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# BALLINASLOELIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 4 Issue 4: Oct-Nov 2014

**FREE**



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# BALLINASLOE LIFE

AN INSIGHT INTO THE AREA WE LIVE IN

Vol. 4 Issue 4: Oct-Nov 2014

## REAMHRÁ



*Autumn leaves and the Green gets its annual fencing in preparation for the thundering hooves.*

*This year the hooves will hopefully gather along with their owners and sight seers peacefully under the gaze of two new roofs, looking out onto Society Street, the Town Hall Theatre and The Convent. Both buildings old roofs would have seen some 150 fairs!*

*It still is a magical glimpse of a times past – heritage coming to life, made a little more poignant perhaps that a 100 years ago, the Connacht Rangers Recruiting tent was getting young lads to sign up*

*for a war, that was to have them home by Christmas. The huge work that the local volunteers do in keeping alive the rich equestrian traditions of the Fair and Show and the attendant efforts of the civic authorities – Gardai, Civil Defence, hospitality sector and wider community who are somewhat discommoded has to be acknowledged.*

*As the Roofs will testify no-where can stand still. Hopefully the pathway to a more sustainable and vibrant future for all of us will be illuminated by the Town Benchmarking project. As the canny Scots proved, a lot more can be achieved together than apart.*

*A word of thanks to a community activist who was not afraid to speak out (irrespective of your views on the content or location) about people fears and worries notably at the times of the flooding and indeed more recently with threats to health services. In the third world campaigning for social justice comes with the territory of being a Catholic priest – but in the first, can be embarrassing. Best of luck in your new posting in Eyrecourt.*

*Finally as we are going to press another faith community lost it's shepherd with the sudden and untimely passing of Rev. George Flynn – Rector of the Union of Ballinasloe Parishes. To his wife, family, parishoners and friends we extend our deepest sympathies.*

**Colm Croffy, Editor**  
*Ballinasloe Life.*



*Our Town Mapping programme with an Action Plan is moving along at pace. A well attended meeting was held on 5th August at which Chris Wade CEO of Action For Market Towns outlined progress to date. You can see a synopsis of his presentation on the Ballinasloe Life facebook page.*

*The initial online survey generated a phenomenal response using social media and was very successful in tapping into the views of the next generation of Town Centre users.*

*The next part of the process is a street survey of Business people and their Customers during the month of October. During this time we will also collect information on some key performance indicators which will help us capture what residents in the catchment area see as priorities.*

*These findings will help us to be more focused and effective on how the revitalisation team will direct their energies.*

*We have the financial support from our stakeholders to put this plan in place but it is up to us as Community to come together with manageable propositions to leverage this support. The plan will put us ahead of our peers and I see it as a benchmark which other Towns are going to copy.*

*Don't forget you can have your say in our Company by becoming a member at €30 per annum. Form available for download on our website*

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

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## CREDITS

**Editor:** Colm Croffy **Reporter:** Conor Finnerty **Contributors:** Ken Kelly, Pat Johnston, Barry Lally, Martina Rinaldi and various other contributors.

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# BEC

**Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre**  
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Ballinasloe Enterprise Centre,  
Creagh, Ballinasloe. Co. Galway  
T: 090 9646516 F: 090 9646517  
E: [info@ballinasloeenterprisecentre.ie](mailto:info@ballinasloeenterprisecentre.ie)  
[www.ballinasloeenterprisecentre.ie](http://www.ballinasloeenterprisecentre.ie)





# New Municipal District Chair

By Conor Finnerty



The town's first Municipal District Council Chair is, Moylough man, Michael Connolly. The Fianna Fail councillor was one of the most experienced councillors to be elected and it was agreed between the major parties that he should take the lead.

Formerly serving in the Tuam area, Connolly has been a councillor for the past 15 years gave up his job as a refrigeration engineer in Thermo King in Galway to dedicate himself to being a full time public representative.

It's a new position and is certainly subservient to the County Council Chair but it will remain the focal point for representation for the Town for the foreseeable future. There are no proscribed powers for the District Chairs - they don't for instance have contract

signing powers or any discretionary funds attaching to the post but there is a small expense allowance.

The council have begun to meet on a monthly basis and are in the process of scripting the county development plan. To raise an issue or to bring a deputation to the municipal district council a person or organization has to write to either the chairperson or to the town offices.

"We intend to support the town twinning programme as much as we can, and I personally will do everything that I can to help maintain and enhance the project," said the councillor. "I am very conscious of events and supporting them."

The council voted in favour of retaining the property tax at its current rate so as to have sufficient votes to maintain services such as the roads. The budget for the coming year will be decided in the coming weeks once the development plan is finalised. The Municipal Council has no involvement in setting the budget, adopting the estimates or setting the rates.

Speaking on the future prosperity of the town Michael believes that one great asset which must be taken advantage of is the town's situation and proximity to services such as the railway and the newly built motorway. According to Michael the county needs to create a necklace of developments along the main rail line. "Living in Ballinasloe we should develop the train station parking


facilities so a person can park the car and travel to work and be back again by evening," said the chairperson.

"The area between, Ballinasloe, Woodlawn, New Inn, Ballymacward, Attymon etc has suffered in particular in recent years. But processes and policies have to be put in place to get its fair share of investment" said the councillor.

Michael and the Municipal District Council hope to be able to tweak the by-laws in certain instances and tailor them to the town's need, for instance changing regulations in regards to car parking times and cost at Christmas shopping periods.

In relation to the funds and grants that many local clubs and societies used to get, he is positive that they will be able to apply to Galway County Council for a support through the Countywide schemes

The Galway County Council have voted to retain the local property tax at last years levels for all householders and they are currently working on the Countywide estimates.

Michael was positive on the town having a bright future in the next decade? "Certainly the town has a bright future, but it is encumbent on the both the local and national representatives to lead the way forward, something I hope to do in my time involved." 

## Social Media Business Owner Training

By Conor Finnerty

BACD in trying to get the business community locally more actively using facebook, twitter and social media - to help market their businesses, have launched a new individually tailored programme for business people .

Some young fluent digital natives who can teach business people how to use the mostly free process technology and software to grow market share and to increase customers will be available on a pre-booking basis for one on one tuition.

The Life Mapping survey had an

online reach of some 12,000 facebook users - nearly a third of the natural true catchment area of the town of some 32,000. Currently only 30% of the local business community are fully utilising the potential of Social Marketing!

Tutorials will be held in the Town Hall during business hours and have to be booked with Lyn Donnelly Company Manager at 0909646516. Service is free to Life subscribers and is a pre-paid fee of €50 for 45 minutes and €30 for subsequent lessons.





# New Chiropody Clinic Opens on Dunlo Street

**By Conor Finnerty**

A new Chiropody clinic has opened on Dunlo Street, operated by Martina Leonard, a native of Castleblakeney.

The new clinic, named Footsteps, replaces the previous business which had been operating for almost 30 years behind Duane's Pharmacy.

The clinic will run by appointment only and will initially be opened on Thursdays and Saturdays, although Martina has clinics at other locations on other days where you can avail of her services.

Martina has completed a full training course in Podiatry and is also a member or fellow of The Society of Chiropodists and Podiatrists.

After completing her 4 year degree in Podiatry she carries out all the procedures that a chiropodist does dealing with basic nail care, thickened, fungal or ingrown toenails, removing painful corns or callus (hard skin) verrucae treatment, athletes foot and general foot pain and foot care advice.

Additionally she is qualified to manage the diabetic foot from diabetic ulcer prevention to ulcer management and the Diabetes Federation of Ireland recommend an annual foot health screen which she can perform.

Podiatrists are qualified to prescribe orthotics (insoles) following full biomechanical and gait analysis and according to Martina when the correct



orthotic is prescribed and worn it can greatly assist in sports injury rehabilitation, foot, heel, ankle and knee pain reduction.

Martina is also an expert in her field having lectured in podiatry at NUIG. She has had papers published in medical journals on her research in the area of podiatry and has won numerous awards for her work in the field.

"it is important to know that her podiatry services are recognised by all private health insurance companies so, depending on your policy, your treatment fees may be covered and I looking forward greatly to working with new clients in town and locally " stated Martina .

You can contact Martina on 087 60 72 900 for an appointment.

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# Carlton Hotel Adjudicated Top Wedding Venue

By Conor Finnerty

The Carlton Shearwater hotel is currently the best wedding venue in the county, as voted by Weddings Dates.ie - a national specialist website - in weddings!

The Hotel prides themselves tailoring their wedding packages for their customers. Their attention to detail, professional wedding planners, and helpful advice make them the perfect venue. Their one wedding a day policy ensures a couples special day will never be compromised.

The hotel holds a monthly wedding showcase to give perspective couples the chance to view the venue and talk to its dedicated staff. The wedding planning team in the hotel is spearheaded by wedding co-ordinator Karyn Bergin and Sales and Marketing manager Caitriona Condon. The venues location means it is highly accessible and with the marina in close proximity provides a couple with great photographic opportunities. Additionally the hotels beautifully restored rooftop garden is also available for private photos on the day.

The hotel's luxurious and spacious Plaza Suite can cater from 80 to 400 guests and is the ideal choice for that summer garden/winter wonderland wedding. The staff will work with you to customise your menus, wine list, music and table



plans to your taste and style. The Carlton Shearwater pride themselves in providing a wedding service that is creative flexible and imaginative.

Their reputation for elegance, award winning food and warm service will guarantee delivery well beyond all expectations. Packages start from €40 per person including "Cocktail Reception" "Dessert Buffet" and the traditional "Candy Cart" to give you the wow factor. With limited dates available for Winter Weddings the hotel is offering a complimentary BBQ or Buffet for the celebration day after.

Further advantages of having a wedding in the Shearwater include preferred room rates for your guests, complimentary

executive suits for the parents of both the bride and the groom, complimentary use of the bridal suite for the lucky couple and champagne breakfast the next morning. To make the occasion all the more memorable the hotel promises the lucky couple dinner in the Marina restaurant on their one year anniversary and one full year's membership to its leisure centre.

With such a thoughtful all round service before, during and after the wedding it is easy to see why the Shearwater is currently a top wedding venue offering four star service. For more information call 0909630400 and speak with an expert wedding planner today.

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# Local Ag Contractor Starring in New Grassmen DVD

By Conor Finnerty

BECKETT AGRI, based in Kilconnell, has confirmed that they will feature in a Grassmen DVD due to be released in 2015 after filming took place this summer. They are one of the largest agricultural contractors in the county and as such were prime candidates for the Northern Ireland company, Moover, to feature in one of their highly popular DVD series. The Grassmen series has previously followed Luke Furse, a top agricultural contractor in Devon, South West England, who also owns an earth moving company. The DVDs are very popular among farmers and are widely available at agricultural shows such as the Ploughing Championships.

Beckett Agri believe the DVD will broaden their horizons and will create publicity and hopefully lead to more work by highlighting the quality, reliability and efficiency of their service.

"It took time and patience to get shots right, we had to spend a bit of time with them. They had cameras fixed to remote controlled helicopters and took aerial shots and they dug holes in the ground and put cameras down underneath the rows of grass to take shots as the harvester picked grass as it passed over them," commented Beckett Agri.

The business has grown rapidly since it was started by Martin's father William in 1985. Beckett Agri's extensive fleet of machines allows it to cover all of county Galway and parts of Mayo, Roscommon

and Clare making harvester and/or wagon pit silage and net or net free round bales.

Beckett Agri feels that to run their business as efficiently as they do it is imperative that their machinery is maintained to a very high standard. "We try and keep the machines as modern and as up to date as we possibly can, keeping an eye on the latest developments in our field. We maintain and service the fleet regularly. The last thing we want to be is broken down" said the proud owner of some top of the range tractors. Beckett Agri have also recently purchased a new tractor from Quigley's Claas dealership in Ahascragh, who they praise for their after sale service.


With three separate silage outfits consisting of a self-propelled harvester, three trailers and five Strautmann silage wagons, the team can cover a lot of ground in one day. Visiting their largest customer in late June, Beckett Agri bring the entire fleet to Knock, Co. Mayo to cut a couple of hundred acres of silage in a single day, working out of three separate yards.

Beckett Agri have a lot of money tied up in machinery and with nothing on hire it is easy to understand why bank repayments on their machinery purchases are their largest cost. Wages are another big expense with Beckett Agri predominantly hiring seasonal workers during the busy June to September months. "Getting drivers is not a problem, the phone is red all



spring time with young lads looking for part time summer work, but we tend to stick with the more experience fellas and since the recession it is easy to get good experienced drivers" said the Beckett Agri man.

Beckett Agri now have a huge presence and following on their Facebook page with over 5,000 likes. "It's amazing when you excite some young fella about a machine, they start talking about it at home. We have got a few new jobs out of it" said Beckett who generally leaves the running of the page to younger helpers.

Beckett Agri has worked on the construction of the motorway between Ballinasloe and Galway and with the next phase of that project set to begin again next year, Beckett Agri hope to continue their involvement there. For information on any of the services Beckett Agri provides you can contact Martin on 086 782 9040. 



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# Easy Fix – Local Exporter To New Markets

By Conor Finnerty

18 years ago a Kiltullagh native came up with a business concept for the Agricultural sector. Today his business has grown to a fully fledged exporting enterprise – also catering to the leisure and sports sector with a variety of quality products and employing 25 people.

Starting your own business can be a very scary prospect and it took Michael Earls close to five years after setting up “EasyFix Rubber Products” to finally quit his own full time job.

Michael, the former county hurler of Killimordaly, came up with his first product idea in 1996. For the next few years he spent his spare time designing and securing his patent for rubber mats to be used on concrete slats to improve the comfort of animals.

Securing the patent in 2001 was the defining moment the business became a viable source of income and afforded Michael the opportunity to fully immerse himself in his own business.

Ironically Michael was the second person to be fully employed by the business



as he had already employed a sales representative while he was working full time as a Sales Manager with Galway Corrugated Cases.

Originally setting up base in Athenry, the company had to change site due to the growth of the business. The opportunity arose in 2006 for land to be purchased and a purpose built premises to be constructed on a 1 acre site locally.

The company officially moved to its new site in 2007 at Persse Business Park,

and despite the recession has continued to grow. Luckily the business was not totally reliant on the construction sector when the downturn occurred and the introduction of new E.U. Veal Regulations has seen sales surge in the Dutch, French and German Markets.

The success of the patented rubber mats allowed funds to be invested in the design and development of other products. With a background in farming Michael and the company have designed



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products for the beef, dairy, poultry, pig and equine sectors. They also have products designed for playgrounds and construction.

The export side of the business was set up in 2004 and the company now exports their products to countries all over the world.

“Our products are tailored for each market, in Ireland for example the mats are used to fit over slats on a tank where as in other countries the mats might cover a solid floor,” said Michael. Farmers in Ireland can still buy products direct from the company but his products are widely available via various agents.

The company has grown to employ nearly 25 people in total and continues to look towards diversifying the business.

In 2013 EasyFix replaced 9 out of 13 fences at the famous Aintree Racecourse. The replacement of the traditional fences at the racecourse came on the



back of concern for animal welfare when a number of horses suffered falls during the English Grand National in particular.

