Toddler group Line Dancing 21st JANUARY Tea Dance 22nd JANUARY Trad session 24th JANUARY Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Peter Boyle	Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Carlton Shearwater Hotel Moycarn Lodge Gullane's Hotel Gullane's Hotel An Táin	10.00pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 10.00pm 9.30pm 10.30am 8.00pm 9.00pm
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Checkers 18th JANUARY Al O'Connor Live DJ Peter Boyle 19th JANUARY John McHicholl Country Night 20th JANUARY Mother and Toddler group Line Dancing 21st JANUARY Tea Dance 22nd JANUARY Trad session 24th JANUARY Trad and Folk music with The Beahans	Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Carlton Shearwater Hotel Moycarn Lodge Gullane's Hotel An Táin An Táin Carlton Shearwater Hotel	10.00pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 10.00pm 9.30pm 10.30am 8.00pm 9.00pm 10.00pm
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Checkers 18th JANUARY AI O'Connor Live DJ Peter Boyle 19th JANUARY John McHicholl Country Night 20th JANUARY Mother and Toddler group Line Dancing 21st JANUARY Tea Dance 22nd JANUARY Trad session 24th JANUARY Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Peter Boyle 25th JANUARY	Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Carlton Shearwater Hotel Moycarn Lodge Gullane's Hotel Gullane's Hotel An Táin An Táin	10.00pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 10.00pm 9.30pm 10.30am 8.00pm 10.00pm 6.00pm
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Checkers 18th JANUARY AI O'Connor Live DJ Peter Boyle 19th JANUARY John McHicholl Country Night 20th JANUARY Mother and Toddler group Line Dancing 21st JANUARY Tea Dance 22nd JANUARY Trad session 24th JANUARY Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Peter Boyle 25th JANUARY Shtick her down	Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Carlton Shearwater Hotel Moycarn Lodge Gullane's Hotel Gullane's Hotel An Táin Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin Carlton Shearwater Hotel	10.00pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 10.00pm 9.30pm 10.30am 8.00pm 9.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Checkers 18th JANUARY Al O'Connor Live DJ Peter Boyle 19th JANUARY John McHicholl Country Night 20th JANUARY Mother and Toddler group Line Dancing 21st JANUARY Tea Dance 22nd JANUARY Trad session 24th JANUARY Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Peter Boyle 25th JANUARY Shtick her down Live DJ	Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Carlton Shearwater Hotel Moycarn Lodge Gullane's Hotel Gullane's Hotel An Táin An Táin Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin - Downstairs Bar An Táin - Upstairs Bar	10.00pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 10.00pm 10.30am 8.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 9.30pm
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Checkers 18th JANUARY Al O'Connor Live DJ Peter Boyle 19th JANUARY John McHicholl Country Night 20th JANUARY Mother and Toddler group Line Dancing 21st JANUARY Tea Dance 22nd JANUARY Trad session 24th JANUARY Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Peter Boyle 25th JANUARY Shtick her down Live DJ Joe Glynn 26th JANUARY Johnny Brady Country Music & Dance	Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Carlton Shearwater Hotel Moycarn Lodge Gullane's Hotel Gullane's Hotel An Táin An Táin Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin - Downstairs Bar An Táin - Upstairs Bar	10.00pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 10.00pm 10.30am 8.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 9.30pm
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Checkers 18th JANUARY Al O'Connor Live DJ Peter Boyle 19th JANUARY John McHicholl Country Night 20th JANUARY Mother and Toddler group Line Dancing 21st JANUARY Tea Dance 22nd JANUARY Trad session 24th JANUARY Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Peter Boyle 25th JANUARY Shitck her down Live DJ Joe Glynn 26th JANUARY Johnny Brady Country Music & Dance 27th JANUARY	Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Carlton Shearwater Hotel Moycarn Lodge Gullane's Hotel Gullane's Hotel An Táin An Táin Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin - Downstairs Bar An Táin - Upstairs Bar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Carlton Shearwater Hotel	10.00pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 10.00pm 9.30pm 10.30am 8.00pm 9.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 9.30pm
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Checkers 18th JANUARY AI O'Connor Live DJ Peter Boyle 19th JANUARY John McHicholl Country Night 20th JANUARY Mother and Toddler group Line Dancing 21st JANUARY Tea Dance 22nd JANUARY Trad session 24th JANUARY Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Peter Boyle 25th JANUARY Shitck her down Live DJ Joe Glynn 26th JANUARY Johnny Brady Country Music & Dance 27th JANUARY Mother and Toddler group	Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Carlton Shearwater Hotel Moycarn Lodge Gullane's Hotel An Táin An Táin Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin - Downstairs Bar An Táin - Upstairs Bar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Carlton Shearwater Hotel Carlton Shearwater Hotel Moycarn Lodge	10.00pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 10.00pm 9.30pm 10.30am 8.00pm 9.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 10.00pm
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Checkers 18th JANUARY AI O'Connor Live DJ Peter Boyle 19th JANUARY John McHicholl Country Night 20th JANUARY Mother and Toddler group Line Dancing 21st JANUARY Tea Dance 22nd JANUARY Trad session 24th JANUARY Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Peter Boyle 25th JANUARY Shtick her down Live DJ Joe Glynn 26th JANUARY Johnny Brady Country Music & Dance 27th JANUARY Mother and Toddler group Line Dancing	Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Carlton Shearwater Hotel Moycarn Lodge Gullane's Hotel Gullane's Hotel An Táin An Táin Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin - Downstairs Bar An Táin - Upstairs Bar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Carlton Shearwater Hotel	10.00pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 10.00pm 9.30pm 10.30am 8.00pm 9.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 9.30pm
Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Checkers 18th JANUARY AI O'Connor Live DJ Peter Boyle 19th JANUARY John McHicholl Country Night 20th JANUARY Mother and Toddler group Line Dancing 21st JANUARY Tea Dance 22nd JANUARY Trad session 24th JANUARY Trad and Folk music with The Beahans Peter Boyle 25th JANUARY Shtick her down Live DJ Joe Glynn 26th JANUARY Mother and Toddler group Line Dance 27th JANUARY Mother and Toddler group Line Dancing 28th JANUARY	Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin/ Downstairsbar An Táin/ Upstairsbar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Carlton Shearwater Hotel Moycarn Lodge Gullane's Hotel An Táin An Táin Carlton Shearwater Hotel An Táin - Downstairs Bar An Táin - Upstairs Bar Carlton Shearwater Hotel Carlton Shearwater Hotel Moycarn Lodge Gullane's Hotel	10.00pm 9.30pm 9.30pm 10.00pm 9.30pm 10.30am 8.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 10.00pm 9.30pm 10.00pm 9.30pm 10.00pm 10.00pm
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Christmas Party Menu



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MAIN COURSES

Roast Stuffed Turkey & Ham with Chestnut Stuffing, Roast Gravy & Cranberry Tartlet.

Sirloin of Irish Beef, Oven Roasted with Crushed Black Peppercorns

Served with Yorkshire Pudding, Red Wine & Mushroom Sauce.

Oven Baked White Fish, on a bed of Stir Fry Vegetables

Duck Confit Leg with Potato & Scallion Stuffing & Orange Sauce

DESSERTS

Christmas Pudding with Rum & Raisin Ice-Cream.
Chocolate & Orange Mousse with White Chocolate Shavings.
Chestnut & Brandy Fruit Pavlova.
Tea/Coffee served with Mini Mince Pie.

New Operators for Dunlo St. Entertainment Venue

Loughrea businessman Finbarr Drayne had purchased The East (incorporating Blakes Bar and the Night Club) from the receivers and new operators have been appointed to redevelop the venue. 33-year-old Anthony Kilcar from Duniry, who has been in the Bar and Nightclub business for over 12 years, has teamed up with Michael Drayne to take the lease on the building and are to rebrand the Bar as *The Auld Sod* and make it a weekly live music venue.

The premises employs four full-time and twelve part-time staff and retained all the existing team on handover. "We see huge potential for a quality entertainment venue in Ballinasloe and are looking forward to rolling out our plans and meeting our new customers" said Anthony. Anthony can be contacted on the premises and on 086 0274888. The East Nightclub Facebook page will have regular updates on the Christmas and New Year events and offers.