The EasyFix replacement fence is manufactured from tough-wearing materials is a safer alternative to

traditional hurdles and fences. Equine products now make up over 10% of export sales.

EasyFix are committed to making quality products which are rigorously tested by their own team, on commercial farms and by organisations such as Teagasc,

The testament of so many customers who indicate higher milk yields and improved comfort for dairy cows due to the rubber mats on slats and cubicles is an indicator of the level of quality products that are being produced.

Looking back on the start up “I honestly wouldn’t change a thing,” said the entrepreneur. But he had some words of caution for anyone thinking of starting their own business. “Tread very carefully. You have to think about how to turn it into money, who is going to buy the product? Remember your first idea might not be your best idea.”



## South Roscommon Charity Fundraiser

The South Roscommon Vintage Club presented a cheque worth €1200 to the “Help Emma Beat it Fund” in Millars pub. The Help Emma Beat it Fund is in aid of Emma Naughton-Heavey, a 17-year-old girl from Galway who was diagnosed with a rare form of cancer which

only affects one in five-million people, and there are less than 200 new cases diagnosed each year. There , to receive the check on the night was two of Emma’s aunties, Cathy and Angela Heavey.

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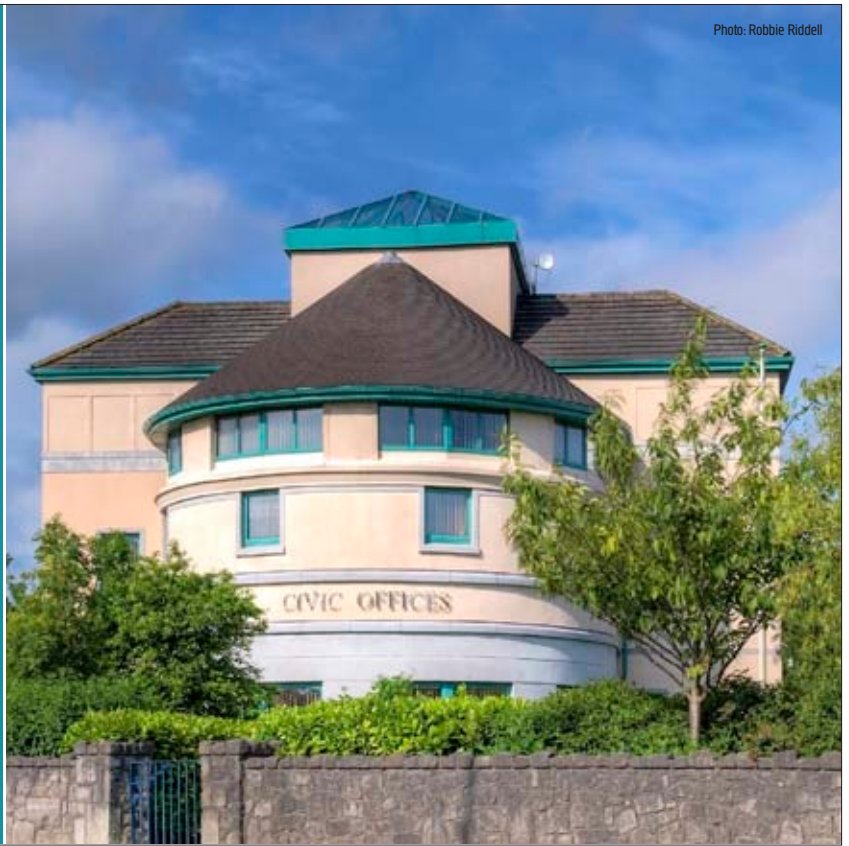
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## **“MAKE THE LINK”: ROADSHOW FOR JOB-SEEKERS**

Job Seekers are welcomed to come along to a training and information roadshow run by the Galway Rural Development. The roadshow will run in 7 different locations throughout the county in October, including Gullanes Hotel on Wednesday the 15th. The event begins at 10am and finishes at 2pm and will provide Jobseekers the opportunity to work on their CVs and interview skills for free. These training and information events will also provide information on the benefits of back-to-work training; consultation opportunities with training and employment service providers; information regarding best strategies in job-seeking as well as support with efforts

to secure employment and enhance employment prospects. This is just one of the services that Galway Rural Development provide since being established in 1994. GRD is a partnership of 23 directors, representing statutory agencies, social partners, business, farming, community and voluntary sectors which operates all over East Galway. These events will also take place in Mountbellew and Portumna. For further information please contact

GRD's Colette Coughlan or Freeda Garman on 091 844335 or [info@grd.ie](mailto:info@grd.ie)

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# Crumbs and Cream 21 Year Anniversary

By Conor Finnerty

Crumbs and Cream are celebrating 21 years in business this October. Open since 1993, the store moved the short distance from its location from Croffy's yard to its current site on Main Street.

Ann Conlon, a native of Ballinasloe, grew up in Brackernagh and is a qualified chef after training at Athlone Institute of Technology.

Having emigrated to London in 1988, Ann further improved her portfolio by completing a pastry course. She then travelled back home when a job opportunity arose in Galway. However the lure of opening her own premises soon overtook her and "Crumbs and Cream", coffee shop and house bakery was born.

Having worked in restaurants and hotels in Ireland for years Ann had a great knowledge of the sector before taking the leap of faith and opening her own business. Continuing her efforts to continually improve her business, Ann renovated the building and created a large seating area for customers in 2001.

According to Ann, the boom never really affected the town and her business. However, when the recession hit the bakery was forced to diversify to continue making an income.

"The recession had a huge impact, it really hit the town hard," Ann said. "Cakes used to be the main part of the business, but the deli side of the business has grown in recent years."

Ann took the step to deliver lunches to the national and secondary schools in the area which leaves her schedule very busy during the school term.



The business employs 8-10 people on a full time and part time basis, and their employer cannot be more praise



Aneta Burgoyne, Ann Conlon, Bernie Campbell

worthy of her staff.

To improve the business further Ann now wishes to improve her social media presence and her next task will be to update her website on a regular basis and create a Facebook page for the business.

"It's a great tool to let people know about offers and events and something I've been intending to do for a while," said the business woman.

Working in a bakery requires long hours and Ann could not cope with all the early starts of around 6.30 am every morning without her reliable staff.

"They are very hardworking, dedicated and diligent staff working here who will look after your every need and make your visit to "Crumbs and Cream" a very pleasant experience."

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The first ever midlands CU factor talent competition is scheduled to take place in the town hall theatre on Saturday the 18th October. Contestants from Athlone, Banagher, Clara, Granard, Longford, Mullingar, Portumna and Roscommon will all be hoping to be selected. They will join local Galway CU factor winners, Ballinasloe group - dancing stars, at the All-Ireland CU factor final in Drogheda on the 1st November.

Tickets are €7 and are limited, they will be available in the Credit Union from the 6th.

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# Poolboy Industrial Estate - gets the final touches!! - 30 years on



By Conor Finnerty

In the late 1970's Galway Co Council acquired land in Poolboy to develop an industrial estate for the town.

In the last few weeks the final touches were put to the estate to the satisfaction of all the businesses there.

Adrian Headd Area Engineer with Galway County Council led the project. A new turning circle was created at the end of the estate, it was tarred as was the new section of road, signs erected, road marking put down and the entrance gates removed.

Poolboy estate is home to 9 businesses with K.P.W. the oldest and An Post the newest firms on site.

There over 130 employees working there between KPW, Domac, An Post, NCT, Cal Cool, ESB, GMS Engineering, Garbally Oil and Cooper in an estate they are justifiably proud of. 🍀

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## Country Market Returns to Town Hall

September marks the return of the Country Market to the Town Hall Theatre foyer after a 16 weeks absence. There are 16 stall holders selling a variety of goods including arts and crafts, vegetables and an array of artisan food and bakery products.

The Market will continue to occupy the foyer every Friday morning from 9am until 1.30pm. For further details contact Margaret O'Gorman on 0872724332.

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# Local Groening Circle of Friends Lecture

By Conor Finnerty

There is an All-Ireland International lecture presented by medical doctors and psychologists covering the healing force of Bruno Groening's teachings taking place locally.

Monday the 27th of October sees the Bruno Groening Circle of Friends, hosting their first lectures in Gullanes Hotel in the Forrester suite at 3 pm. The topic is "Healing on the Spiritual Path- Medically Verifiable".

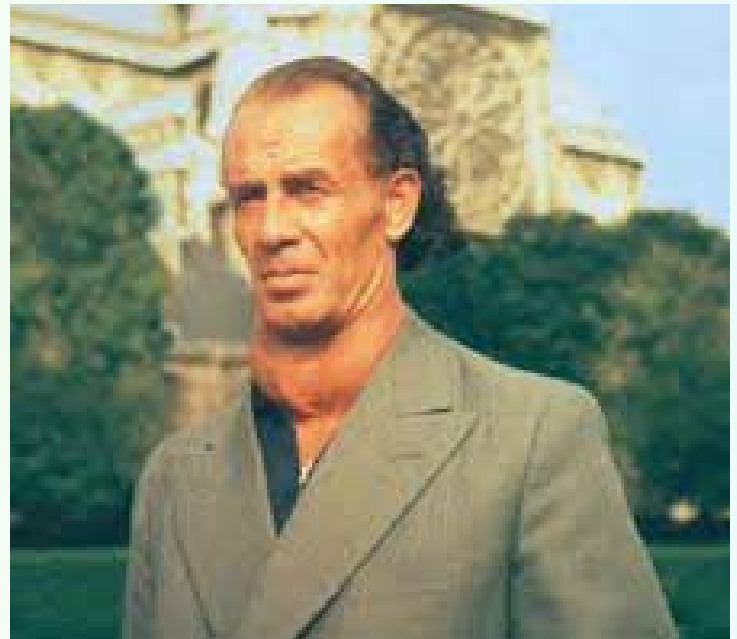
There are a growing number of people searching for a solution in holistic medicine. Ancient civilisations spoke of the existence of a higher power that can help and heal. Bruno Groening called this power "Heilstrom" or healing force.

Groening, was a German mystic who gave lectures on faith healings. He was active in Germany in the 1940s and 1950s after World War II. Groening had no formal training in the medical profession and while enlisted in the war he refused to kill another human being, a stance which nearly resulted in him being executed at a court martial.

Among other things, he taught how one can absorb this natural healing power. The healings, even of so called incurable diseases, are occurring today just as they did during his life. A multitude of medically documented healing reports testify to this. In this lecture, healed individuals will report about their experiences.

The Friends group are dedicated to inform as many people as possible about the teaching of Bruno Groening. An international lecture series of the Medical Scientific Group of the Bruno Groening Circle of Friends took place at well-known universities in the United States and Canada in the cities of Toronto, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Washington D.C. in 2008 and 2009.

Numerous physicians from different countries voluntarily



lectured in their spare time on the teaching of Bruno Groening with a steady level of success. This year the group are continuing this series with 47 lectures with medical doctors and psychologists in Ireland.

These events are free of charge to attend, however donations are appreciated. Individuals from medical professions, people interested in the topic, and especially those searching for help and healing are invited to attend the events.

All individuals from medical professions, everyone interested in the topic, and especially everyone searching for help and healing are invited. There will also be similar events coming up in Athlone, Mullingar and Tullamore. For further information contact Michael McArdle on 0864114810 or by email at [mickmc12@gmail.com](mailto:mickmc12@gmail.com)

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# What Happens Now At the Civic Offices?

By Colm Croffy

With the recent abolition of the town councils it is unclear just what services are being manned in the civic offices. It is common knowledge that the motor tax office is located on the second floor but what else happens in the new sub office of Galway County Council.

There is no Town Clerk, or Director of Services (AKA The Old Town Manager Position) no Town Engineer or Town Foreman - PJ Clancy and his hard working crew have been re-assigned to other operational duties within East Galway.

Dialling the old civic office number will put you in contact with the Ballinasloe Municipal District Office Staff - there are just four Admin Staff and three ancillary staff of Galway County Council left working alongside their Motor Tax colleagues.

Upon entering the building the first change that hits you is the pleasant and affable Receptionist to the building (since it opened in 1999) - Kathleen Glennon has retired. A bell in the foyer summons the desk attendant to assist you.

If you have a local authority housing query - it must be first directed and logged by Carmel Scott. The query or issue will be assessed by the Housing unit in Head office, Galway and a response will be issued. If you wish to pay rent by laser card or cheque - the

facility is still there to pay at the Foyer. Indeed every fine and bill payable in the building during the Town Council time can still be paid!

The Revenue Officer for the District and Town (Rents & Rates) is Liam Carroll and The Litter and Traffic Warden is still Seamus Mc Goldrick - they both have additional electoral area responsibilities. The Community Wardens - Pat and John will still carry out their support functions when called upon to do so.

If you have issues with the paths or roadways outside your doorway you can ring the building but it will be the Roads Maintenance Division of Galway County Council that will be responding from their Maintenance Yard off Sliabhainn. All local Town Maintenance activity is transferred to Prospect Hill and Area Foreman Noel Casey. Significantly if you have a problem with your water or sewage - It's Irish Water we must now call - as all local authorities are off the hook for this utility.

Adrian Headd is the Acting Senior Executive Engineer, all issues to do with bye laws, parking meters, times, traffic flows and repairs are now being dealt with by the Roads & Transportation Dept. of Galway County Council as per the rest of the County with assistance from the Municipal District Office.

Stray Horses are dealt with by the Control of Horses Unit in Galway County Council with the assistance of Community Wardens based in the

Municipal District.

If you want to apply for Planning permission - requests must now be made to the Planning Dept. of Galway County Council. It is not known at this point whether public inspection of planning files can occur at the District Offices or whether we must traverse west to Aras an Cathrach to view files and decisions. There are no plans to have a planner in attendance to engage with pre-planning meetings or to meet developers on building and development issues.

Graves particular to Creagh Cemetery are being dealt with by the Environment Section of Galway County Council with assistance from the Municipal District Office. Graves can be purchased and assigned via the Municipal District Office - so we can still bury the dead during office hours.

Applications for the erection of temporary signs can be processed in accordance with the Planning Dept. of Galway County Council and the Planning Regulations. Road closure applications should be forwarded to the Roads Dept. in Galway County Council unless the road in question is been closed by An Garda Síochána.

Office Opening Times are 9.10am to 1.00pm and 2.10pm to 5.00pm and the Motor Tax Unit is open from 09.30am to 3.00pm (inclusive of lunchtime) Galway County Council District Sub Office Number is 090962263.

## Tidy Towns Results

By Conor Finnerty

The results of the annual tidy towns saw the town score a respectable 285 out of 450 marks. The town scored highest in the category of landscape and open spaces with a quality score of 44 out of 50.

The park at Riverview was admired as was the marina which was well kept at the time of inspection. The one point of criticism for the park was the "regrettable litter" in the river which detracted from the rest of the amenity. The report also complimented the efforts made to landscape and enhance open spaces.