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Still Going Strong in 90th Year

By Pamela Ryan

Walking into the house in Brackernagh, it is difficult not to notice the mountains of birthday cards and presents filling the front room. This is, of course, the house of Teresa Murphy who recently celebrated her 90th birthday!

Part of a traditionally large Irish family, Teresa (nee Rankin) is the eldest of 11 children and was born back in 1923 at The Lodge in Castlegar, Ahascragh. At the age of two she and her family moved to Brackernagh and she has lived in there ever since. As a native of Ballinasloe she first attended the Mercy Convent National School before moving on to the local "Technical School", according to her sister Carmel. Teresa said she did not mind going to school and due to the large number of students per class, she always had numerous friends. Her family laughingly bring up the subject of 'the cane' at school to which Teresa replied: "I can't ever remember getting that."

From school Teresa moved on at just 14 years old to work in the Dubarry shoe factory here in town. Beginning on November 1, 1938, Teresa continued to work there for over 40 years. Her sister Carmel said Teresa always had "Great respect for the Scott family, whom she worked for" and that the family always looked after Teresa well. Through all her hard work there she was even promoted to supervisor. "She was offered the job of supervisor but she couldn't do it because she couldn't give orders to the rest of them," said niece, Ursula Gannon, about Teresa's friends in Dubarry. Carmel said Teresa always enjoyed the "happy atmosphere at work" and the singing and dancing that would go on, especially when Dubarry employees put on shows.

Teresa's only child, a daughter by the name of Marcella, used to love waiting for her mother to arrive home every Friday night from work at the factory. "Friday night was our party night," she said about all the sweets and biscuits Teresa would bring home from work.



"We'd all be looking forward to her coming home on a Friday night with all the party stuff from Dubarry."

Despite Teresa's momentous age, she still recalls a lot from her youth here in Ballinasloe. The first thing that came to mind was her father Michael, whom she fondly remembers as "Pop". Her father used to work on the old railway line before "he worked on the canal as well," said Teresa. Michael Rankin worked on the canal for Guinness but he was also the first man to drive the lorry for Guinness. "First man to deliver Guinness by lorry," said Carmel proudly, before noting that he'd also worked with Mayor Mike Kelly's father, Tony Kelly.

Teresa's great-grandfather was also a coachman for Lord and Lady Mahon in his time and worked for them "all his working years," according to Carmel. Teresa's late brother, Tom, came to mind also. He was a great singer, known for his appearance in all the musicals and Carmel said he was very good to Teresa right until the end. Teresa cycled everywhere and every Sunday she would do so for miles and miles. When her brother Declan was in hospital for many weeks she would often cycle all the way to Galway, with her late husband Christie. whom she was married to for 67 years. just to see him. Family has always been and still is, very important to Teresa.

Teresa also remembers a lot of the town and how it has changed over the decades. "There was the pictures and at home when the music would go on Pop would bring me out dancing," said Teresa adding that one would want to be at the pictures very early to get a seat on a Sunday at Swanwicks. She remembers that there were no cars around and turf was brought back from the bog using donkeys and carts, not tractors. She has seen the traffic in the area build and build and the retail centre too, as shops have popped up over the years. The Rankin family used to send the order in for their groceries every week to Grenhams and were loyal customers, only going to Jackie Hogan's for "bits and bobs during the week," according to Carmel. Teresa also saw money stretch a lot further in years gone by than it does today.

Mayor Mike Kelly also reminisces over his memories of Teresa from his youth. "We used always get money off these elderly people going to the pictures on a Saturday when we were growing up." Teresa puts her health and age down to "hard work" and having never smoked. She has lived all her life with a positive attitude and "I've never had a row with anybody," she said. Leaving the festivities of the day, Mayor Mike called out: "I'll be back next year for part two Teresa!"



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Ardscoil Mhuire's Calamity Jane Production

Ardscoil Mhuire recently staged the musical, *Calamity Jane*. Following the success of shows like *Back to the 80s* and *All Shook up* this classic was embraced enthusiastically by the girls of Ardscoil Mhuire and their fellow Transition Year students in Garbally College. Clare Callaghan took the lead as Jane. Among the other principals were Jack Kelly (Wild Bill Hickcock), Tara Ryan (Lieutenant), Danny Gilmartin, Grace Dooley (Katie Brown), Rafeek Khan (Henry Miller), Genevieve

Duncan (Adelaide Adams), Ciara Fletcher (Susan Miller) and Nadine Kenny (Francis Fryer). There was also a strong team behind the scenes. Joint Musical Directors were music teachers, Caroline Jackson and Maeve Higgins, Choreography was managed by Aoife O'Grady and Director was Eoin Croffy, Stage Manager was Reece Fahy and Set Construction was by Pat Byrne. It was a great success and created great memories for all involved, some are looking forward to next year already!

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By Pat Johnston

There was laughter and tears, music and song, stories and even dancing when generations of Creagh old and young, as well as many who had long left the parish, gathered last month for the closing mass and deconsecration of St. Brigid's Hospital Church which as MC Maria Donoghue said "holds personal and special memories for so many people."

Bishop John Kirby was chief celebrant along with Fr. Bernie Costello, Chaplain Fr. John Killeen, Toher, and Monsignor Cathal Geraghty, Loughrea. Also present were members of the Mercy and Franciscan Sisters, past and present staff, patients, neighbours and friends of the hospital community. It was a commemoration of all who lived, worked and used the services of the hospital over the 180 years.

Among the offertory gifts was a set of keys which evoked different emotions from staff, patients and visitors and which, Fr. Bernie remarked in his commentary, had now been replaced by swipe cards! Following the celebration of the Sunday liturgy which was also an anniversary mass for Tom Broderick, Creagh, there was a short ceremony of deconsecration which involved the removal in procession of the Blessed Sacrament, altar stone, Book of the Gospels, the sanctuary lamp, candles and silk altar cloths, the latter being a gift from India presented by physiotherapist Ciaran Gaffey who now lives in Canada.

Proceedings were greatly enhanced by the community singing and the wonderful traditional music provided by the local Comhaltas group as well as other musicians who had often played there down through the years.

Adrian Ahearn, recently retired from his management role in the hospital, spoke about the church as an integral part of the holistic service and caring for the

whole person that was always practised in St. Brigid's where there was also a Church of Ireland chapel until recently. In referring to change and the embracing of new thinking which had always been a hallmark of the hospital he noted the pioneering work of Dr. Ada English who introduced recreational activities. occupational therapy and ECT in her time from 1904-1943. Mental health services had now moved he said "from being hospital based to integrated services which are in and of the community."

Speaking on the behalf of the wider community, Gearóid Geraghty recalled working in the hospital in his younger days saying that what struck him most was the kindness of staff towards the patients "who always came first." The hospital then was a full community with its own farm, butcher and baker. Over time the church had seen baptisms, weddings and funerals as well as masses with two staff members Fr. Ray Sweeney and Fr. PJ Madden, who had gone on to be ordained priests. He said that the church was always a great place to bring children, a great place for liturgies that were never dull or longwinded.

The community, he said, was very lucky with the priests who ministered in St. Brigid's from its first chaplain, Fr. John Higgins, to Fr. Benny Flanagan, Fr. John Killeen of Toher and Fr. John Killeen of Shannonbridge. But he had special praise and good wishes for the present incumbent, Fr. Bernie Costello, "a man of patience and understanding who always made time for people and whose sermons covered the essentials and kept us interested." Those sentiments were endorsed by the congregation who gave a standing ovation to Fr. Costello.

Bishop Kirby traced the story of the church buildings in the hospital going back to the 1850's when Bishop John Derry and Archdeacon Dillon of the Ballinasloe parish lobbied the governors of the hospital to provide for a Roman Catholic place of worship. In 1856 Fr.

John Kirwan was the first priest to celebrate mass in that cut stone chapel which still stands.