A high score of 38 out of 50 was in appreciation for the development of old buildings such as the Town hall theatre and the public library and the well-kept grounds of St. Michael's church. "The Town Hall Theatre which has benefited from substantial works this year was admired as was the Mercy Caoineadh Western Province Building nearby,"

stated the report.

Another area which impressed were the residential streets and housing areas. The estate off Harris Road received plenty of praise with the private houses presenting very fine gardens. Private homes across the board presented a good standard in the main.

These strengths mirrored previous results from both 2013 and 2012. An aspect which the town improved on in the latest results was their sustainable waste and resource management. In the past year the town has numerous businesses following a programme to help reduce their footprint

Scoring just half of the 90 points available in the tidiness and litter control section means there is work to be done.



However progress is evident with the competitive nature of "adopt an area" bringing out the best from the likes of Garbally Secondary school, the active retirement group and the districts athletes who carry out regular litter picks.

See Full report at - <http://bit.ly/1xq0927>



# Town Benchmarking Project to Appoint New Town Team

By Colm Croffy

BACD - the local development company announced the appointment of Mrs. Jacinta Divilly as the new Town Team Facilitator for the next phase of the Town Revitalisation project which is being managed and co-ordinated by UK based Towns Alive.

Jacinta is no stranger to business or indeed community development locally - her late parents ran a very successful Supermarket in Brackernagh and she and her husband Liam ran an award winning restaurant in Dunlo St. for over 12 years. She has been an active and enthusiastic member of the Parents Association in Creagh NS, where their two young boys are enrolled. She currently works with Social Services.

As well as helping to shape the formation and development of the "Ballinasloe Revitalisation Team" and recruitment of new members, she will help prepare and review a Revitalisation Team 'Forward Plan' and Town Centre Action Plan.

The project partners of the Development Company, the Credit Union, the Chamber of Commerce agreed after the preliminary online survey and project launch in August that a new team of energetic citizens drawn from different aspects of the 33,000 hinterland and its 24 outlying villages should be empanelled to act as the wider focus group for the next phase.

Speaking on Jacinta's appointment by

the Board of B.A.C.D. Chairman Seamus Duffy welcomed her to the post "We are all looking forward to having Jacinta share her enthusiasm and energy in facilitating new voices and new ideas for the betterment of the hinterland and our wider community".

Jacinta herself is eagerly anticipating the role and working with the new team to review the street users, business owners and visitors survey and to benchmark the future development priorities for the locality. "What is really exciting about this Towns Alive approach to community led development that appeals to me - is that it will engage fully the wider stakeholder communities of our hinterland and the Clubs and voluntary organisations. I can remember as a kid my late Dad keeping his store open to make sure that some of his farming customers were looked after late Marts and - really we may have forgotten about our farming families during the boom and down turn".

The Online Survey whose preliminary results were released at a meeting in August (and are available on the LIFE Blog - ballinasloelife.wordpress.com ) saw a total total 8,800 Facebook users were reached by the video campaign and nearly 1500 people viewed the clips by local business people. As a result of the online campaign a total audience of 12,200 people were reached from Social



Lyn Donnelly (Manager) BACD with Jacinta Divilly (Town Team Facilitator)

Media awareness, which is 37% of the Ballinasloe area population.

The online campaign was extremely beneficial in fact that it captured an audience that are difficult to survey on the street. I.e 15-34 year olds who made up 48.28% of the surveyed audience. To date 823 have people completed the survey online. With an online audience of 12,200 this results in a total responding audience of 7%.

The Towns Alive pollers will be back in Town in late October to capture and track the non online users by sampling shoppers, workers, famers and service users of sports and health facilities.

It is hoped that a draft bench marking report and action plan can be workshopped by the Town Team in the late Winter early new year.

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# Our Wireless- The Golden Age of Radio

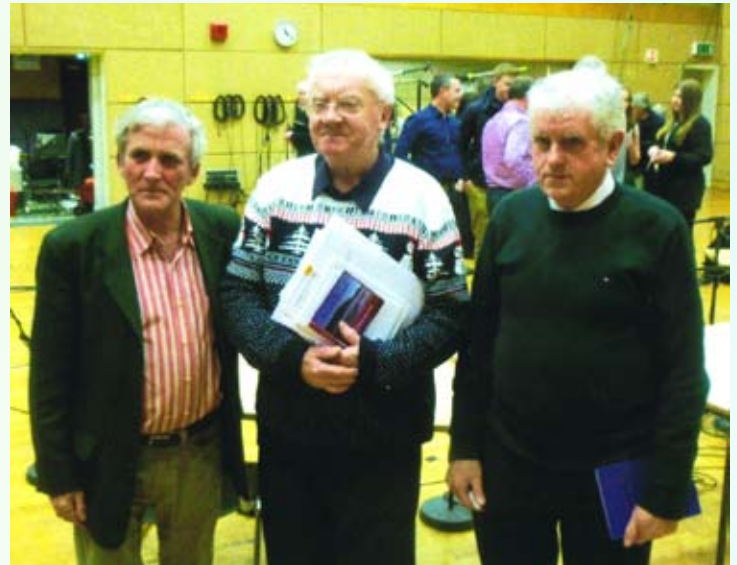
By Conor Finnerty

The fifties and sixties was an era when radio was king. In rural Ireland at the time it was common practice for communities to come together to learn about important events via the wireless radio.

The author, Gurteen native - John Corbett, has compiled a book including all the programmes, presenters, and entertainers that meant so much to the ordinary people of that era.

The book was launched by Phil Murphy, Editor of 'Ireland's Own' on the Christmas edition of Fáilte Isteach which is broadcast on RTE Radio One. The show's producer and presenter Donncha O Dúlaing also wrote the foreword for it.

The book concentrates on radio in Ireland in the fifties and sixties but has material from other decades as well. It costs €15 and can be purchased at Salmons and at other bookshops throughout the region.



## Malin to Mizen Local Garda Success

Sergeant Tom Horkan, Garda Ciará Ó Ráighne and Garda Anthony Pender completed the Malin to Mizen charity cycle and raised close to €3,000.

The cycle, over 700kms, travelled through Cork, Kerry, Galway, Mayo and Donegal. "Cycling through Killarney National Park on a beautiful day is a memory I'll take with me to the grave," said Sergeant Tom Horkan.

The proceeds for the cycle went to charities decided upon by the families of two Guards killed in action in 2009, Robbie McCallion and Barry McLoughlin. Anthony Pender also completed the recent Ballinasloe GELS cycle.

The local fundraising night saw some proceeds go to the Social Services Centre also.



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# Hospital Watch

By Conor Finnerty

Last time around there was a threat of closing our maternity ward, which was is one of the highest quality in all of the country. This time around the government seem fit to propose to close the 24hr Emergency Service Department in the town, as well as in Clonmel, Naas, Portlaoise and Mercy Hospital in Cork.

With the closure of Roscommon's Emergency Department, Portiuncula has dealt with nearly two thirds of the overflow resulting from that closure of services. Thankfully talk of closing the maternity unit in the town has stopped. A decision that was helped in no small part by Noel Daly's conflict of interest when he was both head of the West and North West hospital group and had a share in the review group that was suggesting closing the maternity services in Portiuncula.

So where has the talk of this closure sprang from? Potential cuts of over €800 million in the health budget are outlined in the Department of Health's submission to the Government's comprehensive review of expenditure.

The Department has said that it would have to cut spending by over €200 million just to reach the target set by the Department of public expenditure and reforms review. Ways which have been cited to achieve these goals is to close 290 beds and to target a reduction in high cost procedures. These procedures include hip or knee replacements and coronary interventions.

Speaking in Roscommon, Sinn Féin bye-election candidate Cllr Martin Kenny said, "When the A&E was closed at Roscommon General Hospital many people were forced to go to Portiuncula as the nearest A&E. If



the removal of 24 hour A&E services from Portiuncula goes ahead people will be forced to go all the way to Galway."

Naturally with the Bye-election in the offing Government TD's have rushed out statements assuring us there will be no downgrading of A & E services !

Portiuncula competes well with others in the country making it into the top 10 of the acute public hospitals with a ninth ranking, according To Rate My Hospital.ie A list topped by St Johns of Limerick. With Merlin in 18th place and UCHG in 43rd. Trolley watch figures courtesy of I.N.O.

Catchment Area	East Galway, South Westmeath, Roscommon. Also Offaly, North Tipperary, Longford
Staff numbers	650 approximately
Total budget	€55 million
Wage Roll Annualised	€45 million
Number of Births Annually	2,052
Number of Patients Treated	55,000 per annum
Regular Beds	195
Day Care Beds	25
Average cost to HSE per birth	€4,873
Trolley Watch Numbers Portiuncula	Average 2-3 per day for the last month
Trolley Watch Numbers UCHG	Average 13.6 per day for the last month

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# Ballinasloe Native Teaching The Chinese Farriery



By Conor Finnerty

An Ahascragh native is currently the only master farrier resident in China, 28-year-old Arthur Judge son of Arthur

the place to start an independent farriery business, Arthur Judge Farriery.

The language barrier was initially a stumbling block but with the help of girlfriend Huang the business expanded.

The farrier profession has not expanded at the same rate as other equine services and as a result foreign professionals do not reside in China. They fly in, complete the work and fly home; therefore Arthur is unique as he is building sustained relationships across all of China's Equestrian Centres and private bloodstock owners.

Arthur has gained an invaluable reputation for excellent quality, long term after care, education of Chinese staff along with a reliable regular service along a six week cycle. This reputation has earned interest from clients in Singapore, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines and Australia.

These clients employ him as a part time farrier and consultant, enabling those facilities to have the top Asian farrier shoe their number one horses, along with Arthur training and coaching their indigenous farriers.

After two years building up his portfolio of clients Arthur has committed his core business to China currently. However, as more and more consultancy offers roll in Arthur will be forced to decide between the hard graft of daily shoeing or move fully into the consultancy role of teaching indigenous farriers to reach a much higher standard.

and Patricia has a long history of working with horses.

Finishing secondary school in St. Cuans College, Castleblakeney in 2005 Arthur moved to Co. Meath to begin his apprenticeship with master farrier Niall Foley. In 2006 he was accepted into the very competitive Irish School of Farriery in RACE campus Co. Kildare. The competitive nature of the campus ensures only the best eight candidates are selected each year.

Having qualified after four years, Arthur decided to go to Wellington, Florida to gain experience in the show jumping industry in late 2010.

In March 2012 Arthur moved back to Europe searching for more opportunities in different industries to build his portfolio of experience. While at home the opportunity arrived to work in Asia to prepare horses for the FEI World Cup.

While working for the FEI love blossomed for the Galway man, he met Huang Dandan, a 24-year-old Chinese native who was one of the chief organisers of the World Cup.

After studying the market in China, Arthur decided this upcoming NIC (newly industrialising country) country was



Ten of our up and coming Ballinasloe camogie stars had the honour of playing at the half time of the All-Ireland Semi Final between Galway and Kilkenny in the Gaelic Grounds in Limerick. The girls had a great day out and managed to secure a victory against a tough Kilkenny side from Carrigshock.

Meanwhile the camogie club recently held a 'Human Foosball Tournament' in Maud Millars. On the night there was a raffle, BBQ and music. 6 teams entered the tournament with The Gardai winning it out in the end. With one of the strongest junior panels of recent years they were unlucky to suffer agonising defeats in the semi-final stage of both the league and the championship.





# Join Our Boys Trust Makes a Difference

By Conor Finnerty



Padraic and Paula Naughton's lives were changed forever on the 9th of November 2012 when their 3 sons were diagnosed with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy. Paula, originally from the UK, is an educational officer working with HSE west in the mental services here in the town while Padraic's (A Community Nurse)

family is originally from the Moore/Ballydangan area.

A trust in aid of the boys is ran by a huge number of volunteers. "The trust has been a community effort, the support has far exceeded anything I could have hoped for, we have a whole army of support," said Paula.

The Join Our Boys trust has raised nearly €500,000 since March of this year, the fundraising events are continuing to help raise in the region of €6 million to begin clinical trials to help find a cure for DMD. The Shearwater Hotel will be holding a Glitz and Glam, black tie event on the 12th of December while there will be a monster draw next January with a top

prize of a Volkswagen car donated by John Keane's Garage in Roscommon.

One of the major aims of the Join Our Boys Trust is to develop a purpose built house in Roscommon Town, which will meet the needs of the Naughton family. Despite their problems the brothers are showing a great love of life. The trust's main aims are to raise awareness of DMD Nationally & Internationally and to ensure Archie, Isaac and George have the additional resources to live fulfilled lives.

Archie's loves include diggers and tractors. His ambition is to be a professional Goalkeeper, a Farmer, and to play rugby for Connaught & be a champion Hurler. He is a caring role model to his brothers according to his mother.

George loves to laugh with everyone and has a great sense of humour. He is obsessed with going to church and lighting candles. He has recently started pre-school with his twin brother Isaac. When he grows up he wants to be a chef. Meanwhile, Isaac is obsessed with trains, especially Thomas the Tank Engine. He has great rhythm and enjoys all types of music and dancing. Isaac dreams of being a farmer when he grows up.

The boys and their family and friends would like to thank everyone who has helped them over the last few months and would like to remind people that every piece of work that is done is a step closer to finding a cure. 🌱

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# Our Irish Times Greek Reporter



By Conor Finnerty

Damian McCullough, has many happy memories of growing up in Ballinasloe but can't see himself moving his family from their home in Greece back to Ireland.

Son of Michael the auctioneer and Ann who is a retired Nurse, Damien is one of a family of five. Growing up in Mount Pleasant, Damian has many fond memories of growing up as a child and being able to wander safely through the woods and the fields. "Just behind the house we had a massive playground in the shape of McCarthy's woods, where we could

climb and swing from trees, roll down a sandpit and wander as "far" away as Garbally. The river wasn't too far away either and we used to sneak down there fishing pinkeens long before we were ever allowed go near it," said Damian, a freedom which will be diminished for his children living in a city in Greece.

Becoming a journalist was something he never planned. After St. Grellans and Garbally College he studied history and German at NUI Galway and he went on to do a master's and a PhD. Finishing his PhD in Greece Damian began working in educational publishing but didn't find it

satisfying. The opportunity arose to apply for a job in a weekly English-language newspaper in Greece called the Athens News and in 2008 he became an editor of the books it published.

When a colleague went on leave, Damian was asked to cover for her and that's when he began reporting. Due to the paper closing down after 60 years in print he was forced to find a new job and began working with an English-language news website, EnetEnglish. Damian began reporting for the Irish Times when the crisis hit Greece in 2011.


"I suppose I can thank being in the right place at the right time for that. Even though I was a daily reader of the Irish Times since national school, I never thought of approaching them to see if they wanted material from Greece," said Damian, who's second son was born during his first two weeks reporting for the Times.

Damian has written many stories for the Irish Times but two are especially memorable. The first was about an Egyptian bakery worker, named Walid, who was badly tortured by his Greek employer after he asked for a few months' back pay that he was owed. Despite being such a shocking story, he was the only journalist, Greek or non-Greek, at the court. This was the most read article the following day on the Irish Times website. "I'd like to think that the international attention the story got helped Walid in

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some way as the Greek authorities were very quickly forced to cancel plans to deport him after the attack. That would have left him with no recourse to justice," said the humble journalist.

The second was a story which sparked national headlines here in Ireland. A young Roma girl was taken into care after the authorities established that the couple raising her were not her biological parents. According to Damian the charity that took her into care engaged in all sorts of scaremongering and speculation

to travel far to find an island with quiet beaches to relax according to Damian. However as a result of austerity, the economy is in tatters, unemployment has skyrocketed, taxes have increased, wages have been decimated and public spending has fallen. All of this has made living in Greece increasingly difficult. This had led Damian to contemplate moving. "You end up wondering whether you and your family would be better off elsewhere. But the grass is always greener the other side, so I'm well aware that there are

has been to Ballinasloe a few times, and his sons, who are now five and three, visited for the first time last Christmas. The rain was a novelty for the boys, and a highlight for them was splashing through puddles in their wellingtons up in Garbally.

Damian feeds his appetite for local history through the Ballinasloe Memories page on Facebook, which he says is a great way to share photographs and get feedback from people. "In August, I posted a photo of a group of Ballinasloe men taken before



about what happened the girl through the media, which helped whip up anti-Roma hysteria far beyond Greece, to the point that two children in Ireland were taken into care. Damian documented all the nasty allegations that this charity made in the international media and the chairman of the charity even threatened to sue him, proof enough for Damian that he was doing something right.

Damian met the woman of his dreams in Berlin while researching his PhD. "One day while reading away through files in an archive, I spotted a young woman and I quickly made it by business to learn her name (Phaedra) and where she was from (Greece)," said the romantic Irishman. The couple started going out and in 2004 made the decision to move to Greece. Damian enjoys living in Greece and certainly doesn't miss the cold, rain and the clouds.

Greece is blessed with great weather from spring until autumn and you don't have

pros and cons no matter where you live," Damian remarked ruefully.

The unrest in Greece did not adversely affect his family's welfare but it did mean more work for him personally. Damian remembers receiving texts from Ireland wondering to see if he was ok. People's TV screens gave them the impression that the country was on fire but the riots were actually confined to certain streets according to the Times reporter.

When asked about moving his family back to Ballinasloe, Damian said "I'm still very attached to the place, but I've come to realise that I miss the Ballinasloe that I knew growing up, not necessarily the Ballinasloe of the present. My wife and I both have jobs and a home in Greece, so we could really only seriously consider moving to Ireland if we knew there would be work for us there."

Even though there is a small opportunity to move back to the town Damian's wife

they went to fight in the First World War. I had the photo for quite a while but only knew the name of one person in it. Social media in general is fantastic for gathering additional information on photographs and other artefacts, and it would be fantastic if more people got their old photos out and scanned them to share with others," said the eager amateur historian.

Speaking on his plans for the future, Damian has a very simplistic idea. "It's hard to plan for the future in Greece because of the precariousness generated by the crisis. Employers, including my Greek one, are months behind in wages, for example.

So, my main aim is to weather this crisis and then we'll see about the long term."

# OCTOBER Events Guide

<b>4th OCTOBER</b>			The Ada English Play	Town Hall Theatre	8pm
Bonnie Stewart	Downey's	10pm	<b>17th OCTOBER</b>		
Live Music	Pillar House	9pm	Ken and Steve	Canal Bar	9pm
Frank Dempsey	Canal Bar	9pm	Declan Keenahan	The Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
Live Entertainment in Main Bar	Gullane's Hotel	9pm	Clothes Collection Final Date	Golf Club	6pm
Kensey 3	The Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm	The Ada English Play	Town Hall Theatre	8pm
Driftwood	Joes Bar	10pm	<b>18th OCTOBER</b>		
The Big Lad	An Tàin (Downstairs)	9.30pm	DJ Keith	Downey's	9pm
Live Dj	An Tàin (Upstairs)	9.30pm	Shane Moore and Dj JOHN	Haydens Hotel	10pm
<b>5th OCTOBER</b>			Ultan Conlon	Pillar House	10.15pm
Nite Owls	Downey's	10pm	The Hoppy bar stars	Canal Bar	9pm
Ginger Biscuits	Pillar House	10.15pm	The Mahoneys	An Tàin (Downstairs)	9.30pm
Live Entertainment in Main Bar	Gullane's Hotel	9pm	Live Dj	An Tàin (Upstairs)	9.30pm
Trad Session	The Dunlo Tavern	5.30pm	<b>19th OCTOBER</b>		
Ann Marie McLoughlin	The Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm	Black Shaddow	Downey's	9pm
Buzz The Agent	Joes Bar	9.30pm	Trad Session with John Wynne & Frank Kelly	Pillar House	6pm
Loose Rooster	Maud Millars	8pm	Ceili	Gullane's Hotel	8pm
Shtick Her Down	An Tàin (Downstairs)	9.30pm	Think Big	Joes Bar	9.30pm
Live Dj	An Tàin (Upstairs)	9.30pm	Trad session (Singing pubs competition)	An Tàin	7pm
Gerry Guthrie	The Carlton Shearwater	10.30pm	TBC	The Carlton Shearwater	10.30pm
<b>6th OCTOBER</b>			<b>20th OCTOBER</b>		
Trad Session	The Dunlo Tavern	6pm	Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	7.30pm
Mikey & The Scallywags	Maud Millars	10pm	Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
<b>7th OCTOBER</b>			<b>21st OCTOBER</b>		
Maggie Dunne	Pillar House	8pm	Fr Walsh Trophy	Ballinasloe Bridge Club	8pm
Unislim	Gullane's Hotel	5.30pm	Unislim	Gullane's Hotel	5.30pm
Tug of War	Main Street	8.30pm	<b>22nd OCTOBER</b>		
<b>8th OCTOBER</b>			Trad session (Singing pubs competition)	An Tàin	10pm
Ballinasloe Flower & Garden	Gullane's Hotel	8pm	<b>23rd OCTOBER</b>		
Trad session (Singing pubs competition)	An Tàin	10pm	Country N Western Dance Lessons	Haydens Hotel	8.30pm
Tug of War	Main Street	8.30pm	Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11am
<b>9th OCTOBER</b>			Trad Session	The Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Country N Western Dance Lessons	Haydens Hotel	8.30pm	Kevin Rohan	Haydens Hotel	10pm
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11am	Open Jam Session	Maud Millars	10pm
Singing Pub Night	The Dunlo Tavern	10pm	The Weir Play	Town Hall Theatre	8pm
Kevin Rohan	Haydens Hotel	10pm	<b>24th OCTOBER</b>		
"Singing pubs, open session"	Maud Millars	10pm	Charlie McGettigan	Pillar House	9pm
Soap Box Derby	Dunlo St. & St. Michael Square	8pm	Chequers	Canal Bar	9pm
<b>10th OCTOBER</b>			The Weir Play	Town Hall Theatre	8pm
The Suspects	The Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm	Paul Watchorn	The Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
Shane Moore	Joes Bar	10pm	Beggars Velvet	Maud Millars	10pm
Strange Brew	Maud Millars	10pm	<b>25th OCTOBER</b>		
Madden family band	An Tàin (Downstairs)	9.30pm	DJ Keith	Downey's	9pm
Live Dj	An Tàin (Upstairs)	9.30pm	Johnny O'Halloran	Pillar House	10.15pm
Supermacs Monster Fireworks display	The Marina	10.30pm	Backstage	Canal Bar	9pm
Tug of War	Main Street	8.30pm	Last Man Standing and Dj JOHN	Haydens Hotel	10pm
<b>11th OCTOBER</b>			Ollie Rocks	Joes Bar	10pm
Sharon Turley	Downey's	10pm	Rock on Paddy	The Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
Hickory Wind	Pillar House	10.15pm	The Hush	Maud Millars	10pm
Sara o Kane	Joes Bar	10pm	Shtick her down	An Tàin (Downstairs)	9.30pm
Joes Band	An Tàin (Downstairs)	9.30pm	The Weir Play	Town Hall Theatre	8pm
Live Dj	An Tàin (Upstairs)	9.30pm	Live Dj	An Tàin (Upstairs)	9.30pm
Mary P & Liam and Dj JOHN	Haydens Hotel	10pm	<b>26th OCTOBER</b>		
Gaegan Pagans	The Dunlo Tavern	4.30pm	Anything goes	Downey's	8.30pm
Too Tall Paul	The Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm	Trad Session with John Wynne & Frank Kelly	Pillar House	6pm
Good Ole Trusty	Maud Millars	10pm	Open Golf Classic	Ballinasloe Golf Club	10pm
<b>12th OCTOBER</b>			Sara o Kane ( Halloween Fancy dress)	Joes Bar	9pm
Outback	Downey's	8.30pm	Shane Moore	Haydens Hotel	9.30pm
Trad Session with John Wynne & Frank Kelly	Pillar House	4pm	The Kings of Connaught Bank Holiday Sunday	Canal Bar	9pm
Joe Hession	Joes Bar	9.30pm	Chris&Tara	The Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Country Night with Trevor Dixon and Jenna	The Dunlo Tavern	10pm	Imposter	Maud Millars	8pm
The Nudie Suits	Maud Millars	8pm	Trad session (Singing pubs competition)	An Tàin	7pm
Trad session (Singing pubs competition)	An Tàin	7pm	Robert Mizzell	The Carlton Shearwater	10.30pm
Dog Show	St. Michaels Square	12pm	<b>27th OCTOBER</b>		
Craft & Food Market	St. Michael Square	9am	Children's Halloween Party	Gullane's Hotel	2pm
Pig Racing	Dunlo St.	3pm	<b>28th OCTOBER</b>		
Mick Flavin	The Carlton Shearwater	10.30pm	Unislim	Gullane's Hotel	5.30pm
<b>13th OCTOBER</b>			<b>29th OCTOBER</b>		
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	7.30pm	Trad session (Singing pubs competition)	An Tàin	10pm
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	9pm	<b>30th OCTOBER</b>		
<b>14th OCTOBER</b>			Country N Western Dance Lessons	Haydens Hotel	8.30pm
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm	Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11am
<b>15th OCTOBER</b>			Trad Session	The Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
Active Retirement	Gullane's Hotel	3pm	Kevin Rohan	Haydens Hotel	10pm
Trad session (Singing pubs competition)	An Tàin	10pm	Open Jam Session	Maud Millars	10pm
<b>16th OCTOBER</b>			<b>31st OCTOBER</b>		
Country N Western Dance Lessons	Haydens Hotel	8.30pm	Sweet Sensation	Canal Bar	9pm
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	11am	Halloween Party	An Tàin (Upstairs)	9.30pm
Bruno Groening - Circle of Friends	Gullane's Hotel	5pm	Live Music	The Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
Trad Session	The Dunlo Tavern	10pm	Macey South	Maud Millars	10pm
Kevin Rohan	Haydens Hotel	10pm			



# NOVEMBER Events Guide

<b>1st NOVEMBER</b>			<b>16th NOVEMBER</b>		
Geagan Pagans	Pillar House	10.15pm	Buzz The Agent	Joes Bar	9.30pm
Backstage	Canal Bar	9pm	Trad Session with John Wynne & Frank Kelly	Pillar House	6pm
Madden Family Band	An Tàin (Downstairs)	9.30pm	The Gaegan Pagans	Maud Millars	8pm
Live Dj	An Tàin (Upstairs)	9.30pm	Trad session (Singing pubs competition)	An Tàin	7pm
Black & White and Dj JOHN	Haydens Hotel	10pm	Gerry Guthrie	The Carlton Shearwater	10.30pm
Anmarie McLoughlin	The Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm	<b>17th NOVEMBER</b>		
Red tape	Maud Millars	10pm	Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	7.30pm
Tommy Fleming	The Carlton Shearwater	10.30pm	Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
<b>2nd NOVEMBER</b>			<b>18th NOVEMBER</b>		
David Maguire Live	Downey's	8.30pm	WWI Talk & Panel Discussion	Ballinasloe Library	6pm
Trad Session with John Wynne & Frank Kelly	Pillar House	6pm	Mass for deceased members	Ballinasloe Bridge Club	7pm
Ballinasloe Musical Society	Gullane's Hotel		Unislim	Gullane's Hotel	5.30pm
Open Day	Gullane's Hotel	4pm	<b>19th NOVEMBER</b>		
Trad session (Singing pubs competition)	An Tàin	7pm	Trad session (Singing pubs competition)	An Tàin	10pm
Mikey & The Scallywags	Maud Millars	8pm	<b>20th NOVEMBER</b>		
Michael English	The Carlton Shearwater	10.30pm	Country N Western Dance Lessons	Haydens Hotel	8.30pm
<b>3rd NOVEMBER</b>			Tommy Derrane Trophy	Ballinasloe Bridge Club	8pm
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	9pm	Open Jam Session	Maud Millars	10pm
<b>4th NOVEMBER</b>			<b>21st NOVEMBER</b>		
Simultaneous pairs	Ballinasloe Bridge Club	8pm	Chequers	Canal Bar	9pm
Unislim	Gullane's Hotel	5.30pm	Trad Session	The Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm	Beggars Velvet	Maud Millars	10pm
<b>5th NOVEMBER</b>			Nathan Carter	The Carlton Shearwater	10.30pm
Active Retirement Meeting	Gullane's Hotel	3pm	<b>22nd NOVEMBER</b>		
Social Services AGM	Social Services Centre	8pm	Ulltan Conlon	Pillar House	9.30pm
Trad session (Singing pubs competition)	An Tàin	10pm	The Hoppy bar stars	Canal Bar	9pm
<b>6th NOVEMBER</b>			Last man standing and Dj JOHN	Haydens Hotel	10pm
Country N Western Dance Lessons	Haydens Hotel	8.30pm	Joes Band	An Tàin (Downstairs)	9.30pm
Kevin Rohan	Haydens Hotel	10pm	Live Dj	An Tàin (Upstairs)	9.30pm
Open Jam Session	Maud Millars	10pm	John Molloy	Joes Bar	10pm
<b>7th NOVEMBER</b>			Paul Watchorn	The Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Michael Regan	Canal Bar	9pm	Washout	Maud Millars	10pm
Bruno Groening - Circle of Friends	Gullane's Hotel	7pm	<b>23rd NOVEMBER</b>		
Trad Session	The Dunlo Tavern	10pm	Trad Session with John Wynne & Frank Kelly	Pillar House	6pm
The Hush	Maud Millars	10pm	Think Big	Joes Bar	9.30pm
<b>8th NOVEMBER</b>			The Nudie Suits	Maud Millars	8pm
Joe Wynne	Pillar House	10.15pm	Trad session (Singing pubs competition)	An Tàin	7pm
Anything Goes	Joes Bar	10pm	John McNicholl	The Carlton Shearwater	10.30pm
Paul Burns	Canal Bar	9pm	<b>24th NOVEMBER</b>		
The Big Lad	An Tàin (Downstairs)	9.30pm	Christmas prizes	Ballinasloe Bridge Club	8pm
Live Dj	An Tàin (Upstairs)	9.30pm	Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	7.30pm
The Suspects	The Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm	Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
Jig Jam	Maud Millars	10pm	<b>25th NOVEMBER</b>		
<b>9th NOVEMBER</b>			Unislim	Gullane's Hotel	5.30pm
Anything goes	Downey's	8.30pm	Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm
Trad Session with John Wynne & Frank Kelly	Pillar House	6pm	"Ard Scol Mhuire ""Hairs pray"""	Town Hall Theatre	8pm
Loose Rooster	Maud Millars	8pm	<b>26th NOVEMBER</b>		
Trad session (Singing pubs competition)	An Tàin	7pm	"Ard Scol Mhuire ""Hairs pray"""	Town Hall Theatre	8pm
Paddy O'Brien	The Carlton Shearwater	10.30pm	<b>27th NOVEMBER</b>		
<b>10th NOVEMBER</b>			Country N Western Dance Lessons	Haydens Hotel	8.30pm
Tommy Kelly Cup	Ballinasloe Bridge Club	8pm	Christmas prizes	Ballinasloe Bridge Club	8pm
Ciorcal Comhra	Gullane's Hotel	7.30pm	Bruno Groening - Circle of Friends	Gullane's Hotel	5pm
Line Dancing	Gullane's Hotel	9pm	Kevin Rohan	Haydens Hotel	10pm
<b>11th NOVEMBER</b>			Open Jam Session	Maud Millars	10pm
Unislim	Gullane's Hotel	5.30pm	"Ard Scol Mhuire ""Hairs pray"""	Town Hall Theatre	8pm
Tea Dance	Gullane's Hotel	9pm	<b>28th NOVEMBER</b>		
<b>12th NOVEMBER</b>			Kiwi Paddy	Canal Bar	9pm
Active Retirement Meeting	Gullane's Hotel	3pm	Trad Session	The Dunlo Tavern	10pm
Ballinasloe Flower & Garden Club	Gullane's Hotel	9pm	Macey South	Maud Millars	10pm
Trad session (Singing pubs competition)	An Tàin	10pm	<b>29th NOVEMBER</b>		
<b>13th NOVEMBER</b>			Kieran Whyte	Downey's	9.30pm
Country N Western Dance Lessons	Haydens Hotel	8.30pm	Geagan Pagans	Pillar House	9.30pm
Credit Union cup	Ballinasloe Bridge Club	8pm	The Pink Panter Jazz Band	Canal Bar	9pm
Singers Circle	The Dunlo Tavern	9.30pm	Country Comfort and Dj JOHN	Haydens Hotel	10pm
Kevin Rohan	Haydens Hotel	10pm	Slider	Joes Bar	10pm
Open Jam Session	Maud Millars	10pm	Too Tall Paul	The Dunlo Tavern	10.30pm
<b>14th NOVEMBER</b>			Good Ole Trusty	Maud Millars	10pm
Mike Casey Photographic Exhibition Launch	Ballinasloe Library	5.30pm	<b>30th NOVEMBER</b>		
Declan Sinnott	Pillar House	9pm	Outback	Downey's	8.30pm
Ken and Steve	Canal Bar	9pm	Trad Session with John Wynne & Frank Kelly	Pillar House	6pm
AOIFE Conference	Carlton Shearwater	All day	Shane Moore	Haydens Hotel	10pm
Trad Session	The Dunlo Tavern	10pm	Live Music	Maud Millars	8pm
Strange Brew	Maud Millars	10pm	Jimmy Buckleu	The Carlton Shearwater	10.30pm
<b>15th NOVEMBER</b>			<b>5th DECEMBER</b>		
Sweet Sensation	Downey's	9.30pm	Sean Keane Concert	Town Hall Theatre	5.30pm
G2	Pillar House	10.15pm			
Kieran White	Canal Bar	9pm			
Shane Moore and Dj JOHN	Haydens Hotel	10pm			
The Mahoneys	An Tàin (Downstairs)	9.30pm			