That building was replaced by the more modern light-filled church which was consecrated on March 21st, 1971. Bishop Thomas Ryan consecrated the building and the then Fr. Joe Cassidy preached the sermon. There too were Fathers Ger O'Shea, Pat Bruen and Declan Gordon while Eugene Creavan and Brendan Payne were altar servers. In 1977 Fr Higgins was appointed chaplain, to be followed by Fr. Benny Flanagan in 1989 and Fr. Bernie was appointed in 1996.

The Bishop acknowledged the sadness of those who worked and worshipped in the church and said the affection and attachment of the people was obvious in their responses. But, he said 'we can now celebrate a new way of looking at mental health issues with the development of community houses', adding that he hoped that the acute facilities will continue and be maintained in Ballinasloe. He thanked the HSE and their predecessors for the support and maintenance of the building and for its use during the time Creagh Church was closed for refurbishment.

Fr. Bernie reminded all present that the church was the people of God and more important than any building. He shared reminiscences of Christmas Eve masses, St. Patrick's Day liturgies the annual pilgrimage to Lourdes as well as other anecdotes. The church, he said, had been a place of sanctuary and quiet reflection, an asylum, a focal point where local residents and hospital staff and patients came together, a place of heartfelt prayers and intercessions.

St. Brigid's Heritage group have already begun to record and document the history of the place and they will be hoping to record the memories and conserve the photographs and memorabilia of what was such an important part of the life and heritage of Ballinasloe.



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Aughrim's Coach House Art Group

The Coach House Art Group, Aughrim, recently celebrated the launch of their exhibition at Crumbs and Cream in Ballinasloe. Officially opened by Michael Breathnach of the Oat Gallery, who also curated the exhibition, there were 30 paintings on display. On behalf of the relatively new group, tutor Jackie Eastwood expressed her delight at the standard of work and said the artists should be very proud of their achievements. She highlighted the recreational enjoyment of art as a hobby and especially the social benefits developing new friendships for all ages. The exhibition will continue through December and the paintings would make an ideal Christmas gift.



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Breaking in is Pat's Business

Writes Ken Kelly

For the past twenty years he has been forcing his way into houses and businesses, opening locked cars and cracking safes, all with the backing of the Gardaí! That's the life of Ballinasloe locksmith Pat Harney, one of the sixty bona-fide locksmiths in Ireland.

Pat embarked on this unusual career in 1992, when there was a big demand for locks in PVC type doors. "I had been cutting keys since the mid 80's as a sideline to our Dry-Cleaning business in Dunlo St. Then came along the PVC doors and windows and people were enquiring about locks, so I took the plunge and underwent a three-year course to become a locksmith" Pat explained, who still does extension classes as security and technology changes continuously.

"The specialised course was run in both Dublin and Belfast but candidates were thoroughly vetted and had to produce a number of references before being accepted. As from next year every locksmith has to be licenced, by the Government, to operate legally. There are only about sixty bona fide members in the country, with only five operating in Co. Galway," he said. His son Patrick, who is Treasurer of the Association, is also a certified locksmith and operates in Athlone. He is only one of the two covering all of counties Westmeath and Meath.

Pat Harney said the hours are unsociable, operating 24/7, but there is a certain amount of satisfaction in his work. "We have had to rescue kids from motorcars after they locked themselves in, freed people from bedrooms after they had locked the doors and lost the keys, forced our ways into homes where sick people were unable to get out of bed as well as facilitating key holders who has lost their keys. Of course we were also called by the Gardaí to gain entry when the resident unfortunately had not been seen for some time and usually this meant a grim discovery," he told me.

Backed by a number of Gardaí and the Sheriff, Pat also had to visit premises, on the instructions of a financial institution to change locks or secure the premises. "I was never threatened

or abused on any occasion but I found it sad that these things had to be done," said Pat.

Pat operates his business in conjunction with his Dry-Cleaning and Laundry outlet in Dunlo St. "We cut every type of key as well as providing floor safes, new break-secure cylinders for all properties, secret key minders and that all important universal key-opener. People are more security-conscious now. They want alarm systems, burglar-proof locks, one key for all doors, auto-pads etc., but they can still lose keys," declared Pat, who urged everybody to be more careful in minding keys.

He said it was a good idea to give an extra key to a trusty neighbour for use in case of emergency but if entry could not be gained then Pat at 087 2941416 would only be too happy to come to the rescue at any hour.

So what dilemma has Pat not yet been called to? "Well to be honest we still have not been called to rescue 'The Three Old Ladies Locked in a Lavatory' but I'm sure that is still a possibility" he said.







Wishing you all a Happy Christmas and Best Wishes for 2014

Call: 090 9643241 or 086 2452561 Email: principalpat@eircom.net



By Frances Leahy

It's that time of the year when the members of Ballinasloe Musical Society start preparing for their annual production. 2014 will bring the well known Musical *Me & My Girl* to the Town Hall Theatre from Tuesday March 11 to Saturday March 15. A musical with lots of humour, dance numbers, wit, charm and deft expertise, along with great musical numbers such as *The Lambeth Walk, The Sun Has Got It's Hat On* and *Leaning On a Lamp Post*, this show promises to be a musical treat for all the family.

Following the success of the 2013 production of *The Pirates* of *Penzance* the society are delighted to welcome back the same production team for this show with Paul Norton,

Director; Shane Farrell, Musical Director and Sarah Griffin, Choreographer. The fun has started with rehearsals in Gullane's Hotel and chorus numbers and laughter can be heard coming from the meeting rooms on a regular basis. There is still time to join in the fun and new members are very welcome to come along.

The society staged Me & My Girl in 1999 for which it received three National AIMS (Association of Irish Musical Societies) nominations and was thoroughly enjoyed by both audiences and cast alike. We look forward to an equally enjoyable and successful show for 2014.

For further information or indeed if you are interested in joining, contact Frances Leahy on 087 222 0282.

Devlin's Children's Christmas Book Launch

Gerry Devlin, launched his new book in Salmon's recently. The book entitled *Dear Santa* is targeted at parents and children. The book is both funny and serious according to the author. Inspiration for the story first struck during Gerry's everyday routine of walking his dogs in the bogs, snapping shots with his camera and working in his shed behind his home. While the title may give it away as being 'just for Christmas', Gerry said: "The all year long problems it highlights are too serious

for just a Christmas read." The Book highlights how important it is to look after the future we leave for our children. "We should leave them a clean and safe one. Hopefully, this book and our children will teach us how." The book even has some workbook elements to it. Gerry would like to extend his thanks to some of the local children involved in the creation of this book. The book is priced at €8 and will make an ideal stocking filler for Christmas.

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Ria Purcell's Greek Connection

By Pamela Ryan

Born and raised in Kilgarve Court in Creagh, Ria Purcell has made a successful dance performance career, beginning at just three-years-old!

One of Ria's earliest memories is working with the Ballinasloe Musical Society and singing Me and My Shadow alone on stage in front of a crowded theatre at such a young age. Ria regularly performed with the society growing up as she took up piano playing and ballet classes from three-years-old, as well as singing in St. Michael's Choir.

Ria's love of music, dancing and musical theatre comes from her late mother, Kay Purcell. "My love for music and dance just grew from there and I owe all my success to my mother and to my father, who claims I got my music from my mother and my side-step from him! My parents supported me every step of the way, without which I would not be where I am today and doing what I love," said Ria.

Ria attended Creagh National School and Ardscoil Mhuire but never truly enjoyed the academic side of her schooling. "I was always a more artistic and creative type of person and just knew that I had to follow that path in some form." Before beginning Transition Year at school, Ria, along with her mother's guidance, contemplated leaving school and going on to study dance full-time. "Music and dance just always made me feel so happy and to an extent, in my own world," she said, before admitting that while it is better to start dance-training at as young an age as possible, she simply was not ready to leave home. "I just didn't feel ready to move away from home





and live alone so I decided to finish my studies, get my Leaving Cert and take it from there. It was definitely the best choice!"

After finishing her state exams, Ria auditioned for a two-year full-time Diploma in Dance at the College of Dance in Monkstown, Dublin. "I completed a rigorous two-year full-time training there, which was 9.30am to 6.30pm everyday and we took classes daily in ballet, jazz, contemporary, tap, body conditioning and dance history." While there, she was also one of the lucky few chosen to take private dancing lessons at the Royal Academy of Music in Dublin.

Succeeding from here, Ria graduated and was accepted for a full-time threeyear Professional Diploma in Dance and Musical Theatre at the Urdang Academy in Covent Garden, London. Her three years there were extremely intense, working daily from 8.45am until 7.30pm. "We had regular assessments in every dance style and had many projects throughout the three years including writing a musical in our final year!"

"Many people think that life as a dancer is very glamorous and exciting - which it is - but in order to get to that level you must struggle through years of aching muscles, joints, bones, injuries, blistered feet, exhaustion etc." Apart from the physical manifestations of pain, Ria said a dancer has to be mentally strong to survive in the industry too. One can go into an audition and give it their all and hear ten to one hundred no's

before they get the coveted 'ves', "With the industry growing, there's already thousands of dancers and singers out there all looking for that same job as you want. There's also new, younger and fresher competition graduating from all the colleges in London and the UK every year," she said before adding: "It is also an industry in which, no matter what job you get it is not permanent." Most dancers' contracts only last from six months to a year, according to Ria, so she is most fortunate to constantly be in work since her graduation.

After leaving the Urdang Academy as a graduate, she auditioned for various jobs all around the world and felt extremely lucky to have been accepted for a job in Greece "as a commercial, hip-hop dancer on a six-month contract." Ria moved to Greece a month later, having won-out over 250 girls for that position. Once that contract was up she began working for another choreographer there and decided to stay in Greece, at the same time as beginning to sing at the same venue she worked in. After some time she started to teach dance in the genres of jazz, hip-hop and contemporary in many schools in Thessaloniki.

Having worked consistently in such a difficult industry is Ria's greatest career achievement but her "life's greatest achievement is having been fortunate enough to fulfil my dream, which I had from such a young age," as not everyone is lucky enough to do. Ria has also recorded many songs in corroboration with songwriters in Greece and "I was asked to feature in a new upcoming RnB track with a famous Greek rapper, which is out for release within the next few months!"



Panto Preview

By Pamela Ryan

It is Panto time again! This year the townsfolk will be staging Snow White and the Vertically Challenged Excavators. This much loved fairy tale will get a unique style revamp with a cast flushed with new and old talent. The cast consists of over 150 people – short and tall – and will take to the Town Hall Theatre this December.

The Panto "promises to be a biggy," according to Pat Vaughan, who will play Muddles, Snow White's confused best friend. The leading lady, Jennifer Clogher said: "There's so much happening in this year's show to tickle everyone's fancy, if you blink you'll miss something!" Fergal D'Arcy takes on the role of the love struck, over-zealous, not too bright and somewhat misguided prince. He himself has said he promises not to go into the audience much.

Creagh's very own Mary Brody transforms into the good fairy this year and is showing a bright future ahead of her on the stage. The stage will be filled with not just the 'usual suspects' but also a lot of new talent with Dave Hardiman playing the Magic Mirror with a lisp and a distinct disregard for clothing. Majella Flanagan will take to the stage as the Panto Dame in a performance that is sure to leave the audience rolling in the aisles laughing. Louise McEvoy will be travelling all the way from Tullamore to take on the role of the most evil of all queens, who will try to sabotage true love and shove poisoned apples down the throat of the unsuspecting princess.



The band of unemployed, erratic, flatulent, sneezing and mixed-up, not-so-vertically-challenged dwarves are being represented by Mike O'Reilly, Brian Derrane, Declan Finn, Eoin Quinn, Aidan Flanagan and David Kennedy. David, a newcomer to the Panto, has since been selected to perform on this year's Late Late Toy Show! The seventh dwarf however is still a secret and will not be revealed until the curtain goes up.

The Panto is sure to kick off the festive season with a bang and is not to be missed. Running from December 9th to 15th in the Town Hall, the show begins nightly at 7.30pm with two extra fancy dress matinees on December 14 and 15 at 2.30pm where both children and adults alike are invited to come as their favourite Disney character with prizes for the best dressed.

Pre-booking is recommended. The booking office can be found at J&S Photos on Society Street. Call 090 963 1566 or buy your tickets at the door.







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New Cross for Creagh Graveyard

By Pat Johnston

A very simple, but moving, ecumenical service was given by Fr. John Garvey P.P. Ballinasloe, Rev. George Flynn, Rector of Aughrim and Ballinasloe parishes and Fr. Bernie Costello, Chaplain of St. Brigid's Hospital. They prayed with those present for all who were buried in the six cemeteries within the grounds.

Welcoming all present, John Molloy, the Chairman of Creagh Community Development Council (CCDC) said that the cross was erected to honour all who had been buried in Creagh, 'good and saintly people, babies and the unknown'. He made special mention of the religious sisters who had worked in the parish and those who had died in St. Brigid's Hospital down through the years, since its foundation in 1837.

Following a reading from St. Paul, Fr. Garvey said that the cross was a reminder of Christ's suffering and his victory over death. After the blessing of the crucifix by Fr. Garvey, the assembly sang *The Old Rugged Cross*. Music was provided by

Tom Quinn and Bobby Kilkenny.

The assembly then moved to the Church of Ireland cemetery which has been beautifully restored. Praising the work of Creagh Community Development Council, Rev. George Flynn said that the graveyard was now a wonderful space, 'a place of reflection and peace.'

The crucifix, which is erected on a base of Galway limestone at the east wall of the main cemetery, is the work of Martin Curley of Curley Stone, Ballydangan. It was donated by Creagh Community Development Council who have spent over €18,000 on improvements to the cemetery.

There are ruined remains of three church buildings all within a few hundred metres of each other in the graveyard: the Church of Ireland chapel, the first RC church from 1701, the second RC church from 1825. The cemetery has been used by the community, including the religious sisters, St. Brigid's Hospital and the HSE. There too lie the remains of Matt Harris and Dr. Ada English, both

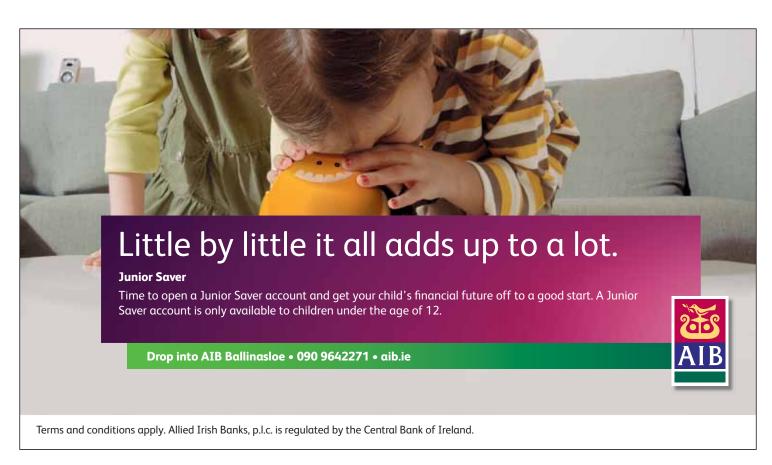


of whom, although not born in the area, dedicated their lives to improving the lot of the people among whom they lived.

John Molloy acknowledged all the voluntary work done by the committee to enhance and restore the cemeteries. He said that they were negotiating with heritage and planning authorities to lift the 31 fallen headstones into their original positions and he also pointed to a space which would now be made available for the internment of urns following cremations.