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# Hollywood Beckons For Local Based Author

By Conor Finnerty

Ballinasloe based writer Nuala Ní Conchúir is enjoying a rich vein of success at the moment with her novel "A Closet of Savage Momentos" named as a must read book by the Journal.ie and her blog has also been nominated for "Best Arts and Culture Blog" award at the National Blog Awards 2014.

Born in Dublin in 1970, the full-time fiction writer and poet, who now lives in Old Mountpleasant has published four collections of short fictional stories, three poetry collections and two novels.

Nuala holds a BA in Irish from Trinity College Dublin and a Masters in Translation Studies (Irish/English) from Dublin City University. She has worked as an arts administrator in theatre and in a writers' centre as a translator, as a bookseller and also in a university library.

But this talented novelist was always destined for greatness after coming second in a national poetry competition at the age of nine, with a poem in Irish about Traveller children.

This success gave support to her already smouldering talent. Growing up, the Dublin native was an avid reader: "I loved the usual list of Enid Blyton, Sinéad de Valera, Eilís Dillon and Walter Macken. I preferred reading to every other activity. I still do, pretty much."

Moving from Dublin to the East Galway Capital, this ambitious author became more serious about her writing. She takes inspiration from life, art, people, the body, feminism and historical biographies of real people.

Writing, a traditionally tough profession

to make a living in, has put its fair share of obstacles in Nuala's way: "literature, like most professions, is weighted in favour of (single) men. It is also difficult to earn a decent living. The notion that writers sit and write and doing nothing else is false. I teach creative writing, I mentor writing students on the BA in Writing in NUI Galway, I do readings, I review books etc."

Attracted to the West by a job opportunity and the chance to raise her son in a less populated area, Nuala has been getting rave reviews for her second novel "The Closet of Savage Momentos", described as a "moving and beautifully written portrait of death, grief and motherhood" by Sarah Gilmartin in the Irish Times.

Asked which piece she is most proud of writing this humble writer diplomatically responds: "It's difficult to be proud of anything you write - you can't be objective about the work and the things you like are the things others don't, and vice versa. I have a fondness for my debut novel YOU, as it is set in my homeplace in Mill Lane in Palmerstown. But I adore short stories too and I feel my collection Nude is a keeper."

Not one to rest on her laurels, Nuala is busy preparing for her next publication. Her third novel, "Miss Emily" which is about the poet Emily Dickenson's Irish maid, will be published next summer by Penguin in the USA and Canada and by a British publisher which as of yet, has not been made public.

Along with promoting her third novel, the adopted Galway woman will feature the town itself in her fourth novel which will also be set in London and Paris.



With social media and the use of kindles adding to the decline book sales this writer believes it is a far better option to embrace this new age rather than trying to find a way to stem the tide.

"I love my kindle too - I travel a lot with my writing, so loading up the kindle with good books before I go is one of my joys. Paper books and e-books can live happily side-by-side. It is pointless to resist technology. Better by far to embrace and use it."

"But I do hope that parents continue to read paper books to kids so that their whole world is not about screens. As I say, if we use the things in tandem with each other, that's the best option," said the successful writer and mother. 🌱

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# Ballinasloe Town Twinning 24 Years Strong

By Michael Kelly

In 1990 Ballinasloe & Ballycastle (Co Antrim) formally ratified the Twinning of our two towns, and in 1993 a Twinning agreement between Ballinasloe Town Council and Chalonnes-Sur-Loire Town Council in France was signed by the late Patsy Geraghty (Chairman) later years the Town Council ratified a Friendship Agreement with the town of Halewood (Liverpool) and also share Twinning links with Killorglin (Co Kerry).

The town of Chalonnes-Sur-Loire is similar in size to Ballinasloe and is located on the river Loire about 100 miles from the west coast of France, near the city of Angers.

Each year, formal invitations have been made annually by both Town Councils and the Twinning Committees to visit their respective festivals.

Over the years members of the Town Twinning Committee/Ballinasloe Town Council have visited the "Wine Festival" or "Rhythm & Beef Festival" in Chalonnes, with our counterparts from Chalonnes visiting our great "October Fair & Festival", with the objective of promoting interactions between our Towns of Student Exchanges, Sporting Clubs, and various cultural groups.

Host families in both towns house visitors on these exchanges, and both Municipalities have funded receptions and tours around their localities. As a result a number of long term friendships have been made with our visitors. Chalonnes is also twinned with Saniki (Poland) & Tecklenburg (Germany) and have regular exchanges.

Chairperson of Ballinasloe Town Twinning, Mike Kelly and the Committee are aware of the challenges ahead on foot of the recent abolition of Ballinasloe Town Council "I have always

felt that the abolition of the Town Council will have a seriously negative effect on our town, and it will take time for this to be realised. I would like, on behalf of the committee to thank former Town Clerks, Mary Molloy (R.I.P), Alan Farrell, Mark O'Donnell, Caitriona Morgan; Town Manager Kevin Kelly, and all elected members for their support and enthusiasm over the years. It has provided an opportunity for individuals, clubs and groups from our towns to share and learn about each others culture and heritage. We have had many successful exchanges between students, sporting and cultural clubs alike, as well as some very successful exchanges in conjunction with the H.S.E".

Mike would also like to thank all who have been instrumental in ensuring the success during his involvement as Committee Chair I want to sincerely thank Bobby Finn, Seamus Doherty, Geraldine Kelly, Adrian Ahern, Johnny Walsh, Lily Broderick, M S Kelly (official snapper), Lily Broderick Kelly, Pat O'Sullivan, Tom Madden, Cathal Concannon, with a special thanks to Carol Kavanagh, Nancy Cregg, and Sean Tully who have been there from the start and are still actively engaged in the twinning project. I would also like on behalf of the committee to welcome Cllr. Michael Connolly and Cllr. Timmy Broderick formally to the committee, and also look forward to working with Kieran Coyne and Breda Mulrennan of the Community and Enterprise Department of Galway County Council who will be our Liaison Officers going forward and look forward to their involvement and support for what has been a very successful project on so many levels to date".

Mike would like to see more people involved and to facilitate where possible an opportunity for other clubs and groups to partake in exchange visits or simply to just get involved. Anybody wishing to do so can contact any of the committee members.



L&R: George MacKenzie, Former Mayor Mike Kelly, Barbara Stewart, Mayor of Halewood Edna Finneran, Joe McGuinness, Martin Lynch



Pictured at the Chalonnes Rhythm & Beef Festival in July were Tom Madden, Marie-Annick (President), Michael Kelly, Yveline Dumont, Geraldine Kelly and Jacqueline Reveaull.

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# Town Hall Theatre Renovation Continues

By Conor Finnerty

This Autumn marks the return of a fully rain proofed venue to the Society St. as the scaffolding and the painting buckets are slowly being removed.

Since May the building has been thoroughly re-roofed and re insulated in the most significant piece of renovation work since the late President Hilliary reopened the venue in 1989, after an ANCO refurbishment.

Some 25 years later with a new Board of Directors – directly representing the community and the performance arts interests, with a long term lease; have managed with a huge investment from the old Town Council – the winds of change are blowing !

The internal walls, ceilings and foyer were all extensively repaired from the damp and water damage and a huge painting and decorating programme was undertaken by an array of volunteers who between them gave over 2000 hours of hard graft to have the venue open again for the Autumn.

In excess of €90,000 was grant aided by the Town Council and Galway County Council to help defray some of the core costs of the project and IRISH Public Bodies Community Fund invested €11,000 towards the renovation of the dressing room facilities to the rear and side of the stage.

The venue enjoys the huge support and engagement of the local TUS team and indeed the Emerald Community Employment programme – who provide operatives on a weekly basis for the ongoing renovations programme.

Patrons to the venue will enjoy a much warmer environment during the winter season as the roof has now been fully insulated for the first time in its history. Ancillary rehearsal spaces, a windows repair programme, painting, storage and archiving provision and a complete overhaul of the stage and lighting facilities are now being carried out while attempting to keep the building fully utilised for the public.

Chairperson Mary O'Connell was effusive in her praise of all the volunteer crew from many stage and musical groups and indeed

none. "We were really under pressure to redesign and revamp the foyer and auditorium for our audiences and we literally had six weeks to our first show, we put the call out through our facebook and within days we had a cleaning, renovating and painting crew helping the Tus and Fas operatives in the building, there is really a huge amount of GRA for this building and people have been very supportive of us".

The plan is to get to venue back to maximum usage of its groups, patrons and performers as well as getting back on the calendar for national touring shows and then to completely modernise the seating and heating system. This will require substantial more fundraising and plans are at an advanced stage for a new campaign.

Tracking the Ballinasloe LIFE Town Mapping Online survey – the Theatre is planning to roll out a pilot Cinema Project over 12 weeks from early November to the end of April 2015 with screenings of movies taking place on Friday and Saturdays.

Up-coming events include Relays Drama Group "For one last lonely while" the life and times of Ada English written by local women Pat Johnson which will be staged on 16/17 October.

The Weir by Conor McPhearson will go ahead as a fundraising event on behalf of Ballinasloe Town Hall Theatre. Ard Scoil Mhuire "Hairspray" the musical which will be staged on 25, 26, 27 November. On Friday December 5th Sean Keane is making a welcome return visit to The Town Hall Theatre with tickets reasonably priced at €20 .

Prior to Xmas the Panto are making a welcome return with their rendition of Puss In Boots from 8th to 14th of December.

The weekly country market has returned to the foyer on Friday mornings with wonderful food items and crafts by local crafts people.

Please contact The Town Hall Theatre with any queries to [ballinasloetownhalltheatre@gmail.com](mailto:ballinasloetownhalltheatre@gmail.com) or on our facebook page [ballinasloetownhalltheatre](http://ballinasloetownhalltheatre).



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# New Art and Garden Projects For Brothers of Charity

By Conor Finnerty

The Brothers of Charity's houses are full of budding artists after projects in houses on Station Road and Church Hill have transformed dull areas into bright, colourful spaces to be enjoyed by their occupants.

The only complete respite house's garden on Station Road has undergone a complete transformation thanks to the generosity and good will of councillors, suppliers, volunteers and tradesmen. The garden has become a bright, comfortable area where the clients can sit in the sun and enjoy their new space which they craved.

The project was kick-started by a generous donation of €1,700 by local Independent TD Timmy Broderick and this was added to by a parent of one of the house's users, which has a reach of over 20kms. The house caters for four people at a time who come and go on a regular basis according to team leader Mary Kenny. Generally staying for two nights nearly 20 people are availing of this service which creates "a home away from home".

Enough of praise can't go to the Canal House group who stripped a garden wall of ivy and tidied up the garden to give the team a blank canvass to work from. Local tradesmen and suppliers like Tony Colohan, Sean Finnerty and Mike Kenny



to name a few have given their services at discounted prices to help the project to reach completion.

Maureen and Alan Russell, who donated a garden bench and canopy, have given their creative eyes to the project to help fulfil the gardens potential. The project has given the house a "family area" as such where they can sit around and enjoy their collective love of country music. The garden's large shed has been decorated and now caters for discos where songs by Mike Denver, Nathan Carter and Richie Kavanagh are regularly played through the speakers.

But the project doesn't stop there according to Mary Kenny: "We are looking for people to sponsor a season in our memory corner." The house has plans for one corner of the garden to be dedicated to flowers and plants that

are low maintenance to represent the four seasons in the year. But funds are running low and the team are looking for any willing donation towards the further improvement of the garden.