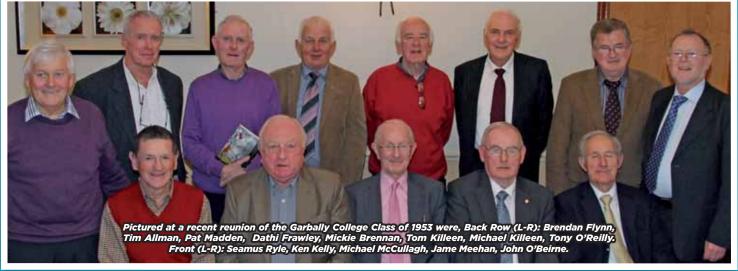
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This Scheme has officially signed up 20 businesses who have committed to becoming Age Friendly. Each has completed and signed an Age Friendly Charter which identifies three actions that they are taking to make their business more Age Friendly, e.g. discounts for older customers, better accessibility inside the premises, more focus on customer service and the needs of

older people. 'Mystery Shoppers' will be visiting the businesses during the Christmas period and an Age Friendly marketing brochure has being developed to promote the Age Friendly services that businesses are offering in the town. If any business in the Ballinasloe area would like to join the Age Friendly Business Recognition Scheme, you can email Shane@ageingwellnetwork.ie or you can contact the Ageing Well Network Head Office on 01 612 7040.





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Fair & Festival A Great Success

By Adrian Ahern

As the curtain closes on the 2013 Horse Fair I would like to thank all of our sponsors for their financial support, without it the there would be no Festival. The full list of all those that contributed in 2013 is on our website www.ballinasloecreditunion.ie. As we head into the Christmas season I would ask the people of Ballinasloe to show their support to our sponsors by shopping local this Christmas. To the thousands of people who visited out Town during the nine-day festival I hope you enjoyed your stay and left with fond memories of your time in Ballinasloe. Without the Horse buyers or Sellers the Fair would not exist and the people of Ballinasloe are indebted to your continued support for our Fair. I look forward to seeing you all back in Ballinasloe for the 2014 Fair and Festival, which takes place from the 5th to 12th October 2014.





Ballinasloe Show 2013 Success



By Pat O'Sullivan

The 174th Annual Ballinasloe Show proved to be a great success. Once again the Show's Chairman, Rev Fr. Christy McCormack used his influence with the Lord and the show was blessed with beautiful weather, to help with the preparations for the event and on the day itself. Shirt sleeve weather was the order of the day. This without doubt also helped in the large entries in the various classes held in the Showgrounds, especially in the horse and fowl classes. It also brought a great number of patrons through the gates.

Over recent years the interest in the fowl classes has increased and the number of entries has grown enormously which shows a great growth in the numbers and variety of fowl being bred and reared by people. Entries to the show come from far and near.

In the cattle and sheep classes there was a very high quality of animal and this was referred to by the judges in these classes. There are now some rules and regulations being introduced by the Department in relation to showing of cattle at shows. A Certificate of Compliance has to now be obtained prior to the movement of cattle to a show. This certificate has to be provided to the Show Secretary and only cattle so certified

can be shown on show day. There were very good entries in the Charolais, Saler and Belgian Blue classes. In the sheep events the standard in purebred and commercial entries were very high indeed.

Of course Ballinasloe itself and especially the Show is synonymous with the horse. Being the last major outdoor show of the year it gives the breeders and owners one last chance to parade their animals in as fine a show arena as there is anywhere in the country and in perfect conditions. Hence entries come from all provinces and almost all counties. The numbers entered in the various classes, especially ridden ponies and mare and foal classes were high indeed.

Over the years, the Irish Shows Association in conjunction with Ballinasloe Show has been holding All-Ireland Championships in various classes on Show Day. In 2013 there were five All-Irelands held, in Connemara Fillies and Mares, Irish Draught Colt Foal, Irish Draught Filly Foal, the Gain Colt Foal and something very unique, the Donkey Mare and Foal All-Ireland Championship. The competitors in all the championships had qualified at various shows throughout Ireland from May to September. These classes are a major attraction in the show ring and bring patrons from all over the country to see animals of the highest quality being judged and see if the agree with the verdicts. To win one of these championships is without doubt something to be proud of.

So the 2013 show has come and gone and now preparations can start for 2014. President, Joe Brooks and Chairman, Fr. Christy McCormack would like to thank everyone who helped in making the 2013 show the resounding success it was, their hard working committee, especially Secretary, John Harney, all the Stewards, Photographer, Gerry Stronge, the Judges, Ballinasloe Town Council, the Gardai and anyone who helped in any way. However, they had a very special word of thanks for those who were sponsors of the show. Without our sponsors, the Chairman said, we would not have a show. He sincerely appreciated their generosity in these difficult times financially. Go mbeirimid beo ar an am seo arís.



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Revamped Mummers Festival

By Michael Mullins

When everyone else is enjoying the Christmas break, the Committee of the New Inn Mummers festival will be putting the final touches to arrangements for the Annual festival which takes place on Saturday, January 4th and Sunday, January 5th, 2014, in New Inn Leisure Centre. This unique festival of Music, Song, Dance and Storytelling is being staged for the 36th time and continues to grow in popularity.

This year's format has been revamped, to cater for a new Juvenile Competition for performers Under-13 and this will be staged on the Sunday afternoon in conjunction with the Junior event for those Under-18. The Organisers decided to add a Juvenile competition so as to develop young talent that will be the lifeblood of the festival for the future and to acknowledge the great work being done by music teachers throughout the region. The Senior event, as usual, will



be staged on Saturday night and early indications are that there will be plenty of competition for the Peter J. Donohue Perpetual Trophy.

Mummers festival Secretary, Michael Finnerty urges groups to confirm their participation as soon as possible and he can be contacted on 087 3828281. "We are delighted to have a new competition for the Juveniles this year," he added.

The festival Chairman, Michael Mullins, confirmed to *Ballinasloe Life*, that thanks to the generous sponsors of the festival, there will be cash prizes and trophies

for winning groups and many individual prizes to recognise talented Singers, Musicians, Dancers and Storytellers. There will be a special award this year to honour the late Joe Monaghan of Rahan, who contributed much to the festival over the years.

The Mummers festival is organised under the auspices of New Inn community Council and 36 years ago it emerged as an idea to raise funds for badly needed community facilities. Today the festival is helping to enhance those facilities for the youth in the area.

The festival Committee can guarantee you a feast of wonderful traditional entertainment in New Inn on the 4th and 5th January, in a well heated and comfortable venue and they would be delighted to welcome new groups and Patrons to festival 2014. What better way to bring down the curtain on the Christmas festivities and get your New Year off to a good start.

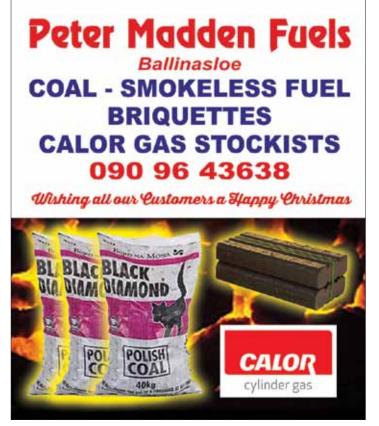


Strictly Come Dancing

Ballinasloe Pádraig Pearses GAA Club held a *Strictly Come Dancing Night* to raise funds for their club, which was held at Gullane's Hotel, Ballinasloe recently. The fundraiser was a great success and was very well supported and thoroughly enjoyed by all. The winners of the fundraiser were Olivia (Colleran) Kelly and Kevin Ward, who danced their hearts out to raise funds for the local South Roscommon Club.









Gables Art Group's Annual Exhibition

The Gables Art Group recently held their Annual Exhibition of Paintings 2013 in Gullane's Hotel. The three day event exhibited work from local artists such as Mary Frances Ahern; Elsie Begley; Pauline Bourke; Annette Carey; Mary Carey; Niamh Cavanagh and Peg Clogher to name just a few. The artists showcasing has a variety of different mediums on show including acrylic paintings, oil paintings, watercolour works, sculptures and pieces engaging in a variety of mixed media. Any of these works would make excellent gifts and if anyone would like to purchase one of the pieces of art in time for Christmas contact Máire Ward 086 165 7491, Betty Noone 087 236 0319 and Jackie Eastwood 087 234 1535.



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Literary Day Success Continues

By Maureen Cahalan

Writers, poets, readers and listeners were in attendance for the Ballinasloe Literary Day organised by Community Hearts. Each year the success of the day is growing such is the interest from local and national writers. The occasion this year was part of The Gathering and was officiated by the town Mayor Mike Kelly in Gullane's Hotel.

Hosted by RTÉ's Ciana Campbell, along with an array of local and national authors, the day was a marvellous success. Ciana was thrilled to be back, to support the Literary Day. She was overwhelmed by the standards delivered on the day and remarked that the interest taken demonstrated that the event was oversubscribed, to the delight of the audience present.

"The stories and poetry are all of human interest. There was a wonderful sense of belonging among today's authors and poets. I have lived in a few places and cannot ever recall meeting a group so grounded and rooted in their home town," said Ciana. "The art



of writing is a wonderful gift to share with so many interested and interesting people. I am also very taken by the way each person opened their minds and hearts through their work. This is very encouraging especially as it keeps the arts active and very much alive." Author Emer Connolly gave a wonderful and well attended journalism course for the event. The feedback from this

workshop was wonderful and inspiring according to the budding junior writers who attended the morning workshop.

Contact Ballinasloe Community Hearts Secretary, Maureen Cahalan, on 087 678 7667 for enrolment on the Memoir workshop with Mary Mullen. It's a three-hour workshop followed by a two-hour fortnightly course for six weeks.

Golf Club Groundsman Retires

Johnny Quinn has been a part of the Ballinasloe Golf Club for more than 40 years of his life and has very recently retired. Johnny first started out in the bar of the club before moving on to the maintenance of grounds. Club Captain, Joe Gaffney, said that in all his time there Johnny has made a fantastic contribution to the club. "He'll probably make history at the club because no one else has ever been there that long I don't think," he said before adding: "He's going to be



missed; he was a very pleasant man, very well liked and probably knew everyone who had anything to do with golfing in the area." Johnny had a lot of experience that the club are sorry to see go and hope will be left behind in others at the club. A presentation was made to Johnny at his retirement party in the Golf Club. The huge turnout to the party proved how much of an impact Johnny has had on the lives of the workers and members of the club.

Ardscoil Mhuire Gathering Night

By Pamela Ryan

Ardscoil Mhuire Parents Association had their Gathering in Gullane's Hotel recently and would like to thank all those who supported this fundraiser so generously. An enjoyable night was had by all with entertainment provided by the Ardscoil Mhuire Trad group under the guidance of music teacher Maeve Higgins. Thanks to past pupil Rachael Goode who delighted all with her talented voice and to Brendan Loughnane who kept us dancing until late.

A special presentation was made to Ann Marie Hayes in recognition of her achievements with the Galway Camogie All-Ireland winning team and Ann Marie proudly brought the O'Duffy and the McCarthy cups on the night. Some memorable singing and dancing by past pupils added to the night's festivities. Sincere thanks to all local businesses who sponsored prizes especially: Topaz, Brackernagh; the Carlton Shearwater Hotel; Beechlawn Organic Farm; Holly's Pharmacy; Dolan's Centra; Ambrose and Mary Cuddy; Salmons; Hogartys; Athlone Chimney; Jorenas; Tranquility; Fletchers Expert Electrical; Gibbons Pillar House; Crumbs and Cream; Greene's Forge; Donnelly's Florist and especially our hosts Gullane's Hotel.

Funds raised are contributing to the recent extension of the school and our thanks to all who gave so generously in these difficult times. Our annual 25 Card game shall be held in January and we look forward to meeting our regular supporters of this great night out, details shall be available closer to the event.

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Nuala Ní Chonchúir Book Launch

By Pamela Ryan

There was a very pleasant gathering recently at Tosnú Art Gallery, Brackernagh for the launch of Nuala Ní Chonchúir's latest offering of Dublin and Other Fictions, a chapbook of flash fiction from Tower Press.

The event was hosted by the Group 8 Artist Collective of which Nuala is a member. Following the launch by Galway writer Maureen Gallagher, Nuala read from her new book and then she signed copies for the many people who bought it both for themselves and as early Christmas presents. Food and wine was served in the very pleasant surroundings of Tosnú Art Gallery.

Traditionally a chapbook was "A small book or pamphlet containing poems, ballads, stories, or religious tracts" but the term is still used today to refer to short, inexpensive booklets. But nowadays one hears more about 'flash fiction', which Nuala describes as a term that was coined in the US in the 1990's. But, she says very short stories have existed as long as stories have been told or written, referencing Anton Chekov and Raymond Carver as exponents of the genre.

She says, "In my world a flash has about 500 words and is part poem, part story. Plot is not as crucial as atmosphere and significant detail and for me, language is paramount. Though short on words, the flash story is long on depth and should sting like good poetry: punchy, succinct and surprising. The best flash will shift the reader's heart but also keep it beating hard."

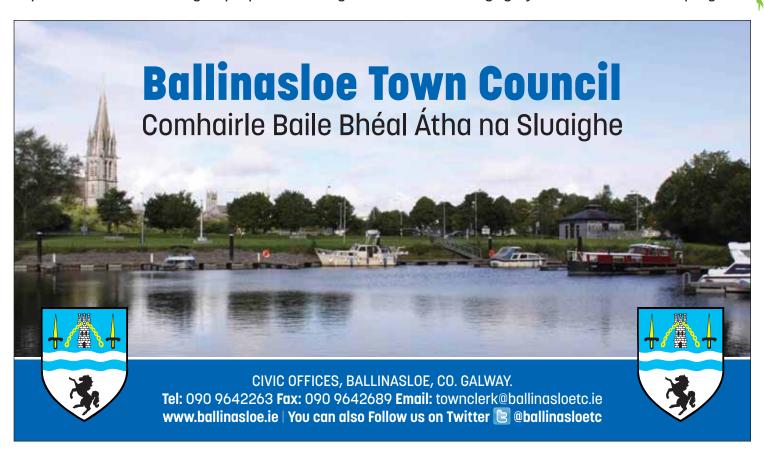
Speaking at the launch, Nuala told me that flash fiction suits our times. "Its easy to publish, it suits the internet. Writers like it because it's a short commitment, not like writing a novel. Readers like the small bit of literature in their day."

Critic Rich Rennicks has said of the book: "All-in-all, Of Dublin, is a satisfying and exciting read, full of beautiful language, vivid emotions and unexpected situations. There are a couple of pieces I could almost imagine people memorising like



poetry and certain stories I'd love to see performed at a poetry slam. Of Dublin and Other Fictions is an exciting book that showcases the breath and depth of its author's artistic sensibility and reminds us that she is one of the most versatile and talented writers anywhere."

Nuala Ní Chonchúir is a short story writer, novelist and poet, born in Dublin and living in Ballinasloe. Her fourth short story collection *Mother America* was published by New Island in May 2012. She will be guest fiction editor for the Spring 2014 issue of *The Stinging Fly*. Her second novel is out spring 2014.



Matt Harris: Land & Revolution

By Barry Lally

Entering Creagh Cemetery by the main gateway the first imposing monument you see on the left is a particularly tall Celtic cross that was unveiled by John Dillon, one of the leaders of the Irish Parliamentary Party, in 1907. It marks the grave of Matt Harris, revolutionary and agrarian radical, who was born in Roscommon town in 1825, a son of Peter Harris from Athlone.

An intelligent, eloquent and essentially self-educated man, Harris worked for several years as a labourer before moving to Ballinasloe in the 1850s where he established himself as a building contractor and later also as a publican. Here he settled for the rest of his life, marrying Molly Bennett from Ahascragh and residing at various addresses in the town, including Church Hill.

Harris was involved in all the major 19th century political movements of Irish nationalism, and was in turn a Repealer and a Young Irelander before joining the Fenians in 1867. He quickly became a leading figure in the Irish Republican Brotherhood, serving on the supreme council and helping to increase the organisation's ranks considerably in the Galway area.

A tireless advocate of agrarian reform, he was dissatisfied with the Home Rule movement of the 1870s, though he did support his fellow-Roscommon man John O'Connor Power in the 1874 parliamentary by-election for Mayo.