Meanwhile in the Brothers of Charity house on Church Hill, an art mural has been created by four artists who have been tutored by Mary Donohue. The project was completed with the aid of the SUAS and Lets Go To Work staff. The mural was undertaken as part of Dulux's "Lets Colour Project". Additional to the painting wind-chimes and tiles were created by the artists during their classes every Tuesday. "We had great fun and a big laugh painting the mural," said Caitriona Larkin, one of the artists. Caitriona hopes to enjoy the space by reading and listening to music on sunny days.

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# Out and About in Ballinasloe



*Sisters Lauren, Sarah Jane and Eva Ruane who received their awards for the competing in the Ballinasloe Library Mythical Maze Summer Reading Challenge from School Librarian Jo Fahey at Ballinasloe Library on Saturday 20th Sept.*



*Bernie Flynn who celebrated her 80th Birthday at the Moycarn Lodge on 16th August with her family, daughter Kathleen and sons John, Joe, Dave and Noel*



*Boat Rally*



The town's fish and chip evening event in aid of local charities took place in Kariba's restaurant and coffee house Run by Community Hearts an estimated €1,000 was raised in aid of local charities. Last years groups that benefited were GELS , Cancer Care West , Help and Repair Club, Cancer Care Ballinasloe and the Lions Club and Maureen would like to thank both John and Marian from Kariba's for all their help. Full details of the lucky groups this year will be released in the next edition.



*Sergeant Tom Horkan on completion of the cycle*



# The Gift of Giving...!

By Maureen Cahalan

During my work as a bereavement facilitator, and at school retreats, one of the most memorable times in people's lives is when they receive something special. Be it time, a kindly word, special gift or a nice gesture the memory always outlives the actual moment. We are journeying this world together so the importance of acknowledging each other is of great benefit. When Nelson Mandela finally became free of Robben Island after being incarcerated for 27 years, he chose to leave all its negativity behind. In so doing, he decided to live his life through the gift of freedom for himself. Mother Teresa often said that he is easier to love the people far away than those close to us. A secondary school student shared with me recently that

the time a particular teacher gives him, empowers his confidence. A bereaved widower looks forward every day to a kindly word from neighbours and friends. The common touch of friendliness has a far greater impact on us than any other form of communications. With my happy and continuously productive years in retail I have never sold one product. I have transacted my business with appreciation; hope and helping customers show their appreciation with family, neighbours, colleagues and friends. Never put off until tomorrow what you can do today. Always take the first step in forging a connection and you might be pleasantly surprised. The gift of giving is invaluable. In giving we receive. Enjoy your day...! 🍀



Maureen Cahalan



## Couples from the Town in the All-Ireland Strictly Come Dancing at Croke Park

Anne Duffy, Renee Carthy, Martha and Leo Mulvany, took part in the Connacht Strictly Come Dancing competition as part of a fundraiser for Cancer Care West. The event was organised by Weightwatchers Ireland with the provincial finalists competing in the All Ireland Strictly Come Dancing Finals in Croke Park in September.

Choreographers Sean and Patricia Casey were on hand at coaching sessions, and local Weightwatchers leader, Treacy Powell encouraged and motivated the dancers along with local members. Practice took place in Claregalway & Athenry over the summer months and the learning process took a considerable amount of individual practice.



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# Dubai Expat To Officially Open Fair

By Conor Finnerty

This year the Fair & Festival committee is welcoming back Duneeda native Colm McLoughlin to officially open the event. Colm is the Executive Vice Chairman of Dubai Duty Free, an airport retailer with a turnover of US\$1.6 billion in 2012. Within his 45 years in the duty-free business, McLoughlin has received peer recognition and is the recipient of a Frontier "Lifetime Achievement" award in addition to the Duty Free News International "25th Anniversary Lifetime Achievement" award and Esquire's Man At His Best "Lifetime Achievement" award.

The Official opening will take place on the Soundstage in St. Michaels Square at 2.30 p. m. on Sunday 5th October and will herald a multitude of equestrian and entertainment events over the nine day festival.

New to the programme is an equestrian parade from St. Brigids Grounds to the Square Saturday, 2.30 p.m. on the eve of

the Fair. Vintners will also host a pet farm display on the streets as well as busking live music on the festival sound-stage.

The Credit Union Horse of the Fair Lunging Competition takes place in the Fair Green on the Sunday the 5th. The Pony and Cob Competitions will then follow on the Monday, with all of these prestigious competitions attracting significant prize money.

For visitors and families the town centre will feature a pedestrianised oasis of outdoor stalls, and there will be live entertainment on the AIB festival sound-stage.

Midweek will see the Gullanes Hotel Tug of War on the Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday nights at 8.30 p.m with the singing pubs competition - from Wed to Friday and a brand new event - a Soap Box Derby on the Thursday night at 9.00 p.m from Society Street into the Square. The Annual Supermacs fire works display will light up the sky on

Friday night at 10.00 pm at the Marina.

Country Fair Day sees over 100 colourful stalls in the car parks in the town centre and the Horse and Pony In-Hand Classes in the Fairgreen.

On the closing Sunday - 12th Supervalu are sponsoring the fourth year of the Art & Craft Competitions involving several adult bakery and craft as well as classes for children. The hugely successful Fear Breige Competition (Scare Crow) at 3.00 p.m is back running for a third year, in St. Michael's Square.

The massive Dog Show and International Craft Fair also takes place in the Square and entries will be taken from noon.

Closing out the week is the Pig Racing and Sheaf Throwing Competitions on Dunlo St. in the afternoon. The Festival Office is now open on Main Street, contact number is 090 9644793/ 087 3487222 [www.ballinasloeoctoberfair.com](http://www.ballinasloeoctoberfair.com)



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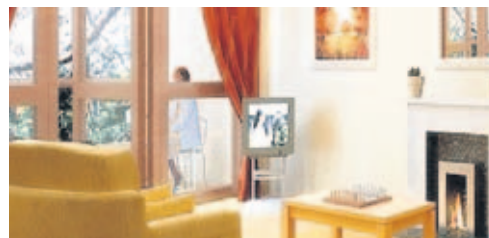
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# Ballinasloe Show 175<sup>th</sup> Annual Show Bigger & Better

**By Conor Finnerty**

Ballinasloe Horse & Agric. Annual Show which is being held on 4th October promises a packed programme of events which will hold popular appeal to all.

One of the oldest Shows in the country will see qualifiers from numerous shows throughout the country congregate in Ballinasloe Show Grounds for 6 All-Ireland Classes.

The first of these will be the All-Ireland Connemara two-year old Filly & Mare of the Future followed by the Irish Draught Filly Foal Competition followed by the Irish Draught Colt Foal and followed by All Ireland Donkey Final and the Gain Feed All-Ireland Foal Competition followed by the Irish Draught Mare & Foal Final.

Other classes include Working Hunter Classes, sponsored by local man Norman Sinclair; The Champion Ridden Pony competing for the Fred Kilmartin Memorial Cup, Cattle & Sheep Classes particularly the All-Ireland Championship Saler Bull Calf and the All Ireland Championship Saler Heifer Class. Both the Saler Classes are sponsored by the Saler Society of Ireland.

Cattle Classes will culminate in the AIB sponsored Champion Beast of the Show, while the Sheep Classes will finish with the Brendan Walshe Cup for Champion Sheep of Show.

Fowl & Bantam classes together with Pet classes will be judged at 11a.m. with a number of classes including Rhode Island Reds, Various Egg Classes and Most Unusual Pet.

“We are looking forward to continuing to build on the success of our past shows and with all the renovations that have been done on Ballinasloe Showgrounds in the last two years we feel that we have never been better equipped to deal with what we hope will be our most successful show ever” says Ballinasloe Show Chairman Fr. Christy McCormack.



Photography by Gerry Stronge





Photography by Gerry Stronge

“Bar facilities will be available and catering will be provided, as usual, by Rumbles one of our major sponsors” continued Fr. Christy.

“The last word must go to our generous sponsors,” says Fr. Christy. “Ballinasloe Show could not survive without the continued support of all our sponsors, those who have been mentioned above as well as all other sponsors of show classes and show jumping classes. We are delighted to work in conjunction with them and recognise the difficulties that businesses face in the present economic climate and I would like, on behalf of Ballinasloe Show Society, to thank all of our Sponsors, large and small for their loyalty”.

All enquiries to Show Secretary, John Harney, Main Street, Ballinasloe. Tel & Fax 090 9645040. Mobile 087 2105032 E-mail: [computerandoffice@eircom.net](mailto:computerandoffice@eircom.net)

  
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# The Weir –A First Town Hall Production

By Conor Finnerty

The Town Hall Theatre Group will be performing the “The Weir” for three nights between the 23rd and 25th of October.

This play won the Laurence Olivier Award as the “Best New Play” in 1997 and contributed to McPherson winning the Critics’ Circle Award as the most promising playwright in 1998.

Set in a rural pub in county Leitrim this play focuses on storytelling, loneliness and addresses the loss a single man feels approaching the end of his life.

Unlike most plays, “The Weir”, does not have an interval and runs right through from start to finish, a duration of about 90 minutes.

Director John Boland and his cast of David Hardiman, Seamus Feerick, Patrick Byrne, Ciara Goode and Liam Jordan have begun rehearsals in the newly refurbished Town Hall Theatre.

The play focuses on the relationship between three bachelors of different ages and their familiarity with one another. Rejecting the common practice of emigration that was rampant at the time, these three friends found a way of surviving.

Quite content with their way of life these men resent any interference from the outside world, however the return of a former resident of the area causes much



Director John Boland and cast of production

conversation.

A man who decided to leave the area, returns successful and married. The fact that he has returned with a woman that is not his wife is the real topic of interest.

The woman who transpires is a new resident in the area, arrival into the pub brings about a fit of story-telling. And the story telling is what keeps the audience on the edge of their seats until the very end.

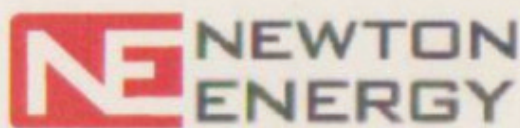
This play gathers momentum as it

progresses and the cast exchange plenty of banter throughout the play.

“The Town Hall Theatre group provides a platform from which to help promote this potentially magnificent arts centre,” according to the Director John Boland.

The proceeds from this production will enhance the fund raising efforts currently undertaken by the Town Hall to facilitate the redevelopment of the building.

Tickets will be available from the Theatre and at the door. Curtain is at 8.00 p.m



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# Fourth Ada Heritage Weekend

By Conor Finnerty



night's inaugural play will be followed by a music session in Gullane's Hotel.

While Ada English was an important person in the Celtic Renaissance and revolutionary struggle in Ballinasloe and she was, according to collective lore, a despatch rider for Liam Mellows and in Dublin with Cathal Brugha just before his death in the civil war, little is formally known about that period of her life.

She represented Galway in the Second Dail and voted against the Treaty. Following the Treaty split she seems to have concentrated on her work as psychiatrist in St. Brigid's Hospital where she was instrumental in the early introduction of occupational therapy and Electro compulsive therapy.

On Saturday there will be a series of lectures in Gullane's Hotel with a very interesting range of speakers including Dr Sean Lucey (Queens University Belfast), Dr Damien Brennan (Trinity College Dublin) and Professor Oonagh Walsh (Glasgow Caledonian University) to name but a few. There will also be a camogie event to honour Dr. English's promotion of the sport and an exhibition relating to the work of Cumann na mBan.

With the approaching remembrance of the 1916 rising there is an increasing interest in the role the Cumman na mBan women played in the Rising and War of Independence. Professor Brendan Kelly will also be showcasing his new book "Dr Ada English (1875-1944): From Ballinasloe

to the Dáil - and back" during the Ada weekend. Ada was one of the first female medical graduates in Ireland having graduated from the Royal University, Dublin in 1903. Ada spent nearly 40 years of her life working in the Ballinasloe District Asylum, later to be known as the St Brigid's hospital.

During this period Ada was a close friend of several leading political figures, including Joseph McDonagh, Patrick Pearse, Arthur Griffith, Liam Mellows and Éamonn de Valera. In 1921, spent several months in Galway jail for possessing nationalist literature and while in jail, Ada was elected as a Sinn Féin TD in the Second Dáil. On 26 August 1921, in the Dáil Ada strongly supported



Valera's bid for the presidency, however she passionately opposed the resulting treaty that was negotiated.

Admittance to both Play and Seminars is at the door. Further information contact Pat Johnson at 086 3689134.

St. Brigid's Heritage Group are running the Ada English Heritage weekend which is scheduled for October 16th to 18th this year.

As part of the fourth Ada English weekend the Relays Drama Group will present a new play 'For a Little Lonely While - the life and times of Ada English' in the Town Hall Theatre on 16th and 17th October at 8pm.

The author, Pat Johnston a former teacher of history in Garbally, wants to present to the public a picture of life and events around Ballinasloe and East Galway during the revolutionary period as a contribution to the decade of centenaries. Friday

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# Fr. McNerney Eyrecourt Bound

By Conor Finnerty

After over 16 years of total service to the parishioners and the Community, Rev. Declan McNerney has been assigned to the parish of Eyrecourt by Bishop Kirby of Clonfert and leaves post in early October to replace retiring P.P. Rev. Fr. John Naughton.

The popular Borrisoleigh man, who is fierce proud of his Co. Tipperary roots, studied in St. Patricks College Thurles and was ordained in June 1994.

His first appointment was to Ballinasloe for one year, after which he was appointed Diocesan Advisor to the Primary Schools, which meant All Hallows College in Dublin to study for one year. Upon returning the Bishop needed a priest in Eyrecourt parish and he went there for four months and although for short time, he really loved it. He was then appointed curate to Abbey/Duniry assisting Fr. Sean Lyons and he has really got on great for three and half years. He was then sent back to town where he has been working ever since.

Looking back he has some great memories of Ballinasloe. "The people are great here; very supportive and always encouraging. The young people of the parish are very friendly and always stop for a chat, and we have a laugh and that is great to see when we hear a



lot of negativity about young people".

He feels a great generosity of spirit in the town and one lasting memory was last March at the untimely death of Mariola Kochańska, a Polish parishioner killed in a car crash. The people of this town could not do enough to help when he asked them.

He also singles out the St. Vincent de Paul Society for all the support they give to those in real need and during the recession in very trying circumstances.

Reflecting on what he may miss most "The children of the Parish, I loved visiting the five primary schools - I always got a great welcome and we had many great laughs and stories. I was Chairperson of the B.O.M. of Creagh N.S. - and I will miss that role dearly; the people on my first Friday calls - the sick and the housebound. I will also miss the Faith and Fun group and the family Mass every Saturday evening, our wonderful choirs and all the people involved in Church organisations".

He has fond memories of his visits to the Brothers of Charity. He always got a great welcome especially from his good friend Frank! Up Tipp. He loved the build up to First Communion and Confirmation and the great tales on First Confession night. He also loved working alongside our excellent teachers and he is very appreciative of the great work they do. He has made lifelong friends with members of our Polish community and he knows this friendship will always be there.