The campaign to secure, for tenant farmers, the ownership of their holdings and the total abolition of landlordism, provided the dominant theme for his later political career. It was these ideals that prompted him to establish the Ballinasloe Tenants' Defence Association in 1876, a forerunner of the Irish Land League, and indeed he spoke alongside

O'Conner Power and others at a mass meeting in Irishtown, Co. Mayo, on April 20, 1879, which led to the setting-up of the latter organisation. The inaugural meeting of the BTDA was held in Craig's Hotel, Main Street; a building which today houses the Crumbs 'n' Cream Café.

Harris, however, was not uncritical of what he perceived to be the mentality of the farming community, describing on one occasion the alliance of the large and the small farmer in the Land League as "the union of the shark and the prey". Later he observed that "when the farmers would be emancipated and get their lands, such men would look on the boundary of their farms as the boundary of their country, because farmers as a rule are very selfish men."

Overcoming his lifelong prejudice against Westminster politics, Harris accepted a Parnellite nomination during the 1885 general election and was elected MP for Galway East; a seat he retained up to his death. Tim Healy, a parliamentary colleague and the first Governor General of the Irish Free State, commented in his Letters and Leaders of My Day published in 1928:

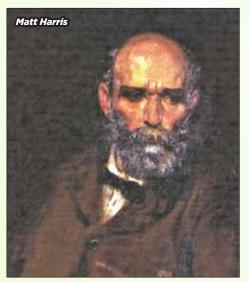
Matt was a power in Connaught and possessed a great flow of humour. We youngsters sat at his feet as a veteran to hear him discourse of old times. He once proclaimed, as we pastured on soda and milk, while he drank punch in the Imperial Hotel, Dublin: "I'd rather be at my humble fireside in Ballinasloe after my third tumbler of punch than drinking soda and milk in the best hotel in Europe."

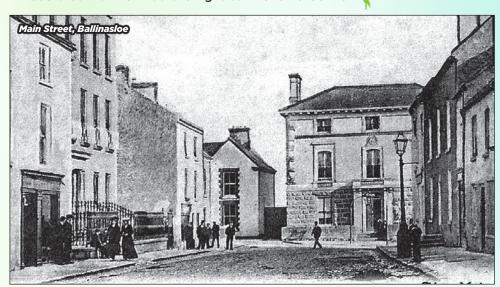
By 1887 severe ill-health, which had been brought about by stomach cancer, meant that Harris ceased to be politically active. He nevertheless maintained his radical reputation by arguing (from a wheelchair) before a special commission in 1889 that Irishmen had the right to The grave of Matt Harris in Creagh Cemetery.

seek complete political separation from Britain, and that any tenant farmer was entitled to use arms to resist an unjust eviction.

On April 13, 1890, Matt Harris died at his Main Street licensed premises, which in later years became Minnie Sullivan's pub. His graveside orations were delivered by William O'Brien who would go on to found the United Irish League in 1898 and heal the rift within the Irish Parliamentary Party that followed the Parnell divorce case.

Harris is the only local political figure to have a Ballinasloe thoroughfare named after him, in this case the road linking Brackernagh and the western end of Society Street, though it's colloquially referred to as 'The Burma'. His greatgrandson is the Dublin-based writer, Ulick O'Connor.





20th Annual AOIFE Conference

By Pamela Ryan

A significant EU Commission funded pilot Festival and Cultural event labelling programme was unveiled at the 20th Anniversary Foundation Conference of the Association of Irish Events held in the Carlton Shearwater Hotel.

Guest Keynote speaker Kathryrn Deventer, the Secretary General of the European festivals and Events Association, announced the details of the €1.2 million programme which involves AOIFE being a contracted Festival hub for all of the country, to promote the project in Northern Ireland and in the Republic.

The project will last for two years and seeks to designate festivals of a quality cultural standard for the EU and will help market them to a worldwide audience.

Once again the Association of Irish Festival Events (AOIFE) delivered a 180 or so attendees for the two day festival and event marketing conference at the Hotel, for this its seventh edition in town.

The 'Capacity to Endure' Conference was in association with Fáilte Ireland and The Gathering and hosted by AOIFE. With over 4,000 Gatherings, large and small, throughout the country in 2013, this was a great opportunity for the sector to get together under one roof and reflect on the season just passed. Welcoming the delegates to town, Mayor Michael Kelly stated "that Ballinasloe had a long relationship with events, in hosting Europe's Oldest Horse Fair and that he hoped many would make it back for a visit."

The master-classes and workshops provided strong educational benefits and conference also was filled with key-note speakers and one-to-one clinics all based on the festival and events sector. The Carlton Best of Marketing Awards also took place at the prestigious Gala Dinner where prizes were swept up by festivals from Cork, Antrim, Wexford and Clare among many others.

Perhaps the most anticipated key note speaker of the conference was Jim Miley, Chief Executive of The Gathering. He delved deeply into some of the preliminary outcomes of the festival season passed and what can be learned to create a sustainable future for the sector here in Ireland.

Students of the field were in abundance for master-classes along with the Placement Partnering programme, which helps to connect the 700 plus students of event management and those working in the sector. A group of students from InHolland University with their lecturers travelled to town for the third year in a row.



The conference also serves as a showcase for acts every year with 2013 being no different. Macey South, a music group from Athlone, gave a great performance after dinner on both nights of the conference. Jack Wise and Tumble Circus also provided delegates and speakers alike with great comedy and entertainment at the Welcome Reception from which none of the audience was safe!

Suppliers to the sector were also able to meet event organisers through the Festival Expo, which provided suppliers with an all-day, two-day platform to show their wares and demonstrate their services.

The Association based in the Town Hall Theatre, Society Street celebrated its 20 Years Anniversary and was fortunate to have as guests the founding Chairperson, Eileen O'Loughlin, National Secretary, Victor Ryan and National Executive Member, Paddy Murphy in attendance as special guests at the dinner.

AOIFE is a decade based in the town since first establishing offices in the Enterprise Centre in 2003. It has two employees and is a designated Training Organisation for over six third level campuses which involves young students from Ireland, Spain, Italy, Holland, France and Slovenia spending several weeks at a time in town as part of their cultural and business management studies. Last year it delivered on site training and mentoring support to over 750 festival and event organisers on the island.

The Association is now planning its 2014 cycle of Irish and European events from its Ballinasloe base. It also manages the European festivals and Events Association Secretariat in places like Nice, Derry, Belfast, Dublin, Cork, Sarajevo, Brussells, Barcelona, Budapest, Basel and again the November Irish Conference in Ballinasloe.

Coached Adult Lane Swimming

Swimming for fun and fitness. A new club the 'Ballinasloe Masters Swim Club' has commenced in the Kingfisher Swimming Pool. It caters for all swimmers over the age of 18 who are capable of swimming two full lengths of freestyle, backstroke and breaststroke.

Our aims are to swim for fun, fitness and develop improved stroke technique. Our coach Kayo is a qualified coach under Swim Ireland and provides excellent training and feedback to the swimmers.

This is an ideal swim session for those who may wish to compete in triathlons, open water swimming and competitive swimming. However it is also aimed at anyone who enjoys swimming as a means of keeping fit and healthy.

Classes are on Wednesdays at 8.30pm Kingfisher Swimming Pool, Ballinasloe. It costs €5 per hourly session (€35 for a term of 7 lessons). Open to non-members of the Kingfisher swimming pool. For further information please contact Joanne Costello on 087 2526764.



NEW BALLINASLOE R.F.C. SPONSORSHIP DEAL

By Noel Mannion

Ballinasloe RFC is delighted to announce a new three year sponsorship deal. One of the oldest rugby clubs in Ireland has linked up with one of the newest businesses in Ballinasloe, Spain Funeral Directors.

Situated in a brand new state of the art funeral home in Main Street, Spain Funeral Directors are due to open for business in early December. Commenting on the new venture, Keith Spain M.D. said: "First of all we are thrilled and excited about our new venture in Ballinasloe. Having similar businesses in Loughrea and Portumna and with my own family connections in the town, Ballinasloe was the next expansion to our business. We have been looking and waiting for two years for the right premises to come available. Now having found such a building at Main Street (on the site of the former ACC Bank) we are ready for business and look forward to a long relationship with the town."