His favourite time of year in the parish was the build up to Christmas and having to watch the birth of the Baby Jesus at least twenty five times in school plays!!! "I will miss greatly our children's Christmas Mass on Christmas Eve, this was truly a special night to see the Church packed and the children acting out the Birth of Jesus".

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“My move to Eyrecourt as Parish Priest comes following the retirement of Fr. John Naughton P.P. He was always a great friend to me and I wish him health and happiness in the years ahead, I see this appointment as a new challenge and I look forward to serving the people of Eyrecourt/Clonfert and Meelick for many years to come. Finally to every parishioner, from the bottom of my heart a sincere thanks for all the friendship and support given to me down through the years”.

Administrator of the Parish, Rev. John Garvey stated “I take this opportunity to thank Fr. Declan for his friendship and support to me and many people over the years. Commitment, positivity and good humour have characterised his ministry as a priest in Ballinasloe - Creagh. I wish him joy and God’s blessings in his new role as parish Priest of Eyrecourt, Meelick and Clonfert”.

# Young Soccer Stars

By Kevin O’Connor

The cream of the crop of young soccer players represented the town on the Athlone District Schoolboys League (ADSL) team who won the Galway Macron Plate and travelled to Wales to compete in the Welsh Super Cup late this summer.

The town’s underage soccer teams have reaped the rewards of hard work from volunteers and the investment in their ground. The Welsh Super Cup, which is in its 30th year, has hosted one of Europe’s leading International youth football tournaments.

The ADSL have been competing in this tournament for the past six years, a tournament which has been graced by famous players in the past such as Steven Gerrard, Andrei Shevchenko, Michael Owen and Shay Given.

Jordan Carr, Oisín Duffy, Josh Hanney, Eoin Keogh and Cian Tracey were “excited and proud” to represent their home club and play against teams from all over the world.

Getting all the way to the final in the Welsh Super Cup only to be defeated by a local Welsh team was a great experience for these players and one that will stand to them in the future.

Shy at first the five players soon become more talkative when the subject of winning score-lines is brought up. They all begin to rhyme off impressive victories against the Kerry, North Dublin and North East schoolboys league.



Easter 2014

Having won every single game in the u13 league, it is no wonder that Ballinasloe continued their history of being well represented on the ADSL team making up five members of the 27 man squad.

These young players have their eyes firmly set on their dream of playing football in the big leagues in England citing players like Cristiano Ronaldo, Steven Gerrard, Lionel Messi and Manuel Neur as their idols.

One of the trainers of last season’s triumphant u13 league team Mark Duffy explained the path that lies ahead for these young stars in the making.

“The ADSL goes up until u15 or u16 and then the lads get incorporated into the Athlone town youth academy, that’s the general progression for them.”

But he was also quick to point out that the lads first aim should be to play for their home club. Mark himself plays for the club and was part of the team to retain their junior Connacht cup title and was in fact one of the men to slot home a penalty in the decider against Castlebar Celtic.



ADSL u13 team

It’s not just soccer that pre-occupies these sport made youngsters. Gaelic football, hurling and rugby also dominate their hectic schedules, young Josh Hanney is also involved in swimming.

According to Sarah Duffy, Oisín’s mother: “They haven’t time to go see Athlone Town play as they’re gone most evenings.” Like most mothers with sporty children she agrees that it’s nearly a full time job driving to trainings or matches.

With the 5 lads either going into Garbally or having first year completed their playing careers are sure to blossom together. The finger is firmly pointed at Goalkeeper Cian Treacy as the



Spring Summer 2014

most vocal on the pitch. Jordan, a talented winger, was the captain for the team that defeated Salthill Devon on a score line of 3 goals to 1 and scored a total of 5 goals in Wales.

But their Welsh adventure together came under serious doubt when goal keeper and Kilconnell GAA man Cian broke a bone in his leg just a few weeks prior to their trip.

However his four teammates were not sure on how the injury occurred as they felt it important to let everyone know it was due to him falling off a “pink barbie” bouncing castle, that he nearly missed out on the trip to the Welsh Super Cup.

Trainer Mark Duffy praised Cian on the amount of extra work and commitment he put in to regain fitness within the 6 weeks before the tournament.

The five young Liverpool supporters are gearing for a new season with their club and hope to continue improving and make their dream of playing professionally a reality. But for now this talented bunch are concentrating on the season ahead.





## Croke Park Cycle

Ballinasloe GAA Club and Galway East Life Support (GELS) wish to thank all the cyclists and all of those who gave up their time to make the cycle a truly excellent Community event on the 30th of August last.

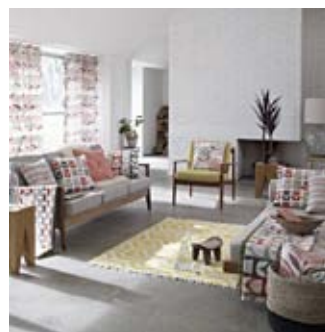
With over 250 cyclists, there was €36,000 raised for the GAA club and GELS received €4,000. The cyclists departed Croke Park at 8.15am and the first cyclists to return arrived in Ballinasloe at 17.02pm.

Huge progress has been made on the development of the clubs second training pitch and it is expected that the pitch will be available for juvenile matches in 2015.

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# Brighter Future for Duggan Park

By Dan Dowling

Duggan Park reached another milestone in its ongoing development with the commissioning of a new set of flood lights.

Duggan Park which was originally opened in 1934 has gone through a series of major renovations in recent years to bring its facilities up to the required inter-county standard, i.e. new referees dressing rooms, new players dressing rooms, an upgrade to the ladies and gents toilet facilities, renovations to seating and terracing areas along with four new turnstiles due for completion shortly.

Since the big switch-on it has been used practically every night and has enabled both the GAA and Camogie Boards to finish their schedules ahead of time.

This development has been made possible due to a number of different groups and organisations in the town and county coming together to bring these upgrades to fruition, namely a substantial grant from the outgoing Ballinasloe Town Council alongside funding from the Galway GAA County Board and a commitment of labour resources from the Ballinasloe Resources Community Employment Scheme.

This project has been spearheaded by Galway GAA Chairman, Noel Treacy, his fellow officers and officials alongside the diligent hardworking Duggan Park Development Committee. It is expected that this project will contribute greatly to the commercial life of the town, presently



going through a regeneration process itself and help attract some big games and events to the Duggan Park which is currently the only inter-county pitch in Galway to have flood lighting facilities.

Duggan Park, Ballinasloe is dedicated to the memory of the late Dr Patrick Duggan who was Bishop of Clonfert at the founding of the GAA. It was the same Dr Duggan that was approached by Michael Cusack to become patron of the GAA who, even though he was delighted at the formation of the GAA, declined due to his age and ill health but recommended a younger man namely Archbishop Croke of Cashel and Emlly, thus the GAA was founded in Thurles and not in Loughrea, of such events are history made.

Past Chairmen were Michael Fallon RIP, Michael Walshe, Brendan Walshe RIP, Fr John Naughton (now retired PP

Eyrecourt) Michael Boland RIP, John Burke, present day chairman is Christy Browne


The present committee are Willie Ward, Brendan Dolan, John Burke, Dan Dowling, Enda Dowling, Pat Dolan, Jim Lally, Peter Mulryan, Tom Gilchreest, John Connolly, Frank Goldrick, Seamus Goldrick, Eoin Goldrick, Martin Healy, Francis Healy, Joe Kelly, Sean Tully, Christy Brown, Dave Curley, Kevin Curley, Anthony Curley, Dillon Curley, Pat Sullivan, Ann Dolan, Ann Goldrick, Seamie Fogarty & Michael Fogarty.

Duggan Park will be looking to get back to the glory days of hosting Senior inter-county League and Championship games of both codes. With the inclusion of these floodlights, the improvement of the facilities and the proximity to the newly constructed motorway this possibility is closer to a reality.

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# East Galway Pony Club - Senior Girls National Tetrathlon Champions!

By Conor Finnerty

The East Galway Hunt Pony Club, which is based in the Showgrounds here in Ballinasloe has had an extremely busy and successful year. A local team of three girls represented the club at the National Pony Club Tetrathlon Championships in Limerick during August.

Tetrathlon contains four phases - running 2 km cross country, shooting, swimming and riding a cross country course over a demanding 1.05m course. Ciara Greene, Aoife Greene and Sionnan O Reilly Collins represented the town against teams from all over the country, with several hundred competitors, the girls won the senior girls team competition. Sionnan was overall individual second and Aoife eighth, despite being still young enough to have competed in the junior competition.

On the heels of their success the girls were picked for the national team to represent the Irish Pony Club at the International Tetrathlon Championships in the UK at Bishop Burten College in late August. Unfortunately Sionnan was unable to travel, but the Greene sisters competed extremely and their team finished second overall.

Earlier in July this year Sive Brassil a senior member of the club, was one of five Irish athletes who travelled to Hungary with Pentathlon Ireland for the European Pentathlon Championships.



Ciara Greene, Aoife Greene and Sionnan O Reilly Collins

Pentathlon is similar to the Tetrathlon but includes a fencing stage. Sive was placed 7th in the swimming phase and finished in 21st place in the qualifying round of the Championship against the world's best Athletes.

Throughout the year the club has been very busy with weekly rallies, specialist Show Jumping and Eventing Clinics as well as a number of outings for hacks and cross country training. The club joined with Galway Mid County Pony Club for a week's Summer Camp in Gurteen Agricultural College.

"The pony club is all about enjoyment and learning how to look after ponies. It's about instructing the kids in a safe environment," said Ruth Waldron, manager of the club. "The part they most enjoy is the friends they make, they go to a camp in Gurteen Agricultural

College for a week and the friends they make and the progression of their skills is remarkable," said the mother of two young club members Saoirse and Caoimhe.

The club is really lucky with the caliber of both local and visiting Instructors, all of whom have developed the Kids skills and talents this year. The children have represented the club at numerous competitions throughout the year and are continuously in the ribbons, from local leagues and shows to National Minimus Championships, National Hunter Trial Championships, and National Eventing Championships.

The club meets regularly in Ballinasloe Showgrounds. At the moment a show jumping training league is taking place on Friday evenings. New members are always welcome, for further details contact Ruth on 087 2875936.

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# Ballinasloe Under 16 Co. Football Champions 1952



Back row, l to r: Patsy Geraghty (Selector), Miko Kelly, Eddie Hogarty, Leo McMorrow, Noel McCann, Ollie Farnon, Sean Mullins, Mike Madden, Paddy Grealy, Johnny Geraghty, Fr. Peter Dunne.  
 Front row, l to r: Martin Beckett, Sean Grealy, Georgie Geraghty, Johnny Reilly, Sean Keeley (capt), Sean Meade, Davy Duignam, P.B. Ryan, Sean Finn.



Athletes representing county Galway did both their both their club & county proud at the Community Games Athletic National Finals which were held at Athlone AIT in late August. Participants included Kayla McKeon, Aoibheann Fitzpatrick, Brian Burke, Charlie Naughton, Shane Fitzpatrick, Mya Kelly, Ava McKeon, Caoimhe Ni Thuairisg and Joseph Tierney. The biggest success story from the Athlone campus was the U10 relay team who finished second overall. The competition at the Community Games Athletic National Finals is as strong as it gets. Ballinasloe & District Athletic Club would like to congratulate all these young athletes for making it into the Community Games National finals & doing both their club & county proud.

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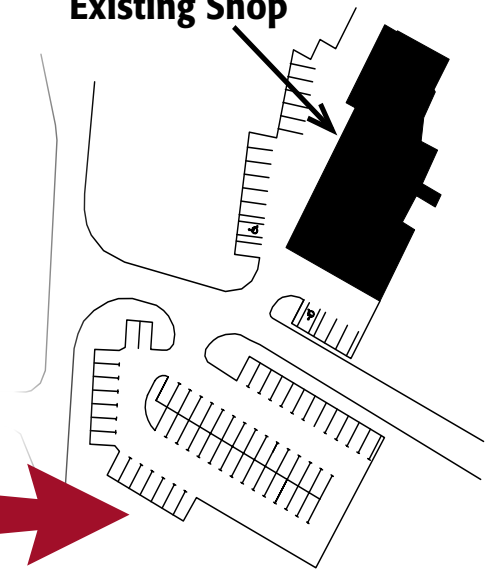


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# Ballinasloe RFC Mini & Youth Rugby

By Conor Finnerty



The Ballinasloe Mini and Youth Rugby season has just started and if it is to continue on the same rich vein of form as last year it promises to be a great success. Numbers continue to grow at all ages and now the club can

boast Girls U12's, U15's and U18 teams. The Mini's, dubbed the Broncos, were successful this summer winning the All Ireland U11 Community Games Final for the first time in over 20 years.

Following on from the tremendous success of the first U15 Girls team to represent the club last year, we have now expanded the women's section in the club to include a Girls U12 team and a Girls U18 team. Women's rugby is one of the fastest growing sports in Ireland at the moment which was boosted by the recent feats of the national women's squad.

The club has recently extended its facilities to cater for the increased membership and playing numbers with the construction of new dressing rooms and showers. New members are encouraged to check out the facebook page or website.



Athlone A Cappella, were formed just under 3 years ago and the group has made a huge impact in female barbershop singing both locally and nationally. The group's membership spans all the adjoining counties of Longford, Roscommon, Offaly, and Galway. Dympna Binchy, the co-ordinator within the group, drives up and down from Kilkenny from rehearsals and events. The group features a number of Ballinasloe based chanteuses ! See if you can spot them in the photo with their Musical Director David Farmer. Bookings / Further info 087 6941220

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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**



# There Was One in Nearly Every Street

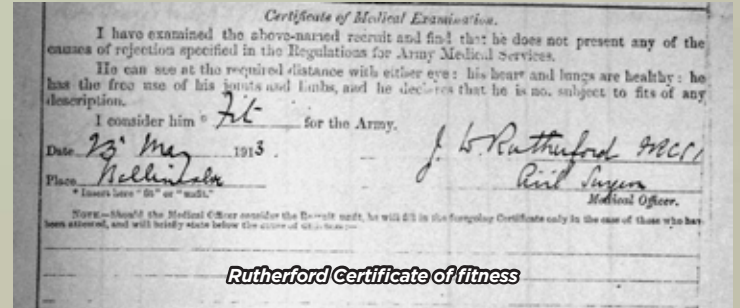


A view of Society Street

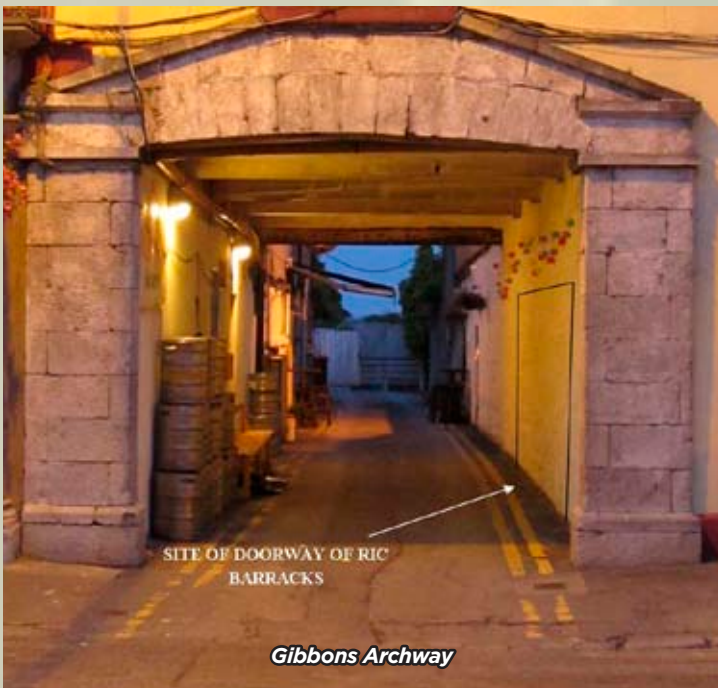
By Douglas Rafter

Since the 18th century there is a long tradition of Royal Irish Constabulary and Military barracks in Ballinasloe,...”there was one in nearly every street”. Leading up to WW1 they would have been used as Army Recruiting stations.

This building was used as a Barracks from 1846 until 1901. An interesting throw back to the original use of this building can be seen in the bricked up prison doorway located down the archway between this building and the Pillar house bar. Residents from present day back to 1850; Image, James Byrne B.D.S., Fitzpatricks Shop, Flanagans, The R.I.C.



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SITE OF DOORWAY OF RIC BARRACKS

Gibbons Archway



Creagh Church



Kelso's Engineering as it is today

Barracks, Sheils & Goldings Solrs, Hibernian Club offices. A land steward for the Clancarty estate also resided here. During 1901 this Barracks relocated to a bigger premises in Dunlo Street.

This building still contains the cells which were in use up until 1922. The very respected Dr Rutherford, who passed many a soldier “fit for duty” lived just across the road from this building.

The newly formed Irish Army took possession of of the building which was then handed over to the newly formed Garda Siocanna on the 25th of September that year.

Residents from present day back to 1850; Kelso's Garage and residence, R.I.C. Barracks, Western Star Printing Works,

The site of this building was another old RIC barracks which was later acquired by the Catholic church. An interesting foot note is that this church came from another Military barracks in Athlone. It's intricate stone features were worked into the larger structure which we see today.

This article is part of the Ballinasloe World War 1 Heritage Group's ongoing research project.



# Wolfe Tone at the Fair

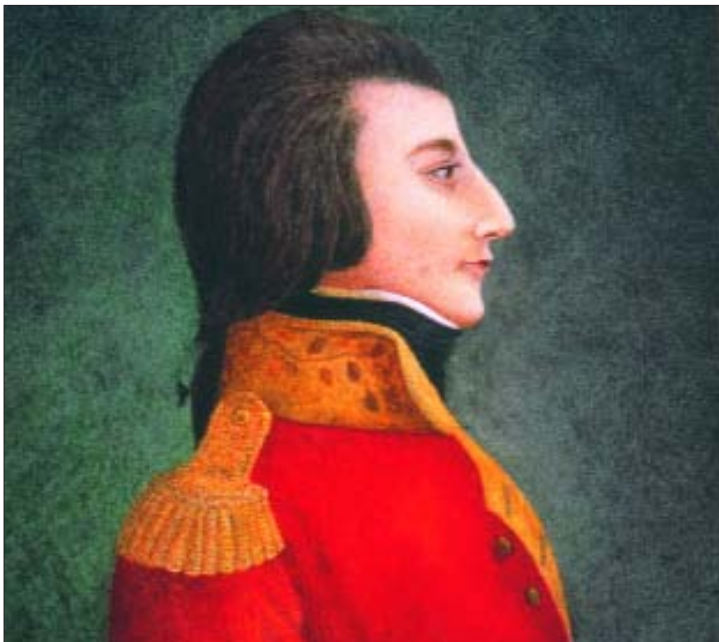
By Barry Lally

In 1760 a Catholic Committee was formed to lobby for the relaxation of the Penal Laws that had been a source of grievance amongst Irish Catholics since the beginning of the century. After three decades, however, the Committee's efforts had met with only modest success, and in 1792 it was decided to summon a Catholic Convention for December of that year in the hope that a heavy weight deputation would be appointed to directly petition King George III and the British Parliament to grant full emancipation.

A difficulty in the way of convening a truly representative gathering was that the Catholic gentry of Galway and Mayo were standing aloof, and so the Committee was decided to send two of the most active members, Theobald Wolfe Tone, father of Irish republicanism, and his friend, Thomas Braughall, on a mission to persuade the Connacht aristocracy to fall into line. Braughall was a 63-year-old prosperous Dublin merchant, well-educated and something of an intellectual, at whose house in Eccles Street Tone was a frequent dinner guest.

Then, as now, important and influential people congregated in Ballinasloe during the October Fair Week, and this was to be the destination of the two friends who set from Dublin in a post chaise (a light carriage used for private hire) at 8 o'clock on the evening of Friday 5th of October 1792, Tone having taken the precaution of loading and packing his pistols in anticipation of trouble. He hadn't long to wait, for near the Phoenix Park Gate they were held up by three highway men who backed off when Tone decided to face them down, which he successfully did without having to fire a shot.

A further adventure was in store for the travellers. The roads were in dreadful condition after weeks of torrential rain,



and their chaise broke down in Kinnegad at 3 o'clock in the morning. Tone's clothes and person got thoroughly bedaubed with grease and mud when he was obliged to act as a human jack while a wheel was being changed.

Following a four-hour rest, they resumed their journey and arrived in Ballinasloe late on Saturday. Accommodation was at a premium because of the fair, and it was only with great difficulty that they secured lodgings. Tone was in a foul mood after the trip and found nothing to his taste: the food was bad, the wine poisonous, and his bed "execrable". He passed



an uncomfortable night in a poky room without a window or a fireplace, and to add to his torments someone upstairs continued to play the bagpipes throughout the hours of darkness, a drunken party in an adjoining room never left off singing, while a couple of stentorian snorers outside his door contributed to their general cacophony.

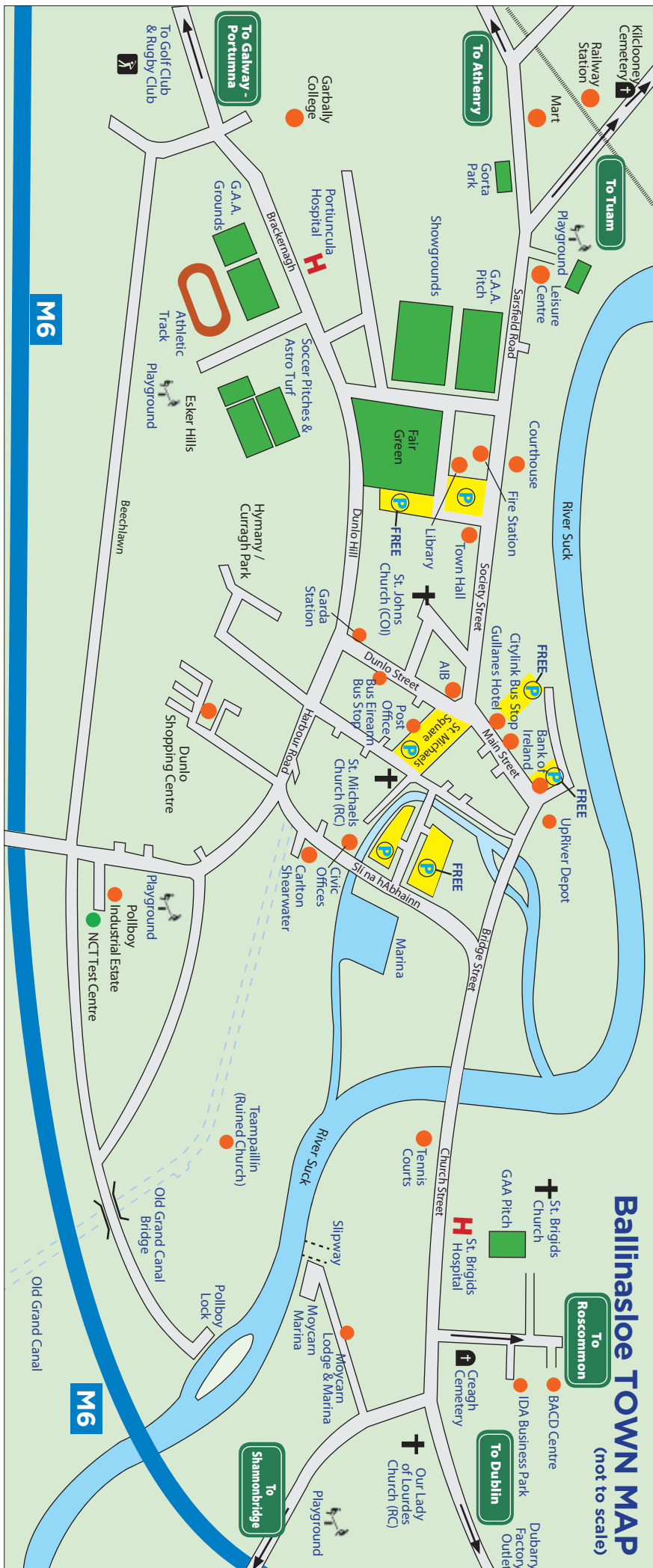
Sunday's breakfast consisted of fried steak smothered in onions, which produced a predictable and audible effect on Tone's digestive system. The parish priest, Fr. Larkin, drew his ire by failing to arrange for anyone to meet himself and Braughall. Eventually they made contact with two men who promised to set up a meeting with some Mayo people after 12 o'clock Mass. Shortly an invitation arrived to dine with the Catholic gentry, whose after-dinner horsey conversation Tone was to find insufferably boring.

Moreover, he entertained grave misgivings about the effectiveness of both his own and his companion's oratorical performance on the occasion. Nevertheless, their hearers were swayed by the arguments of the two Dubliners and agreed to nominate Sir Thomas French and Christopher Bellew as delegates to the Convention.

Much to Tone's displeasure, more steak and onions was served for breakfast on the Monday morning. He went out to see the fair and declared it to be "the greatest cattle fair in Europe except for one in Hungary" and "was glad to have seen it as a matter of curiosity, but on the whole disappointed, as every man will be who expects extravagantly". About 70,000 sheep had been sold, though "it was thin fair for cattle, but with smart prices".

Next day he was presented with the bill for the use of his room - food and drinks were extra - which came to one guinea. Tone reckoned he had been ripped off, but for the want of transport they had to stay put until the morrow, hoping to get seats in the mail coach due at noon on Wednesday. To while away the time they took a walk around the town, Tone acting as a crutch to Braughall who was lame. Luckily the coach arrived empty. Greatly relieved, they occupied their places and set off. After an uneventful journey they reached Dublin at 9 o'clock the following morning.

Their mission had been a success, though Tone was scarcely cheered by the result. One of his biographers has described his dyspeptic comments as reflecting "the narrowness of his eastern, urbanised experience". Incidentally, a plaque on a house at the end of the Main Street, opposite the Bank of Ireland, inaccurately gives the date of his sojourn as 1796. It's unclear how this building, identified as Cuff's hotel, came to be associated with Tone's visit since he never specified any inn or hotel in his diary, apart from his landlady as Miss Colohan.



## Ballinasloe History Walk

**1** – Start at the statue known as *The Man with the Horse*, where Main Street joins St. Michael's Square. From the crossing near the statue, continue by turning right onto Main Street. The prosperity of Ballinasloe in Georgian times can be seen in the scale and classical style of the buildings here. A fine group of four frontages stand across from the statue of The Man with the Horse. With shops and pubs on the ground floor for the most part, these Main Street premises have several floors above.

**2** – Walking along Main Street, lift your eyes above the shop frontages for one of the town's characteristic sights. There are the Diocletian windows that grace several facades. They are from the years after 1805 when the 2nd Earl was in charge. A window of this sort is formed under a semi-circular arch with two upright divisions so that the whole opening is divided into three parts.

**3** – As you stand at the meeting point of Bridge Street and Main Street, you will see the Victorian frontage of a commercial premises, originally the Masonic Hall. Next to it stands a classical looking, beautifully-crafted, early 19th century stone house, currently a guest house. Beside these is a tall, fine stone-fronted classical mansion, which is now the Bank of Ireland. It was originally the town mansion of the Lord of all of Ballinasloe, the Earl of Clancarty. A friend of king George IV, the Earl was one of the architects of the resistance to the emperor Napoleon. It could be said that he was the person to whom most credit is due for the layout, growth and architectural character of Ballinasloe as we see it today.

**4** – At the end of Main Street, head along Bridge Street, then turn to the right to the pathway which runs to the riverscape where you can see channels flowing through the several arches of the long stone bridge over the river Suck, one of the town's most precious monuments. The Bridge has been in continuous use since the 16th century and its extension in 1754 prepared it structurally to carry even the heaviest juggernauts of today.

**5** – Walk through to the far end of the park; you will approach St Michael's Church (1852-58) that stands in a commanding position over the Square. Its architect was J.J. McCarthy, a follower of Augustus Pugin (famed for other Neo-Gothic churches in Ireland) – and the design is said to have been revised by Pugin himself. Inside are many fine stained glass window. Of particular quality are those of St. Patrick and St. Rose of Lima, of 1925, by the renowned Dublin Stained glass artist, Harry Clarke and The Raising of the daughter of Jairus by Patrick Pollen, inserted in 1958.

**6** – From St. Michael's Church now walk up St. Michael's Square back towards the Man with the Horse Statue. Take a left into Dunlo Street, an important street in the history of the town, which contains, together with other buildings of about the same date, the late-Georgian Garda Station. The Station is towards the far end of the street, on the right hand side. Also on this street, over Dolan's Electrical Shop, you can see another fine example of Diocletian windows.

**7** – Halfway up Dunlo Street, turn right up Duggan Street, which will take you to St. John's Church (Church of Ireland, 1843). It dominates the vast Fair Green which becomes a hive of activity during one week every year when up to 100,000 people throng to the October fair. Look out over the Fair Green and admire one of the grandest freestanding classical monuments in the region. Dedicated to Charles Le Poer Trench, it was designed in the Neo-Greek style by the English architect George Papworth (1781-1855). A mile past this monument on the Main Galway road, South West of the town, the Earl of Clancarty's former country house is situated, where imposing gates mark the entrance to Garbally Court. It has been a school since 1923.

Walk down Church Hill onto Society Street and turn left, arriving at the Courthouse on the right. Society Street, like Main Street, was the 19th century location for the professional classes. As well as The Courthouse, it contains the former Bridewell (or gaol) from the 1840s. Further along this street, Ballinasloe Railway Station is a must. Constructed in 1851, it is a Neo-Gothic limestone tour-de-force and a fine example of the quality of rural Irish railway architecture in the mid-19th century.



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