"We are also delighted to have linked up with Ballinsloe RFC Rather than advertise in the traditional way of paper and radio we decided to go a more direct route. Having worked last season with Mullagh GAA and seen the success of this type of sponsorship we see Ballinasloe RFC as a perfect vehicle to continue our promotion. We look forward to working with the Club over the next three years."

Replying, John Doolan, President Ballinasloe RFC said: "We are absolutely thrilled with this new deal between ourselves and Spain Funeral Directors". This could not have come at a better time in the Club's development. Catering for four adult teams, five youth teams, approx 150 mini players and a new U15 ladies team is a costly exercise and in the current difficult financial times this sponsorship is crucial. This funding will go towards pitch development, supply of gear and youth and mini rugby development. We would like to wish Keith and Spain Funeral Directors the very best in their new venture and thank them for their generous sponsorship."





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Mercy Day 10km Walk Raises €8,000

Staff and students of Ardscoil Mhuire celebrated Mercy Day with a sponsored 10km walk to raise funds for the recent building expansion in the school. Raising over €8,000 to date, the impressive yellow-clad train made its way through Brackernagh, along Sarsfield Road, returning to the school via Cahir Cross. Local Gardaí and Civil Defence provided essential assistance to over 500 walkers along the route. Earlier in the day the school had a mass to mark the occasion. Caoimhe Divilly, was presented with a laptop by the Parents' Council for achieving the highest grades in the Leaving Cert exams, Class of 2013.





Supermac's Locations Ballinasloe:

• Main St: 090 9643151 • Sarsfield Rd: 090 9643814 • Mac's Diner: 090 9643444 • Dublin Rd: 090 9642178 • Shannonbridge: 090 9674929

2013 Hurling Review

By Juvenile Hurling Committee

Looking back on Hurling in Ballinasloe for 2013 the year will be seen as one with many positives. Fielding 12 teams from Under-6 right up to our Adult team and competing very well in all grades.

Under 6 and 8 Hurling began in February indoors with some indoor hurling games. The indoor hurling games attracts new children every year and the numbers attending this year were one of the largest ever especially at Under 6. When both teams went out doors in March emphasis was on teaching the basic skills with a fun element at all times. Many challenge matches were played during the year for both ages which also included our own internal Mini All-Irelands in September. The year finished up in October for the teams

The Under-10, 11 and 12 Panels had collectively a very memorable year. The Under-10 panel played over 30 matches during the year most notably The East Galway league which they won for the second time in three years and a Tournament hosted by the Craughwell Club where after playing four matches to get to a final they Defeated Clarinbridge after extra time. The 26 Children who took part this year played in many memorable games and can be very proud of their achievements.

The Under-11 Panel competed in Community Games hurling this year. The team also played a number of challenge games in Galway as well as competing in two tournaments, which included a successful trip to Belfast, winning the Joe McKelvey tournament and also beaten finalists in the final of the Kilmacud Crokes tournament in Dublin.

Our Under-12 hurlers had a very busy year competing in three competitions and various challenge matches. They played 7 league games and were only defeated in one game and thus finished top of their division in the league. They participated in the Aer Lingus Festival of hurling with the group stages held in Ballinasloe and going forward to play in the Finals day held in Pearse Stadium where they had good wins over Gort and Crusheen from Clare. They also won the Suck Valley League in which 14 teams competed, the first Ballinasloe team at any age to win the Final.

The Under-13 and 14 Panels can look back on a very successful year also. The Under-13's managed to reach the County Final played in Duggan Park against Padraig Pearses. They can consider themselves very unlucky not to have won on the day after coming up

just short. With the Under-14s it was a fantastic year for them. Making 3 Finals (Suck Valley League, Toddy Byrne Féile, County Championship), competitive in all and winning the County Championship after defeating Clarinbridge in Pearse Stadium. A huge amount of praise goes to manager Eoin Hardiman for his time and dedication put in with the panel.

The Under 15 and 16s competed well this year also. While they did not win silverware their development has been very good under the guidance of Sarsfields native Shane Dolan.

This years Minor team was in a group of 8 where they won 5 group games. This qualified them for a semi with Sylane who defeated them and the Strong North Galway outfit went on to win the County Title against Kiltormer.

Our Junior Team were drawn in a very competitive group in the Championship. There were only four teams qualifying for the quarter finals but unfortunately they finished fifth, thus ruling them out. They

qualified for the quarter finals in both the Shield and the Junior 1 competition but losing out on both occasions. With a good nucleus of a team, the right attitude and a good positive response to training next year this panel of players are well capable of winning a Junior Championship.

So the year on a whole has been one of positives and with the work of all team managements and players there is a bright future for Hurling in Ballinasloe. A special thank you to all parents who have given their time, donations and work for the Club. Ballinasloe GAA are greatful for your input and welcome any people to get involved in some capacity for 2014.

A Reunion of the Ballinasloe GAA 1973 Senior Hurling team will be held in Hayden's Hotel on Saturday 14th December. Ballinasloe hurlers drew with Castlegar in the County Final that year and were beaten in the replay. The night will commence with a buffet at 8pm. followed by music and dance in the bar. All players, members – past and present are looking forward to the banter and reminiscing about the old days.







Ladies Are Football Champions

By Pamela Ryan

Ballinasloe Junior ladies won the Junior C Championship last weekend after beating St. James in Menlough. It was a historic win considering Ballinasloe have only fielded a junior team for three years.

Ballinasloe Ladies GAA has been in existence for a mere six years. The club fields competitive teams at U12, U14, U16, U18 and Junior level. In this time they have had huge success winning league and championship trophies in every age group culminating in junior championship success last week.

Ladies Gaelic football is now highly competitive in Galway. The club scene

involves teams as far west as Leitir Mor and Rosmuc to Galway City teams including Salthill, St. James and St. Michaels. Football strongholds such as Ballygar, Corofin, Caltra, Mountbellew and Tuam also field ladies teams. Some of these clubs field two teams at every level. There are divisions from A to D in Championship and League at all ages.

Frequently Galway inter-county teams contest for All-Ireland success. This year Galway Ladies won Connacht titles at U14, U16, U18 and Senior. The minor team won an All-Ireland title this year also.

Kevin Hardiman of Advertees and Noel Mannion were thanked for all their effort in helping to get the team kitted out for the big day. Also a massice thanks to main sponsors, Gibbons Pillar House.

Team Manager Dan Moynihan and Coach Nicholas Mc Donagh. Team: Orla McDonagh; Niamh Loughnane, Aisling Brannelly, Michelle Jennings; Natoya Fogarty, Rachel Mannion, Niamh Parker; Chantal Muldoon (1-0), Lisa O'Neill (0-1); Sarah Cox, Mary Geraghty (0-2), Faye Mahon (0-7); Claire Geraghty (2-1), Sheena Kelly (1-2), Siobhan Carey (1-0). Subs: Amy Dempsey for Siobhan Carey; Eilis Renehan for Sheena Kelly; Jade Ward for Sarah Cox; Aisling Kelly for Niamh Loughnane; Ashley Walsh for Natoya Fogarty; Katie Mahon, Lauren Dooley, Sarah Fletcher.



Rugby Club Underage Updates

By Declan Murphy

Ballinasloe Girls U15 Rugby recently played their very first league game at Graigueawoneen and won in very impressive style against a determined Creggs side. This match followed on from a very competitive and exciting start in rugby for most of the girls at the Connaught Blitz outing that was held in Buccaneers recently. At the Blitz, they played games against Westport, Creggs and all the way from Co. Kerry, Dingle RFC. Upcoming league matches include Galwegians, Connemara, Tuam and Ballina. For further details please check out www.facebook.com/BallinasloeRugbyClub.

Also still going from strength-to-strength is the Broncos Mini Rugby section. They have a very busy run up to Christmas with home blitzes against Loughrea, Portumna and Corinthians, training, away blitz v Buccaneers and the eagerly awaited Christmas Party on December 21 in the club.

It goes almost without saying that new members, boys and girls, are more than welcome to come and try out rugby at any stage of the season. For further details, contact Mike Devine 087 6792567 or Declan Murphy 086 8548046.





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